

KDL's bookmobile is just one of many resources for Kent County residents

## Kent District Library provides millions of resources, opportunities for Kent County residents

Despite unprecedented challenges in the last three years due to COVID-19 and a national surge in book bans, Kent District Library has continued to provide residents of all ages with access to millions of resources, directly supporting community development, entrepreneurship, early literacy and more.

KDL serves residents in 27 municipalities through 20 branches, a bookmobile, an Express Library, its main service center, 5,000-plus annual in-person programs and a host of patron-focused services, from in-branch printer/Wi-Fi access and loanable mobile hot spots to early literacy initiatives and an extensive collection of talking books and Braille resources.

Since 2014, KDL has seen utilization of its services grow in all areas, from circulation

and branch visits to card holders and event attendance. In 2022, library patrons saved an average of \$1,348 by using KDL's resources, though its value goes far beyond monetary comparisons.

"The library is so much more than a building," said KDL Executive Director Lance Werner. "We are a place for people to gather and connect, a gateway to ideas and critical thinking, and an inclusive space where all are welcomed and valued.

"We're proud of the millions of resources, programs and services we are able to provide residents of Kent County. As that critical 'third place,' we are honored to give Kent County residents millions of opportunities to learn, grow and come together."

Please see **RESOURCES**, on page 11

## Kent County to Activate Operation Green Light in November to Honor Veterans

GRAND RAPIDS, MI. (October 10, 2023) - Kent County Veterans Services will be activating Operation Green Light in early November to honor veterans ahead of the Veterans Day holiday.

During the week of November 6-12, area businesses and residents are being asked to replace outdoor lights with green bulbs to help support military veterans and to raise awareness about the resources available to them through the Kent County Veterans Services. Now in its second year, Operation Green Light is a national initiative of the National Association of Counties and the National Association of County Veteran's Service Officers.

Kent County Veterans Services connects veterans and their families to earned benefits. These benefits may include emergency funds for unforeseen circumstances like rental assistance, utility payments, food grants, disability, spousal or dependent benefits, burial assistance, and more. Operation Green Light sheds light on these programs to aid veterans and their families in finding the programs that best fit their needs.

"We are excited to continue our success from the previous year when numerous businesses and residents actively participated," said Martha Burkett, Director of Kent County Veterans Services. "In this year's initiative, our aim extends beyond illuminating urban landmarks; we extend a challenge to individuals across every corner of the county to participate."

In the weeks leading up to the initiative, Kent County Veterans Services invites businesses and residents to make a meaningful contribution by:

- purchasing green light bulbs for

- their homes and businesses, visiting [accesskent.com/greenlight](https://accesskent.com/greenlight) for a toolkit of resources to promote the cause, and
- rallying friends, family, and networks to join this initiative, together illuminating Kent County in a vibrant show of support for our veterans.

The weeklong observation ends with the annual Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, November 11 in downtown Grand Rapids. The parade starts at 10 a.m. on Division Avenue under the I-196 overpass. From there, the parade will continue south to Fulton and then east to Veterans Memorial Park where it ends with a Ceremony of Remembrance.

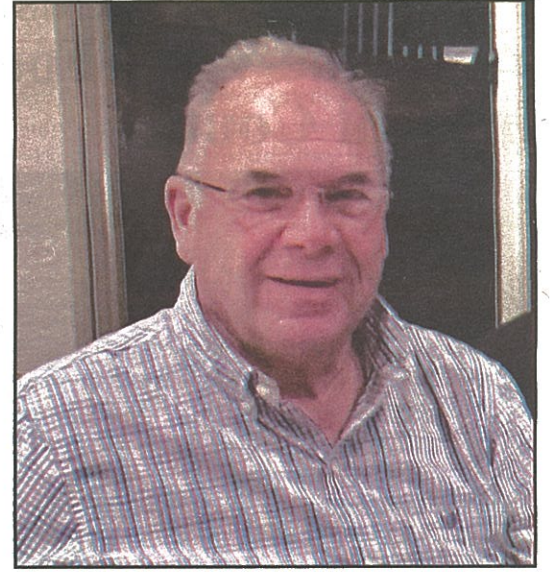
Please join Kent County Veterans Services in shining a green light of hope and support for the more than 28,000 veterans who call Kent County home. Visit <https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/VeteransServices/> to learn more about available resources.



## Celebrating Tom Buteyn as Bostwick Lake Association's Volunteer of the Year!

We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Tom Buteyn, an invaluable member of the Bostwick Lake Association, for his outstanding dedication and commitment.

Tom has been named the Volunteer Member of the Year, a well-deserved recognition of his tireless efforts. Tom has been a driving force behind the scenes, dedicating his time and energy to numerous initiatives that have made a significant difference in our beloved Bostwick Lake community. His contributions, both large and small, have not gone unnoticed. Thank you Tom for all your hard work!



## CORRECTION for article on new pastor at Bostwick Lake Congregational Church

In our October 5th edition, we included a church logo for First Congregational Church in the piece about Bostwick Lake Congregational Church's new pastor. We apologize if this caused confusion to those who have read the Squire and seen two churches listed for the same article. The original article is below.



Bostwick Lake Congregational Church is excited to announce and welcome our new pastor. Rev. Dr. Jonathan White has joined our church family and has already proven to be a great spiritual leader for our congregation. We welcome those in our community without a church home to come and visit Bostwick Lake Congregational Church (7979 Belding Rd., Rockford) and to meet Pastor Jonathan. We meet for worship on Sundays at 10:30 AM, or you can view our live stream at <http://www.bostwick-lakeucc.org>.

Pictured is the new pastor (Jonathan) and two church leaders signing the church commitment document.

## Quasquicentennial

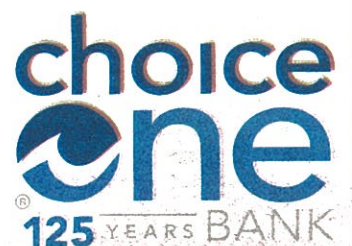
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## 67 ACRE FARM

continued from front page

Development Rights program, which compensates owners of agricultural property for their acceptance of a permanent deed restriction limiting its future development for non-agricultural purposes. The acquisition was made possible through federal funds, donations from Grattan Township, and the Sieracki family.

"We are very happy the Sieracki family decided to be a part of the Purchase of Development Rights program," said Matt Channing, agricultural preservation specialist at Kent County. "Preserving farmland within Kent County ensures land protection and local food security for generations."

The farm has been owned and operated by the Sieracki family for 22 years. Growing corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay on the property, Scott Sieracki decided to purchase the land after he and his wife moved to Michigan from Texas. Sieracki grew up helping on his grandfather's dairy farm, which influenced his purchase of the property from the Downs family who previously owned the farm for 80 years.

"We heard the Purchase of Development Rights program was successful in Kent County and it just made sense to my wife and I to preserve our land for years to come," said Scott Sieracki. "My grandfather, who has since passed, was also very much in favor of this opportunity to protect and preserve farmland so the 67 acres will continue to give farmers access to agricultural ground."

Since the Purchase of Development Rights program was authorized in 2002, the program has preserved approximately 2,800 acres and 29 properties. Farmland in Grattan Township accounts for 800 acres, about a quarter of all preserved farmland in Kent county.

The Agricultural Preservation Board selected the Sieracki farm because of its abundance of prime and unique soils, allowing for a broad diversity of agricultural production and its proximity to other protected parcels. The Purchase of Development Rights program uses a combination of state or federal grant funding, private donations and landowner contributions to purchase the development rights to farmland, creating a permanent agricultural conservation easement.

To learn more about agricultural preservation and the Purchase of Development Rights program, visit <https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/BOC/PDR/>.

## RESOURCES

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In the last nine years, total circulation of KDL's 700,000 physical items has increased by 20%. Its digital collection has doubled to include more than 15.6 million items and posted a circulation increase of 300%. This collection is not limited to books, music and movies; it features a wide range of educational materials including video courses, language lessons, online databases, research and at-home learning materials, Wi-Fi hotspots and a Talking Book & Braille Center.

These resources – and more – support early literacy and education and improve accessibility for residents. At-home learning materials support children learning how to read in a non-traditional classroom setting. WiFi hot spots allow individuals who do not have access to internet at home to connect to online resources, which was particularly critical during the pandemic. Braille resources give individuals with vision impairments a chance to experience the joy of reading.

The library also serves as a hub for thousands of programs, community gatherings and more each year. Program attendance at the library's 20 branches has increased by 62% since 2014. In 2022, more than 5,000 in-person programs were hosted by the library, ranging from weekly storytimes and teen movie nights to mental health seminars and lab experiments for students.


These programs help build community and connection across the more than 440,000 residents who live in KDL's service area. Whether it's parents with young children building camaraderie during an afternoon Babytime, students forming friendships during Teen Zone or young professionals connecting over shared interests, the library provides a safe space for people of all ages, demographics and backgrounds to come together to learn and connect.

To find a branch near you and learn about the many opportunities available through KDL, visit [kdl.org](http://kdl.org).

Kent District Library is pursuing a reduced-rate millage in November 2023 to support operations for through 2034. To learn more about the proposed millage, which is expected to save taxpayers \$3.1 million annually, visit [kdl.org/millage](http://kdl.org/millage).

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# SAVE THE DATE



## SUDOKU Fun By The Numbers

6	4				2		
8			4	3	5	1	
		2			3	9	
7							
	4		2				
9			5			6	7
1	6			5		2	
	8						
			8			5	

Level: Intermediate

To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. To solve the puzzle use the numeric clues provided.

Solution on Page 15

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