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Youth Grantmakers Support Grants Benefitting Youth
GHACF Youth Advisory Council Awards \$48,960 in Spring 2023 Grant Round

GRAND HAVEN, MICH., August 7, 2023 – The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation’s (GHACF) Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is pleased to announce 6 spring-round grant awards totaling \$48,960 in support of Northwest Ottawa County and our surrounding communities. This includes a \$18,000 grant to [Latin Americans United for Progress](#) (LAUP) to expand LAUP Youth services into the Grand Haven area. This funding will support the launch of a one-year pilot program in the Grand Haven Area Public Schools System.

“We heard testimony from Grand Haven students who attended LAUP’s Youth Development Conference about how important community, belonging, representation, and support is to them,” said Johnny Rodriguez, LAUP Executive Director. “We are excited to partner with the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation to bring Adelante y Mas Adelante Career & College readiness, leadership, and cultural enrichment to the Grand Haven community,” he added.

LAUP launched Adelante (meaning forward) and Mas Adelante in 2008 to prepare students for college and life after high school. The goal is to provide students with a variety of experiences and activities that enable them to make informed decisions about their futures and become successful leaders in their communities.

“LAUP is the only Latino-led and Latino-serving organization in Holland and has proven success in the programs they offer the community,” said Meg Bouman, YAC Co-Advisor. “We are proud of our YAC members for realizing the need to expand these essential programs into Northwest Ottawa County.”

The pilot program is open to Grand Haven students from 8th to 12th grade. All students are welcome to participate regardless of racial or ethnic backgrounds, but the hope is to focus on individuals that identify as belonging to a minority group.

“There is power in representation, inclusion, and belonging. Without these three, many voices are left out of the conversation and do not accurately represent nor communicate the values and perspectives that are present within the whole community,” said Julian Lugo, LAUP Programs Manager. “We aim to be current and serve today’s youth according to their greatest needs, while keeping the basic foundation of unity and Latin heritage that has helped LAUP to continue forward,” he added.

The program will follow the school calendar and run for 27 weeks with students meeting once or twice a week.

Additional Grants Include:

Dunegrass Healing Outdoor Therapy – Nature-Based Therapy Program (\$5,500)

[Dunegrass Healing](#) works to create life-changing experiences for struggling adolescents. Their program helps young people make better choices and live healthier, more productive lives through guided experiences in nature. This grant will help fund one of three week-long programs planned for summer 2023 in Spring Lake.

Grand Haven Area Public Schools – Pay It Forward (\$2,000)

Grand Haven High School's Pay It Forward course works to teach students how to identify areas of need in their community and give back. The grant funding will be used to support future student-led community service projects in the Grand Haven area.

ODC Network – Healthy Snack Summer Program (\$8,000)

The [Outdoor Discovery Center](#) Network is designing and implementing a healthy food program into its summer program to empower students to explore healthy food in a fun, new setting. This grant will be used to design the curriculum and to purchase fruits and vegetables. The goal is to serve one healthy snack a day to 120 elementary students from Grand Haven Area Public Schools.

Spring Lake District Library – Refresh Project – Teen Area (\$7,500)

The [Spring Lake District Library](#) is renovating its space to meet the current and future needs of the community. This grant will help fund the purchase of furniture and construction of an updated teen space in the library. Currently, there are 915 teens who have a library card with an average of 2 – 4 teens visiting the library daily. The library hopes this project will increase the usage of 13 – 18-year-olds to an average of 8 – 10 teens per day.

Tri-Cities Family YMCA – Summer Safety Around Water (SAW) Drowning Prevention (\$7,960)

The SAW program is integrated into the [Tri-Cities Family YMCA](#) Summer Day Camp and it teaches valuable, life-saving skills to reduce the rate of drowning and water-related injuries in children. This funding will support aquatics training for camp counselors and children participating in the summer day camp.

About the GHACF

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving Northwest Ottawa County community since 1971. GHACF is regularly recognized as a top 100 Community Foundation in the nation and is the 7th largest community foundation in the State of Michigan. It encourages philanthropy by individuals, families, corporations, and organizations, and serves as a steward of their charitable funds and legacies. In addition to awarding grants, the Foundation offers technical support to nonprofits, convenes community leaders on issues of importance, and advocates for the nonprofit sector. For more information visit ghacf.org.