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MCA's Mission

To serve member agencies and strengthen their capacity to alleviate the causes and circumstances of poverty.

Nominations for 2016 Community Action Awards due

MCA will host its annual Community Action Awards presentation April 28 as part of the annual Day at the Capitol event. All member agencies are invited to nominate an agency client and/volunteer for recognition. Recipients receive an inscribed trophy and \$100 gift card.

Nomination forms have been sent to all member agencies and are also available on the MCA website [here](#). Nominations are due March 11.

Governor's Economic and Education Summit set for March in Grand Rapids

The Governor's Economic and Education Summit (GE S2) will take place Tuesday, March 15, in Grand Rapids, featuring keynote speaker Jaime Casap, chief education evangelist at Google. The event is designed to encourage collaboration between the education and business communities to attract, retain and develop Michigan's professional talent.

The summit brings together educators, business leaders and workforce professionals from across Michigan with the goal of expanding the state's ability to compete in the knowledge-based economy of the future.

The event runs from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Devos Place Convention Center, 303 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids.

For more information or to register click [here](#).

MCA meetings set for March 7 in Okemos

Financial Committee Meeting

11 a.m. to noon

Directors Council Meeting

1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting

3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The meetings take place at the MCA office at 2173 Commons Pkwy., Okemos, MI 48864.

MCA staff member to offer ROMA training

Program and Policy Specialist **Maddy Kamalay** is entering the final phase of certification as a Results Oriented Management and Accountability trainer and is looking for opportunities to conduct the Introduction to ROMA training curriculum for member agencies.

In this final phase of the certification process, Kamalay and a co-trainer will present the material to a group under the observation of a master ROMA trainer (or videotaped for review of a master trainer). Once she has completed the phase successfully, she will become one of Michigan's few nationally certified ROMA trainers.

If your agency is interested in hosting a training session, please contact Kamalay at mkamalay@michigancommunityaction.org.

Did You Know?

Those most affected by the rental housing crisis in Michigan are families with children. Twenty-eight percent of the total rental population in Michigan pays at least half of their income on rent.

TEACH Scholarship aids professional development

Melissa Hodges always wanted to be a teacher, but as a single mother without the means to go to college, her dream seemed out of reach. Now, as a two-time recipient of the TEACH scholarship, thanks to encouragement from Community Action of Allegan County (CAAC), Hodges has earned an associate degree with high honors and is pursuing a bachelor's in Family and Child Development at Western Michigan University.

The TEACH scholarship is designed to improve the quality of early education by encouraging professional development of staff, helping to enhance their compensation and thus reducing staff turnover. Hodges started her career with Allegan County Head Start during the 2010-2011 school year and is now with Plainwell Early Head Start, both under the umbrella of CAAC. A federal program that promotes school readiness of children from birth to age 5, Head Start works to enhance cognitive, social and emotional development.

TEACH Director Kelsey Laird chose Hodges to appear in TEACH's upcoming marketing video and to serve on the TEACH Early Childhood Advisory Committee.



"I am truly honored to participate in the vision of TEACH," Hodges says, urging others with similar goals to "never stop dreaming."

Dr. Melissa Blount: Leaders need community connection, understanding



Dr. Melissa Blount addresses Community Action leaders during January conference in New Orleans.

Leaders who craft social policies need to connect with and better understand the communities they serve in order to be effective, says Dr. Melissa Blount, who spoke at the Community Action Partnership's 2016 Management and Leadership Training National Conference in New Orleans in January. The conference, hosted by America's Poverty Fighting Network, addressed Community Action's impact on the lives of millions of families across the United States.

Blount explained how "false narratives" can burden economically disadvantaged and racially oppressed communities. She outlined ways agencies can change the narratives and develop effective programs and policies that will cultivate resilience and in turn restore a connection to the community.

Blount is a licensed clinical psychologist who maintains a private practice in Evanston, Ill., and is active within the community on issues of social justice, trauma and wellness.

She has spent more than 20 years studying human behavior, with a specific interest in the way racism and class impact physical and psychological outcomes for communities of color. Blount incorporates multiple approaches to healing and cultivating resilience.

Energy efficiency investment brings long-term savings



Energy efficiency reduces energy use overall, helping decrease everyone's utility bills. Low- and fixed-income households spend a greater proportion of their income on energy costs than do higher-income families. While 4 percent of the average U.S. household's income goes toward utility bills, low-income households spend 17 to more than 50 percent of their income on utilities.

Efficiency investments cost much less than building new power plants. For every \$1 spent on energy efficiency, customers will save nearly \$4 in avoided energy costs. The current value of energy efficiency programs in Michigan is roughly \$65 million per year saved. Doubling the amount of energy efficiency in Michigan would result in benefits increasing to \$114 million per year.

To read more about the issue and Michigan Community Action's role, click [here](#).

Join colleagues March 15-18 in Washington, D.C., for NCAF'S Legislative Conference

The National Community Action Foundation's annual legislative conference will host congressional speakers and other national leaders to discuss current issues in Washington, D.C.

The conference is a great opportunity for those in Community Action to come to the Capitol to meet with their representatives, other congressional leaders and national Community Action champions.

Prior to the conference, NCAF will work with participants to prepare for their Hill meetings. It will also have a special session Wednesday for Hill prep.

When: March 15-18, 2016

Where: Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill

For more information, please visit the website by clicking [here](#).

To register, please click [here](#).

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Is there a story or issue you'd like to see covered in Catalyst?

Let us know what's happening in your agency or region. Success stories? Recent events? People news?

We welcome your input and feedback.

Please send your comments and ideas to:

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