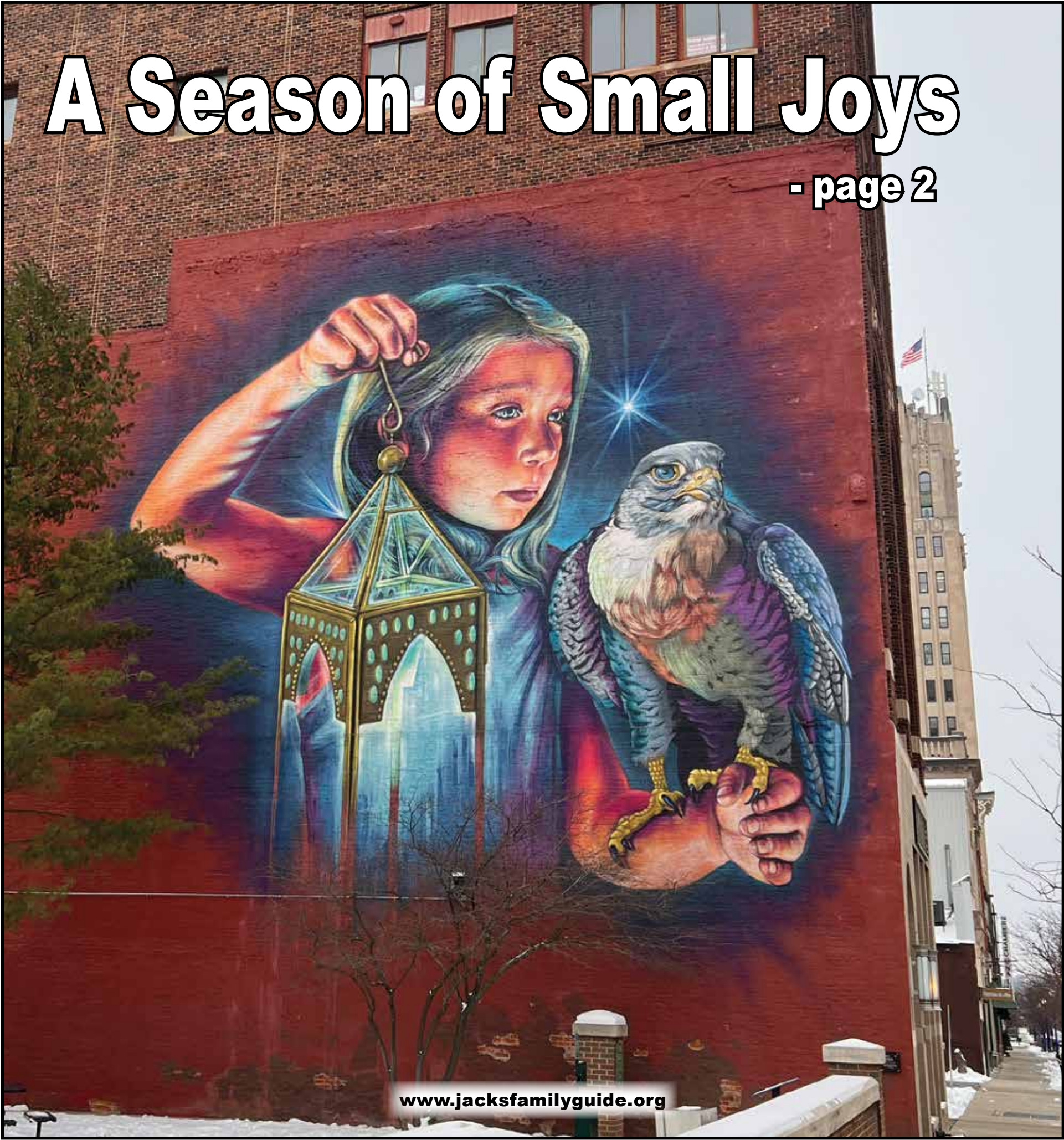




JACKSON AREA COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE SOURCE



# A Season of Small Joys

- page 2

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# A Season of Small Joys

*By Morgan Riggs*

December reminds us that joy does not require grand gestures. Sometimes it looks like a warm pair of mittens pulled from the drawer on a cold morning, or the first sip of hot chocolate after coming inside from the snow. It is the smell of pine carried indoors on someone's coat, the sound of children rehearsing for holiday concerts, and the handwritten cards that appear in mailboxes as if by magic. From cozy indoor spaces to twinkling downtown evenings, here are several local destinations where you can enjoy a season of small joys this winter:

**Jackson District Library**

The Carnegie Branch downtown offers a peaceful retreat from the cold. Visitors can browse new books, pick up holiday

reads, or attend seasonal programs and craft events listed on the library's calendar. With generous open hours during the week, it is an easy place to slip in for a quiet afternoon.

**Ella Sharp Museum and Park**

Ella Sharp Museum provides an indoor setting to explore art and history while staying warm. Current exhibits and winter break extended hours make it a thoughtful destination for families, especially when paired with a short walk through the surrounding park to admire the calm of a snowy landscape.

**Downtown Winter Artwalk and Shopping**

Downtown Jackson hosts seasonal events such as the Winter Whimsy Artwalk Sip & Shop, where local businesses

open their doors for a day of art, light shopping, and festive atmosphere. Even on quieter days, a simple stroll past decorated windows and lit storefronts can be a gentle way to take in the season.

**The Nutcracker at the Potter Center**

For many families, attending The Nutcracker has become a beloved December tradition. Ballet Chelsea and the Jackson Symphony Orchestra bring the classic story to life at the Potter Center with multiple performances over one winter weekend, offering a festive outing that feels both grand and close to home.

Jackson is full of small joys this season. Each one is a reminder that even in the coldest months, our community knows how to stay warm.

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Hometown Eats

December 2025  
Edition: Max's  
House of Pancakes

By Val Herr



I don't know about you, but I could easily eat breakfast foods any time of day. For this month's edition, we visited Max's House of Pancakes, located at 133 West Michigan Ave., Suite C in the City of Jackson.

This family-friendly restaurant won't disappoint with its wide variety of menu options. For the price, it's truly one of the best bangs for your buck—the portions are incredibly generous. I ordered the French toast and still took more than half home to enjoy the next day.

While the three of us stuck with breakfast, Max's also offers a nice selection of lunch options. A pleasant surprise was the complimentary sample of their homemade chicken noodle soup. Sorry, Mom and Dad, but this was the best chicken noodle soup I've ever had. Honestly, it's worth going back just for the soup.

The atmosphere wasn't quite what I expected. The interior still reflects its previous life as a Mediterranean restaurant. However, everything was clean, and the restroom was spotless.

If you're looking for a quiet, out-of-the-way spot to enjoy good food at great prices, give Max's House of Pancakes a try.

Rating: 2.5 stars

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# Jackson County Animal Shelter's Adoptable Pets: Vinnie, Cinnamon & Peaches

Contributed by the Jackson County Animal Shelter

Vinnie

Vinnie is a two-year-old American Staffordshire mix who came in as a stray. He is a cheerful, outgoing guy who greets everyone with enthusiasm. At 36 pounds with a low-maintenance coat, he is the perfect blend of compact and carefree. He loves walks and seems to be working hard on his house-training. When it is time to leave his kennel, his whole body wiggles with excitement. Vinnie is neutered and ready for his forever home. Dog adoptions require an application, which you can find online. The availability date is when the dog becomes JCAS property; however, any necessary medical procedures may cause a slight delay in the adoption process. A meet and greet with your dog is mandatory. A cat room walk-through is available to test reactions. Dogs will be

placed with approved applicants, and the adoption fee is \$150 for medium/large dogs and \$250 for puppies/small dogs, which includes vaccinations, microchip, and sterilization.

Cinnamon & Peaches

These big orange beauties are Cinnamon and Peaches. They were sur-



rendered when their owner faced health issues, and they have relied on each other ever since. Because they came in together and are true best buddies, they hope to be adopted as a pair. Both are declawed on all four feet. Cinnamon is the darker orange, 14 years old, about 12 pounds, with a fluffy coat that gives him a bit of a Maine Coon look. Peaches is 8 years old, around 15 pounds, and has a beautiful buff-colored long

coat. Quiet, friendly, and mellow, they get along well with other cats and enjoy relaxing together. Cinnamon and Peaches are looking for a calm indoor home where they can stay side by side. Stop by and meet them today at the Jackson County Animal Shelter, 3370 Spring Arbor Rd., Jackson, Michigan. Cat adoption fees are \$60 for one cat, \$80 for two, which will include applicable tests, vaccines and spay/neutering. Any necessary medical procedures may slightly postpone an adoption. While visiting the shelter is always recommended, you can also submit an online cat application here, fax it to 517-780-4750, or email it to animalshelter@mijackson.org. For more information, visit our website at mijackson.org/579/Animal-Shelter. Find us on Facebook or view all pets on Petango.com-Shelter Details. Current Shelter Hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 10:00-4:30, Thu 10-7, Sat 10-4:30.



# Cascades Humane Society's Pet of the Month

Contributed by Cascades Humane Society

Meet Ripper! This handsome eight-year-old black Labrador Retriever mix weighs about 70 pounds and is ready to bring love, loyalty, and laughter into his new forever home. With his sweet eyes and wagging tail, Ripper is the perfect blend of maturity and charm-he's past the puppy phase but still has plenty of energy and affection to share. Ripper's loving personality shines through in everything he does. He adores being around people and is always ready to offer a happy grin or a gen-

tle nudge for attention. He's also very food motivated, which makes training and bonding a breeze! Whether it's a leisurely walk, a game of fetch, or just hanging out on the couch, Ripper is



happiest when he's by your side. Ripper has been neutered, vaccinated, and is up to date on all his shots. His adoption fee is \$260. If you're looking for a loyal

companion with a heart as big as his paws, Ripper may be the one for you!

About the Cascades Humane Society

Organized and incorporated in 1952, Cascades Humane Society is dedicated to improving the lives of animals, promoting responsible pet ownership, and creating lasting connections between pets and families. If you are interested in donating, volunteering, or learning about other ways to support CHS, please call 517-787-7387 or email hgoightly@chspets.org to learn more.



2024

IMPACT

CHS

Cascades Humane Society



1,187 TOTAL ADOPTIONS



11,247 POUNDS OF PET FOOD GIVEN TO PETS IN NEED



990 OWNED CATS & DOGS SPAYED OR NEUTERED



4,103 VOLUNTEER HOURS



# Jackson Public Schools Bond Proposal Passes with Strong Community Support

*Contributed by Jackson Public Schools*

Jackson Public Schools is pleased to announce that voters have approved the district's \$126 million bond proposal in the November 5 election. This historic investment will support transformative upgrades across all JPS schools, enhancing safety, technology, and learning environments for every student.

The bond, which received overwhelming community support, will fund critical facility improvements, modern classroom spaces, athletic upgrades, and expanded career and technical education

opportunities. These projects are designed to ensure that Jackson Public Schools continues to provide an exceptional educational experience that prepares students for success in college, career, and life.

"This is a moment of pride and gratitude for our entire Jackson community," said Superintendent Jeremy Patterson. "The approval of this bond shows our collective commitment to our students



and their future. These funds will allow us to modernize our facilities, invest in innovation, and continue to build a school system that reflects the strength and aspirations of this community. We are deeply thankful to our voters for their trust and support."

Assistant Superintendent of Communication Kriss Giannetti expressed appreciation for the collaboration and engagement throughout the process. "This out-

come reflects months of conversation, planning, and listening to our community," Giannetti said. "The Jackson Public Schools family is grateful for the partnership and dedication that made this possible."

Planning for the bond implementation will begin immediately, with construction expected to begin in 2026. The district will provide regular updates to families and community members as timelines are finalized.

For more information about the approved bond proposal and upcoming projects, please visit [www.jpsk12.org](http://www.jpsk12.org).

## Holidays at Imagine Planet

*By Jean McKim, Imagine Planet*

The holidays are upon us, and we are gearing up for a really fun December break. During break we will be open Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, adding Tuesday in for those weeks. We will be featuring some of our favorite activities, so be sure to plan a visit on multiple days. The kinetic sand tables will have new sand and dinosaurs to explore. Our magnets will be making an appearance, and fossils will be out as

well. Our marble run is always ready for engineering practice, and our microscopes will be available to view all sorts of natural items.

On Saturday, December 20, we are planning a theme day all about trees. We will be featuring evergreen identification, winter tree silhouettes, and a special painting project involv-



ing straws. Come find out how to tell what species your Christmas tree is.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page, as we will be scheduling an evening version of our Intro to Mineral Properties class. Contact me if you have a preferred time or day. Future classes will include Michigan

fossils and minerals. As always, you can bring up to ten specimens of fossils, rocks, or minerals, and I will teach you how to identify them.

Thank you to all who donated to our fundraiser. We took in \$1,350. Our gift shop is also open and has great stocking stuffers, mineral specimens, and jewelry for your gift giving needs. Everything is fifteen dollars or less. Shop local.

Have a safe and joyous holiday season from all of us at Imagine Planet.

The logo for the Jackson Symphony Guild features the word "jackson" in a large, elegant, cursive script. Below it, the words "SYMPHONY GUILD" are written in a smaller, all-caps, serif font.

### JACKSON SYMPHONY GUILD NEEDS YOU!

This organization works exclusively for the benefit of Jackson Symphony Orchestra, giving time and talents toward promoting music in the Jackson community. Our volunteers include people with a wide range of abilities who strive to raise funds through dues and proceeds from the Annual Holiday Ball.

For membership and volunteer information visit [jacksonsymphony.org/jackson-symphony-guild/](http://jacksonsymphony.org/jackson-symphony-guild/).

A group of about ten women are posing for a photo. They are dressed in formal or semi-formal attire, including dresses and blouses. They are standing in front of a dark background with some lights visible.A woman with blonde hair is standing at a podium, speaking into a microphone. She is wearing a light-colored top. Another person is partially visible behind her.A group of people are standing together, holding a large check. The check is from "JSG" (Jackson Symphony Guild) and is for a significant amount. They are all smiling and looking at the camera.



# Pig Butchering Scams on the Rise

By Lora Hartshorn,  
Risk Manager at TRUE Community Credit Union

While the term may sound unsettling, “pig butchering” is considered an artform in the eyes of a fraudster. These scammers methodically manipulate their victims, taking time to “fatten them up” emotionally and financially before the final “slaughter”—when they take as much money as possible and disappear.

These scams often begin when a victim receives an “accidental” text or message from the fraudster. However, these contacts are rarely accidental. Scammers typically purchase phone numbers obtained through data breaches and send out mass messages, hoping someone takes the bait. Even a simple reply like “wrong number” can open the door for the scammer to strike up a conversation and initiate the con.

As pig butchering scams have become more prevalent, certain patterns have emerged:

- “Accidental” contact: Fraudsters frequently pretend they reached out by mistake. While initial contact often occurs via text, it can also happen through social media DMs, dating sites, or other digital platforms.
- Crypto or investment hook: Once a conversation begins, the fraudster gradually introduces a fake investment opportunity—often involving cryptocurrency, gold trading, or forex (foreign exchange) markets. These so-called investments are complete fabrications; any money sent goes directly to the scammer.
- Extended communication: After

building trust, the scammer pushes for continued investments. They may share fake charts, forged screenshots showing unrealistically high returns, or even allow small “withdrawals” to convince the victim that their money is growing. Victims are often directed to apps that mimic legitimate financial platforms like Robinhood or Coinbase.

- Group manipulation: Some scammers add victims to fake group chats filled with others discussing investments—these are usually controlled entirely by the scammer, either through fake profiles or other accomplices.

Pig butchering scammers are relentless. Even after a victim has exhausted their savings, the scammer may pressure them to borrow money or take out loans for further “investments.”

Eventually, the scam comes to an end. Once the fraudster determines the victim has no more funds, or begins to suspect the deception, they abruptly cut off all communication.

The most effective way to protect yourself from pig butchering scams is to treat any unexpected or seemingly accidental contact with caution. A general rule of thumb: Don’t respond to unsolicited messages from strangers, whether they come via text, WhatsApp, Telegram, social media, or dating apps. As generative AI becomes more sophisticated, even “wrong number” phone calls or video chats can be part of these elaborate schemes.

To learn more about how to protect yourself and loved ones from scams, visit TRUECCU.com.



Photo contributed by TRUE Community Credit Union

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## The Season of Giving at CHS

*Contributed by Cascades Humane Society*

As December arrives and the year draws to a close, many of us take time to reflect on what we are grateful for and how we can give back to our community. End of year giving plays an important role in helping Cascades Humane Society continue its lifesaving work. Whether you choose to honor a loved one with a memorial gift, support day to day care for animals, or give in a way that leaves a lasting mark, these contributions make the holidays brighter for pets who depend on compassion and kindness.

### Monthly Giving: Support All Year Long

For those who want their impact to continue past the holidays, monthly giving offers steady, dependable support. Recurring donations help CHS plan ahead and provide consistent care, from food and shelter to medical treatment and enrichment. Monthly donors ensure that animals are supported not just in December but throughout the entire year.

### Volunteering: Giving Time and Talent

Many community members give back by sharing their time. Volunteers walk dogs, socialize cats, help with events, greet visitors, and offer professional or creative skills. A few hours of volunteering can brighten the day of both animals and humans, and every act of service helps further our mission.

### Legacy Giving: A Lasting Mark of Love

For those thinking about the future, legacy gifts offer a way for compassion to continue beyond a lifetime. Including CHS in your will costs nothing today and ensures that animals will be cared for in the years ahead. Gifts may include a specific amount, a percentage of your estate, real estate, retirement accounts, or life insurance.

To include CHS in your plans, use:

Cascades Humane Society

1515 Carmen Dr., Jackson, MI 49202

EIN: 38-6119309

Supporters may also choose lasting tributes such as engraved stars in our memorial gazebo, granite stones in the gardens, or sponsorship of a kennel or cat condo.

### Ending the Year With Hope

Cascades Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that receives no county funding or support from national animal welfare groups. Every gift, volunteer hour, and legacy action directly helps local animals.

As we welcome a new year, we invite you to give in the way that feels right for you. Whether you donate, volunteer, or plan a future gift, your kindness ensures that every pet who comes through our doors is met with safety, compassion, and love.

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# College & Career Access Center, December Scholarships

### Jackson Community Foundation Scholarships

Your application gives you access to 30+ different scholarships. Eligibility requirements vary from minimum GPA, area of study, new graduate or returning learner, financial need, etc. If you meet the eligibility requirements for any of our scholarships, you will automatically be added to that scholarship's pool of candidates (with the exception of the Bernice Barabash Sports Scholarship - see below) saving your time searching which scholarship you should apply for.

**Required Documents:** 1 letter of recommendation, transcripts, proof of FAFSA completion

**Award:** Varies

**Deadline:** February 11, 2026 (opens Dec. 1)

### Myer & Lois Franklin Scholarship

**Description:** Myer and Lois Franklin, life long residents of Jackson, Michigan, were highly appreciative of the success they enjoyed as a result of the opportunities afforded them in the Jackson community. In order to give back to others, they chose to leave a legacy of education. As strong believers in the power of education, the Myer and Lois Franklin Charitable Trust was established to be utilized as a vehicle for providing scholarships to residents of Jackson County.

The ability to give back to the community and the right to an education for all was of extreme importance to the Franklins. They created the trust to provide scholarships embracing all

members of the Jackson community no matter what their background in an effort to promote acceptance and access to education to those seeking same. All scholarship recipients are expected to be a role model for the Jackson community and to demonstrate the qualities and perform the activities which enabled them to be selected as an outstanding scholarship recipient.

**Eligibility:**

- Resident of Jackson County, Michigan
- Those enrolled in the Jackson County Early College may apply in their 13th year of after
- Previous recipients are encouraged to reapply, however renewal is not guaranteed

**Required Documents:**

- Two Letters of Recommendation

- Transcript

**Award Amount:** Between \$1,000-\$5,000

**Deadline:** When we receive 200 completed applications or February 11, 2026, whichever comes first (opens Dec. 1)

### Eastern Michigan University Presidential Scholarship Competition

**Details:** Eastern Michigan's Presidential Scholarships are awarded competitively using the application process detailed below. Qualified students apply to receive our largest academic award. In addition to completing the application process, interested prospective students will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be officially admitted to EMU as a traditional incoming Freshman for Fall 2026

• Applicants must have at least a 3.5\*\* cumulative GPA and 25 composite ACT or 1200 SAT

• Complete application information (detailed below) by December 15, 2025.

• Students must register for the Presidential Scholarship by December 15, 2025.

\* Registration will become available in August 2026.

Once registered, you will receive an email with our required supplemental application.

**Award:** Full Ride (valued at approximately \$73,600 over four years)

**Deadline:** December 15, 2025

For the full list of monthly scholarships, please visit the College and Career Access Center's website at [jacksoncac.org](http://jacksoncac.org).

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