



Dear Community Partners and Friends,

We've been receiving some questions about what our current plans are for our 2021 Celebration of Philanthropy in light of the increase in COVID-19 cases locally. In times of anxiousness and uncertainty I have found that clear and open communication is the best path forward. Below, I've outlined our current plan and the thinking behind it.

What we know about COVID-19 in our community

As of the writing of this letter, Ottawa County has a 10.34% COVID-19 test positivity rate and 57.4% of eligible individuals are completely vaccinated. Most new cases are caused by the highly infectious COVID-19 Delta variant with most hospitalizations being of non-vaccinated individuals. The [CDC](#) has issued guidance on decreasing the spread of COVID-19 and so have our local experts from the [Ottawa County Health Department](#).

Celebration of Philanthropy goals

Considering what we know about COVID-19 and our most sincere desire to keep our community safe, we have revisited our goals for the Celebration of Philanthropy. Our standard goals for our Celebration of Philanthropy continue to be:

1. **Celebrate**, honor, and lift up the good work of nonprofits and individuals in our community.
2. **Create** space for a wide range of community members to gather and see long-time friends while also meeting new people.
3. **Help** fund CFHZ operations through ticket sales and sponsorships.

While these three goals remain integral to our planning, we are adding a fourth goal: **Prioritize public health safety through intentional designing of the event experience.**

With these four goals guiding us, we are pleased to share the 2021 Celebration of Philanthropy event will continue and occur at its regularly scheduled date and time.

2021 Celebration of Philanthropy

Thursday, September 9

5:30 p.m.

ME Yacht Restoration

471 Howard Ave Holland, MI 49424

(Virtual live streaming at 7:15 p.m.)

Considerations

We have worked to weigh the risks involved for both attendees and the community at large in hosting an event of this size, taking into account the following considerations:

- Our venue, ME Yacht Restoration, is a 140,000 square foot facility with high ceilings and large barn doors that will remain open to create outdoor-like air flow.

- Every person attending the event is making a personal choice to attend an event of this size and nature.
- To the extent of our knowledge, we believe there is a higher-than-average vaccination rate among our constituents who are likely to attend.

Additional Measures

Further, we challenged ourselves to go beyond “good enough” and design an event experience aimed at giving attendees choice and prioritizing public health safety. Additional decisions that help us meet this goal include:

- **Requesting sick or exposed individuals stay home** – We ask that you stay home if you feel unwell or have been exposed to others who are ill. We will fully refund your ticket and will be forever grateful for helping us minimize risk to others in attendance.
- **Refunds** – We will provide a full refund to any individual ticket holder or sponsor who no longer feels comfortable attending an event of this size and nature or who is unable to attend due to illness or exposure to others who are ill. There is no deadline for letting us know you would like a refund and there will be no questions asked.
- **Additional seating** – We have expanded our seating options to include 50 bistro tables which will be spread around the outside of the main seating area. These are intended for anyone who would prefer to have more space/distance than our traditional seating arrangement of long rows of tables will provide.
- **Modified dinnerware and drinkware**– We have selected high quality, sustainable, disposable plates and beverage cups instead of the dinnerware and drinkware we normally rent which are handled by many people throughout the evening.
- **Masking** – We encourage attendees to wear masks whenever practical. We understand that this event is one where most people will have either food or a drink in their hands most of the evening.
- **Virtual option** – The event program will be made available via live stream, allowing anyone in the community an opportunity to celebrate with us wherever is most convenient for them.

While we believe these are important steps to increase the safety of our event and enjoyability of the event for all, all guests should understand there are aspects of the event that remain similar to past years. Attendance will present a heightened risk of inadvertent exposure to the Coronavirus, which each guest assumes by attending.

- **Event size** – There will be a lot of people in attendance (we currently have more than 750 people registered)
- **Social event** – This is a highly social event with mingling and networking occurring before and during dinner
- **Food staging** – Food will be offered in a “roaming” format, and some of our partner restaurants will likely have lines to wait in.

Each of our supporters will need to make their own decision about their comfort level and whether to attend the event. We understand the wide range of opinions and risk tolerance that community members hold in good faith. We know that many of you will feel comfortable attending an event like this, which is why we plan to proceed with the event. And we fully support and respect the decision of those who are not comfortable attending and we hope that you will join us for the live stream of the program at 7:15 pm.

We live in a time with many different positions on a variety of topics. The Community Foundation has tried our best to enter into these discussions with a posture of listening and openness to inform our final decision. Thank you to those who have given us feedback from all angles as we sought wisdom on decisions related to this event.

Whether you choose to attend in person, or participate in the live stream, I must tell you, this promises to be an inspiring and uplifting evening. In addition to the great food and wonderful people, we have something awesome to celebrate. Well, actually more than one thing to celebrate! We will be celebrating our amazing local nonprofits that stepped up in phenomenal ways to serve our community these past 18 months AND we will be celebrating a historic milestone for CFHZ in crossing \$100 million in total assets to continue serving the community for generations to come.

If you have any questions about our event, would like to request a refund, or would still like to register, please contact me, Jessica Lynch (jynch@cfhz.org) or Colleen Hill (chill@cfhz.org).

With gratitude for your partnership,

Mike Goorhouse
President/CEO
Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area