

# Community Foundation

FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

# REPORT

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## SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND RESILIENCE



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**Community Foundation**  
 FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

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A year ago, we had just closed our offices in response to COVID-19. At that time, we were working hard to keep current grants moving, inform our grantees about how our work would continue, and listen to organizations about what they would need during a time of tremendous change. What resulted was the largest grantmaking year in our history, with more than \$102 million provided in financial support to thousands of organizations in our region.

As we reflect now on all that’s changed since last March, not only due to COVID, but also to the resounding demands for racial justice last summer, we are immensely proud of the resilience and innovation of our grantees, donors, partners, and community members, and inspired by the amount of work they’ve accomplished.

Despite arts organizations being particularly hard-hit by the pandemic, it hasn’t stopped groups like Accent Pontiac, a music education program, from connecting with dozens of students at home to bring them the music they love. Caregivers and other groups working to support older adults, who have faced their own challenges during the pandemic, continue to provide services such as food delivery and care for those with memory-related diseases.

In addressing racial equity issues, one of our programs, our Youth Advisory Council, put racial equity at the core of their grantmaking, focusing their efforts on supporting change for youth. We know that youth are often the drivers of social change, but they don’t always have a seat at the table when it comes to matters of public policy and community decision-making. Through the YAC, we’re working to change that.

In the spirit of resilience and innovation, the Community Foundation also recently supported the production of a new children’s book — *That They Lived: African Americans Who Changed the World*. The book, authored by former *Detroit Free Press* columnist Rochelle Riley, features 21 inspirational, biographical essays about the childhood experiences of prominent figures such as Rosa Parks, Barack Obama, and others who overcame challenges both as children and adults to lead and improve the world around them.

While we celebrate all things new, we must also take the time to recognize a legacy. Recently, we said goodbye and paid our respects to Joe Hudson, the founder and 19-year chairman of the Community Foundation. A model civic leader and passionate philanthropist, he passed away peacefully at his home in December.

I know that Joe was incredibly proud of what the Community Foundation has accomplished, both recently and over the past three decades. As we continue to learn how to serve people best during the pandemic and well beyond, we will continue to carry out Joe’s legacy and work to improve quality of life in the community that he loved and cherished, just as we all do today.

We finished 2020 with deep appreciation for all the hard-working charitable organizations that are helping so many. We thank the thousands of donors who supported the Community Foundation and other organizations locally and across the country.

Sincerely,  
  
 Mariam C. Noland  
 President

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## TIME CAPSULE



## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL DEVELOPS FUTURE LEADERS

The Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Council was established in 1991 with a \$1 million challenge grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. These funds established an endowed youth fund that would, in perpetuity, involve young people in reviewing grant proposals from organizations that benefit youth in southeast Michigan. Over the past 30 years, about 600 young people have participated in YAC. Serving on the advisory council provides opportunities for youth to learn about real needs in their own communities, help the Community Foundation invest in projects that directly benefit their peers, and take the first steps toward a career in community service. Our YAC, which includes high school-aged students from across the region, oversees this fund and makes grant recommendations to the Community Foundation Board of Trustees. Grants range from \$2,500 to \$20,000, and support projects and programs designed to benefit youth and promote youth leadership. Since its inception, the YAC has recommended \$1.6 million through more than 220 grants, which have benefited organizations like the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor and Keep Growing Detroit, which operates a program that engages youth to examine the food system through a racial justice lens. Through its Summer Youth Program, the eight-week Food Justice Track will provide a combination of workshops, socially distant field trips, and activities to supplement Keep Growing Detroit's existing farm-based curriculum. See page 6 for more information about the YAC's recent funding of youth leadership projects.

## SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN THE ARTS AND ELDER CARE DURING COVID-19

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed aspects of our lives in countless ways. We've experienced dramatic shifts in the ways we live, work, and connect with fellow community members. These changes have also been felt among nonprofits in our region that are working to improve our lives through the arts, health, education, youth, community development, civic affairs, and more.

Thanks to the generosity of many funding partners and donors, the Community Foundation has been able to help support needs in new and innovative ways. We've adapted our grantmaking to work more

quickly and efficiently during COVID-19, and we've worked closely with many new partners to help make an impact where it's needed.

While we're proud to have supported many organizations in recent months, we recognize our responsibility to provide help in areas that often go overlooked. In recognition of our ability to understand and meet changing needs during COVID-19, the Community Foundation has recently directed some of its grantmaking to support groups benefiting the arts and culture sector, and those serving older adults and seniors.

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ARTS TO FLOURISH

Arts organizations and those employed in the arts have been particularly impacted by the economic strain of the coronavirus pandemic.

Based on a summer 2020 study conducted by the Brookings Institution, the creative industry is set to lose about 2.7 million jobs and more than \$150 billion in sales of goods and services nationwide. The fine and performing arts industries are expected to be hit hardest, suffering estimated losses of almost 1.4 million jobs and \$42.5 billion in sales.

In southeast Michigan, arts nonprofits are no exception. Last spring, with a grant funded by the Community Foundation, Detroit-based arts organization CultureSource retained cross-disciplinary national consultant group WolfBrown to conduct a needs assessment of 46 local arts organizations.

Findings from the study showed that, at the time of the assessment, more than 35 percent of the

*Students of the Accent Pontiac porch lessons program practicing music while social distancing in summer 2020.*





organizations interviewed were “entering survival mode,” meaning they would be facing serious challenges in the next four to six months if conditions didn’t change or they weren’t able to successfully “hibernate” for an extended period of time.

Since then, conditions haven’t changed for many. In response, groups are developing creative approaches to safely bring performances, galleries, and other events to life.

Through the COVID-19 Arts and Creative Community Assistance Fund — a collaboration of the Community Foundation, other foundations, and CultureSource — five organizations recently received support for projects to creatively connect with audiences.

Accent Pontiac, an arts program that aims to strengthen Pontiac’s youth and community through equitable access to music-making, is implementing a second iteration of its porch lessons program. Last July, Accent Pontiac launched a pilot program to provide outdoor music lessons at students’ homes. The program will continue to provide students with two socially-distanced porch lessons per week on percussion, brass, and/or woodwind instruments.

Other arts groups are optimizing the ways in which they connect with patrons online. When the Detroit Historical Society’s (DHS) museums shuttered, the organization noticed a large spike in visitors’ online usage. The uptick in online visitors prompted them to expand their digital content. The DHS has since collaborated with nonprofit and business accelerator Design Core Detroit. The collaboration is working to develop a replicable model that blends community

engagement, technology, and design to create new ways to experience Detroit’s history in public spaces. As the beginning of a portfolio of interactive programs, the DHS and Design Core Detroit will pilot an interactive mobile-optimized walking tour of Detroit’s former Black Bottom neighborhood, encouraging users to engage with images, oral histories, and videos while safely gaining historical insight and perspectives on contemporary issues.

In response to the growing — and still often overlooked — needs of arts organizations, the Community Foundation will continue to utilize the most current and relevant data collected by surveys and other research methods from local arts organizations to guide our grantmaking. In working alongside them and fellow arts funders eager to see members of our creative community flourish, we can better understand their needs and meet them more efficiently.



## PROMOTING THE WELL-BEING OF OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS

As we have collectively learned more about the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains clear that the dangers of coronavirus increase with age. According to the CDC, older adults are at greater risk of requiring hospitalization or dying if diagnosed with COVID-19.

Like nonprofits in other sectors, caregiver organizations have made changes to their health care delivery and business models to ensure the health and safety of the individuals they serve. Organizations are implementing or expanding existing telehealth services, establishing mobile food banks, and collecting digital devices like laptops and iPads to provide isolated seniors with opportunities to connect with loved ones.

As many seniors look to secure vaccination appointments, caregivers are also often helping older adults sift through information and navigate confusing websites.

Through the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Fund for Caregivers, the Community Foundation awarded grants to 19 organizations supporting caregivers in the region. Grants also went to groups working to meet other needs for older adults and to promote increased senior care. Grants were made to address the impacts of COVID-19 and provide flexibility to organizations ranging from neighborhood-based groups to hospice care centers to those supporting caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease.



Senior services at Livingston County Catholic Charities include art therapy, cooking groups, chair exercises, and other enrichment activities provided by caregivers.

Other recipients through the Wilson Legacy Caregivers grants include Livingston County Catholic Charities and the Area Agency on Aging 1-B. Livingston County Catholic Charities operates a day program for persons with memory-related diseases and a free, bimonthly dementia-specific caregiver support group (with free respite care for their loved one). The Area Agency on Aging 1-B continues to provide assistance with food and the delivery of essential items for seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers during COVID-19.

For more information about our COVID-19 response efforts, visit [cfsem.org/coronavirus](https://cfsem.org/coronavirus).

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION REACHES RECORDS IN 2020

**\$102 MILLION**  
Total grants made in 2020

**\$1.1 BILLION**  
Total assets at year-end 2020



YAC members participate in a team-building exercise during a kickoff event for the 2019-2020 cohort. The YAC offers a unique opportunity to learn about philanthropy, grantmaking, and volunteerism, while also providing a place to help youth develop and strengthen their leadership skills.

# ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE PROJECTS THROUGH YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

While addressing many needs directly related to COVID-19 over the past year, the Community Foundation has also continued to support innovative projects designed to advance racial equity, especially for young students.

Over the course of the events last summer, we witnessed a strong rallying cry for racial justice throughout the country. Youth groups and teens in communities such as Detroit and Grosse Pointe often joined in or organized protests of their own to express their desire for action and change on the racial justice front. We know that young people have a voice, but in matters of education and public policy, those voices often go unheard. It is vitally important to give them a seat at the table during community decision-making.

The Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Council provides local youth with an opportunity to help guide community grantmaking from our Youth Leadership

Fund. (For more on the Youth Leadership Fund and its history, see page 2.) With input from YAC participants, the Community Foundation recently announced financial support for organizations developing and enhancing youth-led racial justice programs.

The Allied Media Projects' Detroit Area Youth Uniting Michigan (DAYUM) Program is engaging high school students throughout the region in youth-led dialogues against racism and injustices experienced at schools or in their communities. New support is helping expand the program to more youth. The YAC also recommended funding for Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County. The grant will help improve refugee and immigrant youth services by creating a Youth Advisory Committee. The committee will empower immigrant and refugee youth to be a voice for change on key racial justice issues such as human rights, access to services, participation, educational disparities, and equity.

## EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOURNALISTS OF COLOR AND STRENGTHENING THE DIVERSITY OF LOCAL NEWSROOMS

In addition to supporting student-oriented racial justice projects, the Community Foundation also recently made grants to projects advancing opportunities for journalists of color.

Racial and ethnic minorities currently comprise about 40 percent of the U.S. population, according to the Pew Research Center. Despite being nearly half of the U.S. population, minorities are vastly under-represented in newsrooms — a fact that many media outlets confronted during and following the coverage of this past summer's racial unrest and the death of George Floyd.

Today, about 75 percent of newsroom employees are non-Hispanic white. That lack of diversity can lead to biased news coverage. Maintaining a racially homogeneous news staff can also present barriers for journalists of color seeking full-time positions at major media outlets, where unpaid internships are often the first role an aspiring journalist seeks.

Southeast Michigan is home to a diverse array of journalists and media outlets. The Community Foundation's Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund recently supported the Detroit Equity Action Lab's Race and Justice Reporting Initiative at Wayne State University. The initiative aims to tap into the enormous potential of networks and stories from journalists of color by connecting individuals with mentors and media outlets. Those outlets include Planet Detroit, an email newsletter that focuses on environmental issues in Detroit and Michigan, and Detour Detroit, a website that aims to publish equitable journalism by and for Detroiters. Together, the two outlets are producing pieces on race and justice, including topics on mental health access and environmental justice.

The Equity Action Lab also recently partnered with *Indigenizing News*, a digital magazine dedicated to increasing Native American and Indigenous representation in the news media. The partnership

will lift the voices of journalists from the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, the Grand Traverse Bay Area Ojibwe, and the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians in northern Michigan. Their stories will be shared in the *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, and in one of the many media outlets in southeast Michigan.



In February, the Detroit Equity Action Lab announced the 2021 cohort of its racial equity fellowship program, now in its sixth iteration.



## MICHIGAN OPIOID PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES TO EXPAND FUNDING AND OUTREACH WITH RECENT COLLABORATIONS

In January, the Community Foundation announced additional funding for activities through the Michigan Opioid Partnership.

Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation's overdose epidemic continues to be a leading cause of death for Americans.

According to 2020 data collected by the University of Michigan, in early 2020, between 30 and 40 Michiganders died of a suspected opioid overdose each week.

When the COVID surge began in mid-March, that number topped 40 a week, and kept rising through early June. It didn't fall back to the level seen in early 2020 until late August.

Nationwide, opioid-related fatalities are on the rise, too. A study published in February 2021 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) analyzed nearly 190 million emergency department visits. The study found significantly higher rates for opioid overdoses from mid-March to October 2020 when compared against the same dates in 2019.

In collaboration with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and Blue Cross Blue

Shield of Michigan, the Community Foundation announced seven grants totaling \$1 million for groups such as CARE of Southeastern Michigan, Catholic Human Services Inc., and Community Mental Health of Ottawa County. The grants will provide outreach to individuals who have recently survived a drug overdose, and will connect them with resources to prevent overdose mortality.

The Community Foundation and the Michigan Opioid Partnership also announced 10 grants designed to help reduce overdose deaths by expanding harm-reduction services throughout Michigan. In partnership with global public health organization Vital Strategies and the Council of Michigan Foundations, 10 community foundations throughout Michigan received grants as part of Vital Strategies' Overdose Prevention Program.

The Michigan Opioid Partnership is a public-private collaborative that includes the state of Michigan and key nonprofit funders whose mission is to decrease Michigan opioid overdoses and deaths through prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and sustained recovery.

For more information, visit [cfsem.org/initiative/opioid](https://cfsem.org/initiative/opioid).

## NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK REMINDS READERS THAT FAMOUS AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY-MAKERS WERE KIDS ONCE, TOO



Rochelle Riley

In February 2017, Rochelle Riley, former *Detroit Free Press* columnist and current director of arts and culture for the City of Detroit, was scrolling through Twitter when she came across a series of black-and-white photos.

In each one, Cristi Smith-Jones, a photographer and mother, had dressed up her then 5-year-old daughter, Lola, as Rosa Parks, Michelle Obama, and other iconic black women. The photos garnered attention from outlets like CNN, *The Washington Post*, and — of course — Riley, who envisioned the photos as a children's book.

Fast-forward a few years and, through a grant provided by the Community Foundation to the Wayne State University Press, Riley and Smith-Jones have published *That They Lived: African Americans Who Changed the World*, a children's book featuring photographs of 21 historic figures and their stories.

Along with shots modeled after Smith-Jones' original Twitter posts, the book also features photos of Riley's grandson, Caleb, dressed as historic black male figures such as W.E.B. DuBois, Duke Ellington, and Barack Obama. Accompanying each photo is an inspirational, biographical essay celebrating moments from their early lives.

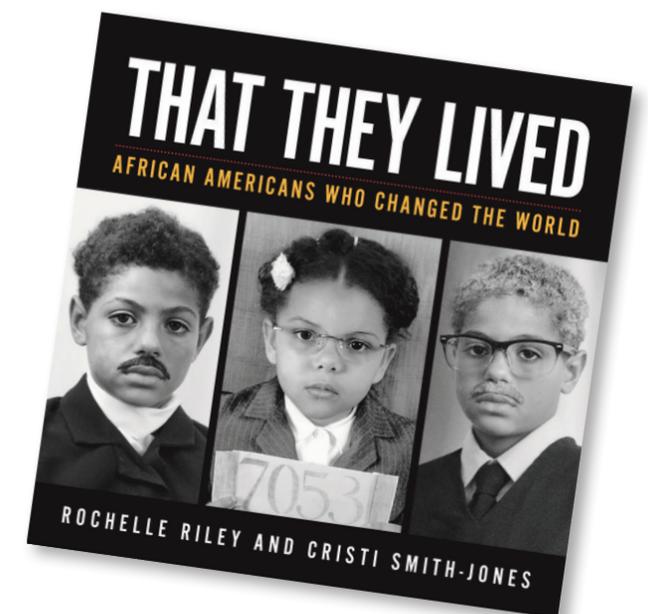
The story accompanying the photo of Caleb as Frederick Douglass explains how the future abolitionist first learned to read while enslaved as a young boy. After escaping to freedom, Riley writes, "He became a legend. But the legend began on a plantation in Maryland with a 9-year-old boy who was determined to read."

Accompanying a photo of Smith-Jones' daughter Lola as NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson, Riley explains that when Johnson was 10 years old, "She was smart enough to begin high school when her friends were still in elementary classes." Johnson, who graduated from West Virginia State at age 18, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama in 2015, decades after she'd made calculations that helped carry the Apollo astronauts to the moon and back.

Ultimately, the book's mission is "to teach children on the cusp of puberty that they can be anything they aspire to be and to serve as a reminder that every famous person was once a child who, in some cases, overcame great obstacles to achieve."

The book was officially launched in February and is available wherever books are sold.

For more information, visit [wsupress.wayne.edu/books/detail/they-lived](https://wsupress.wayne.edu/books/detail/they-lived).





The Community Foundation and the Pontiac Funders Collaborative recently issued a grant to Friends of the Clinton River Trail for a trail maintenance project that will design, engineer, and construct significant enhancements to the Clinton River Trail in Pontiac.

# PONTIAC FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE STRENGTHENS SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CAPACITY-BUILDING AND MORE

In January 2021, the Pontiac Funders Collaborative and the Community Foundation announced seven grants designed to support economic growth and prosperity in the Pontiac community. Four grants were made to help build capacity of key institutions in Pontiac: the City of Pontiac, the Pontiac School District, Oakland University, and Main Street Pontiac. Three others were made to support larger citywide projects in the areas of economic development, collective impact, and public spaces, such as the Clinton River Trail.

Since the Pontiac Funders Collaborative launched in early 2020, cross-sector members of the initiative have worked closely with grassroots organizations, advocacy groups, businesses, and government leaders to improve quality of life for residents and change negative and uninformed perceptions about the city.

Through interviews and research conducted in 2018 and 2019, the Pontiac Funders Collaborative learned that in recent years, the city's network of nonprofit and community organizations has grown and expanded to

meet community needs. Members of the collaborative also recognized a strong need to strengthen the city's public institutions and entrepreneurial scene.

As a result, in 2020, grantmaking included 18 capacity-building grants, 56 small business relief grants, and three emergency relief grants issued to key human service organizations in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Pontiac Funders Collaborative is a group of regional funders administered by the Community Foundation, working in close partnership with nonprofit organizations and local government in Pontiac. The unique, collective-impact model brings leaders together around common goals to solve complex community challenges by identifying shared outcomes, measuring change, and using data to inform decisions.

For more information on the Pontiac Funders Collaborative or to read a 2020 report summarizing the Collaborative's work, visit [cfsem.org/initiative/Pontiac](https://cfsem.org/initiative/Pontiac).

## GIVING

### MAKE A GIFT FROM YOUR IRA TO MAXIMIZE TAX SAVINGS

There's good news for individuals aged 70½ and older, who now have the opportunity to donate up to a total of \$100,000 (\$200,000 for married couples) to one or more public charities directly from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) free from federal income tax. In 2021, amounts donated directly to charity from an IRA will count toward your required minimum distribution. The charitable distribution is not taxable income to the IRA owner. This means the tax benefit from an IRA charitable distribution can be realized, regardless of whether you take the standard deduction or itemize your deductions.

Even better, all funds (other than donor advised funds) of the Community Foundation are eligible to receive IRA charitable rollovers.

Please contact Randy Ross, vice president of philanthropic services, for details on how to manage the process simply and efficiently and achieve the maximum impact for your charitable dollars and all applicable tax advantages.

Randy Ross may be reached at [rross@cfsem.org](mailto:rross@cfsem.org) or 313.961.6675, ext. 118.

## NEWS

### COMMUNITY FOUNDATION WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan recently welcomed JoAnn Chávez and Chuck Stokes as its newest board members.



JoAnn Chávez



Chuck Stokes

JoAnn Chávez is senior vice president and chief legal officer for DTE Energy. In addition to her role there, Chávez is also a strong advocate for young people, most recently founding the Michigan Hispanic Collaborative (MiHC).

Chuck Stokes is the editorial/public affairs director for WXYZ-TV/Channel 7 in Detroit. He has a long list of personal awards and achievements, including 12 Emmy Awards for editorial reporting and two Emmys for documentary reporting. He's a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and past president of the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Foundation.

## RANDY ROSS NAMED VICE PRESIDENT, PHILANTHROPIC SERVICES



The Community Foundation is pleased to announce that Randy Ross has been named the new vice president of philanthropic services.

Most recently, Ross served as associate director of donor engagement at the Community Foundation. He initially joined the organization in 2005 as a program officer. Prior to joining the Foundation, he was with the Guidance Center in Southgate, Michigan, for 10 years. He has also served as the president of the Alumni Board of Governors of the University of Michigan School of Social Work. His knowledge in grantmaking, fund development, and legacy planning, enhanced by his more than 15 years of service at the Community Foundation, makes his connection to donors and their families particularly effective.

He holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and a Master of Social Work, both from the University of Michigan.

He may be reached at [rross@cfsem.org](mailto:rross@cfsem.org) or 313.961.6675, ext. 118

## THANKING KAREN LEPPANEN

At the end of 2020, the Community Foundation's Karen Leppanen retired from her role as vice president, finance and administration.

Throughout her 34 years at the Community Foundation, Leppanen was an integral part of a leadership team that grew the Community Foundation from its humble beginnings in 1984 to one of the top 30 community foundations in the country, distributing more than \$1 billion in grants and possessing \$1 billion in assets.

In addition to leading the Community Foundation's financial work, including investments, grants, and donations, Leppanen also oversaw the transformation of the Community Foundation's information technology and HR systems.

All those who have worked with Leppanen as a colleague and in other capacities are grateful for her decades of leadership, exemplary performance, and consistent availability to lend a helping hand.

In her honor, the Community Foundation's Board of Trustees established an endowed fund called the Karen L. Leppanen Fund for Operational Excellence.



## A TRIBUTE TO JOE HUDSON, FOUNDER OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Community Foundation was saddened to learn that Joseph L. Hudson Jr. passed away peacefully at his home on December 2, 2020. In addition to leading the J.L. Hudson Co. and Dayton Hudson Corp. retail businesses, Hudson was a model civic leader and groundbreaking philanthropist who founded the Community Foundation.

In the late 1970s, Hudson learned about the impact of community foundations and began laying the groundwork to establish one in Detroit. In the years that led to the creation of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan in 1984, Hudson brought civic and business leaders together to build awareness and garner support for community foundations.

Hudson was the Community Foundation's chair for 19 years. He continued to help people recognize and appreciate the vital role that the Community Foundation plays in improving quality of life in the region. In the community foundation world, Hudson is best known for coining the phrase "building community capital." When he discussed "capital," he was always referring to both social and economic impact.

Some of the major initiatives that he oversaw while serving in his role as chairman included:

- Endowing youth philanthropy through a challenge grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- Project Prevention — a multiyear initiative funded by the Ford Foundation to reduce substance abuse.
- The GreenWays Initiative, which has helped more than 80 municipalities plan, design, finance, and build more than 100 miles of connected greenways across southeast Michigan.
- The Van Dusen Endowment Challenges. In 1991, the first 29 agencies were supported to build endowments with the Community Foundation.



Now, more than 200 nonprofit organizations are working with the Community Foundation to build endowment.

- The New Directions Initiative, which aimed to support bold new approaches to solve community problems.

As we reflect on Hudson's legacy and accomplishments, we are inspired, honored, and grateful for his innovation and leadership. He challenged us to think bigger, be better, and to always keep sight of our mission to serve.

Watch a tribute video to Hudson featuring interviews with many of those who knew him and worked with him at [cfsem.org/joe](http://cfsem.org/joe).

# Community Foundation

FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

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The Community Foundation creates permanent, positive change in southeast Michigan through thoughtful philanthropy.

With generous support from thousands of donors, the Community Foundation is building permanent endowment for the region and helping individuals, families, and businesses fulfill their charitable goals.

