

Toyota Inaugural Drive4Five Initiative Provides Grants to Address Community Needs in Michigan

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ANN ARBOR, Mich. (May 21, 2019) – Toyota is awarding impact grants to five Michigan-based nonprofit organizations through its inaugural Drive4Five campaign, building on the company’s longstanding commitment to serving the communities where its team members live and work. The grant awards will help address critical needs facing residents across the state within the five pillars of Toyota’s community outreach program, including safety, mobility, STEM education and environmental sustainability.

Drive4Five builds on Toyota’s long history of community investment in Michigan, where the company works with organizations to help create tangible, sustainable solutions that address societal challenges. In addition to providing direct financial assistance, the company will contribute volunteer hours from it over 1800 team members at Toyota Motor North America Research & Development (TMNA R&D) Ann Arbor- and Saline-based research facilities.

“We’re proud to help advance the mission of our nonprofit collaborators across Southeast Michigan,” said Shinichi Yasui, president of TMNA R&D. “At Toyota, we are committed to giving our time, knowledge and resources to support our local communities. We are looking forward to making a meaningful and sustainable impact across the state, and to join with our grant award recipients in building toward a stronger future.”

GRANT RECIPIENTS

FIRST in Michigan: Toyota FIRST Fund with Teams For All

Toyota will be the first company to offer a state-wide grant to existing middle and high school *FIRST* teams, expanding STEM access in rural and urban communities. *FIRST* Robotics is a robotics competition organization where students, coaches and mentors work during a six-week period to build robots that complete tasks such as launching balls and discs into goals, hanging on bars and/or balancing robots on beams. While teams are given a standard set of parts, teams must cover registration costs of buying or making specialized parts, which can be cost prohibitive and leave many teams unable to compete.

“*FIRST* in Michigan is honored to have a collaborator like Toyota who listens to the needs of our teams and responds. For the first time, we will have a state-wide grant for middle school and high school teams not only where Toyota is located, but also in rural areas that don’t have access to large manufacturing companies for sponsorship. This will help level the playing field in a dramatic way and help prepare students to enter the workforce of tomorrow,” said Gail Alpert, president, *FIRST* in Michigan.

Community Foundation of Greater Flint: Upward Mobility

Toyota will support literacy and STEM education for a community in North Flint by establishing two “Start Your Impossible” community libraries at the Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village ([SBEV](#)) in North Flint. The SBEV offers a community space, safe place for youth and afterschool education for children/families. Toyota team members will help build the libraries, donate books, create an adult literacy center and develop a weekend STEM lab within the space. This grant also will tap into Toyota’s commitment of upward mobility by creating a Flint Fresh Mobile Market stand at SBEV which will be open for five days a week and once a week to the entire community to access healthy groceries in a food desert. [Flint Fresh](#) is a non-profit market whose mission is to bring sustainable access to healthy food to the Flint community. Their unique model is a collaboration of organizations to ensure community buy-in and support. SBEV students will now have access to Rides to Wellness, which offers children transportation to medical appointments. SBEV serves 6000 families annually, supporting 300+ students per day through more than seven after school programs in a community where all local schools have closed.

“Our collaboration with Toyota is exciting because it supports literacy – for youth and adults – in one of the most underserved communities in Flint,” said Isaiah Oliver, president and CEO, Community Foundation of Greater Flint. “Investing in our youth through two-generation literacy programs increases educational mobility of Flint youth. And involving our youth in the development of the “Start Your Impossible” libraries, alongside Toyota volunteers, provides valuable hands-on experience.”

Food Gatherers: Summer Food Program

Food Gatherers is the food bank and food rescue program serving Washtenaw County by providing almost 6.5 million pounds of food annually to 170 organizations and programs addressing food insecurity in our community. Toyota has committed to taking on the entire Food Gatherers Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for this upcoming summer. The program will provide meals to 1,500 food-insecure Washtenaw County students each weekday at 37 sites, and with Toyota's funding, will expand to support the students' families with distributions of fresh produce and groceries. Taken together, the support will enable increased social and educational mobility by relieving families of the burden of food insecurity.

"We are so grateful for this collaboration with Toyota," said Eileen Spring, CEO, Food Gatherers. "This funding allows us to expand the number of SFSP sites, serve more children, and incorporate parent meals and grocery distributions into the program. Because of Toyota's investment, hungry children and families in our community will have access to nutritious meals throughout the summer."

Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley: Rebuild A Community

Building on a relationship that began in 2007, Toyota and Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley completed the full renovation of two houses, bringing the total number of houses Toyota has helped rebuild in Ypsilanti, Michigan, to 15. To date, Toyota has given more than \$450,000 to the organization and Toyota team members have volunteered roughly 15,000 hours. Over the years, Toyota has seen the neighborhood improve in home value, safety and neighborhood investment.

"Our long-standing collaboration with Toyota is one of our organization's most significant relationships," said Sarah Stanton, executive director, Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley. "Not only does Toyota provide tremendous financial support and an incredible volume of volunteerism, but they are invested in our organization with senior leaders that participate on our board of directors and committees, helping us steer and grow the organization to have a greater impact in Washtenaw County."

Huron River Watershed Council: Environmental STEM Education

The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) works to protect and restore the river to promote a healthy community. It will expand to offer environmental STEM programming with integrated learning across classroom activities and state standards through place-based, hands-on learning. Over 1500 high school students from 15 schools across Southeast Michigan will participate in the STEM program and river water cleanup in the 2019-2020 school year. Students will learn freshwater science, including how to test for water quality indicators in their home streams, applying lessons from math, biology, ecology, chemistry. The program will also offer students opportunities to snorkel in the river to collect scientific data alongside professionals. Ultimately, this program will help students understand the importance of river health and what they can do to improve and protect it.

"We have our eye on the next generation," said Laura Rubin, executive director, HRWC. "With Toyota's support, HRWC's programs to educate, engage, and inspire youth and students will grow and expand even further, developing Southeast Michigan's future STEM leaders and river stewards."