FFE helps empower neighborhood entrepreneurs like DeMargeo White, owner of Huey D’s Goodies. Learn more on page 6.

FIVE YEARS

The Foundation for Excellence (FFE) has accomplished many ambitious milestones since its creation in 2016, like investing $150 million in the prosperity of all residents and creation of a $500 million endowment to ensure it can permanently support our community’s vision. Learn more inside about how the FFE is helping everyone in Kalamazoo live the lives they want for themselves and their families.

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Community Members Lead

Each year, proposed projects are evaluated to ensure they align with Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 goals and are positioned for success. These projects are proposed to the FFE Board of Directors and City Commission in alternating public meetings for review, discussion, and approval.

Guiding Principles

Listening: The FFE board is guided by resident input through Imagine Kalamazoo 2025.

Transparency: All board meetings are conducted under the Open Meetings Act, welcome the public, and include an opportunity to comment.

Representation: The board intentionally application and selection process prioritizes diversity of abilities, perspectives, and sectors.

Mission-Driven: FFE has a single focus on serving the people of the City of Kalamazoo.

How does FFE work?

Donations to the Foundation for Excellence are invested in an endowment to ensure it will last for generations to come. Every year, the endowment earnings provide millions of dollars to fund projects and programs to realize our community’s vision, stabilize the city budget, and reduce taxes. Annual grants are approved by the FFE Board of Directors representatives, the City Commission.

Our Community

Impact begins and ends with Kalamazoo residents.

Vision & Master Plan

Our community vision guides our work and shapes the future.

Community Philanthropy

Donations support the community’s vision for Kalamazoo’s future.

FFE Endowment

Funds are invested to ensure FFE will support Kalamazoo for generations to come.

Annual Grant

The FFE Board of Directors and City Commission approve a grant to the City for aspirational projects, property tax reduction, and to stabilize the budget.

Dear Neighbors,

Before the FFE no one dreamed we could produce nearly 100 new affordable housing units per year on average or create a whole new sector of small business supports and fund more than 500 entrepreneurs in just three years. Before the FFE who could have dreamed Kalamazoo could invest $1 million per year on sidewalks left neglected for generations for want of resources? Before FFE no one was able to ask what free Metro bus access might contribute to the educational careers of high school students.

Kalamazoo can now act assertively on improving our shared community for everyone, with particular focus on countering the effects that historical disinvestment and marginalization have had and continue to have.

I hope you read this newsletter and share what you read with those in the community you hold dear. Together, we really can empower residents to achieve the lives they want for themselves and their families.

Sandra Calderon-Huezo
FFE Board President

Join Us!

FFE meetings are open to the public and welcome community comments. Learn more about upcoming meetings, events, and projects at kalamazooffe.org.
EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED

Transparency is a core value of FFE. It provides an interactive map online that shows what FFE is funding and where those investments are made. The dashboard shows all funding that has been expended for aspirational projects and the impact of property tax reduction.

The dashboard is updated near the end of each year as data becomes available. Explore the dashboard at www.kalamazooffe.org.

TO REALIZE OUR VISION

FFE exists to empower the people of Kalamazoo. It invests to achieve our collective vision for the future, as outlined in the Imagine Kalamazoo Strategic Vision. You can use the dashboard to explore what goal areas FFE investments are supporting, and view a list of projects either by year or overall.
EMPOWER ENTREPRENEURS

$11 million invested to start or grow more than 500 businesses
$1.25 million invested in microenterprises
$2.5+ million invested to improve storefronts or build out commercial space
Minority tradesperson training
$300,000 committed to mixed-use business incubator
Support for Black Entrepreneur Training Academy
$2 million provided to small business during pandemic

The City of Kalamazoo has had a successful Brownfield Redevelopment program for decades. Until recently, however, a critical part of economic development was missing. No programs were in place to help entrepreneurs, startups, and small or micro neighborhood businesses.

This is one of several areas where the Foundation for Excellence has been a gamechanger. In a few short years the City of Kalamazoo has gone from offering no support at all to local businesses to investing hundreds of thousands of dollars per year into entrepreneur education, technical support, storefront improvements, and 0% loans and grants. More residents have the help they need to turn their idea or passion into a sustainable business.

Our community and local economy need residents who have the help they need to turn their idea or passion into a sustainable business. The Black Entrepreneurship Training Academy (BETA) program through Black Wall Street Kalamazoo was created to help Black entrepreneurs with the skills and education they need to be successful. BETA also provides low-barrier access to funds to those who complete the program, with the opportunity to pitch for up to $5,500.

Minority tradesperson training and certification programs also benefit from FFE support. The Core60 program works with contractors of color to help them achieve certification, which in turn unlocks larger jobs and the opportunity to bid on government projects. It’s also a great networking opportunity for contractors to share advice, experiences, and real-world projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted businesses, and small, local businesses are least able to adapt. FFE support made it possible to almost immediately launch the Kalamazoo Small Business Loan Fund (KSBLF), which provided loans to small businesses in Kalamazoo on favorable terms. This funding helped support these businesses while larger federal support was created and made available. The KSBLF continues to offer bridge loans.

Microbusinesses with fewer than ten employees received $1.25 million in support through the Kalamazoo Microenterprise Grant (KMEG) program. These funds were provided to small businesses in Kalamazoo during the pandemic to help them thrive and continue to serve their communities.

Empowering and investing in entrepreneurs helps revitalize neighborhoods, create job opportunities, and build wealth. In turn, these investments further our community goals more broadly. This is another area in which FFE makes it possible for the City of Kalamazoo to have a direct impact.

Curing a Sweet Tooth One Bite at a Time

After nine years in the food industry, DeMargeo White wanted to stand out. So with his godmother’s cheesecake recipe he started Huey D’s Goodies specializing in gourmet cheesecakes and cheesecake cupcakes. DeMargeo attended the FFE-supported Black Entrepreneurship Training Academy (BETA) through Black Wall Street, and received grant funding to invest in his business. His products are now available at locations like Twine Urban Winery, La Familia Cafe, Midtown Fresh, Park Street Market, and Wing Hut, to name a few. He continues to add retail locations and is looking to start shipping his desserts nationwide.

Find Huey D’s Goodies on social media or at www.hueydsgoodies.net.

FFE funds also support the Black Entrepreneur Training Academy (BETA) program through $2 million provided to small business during pandemic.

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CLOSE THE GAPS FOR NEW HOMES

380 new affordable homes
314 affordable homes rehabilitated or preserved
0 homeowner tax foreclosures

LQ.DDOPDJRRVLQFH

Dozens of new homes sold

WROZHLQFRPHVWVLPH

homebuyers

$500,000+ support for emergency housing and disaster relief

The FFE dramatically changed the role the City of Kalamazoo can play in housing. With more investment possible, more opportunities to match and secure state and federal funding are available.

The FFE made it possible for the City to step in to cover the gap. By supporting the Kalamazoo Attainable Homes Partnership, FFE provide a $750,000 gap loan for a new senior development at 315 E Frank Street. These developments will create 77 new units for people at varying incomes, 64 of which are for seniors.

FFE support helps to make projects like these viable, but it has another subtle but important effect. By committing to support a project, FFE actually helps make a project’s application for other funding more competitive and more likely to receive additional state or federal support.

It’s one more way that FFE has changed the landscape for housing development in Kalamazoo.

While housing continues to be built, FFE supports other programs to speed up future development and help people most in need. Pre-permitted plans are in development to make building new homes faster and cheaper, and FFE helped start a program that eliminated tax foreclosures in the city. It also provides support to the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care and the United Way Disaster Relief Fund to ensure resources are there to help the people who need them the most.

Historically, the City of Kalamazoo supported affordable housing through things like Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) and by creating an environment to encourage development. Now, the City has a more active role creating partnerships, funding projects, and rising to meet one of our community’s greatest needs. The opportunities that exist now wouldn’t have been imaginable without FFE.

Getting People Into Homes

Jamauri Bogan wants to get people into homes. He started Bogan Developments in 2018. Although he didn’t see a return on that investment, he was motivated to keep going. He realized that by taking more control of his projects he could create attainable homes for people and still make a profit.

“I really feel like we (the Kalamazoo Community) have the biggest heart around. People really care and they really give time, energy and money and resources to the things that they believe in. It’s a really unique city.”

He is currently developing a 13-unit mixed-use project on Frank Street in the Northside neighborhood. The project also plans to include a daycare and units for people at or below 80% area median income. FFE provided a $400,000 gap loan to support the project.

“They have a mission and a vision, and that was aligned with what I was looking for.”
NEW PATHWAYS
FOR YOUTH

The Foundation for Excellence has created several pathways for youth to succeed. Programs start in childhood to help young residents stay engaged, explore their passions, and eventually take advantage of the Kalamazoo Promise or start a career. FFE funds the SuperRec program, an entirely free, nine-week summer camp for Kalamazoo youth. Youth make friends and explore interests at one of several camp sites in core neighborhoods. They can explore their interests and meals are provided through the Kalamazoo Public Schools Meet Up & Eat Up program. Parents have a safe and engaging place for their children to play during the summer without having to worry about daytime childcare.

When youth prepare to enter high school, All Things Possible (ATP) can help them continue exploring their interests, with an eye towards high school, college, and career options. ATP keeps youth engaged with hands-on activities and field trips to college campuses to expose them to new careers. Youth that complete ATP earn free drivers training when they are old enough and meet academic requirements.

“There’s different job opportunities and most of them require college,” one student shared. “There’s a lot I didn’t know about.”

In high school, the MyCITY program provides an opportunity for paid summer employment. Depending on the age group, the experience can vary from learning basic skills needed to maintain a job, to a more specialized career experience for older students. All students are paid for their participation.

Youth that are interested in teaching or working with youth themselves can become Counselors in Training. CITs earn a stipend working alongside Kzoo Parks youth development staff for the summer. They gain valuable experience and bring the perspective of having been in the programs themselves. Many CITs go on to work as program leaders for Kzoo Parks.

All of these programs are bolstered by the Youth Mobility Fund, which provides free transportation for youth on the Metro bus system. YMF has helped students take more than 180,000 trips to these FFE-supported programs or other after school activities.

FFE also helps our community rise to the challenge when the unexpected happens. When you walk into All Things Possible, you see students creating sweet treats of their own. They form bonds and learn to communicate their needs. They’ll be going to high school in the fall, so these skills are important for their social, educational, and career development.

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Most importantly, they see someone who came from the same place as them succeeding by doing something she enjoys.

After the presentation the students create sweet treats of their own. They form bonds and learn to communicate their needs. They’ll be going to high school in the fall, so these skills are important for their social, educational, and career development.

Later the participants head to Western Michigan University’s Esports Arena. They’re eager to explore campus and the activity that is laid out for them. After they learn about the technology that operates the arena, they enjoy a friendly competition.

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MORE VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

7 city parks renovated
1,000+ trees planted
12 miles of sidewalk repaired or built, connecting 24 miles of the network
Placemaking and the Ambassador program attract visitors to downtown Kalamazoo

FFE supports a vision where neighborhoods are vibrant places that offer much more than just a place to live. Investments in public spaces make these areas safer and more welcoming, with more to experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 city parks renovated</th>
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More than 1,000 street trees have been planted throughout the city, focusing in core neighborhood areas where more canopy is needed. FFE also funded a tree inventory in 2021 to document the condition, age, and value of more than 22,000 trees to further guide planting and maintenance.

The streets that these trees shade and beautify have seen major improvements as well. Much of the investment to realize complete streets has been made by FFE. After years of investing $0 to improve sidewalks, $1 million in 2019 and $1.4 million in 2020 have been invested every year since 2019 to repair and expand our sidewalk network. Bright new sections of sidewalk are visible in every neighborhood. Many of the crosswalks that connect them have been improved with new paint and signage.

Traffic calming projects have been undertaken on streets like Westnedge Avenue and Park Street, to make them safer for everyone. Speed humps and radar signs have been installed in neighborhoods to reduce speeds, too. On average, traffic calming has reduced speeds by 2-5 miles per hour, which makes streets safer for everyone. New features are being piloted as well, like mini roundabouts and bumpouts.

For residents in Kalamazoo’s neighborhoods, new programs to beautify blocks have people in need. Free tire recycling has been available since 2021 and has removed nearly 5,000 tires from yards and garages.

Facade improvement grants and other business investments funded by FFE have left commercial areas cleaner and more inviting, with more shopping and services available. The Downtown Ambassador program and placemaking investments like Bates Alley help make downtown Kalamazoo one of the region’s best attractions.

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<th>Traffic calming on city streets, reducing speeds and average of 2-5 mph</th>
<th>Tire recycling, vegetable gardening, and other programs</th>
<th>Downtown Ambassador Program</th>
<th>$11 million invested in neighborhood businesses</th>
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Keeping It Fresh

Kalamazoo Roots helps residents grow fresh healthy food, and share the experience with their families.
SHARE THE OPPORTUNITIES

$2 million for dedicated Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo 2-Generation programs
3DUUQHLUQ,DODP|RR\8VV every expungement clinic
Founding partner of Patient Care Academy
380 new affordable homes
Wealth building through clearing clouded titles
0 homeowner tax foreclosures
VLOF
Free summer camp, career exploration, and transportation options for youth
Woven throughout everything the Foundation for Excellence funds is a commitment to sharing opportunities and investments with everyone. All work is aligned around this core value so everyone can succeed.

Some projects are focused directly on expanding opportunities. For example, the work of the Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo initiative seeks to invest in jobs, youth, and families with a “2-Generation” approach (programs ZLKWDUHWDQGKLOGIRFXV.Q] allocated $2 million directly to this initiative, funding programs for generational health, early childhood education, business development, and housing barrier removal. But projects in other areas often help achieve this goal as well.

By funding a pathway of youth development programs from childhood to young adulthood, FFE sets residents up for success at an early age. These programs are focused in core neighborhoods with the highest need. They prepare youth to enter the workforce or continue their education with the coming, state-of-the-art Career Technical Education Center and/or the Kalamazoo Promise. Programs include career exploration and summer employment so they then can explore FDUHVLOQKDWQDWUHVWVW.

IfXH\VJUPVDFQEWHQ\WKH\HZKOHIDPLQJOI as well. By offering free summer programming, SDUHFWKDY HOHUVIRDFKDOHQQ\HWBGDOQ pay for childcare, which makes it easier to FKQROXWHEU\LJ\DLROVZRUNR\UXUW\KH\H\L\V education.

Major investments in housing have provided hundreds of new homes in Kalamazoo, increasing the availability of a safe and secure place to live. Housing is the foundation of success in so many areas, so the importance of these investments cannot be overstated.

FFE also initiated an effort to prevent tax foreclosures to keep people in their homes. This proactive investment has led to zero KRPHQZQWHU|RI|HU\DFVUX\V\LQFHDOQ prevented the cycle of negative consequences that follow for many families. Kalamazoo County has continued this work through the pandemic.

For some families, the title or ownership of their home is unclear, often due to a death in the family. FFE funds a program to help clear these “clouded” titles so that residents and families can secure the wealth of their home. This is another proactive investment that yields huge dividends for Kalamazoo families.

\VHJZVDIRXQGLQJSDUWHURID Patient Care Academy in Kalamazoo’s Northside neighborhood. With several community partners, training was offered right in the QHLJ\RURKURDGWIR\UDGW\HDFDVVRVRIH\HU\LH\H\XVLQJO|VSLVWQDQW7KH\FWDFDVJUDGWDFXVVKD\D\GDWRIKH&28;SDQGPH\FKHQW\V were needed more than ever.

People with criminal records are often haunted by them long after they have completed their sentence. Employment or education opportunities are limited, making it even more challenging to start anew. FFE was a key partner LQRUDQ\LJQ,DODP|RR\WV expungement.

Before FFE, none of this work would have been possible. We’ve seen a transformational change in MX\VW\H|HDUV)(ZLOOI\QG this work so that everyone in Kalamazoo can succeed.
Kalamazoo is stronger together

We invite everyone to be involved in Kalamazoo’s success by participating in FFE’s cycle of impact. Whether it’s by voting in local elections, volunteering, looking out for neighbors, keeping public spaces safe and beautiful, or donating to FFE’s endowment, we all have a role to play.

LEARN
• Read about the FFE’s impact in this newsletter
• Sign up for the City of Kalamazoo email list
• Follow @kalamazoocity on social media
• Attend an FFE board meeting
• Visit www.kalamazooffe.org

GIVE
• Make a gift of any size to support this work online or by mailing a check to the address above
• Volunteer your time for a cause that advances our community vision

LEAD
• Apply to serve on the FFE Board of Directors or nominate someone you know
• Make your voice heard in a community or neighborhood planning meeting