



LEADING WITH

*heart*



**2023**

COMMUNITY  
IMPACT REPORT





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# living our values

LEAVING AN IMPACT



Click Play to watch  
a video about  
Priority Health in  
the community.

We are pleased to present the 2023 Priority Health Community Report, which outlines the combined impact of our corporate responsibility initiative Priority Health for Good, the Priority Health Total Health Foundation, and our sponsorships and partnerships throughout the communities we serve.

## mission

Improve health, instill humanity and inspire hope.

## vision

A future where health is simple, affordable, equitable and exceptional.

## values



COLLABORATION



CLARITY



COMPASSION



CURIOSITY



COURAGE

## about us

Priority Health, a provider-sponsored health plan serving more than 1.3 million members, is part of the not-for-profit health system Corewell Health.

Priority Health continues to be nationally recognized as a leader for quality, customer service, transparency and product innovation. We're committed to improving health and well-being by ensuring access to quality care in more places, for more people, at an affordable cost.





Click Play to watch a brief message from President Praveen Thadani.

# PUTTING *compassion* INTO ACTION

As I reflect on 2023, I am filled with gratitude for all that was accomplished for our members and Michiganders across the state through our community partnerships.

We share a deep compassion for the health and well-being of each person, and I can truly say that with each program, sponsorship and event, our collective teams put their compassion into action.

Our community partners play a vital role in the advancement of our mission to improve health, instill humanity and inspire hope. In this community report, you will learn about the many ways we are making an impact through our community sponsorships, our Priority Health for Good initiative and the Priority Health Total Health Foundation.

One of my favorite highlights is our new signature program: Priority Pups™, an idea that was sparked by a team member's desire to help struggling students. Through a partnership with Canines for Change, we are placing facility dogs in schools across Michigan to help ease anxiety and support kids as they learn.

"This is just one shining example ...."  
Praveen usually says ... "to help people get, be and stay healthy."

And as we look toward 2024, I am energized and excited to continue to work with our community partners to fulfill our mission and realize our vision where health is simple, affordable, equitable and exceptional.

Thank you, team, and thank you, community partners, for leading with your heart and putting your compassion into action to help people live their healthiest lives possible.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Praveen'.

**Praveen Thadani**  
*President, Priority Health*



INSPIRING

hope

ACROSS MICHIGAN

**Priority Health for Good**

We believe all people have the right to a healthy life. Priority Health for Good is our company's promise to reduce health inequities through advocacy, employee citizenship and investing in the community.

We don't have all the answers, but we do have a willingness to listen, a desire to collaborate and a commitment to support people with the unique tools and resources they need to improve their health and well-being.

WE BELIEVE ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY LIFE.

**What is health equity?**

Health equity means that all people are able to achieve their best possible level of health. Health equity is achieved when resources are shared according to a community's specific needs. Equity doesn't give the same amount of resources to everyone; it gives the same opportunity to succeed, regardless of physical or mental ability, location, race, class, gender and/or other social determinants.

**Achieving health equity**

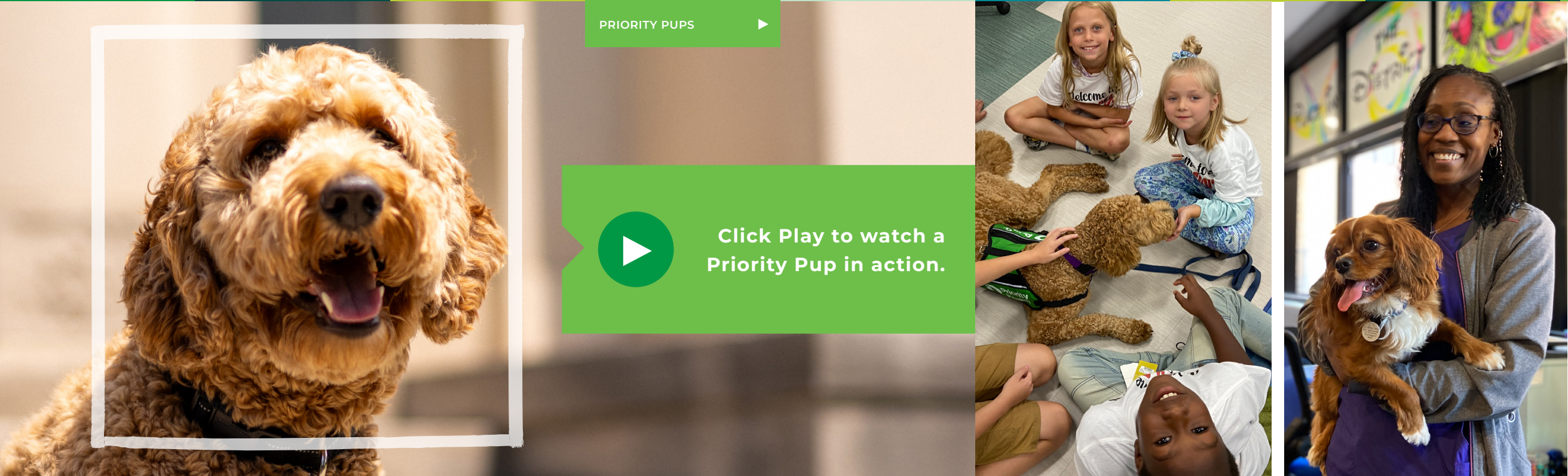
Priority Health is continuously working to improve health and health equity. As part of the Corewell Health system, we support Corewell Health's pledge to act, which acknowledges that systemic and structural racism<sup>1</sup> exists and that it harms the health and well-being of communities we serve. We are called to tackle all barriers to healthy equity, including racism, as part of our mission to improve health, instill humanity and inspire hope.



In 2023, the Priority Health team traveled across the state, working alongside neighbors, leaders and local organizations to find ways to reduce barriers; make health care resources more accessible; and make a real, tangible difference in each of the communities we visited.

Click the  to see our partnership impact.





▲ Scout, a Priority Pup.

▲ Students meet Scout at Bunker Elementary in Muskegon.

caring

“FUR” THE NEXT GENERATION

Health is about more than a strong body. Mental health and behavioral health play an important part in one's well-being but can be overlooked, especially in young children. One in five<sup>1</sup> children struggle with mental health, and more than half of Michigan parents report mental health concerns for their children.<sup>2</sup>

In an effort to help kids experiencing anxiety become resilient adults, Priority Health developed Priority Pups™, a signature program of the Priority Health for Good corporate responsibility initiative.

A collaboration with Canines for Change, the program helps address a variety of behavioral health needs in a place where kids spend so much of their time: at school. Priority Pups are highly trained facility animals that are assigned to an in-school handler and assist students who struggle with anxiety and other emotional needs. For kids who have difficulty with experiences like peer interaction, homesickness and learning disabilities, the dogs can make school a more welcoming place.

It's more than just fun to have a dog at school. Studies show<sup>3</sup> that support dogs can help provide stability and comfort, reduce stress, improve reading scores and offer social and emotional support.

And those support dogs are already making a difference. The first of five dogs to be placed in 2023-2024 is a goldendoodle named Scout. He is hard at work at Bunker Elementary in Muskegon Public Schools. On his first day, he approached a girl fearful of leaving her mother's car to attend class. Before long, she was calmly walking Scout by the leash into the school. School partners are chosen based on a variety of factors, including social determinants of health, mental health crisis rates in the county, poverty rates and other factors.

"It's amazing to watch Scout work," says Muskegon Public Schools superintendent Matthew Cortez. "He can tell when somebody needs him by their side." Scout and the other Priority Pups are giving students tools for regulation and managing stressors, and ways to feel safe so they can grow and achieve academically.

"It's just going to revolutionize how we can emotionally bridge that gap with a lot of our students," Cortez says.

Godwin Heights Public Schools, based in Wyoming, Michigan, announced it is bringing Priority Pup Meeka to one of its elementary schools in February 2024.

At the start of the school year, Priority Health presented a \$12,000 check to the River Rouge School District to support its Animal-Assisted Interventions program.

The Pup Culture Lab is led by veterinary social worker Kesha Alexander, MSSW, VSW. She has developed programming that helps students form bonds with dogs, which helps reduce stress, increase attendance and improve reading confidence. The Pup Culture Lab is also an educational resource that teaches students job skills, including how to care for canine companions in a professional role. These dogs play an important role in reducing anxiety and improving the mental health and well-being of the students throughout the district.

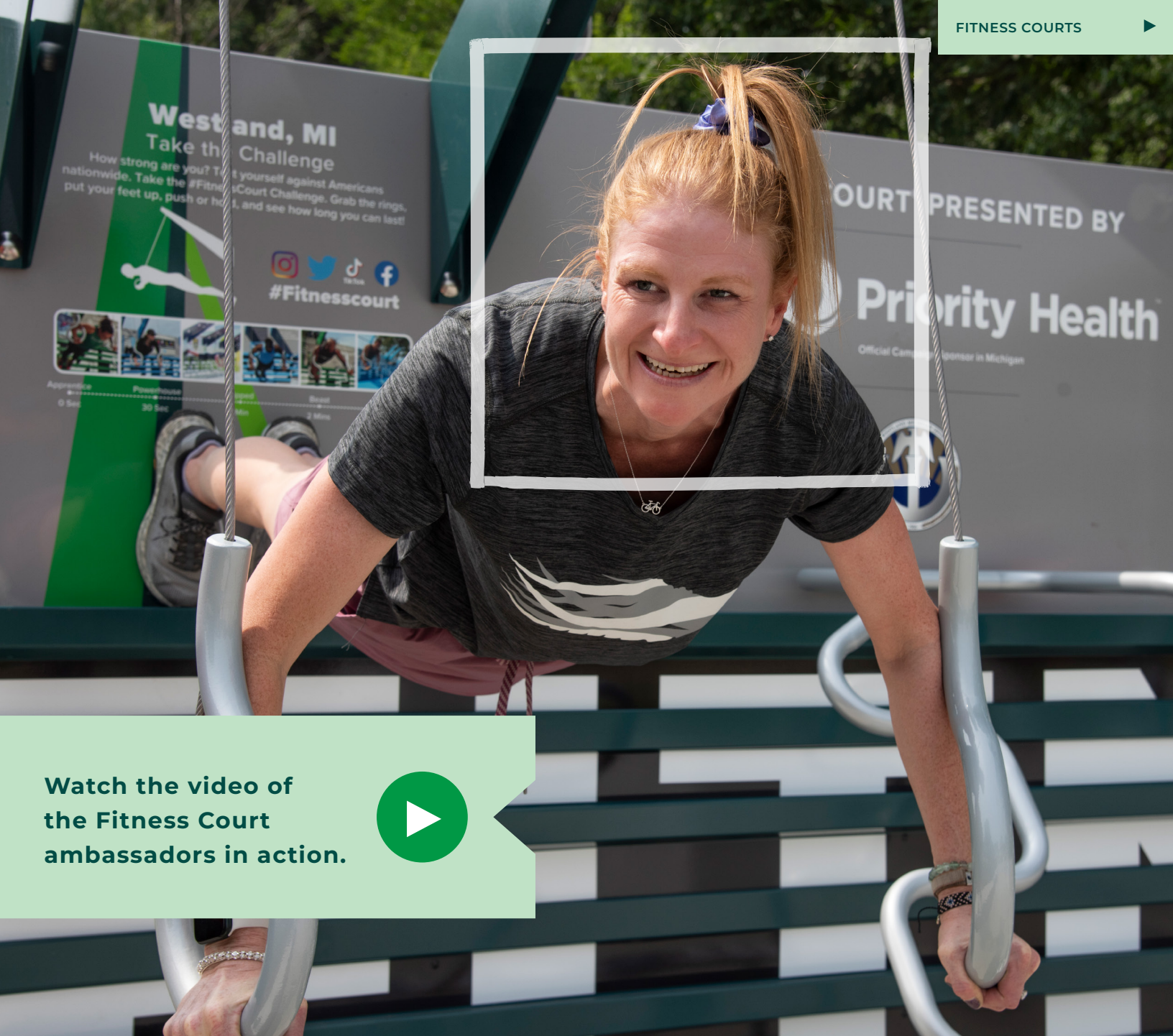


Follow the program on social media:

#PriorityPups  
and  
#PriorityHealthforGood

**Sources:**  
1: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/one-five-children-mental-illness-schools-often-dont-help>  
2: <https://ihpi.umich.edu/news/overuse-social-media-and-devices-top-parent-concerns-kids-head-back-school>  
3: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1173578.pdf>





Watch the video of the Fitness Court ambassadors in action.



# EXPANDING ACCESS TO health

In Michigan, nearly 70% of adults fall within the overweight or obese categories according to body mass index standards. Even more concerning, obesity-related conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, are among the leading causes of preventable, premature death.

To address this epidemic, Priority Health has partnered with the National Fitness Campaign (NFC) to expand access to free, high-quality outdoor exercise options in communities across Michigan. Since the inception of the partnership in 2019, Priority Health Fitness Courts® have been built in 20 communities, with the goal of adding dozens more through 2025.

The campaign works to address the obesity epidemic by removing barriers to exercise and improving quality of life so that Michiganders have a better chance at living their healthiest lives, regardless of financial status, fitness level or age. The overall investment to help reduce chronic disease by getting Michigan moving will approach \$1 million.

But Fitness Courts are more than just a gym alternative. Each court is strategically located to ensure that surrounding community members have less than a 10-minute bike ride to the structure. Many are located within an existing city park so that municipalities and schools can use the courts for programming, making them a community gathering place that supports connectedness—one of the social determinants of health.



Priority Health Fitness Court locations.

“Its benefits go beyond physical health, as it fosters a sense of camaraderie and support among community members,” said William Campbell, mayor of River Rouge. “The Fitness Court is a true inspiration and is helping to promote health, wellness and community fellowship in River Rouge.”

“IT FOSTERS A SENSE OF CAMARADERIE AND SUPPORT AMONG COMMUNITY MEMBERS.”

— WILLIAM CAMPBELL, MAYOR OF RIVER ROUGE

By 2025, Priority Health Fitness Courts are expected to reach one-third of communities in Michigan. That’s approximately 3.3 million Michiganders who will have access to free health and wellness infrastructure. By making this type of intentional investment in our communities, Priority Health is not only championing the health and wellness of Michigan residents, but helping to build stronger communities.





## In Westland, one dynamic senior is shattering stereotypes about age and fitness with the help of her local Priority Health Fitness Court®.

Created with teens and adults of all ages in mind, Fitness Courts are adaptable for nearly all fitness levels. The seven-station circuit provides a full body workout using the exerciser's own body weight, which can be safer for stiffer or less flexible joints. Also, each station has a QR code that allows the user to view online workouts led by professional trainers, including a workout geared toward adults 50 years and older.

Lynn, age 66, lives two blocks from the Priority Health Fitness Court that opened in Westland in summer 2023 and walks there for her daily exercise, a workout she achieves without the burden of back or knee pain.

"I find it [the Fitness Court] to be a good alternative, as I don't lift heavy weights," said Lynn. "It's a good body workout with the standing pull and push stations. The bar for pushups is easy for older people to do. I do lunges on the larger blocks, which is good for strength."

Engaging in regular physical activity is one of the most important things an older adult can do to stay healthy. It can prevent or delay many physical health problems; improve mood, focus and attention; and increase strength, balance and stability.

"I go almost daily before my park walk. I've checked in [on the app] 63 times since the Fitness Court opened," said Lynn

With nearly 25% of Michigan's population over the age of 60, and 37% over the age of 50, Lynn's story is a reminder of how partnerships like the one with Priority Health, National Fitness Campaign and neighborhoods can help support our aging population with strategic investments that make it easier to stay fit and healthy at every age.

Read more about the health benefits a Fitness Courts supports on [ThinkHealth](#).

"I GO ALMOST DAILY BEFORE MY PARK WALK. I'VE CHECKED IN 63 TIMES SINCE [IT] OPENED!"

— LYNN, AGE 66, AT THE WESTLAND FITNESS COURT RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY.

Find a Priority Health Fitness Court near you at [priorityhealth.com/fitnesscourt](https://priorityhealth.com/fitnesscourt)

supporting fitness  
at every age

LYNN'S STORY



NURTURING A

healthier

FUTURE

As a new parent, it's not only important to take care of your baby—it's also essential to take care of yourself. But for some, it can feel impossible at times. And for Michigan families who are faced with a lack of resources and limited social supports, new parenthood can come with additional challenges. Priority Health is committed to compassionate support for new parents so they can focus on their greatest priority—a healthy start for a growing family.

Carrie Kolehouse, executive director of MomsBloom, an organization that matches trained volunteers with new parents, notes that “about 67% of the parents served are experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety, and of those parents nearly all of them report that the support of a MomsBloom volunteer helps alleviate symptoms.” Volunteers travel to family homes to help with chores, house projects, pet care and babysitting older siblings—anything a new parent needs while

“PRIORITY HEALTH IS COMMITTED TO COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS SO THEY CAN FOCUS ON THEIR **GREATEST PRIORITY...**”



caring for a baby. As one of the mothers of MomsBloom shared, “With two under two, having a few hours a week to yourself is a game changer.” As the organization expands and works to fill the increasing requests, MomsBloom needed to cast a wider net, as volunteers were limited in certain areas of West Michigan and there was a language barrier for Spanish-speaking homes. Seeing the opportunity to invest through its Priority Health for Good initiative, the health plan covered the cost for MomsBloom to fill the gap and hire bilingual contractor Margie Jaeger to help the families who were on a waiting list.

The National Diaper Bank Network (NDBN) reported in 2023 that almost half of families in the United States need diapers, and families with limited financial resources are disproportionately affected. NDBN also reported that families are cutting back on other necessities, like healthy food and utilities, in order to keep their infants and toddlers in clean diapers. Since 2020, Priority Health has expanded its support to meet the diaper needs of many families across Michigan. With volunteers and \$114,000 to support the Metropolitan Detroit Diaper Bank, Catholic Charities West Michigan and United Through Motherhood in Benton Harbor, Priority Health helped bring one of the most important infant and toddler essentials to area parents so they can focus on raising a new generation of healthy Michiganders.

Additional ways we partnered to support and advocate for infants and their parents:

- “Birthing Justice”: PBS film screening and panel discussion
- Muskegon and Detroit Community Baby Showers
- Black Breastfeeding Association Conference
- Maternal & Infant Health Summit Scholarships
- March of Dimes Southeast Michigan







A message from  
the executive  
director of the  
Priority Health  
Total Health  
Foundation.

About the Priority Health  
Total Health Foundation:

The Priority Health Total Health Foundation was formed in 2020 as a result of the merger between Total Health Care, the longest-serving HMO in Detroit, and Priority Health. The mission of the Priority Health Total Health Foundation is to improve the health and well-being of the people of Detroit and the surrounding area by investing in organizations dedicated to serving the needs of the community.



SOUTHEAST  
MICHIGAN

The Priority Health Total Health Foundation continues to transform compassion into action through its work with nonprofit organizations in Detroit and Southeast Michigan.

As we wrap up the third year since its founding, I am reflecting on the numerous lives that have been impacted through the organizations we partner with at the Priority Health Total Health Foundation. The foundation name has been updated, but our mission remains, as we stay dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health affecting the residents of Detroit and Southeast Michigan. Since 2020, grants totaling more than \$14.78 million have been awarded to several unique organizations that are making extraordinary strides to improve the quality of life for Michiganders. In 2023 alone, the foundation contributed more than \$4.12 million to more than 50 organizations. Often, the grant funding serves as a catalyst to address systemic issues that contribute to poor health outcomes, such as trauma, lack of housing, food insecurity and health care quality.

Here are some unique partner highlights from 2023:

- **Detroit Life Is Valuable Everyday (DLIVE)** is a health-centered community violence intervention organization that works with youth and young adults ages 14–30 to radically improve health outcomes and quality of life. DLIVE was awarded \$264,000 to advance its work in delivering innovative solutions in the areas of mental health therapy, social determinants of health, community health education and leadership development. DLIVE's work extends across Detroit with a primary focus on survivors of trauma emerging from Detroit Sinai-Grace & Detroit Receiving Hospitals.

- **With a grant for \$250,000, Project HEARD, which stands for Health Equity via Advocacy for Resources in Detroit**, came together as a policy initiative of the Detroit Urban Research Center, a longstanding community-academic partnership in Detroit made up of eight community-based organizations, two health and human service agencies, and the University of Michigan Schools of Public Health, Social Work and Nursing. This community-led program partners with academics to advance policy change that addresses critical determinants of health equity affecting our communities, such as air quality and transportation. The goal is to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations in Detroit to impact policy change.
- **Wayne State University School of Social Work** launched the Early Childhood Support Clinic, an innovative perinatal and early childhood mental health clinic co-located at Wayne Pediatrics in Detroit. The \$100,000 grant supports the clinic as it provides dedicated maternal and infant health care, including on-site intervention services to screen for perinatal mood and anxiety disorder, trauma exposure, adverse childhood experiences and developmental concerns in young children.

These organizations are just a few that are partnering with us to build trusting relationships and inspire hope in our community every day. In 2024, the Priority Health Total Health Foundation will continue to partner with outstanding community-based organizations, not only to spread compassion but also to deliver measurable results to improve health and well-being.

Sincerely,



Shannon Wilson, MPH

Executive director, Priority Health  
Total Health Foundation

Vice president of population health  
and health equity, Priority Health



Board members

- Shannon Wilson  
*Chair*
- Doug Baker
- Ruby Cole
- Michael Jasperson
- Molly McCoy
- Krista Poole
- Elizabeth Pratcher
- Erin Sullivan

53 GRANT RECIPIENTS  
IN 2023

93% OF GRANT RECIPIENTS  
ARE IN DETROIT

\$4.12 million+  
DISTRIBUTED GRANTS IN 2023

\$14.78 million+  
DISTRIBUTED GRANTS SINCE  
FOUNDING IN 2020





# nourishing our neighborhoods

## ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

**Food is one of the basic necessities of life. Yet approximately 1.4 million people in Michigan, including more than 300,000 children, face daily food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>**

The cycle of income restriction, food insecurity and unequal health outcomes is difficult to break. Food is often one of the first expenses cut after a sudden loss of income. However, many chronic diseases are impacted by poor diet and nutrition, which, in turn, contribute to an increase in health care costs.

The Priority Health Total Health Foundation has awarded several grants that directly address the impact food can have on health and the need for improved access to nutritional education in many communities.

The foundation awarded Authority Health \$450,000 to open the Ruby Cole Community Kitchen at its Popoff Family Health Center. The new community space has sit-down space for 35 people, clinical therapy rooms for nutrition education and demonstration space for cooking classes.

“Every culture, every community gathers around the kitchen,” said Loretta Bush, president and CEO, Authority Health. “We believe food can be used to prevent chronic diseases and can be used as part of the healing process. Nutrition is at the heart of our efforts to promote a healthy community.”

Located on the east side of Detroit, Authority Health’s Popoff Family Health Center is a comprehensive family medical practice that offers screening for the social determinants of health and adverse childhood experiences, as well as health promotion and disease prevention activities.

Bush continued, “We are grateful to the Priority Health Total Health Foundation for its generous grant that will allow us to provide this valuable community resource.”

**Since its formation in 2020, the Priority Health Total Health Foundation has given \$2.86 million to organizations working to eradicate food insecurity in Detroit and Southeast Michigan, including:**

- Authority Health
- Brightmoor Connection
- Capuchin Soup Kitchen
- Central Detroit Christian
- Kids Health Connection
- Leaders Advancing & Helping Communities (LAHC)
- Matrix Human Services
- Micah 6
- MSU Edible Forest
- Oakland HOPE
- Redford Brightmoor Initiative
- St. Vincent de Paul



<sup>1</sup>Food Security Council, “Final Report 2022,” February 2022.





THE FUTURE

Priority Health is working to improve health and health equity in the communities we serve. Here's a look at some of our stats from 2023.

\$5,421,509

INVESTED IN MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES THROUGH SPONSORSHIPS AND FOUNDATION GRANTS



400+

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN & 20 TEACHERS SUPPORTED BY PRIORITY PUPS™



168

TOTAL PARTNERS & GRANTEES



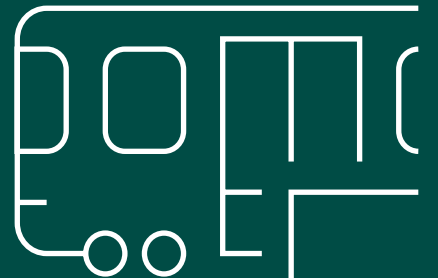
152

STUDENTS IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN HAD HEART SCREENINGS.



3,169

FREE RIDES TO HEALTH APPOINTMENTS THROUGH THE OLDER PERSONS COMMISSION IN OAKLAND COUNTY



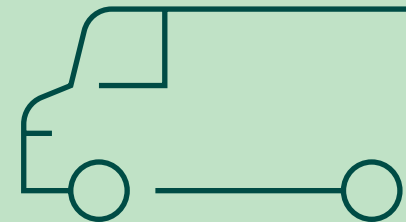
65,000

YOUNG READERS AND 85 LIBRARIES IN THE MARANDA READING CLUB



800

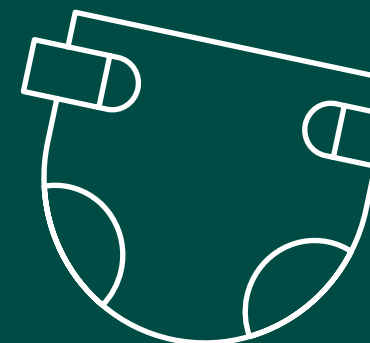
TRANSPORTATION TRIPS THROUGH THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF KENT COUNTY



16 WEEKS OF DIAPER SUPPORT FOR

1,905

FAMILIES IN MUSKEGON, OSCEOLA, OCEANA, NEWAYGO, HOLLAND, IONIA, BERRIEN, WAYNE, OAKLAND AND MACOMB COUNTIES



8

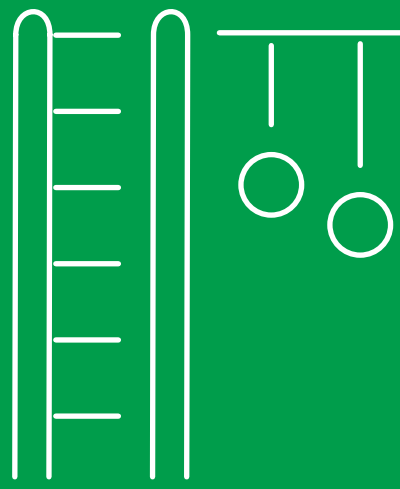
COURTS OPENED IN 2023

16M+

CALORIES BURNED AT FITNESS COURTS

10K+

PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO A COURT WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK







**myStrength<sup>®</sup>**  
by Teladoc Health

## Free mental health support with myStrength

In 2023, we gave Michiganders 13 and older free access to a leading mental wellness app called myStrength. The app includes information, activities and resources to help you manage stress, reduce anxiety and improve your mood. This service is available to anyone through June 2024.

[web-ui.mystrength.livongo.com/go/phcp/phc23](https://web-ui.mystrength.livongo.com/go/phcp/phc23)

Check out our webpage to  
see what Priority Health is  
doing in the community.

[priorityhealth.com/community](https://priorityhealth.com/community)

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