



Foundations

East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation & Alumni Association **FALL 2023**



You Did That! | The Foundation Turns 40 | Community Champion: A Virtual Cup of Coffee with Betsy Willey '64



East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation

VIRTUAL CUP OF COFFEE

Betsy Willey '64

For 60 years, lifelong community supporter Betsy Wood Willey has been giving back. A former teacher and author, Betsy was a co-founder of the Leadership and Youth Development program at East Grand Rapids High School. She has served as President of both the Mary Free Bed Guild and the EGRHS PTSA, served on the boards of Universal Health Solutions, Camp Newaygo, and Arts in Motion, and for more than 20 years, Betsy led students and adults into the wilderness of the Boundary Waters of Minnesota. As a lifelong environmentalist, activist, and teacher, Betsy educates others on climate change and the degradation of the earth. As a community leader, Betsy models activism, wisdom, caring, integrity, and wholeheartedness as she brings out the best in those she mentors.

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

I have great memories of getting Rose's caramel corn when that was all they offered but my favorite is Jersey Junction! It is unchanged after all these years and I still am enjoying it with grandkids.

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

I graduated from U-M in 1968, majoring in English & History with a teaching certificate. I taught middle school in Livonia, MI while my husband, Larry attended U of M Law School. After law school, we lived in Chicago with our young son, Dave, and then moved to Hawaii for a glorious year. Our daughter, Sarah, was born there. The next move was to Washington DC for six years during a very interesting time - Watergate. We moved back to Grand Rapids in 1978 to be closer to my mother. I started taking classes to renew my teaching certificate and our son, Dan, was born. When Coach Barcheski was in the hospital, I took over his classes and then stayed on at the high school for 11 years teaching English, Social Studies and Leadership classes. My career path changed in 2000 when I became certified in Healing Touch and received a certificate in spiritual direction from The Dominican Center. Since then, I have enjoyed teaching classes in interfaith spirituality and leading retreats using my book, Footprints of the Soul, A Creative Guide For Spiritual Journey Groups and Individuals.

What specific thing did you learn in East that has enabled you to be successful?

I grew up in a neighborhood with lots of kids and parents who created a supportive community. When my father died suddenly when I was four, the neighborhood surrounded my family with love and support. I learned how important it is to create community in many ways and this formed my way of being in the world. I still have several groups I enjoy facilitating.

What were you like in school?

In elementary school, I was very shy and quiet but had a few close friends at Lakeside who are still connected and important to me. Even though there were no women's sports at the high school, I had a positive experience through various clubs and student council.

Did you have a favorite teacher or class?

Shirley Menninga for senior English. She inspired me to major in English and become a teacher.

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?

Being the first senior class to attend our new high school. We spent the first three years of high school at Wealthy Elementary and I have lots of fun memories of dances in that gym and swim meets in the old pool.

What do you know now that you wish you'd known then?

How important and formative my growing up years in East were. When I left for college, I thought I would not come back but from an older perspective, I appreciate our beautiful community. I also wish I'd been more exposed to the rich diversity of the world. When I taught at East, I sponsored the Multicultural Youth Ambassadors and we interacted with students from all over the Grand Rapids area. We attended a PeaceJam International Conference in Denver and heard from the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu.

Do you stay in touch with many people from East Grand Rapids?

Yes, our class has had great reunions and we're planning our 60th for next year. Several of us have stayed close through the years.



What advice do you have for young East alums who are just starting out?

Stay in touch with friends and find ways to contribute to your community.

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

Susan Wittenbach (Class of '64), John Sebastian (Class of '63).

Bonus question: What are you glad we didn't ask you about?

Embarrassing moments like when I fell downstairs at a formal in front of everyone.

Want to read more?

Visit egrsf.org/alumni/alumniprofiles



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

In 1983, seven Pioneers had a plan. Judy Frey, John Sebastian, Bob Eleveld, Brent Slay, Linda Patterson, Jim Maher, and Marjorie Chamberlain led a group that raised \$100,000 to start the Foundation.

Forty years later, that plan continues to provide enormous benefit to our students and our schools. The endowment those seven Pioneers created—and which more than one thousand donors have helped grow—now contributes more than half a million dollars to our schools every year.

How did seven Pioneers create such a lasting legacy? That's the power of planning.

Forty years from now, you could leave a legacy of your own, by making a planned gift to the Foundation.

By including the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation in your estate planning, you can be an enduring part of a brighter future for our community. Your commitment to our schools today will give our students a better tomorrow.

The Louise Neesley Legacy Society, named for an East resident who understood the positive difference the Foundation can make in our public schools, recognizes people who have pledged to include the Foundation in their estate plans.

What will your legacy be?

Will you make the world a better place?

Will you make a difference?

How will you be remembered?

To add your name to the Louise Neesley Legacy Society, give me a call at (616) 235-3535 or email me at astuursm@egrps.org. I'd love to talk to you about how you can make a gift that lasts forever.



Amy Stuursma

AWARDS | August 15, 2023

Congratulations to our Excellence in Teaching award winners, Andrea Eggert (elementary) and Maggie Edison (secondary); and James and Georgia Nicholas Endowed Award for a Teacher of Math, Science, or Technology winner, Patrick Reed!



EAST GRAND RAPIDS SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

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to “enrich our public system by this private
allowing our own school system the benefits
private as well as public commitment.”
Newly formed
foundation hopes to establish an endowm
ld grow into the millions of dollars,” acc
a foundation press release.



What does the Foundation do for our students?



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT | NICK ADAMY

I'm humbled by what the Foundation and our community have accomplished together. This is a community of people who care about each other, our students, and our shared future together. Our donors, staff, and board members share a deep belief in the role that our schools play in helping our students achieve their full potential. There are few investments that have a better return for society and individuals than education. The enhancements that the Foundation provides are having an outsized effect on improving the lives of our students and equipping them for the future.

One example is our new Mental Health and Wellness Fund. There is no question that kids today are under more pressure from many fronts than my generation was. At the same time, traditional support structures have not necessarily adapted to the needs of today's children. Thanks to the contributions of all of you in the community, our Foundation was able to bridge the gap with this initiative, funding two new mental health professionals in our schools. As this fund grows with your continued support, we expect to find new ways to meet the evolving mental health needs of our students.

Another example is our endowment. Thanks to your support, the EGR Now&Forever campaign raised our endowment to a level that secures the Foundation's ability to meet the changing needs of our students for generations to come. The Foundation has adapted through an amazing amount of change in the last few years. We can only guess at the needs and opportunities our schools will face in the future, but we can be confident that with your support, the Foundation will continue to be there for our students.

I look forward to kicking off another exciting school year and meeting with many of you to discuss how you can help us continue to meet the evolving needs of our schools and students.

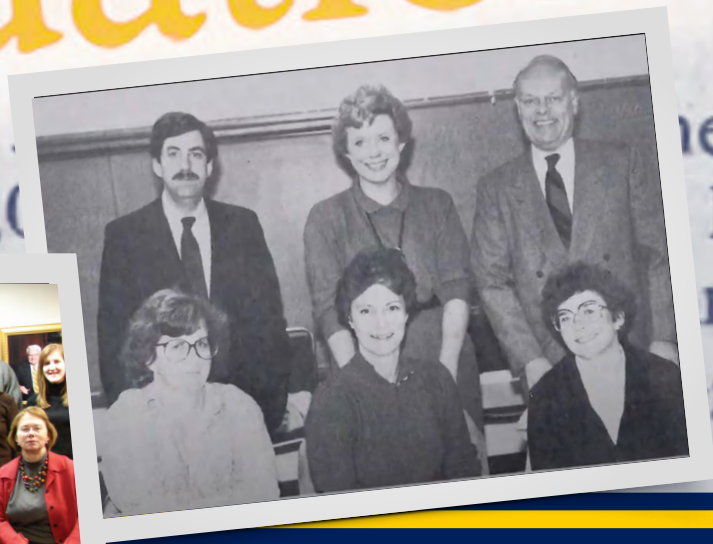
This year, for our birthday, we're asking you to support our mission.

Donate today at egrsf.org

1983 - 2023



Foundation



MILESTONE | THE FOUNDATION AT 40 | Supporting Our Students Since 1983

This year, as the Foundation marks 40 years of helping our students, it's more instrumental to our schools than ever before.

Thanks to our incredible donors, the Foundation begins helping students as soon as they walk in the doors of kindergarten. Early literacy paraeducators that help our youngest readers learn to read? The Foundation funded them in response to a program support request from the district. Classroom libraries? The Foundation funded those too in response to a classroom enhancement grant request from a group of teachers.

Kindergarten is just the beginning. Throughout elementary school, students benefit from Foundation program support and classroom enhancement grants. In 2022, the Foundation helped fund a new Elementary Learning Commons Coordinator to organize and revitalize elementary libraries.

Last fall alone, classroom enhancement grants helped fund author visits, field trips, Jump Rope Readers, speech pathology iPads, and March Book Madness, a wildly popular bracket-style reading competition.

The Foundation's involvement for middle schoolers begins as soon as 6th graders start, with a team-building trip to Camp Blodgett. It continues all the way through 8th grade, as hundreds of students participate in the Middle School Innovation Lab, which was started with a grant from the Foundation.

Other middle school grants last year included a new broadcast studio, new technology for the math department, a mural artist to help students create a new piece of public art, professional development for English teachers, sensory tools for classrooms, and a digital piano for choir classes.

At the high school, the Foundation is everywhere. The International Baccalaureate program? The Foundation helped fund that. We the People, Quiz Bowl, Robotics teams, band, orchestra, drama, and that cool Gone Boarding class where students learn STEAM concepts while designing and building their own surfboards, snowboards, longboards, and stand up paddleboards? The Foundation supports those too, along with new data collection devices used by every science student.

Perhaps most important, the Foundation funded the Mental Health and Wellness Fund. In spring 2022, the Foundation made a \$750,000 commitment to support student mental health in all our schools. Last winter, a committed alum made the largest single gift ever to the Foundation—one million dollars—to provide mental health resources that will help students, teachers, and parents.

The Foundation started in 1983 when seven East residents decided to create the Foundation. Together, they managed to raise \$100,000, along with five-year pledge agreements that grew the Foundation's endowment to \$464,000 in 1994.

Hundreds of new donors since then have helped grow the endowment. When the Foundation celebrated its 30th birthday in 2013, its value was \$2.7 million. Five years ago, the Foundation's Now&Forever campaign sought to raise an additional \$8 million to bring the total endowment value to \$12 million.

Thanks to incredible support, Now&Forever was a success. With the endowment now more than \$15 million, investment earnings should provide more than \$500,000 in support for our schools every year for generations to come.

Over the course of students' time in East schools from kindergarten through graduation, the Foundation will provide more than \$6 million for their education.

Foundation Executive Director Amy Stuursma says there's no limit to what the Foundation can do for our students. "Our mission is to fund enhancements to teaching and learning that support the whole child," Stuursma says. "We're redefining excellence so all our students can reach their full potential."

You can help by donating, volunteering, sharing the Foundation's mission, or attending and sponsoring Foundation events. Our next event is the Community Service and Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner September 13. Tickets are available on the Foundation's website, egrsf.org.

\$6.05 MILLION RA

\$350K TO YOU DID THAT!

ENHANCEMENT GRANTS | Approved Spring 2023

DRAMA: Stratford Trip

HIGH SCHOOL | Marcus Chapman, Pam Steers
Students traveled to Stratford, Ontario, to attend plays and workshops.

BOOKS: Jump Rope Readers

ELEMENTARY | Jodi Westgate
Units of Study Decodable Book Series: Jump Rope Readers Set 2 (1st grade).

ROBOTICS: First Lego League

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE
Holly Goulet, Stephanie Thelen, Mike Tietz
Robotics Underwriting, Grades 1-6.

TECH: 3D Printers

HIGH SCHOOL | George Bernecker (student), Patrick Reed
Ultimaker System 2+ Connect 3D Printers (2).

DRAMA: Wireless Microphones

HIGH SCHOOL | Marcus Chapman, Brendan Espinosa
New wireless microphones for students to use in stage productions.

STUDENT LIFE: Lunchroom Transformation

HIGH SCHOOL | David Dublis
Ping pong, foosball tables for students to use during free time in cafeteria.

BOOKS: Kindergarten Storybooks

ELEMENTARY | Hannah Bailey, Shannon Brady, Renee Rowan, Erin Grin, Kerry McKee, Nicole Vanderplow, Victoria Schaap, Jenna Jenkins, Carly Schwartz
New copies of classic storybooks to replace overused old books.

LATIN: "Hadestown"

HIGH SCHOOL | Jason Albaugh, Betsy Kratt
More than 50 Latin students attended a professional theater performance.

VISUAL ART: iPads

HIGH SCHOOL | Elizabeth Miller-Wallau, Terry Szpieg
Class Set of iPads for use in Visual Art and Design classes.

VISUAL ART: iPads

MIDDLE SCHOOL | Holly Lampen, Mike Tietz
Digital Art Class Equipment Replacement (iPads).

FURNITURE: High-Top Chairs

HIGH SCHOOL | Thomas Kawel, John Noreen, Jamie Stevenson, Janet Tombre
Flexible Seating in High School classrooms.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Teachers College

ELEMENTARY | Tim Saunders, Anna Tyrer, Delaney Klein, Emiliya Heerema, Scott Mitton, Kirk Reifinger, Kristen Lecours
Writing Institute course for upper elementary teachers.

LANGUAGE ARTS: EGR Bard

HIGH SCHOOL | Katie Michell, Anne LaGrand
Visits from Shakespeare expert and retired EGRPS teacher Jane Hazle.

VISUAL ART: Nature Photographer

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL | Friends of the EGR Library
Audubon Award-winning photographer Steve Jessmore reviewed photos of his yearlong project with students.

TECH: 3D Printers & Filament

HIGH SCHOOL | Andrew Sherman (student), Patrick Reed
Two Flashforge Finder, three 3D printers and filament.

TECH: DDT Supplies

HIGH SCHOOL | Patrick Reed
Equipment upgrades for Drafting, Design, & Technology classes.

MENTAL HEALTH: Sensory Tools

MIDDLE SCHOOL | Amy Marlow, on behalf of building teachers
Sensory tools for classrooms, including cloud lights.

FURNITURE: Art Room Seating

ELEMENTARY | Hillary Klopac, Peri denDulk
New, comfortable, flexible seating for art classes at Lakeside.

PERFORMING ARTS: Ukuleles

HIGH SCHOOL | Jemma Doublestein, Olivia Miller (students)
Ukuleles and capos for Ukulele Club.

FURNITURE: Flexible Seating

ELEMENTARY | Whitney Moore
Flexible seating for classroom at Lakeside.

STEM: Gone Boarding Class

HIGH SCHOOL | Terry Szpieg
Stand Up Paddleboard design/build pilot program.

FURNITURE: Engaging Classroom

ELEMENTARY | Alison Buffin
Created separate, collaborative, purposeful learning spaces in Breton Downs classroom.

TECH: Drones

HIGH SCHOOL | Maggie Edison
Programmable drones for computer science classes.

ART: Headphones

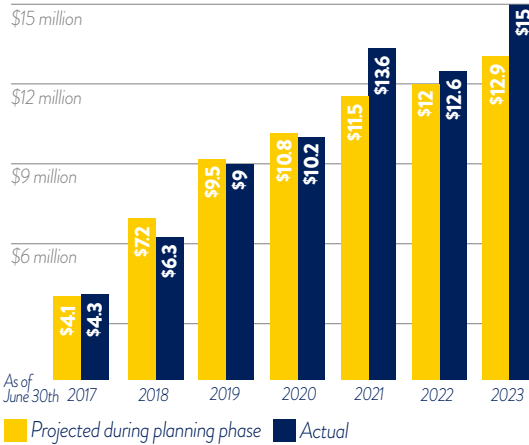
HIGH SCHOOL | Elizabeth Miller-Wallau, Terry Szpieg
Headphones for listening to audio tutorials and videos.

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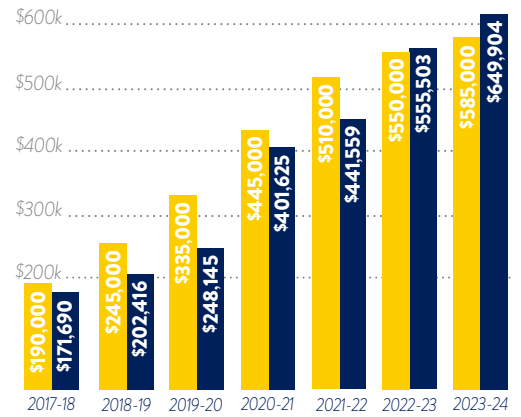
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EGR NOW & FOREVER

ENDOWMENT BALANCE



ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTIONS



UPDATE | A Look at Now&Forever Now

Don't you love it when people do what they say they're going to do?

When we started making plans to grow the Foundation's endowment through the Now&Forever capital campaign, we established some very ambitious goals: We wanted to grow the endowment from \$4 million to \$12 million. And we wanted the earnings from the endowment eventually to generate \$600,000 a year for our schools.

That was six years ago, in 2017. If all went according to plan, by the 2022-2023 school year, we should be able to contribute \$540,000 to our schools.

To make it happen, we enlisted the help of Natalie Bernecker and Brian Ellis as our Campaign Co-Chairs. We put together a Campaign Cabinet and Honorary Committee Members. We also assembled a gift tree of more than 230 committed supporters. **And then we went to work.**

Thanks to incredibly supportive community members—and the value they place on public education—donations began to roll in, many of them in three-year pledges. The plan was for Now&Forever to raise \$6.4 million in cash, with the rest of the money in planned giving commitments to bring the total endowment to \$12 million.

So, six years later, how did we do? Well, we were a little off on our projection for the size of the endowment. As of June 30 2023, the endowment wasn't \$12 million; it was \$15 million. And that \$600,000 contribution we planned to make by the 2024-25 school year? We exceeded that too.

In other words, we're either on schedule or ahead of it. We're doing what we said we would do.

Thank you to everyone who supported Now&Forever. As we said back in 2017, "Our vision is...to enable East Grand Rapids to remain one of the very best school districts in Michigan. Future state funding will always be uncertain, but this proactive approach will ensure that the excellence of our schools will not be threatened. Whatever challenges the coming years present, we will be ready to meet them." **Thank you for helping make that vision a reality.**



MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER | TOM BLOWER

As I begin my second year as Treasurer for the Foundation, I continue to be in awe of the financial foundation that this community has built with such committed residents and supporters. As we are hovering around \$15 million in our endowment, I think that it is important to take a step back to see how we got here. As you can see in the charts, the endowment has not always been this large.

With increased endowment values/balances, our ability to grant additional dollars to the schools each year has greatly increased. For the upcoming school year, we will have over \$600,000 to invest in our schools!

Even though we have roughly \$15 million in our endowment, our job is not over! The Foundation continues to manage our internal costs while also working to increase revenue through several means. Maintaining these funds while also growing them over the long term is paramount in order to meet our goals of being able to reinstate previous reductions while continuing to be innovative.

Having participated in several Big Check Days this past year has been an eye-opening experience. The support and appreciation that comes from the teachers in the district is absolutely incredible. Deciding on funding grants in a committee meeting is one thing, but seeing the reaction of teachers (and students) when their projects or interests are being funded by the Foundation is very special.

Serving on this board has made me appreciate our community in ways that I could have never imagined. We should all be grateful for the years of effort and support that have gotten us to this point. Only time will tell what this Foundation will be able to provide to our children in 10 to 20 years...

GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

BOOKS: Storybook Readers | ELEMENTARY

“Down fell the snow—Plop!—on top of Peter’s head.”

That’s a line from *The Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats, but you probably knew that already. You probably read that book when you were little, or had it read to you, or both. And you probably never forgot it.

That’s one of the reasons Lakeside Elementary kindergarten teacher Hannah Bailey applied for a grant from the Foundation to fund the purchase of new copies of classic picture books for kindergarten classes in all three elementary schools to replace the ones that are worn out from years of repeated reading.

The titles include *The Snowy Day*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *The Three Bears*, *Brown Bear Brown Bear*, *Are You My Mother?* and other beloved classics.

“Storybooks teach to the potential of our earliest readers,” says Wealthy Elementary kindergarten teacher Kerry McKee. “Elizabeth Sulzby states that storybook reading facilitates language development and plays an important role in preparing children for success in school.

“As children hear the same story over and over, their understanding of story structure and story language will grow. They will get better at studying characters to make meaning and predictions, which fuels comprehension skills. In addition, they will begin to match the written word with the spoken one as they repeat familiar slogans like, ‘Who’s that tripping over my bridge’ (in *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*).”

“The addition of this grant puts new and traditional storybooks in the hands of our district’s youngest learners. It feeds their imagination and fosters the love of reading.”



MENTAL HEALTH: Sensory Tools | MIDDLE SCHOOL

Rainn Wilson, who played Dwight Schrute on “The Office,” once said the worst part of that role was spending the day under fluorescent lights. There might be a few middle school students who would agree.

East Grand Rapids Middle School teacher Amy Marlow sought to solve that problem when she wrote a grant application for materials that would change the lighting in her classroom. The changes included “cloud lights”—filters for fluorescent ceiling lights that soften and cool the light beaming down on students.

It’s a simple solution, but the change in her classroom, Marlow says, has been remarkable. “Students have reported that they love walking into their classrooms. Many of them have commented on how calm and relaxing the classrooms feel.

“The traditional overhead lights are harsh and bright in their fluorescents, but with the cloud light covers all lights in the classrooms can be used at the same time. The light is gentler, softer, and more conducive to reading, writing, and learning. The students and teachers are very thankful for the improvement to the mood of our learning spaces!”

If only every middle school challenge were so easily solved.





STEM: Gone Boarding | HIGH SCHOOL

The Gone Boarding class that the Foundation helped launch at the high school has been an enormous success. Since its inception, the class—in which students design and build their own surfboards, snowboards and skateboards while learning hands-on lessons about science, technology, engineering, and math—has ridden a wave of popularity that shows no sign of cresting.

After the first class was funded, the Foundation approved a grant for a second section of the class. This past year, teacher Terry Szpieg wrote another grant, this time for Gone Boarding to have a pilot program in which students can design and build stand up paddleboards (SUP's).

“From a number of perspectives, this grant would enhance/increase a number of teaching and learning experiences for a growing number of students across the visual arts, Drafting, Design, and Technology, and eventually the physical education classes,” Szpieg says. “I am hopeful that this grant will benefit students and our curriculum on a number of fronts.”

“During design planning and construction, this grant would enable students who might encounter financial barriers, to fully participate in the concept-to-reality, designing and building processes of one of the larger projects available to Gone Boarding students,” Szpieg continues. “Students will learn and apply very concrete knowledge and skills with tools, materials and a number of construction processes (without the financial barriers/limitations of funding one of the larger projects), as well as directly developing an understanding of abstract notions such as seeing an idea through from concept to reality, perseverance, dedication, patience and the result (physical manifestation) of hard work and dedication.”

The benefits won't stop when the work ends either. “Upon completion, the goal is to eventually have a ‘fleet’ of around 20 SUP's that the school would have available,” Szpieg says. “Because the SUP's created under this grant will become property of EGRHS, this grant would provide impact/enhancements on a variety of fronts, for a number of classes, including but not limited to: current and future Gone Boarding, DDT and PE classes. Adding the availability of the SUP's to the PE classes for various activities on Reeds Lake, this grant would provide additional opportunities to enhance fundamentals such as stretching, balance, strength and conditioning, endurance, body-awareness, physical, social and emotional wellbeing, among many others.”



ALUMNI NEWS | 2023 Homecoming | September 29

Calling all Pioneers! Homecoming is September 29. Come to the parade Friday afternoon, then stop by the alumni tent at the football game Friday night. We'll have our prize wheel there for your chance to win some East merch. Come reunite with your fellow alumni or meet some new ones.

We're also your partner for reunion planning. Maria Allen, Alumni Relations Coordinator, has supported numerous groups in the preparation of their class reunions. If you need alumni contact information, local venue options, activity ideas, invitations, technology help, decorations, or just about anything else, Maria is available to help your group. Visit egrsf.org/alumni for more information or email Maria at mallen@egrps.org.

: REUNIONS

- **1958** 65TH 9/29-30/23
- **1962** 61ST 10/13/23
- **1963** 60TH 9/22-23/23
- **1964** 60TH 8/23-24/24
- **1968** 55TH 9/23/23
- **1973** 50TH 10/6-7/23
- **1983** 40TH 9/30/23
- **1993** 30TH 9/29-30/23
- **2002** 21ST 10/21/23
- **2008** 15TH 9/8/23
- **2013** 10TH 11/25/23
- **2018** 5TH 11/22/23



Class of 2003

20TH REUNION | Class of 2003 | June 24, 2023 | Noco Provisions

It still sounds strange to us to hear about Pioneers who graduated in the 2000s having their 20-year reunions. Don't tell that to the class of 2003, though. "We held our 20 year reunion back in June at Noco Provisions," says Abbey Smith '03. "We just did a happy hour, that was really it!" See? Reunion planning can be simple and fun. It looks like they had a great turnout!

70TH REUNION | Class of 1953 | June 24, 2023 | Kent Country Club

A group of "forever young" Pioneers from the class of 1953 got together over the summer. Here's a report from **Don Dunton '53**:

"Our 70th reunion for me was bittersweet. It was sweet seeing the other thirteen of my classmates who were able to attend, none of whom I had seen for the past ten years. The majority of our attendees came from the Greater Grand Rapids area, but several of us did make much longer trips. Class reunions are very special to me, and my wife and I have loved them all over the years.

"The bitter part for me was in remembering all of my wonderful class of '53 friends who are no longer with us or are unable to attend, and for them, fond memories of past reunions had to suffice."



Class of 1953



EVENT RECAPS

HURRAH! Adventure Awaits | April 22, 2023 | Wege Plaza

Food, fun, friends, flannel, fleece, fundraiser for the kids. HURRAH! Adventure Awaits brought more than 400 members of our community together to celebrate our schools and explore all the possibilities the Foundation provides for our students. Wege Plaza overlooking Reeds Lake was transformed into an outdoor oasis, providing hundreds of happy campers with a spectacular night of food, fun, music from Troll for Trout, and lively conversation. It was a great night for a great cause, and we're already working on plans for HURRAH! 2024.



Chicago Alumni Happy Hour | May 11, 2023 | Gaslight Bar

Our first ever Chicago Alumni Happy Hour attracted generations of Pioneers. With a nod to our hometown business district, the event was held at the Gaslight Bar in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Alumni in attendance ranged from an 80s alum sporting his original letter sweater to a group of 20-somethings who stopped by the happy hour on the way to their softball game. The whole event was so much fun that now we're looking for destinations for our next Alumni Happy Hour. Where should we go? Email your suggestions to mallen@egrps.org.



Gerken Open | June 7, 2023 | Thousand Oaks Golf Club

The Gerken Open has always been one of our most popular events, but last spring's golf outing was the biggest and best one yet. The 18-hole afternoon event sold out and the morning 9-hole event also filled its slots for foursomes. Named for former staff member and East Grand Rapids legend Jimmy Gerken, the Gerken Open supports athletics and co-curriculars through the Jimmy Gerken Fund and EGR Team Boosters. The Jimmy Gerken Fund also sponsors Kabookie Week at EGRHS. Next spring's Gerken Open will be Wednesday, June 5. Make sure you register early as it will likely sell out once again!



UPCOMING EVENT

Community Service & Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner

September 13, 2023 | 6-9:30pm | JW Marriott Grand Rapids

Join your friends and neighbors for a fascinating night celebrating service and world affairs! Lifelong community supporter Betsy Willey '64 will be honored with the Community Service and Leadership Award. Climate and Energy Journalist and former Wall Street Journal Middle East Bureau Chief Bill Spindle '81 will receive the Distinguished Alumni Award.



East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation
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