

# THE PIONEER POST

East Grand Rapids Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2020



## Looking to the Future

After months of the COVID-19 shutdown, our schools and our city began taking the first steps toward a return to something like normal in June.

In a normal summer, this is the space where we'd update you on graduation and the spring season in sports and the arts. None of those things happened, of

course. Schools were shut down March 13, everything from the spring sports season to the spring musical to prom was canceled, and our newest alumni missed out on many of the traditions of being a senior at East. The district still hopes to have some form of in-person graduation August 6, but those plans--like all plans in 2020--are tentative.

So instead of looking back, we're looking ahead. In just a couple of months, school will start up again. New students will be welcomed at Breton Downs, Lakeside and Wealthy Elementary. Sixth graders from around the district will come together at the Middle School. And a new class of Pioneers will enter the High School.

Those students could use your help. The shutdown has caused a \$2.85 million budget deficit for our schools. The district has already recommended \$1.25 million in cuts, and the Board of Education has asked the district to recommend more. Those additional cuts may be necessary to keep the district solvent, and eliminate the possibility of the state taking control of our schools.

Some of the cuts being considered would fundamentally change the East educational experience. The Board of Education doesn't want to do that, but without help, that may be necessary. It's up to us.

Please consider contributing to the One East fundraising campaign. You can learn more about One East below, but as an East alum, you already know the most important part: East Grand Rapids is the best school district in the state. We have the greatest, proudest, most loyal alumni anywhere. Together, we're investing in our students, because the future belongs to Pioneers!

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## Community-Wide Fundraising Drive

# Working to Save Our Schools Before July 31 Budget Deadline

An unprecedented challenge demands  
an unprecedented response.



Because of COVID-19, our East Grand Rapids school district is facing a \$2.85 million deficit.

We can help.

The Foundation is organizing One East, a community-wide, coordinated fundraising effort so every dollar raised by school entities this summer supports programs in our district that are in danger of being cut. One East is bringing together organizations, students and families at all our schools to protect the East Grand Rapids Public Schools' Tradition of Excellence.

More than 62% of school funding comes from sales & income taxes— not property taxes! Covid-19 has caused a school funding shortfall greater than the one during the Great Recession. Schools across Michigan will be impacted, but together, we can lessen the blow here at home through One East.

Any contribution to One East will make a difference. We're trying to raise \$653 per student by July 31 to offset the \$653 per pupil state budget cut for 2020-21. That's \$653 so a child can learn to read and write, so a child can learn another language or learn to code, so a child can play a sport or an instrument and prepare to play a part in the future of our world.

Are you in?

You can find out more at [egrsf.org](http://egrsf.org) or make a donation on the [One East homepage](#). You can also avoid processing fees by sending a check made out to "One East" directly to: EGRSF, 2915 Hall Street SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506.

***Foundation Connection: The East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation will contribute more than \$330,000 to our schools this year--including a one-time 20 percent increase in the maximum amount that can be drawn from the Foundation's endowment--but that won't be enough.***

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## Alissandra Krueer '04 Organizes Alumni One East Fundraiser

"As alumni of EGR, we are proud to raise the next generation of Pioneers. Help us keep the tradition of excellence by donating."

That's the statement on Allisandra Krueer's [One East alumni fundraiser page](#). Krueer set a goal of raising \$50,000 for One East from alumni. She and her husband Matt started the fundraiser with an initial donation of \$2,053.17. On the page, you can sponsor a

current East student for \$653, or even sponsor an entire classroom for \$15,000.

"Let's make sure EGR is able to keep its amazing reputation as one of the best districts in the state of Michigan," Kruer says on the site. "EGR get LOUDER!"

***Foundation Connection: You can create your own One East alumni fundraiser as an individual or team. You can raise money by class year, sport, activity, or any other designation. Fundraisers can be set up in less than five minutes and every dollar goes to help our schools make it through the COVID-19 budget crisis.***



## **E** Class Reunions

Most of the 2020 East class reunions have been postponed until 2021. For the list of class reunions and updated reunion information please go to our [Upcoming Alumni Events page](#). You can also contact [Alumni Relations Coordinator, Maria Allen](#) to request or share reunion information.

*new*  
— SAVE THE DATE AND JOIN US —



the 2020  
**GERKEN  
OPEN**

**MONDAY**  
**OCTOBER 5, 2020**

THOUSAND OAKS  
GOLF CLUB

12:30PM SHOTGUN START  
FOLLOWED BY HAPPY HOUR WITH  
APPETIZERS, BEVERAGES,  
LIVE MUSIC AND AUCTION.

East Grand Rapids Team Boosters and the  
East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation in  
support of Athletics, Kabookie Week, and  
The Jimmy Gerken Fund.

GO TO [WWW.EGRSF.ORG](http://WWW.EGRSF.ORG)  
TO SPONSOR AND REGISTER  
FOR THE EVENT.

## Gerken Open Pushed Back Until October 5

Just like the Masters, the Gerken Open has been postponed until the fall. The annual golf outing will be on Monday, October 5 at Thousand Oaks Golf Club. This year's Gerken Open may be the most important one in

the event's history. With the athletic department facing severe cuts due to the COVID-19 budget shortfall, Gerken Open golfers and sponsors will play a vital role in preserving the legacy of East Grand Rapids Pioneers sports. For updates and to sponsor or register for the event, check the [Gerken Open page on our website](#).

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## Awards Dinner

The East Grand Rapids Schools Foundations Community Service and Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner scheduled for November 10, 2020 is postponed to the fall of 2021. The decision to reschedule this special event was made to protect the health and safety of our recipients, Bruce Towne and CDR Bill Krissoff, MD Class of '64, their guests, and all who plan to attend. We look forward to honoring and celebrating them with you in 2021. Please continue to check our [Upcoming Alumni Events](#) page for updates.

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## Foundation Annual Report Available Online

In an effort to cut costs and make the most of our donors' contributions during these trying times, we made the difficult decision not to print and mail our annual report this spring. Instead, we've made it available in an [easy-to-read, page-turning format on our website](#). The report lists donors to the Foundation in 2019, along with highlights of how those donations are making a powerful, positive difference in the lives of students at all our schools.



East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation, 2915 Hall, [egrsf.org](http://egrsf.org)

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