MOBILIZING FOR MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY’S WELL-BEING
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The context of our recovery

As we wrap up 2021, I can’t help but think how the majority of 2020 was about searching for the light at the end of a vast, dark tunnel. And while 2021 brought a lot of hope, it seemed like the light at the end of the tunnel kept flickering. The new uncertainty is if this light will stay on – and for whom?

The challenging news: As we explore how to rebound from the COVID-19 disaster, structural racism is creating an additional barrier to recovery for our neighbors of color.

The inspiring news: We can no longer deny how interconnected we are, and any imbalance in our community is a problem for the collective. The imbalance of injustice threatens how our community works, learns, socializes, heals, grows and prospers now and into the future.

Fortunately, this is not the natural order of things, and balance can be created.

We can no longer deny how interconnected we are, and any imbalance in our community is a problem for the collective.

We will continue to acknowledge how the pandemic is disproportionately affecting Black, Brown and other People of Color communities. The cover story of this issue of UPDATE focuses on the pandemic’s impact on mental health and the renewed opportunity to create better wellness support for neighbors whose identities are ignored, made invisible and not seen as priority.

Let’s do our best to take care of ourselves, and be kind to each other in this season and beyond.
TRHT Impact Report out now

How is Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation making a difference in our community?

The newly released 2017-2020 TRHT Impact Report tells the story of partnerships, programs and projects that are centering racial equity, reshaping power and building community in our county.

TRHT is a community-based process that addresses the past and present-day effects of racism. The process helps communities heal and make actionable, sustainable change.

TRHT Kalamazoo, one of the original 14 TRHT locations nationwide, came to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation in 2017. With nothing but a framework as a guide, community came together to assemble a leadership team, grow partnerships, implement programs and develop a vision for a community without racism.

Top left: TRHT Healing Practitioners group photo during Police Academy training. Top right: Sholanna Lewis, former director of TRHT Kalamazoo.

Toplines from the report include:

• People want to be a part of this movement. TRHT grew its partnerships from 55 in 2017 to over 600 by 2021.

• Organizations are changing because of TRHT. Over 85% of TRHT partners reported a change in their organization as a result of participation.

• Individuals’ behaviors and habits are changing because of TRHT. Over 90% of people report a change in their personal behavior and habits as a result of engaging with TRHT.

Through the grants, individual gifts and funding from KZCF, TRHT has grown from a $180,000 programmatic budget with one part-time staff, to an annual programmatic budget of more than $1 million and four full-time staff.

And this is just the beginning. Funding has also been used to create an endowment to permanently support racial healing for generations to come.

Check out all the insights and photos from TRHT’s work over the last three years by visiting the documents section at trhtkzoo.org.
Anxiety over the pandemic, social unrest, racial injustice, parental burnout, isolation, and economic instability have taken a toll on our mental fortitude. The last 21 months emphasized the importance of being attentive to our mental health. Many community members expressed that their mental health was tanking – especially those without the resources to make it a priority alongside other basic needs.

To address this critical need for care, KZCF is mobilizing people, resources and expertise to support a better future for community mental health.

Mobilizing People for Mental Health

Kalamazoo Black & Brown Therapy Collective

The Black & Brown Therapy Collective connects People of Color in community to therapists of color in order to address racial trauma. While KZCF provided financial support to this project, the impact is all about mobilizing the right people. The absence of culturally relevant services creates a barrier between People of Color and appropriate mental health support.

“Community care is so important now and always,” said Kama Mitchell, Artistic Director and Queen Doula of Rootead Enrichment Center. “Having lived experiences be reflected back to you from a therapist that has had similar lived experiences can create a healing relationship that supersedes one based on insurance and access. Representation deeply matters for de-stigmatizing Black and Brown mental health.”

The BBTC also covers the cost of therapy for residents as financial barriers can also prevent access to mental health support.

Consider making a gift to the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Kalamazoo Endowment Fund to sustain collective healing work and into the generations ahead. Visit kalfound.org/GiveNow.

Mobilizing Resources for Mental Health

Check out some of the organizations KZCF partnered with to improve mental health outcomes in Kalamazoo County in the last year:

- Changes and Beyond: People of Change
- Community Healing Centers: Early Intervention Program
- Community Healing Centers: Mental Health as a Continuum of Care amidst COVID-19
- Douglass Community Association: Fulfilling our Promise to Our Community
- InterAct of Michigan (services now provided by Integrated Services of Kalamazoo)
- Integrated Services of Kalamazoo: Set Up Shelter
- Residential Opportunities, Inc: Affordable Housing Operating Assistance
- Rootead Enrichment Center: Kalamazoo Black & Brown Therapy Collective
- The Arc Community Advocates: Adult Advocacy Service

*EDITOR’S NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of mental health related grants made through the community foundation. Additionally, grants and distributions have been made from Advised, Field-of-Interest and Designated Funds.*
Mobilizing Expertise for Mental Health

Southwest Michigan Journalism Collaborative

The expertise KZCF holds comes from playing a convener role in community. KZCF engages elected officials, educators, nonprofits, business leaders and individuals across Kalamazoo County. The team uses insights from these interactions to make strategic connections that advance a community where no one faces barriers to a high-quality life.

The Southwest Michigan Journalism Collaborative is one way the community foundation used community expertise to build an impactful partnership. In 2019, Sarah Lee, KZCF’s Director of Marketing Communications, initiated a gathering of local media leaders. They came together to answer one question: How do we work together to better tell the most critical stories in our community?

“The goal is for this group of newsrooms to generate public conversations and build trust with the community around issues that otherwise might not get the attention they should,” Jennings said.

The next issue the collaborative’s storytelling will highlight is mental health.

“What solutions are there for this situation? What other areas of mental health deserve our attention as a community? These are the questions we will be exploring,” Jennings said. “It is also important to note that we are dedicated to work that is centered in equity. And we will be seeking out stories that lead to community-based change.”

Members of the Southwest Michigan Journalism Collaborative

Second Wave Media
Now Kalamazoo/The Homefront
WMUK Public Radio
Nueva Opinion
Encore
MLive/Kalamazoo Gazette
Public Media Network
WMU School of Communications
WMU Student Media Group
Community Voices
Watershed Voices

Typically, the world of journalism is one of competition. Each news outlet wants to be the first with a story, to scoop its competitors,” said Kathy Jennings, managing editor of Southwest Michigan’s Second Wave Media. “This collaboration in which news organizations agree to work together is one way to assure that gaps in news coverage are addressed.”
“I’m not able to pay my tuition balance and can’t register for next semester until I do.”

“I’m almost finished with my program but can’t cover my Licensed Practical Nurse fee.”

“I can’t afford my textbooks for next semester!”

These are real barriers to achievement facing college students in our community. That’s why the Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) Scholarship team set up the Emergency Scholarship fund in August 2021. The scholarship provides help with emergency needs that prevent students from completing a degree or training program.

“There is a considerable amount of time between our regular scholarship application openings and funds being dispersed,” said Laura Galaviz, director of Scholarships at KZCF. “The Emergency Scholarship Fund is bridging the gaps between scholarship opportunities. We also see this bringing emergency applicants into the regular scholarship cycle and meeting expenses that can’t be covered by our other scholarships.”

The independent committee that reviews emergency applications is made up of seven Kalamazoo County community members. As of October 2021, over 80 students from various age groups, backgrounds and disciplines have applied for funding. Sixty-six percent of eligible requests have been at least partially funded.

“The two largest requests are for assistance with paying an outstanding university balance and purchasing textbooks,” said Meredith Bradford, KZCF Scholarships manager. “Outstanding balances create real barriers to student success. These balances can prevent a student from registering for courses, graduating or receiving transcripts.”

Applications for KZCF Emergency Scholarship program are reviewed on a rolling basis. Apply at kalfound.org.

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The Community Foundation also holds over 60 other scholarship funds that award millions to graduating high school seniors and returning adult students across Kalamazoo County each year.

Starting January 1, 2022, head to kalfound.org and fill out only one application to apply for those scholarships. You’ll be considered for multiple scholarships based on your eligibility. The application closes March 1, 2022, please contact the Scholarship team at scholarship@kalfound.org for more information.
National Day of Racial Healing 2022

Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Kalamazoo is hosting its annual National Day of Racial Healing celebration at the Kalamazoo State Theater on January 18, 2022.

The celebration happens every year on the Tuesday after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The goal is to inspire people, organizations and communities across Kalamazoo County to work collectively for a more just and equitable world.

This year’s theme is Our Joy Matters: Healing Across Generations. Events will celebrate the experiences, wisdom and joy of people across generations who strive to create communities where people are welcome and valued without exception.

Look out for more details online at trhtkzoo.org or @TRHTKalamazoo on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Donors create new funds at KZCF

KZCF donors established four new funds since the Summer issue of UPDATE. Other types of funds not listed include Advised Funds and Love Where You Live (or Unrestricted) Funds.

**DESIGNATED FUNDS**

These funds benefit a specific nonprofit, educational, institution or faith-based organization. Individual donors or the organization themselves may establish these funds.

- Gordon and Elaine TenBrink Family Fund
- Eliminating Racism Fund

**FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS**

These funds enable donors to focus their giving on the community issues or causes they care about most.

- Patti Petersen Education and Learning Fund

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

Scholarships invest primarily in post-high school education and training for students in various stations in life:

- Nancy Timmons Love Where You Live Scholarship Fund

For a complete list of KZCF funds visit kalfound.org/howtogive/listoffunds. Contact a Donor Relations Officer at 269.381.4416 to learn more on how to open a fund.
The team at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation wants to share our gratitude, not only for your resilience and partnership, but also for all the ways you continue to step up for your friends and neighbors.

If this moment has taught us anything, it’s that we can’t predict the future. The long-term consequences of the pandemic are not fully known, but we can be sure that more challenges lie ahead of us.

Your gifts have allowed local nonprofits to remain responsive to the ongoing needs and aspirations of our community, even in unpredictable times.

**Giving to the Love Where You Live Greatest Needs fund** means your gift grows and sustains the community through whatever lies ahead. Use the enclosed envelope to make a gift, or give online at kalfound.org/give.

Grow your gratitude

**Give to the Love Where You Live Greatest Needs fund**

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