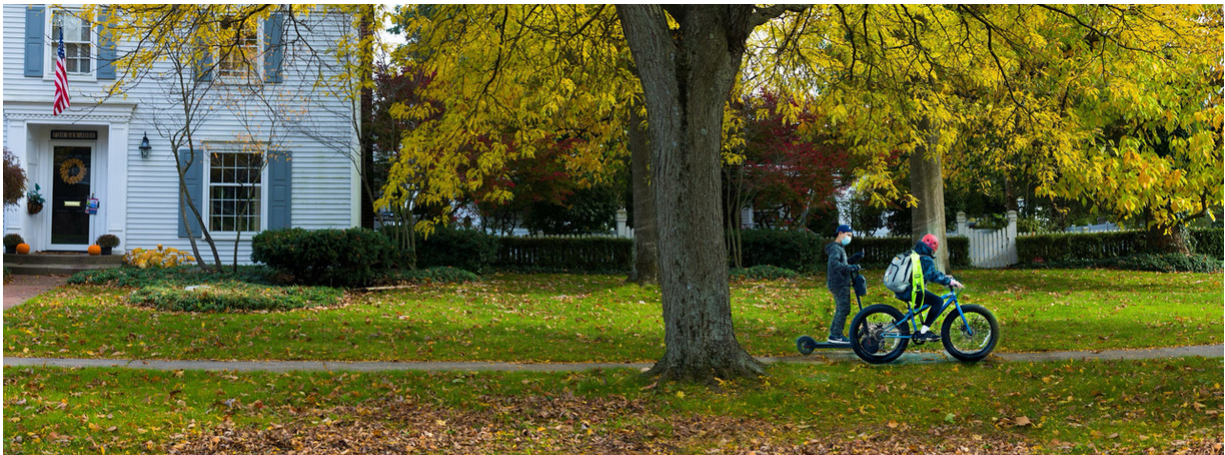


THE PIONEER POST

East Grand Rapids Alumni Newsletter

Autumn 2020



Pioneers Take On New Challenges

First, the news: In mid-November, in response to rising COVID-19 numbers in Michigan, a state order forced EGRPS to pause in-person learning at the high school. EGRPS also temporarily shifted to full virtual learning at the middle school, but continued in-person learning at the elementary schools.

Now, some perspective. By the time the order came, East schools had already completed nearly three months of uninterrupted in-person learning at all our schools. At the end of August, our students, teachers and staff masked up and returned to class for the first time since last March. The district also offered families full virtual learning through a third party, a hybrid option that combined in-person and virtual learning, and virtual instruction from EGRPS teachers. No school district in Michigan offered its students such a range of choices. In fact, many districts in the state never opened their doors to students at all.

Being able to offer such a full range of educational opportunities to all our students this fall was a tremendous accomplishment. The Foundation is proud to have played such an important role in making it happen. Our donors--to the Now&Forever endowment campaign, One East, and all our fundraising efforts--made it possible, and, as explained in the One East article below, we'll continue to give our students the outstanding education they deserve in the months to come.

None of this has been done before. We're inventing new, innovative ways to serve our schools. Together, we're investing in our students, because the future belongs to Pioneers.

One East: Restoring, Adding and Maintaining Programs and Supports This School Year



Last spring, when the pandemic hit, East Grand Rapids Public Schools were facing a projected budget deficit of more than \$2 million. We put out a call for help, and you responded. In less than two months last summer, donors to One East raised nearly half a million dollars for our schools.

In early November, the Foundation Board approved the district's request for the \$490,000 raised through One East. At its November meeting, the Board of Education approved the district's balanced budget, which was made possible by the One East funds. Here's how the funds raised through One East will be allocated:

- 1. Instructional support for in-person learning (\$293,500)**
- 2. Support for virtual learners (\$164,000)**
- 3. Enhanced health and safety measures (\$32,500)**

For more details on how the funds raised through One East will help our schools, including an itemized list of programs and supports, [read the article on the Foundation's website](#).

Thank you for your support!

Foundation Connection: Including One East, the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation will contribute nearly \$900,000 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.

Alumni One East Fundraiser Contributes More Than 15% of Total Funds Raised

As part of One East, Allisandra Krueer '04 initiated an alumni-specific fundraiser. In less than two months, Krueer's effort raised more than \$82,000 from 93 donors, more than one-sixth of all the money contributed to One East.

Including alumni who set up fundraisers of their own or contributed to others, well over 100 East alumni donated to the cause. "As alumni of EGR," Krueer said, "we are proud to raise the next generation of Pioneers."

By helping our schools adapt to the changing needs caused by the pandemic, alumni are truly helping preserve the East Grand Rapids Public Schools' Tradition of Excellence for future Pioneers.



Foundation Connection: Our alumni continue to be some of our most reliable donors. This includes Pioneers from right here in East Grand Rapids, across the country, and around the world. Thank you!



Fall Sports Update

In an eerie parallel, the state suspended fall sports just days before the state finals for girls swimming. Last March, the Pioneer boys swim team was on the bus to the state finals when sports were shut down by the pandemic.

Two East teams, football and girls swim and dive, still hope to finish their seasons in December if sports are allowed to resume. The football team won the district championship and is set to face Muskegon in the regional final. Tentative plans call for that game to be played December 15 or 16. The girls swim and dive finals are scheduled for December 22 and 23.

With the exception of boys water polo, which was moved to the spring, all other fall sports--crew, cross country, field hockey, golf, sailing, soccer, tennis and volleyball--managed to complete their seasons before the shutdown.

Highlights included a state runner-up finish for girls cross country and trips to the state semifinals for field hockey and boys soccer. For the athletes in all sports, though, it was a tremendous achievement to be able to compete in the sports they love in ever-changing, enormously challenging conditions. If allowed by the state, winter sports are set to begin practices December 9, with competition to begin January 4.

Foundation Connection: A portion of the funds generated by the Foundation's endowment and donated to our schools will help provide East athletes a safe return to competition.



Drama, Band, Orchestra All Managed to Perform Despite COVID Restrictions

You're probably recognizing a theme by now. The pandemic presented new challenges for all our students and staff. Like the Pioneers that they are, however, everyone rolled with the changes and did their best under trying circumstances.

Before they were allowed to perform at football games, the marching band held Wednesday night shows at Memorial Field. The high school orchestra held a live-streamed concert in the Performing Arts Center. The middle school drama program performed "Intergalactic Chuck" in early November. And EGR drama produced 24-Hour Theater and the fall play, "If They'd Only Let Me."

This year's spring musical, "Mary Poppins," is scheduled for April 29-May1 in the PAC.

Foundation Connection: Through its Performing Arts Fund, and by sponsoring productions, the Foundation supports the arts in our schools.

Autumn Gerken Open a Success

The 2020 Gerken Open's move from summer to fall proved that the time of year does not matter when it is in support of The Jimmy Gerken Fund and the EGR Team Boosters. Gerken Open sponsors, golfers, and volunteers came together on a beautiful October day to continue this tradition in support of our East students. Additional 2020 Gerken Open information and event photos can be found on the [EGRSF-Gerken Open page](#).



Save the Date for the 2021 event: Wednesday, June 9 at Thousand Oaks. If you would like to be a Gerken Committee member or a 2021 sponsor (to ensure you reserve a spot for this popular event) [email Maria Allen](#) or (616)575-9907.

Foundation Connection: The fall Gerken Open raised nearly \$20,000 to support athletics and co-curriculars, the school activities Jimmy Gerken loved most.

Class Reunions, Alumni Hockey Game

All 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.

Sadly, because of the state order that closed ice rinks until December, the annual Alumni Hockey Game will not take place this year. Alumni interested in being part of this event have another year to get in skating shape before the 2021 game. Contact [Maria Allen](#) to join the planning group for this exciting alumni event.

Awards Dinner

The East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation's 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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