



County Currents

FALL 2025

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Y.O.U.T.H. Fill-the-Freezer

On Wednesday, July 23, the Hillsdale County Community Foundation Youth Advisory Committee, Y.O.U.T.H. (Youth Opportunities Unlimited Throughout Hillsdale), hosted its annual “Fill the Freezer” event to help combat food insecurity. The event aims to support local food pantries by providing \$15,000 in donations.

A fan favorite among our Y.O.U.T.H. members, this annual food drive offers them a chance to make a tangible difference in the lives of people right here in Hillsdale County. This year, we were proud to sponsor five food pantries and one shelter: Current Church Food Pantry, King's Kupboard Food Pantry, Salvation Army, St. Anthony Catholic Church Family Center, Waldron First Church of Christ Food Pantry, and Domestic Harmony.

Each organization received a wide variety of items, including canned foods, grocery staples, meat, paper goods, hygiene products, and cleaning supplies.

Our goal during this event is to provide these pantries and the shelter with items they may not always receive or have difficulty obtaining, especially meat and other nutritious foods, which are often in short supply. At “Fill the Freezer,” we make it a priority to ensure each organization receives its own supply of meat and specific items they request based on the needs of the people they serve.

Great Give

Hillsdale County Community Foundation is happy to announce our annual Great Give event will take place on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the HUB Activity Center, 1300 South Hillsdale Road, Hillsdale, MI 49242.

This season of giving offers three convenient ways for you to support your community:

1. Early Giving

Drop off your donations at the Foundation office, 2 South Howell Street, Hillsdale, starting Monday, November 10 through Monday, December 1. Office hours: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

2. Give Online

Make a secure donation anytime through our website: www.abouthccf.org

3. Day of Event

Join us in person on Tuesday, December 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the HUB Activity Center. Just drive through and drop off your gift.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all past donors and look forward to coming together again this year to make a difference in Hillsdale County with 18 agencies!

- | | |
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| • Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness Hillsdale County (CAPA) | • Hillsdale Rotary Club |
| • Domestic Harmony | • Hospice of Hillsdale County |
| • Friends of the Dawn Theater | • Kimball Camp Outdoor Center |
| • Greater Hillsdale Humane Society | • Love, INC of Hillsdale County |
| • Helping Hands Pregnancy Resource Center | • Share the Warmth |
| • Hillsdale CASA, Inc. | • The Salvation Army |
| • Hillsdale Community Theatre - The Sauk | • Current Church Food Pantry |
| • Hillsdale County Great Start Collaborative | • First Church of Christ Waldron Food Pantry |
| • Hillsdale County Senior Services Center | • King's Kupboard (<i>Trinity Lutheran Church</i>) |

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Introducing Eve Goodlife



The Hillsdale County Community Foundation is excited to welcome Eve Goodlife as our newest Board of Trustees member!

Eve, a Homeschool senior, has been part of our Youth Advisory Council (Y.O.U.T.H) for the past three years. She has served as secretary, and this year she is leading the group as president. Through Y.O.U.T.H, Eve has enjoyed making connections with other members, learning more about philanthropy, and working side-by-side with HCCF to make a real difference for young people in our community.

When she is not busy with school and YAC, Eve is dreaming big about the future! After graduation she plans to study marine biology, pursue modeling opportunities, and maybe even dive into a pottery apprenticeship.

We are so proud of all that Eve has accomplished already and thrilled to see the energy, creativity, and leadership she'll bring to the Board. Welcome, Eve, we are lucky to have you!

Year-End Giving

As the year comes to a close, consider how you can make a difference in your community. You can provide lasting support to the people and projects in Hillsdale County through a gift to the Hillsdale County Community Foundation. A gift to the Foundation will ensure we are able to meet the ever changing needs of our residents both today and in the future.

Here at the Foundation we offer long term benefits of endowment funding and the ability to establish a legacy fund in the name of your family or loved one. Your donation can be of any size, and is a gift that keeps on giving back to Hillsdale County forever.

For more information on how giving to the Hillsdale County Community Foundation can make sense for you and your family, contact us at (517) 439-5101 or visit www.abouthccf.org.

April 2025 - September 2025 Unrestricted Grants—\$71,458.00

- **Hillsdale County Parks Commission**—\$6,500 for Save the Ponds at Lewis Emery Park
- **Friends of the Dawn Theater**—\$2,680 for the Nutcracker at the Dawn Theater
- **City of Reading Tax Increment Finance Authority**—\$7,500 for Art on Main “Reading Art Alley Project”
- **Hillsdale Township Firefighters Association**—\$12,000 for July 3rd Fireworks/Great All-American Celebration
- **St. Anthony Catholic Church**—\$12,000 for Family Center Food Pantry
- **Hillsdale County Senior Services Center**—\$5,000 for Fresh Produce Initiative
- **Hillsdale College GOAL Program**—\$25,778 for a variety of community based programs.

April 2025 - September 2025 Y.O.U.T.H. Grant Awards—\$39,836.00

- **Camden-Frontier Schools, Northern Adventure Bound**—\$2,000 for a Northern Michigan field trip
- **Hillsdale Area Career Center**—\$500 for student hiring event
- **Waldron Area Schools**—\$4,957 for new stage curtains for school concerts and plays
- **Hillsdale High School**—\$10,000 for new equipment and robotics lab renovation
- **Hillsdale High School**—\$500 for new equipment for the Esports team
- **Hospice of Hillsdale County**—\$2,500 for their annual Camp Courage event
- **MDHHS**—\$2,700 in scholarships for foster children attending summer camps
- **Montgomery Firefighters**—\$1,679 for back to school backpacks
- **Hillsdale County Food Pantries**—\$15,000 for local food pantries and one shelter

Edward L. Kunesh Fund Impact

Thanks to the Edward L. Kunesh Youth Agricultural Education Fund, we were able to support students from Camden-Frontier, Jonesville, and Waldron Area Schools in attending the FFA State Convention. This grant opportunity allowed 53 students to participate and compete in a variety of events. Each school performed exceptionally well, with several students placing at the state level and some advancing to the FFA National Convention.

Additionally, through the National Convention Grant, 13 students will be attending the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. During this three-day event, students will engage in networking, competition, and learning opportunities alongside FFA teams from across the country. This experience offers a unique chance for students to expand their knowledge and develop valuable skills in agriculture and leadership.

The Foundation is also pleased to offer the Edward L. Kunesh Young Farmer Support Grant, which opens on October 1, 2025, and closes on November 15, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. This grant is designed to support young farmers by providing funding for equipment, livestock, infrastructure, or crops. Available to young farmers aged 18-36.

To apply, visit <https://goapply2.akoyago.com/hillsdale/> to create your individual account. Once logged in, search under “Opportunities” for the Edward L. Kunesh Young Farmer Application.



Great All-American Celebration

In 2007, the Great American Celebration was on the verge of collapsing and leaving Hillsdale County. To keep the tradition alive, local businesses and committed individuals came together to contribute the necessary funding for maintaining this event.

This cherished event brings the community together each year to celebrate with family-friendly activities like live music, magic shows, face painting, and a spectacular fireworks display.

For the past 18 years, the Foundation has proudly provided **\$173,500** and remains honored to play a role in this annual celebration.

A Gift From Your IRA

Donating from your IRA is a smart and efficient way to give back to your community while potentially reducing your tax burden. Here's what you can achieve with a charitable gift from your IRA:

- Support the causes you care about most
- Build a lasting charitable legacy
- Take control of how your retirement assets are used

Taking a regular distribution from your IRA may increase your taxable income. However, making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows you to donate directly to a qualified nonprofit, like the Hillsdale County Community Foundation, without incurring taxes on the amount gifted.

IRA Charitable Giving Benefits:

- Starting at age 70 ½, you can make tax-free gifts up to \$108,000 per year directly from your IRA
- At age 73 or older, your charitable gift can count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

Getting started is simple, just contact your IRA administrator to request a qualified charitable distribution.

To learn more, visit us at 2 South Howell Street, Hillsdale, call us at (517) 439-5101, or email info@abouthccf.org.

College & Career Fair

Hillsdale County Community Foundation is pleased to once again host the annual College and Career Fair on **Monday, October 20, 2025, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.** at the Searle Center on the campus of Hillsdale College, located at 315 N West Street in Hillsdale.

This free event is open to all juniors, seniors and their families from Hillsdale, Branch, Calhoun, Jackson, and Lenawee Counties, as well as students planning to transfer after attending Jackson College. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from colleges, universities, trade schools, military branches, and local employers to explore a wide range of post-secondary and career options.



**Hillsdale County
Community Foundation**

For good. For ever.

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MEET THE STAFF

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We invite you to share your thoughts about the Foundation with any of our knowledgeable and helpful staff. Please feel free to contact any of us at any time!

Love Your Community Grant Awards—\$9,331.00

Hillsdale County Community Foundation is proud to announce the recipients of this year's Love Your Community awards. These grants support projects that strengthen connections and enhance quality of life throughout Hillsdale County.

- **Hillsdale County Firefighter Association**—\$2,000 for the creation of a First Aid/First Responder Shed at the Fairgrounds, serving the entire county and bringing local departments together for events.
- **Hillsdale County Senior Services Center**—\$1,331 to purchase an ADA-compliant picnic table as part of the Community Connection project.
- **Kidz2Kidz**—\$2,000 in support of their ongoing work in the Montgomery/Camden area, assisting families in need and promoting back-to-school events.
- **Kimball Camp Outdoor Center**—\$2,000 for their Beyond Boundaries: Strengthening Communities through Team Building project, specifically for upgrades to the low ropes course and portable team-building kits.
- **Village of North Adams**—\$2,000 for their Beautify the Ball Field project, which includes installing a new swing set.

The Foundation extends its appreciation to these organizations for their dedication to making Hillsdale County a stronger, more connected community.

Connect with us!

 **Hillsdale County Community Foundation**
 **HillsdaleCoCommunityFoundation**