YOU’RE MAKING A NOTICEABLE IMPACT

When students return to school, they’ll likely benefit from the expansion of the state-funded 10 Cents a Meal program that gives them access to more healthy, locally-sourced fruits, vegetables, and legumes at lunchtime. 10 Cents received expanded support from the State Senate and House (and awaits Gov. Snyder’s budget signature) because of an advocacy campaign launched by Groundwork, and because of your phone calls, emails, and positive encouragement to continue this impactful farm-to-school program. Your voice mattered. It’s a powerful opportunity for schoolkids and farmers across Michigan, and we couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you.

At one event after another, we’re seeing Groundwork’s impact on protecting everything you love about Michigan. At the first ever Clean Energy Conference & Fair (which Groundwork co-organized) last month in Traverse City, national clean energy luminaries highlighted the importance of renewable energy on the local level. Earlier this summer on Mackinac Island, Groundwork and the Great Lakes Business Network teamed with Bell’s Brewery founder Larry Bell, business leaders and elected officials to heighten the urgency to shut down the aging oil pipelines under the Mackinac Bridge. On June 15 we celebrated the opening of our new Petoskey office, and the northward expansion of our food and farming work. And Taste the Local Difference™ recently published two local food guides covering 47 counties, showing how Michigan’s local food movement has grown over the last decade.

It’s an exciting time to be building resilient communities in Michigan. Your involvement is so appreciated. Together, we’re having an impact.

EMPOWERING BUSINESS LEADERS TO PROTECT THE GREAT LAKES

With the majestic Mackinac Bridge looming to the west, Michigan business leaders, U.S. Senators, members of Congress, and teams from the Groundwork Center and the Great Lakes Business Network packed Mary’s Bistro Draught House on Mackinac Island on May 31 during this year’s Mackinac Policy Conference. The reception presented an opportunity for members of the Business Network to recruit others in the private sector and exercise the need to de-commission Line 5.

Larry Bell, founder of Kalamazoo-based Bell’s Brewery hosted the reception, and led a chorus of leaders who spoke about the dangers of Pipeline 5 under the Straits of Mackinac, and the need to protect the Great Lakes — both as environmental stewards and to protect profits.

“Having seen what happened in Kalamazoo, to think of the catastrophe that could happen in the Straits is something I couldn’t countenance,” Bell told the CBS Detroit show Michigan Matters. “We have a small brewery up in Escanaba called Upper Hand Brewery. Escanaba uses water from Lake Michigan. Even if we had a minor spill, the perception that Lake Michigan or Lake Huron water is corrupted would be devastating to our business.”

INTRODUCING OUR FELLOWS

Three fellows recently joined the Groundwork team for a nearly three-month period. Sarah Perez-Sanz is working with food & farming director Meghan McDermott on food equity/access; Farms, Food and Health fellow Katie Wheeler is working with senior policy specialist Diane Correro on Community-Supported-Agriculture (CSA) wellness programs; and Abby Hackman is supporting clean energy policy specialist Dan Worth on clean energy. Meanwhile, former fellow Zada Harris continues to work with program director Jim Lively on the Great Lakes Business Network.

LET’S THRIVE
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ALLISON BEERS

Wherever Allison Beers went in Traverse City, Groundwork’s name, and its work, kept popping up. “When I first heard about Groundwork (then called the Michigan Land Use Institute) years ago, it wasn’t what they did that caught my attention,” said the owner of Event North. “Every time I went to a meeting I was at in town, there was always a really intelligent, thoughtful, community-minded person, and it always kept being different staff from Groundwork! I was pulled to find out what kind of organization would attract such immense talent. So I Googled the organization, I called, and I found out they were stepping in as thought leaders and the backbone organization on many issues I found important.”

As a parent to two young school-aged children, said Beers, the issue that drew her to connect with Groundwork, and become a member, was our farm-to-school work. Beers also enjoyed the Tests the I Local Difference™ guide, “I wanted to know where to go pick berries and learn more about the local farms,” she said.

Groundwork’s effort to educate the public about the Line 5 pipelines and to keep the Great Lakes clean also resonate with Beers. “I love our fresh water. I love swimming, boating and spending time with my family on South Manitou Island.”

PROGRAM UPDATES

Groundwork is expanding its reach into Antrim, Charlevoix and Emmet counties. On June 15 we launched a new Petoskey office to support an expansion of Groundwork’s farm to school, food access, and farmer support projects. The expansion of our farm to school and food access programs will help connect vulnerable children and families in the Petoskey and Charlevoix area to healthy, local food through a series of strategic initiatives implemented in schools, food pantries and meal sites throughout the region.

The state legislature has expanded funding for 10 Cents a Meal and pending Gov. Snyder’s budget signature, will expand the school incentive reimbursement program — originally the brainchild of Groundwork — from 2 to 3 Prosperity Regions. This means more Michigan students will have access to more healthy, locally-sourced produce at school.

Last month, Groundwork teamed up with the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association to host the first-ever combined Michigan Clean Energy Conference & Fair in Traverse City.

Speakers included former Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm—an authority on clean energy policy and the politics of economic diversification—and Mary Powell, CEO of Green Mountain Power, which this year was named one of the top 10 energy companies in the world by Fast Company.

The three-day event inspired attendees to accelerate clean energy investments in Michigan homes, businesses and communities. The keynote speeches and panel discussions allowed participants to hear from experts on a diverse array of topics including municipal strategies for 100 percent renewable energy, community solar, innovative electric utility models, and making solar energy affordable for all.

The campaign to restore passenger trains to northern Michigan is moving along. Transportation consultants are advancing the northern Michigan passenger rail feasibility study, which will give Groundwork the state a roadmap for rebuilding the passenger rail service on the state-owned tracks between Ann Arbor and the Traverse City area.

The consultants will study the tracks so that they can determine what it will take to get trains moving at various speeds. They’ll also evaluate the best places for train stops and estimate how many people would ride the trains. We’ll keep you up-to-date on ways you can support the study. And look for an upcoming storytelling campaign where we will feature people along the route who will be impacted by new train service.

In October, we’ll bring together a panel of leaders to talk about what it takes to grow businesses in our downtowns. The speakers will include McKeel Hagerty from Hagerty Insurance and Dan Gilmartin from the Michigan Municipal League.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Last month, an endowment was established at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, designated to benefit the mission and work of Groundwork. This was made possible through the giving of five lead donors who gave to create this long-term resource for our benefit. The endowment offers a unique opportunity for Groundwork supporters to make a gift today that will advance and ensure its mission long into the future. Leaving a legacy of support for causes that are dear to you is what this option is designed to do. For more information, please contact Amy MacKay at amy@groundworkcenter.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 24
National Writers Series
Alice Waters

OCTOBER 7
Groundwork’s Harvest at the Commons

OCTOBER 19
New Economy project Hosts Dan Gilmartin & McKeel Hagerty