

Wednesday, November 15, 2023



Senior
NEIGHBORS
no longer alone

Program Booklet
with 2023 Honoree Bios

Our gratitude never gets old.

Congratulations 16 Over 60 Honorees

Your dedication and commitment to our
community is appreciated and valued.



DAVID & CAROL
VAN ANDEL FAMILY
FOUNDATION

16 OVER 60 AWARDS *Gala*

Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023

6:00 pm Cocktail Reception

6:30 pm Welcome and Dinner

7:00 pm Awards Program

- *Inspirational Stories from the Honorees*
- *Moving Story of Triumph and Joy*
- *Memorable Moments and Entertaining Banter!*



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The 16 Over 60 Awards Gala celebrates the diverse and inspiring roles people 60 years of age or more play in our community.

To see Honorees from prior years and read their bios, visit: seniorneighbors.org/16over60



KLOPCIC FAMILY FOUNDATION

GOLD SPONSOR • 2023 COMMUNITY PARTNER IN PHILANTHROPY



Seniors at the Grandville Senior Neighbors Center are learning how to play Mahjong, “the pickleball of board games.” This game is increasing in popularity at the center and more people are learning to play each week!

The Klopcic Family Foundation supports Senior Neighbors because of the social connections that are provided through the 5 senior centers located throughout Kent County.



Engaged & INSPIRING

Each year, the **16 Over 60 Awards** recognize 16 Engaged & Inspiring individuals who are 60 years of age or more. Through their continuing achievements, passions, and impacts on those around them, these Honorees **exemplify the vigor and purpose** that may flourish with age and experience.

16 Over 60 Honorees may:

- Lead, support, or inspire others
- Give back to the community
- Serve as a neighborhood cornerstone
- Contribute to local arts or culture
- Elevate the well-being of others
- Embody healthy living
- Champion those in need, or
- Be anyone 60 years of age or more living life to its fullest or overcoming great adversity



If you know someone who you'd like to see honored at a future event, please email Winsome Bricker at wbricker@seniorneighbors.org. We'll follow up when nominations open for next year's awards.

The 16 Over 60 Awards Gala **also provides much-needed support for Senior Neighbors programs** serving seniors throughout Kent County.

**Thank you for participating
in tonight's event!**

Senior
NEIGHBORS
no longer alone

50 years
serving area seniors since 1972

Here to Help

The 16 Over 60 Awards Gala supports Senior Neighbors in its mission to help West Michigan seniors stay **independent**, **safe**, and **connected** to the community.

For more than 5,000 seniors each year, Senior Neighbors provides services that promote the well-being of older adults, especially for those with physical, social, or economic needs living in Kent County.

SENIOR CENTERS

Our five centers in Grand Rapids, Grandville, Lowell, Sparta and Walker offer friendly spaces for seniors to socialize, share meals, exercise and learn new skills. By participating in our diverse activities, older adults remain healthy, independent and connected to the community.



CASE MANAGEMENT

We work one-on-one with older adults to develop strategies and provide support, crisis assistance and referrals to overcome challenges that limit independence. Common concerns include finances, technology, animal companions, insurance, health and housing.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

We connect older adults to affordable ways to get to the doctor, grocery store or our senior centers so they can maintain their independence.



HOME REPAIR FOR VETERANS

Giving back to our veterans is an honor. This program offers home repairs to veterans and their spouses at no cost to them. From changing locks to new flooring, the program strives to improve the safety, accessibility, and livability of the homes of veterans.

HOME MAINTENANCE

Our home maintenance team performs minor repairs for homeowners who do not have the support or resources to complete the repairs themselves. Limited seasonal lawn care and snow removal is also available.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Our AmeriCorps Seniors program is Kent County's hub for connecting schools and non-profits to the wisdom, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers 55 and older. Participants can apply existing skills or learn new ones as they help others throughout their community. We offer three distinct paths for volunteering with diverse opportunities to match nearly any interest.



PET ASSISTANCE

For many seniors, pets provide vital companionship, engagement, purpose and love. If caring for an animal companion becomes a challenge, we can lend a hand! We help with vet bills and guidance, and provide food and supplies so these furry family members can stay healthy and safe at home.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Get connected digitally with our newest program that offers small group workshops on a variety of tech topics, a device lending library and staff to support one-on-one assistance for specific questions.

HEALTHY AGING

We believe in the importance of keeping the body and mind active to help maintain independence. Active older adults are physically stronger, less likely to fall, more confident in their ability to stay independent, and enjoy better overall health. Our many Engaging Wellness classes, offered throughout the area, encourage people to participate regardless of their fitness levels. It's never too late to choose an active lifestyle!



Senior Neighbors programs are funded by donations and grants from **foundations**, **agencies**, **municipalities**, and **caring individuals like you**. We also thank these **funding partners**:



*Kent County
Senior Millage*



get involved

If you **like**
our mission,
You'll **love**
joining our team!

At Senior Neighbors,
we have ongoing opportunities
to **get involved**. Whether it's serving others as
a volunteer or pursuing a rewarding career on our staff, you'll find the perfect fit!

To learn more, email us at info@SeniorNeighbors.org or explore online...

Volunteer: SeniorNeighbors.org/Volunteer **Jobs:** SeniorNeighbors.org/Careers



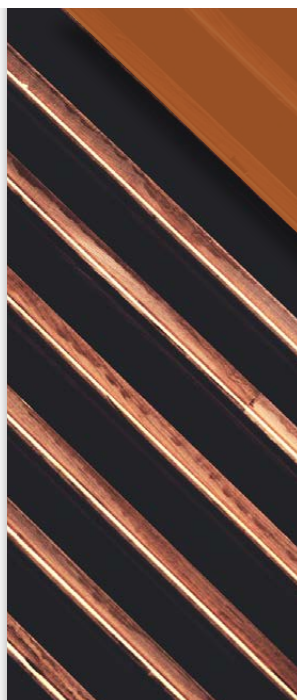
VARNUM

IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

Senior Neighbors

congratulations,
2023 CLASS OF
16 OVER 60

*Thank you for your service and
contributions to West Michigan!*





The right care starts in the community. That's why we partner with locally based organizations on programs that encourage healthy lifestyles, increase access to quality health care, and address and reduce health disparities. We also support free and low-cost clinics across our state. Blue Cross is ready to help support the health of all Michiganders.

Learn more at [AHealthierMichigan.org](https://www.AHealthierMichigan.org)

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Proud Supporter of Senior Neighbors!



Faith-Based & Not-For-Profit



Brio Living Services offers a wide array of living options and services to meet the needs and desires of older adults across the state.

Learn more at www.MyBrio.org   

A HELPING HAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

With generous financial support from our community, Senior Neighbors connects local seniors to resources to help them maintain independence and navigate through times of crisis. Among respondents to our client survey:

94% reported **improved health, reduced stress, and reduced isolation.**

100% reported **improved independence and self-sufficiency** after working with a case manager.

99% said their **financial situation improved** after working with Senior Neighbors.

100% of seniors facing a housing crisis **remained in their homes** with the assistance of Senior Neighbors.

SERVICE AND BELONGING FOR EVERYONE

Meet Our Clients

AGE

60 to 69. . . 45%
70 to 79. . . 35%
80 to 89. . . 16%
90+ 4%

GENDER

65% **35%**
female **male**



41%
describe themselves as
frail or having a disability



49%
live alone

RACE/ETHNICITY

According to the census, 91% of Kent County seniors identify as white. Our clients identify as:

African American 32%
Asian. 2%
Hispanic 5%
Native American 1%
White 65%

437

veterans served
421 veteran spouses served



More than 1/3 of those we serve live on less than \$14,000 a year.

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

Many older adults depend on transportation assistance. The greatest need is getting to medical appointments, followed by grocery shopping, other miscellaneous trips, and finally to our centers for meals. Of those surveyed:

100% reported improved follow through with medical visits and treatment because of transportation services.

91% reported reduced isolation thanks to Senior Neighbors transportation services.



GAINING A LIFELINE THROUGH COMMUNITY

Senior Neighbors has five senior centers throughout Kent County. These centers provide vital community and emotional support to seniors who might be isolated from family and friends through no fault of their own.



79% reported eating more regularly because of meals provided by their local center.

93% report their center helped them be more active.

90% are enjoying better health thanks to activities offered at their center.

**29,242
meals
served**



A MATTER OF BALANCE

Did you know, the fear of falling can be more debilitating than experiencing an actual fall? In the older adult population, this fear leads to social isolation, depression, poor health, and an increased risk of falls. Senior Neighbors strives to help older adults feel more confident in their abilities to prevent a fall. Those participating in the many Engaging Wellness classes find themselves more physically fit and confident in their own strength and balance to help manage the fear of falling. Numerous classes are offered at all levels, including:



EnhanceFitness • Tai Chi • Virtual Fitness Classes
Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program • Gentle Yoga

98% find improvement or greater ease in maintaining their physical abilities.

97% report the classes help their mind become healthier as well as their bodies.

2022

impact report



Smart decisions today. Lasting value tomorrow.™

Crowe proudly supports the Senior Neighbors
16 Over 60 Awards Gala 2023.

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Tax2499-003C

A photograph of a group of senior citizens participating in a Tai Chi class. They are in a large, bright room with large windows overlooking a brick building and a parking lot. The participants are dressed in casual attire, and a wheelchair is visible in the background. The room has a light-colored tiled floor and a clock on the wall.

**Kent County seniors enjoy a class of
relaxing Tai Chi.**

**The Currie Foundation
Supports Senior
Neighbors.**

**16
OVER
60**

Alumni

Since 2018, the annual 16 Over 60 Awards Gala has celebrated the inspiring impacts of those 60 or more. The contributions of these outstanding individuals are emblematic of the pivotal role older adults serve throughout our community!

2018 Honorees



Back row: Priscilla Kimboko, Barbara Hohman, Larry Robson, Rev. Leonard McElveen, Barry Van Dyck, Jack Greenfield, Robert Hill, Kate Dernocoeur, Robbie McCollum

Front row: Donna Sterling, Gwendolyn P. Nathan, Sr. Jarrett DeWyse, OP, Micki Benz, Marian Barrera-Young, JoAnn Abraham, Karen Weaver

2019 Honorees



Back row: Susan Zimmerman, Rodney Martin, Faye Richardson-Green, Sara Smolenski, Carl Ver Beek, John Mulder, Doyle Hayes, Dave Kampfschulte

Front row: Mary Jane Dockeray, Mary Alice Williams, Marc DeRuiter, Julie Haveman, Cindy Ritter, Steve Maas, Suzan Couzens, Elaine Hillary



Top Row: Tom Appel, Lucille Arndt, Syd Baxter, Sarah Brooks, Juanita Gaddis

Middle Row: Hattie Hayes, Bob Hengeveld, Ron Hofman, Shelley Irwin, Ruth Kelly, Katie Orent

Bottom Row: Teresa Toland, Jim Tuinstra, Christopher Wilson, Bruce Young, Raul Ysasi



Back row: Reverend Bob Evans, Harold Mast, Dr. James Fahner, Dr. Ronald Grifka, Dr. Kevin Foley, Marlin Feyen, Oliver Hale

Front row: Alice Johnson, Pauline Meyer, Sister Rosita Schiller, Marilyn Booker, Deborah Clanton, and Lois Carey.

Not Pictured: Fred Bivins, Larry Byle, and Anthony Spallone

Alumni (cont.)



2022 Honorees

Back row: Ed Riekana, Joy Spahn, Joe Zomerlei, Ronald Jimmerson, Dale Robertson, Rev. Charles Hudson III, Nancy Clouse, and Mick McGraw.

Front row: Thomas Weaver, Katherine Mullen, Ellen Bruinsma, Lisa McManus, Gertrude Croom, Earnestine Tolbert, and Chuck Burpee.

Not pictured: Iris Boettcher



***Congrats to all of the winners of
the 16 over 60!***

As our two companies have come together with a "Heart of Servitude",
We at Fusion-IT and Millennia Technologies
are proud to support Senior Neighbors' mission
in serving our senior community throughout West Michigan!

www.fusion-it.net

www.mtvoip.com

GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY

Marcelo Lehninger, Music Director

University of Michigan Health-West

HOLIDAY POPS

December 21 7:00pm

December 22 7:00pm

December 23 2:00pm

December 23 7:00pm

SCAN FOR TICKETS!



Series Sponsor



Title Sponsor



Guest Artist Sponsor

Jim & Sheryl Jurries

Allegro Lounge Sponsor



JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE 16

Engaged & INSPIRING HONOREES FOR 2023

The 16 Over 60 Awards Gala, now in its 6th year, helps local seniors maintain their independence and well-being by supporting the diverse programs and services offered by Senior Neighbors.



Don Bultman

*Community Builder, Neighborhood Handyman,
Food Pantry Advocate*

Don Bultman, after serving 40 wonderful years in education with children, is continuing to serve God and his community by leading the Saturday Food Program at Eastern Ave CRC, aiding over 100 families weekly. He dedicates 6 to 10 hours weekly, handling tasks from food collection to cleanup. His engagement extends to youth tutoring, summer programs, and diverse roles within the church. As condo president, Don transforms his love for helping others into action, overseeing maintenance and landscaping projects to build community bonds. Volunteering with AARP, he offers no-cost tax assistance to those in need and greets customers, fostering positive connections. For three decades, Don has served on the

board of Grand Rapids Sister Cities, fostering global ties and hosting students from Omihachiman, Japan. Through this work he engages with international students and supervises visits to Japan. Don's philanthropy reaches beyond the borders of Michigan, to Mississippi Family Christian Services an organization providing services to handicapped adults. He volunteers with his wife at a thrift store for the organization and does minor painting and repairs. In retirement, Don finds fulfillment in the love of his family and meaningful relationships, embracing the beauty of life through dedicated service and care for others.



Carole Chisholm

Selfless Volunteer, Mental Health Provider, Mentor

Carole Chisholm is a lifelong volunteer deeply influenced by her family's strong tradition of community service. Her commitment to giving back remains steadfast in her 60s. Carole co-owns Claystone Clinical Associates, a mental health agency, where she provides care for individuals from adolescent to senior years, mentors others, develops programs, and stays on the cutting edge of her field. For over 20 years, she's also taught graduate social work classes at WMU. In her free time, Carole and her therapy dog, Chewbacca, certified through West Michigan Therapy Dogs, spread joy by visiting various places, including hospitals, schools, and the Ronald McDonald House. Carole regularly volunteers at

Blodgett Hospital, distributing Holy Communion, and stays involved with Senior Neighbors beyond her many years of service on the board of directors. She's hands-on with Habitat for Humanity's Catholic Builds, willingly taking on construction tasks by picking up a hammer or saw. Carole serves as an ambassador for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, offering support and facilitating grief groups for Kent County events. Carole's unwavering commitment to volunteering and her eagerness to embrace new experiences inspire others to seize opportunities and stay engaged in making a positive impact.

**Patrick Coleman***Man of Faith, Professor, Empowerer*

Patrick Coleman has a heart for people and an ardent passion for lending a helping hand. As an Army veteran, he is instrumental in guiding fellow vets and their families through the transition from military to civilian life. He helps them navigate the maze of benefits, receive medical compensation for injuries, and access college education. He also helps spouses understand and empathize with what their husband or wife may have endured while on active duty. Often, what a vet needs most is a just a good listener, companion, or helper. As Patrick says, everyone needs someone, and he is honored to be that someone for others. Patrick believes in being a constant seeker and in becoming Kingdom First. As an ecclesiastical leader

of a major church in the heart of the city, his faith and compassion shine through. Patrick's lifetime of service covers many impactful roles in education and employment assistance. Now, through his varied philanthropic efforts and role modeling, Patrick rallies support for those in need, aids reintegration for former inmates, encourages community development, and inspires others to be personally great and love unconditionally. Moreover, he is a loving and stalwart husband, father, and grandfather.

**Sandi Frost Steensma***Community Cornerstone, Nonprofit Catalyst, Traveler*

Sandi Frost Steensma is the founder of Kennari Consulting, a Kent County-based fundraising firm established in 2007. With a remarkable track record, Sandi and her team have supported local non-profits in their efforts, raising more than \$750 million for more than 200 nonprofits, enriching the fabric of West Michigan with a thriving philanthropic spirit. Her dream of a richer and more inclusive community through philanthropy has become a reality. Serving as a philanthropic partner for clients like Cherry Health, Mary Free Bed, Grand Rapids Symphony, and more, Sandi witnesses firsthand the transformative impact on lives. From healthcare accessibility to educational opportunities and vibrant arts, these collaborations

have contributed to Kent County's positive transformations. Grateful for the opportunities, she feels an overwhelming joy every day, knowing that her work contributes to sustaining the philanthropic heart that makes Grand Rapids special. Sandi's recent book, "The Giving Garden," stands as her gift back to the profession, aiming to share the joy that comes from a life dedicated to service. Sandi also has a voracious appetite to travel and see the world, her thirst for adventure and learning never end. Her future travel plans include Cartagena, Columbia, the Panama Canal and visiting Christmas markets in Germany - and that's just in 2024!



KENNARI
CONSULTING

Congratulations to
our fearless founder –
a 16 Over 60 Honoree!

Sandi Frost Steensma



Kennari Consulting

*Our mission is to change the face of philanthropy,
moving nonprofits of all sizes to greater capacity and
meaningful impact within the communities they serve.*

Learn More

www.kennariconsulting.com

**inspiration
is ageless**

Proud sponsor of the 16 Over 60
Gala Awards 2023

#meijercommunity



Congratulating the 2023 honorees of Senior Neighbors “16 Over 60”

HAP is proud to be moving healthy forward in West Michigan. We are committed to community outreach, quality healthcare and providing value to Michigan residents.

Learn more about staying healthy and the affordable health plans HAP offers: hap.org/blog

***See for yourself why more neighbors
are choosing HAP!***

HAP320847



Cynthia Kay

Media Entrepreneur, Nonprofit Ally, Author

Cynthia Kay embodies the values of community service. She has served on countless boards and committees, most recently on the fundraising committee for the new Junior Achievement Finance Park and Biz Town. Cynthia is a founding member of Leading Ladies at Clark and has been instrumental to the success of the Cascade Community Foundation. As the founder of CK and CO Media Production, she provides video production support to various nonprofits, including Kids Food Basket, Angels in Action, Clark Retirement Community, Rockford Community Foundation, and Junior Achievement. One recent documentary, "A Story to Remember," won the prestigious GOLD Telly award. Cynthia's passion for

small businesses led her to chair the Small Business Association of Michigan and the National Small Business Association. She remains actively involved with both organizations and has authored several books on business and women in business, including her new release, "Small Business Big Success: Proven Strategies to Beat the Odds." Her life philosophy centers on loving what you do, giving selflessly, and staying active. Through her enduring commitment to her community, dedication to small businesses, and philanthropy, Cynthia Kay is an inspiration to many, leaving a lasting impact on all she touches.



Don Kern

Marathon Master, Inspiring Athlete, Adventurer

Don Kern is a passionate advocate for fitness, community, and charity in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He serves as the Race Director for the University of Michigan Health-West Grand Rapids Marathon and other local events, drawing thousands of participants into the city, positively impacting local businesses and the individual health of each runner. Don's weekly newsletter reaches nearly 20,000 subscribers, primarily runners and event enthusiasts, inspiring them to set and achieve goals while emphasizing physical fitness and overall well-being, regardless of age or physical condition. In addition to his event leadership and newsletter, Don works as a lifeguard at the downtown YMCA and serves as a member

of the YMCA Service club, helping send children to summer camp at Camp Manitou-Lin through scholarships for children that might not otherwise be able to attend. Don's charitable endeavors extend to various causes, including Kent County Parks, My Team Triumph, Team World Vision, and Hope Water International, showcasing his dedication to giving back to the community. Don Kern's unwavering commitment to fitness (having run over 300 marathons), community service, and charitable contributions makes him a beloved and respected figure in Grand Rapids, positively impacting the lives of many.

**Darlene Larson**

*Women's Champion, Life Purpose Coach,
Inspirational Author*

Darlene Larson, a seasoned life purpose and grief-loss coach, is also an accomplished author. Her fifth book, focusing on grief and loss, is set to release in 2024. Recognized as a leading Christian Life Coach, she specializes in helping women find purpose in adversity. Darlene's coaching profoundly impacts Kent County, guiding women through life's challenges to discover their life purpose. She holds leadership roles in organizations like the Well Ministry for Creatives and serves as faculty for The Well Conference and SpeakUp Conference, empowering Christian leaders in speaking and writing. She has also spoken as an advocate for teenage girls at the GEMS Conference at Calvin College. As an active member

of the World Weavers, Grand Rapids North Group, Darlene supports fellow writers, and within her church, she teaches, leads groups, and volunteers. Using online resources, she connects with Kent County women through complimentary coaching calls and newsletters. Darlene is a sought-after speaker for various organizations, and her entrepreneurial venture, Hearts with a Purpose, helps women worldwide to find purpose through their pain. Certified in Life Purpose Coaching®, Grief-loss Coaching, and Recovery Coaching, Darlene's educational background, personal story, and teaching experience underline her commitment to empowering women on their life journeys.

**Delight Lester**

Disability Advocate, Creative Leader, Community Activist

Delight Lester serves as founder and artistic director of Arts in Motion. For more than a decade, this West Michigan nonprofit has enriched the lives of individuals with disabilities through programs in expressive arts and community engagement. Delight is passionate about the power of building confidence through self-expression, enabling students to break through perceived barriers to see themselves as active, contributing members of our community. Through her leadership, Arts in Motion programs encourage long-term learning and development, while highlighting student talents and fostering awareness through community performances and exhibitions. As individuals with disabilities age, Delight works closely with families to explore changing

needs and assist with planning, frequently using the arts as a tool to help navigate changes. She also is developing a curriculum to assist with developing life plans and establishing milestones to foster a sense of accomplishment and successful living. In her current role, Delight merges diverse skills gained from previous experiences as a social worker, performer, choreographer, instructor, disability compliance consultant and cultural representative for the State of Michigan. Now, through creativity, passion, and "Loving Big," Delight brings joy and nurtures self-worth for countless individuals, forging paths to more fulfilling and hopeful lives.



Where communities come together

Merc is here.

Congratulations to the 16 Over 60 honorees!



**The communities we serve
are a top priority.**

**Priority Health is honored to partner with Senior Neighbors.
Together, we can better serve one of our top priorities –
Michigan communities.**

priorityhealth.com



Priority Health™

**Your gift to Senior Neighbors
will help protect the safety
and well-being of more than
5,000 local seniors this year.**



**Please give generously using
this QR code or by visiting
SeniorNeighbors.org/give**

Thank you for your support!

AmeriCorps seniors
Case management
Healthy aging classes
Home maintenance
Home repair for veterans
Housing assistance
Medicare & Medicaid counseling
Pet assistance
Refugee program
Senior Centers
Technology support
Transportation

**Senior
NEIGHBORS**
no longer alone
50 years
serving area seniors since 1972

Volunteer With Us!

Connect with your community, learn about our worldwide collections, and work with visitors of all ages!

Visit grpm.org/volunteer to learn more.

Congratulations to GRPM Trustee Lupe Ramos-Montigny and all recipients of the 16 over 60 award!

GRAND RAPIDS
PUBLIC MUSEUM

Be curious.


grpm.org



Doreen Mangrum

Transforming Superintendent, Mindfulness Teacher, At-Risk Advocate

Doreen Mangrum, currently the Acting Superintendent for three Covenant High Schools in West Michigan, works to empower vulnerable students aged 15-22. Her work as a Special Education Teacher has been foundational to all her work. Over the years she has been instrumental in the success of multiple school locations in a variety of roles but has always kept the mission of the organization central to all she does; welcoming all students with unconditional love to give them growth opportunities and take control of their lives. After retiring, Doreen was later called back post-pandemic to restore the schools, now on an upward trajectory. Beyond education, Doreen is a Certified

Mindful Meditation Teacher, transforming women aged 50-80 through mindfulness. Through her teachings, students report enriched relationships and personal growth, embracing gratitude and openness. The tools extend to navigating aging and death, fostering new connections and supporting individuals through grief. Doreen also serves on the board of SowHope.org, a Kent County-based nonprofit aiding vulnerable women globally. Inspired by her travels to Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana, Doreen has learned profound lessons about strength from the heart and soul, reflecting her commitment to making a positive impact both locally and internationally.



Laura B. Moody

Compassionate Hero, Lifelong Educator, Nursing Champion

Laura B. Moody, MSN, RN, with a focus on Women's Health, is a driving force in healthcare and community service. As a founding member of the Grand Rapids Chapter of the National Black Nurses Association, she brings a wealth of experience from her roles as a retired nursing Professor and adjunct Instructor. Laura has inspired numerous nursing students to pursue advanced degrees and careers in healthcare while volunteering in Kent County schools, encouraging young people to chase their dreams. She actively supports minority students through a nursing scholarship at Grand Rapids Community College and contributes to the Grand Rapids Black Nurses Association's scholarship committee. Alongside

Commissioner Nathaniel Moody, Laura co-founded Brown Hutcherson Ministries, and oversaw the health ministry. Leading the Health Ministry at her church, she educates the community on various health topics. Laura serves on multiple boards and committees, advocating for the underserved and promoting health parity in Kent County. Laura's dedication spans over 40 years, making her a valued pillar in the community, and she continues to actively contribute to the health and well-being of Kent County residents.

**Arlan Palmer***Chaplain, Foster Parent, Diversity Coordinator*

Arlan Palmer has been a dedicated member of the Grand Rapids community for over 30 years. In his role as the Chaplain and Diversity Coordinator at Wedgwood Christian Services, Arlan focuses on ministering to youth and families, especially those navigating challenging situations in the foster care system. His goal is to provide support to youths placed in residential programs, offering companionship during times of family separation. As the Neighborhood Chaplain for Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Arlan actively supports the tutoring program and is a mentor to young men individually and in groups. His commitment to helping others extends to providing advice and support to parents,

particularly those in single-parent homes. With a philosophy centered on continuous growth, learning, and community service, Arlan emphasizes the value of every individual, irrespective of age. Inspired by his life experiences, including overcoming adversity after his father's departure at age six, Arlan brings a strong foundation of faith to his work, aiming to inspire and support others on their journey. Additionally, he is part of a project to publish a book started by his late mother, showcasing her resilience and serving as an inspiration for many.

**Hon. Lupe Ramos-Montigny***Civil Rights Advocate, Community Unifier, Lifelong Educator*

Hon. Lupe Ramos Montigny, a dedicated leader in Grand Rapids, has chaired the Committee to Honor César E. Chávez for 23 years, annually awarding scholarships to students from various universities. She also played a pivotal role in renaming streets through the M.A.R.C.H. Committee, honoring civil rights heroes César E. Chávez and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A committed community servant, Lupe serves on two boards at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, advocating for inclusive education. Running for a statewide office at 69, she won a term on the State Board of Education, emphasizing her philosophy that age is just a number. Lupe encourages those turning 60 and beyond to embrace

new chapters filled with adventures and laughter. Even though she retired after 36 years with GRPS, she did not retire from her family, community, or politics! Her view on life has, and always will be, "Si Se Puede," "Yes, I can!" Beyond her civic contributions, she loves dancing, gardening, live concerts, and celebrating life. A believer in sharing experiences, she connects senior citizens with students, creating the Golden Citizen Award to honor the contributions of seniors.



LUPE RAMOS-MONTIGNY

Chairperson of the Committee
to Honor César E. Chávez

Lupe Ramos-Montigny "SI SE PUEDE" Legacy Scholarship

The Lupe Ramos-Montigny "SI SE PUEDE" Scholarship was created at Grand Valley State University in 2015 to support Hispanic/Latino students (including undocumented students and dependents of migrant farm workers) with the cost of earning a degree at GVSU.

TO SUPPORT THE SCHOLARSHIP VISIT:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/giving/give-now-752.htm>

Use the drop down menu to select "GVUFLupe Ramos-Montigny "SI SE PUEDE" Legacy Endowed Scholarship"

SOME FOUNDATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE:

- Supporting Hispanic and Latino students' access to and completion of higher education
- Providing scholarships to students who are descendants of migrant farm workers or of Hispanic/Latino descent
- Celebrating and teaching Hispanic and Latino culture and heritage
- Promoting economic opportunities to children of migrant workers or recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival status
- Promoting a culture of inclusivity and togetherness in the community, and honoring the legacy of César E. Chávez



**AARP congratulates the 2023 honorees of
Senior Neighbor's "16 Over 60"!**

Find your crew!

Get involved with your local community and make unforgettable memories at
AARP's volunteer events in Grand Rapids and west Michigan.
Make new friends and connect with your neighbors in a fun and exciting way!



To learn more, visit: aarpmi.org/grandrapids

**Congratulations to
Ric Roane and the other
16 Over 60 honorees
being recognized for
their commitment to
community and impact on
the lives of many.**

wnj.com

Ric Roane
Attorney, Grand Rapids



Ric Roane

*Attorney for Access to Justice,
Symphony Spearhead, Food Nurturer*

Ric Roane, a seasoned family law attorney for 36 years, prioritizes equitable access to justice, emphasizing pro bono cases, especially for domestic violence victims at Warner Norcross + Judd. Beyond legal realms, he serves as Grand Rapids Symphony Board of Directors' vice chair, a trustee for the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and Grand Rapids First United Methodist Church. During the pandemic, Ric's dedicated volunteerism on the Symphony Board safeguarded jobs and income for performers, contributing to the symphony's success. His 35-year support emphasizes providing education, cultural exposure, and career opportunities. As a trustee, he

supports LGBTQ programs and scholarships, and breaking accessibility barriers through the Community Concerts program. Addressing food insecurity, Ric volunteers at First United Methodist Church's expanded food distribution program, reaching beyond Heartside to assist First Nation (Native American) people. Raised by a single mother, his personal background fuels his commitment to justice, education, and resources for all in Grand Rapids. Guided by his husband's wisdom, Ric's service motto is, "Do everything with joy in your heart. Anything less, and your efforts are meaningless."



James Smither

Engaging Educator, Voice to Veterans, Modern Historian

James Smither, a history professor at GVSU, has devoted his career to educating and preserving the stories of military veterans. Joining GVSU in 1990 as a specialist in Renaissance and Reformation European history, he shifted focus in 2003 to military history, founding the GVSU Veterans History Project. Having conducted over 1,000 oral history interviews with military veterans, many residing in Kent County, James records and broadcasts interviews on public access cable. He runs live presentations and adult education classes, posting interviews on YouTube and archiving them online. Beyond his academic role, James produced a documentary on the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League and published a WWII

memoir. Collaborating with Sen. Gary Peters' office and Kent County Veterans Services, he organized a day-long interview session with local veterans. James believes in the healing power of storytelling, guiding veterans to make sense of their experiences. His work extends beyond conventional history, showcasing a commitment to community engagement and preserving the living history of those who served. After turning 60, he continues to redefine his role, demonstrating a passion for connecting history with the community.



Angelica Velazquez

Community Leader, Business Owner, Grandma to the Rescue

Angelica Velazquez, President and Founder of “Grandmas to the Rescue,” passionately dedicates herself to uplifting the community. Through year-round events, she focuses on enhancing education, offering families opportunities, and organizing initiatives like composting and planting sessions. Angelica also provides free soil and seeds for families to start their gardens. Beyond events, she ensures families have essentials by distributing toys, clothes, food, and turkeys during Thanksgiving. Angelica goes further by assisting people in finding homes and employment, embodying the support “Grandmas to the Rescue” provides. She fosters community connections by hosting meetings with state representatives to

address concerns, believing that building a stronger community involves connecting its members. Coming from a large family and raising seven children while adopting four more, Angelica’s commitment to community care is deeply rooted. Born in Tamolipas, Mexico, she moved to Grand Rapids 22 years ago. Angelica aspires to be more than a store owner or a community leader—she seeks to be a part of the family, especially within the South Division corridor of Grand Rapids, where she feels a genuine connection.



Betty Webber

Lifelong Volunteer, Joyful Presence, Community Connector

Betty Webber, at 101 years young, boasts a unique perspective shaped by a life rich in experiences. A dedicated worker, she contributed to Measurement Inc., grading essays for MEAP tests until the remarkable age of 92, showcasing her commitment and work ethic. Betty, an English major, finds joy in reading and spearheading discussions within her church’s book circle, demonstrating her continuous pursuit of knowledge. Her commitment to giving back extends to frequently volunteering as a mock patient for medical students, emphasizing the importance of understanding elderly care to future doctors and nurses. Beyond volunteering, Betty is a friend to all and employs a no-questions-asked attitude to helping

anyone in need. Her steadfast support for her friend’s LGBTQ+ son led her to switch churches, embodying her open-mindedness and advocacy for inclusivity. With a philosophy that embraces gratitude for a long, healthy life, Betty lives with grace and love. Despite joking about being ready to go when the time comes, she remains a positive role model for her family, exemplifying a life well-lived with love and gratitude. Betty’s enduring impact continues through her daughter, grandchildren, and friends, creating a legacy of compassion and wisdom.



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