



# The Grizzlies Gazette



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**HAPPY  
THANKSGIVING**



### MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### Office of the Superintendent Something Personal

Hello Grizzly Family! I hope you and your family are well! I realize that this week may feel strange to you (and me)! You may be missing the planning of a big family gathering with plenty of relatives and plenty of food. I also presume that there are probably very limited plans as well for going to the store for the excitement of Black Friday deals. And you may be missing whatever other traditions you have enjoyed in years past. Even with all of this in mind, we continue to have much to be grateful for!

Most of us are healthy, we all have jobs, and many of us have families and friends that love and support us! We are so blessed! I am looking forward to a small dinner with my husband, enjoying a Netflix movie on zoom with my children and my mother plus catching up on the phone with lifelong friends.

I hope that you will take the next few days to rest and to get organized. It's an opportunity to (after you clean up the kitchen of course :-)) to clean up all the things you have pushed aside because of the chaos. I know I personally have put many little chores and things I want to do around my office on the back burner because I've been too busy with the business of teaching in this new remote world.

We are reminded by many professionals that this may be the perfect time of year to deal with all the things you may have put off to begin 2021 with a clean slate. This is a good time to think about your 2021 goals, especially in relation to the goals you have put aside this year. I hope that whatever you decide to do this week, that you will take time for yourself!

### Something Professional

I can't thank each of you enough for what you continue to do day in and day out on behalf of our students. As we shared with you previously, we decided (even before the DHHS order) to move all programs to remote. We were scheduled to remain without in-person instruction until November 30th. Due to the DHHS order, we have worked with the union leadership and determined that we will return the week of December 7th. This return to in-person is only for students who began in September in in-person programs. We will continue to watch the numbers of positive cases in our county and the number of our staff who are available to work in the in-person setting. It is expected that the remainder of our staff will return on January 4th and students (in phases) returning to school on January 19th. Again, please note that we will continue to watch the COVID numbers and if there are not a flat number of cases or a decline in positive cases over two weeks, we will move to our contingency plan. Your safety is our number one priority!

**Alena Zachery-Ross — Superintendent**





## Human Resources

**Open Enrollment - MESSA** -We are in the **2nd** week of open enrollment. Please be mindful of the dates, open enrollment will close on November 20, 2020. **If you do not wish to change your benefit plan, do nothing and your plan will remain unchanged.**

**TSSC -19 Grant** Update - Teachers and Support please send **all forms and inquiries** to the designated email: [tssc-19grant@ycschools.us](mailto:tssc-19grant@ycschools.us). Please remember that these payments will come to employees directly from the Michigan Department of Treasury.

**Check Stubs:** Employees receive an electronic check stub every payroll. Attached is the link that will guide you through the setup process for an account in New World. This account will allow you to view your pay stub. It is important to note that check stubs cannot be obtained via email.

**IMPORTANT: E-Mail** - You must **check your email** at least 2 times per day; this is a mandatory requirement. If you are experiencing difficulties with your email please contact technology support at [techsupport@ycschools.us](mailto:techsupport@ycschools.us).

**COVID-19 Reporting** - During the COVID-19 pandemic it is important that if you receive a call from 734-221-1211 (Sue McCarty) or 248-592-7160 (Alena Zachery-Ross) that you answer the phone or return the call. The Superintendent and I are the points of contact for the Washtenaw County Health Department. Remember all actual or potential COVID-19 exposures **must be reported directly** to Human Resources or the Superintendent. You can call the numbers indicated above or email at [smccarty3@ycschools.us](mailto:smccarty3@ycschools.us) or to the Superintendent at [azacheryross7@ycschools.us](mailto:azacheryross7@ycschools.us).

**Absences not reported in AESOP may result in a loss of wages. Payroll and Human Resources will no longer track down unreported absences or issue a check outside of the payroll calendar dates.** Reporting absences is **mandatory** and an expectation of each employee. You **must** report all absences in AESOP including **daily absences and extended medical leaves**. Daily absences must be reported at least **1 hour** before you are scheduled to work. It is a professional courtesy to notify your immediate supervisor as well. Please contact your immediate supervisor for guidance on how to contact him/her. **Do not request a substitute until you have consulted your building administrator.** Contact Lois Nowling if you do not have access to AESOP.

**Criminal Convictions** - If you are arrested any time during your employment with YCS, you **must report** any and all convictions to Human Resources. Failure to report convictions may lead to further disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Medical Leaves and substitute Requests** - Medical leaves whether short or long term must have a doctor's note when submitted for approval to Human Resources. A doctor's note must also be submitted **prior to your return** directly to Human Resources. **It is imperative that you DO NOT request a substitute unless directed by the building administrator when reporting an absence.** The process of not requesting a substitute is new and temporary for the 2020-21 school year. The process is subject to change as we phase in return to school or need to step back to Phase 3.

**The Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA)** under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) requests from staff will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The total amount of time you can be compensated for both leaves cannot exceed 12 weeks or 480 eligible hours combined. You must have been employed for a minimum of 30 days with YCS to qualify.

**Mandatory Meaningful work assignments** are mandatory assignments. You must be available during your regular work hours in order to be paid. Failure to report to meaningful assignments will result in a loss of wages.

*"A team is not a group of people who work together. It is a group of people who trust each other"*  
*Simon Sinek, writer and entrepreneur*

Sue McCarty — Human Resources Director

Self care isn't something that comes naturally to most of us. It is like any habit – it needs repetition, repetition, repetition!



**SAVING LIVES**



## Office of the Assistant Superintendent

As you plan to deliver your daily lesson with your students don't forget the importance of *connecting with them and establishing a strong sense of belonging throughout the lesson. Understanding the importance of connection in our daily interactions with our students is crucial to your success as an educator. **Effective Teachers** always communicate and model their ability to listen to what their students have to say (really have to say). They intentionally exercise the 5 pillars of asking powerful questions. Author Will Wise in his book titled, *Ask Powerful Questions* discusses these 5 Pillars of the Ask Powerful Questions Pyramid.*

**Effective Teachers** always clearly communicate their **Intention**—"I am willing to know you", their **Rapport** - "I see you", their **Openness** - "I hear you", their **Listening** - "I get you", and lastly, their **Empathy** - "With you". In this issue of the *Grizzlies Gazette* Staff Newsletter, I will address how you can engage your students by being transparent about your intention for the lesson. Know that your intent is the key to unlocking your potential for asking powerful questions. It brings clarity to your students about "where" you are coming from. Sharing your intention allows for full transparency rather than confusion that leaves students guessing where you are headed with your lesson and questions. When teachers share their intention they are sharing the following:

- What you are aiming for?
- What your purpose is?
- What you plan to achieve?

When teachers are successful in sharing their *intention with their students (openly and honestly)* they are more likely to arrive at their destination with fewer bumps in the road. When a teacher is clear about their intention with their students, they are saying, "I am willing to know you." This willingness invites others to engage honestly about what they want and what they are working toward. Step 1 is to share your intention for your lesson upfront. State it as a learning target.

Let's say that you are teaching your lesson and Pat (one of your students) says, "I'm confused, what is the purpose of this additional SEMIS project? An Effective Teacher hearing this uses this opportunity to ask an open ended question that invites the student to share her confusion with others.

The **Effective Teacher** would model his/her *intention by asking an open-ended question like, "Pat, I would like to ask you a question. My intention in asking is to bring some clarity to everyone about the purpose of this SEMIS project. Can you tell us more about what might be contributing to your confusion? I think it might give us all an opportunity to see a gap we might be missing?"* By kindly asking a question to understand a student's perspective while expressing your own intention, will allow you to share in a way that is not simply Pat defending her views or those of others.

Remember to stay in the moment. Greet each student as if they matter, because they do. These small details will show your students that you are willing to know them and allow them into your *intention. Finally, finish your lesson by letting your students know that you've learned from them.*

Hope that you find this Learning TIP useful in your teaching. It worked for me as a teacher.

Carlos Lopez — Assistant Superintendent



**Give thanks not just on Thanksgiving Day, but every day of your life. Appreciate and never take for granted all that you have."**



## Student Support Services

Wow, can you believe it's actually November in Michigan?? We haven't been able to tell by the past few days of this unseasonably warm weather. However, please note: This is not a complaint! It's an observation!

We are still in need of two parents to represent us on the WISD Parent Advisory Committee. Please contact the Student Support Services Department if you're interested in serving in this capacity. We can set up a time to meet to discuss what all this implies and what the duties and responsibilities are. You can contact our office at:

(734) 221-1952 or email me directly at [rjordan7@ycschools.us](mailto:rjordan7@ycschools.us).

All of us in Student Support Services wish us and your families a **SAFE and HEALTHY Thanksgiving!**

**E. Ruth Jordan — Student Support Services Director**

## Statewide Field Team (SWFT): Blueprint Installation

The Statewide Field Team is excited to offer four (4) online learning opportunities for leaders and teachers. These are self-paced online courses with a SWFT instructor. The Winter I session runs 11/18/20 - 1/20/21. You may register for any of the courses using the following link: <https://blueprinttoolsandresources.com/events-listing/>

**Collaborative Learning Cycle:** Powerful data conversations can lead to powerful changes in instruction and dramatic improvement in student achievement. This online course focuses on what an effective data conversation looks like using Wellman and Lipton's Collaborative Learning Cycle as well as how to facilitate these important conversations. SCECH Hours – 5

**Teacher Collaborative Routines:** This course consists of several modules designed to develop a theoretical understanding of each practice of teacher collaborative routines as defined in the *Blueprint systems framework Evidence of Practice*. This course will provide not only the research supporting collaborative best practices, but it will also provide practical support and examples that will enable teachers to move from theory to impactful and sustainable collaborative routines. SCECH Hours – 7

**Educational Improvement Through Systems:** \*New course\* This course will address a variety of ideas around how systems in classrooms, schools, and districts support continuous improvement. This course is designed to help you learn about systems by examining a case study, and looking at examples of systems from your daily life and your experiences in schools. SCECH Hours – 5

**Changing Minds to Address Poverty in the Classroom:** is based on the work of Eric Jensen, this course provides background on the effect living in poverty has on students' brains and their learning in the classroom. The course moves beyond the theory and provides practical classroom strategies that enrich the learning environment and increase the likelihood of success for students living in poverty. Participants will explore seven essential mindsets shown to positively impact student learning. This course provides strategies and tools to make changes in your classroom so students living in poverty have a greater chance of learning what they need to succeed in your classroom and in life. SCECH Hours – 12

Please reach out if you have any questions or need assistance in registering for a course.

**Sarah Scott, — SWFT Coordinator of Professional Learning**  
(Ypsilanti Community Schools)



**SAVE LIVES**  
IT'S WHAT WE DO

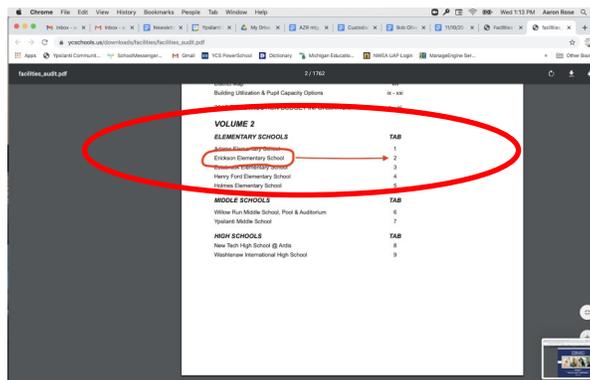
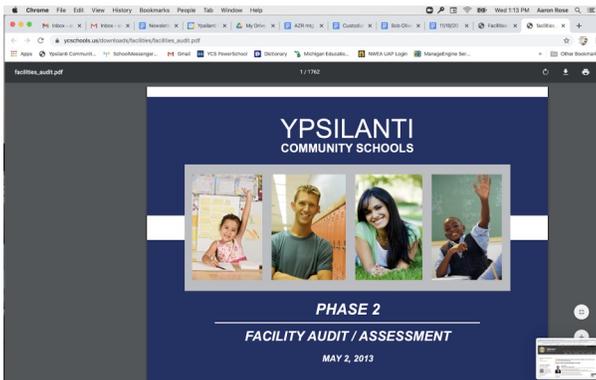
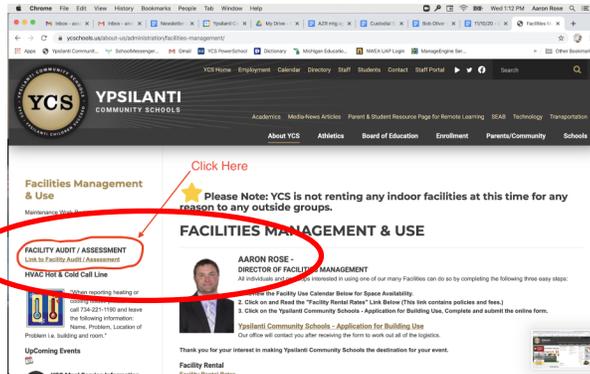
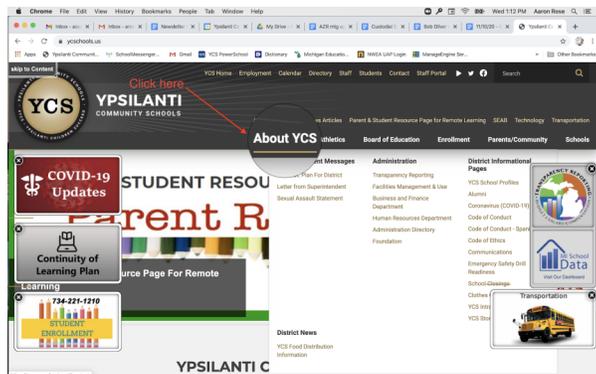


## Facilities

Are you searching for a floor map of your school? Want more information about the building you work in? When was the building built? How many acres of land where the school is located? What is the student capacity? What is the condition of the roof? The YCS Facilities Department has a link to the YCS 2013 Facilities Audit, linked on our the department's homepage. Our department continues to collect information on our facilities

to keep our data up to date and relevant to the decision making process. Please consider taking some time to familiarize yourself with our homepage and the resources within, including the YCS Facilities Audit. The information within this audit has been used to inform the allocation resources and prioritize projects. Below are screen shots with direction on how to navigate our webpage to access the YCS 2013 Audit.

**Aaron Rose — Director of District Operations**



## Data Coach

This week was another full week at YCS! On Wednesday we wrapped up our first remote NWEA testing season! As a teacher you can find your NWEA directly from your account under MAP Growth Reports or you can log into Illuminate DnA to find your data either as a [spreadsheet](#) or through some of the wonderful [pre-built reports](#). Elementary teachers working on IRIP should see the relevant tiles/links directly on the dashboard after logging in. If you missed the session, you can find the [recording here](#).



In addition, we launched Seesaw for all TK-5 students! Now teachers and students are able to access their Seesaw accounts through the Clever. If you already started a Seesaw account, you may want to archive it and re-name the new one created by Clever.

Finally, don't forget about many of the wonderful new platforms that we have adopted this year to better facilitate remote instruction and communication. Remind is one such tool that can be used by teachers, ancillary support staff, and organization leads! Here's [a link to help you get started](#) if you have not yet logged in. Where do you log in? Teachers and students will use Clever. You can find [resources](#) here to help parents create their own accounts and add themselves to a classroom.

**Solomon Zheng — Data Coach**



## Technology

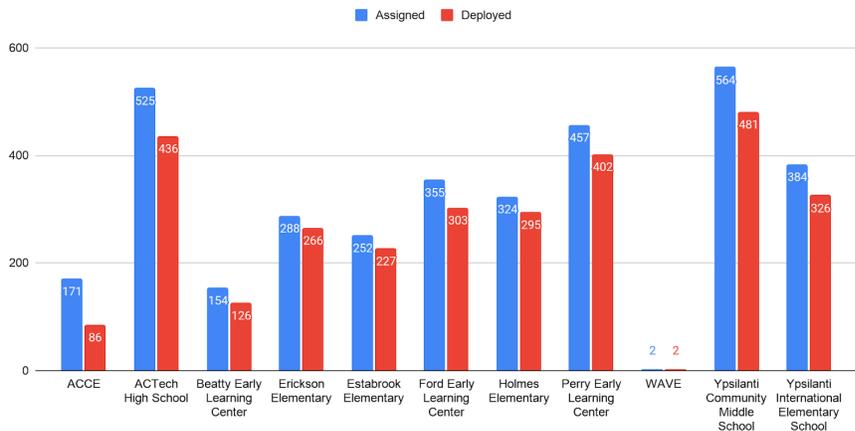
Hello YCS, as we still continue a consistent effort to deploy devices, we are currently at about 85% deployed for students. Which means we still continue to schedule device pickups and swap outs on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Technology is in the process of upgrading the security cameras throughout the district. This means all 420 cameras in every building will be upgraded and we will have a modern centralized management platform to use the system. This project is expected to be completed by spring 2021.

Technology has been awarded a grant to purchase additional hotspots for our families that have trouble with the Internet at home. I am currently working with Verizon Wireless to begin discussion on securing these devices so I can have them prepared for use in December. Details will follow on how families in need will be able to get one of these devices once we receive them and they are ready to be deployed.

**Nik Jackson — Technology Director**

YCS Technology Distribution



## Transportation

Reminder about availability for meaningful work-Ypsilanti Community Schools continue to honor the work hours from the 2019-20 school year for transportation staff up to 8 hours. As a result of the limited number of students attending YCS classes face-2-face we have experienced a considerable decrease in the number of our student ridership. Many transportation staff have been and will be assigned meaningful work outside transportation.



We have transportation staff working as COVID Facilitators at the ELC and the Middle School F-2-F, we also have transportation staff working as paras at the ELC.

Please remember when completing the health questionnaire, this is required when entering any YCS building.

### Acknowledgement Statement

**Please read the 3 statements below. If you answer YES to any of the statements below, please notify the person in charge immediately.**

1. I have symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, or diarrhea.
2. I have had close contact in the last 14 days with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19.
3. I have traveled via aird plane internationally or domestically in the last 14 days.

\*By checking the box, you have read and are in compliance with the Acknowledgement Statement. Thank you for your support.

Tyler Tablet training scheduled for 11/13/2020 will be rescheduled-date TBD.

Please continue to take care of yourself and stay safe.

Wearing your mask saves lives!

**Kim Searcy — Director of Transportation**





## Communications Department

### Mask Up

**YCS:** The holidays are upon us and it will be very

different from years past. Please take serious precaution as we navigate this unusual time. This would include holiday gatherings including Thanksgiving but our beloved after Thanksgiving holiday-Black Friday shopping! Although I support brick and mortar businesses this maybe the time to shop online and avoid public spaces.

The Marketing Department is having a contest for YCS students K-12 grade to design our new billboards at and around the high school. The chosen designs will be printed and part of our new Mask Up YCS project. Please help get our students involved in something fun and community oriented.

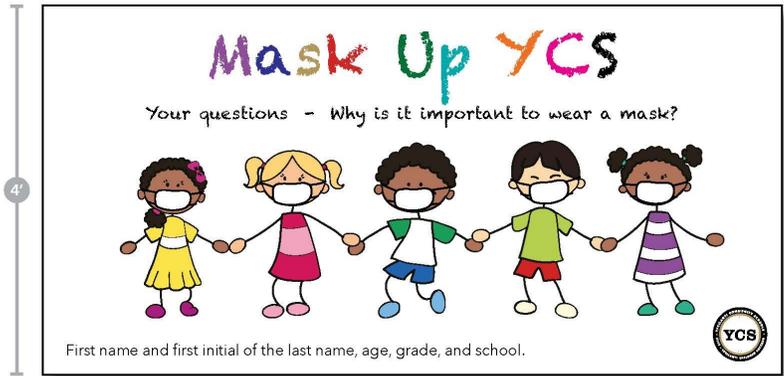
**Taryn Willis — Marketing and Communications Coordinator**



Ypsilanti Community Schools is inviting students K-12 to design the next billboard and marketing campaign!

**The theme is MASK UP YCS.**

PLEASE SEE THE GUIDELINES AND DETAILS BELOW.



First name and first initial of the last name, age, grade, and school.

Students are invited to submit their designs, and the YCS Administration will select the top two designs.

### GUIDELINES AND DETAILS

**Submissions deadline Friday, December 4, 2020, by 4 p.m.**

- No late submissions accepted.
- The theme is Mask Up YCS.
- The submission must include images of masks.
- The submission can be any medium form, including photography, graphic design, painting, crayon, etc.
- The student(s) must be currently enrolled at YCS and in grades K-12.
- The art must be the original work of the student or group of students.
- The final size of the billboard is 4x8.
- Students should include their first name and first initial of the last name, age, grade, and school.
- Students must include one complete sentence answering the following questions **Why is it important to wear a mask?**
- Submit your designs to [marketing@ycschools.us](mailto:marketing@ycschools.us)

## Business Office

Can you believe it is almost Thanksgiving? Now that the Audit is over, the Business office is gearing up for the end of the Calendar year. Yes! It is that time of the year. W-2's are just around the corner. Please make sure we have your current address in the eSuite. Take time now to verify and update your address in the eSuite. As always, if you have any questions or need assistance please reach out to the Business Office staff.



If you have received invoices from the vendor, please cc'd it to [apinvoices@ycschools.us](mailto:apinvoices@ycschools.us). This email is monitored by all of us to make ensure the vendor payments are made timely. If you have any questions regarding the PO process or need help in creating it, please contact Barbara Boone or Renee Carrico at the Business Office.

Please continue to take care of yourself and stay safe.

We hope you have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving !!

**Stronger Together.**

*"Good teams become great ones when the members trust each other enough to surrender the Me for the We" - Phil Jackson*

**Priya Nayak — Director of Business and Finance**



## Food Service

In preparation of the Thanksgiving Holiday, we will not distribute meals from Wednesday, November 25- Friday, November 27.

We will continue to monitor participation at sites and adjust accordingly.

We are working with Food Gatherers as they are creating boxes to supplement the popular combo boxes. We will now begin to distribute produce bags and and/or non perishable boxes on our distribution days.

**We Are YCS!!!!**

**Tiffany Houston — Food Services Director**

## Grants

### Hazard Pay Up Date for Teachers and Support Staff



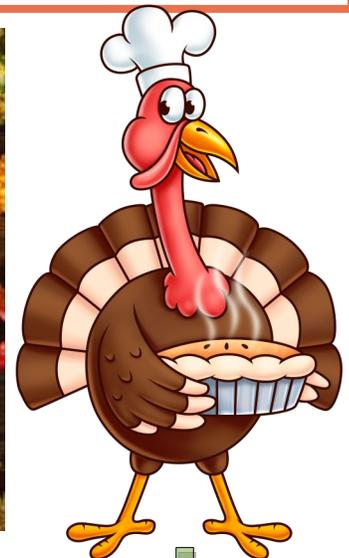
On Tuesday, October 27th, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and state treasurer Rachael Eubanks announced a new grant program for Michigan teachers and support staff. Under the Teacher COVID-19 Grant and the Support Staff COVID-19 Grant (TSSC-19 Grant), eligible teachers that taught in YCS during the 2019-2020 school year can receive up to \$500 and eligible support staff that were employed during the 2019-2020 school year can receive up to \$250.

**Eligible staff members that wish to receive the money must complete the [5734 Form](#) (details on how to complete are on the second page of the document) and return it by December 4th 5:00 p.m. to [tssc-19grant@ycschools.us](mailto:tssc-19grant@ycschools.us) Use this email only. It is imperative to send the form to this email only as sending it other places may cause your application to be missed. Fill out the form completely especially the boxes that indicate your eligibility. Please remember to sign the document. The application asks for your “Personal Identification Code (PIC)” You can find your PIC at the following Michigan Department of Education (MDE) website: <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/MOECES/Login.aspx>**

Here is a link with more information from the Department of Treasury [TSSC-19 Grant](#) and a link to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document supplied by the department of treasury. [FAQ linkSC19 Grant Program FAQs 705856 7.pdf](#)

This grant was announced on Tuesday, October 27th, while the legislature has set a very ambitious timeline, it appears that payments from the Department of Treasury will not be sent to staff members until mid to late February. As we receive additional information on this matter, we will be sure to send these updates in our District Newsletter. Please continue to read all District Newsletters for additional details. Thank you for your patience and all you have done and continue to do on behalf of our YCS students and families.

**Mark Coscarella — Director of State and Federal Grant Programs**



# Watch for our next issue!