



Fall 2024

## President's Pen

Brandon Reame, GHSF President



This year marks my ninth year serving on the board of the Grand Haven Schools Foundation (GHSF), and according to our bylaws it's time to pass the torch next summer. Working with this talented group of individuals has been a gift, and I'm thrilled with the progress we've made in developing the organization and increasing the impact for students and staff of Grand Haven Area Public Schools (GHAPS). The Foundation is set up

for success, and we're fortunate to have such a committed and visionary Board of Directors working alongside our talented Executive Director, Sue Bays.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters and volunteers. The past 12 months have been incredibly productive as we've continued to increase the impact of your Grand Haven Schools Foundation. We provided over \$125,000 in funding during the 2023-2024 school year to support GHAPS students and staff, which is a record! The Foundation provided full-tuition preschool scholarships for 42 students during the last academic year.

Events such as Art at the Yard, our 30-year Celebration Breakfast, and past GHHS Hall of Fame ceremonies helped generate significant funds, thanks to your support.

This is another pivotal year, as we launch a brand-new GHSF Community Partners Program. Businesses and individuals now have the opportunity to support the Foundation in a more streamlined and impactful way. Program members will enjoy increased visibility and awareness through one simple annual contribution. Proceeds from the Community Partners Program allows us to deploy funding to support the students and staff of GHAPS faster and more efficiently. If you haven't heard about this program yet, please reach out to our Executive Director, Sue Bays, at [sbays@ghsf.org](mailto:sbays@ghsf.org), or one of our board members and we'd be happy to share more.



# Welcome to the Board of Directors

The Grand Haven Schools Foundation (GHSF) is excited to introduce our newest board member.



Jared Werksma

Jared Werksma joined the GHSF Board of Directors during the past year. A native of Grand Haven, Jared brings his passion for service and communications to the Foundation to impact local students. Jared works for Northwestern Mutual as a Financial Advisor and has past experience as an investigative news reporter for network affiliates from coast to coast. We thank Jared for his service and commitment in supporting a quality education for area students.

#### Officers:

Brandon Reame – President  
Chris Van Schoick – Vice President  
Denise Stone – Treasurer  
Mary Jane Evink – Secretary

#### Directors:

Megan Akselberg  
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Alison Spiewak  
Chris Streng  
Nikki Tiefenbach  
Heather Walsh  
Jared Werksma

#### Emeritus Board Chairperson:

Lana Jacobson

#### Executive Director:

Susan Bays - sbays@ghsf.org

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Grand Haven Schools Foundation  
PO Box 272  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
GHSF.org  
(616) 850-5066



**TOGETHER**, carrying out our mission to support a quality education for area students through funding initiatives that help empower learning.

- Preschool Scholarships
- Mini Grants for Teachers
- Field Trip Grants (Title 1 Schools)
- New Teacher Classroom Library Grants
- District Impact Grants

#### Our VISION:

To support academic readiness, lifetime learning and success for all.

#### Our VALUES:

Engage. Educate. Empower.



## UPCOMING: GHSF Annual Breakfast

March 13, 2025  
American Dunes Golf Club



*Purchase your tickets*



## Celebrating 30 years supporting area students!

The Grand Haven Schools Foundation continues to celebrate its 30th year as a local non-profit organization, supporting a quality education for area students of Grand Haven Area Public Schools.

Last spring, we welcomed GHSF supporters, parents, school staff and local leaders to join us at the GHSF 30 Year Breakfast Celebration to kick-off this milestone.

Thank you to all those who came out to support the Foundation and showed their dedication to local students and staff.



# GRANT

# Spotlight

*GHSF Impact Grants Increase Student Achievement Across the District*



*GHAPS Instructional Coaches (from left to right) - Laurel Pellegrum, Katie Ingram, Elizabeth Gervais, Sara Cooke, Lyndsey Bensel and Elyse Taylor.*

The Grand Haven Schools Foundation has awarded over \$27,000 in grant funds over the past two years to help support Math Recovery training for district Math Coaches and provided math manipulatives for students in the classroom.

Sara Cooke, one of two Elementary Math Coaches at GHAPS, was the Foundation's keynote speaker at the GHSF 30 Year Breakfast Celebration last spring. Sara shared, "With the support of GHSF, we have been able to impact professional learning, empower teachers in instructional shifts and increase student achievement."

The Math Recovery training helped deepen the coaches knowledge on how students develop understanding around numeracy and allowed teachers to shift away from memorization and rote procedures towards a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

"GHSF funding allowed us to purchase math manipulatives for teachers in the classroom. Through the use of hands-on tools and games, students are building a strong foundation of number sense, and we are seeing an increase in joy and

engagement. These supports have led to a positive impact on student achievement," shared Sara. At the conclusion of Sara's speech, she thanked those who support the Foundation and make grants like these possible. "The work we are doing right here in Grand Haven Area Public Schools is making an impact not just day to day, but lifelong. As a district, the data clearly shows that we are moving in the right direction."

- Despite learning loss due to COVID, our math scores are showing an upward trend.
- We are 9 percentage points ahead of the midyear national average on the iReady benchmark assessment.
- In regards to our benchmark assessment scores, we are exceeding the national average in math for every grade level.

Additional support from GHSF grants and the collective efforts from GHAPS Math Coaches are directly benefiting students. As scores are rising, students are finding joy in their math journey. Thank you to all the GHSF donors who make these grants possible.

*"Through the use of math manipulatives like counters, unifix cubes, 10 frames, and bead racks kids are creating a much more solid foundation of number sense. With manipulatives, they SEE the math concept. Having different tools allows each student to find what works best for them. We have embraced that all brains are different, and giving students ownership in finding the tool that works best for their brain is really empowering." – GHAPS Teacher*

# TOGETHER

let's make a difference.

NEW!

## Become a Community Partner!

### Join the GHSF Community Partners Program

As a Community Partner, you will receive benefits and broad recognition throughout the Grand Haven district. Are you ready to make a big impact and show your commitment to area students and staff? Contact Sue Bays, Executive Director, at sbays@ghsf.org with any questions.

YOUR support will directly impact PreK through 12th grade students of Grand Haven Area Public Schools by helping fund the following:

- Preschool Scholarships
- Mini Grants for Teachers
- Field Trip Grants (Title 1 Schools)
- New Teacher Classroom Library Grants
- District Impact Grants

## THANK YOU to our new GHSF Community Partners!



**DIRK STONE & COMPANY**



To learn more, become a Community Partner or to make a donation, visit our website: [GHSF.org](http://GHSF.org)

## It's easy to give.

### Mail check:

Grand Haven Schools Foundation  
PO Box 272  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Visit online: [ghsf.org/DONATE](http://ghsf.org/DONATE)



## Thank you Donors!

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**Thank you for your support!**

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Fall 2024

# Grand Haven Schools Foundation Grant Celebration Day! GHSF Awards Over **\$125,000** in Granted Wishes

The Foundation continues to increase its impact each year and the 2023-2024 school year was no exception. Providing over \$125,000 in grant funds, last year was the Foundation's biggest giving year to date.

GHSF is proud to support five grant initiatives which directly impact student learning and help support area teachers as they provide a first-class education.

- Mini Grants for Teachers
- Field Trip Grants (Title 1 Schools)
- New Teacher Classroom Library Grants
- District Impact Grants
- Preschool Scholarships

To learn more about the Foundation and GHSF grants, visit [GHSF.org](http://GHSF.org).

**Thank you to our donors who make these grants possible! Together, making a difference.**



Engage. Educate. Empower.





GRAND HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL  
HALL OF FAME

# 2025 NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!

Nominations will be accepted online at [GHSF.org](https://GHSF.org) now through March 30, 2025.

The Grand Haven High School Hall of Fame —hosted by the Grand Haven Schools Foundation—was established in 2008 to honor exceptional graduates and those who have served the school district. Do you know an outstanding individual or team you would like to nominate for the 2025 Hall of Fame?

## Save the date!

**GHHS Hall of Fame Dinner & Ceremony**  
**Saturday, October 25, 2025**  
**Spring Lake Country Club**



◀ To learn more about the GHHS Hall of Fame or to submit a nomination, visit [GHSF.org](https://GHSF.org).



### **I. Cultural/Performing Arts:**

This individual will be recognized for achievement in the cultural, visual, or performing arts and/or contributions to the promotion of cultural activities on a local, state or national level.



### **II. Athletic Accomplishments:**

This individual or team (one female or all girls' team and one male or all boys' team chosen) will be recognized for outstanding athletic accomplishments while attending GHHS/CHS and/or at the college, semi-professional, or professional levels.



### **III. Academic/Career Accomplishments:**

This individual will be recognized for achievement in his or her profession, which has resulted in a direct and significant impact in their field. He or she has demonstrated unique talents and/or accomplishments.



### **IV. Service to the Grand Haven Area Public Schools/Society:**

This individual is recognized for service to the Grand Haven Area Public Schools or to society by sustained example or contribution, and by serving as a major influence in the lives of Grand Haven students or in the community/society through acts of leadership.



### **V. Honorary Award for Service to GHAPS:**

This individual is recognized for special contributions and service to Grand Haven Area Public Schools and its students. This candidate does not have to be a graduate of Grand Haven High School/Central High School.



# Grand Haven Schools **FOUNDATION**

P.O. Box 272 | Grand Haven, MI 49417



## Looking for a teacher gift?



Scan the QR code  
or visit  
[ghsf.org/donate-now](https://ghsf.org/donate-now)

Your donation(s) can be given in honor (or memory) of someone special. Honor a teacher or administrator today and let them know the impact they make on students' lives every day.

All gifts will help the Foundation's mission to support a quality education for area students and staff of Grand Haven Area Public Schools.

**YOUR** gift makes a world of difference. Thank you!

Please contact Sue Bays, Executive Director, at [sbays@ghsf.org](mailto:sbays@ghsf.org) for more details.

Checks can be mailed to:  
Grand Haven Schools Foundation  
P.O. Box 272  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

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