Leaving A Legacy

Thank you to those who have chosen the community foundation as a way to enhance the community for future generations through a planned gift. Leaving a gift to the community foundation allows individuals to support the causes that they are most passionate about forever.

Beginning with 59 members in 2003, the Legacy Society has grown to more than 330 individuals today. It is because of that generosity that Northern Ottawa County remains a wonderful place to live, work, and play – and will remain for future generations.

We created this special section to honor those legacies that have been realized over the past year (June 2021-March 2022). We would also like to acknowledge the recent passing of the following Legacy Society Members: Sue Ellen Hinkle-Barrett, Nancy Dornbos Rhem, and Richard Scholler. We plan to honor and recognize their legacies in a future publication.
Muriel Mersereau

*Muriel Mersereau lived a life full of love for her family, her community, and new experiences.* Muriel was a lifelong community member of Grand Haven. Her passion for life and dedicated service allowed her to explore many walks of life and areas of the world. She continuously befriended countless individuals, learned new skills, and most importantly helped others. Muriel’s philanthropy was people centric, reflected in her international mission trips and long history of charity in memory of others. She devoted her life to truly understanding and embracing everyone she met with love and warmth. Muriel impacted numerous lives with her generous spirit and boundless love for all the world has to offer.

Gerald Retzlaff

*Gerald “Jerry” Retzlaff connected with every part of our community.* He was not only a leader of a local business, but also dedicated his time to a variety of nonprofit organizations and local initiatives like International Aid and the Committee of Economic Development. His work was always community oriented and centered on supporting others and the Grand Haven area. Jerry lived an authentic life, welcoming to all who met him, and was a man who cared deeply for his friends, family, and community. Jerry’s memory will live on through the individuals who loved him and the organizations his legacy will continue to support.

Patricia Shears

*Patricia “Pat” Shears committed wholeheartedly to supporting her community and neighbors in everything she did.* Her love was unconditional and all encompassing. She held a great passion for philanthropy within the community, becoming the first woman president of the Tri-Cities Kiwanis Club. Her energetic and kind spirit was inviting to anyone who met her and reflected her deep love for all life had to offer. Pat’s impact within the community was one of kindness and genuine warmth. Her ability to celebrate the joy of living through her everyday actions will continue to be visible within our community for years to come thanks to her support of our children’s future through continued education.

Peter Theune

*Peter Theune lived a life devoted to helping others.* He was a local leader, full of kindness and passion, who cared deeply for his community. He played a pivotal role in the establishment of The Little Red House, The People Center, and Bluebird Cancer Retreats – organizations that continue to serve our area today. Peter held a great love for everyone around him, especially his family, as well as the world’s natural beauty – and his actions reflected this. His dedication to supporting the community was a lifelong effort that continues to impact countless individuals, families, and organizations.
Legacy Society Members

If you would like more information about joining the Legacy Society, please contact Chris Riker.