



SUPPORT *Local* JOURNALISM ▶ ▶ ▶

MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/DONATE



**Congratulations
Commandress
Brigitte D.
Johnson, Magnus
Court No. 100**

FAITH, PG 43



**A season of gratitude, grace,
and purpose**

BY JEROME BUCKLEY

As the year winds down and the glow of the holiday season settles over our homes and neighborhoods, I find myself thinking about the little things we too often rush past: warm conversations, familiar faces, shared meals, and quiet moments that remind us we're not alone. This time of year invites us to slow down, look back, and give thanks. And for me, it also brings the clearest reminder of all: Jesus is the reason for the season.

At The Michigan Banner, 2025 was another chapter in the work we believe in, telling the stories that deserve to be told, lifting voices that are too often overlooked, and shining a light on the people doing the steady, faithful work of building stronger communities. Every edition, every feature, every headline is rooted in a simple belief: when our communities are seen and heard, it grows stronger.

To our readers, partners, advertisers, and sponsors, thank you. Your support has helped keep this platform moving forward and helped



JEROME BUCKLEY

us continue serving the Great Lakes Bay Region and throughout Michigan with consistency and care. You don't just support a newspaper; you support a mission.

This year also brought a deeply personal reminder of what really matters. In 2025, I faced serious health challenges that tested my

strength and reshaped my perspective. It was not a journey I would have chosen, but it became a testimony I will never take lightly. There were days I had to lean harder

**See SEASONS
GREETINGS, Page 2**



**Saginaw
residents invited
to weigh in on
city's 5-year
housing and
development
plan**

COMMUNITY, PG 15



**Shields to defend
undisputed
heavyweight
title in Detroit**

SPORTS, PG 41

SEASONS GREETINGS, from cover

than ever on faith, and nights when prayer wasn't just something I did, it was something I needed.

Through it all, I held tightly to God's promises and the strength that comes from Him. Scripture didn't just comfort me, it carried me: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) And even in the middle of uncertainty, gratitude remained my anchor: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

That's what this season is about for me, not perfect moments, but present grace. Not just gifts under a tree, but the greatest Gift we've ever received. As the Bible says, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (2 Corinthians 9:15)

So while we celebrate with family, friends, and community, my prayer is that we also make room for the true meaning of Christmas: Christ's love, Christ's peace, and Christ's promise. Because when life gets heavy, it helps to remember we serve a Savior who is still near, still faithful, and still able.

As we step toward 2026, I'm moving forward with a renewed purpose and a grateful heart, committed to continuing the work, strengthening our connections, and telling the kinds of stories that help us grow, heal, and hope together.

From my heart to yours, thank you for walking with us through 2025. May your holiday season be filled with warmth, worship, and wonder, and may the peace of Jesus Christ rest on you and your home.

With gratitude and best wishes,



Jerome Buckley

CEO & Founder, The Michigan Banner



THIS DAY IN MICHIGAN HISTORY

DECEMBER 16, 1909

On Dec. 16, 1909, Detroit business leaders packed the Pontchartrain Hotel for a kickoff meeting to launch an Aero Club, urged on by William E. "Bill" Metzger, an early believer in aviation's potential. To spark interest, Russell A. Alger — a Packard Motor and Wright Airplane Co. investor — invited the Wright brothers to attend, and about 75 prominent Detroiters showed up as the city's newspapers reported on what aviation could mean for Detroit.



MEMBERS OF THE DETROIT AERO CLUB (COURTESY OF THE WILKINSON FOUNDATION)

MICHIGAN BANNER

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

PUBLISHER

Michelle McCoy

VP SALES & MARKETING

Jerome Buckley

EDITOR EMERITUS

Rae Lynn Buckley

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.

DISCLAIMER

The Michigan Banner and its staff are not responsible and will not be held liable for any mistakes, error, misspellings and false advertisements in part or whole that may be placed within its publication. Articles, information or comments printed in the newspaper are not necessarily the views or beliefs of The Michigan Banner newspaper. The Michigan Banner reserves the right to edit, change, or delete any information, or refuse to print any information, article or advertisement which is believed to be inconsistent with or conflicts with the mission of the newspaper.

DEADLINES

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

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Mailed or e-mailed
Preferred format: Jpeg or PDF

CONNECT WITH THE MICHIGAN BANNER ONLINE!

www.michiganbanner.org
Facebook.com/TheNewMichiganBanner
Twitter.com/MichiganBanner



IN THIS ISSUE ▶

Youth Banner 5 - 7
 Latino Banner LB 1 - LB 5
 Community 13
 Politics 20
 Health 23
 Education 26
 Business 36
 Sports 40
 Faith 42

MLK DAY

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR REGIONAL CELEBRATION

Thursday, January 22, 2026
7:00 p.m. — Malcolm Field Theatre
Located in Curtiss Hall

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



Inspiring conversation with **Cynthia "Cynt" Marshall**

*President & CEO, Marshalling Resources
Former CEO, Dallas Mavericks*

Cynt Marshall has been a dynamic force in business for over four decades, establishing a reputation as a champion for achieving business results through inclusion and a relentless focus on people and operational excellence.

Following a 36-year career at AT&T, Marshall established Marshalling Resources, a consulting firm specializing in leadership development, culture transformation and optimization of people resources. In 1987, she broke new ground when she was named CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, the first Black woman to hold the CEO title for any NBA team.

As senior vice president, human resources and chief diversity officer at AT&T, Marshall led the team that created a world class culture and also spearheaded the work that placed AT&T on Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For list in 2017, the first time in the company's history. She's had similar results with her clients at Marshalling Resources.

Marshall's first book, "You've Been Chosen," was released in September 2022 and nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

Widely recognized for her visionary leadership, Marshall has received numerous accolades, including the 2022 Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum Hope for Humanity award. In 2021, Forbes named Marshall one of 15 of the world's most inspiring female leaders, and in 2024, she was recognized as a Junior Achievement Dallas Business Hall of Fame Laureate. In 2025, Marshall was named Cal Alumni of the Year.

Marshall holds degrees in business administration and human resources management from the University of California at Berkeley. She has also been granted five honorary doctorate degrees.

She serves on four corporate boards and on several non-profit boards.

Celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This event will feature:

- Keynote Address — Cynthia "Cynt" Marshall
- Presentation of the MLK Regional Scholarship Awards
- Presentation of the MLK Regional Drum Major Awards for Community Service
- The Dr. Mamie T. Thorns and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award

For more information, please visit svsu.edu/mlk or contact the Office of Diversity Programs at **989-964-4068**

SVSU does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical impairment, disability or veteran status in the provision of education, employment and other services. SVSU will provide reasonable accommodation for those persons with disabilities. Individuals who wish accommodation should contact The Conference Center at SVSU at (989) 964-4348 at least three days prior to the need.

WORKING TOGETHER. SHARING THE DREAM.



**SAGINAW VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**

MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 24



Christmas gifts for parents that don't break the bank



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

If you're trying to get a gift for your parents (or guardians) without draining your whole paycheck or allowance, you're not alone. The good news is most parents don't actually need expensive stuff. They want something that shows you noticed them — what they like, what they're tired of, what they've been missing, or what would make their day easier. The best part is that thoughtful gifts can still be done on a budget, usually for \$5–\$30, and some are basically free.

One of the easiest ideas is a "You Don't Have to Think Today" coupon book. You can make a small booklet of coupons that your parent can cash in later, like a car wash (you wash it), a quiet hour where you handle chores and keep the peace, an "I'll cook dinner" night, a movie night of their choice, or a phone-free walk

where you just talk. It sounds simple, but if you actually follow through, it turns into a seriously good gift.

Another option is a snack box filled with their favorite things. Grab a small basket or even a paper bag and add items like their go-to chips or candy, coffee pods or tea bags, a fancy soda or juice, and some gum or mints. Add a note that says "Emergency Parent Fuel," and it instantly feels intentional — cheap, cute, and useful.

If you want something meaningful without spending much, do a memory gift. Print a few photos — even 3 to 10 is enough — and put them in a small frame, a mini photo album, or a decorated envelope with captions. Parents usually love this, even if they act like they don't.

A self-care starter pack is another affordable win. You can keep it simple with things like lotion and lip balm, a face mask, a

candle, or cozy socks. If money is tight, choose just two items and make it look like a matching set. Presentation makes it feel more expensive than it is.

You can also give the gift of real help by cleaning their space for real — not "I'll do it later," but actually doing it. Deep clean the kitchen, organize the pantry, vacuum the car, or clean the bathroom. Put it in a card that says, "Today, you rest. I got this," and it becomes a gift they'll genuinely appreciate.

If your parent likes music, make a playlist and pair it with a note. Name it something like "Songs That Remind Me of You," "Your Throwback Era," or "Stress Relief Mix," then write a short message explaining a few songs and why you chose them. It's personal, thoughtful, and costs nothing.

Food is always a good idea, too. Making breakfast or dessert — pancakes, French toast,

brownies, cookies — counts, even if you use a boxed mix. A simple trick is to plate it nicely, add a napkin, and write a tiny "menu" like it's a café. It makes the moment feel special.

If you have a little budget and want something practical, go for a \$10–\$20 "upgrade" they'll actually use, like a new phone charger, a travel mug, a car air freshener with cleaning wipes, a nice pen and small notebook, or warm gloves or a beanie. If they use it every day, they'll remember you gave it to them.

You can also build a small "day off" kit around their hobbies. For someone who gardens, add small gloves or seed packets. For a parent who cooks, pick a spice blend. For a reader, a bookmark and a snack works. For sports fans, team socks or a hat on sale can be perfect. It's basically saying, "I see what you're into," without needing a big price tag.

And honestly, the best cheap gift is effort and consistency. If you can't buy much, choose one thing and make it high effort — a handwritten letter, a cleaned house, a playlist, or a framed photo. Parents can tell when you rushed, and they can definitely tell when you didn't.

At the end of the day, the best gifts for parents aren't the ones with the biggest price tags — they're the ones that feel personal. Pick something that shows you were paying attention, add a short note, and put a little effort into how you give it. Whether it's a coupon book, a snack box, or you taking over chores for a day, the message is the same: I appreciate you. And that's the kind of gift they'll remember way longer than anything expensive.

Saginaw Promise Scholarship: Investment in Saginaw and its students!



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Saginaw Promise is making an investment in the future of Saginaw and in the lives of its students through postsecondary education. The Saginaw Promise is an organization that believes in the power of postsecondary education to be a “change agent” to affect positive change in Saginaw, its economy and quality of life and the lives of its students through a “residence based” scholarship; a benefit and an incentive for the children of families who live in the Saginaw Promise Zone to earn a program

certificate or degree. Education provides change for a lifetime to both the individual and their community.

The Saginaw Promise scholarship benefits students who reside in and graduate from a high school in the Saginaw Promise Zone (Saginaw, Zilwaukee, Kocville and that area of Buena Vista designated to the Saginaw Public School District). The Saginaw Promise scholarship can be used at technical/trade schools, community colleges, and universities throughout Michigan for tuition and mandatory fees and is renewable for up to two years. Students must apply for the scholarship

within two years of high school graduation and scholars have up to six years from high school graduation to use their scholarship. Note: The Saginaw Promise is working to revise its Development Plan to fund “Costs of Attendance,” once approved, funding would be broadened beyond tuition and fees to include costs such as housing, books, supplies, transportation etc. Since 2012, Saginaw Promise has awarded \$1,405,747 in scholarships to 774 scholars, and those scholars have earned 323 program certificates and degrees to-date!

How to apply: Students are required to complete the online

Saginaw Community Foundation scholarship application at saginawfoundation.org/site/scholarships/ and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <https://fasa.ed.gov/> to apply for the Saginaw Promise scholarship and to be reviewed for other available funding. Application deadline is February 13, 2026. For questions or information about the Saginaw Promise, programming or scholarship, visit www.saginawpromise.org or telephone (989) 607-3428.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Saginaw NAACP invites high school students to compete in 2026 ACT-SO

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Saginaw NAACP is inviting high school students in grades 9-12 to apply for its 2026 ACT-SO competition, part of the national Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics program.

Applications are due April 6, 2026. The local ACT-SO competition is scheduled for April 18, 2026, at 9 a.m. at 3145 Russel St.

The competition includes categories in business and culinary, humanities and visual art, and performing arts and STEM. Local prizes include gold, silver and bronze medals for first through third place.

Winners may advance to the 49th Annual National ACT-SO Competition, set for July 15-19, 2026, in Chicago. National prizes listed include a gold medal and \$2,000 for first place, a silver medal and \$1,500 for second place, and a bronze medal and \$1,000 for third place.

For more information, call 989-327-4499 or email ypugh914@aol.com.

Saginaw NAACP ACT-SO
Academic Cultural Technological Scientific Olympics



Calling All High School Students - Grade 9-12

Application Deadline
April 6, 2026

ACT-SO Competition 2026

Local Competition

April 18th 2026

9am 3145 Russel Street



**Business
Culinary**

**Humanities
Visual Art**

**Performing Arts
STEM**

Saginaw Local Prizes

- 1st Place-Gold Medal
- 2nd Place-Silver Medal
- 3rd Place - Bronze Medal

National Prizes

- 1st Place-Gold Medal & \$2000
- 2nd Place-Silver Medal & \$1500
- 3rd Place - Bronze Medal & \$1000

49th Annual National ACT-SO Competition
Date & Location: July 15-19, 2026
National Competition: Chicago, IL

For more information
Call 989-327-4499 or email ypugh914@aol.com



Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

Nessel joins 19 states in lawsuit challenging \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visa petitions



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has joined a coalition of 20 states in a federal lawsuit seeking to block a Trump administration policy that imposes a \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visa petitions, calling the charge unlawful and harmful to key industries that rely on highly skilled workers.

The policy, implemented through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, applies to H-1B applications filed after Sept. 21, 2025, following a presidential proclamation issued Sept. 19, according to the Michigan Attorney General's office.

"The H-1B visa program is

meant to attract and retain highly skilled workers, and slapping a massive fee on the very people who help educate our students, keep our auto industry competitive, and provide critical medical care is not only unlawful but harmful to Michiganders," Nessel said in a statement.

H-1B visas allow U.S. employers to hire foreign workers in specialty occupations that typically require at least a bachelor's degree. Nessel's office said nearly 12,000 people in Michigan are employed through H-1B visas. Under federal law, employers must also certify that hiring an H-1B worker will not negatively affect wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers, the office said.

In the lawsuit, the states argue the \$100,000 charge exceeds what Congress authorized and was imposed without required rulemaking procedures under the Administrative Procedure Act, among other claims. The states also contend the fee far exceeds the government's cost to process petitions; Nessel's office said employers typically expect to pay between \$960 and \$7,595 in regulatory and statutory fees for an initial H-1B petition. Reuters reported the case is at least the third legal challenge to the fee and was filed in federal court in Boston.

Nessel's office warned the fee could strain public and nonprofit employers, including schools and hospitals, that use the program

to address staffing gaps. The office cited national data showing widespread difficulty filling teaching positions and said healthcare providers rely on the program to recruit physicians and other clinicians.

The coalition includes the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin, in addition to Michigan. The White House has defended the fee as a lawful measure intended to deter abuse of the H-1B program, according to Reuters.

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



DOMINA TUS SISTEMAS FINANCIEROS

¿QUÉ APRENDERÁS?

- Gestionar el flujo de efectivo y evitar errores contables
- Dominar las 3 R: Revisar, Conciliar y Reportar
- Construir tu primer presupuesto funcional



 **20 DE ENERO, 2026.**

Alliance Catholic Credit Union, 28800 Orchard Lake Rd, Farmington Hills, MI 48334

4:30 p.m - 7:00 p.m

 **100% bilingüe**

CHARMAINE FULLER

Fundadora y Jefa de Estrategia Financiera

\$10 ANTES DEL 1 DE ENERO

PRECIO NORMAL: \$30

Cupos limitados



Para más información contacte a Laura Geftos: lgeftos@mhcc.org

Scholarship opens for Michigan Latino high school seniors



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

MICHIGAN — ALSAME (Advocates for Latino Student Advancement in Michigan Education) has opened applications for its 2026 scholarship program, seeking Michigan high school seniors who have shown a strong commitment to supporting their communities and who plan to continue their education in the state.

The ALSAME Scholarship is intended to recognize and support students whose goals and experiences reflect the organization’s mission and values. The award amount varies each year, with scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,000. The scholarship is open to Michigan high school students who will enroll in a Michigan higher education institution — including public, private, or trade schools — in fall 2026.

ALSAME said the scholarship is not tuition-restricted. Scholarship recipients also agree that ALSAME may use their name and likeness in future promotional materials aimed at encour-

aging students to apply.

Applicants must be current high school seniors at the time of application, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0, be on track to graduate from a Michigan high school in 2026, and enroll in a Michigan institution. Applicants must also reflect ALSAME’s mission and values, according to the organization.

Required application materials include an official high school transcript, a personal statement (with a prompt provided in the application), and one letter of recommendation. Recommenders who prefer to submit letters directly may email them to scholarships@alsame.org.

The scholarship committee also cautioned students against using AI-generated materials for their personal statements, encouraging applicants to share their own stories as part of a holistic review process.

The application deadline is Feb. 28, 2026. ALSAME said scholarship recipients must submit proof of enrollment by early July 2026, with awards expected to be mailed by late July or early August.

Alsame!

SCHOLARSHIP 2026

Apply Now! Due Feb. 28th!

SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA:

- Be a current high school senior at time of application
- Have a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0
- On track to graduate from a high school in Michigan in 2026
- Must enroll at a higher education institution in Michigan (public/private/trade)
- Reflect ALSAME's mission/values

APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Official high school transcripts
- Personal Statement (prompt in application)
- Letter of Recommendation

MORE INFORMATION:

- www.alsame.org
- scholarships@alsame.org

Multiple scholarships \$500 - \$3,000

Apply Now!

IT MATTERS WHERE YOU BUY YOUR CAR



5925 State St, Saginaw, MI 48603



Louie Garcia

(989) 770-3078

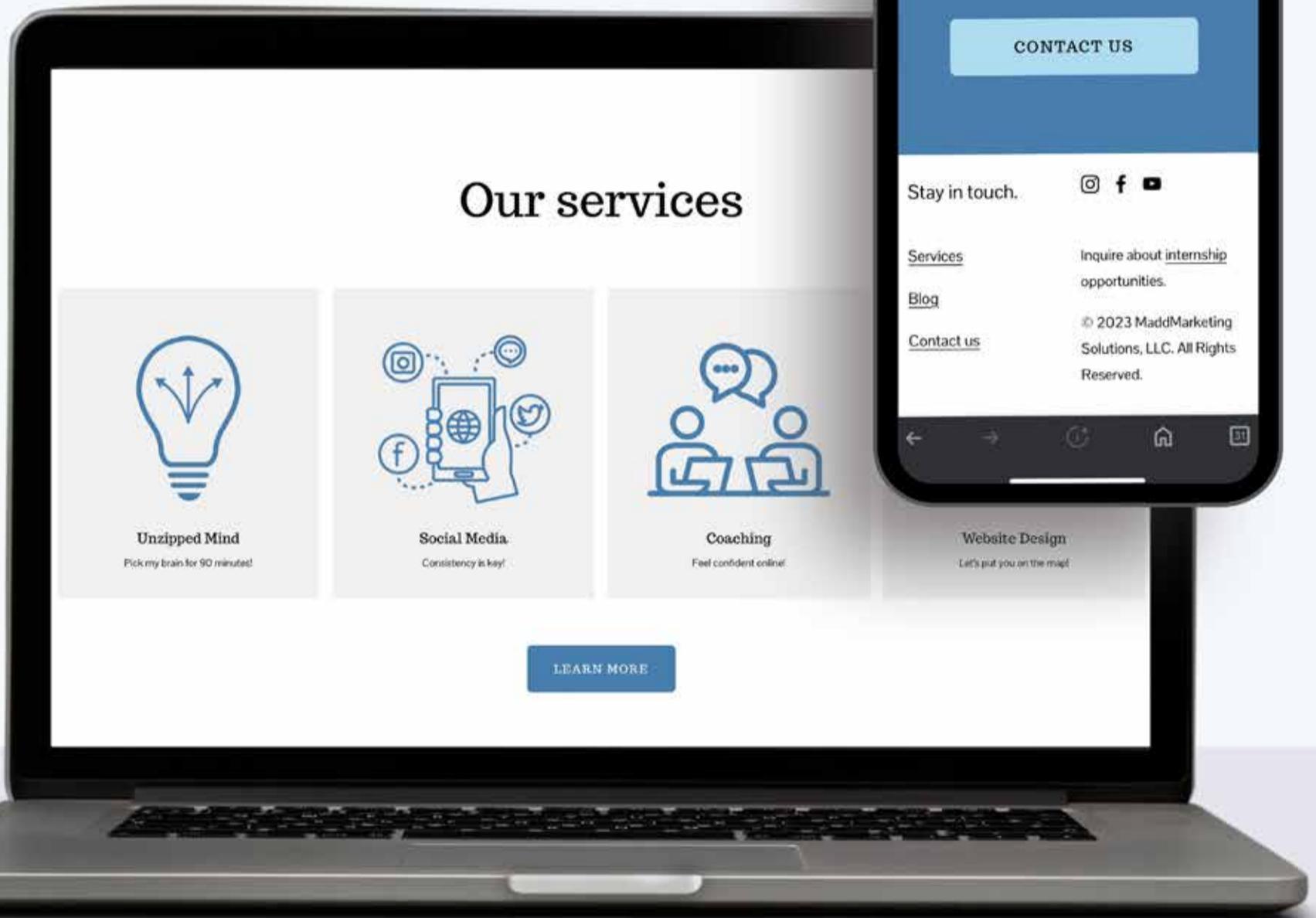
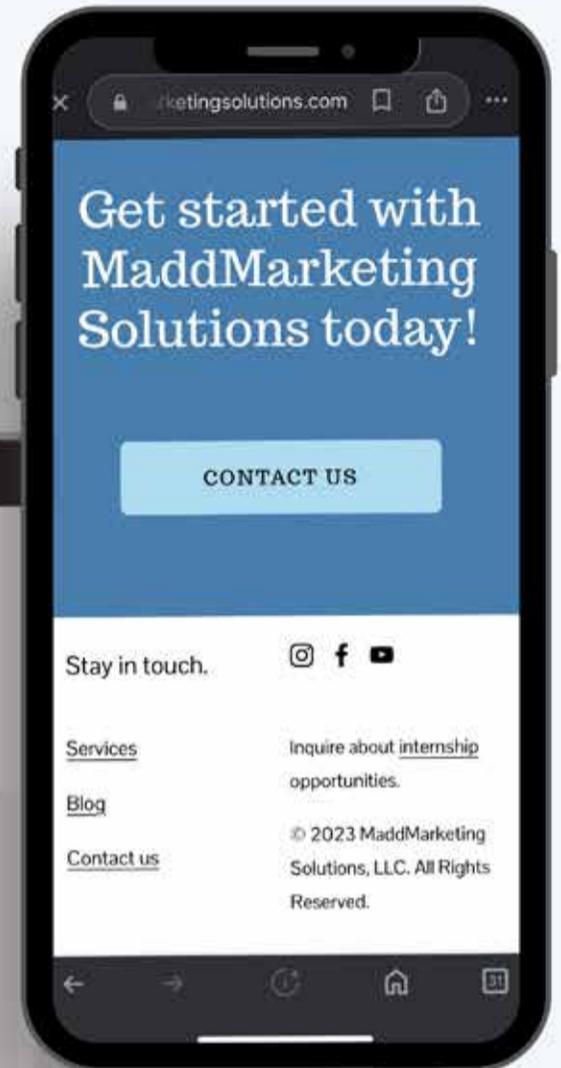
LGarcia@garberbuick.com

You'll Do Better At **GARBER**

www.garberbuick.com



MaddMarketing Solutions
@maddmkt



Schedule Your Free Consultation Today

www.maddmarketingsolutions.com

COMMUNITY

Flint water settlement payments move forward



FLINT WATER PLANT

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Flint residents began receiving letters last week outlining how much they will receive from the Flint water settlement fund, and an online payment portal went live Dec. 12, 2025, for approved claimants to access their payments.

Nearly 26,000 people have been found eligible to share in a settlement fund totaling more than \$600 million, created by the state of Michigan, the city of Flint, McLaren Flint Hospital and Rowe Professional Services to resolve lawsuits tied to the

Flint water crisis.

More than a decade ago, an emergency manager appointed by then-Gov. Rick Snyder moved Flint's drinking water source in an effort to save money. The switch to improperly treated Flint River water damaged aging pipes and allowed lead and other contaminants to leach into the city's tap water.

In an order approving the payment process earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Judith Levy authorized distributing payments to claimants on a rolling basis.

The first letters involved

property claims. About 7,000 residential property damage claims have been approved under the settlement, with payments worth about \$1,000 per property.

The special master overseeing the fund has said most payouts are expected to be modest. But some claims — particularly those involving people who were young children during the crisis with documented high lead exposure — are expected to receive compensation of around \$100,000.

Under the distribution plan, children who were 6 and under at the time of the water crisis

are allocated 64.5% of the fund. Children ages 7 to 11 are allocated 10%, while those ages 12 to 17 are allocated 5%. Adults at the time of the crisis with eligible injuries are allocated 15%. Residential property damage claims are allocated 3%, capped at \$1,000 per property, and business loss claims are allocated 0.5%, capped at \$5,000 per business. Altogether, claims are divided among 30 categories.

The exact size of the fund remains unclear. The original \$626.5 million settlement approved in 2020 has continued to grow through interest earnings.

Established
November 26, 1935

Cheers

90th

• BIRTHDAY •



Saginaw residents invited to weigh in on city's 5-year housing and development plan

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — City residents are invited to share feedback on Saginaw's updated five-year Consolidated Plan during a public open house Wednesday, Dec. 17, at the Andersen Enrichment Center.

The meeting begins at 6 p.m. and is open to all city residents. Dinner will be provided, and the first 100 eligible households in attendance will receive a free air purifier from Consumers Energy, according to the city.

Saginaw's five-year Consolidated Plan is a strategy used by local governments to address affordable housing and community development needs with federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The plan covers how the city will use funds from the Community Development Block Grant program, HOME and Emergency Solutions Grants, including priorities related to low-income residents, homelessness and economic development.

Once drafted, the plan will be presented to City Council for final approval and then submitted to HUD, the city said.

"Public participation is extremely important as we develop our 5-Year Consolidated Plan," Kanah Franklin, the city's deputy director of community services, said in a statement. Franklin said the city is asking residents where they would like to see federal dollars invested and noted the funding can support a wide range of projects, including housing rehabilitation, street resurfacing, recreation and youth programs, and blight elimination.

For more information, residents can contact Franklin at (989) 759-1533.

YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

OPEN HOUSE EVENT

Wednesday December 17 | 6:00 to 8:00 PM | 120 Ezra Rust Dr. Saginaw, MI 48601

First eligible 100 households receive a FREE air purifier!

The City of Saginaw CDBG Division needs your input on how to grow and enhance our community through housing and economic development.

Dinner provided! All ages welcome

Join us at the Andersen Enrichment Center to voice your ideas!

For more information, please contact: 989-577-0184

EVENT FLYER

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
RITA'S SOUTHERN SOUL CAFE 4TH ANNUAL

Holiday Gift *Giveaway*

DECEMBER

21

2PM-5PM

FOOD, SOCIALIZING, & GIFTS

110 N WASHINGTON AVE SAGINAW MI 48607

For more info call 989-233-0176

Sponsored by Rita's Southern Soul Cafe

First 300 Welcome

COMMUNITY

Cynthia “Cynt” Marshall will keynote regional MLK Day celebration

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw Valley State University will hold its MLK Day Regional Celebration on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, featuring an “inspiring conversation” with business leader Cynthia “Cynt” Marshall.

The event is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Malcolm Field Theatre in Curtiss Hall and is open to the public, according to SVSU event information. The program is set to include the MLK Regional Scholarship Awards, MLK Regional Drum Major Awards for Community Service, and the Dr. Mamie T. Thorns and Dr. Mar-

tin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award.

Marshall is the president and CEO of Marshalling Resources and the former CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, SVSU said. She became the first Black female CEO in NBA history when she was hired to lead the franchise in 2018 amid allegations of workplace misconduct within the Mavericks’ business office.

Before joining the Mavericks, Marshall spent 36 years at AT&T in leadership roles that included work focused on workplace culture and diversity, equity and inclusion. She announced her retirement as Mavericks CEO effective Dec. 31, 2024. During her

tenure, she helped launch a new television partnership expanding free access to games in Texas and oversaw \$30 million in upgrades at the American Airlines Center, ESPN reported.

Marshall has also been recognized nationally for her leadership. Forbes listed her among its “world’s most inspiring female leaders” in 2021, and Worth named her to its “21 Most Powerful Women in the Business of Sports.”

More information is available at SVSU’s MLK webpage or through the Office of Diversity Programs at 989-964-4068.



CYNTHIA “CYNT” MARSHALL

African American film series continues with screening of “Sing Sing”

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — Communities First, Inc. will present “Sing Sing” on Thursday, Dec. 18, as the second film in its 11th Annual African American Film Series at the Flint Institute of Arts.

Based on true events, “Sing Sing” follows Divine G, a man wrongly imprisoned at the Sing Sing prison, who finds healing and purpose through a theater program aimed at building creativity, empathy and hope among incarcerated men.

The evening will be held at the Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., with dinner and live music beginning at 5:30 p.m., the film screening at 6:45 p.m., and a discussion panel afterward. The event is free to attend, with

AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM SERIES

a suggested \$5 donation. Doors are scheduled for 5:30 p.m., and

programming runs until 10 p.m. Registration information is

available here: <https://tinyurl.com/AAFS2025>

YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

OPEN HOUSE EVENT

Wednesday | **6:00 to** | **120 Ezra Rust Dr.**
December 17 | **8:00 PM** | **Saginaw, MI 48601**

**First eligible
100 households
receive a FREE
air purifier!**

The City of Saginaw CDBG
Division needs your input
on how to grow and
enhance our community
through housing and
economic development.

**Dinner
provided!
All ages
welcome**

**Join us at the Andersen Enrichment
Center to voice your ideas!**



For more information, please contact:
989-577-0184



COMMUNITY

Michigan to revive red, white and blue license plate for 2026, tied to U.S. 250th anniversary



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — A familiar piece of Michigan road nostalgia is returning in 2026.

Beginning Jan. 2, drivers will be able to order a limited-edition red, white and blue license plate — a stars-and-stripes redesign inspired by the state's 1976 bicentennial plate — as Michigan marks America's semiquincentennial, or 250 years of independence.

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson announced the plate's comeback this week, calling it a way to recognize the nation's milestone while continuing

Michigan's recent trend of reviving historic plate designs. "As we prepare to celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary, I'm proud to announce Michigan's iconic red, white and blue license plate will return to our roads in 2026," Benson said.

The state's new version is billed as a modern take on the 1976 design, which earned Michigan its first "Plate of the Year" honor from the Automobile License Plate Collectors Association, according to the Secretary of State's office. The updated plate features flag elements including stars and stripes and will be sold through the end of 2026.

State officials said the plate will cost \$55 upfront, which includes a \$5 plate service fee and a \$50 contribution to the Michigan Transportation Fund for road construction and repairs. Drivers renewing the legacy plate in subsequent years will pay an additional \$10 renewal fee, the state said.

The semiquincentennial plate is the newest addition to Michigan's "legacy plate" lineup, created under Public Act 317 of 2023, which directed the state to develop throwback designs based on plates first issued in the 1970s and 1980s. Michigan already offers legacy options replicating the

blue "Great Lakes" plate and the black "Great Lake State" plate.

Ordering will be available starting Jan. 2 online, through dealerships during a vehicle purchase, or by visiting a Secretary of State office, according to the department. The state's legacy plate webpage also notes plates may be ordered through online services or by mail using the designated application, with registration and personalization fees applying.

Online ordering: Michigan.gov/SOS

Legacy plate info: Michigan.gov/LegacyPlates

POLITICS

Whitmer's new DGA leadership post amplifies national profile, renews 2028 speculation

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's election as vice chair of the Democratic Governors Association for the 2026 cycle is a new national platform for the term-limited Michigan Democrat — and it is already raising fresh questions about what comes next, including whether she could eventually be drawn into the 2028 presidential conversation, even as she has not announced any such plans.

Democratic governors voted unanimously for Whitmer at the group's annual meeting in Phoenix, elevating her into a leadership role alongside Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who began his term as chair. The DGA, a political organization focused on electing and supporting Democratic governors, will be heavily engaged next year as voters in 36 states choose their governors.

Beshear said he looked forward to working with Whitmer as the group seeks to expand the party's map in 2026. "Democratic governors are making life better for families across our country by staying laser-focused on issues like lowering costs, creating jobs, and improving public education," he said in a statement released by the association.

Whitmer, who cannot seek a third term under Michigan's constitutional term limits, has framed her new role around "kitchen table issues." "In Michigan, we've shown that staying focused on the kitchen table issues — like costs, jobs, and roads — is a winning strategy," Whitmer said in a statement circulated by the DGA and her political organization.



GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER

The DGA has previewed an "affordability" message it says will anchor its approach, including emphasis on housing, child care, utilities and grocery costs, and competing in states where Democrats have struggled in the Trump era.

Whitmer's move into a national campaign leadership post comes as Democrats look to their governors — many of whom have won statewide office in competitive or conservative-leaning states — as messengers for the party heading into 2026 and beyond. It also places Whitmer more visibly in the same national political ecosystem where potential presidential contenders often

build relationships, raise money and campaign for allies.

Whitmer has faced questions about 2028 before. In an Associated Press report this fall, she cast doubt on a presidential run during remarks in Toronto, saying she may not be "the main character" while emphasizing her focus on current responsibilities.

Still, the combination of term limits at home, a prominent national role for a major Democratic political organization, and the heightened visibility that comes with helping recruit and boost candidates in dozens of states is likely to keep interest in Whitmer's long-term plans alive — particularly as the party begins to

look past 2026.

Whitmer has also been recalibrating her involvement in national governors' groups. The Detroit News previously reported that she stepped away from the National Governors Association earlier this year, with her office citing concerns about a lack of bipartisanship in the organization.

For now, Whitmer's new assignment is clear: help Democrats win governors' races in 2026. Whether that role becomes a springboard to something larger remains unsettled — and, publicly at least, unclaimed by the governor herself.

McDonald Rivet, Kiggans introduce bipartisan bill on child care access and affordability

BY MB STAFF

WASHINGTON — Reps. Kristen McDonald Rivet of Michigan and Jen Kiggans of Virginia on Thursday, Dec. 11, introduced a bipartisan bill aimed at examining why affordable, accessible child care remains out of reach for many families across the United States.

The proposed Child Care Access & Affordability Act would direct the Government Accountability Office to study challenges families face when searching for child care, including difficulties meeting state Child Care and Development Block Grant eligibility standards, the extent of child care waitlists, state subsidies for child care providers, and the impact of inflation on affordability and access.

“It’s becoming nearly im-



FILE PHOTO

possible for working parents to get child care,” McDonald Rivet said in a release announcing the bill, pointing to high monthly costs and lengthy waitlists. Kiggans said the measure would help gather information needed to “fix a system that’s simply not working,” including examining

waitlists, eligibility rules and rising costs affecting families and providers.

McDonald Rivet’s office said she has worked on child care and early education initiatives throughout her career, including serving as executive director of Michigan Head Start and as chief

of staff at the Michigan Department of Education. The release said she recently hosted a bipartisan child care roundtable and introduced the Early Education Savings Program Act, a separate bipartisan proposal that would expand 529 savings programs to cover child care expenses.

Michigan Democrats weigh response after House GOP uses rare maneuver to cut \$645M from budget

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan legislative Democrats are weighing their next steps after the House Republican majority used an obscure budget maneuver to cut \$645 million from the current state budget — a move that does not require approval from the Senate or Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

The action targets funding for multiyear projects that remained unspent at the end of the last fiscal year. Among the items affected are allocations tied to prenatal

and newborn programs, museums and symphonies, and Flint water crisis recovery efforts.

House Speaker Matt Hall, R-Richland Township, said Republicans have been searching the budget for fraud and abuse and described much of the canceled spending as unvetted projects approved while Democrats controlled the Legislature. Hall said some of the funding could return after further review, but he said projects would have to be reconsidered through a public process.

“We’re going to find, I’ll bet, that a lot of them don’t get re-submitted because they’re going

to have to go through that transparent process now,” Hall said Thursday.

Democrats criticized the vote as abrupt and said it undercut claims of transparency. They also said community organizations were caught off guard and now face pressure to make up for lost revenue.

House Minority Leader Ranjeev Puri, D-Canton, said Democrats are reviewing options, including possible legal action.

“All options are on the table,” Puri said. “Look, I think the problem with the dynamic that’s been set up is that this is an unprece-

ded maneuver and so we’re all trying to figure out what exactly is happening.”

In the Senate, Democrats said the House move — even if legal — violated the terms of a bipartisan budget deal as lawmakers head into a new round of spending negotiations. Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks, D-Grand Rapids, sharply criticized the timing.

“There’s a special place in hell for someone willing to yank money away from moms and babies 15 days before Christmas,” Brinks said in a statement.

Holiday Cheer is Here!



Fun to give and even more fun to get, Holiday Instant Tickets from the Michigan Lottery are bursting with cheer. Everyone loves to scratch and play for a chance to win up to **\$500,000** instantly. Whether tucked into stockings or handed out with a grin, these festive tickets are the kind of surprise that makes spirits bright. This year, gift something wonderful with Holiday Instant Tickets.



NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION and all related characters and elements © & TM Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
Overall odds of winning Holiday Colors: 1 in 4.66. Overall odds of winning Holiday Doubler: 1 in 4.46. Overall odds of winning NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION: 1 in 3.76.
Overall odds of winning 25 Days of Winning: 1 in 3.60. Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call 1-800-GAMBLER for confidential help.



HEALTH

MyMichigan Health opens second rehabilitation services site in Mt. Pleasant



MYMICHIGAN HEALTH'S NEW REHABILITATION SERVICES LOCATION AT 1400 MISSION STREET IN MT. PLEASANT. (COURTESY OF MYMICHIGAN HEALTH)

BY MB STAFF

MT. PLEASANT, Mich. — MyMichigan Health has opened a second Rehabilitation Services location in Mt. Pleasant, expanding access to physical therapy and other rehabilitative care as demand for services grows, the health system announced.

The new facility, located at 1400 Mission St. in Campus Plaza, is designed to support specialized therapy techniques and includes 8,400 square feet of open space for plyometric training, agility drills, throwing and other performance-focused therapies, according to MyMichigan Health. The site is open 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through

Thursday and 7 a.m. to noon Fridays.

“MyMichigan is deeply committed to the health of our entire community, providing local residents of all ages—including Central Michigan University (CMU) students and student-athletes—with an expanded array of expert care options,” said Brian Locke, D.P.T., A.T., manager of rehabilitation services at MyMichigan Health. “Our goal is to help everyone recover quickly from injury, effectively manage chronic conditions, and achieve optimal mobility.”

Therapists at the Campus Plaza site include Jacob Hart, D.P.T., who specializes in sports medicine, injury prevention, manual therapy and blood flow

restriction and also works with CMU student-athletes on campus; Zachary Lamphere, D.P.T., and Nathaniel Wittenbach, D.P.T., who specialize in orthopedics and sports medicine; Gwendolyn Warby-Marsh, M.S.P.T., who specializes in orthopedics and sports medicine and also works with CMU student-athletes on campus; and MacKenzie Sohns, D.P.T., who specializes in orthopedics, vestibular and balance dysfunction, concussion management and LSVT Big therapy.

MyMichigan Health also continues to offer physical, occupational and speech therapy at MyMichigan Medical Center Mt. Pleasant, 4851 E. Pickard St., Suite 2600. That location is open

7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fridays, the health system said.

Physical therapists at the medical center site include Mandy Alvord, D.P.T., and Kristin Andraka, D.P.T., who specialize in pediatrics and a range of developmental and orthopedic conditions; Alex Catlin, D.P.T., who specializes in manual therapy, musculoskeletal and sports medicine, shoulder rehabilitation and dry needling; Nicole Erbes, D.P.T., who specializes in pelvic floor and women’s health; Erin Hammar, D.P.T., who specializes in orthopedics, sports medicine and vestibular and balance dysfunction; and Shrinivas Punjabi, D.P.T., M.P.T., O.C.S., who specializes in musculoskeletal and sports medicine and manual therapy and is board certified in orthopedic physical therapy.

Occupational therapy services at the medical center location include Melissa Thomas, O.T.R.L., specializing in lymphedema; Madeline Welch, O.T.R.L., specializing in pediatrics, feeding, sensory processing and neurodevelopment; and Monica Wilds, O.T.R.L., who is LSVT Big and Vivistim certified and specializes in orthopedics, hand, wrist, elbow and neuro rehabilitation. Speech therapy services are also offered through Sara Vos, M.A., C.C.C., S.L.P., who specializes in dysphagia, adult neurogenics, voice, pediatrics and LSVT.

To schedule an appointment at either location, residents can contact the MyMichigan Access Center at (989) 633-5252.

HEALTH

Beating the winter blues: How to handle seasonal depression in Michigan

Michigan winters can be beautiful, but the short days, gray skies and cold temps can also hit hard. For some people, that slump becomes seasonal depression — often called seasonal affective disorder (SAD) — where mood, sleep and motivation dip during the winter months. If that sounds familiar, the good news is there are practical ways to push back and feel more like yourself again.

Start with light, because darkness is a big trigger. Open blinds as soon as you wake up, sit near windows when you can, and try to get outside during daylight even if it's just a 10-minute walk. Some people also benefit from a light therapy box used in the morning, which can help reset the body's internal clock. Next,



FILE PHOTO

protect your routine. Winter can make it easy to stay in bed, skip meals or stop moving, but consistency is a mood booster. Aim for

regular sleep and wake times, eat real meals (not just snacks), and build in movement that's realistic — a home workout, a tread-

mill walk, a dance break, or even stretching while watching TV.

It also helps to stay connected. When it's cold, isolation can sneak up fast, so plan small "social anchors" like a weekly coffee date, a phone call, or joining a class or group. Add something enjoyable on purpose, too — a hobby, music, a creative project, or a short trip to a museum or indoor garden. And don't ignore the mental side: journaling, prayer or meditation, and limiting doom-scrolling can reduce stress. If your mood drops most days, you're sleeping too much or too little, or you feel hopeless, it's worth talking to a doctor or counselor — seasonal depression is common and treatable, and help can make a big difference.



NEXT GENERATION ORTHOPAEDIC TREATMENTS

Choose the most preferred health system for orthopaedics.

It's important to keep your bones and muscles strong. Covenant HealthCare keeps the whole family one step ahead. We're leading the way with next generation treatments, like robotic-assisted joint replacement, advanced expertise for complex trauma injuries, and a personalized approach to sports medicine. With the largest orthopaedic team, we're with you every step of the way. You have a choice. Choose Covenant HealthCare.



CovenantHealthCare.com/Ortho



MDHHS urges flu shots as influenza rises in Michigan and new H3N2 variant emerges

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — With influenza activity increasing in Michigan and across parts of the United States, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is urging residents to get vaccinated as holiday travel and gatherings begin.

“Vaccination remains the most important tool for prevention of serious influenza illness,” the department said in a Dec. 2 update tied to National Influenza Vaccination Week, observed annually in early December.

“The flu vaccine may not prevent mild illness, but data shows it reduces severe complications of influenza, including hospitalization,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, Michigan’s chief medical executive. “Getting a flu vaccine now is a great way to boost your immunity against influenza through the winter months, when we tend to see even more cases.”

MDHHS pointed to an earlier and more intense start to flu season in the United Kingdom, Canada and other countries whose seasonal timing often mirrors the U.S. In the United Kingdom, officials have reported a rise in positive flu tests to 13.3% as of Sunday, Nov. 9, compared with about 4% at the same time last year. Most recent U.K. cases have been linked to the H3N2 strain, and many samples show a newer version known as subclade K.

The World Health Organization reviews circulating strains each year to help guide the formula for seasonal vaccines. MDHHS said this year’s flu vaccine was designed to protect against an H3N2 strain known as subclade J.2, but a newer variant — subclade K — emerged after development. Officials said hospitals in the U.K. have reported higher-than-normal respiratory



FILE PHOTO

infections and have partially attributed the increase to subclade K’s efficient spread.

Despite that, MDHHS said vaccine effectiveness estimates from the U.K. indicate the current vaccine still provides protection, preventing an estimated 70% to 75% of flu-related hospital visits for children and 30% to 40% for adults. The department said vaccination can help reduce the severity of symptoms and outcomes even when it does not fully prevent infection.

Michigan’s vaccination rate remains low, MDHHS said. According to the Michigan Respiratory Virus Immunization Statewide Summary, influenza vaccine coverage for the 2025-

26 season is about 18% — roughly one in six residents — raising concerns about higher illness levels, emergency department visits and hospitalizations as the season continues.

MDHHS cited the 2024-25 season as an example of how severe influenza can become. Michigan recorded more than 33,000 hospitalizations between October 2024 and May 2025, with weekly hospitalizations peaking at more than 3,100 in February. Emergency departments saw nearly 8,600 influenza-related visits at the height of the season, the department said.

The department also reported 14 pediatric influenza deaths in Michigan during the 2024-25

season — the highest since the state began tracking pediatric flu mortality in 2004 — and urged families to ensure eligible children are vaccinated.

MDHHS recommends that everyone eligible — ages 6 months and older — get an annual flu shot. The department also advised residents to stay home when sick, cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands frequently and improve indoor ventilation to help reduce spread of influenza and other respiratory illnesses.

More information on influenza trends and vaccine coverage is available at [Michigan.gov/COVIDFLURSV](https://www.michigan.gov/COVIDFLURSV).

EDUCATION

SVSU approves room-and-board increase, authorizes degrees



A RESIDENCE HALL AT SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY IS SHOWN ON THE SCHOOL'S CAMPUS IN UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH. SVSU'S BOARD OF CONTROL ON FRIDAY, DEC. 12, APPROVED ROOM-AND-BOARD RATE INCREASES FOR THE 2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR. (COURTESY OF SVSU)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Saginaw Valley State University Board of Control approved higher room-and-board rates for the 2026-27 academic year and passed a resolution authorizing the university to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees during its regular meeting Friday, Dec. 12.

SVSU said the average weighted increase for students living on campus in its residence halls will be 4.3%.

For incoming freshmen with a meal plan, rates will rise from

\$12,500 to \$13,000 in 2026-27, according to information provided to the board. Students residing in shared-occupancy bedrooms or efficiency units will see rates increase from \$6,500 to \$7,000.

Students living in University Village, Pine Grove, or in a single bedroom in a residence hall will pay \$7,500, compared with \$7,200 in the current year.

The university's residence halls and on-campus apartments are at full capacity this year, SVSU said, and all available units for returning students have already been reserved for 2026-27. SVSU is building additional apartment-style student housing

in the University Village and Pine Grove sections of campus.

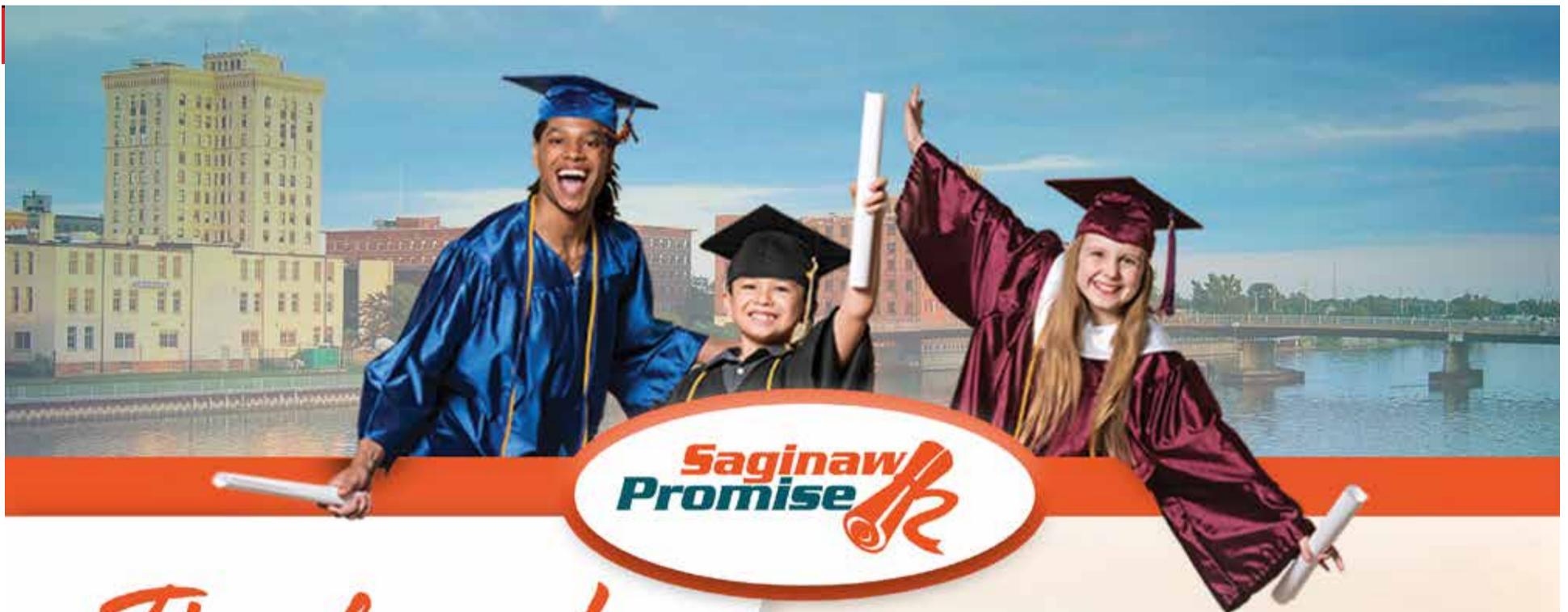
SVSU also pointed to national recognition for its on-campus housing. In Niche's annual "best dorms" ranking, SVSU has been named No. 1 among all public universities in the United States.

In other action Friday, the board passed a resolution to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees ahead of commencement exercises scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 13. SVSU said about 500 students are expected to participate.

The board also approved sabbaticals for 10 faculty members: Cal Borden, biology; George

Corser, computer science; Sherin Frances, English; James Hitt, philosophy; Mohamad Khan, electrical and computer engineering; Shiva Nadavulakere, management and marketing; Chris Nakamura, physics; Chat Pongpatipat, management and marketing; Abir Rahman, computer science; and Sher Ratnabalasuriar, criminal justice.

Trustees approved revisions to the policy statement for SVSU-authorized public school academies and authorized the addition of sixth through eighth grades at Muskegon Maritime Academy, a previously authorized charter school.



Thank you!

We are able to do what we do with community support!

Working to change a community, its economy and lives through information and scholarships for postsecondary education!

2012-2024 Scholars Persistence and Attainment:

***NSC—2024 National Student Clearinghouse Report Summary:**

Persistence: 49% of Saginaw Promise Scholars persisted to 2nd year

Return on Investment!

Program Certificates and Degrees earned by Saginaw Promise Scholars:

- ✓ Program Certificates: **13**
- ✓ Associate Degrees: **56**
- ✓ Bachelor's Degrees: **152**
- ✓ Master's Degrees: **33**
- ✓ Doctoral Candidates: **3**
- ✓ Juris Doctor: **1**
- ✓ Degrees earned, but report did not identify degree level: **65**

Total Number of program certificates and degrees earned... 323

A gift to the Saginaw Promise is an investment in Saginaw's future and that of its students! Thank you!

CLICK HERE TO DONATE

or visit <https://pci.jotform.com/form/221173527315147>

EDUCATION

Hemlock schools plan major expansion of AP course offerings for 2026-27



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

HEMLOCK, Mich. — Hemlock Public School District plans to expand its Advanced Placement course lineup for the 2026-27 school year, adding five or more new AP classes as part of a broader effort to increase rigorous academic opportunities for students, district officials announced.

The planned additions are expected to include expanded options in high-demand areas such as AP Physics and AP Calculus, along with other new offerings across core and elective disciplines, according to the district.

Leaders said the goal is to broaden academic choices for students pursuing a range of postsecondary paths, including college, careers, the military, skilled trades and other training.

“This is what it looks like to be a high-performing district that refuses to stand still,” Board of Education President Matthew Wesener said in a statement. “We want every student to have access to meaningful next-level opportunities. Expanding AP offerings is an investment in student ambition, and it reflects our belief that Hemlock students can compete and succeed anywhere.”

Superintendent Dr. Don Kill

ingbeck said the district is focused on building a culture where academic challenge is more widely available and supported.

“We are leveling up—again,” Kill

ingbeck said in a statement. “Our job is to widen the runway for students. Adding five or more AP courses is one more way we are pulling the sled a little harder and building a culture where challenge is normal, effort is celebrated, and opportunity is intentional. We want Hemlock students to leave us not just prepared—but confident.”

District officials said the AP expansion plan will include program planning, staffing, student advising and continued alignment with district priorities tied

to academic excellence and post-secondary readiness. Students also voiced support for the additional offerings, saying broader access to AP classes could help more students earn college credit and tailor their course schedules to future goals.

Hemlock officials said additional information will be shared in the coming months, including the full list of new AP courses, enrollment guidance and opportunities for families to learn more.

Hemlock Public School District, located in Saginaw County, serves students through its elementary, middle and high schools.



HELP ME FIND MY TEACHER!



www.sisd.cc

Saginaw ISD is **NOW HIRING** for all Early Childhood Education positions!

- competitive wages
- tuition reimbursement
- reduced childcare*
- full benefits packages
- continued professional development



**For those that qualify through Tri-Share*

EDUCATION

Strategies to help schools retain teachers



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

Teacher shortages continue to affect schools across Michigan and the nation, prompting local districts to examine how to keep experienced educators in the profession. While many factors influence teacher retention, education leaders often point to several strategies that can make a significant difference.

1. Ensuring a Safe and Orderly School Climate

Experts note that school culture plays a central role in whether teachers remain in their positions. Support from administration and school boards is critical, and that support often extends into the surrounding community.

Saying this a bit stronger, it is incumbent upon superintendents and local boards of education must insist upon Safe & Orderly operations. Those who accomplish this benefit from enrollment gains and teachers who stay longer. When teachers feel backed by leadership and work in a stable environment, retention rates improve.

2. Providing Professional Development and Addressing Burnout

Districts that offer meaningful professional development—particularly training focused on teacher wellness—tend to see stronger staff stability. Balancing professional responsibilities with personal life is key.



FILE PHOTO

Without work/life balance, educators may feel overwhelmed, contributing to early departures from the field. If teachers feel their spouses and children are being ignored, they are likely to pivot into another career option.

3. Recognizing and Respecting Educators

Acknowledging teachers for their contributions, initiatives, and years of service remains simple yet powerful retention tools. Long-serving educators, many with 10 to 30 years of experience, bring deep commitment and continuity to schools. As such long tenures become less common,

recognition efforts have taken on increased importance.

Losing veteran teachers poses challenges for students, families, and school administrators, who must work quickly to fill vacancies and maintain instructional quality. Education leaders say that understanding the issue—and responding with proactive strategies—remains essential to supporting strong schools.

Society seems to blame teachers for a long list of disappointments (low test scores, high absenteeism, high special education needs, and teacher salaries, just to name a few). It is extremely short-sighted and encourages young teachers to say, “To heck

with it.” We are at a point where we cannot afford to lose teachers to other professions. We need to understand and be resolved to the valuable role teachers play. Recall the COVID 19 pandemic, when students stayed at home and worked remotely; parents soon realized how much they missed their child’s teacher(s).

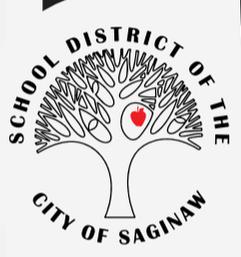
Let us work to keep the teachers that we have.

Resource: <https://moreland.edu/resources/blog-insights/teacher-retention-strategies?category=school-leadership-resources>



OUR
FUTURE

Providing innovative education and opportunities for every student to thrive.



At Saginaw Public Schools, we're shaping the leaders and innovators of tomorrow. Serving over 5,800 students across 17 schools, we offer cutting-edge programs, modern facilities, and a commitment to academic and extracurricular excellence.

From early childhood education to career and college readiness, we give every student the tools to succeed in the 21st century.

Your future starts here.
17 Schools | Over 5,800 Students | One Mission

www.spsd.net | 989.399.6500
Our Kids. Our Future. Our Community.

EDUCATION

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



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

Parents, students, school staff members, and others are encouraged to nominate outstanding public-school educators for the Michigan Lottery's 2025-26 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>.

"The Excellence in Education awards are our way of honoring the phenomenal work being done by educators in communities throughout Michigan," said Lottery Commissioner Suzanna Shkreli. "These dedicated professionals do so much more than teach; they are a constant, supportive presence who instill life-long skills and inspire students to

believe in themselves."

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

The winner of the 2025 Educator of the Year award was Kelly Herberholz, a science teacher and administrative intern with Dakota High School in Macomb.

Hundreds of educators were nominated during the 2024-25 school year, which was the 11th year of the Excellence in Education awards program. Thirty-four of these nominees, including Herberholz, were selected to win a weekly award.

Previous winners of the Educator of the Year award:

2024 – Samantha TwoCrow, the director of the Indigenous Education Program for Suttons Bay Public Schools in Suttons Bay.

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 Ubyly 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.

MI Tri-Share CHILD CARE



LOOKING FOR A NEW OPTION TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN STAFF?

CONSIDER MI TRI-SHARE!

The MI Tri-Share Child Care Benefit Program (MI Tri-Share) is a workforce development initiative that allows Michigan employers to offer a highly desirable benefit to help improve employee recruitment and retention. One of the most significant employment barriers for working parents is the cost of child care.

Through MI Tri-Share, the cost of an employee's child care is shared equally among the employer, the employee and the State of Michigan - an even three-way split



CONTACT US NOW

Ericka M. Taylor, Ph.D.
Executive Director
of Early Childhood

989-399-7423

etaylor@sisd.cc



EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Offer the MI Tri-Share program to one or more employees with dependent children between 0-12 years old.
- Agree to cover 33% of participating employees' child care costs.
- Collect employee payments.
- Submit employer and employee payments via ACH.
- Communicate if an approved employee is no longer employed.
- Allow for flexibility as family situations and needs vary.

MI Tri-Share Program Eligibility 2025

Household Size	Minimum	Maximum Income	Household Size	Minimum	Maximum Income
2 People	\$42,300	\$ 84,600	6 People	\$86,300	\$172,600
3 People	\$53,300	\$106,600	7 People	\$97,300	\$194,600
4 People	\$64,300	\$128,600	8 People	\$108,300	\$216,600
5 People	\$75,300	\$150,600	9 People	\$119,300	\$238,600

200% - 400% Federal Poverty Level - Effective May 1, 2025

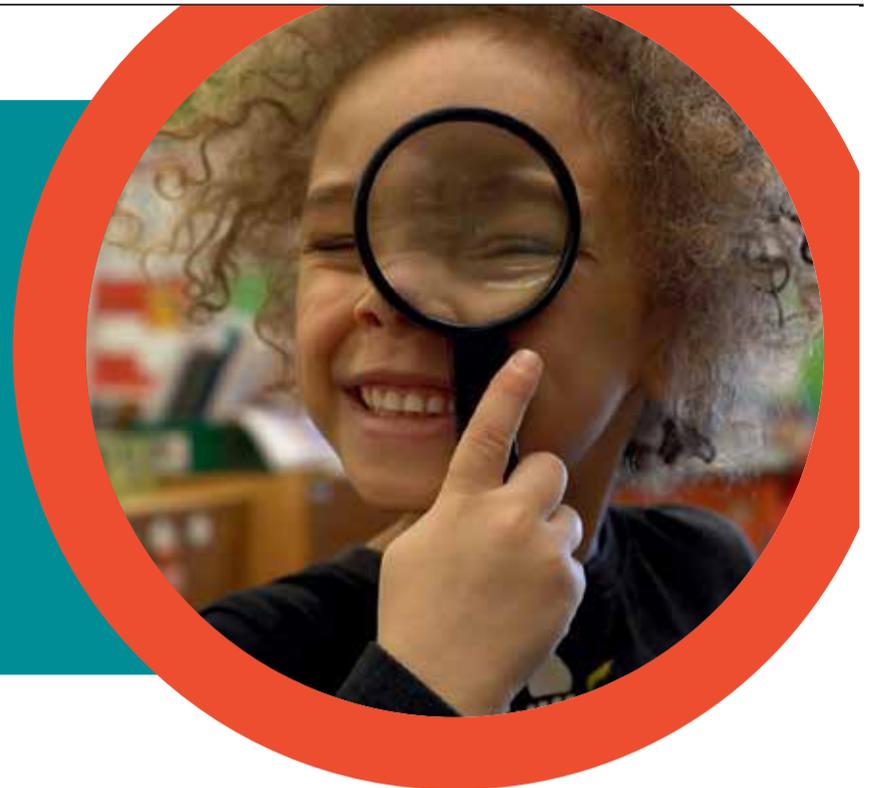
Rev 5.1.2025



MITRISHARE.ORG



NOW OPEN: Enrollment for NO-COST, High- Quality PreK for All



APPLY NOW FOR THE 25-26 SCHOOL YEAR TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!

Open to children who will be four by December 1, 2025.

Thanks to **Michigan's PreK for All program**, participating PreK classrooms are available at **NO COST** to families with licensed teachers throughout Saginaw County.

OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Half-days or full-days
- Four- and five-day programs
- Extended day programs are available in some locations
- Transportation is available in some areas

Research shows participation in a quality PreK program **improves a child's emotional, social and intellectual skills** and helps ensure they are healthy and ready for kindergarten.*

All Michigan 4-year-olds qualify for NO-COST, **high-quality** PreK with licensed teachers. While children from low-income families receive priority, this program is available to all Michigan families regardless of income.

**Administration for Children and Families: Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of Evidence*



Visit www.earlychildhood.sisd.cc or call
989-752-2193 for more information and apply today!


MOTT
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
MINI-MESTER



**Earn
Credits
Online in
3 Weeks**
STARTS DEC. 22



REGISTER NOW!

BUSINESS + FINANCE

Marijuana wholesale tax to take effect Jan. 1



LUME CANNABIS CO. (FACEBOOK.COM/LUMESAGINAW)

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan's new 24% excise tax on adult-use marijuana at the wholesale level is set to take effect Jan. 1, 2026, after a Court of Claims judge declined to block the law less than a month before it begins, while allowing key parts of the cannabis industry's legal challenge to continue.

The wholesale tax was created under the Comprehensive Road Funding Tax Act, signed into law Oct. 7, 2025, as part of a broader road-funding package tied to the state budget negotiations. The Michigan Department of Treas-

ury has said the 24% levy applies to certain sales or transfers of adult-use marijuana, including the first sale from a licensed marijuana establishment to a retail licensee, product cultivated and processed for retail sale by a retailer itself, and transfers from licensed medical marijuana provisioning centers to adult-use retailers.

In a Dec. 8 opinion and order, Court of Claims Judge Sima G. Patel denied motions for a preliminary injunction filed in two cases brought by cannabis business plaintiffs, including the Michigan Cannabis Industry Association and others, finding they had not shown they were likely

to succeed on the merits at this stage. Patel also dismissed the industry's Title-Object Clause challenge in one of the cases, ruling it was not supportable.

The industry lawsuits argue the tax improperly alters Michigan's 2018 voter-approved marijuana legalization law and therefore required a supermajority vote in the Legislature. Patel rejected the argument that the voter initiative is the only method for taxing regulated marijuana and said the new wholesale tax could not be enacted only through an amendment passed by a supermajority. However, the court said questions of fact remain about whether the whole-

sale tax contravenes the purposes of the voter initiative, allowing that portion of the challenge to proceed.

Treasury has said the 24% wholesale tax is levied in addition to Michigan's existing 10% excise tax on retail adult-use marijuana sales and the state's 6% sales tax. The department has also indicated it expects returns and payments to be made quarterly, but said filing and payment details were still being finalized.

More information and updates are posted on Treasury's wholesale marijuana tax webpage: <https://www.michigan.gov/taxes/business-taxes/wholesale-marihuana-tax>

THE MICHIGAN BANNER GEOFENCING ADVERTISING SOLUTION



WHAT IS GEOFENCE ADS

Geofencing advertising, sometimes referred to as geofencing marketing, is the use of a virtual boundary around a specific location, where certain rules are applied when a mobile device enters or leaves.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

Geofence ads are currently the number one most accurate and effective way to promote your campaign or brand in specific locations. They also deliver a very high conversion rate due to precise location-based ad placement.

Our AI-powered keyword algorithms can deliver ads directly to mobile devices of people within a facility who share specific interests.

OUR SERVICES

Our Geolocation Ad Placement are Perfect for



CAMPAIGNS

Direct and specific ads to reach your Audience.



BRANDING

Brand your New Shop or product to specific demographic Areas.



MARKETING

Market our Product, Event. Shop or company to areas of your choosing.

GET IN TOUCH



THE MICHIGAN BANNER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AT&T



Connecting the Great Lakes State to greater possibility

We're investing in a brighter future for Michiganders so our communities are connected to the resources they need to live, learn, work and succeed.

Learn how we're helping to address the digital divide at attconnects.com/Michigan



© 2024 AT&T Intellectual Property. All rights reserved. AT&T, the Globe logo and other marks are trademarks and service marks of AT&T Intellectual Property and/or AT&T affiliated companies.

BUSINESS + FINANCE



Ebony Payns
Mental Health
Therapist, LMSW



313-228-6299
epayns7@gmail.com
18121 E. 8 mile Rd, STE 211
Eastpointe, MI 48021
(Virtual Therapy Available)



Your *dream wedding* destination.

Our creative team delights in making your vision come to life so you and your guests will experience an unforgettable day. Start planning your dream wedding today with HORIZONS.

HORIZONS
ART OF HOSPITALITY

HORIZONS Conference Center
6200 State Street | Saginaw, Michigan
(989) 799-4122
weddings@horizonscenter.com

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HORIZONSconfctr) | [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/horizonscenter) | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/horizonscenter) | [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/horizonscenter) | [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@horizonsweddings)

SPORTS

Flint City Bucks accept U.S. Open Cup invitation, seek to host first-round match in Grand Blanc



Photo Credit: ©Amanda Thick

FLINT CITY BUCKS PLAYER (PHOTO CREDIT: AMANDA THICK)

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The Flint City Bucks will compete in the 2026 Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup after accepting an invitation from U.S. Soccer, marking the club's first appearance in the tournament since rehoming to Genesee County in 2019.

The Bucks, on December 10, submitted a bid application to host their first-round match, which would feature a fully professional opponent. If the bid is awarded, the Bucks' opener would be played at Don Batchelor Stadium in downtown Grand Blanc, a new 6,000-seat facility for Grand Blanc Community Schools.

"GBCS is proud to support

hosting the prestigious Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup at Don Batchelor Field," Superintendent Trevor Alward said in a statement, calling it an opportunity to showcase the community while highlighting the district's soccer tradition and its partnership with the Bucks.

If awarded to Flint City, the tournament opener would most likely be played Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 7 p.m. The club said tickets would be included in Bucks and Flint City AFC season-ticket packages, with general public sales expected to begin in early January.

Local leaders and community organizations also voiced support for the hosting effort, citing potential regional visibility and economic impact. "Hosting

an event of such magnitude as the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup will have a tremendous impact for Grand Blanc along with all of Genesee County," Genesee County Commissioner James Avery said. Grand Blanc Mayor John Creasey said hosting would be an opportunity for broader attention on the community, adding, "Personally, I'm excited."

The Bucks earned one of USL League Two's nine automatic bids, bypassing qualifying rounds. Flint City (9-3-0) won the USL2 Great Lakes Division in 2025 to secure a place among potential qualifiers, prioritized by regular-season points per match.

"We're thrilled to return to the Open Cup stage," Bucks President Costa Papista said, citing changes to the soccer landscape

and tournament format since the club moved to Genesee County. "But our recent success has given us a new opportunity, and we feel prepared to take another run at this historic David vs. Goliath tournament."

Additional tournament details are expected in early 2026, followed by the first-round draw, including matchups and hosting announcements. The Bucks said Don Batchelor Stadium meets U.S. Soccer standards for hosting and that the club plans to apply to host all tournament matches. Later-round games, if earned,

could be played at Kettering University's Atwood Stadium.

Now entering its 111th edition, the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup has crowned U.S. Soccer's national champion since 1914 in a single-game knockout format open to professional and amateur or semiprofessional teams affiliated with U.S. Soccer.

The Bucks also bring a deep Open Cup history. Since their inception in 1997, the club has made 15 tournament appearances, played 30 Open Cup matches and earned a record 10 victories over professional opponents, including notable wins over MLS teams — the New England Revolution in 2000 and the Chicago Fire in 2012.

SPORTS

Shields to defend undisputed heavyweight title in Detroit rematch with Crews-Dezurn



CLARESSA SHIELDS STANDS IN THE RING BEFORE HER JULY 26, 2025, FIGHT AGAINST LANI DANIELS AT LITTLE CAESARS ARENA IN DETROIT. (MB PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

DETROIT — Claressa Shields will defend her undisputed women's heavyweight championship Feb. 22 at Little Caesars Arena in a rematch with Franchon Crews-Dezurn, the first fight in an \$8 million, multi-fight deal Shields signed last month.

The bout was announced Tuesday and will headline a DAZN card at the home arena of the NBA's Detroit Pistons and NHL's Detroit Red Wings. Doors are scheduled to open at 4 p.m. ET, according to event information released with the announcement.

Shields (17-0, 3 KOs), a two-time Olympic gold medalist and five-division champion, is giving Crews-Dezurn (10-2, 2 KOs) a second shot nearly a decade after the two met in their pro debuts in

2016. Shields won a four-round unanimous decision on the undercard of Andre Ward's victory over Sergey Kovalev in Las Vegas.

"In 2016 I had just won two Olympic gold medals, fresh out of the amateurs, and finding an opponent was difficult, Franchón stepped in," Shields said. "I've grown a lot since that first victory ... but Franchón and I have unfinished business that needs to be settled."

Shields, who drew more than 15,000 fans at Little Caesars Arena last July while defending her heavyweight belts against Lani Daniels, said returning to fight in Michigan brings added motivation — and pressure.

"Selling out Little Caesars Arena was a dream, and my fans made that come true," Shields said. "Fighting in Michigan motivates me and also puts pressure on me because I never want to

fail them."

Crews-Dezurn, a former undisputed super-middleweight champion who lost that status in 2022 to Britain's Savannah Marshall, will move up to heavyweight for the rematch. "I've been waiting and working a long time for this moment, and we finally meet again," Crews-Dezurn said. "This time as established champions with great legacies."

Shields said she intends to close the rivalry more decisively than in their first meeting, citing improved health after what she described as injury-affected performances in recent bouts.

"I plan on putting Franchon Crews on her back and leaving with the KO," Shields said. "My last few fights, I was dealing with injuries, but now I'm 100 percent. Franchon is elite, but I am super elite."

The event is promoted by

Salita Promotions in association with Wynn Records and is co-promoted by 313 Presents. Shields is a partner in her multi-fight deal with Wynn Records and Salita Promotions. Promoter Dmitry Salita said the rematch reflects the trajectory of both fighters since their shared debut.

"Nearly a decade ago, Claressa and Franchón stepped into the ring as two Olympians making their professional debuts," Salita said. "Since then, both have risen to become world champions and global forces in women's boxing."

Ticket information was released with the announcement through Ticketmaster and 313 Presents, with organizers instructing fans to use the code "GWOAT." Additional event details are expected in the coming weeks.

FAITH IN FOCUS



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

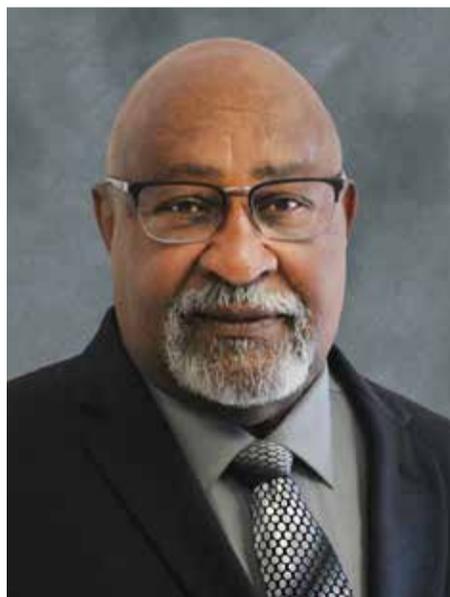
Ministry Without Walls expands vision with community-focused mission

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.

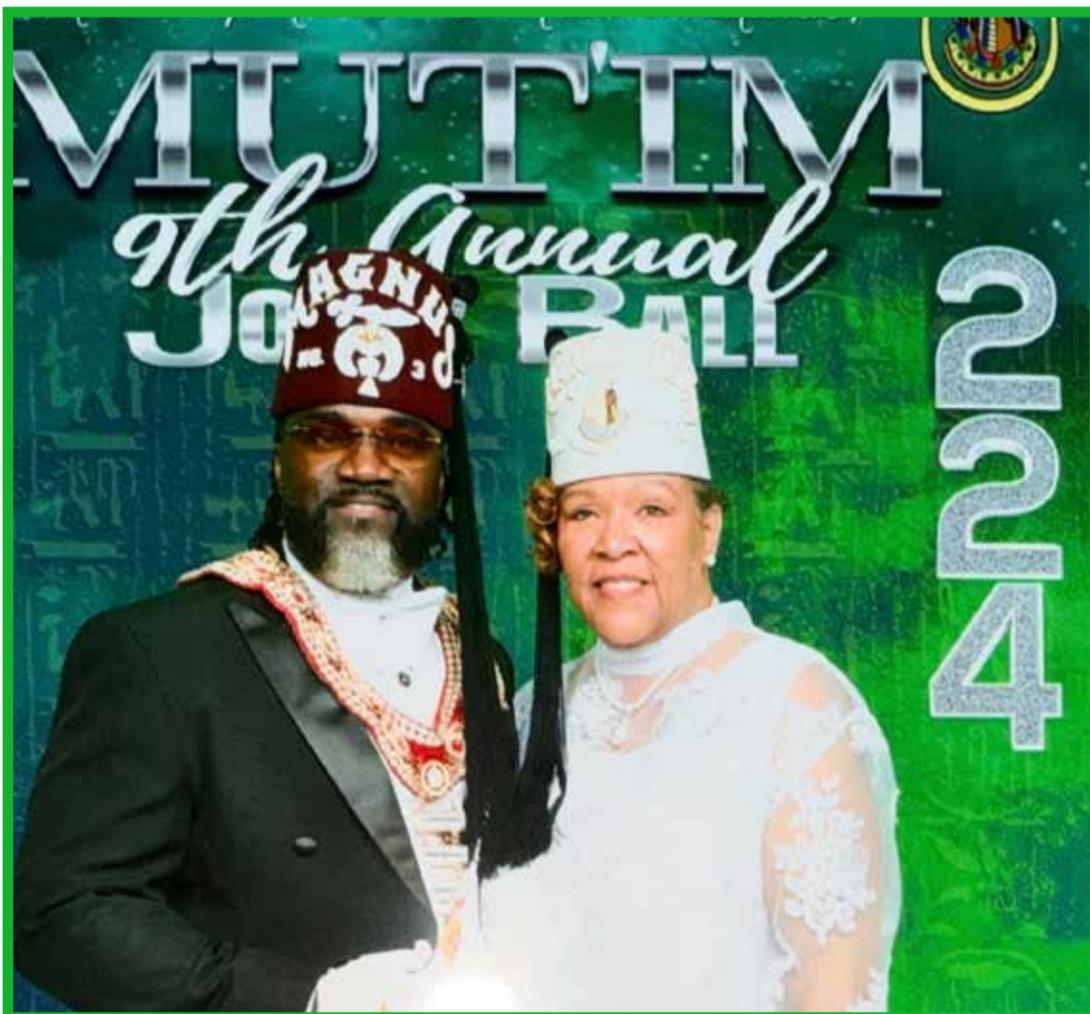
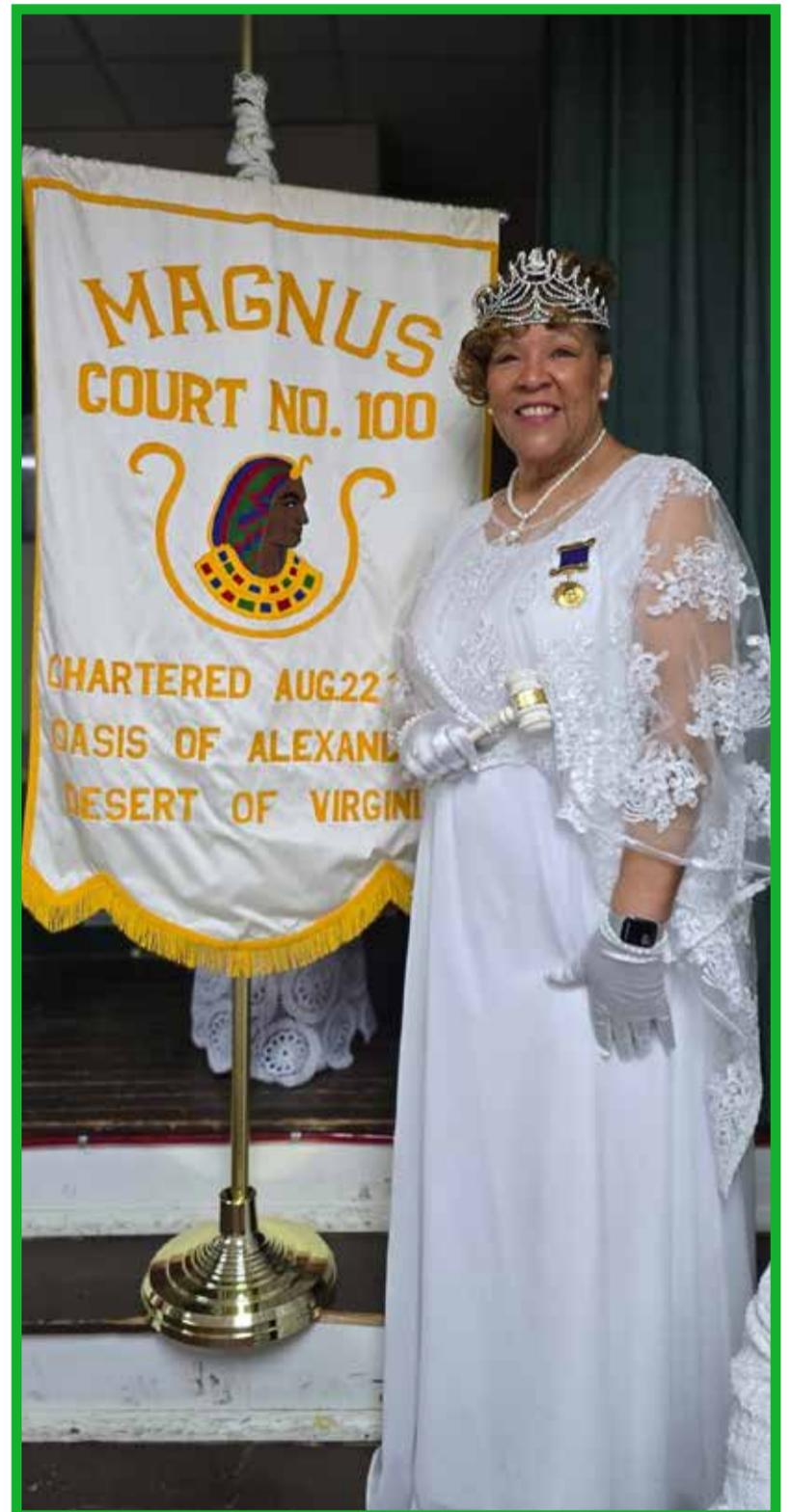
For more information, visit Ministry Without Walls at 3783 Mannion Road, Saginaw, MI 48603.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Congratulations

COMMANDRESS BRIGITTE D. JOHNSON
MAGNUS COURT NO. 100

WELL DESERVED FOR ALL OF YOUR LOYALTY,
HARD WORK & STRONG LEADERSHIP!!!



FAITH IN FOCUS

SERMONETTE SERIES

What Was Meant to Break You – God Will Use it to Build You

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Genesis 50:20 (NIV)



BY MINISTER CAROLYN
CARTER TOWNSEL



Joseph's words were not spoken from a place of comfort, but from a place of clarity. He had been betrayed by his brothers, stripped of his identity, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and forgotten in prison. Every chapter of his story looked like evidence that evil had won.

Yet Joseph reveals a powerful truth: human intention does not override divine purpose.

What was meant to destroy him became the very road God used to develop him. The pit was not the end—it was the passage. The prison was not punishment—it was preparation. God did not deny the evil done to Joseph, but He redeemed it. God took what was twisted and used it to save lives, including the lives of those who hurt him.

This scripture reminds us that God is not intimidated by our pain, our past, or other people's choices. God is a master at repurposing what was meant to harm us and turning it into healing, wisdom, and authority.

You may be carrying a story that feels unfair—betrayal, loss, rejection, abuse, sickness, or disappointment. Genesis 50:20 assures us that while the enemy's plan was evil, God's plan is always greater and always good. Time reveals what trauma tries to hide: God was working even when it didn't look like it.

Beloved, Joseph did not become bitter; he became better. He chose forgiveness, not because what happened was acceptable, but because God's purpose was unstoppable.

Prayer:

God, help me trust You with the parts of my story that still hurt. I surrender what was meant for evil and believe You will bring good from it. Heal my heart, strengthen my faith, and help me walk in forgiveness and purpose. Amen.

Declaration:

What was meant to break me will build me. God is turning it for my good Blessings to All,
Carolyn

FEAR NOT: The Christmas story still hits different

BY MB STAFF

By the time December hits full volume, Christmas can start to feel like a group project you didn't sign up for: lights to hang, gifts to buy, cookies to bake, "just one more" event to attend. The season sparkles, sure — but it can also sprint.

Then, almost stubbornly, the Bible tells the Christmas story at a slower pace.

It doesn't begin at a mall. It begins with a promise.

Long before there were nativity scenes on front lawns, there was a prophecy whispered into the dark: "For unto us a child is born... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6, KJV). That's not holiday decor language. That's survival language. A child, a gift, a peace this world doesn't manufacture on an assembly line.

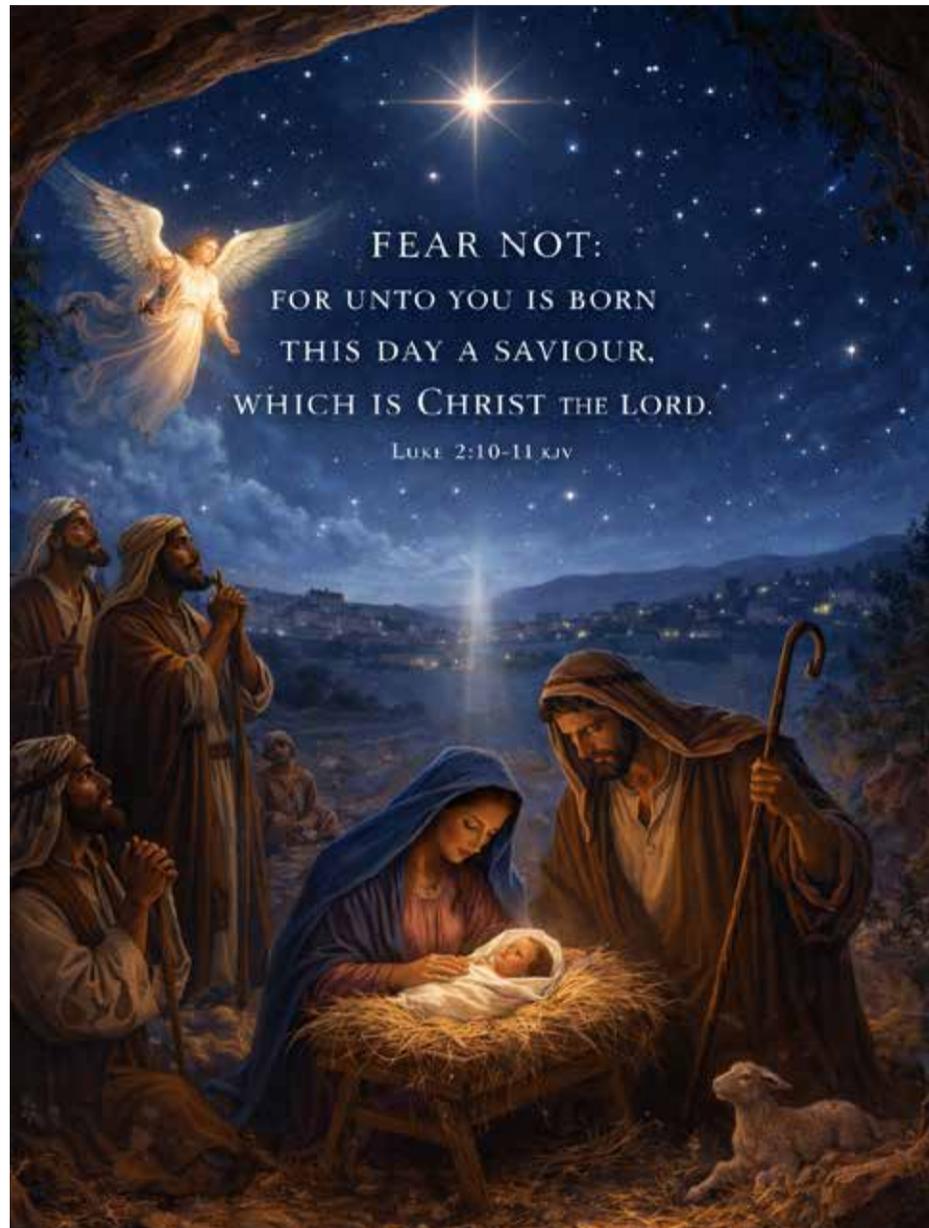
And when the moment finally arrives, it doesn't come with velvet ropes.

Luke's Gospel puts it on the night shift — literally. "There were... shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8, KJV). Shepherds weren't VIPs. They were working-class, outdoors, probably cold, probably tired, probably just trying to make it to morning. In other words: they were normal people in a normal night, when heaven decided to interrupt.

Then the sky opens and the angel speaks a sentence that still lands like a deep breath: "Fear not" (Luke 2:10, KJV).

Not "Try harder." Not "Do more." Not "Fix yourself before you come near." Just: Fear not.

The angel keeps going: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people... For unto you is born this day... a Saviour" (Luke 2:10-11, KJV).



FILE PHOTO

Notice the direction of the gift. Not for the perfect. Not for the put-together. Not for the ones who finally got their life sorted. For you. For all people.

That's the reason for the season, before the season gets its hands on it.

Christmas, at its center, is God choosing closeness.

John says it with startling simplicity: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, KJV). Not "the Word sent a message." Not "the Word dropped a hint." The Word became flesh. God stepped into skin, into hunger, into fatigue, into family, into the kind of world where you can't always find room

at the inn.

That detail matters. Because a lot of us spend December trying to prove we belong — in a family photo, at a table, in a job, in a relationship, in a world that grades people like essays. Christmas tells a different story: God didn't wait for the world to be safe, quiet, or cleaned up. He came anyway.

Matthew frames it as fulfillment: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child... and they shall call his name Emmanuel... God with us" (Matthew 1:23, KJV). Not God above us. Not God against us. God with us — with us in the grief that shows up when a chair at the table is empty, with us in the anxiety that hums beneath

the music, with us in the bills and the diagnoses and the "I'm fine" that isn't fine.

And if you want the most unexpected twist of all, look at the audience.

The announcement doesn't go first to kings. It goes to shepherds. The first invitations go to people who smell like work. It's as if God is making a point: the doorway into this story is not status. It's need.

Mary, too, sings like someone who knows that. Her song — often called the Magnificat — isn't soft background music. It's a bold declaration that God sees the lowly and lifts them up (Luke 1:46-55). Christmas isn't just a sweet scene with hay and halos. It's a holy upset: God showing up in the small, the ordinary, the overlooked.

So if the season has you feeling like you're behind — behind on shopping, behind on healing, behind on being okay — the Christmas story doesn't scold you. It meets you.

It says: start here. In a stable. Under a night sky. With a message that begins, "Fear not."

And maybe that's the most "Christmas" thing you can do this week — not add another task, but pause long enough to remember what Christians have been insisting for centuries: the point of Christmas isn't that we finally get it all right. It's that God came near.

The lights will come down. The wrapping paper will disappear. The cookies will be gone (or mysteriously moved into containers "for later"). But the reason remains: "unto you... a Saviour" (Luke 2:11).

The first Christmas didn't arrive with a receipt, a rush, or a requirement. It arrived like grace does — quietly, clearly, and right on time.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Faith Ministries Church

Rev. Dr. Anthony Revis
Prophetess Linda J. Kemp Revis
3420 E Ashman St.
Midland, MI 48642
989-837-7777
faithministrieschurch.org



Ministry Without Walls

Pastor, John Dunn
3783 Mannion Road
Saginaw, MI 48603



New Life Baptist Ministries

Dr. Craig Tatum
1401 Janes Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-753-1151
newlifelcm.com



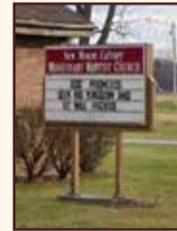
Glory House Ministries

Pastor Jim House
3660 Hermansau Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48603
(989) 752-4769



World Outreach Campus

Bishop Hurley J. Coleman Jr.
2405 Bay Road
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-752-2955
worldoutreachcampus.com



New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church

3610 Russel St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-0801



Holy Communion Gospel Center

Pastor Charlene Washington
1245 E. Genesee
Saginaw, MI 48607
989-752-3993



New Beginnings Ministries

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



Saint Paul Baptist Church

Rev. Dr., Vincent D. McMillon
120 North 15 St.
Saginaw, MI. 48601
stpaul2@yahoo.com



Jacob's Ladder

Pastor Dennis Barlow
1926 Fairfield Street
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-799-6601



New Birth Missionary Baptist

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



Victorious Belivers Ministries Church

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



Bridgeport Community Church

Pastor Rob Ashmall
3821 State St.
PO Box 541
Bridgeport, MI 48722
989-777-1840



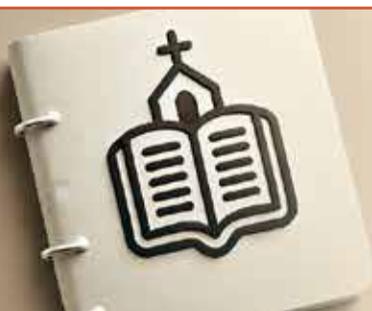
New Covenant Christian Center

Pastor Ron Frierson
2395 S. Outer Drive
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-8485



Anointed Temple ministries

Bishop Tim D. Holden, Sr.
612 Millard St.
Saginaw, MI 48607
901 Melbourne
Detroit, MI 48211



List your Ministry in The Michigan Banner Church Directory

Ensure your ministry is easily found by those seeking a place to worship, connect, and grow in faith.

CONTACT US AT (989) 249-3882 TO ADD YOUR MINISTRY TODAY

FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

The secret self-care ingredient



BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

It can feel good to know you are doing everything you can to advance the work of your nonprofit. But sometimes we forget that sharing the work of our organizations is as important as the work itself. In fact, it's part of the work.

The challenges facing non-profit organizations and institutions are many. They are seeking to do good, help those in need, heal the sick, educate students, create music, clean up neighborhoods, and advocate for the disenfranchised. The list of ways to do good is long; the people involved are many; and the results last both a lifetime and the duration of a smile. With so much to do, why waste time “beating your chest” about all the good your nonprofit does?

Here's why. If people don't know about your organization, how can they support you? You know you can't do it alone, but you will have to take time out from your activities to open your arms, put on your smile, and let people know what your organization is up to and why it's important. When people know about you, they can advocate for your work, encourage people to use your services, volunteer on your behalf, and more.

Don't spend time wondering why people don't know about you, why they don't recognize your work, or why they are not providing funding. Get into action instead. Take a small step or make an organized plan you can implement over time. The goal is to let people know about the impact your organization makes



FILE PHOTO

and how you are an important part of your community.

Here are a few suggestions.

1. Develop and manage a volunteer program with the sole purpose of creating awareness and educating your constituency about the work of your organization
2. Produce “see and tell” events at your facilities. Invite people to see your work in action!
3. Establish “meet and greet” activities that are hosted by your board, staff, volunteers, students, and clients. These can be at your facilities or at the homes, offices, or workplaces of those who support your organization.
4. Have board members and management, and staff attend and engage

in community events and activities – outside of those you host or are a part of. It is good to be a part of your community: yours isn't the only valuable nonprofit in town. Besides, when you are working with others, you get to know each other and share concerns and solutions.

5. Publish a summary of your strategic plan and case for support and share it in an engaging printed format as well as via social media

6. Develop a plan of action to engage the press – print, TV, radio, podcasts, and more. Have a year-long program of reaching out with meaningful and inspiring information to share

Here's the takeaway: Make yourself available to others. Let people get to know you and what you do. Encourage their confidence in what you do and share the impact you are making. Don't be a best-kept secret: get out of your bubble and experience a new level of good.



Copyright 2025 – Mel and Pearl Shaw

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.



PICS OF THE WEEK

Hosted by Wonder Burger, local food trucks and volunteers served 2,100 meals to the Saginaw community on Dec. 14 at Hoyt Park during the second annual Feed Saginaw event.



The Great Lakes Bay Region Does Better With

GARBER
BUICK SAGINAW



“When you want a great car or truck come see **The Wright Guy** for the job!”

John Wright
jwright@garberbuick.com
989-497-4444, ext. 1615
GarberBuick.com



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.***



SAGINAW VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY®

#WeCardinal

svsu.edu/opportunity



7400 Bay Road • University Center, MI 48710 • (800) 968-9500 • admissions@svsu.edu