

THE PIONEER POST

East Grand Rapids Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2022



Class of 1971



Class of 1982



Class of 1991

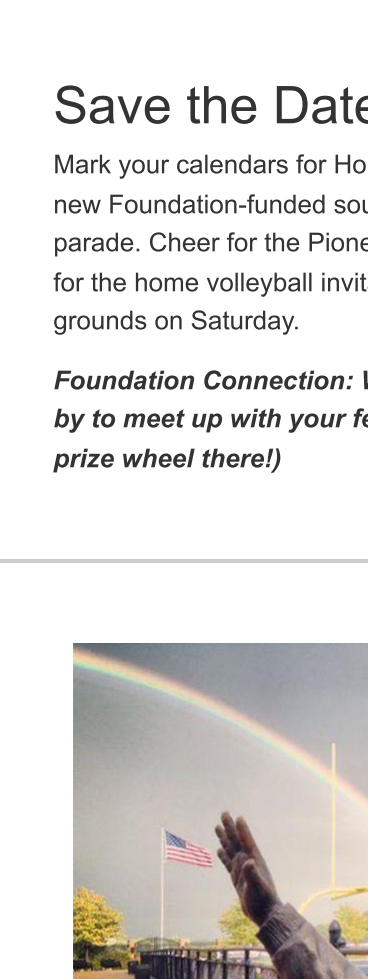
Summer of Fun Reunions, More This Fall

We had a great summer reconnecting with alumni at reunions for the classes of 1971, 1982, and 1991. There are lots more scheduled for this fall, too.

Upcoming Reunions:

- 1952 - September 8
- 1957 - September 23-24
- 1967 - September 17
- 1970 - October 8 - 70 Turns 70
- 1972 - September 22
- 1977 - September 2
- 1992 - October 1
- 2001 - October 7-8
- 2012 - December 23
- 2017 - November/Thanksgiving

Foundation Connection: *If your class is due (or overdue) for a reunion, please contact Maria Allen at mallen@egrps.org. She'd love to help your committee get started planning your event! You can also download our [Planning Guide on the Reunion Planning page on our website](#).*

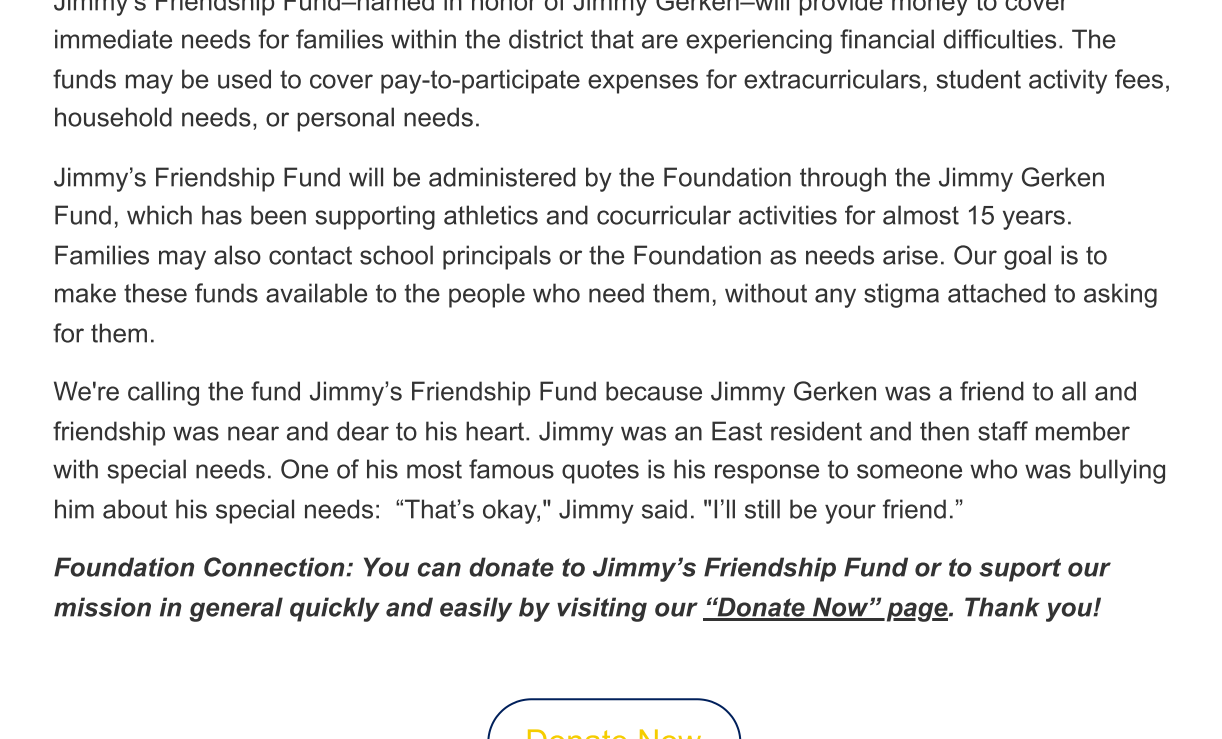


Attention Alumni Service Members and Veterans

Are you a veteran of the United States armed forces or an active-duty service member? Do you know of any East alumni who are? Or did you have a friend or relative who went to East and then served in the military?

East Grand Rapids High School is gathering this information in order to recognize the brave people who have served our country in the armed forces. The school plans to honor them permanently and remember the sacrifice each of them has given to help protect our country at a special place in the high school and every year on Veterans Day.

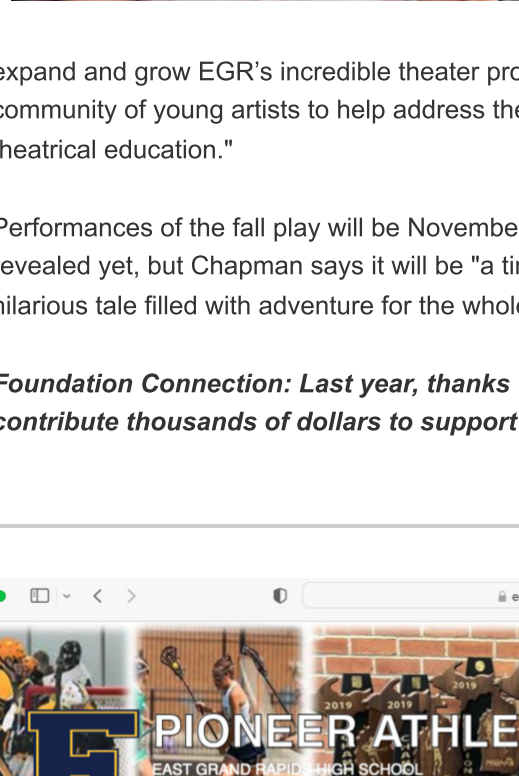
Foundation Connection: *Find the link to submit information on our [Honoring Alumni Service Members page](#). Or you can send an email to Maria Allen, Alumni Relations Coordinator, at mallen@egrps.org. Be sure to include the following information: name (include name at graduation if different), graduation year, current rank (or rank at retirement), locations of service, and any medals or commendations received.*



Save the Date for Homecoming in October

Mark your calendars for Homecoming Friday, October 7 and Saturday, October 8. Listen to the new Foundation-funded sousaphones and drums in the marching band at the Homecoming parade. Cheer for the Pioneers at the football game versus Forest Hills Eastern Friday and stay for the home volleyball invitational and field hockey game and to revisit your old stomping grounds on Saturday.

Foundation Connection: *We'll have an Alumni Tent at the football game Friday night. Stop by to meet up with your fellow Pioneers! (There's even a rumor we'll have a "spin to win" prize wheel there!)*



Jimmy's Friendship Fund Will Help Families in Need Gain Access to Opportunities

The East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation has always been about opportunity. Whether funding program support and classroom enhancements for our students or professional development for our teachers and staff, we've always strived to provide educational opportunities in our district that are second to none.

Now, the Foundation is making sure everyone in our district has access to every opportunity our district has to offer.

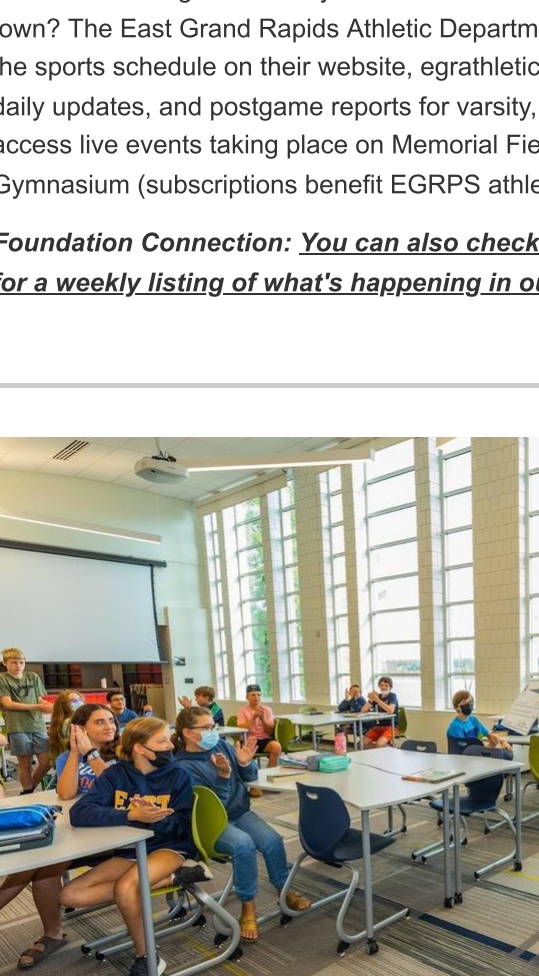
Jimmy's Friendship Fund—named in honor of Jimmy Gerken—will provide money to cover immediate needs for families within the district that are experiencing financial difficulties. The funds may be used to cover pay-to-participate expenses for extracurriculars, student activity fees, household needs, or personal needs.

Jimmy's Friendship Fund will be administered by the Foundation through the Jimmy Gerken Fund, which has been supporting athletics and cocurricular activities for almost 15 years. Families may also contact school principals or the Foundation as needs arise. Our goal is to make these funds available to the people who need them, without any stigma attached to asking for them.

We're calling the fund Jimmy's Friendship Fund because Jimmy Gerken was a friend to all and friendship was near and dear to his heart. Jimmy was an East resident and then staff member with special needs. One of his most famous quotes is his response to someone who was bullying him about his special needs: "That's okay," Jimmy said. "I'll still be your friend."

Foundation Connection: *You can donate to Jimmy's Friendship Fund or to support our mission in general quickly and easily by visiting our ["Donate Now" page](#). Thank you!*

[Donate Now](#)



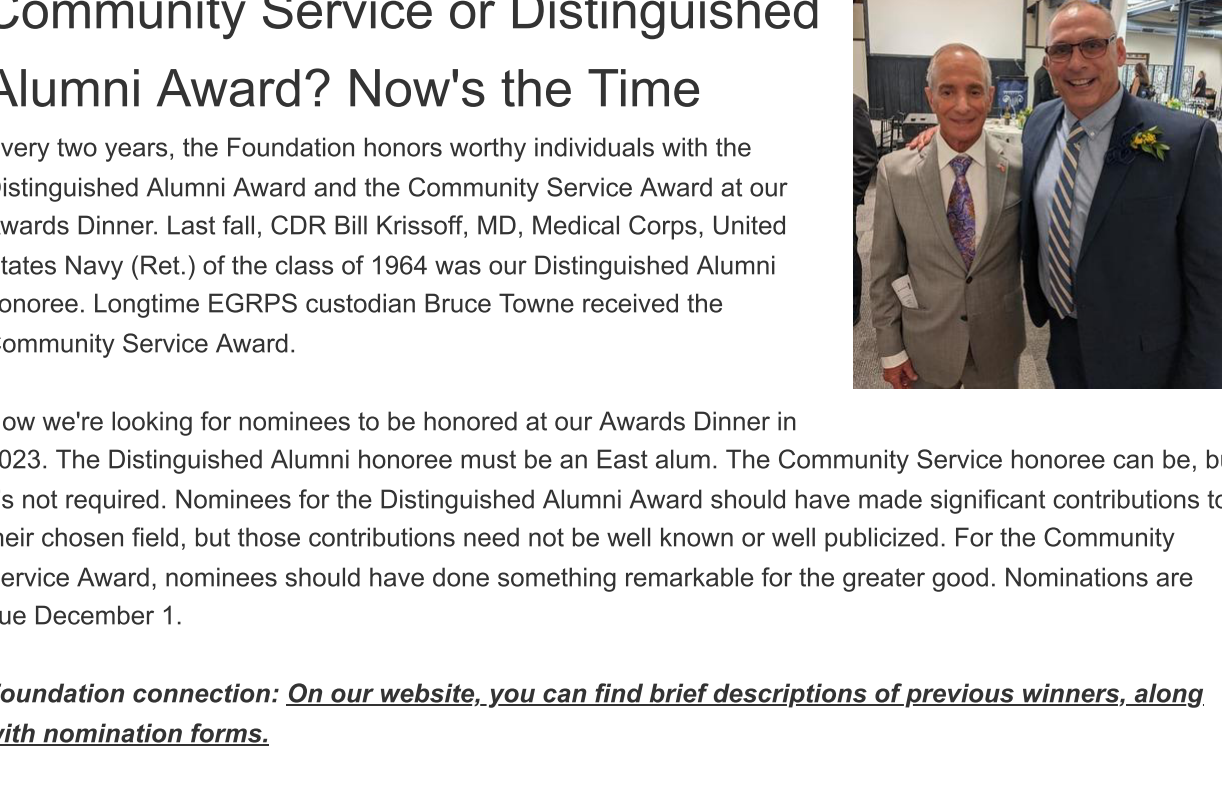
New Director for EGRHS Drama

Marcus Chapman has joined EGRPS as the new EGRHS Drama Activities Director. Chapman has been an active member of the Grand Rapids theater scene since 2014, and has had a passion for theater and performing since long before that.

Chapman recently graduated from Grand Valley State University with a Bachelor's in theater and non-profit administration. "My primary goals for the upcoming year are to expand and grow EGR's incredible theater program," Chapman says, "and connecting with this new community of young artists to help address their specific needs through performance and theatrical education."

Performances of the fall play will be November 10-12 at 7pm. The name of the play hasn't been revealed yet, but Chapman says it will be "a timeless, swashbuckling, combat-heavy, and hilarious tale filled with adventure for the whole family!"

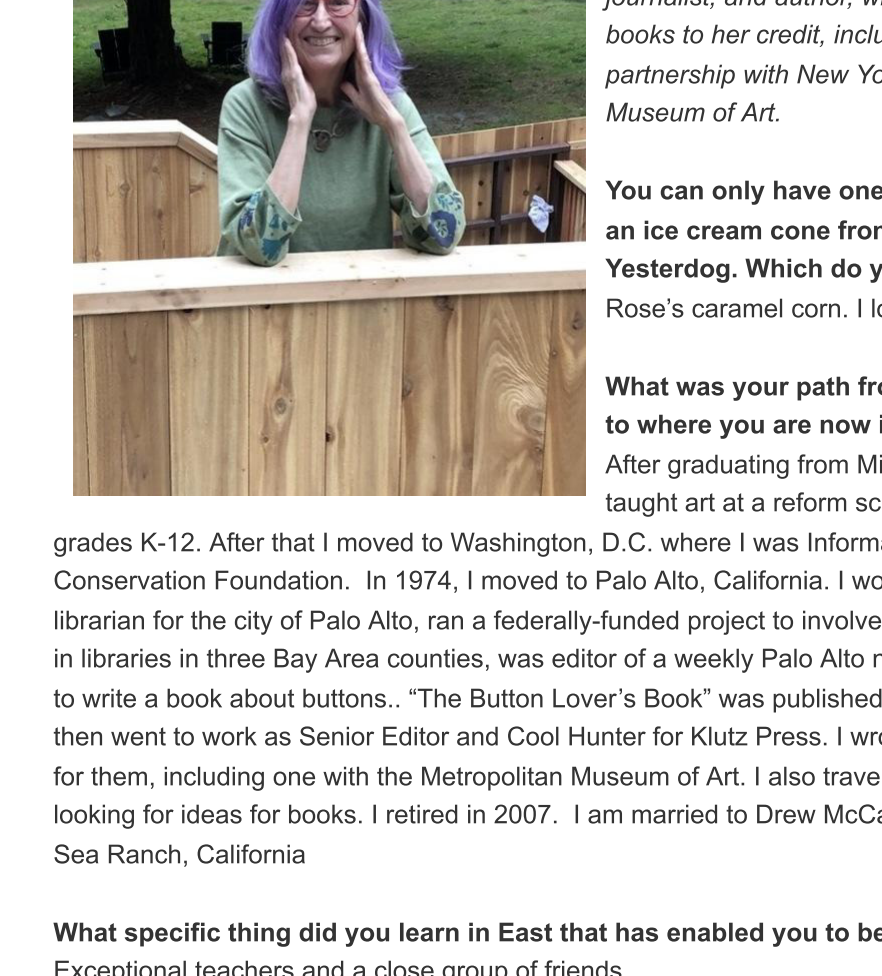
Foundation Connection: *Last year, thanks to our donors, the Foundation was able to contribute thousands of dollars to support the performing arts in all our schools.*



Full Sports Schedule Online at egrathletics.org

Want to catch a game when you're in East? Or wondering when the Pioneers are coming to your town? The East Grand Rapids Athletic Department does a championship-level job of updating the sports schedule on their website, egrathletics.org. You'll find monthly and weekly schedules, daily updates, and postgame reports for varsity, JV, and freshmen teams. For a fee, you can even access live events taking place on Memorial Field and Mehney Field and in Waterman Gymnasium (subscriptions benefit EGRPS athletics).

Foundation Connection: *You can also check [The Cheat Sheet on our website, \[egrpsf.org\]\(http://egrpsf.org\)](#), for a weekly listing of what's happening in our schools, sports, the arts, and our city.*



"You Did That!" Impact Statement Is Available on Our Website

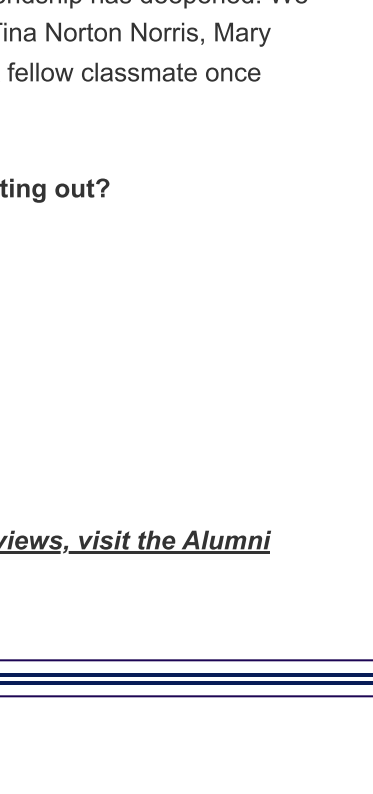
Would you like a vivid reminder of what donors to the Foundation did for our students this past school year? Check out the "You Did That!" page on our website. It lists all the

classroom enhancement grants the Foundation funded this school year, along with photos and testimonials from teachers and students for most of them. If you have donated to the Foundation, you made it all possible. Thank you for your support!

Foundation Connection: *In the 2021-22 school year, thanks to our donors, the Foundation funded more than 30 classroom enhancement grants totaling approximately \$240,000. That money comes from investment earnings on our endowment. You can support these grants by contributing directly to the Foundations's Endowment Fund on the donation page of our website, egrpsf.org.*

Want to Nominate Someone for Community Service or Distinguished Alumni Award? Now's the Time

Every two years, the Foundation honors worthy individuals with the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Community Service Award at our Awards Dinner. Last fall, CDR Bill Krissoff, MD, Medical Corps, United States Navy (Ret.) of the class of 1964 was our Distinguished Alumni honoree. Longtime EGRPS custodian Bruce Towne received the Community Service Award.



Now we're looking for nominees to be honored at our Awards Dinner in 2023. The Distinguished Alumni honoree must be an East alum. The Community Service honoree can be, but it's not required. Nominees for the Distinguished Alumni Award should have made significant contributions to their chosen field, but those contributions need not be well known or well publicized. For the Community Service Award, nominees should have done something remarkable for the greater good. Nominations are due December 1.

Foundation connection: *On our website, you can find brief descriptions of previous winners, along with nomination forms.*

Save the Date for Alumni Hockey Game November 23

Calling all alumni hockey players: It's time to sharpen your skates! The event will be at 5pm Wednesday, November 23 at Patterson Ice Center. [More information is available on the Alumni Hockey page of our website.](#)



A Virtual Cup of Coffee with Marilyn Green '66

Marilyn Green is a former teacher, advocate, journalist, and author, with more than a dozen books to her credit, including one produced in partnership with New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

You can only have one: Rose's caramel corn, an ice cream cone from Jersey Junction, or a Yesterdog. Which do you choose? Rose's caramel corn. I loved that copper pan, too

What was your path from East Grand Rapids to where you are now in life?

After graduating from Michigan State in 1970, I taught art at a reform school near Detroit...

grades K-12. After that I moved to Washington, D.C. where I was Information Officer for The Conservation Foundation. In 1974, I moved to Palo Alto, California. I worked as a reference librarian for the city of Palo Alto, ran a federally-funded project to involve senior citizens and kids in libraries in three Bay Area counties, was editor of a weekly Palo Alto newspaper and then quit to write a book about buttons. "The Button Lover's Book" was published by Chilton in 1991. I then went to work as Senior Editor and Cool Hunter for Klutz Press. I wrote about a dozen books for them, including one with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I also traveled all over the world looking for ideas for books. I retired in 2007. I am married to Drew McCalley and now live at The Sea Ranch, California

What specific thing did you learn in East that has enabled you to be successful?
Exceptional teachers and a close group of friends.

What were you like in school?
Quiet but feisty.

Did you have a favorite teacher or class?
Mr. Frosyland, English. (I think I am spelling his name wrong.)

If you had to choose one moment in one location to serve as the signature moment of your East school experience, what would it be?
Attending football and basketball games with my friends. Working on the yearbook

What do you know now that you wish you'd known then?
Make friends with people with whom you don't agree. There is always some common ground and the friendship will make life richer for you both

Do you stay in touch with many people from East Grand Rapids?
Yes! My group of high school friends have stayed in touch and our friendship has deepened. We often meet on Zoom. My dear high school friends are Pat Johnston, Tina Norton Norris, Mary Kuhn Kraai, Ruth Hesselschwerdt Harris, and Nancy MacNaughton. A fellow classmate once referred to us as "the conscience of our class."

What advice do you have for young East alums who are just starting out?
Follow the beat of your own drum and don't take "no" for an answer

Who else would you like us to have a virtual cup of coffee with?
Lynn Irmie.

Bonus question: What are you glad we didn't ask you about?
What did you get away with?

Foundation Connection: *To see more Virtual Cup of Coffee interviews, visit the [Alumni Profiles page on our website](#).*