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Sixth-annual Mittenfest music festival raises record \$21K for 826michigan

By Ryan J. Stanton

After five nights of nonstop rock at [Woodruff's bar](#) in Ypsilanti, the organizers of the annual [Mittenfest music festival](#) are celebrating a big win.

Now in its sixth year, Mittenfest raised more than \$21,000 this year for [826michigan](#), an Ann Arbor-based nonprofit dedicated to literacy and helping youths with creating writing.

"I would say it was highly successful on all fronts," said [Brandon Zwagerman](#), who founded the event. "A zillion kids are going to benefit from this."

The money raised this year sets a new record for the festival, topping [last year's \\$15,000](#).

"It's huge," said [Amanda Uhle](#), executive director of 826michigan. "It's one of the most humbling things I can imagine. Thousands of people came through the doors."

Woodruff's was jam-packed for the final night on Sunday as two popular Michigan bands – [Great Lakes Myth Society](#) and [Frontier Ruckus](#) – closed out the festival. In all, 60 bands with Michigan roots played over the course of five days.

The \$21,000 raised will help cover a great portion of the costs of 826michigan's literacy and tutoring programs in Ypsilanti, Uhle said.

"One of the things I think is coolest about this event is it happens right around the corner from where a lot of our stuff happens, too," she said. "We do a daily program at Ypsilanti Middle School where we do homework help. I think this will completely fund the rest of the year for that, which is incredible. And then we're in many, many Ypsilanti public schools doing our programs as well."

Festival co-organizer [Jeremy Peters](#) said Mittenfest continues to grow every year. Adding up all six years, more than \$55,000 has been raised for 826michigan to date, he said.

"I'm completely blown away by the amount of people coming out and supporting all of the bands and coming out consistently every night," he said. "We pretty much reached capacity every night and raised more money than we've ever raised before."

The core philosophy behind 826michigan, which served more than 2,300 youths last year, is that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one tutoring and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success. To make that a reality, the organization provides a wide range of programs,



Members of the Detroit-based band [Legendary Creatures](#) rock out during the final night of Mittenfest on Sunday.

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including drop-in tutoring and after-school workshops.

"I will tell you that one of the most magnificent things that happens at 826 that I get to see all the time," Uhle said, "is students who are struggling and they come to us, they work with our tutors, they get a little bit better at their homework, they become stronger writers, and best of all they feel good about themselves ... and it's like this little miracle that happens."

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