

THE FOUNDATION

2025-2026
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE EAST GRAND
RAPIDS SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION

5 Questions (and Answers) about the New High School
A Cup of Coffee with “American Pie” Creator Adam Herz ‘91
Homecoming Mystery Solved
Grant Highlights
Donor Roll Call
Upcoming Events and Alumni Reunions



East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation & Alumni Association



UPCOMING EVENTS



HURRAH!, the Foundation’s fundraiser of the year, will be **Saturday, March 28** in The Big Room at Silva. Tickets to this extremely popular event have sold out the last few years, and this year HURRAH! promises to be even bigger. The Big Room at Silva is unlike any other venue in Grand Rapids.

We’ll have a DJ, dancing, apps, treats, and drinks. Plenty of surprises too. Get your tickets or be a sponsor now!



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR TICKETS & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



The Gerken Open golf outing is one of the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation’s most anticipated events. We offer a 9-hole morning scramble or an 18-hole afternoon scramble. The afternoon sells out every year, and the morning filled up quickly last year, too!

This year, mark your calendars for **Wednesday, June 10**, at Thousand Oaks Golf Club. If you want to be part of the fun while supporting the Foundation’s Gerken Fund, sponsorship opportunities are now available on the Foundation’s website at egrsf.org.

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation

Please Join Us

Community Service & Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner, Fall 2026

This fall, the Foundation will hold its 15th Community Service and Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner. Our honorees have been chosen and will be announced later this year. We’ll share the date and location when tickets are available. Stay tuned!

On **Wednesday, July 15**, the Kona Ice truck will return to the Middle School parking lot for the Foundation’s “Midsummer Ice Dream,” offering free frozen treats to everyone in our community from 1-4pm. Just a little thank you from the Foundation for all your support!



ON THE COVER:

EGRHS Marching Band Drum Major Tanyon Sanders ‘26 (pictured left with Sydney Steiner ‘27) has served for the last two years as an East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation student board member. His account of his extremely busy 15-hour day in the life of a drum major on Homecoming appears on pages 14 and 15.



Executive Director Message

It was 2011, and we had just moved to East Grand Rapids because of the excellent public schools. My oldest was a kindergartener, full of excitement, wonder, and energy. Little did I know that within months of his first day of school, elementary art, music, gym, and Spanish would all be on the chopping block, potential victims of massive state funding cuts.

But it wasn't all doom and gloom. That budget crisis introduced me to the incredible generosity of our community. We rallied to save elementary specials, and I say *we* intentionally. It was all of us: parents, alumni, teachers, neighbors, even kids, all brought together by the visionary leadership of the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation.

Fifteen years later, the Foundation is still bringing us together, thankfully under very different circumstances. Including \$400,000 for the high school transformation, we will invest more than \$700,000 in enhancements this school year, through program support, classroom grants, student experiences and scholarships, and advanced learning for staff.

Prior to becoming the Foundation executive director last fall, I served on the Board of Education. Every spring, I watched graduates walk across the stage to pick up their diplomas. I saw the proud faces of young adults who'd built a robot, performed in the school musical, created their own surfboard, found inspiration in meeting a favorite author, and broadcast school news to the student body. They had those transformative experiences because of the Foundation. Because of you. Because of all of us.

The opportunity to do collectively what none of us could do individually is what drew me to support the Foundation 15 years ago and to take on my new role today. I want to thank former executive director Amy Stuursma for the support and counsel she continues to provide. And I want to thank you, our donors, for being part of the *we* that sees the potential in all our students and knows that only when we work together can we help them reach it.

Amy Turner-Thole

Amy Turner-Thole
Executive Director



EAST GRAND RAPIDS SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

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Jena Lacks
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Tammy Shreiner
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Tanyon Sanders, '26
Caleb Rapoport, '27

Ex-officio

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Matt Richenthal, *EGRPS Board of Education Member*

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Maria Allen, *Alumni Relations Coordinator*
Jay Forstner, *Communications Director*
Rosanne Mack, *Accountant*
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A Message from EGRSF Treasurer

BY CARRIE WALTON



Managing a household budget often requires careful planning, honest conversations, and an eye toward the future. The East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation approaches its financial stewardship in much the same way—thoughtfully, transparently, and with our community’s long-term needs in mind.

This year, the Foundation completed its annual independent audit with excellent results. Our auditors at Hungerford once again confirmed that our financial records are clean, accurate, and transparent. “Rosanne Mack does such a great job that it makes our job easy,” says Jen Rogell, For-Profit/NFP Audit Senior Manager at Hungerford. “She keeps track of everything during the year so there aren’t any surprises when we do our annual audit.” Rosanne’s careful attention to detail and commitment to strong financial practices play a critical role in ensuring that every dollar is tracked and managed responsibly.

One of the Foundation’s greatest strengths is its endowment. Especially in times of economic uncertainty, the endowment provides stability and predictability. While many organizations must raise every dollar they spend each year, our endowment allows us to plan ahead and support our schools with confidence, even as economic conditions change.

The endowment is professionally managed with a long-term perspective. While investment values naturally rise and fall during periods of market turbulence, our investment managers focus on generating stable returns over time. This disciplined approach helps ensure that today’s students benefit while safeguarding the Foundation’s ability to support future generations.

During the 2024–2025 school year, more than \$700,000 from the endowment was directed to our students and schools. At the same time, the Foundation continues to raise funds annually to prepare for future needs, major projects, and operating expenses. This balance—using resources responsibly today while planning for tomorrow—remains central to our mission.

It’s hard to believe, but it’s been nearly ten years since the Foundation launched its last major capital campaign, Now & Forever. As our schools and community continue to grow and evolve, thoughtful financial stewardship today helps position us well for what lies ahead.

I am deeply grateful for the trust placed in the Foundation by our donors, volunteers, and the broader East Grand Rapids community. Your continued support allows us to remain strong, stable, and focused on what matters most—supporting our students and schools.

Thank you for being an important part of this work!



FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

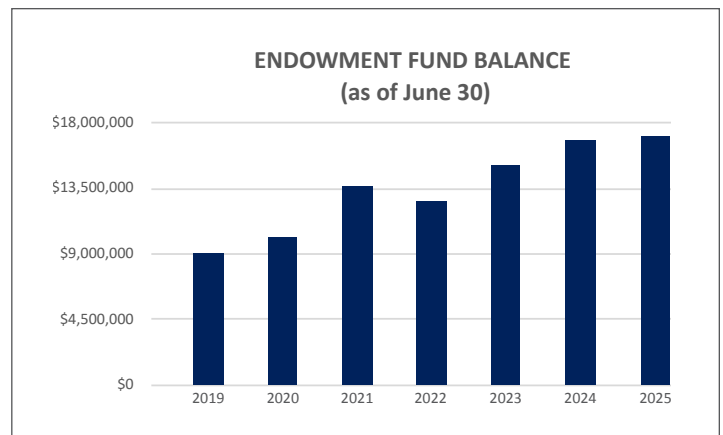
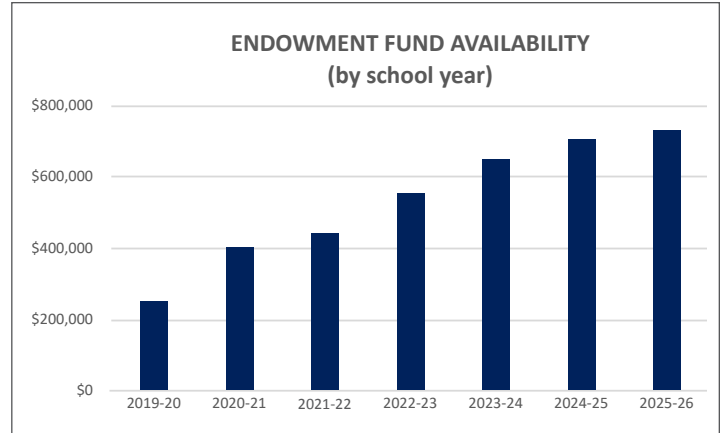
JUNE 30, 2025 (AUDITED)

Assets

Cash and equivalents	\$	84,342
Prepaid expenses		8,802
Pledges receivable, current portion		292,072
Investments		17,135,970
Total Assets	\$	17,521,186

Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$	10,178
Grants payable, current portion		818,847
Alumni reunion funds held		43,907
Grants payable, long term portion		2,000,000
Total Liabilities	\$	2,872,932
Total Net Assets	\$	14,648,254
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	17,521,186



5 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL



We asked EGRPS Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Anthony Morey for an update on the high school transformation.

1. Why do we need a new high school? How will this help our students?

When the current high school opened in 1964, most classrooms were set up with rows of desks and a teacher up front. Today, we know students and teachers need space to collaborate, conduct experiments, design, and create. The project began as a full academic renovation but evolved into a transformation and reconstruction project because of student, teacher, and community input. The new high school will have larger classrooms to facilitate the best teaching and learning practices. It will have much more natural light, which research shows is beneficial to students' academic performance and emotional wellbeing. It will have dedicated spaces for robotics, the arts, maker spaces, and more. The facility is designed to meet our students' needs now and the needs we anticipate over the next fifty years.

2. What's the latest on the timeline for starting construction? When will people notice the project is getting started?

After years of planning, we're very excited to break ground on this project that will be a positive addition not only to our school district but to our entire community. Construction officially begins on June 1st, 2026, and activity will rapidly increase in the late summer and early fall.

3. What are some examples of things the district has learned since planning started?

We recognized early on that modifying the existing building envelope would be extremely costly and would not meet our design goals. After about six months of study, it became obvious that starting over was the most prudent course of action for academic areas. The District prioritized the voices of students and teachers in the design process

and learned valuable lessons about the specific needs of individual programs over the last 24 months. Examples are numerous, including how windows are positioned in hallways, instructional technology is mounted in classrooms, how science labs can be designed to achieve teaching objectives, and countless others.

4. It's possible the high school construction will be happening at the same time as the big Gaslight Village project. Is the district communicating with the city and the developer of that project to share information?

The District has closely monitored plans and coordinated with city officials over the last two years for any potential overlapping areas of concern. At this point, the District is not concerned with any of the proposed Gaslight Village plans negatively impacting our construction timeline or logistics.



5. When do you hope the new construction part of the project will be complete and students will move into the new building?

Students will start to see the benefits of some renovations as early as the fall of 2027. Students will move into Phase 1 (the first half of new construction), in August of 2028. It will take another two years to complete Phase 2 of the project (the second half of new construction), with the fully completed transformation opening in the fall of 2030. We can't wait until we get started, and we can't wait until the project is finished. The transformed high school will be the new home of the next generations of Pioneers.





Jimmy's Friendship Fund Extends Access to Opportunity

“That’s OK. I’ll still be your friend.”

Those words were Jimmy Gerken’s response to someone who was bullying him. They’ve become a message of friendship and inclusion throughout our district.

At the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation, we’ve always been about providing outstanding educational opportunities. With Jimmy’s Friendship Fund, the Foundation is making sure all students have access to more of the opportunities our district has to offer.

Jimmy’s Friendship Fund provides money to cover immediate needs for families within the district that are

experiencing temporary financial difficulties. The funds may be used to cover pay-to-participate expenses for extracurriculars, student activity fees, household needs, or personal needs.

School principals allocate the funds based on needs they see. Families may also contact school principals or the guidance office as needs arise. Since its inception, the Fund has helped families pay for utility bills, participation fees for co-curriculars and sports, driver’s education, and even winter clothing.

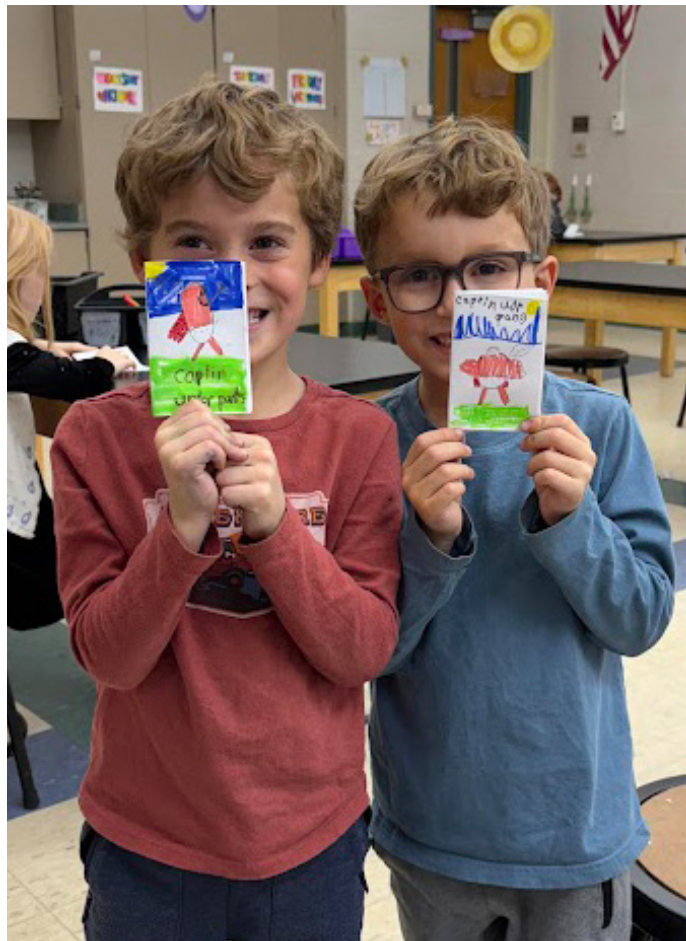


You can donate to Jimmy’s Friendship Fund quickly and easily by visiting our “Donate Now” page and selecting “Jimmy’s Friendship Fund.” Thank you!

CLASSROOM ENHANCEMENT GRANTS THE FOUNDATION FUNDED IN 2025

Spring 2025

- Interactive Dry Erase Tables
- Portable School Sound System
- Risers for Wealthy Elementary
- English Language Learner Technology
- March Book Madness 2026
- Author Visit 2025-2026
- Gone Boarding SUP Year 4- 4 Boards
- Scholastic News Periodicals
- 2025 NCTE Annual Convention for English Teachers
- reMarkable Paper Pro Table
- eSports Equipment
- Science Olympiad
- Camp Manitou-Lin 6th Grade Camp
- **Total Grants awarded Spring 2025 Grant Cycle \$62,245.64**



FALL 2025

- 6 iPads for Digital Assessments
- Junior Achievement Finance Park
- Junior Achievement BizTown
- 5 iPads & iPad Cases/Screen Protectors
- Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra Experiences
- Electric Piano at Lakeside
- PBIS Conference (Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports)
- Robotics - 3D Printer & Supplies
- Building Thinking Classrooms Supplies
- STEAM Night
- eSports Equipment
- 20 iPads for MS Video Production Classes
- PAC Learning & Performing Enhancement Grant
- Innovation Lab Coding Drones
- Kindergarten Purposeful Play Toys
- Robotics Competition Fees
- Stratford Trip Tickets
- Goalbook Subscription
- Bright Star Theater
- IXL Subscriptions for Elementary Schools
- Teaching Microscope & Camera
- NCTE Conference
- Grand Rapids Public Museum Immerse Program
- Michigan Art Educators Conference
- EGRMS Robotics Kits
- iPad Pro 13-inch
- Civic Theatre School Show for Kindergarten
- Learning Commons Library Collection Update
- Classroom Shelves
- **Total Grants awarded FALL 2025 Grant Cycle \$108,400.36**



ELEMENTARY IMMERSE GRANT HIGHLIGHT



“The week was amazing!”

That’s what Wealthy Elementary third grade teacher **Andrea Eggert** says about the **Immerse program at the Grand Rapids Public Museum.**

One week in November, students in all three third grade classes at Wealthy spent Monday through Friday with the Museum as their classroom. They toured exhibits, learned from museum staff, and even got to handle actual artifacts from the museum’s collections.

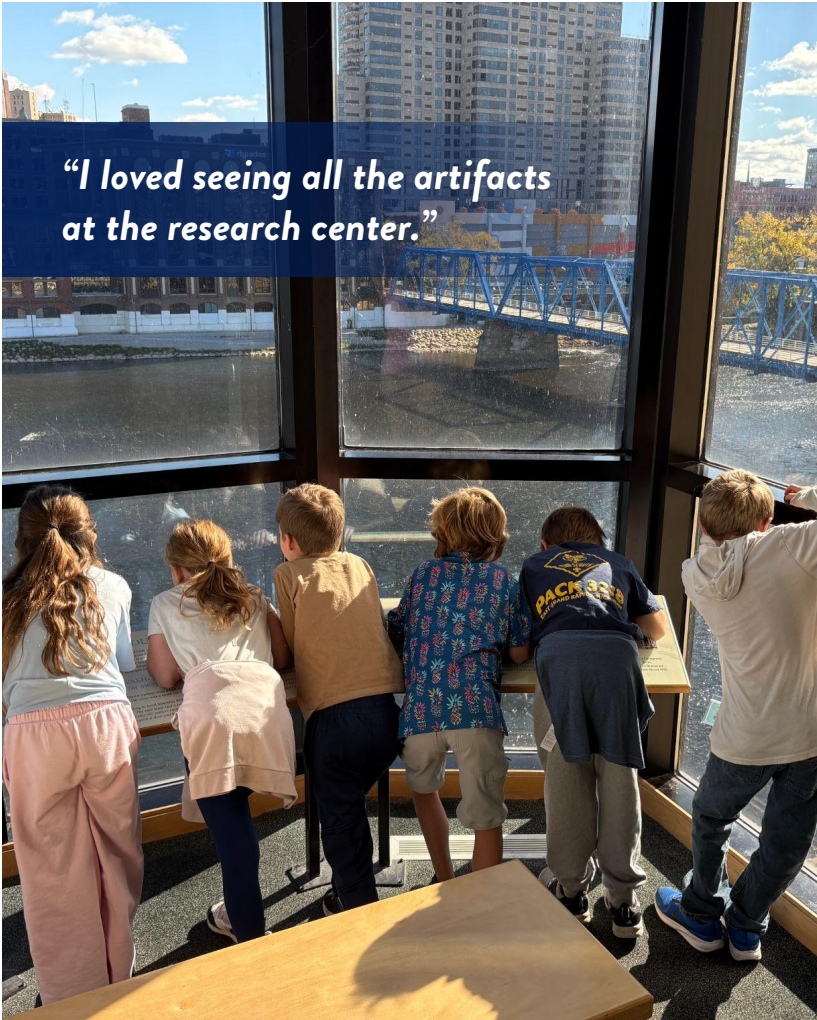
Students loved it. Asked to describe the experience, one said, “I wish you were there with me. It was so fun. It is the same amount of fun as opening birthday gifts.”

Eggert and her fellow third grade teachers at Wealthy—Michelle Day and Elizabeth Schaefer—started working on this project last year when they applied for the

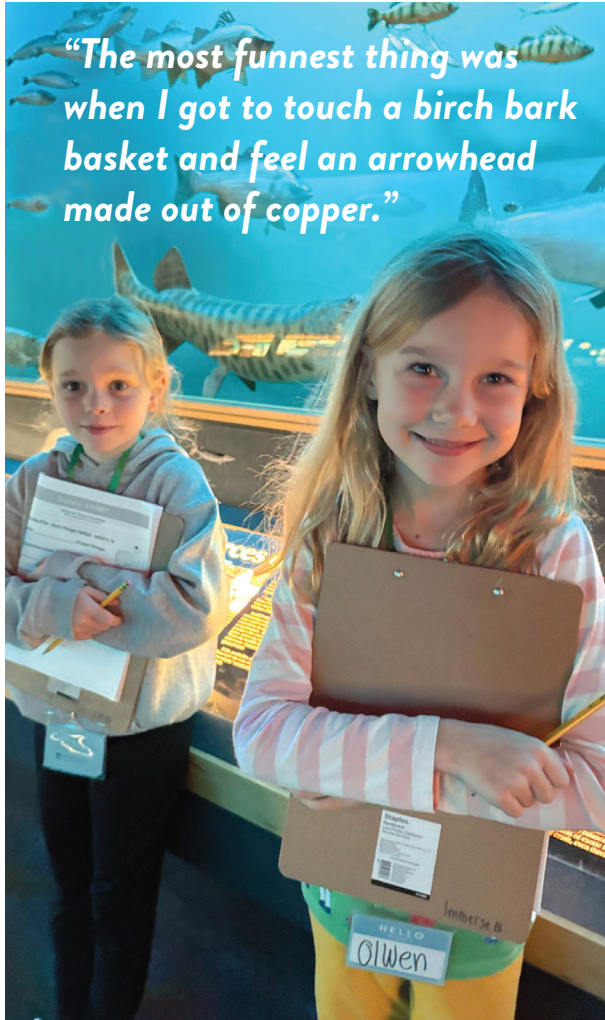
Immerse program through the museum. Once their application was approved, the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation partnered with the Wealthy Elementary PTO to fund it.

Eggert says students learned during the week how to be consumers of information. “It was an opportunity for kids to practice the ‘soft skills’ of school success,” she says. “One thing that impacts student learning across content areas is the ability to be a thoughtful and careful consumer. Whether you are reading and comprehending a story, solving a math story problem, or thinking critically about science or math topics, being able to be observant and reflective supports all learning.

“At the museum, we taught kids to look more carefully at exhibits. They learned to slow down and appreciate



“I loved seeing all the artifacts at the research center.”



“The most funnest thing was when I got to touch a birch bark basket and feel an arrowhead made out of copper.”

how they are organized, how artifacts are chosen, even how curators choose the topic.”

As a culminating project for the week, students will create their own exhibits to be displayed at the Immerse program’s Showcase event in May. Students will also have a chance to put what they learned into practice when they visit the Michigan Historical Museum this spring.



“It was truly immersive.”



Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone to watch a video about Wealthy Elementary’s participation in the Immerse program.



THANKS TO THE FOUNDATION, MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO FLY



WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR
MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSES?



DO YOU REMEMBER PROGRAMMING ROBOTIC SPHERES
SO THEY FOLLOW PATHWAYS ON THEIR OWN?



DO YOU REMEMBER CODING DRONES SO THEY CAN FLY OVER,
UNDER, AND BETWEEN OBSTACLES TO REACH THEIR TARGET?

Thanks to a series of grants from the Foundation, years from now today's middle schoolers will have experiences like that to look back on.

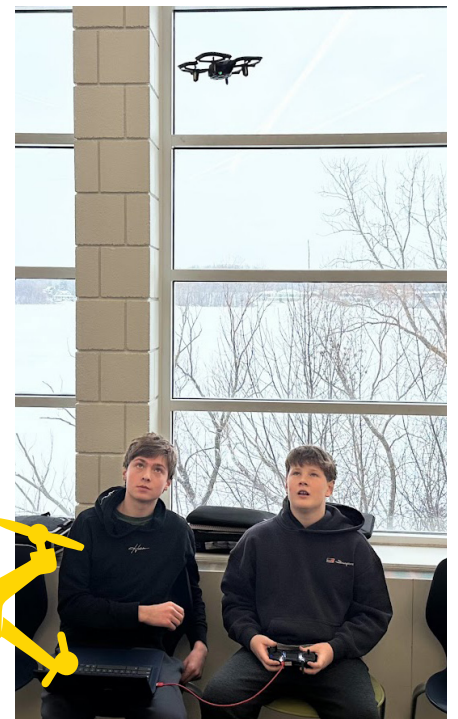
The Middle School Innovation Lab had a humble beginning in 2015, when then Middle School Principal Peter Stuursma and EGRMS teachers Kevin Vance and Holly Lampen applied for a grant for \$2,819.05 to get the project started.

Since then, thanks to additional grants from the Foundation, the Innovation Lab has offered extraordinary opportunities to hundreds of EGRMS students. Last fall, Vance, along with EGRMS teachers John MacKenzie and Isabella Schumann, requested \$3,599 from the Foundation to purchase 12 programmable drones that support block-based

(Blockly) and Python coding. The drones come equipped with advanced sensors, programmable LEDs, and modular parts and are ideal for teaching coding, robotics, and STEM principles in a classroom environment.

We were there the day 8th graders got to use the drones for the very first time. On a frigid morning, the class met in the Middle School Learning Commons overlooking the frozen expanse of Reeds Lake.

Less than half an hour after unboxing the drones, students had already programmed them to fly. Two days later, they were maneuvering the drones back and forth across the room, soaring over obstacles, swooping under tables, and returning to their bases.



*Thank you,
Foundation donors,
for giving these
students the
opportunity to fly!*

Scan the QR code to see students flying the drones.



Homecoming:

A (BUSY) DAY IN THE LIFE OF A DRUM MAJOR

By Tanyon Sanders '26,
EGRSF Student Board Member

SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

› **7AM.** I arrive at the high school just before the building begins to stir. I grab my essentials: whistle, the metal baton called a mace, earplugs, and gloves. Sydney, our assistant drum major, joins me. We check in with our band directors to go over the full breakdown of the day. Homecoming is exciting, but it's also extremely demanding.

After the meeting, we head onto the field. As band members arrive, Sydney and I begin our most important job, ensuring that every band member is just as excited as we are. A loud, confident, "IT'S GAME DAY!" goes a long way first thing in the morning.

› **7:30AM.** As the first bell rings, we play the fight song. No matter the day, no matter the weather, that's the rule.

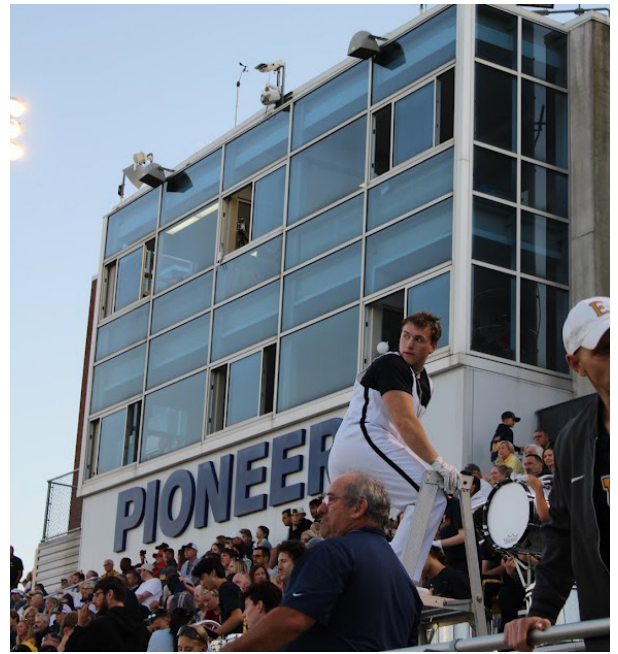
› **11:30AM.** At lunch, I get a break to lock in both mentally and physically. I stretch and practice my pre-game strut. I double check my uniform to make sure everything is shiny, white, and ready to go.

› **3PM.** After my last class, my focus shifts entirely to the band. I help make sure everyone has their equipment and uniforms ready before leaving for the parade's start at Woodcliff. Sydney and I help organize warm-ups, check in with sections, and help section leaders.

› **4PM.** The high school band is last in the parade, the main event. Getting to see all the kids lining the streets, smiling and cheering, is awesome. We become the faces of East Grand Rapids, our pride and tradition.

› **5:30PM.** After the parade, we share pizza with the eighth graders who marched with us. I check in with each one. Helping them feel welcome is incredibly important. They're the future of the band.





➤ **6:30PM.** Before the football game, we perform in Gaslight Village for hundreds of people. We play loud and proud to build excitement for the game and bring the community together.

➤ **7PM.** More than twelve hours after my day began, the game finally kicks off. We perform between plays so I always have one eye on the field and one on the stands. At halftime, we take the field. We blast Bruno Mars' greatest hits, and the crowd roars.

➤ **9:30PM.** By the end of the game, I'm exhausted, but incredibly proud. Serving as head drum major is an honor. Homecoming shows me how special it is to represent my school and help others to do the same.



I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the impact that the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation has made to the high school band program. Over the years the Foundation board has funded countless advancements to the program, including more than \$50,000 for drumline instruments. In one grant alone, the Foundation funded \$26,408 for new sousaphones! These investments go beyond equipment and directly elevate the student experience. As a student representative on the EGRSF Board, I'm especially grateful to see firsthand how the Foundation's support translates into opportunity for current and future musicians.



Contribution available to schools in 2025-26:
\$729,000

Teachers who have received the EGRSF Excellence in Teaching awards:
83

Requests from Jimmy's Friendship Fund for Families in Need funded in 2024 and 2025:
62

Members of the Class of 2019 who have donated to the Parker Spindle Fund:
44

Total golfers at 2025 Gerken Open:
188

Grants funded in fall 2025:
29

Think You Don't Know THAT'S OK.

Classroom grant total funding fall 2025:
\$108,400.36



Program support to district in 2025-26:
\$510,000



Support for performing arts 2025-26:
\$100,000+

Multi-year commitment to high school transformation:
\$2.4 million

Visitors to egrsf.org website in 2025:
53,554

Students on the Foundation's Inaugural Student Auxiliary Committee:
9

Alumni Contributions to the Foundation in 2025:
\$161,193.79

Total Contributed to EGRPS in Class of 2026 Time K-12:
\$5.1 Million

East Horizon
Monthly
E-Newsletters in
2025:
12

3D Printers
Funded Since
2015:
21

Number of Cheat
Sheet Weekly
Updates in 2025:
44

Prizes Given Out
at Gaslight Village
Trick-or-Treating:
422

Students K-12
Who Benefited
from Foundation
Support:
2,971

How the Foundation? You Know What WE DO!

Community
Members Who
Attended a
Foundation Event
in 2025:
1,086



Cups of Kona Ice
Given Away at
Midsummer Ice
Dream:
711



Foundation
Annual
Sponsors:
38

Alumni Who
Attended
Reunions in
2025:
550+

Professional
Development
Scholarships
Awarded in
2025:
10

Student
Scholarships
Awarded in
2025:
8

Applications/
Nominations
for Student
Scholarships:
36

Support from
Gerken Fund for
Athletics, Co-
Curriculars, and
Kabookie Week in
2025-26:
\$35,283



VIRTUAL CUP OF COFFEE

ADAM HERZ '91

Adam Herz '91 is a writer and producer best known for the *American Pie* movies, set in the fictional "East Great Falls." He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two boys.



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

Yesterdog. One Ultra, one Tim, a stack of napkins, and a side of embarrassment for missing the tip target. Rose's caramel corn today is great, but I'd need Bub Rose's original recipe from the original place — the stuff that stuck to your teeth like epoxy.

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

EGR to U of M to Los Angeles. I worked as a production assistant for a year on low-budget tv shows, during which I got lucky and landed a literary manager who liked some sample tv scripts I'd written. He helped me write and sell the screenplay that became *American Pie*.

Once that movie became a hit, everything was a whirlwind for quite a few years. I worked my butt off on various screenwriting gigs, wrote and produced the *Pie* sequels, and started my own production company. It was surreal. Every day, the Universal Studios tour tram — the thing I'd once ridden while fantasizing that I worked

in one of the old-school Hollywood bungalows it drove past — was suddenly driving past my little bungalow. I got to meet and work with many of my heroes. I knew my head would explode if I thought about it too much, so I just stayed focused on the work.

The early success I was fortunate to have allowed me to shift gears once I was married and had kids. I slowed way down. I've been able to take years off at times to watch my kids grow up and pursue hobbies and passion projects.

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

Good midwest values, perseverance, and the value of friendship. Also, there was this program called SAGE in elementary school — "Skills for Academic Growth and Enrichment" — that taught me things I still think about.

In a sense, I owe my entire career and adult life to EGR and the people I grew up with. The *Pie* movies wouldn't have existed otherwise — I have no clue what I would've written had I grown up in some other random place, or if I'd even be a writer — every English teacher I had at East encouraged me to keep writing and to find my own voice.

What were you like in school?

Smart but not driven, unless I really enjoyed what I was working on. Socially I was attention-seeking, impulsive, unfiltered, a bit of a class clown. I did a lot of theater in high school. School itself felt like a distraction to endure while trying to be with my friends and goof off. Not all the time, but enough that I got in disciplinary trouble every now and then.

Did you have a favorite teacher or class?

Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Graham, and Mr. Froyland, all English. Mr. Norman, Latin. Mrs. Pantlind, speech. Mrs. Knack, creative writing. Miss Bergeon, trig. Mr. Jenkins, physics. Mr. Radakovich, history/social studies. Mrs. Kemp, SAGE. Miss VanHaren, 4th grade. Mrs. Brown, kindergarten.

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?

Ooof. I have tons. Spring musicals. Skipping 1st hour to write the essay I forgot was due 2nd hour — multiple times. Open campus lunches in middle and high school. Lots of classic moments with friends. Using the debate room copy machine to

duplicate homework that you didn't have to hand in, only answer from in class (regularly). There was a group of us that pulled off some pretty crazy stuff, some of which I can't even mention here.

As far as a particular moment, in retrospect: I wrote the humor column for the first Vision with Robert Fleetwood ('91). We got called into the principal's office (Pat Cwayna) for publishing masturbation jokes. "Guys, come on. You know you can't write that stuff. No more, okay?" Months later, at the honors assembly at the end of the year, Mrs. Ford (I think it was her?) announced that we'd won a MIPA award for our column — a state "excellence in journalism" thing. Mr. Cwayna thought it was a prank. "This is a joke, right guys? It's a joke on me?" I was already on my career path.

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

Self-awareness. Patience. How to listen to other people and really hear them. I wish I'd known how much I'd miss it all when it was gone.

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

Yes. Firstly, Chris Stevenson ('91) has been in LA about as long as I have, and we hang out all the time. Then there's a group of friends I stay in touch with outside of that, and we try to get together when we can. I still have amazing friends back in East and the GR area. I love going back there, hanging out, and just absorbing it all.

The class of '91 was small (135 students). So even for the kids you didn't know well, we all knew each other to some degree. That's kept us all in better touch. Then, I think for some of us, Pie added a kind of layer on top — like it was a record of our collective experience. Not plotwise, but the first movie in particular was full of recognizable elements. Not just "East Great Falls" and the overall look (the art department toured East to know what to approximate, and my yearbooks were treated like bibles), but especially the characters, moments, and "if you know you know" Easter eggs.

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

Fiction has to make sense — the world doesn't. Accept that there's plenty of stuff that will piss you off. Let it go.

Learn how to present yourself well: often it's not what you say, but how you say it. Being good in a room can matter more than the info you're conveying. Turn data into story.

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

My brother Scott. He'll have more practical advice, and I'm pretty sure he did the whole EGR thing better than I did.

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

Stifler's Mom.



Want to read more virtual cup of coffee alumni interviews? Visit egrsf.org/alumni/alumni-profiles.html

ANNUAL FUND SUPPORTERS (CALENDAR YEAR 2025)

\$5,000 or more

Anonymous*
Ray '71 & Kristin Abraham*
The Adamy Family*
Sue '56 & Marty Allen*
The Bissell / Kruer Family*
The Cherveney Family*
The Cunningham Family*
Damian & Sara deGoa*
Laurie Duthie & Mark Secchia '91*
Rick & Carol Godfrey*
Tom & Mary Sidell '61 James, *in honor of the Class of 1961*
Tom '71 & Vicki '70 Kimball
KV '02 & Jena Lacks Family*
David '57 & Linda Mehney Family*
Meijer, Inc.*
NPF Investment Advisors*
Pure Architects*
Matt Richenthal*
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In this report, we acknowledge everyone who has supported our mission through donations or sponsorships in the **2025 calendar year**. Although we appreciate all participants in Foundation-sponsored events, they are too numerous to list here. We strive to be accurate, but errors may occur. We welcome assistance from readers in bringing any inaccuracies to our attention, and will try to make corrections in the online version of these lists. Thank you, as always, for your support!

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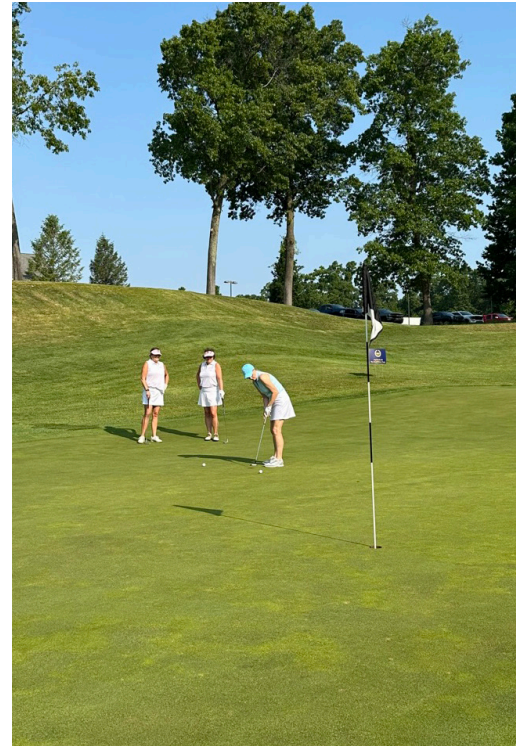
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HURRAH! 2025

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Philip Bender
Jim ‘68 & Barbara Caldwell
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Matt ‘90 & Diana Schad
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Lou Murray ‘64

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Rich MacKeigan, Rick Winn & your
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Brent & Diane Slay
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John & Carroll Wiener
The Zeilstra Family

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Class of 1977

BEQUESTS

The Foundation was honored to receive a
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‘53



The Foundation partnered with EGR Friends of the Library to bring author Carole Boston Weatherford and her illustrator son, Jeffery Weatherford, to visit our schools.

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REUNION GIFTS

CLASS OF 1965 - \$3,815

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Nancy Muir Duggan
Sue Spicer Elliott
Chuck Ellis
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The Haiduck Family, *in honor of*
Richard (Dick) Haiduck '65
Win Irwin
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Jain Hayes Petersen
Mike Sebastian
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1965 Reunion Gift

CLASS OF 1975 - \$250

Class of 1975, *in honor of Lou*
Murray '64

CLASS OF 1985 - \$1,601

Michael Baldwin
Dan Barnhart
Ray Baumruk
Connie Cook Billett
Jim Conely
Rob Eleveld
Teresa Bush Gardner
Jean Geran
Steve Gregory
Wes Reynolds
Duncan Rougier-Chapman
Keith Stewart
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David Willey
1985 Reunion Gift

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Bess Connors
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Kaitlin Green
Kristen (Keye) Hall
Leyton Nelson
Elan Winterberger
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Jones, & Kelly Smith

CLASS OF 2015 - \$265

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Aiden Wysocki
2015 Reunion Gift

CLASS OF 2024 - \$4,000

2024 graduation gift



Mystery Man Makes Magical Moment in Homecoming Parade

In 1949, when Marcia (Warnshuis) McClimans was named Homecoming Queen, football games were played Saturday afternoons, not Friday nights, and they were on the field by what was then the high school and is now Wealthy Elementary. Mayor John Collins (as in John Collins Park) gave her the crown, which was a donated bridal tiara.

Last fall, 76 years after she was crowned, McClimans (pictured above with the 2025 Homecoming Court) rode in the Homecoming Parade in a vintage Ford Mustang.

"It was a wonderful experience," McClimans says. "The girls on the Homecoming court were so lovely, and all the students were so polite and kind. Riding in the parade was very exciting, waving to everyone."

McClimans' appearance in the parade was a highlight of the weekend, but one question remained. Who was the man who came out of the crowd and presented her with a bouquet of flowers?

Who was the mystery man?

To find out, we turned to one of McClimans' two sons, Chip, a member of the EGRHS class of 1975. "I was talking to (EGRSF Alumni Coordinator) Maria Allen about our class's 50th reunion, which was last fall," Chip says, "and I mentioned to her that my mom was the Homecoming queen in 1949. We came up with the idea of having my mom ride in the parade."

During the parade, Chip rode in the passenger seat of the Mustang, with the car's owner, father of three East alumni and former East student John Boeschenstein, at the wheel. Marcia rode in the back. "We were coming down Lake Drive when I looked up," says Chip, "and there was my neighbor coming up to the car with a bouquet of flowers for my mom."

Chip's neighbor is Glenn Anderson, another East dad whose children graduated in 1991, 1993, and 1998. "We've gotten to know Marcia over the years," says Anderson. "So when we were going to the parade, my wife, June, to her credit, said we should get her some flowers. Red roses didn't seem right so with everything blue and gold, we decided on yellow roses."

The mystery man says it was a thrill to be part of the moment. "You take an instant liking to Marcia," Anderson says. "She's just a wonderful person."





UPCOMING REUNIONS

1956 - July 25-26

1996 - July 10-11

1966 - September 25-27

2016 - Thanksgiving
Weekend

1971 - August 28-30

2021 - November 25

1976 - TBD

1986 - Fall 2026



CLASSES OF 1961, 2001, 2006, 2011

the countdown to your class reunion in 2026 has begun. Now is the time to start planning your unforgettable celebration. Need help getting started? Contact Maria Allen, Alumni Relations Coordinator at mallen@egrps.org. It's

time to reconnect, reminisce and celebrate the memories that shaped you.

IN REMEMBRANCE

We extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the following alumni and EGRPS staff who passed since our last publication. They will be greatly missed. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please help us stay informed by calling us at (616) 235-3535 or emailing to egrfs@egrps.org.

1944

Patricia (Gauthier) Baltutat
Cornelia (Herz) Freeman

1945

Mary Ruth (Richards) Rang

1946

John Bloomstrom

1947

William Barnett

1948

John Gilmore

1952

Richard Harrison
Hugh Deane

1954

Ralph Lane Ritter
James Clay
Frederick "Rob" Deane

1955

Glenna (Vander Meer) Paukstis
Thomas Schultz

1956

Tamsen (Sears) Roach
Carles "Cai" Raber

1957

Lawrence Steen
Cynthia (Becker) Horstman
Edward Sawyer
David Mehney
Ann (Durno) Shafer
Sandra (Dykstra) Floreani

1958

Daniel Donahue
Stanley Potter
Peter Foy, Sr.

1959

Joyce Andre
Ronald Boorsma

1960

Ruth Ann (McKay) Bullen
Robert Harris, Jr.

1961

James R. Dunwell
Lucinda (Dewey) Alt
Thompson Clay

1962

John L. Stuart
Connie (Cook) Hanson

1963

Richard Alt

1964

Steven Hoskins

1965

Richard VandenBerg
Jeffrey Heth
Nancee (Lackey) Doyle

1966

Harold Courtright, Sr.
Kathleen (Gezon) Leahy
Margaret (Johnson) Connell
Stanley Stevens
Susan Dunwell
Stephen Molloy

1967

Clarissa (Parks) Hill Cook

1968

William Watkins

1969

Thomas VanKuiken
Mary (Yared) Davis

1970

Maclear Brooks Kindel
Patricia (Poisson) O'Connor

1972

R. Scott Morrissey

1973

Raymond Zwingenberg, Jr.

1974

Michael Whitman

1976

Jeffrey Conklin

1978

Daniel Abid

1979

John Zazakis

1980

Michael Ellis

1982

John Tuitel

1983

Jeffrey C. Hutchinson

1987

John W. Timmer

1991

Thomas "Brad" Welch

1992

Paul Lee

1993

Brian Caldwell

2010

Skye Roberts

2013

Hanna (Kugele) Puhl

2015

Jordan Grady

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David Benson
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Linda Paul
Lorraine Boer
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Ren Brander '55 Has a Story to Tell

On a good day walking around East Grand Rapids, you might run into Reynolds “Ren” Brander, who graduated from East Grand Rapids High School in 1955. On a really good day, Ren might have time to tell you a story.

A few years ago, we had one of those really good days when Ren sat down with us for an alumni interview. “Before we get started,” Ren began, “please understand East Grand Rapids schools were arranged differently in the years before 1955, the year we graduated. There was a lovely stone farmhouse that sat just east of what is now Wealthy Elementary School. That served as our kindergarten in 1942.

What are now the condominiums on Wealthy Street (that look like a school) housed grades 1-6. Grades 7-12 were in what is now Wealthy Elementary. Also, Ramona Park was still operational and the Ramona boat still rounded Reeds Lake endlessly in the summer.”

We asked Ren the question we always ask at the beginning of our interviews, “You can only have one: Rose’s caramel corn, an ice cream cone from Jersey Junction, or a Yesterdog. Which do you choose?”

“None of the above,” Ren said. “In the 50’s, those places did not exist. Bud Rose was there, not selling caramel corn, but rather swimming lessons. There was a small narrow restaurant on Wealthy that sold the best hamburgers in town. And my Mom’s picnic lunch, taken to the Ramona boat where for a dime you could circle the lake as long as you wanted while listening to the player piano on the top deck.”

Even if you don’t know Ren, you might know his house on Lake Drive near Conlon. He and his wife, CJ, have created one of our town’s most beautiful gardens. (Ren happily says CJ deserves all the credit.)

This winter, Ren stopped by the Foundation again, with a message about how you can make a difference in the lives of East students for generations to come.

“Except for seven years at university and law school, and 4 years in the US Navy, I have had the good fortune to live 89 years in four different homes in EGR,” Bander says.

“For more than forty years, I have watched the EGR Schools Foundation do wonderful things for the schools, the kids, the alumni, and the community.

“I have remembered the Foundation in my estate plan and I encourage you to consider doing so as well.”

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