

Travis Williams
Chief Executive Officer
ODC Network

Lakeshore Food Rescue:
Turning Excess Food into
Food Access

Ottawa County Economic
Forecast for 2024

West Coast Leadership:
Health & Human Services
Day Inside Peek

Meet the West Coast Chamber's Icon Award Winner, Travis Williams

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The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce serves as a catalyst for business growth, a convener of leaders and influencers, and a champion for our thriving community. The Chamber serves its 1,200 members by building businesses, advocating for issues that matter, developing leaders, and supporting initiatives to build an inclusive community where all feel welcome.

The West Coast Chamber has been recognized with the U.S. Chamber's prestigious Five Star Accreditation. Less than 1% of Chambers in the country receive this distinction.

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The West Coast Way

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Welcome to our latest edition of *The West Coast Way* as we shine a spotlight on the outstanding work happening right in our neighborhoods. In each issue, we delve into the heart of our community, uncovering inspiring stories of entrepreneurship, social responsibility, and innovative solutions to local challenges. This issue is no exception. Our articles are more than just business success stories; they are a testament to the spirit of collaboration and resilience that thrives within our community. As you turn these pages, I hope you'll be inspired by the creativity, dedication, and passion of our local leaders who are making a significant impact. Join us in celebrating their achievements and learn how we can move forward together to contribute to this vibrant and ever-evolving community tapestry.

Jodi Owczarski
President & CEO
Michigan West Coast Chamber
of Commerce

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Ottawa County Economic Forecast for 2024

By Paul Isely, Ph.D. | Associate Dean & Professor of Economics, Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University

This article delves into the comprehensive survey results conducted in collaboration with the West Coast Chamber, offering a detailed analysis of the economic landscape and the anticipated trends for Ottawa County in 2024.

Introduction

The survey of West Coast Chamber Members was conducted in November and December 2023 and had 49 organizations respond. However, due to the possibility of a non-random response sample, the survey should be interpreted with caution. Since the average of a small sample is significantly influenced by

extreme numbers, we use the averages without the outliers to provide more reliable results.

Survey Results in conjunction with the West Coast Chamber:

- The Current Business Confidence Index for the end of 2023 is 68%, effectively the same as last year.
- The Forecast Business Confidence Index for 2024 is 67%, effectively the same as last year.
- Employment is expected to grow by 1.0 - 1.6% to 2.0% in 2024, slowing slightly from 2023.
- Wages are expected to increase by 3.3% - 3.7% for 2024, slower than the increases seen last year.

- 81% of respondents say the political environment will negatively affect their business, compared to 71% of respondents across West Michigan.
- All indicators signal the Ottawa County Businesses expect the coming year to be similar economically to 2023 – although perhaps just a little slower.

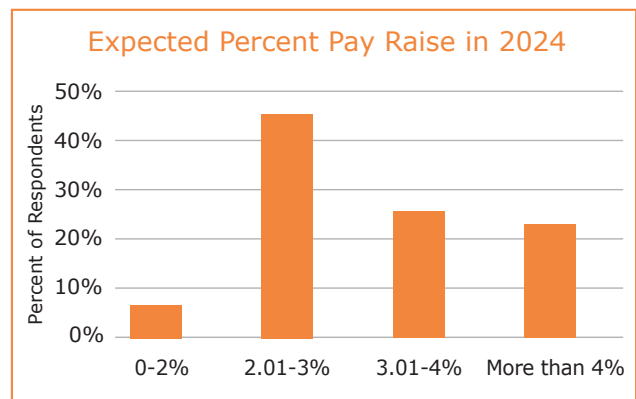
Confidence Index

The confidence index has been tracked by researchers at the Seidman College of Business since 1995 for all of West Michigan. This year we can provide the confidence index broken out for the West Coast Chamber's geographic footprint. The confidence index respondents use a scale from zero percent (no confidence at all) to one hundred percent (complete confidence) in response to the question: **How confident are you in the regional economy?** The average response has been 70% over the last 28 years.

The confidence index for the end of 2023 and expected confidence for 2024 are just below the average confidence for the last 28 years for the West Coast Chamber respondents. There is a slight decrease in confidence for the next year which likely shows uncertainty surrounding the year ahead. This suggests that businesses that responded view that we have reached a relatively stable time compared to the last four years and that they do not expect fundamental change in the economy this year.

Employment and Wages

In last year's employment for KOMA (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, and Allegan), there was an expectation of 1.8% job growth. Respondents in the West Coast Chamber Region this year are expecting 1.3% employment growth. This slowing employment growth is accompanied by slowing wage growth expectations of a 3.5% increase this year. Slowing wage growth and slowing employment growth together suggest that businesses in the region are expecting that the economy will continue to slow over 2024, but the continued



expected growth in both measures show that that businesses also do not expect a recession, at least regionally.

General Outlook

Respondents in the West Coast Chamber Region were more likely to find the effects of politics as a negative headwind than businesses across West Michigan. A full 81% of respondents answered that they expect the political environment will negatively affect their business whereas respondents across the West Michigan region had that expectation 71% of the time. This combined with uncertainty surrounding a presidential election year, the conflicts in the Ukraine and Israel, and potential Federal Reserve policy changes explain why business are showing a little caution for 2024. The survey data for the Holland area shows a marginal slowdown compared to 2023.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to all the organizations that participated in the survey administered through the West Coast Chamber, providing essential insights into the economic sentiments and expectations of businesses in the region.



Dr. Paul Isely is currently Associate Dean and Professor of Economics for the Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University. He joined the GVSU faculty in 1995 after earning his Ph.D. in Economics from Purdue University. He also holds an M.S. in Economics from Purdue University and a dual B.S. in Physics and Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Lakeshore Food Rescue: Turning Excess Food into Food Access

By **Krista Burgett** | *Lakeshore Food Rescue Manager, Community Action House*

For years, Community Action House in Holland has worked quietly behind the scenes to shape local food rescue efforts. Beginning as a way to increase healthy food access at our food pantry on 14th street and share food with partner agencies, the program grew through the pandemic and the October 2021 opening of our Food Club & Opportunity Hub — becoming the “place to go” for local businesses looking to decrease food waste and make an impact. Now named Lakeshore Food Rescue, our program aims to end food waste, fight hunger, and mobilize community — turning excess food into food access for our neighbors. Our team, which now includes multiple staff, 50+ volunteers, and a fleet of vehicles, is on track to rescue **two million pounds of food** this year.

In partnership with Ottawa Food, we took Lakeshore Food Rescue county-wide in July of 2023, launching the use of the nationally recognized Food Rescue Hero app to

harness the power of individual volunteers. Students can fill time in-between classes, seniors create meaningful structure for their retirement, and parents find a hands-on way to demonstrate the impact of community collaboration to their kids. Volunteers claim routes through the app and use their own vehicle to pick up surplus food from businesses, then drop items off at local food access agencies.

Restaurants, grocery stores, farms, coffee shops, government agencies — any businesses with surplus food — can become a partner. No donation is too small! We provide the logistics, volunteers, time, and transportation then match food with nonprofits who are positioned to get food to those who need it most. In 2022, more than 80 food donor partners helped redirect 1.2 million pounds of food away from the landfill and into our community. In 2023 with our new expansion, we’ve added 17 nonprofit partners and 37 new food donors to the Lakeshore Food

Rescue Network, powered by 42 volunteers signed up through the Food Rescue Hero app.

Bowerman Blueberries Farm Market joined the Lakeshore Food Rescue Network in the fall of 2023. Kassie Grasmanis, owner, shared that they joined because the program “benefits people who are local. Being able to bless people in your own community is such an amazing opportunity.” Their team enters donations through lakeshorefoodrescue.org when they have surplus food. The process is quick — submitting a food donation only takes about five minutes, and pickups are typically claimed by volunteers within 10 minutes — meaning that produce and prepared food can be transported to nonprofits fast enough to stay fresh. “We love the ease of being able to donate and we know that it will go to use immediately” Kassie said.

Outside of their commitment to community, Bowermans was driven to join the Lakeshore Food Rescue Network because of their focus on decreasing food waste. “We are constantly looking for ways that we are able to save products from going to waste. We try to use items in many different ways in an attempt to save those items from being disposed of” Kassie shared. Since becoming a Lakeshore Food Rescue partner, they’ve been able to save even more items from being thrown away.



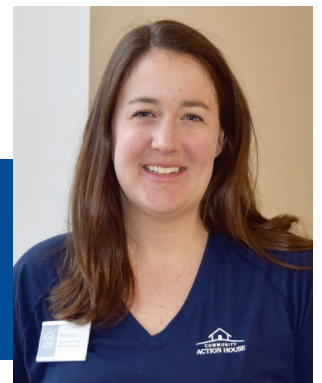
Last fall, their team donated more than 800 pounds of fresh pears and plums, transported by a volunteer to our Food Club & Opportunity. The Bowerman’s team carefully packaged all of the fruit ahead of time, making it quick and easy for volunteers to stock the fresh produce on our shelves and share with other nonprofit partners. Their generosity and care is a common thread we see throughout so many of our partnerships — local businesses play a critical role in caring for families in our community.

We asked Kassie what she would say to another business owner considering participation in Lakeshore Food Rescue — “Do it! That feeling of being able to help out others in your community is indescribable.”

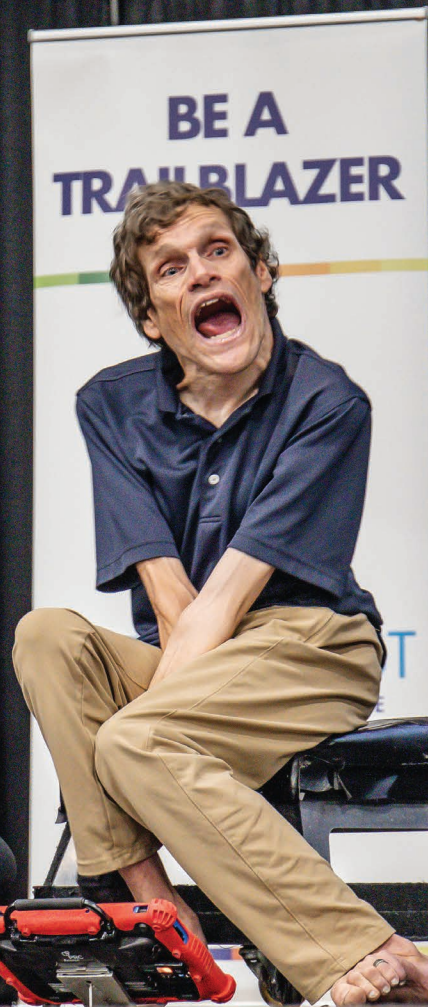
You have surplus food that you don’t want to waste — let us connect it to those who need it most. Join the growing network of businesses committed to decreasing food waste and increasing healthy food access for our neighbors!

Learn more at lakeshorefoodrescue.org

Krista was raised in the Chicago suburbs and moved to Holland to attend Hope College in 2007. She graduated Hope College in 2011 with a BA in Religion and later earned an MA in Mental Health Counseling from Trinity International University. She’s a state licensed professional counselor with a decade of clinical counseling experience. Krista joined the Lakeshore Food Rescue team as Program Manager in March 2023, and is passionate about shifting systems so that individuals and families can thrive in supportive communities. Krista believes that food is a basic need, and a central part of building cultures and relationships.



Get to Know Chris Klein, Owner of Lessons from the Big Toe



Tell us a little about yourself.

In 1973 I was born with cerebral palsy because the umbilical cord was coming out before me. They had to do an emergency c-section and I was without oxygen for 45 minutes and was given CPR for another 40 minutes. The lack of oxygen caused an injury to the motor portion of my brain. Cerebral palsy has five classifications, and I am classified as an athetoid, which means my muscles never stop moving.

I am unable to talk, so for the first six years of my life we played a guessing game, and it was really

frustrating for me and my communication partner.

At the age of six, I received my first communication device, and that changed my life. My teacher realized I wasn't being challenged enough, so she pushed for me to be mainstreamed. I was mainstreamed full time at the start of third grade, which was a life changer.

I came to Hope College in 1992. I graduated with a degree in kinesiology and went on to Western Theological Seminary to pursue a Master of Divinity. I have established myself as a speaker and I have spoken all over the world.

How can individuals and organizations be more inclusive for people with physical disabilities?

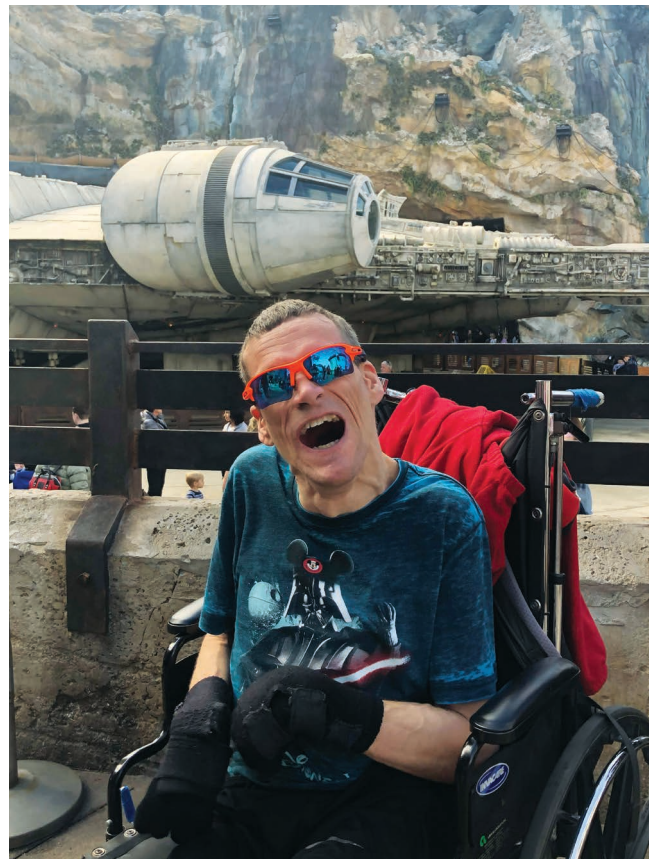
Individuals with physical disabilities get judged by their first impression all the time. I know I am going to get judged the minute I walk out the door, and usually I get walked right past. People and organizations need to look past the disability and see the abilities of the person. This means you are going to have to get to know the person to see their abilities and talents. People with a communication disability even have a rougher time getting a foot in the door. It is unfortunate because talents are being wasted and not everybody is getting a chance to get a seat at the table. It's time for everybody to be included, and that's not just getting into a building. It is getting a role in an organization and having a voice in the organization.

What are some of the most beneficial aspects of your work on the Board of Directors of Lakeshore Disability Network?

Disability Lakeshore Network started in 1992 when I came to Hope College. It is an honor to be on the board, and I am excited to help its mission move forward. We believe in the independent living philosophy. It says that people with disabilities know best how to take care of themselves. They can make important decisions that affect their lives, have relationships with whom they choose and have access to all the benefits of society that non-disabled people do. We need to develop more corporate partnerships, so that we can achieve this mission. Holland is a town that can lead the way and be an example for other cities. Change isn't going to happen if we don't have a corporate effort from everybody.

What are some of the most challenging barriers for people with physical disabilities?

Employment is one of the biggest barriers people with disabilities face and the whole system needs to be reformed, but that is another topic. It is also why I am interested in getting into politics. I want to talk about people who have a communication disability. Many of these people use augmentative difference communication (AAC). I have used AAC since I was six years old, and I have accomplished a lot of things in my life. The one thing I haven't achieved is being employed full time. It's frustrating! The reality is only 5% of the 4.1 million



people that use AAC work over twenty hours a day. This is a statistic that affects equality of life. It is a statistic that I am determined to change.

How can we make our workspaces more inclusive for those with disabilities?

To change these statistics, workplaces need to see people with disabilities differently. I don't believe the problem is getting in the building. The problem is workplaces need to look passed the disability to see the abilities the person has and be willing to make the accommodations to make it work.

What made you decide to write a book?

I believe I have a story to tell, and I believe my story can help one person to persevere through a constraint, and it may not be a disability. However, we all have constraints, and sometimes we need encouragement to get through it and move forward. If you are interested in learning more about my book, speaking opportunities or stay connected on upcoming events, fill out this online form: <https://bit.ly/3TNQfrk>

A launch date for the book is coming soon!



Meet the West Coast Chamber's Icon Award Winner, Travis Williams

By Bruce Buursma | Manager, Bruce Burrmsa Communications LLC

Photo Credit: Elisabeth Marie Photography

Travis Williams is a no-nonsense, lunch-bucket style of leader, seeking to inspire and empower others through his example of devoted diligence, strategic vision, and risk-taking resilience. He hankers neither for awards nor attention, but rather for the steady, sometimes spectacular advancements in the area's ecosystem and natural habitats through the achievements of the ODC Network and the Lakeshore Leadership Council he oversees.

Williams, who was selected as the inaugural recipient of the West Coast Chamber's Icon Award, regards such recognition as an endorsement of his nearly quarter-century of building partnerships to improve the local watershed and greenways and advocate for innovative nature-based education.

"With the help of so many key partners throughout the area and the remarkable efforts of the ODC Network staff," says Williams, "the Outdoor Discovery Center has evolved into a spectacular community asset in West Michigan. It's helped reshape education, and it's led a sweeping transformation of our communities' approach to our lakes and rivers, as well as responsible management of our land."

A native of West Michigan, Williams came to Holland in 1994 to attend Hope College, where he played football for the Flying Dutchmen and pursued a biology major.

"I wasn't the best student by any measure in high school or college," Williams acknowledges. "I didn't care to do a lot of reading. I struggled with rote memorization. I had poor motivation to do repetitive homework. But I loved

the hands-on stuff. I could take a lab and love it. I would jump neck-deep into the lakes and rivers and enjoyed that aspect of learning. I just needed mentors and professors who understood me and would help me achieve my goal.”

Despite his undistinguished grade point average, Williams convinced a couple of faculty mentors to help him chart his own, non-typical path through Hope College, paving the way for the completion of his bachelor’s degree in biology, master’s degrees in education and business, and the fulfillment of his vocational dream — to work for, and ultimately to run, a nature center.

Following his graduation, Williams worked as an aquatic toxicologist before accepting a biology teaching position at Black River Charter High School in Holland. But only a year later, at the age of 24, he applied to become the founding executive director of the fledgling Outdoor Discovery Center.

“I’m still astonished — and eternally grateful — that the board took a chance on me,” says Williams. “I wasn’t the most talented and I certainly wasn’t the most qualified person they could have found. But I believe they could see my passion for working hard and my love for the outdoors, and they took a risk on an untested young guy.”

And so it was, at the dawn of the 21st Century, under the leadership of the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District and their counterparts at Wildlife Unlimited, that the Outdoor Discovery Center was launched on 100 acres of former farmland just south of Holland. An inexperienced



but motivated executive director was charged with developing an attractive nature preserve which could host programs of appeal to the community.

With the help of his board and a skeletal staff, Williams began living out the center’s mission of connecting people, land, and nature in respectful and engaging ways in order to advance outdoor education and conservation.

In the 23 years since, the Outdoor Discovery Center has mushroomed into the multi-pronged non-profit ODC Network, which now owns more than 800 acres of land and manages an additional 2,000-plus acres in the Macatawa River and Kalamazoo River watersheds. A staff of about 125 people run an array of projects and programs that touch more than 100,000 children and their families throughout the year.





It operates two Greenway projects, a watershed clean-up initiative, three nature-based preschools, two nature centers, multiple wildlife preserves, a land conservation and restoration business, an educational consulting practice working with about three dozen regional schools, a corporate childcare program and consultancy, and an eco-tourism business.

“Organizationally, we’ve created a robust set of business divisions to help us fulfill our mission in a way that makes us sustainable and opportunistic,” Williams says. “Many non-profits only have philanthropy to keep them going. We now earn about 75 percent of our annual income. We still need philanthropy, of course, but we are a long way down the pathway to a self-sustaining journey.”

In recent years, Williams has turned over much of the day-to-day direction of the ODC Network to emerging leaders on the staff, freeing capacity to provide strategic and management services to the Lakeshore Leadership Council, a group of business, educational and nonprofit leaders seeking to ensure long-term prosperity for the Holland-Zeeland area.

“It’s an opportunity to be more of a strategist and innovator on a broader playing field,” says Williams. “It’s an incredible blessing to be a part of this community that wants to be excellent, that wants to be the best place to live, work and play. I’ve had opportunities to take other

positions in other places, but I’m hard pressed to walk away from the tremendous potential for impact in front of me.”

When Williams looks back at the accomplishments of the past 20-plus years, he is overwhelmed with appreciation for the spirit of collaboration that encouraged it to happen. And he’s also eager to see what might transpire in the next 20 or 25 years. “There’s always something more that could be done,” he says. “When people support you and believe in you, you create a true sense of loyalty. I am committed to the things that got started here... and there is more to be done.”

Williams adds: “We’re just getting started. Imagine what we can do next. We live in a community that has embraced fresh ideas, with a mindset for excellence and generosity. I get to work in a community that has aggressively supported our organization and many others — to become a community, as my friend Dick Haworth describes, with that unfair competitive advantage — this amazing Holland-Zeeland community.”



Bruce Buursma is a writer, communications consultant, and documentary/video producer who lives in Grand Haven, Michigan. During his career in journalism, he reported from more than 50 countries for the Chicago Tribune, earning recognition as a Pulitzer Prize finalist. More recently, he’s served as a corporate communications officer for Herman Miller and now specializes in helping non-profit organizations tell their stories and advance their missions.

Postcards: a Great Customer Communication Tool for Businesses

Postcards are a very cost-effective way to promote events, market food, generate website traffic, and make special offers and promotions...if you do it right.

- 1. Make a Big First Impression.** Use attractive images and larger sizes to stand out. Make sure the graphics are striking: the better the image, the better the response.
- 2. Get to the Point.** Postcards are ready to read. Make your biggest benefit the first thing the reader sees. Encourage them to engage with your postcard. Be direct.
- 3. Choose the Right Purpose.** Postcards are most effective when used to generate website traffic, excitement, or interest for something to come. They are less effective for closing sales because they can't provide a detailed message. Don't include much actual information about what you are selling. Instead, promote major benefits. Persuade the reader to visit your website or to take some other action. Your customer may take more definitive action if the matter is time sensitive and they must act immediately.
- 4. Make a Strong Call to Action.** You have only a few moments to get the reader's attention and to persuade them to act. Keep your message brief and make sure the reader can clearly understand at a glance what action they should take.
- 5. Include a Strong Offer.** Just telling your reader how to get more information may not be enough. Give them a reason to respond now or many will put your postcard aside and forget to take action. Examples of good offers are a discount, a free consultation, a time frame requirement, or limited seating availability.

As for mailing, postcards can be sent at multiple sizes, two delivery speeds and with two audience strategies. Here's an overview.

Let's begin with size. Postcards must be a minimum 3.5"x5.5" and can be as large as 12"x15" or more. USPS has postage costs for each service tied to size. With larger sizes, your per-unit postage may increase. Nonprofits qualify for lower rates.



As for speed, postcards can mail First Class, with a delivery standard of 2-5 days, or via Marketing Mail, which features a delivery standard of 3-14 days. Marketing Mail used to be known as standard mail and includes Nonprofit mail for a lower cost.

Finally, let's talk about audience. There are two basic strategies: send to a list, or mail to everyone in a geographic region. List examples include your prospects and customers or a list we rent on your behalf based on your target audience. Geographic examples include everyone in a zip code, a radius of your business, a county, or carrier route. Think of this as targeted by demographic trait vs. targeted by geographic area. You can even combine strategies and dedupe the list!

Seem a bit confusing? It can be, but that's where we add value from start to finish. We can take all your variables into consideration (budget, schedule, audience, goals, offers) and help you choose the right size, the right printing solution, and the right distribution strategy to meet your goals. We also provide the mailing strategies you can rely on to minimize overall costs, for example deduping lists from multiple sources or designing an audience strategy that meets your geographic needs.

Want to know more? Contact Craig Parker at craigp@hollandlitho.com or 800-652-6567 to access the experts at Holland Litho.





West Coast Leadership: Health & Human Services Day Inside Peek

By Luke Panning | Wealth Manager, Arcadia Capital

My shoes were too tight. My shirt was too short. My pants were too baggy. I became hyperaware of a few stains on my clothes that I hadn't noticed while thrifting my outfit as I met my colleagues for our West Coast Leadership Health and Human Services Day.

The Day

We spent time at Community Action House, Holland Hospital, Community Kitchen, Gateway Mission, and the Children's Advocacy Center. To build awareness around some of the challenges faced everyday by our neighbors, we were assigned prework: use public transit to purchase groceries, sleep overnight in a vehicle, or find a free meal. My group was tasked with finding and wearing a complete outfit for under \$15. Constrained by budget, my colleagues and I went without coats for the day, thankful that much of our time was spent indoors.

The Stats

For several years, Ottawa County has been the fastest growing county in Michigan. It's a testament to the community we know and love but challenging as resources have not kept up with demand and inflation.

We discussed the important distinction between the poverty line and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. ALICE measures the income needed to cover essentials: \$29,640 per year for an individual and \$57,276 for a family of four. 82,000 people in Ottawa County currently live below these levels and pressure continues to mount. Inflation of essential goods and services has increased 43% faster than general inflation over the past 15 years. **Community Action House** has helped 265 people experiencing homelessness this year, an increase of 50% over last

year and **Gateway Mission** provided a collective 36,000 nights of shelter to 921 adults and 148 children.

We've seen rising needs in mental health care, too, at higher levels of acuity. Mental Health struggles are one of the biggest factors negatively impacting children and adolescents, compounded by technology, accessibility to drugs, parental pressures, and breakdown of family structures. **Holland Hospital** has been facing this issue head-on, increasing behavioral health staff and resources and introducing combined in- and out-patient programs.

Additionally, the need for physical and sexual abuse counseling and support have been increasing. Families may be faced with the difficult decision between staying in abusive relationships and forfeiting stable housing or multiple income streams due to inflation and lack of affordable housing. The **Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)** works with 350-500 cases per year and hosts over 200 counseling sessions per month and helps over 18,000 students yearly.

The Resources

When forced to choose, people prioritize shelter over healthy food options. **Community Action House** has expanded efforts in food rescue, partnering with local distributors and farms to reduce waste and provide affordable access to those in need, saving over one million pounds of food each year. If you have not visited the food club, you will be impressed by the vibrant colors, points-based membership, demonstration kitchen, and counseling space for budgeting and savings strategies. **Holland Hospital**, one of only four private hospitals remaining in Michigan, has been working diligently to broaden mental health services with several exciting expansions. The **Gateway Mission** is focusing on providing Hope, Housing, and Sustainability to "give a hand up, not a handout." They have an impressively streamlined donation system and offer several programs to help ensure participants no longer experience homelessness. The **Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)** provides resources to child victims of sexual and physical abuse and has a presence in most local schools to streamline access and minimize trauma to the victims.

Luke Panning is a wealth manager at Arcadia Capital. He's been providing advice to clients and their families for the past decade. Luke recently joined the Holland Symphony Board. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his wife and newborn daughter. He loves the outdoors, traveling, cooking, playing fiddle, and renovating his 100-year-old house.



Reflections

The challenges of our prework assignments are comparatively trivial to the struggles faced by our community members. We were uncomfortable in ill-fitting clothes or tired from a sleepless night. Those taking public transit relayed the difficulty in coordinating work, childcare, and bus schedules to get basic groceries. It's striking how a simple task can become a major problem without the necessary resources and can so quickly cause compounding, negative effects on productivity, health, and advancement.

A staff member commented, "we live in a bifurcated society," coexisting without true understanding of others' struggles or privileges. I was surprised how my own life was interwoven with these organizations as I saw a former teacher volunteering at Community Action House, a former high school classmate having a meal at the Community Kitchen, and a friend working as a child abuse specialist at the Children's Advocacy Center. Everyone in our group was overwhelmed by the experience but left proud of our community and the organizations fighting to provide access to critical resources, healthier options, and necessary care in our community. It was humbling to spend the day walking in someone else's shoes.



Upcoming Programs



To **register**, visit our website or scan the QR code on this page.

February 2, 2024

Advocacy in Action

7:45 AM – 9:00 AM

Michigan West Coast Chamber

Join us for Advocacy in Action as we're joined by Jason Latham, Executive Director of the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, to hear important and timely updates related to transportation. You'll also have the opportunity to hear updates from your local elected officials and will enjoy networking time with other Chamber members. Register today!

Lead Sponsor: **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan**

February 7, 2024

Leading Edge Workshop: Four Pillars of Leadership Success for New & Experienced Managers

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Michigan West Coast Chamber

Leading a team successfully isn't a skill that comes naturally to most managers. Whether you're a new manager, experienced manager, or aspired to one day lead a team, this training facilitated by Dan Corp, President of Advanced Time Management, will provide you with a practical set of tools to reduce frustration and self-doubt as you establish yourself as a leader.

Lead Sponsor: **Fifth Third Bank**

February 13, 2024

Wake Up West Coast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Haworth Hotel

Learn to be a standout leader and communicator in today's fast-paced world! Join us for Wake Up West Coast where guest speaker, Robert Heath, Founder of The Legacy Leadership Consulting Group, will help us dive into the art of powerful communication, teaching you to lead with confidence and earn respect, even if you're not at the top.

Program Sponsor: **Corewell Health**

Morning Mingle Sponsor: **Opportunity Available!**

February 28, 2024

Employment Law Update with Miller Johnson

8:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Haworth Hotel

The 2023 state and federal legislative sessions, and agency action, brought a number of changes to employment laws in Michigan. Join the Chamber and Lakeshore Human Resource Management Association for this event to hear important updates on Employment Law from our friends at Miller Johnson Attorneys.

Program Partners: **Lakeshore Human Resource Management Association & Miller Johnson Attorneys**

February 29, 2024

Lakeshore Women Connect

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Haworth Corporate

Join us for Lakeshore Women Connect, where we welcome new women to our business community and celebrate those who have taken new leadership roles. Come and expand your professional network and enjoy an evening of networking along with appetizers and beverages.

Program Partner: **Lakeshore Advantage**

March 19 – March 21, 2024

D.C. Fly In Trip

Multi-Day Agenda

Washington, D.C.

The Chamber invites you to participate in our first D.C. Fly In Trip that will allow participants to engage in vital discussions regarding the important issues impacting our business community with our congressional delegation and other federal officials. This is a must attend event for those interested in ensuring West Michigan's voice is heard.

Lead Sponsor: **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan**



HAPPENINGS



The Culture Cheese Shop made its Holland debut at 211 S. River Ave with a ribbon cutting celebration – with plenty of cheese samples of course!



Chamber President, Jodi Owczarski, poses for a photo with Congressman Bill Huizenga, and Program Facilitator, Mike Hill of Total Control Health Plans, at Breakfast with our Congressman.



Blueprint Dentistry recently celebrated a rebrand complete with the opening of their new state-of-the-art facility located at 877 E. 16th Street with a ribbon cutting celebration.



Critter Barn has officially broke ground on their next barn called Lolly's Place that will house their small livestock at their new farm location 2950 80th Ave in Zeeland.



We love our Ambassador Team! We celebrated the holiday season and all of their hard work with a delicious lunch at Boatwerks Waterfront Restaurant.



Quality Car Wash is excited to announce the opening of their new Express Interior Cleaning at 187 N River Ave with a ribbon cutting celebration.



The Center for Physical Rehabilitation has officially opened their doors on the southside of Holland with a ribbon cutting celebration at their facility that is connected to the Holland Aquatic Center at 550 Maple Ave.



The Chamber Team joined Holland/Zeeland Young Professionals for their Annual Awards Dinner and celebrated Hannah Bowen as an award recipient.



West Coast Leadership Alumni members catching up with fellow cohorts at the annual Holiday Party held at Boatwerks.



Cento Anni Home Essentials celebrated being the first storefront on 6th street with a ribbon cutting ceremony at their 136 E 6th St shop – stop by and check out their artisan-made homewares today!

Premier Partner Spotlight

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

For 83 years, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's commitment to our members, customers and communities as the state's largest health insurer has remained strong and steady. Throughout this time, we've continued to deliver a variety of affordable health care products to more than 4.8 million members residing in and outside of Michigan, as well as continuing to embrace innovation and collaboration, and seeking growth opportunities and partnerships to better serve our stakeholders — businesses, individuals and seniors.

Beyond health care coverage, Blue Cross is proud to support impactful community initiatives and provide leadership in improving health care. Through our Corporate Community Giving, Blue Cross donated more than \$3 million to 380 nonprofit organizations and awarded \$2.2 million through targeted Social Mission grants to improve the health and well-being of individuals and families throughout 2022 alone.



As in years past, we look forward to continued engagement within communities across Michigan to address social determinants of health, help remove barriers and inequities and increase access to services and care. For more information about Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, visit bcbsm.com and MiBluesPerspectives.com



SAVE THE DATE: LEADERSHIP MONTH MAY 2024

LEADERSHIP LIVE

MAY 3, 2024

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

ENGEDI CHURCH

PROGRAM SPONSOR
 FIFTH THIRD BANK

COMMUNITY IMPACT DAY

MAY 15, 2024

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

LOCAL NONPROFITS

PROGRAM SPONSOR
 LG Energy Solution

AFTER PARTY CELEBRATION

MAY 15, 2024

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

HOLLAND CIVIC CENTER

PROGRAM SPONSOR
 LG Energy Solution



Renewing Members

It's All About YOU

The West Coast Chamber's **Why** boils down to this: It's All About You. Being a partner for you, a resource for you, and an ally for you. When you renew your Chamber membership, it tells us that we are being responsive to your needs and providing value, and that you trust us to be here for your business whenever you need us. Your renewal is the ultimate source of feedback on the positive impact the West Coast Chamber has on fostering strong businesses that support a thriving community. Thank you!

We appreciate our members who recently renewed their memberships:

* Indicates years of membership

Action Supply, Safety & Workwear Store - 25*	Dutch-Touch Window Cleaning
American House of Holland	Eckhoff & DeVries Painting
Berends Hendricks Stuit Ins. Agency, Inc.	Edward Jones Dolbow
BioLife Plasma Service, LP	Edward Jones Gualtiere
Black River Public School - 25*	Edward Jones Jungling
Bob's Butcher Block West	Edward Jones Pedersen
Boers Transfer & Storage, Inc. - 50*	Edward Jones Simpkins
Boileau & Co	Evolve
Broadview Product Development Corp.	GO Riteway Transportation Group
Camp Blodgett - 5*	Hampton Inn of Holland
City on a Hill	Herrick District Library
Coastal Group / Coastal Container / Coastal Automotive	Holland Board of Public Works
Collins Bookkeeping Solutions LLC	Holland Bowl Mill, Inc.
Comfort Keepers	Holland Christian Schools
Commercial Flooring & Installation	Holland Tasting Tours
Conpoto	Hollandia Outdoors
Dickey's Barbecue Pit	Hope College
DISHER	Hope Pkgs
Dri-Design	Huisman Flowers
Dutch Touch Growers Inc. - 25*	Hungerford Nichols CPAs + Advisors
	HYK Consulting LLC.
	Kammeraad Financial Group
	KW Harbortown
	Lake Michigan Credit Union



Lakeshore Property Management, Inc.
 Langeland-Sterenbergh & Yntema Funeral Homes
 Living Lark
 LVZ Financial Planning
 Manpower
 Merle Boes, Inc.
 Metal Flow Corporation- **40***
 Meyaard Tolman & Venlet, P.C.
 Michigan ENT & Allergy Specialists
 Mission Partners India
 Northgate Appliance, LLC
 OMT Veyhl
 Out of the Box - Zeeland
 Pro-Tax & Notary Services
 Rabbit River Transport II, LLC
 Randy's Carpet Care
 Restoration 1 of the Lakeshore
 Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc. - **20***
 Schreur Printing & Mailing

SERVPRO of Holland/W. Ottawa County - **20***
 Sharp Construction LLC - **5***
 Sperry's Moviehouse
 SY Transport - **30***
 Teerman Lofts - **10***
 The CBD Store South
 The Employers' Association
 The trU Group
 Tiara Yachts
 Urban Plank
 Van Hill Furniture
 Waverly Meadows - **20***
 West MI Plumbers, Fitters & Service Trades Local
 WHTC
 Wolverine Power Systems
 World Class Prototypes
 Zip Xpress, Inc.

New Members

Welcoming these new members who recently joined the West Coast Chamber

Avid Hotel
Jessica Daly
 (616) 741-8500
www.6pmhospitality.com
jessica.daly@6pmhospitality.com

Eastbrook Homes
 (616) 455-0200
www.eastbrookhomes.com
info@eastbrookhomes.com

EOS Worldwide - Chris Heileman
Chris Heileman
 (616) 723-3197
www.eosworldwide.com/chris-heileman
chris.heileman@eosworldwide.com

FYZICAL THERAPY and Balance Center
Natasha Flipse
 (616) 290-9694
www.fyzical.com
info@michiganfyzical.com

Heartland Builders LLC
Cindy Kogelschatz
 (616) 205-5430
www.heartlandbuilders.com
cindy@heartlandbuilders.com

Jason Howe
www.linkedin.com/in/jason-dc-howe
jasonhowe@comcast.net

Paradise Bound Thrift Shoppe
Holly Guillozet
 (616) 748-7690
paradiseboundstore@gmail.com

U.S Air Force
Jocelyn Chapman
 (616) 836-9540
www.airforce.com
jocelyn.chapman@us.af.mil

WM Uniform
Patrick Van Tuinen
 (800) 878-8770
www.wmuniform.com
wmu@wmuniform.com



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