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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **GRandJazzFest announces fundraising challenge with Downtown Development Authority**

***Challenge grant will help to support expanded FREE, family-friendly community jazz festival that supports local businesses and encourages a diverse audience.***

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – March 22, 2013 – [GRandJazzFest](#) presented by DTE Energy Foundation announces a special opportunity for funding in collaboration with the Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA): For every \$4 that is raised for the festival, the DDA has offered a \$1 match, for up to \$20,000 in grant funding.

“We’re happy that the DDA has proposed this challenge grant to support GRandJazzFest in downtown Grand Rapids – to help us provide this FREE community festival that, due to the positive response in 2012, we’ve expanded to two days,” GRandJazzFest Founder Audrey Sundstrom said.

This year’s festival will be held at Rosa Parks Circle in downtown Grand Rapids on Saturday, Aug. 17, and Sunday, Aug. 18, and will offer 10 jazz bands and performers of diverse genres, all for FREE to the concert-going public. The family-friendly festival will encourage attendees to enjoy the restaurants, pubs and retail businesses in the area of Rosa Parks Circle. Expanding to two days will bring in more out-of-town visitors and boost hotel occupancies.

“The DDA is committed to exploring new ideas that can advance the Grand Rapids community, and we are pleased to partner in the funding for GRandJazzFest’s second annual event,” said Kris Larson, DDA’s executive director. “It’s a great event for the city, and we heard from stakeholders that the 2012 event provided significant economic impact for downtown.”

The \$10,000 grant that the DDA approved last year for the inaugural GRandJazzFest helped to make Grand Rapids’ and West Michigan’s only jazz festival hugely successful and free for 4,000 people of all ethnicities, ages and socioeconomic levels. Downtown businesses reported that the day of the festival was among their best in sales for the summer. Kilwins reported the second busiest day since they opened in



May 2012. Tre Cugini's owner likened the festival to a mini-ArtPrize. A representative of The Dog Pit said the popular eatery did triple the business of a normal Saturday.

"The new DDA challenge grant and sponsorships such as those from our presenting sponsor DTE Energy Foundation and from the City of Grand Rapids have a significant impact on encouraging other sponsors to support GRandJazzFest. This DDA opportunity is an endorsement as we seek an even broader base of sponsors," Sundstrom said.

On Jan. 23, Grand Rapids city commissioners approved GRandJazzFest as one of 24 events it will co-sponsor in 2013, a distinction only given to events that have proven to be successful and enrich the community.

In addition to the DDA challenge grant, the DTE Energy Foundation and the City of Grand Rapids, sponsors and collaborators for the 2013 event to date include the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Gilmore Collection, GR and Jazz, Ellis Parking, Fifth Third Bank, Hilger Hammond, IntentPR, Meijer, Mike July Web Design, San Chez Bistro and Café, The Wege Foundation, Saint Mary's Health Care, Grand Rapids Community College, the Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority, ExperienceGR, Ferris State University and Founders Bank & Trust.

"We are so grateful to the DDA and all of our sponsors so far for their support!" Sundstrom said. "We're putting the word out to encourage other businesses, organizations and individuals to support this great community event!"

GRandJazzFest is founded and produced by GR and Jazz, a volunteer based 501(c)(3). All GRandJazzFest sponsorships are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

More information on GRandJazzFest – including sponsorship/volunteer opportunities – can be found at [www.grandjazzfest.org](http://www.grandjazzfest.org).

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#### **About GRandJazzFest**

GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation is a community event of the nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization "GR and Jazz" founded in 2012, with the purpose of promoting and bringing awareness of jazz and related arts to new and diverse audiences through educational programs and community events. GRandJazzFest 2013 is a FREE weekend-long event that runs Saturday, Aug. 17, from noon until 10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 18, from noon p.m. to 7 p.m., featuring jazz artists who are primarily Michigan-based. GRandJazzFest brings together notable jazz performers as well as highlights up-and-coming artists for diverse audiences. GRandJazzFest is being held at Rosa Parks Circle, a central location in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, where attendees can enjoy music, support local businesses and visit other Grand Rapids attractions. The festival is FREE. More information at [www.grandjazzfest.org](http://www.grandjazzfest.org).

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