

ROTARY
CHARITIES

Resources for change.



2024-2025
ANNUAL REPORT

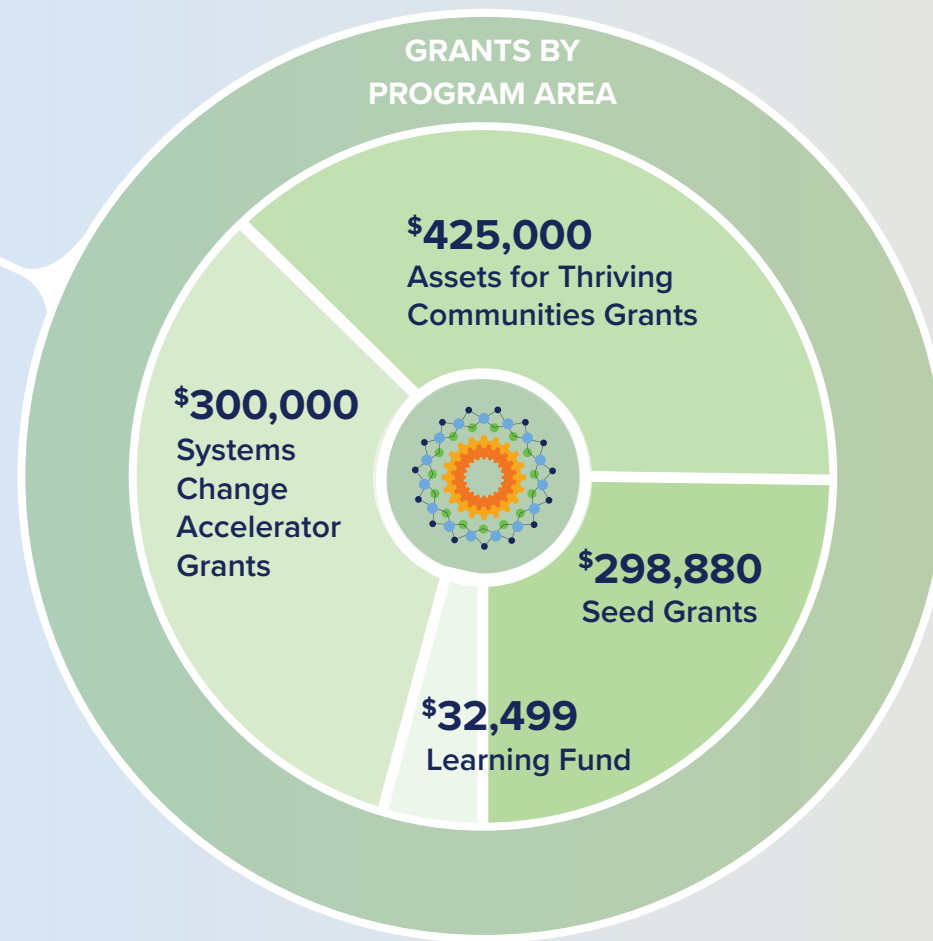


**WE ENVISION ADAPTIVE
AND EQUITABLE
COMMUNITIES
WHERE EVERYONE HAS
THE OPPORTUNITY TO
THRIVE.**



Our new website was designed with our community in mind. Scan the QR code below to access tools, stories, and the full annual report.

WWW.ROTARYCHARITIES.ORG/24-25-ANNUAL-REPORT



RESOURCES FOR CHANGE

Working in partnership with changemakers, Rotary Charities provides funding, learning, and connections **to address our region's complex problems and create community assets for all.**



CONNECTING

CONNECTING WITH CHANGEMAKERS

5
community engagement events
265
attendees

CAPACITY ADVISORY POOL

67
organizations supported with
225
hours of no-cost consultation

LEADERSHIP LEARNING LAB
53 participants from 4 sites; 353 alumni

COHORT LEARNING
135
participants

LEADERSHIP COACHING COHORT
14 participants; 175+ alumni

WINTER WARM UP
60 participants

FUND DEVELOPMENT COHORT
8 participants; 87 alumni



LEARNING

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4
offerings
77
attendees
50
organizations represented

SYSTEMS CHANGE LEARNING

9
initiatives participating in the Systems Change Community of Practice

SYSTEMS CHANGE COACHING
32 hours



FUNDING

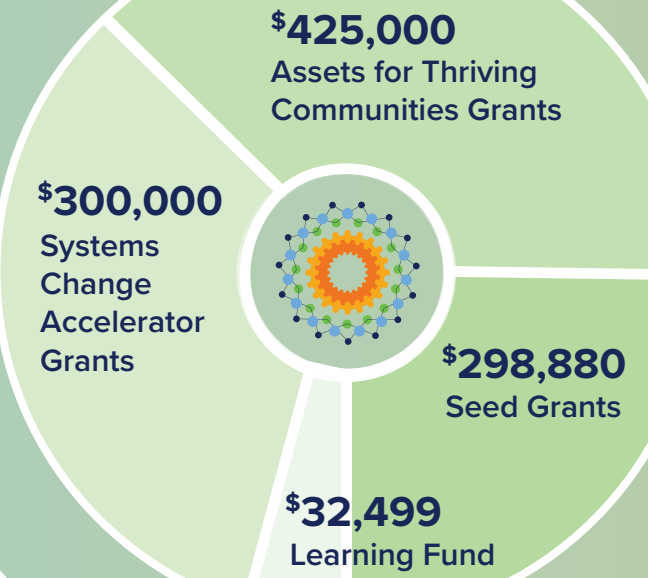
GRANTS
\$1,802,467
awarded through

97
grants awarded to
69
organizations

IMPACT INVESTMENTS

\$500,000
invested in IFF
\$1M
invested in IFF's Michigan State Housing Fund
\$500,000
invested in Venture North Funding and Development

GRANTS BY PROGRAM AREA



RESOURCES FOR CHANGE

Working in partnership with changemakers, Rotary Charities provides funding, learning, and connections to address our region's complex problems and create community assets for all.



Dear Friends,

This year has challenged us to stand in our belief that the strength of our region lies in our willingness to face hard truths together.

From rising housing insecurity and nonprofit workforce strain to mounting uncertainty in federal support, it has been a time of reckoning for many across Northern Michigan. These challenges are not abstract. Actual and proposed cuts to programs like Medicaid, SNAP, rural development, and youth development programs threaten the basic infrastructure of wellbeing for tens of thousands of our neighbors.

And yet, even in these times, we are guided by a powerful understanding that **community-led collaboration remains one of our greatest tools for resilience.**

Throughout the year, we've witnessed and supported courageous efforts to respond to urgent needs while staying rooted in long-term vision. One example: the coalition working to address the needs of our growing unsheltered community and chronic homelessness through a cross-sector response coordinated by the Housing and Homelessness Taskforce. Bringing together representatives from government, homeless and social service providers, healthcare, housing development, law enforcement, and other key sectors, the Taskforce efforts maximize resources and drive long-term solutions for safe and stable housing.

This is what Rotary Charities stands for. Not only funding solutions, but **supporting conditions rooted in trust, shared learning, and mutual accountability** that allow new solutions to emerge.

Across all our programs, we've continued to prioritize community-centered collaboration, adaptive strategy, and systemic thinking. Whether through coaching for teams shifting how they work, grants that support learning and exploration, or convenings that cultivate belonging, our role remains steady: to walk alongside those transforming systems from the inside out.

As we look ahead, we know the path won't be easy. Federal rescissions and regulatory shifts continue to destabilize local safety nets. But we also know this: communities in Northern Michigan are not passive in the face of hardship. We are interconnected, informed, and innovative. And we are willing to do the slow, steady work of change—not alone, but with one another.

To everyone who has contributed ideas, energy, or time to this work—thank you. Your leadership, formal or informal, is what sustains this vision. We are grateful to be in community with you.

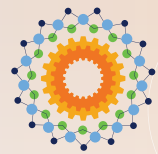
With hope and determination,



Sakura Takano
Chief Executive Officer



Lorraine Beers
Chair, Board of Trustees



FOSTERING
COLLABORATION
TO BUILD RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES



KALKASKA'S COMMUNITY-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

Since the 1800s, Kalkaska has been the crossroads of northern Michigan, a place many travelers simply passed through. Today, locals are writing a different story grounded in belonging, possibility, and pride.

After nearly a decade of community-led visioning and collaboration, the village is becoming a destination in its own right. “We are becoming a thriving community,” says Gayenell Gentelia, associate director of the Downtown Development Authority.

With early support from Rotary Charities, residents’ vision for a lively community hub transformed a vacant lumber yard into Railroad Square. Now, the downtown pavilion hosts concerts and outdoor movie nights, food trucks, and a thriving farmers market most weekends from spring through fall. “When people feel heard, they take ownership,” Gentelia observes.

Progress here rarely comes from a single grant. Village leaders knit together state, foundation, and local dollars — “maybe ten grants” for one project, Gentelia laughs — to keep momentum building. That resourcefulness recently delivered a trailhead for the 4,800-mile North Country Trail and is fueling an ambitious Downtown Safety & Mobility Plan designed to make it safer to walk, roll, and ride across U.S.-131.

Kalkaska’s lesson for other small towns? Build a broad network and listen well. With patience, persistence, and a clear plan, the impossible starts to feel achievable.



“Build your network. You can’t do it alone. And listen to your community—engagement is key to any project’s success.”

— Gayenell Gentelia, Associate Director,
Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority



**SUPPORTING
SHARED SPACES
WHERE
COMMUNITIES
FLOURISH**





CREATING COMMUNITIES WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

We believe pursuing equity in our communities is not a separate initiative. It's a guiding principle that benefits everyone. It's how we create communities where everyone can access opportunity, contribute fully, and feel a sense of belonging. That's why we support efforts that lower barriers, elevate local leadership, and ensure solutions are shaped by those most impacted.

One powerful example is the Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project, a collaboration between the Traverse Area Historical Society, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and regional partners. This initiative marks ancestral footpaths in the region with interpretive signage, art, and QR codes that share Anishinaabek language, stories, and history. By making Indigenous knowledge visible and accessible, this work invites the entire region to learn, reflect, and grow in relationship.

Our role is to walk alongside efforts like these with humility and trust. In addition to project funding, this year, we worked to increase our accessibility for grassroots and community-led initiatives by reducing administrative burdens, supporting long-term goals, and investing in relationships that foster equity, community voice, and shared stewardship.

“The Anishinaabe wisdom reflected in our language and cultural teachings is filled with beauty and meaning. The stories and words of our ancestors are alive in our homeland, listen to their voices carried on the wind. They speak to all who respectfully listen.”

— Eva Petoskey, Grand Traverse Band Tribal Elder

Zaagidowin Love

Zaagidowin aawan getchi-pitendaagok bimaadiziwin. Kina-gegoo meneziyng ji-bimaadiziying miiniwaa ji-gishkiweziyng temgwad zhinda Gzheminidoo gaamligwed miiniwaa mooshkin zaagidowin. Pii-dash zaagidiziying miiniwaa kinawaya gnisdowaabndaanaa kina ezhi-waabmidiziying mompii Gzheminidoo zhichiganing. Nji-dash zhindaa aabitoweyng minik eteg zaagidowin, gdoo-mina-daapinaanaa eshshyng nji-sa kina-gegoo Gzheminidoo-zhichiganing – aki, nibi, mitigoog, wesinyag, ezaaklig, miiniwaa bemaadizijig.

Love is feeling the sacredness of life. Everything we need to live and thrive is provided through the Creator's generosity and unconditional love. By loving ourselves and others we recognize that we are a reflection of Creation. From this center of unconditional love, we embrace our relationship with all of Creation—the earth, water, trees, animals, plants, and human beings.

Nakazan gdoo-mooshchigewinan ji-mooshtowin kina gegoo gaataaying yaa'in. Mkwendan bimaadiziwin gaa-bi-zhi-teg nbing, asining, mitigoong, ezaaklig, bineshinying, maage anangoong. Wenesh yaawong zaagidowin wiiniwaa sa nji? Wenesh ezhi-zaagtoowin Gzheminidoo zhichigan nongo?

Use your senses to feel the natural world around you. Think about the life journey of the water, rocks, trees, plants, birds, or the stars. What is love to them? How is Creation loving you today?



STORIES OF CHANGE: DEEPENING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Two years after sharing Stories of Change: How a Systems Approach is Transforming a Region, we returned to two initiatives to see what had unfolded since. What we found was not just sustained momentum, but deepened impact through shared leadership and bold collaboration.

In the effort to end homelessness, the coalition that reached “functional zero” for youth is now applying what they’ve learned to address chronic homelessness. They are centering lived experience, aligning new partners, and securing historic public investments.

In the emergency food system, a trusted partnership grew stronger through Tribal leadership and federal support. Together, they are transforming how local food is grown, shared, and chosen, with dignity and culture at the center.

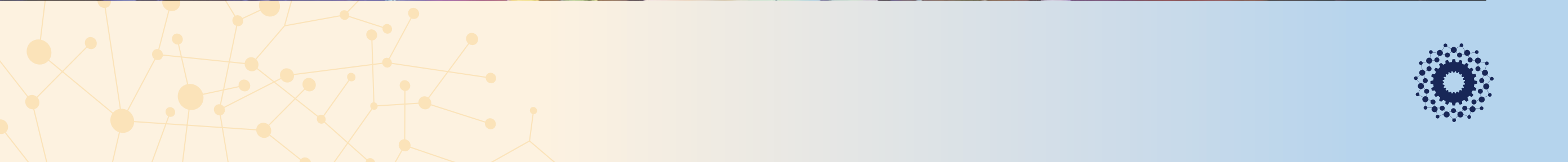
These stories remind us that systems change is a long game that is shaped by trust, learning, and the willingness to keep showing up when the path forward is uncertain.



Read the full articles
of inspiring stories.



STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITIES
THROUGH
CREATIVITY
AND BELONGING





EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS THROUGH LEARNING AND CONNECTIONS

Last year our learning programs supported changemakers in growing the skills and knowledge needed to navigate complexity and lead with clarity and purpose.

We support this growth through learning grants, expert coaching, workshops, and peer learning, each designed to connect and build on one another. This past year, the Capacity Advisory Pool (CAP) provided coaching to several organizations facing technical challenges, which led to deeper team trainings funded by the Learning Fund. We also expanded access to CAP to Leadership Learning Lab participants throughout Michigan, reaching rural communities where support is not easily accessed.

By paying attention to patterns and staying responsive to evolving needs, we've learned that meaningful learning support must be dynamic: timely, relevant, and grounded in local context and the real conditions changemakers face.





IMPACT INVESTMENTS

\$500,000

invested in IFF

\$1M

invested in IFF's Michigan State Housing Fund

\$500,000

invested in Venture North Funding and Development



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS TO URGENT CHALLENGES

We believe in leveraging every tool we have to meet our region's challenges. That's why, in addition to grantmaking, we invest in efforts that create lasting solutions to urgent challenges like housing affordability, workforce retention, and small business resiliency.

We increased our investment with IFF, a Community Development Financial Institution, to help close our region's housing gaps, including projects like HomeStretch's developments in Frankfort and Elk Rapids. Goodwill Northern Michigan's East Bay Flats, which will create 64 units of permanent supportive housing, is a powerful contribution to ending homelessness in Grand Traverse County. And last but not least, we supported NorthEd's Educator Housing Initiative, a first-of-its-kind partnership between regional educational institutions, which will address educator shortages through access to affordable housing in five school districts.

Meanwhile, our long-standing investment in Venture North continues to support rural economies. Annually, Venture North deploys about \$1.5 million in low-interest loans to small businesses in Northern Michigan.

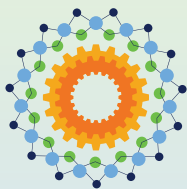
This is how we extend our impact: by trusting local leaders, bringing new capital and expertise to the region, and working together to shape a more resilient future.

"What we do is more than lending. It's about nurturing entrepreneurs and strengthening the fabric of rural communities."

— Laura Galbraith, Executive Director, Venture North Funding and Development

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	FY 2025	FY 2024
Net assets, beginning of year	47,925,881	46,353,295
REVENUE AND GAINS		
Consulting fees	32,993	55,009
Investment return, net of investment fees	4,749,162	4,390,421
Oil and gas royalty income	181,994	161,132
Grants and Other	87,798	85,745
TOTAL REVENUE AND GAINS	5,051,947	4,692,307
OPERATING EXPENSES AND GRANTS		
Program Services	2,790,447	2,882,289
Management and general	238,078	237,432
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES AND GRANTS	3,028,525	3,119,721
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	2,023,422	1,572,586
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	–	–
TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	2,023,422	1,572,586
Net assets without donor restrictions end of year	49,949,303	47,925,881
Net assets with donor restrictions end of year	–	–
TOTAL NET ASSETS END OF YEAR	49,949,303	47,925,881



We are grateful to the many community partners, grantees, and local photographers who contributed images for this report:

Beth Price Photography
 Courtney Kent Photography
 Gary Howe Photography
 Goodwill Northern Michigan
 HomeStrech Nonprofit Housing Corporation
 Housing and Homelessness Task Force
 Madi Taylor Photography
 Mashup Rock & Roll Musical
 Traverse Area Historical Society



ROTARY CHARITIES STAFF

From Left to Right:

Stacey Foster, *Office Manager*

Freya Bradford, *Director of Systems Change & Learning*

Sakura Takano, *Chief Executive Officer*

Miriam Owsley, *Strategic Communications Manager*

Mi Stanley, *Director of Community Development*

Kendra Luta, *Grants & Learning Manager*

ROTARY CHARITIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our Board of Trustees is made up of dedicated members of the Rotary Club of Traverse City, elected by their peers to serve. We are grateful for their expertise, passion, and service above self.

Lorraine Beers, *Board Chair*

Greg Luyt, *Vice Chair*

Kelly Dunham

Benjamin Marentette, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Madison Ford, *Rotary Club of Traverse City
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ROTARY
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Resources for change.

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Explore the full report:
www.rotarycharities.org/24-25-annual-report