

Community Engagement Report.

Be curious. | GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM



2022

Vision

To inspire passionate curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world around us.

Mission

We exist to be a living monument of artifacts, ideas, and stories told through exhibitions, events, and educational programming designed to inspire, motivate, and celebrate our human bond.

We enrich the life of our community through experiences of the wider world in a uniquely Grand Rapids context.

For 168 years, the Grand Rapids Public Museum has been a source of inspiration and a place to cultivate curiosity. From its beginnings in a house in downtown Grand Rapids to its affiliation with Grand Rapids Public Schools, the Museum, at its core, is a learning institution dedicated to accessibility and knowledge for all.



The Museum continues to forge exciting new paths of research and cultural exploration.

The past year has been one of many accomplishments for the Museum: the opening of an original new exhibit, two major scientific discoveries and the revitalization of our facilities, educational programming and accessibility features. Post pandemic, the Museum has sought to bolster its connection to the Grand Rapids community and to provide engaging experiences for all visitors.

At the core of this banner year lies the strength of our community partnerships, through which the GRPM was able to reach new heights of engagement, discovery and cultural stewardship. In partnership with local institutions, the GRPM led research documenting the successful reproduction of lake sturgeon in the Grand River—the rewarding culmination of a four-year effort.

In cooperation with scientists at the University of Michigan, our team of Museum researchers also unearthed a mastodon skeleton that, once properly preserved, will soon make the GRPM its permanent home. The discovery of the Clapp Family Mastodon, as it is now known, has garnered international attention for the expertise of the GRPM, including articles in The New York Times, USA Today, and over 2 million impressions on the Museum’s social media channels.

In 2022, we’ve hosted more students, visitors and programs than previous years, and soon, we will begin an exciting new expansion project to accommodate our growing community. This renovation will allow us to broaden our exhibits and programming, serve twice the number of students and enhance Grand River access for the entire community. We look forward to sharing more details soon.

Thanks to the sustaining support and involvement of so many, we were able to better serve our community through inclusive exhibits, programs and virtual experiences designed to inspire curiosity and celebrate discovery. On behalf of every visitor and the entire Museum team: Thank you! Your engagement truly makes a difference.

Sincerely,



Dale A. Robertson
President & CEO



Linsey Gleason
Chair, GRPM Board of Trustees



Community Engagement & Partners.

The Museum's close partnerships with local educational institutions, organizations and government agencies provide the community with significant enrichment opportunities and educational events.

Cultural Programming with Community Partners

The Museum welcomed back its cultural partners for a successful Anishinaabe Culture Day, as well as a Cultural Heritage Festival for the public. More than 1,000 students participated in Anishinaabe Culture Day, learning firsthand about regalia, dance and music, while immersing themselves in the rich history of local Indigenous cultures.

A record number of 40 local organizations shared their rich cultures with the community at the annual Cultural Heritage Festival celebration. Through visual presentations, music, art, food and more, the community learned about a variety of cultures that call West Michigan home.

Incorporating Indigenous Perspectives

In 2022, the Museum was the recipient of two grants: one from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and one from the Wege Foundation, both of which will help ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives are consistently incorporated into GRPM programming and exhibits. Specifically, these grants have allowed the GRPM to create a new full-time position for an Anishinaabe Curator, as well as a robust Indigenous internship program for local Native American college students. Initial work for the Anishinaabe Curator, Jannan Cotto, will be focused on The Mounds, a sacred Indigenous burial ground stewarded by the Museum.



Cultural Heritage Festival

“

Excellent museum! Great for all ages. We visited on a Monday, which was perfect because there wasn't a crowd of visitors. We could take our time at each exhibit.

Museum Visitor
June 2022



Cultural Heritage Festival

Giving Back

The Museum donates tickets to various Kent County nonprofits and schools on an annual basis.



\$3,264
in 2022 ticket donations

Artifacts on Loan

As a service to the community, artifacts from the Collections are loaned to museums, schools and other organizations.



82
objects on loan to nine organizations in 2022



703
artifacts used for 47 Museum School projects



161
Discovery Kit school reservations brought artifact-based learning to 6,060 students

New Donations to the Collections



962
artifacts and specimens received from 74 donors

Increasing Museum Accessibility

Connecting with communities and improving accessibility are important goals for the GRPM. This year, the Museum took great strides toward these goals by introducing a new pricing structure, designed to reduce financial barriers to access.

In the GRPM's new admissions structure, all exhibits— including special and traveling exhibits— are now offered as part of the Museum's general admission fee, increasing the value of each ticket. Rides of the newly reopened 1928 Spillman Carousel are also included in the ticket price. Shows in the Chaffee Planetarium are an additional cost, but at an affordable \$4 per person, with discounts to Museum members.

The GRPM has also joined the Museums for All program, an initiative of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), to offer reduced general admission to EBT/WIC cardholders.

The GRPM was nominated and selected as an Epic Awards Finalist for "Excellence in Business 2022" by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce for this update to its business model and service to the community.

“

Such a great experience for the grandkids. The exhibit was terrific and the planetarium was spectacular for kids being hosted by Big Bird and Elmo. Loved all the hands-on activities.

Museum Visitor
February 2022

Exploring Digital Collections

Access the GRPM's Collections anytime, anywhere and absolutely free at [GRPMCollections.org](https://www.grpm.org/collections)! With more than 250,000 artifacts and specimens, only approximately 5% are currently on display at the Museum. Dive deeper into science, history and culture with detailed information and photos of the Collections.

Discovery through Augmented Reality

Building off of a 10-year strategy to make the Museum's Collections more accessible through technology and digital integration, the GRPM has launched an exciting new experience. The Sturgeon Excursion game—an augmented reality experience that allows visitors to interact with Museum content on their personal devices—is free to play for all students and guests at the Museum. Features have been developed that allow visitors to engage in a more customized way by creating a login, curating personal collections and contributing stories through their own digital exhibits. A gallery of projects and Collections made in partnership with schools and universities is continually growing, showcasing ways the Digital Collections can enrich classroom instruction. Since the launch of the Sturgeon Excursion game, the GRPM has begun prototyping other digital experiences to integrate the Museum's Collections and content. One prototype, River of Time, is still in the development stage, and pairs location with historic information and artifacts from the Museum. These projects were funded by the Wege Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

John Ball Zoo Collaboration

This year, the GRPM continued its partnership with the John Ball Zoo to offer members increased access to each other's locations. The Zoo and Museum have also collaborated on multiple educational programs and research projects, including co-promotion of the GRPM's *Fashion and Nature* exhibit and the JBZ's *Washed Ashore* exhibit.



Digital discovery

Reduced Admissions for Kent County

In gratitude for our community's support through a voter-approved millage, the GRPM offers FREE parking and reduced admission rates for all Kent County residents! \$10 general admission tickets for adults, \$8 admission for seniors, and FREE admission to children 17 and under, as well as all Grand Rapids Community College students, faculty and staff.

Learn more at [grpm.org/Admission](https://www.grpm.org/Admission).



Museum visitors



Fashion + Nature exhibit

Traveling & Special Exhibits 2022

POPnology

Bats: Masters of the Night

Windows GR

Pterosaurs: Flight in the Age of Dinosaurs

Fashion + Nature

A Celebration of Souls: Day of the Dead in Southern Mexico

The Power of Poison

New and Enhanced Exhibits and Programs.

Through the generosity of donors and support from our community, the Museum was able to explore new worlds, spark curiosity and bring exhibits to life with our 2022 programming. Here are some highlights:

Fashion + Nature

The GRPM original exhibit, *Fashion + Nature*, examines the close-knit relationship between the natural world and the fashion industry, inspiring and educating visitors to become better consumers.

Designed and built by the GRPM staff with input from community partners, this exhibit showcases a wide variety of scientific specimens and fascinating garments from the Museum's Collections. In the exhibit, visitors journey through discovery, exploitation and sustainability rooms—each with interactive modules that raise awareness on the harmful impact of the fashion industry.

The beauty and diversity of the natural world offers materials, colors, patterns, shapes and rich visual and textural inspiration. Visitors will examine fashion trends throughout history (how mussel shells were used in the button industry, how beaver pelts were made into hats, how iridescent beetles were incorporated into garment embellishments) as well as current, sustainable fashion trends created by local designers.

The GRPM was nominated as an Epic Awards Finalist for "Creative Business of the Year 2022" by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce for its creativity on this exhibition.

Fashion + Nature is sponsored by: The David & Carol Van Andel Family Foundation, The Steve and Amy Van Andel Foundation, BravoEcho Inc., the DTE Energy Foundation, West Michigan Credit Union, WOOD TV8, Hot 105.3 FM, Media Place Partners and many others.



Fashion + Nature exhibit





A Celebration of Souls exhibit

Roger That!

The Museum partners annually with Grand Valley State University for *Roger That!*, a multi-day event celebrating space exploration and the life of NASA astronaut and Grand Rapids native Roger B. Chaffee. The program includes an academic conference at GVSU, programs for school students with both organizations and a public celebration at the Museum. In 2022, *Roger That!* hosted NASA Astronaut Col. Eileen Collins.



Roger That!

A Celebration of Souls: Day of the Dead in Southern Mexico

In hosting the *A Celebration of Souls* exhibit from the Field Museum in Chicago, the GRPM worked with community partners to add *ofrendas* – traditional Mexican altars – to the exhibition display.

Partners included: professor and artist Margaret Vega, who honored her father, Francisco Vega (1922-2021); the Latino Community Coalition's Nuestra HERencia project; and local mural artist Arturo Morales Romero, in a collaborative effort with the Mexican Heritage Association of West Michigan.

A Celebration of Souls was sponsored by: The David & Carol Van Andel Family Foundation, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., Meijer and the Mexican Heritage Association of West Michigan. Media sponsorship from El Vocero and Mix 104.9.

Interactivity in the Chaffee Planetarium

Solar System Discovery is a live, interactive planetarium show produced by the Chaffee Planetarium, which uses simple remote-control clickers to allow students to visit planets, answer questions and interact with the show. Developed specifically for school groups, it features a deep-dive into the science behind gravity and real-life space travel linked to NASA missions. Students can choose to dive through Saturn's rings with Cassini, zip by Pluto with New Horizons or drill into an ancient crater with the Mars Science Laboratory. *Solar System Discovery* is presented by a planetarium expert, and the educational content is tailored to the grade level of the audience.

Chair Camp

Chair Camp returned to the GRPM in 2022 through a partnership with Carla Hartman, Education Director of the Eames Office, owner of the Chairs Lady design company and granddaughter of Charles and Ray Eames. *Chair Camp* gives a nod to the important history of Grand Rapids as Furniture City, and allows participants to design and create miniature

chairs and seating from recycled materials. *Chair Camp* programming welcomed students, families and adults to the Museum to create their own miniature masterpieces. *Chair Camp* was supported by Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

The 1928 Spillman Carousel Reopens

The iconic Spillman Carousel is housed above the Grand River in the GRPM's own Cook Carousel Pavillon. Since its installation at the Van Andel Museum Center in 1994, it has been ridden by hundreds of thousands of Museum visitors—including families, students, wedding guests and more.

The nearly 100-year-old artifact has been undergoing a major renovation which began in 2017, requiring the Carousel to be dismantled and rebuilt. In May, this iconic community treasure reopened for visitors of all ages to once again enjoy.

Renovations to the 1928 Spillman Carousel include mechanical and electrical upgrades, installation of 1,200 LED lightbulbs, band organ repairs and initial steps toward restoring two chariots and 53 horses and menagerie animals. The Carousel is now equipped with bilingual signage and instructional recordings, as well as additional communication features for those who are blind or with low vision, and deaf or hard of hearing..

Ongoing and future updates include the creation of a wheelchair accessible chariot and ramp. The full renovation and restoration of the Carousel menagerie animals will take additional time to complete, and the Museum will continue to swap out animals to keep the Carousel running during this work.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Peter C. and Emajean Cook Foundation. Through their patronage, and many others, visitors are creating memories that last for lifetimes.

To follow along with the updates to the 1928 Spillman Carousel, please visit: grpm.org/Carousel.



1928 Spillman Carousel

“

This is definitely a stop if you are anywhere in the area. We drove over from our vacation in Holland and so glad we did. The whole family enjoyed it and the carousel was so pretty. Especially loved the old town area, retro games and fashion exhibit.

Museum Visitor
July 2022



Museum visitors



Grand River research team



Dr. Stephanie Ogren

Community Research Projects.

With a team of scientists, experts and community partners, the Grand Rapids Public Museum leads research on a variety of topics. Findings are shared through academic publications and conferences, and with the public on the Museum's website and blog. The Museum's research team is led by the GRPM's scientists on staff, Dr. Stephanie Ogren, VP of Science and Education, and Dr. Cory Redman, Science Curator. [Learn more at grpm.org/research](https://www.grpm.org/research)

Grand River Discovery

For the first time, the GRPM's team of scientists, along with partners Encompass Socio-Ecological Consulting and John Ball Zoo, have documented natural reproduction of lake sturgeon in the Grand River. The result of a four-year effort, the 6-inch sturgeon that was captured during the team's Lake Sturgeon Assessment work indicates successful recruitment and reintegration into the Grand River population. This year, a graduate student from Grand Valley State University, along with support from the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will allow for additional habitat mapping to be included in future research.



Clapp Family Mastodon excavation



Dr. Cory Redman

The Clapp Family Mastodon

In mid-August, GRPM Science Curator Dr. Cory Redman was contacted about a possible fossil discovery in Kent City, Michigan. The discovery was that of a juvenile mastodon, uncovered during a culvert repair project by the Kent County Drain Commission. The Clapp Family, on whose property the bones were found, allowed the excavation to take place before generously donating the findings to the GRPM. The bones are currently going through a drying process, and once completed, will be radiocarbon dated and put on display for the GRPM community to enjoy in perpetuity. Explore the Clapp Family Mastodon in the GRPM's online Collections at grpmcollections.org.

“ The owners [...] agreed to donate the bones to the Grand Rapids Public Museum, which is now conducting an extensive cleaning and drying process to prepare the bones for display.

The New York Times

“ It's not that often that you find a skeleton this complete. [...] One of the things that makes this find really unique besides being local is all the bones appear to come from a single juvenile mastodon.

 USA TODAY



Educational Impact.

As a vital educational resource, the Museum offers learners opportunities to stimulate their curiosity through hands-on activities, access to 250,000+ artifacts, free distance learning content and guided explorations— both in person and virtually.

Museum School: Summer Workshop

The Museum collaborated with founding partners of the Grand Rapids Public Museum School to host a three-day workshop for middle and high school educators in August 2022. The workshop was designed to emphasize how the Museum School model blends Museum Mindset, Place-Based Education and Design Thinking in a way that produces deep learning. Facilitators shared advice and experiences to help schools unlock the power of community partnerships. Twenty-seven educators participated, representing 17 schools across six public school districts and four private schools.

“

I think it is important for students to realize that learning takes place outside of the classroom and they can be in charge of what they learn. Immerse is an experience like nothing I can provide in the classroom.

The students are exposed to artifacts, materials and information in a way that reading about it or researching online cannot provide.

Alejandro Ramos, 5th grade teacher
Roguewood Spanish Immersion



Schools

965

school groups visited the Museum through in-person or virtual field trips (704 Kent County)



Students

21,403

Kent County students visited the Museum through field trips (in-person and virtual)

13,405

students participated in guided educational programs (in-person and virtual) led by Museum educators; 92% of those students attend Kent County schools



Access to Museum Collections

50

on-site or virtual tours of the Archives

776

students accessed the Collections, including Museum School Students

61,000+

people have accessed the Collections online



After-school programming

The 2021/2022 Immerse Cohort:



1,355
students



52
classes, grades 2-7



23
schools | 6 public school districts
7 private schools
2 charter schools



Immerse educational program

2021/2022 Immerse Program

One of the flagship educational programs of the GRPM, *Immerse* is a weeklong learning experience for schools from the West Michigan region. Learning is crafted and led by the visiting teachers, who leverage exhibition spaces, Museum artifacts and various enrichment programs. Teachers are trained and supported through a rigorous orientation program and individualized planning. *Immerse* provides students with local, hands-on examples of history, science and culture. These experiences connect them deeply to their curriculum and community.

Camp Curious

Over 825 campers participated in the *Camp Curious* summer camps in 2022. The Museum was able to offer engaging and educational camp experiences that included behind-the-scenes tours, experiments and artifact investigations.

New in 2022: a partnership with the Occupational Therapy Program at GVSU to engage neurodiverse teens and young adults in a fun, educational camp program focused on artifacts and stories.

Additional community partnerships for *Camp Curious*:

- *Summer Science Leadership Program* in partnership with Grand Rapids White Water, which engaged students in a hands-on interaction with the *River Restoration Project*, teaching them the principles of sustainability and inspiring them to become future leaders willing to tackle complex projects that offer widespread benefit.
- *River Rescue! Exploring the Grand River*, in partnership with VAEI, where participants learned about the history of the Grand River and the plants and animals that make it their home.
- Over *Snowflake Break* in December, correlating to the school district holiday break, the GRPM hosted day camps for students to continue learning.

After-School & Weekend Programming

Saturday Investigations classes for children and families immerse participants in full sensory learning through hands-on activities with artifacts and specimens, exploration of exhibits and the Grand River corridor and behind-the-scenes access. The GRPM hosted *Saturday Investigations* in spring and fall of 2022, and looks forward to more programming in 2023.

The DTE Energy Foundation has continued to support After School STEAM at the Museum, which focuses on inquiry-based learning and exploration of a wide range of STEAM topics with a special focus on career exploration and reflection. The program combines career-related exploration with diverse role models working in science professions and hands-on laboratories that emphasize design and innovation. These young learners investigate concepts and complete experiments connected to their middle school science and math standards. This learning in a fun, after-school environment complements the learning that happens during the school day. The GRPM partnered with Godfrey-Lee Public Schools to host middle school students in this programming in spring and fall 2022, and will continue with Grand Rapids Public Schools in spring 2023.

“

Immerse is, by far, my students' favorite week of the entire school year. The students were able to extend learning from the classroom on very interesting fourth grade topics such as: Animal Adaptations, Sun, Moon & Earth, Native Americans and Michigan History. When students are able to experience learning hands-on, it seems to really set in and it's memorable.

Kristy Crater, fourth grade teacher
Godfrey Elementary

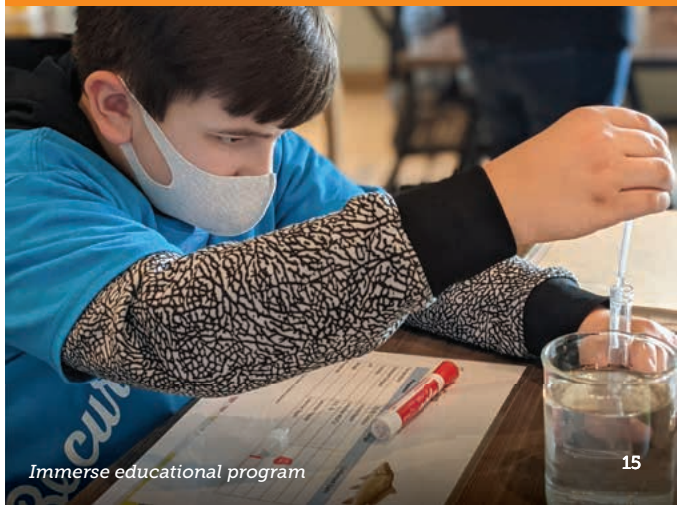


Saturday Investigations classes

“

The whole experience was fantastic! The teacher was knowledgeable. We enjoyed connecting the learning experience with an exhibit in the museum. The favorite parts of the experience were being able to handle artifacts and to create one of our own to take home!

Saturday Investigations participant



Immerse educational program



GRPM volunteers and visitors

2022 Engagement.

The GRPM engaged with visitors both in-person and virtually this year, through digitally accessible programs, the GRPM's online Collections and more.

Volunteer Impact

GRPM volunteers dedicated 8,598 hours in 2022. The GRPM volunteer program is filled with enthusiastic individuals who thrive on sharing their knowledge and engaging with visitors. Volunteers interact with guests through artifact discovery carts, lathe-working demonstrations and by bringing the *Streets of Old Grand Rapids* to life! Volunteers also assist in every summer camp and education program the Museum offers.

“

Absolutely fantastic museum. So much to see and do. Lots of interactive features and kid friendly items as well. The gift shop is cute and perfect for people who love nature themed items. 10/10 would come again!

Museum Visitor
May 2022

2022 Attendance

Total visitors:
176,612

Museum member households:
5,683*

Kent County visitation:
65,420

School group attendance:
29,832

Website visitation:
334,516

GRPM Collections visitation:
64,146

Virtual program attendance:
12,345

Museums for All:
4,160

Planetarium attendance:
54,104



Museum visitors

Fiscal year: July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

* Museum Member households at the end of FY22



The Power of Poison exhibit



Facilities Updates.

Thanks to the generous support of our community along with private donations and grants, the Museum was able to make investments that provide better experiences for visitors and improve the efficiency and sustainability of our operations

Van Andel Museum Center

- Replaced nine building humidifiers and added a reverse osmosis filtration unit to improve climate control and energy efficiency
- Upgraded four lamppost fixtures for greater outdoor illumination and nighttime security
- Installed a new parking ramp and office doors for better privacy and security
- Reinforced and repainted the Model-T kids car in front of *A for Autos* exhibit
- Replaced holiday snow decorations in the *Streets of Old Grand Rapids* exhibit with more sustainable decor
- Dismantled and rebuilt the woodworking lathe
- Reopened and continued refurbishment work on the 1928 Spillman Carousel

Parking Ramp

- Completed Parking Ramp Asset Management, including concrete and masonry repairs, installation of traffic coatings and sealants, drain pipe and electrical repairs and upgraded fiber connections for ticketing kiosks

The Mounds

- Performed regular inspections and cleanup excursions in partnership with local Indigenous leaders

Voigt House

- Performed continuous routine maintenance of the facility
- Repaired cellar doors
- Participated in the Heritage Hill garden tour

Calkins Law Office

- Repaired and repainted stairs and repaired a broken window
- Participated in the annual Heritage Hill historic home tour



Investing in Kent County

By shopping local whenever we can, we support our Kent County vendors by purchasing various goods and services. These range from insurance and administrative needs to the procurement of local designers, artists and other craftspersons. In 2022, the Museum had over \$6 million of expenses, more than 50% of which was reinvested into our community through local organizations.

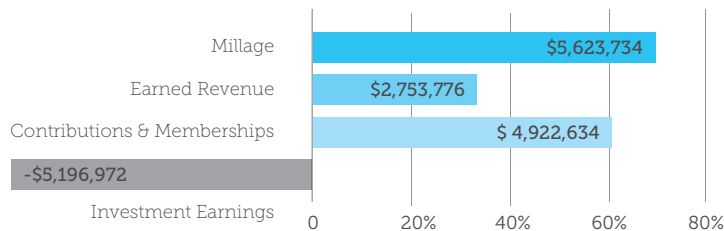


2022 Museum Budget.

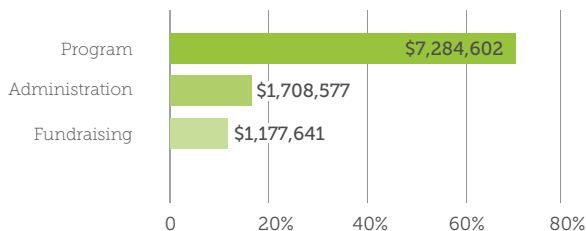
The Museum is grateful to the voters of Kent County for the millage that covers core operational costs, including caring for 250,000+ community artifacts, allowing for facility improvements and previously deferred maintenance and enhancing educational programs and exhibits.

Budget Breakdown

Revenue
\$8,103,172



Expenses
\$8,453,566



Total Net Assets
\$57.1 million

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Thank you to these individuals and corporations who made contributions to the Museum in 2022.

Fiscal year: July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

\$100,000+

Anonymous
City of Grand Rapids
Peter C. & Emajean Cook Foundation
David L. DeBruyn
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc
DTE Energy Foundation
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Linsley Gleason
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\$50,000+

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Michigan Humanities Council
The Currie Foundation
Townsquare Media
Williams Distributing
13 ON YOUR SIDE

\$5,000+

Anonymous (2)
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Corewell Health
Cumulus Broadcasting
Thomas & Debra Dilley
Eastern Floral
Eenhorn
Marlin Feyen & Ruth Posthumus
Eric & Kelly Fischer
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TowerPinkster
University of Michigan Health West
Van Andel Institute
Allen & Nancy Vander Laan
West Michigan Credit Union
Kyle Williams & Vanessa Bradley
WOOD TV8

\$2,500+

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The Tent Chik
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Wise Men Distillery
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\$1,000+

120 C Elizabeth LLC
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Gary Stark & Kathleen Underwood
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The Dettler Family Foundation
Tontin Lumber Company
Universal Forest Products Foundation
Lewis & Norma VanKuiken
John & Janet Vigna
William & Pat Waanders
Julie & Joel Westra
Kay Zuris
Margie Zylstra

Collection Donors FY22

Scan for a complete list.



If there are omissions or inaccuracies, please let us know by emailing us at info@grpm.org.

How to Donate

Online at grpm.org/donate or
by calling 616.929.1705



Scan to donate

Accreditation

The GRPM was the first public museum in the United States to be accredited
by the American Alliance of Museums. www.aam-us.org

Contact Info & Hours

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
616.929.1700 | info@grpm.org



 **YouTube** /GRMuseum



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