A letter from our Chair

Mary Frey Bennett

Intentionality and the Fabric of our Communities

When I think about the Frey Foundation, I am incredibly honored that our organization is part of the fabric of the communities we serve. Core to our organization is the belief that every thread in this fabric matters. Each thread has a place and a purpose. It is only when our threads are woven together that something beautiful and interesting is created. Our combined fabric is far stronger than a single thread alone.

Strengthening community threads and weaving in those on the fray requires intention. And when I look back over the past year at the Frey Foundation, working with intentionality is one of the things that strikes me most as a point of pride.

We’ve demonstrated intention as we’ve listened to the voices in the communities we serve. Though close in proximity, north and western Michigan are different places with different systems, different opportunities, and different resources. A one size fits all approach to serving these areas doesn’t work. We’ve pushed to go deeper—to listen, understand, support solutions and build capacity in ways that honor the uniqueness of these special places.

We’ve shown intention in supporting grantees of all shapes and sizes. From Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council in Northern Michigan, to Blandford Nature Center and First Steps Kent in West Michigan—and so many other incredible community partners in between. Each organization is doing evocative, poignant work that adds to the richness of the communities we serve. I am thrilled that our grantmaking supports this breadth. As a mid-sized funder, we can’t be all things to all organizations, but we certainly can, and do, choose to engage a range of nonprofits doing amazing work to impact our four program areas.

Finally, our trustees and staff have worked through an organizational transition with such intention to ensure our long-term success. I am proud of our cohesion and steadfastness. I attribute much of it to Steve Wilson’s leadership. Steve has been an incredible asset to this organization, and his presence will be missed. To stick with my opening analogy, Steve has forever changed the fabric of the Frey Foundation. He leaves us strong, focused and committed to being woven more deeply than ever in the communities we serve. For this, and for everything else he has done, we are thankful.

On behalf of the trustees and staff of the Frey Foundation, thank you for the role you play in strengthening the fabric of your community.

With gratitude,
A letter from our President

Steven M. Wilson

A History of Listening to Community Voices

Community is at the heart of every grant we make at the Frey Foundation. It’s a legacy we’ve built on for more than three decades. Listening to community voices is core to how we approach our work. It was instilled in us by our founders, Edward and Frances Frey, and it continues today as a new generation of Frey family trustees advances the Foundation into the 21st century.

Whether supporting the decade-long restoration of the Boardman River in Northern Michigan, or improving school readiness for young children through the Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative in Grand Rapids, we’ve made community engagement a priority. As a result, we’ve developed meaningful collaborations that are helping us move the needle in the Foundation’s four program areas—building community, children & families, community arts and the environment.

As you read this annual report and click through to the Foundation’s website, you’ll learn how we’ve adjusted our approach to meet emerging and future needs. We are combining community voices with data and science. This information is helping us zero-in on community systems. For example, we’ve supported the mapping of racial and economic disparities. We’ve also supported bringing collective impact initiatives to both West and Northern Michigan.

Working collaboratively, with all voices at the table, brings new depth to our work. It’s not always the easy way, but we believe it’s the right way, and that it will result in substantive and lasting changes in the communities we serve, for the lives of children and their families, for our creative spirit and for the health of the land and watersheds that surround us.

Within the Frey Foundation, a great deal of progress is also underway. When I joined the Foundation six years ago, my chief role was to support the trustees as they passed the torch to the third generation of Frey family leaders and transitioned to a multi-generational board. Today, Mary Frey Bennett chairs the foundation, a seat held by her uncle David Frey for more than twenty five years. Four of the five seats on the Foundation’s executive committee are held by third generation family members, as well. These new leaders are knowledgeable, enthusiastically engaged and committed to addressing the issues that are foremost in our communities. The Foundation is in good hands!

It has been my honor to serve as president of the Frey Foundation, and to help guide the trustees through this evolution. In early summer, I will retire from my position to embark on exciting new challenges. This has been a remarkable journey for which I am most grateful.

Thank you for sharing it with me.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Wilson

FREY FOUNDATION

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## 2017 Results

**a year in review**

### Total Grants Awarded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Amount Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>$2,083,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Community</td>
<td>$1,441,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>$1,151,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Families</td>
<td>$1,118,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$511,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Grants Awarded: **$7,174,019**

### Program Area Breakdown

- Arts: 9 grants, $2,083,743
- Building Community: 16 grants, $1,441,750
- Environment: 13 grants, $1,151,667
- Children & Families: 7 grants, $1,118,900
- Other: 5 grants, $511,500

### Average Grant Size: **$126,151**

### Program Area Distribution

- Arts: 9% of grants, 29% of total
- Building Community: 16% of grants, 19% of total
- Environment: 13% of grants, 16% of total
- Children & Families: 7% of grants, 16% of total
- Other: 5% of grants, 7% of total

### Type of Support Distribution

- Capital: 13 grants, $2,122,643
- Program: 11 grants, $169,250
- Policy & Advocacy: 2 grants, $200,667
- Capacity Building: 11 grants, $169,250
- Other: 13 grants, $225,000

### Average Grant Size Distribution

- < $10k: 4 grants, $230,000
- $10-99k: 13 grants, $3,590,000
- $100-499k: 20 grants, $1,151,667
- $500k+: 13 grants, $1,441,750

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