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## MCA's Mission

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

## Upcoming Events

"Understanding White Privilege" webinar Feb. 15

The webinar "Understanding White Privilege" will be held by Community Action Partnership on Feb. 15 from 2-3:30. The webinar is free.

"Structural Racism" webinar Feb. 22

The webinar "Structural Racism" will be held by Community Action Partnership on Feb. 22 from 2-3:30 p.m. The webinar is free.

"National Poverty Trends Session 6" webinar Feb. 28

The webinar "National Poverty Trends Session 6" will be held by Community Action Partnership on Feb. 28 from 1-2:30 p.m. The webinar is free, but [registration is required](#).

## Did you know?

The uphill climb to financial security is most daunting for low-income families, particularly those with a generational history of poverty. The greater asset building families achieve, the stronger the state and its communities will be – while reducing the burden on Michigan taxpayers.

Community Action Agencies' (CAAs) help low-income families become self-sufficient and financially secure. CAAs strive to provide state residents a path toward income security through services such as financial education, free tax preparation and home buyer education, foreclosure prevention and down payment assistance.

CAAs also step into the picture with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and services such as paying for utilities and preventing utility shutoffs, referrals for medical and mental health issues, homelessness prevention, food assistance and emergency housing/relocation assistance.

## 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 [here](#).

## MCA Officers/Board Members 2015-2017

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## EightCAP Inc. helps historic camp reach 50th year



Since its inception 50 years ago, Greenville Optimist Camp has become a collaborative community program

During a handful of summer weeks, the city of Greenville comes alive with the sounds of splashing water, crackling bonfires and laughter. With the help of EightCAP Inc., people ages 5 to 75 who come from at-risk homes or have special needs enjoy recreation and learning at the Greenville Optimist Camp.

Over its 50 year history, the camp has struggled to survive, but now a public/private partnership has helped continue the community institution.

The camp has become a collaborative project with the city of Greenville, which leases the camp to EightCAP, while the Greenville Optimist Club maintains its facilities and helps EightCAP with outreach efforts. In addition, a volunteer advisory board handles fundraising efforts, making sure there is enough money to run the program every year.

EightCAP Executive Director Dan Petersen says the partnerships it has developed as a result have strengthened its community organization relations.

"The community values all of its members and recognizes that there is an important cultural and socialization component to all of our lives. We really are happy to have a strong, supportive community with a camp that highlights activities for individuals with disabilities."



EightCAP provides financial aid for applicants who can't pay the camping fee

EightCAP also serves as the camp's fiduciary, handling its finances to guarantee as many people as possible can participate. It can sometimes be challenging, says Petersen, since many campers can't afford to pay the \$20 registration fee, let alone the \$250 it costs per camper.

"Often \$20 is a hardship for campers so we waive even that. That's really where the Community Action aspect of the program comes in, ensuring everybody, no matter what hand they were dealt, is able to enjoy the high quality of life amenities that our communities have to offer."

A lean budget of \$72,000 a year covers counselors, training, camp personnel as well as food and other supplies. The camp is funded entirely by local contributions, and donations from sources like United Way and the Greenville Area Community Foundation have helped make continued sessions possible.

"Our ultimate goal would be to fill an endowment where we don't have to worry about fundraising every year," Petersen explains. "Some endowments are already set up for the camp, so donors are putting money where they feel there's a gap in the community."

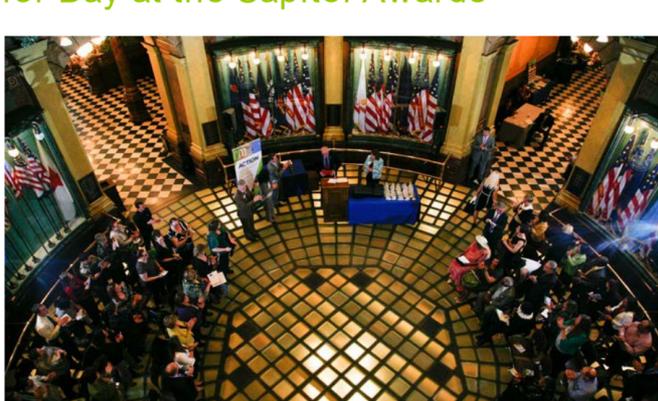
"The collaboration between EightCAP and the Greenville community shows what can happen when organizations share resources and leaders are determined to keep a good program going," says Sen. Judy Emmons (R-Sheridan). "This is a remarkable partnership and the leaders are committed for all the right reasons."

Campers stay in rustic-style tents and participate in recreational activities like hiking, swimming and nature studies while interacting with their peers and forming new friendships. Camp staff members complete basic medical training and more specific training for working with individuals with disabilities.

Petersen says the camp is a gem of a resource to the community.

"It helps individuals who are low-income to appreciate the natural resources around them, to learn activities and gain something they can take back and share with friends outside of camp. For the adult campers especially, it's one of the highlights of their year. The success is really the smiles on their faces."

## MCA accepting nominations for Day at the Capitol Awards



MCA is accepting nominations for Community Action Awards now

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) may recognize outstanding volunteers and program participants with a Community Action Award at the annual Day at the Capitol event on May 9. Michigan Community Action is currently accepting nomination forms now until Tuesday, March 28.

An ad hoc task force of the MCA Training Committee will review all nominations received by the March 28 deadline and will select five nominees from each category to receive an award. Individual award winners will receive a \$100 gift card in addition to an inscribed trophy and recognition in the event program. Collective award winners, such as the staff of a food bank or a health clinic, will receive one \$100 gift card.

Nomination forms will be available for download at [www.micommunityaction.org](http://www.micommunityaction.org) under "2017 Community Action Awards". For a list of criteria to guide the nomination process, please visit MCA's website.

## Social media requires strategic communication tactics

In an age of "instant" – news, meals and gratification, to name a few – social media has emerged as the current platform for today's quick-paced populace. When used appropriately, social media can be incorporated into an organization's communication plans to enhance its strategic goals.

For any organization looking to impact a wider range of people, social media offers the entirety of the internet as a sounding board. Companies that post engaging information on social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram update followers and attract new ones at the same time.

Social media continues to expand on mobile and web-based platforms, creating new opportunities to connect with potential clients, donors and partners. Due to its popularity, social media helps promote an organization's image. People are equally as likely to look at an organization's social media accounts as they are its web page in order to learn about the organization and potential business opportunities. In addition, visits to social media pages increase not only follower numbers but traffic on an organization's website.

With a multitude of different platforms available and an audience of billions, organizations need specific communication tactics in order to stand out. Posting updates without a target goal (more followers, support for a cause, etc.) is the internet equivalent of shouting into the void.

Understand the limits of a particular social media platform. Some platforms, like Facebook, offer unlimited space to post and discuss information while others require brevity. When posting general updates, simultaneously update all social media channels to create consistent messaging and keep accounts active online. Since posting space on social media varies, it may be necessary to edit posts to fit each platform while retaining the important elements of the original message.

Engaged organizations contribute worthwhile information and become leaders in discussions. Identify specific audiences and target them with well-tailored posts. For example, if an organization wants to post about blocking federal legislation, it should find public discussion forums or other organizations with similar goals to engage.

Most importantly, remember that social media is more about conversations than it is about advertising goods or services. An organization will leave a greater impact if it engages users in a discussion that inspires them to join its cause.