



# WE ARE GR

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Thanks to the generosity of our advertisers, this newsletter was funded using minimal taxpayer dollars.

## City Offers Wide Range of Engagement Opportunities and Ways to Connect



As city manager, my top priority is to enhance the quality of life in Grand Rapids by delivering outstanding City services. Our success has been enabled by the active and enthusiastic participation of the people we serve – you. In fact, fostering an “Engaged and Connected Community” is one of the six core priorities outlined in our City’s Strategic Plan, which you can find at [grandrapidsmi.gov/StrategicPlan](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/StrategicPlan).

Throughout the year, there are numerous opportunities for you to contribute your voice and ensure that our City government remains responsive to the needs of our diverse community. The City Commission conducts two meetings a month and offers a diverse array of events, including Commission Night Out meetings. Other ways to engage include the Community Master Plan gatherings, National Civic League Public Safety roundtables, biannual National Community Surveys along

with various boards and commissions. We present an abundance of opportunities for you to voice your opinions and perspectives through these various channels.

We recognize that your life can be filled with commitments to family, work, or other obligations. With this in mind, we are committed to providing an extensive range of engagement opportunities and ways to connect with your local government. A few of these opportunities are listed below. I encourage you to participate as your schedule permits, to help maintain Grand Rapids as one of the finest places in the country to live, work, and raise a family.

### Ways to Engage Boards and Commissions

We are fortunate to have more than 360 volunteers from across the city and surrounding areas serving on our 55 boards, commissions and committees. Joining one of them is a great opportunity to expand your voice in your government. These groups play an important role in offering input and reviewing City programs. Some even make recommendations to the City Commission. You can read about our boards and commissions, see the current list of openings and apply at <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-Boards-and-Commissions>.

### Community Master Plan

You are invited to engage in our Community Master Plan (CMP) process, currently underway. A community master plan serves as a comprehensive guide for the future growth and development of a city, outlining goals, policies and strategies for the next 20 years.

Perhaps you already participated in a CMP launch event early this year, but your opportunity to shape the CMP is just getting started. Our process contains four rounds of equitable, inclusive, productive and fun engagement which will be completed in mid-2024. We’ve completed the first round of engagement and are planning second round engagement. A public workshop will take place from 5 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, May 18 at GRPS University, 1400 Fuller Ave. NE.

We will also be at this year’s Neighborhood Summit hosting sessions on the CMP. Visit our website, [bridgetoourfuture.org](http://bridgetoourfuture.org), for more updates.

### Ways to Connect City Commission Meetings

A revised Commission meeting schedule this year – one 2 p.m. meeting and one 7 p.m. meeting each month – provides daytime and evening opportunities to attend and participate in meetings. The new schedule allows those who cannot attend or livestream the traditional evening meetings to now catch at least one per month at a more convenient time. Commission Night Out meetings in the City’s three wards – March 28, June 13 and September 19 – gives us an opportunity to have more City Commission discussions in neighborhoods. A list of meetings can be found at [grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Meetings](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Meetings).

### Correspondence

Although public hearings and the public comment periods during City Commission meetings are the most visible way you can communicate with your local government and elected officials, letters and emails to [info@grcity.us](mailto:info@grcity.us) also are effective ways to connect with the City. You also can send a personal email or call your elected officials directly. Visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Elected-Officials](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Elected-Officials) for each members’ individual accounts.

### 311 Customer Service

Our 311 Customer Service Center (616-456-3000) encourages your calls, questions and feedback weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. 311 is a convenient, single point of contact to make a request for service or for non-emergency government program information. You can also access these services online 24/7/365 at [grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Report-an-Issue](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Report-an-Issue) or through the [grcity311](http://grcity311) app.

### Publications

For those of you who like to keep up with happenings in more traditional ways, our City helps produce this We Are GR newspaper that

is mailed quarterly to every address in Grand Rapids. Please sign up for an e-newsletter tailored to your interest:

- GR Connected is your source for municipal news and special events information: [grandrapidsmi.gov/GRConnected](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/GRConnected).
- The Economic Development News provides the latest development happenings, including projects on the horizon: [growgr.grandrapidsmi.gov/News](http://growgr.grandrapidsmi.gov/News).
- The Office of Sustainability E-Newsletter details the city’s sustainability journey with a focus on the environment: [grandrapidsmi.gov/sustainability](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/sustainability).
- The Parks and Rec Newsletter offers exciting news happening in our City parks, community events and more: [grandrapidsmi.gov/parks](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/parks).
- A Road Construction Update email contains information about road construction projects near you: [grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Road-Construction](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Road-Construction).

### Social Media

Our City also maintains a large presence on social media to share information encourage civic participation. Check out Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn to connect with these great City resources.

### Help us prioritize an Engaged and Connected Community

I hope you consider engaging with one of these opportunities. Be on the lookout for our Annual and Mid-Year Performance reports which share our progress. Engaging with us can increase your understanding of issues and can empower you to better shape decisions that affect your life, your city and neighborhood.

In partnership,

Mark Washington, City Manager

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## Oversight and Public Accountability Improving Outcomes and Relationships through Policy and Programming



The City's Office of Oversight and Public Accountability (OPA) helps create and improve just outcomes and respectful relationships between public safety and community. The seven-member office follows that mission through targeted change, accountability, restorative justice, empowerment, and engagement.

Established in August 2019, the office is the first of its kind in the state of Michigan and serves as the liaison between Grand Rapids' public safety departments and our community. It leads through the lens of the City's Strategic values and its own values of **T.R.U.E. Justice:**

**Transparency** – Always being upfront and honest about what we do and say.

**Responsibility** – Always being accountable and considering the big picture.

**Unity** – Always working to build bridges.

**Equity** – Always advancing just outcomes and

opportunities by leading with racial equity to address the root causes of disparities.

**Justice** – Always operating with integrity and doing the right thing.

OPA began developing its operational policy – available at [grandrapids.mi.us/OPA](http://grandrapids.mi.us/OPA) – for its newly formed office in 2019. It hosted community workgroup sessions which included representation from community members, organizations and City staff. Those sessions reviewed drafts and offered feedback in the development of the policy which stands today.

Since that time, OPA's policy has continued to iterate due to active bargaining between the City and public safety departments and in response to grants of authority and jurisdiction.

Brandon Davis, director of OPA, said establishing the office was unchartered in Michigan and was scoped by researching best practices across the Country. "We were building new ground as it relates to what a new policy should look like and how the office operates along with the laws and rules of the State of Michigan," he said.

Four years later, OPA now has the formalized policy and authority, jurisdiction, and oversight functions of the OPA regarding how it interacts with the Grand Rapids Police (GRPD) and Fire Departments (GRFD) and its role in administering the Civilian Appeals Board (CAB). The office has formally established an analytical framework for auditing Internal Affairs investigations and officer-involved shootings. It also has

established a framework for conducting supplemental investigations for CAB.

In addition to reviewing and establishing City policies, the office also is active in developing social justice programming for the community. In addition to its second "Project Clean Slate" expungement event on May 13 (see story on pg. 3), OPA also provides:

**Community Informed Law Enforcement Training** – a joint initiative between OPA and the Grand Rapids Police Department that allows the community to submit training ideas or proposals for law enforcement personnel. Ideas or proposals should align with OPA's values and strategic priorities.

**I AM THE DREAM: Civil Rights Youth Academy** – an eight-week civic engagement program to equip middle schoolers with the knowledge and skills to become civic leaders in their communities and promote social justice. Students will take a journey through history to highlight policing in America, while engaging in effective dialogue with their peers about how the criminal justice system and judicial system impacts their everyday lives. Sessions, beginning June 1 at the Paul I. Philips Boys and Girls Club, include interactive activities, community presentations and facilitated lessons.

**Know Your Rights Workshops** – are available throughout the year and equip Grand Rapidsians with the knowledge they need to react safely when those rights are violated

by the City's public safety departments. These year-round workshops are designed to be interactive and allow participants to share their experiences, voice concerns and ask questions. Workshops on "Civilian Oversight," "What to Do If You're Stopped by the Police," "Refugee and Immigrant Rights: What to Do If You're Stopped by the Police or Immigration officers," and "Introduction to Criminal Justice: What to Do if You're Arrested, Ticketed, or Searched."

In addition to its policy and programming work, OPA also administers the implementation of Cure Violence in Grand Rapids through the Grand Rapids Urban League. OPA provides primary oversight for Cure Violence implementation to ensure the application of violence interruption and reduction strategies. In addition, OPA serves as the administrative office for the Grand Rapids Police Civilian Appeal Board. The Board reviews findings of the GRPD Internal Affairs Unit, reviews complaints of use of excessive force, falsification and lying, civil rights violations, hostility, discourtesy, conduct unbecoming of an officer, and complaints in the context of racial animosity or prejudice.

Through these measures and others, you can be assured that OPA's professional staff are dedicated and committed to ensuring that all people feel safe and are always safe in Grand Rapids. For more information about OPA or to register for one of its many programs, visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/OPA](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/OPA).

## City Seeking "GRowers" for Summer Jobs Program

Our GRow1000 program is back with a renewed commitment to developing job skills among our city's youth, program enhancements and a new logo. Applications to participate in the teen and young adult summer jobs program are available now for job seekers and the business sector through April 28.

We and area businesses are poised to employ residents from June 12 to July 21 at jobs paying \$13 to \$15 an hour. GRow1000 will offer young people 120-hour work experiences over the course of six weeks.

To participate, individuals must meet the following basic requirements:

- Be between 15 and 24-years-old as of June 12
  - Live in the city of Grand Rapids
  - Be eligible to work in the U.S.
- Youth may apply for the GRow1000

program at [grandrapidsmi.gov/GRow1000](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/GRow1000). Bus passes will be available for upon request.

"I am so pleased that this program continues to engage and train young people in meaningful ways," Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss said. "These young people are getting a head start on a successful and rewarding future which, in turn, contributes to building a talented and educated workforce and robust economic climate here in Grand Rapids."

A series of weekly, paid training seminars each Friday throughout the length of the program called GRow Further Fridays will enhance this year's GRow1000 offering. Each session teaches youth participants professional development topics such as Dressing for Success, Public Speaking, Financial Literacy, Growth Mindset, Customer Service, Post-secondary Success and more.

The GRow1000 program, established in 2020, has employed over 800 youth in meaningful summer jobs at a variety of locations throughout the city. Last summer's GRow1000 program employed 184 youth at more than 50 unique job sites.

As businesses are the key to offering this unique jobs program, GRow1000 has also made enhancements to encourage continued participation, value and support of its business partners. Those service improvements include:

- Easy, two-step weekly timesheet submissions for both employees and employers.
- On-site visits by Our Community's Children staff and GRow 1000 Mentors.
- Electronic GRow1000 Employer feedback forms.

"I want to thank our business partners

and Our Community's Children for their continued dedication and support of this program," City Manager Mark Washington said. "I also want to encourage our youth to take full advantage of this employment opportunity to not only earn money during the summer, but to also develop or enhance a skill they can use for the rest of their lives."

A spin-off of the GRow1000 program – called the GRow1000 Academy – also will return this summer. The GRow1000 Academy, curated by Our Community's Children for the 18 to 24-year-old population, promotes long-term employment thanks in part to a grant from Bank of America. To access the application, visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/GRow1000](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/GRow1000).

Information about the GRow1000 Academy can be accessed through the City's website at [grandrapidsmi.gov/GRow1000](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/GRow1000).



## Office of Oversight and Public Accountability Hosts Clean Slate GR Expungement Program May 13 *“We are doing life-changing work and I am proud to do it.”*

The Office of Oversight and Public Accountability (OPA) and our community partners will host the second annual Clean Slate GR Expungement Program Saturday, May 13. The 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. event – at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, 2500 Division Ave. S, Grand Rapids, MI 49507 – welcomes guests interested in learning more about the State of Michigan’s Clean Slate process.

Preregistration is required. Registration is now open through April 12 at [grandrapidsmi.gov/OPA](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/OPA). The site contains information on event expectations, expungement eligibility, benefits of attending, a participant pre-registration form and a volunteer sign-up form. Those planning to attend this event must use the Alger entrance for parking.

Brandon Davis, director of oversight and public accountability, said he is excited to once again host this event which last year was “amazingly successful in helping more than 500 people navigate the criminal

expungement process. Those efforts gave these individuals – many for the first time – the opportunity to do things like get stable housing and find meaningful employment.

“This expungement program is one of the restorative justice efforts that OPA is implementing to advance equity and justice in our criminal justice and public safety systems. This will make a positive impact on the lives of members of our community, and that is what this work is all about. We are doing life-changing work and I am proud to do it.”

This year’s Clean Slate event will also feature a social equity job program co-sponsored by JARS Cannabis. Multiple felon-friendly employers from inside and outside of the cannabis industry will be present and prepared to offer jobs to Clean Slate participants. Those companies are hiring for various dispensary-based positions, such as budtenders, delivery drivers/curbside specialists, and packagers. JARS will also offer



job readiness training to individuals interested in participating.

Michigan’s “Clean Slate” legislation, signed in 2020, allows Michiganders to expunge eligible criminal records. The law made Michigan a national leader in criminal record-sealing policy and includes an automatic expungement provision that

eliminates certain crimes from personal records as of April 11, 2023. The legislation and its impacts align with commitments contained in the City’s and OPA’s strategic plans to advance equity by identifying systemic issues that cause disparate outcomes in the justice system and implementing strategies to address them.

## DASH Expands Service to More of Grand Rapids

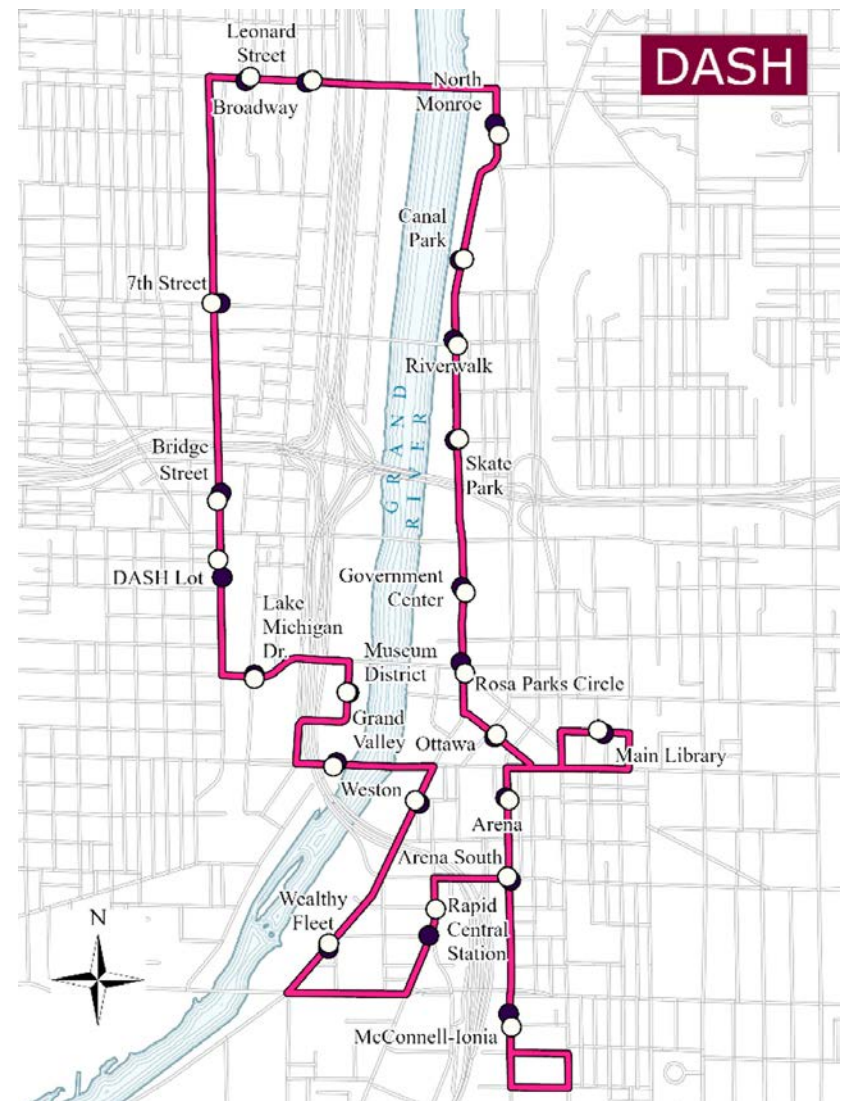
We have some exciting news regarding the upcoming changes to the DASH bus service! The DASH West and DASH North routes are being consolidated into a single route that will cover a larger area of Grand Rapids. New DASH destinations include a Bridge Street stop that connects much of downtown to a grocery store, a Grand Rapids Public Library stop, and Leonard Street and residential district to the downtown area. These changes are accompanied by new evening and Sunday DASH hours.

We listened to community feedback and are making these changes to better serve residents and visitors. The change will take place on Monday, May 8. With the new DASH service going live Wednesday, May 10. Here are some highlights of the upcoming changes:

- The DASH circulator will operate every 15 minutes Wednesday through Friday

– 7 a.m. to midnight, Saturday – 11 to 1 a.m., and Sunday – 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Staff hopes to bring 7-day-a-week service back to the DASH as soon as possible.

- The new DASH loop will run in both directions. That means you can ride it both clockwise and counterclockwise. This allows you to always take the shortest route to your destination.
- The DASH will continue to serve the same core destinations as DASH West and DASH North on the days it operates (Wednesday through Sunday). There will also be several new destinations covered by the new route.
- The last day of DASH West and DASH North service will be Saturday, May 6. The DASH circulator will launch on Monday, May 8.
- A draft service map is to the right. Please visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/DASH](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/DASH) for most up to date map and information.







## Grand Rapids Income Tax Office Offers Extended Hours

Need help filing your income tax return? Our Income Tax Office is here to help – in fact, we are opening on select Wednesdays and Saturdays to help you file your city return.

The office is open 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. the following Saturdays:

- April 15
- April 22
- April 29

The office is open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. the following Wednesdays:

- April 12
- April 19
- April 26

You can also visit the Income Tax office during regular hours Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Be sure to bring your photo ID, the first page of your federal return and any W-2s, 1099s or schedules that you may have.

Walk-ins are welcome, you can make an appointment by emailing [grincometax@grcity.us](mailto:grincometax@grcity.us) or calling 616.456.3415 and selecting option 0.

**Who needs to file?** Residents of Grand Rapids are required to file regardless of where the place of employment is located. Non-residents who work in Grand Rapids are required to file a non-resident return.

**E-file** – Certain e-file vendors do not send the Grand Rapids returns. If you use Turbo Tax or H & R Block you can upload your return to [michigan-grand-rapids.insourcetax.com](http://michigan-grand-rapids.insourcetax.com). You can also use this site to prepare a form or submit a new form.

The Income Tax office is located on the third floor of City Hall, 300 Monroe Ave NW and on the Monroe level. Validated parking is available in the Government Center Parking Ramp off Monroe and Ottawa avenues.

The filing deadline for 2022 City of Grand Rapids income tax returns is Monday, May 1.

## Neighbors to Gather and Collaborate May 20 at the Annual Grand Rapids Neighborhood Summit

The Grand Rapids Neighborhood Summit, Saturday, May 20, brings residents and stakeholders together to learn, strategize and connect to strengthen neighborhoods and belonging in community to make GR a more equitable place to live, work and play.

This year's theme, Co-Creating Belonging, aligns workshops to local efforts and strategies that foster belonging. Topics also include social and political determinants of health. Those can include everyday interactions and systems that impact our health – from housing availability and access, schools, employment and wealth creation, to air quality and other environmental factors. Co-Creating Belonging was inspired in part by the resolutions declaring racism as a public health crisis in Grand Rapids and Michigan. Our community's desire to undo racism, heal the harm it causes, and advance belonging together also drove this year's theme.

Summit features an opening keynote presentation; several workshop options; lunch and lunchtime activities such as a fun photo booth, Zumba, yoga and several thoughtfully curated community resource tables; recognition of Grand Rapids residents for their leadership with Neighborhood Match Fund projects, Anishinaabe opening and closing drum presentation, a Community Celebration to end the day with everyone who makes Summit special – attendees, volunteers, and sponsors featuring free food, music, and new this year a marketplace to support local vendors co-hosted by BIPOC Night Market.

“Summit continues to be one of the

**Save the Date!**

**Your City, Your Voice: Co-Creating Belonging**

**Saturday, May 20, 2023**

**8 a.m. – 4 p.m.**  
followed by a community celebration

**GRCC Leslie E. Tassell M-TEC,  
622 Godfrey Ave SW,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

**Community Celebration/BIPOC  
Night Market:  
@ Roberto Clemente Park 4 – 7 p.m.**  
(Free Food, Music, Refreshments and BIPOC vendors)

[www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Summit](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Summit)

[@GRNeighborhoodSummit](https://www.facebook.com/GRNeighborhoodSummit)

most diverse learning events in Grand Rapids across race, ethnicity, gender identity, and age,” said Stacy Stout, equity and engagement director. “Appreciation for this inclusive space consistently ranks as one of the top themes of event evaluations each year. We welcome residents to join us for Summit as it brings people together from all walks of life, lived experience, 33 neighborhoods and from so many different sectors ranging from corporations to grassroots movements, from early childhood to higher education, from government and business to nonprofits.”

Stout said that new Summit activities

include Spanish workshops, childcare for zero- to five-year-olds, Kids Summit for six- to 12-year-olds, a Teen Track for kids 13+, and a celebration with the BIPOC Night Market at Clemente Park featuring diverse community vendors, free food and music.

To maintain a collaborative energy and to be safe, Summit will limit participation to 400 in-person attendees. While a fully online option will not be offered, some workshops may host online activities.

To register for the 2023 Neighborhood Summit, please visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/summit](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/summit)

## Join our team

Our Grand Rapids Police Department is hiring certified police officers. Lateral transfers or those who will graduate from an academy by August 2023 are also eligible.

If you have a family member, loved one or friend who is in law enforcement and would like to come home to Grand Rapids, the GRPD wants to talk with them and encourage them to join its team of dedicated law enforcement professionals. Applications are open until May 24.

For more information and to apply, scan the QR code or visit [joiningrpd.com](http://joiningrpd.com).



**NOW HIRING**

GRAND RAPIDS POLICE

GRAND RAPIDS POLICE



## FEMA Updates Grand Rapids Flood Maps *Is your home or business in a revised flood zone?*

Earlier this year, the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued new Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Grand Rapids. This is the first time since 1982 – the same year that the film “E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial” and Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” album debuted – that flood maps were updated.

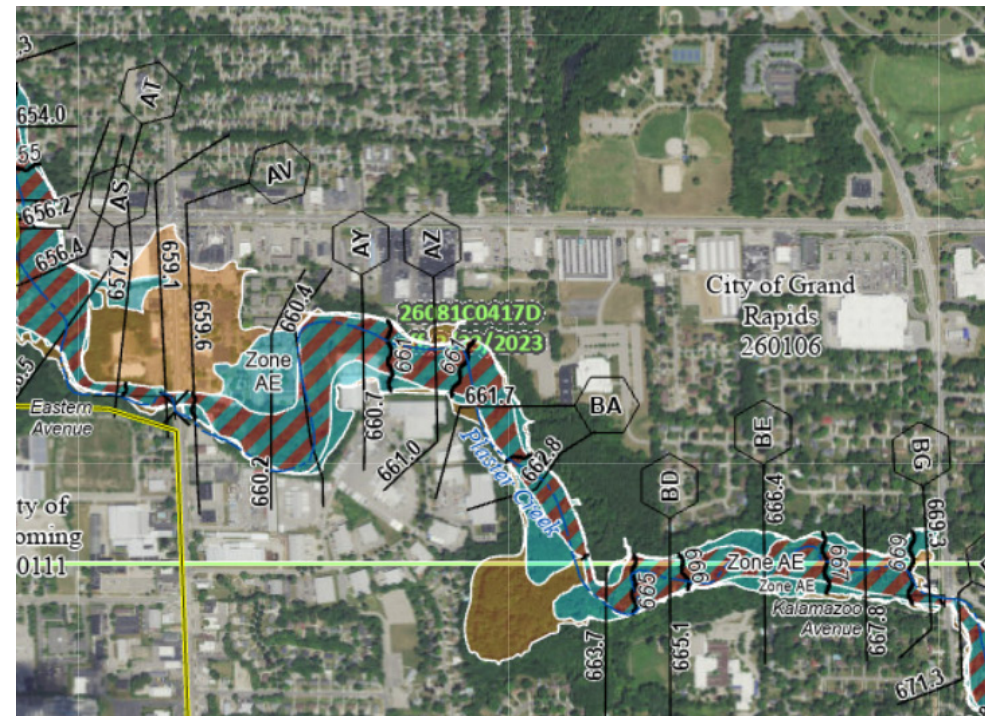
The new digitalized maps outline current flood zones located within the city of Grand Rapids. The maps identify areas that are subject to flooding in what FEMA refers to as a 100-year flood event or a 1% chance event of occurring in any given year. The new maps will help property owners, insurance agents, and mortgage lenders determine whether flood insurance is required at a property.

Emergency Manager Allison Farole said that, while the maps don’t show significant movement of flood zones throughout Grand Rapids, all residents should look at the maps for peace of mind.

“It’s important to stress, that although your home or business may not be in a

floodplain, flood insurance is still available and is the best way to protect your property in case of a flood or rain event,” she said. “Typical homeowners’ or renters’ insurance does not cover damage caused by flooding or rain. According to FEMA, 25% of flood-related claims are from low to moderate flood risk areas. So, it’s important to consider purchasing flood insurance to protect your property and to ensure you can restore your property after a flood or impactful rain events.”

FEMA’s flood maps for the City of Grand Rapids can be found at [msc.fema.gov](https://msc.fema.gov). If your property is based within the 100-year flood zone and has a federally-backed mortgage, your lender will require you to have flood insurance. If you believe your home is mistakenly included in the flood zone you will have to apply for a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) with FEMA. The process for a LOMA can be found here: [fema.gov/flood-maps/change-your-flood-zone/loa-lomr-f](https://fema.gov/flood-maps/change-your-flood-zone/loa-lomr-f).



## Don't go chasing Water Bills

Save time and money by paying your water bill using GR PayIt.

Start making web or mobile payments today and never miss another payment, by downloading GR PayIt in the iOS app store or on Google Play, or create an account at

[payments.grandrapidsmi.gov](https://payments.grandrapidsmi.gov)



SCAN TO GET STARTED!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Neighborhood Match Fund is accepting project submissions throughout the month of JUNE!



Contracts ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 will be awarded for Grand Rapids resident-led projects that are community focused, inclusive and promote a deeper sense of belonging among neighbors.



Learn more at [grandrapidsmi.gov/nmf](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/nmf)



## Six Tips for Spring Safety

We're thinkin' spring, are you? Spring showers bring flowers, but may bring severe weather too. Our Office of Emergency Management coordinates disaster preparedness and planning efforts by strengthening the resilience of our Grand Rapids community. You can strengthen your preparedness by following these six tips to help keep you safe as the blooming season is underway.

- 1. Be informed.** Essential and timely information can make a big impact. Sign up for the Grand Rapids Emergency Alert System at [grandrapidsmi.gov/EmergencyAlerts](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/EmergencyAlerts) to receive notifications regarding weather alerts, water boil notices, evacuation notices and other important messages. Make an emergency communications plan with your loved ones so you know how to reconnect if separated during a disaster.
- 2. Be ready for severe weather.** Spring can bring excessive rain and severe thunderstorms. If the skies look threatening, check to see if a storm watch or warning has been issued. A storm watch means that conditions are possible, whereas a storm warning means conditions are expected or happening. Redundancy is key, get yourself a NOAA All-Weather Radio to stay informed during any severe weather incident.
- 3. Protect you and your loved ones.** Prepare an emergency plan and establish a family meeting area that is familiar and

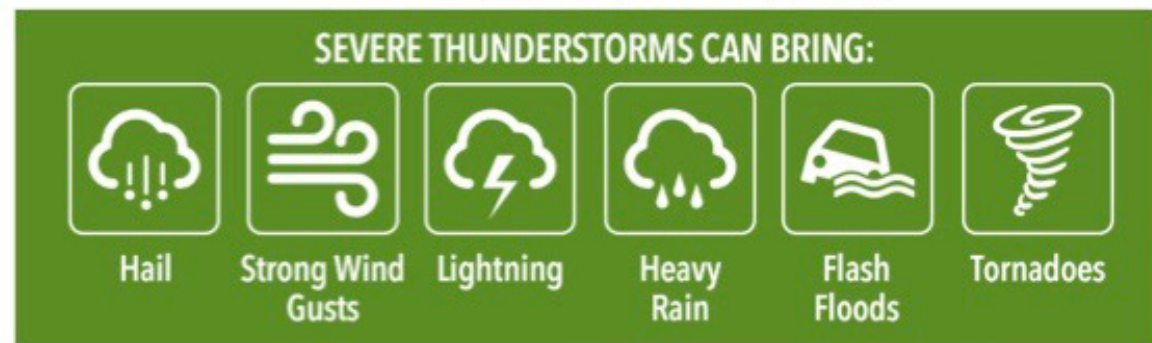


## Spring Weather

### Severe Thunderstorm Safety



When you hear the words "severe thunderstorm" in the forecast, be ready for more than just heavy rain and lightning.



easy to find. Practice sheltering in place with your household and review your evacuation routes should local officials issue an evacuation notice. Practice ensures everyone knows where to go and what to do. Visit [ready.gov/plan](http://ready.gov/plan) for more resources on building your preparedness plan.

- 4. Protect your property.** No home is completely safe from potential flooding and most home insurance policies do not include flood insurance. Talk to your insurance agent about the coverages available and prioritize enrolling now, as

it can take 30 days for a policy to go into effect. If you rent, there is affordable, contents-only flood insurance available, and is recommended to ensure the items inside of your unit are protected in the event of a flood. Visit [FloodSmart.gov](http://FloodSmart.gov) to learn more!

- 5. Spring forward and refresh your safety checklist.** Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Testing should be done once monthly and batteries should be replaced at least once a year. Review and update your individual or family emergency

and restock your home and vehicle emergency kit supplies.

- 6. Spring clean...the safe way!** Household chemicals, paints and poisons should be properly marked and stored under lock and key. Inspect and dispose of any chemical containers that are leaking, expired or appear damaged. When cleaning up hazardous materials, wear proper protective equipment and follow the safety directions on the packaging. NEVER mix chemicals. Put them into the trash or pour them down the drain.

## Free summer Event Offers Resources and Family Fun

For the second consecutive year, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) and the Black Impact Collaborative are teaming up to host "Health and Unity in the Community," a free special event 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, June 23 at Campau Park, 51 Delaware Street SW.

Health and Unity in the Community is open to all and will feature a vaccine clinic, health care, educational and employment resource tables staffed by community organizations, music provided by Mainstreet Association and fun for kids of all ages – games, prizes, face painting, temporary tattoos, sno-cones, popcorn, cotton candy and more.

For more information, including a list of participating organizations, contact GRHC Resident Services Manager Joyce Williams at (616) 970-8265.







# 4 WAYS TO GET ACTIVE THIS SUMMER

Community fitness happening May through September

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>VIRTUAL FEE-BASED</b></p> <p><b>PAGES</b> 7 - 8</p> <p><b>PRICING:</b> \$42 per 8-week class \$37 per 7-week class</p> <p><b>LOCATION(S):</b> Wherever you are! Live on Zoom</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>INDOOR FEE-BASED</b></p> <p><b>PAGES</b> 8 - 9</p> <p><b>PRICING:*</b> \$42 per 8-week class \$37 per 7-week class</p> <p><b>LOCATION(S):</b> Parks and Rec Studio 201 Market Ave SW Garfield Park Gym 2111 Madison Ave SE</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>OUTDOOR FEE-BASED</b></p> <p><b>PAGES</b> 9</p> <p><b>PRICING:*</b> \$42 per 8-week class \$37 per 7-week class</p> <p><b>LOCATION(S):</b> Parks and public spaces across Grand Rapids</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>OUTDOOR FREE</b></p> <p><b>PAGES</b> 10 - 11</p> <p><b>PRICING:</b> FREE, no registration. Just drop in!</p> <p><b>LOCATION(S):</b> Parks and public spaces across Grand Rapids</p>
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\*Add \$10 for nonresidents

\*Add \$10 for nonresidents

**Register online**  
grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr

**Register by phone**  
616.456.3696, option #1

**Register in person**  
201 Market Ave SW

## VIRTUAL YOGA

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<p><b>BASIC YOGA</b> Discover your inner yogi in a class that builds strength and body awareness. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.</p>	MON* WED SAT	5:30 - 6:25 PM 6:00 - 6:55 PM 9:00 - 9:55 AM	VIRTUAL VIRTUAL VIRTUAL	TERRI S. SARA R. SARA R.
<p><b>GENTLE YOGA</b> A balanced practice that will center you, leaving your body feeling open and relaxed. Basic poses and a slower flow unlock body tension, strengthen your core and help you tune into personal peace.</p>	TUE THU	9:15 - 10:10 AM 9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL VIRTUAL	TERRI S. TERRI S.
<p><b>SLOW FLOW YOGA</b> End your weekend and set the tone for the week ahead with this calming and gentle yoga class. Each class will begin and end with a variety of restorative postures, with a slow yoga flow in between. Find a cozy comfortable space, light a few candles, and grab as many blankets and pillows as you can!</p>	SUN	7:00 - 7:55 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<p><b>POWER YOGA</b> This energetic class is designed to build strength, flexibility, and balance! Challenging peak poses, breath to movement flows, and mind body connections will encourage students to find their edge. Modifications are always offered and body awareness is always encouraged.</p>	TUE	6:30 - 7:25 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<p><b>VITAL MOVEMENT</b> Strength, flexibility and balance are vital to our well-being. This class combines yoga stretches and poses (from the chair and standing only), along with light core work. No mat required. Perfect for anyone needing to stretch, improve their range of motion, or modify their practice as they recover from injuries. This class is great for any age, especially those 50+.</p>	WED	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.

\*7-week class



## VIRTUAL DANCE FITNESS

CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)  
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>GENTLE MUSICAL MOVEMENT</b> This 45-minute class encourages freedom for body, mind + spirit while working range of motion, strength, flexibility and balance. Class is created around music and combines simple dance and stretch moves for all body parts. Move your body in ways outside of your daily routine, inviting in both fun and freedom of personal expression. Perfect for all ages, especially those 50+. This class can also be adapted to the chair.	MON*	9:15 - 10:00 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>MINDFUL MUSICAL MOVEMENT</b> Move in new ways, get your heart pumping, and infuse your whole body with joy in this not-so-typical dance class set to a variety of great music. Simple steps designed to work your whole body are provided and you are encouraged to supply the intensity level and flair. Perfect for all levels, all you need is space to move freely.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.

\*7-week class

## INDOOR YOGA

CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)  
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BASIC YOGA</b> Discover your inner yogi in a class that builds strength and body awareness. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.	MON*	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	SARA R.
<b>POWER YOGA</b> This energetic class is designed to build strength, flexibility, and balance! Challenging peak poses, breath to movement flows, and mind body connections will encourage students to find their edge. Modifications are always offered and body awareness is always encouraged.	THU	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	AMY K.

\*7-week class

## INDOOR DANCE FITNESS

CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)  
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BEGINNER BALLROOM DANCING</b> A beginner class targeted toward couples wanting to learn ballroom dancing. Learn the Salsa, Waltz, Foxtrot, East Coast Swing, Cha Cha, Rumba and Tango. <b>Participants must register with a partner.</b>	TUE	8:00 - 9:00 PM	201 MARKET AVE	BYRON D.
<b>SWING DANCING</b> This couples class will focus on West Coast Swing, a fun rhythm dance that can be danced to a wide range of music including rhythm and blues, country western, funk, disco, rock, and pop. In each lesson we will cover basic steps for both lead and follow and one or two new steps each week. No dance experience necessary. <b>Participants must register with a partner.</b>	THU	8:00 - 9:00 PM	201 MARKET AVE	SHANNON B.
<b>ZUMBA</b> Zumba is a high energy, dance fitness class that incorporates Latin and international music. All fitness levels are welcome.	THU SAT	6:30 - 7:25 PM 9:00 - 9:55 AM	201 MARKET AVE	AMY K. & BRI C. AMY K.

## INDOOR CARDIO & STRENGTH

CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED


Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)  
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BARRE</b> Barre is a low impact, high intensity total body workout that incorporates elements of Pilates, Ballet and Yoga. This workout is fast paced and set to fun upbeat music. During the workout you will use light hand weights, resistance bands, and your own body weight. You will complete small range movements at high repetitions meant to fatigue your muscles to build strength and endurance, and then stretch everything out to increase your flexibility. Barre is a great workout for any fitness level as there are options to level up or down based on your own body. Barre is for EVERYBODY.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	KELLY B.



## INDOOR CARDIO & STRENGTH (cont.)


CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<p><b>HIGH FITNESS</b></p> <p>HIGH Low Fitness is an energetic, fun, fitness class that incorporates interval training with pop music, and easy-to-follow fitness choreography. This dance based class produces a high caloric burn and full-body toning through its carefully formulated choreography, alternating between intense cardio peaks and toning tracks. No equipment necessary, and options will be given for all fitness levels.</p>	TUE	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	AHNA S.
<p><b>HIIT EXPRESS</b></p> <p>This class uses High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) to increase your heart rate, strengthen your muscles, and boost your metabolism. Participants will be given 30 seconds to do as many reps of a single body weight exercise as possible. Then rinse, repeat, with a new move! Class will end with mat routines that includes core and upper body strength exercises. All movements will have modified options as well as progressions, allowing each person to decide their own intensity level. All fitness levels welcome!</p>	WED	6:30 - 7:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE	AMY K.
<p><b>KETTLEBELL AMPD</b></p> <p>Kettlebell AMPD is a group fitness format that takes heart-pumping music and kettlebell moves and combines them into a calorie torching fun workout! The program uses lightweight kettlebells, in both traditional and non-traditional ways, to create a fun, effective, full body workout. Combining the benefits of strength training, functional movements and cardiovascular exercise, this program is a safe and effective workout for all ages and fitness levels. No experience necessary!</p>	THU	4:30 - 5:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	MONICA S.
<p><b>PILATES</b></p> <p>Tone muscles, improve posture and learn flexibility and balance. Focus on moving as one unit with control and grace. Improve circulation, endurance and reduce stress.</p>	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM	ZIYAH D.
<p><b>STRENGTH &amp; POWER</b></p> <p>This laser-focused strength class will work all your muscle groups with a variety of exercises to elevate your current routine. It will combine compound exercises to engage as many muscles as possible in a single move, as well as incorporate isolation moves. Modifications and challenges will be offered to make the class appropriate for all levels.</p>	TUE	6:30 - 7:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	AMANDA M.

## OUTDOOR FEE-BASED CLASSES

CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF MAY 8, UNLESS NOTED

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<p><b>NEW! CIRCUIT TRAINING</b></p> <p>The Fitness Court at Ottawa Hills Park is designed to provide a full body workout by moving through seven stations including movements of squat, lunge, push, pull, core, bend, and agility. The movements include variations for all ages and fitness levels. This is a great opportunity to change up your exercise and enjoy the outdoors! Please bring your own mat and water.</p>	MON*	5:30 - 6:25 PM	OTTAWA HILLS FITNESS COURT	MICHELLE D.
<p><b>CYCLING</b></p> <p>Reach your fitness goals while building leg and core strength! Powerful music and pace-setting instruction helps you climb steep hills, move across flat road and master intense intervals.</p>	MON* TUE THU	5:30 - 6:15 PM 5:45 - 6:30 PM 5:30 - 6:15 PM	COLDBROOK AT RIVER'S EDGE (1101 MONROE NW)	CAROL S. MICHELLE D. JULIE S.
<p><b>CYCLING/ROWING COMBO</b></p> <p>Find strength through the power of cycling with fast flats, hill climbs and intervals set to fun music, and then hop off the bike and continue your cardio burn by igniting your upper body with our low impact rowers where you will complete power and intervals.</p>	MON* WED	6:30 - 7:30 PM 5:30 - 6:30 PM	COLDBROOK AT RIVER'S EDGE	CAROL S. CAROL S.
<p><b>PADDLE BOARD BASICS</b></p> <p>In this introductory class (meets twice) we'll provide the basic tips and tricks for navigating and stability on a paddle board. You'll become aware of all the muscles and benefits received. All levels welcome. All equipment is provided. <b>\$25/residents, \$35/nonresidents.</b></p>	JUN 20 & 27 JUL 11 & 18 JUL 25 & AUG 1	7:10 - 7:55 PM OR 8:00 - 8:45 PM	RICHMOND POOL	HEATHER W.

\*7-week class

# FREE OUTDOOR CLASSES

CLASSES RUN FOR 15 OR 17 WEEKS STARTING MAY 15. **DROP-IN, NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED!**

All outdoor classes are weather dependent. Follow us on Facebook @GRParksandRec or call our cancellation hotline at 616.456.3699 for up-to-date cancellation information.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BALLROOM DANCING</b> A beginner class targeted toward couples wanting to learn ballroom dancing. Learn the Salsa, Waltz, Foxtrot, East Coast Swing, Cha Cha, Rumba and Tango.	WED*	7:00 - 7:45 PM	THE BLUE BRIDGE	SHANNON B. & RODNEY B.
<b>BARRE</b> Barre is a low impact, high intensity total body workout that incorporates elements of Pilates, Ballet and Yoga. See full description above in previous section.	TUE*	5:30 - 6:15 PM	THE BLUE BRIDGE	BARRE CODE
<b>BASIC YOGA</b> Discover your inner yogi in a class that builds strength and body awareness. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.	MON THU*	6:00 - 6:45 PM 12:00 - 12:45 PM	MULICK PARK SIXTH STREET PARK	DARCEL S. SARA R.
<b>NEW! GLUTE CAMP</b> Ready to sculpt your glutes and tone your lower body? Glute Camp is a fun body weight rhythmic class! This class will leave you feeling strong, accomplished, and sweaty by incorporating dance fitness, high reps and cardio blasts!	TUE*	6:30 - 7:15 PM	555 MONROE	VAL J.
<b>HIGH LOW FITNESS (LOW-IMPACT HIGH FITNESS)</b> HIGH Low Fitness is an energetic, fun, low impact fitness class that incorporates interval training with pop music, and easy-to-follow fitness choreography. Full description on page 9.	WED	5:30 - 6:15 PM	CHERRY PARK	AMANDA M.
<b>NEW! QK LINE DANCE</b> Enjoy line dancing while exercising mind, body, and spirit. In QK Linedance we dance to all genres of music and everyone is welcome!	THU	7:15 - 8:00 PM	BRIGGS POOL DECK	QUEEN J.
<b>POUND®</b> Using Ripstix®, lightly weighted drumsticks engineered specifically for exercising, POUND® transforms drumming into an incredibly effective way of working out. Instead of listening to music, you become the music in this exhilarating full-body workout that combines cardio, conditioning and strength training with yoga and pilates-inspired movements. Designed for all fitness levels, POUND® provides the perfect atmosphere for letting loose, getting energized, toning up and rockin' out! The workout is easily modifiable, and the alternative vibe and welcoming philosophy appeals to men and women of all ages and abilities.	THU*	5:30 - 6:15 PM	THE BLUE BRIDGE	JANNA S.
<b>SOULFUL MOTION</b> SoulfulMotion is an exciting class of fitness and inspiration. This is a high intensity interval training (HIIT) class set to Christian and inspirational music. Designed for anyone regardless of age or fitness level.	MON	6:30 - 7:15 PM	GARFIELD PARK	AMBER M.
<b>SUNRISE YOGA</b> Add some relaxation to your day. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.	WED	6:30 - 7:15 AM	INDIAN TRAILS GOLF COURSE	DARCEL S.
<b>SUNSET YOGA</b> Add some relaxation to your day. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.	TUE THU	7:00 - 7:45 PM 7:15 - 8:00 PM	LOOKOUT PARK MLK POOL DECK	AMY K. VAL J.
<b>WERQ</b> WERQ is a nonstop cardio dance class with fun and unique routines set to the hottest pop and hip hop music. Participants will get a high calorie burn, and a non stop workout, combining repetitive athletic moves with fresh dance steps. Anyone can WERQ it!	WED	7:15 - 8:00 PM	RICHMOND PARK POOL DECK	JEANNIE W.
<b>ZUMBA</b> Zumba is a high energy, dance fitness class that incorporates Latin and international music. All fitness levels are welcome.	MON* FRI	6:30 - 7:15 PM 6:15 - 7:00 PM	ROSA PARKS CIRCLE ROOSEVELT PARK	AMY K. & BRI C. CECE V.

\*15-week class



# FREE OUTDOOR CLASSES (cont.)

CLASSES RUN FOR 15 OR 17 WEEKS STARTING MAY 15. **DROP-IN, NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED!**

All outdoor classes are weather dependent. Follow us on Facebook @GRParksandRec or call our cancellation hotline at 616.456.3699 for up-to-date cancellation information.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<p><b>30-MINUTE HIIT</b></p> <p>30 minutes is all you need to get a full workout in! This class uses high intensity interval training (HIIT) to increase your heart rate, strengthen your muscles, and boost your metabolism. Participants will be given 30 seconds to do as many reps of a single body weight exercise as possible. Then rinse, repeat, with a new move! Exercises will have modified options as well as progressions, allowing each person to decide their own intensity. All fitness levels welcome!</p>	TUE	6:15 - 6:45 PM	LOOKOUT PARK	AMY K.

## OUTDOOR CLASS LOCATIONS

**555 Monroe** - 555 Monroe Ave NW  
**The Blue Bridge** - Between Front Ave and Campau Ave  
**Briggs Park** - 350 Knapp St NE  
**Coldbrook at River's Edge** - 1101 Monroe Ave NW  
**Garfield Park** - 2111 Madison Ave SE  
**Indian Trails Golf Course** - 2776 Kalamazoo Ave SE  
**Lookout Park** - 801 Fairview Ave NE

**MLK Park** - 900 Fuller Ave SE  
**Mulick Park** - 1632 Sylvan Ave SE  
**Ottawa Hills Park** - 2060 Oakfield Ave SE  
**Pleasant Park** - 620 Madison Ave SE  
**Richmond Park Pool** - 1101 Richmond St NW  
**Roosevelt Park** - 739 Van Raalte Dr SW  
**Rosa Parks Circle** - 135 Monroe Center St NW

FREE CLASSES MADE POSSIBLE BY



## ENRICHMENT & ADVENTURE

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

PROGRAM	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<p><b>TAE KWON DO (AGES 7 - ADULT)</b></p> <p>Learn the basics of the Korean martial art form of Tae Kwon Do. Participants will develop confidence, increase flexibility, concentration, balance, and learn how to defend themselves. <b>\$45/residents, \$55/non for 8-class session, \$40/residents, \$50/non for 7-class session.</b></p>	TUE, MAY 2 - JUN 20 TUE, JUL 11 - AUG 29	6:00 - 7:30 PM Green belts and higher will meet until 8:00 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM
<p><b>BEGINNER PICKLEBALL LESSONS (AGES 18+)</b></p> <p>Learn the basic rules, skills, and strategies needed to play the sport of pickleball! <b>\$25/residents, \$35/non for 4-class session.</b></p>	TUE & THU, MAY 9 - 18	2:45 - 4:00 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM
<p><b>GUIDED KAYAKING ADVENTURES</b></p> <p>Join our GR Outside division for guided kayaking adventures on the Grand River! <b>Family Kayaking Adventures (ages 10+)</b> are relaxed, short trips designed for all abilities and will include safety and paddling instructions. <b>Kayaking 101 (ages 15+)</b> are adventures for first-time or beginner paddlers. Kayaking 101 begins in the Riverside Park lagoon and includes some time on the river. <b>Kayaking 201 (ages 15+)</b> is an intermediate adventure for kayakers looking to strengthen their skills.</p>	MULTIPLE DATES MAY - AUG	VARIOUS	RIVERSIDE PARK OR CANAL PARK


## YOUTH SPORTS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

PROGRAM	DATE(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)
<p><b>SOCCER CAMP (AGES 5-12)</b></p> <p>Participants will learn ball work, dribbling, shooting, passing and control. Skills will be taught using drills, games and competitions. Teamwork, sportsmanship and safety will be emphasized. <b>\$45/residents, \$55/non.</b></p>	MON - THU JUNE 12 - 15	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	MACKAY-JAYCEES PARK
<p><b>FIELD HOCKEY CAMP (AGES 7-12)</b></p> <p>Come out and learn how to play the sport of field hockey! Skills will be taught using drills, games and competitions. Teamwork, sportsmanship and safety will be emphasized. Equipment will be provided. <b>\$45/residents, \$55/non.</b></p>	MON - THU JULY 17 - 20	10:00 - 11:30 AM	ABERDEEN PARK
<p><b>YOUTH TEE BALL &amp; BASEBALL (AGES 4-12)</b></p> <p>Programs include Tee Ball (ages 4-6), Coach Pitch (ages 6-8) and Player/Coach Pitch (9-12). All programs meet for practices and games on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning July 11. Final games will be played on Saturday, August 5. Practices are 1 hour (5:30 or 6:30 pm start time). Baseball/softball glove and athletic shoes are required <b>\$48/residents, \$58/non.</b></p>	TUE & THU JULY 11 - AUG 3	5:30 - 6:30 PM OR 6:30 - 7:30 PM	HUFF PARK OR MACKAY-JAYCEES PARK

## YOUTH DANCE

6-CLASS SESSIONS. \$45/RESIDENTS, \$55 NONRESIDENTS


Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<b>BALLET+TUMBLE+JAZZ (AGES 3-5)</b> This is an introduction to ballet basics using methods designed for young imaginative minds and bodies. Students are given the opportunity to move, stretch, and improve self-confidence while being introduced to basic ballet concepts, body alignment, posture, locomotor skills.	MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19* FRI, MAY 19, 26, JUN 2, 9, 16, 23	3:00 - 3:45 PM 3:00 - 3:45 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<b>YOUTH MOVEMENT (AGES 4-8)</b> This class combines creative movement and basic dance skills. The class focuses on coordination, motor skills, musicality, and overall to get the wiggles out and heart rate up! This non-stop action packed class will include foundations in mostly hip hop and jazz dance, so please wear a pair of clean sneakers or ballet slippers.	TUE, MAY 16, 23, 30, JUN 6, 13, 20	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<b>BALLET TECH +JAZZ (AGES 6-8)</b> Focuses on the fundamentals of ballet technique. The class emphasizes proper placement, vocabulary, etiquette, ballet-based improvisation, and increasing flexibility through center and across the floor exercises.	MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19* FRI, MAY 19, 26, JUN 2, 9, 16, 23	4:00 - 4:45 PM 4:00 - 4:45 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<b>CONTEMPORARY+TUMBLE (AGES 9-12)</b> Exercises focus on increasing flexibility and strength, total body connectivity, and creative problem-solving. This class helps develop flexibility and strength. Its covers rolls, handstands, cartwheels, roundoffs, walkovers, up through backhand springs and more.	THU, MAY 18, 25, JUN 1, 8 15, 22 FRI, MAY 19, 26, JUN 2, 9, 16, 23	5:30 - 6:15 PM 5:00 - 5:45 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<b>YOUTH HIP HOP (AGES 6-15)</b> This is introduction of Hip Hop Dance. We are here to enrich the skills of Hip hop dancers by giving the basic fundamentals while helping the youth express themselves through creative movement. Each student will learn a quality of movements through high energy music including footwork, pop locking, and creative hip hop movement.	MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19*	AGES 6-8 5:00 - 5:45 PM  AGES 9-11 6:00 - 6:45 PM  AGES 12-15 7:00 - 8:00 PM	201 MARKET AVE

\*5-week class

## YOUTH GYMNASTICS

6-CLASS SESSIONS. \$45/RESIDENTS, \$55 NONRESIDENTS


Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<b>PARENT &amp; ME TUMBLE &amp; PLAY (AGES 2-3)</b> Laugh, play, and tumble with your child while creating balance, strength, and learning fundamental movements. Also includes activities and games to get the wiggles out! Required Clothing: leotards, athletic clothing with shirts that can be tucked in, comfortable with stretch.	THU, MAY 18, 25, JUN 1, 15, 22, 29	5:15 - 5:45 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM
<b>GYMNASTICS I (AGES 4-6)</b> For the younger gymnast to encourage success and fun in the gym. Kids learn tumbling and balancing basics with emphasis on strength and flexibility. Required Clothing: leotards, athletic clothing with shirts that can be tucked in, comfortable with stretch.	MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19* MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19* THU, MAY 18, 25, JUN 1, 15, 22, 29	5:00 - 5:45 PM 6:00 - 6:45 PM 6:00 - 6:45 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM
<b>GYMNASTICS II (AGES 7-10)</b> A follow-up to Gymnastics I. Activities increase strength, movement, coordination, agility and flexibility.	MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19* THU, MAY 18, 25, JUN 1, 15, 22, 29	7:00 - 7:45 PM 7:00 - 7:45 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM

\*5-week class

## CHILDREN'S YOGA

6-CLASS SESSIONS. \$45/RESIDENTS, \$55 NONRESIDENTS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jul/Aug opens June 1.

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<b>CHILDREN'S YOGA (AGES 3-6)</b> Children can enjoy and benefit from yoga and mindfulness from toddlerhood through middle school and beyond. These yoga classes will include mindful movement, music, yoga, games, and fun and simple breathwork. This series is designed to be playful while still challenging children to develop their focus, awareness, and movement in new ways. Children will build regulation skills, healthy social skills, and positive self-esteem.	MON, MAY 15, 22, JUN 5, 12, 19*	4:15 - 5:00 PM	201 MARKET AVE

\*5-week class



# BRICKS 4 KIDZ

3-CLASS SESSIONS. \$45/RESIDENTS, \$55 NONRESIDENTS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<p><b>INTERESTING INVENTIONS (AGES 5-11)</b>                      During this unit, students will learn how inventions solve problems. Each week, students are encouraged to think of what they could invent, or improvements they could make to an existing object to solve a problem. So many things we use each day are someone's invention. Introduce your student to the world of ideas, creativity, inventions and patents. We will construct different familiar objects each week such as a hand mixer, windshield wipers and the typewriter. Each model is motorized for maximum movement and fascination! Start creating!</p>	MAY TBD	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<p><b>GAME ON: MARIO EDITION! (AGES 5-11)</b>                      In this interactive class, you will use LEGO® bricks to create and build different characters from your favorite video games. Themes such as Super Mario Bros, Beyblades, and Pokémon come to life through the use of our moving models, all made out of LEGO® bricks. Each session will be a new adventure as the virtual and LEGO® worlds combine!</p>	JUNE TBD	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<p><b>NINJA SPINNING (AGES 5-11)</b>                      LEGO Ninjago™ fans will spin with excitement in this action-packed class! Come build motorized models including spinners using our Bricks 4 Kidz™ model kits. Imagination and creativity will abound as kids build themed models and do battles with their customized arenas, tools, vehicles, and more! On the last day of class, each participant will receive a Ninjago Spinner Crown and stickers to keep!</p>	JULY TBD	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE
<p><b>JURASSIC BRICK LAND (AGES 5-11)</b>                      Put on your hiking boots and camouflage...you're about to enter Jurassic Brick Land! Students will build a world that comes to life with gentle Brontosaurus, terrifying T. Rex, and more. We'll learn about amazing dinosaurs that lived during the Jurassic period. Show us your building skills using our specialized project kits! Come learn, build and play at Jurassic Brick Land class!</p>	AUG TBD	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE

# YOUTH SWIM LESSONS

OUTDOOR CLASSES HAPPENING JUNE THROUGH AUGUST

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

## SWIM LESSON LEVELS

- PARENT CHILD (AGES 6M-3Y)**  
 Introduce water safety and basic swim skills to parents and children. Parents will learn skills to safely work with their child in the water, including how to correctly support/hold them in the water and how to encourage them. Children will gain confidence in the water through games and songs and receive an introduction to swim foundations, like submerging and kicking.
- PRESCHOOL LEVEL 1 (AGES 3-5)**  
 Introduces water safety and basic swim skills. Children will work with instructors to gain confidence, develop positive attitudes around the water, and receive an introduction to swim foundations like submerging, floating, and the movements of front and back crawl.
- PRESCHOOL LEVEL 2 (AGES 3-5)**  
 Builds on the skills introduced in Preschool Level 1. Children will continue to develop a positive relationship with the water while mastering swim foundations like floating, submerging, and the basics of front and back crawl.
- YOUTH LEVEL 1 (AGES 6+)**  
 Youth Level 1 aims to develop positive relationships with the water while mastering swim foundations – like floating, submerging, and the basics of front and back crawl. At the end, participants will be able to perform swim foundations independently or with minimal assistance.

## SWIM LESSON LEVELS

- YOUTH LEVEL 2 (AGES 6+)**  
 Builds on the foundations in Level 1 to support the correct execution of foundational swim skills. Focuses on proper technique of foundational skills to ensure participants are strong and capable in the water independently. Repetition is used to build endurance and muscle memory. Participants will learn how to float, glide and move forward in the water with no support and will continue to develop the foundations for future swim strokes.
- YOUTH LEVEL 3 (AGES 6+)**  
 Aims to increase proficiency of previously learned skills by providing additional practice with an emphasis on technique. Participants will learn and practice survival floating and improve their front crawl, back crawl, breaststroke, and elementary backstroke technique while swimming longer distances. Participants will also learn safe headfirst entries and begin learning the foundations of butterfly. After successfully completing Level 3, participants will have achieved basic, independent water competency in a pool environment.
- YOUTH LEVEL 4 (AGES 6+)**  
 Participants will improve their technique and increase endurance in previously learned strokes. Swimmers will gain better control over front crawl, back crawl, and breaststroke and will continue to learn butterfly foundations. Emphasis will be placed on headfirst entries and swimming underwater to provide the basic skillset for competitive swimming. After successfully completing Level 4, swimmers will be well equipped with the skills needed to transition to a swim team setting.



**Pools and splash pads will open June 9!**  
 Learn more at [grandrapidsmi.gov/aquatics](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/aquatics)



## Visit any of the Grand Rapids Public Library's 8 locations

### Main Library

111 Library Street NE ■ 49503  
616.988.5400

### Madison Square Branch

1201 Madison SE ■ 49507  
616.988.5411

### Ottawa Hills Branch

1150 Giddings SE ■ 49506  
616.988.5412

### Seymour Branch

2350 Eastern SE ■ 49507  
616.988.5413

### Van Belkum Branch

1563 Plainfield NE ■ 49505  
616.988.5410

### West Leonard Branch

1017 Leonard NW ■ 49504  
616.988.5416

### West Side Branch

713 Bridge NW ■ 49504  
616.988.5414

### Yankee Clipper Branch

2025 Leonard NE ■ 49505  
616.988.5415

For more information and hours,  
visit [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org).



616.988.5400 ■ [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org)

## Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May 1 – 31, 2023

Celebrate Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month with the Grand Rapids Public Library!

Join us in May for programs for both kids and adults that highlight and celebrate our Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation, the Grand Rapids Asian Pacific Foundation, and the Wege Foundation.



### Author Talk with Gene Luen Yang

Saturday, May 13 | 1:00 – 3:00pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE  
Registration required: [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Enjoy an author talk with the bestselling writer and artist behind the iconic titles *American Born Chinese*, *Boxers & Saints*, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and many others. The event will be followed by a book signing. Books & Mortar, a local independent bookstore, will be onsite selling copies of Yang's books.

### Japanese American Soldiers of World War II and Their Connection to West Michigan

Tuesday, May 16 | 6:30 – 7:30 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Join GRPL and Jennifer Tompkins, Community Education and History Director of the Grand Rapids Asian Pacific Foundation, to learn about Japanese American soldiers of World War II.

Initially deemed unfit for military service, second-generation Japanese Americans known as Nisei would ultimately become the most highly decorated unit in U.S. military history. Although they mainly came from Hawaii and the West Coast, a handful came from Michigan. This presentation highlights these men and tells the story of the Nisei soldiers of World War II and their connections to West Michigan. Refreshments will be provided following the presentation.

A recording of this event will be available on GRPL's YouTube channel after the experience.



### AAPI Heritage Month Craft Kits

May 1 – 31, 2023 | All locations

Stop by and pick up a free craft kit. These take-home kits include age-appropriate activities and information to celebrate AAPI month. Available while supplies last from May 1 – 31, 2023.

This month's craft kits feature all the tools you'll need to create your own rangoli artwork. This traditional Indian art-form consists of patterns that are created using colored powder.

You'll also find information about Isabella Aiona Abbott, who studied seaweed and was the first native Hawaiian woman to earn a doctorate in science. Create your own paper seaweed seascape and try some edible seaweed for yourself!

## Service Spotlight: Books By Mail



The Grand Rapids Public Library offers a free Books By Mail Program to those who are unable to visit the library due to illness, disability, or old age. Residents of the city of Grand Rapids may participate. The Books By Mail Program provides participants with:

- Delivery to your door or mailbox
- Many current titles and authors, including some in large-print format
- A selection of books-on-CD
- Easy, postage-free return

To qualify for this service you must be a resident of the City of Grand Rapids and unable to come to the library or any of its branches because of illness, disability, or old age. This service is only available to patrons 18 years or older. Learn more by visiting [www.grpl.org/books-by-mail](http://www.grpl.org/books-by-mail).



## Free Events at the Library

### Teen Anime Club

Tuesdays, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8  
4:00 – 5:30 pm | Madison Square Branch  
1201 Madison Ave SE  
Registration required: [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Join Teen Anime Club to talk with other enthusiasts about your favorite anime and manga fandom.

Chat about what you're currently reading and watch movies and TV episodes together! Snacks are provided and attendees can enter a drawing to win a prize. This program is designed for teens ages 13 – 19.

Can't make the in-person event? Join us virtually! Submit an application to join GRPL's private Discord server at [www.grpl.org/discord](http://www.grpl.org/discord).



### Grand Rapids Media Literacy Summit

Saturday, May 13 | 9:30 am – 5:00 pm  
Wealthy Theatre – 1130 Wealthy St SE

Join GRPL, the Grand Rapids Community Media Center, and Wealthy Theatre for a media literacy summit.

At this day-long event, discuss how to access, analyze, create, and evaluate media online, in print, and over the airwaves. Learn more about how different media forms are made, who makes them, and how you can get involved in the process.

10:00 – 11:00 am | News Deserts and the Importance of Local News

11:30 am – 1:00 pm | Media Literacy 101 with Sue Ellen Christian

2:30 – 3:30 pm | Diversity & Representation in Media

4:00 – 5:00 pm | Grassroots & DIY Media

Special thanks to the GRPL Foundation for their support of this program.

### 55th Annual Dyer-Ives Poetry Competition Reception

Saturday, June 3 | 2:00 – 3:00 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

The 55th Annual Dyer-Ives Poetry Competition Awards Reading Ceremony will take place during the annual Festival of the Arts celebration! Enjoy poems read aloud by winners in each category in the Ryerson Auditorium located in the Main Library. Copies of this year's *Voices* publication will be available at the ceremony.

Special thanks to the GRPL Foundation – Dyer-Ives Foundation Poetry Fund for their support of this program.



### Trybrary with Muse GR

Saturdays, June 17, July 15, August 12  
1:00 – 2:30 pm  
Muse GR – 727 Leonard St NW

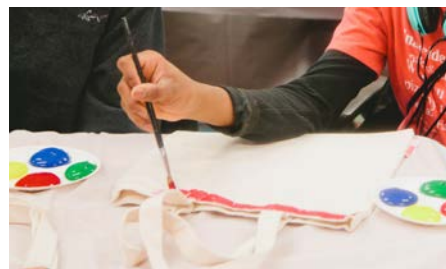
Have you ever wanted to try your hand at a new art project, but didn't have the know-how or supplies? Now is your chance to get creative!

Adult and teen budding artists can try a different art form each month. Each program will feature a local artist giving tips and tricks to master the art project. All supplies will be provided. Space is limited to 15 people on a first-come, first-served basis. This event is designed for teens (11 – 17) and adults.

June 17: Fiber Arts with the Woodland Weavers and Spinners

July 15: Acrylic Painting with Carlos Sampson

August 12: Illustration and Collage with Guin Thompson



### Art Party with Brush Studio

Tuesday, June 20 | 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE  
Registration required: [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Paint your own masterpiece with the help of Brush Studio! At this teen event, an instructor will walk event attendees through the creation of a unique acrylic painting. Materials will be provided and participants get to keep their paintings. For ages 12 – 18.



### Mad Science Mayhem

What happens when you mix baking soda and vinegar in a sealed bag? Can you see sound? What does oobleck feel like? Learn more about explosions, slime, and science in this free event series for ages 6-12 years old. This event takes place outdoors at our Seymour and Yankee Clipper Branch locations and indoors at our West Side Branch. In case of inclement weather, outdoor events will be moved indoors.

Thursday, June 29 | 10:30 – 11:30 am  
Seymour Branch – 2350 Eastern SE

Wednesday, July 19 | 10:30 – 11:30 am  
Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard NE

Thursday, August 3 | 5:00 – 6:00 pm  
West Side Branch – 713 Bridge St NW



### Grand River Walk

Saturday, July 22 | 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
Grand River Fish Ladder – 606 Front Ave NW  
Participants will meet at the Grand River Fish Ladder.

Join GRPL for an afternoon stroll along the Grand River! During this interactive walking tour, local experts will speak about the river's ecosystem and fishery, water protection efforts, and the connection between the Ottawa (Odawa) Native Americans and the river.

Speakers include:

- Addie Dutton, DNR Biologist
- Bruce Ling, River Protector
- Alan Campo, Muralist



### Movies on the Lawn | The LEGO Movie

Friday, July 28 | 8:00 – 11:00 pm  
Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard NE

Bring a chair or blanket and join us for an outdoor family movie! Free refreshments and a take-home craft will also be available. Activities begin at 8:00 pm and *The LEGO Movie* will begin at dusk for best visibility. Event will be weather permitting.

This program is presented in partnership with Wealthy Theatre.

Many of these events are made possible thanks to the support of the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation, Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation – Meijer Fund, Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation – Edsko & Claire Hekman Family Fund, the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, and the Friends of the Library.

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## Author Talks & Book Clubs



### An Evening with Christina Baker Kline

Saturday, June 10 | 7:00 – 9:00 pm  
Fountain St Church – 24 Fountain St NE  
Registration required: [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

GRPL is proud to present an evening with #1 *New York Times* bestselling author, Christina Baker Kline. Best known for her works *The Exiles*, *Orphan Train*, and *A Piece of the World*, Christina Baker Kline is published in 40 countries and is celebrated worldwide. The event will be followed by a Q&A and book signing.

Christina Baker Kline novels have received the New England Prize for Fiction, the Maine Literary Award, and a Barnes & Noble Discover Award, among other prizes. Hundreds of communities, universities, and schools have selected her novels for their “One Book, One Read” programs.

Special thanks to the GRPL Foundation — Vander Veen Center for the Book Fund.



### An Evening with Michelle Zauner

Tuesday, July 11 | 7:00 – 9:00 pm  
Fountain St Church – 24 Fountain St NE  
Registration required: [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

GRPL is proud to present an evening with recording artist and author, Michelle Zauner. Learn more about Zauner’s book, *Crying in H Mart*, and her indie pop band, Japanese Breakfast. The event will be followed by a Q&A and book signing.

As the lead vocalist of the indie pop band Japanese Breakfast and the author of recent best selling memoir *Crying in H Mart*, Michelle Zauner has traveled many roads. Her memoir recounts her personal journey as she comes to terms with the unexpected death of her mother. Growing up in the United States in a mixed-race family, Zauner’s relationship with her Korean mother was often emotionally strained. But their shared love of traditional Korean food served as a bridge for mother and daughter, even through death.

Special thanks to the GRPL Foundation — Vander Veen Center for the Book Fund.



### Popular Pages Book Club

Saturdays, July 15, August 12, September 9,  
October 7, November 4, December 2  
12:00 – 1:00 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Enjoy popular fiction and nonfiction titles selected by GRPL librarians and participate in a discussion about each reading with members of the community and library staff. Book clubs are designed for adults and are a great way to meet new friends, explore real and imagined worlds, and discover new perspectives.

July 15: *Death Is Hard Work* by Khaled Khalifa  
August 12: *In the Dream House*  
by Carmen Maria Machado  
September 9: *Gods of Jade and Shadow*  
by Silvia Moreno-Garcia  
October 7: *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz  
November 4: *There There* by Tommy Orange  
December 2: *Big Friendship: How We Keep Each Other Close* by Aminatou Sow and Ann Friedman

## Summer Reading Challenge: For All Ages

May 29 – September 4, 2023

Join the Summer Reading Challenge! This year the Grand Rapids Public Library invites you to discover new hobbies, interests, and skills through our fun and educational reading challenge designed for all ages.

### Sign up

Sign up online or in-person at any GRPL location to receive your Summer Reading Challenge booklet at the end of May. Follow the challenges included in your summer-themed passport and track your progress by marking pages as you go.

Earn mini prizes for meeting reading milestones and, once you’ve completed all of the challenges in your passport, drop by any GRPL location to get your special badge and pick up your grand prize! Participation is free and does not require a library card. Learn more by visiting [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org) beginning this May.

### Sponsors



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Vander Veen Center for the Book Fund

Michigan Arts and Culture Council

Friends of the Library

### Partners

Vault of Midnight  
Bricks & Minifigs  
Kent County Parks  
We Are Lit  
Schuler Books  
Books & Mortar



## Free Summer Storytimes



### Outdoor Storytimes

Mondays, May 15, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18 | 10:30 am  
Lincoln Park – 231 Marion Ave NW

If you love stories, songs, and rhymes, join the Grand Rapids Public Library for a chance to get the wiggles out with your friends at the park on Monday mornings! Storytime Kits are available for every child to take home while supplies last. For ages 0 – 5 years.



### Storytime on the Lawn

Join us outside at select GRPL locations for this storytime on the lawn! Participants are encouraged to bring a blanket or chair. In case of inclement weather, this event series will be moved indoors. For ages 18 months – 5 years.

Wednesdays, June 7 – 28, July 12 – August 9  
10:30 am | Seymour Branch  
2350 Eastern SE

Thursdays, June 8 – 29, July 13 – August 17  
10:30 am | Yankee Clipper Branch  
2025 Leonard NE

### Family Storytime

Parents and caregivers are invited to bring their children to this storytime featuring great books, songs, fingerplays, and hands-on fun. Classes end with an art activity and playtime designed to help your child's brain grow. For ages 0 – 5 years.

Mondays, June 5 – 26, July 10 – August 14  
6:30 pm | West Leonard Branch  
1017 Leonard NW

Tuesdays, June 6 – 27, July 11 – August 15  
10:30 am | West Side Branch  
713 Bridge St NW

### Summer Celebrations with StorytimeGR

Join GRPL and StorytimeGR for stories, book giveaways, free snacks, craft activities, lawn games, and so much more! This festive event is designed for families. StorytimeGR is a partnership of the Grand Rapids Public Library, Read GR, Grand Valley State University, and the Grand Rapids Office of Special Events.

Tuesday, June 13 | 6:30 – 8:30 pm  
Martin Luther King Park  
1200 M.L.K. Jr St SE

Tuesday, July 18 | 6:30 – 8:30 pm  
Roosevelt Park – 1340 Godfrey Ave SW

Tuesday, August 8 | 6:30 – 8:30 pm  
Lincoln Park – 231 Marion Ave NW



### Storytime in the Park with StorytimeGR

Tuesdays, June 6 – August 29 | 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
Garfield Park – 2111 Madison SE

Join StorytimeGR and partners on Tuesday nights for stories, free books and ice cream, special guests, and a whole lot of family fun!

StorytimeGR is a partnership of the Grand Rapids Public Library, Read GR, Grand Valley State University, the Grand Rapids Office of Special Events, and Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation.

Many of these events are made possible thanks to the support of the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation, Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation – Meijer Fund, Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation – Edsko & Claire Hekman Family Fund, the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, and the Friends of the Library.

## Branching Out at GRPL: West Leonard Branch



### Introduction

The West Leonard Branch occupies a space that originally housed a Mr. Fables restaurant. In 2002, the opening of the West Leonard Branch of the Grand Rapids Public Library marked the end of the library's ambitious project to introduce more library locations into the community. This active branch boasts large windows, a welcoming children's play area, and a vast collection.

### The Beginning

Library reports and plans indicated a desire for a branch in this neighborhood as early as 1909. Despite being close to the West Side Branch, the West Leonard neighborhood is a distinct area that the library recognized as needing its own branch. The proposed location shifted west along Leonard Street over the years, from the area of Broadway Avenue to Alpine Avenue and then finally Tamarack Avenue. The construction of the Interstate-196 highway through the neighborhood in the 1960s only increased the desire for an additional branch library on the West Side.

### Plans Move Forward

GRPL went through a major planning phase in the 1990s, which led to the construction of the West Leonard Branch. In 1993, an operational millage was passed which provided enough funding for the

library to fully staff existing branches. In 1996, the library board approved a plan for branch locations after seeking community feedback. This plan included a new branch near the intersection of Leonard Street and Tamarack Avenue NW. In 1997, citizens passed another millage, this time to generate \$12.8 million for building renovations and construction projects. The Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation also committed to raising \$8 million in private funds for the project.

### Plans Begin

In 2001, the library purchased 1017 Leonard Street NW for the new West Leonard Branch. Construction began later that year. Mr. Fables restaurant was located at the site from the 1960s through the 1990s.

### Grand Opening

On September 4, 2002, a grand opening celebration was held at the new West Leonard Branch. The \$1.2 million building offered 10,000 square feet and plenty of space for kids, teens, and adults.

### Present Day

Today, the West Leonard Branch sees a diverse cross-section of Grand Rapids residents. Many patrons walk to the library daily to read, visit with staff, and use computers. Computer access, WiFi, and printing are in high demand at West Leonard Branch. Even during the pandemic, over 100 public computer sessions were provided each week.



April 2023 | Section B

Early Childhood: 5

F.A.C.E. : 7

Athletics: 10

## GR Board of Education Set to Vote on Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan and Ballot Proposal in July

In December 2022, the Grand Rapids Board of Education voted unanimously to approve the GRPS Facilities Master Plan, an extension of the 2022 GRPS Strategic Plan - Strategic Theme #6 (“Create a culture of trust, collaboration and stewardship”). This included seven key points:

- Ensure sustainability and align with the Strategic Plan by aiming for an average 75% utilization across the district, with an emphasis on elementary and middle schools.
- Enrollment and utilization rates to be assessed annually to ensure Facilities Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and Academic Plan implementations are improving measurable strategic outcomes.
- Relocation of scholars and staff will be implemented to preserve programs, prioritize equitable access and improve learning environments of our schools.
- Be responsive and transparent with our community by producing a Facilities Master Plan calendar that includes continual stakeholder engagement and communication milestones on a regular basis.
- Providing continuation of funding for the implementation of the Facilities Master Plan through a capital program initiated in November 2023.
- Use district assets for community benefit by seeking out partnership opportunities for vacated schools and sites once program replacements have been identified. In these partnerships, GRPS would prioritize property ownership with future asset decisions.
- Reduce current operating costs and resource inefficiencies by leveling Kensington and reducing financial responsibility for Alexander during fiscal year 2023.

With feedback from the Grand Rapids Board of Education, this led to the development of a timeline that included additional engagement prioritized for internal and external

partners who were not well represented in the data from the fall 2022 engagement efforts on the Facilities Master Plan as well as engagement with SW residents on the Kensington options. The goal was for the data from the engagement efforts to inform recommendations and a draft plan to present to the board in May.

“Based on input from the board, cabinet, central office and school leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, and community partners, we heard very clearly that we need more time for engagement, more time to develop the plan, more time to engage the board and we need to change the name so that it is more inclusive of the collective input that is shaping the plan,” said Dr. Leadriane Roby, Superintendent of Schools.

To that end, the name of the plan changed to Reimagine GRPS with Us! and the timeline shifted with final presentation and vote on the vision and plan framework and the ballot language for the ‘no-new-tax’ bond proposal now scheduled for the July 17 BOE meeting.

“It is important to note that the board will be voting on just the vision, framework, bond budget allocation for the Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan and the ballot language for the November 7 election,” said Dr. Roby. “It will not include specific facilities or school buildings that may need to be closed, consolidated, repurposed, renovated or constructed. The outcome of the ‘no-new-tax’ bond vote will play a significant role in shaping the final recommendations for facilities which will be developed after the November 7 election.”

GRPS is considering a November 7 ballot proposal that would extend the existing voter-approved tax rate of 3.85 mills by 20 years which would generate \$290 million for the Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan. The 3.85 mills are a combination of the two different bond proposals that were approved by voters in 2004 and 2015. This is not a new tax nor is it a tax rate increase – it is a property tax rate that taxpayers are currently paying.

The following is a tentative timeline that outlines the sequence of actions that will happen between now and the end of 2023. This schedule does not include all committee

## OUR CHILDREN, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FUTURE

### REIMAGINE GRPS *with Us!* PLAN FRAMEWORK AND BOND PROPOSAL

#### APRIL

- 18** Academic Committee Meeting: Academic Visioning Work Update
- 19** Ad Hoc Facilities Committee: Kensington Public Hearing update, Housing/Community Use Research Proposal

#### MAY

- 8** BOE Work Session: Overview of Internal/External Engagement Scope of Work
- 22** Finance Committee: First review of bond budget

#### JUNE

- 9** Last Day of School
- 12** BOE Work Session: Presentation of Eureka Group Internal/External Engagement Report
- 20** Academic Committee Meeting: Internal/External Engagement Report Review/Discussion, recommendation for proposed PK-12 Structure
- 21** Ad Hoc Facilities Committee: Discussion on Housing/Community Use Research
- 26** Finance Committee: Final review of bond budget

#### JULY

- 10** BOE Work Session: Presentation of Draft Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan Vision, Framework and Bond Ballot Language
- 17** BOE Vote on Reimagine GRPS with Us! Vision, Framework and Bond Ballot Language

#### AUGUST

- 15** Deadline for Clerk to Certify Ballot Language

#### SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

Informational Education Communication on Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan and Bond Proposal

#### NOVEMBER

- 7** Election Day
- 13** BOE Work Session: Review of election results, update on Reimagine GRPS Plan and Timeline
- 14** Academic Achievement Committee: Review recommendations for Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan
- 15** Ad Hoc Facilities: Review recommendations for Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan
- 20** Public Hearing on Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan BOE meeting
- 27** Finance Committee: Finalize Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan budget

#### DECEMBER

- 4** BOE meeting: Vote on Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan and Budget
- 11** BOE Work Session: Review communications and implementation plan and timeline for January-December 2024

and BOE meetings. The intent is to provide context for key votes that will take place on July 17, November 7, and December 4 that

will inform the Reimagine GRPS with Us! Plan development and implementation.



## 1,000+ Scholars Attend African American Male Achievement Conference

*Back in person for the first time since 2020, the annual event helped scholars consider challenges, choices and changes.*

Emmanuel Armstrong stood on the gym floor at Grand Rapids Community College, a broad smile on his face as behind him more than 1,000 GRPS scholars in grades eight through 12 began to take their seats for the 2023 edition of the African American Male Achievement Conference.

As they settled in, Sultan Muhammed, the School to College Coordinator at Innovation Central High School, stood up on the stage, took to the microphone and welcomed the attendees.

“This is a day off from school, young brothers,” he said as he scanned the room. He paused for a beat and then continued. “But it is not a day off from knowledge. Today, we are going to be talking about challenges, choices and changes. In every challenge we face, we have a choice to make. We can embrace the challenge, or we can run away. If we choose right, if we have the right attitude, we will make changes for the better. So, I encourage you today to be present. We believe in you, and we want the best future for you.”

Armstrong, the counselor coordinator for GRPS, said that Muhammed’s words were part of a larger theme for the day, a theme that began already even before the event’s first formal words were spoken.

Indeed, as buses dropped them off and scholars came into Ford Fieldhouse, they walked through a receiving line of sorts, a line made up of African American men from throughout the community, many of whom would also be leading later breakout sessions.

The receiving line greeted each scholar with fist bumps and hugs and smiles and words of encouragement, and that positive energy carried over into every aspect of the 2023 event.



*Fist bumps, smiles, hugs and more as scholars entered Ford Fieldhouse for the event*

For example, in a video produced by GRCC and set in a local barbershop, young and old people discussed issues of leadership, respect on the streets and even the value of a 401k with wisdom coming from both the scholars and the self-described OGs – those elders respected or regarded for their insights and their example.

Elijah Taylor, a senior at Museum High who has a four-year college scholarship awaiting him, watched the barbershop video with a smile on his face and then picked up on some of those same themes. He talked to his 12th-grade peers, but also those next grades coming up, about his approach to life, including his podcast and its ongoing emphasis on knowledge.

“Knowledge is everything,” he said in a clip from his podcast that played on the big screen. “Don’t chase the money, chase the knowledge.”

And Grand Valley senior Abdul Cisse spoke movingly about his own journey as a young Black man, including his emigration to the U.S. from Somalia at the age of 4, and the impact on him of the death of his older sister from tuberculosis.

“She never got a chance to show up,” he said. “Never got a chance to see her little brother do what he was born to do.”

He encouraged GRPS scholars to never take a day for granted but to show up, to put the extra work in and to define what success would look like for their own life, not based on anyone else’s ideas about success.

“One day the life you’re dreaming of right now, you’re going to wake up and it’s going to be the life you’re living in,” he said.

In addition to the variety of speakers, the Alger Middle School Drumline brought energy and enthusiasm with both original songs and covers, setting just the right tone for Abdul’s talk and then the 100 or so breakout sessions that took place throughout Ford Fieldhouse, including dozens led by members of the Grand Rapids Urban League, one of the event’s lead organizers, as well as representatives from GRPS, GRCC, GVSU, the City of Grand Rapids and more.

Afterward, Armstrong reflected on the event and its value to GRPS scholars.

“The event can serve as a bridge between the generations,” he said simply. “It provides an opportunity for young men and adults to connect with each other, for the young men to gain a chance to get the advice that will be necessary to be successful in life.”



*Elijah Taylor, a senior at Museum High*



*Emmanuel Armstrong, the counselor coordinator for GRPS*

Grand Rapids Public Schools

**WE ARE GR**

April 2023

Grand Rapids

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Title IX Annual Athletics Compliance Report: Grand Rapids Public Schools is committed to securing athletic equity and provides annual Title IX reporting to the athletes and parents in an effort to bring increased attention and resources towards ensuring that gender equity as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments for 1972, Grand Rapids Public Schools annual report is available at [www.grps.org](http://www.grps.org).

To comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teachers.

Please contact Micky Savage, Director of Human Resources, in Human Resources via email [savagem@grps.org](mailto:savagem@grps.org) or at (616) 819-2028.

**WE ARE GR**

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## Museum Middle School Scholars Turn Chip Bags Into Blankets

*Art teacher Cloe Hadley and her eighth-grade scholars collected old chip bags and made them into heat-reflective king-sized blankets, partnering with Mel Trotter Ministries to get them to people experiencing homelessness*

Old potato chip bags are now warming blankets for people experiencing homelessness in Grand Rapids thanks to scholars at Museum Middle School.

Art teacher Cloe Hadley and her eighth-grade students are behind the project which sees them convert some 100 empty chip bags into one king-sized blanket after lots of planning and labor (the foil inside the bag turns the eventual blankets into an inexpensive reflective heat source, while the outside of the bags helps the blankets stay waterproof).

Hadley said she stumbled across the Crisp Packet Project in the United Kingdom (crisp is the British term for a potato chip) and she knew immediately that it was a perfect fit for the Museum School.

Over winter break, she began reaching out to schools in our district, and other surrounding districts, to begin collecting chip bags with the aluminum inside. And as she collected bags, she started prototyping how to join the many to form one, using an iron, ironing board and wax paper.

She recalled those early experiments.

“I found this process to be instant gratification as I watched the prototype grow bigger,” she said.

And she knew what she was feeling would translate to her Museum School scholars.

“I was so excited because I knew that as they started, they too would feel a sense of contribution and reward,” she said. “And beyond that, they would get to do the sort of research and prototyping that is a prime example of the design process at work that is a hallmark of Museum School.”

Still, she said, when she first unveiled the idea, many of her scholars were hesitant.

“They seemed really unsure of the process and the hundreds of chip bags around us,” she recalled with a broad smile. “But as soon as each table was given a role, the scholars got totally engaged, and it was an all-hands-on-deck moment in the classroom. This was beautiful to see how the kids were immediately jumping into action to make a difference for our community.”

As the project proceeded, Hadley and her

scholars connected with Aaron Edwards at Mel Trotter Ministries who came to the school to investigate the blankets and see if they’d be a fit for the folks Mel Trotter serves.

“He was so excited,” Hadley said. “And so, we became official partners.”

Indeed, the blankets were dropped off at the front end of a nasty patch of weather in Grand Rapids, Hadley said, so the timing was perfect, and the blankets were gone within an hour.

She said that scholars were moved by the experience of taking discarded chip bags and turning them into something tangible for people who have so little.

Jakari Vanlente told MLive/The Grand Rapids Press that he often sees homeless people along his route to school. “I see them wearing a hat and coat that doesn’t have any fur in it,” he added. “There are a lot of people who are cold out there, especially since it’s very cold outside. Even though the blanket doesn’t have any fur on it, it traps the heat in so you can feel warm.”

And Angie Cifuentes told MLive reporter Melissa Frick that though the project was a lot of work, she and her fellow scholars felt good about being part of something bigger than themselves.

“Even if I don’t know them, a stranger, just to know that I could be helping someone else makes me really happy,” she said.

Hadley said she already is planning for next January with a goal to partner with schools within GRPS to make 75 blankets.

“I’m extremely proud of my scholars and our school and district,” Hadley said. “We used art for the purpose that I live for. Art is a tool for restoration and a way to bring justice to the areas of injustice in the world around us. The scholars got to see the power of using art for good.”



## Asbestos Notice

Asbestos is a general name for a group of naturally occurring minerals composed of small fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. The mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of the building occupants is endangered. When left intact and undisturbed, asbestos-containing materials do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is, however,

the potential for exposure when the material becomes damaged or disturbed. Because of these problems associated with asbestos exposure, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act, or AHERA emphasizes that asbestos in school buildings must appropriately be managed.

The Grand Rapids Public Schools has an asbestos management plan that addresses contact persons, training, inspections, response

actions, operation and maintenance activities, periodic surveillance, cleaning, disclosure efforts, and school building areas containing asbestos. Any person may review the management plan at the Grand Rapids Public School’s Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503, during regular business hours (8:00 am to 4:00 pm). Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan by writing the Grand Rapids Public

Schools Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503. There is a cost involved in reproducing the document of approximately 10 cents per page. The Grand Rapids Public Schools will send a copy out of the management plan within 5 business days of receiving the request



## Annual Latinx Youth Conference Returns In Person this Year

*The Latinx Youth Conference returned in-person this year with more than 800 West Michigan students at the GRCC Ford Fieldhouse. The day was filled with learning, empowerment, and representation targeted toward 8th-grade scholars gearing up for high school.*

The Latinx Youth Conference (LYC) was organized by the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan together with other organizations in the community to provide exposure to tools for scholars to reach their greatest potential. For the last two decades, this event has empowered scholars from districts all over West Michigan.

With over 100 volunteers and dozens of workshops to choose from, this event was definitely one to remember. Some of the workshops included Health & Wellness, Post Secondary Education, Banking for Today, and Latinidad.

This year, Lea Tobar and Dr. Juan Olivarez, founders of the Latinx Youth Conference, were recognized with awards. Lea Tobar is a retired Grand Rapids Public Schools employee with over 40 years of service to our district. Lea still plays an active role on the planning committee and continues to connect with GRPS families to provide them assistance with enrollment, resources, and much more.

Dr. Juan Olivarez served as the eighth president of Grand Rapids Community College from 1999 to 2008. He was the first Hispanic

president of any college or university in Michigan. As an active leader in the Hispanic/Latinx community, Dr. Olivarez continues to inspire our youth to believe that anything is possible with hard work, determination, and grit.

The LYC awarded four students \$1000 scholarships to pursue their education, including two GRPS scholars. The scholars were required to submit an essay based on the following four categories: Capture and Image, Art & Culture, Be a Storyteller, and List of Accomplishments.

Keyla Arcos-Lopez, an eighth grader at Grand Rapids Museum High School, received the Be a Storyteller scholarship. Areia Lopez, an eighth-grade student at Southwest Middle High School Academia Bilingue received the Art & Culture scholarship.

This year's keynote speaker was Lupita Infante. Infante is a Mexican-American, Grammy-nominated musical artist. She was born in Los Angeles and is the granddaughter of the renowned artist, Pedro Infante. Infante earned her bachelor's degree in Ethnomusicology (world music) from the University of California Los Angeles. She worked



Scholars attend Latinx Youth Conference at GRCC Ford Fieldhouse

as an Uber and Lyft driver in order to pay for her education. Through her music, Infante highlights her Mexican heritage and continues her family's musical legacy.

"I would say this is a great event for our Latino students. They don't see or have many opportunities to connect with Latino leaders and so our goal is to provide that space to these

eighth graders to see themselves," Evelyn Esparza, executive director of the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, told WOOD TV8.

GRPS is a proud sponsor of the annual LYC and is committed to continuing to support our scholars to be leaders and change agents in the community and beyond.



Keyla Arcos-Lopez (Grand Rapids Public Museum Middle School) - \$1000 scholarship recipient



Scholars attend Latinx Youth Conference at GRCC Ford Fieldhouse



Areia Lopez (Southwest Middle High School Academia Bilingue) - \$1000 scholarship recipient





## Learn More about Great Start Readiness Program for Preschool Scholars

*The All GRPS preschool locations will open their doors to prospective parents and scholars on Friday, April 28 for the Preschool Here I Come open house event.*

Jennifer Newberg, a preschool teacher at CA Frost Environmental Science Academy Elementary, is in her 7th year at her current school and 15th year of teaching in GRPS.

“I love preschoolers’ curiosity and enthusiasm for learning,” she said. “It’s so fun to learn alongside them and see where their interests take them during the school day. We get to play every day.”

Over at Aberdeen Academy, preschool teacher Tammy Johnson is in her 41st year of teaching and, like Newberg, still loves the joy and energy that her young scholars bring to her classroom each day.

“I love my preschoolers’ excitement and spontaneity for all things,” she said. “They are so eager and willing to try. And I think that people would be surprised to the extent that preschoolers are such able learners about everything.”

That last comment is an important one said Kelly A. Gerlinger, the GRPS Director of Early Childhood Programs.

“Learning in a Grand Rapids Public Schools preschool prepares children to be successful in kindergarten and beyond,” she said. “Preschool is the essential first step in a child’s lifelong education.”

GRPS preschool is part of the Great Start Readiness Program, a state-funded, full-day free preschool program for qualifying four-year-old children. It includes both an approved curriculum and an assessment tool called COR, or Child Observation Record, where teachers collect data three times a year and check on the progression that the children are making.

The curriculum, Gerlinger added, is a newer one and approved by the State of Michigan. It’s well-researched and developmentally appropriate for preschool-aged children. It also has been

adopted by all of Kent County so that children who might start out at one program and then transition to another program, continue to receive the same high-quality education.

GRPS offers its full-day preschool Mondays through Thursdays on the same bell schedule at 24 elementary schools in Grand Rapids.

Each of those 24 locations will open its door to prospective parents and scholars on Friday, April 28 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for Preschool Here I Come, an open house event intended to allow parents to meet teachers, see the classrooms and learn more about what GRPS can offer their preschooler. Families who are in the application process will also be able to drop off any needed forms (things like immunization records) at any of the GRPS preschool locations they might choose to visit on April 28, and GRPS staff will make sure those forms get uploaded to the family files online.

Gerlinger said that during the pandemic preschool numbers in GRPS and across the county dropped but are starting to rebound now. The district had just over 500 preschool scholars this year and is hoping to see that number go over 600 next year, part of the reason for the open house event on April 28.

Aberdeen’s Johnson and CA Frost’s Newberg can’t wait to talk to parents about what their children will experience in GRPS schools.

“The Great Start Readiness Program is such a wonderful first experience for families to give their child,” said Newberg. “All of our district teachers are excited to form a partnership with families.”

Johnson agreed.

“Preschool is a wonderful age,” said Johnson. “They want to learn and soak up all the knowledge and experiences that we provide for them in a play-based, whole-child-centered curriculum.”

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESENTS

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**HERE I COME OPEN HOUSE EVENT**



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GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**2023 GRADUATION SCHEDULE**  
 HOSTED AT HOUSEMAN FIELD

SCHOOL/PROGRAM	CEREMONY
<b>Monday, May 22, 2023</b>	
City High Middle School	5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Grand Rapids Learning Center (Ceremony will be held at GRCC Applied Technology Center)	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
<b>Tuesday, May 23, 2023</b>	
CA Frost Middle High School	5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Innovation Central High School & Grand Rapids Montessori	7:00 PM – 8:00 PM
<b>Wednesday, May 24, 2023</b>	
Ottawa Hills High School	5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Grand Rapids Public Museum High School	7:00 PM – 8:00 PM
<b>Thursday, May 25, 2023</b>	
Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy	5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Union High School	7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Questions? Email [RitsemaL@grps.org](mailto:RitsemaL@grps.org).

# GRPS



## FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Parent University

If you haven't already, explore the Parent University website at [parents.grps.org](https://parents.grps.org). This newly designed website contains academic and community resources, trending news, a monthly online magazine, and so much more.

In April's edition of Power Parent Magazine, you will find great resources that focus on SMOOTH GRADE LEVEL TRANSITIONS.

### Power Parent Magazine

Check out April's edition of Power Parent Magazine.

- How can you prepare your little one for preschool? Find out in Jump to Pre-K.
- Learn about the kindergarten transition process in To and From Kinder.
- In 3rd Grade Guide, discover how to support your scholar throughout this monumental grade level.
- Transitioning from elementary school to middle school is difficult. Read about this shift in Graduating Elementary School.
- Middle and High School Transitions focuses on how to support middle schoolers as they transition to high school.
- If you need advice on how to support scholars following high school graduation,

then you will find 12th Grade and Beyond very helpful.

### Parent University Calendar - April/May

#### Dig Into SEL

These Social & Emotional Learning Workshops will provide strategies to nurture scholars' social-emotional needs and interpersonal skills. Register at [parents.grps.org/events](https://parents.grps.org/events).

- TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023 – 9:30-10:30 am – Virtual
- WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023 – 6:00-7:00 pm – Coit Creative Arts Academy (617 Coit Ave. NE)
- THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023 – 6:00-7:00 pm – Burton Elementary/Middle (2133 Buchanan Ave. SW)

#### Mental Wellness Series - Talking to your kids about mental health

Parent University has partnered with Network180 to provide interactive mental wellness workshops. These workshops will provide helpful mental health information and strategies to support scholars and caregivers. Dinner and childcare will be provided at each in-person session! Register at [parents.grps.org/events](https://parents.grps.org/events).

- TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH - MAY 3, 2023 - 4:30-6:00 pm – Dickinson Academy (448 Dickinson St. SE)
- SELF-HARM & SUICIDE PREVENTION - MAY 10, 2023 – 5:00-6:30 pm – City High Middle School (720 Plainfield Ave. NE)



- USO Y ABUSO DE SUSTANCIAS (SPANISH ONLY) - MAY 16, 2023 – 9:30-11:00 am – Southwest Middle High (327 Rumsey St. SW)
- SUBSTANCE USE & ABUSE - MAY 17, 2023 – 3:00-4:30 pm – Westwood Middle School (1525 Mt. Mercy Dr. NW)

### PALS - Parent Action Leaders

The PALS attended their 3rd quarterly meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2023. During the meeting, they worked with Jenni Brasington, Director of Consultative Services for Scholastic's Family and Community Engagement, about ways to advocate and create equal partnerships for all GRPS schools and families. Ms. Brasington will continue this work with the PALS over the summer.

### Taste Buddies

The GRPS FACE and EL department, in partnership with Abriendo Puertas, facilitated a culturally responsive, Spanish-speaking TASTE BUDDIES for Buchanan Elementary School families. Abriendo Puertas, a national program that builds parent leadership skills and knowledge, fit perfectly into TASTE BUDDIES. Program participants learned about healthy bodies and minds, the importance of physical activity, and balanced nutrition. Each participating family made Arroz Con Pollo, a traditional dish of Latin America.



## GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## Harrison Park Scholars Interview U.S. Rep. Scholten for Documentary Project

*A partnership with the West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology sees sixth-grade scholars working on a video documentary and podcast around the question “How do we see ourselves within the community?”*

A visit to Harrison Park Academy by Representative Hillary Scholten not only allowed sixth-grade scholars there to meet their Congresswoman but also to interview her as part of a documentary project they are working on in partnership with the West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology or WMCAT.

The visit was exactly what sixth-grade teacher Maximilian Young had hoped it would be when the initial planning began, and, he added, it was illustrative of what the partnership between Harrison Park and WMCAT has been all about for the past four years.

“WMCAT has been one of the best neighborhood partners we could ask for at Harrison,” Young said. “They make education fun and show scholars that learning can be done not just in the classroom, but through activities that they want to do. This can be video production, graphic design, watercolor, photography, game design and more. And we are honored to be the youngest group they work with because they primarily work with teenagers and young adults.”

A 2017 graduate of Michigan State, Young is now in his fifth year at Harrison Park and helped put the partnership with WMCAT in place in his second year. One of the powerful places of connection has become WMCAT’s Arts + Tech programming which includes Daytime Studios – field trips, workshops and semester-long arts and technology experiences.

This year, Daytime Studios gave Young’s Harrison Park scholars an introduction into some basic video skills, after which they began to discuss how to put those skills into action around the topic of “How do we see ourselves within the community?”

His sixth graders landed on the idea of politics. Specifically, they were interested in interviewing someone in politics as part of a video documentary project and podcast. So, Mike Saunders, WMCAT program manager, reached out to Rep. Scholten’s team through her website, Scholten said yes, and the visit began to take shape.

Young said one of his goals for the visit was for his scholars to be able to explain what community means to them and how they can use art and technology to express themselves. They also created their own interview questions that they wanted to ask Rep. Scholten for the documentary and podcast.

The visit left an impression, Young said. “What my scholars took away most was that this was a person with the power to make change,” he said. “But the visit also allowed them to see her as a person that they can communicate with directly and have their voice actually heard.”



The visit also made an impression on Young and reinforced everything he loves about teaching. “I want to build lifelong learners who know how to succeed both inside and outside the classroom,” he said simply.

Heather Thompson, Harrison Park principal, agreed.

“This was such an amazing experience for our scholars,” she said. “Students asked great questions, and Rep. Scholten was so excited, she wants to come back. She also invited our eighth-grade scholars who are going to (Washington) D.C. to take a tour with her while they are there.”

Because of the success of the Scholten visit, Young and the WMCAT staff now have their sights set on guest speakers for the seventh- and eighth-grade students too. The seventh-grade students are focusing on sports and hoping to bring a player from the Grand Rapids Gold to their campus, while eighth-grade students are focusing on education and hoping to invite Michael Rice, superintendent of public instruction for the state.

Megan Lorenz, director of communications + strategy for WMCAT, said that at the end of May, WMCAT will be hosting an exhibition showing all Harrison Park student work from this year’s Daytime Studios, including the final project featuring Rep. Scholten.







## Union High School Football Program Prepares Youth for a Future in Athletics

*Union High School football team hosts a youth football camp for scholars in grades 2-7.*

The Union High School football program is all about connecting athletes and having grit, and they decided to take that to the next level by hosting their first off-season youth football camp this year. Coached by the Union High School football team and staff, scholars in grades 2-7 were welcome to attend. In total, over 75 youth athletes participated.

“One thing I’m trying to develop at GRPS is taking our older scholars and having them understand who the younger scholars are,” said Don Fellows, Union’s head varsity football coach.

Fellows aims to get to know younger scholars who are performing well in their academic setting and have a passion for football. His goal is to build a comprehensive, community-based football program for scholars in grades K-12. He knows he needs to do that by creating programs for scholar-athletes at all grade levels.

Two years ago Fellows helped launch a youth football program that continues to show success. This fall, the 3rd and 4th graders went undefeated and the 5th and 6th graders won half of their games. The 7th and 8th grade middle school team also finished without a loss. In many ways, this success was led by the high school football team, who are also showing improvements on the field and in the classroom. The high school players are demonstrating a commitment to the program, and they are sharing that passion with younger athletes. That is why, Fellows believes, he saw success at the elementary, middle, and high school levels of the program.

This year, Fellows added, there are 90 high school scholars playing football at Union. Four of them are scholarship scholars, who excel beyond expectations in the classroom, and several of their teammates are ranked in their classes. Nearly all of this year’s football team has above a 3.0 GPA as

well, Fellows said.

Fellows wanted to show the younger athletes who they can become if they continue working hard in the classroom and practicing football each year. He brought out a talented sophomore scholar, Syncere Hobson, to speak to the audience about his experience as a football player at Union. Syncere is ranked as a top offensive lineman in his class.

“Football itself can only take you so far, but school can take you further,” said Hobson. “School takes you through the rest of your life.”

Scholars were able to ask Fellows and his team questions about academics and becoming a successful scholar-athlete in the near future. The team answered each question thoroughly, explaining to the youth that practice comes second

to education, grit is a necessary part of being an athlete, and respecting your teammates and others around you is an essential part of being on the team.

Following opening remarks, the football camp kicked off with warm-ups and a team huddle. Don Fellows and Andrew Stoddard, the 5th and 6th grade football coach, hyped up the teams and got them excited to practice new skills. Exercise drills ranged from tackling to catching, hiking the ball to throwing a proper pass.

“My job is to take these younger scholar athletes to these camps for exposure,” said Fellows. “They will be community leaders in our town and this will get them there.” While exposure camps might be the ultimate high school goal, giving kids opportunities to play now is the first step.

“We want to make sure our scholars get an opportunity like every other scholar gets,” said a passionate Fellows. “I hope everyone feels that way in our football community.”

Fellows also organized a flag football program that will launch this spring, and the Union High School team will be coaching. There will be an offensive and defensive coordinator leading each youth team, and the season will culminate in a league tournament hosted by the varsity program. Youth, middle school, and high school tackle football will return again in the fall.

For more information about Union Youth Football, please reach out to Megan Persons ([personsm@grps.org](mailto:personsm@grps.org)). For more information about middle and high school football, please contact Don Fellows ([fellowsd@grps.org](mailto:fellowsd@grps.org)).



*Union High School head football coach Don Fellows speaks to youth audience*



*Members of the Union High School football team*



## Ottawa Hills Alumni Scholar-Athletes Return for a Hall of Fame Recognition

*1989 girls basketball state champion team and 19 Ottawa Hills alumni were recognized for their athletic achievements during their high school years.*

Ottawa Hills alumni scholar-athletes returned to their alma mater during the second Hall of Fame event in mid-February. During halftime of the boys' varsity basketball game, they walked across the court and were recognized for their past awards and accomplishments achieved during their high school athletic career.

The event kicked off with a Meet & Greet, where friends and families could speak with the past scholar-athletes personally and learn about their history in a variety of athletics.

Later in the evening, the Hall of Fame ceremony began, and the room filled with the cheers of Ottawa students, families and staff.

The 19 new inductees and the 1989 girls' basketball state champion team were recognized for their varsity letters, All-City honors, and other athletic awards along with the amount of time they had spent in sports, whether that be as successful teammates or team captains or coaches. Many individuals continued with their athletic careers after high school, and their accomplishments during that time were also recognized.

"It's a reunion, but also an honoring of what that group or individual was able to accomplish in the past," said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Brandy Lovelady Mitchell, an alumni scholar-athlete from



*All Ottawa Hills Hall of Fame inductees after the ceremony*

the 1989 girls basketball state champion team.

Dr. Lovelady Mitchell recalled a decade ago when members of the championship team met at Ottawa Hills during halftime of one of the girls' basketball games. That was the first time they had seen each other since high school, and she remembered feeling inspired that the team was back together again in the same location that they practiced in years ago. Last week, this moment happened for a second time.

"The Hall of Fame ceremony is a great milestone for the legacy work of sports at GRPS," said Dr. Lovelady Mitchell. "Our legacy work is hopefully setting the stage for more girls to be able to participate in that way and have opportunities for the next level athletically and academically."

At the Hall of Fame ceremony, members of the 1989 team were able to embrace each other and celebrate that they were back together once again, 34 years later. Each teammate proudly held up their Hall of Fame plaque with smiles on their face.

This event not only inspires the current athletes of Ottawa Hills, but it establishes a sense of community among GRPS. It is a unique opportunity for different generations of Ottawa Hills athletes to come together, make connections, and leave a legacy.



*Ottawa Hills alum Heather Dutcher Williams walks across the stage with her Hall of Fame plaque*



*Eric Large and Brittina Williams after receiving their Hall of Fame plaque and walking across the court*



*Ottawa Hills alumni catch up in conversation after receiving their Hall of Fame plaque*

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GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESENTS

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APRIL 19—MAY 11

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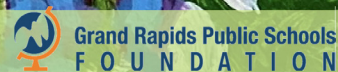
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April 20 5:00—7:00 PM | GRPS K-5 & K-8 Schools

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GALLERY HOURS | APRIL 19—MAY 11 8AM—8PM (MON—THU)

8AM—5PM (FRI)





## Immunization Reminder

Attention GRPS Parents!

Did you know certain immunizations are **REQUIRED** for your child to attend public school in Michigan? If you have an incoming preschooler, kindergartner, or 7th grader for the 2023-2024 school year, the summer is a perfect time to ensure they are caught up on their immunizations.

If you need assistance finding an immunization location, or scheduling an appointment, you can contact the following:

- Your child's school nurse - call your school building and ask to speak directly to the health office staff. The GRPS nurses can help you identify an immunization location and help set up an appointment.
- Cherry Health School-Based Health Centers - call one of the three GRPS

school-based health centers to schedule an immunization appointment.

- Innovation Central High School: (616) 776-5120
- Union High School: (616) 791-6593
- Ottawa Hills High School: (616) 776-5110
- Kent County Health Department: clinics are available throughout Kent County. You can make an appointment for immunizations by calling (616) 632-7200.

## PARENTS VACCINES REQUIRED FOR SCHOOL ENTRY IN MICHIGAN

Whenever children are brought into group settings, there is a chance for diseases to spread. Children must follow state vaccine laws to attend school. These laws are the minimum standard to help prevent disease outbreaks in school settings. The best way to protect your child from other serious diseases is to follow the recommended vaccination schedule at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines). Talk to your health care provider to make sure your child is fully protected.

	All Kindergarteners and 4-6 year old transfer students	All 7th Graders and 7-18 year old transfer students
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP, DTaP, Tdap)	4 doses DTP or DTaP 1 dose must be at or after 4 years of age	4 doses diphtheria and tetanus or 3 doses if 1st dose given at or after 1 year of age 1 dose Tdap at 11 years of age or older upon entry into 7th grade or higher
Polio	4 doses 3 doses if dose 3 was given at or after 4 years of age	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)*	2 doses at or after 12 months of age	
Hepatitis B*	3 doses	
Meningococcal Conjugate (MenACWY)	None	1 dose at 11 years of age or older upon entry into 7th grade or higher
Varicella (Chickenpox)*	2 doses at or after 12 months of age or Current lab immunity or History of varicella disease	

During disease outbreaks, incompletely vaccinated students may be excluded from school. Parents and guardians choosing to decline vaccines must obtain a certified non-medical waiver from a local health department. Read more about waivers at [www.Michigan.gov/Immunize](http://www.Michigan.gov/Immunize).  
\*If the child has not received these vaccines, documented immunity is required.  
All doses of vaccines must be valid (correct spacing and ages) for school entry purposes.



Updated December 11, 2019

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# HIRING EVENT

Registration closes on Monday, May 15. Walk-ins are welcome.

Visit [grps.org/hiring](http://grps.org/hiring) to register.

## A CAREER WITH IMPACT IS WAITING!

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2023  
3:30 – 6:30 PM  
GRPS University  
1400 Fuller Ave NE Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Contact Talent Development, Retention & Diversity Recruitment Manager  
Adriana Almanza at [almanzaa@grps.org](mailto:almanzaa@grps.org)  
or (616) 819-2027 with any questions.

**Open Positions Include:**

- Teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Child Care Workers
- Custodians
- Public Safety/Security
- Food Service
- Secretaries
- Bus Drivers
- LOOP
- School Social Workers
- Counselors
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Nurses

NOW OPEN!

# THE POWER OF POISON

THE POWER OF

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM

Be curious.

[grpm.org](http://grpm.org)



# NEIGHBORHOOD ENROLLMENT NIGHT

## LEARN MORE ABOUT SCHOOLS NEAR YOU AT OUR UPCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS!

We're hosting events to share important information with parents and guardians. Meet school staff from neighborhood schools, ask questions, and have some fun as you learn about GRPS.

ENJOY FREE FOOD

TAKE HOME GIVEAWAYS

MEET SCHOOL STAFF

DROP OFF PRESCHOOL DOCUMENTATION

GET ENROLLMENT ASSISTANCE

- SOUTHWEST REGION**  
Wednesday, May 17, 5:00-6:30 PM  
Hispanic Center  
1204 Cesar E. Chavez Ave. SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
- SOUTHEAST REGION**  
Thursday, May 18, 5:00-6:30 PM  
LINC Up  
1167 Madison Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507
- NORTHWEST REGION**  
Tuesday, May 30, 5:00-6:30 PM  
Steils Center  
235 Straight Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
- NORTHEAST REGION**  
Wednesday, May 31, 5:00-6:30 PM  
GRPS University  
1400 Fuller Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505



(616) 819-2000  
www.grps.org

