



## NEW EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY FUND SEEKS TO RAISE \$1 MILLION FOR JACKSON COUNTY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

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JACKSON, Michigan, July 13, 2023 - The Jackson Community Foundation's Board of Directors is pleased to welcome a new charitable fund focusing on the special needs and opportunities for our community's youngest learners. The Jackson County Early Literacy Fund will join over 400 existing funds used to strengthen and build our community through grantmaking to local charitable causes and students in Jackson, County.

The fund was created by Hendrik Schuur and Stephanie Schuur. Hendrik is a former trustee and Board Chair at the Foundation. They observed that, since the pandemic, early childhood literacy scores among Jackson County's K-3 student population have fallen even below historically low findings for the County and Michigan as a whole.

"Given the critical importance of reading proficiency by Grade 3 as a predictor of K-12 success, we need to address this problem, now. Innovative programs that have been shown to improve outcomes, including some starting as early as infancy, are being implemented by Jackson area educators," said Hendrik and Stephanie. "While some of these programs have been funded with grants, the continuity for these programs is simply not assured. We must do better as a community to ensure support for our youngest generation of learners. Having been privileged to live and work in Jackson for decades, we believe many wonderful families and individuals feel the same call to action and will support this worthy cause."

Accordingly, and based on this community need, Stephanie and Hendrik have made a multi-year commitment to kickstart a new Jackson Early Childhood Literacy Fund to fill in the gaps for early childhood literacy programs throughout the County. They call on others to join them and contribute what they can to this fund.

"We hope Hendrik and Stephanie's commitment to fund early literacy programs in Jackson County will inspire others to help," said Monica Moser, JCF President & CEO. "With the creation of this fund, donations of any amount can be made to support their vision and help this vital area of education."

If you would like to donate, go to [jacksoncf.org/donate](https://jacksoncf.org/donate) and type "early literacy" in the description

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**OUR MISSION** is to connect people and resources to causes that build and strengthen our community. For Jackson. For good. For ever.

For more information about the Jackson Community Foundation, go to [www.jacksoncf.org](http://www.jacksoncf.org)

**Contact:** Monica Moser, Phone: (517) 787-1321, Email: [mmoser@jacksoncf.org](mailto:mmoser@jacksoncf.org)

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