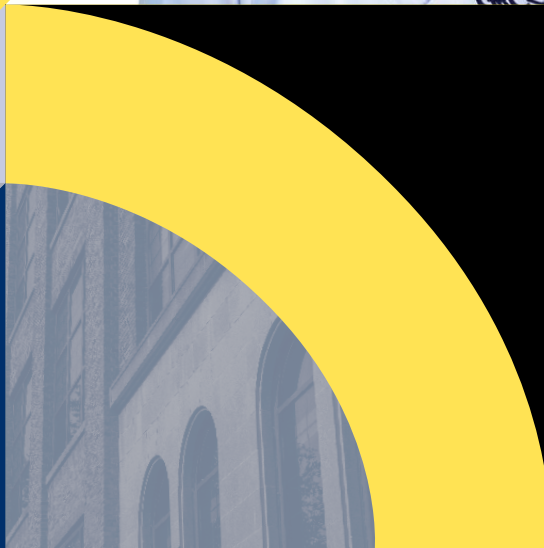


GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Foundation Annual Report 2023-2024



AT-A-GLANCE
2023-2024

\$41

MILLION IN
ASSETS

545

TOTAL
FUNDS

\$2.3

MILLION IN TOTAL
CONTRIBUTIONS

626

DONORS

1,608

STUDENTS
AWARDED

\$1.3

MILLION IN
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR

Welcome to the 2023-2024 annual report! We are excited to share with you the work the Grand Rapids Community College Foundation has done over the past year.

The numbers are a good place to start if you want a concise summary of our impact. During the 2023-2024 fiscal and academic year, over \$1.3 million in scholarships went to 1,608 students.

While the numbers are compelling, we hope you realize that dollar signs and decimal points do not convey the full scope of how your donations impact our students, our college and our community. That's part of what we hope to give you in this report – a better picture of how your generosity is making a real difference in the lives of students.

Flipping through these pages, you'll see stories of talented chefs inspiring the next generation of culinary students. You'll read about young people who are excited to build homes in their communities and students whose dreams are becoming a reality thanks to the generosity of someone they do not know.

Perhaps most importantly of all, we hope you will see that donations are so much more than a financial transaction. Education is a powerful tool that transforms lives, and your contributions have made those transformations a reality. Supporting students through scholarships is not only about removing financial barriers to education. It's about the hopes, dreams and opportunities those scholarships provide.

The tagline for GRCC's latest marketing campaign sums it all up rather nicely: "Together, we've got this." One of our campaign objectives is to strengthen connections with our current students, alumni and local community and help everyone feel like a part of the GRCC community – whether they are on or off campus. This tagline is more than just a promise. It's a rallying cry that encapsulates our belief in the power of community and the collective effort behind every student's personal and academic success.

Thank you for your continued support. Your generosity paves the way for a brighter tomorrow, where big dreams are not stifled by financial constraints and ambitions are not curtailed by a lack of resources.

We hope you join us in dreaming even bigger for 2025 and beyond.

Together, we've got this!

Charles W. Lepper, Ph.D., GRCC president

Kristine R. Babcock, GRCC Foundation board chair

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Teresa Weatherall Neal
President and CEO of LEAD 616

Education is one of the greatest gifts we can give, and Teresa Weatherall Neal is passionate about inspiring every member of our community to grow toward educational transformation.

Weatherall Neal graduated from Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) with an associate degree in liberal arts. From there, she went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in public administration from Grand Valley State University and a master's in educational leadership from Western Michigan University. Weatherall Neal has also received two honorary doctoral degrees for her leadership in education, one from Grand Valley State University and one from Ferris State University.

Weatherall Neal served Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) for 43 years as an administrative assistant, coordinator of compliance and assistant superintendent before becoming superintendent in 2012. Her GRPS Transformation Plan led to increased enrollment rates, increased graduation rates, decreased absenteeism and gained state and national attention as the turnaround model for urban districts. She also implemented professional development focused on equity and inclusion, school choices and building community partnerships.

Since retiring from GRPS in 2019, Weatherall Neal has remained incredibly active in her community. She serves on numerous boards, including as chair of the Grand Rapids Promise Zone Authority. Weatherall Neal is also the CEO of LEAD 616, a leadership development company that provides consulting services for individuals and companies.

She was named GRCC's Distinguished Alumna in 2019. In 2022, she received the Edward J. Frey Distinguished Achievement Award from Junior Achievement of the Michigan Great Lakes and the Equity Champion Award from the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute.



Alejandro Quiroga MD, MBA
President, Corewell Health West

Dr. Alejandro Quiroga is an innovative healthcare professional who is passionate about solving complex problems and finding new ways to care for our community.

Born in Medellin, Colombia, Quiroga's love of learning and medicine led him to earn his medical degree from Universidad del Rosario – Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. He moved to the United States and completed his residency at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami and his fellowship in pediatric nephrology at Montefiore Children's Hospital in New York. In 2017, Quiroga earned his executive M.B.A. from Grand Valley State University.

Quiroga began working at Spectrum Health in 2011 as a pediatric nephrologist. His dedication and skill for helping teams perform at their best earned him leadership positions at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital including division chief of pediatric specialties and associate program director for the pediatric residency program. He also served as vice president of medical affairs for Spectrum Health Medical Group and as senior vice president of population health before moving into the CMO role of ambulatory care for Corewell Health in West Michigan.

As senior vice president of population health for Spectrum, he and his team began a journey to transform care management and primary care into a value-based care model. Their goal was to achieve the best outcomes at the lowest cost and maximize the value for patients. The four-year effort resulted in higher satisfaction rates among patients and lower rates of disease reported by physicians and advance practice providers.

In 2023, Quiroga became the president of Corewell Health where he leads strategy, operations, clinical oversight and financial performance for 11 hospitals, 120 outpatient locations, telehealth, a large continuing and home care enterprise and a medical group with 2,000+ provider members in West Michigan.

HELPING EVERYONE BELONG



Dr. Orzie Henderson created a scholarship to support underrepresented students and honor a family legacy.

Financial barriers are not the only things that can prevent someone from pursuing their college dreams. Sometimes, it's because they do not feel like they are "college material."

Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) alumnus and GRCC donor Henderson knows what this feels like. But now, he's hoping a new scholarship will help future students feel like college is a place where they can grow and explore their passions.

Henderson attended GRJC from 1961 to 1963. Receiving a scholarship during his second year was much more than just a big financial help. It boosted his confidence and helped him feel like he belonged after all.

"I was often the only Black kid in class," said Henderson. "This scholarship really encouraged me. I distinctly remember receiving the best grade in class on a very hard chemistry test. That was the moment I realized I was college material and that I belonged here. I felt respected and I really needed to feel that."

After attending GRJC, Henderson went on to the University of Michigan and earned his B.A. and M.D. He practiced medicine for over fifty years, first in general practice and then in emergency medicine. He has

volunteered in Nicaragua and worked for the last 12 years at the Hope Clinic in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Henderson is also the author of several essays, editorials and a novel, *Light in Winter: A Mama's Prayer*.

Henderson started the Josephine Henderson Heritage Fund in 1999 as a way to honor his mother and support students from underrepresented backgrounds. This scholarship is awarded to two students from Ottawa Hills High School who will attend GRCC. It prioritizes workforce development programs like construction, applied technology, culinary arts, automotive and nursing.

"I was a poor Black kid and a scholarship boosted my confidence in my abilities," said Henderson. "Now, I want to help others like myself. A scholarship focused on the trades will be helpful to those who want non-academic work."

The fund is named for Henderson's mother, who faced her own share of hardships as a single mother of seven. She worked a factory job to provide for her family and earned her GED after her children grew up and left home.

"Mom will be most remembered for her determination and selflessness in raising her family," said Henderson. "She always said that when God gives you more than you need, the extra is for giving back. GRCC is a good place to give back because of the opportunities it offers and the difference it makes in people's lives."

"I WAS A POOR BLACK KID AND A SCHOLARSHIP BOOSTED MY CONFIDENCE IN MY ABILITIES... NOW, I WANT TO HELP OTHERS LIKE MYSELF..."

— DR. ORZIE HENDERSON



Painting commemorating Josephine Henderson donated to GRCC

Visitors to the GRCC Adult Education Office will notice a new portrait on the walls. This painting of Josephine Henderson was commissioned by her granddaughter Julie Henderson and donated by Dr. Orzie Henderson.

Even though her life was far from easy, Henderson's family remembers her unfailing support and encouragement to improve. The portrait is based on a photo of Henderson taken on a cold and dreary trip to a Grand Rapids post office. The candid moment perfectly encapsulates Henderson's strength, kindness and wisdom.

Originally given as a Christmas gift to Dr. Henderson, the family decided to donate the painting to GRCC. It now hangs in the Adult Education Office where we hope students find inspiration in Josephine Henderson's story and legacy for many years to come.



Christian Mother of Seven Children (1921-2013) Proud GED recipient

Josephine Henderson Heritage Fund

Painted by Anatola Araba in 2014 at the age of 16, while attending the prestigious LaGuardia High School of Music and Performing Arts. Anatola would go on to graduate from NYU, Tisch School of Arts in 2021 and is completing her Master of Fine Arts at the California Institute of the Arts by 2025.

BUILDING CAREERS

Home Builders Association Foundation creates a scholarship to give the next generation of residential construction professionals tools for success.

The biggest worry many builders face is not rising material costs or supply chain instability, but how to get young people from the classroom to the construction site. With that in mind, the Home Builders Association Foundation (HBAF) is stepping up to ensure the next generation of home builders has the skills and experience to build rewarding careers.

The nonprofit teamed up with the Grand Rapids Community College Foundation to provide scholarship support for students enrolled in the Residential Construction Job Training program.

"The HBAF was founded to provide housing assistance to people with

special needs and to bring young people into the building industry. I can't think of a better way to do that than by setting up this scholarship with GRCC," said Dave Nichols, HBAF Board Member and Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) Alumni. "GRCC programs offer accessible ways for students to learn real-world skills and gain experience that will help them grow into their careers."

The Job Training program takes place on a construction site, where students learn by actually building a new home. Throughout the 18-week program, students get hands-on learning about the entire process of residential construction, including blueprint reading, site layout, concrete, carpentry, door and window installation, roofing, siding and interior finishing. Graduates are qualified to work in the residential construction industry.

The new scholarship addresses an urgent need for skilled construction workers. The trade group Associated Builders and Contractors estimates the construction industry will need to

hire about half a million workers in 2024 just to keep pace with demand. The shortage of construction workers has also contributed to rising housing costs and housing shortages.

"GRCC was a terrific start for me," said Dave Nichols. "Not only was it affordable, but many of my classes were taught by people with relevant industry experience. My career benefited from their real-world expertise and knowledge. This scholarship will expand opportunities for young people in our community by teaching them real skills they'll need on a construction site. They'll get to learn from the best and get a head start on building a career they can be proud of."

David and Victor Soriano-Mendez are brothers who have benefited from the scholarship and plan to use their new skills to advance their careers as licensed builders. "I work alongside my family fixing homes," said David. "My brother and I want to expand our knowledge of building homes and create connections with future builders."



Ruth Kelly named 2024 Distinguished Alumni

Distinguished Alumni Award winner Ruth Kelly has had many careers: teacher, community organizer and Grand Rapids city commissioner. Ruth credits GRCC with building a foundation for these roles by allowing her to explore different interests and perspectives.

Kelly majored in political science at Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) and used her electives to explore music and art. She also made connections with other students from diverse backgrounds. After earning her associate degree, she went on to earn a bachelor's degree in political and social sciences and education from Aquinas College, followed by a certificate in Montessori education and a master's in educational technology from Grand Valley State University.

From there, Kelly began her decades-long journey of public service. She worked for Grand Rapids Public Schools for 20 years, first as a Montessori teacher and later as a middle school teacher. Working as a community organizer on political campaigns and initiatives inspired her to run for a seat on the City Commission, and she was elected to represent the 2nd Ward from 2010-2019. Her wisdom, calm demeanor and determined attitude are consistent hallmarks of her service to the entire community.

Kelly's legacy continues on through the Ruth and Carl Kelly Public Service scholarship, established by her brother and his wife. It encourages students with financial need, especially new Americans, to serve the public through enlightened decision-making based in solid and continuing education.



honor an alum!

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes alumni for their career achievements, public service and dedication to the college. It is the highest honor bestowed upon former GRCC and GRCC students.

The Young Alumni Award recognizes graduates who are 40 or younger for their community and civic contributions, service in support of GRCC and exceptional accomplishments in their profession.

To nominate someone, go to grcc.edu/AlumniAwards, where you'll find links to both applications. Nominations are accepted all year long and the winners are announced in January. You can receive a paper copy of the applications by contacting the Foundation at foundation@grcc.edu.

**GRCC.EDU/
ALUMNI AWARDS**

I KNEW COLLEGE WAS IN MY FUTURE



Scholarship removes financial barriers and helps Jena Buttery create connections and learn leadership skills.

Jena Buttery had always planned on attending college. During her senior year in high school, Buttery mapped out her future alongside her friends. She researched programs for film and video production, applied to colleges and universities, got accepted, toured campuses and made plans to move away from home. She even received scholarships. But when it came time to commit to a program, Buttery hesitated.

Something just didn't feel right.

"It was set in my head, but not in my heart," she said. "I had worked for this my whole life, but it wasn't what I wanted. I didn't want to move away from my family. And even with scholarships, college would be difficult to afford. I was paying for college on my own and my biggest worry was drowning in student loans."

Despite this change of plans, Buttery knew that college was in her future. She applied to GRCC and declared marketing as her major. And, thanks to GRCC Foundation scholarships, Buttery was able to continue her education without worrying about finances.

"I was able to stay at home with my family, take classes at the Lakeshore Campus, and even try doing classes online," Buttery said. "Receiving scholarships allowed me to feel confident and comfortable continuing my academic career."

Despite being an introvert, Buttery was determined to make the most of her college experience. She was invited to join the GRCC Honors Program and attended the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Chicago. After sharing her interests and passions with Experiential Learning Director Michael Schavey, she was given the distinguished position as social media marketing intern. She also joined another academic-based group, Phi Theta Kappa, where she attended leadership conferences and served as the social media and communications officer.

"I learned that making strong and positive connections with others and getting involved in your community can boost your self-confidence and be the driving force for your success," said Buttery. "You are not alone in this world, and you do not have to do it all alone. Confide in those around you, be with and engage with others, and you will succeed."

"I WANTED TO CONTINUE LEARNING AND GROWING, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW IF I COULD AFFORD IT. THE GRCC FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO PURSUE MY ACADEMIC CAREER AND CREATE LIFELONG CONNECTIONS."
– JENA BUTTERY

In March 2024, Buttery was named a 2024 New Century Workforce Scholar — the first national scholarship of its kind to support community college students entering the workforce after completing their degree or certificate.

Buttery graduated from GRCC in April with an associate degree in marketing. She plans to use her passion for storytelling to pursue a career in social and digital media marketing.

"I began my GRCC journey thinking only about my education and opportunities for success," said Buttery. "Now that I've graduated, I can confidently say I will never forget the connections I've made here."

GRCC is an amazing school because we are a community. I have made life-changing friendships, gained real-world experiences that directly relate to my career path and learned leadership skills that will benefit me in all aspects of life."



Creating Connections speakers share how scholarships helped them dream big

The annual Creating Connections breakfast is a special event that brings together scholarship recipients and donors. Students meet donors who made their scholarships possible, and donors see first-hand how their gifts help students achieve their dreams.

At the event, GRCC President Dr. Charles W. Lepper welcomed guests and reflected on his own experience as a first-generation college student and scholarship recipient. "I know firsthand the difference a scholarship can make," he said to donors. "Your generosity grants hope, opportunity, a sense of belonging and confidence to pursue your dreams."

The event also honored Reverend Nate and Laura Moody and their vision for helping students overcome financial barriers to college. Together, they began the Laura B. Moody Nursing Scholarship to honor two special women, Laura's mother, Elizabeth R. Johnson and Rev. Moody's mother, Lucy Mae Moody. The scholarship, now fully endowed, will help future nursing students pursue their dreams by making sure they have the funds to buy books, supplies and lab coats.

Students Jena Buttery and Braeden Pelton shared how scholarships gave them the confidence to dream big and embrace the GRCC experience. Buttery earned her marketing associate degree in April and is now a video production intern for the City of Holland. Pelton plans to graduate in 2025 with a degree in public relations and communication before transferring to a four-year university.

Did you know...you can watch highlights of GRCC events like Creating Connections on the GRCC YouTube channel? Check out our special tribute to Laura Moody and how the scholarship is making a difference for nursing students. Visit youtube.com/@grcc and search for "The Laura B. Moody Scholarship."



Oh, the places they'll go!



Bob and Nanci Guigue give back so all GRCC students can have the same opportunities.

Some donors are grateful for the role their Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) or GRCC education played in their careers and lives.

Others give back because they see first-hand how scholarships are the first chapter of an exciting new story for students who may not have been able to afford a college education.

Bob and Nanci Guigue give for both of these reasons.

Nanci attended GRJC twice! In 1974, she took chemistry classes before transferring to the University of Michigan, where she earned a degree in elementary education. After teaching at four different schools in four years, Nanci was laid off and told it would be five years before there would be another teaching position for her.

This led her back to GRJC in 1981, where she got her degree in dental assisting. She also worked in the Dental Clinic office as a student.

"Being an 'older student' the second time around and working three jobs

to pay for my degree helped me understand the financial needs many students face in trying to obtain higher education or workforce training skills," Nanci said.

"NEVER FORGET THAT THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO COULD USE YOUR HELP... YOUR SCHOLARSHIP GIFTS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING OF SOMEONE ELSE'S JOURNEY! TO PARAPHRASE DR. SEUSS, 'OH, THE PLACES THEY'LL GO!'"
 – Nanci Guigue

Soon after completing her degree, Nanci began working as an adjunct professor in the Dental Department. In 1998, she started as a contingent employee in the Dental Clinic office, moved to the Registrar's office and

also spent time working in the Admissions office. In November 2000, Nanci became a support professional in the Associate Dean's office for the School of Workforce Development.

Nanci's husband, Bob, started working in the GRCC Technical Operations Department in 2011. They both retired in 2019 but continue to support the GRCC Foundation.

"I feel those of us who are blessed with many different resources should share our blessings with those who may be struggling," said Nanci. "Bob and I believe education is important, and we want to make sure students who may have difficulty affording tuition have the same opportunities as everyone else."

"Never forget that there is always someone who could use your help. Giving to the scholarship funds at GRCC allows you to impact many lives for years to come. Your scholarship gifts are just the beginning of someone else's journey! To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, 'Oh, the places they'll go!'"

MAKE A LASTING IMPACT FOR OUR STUDENTS

The GRCC Foundation can coordinate with you and your professional advisors on a plan to help bring a life-changing education to future students.

BEQUESTS

This is one of the easiest and most flexible ways you can leave a gift to the GRCC Foundation.

Options include:

- Percentage bequest – make a gift of a percentage of your estate.
- Specific bequest – make a gift of a specific dollar amount or asset.
- Residuary bequest – make a gift from the balance, or residue, of your estate.

RETIREMENT ASSETS

You can donate part or all of your unused retirement assets, such as your IRA, 401(k), 403(b), pension or other tax-deferred plan.

If you designate the GRCC Foundation as a beneficiary, our students will benefit from the full value of your gift because your retirement assets will not be taxed at your death. Your estate will benefit from an estate tax charitable deduction for the gift.

To name the GRCC Foundation as a beneficiary, update your beneficiary designation form through your plan administrator.

Options for designation include:

- Primary beneficiary – GRCC Foundation will receive a percentage or specific amount.
- Contingent beneficiary – GRCC Foundation will receive the balance of your plan if your primary beneficiary doesn't survive you.

LIFE INSURANCE

You can designate the GRCC Foundation as the full, partial or contingent beneficiary of your life insurance policy, while still retaining ownership. To make a gift of life insurance, contact your life insurance provider to update your beneficiary designation form.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

If you are 70 ½ years or older, you can make a difference now with an IRA Charitable Rollover. You can give up to \$100,000 annually, income tax-free, from your IRA directly to a qualified charity. If you are considering an IRA Charitable Rollover, consult with your professional advisors to ensure that your transfer qualifies.

CONTACT GRCC FOUNDATION

After creating or updating your will or trust, please contact us to inform us of your plans. We would love to recognize you. **For more information, please visit grcc.edu/PlannedGiving.**

your legacy, their future

As a GRCC Foundation supporter, you know how meaningful your gifts are to the students you help each year. Did you know, you can extend your impact for generations to come by including the GRCC Foundation in your long-term financial plans?

A planned or legacy gift is a donation that will be made at a future date, often through a formal financial or estate plan. In addition to creating a legacy that will last far into the future, planned giving offers two key advantages to donors.

1 Donors secure tax benefits for themselves and their heirs.

Large estates may owe federal taxes. But bequests of cash, real estate or stocks are deducted against the estate's value, reducing estate taxes for a donor's heirs.

2 Donors determine how their gifts are spent.

Because a planned gift is part of a legal contract, like a will, the donor can specify how or where they would like their contribution to be spent.



Working with your financial planner to plan a gift to GRCC will help ensure students receive an affordable, high-quality education now and in the future.



EXPLORING NATURE THROUGH ART



Wildlife painter Bonnie Marris remembers GRCC as a turning point in her life.

From painting horses on typing paper at age six to studying apex predators in the Alaskan wilderness, Bonnie Marris's love for animals and art has led her on a life-long journey of adventure and discovery.

Growing up, Marris didn't have to look far for inspiration. Her family home was a refuge for wild animals and at one time they had two wolves and a three-month-old coyote living with them. If Marris wasn't around animals, she was painting them. This dual passion led her to pursue a college education in zoology and art.

Marris attended Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) in 1970 and 1971, where the classes and breadth of expertise pushed her to develop her skills further.

"Every day at GRJC was fun and challenging," she said. "The professors were brilliant, demanding and encouraging. I couldn't get enough of the biology classes and Dave Holkebor and Walt Lockwood set a lifelong standard for good writing. It's still a passion of mine."

More than learning the mechanics of painting or studying animal biology, Marris' time at GRJC helped her develop a strong sense of self and prepare for becoming a female artist in the 1970s.

"I began to see that in order for a woman to stand out, she has to be bold and determined. She has to have solid convictions and faith in her own style. Up until this point, I had fought to be taken seriously. This was a turning point in my life and career and GRJC supported me every step of the way."

After GRJC, Marris studied zoology, writing and painting at Michigan State University. She began working toward her master's, focusing on the

social bonds of predators like foxes, coyotes, wolves, big cats and grizzlies.

She also began taking trips to study animals in the wild. In 1980, she lived in the Alaskan wilderness for six months.

"To get into a natural environment and see the animals on their own terms is as important as knowing the animals themselves," she said. "Alaska changed me. It gave me the biggest incentive to paint and increased my interest in predators. They exist on so many levels: their moods show in their eyes, and we can learn so much from them."

**"EVERY DAY AT
GRJC WAS FUN AND
CHALLENGING," ...
"THE PROFESSORS
WERE BRILLIANT,
DEMANDING AND
ENCOURAGING..."**

– BONNIE MARRIS

She entered her artwork in shows, where her passionate, detailed portrayals of wolves, foxes, bears and horses attracted the attention of buyers, gallery owners and wildlife art collectors. Now, Marris exhibits yearly at major museum shows and is highly praised as one of the leading wildlife painters in the country.

"I hope people who see my art can see each animal as an individual," she said. "We all know that our dogs and cats have personalities and their own ways of being. Well, this is also true of grizzlies, of horses, of wolves—all nature's creatures."



Family Ties
Oil on linen

Bonnie Marris has spent her life studying wild animals and has had some thrilling experiences with grizzly bears, coyotes and wolves. The more time she spends with wild animals, the deeper her passion for them grows.

This painting features wolves from Montana and seeks to convey the deep bonds that form between pack members. Like with all of her work, Marris hopes to create a connection between the viewer and the animal that sparks a new understanding and empathy.

Scholarfest celebrates Buzzitta's commitment to education and community

Scholarfest 2023 honored the efforts of Dr. Jim Buzzitta and his family to support GRCC and its students through scholarships.

Dr. Buzzitta graduated from Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) in 1974. Later, he returned to GRCC to serve as the Foundation board chair from 2019-2023. As co-chair of A Broader Vision capital campaign, he helped raise almost \$23 million for student scholarships and facility improvements.

Scholarfest guests were treated to a video tribute that highlighted Dr. Buzzitta's accomplishments and featured interviews with students and colleagues and reimagined scenes from the Buzzitta family kitchen. After the video, Erin Van Egmond, executive director of the GRCC Foundation, and GRCC President Dr. Charles W. Lepper invited Dr. Buzzitta to the stage to share a few words.

Dr. Buzzitta reflected on his family history and the value his grandparents and parents placed on hard work and community. He highlighted professors at GRJC who encouraged him to explore his curiosity and gave him

skills to be a lifelong learner. Dr. Buzzitta emphasized that Scholarfest is really about the college and its impact on students and the community. "How do you make the world a better place?" he asked guests. "You do it one good act at a time. When you support Grand Rapids Community College, you help make the world a better place."

This year's event added a new flair with a friendly culinary competition. Teams of alumni and student chefs worked together to prepare amazing Italian-themed dishes in honor of Dr. Buzzitta's heritage. Alumnus Chef Darrin Mayweather won the first-place prize in the "Corked Competition" and the opportunity to cater the next Foundation board meeting.

The event raised more than \$145,000 for scholarships.

"I cannot emphasize enough how crucial your support is," Dr. Lepper told Scholarfest guests. "Your generosity paves the way for a brighter tomorrow, where every student has the opportunity to soar, where potential knows no bounds and where the legacy of learning continues to flourish."



CHEF DARRIN MAYWEATHER WINS SCHOLARFEST'S "CORKED COMPETITION"

Scholarfest is all about celebrating the college's philanthropic leaders and showcasing the achievements of faculty, staff and students. This year's event gave guests a unique taste of GRCC and its talented culinary students and alumni.

Alumni chefs paired up with students in the Personal Chef Program at the Secchia Institute for Culinary Education to prepare Italian-themed entrées and desserts. Scholarfest guests voted for their favorite meal with corks they received at the beginning of the evening.

Chef Darrin Mayweather and culinary student Lauren Williams took home first place with a delicious chicken marsala and vanilla panna cotta with strawberry puree. Chef Mayweather was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His love for the culinary world began when he was 16 and working as a dietary aid in an assisted living facility. He graduated from the Secchia Institute of Culinary Education in 2014 and went on to earn his bachelor's degree in hospitality management from Ferris State University in 2020. Now, as the director of hospitality at The 1530 Events venue and co-owner and executive chef of Social Arts, LLC, Mayweather enjoys using his passion for food to create unique menus and experiences for his clients.

The GRCC Foundation Board of Directors was honored to support Chef Mayweather and his small business by having Social Arts cater the March board meeting.



Culinary alumnus brings home a taste of Australia

Chef Daniel Wilson, a Secchia Institute for Culinary Education graduate, returned to GRCC last fall for a flavorful fundraising event. Chef Daniel's engaging presentation and specially curated menu showcased the strong ties between the college and its alumni and highlighted the impact of GRCC's culinary programs on the global stage.

Chef Daniel, originally from Auckland, New Zealand, began his distinguished culinary career with an associate degree in Culinary Arts from GRCC in 1997. His journey took him from the kitchens of Grand Rapids to the vibrant food scene of Melbourne, Australia where he is the executive chef at Chris Lucas's Yakimono.

The fundraising event at GRCC's Heritage Restaurant brought together alumni and supporters of the Secchia Institute. The menu included a BBQ king prawn appetizer with macadamia hummus and finger lime and a charcoal-roasted wagyu rump cap, served with parsnip purée. This memorable meal concluded with a beautifully crafted pavlova with coconut yogurt, mango sorbet and toasted coconut.

The proceeds from this special lunch benefit the Stage Alumni Scholarship, a program that offers former Secchia Institute students opportunities to advance their education and expertise. This scholarship also enables past graduates to return to GRCC, providing current students with inspiration and mentorship from accomplished professionals like Chef Daniel.



For a behind-the-scenes look at Chef Daniel's time with students and his inspiration for the menu, you can watch a special video on the GRCC YouTube channel. Just visit youtube.com/@grcc and search for "Chef Daniel Wilson."



TWO CONSECUTIVE GIVING CLUB MEMBERS TIE FOR 2024 AWARD

The 2024 Armen Oumedian Consecutive Giving Award recipients spent a combined 72 years of giving back. Every year, we host a special event to celebrate donors who have faithfully supported the GRCC Foundation. The Armen Oumedian Consecutive Giving Award goes to the donor who has given consecutively for the greatest number of years.

This year, we were in for a pleasant surprise — two donors were tied! Dr. Joe and Sheila Hesse and Frank and Raeni Conner have each given to GRCC for 36 years.

Frank Conner worked at GRCC for 38 years and retired in April 2024. Conner taught in the Psychology Department and served as the Faculty Association president for eight years.

Dr. Joe Hesse worked at GRCC for 31 years and retired in 2015. Hesse taught in the Physical Sciences Department as well as served as a faculty representative on the Foundation Board.

The event will also recognize club members who reached milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of giving. The club is named in honor of Armen Oumedian, a GRCC alumnus and one of GRCC's biggest advocates and supporters. He and his family understood the importance of a college education, and their consistent generosity helped remove financial barriers for many of our students. Armen passed away in 2018, but his legacy lives on through this club.

We are so grateful to all of our club members. Your continued support and belief in GRCC allow us to continue to offer the very best in education, facilities and resources to our students.

WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY RAISE MONEY FOR STUDY AWAY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

GRCC's Women in Philanthropy group has expanded beyond scholarship support and is building a community around the power of giving back.

Members gather for a quarterly breakfast where attendees connect with other women and learn about opportunities to make a difference for GRCC students, faculty and staff. This year, presentations included GRCC's Study Away and Early Childhood Learning programs.

In September, Michael Schavey, GRCC's director of Experiential Learning shared how study abroad programs deepen students' knowledge and skills through authentic, guided, real-world experiences. He also covered some of the barriers students face including getting a passport for the first time and travel expenses.

In December, Director Melissa Boman highlighted how the Phyllis Fratzke Early Childhood Learning Laboratory serves the early childhood community by providing high-quality child care and training for those who want to pursue careers in early childhood education. The preschool provides care to about 72 children and more families are on the waiting list.

The group raised \$750 to support students on their journey to studying away and \$600 to provide preschool families with holiday gifts.



ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND STAFF CELEBRATE HOMECOMING

Homecoming week celebrates GRCC alumni, students and staff with engaging activities and opportunities to connect. Festivities started off with a few friendly competitions including an employee office decorating contest, a chili cook-off and a pumpkin art contest. A special retiree happy hour at City Built Brewing, a tailgate party and a formal homecoming dance rounded out the full list of events.

Cheering on the Raiders Volleyball and Soccer teams was the perfect way to end the week. The volleyball team served up a great game, defeating Montcalm Community College 3-0. The men's soccer team won 5-0 against Lakeland Community College and the women's team followed with a 2-0 win to end their season. Go Raiders!



Alumni get in the game

Around 75 GRCC alumni gathered in August to watch the West Michigan Whitecaps take on the South Bend Cubs. Alumni brought their friends and family out to the ballpark and had the opportunity to win prizes and take home GRCC swag.

The first 1,000 fans through the gate received a special bobblehead celebrating former Detroit Tigers first baseman Robert Fick. A community college alumnus himself, Fick was inducted into the Whitecaps Hall of Fame in 2009. He made his major league debut with the Tigers in 1998 and subsequently played for the Atlanta Braves, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, San Diego Padres and Washington Nationals.

GRCC President Dr. Charles W. Lepper started the game by throwing out the first pitch. Throughout the evening, fans learned about GRCC's life-changing programs, including those available to remove cost as a barrier. GRCC staff out on the concourse answered questions about scholarships and even helped with last-minute enrollment for fans who wanted to get started right away.



SHARING OUR STORIES



ANYELIN VASQUEZ-LOPEZ
Current student,
Business
Administration
Taco Boy Scholarship

"I chose GRCC because it was affordable and offered classes that fit my schedule. As a first-generation student, I had to pay for all my classes. This scholarship was a financial blessing and a big motivation during difficult times. I see it as a reminder that hard work and dedication pays off."



MARK EURICH
Current student,
Industrial
Maintenance
Technologies
GRCC Foundation
Scholarship

"I never expected to receive a scholarship, but when I did, I felt a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. This scholarship has helped me buy books and pay for parts of my courses that would otherwise put a strain on my budget. With a wife and four foster kids at home, the scholarship has been a godsend to me. I would like to thank everyone who is kind enough to think of helping others like me. Your generosity has made my dream a reality."



CHELSE WYSE
Alumna
Owner/Creative
Director of tact
Marketing Strategy

"GRCC creates this 'come as you are' experience, which makes the environment accessible and keeps one's mind open to what could be. There is no 'one way forward' when you're a student at GRCC. You can truly move through the experience however you need to and get where you want to be. My time at GRCC definitely prepared me for starting my own business and my only regret is not enrolling right after high school!"



REECE BRASWELL
Alumnus
Corewell Health
Scholarship

"This scholarship gave me the financial security to become a full-time student and the motivation to work toward my goals. I am so honored to have received this scholarship, and I hope one day I can pay that generosity forward to the next generation of young Black men on their own journeys to fulfilling careers."



CHLOE DORMAN
Current student,
Psychology
Dickie Drew
Memorial
Scholarship

"This scholarship has helped me to feel more financially secure while pursuing higher education. My time at GRCC has changed my life for the better. I'll always remember the class I took with Dr. Hendershot because it taught me that I am worthy of my aspirations."



JOE MAATMAN
Donor and Alumnus
Retired, Law
Enforcement

"I give to GRCC because I want to give back to the younger generation who want to get involved in the criminal justice system. After 41 years as a police officer and command officer, I can confidently say I used everything I learned at GRCC more than what I learned at a four-year university."



KYLE GREER
Current student,
Nursing
Milo M. Brown
Memorial Scholarship

"Losing my mother to cancer inspired me to become a nurse. Without this scholarship, I would not have been able to attend class or buy the books and supplies needed for the nursing program. The funds also helped pay for gas and parking. I would not have had the courage to pursue my dreams without the generosity and kindness of others who provided this financial assistance. It has been such a blessing!"



PHIL MEADE
Alumnus
Communications
Manager at Kent
County

"When I enrolled at GRCC, I didn't know what I wanted to do for a career. They provided a supportive environment where I could explore job possibilities and chart my path. The classes I took mirrored my interests and laid the foundation for my career in communications where I can focus on organizations making a positive impact in our community."



LINDA STEWART
GRCC Retiree
Established the
Linda Love Stewart
Scholarship

"My connection with GRCC began in 1973. It was an incredible journey of helping hundreds of students in the Health division. I saw the need for scholarships, so it was a no-brainer for me to help. Students working toward a healthcare degree are remarkable and it is a joy to be able to support their dreams."



MARCIAL BENAVIDEZ JR.
Alumnus
Welcome Plan
Communications
Specialist at Kent
County Office of
Inclusion

"As a first-generation college student who was unsure of my path, GRCC's navigation tools made it simple for me to adjust my curriculum as my interests evolved. The thriving campus environment and variety of majors at GRCC helped nurture my creativity, which has had a lasting impact on my community work."





LUNCHEON CELEBRATES COACH CLARK'S ENDURING LEGACY WITH NEW SCHOLARSHIP

Alumni, family and past athletes gathered at the Custer Alumni House to celebrate and honor Coach Dave Clark's remarkable legacy with a new scholarship. Coach Clark was a swimming coach at Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) for 28 years where his dedication, mentorship and commitment inspired generations of student athletes both in and out of the pool. He earned the National Swim Coach of the Year award twice and the State Swim Coach of the Year four times.

The initiative was coordinated by Dr. Alan Doering who is a member of the Foundation Board. GRCC President, Dr. Charles W. Lepper, gave opening remarks that applauded attendees for coming together in support of future students. "As we reflect on Coach Clark's contributions, it is fitting that we come together to establish this endowed scholarship in his honor. This scholarship will not only serve as a lasting tribute to Coach Clark's legacy but will also provide support to future GRCC students, enabling them to pursue their academic aspirations."

Guests passed the microphone around the room for two hours as they shared memorable moments and stories of how Coach Clark impacted their lives. Events like this are a testament to the strong ties shared by GRCC alumni and their passion for building a better future for our college and our community.

JOHN BOS GRANDDAUGHTER ATTENDS HONORARY ALL-STAR BASEBALL GAMES

Every year, the most talented high school senior athletes in West Michigan gather for the John Bos Baseball and Softball All-Star Games. The games honor John Bos, who coached the men's sports teams at what was then Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC), including football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis and swimming.

This year, Bos's granddaughter Ann Eggerding Bobroff cheered on the players from the grandstands. "I'm so honored that John Bos Baseball is being played!" she said. "It was wonderful to hear so many stories about my grandfather and see how his legacy continues to impact student athletes."

The games have been a fixture in the local community since 1959 and showcase some of the best players in Kent and Ottawa counties. Ticket sales support the John Bos Scholarship Fund, which is awarded to GRCC student athletes who compete for at least one of the college's teams and maintain Michigan Community College Athletic Association eligibility. Student athletes also receive academic counseling and advising, along with tutoring and peer academic coaching. Proceeds from the John Bos All-Star Games and donations to the Bos Scholarship continue to help make this possible.



ALUMNUS DOUG WABEKE REMEMBERED AS A RAIDER LEGEND

Doug Wabeke embodied what it means to be a Raider during his time as a player, coach, professor and athletic director.

Wabeke played shortstop and was a two-time All American as a student at Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC). He went on to earn his bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University and a master's degree from Miami University in Ohio. In 1987, he began his 17-year coaching career at GRCC (formerly GRJC) and served as the co-athletic director in 1997. Wabeke won over 500 games as head baseball coach at GRCC and led the Raiders to 14 conference titles, nine region titles, and four national championships, including the college's first-ever national title in 1996.

Wabeke's athletic achievements are only a small part of his legacy at GRCC. Many former players, students and colleagues remember him as a friend and mentor who gave them the skills and confidence to pursue their passions.

"It's been 23 years, but I can still feel Wabs on my heels putting the pressure on as we were running flights of stairs at the GRCC fieldhouse," said former All-American pitcher Brandon Harmsen. "One of the few coaches who would do it with you to show you what's possible instead of telling you what to do. I would have not been able to fulfill my baseball dreams without him."

"Doug was an unbelievable boss and human being," said GRCC Volleyball coach Chip Will. "He helped give me my start to college coaching. He believed in me and helped give our volleyball program the support to be successful. His laughter and personality could fill a room. I'm a better person and coach from having Doug as a friend and mentor."

Wabeke was named to the NJCAA Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2022. He and players on the 1996 and 1997 teams were honored during a GRCC baseball game at LMCU Ballpark in 2022.

New for 2023-24

- ▶ Nevaeh Downs Scholarship
- ▶ The Haik Scholarship
- ▶ Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Scholarship
- ▶ Doug "Wabs" Wabeke Baseball Scholarship

Newly endowed for 2023-24

Many donors choose to name their endowed scholarship after a person they love or to establish a permanent legacy. We are so thankful for our newly endowed scholarship funds, which will help countless students for years to come.

- ▶ Vern and Norma Boss Award
- ▶ Coach Dave Clark Scholarship
- ▶ Golden Raiders Scholarship Fund





WOMEN'S WELLNESS PRACTITIONER CREATES SPACES TO THRIVE

Becky Haderer is making it easier for women in Grand Rapids to thrive professionally and emotionally. Becky graduated from GRCC in 2007 and is the founder of The Space, a women's coworking community, and Pathways To The Sacred, where she offers wellness services.

As a mother to three sons and wife to a supportive husband with a chronic illness, Becky understands the demands of a busy and challenging life. With time, practice and the support of friends and family, Becky learned practical tools and practices to find peace and calm. Now, she is using what she learned to help other women navigate toward a more equipped, aligned and empowered life.

At first, Becky offered sessions at wellness spas around Grand Rapids. Then, in 2021, she founded The Space as a community coworking hub where creative freelancers and wellness entrepreneurs build their businesses, focus on self-care, foster authentic connections and serve clients. Members pay a monthly fee for access to a professional office space with high-speed internet, printer and office supplies, and rooms for client appointments or small group sessions. Becky offers Womb Care sessions, Reiki sessions and coaching at The Space.

"I know I'm not alone in craving a healing community and workspace," said Becky. "My passion lies in supporting people, especially girls and women, through all of life's phases. We all deserve to find our own pathways to the sacred, to feel less anxiety and stress, and to experience more peace, harmony and empowerment."

For more information about The Space, visit thespacegr.com or call (616) 888-2569. To learn about Pathways To The Sacred, visit pathwaystothedivine.com or call (616) 284-1333.

WAYS TO GIVE

The GRCC Foundation can help you plan your donation – using whichever method makes you most comfortable.

Your first stop: grcc.edu/GRCCFoundation to see the different ways you can give. Feel free to call us at (616) 234-3939, and we'll answer any questions and help you set up your donation. Or stop by in person at the Custer Alumni House, 473 E. Fulton St.



**MAIL OR
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Pay via credit or debit card; PayPal or Venmo



AUTOMATED
monthly donations
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credit card



**MATCHING
GIFTS**
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employer



**PLANNED
GIVING**
a lasting
legacy



GRCC ALUMNI OWNED BUSINESSES



Art & Textiles

American Etching LLC
Emily Luyk Illustration & Fine Art
Flashback on Leonard
Fresh Coast Signs
GarenHuis Yarn Studio
RC Caylan Atelier
The Color Forest



Mechanical & Electrical Services

Control Solutions Inc
Gas Pedal Customs
Hull Heating and Cooling
VanKempen Electric



Food & Drink

Airborne Burritos
Archival Brewing
Black Calder Brewing Company
Carolina Low Country
Casa De Los Abuelos GR
City Built Brewing Company
decadent desserts by Donna
El Caribe
Four Chefs
Holland Cakery 'n' Sweets
Ice Box Brand
Meyers Hometown Bakery
Monica's Cookies
Palermo Pizza
Patty Matters
Pressed In Time
Social Arts
Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea
The Ginger Chef
YoChef's Mobile Gourmet



Business Services

Budget Queen Tax and
Financial Services
Custer Inc
Mixed Staffing & Recruiting
tact Marketing & Strategy



Personal Services

Andrew J. Schmidt Photography
E3 Coaching Studio
GR Task Master LLC
Grand Haven Therapeutic Massage
Julie Schillim Counseling
KAZAP Accessibility Associates
Morgan Jean Photography
Music Studio of Karen A.
Betz-Griewahn
Pathways To The Sacred /
Sacred Steam GR
The Space



RAIDERS SUPPORTING RAIDERS

Craft breweries, financial planning, photography – so many GRCC alumni are fulfilling their dreams of owning a business.

We support them, and we created a way you can too. Head to grcc.edu/Alumni and you'll see a menu link to alumni-owned businesses. There, you'll find a directory highlighting the extraordinary accomplishments of GRCC alumni business owners. The page also has a convenient link to add your business to the list.

[GRCC.EDU/ALUMNI](https://grcc.edu/alumni)

STAYING CONNECTED

No matter where you are, you can stay updated with the latest news by following us on social media:



GRCC FACEBOOK –
facebook.com/grandrapidscc

GRCC FACEBOOK ATHLETICS –
facebook.com/grccathletics



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GRCC X (formerly Twitter) – @grcc
GRCC X Athletics – @GRCCAthletics



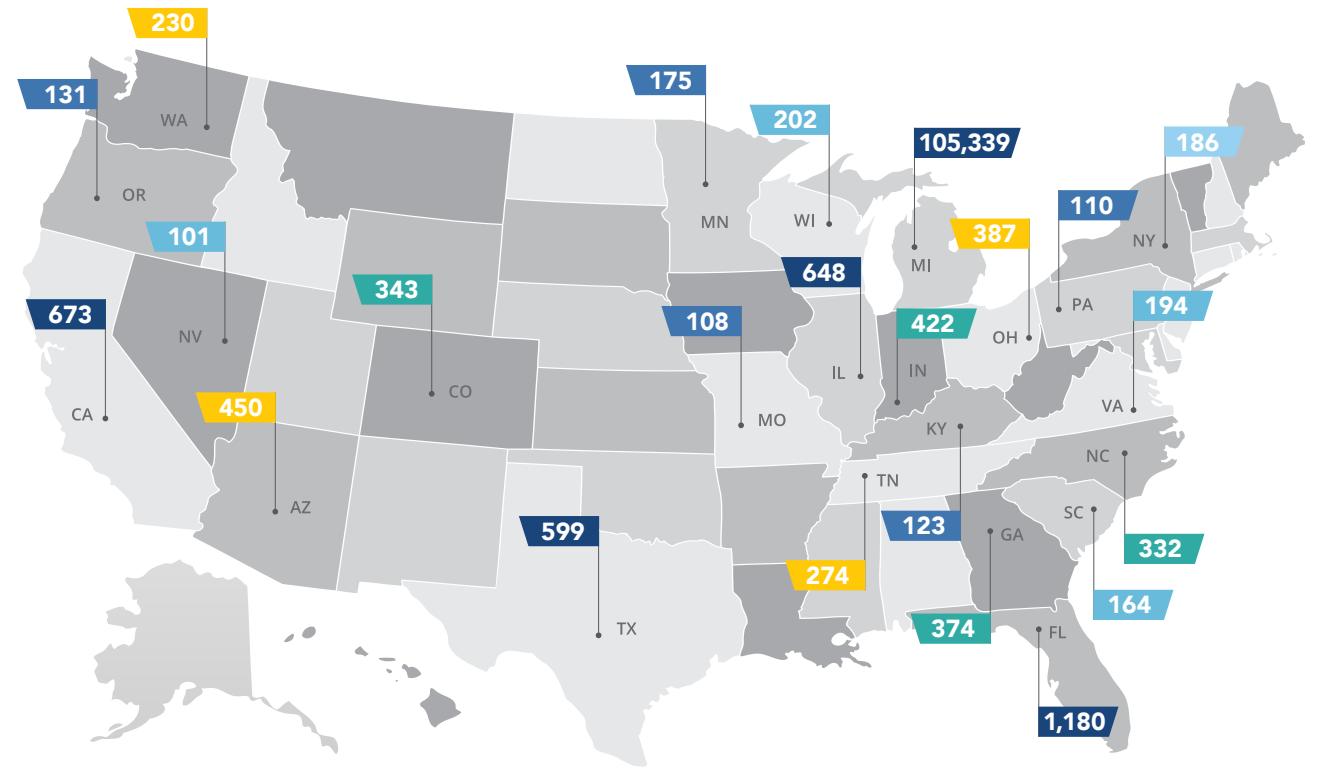
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Extend your networking reach by following our LinkedIn page – linkedin.com/School/Grand-Rapids-Community-College

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Help us ensure all our GRCC and GRJC alumni stay informed about the latest news and events! Simply visit grcc.edu/Alumni, click on “update your contact information” and tell us how you want to hear from us.



WHERE ARE GRCC ALUMNI IN THE UNITED STATES?

There are over 115,000 GRCC alumni worldwide. Check out the map to see the top states where GRCC alumni are throughout the United States. While most reside in Michigan, did you know that Florida has the second highest number of GRCC alumni?



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE

DIRECTOR OF THE GRCC FOUNDATION

Thank you for your support! It's difficult to summarize a year's worth of giving and growth into a single report, but I hope this offers a glimpse into how your generosity impacts our students and our community.

When I was writing this letter last year, I was still settling into my role as the GRCC Foundation's new leader. This year, I am honored to also serve as the vice president of College Advancement. Working here for most of my career—as a scholarship coordinator, donor relations coordinator, alumni relations director and associate director—has given me a unique vantage point of the life-changing impact a scholarship can have.

I am privileged to witness the full scope of your impact being played out every day on campus. The connections a scholarship can make between students and donors are something close to magic.

To be a part of our incredible community is to watch the impossible happen countless times. Our partners understand the challenges students face and what a scholarship means to them. Students often share with us that while they are

beyond grateful for the financial help, they're also blown away that someone they've never met cared enough to support their dreams.

Consider this your invitation to join me for the full GRCC experience by connecting (or reconnecting!) with fellow donors and alumni. Attend some of the amazing events we have lined up for 2025. Be in the front row to cheer for students as they accomplish their goals. Become part of the life-changing magic at GRCC!

I'm beyond excited to continue building relationships with our foundation partners and ensuring that life-changing education remains accessible to everyone.

With appreciation,

Erin Van Egmond

Erin Van Egmond
Vice President of College Advancement and
Executive Director of the GRCC Foundation

FOUNDATION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS (as of June 30)	2023	2024
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 4,573,552	\$ 2,227,608
Contributions receivable — net of allowance for uncollectible pledges of \$0 at June 30, 2024 and \$250 June 30, 2023	\$ 595,566	\$ 266,669
Accrued interest receivable	\$ 90,348	\$ 122,316
Investments	\$ 35,455,862	\$ 39,287,201
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 40,715,328	\$ 41,903,794

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS (as of June 30)

LIABILITIES:

Scholarships payable	\$ 550,409	\$ 454,732
Accounts payable	\$ 286,703	\$ 252,609
Grants payable	\$ -	\$ -
Funds held on behalf of others	\$ 1,445,446	\$ 1,543,283
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 2,282,558	\$ 2,250,624

NET ASSETS:

Without donor restrictions	\$ 9,272,181	\$ 10,378,034
With donor restrictions	\$ 29,160,589	\$ 29,275,136

TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 38,432,770	\$ 39,653,170
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 40,715,328	\$ 41,903,794

GRCC FOUNDATION MISSION

It is the mission of the GRCC Foundation to secure and manage financial gifts to support and promote student, employee and community learning, enabling the college to fulfill its mission and vision.

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WHY NOT GO GREEN?

You can receive future GRCC Foundation annual reports online with the same stories of our students, our events and our efforts as in the print version. If you want to “go green” and receive the electronic version in future years, please go to grcc.edu/ContactUpdate.

GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT
2023-24