

muskegon innovation hub

2022

annual report



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
MUSKEGON  
INNOVATION HUB



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INNOVATION HUB

## who we are



A business innovation center bringing excellence to a diverse and everchanging entrepreneurial community.

## what we do



Coaching, funding, networking, and providing a synergistic work environment.

## how we do it



Business incubation, coworking space, funding assistance, events and programming, and meeting space rentals. We are a key partner in the region's innovation ecosystem, supporting start-up businesses, entrepreneurs, and corporate innovation teams.

## team



**Kevin Ricco,**  
Director



**Tom Hopper,**  
Associate Director



**Allison Dile,**  
Business Incubator Manager



**Katie Walker,**  
Administrative Coordinator



**Thomas Hull,**  
Maintenance and Operations

## from the director

Change....There are few things in life more inevitable. No matter what we do, change is an unstoppable force that cannot be denied. It is a natural part of our personal and professional lives.

So, how do we deal with change? We can seek it out in an effort to alter course and improve our current standing. We can fight it, which only leads to delaying the inevitable. Or, we can embrace it and look at it as an opportunity to grow in a new direction.

This year, The Hub experienced significant change in the form of staffing. We are a very small team and staff turnover is not part of our normal routine. We had two long-term, very valuable team members move on to other opportunities. I lamented this change at first, but as I moved through the "Seven Stages of Grief," I came to realize that this represented an opportunity for our program. Maybe this was our chance to inject new ideas into our team. Once I adopted that mindset, I became more excited for the future!

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked with a lot of entrepreneurs struggling with their own change issues. We have found that those who embrace change and adapt to it have the best success in weathering the storm. In fact, those who find ways to adapt almost always achieve the greatest level of success.

How has it worked out for our Hub team? I am happy to report that our new team members have worked out splendidly! Those who left are truly missed, but new energy has been a welcome...."change."

Kevin Ricco,  
Director

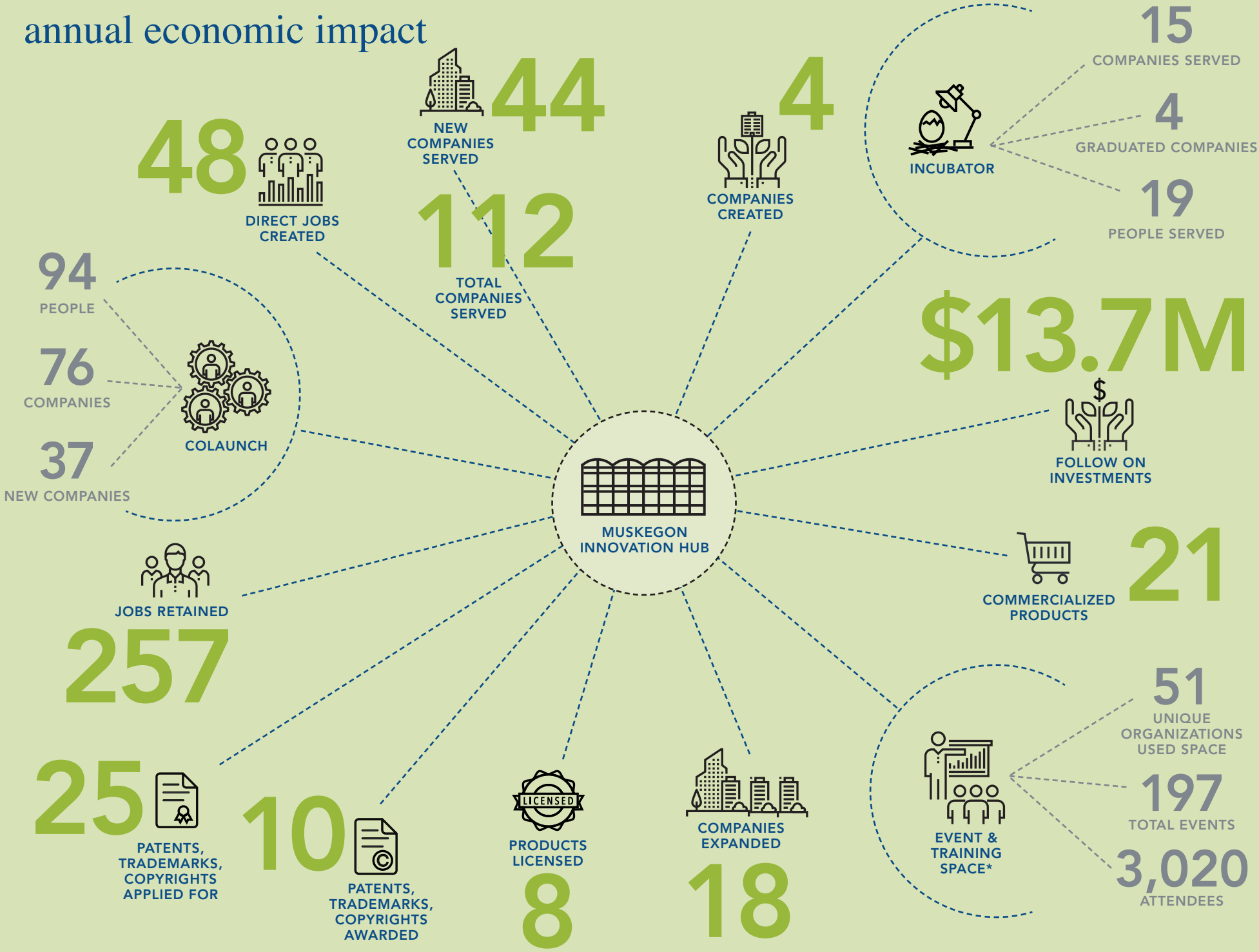
## Med5 Graduates

The Hub would like to recognize Pat Camp and her team at Med5/Stomacloak on their recent graduation from The Hub's incubator programs and subsequent sale of the business. Pat has been a tenant at The Hub since 2018 and has worked closely with Hub Associate Director Tom Hopper in her efforts to grow the business. She also received a 2022 Michigan Celebrates Small Business award. Congratulations Pat and team on your success!



Kevin Ricco and Pat Camp

annual economic impact



## programs and events

### Hub Programs/Events

#### Marketing Mondays

Once-a-month seminars that provide valuable tools, techniques and knowledge to help small businesses effectively engage with customers and increase sales revenue.

#### Lakeshore Innovator of the Year

An award program that recognizes and celebrates the most innovative ideas on the lakeshore.

#### Building a Better Workplace Series

A three-part series focused on workplace trends, benefits on any budget, and creating company culture.

#### 5x5 Night

A pitch competition in partnership with Start Garden where 5 contestants get 5 minutes to pitch their business idea to 5 judges for a chance to walk away with \$5,000.

#### MISTEM Forward

A networking event that aims to create internship connections for area businesses and students in STEM fields.

#### Side Hustle 101

A three-part series for budding entrepreneurs looking to turn their side hustle into a legitimate and profitable business.

#### Artist Series

A new two-part series focused on helping local artists turn their passion into profit with the help of West Michigan experts.

### Members-Only Events

#### Hub Happy Hour

A networking happy hour held once a month at The Hub to let members get to know each other in a fun, casual setting.

#### Taco Tuesday

A community-building lunch held once a month in our CoLaunch space.

### Advisory Committee

#### Ken Johnson

LPL Financial and  
Mayor, City of Muskegon

#### Cynthia Langlois

Muskegon Community College

#### Joe Finkler

Michigan Inventors Coalition

#### Laurie Supinski

Start Garden

#### Katherine Roskam

Varnum LLP

#### Jake Eckholm

City of Muskegon

#### Jennifer Wardrop

Grand Valley State University

#### Mickey Wallace

Kemetic Kings Mentoring

#### Ben Scheerer

Red Hat

## member spotlights

**Ben Scheerer:** After a 20+ year hiatus from his native Muskegon, Ben returned to his roots in 2019 and sought out a coworking community that would meet his needs as a product marketing director in the global enterprise software space. He found The Hub's CoLaunch facility and since then, Ben has been working out of The Hub in both his full-time role at Red Hat software, and as an entrepreneur running a community and conference business for competitive marketing professionals through competitivemarketing.com. Ben has successfully leveraged the Hub facility, staff and programs to best guide his professional endeavors. He is also engaged as a member of The Hub's Advisory Committee.



**Red Hat**

**Historia Group:** Historia Group is a consulting and communications firm that assists new non-profit organizations with accessing grant revenue, creating operational structures for new programs, growing new executive board teams, and developing brand strategies to increase community impact. With offices in Atlanta and Muskegon, the company is passionate about helping mission-led businesses and non-profits enrich their operations and maximize growth. Senior Consultant Andrea Copeland leads a women-led and minority-owned business, and CoLaunch provides a space that cultivates collaboration and innovation as Historia Group builds capacity for communities across the U.S.



**Studio 4 Us:** Studio 4 Us was created in 2022 by four retiree artist friends who enjoy the creative outlet that painting affords. The group was drawn to the abundant natural light in The Hub's studio spaces where they also have the flexibility to leave their canvases and painting materials until they return. Another benefit of being at The Hub is having access to a variety of meeting spaces where they can convene with a guest artist for an instructional session. Studio 4 Us members' focus is to continue to grow and expand their creative efforts. They value "the balance in life" that comes from collaborating and the social/mental stimulation that comes from being together.







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## 2022 lakeshore innovator of the year



**Nick Carlson, Business  
Development Director, Goodwill  
Industries of West Michigan**

The problem of what to do with unsold donated plastic items stumped Nick Carlson for more than ten years. After much research, he connected with Pittsburgh-based HydroBlox, which recycles plastic into a variety of products used in stormwater management systems. The partnership will help Goodwill eliminate more than 500,000 pounds of plastic waste from its donation stream each year. "This is pretty awesome," said Carlson on winning the 2022 Lakeshore Innovator of the Year award. "I couldn't be prouder of our partnership with HydroBlox and what our two organizations can accomplish together."