

SAGINAW COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



cornerstone

SPRING 2026



Rx Kids Launches in Saginaw County

Helping transform health and economic outcomes for families

▶ SEE PAGE 3 INSIDE

it takes
**EACH
OF US**
For good. For ever.



Saginaw

community foundation

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For good. For ever.

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President's Report

FROM RENEÉ S. JOHNSTON

Springing Into Action

Even though Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter, the Saginaw Community Foundation (SCF) team has already sprung into action. The year is off to a strong start with several exciting accomplishments and initiatives underway. As spring approaches, we look forward to maintaining this momentum, because there is much more ahead. The Spring 2026 edition of the Cornerstone Newsletter highlights many of these efforts and offers a glimpse of what is still to come.



Donor appreciation night at the Saginaw Spirit game Feb. 19, 2026.

One of Saginaw County's most significant accomplishments this year – one SCF is proud to support – is the launch of Rx Kids. On page 3, you will learn about the positive impact this innovative program is already having on mothers and babies in Bridgeport, Buena Vista, and the City of Saginaw. Special thanks to Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha for encouraging the Saginaw County Health Department and community partners to help bring this initiative to life.

In January, many of us gathered at Saginaw Valley State University for the annual MLK Regional Celebration. In addition to hearing from a dynamic keynote speaker, five outstanding Saginaw County students received scholarships. Two longtime SCF supporters, Dr. Jack and Janet Nash, were also honored with the Drum Major Award for Community Service. Congratulations again to Jack and Janet – you are truly deserving of this recognition. Read more about the celebration on pages 4 and 5.

The celebrations continued on February 19 when the SCF team hosted 40 donors in the Frankenmuth Credit Union Suite at a Saginaw Spirit game. Guests enjoyed great food, good company, and an exciting Spirit victory. Most importantly, it was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with the generous donors who make our work possible.

Speaking of donors, the back page of this newsletter highlights several new funds established so far this year. We are incredibly fortunate to work with individuals and families who care deeply about our community. Their generosity allows us to make a meaningful difference throughout Saginaw County and beyond.

This year alone, we received more than 1,200 scholarship applications from students across Saginaw County, the Great Lakes Bay Region, and beyond. Soon, SCF staff will work alongside hundreds of volunteers to review applications and select recipients. Last year, we awarded a record \$1.7 million in scholarships – and we are hopeful that 2026 will be another record-breaking year.

At the same time, SCF staff and Board members have been working diligently to update our strategic plan. The 2026-2029 plan will help guide how we support our partners, strengthen our organization, and continue providing leadership in the community.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention two additional initiatives. On February 1, we launched another Community Improvement Initiative grant cycle (see page 6 for details). Then, on February 24, we hosted the second annual Community Empowerment Symposium in partnership with SVSU, Delta College, the NAACP, HSC, and Great Lakes Bay Health. More than 130 people attended to learn how we can build a more caring, respectful, and inclusive community.

As you can see, it has already been a busy and exciting year. The SCF team and Board of Directors are honored to do this work alongside you.

After all, **It Takes Each of Us.**

Reneé S. Johnston
President & CEO

Rx Kids Launches in Saginaw County

As of Jan. 12, pregnant residents of the City of Saginaw, Bridgeport Township, and Buena Vista Township can apply for Rx Kids, a maternal and infant support program providing direct financial assistance during pregnancy and early infancy.

Eligible participants will receive \$1,500 during pregnancy, followed by \$500 per month for the first six months after birth. Any baby born on or after Jan. 1, 2026 is eligible.

Rx Kids is led by Michigan State University and has already supported more than 5,000 families statewide, improving maternal health outcomes and strengthening family financial stability.

SCF is proud to financially support and serve as the fiscal sponsor for the local expansion of the program.

"Our mission is to bring people and resources together for an equitable community and that's exactly what Rx Kids represents," said Renéé Johnston, president & CEO, Saginaw Community Foundation. "When we invest in moms and babies early, the impact lasts for generations."

Local health leaders emphasized the importance of early support in a county where nearly half of all births occur within the three participating communities.

"When families have stability, health follows," said Christina Harrington, health officer,

Saginaw County Health Department. "Babies are healthier, moms are healthier, and families are stronger."

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, director of Rx Kids and associate dean at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, noted that pregnancy and infancy represent a uniquely critical window.

"Families struggle the most during pregnancy and infancy," Hanna-Attisha said. "If there was ever a moment to surround families with stability, it's during this time."

For local moms, the impact is deeply personal. One expectant Saginaw mother shared how learning about Rx Kids eased her stress.

"It felt like a huge burden was lifted," she said. "Baby items are so expensive and knowing I have support helps me focus on staying healthy for my baby."

Rx Kids is supported through a public-private partnership, including funding from the State of Michigan, Saginaw Community Foundation donors, Covenant HealthCare, TriStar Trust Foundation, and community partners.

"We see the data, and we see the impact on moms and babies," Johnston added. "This is the kind of investment that strengthens our community for the long term."

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

Rx Kids Enrollment Impact Statistics

Rx Kids launched in Saginaw County on Jan. 12, 2026. Here is a snapshot of participant enrollment data as of Mar. 5, 2026. View current statistics by visiting rxkids.org/impact/dashboard/saginaw.

Funding Prescribed

\$255,000

Families Enrolled

163

Babies Born

60

"When we invest in moms and babies early, the impact lasts for generations."

Renéé Johnston

President & CEO
Saginaw Community Foundation



MLK Regional Celebration Highlights Student Service and Community Leadership

Saginaw Community Foundation joined regional partners on Jan. 22 at Saginaw Valley State University for the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Celebration – an evening dedicated to honoring student leadership, service, and community impact across the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Fifteen students from Bay, Midland, and Saginaw counties were recognized for living out Dr. King’s values of service, equity, and leadership. Each student received a \$1,000 scholarship in recognition of their character, commitment, and dedication to strengthening their communities.

2026 MLK Scholarship Recipients from Saginaw County are **Amaria Tarver**, Saginaw United High School; **Tierra Pringle**, Saginaw United High School; **A'Myah Perkins**, Frankemuth High School; **Ahn Ya La Eichelberger**, Saginaw United High School; and **Michaela Witgen**, Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy.

The event also honored community members whose behind-the-scenes service has made a lasting difference. Recipients of the 2026 Drum Major Award for Community Service included Nicole Luczak (Bay County), Jennifer Vannette (Midland County), and Jack and Janet Nash (Saginaw County). The award recognizes individuals who exemplify humility, justice, and community responsibility (see page 5 for more details).

The evening featured keynote speaker Cynthia “Cynt” Marshall, nationally recognized author and leader, who shared a message of resilience and purpose – encouraging students and attendees alike to turn personal challenges into opportunities to serve others.

As part of the MLK Regional Scholarship Program, students complete an annual service project. Inspired by Marshall’s book, *You Have Been Chosen*, this year’s scholars assembled care packages for individuals

undergoing cancer treatment. Each package included comfort items such as warm socks and gloves, recipe cards, and handwritten notes of encouragement.

Saginaw Community Foundation coordinated distribution of the care packages to local recipients, including Covenant Healthcare, MyMichigan Health (Saginaw), and United Cancer Alliance – extending the spirit of Dr. King’s legacy through tangible acts of compassion (see photo at bottom of page 5).

Established in 2005 through a partnership between local NAACP chapters and regional community foundations, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Scholarship Program continues to uplift student leaders while addressing real needs within our community. The program expanded in 2010 to include Delta College and Saginaw Valley State University, strengthening its reach and regional impact.



Left to right: Amaria Tarver, Saginaw United High School; Tierra Pringle, Saginaw United High School; A'Myah Perkins, Frankemuth High School; Cynthia “Cynt” Marshall; Ahn Ya La Eichelberger, Saginaw United High School; and Michaela Witgen, Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy

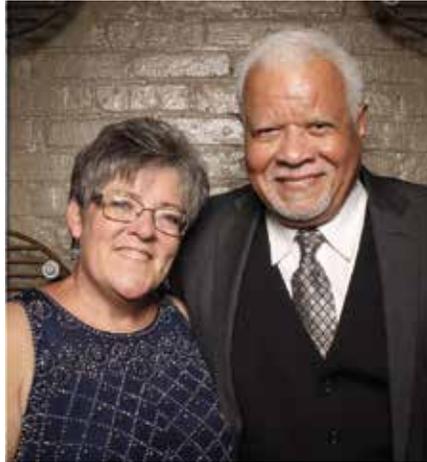
Community leaders receive Drum Major Award at MLK Regional Celebration

Four dedicated community leaders from Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties were honored with the 2026 Drum Major Award for Community Service. Nicole Luczak, Jennifer Vannette, and Jack and Janet Nash were recognized during the 17th Annual Great Lakes Bay Region Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration that took place on Jan. 22. at Saginaw Valley State University.

The Drum Major Award honors figures in the Great Lakes Bay Region whose behind-the-scenes service exemplifies values central to Dr. King's legacy, including equity, justice and community responsibility.

Saginaw County: Jack and Janet Nash

Jack and Janet Nash have both contributed decades of service across education, community programming and historical preservation in Saginaw. Jack has practiced dentistry in the city of Saginaw for decades. A longtime leader on the Positive Results Downtown Saginaw board of directors, he is also active with the YMCA and supports projects that highlight local history. Janet Nash held prominent positions in the Saginaw Public School District, from community education program specialist to principal of the Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy (SASA). In recognition of her decades of service to education, the riverfront preserve near Saginaw United High School was



2026 Saginaw County Drum Major Award recipients Janet and Jack Nash

named in her honor. She continues to be active with the SASA Foundation. The Nashes have established three scholarships that support local youth.

Bay County: Nicole Luczak

Nicole Luczak, president and CEO of United Way of Bay County, has spent more than a decade leading initiatives to deepen community resiliency and expand access to financial security, health and essential resources. She serves on the Michigan Health Improvement Alliance board of directors, the 211 Northeast Michigan Board and several advisory councils, including Blue

Cross Blue Shield and SVSU's College of Health and Human Services. Nicole is also a longtime volunteer with the Junior League of the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Midland County: Dr. Jennifer Vannette

Dr. Jennifer Vannette volunteers with the Midland Area Community Foundation's Cultural Awareness Coalition, helping lead projects that highlight the stories and lived experiences of Black Midlanders through the Voices of Black Midland historical archive. In 2025, she supported the development of a community learning program built around the archive and continues to facilitate educational initiatives across the Great Lakes Bay Region. Jennifer serves as the outreach coordinator for the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History.

The Great Lakes Bay Regional Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration is presented in partnership with the Bay Area Community Foundation, Midland Area Community Foundation and Delta College.

For more information about the event, awards and scholarship opportunities, visit svsu.edu/mlk.



Giving Back: Care Packages

Students receiving regional MLK Scholarships participated in a giving back outreach project to assemble care packages that will be distributed by Covenant Healthcare, MyMichigan Health (Saginaw), and United Cancer Alliance to individuals receiving treatment for cancer. Each package included fuzzy socks, gloves, straws, Rick Smith's bean soup recipe cards, and handwritten notes of encouragement from the students.

Pictured, left to right, Chamika Ford, Program Officer, Saginaw Community Foundation; Hurley Coleman, III, Executive Director, Saginaw County CAC; James Lloyd, United Cancer Alliance; Adam Tompa, Vice President of Clinical Service Lines, Covenant HealthCare; Dr. Mamie Thorns, Chief Diversity Officer, SVSU; Renee Johnston, President & CEO, Saginaw Community Foundation.

Grant program continues to impact grass-roots community improvement

A single project will be awarded up to \$40,000 this summer

Tracing its roots back to 2012, the Saginaw Community Foundation's Board of Directors' Community Improvement Initiative (CII) Grant has helped support 14 community projects with a total financial impact of \$405,000.

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 2027.

The objectives of the CII Grant is to create a funding vehicle that will allow the Saginaw Community Foundation to be more proactive in developing and improving community assets and to encourage community organizations and their partners to create and implement community improvement initiatives.

What is "community improvement"?

As the Foundation enters a new CII Grant cycle, the definition and scope of community improvement have been refined.

"As we prepared for our 14th year of the CII grant process, we modified the CII definition and scope," said Reneé Johnston, president and CEO. "The new definition states that projects must create an enduring, measurable impact in the community, be supported and planned by a broad range of users and have a clearly defined plan for success and sustainability."

The CII Grant was established to allow the Foundation to be proactive in developing

and strengthening community assets while encouraging collaboration among organizations and partners.

Who can apply for the grant?

Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is eligible to apply. Individuals, neighborhood groups, businesses, youth groups, churches, and other community-based efforts may also apply by partnering with a qualified fiscal sponsor such as Saginaw Community Foundation, another nonprofit organization, a local unit of government, or a religious institution. Both new and existing projects are eligible.

What types of projects are eligible?

Beginning in 2026, all applications must be project-based and focused on creating a permanent physical asset that delivers lasting, measurable community benefit. Eligible examples include park revitalization or development projects such as playground equipment, trails, and pavilions; trailhead construction; youth center equipment upgrades; installation of fitness park equipment; and refurbishment or enhancement of recreation and community centers.

While this opportunity is open to all applications that address community needs with a permanent physical asset, priority will be given to projects that focus on one or more of the following: diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and/or justice (*see definitions below*).

- **Diversity:** Appreciates and celebrates the unique differences that make us who we are.
- **Equity:** Provides equitable access to opportunities and eliminates barriers to participation.



- **Inclusion:** Everyone is invited, is heard and understood, is valued for their authentic self, and feels safe and secure.
- **Belonging:** Everyone feels connected with people, accepted for their true selves and inspires a sense of empowerment.
- **Justice:** 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 community partnerships and special initiatives, at (989) 755-0545 or brian@saginawfoundation.org to discuss a project. Additional information can be found at saginawfoundation.org/cii.



SCF Welcomes New Staff Member

We are happy to announce the addition of Katey LaPratt to the staff here at Saginaw Community Foundation as Program Associate. In her role, she will support our competitive grants and scholarship programs.

Katey received a bachelor's degree in history from Saginaw Valley State University and a master's degree in history from Central Michigan University. Throughout her educational career, she volunteered and worked at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History in their Collections Department and at the front desk. Before

accepting the role at SCF, Katey worked as a Museum Technician at Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shores, Mich. She is looking forward to utilizing the skills she obtained in the museum sector towards her new role.

Katey is a Metro Detroit native but adopted the Great Lakes Bay Region as her second home while obtaining her two degrees. She is excited to become a permanent resident with her husband, Nicolas, and her cat, Echo.

Welcome, Katey!

SCF Receives \$150,000 Grant to Address Food Insecurity

Saginaw Community Foundation has received a \$150,000 grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund through its Food Security Rapid Response Initiative to help address rising food insecurity in the region.

The funding was awarded in response to increased demand for food assistance caused by disruptions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during a recent government shutdown, as well as longer-term reductions in federal food assistance programs. Saginaw Community Foundation redistributed the grant funds to local organizations providing direct food access and emergency relief, including:

- East Side Soup Kitchen
- Hidden Harvest
- Partnership Network
- Saginaw Backpack Program
- Saginaw Community Action Center
- Saginaw Community Foundation Emergency Relief Fund
- Saginaw Food Club

"These funds were deployed quickly to ensure families facing immediate food insecurity could access help when they needed it most," said René Johnston, president and CEO of Saginaw Community Foundation. "We are grateful to the Michigan Health Endowment Fund for recognizing both the urgency of this

moment and the importance of trusted local partners in delivering solutions."

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund was established in 2013 with a mission to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and older adults. The Health Fund prioritizes eight focus areas in its grantmaking, including access to healthy food.

"Our rapid response initiative aimed to provide immediate relief for those most impacted by disruptions to food assistance programs, while also strengthening regional partnerships that build long-term capacity to address hunger," said Kari Sederburg, vice president of programs for the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. "We're grateful for the Saginaw Community Foundation and our other local and regional collaborators, who have quickly mobilized grant resources to support families and strengthen the food safety net in their communities."

From 2014 through 2025, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund awarded more than 1,300 grants totaling over \$350 million statewide, supporting initiatives that improve health, wellness, and access to essential services for Michigan residents.

To learn more about the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, visit mihealthfund.org.

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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

MAY 31

Application deadline for HSC CARES Grants

JUN 01

Application deadline for general SCF Grants and Nexteer Steering the Future Grants

JUN 03

Excellence in Education Event

SEP 14

2026 SCF Annual Celebration
Curtiss Hall, SVSU

SEP 30

Application deadline for HSC CARES Grants

OCT 01

Application deadline for general SCF Grants and Nexteer Steering the Future Grants



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New Funds Established

The following new funds were approved by the SCF Board of Directors between **Dec. 19, 2025 – Feb. 20, 2026**:

Donor Advised Fund

Charles T. Day 2025 Family Charitable Fund
Alec and Gayle Laorr Giving Fund

Community Initiative/Special Project Fund

100 Trees For 100 Years For 100s of Women
The Building Futures Fund
Friends of Hope Project
Genesis Community Garden

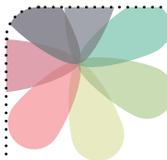
Agency Fund

Barb Smith Suicide Resource and Response Network Fund

Interested in starting your own fund?

The fund you establish with the Saginaw Community Foundation can be set up in your name, in the name of your family, or in honor of any person or organization you choose. You also may choose to give to an existing fund.

To get started, meet with your professional advisor or contact the Saginaw Community Foundation at (989) 755-0545 or visit saginawfoundation.org for more information.



For Good. For Ever.

Your generous donation will make an impact in Saginaw County

Name(s): _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Gift amount: \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$: _____

Direct gift to fund/program (if applicable): _____

Please charge my: VISA MasterCard Discover American Express

Credit card #: _____ Expiration date (MM/YY): _____ / _____

Print name as it appears on credit card: _____

Signature: _____

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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