

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023
ANNUAL REPORT



FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BY THE NUMBERS

DONORS

348

generous donors helped their communities through contributions to funds that support education, family assistance, child welfare, economic development, emerging needs and more.

NONPROFITS SUPPORTED

81

local nonprofit organizations working to meet the needs of Branch County and Colon's communities were supported through our grant programs.

DOLLARS GRANTED

\$380K

in grants awarded to help build a better Branch County and Colon.

LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Reflecting on the past year, I am immensely grateful for our community's support and dedication. Through the collective efforts of dedicated staff, volunteers, board members, community partners, and generous donors, we have made such a significant difference.

Over the past fiscal year, we've addressed pressing needs in our community. This report highlights just a few of the initiatives we have supported and represents a small piece of our overall impact. As we continue the journey, we will build upon our successes and explore new avenues to address emerging needs.

We are honored to serve this remarkable community and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead.

Erica Heminger

Erica Heminger
Executive Director

The Branch County Community Foundation (BCCF) is a non-profit 501(c) (3) dedicated to improving the quality of life in the communities of Branch County and Colon, Michigan. In partnership with generous donors and community partners, we lead a community-wide effort to build a better future for everyone.

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Paul Creal
Hillary Eley
Rachel Hard
Chuck Lillis
Robert Mayer
Remus Rigg
Ron Rose
Patricia Klein Shoemaker
Connie Winbigler



The Community Foundation offers professional services and a place to begin for people who want to work together to create strong, prosperous communities. We promote community philanthropy, build endowments and other philanthropic funds, and connect community resources. Our endowment funds are preserved, invested, and managed to assure a steady income stream for grants to organizations that serve our community. Donors can contribute to one of over 140 funds or establish a new charitable fund at the foundation.

OUR MISSION

We promote and inspire community generosity and giving by bringing together passionate people and resources in our collective efforts to make an enduring difference in the community we love.

OUR VISION

A prosperous, collaborative, and welcoming Branch County community that promotes a strong sense of belonging and pride in its residents and provides opportunities for all to grow and thrive.

OUR PURPOSE

To achieve our vision, we will be a proactive, collaborative, and innovative community leader and partner in addressing community needs and making Branch County and Colon places people want to live, work, and visit.

OUR STAFF



Erica Heminger
Executive Director



Veanna Sargent
Development Associate



Madison Hostetler
Program Officer



Mallory VanWagner
YAC Advisor



Mackenzie Bracy
Volunteer YAC Advisor

OUR BOARD

Our donor-led board consists of volunteers from all over Branch County and the Colon area and includes a member of our Youth Advisory Council.

These dedicated volunteers have expertise in business, governance, finance, and other skills we need to operate transparently, efficiently, and effectively. Board members serve limited terms without compensation.



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Patti Miller
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Board Member



Brian Miller
Board Member



Liam VanWagner
Youth Advisory Committee



EXPLORING PHILANTHROPY WITH THE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is the Community Foundation's youth philanthropy program. The group consists of adult mentors and young people ages 12-21 from Branch County and Colon, Michigan. Together, they address local youth needs, assist in fund development activities, and direct grantmaking toward youth programs. YAC is dedicated to improving our communities by involving youth in the visioning and decision-making process and giving them a voice to shape the future. YAC is open to youth ages 12-21 who attend Bronson, Coldwater, Colon, Pansophia, St. Charles, or Union City Schools.

YAC kicked off the year by sponsoring and volunteering at the ABC Challenge. Several of the YAC members, including one of the YAC advisors, got dirty and covered in hay as they put their muscles to work helping build out the courses for the event. On the morning of the event, several other members were present to help run some of the event stations.



Awesome Branch County Challenge (ABC Challenge) - photo credit: Don Reid

At their first official meeting for the planning year in September, YAC invited three new members to the group! One of their first events was to present an exhibit at the annual

Community Foundation Open House, which is always a favorite event for the YACers, as they can see firsthand how some of their grants have been used to improve our community.



BCCF Open House

Members spent time reviewing the YAC Best Practices, to better understand their role as YAC members. They also had the opportunity to help meet a need by providing funds to relocate the Branch County Children's Museum in downtown Coldwater.

In December, YAC got to do one of their favorite community service projects, shopping for Christmas presents for children in need. Meijer gave them \$200 in gift cards to help increase their impact. They provided presents for 48 people in our community, including some parents of children they were shopping for. Recipients of these gifts included Family Promise, Teen Share, and families who utilize services at the the Branch County Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence.

For the second year, YAC members worked to help local 5th-graders discover philanthropy. Presentations at Pansophia in Coldwater and Colon Elementary introduced 5th-graders to the concept of philanthropy and to nonprofits

in our area. The project aims to help 5th graders in our school districts recognize the different ways to give back and inspire younger people to make a difference early on. YAC also empowers the students to have a voice by choosing a local nonprofit to receive a grant on behalf of YAC. That way, the students can see philanthropy in action!

The 2022-2023 planning year also meant an updated YAC Needs Assessment was in order. They received over 280 responses from youth in our community on the top issues they face.



5th-grade presentations

The YAC Grant cycle awarded **\$8,450.00** to five organizations in our area!

YAC granted funding to:

- Anderson Elementary in Bronson for their building community at recess project,
- The Branch Area Careers Center for their personal & hygiene project for students,
- Coach Eby Youth & Family Center to participate in a Fresh Food Distribution,
- Panshopiha Academy for their Drama Program, and
- Coldwater Community Center for youth programming once the center is open!

The main concerns highlighted were:

1. Anxiety, Depression,
2. Bullying/Cyberbullying, and
3. Academic Stress.

With their grant cycle, they used the Needs Assessment to prioritize grants that addressed these critical issues. YAC wrapped up a busy year with their final service project, creating and distributing hygiene kits to the four ProMedia Coldwater Regional Hospital Telemedicine Clinics in Branch County. These clinics service the

local middle and high school students, and their kits provide access to necessities some students may lack, such as shampoo/conditioner, toothbrushes and toothpaste, hairbrushes, sunscreen, and deodorant. YAC also evaluated the products they supply, and this year, they added more, including eye drops, braces wax, floss, and burn cream.

YAC recognized three seniors at their year-end dinner with the YAC members, their families, and BCCF Board members. It was a great year, and YAC is already in full swing as they enter their upcoming planning year!



YAC End-of-Year Dinner





COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY

In the years following the pandemic, food insecurity with rising food costs has been a silent struggle for many within our community. In Branch County, many groups have stepped up to aid in this area of need. The South Michigan Food Bank and Quincy United Methodist Church both received grants from the Branch County Community Foundation to contribute to their efforts.

Volunteers with the Quincy United Methodist Church were able to contribute to filling the Blessing Box, a roadside food pantry, on a weekly basis with non-perishable food items. To gain insight on exactly who benefits from the Blessing Box and to provide the most appropriate food items, an anonymous survey was conducted.

Among those who completed the survey,

- 80% of households have children,
- 60% have a senior citizen in the home,
- 40% of those households visit on a weekly basis for their food needs.

Re-stocking is done two to three times per week to ensure that those food needs can continuously be met.

Since 2008, the South Michigan Food Bank has worked diligently to provide over 100 sites with an opportunity to lift the burden of food insecurities. On a monthly basis, seven of those fresh food distributions take place within the Branch County community. Thanks to the efforts and volunteers with the South Michigan Food Bank, the gap is being filled to help our neighbors in need.

From January to June 2023 alone, an incredible 148,417 pounds of fresh, and non-perishable food items were distributed to Branch County families.

While the demand for food resources has continued to rise, grants from the Forever Fund contribute to programs like the Blessing Box and South Michigan Food Bank, helping to break the barrier of hunger in our community.



2023 SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2023, the Branch County Community Foundation was honored to fund 43 scholarship awards totaling \$52,500 to local residents who are pursuing higher education. BCCF Scholarship program is significant to us, because in most cases the scholarships received were created in memory of somebody who is no longer with us. Either the family is honoring their loved one and setting aside funding for others to obtain higher education, or the person themselves left funding in their will or trust so that

others would have the opportunity for higher education. Helping maintain an individual or family's local legacy is truly an honor. Congratulations to all of the Community Foundation scholarship recipients! Students who are graduating from high school or live in our service area and plan to enter an appropriately accredited post-secondary institution, including trade schools, two-year-degree programs, community colleges, and 4-year degree colleges and universities are welcome to apply!



MUSIC-FILLED SUMMERS

IN MEMORY OF IRMA L. ENGLISH

The Irma L. English Memorial Music Scholarship was established at the Branch County Community Foundation to honor a lifelong Branch County Resident who was passionate about life. One of Irma's strongest passions were music, evidence by the encouragement she gave to her children who participated in various musical activities. Because of that encouragement, some of Irma's children were lucky enough to receive scholarships to summer music camps in Michigan for two weeks during the summer break from school.

After Irma's death, her children discussed how they could honor their mother and decided that the best way would be to create a fund that allowed others to have the

same experiences at summer music camp, just like Irma's children did. Volumes have been written showing the benefit of music to children, including benefits in the areas of cognitive thinking, teamwork, discipline, not to mention math.

Since the inception of the fund, there have been fifty-six awarded scholarships to summer music camps throughout the State of Michigan. Through a scholarship from the ILE, Nathan Secord from Union City Middle School, was able to attend his second year of band camp at Camp Wakeshma. Nathan plans on attending a summer band camp again next year, saying "It gives me a chance to meet new people, be in nature, and get out of the house".



Queen

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to see videos from
summer band camp.



Journey

PLAYSPACE THAT BUILDS COMMUNITY AT ANDERSON ELEMENTARY

Every two years, the Youth Advisory Council conducts a needs assessment among peers within the schools of Branch County and Colon. With the last needs assessment, over 500 students responded with their top priorities - mental health concerns in anxiety and depression, inequity between student groups of different backgrounds and interests, along with interest in providing resources to our underserved populations and teaching basic life skills and morals.

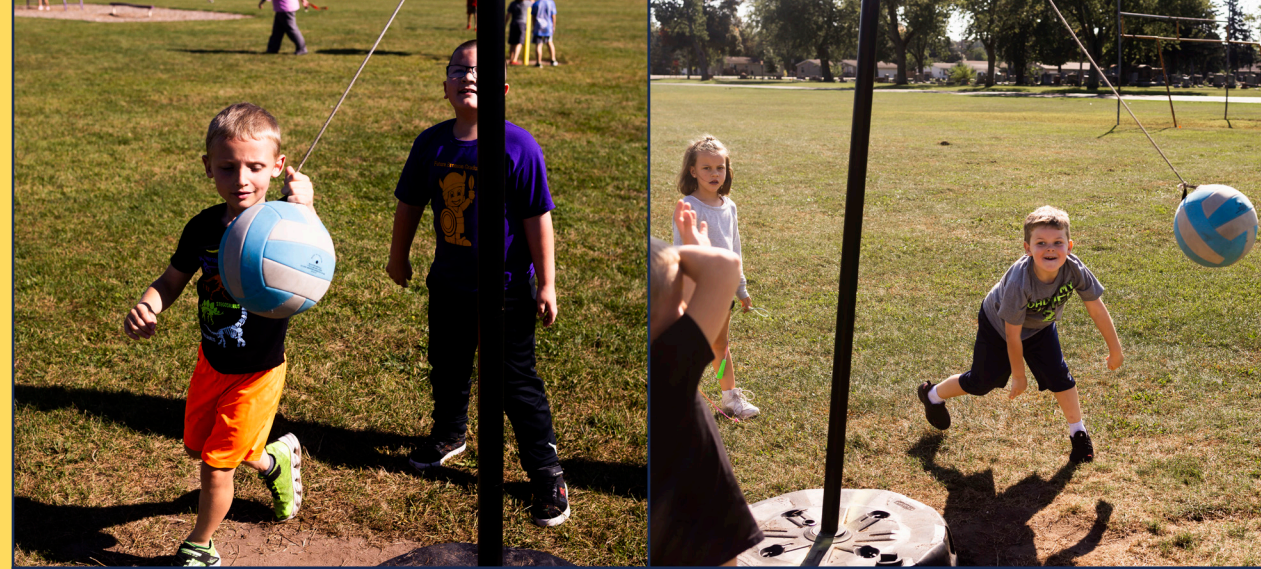
like new balls and sidewalk chalk. Games of this nature encourage team work and a cooperative attitude toward their peers. Consistently, students would be sent to the principal's office daily from recess due to behavior issues. Almost immediately after receiving the new equipment, there was a significant drop in recess referrals to the office; down to two times per week or less.

"I have seen our students learn to be cooperative. I have had second graders tell me that they prefer organized soccer with one ball, over multiple balls, and no order. Tether ball has been huge! It is so rewarding to see students cheer each other on. When our students are doing something organized at recess, we see a drop in after/during recess referrals. This was a wonderful opportunity for our school community and wonderful to watch students learn to work together."

– Alanna Denton, Principal,
Anderson Elementary

Through funds from the YAC grant cycle, Anderson Elementary School in Bronson was able to purchase new playground equipment that promotes students to work together and build community. Among these items purchased were two tether ball units, pickle ball, wiffle ball, flag football, tic-tac-toe, and other replacement items for recess

Seeing such strong progress toward working together with peers at a young age is inspiring. YAC funds are pushing the needle to create a strong moral compass in our youth and a positive environment, bringing all backgrounds and interests together.





COLON FIRE DEPARTMENT THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA

As technology continues to rapidly advance, funds from the Forever Fund and Colon Foundation Fund have helped the Colon Fire Department stay on track with those technological advances by obtaining tools to aid in their services in community safety.

A thermal imaging camera was purchased to assist firefighters in identifying hotspots, locating victims in smoke-filled environments, and assessing the severity of a fire. A camera of this magnitude creates a heightened situational awareness, improves safety measures, and allows for more effective firefighting strategies to be implemented.

"The camera has been used in all three of our last structure fires, and a handful of smoke and odor scares. It has become a continuous tool in our training details. The TIC increases our situational awareness, improves safety, and allows for more effective firefighting strategies.

With the camera's technology, firefighters can quickly and accurately assess and respond to fires. This leads to faster containment, reduced property damage, and increased overall safety for our residents. All of these things greatly impact our service to our community members during their time of need and we are thankful for the Branch County Community Foundation and Colon Foundation Fund for their support of our firefighters and our community."

-Tommy Talbot, Training Captain
Colon Fire Department

BRANCH COUNTY CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Since 2014, the Children's Museum of Branch County has been a place of education and exploration for the entire family. With the closest children's museum being over 35 miles away, helping to maintain and grow our local museum became a priority. In 2020, CMBC joined the "Museums for ALL" initiative with the financial support of the BCCF; which allows families to experience the museum at a discounted rate.

In 2022, a collaboration with Coldwater

Downtown Development and Branch County Economic Growth Alliance began to bring our museum to the heart of downtown Coldwater. An opportunity to renovate a former business building arose, and both the Branch County Community Foundation and YAC had the chance to step up in a big way to make the relocation and renovations a reality for the 2023 grand opening. Not only did the BCCF and YAC financially support the move but have also played a key role in bringing new exhibits to life, like Everbright and River Rock Climbing Wall.

"Creating a bigger, brighter space for the Children's Museum has brought us closer to creating a family-friendly downtown that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. The museum has made an incredible impact in its first year, bringing thousands more children and families to downtown Coldwater for engaging exhibits and classes. We look forward to celebrating the growth and success of both the museum and downtown and are grateful to each of our supporters who helped make it happen."

– Audrey Tappenden, Director,
Branch County Economic Growth Alliance



TYPES OF FUNDS

COMMUNITY FUNDS

Community Funds are flexible funds created to support a broad range of community projects and to meet emerging needs and opportunities and allow the Community Foundation to determine annual recipients.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FUND (UNRESTRICTED)

When you establish an unrestricted fund with Branch County Community Foundation, your gift will be used to address significant challenges and opportunities in the community. Each year, our program experts determine where grants from these funds can have the largest impact. As community needs change, so will the projects your fund supports. The community foundation evaluates all aspects of community wellbeing: arts and culture, economic development, education, environment, health and human services, neighborhood revitalization and more. The flexibility of your unrestricted gift allows the community foundation to respond to the community's most pressing needs, today and tomorrow.

THE FOREVER FUND

The **Forever Fund** is our one unrestricted fund. It fuels the Community Good Grants Program, which grants funds to qualifying nonprofit agencies in Branch County and Colon. The **Forever Fund** also creates locally controlled assets that can be used to meet current needs and prepare for emerging needs. As an unrestricted fund, the **Forever Fund** is the only fund where distributions aren't restricted to a specific cause, meaning it has a broad impact on our local communities. The **Forever Fund** supports the community now and in the future by awarding grants for any project or program that improves the quality of life in Branch County and Colon and supporting the Community Foundation's work in our communities. The **Colon Foundation Fund** serves the Colon, Michigan area.

THE BRANCH COUNTY LEADERSHIP FUND

Is an endowed fund that provides vital support for our work in the area of community leadership and collaboration. We believe collaboration with other organizations provides a better understanding of community issues, leading to better, more comprehensive solutions.

FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS

By establishing a field of interest fund with Branch County Community Foundation, you can target your gift to address needs in a specific area of community life that matters most to you: arts, environment, children health. You choose. Our program experts award grants to nonprofits and programs that are making a difference in the area you select. Your gift stays flexible enough to meet community needs in your interest area—even if those needs change over time.

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUNDS

Special Purpose Funds allow donors to create funds that support targeted goals or specific charitable organizations.

DONOR ADVISED

A donor advised fund through Branch County Community Foundation provides a simple, flexible and tax-efficient way to streamline your charitable giving. You make a gift to establish the fund and then remain actively involved in suggesting grants from the fund to the nonprofit organizations you wish to support. The ease of use and potential tax advantages make donor advised funds the fastest growing charitable giving vehicle in the nation.

DESIGNATED

Establishing a designated fund with Branch County Community Foundation allows you to support the good work of your most valued nonprofit organization long-term. For the nonprofit, the fund creates a permanent income stream from which they can take annual distributions to support their mission or preserve the available dollars for a large expense in the future. Because it's given through the community foundation, your gift provides the nonprofit not only funding but also planned giving support and investment management services.

AGENCY

Establishing a nonprofit agency endowment fund with Branch County Community Foundation is a simple and efficient way to create a source of permanent capital for your organization's future. These funds offer a reliable, ongoing source of financial support. Your organization receives the added benefit of our expertise in helping you develop planned giving programs and facilitate complex gifts from your donors. We handle the investment management of the fund and all administrative details, including gift processing, record keeping, tax reporting and audits.

SCHOLARSHIP

Through a scholarship fund with Branch County Community Foundation, you can invest in the lives of students who are pursuing their dreams. The community foundation provides the expertise to help you meet your personal goals and awards scholarships to deserving students who meet the criteria that you are able to help set. Your gift can help students at all ages and stages pursue education and open new doors to success.

SPECIAL PROJECT

The Community Foundation's primary mission is to establish permanent funds. However, we offer temporary funds as a donor service to assist with distributions of memorial donations or for fundraising efforts that benefit our communities.

TYPES OF GIFTS

TYPES OF GIFTS ACCEPTED

The Branch County Community Foundation is extremely flexible in the types of assets that may be used to make a contribution to an existing fund or start a new fund. Donors may contribute gifts during their lifetimes or through wills or trusts. And gifts may be made in memory of or in honor of a friend or loved one.

GIFTS OF CASH

Gifts of cash are most popular for many people who make smaller contributions to the Foundation. The cash gifts contributed each year help the community's endowment funds grow and allow the Community Foundation to expand our support to the community through grants.

GIFTS OF GRAIN

The Branch County Community Foundation can accept gifts of grain and other commodities to local participating elevators to any fund held at the Branch County Community Foundation. These gifts allow the donor to maximize the tax benefits while supporting the causes they care most about. Donations can be directed to any fund, including our unrestricted endowment.

SECURITIES

The Community Foundation gratefully accepts gifts of securities. If either public or private securities have appreciated over time, the owner may incur substantial capital gains taxes if the stock were sold outright. The donation of appreciated securities can offer the donor attractive income tax benefits, including relief from capital gains tax liability.

IRA ROLLOVER OR QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION

If you are the age of 70 ½, you can transfer up to \$100,000 directly from your individual retirement account (IRA) to the Branch County Community Foundation tax-free. If you are 72 or older, this gift will count toward your required minimum distribution. DAF's are not qualified under this giving option.

LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES

Many people are surprised to learn that their life insurance policies can become a charitable gift. Life insurance is usually purchased to protect the family from financial loss due to the death and loss of income of one or more family members. Normally, the need for life insurance protection lessens as an individual grows older. Children are grown, self-supporting, and through college; the mortgage has been paid; and an estate of other assets has been acquired. The insurance has served its original purposes, and can become a gift to the Community Foundation. The donor receives an immediate tax deduction (usually equal to the cash surrender value).

REAL ESTATE

Gifts of real estate can include homes, condominiums, apartments, undeveloped land, farmland, and rental property. Such gifts may help the donor alleviate management costs and responsibilities if the property were held, and capital gains tax and broker's fee if the property were sold. When you give gifts of real estate, the Community Foundation in turn sells the property, and — depending on the amount — contributes the proceeds to an existing fund of your choice or opens (or increases) your own fund with the income from the sale. You receive a charitable tax deduction equal to the fair market value of the property, and you pay no capital gains tax on the sale.

PRESERVING ENDOWMENTS

As stewards of over 100 separate endowed funds, the Community Foundation converts contributions into community betterment. The Community Foundation uses a sound investment strategy designed to maintain the principal balance — those gifts and contributions received from the public — while maximizing the return on these investments for current grantmaking and future growth purposes. To achieve these goals the Community Foundation assumes a level of risk aimed at maximizing investment return, but that is consistent with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA).

All of the endowment funds of the Community Foundation are pooled for investment purposes. They are carefully, expertly, and responsibly managed in a balanced portfolio according to the Community Foundation's Investment Policy Statement (IPS). The Community Foundation's investment portfolio is designed with these goals in mind:

- Preserving the inflation-adjusted value of the principal
- Assuring the investments will generate income for maximum distributions back to the community
- Assuring enough growth to keep pace with inflation.

The Community Foundation's investment managers are charged with investing dollars based on the Board of Directors approved

IPS. For investing, we value the importance of local partnerships and contract with Century Bank & Trust and Southern Michigan Bank & Trust. We also contract with Arcadia Investment Management Corporation and we hold a fixed income mutual fund at Charles Schwab.

A consistent and completed review of the management and allocation of the Community Foundation resources is one of the highest priorities of operating the Community Foundation as a public trust on behalf of the donors and citizens of this community – a responsibility that is taken with the greatest sense of seriousness and professionalism.

To assist us with monitoring managers' adherence to the IPS and performance of their portfolios, the Community Foundation works with GEM Asset Management, an independent financial planning and investment advisory firm. Independent auditors evaluate the financial position of the entire endowment, including investment activity, on an annual basis. In addition to wise investment strategies, we preserve and grow our permanent endowments by limiting the distribution each year. Currently, the maximum amount available each fiscal year for spending (grants and fees) is up to 5% of the market value over an average of 20 quarters.

MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS

In Memory of Bob Mitchell
Dan & Judy Dobson

In Memory of Constance Formsma
Dave & Beth Hoppe

In Memory of Dan Ludlow
Dan & Judy Dobson

In Memory of Erik DeGroot
Paul & Connie Winbigler

In Memory of Evon Pluister
Diane E. Godfrey

In Memory of Gregg Bale
Dave & Beth Hoppe

In Memory of Helen Jean Brayton
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William & Roxann Metcalfe
Dennis & Joyce Page
John Rohloff & Joan McKinnon
Joan Schafer
Ronald & Carol Simmons
Richard & Mary Smith
Brian & Kathleen Stout
Howard & Lola Taylor
Paul & Connie Winbigler
Carol Woodman

In Memory of Irma English
Ramona Hercules

In Memory of Jim Stout
Wayne Kellogg

In Memory of Kelli Loveberry
Roma Loveberry-Bishop

In Memory of Kendra J Thrasher
Donald Thrasher

In Memory of Kenneth Stutzman
Timothy & Martha Stutzman

In Memory of Laura Bengé
Dave & Beth Hoppe

In Memory of Lyndsay Sharp
Verlan* & Sandra Miller

In Memory of Richard Goldfogle & Helen Schaupp
Catherine A. Schaupp

In Memory of Rolene West
Connie Wright
Ella Pierucki
Smith Trulane

In Honor of BCCF Staff
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In Honor of Brent Veysey
David & Jill Sluyter

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R

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Diane Riegel
Bernadette Rieger
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McKinnon
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Royalty Fence & Deck, LLC
G. David Rubley

S

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S & D Landscape & Irrigation
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Thomas & Clare Schmelzer
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Super Liquor II
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T

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U

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Z

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Branch County Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
Branch Intermediate School District

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Jeffrey Schragg
Emory Sechrist Scholarship Trust
Walmart Foundation

Sponsor (\$10,000 +)

Alchem Aluminum
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Altrusa International, Inc. of Branch County
Paul & Kathy Bair

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 Coldwater Downtown Development Authority
 Coldwater On the Run
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 Coldwater Township Sunrise Rotary Club
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 Bruce & Ruth Young

FINANCIALS

ASSETS

Permanent	\$7,783,270
Non-permanent	\$693,418
Total	\$8,476,668

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$516,015
Fundraising	\$35,559
General & Management	\$159,104
Total	\$711,104

* indicates deceased



BRANCH COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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COLDWATER, MI 49036

517.278.4517

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