

KALAMAZOO ABRAHAM LINCOLN PROJECT

Annual Report, May 18, 2019

The Kalamazoo Abraham Lincoln Project (KLP) entered the year 2019 poised to launch its capital campaign and begin the search for an artist to sculpt the anticipated Lincoln statue for Bronson Park. Since the last annual report dated April 21, 2018, a Fundraising Committee and Statue Committee have been established with the latter overseeing two subcommittees, a History Subcommittee and Arts Advisory Subcommittee. A field trip in the summer of 2018 to Grand Rapids to meet with Joseph Becherer, Vice President and Curator of Collections for the Frederick Meijer Sculpture Gardens, provided valuable input. At the time, Mr. Becherer also managed the Grand Rapids Community Legends sculptures project responsible for placing some 25 sculptures in the Grand Rapids area.

A full-color poster-size capital campaign brochure designed by award-winning graphic artist Richard Schlatter of Battle Creek has been a valuable promotional tool to help advance our capital campaign goal. Mr. Schlatter donated his services and the brochures were printed by Howard Printing of Kalamazoo. As part of the design process, Mr. Schlatter created an original logo block that now serves as the basis for the KLP's new corporate identity package.

Kalamazoo, Portage and Comstock public schools participated in organized penny drives in March and April of this year to help raise funds and awareness of plans for the Lincoln statue in Bronson Park. Hundreds of students voluntarily participated.

An original computer-generated portrait of Abraham Lincoln formed from the words of Lincoln's 1856

Kalamazoo Speech was commissioned by board member Dr. Al Jackson and his wife Judi. Once again, Richard Schlatter's artistry was engaged. The full use of this artwork as a fundraising and promotional tool has yet to be fully determined.

A renewal of the previous \$15,000 grant award from the Jim Gilmore Jr. Foundation was secured and will be distributed in equal amounts over a period of three years. The first installment will be delivered in December of this year.

A large donation from Don and Ann Parfet of Kalamazoo helped bolster the KLP's capital campaign launched on Lincoln's birthday at the Ladies' Library Association. Despite the cold and snow, the kick-off event was well attended by invited guests representing a cross section of greater Kalamazoo.

A grant writer has been identified to assist in submitting funding requests to area foundations. At the same time, the board is exploring other fundraising options including crowdfunding.

The board looks with eager anticipation to conducting and completing an open and deliberative process to identify an artist who will transform the board's vision of an original piece of statuary art into reality. The year is full of great promise as the board moves forward to realize the first objective of its Lincoln-legacy plans for Kalamazoo, all of which are intended for the purpose of having a positive impact on the educational and cultural life of the community.

—Submitted by Cameron S. Brown, President