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## Welcome to the GReat Return



Welcome to the dawning of our GReat Return.

Day by day, Grand Rapids is rebounding after our community's collaborative response to COVID-19. We're once again enjoying festivals, music venues, movie theaters, breweries and full indoor service at our beloved eateries and watering holes. We're returning to work in the office and planning long-delayed family gatherings. Traffic seems back to normal on the iconic S-curve and elsewhere. We can finally see each other's mask-less smiling face.

While COVID-19 remains and our recovery from the pandemic is far from over, now is an appropriate time to reflect. Consider the selfless work our teachers, first responders, medical professionals, food and restaurant employees, public works and other public servants did for all of us over the past 15 months. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who redefined "essential" workers.

We can pay tribute to their tireless efforts, follow their example and help in the community's recovery by getting vaccinated. Our Kent County Health Department has life-saving vaccines readily available and offers dozens of neighborhood pop-up clinics each month. Visit [vaccinatewestmi.com](http://vaccinatewestmi.com) to see where and when you can get vaccinated.

I am very proud of our employees here at the City of Grand Rapids who worked tirelessly to serve the public during the pandemic. We provided high-quality essential services, including public safety, water treatment and distribution, refuse and recycling collection, park maintenance that is responsive to increased utilization, and many others.

While the pandemic underscored the convenience of City services offered online, such as water bill and tax payments, the GReat Return also means the return of face-to-face City services in a safe and responsible manner. In June, we reopened City pools and splashpads. In July, we ended fitness class capacity limits and returned to in-person government meetings. In addition – to be even more transparent than we were pre-pandemic – we've maintained the City Commission's committee-level meeting schedule adopted during the pandemic. While you are invited to travel down to City Hall, 300 Monroe NW to watch the meetings in-person, for convenience, you can now watch our committee meetings live on Grand Rapids' government access channel 26, on Facebook and YouTube. Check [grandrapidsmi.gov](http://grandrapidsmi.gov) for meeting times



and locations of all City commissions, committees and boards – some meeting times and schedules may vary from what they were pre-pandemic.

If you do plan to visit City Hall, please note that things may be different than the last time you visited. Over the past many months, we have made changes to the way we access City Hall. As part of our continued effort and commitment to providing safe and secure facilities for all staff members, customers, visitors and guests, we have implemented increased security measures.

Our Plaza level will continue to be staffed during normal business hours with a visitor ambassador. Customers, visitors and guests should visit the Ambassador Desk in order to access City Hall floors 2 to 9 prior to meeting with City staff in the building. Our Customer Service Center on the Monroe level remains available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. where you can access a variety of services at our windows.

One of the most exciting aspects of the GReat Return is re-emergence of community events. Our Office of Special Events and hundreds of community partners are committed to generating year-round, high-quality events and activities that welcome all and display our community's vibrancy

and diversity. Grand Rapids' position as a destination city is backed by these fun, safe, equitable and inclusive special events, activities and experiences. I invite you to participate in the GReat Return, look through the list printed on Page 3, and make plans to visit one of these exciting events.

Finally, I want to thank you for your patience, kindness and love shown to your family, friends and neighbors during the pandemic. This has been a most challenging time in American society, and I know that we, as Grand Rapidians, have come through it stronger and with a renewed dedication to make our hometown one that is nationally recognized as an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative with a robust economy, safe and healthy community, and the opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

Mark Washington, City Manager



## City Outlines Participatory Budgeting Process for American Rescue Plan Act Funds



The City Commission has outlined a public participatory budgeting process for the allocation of \$2 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The recommended process, which would take place through fall, likely will follow a five-step template laid out by the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP). While still being formulated at press time, the process relies on residents to create the rules and engagement plan, brainstorm project ideas, develop ideas into workable proposals and ultimately vote on the proposals that best serve the community's needs.

The City's ARPA participatory budget process follows PBP best practice for municipal budgeting which outlines \$1 million per 100,000 in population. The \$2 million that Grand Rapids has set aside for participatory budgeting exceeds similar sized cities such as Oakland, CA (\$185K per 100K), Durham, NC (\$889K per 100K) and Sacramento, CA (\$200K per 100K).

Commission has recommended graduated dispersal of \$2 million in ARPA funds across the City's three wards. This allows for investment based in part on the distribution

of demographic and economic factors in each Ward. The recommended graduated ward distribution includes:

- \$1M Third Ward
- \$600K First Ward
- \$400K Second Ward

The first step in the process began in June with the City Commission appointing steering committee members, who will coordinate work within each ward. The committees will be responsible for planning and guiding public engagement and generating ideas for ARPA projects based on specific priority areas for investment. Prior to the public vote for funding, the steering committees will review and may refine the top ideas and proposals to make sure they are feasible.

Project ideas should be focused on one-time or time-constrained activities that address one of the five priorities outlined in ARPA and/or by the City Commission:

- Violence Reduction
- Public Safety Co-Response
- Housing Affordability
- Broadband Access
- Economic Impacts from COVID

"We would not have this federal funding available if not for the pandemic," Mayor Bliss said. "The pandemic touched every life in every part of our city. I think this is a fair recommendation based on what we know the needs are in the different wards."

The City expects to release additional information on the process over the coming weeks.

Check [grandrapidsmi.gov](http://grandrapidsmi.gov) and the City's Facebook page for details of this process as it develops.

## GRPD Provides an Update on New Neighborhood Policing Model

When our Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) adopted its three-year Strategic Plan last year, one of the biggest operational shifts outlined in its plan was way it assigned patrol officers. In March, our GRPD began the transition to this new neighborhood policing model which keeps officers in the same neighborhoods and on the same shift schedule to improve communication and collaboration between you, businesses and officers.

Neighborhood policing is based on familiarity, consistency and engagement to understand and address unique concerns and issues, improve safety, reduce crime and build better relationships between officers and the community.

This consistency in patrol assignments is coupled with increased unallocated time. Officers rotate being dispatched to calls to more actively engage with you, fellow residents and businesses.

"Officers will have time built into their shift to meet with residents, stop in at the park to play a quick game of catch with youngsters, and collaborate on tailored solutions to crime prevention within their beat," said GRPD Chief Eric Payne. "This will definitely increase officers' ability to meet informally with residents outside of calls for service."

Neighborhood policing increases an individual officer's sense of responsibility in that community as well.

"When officers are in a neighborhood every day, they get to know residents' names and faces and can better understand the specific safety concerns," said Payne. "They can work in tandem with residents to be problem-solvers. Officers are invested in that neighborhood and the community sees that."

City and police department officials anticipate that this new approach will aid recruiting efforts, as young people see the variety of ways that officers serve the community. GRPD has been actively pursuing a "grow your own" recruiting strategy, but the relationships built in a neighborhood policing framework can significantly step up those efforts.

"We are hopeful this will increase interest in our youth programs and internship opportunities and further diversify our applicant pool for the next generation of GRPD officers," said Lieutenant Maureen O'Brien, who leads GRPD's recruiting efforts.

City staff will be updating the GRPD website to reflect the department's neighborhood policing model. When completed, you will be able to put in your address to find which neighborhood beat you're in, a list of officers assigned to your beat, and officers' individual contact information.





## News from the Office of the City Clerk

### Upcoming Special millage election for Grand Rapids Public Schools

On Tuesday, August 3, 2021, the Grand Rapids Board of Education is asking the voters in the City of Grand Rapids to consider a non-homestead millage proposal of up to 23 mills for a period of seven years to protect against a likely Headlee rollback. State law specifically limits the maximum levy to no more than 18 mills.

For more information visit: [grps.org/grps-millage](https://grps.org/grps-millage).

### Voting procedure changes

In the November 2018 Election, Michigan voters approved Proposal 3, which changed a host of election laws. Here is how that law affects you and your fellow voters:

1. Absentee Voting (AV). If you are registered to vote, you are now eligible to receive an Absentee Ballot without a reason. In order to receive a ballot, you, as a voter, must fill out an application for a ballot before every election. If

you want to be placed on a permanent AV list to receive an application prior to each election, please contact the Clerk's Office or sign up online at [grandrapidsmi.gov/avlist](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/avlist).

2. Straight Party Voting. The proposal reinstated the option to vote in the partisan section of the ballot by selecting the party only.
3. Voter Registration. If you're at least 18 years old and make any transaction with the Secretary of State, you will automatically be registered to vote. You may choose to cancel your registration. You may register by mail up to 15 days before an election and may register to vote in person at the Clerk's Office within 14 days of the election up to Election Day. You must prove residency in the city. If you prove residency and registers, you are eligible to vote.

### New precinct lines on the horizon

Another aspect of Proposal 3 was to create a Citizen's

Redistricting Commission. The commission was formed to draw new lines for the U.S. House of Representative, State House of Representatives and State Senate districts. Kent County will also be drawing new County Commission district lines. The district sizes will be based on the 2020 Census count. The City of Grand Rapids will review these new district lines to adjust precinct lines. Registered voters will get new voter registration cards in the mail next spring.

### Notary service

We also wanted to remind you that the Clerk's Office offers Notary Service. Our staff can assist with you with getting your documents notarized. The fee for notarization is \$5 per signature. You can make an appointment by calling our office at 456-3010.

You can learn more about these services and all we have to offer on our website: [grandrapidsmi.gov/clerk](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/clerk).

## Grand Rapids Fire Department Earns International Reaccreditation Status

Our Grand Rapids Fire Department (GRFD) has once again achieved accredited agency status with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). It earned reaccreditation, originally awarded in 2016, for meeting the criteria established through the CFAI's voluntary self-assessment and accreditation program.

The Grand Rapids Fire Department is one of more than 290 agencies to achieve internationally accredited agency status with the CFAI and the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. (CPSE). The CFAIA voted unanimously to reaffirm the Grand Rapids Fire Department's accredited status.

Accredited agencies within the State of Michigan include Canton Township Fire Department, Detroit Metro Airport, US Army Garrison Detroit Arsenal Fire Department, and Grand Rapids Fire Department. The Grand Rapids Fire Department owns the unique distinction of being the only ISO Class 1 agency in Michigan while retaining the CPSE Accredited Agency designation.

The Accreditation program ensures that fire and emergency service agencies:

- Assess community risk and safety needs,
- Develop a community-specific Standards of Cover,
- Evaluate the performance of the department, and
- Achieve continuous organizational improvement.

Fire Chief John Lehman stated that the agency's achievement, "demonstrates the commitment of the agency to provide the highest quality of service to our community. We have also been able to use the Commission on Fire Accreditation International's process as a proactive mechanism to plan for the future of this agency and locate areas where we can improve on the quality of the services we provided."

The Grand Rapids Fire Department has incorporated the accreditation process into its daily operations. The GRFD Planning Division actively manages the process, as well as serving on the Michigan-Ohio-Indiana accreditation consortium, providing mentorship to other agencies seeking accreditation, and participating in the peer assessor program



for the CFAI.

"Reaccreditation is a testament to the department's commitment to continuous improvement while serving the needs of our community," said City Manager Mark Washington. "I am continuously impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of the department. They strive every day to provide exceptional service to our residents and achieve the goals and objectives contained in the City's and GRFD's strategic plans."

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International is dedicated to assisting the fire and emergency service agencies throughout the world in achieving excellence through self-assessment and accreditation to provide continuous quality improvement and the enhancement of service delivery to their

communities. The CFAI process is voluntary and provides an agency with an improvement model to assess their service delivery and performance internally and then works with a team of peers from other agencies to evaluate their completed self-assessment.

Fire Chief Craig Rollins of Castle Rock, CO, who was the CFAI team leader said, "When on site, the Peer team observed a strong commitment, by the department for the CFAI accreditation model. In particular, it displayed continuous improvement through the implementation of LEAN methodology and practices."



## \$26 Million in Street and Sidewalk Improvements Coming to a Neighborhood Near You

The hundreds of orange barrels dotted around town are proof positive that Grand Rapids is in the midst of its eighth season of ramped-up road construction. In fact, you can again expect to see improvements to streets and sidewalks throughout the entire city this summer.

The Vital Streets Oversight Commission wants you to know about its Vital Streets program and what street and sidewalk projects are planned for fiscal year 2022 (FY2022). Since 2014, the Vital Streets millage has allowed us to complete preventative maintenance and reconstruction of 514 miles of streets. This year, we plan to work on an additional 22 miles. We also plan to dedicate a total of \$1.8 million for various sidewalk repair and construction projects in all three city wards.

In the past year, our Vital Streets Oversight Commission engaged with the community virtually while also ensuring health and safety. Along with hosting four virtual community meetings, the commission maintained communications with residents, like you, by reaching out directly with mailers, responding to over 370 service message requests from 311, offering surveys through Public Input and providing Spanish translation for all mailers. You and your neighbors weighed in on your priorities for projects and spending of Vital Streets dedicated millage dollars.

Vital Streets projects not only improve the streets and sidewalks for drivers, but they also concentrate on improving these spaces for pedestrians and cyclists. Last year, we added 8.5 miles of new bicycle facilities with nearly seven miles of new bicycle trails added in Neighborhoods of Focus. We also emphasized the increase of green infrastructure by adding over 280 street trees, 46 bioswales and 37 infiltration basins. This year, we plan to add four more miles of bicycle facilities in addition to making changes to existing bicycle facilities for better signage and cyclist access.

Vital Streets projects are backed by a voter-approved plan in 2014 that extended a local income tax levy for 15 years. Vital Street investment, along with a road funding commitment by the State of Michigan, ensures that 70 percent of Grand Rapids city streets reach fair to good condition by 2030. Since 2014, Grand Rapids has gone from 37 percent of streets in good or fair condition to 61 percent thanks to the Vital Streets program.

Below is a partial list of 2021 road construction projects with no start dates set to date. Street projects, listed in alphabetical order, may be carried over to the next construction season. A partial list of street paving projects planned by the City's Public Works Department also is included. Other locations may be added.

### Rotomill/Resurfacing

- 29th Street – Breton to East City Limits (2022)
- Benjamin Avenue NE – Bradford to Cedar– Contract No. 1
- Benjamin Avenue SE – Hope to Fulton
- Bradford Street NE – Plymouth to Perkins and Perkins Avenue – Bradford to Mason– Contract No. 1
- Butterworth Street – O'Brien to Marion (2022)
- Capen Street NE – Eastern to Houseman
- Cass Avenue SE – Delaware to Franklin – Contract No. 1
- Collindale Avenue – Lake Michigan to Leonard (2022)
- Crescent Avenue NE – Lafayette to Grand



- Dale Street – Monroe to Center and Coit to Plainfield
- Division Avenue - Quigley to Cottage Grove (2022)
- Eastern Avenue – 400' South of 44th to 28th (2022)
- Elliott Street SE – Thelma to Nelson – Contract No. 2
- Grand Avenue – Flat to Lydia
- Hall Street SE – Plymouth to east city limits
- High Street SW – Grandville to Century – Contract No. 2
- Holland Avenue NE – Fulton to Fountain– Contract No. 1
- Innes Street NE – Diamond to Fuller
- Lyon Street – Monroe Avenue to Division Avenue
- Mason Street – Plymouth to Perkins – Contract No. 1
- Mayfield Avenue – Leonard to Sweet
- Merritt Street SE – Eastern to Blaine– Contract No. 2
- North Avenue NE – Shirley to Walnut and Shirley Street NE – North to College – Contract No. 1
- Ottawa Avenue – Fulton to Michigan
- Walnut Street NE – North to Union – Contract No. 1

### Other road projects

- College Avenue – Leonard Street to Sweet Street (water main, reconstruction)
- Curwood Avenue – Blossom to Oak Park, Oak Park Drive – Curwood to Langley and Langley Street – Oak Park to Plymouth (water main, reconstruction)
- Chestnut Street SW – 570 feet west of Godfrey to Godfrey (sewer separation, reconstruction)
- Eastern Avenue SE – Burton to Ardmere (water main, reconstruction)
- Franklin Street SW – Division to east city limits (water main, resurfacing)
- Fuller Avenue – Adams to Alexander (water main, reconstruction)
- Fulton Street East – Benjamin to Wallinwood (water main, resurfacing)
- Garfield Avenue - Fulton to Bridge, Veto Street – Valley to Garfield and California Street – Valley to Garfield

- (water main, reconstruction) (2022)
- Godfrey Avenue SW – South city limits to Oxford (sewer separation, reconstruction)
- Hall Street SE – Kalamazoo to east of Sylvan (water main, reconstruction)
- Houseman Avenue – Leonard to Spencer (water main, reconstruction) (2022)
- Lake Eastbrook Boulevard SE – East Beltline to 28th Street (water main, reconstruction)
- Market Avenue – Wealthy to Fulton and Fulton Street – Grand River to Market (sanitary sewer, reconstruction)
- Norwich Avenue SW – Curve to Hayden (sewer separation, water main, reconstruction, resurfacing)
- Oxford Street SW – Norwich to Godfrey (sewer separation, reconstruction)
- Prince Street SE – Madison to Eastern (sewer separation, water main, reconstruction)
- Prospect Avenue – Burton to Griggs and Garden to Highland (water main, reconstruction) (2022)
- Richards Avenue – Fulton to Sibley (water main, reconstruction) (2022)
- Straight Avenue – Wealthy to Emperor and Wealthy Street - Straight to 300' West of Front (water main, reconstruction) (2022)
- Valley Avenue NW – Fourth to Walker (water main, reconstruction)

### Preventative Maintenance of Bridges:

- Division Avenue
- Alpine Avenue
- College Avenue
- Leffingwell Avenue

### Public Works Department resurfacing projects:

- Acacia NW - Richmond to Acacia
- Adams SE - Fuller to Calvin
- Alewa NW - Lake Michigan Dr to Olivia
- Andre SW - Division to Buchanan
- Ball Park Bvd NW - Bridge to Sibley

- Baynton NE - Lyon to Michigan
- Benjamin NE - Evangeline to Fountain
- Benjamin SE - Franklin to Alexander
- Benjamin SE - Hall to Adams
- Broadway NW - Hamilton to Elizabeth
- Charles SE - Wealthy to Logan
- Cheshire NE - Prospect to Oakwood
- Cutler SW - Clyde Park to Mckee
- Derbyshire SE - Kalamazoo to East Dead End
- Eastern NE - Fountain to Innes
- Edwin NW - Turner to Will
- Elizabeth NW - Richmond to Broadway
- Emerald NE - Capen to Malta
- Emerald NE - Knapp to Country Club
- Evernia SE - Rosemary to Ken-O-Sha
- Feakin SW - Dickinson to Fox
- Fern NE - Florence to Hanover
- First NW - Valley to Valley
- Fisk SE - Kalamazoo to Neland
- Fountain NE - Fuller to Auburn
- Gateway NW - Covell to Luray
- Giddings SE - Hall to Adams
- Gilpin NE - Riverside to West Dead End
- Godwin SE - Burton to Griswold
- Golfridge SE - Grove Bluff to Alger
- Graham SW - Oakland to Century
- Grove Bluff SE - Heathcliff to Golfridge
- Haines NW - Covell to Dick
- Hake NE - Grand to Diamond
- Hamilton NW - Leonard to Crosby
- Hamilton NW - Richmond to Broadway
- Hamstead NW - Shawmut to Covell
- Hanover NE - Forrest to Fern
- Hayden SW - Norwich to Dorchester
- Herrick NE - Spencer to SWeet
- Houseman NE - Lyon to Fountain
- Houseman NE - SWeet to Spencer
- Humbolt SE - Eastern to Kalamazoo
- Jerome SW - Burton to Griggs
- Kenning NW - Covell to Shawmut
- Kerwin NW - Derby to Holborn
- Kirtland SW - Clyde Park to Mckee
- Lawrence NE - Coit to SWensberg
- Lenora NW - 4th to 6th
- Luray NW - Cayuga to Sibley
- Lydia NE - Union to Eastern
- Malta NE - Eastern to Diamond
- Margaret SE - Adams to Griggs
- Marshall SE - Hall to Humbolt
- Melbourne NE - Monroe to Riverside
- Monticello NW - Skyline to Shanandoah
- More NE - North to Sinclair
- Moreland Ct NW - Moreland to South Dead End
- Moreland NW - Richmond to Cherry Run
- North NE - Bradford to More
- Norwood SE - Lake Dr to Sherman
- Ontonagon SE - Burton to South Cul-De-Sac
- Prospect NE - Knapp to Cheshire
- Prospect NE - Michigan to Lyon
- Ridgemoor SE - Burton to North Cul-De-Sac
- Riverside NE - Sligh to Gilpin
- Shanandoah NW - Skyline to Monticello
- Spring NE - Leonard to Page
- Sylvan SE - Ardmore to Boston
- Union NE - Lydia to Cedar
- Valley NW - Valley to South Dead End

- Vassar SE - Edgewood to Woodcliff
- Widdicomb NW - Dorothy to Thornapple

### Sidewalk Repair

The repair and replacement of sidewalks throughout Grand Rapids neighborhoods are an important part of the Vital Streets program. This summer, our inspectors will be in each neighborhood marking out the sidewalks to be replaced. Properties that have sidewalk repairs in sections that cross through their driveways will get 48-hour notice posted to their property informing of them of the upcoming work and expected duration the driveway will be unavailable.

The duration of work in front of any home will average one week, which includes removal, forming of sidewalks, pouring of concrete and restoration of lawns.

Systematic sidewalk work will take place in the following areas:

**First Ward** – Sidewalk repairs are taking place in the general area bounded by Walker Ave NW, Leonard St NW, Alpine Ave NW and Richmond St NW thru the end of June.

**Second Ward** – Sidewalk repairs will be done within the general area bounded by Fuller Ave NE, Michigan St NE, Leonard St NE, and I-96. Work is scheduled for September through November.

**Third Ward** – Sidewalk repairs will be done within the general area bounded by Eastern Ave SE, Hall St SE, Giddings Ave SE and Franklin St SE. Work is scheduled for July through August.

Updates on the City's Vital Streets projects are available at [grandrapidsmi.gov](http://grandrapidsmi.gov) or by calling 311 or 616.456.3000.

## Notice From the Grand Rapids Water System

The Grand Rapids Water System will resume water shutoffs associated with non-payment of water/sewer bills on August 1, 2021.

On March 13, 2020, the Grand Rapids Water System suspended all water shutoffs related to non-payment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Whitmer signed a temporary statewide ban on water shutoffs that ended on March 31, 2021, but the Grand Rapids Water System continued to suspend all water shutoffs for non-payment beyond that date. Beginning August 1, the Grand Rapids Water System will resume water shutoffs due to non-payment.

Last year, the Grand Rapids Water System received state funding, and with Kent County Community Action's assistance, 1,467 customers received utility payment assistance totaling \$437,799. Customers of the Grand Rapids Water System can continue to contact Kent County Community Action at 616.632.7950 for water/sewer payment assistance.

## 2021 Summer Property Tax Update

Your 2021 property tax bills were billed and mailed on June 29. If you have not received your bill, please contact the City Treasurer's office at 616.456.3020. The summer tax bill is due Monday, Aug. 2. We collect taxes for many groups. You will see familiar names like parks, library, refuse, GRCC, public schools, and Kent ISD. The City collects and distributes your tax dollars to these organizations.

Pay your tax bill online at [grandrapidsmi.gov/Payments](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Payments). It is easy to complete using GR PayIt, our online payment solution. There are several other ways to pay and the options are listed on the back of your tax bill.

We understand COVID has had an impact of many of us. There is an insert included with your tax bill. It provides homeowners with information on poverty and disabled veterans exemptions. There may also be a chance for homeowners to defer summer taxes.

If you have questions about your property tax bill, we are here to help. You can contact us at 616-456-3020 or send an email to [grtreasurer@grcity.us](mailto:grtreasurer@grcity.us).



## Special Events Speak to the Quality of Life and Fabric of Our Community

Nowhere is the GReat Return more evident than in the re-emergence of special events taking place throughout the community. Our Special Events team is processing dozens of applications and assisting event planners with more than 167 separate events this summer. The events range from concerts and movies in the park to Eastown's iconic Bizarre Bazaar.

Whatever your interest or game, take a minute to enjoy Grand Rapids at one of these remarkable events (events and times are schedule to change – may not be a complete list due to printing deadlines).

### GRPL Outdoor Storytime Summer 2021

Monday, July 19 · 11 to 11:30 a.m.

Lincoln Park, 1120 Bridge St NW

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Public Library

### Grand Rapids Symphony Neighborhood Concert

Tuesday, July 20 · 6 to 7 p.m.

Wilcox Park, 100 Youell Ave

Tuesday, July 20 · 7 to 9 p.m.

Midtown Green, 747 Fountain NE

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Symphony

### Rapids City Chess Event

Wednesday, July 21 · 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Chess Center

### Meet Up in the Park

Thursday, July 22 · 6 to 8 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by Office of Special Events

### Eastown Bizarre Bazaar

Saturday, July 24 · 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wealthy St between Ethel and Sigsbee

Sponsored by Eastown Neighborhood Association

### Healthy Housing, Healthy Kids Drive Up Fair

Saturday, July 24 · 1 to 3 p.m.

Buchanan between Feakin and Fox

Sponsored by Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan

### Storytime in the Park

Tuesday, July 27 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by GVSU, Read GR, GRPL

### Watercolor IV

Friday, July 30 · 6 to 10 p.m.

Ah-Nab-Awen Park, 220 Front Ave NW

Sponsored by Asher Production

### Something New Evangelistic Outreach

Saturday, July 31 · 4 to 7 p.m.

Corner of Division and Andre

Sponsored by Mision de fe Church

### Upcoming Events for August

#### Baxter Summer Programming

Monday, August 2 - Thursday, August 5 · 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Monday, August 9 - Thursday, August 12 · 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Joe Taylor Park, 1038 Bermis St

Sponsored by Baxter Community Center

#### Storytime in the Park

Tuesday, August 3 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, August 10 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, August 24 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Garfield Park, 2111 Madison St

Sponsored by GVSU, Read GR, GRPL

#### Tuesday Night Swing Dance

Tuesday, August 3 · 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 10 · 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17 · 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 24 · 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 31 · 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Ah-Nab-Awen Park, 220 Front Ave. NW

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Events

#### National Night Out-Roosevelt Neighborhood Association

Tuesday, August 3 · 4 to 6 p.m.

Caulfield Park, 1121 Caulfield SW

Sponsored by Roosevelt Neighborhood Association

#### National Night Out-John Ball Area Neighbors

Tuesday, August 3 · 6 to 8 p.m.

Lincoln Park, 1120 Bridge Street NW

Sponsored by John Ball Area Neighbors

#### Church Street Ministries

Thursday, August 5 · 3 to 7 p.m.

Saturday, August 7 · 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 14 · 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday, August 19 · 3 to 7 p.m.

Saturday, August 21 · 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 28 · 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Madison and Hall

Sponsored by IUIIC Grand Rapids

#### Sandy Point Beach House Musical Series

Thursday, August 5 · 5 to 11 p.m.

Thursday, August 12 · 5 to 11 p.m.

Thursday, August 19 · 5 to 11 p.m.

Thursday, August 26 · 5 to 11 p.m.

822 Ottawa Ave

Sponsored by Sandy Point Beach House

#### Friday Night Live

Friday, August 6 · 6 to 10 p.m.

Friday, August 20 · 6 to 10 p.m.

Canal Park, 941 Monroe NW

Sponsored by Beer Me Bro, LLC

#### Hispanic Festival

Friday, August 6 · 5 to 11 p.m.

Saturday, August 7 · 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Sunday, August 8 · 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Calder Plaza, 300 Monroe

Sponsored by Hispanic Center of West Michigan

#### Music and Movies in the Park

Saturday, August 7 · 7 to 11 p.m.

Plaster Creek, 2401 Buchanan SW

Sponsored by Friends of GR Park

#### The Vendor GR Community Event

Saturday, August 7 · 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, August 21 · 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

#### GRPL Outdoor Storytime Summer 2021

Monday's, August 9 · 11 to 11:30 a.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Public Library

#### Storytime in the Park

Tuesday, August 10 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by GVSU, Read GR, GRPL

#### Green Gala

Thursday August 12 · 6 to 10 p.m.

Ah-Nab-Awen Park, 220 Front Ave

Sponsored by Friends of GR Park

#### Rapids City Chess Event

Thursday, August 12 · 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Chess Center

#### Meet Up in the Park

Thursday, August 12 · 6 to 8 p.m.

Martin Luther King Park, 900 Fuller Ave SE

Sponsored by Office of Special Events

#### Westside Vintage Market

Saturday, August 14 · 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Monroe North Lot, 601 Monroe Ave NW

Sponsored by Westside Connection

#### Run for Type 1

Saturday, August 14 · 8 a.m. to Noon

Riverside Park, 2001 Monroe NE

Sponsored by Run for Type 1

#### Creston. After Dark

Saturday August 14, Noon to 10 p.m.

Quimby between Lafayette and Spencer

Sponsored by Lions and Rabbits

#### GRPL Outdoor Storytime Summer 2021

Monday's, August 16 · 11 to 11:30 a.m.

Lincoln Park, 1120 Bridge St NW

Sponsored by Grand Rapids Public Library

## Upcoming Events for August (continued)

### Storytime in the Park

Tuesday, August 17 · 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
Lincoln Park, 1120 Bridge St NW  
Sponsored by GVSU, Read GR, GRPL

### Blues on the Mall

Thursday, August 19 · 4 to 9 p.m.  
Ah-Nab-Awen Park, 220 Front Ave  
Sponsored by WLAV

### GR Charity Fair

Friday, August 20 · Noon to 6 p.m.  
Saturday, August 21  
Calder Plaza, 300 Monroe

### Latino Health 5K

Saturday, August 21 · 9 to 11 a.m.  
Roosevelt Park + Race Route, 739 VanRaalte SW

Sponsored by WMHCC

### Music and Movies in the Park

Saturday, August 21 · 7 to 11 p.m.  
Highland Park, 700 College NE  
Sponsored by Friends of GR Park

### Advance Manufacturing Expo

Thursday, August 26 · 3 to 5 p.m.  
Gillett Bridge  
Sponsored by Industrial Control

### Family Fiesta

Friday, August 27 · 5 to 7:30 p.m.  
Roosevelt Park, 739 VanRaalte SW  
Sponsored by Roosevelt Park Advocates

### Polish Festival

Friday, August 27 · 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.  
Saturday, August 28 · 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.  
Sunday, August 29 · 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Calder Plaza, 300 Monroe  
Sponsored by Polish Heritage Society

### One Peace Fest

Saturday, August 28 · Noon to 9 p.m.  
Campau Park, 50 Antoine ST

### Community Block Party

Saturday, August 28 · Noon to 6 p.m.  
MLK Park, 900 Fuller Ave  
Sponsored by Better Beings

## Know the Rules and Practice Extreme Caution When Lighting Fireworks



We understand the popularity of consumer fireworks and know that many of you will purchase them for use in your backyard celebrations. But before you light up the sky, our fire and police departments urge you to be aware of fireworks regulations and safety tips.

Our fireworks ordinance, limiting the use of them within Grand Rapids, reflects state law governing the use of

consumer-grade fireworks. It sets a civil fine of \$1,000 for each violation of the fireworks ordinance. The ordinance also sets the times and dates when fireworks may be set off throughout the year:

- 11 a.m. December 31 to 1 a.m. January 1
- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. on the Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Memorial Day
- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. June 29 to July 4
- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. on the Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Labor Day

Our Fire Department promotes fireworks safety to ensure that not a single family in Grand Rapids suffers the pain and sorrow of a fireworks injury. To reduce fireworks accidents, please take note of these important fireworks safety tips:

- Read and follow all warnings and instructions contained on the package.
- Never allow children to play with or ignite any fireworks. Sparklers, although considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for the young, burn at extremely high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing. Many children do not understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.
- Keep a bucket of water, or garden hose handy in case of a malfunction or fire.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting

fireworks. Never shoot a firework at or near another person.

- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves and flammable materials. Never light a firework while holding it in your hand!
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned. "DUDS" can re-ignite and injure you. If you must move them, consider scooping them up with a shovel, and dropping them into a bucket of water to extinguish. Throw them away after they are extinguished.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Never mix fireworks and alcohol!
- Observe local laws.
- State law prohibits igniting fireworks on a public street, public sidewalk, park, church, school or public rights of way.
- Before retiring for the evening, make sure that your yard, shrubbery, trees and your home are free of any unwanted burning. Make sure you have working smoke alarms in your home.

## GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy Offers Primary Care for Older Adults

The Grand Rapids Housing Commission has partnered with the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) Kirkhof College of Nursing to establish the GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy, 1425 Bridge Street NW – a full-service primary and mental health care clinic located within the Mount Mercy Apartments. Mount Mercy is a 180-unit senior community that's home to income-eligible adults ages 55 and older. The Health Center is open by appointment to not only Mount Mercy residents but also other Grand Rapids seniors whose annual income does not exceed 60 percent of the Area Median Income (currently \$33,600 for a one-person household).

Funded through grants from the Michigan Health

Endowment Fund, GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy services include:

- Primary and preventive care
- Mental health and behavioral counseling
- Specialist and diagnostic referrals
- Nutrition and lifestyle counseling
- Video appointments\*

\*Video appointments can be scheduled for minor illnesses and follow-up appointments. No apps or downloads required—the clinic's web-based appointments require an internet connection and a device/computer with a camera.

Nurse practitioners specializing in geriatrics and

psychiatry and overseen by medical doctors, provide services at the GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy. The Center's goals are to improve access to early preventive services, address safety in the home and ultimately optimize patients' ability to successfully age in place. The Health Center also provides valuable clinical experience to GVSU students who are pursuing medical careers.

The GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy accepts Medicare, Medicaid and other insurance. An appointment is required. For more information or to make an appointment, please contact the center at (616) 331-9830.





## FALL RECREATION WELCOMES THE RETURN OF IN PERSON CLASSES

We're excited to be welcoming recreation participants back to the fitness studio (and our other indoor facilities across Grand Rapids) for a great lineup of fall classes! In addition to in person classes, we'll be continuing some of our virtual classes as well. Whatever your schedule, fitness level, or location, we'll have a class for you! Check for updates and full details at [grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation).

### Adult classes will include:

- Yoga
- Strength & Cardio
- Dance Fitness
- Enrichment
- Cycling

### Youth classes will include:

- Fall Soccer
- Youth Dance
- Indoor Swim Lessons
- And more!

## LOOKING FOR WAYS TO STAY FIT OUTDOORS AND ONLINE NOW? REGISTER FOR AUGUST CLASSES!



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



Register by phone  
616.456.3696, option #1



Register in person  
201 Market Ave SW





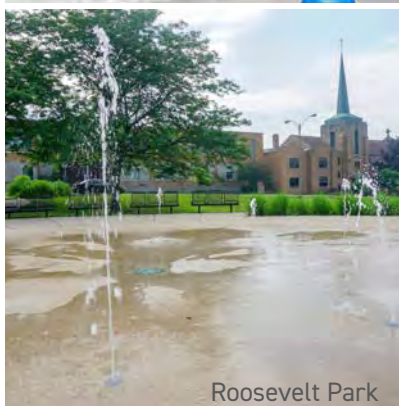
Aberdeen Park



Mulick Park



Joe Taylor Park



Roosevelt Park

**SPLASHPAD LOCATIONS**

**Aberdeen Park**  
2230 Eastern Ave NE

**Alger Park**  
921 Alger St SE

**Campau Park**  
50 Antoine St SW

**Cherry Park**  
725 Cherry St SE

**Fuller Park**  
300 Fuller Ave NE

**Gerald R. Ford Academic Center**  
851 Madison Ave SE

**Heartside Park**  
301 Ionia Ave SW

**Highland Park**  
700 College Ave NE

**Joe Taylor Park**  
1038 Bemis Ave SE

**Lincoln Park**  
1120 Bridge St NW

**Mary Waters Park**  
1042 Lafayette Ave NE

**Mulick Park**  
1632 Sylvan Ave SE

**Roosevelt Park**  
739 Van Raalte Dr SW

**Wilcox Park**  
100 Youell Ave SE



Richmond Park

**BRIGGS PARK POOL (350 KNAPP ST NE)**

**Open Swim Hours:**

Monday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Tuesday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm  
 Wednesday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Thursday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Friday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Saturday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Sunday - Noon to 4:00 pm

**MLK PARK POOL (900 FULLER AVE SE)**

**Open Swim Hours:**

Monday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Tuesday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Wednesday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Thursday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Friday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Saturday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Sunday - Noon to 4:00 pm

**RICHMOND PARK POOL (1101 RICHMOND ST NW)**

**Open Swim Hours:**

Monday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Tuesday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Wednesday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Thursday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm  
 Friday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Saturday - 1:00 to 4:00 pm and 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Sunday - Noon to 4:00 pm

**SPLASHPAD ADMISSION**

Free for all visitors

**SPLASHPAD DATES**

June 11 - September 12

**SPLASHPAD HOURS**

Every day, 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

**MORE INFORMATION**

[grandrapidsmi.gov/aquatics](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/aquatics)

**POOL ADMISSION PRICES**

Grand Rapids Residents:  
 • Youth (17 and under): \$1  
 • Adult (18 and above): \$3  
 Nonresidents:  
 • Youth (17 and under): \$3  
 • Adult (18 and above): \$5

**POOL SEASON DATES**

June 11 - August 21

**CLOSURE INFORMATION**

Facebook @GRParksandRec  
 616-456-3699



## Thrive Outside Grand Rapids

### Who We Are

We believe all Grand Rapids youth should have equitable access to natural places and spaces for a happy and healthy life.

Research has shown that time outdoors, no matter how you spend it, is a key part of a healthy life. Yet, we also know that access to outdoor spaces and equipment is not equitable for everyone. That's where we come in.

We create outdoor adventure opportunities, particularly for people of color and in neighborhoods with a lack of green space.

### What We Do

Looking for something to do outside? We've got you covered with year-round events and outdoor gear rentals.

### The Gear Library

Our Gear Library has outdoor gear rentals for you to use for hiking, hammocking, playing yard games, and more – absolutely free. Check out our frequently asked questions below and visit our website at [grandrapidsmi.gov/thriveoutside](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/thriveoutside) to see a full list of available gear.

### Who can use the Gear Library?

Gear rentals are open to all City of Grand Rapids residents.

### How does the Gear Library work?

When you arrive for your first visit, we'll sign you up with a free Gear Library membership. We'll give you a short orientation on how to borrow gear. You can borrow gear for up to one week at a time! Once you become a member, you can stop in and borrow gear more quickly without having to sign up again.

### For large group outings like classrooms or youth organizations

We'd love to talk more and see if we can support your outing! To discuss further, contact Sam at [struby@grcity.us](mailto:struby@grcity.us). We can't guarantee gear availability for groups, and a group fee may be charged.

### Location

The Gear Library headquarters is located at the community gym at Roosevelt Park (739 Van Raalte Dr SW). The library will be open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm all summer.

### Free Programs in Community Parks

Our Gear Library staff also brings free gear to borrow into Grand Rapids parks, just for you! Come say hello and give some of our equipment a test run. Each week will be a little different, but some examples of our gear include yard games, hammocks, basketballs and other team sports gear, binoculars, and more.

### Learn more at

[grandrapidsmi.gov/thriveoutside](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/thriveoutside)



### Partners

Thrive Outside Grand Rapids is a collaborative effort with numerous local organizations working to increase equitable access to the outdoors.

#### Network Partners

- Blandford Nature Center
- Boys and Girls Club of Grand Rapids
- Camp Newaygo
- Expanded Learning Opportunities Network
- Friends of Grand Rapids Parks
- Grand Rapids Audubon Club
- Grand Rapids Children's Museum
- Grand Rapids Public Schools
- Groundswell
- John Ball Zoo
- Latino Outdoors GR
- Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds
- Outdoor Afro
- Sierra Club Michigan Chapter
- Switchback Gear Exchange
- West Michigan Environmental Action Council

#### Presented by



**OUTDOOR  
FOUNDATION**

#### Sponsors

**WOLVERINE** | **W**  
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**MERRELL** | **Moosejaw**





## The Power of Parks

Our City parks are important pieces of what makes Grand Rapids a more vibrant, active and connected community. The need for and value of parks were made even more clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were, and continue to be used as safe places of relaxation, gathering, exercise, and play.

From large multi-use parks to small pocket parks tucked away in neighborhoods, Grand Rapidians went to their local parks to get out of the house, unwind, and experience nature.

Over the course of the pandemic, the number of visitors in Grand Rapids parks increased dramatically. It's estimated that there was a 50% increase in park visitorship across the country in 2020. Parks did more than host more people. They were also used in new and creative ways—from free WiFi hotspots for work and school, to outdoor dining social zones and food distribution sites.

As we look to the future of our park system, we want your help in shaping the next five years. Grand Rapids residents continue to emphasize that parks, natural spaces and safe recreational opportunities are an important part of our community. Every five years, we update our parks master plan, which provides a road map for the long-term development and sustainability of our park system.

The 2022-2026 Parks Master Plan will look at ways we can:

- Create equitable access to parks in every neighborhood
- Ensure we have the right number and distribution of recreational facilities
- Develop creative and inclusive programming for our community
- Expand community impact through partnerships and creative funding strategies

### The 2021 PhotoVision Challenge

Our PhotoVision challenge was one of many planned public input opportunities for residents as we prepare to update our five-year plan. During the challenge, residents posted a photo of their neighborhood park to Instagram with a description of what they currently enjoy at their park, what could be improved at the park, and what activities they want to see at the park. Here are some things we heard:

- Maximiliano and his son Max enjoy bike trails and Max loves the challenges of mountain biking within the city
- Allie loves stroller friendly trails in our parks, and would like to see more toddler-focused playgrounds
- Shianna and her son would like more art classes in our parks, like painting
- Hannah would like more opportunities for hammocking in our parks

### Get Involved

Looking for ways to get involved? Here are a few:

- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @grparksandrec
- Keep an eye out for community input meetings at parks
- Sign up for email updates at [grandrapidsmi.gov/parkspan](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/parkspan)
- Volunteer at your local park with the help of Friends of Grand Rapids Parks' Adopt-A-Park program. Learn more at [friendsofgrparks.org/adopt-a-park](https://friendsofgrparks.org/adopt-a-park)



I go outside to kind of get away and connect back to myself.



Being in a park with my friend made things feel normal again.



Everybody was out enjoying themselves, it was just so fun!





## Construction Wraps Up at Roberto Clemente Park in the Roosevelt Park Neighborhood

Construction is now complete at Roberto Clemente Park! The park is open and ready to explore—keep an eye out for a formal ribbon cutting event in late summer.

Improvements at the park, located at 546 Rumsey St SW, include:

- New universally accessible outdoor discovery area featuring a play area, seating and an outdoor classroom space
- Universally accessible 6-foot-wide and 8-foot-wide concrete trails and new energy efficient lighting
- New picnic shelter and an all-gender restroom building that meets universal design standards
- New furnishings like bike racks, benches, picnic tables, grills, drinking fountain and trash bins
- Domino/Chess combo game tables (coming late July)

In addition, Roberto Clemente Park also has new innovative daylighted stormwater infrastructure (thanks to the City of Grand Rapids Environmental Services Department) that will protect the Grand River and Lake Michigan. These upgrades include:

- New green infrastructure like bioswales, rain gardens and educational signage throughout the park
- Native meadow plantings that naturalize the passive areas, filter pollutants and help reduce stormwater runoff

This \$1.5 million community investment is made possible thanks to funding from the voter approved Parks Millage that was passed in 2013, a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, and green infrastructure funding from the City's Environmental Services Department.

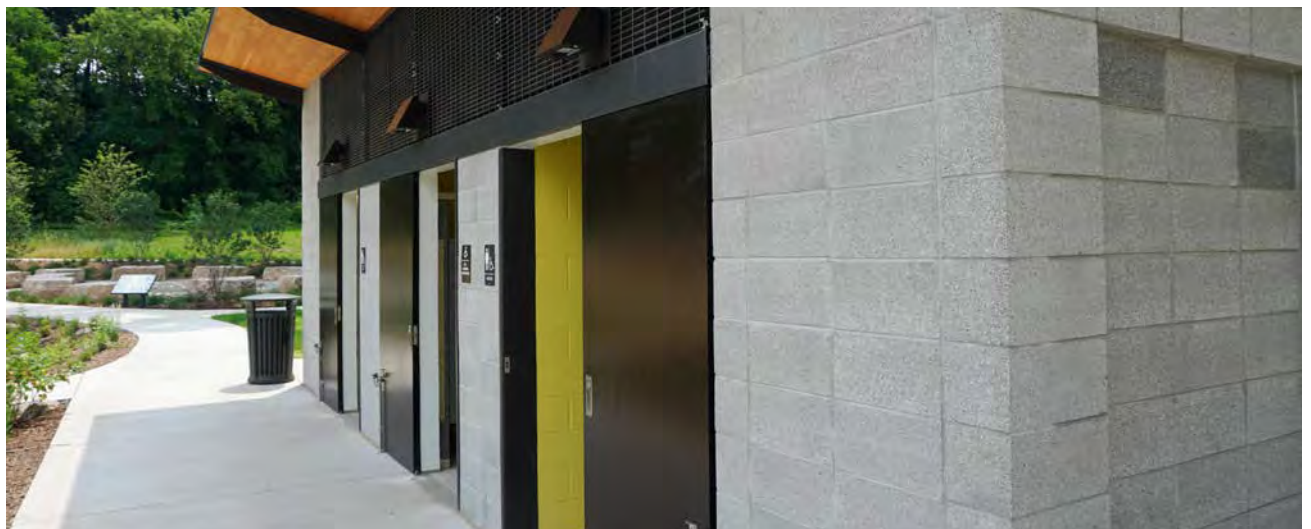
**Design team:** VIRIDIS Design Group

**Construction team:** Katerberg VerHage Inc.

**Other community partners:** Grand Rapids Public Schools (Southwest Community Campus and Cesar Chavez Elementary), Roosevelt Park Neighborhood, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks and the Puerto Rican Cultural Committee of Grand Rapids.



*Outdoor classroom and seating area.*



*Universally accessible restroom building. This is the first gender-neutral restroom in the park system.*



*Nature-inspired "Log Tangle" play structure with universally accessible poured in place surfacing.*



*New picnic shelter with accessible picnic tables.*



## Visit any of 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)

## Super Secret Summer Reading Challenge 2021

Grand Rapids Public Library is searching for kids and teens to take part in a mysterious summer adventure.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to create your own summer reading adventure with Grand Rapids Public Library! Do you like to move? Do you like puzzles? Are you an artist? Pick your favorite activities to discover your mystery team. GRPL invites kids under the age of 19 to take part in exciting online events featuring local community partners, reading challenges, and select in-person programming throughout the city of Grand Rapids to inspire and entertain you all summer long.



### Virtual Events

Visit Grand Rapids Public Library's Facebook page or YouTube page to watch virtual events at any time.

- **Spy Moves with AM Yoga**
- **Spanish Storytime with the Cook Library Center (Hora de cuentos en español con el Centro de la Biblioteca Cook)**
- **Blandford Nature Center Presents Spies of Nature**
- **"Art of Spies" with Division Avenue Arts Collective (DAAC)**



### In-Person Events



#### Storytime on the Lawn

Storytime on the Lawn is held on a weekly basis in the lawn space at four GRPL locations. Feel free to bring your own blanket for seating. To keep our outdoor storytimes fun and engaging they are limited to the first 20 participants. Weather permitting. For ages 18 months – 5 years old.

Mondays, July 19 & 26  
6:00 pm | West Leonard Branch  
(*This is a bilingual storytime.*)

Wednesdays, July 21 & 28  
10:30 am | Seymour Branch  
10:30 am | West Side Branch

Thursdays, July 22 & 29  
10:30 am | Yankee Clipper Branch

#### Outdoor Storytimes with GRPL

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! For ages 0 – 5 years old. Storytime Kits are available for every child to take home (while supplies last).

Mondays, August 9 & September 13  
11:00 am | Martin Luther King Jr. Park – 900 Fuller Ave SE

Mondays, July 19, August 16, September 20  
11:00 am | Lincoln Park – 1120 Bridge St NW

#### Storytime in the Park with StorytimeGR

Join us this summer for stories, free books and ice cream, special guests, and a whole lot of fun! For all ages of kids and teens. StorytimeGR is a partnership of Grand Rapids Public Library, Read GR, Grand Valley State University, and Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation.

Tuesdays, July 20, 27, August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31  
6:30 pm | Garfield Park – 2111 Madison SE

Tuesdays, July 27, August 10  
6:30 pm | Martin Luther King Jr. Park – 900 Fuller Ave SE

Tuesday, August 17  
6:30 pm | Lincoln Park – 1120 Bridge St NW



RIVALRY. REVENGE. REFRESHMENTS.

#### GR Crimes Tours for Teens

Tuesdays, July 20 & August 3 | 5:00 pm  
Meet at the flagpole at the Main Library

Join GRPL and GR Crime Tours for a fun and educational trip around the city. Explore downtown Grand Rapids and visit local sites infamous for historical crime and folklore. Led by comedian Eirann Betka-Pope, this light-hearted and educational program is perfect for young true-crime enthusiasts. Light refreshments will be available before and after the tour. Designed for ages 11–19.

To sign up and get your classified information, visit [www.grpl.org/summerreading](http://www.grpl.org/summerreading) or visit any GRPL location.

### At-Your-Own-Pace Activity



#### Grand Rapids Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

Monday, May 31 – Saturday, September 4

Division Avenue Arts Collective (DAAC) and GRPL have teamed up to bring you a city-wide scavenger hunt! Take a closer look at your neighborhood to find art in everyday life. Super sleuths may even find a few favorite Summer Reading Challenge characters from years past! Scavenger hunt participants will be entered automatically into a drawing to win prizes from local businesses.

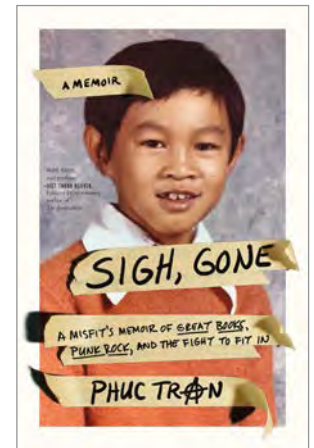
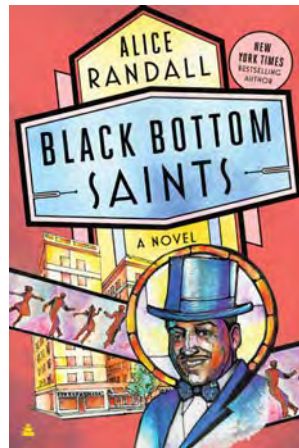
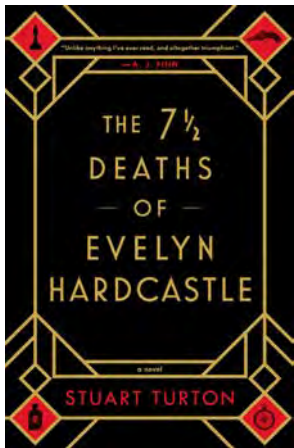
Pick up your scavenger hunt document from any GRPL location, or download it at [www.grpl.org/summerreading](http://www.grpl.org/summerreading). Return your completed scavenger hunt to a GRPL location to get a super secret treat while supplies last.

Funded by:





## GR Reads 2021



Grand Rapids Public Library has partnered with area organizations to present GR Reads, a summer reading program designed for adults. Our expert staff have selected six engaging titles that can be downloaded directly to your digital device or picked up through GRPL To Go, our curbside holds pick up service.

Want an extra reading challenge? Fill out a GR Reads BINGO card for your chance to win a gift certificate to local businesses. BINGO cards are available at [www.grpl.org/grreads](http://www.grpl.org/grreads).

### Events



#### Black History Tour of Downtown Grand Rapids

Discover local Black history with a walking tour of downtown Grand Rapids. City Commissioner Joe Jones narrates the tour, which starts in Lyon Square. The self-guided tour is approximately two miles. It stops at eleven points of interest. Learn the history of local African American leadership, culture, and community.

The walking tour available on demand using the GR Walks app. Download the app from [www.grwalks.com](http://www.grwalks.com), the Apple Store, or Google Play.

DGRI and GR Walks organized and produced this tour.

#### A Conversation with Two Eagles Marcus

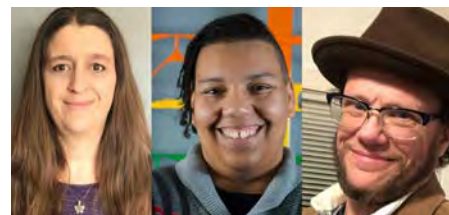
Thursdays, July 22, August 26 | 7:00 pm  
Virtual Event | MPWRDX's Facebook Page

Join founder of MPWRDX Media Group (Pronounced Empowered X), Two Eagles Marcus, as he chats with Indigenous entrepreneurs who are leading the way and changing the narrative in their respective fields.

#### The Good Life is Our Birthright: Indigenous Foods Research in the Great Lakes Region

Tuesday, August 3 | 7:00 pm  
Virtual Event | Zoom

Minobimaadiz (the good life) is something that Anishinaabe people learn as part of their education. It assumes that they will strive to live their lives in a way that is in balance and harmony with nature. Dr. Martin Reinhardt will discuss the relationship the Anishinaabe have with spirit beings that they often think of as food.



#### Panel on Modern Families

Wednesday, August 4 | 7:00 pm  
Virtual Event | Zoom

Gone are the days of a "traditional" family featuring a dad, a mom, and 2.2 children. Families today come in all shapes and sizes, and all are valid and loving. Join us for a community discussion about what makes a modern family. Hear from local parents Carrie Stratton Burrows, Renee Orr Carr, Chazz Darling, and Jazz McKinney. Topics will include gender neutrality, preferred pronouns, myths and stereotypes, inclusivity, and more.



#### GR Reads: The Movies – Minari

Wednesday, August 11 | 7:00 pm  
Wealthy Theatre – 1130 Wealthy St SE

Please follow COVID safety measures. Tickets are \$3 with valid GRPL library card. Buy tickets at the door or online at [grcmc.org/theatre](http://grcmc.org/theatre). Use promo code: GRREADS2021.



#### Mastering the Art of Pho

Thursday, August 12 | 6:00 pm  
Virtual Event | Zoom

Registration required: [grpl.org/register](http://grpl.org/register)  
Join The Good Bowl restaurant for a fun and interactive cooking class with Executive Chef and co-owner Tony Vu. He will walk you through how to master the art of Vietnam's national homemade pho virtually in the comfort of your own kitchen. You'll learn about the iconic dish's origins, its healthful benefits, and how to make and serve pho. You will also gain insights and history about Vietnamese culture.

#### GR Crime Tours

Thursday, August 19 | 7:00 pm  
Meet at the flagpole at the Main Library

Learn about some of the most infamous crimes in Grand Rapids on this 1 hour walking tour. Led by comedian Eirann Betka-Pope, explore the streets of downtown Grand Rapids. You will visit local sites known for their historical crime and lore.



#### Cerulean Sea Family Celebration

Saturday, August 21 | 10:00 am – 2:00 pm  
Riverside Park Bandshell – 3060 Monroe NE

Come celebrate families of all kinds! Enjoy crafts, lawn games, and refreshments. Local photographers will take free family portraits. Listen to special storytimes about diverse families like LGBTQ+, adoptive, and foster families.

#### GR Reads: The Movies – Clue

Wednesday, August 25 | 7:00 pm  
Wealthy Theatre – 1130 Wealthy St SE

Please follow COVID safety measures. Tickets are \$3 with valid GRPL library card. Buy tickets at the door or online at [grcmc.org/theatre](http://grcmc.org/theatre). Use promo code: GRREADS2021.

Sponsored by:





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616.988.5400 • WWW.GRPL.ORG

# Board of Library Commissioners Appoints New Member



The Grand Rapids Public Library Board of Library Commissioners appointed Sheila García Mazari as a new Commissioner. She replaced Kent Sparks who resigned from the board this winter. Garcia Mazari will fill the seat vacated by Sparks until the next board election in 2022, at which time a Commissioner will be publicly elected to fill the remainder of the term ending in 2024.

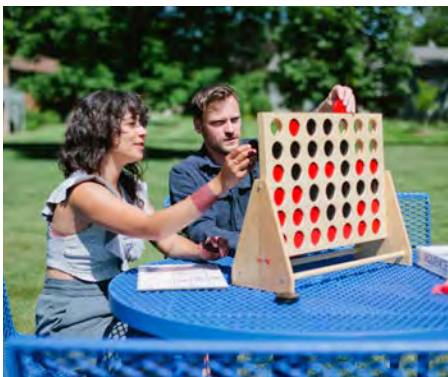
Sheila García Mazari is currently a Professional Programs Liaison Librarian at Grand Valley State University. A lifelong Westsider, she received a Bachelors of Arts from Grand Valley State University and has a Masters in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University. García Mazari has worked in both public and academic libraries for nearly a decade. Throughout that span of time, she has been named a 2016 American Library Association Spectrum Scholar, a 2019 Emerging Leader, and has been awarded the Diversity Award from the Library Diversity Council during her tenure at the University of Michigan. García Mazari's passion lies in ensuring equitable access to information for all. She looks forward to working with the board to advance the mission of the library and serve as an advocate for the greater Grand Rapids community.

"I'm excited to work with the board to build on prior successes and continue to guide the library through a difficult time, ensuring it's meeting the evolving needs of our local communities," remarked García Mazari.

A publicly elected Board of Library Commissioners governs the Grand Rapids Public Library. The seven Commissioners are elected to 6-year terms. Board meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month at 5:15 p.m. and are open to the public.



## GRPL Introduces Outdoor Social Spaces at Two Locations



As a part of Grand Rapids Public Library's 150 anniversary celebration, two outdoor spaces have been transformed into Libraries on the Lawn. These spaces at the Seymour and Yankee Clipper branches have free WiFi, benches, and picnic tables and are a great place to relax before or after your visit to the library.

Visitors can borrow outdoor games in the library to play at Libraries on the Lawn. Additionally, GRPL offers programs like storytimes and book discussions in these

pocket parks. Visitors are welcome to bring their leashed pets, food, and beverages. Libraries on the Lawn are open dawn through dusk from May through October.

For more information, please visit [www.grpl.org/on-the-lawn](http://www.grpl.org/on-the-lawn) or call 616-988-5400. Libraries on the Lawn are funded in part by a grant from the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation.





# GRPL's History and Special Collections Department Expands Digital Collections

Helping people research historical events, Grand Rapids history, and family genealogy has always been a specialty of the Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department at the library. Recently two new digital resources were added to the collection to enhance the research experience.

## Historical Black Newspapers

Grand Rapids Public Library is now offering a digital archive of ten of the most distinguished Black newspapers in the U.S. The Historical Black Newspapers database provides researchers primary source content that contains perspectives and information that was often excluded or marginalized in mainstream sources.

The content spans from 1893-2003 and includes cover-to-cover searchable access including articles, editorials, ads, cartoons, obituaries, and classified ads. The database provides the ability to research a topic across a large span of time. These regional newspapers contain local stories that are not available anywhere else.



The ten historically Black newspapers that are included in the archive include:

*Atlanta Daily World* (1931-2003)

*The Baltimore Afro-American* (1893-1988)

*Chicago Defender* (1910-1975)

*Cleveland Call and Post* (1934-1991)

*Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-2003)

*Michigan Chronicle* (1936-2010)

*New York Amsterdam News* (1922-1993)

*The Norfolk Journal and Guide* (1916-2003)

*The Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001)

*Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-2002)

To use this archive, visit [www.grpl.org/research/history/](http://www.grpl.org/research/history/)

## Collective Access

Searching the library's digitized photographs and archives is now easier than ever. Collective Access is a new platform for the library's historical digital collections including images, newspapers, maps, and archival content. This is the first major update to the library's digital collections since they started in 2009. Collective Access is easier to browse, works better on mobile devices, and offers tools like a map view, timeline, and the ability to create personal collections. The library's digital collections are a sampling of the full archives. For example, there are about 8,000 images online and over 1 million images in the archives.

To use Collective Access, visit [digital.grpl.org](http://digital.grpl.org).



## Don't miss out on these free services with your Grand Rapids Public Library card



- Up to 50 pages of free printing, faxing, copying and scanning per week
- Borrow the Internet—check out a hotspot for free Internet access at home or on the go
- Stream movies, TV shows, music, and audiobooks
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- Free rides to and from the library on The Rapid
- Research your family history with Ancestry.com and other genealogy databases
- Free test prep material
- Digital and physical newspapers and magazines
- Much, much more!





# WE ARE GR

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

## Reserve Your FREE Tickets Today Crosstown Throwdown & GRPS Citywide Alumni Reunion August 27

The Crosstown Throwdown & GRPS Citywide Alumni Reunion August 27 at Houseman Field between Ottawa Hills and Union high schools will kick off a year's worth of celebrations as Grand Rapids Public Schools marks its 150th Anniversary in 2021-22.

In addition to that night's football game between the two crosstown rivals, the August 27 event also will feature an all-city reunion with graduates of current and former GRPS schools invited from near and far.

Doors will open at 4:00 p.m. with music, activities, and more on hand for the all-city reunion. Kick-off for the Ottawa Hills vs Union game will be at 6:00 p.m.

The Annual Crosstown Throwdown is FREE, but registration is required. To register for the event, visit [grpsf.org/150th-anniversary](http://grpsf.org/150th-anniversary).

GRPS superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby said the

district is eager to see alumni attend the August 27 reunion.

"We really want this to be the largest class reunion in GRPS history," Roby said. "And we want people to be aware of the various sponsorship opportunities we will have for the different events. We want to encourage a healthy competition between the schools and classes, and, of course, since all proceeds raised will go to the GRPS Foundation, sponsorships will directly benefit our students. It's definitely a win-win."

GRPS spokesperson John Helmholdt added that the district is being highly intentional as it honors its history, highlighting high schools both current and past as it invites alumni to the August 27 reunion.

"We have alumni of all ages who live not just in Grand Rapids and West Michigan, but across the country and the world," said Helmholdt. "We have graduates from recent years who went to high schools that still exist. We have graduates from decades ago who are proud alumni of high schools that are no longer around. Our invitation is to all alumni from all of our schools to come out in August and connect with former classmates and teachers and have a great time. We can't wait to see you."

Helmholdt noted too that there is also a new alumni website that former students can join to read alumni stories, news and more at [www.grpsalumni.org](http://www.grpsalumni.org).

### Crosstown Throwdown and Citywide Alumni Reunion, Friday, August 27

Reserve Your Free Tickets Today:  
[grpsf.org/150th-anniversary](http://grpsf.org/150th-anniversary)

Sponsorship Opportunities:  
[grpsf.org](http://grpsf.org)



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TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021

# MILLAGE ELECTION

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE  
GRPS NON-HOMESTEAD MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Non-Homestead Millage Proposal to Address Headlee  
Rollback is not a New Tax and not a Tax Increase

### IT COSTS HOMEOWNERS \$0

This is a property tax assessed on commercial, industrial, and other "non-homestead" property only.

### IT IS NOT A NEW TAX

The 18 mill non-homestead property tax is already being levied.

### IT IS NOT A TAX INCREASE

State law specifically limits the maximum levy to no more than 18 mills. All or a portion of the additional 5 mills would only be used to maintain the current 18 mill levy in the event of a Headlee rollback.

### IT GENERATES \$30 MILLION

15% of our total operating budget – for teaching textbooks, technology, classrooms, and schools.

LEARN MORE AT  
[WWW.GRPS.ORG/GRPS-MILLAGE](http://WWW.GRPS.ORG/GRPS-MILLAGE)



## GRPS to Ask for Operating Millage Buffer in August

By Phil de Haan, Courtesy of School News Network



Come August 3, Grand Rapids Public Schools will be asking voters to consider a non-homestead millage proposal of up to 23 mills for a period of seven years, to protect against what the district fears will be a likely Headlee rollback amid the city's rising property values.

The resolution was approved unanimously at the Monday, May 3 Board of Education meeting, to submit to the City Clerk's office prior to a May 11 deadline.

A GRPS press release called the non-homestead millage "one of the most misunderstood ballot proposals that voters in school districts across Michigan are frequently asked to consider."

But though misunderstood, in GRPS the millage generates \$30 million, or about 15% of the district's total operating budget. That money goes directly to such foundational items as teaching, textbooks, technology, classrooms and more, the district says.

That's why the district is planning an all-out informational campaign between now and August about its request, known as a Headlee Override, said Superintendent Leadriane Roby.

"One of the main reasons why non-homestead millage proposals fail is simply the lack of understanding and information, especially about the Headlee rollback, the 18-mill cap and why the millage request is more than 18 mills even though we legally cannot levy more than 18 mills," Roby said. "So, we will be conducting an informational campaign to raise awareness about the non-homestead millage."

A non-homestead millage does not tax homeowners, but rather is a property tax only assessed on commercial, industrial and other non-homestead properties such as rental properties.

### How Headlee Can Lead to Rollbacks

State law specifically limits the maximum levy to no more than 18 mills. But where things get complicated, and misunderstood, is via a 1978 amendment to the Michigan Constitution known as the Headlee Amendment. It states

that non-homestead millages can be rolled back in the right economic circumstances – primarily rising property values and low inflation rates. If a district's property values increase over the inflation rate the 18 mills are rolled back so as to not exceed inflation.

"Historically, GRPS had not had significant Headlee rollbacks year-over-year, if any," said district spokesperson John Helmholdt.

But in Grand Rapids, where taxable values have increased 4.5-6% annually in recent years, GRPS fears there is potential for rollbacks of .20 to .25 mills a year for the foreseeable future.

That's why the district is asking for a buffer of 5 mills over and above the 18 mills allowed by state law. It will only use that buffer in the event of Headlee rollbacks, taking all or a portion of the additional 5 mills to maintain the levy at the capped 18-mill rate.

### This Tax Isn't New

In its press release, GRPS noted that the August proposal is not a new tax but is already being levied and has been repeatedly approved by voters. More than 71 percent of district voters approved the last non-homestead millage proposal in November 2017.

At that time, the approval was for 10 years and was for an authorized millage rate of 19 mills, something the district at the time believed would be sufficient to protect against any Headlee rollbacks. But that additional 1-mill buffer in the district's authorized millage rate has been eroded much quicker than what was anticipated, Helmholdt said.

"Although 2021 assessment information is not yet complete for all of Kent County, we believe that we could experience a rollback this year that would bring our authorized millage rate below the 18 mills max," Helmholdt added.

The resulting loss would potentially be as much as \$250,000 per year or more.

Grand Rapids Public Schools

**WE ARE GR**

April 2021

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.

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## Student Vaccine Ambassadors Spread the Message: ‘Do Your Part’

*Six GRPS students appointed to state task force*

*By Phil de Haan, Courtesy of School News Network*

Ottawa Hills senior Randell Jones is used to handling big obstacles on the football field where he toiled in the trenches as an honorable mention all-conference offensive lineman, creating safe paths for running backs and protecting his quarterback from danger.

Now, though his high school football career is done, he has another opportunity to create safe paths and protective pockets.

Jones is one of six students in Grand Rapids Public Schools chosen to be student vaccine ambassadors by the state of Michigan, the first six in a program the state hopes to expand across the lower and upper peninsulas.

All six students volunteered to serve as Protect Michigan Commission COVID-19 ambassadors. Their role: urging their peers to get vaccinated and continue to practice preventative measures such as properly wearing masks, social distancing and frequent handwashing, all to reduce the spread of the virus until the vast majority of people have been vaccinated.

The program was unveiled in late April at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, site of a mass vaccination clinic that put shots in the arms of more than 200,000 people during the short span it operated. The clinic is set to wind down operations by May 21 as Kent County moves vaccinations to smaller settings. Those include a series of clinics for GRPS students 16 years and older and their parents/guardians that will see the county partner with the district and Walgreens to provide the Pfizer vaccine.

Jones and his fellow GRPS student ambassadors were joined at a DeVos Place press conference by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan Chief Medical Executive Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, GRPS Superintendent Leadriane Roby and other luminaries. The event included all six ambassadors getting their first shot of the vaccine.

### Putting Aside Fears for the Greater Good

For Jones, the event was a little nerve-wracking, but he put aside his fears, he said, for the greater good.

“I first heard about becoming a vaccine ambassador from my (football) coach,” he recalled. “I wasn’t sure, but when I had time to think about the positive message I would be sending, I had to say yes.”

He added that he and his family have been personally touched by the virus, having lost a loved one to COVID. That personal connection played a big part in saying yes. But, he said, even people who have not suffered such a loss should do their part.

“We’re all in this,” he said. “If you care for others, do your part.”

That perspective doesn’t surprise Ottawa Hills football coach Christian Verley.

“Randell is a leader, a hard worker and a motivator,” he said. “He is selfless, he is true and he is a servant. You would



*At a late-April press conference, six GRPS COVID-19 student ambassadors were introduced (from left): Tina Freese Decker, president and CEO, Spectrum Health; Randell Jones, Ottawa Hills High School; Ruby Taylor, C.A. Frost Environmental Science Middle High School; Esther Solis, Innovation Central High School; Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, state chief medical executive; Gov. Gretchen Whitmer; Naomi Solis, Innovation Central; Mi’a Jaden Johnson, Grand Rapids University Prep Academy; and Pablo Villalvazo, Union High School*

always want him in your corner, and you can count on him.”

At the press conference, Superintendent Roby noted that young people continue to be increasingly hard hit by the virus and that young people of color are among the hardest hit. She also introduced the student ambassadors, all of whom have excelled during their high school careers.

Jones not only earned three letters in football, he also was captain of the varsity swim team and is an honor roll student. He volunteered more than 2,500 hours of community service in his four years at Ottawa, including as part of the Grand Rapids Mayor’s Youth Council.

### Two Seniors, Four Juniors on Team

Fellow senior Pablo Villalvazo of Union High School was president of that Mayor’s Youth Council, served the Grand Rapids Community Foundation as a student representative, volunteered at Gilda’s Club of Grand Rapids and more.

In addition, four GRPS juniors are ambassadors:

Mi’a Jaden Johnson from Grand Rapids University Prep Academy, a 4.0 student who took AP courses and classes at Grand Rapids Community College and cheered for Ottawa Hills, including serving as a team captain.

Ruby Taylor from C.A. Frost Environmental Science

Middle High School, an award-winning artist and 4.0 honor roll student and member of the school’s Art Club and Gender Sexuality Alliance Club.

Naomi Solis from Innovation Central High School, part of the Academy of Design & Construction and eyeing a career in music production.

Esther Solis from Innovation Central High School, part of the Academy of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math and hoping to major and work in graphic design.

Though the ambassadors have not been given strict marching orders, they are encouraged to informally network with their peers and spread a positive message about the importance of COVID vaccinations, even for their age group.

Randell Jones is doing his part.

In a recent email exchange with a reporter, he ended with this:

“Something I would like to say to everyone going through a rough time right now is I understand. And I want you to know that there are people there for you and that a lot of people are working very hard to end this. If you want to help, do your part: wear your mask correctly, keep social distancing and when it’s your time, get vaccinated.”



## 2021/2022 Bell Schedule

SCHOOL	DROP OFF/ BREAKFAST	AM BELL	PM BELL	1/2 DAY BELL	SCHOOL	DROP OFF/ BREAKFAST	AM BELL	PM BELL	1/2 DAY BELL
Aberdeen Academy	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Harrison Park Academy	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Alger Middle School	7:15 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am	Innovation Central	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
Blandford School	7:50 am	8:10 am	3:06 pm	11:20 am	John Ball Park Zoo School	7:50 am	8:10 am	3:06 pm	11:20 am
Brookside Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Buchanan Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Kent Hills Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Burton Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	MLK, Jr. Leadership Academy	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Burton Middle School	7:15 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am	Mulick Park Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
CA Frost Environmental Science Academy	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm	Newcomers Community School	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
CA Frost Environmental Science Academy Middle High School	7:30 am	8:00 am	2:47 pm	10:45 am	North Park Montessori	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm
Campus Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Ottawa High Transition	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
Center for Economicology	7:45 am	8:00 am	2:41 pm	10:45 am	Ottawa Hills High	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
Cesar E. Chavez Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Palmer Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
City Middle/High School	7:45 am	8:00	2:41 pm	10:45 am	Ridgemoor Park Montessori	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm
Coit Creative Arts Academy	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm	Riverside Middle	7:15 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
Congress Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Shawmut Hills Academy	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Dickinson Academy	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Sherwood Park Global Studies Academy	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm
East Leonard Elementary School	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am	Sibley Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Gerald R. Ford Academic Center	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm	Southeast Career Pathways	--	9:00 am	2:39 pm	11:46 am
Grand Rapids Learning Center	--	7:45 am	4:15 pm	11:45 am	Southwest Elementary - Academia Bilingue	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm
Grand Rapids Montessori Academy	8:50 am	9:10 am	4:06 pm	12:20 pm	Southwest Middle/High - Academia Bilingue	8:35 am	9:00 am	3:46 pm	11:45 am
Grand Rapids Montessori Middle/High	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am	Stocking Elementary	8:10 am	8:30 am	3:26 pm	11:40 am
Grand Rapids Public Museum Middle	7:50 am	8:10 am	3:05 pm	11:20 am	Union High School	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
Grand Rapids Public Museum High	8:00 am	8:15 am	3:05 pm	11:25 am	Union High Transition	7:10 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am
GR University Prep Academy	7:10 am	7:35 am	2:16 pm	10:20 am	Westwood Middle	7:15 am	7:40 am	2:21 pm	10:25 am

\*The bell schedule is a working document and subject to change.





**2021/2022 GRPS EXTERNAL CALENDAR**

Revised 7/12/21

**AUGUST 2021**

Aug 6	District Closed
Aug 9	High School Football, Cross Country, Boys Soccer, Boys Tennis, Girls Golf, Girls Swimming, Sideline Cheer and Volleyball Seasons Begin
Aug 9	Middle School Football Practice Begins
Aug 13	District Closed
Aug 24	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
Aug 27	Crosstown Throwdown - Union v Ottawa Varsity Football (Houseman Field)
Aug 31	First Day of Great Start Readiness PreK Program
Aug 31	First Day of LOOP Programming (no LOOP Programming on Fridays)

**SEPTEMBER 2021**

Sep 2	No LOOP Programming
Sep 3	NO SCHOOL - Non-Work Day; No LOOP Programming
Sep 6	NO SCHOOL - Non-Work Day; No LOOP Programming
Sep 7	Middle School Cross Country, Boys Soccer & Volleyball Practice Begins
Sep 17	Ottawa Hills Varsity Football Homecoming v Wayland (Houseman Field)
Sep 17	Ottawa Hills Cross Country Invitational (Riverside Park)
Sep 23	GRPS Parent Action Leaders (PALs) Meeting (9:30-11:30 am & 5:30-7:30 pm)
Sep 25	Union High School Cross Country Invitational (Richmond Park)

**OCTOBER 2021**

Oct 1	FAFSA Application Opens for 2022-23 (studentaid.gov/fafsa)
Oct 1	Union High School Varsity Football Homecoming v Zeeland East (Houseman Field)
Oct 2	Ottawa Hills Girls Swim Invitational (Ottawa Hills)
Oct 2	Ottawa Hills Volleyball Tournament (Ottawa Hills)
Oct 6	COUNT DAY
Oct 11	NO SCHOOL - Records Flex Day; No LOOP Programming
Oct 22	End of 1st Marking Period
Oct 25	Beginning of 2nd Marking Period
Oct 28	Lights On After School

**NOVEMBER 2021**

Nov 1	Theme School Application Period Opens (1st round)
Nov 1	First Round College Application Deadline for Colleges/Universities
Nov 2	NO SCHOOL - GREa Professional Development (am); Records Flex (pm); No LOOP Programming
Nov 3	Middle School Boys Basketball, Co-Ed Swimming & Cheer Practice Begins

**NOVEMBER 2021 (CONT.)**

Nov 9	School Choice Expo
Nov 18	GRPS Parent Action Leaders (PALs) Meeting (9:30-11:30 am & 5:30-7:30 pm)
Nov 22-26	No LOOP Programming
Nov 24	NO SCHOOL - PLC Exchange Day
Nov 25-26	NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
Nov 25	GRPS Turkey Trot

**DECEMBER 2021**

Dec 1	Grand Rapids Community Foundation Scholarship Applications Open
Dec 3	Theme School Application Period Closes (1st round)
Dec 11	I-96 Holiday Basketball Tournament (Ottawa Hills)
Dec 15-31	No LOOP Programming
Dec 15	Half Day for Students, Secondary Exams (am); NO SCHOOL - Records Flex (pm)
Dec 16	Half Day for Students, Secondary Exams (am); NO SCHOOL - Records Flex (pm)
Dec 17	Half Day for Students, Secondary Exams (am); NO SCHOOL - Records Flex (pm)
Dec 17	End of 2nd Marking Period
Dec 20-31	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break

**JANUARY 2022**

Jan 1-2	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break
Jan 1-2	No LOOP Programming
Jan 3	Start of 3rd Marking Period
Jan 3	Theme School Application Period Opens (2nd round)
Jan 15	MLK Basketball Tournament (Ottawa Hills)
Jan 17	NO SCHOOL - Non-Work Day; No LOOP Programming
Jan 20	School Choice Expo
Jan 20	GRPS Parent Action Leaders (PALs) Meeting (9:30-11:30 am & 5:30-7:30 pm)

**FEBRUARY 2022**

Feb 1	Middle School Girls Basketball, Wrestling & Bowling Practice Begins
Feb 4	Theme School Application Period Closes (2nd round)
Feb 5	Union High School Basketball Showcase (Union)
Feb 5	Ottawa Hills Boys Swim Invitational (Ottawa Hills)
Feb 9	COUNT DAY
Feb 18	Half Day for Students (am); NO SCHOOL - GREa, GRPSA & GRACEN Professional Development (pm)
Feb 21	NO SCHOOL - Mid Winter Break; No LOOP Programming

**MARCH 2022**

Mar 11	End of 3rd Marking Period
Mar 14	NO SCHOOL - Records Flex Day; No LOOP Programming
Mar 15	Start of 4th Marking Period
Mar 24	GRPS Parent Action Leaders (PALs) Meeting (9:30-11:30 am & 5:30-7:30 pm)

**APRIL 2022**

Apr 1-8	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break; No LOOP Programming
Apr 1	Middle School Baseball, Softball, Co-Ed Track, Girls Soccer & Co-Ed Golf Practice Begins
Apr 30	Elite Challenge Track Meet (Houseman Field)

**MAY 2022**

May 4-6	Senior Exams
May 6	PreK Here I Come
May 6	Senior Last Day of School
May 11	Last Day of Great Start Readiness PreK Program
May 16	Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy Graduation (5:00 pm, Calvin University)
May 16	City High Middle School Graduation (7:30 pm, Calvin University)
May 17	CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School Graduation (5:00 pm, Calvin University)
May 17	Innovation Central High School & Grand Rapids Montessori High School Graduation (7:30 pm, Calvin University)
May 18	Ottawa Hills High School Graduation (5:00 pm, Calvin University)
May 18	Museum High School Graduation (7:30 pm, Calvin University)
May 19	Union High School Graduation (6:30 pm, Calvin University)
May 21	Collaborative Youth Fair
May 26	Last Day of LOOP Programming
May 27	Half Day for Students (am); NO SCHOOL (pm)
May 30	NO SCHOOL - Non-Work Day

**JUNE 2022**

Jun 6	Half Day for Students; Secondary Exams (am); NO SCHOOL - Records Flex (pm)
Jun 7	Half Day for Students, Secondary Exams (am); NO SCHOOL - Records Flex (pm)
June 8	Half Day for Students, Secondary Exams (am); NO SCHOOL - Records Flex (pm)
June 8	End of 4th Marking Period
June 8	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS



## 2021/2022 Orientations, Open Houses and Registration Support

BUILDING	ORIENTATION	OPEN HOUSE	REGISTRATION SUPPORT
Aberdeen Academy	Thursday, August 19: 6:00-6:30 pm (Grades 6-8)	Thursday, August 19: 6:30-7:30 pm	
Alger Middle School		Monday, August 16: 4:00-6:00 pm	
Blandford School	Tuesday, August 17: 6:00-7:00 pm		
Brookside Elementary		Wednesday, August 18: 5:30-6:30 pm	Thursday, August 12: 9:00 am-3:00 pm
Buchanan Elementary		Tuesday, August 17: 5:30-7:00 pm	
Burton Elementary	Thursday, August 12: 5:30-6:00 pm	Thursday, August 19: 6:00-7:00 pm	Tuesday & Thursday, August 10 & 12: 8:00-11:00 am & 2:00-6:00 pm
Burton Middle School	Thursday, August 12: 4:00-5:00 pm (Grade 6)	Tuesday, September 14: 5:30-7:30 pm	Tuesday & Thursday, August 10 & 11: 1:00-6:00 pm
CA Frost Environmental Science Academy Elementary		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-7:00 pm	
CA Frost Environmental Science Academy Middle High		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-6:30 pm (Grades 9-12) & 7:00-8:00 pm (Grades 6-8)	
Campus Elementary		Wednesday, August 18: 4:00-7:00 pm	Monday-Thursday: August 9-12: 8:00am-3:00pm
Center for Economicology	Monday, August 16: 2:00-3:30 pm		
Cesar E Chavez Elementary		Wednesday, August 18: 5:00-6:30 pm	
City High/Middle	<p>Jumpstart (new students) - Wednesday, August 11: 9:00-11:00 am</p> <p>Restart (returning students) - Thursday, August 12: 10:00 am-12:00 pm (Grades 8-9); 1:30-3:30 pm (Grades 10-12)</p> <p>Restart (returning students) - Monday, August 16: 10:00 am-12:00 pm (Grades 10-12); 1:30-3:30 pm (Grades 8-9)</p> <p>*Note-If a student is not able to attend the Jumpstart session, they are welcome at any Restart session</p>		
Coit Creative Arts Academy		Thursday, August 19: 6:00-7:30 pm	
Congress Elementary		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-6:30 pm	Tuesday-Thursday: August 10, 11 & 12
Dickinson Academy		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-6:30 pm	Tuesday, August 10: 8:30 am-3:30 pm
East Leonard Elementary		Wednesday, August 18: 5:00-6:30 pm	
Gerald R. Ford Academic Center	Thursday, August 12: 11:00am-6:00 pm	Wednesday, August 18: 6:00-7:00 pm	
Grand Rapids Learning Center--		Wednesday, August 18: 11:00 am-4:00 pm	
Grand Rapids Montessori		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-7:00 pm (Welcome presentation followed by grade level information)	
Grand Rapids Montessori Middle High		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-7:00 pm (Welcome presentation followed by grade level information)	
Grand Rapids Public Museum Middle	Tuesday, August 17: 5:30-7:30 pm	Tuesday, September 14: 5:30-7:00 pm	
Grand Rapids Public Museum High	Wednesday, August 18: 3:00-6:00 pm	Tuesday, September 21: 5:30-7:00 pm	



BUILDING	ORIENTATION	OPEN HOUSE	REGISTRATION SUPPORT
Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy	<p>Tuesday, August 10: 11:00 am-2:00 pm (Grades 6-7); 12:30-3:30 pm (Grades 8-9); 1:00-4:00 pm (Grades 10-11); 4:00-6:00 pm (all)</p> <p>Wednesday, August 11 11:00 am-2:00 pm (Grades 10-11) 12:30-3:30 pm (Grades 6-7); 1:00-4:00 pm (Grades 8-9); 4:00-6:00 pm (all)</p> <p>Thursday, August 12 12:00-6:00 pm (Make-up &amp; families of 3 or more students)</p> <p>Thursday, August 19: 6:00-7:00 pm (Senior Orientation)</p>		
Harrison Park Academy	Tuesday, August 17: 2:00-3:00 pm (Grades 6-8)	Thursday, August 19: 5:00-6:00 pm	Tuesday-Thursday: August 10, 11 & 12 9:00 am-2:00 pm
Innovation Central High School	<p>Monday, August 2: 4:00-7:00 pm Tuesday, August 3: 9:00 am-12:00 pm Wednesday, August 4: 4:00-7:00 pm Thursday, August 5: 9:00 am-12:00 pm</p>	Tuesday, August 31: 6:00-7:30 pm	
Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary		Thursday, August 19: 5:30-7:00 pm	
Kent Hills Elementary		Thursday, August 19: 4:30-6:30 pm	Wednesday-Thursday, August 11 & 12: 9:00-11:00 am & 12:00-2:00 pm
MLK Jr. Leadership Academy		Thursday, August 25: 5:00-7:00 pm	
Mulick Park Elementary		Thursday, August 19: 4:30-6:30 pm	Wednesday-Thursday, August 11 & 12: 8:30-11:30 am; 12:30-3:30 pm
North Park Montessori ECC @ Wellerwood		Wednesday, August 18: 4:30-6:00 pm	
North Park Montessori		Thursday, August 19: 4:30-6:00 pm	
Ottawa Hills High School	<p>Tuesday, August 10: 11:00 am-12:00 pm &amp; 1:00-2:00 pm (Returning students)</p> <p>Wednesday, August 11: 10:00 am-12:00 pm &amp; 1:00-3:00 pm (New students)</p> <p>Thursday, August 12: 1:00-3:00 pm (Make-up session for all students)</p>	Thursday, September 9: 6:00-7:30 pm	
Palmer Elementary		Wednesday, August 18: 5:30-7:00 pm	Thursday, August 12: 10:00 am-2:00 pm Tuesday, August 17: 10:00 am-2:00 pm
Ridgemoor Park Montessori		Tuesday, August 17: 6:00-7:00 pm	
Riverside Middle School		Wednesday, September 15: 6:00-7:00 pm	
Shawmut Hills Academy	Wednesday, August 18: 6:00-7:30 pm (Grades 6-8)	Thursday, August 19: 6:00-7:30 pm (Grades K-5)	Tuesday & Thursday, August 10 & 12: 8:00-11:00 am & 12:30-3:00 pm
Sherwood Park Global Studies Academy		Thursday, August 19: 5:00-7:00 pm	Monday-Thursday, August 9-12: 9:00-11:00am & 1:00-3:00 pm; Tuesday, August 10: 5:00-7:00 pm
Sibley Elementary		Wednesday, August 25: 4:00-6:00 pm	Tuesday, August 17: 9:00 am-1:00 pm
Southeast Career Pathways		Thursday, September 16: 5:00-6:30 pm	Tuesday & Thursday, August 10 & 12: 9:00-10:00 am & 5:00-6:00 pm
Southwest Elementary		Thursday, August 19: 5:00-7:30 pm	



## Want to Participate in Athletics?



### You will need:

- A physical dated after April 15, 2021
- Supplemental insurance for each season: \$10 for high school and \$3 for middle schools
- Cherry Health and health offices in the schools ARE NOT PROVIDING SPORTS PHYSICAL UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
- Fall middle school athletics may have physical nights in August. Dates, times, and location TBD.

### Eligibility Rules:

- All students grade 6-12 MUST have achieved and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 prior to the official start of the season (including practices). You must also pass 66% of your classes before and during the season (Michigan High School Athletic Association).
- Students in grades K-5 must be in "good standings" at school with satisfactory attendance, grades and behavior. All students must be eligible to practice FIRST.

### Reasons to be a multi-sport athlete:

- Develop different skills that compliment other sports.
- Minimal sport burnout occurs when involved in multiple sports.
- Time management improves
- Athletics help to improve educational success
- Colleges and Universities like to see that you can be multi-faceted.

### Sportsmanship

As a spectator of interscholastic athletics please respect the time and effort that these young participants have put forth to represent their schools. The purpose of all athletic activities is to provide positive learning experiences and opportunities for personal growth for the participants, coaches, officials and spectators. Everyone who attends can – and is expected to – assist in the promotion and achievement of good sportsmanship by taking personal responsibility for keeping this contest at a high level of fair, clean and wholesome competition. Remember.... SPORTSMANSHIP COUNTS!

### ELEMENTARY FALL SPORTS

Season begins September

**Cross Country:** Practices will begin after September 9th. Please check with your elementary school athletic liaison for more information.

- Meet dates: TBD for 2021
- GRPS Cross Country Invitational: TBD for 2021

**Soccer:** Practices will begin after September

- Game dates (Saturdays in September): Registration will be due September. Look for more information at your school's orientation.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL SPORTS

**Football:** Season begins August 9 (7th/8th grade only)

**Volleyball, Boys' Soccer, Cross Country:** Season begins September 7

### HIGH SCHOOL FALL SPORTS

**Football, Cross Country, Boys' Soccer, Boy's Tennis, Girls' Golf, Girls' Swimming, Sideline Cheer and Volleyball:** Season begins August 9

For schedules, highlights, and parent resources check out our website at [grps.org/athletics](http://grps.org/athletics)

### PARENT MEETINGS

Parents/Guardians should attend any and all meetings requested by the athletic directors and/or coaches for a more in depth and clearer understanding about how the team or program will operate.

### VOLUNTEERS

Any parents, family or community member interested in volunteering to support GRPS student-athletes, please contact the volunteer office at 819-2131 or go to <http://grps.org/volunteer> for the volunteer application.

We are currently looking for:

- Elementary Coaches for Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track
- Turkey Trot Volunteers – Sign up now at: [volunteersignup.org/ALW3Q](http://volunteersignup.org/ALW3Q)

Interested in coaching? Contact the athletic office for more information! We have some vacancies for the 2021-2022 school year.

### GR8 SPORTS, GREAT KIDS

Our community recognizes the importance, value, and positive impact that after school sports can have on students. Thank you to the Student Advancement Foundation and GR8 Sports, Great Kids for their continued support of these programs!

### ATHLETIC DIRECTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

**Kurt Johnson, Executive Director of Athletics**  
Phone: 616.819.2010 • Email: [johnsonk@grps.org](mailto:johnsonk@grps.org)

**Marcus Harris, Ottawa Hills HS Athletic Director**  
Phone: 616.819.2879 • Email: [harrismar@grps.org](mailto:harrismar@grps.org)

**Justin Walker, Union HS Athletic Director**  
Phone: 616.819.7688 • Email: [walkerju@grps.org](mailto:walkerju@grps.org)

**Brodie Larson, Middle School Athletic Office**  
Phone: 616.819.3243 • Email: [larsonb@grps.org](mailto:larsonb@grps.org)

**Kathryn Hudson, C.A. Frost Middle Athletic Director**  
Email: [hudsonk@grps.org](mailto:hudsonk@grps.org)  
(Also responsible for Shawmut Hills, Blandford, and Zoo)

**Lanita Hobson, Burton Middle School Athletic Director**  
Email: [hobsonl@grps.org](mailto:hobsonl@grps.org)

**Ed Droski, City Middle School Athletic Director**  
Email: [ebdroski@gmail.com](mailto:ebdroski@gmail.com)

**TBD, G.R. Ford Middle School Athletic Director**  
(Also responsible for Dickinson)

**Rojeana Calvert, Harrison Middle School Athletic Director**  
Email: [calvertr@grps.org](mailto:calvertr@grps.org)

**Jolinda Lucas, U Prep Athletic Director**  
Email: [lucasj@grps.org](mailto:lucasj@grps.org)  
(Also responsible for GR Montessori & Museum School)

**Kellie Kieren, North Park Montessori & Aberdeen Middle Athletic Coordinator**  
Email: [kierenk@grps.org](mailto:kierenk@grps.org)

**Houston Glass, Sherwood Park Middle Athletic Director**  
Email: [glassh@grps.org](mailto:glassh@grps.org)

**James Peacock, MLK Academy Athletic Coordinator**  
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**Don Zomer, Southwest Middle/High Athletic Director**  
Email: [zomerd@grps.org](mailto:zomerd@grps.org)

**Teresa Green, Westwood Athletic Director**  
Email: [greente@grps.org](mailto:greente@grps.org)

**Patricia Elliott, Alger Athletic Director**  
Email: [elliottp@grps.org](mailto:elliottp@grps.org)

**Danielle Ayers, Riverside Athletic Director**  
Email: [ayersd@grps.org](mailto:ayersd@grps.org)



## Challenge Scholars Program to Phase out With Class of 2028

*Community Foundation cites changed opportunities for graduates*

*By Phil de Haan, Courtesy of School News Network*

A program offering full-tuition college scholarships for students on the West Side of Grand Rapids will be phased out over the next decade, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation announced today, May 21.

The Union High School class of 2028 will be the final cohort of students enrolled in the Community Foundation's Challenge Scholars program. The foundation introduced the program in 2012 to provide scholarships and what it calls "an ecosystem of support for students on Grand Rapids' west side."

The first class of Challenge Scholars enrolled in the program in 2013 and graduated from Union High School in 2020. The program has restrictions based on family income and strict criteria around grades, attendance and behavior. In return those who take advantage of the program can attend college or technical training tuition-free.

The Community Foundation estimates that approximately 130 graduates have qualified for the four-year scholarship, with about \$175,000 awarded to the Class of 2020. Another estimated 870 students are currently in the pipeline for scholarships. Those students all will have a chance to earn the award if they continue to meet eligibility criteria, with four-year awards available to students who started at Harrison Park or Westwood middle schools. Other Union grads may qualify for two-year scholarships at Grand Rapids Community College.

Foundation officials said that since the program began, there have been changes to the ways in which Grand Rapids students, including those at Union, gain access to college.

One significant difference is the presence of the Grand Rapids Promise Zone Scholarship. Implemented last year, the program gives free access to GRCC's associate degree and job training and certification programs for eligible students who live within the city of Grand Rapids and who graduate from one of the 24 public, public charter, or private high schools located inside city limits. That program, which just saw its first GRCC graduate, has mostly replaced the Challenge Scholars two-year GRCC scholarship.

### A Changing Landscape

Given those changes, leaders said the Community Foundation needed to make its own changes in response.

"As we work to increase opportunities for all students, it was imperative for us to recognize the ways the landscape has changed," foundation President Diana Sieger said in a statement. "As a community foundation, it is our responsibility to adapt and respond, so we can meet the most pressing community needs."

She added: "We will continue to work together to support our current Challenge Scholars as we look to the future and create more equitable opportunities."

A Challenge Scholars Advisory Committee worked with Community Foundation staff on the recommended changes, which were approved by the foundation's Board of Trustees



*The Challenge Scholars program offers college scholarships to qualified Union High School graduates (photo courtesy Grand Rapids Community Foundation)*

earlier this year.

Cris Kutzli, Challenge Scholars director at the foundation, told SNN that the approach going forward will be to contribute to a more equitable educational system.

"Our commitment to the current (Challenge) Scholars isn't going away," she said. "But this is an opportunity for us to step back and say 'What's our role and how can we use our limited resources?'"

### Needs Beyond Tuition and Books

Kutzli added the changes since the program was designed a decade ago led the Community Foundation to want to be less rigid as it looks ahead to the next decade or more and the foundation's contributions to college affordability.

For example, she said, students who benefit from the

Promise Zone scholarships still have needs beyond tuition and books, including essentials like housing and food.

"We want to be really intentional about looking for where the disparities are still showing up," she said.

In 2020, the Community Foundation gave more than \$1.1 million in scholarships to Kent County students, in addition to scholarships for students in the Challenge Scholars program.

Kutzli said the foundation is committed to all the current Challenge Scholars through 2032, covering up to four years of college for the Class of 2028. She and her team also will be looking to implement some of the foundation's new approaches to equity and disparity immediately, she said using some of their unrestricted funds to test the waters in the coming years with new approaches.



# ENROLL TODAY

## AT ENROLL.GRPS.ORG

TAKE THE NEXT STEP BY FOLLOWING OUR  
ONLINE ENROLLMENT INSTRUCTIONS BELOW.

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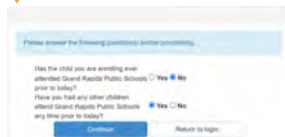
Select the link that applies to your family on our website.

#### NEW GRPS FAMILIES

Create a ParentVue account with GRPS



Answer the prompted  
questions and click  
Continue



Complete Steps 1 through 3 of Parent Account Activation

Step 1: Accept privacy statement

Step 2: Create your account

Step 3: You will receive an email that will contain a link  
to complete your account creation

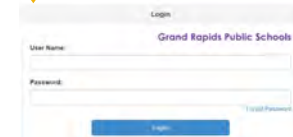
Click the link from the email to create and confirm  
your account password, then follow instructions to  
complete online registration

#### RETURNING GRPS FAMILIES

Select "I am a parent" link



Login to your  
ParentVue Account



Select Online Registration Tab and answer all questions  
in each section for students enrolling

Check marks indicate completed sections

Exclamation marks indicate incomplete sections

Check the status of your completed registration by  
returning to your ParentVue home screen and clicking the  
Status Tab

Questions? Call (616) 819-2150 or email [communications@grps.org](mailto:communications@grps.org)

## Students Envision the Ideal Community: ‘Divine and Unique’

Writings will inform anti-racist summer mural project



Grand Rapids artist E'lla Webber is one of seven artists who will create anti-racist murals in the 49507 zip code

About half an hour into a class discussion about the history of housing discrimination in Grand Rapids, poet Marcel “Fable” Price asks students, “What would make your neighborhood feel more like home to you?”

The Ottawa Hills High School classmates quickly text him their thoughts over Zoom.

Janya: “Going back to elementary days the way I felt idk” and “the playing outside”

Quimora: “if grown ups would stop arguing all the time”

Janya again: “Everyone being together”

Dayven: “Jst (sic) to keep up with the homes, make me feel as if the world isn't attacking us”

It's a revealing moment in an hour's worth of dialogue in Peter Walblay's English class, led by Price and other leaders of The Diatribe, a community-based nonprofit that offers workshops, assemblies and other programming to area schools. Through poetry and spoken word, students are encouraged to explore social issues like racism as well as personal challenges

such as mental health.

Partnering with the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan, The Diatribe conducted a nine-week unit in Walblay's class focusing on how racist policies contributed to segregated housing patterns in Grand Rapids. Students responded with written reflections in a Diatribe class called “Writing to Right Wrongs,” exploring not only historical trends but their own neighborhood experiences.

Though the class was hosted by Walblay previously, as chronicled in a 2019 School News Network video story, this time students' voices reached beyond the classroom. They shared their ideas with seven artists of color to help shape The 49507 Project, a series of educational, anti-racist murals to be painted this summer on businesses in that Southeast Side zip code. The Zoom session included artists such as Erick Picardo and Grand Rapids poet laureate Kyd Kane.

### Elevating Student Voices

The combination of creative expression and community

involvement is a big plus for his students, said Walblay, a seventh-year teacher.

“It's important for young people to be listened to, and I feel The Diatribe does a good job of providing that platform,” Walblay said. “Young people have a lot to say, and very unfairly they're often overlooked. Any opportunity to uplift students' voices in the community is an opportunity well-taken.”

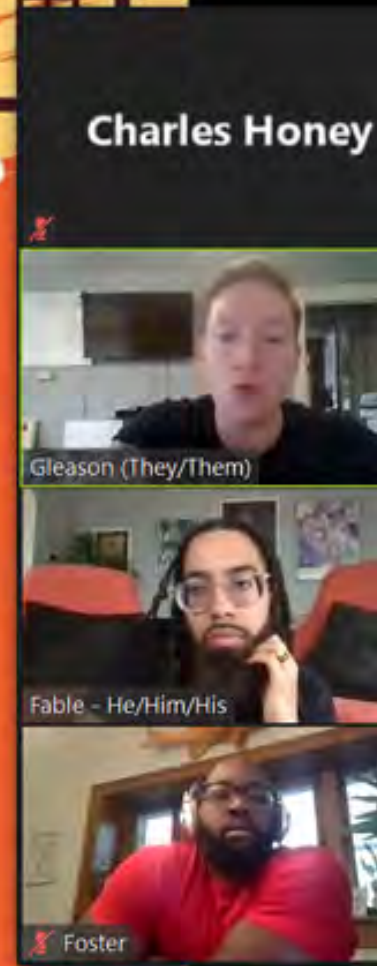
Some of his students will help develop The 49507 Project, which will include community listening sessions and a late-summer mural unveiling, and along other students will have the opportunity of summer programming in poetry and self-expression. Their comments and writings will help inform the muralists' artworks.

“They're writing about their lived experiences,” said Price, executive director of The Diatribe and former Grand Rapids poet laureate. “Their lived experiences when it comes to their experiences in their neighborhoods, the experiences that their families have had, or their experience in the world.”

■ CONTINUES ON A12



# Activity



Leaders of *The Diatribe*, at right, led an online student discussion about housing discrimination, racism and equitable community

Through “Writing to Right Wrongs,” students learn about racist realities that affected where their parents and grandparents were able to live, such as redlining, a government practice begun in the 1930s of drawing red lines around Black and poor neighborhoods where mortgage lenders and insurers would not invest.

Students saw a loan corporation’s 1937 “residential security map” of Grand Rapids that color-coded areas from most to least desirable. Price also called their attention to a map document designating one neighborhood as having an “infiltration of Italians & Negroes.”

The boundaries drawn then are still evident in concentrations of people of color and under-invested neighborhoods, Price said.

“These are like maybe your great-grandparents,” he said. “The reason some of them were refused loans was because of who they were.”

■ CONTINUES ON A13

*“Anti-racist art looks like two divided communities in unison, showing them as equals instead of one over the other.”*

– Marshaun,  
Ottawa Hills High School freshman

### What Neighborhoods Should Look Like

Ninth-grader Dayven said he was familiar with redlining and other injustices, but that the class motivated him to help spread awareness about racial discrimination.

“I think The Diatribe kind of pushed me to talk about it more, pushed the idea out there,” said Dayven, adding he wants to stay active in The 49507 Project. “I feel The Diatribe has given me that voice to spread the word.”

He shared his voice through a poem, “In My Eyes,” in which he decries racism and police killings of Black people: “The one problem in this world is ignorance/ This life of/ ‘it just is’/ needs to change to ‘justice.’”

But classmate Marshaun said while he learned from the class, he hasn’t felt touched personally by housing discrimination or racism. Rather than get politically involved, he said he’d prefer to teach kids how to play guitar and help with their homework at City View Church.

“You’ve got the power to speak; it just depends on what you’re speaking on,” Marshaun said. “I want to teach people to be their own selves and not follow everybody else.”

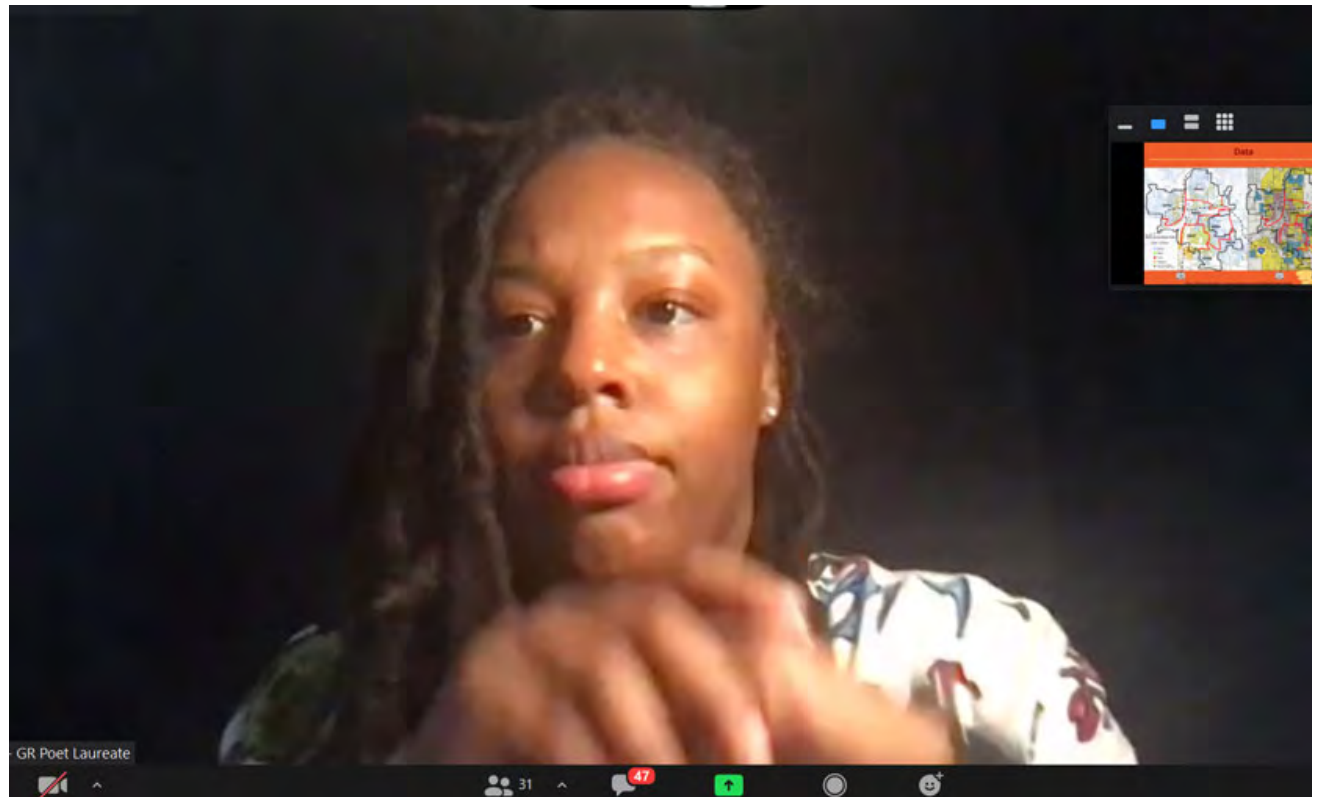
He contributed his thoughts in class on what anti-racist murals should look like: “Anti-racist art looks like two divided communities in unison, showing them as equals instead of one over the other.”

Asked what their neighborhoods would look like if they had more control over them, students texted some big-dream thoughts: “Colorful.” “Better everything, like schools, stores etc.” “Way more flavor.” “More nature.”

And if they had art that reclaimed their neighborhoods, what might it say or look like? Price asked, mindful of the artists on the Zoom.

“I’m thinking it would look divine and unique,” Marshaun said. “Something different, something new ... an abstract portrait of something.”

“Oh, the words y’all are choosing!” Price exclaimed. “Yes, yes! These artists are sponges right now. They’re soaking in what you all have to say. This art that’s going to live is from this, right now, right here.”



Grand Rapids poet laureate Kyd Kane took part in the online student discussion

*“Young people have a lot to say,  
and very unfairly they’re often  
overlooked.”*

– Peter Walblay,  
Ottawa Hills English teacher

## 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). Plans may also be found on the district’s website at [grps.org/facilities-asbestos-info](https://grps.org/facilities-asbestos-info). 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.



## Post High School, She's Pursuing Big Dreams in the Big Apple

*Making films and exploring cultural life of New York City*

By Charles Honey, Courtesy of School News Network

*Editor's note: Mariah Barrera was featured in May 2020 as part of SNN's Grads with Grit series. We follow up with her here to see how things have gone in her first year of college.*

Around this time last year, Mariah Barrera was feeling down about the end of her K-12 career. She and her senior classmates at City High Middle School had graduated without an in-person ceremony after spending their last few months of school online due to the pandemic.

"It kind of hurt," Barrera recalled. "The other day I saw (this year's) seniors from my school having their graduation. If I let myself think about it too much, it does make me sad."

Fast forward to now, when she is wrapping up her first year of college at Columbia University in New York City, and her outlook is dramatically different.

"It's just been an amazing experience so far," she said on a Zoom call from her dorm room. "I really love being here. I haven't gotten tired of it."

Besides drinking in the coffee shops, restaurants, parks and neighborhoods of the Big Apple, Barrera has already jump-started her career aspiration to make documentary and feature films.

She was awarded the \$10,000 top prize from YoungArts, a national nonprofit, for "My Brother's Keeper," a documentary about her father's experiences with incarcerated brothers. She was also accepted into The Catalyst Cohort, a mentorship program for emerging women and nonbinary film-industry professionals of color.

All told, studying and working in New York has accelerated the creative drive she had already fueled at City High and through award-winning films she made at West Michigan Center for Arts & Technology.



*Mariah Barrera plans on a career making feature and documentary films*



*City High graduate Mariah Barrera has been soaking up the cultural life of New York City, where she is studying at Columbia University (all photos courtesy)*

"Just being here reminds me there's so much out there for me, and that I'm only going to find it if I stay focused and keep working hard on what it is I care about," she said. "Because the city is just filled with people who are here pursuing something very specific and important to them."

Mariah Barrera plans on a career making feature and documentary films

### Collaborating with Dad on Film

It's been a heady experience for a young woman who spent part of her upbringing homeless after her parents were priced out of their home. She persevered by studying hard and channeling her experiences into her passion for filmmaking.

She continued that outlet with "My Brother's Keeper," which she shot at home in the fall while taking online classes from Columbia. She created it in collaboration with her father, Robert, who narrated the film about what it was like having two brothers spend time in prison.

"It is history, but in a lot of ways it's my story as well," Mariah reflected. "This is just an experience that has been going on throughout my entire life, that just felt so normal. It isn't something that I ever really talked about with anyone outside of my family. ... I was comfortable enough to be vulnerable with this story."

The idea for the film gestated last summer during nationwide Black Lives Matter protests, when conversations about the criminal justice system often used depersonalizing

language about incarcerated people, she said.

"They're not just prisoners. They're so much more than that. They're someone's son, someone's brother."

The \$10,000 award was confirmation that she was on the right track with her chosen career, Barrera said. Meanwhile, she moved to New York in January to continue her course work, including classes in writing, Spanish, science and theater.

### 'I Can Do What I Want to Do Here'

Then there is the education of living in the creative capital of America, with its fascinating array of artists, ethnicities and cultural centers. She's spent a lot of time off the Columbia campus on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, hanging out with friends at New York University on the Lower East Side and exploring the byways of neighborhoods and little shops.

"It's like every day I see a new part of the city I didn't even know was there," she said. "Every single neighborhood feels like you're in a new city."

Coming off the social isolation of the pandemic, it's an invigorating place to begin a new chapter – motivated in part by a sense of urgency instilled by the threat of COVID.

"It's really taught me the importance of, I can do what I want to do here, with the resources I have, if I believe in what it is I'm doing and if I really care about it," she said. "Not waiting for the perfect moment, because you're never going to get the perfect moment and the perfect time to do it."



## Family and Community Engagement



The GRPS Family and Community Engagement department continues to thrive.

Explore the Parent University website. Within “Trending News”, you will find “Summer Learning for GRPS Students”. This section contains guided lessons for K-12 students using Imagine Learning and Imagine Math. The lessons are designed to enhance your child’s learning throughout the summer.

Register for Parent University ([parents.grps.org/register](https://parents.grps.org/register)) to receive access to free courses and weekly Family and Community Engagement announcements.

Parent University has partnered with some amazing organizations for the 2021-2022 school year. Family Kitchen, part of the Spectrum Health’s Lifestyle Medicine department, will launch a “Healthy Living” program to pair hands-on culinary education with personalized coaching from a registered dietitian.

Parent University also joined forces with the Alzheimer’s Association, and will offer the following courses:

### Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body

- Thursday, September 23, 2021 from 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- Thursday, September 23, 2021 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

### 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s

- Thursday, November 18, 2021 from 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- Thursday, November 18, 2021 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

### Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia

- Thursday, February 17, 2022 from 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- Thursday, February 17, 2022 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

If you have an idea for a Parent University class or you would like to co-create a course, please email the Family and Community Engagement Office at [parentengagement@grps.org](mailto:parentengagement@grps.org).

## Early Childhood Information

Grand Rapids Public Schools provides FREE world-class PreK learning opportunities to qualifying preschoolers in ALL of our district’s elementary schools throughout the city.

GRPS’ World-Class PreK programs provide young children with the foundation for both academic and social-emotional success! Within our World-Class PreK classrooms, children will have the opportunity to learn social-emotional, motor, cognitive, and academic skills in a developmentally appropriate play-based environment through engaging, fun, hands-on activities!

For those students who will be 4 years of age by December 1, 2021, we are now accepting PreK applications for the 2021-2022 school year. Apply online at [preschool.kentisd.org](https://preschool.kentisd.org) for Great Start Readiness Program PreK today.

Full day PreK, Monday through Thursday, is offered at the following schools.

- Aberdeen School

- Brookside Elementary
- Buchanan Elementary
- Burton Elementary
- CA Frost Environmental Science Academy
- Campus Elementary
- Cesar E. Chavez Elementary
- Coit Creative Arts Academy
- Congress Elementary
- Dickinson Academy
- East Leonard Elementary
- Gerald R. Ford Academic Center
- Harrison Park
- Ken-O-Sha Elementary
- Kent Hills Elementary
- Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Academy
- Mulick Park Elementary
- Palmer Elementary
- Shawmut Hills
- Sherwood Park Global Studies Academy
- Sibley Elementary

- Southwest Elementary School - Academia Bilingue
- Stocking Elementary

Half day PreK, Monday through Thursday, is offered at the following schools.

- Grand Rapids Montessori
- Ridgemoor Park Montessori
- North Park Montessori at Wellerwood Early Childhood Center

Please note that PreK placements at Grand Rapids Montessori, Ridgemoor Park Montessori, or North Park Montessori at Wellerwood are conducted through the theme school application process.

If your child will be 4 by December 1, 2021, apply online today for PreK at [preschool.kentisd.org/apply](https://preschool.kentisd.org/apply).

Contact the Early Childhood office of Grand Rapids Public Schools today at (616) 819-2111 or [EarlyChildhood@grps.org](mailto:EarlyChildhood@grps.org) to learn more about PreK options for your child!

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