

SAGINAW COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



**cornerstone**

SPRING 2024



# *Introducing a Community Vision*



Building a More Inclusive and  
Equitable Saginaw County

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# President's Report

FROM RENEÉ S. JOHNSTON

## A year to celebrate

It's hard to believe that the Saginaw Community Foundation (SCF) is celebrating 40 years of service in Saginaw County. In recognition of this milestone anniversary, we have planned a series of events and activities to celebrate the occasion (see page 3 for details). One might ask, "Why is SCF's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary so significant that it qualifies for a year's worth of celebrating?" At our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kick-Off event, I mentioned that we have celebrated every milestone anniversary since the Foundation was established beginning with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In 1994, not only did we celebrate SCF, but we also provided a gift to the community with the establishment of Hidden Harvest.

Our anniversary years are definitely worth celebrating as it's a wonderful reminder of what the Junior League of Saginaw Valley hoped to accomplish by providing the seed money to launch SCF in 1984. Our milestone anniversaries serve as a wonderful time to share and reflect upon the impact SCF has had – and will continue to have – on the community, **For Good For Ever.**

On Feb. 15, we held our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kick-Off Event at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History, the location where SCF was introduced to the community by the Junior League of Saginaw Valley in 1984. The event exceeded our expectations on how many would attend, especially on the day of a winter storm. It was wonderful to be surrounded by donors, volunteers, community partners, and members of the Junior League to celebrate. As part of the program, two of the Founding Mothers of SCF, Janet Crane and Mary Ellen Vaydik, shared historical insight to the establishment of the Saginaw Community Foundation.

Janet Crane shared, "In 1980, the Junior League of Saginaw membership started considering in a serious way how to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The consensus was that it should be something more substantial than a gala party. The goal was to find a project in keeping with the Junior League's purpose of benefiting the community in a lasting way through the active participation of trained volunteers. Upon receiving the initial seed money, Ted Braun stated that a community foundation is an effective way for residents of an area to respond individually, in their own way, to the special needs of their own area. The Junior League should be commended for their efforts in its establishment." Thank you, Junior League!

As noted throughout this newsletter, there is plenty going on in 2024 in addition to all of the 40th anniversary celebration activities. We have many things to celebrate including the announcement of the Community Equity and Inclusion Council, a \$40,000 Community Improvement Initiative Grant, and our revitalized Youth Advisory Council, FORCE.

It's early in the year, and it's already been an amazing one! We truly hope that the community sees our planned celebration activities in 2024 as an opportunity to engage with SCF and celebrate not only the community foundation, but also our entire community.

**Reneé S. Johnston**, President & CEO



## A night of trivia fun

On January 18, the SCF Staff and Board of Directors met at The Junction in Old Town Saginaw for a friendly trivia night to launch SCF's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year. Teams answered questions about general knowledge, pop culture, SCF trivia, Saginaw history trivia, and a Name That Tune round featuring songs from 1984, the year SCF was founded. Trivia Night Committee Members pictured left to right: Rachel Geddes from WHNN 96.1 FM (our Emcee for the night) and SCF's Alexandria Martinez, Bryan Konieczka, and Vanessa Salogar.

# SCF kicks-off 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration year

Nearly 200 guests joined Saginaw Community Foundation at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History on the evening of Feb. 15 as we kicked-off our year-long 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. We returned to the location where we were introduced to the community by the Junior League of Saginaw Valley (today's Junior League of the Great Lakes Bay Region) in 1984 as their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gift to the community.

Founding Mother's of the Foundation, Janet Crane and Mary Ellen Vaydik, were in attendance and shared remarks during the event.

Check out our list of upcoming events in 2024 on the right side of this page. Some event details are still being finalized. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn for updates.



Reneé Johnston, SCF President & CEO



John Shelton, SCF Board Chair



Janet Crane



SCF Staff and Board Members

## An ode to SCF

At our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kick-Off Event, Mary Ellen Vaydik, one SCF's Founding Mothers, shared a verse composition (see below) she first shared on Feb. 7, 1984 at SCF's introduction to the community by the Junior League of Saginaw Valley.

### Junior League of Saginaw/ Saginaw Community Foundation

by Mary Ellen Vaydik (from 1984)



Mary Ellen Vaydik

We're here today to celebrate  
Not just one thing, but two:  
A Junior League that's 50 –  
And a Foundation that's brand new!

Now, I won't try, in my few lines,  
To cover fifty years;  
But I will say while I'm up here-  
"We love those volunteers!"

If there were no Junior League here,  
You simply wouldn't see  
Many things we take for granted  
Because the work they did was free.

Their specialty is opening doors  
And bringing things about  
That make our lives much better

And that we'd hate to be without.  
Some doors they've opened through the years  
Can be seen in that display;  
Now one more door is opening  
That we celebrate today.

The Saginaw Community Foundation  
Is a name too long to rhyme,  
But the good that it can do here  
Will be evident in time.

So welcome the Foundation!  
And to the League – three cheers!  
We can celebrate your birthdays  
Because of VOLUNTEERS!

# 2024 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Upcoming Events

As part of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, we invite you to join us at these events. Follow us on social media for details about these events!



### HEY HOCKEY FANS!

## SCF Impact Bus Tour & CHL Memorial Cup Game

May 24 • Ticketed Event  
Tour: 3-5:30 P.M.  
Hockey Game: 7:30 P.M.



## SCF Annual Celebration & 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala

Sept. 14 • Ticketed Event • 5 - 11 P.M.



## 2024 Philanthropy Uncorked

Nov. 20 • Ticketed Event  
5:30 - 8:30 P.M.



## Cornerstone Pillar Society Champagne Toast

Dec. 2 • Free Event • 5:30 - 6:30 P.M.



Saginaw

community foundation



# Introducing a community vision

## Building a more inclusive and equitable Saginaw County

A transformative vision is taking shape in Saginaw County, one that is set to transform the very fabric of our community. Led by a coalition of passionate community leaders from education, business, healthcare, and community non-profit, the Community Engagement and Inclusion Council (CEIC) was introduced to the community at a press conference held at the Saginaw Community Foundation on Jan. 18. The CEIC is poised to create a brighter, more inclusive, and equitable future for all in our county.

From grassroots conversations to impactful action, 2021 marked the genesis of a movement in Saginaw County. Community leaders, driven by a collective ambition for progress, spearheaded the creation of a robust diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice (DEIBJ) vision and strategic plan. This strategic plan provides a roadmap that promises to propel

Saginaw County toward a future where diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice are cornerstones, not aspirations.

As the CEIC embarks on the next phase of its journey, its commitment to creating lasting positive change in Saginaw County remains steadfast. Building on the foundation of their shared vision, they are now turning their attention to concrete actions that will bring this vision to life. In the coming months, they will engage in extensive community dialogues, provide learning opportunities, conduct research, and prepare for Saginaw's first community DEIBJ-focused seminar. The CEIC will share news and information on upcoming events through the Saginaw Community Foundation's social media channels.

"Our community leaders are already hard at work, developing concrete action plans, engaging with community stakeholders, and seeking partnerships to make this vision a reality. The path ahead will not be easy, but together, we

will build a Saginaw County where everyone can thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances," said Dr. Mamie Thorns, Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer for Diversity Equity and Inclusion at Saginaw Valley State University and CEIC steering team member.

Other steering committee members are NAACP Saginaw Branch President Terry Pruitt, Brian Jackson, director of donor services and special initiatives for the Saginaw Community Foundation, Antione Martin, chief workforce officer for Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, Pam Ross McClain, chief officer of culture, belonging and community building at Delta College, Renee Johnston, president and CEO of the Saginaw Community Foundation, Jenny Geno, executive director of career and technical education for Saginaw Intermediate School District, and Raquel Ledesma Perez, diversity and community liaison for Hemlock Semiconductor Operations.

*"We need to know how to work together. We need to look beyond the negativity that we see across the country, come together, and show that with a little extra care, concern, and support for one another we can be successful as a community."*

**Reneé Johnston**  
President & CEO  
Saginaw Community Foundation



"We need to know how to work together. We need to look beyond the negativity that we see across the country, come together, and show that with a little extra care, concern, and support for one another we can be successful as a community," said Renee Johnston, president and CEO, Saginaw Community Foundation.

Since 1984, the Saginaw Community Foundation has helped Saginaw County residents build a better community by linking donor interests with the community's most pressing needs and promising opportunities.

"SCF isn't the only organization making diversity, equity and inclusion a priority," said Brian Jackson, director of donor services and special initiatives, Saginaw Community Foundation. "We invite any individual or organization to get involved. We'll work with anybody that wants to work with us. It's going to take everybody to move the needle."

### Learn more

If you are interested in learning more or would like to get involved, send us an email at [ceic-info@saginawfoundation.org](mailto:ceic-info@saginawfoundation.org) or call (989) 755-0545.



Community members attend the CEIC Press Conference in the atrium at Saginaw Community Foundation on Jan. 18.

## CEIC Vision

### Saginaw is an inclusive community where everyone:

- can *thrive*
- be their *authentic* self
- has a *voice* which is *valued*
- has *access* to *opportunities*
- feels a *sense of belonging*
- advocates for *safety, equity and justice*
- openly *celebrates and embraces differences*

## CEIC Strategic Initiatives

### Diversity

A community that appreciates and celebrates the unique differences that make us who we are.

#### Goal #1

Increase Saginaw County's awareness about it's diversity (our unique differences).

#### Goal #2

Celebrate Saginaw County's diversity.

### Equity

A community that provides equitable access to opportunities and eliminates barriers to participation.

#### Goal #1

Conduct an assessment to identify barriers and challenges.

#### Goal #2

Develop a strategic plan to address and mitigate inequities.

#### Goal #3

Implement action plan and solutions.

### Inclusion

A community in which everyone is invited, is heard and understood, is valued for their authentic self, and feels safe and secure.

#### Goal #1

Establish a common, consistent, inclusive message promoting Saginaw County.

#### Goal #2

Coordinate and convene courageous conversations to better understand DEIBJ and how the leadership group has identified it.

#### Goal #3

Identify what the young people of Saginaw County want and show that their voice matters.

### Belonging

A community where everyone feels connected with people and are accepted for their true selves thus inspiring a sense of empowerment.

#### Goal #1

Motivate the community to champion belonging.

#### Goal #2

Empower community members through guided discourse and action.

#### Goal #3

Develop a long-term plan for increasing belonging.

### Justice

A community that identifies, challenges and eliminates systems and structures that limit fairness and equity.

#### Goal #1

Identify systems and structures that limit fairness and equity.

#### Goal #2

Challenge and eliminate systems and structures that limit fairness and equity.

# Grant program continues to impact grass-roots community improvement

## Award increased to \$40K as part of SCF's 40th Anniversary year

Tracing its roots back to 2012, the Saginaw Community Foundation's Board of Directors' Community Improvement Initiative (CII) Grant has helped support 12 community projects with a total financial impact of \$325,000.

Every year, Saginaw Community Foundation awards its CII Grant to a single project. The project, as selected by the Foundation's Board of Directors, will receive a grant of \$40,000 and the project must be completed by July 2025.

The goal of this initiative for Saginaw Community Foundation is to create a funding vehicle that enables organizations to be more proactive in addressing community improvement needs. A desired outcome is to encourage the community to create and implement community improvement initiatives on its own.

## What exactly is "community improvement"?

"We have defined a community improvement initiative as a project that will create indelible, measurable impacts in the immediate and broader community," said René Johnston, SCF president and CEO.

This initiative extends beyond existing charitable organizations, churches, schools and county/city officials. Individuals, community groups, neighborhoods, businesses and youth groups can apply if they utilize the Foundation as a fiscal sponsor. New and existing community projects are eligible.

## Who can apply for the grant?

Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is eligible to apply. The Saginaw Community Foundation, another nonprofit, a local unit of government, or a religious institution can be used as the fiscal sponsor for individuals, community groups, neighborhoods, businesses and youth groups if not a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

## What types of projects are eligible?

The projects submitted must create indelible, measurable impacts in the immediate and broader community; be supported and planned by a broad range of users; and have a clear, well laid-out plan for success and sustainability.

While this program is open to all applications that address community needs, a priority will be given to projects with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and/or justice (see definitions below).

- **Diversity:** A community that appreciates and celebrates the unique differences that make us who we are.
- **Equity:** A community that provides equitable access to opportunities and elimination of barriers to participation.
- **Inclusion:** A community in which everyone is invited, has a sense of belonging,

is heard and understood, is valued for their authentic self, and feels safe and secure.

- **Belonging:** A community where everyone feels connected with people and accepted for their true selves and inspires a sense of empowerment.
- **Justice:** A community that identifies, challenges and eliminates systems and structures that limit fairness and equity.

## How to apply

**Applications are due by May 1.** Before beginning an application, please contact Brian Jackson, director of donor services and special initiatives, at (989) 755-0545 or [brian@saginawfoundation.org](mailto:brian@saginawfoundation.org) to discuss a project. Additional information can be found at [saginawfoundation.org/site/grants](https://saginawfoundation.org/site/grants).



# New online donor portal

## Update your contact info to gain access

Saginaw Community Foundation is excited to announce the launch of our new online Donor/Fund Representative Portal. In order to invite you to join our new portal, we are asking for updated contact information from all fund representatives. Please visit [saginawfoundation.org/site/portal](http://saginawfoundation.org/site/portal) or scan the QR code below to access an online form.

After receiving your updated contact information, we will begin inviting donors/fund representatives in the near future on a rolling basis via email. The email you receive will contain a secure link to complete your registration. Once your registration is complete in the new portal, you will be able to:

- See the current balance of your fund
- View recent grants from your fund



- Generate and download a PDF fund statement
- View recent donations to your fund

We hope you will take advantage of all the features and benefits our new Donor/Fund Representative Portal has to offer. If you have any questions, please contact Lori TenEyck, director of finance, at [lori@saginawfoundation.org](mailto:lori@saginawfoundation.org) or (989) 755-0545.



Visit [saginawfoundation.org/site/portal](http://saginawfoundation.org/site/portal) and update your contact information today!



## FORCE feels the love

Saginaw Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee, FORCE, gathered in our boardroom in early February to participate in **Project Valentine**. Students created hand-made Valentine Cards filled with uplifting and inspiring messages that would be delivered to patients at Saginaw's Covenant HealthCare.

The FORCE Youth Advisory Committee encourages local youth to get involved in solving problems in their community. This diverse group of teens, in grades 8–12, are actively engaged in community service and grantmaking.



Bottom photo, left to right: Kylie Fraser, Joslyn Hoang, Mary Young, and Violet Brown. All students are in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Heritage High School.

## inner CIRCLE

We thank our corporate sponsors for their generous support of Saginaw Community Foundation general operations.

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### President's Circle



### Friends Circle

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 Simoni Systems, Inc.  
 Spence Brothers  
 Tri-Star Trust  
 Wildfire Credit Union  
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 Wolgast Corporation  
 Zehnder's of Frankenmuth

### WANT TO JOIN THE inner CIRCLE?

There are various levels of public and printed recognition available depending upon your membership level. For more information, call (989) 755-0545.



## Notable Dates

MAY 01

Application deadline for Community Improvement Initiative (CII) Grant

Application deadline for general SCF Grants

MAY 24

SCF Bus Tour of Impact & CHL Memorial Cup Game One, Saginaw Spirit vs. Western Hockey League Champion

MAY 31

Application deadline for HSC Community CARES Grants

JUN 01

Application deadline for Nexteer Steering the Future Grants

JUN 05

Excellence in Education Event



Saginaw

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1 Tuscola St., Suite 100B  
Saginaw, MI 48607

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## SAVE THE DATE



SAGINAW COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

40<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
*Gala*  
CELEBRATION

SAT. SEPT. 14  
5 - 11 P.M.

COCKTAIL HOUR • DINNER • COMMUNITY AWARDS  
\$40K CII GRANT ANNOUCEMENT  
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING

TICKET INFORMATION COMING THIS SUMMER



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in Saginaw County

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**Please make all checks payable to Saginaw Community Foundation. If applicable, indicate the fund name in the memo line you wish to support with your donation.**

**MAIL TO:** Saginaw Community Foundation • 1 Tuscola St. • Suite 100B • Saginaw, MI 48607



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