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## **Great Start Collaborative receives preschool grant funding from local community foundations**

The Great Start Collaborative of Charlevoix, Emmet and Northern Antrim Counties recently received preschool funding that will support families and children in Northern Michigan. The Charlevoix County Community Foundation and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation both provided funding to the Great Start Preschool Scholarship Program.

“Having access to high-quality preschool is a key factor impacting a child’s school readiness,” said Savannah Cool, Great Start Collaborative director. “While there are income-based programs in our communities - Great Start Readiness Program and Head Start, specifically - there is not enough capacity in those programs to serve every child that would qualify. These scholarships remove financial barriers for families to be able to enroll their children in available tuition based preschool programs.”

The Charlevoix County Community Foundation provided \$10,000 through the Community Priorities 2024 grant cycle.

The Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation provided \$9,300 from its Boeckman Family Fund (\$500), Ted and Brenda Frey Donor Advised Fund (\$800), Circuit Controls Corp. Charitable Fund (\$1,000), and Birchwood Outreach Fund (\$7,000). Cool said these funds will be available to support families beginning in fall 2024.

“We are so grateful for these donations that help level the playing field and alleviate strain for local families,” Cool added.

Businesses, organizations, and individuals interested in donating to preschool scholarships are encouraged to contact Cool at the Great Start Collaborative, [cools@charemid.org](mailto:cools@charemid.org). Char-Em Intermediate School District serves as the fiduciary of the collaborative with 100 percent of funds distributed back to Great Start Collaborative offerings. Tax incentives may be available for donations

### **About preschool funding**

The Great Start Preschool Scholarship Fund (GSPSF) fills the state and federal preschool funding gap in local counties. Upon capacity of government funded preschool programs, GSPSF provides preschool tuition support for eligible children ages 3-5. Eligibility standards require families to be living at 250% or below poverty level and takes into account other factors such as development delays and single parent households. Scholarships are awarded for assistance up to 100% for preschool enrollment to high-quality programs. Preschool partners are selected based on participation & rating in the state’s Quality Rating & Improvement System. GSPSF is a committee of the Great Start Collaborative of Charlevoix, Emmet & northern Antrim counties. The fiduciary is a collaborative partner, Char-Em ISD. GSPSF has awarded 440+ preschool scholarships. Through partnerships with Joint Preschool Recruitment & Great Start to Quality Northwest Resource Center, children of highest need are assured to receive high quality care and education.