



**VENTURE
NORTH**

PRESS RELEASE

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LEELANAU TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY FOUNDATION COMPLETES SECOND ROUND OF GRANTS TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES HURT BY COVID PANDEMIC

NORTHPORT, MICHIGAN – Eight small businesses near the tip of Michigan’s Leelanau Peninsula are recipients of Regional Resiliency Program grants, thanks to the unflagging commitment and resources of the Leelanau Township Community Foundation.

“For 75 years this organization has had one primary focus; that being to do all that we can to support the quality of life and well-being of this very special area,” said Joan Moore, Executive Director of the Leelanau Township Community Foundation. “With the partnership of Venture North, we are able to participate in the Regional Resiliency Program and provide financial help to our small businesses that have suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Regional Resiliency Program was formed by Venture North Funding and Development in May 2020 with an initial grant of \$200,000 from the Consumers Energy Foundation. Since then, the organization has worked with partners in their 10-county region to make over 150 grants amounting to nearly \$400,000 to help small businesses with nine or fewer employees that have been hurt by the pandemic.

Since that time, the Leelanau Township Community Foundation has awarded \$52,500 to the Resiliency Program, enabling grants to 15 small businesses in the Township, including \$30,700 from the current grant round. To date, 100% of the awards made to Venture North have been turned into grants to small businesses.

“The majority of these businesses have not benefitted from federal stimulus programs, despite the fact that they are critical to the economic backbone of northwest Michigan,” said Laura Galbraith, Executive Director of Venture North. “Most of these businesses have struggled through being shut down, losing summer cash flow, losing seasonal customers as well as employees and having to significantly adapt their operations to stay in businesses. With these grants and the expertise and knowledge of our local partners, we have converted grants and donations from several sources into grants that have helped resolve crisis while also supporting the resilience of small businesses.”

Galbraith said that funds have been used for inventory, payroll, rent or leases, marketing, on-line sales systems and many others.

“We don’t set parameters for how funds are used,” Galbraith said. “Instead we rely on the local businesses to understand what will help them the most with a goal being to get through this winter and into 2021. The Leelanau Township Community Foundation has set a high bar for their counterparts and philanthropy in general to help sustain the essence of their communities.”

“We encourage other foundations, companies and individuals to take a look at charitably giving to the Regional Resiliency Program to keep our small businesses encouraged and alive through what will be a very difficult period,” said Moore. “Many of the people that own these businesses also serve on area nonprofits or on local government boards and commissions and provide jobs for our students. We hope others will give what they can in this historic period that challenges all that we have worked to achieve.”

Venture North Funding and Development is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that specializes in supporting economic growth and jobs by making capital available to small businesses. Venture North also administers the Regional Resiliency Program that provides grants of up to \$5,000 to northwest Michigan businesses with nine or fewer employees. Donations to the fund can be made online by clicking the “Donate To The Fund” button at <https://www.venturenorthfunding.org/regional-resiliency-program> or by contacting Laura Galbraith at 231-357-6776.

Small Business Grant Recipients in this Round Include:

Enjoy Michigan and Porcupine Cabin (two businesses with one owner)

Families First Monthly, LLC

Myrtles of Northport, Inc. Studio 106

Green Spirit Living Farm

The Tribune Ice Cream Eatery

Garage Bar & Grill

The Mitten Brewing Company – Northport

Northport Fitness

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