

## At The Drive-In

Outside, big screen, cars parked and popcorn in hand. The **Berrien Community Foundation's 68th Annual Meeting & Celebration** held as a drive-in movie at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center parking lot was a fitting way to commemorate 2020.

"We still wanted to gather and talk about the work that has been done this year to help the community," said Lisa Cripps-Downey, BCF President. "Like many of the other things we have done this year, we had to find a creative and safe way to make it happen."

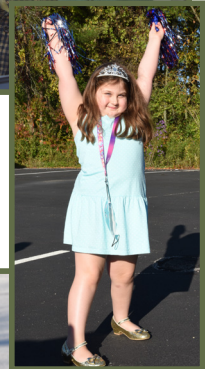
The Berrien Community Foundation provided over \$7.3 million in grants during 2019. In 2020, the Foundation has provided over \$160,000 in scholarships to local students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Berrien Community Foundation gave a \$50,000 grant and partnered with United Way of Southwest Michigan and South Haven Community Foundation to oversee the Southwest Michigan Cares Fund. Jointly, the Southwest Michigan Cares Fund has raised just over \$1 million. To date, grants of almost \$600,000 have been made to local organizations for basic needs, utilities, rent and mortgage assistance. Grants continue to be made weekly to support community needs.

The Foundation also partnered with Cornerstone Alliance with a \$60,000 grant for the Rent And Mortgage Payment Program to provide interest-free loans to local businesses and nonprofit organizations struggling during COVID-19.

"We had to re-think business as usual and we had to dig in," Cripps-Downey said of Berrien Community Foundation's COVID-19 response. "We talk about BCF helping resources meet needs - it absolutely had to happen this year, and it did."



**Above:** Mark and Jean Penwell enjoy popcorn and a show.



**Right:** Camille Glisson joins the BCF Celebration

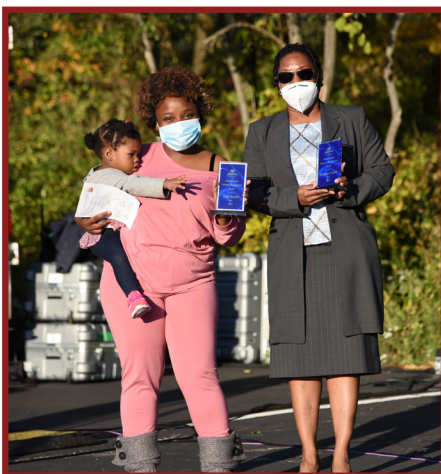


**Above:** John Mayfield relaxes and takes in the show.



**Right:** Lisa Cripps-Downey waves to the BCF Drive-in crowd.

## Congratulations Golden Acorn Excellence Award Winners!



**Traci Burton and M'Shannon Rockette**, who volunteered to create an award winning Census video and creative Census 2020 events, received the **2020 Golden Acorn Award for Volunteerism**. Their efforts and dedication helped to increase the number of people filling out the census and secure millions in census-based funding for the next decade.

"Their efforts resulted in a total of \$14 million in census-based funding for our community over the next 10 years," said BCF Board Member Phil Maki as he thanked them and presented the award.

In addition, **Meals on Wheels of Southwest Michigan** received the 2020 Golden Acorn Excellence Award for their work to care for vulnerable senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

# Big Winners!

## BCF Awards \$175,000 with Three Large Grants



The \$50,000 **Stephen E. Upton Love Your Community Grant** was presented to **YMCA of Greater Michiana**. The grant will support a new daycare program for low and middle income families in Niles with a new model to help make daycare more affordable.

The Stephen E. Upton Love Your Community Grant is presented each year to address a crucial community need.

“Thank you for this recognition of the work we are doing,” said Mark Weber, Executive Director of the YMCA of Greater Michiana. “We were called to provide first responders daycare and we brought the solution. Now we will be able to provide quality daycare to low-income families.”



**Neighbor by Neighbor**, a nonprofit focused on basic needs for residents of Harbor Country and beyond, was awarded the \$75,000 **Alamar Nonprofit Sustainability Grant**. In its second year, the Alamar Grant is \$75,000 given over three years - \$25,000 each year - to support nonprofits as they seek creative ways to take care of employees and find organizational sustainability. This grant will allow the organization to focus on staff support, board development and fundraising.

“We are extraordinarily grateful,” said Neighbor by Neighbor Director Linnea Berg. “We had challenges before COVID, but now with this we will have stability.”



The **Berrien Community Foundation and the Frederick S. Upton Foundation** partnered to provide a surprise \$50,000 grant to **The Children's Advocacy Center of Southwest Michigan**. The grant will help create programming to enhance child abuse prevention programs needed during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

“We are just so excited and thrilled,” said Jamie Rossow, Executive Director of The Children's Advocacy Center. “This will allow us to provide prevention and intervention on the road with added technology.”



## Backpacks For Good Expands

### Coloma, Watervliet, Niles and Brandywine Schools drive thru for school supplies

In August, BCF provided over **1,600 backpacks filled with school supplies** for families to help them get ready for the school year. The drive-thru event let kids pick their favorite color backpack and a mobile food pantry helped stock the cupboards.

BCF partnered with the **DeGroot Family Foundation** in Coloma and Watervliet and the **Frederick S. Upton Foundation** in Niles to make the events happen. Volunteers masked up and helped at the event and before by packing backpacks and pencil bags. High school students and teachers pitched in to pack the backpacks and distribute.

“This event was so important,” said BCF Program Manager Susan Matheny. “Some families are really struggling right now. These supplies will lighten the burden and the food pantry was a great way to re-stock on fresh produce and get ready to head back to school.”