

SAGINAW COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
SCF cornerstone
FALL/WINTER 2026

It Takes Each of Us

2026 SCF Annual Celebration presents community awards … and makes a surprise grant announcement.

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it takes EACH OF US
For good. For ever.

SCF Saginaw community foundation

it takes EACH OF US For good. For ever.

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Saginaw Community Foundation is confirmed in Compliance with Community Foundations National Standards

Board of Directors Updates

Board Chair Leadership Change

Todd Gregory retires as Board Chair after serving in that capacity for the past two years. Todd joined the Board at Saginaw Community Foundation in 2011. As Board Chair, one of Todd's goals was to ensure a fully engaged Board as well as making sure Board members understood their responsibility in providing oversight of SCF's financial growth and stability. Todd will remain on the Board as Immediate Past Board Chair. Thank you for your volunteer service, Todd!

Dana Tell has assumed the role of Board Chair, beginning with the September 2026 SCF Board Meeting. Dana joined the Board of Directors at Saginaw Community Foundation in 2016. Welcome to the Board Chair position, Dana!



Reneé Johnston presents outgoing SCF Board Chair Todd Gregory with a commemorative portrait during the 2026 SCF Annual Celebration.

Retiring Board Members

John Shelton served on the SCF Board of Directors from 2012-2026. During this time he served on the Marketing & Asset Development Committee, the 40th Anniversary Committee the Executive Committee, United Way Liaison, Assistant Treasurer and Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-Chair, and Chair. John isn't planning on going very far as he has committed to volunteering on the Competitive Grants Distribution Committee.



John Shelton

Rumi Shahzad served on the SCF Board of Directors from 2019-2026. Rumi served on the Investment Committee during his tenure on the Board.



Rumi Shahzad

Thank you to John and Rumi for their dedication serving on the Board of Directors at Saginaw Community Foundation!

SCF Welcomes New Board Members

At our June Board Meeting, Saginaw Community Foundation welcomed three new Board Members: **Micah Baumgartner**, **Maddy Tarnosky** (photo unavailable at press time) (SCF FORCE Youth Advisory Committee Member) and **Jackie Tinnin**. Welcome to the Board Micah, Maddy and Jackie!



Micah Baumgartner



Jackie Tinnin

Scholarship Spotlight

Delta College student Shandanae Collins is building a new career in IT while raising her daughter.

A scholarship from SCF has made all the difference.

Shandanae Collins has spent years working in healthcare as a pharmacy technician. Along the way, she realized that her favorite part of the job was the technology. She went back to school and today, she is studying IT networking at Delta College. She plans to bring her computer skills back into the healthcare field.

Going back to school as a single parent who works part time has not been easy. Shandanae is raising her daughter while covering everyday expenses and adding tuition and books to that list was a lot to manage. This was her first time receiving a scholarship, and she says the difference was immediate. “Starting this school year is way less stressful than last year,” she says.

A village behind her

Shandanae learned about Saginaw Community Foundation scholarships from her career coach at Delta, and from an email the college sent out. Once she was awarded a scholarship, she worked with SCF staff to understand exactly how it could be used. She’s grateful for that guidance, and she says it means everything to her to have people explain the process. “It takes a village,” she says.

Her scholarship now covers her tuition and books, with financial aid as a backup for supplies like pens, binders, and calculators. And with fewer expenses to worry about, she is working toward buying a laptop, something she knows she will need for her networking classes and the ones that follow.

Never expected to be chosen

Shandanae never expected to be selected. She had put a lot of herself into her application and worried that no one would want to hear her story. “It meant so much to me to know that someone saw a real person behind my application.”

She also wants other adult learners to know there are opportunities out there. While searching for scholarships, she noticed that many were meant for graduating high school seniors, and she wondered about people who go back to school later in life. “Receiving this scholarship is possible for anybody, young or old,” she says.



Shandanae Collins

A message for her donor

Shandanae is holding a 3.8 GPA and aiming for a 4.0 over the next year and a half. She plans to graduate with honors and wants her donor to know their gift was a good investment. “I'm glad they took the time to invest in my future,” she says. “This investment wasn't a waste.”

Her scholarship, she says, helped her find strength she didn't know she had. “They lit this fire, and it's burning.”

She is committed to staying enrolled through the summer, with no breaks, and she hopes more scholarships will support students during spring and summer terms as well. For now, she’s focused on the road ahead and grateful for the people who helped her get started.

> “I'm glad they took the time to invest in my future. They lit this fire, and it's burning.”
>
> **Shandanae Collins**
> Saginaw Community Foundation
> Scholarship Recipient

2026 General Scholarship Program Highlights

At our 39th annual Excellence in Education event in June, the **Saginaw Community Foundation presented 1,004 scholarship awards to 662 students totaling $2,925,900.** All of these numbers represent record-high amounts.

“Education is a cornerstone for thriving communities,” said Reneé Johnston, president and CEO, Saginaw Community Foundation. “Through scholarships, we help individuals take meaningful steps toward their goals – whether that means a degree, a certification, or vital job training. Our scholarship program removes barriers and creates opportunities – opening doors that might otherwise remain closed.”

The foundation currently administers 260 scholarship funds that have been established by its donors. Since 1987, the foundation has awarded more than $13.7 million to students to help them achieve their educational goals.

Applications for 2027 general scholarships are due on Feb. 12, 2027. Visit **saginawfoundation.org/scholarships** for more details.

2026 Scholarship Awards

1,004

Number of Students Receiving Awards

662

Total Dollars Awarded

$2,925,900

SCF Community Awards Presented

On Sept. 14, Saginaw Community Foundation hosted its 2026 Annual Celebration at Saginaw Valley State University. We gathered together to share how it takes each of us to help build a flourishing community for all.

At the Annual Celebration, several community awards were presented: the Joseph W. Madison Youth Award, the Mridha Foundation Teacher of the Year Award, the Saginaw Community Foundation Volunteer of the Year Award and the Frank N. Andersen Spirit of Philanthropy Award.





Mridha Foundation Teacher of the Year Award

Matthew Berchert, a teacher from Saginaw Career Complex, received this year's Mridha Foundation Teacher of the Year Award.

"I want to I want to thank the Saginaw Community Foundation, Saginaw Public Schools and Saginaw Career Complex (for this award)," said Matthew Berchert. "When I retired as a law enforcement officer after 31 years, a lot of people asked me, 'why are you stepping back?' I don't believe it was a step back. I believe it was a step-up."

"Every day I get the opportunity to watch young men and women who are showing their potential, their dreams, their desire to help their communities and give back to their communities."

Founded in 2010 by Dr. Debasish Mridha, the Teacher of the Year Award was established to help teachers inspire students to reach beyond their potential.

Teacher's receiving this award will be presented with a grant to be used for continuing education and professional development.

"Teachers are one of our community's greatest assets," said Dr. Mridha. "They inspire confidence, build character, and sometimes change the course of a young person's life."



SCF Volunteer of the Year Award

Scott Ellis was named the Saginaw Community Foundation Volunteer of the Year. Scott currently serves on the SCF Board of Directors and is a member of the Community Engagement and Inclusion Council Leadership Team and the Community Improvement Initiative and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Committee.

"I was really fortunate to be exposed to philanthropy at a young age and have been able to carry that experience into my professional career," said Scott Ellis. "It's been such a privilege to be part of the Saginaw Community Foundation. To have the opportunity to work alongside all of you. And I really do appreciate it. And then to my fellow board members and everyone in this room who gives up their time, talent and treasure to support our hundreds of organizations in the Great Lakes Bay region. Thank you for doing that work. The work that you do matters. Thank you (for this award). This is so, wonderful."

Established in 2024, this award is presented annually to someone who exhibits a desire to better the community, holds a passion for SCF and being a strong advocate for community improvement.



Frank N. Andersen Spirit of Philanthropy Award

Terry Duperon and Tammy Bernier were named this year's recipients of the Frank N. Andersen Spirit of Philanthropy Award, marking the first time the award was presented to a father/daughter duo.

In 1994, the Frank N. Andersen Spirit of Philanthropy Award was created to honor Mr. Andersen. The award is presented annually to an individual or individuals who have a history of outstanding philanthropic leadership and have demonstrated their generosity of time, talent, and dollars. This award honors its recipient, who, like Mr. Andersen, is a philanthropist in the truest sense of the word – with a personal commitment to making a difference here in Saginaw County.

Upon learning they were the recipients of this award during the program, Tammy Bernier remarked: "I can't even say what it means for us to receive something like this. I will say that one of my dreams was to be a philanthropist, and when I think of all the people who have received this award in the past, I can't imagine that I am part of (the list) as well."

Joseph W. Madison Youth Award

Brendan Chislea, a recent graduate from Freeland High School, was awarded the 2026 Joseph W. Madison Youth Award. Brendan was unable to attend our event to receive his award.

Established in 2007, the Joseph W. Madison Youth Award recognizes an area youth who has given a little more and went above and beyond to serve the community. A longtime community volunteer and champion, Joseph Madison spent countless hours giving back to help make Saginaw County a better place and remarked: "Everybody's got something to give. There are so many ways to take your skills and talents and help the community."

Brendan was nominated by Ms. Jessica Harrold, counselor at Freeland High School. She had this to say about Brendan:

"Brendan is very deserving of the Saginaw Community Foundation Youth Award because of his exceptional commitment to service, leadership, and mentorship he has given to the young students in Saginaw County and at Freeland Community Schools. He has completed an exceptional amount of community service hours throughout high school, and I know he plans to continue to be involved and volunteer for the Robotics STEM experiences moving forward. Brendan consistently volunteers his time to mentor younger students, sharing technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, and encouragement with patience and enthusiasm. He serves as both teacher and role model, helping new team members develop confidence while fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment. He willingly invests countless hours to ensure others have opportunities to learn and contribute."

$40,000 Community Improvement Initiative Grant Awarded ... and a special surprise!



Buena Vista Charter Township representatives (left to right): Kelly Coleman, Board Chair, Parks & Recreation; Torrie Lee, Superintendent/Manager; Christina Dillard-Jackson Supervisor; Bill Wheeler, Director, Parks & Recreation.



Members of FORCE, SCF's Youth Advisory Committee and Rotary Club of Saginaw.

The 2026 SCF Board of Directors' Community Improvement Initiative (CII) $40,000 grant was awarded to Buena Vista Charter Township Parks & Recreation for improvements to the Duane J. Fairris Community Center.

This grant award will be part of a larger capital funding campaign that will address critical needs at the community center. The project includes replacing aging HVAC components, install energy-efficient LED pool lighting, add a new ADA-compliant pool chair lift, and upgrade fans in the pool area and gymnasium. Once complete, the community center expects to serve over 1,000 direct recipients, from youth and families to seniors who rely on the Center for wellness programming and social connection.

"Getting this grant will going to be huge for our community center," said Bill Wheeler, director of Parks & Recreation, Buena Vista Charter Township. "Our community center serves a number of people from very different walks of life and this grant will be very helpful."

A Special Surprise

In a surprise announcement, FORCE, SCF's Youth Advisory Committee, presented the CII Grant Runner-Up project, Rotary Club of Saginaw Crayola Park Restoration, with a $40,000 grant.

"When the members of FORCE learned that the Crayola Park project was not the recipient of the 2026 CII grant, the members called an emergency meeting to propose the idea of supporting the project ourselves," said Maia Bierlein, FORCE member. "Because the Crayola Park Project supports youth in our community, which is our focus, we felt compelled to do something to make sure this project was successful."

The Rotary Club of Saginaw, in partnership with the City of Saginaw, is moving forward with the full restoration of Crayola Park, the beloved crayon-themed playground that has served Saginaw children since 1997. Part of a $636,000 restoration effort, the project will replace worn and unsafe play structures with new, durable, and fully accessible equipment – including barrier-free features like the Flex Swing and sensory-friendly elements such as the Cozy Dome Climber – designed with direct input from local kids. Expected to serve about 5,000 children annually and nearly 8,750 family members and caregivers, the restoration will make Crayola Park a safe, welcoming destination for generations of Saginaw youth to come.

"I am truly speechless," said Daniel McKune, president, Rotary Club of Saginaw. "Thank you to the Saginaw Community Foundation as a whole. We also appreciate you serving as our fiscal sponsor as we collect funds for Crayola Park. You know, some of you have heard me say this before, but we live in a world where people say, 'well, someone's got to do something about this.' We are somebody. Everyone in this room is someone."



Opening Doors

Accelerated Career Training Program Scholarships First Year Review

Not every path to a good career runs through a four-year degree. For many students in our community, the route is a certificate program, a licensing exam, or a few months of hands-on training. Until recently, those students were not always finding their way to Saginaw Community Foundation scholarships.

That gap is why the Foundation launched the Career Training Program (CTP) Scholarship. In its first year, Oct. 2025 through Aug. 2026, this new scholarship helped 32 students pursue certificates and in-demand credentials.

Why a new scholarship?

Students in short-term career and certificate programs made up only 5 to 6 percent of applicants in our annual general scholarship process. The reason was timing. Short programs often start and end on schedules that don't match a traditional scholarship cycle, so available funds weren't consistently reaching these students.

In 2025, the SCF's Board of Directors approved an annual $60,000 allocation to create a separate CTP application and funding cycle built around how these students actually enroll.

Built for a different kind of student

The CTP application is designed to be quick and flexible:

- Five application cycles each year, so students can apply when their program begins
- Awards of up to $2,000 to help cover training costs
- Eligibility for certificate programs of less than two years
- A streamlined process. Apply and accept terms, application review, notification and acceptance, then payment direct to the institution

Program Impact

Year-one results included 63 student applications. From those applicants, 32 students received scholarship awards – about half of all applicants (51%). A total of $56,686 was awarded toward career training. Of the students offered funding through the CTP application, 100% accepted their award. By comparison, award acceptance was 67 percent in the 2025 general scholarship application and 57 percent in 2026. A process matched to a student's timeline appears to make it easier for them to say "yes" and move forward with their training.

Where the funding went

CTP recipients are preparing for careers in several fields, including:

- **Healthcare:** Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Phlebotomy, combined CNA and Phlebotomy, and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)
- **Cosmetology and personal care:** cosmetology training and testing, and manicurist programs
- **Health, fitness and management:** Health Fitness Specialist
- **Skilled trades and industrial technology:** Chemical Processing Technology

What's next?

SCF is looking at three areas as the program enters its second year:

- **Tracking long-term impact.** A consistent follow-up process with recipients will help measure program completion, employment placement, and the lasting effect of CTP funding. Application data will also help the Foundation understand barriers and unmet need.
- **Reaching more students.** The Foundation plans to strengthen partnerships with Michigan Works! and local training institutions, and to raise awareness among eligible students and workforce-development partners.
- **Matching funding to demand.** The Foundation will keep monitoring application demand and award use each cycle to decide whether the $60,000 annual allocation should grow.

Learn more

Students interested in the CTP Scholarship, and partners who work with career-training students, can find application details and cycle dates at **saginawfoundation.org/ctp** or by contacting Chamika Ford at via email at **chamika@saginawfoundation.org** or by calling 989-755-0545.



63
Applicants



32
Awardees



$56,686
Total Awarded

Generosity that endures







Saginaw Community Foundation is committed to bringing people and resources together to build an equitable community and to make a lasting philanthropic impact. Creating lasting and enduring impact depends on long-term resources. We partner with donors to build endowment funds that ensure vital futures for the communities we serve across Saginaw County. We are uniquely equipped to help our donors achieve their personal charitable goals by providing in-depth knowledge of our community along with expertise in a wide range of flexible charitable giving options.

Roselynn Ederer shares her thoughts on how partnering with SCF helped bring her charitable visions to life.

"My attorney introduced me to Lucy Allen in 1997. Because I knew nothing about the Saginaw Community Foundation, Lucy invited me to join the Distribution Committee. I worked my entire federal career serving people with disabilities, mental health challenges, low household income, and life's daily struggles of food, shelter, and medical care. During the 27 years I served on the Distribution Committee, I saw firsthand the many dedicated Saginaw volunteers who worked tirelessly with non-profits on their initiatives for projects and programs which would benefit the same people I served. When my family and I established our Donor Advised Fund, we could then grant much-needed funds to some of the same non-profits in which we also volunteered. When the right occasion occurred, we also established Designated Funds for several non-profits. Over the years some of these non-profits' directors have expressed deep gratitude for the annual grants they received to initiate or continue their many programs.

Volunteering for the Saginaw Community Foundation has been an interesting, educational experience. Establishing the many permanent funds brought me much heartwarming satisfaction to know that these non-profits can continue their many programs with the help of the Community Foundation's annual grants which will benefit people in Saginaw County and beyond for decades to come."

The greatness of a **community** is most accurately **measured** by the compassionate actions of its **members**

CORETTA SCOTT KING

it takes EACH OF US
For good. For ever.

LUCY R. ALLEN cornerstone fund

Every person's actions matter. When you volunteer your time, shop at a local business, mentor a young person, or simply extend a little kindness, you help build a Saginaw County that is welcoming, resilient, and inspiring. Together, those individual efforts shape the quality of life here, for everyone.

Since 1984, the Saginaw Community Foundation has been the bridge between caring people and the causes that move them most. We're a trusted place to give, to help gifts grow, to partner with nonprofits, to identify community needs, and to bring organizations and individuals together around shared goals.

Lasting change comes from people doing what they can, big or small, and doing it together. When each of us gives what we can, we create a community that thrives today and is prepared for tomorrow.

The Foundation Behind the Work

If you've supported one of the nearly 670 funds we steward, given toward scholarships, backed a vital initiative, or helped keep everyday operations running, thank you. Your generosity is already making a difference.

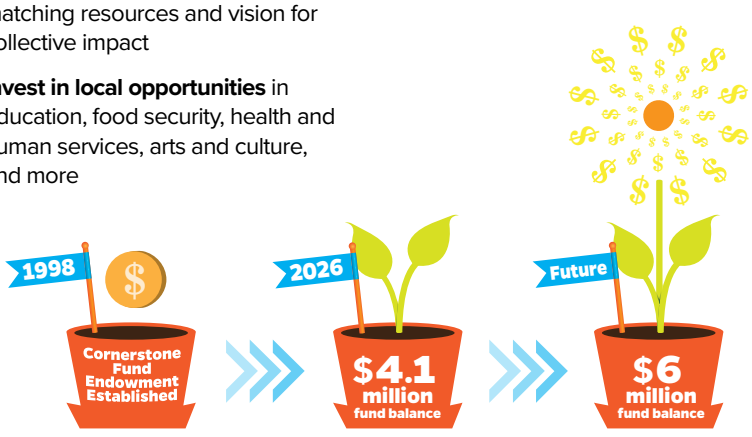
Here's how you can help us keep moving forward: through the **Lucy R. Allen Cornerstone Fund.** This administrative endowment strengthens the Foundation's ability to keep operating and to respond to changing needs across Saginaw County. Gifts to the Cornerstone Fund help us to:

- **Lead by bringing people together**, matching resources and vision for collective impact
- **Invest in local opportunities** in education, food security, health and human services, arts and culture, and more
- **Award over 1,000 scholarships** benefiting more than 600 students, a more than $2.9 million impact in 2026
- **Enable youth voice and action** through programs like FORCE, our youth advisory council, which gives young people real power to shape their future
- **Offer our Youth First Program**, a before-, during-, and after-school educational and character-building resource that helps elevate academic performance for children in our community
- **Uphold the highest standards of trust and transparency**, as an accredited institution with the National Standards for Community Foundations
- **Bring special community initiatives to life**, like the Shine Bright Silo Murals, Garber Tennis Court Reconstruction, and Backpack Buddies

Make an Impact

Every dollar makes a difference. Your gift is a statement of support and belief in our mission to bring people and resources together to build an equitable community and make a lasting philanthropic impact.

If you believe in a more inclusive and equitable community, donate by visiting **saginawfoundation.org/cornerstone**. *It takes each of us* to create a flourishing community, for good, for ever, for all.



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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

DEC 07 Cornerstone Club Open House Reception at The Saginaw Club

DEC 31 Last day to make a 2026 Cornerstone Campaign contribution

JAN 27 SCF Donor Appreciation night at Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds game

JAN 31 Grant application deadline for HSC Care Grants

FEB 01 Grant application deadline for SCF General Grants, Nexteer Steering the Future Grants

FEB 12 SCF General Scholarship Application Deadline

SCF Saginaw community foundation

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For good. For ever.

cornerstone

1 Tuscola St., Suite 100B
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*If you are receiving duplicate copies of **Cornerstone**, let us know, and please pass one on to a friend.*

New Funds Established

The following new funds were approved by the SCF Board of Directors between **Feb. 21 – Nov. 1, 2026**:

Designated Fund
John & Jean Denton Fund

Donor Advised Fund
Katelyn B. Howay Memorial Donor Advised Fund

Community Initiative/Special Project Fund
989ConnectKindness
Friends of Duane J. Fairris Community Center
Her Braids Foundation

Scholarship Fund
Philip A. Grenney Scholarship
Katelyn B. Howay Memorial Scholarship Fund
Kevin R. Kubczak Scholarship
Mike Prezzato Memorial Scholarship
Al & Beth Thieme Entrepreneur Scholarship
The Sigma Excellence Scholarship

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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saginawfoundation.org/donate

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