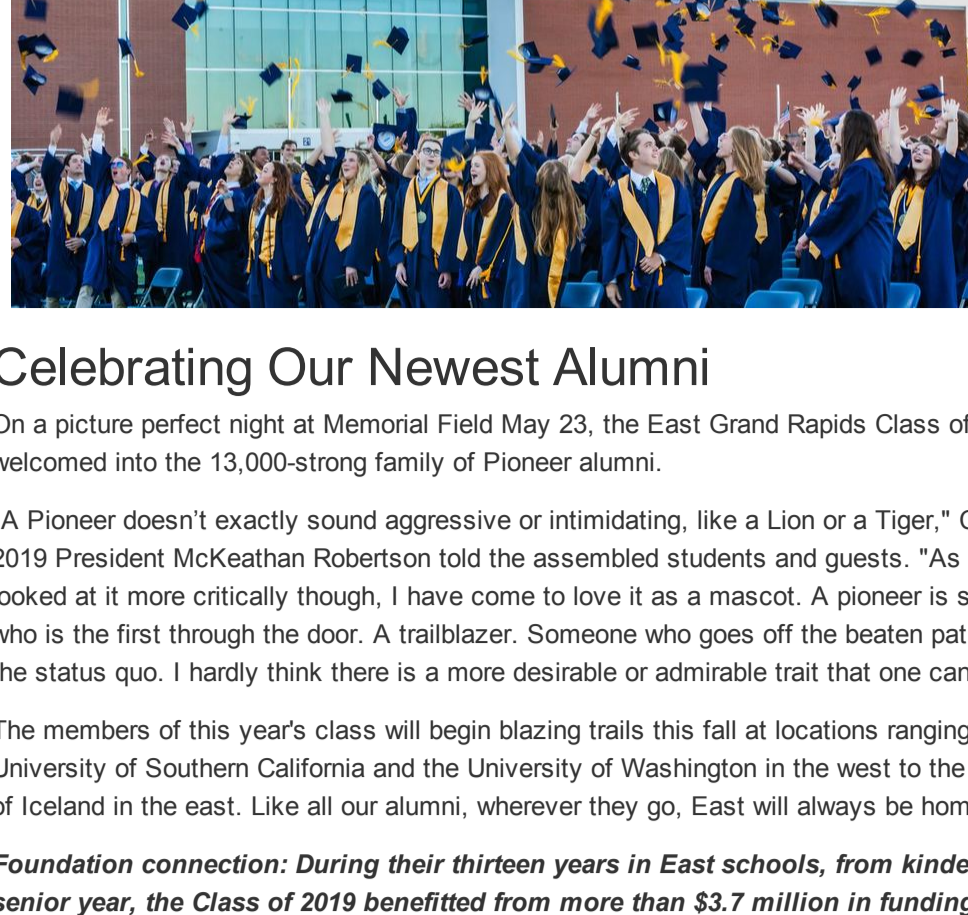


THE PIONEER POST

East Grand Rapids Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2019



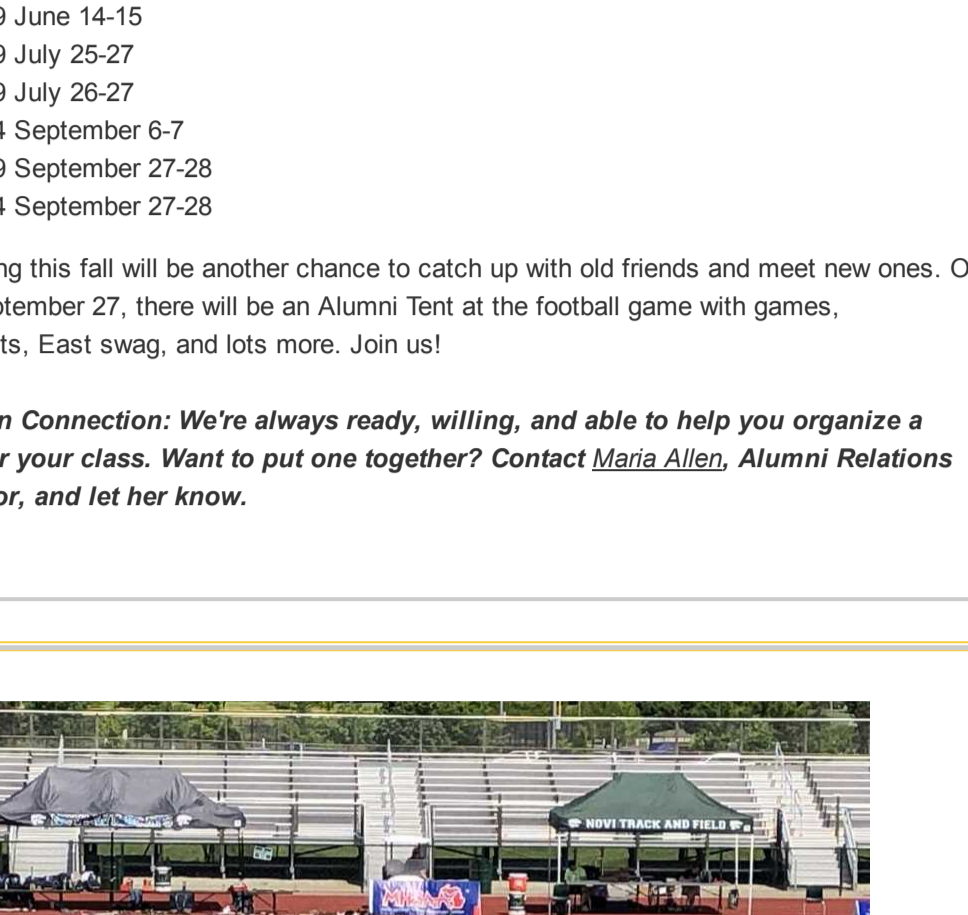
Celebrating Our Newest Alumni

On a picture perfect night at Memorial Field May 23, the East Grand Rapids Class of 2019 was welcomed into the 13,000-strong family of Pioneer alumni.

"A Pioneer doesn't exactly sound aggressive or intimidating, like a Lion or a Tiger," Class of 2019 President McKeathan Robertson told the assembled students and guests. "As I have looked at it more critically though, I have come to love it as a mascot. A pioneer is someone who is the first through the door. A trailblazer. Someone who goes off the beaten path, or rejects the status quo. I hardly think there is a more desirable or admirable trait that one can hold."

The members of this year's class will begin blazing trails this fall at locations ranging from the University of Southern California and the University of Washington in the west to the University of Iceland in the east. Like all our alumni, wherever they go, East will always be home.

Foundation connection: *During their thirteen years in East schools, from kindergarten to senior year, the Class of 2019 benefited from more than \$3.7 million in funding from the Foundation provided by our donors.*



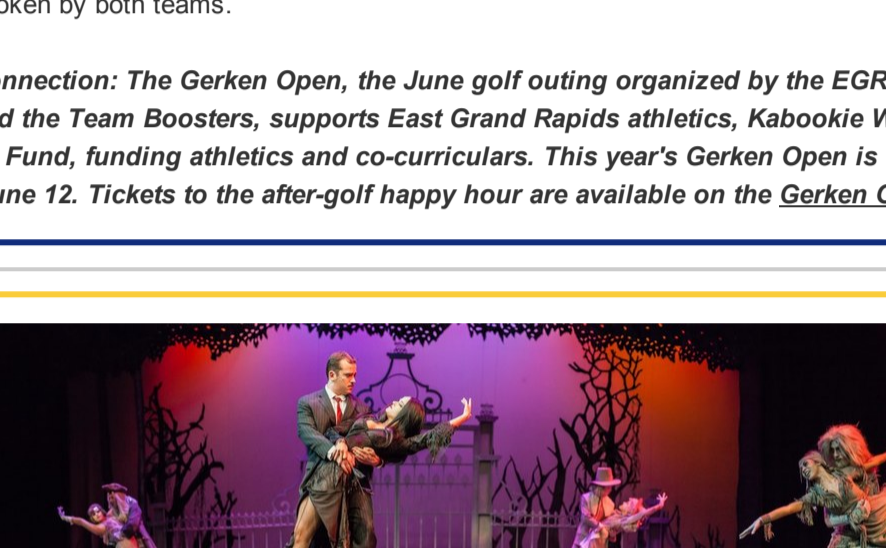
Reunion Season Starts Next Weekend, Save the Date for Homecoming in the Fall

There are six reunions scheduled for 2019. The classes of 1959, 1964, 1969, 1979, 1984, and 1989 have reunion dates on the calendar this summer and fall. If your class is planning a reunion but you don't see it here, please let Maria know.

- 1979 June 14-15
- 1969 July 25-27
- 1989 July 26-27
- 1964 September 6-7
- 1959 September 27-28
- 1984 September 27-28

Homecoming this fall will be another chance to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. On Friday, September 27, there will be an Alumni Tea at the football game with games, refreshments, East wear, and lots more. Join us!

Foundation Connection: *We're always ready, willing, and able to help you organize a reunion for your class. Want to put one together? Contact Maria Allen, Alumni Relations Coordinator, and let her know.*



State Champions!

Baseball: The team broke the school record for wins (34, also the most in the state this year) and defeated GR Christian in the district semifinals.

Boys Lacrosse: Won seventh straight regional and made it to the state semifinals.

Boys Golf: The team qualified for the state championships.

Crew: The Girls 2x boat of Bella Olsen and Ellie Iorio earned EGR's first Midwest event title. Four other boats won state championships.

Girls Lacrosse: The team won the state championship, winning each playoff game by at least 10 goals.

Girls Soccer: "Probably one of the most skilled Girls' Soccer Teams East has had in a while," according to Coach Fabian Rodriguez. "This young team (only 2 of the starters were upper classmen) had a very successful season and looks to build on this success in the coming years."

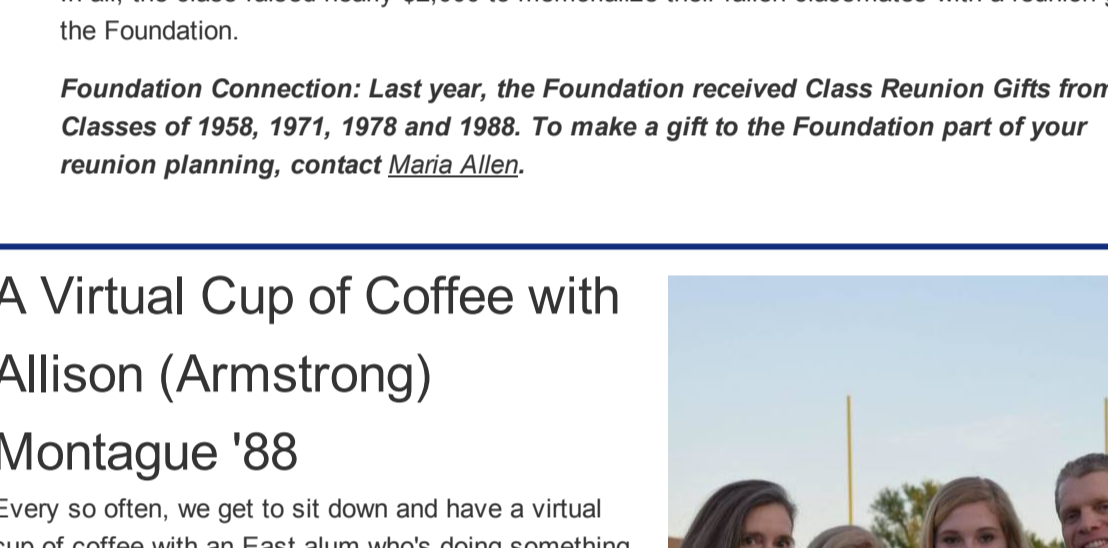
Girls Tennis: Sloane Teske won her third straight state championship at first singles.

Girls Water Polo: The team finished sixth in the state.

Softball: The team had one of its most competitive seasons in recent years.

Track: The Girls 4x800 team (Anna Pett, Ainsley Workman, Hannah Bodine, Katie Hessler) won the state championship. The Girls finished 4th in the state. The Boys team finished 16th in the state. Many school records were broken by both teams.

Foundation Connection: *The Gerken Open, the June golf outing organized by the EGR Schools Foundation and the Team Boosters, supports East Grand Rapids athletics, Kabookie Week, and the Jimmy Gerken Fund, funding athletics and co-curriculars. This year's Gerken Open is this coming Wednesday, June 12. Tickets to the after-golf happy hour are available on the Gerken Open page.*



Spring Performances Highlighted by "The Addams Family" and Band, Choral, and Orchestra Concerts

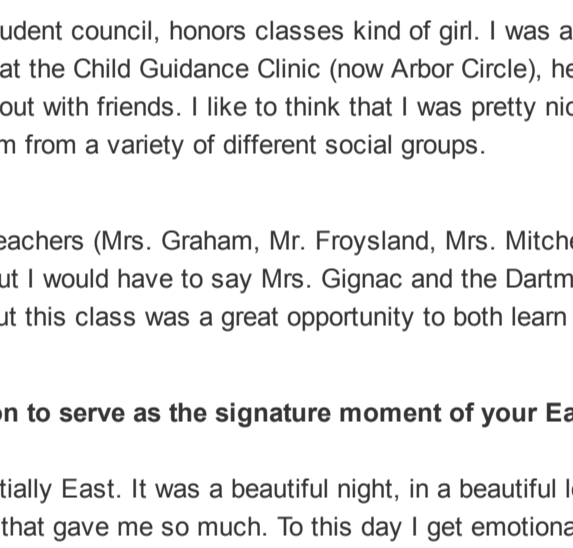
The spring musical, "The Addams Family," had audiences spellbound this spring in the Performing Arts Center. Once again, the extraordinary talents of the actors, director and crew were on display.

The EGRPS Music program also provided a full slate of concerts, with year-end concerts from the Middle School Band, Orchestra, and Choir, along with the High School Band, Orchestra, and Choral Concerts.

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

Class of '78 Honors

Deceased Classmates with Memorial Gift



At the 40th reunion of the Class of '78 last October, Jim Fuger was struck by how many members of the class had passed away.

When he also noticed that the Class of '77 had made a class gift to the Foundation a year before, he decided to organize a memorial gift from his class.

Working with Laura Young, who organized the reunion, Fuger gathered donations from classmates to honor the 21 members of the class who have passed away. "This was Jim's idea," says Young. "Then our classmates ran with it. I think it's a great way to recognize the wonderful legacy that we all have with East Grand Rapids."

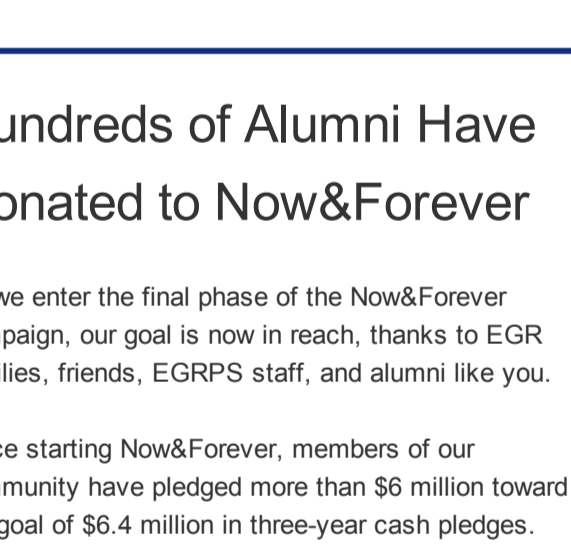
The deceased members of the class of 1978 are:

- Daired Defoe
- Darrell Drummond
- Thomas Terkeurst
- Katherine "Katie" Delongy O'Connor
- Pat (Perrin) Fichuk
- Susan (Williams) Lafferty
- Scot Finkelstein
- Michael David Prinsze
- Molly (Kirchegessner) Schuler
- Jim Jager
- John "Shaai" Kernosky
- Sharon "Shari" (Sawdoy) Solomon
- Tim Jenkinson
- Pam (Robey) Rumberg
- Ann Hartney
- Shelly Virkstis
- Bruce Barnhart
- Ellen Bradshaw
- Dave Geran
- Randall S. Phillips
- James Gruel

In all, the class raised nearly \$2,000 to memorialize their fallen classmates with a reunion gift to the Foundation.

Foundation Connection: *Last year, the Foundation received Class Reunion Gifts from the Classes of 1958, 1971, 1978 and 1988. To make a gift to the Foundation part of your reunion planning, contact Maria Allen.*

A Virtual Cup of Coffee with Allison (Armstrong) Montague '88



Every so often, we get to sit down and have a virtual cup of coffee with an East alum who's doing something really interesting. Recently, we sat down with Allison Montague. Want to join us? Pull up a chair!

Allison (Armstrong) Montague '88 has a BA from Skidmore, a Masters in Clinical Social Work from Smith, and a JD from the University of Denver. We're pretty sure that makes her the best-educated store owner in Gaslight Village (she owns and operates Snapdragon Boutique). She and her husband Jeff have two daughters: Claire, who graduated from East in 2018, and Lily, who's a member of the East Class of 2020.

You can only have one: Rose's caramel corn, an ice cream cone from Jersey Junction, or a Yesterday. Which do you choose? Obviously this is a hard one, but I would have to go with Yester because I have a lot of fun memories, albeit a little fuzzy ones, associated with going there.

After your was path from East Grand Rapids to where you are now in life? When graduating from East I attended Skidmore College graduating with a double major in Government and Psychology with a minor in Spanish, earned my Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work from Smith College, and a JD from the University of Denver. After working as a Child & Family Therapist in both Grand Rapids and Denver, I practiced Labor & Employment law at Holland & Hart in Denver and at Varnum in Grand Rapids. Shortly after passing the bar exam in Michigan, Meg Sebastian Evans (fellow EGR alum) called to discuss her idea to open a children's clothing store in Denver. I had recently moved back from there, and I tried to convince her to move back to East and open one here instead. Long story short, she didn't, but I did. Fifteen years later I still own and operate Snapdragon Boutique in Gaslight Village.

What specific thing did you learn in East that has enabled you to be successful? Don't be afraid to try new things, meet new people, and put yourself out there. I had a great time in high school, in large part because of all the different opportunities I had to participate in a variety of activities, play on different teams, and even do a bit part in the musical. These opportunities not only expanded my interests, but they also allowed me to become friends with people I might not have met otherwise.

What were you like in school? Most people would remember me as your typical student council, honors classes kind of girl. I was a member of the club and debate teams, volunteered at the Child Guidance Clinic (now Arbor Circle), helped start the Key Golf, and spent a lot of time hanging out with friends. I like to think that I was pretty nice to everyone, and I enjoyed friendships with people from from a variety of different social groups.

Did you have a favorite teacher or class? Hard to choose just one as I loved all my English teachers (Mrs. Graham, Mr. Froysland, Mrs. Mitchell), and I had a great time doing Debate with Mrs. Knack, but I would have to say Mrs. Gignac and the Dartmouth Spanish school. Sadly it's not around anymore, but this class was a great opportunity to both learn Spanish and to teach it as well.

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? Graduation on the football field—it is so quintessentially East. It was a beautiful night, in a beautiful location, surrounded by friends and family—and a community that gave me so much. To this day I get emotional when I drive by and see graduation.

What do you know now that you wish you'd known then? How good we had it. Going to college in New York with kids who attended prestigious private schools, I found that not only was I as well prepared as they were for college (if not better!), I also had an unparalleled opportunity that was I did. Moreover, the unbelievable support for life in this community is unparalleled. From athletics, to drama, to the People or the International Baccalaureate program, the whole community really cares and supports the kids and makes them feel valued for their participation.

Do you stay in touch with many people from East Grand Rapids? Yes, I keep in touch with all my close friends from East, and I try to see them as much as possible. Living in East now gives me the added benefit of seeing people when they come home to visit. Also, I just attended my 30th reunion and it was amazing to get to catch up with so many classmates that I hadn't seen in ages!

What advice do you have for young East alums who are just starting out? Don't be afraid to change course. I am a planner, always have been and always will be. I wanted most high school graduates, I knew exactly what I wanted to do: Become a child and family therapist to gain first hand knowledge of their needs, then attend law school to become a child advocate. I did all that, but ultimately realized that it wasn't for me. After being exposed to a variety of different legal issues during my internship at the Colorado Supreme Court, I decided to practice labor and employment law and do child advocacy pro bono work utilizing the resources available at a large firm. But in the words of John Lennon, life happens when you are busy making other plans. One random phone call, and six months later I am opening a children's clothing store.

Who else would you like us to have a virtual cup of coffee with? Andrew Palmer, Margie Bradshaw, Jim Berles, Jenny Katt Warren, Lisa Stevenson, Antonio Gracias, and Kerry Eleveird.

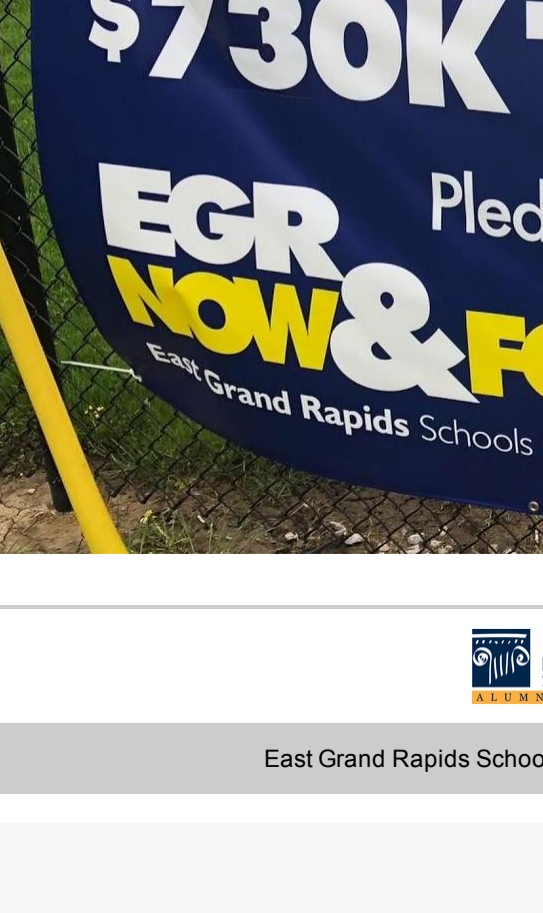
Bonus question: What are you glad we didn't ask you about? The time that I allegedly led the senior class out of the Academic Boosters awards ceremony. Let's just say that it seemed like a great idea at the time.

For more "Virtual Cup of Coffee with..." visit the [Alumni Profiles](#) page on our web site.

Foundation Connection: *Every year, the Foundation supports reunion organizers for East classes from the last 70 years. This summer, there are reunions for the classes of 1959, 1964, 1969, 1979, 1984, and 1989. For more information, or if you'd like to organize a reunion for your class, email Alumni Relations Coordinator Maria Allen.*

EGRPS Staff Who Retired This Year

- Jan Aardema, Special Education Paraeducator, High School - 19 years
- Jackie Burdick, Elementary PE Teacher, Lakeside and Wealthy - 24 years
- Barbara Davis, Special Education Paraeducator, High School - 23 years
- Joyce Duncan, Food Service, Middle School - 31 years
- Nancy McSkimming, 4th grade teacher, Lakeside - 30 years
- Annie Schmieder, Elementary Music Teacher, Lakeside and Wealthy - 15 years



Hundreds of Alumni Have Donated to Now&Forever

As we enter the final phase of the Now&Forever campaign, our goal is now in reach, thanks to EGR families, friends, EGRPS staff, and alumni like you.

Since starting Now&Forever, members of our community have pledged more than \$6 million toward our goal of \$6.4 million in three-year cash pledges.

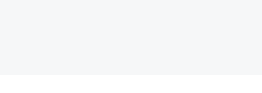
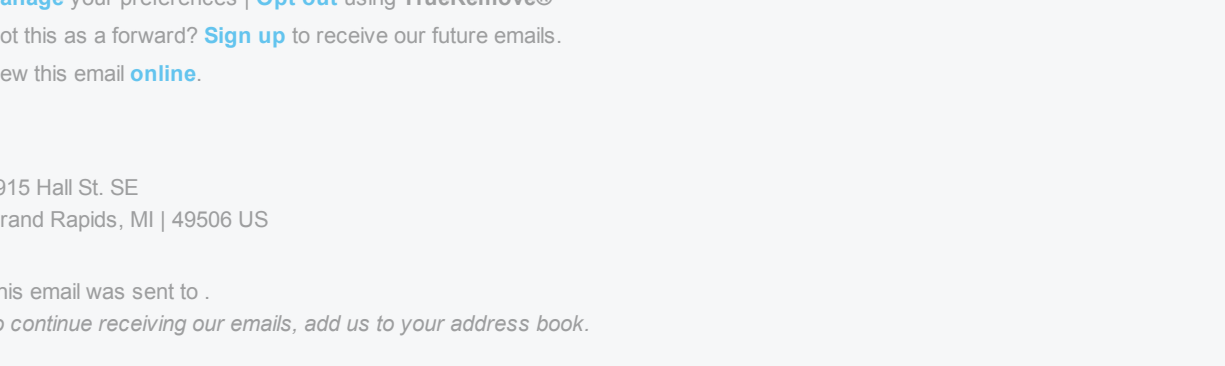
With the last \$2 million coming in the form of planned giving, these latest donations mean we are only \$350,000 from our target amount. Thanks to you, and everyone in our community, we'll get there!

Now&Forever is a brilliant new way that you can help our students, our schools and our community. By building the Foundation's endowment from \$4 million to \$12 million, Now&Forever will allow investment income from the endowment to fund the enhancements and program support our schools rely on us to provide.

Already, more than 200 East alumni have made pledges to Now&Forever. If you haven't pledged yet, join those who have by making a pledge to this historic effort. To make your pledge, visit [the donation page](#) on [egrsf.org](#).

Foundation Connection: *When we meet our goal of growing the endowment to \$12 million, the investment earnings may provide approximately \$600,000 every year for our schools.*

Donate to Now&Forever



East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation, 2915 Hall, [egrsf.org](#)

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