

CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from Cascade Charter Township • Winter 2022



- + Upcoming Events at the Library
- + Winter Driving Tips from Deputy Dieppa
- + Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update

NEWS FROM THE SUPERVISOR



Dear Cascadians,

As 2022 comes to its end, I want to first thank you – the residents – for your participation, involvement and interest in the governance of our Cascade community.

From the overwhelming participation in creating the 2022 strategic plan to the many residents volunteering to serve on the Township’s various boards and commissions, along with public commentary offered at Township Board meetings or to me and trustees individually – your voices made a difference.

Looking back, the past year included some robust public discourse. From the vantage point of someone new to the political arena, I chalk it up to opportunities for professional growth. From the vantage point of your supervisor, I chalk it up to opportunities for transparent conversations about public issues that impact every taxpayer and resident in Cascade. I believe this civil discourse, although tense at times, is a natural and critical component of effective and representative governance.

Looking ahead, I am also confident it created the community-wide engagement critical to making our goals a reality:

- Maintaining the safety of our homes, neighborhoods and businesses is a top priority. An additional full-time Kent County Sheriff’s Office patrol officer, hired with no additional cost to taxpayers, will begin serving Cascade at the beginning of January. Fall 2023 will also mark the completion of Cascade’s largest capital improvement project to date, a new Fire Station 1. This state-of-the-art facility will significantly enhance public safety.
- Conserving green spaces and natural areas throughout the entire Township, along with protecting the Thornapple River, will be priorities for 2023.

- Creating a more “walkable” village area between 28th Street and Cascade Road and the Thornapple River will be a planning priority in 2023.

Each of these priorities encompass the broader goal of preserving and protecting the unique character and natural beauty we cherish. We often hear we have to choose between green and growth. I disagree. This requires proactive planning that **anticipates** inevitable growth pressures and ensures **the right kind of growth happens in the right places**.

Thank you also for the support and encouragement offered by so many of you as I finish my second year as an elected official. It has been a new experience – with much learned – but always an honor to serve as your supervisor. I look forward to working with you as the Cascade community addresses its unique challenges and exciting opportunities in 2023.

Reminder: I have scheduled evening office hours 6-7 p.m. every Thursday in the History Room at the Cascade Branch of Kent District Library, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE, in addition to regular office hours. It’s sometimes hard in the midst of busy schedules to contact Township officials during normal business hours. I hope these evening hours will make that easier. As always, feel free to contact me at glesperance@cascadetwp.com or 616.949.1500.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a truly happy new year!

Grace Lesperance
Cascade Township Supervisor

Township Contacts

Township Hall Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Supervisor

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Jennifer Genter; 949.6176
jgenter@cascadetwp.com

Building Inspections

Brian Wilson; 949.3765
bwilson@cascadetwp.com
Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Friday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Community Development

Brian Hilbrands; 949.0224
bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com

Fire

Adam Magers; 949.1320
amagers@cascadetwp.com

Sheriff/Non-Emergency Dispatch

336.3113

Community Policing Officer

Omar Dieppa; 632.6435
omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov



Project Team Breaks Ground on New Fire Station 1

Work continues on the new Fire Station 1 after Township officials, Fire Department staff and project partners broke ground in November.

The new Fire Station 1, which will be located at its current site at 2865 Thornhills Ave. SE, will incorporate enhanced safety features, additional storage, training space and other amenities designed to improve efficiency and meet or exceed national fire standards.

Construction of the new Fire Station 1 is slated to be completed fall 2023.

To learn more, visit cascadetwp.com/community/fire-station-1.

Burton Park Deer Study Underway

Over the past few years, the community has recognized an increase in the deer population in and around Burton Park. A large and uncontrolled deer population can lead to several issues, including an increase in landscaping damage and deer-vehicle crashes as well as a decrease in biodiversity in the park.

The Township has partnered with Cornerstone University Professor of Environmental Biology and Science Education Robert Keys to conduct a deer population study in Burton Park.

Professor Keys and his student team deployed infrared motion sensor cameras in locations throughout Burton Park on known white-tailed deer trails. The cameras will be in place until mid-December. Once the study period has concluded, the team will analyze three two-week periods (one pre-rut, one during the rut and one post-rut) for white-tailed deer bucks. The periods then will be compared to provide an overall estimate of white-tailed deer utilizing the park.

Buck data is used because bucks are easier to differentiate due to their antler patterns, and research estimates there are three to five white-tailed deer doe/fawn families for each white-tailed deer buck.

Professor Keys and his team will present the data to the Township Board in early 2023. With the data in hand, the Township will be able to determine if deer control measures are needed and, if so, how those measures may be accomplished. Information will be posted on our website once the study has been completed and the report is available.





From the Friends of the Cascade Library: **Don't Miss These Flix and Book Discussions**

The pandemic shut down most of the events sponsored by Friends of the Cascade Library for more than two years, but we're happy to say many of them are back, including book discussion sessions and Flix @ the Library. Here's what's on the calendar for the next few months.

Flix @ the Library

This popular program recently returned with free showings of fan-favorite movies "Elvis," "Minions: The Rise of Gru," "Sing 2" and "Downton Abbey." There are other great movies to come this winter.

There's something to be said about watching a movie in a theater-like setting, with other people, large screens and free refreshments," said Debbie Straub, president of Friends of the Cascade Library. "And we work hard to get movies scheduled that aren't readily available yet through streaming services."

While additional dates and movies will be added, mark these upcoming dates on your calendar for family Flix @ the Library:

- **Jan. 8**
- **Feb. 12**
- **March 12**
- **April 16**

Watch for details at the library, on our website – cascadefriends.org – and on Facebook. Make sure to sign up for our email communications on our website. See you at the movies!

Book Discussions

If you're looking for a fun and stimulating way to interact with other booklovers as the winter months set in, the monthly Friends Book Discussions at the library offer a great escape. They are free and open to everyone. They take place 10 a.m. on the third Monday of each month through May at the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE. December is the exception, with the group meeting on the second Monday of the month.

Here are the books on the schedule for the next two months, with a brief synopsis provided by "Goodreads." Mark your calendar and join the discussions.

Dec. 12: "The Exiles," by Christina Baker Kline

The author brilliantly recreates the beginnings of a new society in a beautiful and challenging land, telling the story of Australia from a fresh perspective through the experiences of Evangeline, Hazel and Mathinna. While life in Australia is punishing and often brutally unfair, it is also, for some, an opportunity: for redemption, for a new way of life, for unimagined freedom.

Jan. 16: "News of the World," by Paulette Jiles

In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people in this exquisitely rendered, morally complex, multilayered novel of historical fiction that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor and trust.



Check Out the Cascade Library's Lineup of Winter Events

The Cascade Branch of Kent District Library will host a range of events for kids, teens and adults this winter.

- **Dec. 11 • 5-8 p.m.** – Teen Cram Night. Finish that big project or prepare for a test while having the library all to yourself and enjoying pizza and pop. For teens.
- **Dec. 13 • 10 a.m.** – Stroll down Gingerbread Lane and enjoy decorating a gingerbread house. For young children.
- **Dec. 30 • 11 a.m.** – Countdown to Happy Noon Year! An exciting way for kids to ring in the new year at an hour that won't keep them up way past their bedtimes. For all ages.
- **Jan. 12 • 5:30 p.m.** – Meet the Sled Dogs. Return to the parking lot to meet the sled dogs from Tun-Dra Kennels and learn about the Iditarod. For all ages.
- **Jan. 26 • 6:30 p.m.** – The Art of Life Guided Painting. Follow along step by step with one of The Art of Life's professional artists and art instructors to create a pre-chosen image. Space is limited. For adults.
- **Feb. 23 • 6:30 p.m.** – Homebrew 101. In this introductory class, you will learn about equipment and best practices. For adults 21+.

Additional information is available at kdl.org.

Assessment Change Notices

Assessment change notices will be mailed on or before Feb. 22, 2023. If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1, please call the Township Assessor's Office at 616.949.6176. Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes at the county level may take up to eight weeks for information to reach the Township.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- If there was a transfer of ownership in 2022.
- If there is a principal residence exemption, or PRE, on your property for 2023. If you purchased the property in 2022, please check the PRE status carefully. Contact the Assessor's Office if the PRE status is incorrect.

Board of Review Will Hear Assessment Appeals March 13-14

- Appointments may be made beginning March 1.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available beginning Feb. 27 on the Township's website – cascadetwp.com – as well as at Township Hall, 5920 Tahoe Drive SE, and the Cascade Branch of Kent District Library, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of petition form L-4035 and supporting documents must be received no later than March 13. Please send them to Cascade Township Board of Review, 5920 Tahoe Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.
- An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for residential properties. Commercial or industrial properties do not have to appeal to the Board of Review to appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

Disabled Veteran Exemption Application

In order to apply for the exemption, the disabled veteran, their unremarried surviving spouse or their legal designee must file an affidavit, Form 5107 "Affidavit for Disabled Veterans Exemption," with the local unit of government where the property is located. Both the affidavit and supporting evidence must be filed with the local city or township assessor annually. When possible, this submission should be made in the first two months of the assessment year (January or February).

For more information about the disabled veteran exemption, contact the Assessor's Office 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Feel free to stop in Township Hall, call 616.949.6176 or look up the information online at michigan.gov/treasury/local/stc/ppe/detail/disabled-veterans-exemption-information.

Winter Driving Tips

From Deputy Dieppa



Greetings from your community police officer.

Believe it or not, winter is upon us! **Don't blame the weather this winter** and follow the tips below when driving during the snowy months.

Drive Slow on Ice and Snow

- **Slow down.** It can take up to 10 times longer to stop your vehicle on snowy and/or icy roads. Slow down and allow more room between your vehicle and the one ahead of you. This gives you more time to react and brake, reducing your crash risk.
- **Put your turn signal on sooner than you would in warm weather months.** Remember, it takes longer for the drivers behind you to react and stop, too.
- **Avoid distractions now more than ever.** Taking your eyes off the road for even a few seconds robs you of precious reaction time. Put your phone away and don't multitask (eating, putting on makeup, etc.).
- **Avoid a ticket.** Michigan law requires drivers to travel at a speed that is "reasonable and proper" for the road conditions. Even if you are driving at or below the speed limit, you can get a speeding ticket if the road conditions make that speed unreasonable for safe driving.

Be Prepared

- **Winterize Your Car.** A well-maintained car is a safer car. Check your fluid levels (oil, wiper fluid, antifreeze, etc.) and ensure the following are in good working order: battery, ignition system, light, brakes, heater/defroster, wipers.
- **Remove all snow and ice from your vehicle, not just from windows and the windshield.** Remove snow and ice from mirrors, headlights, taillights and the roof of the car. Snow, ice and dirt buildup can dim lights and reduce visibility, and snow and ice from the roof can fall on to your windshield and block your view of the road. Clearing your car is important to protect others as well. In fact, it's the law: If snow or ice from your vehicle impairs the vision of other drivers by hitting their windshields, the road or the shoulder, you can be hit with a hefty fine.

Reminder: Do not leave a running vehicle unattended. If you choose to warm up your vehicle, lock the doors or, better yet, remove the keys and only use the remote start. Thieves target gas stations, day care centers and other places people tend to leave their vehicle running.

Have a great winter and stay safe!

Deputy Omar Dieppa

Omar.Dieppa@kentcountymi.gov, 616.632.6435



Welcome, Aric Thorne

We are pleased to welcome Aric Thorne to the Cascade Township team.

Aric was selected for the recently created position of in-house engineer. He comes to us from the City of Holland, where he worked as a civil engineer in its Streets Department.

In addition to his regular duties as engineer, Aric will have special responsibilities for PFAS remediation and restoration of the project area following completion of the water main extension. He will also work closely with the Parks Committee and Planning Commission.

Aric appreciates the unique character of our Cascade community and looks forward to serving you.

The Latest News on Oak Wilt at Burton Park and Snow Avenue Cemetery

Snow Avenue Cemetery has been confirmed as an oak wilt site. This is the second confirmed site of oak wilt at a Cascade Township property.

The Cascade Parks Committee met with the oak wilt consultant in early November and is developing a management plan to address this issue. We are hopeful we can have trenching – roots of the red oaks in the infected areas are disconnected from non-symptomatic red oaks – completed before the ground has frozen at Snow Avenue Cemetery. The infected trees will then be removed next season.

Trenching has been completed at the two confirmed oak wilt sites at Burton Park. The removal of infected red oaks at these sites began Monday, Nov. 28 and is slated to take approximately two weeks. Inclement weather and site conditions may impact the schedule. The infected stumps will be treated with a fungicide. November is a dormant period for trees, so it is the safe time of year to remove infected trees without spreading oak wilt.

The tree removal company will work with the Township's Building and Grounds Department to make sure there is appropriate posting and signage along trail areas at the Burton Park sites. Barriers will be in place to notify and help prevent public access during the work.

It is important to note the Township's oak wilt consultant and trained staff are constantly monitoring the two sites to make sure oak wilt has not spread.

Be on the Lookout for Oak Wilt in Your Neighborhood

Look for red oaks that suddenly drop their leaves in July through September, making it look like fall in the summer.

What you can do to prevent oak wilt:

- Don't prune or wound oak trees during the growing season, which is mid-April through mid-September. Immediately use clear shellac to seal any wounds created during this time period.
- Prune oak trees in November through March.
- Don't move infected wood.

For more information, visit michiganoakwilt.org. For questions or concerns, email Cascade Parks Committee Chair Ginny Wanty at cascadeparks@cascadetwp.com.

Ginny Wanty
Chair, Cascade Township Parks Committee



Dog Licenses

Kent County dog licenses are available in the Township Treasurer's Office year-round. A current rabies certificate and proof of neuter/spay should be provided at the time you apply for the license.

Winter 2022 Tax Information

Winter 2022 tax bills and informational notices were mailed Nov. 28.

Winter taxes are due now and must be paid by Feb. 14 to avoid penalty or interest charged. If you do not receive a tax statement during December, please check the Township's website – cascadetwp.com – or call the Treasurer's Office at 616.949.6944.

Payments are receipted on the same business day they are received. If paying by mail, we recommend you allow seven days to ensure a timely delivery. **Postmarks are not accepted.**

Please include a phone number on your check – sometimes we do need to contact you. An informational letter is enclosed with the bill for alternative payment instructions and E-Z pay application.

Your tax bill information is available 24/7 at cascadetwp.com:

- Click on "Property/Parcel Lookup" on the homepage.
- Search "All Records By" at the top of page.
- Click the drop-down arrow to select data search by address, name or parcel number.
- Double click on "Selected Parcel."
- Click on "Tax Information Tab."

On **March 1, 2023**, all unpaid real property taxes will be forwarded to the Kent County Treasurer's Office for collection.

Park and Recreation Master Plan Update

Cascade staff and the Parks Committee are finishing a five-year parks and recreation master plan to help guide development of township parks and provide eligibility for potential grants through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Through analysis of the existing parks, review of the public engagement and collaboration with Township staff and the Parks Committee, the master plan will provide goals, objectives and action items for the next five years to help improve parks and recreation in Cascade Township.

The master plan process featured community engagement, including a survey that received nearly 1,000 responses. The plan also includes public feedback provided during the Township's strategic planning process, when community members prioritized parks, recreation and pathways.

The Township accepted community feedback on the draft parks and recreation master plan this fall over a 30-day period, which included an open house for residents to review the plan and provide input on it as well as two concepts for the new Wycliffe Trailhead Park.

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to vote on adoption of the plan during its Dec. 14 meeting. The plan is available online at cascadetwp.com/community/parks/parks-and-recreation-plans.

If you have any questions about the parks and recreation master plan, contact Cascade Township Planning Director Brian Hilbrands at bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com or 616.949.0224.

Ginny Wanty
Chair, Cascade Township Parks Committee

Follow These Best Practices For Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors



Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors save lives. A working smoke alarm reduces the chance of death in a fire by nearly half. It has been estimated 890 lives could be saved each year if all homes had working smoke detectors.

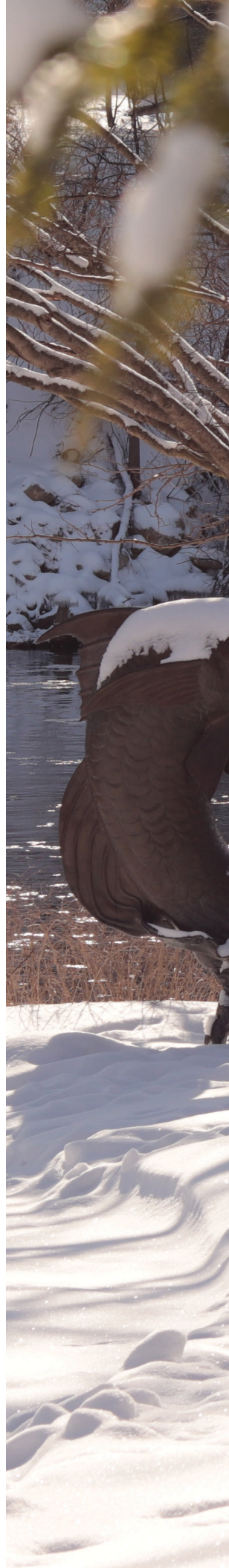
Building codes require the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for home projects that require a building permit, such as an interior renovation. Smoke alarms should be located inside and outside of each bedroom and on every level of the home. Carbon monoxide alarms are required in the area of all bedrooms.

Smoke alarms are available in a wireless style that provides interconnection without the expense of installing new wiring. Interconnected smoke alarms provides faster and louder notification, allowing extra time to safely exit the home.

A Few Tips to Follow

- Test your alarms monthly.
- Replace batteries as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Never disable a smoke alarm.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years – they do wear out.
- Plan regular fire drills – teach children what to do in the event of a fire.
- Establish a meeting area outside your home in a safe location.
- Teach children to stay at the meeting spot and never return inside – Get out, stay out, stay safe!

Cascade Township Building Department





Sign Up For Feb. 25 Burton Park Invasive Bittersweet Workday

Please join the Township's Parks Committee **9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 25** for another winter invasive species workday at Burton Park. We are again partnering with Kent Conservation District to control the very aggressive non-native invasive bittersweet vines at Burton Park.

Invasive bittersweet vines are growing unchecked at Burton Park and other areas in the township. The KCD strike team will give a hands-on demonstration on how to properly cut and treat invasive bittersweet, which will involve cut-stump application. Treatment kits and various supplies, including \$8 daubers, will be available for sale using check (preferred) or credit card.

All supplies, gloves, eye protection and tools will be provided by the KCD strike team. Groups, individuals and students are welcome. Scout troops or other large groups should RSVP by calling the KCD strike team at 616.222.5801. Walk-ins are welcome. Stay for an hour or the entire shift.

Meet at the Burton Park maintenance building, which can be accessed from the driveway on Windcrest Street or Burton Street. Parking is available behind the building, so drive past the sign that reads: "No Motorized Vehicles."

For more information, call the KCD strike team at 616.222.5801.

If you know of a business or large group interested in scheduling a separate invasive species workday at a Cascade park, contact the KCD strike team. We are very grateful for groups like GE Aviation and its group of 17 volunteers who treated and removed invasive bittersweet from Burton Park last spring!

Cascade Township One of 31 Michigan Communities **to Receive New Trees**

Be on the lookout this spring for some new trees along the entrance to Cascade Recreation Park. Cascade Township was one of 31 Michigan communities to receive a grant as part of \$105,000 awarded this year to complete 33 tree-planting projects around the state.

We would like to thank the DTE Foundation, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and nonprofit ReLeaf Michigan for their partnership in this effort. These organizations are truly dedicated to protecting, preserving and expanding our state's natural resources. We are grateful for the opportunity to expand the Township's tree canopy through a \$4,000 grant to purchase and plant 15 trees at Cascade Recreation Park.



Winter Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.



HOLIDAY DECORATING

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.



Before Heading Out or to Bed

Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

FACTS

- More than **one-third** of home decoration fires are started by candles.
- More than **two of every five** decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



CASCADE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dedicated to Serving You
616.949.1320



Fire Safety during Winter Storms

Winter storms can happen almost anywhere. They can cause us problems. Know what to do before, during and after a storm. This will help keep you and your family safe from a winter fire.

- Test all smoke alarms. Do this at least once a month. This way you will know they are working. Install carbon monoxide alarms in your home. Test the alarms.
- Plan two ways out of the home in case of an emergency. Clear driveway and front walk of ice and snow. This will provide easy access to your home.
- Make sure your house number can be seen from the street. If you need help, firefighters will be able to find you.
- Be ready in case the power goes out. Have flashlights on hand. Also have battery-powered lighting and fresh batteries. Never use candles.
- Stay aware of winter weather. Listen to the television or radio for updates. Watch for bulletins online.
- Check on neighbors. Check on others who may need help.
- Generators should be used outdoors. Keep them away from windows and doors. Do not run a generator inside your garage, even if the door is open.
- Stay away from downed wires. Report any downed wires to authorities.
- Be ready if the heat stops working. Use extra layers of clothes and blankets to stay warm. If you use an emergency heat source, keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away.
- Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room. Turn them off when you go to bed.

important reminder

There are more home fires in winter than in any other season. Half of all home heating fires happen in December, January and February.

As you stay cozy and warm this winter season, be fire smart!



Fact

Nearly half of all space heater fires involve electric space heaters.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



CASCADE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

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PERMIT NO. 657

Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(p) 616.949.1500
(f) 616.949.3918
cascadetwp.com

From Cascade Community Foundation: **2022 Grant Recipients Announced**

Each year, Cascade Community Foundation provides grant funding to local nonprofits through the Joyce & Thomas Wisner Fund. The CCF grant committee is at the forefront and is pivotal in the decision-making process regarding grant recipients.

For over 20 years, Cascade Community Foundation has directed grant dollars from the Wisner Fund back into nonprofits that serve Cascade and Forest Hills,” CCF Grantmaking Committee Chair Curt Monhart said. “This year’s class of recipients was extra special because applicants truly have a hyper-local focus for their programming, and we were able to acknowledge them at our annual gala.”

For 2022, there are five grant recipients receiving a total of \$12,000.

- **Safe Haven Ministries** is awarded for its Youth Violence Prevention curriculum, which will empower students by giving them skills to use in their own relationships.
- **Diaper Depot** provides diapers for low-income families in the area and is using this funding to add size 6 diapers to its inventory, aiding in the health and wellness of their children.

- **Brody’s Be Cafe** – a small coffee shop that employs individuals with special needs – was awarded a technology grant to enhance its website, donor management system and point-of-sale kiosks.
- **Camp Henry** – in conjunction with Native Circle of Newaygo County – will enhance the delivery of Native programs and experiences to campers and guests.
- **National Violence Prevention Hotline** – a locally operated nonprofit and prevention resource for people compelled to commit acts of violence in the future – was awarded a capacity building grant.

Additionally, a portion of this year’s funding has been allocated for delivering innovative and streamlined services for Cascade residents experiencing addiction and their families.

Thank you to all who applied for grants this funding cycle. We are pleased to give back to nonprofits who provide resources in this hyper-local community.