

# FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE  
LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**JANUARY 2023**



## **THE DAVIES PROJECT** MORE THAN JUST A RIDE

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MESSAGE FROM 2023 LRCC BOARD CHAIR MATT RESCH

LANSING INSURANCE AGENCY PROMOTES INDUSTRY DIVERSITY

LRCC SUPPORTS SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

## 2023 Board of Directors

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### Board Partnerships

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**Bob Trezise** / LEAP, Inc.

*Lansing 5:01*

**Chris Sell** / Michigan State University

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**Dr. Alane Laws-Barker** / Sparrow

*Greater Lansing Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*

**Chaz Carrillo** / David Chapman Insurance Agency

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Cover Photography **Nate Lentz/Tandem Studios**



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Leadership Circle investors are proven business and community leaders. We value their commitment and applaud their efforts to strengthen our region with their leadership and appreciate the important role they play in advancing our organization.

Stay Connected. **Stay Social.**

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[twitter.com/LansingChamber](https://twitter.com/LansingChamber)

[Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce](https://www.youtube.com/LansingRegionalChamberofCommerce)

[@LansingRegionalChamber](https://www.instagram.com/LansingRegionalChamber)

[Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce](https://www.linkedin.com/LansingRegionalChamberofCommerce)



LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER

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## We All Have a Role in Advocating for Our Region

It is a privilege for me to serve as the 2023 Chair of the Board of Directors of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. I have been involved on the board and several other committees for many years. I have not only been a part of the outstanding work your Chamber does on behalf of the business community but have also been able to work together with many outstanding leaders. I can assure you our Board of Directors is comprised of some of the best and brightest leadership talent in the region. They are committed to the LRCC mission of helping businesses in the region connect, grow and thrive. I look forward to working with our entire board and Chamber staff throughout the next year.

For those who do not know me, I am the founder and CEO of Resch Strategies, a public relations and public affairs firm located in downtown Lansing. In addition, my family lives just outside the downtown business district. My deep personal and professional connection to the City of Lansing, and particularly the downtown area, has created a strong awareness of the importance of Lansing's downtown for our entire region. We cannot have a strong, thriving region unless we have a strong, thriving central business district in the city of Lansing.

The Covid pandemic ravaged many central business districts across Michigan, none more so than in Lansing, where the loss of state workers in the downtown area continues to have a strong negative impact on the health of our downtown business community. It is heartening to see so many stakeholders, including LRCC, LEAP, Downtown Lansing Inc., the City of Lansing, and others, come together to advocate strategies for revitalizing downtown Lansing. In my role as LRCC Board Chair, I will work with our Chamber team to continue to be a strong advocate for our downtown business district.

All of us have a stake in the revitalization of downtown Lansing. It is important that collectively as a region, we stand up and advocate for ourselves, as many other regions in the state are doing so effectively.

We are very fortunate to not only have a strong group of state lawmakers representing our region, but to have several of those lawmakers move into key leadership positions in the next year. State Representative Angela Witwer and Senator Sarah Anthony will chair the House and Senate Appropriations committees. State Senator Sam Singh will serve as Senate Floor Leader. As a region, we need to ask our lawmakers to support efforts to rebuild the downtown.

We also need the City of Lansing to be a stronger partner in supporting businesses of all sizes and work to make it easier to do business in Lansing.

I am proud of the work that our Chamber does on behalf of the entire business community. As a small business owner, I am particularly proud of LRCC's continued advocacy on behalf of those small businesses that create thousands of jobs across our region. It is my pledge to all of our members that we will continue that work in 2023. I invite you to join us in those efforts. ●



**MATT RESCH**  
BOARD CHAIR  
LANSING REGIONAL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



**All of us have a stake in the revitalization of downtown Lansing. It is important that collectively as a region, we stand up and advocate for ourselves, as many other regions in the state are doing so effectively.**

## January 2023

1/10

### Member Mixer

**Tuesday, Jan. 10 from 4:30–6:30 p.m.**  
**tinkr2.0 STEAM Hub & Toy Store**  
**2650 E. Grand River Ave., Unit D,**  
**East Lansing**

Shake off the winter blues and get your creativity engaged at the January Member Mixer at tinkr2.0 STEAM Hub & Toy Store! Creativity and curiosity are encouraged in a safe environment, with hands on teaching. Tinkr2.0 is dedicated to helping kids to Imagine, Develop and Build.

## February 2023

2/2

### Economic Club

**Thursday, Feb. 2 from 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**  
**Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center,**  
**S. Harrison Road, East Lansing**  
*In partnership with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan*

**Sponsor:** LAFCU

**Speaker:** Eddie S. Glaude Jr., the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University, where he is also the Chair of the Center for African American Studies and the Chair of the Department of African American Studies.

**Cost:**

Lansing Economic Club members: Complimentary  
 LRCC members: \$55  
 Future members: \$75  
 Table of eight: \$425

2/14

### Member Mixer

**Tuesday, Feb. 14 from 4:30–6:30 p.m.**  
**High Caliber Karting and Entertainment,**  
**1982 W. Grand River Rd., Suite 800,**  
**Okemos (in the Meridian Mall)**

Time to rev up your networking game at the February Member Mixer at High Caliber Karting! Check out Michigan's #1 Indoor Action & Entertainment Park with your Chamber friends and enjoy the best place for adults to feel like a kid again.

**Cost:** No charge

## 2023 Signature Events

### March 2

Legislative Policy Forum  
 featuring former U.S.  
 Representative Mike Rogers



Rogers

### May 10

Lansing Regional Chamber  
 of Commerce Annual Dinner  
 at the Kellogg Hotel &  
 Conference Center

### August 15

Lansing Open at Eagle Eye Golf Course

## Virtual Business Roundtables

Virtual roundtables allow community and government leaders an opportunity to share what is going on in the community and determine ways to advise the tri-county region. For more information please visit [www.lansingchamber.org](http://www.lansingchamber.org) calendar of events.

### Delta Township — Eaton County

Wednesday, Jan. 4 from 9 to 10 a.m.  
 Wednesday, Feb. 1 from 9 to 10 a.m.  
 Wednesday, Mar. 1 from 9 to 10 a.m.

### Lansing — Delhi Township

Wednesday, Jan. 11 from 9 to 10 a.m.  
 Wednesday, Feb. 8 from 9 to 10 a.m.  
 Wednesday, Feb. 8 from 9 to 10 a.m.

### East Lansing — Meridian Township

Wednesday, Jan. 18 from 9 to 10 a.m.  
 Wednesday, Feb. 15 from 9 to 10 a.m.  
 Wednesday, Mar. 15 from 9 to 10 a.m.

The LRCC hosts numerous events monthly, from Member Mixers to Lansing Economic Club programs. The events and programming provide valuable content and information and give members unique opportunities to connect and network.

The LRCC encourages members to check their email, follow LRCC social media channels, and visit the LRCC website for the most updated information on upcoming educational offerings and networking opportunities.

Registration is available on the [LRCC website](http://LRCC website).

## Thank You Renewing Members

Anderson Economic Group	Farm News Media	Lansing Ice & Fuel Company
Audiology & Hearing Aid Center	Feyer Marketing	Larry T. Schaefer, Inc.
Auto-Owners Insurance Co.	Friedland Industries, Inc.	Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis & Gotting, P.C.
Canada Dry Bottling Co. of Lansing	Governmental Consultant Services Inc.	LorAnn Oils, Inc.
Christensen Law	Granger Construction Company	Michigan Health & Hospital Association
Ciesa Design	Granger Waste Services	Northfork Estate
City of Lansing	Great Lakes Christian College	Peabody Group, The
Commercial Bank	Hayhoe Asphalt	Peckham, Inc.
Community Mental Health of Clinton, Eaton & Ingham Counties	Holiday Inn Express & Suites (Amerilodge Group)	Preuss Pets
Dean Transportation, Inc.	Ingham Intermediate School District (Ingham ISD)	Quality Dairy Company
Dewpoint	Kramer Management Group Inc.	Trumpie Photography
Doty Mechanical, Inc.	Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL)	Volaris Lansing
Emergent BioSolutions	Lansing Community College Foundation & Alumni Assoc	Window World
Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott-Eastwood		YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing

## Welcome New Members

### 2Gen Investment (dba Youngs Beauty, Inc.)

(517) 580-4175  
1315 W. Holmes Rd.  
Lansing, MI 48910

### Audible Business

(517) 657-5190  
6760 English Oak Dr.  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
[www.audiblebusiness.com](http://www.audiblebusiness.com)

### Media Ace Marketing

(503) 943-9305  
[www.mediaacemarketing.com](http://www.mediaacemarketing.com)

### PuroClean of Lansing Restoration Services

(517) 679-3100  
6435 Westland Way  
Lansing, MI 48917  
[www.puroclean.com/pls-mi](http://www.puroclean.com/pls-mi)

### Thrivent Financial

(517) 881-8294  
3410 Belle Chase Way, Ste 400  
Lansing, MI 48911  
[www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com)

### US Alternator

(517) 706-6868  
5096 N. Canal Rd.  
Lansing, MI 48821  
[www.usalternator.com](http://www.usalternator.com)

## Chamber Milestones

### Family Life Financial Services of Michigan

30 Years

### Downtown Lansing, Inc.

25 Years

### Michigan Health Council

25 Years

### Educational Tours, Inc.

15 Years

### Enterprise Logistics + Solutions

25 Years

*We'd like to offer a special salute to these great organizations who reached milestone anniversaries as Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce members this month. Thank you for your continued support throughout the years!*

## Info Hub

LRCC members have unparalleled access to company and staff profiles on the LRCC website. To access and update this information at any point, visit [lansingchamber.org](http://lansingchamber.org) and enter your username and password. If you have not yet signed into the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions.

**Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.**



Maxwell

Nat Lentz/Tandem Studios/FirstLast Media



Cumberbatch



Lyon

## ATHENA Celebrates its 40th Anniversary

An enthusiastic crowd of business and community leaders attended a celebration marking the 40th anniversary of ATHENA, on Tuesday, December 6. The ATHENA award was established in Lansing in 1982 by Martha Mertz, who was in attendance at the event.

ATHENA Lansing honored Dorothy Maxwell as the 2022 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient. Maxwell, who serves as CEO of Max Winegar Group, was recognized for her demonstrated leadership in her profession, commitment to the community, and long-standing dedication to helping women develop their skills.

"Opportunities to do good are everywhere you happen

to be. Lend a hand, gain a new skill, and possibly meet a new friend," Maxwell said upon receiving her award.



The event also recognized the 2022 and 2023 recipients of the ATHENA PowerLink (APL) Awards, a national mentoring program that connects selected women business owners with a skilled advisory panel. The specified panel of advisors will donate an estimated \$25,000 value of business consultation services to help the businesses achieve the next level of success. As the 2022 APL recipient, Tobi

Lyon of Ngage Management has been working with her mentor panel to develop new business growth strategies. Lorin Cumberbatch, the founder of Skin Studio 211, has been named the 2023 APL recipient. ●

### A healthier take on health care coverage



You want your employees to get the care they need — and so do we. At Blue Cross, we work hard to provide the best coverage in Michigan. With more plan options, more efficient, higher quality care, and access to no-cost programs such as Coordinated Care Core, a Blue Cross plan adds up to smarter care and better coverage for you and your employees, so you can attract the best talent, and keep it too.

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W007955

# Mid-Michigan 'MLK Day of Celebration' Earns an Emmy

## 'LABOR OF LOVE' BROADCAST HONORS CORETTA KING'S WORK IN PRESERVING MLK'S LEGACY

**D**r. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan has won an Emmy® Award for the broadcast of its 2021 "MLK Day of Celebration" honoring Dr. King's legacy.

The award is for excellence for broadcast production in the historical/cultural category from the Michigan Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. It was presented at the chapter's Emmy Award Show in Detroit.

Necessitated by the pandemic, the January 2021 broadcast was the first time in 36 years the commission transformed the annual event for television. Previously it was staged before a sold-out audience of up to 2,200 at the Lansing Center, Lansing.

"Producing this show was a labor of love," said Elaine Hardy, commission chair. "The replacement of our annual luncheon couldn't just be a Zoom video conference — it had to be inspirational. And it had to amplify the message of our keynote guest, Dr. Bernice King. We're honored and proud the quality and spirit of the program are recognized by others."

Dr. Bernice King is a global civil rights activist and daughter of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. She spoke about her mother's achievements in preserving MLK's words and work through institutionalizing his legacy, including the establishment of MLK Day. The national holiday allows for annual reflection on creating a more just, humane, equitable, and peaceful society.

Hardy worked closely with Kevin Meyer, East Lansing, in developing the program. He's a concert producer who has partnered with the commission on events for about a decade.

Over 100 people are listed in the show's credits. The program



Elaine Hardy, chair of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan, and Kevin Meyer, president of MiEntertainment Group Inc., pose with the 2021 Michigan Regional Emmy Award given for broadcast production excellence in the historical/cultural category from the Michigan Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.



Producers of the Emmy award-winning, hour-long broadcast combined artists' performances filmed in the Grand Rapids Captus Creative studios and Van Andel Arena.

was executive produced by the commission. The production team was led by MiEntertainment Group, Grand Rapids. Producers in addition to Meyer were Marshall Yoder and Dyan Yoder; Eric Nacke was the video director, and Allen McAvoy was the audio engineer.

The hour-long broadcast included segments recorded in the Grand Rapids Captus Creative studios and Van Andel Arena, musical performances, remarks from elected officials, and iconic civil rights photographs.

Featured musicians included hip hop soul singer Musiq Soulchild and gospel singer Tasha Cobbs-Leonard, along with Michigan artists Rodney Page, Larry Trice Jr., Sharon Lawrence, Phil Denny, Larry Trice III, and Lansing's Music of a Dream Orchestra. There was a salute to the commission's sponsors.

The program aired on WILX TV 10-NBC, Lansing. It can be viewed at [bit.ly/MLKCom-2021](https://bit.ly/MLKCom-2021).

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences – Michigan Chapter represents experienced and talented television professionals.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan works to support equality, diversity, and social justice. It focuses on the area's pressing issues of literacy, youth violence, hunger, mentoring, education, and community enrichment. The nonprofit organization hosts speakers and concerts, supports community service agencies, and promotes youth initiatives, such as essay and art contests, college scholarships, and an annual Y-Achievers tour for high school students. More information is at [www.mlkmidmichigan.com](http://www.mlkmidmichigan.com) or follow the commission on Facebook, [@MLKCommOfMidMI](https://www.facebook.com/MLKCommOfMidMI), and Twitter, [@MLKCommOfMidMI](https://twitter.com/MLKCommOfMidMI). ●

## Rathbun Insurance: Leading the Way for a Diverse Future

By: Cionne Harris, Kolt Communications, Inc.

**B**en Rathbun, the third-generation owner of Rathbun Insurance Agency, has been in the family business since 2014. After recently becoming president following the untimely death of his father in 2021, he has been making strides in solidifying the importance of diversity in an industry that has primarily been dominated by white males. One of the many ways Rathbun attempts to do this is by working with Black insurance organizations such as NAAIA (National African American Insurance Association) to spread their reach through Michigan.

“NAAIA’s Michigan chapter is primarily focused in Detroit. We in Lansing have over 10,000 insurance careers,” said Rathbun. “Our agency is helping spread NAAIA further west and helped host a Lansing kickoff event in September. NAAIA members, local insurance professionals, high school and college students came together to highlight the importance of supporting Black insurance professionals,” said Rathbun.

Ben Rathbun is passionate about practicing what he preaches. One of Rathbun’s most recent hires, Darren Bardell, is the company’s first Black producer. After his hiring, Rathbun quickly got Bardell involved in his state association’s Young Agents Committee. The two of them recently returned from the NAAIA national conference in Baltimore, where they were able to connect with other Black insurance professionals already in their industry.

Rathbun speaks to a wide range of high school and college students on opportunities in the industry, encouraging them to pursue a career in insurance. However, Rathbun knows there’s still work to be done.

“Many of the companies I partner with say they care about diversity. But there’s a big difference between hiring diverse talent and making diverse talent feel welcome once they’re in your organization,” said Rathbun. “It’s really about treating human beings like human beings and recognizing each individual’s unique talents.”

Since September 2015, Rathbun Agency has selected a different nonprofit for their “Quotes for a Cause” campaign. They are proud to support many organizations led and supported by diverse community members. Rathbun also founded the For Good Foundation with his fiancé after his father’s passing. Their mission: “We do good.”

Rathbun has been a part of a mentorship program in the Wilson Talent Center’s business and risk management class for the last several years. He recently duplicated that program within Lansing School District’s corresponding high school insurance program.



“I don’t think we have a talent crisis in any industry. I think we have a lack of awareness to fill roles that already exist,” said Rathbun.

Rathbun is currently working on a certificate program with Olivet College to give people who otherwise wouldn’t be able to get into the industry a chance to get in on the ground level. He hopes this lower barrier to entry not only makes it easier for diverse talent to enter the field. He also encourages other companies to find ways that go beyond the bare-bone checklists that come with trying to do good for your community. ●

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# LRCC Supports Small Business Saturday

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) was proud to support the tri-county small business community once again for Small Business Saturday on November 26.

Created in 2010 by American Express, this annual shopping holiday occurs the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It encourages shoppers to support small businesses nationwide during one of the biggest shopping periods of the year. American Express recently released the results of its 2022 Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, which found:

- 72% of shoppers said Small Business Saturday makes them want to shop and dine at small, independently-owned retailers and restaurants all year long;
- Small Business Saturday drove an estimated \$17.9 billion based on projections from U.S. consumer reported spending, with more than two-thirds (72%) of shoppers strongly agreeing they will continue to Shop Small throughout the holiday season because of the impact it has on their local community.

“Supporting our small businesses is always important but even more so this year as companies navigate continued challenges such as inflation, talent needs, and supply chain concerns,” said Michelle Rahl, vice president of membership and marketing for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. “Our small businesses bring the uniqueness and character to our region and make the Greater Lansing region a more engaging place to live, work, and raise a family.”

The LRCC supported Small Business Saturday as a “Neighborhood Champion,” which provides the organization with materials to distribute to select businesses. The kit consisted of branded items to drive awareness of Small Business Saturday.

The businesses that received the kits from the LRCC include:

- Country Stitches
- The Peanut Shop
- Bradley’s Home and Garden
- Elderly Instruments
- Nothing Bundt Cakes
- Curvaceous Lingerie
- Impression 5 Science Center
- TinkrLAB
- Hyacinth House
- Hooked ●



# CATA Partners with Lansing Police Department, Department of Homeland Security to Combat Human Trafficking

In partnership with the Lansing Police Department and the Department of Homeland Security, the Capital Area Transportation Authority has launched its human trafficking awareness and prevention campaign. One of the key components of the campaign is the debut of the ELERTS See Say app, which invites members of the public to anonymously report safety concerns and suspicious activities, including suspected human trafficking in the Mid-Michigan region.



said: “The driving philosophy behind our partnership with CATA is we recognize the need for community education and other protective factors like the ELERTS See Say App to provide critical safeguards to help community members identify risk and report concerns.”

Together, CATA, the Lansing Police Department, and the Department of Homeland Security are working closely

with the Lansing School District and Lansing’s Refugee Development Center to provide resources that help educate our community about human trafficking and keep those who are targeted safe.

To learn more about the campaign, how to identify human trafficking, and to download the See Say app, visit [www.cata.org/humantrafficking](http://www.cata.org/humantrafficking).

“Human trafficking is the exploitation of some of the most vulnerable members of our society,” said CATA Chief Executive Officer Bradley T. Funkhouser. “It is the world’s fastest-growing criminal enterprise, according to the Department of Justice, and no community is immune to it. Rider and employee safety remain a top priority at CATA, and the campaign message – coupled with the See Say App – will better arm customers, drivers, and administrative staff at our transit facilities in our fight against this heinous crime. If we’re able to save even one individual from becoming a victim of human trafficking, it will have been well worth our investment and years-long efforts.”

In January 2020, CATA was awarded a \$75,000 grant through the Federal Transit Administration’s Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety Initiative for a public transit safety campaign. Grant funds were also received from the Michigan Department of Transportation. The Lansing Police Department committed in-kind support for the initiative.

According to the Polaris Project, which works to disrupt and prevent human trafficking, Michigan is currently ranked seventh in the United States for human trafficking cases; Lansing is ranked in the top five cities in the state for calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness about the growing prevalence of human trafficking in the region and to provide information that can help prevent it. With guidance and ongoing support from the Lansing Police Department and the Department of Homeland Security, CATA is implementing the interactive-response protocol and a prevention-based awareness campaign across multiple platforms.

Rodney Anderson, Captain, Lansing Police Department,



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The **Law Office of Reid Felsing** welcomed their new associate Jack Rucker and moved to a new location at 428 W. Lenawee St. in Lansing. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce joined them for a ribbon cutting to celebrate.



**Red Cedar Lodge** is a luxury senior living community in the heart of Lansing. Adjacent to the Michigan State University campus, a vibrant and dynamic area that residents will find energizing. Red Cedar Lodge offers an unparalleled level of service and amenities, from independent living to appropriately scaled levels of assisted living and memory care.



Having outgrown the Stadium District Building space it has occupied since 2008, **Diversified Insurance Group** was excited to move into its brand-new office at 154 S. Larch Street in Lansing. The DIG team provided attendees with a food truck, spirits, networking, a new product launch, 50/50, prizes, and more. All proceeds were donated to Landry's Landing in support of Happy Feet Pet Rescue. This new space will allow Diversified Insurance Group to continue to grow and provide their clients with a team of specialists to guide them through the insurance world with the knowledge and expertise to provide the best combination of price, coverage, and service.



**Crumbl Cookies** opened its new 1,400-square-foot store at 501 N. Marketplace in early-December. "This marks the first Crumbl Cookies location in the Greater Lansing area, and we are excited to serve the people of Lansing with unique and delicious cookies inspired by popular flavors, foods, desserts of all kinds, from pies to cakes to candies and more. This location creates over 60 (part-time and full-time) jobs, and will attract customers from many nearby communities to this area on a regular basis," according to Andrew Lord, a member of the franchise ownership team.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce celebrated Lansing's favorite STEAM store at its new location. **tinkrLAB** has opened its 7,000-square-foot STEAM Experience store, tinkr2.0, on the corner of Park Lake and Grand River in East Lansing. There are plenty of items to shop from as well as room for new classes and playtime!



The **Expectant Parents Organization** is proud to be housed within the new office of the Lansing Area Safety Council, located at 809 Center St., Suite 2A, Lansing. For more than 70 years, their team of qualified instructors has provided an appreciation for the importance of partnering with families during the special time of pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting a newborn. Cutting the ribbon was Executive Director Krista Fuerst.



It was a wonderful celebration on December 7 for the **Lansing Area Safety Council (LASC)** as a red ribbon was cut for their new location at 809 Center St., Suite 2A, Lansing. This new space expands the ability of the LASC to provide valuable information, services, and training to its clients and partners. For 83 years, the mission of the Safety Council has been to promote all types of safety through education, particularly child/school safety, traffic safety, home/community safety, and workplace safety, with the purpose of preventing the personal and economic loss associated with injuries and health hazards. Cutting the ribbon were City of Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and LASC Executive Director Rita LaMoreaux.

## Still searching for the right way to tell your story?

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 O Q J U U E R O J P U T M S J I Q C C X  
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 Z Y U P T K Z I Y K R O F L A B R A N D  
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 K P N S A X O H U M E T R I C S G U J E  
 N L F X Q C L C R K M X A Y J K P V G Q  
 N O L G I M H F I M P A C T B B L I E A  
 G L U R D H O L B M Q L I O U G O C E D  
 X X E I Q A H V H P E N G A G E M E N T  
 X E N C E T O Q F A A B V R U U U J F D  
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# The Davies Project

## MORE THAN JUST A RIDE

**L**aSean Thompson was a mother in crisis. Something wasn't quite right with her five-month-old son Nathan.

"As he was developing, I noticed that his head and neck weren't quite right," said Thompson. "It always tilted to the side. It kept getting worse."

After a series of frustrating visits to consult doctors about his condition, a home-visiting nurse referred Thompson to Sparrow Hospital, where Nathan was diagnosed with torticollis. It's a rare condition in which the neck muscles contract, twisting the head to one side.

His treatment required occupational, physical, and speech therapy four times a week. The problem for the young mom and her child was that they did not have transportation to get to the appointments.

"I had no clue how I was going to get there," said Thompson. "All I knew was that my son needed to be there, and making the appointments was a requirement for the treatments to continue."

Frustrations grew as Thompson tried to find transportation. Their family was unable to help. The nearest bus stop was more than a quarter mile away. Treatments were starting in the winter, and the long walk in bad conditions with Nathan and his older sister in tow was a major challenge.

Finally, as the frustrations brought her to tears, one of Nathan's therapists told her about a new organization providing rides to medical appointments to those in need: The Davies Project.

Thompson called the then-fledgling non-profit organization



Thompson



Miklavcic

hoping they could offer some help. The next thing she knew, she had a driver, Vergil Pinckney, assigned for their next few appointments.

"I felt overwhelmed with appreciation, and hearing those words from Vergil, 'Do you need help?' meant the world to me," said Thompson. "Every single day, he would knock on the door, take my daughter by the hand, grab a diaper bag and just lead us to the car. It was so amazing."

While Pinckney passed away in January 2021, the memories families like the Thompsons have live on in many uplifting ways.

Thompson's story has a happy ending in and of itself. Nathan's treatment was successful. He is now a healthy eight-year-old boy and Thompson's life has improved. She and her husband have three healthy children, a car, and a home. Thompson's involvement with The Davies Project --and the needs of so many others in the community with stories like hers -- led her to become a board member of the organization.

"This family was overwhelmed and struggling, and resources were very limited. We helped the Thompson family through some really hard times," said Pam Miklavcic, Ph.D., founder, and CEO of The Davies Project. "Their story is the perfect example of what our agency is all about."

For eight years, The Davies Project has been providing rides to all of a child's medical appointments when a serious health challenge is involved. This includes transportation to specialty appointments, physical therapy, occupational therapy, mental health care, dental and eye visits, and primary care. The Davies Project also provides rides to prenatal visits for pregnant people and the neonatal intensive care unit for parents of hospitalized infants.

“Seventy percent of the children in our region who rely on the specialty clinics are on Medicaid,” said Miklavcic. “And those same kids are missing 60 percent of their outpatient appointments. You can imagine what the health outcomes are for children in that kind of situation.”

The Davies Project has provided thousands of rides since it began in 2014. During 2022 alone, it has provided close to 2,000 rides to appointments that likely would have been missed otherwise.

Since its inception, The Davies Project has served 800 families, including 550 children, 220 pregnant people, and 30 NICU families. Through 2021, roughly 125 volunteer drivers traveled an estimated 111,225 miles in service to TDP clients.

### **A Crisis With a Happy Ending Leads to New Beginnings**

The genesis for what eventually became The Davies Project began a little more than 20 years ago when the Miklavcic family was enjoying the holidays in New England. Things took a sudden and dramatic turn for the worse on Christmas Eve 1999. Their oldest child, Peter, then age 3, spiked a fever of 105 that was impossible to lower with any kind of medication. They cooled him as best they could in the bathtub and cuddled with him to calm him down, yet he grew increasingly frightened as he sobbed with what turned out to be bone pain during the night.

As quickly as they could, the family returned to Michigan where Dr. Susan Burke quickly and accurately suspected the symptoms as cancer. For the next three and a half years, Peter received regular chemotherapy and intrathecal injections into his spinal column. On several occasions, the family feared they would lose him. Fortunately, his story has a happy ending: Peter is now completing a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering.

As a result of everything her family endured and what Pam Miklavcic saw other families go through, she resolved to do what she could to make challenging health scenarios a little easier for families to face. “Our community needs more happy endings,” she said.

“We had the resources. We had what we needed to get through that difficult time,” said Miklavcic. “But how would we have done this without a car? How would we have done this without steady employment, good insurance, an education, or even the ability to speak the language?”

As the next step in the journey, Miklavcic worked for a few

years with Dr. Dele Davies, who was at Michigan State University and led the Children’s Health Initiative. Dr. Davies served as chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Human Development in the College of Human Medicine at MSU for more than nine years. During this time, he provided exemplary values for service, love of children, and outstanding administrative and mentorship skills. By promoting his values, he made invaluable contributions not only to his department but also to the College of Human Medicine and the community at large. Miklavcic decided to name her next venture after Dr. Davies.

When her work with the Children’s Health Initiative came to an end, Miklavcic and several community leaders began to focus on a new project to help children in the region. Those leaders, including Jack Davis and Dr. Steve Guertin, helped Miklavcic focus her vision. While Miklavcic was filled with passion and an abundance of ideas, her community supporters encouraged her to zero in on one big idea.

“At the first board meeting in 2013, I walked in and said, ‘Here we are and this is what we are going to do,’ and I had 10



Working with supporters Tammy and Ron Averill, TDP was able to locate and renovate an old fire station near Sparrow Hospital as the organization’s headquarters.

or 12 ideas that I was sure we could tackle right away,” said Miklavcic. “I remember Jack and Steve looking at me and shaking their heads. They then advised me to focus on one area, do it well, establish our credibility through that one area, and take it from there. That’s when we zeroed in on transportation. It was the best advice possible.”

### **An Old Fire Station Becomes Home**

The Davies Project quickly outgrew its humble beginnings. The first The Davies Project home was a room in Grace Lutheran Church in downtown Lansing. Rich Howard, who was then with Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Lansing and now serves as COO for The Davies Project, had excess space at the Marshall Street Armory, which he leased to Miklavcic.

# The Davies Project

## More Than Just a Ride

**“ We’ve created a model that works here. Every day I think about the children who are out there across the state and country who don’t have access to what we are providing. They are losing their childhoods. We could take this so far and we need help to do that.**

Again, The Davies Project quickly outgrew the space. Working with supporters Tammy and Ron Averill, the organization located an old Lansing Fire Station building on Bingham Street on Lansing’s Eastside. The location was ideal for many reasons, including being down the street from Sparrow Hospital. The Averills purchased the building, gave The Davies Project a budget for renovations, and provided a seven-year lease at deeply discounted rates.

“It couldn’t have been a better spot for us to land,” said Miklavcic. “I am forever grateful to Tammy and Ron.”

The Davies Project currently occupies the first floor of the two-story building. Miklavcic hopes to eventually have a capital campaign to buy the building outright and use dollars from the fundraising effort to help with the operational costs associated with continued expected growth and expansion.

The Davies Project growth has been supported by individual and corporate donors. Local grants from Jackson, The Community Foundation, The Pentecost Foundation, and the Capital Area United Way have provided a significant boost to The Davies Project. Other supporters, like Kellie Dean, Coach Suzy Merchant, and the Izzo Legacy Foundation, also play a significant role.

### **Demand is Skyrocketing— Drivers Needed**

The volunteer drivers are the heart and soul of what The Davies Project is all about. If not for volunteer drivers, many families would not be able to make appointments that are critical to their children’s health.



Schulz

“Day after day, year after year, volunteer drivers make sure that necessary medical appointments are not missed,” said Mary Schulz, chair of The Davies Project’s board. “This level of dedication is what our families rely on. Every ride matters.”

As The Davies Project slogan suggests, drivers provide much more than just a ride. Much like the Thompson family’s experience, volunteer drivers provide comfort and encouragement to families in need. They even come equipped with goody bags that bring a smile to the faces of the families they serve. Most drivers come from social work,



The volunteer drivers including Beth Rhodes and George Hubbard are at the heart of what TDP provides for its clients.

teaching, or medical backgrounds. For The Davies Project drivers, the work is a labor of love.

“It’s just that feeling that you helped somebody and, who needs help more than the people we serve,” said Beth Rhodes, a volunteer driver for the past year. “You get way more than you give.”

“I’ve been very blessed in my life, and the opportunity to do this and help others is a blessing to me,” said George Hubbard, a volunteer driver for the past six months. “I can’t imagine how some people struggle to get necessary medical assistance. Doing this is a wonderful thing. I get a good feeling.”

“Once they start driving with us, they get as much out of it as the families do,” said Miklavcic. “I like to think we are building bridges across the community. We are introducing people to one another who never would have met without The Davies Project.”

Before the COVID pandemic, the number of volunteer drivers peaked at 87 and fell off during the pandemic to 45. At the same time, demand for rides is skyrocketing. The Davies Project is seeking more volunteer drivers to help meet the community’s needs. Drivers receive training that includes cultural sensitivity, diversity, equity and inclusion training, car seat installation, a review of policies and procedures, and the dos and do-nots of driving.

### **Growing Beyond the Lansing Region**

The needs that The Davies Project has been working to meet are not unique to the Lansing area. Miklavcic’s vision for The Davies Project is to eventually expand it into other communities.

“We’ve created a model that works here,” said Miklavcic. “Every day, I think about the children who are out there across the state and country who don’t have access to what we are providing. They are losing their childhoods. We could take this so far, and we need help to do that.”

For more information on The Davies Project, visit Davies Project ([thedaviesproject.org](http://thedaviesproject.org)) or call 517-515-5122. ●

# Greater Lansing Lawmakers Appointed to Key Leadership Positions

The Greater Lansing region is positioned to increase its influence in the State Capitol as several members of the local legislative delegation have been appointed to key leadership roles. For the first time in 20 years, the chairs of both the House and Senate Appropriations committees are from the same region. The Appropriations committees hold considerable control over spending decisions in state government.

Third-term State Representative Angela Witwer (D-Delta Township) has been appointed by new House Speaker Joe Tate as chair of the House Appropriations Committee for the 2023-24 legislative session.

"I am honored to serve in this esteemed role and recognize my responsibility as a financial steward of the taxpayers' hard-earned money," said Rep. Witwer. "I remain committed to investing in those things that matter to most Michiganders – quality infrastructure, access to affordable healthcare, and a world-class education for all children."

Newly elected State Senator Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing) is the first Black woman to represent Lansing, Ingham, and Eaton counties in the state senate. Sen. Anthony has been selected to chair the Senate Appropriations Committee and is the first Black woman to lead that critical state budget committee.

"I am proud and honored to serve as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee next term," said Sen. Anthony. "I am eager to get to work on a responsible, equitable, and fiscally sound state budget that addresses needs now and into the future. Mid-Michigan's time is now and we must seize the opportunity to invest in our region for generations to come."

Newly elected State Senator Sam Singh (D-East Lansing) will be the first person of color to hold the title of Senate Majority Floor Leader and the first Indian-American elected to the Senate.

"I'm just honored that my colleagues asked me in my first term to serve in a leadership position," said Sen. Singh in an interview with the news site Michigan Advance. "I'm excited about the opportunity to take a lot of good ideas



Anthony



Singh



Filler



Hope



Witwer

that citizens have been demanding... the opportunity to move forward."

State Representative Kara Hope (D-Lansing) has been named House Majority Assistant Floor Leader. Third-term State Rep. Graham Filler has been appointed to serve as House Assistant Minority Floor Leader.

"We extend our congratulations to Senators Anthony and Singh and Representatives Witwer, Hope, and Filler on their well-deserved appointments to key positions of influence in the 2023-24 legislature," said Steve Japinga, senior vice president of public affairs for the LRCC. "We look forward to working with them and the entire Capitol Caucus in our efforts to advance the interests of the Greater Lansing region." ●

## Chamber Events

Your Connection to Professional Development and Networking Success

From professional development to networking, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce hosts events to fit every need.

A full list of events is located on the Chamber Calendar on the LRCC website.



# Sparrow to Join U-M Health Under Proposed Agreement

**S**parrow Health System will join the University of Michigan Health under a proposed agreement that will expand services to Mid-Michigan residents, provide access to the highest level of care, improve facilities and technology, and begin a new chapter in Sparrow's storied history.

The U-M Board of Regents approved moving ahead with the agreement at its Dec. 8 meeting, as did the Sparrow Health System Board of Directors on Nov. 28. The agreement is expected to be completed in the first half of 2023, pending final regulatory approvals and completion of the closing process.

Joining U-M Health will have a far-reaching impact on Sparrow and Mid-Michigan, expanding access to clinical care throughout the region and, ultimately, statewide.

"The partnership with the University of Michigan Health provides Sparrow the opportunity to take a greater leadership role in improving the health of the communities we serve," said Sparrow Health System President and CEO James F. Dover.

Added Sparrow Health System Board Chair John Pirich: "This enables Sparrow to achieve our long-term strategy of helping to create a statewide system of care and allows us to accelerate growth and continue our 126-year commitment to providing world-class care close to home."

U-M President Santa Ono pointed out that an affiliation agreement signed by the two organizations in 2019 for pediatric services paved the way for ongoing collaboration between the two systems.

"The mission, vision, and values of the two organizations are aligned with a common goal to deliver on the promise of nationally renowned clinical excellence in an accessible setting," he said.

LaKeeya Tucker, D.O., Medical Chief of Staff for E.W. Sparrow Hospital, said as a clinician she is excited about working with her U-M Health colleagues to improve access to world-class care throughout the region.

"We are doing something special here by combining the



**MICHIGAN MEDICINE**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



community care and know-how that Sparrow has long been known for with the clinical expertise and commitment of U-M Health," Dr. Tucker said.

The University of Michigan Health has committed \$800 million in investment to Sparrow Health System, which will be funded through facility projects, operations, and strategic investments over eight years.

"We will invest in numerous improvement and growth initiatives based on community need, such

as renovations to our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at E.W. Sparrow Hospital in Lansing and geographic growth across the communities we serve. This will also strengthen our key service lines, including cardiology, oncology, orthopedics, and neuroscience," noted Joseph Ruth, Sparrow Health System's executive vice president and chief operating officer.

The partnership will also build on U-M Health's minority investment in Sparrow's health plan, Physicians Health Plan (PHP). PHP provides high-quality healthcare coverage to more than 70,000 members and 300 employers across Michigan and includes a Medicare Advantage plan.

Sparrow has more than 115 sites of care, including E.W. Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, community hospitals in Carson City, Charlotte, Ionia, and St. Johns, Sparrow Specialty Hospital, and nearly 500 Sparrow primary care providers and specialists serving patients across the region. ●

## Junior Achievement: Connecting Students and Business Through Career Learning

**J**unior Achievement (JA) has worked in Lansing since 1967, providing students with important financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career readiness education. As JA continues, the educational focus has shifted, bringing greater attention to the need to connect students with career learning.

Experts have been discussing the Future of Work and how advances in automation and remote work could eliminate the need for many unskilled and low-skill jobs.<sup>1</sup> The job loss associated with the COVID-19 shutdown and social distancing restrictions may be accelerating the arrival of the Future of Work as businesses examine using technology to increase productivity without bringing employees back.<sup>2</sup>

Generation Z was one of the groups hardest hit by shutdown-related job losses, with 1 in 4 becoming unemployed and nearly half working in vulnerable industries, such as retail and hospitality.<sup>3</sup> While much is due to the relative youth of this group – the oldest are turning 25 in 2022 – many are entering the job market or making decisions about their futures that could have long-term consequences for their employability and financial security.

With uncertainty in the economy, it's crucial to help Generation Z gain the skills necessary to increase their employment prospects. We need to help them better understand the connection between their strengths and interests, educational options, and skills required in the shifting world of work.

JA is a solution, using a pathways approach to teach career and work readiness to young people. JA programs engage students over multiple grades, preparing them for the transition to post-secondary education or work. JA takes this approach because, in many states, career and work readiness aren't addressed until high school. That may be too late for students who haven't given the subject much consideration, possibly affecting their academic readiness and ability to pursue specific career paths.

JA partners with business and trade professionals to deliver its curriculum. Volunteers not only present programs,

**Volunteer Impact**

**56%**

**Students follow in the career footsteps of one of their JA volunteers**

**Junior Achievement™**

but they share information about their own careers. This connection works, as statistics show that 56 percent of JA students report that they are in a career that is the same or similar to that of one of their JA volunteers. Additionally, JA works with schools to deliver the JA Career Speaker Event, at which area professionals spend a day in the school sharing information about their careers with students.

These JA connections inspire and prepare students for success, even in challenging times. Our approach has been shown to give students the tools they need to increase their chances of achieving career and work success.

JA of Mid-Michigan is seeking new partners to deliver this programming locally. If you would like to be a part of the solution, please call (517) 371-5437. ●

<sup>1</sup> Wingard, Columbia University, 2020

<sup>2</sup> The COVID-19 Crisis Will Accelerate Enterprise Automation Plans, Forrester, May 5, 2020

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center, May 2020



## Lansing Area Safety Council: Keeping Lansing Safe

**D**id you know that for the last 83 years, Lansing has had an organization whose sole responsibility is to keep Lansing safe? The Lansing Area Safety Council was formed in 1939 as an offshoot of the Safety Committee of the Lansing Chamber of Commerce to create community-wide safety initiatives. The Safety Council today lives by the principle of bringing together leaders in police, fire, education, business, corporations, and community volunteers to direct the path and mission.



LaMoreaux

The mission of the Safety Council is to provide safety education programs and serve as a resource hub to greater Lansing by providing tools and resources to create a culture of safety for our citizens. The goal is to promote safety through education for our workforce, community, and schools.

The Lansing Area Safety Council is now embarking on its next 83 years serving Lansing with new leadership

and a new building. This past June, Rita LaMoreaux took the reins as Executive Director. During the last six months, she has worked to build new partnerships within our region. On November 1st, the Safety Council moved from their long-time building on South Pennsylvania to 809 Center Street to reinforce the commitment to being the central resource for Lansing safety. The new training center will give greater access for both in-person and virtual training programs.

May 2023 will usher in the return of the Safety Patrol Picnic celebrated by our local student safeties for over 70 years. In September, look out for an awards gala to celebrate our local heroes in safety.

The Safety Council is currently reinventing and developing more community programs for basic safety training. Workforce safety programs and certifications are being expanded, with local instructors developing programs tailored to fit Going Pro Talent dollars. Check out the current workforce and community classes at [www.safetycouncil.org](http://www.safetycouncil.org).

# Maner Costerisan Supports Eight Nonprofits as Part of Firm's Annual Day of Impact

## TEAM MEMBERS DONATE TIME, RESOURCES IN LANSING, GRAND RAPIDS

**M**aner Costerisan team members volunteered at eight Lansing and Grand Rapids nonprofits as part of its fifth annual Maner Costerisan Cares Day of Impact. The event is held on the first Thursday of November each year as part of the firm's Maner Cares community relations program.

"Maner Cares Day is an event our team looks forward to every year," said Trey Williams, CPA, president of Maner Costerisan. "It was truly a rewarding experience for all of us."

Maner Costerisan, a full-service public accounting, technology, and business consulting firm, has offices in Lansing and Grand Rapids. Between four and 20 team members volunteered at each nonprofit location, including the Greater Lansing Food Bank, Junior Achievement, Tri-County Office on Aging, Habitat for Humanity Capital Region and Mid-Michigan Recovery Services in Lansing, and Junior Achievement, Senior Neighbors and the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Grand Rapids and surrounding areas.

"We were so proud to partner with volunteers from Maner Costerisan to bring financial literacy principles to our area students," said Laura Lutterbeck, interim education director, Junior Achievement of the Michigan Great Lakes. "Their employees' enthusiasm, dedication,



and commitment to our students was phenomenal."

Maner Costerisan, along with five of the eight nonprofits, are Lansing Regional Chamber members, including the Greater Lansing Food Bank, Junior Achievement of Mid-Michigan, Tri-Counting Office on Aging, and Habitat for Humanity Capital Region.

"While volunteering with Junior Achievement, I had the opportunity to teach a fourth-grade class about entrepreneurship, how regional resources influence how businesses work and thrive, and how businesses work together locally and across the globe," said Sarah Jennings, CPA, CFE, CEA, principal and head of Maner's community development initiatives. "It was such a fun experience and the entire Maner team is overjoyed to be able to contribute to the important work that nonprofits like Junior Achievement do across the state."

Maner Costerisan was named one of Crain's Detroit's 2022 Cool Places to Work in September and continues to be recognized for its positive work culture and a top midsize and large firm to work for nationwide by prominent industry publications such as "Accounting Today." Many of those accolades result from staff feedback and surveys, and much of that feedback is based on events and activities such as Maner Cares Day. ●

## NEW HIRES



Maly

Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Maly will have an office in Traverse City, where he lives with his wife of 35 years.

**Michigan Certified Development Corporation (MCD)** is pleased to announce the addition of **Eric Maly** as senior loan officer for the Northern



Wright

degree in geology from Calvin University in Grand Rapids. Wright focuses on lead inspections/risk assessments, asbestos building inspections, mold investigations, and radon assessments.

**Luke Wright** joins **Triterra** as a senior industrial hygienist, working as a part of the industrial hygiene team. Wright acquired a bachelor's



Allor

comes with extensive experience in the contract furniture industry. Most recently, he was a regional sales director at Staples Business Advantage.

**Kentwood Office Furniture** announced that **Rick Allor** has joined the company as general manager in their Lansing and Detroit offices. Allor

**Vlad Lebedintsev, Ed.S., MBA**, a seasoned educator and career preparation expert, joined **Eaton Regional Education Service Agency** as the assistant

superintendent for career & technical education. He fills the position previously held by **Kathleen Szuminski**, who retired after 40 years of service.



Wolfe Howard

Geriatrics Center Community Programs and the director of the Turner Senior Wellness Program with Michigan Medicine.

**Jennifer Wolfe Howard** has joined **Ele's Place, Inc.**

as the new president/CEO. Since 2020, Wolfe Howard has served as the assistant director of the



Griffin

Manager, will focus on strategic initiatives to successfully drive new business with product roadmap development, market research, and data analysis to help support local businesses and build the bank's brand throughout the various markets it serves.

**Union Bank** has added **Stephanie Griffin**, vice president, treasury management director. Griffin, a Certified Public Fund Investment



Fountain

restoration industry for around 12 years and began his industrial hygiene career in 2019. Fountain performs pre-renovation/pre-demolition hazardous material

**Vince Fountain** joins **Triterra** as an industrial hygienist, working as a part of the industrial hygiene team. Fountain worked in the construction/

inspections to identify the presence of asbestos, lead, mold, and other hazardous waste and oversees hazardous abatement projects to ensure contractors comply with regulatory agencies.

**Kelley Cawthorne**, the Midwest's foremost multi-client lobbying firm, continued its expansion in the Michigan market with the addition of experienced government relations professional **Christin Nohner**. She officially joined the firm on December 12th after a career as a multi-client lobbyist, association lobbyist, and congressional staffer. During that time, she has developed expertise in a number of issue areas, including energy, the environment, criminal justice, and agriculture.



**Edge Partnerships**, a strategic marketing and public relations company, understands the critical need to attract and retain talent in Michigan. With this in mind, Edge's newest hire, **Dustin Burkman**, joins the team for a marketing, visual content internship. Burkman, a senior at Northern Michigan University, is pursuing a degree in social media design management.

## AWARDS

**Peckham** received the Community Impact Award during the Michigan Manufacturers Association MFG Excellence Awards. The MFG Community Impact award recognizes a manufacturing business that has shown exemplary leadership in serving its community or state. Peckham was recognized for its commitment to community service and advancing

the manufacturing industry in the Lansing, Flint, and Charlotte regions.



**Consumers Credit Union's** vice president of organizational development **Kristen Davidson** was recently honored with the HRUnite! Ambassador Award from a competitive nomination pool of HR professionals all over the country. The esteemed award recognizes an individual who tirelessly volunteers their time to promote the HR community in a program that encourages professional development.



**McLaren Greater Lansing** nurse **Rita Ashcroft** was honored with the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. Ashcroft was recognized by hospital leadership and co-workers and received a certificate commending her for being an "Extraordinary Nurse," as well as a sculpture called "A Healer's Touch," hand-carved by artists of the Shona people in Zimbabwe.

**Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU's** chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer, was recently



**Ellsworth Etchison**

named a 2022 Salute to Diversity Award recipient by Corp! Magazine. Ellsworth Etchison was recognized for her efforts as the credit union's first chief

diversity officer, a position she has held since 2020 while maintaining her role as LAFCU's chief marketing officer.

**Peckham** received the National Service Impact Award during the Governor's Service Awards on Nov. 17. Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Community Service Commission celebrated 46 individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations who are leaders in volunteerism, service, or philanthropy. Peckham was recognized for its success with the



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## MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Americorps Economic Opportunity Coaching program.



**Sparrow Carson Hospital** is proud to recognize **Leslie Bliss** from Sparrow Medical Group Greenville as its Caregiver of the Quarter. Bliss has been part of the SMG Greenville team for the past nine years and is an example of the highly skilled caregivers who provide leading-edge medicine at Sparrow. She works as a referral coordinator, ensuring patients are scheduled for testing and appointments for their specialized care.



**Sparrow Eaton Hospital** has honored a highly skilled nurse with its first-ever DAISY Award after she comforted an autistic child who was uneasy about undergoing surgery. Surgery nurse **Emily Bradford, RN**, was named the DAISY Award honoree based on a nomination from a family member of a patient for her compassion and attentiveness to the autistic child. Bradford, who has worked at Sparrow Eaton since 2016, was recognized for her compassionate care, outstanding nursing skills, and for always putting patients first.



**Elayna Creed**, operations manager of the **State Room Restaurant**, was awarded the Emerging Hospitality Leader of the Year award at the Michigan Restaurant and Lodging Association 2022 Stars of the Industry Awards dinner on November 9th.



Engineering News-Record (ENR) Midwest has awarded **McLaren Greater Lansing** an Award of Merit in its 2022 Best Projects competition. An independent panel of Application Engineering Company experts reviewed a total of 64 projects. Of those projects, 13 received Best Projects recognition and ten received Awards of Merit across 16 categories. The project consolidated two existing Lansing hospitals into a new 562,000-square-foot hospital adjacent to Michigan State University. The nine-story, 240-bed hospital is nestled within a 39-acre, \$601 million healthcare campus.

The Credit Union National Association (CUNA) has awarded **LAFCU** with the 2022 state-level Alphonse Desjardins Award for its comprehensive, eight-month personal financial course, Pathway



to Financial Transformation. The Alphonse Desjardins Award recognizes credit unions for their excellence and leadership in adult and youth financial literacy and education. LAFCU was honored for its innovative adult personal finance course, which is now in its second cohort.

**Delta Township** is proud to have received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The award represents a significant achievement by the Township and reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. To receive the budget award, the entity had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well the Township's budget serves as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device.

## DISTINCTIONS

**Rehmann**, a fully integrated professional advisory firm, has been named to the Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance 2022 Best CPA Firms for Women list, as well as the 2022 Best CPA Firms for Equity Leadership. This is the firm's tenth time being named on the Best CPA Firms for Women list, and the third consecutive year it's been named a Best CPA Firm for Equity Leadership.

## MICHIGAN PREMIER EVENTS

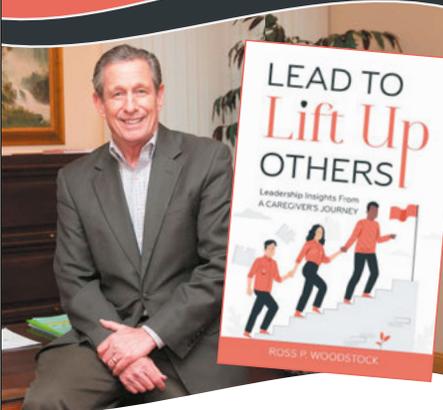
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**Origami Rehabilitation** has received the highest level of accreditation (three-year) following a thorough survey conducted by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Origami was recognized for its serene and therapeutic environment, tenured, passionate team, variety of unique specialty services, and for being a "one-stop-shop" for all things rehabilitation.



Shock and appreciation flooded **Allison Altenberger-Olson** when she was notified of her Michigan Lottery Excellence in Education award. She is the first **Mason Public Schools** teacher to receive the award, which includes a \$1,500 cash prize as well as a \$500 classroom stipend. Altenberger-Olson has taught Special Education at North Aurelius Elementary School for the past five years. To further commemorate her dedication to students, her school, and the Mason community, City of Mason Mayor Russell Whipple proclaimed Nov. 30, 2022, as "Allison Altenberger-Olson Day" and presented her with a certificate marking the occasion.

**Rehmann** is pleased to announce that advisors **Steven Gibson, CFA**, and **Simon Micakaj, CFPA, C(K)P**, have been named to the National Association of Plan Advisors' 2023 list of "Top 100 Retirement Plan Advisors Under 40."

The **Arc of Mid-Michigan** sends a huge thank you and shout out to this year's Volunteer of the Year **Gary Bendall**, who has supported



Bendall

The Arc of Mid-Michigan for many years. Over the past year, he has made a huge impact by assisting with dances, planning special events at the Owosso Knights of

Columbus and with their Operation Friendship program. Because of Bendall, Arc members have been able to enjoy events this year that would not have been possible otherwise.

**Michigan State University's** Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation has been recognized as a leader in entrepreneurship education by the Princeton Review for a fifth consecutive year. MSU comes in at No. 21 on The Princeton Review's new rankings and stands among the top 25 undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the nation. Significant investment in MSU's program since its inception in 2012 has fostered a culture of innovation at the university, attracting the attention of talented, motivated students and alumni venturers. MSU's minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation began in 2016 and continues to be one of the fastest-growing minors in the university's history.

## PROMOTIONS



Pictured left to right: **Melissa Nay**, **Lori Lanspeary**, **Anne Lavender**, **Valeri Gill**, and **Brandie Putnam**.

The **Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau** is pleased to

announce that five staff members have advanced to new roles in the organization. **Melissa Nay, CTA**, is now the GLCVB's membership and community outreach manager.

**Lori Lanspeary, CTA**, has advanced to marketing and community engagement manager. **Brandie Putnam, CMP, CTA**, has been elevated to senior convention services manager. Other role advancements include **Anne Lavender, CTA**, who is now an executive assistant to the CEO, and **Valeri Gill, CTA**, who is the creative services manager.

**CBRE** is pleased to announce **Steve Hershfield's** promotion to vice president and thanks him for his hard work and dedication.



Bendall

**Shawn Turner** has been named general manager of **WKAR Public Media** at Michigan State University, effective December 1, 2022. In addition

to his role as general manager, Turner is a professor of practice in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at MSU and a national security communication analyst for CNN.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Lansing Community College

Trustees **Ryan Buck, Angela Mathews** and **Robert Proctor** all won re-election to LCC's Board of Trustees on Nov. 8. Each will serve a six-year term. Trustees Buck and Mathews were first elected to the Board in 2016. Trustee Proctor was first elected in 2003 and will now serve his fourth term. **Dr. Toni Glasscoe**, LCC's Associate Vice President for External Affairs, Development & K-12 Operations, was elected to the Grand Ledge

School Board. Glasscoe will serve a one-year term.



Kleinjans-McKee

Open Systems Technologies, headquartered in Grand Rapids.

### Union Bank

has announced the addition of a new Board Member, **Robin Kleinjans-McKee, CPA**. She is the current chief financial officer for

## COMPANY NEWS

**Sparrow** has launched its fifth innovative 24-week Medical Assistant Apprenticeship class, which provides one-on-one, hands-on instruction by Sparrow's highly skilled caregivers. Sparrow covers the entire cost of the program, including tuition, books, scrubs, and wages during clinical hours. This new class includes eight students who successfully met the testing requirements and have committed to serving as a Sparrow Medical Assistant for two years after graduation in March 2023.

The accounting firms of **Maner Costerisan** and **Hall & Romkema, PLC** recently announced a merger. Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, Hall & Romkema, PLC is now recognized as Maner Costerisan. The merged practices will retain the name Maner Costerisan, and offices will be in the current Maner Costerisan headquarters at 2425 East Grand River Ave., Suite 1, Lansing. The team at Maner Costerisan can be contacted at 517.323.7500.

Nearly three decades ago, a piece of artwork was commissioned by an advertising firm that was doing pro bono work for the American Cancer Society. The goal of the artwork was to encourage women in underserved populations to get mammograms. The program that the art was attached to was

called "Tell A Friend." The intent was to get women to motivate their friends and family to get a mammogram. Now, almost 30 years later, the artwork has found a new home inside **McLaren Greater Lansing's** Breast Imaging Center.

Effective Nov. 1, 2022, **Rehmann** continued its expansion into the Florida market with the announcement of a business combination with Orlando-based Vestal & Wiler, one of the most comprehensive CPA firms in Central Florida. The partnership unified two firms with a deep understanding of the particular needs of middle-market clientele.

**Ingham Intermediate School District (ISD)** is seeking eligible families throughout the Lansing area to participate in the nationally-ranked Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Families with children who are four-years-old by December 1, 2022, and whose household income is less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for tuition-free preschool through the GSRP program. There are immediate openings in the school districts of Dansville, Holt, Lansing, Leslie, Stockbridge, Webberville, and Williamston. To apply to the GSRP program, visit [www.inghampreschool.org](http://www.inghampreschool.org) or call 517.244.1246 for assistance. Parents will need documentation of their household income, the child's date of birth, and the family's address to submit their application.

### Richardson & Richardson

**Consulting, ThreatLocker®**, a multi-disciplinary business consultancy service, announced it raised over \$200,000 for five charities: Hackers for Vets, Women Who Code, Bits N' Bytes, Diversity Cyber Council, and Bike Walk Wichita. Husband and wife duo Ian and Carrie Richardson doubled their initial goal of \$100,000 with the "Shave that Beard for Charity" event at this month's IT Nation Connect 2022.

Contributions were made by over 270 individuals and vendors attending the event.



As leaders in the creative placemaking movement and supporters of the arts in the Greater Lansing Region, the **Arts Council of**

**Greater Lansing** has been bringing accessible public art to all through its “Art in the Sky Billboard Project” for 13 years. This project is a collaboration with Adams Outdoor Advertising. The 2022/2023 billboard project will feature each artist’s work individually for two months on multiple boards throughout Greater Lansing from December 2022 through November 2023, with the first billboard going live in December. Additionally, there will be a two-week splash of all six artist billboards that will run simultaneously beginning January 2023. The 2022/2023 billboard awardees include the following regional artists: **Laura Gajewski, Elyse Gambino, James Hays, Steph Joy Hogan, Dennis Preston, and Julian Van Dyke.** ●

LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER

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