



# WE ARE GR

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October 2024 | Vol. 22 | Issue 2 | Section A

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## MSU, Grand Rapids schools partner for new teacher prep pipeline

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Michigan State University and Grand Rapids Public Schools, or GRPS, will launch the inaugural Community Teachers cohort in October 2024. The initiative will help future educators start their careers sooner and will culminate in full-time teaching job offers in a GRPS K-12 school upon program completion.

Fifteen students are in the pilot cohort. They can complete the program – and become a teacher – at no cost to them thanks to a gift from a private donor.

“We want to reach high schoolers who care about high-quality teaching and have a commitment to those in the community in which they live,” said Gail Richmond, director of MSU’s Teacher Preparation Program and one of the leaders of the Community Teachers initiative. “This program is intended to reduce the financial barriers to getting a teaching degree and certification.”

High school seniors throughout GRPS are dual enrolled at MSU, taking entry-level courses. Upon high school graduation, the 15 students can attend MSU for four years or enroll in Grand Rapids Community College and then transfer to MSU. While in MSU’s Teacher Preparation Program, participants will intern in GRPS.

“As educators, we strive to cultivate the seeds of knowledge within our community,” said Leadriane Roby, superintendent of schools for GRPS. “This program serves as the fertile ground, nurturing aspiring teachers from Grand Rapids, shaping them into the future stewards of education for Grand Rapids Public Schools. Together, we’re not just growing teachers; we’re nurturing the roots of our community’s educational legacy.”

### Supporting future stewards

The GRPS partnership is ideally just the beginning of Community Teachers, say MSU leaders.

“This inaugural GRPS cohort is serving as a pilot model for planned and hoped-for collaborations across Michigan,” said Kimberly Arsenault, MSU associate professor and Grand Rapids-area program director for the Community Teachers initiative.

She noted several other school districts around the Grand Rapids area are invested in the initiative and are working through initial steps to formalize establishing cohorts in those districts.

“This important initiative can continue, in GRPS and beyond, through continued partnerships and philanthropic support,” Arsenault added.

The collaboration aligns with complementary MSU and statewide initiatives to address teacher recruitment challenges. For example, MSU’s Teacher Preparation



Program moved from a five- to a four-year model, saving students more than \$16,000 in tuition and preparing teachers faster. The Michigan Future Educator Stipend, offered by the MI Department of Treasury, also supports students pursuing teaching careers.

GRPS students in the pilot cohort have already started work in MSU classes. Even

early into its programming, they can see results and have hope for the future.

“TE 101 [an introductory course on teacher education] taught me in-depth societal history I was unaware of,” said GRPS student Barrett Vernon. “More people should be taking advantage of the Community Teachers opportunity.”

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## Ribbon Cutting Held for the Biggest Renovation in GRPS History

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Standing tall since 1911, Innovation Central High School has been revitalized by a three-year, \$40 million renovation, ensuring it will continue educating the children of Grand Rapids for another century.

Grand Rapids Public Schools celebrated the first day of school by hosting a ribbon cutting celebrating the completion of the project.

“This is no longer just a monument to our past, it has become a beacon of our future,” GRPS Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby told those at the ceremony. “It’s where history and innovation converge, and every scholar who walks through these doors is inspired to shape the world of tomorrow.”

“These walls have nurtured some of our city’s greatest minds, including First Lady Betty Ford and astronaut Roger B. Chaffee,” explained Innovation Central Principal and Central High graduate Derrick Martin. “With this renewed commitment to excellence, I have no doubt that the list of change-makers who call Innovation Central High their alma mater will only continue to grow.”

Innovation Central High School is the oldest continuously operated high school in Michigan. The \$40 million investment is the final project paid for by a 2015 voter-approved bond.



Project highlights include restoring the exterior of the building to its 1911 look with masonry improvements and 400 new, larger windows. The windows increase the amount of daylight in classrooms by 7,600 square feet.

“I believe the building’s exterior now looks as good—if not better—than it did when it first opened in 1911,” said GRPS Executive Director of Facilities and Operations Alex Smart.

Interior renovation work focused on creating environments for scholars to succeed, including new classroom technology, LED lighting, and a new HVAC system. The project also included a new safe and secure entrance.

“Our newly updated classrooms are truly a breath of fresh air,” said Grand Rapids Montessori Principal Kerri Reed.

The Grand Rapids Montessori Middle-High School program is located within Innovation Central. “With more natural daylight and enhanced flexibility, these spaces are better suited to the Montessori method of teaching, providing our students with an environment that fosters creativity and independent learning.”

Phase one of renovations for the Betty Bloomer Ford Auditorium were completed, restoring the architectural features of the historic space. A new sound and lighting system will be completed during the 2024-25 school year, preparing the auditorium for scholar performances.

“Thank you to everyone who played a part in making this transformation a reality,” said Alethia Bettinghouse, a senior at Innovation Central High School. “Your dedication to our school inspires us to aim higher and achieve more.”

### Grand Rapids Public Schools

**WE ARE GR**

October 2024

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 Christi Atwood, Director of Human Resources, in Human Resources via email [atwoodc@grps.org](mailto:atwoodc@grps.org) or at (616) 819-2095.

WE ARE GR is published four times per year by GRPS Communications Office  
 Grand Rapids Public Schools  
 1331 MLK Jr St. SE, P.O. Box 117  
 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501  
 Phone: (616) 819-2149 Fax: (616) 819-3480  
[www.grps.org](http://www.grps.org)

Luke Stier, *Director of Communications + Community Liaison*

Evan Linnert, *Communications & Visual Content Mgr.*  
 Kaitlyn Califf, *Webmaster+Multimedia Designer*  
 Lynn Ritsema, *Project Coordinator+Web Editor*  
 Damary Lofgren, *Bilingual Communications Coordinator*

# GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS APPLY TO A THEME SCHOOL

**The Theme School Application will open in January 2025!**

We are proud to offer a variety of school options for families, including both neighborhood and theme schools. Each theme school offers a customized curriculum focused on a unique "theme," such as environmental science, dual immersion, arts and music, skills training, Montessori, International Baccalaureate, and more!

**All theme schools require an application. Select schools have admissions requirements. Seats are limited.**

ROUND 1 SELECTION	ROUND 2 SELECTION
<p><b>Application Submission:</b> January 6, 2025 through February 14, 2025</p> <p><b>MAP Testing (if needed):</b> February 4 and February 6, 2025 (4-7PM)</p> <p><b>Deadline to Request Round 1 Changes:</b> April 11, 2025</p>	<p><b>Application Submission:</b> March 3, 2025 through April 11, 2025</p> <p><b>MAP Testing (if needed):</b> April 1, 2025 (4-7PM)</p> <p><b>Deadline to Request Round 1 Changes:</b> May 23, 2025</p>
ROUND 3 SELECTION	ROUND 4 SELECTION
<p><b>Application Submission:</b> April 28, 2025 through May 23, 2025</p> <p><b>MAP Testing (if needed):</b> May 20, 2025 (4-7PM)</p> <p><small>*No requests for changes accepted during Round 3.</small></p>	<p><b>Application Submission:</b> June 9, 2025 through July 4, 2025</p> <p><small>*No MAP testing. No requests for changes accepted during Round 4.</small></p> <p><small>Please note that round 4 occurs during the summer, when seats are extremely limited and building staff are on recess. Updates and communication will not be available until August 2025.</small></p>

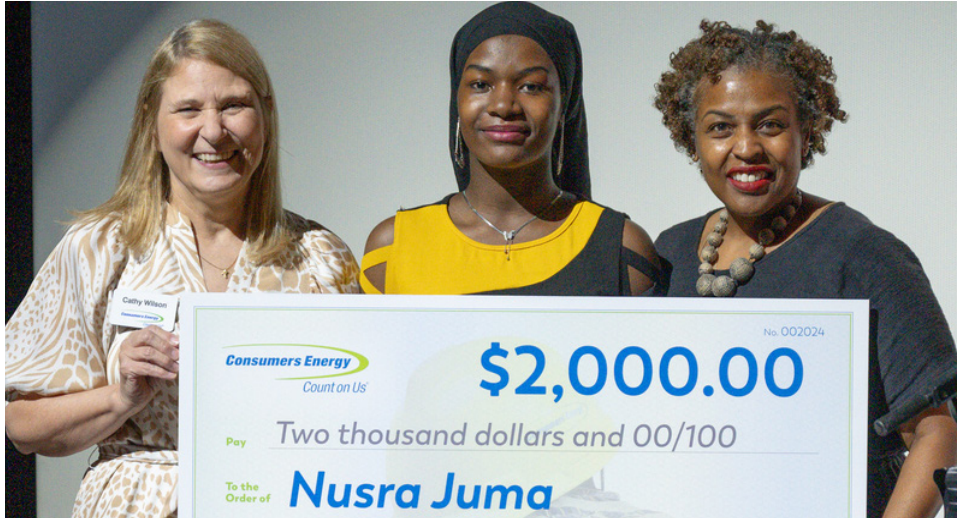


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## Ottawa Hills Junior Claims Top Prize at Smartart Competition



GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Nusra Juma, a junior at Ottawa Hills High School, has been awarded the top honor at the 2024 SmartArt Awards for her artwork titled “Earth Balance.”

Juma received a \$2,000 scholarship and an Apple laptop, provided by Consumers Energy, during the awards ceremony held at Celebration Cinema’s Studio Park. The top ten finalists were also recognized with various prizes, including Apple laptops, iPads, and Meijer gift cards.

Angie Cifuentes, a sophomore from Museum High School, won the People’s Choice Award for her entry, “Left for Dead.” This award was determined by public vote and highlights the community’s appreciation for her work.

The 20 finalist artworks are currently on display at Grand Rapids City Hall, located at 300 Monroe Ave. NW, and will be featured there until September 28. Additionally, the top ten winners are showcased on a large banner outside the Consumers Energy electric substation at the corner of Fulton Street and Market Avenue, making their work highly visible to ArtPrize visitors.

This collaborative initiative between Grand Rapids Public Schools, Consumers Energy, and ArtPrize is dedicated to encouraging young artists to explore sustainability themes through their creative projects.

“Our scholars’ creativity, dedication, and commitment to sustainability are truly inspiring,” said GRPS Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby. “The fact that their work is being celebrated on such a large stage, with the support of Consumers Energy and ArtPrize, speaks volumes about the

power of combining education, art, and environmental awareness. This competition is a remarkable example of what’s possible when young minds actively engage with the world around them.”

“We are proud to support the SmartArt competition and the rising talent of young artists coming from GRPS,” said Cathy Wilson, Consumers Energy’s executive director of corporate giving. “Consumers Energy is committed to a sustainable energy future for generations. The creativity these students show in their artwork highlights our shared passion to keep our Earth in top shape.”

### The 20 finalists, listed alphabetically, are:

- **Samya Alford**, 10th grade, Innovation Central High School
- **Keyla Arcos-Lopez**, 10th grade, Museum High School
- **Emily Barrios**, 12th grade, Southwest Middle High School
- **Ingrid Bott**, 10th grade, City High Middle School
- **Angie Cifuentes**, 10th grade, Museum High School
- **Jack de Graaf**, 12th grade, City High Middle School
- **Lizeth Gallardo**, 11th grade, City High Middle School



## SAVE THE DATE

# GRPS EXPO

## WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29, 2025

## GRPS UNIVERSITY

MORE DETAILS TO COME

- **Nusra Juma**, 11th grade, Ottawa Hills High School
- **Jana Kalumbula**, 11th grade, City High Middle School
- **KenZie Low**, 11th grade, City High Middle School
- **Jaleny Maldonado-Marroquin**, 12th grade, Union High School
- **Alanna Miles**, 11th grade, Union High School
- **Jakelin Parada**, 11th grade, Southwest Middle High School
- **Yarlin Reyes De la Cruz**, 10th grade, Southwest Middle High School
- **Lily Salacina**, 10th grade, CA Frost Middle High School
- **Barbie Sanders**, 10th grade, Southwest Middle High School
- **Lux Schmitz**, 10th grade, CA Frost Middle High School
- **Aeris Tuma**, 10th grade, City High Middle School
- **Rory VanderPloeg**, 11th grade, City High Middle School
- **Juana Zacarias**, 11th grade, Southwest Middle High School





## Lawmakers Donate AEDs from NFL’s Damar Hamlin to Ottawa Hills, Union

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – State Representatives Carol Glanville and Kristian Grant donated life-saving devices, gifted by an NFL player who collapsed during a game, to two Grand Rapids Public Schools high schools.

The automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are among 50 donated by Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin to Michigan schools. Hamlin’s connection to AEDs is personal - first responders used one, along with CPR, to save his life after he suffered cardiac arrest during an NFL game.

Hamlin donated the AEDs during the NFL Draft in Detroit earlier this year as Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed bipartisan legislation to strengthen AED and CPR training requirements in schools.

“The well-being of our scholars, staff, and visitors is our top priority. Providing our community with access to life-saving equipment is a critical aspect of that commitment,” GRPS Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby said while accepting the AED donations. “Today, we stand together to accept a donation that could make the difference between life and death in an emergency.”

“Having resources like this right there, very close by, will ensure that if something ever does happen to you or someone that you love who comes to see you at a game,



*The AEDs will be installed at Ottawa Hills High School and Union High School.*

that we’re prepared,” State Representative Kristian Grant, an Ottawa Hills High School alumnus and former GRPS Board of Education member, told student-athletes attending the event.

“About 2,000 people under the age of 25 in the United States, who are seemingly healthy, die each year from sudden cardiac arrest,” explained State Representative Carol Glanville, a former GRPS educator. “With this legislation, we are helping to ensure that no student, teacher, or visitor in our schools becomes one of those statistics.”

“We are profoundly grateful to the NFL, Representative Carol Glanville, and Representative Kristian Grant for their generous gifts of AEDs,” Roby said.

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## GRPS Unveils New Accessible Playground at Coit Creative Arts Academy

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Grand Rapids Public Schools celebrated a milestone in inclusivity and scholar engagement with the unveiling of the newly designed, accessible-for-all playground at Coit Creative Arts Academy.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the official opening of the state-of-the-art facility, which sets a new standard for playgrounds across the district.

The \$400,000 project, funded by the Reimagine GRPS bond passed by voters in 2023, reflects a deep commitment to accessibility, creativity, and scholar well-being. Scholars from Coit were integral to the design process, offering their feedback to designs in early 2024. The result is a vibrant, multi-functional space that accommodates all scholars, regardless of physical ability.

The playground, completed over the summer, was ready for students on the first day of the new school year in August. It features artificial turf throughout, a new soccer field, an outdoor performance area, basketball courts, and accessible playscapes designed to promote inclusive play.

## Preschoolers in the Great Start Readiness Program Begin Their Educational Journey



*The building blocks of education began for our littlest scholars. Welcome, Class of 2038!*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Excitement was in the air as preschoolers in the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) kicked off their first day of school on September 9! With eager smiles and backpacks in hand, these young learners took their first steps into a world of discovery, play, and learning that will lay the foundation for their future academic success.

GSRP, Michigan's state-funded preschool program for four-year-olds, offers high-quality early childhood education to ensure that children are ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. This year's incoming class of bright-eyed preschoolers is already on the path to a brighter future!

### Why Preschool Matters: Building Blocks for Development

Preschool is more than just an introduction to school—it's an essential stepping stone for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Research has shown that children who attend preschool programs like GSRP develop crucial skills that have a lasting impact on their growth. Here's why preschool is so important:

- **Social Skills:** In the classroom, children learn to share, cooperate, take turns, and build friendships. These early interactions help them develop empathy, communication skills, and the ability to work as a team—skills that are essential throughout life.

- **Cognitive Development:** Preschool provides an environment rich with learning opportunities where children are introduced to early literacy, math, and problem-solving activities. This helps build their curiosity and love for learning from a young age.
- **Emotional Growth:** Learning how to regulate emotions and handle challenges is a key part of early childhood development. Preschool programs help children navigate new experiences, promoting resilience and confidence.
- **Preparation for Kindergarten:** Preschool ensures that children are familiar with classroom routines, helping to ease the transition to kindergarten. Children who attend programs like GSRP enter kindergarten more prepared academically and socially, setting them up for long-term success.

### A Community of Support and Learning

The first day of school was not just an exciting time for the children but also for their families and educators. Teachers in the GSRP program are specially trained in early childhood education, ensuring each child receives personalized attention and care. Parents were thrilled to see their little ones embark on this important journey, knowing

that they are in a nurturing and stimulating environment.

Families and community members can take pride in the opportunities provided by GSRP, as it ensures that all children—regardless of their background—receive the high-quality education they deserve.

### What's Next for our Little Learners?

As the school year unfolds, these preschoolers will engage in a variety of hands-on learning experiences, from art projects to science explorations and story time. The GSRP curriculum is designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and a lifelong love of learning.

Parents and educators are already looking forward to the growth and milestones these children will achieve throughout the year. With a strong start in preschool, these young learners are on their way to success, and we can't wait to see how they flourish.

Let's cheer on our preschoolers as they embark on this exciting educational adventure! Welcome to the Great Start Readiness Program, Class of 2038!

For more information on the Great Start Readiness Program and how to enroll your child, contact our Early Childhood Department at [Earlychildhood@grps.org](mailto:Earlychildhood@grps.org).



**PRINCIPAL PROFILE:  
Burton Middle Leader  
has Lifelong Passion  
for Education**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Burton Middle School’s new principal, driven by a lifelong passion for education inspired by her parents, is ready to lead.

“Since I was like five years old, the thought of being a teacher was very exciting to me,” Principal Amena Moiz explained. “My parents actually came here from India in 1974. And it was very important for them to have their children be educated.”

That sense of purpose shaped her career, but it was also the influence of her own teachers that left a lasting impression. She fondly remembers two influential science teachers who were not only excellent educators but also had a sense of humor.

“It’s great when I see teachers here that do the same thing for our kids,” she



*“I hope I’m able to model what I expect teachers to do with our scholars,” Moiz said. “That’s very important to me.”*

said. “I absolutely love interacting with our students. I hope they see me as somebody who wants them to feel a sense of belonging when they enter our building, and for them to have a good time while focused on their learning.”

Her teaching career has included stops

in Detroit, Flint, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids. She has also served in multiple leadership positions, including principal of a virtual school and at Forest Hills Northern High School.

At the heart of her leadership is a commitment to scholars and their families.

“You’re putting your child in our hands, and it is very important for me and for our staff to make sure that they feel a sense of belonging in our school. Our responsibility is to help them be successful when they leave Burton Middle School.”

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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GRPS Scholar Athletes

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## Game, Set, Match: Restored Tennis Courts Unveiled at Ottawa Hills

*“At GRPS, we believe that every scholar, no matter where they are, deserves access to high-quality facilities and opportunities that inspire pride in their school.”*

*—Superintendent, Dr. Leadriane Roby*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Ottawa Hills High School’s new tennis courts are now in use, marking the end of the second tennis court renovation project this summer at Grand Rapids Public Schools.

The tennis courts at Ottawa Hills High School and Union High School were both restored thanks to a partnership between Grand Rapids Public Schools and West Michigan Community Tennis. West Michigan Community Tennis secured a \$52,000 grant from the United States Tennis Association Foundation for the projects. GRPS added \$69,000 to fully fund the reconstruction.

The new Union tennis courts were completed in June. The courts at Ottawa Hills were restored in September.

“At GRPS, we believe that every scholar, no matter where they are, deserves access to high-quality facilities and opportunities that inspire pride in their school,” GRPS Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby said during the ribbon cutting for the new courts. “These tennis courts are all part of a larger vision -- a commitment to ensuring that our scholars are set up for success, both in and out of the classroom.”

Following the ribbon cutting, the Ottawa Hills boys tennis team hosted a match against Cedar Springs.

“I am incredibly excited to see our athletes on these courts today, performing at their best, on the courts they truly deserve,” said Ottawa Hills Tennis Coach Andre Posey.

“I can’t believe that these are our new courts,” said Max Yoder, a member of the Ottawa Hills tennis team. “This is a moment that many of us have been dreaming about, and it feels amazing to stand here today and see this transformation in front of us.”

West Michigan Community Tennis hosts “Tennis in the Park” during the summer months at multiple locations in Grand Rapids and Wyoming, including both Ottawa Hills and Union. The summer program is supported by a grant from the National Junior Tennis and Learning network of the United States Tennis Association Foundation.

“Tennis in the Park” provides instruction twice a week in June and July for children between the ages of 5 and 14 for just \$10. Each session also includes a time of learning using curriculum developed by “Be Nice.” More than 500 students participated this summer. The program is in cooperation with the City of Grand Rapids Department of Parks and Recreation.

“We are thankful that West Michigan Community Tennis and GRPS were able to partner in such a great way to help our local kids and adults have a great place to connect on these tennis courts for years to come,” said Jack Ponstine, vice president of West Michigan Community Tennis



## PUBLIC SAFETY & SCHOOL SECURITY

### TRAINING FOR PARENTS, SCHOLARS, PTA & COMMUNITY MEMBERS

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**6:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

October 8, 2024

January 14, 2025

November 12, 2024

February 11, 2025

December 10, 2024

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Components of a Safe School

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## GRPS has gone mobile!

Have you heard the news? Connecting with Grand Rapids Public Schools just got easier for scholars, staff, families, and community members! Our new GRPS Mobile App is a one-stop solution for valuable resources and information about our district and schools, right at your fingertips. Whether you're a parent wanting instant updates, a scholar keeping track of school events, or a staff member connecting with your community, this app has you covered.

**Fast. Easy. On-the-Go!** With the GRPS Mobile App, you can stay engaged and informed wherever you are. Here's what makes the app a must-have for everyone in the GRPS family

**ALERT: Get Instant Notifications.**

No more waiting around for important updates! With the GRPS app, you'll receive instant messages and alerts directly to your device. Stay safe, stay informed, and always be in the know

**INFORM: Want to check the school calendar or see the latest announcements?**

The GRPS app makes it easy to view school events, calendar updates, and important messages all in one place. Never miss an important date again!

**ENGAGE: Personalize Your**

**Experience.** Customize your app experience to follow your specific schools and groups! Stay connected with the updates that matter most to you and tailor your notifications to fit your needs.

**CONNECT: Stay in Touch with Staff & Community.**

Need to contact a teacher or check out the latest social media posts from GRPS or your school? The app allows you to easily connect with staff, view social media updates, and even visit the GRPS website with just a tap. You're always just a click away from the support you need.

**DOWNLOAD TODAY: It's Free!**

Don't wait—download the GRPS Mobile App today and experience the convenience of having all your school resources in one place. Search "Grand Rapids Public Schools" in the App Store (Apple) or Google Play (Android) to get started.

Or, make it even easier! Text @grps to 616-816-1777 to download the app directly to your phone.

For a personalized setup, visit [grps.org/mobile](https://grps.org/mobile) to view app setup instructions and make sure you get the most out of your mobile experience.

Stay alert, stay informed, stay engaged, and stay connected with GRPS—right in your pocket! Download the app now and join the GRPS community on-the-go!

## 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.



## Kindergarten Teacher Celebrating Nearly 30 Years of Inspiring Young Minds

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Julie Ann Mosqueda, a cherished kindergarten teacher at C.A. Frost, has devoted almost 30 years to Grand Rapids Public Schools, sharing her passion for teaching with countless students and families.

Known for her ability to build deep connections and her innovative approach to education, Mosqueda is a true champion within the GRPS community. She finds joy in the unique energy her students bring each year.

“Every group over the years has brought their own little spunk and interests to our classroom,” she explained.

Mosqueda tailors her lessons to meet her scholars’ interests, creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Last year, she incorporated coloring sessions with soft music to help scholars focus - an idea

inspired by their love for art.

Her journey with GRPS began as an intern at Harrison Park. A series of opportunities led her to her first teaching role at Campau Park, where she found her calling.

“I just knew in my heart that that was where I was meant to be,” she recalled. After 12 years, she transitioned to C.A. Frost, where she embraced outdoor learning experiences to enrich her students’ education.

During her tenure at GRPS, she has treasured those rewarding moments when former students return to share their gratitude.



“When 5th graders walk down the hall and whisper, ‘Ms. Mosqueda was my kindergarten teacher, she was the best,’ you feel that and smile,” she exclaimed.

Her impact can be felt through the values of kindness, joy, and a love for reading

that she instills in her young scholars every day. Her compassion, dedication, and nearly three decades of service make her a true GRPS Champion.

JOIN OUR TEAM

# APPLY TODAY!

WHY GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

- TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- HEALTH-DENTAL-VISION
- RETIREMENT BENEFITS



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October 2024 | Section B



Park Projects Update: 5



Fitness Classes: 7



GRPL Storytime: 9

## Making Growing Pains Less Painful



Dear Community Member,

Just as your car needs routine maintenance and your home occasionally undergoes renovation, so, too, do our roadways.

The City of Grand Rapids continues its commitment to improving our infrastructure, understanding that construction projects, while necessary, can create challenges for local businesses, residents and commuters. This year, the City coordinated over 70 road projects, totaling more than \$40 million – including Hall Street improvements, reconstruction of César E. Chávez and S. Division Avenues, and the Michigan/Fuller intersection repair. While we are working hard to improve roads, utilities and public spaces, we recognize that construction causes temporary disruptions for business owners and their customers.

These projects are vital to the long-term health of our city and local economy. What's more, residents want reliable modern infrastructure. Results of the National Community Survey of Grand Rapidians showed that community members recognize that improving roads can:

- Enhance safety.
- Provide increased traffic capacity.
- Spur future economic development.

Updating aging infrastructure helps prevent costly emergency repairs, which can cause even more significant disruptions and safety concerns down the road. By taking an asset management approach, we carefully monitor and plan for the replacement of key infrastructure elements, ensuring that our city remains resilient. However, we understand that, while the result will benefit all residents and businesses, the process can sometimes be frustrating.

We empathize with the difficulties this creates for residents and business owners and recognize the economic challenges that construction can impose. We understand that the noise, dust, detours and limited access can affect customer foot traffic and create a sense of uncertainty. That's why the City is committed to minimizing these impacts as much as possible, even as we work to achieve necessary improvements. We know that the strength of our local businesses is integral to the health of our economy, and their success during these challenging periods is just as important as the infrastructure we're upgrading.

Our hope is that the results of these construction projects, once completed, will be well worth the seasonal inconvenience. Residents and businesses alike will benefit from smoother streets, leading to less wear-and-tear on vehicles and improved driving experiences for everyone. More attractive streetscapes will help boost property values and create inviting spaces for customers. Our designs will prioritize safety, with traffic calming measures, better lighting and enhanced crosswalks. The improvements also open up opportunities for multi-modal transit, including expanded bike lanes, improved sidewalks and more space for micromobility options like scooters. Ultimately, these projects are about ensuring that Grand Rapids continues to grow as a vibrant, safe and accessible city for all.

As we make these necessary improvements, we are continually working to ensure that communication with residents and business owners is as clear and consistent as possible. Property owners and businesses receive mailers with detailed project information, and we invite them to meetings to present designs and gather feedback. Despite these efforts, we know that not everyone receives or reads the mailers, and attending meetings may not always be possible. We are committed to

finding more ways to keep everyone informed and involved, whether through more targeted outreach, better use of digital tools, or direct engagement with affected businesses.

*Whatever it takes, we want to ensure that businesses have the resources they need to stay successful.*

Furthermore, I want to affirm that we're not only focused on the short-term impacts but are also focused on how we can improve our processes for future projects. The City understands the importance of continuous improvement. We have assembled an internal team to review our current approach to construction planning, community engagement and communications. This team is exploring opportunities to better anticipate, mitigate and manage the impacts of construction on business districts, neighborhoods and commuters. By adding more tools to our toolbox — such as improved signage, creative detour management and better collaboration with local businesses — we aim to make future construction seasons smoother for everyone involved. I'm optimistic that some of these new approaches will be ready in time for the 2025 construction season.

Throughout the design and construction process, we strive to support the businesses in affected areas. Whether through providing signage, helping adjust traffic flow, or directly engaging with business owners, we aim to

help ensure that businesses can continue to operate. This summer, for example, our staff have been personally engaging with business owners along construction routes, not only to listen to their concerns but also to support them by using their services and demonstrating that, as a City, we're committed to their success during challenging times. I encourage everyone in the community to do the same — continue to visit and support local businesses during construction, as this will help them remain vibrant and successful once the work is completed.

We understand that improvements to our streets and infrastructure create difficulties. I want to express my sincere thanks to all business owners, residents and commuters for their patience and understanding that this work will make us a better city. Together, we will continue to make Grand Rapids a nationally recognized, equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city with a robust economy, safe and healthy, with the opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

If you'd like to learn about active road projects, road closures or have ideas to improve the way we plan, engage and communicate about City construction projects, please visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/engageGR](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/engageGR).

Regards,

Mark Washington, City Manager



## Final Neighbor Engagement and Commission Night Out Meeting of 2024 Set

The City Commission invites you to its final City Commission Night Out (CNO) meeting of 2024. The Tuesday, Oct. 22 event takes place at Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) University, 1400 Fuller Ave. NE in Grand Rapids. This is the last of three CNO meetings this year and includes an engagement session and a business meeting with public hearings.

Doors open at 5 p.m. with dinner provided. An engagement period follows at 5:30 p.m. City departments will host information tables and offer giveaways beginning at 5:30 p.m. The evening's City Commission meeting begins at 7 p.m.

During the 5:30 p.m. engagement session, City officials will detail results of the National Community Survey and will look to gain additional feedback from you and your

fellow community members about what those Grand Rapids findings mean to them. Those who participate in the engagement activity will be eligible for City of Grand Rapids pool passes and John Ball Zoo tickets. For those interested in interacting with additional departments, resource tables will be set up at the Commission Night Out event. Staff from 311, Water, Public Works, Code Compliance, and Planning will be available for selected services. Grand Rapids Public Library staff will be present with age-friendly activities and in-person library card sign ups.

The 7 p.m. City Commission meeting will air on Comcast Channel 26 and be live streamed on the City of Grand Rapids Facebook page and YouTube channel.



**Darrell Singleton**

Customer Ombudsman  
Development Center

## Development Center Customer Ombudsman Elevating Service for City's Residents

Darrell Singleton, the customer ombudsman at the City's Development Center, has been instrumental in enhancing the experience of customers seeking City permitting, plan review and inspection services. Over the past five years, Darrell's proactive approach has resulted in smoother project execution and expedited approvals for contractors, homeowners and do-it-yourselfers (DIYers).

Darrell's commitment to customer satisfaction is evident in his willingness to engage with customers through various channels, including phone calls, emails, face-to-face interactions, and formal meetings. Whether at the project's inception or during any stage of the process, Darrell is readily available to assist customers in navigating the home improvement journey. His guidance ensures timely project processing, facilitates issue resolution and offers insights for process improvement. Furthermore, Darrell collaborates with the City's Economic Development Department to connect customers with available incentives. Through thousands of interactions, customers have gained a better understanding of their shared responsibilities with the City. They can now clearly distinguish between the City's obligations and those of contractors, homeowners, or DIYers during the building and development process. Darrell also provides technical assistance with the department's Citizen Access permit portal, helping users navigate and submit permits through the website.

*"I take great pride in educating residents and contractors about the process," Darrell remarked. "I have witnessed how this knowledge streamlines and expedites projects, resulting in greater satisfaction with our department."*

Looking ahead, Darrell plans to focus on meeting customers where they are. He actively engages with neighborhood associations, business associations, and other groups, conducting lunch and learns to promote a better understanding of the permitting and development processes. During these engagements, Darrell emphasizes the importance of obtaining permits from a safety and inspection standpoint.

"In addition to ensuring the renovation or building is safe, pulling a permit can also protect you in the unfortunate case of having to file a homeowners insurance claim," he said. "Insurance companies increasingly file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests after a claim is submitted to verify permitted home additions or improvements. Having pulled a permit safeguards and protects you from a safety and recovery perspective."

Jonathan Oeverman, development center manager, said the City provides efficient and accessible permitting, plan review, and inspection services. "With a focus on customer satisfaction," he said, "the Development Center aims to support economic prosperity and affordability for all customers. Darrell's expertise, dedication, and tireless efforts help in creating a seamless experience for all customers, including new customers, small businesses and homeowners."

If you're interested in conducting business with the City, please contact Darrell Singleton at 616.456.3971 or [dsingleton@grcity.us](mailto:dsingleton@grcity.us).

Hey, Grand Rapiidians.

## SEE THESE SIGNS?

Then, **think ahead before bed.** Odd-even parking is enforced on this street.

**ODD ADDRESSES**

**ODD DATES PARKING**

**EVEN DATES PARKING**

**EVEN ADDRESSES**

- On even dates, park on the side of the street with even addresses (1 AM – 6 PM).
- For 7 hours each night (6 PM - 1 AM), you can park on either side of the street. Just make sure to **think ahead before bed and move your vehicle** to the side of the road matching the next day's date by 1 AM.
- On odd dates, park on the side of the street with odd addresses (1 AM – 6 PM).

# GRVOTES

## City Clerk Joel Hondorp wants to make sure you're prepared for the upcoming November 5, General Presidential Election and offers this information:

### Partisan Section

Candidates for Federal, State, and County offices. To vote the partisan section of the ballot, you may cast a "straight ticket", a "split ticket" or a "mixed ticket."

- Straight Ticket: Vote the party of your choice. Nothing further needs be done in the partisan section.
- Split Ticket: You may vote a straight ticket AND vote for individual candidates of your choice.
- Mixed Ticket: Vote for the individual candidates of your choice in each office.

Non-Partisan Section must be voted separately

Judges, City of Grand Rapids (Mayor, City Commissioner, Library Board), Grand Rapids Community College, Local School Districts

### Voters have 3 options to cast their ballot.

**1. Early Voting** – Grand Rapids voters may go to any early voting site to get a ballot, vote and place the ballot in the tabulator during a nine-day period. Voters may also bring their absentee ballot to the Early Voting site to tabulate that ballot.

#### Locations:

Sts Peter and Paul School	1430 Quarry NW
GRPS University	1400 Fuller NE
Ottawa Hills High School	2055 Rosewood SE
DeVos Place, Exhibit Hall B	303 Monroe NW

#### Days and Times:

Saturday, Oct. 26	9 to 5 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 27	9 to 5 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 28	9 to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 29	11 a.m. to 7p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 30	9 to 5 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 31	11 a.m. to 7p.m.
Friday, Nov. 1	9 to 5 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 2	9 to 5 p.m.
Sunday, November 3	9 to 5 p.m.

**2. Absentee Voting** – Voters may choose to be placed on a Permanent Ballot List. A voter will apply once for all future elections. A voter may still choose to fill out an application for every election. Ballots may be returned by postage paid mail, in a secure drop box, in person at the Clerk's Office or in a tabulator at an early voting site or designated polling location. A list of drop boxes can be found at <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Elections/Current>.

**3. Election Day Voting** – Tuesday, November 5. The polls are open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Check [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote) to verify your registration status and polling location. Voters may also bring their absentee ballot to their polling location to tabulate that ballot.

### Some reminders before you head to the polls:

- Voter registration – Residents who are 18 or older are automatically registered to vote when they make a transaction with the Secretary of State. You may register to vote by mail up to 15 days before an election and or in person at the City Clerk's Office within 14 days of the election up to Election Day. You need to prove residency in the city.
- Check your voter registration status, register to vote, view a sample ballot or find your polling location at [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote).

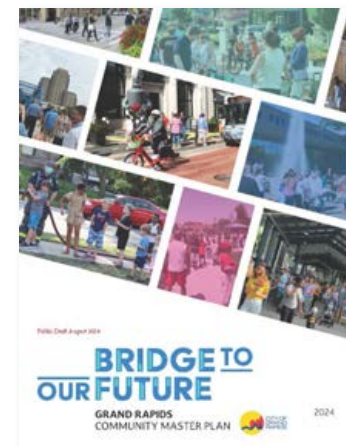
### Get involved – Become an Election Worker

To run successful elections, we need help from the community. Election workers are on the frontline of democracy. You will be able to see firsthand how the election process works. Election workers report how rewarding it is to experience the voting process, especially when you see someone vote for the first time. Please check out this website about becoming an election worker:

[www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Elections/Election-Workers](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Elections/Election-Workers)

### Important Election Websites:

- [www.grandrapidsmi.gov/grvotes](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/grvotes)
- [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote)



## Join Us for the Formal Approval Process for Our New Community Master Plan

We've created a draft Community Master Plan (CMP) that will define the vision of how our city will grow and develop over the next 20 years and it is now going through the formal adoption process.

We completed our fourth engagement round in June, which gathered input on the plan's draft recommendations, and incorporated the feedback gathered into an updated draft that was released by Planning and City Commission for a 63-day public comment period that ended October 16.

The Planning team is now addressing the comments received to create a final version of the plan for public hearings at Planning and City Commission. Formal adoption of the plan by City Commission is anticipated in December. Please visit our website at [BridgeToOurFuture.com](http://BridgeToOurFuture.com) for the complete schedule.

The CMP contains recommendations, based on public input and data analysis, for great neighborhoods, vital business districts, a strong economy, balanced mobility and desirable development character. Additionally, the recommendations incorporate the themes of equity, safety, vibrancy, culture and sustainability.

Leading the CMP initiative, among others, are planning NEXT, a nationally recognized municipal planning consultant; the Grand Rapids City Commission; the city's Planning Commission and Planning Department; and the Community Master Plan Steering Committee. Grand Rapids' last plan was developed in 2002 and has been updated since.





## Construction Begins on Kendall Street Fire Station

City and State officials gathered late this summer to break ground on Grand Rapids' new Kendall Street Fire Station, 4044 Kalamazoo Ave. SE. It is the first fire station built in the city of Grand Rapids in 37 years.

The ground breaking marked the official start of the Grand Rapids Fire Department's (GRFD) Kendall Street Fire Station construction project. Station No. 12 is a thoughtfully designed 12,600-square-foot, two-bay facility on a 1.5-acre site featuring private living quarters with individual dorm rooms, modern amenities, kitchen and dining areas, drive-through apparatus bays, advanced exhaust systems, ample storage for equipment, fitness room and on-site parking. The exterior design complements the surrounding neighborhood, while a community meeting room and future neighborhood park space enhance public engagement. The project saves the oak trees found on the corner of the property and features thoughtful landscaping

and an underground stormwater storage chamber.

Designed to serve the Third Ward for the next 75 to 100 years, this station prioritizes functionality, inclusivity and community integration, becoming a vital and lasting addition to the area. It is ideally situated on the corner of Kalamazoo Avenue SE and Kendall Street SE with access to both public rights-of-way to improve fire response times in this neighborhood. When complete, It will have 12 personnel assigned, resulting in a three-person engine crew 24/7/365.

The \$8.1 million station is funded through a State of Michigan FY24 grant. The GRFD anticipates opening the station in Fall 2025.

As always, GRFD reminds you to have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your home. If you live in your own homes, please call 311 to schedule a free home safety assessment and free smoke alarm/carbon monoxide detector installation.

## Grand Rapids Named a Storm Ready Community

The National Weather Service (NWS) has formally presented its StormReady® Designation to the City of Grand Rapids. We're the largest city in the State to be designated a storm ready community and we join more than 3,474 sites in the United States and 63 in Michigan that are NWS StormReady.®

Allison Farole, our emergency management administrator, said that being part of a Weather-Ready Nation is about preparing for our community's increased vulnerability to extreme weather and water events.

As an official StormReady® community, the City of Grand Rapids:

- Established a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center
- Has more than one way to receive weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public
- Created a system that monitors weather conditions locally
- Promoted the importance of public readiness through community seminars
- Developed a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises

The Grand Rapids Office of Emergency Management encourages you to be StormReady® and sign up for free emergency alerts. Alerts include weather warnings, water boil notices, evacuation notices and other emergency messages.

To sign up online, visit: <https://local.nixle.com/register/>.



## City Earns First Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting



We've earned the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR Award). It is the first time the City achieved this honor for its Resident's Guide to the City's Finances.

The award represents a significant achievement by the City's Comptroller's Department. To be eligible for the PAFR Award, a government must also submit its annual comprehensive financial report to GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program and receive the Certificate for the current fiscal year. GFOA judges evaluate each eligible report based on the following categories:

reader appeal, understandability, distribution methods, creativity and other elements.

City Comptroller Max Frantz said, "We are thrilled to see the City of Grand Rapids earn this award for Excellence in Financial Reporting and be recognized for the Comptroller team's effort and innovations in making the Resident's Guide to the City's Finances concise, informative and appealing to read."

The GFOA advances excellence in government finance by providing best practices, professional development, resources, and practical research for more than 21,000 members and the communities it serves.



# PARK PROJECTS UPDATE



## Martin Luther King Park

The Martin Luther King Park project includes the development of a new lodge building, new pool house building, new fitness loop and playground, reconstructed parking lot, and expanded community garden. This project will allow for recreation programming, rentable community space, outdoor event space, and more! This project was designed with over 5,000 community members providing input. Construction will be Fall 2024 and complete in 2026. Please visit the following link to learn more: [Publicinput.com/MLKParkProject](https://Publicinput.com/MLKParkProject)

## MacKay-Jaycees Park

The Parks and Recreation Department initiated a Comprehensive Dog Park Study in March and April to address the lack of access to dog parks in our city. The Dog Park Study garnered responses from 1,952 community members. According to national standards, a city the size of Grand Rapids should have access to four permanent dog parks; currently, there are only two.

Based on results of that study, we are excited to announce that the location of the next dog park in the city will be at MacKay-Jaycees Park. Its development will be included in a parking lot and internal roadway project to address parking concerns. Design of the project will begin 2026. Please visit the following link to learn more: [Publicinput.com/DogParkStudy](https://Publicinput.com/DogParkStudy) Contact: 616.456.3696 | [parkinfo@grcity.us](mailto:parkinfo@grcity.us)



## 61st District Court Launches Domestic Violence Court



The 61st District Court is proud to announce the launch of a new Domestic Violence Court, a specialized court aimed at addressing the unique challenges posed by domestic violence cases. This initiative is part of a broader effort funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds awarded to Kent County, in partnership with the 61st District Court and 62B District Court in Kentwood. In response to the significant allocation of ARPA funds, Kent County has strategically dedicated a portion of these resources to the critical area of domestic

violence prevention and response. As part of the Domestic Violence Action Network (DVAN) initiative, the establishment of the Domestic Violence Court stands out as a pivotal goal, underscoring the county's commitment to enhancing the support and protection for victims and ensuring a more efficient and effective judicial process. The Honorable Jennifer L. Faber presides over the Court in 61st District Court and the Honorable Amanda Sterkenburg presides over the Court in 62B District Court.







CITY OF  
GRAND  
RAPIDS

Parks and  
Recreation



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



Register by phone  
616.456.3696, option #1



Register in person  
245 State St SE

## ADULT FITNESS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024

### SESSION DATES

November 11 - December 22  
(6 weeks)

### SESSION COST

\$44/residents, \$54/nonresidents

### REGISTRATION IS OPEN

August 5 at 8:00 am

#### YOGA

BASIC YOGA  
GENTLE YOGA  
POWER YOGA  
VITAL MOVEMENT

#### AQUATICS

WATER AEROBICS

#### CYCLING

CYCLING  
CYCLE & TONE

#### CARDIO & STRENGTH

BARRE  
HIIT EXPRESS  
HIGH LOW FITNESS  
KETTLEBELL AMPD  
PILATES  
POUND  
STRENGTH & POWER  
STRENGTH & ROW

#### DANCE FITNESS

BALLROOM DANCE  
GENTLE MUSICAL  
MOVEMENT  
MINDFUL MUSICAL  
MOVEMENT  
WERQ  
ZUMBA

Full class details will be  
available online at:  
[grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

## ENRICHMENT & ADVENTURE

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

CLASS	DATES/TIMES	LOCATIONS
<p><b>TAE KWON DO (AGES 7 - ADULT)</b> 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. \$35/residents, \$45/nonresidents.</p>	<p><b>TUE, NOV 12 - DEC 17</b> FROM 6 PM - 7:30 PM *GREEN BELTS AND HIGHER WILL MEET UNTIL 8 PM</p>	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM
<p><b>BEGINNER PICKLEBALL LESSONS (AGES 18+)</b> Learn the basic rules, skills, and strategies needed to play the sport of Pickleball! \$26/residents, \$36/non for 4-class session.</p>	<p><b>TUE &amp; THU, NOV 12-21</b> FROM 2:45 - 4:00 PM</p>	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM
<p><b>YOUTH SWIM LESSONS</b> Tackle fear of the water and have your kids learn the basics to swimming! \$45/residents, \$55/nonresidents</p>	<p><b>MON / WED / SAT</b> TIMES VARY BY DAY, CHECK WEBSITE FOR DETAILS</p>	UNION HIGH SCHOOL
<p><b>FREE PROGRAMS FOR AGES 50+</b> Programs run Monday through Friday. All are FREE &amp; open to public: Visit <a href="http://www.GrandRapidsMI.Gov/Recreation">www.GrandRapidsMI.Gov/Recreation</a> for details! Programs include: Pilates, Stretch &amp; Flex, Cardio &amp; Strength (Low Impact Workout), Active Adults, Zumba Gold, Line Dancing, Pickleball, and more!</p>	<p><b>MONDAY - FRIDAY</b> CHECK WEBSITE FOR DETAILS</p>	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM



### Main Library

111 Library St NE  
616.988.5400

### Madison Square

1201 Madison Ave SE  
616.988.5411

### Ottawa Hills

1150 Giddings Ave SE  
616.988.5412

### Seymour

2350 Eastern Ave SE  
616.988.5413

### Van Belkum

1563 Plainfield Ave NE  
616.988.5410

### West Leonard

1017 Leonard St NW  
616.988.5416

### West Side

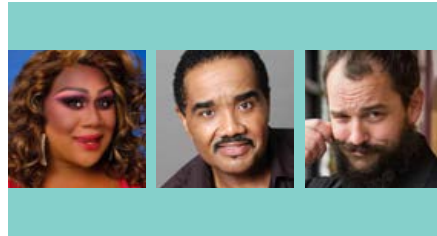
713 Bridge St NW  
616.988.5414

### Yankee Clipper

2025 Leonard St NE  
616.988.5415

grpl.org

## Free Events at the Library



### Adult Storytime

*Mondays, October 21, November 18, December 16, 6:30 – 7:30 pm*  
Saugatuck Brewing Company  
Creston Taproom – 1504 Plainfield Ave NE

Why should kids have all the storytime fun? Adults enjoy stories, too! Join us at the Golden Age at Saugatuck Brewing Co. to sit back and relax as library staff and special guests read short stories aloud. Free appetizers are first come, first served, and drinks are available for purchase.

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation for their support of these programs.

### Teen Anime Club

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. Designed for teens ages 13 – 19.

*Tuesdays, October 22, November 5, 19, December 3, 4:00 – 5:30 pm*  
Madison Square Branch  
1201 Madison Ave SE

*Thursdays, November 14, December 12, 4:30 – 6:00 pm*  
West Side Branch – 713 Bridge St NW

### Conversation Circle | English

*Wednesdays, October 23, 30, November 6, 13, 27, December 4, 11, 7:00 – 8:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Each week, join others who are practicing English through conversations centered around topics like music, food, sports, travel, and more! These casual and fun events are designed for adult English language learners.

### Popular Pages Book Club

Join us for our monthly book club! 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. This book club is designed for adults and is a great way to meet new friends, explore real and imagined worlds, and discover new perspectives.

*Saturdays, November 2, December 14, 12:00 – 1:00 pm*

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

November 2: *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

December 14: *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman

*Wednesdays, November 13, December 11, 6:00 – 7:00 pm*

Ottawa Hills Branch – 1150 Giddings Ave SE

November 13: *There, There* by Tommy Orange

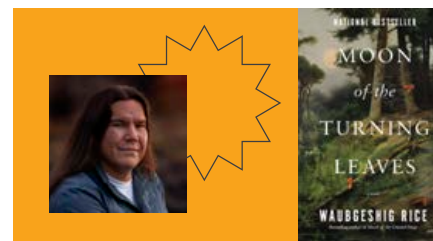
December 11: *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar

*Mondays, November 11, December 9, 6:00 – 7:00 pm*

Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard St NE

November 11: *Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones

December 9: *The Anthropocene Reviewed* by John Green



### Author Talk with Waubgeshig Rice

*Wednesday, November 6, 6:30 – 8:30 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE  
Registration recommended:  
[www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Join us for an evening with Waubgeshig Rice who will discuss his most recent novel, *Moon of the Turning Leaves*. The discussion will be followed by a book signing. Waubgeshig Rice is an author and journalist from Wasauksing First Nation on Georgian Bay. His first short story collection, *Midnight Sweatlodge*, was inspired by his experiences growing up in an Anishinaabe community.

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation and Warner Norcross + Judd LLC for their support of this program.



### Dungeons & Dragons for Teens

*Thursdays, November 7, December 5, 4:00 – 7:00 pm*

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Registration recommended:  
[www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Want to try Dungeons & Dragons but don't know where to start? Already love D&D but don't have a party? Come to the library for monthly drop-in sessions, open to players of all skill levels.

You don't need to commit to multiple sessions. And like any good D&D session, we will have snacks. Bring your own character, get a premade one from us, or create your own in our first session.

### Black Lives Are Beautiful

*Wednesdays, November 13, December 18, 6:30 – 7:30 pm*

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Join Dr. Charmeka Newton and Dr. Janée Steele to learn more about their workbook, "Black Lives Are Beautiful." "Black Lives Are Beautiful" is explicitly designed to help members of the Black community counter the impacts of racialized trauma while also cultivating self-esteem, building resilience, fostering community, and promoting Black empowerment.

### Native American Dancers | Reg Pettibone & Family

*Saturday, November 16, 3:00 – 4:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Reg Pettibone, champion pow-wow dancer, and his family will perform traditional dances and songs as well as share stories to educate audiences about Native American culture.

### Grand Rapids: A Poetry City

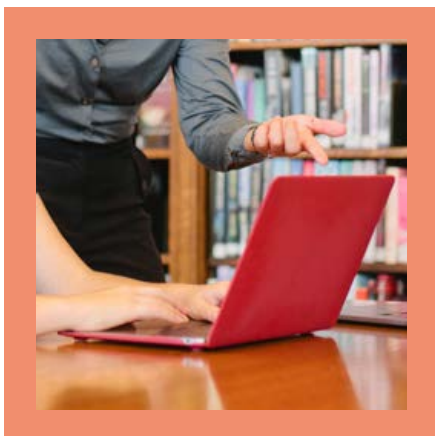
*Sunday, November 17, 2:00 – 4:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Learn more about the history of poetry in Grand Rapids from our Poet Laureate, Christine Stephens-Kreiger, and hear performances from city poets including: Linda Nemece Foster, Patricia Clark, David Cope, Lew Klatt, and Kyd Kane.

Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation — Dyer-Ives Foundation Poetry Fund for their support of this program.



## Computer Classes & Technology Support



### Open Lab | Walk-in Technology Help

*Wednesdays, September 4 – November 13,  
11:00 am – 1:00 pm*

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Need help with your computer, laptop, or smartphone? Have questions about email, the Internet, or the library's digital resources? Stop by during our drop-in sessions and library staff will help answer your basic technology questions.

### Google Drive Basics: Google Sheets

*Thursday, October 24, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Cloud storage services like Google Drive allow you to store and edit documents online. These documents can be accessed or edited on any device with an Internet connection. In this class, we will learn how to create, edit, and share spreadsheets.

### Learning Online: Free Tools and Classes

*Thursday, October 31, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

In this class, we will explore free tools and sources for online education, including LinkedIn Learning, Learning Express, MOOCs, and more. Whether you are a beginner to online education or a graduate, you'll find plenty of tools in this class to keep learning for a lifetime.

### Building Basic Computer Skills

*Monday, November 4, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Are you often confused by computer terms and lingo? In this class, you will gain skills to help you start navigating the Internet, mobile devices, and many types of software. Learn basic terminology used in technology to build a foundation for digital literacy.

### Discovering the Internet

*Monday, November 11, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Using the Internet can be an intimidating experience for many people. In this class, you will learn how the Internet works and basic definitions for the most common Internet terms. Discover tips and tricks on how to protect your information and identity while searching, shopping, and browsing the web.

### Exploring Email

*Monday, November 18, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

The Internet is always evolving and developing new services and functions. But as services and social networks have come and gone, email has remained constant. In this class, you will explore how to secure your email account and regain access if you forget your password. You will also discover how to use two-factor authentication to protect your accounts.

### Managing Your Digital Footprint

*Monday, November 25, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Have you ever forgotten a password? Do you wish you had a plan to manage your online information and protect your privacy? Managing your digital footprint may seem hard, but with a plan and the right tools you can stay safe online. This class will offer methods and tools to manage your online profiles and passwords.

## Storytimes



### Family Storytime

Parents and caregivers are invited to bring their children ages 0-5 years 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.

*Mondays, October 21, 28, November 11*

10:30 am | Main Library  
111 Library St NE

*Wednesdays, October 23, 30, November 13*

10:30 am | Seymour Branch  
2350 Eastern Ave SE

*Fridays, October 25, November 1, 15*

10:30 am | Ottawa Hills Branch  
1150 Giddings Ave SE

### Baby & Me Storytime

Bring your baby and bounce along to fun stories, songs, and rhymes. Baby & Me is a 15-minute storytime followed by a relaxed playtime where you and baby will meet new friends. For ages 0 – 18 months.

*Tuesdays, October 22, 29, November 5, 12*

10:30 am | Main Library  
111 Library St NE

*Thursdays, October 24, 31, November 7, 14*

10:30 am | Seymour Branch  
2350 Eastern Ave SE

*Fridays, October 25, November 1, 8, 15*

10:30 am | Van Belkum Branch  
1563 Plainfield Ave NE

### Pajama Time

Get cozy in your pajamas, grab your favorite stuffed animals or blanket, and come to the library for a special bedtime event! Listen to stories, sing songs, and get those wiggles out before bed. Great for working parents! For ages 0 – 5 years.

*Mondays, October 21, 28, November 11*

6:30 pm | West Leonard Branch  
1017 Leonard St NW

### Toddler Time

Bring your toddlers to share fun stories, songs, and rhymes and learn together! Toddler Time is a 25-minute long storytime followed by a hands-on activity and playtime designed to help your child's brain grow. For ages 18 months – 3 years.

*Tuesdays, October 22, 29, November 12*

10:30 am | West Side Branch  
713 Bridge St NW

*Thursdays, October 24, 31, November 14*

10:30 am | Yankee Clipper Branch  
2025 Leonard St NE

### Bilingual Family Time

Join us for an evening bilingual storytime filled with fun stories, movement, and music activities. The 30-minute English and Spanish storytime is followed by a hands-on activity and playtime. For families with children ages 0 – 5 years.

*Thursdays, October 24, 31, November 14*

6:00 pm | Madison Square Branch  
1201 Madison Ave SE

### Native American Heritage Month Storytimes

Join us for a series of storytimes during National Native American Heritage Month. Storytimes will highlight Native American stories and include songs, fingerplays, and hands-on fun. For ages 0-5 years old.

*Monday, November 4*

10:30 am | Main Library  
111 Library St NE

6:30 pm | West Leonard Branch

1017 Leonard St NW

*Tuesday, November 5*

10:30 am | West Side Branch  
713 Bridge St NW

*Wednesday, November 6*

10:30 am | Seymour Branch  
2350 Eastern Ave SE

*Thursday, November 7*

10:30 am | Yankee Clipper Branch  
2025 Leonard St NE

6:00 pm | Madison Square Branch

1201 Madison Ave SE

*Friday, November 8*

10:30 am | Ottawa Hills Branch  
1150 Giddings Ave SE

## Board of Library Commissioners

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# Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrations



### Altar Kits

*October 1 – 30, 2024*  
All GRPL locations

Parents and teachers, build an educational altar kit with your kids! Share this Día de los Muertos tradition through hands-on learning. Kits contain information about altar building and the supplies you need to create your own!

Each kit includes the following: Día de los Muertos altar fact sheet, tea light candles, incense sticks, fake marigolds, paper sugar skulls, fake fruit pieces, cut paper banners, a tissue paper craft, and picture frames. Altar kits are available to pick up at all GRPL locations while supplies last. Limit one kit per family or classroom.



### Grand Rapids Día de los Muertos Festival

*Saturday, October 26, 5:00 – 9:00 pm*  
*Sunday, October 27, 3:00 – 9:00 pm*  
Roosevelt Park – 1340 Godfrey Ave SW

¡Celebrate Día de los Muertos! Enjoy a free cultural and educational event, created in collaboration with the Grand Rapids Día de Los Muertos Festival committee. Latin American altars honoring family and friends who have passed away will be on display throughout the festival. Music, Latino food, workshops, and crafts will also be available.



### Day of the Dead Procession

*Sunday, October 27, 2:00 – 3:00 pm*  
Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities  
1100 Cesar E. Chavez Ave SW

Participate in a traditional Day of the Dead procession! Meet in the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities parking lot and join the procession to Roosevelt Park (739 Van Raalte SW Grand Rapids, MI 49503).

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation for their support of these programs. In-kind media supporter: WGUV Public Radio

## Spotlight on Collections & Services



### Board Game Collection

Borrow board games with your Grand Rapids Public Library card!

Drop by our Main Library, West Leonard Branch, or Yankee Clipper Branch locations to explore our collection of popular games for all ages.

Questions? Email [custserv@grpl.org](mailto:custserv@grpl.org) or call 616.988.5400.



### Ask a Doctor

*Fridays, October 18, November 1, 15, 29, December 13, 27, 2:00 – 4:00 pm*  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Trinity Health Medical Residents will be available to answer general health questions from patrons. This is a drop-in event and participation is first come, first served.

## Community Feedback Session

**Thursday, November 21, 7:00 – 8:00 pm**  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

We're planning for our future and need your feedback! Join us for a community conversation led by ReThinking Libraries. Attendees will be asked questions to better understand the needs of our community. Light refreshments will be provided.



## Small Business Resource Center News

This interview is an excerpt from GRPL's quarterly Small Business Resource Center eNews. Sign up for the newsletter by visiting [www.grpl.org/sbrc](http://www.grpl.org/sbrc)



### An Interview with Roy Messing, Executive Director of the Center of Employee Ownership

By Steven Assarian, Business and Career Librarian

*Steven Assarian: Tell me about your background.*

Roy Messing: Well, I grew up in the thumb of Michigan, and grew up on a dairy farm. I spent several years in the banking business. I worked for Farm Credit Services, which is a farmer-owned cooperative. Today, I wear a couple of hats. First, I'm the Executive Director of the Michigan Center for Employee Ownership (MICEO). I'm also with a national group called the Employee Ownership Expansion Network (EOX). The purpose of that nonprofit is to start local and state-based centers for employee ownership like we have here in Michigan.

*Steven: What does employee ownership mean exactly? And why should we care about it?*

Roy: Ownership is broadly shared with the employees. Different structures allow for employee ownership, but in each one, the employees own shares of the company,

either directly as in a co-op, indirectly through a stock ownership plan, or in combination.

Why should we care about employee ownership? A survey was completed a few years ago that looked at the State of Michigan's privately held businesses and highlights owners who will retire in the next five or 10 years.

This study found that Michigan has over 80,000 businesses owned by individuals who will retire in the next ten years. These businesses have a million employees, generate over 200 billion dollars in revenue, and pay over 40 billion dollars in payroll. These businesses represent a huge chunk of the Michigan economy.

And when these owners want to retire, most of their businesses don't sell; 80% of all businesses put up for sale aren't sold.

The main reason these businesses don't sell isn't that they are not profitable; the companies just aren't sellable in their current state. They do not have an exit plan in place. As a result, many of these owners will not achieve/meet their initial retirement goals or will settle for less.

If employee ownership is a good fit, these can remain local. Instead of selling or closing, they can continue operations, and help the economic opportunity within that region, all while helping business owners achieve their retirement goals.

Research has also shown that employee-owned companies pay better, offer better benefits, and have more engaged employees. There's an employee-ownership culture that comes along with it.

*Steven: Can you walk us through these different types of employee ownership? What structures fit with different companies?*

Roy: First is the employee stock ownership plan, commonly known as an ESOP. An ESOP is a qualified retirement plan, where a trust is formed to hold company shares

for the benefit of employees. Since it is a qualified plan, you must comply with many rules as you do with a pension. Their shares accumulate in a retirement account. Large highly profitable businesses might be a good fit for a transition to an ESOP.

There is an employee ownership trust (EOT) that is a newer type of entity here in the states. It's based on a UK model. In this model, a trust is established to hold the company shares, but the company is operated with the idea of operating into perpetuity. It's a perpetual trust; the intent is to keep that business going forward into the future. And the employees don't get company shares. However, they share the profit at the end of each year.

Compared to an ESOP, which is a retirement plan, employees are getting a little more cash each year and don't accrue retirement benefits. If you're talking about a legacy company, and you've got people who don't need a lot of cash when they sell, this might be a good fit for them.

There's also an employee or worker-owned cooperative. A lot of folks are familiar with a farmer-owned cooperative, or organizations that are mutually owned, like credit unions. In these models, members own the company. In the case of a worker-owned co-op, the members are also the employees.

This structure might be a better fit for a smaller company that's close-knit. If you had a company with five to 20 employees, good management-worker relations, and effective communication, that could be a good fit for a cooperative. Worker cooperatives have a much more flexible structure to organize.

*Steven: Who is on the forefront of this kind of work? Is there a country or a region that has a concentration of these kinds of businesses?*

Roy: There are lots of countries and regions that do this, but they all have a different twist. I will soon be traveling to Italy to the

Emilia Romagna area, where a third of their GDP is driven by co-ops. The Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain is another model that's one big cooperative, something like 180,000 worker-owners, certainly north of half a billion of revenue. There are cooperatives in Canada, where Quebec has a strong cooperative tradition. Argentina has a strong tradition, so does France, etc.

Here in the US, we've started to look at these other types of structures and bring them in and see where there's a fit. Interestingly enough, the West Michigan region has one of the highest concentrations of ESOP companies in the country. This is the result of the business community's culture. People here are more concerned about what is happening/impacting their community and using employee-ownership models has generated positive results.

*Steven: Roy, thanks so much for your time and knowledge on this topic. If people are looking for more information on employee ownership, where should they go?*

Roy: You're very welcome. There's the Michigan Center itself ([miceo.org](http://miceo.org)). Our national organization, the EOX Network ([eoxnetwork.org](http://eoxnetwork.org)), has a lot of resources, along with the National Center for Employee Ownership ([nceo.org](http://nceo.org)). The ESOP Association ([esopassociation.org](http://esopassociation.org)) is very much focused on ESOPs. If you're interested in articles and symposia on employee ownership, there's the NY/NJ Center for Employee Ownership. They do a lot of great work.

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