



## **GRAR'S STRATEGIC RELATIONS PROGRAM**

### **FORMING CONNECTIONS THAT UNITE, ENGAGE, & STRENGTHEN WEST MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES**

Since its launch in October of 2010, the Grand Rapids Association of REALTORS® Strategic Relations Program has connected REALTOR® and Affiliate Members with organizations, groups, and entities that share the common goal of promoting West Michigan as a great place to live, work, and play.

This document highlights a sampling of the relationships that have been formed, events that have been held, and enhanced communication that has occurred as a result of this program.

- 140 local organizations, ministries, and schools are communicating with GRAR on a quarterly basis via the Welcome Home West Michigan newsletters.
- 100+ GRAR Members are serving as official Community Liaisons to the groups referenced above.
- GRAR Members “Walked the Halls” with Grand Rapids Public Schools.
- GRAR assisted Fountain Street Church in promoting the “Old House Expo.”
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with representatives of Habitat for Humanity of Kent County and promoted the volunteer opportunities available through that organization. GRAR also assisted Habitat in sharing the message that it doesn't just give houses away or serve the homeless. It offers home ownership programs and opportunities to consumers who fall within annual income guidelines of \$20,000-\$39,000.
- The GRAR Board of Directors held a business meeting at the ICCF building and spent some time learning about the efforts of ICCF to provide safe, clean, and affordable housing opportunities.
- GRAR Members were encouraged to donate used financial calculators to the students at Hudsonville High School.
- GRAR assisted Home Repair Services in promoting its “Resourceful Homeowner Celebration.”
- The Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan's Carbon Monoxide Alarm Drive was promoted, and a tour of the facility was offered to REALTOR® and Affiliate Members.
- The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan participated in GRAR's “Cultural Intelligence: Don't Sell a Home Without It!” event. GRAR also promoted the Center's Annual Fair Housing Month Luncheon & Workshop Series.
- Information concerning the local Leukemia & Lymphoma Society was shared with the GRAR membership.
- GRAR promoted the membership opportunities and events/activities of the Women's Council of REALTORS®.
- GRAR Members were encouraged to volunteer at God's Kitchen.
- GRAR Representatives attended Barbara Corcoran's presentation at the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. Barbara's books were also added to the REALTOR® Store inventory.

- GRAR Members organized and participated in several Volunteer Days at Degage Ministries.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with a representative of Local First to learn more about the organization. As a result, Local First has offered to provide GRAR with rosters of its locally owned restaurants, retail outlets, and service providers for inclusion in the REALTOR® Store gift baskets. This would help spread Local First's message that, if everyone were to make a 10% shift toward locally owned businesses, we could create 1600 new jobs for our region.
- Blood Drives supporting Michigan Blood were held at the GRAR office.
- The Grand Rapids Griffins held a REALTOR® Night and offered special seating and discounted prices.
- A GRAR Community Liaisons Facebook Group was created to facilitate discussion between members serving as liaisons.
- Information concerning the Heritage Hill Weekend Tour of Homes was shared with the GRAR membership.
- GRAR assisted the Northwood Hills Condominium Association in spreading the word that the Association permits cats, but does not allow dogs of any size or breed.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with a representative of Olivia's Gift and learned of the non-profit organization's ongoing project to build a state-of-the-art apartment style development for disabled individuals in Ada Township.
- A popular series of educational programs were held in conjunction with the Rental Properties Owners Association.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with members of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and discussed the leadership programs available through that organization. This information was then shared with the Next Generation Leadership Task Force, which may opt to offer some of the programming to the GRAR membership.
- GRAR promoted Fountain Street Church's 3-day Human Shelter and Sustainability Symposium.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with a representative of the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and shared the message that the Chamber offers translation services. This meeting also inspired the Chamber to sponsor GRAR's "Cultural Intelligence: Don't Sell a Home Without It!" event.
- GRAR has included local programs, events, and activities in the Community Events Calendar section of the public website.
- Members of GRAR's Young Professionals Group attended Blend's anniversary celebration and networked with leaders from other industries.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with a representative of WGVU's Engage Committee to discuss upcoming public service events. There may also be an upcoming opportunity for GRAR members to tour the studios.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force received information concerning the history and objectives of National Heritage Academies. GRAR is in the process of obtaining informational brochures that REALTORS® may share with their clients. These brochures will be available in the REALTOR® Store at no cost.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force worked with representatives from the City of Grand Rapids' Community Services, Historic Preservation, and Economic Development offices to provide a REALTOR® Bus Tour. The information shared on the Tour better enabled REALTORS® to promote City programs, services, and events to their clients.

- GRAR hosted one of the Center for Michigan's Community Conversations re: The Future of Education. Real estate professionals know better than most the impact that schools have on the local economy and property values, so REALTOR® input was useful to the Center as it attempted to determine what is working in our local communities, what needs reform, and what new ideas can be brought to the table.
- GRAR promoted the Michigan Disability Sports Alliance's Victory Games.
- The Strategic Relations Task Force met with a representative of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids to learn about what services are available to the community so that REALTORS® may share that information with their clients.