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A Newsletter from Four County Community Foundation

Fall /Winter 2022

YAC members become Mental Health First Aid ambassadors:

Teens equipped to help friends and classmates

In October, members of Four County Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) started a three-session training series to become certified through the teen Mental Health First Aid program (tMHFA).

The program, created by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, features evidenced-based training that aims to help teens learn how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance abuse challenges among their friends and peers.

In introducing the program to YAC members at their regular October meeting, one of the course instructors, Matt Henry, noted that teens often prefer to turn first to each other when facing a stressful or upsetting situation. The tMHFA course focuses on helping participants have supportive conversations with their friends, encouraging them to get



Matt Henry leads YAC members through a team-building activity during the first teen Mental Health First Aid sessions at Skyline Camp and Retreat Center in Almont.

help and determining when it's time to get a responsible and trusted adult involved.

The course covers topics including what mental health challenges are and how common they are in teens; the impact mental health challenges can have; how professionals can help and how to help a friend who may be in crisis or experiencing trauma.

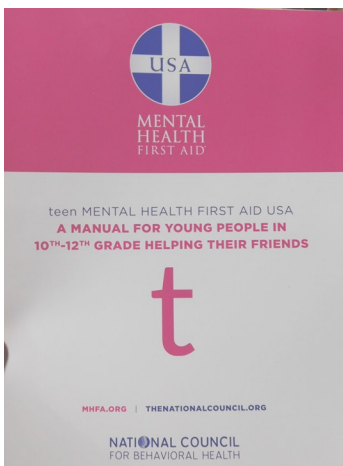
According to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, one in five teens has had a serious mental health disorder at some point in their life and suicide in the second-leading cause of death among adolescents ages 15-19.

Henry, along with Erin Stokes, taught the course. Both are directors at Skyline Camp and Retreat Center and the Almont camp was the site of the training sessions which also included recreational activities and a shared meal. Earlier this year, Four County Community Foundation (4CCF) grant-

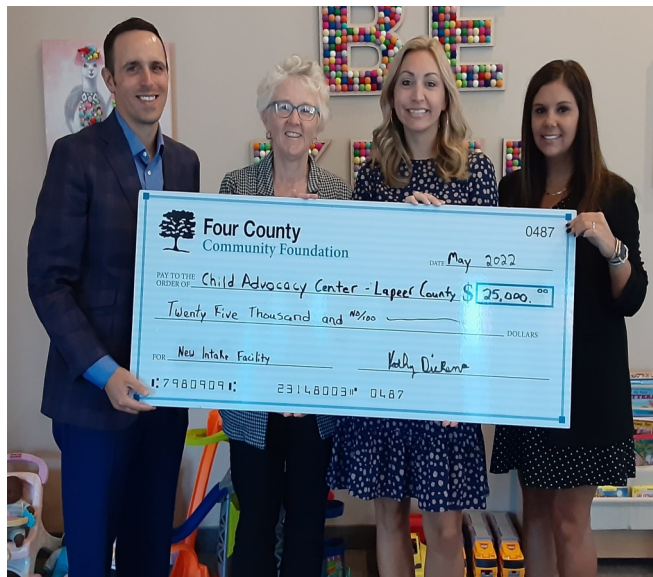
ed funds for Henry and Stokes to become certified trainers in the program.

4CCF Executive Director Kathy Dickens said the hope is that YAC members, after completing their tMHFA training, can become ambassadors of mental health within their own schools and encourage other student groups within 4CCF's service area to enroll in the program. Thanks to a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, the cost per group of 15 participants, will be covered for four student groups to take part in tMHFA at Skyline Camp and Retreat Center.

For more information about teen Mental Health First Aid, visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org. To inquire about a student group receiving teen Mental Health First Aid training, contact Kathy Dickens at kdickens@4ccf.org or (810) 798-0909.



Foundation gifts \$25,000 to new Child Advocacy Center facility



Board Vice Chair Ken Hummel and Executive Director Kathy Dickens present \$25,000 gift to the Child Advocacy Center's CEO/Executive Director Casey Schlunker and Development Director Dawn Wisner.

On Wednesday, October 5, the Four County Community Foundation (4CCF) formally presented a \$25,000 gift to the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County's capital campaign. The Child Advocacy Center (CAC) will use campaign funds for the construction of a new facility to be located on Imlay City Road in Lapeer.

Casey Schlunker, CEO/Executive Director of the CAC, said a new space for their organization is a necessity as they seek to expand their services and partnerships within the community.

"Our team is excited about what the new facility can bring to the children and families we serve," Schlunker said. The building promises to offer more

confidentiality to families and children who visit and provide more functionality and working space for CAC staff.

The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County was established in 2008. Its mission is to "reduce the trauma to children during the investigation and intervention of alleged sexual or severe physical abuse through advocacy, education, intervention, and treatment." The CAC also provides emergency and scheduled forensic medical examinations for adult and child victims of sexual assault through a partnership with LC Safe/Lapeer County Sexual Assault Program. For more information about the Center visit caclapeer.org or call (810) 664-9990.

Stone Soup Food Bank finds success with garden initiative

Earlier this year Four County Community Foundation gave \$5,000 to support the Stone Soup Food Bank. The food bank, which has been collecting and rescuing surplus food to feed Lapeer County residents since 2009, launched their 'Sustainable Garden-Sustainable Life' initiative and created a garden on a three-acre plot in Lapeer Township. Their goal was to increase the variety of vegetables supplied through the food bank. Additionally, produce from the garden was also available to purchase on site from 'Louise and Lino's Farm Market' with proceeds going

towards food bank programs.

Mary Anne MacLeod, the organization's business development director, describes it as a private garden for the community, managed by Stone Soup.

"For our first year, we were very pleased with the overall success of the garden," MacLeod said.

The project got underway when a family approached Stone Soup with an offer to let the food bank utilize a vacant plot of land. MacLeod said the pantries they support have requested a greater variety of fresh produce.

Once the 30-plus variety of crops started producing, the vegetables were distributed through the food bank's traditional channels and also through a new partnership with Door Dash whose drivers delivered packages to senior citizens, veterans and anyone with mobility issues. In August, the farm market—named in honor of the property owner's parents, Louise and Lino—opened three days a week to sell extra produce to the general public.

To learn more about Stone Soup Food Bank, visit them online at www.stonesoupfoodpantry.org/ or call (810) 245-0500.



Broccoli growing in the Stone Soup garden.

Louise & Lino's



Farm Market

Women's Fund seeking new members, planning fundraiser

In 2010, a group of community-minded women came together with the intent to help other women navigate life's challenges. They created the Women's Fund, an endowed fund held and administered by Four County Community Foundation, and thanks to contributions and fundraisers, have accomplished their goal of being a "helping hand" to women in need.

They've awarded a scholarship to a first-generation high school graduate who enrolled in nursing

school; helped cover transportation-related costs for a Samaritan House client and her husband; assisted a Lapeer Area Citizens Against Domestic Violence (LACADA) client purchase and install a home alarm system and provided general program support for agencies that help women in need including Samaritan House and Turning Point Macomb.

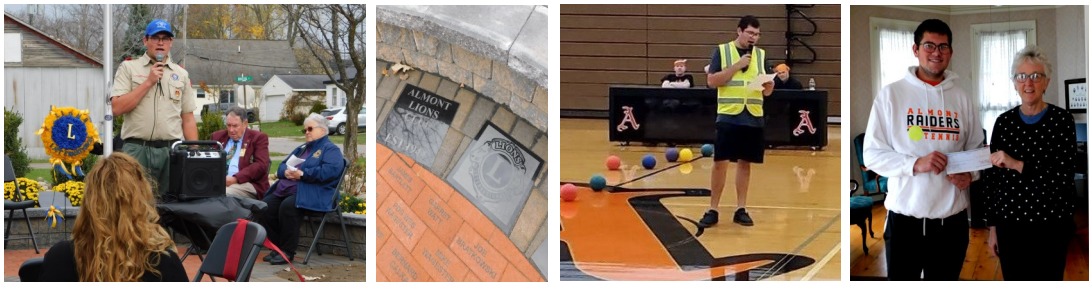
Women's Fund members are actively recruiting other women to join their ranks. There are no dues but members are asked to

make regular donations to the Fund. When a member's donations reach \$1,000 or more, either over time or with one large gift, they will become a Founding Member. That elite group of Founding Members will be limited to 100 women.

For more information about The Women's Fund, contact Susan Gainer at 586.770.3484, Dina Miramonti at 248.628.0671 or Linda Salas at 810.751.0309 or send an email to thewomensfund.4ccf@gmail.com.

Help families in need this holiday season with a donation to Jamie's Smiles. Fund volunteers assist families through the Macomb Infant Pre-school Program with gifts, food, clothing and much more. To make an online gift, visit jamiessmiles.org or send a check to Four County Community Foundation.

Want to learn more about how our Return to Earn Internship Program went in its first year? Then head on over to our website, 4ccf.org, and click on the 'News' tab to read an evaluation with insights from the ten interns who participated.



Almont's Troy Pape has been busy! In November, he completed a 4CCF-supported project that included the installation of a flag pole and memorial at the Almont Lions Hall. He also coordinated a dodgeball tournament at his school and donated the \$400-plus proceeds to 4CCF's Youth Advisory Committee.

Imagination Library Fund puts free books in kids' hands

Thanks to their group of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, the Imagination Library Fund has helped more than 500 children foster a love for reading since the summer of 2022.

Imagination Library is a book gifting program created by well-known performer Dolly Parton. Free age appropriate, high-quality books are mailed to children every month regardless of their family's income.

After securing the necessary

funding required of partners to cover the cost of wholesale book purchases and mailing fees, volunteers were able to start registering children from birth to age 5 earlier this year in Addison, Almont, Armada, Attica, Dryden, Imlay City, Metamora, Memphis, New Haven, Ortonville, Oxford, Ray, Richmond, Romeo, Shelby, and Washington with the goal of adding more communities as funding allows. Fundraising dollars have come in many forms including generous donations from area groups. Recently the

Romeo Kiwanis Club presented the Friends group with a \$4,500 donation and \$3,000 was given by the Friends of the Shelby Township Library. Friends Group member Julie Shanks also applied for and received a \$2,500 Bridging Michigan grant from Michigan Humanities in October.

A gift of just \$30 provides a year's worth of book for one child and a gift of \$150 will cover the cost for one child to receive 60 books over the course of five years. To check



availability and to register for Imagination Library, go to imaginationlibrary.com.

To make a donation to the Four County Community Foundation Imagination Library Fund visit <https://www.4ccf.org/initiatives/four-county-imagination-library/> or call the foundation at (810) 798-0909.

Helping Our Community Grow



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With 4CCF grant dollars, the Dryden Township Police Department was able to purchase new medical kits that officers can use when responding to emergency situations. The new kits feature new and improved first aid items including tourniquets, splints and more.

More than \$62,000 awarded in fourth quarter grants

At their October meeting, Four County Community Foundation's Board of Trustees approved more than \$62,000 in grant dollars to local nonprofit organizations. Volunteer committees reviewed 26 fourth quarter grant requests and recommended awards to 19 local groups, including seven area school districts. Here's snapshot of the grants awarded. For a complete list, visit www.4ccf.org.

W.K. Kellogg Youth Fund

- Holocaust Center field trip costs for Imlay City Middle School
- funding of Capac Jr./Sr. High School Student Council's Travel Club

Healthy Senior / Healthy Youth Fund

- support for the DRIVE R&E Family Foundation's weekend food program for students at Roberts Elementary School in Shelby Twp., Washington Elementary School in Washington Twp. and Hamilton Parsons Elementary School in Leonard Twp.
- mental health presentations at Armada middle and high schools
- supplies for the Fancy Quilters of Romeo Washington Bruce Parks

Four County Community Fund

- new equipment for the updated weight room at Imlay City High School

21st Century Education Funds

- Eisenhower High School's Science Olympiad Team
- die-cutting workshop at Almont High School

Jamie's Smiles Endowment Fund

- funds were given to The Romeo Croswell Early Childhood Center, Macomb Intermediate School District and Glen H. Peters School for therapy cube chairs, therapeutic positioning items, and toys for speech therapy and developing motor skills.

To apply for a grant, visit our website at www.4ccf.org and click on 'Grants.' Questions? Contact Micaela Boomer, Program Officer, at (810) 798-0909.