The impact of a global pandemic and seismic social, racial, and political upheavals would reverberate across nearly every sector in which the Foundation invests. Navigating this dynamic and uncertain time would require agility, flexibility, collaboration, and unprecedented shifts in how foundations and grantees work, how they work together, and what’s needed to keep equity at the fore as we faced multiple, complex, interconnected crises. 2020 began with little clue of the extraordinary challenges ahead.

Photo by Damion Van Slyke

Here’s a look back on the Foundation’s work alongside some of the defining moments of a most unusual year.
### January 13

Steelcase Foundation announces 2020 grants...

**To provide free, hands-on, STEM Saturday learning opportunities for middle schoolers in Kent County. Camp Blodgett.** $35,000 (+ $70,000 future)

**For annual membership dues. Council of Michigan Foundations.** $11,600

**To support the Nonprofit Technical Assistance Fund, which provides technical and capacity-building support to nonprofits in Kent County. Grand Rapids Community Foundation.** $30,000

**To increase availability of affordable housing in Grand Rapids. Dwelling Place.** $150,000

**To empower people to connect through art, creativity, and design. Grand Rapids Art Museum.** $175,000 (+ future $350,000)

**To facilitate systemic change in housing security by building collaboration, bringing the voices of those with lived experience to the fore, and remedying the over-representation of families of color who experience homelessness. KConnect.** $10,000

**To support a collective cradle-to-career movement using the power of data to transform systems so all children have an equitable path to prosperity. KConnect.** $125,000 (+ future $250,000)

**To provide free eye exams and glasses for students in low-income communities of Kent County. Vision to Learn.** $50,000

### January 16

To continue support for a program to improve early literacy among students in high-poverty West Michigan schools using innovation and evidence-based strategies. Education Trust-Midwest. $500,000 (+ future $350,000)

To continue support for a pilot program to help tenants and landlords resolve potential evictions and avoid formal court judgements. City of Grand Rapids. Final $50,000 of $150,000

**For 2020 membership dues. Grantmakers for Education.** $2,700
January 21

World Health Organization declares a global health emergency of international concern as at least 17 people have died and more than 570 have been infected by an unidentified illness.

February 11

Respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus gets its name: COVID-19

February 23

Ahmaud Arbery, an innocent, unarmed, 25-year-old Black man, is pursued and fatally shot by three white residents while jogging in Georgia.

March 9

To support a summit on learner-centered design for the 21st Century—an event that ultimately pivots to a virtual 6-week design-thinking exploration and lays the groundwork for a full-scale summit in 2021—Grand Valley State University provides $10,000.

March 10

First positive cases of COVID-19 in Michigan

March 13

Breonna Taylor, an innocent, unarmed, 26-year-old Black woman, and Grand Rapids native, is fatally shot by white police officers in her Louisville, Kentucky apartment.
On March 10, the first cases of COVID-19 are diagnosed in Michigan and within weeks Governor Whitmer issues a stay-at-home order, including the closure of all K-12 schools. For those relying on low, hourly, or tipped wages; those living in overcrowded or congregate spaces; those without reliable day care; the impact is forecasted to be dire. As foundations meet daily to triage a response, the Steelcase Foundation’s trustees approve strategic shifts in grantmaking, including temporary rapid-response funding (as little as 24 hours), greater flexibility in how funds may be used (so nonprofits can better navigate the new realities), and a new COVID-19 funding category to channel an additional $427,500 for emergency needs (from helping minority-owned businesses access relief funding to providing technical support to nonprofits and schools transitioning to online models).
The Foundation approves and funds its first rapid-response grant to seed and support the United COVID-19 Response Fund coordinated by Heart of West Michigan United Way. $250,000.

As the pandemic hits Kent County, the Heart of West Michigan United Way's (HWMUW) relationships with nonprofit partners and its understanding of the community makes it the perfect partner to quickly and strategically disburse needed funds to those on the front line. United Way coordinates a community-wide response and quickly builds a $3.3 million COVID Response Fund supported by foundations, corporations, and individuals. HWMUW launches a process to approve COVID-impact grant applications within 48 hours. And will ultimately distribute $3.14 million to 150 agencies to cover everything from childcare and transportation costs for essential workers to expanded virtual and in-person mental health services for those struggling.

For intensive mentoring for high-needs youth who have spent time in the Kent County Juvenile Detention Center. Realism Is Loyalty. $23,712

As group programs shut down, Realism is Loyalty commits this time to deepen its focus on its intensive, one-to-one mentoring program for youth at risk. The move is an unexpected win for this demographic that thrives on relationship. What’s more, says program director JD Chapman, Jr., the racial uprisings of 2020 create a “safe space” in his program for uncomfortable but necessary conversations about race and equity. His greatest hope: that action follows.

To continue support for broad-based organizing for effective civic formation and engagement. Micah Center. $102,000 (+ future $90,000)

To pilot a community-based doula program to train and certify women of color as doulas, helping other women of color navigate pregnancy, birth, postpartum experiences, and the possible discrimination they face in the healthcare system, with the hope of closing the health disparity gap among Kent County infants. Baxter Community Center. $30,000 (+ future 60,000)

Baxter Community Center moves its doula training program and doula support services online to continue these important programs despite the pandemic. It launches a virtual classroom to provide safe, guided, online learning for neighborhood students whose parents are returning to work. And it transitions its food pantry from a grocery-store model to preboxed foods to accommodate new safety guidelines.
To continue to support a program using arts and digital media to create, explore, and connect GRPS high-school students to college and career. **West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology.** $50,000 (+ $100,000 future)

### April 27

To support small and minority-owned businesses affected by COVID-19 in applying for and accessing funding. **Greater Grand Rapids Chamber Foundation.** $50,000

To fund stories of impact and recovery around COVID-19 through Rapid Growth Media. **Grand Rapids Community Foundation.** $10,000

### April 29

To transition one-on-one tutoring support to an accessible, online format for students most at risk of falling behind in reading, spelling, and writing. **SLD Read.** $10,000.

As school leaders face unprecedented challenges and change, the West Michigan Leadership Academy and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Education Trust-Midwest collaborate to support them through the uncertainties ahead—how to transition learning to an online model, how to manage new health and safety requirements, how to keep students from falling off the digital divide. And most critically, how to address the many immediate crises while remaining focused on the larger arc of equity in education. Unintended outgrowths of the challenging year? Greater cross-district collaboration and a successful, new series that brings school leaders together to go deeper in exploring solutions to persistent challenges in education.

### May 11

To continue support for a program to change outcomes for children in Kent County by ensuring all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. **First Steps Kent.** $50,000

To provide continued support to develop leadership skills among GRPS staff to close achievement gaps and identify equitable systems to ensure all students achieve in school through Harvard Leadership Development. **Grand Rapids Public Schools.** $194,000
Early in 2020, the groundwork was in place for a movement to radically redesign the response to housing insecurity in Kent County—to take on systemic issues, integrate the voices of people with lived experience, and dismantle barriers to collaboration. Rather than continuing to pull people from the river, the Housing Stability Alliance aims to “go upstream and find out why they’re falling in” (Desmond Tutu). The two-year study hits the community just as the pandemic hits West Michigan, creating an immediate crisis in homelessness—shelters close or restrict capacity, people are on the street, and families cannot double up due to fear of spreading the virus. Now the challenge becomes greater still: to pull people from the river of homelessness created by the pandemic and, at the same time, to keep focus squarely upstream to stem the flow of inequity as nearly 1 in 6 African American children in Kent County accessed the homeless system, compared with 1 in 130 white children.
For emergency hotel rooms for families experiencing homelessness while shelters are closed due to COVID-19. Family Promise of Grand Rapids. $50,000.

When COVID-19 hits Kent County, nearly all available shelter is congregate space, putting staff and families experiencing homelessness at serious risk of exposure. And since the existing space has traditionally been available at no charge to families, figuring out how to pay for shelter for 60 families every night was a huge hurdle. Quick action from foundation and private funders allows Family Promise to pivot in a matter of days moving families from high-risk congregate spaces to rooms in under-capacity hotels. As needs grow, the agency more than doubles its traditional capacity—ultimately safely housing 250+ families, including more than 750 children.

For continued support for engagement efforts among residents living in ICCF-owned units with the goal of renters becoming homeowners. Inner City Christian Federation. $100,000

Protests break out in more than 2,000 US cities and 60 countries around the globe following the death of George Floyd, who died, pinned to the ground, under a police officer’s knee

To support innovative funding partnerships and strategic collaborations between the state of Michigan and grant makers through the Governor’s Office of Foundation Liaison. Council of Michigan Foundations. $15,000 (+ $30,000 future)

To support effective distance learning for students Grand Rapids Public Schools. $50,000

Juneteenth commemorates end of slavery in the US. Officials in Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and elsewhere begin to remove monuments that celebrate Confederate leaders
Social Justice Movements Take Center Stage

Following the death of George Floyd and fueled by countless deaths of unarmed Black people at the hands of police, people across the country rise up against systemic racism, abusive power, oppression, and inequity. Black Lives Matter becomes one of the largest social movements in US history. Millions march across the country; thousands march in Grand Rapids. Protests—set against the backdrop of a pandemic that disproportionately affects Black people—shine a glaring light on racial inequity and on our need to acknowledge and address it. 2020 would prove both the challenges and importance of that work.

Photo by Damion Van Slyke
To renew support for a two-generational model preparing children in early childhood development programs for school by ensuring their families’ basic needs are met and providing coaches to help parents be their child’s first and best teacher. Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative. $260,000 (+$260,000 future).

To provide after-school STEM enrichment programming for middle school students. STEM Greenhouse. $30,000 (+$50,000 future).

With online learning likely to continue into the 2020-21 school year, STEM Greenhouse executive director Keli Christopher begins work on five virtual videos that allow middle-school students to continue hands-on STEM learning at home, on their own schedule. Knowing her students are most comfortable with YouTube, Christopher collaborates with West Michigan Center for Arts and Technologies (WMCAT) to create and post short, hands-on, how-to videos (accompanied by kits of supplies delivered to homes). Her work is infused with culturally connected music and visuals and was so successful that more videos are in the works and the Michigan Learning Channel will begin airing them online in 2021.

To support the Grand Rapids Promise Zone Scholarship, which provides two years of free tuition and fees to Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) for any student who lives within the city and graduates from a Grand Rapids high school. After initial philanthropic funding, the scholarship will live in perpetuity through an incremental tax capture. $150,000 (+$100,000 future)

The Grand Rapids Promise Zone scholarship program is introduced just as the pandemic strikes and first-year recipients find that, while the scholarship eliminates the obstacle of tuition and fees, access to technology creates an unexpected barrier as learning goes online. GRCC steps in to bridge the digital divide, providing hundreds of laptops and other equipment to students in need, as well as expanded WIFI access on campus and onsite at other community partners.
July 15
To fund an external independent evaluation of Health Net's impact on clients and community. Health Net of West Michigan. $35,000

For annual support of the Heart of West Michigan United Way. $450,000

To provide economic opportunities for disconnected young adults—especially young men of color—who may experience barriers that prevent them from obtaining living-wage jobs. Steepletown Neighborhood Services. $50,000 (+ $50,000 future)

For annual support of the United Way of Athens and Limestone County. $52,525

July 27
To support Project Freezer Food Storage in response to increased food insecurity and unplanned 40% increase in demand for grocery delivery in northern Kent County as a result of COVID-19. Local Impact. $2,500

August 4
To provide continued support for the mental and physical health needs of homeless youth experiencing housing insecurity, stress, and isolation due to the pandemic. AYA Youth Collective in collaboration with Health Net of West Michigan. $80,000 (+ $80,000 future)

August 23
Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man was shot and seriously injured by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in front of his three sons; the shooting triggered rallies, marches, and clashes with police in Kenosha and elsewhere.
Our deepest thanks to Julie Ridenour who announced her intention to retire at year’s end after eight successful years as president of the Steelcase Foundation.

As I look back on those years, I am grateful for Julie’s deep understanding of the inequities in our communities and her persistent work in helping us foster greater equity through funding, collaboration, innovation, and vision.

Julie’s reach extends beyond the Foundation and into our communities and policy centers—from chairing the Public Policy Committee of the Council of Michigan Foundations, to helping to hold the State of Michigan accountable for the future of public education of its youngest students, to her involvement in the complex issues around homelessness and housing insecurity in West Michigan, Julie’s work has been about systems change and impact.

Thank you, Julie, for nearly a decade of tough work on behalf of the underserved and underrepresented. You will be missed both here at the Foundation and across the nonprofit community.

Our best wishes go with you.

Kate Pew Wolters
Chair
Steelcase Foundation
School shutdowns in the spring further exposed the already existing inequities in students’ access to education. As some form of distance learning looks likely for the fall, nonprofits and schools are pivoting plans and resources to train educators in new technologies, help bridge the digital divide, provide critical mentoring and tutoring virtually, and address this disruption to education that has impacted students, families, and teachers alike. There is a continued need to address the social and emotional impacts of the pandemic as well as widespread unfinished learning resulting from already inequitable systems both inside and outside of K12 education.

September 10

To provide continued support to improve outcomes for ELL students by engaging parents, removing trust barriers, reducing reliance on their children for translation, and teaching skills to support their children’s success in school. Kentwood Public Schools, $65,000

To provide continued support to Godfrey Lee Early Childhood Center’s efforts to serve more students, expand programming, and increase literacy support for elementary school students. Affinity Mentoring, $25,000

Affinity Mentoring moves its literacy support and mentoring services online to ensure continued support for students at Godfrey Lee Early Childhood Center during the pandemic.
For continued support of efforts to secure the orchestra's financial wellbeing for the future. **Grand Rapids Symphony.** $175,000 (+ $175,000 future)

**To help young men of color ages 16-28 overcome barriers they face in finding steady employment and long-term economic success.** **Urban League of West Michigan.** $100,580 (+ $2,000 future)

**October 8**

FBI announces arrest of 13 men suspected of orchestrating a far-right domestic terror plot to kidnap Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer and overthrow the state government in response to strict lock-down orders.

**October 12**

**To build and refine professional development and scholarship opportunities for** **Vibrant Futures** (formerly Camp Fire West Michigan 4C). $65,000 (+ $100,000 future)

**To renovate the early childhood wing in the 415 Franklin project which provides 72 childcare slots for children of low-income families, as well as 41 affordable housing units and community meeting space.** **Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative.** $220,000

**To help realize diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging goals through an extensive assessment, benchmarking, training, and tracking process.** **Frederik Meijer Gardens.** $38,350

**To strengthen the voices and expand the influence of West Michigan advocates during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond through advocacy training.** **Michigan League for Public Policy.** $25,000 (+ $25,000 future)

**To support neighborhood-based 1:1 tutoring, academic and mentoring support, and clubs to engage students in their interests and help them succeed in school.** **Oakdale Neighbors.** $25,000 (+ future $50,000)

Oakdale Neighbors had to close down its physical operations at the start of the pandemic, but still find ways to provide services needed now, more than ever, in a community that was already struggling, explains Rev. Kenneth Hoskins, executive director. “Our Learning Cafe program is a great example. It supplied a computer to every student without access to one, facilitated the transition to learning online, tutored at-risk youth via Zoom, hired a former student to translate for refugee families, and employed a GVSU intern to assist ESL students virtually.” In the last quarter of 2020, 100 students will log on to the Learning Cafe for support and mentoring, including 25 for one-on-one tutoring and five specifically focused on college prep.
To increase capacity for early childhood education for children of refugee backgrounds through a nationally unique model that emphasizes culturally and linguistically responsive care in center and home-based childcare settings. **Refugee Education Center.** $100,000 (+ $200,000 future)

To transform communication between students, teachers, and staff using the evidence-based RULER program for emotional intelligence developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. **Wyoming Public Schools.** $54,000

“The pandemic has only strengthened our belief that the RULER program will be a valuable asset to our district. It teaches us how to recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate feelings,” says Wyoming Public Schools' Jason Maas. “As both an American and an educator, I can’t think of a time when the ability to safely express one’s feelings and empathize with the feelings of others has been more important than it is right now.”

To provide added technical support to nonprofits navigating COVID-19-related assistance, including CARES Act and PPE. **Grand Rapids Community Foundation.** $5,000

October 13

After further local protests breakout following the failure to charge officers for killing Breonna Taylor, Grand Rapids City Commission takes up a request to designate Monroe Center “Breonna Taylor Way”

October 15

To continue to **fund use of the Museum of Science Engineering is Elementary STEM curriculum for Kentwood’s afterschool programming. Kentwood Public Schools.** $19,250 (+ $20,575 future)

November 7

Joe Biden declared winner of the presidential election: America elects first African American, first Asian American, and third female vice presidential candidate in history. Concerns begin over peaceful and orderly transition of power.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 19</td>
<td>For continued support of Limestone County's <em>Suicide Prevention Education Project</em>. Crisis Services of North Alabama, Inc. $6,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To continue to <em>fund a full-time accessibility and inclusion coordinator</em>. Grand Rapids Children's Museum. $59,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>To continue efforts to <em>mobilize nonprofits in West Michigan to encourage participation in the 2020 Census</em>, particularly among those hardest to count. Michigan Nonprofit Association. $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To continue support for a program to <em>improve GR urban schools through leadership development</em> that strengthens capacity to support learning and achievement, particularly for the most disadvantaged students. The Leadership Academy. $336,000 (+ $315,400 future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>First American vaccinated against COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 21</td>
<td>City of Grand Rapids forces homeless people to abandon a tent city erected at Heartside Park which had grown to 100 people due to overcrowded shelters and the impact of COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 31</td>
<td>US experiences the deadliest month of the pandemic with 65k confirmed virus-related deaths. The US leads the world with more than 19 million cases and 334,116 deaths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2020 Changed the World As We Know It

While we may be in the same storm, 2020 made it clear, we are not in the same boat. Social distancing is a privilege. Access to technology is deeply unequal. Deep-seated racism has poisoned our systems and the pandemic has disproportionately harmed Black and Brown people. 2020 laid bare in new ways the divisions that have long existed in our communities.

If it’s true that 2020 has changed the world forever, it is also true that as grant makers we have both the responsibility and opportunity to ensure that change will be for the good. There’s been too much won and lost this year to simply go back to the way things were.

Photo by Isabel Media Studios
Board of Trustees

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Mary Anne Hunting
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Kate Pew Wolters, Chair

Staff

Daniel Williams, President

Leslie Schoen, Foundation Administrator and Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Katie Daniels, Grant Analyst
$5,155,251
Grant Totals

$2,394,763
Education
(+ $1,900,975 future)

$853,780
Social Justice
(+ $315,896 future)

$1,479,208
Legacy*
(+ $805,000 future) *Includes 2020 Matching Gifts ($567,383.32), as well as grants to Grand Rapids Whitewater and CASA to be paid in fiscal year 2021

$427,500
COVID-19
# 2020 Statements of Financial Activities

## Statements of Financial Position

**Year Ended November 30**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</td>
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<td>Pending Trade Receivables</td>
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<td>Investments, at Fair Value</td>
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<td>Federal Excise Tax Refundable</td>
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<td>Loan Receivable</td>
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<td>$270,872</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$107,121,478</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liabilities: Grants Payable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets: Unrestricted</td>
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<td>$104,122,126</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$144,144,478</td>
<td>$107,121,478</td>
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## Statements of Activities

**Year Ended November 30**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
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<td>In-Kind Contributions</td>
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<td>$406,950</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>$1,230,000</td>
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<td>Investment Income:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dividends &amp; Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Realized &amp; Unrealized Gain on Investments</td>
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<td>$7,626,238</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
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<td>$9,263,188</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Matching Gifts</td>
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<td>$5,167,818</td>
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<td>Investment Management &amp; Agency Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Provision for Federal Excise Tax</td>
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<tr>
<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>$496,908</td>
<td>$437,711</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$5,674,678</td>
<td>$5,605,529</td>
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</table>

Net Assets, Beginning of Year | $104,122,126 | $100,464,467 |
Net Assets, End of Year | $111,122,607 | $104,122,126 |
Increase in Net Assets | $7,000,481 | $3,657,659 |