the

ESSENTIAL

WORK
Rural communities are facing big questions about our future: what do we offer? How do we chart our own course of economic development, and not rely on the whims of giant corporations? How do we control our own narratives instead of buying into what urban centers believe us to be? How do we thrive as places in our own right? How do we take a clear-eyed look at our pasts and reconcile the sometimes violent legacies that formed these places and the people here? How do we create a new politics of the rural that embraces the best of both conservative and progressive thinking, and makes room for ideas way outside of the current Overton window?

Crosshatch dives deep into the complexities of the above questions, creating programs designed to get to the root of the rural: thriving place-based cultures and economies, built around regenerative agriculture, arts, craft, and light industry, that attract skilled creatives, give residents a compelling vision of rural life, and that speak authentically to this place and its people.

**Mission**

We build strong communities at the intersections of **art, farming, economy, and ecology**. We exist to create places and connections that restore the earth and its people.

**Dear Friends,**

There’s been a lot of talk about “essential work” as we navigate the ongoing impacts of this pandemic. At Crosshatch, we’ve always been focused on what we consider to be essential work: supporting artists, growing food, and staying connected. These are the fibers that weave us all together for resilience.

In this year’s report, we reflect on some of the ways that Crosshatch has undertaken, facilitated, and otherwise helped to catalyze this work over the past year. There are two specific endeavors that I am enormously proud to say that Crosshatch was thoughtful enough, courageous enough, and caring enough to manifest:

**Crosshatch Artist Emergency Fund**

Thomas Merton, the American Trappist monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet, social activist and scholar, famously said, “Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.” If there’s been anything consistent about this last year, it’s been how often I’ve spoken to loved ones and friends regarding how frequently they’ve felt they were losing themselves, and simultaneously discovering themselves. If, indeed, as Merton suggests, art can be what enables us to navigate those personal journeys, then who better to support during this unprecedented time than artists? You can read more about the impact of the Crosshatch Artist Emergency Fund in these pages.

**Supporting Local Growers**

At a time when our connections have been severed from so many of the people, places, and experiences that help us stay rooted, support for farmers was essential. These are the folks adept at that special alchemy that transforms dirt and seed into nourishment and flavor. We stayed by their side to “grow” new endeavors, new markets, and to establish uniquely collaborative and community-based business models that turned the ordinary and traditional into the antiquated and outdated. One example is the Torch Lake Co-op. We’ve got an interview with Joanna Claire, Torch Lake cooperator, in here too.

I could not be more proud to be associated with this organization and its associated community of partners, supporters, makers, and growers who have worked so diligently to ensure that the essential work continues.

With sincere gratitude,

Brian Bourdages
Crosshatch Board President
Supporting Each Other Through a Pandemic

As we emerge and recover from a global pandemic and the challenges of the past year, we are so grateful for the opportunities presented to us to be in service to the land and each other. The pandemic was (and continues to be) a pressure test of our belief that this region has everything it needs to become more resilient. Each challenge reinforced the importance of cultivating deep roots in community, art, and ecology.

Do you already know that your existence — who and how you are — is in and of itself a contribution to the people and place around you? Do you understand that your quality of life and your survival are tied to how authentic and generous the connections are between you and the people and place you live with and in?

— Adrienne Maree Brown, Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds

What we bring to our community

- a scale of work that encompasses the kitchen table up to the regional network
- an emphasis on care for ourselves, each other, and the living world
- a process that values small, slow, and comprehensive solutions
- an open-ended process of making the world through visioning, practice, organizing and art-making
- a deep abiding love of partnership and shared work

On-Farm Education

Through our Twilight Tours and workshops, small farmers of all experience levels learn from one another’s practices. The tours provide a “field trip” to observe good farming techniques up close, such as crop rotation, cover cropping, and year-round vegetable production. Workshops take it to the next level for intermediate learners, with integrated classroom and field work. Expect to see lots more food and farm programming in 2022.

Crosshatch Artist Emergency Fund

Working artists have been hit hard by loss of revenue as a result of the pandemic, including cancelled gigs and closed galleries. In response, Crosshatch has raised and distributed over $65,000 in emergency aid to artists in Northwest Lower Michigan, with more on the way. More than just funding for urgent needs, this is an essential reminder of the importance of arts in difficult times.
Renewable Energy Grant
We’re proud of this ongoing partnership with Cherry Republic to help local farms invest in renewable energy. These are farmers who are dedicated to producing food for their community as a way to give us all an alternative to big corporate agriculture. What better way to honor their work than to help them transition to alternative energy sources? We’ll be expanding this grant in early 2022—stay tuned for ways you can get involved.

The Long Memory Project
Without an ongoing living memory, a community forgets where it came from and what it is. Without a diversity of stories, that living memory fails to truly represent the community it serves. The Long Memory Project uplifts the long and varied history of a place by bringing elders together with artists for an intentional listening session that honors the memories of the past. The artists then spend two weeks in residence to create songs, poems, and artwork to maintain the lineage of the stories and weave a connection between the generations.

Skill Swap
An intergenerational practical learning day with workshops in art, nature, and real home economics, the Skill Swap is a Crosshatch staple. This is where folks share skills, a meal, and a social dance with live music. We took a break from the digital Skill Swap in 2021, but we’re working hard to bring it back better than ever starting in 2022 (with some interesting news on the way).

Microloans
Our partners at the Grain Train and Oryana join forces with us to support the local food and farm economy by providing no-interest microloans to farmers and food entrepreneurs throughout Northwest Lower Michigan. Given the impact of the pandemic this past year, we saw more applications for foundational improvements or upgrades to farm equipment, wells, and infrastructure like freezers and coolers. We’ve distributed close to $80,000 in microloans (including $22,000 in 2021). This year’s recipients include Danu Hof Farm and Market in Mancelona, Michigan Worm Works in Manistee, and Z & N Farm in Bear Lake.

Northern MI Small Farm Conference
This is a small farm conference not afraid to look to the past and to the future at the same time. Our goal is to equip the small farm community with the tools for success, including hands-on sessions and a forum for the open exchange of ideas. We’re working hard right now to improve on last year, and will offer another virtual conference from Feb 2–6, 2022.

Chicken Coupe
To meet the needs of small farmers, sometimes you gotta get mobile. The Chicken Coupe is an MDA-certified poultry processing trailer that small farmers can use to bypass expensive processing facilities and sell directly to their customers. The Coupe is going strong, thanks to the hard work of Matt and Ellie at Pitchfork Farm, who have stepped in as stewards of the coupe.

Preservation Station
The Preservation Station (aka “Blanch”) is a canning kitchen on wheels that allows people to learn a new skill, sharpen their techniques, and join friends or family to make food preservation a fun tradition in their community. Blanch was parked this past year, but we’re plotting her comeback.
By the Numbers

$79,775
Microloans distributed since 2016
($22,000 in 2021)
Thank You,
Oryana Community Co-op and Grain Train Natural Foods Market

$65,000
in emergency aid to artists in Northwest Lower Michigan
Thank You,
Begonia Charitable Foundation and the Jones Family Foundation

$35,685
in Farm Renewable Energy grants since 2019
Thank You,
Cherry Republic

Shining a Light On Our Partners

Bellaire Public Library
Crosshatch sponsored an anti-racist special collection at the Bellaire Public Library. The library invested in great books—both classics and new bestsellers, youth and adult, fiction and non-fiction—that help us to understand the history of racism, colonialism and other forms of oppression in the United States. These selections now live on as a collection to promote inclusive storytelling in our region.

Springboard for the Arts
After we launched the Crosshatch Artist Emergency Fund, Springboard contacted us to expand the program in order to serve the entire Upper Midwest. As a result, Crosshatch joined the Upper Midwest Emergency Relief Fund Coalition, and, in partnership with Arts South Dakota, Culturesource, ImagineMKE, Racing Magpie, Springboard for the Arts, and The Arts Partnership, we’ve hugely multiplied donor dollars to support artists throughout the region.

Commgrounds
We are super excited to be the primary non-profit partner for this innovative real estate cooperative in Traverse City. Crosshatch will assist with the programming available in the performance space, embed our Artist Residency there, and serve as advisor to anything nonprofit related for the pilot project building at 416 Eighth Street.
Our Small Farm Guilds are organized by farmers for farmers, and we welcome any aspiring food and agriculture entrepreneur to join. At any given meeting, you’re likely to hear lively discussion about efficient growing techniques, integrating plants and livestock into production, or improving small food systems for farmers and customers alike.

It was this last topic that prompted the members of the East Bay Small Farm Guild to start the Torch Lake Co-Op at one of the busiest points of the season—and just as the pandemic was getting started. We checked in with Joanna Claire from Grass Lake Organics for an update on how things have progressed and what’s in store for the Co-Op going forward.

How are things going with the Torch Lake Co-Op?
It’s very exciting. I feel like we have all the potential in the world. Co-ops generally take between three and seven years to form—we’re in year two, and hoping to get something done with the state as a legal entity. We’re learning what’s best for our market, and we’re doing everything we can to become more than the sum of our parts. We have a steering committee, and we have collaborative marketing, advertising, and distribution efforts. Even as microproducers, we can do things in the future like produce certain crops together, then package and sell them under the Torch Lake Co-Op brand.

What’s the benefit to small farmers of forming a Co-Op?
Our dollars go further when we work in a collaborative way. For example, the laws around third-party egg sales require a certifiable washing/grading facility. One of our goals is to afford such a facility, which will then allow us to sell eggs to restaurants and local grocery stores, like Grain Train Natural Foods Market or Village Market. We can achieve more when we pool our resources.

How has Crosshatch helped the Co-Op thrive?
Beyond being the reason why we met for brainstorming sessions in the first place, Crosshatch supplied both our steering committee meetings and general co-op meetings with a very talented facilitator: Daniel Marbury [Crosshatch Program Coordinator]. We would be nowhere without him! Crosshatch’s method of creating the space and environment for collaboration and creative thought was certainly at the core of our decision to cooperate. Another valued member of the steering committee is Wendy Wieland, who works with MSU Extension and is incredibly knowledgeable about our food economy.

Did you ever see yourself running a Co-Op outside of your regular farming?
I’ve discovered a lot of passion for it! I didn’t realize I liked accounting or bookkeeping, but I’m able to lean on previous business experience. I find collaboration very fulfilling. As one of the older members of the co-op, I hope to leverage my expertise and complement the enthusiasm of the younger farmers; it feels good to use my life skills to move this project forward.

What’s next for the Co-Op?
Anything you’re building by committee is slow and takes a lot of effort. We all have different ideas of what’s best for our business, so we’re spending time figuring out where “what’s good for the group is good for you.” I want our farmers to have time to focus on their business, while I try to catapult us all into a new tax bracket. A few members have put off pouring energy into our own marketing plans, and so we also see a lot of value in things like logos, branding, and developing our existing customer base.

We currently have an online farm market, which has worked well because of the trend of people buying their groceries online, but our in-person market really shines in the winter. We expanded last summer to include a drop off in Williamsburg, then we added Elk Rapids this spring, and this fall, we’ll be adding the TC Commons!

Find out more at TorchLakeCoop.com
Crosshatch Artist Emergency Fund

The devastating impact of the coronavirus on the arts economy is still reverberating through our community. Since early 2020, the Emergency Fund has disbursed over 130 grants to artists in need. The process was designed to honor the importance of artists to the communities they serve, so we decided to keep the recipient list private. Due to the fact that Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ artists and those with disabilities were disproportionately affected by the economic loss, we prioritized their applications first.

We also made the application as short as we possibly could (about 12 questions). We didn’t require a report on how the money was spent, and we didn’t require any extra work from the artists—no testimonials or thank yous. Nonetheless, scores of artists emailed us to express their gratitude.

As the need for artist relief grew, we collaborated with other artist-centered organization to grow the fund. The Upper Midwest Emergency Relief Fund Coalition was born out of Springboard for the Arts, and includes Arts South Dakota, Culturesource, ImagineMKE, Racing Magpie, and The Arts Partnership.

To date, we have supported artists in Northwest Lower Michigan with over $65,000 in funding.

I really appreciate you being so pro-active to support local artists at this tumultuous and uncertain time.

Thank you so incredibly much.

With the recent re-shutdown of the studio, this honestly could not have come at a better time.

I feel very privileged indeed, as I know I am one of MANY artists and performers here in northern Michigan that have had their livelihoods decimated. We all just want to get back out there and do our thing, but I fear that may be a long way off. This award gave me at least 500 reasons to keep going, and as many sources of inspiration to pass it on. So shines a good deed in a weary world.
Our Strategic Plan, Summarized

**Building the Dream: Hatchquarters**

*One of our long-term aspirations* includes developing 50 acres of farmland into our Hatchquarters, an ecological farmstead, makerspace, artist residency, and community space to hold social dances, art exhibits, potlucks, classes and more. We recently received a grant to support planning and community engagement for this project. We’d love to hear your ideas; email amanda@crosshatch.org and we’ll talk.

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**Equity, Accessibility, Reconciliation, and Care**

Crosshatch is deeply indebted to thinkers, activists and organizers from historically marginalized and colonized communities. We are particularly aware of the need to resist what’s called the “non-profit industrial complex” and base our work on trust, connection, kinship, accountability to our community, and a commitment to liberation for all people. We have much more to do, but here’s what this looks like so far:

- Ongoing **territorial acknowledgment**, as well as acknowledging that many of the ideas prevalent in the movements for environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, local economy and self-sufficiency originate from indigenous peoples in the Americas.

- Auditing **accessibility of both in-person and online events** with a goal of making our programs available to any person who desires to attend. This includes sliding scale pricing and scholarships to ensure economic equity.

- A measurable objective of searching outside of our immediate circles when selecting speakers, panelists, workshop presenters and other thought leaders, with a commitment to **uplifting the voices of BIPOC, female-identified, disabled and LGBTQIA+ artists, farmers and community builders**.

- An **anonymous hiring process** that de-prioritizes resumes, education status and awards, and that is transparent about pay and benefits (see more on the next page). Likewise, we structure our pay through an algorithm that’s posted on our website; everyone knows what everyone else is making, and why.

- A **commitment to staff care** that includes a take-what-you-need vacation policy (with a minimum 21-day requirement), the best health care benefits we can afford, and time for personal check-ins that prioritize the person over the position.

- Ongoing training for staff and board members in **implicit bias and anti-oppression action**.

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**Land Acknowledgement**

Our work is embedded in land that has been cherished and maintained for many thousands of years by the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Bodewadmi nations. We acknowledge that we benefit from the colonization of Michigan, which was a part of a national project of erasure that hindered access of the Anishinaabek to their lands and water, and that committed physical and spiritual violence against native traditions, languages, beliefs, community structures, and bodies. We acknowledge the past, present and future generations of these nations, and we honor both their long-standing kinship with the land and their resilience in the face of colonization.
Meet our Staff

Our staff consists of tinkerers, writers, deep thinkers, poets, data geeks, connectors, artists, permaculture nerds, and all around bright, beautiful humans. Together, we make Crosshatch shine. It’s a pleasure to meet you!

Amanda Kik, Co-Director (she/her/hers)

The last year was brutal, but one of the bright spots for me was working with folks from the Upper Midwest Emergency Relief Fund Coalition. We were able to join together to raise more funds for artists, and learn from each other about how to disperse them more equitably. It warmed my heart to work with the helpers. I wish we could have done more.

Brad Kik, Co-Director (he/him/his)

A memorable moment from the year was when a Crosshatch Residency Alum, Moheb Soliman, was in town promoting his book of poetry, HOMES. There was so much joy just to see people gathering again, to see Moheb, and to know that we had supported the creation of his amazing book. Afterwards, an artist in the audience stopped me to thank us for an Emergency Fund grant and it was shockingly moving to hear that gratitude in person.

Daniel Marbury, Program Coordinator (he/him/his)

One of the things that I value immensely over the course of my three years at Crosshatch is how I’m given the flexibility to adapt to community needs and opportunities. For example, we’re continuing to develop neighbor-to-neighbor mutual aid efforts around home gardening, given concerns about food supply shortages. We’re able to broaden and connect at points of crisis to engage a wider and more diverse base of partners, because we know that diversity is the ecological basis of resilience.

Kaitlyn Bunting, Communications Director (she/her/hers)

I was initially drawn to Crosshatch through their mission of intersectional, place-based community building, which sits at the core of my personal value system. The hiring method with its anonymous, project-based aspect really hooked me on the organization, I have never been part of such an unbiased, thoughtful process. Once I met with Brad and Amanda, I was all in. Their energy and passion for the work they do is palpable, and I am so excited to help further the impact of this work.

Taylor Reed, Communications Specialist (he/him/his)

Crosshatch’s unique mission and work strongly parallels my own understanding of what this world deeply needs. What I know of concepts like community resiliency, nature’s pace, proper scale, and respect for limits, arose from years of wanderings, evening conversations and books. Coming across an organization that embodies, supports and explores those very things has felt like a godsend, and I’m both inspired and thankful to be able to contribute to its work.

Ross Greedy, Development (he/him/his)

I grew up on a small family farm in Southwest Iowa, where I have early memories of herding our cattle down gravel roads to rotate between pastures and harvested plots. Those experiences led me to pursue a career in outdoor education and recreation and now a PhD in Community Sustainability from MSU. At the heart of Crosshatch’s mission is an interest in connecting people to our environment, so I knew I had to be a part of their vibrant community work.

...AND WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THREE BRAND NEW MEMBERS TO THE CROSSHATCH TEAM...
On Thoughtful Growth

We don’t hire often. The last time we hired someone was four years ago; and seven years ago before that. But it was time.

In order to find Kaitlyn, Taylor, and Ross, we knew we wanted to go about the search and hiring process in a new way. We were frankly sick of the standard approach and hungry for something that showed us how someone thought through problems that were specific to us; how they wrote (beyond the cover letter), and how they approached a task. We were fortunate to stumble upon a great model from Chuck Marohn, Founder of Strong Towns, which you can see here: www.strongtowns.org/journal/2021/9/17/the-strong-towns-hiring-process

Here are some of the critical pieces of our hiring approach:

- **Protecting candidate anonymity:** The process only allowed us to see names or resumes if we got to the interview stage. Everything before that was evaluated upon the quality of work demonstrated in Round 1 questions. Awards, degrees, or where a candidate went to school were irrelevant.

- **Transparency:** We wanted to make sure everyone understood the position in detail before they applied, so we posted an anonymous form for questions, then answered every one of them (over 50) on a live webinar and on our website. Most importantly, we put the exact pay front and center of each job description.

- **Designing Round 1 Questions:** We created hypothetical scenarios and asked candidates to respond as though they were on the job: write an email to a county commissioner, follow up with a major donor, or craft a marketing plan to launch a new film. We used hypotheticals to ensure we weren’t exploiting them for actual labor.

- **What we Discovered:** The best candidates showed us that they not only understood the work each position entailed, but that they could think around corners, or draw new conclusions based on context. It was great to see candidate personalities shine through, and to realize lots of candidates advanced who wouldn’t have made the cut on resumes alone.

The hardest part? Making all the calls to folks who we didn’t select, because again, they were all awesome. You can read more about our hiring process in our blogpost: crosshatch.org/news/2021/6/10/were-hiring
We’re delighted to share that in 2020, we achieved a major financial goal for a small nonprofit like us; we now have a cash reserve of 25% of our operating budget. This is a strong indicator of the health of our organization.

Transparency about our financial position has always been an important part of our work. Like many organizations, the pandemic tested both our resilience, and our budgeting in 2020 and 2021. In-person events, along with their income, went away, but many costs remained.

Though the pandemic unbalanced our expense budget toward general admin, we saw the opportunity to dedicate employee time to showing up for the needs of our community, and for rigorous planning for 2022 and beyond. It also allowed us to hire more staff to bring even more great programming in the near future. So, while we weren’t able to rely on earned income this year, your contributions and CARES Act support filled the gap. We’re using this breathing room to invest in becoming even stronger and more adaptable.

Income by Category

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Expenses by Program

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Food, Farm & Community

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Education

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Arts Programs

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Financials & How to Give

How to Give

Your donation invests in programs that restore our connections to the land and each other. To make a gift, visit our website at crosshatch.org/donate and follow the prompts. Or contact us at (231) 622-5252 or donate@crosshatch.org, and we’ll help you help us. We also accept donations of cryptocurrency and stock, planned gifts, and gifts in tribute or memoriam. Let’s build resilient communities together.

Funding Sources

Public Grants
Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs, Networks Northwest MI Restart Program, Small Business Administration Payroll Protection Program, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Corporate Grants
Cherry Republic, Downtown Traverse City Association, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Kinship Handwork, Leelanau Conservancy, Market M88, Oryana Community Co-op, Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Foundation Grants
Americana Foundation, Anonymous, Begonia Charitable Foundation, Fred & Jaqui Blackwood, Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, John & Ann Steinbrunner, Jones Family Foundation, Mark & Laurie McMurray, Mary Bevans Gillett, Petoskey Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, Pierce Family Charitable Foundation, Rotary Charities of Traverse City, Springboard for the Arts Upper Midwest Emergency Relief Fund

Ryan Romeyn of Providence Farm working with his cattle during a Crosshatch Twilight Tour.