



SJACF

PO Box 33
St. Johns, MI 48879

SJACF.org

YOUR COMMUNITY FUND AT WORK

Planting the seed for a better tomorrow.

WHAT'S HAPPENING
FALL 2023

SJHS Students Learn About Philanthropy

SJACF recently helped St. Johns High School bring inspirational speaker Jacob Atem, founder of the South Sudan Health Care Organization (SSHCO), to share his story and mission of bringing health care and clinics to South Sudan.

A group of SJHS students, under the guidance of teacher Barry Palmer, have established a St. Johns chapter of SSHCO with the yearly goal of raising \$1,000 for the health care clinic in the rural village of Maar as they learn about compassion and philanthropy. By working together to give rather than receive, students pledge their time and talents towards a cause greater than themselves and help build a positive school environment.



Jacob Atem and SJHS teacher Barry Palmer, center, pictured with the student chapter of SSHCO.

Jacob Atem shared with students his story that led to the founding of SSHCO. How, at the age of six, he witnessed the killing of his parents and siblings by militants and the 1,000-mile journey that landed him in a refugee camp and eventually to a foster family in Michigan. After college, Jacob, now a Ph.D. in environmental and global health, is using his education to help people around the world. SSHCO officer Ella Koenigsknecht says, "Hearing his story made me realize that this club has a purpose beyond our small town of St. Johns and that we can save the lives of people all the way across the globe."

Fantasy Can Become Reality!

Our idea that we could create a new City Park Fantasy Forest playground has a great chance of becoming an exceptional playground. How exceptional depends on the success of major fund-raising efforts likely to begin next summer and a new playground in place in 2025. Progress to date has been impressive with the City and SJACF securing over \$919,000 in grants, donations, and pledges, but this is only the beginning. "The City getting a \$694,400 Michigan DNR Sparks grant for Fantasy Forest is amazing news for the whole community and especially for the next generations of our kids. With continued community support we can make this dream come true" declares SJACF board president Ken Perrin. We invite you to join us in support of the Fantasy Forest 2.0 Project. To stay informed on project developments and/or to contribute, visit sjacf.org/FantasyForest.



Heather Reed (center) pictured with SJACF members Kate Upton (left) and Meredith Goodman (right).



SJACF Community Service Award

Congratulations to Heather Reed of Heather's Dance Company. She was nominated for the SJACF Community Service Award for selflessly dedicating her time and passion teaching youth in and out of the studio self confidence, team building, strong work ethic, and self expression through dance! Thank you for your role in making the community a better place!

Next: Calling all sports enthusiasts! It's time to recognize the incredible coaches in our community who go above and beyond to inspire, motivate, and mentor athletes to reach their full potential. Nominate your favorite coach at the below website. Add a brief description of why they deserve to win this award. Let's celebrate their dedication, passion, and exceptional coaching skills! Spread the word, tag your friends, and let's make sure these amazing coaches get the recognition they truly deserve.

<https://www.sjacf.org/award-nominations>



Paint by Number Murals Make a Community Splash



Local artist Tracie Davis decided it was time to bring community painters together to fill the wall on the back of Gill-Roy's Hardware! In 2017, the Clinton County Arts council, SJACF and Michigan Council for Arts and Culture came together to fund a mural painted on the back wall. The original mural depicts the rich railroad history of St. Johns. The second frame now includes wildlife common to the area, appealing to our population, especially hunters who may frequent the sporting-goods department of Gill-Roy's. The third frame captures the agricultural part of our community including a combine harvesting corn. Running behind the frames about halfway up the wall will be local foliage including mint, corn, wheat and wildflowers.

Your SJACF granted \$2.5K towards painting supplies needed to bring these next two murals to life. This paint by number mural event created community engagement during Mint Festival weekend, by bringing families together through art.

Meet our Student Board Member Lily



We are honored to introduce Lily Sackrider as our active, voting, student board member for this school year. The energy and enthusiasm she brings to her community inspires us. A senior at St. Johns High School, Lily participates in cross country, basketball, and track, and has been a captain for all three. She's an officer on the Youth Advisory Council, a group of high school students with the Capital Region Community Foundation; a member of Peer Assisted Leader (PALs); National Honor Society president; and on the SJHS marching band drumline. Lily loves running and biking, spending time with family, reading, baking, and driving around singing with her friends. Her favorite thing about St. Johns is how safe she feels in our community.

"For me, community is people banding together to support each other and help the group to rise to its fullest potential."

-Lillian Sackrider

QCD's - Tax Savings for Charitable Giving

Normally, distributions from a traditional individual retirement arrangement (IRA) are taxable. With a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), however, these distributions are not treated as income, becoming tax-free if paid from the IRA custodian directly to an eligible charity like SJACF. QCD's are an opportunity for an IRA owner age 70½ or over and are excluded from gross income up to \$100,000 annually per taxpayer. QCD's also qualify as Required Minimum Distributions for those taxpayers required to take IRA distributions. If you have a charitable bent, using QCD's is about as good as it gets for tax savings. Most custodians will make QCD's of as little as \$250. The devil is in the details, so contact your tax preparer or your IRA Custodian to get it right. If your age is right, QCD's can become the source of all your charitable giving.

