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**Giving Back. Moving Forward.**

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### **Youth Grants Awarded in New Focus Areas**

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) of the Charlevoix County Community Foundation responded to requests from nonprofit partners in November. Thanks to donors who look to the Community Foundation to make a difference close to home, grants have been awarded primarily to nonprofits who will focus in the areas of youth mental health and academic stress. In all, over \$29,000 was awarded during the Youth Needs grant cycle.

Every three years, the YAC performs a Youth Needs Assessment, asking 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Charlevoix County about the top issues concerning them. Earlier this year, the YAC met to discuss the results of the most recent Youth Needs Assessment and made the decision to focus their grantmaking dollars on prioritizing the top two issues identified by their peers – youth mental health and academic stress.

“Mental health and academic stress have long been areas of need for Charlevoix County youth, and both have worsened due to the effects of COVID-19,” said Nathan Newman, a senior at East Jordan High School and Treasurer of the YAC. “So, for this grant cycle, we wanted our resources to go toward programs that will support the mental health and relieve the academic stress of Charlevoix County youth.”

The YAC made this goal a reality when they awarded 80% of their available funding in this cycle to organizations who are directly addressing youth mental health and/or academic stress. By prioritizing these focus areas the YAC hopes to make a bigger impact in the areas that Charlevoix County youth themselves have identified as most important.

Specific grants were awarded to five area nonprofits. Northern Michigan Equine Therapy will receive funding to expand their mental health professional services, which currently has a waiting list. East Jordan Public Schools will use funding to support learning loss among students due to interruptions in the school year caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan will expand their programs to middle school students in Charlevoix. Northern Family Intervention Services will use their grant to create mental health coping kits for youth, as a way to encourage progress. Finally, the Women’s Resource Center of Northern Michigan will use their grant to set up a protocol for Charlevoix County at their Child Advocacy Center, a necessary component that will allow them to steadily provide services to area youth. All of these projects or programs directly address the areas of youth mental health and/or academic stress.

While the primary focus of this cycle was on the two priority areas, two other grants were also awarded to Good Samaritan Family Services for the Sammy's Shoes program, and to Planned Parenthood of Michigan for their Smart & Healthy Youth programming in Charlevoix County. Additionally, earlier in the year, the YAC held a special meeting and awarded \$32,000 to the school nurse program in Charlevoix County schools, which was in danger of being discontinued. The YAC teamed up with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, the C3F, and other donors, to continue the program for another year, to help schools cope with implications of the pandemic.

"We're excited about all of the grants we recommended during the Youth Needs cycle this year," commented Aubrie Sparks, a senior at Boyne Falls High School and President of the YAC. "And we are super confident our allocations will benefit the priority areas we identified."

A charitable organization dedicated to improving and enriching life in the area, the Charlevoix County Community Foundation accepts gifts from individuals, families, businesses and civic groups and manages them as permanent endowments. While a portion of the funds are utilized to support grantmaking, the principal of the endowment continues to grow, providing ongoing charitable capital to benefit Charlevoix County's residents—now and in the future.

The next grant cycle will focus on Environment, Land Use, and Recreation projects. Applications will become available in mid-December and will be due by Monday, February 1, 2021. The Community Foundation welcomes inquiries about applying for grants anytime by emailing Ashley Cousens at [acousens@c3f.org](mailto:acousens@c3f.org). More information about each grant cycle can be found at [c3f.org](http://c3f.org) on the "Apply for a Grant" page. Additionally, scholarship applications are now available at [c3f.org](http://c3f.org) on the "Apply for a Scholarship" page or interested students can contact their high school counselor or Mishelle Shooks at [mshooks@c3f.org](mailto:mshooks@c3f.org) for more information.

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