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Generous Donation Improves Safety for Grand Haven Football Players

GRAND HAVEN, MI: Grand Haven High School football players will be heading onto the field with the best technology in football helmets this season, thanks to a generous donation from Karl Chapel, owner of Grand Haven Custom Molding. Players will be outfitted in VICIS ZERO1 helmets, which are the top-ranked helmets for safety, backed by independent research from Virginia Tech University.

"Brain safety for our athletes is a critical priority," says Scott Robertson, GHAPS Athletic Director. "I was a football player my whole life, and I've taken part in the studies that Boston University is doing. Our #1 priority is doing everything we can to protect our kids."

The helmet was created after a three-year, \$20 million research project using technology developed by athletes, engineers and neurosurgeons, and is proven to decrease concussions. The district did some research of its own and was impressed by the quality and safety features of the ZERO1.

But the helmets cost more than twice what other high quality helmets cost, and to buy a helmet for every high school player, grades 9-12, would cost the district more than \$72,000. Thanks to a generous \$50,000 donation by Karl Chapel, the district was able to purchase the new helmets.

"Ultimately, how can we put our kids in anything but the best?" says Robertson. "But the cost was far beyond what our budget - in fact, what most high school budgets - would allow. So we started problem solving - and that led us to Mr. Chapel and Grand Haven Custom Molding. We could not have done this without him."

The impact of the new helmets is already being felt by players, who love the lightweight fit and custom padding in the helmets. Most programs expect to replace about 10% of their helmets every season, based on testing and age, but the standard for the ZERO1 helmet is 4%, which allows the district to keep providing players with ZERO1 helmets for years to come.

"We are very excited that we are able to put our kids in the most researched and developed helmet on the market to date," says Joe Nelson, GHHS head football coach. "Our kids are extremely grateful that we have a helmet that fits properly and will allow them to see more field of play. Without the generous donation from Grand Haven Custom Molding, we would not be able to put these helmets on our kids!"

Grand Haven Area Public Schools is a district of distinction for students preschool through 12th grade. With a goal of providing exceptional educational experiences, GHAPS is committed to success for all students and strives to provide exemplary programs and opportunities to meet the diverse needs of students.

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