

Young at heart. Young in career. Young in age. All are welcome.



JANUARY 2026

Our YPN Network is growing – *thanks to you!*

Thanks to our incredible members, the Young Professionals Network (YPN) is thriving! We just started tracking membership last year, and we're already at **111 members** – a testament to the energy and enthusiasm you all bring to the group.

[Click here to view our current roster of members.](#)



YPN is all about connecting, collaborating, and celebrating each other's successes. Membership is free and open to anyone who is forever young at heart, young in their career, or simply young in age. Together, we're building a supportive network of professionals who lift each other up.

Help us keep the momentum going – encourage your colleagues and friends to join!

Anyone interested can email [Pam Peters](#) to sign up – it's free, and [the benefits](#) are endless.

Hi!



Meet Steve Sochanek!

Say hello to Steve Sochanek, GRAR's Director of Events and Community Outreach! Steve is a great resource to YPN. He makes events run smoothly with his signature attention to detail and friendly approach. He's great at what he does and an all-around cool dude.

If you haven't met Steve yet, be sure to introduce yourself at an upcoming YPN event—you won't regret it!



We are proud to introduce the 2026 YPN Advisory Council

Kyle Burns (Chairperson), Kaydi Johnson (Vice-Chairperson), Peyton Baxter, David Buko, Katrina Cole, Michelle Costa, Christopher DeRuischer, Lindsey Eppink, Katie Gardner, Ryan Gardner, Cody Harding, Ellengrace Hauenstein, Collin Hoffer, Travis Miedema, Hailey Muriset, Emily Norris, Jamie Sauline, Lacey Sauline, Matthew Slater, Zakia Staten, Kaylin Sternberg, Mallory Strotheide, Colin Vugteveen, and Lisa Thomas (Director Liaison)

Special Recognitions



Emerging Leader Award – Cody Harding

GRAR's Young Professionals Network proudly presented its first-ever Emerging Leader Award at the 2025 Emerge Conference, honoring Cody Harding of Goosehead Insurance. This award recognizes a YPN member who exemplifies dedication, leadership, and collaboration.

A highly engaged GRAR affiliate member and active YPN volunteer, Cody is known for his strong communication, trusted relationships, and commitment to exceptional service. A passionate advocate for YPN and a graduate of GRAR's Leadership Academy (Class of 2025), Cody leads with positivity and purpose. Please join us in congratulating him on this well-deserved honor.

2025 Rookie of the Year – Colin Vugteveen

Colin Vugteveen was recognized as GRAR's 2025 Rookie of the Year at the Annual Awards Celebration. Licensed just over a year, Colin has already made a significant impact through strong production, outstanding client service, and active involvement across GRAR and YPN.



Known for his energy, professionalism, and willingness to help, Colin has earned multiple designations, embraced leadership and volunteer opportunities, and represented GRAR at both state and national events. His enthusiasm and commitment make him a rising leader in our REALTOR® community.



2025 Young Professional of the Year – Brittany Arraut

GRAR proudly recognized Brittany Arraut as the 2025 Young Professional of the Year, honoring REALTORS® age 40 and under who demonstrate excellence, innovation, and leadership.

A GRAR member for seven years, Brittany is a leader in education, mentorship, and professional development, serving as Director of Training & Development at a large brokerage. A past YPN Chair and current member of the GRAR Board of Directors, Brittany's dedication, positivity, and passion for learning continue to elevate those around her. We are proud to celebrate her achievements and leadership.

Events Recap: What has YPN been up to in 2025?

As we look forward to the year ahead, let's take a moment to look back at the second half of 2025—a season filled with community impact, professional growth, and meaningful connections for GRAR's YPN.



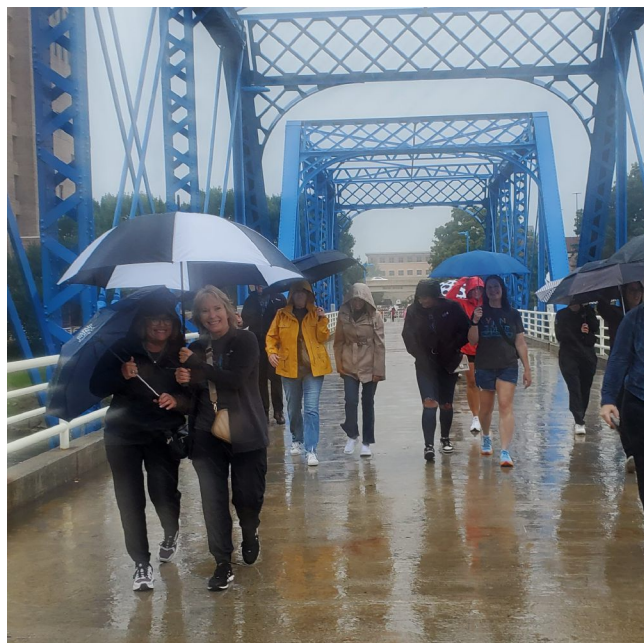
YPN Members Give Back at Gilda's Club

Last July, 28 YPN members volunteered at Gilda's Club Grand Rapids, supporting an organization that provides free emotional care to individuals and families impacted by cancer or loss. From outdoor projects to preparing meals for the Supper Together program, members made a meaningful impact—some even bringing their families along. The day was a powerful reminder of how community and compassion can make a difference.



Blue Bridge .1K: Rain or Shine for a Good Cause

In September, the real estate community braved the elements for the Blue Bridge .1K—a spirited (and very wet) walk across the Blue Bridge benefiting GRAR's Crisis Fund and Schoolhouse Fund. Despite the weather, participants showed up with enthusiasm and humor, raising over \$1,500 for these important causes and celebrating together afterward downtown.





Emerge Conference 2025: Building Communities, Building Careers

The 2025 Emerge Conference welcomed a sold-out crowd of 150 attendees for a full day of learning, networking, and inspiration. Designed for professionals at every career stage, the conference delivered timely insights on housing, leadership, and professional growth, capped off with a well-attended Happy Hour. Emerge continues to be a standout annual event that strengthens both careers and community connections.



YPN's Annual Euchre Tournament

In November, 65 real estate professionals gathered for YPN's Annual Euchre Tournament, combining friendly competition with fundraising. The event raised more than \$1,250 for the Crisis Fund and Schoolhouse Fund and proved once again that euchre is a Michigan tradition that brings people together.



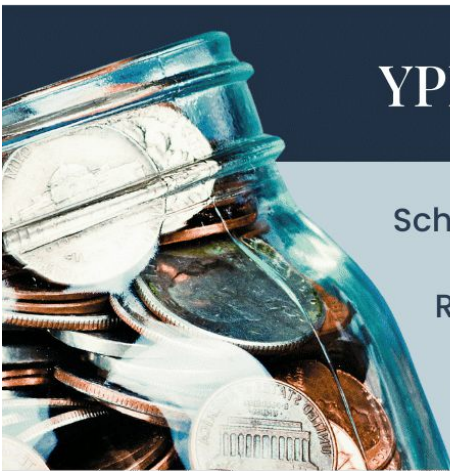
Ugly Sweater Bowling Party

More than 100 members joined YPN in December for the annual Ugly Sweater & Bowling Party—a festive night of bowling, pizza, networking, and holiday fun. The event also raised over \$1,350 for the Crisis Fund and Schoolhouse Fund. The evening wrapped up with the always-anticipated Ugly Sweater contest, capping off the year with laughter and celebration.



Wake Up with YPN

Wake Up w/YPN is a free, quarterly educational and networking series offering timely conversations in a relaxed setting. In 2025, topics included making an impact beyond commission and leadership through mentorship. These events provided practical takeaways, meaningful discussion, and valuable connections. Thank you to everyone who joined us—we look forward to continuing the conversation in 2026.



YPN 2025 Fundraising at a Glance Stats:

Schoolhouse Fund (from multiple events last year): \$1,239.39

RPAC (from Summer Kick Off Event last year): \$7,490.00

Crisis Fund (from multiple events last year): \$2,891.90

What Are the Crisis Fund & Schoolhouse Fund?

The [Crisis Fund](#) is GRAR's official 501(c)(3) charity, providing financial assistance to individuals, families, or non-profit agencies in West Michigan facing sudden housing disasters—like fires, floods, or other unexpected events. This fund helps with repairs, temporary housing, and other critical needs.

The [Schoolhouse Fund](#) supports local schools by helping cover expenses not met by budgets, such as classroom supplies, student lunch debt, clothing, and other resources that promote strong schools and student success.

Per GRAR policy, proceeds from fundraising events are split 70/30, with 70% going to the Crisis Fund and 30% to the Schoolhouse Fund. This isn't a reflection of preference—both causes are important. The split exists because the Crisis Fund is our official, organized charity focused on housing, while the Schoolhouse Fund reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting strong schools. Please visit the links provided to learn more about each.