



WE ARE GR

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Improvements underway at Houseman Field, 162 Houseman Ave NE

Innovation In Motion: A Summer of Reimagining at GRPS

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- Summer 2025 marks the busiest season yet for the Reimagine GRPS with Us! initiative, with transformative projects underway across the district to create more inspiring and safer spaces for scholars and staff.

These projects are made possible thanks to a \$305 million zero-tax-rate-increase bond passed overwhelmingly by our community in 2023.

Southeast Career Pathways: A New Home

The former Sigsbee School will reopen this August as the new Southeast Career Pathways campus. The \$7 million renovation is converting the former elementary school into a vibrant high school environment filled with natural light, thanks to the installation of larger windows throughout learning spaces.

"We are thrilled to welcome scholars into this renovated space," said Alex Smart, Executive Director of Facilities & Operations. "What was once a dark building will now be bright, filled with daylight and upgraded lighting."

The project also features a new safe and secure entrance, scholar commons area, updated flooring and paint, and a new HVAC system.

Houseman Field & Briggs Field: Upgrades for Community Landmarks

Renovations are well underway at both Houseman Field and Briggs Field, two venues that host athletic events, band camps, graduations, and more.

At Houseman Field, improvements include a new track, new turf, energy-efficient LED lighting, expanded parking, and locker room upgrades.

Briggs Field renovations include a new track, new grass playing surface, upgraded bleachers, additional restrooms, and improvements to fencing and masonry.

"These renovations will breathe new life into both facilities, enhancing the experience for our scholars, fans, and visitors," said Smart.

Dickinson Academy: Prioritizing Safety

Scholar and staff safety remains GRPS's highest priority. Renovations at Dickinson Academy this summer include a new safe and secure entrance designed to improve security and enhance the visitor screening process. This is the third new secure entrance completed this year, following upgrades at Westwood Middle School and the new Southeast Career Pathways building.

New Health Center at Harrison Park

This August, GRPS will open an exciting new community resource: the Harrison Park Health Center at Harrison Park Academy, in partnership with Catherine's Health Center. Supported by a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Child and Adolescent Health Center program, this clinic will include medical exam rooms, a behavioral health office, a registration area, and a lab.

GRPS scholars and community members between the ages of 3 and 21 will have access to medical and behavioral health services at

continued on page 2 ►

Innovation In Motion: A Summer of Reimagining at GRPS *continued*

this location, regardless of the ability to pay. Parent or caregiver consent will be required to receive services.

The medical provider will offer services including well-child visits, sports physicals, immunizations, and assessment and treatment for acute illness or injuries. The behavioral health provider will provide individual and group therapy for those needing mental health counseling services.

This is the fourth clinic to open at a GRPS school. GRPS partners with Cherry Health for clinics at Innovation Central High School, Ottawa Hills High School, and Union High School.

Other Summer Projects

Additional work this summer includes parking lot upgrades to improve traffic flow and parking for families and staff at Congress Elementary, Grand Rapids Montessori Academy, Innovation Central High School, and Kent Hills Elementary.

Renovations are also wrapping up at César E. Chávez Elementary, Coit Creative Arts Academy, and Sibley Elementary, providing refreshed spaces that benefit scholars and staff.

In the coming months, GRPS will begin three other major projects: a new elementary school in northeast Grand Rapids, a new Pre-K through 12 Montessori campus, and a new environmental science academy in southeast Grand Rapids.

You can follow updates on these projects by visiting the Reimagine GRPS Dashboard at grps.org/reimagine.



GRPS Foundation Donates Piano Lab to Alger Middle School

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – When Alger Middle School scholars return this August, they'll find something new waiting for them: a state-of-the-art classical piano lab, made possible through the generosity of the Grand Rapids Public Schools Foundation.

The idea for the lab came straight from the scholars themselves. Inspired by their classroom piano and eager to learn, they asked Music Teacher Julie Farrier how they could get more instruments.

"They are fascinated by the piano," Farrier said. "I have a piano that I use. They always wanted to play it." Now, thanks to a \$23,000 donation from the GRPS Foundation, Alger's new piano lab includes 20 individual keyboards, giving scholars the hands-on experience they've been asking for.

Before the school year ended, scholars got a chance to test out the new equipment.

"It's very cool," said Ta'Miah, who will be entering 7th grade this fall.

"It means a lot to us, I just can't explain it," added fellow 7th-grader Belise.

The new piano lab will be integrated into Alger's music appreciation class starting this fall.

"The piano really helps them hone that creativity and that curiosity in a really wonderful way," Farrier said. "I'm just incredibly grateful for the years of education that will come from this great investment."

Stephanie Andrews, President and CEO of the GRPS Foundation, says the project reflects the foundation's long-standing commitment to the arts.



*"Now I can play
a piano, learn an
instrument, and it
can help me in the
future,"*

—Ta'Miah, Alger Middle Scholar

"We have been supporting art and music in the district for years and years," Andrews said. "It aligns with what our community knows that our kids want and deserve."

For scholars like Ta'Miah and Belise, the new lab opens up new possibilities.

"It makes me feel like I'll be there one day—I'll be like Miss Farrier and get to play a lot of songs," said Belise.

You can help support opportunities like this for GRPS scholars by donating to the Grand Rapids Public Schools Foundation, at GRPSF.org.

Grand Rapids Public Schools

WE ARE GR

July 2025

Grand Rapids

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Title IX Annual Athletics Compliance Report: Grand Rapids Public Schools is committed to securing athletic equity and provides annual Title IX reporting to the athletes and parents in an effort to bring increased attention and resources towards ensuring that gender equity as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments for 1972, Grand Rapids Public Schools annual report is available at www.grps.org.

To comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers.

Please contact Christi Atwood, Director of Human Resources, in Human Resources via email atwoodc@grps.org or at (616) 819-2095.

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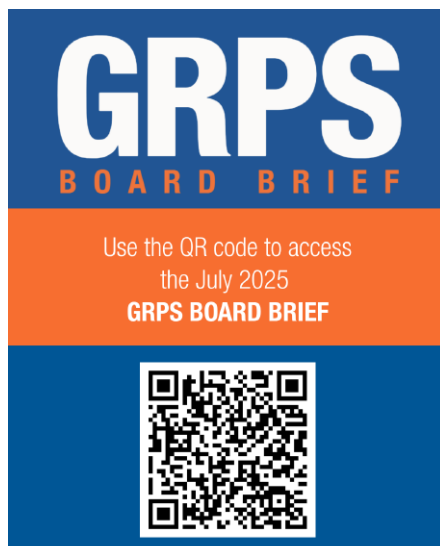
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Coit Scholars' Art To Be Showcased At Historic Site In Salem, MA



GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – Young artists from Coit Creative Arts Academy will soon have their work displayed at a nationally significant site more than 800 miles from home.

Artwork created by Coit scholars will be featured at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Massachusetts from July 2 through August 31 as part of the National Park Youth Art Exhibit. This year's theme is "Revolution and Reflection – America at 250."

"We're talking about freedom," said Coit Art Teacher Amber VanDrunen. "Through freedom, change had to happen. We can use our artistic voice to create change and inspire people based on what we create."

Each student group explored a different historic topic through their artwork.

"This is the Boston Tea Party," said Belle, describing her team's painting. "We have some people on the ship watching others dumping out tea."

Kaiyah's group illustrated the Boston Massacre. "We chose this because we thought it really represented how they were fighting for freedom."

Sa'Riyah's team took a more symbolic approach. "What the cages represent, they weren't free," she said. "But once those cages were broken open, they started to fly away and be free."

Scholars are eager to share their work with a national audience.

"I'm excited, but I'm also really nervous about what people are going to think about it," said Kaiyah.

"I hope they'll think about freedom," added Emma.

"I'm really honored because me and Olive worked very hard on this to make sure it looked nice for people to enjoy," said Sa'Riyah. "If you're stuck somewhere, don't be afraid to break free."

ENROLL TODAY!

We proudly offer No-Cost, High-Quality PreK for All



Enrollment for PreK for All is now open for the 2025-2026 school year.

APPLY NOW TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!

Open to children who will be 4 by December 1, 2025.

Thanks for Michigan's PreK for All program, PreK is available at **NO-COST** to ALL families in Grand Rapids Public Schools. Our GSRP Preschool Offers:

- **23 Safe, Convenient Locations** throughout Grand Rapids.
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Research shows participation in a quality PreK program improves a child's emotional, social and intellectual skills and helps ensure they are healthy and ready for kindergarten.¹



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Visit preschool.kentisd.org or call (616) 819-2111 for more info.



These materials were developed under a grant from the State of Michigan's Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential.

1. Administration for Children and Families: Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence



GRPS Named 'Best High School Band' at Michigan's Largest Memorial Day Parade

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- A combined marching band made up of scholars from five Grand Rapids Public Schools high schools was awarded "Best High School Band" at the Mackinaw Memorial Day Parade, which is the largest Memorial Day parade in Michigan.

More than 80 high school band scholars from CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School, GR Montessori Middle High School, Southwest Middle High School, Ottawa Hills High School and Union High School joined forces to create one unified GRPS marching band. Dressed in coordinated uniforms accented with plume colors representing each school, scholars captivated both parade organizers and spectators with their performance.

"We are incredibly proud of the outstanding leadership shown by directors Nathan Weber (GR Montessori), Andrew LaJoie (CA Frost), Matthew Palmieri (Southwest MHS), and Peyton Berce (Ottawa Hills HS), as well as the remarkable dedication and talent of our student musicians," said GRPS Director of Fine Arts Dan Van Til.

As part of the recognition, GRPS will receive a commemorative plaque from the Mackinaw Memorial Day Parade Committee honoring the achievement.



Learning at the Lakeshore: Beach Trip is the First for Some Fifth-Graders

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – There's no better way to learn about the environment than to experience it up close, and for some Sibley Elementary fifth-graders, that meant seeing Lake Michigan for the very first time.

This spring, scholars traveled to Kirk Park near Grand Haven for a day of discovery.

"I went to the beach and I explored new things that I never learned before," said Loneal, a fifth-grader at Sibley.

The experience brought classroom lessons to life.

"We came to Kirk Park and we got to learn more about the dunes and how they are created," explained Brooklyn Phillips, a teacher at Sibley. They're able to actually make connections and understand."

Experts from Ottawa County Parks &

Recreation helped guide students through the hands-on learning.

"We kind of can show the kids those three phases," said Debra Swanson with the parks department. "The beach, the blowout, the middle age, and then finally what our park looks like, which is basically sitting on a dune."

Swanson said her team is passionate about opening young eyes to the natural world around them.

"We just continue to offer these programs to as many groups and schools as we can, because we want you to love our parks as much as we do," Swanson added.

You can help support field trip experiences like these for GRPS scholars by donating to the Grand Rapids Public Schools Foundation at GRPSF.org.

Asbestos Notice

Asbestos is a general name for a group of naturally occurring minerals composed of small fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. The mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of the building occupants is endangered. When left intact and undisturbed, asbestos-containing materials do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is, however, the

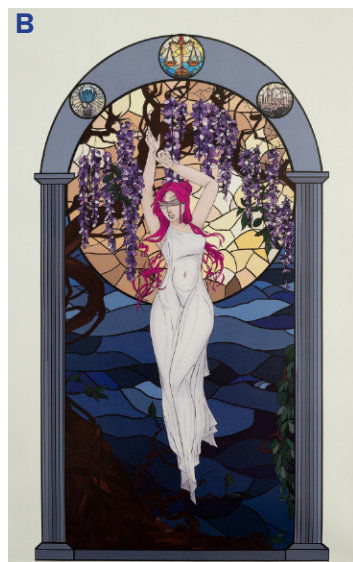
potential for exposure when the material becomes damaged or disturbed. Because of these problems associated with asbestos exposure, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act, or AHERA emphasizes that asbestos in school buildings must appropriately be managed.

The Grand Rapids Public Schools has an asbestos management plan that addresses contact persons, training,

inspections, response actions, operation and maintenance activities, periodic surveillance, cleaning, disclosure efforts, and school building areas containing asbestos. Any person may review the management plan at the Grand Rapids Public School's Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503, during regular business hours (8:00 am to 4:00 pm). Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan

by writing the Grand Rapids Public Schools Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503. There is a cost involved in reproducing the document of approximately 10 cents per page. The Grand Rapids Public Schools will send a copy out of the management plan within 5 business days of receiving the request.

20 GRPS Scholars Named Finalists in 2025 Smart Art Awards



GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Twenty Grand Rapids Public Schools scholars have been named finalists for the 2025 SMART (Students Making Art with a Renewable Theme) Art Awards. The art competition focused on clean energy-related subjects is open to all GRPS scholars in 9th – 11th grade. The competition is a collaboration between Consumers Energy, ArtPrize, and GRPS.

The 20 finalists were selected by a panel of art professionals from the Center for Community Transformation, Cultivate, and Grand Rapids Community College.

The finalists are listed in alphabetical order below. A complete gallery of artwork and a video celebrating the finalists can be viewed at [GRPS.org](https://www.grps.org)

- Samya Alford, Innovation Central High School, 'In Full Bloom' (C)
- Keyla Arcos-Lopez, Museum High School, 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind'
- Andy Blancas-Vazquez, Union High School, 'The Breath of Tomorrow'
- Sneha Dixit, City High Middle School, 'A Drop of Hope' (D)
- Clara Guest, City High Middle School, 'New Beginnings'
- Juan Hernandez-Gomez, Southwest Middle High School Academia Bilingüe, 'Earth's Vision'
- Judy Hollister, City High Middle School, 'Unbalanced'
- Emma Hoogewind, CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School, 'Lady of the Forest' (B)
- Roberto Huling-Perez, Union High School, 'Two Sides of Earth' (E)
- Lucy Kearney, City High Middle School, 'Footprints'
- Sylvie Mahlie, City High Middle School, 'Is It Too Late?'
- LaZell Martin, Innovation Central High School, 'Natural Growth'
- Lulu Nygaard Tap, City High Middle School, 'Way of Water' (G)
- La'Kariana Perkins, Union High School, 'Renewable Energy and Nature'
- Alivia Phillips, Southwest Middle High School Academia Bilingüe, 'XYZ'
- Lily Salacina, CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School, 'Life, Death, and Rebirth'
- Lux Schmitz, CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School, 'Micro Particles, Macro Problems' (F)
- Bee Sutherby, Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy, 'Sustenance' (A)
- Ayana Torres, Southwest Middle High School Academia Bilingüe, 'Our Beautiful Earth'
- Elliot Williamson, City High Middle School, 'Renewable Energy Will Make The World Bright'

All 20 entries will be on display at Grand Rapids City Hall during ArtPrize. The top 10 finalists will be announced during ArtPrize, including the overall winner who will receive a scholarship courtesy of Consumers Energy.

"It continues to be inspiring to see the next generation of our state's thinkers and leaders blending their vision of our clean energy future with their artistic talents," said Cathy Wilson, Consumers Energy's executive director of corporate giving. "Consumers Energy has long been a proud sponsor of this competition, and we are grateful to have another year of inspiring and admirable entries from students across the city."

"The SMART Art competition is a powerful example of how art can inspire action and awareness," said Dan Van Til, GRPS Fine Arts Director. "Our scholars are using their creativity to explore the urgent issue of renewable energy, and the results are both thought-provoking and deeply moving."



PRINCIPAL PROFILE

Abbie Marr to Lead United Ken-O-Sha and Sherwood Park

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – An exciting new chapter is beginning for two GRPS schools, and it will be guided by a leader who knows the community well.

As Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary and Sherwood Park Global Studies Academy unite, current Ken-O-Sha Park Principal Abbie Marr will lead the newly combined school beginning with the 2025-26 school year. The transition officially begins this August, as scholars and staff from both schools come together at the Sherwood Park campus while the Ken-O-Sha Park building undergoes a major renovation.

Once the work is complete, scholars and staff will return to a reimagined Ken-O-Sha Park campus to create a new Environmental Science Academy.

Marr's roots at GRPS run deep. She started as a teacher at Brookside Elementary in 2004 and has since served at several schools across the district.

Now Marr is looking ahead, envisioning

"I just knew this would be a fun place to be," Marr said of choosing GRPS. "I just loved the community and working with our scholars in the Grand Rapids area just really filled my bucket."

a vibrant future for the combined school communities, rooted in nature and hands-on exploration.

"When we arrive back here at the Ken-O-Sha campus, we will be able to really dig in and enrich our scholars' learning through using the outdoor areas like Plaster Creek, like our prairie," Marr explained. "There are so many elements that will naturally enhance our scholars' learning."

GRPS CHAMPIONS

Quaonna Draper's Impact at Ridgemoor Park Montessori

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- For Quaonna Draper, serving as a Health Aide at Ridgemoor Park Montessori is about more than just tending to injuries - it's about creating a safe, supportive space where scholars feel cared for every day.

"Being a health aide is about more than just physical care, it goes much deeper than that," Draper explained. "I play a vital role in offering support in ways that scholars may not even realize, making a meaningful impact on their well-being."

Draper's connection to GRPS runs deep. A 2014 graduate of the district, her

experience inspired her to return and give back to the community that shaped her.

"I chose to work at GRPS because I was once a student-athlete in this district. I understand firsthand what it takes to be part of this amazing community," she said. "As I got older, I wanted to explore and understand the deeper impact this district has—and that's what led me back here."

Whether she's assisting with daily tasks, addressing injuries, or identifying ways to improve the school environment, Draper is always looking for opportunities to make a difference. She also volunteers for after-school programs and strives to be a positive and uplifting presence for scholars and staff alike.

GRPS is fortunate to have dedicated individuals like Draper, whose compassion and commitment help create a nurturing and supportive environment for scholars to thrive.

Looking to make a difference this fall? GRPS is now hiring for several high-priority positions, including:

- Teachers
- Bilingual/ESL Teachers
- School Counselors
- Paraprofessionals
- Special Education Teachers
- School Social Workers
- Psychologists
- Special Education Aides

With competitive benefits, tuition reimbursement, and the chance to positively impact scholars every day—there's never been a better time to join our team. Apply now at careers.grps.org!

JOIN OUR TEAM

APPLY TODAY!

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- ✓ TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
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FOR ALL BACK-TO-SCHOOL
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A Heart for Education, Shelley Miller's Journey to Aberdeen

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – The new leader at Aberdeen Academy, Principal Shelley Miller, is driven by a passion for children and a deep commitment to shaping engaged, community-minded scholars.

“Choosing GRPS for me was about choosing an urban school district that develops and cares for the kids,” Miller said. “To raise students who care about the community in which they’re in and that have the skills to contribute to their community going forward.”

Her love for education began in childhood, inspired by her Aunt Sue, a dedicated educator.

Watching her aunt make a difference in children’s lives sparked a desire to start making an impact as soon as possible.

“From the time I was little, I started teaching, whether it was in Sunday School or coaching,” she explained.

Her career has taken her from the classroom to ministry and back, shaping her philosophy as a leader. As principal, she hopes to be a compassionate and supportive presence for both scholars and staff.

“For a student to look at their elementary principal ten years from now, I would want them to be able to say with confidence that

she was kind, that she cared about me and understood, but also that she was fair and consistent,” Miller said. “I want teachers to feel both supported and challenged to continue their professional growth as they pour into the scholars that we have.”

With Aberdeen Academy set to join Palmer Elementary in a new elementary school in 2027, Miller is eager to help guide the community through this transition.

“It’s quite a privilege to transition the school into a new facility,” she said. “We have some great ways that we’re going to combine both Palmer and Aberdeen. Honoring the past is a very important aspect of this.”

For Miller, leading Aberdeen Academy is a calling.

“It’s more than just a job,” she said. “It’s my heart for the kids, my heart for the future, and encouraging scholars to find that space where they have a love for learning.”



PRINCIPAL PROFILE

“I always wanted to be a teacher,” she recalled. “Like a lot of educators, that comes from a family interest or a teacher within the family. For me, that was my Aunt Sue.”



GRPS CHAMPION

“My commitment is to be present every day with a friendly smile, listening ear, and shoulder to lean on.”



Heart of the Cafeteria: Deb Davis Serves Up Smiles and Support at Ken-O-Sha Park

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) – At Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary School, one of the first friendly faces scholars encounter each morning is Deb Davis, the school’s Nutritional Specialist.

“What I enjoy most about my job is greeting sleepy-eyed scholars, getting them to smile and say ‘good morning,’” Davis said. “Their educational experience begins by me providing a caring, compassionate and safe atmosphere.”

Davis’s warm welcome is just the beginning of the impact she makes each day. Her work in GRPS is deeply personal. She views it as a way to give back to the community that supported her through her own childhood.

“GRPS has my heartstrings,” she explained. “It was this district that nurtured me as a young girl in the loss of my mother as a child. My heart has not allowed me to ever

forget the individuals who have impacted my life.”

She holds special memories of her time at South Middle School, where staff like Mrs. Jennings, Mrs. Likely, Mrs. Lowry, and Mrs. Antoinette Tate helped shape her path.

“I shall never forget as a teen being mentored by Mr. Sy Dubinski and John Dow,” she said. “There are countless others who have influenced my choice to volunteer and work for GRPS.”

Today, Davis is committed to ensuring every scholar feels the same sense of support and belonging that she once received.

“I’m glad to be part of GRPS food service to assure that every scholar and staff member knows that they matter,” she explained. “It is my hope that I impact the cafeteria eating experience for the students and staff by providing an eye-appealing, tasteful meal with nutritional value.”

DO YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN GRPS ATHLETICS?

YOU WILL NEED:

- A physical dated after April 15, 2025.
- Supplemental insurance for each season: \$10 for high school and \$3 for middle schools.
- Sports physicals are provided by Cherry Health and the health offices in the schools.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- All scholars in grades 6-12 MUST achieve and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 prior to the official start of the season (including practices). Scholars must also pass 66% of classes before and during the season (Michigan High School Athletic Association).
- Scholars in grades K-5 must be in “good standing” at school with satisfactory attendance, grades, and behavior. All scholars must be eligible to practice FIRST.

Reasons to be a multi-sport athlete:

- Develop different skills that compliment other sports.
- Minimal sport burnout occurs when involved in multiple sports.
- Time management improves.
- Athletics help to improve educational success.
- Colleges and Universities like to see that you can be multi-faceted.

ELEMENTARY FALL SPORTS

- **Cross Country:**
 - o Practices will begin soon after the first week of school. (Please check with your elementary school athletic liaison for more information.)
 - o Meet dates: TBD
- **Soccer:**
 - o Practices will begin after soon after the first week of school. (Please check with your elementary school athletic liaison for more information.)
 - o Game dates: TBD

MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL SPORTS

- Sign up information can also be found via Facebook @GRPSMSAthletics
- In-person sign-ups at buildings during the first week of school.
- Football practices will begin August 18th.
- Boys Soccer, Volleyball, Cross Country practices are scheduled to begin the week of September 1.

HIGH SCHOOL FALL SPORTS

- The high school fall season begins August 11.
- Fall sports include Football, Cross Country, Boys' Soccer, Boy's Tennis, Girls' Golf, Girls' Swimming, Sideline Cheer and Volleyball
- For schedules, highlights, and parent resources check out our website at www.grps.org/athletics.

PARENT MEETINGS

Parents/Guardians should attend all meetings requested by the athletic directors and/or coaches for a more in depth and clearer understanding about how the team or program will operate.

VOLUNTEERS

Any parents, family or community member interested in volunteering to support GRPS student-athletes, please contact the volunteer office at 819-2131 or go to <http://grps.org/volunteer> for the volunteer application.

We are currently looking for:

- Elementary Coaches for Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track
- Turkey Trot Volunteers – Sign up now at: volunteersignup.org/ALW3Q

Interested in coaching? Contact the athletic office for more information! We have some vacancies for the 2025-2026 school year.

SPORTSMANSHIP

As a spectator of interscholastic athletics please respect the time and effort that these young participants have put forth to represent their schools. The purpose of all athletic activities is to provide positive learning experiences and opportunities for personal growth for the participants, coaches, officials and spectators. Everyone who attends can – and is expected to – assist in the promotion and achievement of good sportsmanship by taking personal responsibility for keeping this contest at a high level of fair, clean and wholesome competition.

*Remember... **SPORTSMANSHIP COUNTS!***

GR8 SPORTS, GREAT KIDS

Our community recognizes the importance, value, and positive impact that after school sports can have on students. Thank you to the Student Advancement Foundation and GR8 Sports, Great Kids for their continued support of these programs!

GRPS ATHLETICS

UPREP Scholars Sign to Play at Kalamazoo College

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- Two scholar-athletes from Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy (UPREP) are taking their talents to the collegiate level after signing letters of intent to attend Kalamazoo College.

Semaj' Robertson will compete in both basketball and track, while Cam'Ran Jones will join the football program. Both scholars made their athletic mark at GRPS while playing for Ottawa Hills High School.

Robertson, who served as a captain for both the basketball and track teams, also excelled in the classroom with a remarkable 4.22 GPA.

"I am now able to do what I want to do at the next level," Robertson said at her signing ceremony. "It took hard work, support, motivation, discipline and being accountable."

Jones played safety and wide receiver for the Bengals and was a consistent academic



performer, earning recognition in the Bengal 3.0 Club, which honors athletes with a GPA above 3.0. Before his senior year, he spent part of the summer at Tuskegee University, a historically Black university in Alabama, gaining valuable academic and life experience.

"It means a lot to me to get a college

degree for free and keep playing football," Jones said.

UPREP Principal Kenyatta Hill-Hall addressed the scholars during the celebration, offering words of encouragement.

"We can't wait to see you bring your gifts and talents to Kalamazoo College and continue to make us proud," Hill-Hall said.



Three GR Montessori Scholars Sign to Compete in College

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- Three seniors from Grand Rapids Montessori Middle High School have committed to continuing their athletic careers at the collegiate level.

Linde Clark and Vivian Idziak will both attend Grand Rapids Community College, Clark to play soccer and Idziak to run cross-country. Major Vance will swim at Aquinas College.

All three scholar-athletes have competed as part of the Union High School Redhawks at GRPS.

"As senior year is coming to an end, it's kind of crazy that I'm doing like all the lasts - all the last soccer games, all the last

practices, and it's really sad - but it's also helpful knowing that it's not the last," Clark said. "I'm going to keep playing soccer and that I get to keep making new friends. I'm really excited."

"I do cross-country, basketball and track, but I'm committing for cross-country," Idziak said. "It's been a really good four years doing all three sports and just meeting a ton of new people. I'm excited to continue in college."

"The campus is awesome," Vance said of Aquinas College. "Meeting all the new people and really just being a part of a big team."

GRPS YOUTH NIGHTS



Join us for Bengals and Redhawks Fall Youth Nights!

Scholars and their families get in FREE to cheer on the teams, enjoy fun pre-game and halftime events, and celebrate school spirit together! Don't forget to wear your Bengals, Redhawks, or school spirit gear for a night full of energy, fun, and community pride!

BENGALS VOLLEYBALL

Monday, September 8 | 5:00 pm
Ottawa Hills vs. Godwin

REDHAWKS VOLLEYBALL

Monday, September 29 | 5:00 pm
Union vs. Kelloggsville

BENGALS FOOTBALL

Friday, October 24 | 7:00 pm
Ottawa Hills vs. Benton Harbor

REDHAWKS FOOTBALL

Friday, October 17 | 7:00 pm
Union vs. Mona Shores

SPONSORED BY:
 **SCREEN IDEAS**

More Information:

📞 616-819-2149
✉ Communications@grps.org



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2025



GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- Grand Rapids Public Schools is proud to celebrate the Class of 2025, with approximately 750 graduates receiving their diplomas and taking their next steps toward bright and promising futures.

Graduates from across the district are heading to a wide range of post-secondary opportunities, including, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Ivy League institutions, and Big Ten campuses. Many are kickstarting their college journey tuition-free at Grand Rapids Community College, thanks to the Grand Rapids Promise Zone Scholarship. Others are entering the workforce directly, prepared to contribute their talents and skills to their communities immediately.

Among the Class of 2025 are scholar-athletes who will continue their academic and athletic careers at institutions such as Michigan State University, Kalamazoo College, and Aquinas College.

An impressive 99 graduates earned the State of Michigan Seal of Biliteracy, demonstrating high levels of proficiency in two or more languages.

During graduation ceremonies, Superintendent Dr. Leadriane Roby reminded scholars that while graduation is a major milestone, it is not the finish line.

"You are now in the starting blocks," Dr. Roby told graduates. "Everything you've learned - in classrooms and on playgrounds, in clubs and on teams - has prepared you for this moment. So take a deep breath, trust your training, and let's go!"

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS COFFEE WITH THE BOARD

You're invited to meet and have a casual conversation with board members at our **"Coffee with the Board"** gathering.

GRPS Board of Education

☎ 616-819-2197
✉ board@grps.org
🌐 grps.org/boe

UPCOMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

6:00 – 7:30 PM
Kids' Food Basket
1300 Plymouth Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

6:00 – 7:30 PM
Gilda's Club Grand Rapids
1806 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

My Choice for ACHIEVEMENT



ENROLL TODAY!
ENROLL.GRPS.ORG

Questions? ☎ 616.819.2150 ✉ Enrollment@grps.org



SENIOR SHOWCASE

GRLC Senior is Already Halfway to a College Degree

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- Meet Kaylie Padron, a senior at the Grand Rapids Learning Center.

Thanks to her experience at the only high school on a college campus in West Michigan, she is well on her way to a college degree.

"I'm about halfway done with an associate's degree in the science of nursing," Padron said. "I have my eye on Michigan State to finish my nursing program. I want to specialize in labor and delivery nursing."

Throughout the school year we've shared #GRPSSeniorShowcase videos to celebrate our incredible seniors. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!



Ottawa Hills Scholar a Leader at School And in the Community

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (GRPS) -- Meet Heman Poudyel, a senior at Ottawa Hills High School who is President of the Student Council and a member of the Rotary Club.

He says his time at Ottawa Hills High School has been fantastic. "I've been able to not only make friends, but I've also been able to grow through my peers, through my teachers, and everybody else."

After graduation, Poudyel plans to enroll in a pre-physician assistant program at either Aquinas College or Grand Valley State University.

Throughout the school year, we've shared #GRPSSeniorShowcase videos to celebrate our incredible seniors. Stay tuned for more inspiring stories from the Class of 2025!





Grand Rapids Named One of America’s Best-Run Cities For Third Year in a Row!

For the third consecutive year, Grand Rapids has been recognized as one of the top 25 best-run cities in the United States. In WalletHub’s 2025 rankings of operating efficiency among the nation’s 148 largest cities, Grand Rapids earned an overall ranking of 22—up from 23 last year and a significant climb from 28 in 2013.

The annual study assesses how effectively cities use their public funds by comparing the quality of city services residents receive to the city’s per-capita budget. Grand Rapids scored 35th in “Quality of City Services” and 37th in “Total Budget per Capita.”

Running a city the size of Grand Rapids means balancing a wide range of resident needs with limited resources and how to fund priorities without overburdening taxpayers.

WalletHub’s analysis provides one way to evaluate those efforts. The report uses 36 metrics across six service categories—including financial stability, education, health, safety and infrastructure—to construct a “Quality of Services” score, which is then compared to each city’s budget per capita.

Grand Rapids’ upward trajectory in the rankings is a point of pride for both City leaders and residents, and a reflection of the City’s continued efforts to improve outcomes while using taxpayer dollars responsibly.

Learn more about your municipal government how it manages your tax dollars. The City offers a comprehensive budget library online at grandrapidsmi.gov and offers a Resident’s Guide to the Fiscal Plan, Final Fiscal Plan, and Strategic Plan.

City Commission Adopts FY26 Budget: Investing in a Safer, Stronger, and More Inclusive Grand Rapids



Dear Community Member,

I am pleased to share that the City Commission has unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2026 budget – a \$735 million financial plan that outlines our investments from July 1 through June 30, 2026. This plan reflects our shared priorities, including safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, quality infrastructure, environmental responsibility and opportunity for all.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to our City Commission, City staff and community partners for their thoughtful engagement throughout this process. Together, we are investing in a Grand Rapids that is an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city with a robust economy, safe and healthy community, and the opportunity for a high quality of life for all. Here are a few highlights:

Public Safety and Neighborhood Well-Being

Safety remains a top community priority. The FY26 budget dedicates \$155 million to our Safe Community efforts, including investments in police, fire, emergency preparedness and violence prevention. This includes:

- \$2.7 million for crime prevention and violence reduction strategies that focus on community partnerships and addressing root causes.
- \$6.6 million for other public safety services such as fire prevention,

indigent defense and the City’s SAFE Task Force.

- \$20.8 million in capital upgrades, including emergency radio systems, backup 911 equipment and continued construction of two new fire stations.

These investments reflect a balanced approach – strengthening emergency response while also supporting innovative programs that build trust and prevent harm.

Housing and Economic Opportunity

Housing costs are rising and the City is working hard to address this challenge. The budget includes \$7.9 million to expand the supply of affordable housing, prevent evictions and meet the needs of our unhoused neighbors.

In addition, we’re investing \$2.1 million in small business support and commercial corridor improvements to help neighborhood businesses grow. These efforts are supported by programs that promote local hiring and inclusive economic development.

Youth, Families and Inclusive Services

Creating a city where everyone belongs starts with investing in people. The FY26 budget funds important services and partnerships focused on:

- After-school and summer youth programming
- Job training and career pathways

continued on page 12 ►



continued from page 11

- Leadership development and neighborhood engagement

We're also continuing to support initiatives like the \$1 million Third Ward Equity Fund, immigrant and refugee outreach, and inclusive city planning through programs like Grand Rapids Sister Cities International and the West Michigan Welcome Plan.

Streets, Sidewalks and Mobility

Grand Rapidsians will see significant reinvestment in the roads, sidewalks and transportation infrastructure that connects us all. The budget includes \$42.1 million in mobility capital improvements, with projects such as:

- Resurfacing and repairing streets through the Vital Streets program
- Improving bus stops and pedestrian crossings
- Installing new EV carshare infrastructure in underserved areas

Another \$2.2 million is allocated to improve traffic signals, lighting, signage and traffic calming – part of our ongoing work to make city streets safer for everyone, including pedestrians and cyclists.

Environmental Sustainability and Resilience

The health of our environment is tied to the health of our city. In FY26, we're investing \$676,000 to implement climate resilience strategies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes:

- Continuing to improve City vehicle efficiency and reduce emissions
- Promoting energy efficiency through building audits and clean energy pilots

We're also dedicating \$13.9 million to reduce lead exposure and environmental risks in homes and neighborhoods, with another \$75.4 million planned for long-term park improvements, water infrastructure upgrades and greenway projects.

The FY26 budget reflects a vision of Grand Rapids that is safe, welcoming and prepared for the future. Whether it's a smoother commute, a safer neighborhood or a more inclusive community, we want these investments to make a positive difference in your life.

To learn more about what's planned for the coming year, I invite you to explore our Resident's Guide to the Fiscal Plan (<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Budget-Office>), which provides an easy-to-understand summary of the priorities and projects funded in this budget.

Thank you for your continued engagement and partnership as we work together for the future of Grand Rapids.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Whiting

Mark Washington
City Manager

Grpd Chief Highlights Sweeping Reforms, Urges Community Partnership in Public Safety

To the Grand Rapids Community –

Since I became chief more than three years ago, the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) has undergone extensive changes in policy, procedure, training, recruiting and, most importantly, culture, with the expectation that every interaction meets the highest standards of professional conduct.



The list of changes is long. We recognize that in every situation, the sanctity of human life is always the top priority. De-escalation, response to resistance and use of force have been addressed in both policy and training, including the expectation that deadly force is used only when necessary. We've transitioned to grappling/Jiu Jitsu-based subject control methods and other less-lethal compliance methods to improve safe outcomes for both individuals and officers. We've increased transparency through hundreds of community meetings, significantly improved responsiveness and outreach to the media and added records unit staff to address the backlog of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

We've instituted constitutional policing and self-regulation training and added virtual-reality technology to enhance scenario-based training. The GRPD has civilianized key positions in the chief's office and elsewhere in the department to diversify perspectives while also freeing up officers to focus on responding to 911 calls.

We've increased staffing levels for victim services, especially when the most vulnerable among us are victimized, and we've doubled the amount of time our mental health co-response teams are on the street since the program began in 2022. Our recruiting efforts have been successful, attracting both new and experienced officers who reflect the makeup of our community and bring a variety of life experiences to the job.

I am extremely proud of the progress GRPD has made. But we will never achieve the goal of living in a community that feels safe and is safe at all times without the community being part of the equation. We have exceptional detectives, but rarely can they make an arrest without individuals stepping up and speaking up with information. GRPD officers, on average, take one illegally possessed gun off our streets every day, but without accountability from family members and community leaders, gun violence will continue to devastate our city.

I will, without exception, hold officers accountable for unnecessary uses of force but when individuals choose to escalate a situation by resisting arrest or otherwise failing to follow lawful orders, I expect my officers to do their job. De-escalation is a two-way street and I will not unjustly punish officers who respond to resistance with an appropriate level of force. I am committed to providing a police department that our community supports and trusts. But to get there, we as a community must be partners in co-producing a safe and secure community.

[Signature]

Chief Eric Winstrom

GRPD is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), which includes an annual policy and compliance review. GRPD's policies are publicly available via the city of Grand Rapids' website (grandrapidsmi.gov).



Grand Rapids Turns 175! – Join the Celebration All Year Long!

On April 2, 2025, the City of Grand Rapids officially turned 175 years old—and the celebration is far from over! A full year of events, activities, and community-wide recognition is underway, and you're invited to be part of the fun, the history, and the future.

A Birthday Bash to Remember

The anniversary kicked off in style on June 7 at Rosa Parks Circle with a free, family-friendly birthday party presented by Consumers Energy. More than 4,000 residents and visitors alike enjoyed live entertainment, games, historical exhibits, hands-on activities and, of course, birthday cake. It was a fitting tribute to the city's rich past and exciting present.

Commemorative Poster Competition

In honor of this major milestone, the City is hosting an official 175th Anniversary Poster Competition. Local artists, illustrators and designers are invited to submit original artwork that captures what Grand Rapids means to them.

- First place award: \$1,500 + signed commemorative prints
- Second & third place awards: \$250 each
- Artists retain all rights to their work

Submissions are due by July 25, so don't wait—start creating now! Visit 175GR.com for entry details.

175 Pictures for 175 Years

Explore the city's history like never before with the mobile museum exhibit, "175 Pictures for 175 Years." This rotating display

will visit locations across the city from June through December, including:

- City Hall
- DeVos Place
- Grand Rapids Public Library
- Grand Rapids Public Museum
- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum

Visit 175GR.com for exhibit dates and stops.

Share the Fun

Capture your favorite moments and post them using #175GR on social media. Whether you're enjoying a pop-up event, sipping the commemorative brew or just showing love for the city, share your pride with the world!

Get Involved

Want to add your own spark to the celebration? Businesses, organizations and individuals are encouraged to host events, design anniversary-themed merchandise or simply show their support using the official 175th anniversary logo, created by local artist Derek Mohr of Grand Rapids Branding Co.

Visit 175GR.com to access the logo, branding guidelines and participation toolkit. The 175GR logo is licensed under Creative Commons and can be used in merchandise for free

A Citywide Effort

This celebration is powered by partnership. Planning is led by the City of Grand Rapids and supported by a wide group of sponsors and organizations, including:

- Consumers Energy, Birthday Party Presenting Sponsor

- Meijer, Anniversary Celebration Sponsor
- WOOD TV8 and 98.7 THE GRAND, 175th Celebration Media Sponsors
- Vicinity Energy, Birthday Party Concert Sponsor
- Independent Bank, Birthday Party Cake Sponsor
- Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority Community Inclusion Group, Birthday Party Family Fun Area Sponsor
- AHC Hospitality, Berger Chevrolet, Celebration Cinema, Country Fresh and Savor..., Anniversary Community Contributors

- ArtPrize
- Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI)
- Experience Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids African American Museum & Archives
- Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce
- Grand Rapids Public Library
- Grand Rapids Public Museum
- West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

For event updates, calendar additions and more anniversary fun, bookmark the City's 175GR.com webpage and follow @CityGrandRapids on Facebook and Instagram. Let's make this a year to remember.

– Happy 175th, Grand Rapids!

GET INVOLVED AT 175GR.COM



- Download the 175th logo kit, licensed under Creative Commons, and create your own 175th merchandise
- Participate in the 175th Commemorative Poster Competition
- Stay up-to-date with all upcoming activities and events

GRVOTES

News from the Office of the City Clerk

Upcoming Election

November 4, 2025 – special millage election Kent Intermediate School District (KISD)

Number of precincts and precinct boundaries updated

There have been many changes to election laws in the State of Michigan over the last seven years. With those changes, voters have many options to cast their ballot including voting absentee at home, early in person at an early voting site or in person on Election Day at their local precinct. A majority of the voters are now voting before Election Day, and it was prudent to review the number of precincts in Grand Rapids.

The Election Commission recently approved modifying precinct boundaries and the City Commission approved an ordinance change to reduce the number of precincts to 59. Affected registered voters will get new voter registration cards in the mail this summer. Most voters will see just a change to their precinct number. Some will see a change to the precinct number and their polling location. To view the proposed precinct boundaries and location go to: <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Elections/Precinct-Maps-and-Polling-Locations>.

Joining a Citizen Board or Commission is a great way to get involved within the city.

There are many boards with various topics and we are confident you'll find one that suits your interests!

Check out all the boards to learn more about what they do and how to apply: <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Boards-and-Commissions>

Need a passport or document notarized? We can help

Your City Clerk's Office offers passport and notary services. If you need to apply for a passport, simply make an appointment by calling 616.456.3010. If you need a document notarized, visit the second-floor City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 300 Monroe Ave. NW, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The fee for notarization is \$5 per signature. No appointment is needed. To learn more about these services and all that the Clerk's Office has to offer, visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/clerk](https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/clerk).

THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AND LIFEQUEST
URBAN OUTREACH PRESENT

NIGHTQUEST

LOCATION

LIFEQUEST URBAN OUTREACH GYM
1050 FISK RD. SE GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49507

Sat. Nights: 5:30 -9 pm
Mon. Night for 16-21 y.o.
Sat. Morning 10 am-1 pm
For middle schoolers

5 ON 5 **MUSIC** **FOOD** **DUNK**
BASKETBALL **SPEAKERS** **CONTESTS**

NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED



**PARTICIPANTS ARE REQUIRED TO UNDERGO SECURITY
SCREENING BEFORE ENTRY. NO BACKPACKS ALLOWED.**



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CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDSPublic
Works

SUMMER UPDATE

Summer Paving

Our Department of Public Works temporary paving program works in conjunction with the City's Vital Streets program, aiming to achieve the goal of 70% of our streets rated in good or fair condition. Each year, Street's Maintenance personnel work with our Engineering department to assess road conditions and develop a plan to help reach that goal.

The resurfacing work is performed by the Street Maintenance division of Public Works. Utilizing department equipment such as asphalt rollers, live bottom trucks and a tack distributor, Street's crews overlay more than 15 miles of City streets each year. Resurfacing existing roadways extends the life of the road by an additional seven to 15 years and greatly improves the ride quality.

We understand that resurfacing a road can be an inconvenience, so if you see Street's crews performing this work in your neighborhood, crew members on site will be happy to answer any questions and help you navigate around or through the construction zone until work is completed.

City of Grand Rapids Single Hauler

We are considering a shift of services where the City will become the sole provider for residential refuse collection. We want to hear your opinion on our trash, recycling and yard waste services and how we can improve those services for YOU in the proposed Single Hauler Program.

If approved, the proposed Single Hauler Program will shift the sole responsibility of refuse collection onto the City of Grand Rapids. This means that private companies will no longer collect refuse for residential homes and those customers will move to City refuse and recycling services. The Single Hauler Program will be a part of the current Pay as You Throw system in which Grand

Rapids residents pay only when their cart is tipped.

The proposed Single Hauler Program is in the beginning stages of development. The primary goal of the program is to make sure the City's environment is healthy. To do this, we use the latest cutting-edge technology for waste, recycling and street management. We are also committed to making the City of Grand Rapids one of the most sustainable cities in the U.S.

The proposal to shift to the City becoming the sole hauler for residential homes came from two separate reports: a rate study and an operational study. Both studies recommended this proposed shift for the following reasons:

- Positive impact on road maintenance—less wear and tear due to fewer refuse trucks on the roads.
- The City will continue to meet its Sustainability priorities by lowering greenhouse gas emissions by having fewer refuse trucks on the road, as well as moving from the City Refuse Truck Fleet from diesel to compressed natural gas.
- A continued investment in equity. The reports observed that the current Pay as You Throw program is the most equitable refuse system nation-wide. This approach may allow us to offer more competitive rates and pricing for our Grand Rapids customers.

We are currently in the public engagement phase, meeting with our Grand Rapids community including residents, rental property associations and current private haulers. If the proposed program is implemented, the anticipated start date would be July 1, 2027, but could be started as soon as mid to late 2026. The input

received from Grand Rapids residents, like YOU, will impact decision-making as well as the direction given by the City Commission.

Make your voice heard and check out the City of Grand Rapids Public Input page to take the Single Hauler Program Survey. If you have questions regarding the proposed Single Hauler program, you can contact us: singlehauler@publicinput.com or voicemail: 1-855-925-28021, project code, 7564

Assisted Refuse and Recycling Service

Did you know that we can help customers that are physically unable to place their trash and recycling carts at the curb. Individuals may qualify for our curbside assisted service with the City of Grand Rapids Assisted Trash and Recycling program.

This service works by residents placing their city trash and recycling carts near their home or garage and city staff will walk up and grab the carts, make sure the cart is emptied each week that service is needed and return the cart to the original location. To see if you qualify, call 616-456-3000 to receive more information and set up an appointment with our team.

Subsidized City Refuse Service

The City of Grand Rapids works with Home Repair Services of Kent County to connect eligible homeowners with affordable, subsidized trash service. Grand Rapids offers a 32-gallon refuse service to qualified homeowners. Additional trash carts can be purchased at full retail price and will not receive subsidized rates.

If you have more material than the cart can hold then you can either purchase blue City bags at City Hall: 300 Monroe Ave NW or you can also add a 2nd paid service to the account. To see if you qualify, please apply at Home Repair Services conveniently located at 1100 South Division Avenue Grand Rapids MI 49507.

You will need to re-qualify for this service each year. Click Here to review the Service Guidelines for recycling and refuse cart services. For more information, please call Home Repair Services of Kent County at (616) 241-2601, email at info@homerepairservices.org or visit the Home Repair Services Webpage and Home Repair Services First-Time Client Intake Form to apply.



Homeowners! Are You Receiving the Principal Residence Exemption? Here's How to Find Out.

The Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) is a property tax exemption administered by the City Assessor's Office. The PRE is sometimes referred to as the "homestead exemption." It is an exemption from the local school operating millage. As

an example, if your home has a Taxable Value of \$100,000, a 100% PRE exemption could result in a savings of up to \$1,800 per year.

If you own and occupy your home as your primary residence, then you're eligible to claim the Principal Residence Exemption. You are allowed to claim only one Principal Residence Exemption in Michigan and cannot claim a similar exemption in another state at the same time. The exemption is not automatic and the property owner must file a claim for this exemption.

Check your current PRE status:

When we say status, we're talking about the percentage of your PRE. This could range from 0 to 100%. If you own a single-family home and occupy the entire home, you are eligible to claim 100% PRE. Because you could live in a multi-family home or rent rooms in your home, you may be eligible for a lesser percentage PRE. For example, if you own a duplex, and live in one side of it, you could claim 50% PRE. If you do have 100% PRE, you won't pay any of the 18 mills of school operating tax.

Here are a few options to check on your PRE status:

- Your most recent summer or winter tax statement.
- The most recent notice of assessment mailed to you in January every year.
- Look it up online at <https://bsaonline.com/?uid=115>. The City has a guide on our website at <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Services/File-a-PRE-Affidavit>.
- Call us and we'll tell you. Dial 311 or (616) 456-3000.

If you find out you have 0% PRE – but you live in the home you own – you may file the PRE Affidavit. The exemption is valid until you:

- Move out of your home
- Rent out your home
- Sell your home
- Some other status change

This form has to be filed on or before June 1 of the year you want the exemption to be applied. Print and file this original, completed form with the Assessor's Office by mail, or drop it off in person:

Link to form: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/2368f_2605_7.pdf

Mail to:

City of Grand Rapids Assessor's Office
300 Monroe Ave NW, 3rd Floor
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

More questions? We are happy to help. Please call 311 or 616.456.3000 or check out the Michigan Department of Treasury information page: <https://www.michigan.gov/en/taxes/property/principal/principal-residence-exemption-pre-guidelines-and-faqs>

ATTENTION NEIGHBORS:



The Healthy Homes Coalition is now distributing lead-reducing water kits to residents with lead service lines throughout the City. Each kit includes

- A lead-reducing filter pitcher
- Replacement filters
- Materials for cleaning faucet aerators
- Lead education materials
- Optional: In-home assessment of pipes and fixtures to identify risks

For more information or to check your eligibility, contact the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan at (616) 241-3300 or by email at info@hhcwm.org. Stop by during their drop-in hours on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to Noon at 1545 Buchanan Ave SW.



Flushing Out The Facts: GRPS Students Dive Into Water Science At The WRRF

Our Environmental Services Department is setting the pace for summer with Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) Summer School Program tours at the Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF). The WRRF will host 700 GRPS 4th through 8th graders over the summer to check out how the human water cycle impacts our world. Students will explore the biological processes that the City of Grand Rapids uses to treat wastewater, make the water clean and safe to be returned to the Grand River; and how to protect our resources by keeping storm drains clean.

Tours are offered year-round to industry professionals, families, students and groups of all ages. Visit our website for more information and to schedule a tour at: grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Request-a-Water-Resource-Recovery-Facility-WRRF-Tour

Grand Rapids Achieves Highest Certification Through Statewide Environmental Recognition Program

We are one of the first local governments ever to achieve platinum certification for our environmental leadership by the statewide Michigan Green Communities (MGC) program. As part of the annual MGC Challenge, local governments are awarded bronze, silver, gold or platinum seals of achievement. These achievements demonstrate community leadership in various areas, including energy efficiency, climate resilience, recycling, mobility, environmental stewardship and more.

Grand Rapids achieved platinum status for exemplary action in 2024 across multiple categories which include: increasing tree canopy coverage in the City, electrification of municipal fleet and facilities and diverting waste from landfills with a pilot municipal compost facility. To qualify for the Platinum status, the City has also made progress on:

- Completing a community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory in 2023
- Increasing the percentage of EV/clean fuel fleet vehicles to 41% (from 37% in 2022)
- Installing 18 new EV chargers at the new fleet and facilities garage at 1500 Scribner Ave
- Growing the City’s tree canopy cover to 37% (from 34% in 2022)

- Utilizing new tools and technology to track the energy use and GHG emissions in municipal buildings and identify energy efficiency opportunities
- Installing a new phosphorous recovery system at the Grand Rapids Water Resource Recovery Facility to efficiently treat incoming wastewater and provide an alternative source of nonrenewable phosphorous- a key ingredient of fertilizer
- Permitting a new municipal composting facility adjacent to the existing Butterworth Yard Waste Drop-Off Station. This facility will accept food waste from select City municipal buildings during its pilot phase and then residents in the City of Grand Rapids.
- Securing funding to establish three new full-time positions within the Grand Rapids Office of Sustainability to implement the strategies of the 2025 Climate Action & Adaptation Plan

Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor are the first cities to achieve this highest level of recognition.



City Of Grand Rapids

Kent County

Please join us on as we provide some exclusive opportunities for the youth across Kent County. (Ages 10+)
Not only will Epic Games (Net worth: \$32,000,000,000) be educating students across Kent County on the process of Game design.

Jump Ahead Play Fuel Summer Initiative is also very happy to educate the youth the following:

- E-Sports Gaming & Technology
- Streaming
- Shout-Casting
- Speaking with Colleges & Universities
- Info On Obtaining Future Careers
- Internships and Scholarships
- NIL Income
- Cryptocurrency

SCAN FOR
SIGN UP INFO



CAMP SCHEDULE :

Camp will be held every Friday and Saturday
from June 20th, 2025, through August 1st, 2025.
Camp hours will be from 5:00pm to 9:00pm each day.

BURTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
2133 BUCHANAN AVE SE
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
49507



Help Keep Our Community Safe: Be Mindful of City Fire Hydrants

As summer temperatures rise, it can be tempting to look for creative ways to cool down. However, we are reminding residents: never use yellow city fire hydrants for cooling off. While it may seem harmless, unauthorized use of fire hydrants poses serious risks to public safety.

Fire hydrants are a vital part of our emergency response infrastructure. The Grand Rapids Water System, in partnership with the Grand Rapids Fire Department, works hard to maintain every hydrant so they’re ready when seconds count. When a hydrant is improperly opened or tampered with, it can lead to pressure loss, damage the piping system, or render the hydrant unusable in an emergency – potentially delaying firefighters when every moment matters.

Only authorized personnel are allowed to operate city hydrants, and for good reason. Every functional hydrant helps ensure quick response times and supports the safety

of our neighborhoods. We ask residents to do their part: stay clear of hydrants unless permitted and never attempt to open one on your own.

If you spot a damaged or leaking hydrant, or if one has been struck by a vehicle, please help us by reporting it. Make note of the nearest address and call 311 from within city limits, or 616-456-3000 if you’re outside the area.

Need temporary access to a hydrant for a permitted reason—like new construction or filling a swimming pool? Hydrant connections are available for approved uses by permit, but only on hydrants within the Grand Rapids Water System.

By staying mindful and reporting issues, you’re helping protect our community and keeping emergency services running smoothly. Thank you for helping us keep Grand Rapids safe this summer!

2025 SUMMER SAFETY

Preventing Accidents And Enjoying The Season



Summer is a time for outdoor fun, but it also brings increased risks of accidents and injuries. Organizations like the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), United States Fire Administration (USFA), The National Safety Council (NSC) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide guidelines to help people stay safe.

Water Safety and Drowning Prevention

Drowning is a leading cause of death, especially for children. The CDC and NSC emphasizes that drowning can happen quickly and silently, making supervision crucial. To reduce risks:

- Learn to swim: Swimming lessons can significantly lower drowning risks. The YMCA offers swim lessons, and there are several private swim classes available in the Greater Grand Rapids area.
- Supervise children: An adult should always be within arm's reach of young swimmers. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children aged 1-14 years old. Never swim alone!
- Use life jackets: Coast Guard-approved life jackets provide better protection than inflatable floaties.
- Secure pools: Home pools should have four-sided fencing with self-latching gates.

Barbecue Safety

Grilling is a summer tradition, but improper use can lead to fires and injuries. The NFPA provides essential safety tips:

- Keep grills away from structures: Maintain a safe distance from homes, decks, and overhanging branches. Never use in your home or other enclosed spaces.

- Never leave a grill unattended: Fires can spread rapidly.
- Check for gas leaks: If using a gas grill, inspect hoses and connections before lighting. Use a light soap and water solution to test for leaks after turning on. Escaping gas will cause bubbles to appear, indicating a leak. If this occurs, shut down the grill and have it serviced by a professional.
- Use proper tools: Long-handled utensils and oven mitts reduce the risk of burns.

Fireworks Safety

Fireworks are a staple of summer celebrations, but they pose serious hazards. The NFPA warns that thousands of injuries occur annually, often affecting children and teens. To stay safe:

- Attend public displays: Professional fireworks shows are safer than consumer fireworks.
- Research the product: Understand what the device will do once lit.
- Keep a safe distance: Never light fireworks near people, buildings, or dry grass. Never allow children to set off fireworks.
- Dispose of fireworks properly: Soak used fireworks in water before discarding to reduce risk of fire.

Here in Grand Rapids, the City Commission passed a fireworks ordinance that aligns with state law, governing the use of consumer-grade fireworks. This ordinance not only aims to ensure the safety of residents but also emphasizes the importance of adhering to the rules. Violations of the fireworks ordinance can result in a civil fine of \$1,000 per offense.

To maintain a peaceful and secure environment, the City's fireworks ordinance specifies the permitted times and dates for setting off fireworks throughout the year:

- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. on the Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Memorial Day
- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. on June 19
- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. June 29 to July 4
- 11 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. on the Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Labor Day
- 11 a.m. December 31 to 1 a.m. January 1

Summer Weather Safety

Summer brings more than sunshine—it's also peak season for severe weather, including thunderstorms, heat waves and tornados. The Office of Emergency Management encourages residents to stay weather-aware:

- Have multiple ways to receive alerts: Receive real-time emergency updates by enrolling in the Grand Rapids alert system at grandrapidsmi.gov/emergencyalerts, ensure Wireless Emergency Alerts are enabled on your smartphones and purchase a NOAA Weather Radio.
- Know the risks: Summer storms can bring damaging winds, hail, lightning and sudden flooding. If thunder roars, go indoors—seek shelter immediately.
- Prepare ahead: Keep an emergency kit with water, flashlights, batteries and a portable phone charger. Review your family's emergency plan and know where to take shelter.

By staying informed and prepared, you can enjoy the season safely—even when the weather turns unpredictable.



Join GR Parks and Rec for free outdoor fitness classes at parks around Grand Rapids this summer! The Free Outdoor Summer Fitness Series is made possible thanks to partnership with Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. and Priority Health. Classes may be photographed for promotional purposes.

Yoga @ Mulick Park

Dates: Mondays through August 18
Time: 6 – 6:45 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 1632 Sylvan Ave SE

Zumba @ Rosa Parks Cicle

Dates: Mondays through August 18
Time: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: 135 Monroe Center St NW

SoulfulMOTION @ Mackay Jaycee’s Park

Dates: Mondays through August 18
Time: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: 2531 Kalamazoo Ave SE

Line Dancing @ Richmond Park

Dates: Mondays through August 18
Time: 7 – 7:45 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: 963 Richmond St NW

Barre @ The Blue Bridge

Dates: Tuesdays through August 19
Time: 5:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: The Blue Bridge spans the Grand River between Fulton St. and Pearl St. bridges

Glute Aerobics @ 555 Monroe

Dates: Tuesdays through August 19
Time: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 555 Monroe Ave

Sunset Yoga @ Lookout Park

Dates: Tuesdays through August 19
Time: 7 – 7:45 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 801 Fairview Ave NE

Circuit Training @ Ottawa Hills Fitness Court

Dates: Wednesdays through July 30
Time: 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 2060 Oakfield Ave SE

Yoga @ Riverside Park

Dates: Wednesdays through Aug. 20
Time: 12 – 12:45 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water

Address: Riverside Park, Band Shell entrance

Pumped Up Strength @ Cherry Park

Dates: Wednesdays through Aug. 20
Time: 5:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 725 Cherry St SE

Core Blast @ Roosevelt Park

Dates: Wednesdays through Aug. 20
Time: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 739 Van Raalte Dr SW

WERQ @ Highland Park

Dates: Wednesdays through Aug. 20
Time: 7 – 7:45 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: 700 College Ave NE

Sunrise Yoga @ Indian Trails Golf Course

Dates: Thursdays through Aug. 21
Time: 6:30 a.m. – 7:15 a.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 2776 Kalamazoo Ave SE

POUND @ The Blue Bridge

Dates: Thursdays through Aug. 14
Time: 5:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: The Blue Bridge spans the Grand River between Fulton St. and Pearl St. bridges

HIGH Low Fitness @ 555 Monroe

Dates: Thursdays through Aug. 21
Time: 6 – 6:45 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: 555 Monroe Ave NW

Hip Hop Yoga @ Pleasant Park

Dates: Thursdays through Aug. 21
Time: 7 – 7:45 p.m.
Equipment: mat, towel, water
Address: 630 Madison Ave SE

TurnUP Dance Fitness @ Roosevelt Park

Dates: Fridays through Aug. 22
Time: 6 – 6:45 p.m.
Equipment: water
Address: 739 Van Raalte Dr SW

For additional class information and cancellations, please like and follow GR Parks and Rec on Facebook (@GRParksandRec). Class descriptions are available at [grparks.info/2025freefitness](https://www.grparks.info/2025freefitness). Cancellations will also be posted to the cancellation hotline at 616-456-3699.

City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation

LATE SUMMER CATALOG

Kayaking on the Grand River

For those who love the water, Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation is offering free and affordable kayaking options at the Riverside Park Lagoon, making it easier than ever to get out and paddle.

Free Family Paddle Nights – These 20-minute kayak rides are open to all skill levels, no registration required.

Dates: July 18, August 15

Time: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

\$5 Per Hour Kayak Rentals – Available every Saturday, visitors can rent a kayak and explore the Grand River.

Dates: May 31 – August 30

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At all kayaking events, participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian on the water. Children ages 10 and older may ride in a solo kayak, while those under 10 may ride in tandem with an adult.

Summer Day Camps

Ages: 6-12 years old

Registration: Online registration is closed however walk-up registrations are welcome, subject to available camp spots for that day

Locations and Times:

Garfield Park Camp @ Garfield Park

- 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Session 2: Weekdays, July 7 to Aug. 1
- Session 3: Weekdays, Aug. 4 to Aug. 15

MLK Jr. Park Camp @ Grand Rapids

Christian Elementary School

12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Session 2: Weekdays, June 30 to Aug. 1

Roosevelt Park Camp @ Roosevelt Park

- 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Session 2: Weekdays, July 7 to Aug. 1
- Session 3: Weekdays, Aug. 4 to Aug. 15

Youth Tennis in the Park

GR Parks and Rec is partnering with West Michigan Community Tennis to offer a tennis and learning experience for kids ages 5-14 this summer. WMCT is part of the USTA's NJTL program and we are offering tennis lessons with the addition of an academic portion in hopes to help youth in developing and growing skills both on and off the court.

This will include an hour of tennis instruction from local pros and high school players followed by a 30-minute off-court lesson utilizing Be Nice Curriculum from the West Michigan Mental Health Organization.

Ages: 5-14

Dates: Multiple session options running from July 7 to July 24

Location: Aberdeen Park, Union High School, Ottawa Hills High School

Cost: \$25 for residents, \$35 for nonresidents

Registration: Now open and closes July 13

Youth Dance

In partnership with The Den, GR Parks and Recreation is offering ballet and hip-hop dance classes for ages 3 to 8. From learning basics and understanding technique and musicality to introducing new moves and terminology, young dancers will enjoy fostering creative expression and building confidence in a supportive environment.

Ages: 5-14

Dates: Multiple classes that run July 15 through August 21

Location: The Den, 2335 Burton St. SE

Cost: \$45 for residents, \$55 for nonresidents

Tae Kwon Do

Participants will learn the basics of the Korean martial art form of Tae Kwon Do. The program is designed to increase confidence, flexibility, balance, and self-defense skills. Green belts and higher will meet until 8:00 p.m.

Ages: 7 - Adult

Location: Garfield Park Community Gym

Time: 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Sessions: Tuesdays, July 22 through Aug. 26

Cost: \$35 for residents, \$45 for non-residents

Running for Wellness

For children interested in building endurance and improving fitness, the city will offer a Running for Wellness program. Participants will work on speed, agility, breathing techniques, strength training, and stretching.

Location: MacKay Jaycees Park

Cost per session: \$40 for residents, \$50 for nonresidents

Dates: Wednesday, July 30 - Aug. 20

- Ages 5-8: 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- Ages 9-13: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Fall Soccer Program

Our fall soccer program offers opportunities for a wide range of ages to enjoy playing soccer. Children as young as four can join a team to learn soccer and enjoy scrimmages. Children ages six to twelve will enjoy weekly hour-long practices on Thursdays with games on Saturdays while teens ages 13 to 16 can register to enjoy drop-in style game play without formal teams or practices.

Ages: 4-16

Dates: Sept. 4 through Oct. 18, deadline to register is Aug. 8, although some age groups may fill before then

Location: MacKay Jaycees Park and Riverside Park

Cost: \$50 for residents, \$60 for nonresidents

Free 50+ Programs

GR Parks and Rec offers a variety of free dance and fitness classes for ages 50 and up. While these programs are designed for people 50+, they are open to everyone!

Cardio & Strength Low Impact Workout: Mondays from 10 – 10:55 a.m.

Pilates: Mondays from 11 – 11:45 a.m.

Stretch & Flex Fitness: Tuesdays & Thursdays from 11 – 11:45 a.m.

Zumba Gold: Wednesdays from 10 – 10:55 a.m.

Active Adults: Wednesdays from 11 – 11:45 a.m.

Pickleball: Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9 – 10:50 a.m.; Fridays from 9 – 11:45 a.m.

Location: Garfield Park Community Gym at 2111 Madison Ave SE

Learn More: Visit grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation or call 616-456-3696, option 1.

For more information on upcoming summer camps, fitness classes, and recreation events in Grand Rapids, visit www.grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation or call 616-456-3696, option 1, for more information and follow Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation on social media for updates.



Main Library
111 Library St NE
616.988.5400

Madison Square
1201 Madison Ave SE
616.988.5411

Ottawa Hills
1150 Giddings Ave SE
616.988.5412

Seymour
2350 Eastern Ave SE
616.988.5413

Van Belkum
1563 Plainfield Ave NE
616.988.5410

West Leonard
1017 Leonard St NW
616.988.5416

West Side
713 Bridge St NW
616.988.5414

Yankee Clipper
2025 Leonard St NE
616.988.5415

grpl.org

Storytimes

Baby & Me
Bring your baby and bounce along to fun stories, songs, and rhymes. Baby & Me is a 15-minute storytime followed by a relaxed playtime where you and baby will meet new friends. For ages 0–18 months.

Fridays, July 25, August 1
10:30 am Van Belkum Branch

Family Storytime
These storytimes feature great books, songs, fingerplays, and hands-on fun. Classes end with an art activity and playtime designed to help your child’s brain grow. For ages 0–5 years.

Fridays, July 25, August 1
10:30 am Ottawa Hills Branch



Storytime on the Lawn
Join us for this outdoor storytime held on the lawn! Children and their caregivers will love this 30-minute event that features stories, songs, rhymes, and playing on the lawn. In case of inclement weather, this event series will be moved indoors. For ages 0–5 years.

Wednesdays, July 23, 30
10:30 am Seymour Branch

Thursdays, July 24, 31
10:30 am Yankee Clipper Branch

Outdoor Storytime
If you love stories, songs, and rhymes, join GRPL for outdoor storytime. This fun event for kids is the perfect way to get some wiggles out. Each child will take home a free storytime kit at the end of the program while supplies last. For ages 0–5 years.

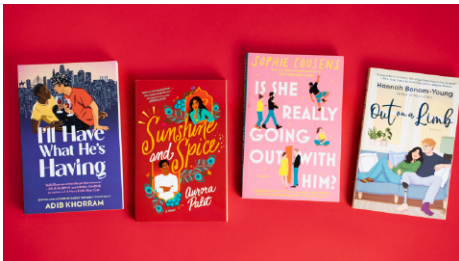
Monday, August 11
10:30 am Mulick Park
1632 Sylvan Ave SE

Mondays, July 21, August 18
10:30 am Lincoln Park
231 Marion Ave NW

Pajama Time
Get cozy in your pajamas, grab your favorite stuffed animals or blanket, and come to the library for a special bedtime event! Listen to stories, sing songs, and get those wiggles out before bed. Great for working parents and caregivers! For ages 0–5 years.

Mondays, July 21, 28
6:30 pm West Leonard Branch

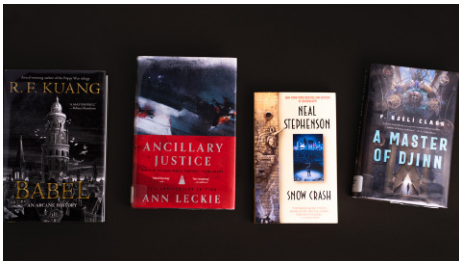
Book Clubs



Steamy Lit Book Club
Wednesday, August 13
6:00 – 7:00 pm Ottawa Hills Branch

Dive into the heartwarming, passionate, and sometimes heartbreaking world of romance novels. Whether you love contemporary love stories, historical romances, or steamy thrillers, we read and celebrate all things love. This book club is designed for adults.

Is She Really Going Out With Him?
by Sophie Cousens



Sci-Fi Book Club
Wednesday, August 6
7:00 – 8:00 pm Main Library

Join other science-fiction readers for a book club led by GRPL staff. Participate in a discussion about each book with members of the community. This book club is designed for adults.

Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson

Popular Pages Book Club
Join us for our monthly book club! Enjoy popular fiction and nonfiction titles selected by GRPL librarians and participate in a discussion about each reading with members of the community and library staff. This book club is designed for adults.

Popular Pages at Yankee Clipper
Mondays, July 21, August 18
6:00 – 7:00 pm Yankee Clipper Branch

July: *Psalm for the Wild Built*
by Becky Chambers

August: *Poverty, by America*
by Matthew Desmond

Popular Pages at the Main Library
Saturday, August 9
12:00 – 1:00 pm Main Library

The Unclaimed: Abandonment and Hope in the City of Angels by Pamela Prickett & Stefan Timmermans

Events for Everyone

FOR KIDS

Comedy Magic with Cameron Zvara

Cameron's magic show is filled with mind-blowing magic, comedy, juggling, music, and tons of audience participation. For ages 6–11.

Tuesday, July 29

2:30 – 3:15 pm Main Library



Drums for All with Josh

Join us for a fun, interactive music experience where we'll drum, sing, and dance together! Open to all ages and abilities, this program brings the community together through rhythm and movement. Drums and percussion instruments are provided. For ages 6–11.

Wednesday, July 30

11:00 am – 12:00 pm LINC UP Gallery
341 Hall St SE

Dinosaur Day with PaleoJoe

PaleoJoe, a paleontologist, children's author, and real dinosaur digger, will bring his exciting program to the library! With over 25 years of experience, he'll entertain and educate all ages with thrilling dinosaur stories and paleontology facts. For ages 6–11.

Tuesday, August 5

6:00 – 7:00 pm Yankee Clipper Branch

Cirque Amongus Live!

Join Cirque Amongus for a fun-filled show packed with tricks, laughter, and surprises! This high-energy performance combines comedy, circus skills, and audience participation for an unforgettable experience. For ages 6–11.

Saturday, August 9

1:30 – 2:15 pm Seymour Branch

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation – Meijer Fund and Edsko & Claire Hekman Family Fund.

FOR TEENS

Totally Rad 90s Crafts for Teens

Step back in time at the library and recreate the crafts and activities your parents grew up with! This program is all that and a bag of chips! Relive the era of slow internet, colorful DIY projects, boy bands, unforgettable TV shows (with unskippable commercials), and the best catchphrases. For ages 11–18.

Thursday, July 24

1:00 – 2:00 pm Yankee Clipper Branch

Teen Escape Room

We've reserved three rooms at The Ruse Escape Rooms exclusively for GRPL teens. Teens can come solo or with friends. We'll create teams, keeping friend groups together but encouraging everyone to meet new people. For ages 11–18. Registration required: www.grpl.org/register. An online waiver must be signed by a caregiver before attending: www.the-ruse.com/waiver

Wednesday, August 13

2:00 – 3:00 pm The Ruse Escape Rooms
25 Division Ave S

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation – Meijer Fund and Edsko & Claire Hekman Family Fund.



FOR ALL AGES

Family Bike Maintenance Workshop with Jill Martindale

Join local bike expert Jill Martindale for a family-friendly workshop on bike maintenance and basic repairs. Jill, the first female winner of the Iditarod Trail Invitational 1000-mile race and a member of The Michigan Mountain Bike Hall of Fame, will teach simple bike care and help troubleshoot common issues for riders of all skill levels. For all ages.

Wednesday, July 23

6:00 – 7:00 pm Van Belkum Branch

Wednesday, August 6

6:00 – 7:00 pm Ottawa Hills Branch



Comic Geek Out

Saturday, July 26

12:00 – 5:00 pm Main Library

Discover your inner hero at the library's annual comic event. Celebrate the comic books you love and geek out about your favorite fandom. Join us for hands-on activities, snacks, free books, a comic & craft station, and other fun events designed for all ages.

Attendees can take home a free 2025 Comic Geek Out poster designed by Cody Coppernoll and enjoy free snacks and refreshments while supplies last.

Meet and Greet with Veronica Taylor

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Level 3, Auditorium

Enjoy a Q&A with Veronica Taylor, an American voice actor with a number of roles in English versions of Japanese anime series. She is best known for her role as Ash Ketchum and Delia Ketchum in the English dub of Pokémon (1997). Explore what it is like to work as a voice actor, learn about Veronica's favorite voice work, and get an autograph.

Open Mic Night | Poetry

Join local poet Michael Sikkema for a night of open mic poetry! All ages are welcome to share their work or simply enjoy live performances from local poets. A sign up sheet will be available for performers upon arrival. For all ages.

Tuesday, August 12

6:00 – 7:00 pm Main Library

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation.

FOR ADULTS

Conversation Circle | English

Each week, join others who are practicing English through conversations centered around topics like music, food, sports, travel, and more! These casual and fun events are designed for adult English language learners.

Wednesdays, July 23, 30, August 6, 13, 20, 27

7:00 – 8:00 pm Main Library

Civic Engagement with The Urban Core Collective

Want to understand how Grand Rapids' local government works? This workshop, led by The Urban Core Collective, provides an overview of city departments and their role in the community. Learn how local government operates and how you can get involved to drive change! Designed for adults.

Thursday, August 21

6:30 – 7:30 pm LINC UP Gallery
341 Hall St SE

To Die For: Conversations on Death

This is a welcoming, non-judgmental space to discuss death and dying. Deathworkers Tracey Walker and Sarah Sun will guide the conversation without a set agenda, allowing participants to explore whatever comes up in the moment. It's a chance for open, meaningful dialogue. Light refreshments will be provided. For teens and adults. Space is limited and first come, first served.

Tuesday, July 29

6:00 – 7:30 pm Seymour Branch

Special thanks to the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation and the Vander Veen Center for the Book Fund.

**Support
library
events.**
Donate today.

**Grand Rapids
Public Library
Foundation**

www.grplfoundation.org

Mobile Library



We're visiting community centers and apartment complexes throughout the city to share library services with our neighbors.

Drop by any stop on our route to sign up for a library card, check out books and movies, access free WiFi, and more. Find more information about our scheduled visits by visiting www.grpl.org/mobile-library this summer.

Creston Plaza Apartments
Mondays, June 9 – August 11
1:00 – 2:00 pm
1080 Creston Plaza NE

Harrison Park Apartments
Mondays, June 9 – August 11
2:30 – 3:30 pm
1400 Alpine Ave NW

Eastern Lofts Apartments
Tuesdays, June 10 – August 12
1:00 – 2:00 pm
623 Eastern Ave SE

Boston Square
Tuesdays, June 10 – August 12
2:30 – 3:30 pm
1551 Kalamazoo Ave SE

Steepleview Apartments
Wednesdays, June 11 – August 13
1:00 – 2:00 pm
501 Eastern Ave SE

Oxford Place Apartments
Wednesdays, June 11 – August 13
3:00 – 4:00 pm
2143 43rd St SE

Park Place Apartments
Wednesdays, June 11 – August 13
4:30 – 5:30 pm
2932 Marshall Ave SE

Campau Commons Apartments
Thursday, June 12 – August 14
1:00 – 2:00 pm
821 Division Ave S

Walnut Grove Apartments
Thursday, June 12 – August 14
2:30 – 3:30 pm
875 Sheffield St SW

Collections Spotlight



VIDEO GAME COLLECTION
Borrow video games with your Grand Rapids Public Library card!

Drop by any location or visit our online catalog to explore our collection of popular video games for PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, and Xbox.

Questions? Email custserv@grpl.org or call 616.988.5400.

READ S'MORE

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

JUNE 2 – AUGUST 30, 2025

FOR ALL AGES

www.grpl.org/SummerReading

Small Business Resource Center Spotlight



Interview with Rob Hughes | SCORE Grand Rapids

Rob Hughes: My name is Robert Hughes. I'm currently the acting chapter chair for SCORE Grand Rapids – Holland and also one of two Associate District Directors for our Michigan district.

Steven Assarian, Small Business and Career Librarian: Rob, what exactly is SCORE?

Rob: Founded in 1964, SCORE mentoring is a free service offered to any aspiring entrepreneurs and established owners of a U.S.-based business. Partnering with you one-on-one, SCORE mentors support your success by providing experienced advice, consulting on best practices, and educating you on small business topics.

SCORE proudly celebrates 60 years of helping America's small businesses launch, grow, and thrive. Since 1964, more than 17 million entrepreneurs have received support from SCORE, a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Today, SCORE has a nationwide network of more than 10,000 volunteers serving all 50 U.S. states and territories, guiding entrepreneurs on their path to success. Our chapter serves the Greater Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area & Holland.

Our mission continues today to foster entrepreneurs and vibrant small businesses through mentoring and education. Our vision is that every person has the support necessary to thrive as a small business owner.

Steven: What does mentoring actually mean?

Rob: We help you, we guide you, we give you ideas, we help you analyze, but above all, through mentoring, we develop the trust necessary to listen to and guide entrepreneurs. They're not paying us. We're doing it pro bono because we care. We're donating our time, but more importantly, we're donating our knowledge. That's the best way to describe it.

Steven: What kind of an experience can an entrepreneur expect when they engage with a SCORE mentor for the first time?

During the session, you'll discuss your business goals and challenges. Your mentor will ask you questions about what's working in your business (and what's not) and will seek to understand what you're hoping to achieve in working with them. They will provide answers to your business questions, connect you to local and national resources, and will recommend workshops and events to help you fill any knowledge gaps that might exist.

Steven: What's your entrepreneurial background?

Rob: I was a 3rd generation owner of a family business here in Grand Rapids founded in 1950 by my grandfather. Under my leadership, our business evolved three times with technological changes. We didn't have a SCORE mentor, but had I known about SCORE, I would've loved to have had one.

Steven: What are the kinds of expertise that you could expect from a SCORE mentor?

Rob: We've had retired top level plant managers of various manufacturing businesses, accountants, lawyers, restaurateurs, all sorts of people. We learn from each other too.

That's the other nice thing about SCORE. We reach out to each other, and we grow together as we learn. When you retire from an industry, and that's all you know, with SCORE you can go into a new environment and learn from people with all sorts of backgrounds. It's amazing what can happen, what you can learn.

I have one client. She calls us "her secret weapon." [Laughs] Once people tap into us, when they see the depth that we have, and how much we can help, it's really great.

Steven: So it's not just knowledge from the mentors themselves; it's also the knowledge that they're being plugged into SCORE's network.

Rob: We have resources beyond that too. Our website is a resource library with hundreds of articles, pre-recorded and upcoming webinars, and downloadable financial planning templates.

Steven: I recommend them all the time. They're really good tools for the new entrepreneur. So in terms of your own experience, are there any trends with entrepreneurs themselves that you find interesting?

Rob: Above all, the successful entrepreneurs I've mentored have patience, communication, and people skills. Some of the entrepreneurs I see get hung up on the 'shiny machine' before they do their research. The entrepreneur has this great idea, and they're in a hurry to get started before figuring out if their idea is feasible. Just because there's a building lease open doesn't mean you should move there, build it out, and throw a hail mary. You have to do due diligence.

Steven: If you're an entrepreneur, and you want to, like you said, do your due diligence, what's the first thing you should be looking at?

Rob: For my money, the best place to start is the Business Model Canvas. It's an excellent one page document that can help you lay out the rationale of your business.

Steven: What would you say is the biggest benefit of the Business Model Canvas?

Rob: You can operate your business using it. It's a living document. Traditional business plans often just go in your desk drawer and stay there. Maybe it helped you get your loan, but it's just too specific for the day-to-day. The Business Model Canvas is more flexible, more usable in daily operations. We've been using it for over a decade.

Steven: Speaking of decades, your SCORE chapter is pretty robust. What can you tell me about our Grand Rapids chapter?

Rob: We have 37 volunteers on the team, and we contributed over 5,200 hours of service in FY24. We've mentored 600 clients, which was an increase of 18% over 2023. We conducted 1,761 mentoring sessions over that year, which was an increase of almost 24%. We're getting requests coming in every day.

One of the things we've improved recently is the communication between chapters. Instead of us being silos like we were 20 years ago, we're a One SCORE network of volunteers that connect together nationally. That's important. No matter which SCORE chapter, you'll get a consistent experience, and we can draw on expertise from other chapters too.

Steven: I understand you're always on the lookout for new mentors. What's the benefit of becoming a mentor?

Rob: Being a mentor is really fulfilling. It's fulfilling to be able to share your knowl-

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Justine Bryant

Kathryn Dilley

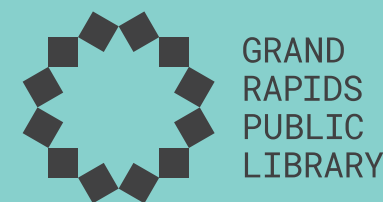
Bryan Holt

Kevin Peterson

Lauren Woolsey

Library Director

John J. McNaughton



edge. You're out there and you're working, still involved with people in a business setting, and you're learning from other people as well.

Steven: Where do people go if they want to find out more?

Rob: Call our chapter at 616-771-0305, and we'll get you connected. To see our trainings, templates, and other tools, you can go to our website, Score.org. There you can also see profiles of our mentors, and directly request them based on the expertise you specifically need.

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