

In This Issue:[Day at the Capitol award ceremony](#)[NMCAA savings programs](#)[Deliverable home heating fuel in Mid-Michigan](#)[Turkish delegation visits Kalamazoo](#)[Donations campaign for Flint](#)[Catalyst survey reminder](#)[Property casualty insurance bidder's conference in Caro](#)[Early Head Start and trauma webinars](#)[Area Agencies on Aging Association conference](#)[Community Reinvestment Act webinar](#)[Executive meeting in Marquette](#)**Quick Links**[MCA Website](#)[Contact Us](#)[Legislative Priorities](#)[Member Services](#)**Follow MCA on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.**

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**MCA's Mission**

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

Mandatory bidder's conference set in Caro May 10

The Human Development Commission, a Community Action Agency that serves Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac and Tuscola Counties, is seeking competitive proposals for property-casualty insurance policies. This mandatory bidder's conference will meet at the Human Development Commission in Caro on May 10.

The conference will provide interested and licensed companies with additional information about the Human Development Commission.

Conference begins at 2 p.m.

The Human Development Commission is located at 429 Montague Ave., Caro, MI 48723

Letters of intent for Human Development Commission's property-casualty insurance policies are due by 5 p.m. on May 11.

Community Action Partnership webinars May 10, 11

Community Action Partnership will host a webinar called "Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership and Community Action" on May 10 and another called "Trauma Informed: A Guide to the Resources" on May 11. The webinars are free, but registration is required.

[Click here to register.](#)

Area Agencies on Aging Association Annual Conference

The 29th annual "Creating the Future of Aging" conference will be held on May 19 from 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m. and on May 20 from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing. The event will feature workshops on topics such as leadership and technology, as well as speakers from agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services.

[Click here for more information.](#)

[Click here to register.](#)

CRA webinar on funding set May 25

Community Action Partnership will host a webinar presented by Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) banking regulators to educate on the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977. The webinar is entitled "Community Reinvestment Act Can the Law Help Me Get Money for My Community Development Project?" The webinar will take place on May 25.

[Click her for more information and to register.](#)

Second Lady Calley praises MCA volunteers at Capitol

Julie Calley addresses the crowd as keynote speaker at the 2016 Community Action awards.

Michigan's second lady, **Julie Calley**, praised MCA volunteers as "tireless advocates, change agents and unsung heroes" in her keynote address at the annual MCA Day at the Capitol and Community Action Awards ceremony April 28. The event kicked off May's Community Action Month, as it recognized contributions of volunteers and the achievements of agency clients. Rep. Tim Greimel was presented with the Legislator of the Year award.

"You are the connectors, the resource generators, those who provide shelter and mentoring," added Calley, who is an Ionia County commissioner and chair of the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) board. Calley thanked MCA volunteers for all that they do across the state to change peoples' lives. As an example, she mentioned the help in her hometown of Portland after a tornado last year. Volunteers from all over Michigan arrived to provide shelter and resources to the affected families.

"Our state would not be what it is today without you," Calley said.

Consumers Energy presented Michigan Community Action with \$293,000 in donations that employees and the company raised at more than 30 Walk for Warmth events across the state. The company matched each dollar that employees, family and friends raised for Walk for Warmth.

House Democratic Leader **Tim Greimel** (D-29) was named Legislator of the Year by Michigan Community Action for his continued support of his local Community Action Agency, Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA). Greimel was cited for his effort in the Walk for Warmth fundraiser,



Rep. Tim Greimel accepts the Legislator of the Year award

his assistance in OLHSA's attempt to find funding for blight removal and his frequent visits to the agency's Head Start classrooms and board meetings.

"Rep. Greimel understands how Community Action Agencies help individuals and families become more self-sufficient," noted MCA President John Stephenson. "We appreciate his support of the many MCA initiatives that help people with workforce training, education and quality-of-life programs."

The following volunteers received awards:

Dale Huggler was nominated by North East Michigan Community Service Agency (NEMCSA) for his 34 years of service on NEMCSA's board.

Mathew Dziadosz was recognized by Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency's (OLHSA) Pontiac Office for his dedication to the Early Childhood Services Department as a volunteer, especially his help with Walk for Warmth, after he joined to repay the help he received when he had health issues.

Stella Ingraham received an award for her 10 years of volunteering in Community Action's Foster Grandparent Program and more than 50 years of volunteering in the Homer school system.



Stella Ingraham shows off her Community Action award

Gary Cuthbert was nominated by Monroe Community Action for driving more than 500 hours last year to deliver food to pantries and shelters that helped contribute to Monroe County Opportunity Program's distribution of food in 2015.

The **Boys and Girls Club of Alpena-Youth Volunteer Corps** was recognized by North East Michigan Community Service Agency (NEMCSA) for logging more than 560 hours in 2014-2015 packing food boxes for distribution in the agency's Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

Five CAA clients were also recognized:

Christina Chevalier received an award by Blue Water Community Action (BWCA) for her volunteer efforts in the Head Start Policy Council and Board of Directors. She took agency classes such as "Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-By World," which led to her renovating a building and opening her own business.

Sara and Tim Enszer were nominated by Mid Michigan Community Action Agency (MMCAA) for enrolling two children suffering from cystic fibrosis in MMCAA's Early Head Start program, which included weekly home visits, speech and motor skills evaluations, emergency training and information on how to budget time and resources.

Ericka Filonczuk was nominated by the Monroe County Opportunity Program (MCOP) for her involvement in the agency's Individual Development Account (IDA), which helped her complete her associate degree and move out of subsidized housing into a home she purchased.

Francesann Lowery was nominated by Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency (WMCAA) for her involvement in the financial literacy training at the agency's Financial Empowerment Center, which resulted in her buying her own home and boosting her credit score to almost 800.

Silas and Marie Ormsbee were nominated by Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency (NMCAA) for their participation in the Individual Development Account's (IDA) matched savings program, which helped them move their family of seven from a house trailer to a Habitat for Humanity home.



The 2016 Community Action awards in the rotunda at the Capitol.

New NMCAA programs promote family savings

Two new programs from the Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency (NMCAA) are sparking interest among both adults and children to stash away some cash.

The agency's Nest Egg Savings Program and Early Bird Savings Club - each introduced early this year - are also designed to boost participants' financial literacy.

"Families have been really excited about both programs," said **Tish Garthe-Shiner**, financial management services and utility coordinator at NMCAA.

The Nest Egg Savings Program supplements the agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance tax preparation services by offering \$100 to households for every \$300 they save from their tax refunds.

"We've always asked our VITA folks to sign a pledge sheet promising to save \$300 of their refund," Garthe-Shiner said. "This year, we're matching each \$300 with \$100."

The ultimate goal is to help families build assets and emergency savings, she said.

The Early Bird Savings Club is meant to get kids interested in a savings account while providing families funding for school supplies and activities, such as band instruments or sports participation fees.

Children participating in the program receive \$50 from NMCAA and \$10 more from Chemical Bank. They also are provided an activity book that teaches about savings, Garthe-Shiner said.

Funding for NMCAA's contributions comes from the agency's Community Services Block Grant, a federal program that targets the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.

In addition to signing a pledge to use the funds according to program guidelines, a member of each participating household is required to attend one of NMCAA's Financial Capability Workshops, which cover various money management topics.

NMCAA is aiming to sign up 28 Nest Egg Savings Program participants and open 56 Early Bird Savings Club accounts, Garthe-Shiner said.

"We're hoping to fill all the slots by June," Garthe-Shiner

MCA execs to meet in Marquette

Date: June 6

UPCAN meeting:
9 AM until 11 AM

Finance Committee Meeting: 11
a.m. until Noon

Lunch: Noon until 1 p.m.

Directors Council: 1 p.m. until 3
p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting: 3
p.m. until 4 p.m.

Location: Holiday Inn of
Marquette

MCA Officers/Board Members 2015-2017

John Stephenson

President
Northwest Michigan CAA

Louis Piszker

Vice President
Wayne Metro CAA

Jill Sutton

Secretary Treasurer
Mid Michigan CAA

Toby Berry

At-Large Officer
Jackson CAA

Arthur Fenrick

Lower Peninsula Rural Officer
Southwestern Michigan CAA

Kerri Duff

Upper Peninsula Officer
Gogebic Ontonagon CAA

Charlotte Smith

Urban Officer
Kalamazoo County CAA

Bill Raymond

Director's Council Chair
Ottawa County CAA

Eric Schertzing

CAA Governing Board Officer
Capital Area Comm. Services

Caroline Ross

CAA Governing Board Officer
EightCAP

Catalyst welcomes input, story ideas

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:
[Click Here](#)

said. "If we do that, then we can continue the programs and expand on them."

To be eligible, households must have income that falls within 125 percent of the federal poverty level, which is around \$1,200 per person and \$2,500 a month for a family of four.

Shannon Wingfield was excited to take advantage of the opportunity this year. She participated in the Nest Egg program and enrolled her daughter, Mailee, 3, in the Early Bird Savings Club.

"I wanted her to experience this because she's 3 years old now, so she can finally start to understand," Wingfield told the Traverse City Record-Eagle newspaper. "I really think it's important nowadays for kids to learn early how to save and what things cost."

Deliverable home heating fuel available to mid-Michigan residents

In an effort to help local households prepare for next winter, Mid Michigan Community Action (MMCA) is offering deliverable home heating fuel to mid-Michigan residents.

"We are urging our neighbors to think proactively," says **Jill Sutton**, executive director of MMCA. "Right now, resources are available to replenish fuel sources. Ahead of next winter, MMCA wants to get residents prepared long before their fuel is depleted. Removing the urgency from the situation will make the transition from fall to winter less stressful for our neighbors."

Residents of Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Mecosta, Midland and Osceola counties can gain peace of mind that comes with being well-equipped for cold weather by applying for propane, fuel oil, wood, heating fuel pellets and other deliverable home heating fuels available through MMCA, the agency said.

Assistance is also available for those who were unable to pay metered utility bills during this past winter and have received shutoff notices.

"This service has a positive impact on so many people because it provides relief to low-income households that would otherwise struggle to pay for heating costs and keep their homes warm," said Abby Lowery, outreach services provider for MMCA.

During 2015, MMCA provided nearly \$2 million in emergency heat and utility services to more than 4,000 mid-Michigan residents.

Funding availability is limited and is subject to state of Michigan eligibility requirements. For more information, contact the nearest MMCA.

Turkish delegation visits Kalamazoo for cultural exchange on policy-making



From left to right: Emily Kalos, Colleagues International intern; Anthony Bradley, CATAB first vice chair; Zuhel Ekmez, Sorjajita Hulbert, CATAB member; Christina Hegwood, CATAB second vice chair; Faith Kaya, Cassandra Stewart, CATAB chair; Zafer Coktan, Jodi Michaels, Colleagues International; Ali Dincer, interpreter; Stephanie Moore, Kalamazoo County commissioner and CATAB member; and Charlotte J. Smith, director of Kalamazoo County CAA.

Delegates from Turkey visited Kalamazoo Community Action on March 23 to take part in a cultural exchange and learn more about policy-making at the federal, state and local levels, including civil and human rights legislation and efforts to include ethnic and religious minorities in decision-making. The delegation was made up of Chairman Zafer Coktan of the Keçioren District of Justice and Development Party, Co-Mayor Zuhel Ekmez of Suruc Municipality and Deputy Governor Faith Kaya of Erzincan Governorate. The meeting was organized by Colleagues International, a Kalamazoo-based organization that facilitates cultural exchanges for professional development and opportunities for international understanding.

MCA launches donation campaign to help Flint residents in water crisis

A donation page, *Give to the Flint Flexible Fund*, has been set up on the MCA website to donate to the Genesee County Community Action Resource Department (GCCARD), which is the member agency on the front line of the Flint water crisis. Donations to GCCARD will go toward supporting the continued efforts of the agency's work with the Flint water crisis.

"We're proud of the work GCCARD is doing in response to the Flint water crisis," says MCA Executive Director Kate White. "We know people would like to help with the effort, and this donation function is a way to reach people using our website to find out more about Community Action in Michigan."

[Click here to donate.](#)

Reminder: Take Catalyst newsletter reader survey

The *Catalyst* reader survey was re-sent to all *Catalyst* recipients on May 4. If you haven't responded, it will take only a minute or so and will give MCA feedback on the *Catalyst* newsletter. If you have already responded to the survey, MCA thanks you and appreciates your time. If you have not received the *Catalyst* reader survey, please [click here to access it](#).

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