



The Cook Family Foundation

Spring 2021

PURPOSE

Serving as both a resource for the community and a catalyst for positive change.

OBJECTIVE

Through strategic, proactive use of funds and grants, strengthen institutions, extend their mission and enable their growth.

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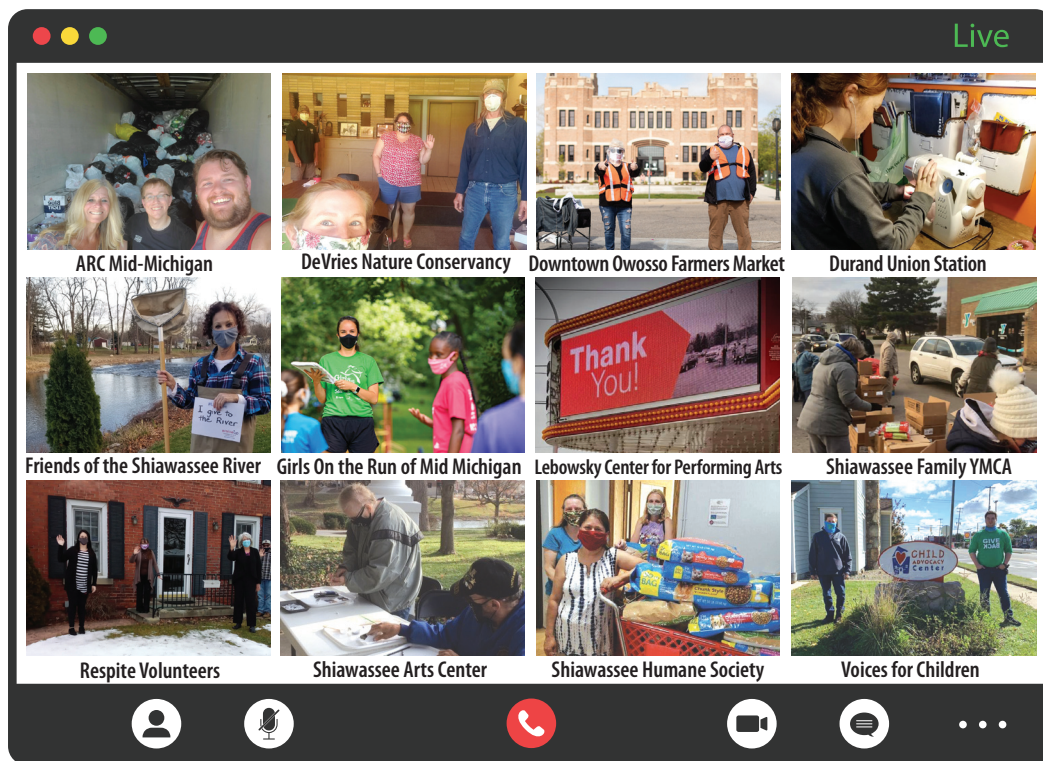
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Courtesy photos

► Our Nonprofit Capacity Building Program partners were able to find new and creative ways to achieve their goals during difficult times presented by COVID-19.

A Community Pulls Together

Collaboration and responsiveness have long been the hallmarks of Shiawassee County's nonprofits. In 2020, the extraordinary challenges presented by COVID-19 put these qualities to the test. Community nonprofit organizations wasted no time in assessing needs; they then brought together the public and private sectors to make use of their assets and relationships in unique and broader ways. Most importantly, they bolstered the community, and one another, to get through the crisis.

In March, the Cook Family Foundation made a \$15,000 donation to the **United Way of Genesee County**, which serves Shiawassee County, to help address emergency needs. Our nonprofit partners responded as well. For instance, **Respite Volunteers of Shiawassee County** connected with the Shiawassee County Emergency Operations Committee to assist the EOC and the County Health Department by contacting nursing homes, assisted living facilities, food pantries and other nonprofits to identify and match available supplies with needs.

Durand Union Station, like many businesses and nonprofits, had to close its facility. Undaunted, staff and volunteers put their sewing skills to work to make masks and coordinate their delivery to those in need. See page 2 for more examples of how the Foundation worked with nonprofit partners to get through the economic and health crisis.

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A Community Pulls Together

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The COVID crisis hit nonprofits hard in 2020. Community residents had increased needs, and nonprofit staff had to adapt in order to serve them. At the same time, they lost opportunities for fundraising and other revenue-producing activities. In response, the Foundation provided over \$43,000 in emergency grants to several nonprofits to assist them through the first wave of the crisis. At the end of the year, the Foundation made another \$90,000 in grants to help community groups set themselves up for continued operation into 2021.

The Foundation, often in partnership with public funding and private contributions, was able to help our nonprofit partners achieve several successes during difficult times; here are a few examples:

Shiawassee Family YMCA, which went through a shutdown of its exercise facilities, was able to expand its role as a community hub, work with the schools to distribute lunches, begin monthly mobile food distributions, and, in 2021, launch a United Way-funded program to partner with restaurants to make meals for those in need.

Arc Mid-Michigan was able to provide food, programming and other support to those with developmental disabilities at the beginning of the crisis, and are now teaming up with **Shiawassee Health & Wellness** to better assist students and adults, many of whom are isolated.

Shiawassee Arts Center was no longer able to provide art classes to seniors at their facility and community centers. Through a partnership with the **Shiawassee Council on**



Photo courtesy of Youth Advisory Council

Aging, they put together art activities to be delivered to seniors in their residences.

The Downtown Owosso Farmers Market was able to add staff so that residents with federal food benefits could use their funds to shop for fresh foods; patrons were also able to get locally-made masks.











SafeCenter, like several nonprofits, receives public funding to operate community programs. Delays in governmental services threatened the organization's operation, and the Foundation was able to provide a short-term loan until grant funds were disbursed.

Other organizations receiving support grants included: the **Friends of the Shiawassee River** to expand virtual and online educational offerings for students; **Girls on the Run of Mid Michigan** to find alternate program locations; **Lebowsky Center for the Performing Arts** to make technology upgrades; **Shiawassee Humane Society** to draw up plans for facility upgrades; **DeVries Nature Conservancy** to make up for several cancelled fundraising events; and **Voices for Children** for operating costs and building improvements. And, the Foundation agreed to cover membership costs so that local nonprofits could continue to support the **Shiawassee Regional Chamber**.

#raiseUP
SHIAWASSEE
#GIVINGTUESDAY

**#Raise UP Shiawassee:
Making a Difference
in Our Community**

**2020 "Give Where You Live"
GivingTuesday Campaign
EXCEEDS Both Its Goals**

\$129,867	Total RAISED	
\$8,875	FOOD CARD & FOOD donations (Thank you to Meijer's Simply Give Campaign!)	
7,550	Pounds of FOOD distributed	
\$3,500	In-Kind COMPUTER EQUIPMENT donations (Thank you, GreenStone Farm Credit Service!)	
501	Total GIVERS	
401	FAMILIES SERVED at Mobile Food Distributions	
148	Volunteer hours of SERVICE on GivingTuesday	
4	YEARS of #raiseUPshiawassee COLLABORATION	
2	GOALS CRUSHED! – Raised OVER \$100,000 AND – Provided OVER 100 Volunteer hours	
1	VERY LARGE BUSINESS DONATION of \$22,500 (Thank you, anonymous GivingTuesday HERO!)	



The Cook Family Foundation

2020 Grants

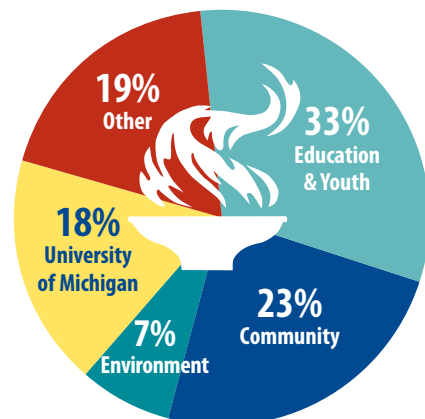
Through strategic, proactive use of funds and grants, the Cook Family Foundation strives to strengthen institutions, extend their mission and enable their growth. Our goal is to help initiate change and promote sustainability within an organization, and as such the Foundation is willing to provide financial support for programs, facilities, equipment, staffing, professional development, contracted services, or other tools for positive change. Each year the Cook Family Foundation reviews grant proposals from community organizations with emphasis on key areas as highlighted in this listing of projects funded in 2020.

Community Organizations		Education and Youth	
\$228,976		\$741,905	
Nonprofit Capacity Building Program	\$61,429	Owosso Public Schools -	
Memorial Healthcare	\$30,000	Auditorium Enhancements	\$600,000
United Way of Genesee, Serving Shiawassee Co.		AdviseMI - Career Advisement	\$10,000
COVID-19 Essential Needs Hotline & Homelessness Emergency Fund	\$16,000	Performing Arts Event	\$1,000
SafeCenter	\$17,685	Shiawassee Family YMCA	\$60,405
The Arc Mid-Michigan	\$12,300	Shiawassee Regional Education Services District	
Friends of the Shiawassee River	\$12,288	Shiawassee Scholars	\$60,000
Girls on the Run Mid-Michigan	\$10,000	Great Start Preschool Scholarships	\$10,000
Shiawassee County Humane Society	\$9,500	Red Thunder Robotics (Laingsburg)	\$500
Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce	\$8,887		
Respite Volunteers	\$8,334		
Voices for Children	\$8,000		
Lebowsky Center for the Performing Arts	\$7,575		
Durand Union Station, Inc.	\$6,852		
Shiawassee Arts Center	\$5,583		
Downtown Owosso Farmers Market	\$5,555		
Raise UP Shiawassee Collaboration (GivingTuesday)	\$4,682		
DeVries Nature Conservancy	\$2,489		
Other Community Development Grants	\$1,817		
Environment		University of Michigan	
\$70,000		\$192,863	
The Nature Conservancy	\$50,000	Scholarships	\$171,636
Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN)	\$20,000	Shiawassee Area Interns	\$14,000
		Scholarship Support	\$6,227
		UM Research	\$1,000
		Additional Financials	
		Administration & Associated Costs	\$198,722
		Office Expenses and Memberships	\$26,003
		Communications	\$16,046
		Professional Services & Fees	\$6,129
		Other Grants	\$3,000
		Total Disbursements	
		\$1,483,644	

Grant Materials

Go to www.cookfamilyfoundation.org to find out more about:

- Scholarship Information
- Grant Criteria and Application
- Nonprofit Capacity Building Program
- Collaborative Efforts
- Fellows Internship Program



In the last five years, the Foundation has made grants totaling in excess of \$4 million dollars in four primary areas.

Building on History for an Equitable Future

Our community, like our country, has a difficult history around race. Parts of this story can be told in the building that houses the offices of the Cook Family Foundation. The story of this building moves from acceptance to violent division and back again.

From 1892 to 1902, the Grow Block (pictured here) housed the barbershop of one of Owosso's black residents, Alexander Johnson. Born a slave in Tennessee, Johnson fought for the Union in the Civil War, and after living in Canada moved to Owosso in 1870. In 1871, a mob of white men forced most of Owosso's black residents out of town but Johnson was one of the few black residents allowed to remain and he lived out his days in Owosso as a self-employed professional.

In the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan was active in Shiawassee County and throughout the country, burning crosses in public, holding marches, and intimidating non-whites and non-Protestants. Several local investors bought the Grow Building and provided a home there for the local Klan and the headquarters of the Michigan chapter. A dark time for Owosso.



In 1932, local tailor Joseph H. Lebowsky, a Russian Orthodox Jew, purchased the Grow Block and began to remove some of the stain of the past KKK presence. Elsewhere in Owosso, Lebowsky also built the theater which is still in use today.

America's history is one of overcoming racism to live up to our highest ideals. In Owosso, the troubled history of race relations is, literally, part of the walls around us. The Cook Family Foundation celebrates how we can use our resources – time, power and money – to be a catalyst for positive change. We are resolute and intentional in our commitment to use our positive history of hospitality to help build a more welcoming and accessible community.

As part of the NonProfit Capacity Building Program, the Cook Family Foundation assists local nonprofits and other organizations to examine their structure, purposes, and organization in order to achieve such goals as racial and social equity as part of an inclusive community.

The Grow Block was built in 1890 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings.



A Community Pulls Together
RaiseUP Shiawassee Exceeds Goals
2020 Grants
Building on History for an Equitable Future

Inside:

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