

In This Issue:[MCA Summer Conference promotes best practices, education](#)[CAA programs benefit from Two Generation approach](#)[CAAs share new programs and services](#)[Child Nutrition Act may not help local kids](#)[College scholarships offered to CAA staff](#)[Weatherization Assistance Program 40 year anniversary](#)**Quick Links**[MCA Website](#)[Contact Us](#)[Legislative Priorities](#)[Member Services](#)**Follow MCA on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.**

We'd like you to become a "follower" of MCA. Keep up with news and events, media coverage and action alerts. Click on the links below to "follow" MCA today.

**MCA's Mission**

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

College scholarships offered to CAA staff

Community Action employees and their immediate family members now qualify for a \$3,000 new student scholarship and a 10 percent tuition discount thanks to a new partnership between MCA and Capella University.

"Our collaboration with Capella promotes accessible education among Community Action employees and their families," says MCA Executive Director Kate White. "Earning your degree, your way, on your own schedule is now a little bit more affordable."

Free professional development webinars, academic support, waived application fees and free transcript evaluations are also available.

Capella, a regionally and professionally accredited online university, offers a wide range of bachelor's, master's, MBA, PhD, and certificate programs using a competency-based curriculum rooted in real-world application. More than 163 degree and certificate programs are available at undergraduate and graduate levels, including:

- Human services, psychology, and counseling degrees
- Business degrees including, accounting, finance, MBA, and human resources degrees
- Information technology degrees
- Education degrees

[Click here](#) and enter contact information to obtain more information. Please use this link to register!

Weatherization Assistance Program marks 40 years of serving low-income families

Since the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) was established nearly 40 years ago, it has provided critical weatherization services to more than 7 million low-income families.

"As CAAs are planning their annual weatherization events in October, consider incorporating a celebration of the 40th anniversary of WAP," suggests Kate White, MCA executive director.

The value of both the energy and nonenergy benefits of WAP is estimated to be about \$1.8 billion. WAP was part of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, signed on Aug. 14, 1976, by President Gerald Ford. Title IV of the legislation established a weatherization program designed to increase the energy efficiency of dwellings of low-income people, reduce their total residential energy expenditures and improve their health and safety. The program is geared toward low-income people who are particularly vulnerable, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, families with children and households with high energy burdens.

MCA transitions to new membership management software

MCA has been searching for a new membership platform in order to enhance its communication networks. This month the organization will transition from Constant Contact to

MCA Summer Conference promotes best practices, education

MCA's Summer Conference was dedicated to fighting poverty in Michigan.

Community Action leaders gathered last month to participate in breakout educational sessions, network with peers and exchange best practice ideas during MCA's annual summer conference July 19-21 in Port Huron.

In addition to legislative updates, attendees gained insight on innovative program models, collaborative community development and leadership.

Improving "health equity" is the focus at Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, explained Susan Moran, senior deputy director of population health and community services.

"Health disparities exist when health outcomes are worse for some groups of people than for others," said Moran. "Michigan's goal is health equity -- when health disparities are eliminated and all individuals and families can live healthy lives and reach their fullest physical, mental and social potential."

Moran explained that Community Health Innovation Regions (CHIR), part of Michigan's State Innovation Model, can be a critical role for CAAs to fill. CHIRs create a governance process for local groups to improve coordination of service delivery, enhance the ability for cross-sector partnerships and reduce health risks within the community.

Optimizing leadership is critical to business success according to Greg Heres, president of communications company MAXIMIZE.

"If leaders expect people and things to change for them, they have to change first," said Heres. "If you want people to give their hearts and their talent, you can't be stiff."

He inspired leaders to engage with their teams and set a constructive workplace example through their actions.

Other conference speakers included James Redford, director of Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, and David Bradley, executive director of the National Community Action Foundation.

"MCA would like to thank our speakers, sponsors and guests for their participation in our 2016 Summer Conference and for their continued commitment to reducing poverty in Michigan," says MCA Executive Director Kate White. "Their knowledge and dedication will shape the next generation of Community Action Agency leadership and accomplishments. We're looking forward to another great conference next year at Crystal Mountain Resort."



LDI Grad, Members of the 4th Graduating Class of MCA's Leadership Development Institute pose with MCA President John Stephenson (left), facilitator Rebecca Kraus (third from left) and Executive Director Kate White (third from right).



Conference delegates show their appreciation for the career and service of Bill Raymond, executive director of Ottawa County CAA, who will retire at the end of the summer. Raymond has served as an MCA board member and chair of the Directors Council for the past three years.

CAA programs benefit from two-generation approach

Paige Teegarden, Garret County Community Action presents two-generation approach findings.

A single working mother struggled to provide and care for her developmentally delayed toddler but got help through a "two-generation" approach outlined by a Maryland Community Action Agency. The mother, who worked a retail night shift, enrolled in the program offered by Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC).

Poverty can threaten an entire family's stability, explained Paige Teegarden of GCCAC, who spoke at MCA's summer conference, putting the futures of both children and parents at risk.

The "two-gen" approach is defined as bringing together parent and child CAA resources that have already demonstrated results, addressing the needs of both children and parents together.

"A two-generation approach aligns the program goals of parents with the program goals of children," said Teegarden, vice president of strategic initiatives at GCCAC. "The resulting program must serve parents and children at the same time."

It offers services to parents and children in education, economic support and social capital. The programs may be more tailored to either a parent or child, but they must provide opportunities for the other generation.

"The approach suggests that children succeed when parents succeed and vice versa," Teegarden noted. "It changes how we help families in a holistic way."

Two-gen programs at Garrett County CAA have furthered parent education while improving mental and social skills of children. The toddler of the single mother is now on track developmentally, and the mother found a better job and parent support with the education and coaching the program offered.

"We want to give opportunities to all parts of the family," says Teegarden. "It's unfair to say that only a child has the potential for future success. The people participating in these programs must be viewed as creative, resourceful and whole. Rather than tell people to do things or try to change them, we should coach them and work with their resources."

CAAs share new programs and services

Argela Aaron Benfield of Wayne-Metro CAA presents a new program to summer conference attendees.

Community Action Agency members had the opportunity to present new services to MCA's Summer Conference attendees.

Wayne-Metro CAA: Vehicles for Change

MemberClicks, an all-in-one

membership management software.

"MCA is dedicated to supporting our members," says Kate White, executive director of MCA. "The new platform will empower members to get to know each other and will foster sharing and support as well as the exchange of information."

MemberClicks fulfills several services for small businesses, including automated membership application and renewals, event registration and a member engagement community. MCA will send its emails, newsletters and other communications through the network.

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

Community Action Agency

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

Directors 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](#)

Vehicles for Change provides Detroit families with newfound mobility.

"Not having reliable transportation is a barrier to success," said Angela Aaron-Benfield of Wayne-Metro CAA. "Without a car, household breadwinners struggle to get to their jobs on time while finding ways to access food, child care or health care."

Wayne-Metro CAA partnered with Vehicles for Change to help Detroit families get a car. Qualified families can receive a repaired, donated car with a six month warranty. The program also educates participants on the responsibilities of owning a car.

"Our program participants receive financial coaching and an orientation on car care," said Aaron-Benfield. "In addition, the car is given to them with a one year, low interest loan that's affordable for families to pay off. Once they do, not only is the car theirs, they've established good credit from paying off the loan."

According to Wayne-Metro's surveys, parents have had more time to take their children to after-school events thanks to their reduced commute times. Wayne-Metro plans to add to the program next year by partnering with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Feldman Automotive and Bell Tire to offer auto technician training.

Muskegon Oceana CAP: Fifth Third Financial Empowerment eBus

Muskegon Oceana CAP brings financial education directly to its community by collaborating with Fifth Third Bank. Financial empowerment eBuses travel through underserved communities to offer free health education, homebuyer and foreclosure prevention assistance, career exploration and credit reviews.

"People are able to walk on to the bus, sit down and immediately have information available to them," said MOCAP employee Todd Rasmussen. "There are computer stations wired throughout the bus."

In addition to computer information, the eBuses provide access to Fifth Third professionals, who are on-hand to discuss financial, housing and banking information. MOCAP coordinates eBus stops with communities and local non-profits.

OLHSA: Revive Pontiac

OLHSA's new program, Revive Pontiac, is all about tearing down and building up, OLHSA employee Tom Ferguson explained.

"There are some homes that can't be brought back from blight," said Ferguson. "Instead of tearing them down, which only adds to landfill waste, our team deconstructs the houses and salvages materials that are still in good condition."

Community members who can't find employment complete a 12-week certification course in blight removal, deconstruction and workplace safety. Then, the newly trained group visits condemned properties in the Pontiac area and deconstructs them, salvaging items like furniture, electrical fixtures and hardwood.

"Overall, only about 15 percent of the house will go to the landfill once it's deconstructed," said Ferguson. "More importantly, members of the deconstruction team have training and certification, which can lead to career opportunities in construction, business or other fields."

Efforts to train workers have expanded to carpentry, as the reclaimed wood can be made into high quality furniture. Soon, OLHSA will open a store in downtown Pontiac that will sell furniture and other goods made by the workers. An online version of the store will be coming soon as well.

For more information about Revive Pontiac, visit revivepontiac.org.

Child Nutrition Act may not help local kids

by Kate White, MCA Executive Director

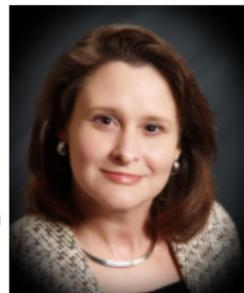
Originally published in the Lansing State Journal

Lawmakers concerned about children growing up in food-insecure households usually work to ensure they have access to healthy food at school. Proper nutrition is an important factor in school performance, so the changes to the Child Nutrition Act are puzzling.

A bill recently approved by a U.S. House of Representatives committee would actually hinder the ability of schools to provide healthy meals to low-income children. Michigan Community Action joins with other child-welfare organizations and health care advocates in opposing the so-called Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Todd Rokita, R-Indiana, was approved by the House Education Committee but has yet to pass the entire Republican-controlled House. We urge U.S. Rep. Mike Bishop and other members of Congress to let this measure die without a vote, so that Michigan County children do not lose out.

[Read full article here.](#)



Michigan Community Action
2173 Commons Parkway
Okemos, MI 48864
Phone: 517.321.7500
Fax: 517.321.7504
info@mcaaa.org