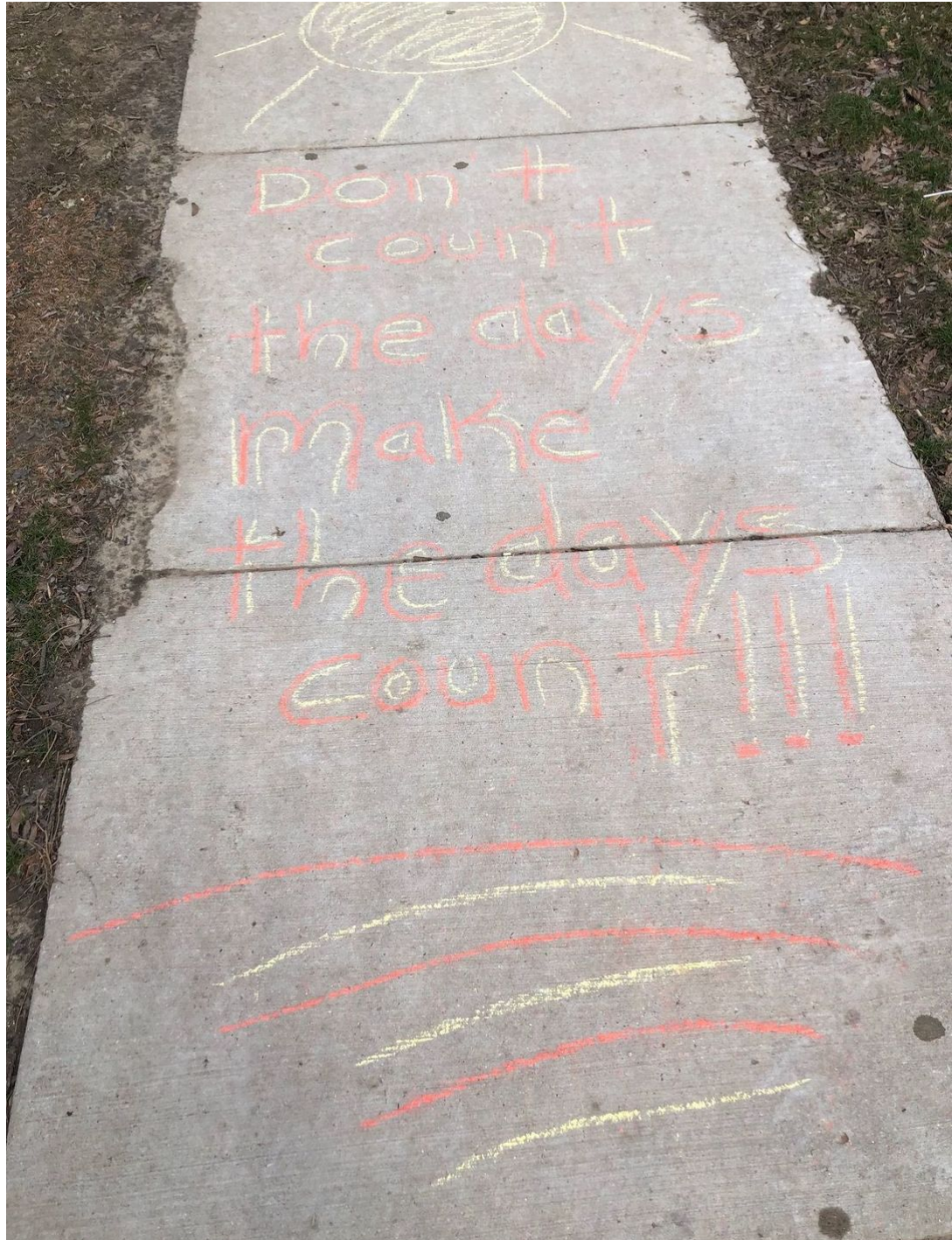


# THE PIONEER POST

East Grand Rapids Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2020

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# Buildings Closed for the Rest of the School Year, but Community Rallies Around Our Students

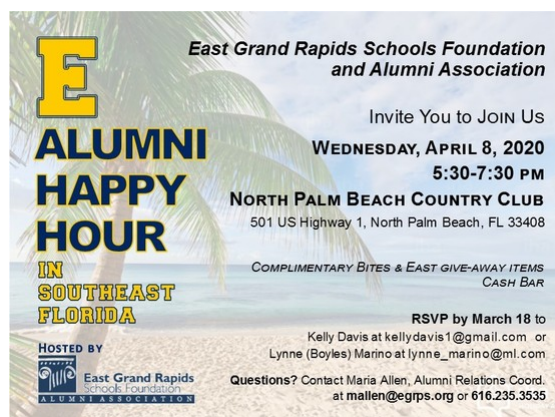
The decision to close school buildings and suspend face-to-face learning through the end of the school year for all public school districts in Michigan due to the Covid-19 crisis was met with sadness in East Grand Rapids. As all East alumni know, our schools are at the heart of our community so their closing leaves a void this spring. The closing is particularly disappointing for this year's seniors, who may miss out on many of the rites of passage our alumni have enjoyed.

Even before the announcement, however, East residents found ways to support and encourage each other. Kids created sidewalk chalk messages like the one shown here, neighbors made signs to thank medical workers who met the challenges at Blodgett hospital, and families came up with ingenious ways to stay connected even when we have to be apart.

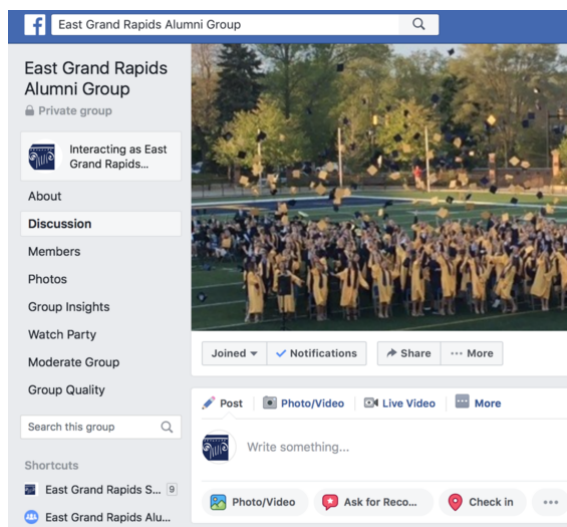
**Foundation Connection: When EGRPS shifted to offering remote learning opportunities after schools were first closed in March, teachers were able to use training and resources provided by our donors to continue to reach our students.**

## Southeast Florida Alumni Happy Hour Has Been Canceled

The Alumni Happy Hour we had scheduled for any East alumni in the southeast Florida area has been canceled. When social distancing measures around the country are lifted, we'd love to schedule other events like this one. Where would you like to have an Alumni Happy Hour someday?



**Foundation Connection: The Class of '77 recently held an online Happy Hour through Zoom. Interested in setting up a virtual event like that? Contact [Maria Allen](#).**



## New "East Grand Rapids Alumni Group" on Facebook

As Michigan and other states issued orders for people to stay home, the EGRSF and Alumni Association created [a new Facebook group, East Grand Rapids Alumni Group](#). Within a few days, the group had hundreds of members, with more joining the group every day. Like other Foundation initiatives, the group gives Pioneers a way to connect with each other even as we have to be physically apart. The group is private but you can request to join and alumni can invite other alumni to join or you can [contact Maria Allen](#) to be added to the group.



**Foundation Connection: The EGRSF and Alumni Association will continue to post news and updates on [our regular Facebook Page](#). The new group is intended for Pioneers to interact with each other.**



## Reunions Still Scheduled for Summer and Beyond

Nine reunions are planned for this summer and fall, and we're still hoping to hear from the classes of 1950, 1960 and 2015. That would bring the total to twelve for the year, the most ever. As with all scheduled events during these uncertain times, the schedule is subject to change, as reunions may be postponed or changed from in-person events to online ones. An updated schedule of class reunions in 2020 can be found on our [Upcoming Events page](#).

**Foundation Connection: Last year, more than 700 people attended class reunions organized by the Foundation and Alumni Association.**

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**East Grand Rapids** Schools Foundation

*Please save the date*  
**Tuesday, November 10, 2020**

East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation  
**Community Service and  
Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner**

Thousand Oaks Golf Club, Grand Rapids, MI  
6:00 p.m.

• • H O N O R I N G • •

**Community Service and Leadership Award Recipient**

Bruce Towne

Former Custodial Supervisor at EGRPS

**Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient**

CDR. Bill Krissoff, MD, Medical Corps, United States Navy (Ret.)

Orthopedic Surgeon

Class of 1964

*Invitations to follow in the fall. For further information,  
please visit our website at [www.egrfsf.org](http://www.egrfsf.org)*



## 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.



## Winter Sports Roundup: School Was Suspended with Boys Swim and Dive Poised to Win Championship

The winter sports season was suspended when schools were closed temporarily in March. Spring sports have also been put off due to the Covid-19 crisis.

**Bowling:** One season highlight was defeating Grand Rapids Christian.

**Boys Basketball:** The team went 13-7 and defeated Byron Center in its first playoff game.

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avored to win, when school was suspended and the meet was postponed.

**Girls Basketball:** The team went 19-1, won districts, and was expected to contend for the state championship

**Ice Hockey:** The team was named All-State Academic for the second straight year and returns 15 players for next season.

**Ski:** Both the boys and girls teams won regional championships and finished 5th at states.

**Wrestling:** Eran Marx, Eli Kinney, and John Shelton were conference champions. Shelton was the state runner-up in the Division 2 189-pound weight class

**Foundation Connection:** *The Gerken Open, the June golf outing organized by the EGR Schools Foundation and the Team Boosters, supports the Jimmy Gerken Fund, which contributes to East Grand Rapids athletics, Kabookie Week, and co-curriculars. The event is scheduled for June 10 but check [egrps.org](http://egrps.org) for updates.*



## Gerken Open Scheduled for June 10 at Thousand Oaks Golf Club

For now, we're still planning to hold the annual Gerken Open golf outing June 10. As with all upcoming events, though, that date is subject to change, and a switch to a fall date is being considered. We do plan to hold this popular event when it is safe to do so. For updates, check the [Gerken Open page on our website](#).

# Thank You RECHARGE Sponsors



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## Recharge Was Postponed, but Sponsors Stay Committed to Powering the Future of Education

Even though the Covid-19 crisis forced us to postpone our spring fundraising event, Recharge!, the sponsors listed above remain committed to supporting the Foundation's efforts to power the future of education. The Foundation is reimagining some of our events to continue to connect our community.



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## Foundation Grant Helps Send Middle Schoolers to See "Hamilton" in Grand Rapids

Thanks to our donors, a grant funded by the Foundation helped all the 8th graders at EGRMS see the mega-hit musical Hamilton during its Grand Rapids run.

Pete Miller, EGRMS 8th grade social studies teacher and one of the grant writers, has been dreaming of sharing the show with his 8th grade students for years. A grant of \$9,558, funded by donors to the Foundation, made it possible. Once the Foundation grant was approved, Miller worked out a plan for families to share the cost of tickets.

To top off the experience, Miller was able to provide another unique opportunity for the 8th grade: Mikey Winslow (EGRHS '04), a Hamilton cast member, came to the middle school the morning after the show. Winslow shared his experience in the cast of Hamilton with the middle schoolers, as well as his journey from East to Broadway, and his dance comeback after a total hip replacement in 2018. The students were awestruck to see someone who had gone to their school who is now part of this landmark show. What an opportunity for our students!

***Foundation Connection: The EGR Schools Foundation funds vital school programs, including the management of the Performing Arts Center.***





## New Virtual Cup of Coffee Alumni Profiles on Website

More additions have been made to the list of our popular "Virtual Cup of Coffee" Alumni Profiles, including interviews with Jeff MacKeigan '91 and Amy Aves Challenger '90. [Visit the page](#) to see them all.



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

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