Our 5th Annual Day to Celebrate Bay and Arenac County Nonprofits

Save the Date:
May 7, 2019

Save the date and do your part to support our local nonprofits. On this annual day of giving, nonprofits will be eligible to receive additional funds through an incentive pool and extra prizes to help grow their endowment funds. Supporting these organizations on Give Local Bay helps ensure that they will be around to make our community thrive for many years to come! Be sure to “like” our page on Facebook to follow along with the festivities: facebook.com/bayareacommunityfoundation

www.givelocalbay.org

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Upon her passing in 2017, a portion of Rosemary’s estate was left to our community.

www.bayfoundation.org
It’s the year to believe...

Last year, we chose the theme “better together” to guide our work. For 2019, the word “believe” will be our guiding principle.

Why believe? Because everything good starts with the belief that it is possible. As the year unfolds, you will see these key messages in our communications.

Believe...you can make a difference
Believe...when others may not
Believe...the best is yet to come
Believe...in the power of community
Believe...in Bay and Arenac counties

I hope you will join with us throughout the year because together we can—and will—make a positive difference in our community.

Believing the best is yet to come,

Diane M. Fong, President & CEO

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Help Us Clean-up the Riverwalk/Railtrail on May 4

We are looking for volunteers to help clean up along the Riverwalk/Railtrail, so that all can enjoy another season of biking, walking, and running along our trails.

Volunteers should check in at Veterans Memorial Park, beginning at 9:00 am. Registration is appreciated, particularly if you are signing up a team of participants, but not required.

Garbage bags and lawn equipment will be provided by the Bay City Parks Department. We recommend wearing comfortable shoes, dressing for the weather, and bringing along garden gloves. Refreshments will be available.

If May 4 does not work for your family or group, you can call 989.893.4438 to coordinate a section of the trail to clean-up on another date.

The Riverwalk/Railtrail was established and is funded by the Bay Area Community Foundation. The 17.5-mile trail system is a cooperative partnership between all municipalities, park departments, the Bay County Road Commission, and the Bay Area Community Foundation’s Riverwalk/Railtrail Committee.

Please call 989.893.4438 or email kirstenm@bayfoundation.org to sign up.
“Thank you so much for granting this money to help build and design our robot for competition,” said Arnae Stokoszynski.

Standish-Sterling Central High School received a $1,000 grant from Arenac Community Funds for their FIRST Robotics Team. This program allows students to work side by side with engineering mentors and learn mechanical, electrical, and software skills. Participating ignites a passion for STEM careers and allows the students to explore new opportunities.

Standish-Sterling Students Learn STEM Skills

Ashleigh graduated from Wenona High School and was awarded the Bay Commitment Scholarship in 2011. She went on to receive an associate degree from Delta College and a bachelor’s degree from Ferris State University.

As a high school student, Ashleigh Lalonde was not the typical teenager. Living with her single mother, Ashleigh struggled with health issues that took her out of school for quite some time. She and her mother were often close to the poverty line, forced to decide if they should use money to put gas in the car or food on the table.

As a teenager, Ashleigh also became her mother’s full-time caregiver after she retired on disability with health issues and was no longer mobile. Although glad to help, for Ashleigh, this meant running errands, taking care of household chores, cooking, and providing for her mother, which took time away from her studies.

But hope for her future was not lost. With Ashleigh’s love of education and her mother’s incredible motivational support, Ashleigh was able to return to high school and graduate. She received the Bay Commitment Scholarship in 2011 and started her post-secondary education at Delta College.

“For me, the Bay Commitment Scholarship was financial security that made me feel like I could make it,” she said.

Since then, she has graduated with an Associate Degree in Computer Science from Delta and a Bachelor’s of Science from Ferris State University. She is currently pursuing her master’s degree in cybersecurity from Pennsylvania State University’s online program.

Ashleigh gives credit to the support she receives from her mother. “We have a very strong relationship,” she said. “She’s been my rock through trying times.”

Currently, Ashleigh continues to care for her mother, is in graduate school, and works full-time for Ellucian at Delta College. As the colleague systems analyst, she manages and troubleshoots the digital systems that the college uses for curriculum management, business services, purchasing, payroll, and more.

She said she enjoys working behind the scenes to make it easier for students to navigate the system.

“All part of my job is to help students get their degree,” she said. “There are so many people working in higher education that will never even meet the students. But I can use my talents to help, and it’s rewarding to see commencement each year.”

She’s still figuring out where her education will lead her, but she knows she’ll continue to strive to grow in her career. The Bay Commitment Scholarship helped her gain financial security to further her education, but her dedication and dreams are what push her through.

During the 10th Anniversary of the Bay Commitment Scholarship, we are sharing 10 stories of success from past recipients. Read them all and donate at www.bayfoundation.org/BCsuccess
New Van: More Accessibility

Area 9 Special Olympics offers opportunities for support, growth, and social interaction for so many children and adults in Bay and Arenac counties. Athletes commit to hours of practice as well as tournaments and competitions leading up to the State Games.

For the volunteer coaches, this means figuring out transportation around the state. It was often difficult to get enough drivers and vehicles to accommodate the whole team, forcing Area 9 Special Olympics to rent vans so their athletes wouldn’t miss out. This became quite costly as they have more than 15 teams traveling regularly throughout the year. As the program continues to grow, so does the challenge of transportation.

With support from the community, Area 9 Special Olympics purchased a team van, eliminating regular rental costs and allowing all their athletes to ride together and build team camaraderie. This was made possible by grants from Bay Area Community Foundation’s Nathalie Awrey Memorial Fund and Civic League of Bay County Fund as well as funding from the Leslie L. Squires Foundation and SC Johnson.

Now, athletes are able to continue to participate in many sports. One such athlete is Paul, a positive and energetic participant who always shows up with a smile and words of encouragement for his teammates. With almost no family to speak of, Paul has come to rely on the Special Olympics volunteers and athletes. They have become his new family and support system.

“Where would he be without Special Olympics?” says Mary Pearsall, longtime volunteer and coach. “It is just such an outlet for him. There isn’t one athlete who hasn’t improved his life from being a part of it.”

Area 9 Director Janelle Rosebush-Miller says, “The van makes a huge difference in our daily operations. We are so grateful for the Foundation’s support.”

Swim Classes Prevent Drownings and Build Character

For ten years, Rob Hendry, aquatics director at Dow Bay Area Family YMCA, wanted the local elementary schools to add swimming and water safety classes to their curriculum. Drownings are the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury death, making it important that children learn early on how to be safe around water. Unfortunately, the schools don’t have the financial resources to do this.

This past year, thanks to grants from Bay Area Community Foundation’s Civic League Fund and Youth Advisory Committee Fund, Rob saw his dream become a reality.

These grants provide buses to bring all third grade classes from Washington Elementary to the Dow Bay Area Family YMCA once a week for class. They learn water safety techniques, how to use water safety equipment, and about the importance of the buddy system. Then, depending on the student’s level of comfort around water, they begin swim lessons.

Rob remembers one student who was so scared, he could only put his feet in the water. But by the end of the class, he was in the deep end! Other students are immediately comfortable and begin learning the different strokes. Rob said it’s important that they meet the kids where they are at to help them work past their fears and not push them past their limits.

He hopes the success of these classes will help the program expand to include all elementary schools in the area.

Beyond water safety and swimming, the instructors are helping these students build a sense of accomplishment and confidence. “Hopefully that transfers over to the rest of their lives,” said Rob. “We’re more than just swim coaches: we’re life coaches.”
Rosemary Pope’s Generosity Provides Opportunities to Live Life to the Fullest

Rosemary Pope was a passionate woman who believed in filling her life with family and friends, connecting with nature, and traveling the world to learn from and experience different cultures.

“I’ll never forget her laugh,” said her niece, Ellen Learman. “She respected the earth and the gifts it gives us.” Rosemary loved to tell a good joke and make others laugh, and she lived life to the fullest, always open to new ideas and taking advantage of opportunities.

Her sister, Maureen Poirier, recalls that Rosemary never let anything hold her back. When Rosemary was in high school, she had to have her knee-cap removed and could no longer bend her leg. “But that didn’t stop her from doing the things she wanted,” said Maureen. “She always told us that the only things she couldn’t do were ice skate and ride a bike.”

Rosemary maintained a Japanese garden at her home, traveled the country to teach seminars on growing bonsai trees, visited China and Japan, and grew close to an exchange student named Yoko Kojima, who became like a daughter to her.

Rosemary made provisions in her estate plan to help others by removing barriers to allow them to seize new opportunities. Upon her passing in 2017, a large portion of her estate was left to our community by way of the Bay Commitment Scholarship and the Bay Area Women’s Center Designated Endowment Fund at Bay Area Community Foundation.

Because of her gifts, more doors will open for first-generation college students and families who have suffered abuse. Rosemary’s generosity gives them the opportunity to live life to its fullest, just as she strove to do.

We are happy to work with you on your plans for charitable giving. Call us at 989.893.4438 to set up an appointment.

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*as of February 28, 2019

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Thank you to our Business Sponsors for showing their support for the work of the Bay Area Community Foundation.

To learn more about becoming a Bay Area Community Foundation Business Sponsor, please contact Lisa Bourdon-Krause at the BACF office at 989.893.4438
Congratulations to the 2019 Bay County recipients of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Scholarship Award. This $1,000 scholarship is awarded to graduating high school seniors who actively embrace Dr. King's dream of improving racial harmony and social justice.

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on January 23 at Saginaw Valley State University, the students were honored for their hard work and met keynote speaker Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to President Barack Obama, 2008-2016.

To hear more about how these students are making a difference in our community, see the posts about each student at www.facebook.com/bayareacommunityfoundation.