Rotary Clubs have been committed to helping those in need in our communities. We do this through partnerships, raising money and giving back in many different ways. We also have seen the power of joining forces among other Rotary clubs too.

Recently, the Williamston Sunrise Rotary Club began a conversation with the Williamston Food Bank about needs. Jill Cutshaw, the Director of the Food Bank mentioned that the biggest need for their food bank, but also for many other communities was to create an “Angel Network” to respond to the immediate needs that arise for families in crisis.

In hearing this, one of the members of the Williamston Sunrise Rotary Club, Dr. Christopher Lewis remembered an 501c3 non-profit organization called, Spark in the Dark, led by Abby McKiernan who had partnered originally with the Traverse City Rotary Club to provide a community for organizations and people to meet the needs of people in need.

Abby McKiernan was invited to speak to the Williamston Sunrise Rotary Club and all other Presidents of our District Rotary Clubs were also invited to learn about Spark in the Dark.

**About Spark in the Dark**

Spark in the Dark was born on Facebook with a simple idea: create a safe platform to connect those in need with those who could help.

Spark in the Dark is redefining the impact that social media can have on a community by connecting people in need directly with people who are able to help in their area. In doing so, we have connected 40,000+ needs to solutions every year since 2017.  
  
Spark in the Dark uses technology and social media to turn online conversations into offline communities and to make needs, realities.  
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They never turn away those with unusual or difficult needs. They walk alongside their members, connecting them to a local community with the resources to help solve their challenges.

**The Plan For Mid-Michigan**

After speaking with Abby McKiernan originally and having a follow-up meeting, members of District 6360 Rotary Clubs came together with an idea to develop 3 new sparks that would create online Facebook communities that would allow community members and organizations to better identify and connect people for their needs into the future.

Each spark would cover approximately a 50-60 mile radius for people to be able to fulfill needs that are requested.

1. Clinton County, **Eaton County**, Ingham County and Jackson County
2. Barry County, **Eaton County**, Calhoun County & Kalamazoo County
3. Berrien County, Van Buren County and Allegan County

**What is needed?**

To create 3 sparks in the lower peninsula typically we would need to raise $10,000 / Spark or $30,000 for all three to provide the infrastructure, training for volunteers and ongoing support. Currently though, there are three matching grants through Spark in the Dark that would allow a dollar to dollar match through funding that has been provided to Spark in the Dark from Facebook. This means that instead of having to pay $30,000, we would need to raise $15,000.

Also needed in each Spark community is about 5 main “Administrators” that would be trained to make sure that communities are positive spaces that are acting proactively to meet the needs of people.

Total Amount Requested: $15,000 for 3 sparks