

OUR 2023 DONORS

INDIVIDUALS:

Ade, Allen & Patricia
 Anderson, Louise and Donald
 Anonymous
 Apelgren, Brett
 Applegate, Amy
 Ashcraft, Constance
 Atkinson, Joe and Irene
 Bailey, James
 Beck, Bill and Ashley
 Bennett, Betsy
 Berggren, Kim
 Bernock, Jessica
 Best, David & Joy
 Best, Eileen and John
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 Birko, Eric
 Blumberg, David
 Bonney, Roann
 Bonney, Lucas
 Bosch, Scott and Gail
 Bosch, Steve & Michelle
 Bosch, Rick & Liz Farner
 Bradley, Ellen
 Bradley, Kathie
 Bradley, Adam
 Brinkerhoff, Rob & Stevie
 Brown, Sarah
 Brunetz, Robert
 Burton, Deborah
 Butler, Bob and Mary
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 Carroll, Kevin & Donna
 Clark, Elizabeth
 Cohen, Sheldon
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 Connors, Gregory & Allison
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 Davis, Carole
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 Dolbee, Hilary
 Dolbee, Eileen
 Douglas, Nancy
 Farner, Matt
 Farner, Peter & Betsy
 Fisher, Beverly
 Frailing, Mary
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 Frederickson, Marci
 Galik, Sara
 Giacomo, Mary Beth
 Gonzalez, Suzie
 Goodman, Ramina
 Graham, Michael
 Green, Cynthia
 Hamilton, Jill
 Heath, Julie
 Heidema, Rachel
 Hill, Phyllis
 Hirsh, Wendy
 Hoffnagle, Mary
 Holmes, Lauri
 Hooper, Martha
 Houser, Daniel and Mary
 Jachym, Aimee
 Johnson, Phyllis
 Joque, David & Lisa Kasmer
 Joque, Darrell and Jenness
 Joque, Jean
 Joque, James & Elizabeth Zentner
 Kauffman, Elijah
 Kelemen, Kim and Michael
 Keller, Donna
 Keyte, Donna
 Kruis, James
 Lehman, Rob & Molly
 Lemmen, Bev

Madison, Harry and Carol
 Mast, Rhoda & Ora
 McCabe, Prudence
 McGlenn, Dan and Carol
 McKinney, Patricia and William
 McLogan, Greg
 Menlen, Barbara
 Mills, Bruce & Mary Holtapp
 Myers, Stephanai
 Needham, James
 Nelson, Kim
 Newton, Angela
 Newton, Erin
 Newton, Michelle
 Orosz, Joel & Florence
 Oudsema, Carol
 Parfet, Don and Ann
 Peavler, Christine
 Pekala, Robyn and Richard
 Peters, Kim
 Petzold, Ann
 Pinto, Catherine and Matthew
 Pinto, Tom
 Poel, Bob & Mary Jo
 Ponto, Patricia
 Pratt, Nick & Carol
 Probyn, Laura
 Pukk, Chris & Rein
 Randall, Ron and Daniela
 Randall, Sarah
 Rapp, Joan
 Reeve, Laura
 Reid, Jill & Mark
 Reile, Mark and Nancy
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 Semark, Cindy
 Semark, Doug
 Semark, Jordan
 Sergeant, Ron & Teri Giannetti
 Sharma, Namita
 Sherzada, Sahar
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 Soares, Neel
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 Stephens, Sherry
 Steusloff, Bill and Linda
 Stinson, Marjorie
 Stradtner, Gary & Janet
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 Thompson, Gail
 Tiffany, Grace
 Timan, Judy
 Trompeter, Jeanne
 Trout, Karen
 Tsapyak, Ross & Jodi
 VanHorn, David
 VanMeter, Peter
 VanPeenan, Wendy and Rod Malcolm
 Venema, Bill and Carrie
 Wanty, Tom & Mary Ellen

BECOME A PARTICIPANT AT AACORN

Aacorn is a program for adults with intellectual and developmental differences who are 18 years or older, but most participants are in school through age 26. After aging out of school, young adults are often left with nothing of meaning or purpose to fill their days and miss vital social connections. **AACORN has a place for you!**

If you are interested, follow these steps:

- 1) Contact us by phone at 269-348-0985 or through our website at aacorncommunity.org
- 2) Set up a tour and interview at the farm to see if the program is going to be a good fit
- 3) At the farm visit if there is interest, the staff will go through the application process with you.

Wheat, Tom and Julie
 Whitfield, JC
 Whyte, Mary and John
 Williams, Gordon
 Williams, Susan
 Wochaski, David and Margaret
 Wood, Douglas & Margaret
 Yurk, Pam & Arno
 Ziemer, Jane & Bob
 Zoicher, Bryan

ORGANIZATIONS:

All-Weather Seal of West Michigan
 Allegra Print & Marketing
 Blackberry Systems, Inc
 Bold
 Bosch Architecture
 Century Bank and Trust
 Clausing Industrial
 Community Living Options
 Confections with Convictions
 Congregation of St Joseph
 Eaton Corporation
 Family Fare Supermarkets
 Fetzer Institute
 First Presbyterian Church
 Great Lakes Center for Autism Treatment and Research
 Gull Lake Marine
 Henika District Library
 Intentional Yoga
 Jeannie Cleaning
 Kalamazoo Area Retired School Personnel
 Kalamazoo Wings
 LEVELS Cannabis
 Meijer Store #196
 Off The Cuff Catering
 Pease Packaging
 Pfizer
 Rentalex
 River Street Flowerland

Ron Jackson Insurance Agency
 Rose Place Properties
 Rose Street Advisors
 Sheetmetal Workers Local 7
 Stryker Corp
 The Central National Gottesman Foundation
 The Victorian Bakery
 Thrivent Financial
 Tillers International
 Unitarian Universalist Community Church of SW Michigan
 United Way of Greater St. Louis
 United Way of South Central Michigan
 V & V Meats
 Walgreens
 Wayne Technologies
 Westminster Presbyterian Church
 Zen Dens
 Zoetis

GRANTS & CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS:

American Online Giving Foundation Inc
 Beim Foundation
 Benevity Community Impact Fund
 Bui Family Foundation
 Dorothy U. Dalton Foundation
 Dr. Joe Foundation
 Fletcher Foundation
 Gary Sisters Foundation
 Glen C. & Gail G. Smith Fund
 Harold & Grace Upjohn Foundation
 Irving S. Gilmore Foundation
 Jim Gilmore Foundation
 Marvin & Rosalie Okun Foundation
 Miller-Davis Foundation
 Nancy Malcomson Connable Fund
 Perrigo Foundation
 Sophie Strong Foundation/Mark Varney
 Thomas A Todd Foundation
 VanDalson Foundation

Hope Grows Here All Year



AACORN 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

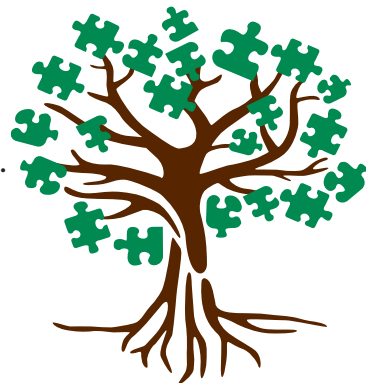
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT



Join me in celebrating the highlights of Hope Growing Here at AACORN throughout 2023. The many gifts of time, talent and treasure have cultivated an inclusive and nurturing environment where our participants with intellectual and developmental differences can thrive, learn, and contribute meaningfully to our community. Every story is a testament to our collective vision and commitment to expanding choices and building community.

In 2024, I look forward to deepening relationships with current partners and discovering more opportunities to invite others to join in our mission and expand the impact of AACORN. Together, let us sow the seeds of possibility and cultivate a future where everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

With gratitude and anticipation,
Mary Pickett



Mary Pickett was hired January 2, 2024

HOPE GROWS HERE ALL YEAR: Enjoying The Activities of Each Season

AACORN participants and staff are always busy, with daily tasks of caring for the animals being a priority all year. Other tasks are more seasonal, such as planting, tending, and harvesting garden vegetables, herbs, and flowers. A favorite springtime job is caring for the newborn goat babies, or kids. Does usually give birth to twins, but can also birth triplets or even quads! The kids spend some time with their mothers but eventually transition to bottle feeding while the does are milked by hand. This is the source of AACORN's famous goat milk soap.

Summer is the season when the most outdoor activities occur, but walks are taken each day all year long and outings in the community happen several times a week. Errands and shopping trips are routine, but special trips take them to indoor venues like bowling in the colder months and places like the fair in the summer or going to pick apples in the fall. Just like all Michigan dwellers know, seasons dictate their own special activities.

SPOTLIGHTING VOLUNTEER KEVIN KUSS

AACORN has been blessed through the years with special volunteers, and Kevin Kuss was one such person. Kevin, a wood crafter, came with the purpose of teaching participants how to use tools and build items out of wood. He set up a workshop in the smaller barn and was a popular person when he came once a week. They made items from bird houses to a rabbit hutch. Thank you, Kevin, for your gifts of time, talent, and friendship.



Kevin (r) helping Nick

Examples of our seasonal activities:



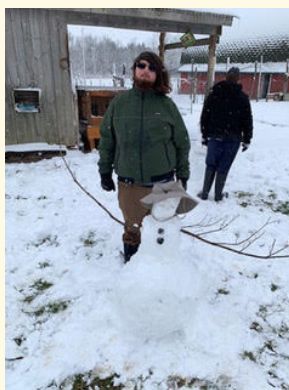
Planting seedlings



Summer gardens



Apple picking



Making a snowman

AACORN Board of Directors

Cindy Semark, President
Liz Farnar, Vice President
John Best, Secretary
Hilary Dolbee, Treasurer
Michelle Bosch
Francis Cervencic
Andy Robins
Jeanne Trompeter

2023 AACORN Staff

Eric Birko, Executive Director
Melissa Alexander, Program Dir.
Erin Love, Farm Manager
Leana Best, Program Staff
Emily Hickman, Program Staff
Sarah Randall, Program Staff

ACCORN INTERNS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In 2023 AACORN enjoyed the contributions and talents of four special interns. Daphne Bos was a summer intern paid by K College as a part of its Community Building incentive program. Three students from WMU's Social Work program worked in the fall and spring semesters at AACORN. Kaitlyn Kline, Jessica Bernock, and Rachel Hansen gained valuable experience in their chosen fields as they brought enthusiasm and new ideas to share with the participants and staff. All of the interns expressed that not only were their experiences valuable, but life-changing. In turn, AACORN received extra help in working with the participants, some of whom require one-on-one support at times. Additionally, our interns assisted with tracking data and other time-consuming projects.



Jess and intern Kaitlyn with kids



Intern Jessica

BUILDING COMMUNITY

We believe strongly in two communities: one--the greater community of which AACORN is a part, whether it be our rural neighbors or urban places we visit. The second community is the one forged at the farm and strengthened every day by being surrounded with understanding staff, volunteers, and fellow participants. Both are vital, teaching us how to be a contributing part of the communities we touch.



Friendships



Volunteering to clear brush on MLK Day



Donating produce

EXPANDING CHOICES

AACORN participants are all adults, but they often have less agency than their neurotypical peers. When they arrive for their program time, participants are offered choices of activities they want to do that day.



Making soap



Feeding the kids

OUR NEW TRUCK!

Faithful donor Pat McKinney re-assigned money donated from her mother Mary's estate to enable us to purchase a great 2020 used truck. Here's Elliot and Noah and the truck by one of their favorite stores, Tractor Supply. Thank you, Pat and Mary!

