



Oceana
| Community
| Foundation

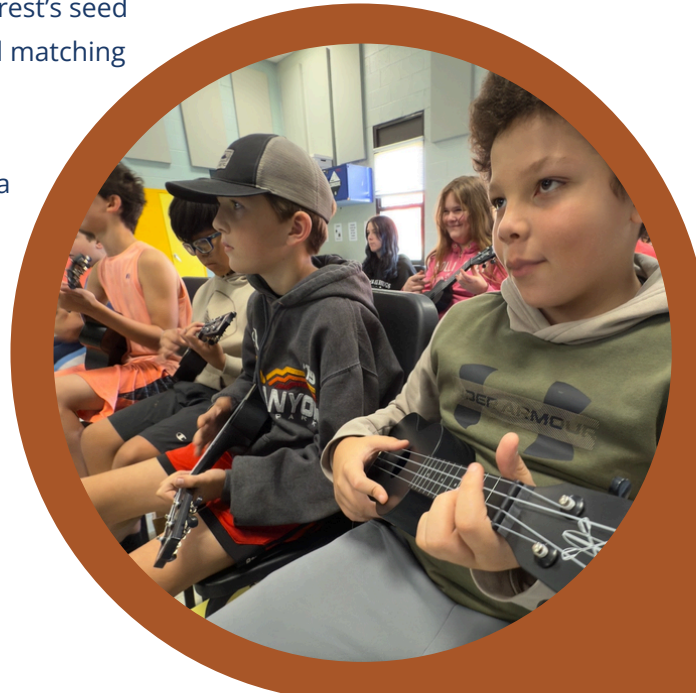
ROOTED IN COMMUNITY.
GROWING OPPORTUNITIES.

A Sound Investment: When Generosity Strikes a Chord

After a five year hiatus, Walkerville students are once again making music! When residents came together in January 2024 to participate in a community assessment, they talked about fostering pride and supporting their school - bringing back the band was a top priority! The **Music in Schools Program** helps to make music education accessible for area students. Inspired by Electric Forest's seed grant of \$10,000 in 2025, nine more Foundation funders contributed matching funds for a \$40,000 investment in music education for area schools.

Over the past two years, over \$20,000 was awarded to Walkerville via this program to refurbish and buy new instruments, add new music curriculum and more. Under the direction of the new music and band teacher Alessandra Dronchi, the elementary music program relaunched in winter 2025 and the middle school band started rebuilding in September. This support is more than just funding—it's a lasting investment in Walkerville's students, community pride, and the future of music education for all Oceana students.

Funding: The Music in Schools grant program was seeded by Electric Forest Charitable Fund and multiplied 4x by nine fundholders.



Complete Your Degree: When Futures Are Reimagined

For many adults in Oceana County, returning to school takes courage. The Complete Your Degree (CYD) program walks with students every step of the way —helping them finish their education, open new doors, and build a brighter future for themselves and their families. CYD reimagines scholarships, supporting not just tuition but the real-life challenges of pursuing a dream.

"Before I found the Complete Your Degree program, finishing school felt out of reach. Between work, raising two daughters, and paying the bills, school didn't seem possible. This program changed everything! It wasn't just the financial help, but the encouragement and conviction the success coach also provided. They made me believe that I could actually do it! I wanted to show my girls it's never too late to chase your dreams. I earned two associate degrees: Business Management and Business Marketing. Best of all, I found a stronger version of myself. I'm so grateful to the Foundation for helping me build a better future."

~ Aubrea S., Spring 2025 Muskegon Community College graduate



Funding: The Complete Your Degree program is supported by a network of donors and several scholarship funds.

Expanding Hope: When Healing Finds a Voice

After decades of gaps in services, the Foundation awarded funding to the Lakeshore Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) to expand support for child survivors of abuse in Oceana County. With the creation of a new interagency agreement, the Lakeshore CAC is connected with law enforcement, DHHS, mental health providers, and advocacy partners across Manistee, Mason, and Oceana counties. A recent Foundation grant provided forensic interviews for 31 Oceana children and trauma therapy for them and their families.

Anonymous feedback clearly illustrates the program's impact:

A child shared, "I am learning not to be afraid to speak up. I am happy and proud of how far I have come." Another participant said, "As a caregiver I've learned how to better support my child. I'll always remember the love and support Lakeshore CAC gave our family." "We're proud of the compassionate care provided to survivors and grateful for the support of the Oceana Community Foundation," said Megan McCarthy, Executive Director, Lakeshore CAC.

Funding: Community Investment Fund, William R. Lathers Fund



Hands That Feed Us: When Giving Brings Comfort

The Foundation is proud to support Oceana County's hardworking farmworkers by connecting generous donors and local nonprofits to meet unique needs through our annual wish lists and the Migrant Child Task Force basic needs drive. Last fall, the Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) submitted three wishes—wide-brim sun hats, hydration backpacks, and winter socks—funded by donor partners. LEO's ongoing efforts to strengthen communities and support essential needs align with our mission to uplift and empower those who make a difference every day.

Each year, we partner with DHHS Migrant Outreach staff to collect donations of new hygiene items, children's books and toys, cultural bulk foods and more to share with farmworkers and their families as they arrive for the agricultural season. Excited farmworkers shared how much they appreciated the backpacks and sun hats, which help them stay hydrated and protected while working in the fields. Together, we can help provide comfort and care to those in our community!

Funding: Frank Family Fund, Lois & Bill Lydens, William R. Lathers Fund, Migrant Child Task Force Annual Drive is supported by many donors



Have you heard of our big news? We're excited to share that the Foundation purchased a historic building in downtown Hart – known by many as the former law office of Eric Fox, across from the County Courthouse. Rooted in the past and focused on the future, this new space is a symbol of our long-term commitment to serving Oceana County and growing alongside the people who make it so special.



As we create the Foundation's permanent home, we invite you to join us in building more than an office. This space will strengthen our operations, expand our capacity to serve, and offer meeting areas for community use. We're thrilled to move into the next decade of growth and impact. We invite you to be part of this exciting chapter in our story by contributing to our **Founders Circle Campaign**. Your gift will help us complete the build out debt-free—creating a lasting hub for our programs and partners. We look forward to opening our doors in spring 2026. In this brief report, we celebrate some delightful stories of people impacted by your collective giving.

With much gratitude - we wish you a wonderful holiday season!

Help us lay the foundation of our future.

**Rooted in Community. Growing Opportunities.
Plant the seeds of change with your gift today.**

Your support transforms lives, strengthening our community in meaningful ways:

- **Foundation Operating Fund:** Investing here ensures the Foundation's day-to-day operations run smoothly. Your gift sustains staff, programs, and essential resources.
- **Founders Circle Campaign:** Contributions to this fund go directly toward the build out of a permanent home for the Foundation. Your investment creates a lasting hub for our programs and partners, ensuring a stable, visible presence in the community.
- **Urgent Needs Fund:** Support here helps our neighbors in crisis. Providing resources to meet urgent and basic needs for the people of Oceana County in partnership with our nonprofit partners.
- **Community Investment Fund:** Gifts here provide flexible support where it's needed most—helping launch new programs, respond to urgent community needs, and fund initiatives that make immediate impact.



Learning in Disguise: When Wonder Takes Flight

Amy Ackley, Pre-K Teacher at Oceana Christian School, brought science to life—literally! Her project, "Learning in Disguise," invited students to explore the life cycle of a butterfly in a hands-on, imaginative way. From caterpillars to chrysalis to colorful wings, her students didn't just learn—they lived the transformation.

As a new teacher, the grant gave Amy a way to obtain hands on resources for her class to enhance and boost learning. The kit had a powerful impact in the classroom—students were so engaged and having fun that they didn't even realize how much they were learning.

"This program was a huge success - it truly was learning in disguise! There is nothing like nature that brings learning to life, quite literally in this case! This grant provided our class with many exciting ways to incorporate learning. It had an incredible impact on our students and the joy on their faces as they saw those butterflies was priceless!"

~ shared beautifully by teacher Amy Ackley.

You may also choose from our full fund catalog to direct your gift to the cause that matters most to you. Every contribution helps us grow opportunity, change lives, and build a stronger, thriving community.

Funding: Oceana Youth Fund, advised by the Foundation's Youth Council