

Celebrate Literacy



Literacy Legacy Fund



of Michigan

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Supporting a literate Michigan citizenry of all ages

Dear Donors & Friends,

Incredible things happen when people come together to support foundational skills that shape lives. Together we have made a positive impact locally and statewide in 2023, helping individuals of all ages improve their literacy through work centered on our mission.*

Over the last year, much has been accomplished through our continued partnership with the Northern Michigan University Center for Rural Health. We completed our second year as part of the National Rural Health Essay Contest encouraging high school age youth across the U.P. to discuss health topics. In addition, an Oral Health Literacy Initiative also has continued to educate various elementary students on the importance of dental hygiene using the book, *Curious George Goes to the Dentist*. This fun and unique project has not only inspired many children, but generated seeds of interest in other communities as well. We've also just begun a "Words Matter" project involving students at NMU exploring the impact of words on student efforts to seek out information to educate themselves on the flu vaccine. Stay tuned in 2024 for exciting updates!

LLF Michigan also continues to support Wayne State University students in a graduate or undergraduate program in teacher education. With a combination of LLF Michigan funds, including direct donor contributions to WSU, \$20,550 has been awarded to date to students through the fall 2023/spring 2024 academic year.

Our beloved Dolly Parton's Imagination Library continues to provide meaningful opportunities for families to read together and for children to explore literacy skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking. We are providing books to enrolled children 0-5 years old in five communities through the tireless work of LLF Michigan leadership, volunteers, contracted support and donors like you. For example, more than 260 Marquette children benefited monthly from this program in 2023.

Our Legacy Grant to the Lowell Area Historical Museum continues annually. This immersion program includes all third-grade classes in the district and has received regional recognition.

The Bertha's Buddies correspondence project, initiated in 2021, continues to touch the lives of those adults who may receive limited correspondence. Cards were sent throughout the state two times this past year with a special message creating connection for 79 recipients.

A special Range Bank's Banking on Literacy "Hidden Talent" fundraising event, your individual gifts, and local sponsorships all helped us fulfill our mission in 2023. **If you have an interest in supporting our efforts in honor or memory of someone, or would like to ensure continued programming, please return the enclosed donation envelope or visit www.literacylegacyfund.org to donate.**

With gratitude,

LLF Michigan Board of Directors

**Our Mission: To support the improvement of a literate Michigan citizenry for all ages through the distribution of charitable funds to enhance literacy efforts.*

The Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan is a section 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

EIN 26-3673521

Outstanding Support

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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David Bammert, M.A., Roxanne Daust, B.S., Angela Hentkowski, J.D., LL.M.,
Laura Lamp, B.S.N., Kristin Tessman, J.D., Kori Tossava, M.A.,
Eric Paad, B.S., Melinda Vokal, A.A.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Gloria J. LaPointe, B.S., CPA, Eric Paad, B.S.,
Nancy (Wiseman) Seminoff, Ed.D.

VOLUNTEERS & ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

Brett Hanson (Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Data Clerk)
Nikki Loehr, Teresa VanZalen (Board Assistants)
Sandra Grenke
Arianna Picotte
Margaret Schwalm

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR SUPPORT

Brian Maki, Computer Technician
Elise Bur, Northern Michigan University Center for Rural Health
Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development
Pam Hunsaker, Senior Regional Director, The Dollywood Foundation
Marquette-Alger RESA and Range Bank - Marquette

APPOINTMENTS: ADVISORY GROUP

LLF Michigan was pleased to welcome three new Advisory Group members
Laura Lamp, B.S.N., Kristin Tessman, J.D., and Melinda Vokal, A.A.



BOARD REMEMBRANCE

LLF Michigan would like to remember longstanding board member, Phyllis Ann (DeJonge) Aurich, who passed away on Wednesday, March 7, 2023. May her contribution be remembered and set a foundation for literacy efforts to come.

Inspiring the Imagination

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails one new book per month to each child from birth to age five with no cost, obligation, or income requirement for the child's family. All preschool age children (birth to age 5) in the community are eligible to receive one age-appropriate book monthly in the mail addressed to the child while enrolled in the program. Parents or guardians must register online or submit an official registration form completed by an authorized adult to enroll the child in the program. The Dollywood Foundation is responsible for selecting, processing, mailing and managing the distribution of over 2.8 million books a month throughout the United States and four other countries.

The Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan is the Program Partner (aka Affiliate) for several Dolly Parton's Imagination Library programs in Marquette and Alger Counties. It is both the Program Partner, and Local Champion and Sponsor, for Marquette 49855. In the Marquette 49855 area, LLF Michigan is responsible for paying \$26 per child annually for the cost of the books and their mailing, maintaining the database, and marketing the program. Many fundraising initiatives including donor mailings and annual poster are used to help raise funds for this program. At this time, it is serving an estimated 260 children annually by ensuring free books in Marquette 49855.

LLF Michigan also provides guidance and support to other programs in the U.P. under its oversight. In addition to Marquette 49855, current programs with LLF Michigan as the Program Partner include:

- AuTrain-Onota Public Schools
- Burt Township Schools
- Ishpeming Public Schools No. 1
- Munising Public Schools



Spotlight Award

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF DR. JACQUELINE TILLES

Dr. Tilles's love of reading started before she was old enough to go to school. In order to fulfill her desire of learning to read, she had to change schools at age five. Persistence paid off; she never let go of her Mama's promise that in school they will teach you to read. That promise was so powerful that it provided a foundation for her life - a foundation that continues to this very day. Dr. Tilles became an elementary school reading teacher, a middle school English teacher, and an Associate Professor of English Education, Reading, Language, and Literature at Wayne State University. We are proud to honor Dr. Tilles through this scholarship.



Dr. Jacqueline Tilles.

Our 2023 recipients are Brianna Coffman who is pursuing a master's degree in Elementary Education with a major in Social Studies and Mariela N-Tyler who is pursuing a master's in Secondary Education with a major in Spanish. Since 2016, this scholarship has provided 14 students with financial assistance. Through the fall 2023/spring 2024 academic year, a total of \$20,550 in scholarships has been awarded by donors and LLF Michigan combined to date.



Pictured left to right, Nancy Seminoff, LLF Michigan Founder and President; Joye Clark, Director of Major Gifts, WSU College of Education Development Office; and Dr. Denise Taliaferro Baszile, Professor and Dean, WSU College of Education, attended the WSU Scholarship Reception on October 16, 2023.

***\$20,550 in scholarships
have been awarded to
Wayne State University Students
by donors and LLF Michigan to date. 4***

Legacy Award

MUSEUM IMMERSION PROGRAM

The Lowell Area Historical Museum was awarded a Legacy Grant for its “Museum Immersion” Program. The program includes all third-grade classes in the Lowell Area School District. Objectives met by the program: 1) Support, expand and supplement social studies curriculum through direct exposure to historical artifacts, exhibits, techniques and interaction with local historians; 2) Connect learning in the classroom to the local community; 3) Model methods of historical research and writing through student-driven activities during their time in the museum with the guidance of historians. This program has been very successful and has consistently made adjustments to in-person learning with the supplementation of videos and activity ideas. LLF Michigan has provided financial support for four consecutive years.

Supporting New Teachers

MRA CONFERENCE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEW TEACHERS

Michigan teachers in their first five years of work received an opportunity to apply for funding to attend the Michigan Reading Association Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 2023. Funds were made available through LLF Michigan and MEEMIC Insurance Company. The funding covers reimbursement up to \$500 for conference registration, hotel accommodations, and MRA membership.

In Your First Five Years After Graduation?

ATTENTION TEACHERS

LITERACY LEGACY FUND OF MICHIGAN OFFERS FUNDING TO ATTEND THE MICHIGAN READING ASSOCIATION 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN MARCH

The Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan is offering beginning teachers an opportunity to apply for funding to attend and represent at the Michigan Reading Association (MRA) 2023 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, March 1-3, 2023. Funds are made available through LLF Michigan and MEEMIC Insurance Company.

AWARDES RECEIVE UP TO \$500 IN REIMBURSEMENT FOR:

- CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
- HOTEL RESERVATION
- MRA MEMBERSHIP

APPLICATION DEADLINE FEBRUARY 15 11:59 EST

Visit www.literacylegacyfund.org for details.

Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports the advancement of a diverse Michigan citizenry of all ages through the proliferation of educational opportunities to enhance literacy-related efforts. To learn more, contact us at info@literacylegacyfund.org.

Applicants wrote a 300-word or less essay on how they would implement what they learned at the conference. Multiple grant readers unanimously chose the top applicants from the many deserving applications received.

Following the conference, each grant recipient wrote a summary of their conference experience. It was clear, as we read each summary, that the conference information will have a great impact on not only the new teachers, but also the educators' students for many years to come.

Northern Partnerships

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH RURAL HEALTH DAY ESSAY CONTEST

In celebration of National Rural Health Day, recognized on November 17th, the NMU Center for Rural Health, the Michigan Center for Rural Health (Michigan's State Office of Rural Health), and the Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan partnered to extend an opportunity to all high school seniors who are college/university bound in fall 2024 and intend to pursue a healthcare career to participate in this essay contest. Each participant wrote an essay identifying two ways that college and university students can contribute to efforts in any of the five key areas of social determinants of health. Winners include:

Eastern Region Winners

1st Place: Christian Garrett, Sault Ste. Marie, MI

2nd Place: Jenna McDonald, Kincheloe, MI

3rd Place: Tamara Nadeau, Manistique, MI

Central Region Winners

1st Place: Lola Korpi, Ishpeming, MI

2nd Place: Amelia Helms-Gleason, Negaunee, MI

3rd Place: Maddyson Jacobson, Negaunee, MI

Western Region Winners

1st Place: Madeline Boehmer, Iron Mountain, MI

2nd Place: Emily Kilpela, Hancock, MI

3rd Place: Robin Kisiel, Chassell, MI

Learn more about the NMU Center for Rural Health at:

www.nmu.edu/ruralhealth

***LLF Michigan
awarded \$500
to each 1st place
recipient.***

ORAL HEALTH LITERACY INITIATIVE

In celebration of National Reading Month, the Northern Michigan University Center for Rural Health and students, currently enrolled in the pre-dental academic track at Northern Michigan University, joined forces to read and engage with youth in an effort to increase awareness and education about proper oral hygiene. The project was made possible through funding from LLF Michigan, Delta Dental Foundation, Upper Peninsula Health Plan, and Superior Dental Care. The project targeted second and third grade students at K.I. Sawyer Elementary in Gwinn Area Community Schools, Aspen Ridge Elementary in N.I.C.E. Community Schools, and Mather Elementary School in Munising Public Schools. Approximately 350 elementary students were served by the project.

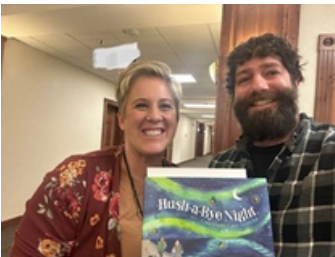
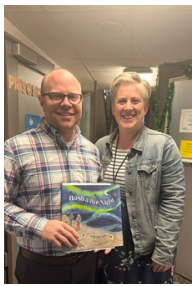


Giving Tuesday

RURAL LIBRARY BOOK DISTRIBUTION

Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan donated new hardcover books to various rural libraries throughout Upper and Lower Michigan as part of an extended Giving Tuesday celebration. Libraries were able to choose between a copy of Michigan-based author Thelma Godin's children's book, *Hush-a-Bye Night: Goodnight Lake Superior* and *The First Notes: The Story of Do, Re, Mi* written by award-winning actress, singer, and author, Julie Andrews and daughter, author, Emma Walton Hamilton.

Twenty books were distributed to various rural libraries by various LLF Michigan leadership in Marquette, Alger, Kent, and Presque Isle counties. Libraries included AuTrain Onota Public Schools Library, Burt Township School Library, Forsyth Township Public Library, Ishpeming Carnegie Public Library, Kent District Library - Alto Branch, Kent District Library - Caledonia Township Branch, Kent District Library - Englehardt (Lowell) Branch, Munising School Public Library, Negaunee Public Library, Powell Township School Library, Presque Isle District Library, Presque Isle Library - Grand Lake, Presque Isle Library - Millersburg, Presque Isle Library - Onaway, and Presque Isle Library - Posen, Republic Michigamme School Public Library, Richmond Township Library, Superior Central School Library, and Wells Township School Library. A copy was also distributed to LLF Michigan headquarters' library, Peter White Public Library in Marquette.



**GIVING
TUESDAY**

Creating Connection

BERTHA'S BUDDIES CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

Bertha's Buddies is a special correspondence project sponsored by the Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan. The intent is to bring joy into the lives of adults, usually, but not limited to senior citizens who may not receive an abundance of personal mail during the year.

Two special mailings were conducted in 2023 featuring cheerful cards with stickers and a positive message. Each card notes the person recommending the recipient to receive a card. LLF Michigan encourages the community to nominate those who may benefit from such correspondence by reaching out to the LLF Michigan office.

This project, launched by the Board in February 2021, was initiated in memory of Bertha Wiseman, mother of the LLF Michigan founder. Bertha loved to send cards to those who were often alone, and she enjoyed receiving cards as well.



Banking on Literacy

HIDDEN TALENT SHOW

Range Bank hosted a special Banking on Literacy: Hidden Talent Show event on April 19, 2023, at 5:30 pm at the Masonic Theater in Marquette. The event featured a talent show format with local celebrities and community members in disguise highlighting their hidden talents. All proceeds for this event benefited Dolly Parton's Imagination Library 49855, a program that provides free books to children ages 0 to 5 in the Marquette area. Range Bank has hosted a Banking on Literacy event annually to support LLF Michigan and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for three years.



Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan President and Board Chair Nancy Seminoff accepted a donation from Range Bank from its Banking on Literacy: Hidden Talent Show in April 2023. Pictured left to right, Hannah Westra, Range Bank Marketing Coordinator, Amy Buck, Range Bank Financial Advisor, Nancy Seminoff, LLF Michigan President and Board Chair, Kim Erickson, Range Bank Marketing Director and Kelly Jandron, Range Bank VP, Branch Administration Officer.

Thank you, Range Bank leadership and staff for supporting Literacy Legacy Fund of Michigan and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library!

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING 2023 FINANCIAL DONORS

Anonymous	Kathy Lovrich (S)
Anonymous	Mary Mathews (S)
David Bammert (S)	Carolyn McDonald (D)
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Kathleen & James Keplinger (S)	Dr. Jacqueline Tilles (D)
James LaJoie (S)	Paula Wiseman & Richard Starck (S)
Laura Lamp (S)	Kristin Tessman (G)
Gloria LaPointe (S)	Melinda Vokal (S)
Dr. Zachary & Jill Leonard (G)	Susan Whitney (G)

*(Legend: Silver up to \$100; Gold up to \$250; Diamond up to \$500;
Platinum up to \$1,000; Legacy Circle above \$1,000)*

IN HONOR OF

Ryatt Walker O'Donnell.....from Gwendolyn Graham
Dr. Jacqueline Tilles.....from Mary Matthews

IN MEMORY OF

Phyllis Aurich.....from Carol Bell, Carolyn Jane Blough,
Jennifer Dodge, Roger & Alice Emmert, Andi Goriesky Family, Lorraine
Johnson, James LaJoie, Gloria LaPointe, Carolyn McDonald, Patricia Olson,
Patricia Pellett, Margaret Schwalm, Nancy Seminoff, Duane &
Judith Soine, and Paula Wiseman & Richard Starck
Marie Constant.....from Patricia Smothermon
Audrey Kaufman.....from Nancy Seminoff
Judy Sarosik.....from Nancy Seminoff
Matt Whitney.....from Susan Whitney

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Zonta Club of the Marquette Area

Contributors (as provided by Range Bank) for Banking on Literacy event:

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Mark Aho Financial Group
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We're honored to have this support, and
we are grateful for all our donors!

CONTACT US



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