

10A The Detroit News | Sunday, October 18, 1998

"I've looked at all the foundations in Michigan and you have never had this: two families in the same city at the same time on the Forbes 400 list, who have as a major commitment contributing to the community where they do business."

DOROTHY JOHNSON
President of the Michigan Council of Foundations

Amway's gifts

Amway Corp. and the men who built it, Richard DeVos and Jay Van Andel, have emerged as the leading patrons of Grand Rapids. Here are some of the major projects to which they have contributed through the corporation or two foundations, one representing each family, since the late 1970s:

The Grand Center

1 A convention center with 79,000 square feet of exhibit space and the 1,600-square-foot DeVos Hall for the Performing Arts were added in 1980 to existing Walsh Auditorium at a cost of \$25 million. Amway's foundation kicked off fund-raising with a \$1 million donation in 1978.

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel

2 A lavish \$67-million renovation that began in 1981 and added a 28-story tower to the 1913 Pantlind Hotel, giving it 1,682 rooms. DeVos and Van Andel paid the costs, and their risk has paid off.

Van Andel Arena

3 A \$75-million horseshoe-shaped sports arena that opened in 1995 and seats 12,098. It received an \$11.5-million donation from Van Andel's foundation.

Van Andel Museum Center of the Grand Rapids Public Museum

4 A \$39-million riverfront building that contains space for exhibits, performances and a planetarium received donations from Van Andel of nearly \$2.5 million. It opened in 1994.

Van Andel Institute for Medical Research

5 The first phase of a planned \$200-million, 400,000-square-foot biomedical research center, under construction near Butternuth Hospital will open in 1999. It is being underwritten by the Van Andel family foundation.

Richard M. DeVos Center

6 A new \$22.5-million, 250,000-square-foot building on the downtown campus of Grand Valley State University will house the business school, an international trade school named for Van Andel and other facilities. DeVos foundation gave \$5 million and Van Andel \$1.25 million for a total of \$7.25 million.

John Ball Zoo

7 Received more than \$2 million in donations, most of it from the Van Andel Foundation and mostly for the Van Andel Living Stones aquarium.

Butternuth Hospital

8 Has received more than \$9 million in donations from the DeVos Foundation this decade, most of it for the DeVos Women and Children's Center.



The Detroit News

AMWAY
A gift for Grand Rapids



FACT: Amway founders Jay Van Andel and Richard DeVos have spent and contributed more than \$100 million for programs and projects in Grand Rapids.

FACT: Van Andel Institute for Medical Research, under construction in downtown Grand Rapids, is the first phase of a planned \$200-million, 400,000-square-foot biomedical research center underwritten by the Van Andel family foundation.

City awash in corporate donors

Old Kent, Steeclase, Meijer 'feel they owe it to the community' to improve quality of life.

By Joel J. Smith

The Detroit News

GRAND RAPIDS — When it comes to good corporate citizens that support the community in which they are headquartered, Grand Rapids has an embarrassment of riches. But most get quiet about it. Amway Corp. maintains a high profile with developments such as the 68-room Amway Grand Plaza hotel and a 200-million bio-medical research institute under construction. But other corporations headquartered in the area are quietly giving away millions of dol-

lars annually to local causes. "They just want to remain anonymous," said Cheryl Edwards, an executive with the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. "These companies feel they owe it to the community." Among the many companies that have made contributions to many local charitable organizations: Old Kent Financial, Irwin Seating the Fry Foundation, Lacks Industries, Steeclase Inc., the giant office furniture manufacturer, and Meijer Inc., the ever-growing supermarket chain. Meijer supports numerous

charities, projects and public events in Grand Rapids and around the state. Its most visible Grand Rapids public landmark is the Frederick Meijer Botanical Garden and Lena Meijer Conservatory. The Meijer Botanical Garden, Michigan's largest sculpture park, has 70 pieces of sculpture in a 20-acre garden and draws visitors throughout Michigan. Edwards said Steeclase, the auto's largest employer with 1,800 workers and \$2 billion in sales, is a major, behind-the-scenes contributor to worthy causes. The company and its foundation are expected this year to give away about \$2 million. "Steeclase touches a lot of people in the Kent County area,"

Key donors

- Here are some of the companies that make sizable charitable contributions to Grand Rapids:
- Old Kent Financial
- Irwin Seating
- The Fry Foundation
- Lacks Industries
- Steeclase Inc.
- Meijer Inc.

Edwards said.

Steeclase officials are already talking about their efforts to help improve the quality of life in Grand Rapids. They said the practice was established years

ago by the three families that founded the business. "It's always been a part of this company to give something back to the community," said Howard Sutton, Steeclase vice president of corporate relations. "But it's a community where a lot of us — not just Steeclase — give something back in order to have a community that has greater value and greater worth. "It's a part of the western Michigan culture. We do it for the recognition. We do it because we genuinely want to help people in need."

Detroit News Staff Writer Gary Heitlein contributed to this report.

AMWAY

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DeVos and Van Andel helped give Grand Rapids a sparkle and serve that other cities envy — from a \$64-million renovation of the old Pantlind Hotel into the Amway Grand Plaza to an \$85-million jump-start of the \$75-million Van Andel Arena, which opened in 1995 and is home to three minor league teams.

"There's no place like home," DeVos said in a recent telephone call from his yacht in the Mediterranean. "The things you do are there for you to see and they affect people you know and love. I guess we're just old-fashioned. We give because that's what we believe in doing. "There's a wonderful joy in giving. It's exciting and I have had a wonderful time doing it. But it isn't just our story. It's a western Michigan story. If you live in Grand Rapids and want to be anybody you better be a giver."

Charitable giving — and being good corporate citizens — are reflections of the Amway founders' religious values, said David Van Andel, Jay's son and chairman and chief executive officer of the Van Andel Institute. Their church, LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church, received more than \$35 million in recent years.

"Civil giving probably originates from a religious value, but goes beyond that to saying thanks to the community where they have prospered," he said.

Amway's sales totaled \$7 billion last year through direct marketing and recruitment of distributors. Detectors say the sales pitch is heavy-handed and creates inflated expectations among distributors — many of whom sell the products part time.

But the founders' contributions to the physical reshaping of downtown Grand Rapids are indisputable. And not all their pet projects are embossed with their names. Potter's House Christian School, attended mostly by children from low-income families, has received more than \$900,000 from a local retirement community just north of Grand Rapids.

Dorothy Johnson, president of the Michigan Council of Foundations, said the DeVos-Van Andel phenomenon is extraordinary — and makes Grand Rapids extraordinarily lucky. "I've looked at all the foundations in Michigan and you have never had this: two families in the same city at the same time on the Forbes 400 list, who have as a major commitment contributing to the community where they do business."

Grand Rapids' gain

Michigan's second-largest city with about 200,000 residents, Grand Rapids has blossomed from a sleepy town to a sleepy furniture town to become a bustling urban center with a strong interest in culture. First-class museums, a 20-acre sculpture garden, opera, Broadway musicals and fancy restaurants are part of its new texture.

Two-year-old Van Andel Arena operates at an annual profit of more than \$1 million, notable because many similar city-owned facilities elsewhere require subsidies to survive. Arena football, Continental League basketball and International Association hockey play to sold-out audiences there. Grand Rapids is unquestionably the "capital" of western Michigan with a metro area,



Parking supervisor Eddie Kimbrough says he appreciates the business boom Amway-backed facilities have given downtown.



Victoria Stacy says her doll business has benefited from downtown's revival, spurred by investments from Amway's founders into such venues as the Van Andel Arena.

Amway Profile

World headquarters: Ada, Mich., a Grand Rapids suburb

History: Founded 1959 by Richard DeVos and Jay Van Andel to sell a single household cleaning product

Description: Direct marketing and recruitment of distributors in homes and businesses

Retail sales: \$7 billion in 1997

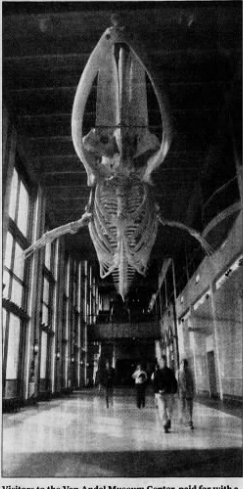
Products: Household cleaners, cosmetics, vitamins and mineral supplements, water treatment filters, numerous other household goods

Sales: 450 Amway-branded and 6,500 catalogue products

Sales force: 3 million independent distributors in the United States and 79 other countries

Employees: About 14,000, including 370 scientists and professionals

sprawling across fast-growing Kent and Ottawa counties, that is just one of 800,000 residences. That is expected to overtake and pass Detroit's population of 1 million within the next quarter century. More than many rural belt cities, it also is recovering from the blight that hit urban core areas when population growth and retailing shifted to suburbs and shopping malls in the 1970s and 1980s. The Amway duo and heads of other local economic powerhouses have invested time and dollars in downtown rebirth.



Visitors to the Van Andel Museum Center, paid for with a donation of \$75 million from Jay Van Andel, get a view of downtown, the Grand River and a whale skeleton.

Faith in the city

Downtown Grand Rapids was down on its heels in the late 1970s, when DeVos and Van Andel made their initial investments — \$4 million to get the Grand Center started and \$6 million to revamp the hotel. The investments were risky and based on a leap of faith for the Amway duo, David Van Andel said.

"It wasn't just driving a stake in the ground and saying, 'We're here, everyone else come on along,'" David Van Andel said.

The first phase, opening next year, will contain 200,000 square feet of laboratories and conference rooms, where scientists will study genetics, nutrition and cancer cases. Phase II, a 900,000-square-foot glass-and-steel addition cascading down a 66-foot hill, will follow in about five years.

Everything about the planned research center "bespoke the Van Andel's intent to make it world-class."

New York architects Rafael Vinoly P.C. were chosen from a field of 47 design architects. The downtown international firm also is designing a \$90-million concert hall for Philadelphia and a 200-million New York City courthouse.

The Van Andels assembled a five-member board of scientific advisers for the institute, four are Nobel laureates.

The advisory board helped recruit Dr. George F. Vande Woude, a National Cancer Institute expert in molecular biology, to become director.

How many millions the Van Andel family will pour into the institute through its charitable foundation is undetermined. But it probably will include a substantial portion of construction costs, the projected \$30-million

annual operating costs for the first years and more thereafter.

Wierenga, who grew up in the same strict Protestant Reformed church that Amway founder Richard DeVos attended as a child, shook his head and struggled for superlatives to describe the Amway guys. "I don't know what to say, except they're amazing," the hard-hatted Wierenga said as he supervised a downtown street project for Dykema Excavators.

"I never thought it would come to this, that they'd do something so good for the city," he said.

DeVos' downtown convenience store and sandwich shop probably owes its visibility to such developments as Van Andel Arena.

"Downtown was going downhill fast when we opened here about three years ago," the 39-year-old said. "Now there's all sorts of people downtown at night."

Eddie Kimbrough, supervisor for Ellis Parking Co., appreciates Grand Rapids Griffin basketball games at the arena, concerts at the Center's DeVos Center for Performance Arts and exhibits that come to the new Van Andel Museum Center of the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

"It's nice — really nice," said Kimbrough. "We have a lot of that (charitable and civic giving). Grand Rapids is building up, there's a lot of rich people around here. It's almost an every week thing."

Grand Valley is building a downtown academic center part-funded by \$6 million from the DeVos family and \$2.5 million more from the Van Andels. Said Grand Valley development director Joyce Hester: "This city wouldn't be what it is without them. Their impact is beyond words. It's the energy and the vision, even more than the money."

Impact 'beyond words'
Sixty-three-year-old Bert