



GIVING big
giving **BACK**

communitychoice
FOUNDATION



The Community Choice Foundation is committed to supporting local causes and nonprofit organizations through volunteerism in communities around Michigan where members and team members live, work, and play. The Foundation supports the **Give Big** philosophy of creating a sustained and lasting impact on people's lives, including causes and nonprofit organizations we care about that make a positive difference.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LETTER

Kevin McAlpine, Executive Director

Our member and team member Give Big attitudes continue to inspire and spark bigger thinking – and bigger goals.

In 2023, we asked Community Choice Credit Union team members to commit to 10,000 hours of volunteer time over the year. Driven by our core values of being credible, charitable, committed, and united, it's no surprise we shattered the goal, achieving more than 12,400 hours of service to organizations across Michigan!

These significant hours were provided during a time when many charitable organizations have experienced a decrease in volunteer participation. This has left many nonprofits struggling to provide important community services. Our Give Big efforts help fill this critical gap.

Aside from our remarkable service accomplishments, we have once again awarded \$100,000 in scholarships to accomplish two goals: make education more accessible and affordable, and to retain great talent in Michigan. This brought our total scholarship awards to \$1.5 million for 320 students since 2009. We've adapted our scholarship program over the years as the needs of students and our state change. Today we offer scholarships for those graduating high school and planning to attend a Michigan college or university, those pursuing a career in skilled trades, or students continuing their education.

To help us keep giving to students and supporting the important work of local organizations and charities, we ask our members, team members, neighbors, and local businesses to join us in giving. Together, we raised \$109,000 in 2023. We are grateful to those who share our vision for thriving communities across our state.

To support our growing impact, we welcomed our first-ever Volunteer Coordinator, Kelsey Royer. She is instrumental in coordinating volunteer opportunities for our team members and members! An enthusiastic advocate for our work, Kelsey helps us maximize our impact and we hope you'll consider serving alongside us in 2024. We welcome our members and neighbors to Give Big too!

I am more excited than ever to lead the Foundation's growth, with a focus on expanding our impact on the communities where our members, team members, and neighbors live, work, and play. In 2024, we are expanding our work in supporting education with a Back-to-School Bash in August. We hope to see you there!

On behalf of our community, thank you for your support and interest in the Community Choice Foundation. We have big plans in 2024 and beyond. Feel free to reach out to me directly at Foundation@CommunityChoiceCU.com or learn more about us at our website: CommunityChoiceFoundation.org.



Kelsey Royer, Volunteer Coordinator

In my role as the Volunteer Coordinator at Community Choice Credit Union, I'm thrilled to reflect on my first year with the team and the incredible impact we've made together.

Throughout 2023, we participated in hundreds of Give Big volunteering events, from distributing 3,200 backpacks to K-12th graders, building 65 Radio Flyer wagons for toddlers, to sponsoring over 900 lunches for the NOAH Project. The collective effort of our team resulted in the accomplishment of over 12,400 volunteer hours.

It's been a rewarding experience to witness the positive change we can bring to our communities, and I am excited about the possibilities and projects in 2024. Here's to another year of making a difference by Giving Big!

Growing Relationships

We continue to develop relationships with charitable organizations, nonprofits, and schools around Michigan. With a focus on financial support and volunteer service, our members, business members, and team members are making a difference in our communities!

ROSEVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Roseville Middle School teacher gained national attention when an idea turned into an innovative movement called *Be the Reason*.

This initiative started with middle teachers writing notes to students who inspire them to come to work every day, letting them know they have someone rooting for them. The result: a greater sense of classroom bonding, collaboration, and achievement. To ensure that the program continues, Community Choice donated design services and notecards.

"This has had a very positive impact on students and staff," said Roseville Middle School teacher, Stasi Earl. "Students have become more comfortable advocating for themselves, and it has increased the dialog between teachers and students." Earl says *Be the Reason* has helped to launch various school

organizations like a cooking club and tutoring sessions that involve both teachers and students.

"One of the big things we want to stress are that works are impactful and their meaning can last a lifetime," Earl said.

She hopes to expand the program to all schools within the Roseville district.

Without the Community Choice Foundation's support, Earl is unsure whether the program would be as effective. "Putting words into action matters," she said.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS EDUCATION:

- Community Choice Scholarships
- Backpack Giveaways
- Teacher Grants awarded



Photo by Donna Dalziel sourced from C&G Newspapers.

THE NOAH PROJECT

Community Choice team members collaborated with The NOAH Project – a nonprofit organization dedicated to compassionately addressing homelessness in Detroit. Team members contributed over 900 meals, helped serve lunches, and organized a successful mug donation drive.

By starting with a simple bag lunch as an initial engagement strategy, The NOAH Project is dedicated to compassionately ending homelessness in Detroit. The nonprofit believes that through hospitality and ongoing relationships founded on trust and acceptance, they can create transformational change in our community.

\$5,000 AWARDED FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY

Brandi Clark, 5th Grade
Hudson Middle School
Hudson, Michigan

Shanekia Cyriaque, 2nd Grade
Inkster Preparatory Academy
Inkster, Michigan

Robyn Gardner, 1st Grade
Westfield Charter Academy
Redford, Michigan

James Pappas, 9-12th Grades
Melvindale High School
Melvindale, Michigan

Patti Reeder, 10-12th Grades
Godwin Heights High School
Wyoming, Michigan

James Rex, 11-12th Grades
Godwin Heights High School
Wyoming, Michigan

Katherine Richardson, 5th Grade
Botsford Elementary School
Livonia, Michigan

Amanda Sanders, 2-4th Grades
Coolidge Elementary School
Livonia, Michigan

Ray Savicke, 9-12th Grades
Jackson High School
Jackson, Michigan

Amiee Snyder, 3rd Grade
Williams Elementary School
Jonesville, Michigan



We're on a mission to Give Big and make a positive difference in our communities

By engaging our neighbors through giving and volunteerism, we are people helping people.

The Community Choice Foundation knows that charitable giving and volunteering are a challenge for many nonprofits. A report released in 2023 by the *Do Good Institute* at the University of Maryland indicated that the formal volunteer rate, also known as the percentage of adults who do unpaid work through or for an organization, experienced its largest decline since the U.S. government began collecting data on volunteering.

While that may be true, our members and donors have stepped up in many ways. The Foundation is filling gaps where we can, highlighted by thousands of volunteer hours and program support for charities and community organizations. While donations and volunteerism have fallen since before the COVID pandemic, the spirit of giving is strong here.

How strong? Given that the Independent Sector and the University of Maryland's *Do Good Institute* estimates the current national value of a volunteer's time at \$31.80, the value

of the foundation's volunteer efforts was more than **\$400,000** in 2023. When you combine scholarship, nonprofit, and volunteer work, the Community Choice Foundation has had a more than \$500,000 impact on our communities.

\$500,000+ COMMUNITY IMPACT

Community Choice Foundation

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Foundation is guided by a board of trustees charged with ensuring a positive, lasting impact upon communities.

TRUSTEES

- ▶ Rob Bava
- ▶ Jennifer Hurren
- ▶ Teresa Mayer
- ▶ Dan Munro
- ▶ Donna Siejutt
- ▶ Kelli Wisner-Frank

BY THE NUMBERS

\$100K

In scholarships awarded to **25 Scholars** in 2023



\$1.5 MILLION

In **Scholarships Awarded** since 2009



320

Scholarships awarded to deserving individuals since 2009

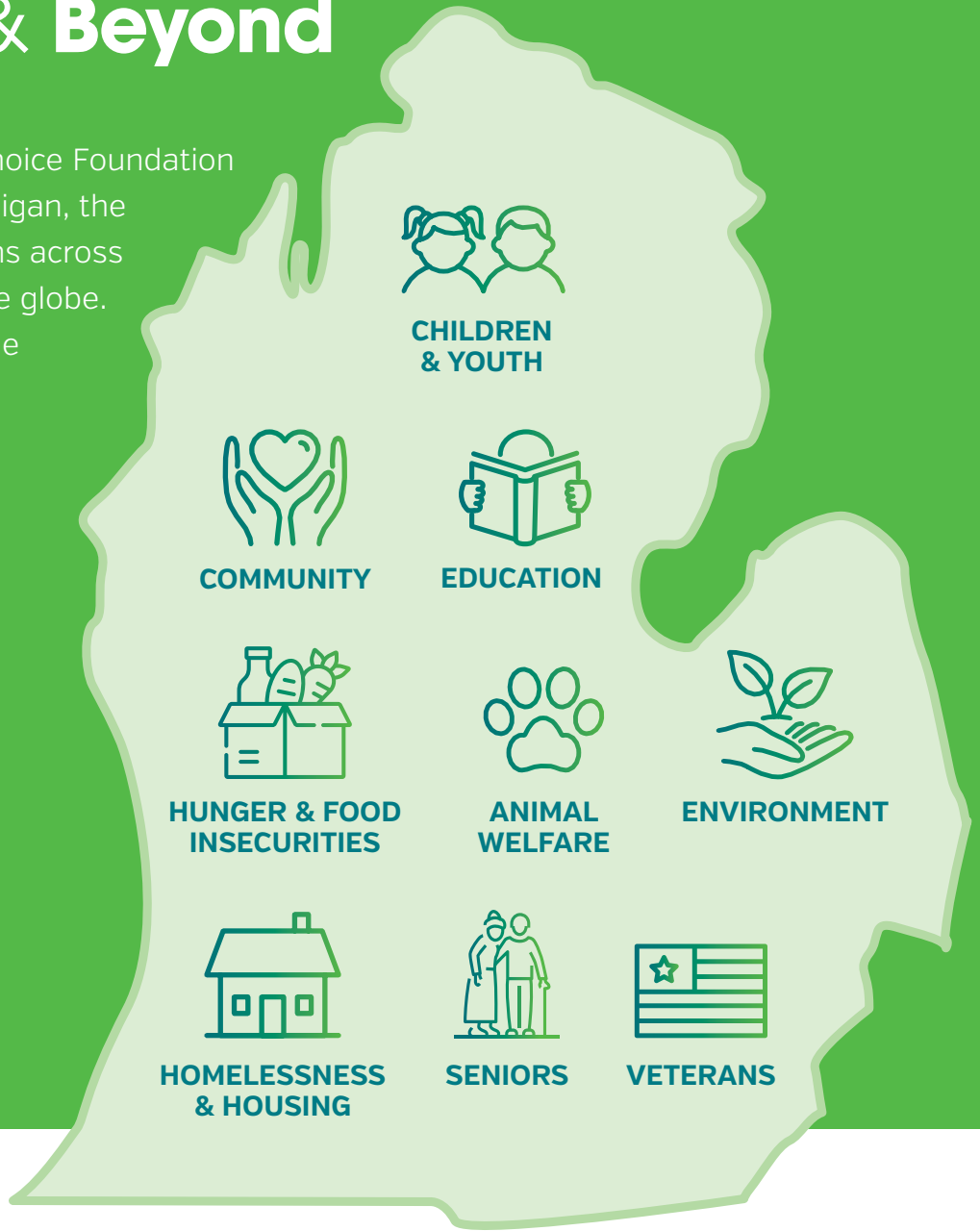


3,200

Backpacks distributed to school-aged children in 2023

Michigan & Beyond

While the Community Choice Foundation has deep roots in Michigan, the credit union movement spans across the country, even around the globe. We are people helping people and that means helping credit union communities in times of disaster and significant need.



ASSISTANCE FOR MAUI

CUAid
The Foundation's Disaster Relief Center

In 2023, the Foundation matched gifts from Community Choice Credit Union team members to support families who lost loved ones, homes, and jobs to the tragic fires in Maui, Hawaii. We sent \$2,500 to the National Credit Union Foundation's disaster relief grant program to help support the individuals and families affected.

The Big Numbers

2023 FUNDRAISING DOLLARS

\$184,836

Members, team members, and business members contributed \$109,836. Community Choice Credit Union generously donated \$75,000.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

\$24,384

Donated through **payroll deduction** by our generous team members to support scholarships and Give Big initiatives.

GIVING BOWLS

\$2,890

Anonymous donations through the **Giving Bowls** in our member center lobbies. These funds directly support students receiving scholarships.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

\$1,471

Donated through the **Kroger Community Rewards** program, shoppers selected the Community Choice Foundation as charity of choice.

2023 GIVE BIG INITIATIVES SUPPORTED WITH TEAM MEMBER PAYROLL DEDUCTION FUNDS:

- ▶ Big Family of Michigan, St. Clair Shores
- ▶ Cascades Humane Society, Jackson
- ▶ Focus Hope, Detroit
- ▶ Kid's Food Basket, Holland
- ▶ Last Day Dog Rescue, Livonia
- ▶ Macomb Foster Closet, Mount Clemens
- ▶ Maybury Farms, Northville
- ▶ Vista Maria, Dearborn Heights



Volunteers decorating Kids Food Basket lunch bags

\$100,000 Awarded in Scholarships

The Foundation awarded 25 students with \$2,500 and \$5,000 scholarships to pursue college, trade school, or a continuing education program.

Every one of our 25 recipients committed to receiving their education in Michigan and sharing their talents in the state after successful completion or graduation from their program. Recipients were chosen from more than 2,500 applicants.

A strong record of volunteerism or public service is required. Scholarships were awarded to the selected applicants based on academic performance, community involvement, and a short, written essay describing how they plan to contribute to their community and Michigan through their chosen career.

The Community Choice Foundation Scholarship Program was established in 2009. To date, it has awarded over \$1.5 million in scholarships for high school students and those furthering their education in skilled trades or continuing education programs.

When a student receives a scholarship, they pledge to use their education to Give Big in Michigan by living and working in the state after graduating or successful completion of their education.



Noah Bowers, Wyandotte

Roosevelt High School
Wayne State University
Education



Brandon Dempsey, Fenton

Washtenaw Community College
Welding Technology



Michael Duong, Oxford

Oxford High School
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Mechanical Engineering



Luca Freise, Novi

Novi High School
Grand Valley State University
Mechanical Engineering



Mary Gadwood, Jonesville

Will Carleton Academy
Aquinas College
Biology



Kaspar Haehnle, Jackson

Jackson High School
Michigan State University
Journalism



Kyah Hicks, Holland

Holland Christian High School
Adrian College
Biology



Vanessa Irish, Jerome

Jonesville High School
Central Michigan University
Business Management



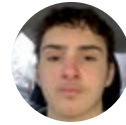
Martino Kas-Mikha, Washington Twp.

De La Salle Collegiate
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Biochemistry



Emily Lackey, Troy

Oakland Community College
Sign Language Interpreter



David Lalaj, Trenton

Trenton High School
Michigan State University
Supply Chain Management



Grace Lapasky, Livonia

Stevenson High School
Grand Valley State University
Health Care Studies



April Lark, Ypsilanti
University of Detroit Mercy
Masters – Counseling



McKinsley McCardell, Homer
Homer High School
Lake Superior State University
Fisheries & Wildlife Management



Alessandra Mireles, Jackson
Michigan State University
Communicative Sciences & Disorders



Sydney O'Hare, Wyandotte
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Computer & Information Science



Madison Palacios, Michigan Center
Michigan State University
Education



Tia Peterson, Holland
West Ottawa High School
Western Michigan University
Art



Caleb Rebandt, Novi
Novi Christian Academy
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Accounting



Pernela Rodriguez, Westland
Oakland Community College
Respiratory Therapy



Hunter Schrink, Norton Shores
Muskegon Catholic Central
Michigan State University
Packaging



Natalie Sprouse-Studabaker, Muskegon
Reeths-Puffer High School
Northern Michigan University
Outdoor Recreation & Nature-Based Tourism



Brittany Thornton, Detroit
Eastern Michigan University
Nursing



Sara Vos, Ann Arbor
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Masters – Education



Justin Weller, East Lansing
Michigan State University
Masters – Education



All Year Long

Just a few highlights of our activities:

JANUARY

Community Choice Credit Union established a goal of team members collectively giving **10,000 hours of service** to causes in their area.

FEBRUARY

More than **2,500 scholarship** applications were submitted for consideration.

MARCH

All **24 Community Choice Credit Union** locations hosted a book drive supporting Friends of the Library groups across Michigan.



Community Choice Book Drive

APRIL

A **shoe drive** was held to help financially support our Foundation's scholarship program.

MAY

We celebrated our scholars at our annual awards ceremony.

 **\$100,000**
In scholarships awarded
to **25 Scholars** in 2023

JUNE

- ▶ We welcomed new volunteer coordinator, **Kelsey Royer**.
- ▶ The Foundation officially opens Give Big volunteer opportunities to Community Choice Credit Union members.
- ▶ Financial support provided for victims of the devastating **Maui wildfire**.
- ▶ To celebrate the grand openings of Commerce Township and Farmington Hills member centers, we donated \$2,500 each to these great organizations: The Drew Crew, CARES of Farmington Hills, Camp Casey, and The Student Pantry of Walled Lake Schools.



CARES of Farmington Hills

JULY AND AUGUST

3,200 new backpacks were distributed across 8 communities for kids headed back to school.



Backpack Giveaway Event

SEPTEMBER

We celebrated Give Big Month with **1,735 hours volunteered** by credit union team members at over 100 charitable organizations.

OCTOBER

Community Choice Credit Union team members built **65 Radio Flyer wagons** along with comfort bags to support children in need.



Team Enrichment Day 2023



Kids Food Basket lunch bag decorating

NOVEMBER

The Foundation awarded both the **Boys & Girls Club of Muskegon Lakeshore** and **Kids Food Basket** with \$2,500 each in celebration of the Muskegon-Harvey Street Member Center grand opening.

DECEMBER

Community Choice team members **filled essential boxes** for United Way partner organizations.

JOIN US IN 2024

GIVE BIG BY GIVING BLOOD

There are many ways to make a difference in the community. That's why we launched the Give Big, Give Blood Program. According to the American Red Cross, one pint of blood can save more than one life. For this reason, we are extending our Give Big Give Blood efforts throughout 2024!



HERE'S HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- ▶ Download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App.
- ▶ Select "Impact" then "Create or Join a Team."
- ▶ Search for "Community Choice Credit Union."
- ▶ Finally, schedule your donation.

Giving Big and Giving Back!

Community Choice Credit Union Board Member Kathy Bonutti is continuing the tradition of charitable giving and volunteerism set by her parents Henry and Esther Poterucha.

Bonutti, who also serves as Board Treasurer for Community Choice Credit Union, grew up in Illinois but has made Michigan her home with her husband, Hank, for more than 45 years. Her parents taught all five of their children the importance of giving back, establishing the Poterucha Family Foundation to follow their lead. Her parents' influence wasn't lost on Kathy and her siblings, who meet in person annually to discuss plans for charitable distribution to worthy organizations in Michigan and Minnesota, where Kathy's siblings and their families live today.

"My parents felt strongly about the need to give back and their generosity really rubbed off on us," Kathy says. "They felt it was important to give back to those who weren't as fortunate and to causes they deeply cared about."

Over the years, the Poterucha Family Foundation has grown significantly to the point that it now serves as an endowment for worthwhile causes. Henry and Esther were always supportive of their church and local schools, with both causes remaining important to Kathy today. It's one

of the reasons she is such an advocate for the Community Choice Foundation Scholarship Program.

Like her own family foundation, the Community Choice Foundation is carefully managed to ensure its sustainability. Kathy appreciates the amount of behind-the-scenes work invested in the program.

"The quality of the selection process for the scholarships is extensive and it's a commitment to support students that want to stay in Michigan," she says. Kathy also sees the impact the Community Choice Foundation is having in other areas, and the growth it continues to experience.

In some ways, the efforts remind her of the commitment her parents and family have given to their own foundation. Giving Big is more than an action – it is a way of life.

"It's great to be involved in two foundations that give back to their communities in such a significant way."



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: NICOLE ZIMMERMAN

Nicole Zimmerman displayed a deep commitment to her community in 2023 through volunteer work in and around the communities of Clinton Township, Fraser, Roseville, and St. Clair Shores. Among her numerous efforts is co-founding the Reach 360 Foundation, designed to help youth athletes who need financial support play the sport(s) of their choice. "I joined the LC in August of 2014 [holy cow it will be 10 years this year]. I have been a board member since July 2015. I am currently the treasurer and have been since 7/1/2022. I am the co-chair for the Fraser Lions Club, annual carnival in Fraser. I sit on the committee that runs the club. I also tend to be the go-to person for all fundraisers."

As the Roseville member center manager at Community Choice Credit Union, Nicole is an advocate for planning and organizing Give Big activities and team volunteering events. Her significant contributions embody the Community Choice Foundation spirit of Giving Big. As a result, her selflessness and leadership have made a lasting and positive difference in local communities.



We gave local children the best start to the school year



Cris Almeida volunteering with our devoted member, Martha Wojciechowski.

The Community Choice Foundation ensured several days of fun across eight different member centers in July and August giving away free backpacks and school supplies to 3,200 students. This annual tradition included free food, fun, activities, music, prizes, and backpacks filled with school supplies made possible by over 100 volunteers. It's one of many ways that the Foundation supports schools, students, and teachers around the state.

A huge thank you to our local business members and partners for making it possible for kids to have lots of fun and leave with great backpacks filled with pencils, notebooks, glue sticks, crayons, rulers, and lots more.

Backpacks were given away at Community Choice member centers in the following communities:

- ▶ Hillsdale
- ▶ Holland
- ▶ Jackson
- ▶ Livonia
- ▶ Muskegon
- ▶ Redford
- ▶ Roseville
- ▶ Wyandotte



3,200

Backpacks distributed to school-aged children in 2023

Supporting Local Charities



Lindsay Noll, Bridget Simone, Anthony Hollow, and Cassandra Zonts at the Mentor Appreciation Dinner.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF JACKSON COUNTY

Supporting youth with resources, education, and mentoring support has always been the goal of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Jackson County (BBBS). The nonprofit creates and supports one-to-one mentoring relationships that help young people achieve their goals and set them up for a bright future.

The Community Choice Foundation has long been a supporter of the organization, donating \$1,500 in 2023, and activating Community

Choice Credit Union team member volunteers at major fundraising events throughout the year. Several Jackson-based Community Choice team members volunteered at BBBS events. Team members have also become “Bigs,” serving as mentors to local youth.

Executive director Tony Hollow is a long-time credit union member and sees the support team members and the Foundation give to the highly respected organization. “We are very appreciative of the Community Choice partnership,” Hollow says. He recognized the Community Choice Foundation at BBBS’ Mentor Appreciation Dinner for its 2023 support.

The Foundation supported more than 240 charitable organizations with financial support and volunteerism in 2023. A few are listed below:

- ▶ Camp Casey
- ▶ Blessings in a Backpack
- ▶ Horses’ Haven
- ▶ Last Day Dog Rescue
- ▶ Rainbow Connection
- ▶ Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- ▶ Angel’s Place
- ▶ Alternative for Girls
- ▶ Forgotten Harvest



Jackson member center partnering to build a wheelchair ramp.

JACKSON ROTARY CLUB

Each year Community Choice Credit Union partners with the Jackson Rotary Club and Disability Connections to build a wheelchair ramp for a community member. This past September team members from our Jackson member center came together. They were able to get their hands dirty and complete the ramp in one day.

Interested in Giving Big?

We appreciate financial gifts and volunteer support from our members and neighbors. From helping to make a college or trade school education more affordable to providing a meal and comfort to an unhoused individual, the Community Choice Foundation continues to expand our reach, but we need your help!

Community Choice Credit Union members can make a contribution to the Foundation in e-Banking. Non-members can contribute at **CommunityChoiceFoundation.org**. Your donation will support the communities where you live, work, and play.

Thank you for Giving Big and Giving Back!





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CommunityChoiceFoundation.org

Email: Foundation@CommunityChoiceCU.com

