

# Foundation's 'Be the Beacon' benefit is June 3

## Author JT Mestdagh serves as honorary chair

The Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education recently announced it will host its popular "Be the Beacon" benefit this spring. The event begins at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 3, on the grounds of the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club.

This annual event is the GPFPE's largest fundraiser, allowing the organization to continue to supplement educational opportunities and support the students and teachers within the Grosse Pointe Public School System. This year's event will raise money for both the organization's unrestricted grant fund, which supports the GPFPE's biannual districtwide grants, as well as a new program being launched this spring - Social Emotional Encouragement and Development, or SEED - which will fund grants specifically targeting social and emotional growth, healing and connections and other mental health programs.

"The timing is right to launch the new SEED initiative, which will allow educators and administrators to apply for funding specifically targeting emotional and mental health programming," said Christie Scoggin, GPFPE board vice president and grants committee co-chair. "Recognizing the many challenges our students are facing due to the pandemic, we developed SEED in partnership with the GPPSS and it will be wonderful to expand our support of students' social and emotional needs alongside academic support, at this time when it is needed most."

Fittingly, JT Mestdagh, inspirational speaker and author, will serve as the event's honorary chair. Mestdagh, who grew up in Grosse Pointe Farms, has overcome health

and learning struggles and was instrumental in bringing the Tattum F.A.S.T. reading program to GPPSS. The GPFPE helped support the initial funding of the F.A.S.T. program, which is still in use today in the district.

The GPFPE has made some changes to the benefit this year to make it safe for all involved. The event takes place outside on the grounds of the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club and social distancing, masking and other safety protocols will be in place. The event includes dinner, an open bar and the auction, which promises some enticing packages.

"We are so pleased to have the opportunity to gather once more, in a safe way, and thank our many supporters throughout the community," said Bob Bury, GPFPE board president. "Our annual benefit is a favorite for many and promises to be a fun night in a beautiful setting and a wonderful opportunity to support our public school system, our teachers and, most importantly, our students."

Corporate sponsors supporting this year's benefit include:

Diamond Level — Edward T. & Ellen K. Dryer Charitable Foundation;

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