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## **Kent County Announces First Round Awardees in Community Violence Prevention Grant Program**

**(Grand Rapids, Mich. – November 18, 2020)** – Kent County and Heart of West Michigan United Way (HWMUW) announced today the grant recipients of the [Community Violence Prevention Grant Program](#). Seven nonprofits were awarded grants ranging from \$15,000 to \$150,000.

The Kent County Board of Commissioners allocated \$500,000 of CARES Act funding to the Community Violence Prevention Grant Program to help stem the increasing rate of violence occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grants support local 501(c)(3) organizations that work to prevent violent behaviors from occurring, stop the progression of violence and rehabilitate individuals with established violent behavior.

“Keeping our residents and communities safe is a top priority for the Kent County Board of Commissioners,” said Chair Mandy Bolter. “We are proud to make these resources available to community organizations who are working tirelessly to develop innovative solutions that make our neighborhoods safer.”

Kent County contracted with HWMUW to review funding applications and administer the grants. The seven Kent County nonprofits that qualified for grant funding are:

1. [Bethany Christian Services of Michigan](#)
2. [Boys & Girls Club of Grand Rapids Youth Commonwealth, Inc.](#)
3. [Edge Urban Fellowship](#)
4. [Grand Rapids Urban League](#)
5. [New City Kids, Inc.](#)
6. [Muse Ed \(Mus\(ed\)\)](#)
7. [YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids](#)

“The agencies receiving funds have established track records in transforming our community,” said Michelle Van Dyke, president & CEO of Heart of West Michigan United Way. “They serve as leaders in preventing violence, facilitators of diversion efforts and mentors for local youth. Together, we will educate and support Kent County residents to ensure the place we call home becomes safer and stronger than ever before.”

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## **About Kent County**

The County of Kent government serves a diverse population of more than 650,000 residents, making it the fourth largest county in Michigan. The County provides a wide range of essential services in the following areas: law enforcement, correctional facility, three court systems, elections, social services, public health, park system and vital records. Additionally, it has operating agreements for the maintenance of County drains, solid waste and road, mental health services, and with the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and John Ball Zoo. To learn more about Kent County services, visit [www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com).

## **About Heart of West Michigan United Way**

Heart of West Michigan United Way unites community resources to reduce poverty in Kent County. Founded in 1917 and locally operated, Heart of West Michigan United Way has been an integral part of Kent County for over 100 years and plays a unique role in connecting community resources to pressing community needs through direct programming, community engagement, and partnerships with local nonprofit agencies, companies, donors, and volunteers.