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Community Foundation Celebrates One Year Anniversary of Rotary Park *Downtown riverfront park gets constant use during pandemic*

Lansing, Mi. — As the Capital Region Community Foundation celebrates the one year anniversary of Rotary Park on August 28, Foundation leaders are thrilled about the park’s popularity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We created Rotary Park as the start of a vibrant and user-friendly riverfront, part of a bigger goal to attract and retain a talented workforce for our region,” said Laurie Baumer, Community Foundation executive vice president. “Immediately the park became a sensation for residents and visitors of all ages, races, and physical abilities. Now during COVID, visitation has exploded. Outdoor spaces like Rotary Park have become essential for our physical and mental well-being.”

In partnership with the City of Lansing and several corporate sponsors, the Foundation led the fundraising, design and construction of the \$1.8 million Rotary Park, located in downtown Lansing on the Grand River, between the Lansing Center and the Shiawassee Street Bridge. Unlike any other park in the region, Rotary Park features a plaza with a large fireplace, a sand beach, a magical lighted forest, a lighted venue under the bridge for small concerts and events, and an ADA-accessible kayak launch. The park is also home to River Town Adventures, a small business that rents kayaks and bicycles.

“Out of 111 parks in the city of Lansing, Rotary Park has been the heaviest used since it opened a year ago,” said Brett Kaschinske, director of Lansing’s Parks and Recreation Department. “Rotary Park has features and amenities that no other parks have, so it’s constantly used for meetings, picnics and exercise. It’s one park during the day and another park at night with the cool lighting.”

Rotary Park is open from dawn to dusk every day and is free to the public.

At the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) annual dinner in February, the Community Foundation was the recipient of LRCC’s Community Impact Award for the Foundation’s leadership in the development of Rotary Park.

Rotary Park’s financial contributors included: Rotary Club of Lansing Foundation, Delta Dental of Michigan, Dewpoint, Red Cedar Investment Management, Auto-Owners Insurance, Gillespie Group, Team Lansing Foundation and the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, and several individual donors. In addition, the Lansing Brownfield Redevelopment Authority awarded \$343,000 for the park, and Ingham County Parks Board allocated \$100,000 toward bank stabilization, bringing total riverfront investments to almost \$3 million to date. A Wieland retiree, the late Dennis Anderson, volunteered his time and expertise as project manager.

In 2017, the Foundation commenced a major placemaking initiative to revitalize Lansing’s riverfront to create a vibrant thriving region where people want to visit and live. After two years of fundraising and

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planning, the Foundation raised over \$1 million from private donors for all riverfront projects, which the Foundation matched dollar for dollar. The Foundation also established a fund to help the City of Lansing maintain the park's amenities, and contributed staffing to oversee the park's design and construction.

The Community Foundation is passionate about creating vibrant, thriving communities throughout Michigan's capital region. The Foundation serves donors to meet their unique charitable goals, supports area nonprofits with grants and coaching, and leads innovative projects that drive community growth. The Community Foundation (also known as the Capital Region Community Foundation) is a tax-exempt public charity whose mission is to lead philanthropic solutions that build vibrant communities in Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties.