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Celebrating Diversity, Empowering Communities



PICS OF THE WEEK
Saginaw's 2024 Holidays in the Heart of the City

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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POLITICS



POST BY SAGINAW COUNTY COMMISSIONER SPARKS OUTCRY

COMMUNITY, PG 30

Saginaw ALPACT forum addresses crime and economic development



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEW BIRTH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CATHEDRAL CHURCH

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — Saginaw Mayor Brenda Moore, fresh off her re-election, is emphasizing her commitment to reducing gun violence and fostering unity in the community. At the November 21 meeting of Advocates and Leaders for

Police and Community Trust (ALPACT), Moore called for a collaborative approach to tackle the city's rising crime rates.

"This is going to take a collective effort," Moore told attendees at the forum. "I want to know what the community wants to do, and I'm

willing to do everything in my power to help it move forward and stay focused."

The ALPACT forum, held in Saginaw, brought together local leaders, law enforce-

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Saginaw LLEAD brings young recruits to the table

LATINO BANNER, PG 2



Gospel Lady's holiday gift lists

COMMUNITY, PG 14



'Toolkit' hammers home Health Fair message

HEALTH, PG 28

FEATURED STORY

Hidden Harvest 'feeds' nearly 200 sites, large and small

COMMUNITY, PG 23



From cover, ALPACT



ment, and residents to discuss strategies for addressing crime. Mayor Moore stressed that solving the problem requires active participation from all corners of the community.

“Whatever we do—whether it’s something simple or something hard—I want the community to step up,” Moore said. “This isn’t just my problem; it’s everybody’s problem.”

During her remarks, Moore announced plans for a series of initiatives designed to curb violence and raise awareness throughout Saginaw. She urged residents to attend these events and participate in the dialogue.

“When we host these types of events, I’m encouraging citizens to show up,” she said. “Come to me with problems, but also come with solutions. We’re trying, and

we need your help.”

The forum was supported by a Department of Justice grant and is the first in a series of five events scheduled over the next nine months. Organizers aim to strengthen ties between the community and law enforcement.

Nicole Liggins, CEO of Guided Grace Family and Youth Services and spokesperson for the Saginaw County ALPACT forum, underscored the importance of collaboration.

“Our goal is to build a stronger relationship between the community and law enforcement,” Liggins said. “Events like this give the community a voice and foster understanding.”

Throughout the evening, speakers addressed topics ranging from the economic impact of crime to education and health. Following the presentations, attendees broke into smaller groups to identify key issues and brainstorm solutions.

“This is about creating a better Saginaw for all of us,” Liggins said. “As a lifelong resident, I know that reducing crime and boosting morale will help our entire community thrive.”

Liggins, who works closely with local youth, delivered a powerful message to those contemplating criminal activity.

“Think about the consequences,” she said. “The cost of crime

isn’t worth it. We want young people to understand that there are alternative ways to achieve their goals, and we’re here to provide those opportunities.”

The next ALPACT event is the 3-on-3 Unity Ball Classic, set for

February at the Dow Event Center. The basketball games will bring together local youth and law enforcement officers in an effort to foster relationships and promote unity.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEW BIRTH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CATHEDRAL CHURCH

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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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**From The Michigan Banner, we greet the new season,
A time for togetherness, joy, and good reason.
May love and peace fill every manner,
Happy holidays... from The Michigan Banner!**

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MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 6 • NUMBER 23



Flint Youth Film Festival invites young filmmakers to share their stories

BY MB STAFF

FLINT — The Flint Youth Film Festival, now celebrating its 10th anniversary, is calling on aspiring filmmakers between the ages of 13 and 25 to submit their work and showcase their storytelling talents. Submissions for the 2025 festival are now open and will be accepted until the March 10, 2025, deadline. The highly anticipated festival events will take place from July 17-20, 2025.

The festival's mission is to introduce young people to the art of filmmaking, offering them a platform to develop their creative voices, share their work, and connect with professional filmmakers and screenwriters. By engaging participants in the film industry, the program not only helps young creators express their creativity but also equips them with valuable communication skills and enriches the arts community as a whole.

Participants are encouraged to explore the stories of their communities, highlight key issues, and celebrate local events through the lens of filmmaking. In doing so, they'll gain access to opportunities such as professional feedback, mentorship from media experts, and connections with peers who share their passion for the craft.

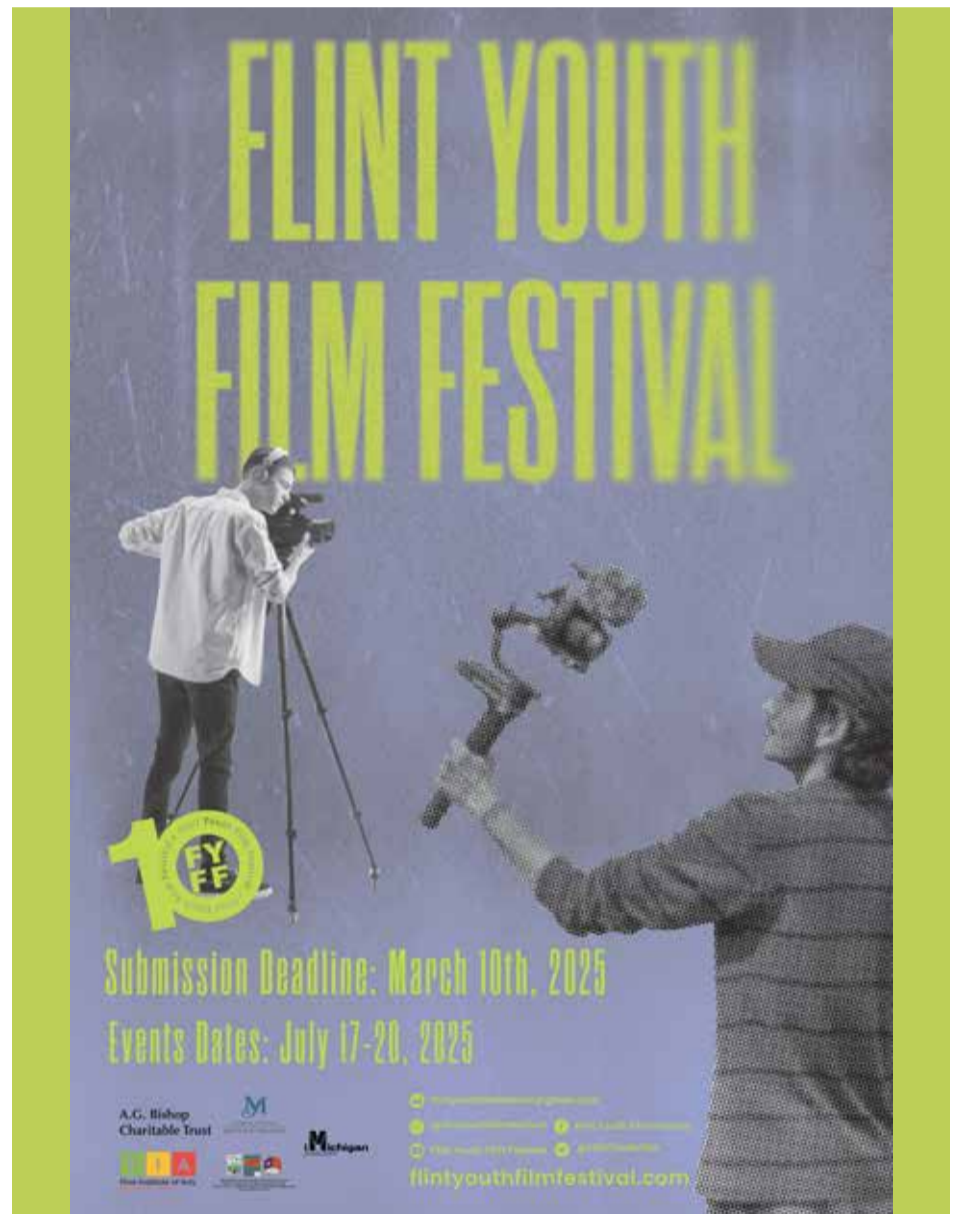
What sets the Flint Youth Film Festival apart

- Professional feedback:** Films are reviewed by a panel of national and international media professionals, including directors, producers, editors, and screenwriters. Judges provide detailed feedback, helping participants refine their skills.
- Awards and recognition:** The festival offers cash prizes for top honors, including the prestigious Heart Award, Industry Award, and Audience Choice Award.
- Career and educational opportunities:** Many past participants have gone on to achieve remarkable success, including winning prizes at other film festivals, earning student Emmy awards, and gaining admission to renowned film programs at NYU and the Maryland Institute College of Art. Others have pursued local media careers or furthered their education close to home.
- Networking and skill-building:** Entrants can expect to interact with community leaders, media professionals, and fellow filmmakers to enhance their production quality and storytelling abilities.

How to enter

The Flint Youth Film Festival accepts submissions through FilmFreeway, an accessible platform for filmmakers. To qualify, participants must:

- Be between the ages of 13 and 25.
- Reside in Flint, Genesee County, Michigan, or anywhere in the United



COURTESY PHOTO

- States.
- Submit films created within the last two years.

Festival organizers are particularly proud of the mentorship and resources provided to young filmmakers. In addition to cash prizes and professional development opportunities, the festival creates an inclusive space for young voices to be heard, inspiring future filmmakers to make an

impact in their communities and beyond.

For more information, visit flintyouthfilmfestival.com or follow the Flint Youth Film Festival on social media. Whether you're a budding director, editor, or screenwriter, the Flint Youth Film Festival is your chance to bring your story to life and take the first step in your filmmaking journey.

MICHIGAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM IS BACK

Save the Date

The Michigan Youth Leadership Forum
for young leaders with disabilities
June 22-26, 2025
Michigan State University



**Michigan Disability
Rights Coalition**



10 Awesome Christmas Gifts you can make for your parents (without going broke!)

BY MB STAFF

Hey, we get it—finding the perfect gift for your parents can feel like a big deal, especially when you're working with a tight budget. But guess what? You don't need to spend a ton of money to give them something they'll love. All it takes is a little creativity and effort to make their holiday extra special. Check out these 10 ideas for gifts that are thoughtful, fun, and totally affordable:

1. Make a coupon book

Parents love help around the house, so why not give them a booklet of "coupons" for things like doing the dishes, vacuuming, or even a free car wash? You can also get creative with "movie night with me" or "tech help" coupons—they'll love it!

2. Frame a family photo

Dig out a favorite family picture and pop it into a cute, inexpensive frame. Whether it's a recent photo or one from when you were little, it's a gift that'll warm their hearts.

3. Write a letter

Sometimes, the best gifts don't cost a thing. Write your parents a heartfelt letter telling them how much they mean to you. Add some doodles, fancy handwriting, or even a little poem if you're feeling extra creative.

4. Create a personalized ornament

Grab a plain ornament and decorate it with paint, glitter, or markers. You can add your family name, the year, or something silly that only your family would understand.

5. Fill a memory jar

Take a jar and fill it with little notes about your favorite memories, reasons why you love your parents, or fun things to do together. It's like a box of happiness they can pull from whenever they want.

6. Bake some treats

Whip up some cookies, brownies, or even a hot cocoa mix. Wrap it up in a cute tin or jar, and boom—you've got a gift that's sweet in every way.

7. Get crafty

If you're into art or DIY projects, use your

talents to make something cool. Whether it's a drawing, a painting, or a handmade bracelet, your parents will treasure anything you put effort into.

8. Plan a parent-kid hangout

Give your parents the gift of your time. Plan a special movie night, cook a meal together, or just hang out doing something they love. Sometimes, the best gift is just being together.

9. Gift a plant

Plants are awesome and super easy to find on a budget. Get a small succulent or house-

plant, and make a little tag with a cute message like, "Thanks for helping me grow."

10. Make a playlist

Music is a great way to share memories. Put together a playlist of songs that remind you of your parents or ones you know they love. It's simple, but it'll mean a lot.

There you go—10 easy ways to show your parents you care without emptying your wallet. Remember, it's not about how much you spend; it's about the thought and effort you put in. You've got this—now go make something awesome!





Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

Seen on the Scene:

Krazy Juan Mexican Steak House located at 110 Uptown Dr, Bay City, MI, held their Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Thursday, Nov. 21.



Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan marks 50 years of service



HISPANIC/LATINO COMMISSION OF MICHIGAN

BY MB STAFF

LANSING — The Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan is approaching a historic milestone: 50 years of dedicated service to Michigan’s Hispanic and Latino communities. Established on July 15, 1975, through Public Act 164, the commission has been instrumental in addressing the needs of one of the state’s most dynamic and growing populations.

Originally founded as the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs, the organization was created to improve access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for

Spanish-speaking residents. In 2010, its name was changed to better reflect the diversity of the populations it serves.

Over the past five decades, the commission has become a trusted advocate and resource, advising policymakers and fostering collaboration with government agencies, community organizations, and local leaders. Its efforts have focused on critical issues such as equitable education, workforce development, immigration policy, and cultural preservation.

The commission’s impact is evident in the progress made in addressing challenges faced by Michigan’s Hispanic and Latino communities. By providing guidance on policy decisions

and amplifying the voices of those it represents, the organization has played a vital role in fostering equity and inclusion across the state.

As it reflects on its accomplishments, the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan continues to focus on its core mission of advocacy and empowerment. With a commitment to addressing current and future challenges, the commission remains a vital force for positive change and a cornerstone of support for Michigan’s Hispanic and Latino residents.

For more information about the commission’s history and ongoing initiatives, visit <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/commissions/hlcom>.

THE LATINO BANNER IS PROUDLY SPONSORED BY GREAT LAKES BAY HEALTH CENTERS

Saginaw LLEAD brings young recruits to the table

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — Professional social workers and longtime activists know all about gathering to exchange ideas, and leaders of Saginaw LLEAD are making sure young people share in the experience.



GABRIELLA OLIVAREZ

"I had never been to a conference," said SVSU student Julia Sausedo, after she joined classmate Gabriella Olivarez to take part in the annual meeting of the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute in Chicago, with sponsorship from Latino Leaders for the Enhancement of Advocacy and Development.



JULIA SAUSEDO

Julia noted, "There were leaders there from all over the world, and it was an honor to be

exposed to their knowledge and experience."

The gathering drew 5,000 students, educators and young professionals from 35 states.

Olivarez and Sausedo both started at Delta College before they transferred to Saginaw Valley State. They took part in Delta's Society of Hispanic Leaders student group under advisor Monica Hernandez, and LLEAD's Angelo Kapp visited to bring forth the opportunity.



ANGELO KAPP

"In middle school and high school, I often felt alone," notes Gabriella, as a Latino involved in student activities, "and so when you learn that there is something available that is for Hispanics, it gets your attention quickly."

Kapp is a Northwood University business major who expressed similar sentiments, saying he often has found himself "as the only one who looks like me." His new enterprise, "Nuestra Cultura Multimedia Productions," aims to promote "building a future for our children."

Olivarez attended Carrollton High School on Saginaw's city border, and Sausedo is a product of Bangor John Glenn High in western Bay County, which happens to be the alma mater of Alberto Flores, state LLEAD president. Both students started

at Delta College and transferred to Saginaw Valley State, a most affordable local start to higher education.

It wasn't a LLEAD giveaway. Sausedo and Olivarez faced a requirement to earn their way to four days at the Sheraton Chicago, through extracurricular time and effort devoted to campus activities. Part of this involved listening to their student peers on general concerns such as education, careers and the overall future, along with Latino-oriented specifics like DACA and immigration, and politics.

Workshops explored those topics and others, from first-generation success and enhancing your roots to mental health and community organizing.

A conference promo stated: "Most of the participants are, or will become, the most influential Hispanic leaders of their generation," adding that they "will help govern our cities, schools, states, and indeed, a nation that will become over 30 percent Hispanic

during our lifetimes."

Neither Sausedo nor Olivarez describe themselves as especially outgoing or outspoken, so they spent most of their time listening. Julia aims for a career in social work, while Gabriella will be a citizen activist while engaged in rehabilitative medicine as an occupational therapist.

Saginaw LLEAD meets on the second monthly Thursday at 6 p.m. at the downtown Delta College campus, and the next session is Dec. 12. There is no membership fee and participants may volunteer in their chosen areas of interest.

A fund-raiser is Dec. 14 at T&T Authentic Mexican, 1302 Court, with proceeds of \$5 for every taco dinner donated to LLEAD to help send students to the 2025 conference.

Sausedo learned, "It's important to hear other people's stories," while Olivarez looks forward "to making a place at the table, instead of in the back of the room."



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Celebrating Las Posadas: A cherished tradition of faith, community, and culture



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BY MB STAFF

Many people have never heard of Las Posadas, the beloved tradition that brings Hispanic communities together for a nine-day celebration leading up to Christmas. Rooted in Latin American Catholic customs, Las Posadas reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem, culminating in the joy of the Nativity. For those who participate, it is far more than a festive gathering; it is a deeply spiritual and cultural experience that highlights the values of faith, hospitality, and togetherness.

From December 16 to December 24, families and neighborhoods come together for nightly processions, prayer, music, and festivities. The term "posadas," meaning "inns" or "lodging" in Spanish, reflects the central theme of the event: the Holy

Family's quest for refuge.

Each evening, participants take on the roles of Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, and other figures central to the Nativity story. The procession, often led by children dressed in costume, moves from house to house, symbolizing the Holy Family's journey. At each stop, the group sings traditional songs requesting shelter, while the homeowners—acting as innkeepers—respond with verses denying entry.

After several stops, the procession reaches a designated home or church where they are finally welcomed. This marks the beginning of a celebration, including prayers, carols, and sometimes a small reenactment of the Nativity scene.

Las Posadas is not just a spiritual observance; it is also a vibrant cultural celebration. Following the prayers, the evening transforms into a lively gather-

ing. Families and friends share traditional foods such as tamales, pozole, buñuelos, and champurrado. Children eagerly anticipate breaking piñatas filled with candy, a joyful highlight of the event.

Although Las Posadas originated in Spain and was brought to Latin America by Spanish missionaries, it has become a cherished tradition in Mexico and other countries, including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. In the United States, many Hispanic communities have adapted and preserved the custom, often incorporating local influences while maintaining its spiritual essence.

Cities with significant Hispanic populations, such as Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Chicago, host public Posadas events, drawing large crowds to celebrate and learn about this meaningful tradition. Churches, commu-

nity centers, and schools often play a central role in organizing these gatherings, ensuring that the tradition continues for future generations.

At its heart, Las Posadas is a reminder of the values of compassion, faith, and hospitality. The story of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter resonates universally, inspiring participants and onlookers alike to reflect on themes of kindness and community.

Whether celebrated in bustling cities or quiet rural towns, Las Posadas serves as a bridge between faith and culture, uniting people through shared traditions and the enduring message of the Christmas season. As the festivities unfold this December, communities across the globe will come together to honor this time-honored tradition, welcoming all to join in its joy and spirit of togetherness.

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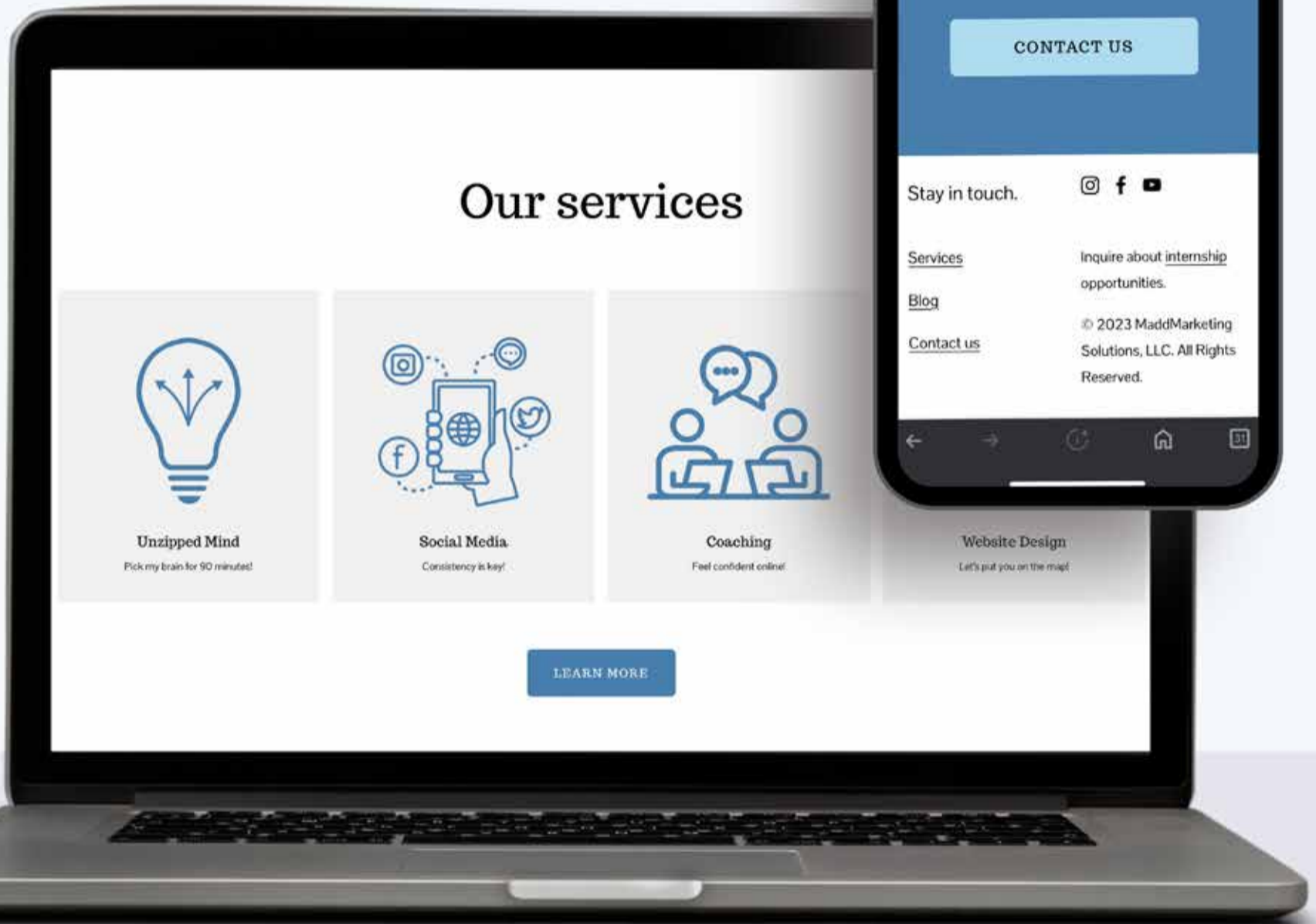
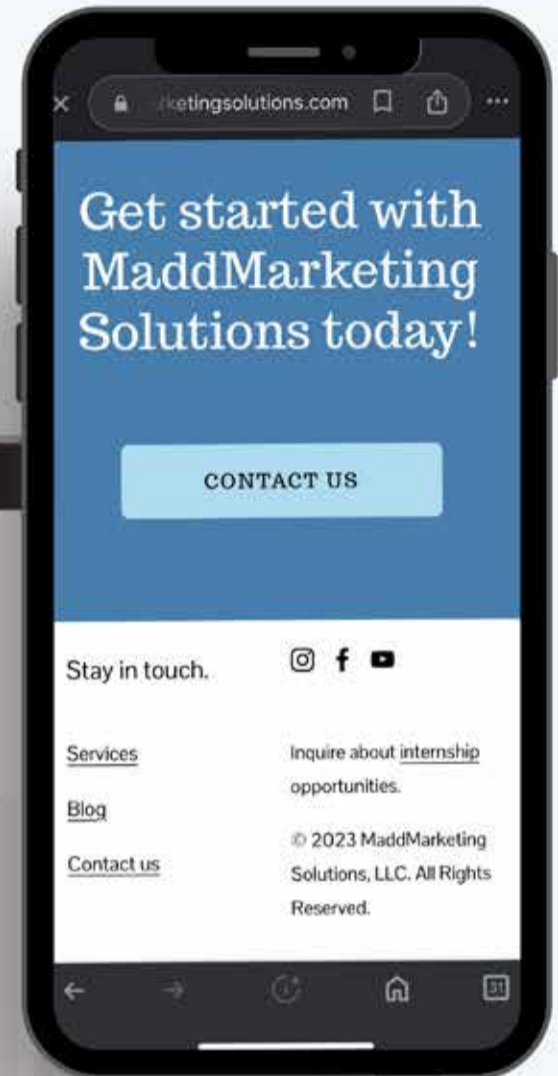
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COMMUNITY

Regional organizations unite to strengthen support for abuse and assault victims

SAGINAW – Michigan Forensic Examiners (MFE), CAN Council, and the Sexual Assault Center of Child & Family Services of Saginaw have formed a partnership to expand trauma-informed forensic care and advocacy for victims of abuse and assault throughout the Great Lakes Bay and Thumb regions. This collaboration is designed to ensure that victims have access to immediate, compassionate support and expert care.

Under the new agreement, MFE will serve as the exclusive provider of pediatric forensic medical examinations for CAN Council in Huron and Saginaw counties. CAN Council will offer financial backing to sustain MFE's 24/7 on-call Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) coverage, with MFE's medical director overseeing case reviews, audits, and training to maintain the highest standards of care.

In addition, MFE has inte-

grated the forensic nursing program previously operated by the Sexual Assault Center. This move will expand MFE's team of specialized nurses and increase access to multiple examination sites, significantly reducing wait times for victims. The Sexual Assault Center will continue to provide expert advocacy services and follow-up care, ensuring survivors have support throughout their recovery journey.

Leaders Celebrate Progress

"We are thrilled to partner with CAN Council and the Sexual Assault Center in a united effort to ensure that all victims of abuse and assault receive immediate, expert care," said Lindsey Bulgrien, Executive Director of Michigan Forensic Examiners. "Our community deserves a comprehensive support system, and by combining resources we can expand our services and reach to ensure no one falls through the cracks."

Caitlin Stone-Webber, CAC Program Director at CAN Council, emphasized the importance of the collaboration. "Partnering with MFE marks a significant advancement in the services we can offer our communities, specifically the children we serve," she said. "With MFE's dedicated 24/7 on-call nurse services for both acute and non-acute sexual assault exams, families can access specialized, compassionate medical care precisely when they need it most. Together, we are reinforcing a robust, trauma-informed safety net that will offer support and security for vulnerable children and families across our region. This collaboration empowers us to meet urgent needs more comprehensively and

aligns with our commitment to deliver exceptional care in every situation."

The Sexual Assault Center's Crisis Services Coordinator, Allison Dakos, shared her perspective on the partnership's impact. "Partnering with MFE has enabled both agencies to expand our impact in the community," she said. "Working with a mobile SANE team means we can provide medical, forensic, and emotional care to victims of sexual assault at a wider variety of locations. We are now able to work with victims not only at Saginaw County Hospitals, but also at multiple Community-Based Exam Locations. All of this is progress that has long been needed in the Great Lakes Bay Region, and it has been a very exciting time to be a part of this incredible movement."

Strengthening Support Systems

Each organization will maintain its core focus while working together to create a stronger network for victims. MFE will continue to provide expert forensic exams, CAN Council will prioritize child advocacy and prevention, and the Sexual Assault Center will deliver counseling and emotional support for survivors and their families.

The partnership demonstrates how collaboration among community organizations can enhance care for survivors and foster safer, more supportive communities across the region. For more information, visit Michigan Forensic Examiners, CAN Council, or Child & Family Services of Saginaw.



(FROM LEFT) CAITLIN STONE-WEBBER AND LINDSEY BULGRIEN

COMMUNITY

Gospel Lady's HOLIDAY GIFT LISTS

When Vicki Hill agreed to suggest "gospel gifts" during the holiday season, she surprised us by starting with books, not music. And on KISS-107 Sunday mornings, she never has been someone to offer critiques of the artists, which is the reason she simply provides her song list without further elaboration.



BOOKS

✓ **Lost and Found, by Sara Jakes Roberts, 2015**

Like every girl, Sarah Jakes dreamed of a life full of love, laughter, and happy endings. But her dreams shattered at the age of 14 when she became pregnant. The daughter of Bishop T. D. Jakes, megachurch pastor and author, she found herself shunned at school and gossiped about at church.

More than a memoir, her book offers hope and encouragement to women of all ages who, like Sarah, find themselves encompassed in a life far from what they dreamed of, and shows that no matter how lost they feel, they, too, can be found.

✓ **Black Pearls: Daily Meditations, Affirmations and Inspiration, by Eric V. Copage, 2011**

This is a gift for when you do not aim to insist that someone should read an entire book. Instead, you are giving 365 messages, each offering inspiration blended with practical advice.

The recipient well may end up reading all the pages day by day, once they encounter an example. And there is no rule against sneaking ahead on the calendar.

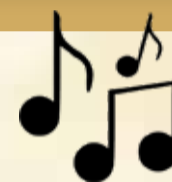
✓ **Damaged but Not Destroyed, Michael Todd, 2023**

His own words: "My eyes were fully opened, and my heart was shattered. For the first time, I saw the world, my friends, my life. ... My tears were more than proof of my pain. They were a testament of my conviction, pruning, purpose, and impending joy."

✓ **Beautifully Whole, by Kimberly Jones Pother**

✓ **Too Blessed to be Stressed, by Debora M. Coty**

MUSIC



For a musical gift, Vicki recommends:

- ✓ **Church Doors, Yolanda Adams**
- ✓ **Able, Jonathan McReynolds**
- ✓ **All Things, Kirk Franklin**
- ✓ **That's My King, Cece Winans**
- ✓ **Worthy, Anthony Brown and Group Therapy**
- ✓ **Peace Be Still, Kelontae Gavin**
- ✓ **Deliver Me, Leandia Johnson**
- ✓ **You Carried Me, Jekayln Carr**
- ✓ **Deliver Me, Leandria Johnson**
- ✓ **God Provides, Tamela Mann**



For gospel gifts with a holiday flavor, Vicki says you can't go wrong with:

- ✓ **Emmanuel, Norman Hutchins**
- ✓ **Just Jesus, Pastor Mike Jr.**
- ✓ **Joy to the World, Chicago Mass Choir**
- ✓ **It's Christmas, Bishop Leonard Scott**
- ✓ **No Christmas Without You, John P. Kee**



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COMMUNITY



PREMIER CANNABIS, 910 E GENESEE AVE, SAGINAW, MI

Anti-dispensary protests seek moratorium, not shutdown

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — Activists who aim to forestall more marijuana storefronts across the city will gather at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 4, at the old OIC, now the Success Academy.

Three blocks to the south, by way of Third Street, is the overflow parking lot for Premier Cannabis East at Third and Janes, one of the most popular among a dozen dispensaries that now dot the landscape starting in 2020, after a previous City Council voted to allow the newly legal cannabis shops.

Leaders of the County Youth Prevention Council are not seeking a rollback or shutdown, although they were opposed from the start. In search of common middle ground, they will ask for a moratorium on any new dispensaries.

They also emphasize that while they frown upon adult consumption, their awareness campaign focuses on the physical and neurological development harm to adolescents and even children who may lack awareness of why they should not imbibe. Stories are especially told of youngsters who may confuse gummies -- the main alternative to smoking -- with candy.

The most recent protests took place more than a year ago, opposing conversion of the old-time Hamilton Bakery across Gratiot from Fordney Park. This now is Premier Cannabis West, a franchise based in Vassar and Caro, two of the smaller communities that have allowed cannabis shops after the 2018 statewide referendum led to limited legalization, with municipal units given the choice on allowing stores.

Saginaw joins larger cities that are near unanimous in

opting for about \$60,000 per dispensary per year, from a 10 percent excise tax. Prosperous suburbs like Saginaw Township and exurbs such as Frankenmuth generally have said no, although one of the city's dozen, Sozo, followed plans to locate directly on the township's border at Bay and Weiss.

Regarding locations within the city limits, the former council acted cautiously in 2019 while comparable towns like Bay City sped ahead. A zoning study bars the shops from locating within 1,000 feet of a school or 500 of a hospital, but the limit is a mere 100 feet from a church because there are so many churches.

They also cannot locate within 500 feet of one another, a limit barely exceeded by the pair across from the Court Theater.

Only after this prolonged review did the prior council decide. Mayor Brenda Moore voted for

the approval and has stood behind it, along with Bill Ostash. So did Michael Balls, but since then he has expressed second thoughts. Monique Lamar Silvia has been an opponent. New to the issue are Pro-Tem Priscilla Garcia, elected to the council in 2022, and the first-time quartet from Nov. 5 -- Jacinta Seals, Eric Braddock, Heidi Wiggins and Carly Hammond.

Former Councilman Reggie Williams, from his police experience, expressed that teens cannot obtain marijuana with the same undercover ease as alcohol from certain party stores, and that prevention must begin with family and friends ceasing to supply.

The Youth Prevention Council is a continuation of the Family Youth Initiative, FYI, founded under the leadership of Faye Harrison when she was probate judge. She today is retired in Texas.

COMMUNITY

Midland's nativity exhibit celebrates 28 years of Christmas tradition



COURTESY PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND – The Christmas season is approaching, and with it comes one of Midland’s most cherished traditions: the annual Nativity Exhibit hosted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Now in its 28th year, the event continues to bring the community together to celebrate the birth of Christ through art, music, and culture.

This year’s exhibit, running from December 6 to December 8 at 1700 W. Sugnet, offers a captivating collection of over 1,000

nativity scenes from around the world. Among the highlights are over 30 nativities from Africa, 100 from Latin American countries, and 50 from Asia, each showcasing unique interpretations of the nativity story.

For many attendees, the exhibit is more than a display—it’s a chance to pause and reflect during the busy holiday season. “We invite everyone to come and experience the beauty and spirit of Christmas at the Nativity Exhibit,” said Melissa Wall, who organizes the event. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of the season.”

In addition to the nativities, the exhibit will feature live concerts on Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:00 PM, offering a musical celebration of the season. A new addition this year, the “Miniature Room,” will showcase over 100 tiny nativities, each no larger than 2 inches.

The Nativity Exhibit is free to attend and welcomes people of all backgrounds. Organizers hope to see families, friends, and community members take part in this long-standing tradition.

The event will be open to the public on Friday, Dec. 6, and Saturday, Dec. 7, from 11 a.m. to 9

p.m., and on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Whether you come to marvel at the artistry of the nativities, enjoy the live music, or simply soak in the festive atmosphere, the Midland Nativity Exhibit offers something for everyone. For more details, visit Midland Nativity Exhibit or contact Melissa Wall at (989) 615-2432.

This annual tradition continues to inspire and remind the community of the season’s deeper meaning, making it a must-see event this December.

COMMUNITY

Nominations encouraged for Michigan Lottery's Excellence in Education Awards to honor outstanding educators

LANSING – Parents, students, school staff members, and others are encouraged to nominate outstanding public-school educators for the Michigan Lottery's 2024-25 Excellence in Education awards.

All public-school employees may be nominated for the Excellence in Education awards, which recognize educators who go "above and beyond" to make a difference in the lives of children. To nominate a public school educator, go to <https://www.michiganlottery.com/excellence-in-education>.

"It is an honor to recognize the incredible work done by educators in communities across the state with the Excellence in Education awards," said Lottery Commissioner, Suzanna Shkreli. "Public educators play such an important role in the development of our children by teaching lifelong skills, being a constant and supportive presence in students' lives, and inspiring them to reach their full potential."

The Michigan Lottery established the Excellence in Education awards in 2014 to recognize outstanding public-school educators across the state during the school year.

One outstanding educator will be selected each week and will receive a \$2,000 cash prize. At the end of the school year, one of these weekly award winners will be selected to receive the Lottery's Educator of the Year award and will receive a \$10,000 cash prize.

Winners of the weekly award are featured in a news segment



COURTESY PHOTO

on the Lottery's media partner stations: WXYZ-TV in Detroit, FOX 17 in Grand Rapids, FOX 47 in Lansing, WNEM-TV in Saginaw, and WWTW-TV in Traverse City.

The winner of the 2024 Educator of the Year award was Samantha TwoCrow, the director of the Indigenous Education Program for Suttons Bay Public Schools.

Hundreds of educators were nominated during the 2023-24 school year, which was the 10th year of the Excellence in Education awards program. Thirty-four of these nominees, including TwoCrow, were selected to win a weekly award.

Previous winners of the Educator of the Year award:

2023 – Kathryn Kluzak, a kindergarten teacher with Robert L. Green Elementary in

East Lansing.

2022 – Spencer Vanderheide, a high school teacher with Kenowa Hills High School in Grand Rapids.

2021 – Janice Smith, a school social worker at Fisher Magnet Lower Academy in Detroit.

2020 – Megan Sidge, an Autism Spectrum Disorder teacher at Hickory Woods Elementary in Walled Lake.

2019 – Stewart Kieliszewski, an Earth science, biology, mechatronics, and media teacher for eighth through 12 graders at the Ugly Community Schools.

2018 – Kerri Moccio, a first-grade literacy intervention specialist at Bedford Elementary School in Dearborn Heights.

2017 – Linda Holzwarth, a social studies teacher at Portage West Middle School in Portage.

2016 – Daniel Carr, a Spanish and sports marketing teacher at Waverly High School in Lansing.

2015 – Michael Craig, a special education teacher at the Charles Drew Transition Center in

Detroit.

Excellence In Education award nominees should demonstrate the following qualities:

- Excellence – Their work consistently helps students and/or their schools or school districts advance to higher levels of academic achievement.
- Dedication – They consistently go above and beyond expectations to help students succeed.
- Inspiration – Their work inspires others around them to exceed expectations either academically or professionally.
- Leadership – They demonstrate clear leadership skills in their positions with their school or school districts.
- Effectiveness – The nominee's work has clear and positive results on the educational advancement of students within the school or school district.



School district hosts holiday shindig

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — City schools are making their annual gateway event for the holiday vacation bigger and better than ever.

"Holiday Winter Wonderland" is slated from noon to 3 p.m. on Dec. 14, which is a Saturday, at the Ricker Center, 1925 South Outer Drive.

Admission is free for games, giveaways, food and entertainment, along with information promoting the schools and the programs offered.

The district's Staff Development Center has moved to Ricker from the former South Elementary building.



COURTESY PHOTO

Lights before Christmas brings holiday cheer to Covenant Kids

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — Credit Unions Impact Saginaw and Alpha Media are teaming up to bring holiday cheer to Covenant Kids with their annual "Lights Before Christmas" events. Designed to uplift children spending the holidays in the hospital, the initiative also encourages the community to donate toys or funds to support the regional children's hospital.

From now through Christmas, the community is invited to donate new, unwrapped toys at designated drop-off locations throughout Saginaw. Participating credit unions include CO-POCO Community, Elga, Family First, Financial Plus, First Area, Frankenmuth (SVRC), Health Advantage, Jolt, Lake Michigan, Team One, United Financial, and Wildfire. Toys can also be brought to the weekly "Lights Before Christmas" events, which

take place between Nov. 27 and Dec. 18. For those who prefer to make a monetary contribution, donations can be made online at www.covenantkidsmi.com.

The "Lights Before Christmas" events, now in their fourth year, bring the community together to create a festive display for children at Covenant Health-Care. Each Wednesday evening, participants will gather in the hospital parking lot at 1000 Houghton Avenue to shine flashlights and other light-up devices toward the kids' windows while enjoying live music and holiday treats.

The 2024 schedule of events includes:

- Wednesday, Dec. 4 – Hosted by Kiss 107.1
- Wednesday, Dec. 11 – Hosted by 94.5 The Moose
- Wednesday, Dec. 18 – Hosted by WSGW 790AM



COURTESY PHOTO

Caroling begins at 5:45 p.m., with the lights display at 6 p.m. Free flashlights will be provided to the first 100 attendees each evening, courtesy of Impact Saginaw. Guests can also enjoy hot chocolate, cookies, and performances by local musical acts. First responders are encouraged to participate by flashing their emergency vehicle lights as part of the display.

Credit Unions Impact Saginaw, which includes 12 local credit unions, is committed to

investing in the community's future. Their support, along with Alpha Media's collaboration, ensures that Covenant Kids experience the magic of the holiday season.

For more information, visit Covenant Kids Facebook page or contact Bridget Looby Staffleno at stafflenob@joltcu.com. This holiday season, the "Lights Before Christmas" offers everyone a chance to come together, give back, and spread a little joy where it's needed most.

Gift something Wonderful

Win up to **\$500,000** instantly!

\$10



\$5



\$2



\$1



USE AS A GIFT TAG.
AVAILABLE IN 5 DESIGNS!

Enter the Holiday Let's Play Giveaway!



SCAN FOR
HOLIDAY
LET'S PLAY
GIVEAWAY
DETAILS

Fun to give and fun to get, it's easy to gift something wonderful with Holiday Instants from the Michigan Lottery. Everyone likes the chance to win up to **\$500,000**, with **\$63.5 million** in total prizes.

So, this year, give the gift that offers instant holiday fun for everyone. And don't forget to make the holidays even more wonderful by entering the Holiday Let's Play Giveaway!



Overall odds of winning Gift Tag Greetings: 1 in 4.66. Overall odds of winning Season's Greetings: 1 in 4.46. Overall odds of winning Make It Reindeer: 1 in 3.94. Overall odds of winning The Most Wonderful Time of the Year: 1 in 3.52. Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call 1-800-GAMBLER for confidential help.



COMMUNITY

Saginaw extends yard waste collection through week of Dec. 9

SAGINAW — The City of Saginaw announced today that the 2024 seasonal curbside yard waste collection has been extended through the week of December 9. This decision, prompted by milder weather conditions, allows residents additional time to complete their leaf raking and yard cleanup projects as the season winds down.

Residents are encouraged to place all properly prepared yard waste materials at the curb by 7 a.m. on their scheduled col-



COURTESY PHOTO

lection day. The final collection dates for the week of December 9 are as follows:

- **Monday, Dec. 9:** Monday collection areas

- **Tuesday, Dec. 10:** Tuesday collection areas
- **Wednesday, Dec. 11:** Wednesday collection areas
- **Thursday, Dec. 12:** Thursday collection areas
- **Friday, Dec. 13:** Friday collection areas

Yard Waste Guidelines

All yard waste must be placed in paper yard waste bags or in garbage cans (35 gallons or smaller) clearly marked with

a “Yard Waste” sticker on the front. The City emphasizes that leaves should not be swept into the street, as this practice is prohibited.

For further details on yard waste guidelines, residents can contact the Mid Michigan Waste Authority (MMWA) at (989) 781-9555 or visit their website at www.recyclemotion.org. Additional information is also available on the City of Saginaw’s website at www.saginaw-mi.com.

Hair workshop for Black and Brown performers offered in Midland

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND – Behind every great theatrical production is a team dedicated to ensuring every performer shines, and the Midland Center for the Arts is taking steps to make backstage work more inclusive. On Sunday, December 8, 2024, the Center will host a unique workshop focused on hair styling for Black and Brown performers, aiming to provide theater professionals with the skills to respectfully and effectively work with diverse hair textures.

The workshop, led by Samantha Glasse, director of the Center’s production of *Anne of Green Gables*, runs from 2:00 to 3:30 PM and offers hands-on experience for those involved in theater production. In addition to techniques for styling different hair types, the session may also include an introduction to wig styling—valuable tools for professionals looking to expand their backstage expertise.

“This kind of training is so important in ensuring that performers of all backgrounds feel seen and supported,” said Glasse. The workshop reflects a broader push in the arts world to embrace



COURTESY PHOTO

diversity and create inclusive environments both on and off the stage.

Set backstage at the Mid-

land Center for the Arts’ Little Theatre, the event costs \$45 for the public and \$35 for museum members. Members can register

through their account to access the discount or contact the Ticket Office directly.

This initiative is part of a larger effort by the Midland Center to make theater more inclusive and representative. A complementary virtual workshop, focusing on stage makeup for Black and Brown performers, is scheduled for January 18, 2025. The makeup workshop will teach participants how to design and apply makeup tailored to performers with darker skin tones—a skill often overlooked in traditional theatrical training.

The Center’s efforts highlight an ongoing commitment to providing education that acknowledges the unique needs of performers of color. By equipping theater professionals with these essential skills, workshops like this aim to improve representation in the arts and foster an atmosphere of respect and care for all performers.

Registration is open online at midlandcenter.org, and spaces are limited. For anyone involved in theater, this is an opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to a more inclusive arts community.

COMMUNITY

Saginaw YMCA to host natural hair & braiding workshop

SAGINAW — The YMCA of Saginaw is inviting the community to join a special Natural Hair & Braiding Workshop on Saturday, December 7, 2024, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. This hands-on event will take place in Community Room 2 at the YMCA, located at 1915 Fordney Street, Saginaw, MI.

Presented by Beauti N Braid Academy, the workshop aims to educate and inspire attendees with a focus on hair care and styling techniques tailored for natural hair. The event will cover essential topics like Hair Care 101, which teaches proper techniques for maintaining healthy hair, Braiding Basics for mastering simple braiding styles, and Creative Braiding, where attendees will witness a student showcase of advanced and artistic braiding techniques.

The workshop is open to participants ages 8 and up, with each youth required to attend with an accompanying adult (no more than two youth per adult). Tickets are priced at just \$5 per person, making this a family-friendly, affordable event. Limited seats are available, so early registration is encouraged.

“This workshop is a fantastic opportunity for the community to learn about natural hair care while celebrating the beauty and creativity of braiding,” said a representative from Beauti N Braid Academy.

For questions or more information, contact Kimberlyn at kimcay@beautinbraids.com or Cathy at carnett@saginawymca.org. Attendees can also call 989-207-3665 for further assistance.

The YMCA and Beauti N Braid Academy are proud to collaborate on this inclusive event, designed to empower participants with knowledge, skills, and confidence in natural hair styling. Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and celebrate the art of braiding.

the YMCA

Community
NATURAL HAIR & BRAIDING
Workshop

Presented by
The Beauti N Braid
ACADEMY

DEC. 7, 2024
12PM - 2:30PM

TICKETS \$5
LIMITED SEATS AVAILABLE

TOPICS

- HAIR CARE 101**
Learn proper hair care techniques
- BRAIDING BASICS**
Learn simple braiding techniques.
- CREATIVE BRAIDING**
Students showcase of advanced styles.

Contact Kimberlyn:
989-207-3665

BUY NOW!

YMCA of Saginaw **1915 Fordney St, Saginaw, MI, 48601** **www.saginawymca.org**

COMMUNITY

Hidden Harvest 'feeds' nearly 200 sites, large and small

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — New Beginnings Ministries Outreach, 701 Hess in the city's south end, is home to the Mi Casa Su Casa food and clothing distribution site.

Hidden Harvest has provided major support with grocery and restaurant surplus items, along with operating guidance, which demonstrates that the innovative agency supports numerous smaller sites beyond the adjacent East Side Soup Kitchen at the Hunger Solutions Center, 940 East Genesee near Janes.

With Hidden Harvest expansion into Bay and Midland counties under Samantha McKenzie, director and CEO, the ever-growing count has surpassed 175 for truck deliveries to grassroots operations like pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, youth after-school programs and senior sites.

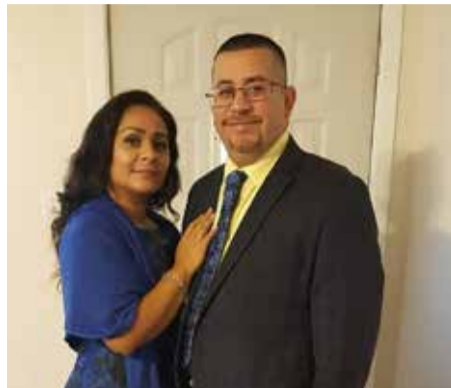


PHOTO CREDIT: HIDDEN HARVEST

To view the full list, visit hiddenharvestshares.org.

Mi Casa Su Casa, "my home (is) your home," kicked off in 2021 as a response to COVID-19. The Rev. Augustine Delgado, New Beginnings pastor, and Claudia, his spouse, took note of major hardship during the pandemic's peak. They witnessed the poverty both through the church and through his employment as a state DSS specialist assigned to Jessie Rouse Elementary, while she oversees the outreach during his hours at the nearby school.

Signs of struggles were as



PASTORS CLAUDIA AND AUGUSTINE DELGADO

simple as neighborhood children walking and playing without winter coats.

Claudia's first call was to McKenzie at Hidden Harvest, and soon a multi-age, multi-racial group of neighbors began arriving at 3 p.m. on Tuesdays, some on foot, others in aging cars and trucks. Some lend helping hands to pass out the mix of kitchen staples, with various goodies also on the tables. After all, people in need also can enjoy a snack now and then.

And if anyone could use a jacket or a pair of jeans, some shoes or a sweater, those also are on hand. Plus there are school supplies for the kids, donated separately aside from Hidden Harvest, of course.

This all adds up to faith in action, regardless of whether Casa patrons actually join the New Beginnings congregation, Claudia notes.

Their location since 2015 was a Roaring '20s-era fraternal lodge hall, and the basement is where the partying took place, with the kitchen taking up a lion's share of the floor and a small corner cordoned for performers. Now the old rooms, beneath the modern updated church sanctuary, serve an outreach purpose that old-time lodge members may not have imagined.

Advice and footstuffs

Even before she took action

to oversee a site, Claudia was volunteering at the Hunger Solutions Center on the city's north end near downtown, where she first encountered Sam McKenzie

The Hidden Harvest leader follows an adage that "food is so much more than food."

She elaborates: "It's traditions ... time spent together ... a feeling of security ... and it's nutrition."

Speaking of staples and sweets, especially at holiday time, Samantha offers the story of a grandmother who was lunching at the soup kitchen and learned that baking supplies, re-packaged by Hidden Harvest volunteers, were available from a pair of regional donors, Star of the West Milling and Michigan Sugar. The little ones were visiting her home for the weekend, and now they could make cookies together.

Ideas for contributions

Should we donate directly to Hidden Harvest or to a program closer to our homes? Fifty-fifty for both? Cash always brings gratitude, of course, but the smaller sites generally look for the canned goods and the non-perishables, while a larger operation is able to leverage every dollar into much larger value via bulk purchases.

Hidden Harvest started 30 years ago, with the Community

Foundation's leadership, to collect and distribute foods that were being thrown away, from corporate canned goods to local bakeries to participating restaurants. These are combined with donations from kindhearted family farmers in the local region, with one sample being the piles of take-what-you-wish sweet corn in summer.

The original cramped headquarters was the former downtown Sunoco station until 2005 construction of the Hunger Center provided expanded new homes for both Hidden Harvest and East Side Soup Kitchen, which had located in various church basements through the years.

Regardless of official poverty statistics since the millennium, both programs are drawing patrons counts that have multiplied many times over, and now the structure that was built to accommodate their prior lack of space no longer is big enough. Expansion will close Thompson street at the rear if plans move forward. Major support blends private contributions, a state grant and federal ARPA funds.

However, those monies would be for the building, separate from program operations, which is why holiday donations -- cold cash or canned corn, along with simple volunteer time -- always are welcome.



PHOTO CREDIT: HIDDEN HARVEST

COMMUNITY

Hollyday Art Mart returns to Andersen Enrichment Center

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The much-anticipated Hollyday Art Mart is set to bring holiday cheer to Saginaw for its 31st year. Taking place at the Andersen Enrichment Center, located at 120 Ezra Rust Drive (across from Ojibway Island), this festive event will run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 4.

Admission to the Art Mart is free, offering the community an opportunity to shop for unique holiday gifts while enjoying the sights and sounds of the season.

This year, the event is presented by The State Bank and Jan Hauck Century 21, with additional sponsorship for the Christmas Café provided by Jolt Credit Union. From 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., attendees will be treated to live Christmas music sponsored by Jody and David Becker, creating a magical holiday atmosphere for late-afternoon shoppers.

The Hollyday Art Mart features a curated selection of hand-crafted goods by talented Michigan artists, including jewelry, ornaments, candles, vintage artwork, books, and other holiday-themed crafts. The event will also include a Christmas Café and Bake Shoppe, offering a selection of delectable baked goods, hot cider, and Starbucks coffee to keep shoppers refreshed.

Adding to the excitement, a Silent Auction will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The auction will showcase gift certificates, tickets, and merchandise generously donated by local businesses, with proceeds benefiting the Saginaw Arts & Enrichment Commission's programs.

This annual holiday tradition, held in the heart of Saginaw's Riverfront District, provides a festive platform for Michigan artisans while giving the community a unique shopping experience. The



COURTESY PHOTO

event is made possible through the support of sponsors including Jody Farley, James M. Braun DDS MS, Covenant Healthcare, Martineau Family Fund, Mercantile Bank, and other local organizations and contributors.

For more information about the Hollyday Art Mart, contact the Saginaw Arts & Enrichment Commission at 989-759-1362. Don't miss this chance to celebrate the season with art, music, and holiday cheer in the heart of Saginaw.



Hollyday
ARTMART
GIFTABLE ART & CRAFT WORKS



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PRESENTS A
**CHRISTMAS
BAZAAR**

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COMMUNITY

Michigan Baseball Foundation opens 2025 grant application period



MICHIGAN BASEBALL FOUNDATION PRESENTS CHIPPEWA NATURE CENTER WITH A \$10,000 MBF GRANT AT GREAT LAKES LOONS GAME ON JUNE 4, 2024.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The Michigan Baseball Foundation (MBF) has officially opened its 2025 Grant Application process as of November 15, 2024. Nonprofit organizations holding 501(c)(3) status are encouraged to apply for funding to support youth-focused initiatives or economic development projects planned for 2025. Applications will close on February 14, 2025.

The grants are designed to

fund specific projects rather than general operational costs, with priority given to organizations located in Midland, Bay, Saginaw, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Genesee, Isabella, Tuscola, Huron, Arenac, Ogemaw, Sanilac, and Iosco counties. These counties represent the heart of the Great Lakes Bay Region, where MBF has made a significant impact since its founding.

Established in 2006, MBF began with a mission to bring professional baseball to the Great

Lakes Bay Region while also serving as a catalyst for community enrichment. As the nonprofit arm of the Great Lakes Loons baseball team, MBF has evolved into a key supporter of local communities, combining America's pastime with philanthropy.

To date, MBF has awarded nearly \$1.47 million in grants to almost 400 organizations. In 2024 alone, MBF provided \$89,565 in funding to projects that included resurfacing tennis courts, developing STEM learn-

ing spaces, upgrading security systems, and renovating athletic facilities. These grants are funded by ticket sales from Great Lakes Loons games, 50/50 raffle proceeds, and direct donations to the foundation.

Interested organizations can apply for grants online at michiganbaseballfoundation.org/grants. Recipients will be notified by the end of April 2025.

For further inquiries, contact Jessica Gillespie at 989.837.6144 or email gillespie@loons.com.

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Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024

Time: 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

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HEALTH

'Toolkit' hammers home Health Fair message

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — The county's Kappa Alpha Psi Men's Health Fair continues to move beyond the annual event in June.

For example, "tool boxes" now are available, just in time for the holiday gift-giving season.

He might be a handyman or a mechanic, but he need not be a garage guy in greasy garb. This is the Men's Health Toolkit, and the tools are step-by-step guides for tuning up the human body. This is available online or in a full-color print copy by contacting Dwayne Parker, leader of the outreach, on his Facebook page or via dparker2123@gmail.com

The table of contents lists pages to find specifics on the "top 10 silent killers" -- heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, lower respiratory diseases, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, suicide and homicide, HIV/AIDS.

They are anything but silent for families and loved ones when they occur, which is why the toolkit aims for prevention, which starts by going to the doctor, by making a checkup appointment or attending a health fair.

Parker, longtime Kappa Alpha Psi volunteer now in retirement from Flint's Hurley Medical Center, reported to the Health Equity Council that their co-sponsorship of an October workshop among health and treatment professionals will lead to ideas to reach the men who still stubbornly shun even free checkups.

The Equity Council is among 11 established statewide through county public health departments when the covid years unveiled disparities in the medical care system. Chairwoman Joyce Seals has taken the lead to organize both inner workings



DWAYNE PARKER

and a wider advisory group that drew 40 participants at the latest session. State startup funds of \$250,000 are monitored and scrutinized at least as closely as tax monies for local budgets that are far larger.

More than ever, teamwork now is the focus. The Equity Council has taken a state mini-grant, in effect if not in name, and split the dollars into mini-mini financial support for more than a dozen grassroots sources, including the Mexican American Council's development of an annual Latino Health Fair.

Parker's outline includes:

- Continued expansion of the big event June 7, 2025, which moves to Horizons Center due to a schedule conflict at The Dow.
- Ongoing followup from the fall symposium, which includes national training for 30 volunteers to promote checkups that hopefully will happen from increased awareness.
- Inclusion of women, both for their own personal

health concerns, and also for dealing with reluctant and stubborn males.

- For real, a "pancakes and prostates" breakfast just might show up on the spring calendar.

His own personal big event is

Feb. 3, the first anniversary of his heart transplant, seven years after a diagnosis of disease that arrived from a routine physical checkup, with early detection saving his life. The coalition behind the Health Fair and the expanded outreach includes local hospitals and health care providers.

MEN'S HEALTH TOOLKIT

It's Time to Get Serious. Make Your Health a Priority

- On average, American men live sicker and die younger than American women, creating what is called the "silent health crisis." (Men's Health Network)
- Men die at higher rates than women from 9 of the top 10 causes of death. (BLS)
- Men, on average, die almost five years earlier than women. (CDC)
- Women are 100% more likely than men to visit the doctor for annual check-ups and prevention. (CDC)
- Men are 4x as likely to die by suicide than women, often because of undiagnosed depression. (CDC)
- The chance of being a homicide victim place African American men at unusually high risk – 1 in 30 for black males, 1 in 179 for white males.

HEALTHY
HM MEN inc.

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or visit...

https://bwellsaginaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Mens-Health-Toolkit_Inserts.pdf

HEALTH

Michigan expands access to substance use disorder treatment

BY MB STAFF

LANSING — The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has introduced new initiatives to improve access to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment across the state. These efforts include the launch of a statewide SUD mapping tool, expanded Health Home services, and Medicaid policy updates aimed at enhancing care options for residents.

MDHHS has unveiled an on-line tool to help residents locate licensed SUD treatment and recovery providers by ZIP code, city, or county. The tool also allows users to filter results by service type, such as inpatient, outpatient, or medication-assisted

treatment, and identifies providers that accept Medicaid.

To increase access to coordinated care, MDHHS has transitioned Opioid Health Homes to SUD Health Homes, broadening eligibility to include Alcohol Use Disorder and Stimulant Use Disorder diagnoses. These services, now available in seven additional counties, are expected to benefit up to 3,000 more individuals. In fiscal year 2023, 23,270 women entered SUD treatment, including 592 who were pregnant, while 29,472 individuals sought treatment for primary alcohol use disorder.

Policy changes have expanded Medicaid reimbursement for alcohol and opioid use disorder treatments in primary care settings, removing barriers such as



COURTESY PHOTO

prior authorization requirements for medications. This has led to a 20% increase in opioid use disorder medication prescriptions over the past four years.

MDHHS has also expanded Medicaid SUD provider networks and incentivized services through loan repayment programs. The department partnered with the Michigan Department of Corrections to provide opioid treat-

ment to incarcerated individuals and peer support in parole offices. Additional efforts include supporting families of substance-exposed infants, adding 27 recovery homes with 79 beds statewide, and providing over 20,000 transportation rides for SUD-related services.

More information about these programs and resources is available on the MDHHS website.

“MY LEGACY IS ABOUT GREAT PATIENT CARE.”

Regina Chenevert
Respiratory Therapist



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Apply at
CovenantHealthCare.com/Careers



POLITICS

Post by Saginaw County Commissioner sparks outcry

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — A social media post by Saginaw County Commissioner Richard Spitzer has stirred controversy and calls for his resignation after he mistakenly targeted newly elected Saginaw Township Trustee Amaya Bradley with inappropriate images of another woman. The post, shared after Bradley's swearing-in on Nov. 19, has led to public outcry and questions about professionalism in local government.

Spitzer's original Facebook post congratulated the community on their new trustee, attaching photos he incorrectly believed were of Bradley. However, the images depicted another woman with the same name. The post has drawn particular attention due to Spitzer's ties to the election—his wife, Connie Reppuhn, narrowly lost her bid for a trustee position by just 13 votes.

Spitzer deleted the post upon realizing the mistake and issued a public apology. In his statement, he described the post as an effort to highlight the importance of researching candidates but admitted he had made a serious error. "Over the past 24 hours, I have agonized over the mistake and worked to set things right," Spitzer wrote. "I apologized profusely to Trustee Bradley and assured her of my commitment to working together."

However, for Bradley, who is the first African American trustee in Saginaw Township, Spitzer's actions went far beyond a simple mistake. "On Wednesday, November 20th the husband of the candidate who came in fifth in number of votes posted a series of vulgar images on his Facebook page of a woman with my name but it is not me," Bradley wrote in a statement. "I am struggling



AMAYA BRADLEY TAKES OATH OF OFFICE

to understand how he could have confused me with the woman in the images." She called the post a deliberate attempt to discredit her and urged the community to reject such behavior.

NAACP Saginaw Branch President Terry Pruitt also condemned Spitzer's actions, calling for him to consider resigning as a commissioner. "It is my strong feeling that Commissioner

Spitzer has severely damaged his credibility going forward in his ability to be viewed as an elected leader who is fair and concerned about the overall equality and well-being of ALL the constituents he was elected to represent," Pruitt wrote. He also suggested that Spitzer meet with Bradley and other minority leaders to address the harm caused.

Support for Bradley at Township meeting

Bradley's first township meeting as a trustee on Monday, Nov. 25, drew a strong show of support from residents and community members. Attendees expressed frustration over Spitzer's actions, with one calling the post "a deliberate attempt to humiliate and discredit."

Saginaw County Board of Commissioners Chairman Christopher Boyd confirmed that the board is reviewing the matter and consulting legal counsel. "We referred to legal counsel and to our county administrator, and I met with her this afternoon. We con-

tinue to collect the information, and we're going to explore what our options are, and we're going to present that to the full board," Boyd said.

A focus on integrity and service

Despite the controversy, Bradley remains focused on her work as a trustee and on serving the township where she grew up. "I wanted to serve the community where I was raised," Bradley said. "I also happen to be a young African American woman who, unfortunately, is not unfamiliar with racism, sexism, misogyny, etc."

As the first African American and youngest trustee in Saginaw Township's history, Bradley's election represents a significant milestone for the community.

Speaking to MLive, Bradley shared her gratitude for the outpouring of encouragement. "I'm overwhelmed with all the support. It's a good feeling that people are trying to support me," she said.



COURTESY PHOTO

POLITICS



COURTESY PHOTO

Trump administration targets DEI programs in sweeping policy shift

BY MB STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President-elect Donald Trump has outlined plans to eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives as part of his broader policy agenda, targeting programs in federal agencies, schools, and public institutions. He has criticized DEI efforts as divisive and wasteful, emphasizing his intent to reverse many such policies enacted in recent years.

During his 2024 campaign, Trump pledged to use federal funding to enforce these changes, aiming to eliminate what he calls "wokeness" from American education and government. His administration plans to audit existing DEI initiatives, cut funding, and issue directives to end DEI-related hiring and training practices. These efforts are expected to significantly impact govern-

ment operations, education systems, and public-private partnerships nationwide.

Reversing momentum

DEI initiatives have gained prominence in recent years as organizations across the public and private sectors have sought to address systemic inequities and increase representation of underrepresented groups. Federal agencies and institutions have implemented policies to encourage diversity in hiring, contracting, and education, but Trump's agenda seeks to curtail these efforts.

Supporters of the rollback argue that DEI programs are unnecessary and undermine meritocracy. In his public remarks, Trump has criticized such initiatives for creating what he sees as ideological conformity.

Critics, however, warn that

eliminating DEI programs could hinder progress in addressing inequities. They point to the importance of initiatives aimed at breaking down barriers in hiring, education, and access to opportunities.

A few diverse appointments

While Trump has openly opposed institutional DEI programs, his administration has appointed some individuals from diverse backgrounds to key roles. Among his nominees are Marco Rubio, who, if confirmed, would become the first Hispanic Secretary of State, and Tulsi Gabbard, a Pacific Islander selected to serve as Director of National Intelligence.

Other appointments include Scott Turner, a Black former NFL player tapped to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Mehmet Oz, a

Turkish American and the first Muslim chosen to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

These appointments have drawn attention, but they remain limited in scope. Critics argue that while representation at high levels of government is important, it does not replace broader policies designed to address equity and systemic inequality.

Looking ahead

As Trump's administration begins implementing these changes, questions remain about the broader impact on public institutions and marginalized communities. The rollback of DEI programs is expected to spark significant debate, with supporters applauding a focus on merit-based policies and critics warning of a retreat from hard-won progress in diversity and inclusion.

EDUCATION

Saginaw ISD partners with SVSU to ease teacher shortages



SAGINAW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT JEFFREY COLLIER AND SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT GEORGE GRANT JR SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE ELIGIBLE ISD EMPLOYEES A 30% EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP TUITION SCHOLARSHIP WHEN THEY ENROLL AT SVSU.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The Saginaw Intermediate School District (ISD) and Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) have teamed up to tackle teacher shortages while offering ISD employees greater access to higher education.

The Saginaw ISD Education Partnership Tuition Scholarship will cover 30% of tuition and fees for eligible employees enrolled in SVSU’s undergraduate, graduate, or certificate programs. Additionally, eligible staff may receive tuition reimbursement from ISD to further ease financial barriers.

“The Saginaw ISD and SVSU share a commitment to quality education, and this scholarship will help employees of the district further their education so they can enhance the services they offer their students and families,” said SVSU President George Grant Jr.

Saginaw ISD supports 12 local

school districts, five public school academies, and 22 non-public schools in Saginaw County. They employ more than 700 professionals in sectors such as education, healthcare, and technology, many of which align with Michigan’s most in-demand careers.

“Investing in our team members is investing in the future of

education and the communities we serve,” said Jeffrey Collier, superintendent of Saginaw ISD. “This partnership with SVSU not only helps reduce financial barriers for our staff but also aligns with our mission to serve, innovate and empower. Together, we are creating opportunities that inspire professional growth and

support the development of a robust and skilled workforce in Saginaw County and beyond.”

The scholarship program begins with the winter 2025 semester. Details about the application process and tuition benefits will be shared with employees through internal communications.



SAGINAW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT JEFFREY COLLIER AND SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT GEORGE GRANT JR.

EDUCATION



COURTESY PHOTO

Avoid chronic absenteeism



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

A student is defined to be “chronically absent” if he/she misses school 10% or more of the time. In a typical nine week marking period, the threshold would be four absences.

The absences can be for any reason and could be “excused” or “unexcused.” An excused ab-

sence typically comes with a note from the parent or a doctor’s slip. For example, in my sophomore year I broke my leg in football and started school several days late; likely I was in the category of being “chronically absent” that marking period.

In 2020 and 2021, the pandemic caused a spike in chronic absences. Remember many schools closed or altered schedules due to COVID. Once that happened some students were slow to return to in-person schooling. Now in 2024 attendance statistics are better but still have not returned to where they were before the pandemic. Most reports show that chronic absences are unacceptably large

in all regions of the United States.

I want to highlight three suggestions from my own experiences working with students and families over the years that may help address chronic absences.

To begin, parents, and teachers need to find out what is going on. Why are absences accumulating? Working together to get to the bottom of what may be causing the student to miss school, and once a cause is identified, resolve to address it together.

Create a plan together to work things out. Communicate with each other on a regular basis to monitor what may be working or not working. Form a united team that is determined to support the student.

Being “united,” with one voice, is crucial.

Finally, consider getting some outside help from a guidance counselor, coach, clergy, or mentor. The voice of a third person who can support the teacher and parent may be the key to convince the student that being away from school is not a solution; instead, being away from school compounds the challenges and makes things worse.

Any cycle of missing school needs to be analyzed and corrected, especially now at this juncture of the school year. Parents and school leaders need to find positive ways to change student behavior and choices to attend school.

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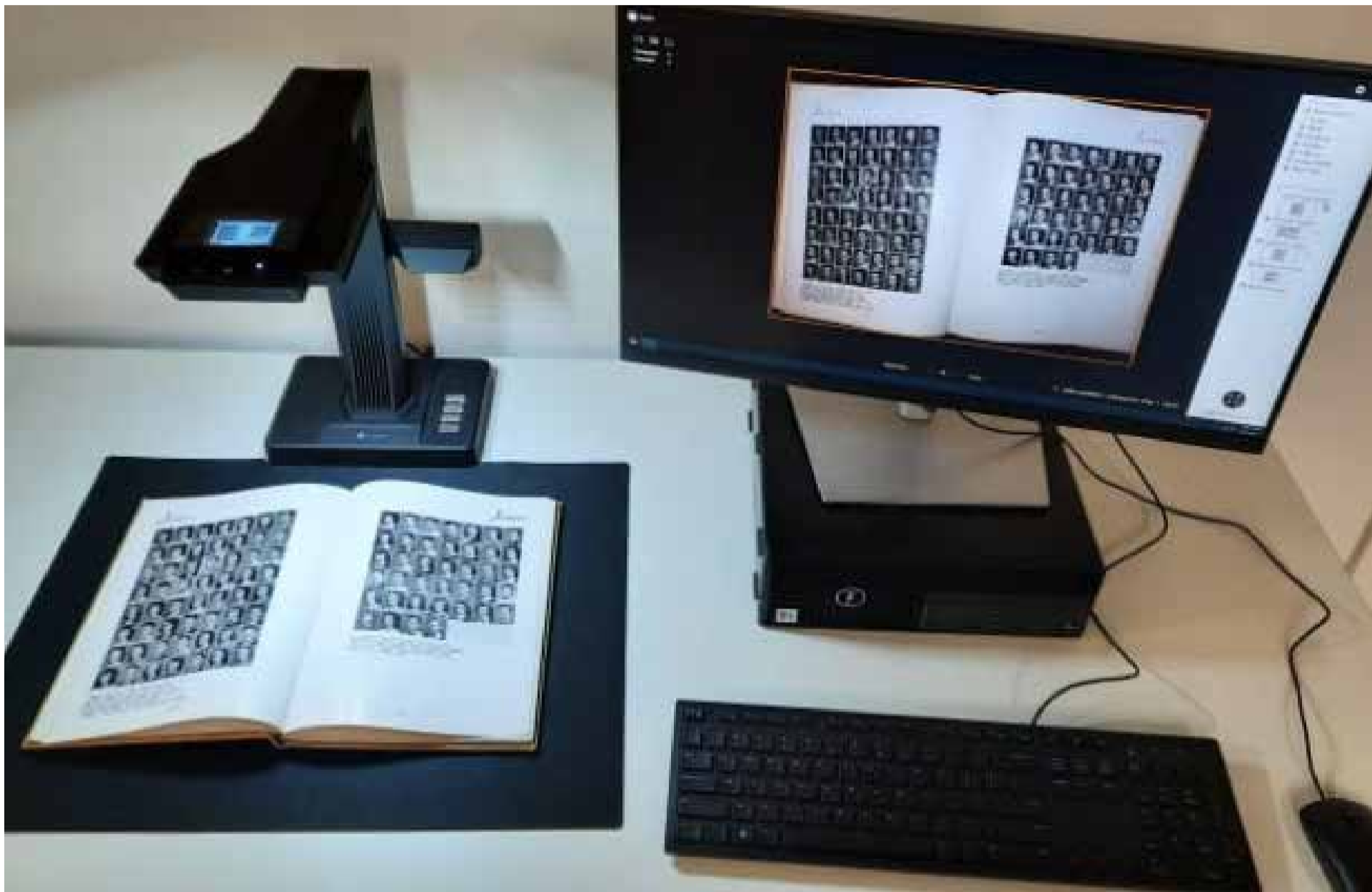
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EDUCATION

Library of Michigan seeks yearbooks to preserve state history



COURTESY PHOTO

LANSING — Yearbooks are more than just collections of photographs and signatures; they are time capsules that preserve the memories, culture, and history of Michigan's communities through the decades. Recognizing their significance, the Library of Michigan is inviting schools, libraries, and the public to donate yearbooks to help build a comprehensive collection representing every corner of the state.

The initiative aims to compile complete sets of yearbooks from Michigan's high schools, colleges, universities, and vocational institutions. These yearbooks not

only document academic achievements but also capture snapshots of social trends, cultural milestones, and local histories.

"Yearbooks are more than just names and photos," said State Librarian Randy Riley. "They are time capsules to our youth, which chronicle our own individual stories and which bridge us to the eras of past Michiganders."

Currently, the Library of Michigan houses several thousand yearbooks at its location on 702 W. Kalamazoo St. in Lansing, offering researchers and historians a valuable resource for exploring family histories, local

communities, and the evolution of Michigan's cultural landscape. However, gaps remain in the collection, particularly from rural areas of the Lower Peninsula and communities across the Upper Peninsula.

To fill these gaps, the Library of Michigan is encouraging schools, libraries, and members of the public to contribute yearbooks to the initiative. Donors are asked to contact library staff before donating to ensure items are not duplicates of those already in the collection. This can be done by calling 517-335-1477 or emailing Librarian@Michi-

gan.gov.

For those interested in learning more about the yearbook initiative or exploring other ways to support the Library of Michigan, information is available at Michigan.gov/LibraryGift. The library's mission is to preserve Michigan's history and make it accessible for future generations to explore and research.

This effort underscores the importance of yearbooks as historical artifacts that go beyond academics, providing a window into Michigan's past and ensuring that its stories are preserved for years to come.

EDUCATION

Former Jerome Elementary undergoing renovations to become high quality, state of the art green STEM preschool model



COURTESY PHOTOS

SAGINAW – Jerome was established as a Kindergarten through 5th grade elementary school in 1976 by the Saginaw Public School District. In 2013, due to low student capacity as well as district wide financial challenges. Dr. Ericka Taylor was the principal assigned to Jerome that year and understood first hand why the school was being offlined, especially in consideration of the many structural needs of the building and grounds.

However, when Dr. Taylor

joined the Saginaw Intermediate School District in 2017 as the Director of Early Childhood, she was surprised to learn that Jerome was a preschool site that was being rented and utilized (in the very same condition) to provide early childhood services which include preschool classes, home visiting teachers and maternal infant support for the families of children birth through 5 years of age. This was an immediate reminder of the reasons why Jerome was originally offlined,

but it also spurred a deeper desire and vision to give our children and families in Saginaw County not only what they need, but what they deserve, which is the very best learning environment that we can possibly imagine and provide, despite their economic status and/or zip code!

A groundbreaking ceremony was held this past May and renovations are currently underway transforming the former Jerome elementary school into the new Jerome Preschool servicing students ages birth to 4 years old! These renovations will include a new roof, awning, heating/cooling system, parking lot and greenhouse. There will be designated space for onsite medical services for children and families, shared community space for partnerships with local colleges/universities, and community organizations. All classrooms and hallways will be updated with new lighting, paint and flooring. The former gymnasium will now be a multipurpose space for staff professional development oppor-

tunities as well as community activities and events.

These renovations will not only enhance and beautify the local community, but will also give our youngest learners the academic, social and emotional foundation they need and deserve to begin their K-12 endeavors and beyond by providing them with a high quality, state of the art building focused on Green STEM. Our vision is that this preschool site will provide an early childhood model that we can replicate not only in Saginaw, but across the state of Michigan and beyond.

A huge thank you to Saginaw ISD Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Collier for allowing us to dream big for the children and families in our community! We welcome any questions you may have to be sent to Dr. Ericka Taylor, Executive Director of Early Childhood, at etaylor@sisd.cc.

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About Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

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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
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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

Source: 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

A flyer for Saginaw ISD Head Start & Early Head Start. It features the program logo at the top, which includes the American flag and the text "SAGINAW ISD HEAD START EARLY HEAD START". Below the logo, it says "HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START". The flyer includes a photo of three children and a photo of a child with colorful handprints. The text on the flyer reads: "FREE PRE-SCHOOL Enrollments for 0 to 5 year olds Call: 752-2193 or Visit the Claytor Head Start Building at: 3200 Perkins Saginaw, MI 48601 REGISTER NOW! Saginaw County Free Pre-School Partnership".

BUSINESS + FINANCE

Michigan climbs to top 10 in business climate rankings, continues upward trend



COURTESY PHOTO

MICHIGAN – Michigan’s business-friendly reputation continues to grow, with the state landing in the No. 10 spot in Site Selection Magazine’s 2024 Business Climate Rankings. This marks the third consecutive year Michigan has climbed the list, moving up from No. 20 in 2022 and No. 12 in 2023.

The state’s improved ranking reflects the success of its "Make It in Michigan" economic development strategy, which emphasizes workforce development, community revitalization, and securing major projects to drive growth across the state.

“We’re honored by this recognition from Site Selection Magazine,” said Quentin L. Messer, Jr.,

CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “It highlights Michigan’s efforts to foster a welcoming environment for businesses of all sizes and industries. While there’s still work to do, this milestone motivates us to keep building a stronger economy where everyone can succeed.”

Site Selection Magazine’s rankings are based on a mix of survey data and economic metrics. Key criteria include workforce skills, infrastructure, cost of living, and state economic development initiatives. Michigan has made significant strides in several areas, including workforce development and regulatory efficiency, while maintaining a

strong quality of life and competitive tax environment.

The state also achieved a No. 9 ranking in CNBC’s Top States for Business list, bolstered by high marks in cost of living (3rd), business friendliness (8th), and technology and innovation (9th). Earlier in the year, Michigan advanced to No. 7 in Site Selection’s Prosperity Cup rankings, driven by project wins and economic competitiveness.

The "Make It in Michigan" strategy continues to play a key role in the state’s success. By focusing on attracting skilled talent, improving infrastructure, and creating a streamlined permitting process, Michigan has positioned itself as a destination

for companies looking to expand or relocate.

Michigan’s efforts to combine workforce initiatives, such as the Talent Action Team, with robust support for entrepreneurs and businesses have created a winning formula for growth. The state’s leadership remains committed to leveraging these assets to attract investment and ensure continued progress.

With its latest top 10 ranking, Michigan is proving it has the ingredients to compete on a national stage, while positioning itself for even greater economic achievements in the years ahead.

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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Gov. Whitmer strengthens ties with Spain to boost Michigan jobs and investment



COURTESY PHOTO

LANSING — Governor Gretchen Whitmer and a delegation of Michigan leaders have returned from a successful economic mission to Spain, aimed at bolstering global partnerships and attracting foreign investment to Michigan. The mission, centered on the state's "Make It in Michigan" economic development strategy, focused on investing in people, revitalizing places, and securing projects to drive innovation and job creation.

"Investment is essential to Michigan's continued economic growth, and this mission highlights our commitment to building strong partnerships that create good-paying jobs and continue innovation across our state," said Governor Whitmer. "Spain is a valued ally and a critical partner in industries that matter to Michigan's future, and together, we're advancing a

shared vision of economic opportunity and sustainability."

During the visit, the Team Michigan delegation, including Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) CEO Quentin L. Messer, Jr., engaged with Spanish business and government leaders to strengthen ties in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and other key sectors.

The delegation hosted a business roundtable with Spanish industry leaders and met with executives from Gestamp, a multinational automotive components company that has recently announced expansions in Mason, Lapeer, and Chelsea. Gestamp's operations in Michigan span districts represented by state lawmakers from both parties, reflecting the bipartisan support for economic growth initiatives.

Governor Whitmer and the

delegation also met with senior officials in Madrid and Catalonia to discuss trade, investment, and collaborative opportunities. Highlights included meetings with Salvador Illa Roca, President of Catalonia, and Jordi Hereu Boher, Spain's Minister of Industry and Tourism, as well as other government leaders.

"We are grateful for the hospitality shown in Spain. Team Michigan remains laser-focused on creating Michigan jobs and opportunities through global investment," said MEDC CEO Quentin L. Messer, Jr. "These missions are critical to ensuring that Michigan is top of mind for foreign companies seeking to enter or expand in the North American market. This investment mission is integral to our broader 'Make It in Michigan' strategy, and we're proud to have strengthened our ties with Spain,

a leader in advanced manufacturing and clean energy."

Michigan and Spain have a strong economic relationship, with Michigan ranking as Spain's fifth-largest U.S. trading partner. In 2023, Michigan exported over \$770 million in goods to Spain. Over the past decade, Spanish companies have invested in eight projects across Michigan, creating nearly 1,000 jobs and generating \$284 million in capital investment.

The mission was supported by the MEDC and the Michigan Economic Development Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting private investment and job creation in Michigan. By fostering international partnerships, the state continues to position itself as a leader in advanced manufacturing, sustainability, and global trade.

Mt. Pleasant Chamber of Commerce names Padraic McMeel as new president and CEO

BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT — The Mt. Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce has selected Padraic McMeel as its new president and chief executive officer, tasking him with spearheading efforts to support local businesses and strengthen the area's economy.

McMeel, a Mt. Pleasant native and graduate of Mt. Pleasant High School, brings a wealth of experience from his career in collegiate athletics management. His return marks a homecoming for McMeel and his wife, Ashley, who wanted to raise their children near family and in the community they've long cherished.

McMeel's leadership role will

involve guiding the Chamber's members, staff, and volunteers in advancing initiatives that promote business growth and foster collaboration across the region.

"Padraic's enthusiasm and expertise make him the right fit to build on the progress we've seen in Mt. Pleasant," said the Chamber's Board of Directors, who led the search for a candidate committed to continuing the momentum in the community.

McMeel officially steps into his new position on Dec. 2, 2024. Chamber members and residents are encouraged to welcome him as he begins his new role shaping the future of Mt. Pleasant's business community.



PADRAIC MCMEEL



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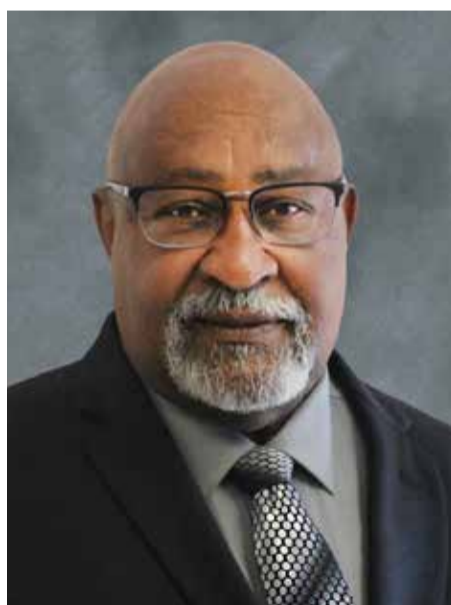
Ministry Without Walls expands vision with community-focused mission

BY PASTOR JOHN DUNN

Ministry Without Walls has recently returned to its location at 3783 Mannion Road with a renewed vision, shaped by recent global events and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeking divine guidance, the organization has embraced a broader mission: to make the church an integral part of the community.

The new direction for Ministry Without Walls is centered around the theme of "Breaking Down Walls." This initiative aims to bridge gaps between spiritual life and community service, uniting church members, volunteers, and local professionals in a shared mission.

The organization's vision includes several key objectives:



PASTOR JOHN DUNN

- Creating a space where the spirit, soul, and body can achieve wholeness.
- Providing resources to those in need.
- Fostering collaboration

between the church, volunteers, and community professionals.

- Ensuring a welcoming environment where love prevails and judgment is absent.
- Maintaining privacy and prioritizing safety.
- Emphasizing the importance of the whole person.

Ministry Without Walls will continue to offer various teachings and seminars on topics such as outreach, spiritual growth, mental health, healthy living, finding purpose, financial management, entrepreneurship, and more. These programs are designed to address diverse needs and support personal development.

Recognizing that the mission field is close to home, not far

away, the organization is committed to a collaborative approach, knowing that achieving this vision will require the collective effort of many. Ministry Without Walls is dedicating its resources, talents, and connections to dismantle barriers and connect with the community more deeply.

Those interested in learning more or getting involved are encouraged to visit the church on Sundays at 11:00 AM. This offers an opportunity to meet Pastor John Dunn, ask questions, and experience the ministry's mission firsthand.

For more information, visit Ministry Without Walls at 3783 Mannion Road, Saginaw, MI 48603.

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Christ Fellowship Baptist Church

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989-754-4435
PastorD818@gmail.com

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F

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faithministrieschurch.org

G

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L

Life in Christ Ministries

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LifeInChristMinistries07@gmail.com

M

Messiah Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor Otis Washington
2615 Williamson Road
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989-777-2636
Fax: 989-777-2640
messiahmbc@att.net
messiahsag.org

**Ministry Without Walls**

Pastor, John Dunn
3783 Mannion Road
Saginaw, MI 48603

N

**New Beginnings Deliverance Ministry**

Pastor Roy & Evelyn Baldwin
2609 E. Genesee
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-777-8272
Pastorbaldwin@charter.net

**New Beginnings Ministries**

Pastor Augustine Delgado
701 Hess Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
newlife3881@gmail.com

**New Birth Missionary Baptist**

Bishop Larry D. Camel
3121 Sheridan
Saginaw, Michigan
989-327-1755

**New Covenant Christian Center**

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newlifelcm.com

New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church

Pastor Alfred "AJ" Harris Jr.
3610 Russel St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-0801

P

Prince of Peace Baptist Church

Pastor Robert C. Corley Jr.
825 North 24th Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-2841

R

**Resurrection Life Ministries Full Gospel Baptist Church**

Pastor Carolyn L. Wilkins
2320 Sheridan Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-395-3142

S

**Saint Paul Baptist Church**

Rev. Dr., Vincent D. McMillon
120 North 15 St.
Saginaw, MI. 48601
stpaul2@yahoo.com
Facebook: St Paul MBC Family Connection

**Second Baptist Church**

Pastor-Elect Marcelle T. Smith
1770 W. Youngs Ditch Rd.
Bay City, MI 48708
989-893-8631

T

**Transforming Life Ministries**

Pastor William Brown
523 Hayden
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-9573

**True Vine Baptist Church**

Pastor Paul E. Broadus
2930 Janes Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-0751

U

**United Missionary Baptist Church**

Rev. Cedric Nickson
4290 Lamson Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
Church: 989-759-9411
Pastor 810.223.2987

V

**Victorious Belivers Ministries Church**

Pastor Chris V. Pryor
624 S. Outer Dr.
Saginaw, MI
989-755-7692

FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

Time to stop playing games



BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

Thanksgiving is reciprocal, and so is giving to a nonprofit. With Thanksgiving, you may be invited to join others in celebrating, or you may invite people to join you. Everyone brings something, including a feeling of gratitude. It's similar to fundraising which is actually an invitation to participate in the good work of a nonprofit. You may be invited to give, or you may be the person asking. In the best scenarios, it is reciprocal, with feelings of gratitude mutually shared by all. Here are our thoughts.

If you are engaged in fundraising for a nonprofit, you know that people have to feel comfortable asking for money. When you feel comfortable asking, the process is easy. It's like asking your sister-in-law to bring a casserole. If she says "no," you ask what she would like to bring. She volunteers to bring dessert, and you are that much closer to a shared meal. It can be a challenge to feel comfortable "asking," but it's worth getting over the discomfort. Those who have embraced fundraising know how good it feels when people say "yes" and make a gift. What we sometimes



COURTESY PHOTO

forget is how good it feels for those who give. When we give, we are part of something bigger than us; we are part of the solution; we are helping to create the world we want to live in.

Here's the other part of giving: saying "thank you." There's no law saying you must say thank you. But it is part of the circle of giving. It acknowledges the good wishes and investment of the donor and ideally is part of your nonprofit's culture. It feels good to be thanked – and it feels good to say thank you. It's a two-way street. Here's a public secret: one of the biggest criticisms nonprofits face is their inability or unwillingness to say "thank you" in a timely and meaningful way – if it is said at all.

Everyone who is associated with your organization should be in a position to say, "thank you,"

and to know what they are saying thank you for, and who they are saying thank you to. Here's another secret: you can't thank people enough. You can thank people for giving, but also for attending an event or participating in an event. We've had the opportunity to work with organizations that are always busy saying thank you, and it is part of their brand.

The details: If you have online giving, make sure your automated thank you message is up to

date. If you solicit people in person, say "thank you" once a person says "yes." Then send a thank you note. Have a board member call. You can set up a system so that if you are fortunate enough to receive a great number of gifts you have people assigned to say thank you to different types of donors. Put in place internal controls and back-ups to help ensure your thank you system is working. Remember – you can't be too busy to say thank you!



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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 or call (901) 522-8727.

SPORTS

Delta College Women's soccer team claims NJCAA National Championship



DELTA COLLEGE WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER — The Delta College women's soccer team capped off an extraordinary season with their eighth consecutive appearance at the NJCAA national championship tournament, securing their first title since 2020. The Pioneers dominated the competition at the 2024 NJCAA national championship tournament, held November 12–17 at Genesee Community College in Batavia, New York.

Delta's performance was nothing short of spectacular. The

team began with a commanding 6-0 victory over the Community College of Rhode Island, followed by an 8-0 win against Suffolk Community College. They sealed their championship triumph with a 3-0 shutout in the finals against Mohawk Valley. These victories underscore their dominance on

the field, completing an undefeated season with a remarkable 15–0 record and an 88–4 score differential.

The team's success was further highlighted by individual accolades. Head Coach Damon Amey was named Coach of the Tournament for the second time in his career, a testament to his leadership and strategic excellence. Forward Isabella Workman earned the tournament's Most Valuable Player award after scoring five goals across three games, while Anna Sabo was recognized as the Most Valuable Defensive Player for her critical role in keeping opponents scoreless.

This championship win cements Delta College's position as a powerhouse in NJCAA women's soccer, showcasing the players' hard work, dedication, and skill. Congratulations to the Pioneers and their coaching staff on an unforgettable season and a well-deserved national title!

Saginaw Spirit sign Forward Trevor Theuer

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER — The Saginaw Spirit have secured a highly skilled prospect, announcing Tuesday that forward Trevor Theuer has signed an OHL Scholarship and Development Agreement with the team. Theuer was selected in the 10th round of the 2024 OHL Priority Selection earlier this year.

A versatile and hard-working forward, Theuer has consistently demonstrated leadership and offensive prowess on the ice. Standing at 5'11" and weighing 180



TREVOR THEUER

pounds, the Clarkston, Michigan native has shown he can excel at high levels of competition.

Theuer captained the Detroit Honeybaked 15U program during the 2023-24 season, leading the team with 69 points (24 goals, 45 assists) in 56 games. In addition to his impressive season, Theuer has continued to showcase his

talent this year, playing for the Oakland Jr. Grizzlies U16 and earning the opportunity to appear in four games with the U.S. National Team Development Program (NTDP).

Over the summer, Theuer participated in USA Hockey's prestigious BioSteel Player Development Camp, where he tied for Team Royal's scoring lead, tallying 13 points (4 goals, 9 assists) in just five games. His performances in these high-profile opportunities further solidify his reputation as a promising young player.

Spirit General Manager Dave

Drinkill spoke highly of Theuer's potential, citing his drive, skating ability, and offensive skill set as key attributes. "Trevor is the kind of player who brings energy and commitment every time he hits the ice. His skating, offensive skill set, and determination make him a perfect fit for our system."

With Theuer officially joining the Spirit, the organization is looking forward to integrating his talent and leadership into the team's roster. Theuer's versatility and experience at both the club and national levels make him a player to watch as he embarks on his OHL journey.

SPORTS

Dow Championship raises purse to \$3.3 million for 2025, cements status as top LPGA event



PHOTO CREDIT: THE DOW CHAMPIONSHIP

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND — The Dow Championship, one of the premier tournaments on the LPGA Tour, will raise its purse to \$3.3 million for the 2025 event, officials announced Monday. This marks a \$300,000 increase from 2024, positioning the tournament among the top five non-major events and in the top 15 percent of the LPGA's highest-paying competitions.

The 2025 Dow Championship is scheduled to take place June 23–29 at Midland Country Club. The tournament's enhanced purse reflects its growing stature and aligns with its commitment to supporting women's

professional golf.

"We are delighted to have our purse ranked so highly in professional women's golf, reflecting our unwavering commitment to elevating the sport and empowering athletes at the highest level," said Carlos Padilla II, the tournament's executive director. "We are also incredibly proud to be honored as a runner-up for the Tournament of the Year award. This recognition is a testament to the hard work, passion, and dedication of everyone involved in the community, and it motivates us to continue striving for excellence."

In addition to its purse increase, the 2024 tournament was recently named runner-up for the

LPGA's Tournament of the Year award, further solidifying its reputation as one of women's golf's most prestigious competitions.

The championship celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2024 with a rebrand that introduced a new name, logo, and mascot, Champ. The unique 72-hole, two-player team format, featuring foursomes and four-ball play, has made the event a favorite for players and fans alike.

Beyond golf, the Dow Championship serves as a cornerstone for community engagement in the Great Lakes Bay Region. The tournament hosts a variety of programs, including the First Tee Junior Clinic, the Special Olympics 3-Hole Challenge, free ac-

cess for veterans, and leadership development initiatives.

Since its inception in 2019, the championship has donated over \$2 million to charitable causes and generates an estimated annual economic impact of \$20 million for the region. The event also partners with more than 250 local businesses and suppliers, fostering economic growth and collaboration.

The Dow Championship will return to Midland Country Club next June. Fans can expect tickets and volunteer opportunities to be announced in early 2025. For more information, visit www.dowchampionship.com or follow @DowChampionship on social media.



PICS OF THE WEEK

Saginaw's Holidays in the Heart of the City took place on Nov. 22-23, offering vendors, family-friendly activities, fireworks, and a festive Saturday Christmas parade.



2024 PARADE FLOAT AWARD WINNERS, WE ARE BIKE LIFE!



PHOTO CREDIT: RIVERFRONT SAGINAW



PHOTO CREDIT: RIVERFRONT SAGINAW



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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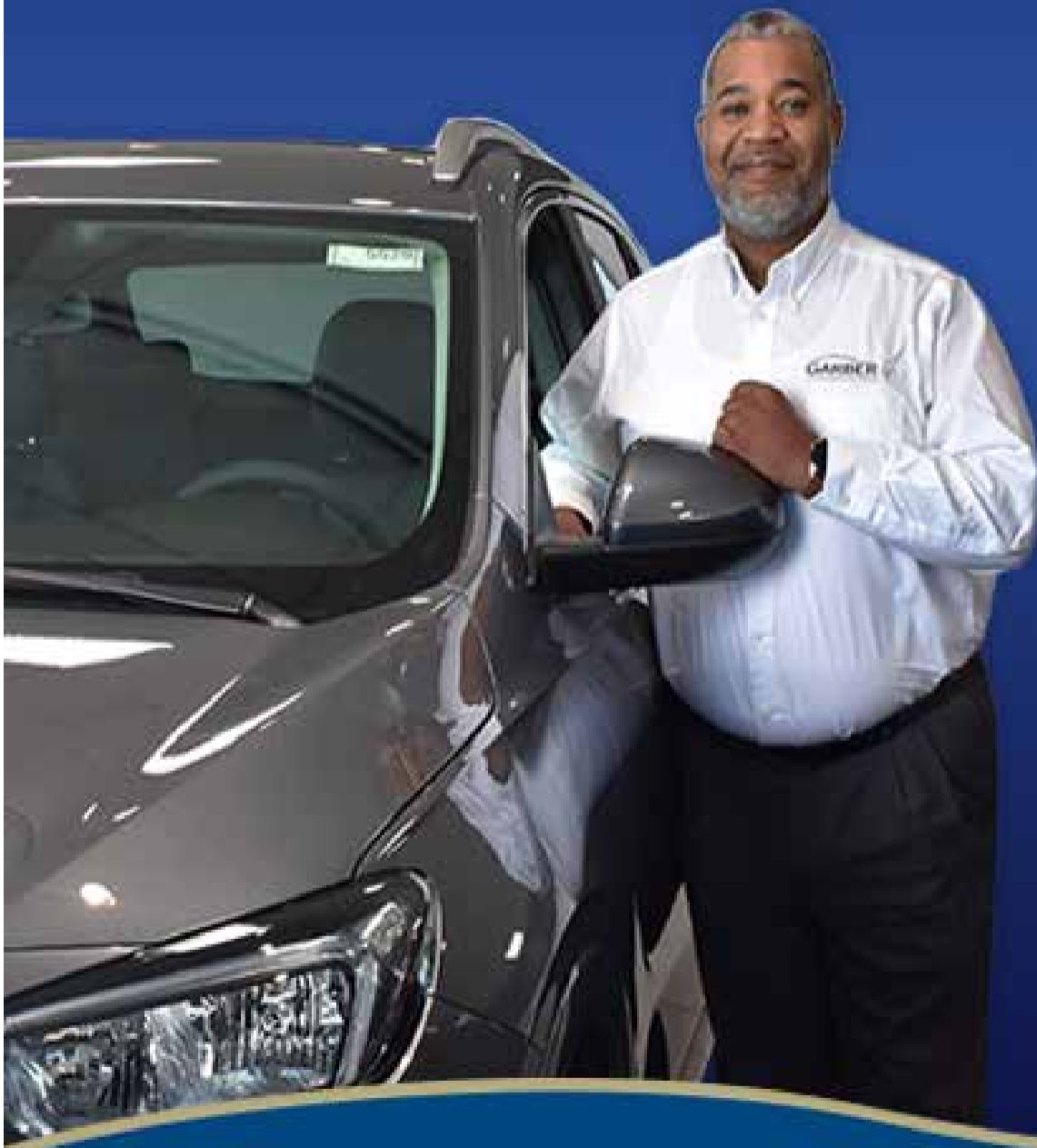


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