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**46<sup>th</sup> annual citywide tribute honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with keynote by Dr. Clarence Nixon**

COMMUNITY, PG 14



"Heaven has another angel. Jimmy Carter was an honorable and humble man. He did more with his post-presidential life than many do with their entire lives. He and Roslynn are together again and I'm comforted by that thought."

- **Ruth Ann Knapp**, retired Saginaw teacher and current school board member for both the city and the SISD



"Jimmy Carter brought a sense of honor to the office, and it is fitting that he has passed away under this current president, not the person who is incoming. He was a good man who did much for the cause of equal rights among all people."

- **Ralph Martin**, former city and now state fire marshal, also Saginaw Library Commission chairman

# Jimmy Carter, former president and humanitarian, passes away at 100

BY MB STAFF

Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, passed away on December 29, 2024, at his home in Plains, Georgia. A Nobel Peace Prize laureate and humanitarian, Carter's century-long life was marked by his dedication to human rights and public service, leaving a complex legacy on race and equality in America.

Born in 1924 in the segregated South, Carter grew up in a society deeply divided by race. His upbringing in Plains, Georgia, exposed him to both the harsh realities of systemic racism and the shared humanity of the Black families he lived among. This dual perspective shaped his approach to race relations as a political leader.

During his presidency from 1977 to 1981, Carter appointed an unprecedented number of Black Americans to federal positions, including Andrew Young as the first Black U.S. ambassador to the



FORMER PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

United Nations. He advocated for civil rights and desegregation, often citing his faith as a guiding principle for equality. His administration also funded historically Black colleges and championed voting rights, laying the groundwork for future progress.

However, Carter's record on race was not without controversy. Critics pointed to his initial opposition to federally mandated school busing, a policy aimed at desegregating schools. While

he later moderated his stance, some viewed his reluctance as a reflection of political pragmatism over principle.

After leaving office, Carter's commitment to racial justice deepened. Through The Carter Center, he worked tirelessly to combat global inequities and promoted policies to dismantle systemic racism. In his later years, he spoke candidly about America's ongoing struggle with racial injustice, urging reconciliation and equity.

President Joe Biden hailed Carter as "a man of principle who sought to heal America's divisions," while civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson praised him as "a Southerner who stood against the tides of racial oppression."

Jimmy Carter's life, marked by both progress and imperfection, serves as a testament to the enduring struggle for racial equality and the power of individual conviction to foster change.





# CHARTING NEW HORIZONS

## Our vision for 2025

Dear Readers, Supporters, and Community Partners,

As we usher in 2025, we are filled with immense gratitude for your unwavering support over the past year. Your belief in The Michigan Banner and its mission has been the cornerstone of our growth and success. Together, we've continued to champion equity, amplify underrepresented voices, and deliver impactful stories that matter to our community.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be an exciting year of growth and innovation for The Michigan Banner. We are thrilled to share some of our plans for the future:

### Curated events to inspire connection

This year, we're planning more engaging, curated events to bring our community together. These gatherings will celebrate our shared culture, and foster meaningful conversations.

### Reactivating our non-profit for literacy and civic engagement

One of our most meaningful initiatives in 2025 will be the revival of our non-profit organization. We are committed to teaching literacy and promoting civic engagement, empowering individuals with the tools they need to actively shape their futures and strengthen our communities.

### Introducing new special publications

To further our mission of inclusive storytelling, we are excited to launch new sister publications that will serve additional audiences. These new platforms will allow us to expand our reach and better represent the diversity and richness of our region.

### Expanding our reach

Our goal for 2025 is to connect with more readers and partners than ever before. Through strategic collaborations, enhanced digital offerings, and innovative marketing strategies, we aim to make The Michigan Banner an even more vital resource for our community.

As we embark on this journey, we remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence, integrity, and the values that have guided us since the beginning. We are proud to stand alongside you, our readers and supporters, as we work to build a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

Here's to 2025—a year of growth, collaboration, and impact. Together, we will continue to make history.

With gratitude and hope,  
**The Michigan Banner Team**



**MICHIGAN BANNER**

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**MISSION**

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

**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

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# MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 1



## BWell Boutique will empower Saginaw teens through confidence and connection

FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — The Saginaw County Health Department (SCHD) is launching the BWell Boutique in January 2025, a new initiative designed to provide high school students with free formal dresses and accessories. More than a wardrobe solution, the boutique is a step toward addressing the impact of financial hardship on self-confidence, mental health, and social participation.

Carissa Hillman, SCHD's Community Resource & Response Supervisor and creator of the BWell Boutique, explained the deeper mission behind the effort. "Homecoming and prom

are defining moments for young women, shaping memories that last a lifetime," Hillman said. "For those unable to afford formal attire, the impact goes far beyond missing the event. It affects self-esteem, confidence, and mental health, while reinforcing economic divides. These young women deserve to feel beautiful, confident, and supported by their community."

The initiative, supported by SCHD health resource advocates working in local school districts, aims to ensure all young women, regardless of financial circumstances, can fully participate in milestone events like homecoming and prom. Though primarily targeting teens in the City of Saginaw, the boutique will be

open to any student in the county who can benefit from its services. All items in the boutique will be available free of charge.

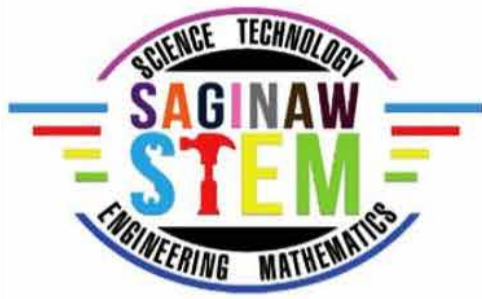
To prepare for the spring prom season, the BWell Boutique is actively seeking community donations of gently used formal dresses, shoes, and accessories. Donations can be dropped off at Room 509 at SCHD, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Financial contributions are also welcome to cover the cost of dry cleaning donated items. Donations can be made online at <https://form.jotform.com/232214450131136> by selecting "BWell Saginaw" under the "Fund" dropdown menu.

The BWell Boutique reflects SCHD's commitment to promot-

ing wellness in all its forms. By eliminating financial barriers to milestone events, the boutique seeks to empower teens, build self-esteem, and foster positive social experiences. The initiative underscores the importance of community collaboration in creating opportunities that extend beyond the events themselves, offering young women confidence, joy, and lasting memories.

For more information or to get involved, contact the Saginaw County Health Department. The BWell Boutique represents a community effort to ensure that every young woman has the chance to shine, no matter her circumstances.





PRESENTS

# STEM SATURDAY

## FORCE & MOTION

### PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Learn the principles of Force and Motion, including Newton's Laws of Motion, Drag, and Friction.
- Design, build and test their own cars that they race in a competition! It is a thrilling, hands-on learning experience!

### FREE FOR ALL K-12 STUDENTS

WHEN: Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

TIME: 9:30 am - 12: 30 pm

### WHERE:

SVRC Marketplace Ballroom (2nd Floor)  
203 S. Washington Street, Saginaw, MI 48607

Registration Link



<https://forms.gle/uaiPTgKmcwkj4QzK9>

POWERED BY





# New Year's Resolutions you *totally* won't regret making

BY MB STAFF

*Ah, New Year's resolutions—the annual tradition of lying to yourself about how much better you'll be in the next 12 months.*

*Kids and teens, it's time to jump on the bandwagon and set some totally achievable goals for 2025! Here are some ideas that will definitely change your life... or at least give your parents a good laugh.*

## 1. "I'll Keep My Room Clean All Year"

Sure, Jan. You'll start off strong, tossing your dirty laundry in the hamper for maybe three days. Then, one busy morning, your floor will become a sock graveyard again, and your chair? Yeah, it's now your unofficial closet. But hey, at least you tried.

## 2. "I'll Spend Less Time on My Phone"

Of course, you will. Right after you finish watching that TikTok about 25 ways to rearrange your desk and beat that one impossible level in your game. Let's face it: your phone isn't going anywhere, and neither are you.

## 3. "I'll Eat Healthier"

Kale chips and smoothies sound great until someone waves a slice of pizza in front of your face. But don't worry—eating a carrot once a week totally counts as balance, right?

## 4. "I'll Stop Procrastinating"

This is the year you stop putting things off. Definitely. You'll do your homework right after... scrolling Instagram, watching one more episode of your favorite show, and reorganizing your closet for no reason.

## 5. "I'll Be Nicer to My Siblings"

Admit it, they've probably already annoyed you this year—and it's only January. While you're totally going to stop stealing their stuff and blaming them for everything, old habits die hard. Good luck with this one.

## 6. "I'll Stay on Top of My Schoolwork"

You've got a planner, new pens, and big dreams. But come March, that planner will be buried under snack wrappers, and you'll be Googling "How to write an essay in 15 minutes" at 2 a.m. Classic.

## 7. "I'll Drink More Water"

Sounds simple, right? Until you realize you've been living on soda and iced coffee. But hey, every sip of water counts, even if it's just to wash down a handful of fries.

## 8. "I'll Wake Up Earlier"

Yes, because dragging yourself out of bed before sunrise sounds so fun. The snooze button exists for a reason, and honestly, 10 more minutes won't hurt anyone.

## 9. "I'll Exercise Regularly"

Translation: You'll do two sit-ups on January 2, then call it quits because "walking to the fridge counts as cardio." At least your thumbs get a workout from all that texting.

## 10. "I'll Save My Allowance"

A great idea—until you see something shiny at the mall or your favorite game releases a new skin. Goodbye savings, hello impulse purchases!

Resolutions are fun, but don't stress about being perfect. Life's messy, and that's what makes it interesting. Set goals, give them a shot, and laugh when things don't go exactly as planned. After all, there's always next year! Happy 2025!







# Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA  
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

## Celebrating 2025 with The Latino Banner

BY MB STAFF

*As we step into 2025, The Latino Banner team extends our warmest wishes for a prosperous, joyful, and meaningful year ahead. This time of year is not only about new beginnings but also about celebrating the connections, values, and traditions that define our vibrant community.*



Looking back on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for your unwavering support. Your readership and engagement have fueled our mission to spotlight the stories, successes, and challenges that matter most to the Latino community. Together, we've celebrated milestones, amplified voices, and strengthened the bonds that unite us.

In 2025, we remain committed to being a source of inspiration, information, and connec-

tion for our readers. This year, we are excited to announce plans to expand our team by adding staff members who represent and speak to the diverse experiences and voices of the Latino community. We believe this step will deepen our connection with you, our readers, and ensure that our content continues to reflect the richness and diversity of our shared heritage.

You can also look forward to

expanded coverage of cultural events, business highlights, and stories of resilience and success from within our community. Our team is dedicated to providing a platform that not only informs but also empowers.

This year, let us continue to uplift one another. Whether through acts of kindness, sharing knowledge, or celebrating our shared heritage, every effort makes a difference. As we navi-

gate new opportunities and challenges, let's keep our focus on building a future that honors our past while creating pathways for generations to come.

From all of us at The Latino Banner, Feliz Año Nuevo! May 2025 bring you health, happiness, and abundant success. Together, let's make this year one to remember.

**¡Gracias por ser parte de nuestra familia!**

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





# MHCC 2025 TERCER JUEVES BUSINESS NETWORKING

## SAVE THE DATE

*Mark your calendar!*

Month	Date	Sponsor
January	16th	JP Morgan Chase
February	20th	TBD
April	10th	SMTAutomation
June	19th	LaSalle Construction
July	17th	Stellantis
September	18th	TBD
October	16th	Davenport University





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# "Sultry Salsa Fridays" brings Latin dance nights to Hamilton Street Pub

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — Friday nights in Saginaw are about to get a lot hotter with the launch of Sultry Salsa Fridays at the Hamilton Street Pub, beginning January 10. This exciting weekly event promises a night filled with music, dancing, and energy that will keep attendees moving until the early hours.

Guests can immerse themselves in the vibrant rhythms of salsa, bachata, merengue, cumbia, cha-cha, and even reggaeton. The night's soundtrack will be curated by the talented DJ Incognito, who will keep the dance floor alive until 2:00 a.m. Whether you're an experienced dancer or stepping onto the floor for the first time, this event offers something for everyone.

To make the evening even more engaging, salsa instructor Jed Walker, known for his work with the Chicago International and Detroit World Salsa Congresses, will provide a complimentary salsa lesson from 9:15 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The lessons are designed to cater to all skill levels, and new moves will be introduced each week. No dance partner is required, as participants will rotate partners throughout the session, creating a welcoming and social atmosphere.

The Hamilton Street Pub, located at 308 S. Hamilton Street in Saginaw, is set to host this event every Friday. Doors open at 9:00 p.m., and a \$10 cover charge applies for attendees aged 21 and over. Proper attire is encouraged, with men required to wear full-length pants and caps prohibited.

With free parking available and the bar and kitchen staying open until 2:00 a.m., Sultry Salsa Fridays is poised to become the perfect way to kick off your weekends. Whether you're coming to dance, learn, or simply enjoy the lively atmosphere, the event promises an unforgettable night of Latin flair and fun.

For more information, visit [SultrySalsa.com](http://SultrySalsa.com) or call 630-251-3906. Don't miss your chance to experience the heat of Sultry Salsa Fridays and make your Friday nights unforgettable.



**SULTRY Salsa**

**Sultry Salsa Fridays**  
**at Hamilton Street Pub**  
**Beginning Friday**  
**January 10th**

*Dance Salsa, Bachata, Merengue  
Cumbia, Cha Cha & a touch of  
Reggaeton to the music of our  
awesome DJ Incognito  
until 2:00 am!*

Chicago International, and Detroit World, Salsa Congress instructor Jed Walker will conduct a **FREE Salsa lesson from 9:15 pm until 10:00 pm**. New moves weekly. Learn and improve your Salsa with this fantastic, fun & entertaining dance instructor

**NO PARTNER IS NECESSARY** as we rotate partners throughout the lesson so by the time the dancing starts you already know a lot of people.

*Dress for Photos. No caps. Men must wear full length pants.  
21 with valid ID to enter. \$10.00 Cover Charge beginning at 9:00 pm.  
Free Parking. Bar and Kitchen Open until 2:00 am.*

 **Hamilton Street Pub**  
**308 S Hamilton Street, Saginaw**

**SultrySalsa.com** **630.251.3906**



# IT MATTERS WHERE YOU BUY YOUR CAR



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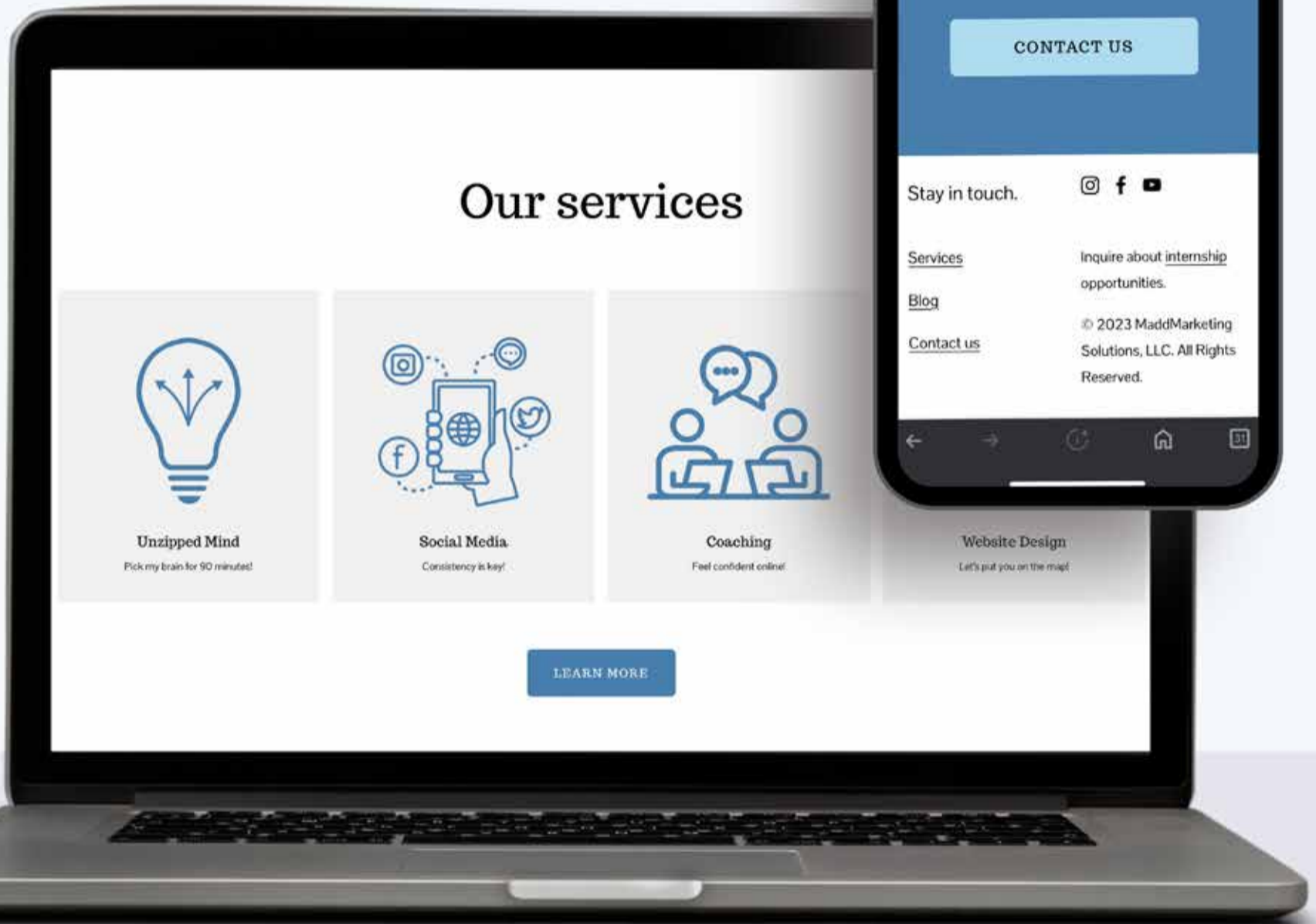
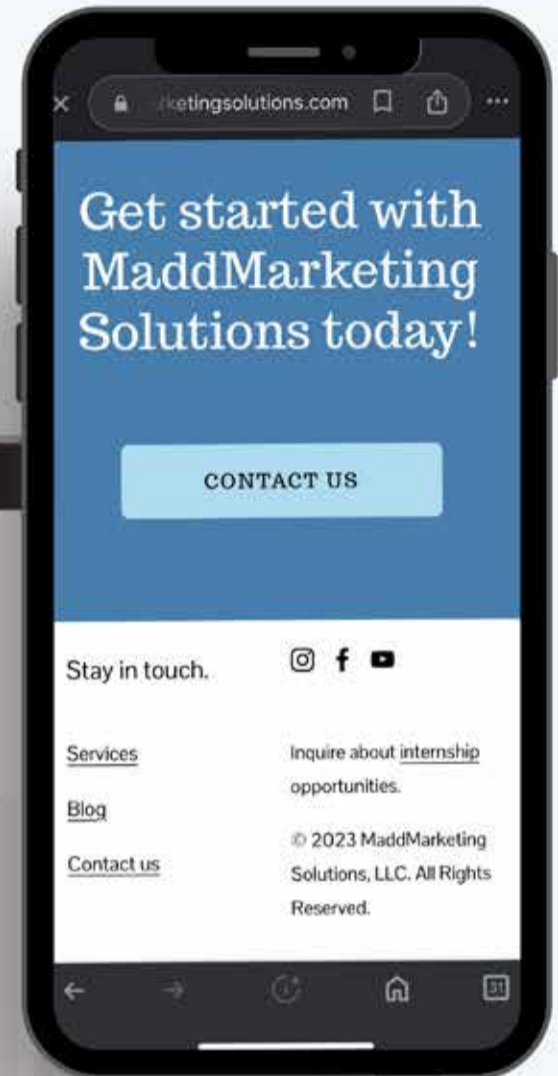
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## COMMUNITY

## Kevin Jones reappointed to Michigan's Black Leadership Advisory Council



KEVIN JONES STANDS IN FRONT OF AMUSBE (A MUSEUM OF BLACK EXPERIENCES)

**BY MB STAFF**

SAGINAW – Kevin Jones, a prominent leader in the arts and cultural community, has been reappointed to Michigan's Black Leadership Advisory Council. His new term will begin on Jan. 1, 2025, and run through Dec. 31, 2027.

Jones, founder of Blactiquing and president of A Museum of Black Experiences, has long been a champion of Black arts and cul-

ture. With a robust background in leadership and advocacy, Jones previously served as a senior associate for Morino Ventures. His academic credentials include a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan, a Master of Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a Master of Public Health from the University of Pennsylvania.

In his role on the Black Leadership Advisory Council, Jones will continue to represent Black

leadership in the arts and cultural sectors. The Council, housed within the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, serves as an advisory body to the Governor, tasked with addressing issues of discrimination and racial inequity across the state.

The Council's mission includes reviewing and recommending policies aimed at eradicating inequities, identifying state laws or gaps in legislation

that perpetuate inequality, and promoting initiatives to ensure equitable treatment of all Michiganders. Additionally, the Council collaborates with community groups and works to elevate Black cultural arts throughout the state.

For more information about the Black Leadership Advisory Council and its initiatives, visit the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's website.



COMMUNITY



# 46<sup>th</sup> annual citywide tribute honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with keynote by Dr. Clarence Nixon

BY MB STAFF

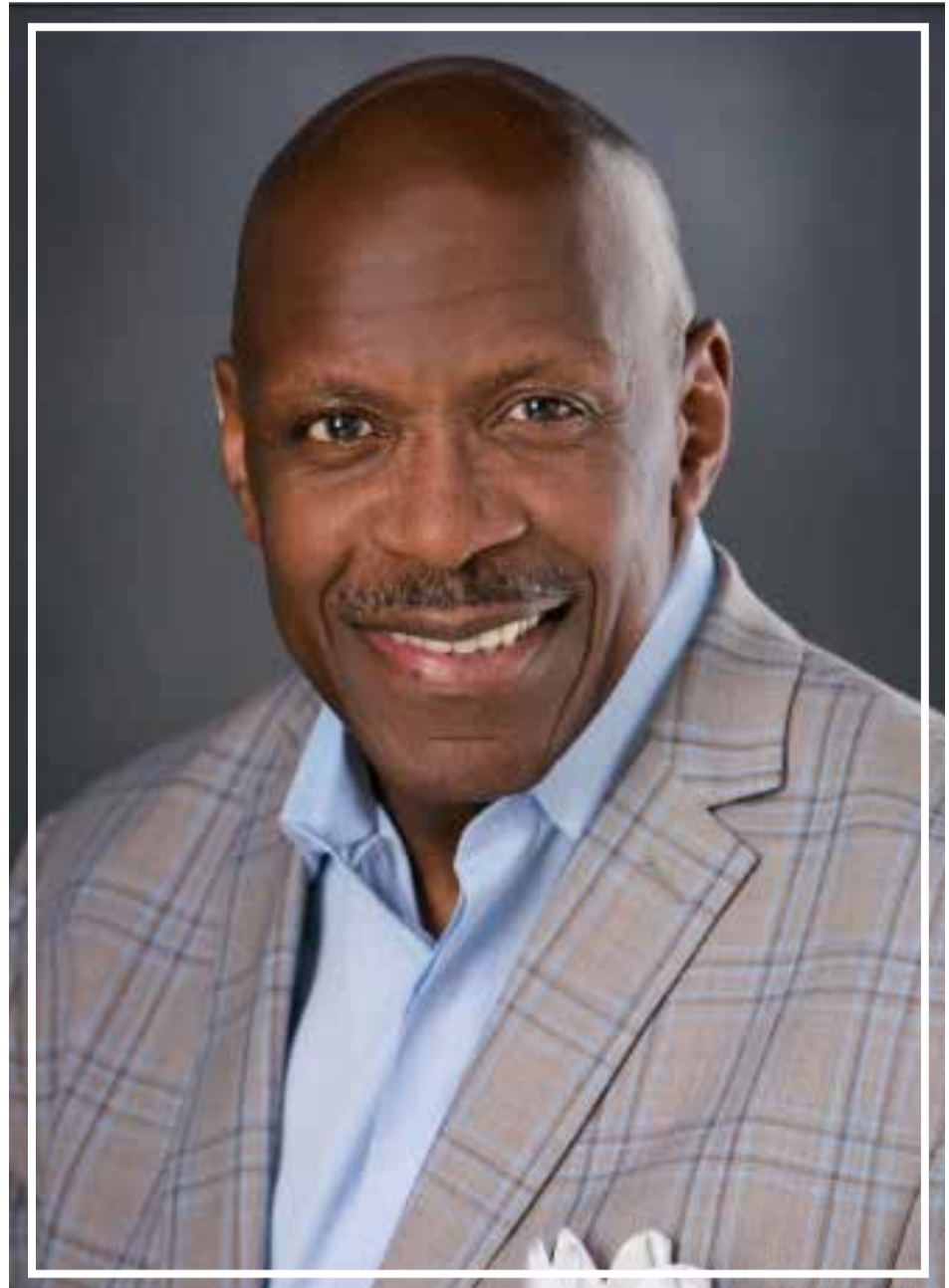
FLINT – The 46th Annual Citywide Tribute in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will take place on Thursday, Jan. 16, at the Genesys Conference & Banquet Center in Grand Blanc. This year's theme, "Equity, Justice & Voting Rights," underscores Dr. King's enduring legacy and commitment to advancing civil rights and equality.

The evening will feature a keynote address by Dr. Clarence Nixon, CEO and Founder of t.Lab, a high-performance learning laboratory for families and students. Founded in 2007, t.Lab has served over 3,800 students and parents globally, including participants from the United States, Kenya, Nigeria, Hungary, Lebanon, and the Philippines.

The organization's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of U.S.-based students by integrating a global leadership model.

Under Dr. Nixon's leadership, t.Lab has achieved remarkable results. As of 2020, the median composite ACT score of its students was an impressive 30.7, and the organization has helped students secure more than \$17 million in college scholarships. In recognition of its impact, Dr. Nixon and t.Lab were recently honored by the Information Technology Senior Management Forum.

The event is organized by the Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Planning Committee, with proceeds supporting the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund. The fund provides financial assistance to eligible students attending Kettering University, Mott Commu-



DR. CLARENCE DIXON

**"Equity, Justice & Voting Rights."**


46th Annual Citywide Tribute Event  
in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Presented by The Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Planning Committee

**Thursday, January 16, 2025 • 6:00 p.m.**  
**Genesys Conference & Banquet Center**

**Individual Admission \$50**  
**Table Sponsorship \$500** (includes 8 VIP tickets)

Pre-registration is required to attend at: [www.mcceventsonline.com](http://www.mcceventsonline.com)



**Keynote Address: Dr. Clarence Nixon, CEO & Founder of t.Lab**

Dr. Nixon is the Founder and CEO of t.Lab, a high-performance learning laboratory for families and students from pre-kindergarten through undergraduate. t.Lab was established to increase the competitiveness of US based students while leveraging a global leadership model. t.Lab has served more than 3800 parents and students since its inception in 2007 and has students from the US, Kenya, Nigeria, Hungary, Lebanon, and the Philippines. As of 2020, t.Lab's median composite ACT score among students is 30.7 and students have received more than \$17M in college scholarships. Dr. Nixon and t.Lab were honored with ITSMFs.

All proceeds go to support the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship for eligible students attending: Kettering University, Mott Community College, and University of Michigan-Flint.

Sponsored By



For more information call Mott Community College - 810-762-0425

If interested in attending, making a donation or becoming an event sponsor please register at: [www.mcceventsonline.com](http://www.mcceventsonline.com)



EVENT FLYER

nity College, and the University of Michigan-Flint.

Tickets for the tribute are now available. Individual admission is \$50, while table sponsorships, which include eight VIP tickets, are \$500. Pre-registration is required and can be completed online at [www.mcceventsonline.com](http://www.mcceventsonline.com).

The tribute will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Genesys Conference & Banquet Center, located at 805 Health Park Blvd

in Grand Blanc.

This annual event not only honors the life and legacy of Dr. King but also provides an opportunity to reflect on his vision of equity, justice, and civic engagement. Attendees will enjoy an inspiring evening while contributing to the education and empowerment of future leaders.

For more information, visit <https://appsprod.mcc.edu/ui/bear-advisory.html#/view/6690>.



COMMUNITY

MLK FLINT

# Flint hosts 10<sup>th</sup> Annual African American Film Series featuring “MLK/FBI”

BY MB STAFF

FLINT – Communities First, Inc. is proud to present the 10th Annual African American Film Series, continuing its tradition of showcasing impactful films that explore the African American experience. Ahead of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the film “MLK/FBI” will be screened on Jan. 9, at the Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley Street.

The evening begins with dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by the screening of “MLK/FBI” at 6:45 p.m. After the film, attendees are invited to participate in an engaging in-person panel discussion exploring the themes and historical context presented in the documentary.

Directed by award-winning filmmaker Sam Pollard, “MLK/FBI” delves into the FBI’s surveillance and harassment of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., shedding light on the agency’s efforts to discredit and undermine the civil rights leader. The documentary, based on newly discovered and declassified files, examines the government’s targeting of Black activists and the tension between democracy and the fight for justice. Featuring interviews with notable figures like Andrew Young, James Comey, Clarence Jones, and more, the film offers an in-depth look at the intersection of power, race, and activism.

The series will continue on Feb. 13, with the screening of “This Is My Black.” This groundbreaking musical documentary explores the nuances of Black adolescence and the challenges of surviving institutional violence through the experiences of musically gifted students at Philadelphia’s Pine Forge Academy. Like the January event, dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. in Isabel Hall, followed by the film at 6:45 p.m. in the FIA Theater.

This annual film series, hosted by Communities First, Inc., fosters dialogue, understanding, and community engagement around pivotal issues in African American history and culture. The events are free and open to the public.

For more information about the series, visit [Communities First, Inc.](http://CommunitiesFirstInc.org)

**AAAFS 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM SERIES**

**MLK/FBI**

**JANUARY 9, 2025**

FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS | DINNER • 5:30 PM  
1120 E. KEARSLEY ST. | FLINT, MI 48503 | MOVIE • 6:45 PM

**PANEL DISCUSSION:**  
In-person discussion to follow conclusion of film

PLEASE VISIT [COMMUNITIESFIRSTINC.ORG](http://COMMUNITIESFIRSTINC.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

**ABOUT**  
MLK/FBI is the first film to uncover the extent of the FBI's surveillance and harassment of Martin Luther King, Jr. Based on newly discovered and declassified files, the documentary explores the government's history of targeting Black activists, and the contested meaning behind some of our most cherished ideals. From Emmy Award winning director Sam Pollard and featuring interviews with Andrew Young, James Comey, Clarence Jones, and more.

GHS Genesee Health System  
FIA Flint Institute of Arts  
NARTEL FAMILY  
FOX 66 25  
CW 46

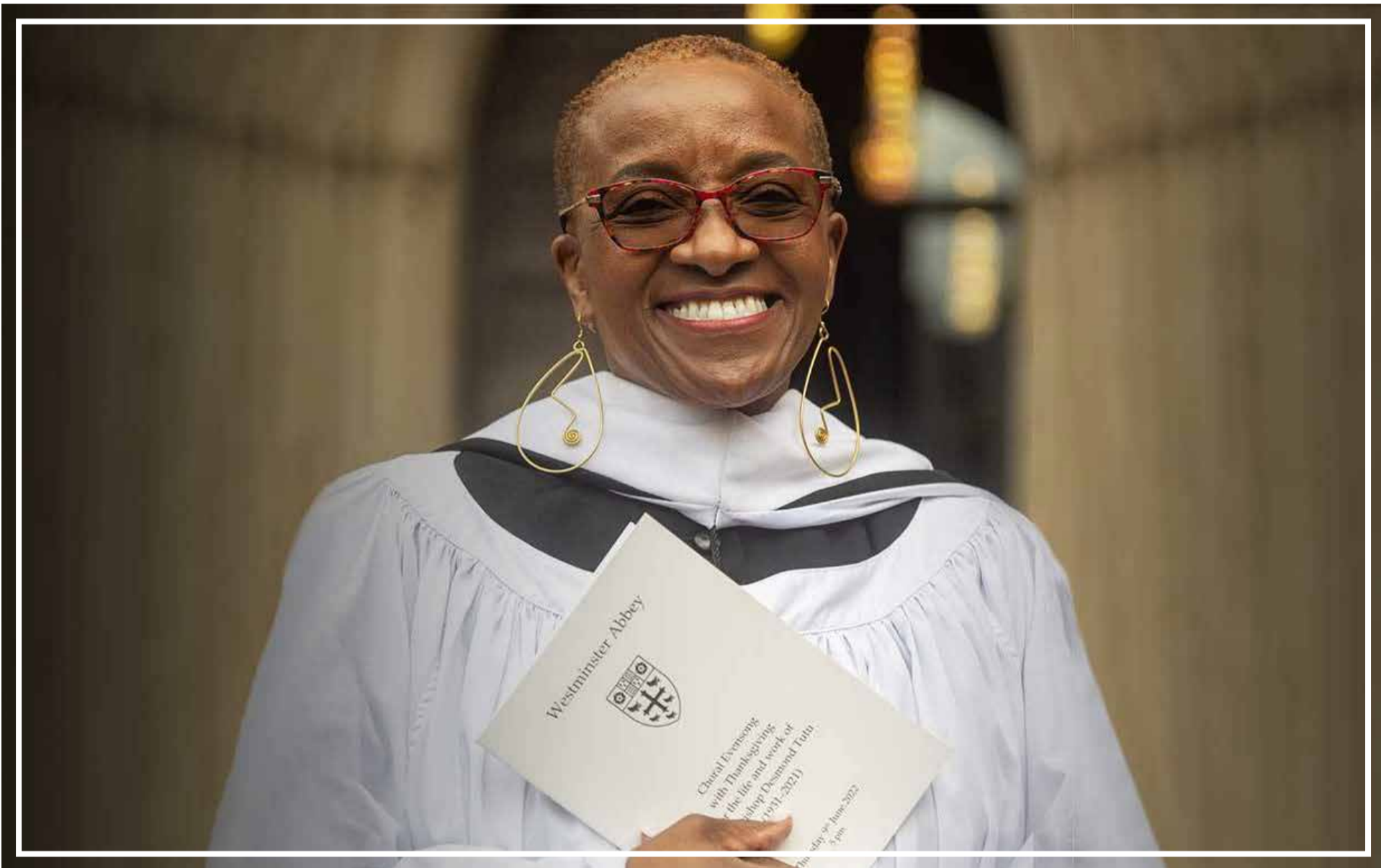
f t i y



COMMUNITY

MLK SAGINAW

# Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu to headline SVSU's 2025 MLK celebration



REV. NONTOMBI NAOMI TUTU

**BY SHAUNTELL SMITH**

SAGINAW – Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) is preparing to host its 2025 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, featuring Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu as the keynote speaker. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Malcolm Field Theatre, located in Curtiss Hall on the university's campus.

Rev. Tutu, a prominent race and gender justice activist, is widely known for her work ad-

vocating for human rights and addressing systemic inequality. Having grown up in apartheid South Africa, her experiences shaped her commitment to social justice. Over the years, she has built a reputation as a powerful and engaging speaker, delivering messages of unity and action to audiences around the globe.

The program will include the presentation of the MLK Scholarship Awards, recognizing students for their academic achievements and commitment to community service. The event will also feature the Region-

al Drum Major Awards, which honor individuals whose leadership and service reflect the values and vision of Dr. King.

The celebration is designed to bring together the SVSU community and the public to reflect on Dr. King's enduring legacy and to inspire continued efforts toward equity and inclusion. By hosting events that highlight influential voices like Rev. Tutu, the university fosters meaningful discussions and encourages positive change.

The event is open to the public, with accommodations avail-

able for those with disabilities. Individuals requiring assistance are directed to contact The Conference Center at SVSU at 989-964-4348 at least three days in advance. Further details about the celebration can be found at [svsu.edu/mlk](http://svsu.edu/mlk) or by calling the Office of Diversity Programs at 989-964-4068.

SVSU's Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration is made possible through the support of regional sponsors and community partners, reflecting a shared commitment to honoring Dr. King's mission of justice and equality.



COMMUNITY

MLK SAGINAW

# Saginaw Fraternity to host 29<sup>th</sup> annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Celebration



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW – The Iota Chi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., in partnership with Delta College’s Black Faculty and Staff Association, will host the 29th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Birthday Celebration on Monday, Jan. 20. The event, themed “Mission Possible: Protecting Freedom, Justice, and Democracy in the Spirit of Nonviolence,” will take place at The Dow Event Center, starting at 11 a.m.

This year’s keynote address will be delivered by Michigan State Representative Amos O’Neal of the 94th District. Representative O’Neal, a respected community leader and advocate, will share insights inspired by Dr. King’s legacy and the ongoing mission to uphold freedom, justice, and democracy.

The celebration will also feature the presentation of several prestigious awards recognizing outstanding contributions to

the community. Richard “Dick” Garber will receive the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Award, the fraternity’s highest honor for community service. Wilbert Long Jr., a member of the fraternity, will be presented with the James “Pete” Gaddis Service Award, while Dr. Angela Guy-Lee, Associate Professor of Sociology at Delta College, will be honored with the Delta College Black Faculty and Staff Association’s Spirit of Dr. King Award.

As part of the day’s events, a Unity March will begin in downtown Saginaw and conclude at The Dow Event Center. This nearly one-mile march is expected to draw over 100 participants, including students, educators, civic leaders, clergy, and local politicians. The march echoes Dr. King’s dedication to calling attention to social injustices and will set the tone for the Unity Luncheon, which typically attracts nearly 300 attendees.

Damon Brown, President of the Iota Chi Lambda Chapter, expressed enthusiasm for

the upcoming celebration. “We are excited about this 29th commemorative event to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King. The Unity March and Luncheon bring together diverse voices and perspectives to celebrate the local heroes who make our communities, state, and nation great,” said Brown.

Tickets for the in-person luncheon are \$50 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various levels, including Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, Patron, and Ad Only options. All

proceeds from sponsorships and ticket sales will support the ongoing community initiatives of the Iota Chi Lambda Chapter.

For sponsorship details, ticket purchases, or additional information, please contact Larry Jones at (989) 714-0709 or Smallwood Holoman at (989) 859-2602.

This annual event not only honors Dr. King’s life and vision but also highlights the collective efforts of those working to advance his mission of equity, justice, and nonviolence in the modern era.

**Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.**  
Iota Chi Lambda Chapter

PRESENTS

**THE 29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
UNITY CELEBRATION**

**Monday, January 20, 2025**  
11:00am at The Dow Center-Unity Hall

**TICKET PRICE: \$50**

A Unity March\* at 10:00 A.M. will precede the luncheon. The March will gather 9:30 A.M. at the corner of Franklin Street and Hayden Street. We will march to the Dow Event Center. There will be remarks about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the end of the March at the Dow Event Center.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TICKET(S)**

**CONTACT**  
Larry Jones (989-714-0709)  
Smallwood Holoman (989-859-2602)  
Eddie Foxx (989-860-4146)

**SAGINAW ALPHAS ARE ON**

**Speaker:**  
Amos O’Neal  
MI State Representative  
- 94th District

Community Awards presented by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Delta College Black Faculty and Staff Association

EVENT FLYER



## COMMUNITY

## MLK MOUNT PLEASANT

# Central Michigan University hosts Martin Luther King Jr. Week with events honoring legacy



DIANA PATTON

honoring Dr. King's fight for justice and peace.

## Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025

- Mission Possible: A Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Showcase at 6 p.m. in the Bovee UC Rotunda. This event highlights Dr. King's mission through student and faculty performances, presentations, and artistic expressions inspired by his legacy.

## Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025

- MLK Jr. Keynote Speaker: Diana Patton at 7 p.m. in the EHS Building, Room 118 (French Auditorium). Diana Patton, a social justice advocate and author, will deliver an inspiring keynote address focusing on actionable ways to continue Dr. King's work for equity and inclusion.

## Friday, Jan. 24, 2025

- MLK Jr. Charity Basketball Game at 6 p.m. in the Student Activity Center, Small Court, Forum, Courts 5 and 6. This friendly competition is not only a celebration of community but also a fundraiser for causes aligned with Dr. King's mission.

For more information about specific events or to RSVP where required, visit CMU's website or contact Multicultural Academic Student Services. Join CMU as it celebrates the enduring impact of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on our world today.

### BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT – Central Michigan University (CMU) will honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a week-long series of events from Jan. 20-24, 2025. Organized by Multicultural Academic Student Services (MASS), the celebration, themed "A day on, not a day off," emphasizes community service, reflection, and education.

The week's events, mostly free and open to the public, aim to engage participants in commemorating Dr. King's commitment to equality, justice, and nonviolence. Seating for all

events is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Week Calendar of Events:

#### Monday, Jan. 20, 2025

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. CommUNITY Peace Service at 9:30 a.m. in Finch Fieldhouse. Doors open at 9 a.m. This annual service gathers students, faculty, and community members to honor Dr. King's legacy through reflection and unity. Those interested in reserving a table can RSVP through the

registration form available online.

- MLK Jr. Day of Service at 12 p.m. in the Bovee UC Rotunda. Hosted by the Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center, this event encourages participants to engage in community service projects, embodying Dr. King's call to serve others.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. CommUNITY Peace March and Vigil at 3 p.m. The march will begin in the Bovee UC Rotunda, traverse the residential area, and continue downtown, concluding with a vigil



## Retired Saginaw County Judge passes away at 86



BRUCE SCORSONE

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW – Retired Judge Bruce Scorsone, a respected figure in the Saginaw County legal community, passed away on December 24, 2024, at the age of 86.

Judge Scorsone served as a Saginaw County District Judge from January 1, 1969, until his retirement on October 31, 2000. His 31-year tenure on the bench was marked by his unwavering commitment to fairness, integrity, and the pursuit of justice.

"Known for his fairness, integrity, and commitment to justice, Judge Scorsone left an indelible impact on the legal community," said Chief District Court Judge Terry L. Clark.

Judge Scorsone is survived by his wife, Karyl, his two sons, and his extended family. His loss is deeply felt across the Saginaw community and by those who knew him personally and professionally.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, January 5, 2025, at Apple Mountain, located at 4519 N. River Road, Freeland, Michigan. The event will take place from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., with a Time of Remembrance beginning at 3:30 p.m.

## Flint City Restaurant Week returns



# Flint City Restaurant week

## Downtown Flint

Jan 13-18

Flint City Restaurant Week

Enter to win a Downtown Flint Staycation!



EVENT FLYER

BY MB STAFF

FLINT — Downtown Flint will host its highly anticipated Flint City Restaurant Week from Jan. 13-18, 2025. This weeklong celebration invites food enthusiasts to explore the city's culinary scene, collect stamps from participating restaurants, and win exciting prizes—all while supporting local businesses.

To participate, diners can pick up free tickets at any participating restaurant starting

Jan. 13. After dining, simply collect a stamp from each restaurant. The more stamps you gather, the greater your chances of winning prizes, including a luxurious Staycation package. The grand prize features a stay at the Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Flint, entertainment, and dinner for two—a perfect getaway without leaving the city.

Flint City Restaurant Week promises to bring locals and visitors together for a vibrant dining experience, showcasing the

best of what Downtown Flint has to offer.

Participating restaurants will be open throughout the week during their regular hours. Be sure to check with individual venues for specific details.

For additional information, email Keith at keithm8989@gmail.com or visit the event website at sinclairentertainment.com.

Plan your visit, savor the flavors of Flint, and start collecting stamps for your chance to win!





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# Hunger in headlines for 2025

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW – As several hundred East Side Soup Kitchen patrons gathered to celebrate the holidays, Director Diane Keenan led her staff and volunteers in a feed-those-in-need event that was different from the norm.

Little was said in regard to 2025, but the year to come will be one-of-a-kind as well.

You don't see musical artists performing at meal sites, but a keyboard and vocal combo duo went through all the Christmas hits, from Jingle Bells to Silent Night, drawing a lanky gentleman in red sweats to the dance floor.

Thrift stores normally are not linked to soup kitchens. Still, after the hearty lunch with ham as the centerpiece, greens and mac-and-cheese among the sides, diners were given six tickets apiece for their choices of coats, along with some books and toys and winter attire for the kids on break from school.

Police usually are on patrol. On this weekday they were serving the lunch trays, representing multiple jurisdictions across the county. For that matter, the patrons also arrived from near and far, all ages and ethnic groups.

## Expansion in the works

If the soup kitchen's 2024 holiday program was noteworthy, just wait until the full agenda for 2025.

Instead of hearing music, by year's end congregants may be listening to jackhammers. A multi-million-dollar expansion is planned for the 20-year-old Hunger Solutions Center, home of both the soup kitchen and the Hidden Harvest food recovery operation, with space created by closing Thompson street at the rear.



EAST SIDE SOUP KITCHEN (940 E GENESEE AVE, SAGINAW, MI)

About a mile across the Cathedral District, at 310 Meredith off South Washington, another crew this spring is slated to begin construction of Saginaw Food Club, a subsidized statewide model that features discounts to all, deeper for lower incomes.

At the same time, a priority is to pursue a mini-Meijer of sorts, similar to Detroit's recent efforts to address what are known as "food deserts" in today's parlance.

Annie Boensch and George Copeland were the prior City Council's leaders in the food and nutrition ARPA bucket. From the federal anti-covid American Rescue Plan Act, \$2 million was split between the Hunger Center and the Food Club.

The pair of council members, with Boensch completing her 13th year and Copeland his fourth, viewed the budgeting as a blend that demonstrates the age-old feeding programs always

will have a place, while efforts for self-sufficiency may address the ever-growing need.

A positive result, in their view, would be more people with self-selected groceries through shopping encounters, reducing the lines for meals and for boxed non-perishables in handout fashion.

While the Saginaw Community Food Club and Kitchen appears as the new teammate among anti-poverty efforts, organizing under Tina Swanton during her YMCA years actually started, in cooperation with an array of local programs, before the pandemic and President Biden's \$1.9 trillion ARPA revamp of the 1960s War on Poverty, including \$52 million for Saginaw. A model based in Grand Rapids can be found on Google. For example, a family with two or three children could earn up to the \$50,000 range and still receive aid, whether on cash or on

an EBT card.

Boensch contends challenges remain, including for people whose low-middle incomes disqualify them from various aid programs, but anything to increase choices is positive.

Saginaw is not bound by the statewide Food Club model and original standards may be set here, including possible "time dollars" in exchange for community volunteerism.

Swanton says she has faith in the concept, and that competition is welcome, be it from big-box franchises in the suburbs or in newfangled smaller outlets in poverty areas where dollar stores now proliferate.

For her latest condensed presentation to the current council, from which Boensch and Copeland were voted off on Nov. 5, go to the Dec. 9 meeting video and skip ahead to 25:40.



## COMMUNITY

## Houghton-Jones group eyes vacant school



FORMER HOUGHTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY MIKE THOMPSON

SAGINAW — The president of Houghton-Jones Neighborhood Association has a dream.

Anganetta Ervin asks, "Our big 2025 question is, "Can we acquire a closed-up Houghton School, remodel it from the ground up, and maintain it?"

This may be news to the new City Council, along with a veteran Board of Education, in regards to a structure that has stood vacant for a decade across from the Houghton-Jones headquarters, 1604 Johnson at Eleventh.

That's where Anganetta grew up, completing K-6 during the late 1960s baby boom population

peak when the Houghton campus also was home to the former Mershon Pool.

Her background in community action goes back even farther than the original Houghton-Jones Task Force.

It takes root with her parents.

The Rev. Charles Birden became a union steward at Malleable Iron and was involved in the formation of the Saginaw County Community Action Center, and Zenobia Birden joined her husband in promoting faith through social action.

And so it was only natural that when organizer Hazel Wilson came door-knocking 32 years ago, Anganetta and her husband,

Willie Ervin, responded to the call. Willie also serves on the Houghton-Jones board.

From her upbringing, she is attracted to the grassroots approach that was reflected by Wilson, who has moved back home to rural Mississippi. Guidance also came from other founders like Christina Jones and Sister Lois Ann Sheaffer.

"I was there at the start," she notes.

**What's up with the school?**

Now she's beginning her second year as Houghton-Jones board president, re-selected by acclaim at a Dec. 19 session.

She looks forward to maintaining the blend of youth activities, both summer and after-school, and community groups using the center for meetings. She emphasizes that the group saved money on repaving the parking lot thanks to an ARPA grant from the City Council, allowing regular funds to remain concentrated on programs and activities.

But like her parents would do, she also looks for higher goals. As Houghton Elementary stands empty, with the health-clinic wing facing the small-sized

**Continues on pg 23,  
Houghton-Jones**



## COMMUNITY

**From pg 22, Houghton-Jones**

neighborhood center at Johnson and Eleventh streets, she asks whether 2025 should be the year for the group to step in and raise questions about the future of what once was the city's largest K-6 school.

"We could use some space," Ervin said, after an annual meeting with about two dozen participants led to a near overflow at the 3,000-square-foot facility, built with local monies organized through the Saginaw Community Foundation shortly after the millennium's turn.

When ARPA funds came along through President Biden's anti-pandemic American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Houghton-Jones asked for use of the health clinic and gym at the east end of the building closest to headquarters. This idea was not discussed at the time of main decisions.

**Housing plan disappears**

In late 2021, as reported only by Michigan Banner (Oct. 1 and 16), the Saginaw Consortium of Homeless Assistance Providers, S-CHAP, floated and quickly withdrew a plan to use ARPA as seed money for conversion of the school classrooms into affordable housing apartments. often cited as in short supply with skyrocketing rents.

CHAP Chair Dan Streeter of the Rescue Mission said neighborhood opposition caused the pullout, even while the Houghton-Jones leader at the time, Rev. Willie Casey, said neighbors simply wanted a meeting to learn more.

United Way was coordinator of the stalled venture, and other partners were Habitat for Humanity, Restoration Outreach, the Housing Commission, County Mental Health, Youth Protective Services, Mustard Seed, Emmaus House, Disabled American Veterans, Mission in the City and the county Department of Social

Services.

Ervin said Houghton-Jones leaders would consider any ideas that may emerge.

**Time for teamwork**

The next meeting is at 6 p.m. on Feb. 13, which will be a Thurs-

day. Count on Willie Ervin to be there, always to back his bride of 48 years. He denies her claim that he tries "all the time" to guide her leadership choices, because he merely picks his spots when he might get a word in edgewise.

Other board members are Saleem Mana'an as vice-presi-

dent, Angie Jones (daughter of Christina, who turned 90 years old on Christmas Day and still remains active) as secretary and Ceciel Reed as treasurer.

The Houghton-Jones website offers info on options for volunteering.



ANGANETTA AND WILLIE ERVIN



## HEALTH

## Michigan launches capacity building center to strengthen behavioral health workforce



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

LANSING — In a move to address the growing need for skilled behavioral health professionals, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has awarded a contract to Public Consulting Group (PCG) to develop and implement a new Capacity Building Center (CBC). This initiative aims to expand access to training for providers while improving the quality of behavioral health services across the state.

Elizabeth Hertel, director of MDHHS, emphasized the criti-

cal role the center will play in supporting Michigan families. “The Capacity Building Center is designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of the behavioral health workforce, supporting retention and recruitment while ensuring that families receive high-quality care,” said Hertel. “This effort reflects our ongoing commitment to improving access to behavioral health services statewide.”

The CBC will provide a centralized resource for children’s behavioral health providers to access training and educational opportunities. Initially, more than 200 training sessions will be

offered to over 5,000 providers. These trainings will cover topics such as the Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool, Intensive Care Coordination with Wraparound, and Medicaid-funded specialty behavioral health services for children and families.

Training sessions will be available both online and in-person, allowing providers to choose formats that best suit their schedules and needs. Participants will be able to register for, attend, and complete training programs through a centralized website, which is expected to launch in

May 2025. The platform will also issue credits for completed sessions, making it easier for providers to track their professional development.

The Capacity Building Center will also introduce Learning Communities—collaborative networks aimed at fostering continuous quality improvement. These communities will enable behavioral health professionals to share insights, refine their practices, and stay up-to-date on advancements in the field.

PCG, the firm leading the initiative in partnership with MDHHS, expressed enthusiasm for the project. “The CBC will provide comprehensive training and valuable resources that will ultimately enhance the quality of care for Michigan’s children and families,” said Jen MacBlane, PCG’s human services manager.

Robert Sheehan, CEO of the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan, praised the effort, stating, “The creation of the CBC further solidifies Michigan’s leadership in developing and delivering cutting-edge clinical training for public mental health providers. It is a significant addition to the state’s efforts to sustain and strengthen the skills of clinicians.”

MDHHS has indicated that the Capacity Building Center is just the beginning. Once the initial implementation is evaluated, additional training opportunities and resources will be added to further support the state’s behavioral health workforce.

For more information about the Capacity Building Center and its upcoming launch, email MDHHS at [MDHHS-CBC@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-CBC@michigan.gov).



**HEALTH**

# Faster processing of disability claims for people with Alzheimer's disease



**BY HILLARY HATCH**  
SOCIAL SECURITY  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

LANSING — Today, more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. It is a brain condition that causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior. Since the onset of Alzheimer's can occur in younger people before they retire, it may affect their ability to work as the disease progresses.

Our benefits and services are espe-

cially vital to people with early-onset Alzheimer's who are unable to work and may have no other source of income. They may want to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Our Compassionate Allowances program provides faster processing of disability claims for people with early-onset Alzheimer's disease and several other neurodegenerative (brain degenerative) disorders.

More than a decade ago, Social Security added early-onset Alzheimer's disease to our Compassionate Allowances program. You can learn more about our Compassionate Allowances program at [www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances).

Please share this information with friends and family.



FILE PHOTO

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## EDUCATION

## State Superintendent visits Flint schools to inspire students and celebrate progress



DR. RICE AND ALONZO WILLIAMS, THIRD GRADE, DOYLE RYDER COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER, READING THE POEM "DREAMS" BY LANGSTON HUGHES TO ALONZO'S CLASSMATES.

### BY MB STAFF

FLINT — Students and staff in Flint Community Schools welcomed Michigan State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice and members of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to their classrooms this week, engaging in meaningful conversations about career aspirations, academic progress, and the power of dreams.

The visit included stops at Flint Southwestern Classical Academy and Doyle Ryder Community Education Center. At Southwestern, Dr. Rice held a discussion with the high school's student council, while at Doyle Ryder, he met with third grad-

ers to explore their career goals and discuss the Langston Hughes poem "Dreams."

During his visit to Doyle Ryder, Dr. Rice asked students to share their future aspirations. Third grader Marcella Blackwell enthusiastically said she hopes to become a teacher, while her classmate Alonzo Williams, who dreams of being a film director, impressed the room by flawlessly reading Langston Hughes' poem. Other students shared ambitions ranging from becoming a scientist or artist to serving as president of the United States.

"When I was your age, I dreamed of being an artist," Dr. Rice told the children. "Later, I thought I might become a baseball player or a child psycholo-

gist. Each of those dreams helped me figure out who I wanted to be, just like you're exploring your dreams now."

At Southwestern Classical Academy, members of the student council engaged Dr. Rice in conversations about their career goals and school policies, discussing topics such as diversity and the use of cellphones in classrooms. The dialogue provided students with a platform to share their perspectives on how to improve their educational environment.

Dr. Rice also met with Flint Community Schools Superintendent Mr. Kevelin Jones, who emphasized the importance of collaboration in nurturing student success.

"Dr. Rice's visit highlights our shared commitment to empowering the dreams of our students," said Jones. "From third graders at Doyle Ryder openly discussing their future careers to Southwestern's student leaders engaging in meaningful dialogue, today exemplifies the spirit of growth and achievement we foster in Flint. The continued support from MDE and our partners ensures we can keep making progress toward our academic goals."

The visit comes on the heels of Flint Community Schools

meeting its 18-month benchmark goals in literacy, mathematics, and systemic improvements as part of its Partnership Agreement with MDE. The district's progress reflects a focused effort by students, teachers, and families, with support from partners such as the Genesee Intermediate School District, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and Michigan State University's Office of K-12 Outreach.

"Flint students, staff, and families are working hard, and it's paying off," Dr. Rice said. "MDE is proud to support Flint and other districts across Michigan in their efforts to improve academic achievement and build brighter futures for their students."

Accompanying Dr. Rice during the visit were Gloria Chapman, director of the Office of Partnership Districts; Bob Wheaton, director of the Office of Public and Governmental Affairs; and Paul Schummer, partnership agreement liaison.

The visit reaffirmed the ongoing collaboration between Flint Community Schools and the Michigan Department of Education, showcasing the district's commitment to fostering student success and ensuring that every child in Flint has the opportunity to dream big and achieve their goals.



DR. RICE MEETING WITH THE FLINT SOUTHWESTERN CLASSICAL ACADEMY, DISCUSSING TOPICS THAT INCLUDED CAREER PLANS, THE SCHOOL'S DIVERSITY, AND SCHOOL CELLPHONE POLICIES.



## EDUCATION



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT (FILE PHOTO)

## Biden signs law mandating FAFSA release by Oct. 1 to simplify college aid process

BY MB STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Joe Biden has signed a new law requiring the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be released by October 1 each year, cementing an earlier and more reliable timeline for students seeking financial aid.

While the FAFSA typically launches in October, the U.S. Department of Education previously had until January 1 to release the form. This leeway occasionally led to delays, including the highly criticized late rollout of the 2024-25 FAFSA, which didn't debut until January due to technical glitches and processing issues.

The new mandate aims to

prevent future delays, ensuring students and families have ample time to complete the application and secure funding for college. The law comes as the Department of Education continues to address the fallout from the 2024-25 processing cycle and subsequent challenges with the 2025-26 form.

After a staggered release that began October 1, the 2025-26 FAFSA became fully available in late November, narrowly meeting the department's revised deadline of December 1. Despite this progress, U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal acknowledged there's more work to be done.

"We remain committed to improving the user experience, addressing bugs, and ensuring

that students and families can access the aid they need without unnecessary barriers," Kvaal said during a press briefing.

**Broad Bipartisan Support for FAFSA Deadline Bill**

The legislation establishing the October 1 deadline received overwhelming bipartisan support, passing swiftly through Congress in November. The House version of the bill was introduced by Rep. Erin Houchin, an Indiana Republican and member of the Education and Workforce Committee. On the Senate side, the measure was championed by Louisiana Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy, who is expected to chair the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions next year.

Virginia Democrat Rep.

Bobby Scott, a ranking member of the House education panel, celebrated the bill's enactment, emphasizing its importance in expanding access to higher education.

"With rising college costs, financial aid programs like Pell Grants are vital for making higher education accessible," Scott said. "By standardizing the FAFSA release date, this law ensures students and families have the time they need to complete their applications and access the support they deserve."

**A History of Challenges and Reforms**

The 2024-25 FAFSA cycle marked the debut of changes introduced by the FAFSA Simplification Act, a 2020 law designed to streamline the application process. However, the rollout faced widespread criticism due to technical errors, processing delays, and a decline in submissions compared to previous years.

In response, the Department of Education committed to improving the system for 2025-26 and beyond. Officials reported that as of Thursday, over 1.5 million FAFSA submissions for 2025-26 had been processed, with more than 7 million student records shared with states and institutions.

Despite the improvements, education leaders acknowledge the need for continued refinement. "We've made progress, but we're not done," Kvaal said, reiterating the department's commitment to enhancing the system for future cycles.

The FAFSA's earlier and standardized release is expected to benefit millions of students, providing clarity and stability as they navigate the college financial aid process. With the law now in place, the Department of Education is tasked with ensuring a smooth and timely rollout moving forward.



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# Michigan gambling brings \$500 Million to schools, raises addiction concerns



MAN AT CASINO (FILE PHOTO)

BY SHAUNTELL SMITH

LANSING — Legal gambling in Michigan generated nearly \$500 million in tax revenue for the state's School Aid Fund this year, according to a report from the Michigan Gaming Control Board. While these funds provide vital support for K-12 public schools, the increasing popularity of online gambling has sparked concerns over addiction.

Since the legalization of online gambling in 2021, Michigan has seen a steady rise in tax revenue from gaming activities. This year, online gambling accounted for approximately 80% of the total, contributing \$400 million.

Despite these financial gains, experts warn that the accessibility of gambling through digital platforms could lead to an uptick in problem gambling.

"A big concern for preventing addiction is the ease of access to online gambling," said Alia Lucas, a gambling disorder program specialist at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. "So rather than get up and get dressed and go to a casino, I am now able to gamble from my phone, from my computer, from my living room."

This increased access has led to greater engagement with gambling, requiring the health department to adapt its approach to raising awareness about problem

gambling, Lucas explained.

"It's required us to be more creative in our approach to making sure that we're providing the necessary information to the Michigan public as to what to look for as far as the signs, how to get help if you need it, and where that help is available," she said.

In addition to the School Aid Fund, gambling tax revenue is distributed to smaller funds aimed at addressing gambling addiction. One of these, the Compulsive Gambling Prevention Fund, is a collaboration between the Michigan Gaming Control Board, the Michigan Lottery, and the health department.

"Our interest is making sure that the Michigan public that's

gambling are doing so healthily," Lucas said.

As gambling tax revenue continues to grow, so does the need for public health interventions to prevent addiction. The state's Problem Gambling Helpline has experienced an increase in calls, reflecting the growing demand for resources and support.

For those struggling with compulsive gambling, help is available through the Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-270-7117. Additional resources can be found on the websites of the Michigan Gaming Control Board and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.



## EDUCATION

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



COURTESY PHOTOS

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

However, when Dr. Taylor

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

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

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

tunities as well as community activities and events.

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

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

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**About Saginaw ISD HE/EHS**

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

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

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

pregnant women and their families.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sabrina Beeman-Jackson

Saginaw ISD Head Start/Early Head Start Program Director

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

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

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

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## BUSINESS + FINANCE

## Dow recognized for sustainability leadership with 24<sup>th</sup> year on Dow Jones Index



THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND — Dow Inc. has once again solidified its reputation as a global leader in sustainability, earning a spot on the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI World) for the 24th consecutive year. The company also marked its 19th year on the Dow Jones Sustainability North America Index (DJSI North America), highlighting its consistent dedication to sustainable practices in the chemical industry.

The DJSI, launched in 1999, serves as a benchmark for corporate sustainability, recognizing

companies that excel in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. Dow's continued presence on these indices underscores its position as a top-performing company in the global chemical sector.

"Being listed among the leading companies in sustainability recognizes our efforts and motivates us to continue pursuing performance excellence," said Andre Argenton, Dow's chief sustainability officer and vice president of Environment, Health, Safety, and Sustainability. "By embedding sustainability practices into our operations and business performance, we

aim to achieve consistent growth and create long-term value for all our stakeholders – from our employees and customers to our investors and the communities we serve. Together, we are driving positive change and contributing to a more sustainable future."

Dow's 2024 ranking was bolstered by strong results in key areas assessed by S&P Global's Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA). The company excelled in Climate Strategy, Water Management, Occupational Health & Safety, and Employee Support & Development Programs. These scores highlight Dow's commitment to reducing

its environmental impact while prioritizing the well-being and growth of its workforce.

The recognition reflects Dow's ongoing efforts to integrate sustainability into every aspect of its business. From innovative climate protection strategies to comprehensive employee development programs, the company continues to set industry standards for corporate responsibility and performance.

For more information on Dow's sustainability initiatives and progress, visit their Intersections Progress Report online.



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## BUSINESS + FINANCE

# Entrepreneurs set ambitious goals for 2025

BY MB STAFF

As 2025 begins, entrepreneurs are setting bold goals to fuel growth, innovation, and resilience in the year ahead. Whether launching new ventures or scaling established businesses, the New Year offers an opportunity to refine strategies and adapt to the ever-evolving market landscape.

Understanding and adapting to consumer expectations is a crucial first step. Modern consumers value personalized experiences, sustainability, and digital convenience. Businesses that align with these priorities are better positioned to foster loyalty and build strong customer relationships. Regular surveys or social media engagement can provide valuable insights into consumer needs, helping businesses tailor their offerings. Emphasizing sustainability in branding and operations can also attract eco-conscious customers and enhance a company's reputation.

Technology continues to be a vital tool for growth and efficiency. Entrepreneurs are embracing automation software, customer relationship management platforms, and data analytics to streamline operations. Expanding into e-commerce or online marketplaces can open doors to broader audiences, increasing sales opportunities and visibility.

Networking and collaboration remain key components of business success. Building meaningful relationships within the industry can lead to new ideas, resources, and markets. Entrepreneurs should consider joining local business organizations, attending industry events, or participating in online forums to expand their professional connections. Partnering with complementary businesses can also create mutually beneficial opportunities, such as joint marketing



YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR (FILE PHOTO)

efforts or product collaborations.

Financial resilience is another priority for many entrepreneurs. Creating a detailed budget for 2025, including contingencies for unexpected expenses, is essential for navigating challenges. Diversifying income streams by exploring new products, services, or markets can help reduce reliance on a single revenue source and provide greater stability.

Maintaining work-life balance and personal wellness is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in long-term success. Entrepreneurs should set realistic goals and delegate tasks where possible to avoid overextending themselves. Regular breaks and activities outside of work can help recharge and maintain a healthy perspective.

Customer engagement is a

cornerstone of building trust and loyalty. Personalized marketing efforts, such as targeted email campaigns or loyalty programs, can foster meaningful connections. Responding promptly to customer feedback and implementing suggestions when feasible demonstrates that their input is valued, which can further strengthen relationships.

Staying informed and adaptive is crucial in a rapidly changing business environment. Keeping up with industry trends through publications, webinars, and competitor analysis allows entrepreneurs to stay ahead. Being prepared to pivot strategies when market conditions shift or new opportunities arise ensures continued relevance and competitiveness.

Innovation drives growth and

differentiation, and fostering a culture of creativity is essential. Encouraging brainstorming sessions with teams can generate fresh ideas for products, services, or marketing strategies. Testing new concepts through small-scale pilots before full launches reduces risk and refines execution.

The landscape of 2025 presents both opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurs. By focusing on adaptability, innovation, and customer-centric strategies, business owners can position themselves for success. Balancing ambitious business goals with personal well-being creates a foundation for sustainable growth, making 2025 a year of significant progress and achievement.



**BUSINESS + FINANCE**

# Michigan workers to gain sick time benefits starting February

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW — Starting February 21, Michigan workers will earn one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. Employers with ten or more employees must provide 72 hours of paid sick leave annually, while smaller businesses will offer 40 hours of paid leave and 32 hours unpaid.

The policy stems from a court ruling restoring a 2018 law, sparking concerns among businesses over strict reporting requirements. “This law requires extremely precise and detailed accounting of accruals for actual time worked,” said Brian Calley, President of the Small Business Association of Michigan.


Workers can use sick time for illness, family needs, or domestic violence issues, but Calley raised concerns about misuse, noting documentation is only required after four consecutive days of absence.

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity has assured businesses that many existing benefits plans may already meet the new requirements. However, while some lawmakers express interest in revising the policy, Calley doubts changes will happen before the February deadline.



SICK WOMAN (FILE PHOTO)

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## 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.

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## FAITH IN FOCUS

# A faith-filled journey into the New Year



INSIDE A CHURCH (FILE PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

As the world ushers in 2025, it is an opportunity for believers to pause, reflect, and embrace the promise of a new year guided by faith. For many, the turning of the calendar symbolizes fresh beginnings, renewed commitments, and a chance to draw closer to God's purpose for their lives.

The Bible reminds us in Isaiah 43:18-19: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" This passage invites us to let go of past disappoint-

ments and failures, trusting that God is working in the unseen to bring forth new blessings and opportunities.

## A Time for Reflection

The New Year offers a moment to reflect on God's faithfulness through the challenges and triumphs of 2024. Many have weathered trials, faced uncertainties, and seen their faith tested, but have also experienced grace, provision, and growth. Reflecting on these moments allows us to approach 2025 with gratitude and confidence in God's unchanging promises.

## Renewed Commitments

For those seeking direction in 2025, Proverbs 3:5-6 offers reassurance: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." This is a season to renew commitments to prayer, worship, and service, aligning personal goals with God's will.

Churches and faith communities are embracing the New Year with activities designed to inspire and encourage believers. Many congregations have planned fasting and prayer events, vision-

casting services, and outreach programs to bless their communities in 2025.

## A Year of Hope and Action

As we step into the New Year, it's essential to carry hope into our relationships, workplaces, and communities. Faith is not only a personal journey but a call to action. Hebrews 10:24 reminds us, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

Believers are encouraged to serve others, stand for justice, and be beacons of Christ's love in their daily lives. Whether it's mentoring youth, volunteering at food banks, or advocating for the marginalized, every act of kindness is an opportunity to reflect God's heart.

## Embracing the Unknown

2025 will undoubtedly bring its share of uncertainties, but we are reminded in Philippians 4:6-7 to "not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Let this year be one of faith over fear, trusting that God goes before us in all things.

## Looking Ahead

As we embrace 2025, let's commit to being the hands and feet of Jesus in our families, workplaces, and communities. May this year be a testament to His glory as we grow in faith, live with purpose, and pursue the abundant life promised to us.

Happy New Year! May 2025 be a year of blessing, peace, and renewed faith for all.



## CHURCH DIRECTORY

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**B****Bethlehem Temple Church of the Apostolic Faith**

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**C****Christ Disciples Baptist Church**

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**Christ Fellowship Baptist Church**

Rev. Robert Davis, Jr.  
818 N. Washington Ave.  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
989-754-4435  
PastorD818@gmail.com

**Christ Image Community Church**

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christimage.us

**F****Faith Harvest Church**

Bishop Ronald E. Chipp  
1734 N. Mason  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
989-799-4200  
faithharvestministry.org  
office@faithharvestministry.org

**Faith Ministries Church**

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

**G****Glimpse Of Hope Ministries**

Pastor Leslie D Lewis  
2211 S. Outer Dr.  
Saginaw Michigan 48601  
989-755-9237  
g.ministries@aol.com

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**J****Jacob's Ladder**

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**L****Life in Christ Ministries**

Pastor Dennis Cotton, Sr.  
2915 S. Washington Road  
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989-401-4465  
LifeInChristMinistries07@gmail.com

**M****Messiah Missionary Baptist Church**

Pastor Otis Washington  
2615 Williamson Road  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
989-777-2636  
Fax: 989-777-2640  
messiahmbc@att.net  
messiahsag.org

**Ministry Without Walls**

Pastor, John Dunn  
3783 Mannion Road  
Saginaw, MI 48603

**N****New Beginnings Deliverance Ministry**

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2609 E. Genesee  
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989-777-8272  
Pastorbaldwin@charter.net

**New Beginnings Ministries**

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**R****Resurrection Life Ministries Full Gospel Baptist Church**

Pastor Carolyn L. Wilkins  
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**S****Saint Paul Baptist Church**

Rev. Dr., Vincent D. McMillon  
120 North 15 St.  
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Facebook: St Paul MBC Family Connection

**Second Baptist Church**

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**T****Transforming Life Ministries**

Pastor William Brown  
523 Hayden  
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**True Vine Baptist Church**

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2930 Janes Street  
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**U****United Missionary Baptist Church**

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

**V****Victorious Belivers Ministries Church**

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



## FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

## The gift of imperfection

BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

We recently facilitated a workshop and tried out a new exercise. A team member pulled us aside afterwards and shared that we really got people interacting. She said this with a smile and a positive tilt in her voice. We listened to her comments, smiling at each other as this was one of the goals of the workshop. Then she mentioned that she saw that some participants were uncomfortable with the exercise. We stopped smiling and looked at each other in distress. She continued, "You were being you – you're known as out-of-the-box teachers, and you were out-of-the-box. You know, no matter how great a job you do there are always going to be a diversity of reactions. That's just the way we are as people." We stopped holding our breath and relaxed our shoulders. What? We don't have to be perfect? We don't have to meet all the expectations of 100 different people, every time? How wonderful to be reminded of our humanity – our human fragility, emotions, and imperfection – especially during a time when artificial intelligence can be confused with human intelligence. What a gift – the wisdom to know that perfection is an elusive, ever-changing measure that often isn't shared in advance. And what does it mean if anyone of us is labeled as "perfect?" Does perfection make you better person? More valuable? More intelligent? More "in-demand?"

Here are our thoughts on perfection: don't try to be perfect; perfection is – for the most part – unattainable. We think that about life in general and also



FILE PHOTO

about fundraising. Very few organizations can perfectly implement all the best practices in all areas of fundraising. It's not possible. No one has enough time, staff, talent, resources, and relationships to even try. Think instead about what you can do with what you have. Make a short list of those actions you can take that you believe will help create the most meaningful positive change for your organization or institution. Not a long list, a short list. Consider, perhaps, how you can stretch a bit to increase the circle of people, ideas, and funding you have access to. Do one thing one day. On another day, take the first step towards a more

complex action. Maybe your undertaking will yield the results you anticipate. Maybe it will be better than you could have imagined. Maybe it will fall flat or fail to gain traction. No matter what the result, don't worry. You tried something. We can't know in advance the results of actions we take... they are contingent upon

so many variables, especially when it comes to fundraising.

And that's the gift of imperfection: you can try new things without knowing the answer or result in advance. You don't have to beat yourself up if things don't work out perfectly. You never know, they just may end up being perfect enough.



Copyright 2024 – 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](http://www.saadandshaw.com) or call (901) 522-8727.





## PICS OF THE WEEK

On December 23, officers joined the East Side Soup Kitchen's Annual Holiday Party and Christmas Store, teaming up with first responders, staff, and volunteers to serve the community during the holiday season.





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**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Nontombi Naomi Tutu**

*Race & Gender Justice Activist*

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*Located in Curtiss Hall*

This event will feature:

- Keynote Address — the Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu
- Presentation of the MLK Scholarship Awards
- Presentation of the Regional Drum Major Awards

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

**THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

The challenges of growing up black and female in apartheid South Africa have been the foundation of the Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu's life as a motivational speaker and activist for human rights. Those experiences taught her that our whole human family loses when we accept situations of oppression, and how the teaching and preaching of hate and division injure us all.

She started her public speaking as a college student at Berea College in Kentucky in the 1970s when she was invited to speak at churches, community groups and colleges and universities about her experiences growing up in apartheid South Africa. She has since become a much sought-after speaker to a wide variety of business associations, professional conferences, elected officials and church and civic organizations.

The Rev. Tutu knew from the time she was young that she wanted to help change the lives of others and make a difference in the world. But she wanted to carve her own path. And that she has done.

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