HILLSDALE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

County Currents

FALL 2026

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PEACE OF MIND EVENT

On April 20 and August 12, 2026, the Hillsdale County Senior Services Center and the Hillsdale County Community Foundation hosted **Peace of Mind: Planning for Life's Next Chapter**. This free event was designed to help seniors and their families better understand the important decisions that come with planning for the future.





Thanks to our wonderful vendors and speakers, we were able to create a welcoming and comfortable environment where attendees could learn more about wills and estate planning, advance directives and healthcare decision-making, funeral and memorial planning, opportunities for transferring wealth, options for in-home and long-term care, grief and bereavement support.

Have questions, feedback, or need help connecting with a resource? Reach out to us using the contact information on page 6. Peace of Mind will return in 2027, with dates and details to come!

GRANT AWARDS APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2026

Unrestricted Grant Awards - $77,500.00

Awarded April 2026 through September 2026 through the Community Investment Fund, Ardeth Morse Memorial Fund, General Mills Community Fund, HCCF Alumni Trustee Fund, Ingles Family Fund, Lavern and Robin Barber Haynes Memorial Endowment Fund, Mildred Hawkes Barber Memorial Endowment Fund, and the Walter and Susan Schray Fund:

- **Reading Emergency Unit 1, Inc.** for 800MHz Radio Project - $13,000.00
- **Kimball Camp Outdoor Center** to support the High Adventure Course Safety & Renewal Project - $6,500.00
- **Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee & Hillsdale Counties** for Children's Advocacy Center of South Central Michigan counseling services in Hillsdale County for Hillsdale County Residents - $10,000.00
- **Hillsdale City Police Department** for Medical Equipment for Patrol Vehicles - $2,500.00
- **Trinity Lutheran Church, King's Kupboard** for food and personal care items for King's Kupboard Food Pantry - $5,000.00
- **Hillsdale County School of the Arts** to support the Summer Strings Festival - $2,000.00
- **Jonesville First Presbyterian Church** to support the Giving Cupboard - $4,000.00
- **St. Anthony's Family Center** to support their Food Pantry - $15,000.00
- **Hillsdale Township Firefighters Association** to support the 2026 Great American Celebration Fireworks - $12,000.00
- **Trinity Lutheran Church, King's Kupboard** for the purchase of bicycle safety equipment, repair parts and tools and helmets for their bicycle transportation ministry, Kingdom Wheels - $2,000.00
- **Hillsdale County Senior Services Center, Inc.** for patient advocate designation with advance directive consultation and document preparation at the Senior Center's Empowering Communities Through Legal Planning - $4,000.00
- **Hillsdale County Intermediate School District** for 3 mini grants to support educators- $1,500.00

Hodshire Family Community Support Fund - $9,380.00

- **Spring Arbor University** for Spring Arbor Nursing Program and the Seattle Spring Arbor Mission Trip

Love Your Community Grant Awards – $9,751.00

- **Village of North Adams** for playground equipment at their Ball Field Park - $1,751.00
- **City of Hillsdale Cemetery Board** for entry gate, arch, and fencing for cremains scattering garden at Oak Grove cemetery - $2,500.00
- **US12 Heritage Trail Daughters of the American Revolution** to purchase a memorial stone for Civil War Veterans and preserving history for future generations at Oak Grove cemetery - $2,500.00
- **Kiwanis Club of Hillsdale** for the purchase of a gazebo for Cold Springs Park - $3,000.00

Field of Interest Grant Awards – $101,588.24

John S. Sterling Music Scholarship Fund - $1,600.00

- **Jonesville Community School** to support their music programs

Hillsdale Rotary Uganda Project Fund - $2,700.00

- **Hillsdale Rotary Club** to support the school in Buluba Uganda

Isaiah 54:2 Fund - $12,000.00

- **Hillsdale Community Schools** for Cross Country Boards, Junior High Power Racks and Benches

Jeannie Pratt Steel Memorial Fund - $300.00

- **Domestic Harmony** to support their organization

Lint Family Music Fund - $4,785.00

- **Hillsdale County School of the Arts** to support the Summer Strings Festival - $2,000.00
- **Adrian Symphony Orchestra** to support the attendance of the Young People's Concert (Storybook: Casey at the Bat and the Thrill of the Orchestra) for 557 students in grades 2 and 4 from seven local elementary schools - $2,785.00

Edward L. Kunesh Youth Agricultural Education Fund Grant Awards - $29,203.24

- **Camden-Frontier Schools** for registration, lodging and transportation to attend the FFA National Convention - $3,738.12
- **Jonesville Community Schools** for registration, lodging and transportation to attend the FFA National Convention - $5,465.12
- **MSU Extension** for 4-H STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education in Hillsdale County Schools for grades 6-8 for the 2026-2027 school year - $20,000.00

Edward L. Kunesh Young Farmer Support Fund Sponsorship Grants - $3,000.00

- **Hillsdale County Farm Bureau** to support Agriculture Career Day - $1,000.00
- **Fulton SWCD** to support Nutrient Field Management Day - $2,000.00

Montgomery Morse Blessing Fund Grant Awards - $60,000.00

- Camden-Frontier Schools Student Scholarships
- Reading Community Schools Student Scholarships
- Montgomery Fire Department Backpack Program
- Domestic Harmony
- Branch County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- St. Peter's Free Clinic of Hillsdale County, Inc.
- Share the Warmth of Hillsdale County
- Turning Point Homeless Shelter
- Montgomery Fire Department
- Camden Fire Department
- Reading Fire Department
- The Salvation Army
- Camden-Frontier Backpack Program
- Branch Area Food Pantry
- Camden United Methodist Church Food Pantry
- Mott's Children's Hospital
- Bronson Children's Hospital
- Jacobs Well Ministries
- Camden-Frontier Schools Music Program
- Reading Community Schools Music Program
- Hillsdale County Senior Services Center Inc.
- UMCOR United Methodist Committee on Relief

Designated Funds Grant Awards FY 2025-26 – $316,618.83

Charles C. Aschbrenner and Chris T. Spencer Fund Distribution- $20,000.00

- Jonesville First Presbyterian Church Memorial Fund
- Jonesville District Library for Archival Projects
- Hillsdale County Agricultural Society for Building Improvements
- Suzanne J. Levy Endowment Fund (Michigan State)

Community Action Agency Fund (ID) - $50.81

Dr. Leo Phillips Senior Center Endowment Fund (ID) for Hillsdale County Senior Services Center Inc. - $293.63

Fields of Dreams Endowment Fund - $7,000.00

Give Where You Live Funds - $87,449.75

- St. Peter's Free Clinic of Hillsdale County, Inc.
- Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness
- Current Church Food Pantry
- Friends of the Dawn Theater of Hillsdale Michigan
- First Church of Christ Waldron Food Pantry
- Hillsdale County Senior Services Center, Inc.
- Hospice of Hillsdale County
- Share the Warmth of Hillsdale County
- Great Start Collaborative
- Greater Hillsdale Humane Society
- Love INC. of Hillsdale County
- Kings Kupboard Food Pantry
- Kimball Camp Outdoor Center
- The Salvation Army
- Hillsdale CASA, Inc.
- Hillsdale Hospital
- The Sauk Theatre
- Domestic Harmony
- Helping Hands PRC

Gospel Barn Building Fund for New Restroom Floors, Toilets & Tree Work - $11,300.00
Greater Hillsdale Humane Society Endowment Fund - $50,000.00
Hillsdale Community Schools Band Instrument Fund - $2,811.00
Hillsdale Community Schools Educational Fund - $5,214.00

- Freshman Mentor Program
- FAFSA Incentives
- General Music Recorders & Boom whackers
- Headphones for CPR Training and Rubiks Cubes for Problem Solving/Stress Management
- HEROES Marketing
- Kindergarten Learning Through Play Project
- Maker Space - Gier Elementary School
- 2nd and 4th Grade Transportation to Adrian Symphony Orchestra
- Music Room Rebuild - Davis Middle School
- Trap Team Opportunity

Hillsdale County Fair Renovation Fund for Remodeling Restrooms & Restaurant Building - $11,624.50
Hillsdale Exchange Club Community Fund - $1,207.75
Hillsdale Rotary Maintenance Fund for Bike Path Resurfacing - $10,000.00
Jon "Mike" and Betty Fast Jonesville District Library Memorial Fund - $2,269.52
Jonesville Community Educational Foundation - $3,137.36
Jonesville Freedom Memorial Fund - $791.22
Key Opportunities, Inc. Agency Fund (ID) - $1,392.91
Kimball Camp Endowment Fund for Camperships - $7,327.88
Luminary Night in Hillsdale Fund - $250.00
Manor Endowment Fund - $1,080.13
Margaret Clay Memorial Fund for Hillsdale First United Methodist Church - $7,146.82
Mitchell Research Center Endowment Fund - $773.03
North Adams Jerome Education Foundation Fund for 2025 Distribution for AED - $1,500.00
Paul Leece Funds - $33,685.9

- Bancroft Gospel Ministry
- BCM International
- Southland Bible Institute
- First Baptist Church
- Positive Action for Christ

Purdy Family Recreation Fund - $602.36
Ralph A. Kelley Fund - $14,718.00

- Cambria Baptist Church
- Hillsdale Hospital
- Reading Emergency Unity 1, Inc.

St. Peter's Clinic Community Support Fund - $32,000.00
Waldron District Library Fund - $2,992.19

Y.O.U.T.H. Grant Awards - $25,651.00

Awarded April 2026 through September 2026 from the Kellogg Youth Advisory Fund:

- **Camden-Frontier Schools -** $1,000.00 for 4th grade Northern Adventure
- **Camden-Frontier Schools -** $3,000.00 for Camden-Frontier Bee Club
- **Kimball Camp Outdoor Center -** $3,800.00 for safety equipment for waterfront recreation
- **Friends of the Dawn Theater -** $3,580.00 for the Nutcracker Ballet production
- **Hillsdale County Intermediate School District** - $1,532.00 for a Smartboard for the Special Education Young Adult Services Classroom
- **Helping Hands PRC -** $5,500.00 for items to make the center more kid-friendly
- **Hillsdale Community Schools -** $3,091.00 for new books for The Next Chapter at Davis Intermediate School
- **Montgomery Firefighter Association -** $2,648.00 for the Backpack Program
- **Hospice of Hillsdale County -** $1,500.00 for Camp Courage

NEW YOUTH BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBER: *Brandy*



Meet Brandy Neill, a 17-year-old senior at Camden-Frontier Schools! Brandy is actively involved in her school through volleyball, softball, cheer, color guard, band, choir, NHS, EMC, FCA, and student council. She also serves on the Camden-Frontier Board of Education as the student council reporter.

Outside of school, Brandy is a member of her church's worship team and serves as the Secretary for the Youth Advisory Council. In her free time, she enjoys baking, photography, watching TV, playing guitar, flute, and saxophone, and making patchwork hoodies.

Brandy is excited to take on her new role as the YAC Trustee and looks forward to working with the Foundation and representing local youth!

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Eve*



Eve Goodlife, a 2026 homeschool graduate, has been a member of the Hillsdale County Community Foundation Youth Advisory Council for the past four years. During her junior year, she served as secretary, and in her senior year, she stepped into leadership roles as President of YAC and Youth Trustee on the HCCF Board of Trustees.

Throughout her time on the board, Eve has enjoyed making meaningful connections with both youth and adult board members while giving back to her community. Some of her favorite memories include participating in the distracted driving campaign and helping assemble wellness kits for students. She shared, "I'm very grateful for the time I've had on the board; it has helped me so much to feel more connected to our community, and confident in myself."

Eve's hobbies and interests include biology, writing, ceramics, cooking and baking, painting, and just about anything creative or crafty. This fall, Eve plans to pursue modeling while taking classes at Jackson College. She is the daughter of Radomi Meyer and Thor Alward.

Y.O.U.T.H. Event: *Fill-the-Freezer*



The Hillsdale County Community Foundation Youth Advisory Council (Y.O.U.T.H. – Youth Opportunities Unlimited Throughout Hillsdale) hosted its annual "Fill the Freezer" event on Wednesday, July 29, donating $15,000 in food and essential supplies to help combat food insecurity across Hillsdale County.

This year's donations sponsored the food pantries at Current Church, First Church of Christ Waldron, King's Kupboard, Salvation Army, St. Anthony Catholic Church Family Center, and Domestic Harmony. Each organization received paper products, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, canned goods, grocery staples, and individually packed meat based on their specific needs.



The event was made possible through the support of local partners. The youth purchased paper products, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, canned goods, and grocery staples from Hillsdale Meijer, who kindly reserved checkout lanes to help volunteers shop efficiently for each organization. M & M Smokehouse also helped the event run smoothly by packaging and delivering the meat orders, ensuring each organization's order was prepared separately for easy distribution.

Established in 1991, the Hillsdale County Community Foundation Y.O.U.T.H. Advisory Council gives local youth opportunities to lead, serve, and support their community through grantmaking and projects like "Fill the Freezer," which helps local food pantries and shelters provide nutritious food and essential items to families in need.

2026 SCHOLARSHIPS SEASON

The 2026 scholarship season at the HCCF was incredibly rewarding, as reflected in the statistics shown to the right. These scholarship funds supported a wide range of educational goals, including certificate programs, associate and bachelor's degrees, graduate school, and even summer camp opportunities.



Thanks to our dedicated scholarship reviewers and the tremendous generosity of our donors, we were able to help students pursue their next steps and continue making higher education and career training more accessible throughout Hillsdale County.

NEW HCCF EMPLOYEES: *Alivia & Elizabeth*

The Hillsdale County Community Foundation is excited to announce the addition of two new full time staff members!





Alivia Tindall (left), is joining us as our Marketing Coordinator. She recently graduated from University of Sioux Falls with a Bachelors degree in Media and Marketing and a Masters in Business, where she also played college soccer. In her most recent position, she worked in marketing and events for an Entrepreneurship nonprofit located in downtown Sioux Falls, SD.

Elizabeth Bianchi (right) is coming on board as our Director of Development. She was born and raised in Hillsdale, and served on the HCCF YOUTH Board throughout her high school years. Elizabeth graduated from Hillsdale College in 2022, and is currently pursuing her Masters through the University of St. Thomas; she will defend her thesis in the spring. Elizabeth has spent the last 4 years as the Assistant Director of Advancement for Sacred Heart Parish and Academy in Grand Rapids, MI.

THE GREAT GIVE: *Tuesday, Dec 1.*

Hillsdale County Community Foundation is excited to announce that our annual Great Give event will take place on Tuesday, December 1, 2026, 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 donations at the Foundation office, 2 South Howell Street, Hillsdale, during the early giving period of Nov 9 - Nov 25.
2. Give Online: Donate anytime at *www.abouthccf.org*.
3. Day of Event: Drive through and drop off your gift at the HUB Activity Center on December 1 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Participating organizations for the 2026 Great Give include:

- Hillsdale County Community Foundation
- Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness (CAPA)
- Domestic Harmony
- Early Pregnancy Loss Association
- Friends of the Dawn Theater of Hillsdale Michigan
- Greater Hillsdale Humane Society
- Helping Hands PRC
- Hillsdale CASA, Inc.
- Hillsdale Community Theatre, Inc. dba The Sauk
- Hillsdale County Great Start Collaborative
- Hillsdale County Senior Services Center Inc.
- Hospice of Hillsdale County
- Kimball Camp Outdoor Center
- Love, INC of Hillsdale County
- Share the Warmth of Hillsdale County
- St. Peter's Free Clinic of Hillsdale County, Inc.
- The Salvation Army
- Wreaths Across America
- Food Pantry: Camden United Methodist Church
- Food Pantry: Current Church
- Food Pantry: First Church of Christ Waldron
- Food Pantry: King's Kupboard (Trinity Lutheran Church)

Thank you for helping make a difference in Hillsdale County this giving season!

Hillsdale County
Community Foundation
For **good.** For **ever.**

PO Box 276
2 South Howell Street
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 439-5101
info@abouthccf.org
www.abouthccf.org

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MEET THE STAFF

Sharon Bisher, *PRESIDENT/CEO* . . . . . **s.bisher@abouthccf.org**
Mindy Eggleston, *PROGRAM DIRECTOR* . . . . . **m.eggleston@abouthccf.org**
Samantha Meyer, *PROGRAM OFFICER* . . . . . **s.meyer@abouthccf.org**
Alivia Tindall, *MARKETING COORDINATOR* . . . . . **a.tindall@abouthccf.org**
Elizabeth Bianchi, *DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT* . . . . . **e.bianchi@abouthccf.org**

We invite you to share your thoughts about the Foundation with any of our knowledgeable and helpful staff.

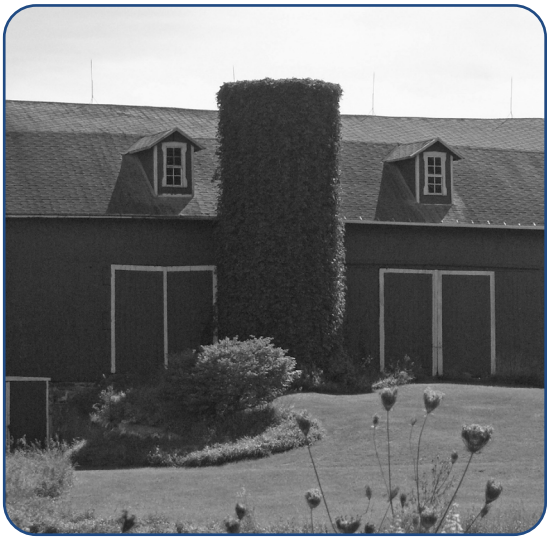
Please feel free to contact any of us at any time!

Give a Little. Help a Lot.

Over the next 30 years, an estimated $2.7 billion will transfer from Hillsdale County residents to the next generation. If just 5% is given back locally, it could create $135 million in charitable resources for our community.

A gift through your estate can support local nonprofits, education, recreation, the arts, food assistance, and more, helping the community you call home for generations to come. Even a small percentage of your estate can make a lasting difference right here in Hillsdale County.

Give a little. Help a lot. Contact us to learn how you can preserve your legacy through charitable giving.



Connect with us!

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