



County Currents

SPRING 2026

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PEACE OF MIND EVENT

The Hillsdale County Community Foundation and the Hillsdale County Senior Services Center will host **Peace of Mind: Planning for Life’s Next Chapter**, a free community information event designed to help seniors and their families better understand important decisions that come with planning for the future.

The event will take place on **Monday, April 20, 2026**, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Hillsdale County Senior Services Center, located at 320 W. Bacon Street in Hillsdale.

This welcoming, no-pressure event will offer clear and compassionate guidance on topics such as wills and estate planning, advance directives and healthcare decision-making, funeral and memorial planning, transfer of wealth opportunities, and options for in-home and long-term care. Information on grief and bereavement support resources will also be available.

The event is open to adults ages 60 and older, family members, caregivers, and anyone seeking peace of mind through thoughtful planning. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about available resources, ask questions, and gather helpful information for planning ahead.

The event is FREE and open to the public. RSVP is preferred by calling 517-437-2422, though walk-ins are welcome. Light refreshments will be provided, and the venue offers accessible facilities and ample parking.

NEW FUNDS OF THE FOUNDATION

- **Adeline Godfrey-Diley Memorial Fund** – a scholarship fund that provides educational support to a graduating senior attending Camden-Frontier Schools.
- **Hillsdale Rotary Uganda Project Fund** - a field of interest fund that provides financial support to the school in Buluba Uganda which the Hillsdale Rotary supports.
- **Carl Lewis Scholarship Fund** – a scholarship fund that provides educational support to graduating seniors attending Reading Community Schools.
- **Hicks Family “Joey’s Gift” Fund** – a field of interest fund that provides financial support for special education services and family needs in Hillsdale County. Funds may be used to support the following areas: the purchase of equipment that supports individual/student engagement within their classroom, school or home; purchase of sensory tools; or provide family support for families facing financial hardships that affect participation.
- **Montgomery Morse Blessings Fund** – a designated fund in which the income will be used to provide financial support to eighteen charities and student scholarships.

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GRANT AWARDS OCT 2025-MARCH 2026

Fall 2025 Unrestricted Grant Awards - \$52,200.00

- Hillsdale County Intermediate School District to support Great Start Collaborative programming - \$12,500.00
- Greater Hillsdale Humane Society to support Low Cost Spay and Neuter program - \$10,000.00
- Mitchell Research Center for Updating Research Technology Tools - \$10,000.00
- Hillsdale Free Methodist Church for the Celebrate Recovery Program - \$3,000.00
- Hillsdale Assembly of God for the Celebrate Recovery Program - \$6,700.00
- Large Animal Sale Committee for support of the 4H/FFA Livestock New Pen Project - \$10,000.00

Field of Interest Funds Grant Awards - \$26,885.00

Local libraries received support from the Benge Library Fund and the Louis Hawkes Library Fund for their Summer Reading Programs:

- Jonesville District Library - \$1,090.00
- Litchfield District Library - \$1,315.00
- Camden Township Library - \$665.00
- Hillsdale Community Library - \$1,000.00
- Reading Community Library - \$2,000.00
- North Adams Community Memorial Library - \$2,000.00
- Waldron District Library - \$1,500.00

Two organizations received support from the Healthy Senior/Healthy Youth Endowment Fund:

- Hillsdale County Senior Services Center for Bingocize - \$2,700.00
- Comet Cruisers of Jonesville for their Comet Cruisers Program - \$500.00

Four organizations were awarded support for programs that support volunteer activities through the George W. Romney Endowment Fund:

- Hillsdale County Agricultural Society for annual volunteer appreciation dinner - \$4,000.00
- Domestic Harmony for volunteer appreciation - \$900.00
- Hillsdale County Senior Services Center for Project SERRRV -A Spirited Effort to Recruit, Retain & Recognize Volunteers - \$1,800.00
- Helping Hands for Volunteer Banquet and Incentive - \$2,500.00

Two area schools received support to attend the FFA State Convention from the Edward L. Kunesh Youth Agricultural Education Fund:

- Jonesville Community Schools - \$4,460.00
- Camden - Frontier Schools - \$455.00



INTRODUCING JOE MCAVOY

Joe McAvoy grew up in Hillsdale and attended Hillsdale High School. Upon graduation he attended North Central College in Naperville, Illinois where he earned a degree in Finance. While at North Central he also ran Cross Country and Track and was a part of eight National Championship teams under the guidance of NCAA Hall of Fame Coach Al Carius. After college, Joe started his professional career with Edward Jones and moved to St. Louis, Missouri to work at their corporate headquarters. Joe obtained and held the FINRA Series 7 & 66 brokerage licenses as well as the FINRA Series 24 Principal license. In his seven years with the firm Joe worked in a variety of roles but most specifically on the Advisory ETF trading team – handling trading, trade reporting, and compliance within actively managed client portfolios. At the end of 2022, Joe returned to Hillsdale to live and work. In partnership with his father, he owns and operates Watkins Oil Company. Joe currently also serves on the board of the Michigan Petroleum Association.

HCCF Y.O.U.T.H. Focuses on Mental Health, Safety, and Community

Under the leadership of President Eve Goodlife, the Hillsdale County Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has made youth mental health and safety a top priority this year. The council is made up of two student representatives from the county high schools, along with two homeschool students, all working together to address issues affecting local youth.

The YAC began its efforts in September by promoting Suicide Awareness, encouraging students and families to seek help, build connections, and foster hope. In October, members focused on Digital Safety, raising awareness about online risks and promoting responsible technology use.

During November and December, the council highlighted healthy coping strategies and assembled 500 wellness kits for students across the county. The kits are being distributed through school counselors to provide encouragement and tools for managing stress and emotions.

In January, the YAC launched a "New Year – New You" campaign promoting healthy habits and positive choices. In February, members partnered with Domestic Harmony to raise awareness for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, providing purple socks for varsity basketball players across the county to wear during games as a visible show of support and a way to spark conversation about healthy relationships.

The council also promotes literacy and community engagement. In March, YAC members restocked all 21 Little Free Libraries throughout Hillsdale County with approximately 350 books, helping encourage reading and access to books for children and families.

Through these initiatives, the Youth Advisory Council continues to demonstrate the positive impact young leaders can have in strengthening and supporting their community.



THE GREAT GIVE:

Giving Tuesday Support Reaches New Heights

The Hillsdale County Community Foundation is proud to celebrate the success of the 2025 Great Give, held on Giving Tuesday, December 2. The annual event brought together local nonprofits, generous donors, and community partners to support meaningful causes across Hillsdale County.

This year, the community made 1,157 gifts totaling **\$390,895.50**, providing vital support for organizations serving residents throughout the county. Donations are helping fund a variety of important initiatives, including a homeless shelter, a new community fitness park, strengthened food pantries, arts programming, and expanded opportunities for children and families.

Eighteen nonprofit organizations participated in the 2025 Great Give: CAPA (Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness), Domestic Harmony, Friends of the Dawn Theatre, Great Start Collaborative of Hillsdale County, Greater Hillsdale Humane Society, Helping Hands Pregnancy Resource Center, Hillsdale CASA, Hillsdale Community Theatre – The Sauk, Hillsdale County Senior Services Center, Hillsdale Rotary Club (Fitness Park), Hospice of Hillsdale County, Kimball Camp Outdoor Center, Love INC., Share the Warmth, The Salvation Army, Current Church Food Pantry, First Church of Christ–Waldron Food Pantry, and Kings Kupboard at Trinity Lutheran Church.

The success of this year's Great Give highlights the power of a community coming together to support one another. The Foundation is grateful to everyone who donated, shared, and championed these causes. Because of this generosity, local nonprofits can continue expanding their impact and strengthening the community we all call home.

GRANT DEADLINES

The Foundation invites organizations to apply for grant funding to support projects that improve the quality of life for residents of Hillsdale County. Eligible projects typically fall within areas such as education, fine arts, social services, community development, recreation, environmental initiatives, health and wellness, and efforts that strengthen the physical, mental, and moral well-being of county residents.

Youth Grant applications are due by 4 p.m. on April 1, 2026, and General Grant applications are due by 4 p.m. on May 1, 2026.

For additional information and a link to the Foundation's online application portal, visit www.abouthccf.org.



**Hillsdale County
Community Foundation**

For good. For ever.

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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!

Y.O.U.T.H. Grant Awards—\$25,725.00

Awarded October 2025 through March 2026:

- \$12,500.00 – Great Start Collaborative to continue programs that help Hillsdale County children grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.
- \$2,000.00 – Williams Elementary School Social Worker to implement play therapy and create a safe space for students.
- \$3,000.00 – Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to support camp, events, and program supplies for 50 Hillsdale County children.
- \$400.00 – Camden-Frontier Schools CrossFit Program for students in grades 3–12 (equipment and program support).
- \$500.00 – Hillsdale Area Career Center Education Academy to support students competing in the FCCLA state competition in Lansing.
- \$645.00 – Hillsdale-Jackson Chapter of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health for the “Big Steps for Little Feet” family move-a-thon promoting reduced screen time and outdoor activity.
- \$426.00 – Gier Elementary School for 24 students (grades 3–5) to participate in the Tri-County Science Olympiad.
- \$5,754.00 – Great Start Collaborative for the 2026 Free Family Safety Fair for Hillsdale County families.
- \$500.00 – Camden-Frontier High School to launch a student newspaper program.

Connect with us!

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 HillsdaleCoCommunityFoundation