In 2019, the Steelcase Foundation granted more than $4,704,650 to programs that have the power to address societal inequities and change people’s lives.

Yet, while funding is a vital part of creating the conditions for change, it’s not the whole answer.

Real social change requires involvement from an entire community of people—nonprofit leaders and staff, private citizens and public officials, volunteers, advocates, collaborative funding partners, and the people who are living daily with the issues we seek to address. Engaging people toward social change brings results that are far more indelible—longer lasting and farther reaching.

Because while grants have a limited life cycle, the countless people impacted by them directly and indirectly—those who have become engaged, inspired, informed, convened, connected, coached, and supported by the mission—carry that change forward for a lifetime.

Surely our granting is producing significant social change in the years ahead. But through its consequent coalescing of public interest and engagement around issues of social justice, it becomes a catalyst for a better future—amplifying the impact of our giving and building the capacity of our grantee organizations long into the future.

This year’s annual report celebrates the engagement of people and their power to inspire lasting social change toward the work of building a more just and vibrant community now and long into the future.

KATE WOLTERS, Chair, Steelcase Foundation
JULIE RIDENOUR, President, Steelcase Foundation
Empowering people to reach their full potential is the mission of the Steelcase Foundation.

FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES:
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STAFF:
Julie Ridenour, President
Leslie Schoen, Foundation Administrator and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Brittany Demberger, Grant Analyst

5 PARENT ACADEMY STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS
7 BOARD MEMBERS
500 PEOPLE SERVED

ORGANIZATION / PROGRAM: Kentwood Public Schools / Kentwood Parent Academy

GRANT: $65,000 (65,000 future year) to engage business and cultural leaders in the Kentwood community to meet the needs of immigrant, refugee, and non-English speaking families in Kentwood Public Schools through the EL Kentwood Parent Academy with the goal of building trust, fostering independence, and supporting their children's success in school.

Who are the people who are directly served by your work and what are the greatest challenges they face?

The Kentwood Parent Academy (KPS) supports parents of our English language learner (EL) students who face a variety of challenges being new to the United States. We host weekly sessions attended by nearly 50 KPS parents and family members—refugees, immigrants, and those whose native language is not English—to help them gain a better understanding of their new culture, understand the resources available to them, and be advocates for their children's success in school. Since our district includes families that speak 60 distinct languages, communication is often their greatest challenge.

A conversation with Michael Zoerhoff on bringing people together to support the needs of immigrant, refugee, and non-English speaking school families.

Superintendent, Kentwood Public Schools

ADDITIONAL DETAILS:
21 PERCENT OF KPS STUDENTS ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO WERE BORN IN MORE THAN 90 COUNTRIES AND SPEAK 60+ LANGUAGES
CLASSES TRANSLATED INTO NO LESS THAN 11 LANGUAGES DURING THE SESSION. MOST TRANSLATORS ARE EAST KENTWOOD ALUMS

The people have the power. All we have to do is awaken the power in the people.

JOHN LENNON
What innovative ideas do you bring to meeting the needs of those people?
First, we remove barriers to participation by providing translators, free child care, a free ride, and a free meal. Additionally, we work to understand what these families need, rather than assume that we know. Our recent formation of the EL Parent Academy Leadership Team is a good example of that. Last fall, before each class, we met with leaders in the EL communities and listened to what they consider the most important issues to address in future sessions. This allowed us to pull in knowledgeable people from the community to speak with intentionality and focus. Understanding the issues that are most important to our EL families increases the benefits we bring to students and their families.

Who are the people within and outside your organization who are vital to achieving your mission and how do you collaborate to achieve your mission?
We could not achieve our mission without Liaison Linguistics translators who attend each session and are critical to sharing the communication before, during, and after each class. Many of the interpreters return week after week at their request, as they too value the work being done on behalf of our EL families.

We also rely on passionate Kentwood Public Schools' staff to help us recruit and retain families, as well as the KPS Steering Committee—five, heavily invested staff members who provide diligent follow through on the work of the Parent Academy.

Child care workers are also vital to the success of the Academy. Each week they care for upwards of 30 elementary and middle-school-age children, freeing their parents to attend and focus on the program.

Perhaps the most valuable people that we work with, however, are our guest speakers—subject-matter experts, drawn from the community, who have the knowledge and empathy to remove barriers and provide a deeper understanding of the concepts we address.

Thinking beyond those who directly benefit from your work, who are the people who indirectly benefit from your work and how?
Because of the growth our parents achieve, everyone in the greater Kentwood and West Michigan communities benefit. Our parents are able to access needed support from local agencies, contribute to the local economy, and become productive community members. The success is so evident that we receive numerous requests from participating families to invite family members from outside the Kentwood community to join in future sessions. They clearly value the information shared and want their extended family and friends to have access to these insights as well. When people want to share what they’ve learned, we believe it’s a clear indicator that the Academy is making a difference in the quality of their lives.

What role does fostering the civic engagement of people toward a common good play in achieving your organization’s long-term vision?
Kentwood Public Schools is committed to diversity, equity, and excellence in community education. Our families come from 90 different countries and speak 60 distinct languages, and it’s a guiding principle of the program that we’re respectful of their myriad beliefs, culture, and customs. If we’re successful in helping these families better navigate their day-to-day responsibilities, support their children’s education, become more civically engaged, and more aware of resources available to them within the community, they’ll feel more at home and engaged, their children will do better in school, and the larger community will benefit from the diversity, culture, and gifts these families bring to us all.

In 10 years I believe the people we serve will...
Become productive and contributing members of our community. They will know what support services are available to help them in achieving their goals. And they’ll be able to take their new-found skills back to their own communities to help others.

If EL students and families are more successful, the quality of life across West Michigan improves. Just last year, the Kentwood 49508 ZIP code was named the “hottest ZIP code” in America by realtor.com—proof that a diverse community is what the next generation is looking for. We want to be a shining example of excellence as a diverse, inclusive school district.
Unlike the private sector, nonprofit leaders need to galvanize passion and commitment from a broad base of people—paid staff, nonprofit allies, public officials, volunteer advocates, and more. Can you speak to this challenge and how you respond to it?

Well, I have always asked the question, “Why does Grand Rapids have 800 churches, 2,800 nonprofits, is one of the most philanthropic communities in the country and yet has massive economic, educational, and racial disparity?” In fact Forbes has said we are one of the worst places for African Americans to live. There are lots of people working in our city, but I think that we are all challenged with the lack of a grand, audacious, and collaborative vision. The whole idea behind the GR Center for Community Transformation was to bring people together in a radically inclusive way. The Harvard Business Review stated the idea this way, “If the goal is big enough, ambitious, and transformational, people will put aside their differences and work together...the challenge is to build a positive coalition that is more powerful than the negative coalition.” (Martin & Osberg, 2015, p. 3)

That’s what we are trying to do—to create a physical space in which all who come here enter into a transformative process that draws them back again—to work here, volunteer, invest, participate—ultimately being part of the change we desire to see in the city.

Who are the people who are directly served by your work and what are the greatest challenges they face?

We actually try not to use the language of “service” anymore. Unfortunately, it can become a patronizing word—those “with” helping those “without.” The reality is that we all are in need and we all have strengths. Lila Watson said it this way, “If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come here because you believe that your liberation is tied to mine, then let us begin.” We are about the growth and transformation of employees, investors, board members, youth, and residents.

We do engage specific historically disadvantaged groups; youth ages 14-24, aging adults living on limited incomes, and residents who have barriers to employment. However, we really do see our work as simply creating opportunities for transformation—and we know all of us need to participate in this process.

What innovative ideas does your organization bring to meeting the needs of those people?

We believe that real transformation happens at the pace of deep relationships. It’s when the real me meets the real you—over and over again. So I think our innovation is that we are creating a place that moves beyond “programs” to one of “presence.” A place that naturally invites each person to be fully themselves.

The transformative process we engage in is one of Action, Reflection, and then Discernment. It’s a cycle in which one informs the other. Most organizations are very busy doing stuff—stuck in the Action phase. We have created regular rhythms into our work life that allow for reflecting on our work, and discerning together what it means for us in the future.

I think because we have been absorbing such a vast array of reflections from all of the people engaged in this movement—we have a unique ability to speak authentically and passionately to many different people.

“That’s what we are trying to do—to create a physical space in which all who come here enter into a transformative process that draws them back again—to work here, volunteer, invest, participate—ultimately being part of the change we desire to see in the city.”
Who are the people within and outside your organization who are vital to achieving your mission (think groups/types/partnering organizations vs. individuals) and how do you collaborate to achieve your mission?

Over the years we have found some very unlikely partners. In fact, the first step to a transcendent consciousness is inclusion—include everyone. We like to say that we partner with people like us, not like us, and who don’t like us. When you are around people and organizations that are different from you—and you take them seriously, there is real room to both learn from them and see their humanity. For us, this includes organizations in the building—from Bethany to the NAACP. It’s a for profit and nonprofit, an advocacy group, and a social service organization. Our work includes hosting groups from the Pride Center to local government, from churches to businesses. We are about building deep relationships with republicans and democrats—getting them to come together for a shared vision of a flourishing community.

A very tangible example of this is in our current capital campaign. We are in the process of raising $4 million, but instead of one organization raising all the money, we have three organizations: Bethany, NAACP, and GR Nehemiah Project doing it collaboratively. This effort has allowed us to set aside differences and instead focus on what we share in common—and it has brought a very robust group of people to the table.

Thinking beyond those who directly benefit from your work, who are the people who indirectly benefit from your work (think volunteers, health community, nonprofit partners, and those who benefit in the future) and how do they benefit?

Many of our investors/donors are challenged with “giving fatigue.” They have given financially but don’t see the impact they had hoped for. We challenge them to see their own pain/suffering and to recognize that their solidarity in this work helps them become more human—and to stay engaged with us in the process as we collaboratively come up with more innovative and sustainable solutions.

For many of our 500 young people who have been labeled high-risk—more than anything, they have been traumatized and then trapped by an unjust and inequitable system. They don’t see a clear path out of their historical situation. We are helping them experience real hope through tangible avenues for education, employment, and housing.

For the 200+ aging adults who we provide discounted landscaping and emergency snow removal services to—sometimes they need someone to chat with, someone to tell them that they matter and the community still cares for them, and that they have great knowledge and stories to share with the younger generation.

How and why does fostering the civic engagement of people toward a common good matter in achieving your organization’s long-term vision?

There is a great quote by Lau Tzu that we have fully embraced, “Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say ‘We have done this ourselves.’”

I think at the end of the day we want people to know that their voice, advocacy, and work not only matters—it’s desperately needed for the flourishing of our community.

I often talk about the metaphor of “love of place”—or the idea that places, just like people, over time begin to bear the mark of the ones who love it. If we want our community to be an inclusive and prosperous place for all, then we have to all get involved. We have to love it by creating the type of culture that we want—because if we stop loving it, caring for it, someone else will make it theirs. So our leadership role is to courageously call forth authentic action in our community—for the common good of all its residents. That is a transforming community!

In 10 years I believe the people we serve will...

Have a greater sense of hope. Not just hope that things will get better, but a collective sense of hope in our humanity—that together we can, have, and will continue to make a difference.

We want to see a transforming community—one in which continued personal growth, interdependence, financial security, and flourishing is happening for everyone. It’s where there is more vulnerability and there is a sense of mutuality between people—where we are able to recognize and celebrate our differences and diversity. It’s where those who are the most vulnerable (kids and the elderly) are able to play safely in local parks, have homes that are affordable and are lead free, economic mobility, and relationships that cross traditional boundaries.

Tangibly, we hope that we are building a movement and community center that helps become a platform to accelerate that big vision—and will remain a beacon of that hope and sign of transformation for millennia to come.

I want to make a difference with people who want to make a difference, doing something that makes a difference.

JOHN C. MAXWELL
Who are the people who are directly served by your work and what are the greatest challenges they face?

Dégagé serves people from a variety of backgrounds—from those who have lived in poverty all their lives to those who are experiencing homelessness for the first time, those with college degrees and those with a middle-school education, those with basic social skills and those who are unable to function independently.

According to the United Way 2019 Michigan Report, the cost of basic needs such as housing, food, health care, and transportation increased by 26 percent per person between 2010 and 2017 (while inflation increased by only 12 percent). With low-wage jobs dominating the Michigan economy and a significant shortage of affordable housing options, many of our patrons struggle to support themselves. Combine this with challenges such as a mental illness or a physical disability, and it’s an uphill battle.

What innovative ideas does your organization bring to meeting the needs of those people?

First, we create a personal plan for each person, based on the unique challenges they face.

We encourage work that builds dignity, prevents perpetuating dependency, and creates unity among our patrons and staff—more than 60 jobs are performed every day by the people we serve. Earnings can be used for basic necessities—to purchase a meal or do laundry—or to participate in other services we provide. Similarly, our Good Neighbor programs instill community ownership, build relationships, and support the livelihoods of our neighbors by paying individuals to clean doorways, shovel snow, and pick up trash in front of neighboring Heartside businesses.

And we’ve established a patron advisory council—so we can learn directly from those we serve how we can best meet their needs. We seek their input and empower them to be leaders in our organization’s efforts to improve inclusivity, diversity, and programming in our community.

Unlike the private sector, nonprofit leaders must galvanize passion and commitment from a broad base of people—paid staff, nonprofit allies, public officials, volunteer advocates, and more. Can you speak to this challenge and how you respond to it?

We strive to educate the public and overcome misperceptions and stigmas about the people we serve. When people fully understand the reality and obstacles of poverty and homelessness in our city, they understand the need to take an individualized approach for each person served. When we’re able to align that understanding with people’s personal interests, we see passion and commitment thrive.

Who are the people within and outside your organization who are vital to achieving your mission and how do you collaborate to achieve your mission?

We know the importance of collaboration and value community conversation and involvement. To that end, we develop our programs to complement the work of other stakeholders, address gaps in services within the community, avoid duplication, and maximize community resources. We collaborate with numerous allied agencies and are actively involved in many Heartside Neighborhood groups. And we’re grateful to partner with supporting businesses that offer classes to our patrons.
Our capital campaign provides a wonderful example of the community coming together to help us achieve our mission. We’ve been fortunate to have engaged and generous donors such as the Steelcase Foundation support our future plans. And we’ve built partnerships with other nonprofits who play a critical role in our new and existing programs—collaborating with Family Promise, for example, to add private rooms for women and children in our expanded Open Door Women’s Center.

Thinking beyond those who directly benefit from your work, who are the people who indirectly benefit from your work and how?

Many people and organizations enjoy the indirect benefits of our work. The entire community benefits from our ID Program, for example, which helps people take the first steps to secure housing, find employment, and become more self-sufficient.

Businesses benefit from our efforts to educate people through soft-skill workforce development classes. They also enjoy a more reliable workforce because we make it easier for people to get to work affordably though the distribution of more than 6,000 bus tickets annually. And, when we open the first daytime shelter to support third-shift employees, their employees can count on a place to rest between shifts.

What’s more, we’re reducing the load on our public health and health care systems through our dynamic wellness program, which improves people’s health and reduces the need for unnecessary emergency visits.

What role does fostering the civic engagement of people toward a common good play in achieving your organization’s long-term vision?

We rely on the skills and resources of countless volunteers, patrons, and donors to keep our programs operating. Last year nearly 1,200 people donated more than 26,000 volunteer hours at Dégagé! What’s more, our patrons performed more than 25,000 jobs to keep the facility clean and operating. We’re blessed with a diverse base of individuals, churches, businesses, and foundations working together to achieve our vision.

In 10 years, I believe the people we serve will...

Even if in 10 years we were able to solve systemic issues such as lack of affordable housing and gaps in mental health services, we know there will always be people in our community who need immediate support. But as we collaborate with people and organizations in the community who share our vision of ending homelessness, eliminating disparities, and building a more equitable community, we believe that in 10 years we’ll be part of a community where all are valued and can thrive!

As executive director at Dégagé Ministries, MARGE PALMERLEE serves our community’s most vulnerable men and women. Throughout her career, she’s been active on countless community committees and boards. Through more than two decades of leadership, the 53-year-old organization has grown under her care and today serves more than 5,500 people annually.

2019 FEATURE STORY BY KATHLEEN O’BRIEN

TOTAL FUNDS GRANTED IN 2019

$4,261,700 ($2,449,352 future)

ADDITIONAL DETAILS:
24,603 VOLUNTEER HOURS
7,000 ADULTS (4,060 WOMEN, 2,940 MEN) IN 2018
280 YOUTH
27,101 OVERNIGHT GUESTS
66 BEDS FOR SINGLE WOMEN—11,852 OVERNIGHT STAYS
79 WOMEN HOUSED 2019
12 BEDS FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN
1,000–2,000 PEOPLE SERVED THROUGH RESPITE CARE
72,000 COOKIES FROM SOCIAL ENTERPRISE “PAUL’S MOM’S COOKIES”
90,000 MEALS ANNUALLY
### Education $2,225,188 ($1,381,738 future)

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<td>AFFINITY MENTORING</td>
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<td>FIRST STEPS KENT</td>
<td>Changing Outcomes for Children in Kent County</td>
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<td>GODFREY-LEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
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### Legacy $930,675 ($395,000 future)

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<td>$880</td>
<td>UNITED WAY OF GREATER HIGH POINT</td>
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$1,105,837 ($672,614 future)  

SOCIAL JUSTICE

$16,948 ($33,896 future) • CASA OF KENT COUNTY • A Voice for Every Child

$44,166.50 • CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY CENTER • MORE Must Be Done Capital Campaign

$200,000 • DÉGAGÉ MINISTRIES • Can You Imagine? A Future Filled with Hope!

$59,158 ($59,158 future) • GRAND RAPIDS CHILDREN’S MUSEUM • Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator

$80,000 ($160,000 future) • GRAND RAPIDS HQ/3:11 YOUTH SERVICES • Comprehensive Health Initiative for Homeless Youth

$100,000 • GRAND RAPIDS NEHEMIAH PROJECT • Ignite the Movement Vision Campaign

$98,565 ($102,560 future) • GRAND RAPIDS URBAN LEAGUE • SON Project 2.0

$100,000 • HEART OF WEST MICHIGAN UNITED WAY • Fulton Manor Shelter

$100,000 ($100,000 future) • INNER CITY CHRISTIAN FEDERATION • Community Homes Initiative—Resident Engagement

$102,000 ($192,000 future) • MICAH CENTER • Broad-Based Organizing for Effective Civic Formation and Engagement

$25,000 • MICHIGAN LEAGUE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • Kids Count—Telling Local Stories to Have an Impact in West Michigan

$25,000 ($25,000 future) • MICHIGAN NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION • 2020 Nonprofit Count Campaign

$75,000 • MIGRANT LEGAL AID • Defending Against Hate

$50,000 • REFUGEE EDUCATION CENTER • Hands Connected Multicultural Center & Provider Network

$30,000 • STEEPLETOWN NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES • JobStart

Whenever one person stands up and says, “Wait a minute, this is wrong,” it helps other people to do the same.

GLORIA STEINEM

STEELCASE EMPLOYEE & RETIREE MATCHING GIFTS

$442,950

Thank you Steelcase employees and retirees for multiplying our efforts, one gift at a time.

Learn more about our matching gifts program 🌟
### STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
#### YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30

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<th>2019</th>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
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### STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
#### YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30

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<td>Investment Income:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividends &amp; Interest</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$749,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Realized &amp; Unrealized Gain on Investments</td>
<td>$7,626,238</td>
<td>$755,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>$9,263,188</td>
<td>$3,121,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Matching Gifts</td>
<td>$5,167,818</td>
<td>$4,530,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Management &amp; Agency Fees</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$1,188,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Provision for Federal Excise Tax</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$119,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>$437,711</td>
<td>$388,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$5,605,529</td>
<td>$6,227,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>$100,464,467</td>
<td>$103,570,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, End of Year</td>
<td>$104,122,126</td>
<td>$100,464,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$3,657,659</td>
<td>$(3,105,713)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>