



BERRIEN
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
For Good. For Ever.™

Berrien County Gives Back

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024



Buchanan High School Concert Band

For Good Grants Keep Beat Going, Wheels Turning

Buchanan High School is one of the many recipients of a **For Good Grant from the Berrien Community Foundation**, which will help the marching band keep the beat going with new percussion equipment. BCF has awarded \$154,475 in the most recent cycle of For Good Grants.

“The students and I are so excited and very grateful for this grant and to be able to get equipment we don’t need to constantly fix so we can just focus on making music together,” said band director Marc Hartman.

The percussion equipment to be replaced includes drums, harnesses and stands, and both the marching and concert bands will benefit. The outdated and run-down equipment shows its age through the constant maintenance and upkeep needed, Hartman said.

Another recipient of a **For Good Grant** is the **Berrien County Veterans Services**, who will use the dollars to replace an aging and high-mileage van that transports veterans to and from medical appointments at no cost to veterans.

“The Berrien County Veteran Service Office is thrilled to receive the support of a \$10,000 For Good Grant to help us reach our goal of raising \$20,000 in matching funds to purchase a new DAV Van that transports veterans to their VA medical appointments in Battle



BCF President Lisa Cripps-Downey presents a check to the Buchanan school officials to purchase new percussion instruments.

Creek,” said Berrien County Veteran Services Office Director Maureen Adams. “With only 18% of veterans in Michigan engaged in their Veterans Affairs benefits, the DAV Van is a rolling billboard that helps remind vets to check into their VA benefits.”

For a full list of grant winners, visit www.berriencommunity.org/news.

Senior Care Kits

BCF's annual **Senior Care Kits** served more seniors than ever before this year! More than 950 Senior Care Kits went to low-income, homebound seniors. These care packages are letting them know they're being thought of during the holiday season.

Senior Care Kits are wrapped packages full of basic necessities like shampoo, lotion and toothpaste – but also goodies like scarves, puzzle books and candy. We partner with Meals on Wheels and Area Agency on Aging to identify clients and to deliver the packages.

The love and care put into each Senior Care Kit is felt the by seniors.

"I feel real blessed to have friends like you. I don't know what I did to deserve this. You all are so wonderful!"
— Cleo



Gotcha Doin' Good!



Annette Washington is the caring and smiling face behind the wheel of Bridge Academy's van, driving students to the school, health center, job or programs. She knows the students, their struggles, their families and keeps them safe. If students miss the bus, she goes back for them!



Twin brothers **Tim & Tom Straman** took in two older cats when the cats' human went into hospice. Because of their kindness, the two 12-year-old cats, Tinkerbell and Patticake, didn't have to be split up. What's more, Tim and Tom take the cats to see their original owner about every other week!

Nominate Someone!

If you'd like to nominate someone for our Gotcha' Doin' Good spotlight feature, head on over to www.berriencommunity.org/gotchadoingood, email kellygampel@berriencommunity.org or give us a call at 269-983-3304.





Scholarship Apps Due Feb. 1!

The application deadline for Berrien Community Foundation scholarships is fast approaching! Students will need to hit the “submit” button by 11:59 p.m. **February 1.**

BCF offers 50+ scholarships for traditional students, adults returning to the classroom and students pursuing trade careers.

This is the second year the foundation has offered one common application to apply for more than 50+ opportunities. Additional questions populate if the student is eligible for more scholarships. BCF anticipates awarding over \$300,000 this year.

Applications are due February 1. This is an earlier deadline than in previous years. To begin the application process, visit www.berriencommunity.org/scholar.

Want to get involved? **Volunteer to be on one of our scholarship committees** that review applications from students across the county. Call BCF Program Director Susan Matheny at (269) 983-3304 to sign up.



(Above Left) The 2023 cohort of scholarship recipients gather for a photo.

(Above) Scholarship donor Sondra Kaminski greets student Cooper Trumbley, 2023 recipient of the Sondra J. Kaminski Scholarship.

T.E.A.M. Cares

Berrien Community Foundation's T.E.A.M. (the youth advisory council) wants to care for and help keep people facing homelessness warm and cozy this holiday season by providing care packages.

T.E.A.M. (Teens Exhibiting Able Minds) called on Blanket Brigade to show them how to make no-sew tie blankets to give to people staying with Emergency Shelter Services (ESS) over the holiday season. T.E.A.M. made 20 care packages that included the blankets, games, gloves, water bottles, and ESS-recommended items such as body wash, lotion and combs.

“It was nice to interact with fellow T.E.A.M. members and work as a team while learning about all the work Emergency Shelter Services does for their clients.

We knew we wanted to help people who are displaced in any way we can,” said T.E.A.M. Chair Daniel McKee, a senior at Brandywine High School.

Do you know a teen who wants to have an impact on youth across Berrien County? Have them check out our website www.berriencommunity.org/team or give us a call at (269) 983-3304.



T.E.A.M. members Keeli Frank and Colton Riggerbach make a no-sew blanket, which was given to Emergency Shelter Services clients for the holidays.

Susie Says

It's January and that means it's a new year of grantmaking here at Berrien Community Foundation!

BCF administers many grant programs, and this year we have revamped deadlines for several of them. We've created a "Grants at a Glance" sheet that can be downloaded from our website at www.berriencommunity.org/grants. This handy sheet lists all our grant programs and when applications or letters of intent are due.

As the program director, I wanted to share some best practices with you as you apply for grants this year.



Susan Matheny
Program Director

Grantwriting Tips

#1 Follow directions

Pay attention to the instructions on how to submit your application or how many words to use. If it says to use "250 words or less" in a response, don't submit a 2-page document.

#2 Have a plan

There's an adage around BCF: "*plans get funded, ideas do not.*" We're excited you're excited about your project, but you need to flesh out all the details of your project before you apply.

#3 Find a proofreader

Don't let little mistakes ruin your submission. Find a friend to read your application and have them look for any typos, missed words, missing documents and any writing that doesn't make sense. If they don't get it, neither will we.

#4 Ask for help early

Grant applications are generally available more than two months before the due date. If you need to ask questions or request help in some way, we are far more able to help you when the due date is a couple of weeks out instead of in a couple of hours.

#5 Answer every question

Never leave a question blank. Never! If a question does not apply to you, tell us that and tell us why.

#6 Keep on the lookout

We have all our grants and their deadlines on our "Grants at a Glance" sheet, but we also make announcements and put reminders up on our social media channels. You can find us on Facebook and Instagram at @BerrienCommunityFoundation.

Upcoming Deadlines

Scholarship Application Deadline

Scholarship Applications — February 1

Grant Due Dates

Golden Acorn Classroom Mini Grants — February 15

Frederick S. Upton Foundation Grants — March 15

For Good Grants — April 1

BIG IDEA Grant from Frederick S. Upton Foundation — April 1

Alamar Nonprofit Sustainability Grant — May 1

Save The Date!

June 13

Scholarship Celebration

September 18

Annual Meeting