

# THE BRIDGE

*Connecting community needs with convictions of the heart*

## SPEAKER SERIES

# Success!

Immaculée Ilibagiza and seven other women huddled silently together in a cramped bathroom of a local pastor's house for 91 days. During this horrific ordeal, she lost most of her family, but she survived to share her story and her miraculous transition into forgiveness. Ms. Ilibagiza was one of 15 speakers who presented their moving messages to 1,500 Newaygo County attendees at the Dogwood Center for the Performing Arts in January.

The Fremont Area Community Foundation and the Dogwood Center for the Performing Arts co-sponsored the January Series of Calvin College this year. The Dogwood Center was one of 28 remote webcast sites and the second best attended site in North America for the 2010 Series. The award winning January Series celebrated its 23rd year of bringing a free liberal arts education to all for 15 weekdays in January.

Speakers in this year's Series included top experts in their fields on topics such as American healthcare, democracy and the internet, the changing face of American Christianity, peace in the Middle East, moral rehabilitation in prison, and much more.

Newaygo County's enthusiasm for the Series is reflected in one attendee's letter to the Foundation. "Thank you for making the month of January an alive and very informative time for the people of Newaygo County. You changed an otherwise normally dull month into a time for introductions to wonderful speakers who were well-versed in their fields, talented, and concerned individuals who gave informative messages to us all and opened our eyes to areas and problems of the world."

The January Series was a welcomed addition to the Foundation's Speaker Series. The mission of the Foundation's Speaker Series is to educate, enlighten, entertain, and encourage dialogue. The Foundation has hosted Garrison Keillor, Mark Shields, Frank DeFord, Ernie Harwell, Chris Gardner, Terry Gross, Jeanette Walls, Bob Beckel and Cal Thomas, Robert Kennedy Jr., and Bich Mihn Nguyen.

Author Anne Lamott will be the Series' next speaker on Thursday, April 29. Call the Grant Fine Arts Center at 231-834-5630, weekdays 10am-3pm for tickets.

*Pictured below from left to right: Garrison Keillor, Ernie Harwell, Terry Gross, Chris Gardner, Jeanette Walls, and Robert Kennedy Jr.*



Confirmed in Compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations

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## FACF WELCOMES A NEW *Staff Member*

The Board and Staff of the Fremont Area Community Foundation are pleased to welcome Kathy Pope as the new Vice President of Finance. Kathy joins the staff as a Certified Public Accountant with 15 years accounting and finance experience, six years of which are in the nonprofit sector.

“Kathy’s education and experience will help the Foundation further its mission and financial goals,” stated Libby Cherin, Foundation President and CEO. Kathy’s employment history includes being the Manager in the Accounting & Tax Department with The Rehmann Group, acting as the Controller with Midland Center for the Arts, and most recently was the Chief Financial Officer at the Bay Area Community Foundation.

Pope moved from her hometown of Bay City to Fremont with her husband, Rob, and two year old daughter Morgan. She enjoys volunteering at community projects, boating, and spending time with her family. “I am enjoying exploring the area’s beautiful landscape of lakes and forestry,” stated Pope. “I also like how friendly and welcoming the people I have met have been to me and my family.”



## YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE *(YAC)*

The Foundation’s 20 Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) members volunteered their time this December to assist families at the NCCS Children’s Christmas Program. The YAC members helped the NCCS staff and other community volunteers to organize, pack, and distribute books, toys, and other gifts for Newaygo County children. A NCCS staff member shared information with the YAC on the various NCCS programs and services provided for Newaygo County.



In February, the YAC members partnered with the Newaygo County Medical Care Facility and Croton Day Care. The YAC members socialized with Facility residents and participated with them in a craft project. The YAC members also accompanied Croton Day Care children delivering the children’s created valentines to Facility residents. Facility residents, YAC members, and Croton Day Care children all discovered that they had more in common than just our community.

Facility Administrator Donna Jacobs described to the YAC members the mission and services of the Facility. She also explained the type of career opportunities available in the health care field.

This spring, YAC will package and distribute trees to children at local schools for Arbor Day and host a mobile food pantry. YAC members have increased their community awareness, communication skills, and leadership abilities through their community service.

The Foundation’s YAC advises the Foundation’s Board on grants and issues regarding area youth. The YAC is comprised of students from each high school in Newaygo County. Students are typically selected as freshmen and serve throughout their high school years.

“Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.” – Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*

## SENIOR PROJECT

# FRESH

Fresh fruits and vegetables can seem like a luxury when you're on a fixed income. Even though they're important for a balanced diet, fresh produce items often fall to the bottom of the priority list when you're trying to stretch a limited food budget.

MSU Extension's Senior Project FRESH works with local senior citizens to make fresh, local produce easier to purchase. The project, funded by the USDA with assistance from The Fremont Area Elderly Needs Fund, provides coupon booklets to income-qualified Newaygo County seniors. The coupons can be exchanged for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmer's markets and farm stands throughout the county.

A major goal of the Project FRESH program is to stretch the food resources of low-income seniors while increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption.

Seniors who receive the coupon booklets agree that the program benefits them in many ways. One recipient told the MSU Extension, "thanks to...Senior Project FRESH I am on my way to a healthier me." Another said the coupons "have been a wonderful means of getting much nutritional help" and that after "medical expenses, household expenses, etc., it's often hard to afford fruits and vegetables."

Each spring, seniors register for the program at various "distribution days" throughout the County (check your local paper for times and locations in June). Volunteers and MSU Extension staff at each location educate recipients on the use of the coupons as well as the best ways to select, store, and prepare fresh produce. Last year, Senior Project FRESH benefited 460 seniors and invested \$18,400 back into the local economy.

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27TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

COURT  
APPOINTED  
SPECIAL  
ADVOCATES  
*(CASA)*  
PROGRAM



Each year, approximately 780,000 children in the US are caught up in the court and child welfare maze because they are unable to live safely at home. Imagine what it would be like to lose your parents, not because of something you did, but because they can't—or won't—take care of you. Now, into these children's lives come dozens of strangers: police, foster parents, therapists, social workers, judges, lawyers, and more. Hopefully, one of these strangers is a CASA volunteer. (Source: National CASA Association)

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are appointed by a Family Court Judge to speak for the best interests of an abused and/or neglected child. According to Ward Staffeld, Circuit Court Administrator for Newaygo County's 27th Judicial Circuit Court, a CASA volunteer is an official part of judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and social workers in an effort to offer an additional perspective on child abuse and neglect cases. CASA volunteers have a broad range of duties and responsibilities, from meeting with children to attending court hearings. CASA volunteers are trained to act as first-hand experts on the individual needs of abused and neglected children, giving them the best possible chance at a hopeful future. Newaygo County CASA volunteers receive training and supervision from Juvenile Services staff of the Newaygo County Circuit Court.

The 27th Judicial Circuit Court coordinates the CASA program in Newaygo County with funding from the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Since recently assuming management of the program, court staff have worked very hard to structure it to fulfill National CASA mandates while continuing to meet the needs of the people of Newaygo County. The newly restructured program is expanding and looking for new CASA volunteers.

The vision of the CASA program is that every child who needs a volunteer will have one. With your help, that goal can be reached. If you have a big heart, love children and have time to give, you may be a perfect candidate to become a CASA volunteer. Call Rachel Herman, CASA Volunteer Coordinator, at (231) 689-7308 or Laura Watkins, Director of Juvenile Services, at (231) 689-7279 to volunteer.

## LOVE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST - NEWAYGO COUNTY

### *Love INC*

Times are tough. Need is great. Our community cares.

Since opening in 2006, the Love INC Community Food Pantry has been an increasingly busy place. Within the first month, 200 needy families were supplied with food and household items. Love INC anticipated a steady increase in the number of families served each month. They were surprised to find that four years later they are serving an average of almost 900 families per month.

Love INC has been able to handle this increase for two reasons. First, 74% of their pantry supply is purchased at Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank for 16 cents a pound or less. Second, a vast majority of their workforce is made up of faithful volunteers.

However, space had become a problem. In addition to food storage areas, the food pantry storage was steadily taking over other portions of Love INC's building. They had literally run out of space. An addition was needed and deserved.

Love INC had been saving undesignated donation funds in 2009 in anticipation of an addition to the

building. Along with funds from FACH's Match Day, Love INC had over \$80,000 to put toward the project. This, paired with an additional grant from the Foundation, supplied funding for the new space to help Love INC adjust to the need in our community and serve those who come for help.

The addition was completed at the end of March this year. It included an increase in food pantry storage, a new cooler and freezer unit, a small expansion of the office and clearinghouse area to accommodate increased staff, and the relocation of the donation receiving area.

Love INC is a family assistance resource center dedicated to helping people in need by providing goods and services through area churches and community resources. Current programs include family and individual assistance, food pantry assistance, a resale store, and volunteerism. The Foundation thanks Love INC staff and over 200 volunteers who work so hard to help our community through tough times. For more information on Love INC, visit [www.loveincnewaygo.com](http://www.loveincnewaygo.com) or call their office at 231.652.4099.



## 2009 NEW *Funds*



### RAY & SUSIE *Dykman*

Lifelong community residents, Ray & Susie Dykman, sent their children to and supported Fremont Christian School. The Dykmans provided a gift through their estate and plan to continue their longtime support of the School through the Foundation.

### PEGGY AND ROBERT *Gunnell*

The Gunnells have resided in the County for over 30 years. Dr. Gunnell practices with Baldwin Family Health Care in White Cloud. Both Peggy and Robert have served on the White Cloud School Board and Peggy is currently a trustee on the Community Foundation Board. The Gunnells have been long time members of St. Joseph Church of White Cloud and have established an endowed fund to provide long-term support for the Church's work in the White Cloud area.



## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH

## *(STEM)*

Recognizing the need to encourage students in sciences and math, an anonymous donor started a fund in 2009 to support the Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency in supplementing STEM curriculum for Newaygo County students. Knowledge and skill in these key subjects is vital to the future of our community's economy and students' livelihood.



### RICHARD L. *Wilson*

Richard Wilson died prematurely from cancer. A Vietnam War veteran and co-owner of Tech-Source International, Richard was also active in the Newaygo VFW Post. Richard's son, Michael, with the assistance of the Newaygo VFW Post's fundraisers and many family members and friends, established the Richard L. Wilson Memorial Fund. The Fund will be used to help find a cure for cancer and to provide assistance for cancer patients.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE

# President

Recent national political discussions have raised two issues that have caught our attention, universal benefits and the national debt. While the Community Foundation is not directly involved in these national discussions, the two issues nonetheless relate to our mission.

**Universal Benefits** - The Community Foundation makes grants over a broad range of areas including human services, community development, education, arts & culture, health, and the environment. While a single grant from the Foundation may touch a few people, the Foundation's over 1,000 annual grants affect thousands of people. The Foundation's mission is to benefit all Newaygo County residents.

**National Debt** - The national debt, if too large, can become a form of intergenerational inequity. Our children and grandchildren may be burdened because of our spending. Donors to the Community Foundation's endowment funds realize the benefits of intergenerational equity. Past donors to the Community Foundation have presented a \$170 million gift to all of us today. We encourage you to join your neighbors in passing a gift on to our children and grandchildren by giving to the Community Endowment Fund.

We welcome your participation in making your Community Foundation one that benefits all Newaygo County residents and that gives to the next generation just as we have received from past generations. The Community Foundation exists because of the participation of many Newaygo County residents just like you.

Elizabeth "Libby" Cherin  
President and Chief Executive Officer



## WHY IS THE CENSUS IMPORTANT?

### *What you need to know*

- \* The 2010 Census will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for things like: hospitals, job training centers, schools, senior centers, roads, bridges, emergency services, and other projects benefiting the public.
- \* The census affects the number of Congressional members Michigan is allotted. Michigan is at risk of losing one if not two congressional seats.
- \* **Over a decade, Michigan loses about \$11,000 of federal resources for each person not counted. In 2000, it was estimated that 70,000 people were not counted, resulting in \$770 million dollars of federal resources lost.**
- \* Census employees are prohibited for their lifetime from sharing any information sent in by residents.

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Grant Deadlines:  
February 15  
May 15  
September 15

Scholarship Deadline:  
March 15

P.O. Box B  
Fremont, Michigan 49412

Change Service Requested



**NEWAYGO MEDICAL CARE FACILITY**

*Eden Kids*

There is something special about the presence of a child. For two weeks during the summer, Newaygo County youth have an opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement with elders through the Newaygo Medical Care Facility's "Eden Kids" program. Youth interact with the elderly through a variety of activities from cooking and reading to nature walks and outdoor games. Last summer, day trips were taken to the Great Lakes Naval and Maritime Museum and the John Ball Zoological Garden.

The rewards of this program are two-fold; youth bring smiles and joy to what can sometimes be a lonely time for elders in a long term care setting, and elders experience an opportunity where their personalities and kind hearts blossom. Many times youth return to be an "Eden Kid" from year to year.

"With a program such as this, our community's youth and elders at the Newaygo Medical Care Facility create friendships, develop bonds and have positive, meaningful experiences that last a lifetime," reported Peggy Sue Hicks, Activity Director and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant at the Newaygo Medical Care Facility. The Fremont Area Community Foundation has funded this unique and rewarding program for the past seven years through the Summer Youth Initiative grant round.

