

Richard & Helen DeVos F

MEIJER PUBLIC BROADCAST CENTER

L.V. EBERHARD CENTER

SEIDMAN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Idema Pew Library

A

GRAND RAPIDS

POWER

ANALYSIS

HENRY H

SE HALL

DNOS
HALL OF
SCIENCE

COOK-DEVO
CENTER FOR
HEALTH
SCIENCES

Engineering

ALLEY
UNIVERSITY
EL
GLOBAL TRADE CENTER

AMWAY BOARDROOM

Hierarchy of Power

Economic Power

Private wealth, corporations, land & property holdings, access, interlocking systems of power

Political Power

Buying access, vetting candidates, lobbying, amplifying voice, bribes, extortion

State Power

Courts, police, jails/prisons, laws, repressing/silencing dissent, limiting real democracy

Media Power

Misinformation, propaganda, marginalizing/omitting dissenting voices, pacification, normalizing power narrative

NGO/Social Service Power

Non-profits, social service agencies, universities, religious institutions all act as a buffer for the other forms of power



Hank Meijer
net worth \$6.2 Billion



Doug Meijer
net worth \$6.2 Billion



Mark Meijer
net worth \$6.2 Billion

The wealth of these 3 men would be enough to completely eliminate poverty, the housing crisis and food insecurity in Kent County.

AHC HOSPITALITY
HOTELS + RESORTS + RESTAURANTS
a management company



pamella roland

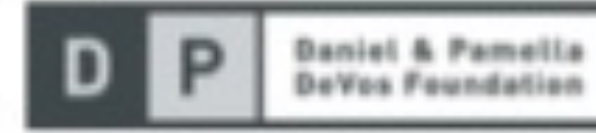


Dick & Betsy
DeVos Family Foundation



Ottawa Private
Capital LLC

Continuum
Ventures LLC



WAKESTREAM
VENTURES



THE WINDQUEST GROUP



Current President of Amway



Dick & Betsy DeVos



Rick DeVos



Doug & Maria DeVos



Dan & Pamela DeVos



Cheri DeVos Ehmman

A sample of the DeVos Family Wealth/Assets

6. Other Assets and Income

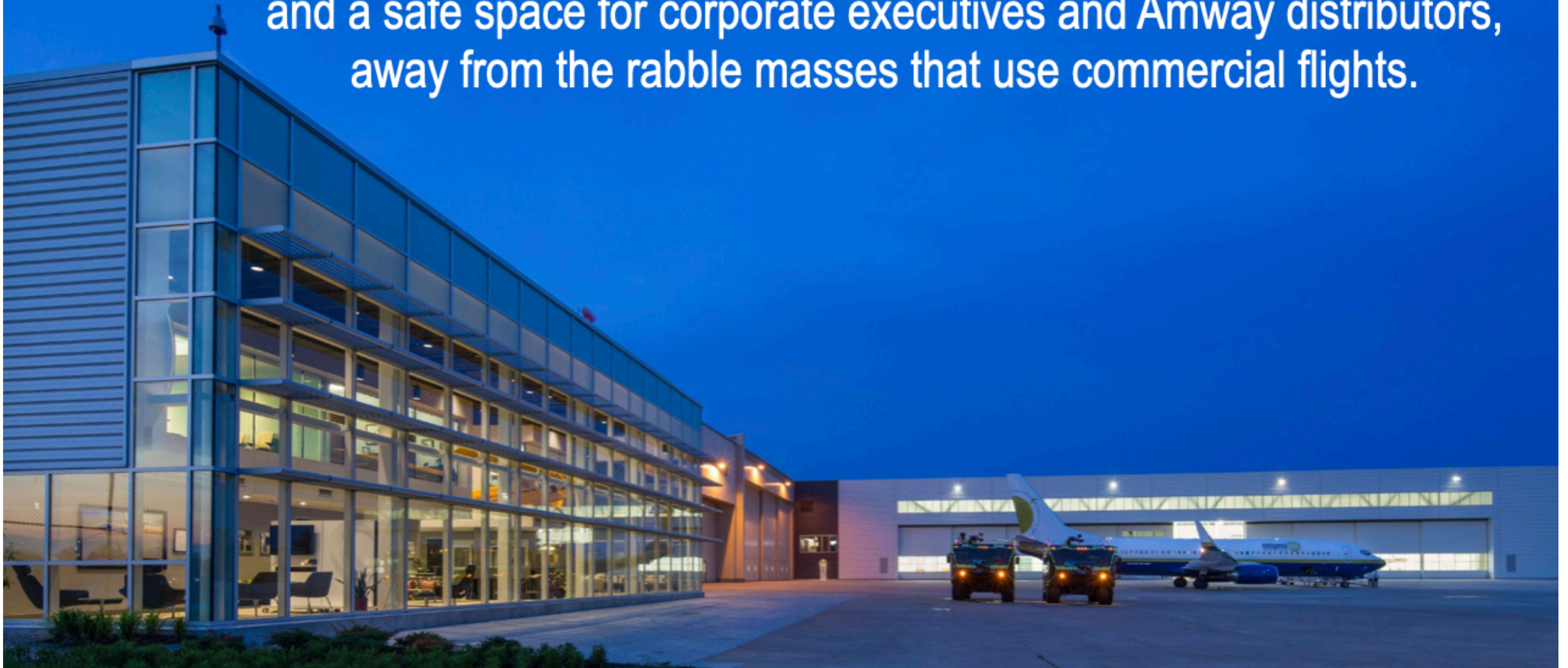
#	DESCRIPTION		EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
1	Northstar Mezzanine Partners III L.P.		Yes	\$50,001 - \$100,000		\$5,001 - \$15,000
2	The Stow Company	See Endnote	N/A	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	Distributive Share	\$275,496
3	Windquest Group, Inc.	See Endnote	N/A	\$250,001 - \$500,000		None (or less than \$201)
4	DBD RE, LLC - Residential Rental Property in Grand Rapids, MI		N/A	\$100,001 - \$250,000	Rent or Royalties	\$5,001 - \$15,000

#	DESCRIPTION		EIF	VALUE	INCOME TYPE	INCOME AMOUNT
5	Activa Holdings Corporation	See Endnote	N/A	\$250,001 - \$500,000	Distributive Share	\$47,590
6	Ada Holdings LLC	See Endnote	N/A	\$5,000,001 - \$25,000,000		None (or less than \$201)
7	BWIB Holdings LLC		No			
7.1	Boxed Water Is Better, LLC	See Endnote	N/A	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000		None (or less than \$201)
8	DBAM Holdings LLC	See Endnote	N/A	\$1,001 - \$15,000		None (or less than \$201)
9	DBD Properties LLC	See Endnote	No			

<https://griid.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/betsy-devos-investmenttrustee-or-director.pdf>



The Amway hangar at the Kent County Airport provides the Amway corporation a place to keep their private jets and a safe space for corporate executives and Amway distributors, away from the rabble masses that use commercial flights.



DeVos Family Foundations

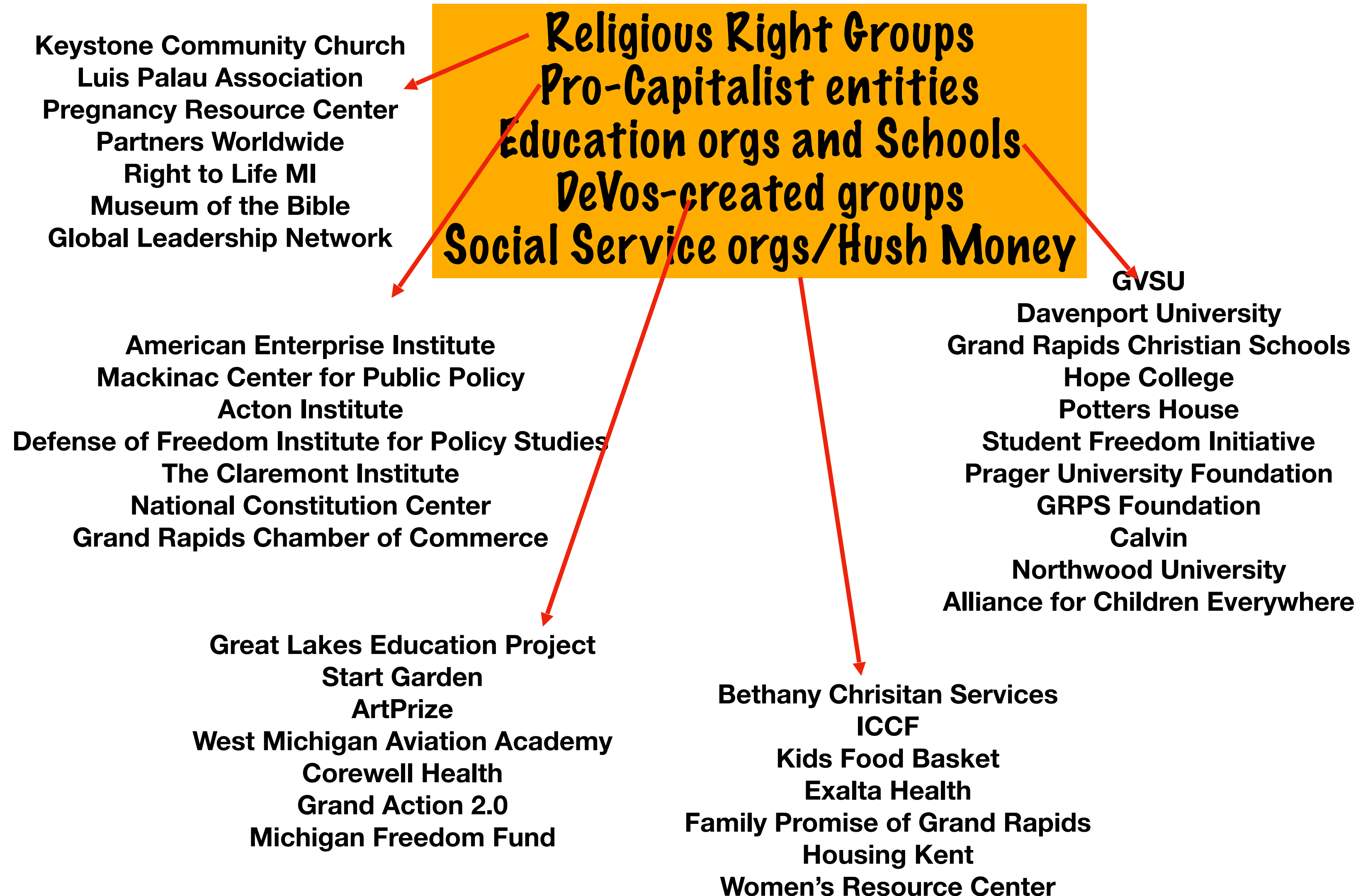
Dick & Betsy DeVos Foundation
Doug & Maria DeVos Foundation
Dan & Pamela DeVos Foundation
CDV5 Foundation
DeVos Family Foundation

**Collective DeVos Family
Foundation assets
as of 2024
\$210,676,597**



<https://app.candid.org/>

What the DeVos Foundations Fund



DEVOS

FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

1. Are tax havens for their wealth
2. Allows them to fund far right organizations
3. Are a Public Relations tool to con the public
4. It distracts us from the amount of money they spend on political campaigns to influence public policy.

The DeVos Family has contributed some \$50 Million to political campaigns and to the Republican National Committee during the past decade.



Their political funding went to attacking unions, keeping the minimum wage low, making Michigan a Right to Work state, undermining public sector pensions, allowing for public money to go to Charter Schools, keeping Flint residents without clean water, Enbridge pipelines in place, reduced funding for social programs, increased funding for private economic development projects and defending Capitalism & White Supremacy.

The DeVos Family's political spending has negatively impacted working class families and communities of color during the past decade.

Many of the same people who have been negatively impacted by the DeVos funded state policy decisions are the same people who now have to utilize the social service programs that the DeVos Family Foundations contribute money to.

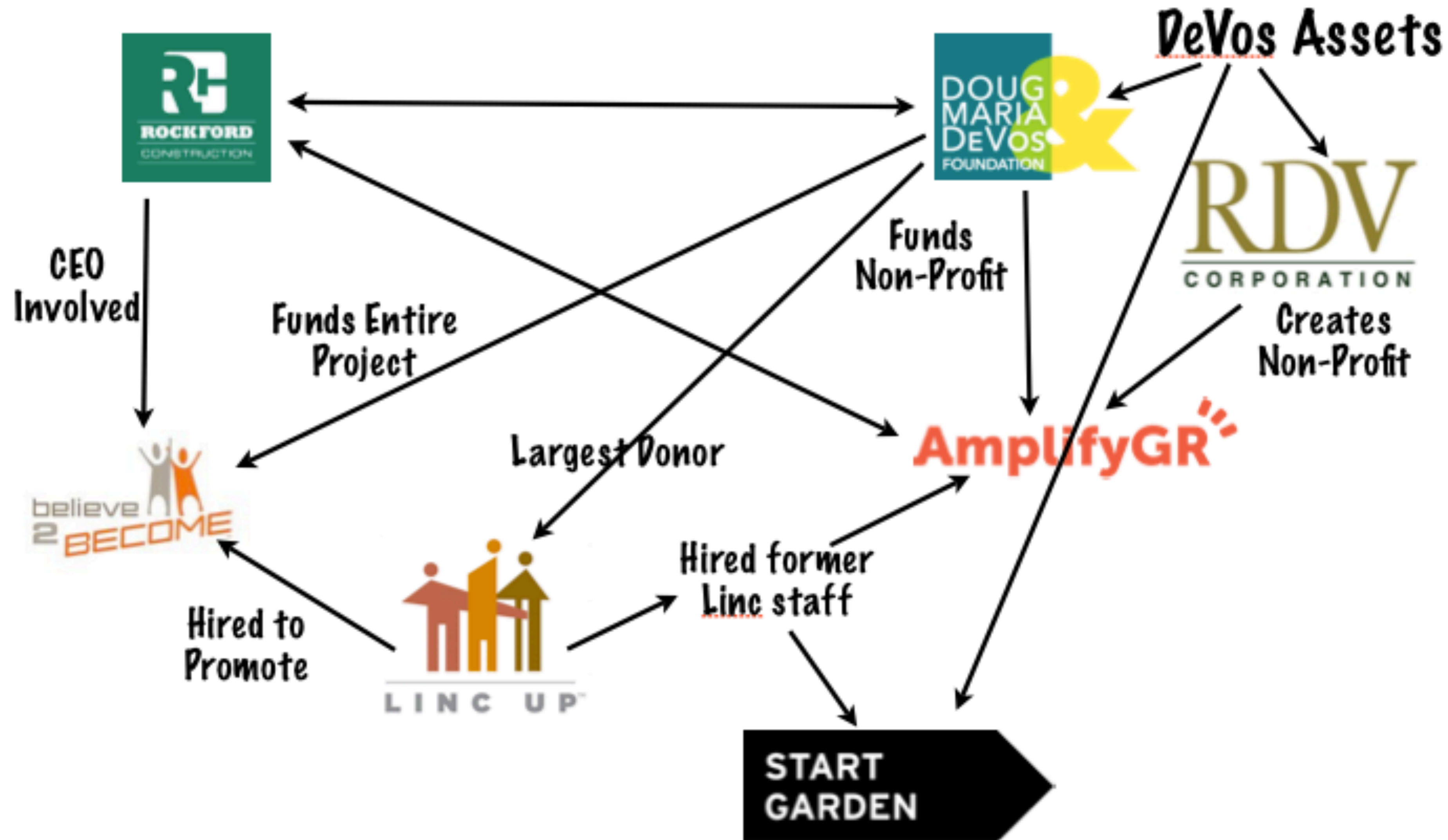
AmplifyGR


The DeVos Family Foundations support:

- 1) Right Wing Think Tanks that craft state policies which increase poverty, like the Acton Institute and the Mackinac Center.
- 2) Social Service agencies which solve individual problems like housing and unemployment, but do NOT address systemic problems.
- 3) Entrepreneurial projects like Start Garden and Amplify GR that provide great PR for the DeVos Family, while ignoring the fact that their political funding have created the conditions for people needing some form of assistance.

**START
GARDEN**

Rockford Construction/DeVos Southtown Land Grab Flow Chart





“My family is the biggest contributor of soft money to the Republican Party. I have decided to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence. Now I simply concede the point. They are right. We do expect something in return. We expect a return on our investment.”

-Betsy Devos

DeVos Campaign Contributions

Buying Elections

transparencyusa.org

Top contributors in Michigan 2026

- 2. Dan DeVos \$2,962,075.00
- 3. Pam DeVos \$2,508,325.00
- 8. J.C. Huizenga \$748,300.00
- 13. John C. Kennedy III \$421,275.00
- 20. Maria & Doug DeVos \$287,500.00
- 21. Suzanne Cheryl DeVos. \$287,500.00
- 24. Michael Jandernoa \$271,075.00
- 27. Daniel Hibma \$264,850.00
- 30. Hank Meijer. \$250,000
- 45. Nancy Kennedy. \$203,825.00



DeVos Family spent \$12.7 million during the 2020 Election and \$12.3 million in 2022.

DeVos Family contrinuted \$330,000 to 5 Kent County position In 2024:
Kent County Clerk
Kent County Sheriff
Kent County Treasurer
Kent County Prosecutor
Kent County Drain Commissioner

2024 Hotel Tax Ballot Initiative funders

- ★ Grand Action 2.0 – \$300,000.00
- ★ GR Area Chamber Ballot Committee – \$50,000.00
- ★ Acrisure LLC – \$25,000.00
- ★ Amway Corporation – \$25,000.00
- ★ Amway Grand Plaza – \$25,000.00
- ★ Corewell Health – \$10,000.00
- ★ Pioneer Incorporated \$5,500.00
- ★ Progressive AE – \$5,000.00
- ★ Michael Jandernoa Trust – \$5,000.00

Since 1990, the DeVos Family has given more campaign money in Michigan than anyone else in the State - over \$150 million.



DeVos



Education



Policy

Influence





State Legislators push for **\$30 Million** in the State Budget for the Amphitheater Project, since many of them have received Tens of thousands each in Campaign Contributions from



DeVos Family

Purchases the former Charlies Crab building and adjacent property to create initial space for Amphitheater project



Grand Action 2.0 makes the formal Proposal for the Amphitheater Project. Dick DeVos is one of the leaders/founders.



City and County officials get behind the project, since many of these elected officials have received campaign contributions from the DeVos family.



The CAA agrees to manage the amphitheater. The Chair of the CAA is Richard Winn, who runs AHC Hospitality, the DeVos-owned Hotel conglomerate.

Soccer Stadium proposed
by Grand Action 2.0
Dick DeVos

DP Fox Ventures LLC
purchases land in
the target area.
Dan & Pamela DeVos

The Right Place Inc.
endorses the project.
CEO of Amway sits on
the Board of Directors

DeVos family will make
Millions annually at their
Hotels and restaurants
in downtown GR with the
added soccer stadium.

This is what is called a
Public/Private partnership,
which is code for transferring more
wealth to the Capitalist Class!

Millions in public dollars
will be allocated to fund
the soccer stadium,
but the public will not
have a say in this.

Dan DeVos is likely
to own the professional
soccer team that will play
in the proposed stadium.
Dan owns the Grand Rapids
Griffins and is the Chairman
of the Orlando Magic.

DDA will capture
tax revenues from
the new Soccer Stadium.
two DeVos representatives
sit on DDA Board of Directors

An architectural rendering of a city development project, showing various buildings and streets. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, red, sans-serif font. A double-headed arrow points from the text below to the text above.

**Grand Rapids Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
unanimously voted to give the
DeVos/Van Andel development project
\$565 million in subsidies.**

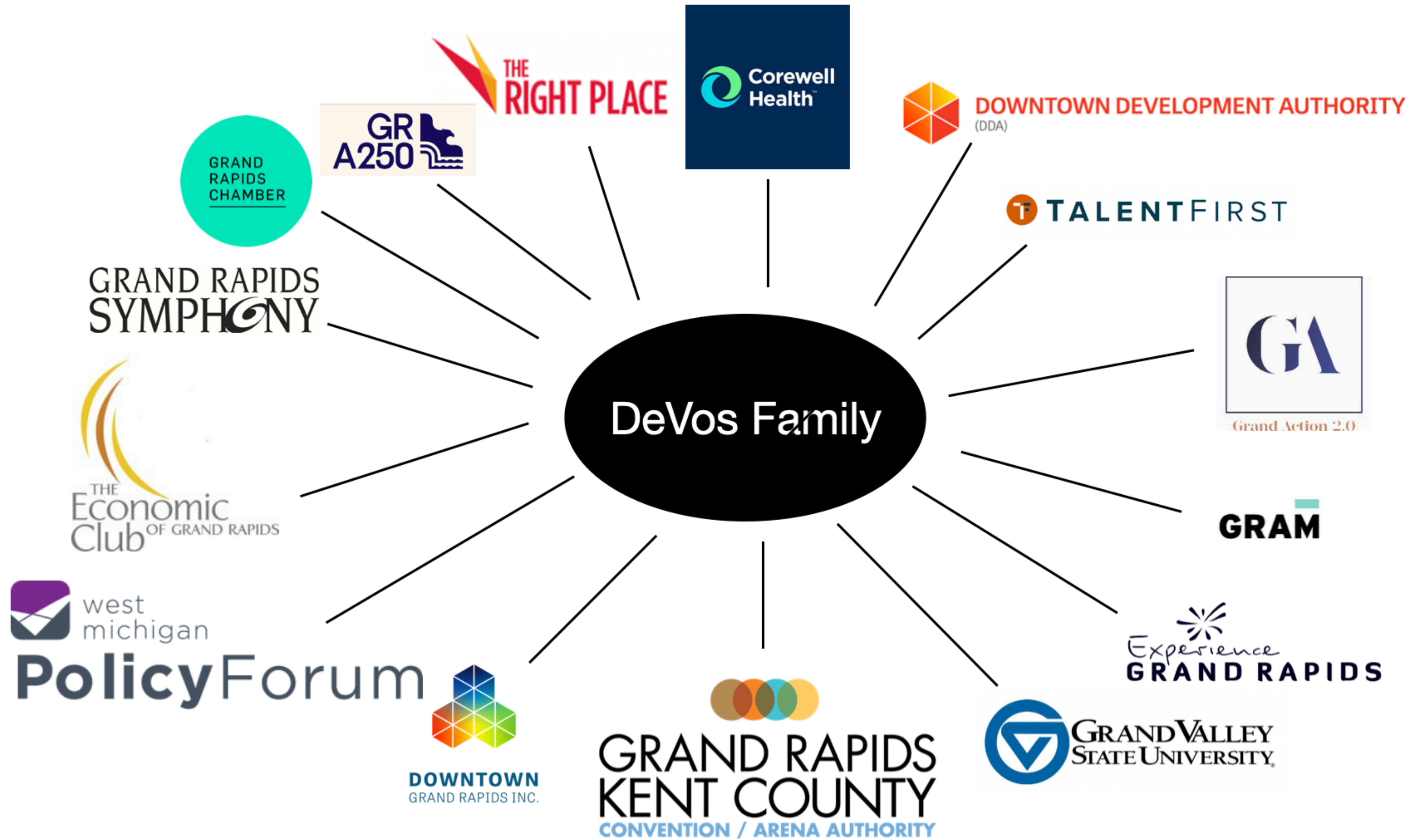
**This should come as no surprise,
especially when you consider
the people who make up
the board for this government committee.**

- ★ **Jeff Edwards, *Chair*** – Principal, Reveille Development Company, used to work for Rockford Construction
- ★ **Lynn Rabaut, *Vice-Chair*** – former GR City Commissioner, retired as the Executive Director at GR Griffins Youth Foundation
- Kristine Bersche, *Secretary*** – Environmental Business Advisor with **Bridge House Advisors.**
- Troy Butler, *Treasurer*** – Managing Partner at **Squeegee Squad Grand Rapids**
- Guillermo Cisneros** – President & CEO – West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, a board member of Grand Action 2.0 and the Economic Club of Grand Rapids
- Kaylee Dillard** – Project Manager at Wolverine Building Group
- Brooke Oosterman** Executive Director of Housing Next, which was created by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce
- Martin Uchendu** – Realtor at Five Star Real Estate
- John Van Fossen** – Vice President Government Affairs at Meijer
- Lynee Wells** – Founder + CEO Aligned Planning
- Milinda Ysasi, *Commissioner*** – CEO at Grow, and as a GR City Commissioner has enthusiastically supported downtown development projects, all of which have used massive public subsidies.



“Our long-term goal is really to import capital – intellectual capital, and ultimately real capital. And this (ArtPrize) is certainly an extraordinary tool.”

Sam Cummings - CWD Real Estate Investment 2009



Interlocking Systems of Power



John Kennedy Michael Jandermoa Mike VanGessel J.C. Huizenga Doug Small David Van Andel Steve Van Andel Jeff Connolly Birgit Klohs Randy Thelen Rick Baker Michael Verhulst

PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS THAT MAKE UP PART OF THE GRAND RAPIDS POWER STRUCTURE



Grand Action 2.0



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.



Local governments promote private sector power through tax breaks, private/public partnerships, development projects, commission board positions, and protect private sector power through white supremacy, gentrification, police departments and jails.

Below are the campaign contribution amounts that the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce have made to each Commissioner since being elected.



Comm. Ysasi
\$1250

Comm. O'Connor
\$750

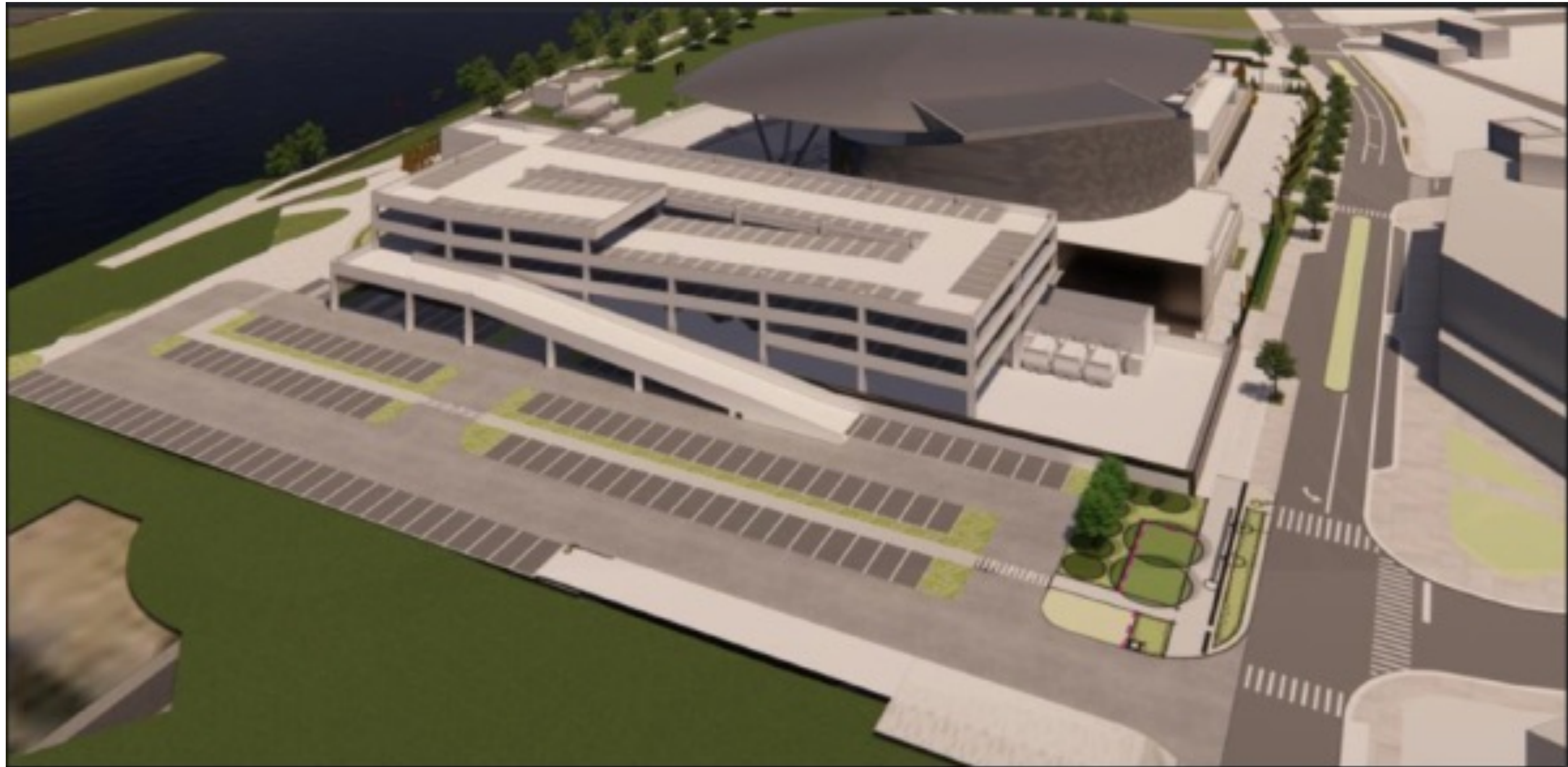
Mayor Bliss
\$1350

Comm. Robbins
\$10,500



City Commission Meeting
July 11, 2023

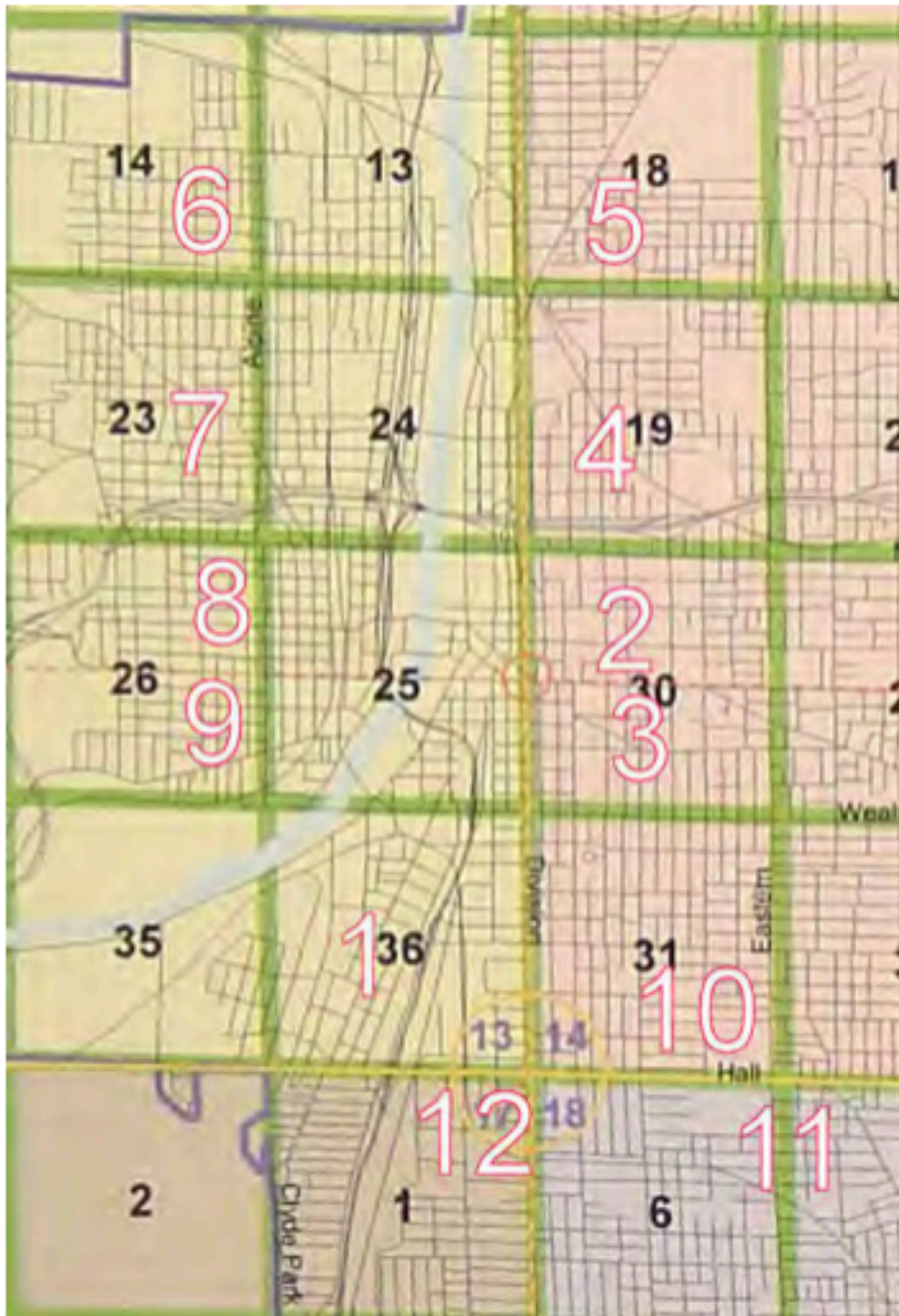
GR Adopted 2 ordinances to criminalize the unhoused



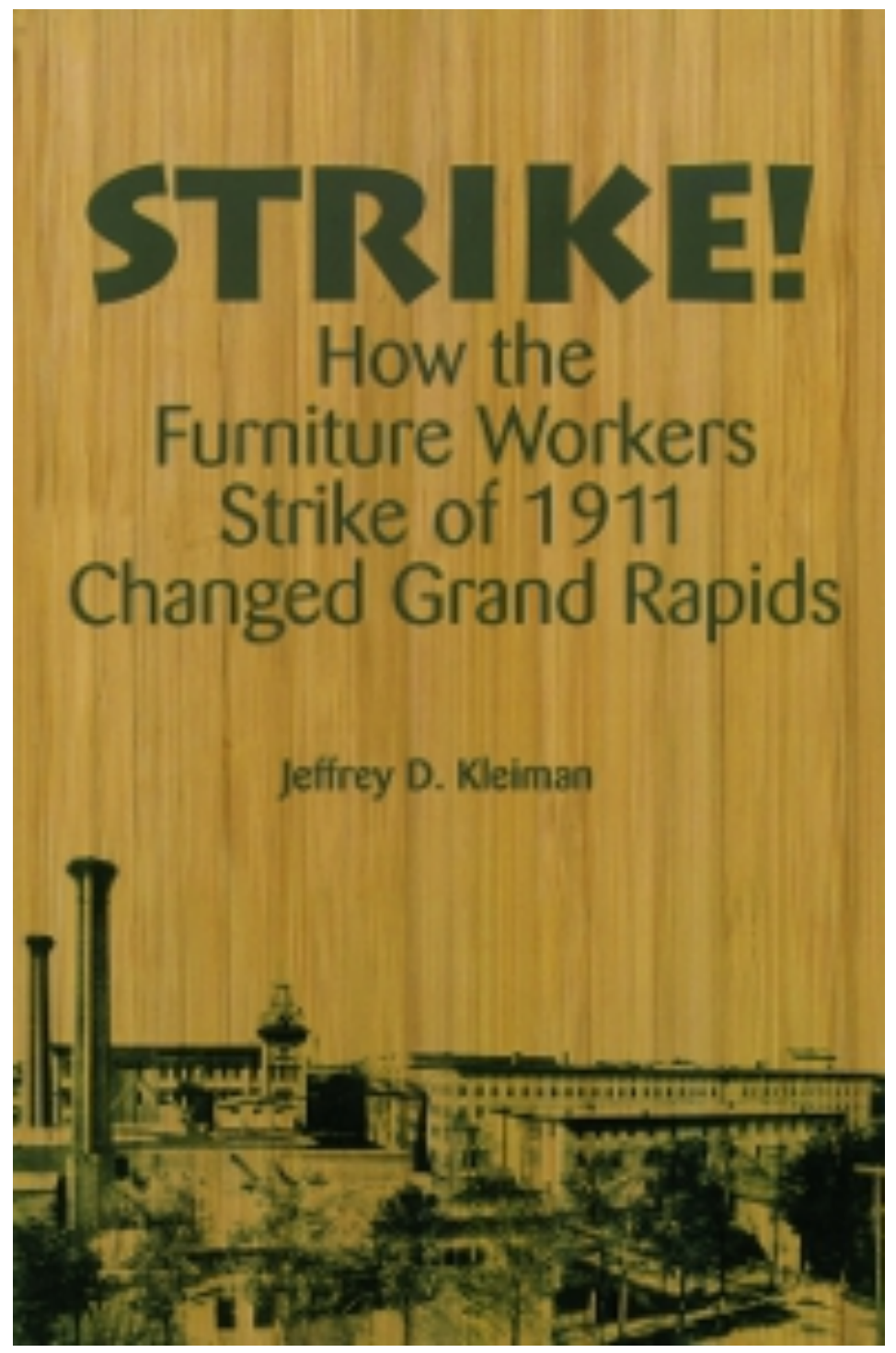
Ask yourself, if the City of Grand Rapids is willing to borrow \$30.5 million for a parking garage, why don't they borrow that same amount to address the housing crisis?

The Matrix of Policing in Grand Rapids





**1916
Grand Rapids
City Charter
Change -
Initiated by the
Furniture Barons**



One Kent Coalition

Tom Butcher (GVSU), Nyal Deems (former EGR mayor), Betsy DeVos, Dick DeVos, Jeanne Englehart (GR Chamber), David Frey (Grand Action), Kurt Kimball (former GR City Manager), David Leonard (Spectrum Health Corp.), Greg McNeilly (Windquest Corp.), Marge Potter (former Kent County Comm.), Jared Rodriguez (West Michigan Policy Forum), Milt Rohwer (Frey Foundation) Peter Secchia, Peter Wege, Kate Pew Wolters, Tim Wondergem and Andy Guy (Wondergem & Associates).

38 page draft to legislatively change the government structure in Kent County, to be a new metropolitan government to be run by a CEO

<https://griid.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/draft-of-one-kent-coalition-metropolitan-government-legislative-proposal.pdf>

Prison Industrial Complex in Kent County



43% of the Kent County Budget - \$668 million - will be used for the Sheriff's Department, the jail, the courts, and the Prosecuting Attorney's office.

**CRAIN'S
GRAND
RAPIDS
BUSINESS**



The main function of the local news media is to serve and normalize the systems of oppression that are part of the Grand Rapids Power Structure.

- ★ WOODTV8 – 4 stories since Labor Day
- ★ WZZM 13 – 2 stories since Labor Day
- ★ WXMI 17 – 4 stories since Labor Day

- ★ 1st Ward Grand Rapids City Commission Seat
- ★ 3rd Ward Grand Rapids City Commission Seat
- ★ 4 open seats for the Grand Rapids Public School Board of Education
- ★ 1 open seat for Grand Rapids Community College Trustee
- ★ 21 Kent County Commission races
- ★ Kent County Sheriff race
- ★ Kent County Prosecutor race
- ★ Kent County Clerk race
- ★ Kent County Treasurer race
- ★ Kent County Drain Commissioner race
- ★ 3 races for 17th Circuit Judge
- ★ 2 races for Probate Judge
- ★ 2 races for the 61st District Judge
- ★ 1 race for 62A District Judge
- ★ 1 race for 63rd District Judge

**From Sept. 8 - Sept. 29
There were a total of 9
Local election stories,
While there was a
Total of
74 ArtPrize stories.**

In the MLive stories we looked at during the 5 day period, we found the following sources cited:

- ★ Government officials – 12
- ★ GRPD – 11
- ★ Downtown Business owners/employees – 11
- ★ Protesters – 7
- ★ Those assisting with the clean up – 3
- ★ Residents opposed to “vandalism” – 2

WOODTV8 sources cited:

- ★ Government officials – 15
- ★ GRPD – 14
- ★ Downtown Businesses – 7
- ★ Those assisting with clean up – 7
- ★ Protesters – 6
- ★ Urban Leaders – 2
- ★ Former cop – 1
- ★ Mother of cop – 1
- ★ Resident who witnessed 1967 riot – 1

WZZM 13 sources cited:

- ★ Government officials – 12
- ★ GRPD – 10
- ★ Protesters – 10
- ★ Urban Leaders – 2

WXMI 17 sources cited:

- ★ Government officials – 14
- ★ GRPD – 10
- ★ Those assisting with clean up – 7
- ★ Downtown Businesses – 6
- ★ Protesters – 5
- ★ Lawyer – 1
- ★ Witness – 1

News Monitoring Data

Public Education

MLive - 27 stories

WOODTV8 - 31 stories

WZZM13 - 16 stories

WXMI17 - 23 stories

Total # of stories = 97

GRPD/Policing/Public Safety

MLive - 146 stories

WOODTV8 - 187 stories

WZZM13 - 123 stories

WXMI17 - 161 stories

Total # of stories = 671

Climate Change

MLive - 24 stories

WOODTV8 - 8 stories

WZZM13 - 4 story

WXMI17 - 5 story

Total # of stories = 41

Local Democracy/Elections in Kent County

MLive - 56 stories

WOODTV8 - 16 stories

WZZM13 - 11 stories

WXMI17 - 15 story

Total # of stories = 97

Local News Coverage on Public Safety/GRPD

Compared to GRPS and Climate Change coverage, policing, the courts and public safety coverage dominated the 6 month local news study.

A disproportionate amount of crime/community safety coverage also centered around the courts, especially since there was the before, during and after coverage for the trial of former GRPD cop Christopher Schurr, who shot and killed Patrick Lyoya. The total number of crime/community safety stories was 432, with 199 of them related to Patrick Lyoya's death and the Schurr trial.

The local news primarily relied on the GRPD, Judges, and Lawyers as sources in public safety related stories.

There were very few stories that were investigative around policing and the courts, which could be understood that the local news internalizes and normalizes the values of those institutions.

There were a total of 9 stories that local news reported on the All Access GRPD TV Show, with no investigation or critique of what that show was designed to communicate to the public.

Out of the 433 stories that were about the GRPD, the courts or public safety matters, only once was there a story where the GRPD prevented a crime or violence.

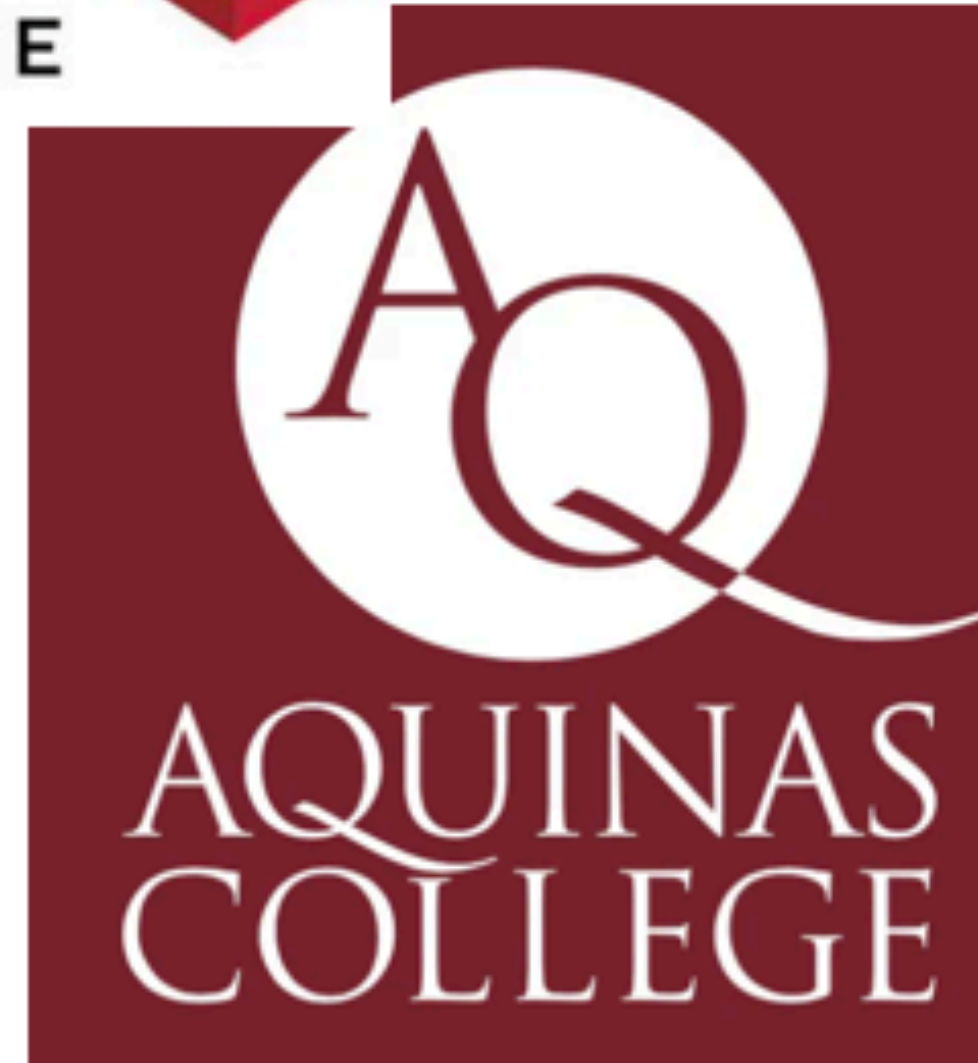


**CORNERSTONE
UNIVERSITY**

Calvin
COLLEGE



**COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES
AND THE
GR POWER STRUCTURE**



**DAVENPORT
UNIVERSITY**

GRCC
GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

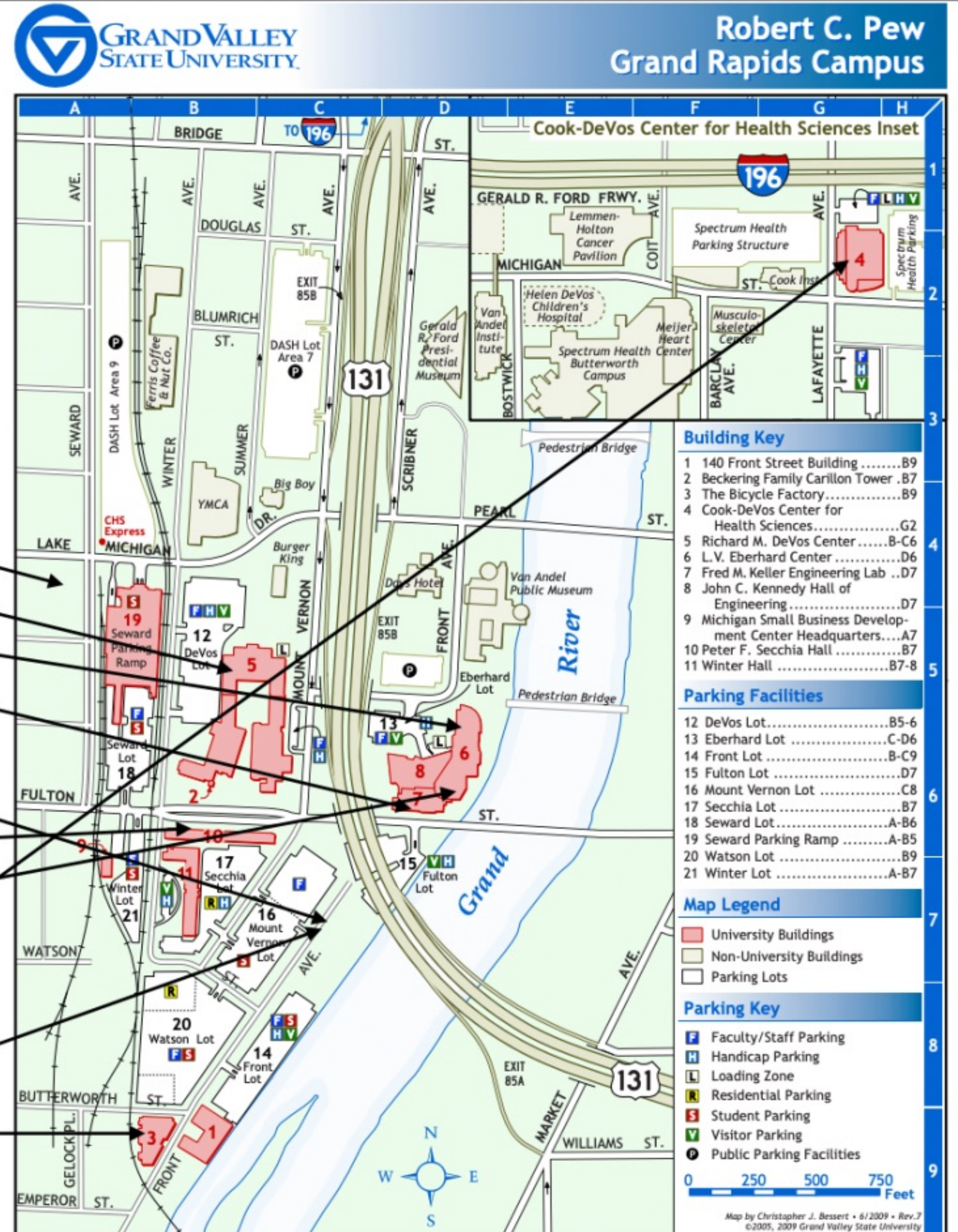
GVSU President [Philomena Mantella](#) also is involved in several of the organizations that I mentioned in Part IV of this series, such as the Right Place Inc., the Econ Club of Grand Rapids, and Grand Action 2.0. In addition, Diana Lawson, the Dean of the Seidman College of Business, sit on the Board of Directors for the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce.

Popular Guide to Wealth and Influence at GVSU

<https://griid.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/a-popular-guide-to-wealth-and-influence-at-gvsu.pdf>

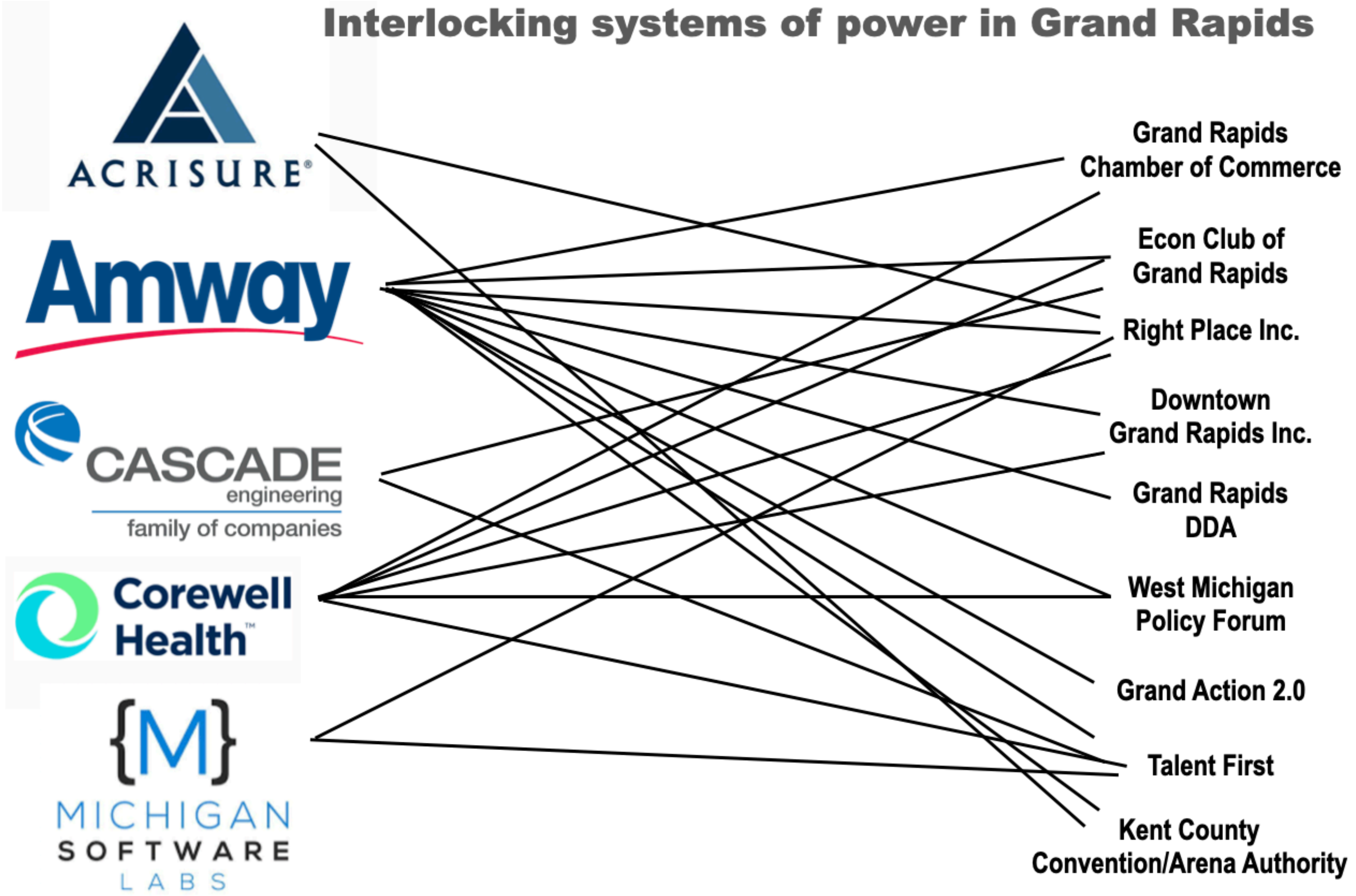


1. Robert C. Pew Campus
2. Richard DeVos Center
3. LV. Eberhard Center
4. Fred Keller Engineering Lab
5. John Kennedy Hall of Engineering
6. Van Andel Global Trade Center
7. Peter Seechia Hall
8. Meijer Broadcasting Center
9. Cook DeVos Center for Health Sciences
10. Siedman College of Business
11. Dorothy Johnson Center for Philanthropy



Companies that GVSU is partnering with

Interlocking systems of power in Grand Rapids





**White
Lies
Matter**

Statue of Catholic Bishop Baraga in Grand Rapids. Baraga played a role in the Settler Colonialism against Indigenous people before Grand Rapids was even founded.

There are an estimated 800 churches in Kent County, but only 3 has publicly declared itself a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants that are being terrorized by ICE.

Ways that faith institutions act as a buffer against systems of power and oppression:

- 1. They remain passive or distracted from the injustices that occur every day in this city**
- 2. By engaging in Charity without ever challenging Structural injustices that people face.**
- 3. To take on causes, without ever taking the necessary risks involved to challenge systems of oppression.**
- 4. Practicing White Savior Politics.**

Ways in which the Non-Profit Industrial Complex acts as a Buffer against systems of Power and Oppression

First, non-profits take care of those who are struggling economically. Take care of them primarily means offering services or resources, but not addressing structural harm.

The second buffer zone function of non-profits is to keep hope alive, which translates into connecting individuals and families to opportunities in the community to improve their economic standing, without questioning the wealth gap.

The third function is to maintain a system of control. Non-profits do this consciously or unconsciously by discouraging people from getting organized and to make sure that they do not engage in socially disruptive acts.

The fourth way is that they do not address the roots causes of social ills. Non-Profits end up perpetuating the systems of power and oppression.



I don't believe in charity.
I believe in solidarity.

Charity is so vertical.
It goes from the top to the bottom.
Solidarity is horizontal.
It respects the other person.
I have a lot to learn from other people.

Eduardo Galeano

Rationalhub.com
facebook.com/rationalhub

West Michigan Nice teaches us that if you want to change things you need to move slow, be polite and always work within the system, the very same system that benefits those in power. Here you are told to cooperate with the cops, to collaborate with developers, to not agitate, to be patient and to always ask permission. Well, for a growing number of people, this is not only unacceptable, it is simply bullshit.



We need to dismantle the

GRAND RAPIDS

POWER STRUCTURE

COOK DEVIAS
CENTER FOR
HEALTH
SCIENCES

John & Nancy Kennedy Hall of Engineering
Seminar Room
GRAND VALLEY UNIVERSITY
VAN ANDEL
GLOBAL TRADE CENTER
AMWAY BO