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Kent County Allocates CARES ACT Funding to Community Violence Prevention Grant Program

(Grand Rapids, Mich. – October 14, 2020) – The Kent County Board of Commissioners recently allocated \$500,000 of CARES Act funding to community violence prevention grants to help stem the increasing rates of violence occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant program will be administered by the Heart of West Michigan United Way.

“We have seen a rise in violent crime throughout the County since the start of the pandemic,” said Kent County Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young. “We need to work together as a community on prevention and education initiatives that can help reduce the incidents that result in violence.”

The Community Violence Prevention Grant Program will assist nonprofit organizations in preventing violent behaviors from occurring, stopping the progression of violence, and rehabilitating individuals with established violent behavior. To receive a grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a 501(c)(3) based in Kent County
- Been in existence for at least one year
- Deliver all programming in Kent County
- Comply with all applicable state and federal laws
- Provide a written summary of the project and its outcomes in January 2021

A selection committee comprised of Kent County leaders, law enforcement, and community members will award grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000.

“Ensuring we have a safe community is a fundamental role of government. However, we alone cannot solve the spike in violent crimes that is occurring because of COVID-19,” said Kent County Board of Commissioners Chair Mandy Bolter. “It was a priority for the Board to support local, grassroots programs that are working to make our communities safe for all.”

Grant applications are due to the Heart of West Michigan United Way by noon on Monday, October 19, 2020 and all funds must be expended by December 15, 2020 pursuant to federal requirements. Organizations can apply at www.hwmuw.org/community-violence-prevention-grant.

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