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**SPORTS**



**SIMMS, AMONGST OTHERS, RECEIVES 2023 NAACP YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD**

SPORTS, PG 49

## Urban Racquet Sports Foundation receive the 2023 national facility of the year award



KEN LECUREUX AND PHARRINGTON DOUGLASS



**Men must unite to stop the violence**

COMMUNITY, PG 13



**Horizons brings distinctive catering live to homes and businesses**

EDUCATION, PG 19

The Saginaw based, Urban Racquet Sports Foundation received the 2023 national facility of the year award sponsored annually by the United States Tennis Association. The ceremony was held during the opening day of the US Open, August 28. The two founders and active volunteers, Pharrington Douglass and Ken LeCureux, were in attendance to receive the award from USTA officials.

It is their 17<sup>th</sup> year of providing tennis instruction, character quality training, nutrition education, and reading activities to urban youth. Their nonprofit charitable

foundation conducted the activities on the old Garber Courts in the summer and other locations in the winter months.

In 2019-20, they raised \$2 million, even during the covid situation, to completely rebuild the Garber Courts with eight tennis courts, eight pickleball courts, lighted courts, and a clubhouse, with a classroom. Construction took seven months in 2021, and they've been expanding the programming ever since to reach even more youth and adults with healthy life-long recreational benefits.

**FEATURED STORY**

## Delta College celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

LATINO BANNER, PG 4



THE MICHIGAN BANNER IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



# Urban Racquet Sports Foundation/Garber Courts in pictures....



COURTESY PHOTOS

**MICHIGAN BANNER**

301 E Genesee Ave, Suite 201B  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
989.992.2600  
publisher022@gmail.com

**CEO/COO**

Jerome Buckley  
publisher022@gmail.com

**PUBLISHER EMERITUS**

Jerome Buckley

**EDITOR EMERITUS**

Rae Lynn Buckley

**THE LATINO BANNER  
PUBLISHER**

Jerome Buckley  
thelatinobanner@gmail.com

**OMBUDSMAN**

Elaine Gregory McKenzie

**MISSION**

The Michigan Banner, Latino Banner and Youth Banner operates and serves as a print and online media venue committed to educating, informing and enlightening our readership regarding events and news that directly and indirectly affect the communities regionally and globally. Furthermore, to serve as a catalyst and a link for cultivating young adults as entrepreneurial and business leaders for the future.

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2 weeks before each publication date of the 1st and 16th of each month

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# NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

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# MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 17



## WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

By DONIQUA SOVIA

I recall going to a fair with some people as I do every summer. One of the rides was that of a hang gliding theme, and my friends insisted that I went on it. I was fine until the ride took off. I proceeded to close my eyes and opened them only twice to look at the ground and then squeeze them back shut again. You see, I have a fear of heights, and going up in the air was not my idea of a "fun" time.

After some time had passed since the fair, I began to think and analyze my fear. I searched for a reason as to why I had it, and then it came to me; It wasn't the heights that scared me, it's what I was looking at while I was up high. So, my question to you is; What are you looking at? That fear that you have, is it a result of something you saw and now have negative thoughts about?

That's also another reason why we may fear things; Negativity. We're so quick to think of a negative result then we are a positive result thus allowing our thoughts to affect our mouth which in turn affects our perception of things, and ultimately our actions. Needless, to say a few weeks later I had what's called a discovery flight with a local airport as I had this secret desire to want to fly.

Once we were heading down the ramp to take off, I kept my eyes ahead, not looking to the left, right, or down. When we made it in the air, I was ecstatic! The freedom of the sky which held no limits, was an amazing feeling! I wasn't afraid, or nervous. I was in fact free from fear. So, I ask again ; What are you looking at? There's a verse in the Bible in Philippians 4:4-9 and it's says;

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-put it into practice.

We can also follow up with the verse in 2 Timothy 2:7 which says;

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

In conclusion, the bottom line is; Face your fears, the only problem could be what you are looking at. Are you looking at God? If not, there's your answer.





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# Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA  
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

## National Hispanic Heritage Month



Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson

and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988, on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

The day of September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Hondu-

ras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Also, Columbus Day or Día de la Raza, which is October 12, falls within this 30 day period.

This year's theme is Building Prosperous and Healthy Communities.

LATINO BANNER SPONSORED BY GREAT LAKES BAY HEALTH CENTERS & TEAM ONE CREDIT UNION



**Seen on the Scene: On August 31, The Saginaw branch of LLEAD, Latino Leaders for the Enhancement of Advocacy and Development, hosted a back-to-school event at the Delta College downtown campus, 319 East Genesee. Over 90 students received bilingual books through the READ Association of Saginaw County, school supplies and a slice (maybe two) of pizza.**





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6PM- BANDA BAJIO  
8PM- CONJUNTO BLINDADO

**SATURDAY, SEPT 16, 2023**  
2PM- CULTURAS DEL SOL  
3PM- AJ FACUNDO YUNG FLACO  
4PM- CELESTINE Y LOS SANCHEZ  
6PM- LOS YATEKOS  
8PM- TEJANO SOUND BAND

**SUNDAY, SEPT 17, 2023**  
12PM- MARTIN CHAPARRO  
1PM- KAPULI TEKPATL  
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# Delta College celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month



COURTESY PHOTO

Delta College is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 - October 15 with special themed events to recognize the incredible contributions, influence and history of the Hispanic and Latino community.

On Monday, September 18 at 11am, the Hispanic Heritage Month Kick-Off event will occur in the lower west student lounge on the main campus and the student commons at the Downtown Saginaw and Midland Centers. Enjoy delicious food and receive information on upcoming events, including a trivia night, Tejano music celebration, discussion panel and more.

Additional events planned for the month include:

## Virtual Hispanic Heritage Trivia

**Tuesday, September 19 at 12pm, Zoom** [www.delta.edu/HHMtrivia](http://www.delta.edu/HHMtrivia): Please join the student and civic engagement department for Hispanic Heritage Month Trivia. We will be awarding various prizes.

## Celebrating Historical Hispanic and Latino Figures

Every day, Friday, September 15 –

## Sunday, October 15

Main Campus, Downtown Saginaw and Downtown Midland Centers: Come view famous Hispanic and Latino figures who have changed the course of history. We will have information on the main campus in the lower west student lounge and at the Downtown Saginaw and Midland Centers in the student commons.

## High School Visit Workshop at the Downtown Saginaw Center

**Thursday, September 28 at 8:30am**

Downtown Saginaw Center: High school students will have the opportunity to visit the Downtown Saginaw Center to view the courses offered, such as skilled trades, nursing, dental assistants, and more. Students will be able to engage with current college students and faculty.

## Celebrating the Meaning Behind Hispanic Heritage Month

**Tuesday, October 3 at 11am**

Main Campus, Downtown Saginaw and Downtown Midland Centers: A presentation of historical information will be displayed to create awareness around the meaning behind the celebration

of Hispanic Heritage Month. We will have information on the main campus in the lower west student lounge and at the Downtown Saginaw and Midland locations in the student commons.

## Brown Bag Celebrating Historical Hispanic and Latino Figures

**Wednesday, October 4 at 12pm**

Main Campus and Downtown Saginaw Center: In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Delta will show a movie about Dolores Huerta viewers call "energetic" and "exuberantly inspiring." Rebel, activist, feminist and mother, Dolores is an amazing force for social justice, and a hero to agricultural workers and many others. This documentary screening is in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, which will be followed with a question-and-answer period by Delta history professor Dr. Amy French.

## Celebrating "Tejano Music" Delta College Broadcasting

**Saturday, October 28 at 1:00pm – 3:30pm**

Main Campus – Broadcasting (A Wing): A presentation of historical will be displayed to create awareness around the genre of "Tejano Music." Come and meet Miguel Mendoza a.k.a. "Gueroman" who will broadcast live from Studio B in Delta College Public Media at main campus. Light snacks will be provided.

## Circle of Wisdom: Intergeneration Dialogue

**Tuesday, October 26 at 11am**

Downtown Saginaw Center: A discussion panelist of multi-generational community members explores the importance of Hispanic Heritage Month, by sharing their insights and experiences relating to the past, present and future. Our youth will share their perspectives on current issues occurring around them in our community and world.

For more information, please contact Monica Hernandez at [monicahernandez@delta.edu](mailto:monicahernandez@delta.edu) or Alison Ginter at [alisonginter@delta.edu](mailto:alisonginter@delta.edu).



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## + COMMUNITY

# Men must unite to stop the violence

By COREY PRITCHETT

Does The Music Matter-Project 13 (also known as DTMM-13) is a music educational, violence prevention & interruption non-profit corporation. DTMM-13 was developed to vigorously pursue recovery from the public health issue of violence. One of the objectives of DTMM-13 is to help address underlying factors that are instrumental to the traumatic impact of violence. Another objective will explore approaches for implementing collaborative solutions towards the demise of violence.

On July 1, 2023, DTMM-13 launched an anti-gun violence campaign called "No Silence for Gun Violence." "No Silence for Gun Violence" was activated to strengthen those who are impacted by gun violence, rather directly or indirectly. This campaign will combat the reality of the public health issue of violence and bring people together with like minds and hearts, to see healing in their communities.

In promotion of the campaign-DTMM-13 has collaborated with the office of State Senator Kristen McDonald Rivet, Mission in The City, StrongSuit Investments, Restoration Community Outreach, The Michigan Banner and others, to present a "Community Canvassing Initiative" & Bro-B Que experience. We will need and we are looking for 100 male volunteers to participate and assist in this canvassing project. These males may be of all ages, ethnicities, religions/faiths and other community sectors. Please note that minors must and will be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise authorized by parent/guardian.

On September 2, 2023 from 10am to 11am (promptly), male volunteers of all ages will meet at New Life Baptist Ministries located at 1401 Janes Ave in Saginaw. During that time volunteers will be provided with an introduction to DTMM-13, canvassing instructions, facilitation and a ticket for a afternoon lunch compliments of Bro-B Que fundraising and Family Fun Day festival sponsored by RCO Men's Shelter.



The Community Canvassing Initiative will take place from 11:15am- 12:45pm. Our goal is to have direct contact and intentional communication with a target of 1200 households; comprised of 300 households each on the east, west, north and south sides of Saginaw.

We will conclude canvassing at 12:45pm, all volunteers will return to 1401 Janes Ave by 1pm where the Bro-B Que and RCO Men's Shelter, fundraising festivities will convene until 5pm. A "Bro-B Que" is a male-facilitated bar-b que style gathering intended for male bonding, relationship building and the development of male resource sharing. In collaboration with RCO's Family Fun Day, these festivities are an opportunity for males to build relationships; financially support a men's shelter; partake in community development, enjoy food, live entertainment, games & activities for the entire family, and opportunity to register for a chess tournament (\$500 cash prize winner take all) and more!

To join the campaign, go to: <https://www.dtmm-project13.org/services-1> and be sure to subscribe. If you cannot attend

this initial event, you may also participate in the campaign by

- creating discussions that have the ability to develop intervention and prevention of gun violence
- Make music about it!
- Use financial resources to combat gun violence.
- Put a forceful stop to gun violence in your particular neighborhood by working with agencies such as a Crime Stoppers.
- Verbally discourage gun violence
- Promote conflict resolution
- Whatever you are "willing" to do just do it!

If you would like more information, ready to volunteer, or make a donation, please feel free to contact [cpritchett@dtmm-project13.org](mailto:cpritchett@dtmm-project13.org) or call 989.443.0985h

We thank you for your kind consideration to help us by shining your spotlight on this public health issue, community concern, and initiative to STOP THE VIOLENCE!

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+ COMMUNITY

# Team One Credit Union, Jolt Credit Union to bring 5K Wine Run to Downtown

Team One Credit Union, Jolt Credit Union and Dig Deep Race Events are teaming up for a 5K Wine Run/Walk on Wednesday, September 20 in historic Downtown Saginaw. Proceeds from the Wine Run will benefit the Saginaw County Veterans Memorial Plaza.

Whether you've never participated in a walk before or you are a serious runner, this fun-filled event is for everyone. So, tell your friends and family to sign up today! The course runs along the scenic riverfront then continues onto Ojibway Island before returning back to the finish line at Jolt Event Park. Participants will be treated with a t-shirt, finisher medal, 2 wine tastings (age 21+) and a commemorative wine glass. Appetizers and entertainment will also be provided.

Register today and race for a cause! For additional Wine Run details and to register, please visit <https://digdepraces.com/5kwinerun>. In order to guarantee an event t-shirt, please plan to register no later than Friday, September 8.



## Elder Abuse: Combating injustice

**By HILLARY HATCH, SOCIAL SECURITY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST**

Elder abuse is the intentional mistreatment or harming of an older person. An older person is defined by the Social Security Act as someone over age 60. This abuse takes many forms – including physical, emotional, and sexual harm, neglect, and financial exploitation. More than 1 in 10 older adults experience some form of abuse each year. That number is likely much higher because elder abuse is often underreported— especially in underserved communities.

Abuse victims typically show emotional and behavioral red flags, such as depression, unusual fear or anxiety, or intentional isolation. Many victims are abused by someone they know or trust. It's important to look for unusual changes in behavior around:

- Family members.
- Staff at inpatient facilities.

- Hired or volunteer caregivers.
- People in positions of trust like doctors or financial advisors.

You can also help make a difference by checking in with older loved ones. Looking for warning signs of mistreatment is the first step to preventing abuse. Signs of physical abuse include bruises, burns, or other unexplained injuries.

There may also be signs of neglect like:

- Poor nutrition or hygiene.
- Lack of necessary medical aids like glasses or medications that a caretaker should be providing.

There may also be indications of financial abuse. These may include:

- Unpaid rent.
- Sudden changes to a will.
- Unusual changes in money management.
- Large, unexplained financial transactions.
- Mortgages despite sufficient

financial resources.

- Allowing someone new to access bank accounts.

If you suspect that someone is a victim of elder abuse, don't ignore it! If you or someone you care about is in a life-threatening situation, call 911. If you suspect that something isn't right – but nobody seems to be in immediate danger – contact:

Your local Adult Protective Services at [www.napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area](http://www.napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area).

The National Center on Elder Abuse at 1-855-500-3537 (ELDR).

You can also find additional local resources by searching the Eldercare Locator for your community at [eldercare.acl.gov/Public/index.aspx](http://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/index.aspx).

Take some time to call or visit with an older adult. Ask if they are okay and listen to what they tell you. Pay attention to signs of abuse or unusual behavior. Most of all, don't be afraid to report instances of suspected abuse. Please share this information with those who need it.

## + COMMUNITY



CHIPPEWA NATURE CENTER

## Chippewa Nature Center to build nature education center

Since it was first established in 1966, Chippewa Nature Center (CNC) has seen tremendous growth. Nature Day Camp (NDC), Nature Preschool and school programs are among its most impactful programs on youth and their families throughout the region. To meet existing and growing demand for these programs, CNC plans to build the Nature Education Center (NEC). The NEC will primarily serve as the home for these youth-based programs. Groundbreaking for the Nature Education Center will take place in 2024, with completion in 2025.

Located near the Visitor Center and existing Nature Preschool building, the Nature Education Center will consist of multi-purpose indoor program space, two Nature Preschool classrooms, office space, a meeting room, accessible restrooms and food prep areas, an outdoor covered area for school and camp programs and lunches for up to 150 people, nature play areas and access to nearby trails and ponds.

Nature Day Camp, Nature Preschool and school programs have outgrown their current space, and a new program building

will play a critical role in growing CNC's service to the community. This building will grow the capacity to serve youth in each of these programs, while maintaining the high quality programming. The new facility will enhance opportunities for positive nature connections for youth throughout the region for years to come.

Nature Day Camp is CNC's longest running program. Through this program, CNC inspires children to build lifelong, meaningful relationships with the natural world. Since 1966, thousands of children have experienced the magic of catching frogs at the pond, creating a miniature homestead village in the woods or learning how to paddle on a river. Annually, more than 1200 campers ages 3-17 make new friends, gain confidence in outdoor skills and get dirty as they explore Chippewa Nature Center and beyond.

CNC's Nature Preschool was established in 2007. The program currently offers 140 3- and 4-year old children a high quality learning environment that meets their developmental needs while initiating them into a life-long, meaningful relation-

ship with the natural world. It provides discovery-based learning through play, sensory, gross and fine motor activities and creative expression, using the natural world as a catalyst for children's growth and development. The NEC will feature two preschool classrooms with direct access to outdoor play areas. Upon completion of the NEC, preschool classes will also continue to run in the two classrooms in the LEED Gold Certified Margaret Ann (Ranny) Riecker Nature Preschool Center.

CNC offers more than 30 authentic, place-based and curriculum-connected school programs, including half and full-day onsite field trips. For the 2022-23 school year, CNC hosted nearly 18,000 students from 43 school districts. School programs cover topics such as STEM and social studies, can provide a launching off-point for a unit or provide an immersive experience.

To date, CNC has raised \$4.2 million toward the \$5.2 million project, with support from The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation and individual donors, as well as funding provided by CNC. "The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation has been a partner and supporter of CNC and its programs since its inception in 1966," notes Ruth Alden Doan, president and trustee. "We are proud to support the Nature Education Center project, which will greatly contribute to the quality of life in the Great Lakes Bay Region." Dennis Pilaske, CNC executive director adds, "CNC's first parcels of land were donated by The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation. Dorothy Dow Arbury (daughter of Herbert and Grace) was instrumental in securing that land, and provided incredible leadership as an original board member."

"CNC is committed to meeting the needs of the community while pursuing its mission to connect all people to nature through educational, recreational and cultural experiences, which is critical to the health and wellbeing of our community," Pilaske shares. "We are thrilled to provide this new resource to connect even more people to nature." More information about the Nature Education Center and opportunities to support the project are available at [www.chippewanaturecenter.org](http://www.chippewanaturecenter.org).



# Pit & Balcony Community Theatre presents "A Streetcar Named Desire"

Pit & Balcony's opens its ambitious 92nd season with Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer Prize Winning play, A Streetcar Named Desire.

The play won the Pulitzer in 1948 and was immortalized in the American dramatic canon by the 1951 film of the same name starring Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh. The play follows Blanche DuBois as she moves in with her sister, Stella, and brother-in-law, Stanley in New Orleans after losing the family estate to creditors. As the story unfolds we learn more about what drives Blanche to live with her sister and brute of a brother-in-law. The classic play explores themes of loss, grief, mental health, and hope.

"Streetcar is such an actor-driven classic," says Amy Spadafore, Managing Director of Pit & Balcony. "We wanted to give our local performers the opportunity to really sink their teeth into a piece and I'm excited about the cast we have to do just that."

Pit & Balcony's all-volunteer cast includes Matt Kehoe and Scarlett Cunningham as Stanley Kowalski and Blanche DuBois, with Megan Douglass playing Stella Kowalski. The cast is rounded out by Greg Allison, Leslie Larkins, Matthew Turner, Richard Gomez, Briana Boyles, Sandra Cline, and Marcelina Fulgenzio.

Guest director, Dave Ryan says of the show, "We need Streetcar because it thrills us, scintillates us, terrifies us. We need it because, despite almost a century of progress, the human animal is the same now as it was then: brutal and fragile, profane and sacred, filthy and clean."

Performances of A Streetcar Named Desire run September 15-17 & 22-24. Friday and Saturday showings will begin at 7:30pm and Sunday's performances will begin at 3:00pm. This production includes potentially offensive language, adult situations, and depictions of domestic violence and sexual assault.

A Streetcar Named Desire is proudly presented in partnership with N'Orlins Café in Frankenmuth. Attendees will receive a coupon for a free beignet with every ticket purchased.

Ticket information can be found at [www.PitAndBalconyTheatre.com](http://www.PitAndBalconyTheatre.com) or by calling (989)754-6587.

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# Horizons brings distinctive catering live to homes and businesses

Throughout the year, HORIZONS Conference Center frequently takes our trademark “Art of Hospitality” on the road to events all over the Great Lakes Bay Region and beyond. With our new mobile pizza oven, a variety of action stations, and seasonal mocktails, our event hosts have even more options to choose from to enhance the experience for their guests.

## Mobile Pizza Oven

We’ll let you in on a little secret: Our executive chef, Mark Wilson, absolutely loves pizza and spends countless hours in his personal kitchen experimenting with dough, sauces, seasonings and toppings. He is excited to share his hobby with HORIZONS guests.

“We wanted to be able to offer the brick oven pizza experience for off-site events as an enhancement to other action stations on our menu, so we invested in a mobile pizza oven this spring,” said Wilson. “We trialed it at an employee pizza party before declaring it ‘road ready.’”

Hundreds of artisan pizzas have already been baked in the new mobile pizza oven and served to guests at graduation parties, company picnics, private parties and other off-site events over the summer. “This has been a great complement to our catering options,” said Kiron Choudhri, executive vice president. “Creating distinctive experiences for our clients and their guests is our passion – and this new addition has been very well received.”

HORIZONS brings fresh dough, a variety of sauces, cheeses and toppings to each event and bakes the pizzas to order. Vegetarian, Margherita (fresh mozzarella, tomatoes and basil) and classic pepperoni are favorites.

## Action Stations/Strolling Buffets

In addition to the new pizza oven, all of the chef-attended and self-serve action stations on the HORIZONS menus are also available for catered events.



COURTESY PHOTO

“Action stations are a great addition to a buffet or even a plated meal,” said Choudhri. “They get guests mingling and allow them to customize their dining experience. Action stations can also be tailored to work with a particular theme.”

Multiple action stations can also be combined to create a strolling buffet experience. HORIZONS offers a variety of action stations for appetizers, main course, beverages and dessert. Some of the most popular include:

- Mac and cheese bar with a variety of toppings
- Paella with saffron rice, chicken, Andouille sausage and roasted peppers and a selection of rustic breads and infused oils displayed on bricks in a paella pan
- Chef-attended carving block with choice of beef, turkey or ham plus accompaniments
- Pasta bar with selection of pasta, sauces, chicken, Italian sausage and sautéed vegetables plus rustic breads and olive oil
- Belgian chocolate fountain with a selection of fruit and sweet/salty treats for dipping

- Bananas Foster – bananas, brown sugar and rum flambéed by a chef and served with ice cream
- Ice cream bar – featuring locally sourced ice cream from Michigan Cream & Sugar Ice Cream Company plus a variety of toppings

## Refreshing Mocktails and Signature Drinks

Mocktails are a popular choice for many events HORIZONS caters during the summer and all year long. Favorites this season include fresh and fruity selections such as the Pomegranate Agave Spritzer, Blackberry Lavender Lemonade, Virgin Mojito and Peach Bellini.

“Going beyond typical nonalcoholic options like soft drinks and iced tea, mocktails and signature drinks can really help elevate an event,” said Choudhri. “Our team’s creativity truly shines in this area – and our bartenders love experimenting with new flavor profiles, seasonal ingredients and garnishes. More and more, we’re asked to develop unique signature drinks to match an event theme – both with and without alcohol – and we’re thrilled to do it.”

## All the Essentials and Extras You Need

Taking the “Art of Hospitality” on the road means HORIZONS handles all of the details – from professional planning, floral design and décor, to setup, teardown and cleaning during and after the event. HORIZONS can also coordinate rental of tents, tables, chairs and linens for maximum convenience and peace of mind.

For more information about catered events by HORIZONS, visit [horizonscenter.com](http://horizonscenter.com).

## + COMMUNITY

## IN MY HUMBLE OPINION



COURTESY PHOTO

## We shall continue to overcome



By **KEN H. SIMMONS, II**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, KENZO  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

We Shall Overcome, as you probably know, stems from a gospel song that became the anthem of the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s. What you might not know, which I didn't, is that it stems from more than one song, or who first sang it as a protest song. According to an article published by The Kennedy Center about the story behind the song, part of the melody is related to two European songs from the 1700s, "Prayer of the Sicilian Mariners" and "O Sanctissima". The lyrics stem from a gospel hymn published in 1901 by Methodist minister and composer Reverend Dr. Charles Albert Tindley called "I'll Overcome Some Day".

The next thing I learned surprised me even more. The modern version of the song, which was initially titled, "We Will Overcome" was first sung as a protest song by striking tobacco workers led by Lucille Simmons during the 1945-1946 Charleston Cigar Factory strike in South Carolina. Rev. Tindley's hymn was a favorite song of

Simmons, "[but] she gave the song a powerful sense of solidarity by changing the 'I' into 'We' as they sang together", per the Kennedy Center article. I thought "wow, this could be one of my relatives".

In 1947, Simmons brought the song to Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, which was an adult education school that trained union organizers, and later civil rights workers. She shared it with other labor activists there, including the school's music director, Zilphia Horton. Horton learned the song and later taught it to the nationally known folk singer, Pete Seeger who revised the lyrics "We will" to "We shall".

Ten years later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was invited to the school's 25th anniversary as the keynote speaker. Part of the program included Pete Seeger who played his banjo and sang the song he had learned at Highlander, and he led the audience in singing it. When Dr. King left the event, he found himself humming the melody in the car, and he said to his companions, "there's something about that song that haunts you."

Today, with the issues facing African American history and literature, we need to harness that same spirit of solidarity that confronted one of the most complex and controversial issues in history, race relations, and achieved civil rights and voting rights for Black citizens. In doing so, we shall continue to overcome in my humble opinion.

This past February marked the first Black History Month since the "Individual Freedom Act" was made law in Florida in July 2022. The act is based largely on an earlier proposal for the "Stop WOKE" act. The law limits and prohibits how public schools and businesses discuss race and gender, and it has been challenged by a number of advocacy groups, including the ACLU of Florida and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. In November, Chief U.S. district judge Mark Walker issued a temporary injunction preventing the law from being enforced in higher education.

In an email to Teen Vogue the ACLU of Florida stated, "The law will result in Black history being taught solely from a misleading, historically inaccurate perspective that excludes the voices and perspectives of many Black Americans. For example, new school lessons about Rosa Parks remove references to the Jim Crow laws that required segregation and even to the fact that Rosa Parks was told to move to the back of the bus because of her race. These changes minimize the role of systemic racism and segregation, instead making it sound like isolated bad actions." This was published by Teen Vogue on 09 February 2023.

In the same publication, it mentions that Governor DeSantis' administration

**CONTINUES ON PG 21,  
OVERCOME**

+ COMMUNITY

## Continued from pg 20, overcome

created the law in an effort to stop “woke indoctrination” and ban the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) in K-12 schools and all public colleges and universities. CRT introduces a perspective of certain groups that are excluded in most current educational settings. It starts with the assumption that race is a social construct and that racism is systemic and not just an individual prejudice. CRT is intended to equip students to deal with challenging issues like the legacy of slavery and racism by broadening the scope of their awareness and beginning discussions that aim to promote the dismantling of structural inequality.

Florida is not alone in censoring or outright banning Black history and culture in the classroom. According to an article by BET entitled, “Banning Black History” published on 17 February 2023, “At last count, 44 states have started debating whether to introduce bills that would limit what schools can teach about race, [and] American history”. Apparently, CRT is the thing that intimidates them the most. Six states in addition to Florida have laws that ban all or parts of Black history and they include Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. Sixteen other states have bans in progress.

The number one way to combat this dangerous campaign is to vote for different leaders, but that opportunity only happens on a four-year cycle, with the exception of New Hampshire and Vermont where governors serve two-year terms. In the meantime, African American athletes can think

twice about playing for public universities in those states mentioned above. Without the many great Black athletes, those schools would not be as competitive and millions in revenue would be lost from television advertising. Americans should also stop spending tourist dollars in those states that are trying to suppress the fullness of our history, and faith-based leaders and corporations should push back as well.

Other ways are non-violent protests which are most effective in large numbers. It is a force for transformation, justice, and championing human rights. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind.” One of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s six principles of nonviolence is, “Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people. Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people. The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil, not people.”

I also encourage parents to find alternative forms of education about Black history, like visiting museums, watching documentaries, and reading books with their children. When I was growing up I was fortunate that my father, God rest his soul, taught me about Black history at home, because it was not taught at school, K-12. The first time I was ever taught Black history in a formal setting was at university and that was in the one elective course available.

To bring it full circle, the arts, and in particular, music has always been a power-

ful tool to raise awareness and motivation for social change. During the ‘60s, music played an essential role in bolstering courage, inspiring participation, and fostering a sense of community that crossed color lines and cultural barriers. Popular White singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez used their names and musical talents to support the Civil Rights Movement. Even “We Shall Overcome” became a protest song among freedom movements around the world being sung by protesters in China, parts of Eastern Europe, India, Ireland, Lebanon, and South Korea.

In my brief, but fairly thorough research about Lucille Simmons, I could not verify her lineage and whether or not we are actually related. Nevertheless, I feel in my spirit that we are, and my wife, who is Zulu, told me in her culture if people share the same last name they are considered to be family. Therefore, I am honored to be related, by blood or just by last name, to one of the creators of this powerful struggle song, “We Shall Overcome”, which was deemed one of the most important American songs of the 20th century by National Public Radio.

Let us rally around this clarion call to overcome the current attack on Black culture, history, and literature. In my humble opinion, we shall continue to overcome, but only if we take action now individually and collectively. A luta continua (the struggle continues)!

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## + COMMUNITY



COURTESY PHOTO

## Nexteer breaks ground on solar field in Saginaw

Nexteer Automotive and NorthStar Clean Energy broke ground on a 25-acre solar field at Nexteer's USA Operations site in Saginaw, Michigan. An initiation ceremony of this renewable energy solution was attended by Nexteer executives and employees, as well as NorthStar Clean Energy executives and several local government officials.

"Nexteer's Saginaw Solar Field represents the next step in our Company's commitment to sustainability, and today's celebration highlighted our continued progress toward our company vision to be the leading motion control technology company accelerating mobility to be safe, green and exciting," said Robin Milavec, President, Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Strategy Officer (CSO), Executive Board Director and Chair of the Sustainability Steering Committee (SSC), Nexteer Automotive. "We are excited to partner with NorthStar Clean Energy on this important sustainability initiative that provides a win-win of both reducing our carbon footprint and improving our site's operational costs."

"Renewable energy is the energy of the future, and partners like Nexteer are on the frontier of this transition," said Brian

Hartmann, President of NorthStar Clean Energy. "The Nexteer Saginaw Solar Field will serve as an important landmark not only of the progress being made in the clean energy space, but in changing the corporate understanding of doing good business. It is possible to do right by the bottom line and by the planet, and we are grateful to see leaders like Nexteer seizing the opportunity to do both."

### Benefits of Nexteer's Saginaw Solar Field

Once complete in 2024, Nexteer's Solar Field will reduce the Saginaw site's operational costs through a renewable energy source with a fraction of the emissions compared to traditional sources such as natural gas or coal.

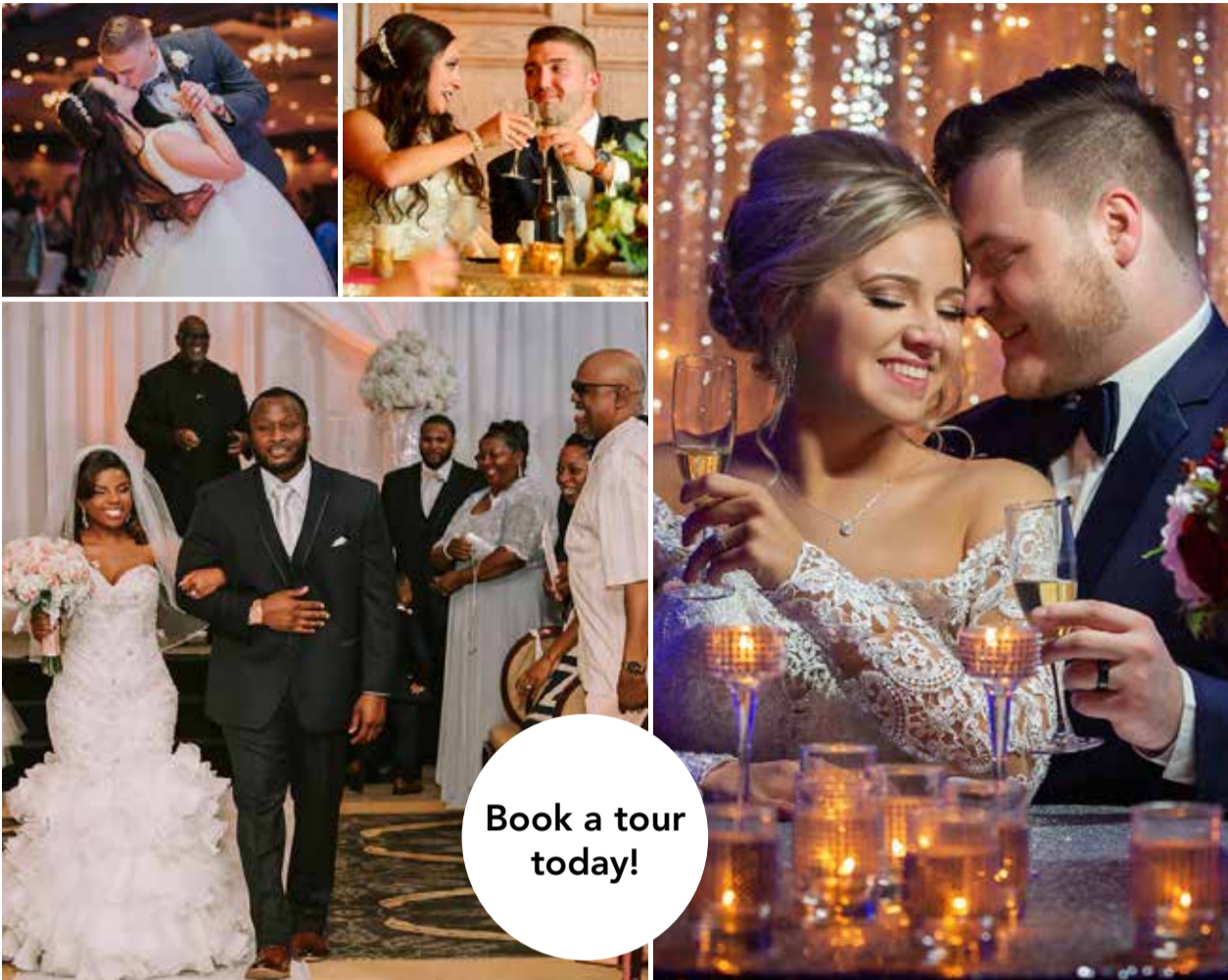
This solar field also represents another proof point of Nexteer's commitment to sustainability with anticipated progresses such as:

- Lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an estimated 7,000 metric tons annually, which is equivalent to saving about 780,000 gallons of gasoline per year

- Preparing Nexteer for growing expectations of its OEM customers for a sustainable supply chain, as well as other key stakeholders such as employees, recruits, regulators, investors, communities, etc.
- Supporting progress toward global clean energy transition via enablers such as renewables, energy efficiency and electrification – as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as #7 Affordable and Clean Energy; #9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; and #13 Climate Action

"We're very proud of the collaboration and creativity that has happened between the Nexteer and NorthStar Clean Energy teams to bring this solar field to our Saginaw site," added Jill Dralle, Vice President and USA Chief Operating Officer (COO), Nexteer Automotive. "The Saginaw Solar Field is a great example of our teams coming together with a sustainable solution that supports Nexteer's vision and generates positive impacts both inside and outside Nexteer."





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## + COMMUNITY

## Renue Physical Therapy partners with American Red Cross to host community blood drive in memory of Morris Stoddard

Renue Physical Therapy will host a community blood drive with the American Red Cross on Friday, September 22nd from 12:00pm – 5:45pm at Freeland SportsZone.

For more information or to make an appointment to donate, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or sign up online at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) with sponsor code FREELAND.

The drive will be held in memory of Morris Stoddard, late husband of Renue Physical Therapist Assistant Stacie Stoddard. Morris was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in October 2020 at 31 years of age, and passed away just five months later due to complications in March 2021. Stacie and Morris were high school sweethearts, and share two beautiful daughters aged 11 months and three years at the time of his passing.

During rounds of chemo, Morris received multiple blood donations as a key part of his treatment. But the Covid pandemic generated a major blood shortage and there were times Morris was not able



MORRIS STODDARD

to get the blood he needed. This inspired Stacie to host a blood drive and give back in his memory.

“Morris was the type of person who

would help anyone in need,” said Stacie. “He was very kind, always positive, and generous. It’s important to me to give back in his name and help others like he would have. This will also help keep his memory alive for his kids.”

Blood is routinely transfused to patients with cancer and other diseases, premature babies, organ transplant recipients and trauma victims, according to the Red Cross.

“The short amount of time it takes to donate can mean a lifetime to a patient with a serious medical condition. We urge eligible donors to join us in the selfless act of giving blood.”

Donors of all blood types are needed, especially those with types O negative, B negative and A negative. According to the Red Cross, type O negative is the universal blood type that can be safely transfused to anyone, and is often used to treat trauma patients.

## Financial Plus Credit Union employee awarded Credit Union Lender of the Year

Financial Plus Credit Union is thrilled to celebrate the achievement of Matt Schroeder, Business Relationship Manager, who has been named Michigan Certified Development Corporation (MCDC) 2022 Credit Union Lender of the Year. This recognition highlights Matt’s dedication, expertise, and outstanding contributions to the financial services industry.

“We extend our congratulations to Matt Schroeder on being named the MCDC Credit Union Lender of the Year,” said Nathan Adams, Director of Business Services at Financial Plus Credit Union. “His dedication and exceptional contributions have not only earned him this prestigious award

but have also made a lasting impression on our members and peers in the industry. His commitment to tailoring innovative and flexible financing options has enabled business members from various sectors to reach their goals.”

The MCDC Credit Union Lender of the Year Award holds immense significance in the financial community. The award honors professionals who have demonstrated exemplary leadership and commitment to supporting local businesses growth and prosperity.

**Financial Plus**  
**Credit Union** 

## 211 Northeast Michigan wins National Innovator of the Year award for local program



COURTESY PHOTO

211 Northeast Michigan received the Innovator of the Year Award in Cooperative Relationships at the national conference for Inform USA (previously the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) during the 50th anniversary event on August 1, 2023, in Orlando, Florida. They won the award against second finalist 211 LA County for creating the LIFT Program with United Way of Midland County.

LIFT stands for Leveraging Income For Tomorrow and focuses on supporting the ALICE population (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed). This group includes hardworking individuals and families struggling to make ends meet because of inflation and rising costs of basic needs like rent, food, childcare, medical care, transportation, and utility.

They often make too much to qualify for state programs such as food stamps and Medicaid but not enough to live more than paycheck to paycheck. Many of these families are one significant expense away from completely altering their already tight budget--a car repair, home repair, high utility bills, illness, or injury could quickly plunge the family into poverty. Often these families are left with impossible choices--buy food or repair the car, pay for utilities, or receive needed medical care.

Since the program launched, more than 568 people have been served nearly

\$200,000 in support has been distributed. This collective impact program is housed at 211 NE Michigan and backboneed by United Way of Midland County. Funding for the incubation and launch of this program comes from United Way and generous investments from the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation and the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation.

Collaboration is key to the success of LIFT. Still in its pilot phase, it brings together numerous nonprofit hub organizations that are experts in their need areas. They help with case management and ensure that all available programs and resources are leveraged first before deploying LIFT support, including dollars already invested by United Way through the annual allocation process.

"ALICE families are hardworking people who often work multiple jobs but struggle to make ends meet," said United Way of Midland County President and CEO Holly Miller. "They have incomes above the poverty line but struggle to afford the basics and often don't qualify for help. They are vital to our economy and are especially vulnerable to economic challenges."

"We go to a partner in the community that provides a service, and they use their relationships to get discounted labor, supplies, and things like that. We are not duplicating the existing channels; I think that

is important," shared 211 Northeast Michigan Executive Director Chiara Cameron-Wood. "We are just finding different ways to use those channels, to leverage them beyond the scope that many people can manage because of those federal poverty lines. The people distributing funds are also limited because the funds they receive come from the federal government, which has limitations. So, we've come together in a very deep partnership with United Way and other community service providers to serve these people in that resource desert."

The program is currently only available to serve those who live in Midland County. Still, the leadership at 211 Northeast Michigan and United Way of Midland County continue exploring ways to ensure this program can be replicated in other areas.

211 Northeast Michigan provides free referral services and community resource connections to all individuals and families in 23 counties in the northeast part of Michigan and the thumb. Anyone who wants to talk to a friendly, highly trained operator for help connecting to resources for a variety of needs, including housing, utility payment assistance, food, health, and more, can dial 211 from the phone anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from anywhere in the state to receive services. This service is also available by texting your zip code to 898-211.

# + FAITH BASED

SPONSORED CONTENT



MINISTRY WITHOUT WALLS - 3783 MANNION RD, SAGINAW, MI 48603

## Join us at Ministry Without Walls

By **PASTOR JOHN DUNN**  
MINISTRY WITHOUT WALLS

Ministry Without Walls recently returned to our building at 3783 Mannion Road with a new vision. The last couple of years, the direction of the world, and the pandemic starting with Covid have all certainly become eye openers. After seeking God for His direction and His will, we are expanding our vision. Today, we clearly understand that the Church is our community.

The assignment that God has given to us is to “Break Down Walls”, bringing both spiritual and those who work in the community together.

Our vision is for Ministry Without Walls to be:

- A place where the Spirit, Soul and Body becomes whole
- A place where resources are available to those in need
- A place where church, volunteers

and community professionals work together to accomplish the will of God.

- A place where love flows, and judgement is absent
- A place where privacy is protected
- A place where safety is a priority
- A place where the whole person is important

Our ongoing teaching and seminars will include:

- Outreach
- Growing Spiritually
- Mental Health
- Healthy Living
- Finding Purpose
- Money Matters
- Entrepreneurship
- Boys to Men
- Women of Wisdom
- Discipleship

We understand that the mission field is not a country far away. It is around the corner, down the street, in our community. We also know that the vision given to us will not be easy to accomplish. We know that we can not do it alone. It will take a “village”.

We are committing our resources, time, talents, people, and our connections to tear down the “walls of the church”.

If our vision is connecting with you on some level and it appeals to you and sounds like something you might want to be a part of, we invite you to join us at 11:00 on Sundays to meet us personally so we can answer any questions you might have.

God bless You, come experience for yourself, Join us!!

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A TRIBUTE TO  
SISTER MARIETTA FRITZ

By **CRAIG DOUGLAS**  
RETIRED EDUCATOR

Muhammad Ali once said that service is the rent we pay for our room here on earth. In my lifetime, a person who has best exemplified Ali's sentiment has been Sister Marietta Fritz, who passed onward on Aug. 12.

When I first heard her speak at the "Bishop's Breakfast" in 1998, I was stunned by her humble honesty about Emmaus House of Saginaw. At that time, Emmaus House was only a decade old. It was formed out of necessity in a former convent on

Fourteenth Street when Sister discovered that inmates leaving the Saginaw County Jail often had nowhere to go but back out onto the streets.

She knew all too well from her jail ministry about recidivism. Sister termed it as "the revolving door." Inmates would serve their time, be released to the streets, and then run afoul of the law again.

Sister joined forces with Sister Shirley to form Emmaus House to help females being released, to provide safe transitional living for them. The need was tremendous, and soon word spread about the safe haven Emmaus House offered.

The program grew; it became a 501(c)3 nonprofit with by-laws and a volunteer board. Sister Shirley lost a battle with cancer, and Sister Marietta became the driving force of the organization.

Sister Marietta lived at Emmaus House as she led the work. Round the clock, 24/7. In service. My wife Joan and I began

to volunteer there in August 2013 when Emmaus was a well-oiled machine.

Sister Marietta "ran" things by example; she modeled civility and decency for women who frankly had not had much of either in their lives. When we began there, Sister sat us down and explained her personal beliefs about the residents at Emmaus House. She politely stated we likely had loving parents and a good home to grow up in, and she pivoted quickly to say, "None of us get to choose our parents."

Sister's compassion is unforgettable. She had the uncanny ability to discipline and enforce rules and expectations while maintaining respect. Sister could deal with the disappointment of relapse or unexpected death due to her strong resolve and faith in God.

She moved in retirement with her order in Cincinnati, Ohio some six hours from here, yet her influence carries on, now and well into the future.

MICHIGAN BANNER  
SERMONETTE SERIES

## I Would Not Take Anything for My Journey Now - He Ordered My Steps!

*“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighted in his way”*

**Psalm 37:23**

By MINISTER CAROLYN CARTER  
TOWNSEL

When we take the time to look over of our lives, we have and continue to have many hopes, dreams, goals, and plans to achieve them. These plans were and are not abstract, but on the contrary, extremely detailed and defined. It is great that we have our hopes, dreams, goals and plans – but what is even greater, is the fact that God has the master plan.

In Proverbs 16:9 Solomon states, **“A man’s heart plans his way; But the Lord directs his steps.”** This proverb expresses; Man freely devises; God powerfully directs. Man innovatively plans; God masterfully dictates. Man acts as he pleases; God is pleased by how He uses man’s actions. Often, we plan as if we know exactly what will happen, but we must truly understand man proposes but God disposes, because He is sovereign. In God’s Sovereignty, He rules, reigns, and sustains our life. Therefore, our life, purpose, and plans are in His hands, meaning God is in absolute control.

Although, we make and have plans God has given each of us a specific plan and purpose for our lives. Those purposes and plans did not commence after we were born, but before our conception. This truth is given in Jeremiah 1:5, when the Lord said to His prophet, **“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were**

**born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”** God’s plan regarding Jeremiah’s formation was not haphazard or accidental. It was preemptive, implying that God explicitly created Jeremiah to accomplish His purpose. Therefore, it is the same with us; you and I existed before we were - with a plan, identity, and purpose. Our lives are not a mistake, a hit or miss, but intentional and purposeful.

David declares in Psalm 37:23, **“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighted in his way.”** The good man David is referring to is someone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they are striving to live their life in a way that will please Him. We must remember God knows our end from the beginning, and weighs our hearts and checks our plans to see if they match His will. Consequently, as Believers fulfilling Psalm 37:5, **“Commit thy way unto the LORD; Trust also in him; And he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, And thy judgment as the noonday,”** we step back from what we think, or even our heart’s desire, and honestly seek to be obedient to what God is calling us to do. He then orders our steps in the direction that aligns with His divine plans and purpose for our life.

God’s plan is rarely a straight shot to a visible goal. It requires of us a journey, a journey that is comprised of steps that makes sudden

stops, steps that has to take detours, and perplexing turns. Therefore, when you or I move away from His way, will, and or purpose that He has assigned to our lives, the Lord orders our steps back to where they are purpose to be. When we would have connected with and formed relationships with the wrong people, or are going in the wrong direction – God places boundaries to stop us. This means God commences to moving things out of our way that will kill, steal, or destroy us. In doing this, He places us in a position that will facilitate growth, increase, and ultimately fulfill His definitive plan and purpose for our lives.

As I look back over my life, examining my hopes, dreams, goals, and plans some were Godly, while others were definitely contrary to my life and the Word of God. Proverbs 19 states, **“Many are the plan’s in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”** I am so grateful for the words of Jeremiah 29:11, **“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”** In the midst of all of our hopes, dreams, goals, and plans, I honestly believe we all can declare truthfully, “I would not take anything for my journey now, because He ordered my steps.”

Blessings to All.....

# MAN UP: THE RETURN

Featuring:

**Hurley Coleman III**  
Executive Director of Saginaw  
Community Action Committee

**Charles Allen**  
American Idol Contestant &  
Community Organizer

**Kareem Bowen**  
Host of 'Straight Talk' & Pastor

**Brian Pruitt**  
Founder of Power of Dad &  
Motivational Speaker

**& Others!**

## September 16th, 2023 | 10am-1pm

### Thompson Middle School | 3021 Court St. Saginaw, MI 48602

Calling ALL MEN, FATHERS, and their children. Come and enjoy **free food, games, giveaways, haircuts, massages, and encouragement** from some of Saginaw's own. We promise an unforgettable day of fun & bonding!

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## + FUNDRAISING GOODTIMES

# Help for conference junkies

By MEL AND PEARL SHAW

*When you receive an invitation to an upcoming conference does a lump rise in your throat? Do your palms get sweaty? Do you start having heart palpitations? Are you lightheaded? Gauge your excitement to determine whether or not you are a conference junkie!*

Conference junkies are admired as the rock stars of conferences. They know everyone, and everyone knows them. They may occasionally be panelists, greeters, or break-out session coordinators. They may even serve on one – or more! – conference planning committees. They reference prior conferences in their conversation, and plan to meet up at future conferences before the opening session of the current conference is over.

Everyone has their weaknesses. If conference attendance is one of yours, we can help you find a new way to respond to invitations and “save the date” notices. But of course, as with all personal change endeavors, you have to want to change. You need to break through your denial and find the strength, guidance and support to adopt both new behaviors and new neural pathways!

Before we go any further, we want to

make clear our position on conferences – they are a good thing. They are great for professional development, staying atop of developments in your field, networking, and honestly – time away from the office. Time with colleagues, mentors, innovators, and thought leaders can be invigorating, leaving you charged up when you return to the office. But too much of a good thing is too much. So, before you register yourself – or even more dangerous, register your whole office – ask the following questions.

Will attending help you advance the work of your organization’s strategic plan? Is the conference related to your job? Will it help you grow professionally? Can your organization, institution or department afford the expense of travel, accommodations, registration and time out of the office? Will the time away create a gap that impacts your short- or long-term planning and implementation? Who “covers” the absence of those attending a conference? Who ends up being responsible for your work – or that of others – and what is the “snowball” effect of that?

While we too enjoy the exhilaration of participating in an excellent conference, there may be a conference hangover lurking. You know, that back-to-the-office feeling of overwhelm experienced while reviewing 278 emails requiring a response, the work back-log, and the looming meetings you are required to attend. Will you still feel good about the conference and the time out of the office?

Our bottom line: Before saying “yes” consider whether there are less time-intensive and more effective ways to achieve your goals. When you say “yes,” increase the value of your absence by planning in advance how you will share and apply what you have learned. And if your conference will be in New Orleans, plan for how you will explain your weight gain!

Whether you are caught in the spiral of conference madness or believe that conference overload is “fake news” let us know your thoughts on this topic. We will publish a collection of your responses!!!



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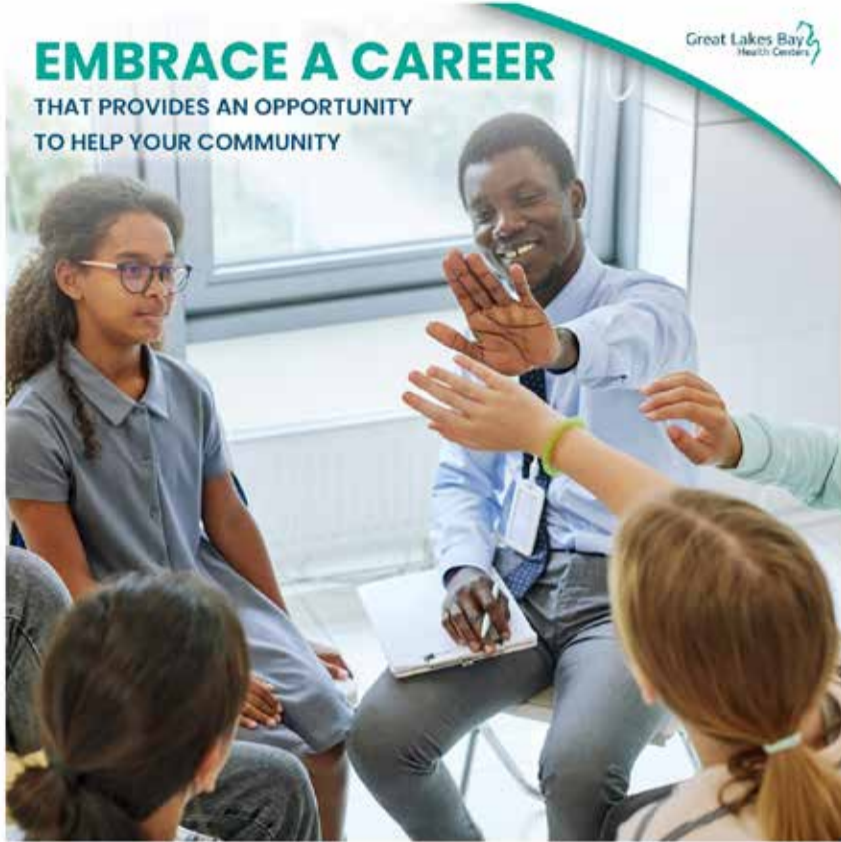
Mel and Pearl Shaw are authors of four books on fundraising available on Amazon.com. For help growing your fundraising visit [www.saadandshaw.com](http://www.saadandshaw.com) or call (901) 522-8727.




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*Respiratory Therapist*

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## ≡ + EDUCATION ≡

# SVSU lecturer will discuss how public academic institutions can foster interfaith dialogue “Religious Identity & University Discourse”

As part of its longstanding Dr. Raana Akbar Memorial Lecture Series, Saginaw Valley State University will host speaker Najeeba Syeed, J.D., on Thursday, Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the Rhea Miller Recital Hall. The lecture is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served following the lecture.

Syeed will discuss how public academic institutions can foster interfaith dialogue, religious inclusion and religious literacy.

Dr. Waheed Akbar, who created the Dr. Raana Akbar Memorial Lecture Series, said, “Over the years, I have followed and watched Dr. Najeeba Syeed’s career and her work. She is the ideal speaker to present at the Raana Akbar lecture Series on Islam and Culture at SVSU. She is nationally known as a leader in interfaith work and mediation work on diversity, equity and violence prevention. I felt she would be an ideal candidate to bring her perspective to our lecture series and to the Great Lakes Bay Region. I am truly excited to be able to invite her to share her views and work with us.”

Syeed is the El-Hibri endowed chair and executive director of the Interfaith Institute at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. She has been a professor, expert practitioner and public speaker for the last two decades in the fields of conflict resolution, interfaith studies, mediation, education, deliberative democracy, and social, gender and racial equity.

She has published widely on conflict resolution and social justice. Syeed has provided mediation services to a variety of public, private and governmental institutions, including the White House.

In 2021, Professor Syeed served as chief of staff to Los Angeles City Councilmember Nithya Raman, the first Asian American woman elected to council. She has also led a number of organizations focused on peacebuilding, justice and conflict resolution. Syeed holds a juris doctor degree



NAJEEBA SYEED

from Indiana University School of Law.

The Dr. Raana Akbar Memorial Lecture Series was created in 2011 by Waheed Akbar in memory of his wife, Dr. Raana Akbar, a former SVSU Board of Control member, physician and community leader.

This lecture is presented with support from the William and Julia Edwards Lecture in Philosophy and Religion and the Dow Visiting Scholars and Artists Endowment.

The Dow Visiting Scholars and Artists

program was established at SVSU through an endowment from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation to enrich our regional cultural and intellectual opportunities.

The William and Julia Edwards Lecture, made possible through a gift from the couple and supported by the William J. and Julia M. Edwards Foundation, is a forum where recognized scholars in religion and philosophy are invited to share their work with the SVSU campus community.



# SPSD ORIENTATIONS

## Elementary

**HANDLEY\***, ARTHUR EDDY, HERIG, KEMPTON, LOOMIS, MERRILL PARK, CHESTER MILLER, ROUSE, STONE, ZILWAUKEE

- Thursday, August 17 (10AM or 3PM)
- Thursday, August 24 (6PM)

\*HANDLEY'S ORIENTATION HELD AT OLD BUILDING-224 N ELM ST.

## Thompson Middle

- Wednesday, August 16 (4:30-5:30PM)
- Thursday, August 17 (12-1:30PM)

## Arthur Hill HS

BEING HELD AT THOMPSON MIDDLE DUE TO CONSTRUCTION

- 10th-12th Gr: Tuesday, August 15 (10AM)
- 9th Gr: Tuesday, August 15 (5PM)
- Make-Up: Thursday, August 17 (5pm)

## Saginaw High

- Tuesday, August 15 (10AM & 5PM)
- Tuesday, August 22 (10AM)

## SASA

SAGINAW ARTS & SCIENCES ACADEMY

- Returning Student-Monday, August 21 (5PM)
- Returning Student-Tuesday, August 22 (5PM)
- 6th Grade Ice Breaker-Wednesday, August 23 (5pm)
- New Students/Make Up-Wednesday, August 23 (6:30 PM)

## Success Academy

- Wednesday, August 16 (10AM or 4PM)
- Thursday, August 17 (10AM or 4PM)

## SCC

SAGINAW CAREER COMPLEX

- Wednesday, August 23 (4-5 PM OR 6-7PM)

# THRIVING NOT SURVIVING

## BUILDING RESILIENCE IN A CHALLENGING WORLD

BY DR. RAMONT M. ROBERTS  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SAGINAW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Ramont Roberts is the Superintendent of Saginaw Public Schools in Saginaw, Michigan. He prides himself on being an urban educational leader. Dr. Roberts is committed to the continued quest of finding ways to help others live a life of purpose.

This book offers a comprehensive exploration of the factors that influence resilience. Resilience is defined as the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life experiences. By examining these influential factors, the book aims to provide valuable insight and actionable strategies to replicate and promote resilience.

Individuals interested in understanding and supporting the resilience of urban, at-risk, high-achieving students would benefit from buying this book. By examining factors in both the home and school environments, the book offers valuable insights that practitioners, policy makers, and parents can utilize to replicate successful strategies and create an environment that fosters and sustains resilience in these students.

PURCHASING  
INFORMATION





COURTESY PHOTO

# Parents-Back to School Tips for YOU!



By **CRAIG DOUGLAS**  
RETIRED EDUCATOR

Blogger Beth Deacon has a terrific set of tips for parents as their children return to school. We focus on the return to school for many reasons; most of all, it is an exciting and nerve-racking experience for so many families. I love these tips because parents (sometimes overlooked), benefit from them.

Here are three tips that jumped out to me from Beth Deacon.

### 1st Carve out time for yourselves.

Parents are on a “fast track” this time of year, especially. Setting up schedules,

getting school supplies, and countless first steps in the new routine for the coming year. Beth advises “carving out time for yourselves.” Whether it is a relaxing evening at home or a bite to eat together at a restaurant, find time to be together and “exhale.”

### 2nd Nurture your physical health.

Fast-pace lives can lead to less sleep and more fast-food, and other less-than-optimum healthy decisions.

The healthier the habits, the more stress is reduced. Regular exercising is also a way to break away from daily stressors. Walking or biking together around supper time are fine ways to work exercise into some quiet time for parents.

Making sure proper sleep is acquired is also important for health. Cutting back an hour or more of sleep may open some unexpected challenges associated with reduced immunity.

None of this is easy, yet the benefits seem to be significant.

### 3rd Connect with others.

Networking with other parents can help calm fears and reduce worries about all aspects of back-to-school. Transportation can be a stressor, and insights about bus schedules or carpooling can be of relief.

Becoming acquainted with school staff will also reduce apprehension. It will open lines of communication and help develop rapport that could pay off as needs arise.

Best wishes to all parents as schools resume full-throttle in September.

-----  
**Resource:**

[https://www.7doorsin.com/post/prioritize-your-well-being-self-care-tips-for-parents-as-kids-return-to-school?postId=b2906d65-775c-4ffc-af32-c04a18c67183&utm\\_campaign=fd34cf9a-379c-4f3e-bf45-4d883961919f&utm\\_source=so&utm\\_medium=mail&utm\\_content=af481409-3e28-442b-b1d4-0806c3e58e03&cid=ac16db1f-f41f-44eb-a37a-1ce9929747bf](https://www.7doorsin.com/post/prioritize-your-well-being-self-care-tips-for-parents-as-kids-return-to-school?postId=b2906d65-775c-4ffc-af32-c04a18c67183&utm_campaign=fd34cf9a-379c-4f3e-bf45-4d883961919f&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail&utm_content=af481409-3e28-442b-b1d4-0806c3e58e03&cid=ac16db1f-f41f-44eb-a37a-1ce9929747bf)

## + EDUCATION



COURTESY PHOTO

## SPONSORED CONTENT

## Despite staffing challenges, Saginaw Intermediate School District's Early Childhood Department continues to provide students and families across the Great Lakes Bay Region with a variety of resources!

Despite staffing challenges, Saginaw Intermediate School District's Early Childhood Department continues to provide students and families across the Great Lakes Bay Region with a variety of resources!

The Saginaw ISD Early Childhood Services Department provides an array of resources for children and families throughout Saginaw County including home visits, preschool programming, and community support. Programs are designed to strengthen families by providing high-quality learning environ-

ments and support for their children while sharing access to essential family resources. Our programs include the following:

- Birth-5
- Early On
- Great Start Collaborative
- Great Start Readiness Program
- Great Start to Quality Eastern Resource Center
- Healthy Families America

- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Michigan Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program (MI-APPP)
- Michigan Tri Share Child Care Program

Our largest programs encompass our preschool programming. The Early Head Start (EHS) program serves 156 students

**CONTINUES ON PG 39,  
SISD**

## Continued from pg 38, SISD

in 6 classrooms and several homes while our Head Start (HS) program serves 859 students in 51 classrooms and 17 sites. Our Great Start to Readiness Program (GSRP) serves over 1,100 students across Saginaw county in local school districts, community based organizations and charter schools. These programs are essential to providing our youngest, most vulnerable learners the experiences they need to build a firm foundation for future academic success. It's impossible to do this alone and we value our partners at the local, state and federal level helping us in our pursuit for funding, support and legislative advocacy for high quality services.

Despite staffing challenges, SISD continues to keep the provision of these services at the forefront of what we do. These challenges are not prevalent just in our county, but across the state of Michigan. Research shows that the early foundational years of a child's life are of the greatest importance due to (but not limited to) the following:

- There are 700 to 1,000 new neural connections forming every second in a child's brain,
- Genetics in addition to life experiences help shape the developing brain,
- The foundation is key for future cognitive abilities, and
- Vocabulary at age 3 can predict 3rd grade reading achievement.

Implementation of high quality programs depends on a quality workforce. Providers locally and across the state know all too well the challenges we have and continue to experience being able to recruit and retain highly qualified staff. We are in need of individuals with a passion to provide much needed services to our students and families across Saginaw County. We encourage you to review the Saginaw ISD current preschool openings at [www.sisd.cc](http://www.sisd.cc) and select "Join Our Team!" at the top right corner of the

page to see all of our openings for the following positions:

- Head Start Lead Teacher
- Head Start Associate Teacher
- Program Service Aide
- Home Visitor
- Early Head Start Lead Teacher
- Family Service Advocate
- Program Support Secretary

The credentials required for these positions range from a high school diploma to advanced degrees and certifications. Below you will find a list of our sites as well as our partner sites providing EHS, HS and GSRP services. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Ericka Taylor at (989) 399-7423 or by email at [etaylor@sisd.cc](mailto:etaylor@sisd.cc). Please, join our team in providing much needed services to the children and families within Saginaw County!

### Early Head Start/Head Start Locations

- Adams Avenue
- Arrowwood Elementary
- Birch Run (North Elementary)
- Birch Run Annex
- Brucker
- Brunkow
- Building Blocks Child Care & Preschool Center
- Chesaning
- Claytor
- Hemmeter
- Jerome
- Kinder Kare Center
- Merrill
- Murphy Farm
- Saginaw Career Complex
- St. Peter & Paul
- Valley

### Great Start to Readiness Program Locations

- Birch Run Area Preschool
- Bridgeport-Spaulding Preschool
- Building Blocks Childcare & Preschool Center
- Carrollton Early Childhood Center
- Chesaning Union Schools Latchkey and Preschool
- EduPlay Discovery Center
- Francis Reh Public School Academy
- Hemlock Child Development Programs
- Merrill Community Child Development Center
- Michigan Child Care Centers, Inc.
- Roaring Lions Learning Center
- Saginaw Preparatory Academy
- Saginaw Public Schools
  - Arthur Eddy Academy
  - Henry Doerr Early Childhood
  - Herig PreK & B/ATB
  - Kempton PreK & B/ATB
  - Jessie Loomis Preschool
  - Merrill Park PreK
  - Rouse PreK
  - Stone Preschool
  - Zilwaukee Prek & B/ATB
- St Charles Children's Center
- Wee Care Christian Children's Center

<sup>4</sup>Head Start Program Information report (2019-2020); Kids Count Data Book (Michigan, 2021); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (2020); Great Start Readiness Program State Evaluation Annual Report (2019-2020).

**ATTENTION: PARENTS OF 4 YEAR OLDS!!**

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- Health Insurance Card
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GRADES 6-12



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**Saginaw Intermediate School District (ISD)** is an educational service agency that provides effective and innovative leadership, services, resources, and programs throughout Saginaw County school districts since 1962. Saginaw ISD's **Early Childhood Services** department offers an array of support for children and families, including home visitation, preschool programs, and community resources.



**Scan the QR code** to learn more about Saginaw ISD's Early Childhood programs and family services. You may also contact Executive Director Dr. Ericka Taylor at [etaylor@sisd.cc](mailto:etaylor@sisd.cc).



# SAGINAW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

3933 Barnard Road, Saginaw, MI 48603  
(989) 399-7473 | [www.sisd.cc](http://www.sisd.cc)





**About Saginaw ISD HE/EHS**

Established in 1965, Head Start promotes school readiness for children, ages three to five, in low-income families by offering educational, nutritional, health, social and other services.

Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families.

Early Head Start, launched in 1995, provides support to low-income infants, toddlers,

pregnant women and their families.

EHS programs enhance children’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; support parents’ efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Together Head Start and Early Head Start have served tens of millions of children and their families.

At Saginaw ISD Head Start our attentive staff is available Monday through Friday to answer all your questions and make every effort to ensure you are 100 percent satisfied.

Saginaw ISD Head Start  
Claytor Administrative Building  
3200 Perkins Street  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
Phone 989.752.2193  
Fax 989.921.7146

**Office Hours**  
Monday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Tuesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Wednesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Thursday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Saturday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Sunday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

For additional information concerning Saginaw ISD Head Start visit: [www.saginawheadstart.org](http://www.saginawheadstart.org)

Source: [www.saginawheadstart.org](http://www.saginawheadstart.org)



Sabrina Beeman-Jackson

Saginaw ISD Head Start/Early Head Start Program Director

**“Head Start graduates are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to need special education, repeat a grade, or commit crimes in adolescence.”**

**Joe Baca, former Dem. California Congressman**

**“Our mission is to provide high quality services, developing school readiness and family empowerment for prenatal to age five children and families by working in partnership with parents and the community.”**  
**-Saginaw ISD HE/EHS**

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Saginaw County Free Pre-School Partnership

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**MWC**  
MICHIGAN WOMEN'S  
COMMISSION



The MI Tri-Share Child Care Program (Tri-Share) is an innovative approach to increasing access to high-quality, affordable child care for working families, with the cost of child care shared by an employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan.

**Current Partners**

- Au Gres-Sims Schools
- Bay Arenac ISD
- Children's Discovery Academy
- Gratiot Isabella RESD
- Hemlock SemiConductor
- Ready, Set, Grow
- Saginaw ISD Head Start
- Vantage Plastics

**Current Childcare Providers**

- ABC Day Care
- Best Friend Preschool, LLC
- Bright Beginnings
- Children's Discovery Academy at Carrie Knause
- Christ the King - Little Knights Preschool
- Grace Christian School
- Janas Full House
- Jolene Adams
- Kinder Kare
- Lil' Sprouts
- Little Explorers Learning Center
- Little Saints
- Play, Learn, Grow (Lil' Sprouts)
- Ready Set Grow
- Swan Valley Learning Center
- The Little Red Wagon Daycare, LLC
- Trinity Lutheran Church/School
- W.R. Bush Day Care

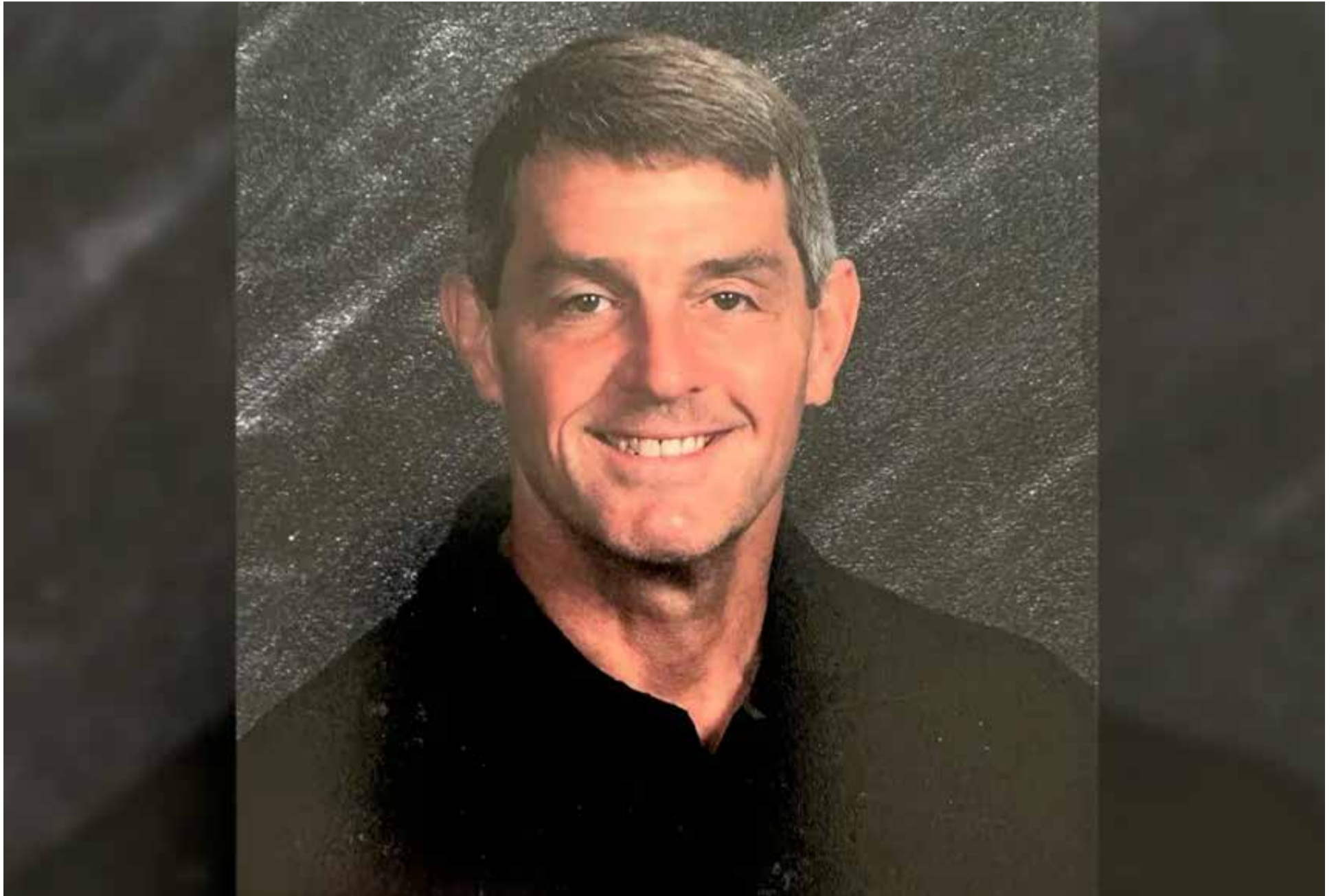
**SIGNING UP AS AN EMPLOYER:**

Saginaw ISD is one of several hubs. If you are interested in signing up as an employer, please contact Dr. Ericka Taylor at [etaylor@sisd.cc](mailto:etaylor@sisd.cc).



## ≡ + SPORTS ≡

# Saginaw Township Community Schools welcomes new athletic director



JOHN MANSFIELD

Saginaw Township Community Schools announced John Mansfield as the new district Athletic Director/Heritage High School Assistant Principal. He replaces Kent Kraatz, who moves into a full-time Assistant Principal position at Heritage High School.

John earned a Bachelor of Arts from Saginaw Valley State University with a major in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Since graduating in May 2002, John has been employed as a K-12 health and physical education teacher in

the Hemlock Public Schools. In 2012, he obtained his Masters of Education in the Principalship (K-12) from SVSU. He holds a current Michigan Teaching Certificate and Michigan Administrative Certificate.

He has coached in a variety of capacities, mostly in the areas of football and wrestling, both at the varsity head coaching and numerous sub-varsity and junior-high levels. His coaching career spans districts such as Norwalk (Ohio), Saginaw Public School District, Hemlock, and Saginaw Township (current Heritage JV Foot-

ball Head Coach).

John and his family are long-time Saginaw Township residents and both sons graduated from Heritage High School.

The Saginaw Township Community Schools is comprised of 8 schools including alternative and advanced programs. The mission is to educate, guide and challenge all students to develop lifelong learning skills necessary to successfully contribute and compete in a rapidly changing global society.

## + SPORTS



GRAND RAPIDS GOLD

## Grand Rapids Gold to host G League tryouts

By HASANI ALI

Do you have an aspiration to make it closer to the NBA? Well, you have two weeks to get prepared for an opportunity of a lifetime.

With the rise of different leagues, many players are finding alternate routes in order to reach their NBA dreams without playing in college.

The Grand Rapids Gold, the official NBA G League affiliate of the Denver Nuggets, will host open tryouts ahead of the 2023-24 NBA G League season.

Notable players such as Isaiah Thomas, Mario Chalmers and Lance Stephenson have developed their talent with the G League team.

The tryouts will be held on Saturday,

September 16 at MSA Woodland, located at 2100 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49508.

Registration begins at 8 a.m., EST. Open tryouts are from 9 a.m. to noon. Pre-registration is \$150 and \$200 for walk ups.

Members of the Nuggets coaching and personnel staff will be present to structure the tryout and evaluate each player.

According to the Grand Rapids Gold website, local player tryouts are a unique feature in the NBA G League. Players participate for an invitation to the Grand Rapids Gold's training camp in October. Up to four players are invited.

Want to know how difficult it is trying to stand out during a G League tryout? Sports Illustrated reporter Jarrell Harris tried out for the Long Island Nets back in

2021.

The reporter's closest experience with playing collegiate sports is winning back-to-back championships in the intramural league at Sienna College.

Harris went through four quick drills where he had very little time to make an impression on the coaches.

In fact, the first drill was a complete disaster for Harris. In a defensive drill, Harris was on the offense side of the drill and his attempted pass across the court ended up ricocheting off the basket.

One of the coaches responded, "if you don't know how to conduct the drill, then step aside and watch from the sidelines."

Though the 75 players were divided into four groups, Harris didn't even get a chance to participate in the shooting drills, in which he insisted that he would have excelled at.

Harris rarely received minutes by the time it came to scrimmaging, but he did have the honor to play with former Div. I leading scorer Antoine Mason, son of NBA All-Star Anthony Mason.

It was evident that Harris was going to get cut.

As the scrimmaging continued, certain players were asked to stay for a private scrimmage. If a player was not invited, then they were asked to leave the gym.

As Harris was a sports reporter and just wanted the experience of the tryout, it was all a light-hearted situation when he was cut from the team.

Players who wish to attend must meet all NBA G League player requirements and complete all steps of the registration process prior to arriving at their tryout. All completed forms must be received by the Gold by September 16. Walk-ups will be accepted.

The Grand Rapids Gold dance team concluded their tryouts last month. The two-day event has dozens of participants, but no official names have been announced to the final roster since the tryout.

# City championship wrestling host inaugural survival of the fittest in Wyandotte

By HASANI ALI

“The Alpha” Chris Moore made a decision 10 years ago that he was going to follow his dreams in becoming a professional wrestler.

When he looked at the members of his family, he noticed that his lineage was nothing but a trail of broken dreams. Moore was determined to live his dream out loud.

“There were so many people in my family that didn’t go out and pursue their dreams,” he said. “I’m not going to put my dream on that broken list. This is what I want to do and I’m doing it.

Moore, now 31, decided to enroll into House of Truth wrestling school, located at 25543 Van Dyke Ave., Center Line, Mich. 48015.

He received a lot of pushback from his family and friends as he was expected to go to college after graduating from high school.

“Oh, my family and friends were on my head about not going to college,” Moore said. “People were telling me that I needed to prepare to get a real job and that wrestling is for kids. I heard it all. But it wasn’t going to stop me from doing what I wanted to do. It was a dream that I had as a child and nobody is going to take that away from me.”

He participated in an eight-man battle royal match for the City Championship Wrestling heavyweight title in which he had to survive a pre-qualifying match prior to entering the battle royal.

Moore was eliminated midway through the match, but did some damage in the ring prior to his exit.

Down to two men, Freedom Ramsey was catching momentum fast and was on his way to capturing gold. Andre Kabashi, the Leader of the New Albania, was quite frantic as his two henchmen were eliminated from the match.

Ramsey was seconds away from becoming the new CCW heavyweight champion when Trevor Straud interfered in the



COURTESY PHOTO

match to ensure that Ramsey was going to win the match as he seemed to be helping out a friend.

That intention turned sour quickly as Straud betrayed Ramsey with a belly-to-belly suplex.

Kabashi nailed his finisher on Ramsey and secured the three count. Straud apparently looked like a member of the New Albania as the group rushed to the ring to celebrate with Kabashi.

Commentator Bubba McKenzie was thoroughly impressed with the show and gave him the push to call the play-by-play with enthusiasm.

“This is professional wrestling with

premier competition,” he said. “Our athletes are dedicated to this company and we’re here to make a quality product. It was an honor calling this event and it was such a quality production.”

Manager Paul Jones is aware that CCW is a new company, but has an idea of how the organization can compete with the local competition around the area.

“What makes our show unique is that we’re a family-friendly company,” he said. “We’re quite versatile as to where we can do our shows. From the banquet halls to the high schools, we can take our production anywhere and we’ll be able to draw a good turnout whenever we put on a show.”

## + SPORTS



ROBERT SIMMS

# Simms, amongst others, receives 2023 NAACP Young Professional Award

By HASANI ALI

The Saginaw Chapter of the NAACP recognizes all of the young professionals in the community due to their stellar performance in their respected fields.

This year, it was given to an athlete. Not just any athlete, but the current WBC United States champion of the heavy-weight division.

Simms, 39, made a humbling post on Facebook after finding out that he was a recipient of the award.

“I am so appreciative being a part of this great group of award recipients,” he said. “Thank you to everyone that believed in me.”

Simms (12-3-1) is currently working on making another big splash in the boxing world after defeating McKenzie Morrison (20-0, 18 knockouts) in a major upset for the WBC United State title last October.

Morrison is the son of the late legend, Tommy Morrison.

There were negotiations for Simms to return to the ring back in the spring, but

Simms was plagued with an ankle injury.

He’s looking to make his official return to competition in the winter months.

His head trainer, Jesse Addison, commented that Simms has a work ethic like no other, especially since Simms entered the fight game late in life and could not waste any time getting into the action.

“Nobody works as hard as Rob,” he said. “He does everything that you ask him to do, then some. He may be an undersized heavyweight, but I’ve seen him compete with the best of them.”

Simms turned pro in 2015 after winning the Michigan Golden Gloves state tournament and after 15 professional bouts, he has never been knocked out.

“It seems like I’ve only fought against knockout artists, but I’ve never been knocked out,” Simms said during an interview before fighting Morrison. “I’m more of a defensive boxer, a pure boxer. People come at me slugging thinking that I am an easy target. I use that against most of my opponents and they get frustrated. Once they are frustrated, I begin to pick them

apart, round after round and there’s nothing they can do about it.”

His training partner and friend Jermaine Franklin loves working with Rob during training camp as he gets prepared for his fights.

“Big bro really brings it when we’re in training camp,” he said. “We push each other to our limits and I know that I have to bring my A-game whenever we get in the ring together.”

Simms isn’t sure who his next opponent is going to be, but said that he’s ready to take on anyone that challenges him.

“If it came down to it, I would even fight Jake Paul if the terms were right,” he said jokingly. “I’m just ready to show that I belong amongst the greats. I’ve put some much work into this craft, missing so much time with my family and it’s time that I make a name for myself so that I can make it all worth it.”

Simms is currently sitting as the no.11 top heavyweight in the United States. His dream fight is to take on Oscar Rivas for the WBC Bridgerweight title.



# Tucker ready to build MSU into a championship Caliber

By HASANI ALI

MSU head coach Mel Tucker knew exactly what he was getting into when he accepted the job offer.

He was heavily advised not to take the position in East Lansing, but Tucker could not stay away from wanting to be a part of the Big Ten action.

“We came in the door playing catch up,” Tucker reiterated. “When this opportunity came up, I had several people tell me, ‘Do not take that job. You go into the conference eighth or ninth walking in the door. You have no facilities.’”

According to Sports Illustrated, leading up to the 2023 season, Michigan State head coach Mel Tucker’s willingness to talk about what the Spartan program lacked when he arrived in February 2020 has been notable.

“I know what the roster looked like when I walked in the door,” Tucker said. “After the 2020 season...we didn’t have a player drafted, and that was the first time in, I think, 80 years that Michigan State didn’t have a player drafted. That’s at any position, so that just goes to show you the state of depth and talent in the program.”

Tucker noted Mark Dantonio, former head coach of the program, insisted that Michigan State had fallen behind with outdated football facilities. Because of the outdated facilities, it has made a negative impact on recruiting.

After securing a commitment from the university to build a new football building, Tucker wasted no time improving the Spartans’ roster.

Heading into his fourth season at the helm in East Lansing, Tucker is starting to see the depth and talent that he envisioned back in 2020.

“We have competition at every single position, and no doubt the most talent that we’ve had top to bottom on our roster,” Tucker said. “We needed more quality depth on our roster and we addressed this out of season.”



MEL TUCKER

Michigan State’s competitive nature under Tucker has been rocky over the last three seasons. The Spartans stumbled onto a 5-7 record in 2020. A breakout 11-2 campaign ensued in 2021, just for the Spartans to fall back to 5-7 last season due to injuries and losing star running back Kenneth Walker III.

“Quality depth is important,” Tucker said. “We didn’t have that at enough positions a year ago, so when we got guys banged up we just weren’t able to answer the bell at a winning level. We’ve addressed the depth through recruiting and player development.”

While Michigan State just opened fall practice days ago, Tucker noted that the size and depth that the Spartans have added is noticeable.

“Much improved,” Tucker said. “I was just talking to one of my good friends who’s an NFL personnel guy and that’s the first thing he mentioned to me. He’s come here every year, even before I got here, and he

could tell that we’ve added some players, especially on the defensive line up front.”

Now, Michigan State is drawing closer to the completion of the new Tom Izzo Football Building, which is expected to help boost recruiting and talent acquisition even more.

“It means a lot for our team, it means a lot for players and it means a lot for our program,” Tucker said. “A locker room like that, that shows a commitment to excellence and pouring into our players and caring about them.”

Tucker has a clear understanding of where his team needs to be in order to get back in the championship picture.

“When you’re winning the games you’re supposed to win, and you’re competing and winning games with the best teams in the conference, and you can do that on a consistent basis,” Tucker said. “At that point, you can say that the program is consistently at this level.”



## PICS OF THE WEEK

Unity in the Community kickball tournament took place on Saturday, August 19, at Hoyt Park.





**We** empower.

*Brittany Saunders is ready to pay it forward. The Chicago native enrolled at SVSU with ambitions to pursue a teaching career. Brittany was encouraged and invigorated by other passionate educators who worked closely with her to ensure she would accomplish her goals. And she is. Even before she was set to graduate, Brittany could boast a résumé with a paid internship in a school district along with K-12 classroom experience. **Now she can't wait to begin a professional career, inspiring students with the same kind of one-on-one attention she received from her professors at SVSU.***



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