Benzie Wellness & Aquatic Center

October 2026 Newsletter

USDA Grant

Big news! BWAC has been selected to receive a $65,000 Rural Business Development Grant from USDA to support the Design Phase of its project!

The focus of this Enterprise Grant is to invest in projects that assist local businesses and economic development in rural communities. BWAC has envisioned from the start a robust network of partnerships in order to provide a wide range of programs and services for all ages and abilities.

With its site at the "Top of the Hill" gateway location in Benzie County (the vacated Crystal Lake Elementary School parcel in the Village of Benzonia), BWAC is well positioned to spur economic development along the US-31 corridor in Benzie County. By re-imagining this site and bringing it back to life, our lively hub will exemplify the Village's vision for a vibrant Village Mixed Use district.

Annual Meeting Updates

BWAC hosted its annual meeting on August 18th at the Mills Community House, **welcoming 70 participants in person and online.** In addition to a progress report, BWAC shared information about our community engagement efforts and the launch of the Design Phase of our project. Much of the Q+A centered around guests asking how they can help BWAC and how the timeline might be accelerated.



Oryana's Groceries for Good

ORYANA

GROCERIES for GOOD

We are nominated under the "Physical and Mental Health Support" category.

BWAC is on the ballot for **Oryana Community Co-op's 2027 Groceries for Good program,** an initiative that connects local nonprofits with community support throughout the year. Each month, Oryana features a local nonprofit. Shoppers can round up their purchases at the register to support that organization, and Oryana contributes even more through a designated 2% of sales donation day. Together, those everyday grocery trips add up to meaningful support for organizations doing important work throughout our community. Voting is open October 1–31, and we'd love the opportunity to be part of Groceries for Good in 2027! The 12 organizations receiving the most votes will be featured in the 2027 program.

Vote for BWAC at: https://oryana.coop/community/groceries-for-good

Frankfort Fillm Festival



Thanks to a generous donation from a BWAC donor, BWAC is sponsoring the closing film **"The Last Picture Shows"** at this year's **Frankfort Film Festival** at the Garden Theater on Sunday **October 18 th at 4:30pm**. This film shares a great message about what it takes to keep community assets like local movie theaters going, so future generations will be able to enjoy them as gathering places and so much more. *"You can't miss what you don't know"* is a line from this movie that also aptly describes why community support has been, and will continue to be, a vital element of BWAC's vision to revitalize the vacated Crystal Lake Elementary School and turn it into a vibrant community hub where people of all ages and abilities can thrive. So, grab your popcorn and a seat at the Garden Theater and join us for this special offering!

2026 Swim Skills Program

In August, we completed our 6th annual free swim skills program in partnership with the City of Frankfort. We had record registration this summer, and over 280 students have enrolled in this program to date!







What parents are saying about the swim skills program:

How has the swim program benefitted your child(ren)?

"It has been wonderful watching all the children grow in confidence and want to show off their new skills. The environment was supportive and fun."

"I've seen such improvement in my daughter's swim skills – and seeing her properly instructed gives me such peace of mind! I'm not a strong swimmer or a pleasure swimmer myself, so I don't know how to teach her."

Describe the long-term benefits of year-round swim lessons for your child(ren):

"This is a great program and so necessary. Not everyone can afford private lessons + I was pleased so see so many kids + so much enthusiasm."

"Every person needs to learn to swim. With our winter, we need more opportunities to swim year-round to hone our skills.."

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