

muskegon innovation hub

2021

annual report



GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY
MUSKEGON
INNOVATION HUB



MUSKEGON
INNOVATION HUB

who we are



The Muskegon Innovation Hub (The Hub) is a business innovation nerve center that helps entrepreneurs and businesses achieve their true potential.

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



Rose Bennett,
Administrative Coordinator



Thomas Hull,
Maintenance and Operations

from the director

Our programs here at The Hub continue to grow and change, even during the COVID pandemic. We have seen growth in our business incubator program, coworking space (CoLaunch), and participation in our special events. We have also seen a shift in the types of entrepreneurs who seek our assistance, and we have adjusted to accommodate them.

Our **incubator and CoLaunch spaces** have been at capacity with a waiting list for the last four years. To address this issue, we converted a training classroom into new staff offices and our administrative suite was repurposed to create seven new entrepreneur offices and new assigned desks. It has been less than a year since construction was completed; however, the new offices are full, and we still have a waiting list!

We also realize that the **lakeshore artist entrepreneur community** is underserved and needs more affordable studio space. Assisted by the guidance of local artists, we turned a 2,000 square foot industrial space into a working artist studio with five semi-private stalls. This space is now open for local artists to rent on a month-to-month basis.

Finally, we have always recognized that not all our entrepreneurs and community members work a strict 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. schedule. There are many occasions when having access to our building is necessary before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. So, starting in July of 2021, we changed our building hours to 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. It's a small change, but one that has made a real difference to the community we serve.

We will continue to stay in tune with the needs of our entrepreneurs and do our best to make sure those needs are being met!

Kevin Ricco, Director

new in 2021

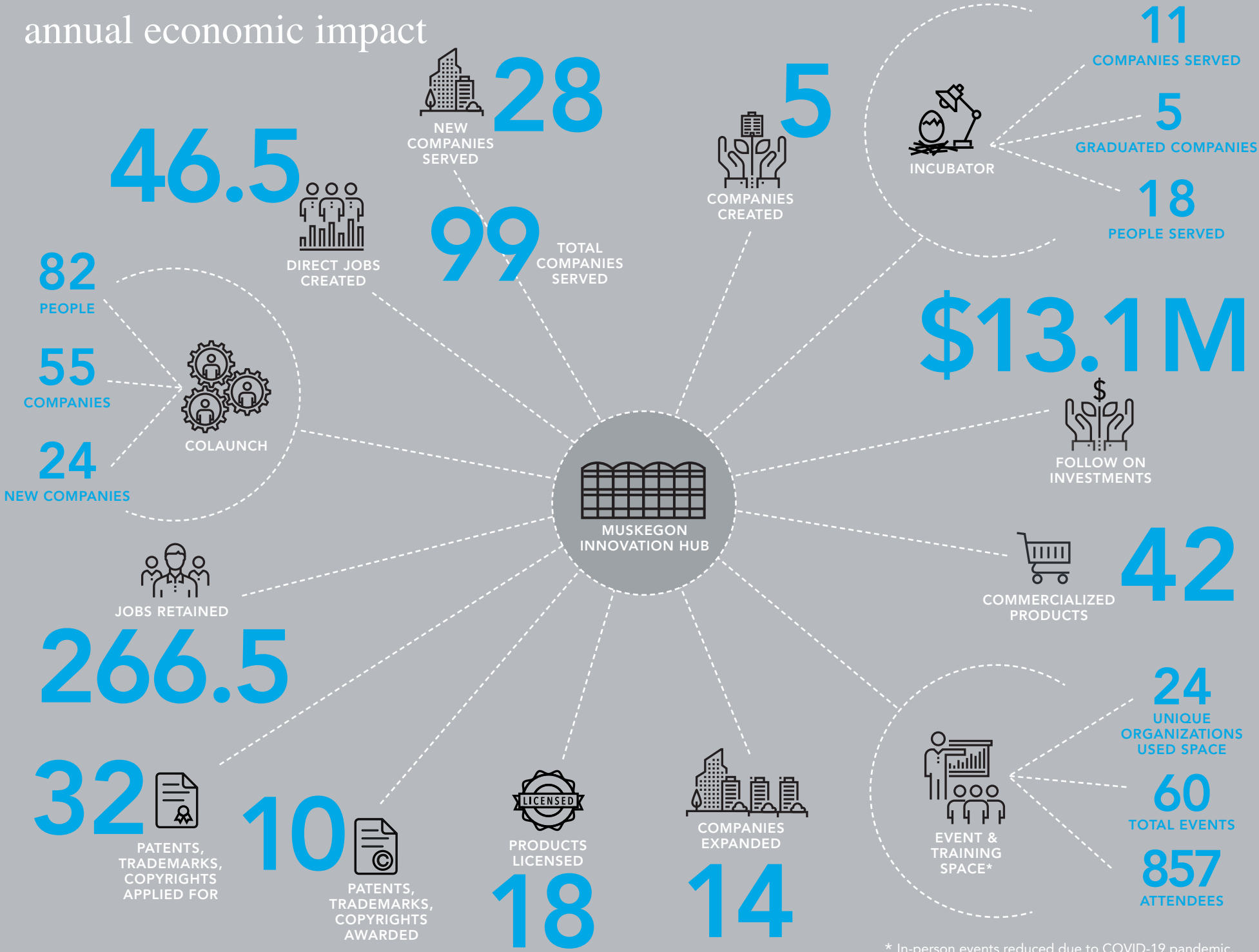


Expanded entrepreneur office space.



New artist studio incubator space.

annual economic impact



* In-person events reduced due to COVID-19 pandemic.

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.

Innovator of the Year Awards

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

Demystifying Market Research

A free virtual event to learn how to gather market research on any size budget.

Grow North Series

A virtual four-part series in collaboration with the SBDC, The Right Place and the River Country Chamber of Commerce covering informative topics for start-ups and Stage I businesses.

Federal Grants for Funding Research & Development

A free virtual program that introduces eligibility requirements and helps businesses find the best fit for their technology.

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

Waddell & Reed Financial, Inc.
and Muskegon City Commission

Cynthia Langlois

Muskegon Community College

Joe Finkler

Michigan Inventors Coalition

Jonathan Wilson

DTE Energy

Laurie Supinski

Start Garden

Bobby Fisher

West Shore Bank

Katherine Roskam

Varnum LLP

Jake Eckholm

City of Muskegon

Renae Hesselink

Kitchen 242 and Nichols

Julie Burrell

The Right Place

Jennifer Wardrop

Grand Valley State University

Mickey Wallace

Kemetec Kings Mentoring

member spotlights

HyVida: HyVida offers unique no-calorie, non-caffeinated energy drinks. As a Hub member, they developed a unique bottling technology and grew their distribution network nationwide. During the pandemic, HyVida's e-commerce business doubled in size, their sales velocity at Meijer quadrupled, and they signed a distribution deal with Imperial Beverage. HyVida was also awarded their first patent and filed three additional patent applications covering the core chemistry of their drink, the use of their technology as a packing gas in aluminum cans, and for maturing the taste of wines.



Wimage: Wimage is a West Michigan-based educational technology company producing an app for young learners that includes a lovable animated robot puppet called "Wimee." The app is normally licensed through libraries, schools, and other institutions, but with the pandemic, Wimage pivoted and created an online interactive show called Wimee's Words, streaming more than 200 live shows directly to partners' Facebook pages. Detroit Public Television contracted Wimage to develop and distribute a show for all PBS stations in Michigan. Wimage has now signed contracts for additional seasons, and launched on PBS New York City in October 2021. Talks with other PBS networks and Cartoon Network are ongoing.



Lambers Creative Studio & Marketing: Digital Nomad: Lambers Creative Studio and Marketing assists small businesses with the launch of their companies and provides digital marketing services. Lambers Creative has clients around the U.S., and owner Debra travels in a modified cargo van that functions as home and office for months at a time. Being an avid cyclist and hiker with flexible work hours, she explores majestic towns and back country roads across the country. CoLaunch has been a perfect home base for her. The open environment, conference rooms, kitchen, and office colleagues are the icing on the cake.





2021 lakeshore innovator of the year



Zaneta Adams, Founder/President of WINC: For all Women Veterans is this year's Lakeshore Innovator of the Year. A military veteran herself, Zaneta created an online global network of over 5,000 women veterans who connect with one another and share stories of survival in order to reduce the rate of suicide among female vets. "WINC was founded to honor women veterans and encourage and empower them," she said. "We want to restore women back to where they were before service or even better than where they were prior to their military duty."

200 Viridian Drive
Muskegon, Michigan 49440
(616) 331-6900
mihubinfo@gvsu.edu
www.gvsu.edu/mihub

