



Building our future by supporting our youth

Our Community's Children

January 2012

Happy New Year!

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." Nelson Mandela



Nelson Mandela's quote really resonates with me as we head into 2012 and I hope it resonates with others. No child should be left without the resources he or she needs to be ready for college, work and life.

It takes every one of us to do our part to ensure that children get the love, attention, and resources for a bright future.

At Our Community's Children, we look forward to providing opportunities that help young people have voice and be active participants within their community.

Through public policy, partnerships and innovative programs, we will act on the recommendations of the Grand Rapids Youth Master Plan and promote collective action toward shared outcomes for children. We are dedicated to ensuring that all children have the knowledge, skills, and experiences that will prepare them for their future.

Join with us for broader partnerships, bigger goals, better data, and bolder strategies in 2012 and beyond!

For the children,

Lynn Heemstra, Executive Director
Our Community's Children

GRPS Superintendent Change

The Grand Rapids Board of Education's Executive Committee has granted Dr. Bernard Taylor, Jr., a study leave now through the end of his contracted term in June 2012. Teresa Weatherall Neal has been unanimously appointed by the Board to serve as Interim Superintendent. Teresa Weatherall Neal is a 35-year veteran of the public schools and served as Assistant Superintendent of Community and Student Affairs for the last nine years.

"We want to thank Dr. Taylor for his leadership and service," said Senita Leneer, President of the Grand Rapids Board of Education. "We have come a long way in a short period of time and much has been accomplished that has positioned our students and the district well for future growth and success."

Interim Superintendent Neal will participate in a listening tour to assess necessary changes and improvements.

"First and foremost, I plan to spend a lot of time meeting with and learning from our stakeholders. I want students, parents, teachers, principals, support staff, volunteers, alumni, and community leaders to know they have a voice that will be heard, respected and acted upon," said Neal.

State of the City Address



Saturday, January 28, 2012

9 a.m.

DeVos Place Convention Center
303 Monroe Ave., NW

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Mayor George K. Heartwell

Call 616.456.3168 for information.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebrations



On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day this year, take time to reflect upon the past, rejoice in the present and be hopeful for the future.

MLK Celebration Service

Sunday, January 15, 2012; 6 p.m.
New Hope Baptist Church - 130 Delaware, SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Admission: Free
Contact: 616.425.4278

GRCC Community Peace March and Program

Monday, January 16, 2012; noon
GRCC's Ford Fieldhouse
Additional program at 12:30 p.m.
Admission: Free
Contact: GRCC's Diversity Learning Center at 616.234.3990

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Monday, January 16, 2012; 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
GRCC's Ford Fieldhouse
Featuring and Bakari Kitwana, Author of *The Hip-Hop Generation* and Rev., Dr. Marvin L. Sapp - Pastor & Recording Artist
Admission: Free
Contact: GRCC's Diversity Learning Center at 616.234.3990

Freedom Riders Screening

Tuesday, January 17, 2012
Celebration Cinema North
5:30 p.m. - Volunteer fair; meet and greet with filmmaker Stanley Nelson
7:00 p.m. - Film screening
Admission: Donation of 1 school supply
Contact: <https://celebrationcinema.com/freedomriders>



**SCHOOL CHOICE
OPEN HOUSES &
FAMILY FUN NIGHTS**

Information booths on Centers of Innovation, Theme Schools, Early Childhood, English Language Learners, Special Education, Title I/Parent Involvement, LOOP/LOFT After School; free dinner and giveaways, face painting, ounce house, balloon-making, and more!

- ◆ Wednesday, Jan. 18 - Union High; 5-7 p.m.
- ◆ Monday, Jan. 23 - Creston High; 5-7 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, Jan. 25 - Ottawa Hills; 5-7 p.m.



www.facebook.com/ourcommunityschildren



**CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS**

**City Commission
2012 Schedule**
*Meetings are held
in the City
Commission
Chambers of Grand
Rapids City Hall at
7 p.m.*

January 10, 24
February 7, 21
March 13*, 27
April 10, 17
May 1, 15
June 12*, 19
July 10, 24
August 14, 28
September 11, 25*
October 9, 23
November 13, 27
December 4, 18

*Meetings held at neighborhood locations to be announced.

In Our Words



"If you're a teen or young adult and have been involved in a variety of programs but need some Direction about your future, the LEAD program would be a great jump start for getting employed."

DeMarcus Williams
LEAD IV
Participant
Creston High School



Our Community's Children is a public/private partnership of the City of Grand Rapids, the Grand Rapids Public Schools, and the community.

300 Monroe Ave., NW; Suite 921 • Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.456.3558 (p) • 616.456.4568 (f) • www.grchildren.us