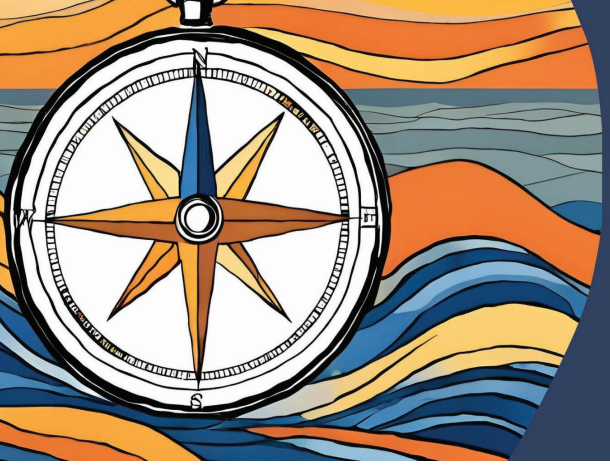


50 Community Foundation for NORTHEAST MICHIGAN

Navigator

Spring 2025

CFNEM Reactivates Urgent Needs Fund Following Northern Michigan Ice Storms



Our hearts are with all those in our communities who have been impacted by the recent devastating ice storm. In response to the natural disaster that has affected much of northeast Michigan, the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan (CFNEM) reactivated its Urgent Needs Fund on April 1 to support those most impacted across the region. The Fund is providing immediate assistance to local nonprofits serving individuals and families facing hardship due to the storm's aftermath.

The Community Foundation contributed $25,000 to make funds immediately available for use. The first round of grants totaling $46,800 was awarded on April 9 to provide basic necessities like food, water, blankets, and gas to those impacted by the storm. Short- and long-term needs are expected to continue. ***Individuals and businesses who can give are welcome and encouraged to donate to support northern Michiganders impacted by the storm, and to support the region with long-term recovery and future preparedness efforts.***

The Foundation serves six counties under the State of Emergency: Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Montmorency, Presque Isle, and Oscoda. Many in these communities are still without power, facing unsafe conditions, and restoration is continuing.

Scan here to give online or visit cfnem.org.

"We are fortunate to be part of a caring, generous, and resilient community," said Patrick Heraghty, Executive Director of CFNEM. "The health and safety of our partners, staff, and neighbors is always our top priority, and we recognize that many in our communities will experience increased hardship in the weeks and months ahead."

Grants from the Urgent Needs Fund will be directed to nonprofit organizations providing vital services such as access to food and basic hygiene, care for senior citizens, and assistance with other essential needs. While CFNEM cannot provide aid directly to individuals, it supports the work of local nonprofit partners who are on the front lines of crisis response. Nonprofits serving one of the impacted counties and interested in applying for a grant should contact Christine Hitch at chitch@cfnem.org.

CFNEM Announces New Strategic Plan

In September 2024, CFNEM adopted a new strategic plan that will serve as a roadmap designed to enhance our mission of fostering a stronger, more vibrant community. Developed in collaboration with local stakeholders, nonprofits, and community leaders, this plan sets clear priorities to address key challenges and create meaningful, lasting change.

"Our Board of Trustees and staff worked for nearly a year to create this plan, and the result

-Strategic Plan, continued-

outlines key areas of focus that will ensure long-term growth, sustainability, and increased community engagement," said CFNEM Executive Director, Patrick Heraghty. "At the heart of this plan is the goal of strengthening the Foundation to be able to continue to support future generations in northeast Michigan."

Key points of the new strategic plan include focus on asset development and stewardship, marketing and communications, youth support, grantmaking, and enhancements to governance and operations. It can be viewed online at cfnem.org under "Resources".



Over $350,000 Raised on Giving Tuesday

2024 marked a full decade that CFNEM has provided a platform for local nonprofits to participate in the global Giving Tuesday movement. 60 nonprofit organizations participated in CFNEM's Giving Tuesday Northeast Michigan event in December 2024 to raise a total of $350,837.

The Giving Tuesday Golden Goose was presented to Friends of the Hubbard Lake Center, pictured left, for raising the most funds ($38,790) during the 24-hour giving event. Those funds are helping with the final furnishing of the new library and community center in Hubbard Lake.

What Will Your Legacy Be?

Your legacy is your legacy, and it says a lot about you. Making a future gift is easy philanthropy almost anyone can do, and the impact is truly remarkable.

The Community Foundation recently produced a video to showcase several members of our Legacy Society - people who have included the Foundation in their will or estate plan. Those featured in this video are your neighbors. With a love of their community, a passion to give back, and the understanding that generations from now will encounter new opportunities and challenges, these generous individuals have chosen to plan for our communities' futures through planned gifts.



Scan the QR code below or visit cfnem.org under "Give/Planned Giving" to hear community members like Beach Hall, Richard and Jeannine Boyce, Esther Ableidinger, and Steve Lappan talk about why they have decided to leave a planned gift through the Community Foundation. You'll also hear from Nancy Szejbach and Kate Phillips about their mother, Margot Dorn's, legacy; and from Brad Somers, who shares how legacy gifts impact our community through the lens of a nonprofit.

If you are interested in learning more about planned giving, we would be honored to help you get started.

Paying it Forward for Alcona

Cheryl Peterson and John Boufford





"Our community invested in us. Now we're investing in our community."

As longtime residents of Alcona County and owners of its local newspaper, The Alcona County Review, Cheryl Peterson and John Boufford have their thumbs on the pulse of the community. They have seen it overcome challenges, embrace opportunity, and change over time. They love every bit of their northeast Michigan home, and they are leaving a legacy gift to make sure their community is supported forever.

"The best part of any community is the people who live there. While most people say that for a quick answer, it is especially true for Alcona County," says Cheryl. "Despite many obstacles for growth and development, Alcona County residents care about their communities and many work diligently to improve them to the best of their abilities."

Cheryl grew up in Oscoda and met John in his hometown of Ionia while they were both working at the Ionia Sentinel Standard. Cheryl had taken over as editor of the daily newspaper, and John had been working in the newspaper production department doing printing and film developing.

In 1995, the newspaper in Harrisville was put up for sale. Cheryl and John took a huge leap, quit their jobs in Ionia, and moved to Alcona County to begin their stewardship of the weekly newspaper.

Publishing local stories for over 30 years allowed them to deeply know Alcona County, as well as the organizations working hard to help it thrive. Cheryl and John learned about the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan having published countless articles about grants that had been awarded, seeing firsthand how the Foundation helped improve many aspects of their community. Their wish for Alcona County is to see that support continued and enhanced. Having no children of their own, they decided to make a planned gift, entrusting their estate to the Community Foundation to support Alcona County forever.

"We decided to keep our legacy in Alcona County to pay it forward to a place that has given us so much. It seemed like the logical thing to do," says John. "We have seen how the Community Foundation supports so many worthwhile organizations, and we trust the Foundation to make decisions about how our gift will be used to support our Alcona County communities. They'll know what to do."

Cheryl and John ultimately entrusted CFNEM with their legacy gift because of what they see as its "outstanding reputation, commitment to serving community organizations, and long-term effect" that will continue with legacy donations like theirs.

As an "unrestricted" gift for the benefit of Alcona County, Cheryl and John's planned gift is among the rarest kind – one that acknowledges the unforeseen needs of the future.

"No matter how prepared you think you are, something always comes up and having the funding to deal with it is a relief," says Cheryl. "We hope this aspect of our legacy plan will help the Community Foundation directly, so it can continue helping so many others."

Featured Grants

Community Members Learn to Curl



Bring on the Bonspiel! For those who follow the sport, that's what you call a curling competition. Two CFNEM Community Impact Grants to Thunder Bay Curling Club helped more than 50 community members take part in the "Learn to Curl" program, giving participants a two-hour block of time with experienced curlers at no cost. They learned the rules of the game, became acquainted with safety measures, practiced "throwing" a curling stone, and learned the artful practice of "sweeping".

CFNEM Trustee Katie Young-Engstrom and CFNEM staff member Rachel Elkie visited one of the sessions at Northern Lights Arena in December 2024.

"This was my first grant site visit, and it was exciting to see friends and community members taking advantage of the 'Learn to Curl' event. There was so much passion, engagement, and fun, and I'm eager to share this experience with others!" said Katie.



Grant Supports Sensory Materials in Atlanta

Have you ever found yourself fidgeting with a pen during a meeting, bouncing your leg at your desk, or turning the lights down in your home or office so you can focus better? Kids need the same types of tools throughout the day to help them focus or transition from one task to the next.

CFNEM team member DeeAnn Karos (pictured left) visited Stephanie Teets's classroom at Atlanta Community Schools in Montmorency County recently to check out some of the equipment and supplies purchased through a Northeast Michigan Youth Advisory Council (NEMYAC) grant. The special needs classroom is full of sensory objects meant to calm students so they can return to their regular class with better focus. Ms. Teets stretched those funds as far as possible, purchasing a light cover to dim the bright fluorescent lights; a fun tent kids can sit in for a calm and quiet place that has fun lights they can turn on if they want; noise-cancelling headphones; a swath of fidget and sensory toys; and chairs that allow for movement.

Trail Improvements at Vogler Conservation Area



CFNEM Trustee Anne Belanger joined staffers Jennifer Dingman and Rachel Elkie for a beautiful two-mile hike at the Herman Vogler Conservation Area in late autumn to check out some of the in-progress trail improvements. A Community Impact Grant to the Presque Isle Conservation District provided funding to repair and replace bridges and wetland crossings along the trail. Project organizers were able to use a "puncheon design", where carefully selected logs from the trail area were cut down to use as the supports for the bridge. The system will likely last much longer than other trail bridge designs, lasting for 20-30 years. Additionally, the District will plant new trees to replace the ones that were cut for the bridges, and plant additional trees.

This CFNEM Community Impact Grant was awarded from the Mr. and Mrs. O.B. Eustis Memorial Fund held at the Community Foundation.



Green Township Fire Department Rescue Training

We all want emergency responders to be well-equipped to handle any situation they encounter while protecting and serving our communities. A CFNEM Community Impact Grant provided funds for the Green Township Fire Department in Alpena County to purchase light towers, bright lighting, extra batteries, and other supplies. The purchases have allowed the Department to have a lighted tower on either side of a burning structure, helping firefighters work faster and more safely as they work to put out fires. In a prolonged situation, the batteries will help keep the area lighted long enough for backup lighting to arrive.

The Green Township Fire Department is serviced entirely by trained volunteers in the interest of keeping people safe and protected. *Pictured here, the new lights are used in after-dark training exercises.*

Preserving History in Presque Isle County

CFNEM staffers Christine Hitch and Rachel Elkie visited with volunteers of the Presque Isle Township Museum Society at the New Presque Isle Lighthouse in October to check out the restoration work being done on the S.T. Crapo lifeboat – a piece of northeast Michigan history being preserved on the lighthouse grounds. A CFNEM Community Impact Grant provided funds to purchase a specialized cover that will protect the boat over the winters, shielding it from the wind, snow, and ice.

Work being done on the lifeboat includes replacing some of the rotted wood, repainting to match the original colors of the boat, and making sure the artifact can weather the elements better.

The lifeboat comes from the S.T. Crapo freighter that hauled cement products out of Alpena, Mich. When we shared this story on Facebook, the Mackinaw Area Historical Society shared the bottom photo of the S.T. Crapo making its final journey through the Straits of Mackinac on September 25, 2022, as it was being towed to Port Colbourne, Ontario, Canada, to be scrapped. How wonderful that this piece of history can be preserved!





Alcona Students Learn the Way of the Wheel

Alcona County students had the opportunity to learn pottery skills through Inspiration Alcona, a nonprofit that works to create local cultural opportunities. A Community Impact Grant provided funding for Inspiration Alcona, in partnership with Huron Arts Collaboration (HARC), to hire several professional potters to demonstrate pottery skills and teach students the ways of the wheel during art class.

The program came to fruition after students took a field trip to the Flint Institute of Arts to learn about ceramics, gaining a greater understanding of clay, its uses, and the creative possibilities. That experience created a lot of excitement and motivation to get pottery wheels and instruction at school. Project organizers say the most important outcome of the project was the students' introduction to a new art form and the enthusiasm that inspired it. The students learned the basics of wheel throwing, centering clay, making vessels, glazing, and firing their creations.

Winter 2025 Community Impact Grants

Community Impact Grants



44 Grants

$126,546

The Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan awarded a new round of Community Impact Grants in March 2025 covering Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Presque Isle Counties. Grants were awarded for a broad range of interest areas including basic needs, human services, environmental programs, arts and humanities, and more.

Projects awarded $5,000 include:

- Brush Creek Mill for technology upgrades and support
- Friends of the Alpena Courts for the Bayview Reconstruction project
- Friends Together for the Care & Comfort Boutique Stock project
- Harrisville United Methodist Church for the Feeding Alcona County Families project
- Hillman Community Schools to purchase chairs and music stands for their music program
- New Beginnings Ministries for the Feeding the Community in Need project
- Art in the Loft for the "Food As Fuel 101" project
- Posen Area Fire & Rescue to purchase a drone
- Presque Isle District Library for the "Northeast Exposure Features Michigan Author and Performing Artists" project
- Rogers City Main Street-DDA to support the "I Love Rogers City" metal statue
- St. John Lutheran School for the "Let's Play! 2025" project

Grants for this Community Impact Grant cycle come from the Community Endowment Fund, as well as several other unrestricted, designated endowment funds, and donor-advised funds including: Alcona County General Fund, Alcona Healthcare Initiative Fund, Ann M. Kuntz Fund for Presque Isle Youth, Huron Shores Health Fund, United Communities of Presque Isle County Fund, Montmorency County General Fund, Wayne Wire Cloth Fund, Presque Isle General Fund, Mr. and Mrs. O.B. Eustis Memorial Fund, CFNEM Spendable Tobacco Fund, Marianne Kalivoda Hall Memorial Fund, Genite Family Fund, Lappan Family Fund, Neva Nelson Memorial Fund, Panel Processing Fund, Pfeiffenberger Fund, Reitz Family Fund, Stevens Fund, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter G. Weinkauf, Sr. Fund.

Winter 2025 Northeast Michigan Youth Advisory Council Grants

In March 2025, the CFNEM Board of Trustees approved over $35,000 in grant recommendations from our Northeast Michigan Youth Advisory Council. These grants are overseen by our YACs, and are awarded in support of youth programs in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Presque Isle Counties. Grant funding comes from the Kellogg Youth Fund, a permanent endowment held at CFNEM.

Youth Advisory Council Grants



23 Grants

$35,596

Winter 2025 NEMYAC Grants include funding for school food pantries to help feed hungry children and their families, support for getting comfort care backpacks to children in foster care, a career fair to introduce students to eco-careers, youth art programs, and support for school curricula and sports activities.

See the full list of Winter 2025 Community Impact and Youth Advisory Council Grants at cfnem.org/resources/news.



Knowledge Corner

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) as a Smart Giving Tool

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a tax-advantaged way for individuals aged 70½ or older to donate directly from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a qualified charity. By making a QCD, the distribution is excluded from taxable income, which can reduce overall tax liability.

In 2025, an individual can donate up to $108,000 from an IRA to a charity, including any fund at the Community Foundation. And it's a good idea to consider a QCD earlier in the year to allow your distribution to count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), which you must take once you turn 73.

Depending on the size of the distribution, you could even use your QCD to establish a new fund to support a cause close to your heart, create a legacy in your name, and see your gift in action.

In short, QCDs are a great tool for giving back to your community if you don't need the funds and want to reduce your tax liability. To make a QCD to the Community Foundation, let your financial advisor know and get in touch!



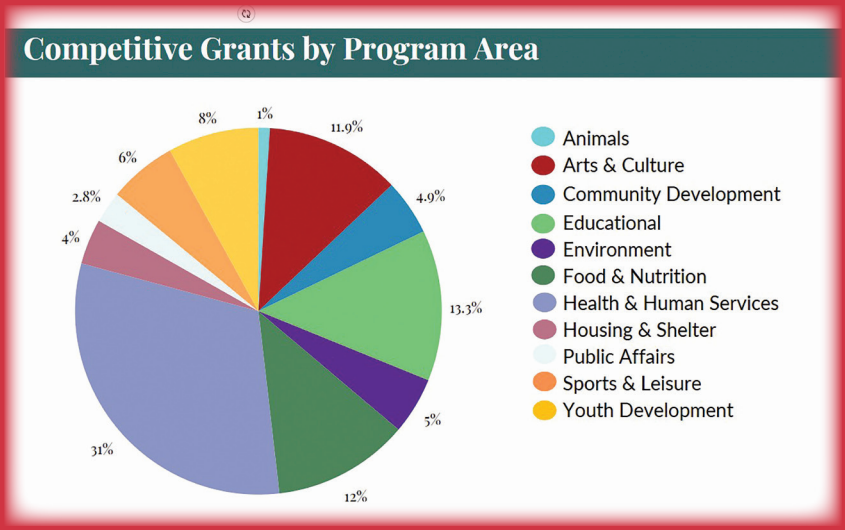
Save the Date!

As we cultivate the next generation of philanthropists, we invite you to help lift up our Youth Advisory Councils, or YACs, and the work they do. Your support will increase the impact they can make for their peers each year. Please consider a donation to your local YAC on Youth Advisory Council Day!

Each of our YACs is being offered a $1,000 match through the Dolores and Leonard Roznowski Fund held at the Community Foundation. This match means your donation goes even further!

Learn more about Youth Advisory Council Day and mark your calendar for May 6th to donate at cfnem.org.

2024 Annual Reports Available Online



2024 Annual Reports for the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan and our three affiliate foundations (Iosco County Community Foundation, North Central Michigan Community Foundation, and Straits Area Community Foundation) are available on our website at cfnem.org under "Resources" and "Annual Reports"; or scan the QR code here to view them online.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Open Cycle
Urgent Needs Fund

June 1
Straits Area Community Foundation Community Impact Grant

June 30
North Central Michigan Community Foundation Community Impact Grant

July 1
Northeast Michigan Women's Giving Circle Grant

July 15
Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan Community Impact Grant

Guidelines and applications are available at cfnem.org.

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