



# WE ARE GR

## In This Issue:

**Grand Rapids News and Recreation Programs - Section A**

**Grand Rapids Public Library News - Section A**

**Grand Rapids Public Schools News - Section B**

## Section A Contents:

**Election Info - 2**

**Winter Preparedness - 3,5,6**

**Community Recreation - 7**

**Grand Rapids Public Library - 13**

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## Co-response and other innovative public safety programs are making an impact in the community



Over the past eight years, the City of Grand Rapids has taken a deliberate approach to the necessary reimagining and evolution of policing. The City and our Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) have strived to thoughtfully implement initiatives and strategies for improved policing based on best practices in consultation with the

community.

Calls from the community for continued reform of the police department are based in part on a desire to better serve people in crisis. Police, they say, are asked to respond to a variety of social issues that they may not be best suited to address. The City, likewise, is committed to community safety and strives to effectively and compassionately serve people in crisis. One way we have done that is through two co-response models, the Homeless Outreach Team and the Mobile Crisis Response Team.

### Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)

In April 2020, the City of Grand Rapids developed the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) to respond to emergency needs including isolation, health and safety issues, and COVID mitigation within the homeless community.

The team has transitioned to an ongoing, active homeless outreach unit in the city. Its mission is “to preserve health and safety and improve outcomes for homeless persons and our community.” The team canvasses the community Monday through Saturday to interact with unsheltered persons and engage with businesses and residents to resolve issues. It also works to build relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness to better assist them in obtaining services and connecting to housing solutions. The City, including HOT, is part of a community-wide system to address homelessness with the Continuum of Care. Currently, there are four members on the HOT team – two police officers and two fire personnel – who work in shifts from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The City has partnered with Network180 to add two social workers and two addiction and recovery specialists to the team for behavioral health and recovery coaching services.

### Mobile Crisis Response Team

As a further expansion of the co-response model, our police department and Network180 have teamed up to help those experiencing a mental health crisis get the resources and access to the care they need. Our department’s co-response model pairs an officer and a clinical social worker to respond together, bringing a unique set of resources, tools, experience, and solutions to crisis situations. Since its launch in July 2022, the Mobile Crisis Response Team has taken over 325 calls for service. The team responds to a variety of situations, including welfare checks, domestic incidents, threats of suicide, and assistance on complex pick-up orders initiated by mental health professionals. They also respond when officers request assistance if it’s clear their services could be beneficial in peacefully resolving a call for service. This has all helped those in crisis to be routed to appropriate support rather than jail or the emergency room of a hospital which may be a traumatic experience for individuals. The new program is playing a key role in improving policing, but even more important, it is better serving the community.

Kristina Lug, a Network180 social worker assigned to the team, shares that having the option to send the mental health co-response team frees up police resources to focus on crime and criminal complaints. The team can get people directly into Network180, Pine Rest Urgent Care, or work with the individual to create a safety plan. Some people do need emergency room care, but that is not necessary or appropriate for every situation. The co-response team can assess and focus on the specific needs of that individual, de-escalate crisis situations, and offer the opportunity for some follow-up care.

GRPD and Network 180 work seamlessly together as they know the system, and in many cases, have had prior contact with the individuals, so there is a level of trust already

established.

The response from the community, and especially family members or others involved in co-response calls, has been very positive. In August, the City of Grand Rapids accepted a federal grant to help fund the program, with the remainder coming from federal recovery funds. The grant will pay for a second full-time social worker to expand the availability of co-response teams.

### Data Informed Community Engagement (DICE)

This past summer, Chief Eric Winstrom implemented DICE (data informed community engagement). DICE is a partnership between the community and the police department focused on deterring and solving crimes specific to that area, in ways that people welcome and support. It uses data to identify specific areas within the city that are experiencing escalating crime and guide conversations with community members, businesses, and other stakeholders on solutions. As DICE is rolled out, officers go door-to-door in those areas to engage with residents about the issues they see, the outcomes they want, and how GRPD could better work with them. Some of these conversations highlight the need for other public safety improvements, like improved lighting or traffic calming. DICE is first and foremost an effort to reduce crime in our city, but these conversations also have reinforced that achieving a safe community requires everyone to contribute including all City Departments when feasible and appropriate.

All these examples show how Grand Rapids is committed to systemic changes in policing and justice. The programs came about because of listening to you and your neighbors and responding with well thought-out programs that will make an impact in the community.

Improved public safety outcomes conversations and focus groups

By the end of November, the City plans to seek input from the community on Chief Winstrom’s soon-to-be-proposed updates to the three-year Police Strategic Plan. This will include reform to police tactics and policies, enhanced opportunities for input from the community, and other ways to improve public safety outcomes.

The National Civic League (NCL), in partnership with the Belonging Initiative, will create neutral and independent spaces for community conversations about safety in Grand Rapids. We want to ensure that input is gathered from every part of the city in a way that reaches populations that are sometimes under-represented in community dialogues and at times and venues convenient to the community. The gathered

*Continued on next page*

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### Co-response – continued from previous page

input will contribute to the final form of the Police Strategic Plan.

NCL will conduct community meetings in each ward to give residents a mechanism for contributing strategies that will be considered as part of the city's Police Strategic Plan and suggesting ideas for improving public safety and civic engagement. Additionally, three smaller focus group meetings will be held for specific parts of the community that are often not well represented at general gatherings. At the ward sessions and focus group meetings food and childcare will be

provided. One virtual meeting option will also be available. The dates and times for these events were finalized after the printing deadline for We Are GR. Please refer to the City's Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram accounts for details on these engagement sessions.

We have and will continue to listen to our community. We have incorporated community feedback into what we are doing now and the actions we intend to take to improve policing and address the needed systemic and institutional change that our community deserves. The community safety

measures outlined in the Fiscal Year 2023 Fiscal Plan show that Grand Rapids is committed to accomplishing our goal of becoming a city where all people feel safe and are safe at all times throughout our community.



Mark Washington, City Manager

## The November 8 General Election is Almost Here

It's a busy year of elections, and City Clerk Joel Hondorp wants to make sure you're prepared. Here are important dates and information for each election:

**November 8:** General Election – You may vote a straight party or select candidates individually. This ballot includes federal, state, county, city, judicial and school races as well as proposals.

This is the first year City Offices will be included in the even year ballot. The city comptroller, city commissioner (1 per Ward) and library board representatives will be elected this year.

Some reminders before you vote:

- **Voter registration** – Residents who are 18 or older are automatically registered to vote when they make a transaction with the Secretary of State. You may register to vote by mail up to 15 days before an election and or in person at the City Clerk's Office within 14 days of the election up to Election Day. You need to prove residency in the city.
- **Michigan Voter Information Center** - Check your voter registration status, register to vote, update address, apply for an absentee ballot, check status of absentee ballot, view a sample ballot or find your polling location at [michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote). Know before you go!
- **Election Day voting** – Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Any voter in line at 8 p.m. may vote.
- **Absentee voting** – All registered voters are eligible to receive an absentee ballot without a reason. To receive a ballot, simply fill out an application before every election. Voters may apply online at [michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote). The application is also available at [grandrapidsmi.gov/election](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/election) or at the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 300 Monroe Ave. NW, second-floor, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Validated parking is available in the Government Center Ramp off Monroe and Ottawa avenues. We also have a second location to serve you at our Election Central Office, 201 Market Ave. SW, second floor. This office is open Monday through Friday (noon to 5 p.m.). You can be placed on a permanent AV list to receive an application before each election by signing up at [grandrapidsmi.gov/avlist](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/avlist) or contacting the Clerk's Office at 616.456.3010.

You have several options available to return your signed absentee ballot:

#### In person:

- City Clerk's Office, 300 Monroe NW (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
- Election Central Office, 201 Market Ave. SW (Monday through Friday, noon to 5 p.m.)

#### Election Drop Boxes (24/7 drive-up):

- 300 Ottawa NW (across from Calder Plaza)
- 1563 Plainfield NE (VanBelkum Library – Curbside on Plainfield)
- 1017 Leonard NW (West Leonard Library – East Parking Lot)
- 1100 Cesar E Chavez SW (Cook Library Center – curbside on Cesar E Chavez)
- 1150 Giddings SE (Ottawa Hills Library – curbside on Giddings)
- 2350 Eastern SE (Seymour Library – rear of building by the book drop)
- 201 Market SW (north entrance to building)
- Election Drop Box (Mon–Fri, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.):
- 300 Monroe NW (City Hall – Monroe Level and Calder Level Lobby)

#### By Mail:

(no postage required) IF MAILING YOUR BALLOT, PLEASE ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR YOUR BALLOT TO GO THROUGH THE USPS MAILING PROCESS. YOUR BALLOT MUST BE RECEIVED BY 8 P.M. ON

ELECTION DAY IN ORDER TO BE COUNTED – THE POSTMARK DATE DOES NOT APPLY.

**Straight party voting** – You can vote the partisan section of the ballot by selecting the party only.



Office of Equity  
and Engagement  
CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS



## NEIGHBORHOOD MATCH FUND!

Submissions will be accepted throughout the month of DECEMBER for projects that take place in Grand Rapids between March and August of next year. Contracts ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 will be awarded for Grand Rapids resident-led projects that are community focused, inclusive and promote a deeper sense of belonging among neighbors.

Learn more at [grandrapidsmi.gov/nmf](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/nmf)



## Winter Preparedness: Parking

Seasonal parking restrictions throughout our city allow us to clear roads of leaves, tree debris and snow in addition to allowing cars and our service and emergency vehicles to travel safely on neighborhood streets in the winter. These restrictions include odd-even and same-side parking.

Our plow crews work hard to clear streets of snow in line with parking regulations. That's why they need your help. If you park on a restricted side of the street and the plows come through, your street won't get completely plowed and your car may get buried in snow. We may not be able to return to plow this street until all regularly scheduled plow routes are complete.

Seasonal parking restrictions are in effect Nov 1 to Apr 1. For a map of the restrictions, visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven). You don't have to worry about seasonal parking restrictions if your street doesn't have odd-even or same-side parking signage. Keep in mind that the normal regulations apply to all streets. These include distance from:

- Curbs
- Fire hydrants
- Driveways
- Stop signs

Seasonal parking restrictions are enforced whether or not there's snow. Follow these rules to avoid a \$20 parking ticket:

- Park on the even-numbered side of the street on even-numbered days from 1 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Park on the odd-numbered side of the street on odd-numbered days from 1 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- From 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. the next day, you can park on both sides of the street unless there are signs that say otherwise.
- Think ahead before you go to bed!

To report a parking complaint please dial 311 or 616-456-3000 or go online at [grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Report-a-Parking-Complaint](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Report-a-Parking-Complaint).



## Lead-Safe Homes Take on New Lives



Across the city, many older homes are beautified at the same time they are made lead safe. Houses that were once a little tired and had little curb appeal are now some of the best-looking homes on the block. And they are safe for kids!

With support from the City of Grand Rapids, lead hazards are being fixed as entire homes are modernized with attractive, weathertight windows and other contemporary features. The southeast side home pictured above is one such home.

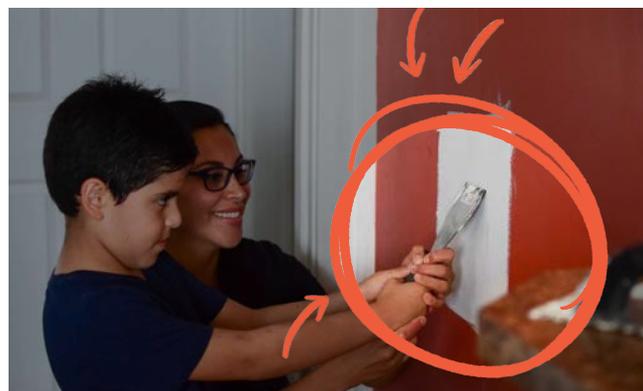
Repairs are made using federal Lead Hazard Control Funds awarded to the City of Grand Rapids to help homeowners and rental property owners fix lead hazards. For example, another southeast side home received nearly \$37,000 in repairs. A no-interest, deferred loan paid for more than \$22,000 of the work. That loan will be 100% forgiven if the family stays in the home for the next five years. The remaining \$14,000 was paid for with an interest-free matching loan, which means that only \$7,000 will need to be repaid over the next ten years with simple, affordable payments of less than \$60/month.

Lead safety, new windows, more comfort, and a beautiful

home all for only \$60 a month. That's less than a monthly phone bill!

Lead Hazard Control funds are available city-wide to families with young children five years of age or younger. Households with a pregnant woman may also apply. Both owner-occupied and rental homes are eligible if the resident family is low- to moderate-income (for example, a family of four must have an annual household income of no more than \$71,600).

If you want to beautify your home while making it lead safe, call the City of Grand Rapids Housing Rehabilitation Office at (616) 456-3030 to apply today.



## Renovate **lead** safe.

Protect your family when improving your home.

VISIT [DONTPLAYAROUND.ORG](http://DONTPLAYAROUND.ORG)



## It Doesn't Have to be Scary, Become Cyber Smart During the Month of October



### CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

As the lines between our online and offline presence blur and technology continues to connect us in ways we could not have imagined, cybersecurity is a topic that everyone should take seriously to protect themselves and those around them from cyber criminals. October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month and the theme this year is "See Yourself in Cyber." The City of Grand Rapids is a Cybersecurity Awareness Month champion and during this time, we wanted to share eight great tips from our partners at the National Cybersecurity Alliance, [staysafeonline.org](https://staysafeonline.org)

**1. Make a Long Passphrase** Length trumps complexity. A strong passphrase is a sentence that is at least 12 characters long. Focus on positive sentences or phrases that you like to think about and are easy to remember.

- 2. Passphrases Aren't Enough** Use 2-factor authentication or multi-factor authentication (like biometrics, security keys or a unique, one-time code through an app on your mobile device) whenever offered.
- 3. When in Doubt, Throw it Out** Links in email, tweets, texts, posts, social media messages and online advertising are the easiest way for cyber criminals to get your sensitive information. Be wary of clicking on links or downloading anything that comes from a stranger or that you were not expecting.
- 4. Keep a Clean Machine** Keep all software on internet connected devices current to reduce risk of infection from ransomware and malware. Configure your devices to automatically update or to notify you when an update is available.
- 5. Back it Up** Protect your valuable work, music, photos and other digital information by making an electronic copy and storing it safely. If you have a copy of your data and your device falls victim to ransomware or other cyber threats, you will be able to restore the data from a backup.
- 6. Own Your Online Presence** Every time you sign up for a new account, download a new app, or get a new device,

immediately configure the privacy and security settings to your comfort level for information sharing.

- 7. Share with Care** Think before posting about yourself and others online. Consider what a post reveals, who might see it and how it might affect you or others.
- 8. Get Savvy about WiFi Hotspots** Public wireless networks and hotspots are not secure, which means that anyone could potentially see what you are doing on your laptop or smartphone while you are connected to them. Limit what you do on public WiFi and avoid logging in to key accounts like email and financial services.

Please visit the sites below for additional resources and tips.

- **Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency: Cybersecurity Tips** [us-cert.gov/ncas/tips](https://us-cert.gov/ncas/tips)
- **Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency: Protecting Your Privacy** [us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-013](https://us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-013)
- **Federal Trade Commission: Cybersecurity Basics** [ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/basics](https://ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/basics)
- **Adobe & NCSA Security Awareness Video: Phishing and Ransomware** [youtu.be/D\\_yAYhjNE-0](https://youtu.be/D_yAYhjNE-0)



Mayor's Youth  
Council

## JOIN THE MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

## 2022-2023



"I know it to be deeply informative, educational, and fun. I left more knowledgeable, more curious, interested in government and met new people who have the same passion as me." - Liam Duncan

"I was able to get involved in the everyday operation of city government and get a feel for what actually happens behind the scenes in our city." - Sophia Ferenczi

"Being a part of Mayor's Youth Council made me feel accomplished and successful this year. I had a very enjoyable and educated year because of this experience!" - Charlotte Beresford.

### ELIGIBILITY:

9-12th Grade Students  
City of GR Resident

### Apply Now:

[www.ourcommunitychildren.com](https://www.ourcommunitychildren.com)

## Winter Preparedness: Snow Shoveling

Residents enjoy the walkability of our neighborhoods – even in the winter. Cleared sidewalks ensure you and your neighbors are able to use them. When sidewalks remain clear in the winter, residents who do not drive can walk to the bus or get to work, school or their favorite businesses. Residents, including seniors, children and individuals with disabilities, remain safe when our sidewalks are clear of snow and ice.

The City ordinance for sidewalk snow removal says:

- The clearing of ice and snow on sidewalks is the property owner's responsibility.
- The full width of the sidewalk needs to be cleared down to the concrete within 24 hours after the end of a snowfall.
- Sidewalks not cleared of snow and ice after notification from the City may be cleared by a City contractor at the property owner's expense.



### Shoveling Tips

Our primary goal is to remove snow from the streets. There is frustration when plows push snow into driveways, sidewalks, fire hydrants and mailboxes. Here's how you can avoid frustration and help:

- If you have a driveway, park on it and leave the road clear for plowing
- If on-street parking is your only option, change where you park throughout the week
- Follow all parking restrictions – map is at [grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven)
- Don't shovel or blow snow into the street – shovel it into your yard – to avoid a ticket and having it pushed back into your driveway by traveling vehicles
- Never bury a fire hydrant with shoveled snow and try to keep the hydrant accessible in case of an emergency.



## Winter Preparedness: Snow Plowing



We're constantly improving our winter operations, so we can deliver the highest level of service to our community.

Our plow operators use de-icing materials on major streets to minimize snow and ice. Pretreating material may be applied to bridges, hills and curves before a snow event, if needed. We work hard to minimize our salt use as part of our commitment to environmental sustainability as it reduces runoff in our rivers and streams. This is also part of our commitment to be a good steward of funds. Plus, many of our

plow trucks have side wings that plow an additional half lane of snow.

When we do have to use salt, our plow trucks have liquid storage capabilities. This allows for the pre-wetting of salt as plows spread it on street surfaces. Pre-wetting salt reduces the bounce to keep it on the road. It also helps us reduce the amount of salt we use by 30 percent – another money saver. Plus, salt activates faster when treated.



### Priority plowing on first-attention routes

The major high-traffic roads in our city are first-attention streets for snow plowing. We apply salt to all first-attention streets. Examples of first attention streets include:

- Burton
- Division
- Fulton
- Leonard
- Monroe

### When do plows go onto secondary (local) streets and alleys?

We monitor weather conditions and clear secondary streets and alleys when there are more than 3 inches of snow. De-icing salt typically is not applied to secondary streets. We may salt these streets if there are hills, severe curves or special circumstances in the city.

Extended snow events may require snow plow crews to leave secondary streets and return to first-attention roads to ensure safety on high-traffic streets. While we make every effort to clear bike lanes our main priority is to keep the automobile travel lanes clear of snow and ice.

## Winter Preparedness: Refuse and Recycling

### Shoveling out refuse and recycling carts

Want to make sure we can pick up your trash and recycling this winter? Follow these tips:

- Clear a path 3 feet wide from your refuse and recycling carts to the alley or street and make sure the carts can be moved freely
- Shovel out your refuse and recycling carts the night before your collection day
- Shovel out your carts the following collection day if a heavy snowfall prevents you from doing so in time for your scheduled pickup

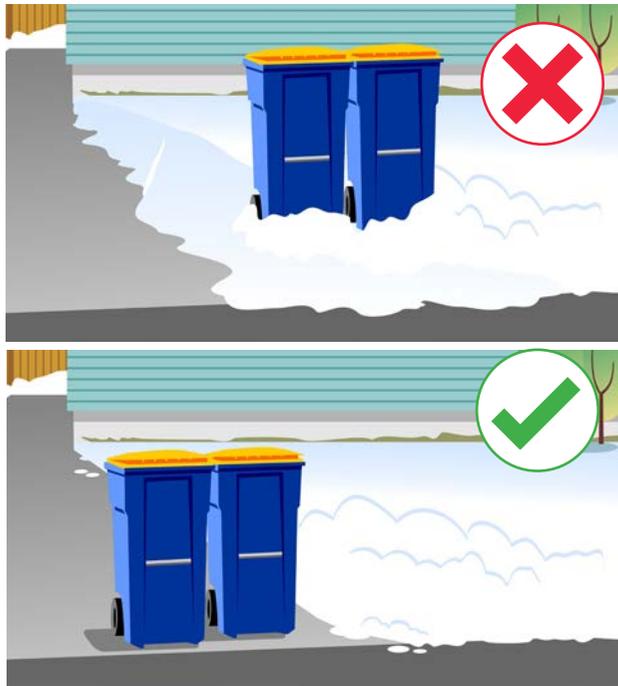
### Refuse & Recycling Tips

#### Avoid Frozen Trash

- Bag your trash – it keeps your cart cleaner and helps us do our job
- Unbagged trash can freeze in the cart, making it difficult to empty
- Avoid a partial tip and keep bags and materials from freezing to the bottom by putting a small amount of rock salt in the cart

#### Don't block sidewalks and streets

- Keep the curbs clear when setting out your trash and recycling carts on collection day – our vehicles need access to your carts
- Keep a clear path between the carts and street



#### Keep the cart lids closed

- Melting snow and rain can easily fill and freeze bags to the cart. We will not return to empty carts with bags frozen to the cart.
- Frozen trash or recycling can result in an overweight or cracked cart



### Mark Your Calendar

#### Yard Waste

You can drop off yard waste until the second Saturday in December, weather permitting. That's December 10 this year. Drop off yard waste at our site at 2001 Butterworth Ave. SW. It's open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. It's closed Thanksgiving Day but is open the Friday and Saturday after the holiday. The site is free for city residents.

Curbside collection also runs until early December each year. It typically ends the second Friday, weather permitting. That's December 9 this year.

#### Refuse & Recycling Holiday Schedule

We collect refuse and recycling one day later during the weeks following:

- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- New Year's Day

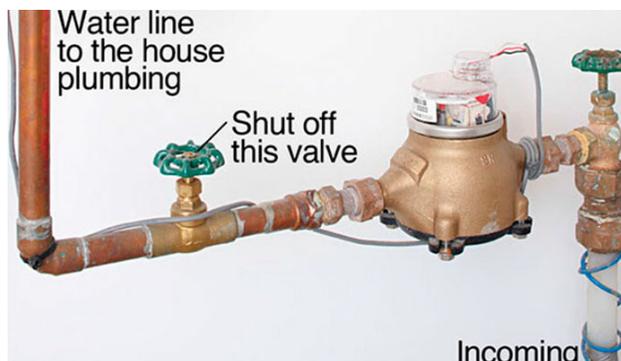
## Winter Preparedness: Keep Your Pipes Warm This Winter

#### Protect your water meter

Knowing where your shutoff valve is located when a pipe bursts anywhere in your home ensures you can turn off the water at the valve. Be sure everyone in the home knows where it is and what it does in an emergency.

#### Here are some tips:

- The water shutoff valve is located near the meter where the water line enters the home or building.
- The water meter is installed by the Water System. It is the property owner's responsibility to protect the meter from damage.
- Make sure the space where the meter is located is heated to protect it from freezing.
- If the meter is frozen or damaged, there is a charge to the property for replacement.
- Take extra precautions during extreme temperatures.
- Pipes located next to an outside wall are most susceptible to freezing temperatures. The same is true for pipes located in a garage or another unheated building.
- Exposed pipes in these areas should be wrapped, insulated or shut off and drained before winter.
- Open cupboard doors under sinks and pipe chases.
- Where plumbing is in an exterior wall, access to interior heat helps to keep pipes warm.
- Keep a steady but slow drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter. Keep water moving – it's less likely to freeze.
- If you're away for more than a day, shut off your water and leave the thermostat at 55 degrees or higher.



#### If your water pipes freeze:

- Open a furnace vent or an inside basement door to help thaw a frozen pipe and get heat into the basement.
- Don't use electrical appliances in areas of standing water – you may be electrocuted.
- Contact a licensed plumber to avoid damage when pipes thaw.
- Assume frozen lines are broken or split and buy repair clamps at a plumbing store or contact a plumber and be prepared to turn off the water when the pipes thaw.

Note: If there's no water to your home, the problem may be in the street if the water has been shut off for a water main repair. Call 616.456.3000 to confirm.



**Parks and Recreation**  
CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

# COMMUNITY RECREATION

Happening November through February

## NOV/DEC SESSION

**REGISTRATION OPENS**  
October 17

**CLASS DATES**  
November 7 - December 24  
No class the week of November 21

**ADULT PROGRAM PRICING:**  
\$30 per 6-week class, \$40/nonresidents

**YOUTH PROGRAM PRICING::**  
\$42 per session, \$52/nonresidents

## JAN/FEB SESSION

**REGISTRATION OPENS**  
November 14

**CLASS DATES**  
January 2 - February 26

**ADULT PROGRAM PRICING::**  
\$42 per 8-week class, \$52/nonresidents

**YOUTH PROGRAM PRICING::**  
\$42 per session, \$52/nonresidents



**Register online**  
[grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)



**Register by phone**  
616.456.3696, option #1



**Register in person**  
201 Market Ave SW

## YOGA

NOV/DEC CLASSES RUN FOR 6 WEEKS, JAN/FEB CLASSES RUN FOR 8 WEEKS

Classes will be held on the same days/times for both sessions unless otherwise noted.

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)  
Registration for Jan/Feb opens Nov 14.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BASIC YOGA (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Discover your inner yogi in a class that builds strength and body awareness. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.	MON	5:30 - 6:25 PM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
	TUE	6:30 - 7:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	AMY K.
	WED	6:00 - 6:55 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
	THU	12:00 - 12:55 PM	201 MARKET SW	MELISSA T.
	THU	7:30 - 8:25 PM	VIRTUAL	KAYLA M.
	SAT	9:00 - 9:55 AM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<b>GENTLE YOGA (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> A balanced practice that will center you, leaving your body feeling open and relaxed. Basic poses and a slower flow unlock body tension, strengthen your core and help you tune into personal peace.	TUE	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
	THU	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>FIRESIDE BASIC YOGA (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Enjoy a peaceful evening of Yoga in a cozy clubhouse complete with a fireplace. Discover your inner yogi in a class that builds strength and body awareness. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end. Please bring a yoga mat	MON	6:00 - 6:55 PM	INDIAN TRAILS GOLF COURSE	DARCEL S.
<b>SLOW FLOW YOGA (Happening in Jan/Feb only)</b> End your weekend and set the tone for the week ahead with this calming and gentle yoga class. Each class will begin and end with a variety of restorative postures, with a slow yoga flow in between. Find a cozy comfortable space, light a few candles, and grab as many blankets and pillows as you can!	SUN	7:00 - 7:55 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<b>POWER YOGA (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> This energetic class is designed to build strength, flexibility, and balance! Challenging peak poses, breath to movement flows, and mind body connections will encourage students to find their edge. Modifications are always offered and body awareness is always encouraged.	TUE	6:30 - 7:25 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.

## YOGA (CONT.)

NOV/DEC CLASSES RUN FOR 6 WEEKS, JAN/FEB CLASSES RUN FOR 8 WEEKS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jan/Feb opens Nov 14.

Classes will be held on the same days/times for both sessions unless otherwise noted.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>VITAL MOVEMENT (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Strength, flexibility and balance are vital to our well-being. This class combines yoga stretches and poses (from the chair and standing only), along with light core work. No mat required. Perfect for anyone needing to stretch, improve their range of motion, or modify their practice as they recover from injuries. This class is great for any age, especially those 50+.	WED	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>RESTORATIVE YOGA (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Using breath work, props and holding simple poses this "mindful yoga" class will help you achieve a deep level of relaxation. The slower pace will help you disconnect from your busy life and tune into you, creating mind and body awareness.	MON	7:30 - 8:25 PM	201 MARKET AVE	KAYLA M.

## CARDIO & STRENGTH

NOV/DEC CLASSES RUN FOR 6 WEEKS, JAN/FEB CLASSES RUN FOR 8 WEEKS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jan/Feb opens Nov 14.

Classes will be held on the same days/times for both sessions unless otherwise noted.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BARRE (Happening in Nov/Dec only)</b> Barre is a low impact, high intensity total body workout that incorporates elements of Pilates, Ballet and Yoga. This workout is fast paced and set to fun upbeat music. During the workout you will use light hand weights, resistance bands, and your own body weight. You will complete small range movements at high repetitions meant to fatigue your muscles to build strength and endurance, and then stretch everything out to increase your flexibility. Barre is a great workout for any fitness level as there are options to level up or down based on your own body. Barre is for EVERYBODY.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	LENOX N.
<b>NEW! FUNCTIONAL FITNESS (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Functional fitness training is a type of strength training that readies your body for daily activities. These exercises equip you for the most important type of physical fitness, the kind that preps you for real-life, daily living stuff like bending, twisting, lifting, loading, pushing, pulling, squatting and hauling.	TUE	6:30 - 7:15 AM	VIRTUAL	DARCEL S.
<b>HIGH FITNESS (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> HIGH Fitness is an energetic, fun, fitness class that incorporates interval training with pop music, and easy-to-follow fitness choreography. This dance based class produces a high caloric burn and full-body toning through its carefully formulated choreography, alternating between intense cardio peaks and toning tracks. No equipment necessary, and options will be given for all fitness levels.	TUE	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	AHNA S.
<b>HIIT EXPRESS (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> This class uses High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) to increase your heart rate, strengthen your muscles, and boost your metabolism. Participants will be given 30 seconds to do as many reps of a single body weight exercise as possible. Then rinse, repeat, with a new move! Class will end with mat routines that includes core and upper body strength exercises. All movements will have modified options as well as progressions, allowing each person to decide their own intensity level. All fitness levels welcome!.	WED	6:30 - 7:15 PM	201 MARKET SW	AMY K.
<b>KETTLEBELL AMPD (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Kettlebell AMPD is a group fitness format that takes heart-pumping music and kettlebell moves and combines them into a calorie torching fun workout! The program uses lightweight kettlebells, in both traditional and non-traditional ways, to create a fun, effective, full body workout. Combining the benefits of strength training, functional movements and cardiovascular exercise, this program is a safe and effective workout for all ages and fitness levels. No experience necessary!	THU	4:30 - 5:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	MONICA S.
<b>WATER AEROBICS (Happening in Nov/Dec - Jan/Feb TBD)</b> Build core strength, conditioning, endurance and all-over toning. Class features deep and shallow water exercises. A great low/non-impact workout. Float belts are available.	MON WED SAT*	6:30 - 7:25 PM 6:30 - 7:25 PM 10:15 - 11:10 AM	UNION HIGH SCHOOL POOL	KATHLEEN H.

\*5-week session  
(\$25 resident, \$30 nonresident)

# CARDIO & STRENGTH (CONT.)

NOV/DEC CLASSES RUN FOR 6 WEEKS, JAN/FEB CLASSES RUN FOR 8 WEEKS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jan/Feb opens Nov 14.

*Classes will be held on the same days/times for both sessions unless otherwise noted.*

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>KICKBOXING (Happening in Jan/Feb only)</b> Mix up your routine with balance, coordination and strength-building moves. Strengthen your legs, upper body, abs and burn calories.	WED	6:30 - 7:25 AM	201 MARKET SW	MARIE R.
<b>PILATES (Happening in Nov/Dec only)</b> Tone muscles, improve posture and learn flexibility and balance. Focus on moving as one unit with control and grace. Improve circulation, endurance and reduce stress.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GYM	ZIYAH D.
<b>POUND (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Using Ripstix®, lightly weighted drumsticks engineered specifically for exercising, POUND® transforms drumming into an incredibly effective way of working out. Instead of listening to music, you become the music in this exhilarating full-body workout that combines cardio, conditioning and strength training with yoga and pilates-inspired movements. Designed for all fitness levels, POUND® provides the perfect atmosphere for letting loose, getting energized, toning up and rockin' out! The workout is easily modifiable, and the alternative vibe and welcoming philosophy appeals to men and women of all ages and abilities. POUND® approved sticks required for everyone. Punch card holders must have their own Ripstix®. Ripstix® available at registration for \$20.	THU	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	JANNA S.
<b>NEW! STRENGTH &amp; CARDIO (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> It's the best of both worlds: strengthen your muscles using a variety of equipment (dumbbells, resistance bands, stability balls, etc) and burn calories with cardio intervals in the same class! You will learn safe and effective movements adaptable for all fitness levels, experience improvements in your fitness from week to week, all while having fun!	MON	5:30 - 6:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	MICHELLE D.
<b>NEW! STRENGTH &amp; ROW CIRCUIT (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> This high intensity class will improve your endurance and strength to row faster and for longer. Each class will include a rowing and strength training circuit to maximize calorie burn!	THU	5:30 - 6:25 PM	COLDBROOK 1101 MONROE NW	JESS W.

# CYCLING

NOV/DEC CLASSES RUN FOR 6 WEEKS, JAN/FEB CLASSES RUN FOR 8 WEEKS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)   
Registration for Jan/Feb opens Nov 14.

*Classes will be held on the same days/times for both sessions unless otherwise noted.*

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>CYCLING (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Reach your fitness goals while building leg and core strength. Powerful music and pace-setting instruction helps you climb steep hills, move across flat road and master intense intervals.	MON	5:30 - 6:15 PM	COLDBROOK 1101 MONROE NW	CAROL S.
	TUE	5:45 - 6:30 PM		MICHELLE D.
	WED	5:30 - 6:15 PM		CAROL S. & PATRICK F
	SAT	8:15 - 9:00 AM		CAROL S. & MICHELLE D.
<b>CYCLE &amp; ROW COMBO (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Find strength through the power of cycling with fast flats, hill climbs and intervals set to fun music, and then hop off the bike and continue your cardio burn by igniting your upper body with our low impact rowers where you will complete power and intervals.	MON	6:30 - 7:30 PM	COLDBROOK 1101 MONROE NW	CAROL S.



### GRATITUDE FLOW

Start your Thanksgiving with a Gratitude Yoga Flow! This class will focus on clearing your thoughts, opening your heart, energizing your body, and setting an intention of gratitude to keep with you throughout your Thanksgiving activities!

- November 24
- 9:00 - 10:00 AM
- Virtual
- Sara R.

### ZUMBA TURKEY BURN

Join us for a 90-minute Zumba dance party on Thanksgiving morning. You'll burn off the calories before the big meal and feel great while you're doing it. It starts early so you can get your dance on without missing your Thanksgiving plans.

- November 24
- 8:30 - 9:30 AM
- 201 Market Ave SW
- Amy K. & Bri C.

## DANCE FITNESS

NOV/DEC CLASSES RUN FOR 6 WEEKS, JAN/FEB CLASSES RUN FOR 8 WEEKS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)  
Registration for Jan/Feb opens Nov 14.

Classes will be held on the same days/times for both sessions unless otherwise noted.

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BEGINNER BALLROOM DANCING (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> A beginner class targeted toward couples wanting to learn ballroom dancing. Learn the Salsa, Waltz, Foxtrot, East Coast Swing, Cha Cha, Rumba and Tango.	TUE	8:00 - 9:00 PM	201 MARKET SW	BYRON D.
<b>GENTLE MUSICAL MOVEMENT (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> This 45 minute class encourages freedom for body, mind, + spirit while working range of motion, strength, flexibility and balance. Class is created around music and combines simple dance and stretch moves for all body parts. Move your body in ways outside of your daily routine, inviting in both fun and freedom of personal expression. Perfect for all ages, especially those 50+. This class can also be adapted to the chair.	MON	9:15 - 10:00 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>MINDFUL MUSICAL MOVEMENT - FORMERLY GROOVE (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Move in new ways, get your heart pumping, and infuse your whole body with joy in this not-so-typical dance class set to a variety of great music. Simple steps designed to work your whole body are provided and you are encouraged to supply the intensity level and flair. Perfect for all levels, all you need is space to move freely.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>NEW! SWING DANCING (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Come enjoy our Swing Dance class from one of the most passionate dancers in Grand Rapids: Jim Chad. There are several types of Swing Dances and the focus of this class will be on the New York Hustle. It can be danced high energy or quite chill and can be adopted to many kinds of music. It is a great dance for women who like to turn. It has been one of Jim's favorite dances for years. In each lesson we will cover the basic step for both leads and follows, and one or two new moves each week. Class is for couples. Each person required to register.	THU	8:00 - 8:55 PM	201 MARKET SW	JIM C.
<b>WERQ (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> WERQ is a nonstop cardio dance class with fun and unique routines set to the hottest pop and hip hop music. Participants will get a high calorie burn, and a non stop workout, combining repetitive athletic moves with fresh dance steps. Anyone can WERQ it! Bring your own water bottle and towel.	WED	6:30 - 7:25	201 MARKET SW	JEANNIE W.
<b>ZUMBA (Happening in Nov/Dec &amp; Jan/Feb)</b> Zumba is a high energy, dance fitness class that incorporates Latin and international music. All fitness levels are welcome.	MON THU	6:30 - 7:25 PM 6:30 - 7:25 PM	201 MARKET SW	AMY K. & BRI C.

## YOUTH DANCE & GYMNASTICS

6-CLASS SESSIONS. \$42/RESIDENTS, \$52 NONRESIDENTS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<b>YOUTH MOVEMENT (AGES 4-8)</b> This class combines creative movement and basic dance skills. The class focuses on coordination, motor skills, musicality, and overall to get the wiggles out and heart rate up! This non-stop action packed class will include foundations in mostly hip hop and jazz dance, so please wear a pair of clean sneakers or ballet slippers.	TUESDAYS NOV 8 - DEC 20	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET SW
<b>PARENT &amp; ME TUMBLE &amp; PLAY (AGES 2-3)</b> For the younger gymnast to encourage success and fun in the gym. Kids learn tumbling and balancing basics with emphasis on strength and flexibility. <b>Required Clothing:</b> leotards, athletic clothing with shirts that can be tucked in, comfortable with stretch.	MONDAYS NOV 7 - DEC 19	10:30 - 11:15 AM	MLK PARK LODGE
<b>GYMNASTICS 1 (AGES 4-6)</b> For the younger gymnast to encourage success and fun in the gym. Kids learn tumbling and balancing basics with emphasis on strength and flexibility. <b>Required Clothing:</b> leotards, athletic clothing with shirts that can be tucked in, comfortable with stretch.	MONDAYS NOV 7 - DEC 19	5:00 - 5:45 PM	MLK PARK LODGE
<b>GYMNASTICS 2 (AGES 7-10)</b> A follow-up to Gymnastics 1. Activities increase strength, movement, coordination, agility and flexibility. <b>Required Clothing:</b> leotards, athletic clothing with shirts that can be tucked in, comfortable with stretch.	SATURDAY NOV 5 - DEC 17	10:30 - 11:15 AM	MLK PARK LODGE
<b>GYMNASTICS 3 (AGES 11-14)</b> For the gymnast who has already achieved basic gymnastics skills. Gymnasts will learn more advanced skills. Classes will also include strength and flexibility activities in a non-competitive and fun environment. <b>Required Clothing:</b> leotards, athletic clothing with shirts that can be tucked in, comfortable with stretch.	SATURDAY NOV 5 - DEC 17	11:25 AM - 12:10 PM	MLK PARK LODGE

## BRICKS 4 KIDZ

3-CLASS SESSIONS. \$42/RESIDENTS, \$52/NONRESIDENTS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<p><b>LOGAN &amp; ZOE: BACK IN TIME! (AGES 5-11)</b></p> <p>Logan and Zoe are featured characters in weekly stories that go back in time to visit the site of fantastic inventions or peek into pre-historic eras long gone. In this unit they will visit Kitty Hawk and build an airplane, they'll see the early construction of motorcycles and cars and visit the pre-historic era to take a look at some dinosaurs!</p> <p>Each class is a fun and educational LEGO-building adventure with Bricks 4 Kidz. We use age appropriate models for different levels of building skill. This hands-on class explores STEAM concepts (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) primarily using LEGO Bricks, in which children will develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills in a fun and engaging way. Even our youngest and newest students will learn how to make mechanical LEGO models that move and groove. As they advance in building skill, they'll also motorize their weekly model for even more learning fun!</p>	OCT 25, NOV 1, 15	4:30 - 5:45 PM	201 MARKET SW
<p><b>REV YOUR ENGINES (AGES 5-11)</b></p> <p>These wheels are ready to roll! Students will use LEGO® Bricks, axles, pulleys, gears, and motors to build a variety of models on wheels. Some are familiar vehicles, such as a fire engine and delivery truck. Others are more spectacular, such as the Rescue Robot and K-9 Bots. Do you have a need for speed? Put your Speed Bot model to the test as your race against others using remote controls! We'll explore concepts of speed and force and gain non-vehicle knowledge from the unconventional Wheels in Motion models as well. Let's roll!</p>	NOV 29, DEC 6, 13	4:30 - 5:45 PM	201 MARKET SW

## YOUTH ENRICHMENT

6-CLASS SESSIONS. \$42/RESIDENTS, \$52 NONRESIDENTS

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

CLASS	DATES	TIME(S)	LOCATION
<p><b>SEWING BY HAND FOR BEGINNERS (AGES 7-12)</b></p> <p>Participants will learn the basic skills to hand sew with needle and thread. Also, the child will use creativity with skills they learn, to sew fun and exciting projects to bring home!</p>	MONDAYS NOV 7 - DEC 19	6:15 - 7:00 PM	MLK PARK LODGE
	SATURDAYS NOV 5 - DEC 17	12:30 - 1:15 PM	
<p><b>YOUTH PICKLEBALL (AGES 10-16)</b></p> <p>Pickleball instruction and play for youth 10-16 years of age. There will be 30-45 minutes of instruction by teachers from the Grand Rapids Pickleball Club. Instruction will include ground strokes, serving, overhands and basic strategies. Paddles and balls will be provided.</p>	TUESDAYS NOV 8 - DEC 20	4:00 - 5:30 PM	GARFIELD PARK GYM
<p><b>CHILDREN'S YOGA (AGES 3-6)</b></p> <p>Children can enjoy and benefit from yoga and mindfulness from toddlerhood through middle school and beyond. Classes are available for three age groups, and activities vary to meet the developmental needs of each group. Classes consist of movement, music, yoga, games, mindfulness practice, and breathwork. They are designed to be playful while challenging children to develop their focus, awareness, and movement in new ways. Children will build regulation skills, healthy social skills, and positive self-esteem. If you'd like to add more to your class, talk to me about adding a related craft for even more fun!</p>	TUESDAYS NOV 8 - DEC 20	4:30 - 5:15 PM	201 MARKET AVE SW

## ICE SKATING AT ROSA PARKS CIRCLE

Outdoor ice skating is coming back to Rosa Parks Circle! This year, we're offering pre-booking for open skate time slots as well as walk-ups. The rink will be open daily (weather permitting) November 25 - February 26.

Book a skate time online in November at [grandrapidsmi.gov/skating](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/skating)

### Pricing:

- Youth admission with skates: \$2
- Adult admission with skates: \$4
- Season passes and punchcards will be available to purchase



## ADULT SWIM LESSONS

Dates and locations TBD.

Visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr) for more information and to register online.

### SWIMMING ESSENTIALS (AGES 16+)

Swimming Essentials is designed for anyone 16 years of age and older. This class will develop fundamental swim skills including floating, water safety, breathing techniques, and foundational swim strokes while allowing participants to gain confidence in a safe, controlled setting. This class is great for individuals who are brand new to swimming or have an existing fear of the water. After successfully completing Swimming Essentials, swimmers will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to safely navigate aquatic environments.

### STROKE DEVELOPMENT (AGES 16+)

Stroke Development is designed for anyone 16 years of age and older. This class will build on fundamental swimming skills by introducing different swimming strokes. This class is great for individuals who are comfortable in the water and looking to expand on their skills and learn different ways to swim. After successfully completing Adult Stroke Development, swimmers will be able to swim using a variety of strokes.

## YOUTH SWIM LESSONS

### SWIM LESSON LEVELS

#### PARENT CHILD (AGES 6M-3Y)

Introduce water safety and basic swim skills to parents and children. Parents will learn skills to safely work with their child in the water, including how to correctly support/hold them in the water and how to encourage them. Children will gain confidence in the water through games and songs and receive an introduction to swim foundations, like submerging and kicking.

#### PRESCHOOL LEVEL 1 (AGES 3-5)

Introduces water safety and basic swim skills. Children will work with instructors to gain confidence, develop positive attitudes around the water, and receive an introduction to swim foundations like submerging, floating, and the movements of front and back crawl.

#### PRESCHOOL LEVEL 2 (AGES 3-5)

Builds on the skills introduced in Preschool Level 1. Children will continue to develop a positive relationship with the water while mastering swim foundations like floating, submerging, and the basics of front and back crawl.

#### YOUTH LEVEL 1 (AGES 6+)

Youth Level 1 aims to develop positive relationships with the water while mastering swim foundations – like floating, submerging, and the basics of front and back crawl. At the end, participants will be able to perform swim foundations independently or with minimal assistance.

Dates and locations TBD.

Visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr) for more information and to register online.

### SWIM LESSON LEVELS

#### YOUTH LEVEL 2 (AGES 6+)

Builds on the foundations in Level 1 to support the correct execution of foundational swim skills. Focuses on proper technique of foundational skills to ensure participants are strong and capable in the water independently. Repetition is used to build endurance and muscle memory. Participants will learn how to float, glide and move forward in the water with no support and will continue to develop the foundations for future swim strokes.

#### YOUTH LEVEL 3 (AGES 6+)

Aims to increase proficiency of previously learned skills by providing additional practice with an emphasis on technique. Participants will learn and practice survival floating and improve their front crawl, back crawl, breaststroke, and elementary backstroke technique while swimming longer distances. Participants will also learn safe headfirst entries and begin learning the foundations of butterfly. After successfully completing Level 3, participants will have achieved basic, independent water competency in a pool environment.

#### YOUTH LEVEL 4 (AGES 6+)

Participants will improve their technique and increase endurance in previously learned strokes. Swimmers will gain better control over front crawl, back crawl, and breaststroke and will continue to learn butterfly foundations. Emphasis will be placed on headfirst entries and swimming underwater to provide the basic skillset for competitive swimming. After successfully completing Level 4, swimmers will be well equipped with the skills needed to transition to a swim team setting.

FREE!

## PROGRAMS FOR AGES 50+

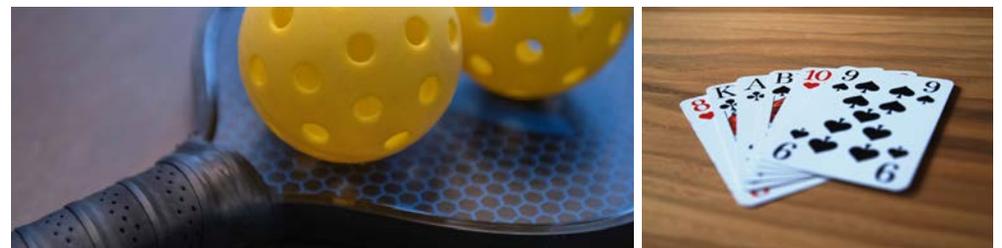
At Garfield Park Community Gym  
(2111 Madison Ave SE)

Programs for ages 50+ are ongoing and run Monday through Friday. All programs are **free** and open to the public.

Visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation) or call 616-456-3696 for more information.

#### Programs include:

- Tai Chi
- Active Adults
- Stretch and Flex
- Pickleball
- Walking Club
- And more!



## Visit any of the Grand Rapids Public Library's 8 locations

### Main Library

111 Library Street NE ■ 49503  
616.988.5400

### Madison Square Branch

1201 Madison SE ■ 49507  
616.988.5411

### Ottawa Hills Branch

1150 Giddings SE ■ 49506  
616.988.5412

### Seymour Branch

2350 Eastern SE ■ 49507  
616.988.5413

### Van Belkum Branch

1563 Plainfield NE ■ 49505  
616.988.5410

### West Leonard Branch

1017 Leonard NW ■ 49504  
616.988.5416

### West Side Branch

713 Bridge NW ■ 49504  
616.988.5414

### Yankee Clipper Branch

2025 Leonard NE ■ 49505  
616.988.5415

For more information and hours,  
visit [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org).



616.988.5400 ■ [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org)

## Celebrate Hispanic Heritage

### Grand Rapids' Día de los Muertos Festival

Sunday, October 30 | 3:00 – 7:00 pm  
Roosevelt Park – 1340 Godfrey Ave SW

Celebrate Día de los Muertos! Enjoy a community-created Día de los Muertos display at Roosevelt Park. Elaborate altars honoring family and friends who have passed away will be on display throughout the afternoon for attendees to view. Music, Latino food, workshops, and crafts will also be available during this day-long festival.

A Day of the Dead procession from the Hispanic Center of West Michigan to Roosevelt Park will take place from 2:00 – 3:00 pm. The community is encouraged to meet at the parking lot of the Hispanic Center of West Michigan and join the walking parade toward the festival.

### Community Altar Showcase

Friday, October 21 – Thursday, November 3  
During open hours  
Madison Square Branch – 1201 Madison SE  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE  
Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities' Cook Library Center – 1100 Grandville Ave SW

Experience altars created by talented artist Reyna Garcia. The altars highlight the significance of the Día de los Muertos celebration within some of our Hispanic cultures. Printed educational material will be available for everyone that visits the altars.



### Latinx Figures Craft Kits

Stop by and pick up a free craft kit! These take-home kits include age-appropriate crafts for kids, and have helpful inserts to help parents and kids get to know three different Latinx figures: Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Ynés Mexía, and Susana Torre. Craft kits can be picked up at any GRPL location and at the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities' Cook Library Center (1100 Grandville Ave SW) September 15 – November 3. Available while supplies last.



### Pick Up an Altar Kit

Parents and teachers, build an educational altar kit with your kids! Share this Día de los Muertos tradition through hands-on learning.

Kits contain information about altar building and the supplies you need to create your own! Each kit will include the following: Día de los Muertos altar fact sheet, tea light candles, incense sticks, fake marigolds, paper sugar skulls, fake fruit pieces, cut paper banners, tissue paper craft, and picture frames. Altar kits are available to pick up at all GRPL locations and at the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities' Cook Library Center October 3 – 30, 2022 while supplies last! Limit one kit per family or classroom.

*Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation for their support of these programs.*

## Celebra la Herencia Hispana



### El Festival del Día de los Muertos de Grand Rapids

Domingo, 30 de octubre | 3:00 – 7:00 pm  
Roosevelt Park | 1340 Godfrey Ave SW

¡Celebremos el Día de los Muertos! Disfrute de un evento cultural y educativo gratuito en Roosevelt Park, creado en colaboración con el comité del Festival del Día de los Muertos de Grand Rapids y la Biblioteca Pública de Grand Rapids. Altares

tradicionales de Latinoamérica elaborados en honor a familiares y amigos que han fallecido estarán en exhibición durante toda la tarde para que los asistentes los vean.

Música, comida latina, talleres y artesanías también estarán disponibles durante este festival de un día de duración. Se llevará a cabo una procesión del Día de los Muertos desde el Centro Hispano del Oeste de Michigan hasta Roosevelt Park de 2:00 a 3:00 pm. Se alienta a la comunidad a reunirse en el estacionamiento del Centro Hispano del Oeste de Michigan y unirse al desfile a pie hacia el festival.

*Mancera Pro – Grand Rapids Día de los Muertos Festival*

### Altars Públicos del Día de los Muertos

Viernes, 21 de octubre – jueves, 3 de noviembre, durante el horario de servicio  
Sucursal Madison Square | 1201 Madison SE  
Biblioteca Principal | 111 Library St NE  
Centro Bibliotecario Cook de Artes y Humanidades de la Avenida Grandville  
1100 Grandville Ave SW

Experimenten altares creados por la talentosa artista Reyna García. Los altares resaltan la importancia de la celebración del Día de los Muertos dentro de algunas de nuestras culturas hispanas. Habrá material educativo impreso disponible para todos los que visiten los altares.

### Kits de Artesanía para Figuras Latinas

¡Pasen y recojan un kit de artesanía gratuito! Estos kits para llevar a casa incluyen artesanías apropiadas para la edad de los niños y tienen insertos útiles para ayudar a los padres y a los niños a conocer tres figuras latinas diferentes: Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Ynés Mexía, y Susana Torre.

Los kits de artesanías se pueden recoger en cualquier ubicación de la GRPL y en el Cook Library Center de Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities (1100 Grandville Ave SW) del 15 de septiembre al 3 de noviembre. Disponibles hasta agotar existencias.

### Recojan un Kit para un Altar

¡Los "Altar Kits" están disponibles para recogerlos en todas las ubicaciones de la GRPL y en el Cook Library Center de Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities del 3 al 30 de octubre de 2022, hasta agotar existencias! Límite de un kit por familia o salón de clase.

*Agradecimiento especial a la Fundación de la Biblioteca Pública de Grand Rapids por su apoyo de estos programas.*

## Library Events for Everyone

### Socktober

Monday, October 3 – Friday, November 4  
All Grand Rapids Public Library locations during open hours.

November is National Runaway/Houseless Youth Awareness Month. In honor, we're partnering with Arbor Circle to collect socks for youth in need. Please drop off brand new socks to any GRPL location. Donations will be accepted from October 3rd to November 4th.



### Meet Me at the Library!

Saturdays, October, 22, 29, November 5, 12, 19, December 3, 10 | 10:30 am – 1:00 pm  
West Side Branch – 713 Bridge St NW  
Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard NE

It's a play date at the library! Kids and caregivers are invited to the West Side or Yankee Clipper Branches on Saturdays this fall. Drop in for family-friendly fun and refreshments.

### Creator Labs

Thursdays, October 20, November 17, December 15 | 5:30 – 7:00 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Tweens and teens are invited to learn how to use GRPL's NEW maker equipment to create something cool to take home. Each month, we'll explore a different art and design creation.

October 20: 3D Printed Keychains  
November 17: Green Screens & Photo Editing  
December 15: Personalized Vinyl Stickers

### Haunted Grand Rapids Tour for Teens

Monday, October 24 | 5:00 – 6:00 pm  
Meet at the flagpole at the Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Registration required: [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Join GR Crime Tours for a haunted walking tour of downtown Grand Rapids! Whether you're a believer or a skeptic, you'll have fun exploring the city and hearing its most notorious ghost stories. Just in time for Halloween! The tour will begin and end at the Main Library. For teens ages 13-19.



### Adult Storytime

Mondays, November 14, December 12  
6:30 – 7:30 pm  
Creston Brewery – 1504 Plainfield Ave NE

Why should kids have all the storytime fun? Adults enjoy stories, too! Join us at the Golden Age at the Creston Brewery to sit back and relax as library staff and special guests read short stories aloud. A cash bar and appetizers (available first come, first served) will be available to attendees.

November 14: Award-winning storyteller and actor John Steven Crowley performs stories drawn from the African American experience.

December 12: Library staff and local educator and theater practitioner Matt McKay will read stories about friends and family gathering for celebrations.

*Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation for their support of these programs.*



### Healthy Habits Book Club

Wednesday, November 16, 5:30 – 6:30 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Katie Hague, a Health Coach from Catherine's Health Center, will lead a book discussion and provide additional strategies for making healthy choices. Participants will leave with more information about how to create new habits for a healthy lifestyle!

November 16: *In Defense of Food* by Michael Pollan

### Market Research Series with GR SCORE

Thursdays, October 20, November 3  
12:00 – 1:00 pm | ZOOM (Visit [www.grpl.org/sbrc](http://www.grpl.org/sbrc) for links)

Join GR SCORE and the Grand Rapids Public Library for this virtual lunch and learn series.

In three sessions, we'll explore business research foundations, what useful industry research analysis looks like, and how to find information in three specific subject areas: nonprofits, health, and food service. All classes will be taught by the Business and Career Librarian of the Grand Rapids Public Library

October 20: Industry Research for Small Business  
November 3: Business Information for Nonprofits, Health, and Food Service Enterprises



### Friends of the Library Book Sale

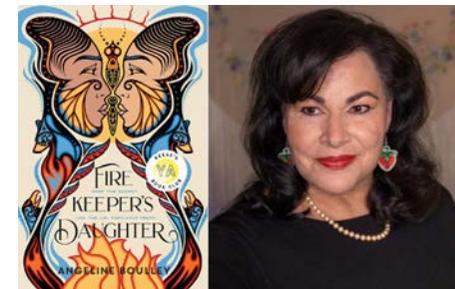
Saturday, October 29 – Sunday, October 30  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Join us at our biggest book sale of the year! During this annual fundraiser, find bargains to help fill your home bookshelf, office, or classroom. Both cash and credit cards are accepted at this event. All proceeds benefit the Grand Rapids Public Library.

Saturday, October 29 | 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
All books are 50¢ each or 3 for \$1.00. Specialty items are priced separately.

Sunday, October 30 | 1:00 – 4:00 pm  
Fill a bag for \$5.00. Specialty items are not included. Paper bags are provided by the library.

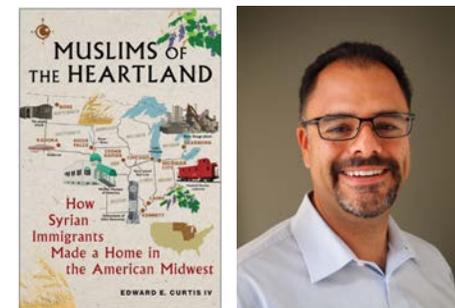
This event is presented by the Friends of the Grand Rapids Public Library.



### An Evening with Angeline Boulley

Tuesday, November 8 | 7:00 – 9:00 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE  
Registration required – [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register)

Join the Grand Rapids Public Library for a lively conversation with #1 *New York Times* best-selling author, Angeline Boulley, about her celebrated book, *Firekeeper's Daughter*. The event will be followed by a book signing.



### Book Talk: Muslims of the Heartland

Thursday, November 17 | 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Join us for an author visit with Dr. Edward E. Curtis IV, who will talk about his book *Muslims of the Heartland: How Syrian Immigrants Made a Home in the American Midwest*. A Q&A session will follow this free event.

Indie bookstore Books & Mortar will have Dr. Curtis' book available for purchase and signing. Refreshments provided.

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## Storytimes at GRPL



### Family Storytime

Parents and caregivers are invited to bring their children ages 0 to 5 years to this storytime featuring great books, songs, fingerplays, and hands-on fun. Classes end with an art activity and playtime designed to help your child's brain grow.

Mondays, October 24, 31, November 7, 14  
10:30 am | Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Wednesdays, October 26, November 2, 9, 16  
10:30 am | Seymour Branch – 2350 Eastern SE  
(This event will take place at our outdoor Library on the Lawn. In case of inclement weather, this event series will be moved indoors.)

Wednesdays, October 26, November 2, 9, 16  
10:30 am | Van Belkum Branch  
1563 Plainfield NE  
(This storytime takes place before normal open hours.)

Fridays, October 21, 28, November 4, 11, 18  
10:30 am | Ottawa Hills Branch  
1150 Giddings SE

### Pajama Time

Get cozy in your pajamas, grab your favorite stuffed animals or blanket, and come to the library for a special bedtime event! Listen to stories, sing songs, and get those wiggles out before bed. Great for working parents of children age 5 and under!

Mondays, October 24, 31, November 7, 14  
6:30 pm | West Leonard Branch  
1017 Leonard NW

### Ready, Set, Play!

Free play helps build social skills, communication, creativity, and, more importantly, confidence! If you have an elementary or middle schooler who wants to de-stress and have fun with games and activities at the library, this drop-in program is for you!

Saturdays, October 22, 29, November 5,  
12, 19 | 11:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Madison Square Branch – 1201 Madison Ave SE

Mondays, October 24, 31, November 7, 14, 21  
3:00 – 5:00 pm | West Leonard Branch  
1017 Leonard NW

### Toddler Time

Bring your toddlers, ages 18 months to 3 years, to share fun stories, songs, and rhymes and learn together! Toddler Time is a 25-minute long storytime followed by a hands-on activity and playtime designed to help your child's brain grow.

Thursdays, October 20, 27, November 3,  
10, 17 | 10:30 am  
Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard NE

Tuesdays, October 25, November 1, 8, 15  
10:30 am | West Side Branch  
713 Bridge St NW

### Storytime After Dark: Tales and Treats

Put on your costumes, bring your friends and family, and join us at the library to hear ghostly stories. We'll have Halloween crafts and tasty treats available while supplies last.

Tuesday, October 25 | 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
Ottawa Hills Branch – 1150 Giddings SE

Wednesday, October 26 | 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
Madison Square Branch – 1201 Madison Ave SE

Thursday, October 27 | 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
Seymour Branch – 2350 Eastern SE

## Borrow the Internet from Grand Rapids Public Library



Getting free, unlimited Internet access is easier than ever with GRPL's hotspot lending program.

Hotspots allow GRPL library card holders to easily get online using a Wi-Fi-enabled device such as a phone, tablet or laptop.

Hotspots are available to check out from any Grand Rapids Public Library location. You must be 18 years or older to check one out.



The Hotspot Lending Program is funded in part by grants from the Wege Foundation, the CDV5 Foundation, the Daniel & Pamella DeVos Foundation, and the Doug & Maria DeVos Foundation through the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation.

# Branching Out at GRPL: Spotlight on the Ottawa Hills Branch



*An architectural rendering of the Ottawa Hills Branch building*

## Fast facts:

- Located at 1150 Giddings SE, in Ottawa Hills
- Rapid bus route #5
- Hours:

Mon | Closed  
 Tues | 10:00 am – 6:00 pm  
 Wed | 12:00 – 8:00 pm  
 Thurs | 10:00 am – 6:00 pm  
 Fri | 10:00 am – 6:00 pm  
 Sat | 10:00 am – 6:00 pm  
 Sun | Closed

- Free WiFi and public computers
- Hold lockers

## Branch History

### Introduction

The Ottawa Hills Branch opened in 1957. It featured a large collection of books, air conditioning, stuffed chairs, and even a smoking section. That year, the Ottawa Hills Branch received an award for excellence in design from the Western Michigan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

### The Beginning

In the 1940s, GRPL had just three public branches—the Main Library, West Side and Creston. Library Director Donald Kohlsted set a goal of providing branches throughout the city to provide service to all citizens. As part of this plan, the library purchased a lot at 1150 Giddings Avenue SE in 1953. The zoning requirements, however, didn't allow for a library. A group of neighbors, led by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Shelby, organized a Citizens Committee to help clear the way. The Citizens Committee secured over 500 signatures from neighbors, which allowed the residential zoning to be waived.

### Construction Begins

The library hired a local architecture company, Roger Allen & Associates, to design the new Ottawa Hills branch. Roger Allen designed the Grand Rapids Public Museum building at Jefferson and State SE, completed in 1939. The plans for the Ottawa Hills Library were approved by the Board of Library Commissioners in January 1956 and construction began by the end of that year.

### Choosing a Name

The Library Board turned to neighbors in 1956 to select a name for the new branch. A total of 43 entries were submitted from community members, including students. Names such as New Library Hall, Nook of Knowledge and Treasure Lore were suggested. A majority of the suggestions, however, included the words Ottawa and Hills, showing a strong sense of connection with the neighborhood. Taking this input seriously, the Library Board decided to name the branch the Ottawa Hills Library.



*Ottawa Hills Branch librarian and clerk pose for a photograph*

### Grand Opening

The Ottawa Hills Branch officially opened to the public on July 29, 1957. The library had a large collection of books—12,000 volumes—“nearly all new.” Notable features of the building included air conditioning and over-stuffed chairs for lounging. Smoking was also allowed in the browsing room of the library, a “relaxation of old-time library rules.” The building cost \$95,000 to build and the furnishings cost another \$9,000.

### Award-Winning Design

In September 1957, the Western Michigan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects recognized the Ottawa Hills Branch. The 1957 Honor Award Certificate was presented to Roger Allen & Associates “in recognition of merit in the design and execution” of the Ottawa Hills Branch Library.



*Ottawa Hills Branch decorated for the 1996 Summer Reading Program*

### Survives Another Day

In 1989, a library consultant recommended closing the Ottawa Hills Branch. The report noted that the building was too small and was located too close to another library in East Grand Rapids. Neighbors organized and worked with the Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association to advocate for the branch to remain open. The Board decided to keep the beloved neighborhood library open and it was updated with funds from a 1997 capital millage. The renovation, completed in 2001, added a barrier-free exterior ramp, updated heating and cooling systems, and renovated the interior.



*The hold lockers available at Ottawa Hills Branch*

### Present Day

Today, the Ottawa Hills Branch is a popular neighborhood library. Many people use it as a hub to pick up items they request from other library locations. In April 2021, the library installed hold lockers outside of the building. Library staff put books or other items in the lockers. Patrons can then pick up their items any time, even when the library isn't open. In just five months, over 2,000 items were checked out from the hold lockers.



### Neighborhood Fixture

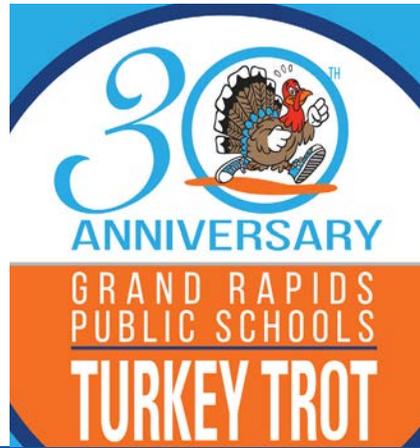
The Ottawa Hills Branch staff is like family to many residents. Some neighbors stop in daily to share the small and big details of their lives. Many people grew up in the neighborhood and have fond memories of the library. They remember the smoking lounge, programs in the basement, and working together to keep the branch open.



In 2022, the Ottawa Hills Neighborhood celebrates its centennial anniversary. Learn more at [www.ottawahillsgpr.org](http://www.ottawahillsgpr.org).



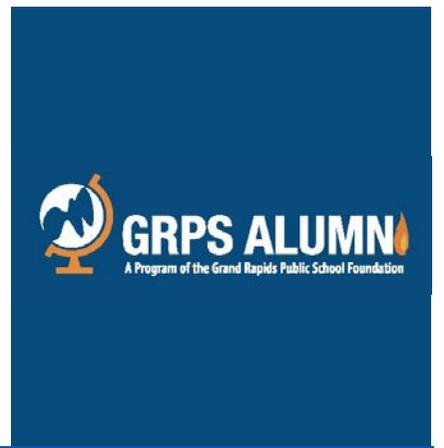
October 2022 | Section B



Turkey Trot: 2



Expo & Fall Festival: 6



Alumni Information: 9

## Elementary School Programs Introduce Scholars to Sports

*Union varsity soccer coach Juan Zavala gathered some of his players around him on a cool and cloudy Saturday morning at GRPS University.*

Union varsity soccer coach Juan Zavala gathered some of his players around him on a cool and cloudy Saturday morning at GRPS University.

“Okay,” he said with a big smile on his face. “Be engaging, be on top of it. We want everyone to feel good. They’ll be coming soon. Get ready.”

“They” were a few hundred elementary school students from a variety of Grand Rapids Public Schools. And Zavala and his players were there bright and early to introduce the young scholars to the beautiful game of soccer on this Saturday and another three Saturdays to come with the hope that some of them might even stick with the game all the way through high school.

Just five days later, on a beautiful, sunny fall day, the scene was repeated, but this time the coach was Ottawa Hills cross country coach Dan Ebright, and the people assisting him were many of his cross country and track and field distance runners.

Still, the vibe was the same: high energy, lots of smile, an emphasis on fun and the hope that maybe a few of the hundreds of young scholars gathered for a run might someday pursue the sport in high school.

Indeed, Ebright said he’s seen the benefits of the elementary school program at the high school level.

“To introduce our scholars to a sport at a young age is so important,” he said. “When they get to high school, hopefully they’ve been through a year or more of cross country. It makes a difference. Since we started this program in 2010, my experience at Ottawa Hills at the varsity level has been much better. It’s helped improve our program.”

For both the first week of soccer and cross country, the young participants had a large cadre of parents, grandparents, siblings and other supporters on the sidelines.

Kenia Boana was at the first week of soccer with her Southwest Elementary School - Academia Bilingüe second grader, Abisai Alvarez, who had never played organized soccer before. He was a bit nervous, and a bit cold, but Kenia couldn’t wait to see him get into the action.

“I’m so excited for this,” she said, looking around at hundreds of participants, parents and GRPS staff. “He’s never played before, but I’ve heard nothing but good things about the program. Having him be with other friends and having the structure of a program like this will be great.”

Jolinda Lucas is a teacher and athletic director at Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy. She assists each elementary sport coordinator (people like Ebright and Zavala)



*A few smiles from young scholars during a break in the action*

with the behind-the-scenes tasks such as registrations, shirt orders and multitudes more that are needed to provide fun and well-organized athletic opportunities at the pre-high school levels.

She said the fall elementary school sports programs are an important first step for scholars like Abisai and the many others who came out for soccer and cross country.

“It’s all about sportsmanship, having fun and trying new things,” she said with a big smile.

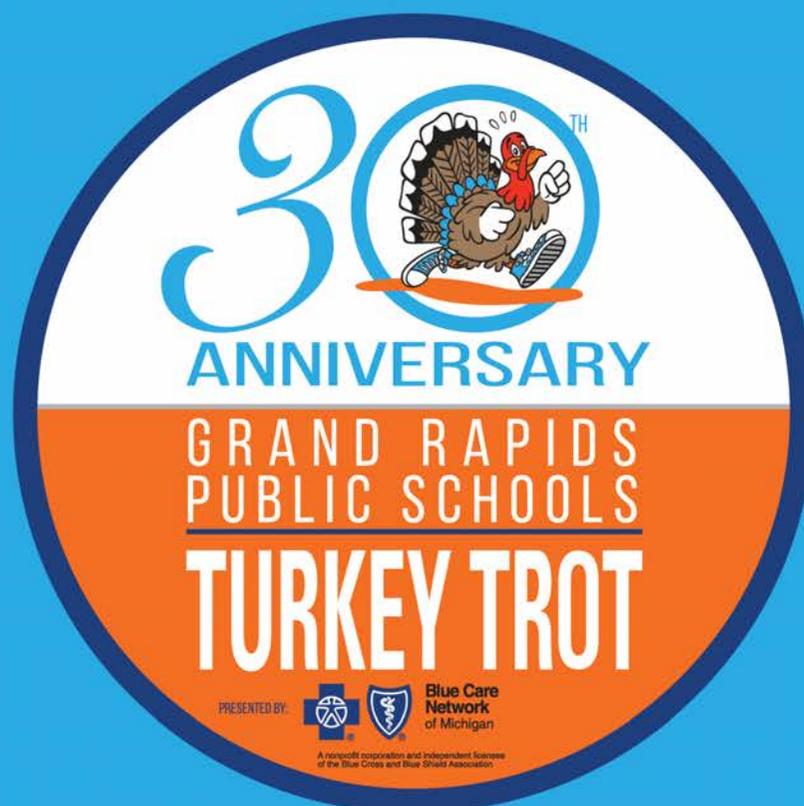
Part of the fun for both soccer and cross-country participants was getting a new T-shirt. Lucas said it’s a big deal for the young scholars, and she thanked the Grand Rapids Public Schools Foundation for providing the resources that make the program possible, including not just the T-shirts but also equipment and staffing.

“We create a new shirt design each year for both soccer and cross country, and shirt colors are never the same from year-to-year,” she said. “We order 1,000 shirts and without the support of the (GRPS) Foundation, we would not be able to run a program of this caliber.”



*Union soccer coach Juan Zavala (right) and Union assistant coach Mose Crawford*

School is back in session  
and the Turkey Trot is  
right around the corner



Register to run!

November 24 • 8:00 a.m.

Van Andel Arena • 130 Fulton Street W

Proceeds from the GRPS Turkey Trot support student athletes from GRPS, giving all students the opportunity to participate in school athletics at no cost.

Register at [GRPS.org/turkey-trot](https://www.grps.org/turkey-trot)  
and follow us on  
Facebook @grandrapidsturkeytrot



## Grand Rapids Public Schools

### WE ARE GR

October 2022

Grand Rapids

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Title IX Annual Athletics Compliance Report: Grand Rapids Public Schools is committed to securing athletic equity and provides annual Title IX reporting to the athletes and parents in an effort to bring increased attention and resources towards ensuring that gender equity as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments for 1972, Grand Rapids Public Schools annual report is available at [www.grps.org](http://www.grps.org).

To comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers.

Please contact Micky Savage, Director of Human Resources, in Human Resources via email [savagem@grps.org](mailto:savagem@grps.org) or at (616) 819-2028.

### WE ARE GR

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## Artists in the Spotlight for Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrations

Erick Picardo stood in front of Sung Pak's fifth-grade class at César E. Chávez Elementary, the smile on his face as bright as his colorful jacket (part of a new venture called Wearable Art by Picardo).

"We're celebrating," he said. "We're celebrating something important this month. What is it?"

Several student hands shot into the air, and Picardo pointed to one eager boy.

"Yes, he said. "What is it?"

"Hispanic month," came the answer, and Picardo's smile grew even bigger.

"Yes, yes," he exclaimed. "And what is this school's name?"

More hands shot in the air and without prompting several students said in unison: "César Chávez."

"César Chávez is a legacy," Picardo replied. "He's someone we celebrate this month and here, every month. But we're putting together a wonderful idea today, we're going to celebrate you and us, our heritage, our culture. I want to encourage you to know your history with pride and embrace your culture. And today, I want you to work on some art that says something about who you are, your identity."

With that, Pak's 28 students began to draw on canvases with pencil and then after that to explore further with brushes and paints. The room settled into a rhythm as Picardo, Pak, EL Coach Kelly Desouza and EL parent liaison Karrie Roy went from desk to desk and student to student, offering encouragement and praise and advice as the students quietly set about the task before them.

Later Picardo, a Grand Rapids-based visual and performing artist who hails from the Dominican Republic, talked about the magic of art, and its ability to help a whole classroom of fifth-graders quiet down and get busy.

"I truly believe in the power of art," he said. "Art encourages fine motor skills and problem-solving. Kids love arts. It's a fact. I always want them to learn new things, especially from their own roots, culture and history. And one of the things that I like is that I feel very young when I work with them."

Pak, who has been a GRPS teacher for 26 years, said she was thrilled to have Picardo with her students.

"I loved that Erick, a successful artist, shared his work, time and talent with my scholars," she said. "It was extra-special because Erik brought his love of his culture and people and embedded it into his art. This allowed my students to think about



Local artist Erick Picardo visited numerous GRPS schools, including César E. Chávez Elementary, as part of Hispanic Heritage Month and brought along some of his own work to inspire the scholars



Finishing touches on a guitar painting



Sibley Elementary scholars working on their guitar paintings

*Continued on page 4*

## Asbestos Notice

Asbestos is a general name for a group of naturally occurring minerals composed of small fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. The mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of the building occupants is endangered. When left intact and undisturbed, asbestos-containing materials do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is, however, the potential for exposure when the material becomes damaged or disturbed. Because of these problems associated with asbestos exposure, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act, or AHERA emphasizes that asbestos in school buildings must appropriately be managed.

The Grand Rapids Public Schools has an asbestos management plan that addresses contact persons, training, inspections, response actions, operation and maintenance

activities, periodic surveillance, cleaning, disclosure efforts, and school building areas containing asbestos. Any person may review the management plan at the Grand Rapids Public School's Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503, during regular business hours (8:00 am to 4:00 pm). Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan by writing the Grand Rapids Public Schools Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503. There is a cost involved in reproducing the document of approximately 10 cents per page. The Grand Rapids Public Schools will send a copy out of the management plan within 5 business days of receiving the request.

*Continued from previous page*

who they are, the possibilities of what they could be and how they could contribute to society.”

Picardo’s time with Pak’s class at César E. Chávez Elementary was one of eight classrooms he visited over a two-day period as part of a month-long celebration in GRPS schools of Hispanic Heritage Month.

At Sibley Elementary, where he worked with enthusiastic second-graders, the time began with a conversation about the importance of music in Hispanic culture, followed by the distribution of acrylic paints and cardboard guitars for Sibley scholars to customize.

Some began painting with the colors of the Mexican flag, and others experimented with mixing colors to create new ones.

After scholars brought their colorful guitars to the drying rack, they finished their workshop with a dance party and then cooled down with a soothing, breathing exercise.

Like Pak, Sibley teacher Bernice Wisnieski loved what Picardo brought to her class.

“His thoughtful gift to our kids was the opportunity to express their hearts through art,” she said. “It was a unique experience that enriched all of our lives.”

Kay Smith, the English Learner Coordinator for GRPS, noted in addition to the hands-on art projects, Picardo also provided a Latin drum assembly at Innovation Central High School.

In addition to Picardo’s in-person visits, Latino authors F. Isabel Campoy and Duncan Tonatiuh were part of the GRPS Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations virtually.

Tonatiuh presented from his books, *Separate Is Never Equal* and *The Princess and the Warrior*, virtually to elementary school students at Sibley and César E. Chávez Elementary. Campoy present virtually from her book “*Yes! We Are Latinos*,” which features poems and prose about the Latino experience, for



*Erick Picardo and long-time GRPS teacher Sung Pak at César E. Chávez Elementary*

students at Dickinson Academy and Burton Middle School.

Tonatiuh is an award-winning author-illustrator who is both Mexican and American.

His artwork, Smith added, is inspired by Mesoamerican art and his aim is to create images and stories that honor the past, but are relevant today, especially to children.

Campoy is an author and an educator specializing in the area of literacy and home school interaction, topics on which she lectures nationally.

Smith said her presentation focused on the importance of literacy and on having an awareness of cultural identities.



*Erick Picardo was busy visiting students and giving advice as they worked on their art projects at César E. Chávez Elementary*



*A scholar artist and her project at César E. Chávez Elementary*



*A scholar artist and his project at César E. Chávez Elementary*



Ms. Stephanie Nielsen and Mr. Joseph Westover were recognized with the Jean Hamilton Cope Teachers of the Year Award for their excellence in the classroom.

## GRPS Teachers Recognized in Late Educator's Honor

Two Grand Rapids Public Schools teachers were recognized at Monday night's school board meeting in honor of a former teacher who dedicated her life to educating children in Grand Rapids.

Ms. Stephanie Nielsen and Mr. Joseph Westover were recognized with the Jean Hamilton Cope Teachers of the Year award for their excellence in the classroom.

The funds for the award are donated annually by Mrs. Cope's daughter and son-in-law Laurie and Mark Grand. They provide each winner with a \$1,000 award to recognize their efforts.

Ms. Nielson teaches kindergartners at Shawmut Hills with impressive results. She has played a major role in kindergarten recruitment and is credited with helping Shawmut Hills beat

projections for incoming kindergarten enrollment several years in a row.

"She is an amazing teacher and a foundational piece of our school community and makes Shawmut Hills the type of school that anyone would be lucky to have their children at," said one of her colleagues who nominated her for the award.

Mr. Westover teaches social studies at Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy. His colleagues nominated him because of his leadership and commitment to scholar excellence. He has spearheaded efforts at the school to help scholars prepare for graduation from high school, spending time outside of school hours to help scholars tie up loose ends that are an inevitable part of the end of their high school

career.

Colleagues say Mr. Westover's work inspires others to come alongside him for the benefit of GRPS scholars. Outside of the classroom he continues to build positive relationships with scholars by coaching cross country and track.

"These teachers embody the Grand Rapids Public Schools spirit," GRPS Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby said. "We are so proud of the work they do and the inspiration they provide to all of us. Their commitment to our scholars shows and we are grateful to Mrs. Cope's family for providing a way to give them the extra recognition they deserve."



WE'RE TAKING OUR  
**WEBSITE**  
TO NEW HEIGHTS

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT [GRPS.ORG](https://www.grps.org).

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# EXPO & FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL

THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 10, 2022  
4:30 - 6:30 PM

📍 Union High School Gymnasium  
1800 Tremont Blvd. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

- ✓ **Learn more** about school choices and the school enrollment process
- ✓ **Visit with** principals, administrators, and staff from **all** GRPS schools
- ✓ **Enjoy FREE** dinner, giveaways, and fun games & activities

For more information, visit [grps.org](https://grps.org).



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[GRPS.ORG/SCHOOLS](https://grps.org/schools)

**T** = Application Required

## GRADES PK-12. ONE DISTRICT. YOUR SCHOOL CHOICE!

GRPS is proud to offer the region's largest, most comprehensive selection of school choices in all of West Michigan including neighborhood schools, theme schools, and more.

### SCHOOL GRADES: PK-5

Brookside Elementary

Buchanan Elementary

Burton Elementary

CA Frost Environmental Science  
Academy Elementary **T**

Campus Elementary

César E. Chávez Elementary

Coit Creative Arts Academy **T**

Congress Elementary

East Leonard Elementary

Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center **T**

Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary

Kent Hills Elementary

Mulick Park Elementary

Palmer Elementary

Sibley Elementary

Stocking Elementary

### SCHOOL GRADES: PK-8, 6, 6-8

Aberdeen Academy

Alger Middle School

Blandford School **T**

Burton Middle School

Center for Economicology **T**

Dickinson Academy

Gerald R. Ford Academic Center **T**

Grand Rapids Montessori Academy **T**

Grand Rapids Public Museum  
Middle School **T**

Harrison Park Academy

Martin Luther King Jr.  
Leadership Academy

North Park Montessori **T**

Ridgemoor Park Montessori **T**

Riverside Middle School

Shawmut Hills

Sherwood Park Global  
Studies Academy **T**

Southwest Elementary  
School-Academia Bilingüe **T**

Westwood Middle School

Zoo School **T**

### SCHOOL GRADES: 6-12, 7-12, 8-12, 9-12

CA Frost Environmental Science  
Middle High School **T**

City High Middle School **T**

Grand Rapids Learning Center

Grand Rapids Montessori Middle High School **T**

Grand Rapids Public Museum High School **T**

Grand Rapids University  
Preparatory Academy **T**

Innovation Central High School **T**

Ottawa Hills High School

Southeast Career Pathways

Southwest Middle High  
School-Academia Bilingüe **T**

Union High School



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## Music in the Halls Part of a Fun, Fresh Start

### Meet Your Administrator: Erin Anderson

By Erin Albanese, Courtesy of School News Network

Erin Anderson is the new principal at Westwood Middle School. Get to know her with a Meet Your Administrator Q&A.

#### Other positions you have held in education

- Substitute teacher
- Guidance counselor and assistant high school principal, Kalamazoo Public Schools
- Adjunct professor, English as a Second Language department, Aquinas College

#### How about jobs outside education?

“I provided in-home family counseling for Child Protective Services and investigated family abuse situations. As a teenager, I worked at the YMCA after school and at a residential facility for youth.”

#### Education/degrees

- Bachelor’s degree, psychology with a minor in human growth and development, Ball State University, Indiana
- Master’s, school counseling, University of St. Francis, Illinois
- Administrative certification, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals

#### Family?

“I am married and I have three bonus children: a senior, a freshman and a third-grader. I come from a background of educators. My sister is a principal and my mother was a teacher.”

#### Hobbies/interests:

Anderson is an avid reader and admits to sometimes preferring YA books. She’s also a self-described Starbucks coffee addict, and has run seven half marathons and finished three sprint triathlons.

And, “I am a music person,” she said. “One of the things I do to incorporate who I am with the students is that we play music during every passing period. They always give me their music suggestions, and we embrace all of it here. I will do Spanish, jazz – It’s been nice to respect and acknowledge the diversity we have in the building.”

#### What kind of kid were you at the age of students at this new school?

“I was very active. In middle school, I was trying to figure out what I liked. I did band, choir and I played volleyball and basketball... I was very social, and still am. I always wanted to look for leadership roles in the school. If there was an ambassador role I would want to do that. I was always wanting to be in charge.”

#### The biggest lesson you have learned from students is...

“They have a side too. Slowing down to hear their side is important. They can articulate it when you give them the opportunity. They just want to be heard. We, as adults, make the decision and tell them later. Half the time, if we got them on board to begin with, it would be better in the end. I think as adults we just need to slow down and listen.”

#### What is something you’re looking forward to this year?

“We are doing things the Westwood way. We are excited to rebrand and get a fresh start and add some fun and energy. Like



New Westwood Middle School Principal Erin Anderson gets a hug from eighth-grader Kori Wright



Erin Anderson said students taught her to slow down and listen



Fun in the halls is obvious with Westwood Middle School Principal Erin Anderson and sixth-grader Nazier Thompson

the music at passing periods, that’s been a nice piece. We are all gaining from good, new changes that are happening.”

#### If you could go back to school, you would return to...

“Freshman year. If I knew what I know now, I would take advantage of some of the opportunities that I didn’t, to explore different things. I did a lot, but I also kind of pigeon-holed myself a little bit with the group I hung with. I would take

advantage of the resources I had then to expand my branches a little more.”

#### If you walked into your new school building to theme music by a favorite artist or band, what would it be?

“I did this activity with my staff! We chose our baseball walk-up songs. Mine is ‘Break My Soul,’ by Beyoncé. It’s about not letting other people’s actions break you.”



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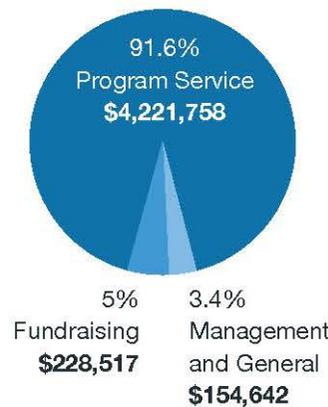
## Laying Pathways for All Students to Succeed in GRPS

*How your support helped kids thrive 2020-2021*

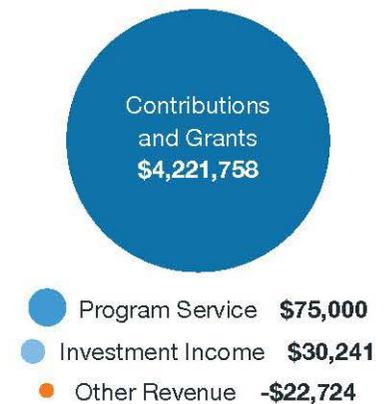
SERVED <b>15,600</b> SCHOLARS	REPRESENTING <b>70+</b> COUNTRIES	ACROSS <b>44</b> SCHOOLS	AND <b>1,800</b> EMPLOYEES
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Dollars raised \$3,862,472

### Expenses



### Revenue



We are pleased to honor Blue Care Network of Michigan as this year's sponsor for the Turkey Trot!



Blue Care Network of Michigan

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## Students Showcase Biculturalism During Hispanic Heritage Month

*'This history is not separate'*

By Erin Albanese, Courtesy of School News Network

While waving flags, eating sweet treats called conchas and wearing bright, colorful traditional clothing, Southwest Elementary School–Academia Biligüe students kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month.

Students, staff and parents gathered outside at the beginning of the school day, while 21 students proudly represented their cultures by marching in a procession with flags representing 21 Spanish-speaking countries.

While waving flags, eating sweet treats called conchas and wearing bright, colorful traditional clothing, Southwest Elementary School–Academia Biligüe students kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month.

Students, staff and parents gathered outside at the beginning of the school day, while 21 students proudly represented their cultures by marching in a procession with flags representing 21 Spanish-speaking countries.

"Everybody is here and happy," said sixth-grader Harelis Alicea, who is from Puerto Rico.

"I love the dancing and the food," said fifth-grader Romeo García, who celebrated with his mom, Miriam Hernandez.

"We like to celebrate our culture and we are proud to be Mexican," Hernandez said.

Assistant Principal Kelly Aponte said the event served as a great way to begin National Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. The month celebrates the histories, cultures and

*Continued on next page*



Students and staff enjoy the festivities



Sixth-grader Yoselin Puente-Cisneros holds her flag high



Sixth-grader Yahir Morena hoists the flag for España



Sixth-grader Liliana Martinez represents Nicaragua

*Continued from previous page*

contributions of Hispanic Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

“Our commitment as a dual-language school is to ensure that our students become bilingual and bicultural,” said Aponte, who is Mexican.

Schoolwide, students will focus on themes like heroes, food, traditions and important celebrations.

Of about 670 students who attend the preschool through sixth-grade school, 83 percent are Hispanic.

Part of the school’s bicultural component is for students to become aware of Hispanic peoples’ contributions to U.S. history, Aponte said. For Hispanic students, “They will be able to see there are people— heroes in history.. who look like them.”

For non-Hispanic students, “That builds empathy, tolerance and compassion for other groups. Knowing about Hispanic heritage and Hispanics’ contributions will enrich our school and students and bring diversity. Scholars will understand this history is not separate from the rest of the events that happened in U.S. history.”

Third-grade teacher Areli Berlanga’s students are studying important Hispanic Americans in Grand Rapids and Michigan. “It’s an area, an opportunity, for them to be able to experience their culture and feel proud.”



*Mirian Hernandez and her son, fifth-grader Romeo Garcia, celebrate together*



*Fifth-grader Ariya Escanuela marches for Ecuador*



*First-grader Luzlinda Romero Ramos nibbles a concha*



*Sixth-grader Enrique Jimenez Munoz holds a Mexican flag*

# GRPS



## FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Parent University

If you haven't already, explore the Parent University website at [parents.grps.org](https://parents.grps.org). This newly designed website contains academic and community resources, trending news, a monthly online magazine, and so much more.

The diversity within Grand Rapids Public Schools is a district superpower! Did you know that more than 32% of our world's countries and more than 51 languages are represented in our Grand Rapids Public School families? To learn about the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, peruse October's Power Parent Magazine at [parents.grps.org/school-info](https://parents.grps.org/school-info).

### Power Parent Magazine

The newest Power Parent magazine components include:

- Listen to Dr. Roby share her thoughts on the importance of equity in GRPS in **GOOD TO KNOW: GRPS Equity & Inclusion** with Dr. Roby.
- It's important to talk with your kids about issues like race and differences, but it's not always easy. Find a helpful guide in **SETTING GOALS: Talk it Out**.
- In **CHECK IT OUT: Celebrating Cultural Heritage**, you'll find a guide to understanding and celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and other cultural heritage events!
- Discover multiple resources in **NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS: Explore Books & Media** to support meaningful race and equity conversations.
- In **NAVIGATING ACHIEVEMENT: Championing a United Grand Rapids**, you'll find a volunteer guide that your family can use to give back to our community.
- Has your family been impacted by bigotry? Find helpful resources under **FAMILY CONVERSATIONS:**

Resources for Healing.

### Parent University Calendar - October & November

Visit [parents.grps.org/events](https://parents.grps.org/events) to learn additional information about these courses.

### Play and Learn

Play and Learn GRCC is a collaborative, community-based partnership created to enrich the early learning experiences of young children. If you are a parent or caregiver of a child, ages 0 to 5 years old, join us for this free, weekly, 90-minute program to learn about child development, early reading strategies and positive discipline

- November 9 from 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm at GRPS University located on 1400 Fuller St. NE.

### Trauma-Informed Parenting

Trauma affects behaviors, feelings, and relationships. This introductory course will explain the effects of trauma and ways to help children overcome it.

- November 3 from 9:30 am - 10:30 am
- November 15 from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

### Creating and Maintaining a Safe School

Attend this GRPS security training and learn about district-wide safety systems.

- November 8 from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm at Grand Rapids Public School University located on 1400 Fuller Rd. NE.

### School Choice Expo & Fall Festival

GRPS is proud to offer the region's largest, most comprehensive selection of school choices in all of West Michigan including neighborhood schools, theme schools, and more. You are invited to come for dinner and explore all of the educational options in our

dynamic district.

- Thursday, November 10, 2022 from 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm, in the Union High School gymnasium, located on 1800 Tremont Blvd NW

### Criminal Record Expungement Workshop for Families

GRPS' Parent University, Clean Slate of Michigan, and LINC UP are hosting a workshop for parents and caregivers to learn about the expungement process and individually meet with legal representatives to discuss their eligibility.

- November 18 from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm at the LINC UP Gallery located on 341 Hall St SE.

### PALs - Parent Action Leaders

Our PALs continue to advocate for all GRPS families. On September 15, the PALs, including 11 new ones, attended their first quarterly meeting. During that meeting, Kaitlyn Califf, the GRPS Webmaster and Multimedia Designer, gave them a personal tour of the new and improved GRPS website.

PALs also participated in a special GRPS Town Hall meeting where they shared their ideas on ways to invest, enhance, upgrade, and revitalize school buildings, and to more effectively and equitably serve our scholars.

### F.A.C.E. in the Community

FACE has partnered with EBONY ROAD PLAYERS, a Grand Rapids theater company, that engages community members in theater arts education and produces plays by renowned Black playwrights.

Ebony Road Players invites GRPS middle and high school families to participate in Story2Stage, a free family experience, that embraces the joy of storytelling. Instructors, Amisha Groce and Todd Lewis, will walk families through the playwriting process and help them create a unique story. Ebony Road Players will bring those stories to life!

This two-day experience will be held on Saturday, October 15 and Saturday, October 22, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, at the Catholic Information Center located on 360 Division Ave S. For more details, call (616) 443-1601.

Would you like to become a homeowner? FACE has partnered with DWELLING PLACE and LINC UP to address the lack of affordable homeownership opportunities. Monthly orientations are being offered through Linc Up to learn about Community Trust Homes, an affordable and sustainable alternative to traditional homeownership. For additional information, please contact Mario Leon, the LINC UP Homeownership Liaison, at [mario@lincrev.org](mailto:mario@lincrev.org). To learn more about the Dwelling Place Community Land Trust visit [dwellingplacegr.org/CLT](https://dwellingplacegr.org/CLT).

## GRPS Hosts Monthly Workshops to Engage with Student Teachers

*Workshops create meaningful and authentic relationships with student teachers and GRPS staff that help build the talent pipeline*

Adriana Almanza says Grand Rapids Public Schools has a great challenge but also a great opportunity in front of it as it works to create a teacher pipeline for both the short and long term.

That's why she's so excited about a recent event – a dinner and workshop session – that the district held for its current student teachers.

“My heart was full after leaving the event that night,” she said. “These are our future educators and for the most part, I've been communicating with them solely via email and telephone. It was great to be able to be in a physical space together and get to know them and thank them for their contributions to the district.”

This fall, GRPS has almost 60 student teachers – one of the biggest groups ever, Almanza said – and 20 of those 60 were able to attend the recent dinner and workshop.

She said that in addition to the opportunity for face-to-face interaction, the workshop portion of the event featured Rhondo Cooper, Social Emotional Learning Coordinator for GRPS, who gave an interactive presentation on social emotional learning (SEL).

“I was thrilled to see the students dive right in and engage,” Almanza said.

She also appreciated the ways in which the seven other GRPS Staff in attendance facilitated an open discussion after the workshop.

“And it was great to hear feedback on how positive the student teaching experiences have been thus far,” she added. “Many students praised their mentor teachers and building staff for creating a positive environment in which they can both learn and contribute.”

In addition to the student teaching experience, GRPS interns receive a \$10,000 stipend and access to the monthly workshops.

“I worked in higher education at GVSU for 10 years where I oversaw a very successful and robust recruitment and retention program for Latinx and undocumented students,” she said. “When I came to GRPS, I knew right away similar efforts could be implemented with our student teachers.”

Almanza said GRPS wants to not just provide an opportunity for its interns to student teach, but also create meaningful and authentic relationships while engaging with them throughout their time in the district.

“We would love for these young folks to consider GRPS as an option to teach once they graduate,” she said. “And because they are already in our pipeline, it is really our responsibility to make them a part of our community early on.”



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## Facilities Master Plan: Engagement Underway

*Grand Rapids Public Schools leaders are wrapping up the first round of public engagement as the district works to create its Facilities Master Plan*

Grand Rapids Public Schools leaders are wrapping up the first round of public engagement as the district works to create its Facilities Master Plan.

GRPS is in the process of creating a Facilities Master Plan that will set a course for the district's buildings and land moving forward. As the number of scholars enrolled has declined, so too has the need for educational space.

Currently the district is utilizing just over half of the educational space available. The excess space costs the district upwards of \$4 million a year to maintain. The district is considering its options for what to do with buildings no longer needed as school space.

On Wednesday, October 12, the district hosted the last of eleven town hall meetings — gatherings that brought in significant feedback for the initial round of engagement with the community.

Surveys for both the general public and GRPS scholars will continue at least through the end of the month. The district will also continue to collect feedback through the [myschools@grps.org](mailto:myschools@grps.org) email address.

"We'll look at all that data, plus the qualitative data that we've collected through conversations, Q & As, and such to compile the themes we're seeing," GRPS Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby said after Wednesday's town hall. "I know that our board is very interested in what the community has said and that will drive how they make their decisions moving forward."

Dr. Roby emphasized that this is just the beginning of public engagement on the critical work of creating the Facilities Master Plan.

"We are far from done hearing from the community as we

move through this important work. The Facilities Master Plan will impact GRPS for generations to come. We need our community's engagement on such an important topic," Dr. Roby said. "We have to get this right."

The engagement process has made clear the concern from many in the public as to what is next and how the changes to some of the district's buildings might impact specific neighborhoods.

"People want to know, 'which schools', 'which programs', and we don't know that yet," Dr. Roby said. "I expected people to have lots of questions about how this is going to shape up."

District leaders have made clear that the Facilities Master Plan will result in the closure of some school buildings, but programs offered by the district will stay intact. There is no plan to lay off any employees.

Changes will be communicated in a way that gives families plenty of lead time to make plans. No changes to open schools will take place prior to the 2024-25 school year.

The GRPS Board of Education is expected to vote on the initial phase of the Facilities Master Plan before the end of the calendar year though precisely which schools will be impacted by consolidations will not be announced until mid-2023.

Until then the district is asking the public to share input through the surveys so that the Board of Education and school leaders can make better informed decisions.

"If you don't engage," Dr. Roby said. "We don't know what's important to you."



## Meet Your Administrator:

*Riley Sunday, Assistant Principal at Sibley Elementary*

Other positions held in education:

Third-grade teacher, Sibley Elementary

"My first year of teaching was normal until the pandemic hit in March," she said. "I knew I wanted to eventually be an administrator, but I didn't want to leave Sibley. I didn't think this opportunity would fall into place this early in my career, but it opened up and I applied... the kids here are awesome and the staff is like a family and have been so supportive of my transition."

Education:

Bachelor's degree, elementary education, Indiana University

Currently pursuing a master's degree, elementary leadership, Indiana University.

Family:

"I was born and raised in Indiana, but my parents have a lake house in St. Joseph, so I spent most of my summers up in Michigan. I also have two older brothers; one lives in San Francisco and one is in Chicago."

Sunday said her mom's job as an elementary school nurse helped influence her career in education: "I'd go in with her to work and be in schools, and there was one awesome kindergarten teacher who swooped me under her wing. That was huge... (Also) my aunt is a teacher and I had some awesome teachers, which were a huge push for me."

Hobbies/interests/talents:

"I bring my clothes to work to help motivate me to go to the gym after. My teacher/best friend and I go together, and it's a great mind release from the day."

Sunday also enjoys spending her summers with family and friends on the lake, and during the winter you can find her and her friends skiing up north.

**What were some of your hobbies and interests as an elementary student?**

"I loved school. I was a part of a swim team and student council in elementary school. I lived close to my school, so I was able to ride my bike if I wanted instead of taking the bus."

**The biggest lesson you have learned from students is...**

"Keep an open mind but have fun. Yes, students need to learn, but building relationships with them at the beginning of the year makes the whole year better... There is always learning to do; learn on your feet and always be open to learning."

## Award-Winning ArtPrize Poet Inspires Grand Rapids Learning Center Scholars

The day before he won the Contemporary Black Art Award at ArtPrize, William Davis was at the Grand Rapids Learning Center doing poetry on demand on his vintage typewriter for the school's students and staff.

"That's no accident," said school principal Rodney Brown.

"We always appreciate the opportunity to see and hear from people who have overcome challenges," he said. "It's part of our culture. We want to expose our students to a variety of careers and a variety of people in those careers who have beat the odds. They can see themselves in these people, and we always say here that you cannot be what you cannot see."

Davis' ArtPrize entry also was what he brought to Brown's students. Each day he set up at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, and he wrote personalized poems for people based on one-word prompts.

The ArtPrize presence gave Davis credibility with his students, Brown said, as did Davis' many other credentials, including being the Hillsborough Poet Laureate for 2016-2018, several published books of poetry, and even the difficult circumstances in which he grew up.

"William is a poet with Grand Rapids roots who attended GRPS schools and graduated from Baldwin," Brown said. "He was able to talk about some of his trials and travails that he was able to overcome, and to be able to connect with a poet was really amazing for our students."

Mark Jones agreed.

A first-year student at the Learning Center, Jones said he was impressed with Davis and his story.

"I loved what he was doing (at the Learning Center) but also in the community and at other schools in the city," Jones said.

He also has come to appreciate the Learning Center in the short time he's been a student there.

"It's in a college environment and the staff here help get us



The day before he won the Contemporary Black Art Award at ArtPrize, William Davis was at the Grand Rapids Learning Center doing poetry on demand on his vintage typewriter for the school's scholars and staff.

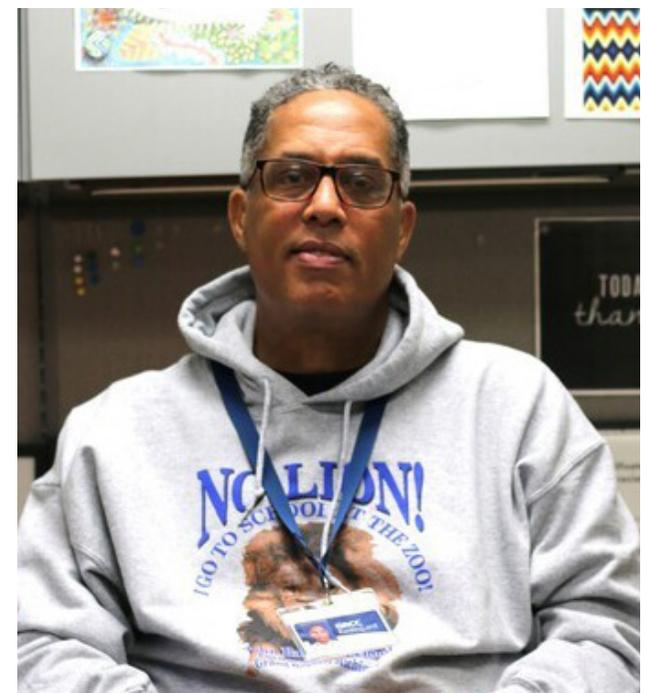
ready for that transition," he said. "They have so many things to offer.

The Grand Rapids Learning Center is a partnership between the Grand Rapids Public Schools and Grand Rapids Community College, a high school developed to re-engage 16- to 19-year-olds seeking to obtain a high school diploma or looking for an alternative option to a traditional high school.

Brown noted that "every school has students who for different reasons have fallen behind and because we are a credit-recovery high school, we fill an important role."

Now in his 26th year as an educator, including the last 18 as a building administrator with GRPS, Brown is also a former GRCC adjunct professor and a GRPS graduate whose wardrobe often includes a John Ball Zoo School hoodie.

"I am a proud alum, a Zooey," he said with a big grin. "I'm also a big fan and advocate of community colleges and the opportunities they create. Because we're the only high school on a college campus in all of West Michigan, we know there are students out there who



Grand Rapids Learning Center principal Rodney Brown is a proud alum of the John Ball Zoo School

will find us of interest."

The Learning Center takes advantage of its location on the GRCC campus.

"We take students to different departments on campus," Brown said. "They visit (the GRCC) M-TEC Center. Our students here blend in with the college students. Many might not even realize that they are high school students. That's a big boost to our students. It makes them feel good.

Currently, the Learning Center has just over 40 students, and Brown said there is room for more with maximum enrollment being approximately 80 students.

"We want to get our story out there," he said.



Grand Rapids Learning Center administrative assistant Maria Cerda



Grand Rapids Learning Center administrative assistant Maria Cerda had a personalized poem written for her by ArtPrize poet William Davis

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