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**MCA's Mission**

To strengthen and inspire Community Action Agencies to champion solutions to poverty and to promote economic opportunity.

**Announcements**

**MCA Requests Audit RFP for Fiscal Audit**

MCA is requesting Audit RFP for fiscal audit. To view the PDF for more details, [click here.](#)

**Upcoming MCA Webinar: Rural Home Ownership Collaboration**

Is your CAA interested in creating or expanding a home ownership program in a rural part of Michigan? Find out more [here.](#)

For a full list of announcements, [visit MCA's website.](#)

**Upcoming Events**

**CAPLAW National Training Conference, June 20-22, Albuquerque NM - for details [click here.](#)**

**MCA Summer Conference, July 10-12, Crystal Mountain Resort - for details [click here.](#)**

**Community Action Partnership Annual Convention, August 28-31, Denver CO- for details [click here.](#)**

For a full list of events, visit [MCA's calendar.](#)

**Did you know?**

Helping a parent learn how to create a family budget through **Community Action financial literacy programs** can pay dividends that last for years. Setting realistic financial goals and a savings plan helps move families from renters to homeowners. More homeownership is shown to create more stable and healthier neighborhoods, with stronger tax bases for even more community development.

**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?

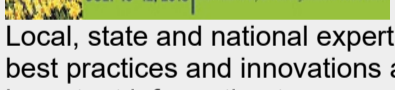
We welcome your input and feedback. Please send your comments and ideas [here.](#)

**MCA Officers/Board Members 2017-2019**

- Jill Sutton**  
President  
Mid Michigan CAA
- Louis Piszker**  
Vice President  
Wayne Metro CAA
- Michelle Williamson**  
Secretary Treasurer  
Community Action
- Toby Berry**  
Urban Officer  
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- Art Fenrick**  
Lower Peninsula Rural Officer  
Southwest Michigan CAA
- Melinda Johnson**  
At-Large Officer  
Blue Water Community Action
- Doug McFadden**  
CAA Governing Board Officer  
EightCAP
- Matt Purcell**  
Directors Council Chair  
GCCARD
- Eric Schertzing**  
CAA Governing Board Officer  
Capital Area Comm. Services

**Register for 2018**

**Summer Conference**



Local, state and national experts will present best practices and innovations and share important information to prepare the network for the future at the annual Michigan Community Action Summer Conference, July 10-12 at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, MI. The conference offers workshops for frontline staff, managers, directors, and board members. Conference registration is now open and our draft schedule is available for review on the MCA website: <https://mca.memberclicks.net/annual-conference-1>

**MemberClicks Update**



Keeping your MCA profile up-to-date in MemberClicks helps us in our advocacy efforts. With so many critical issues in play this spring, we need to be able to connect with members quickly and keep you informed. Legislators are often interested in how many people work in Community Action and how many jobs our network supports. Visit the <https://mca.memberclicks.net/> to make sure your profile is current. Thank you for your assistance.

**Legislator, volunteers lauded at MCA Day at Capitol**



State Rep. Hank Vaupel accepting the 2018 Legislator of the Year Award.

A legislator who walked to help raise funds for heat assistance praised Community Action staff and volunteers at Michigan Community Action's Annual Awards Day at the Capitol May 3rd.

**Rep. Hank Vaupel** (R-Livingston County) accepted the Legislator of the Year award for his efforts with Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA) and its annual Walk for Warmth, which helps raise thousands of dollars for utility payments for those in need through cold winter months.

"You are the real heroes for the work you do," Vaupel said to the standing room only gathering inside the Capitol rotunda.

MCA agencies recognized their volunteers who contribute time and talents to extend the impact of staff work and state programs. Those honored included:

**Starr Albion Prep Sequel Youth Services** (Nominated by Community Action-Battle Creek)  
 Students at Starr Albion Prep, a residential educational facility, helped load food boxes for seniors and others in need. Staff members estimate that the group provided more than 1,500 volunteer hours.

**Nelly Lara** (Nominated by Ottawa County CAA)  
 Lara delivers meals to residents who are homebound or have transportation challenges, and prepares lunches for a group of county prisoners who volunteer to pack food boxes for seniors in the agency's Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

**Diane Tackett** (Nominated by Monroe County Opportunity Program)  
 Since her retirement from Monroe County Opportunity Program in 2012, Tackett devotes time to the Volunteer Caregiver Program, where she visits senior caregivers in their homes. She also delivers Christmas baskets with healthy meals to seniors. It's all part of her goal of 50 years of service to Monroe County seniors.

**Gretchen Wilbur** (Nominated by Mid Michigan CAA)

Wilbur has served Mid Michigan CAA for the past five years with the agency's volunteer tax assistance program. As site coordinator, she provided more than 2,500 hours recruiting and training volunteers who help clients complete their state and federal tax returns. Over the years, her site helped prepare more than 3,000 returns which brought clients more than \$2.5 million in refunds and credits.

**Larry Winter** (Nominated by Northwest Michigan CAA)  
 Winter has volunteered for the last seven years with NMCAA's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site. During a typical tax season, he'll help complete more than 400 returns. His experience has enabled him to take on some complicated tax situations and to help train others with his experiences.

MCA gave special recognition to John Stephenson, executive director of Northwest MI CAA, who plans to retire this summer after serving in that position since 2002. He began his career with NMCAA with the expansion of Head Start programs in 1978 and served on the MCA board of directors for many years, including as association president from 2013-2017.



MCA President Jill Sutton presents John Stephenson with a plaque congratulating him on his upcoming retirement as executive director of Northwest Michigan CAA.

"I can't believe it's been that long. You can say that time flies when you are having fun or when you really believe in what you do," said Stephenson. "It's been a privilege to work with all of you."

Jill Sutton, MCA president and Mid Michigan Community Action Agency executive director, thanked Stephenson, her "friend and mentor." She added, "He has taught us well, giving us a voice and encouraging us to be passionate about what we do."

The awards program also spotlighted program participants, including employment training for a single parent which allowed her to move from joblessness into full-time work through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Residential Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency Program, assistance and support for a youth at risk of running away through the Runaway Youth and Engagement Program, and home improvements that led to reduced water bills and improved financial literacy through the Water Residential Assistance Program.



Sunny Woods (center) was a client award winner for his achievement on becoming a homeowner. With him are (L-R) MCA executive director Kate White, MDHHS director Nick Lyon, Kim Smith Oldham and Art Fenrick of nominating agency Southwest Michigan CAA.

**May is Community Action Month**



The individual face of poverty in Michigan is likely that of a child or a senior citizen, which propels the work of Michigan's Community Action Agencies every day and during Community Action Month in May.

Governor Snyder has officially proclaimed May as Community Action Month in Michigan. Michigan's State Senate has issued a similar citation as part of MCA's Day at the Capitol on May 3.

Community Action Month provides an opportunity to

promote the 29 Michigan CAAs that work to improve the lives and communities of low income families through programs and services that address affordable housing, access to food and health care, early childhood development, and services to seniors and veterans who are experiencing economic distress. "Each year during National Community Action month, we highlight the work of our agencies which help build the self-sufficiency of families and strength of communities," says MCA Executive Director **Kate White**. "Our network of resources provides the tools to help overcome the circumstances of poverty."

Nationally, the Community Action Partnership, America's Poverty Fighting Network, represents more than 1,000 agencies. To get the word out about the work CAAs are doing, the Partnership is encouraging social media engagement using hashtags #CommunityActionWorks and #WeR1000Strong throughout the month of May.

**Summer conference features co-author of "\$2 a Day"**



H. Luke Shaefer, Ph.D., nationally renowned co-author of the book "\$2 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America" will speak at the Community Action Annual Summer Conference, July 10-12 in Thompsonville.

Shaefer, director of Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan, found that millions of Americans live on less than \$2 a day.

"Dr. Shaefer's research expands on what we know to be true – that people struggle, and we have important work to do," says Kate White, MCA executive director. "We are honored to have noted experts speak on such relevant topics."

Shaefer's book, co-authored with Kathryn J. Edin, revealed that nearly 1.5 million American households subsist on meager incomes. This number has doubled since 1996, the same year that a major welfare reform bill was passed.

The book was named one of the 100 Notable Books of 2015 by The New York Times Book Review and won the Hillman Prize for Book Journalism.

Shaefer serves as associate professor at the UM's School of Social Work and associate professor at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. His presentation at the Community Action Conference will take place over breakfast on Thursday, July 12.

The conference agenda also includes:

- CAA board roles and responsibilities
- Human resources and financial management
- FACSPRO and technology
- Weatherization Assistance Program management
- Marketing and communications
- A series of Best Practices presentations on model agency programs
- Head Start Directors Meeting, July 8 -10
- CAA Executive Directors Dinner on July 9.

MCA members will attend along with members of the Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity.

To register, use the link here: <https://mca.memberclicks.net>. A full agenda is available on the website.

**Planned senior housing project is public/private partnership**



A public-private collaboration in western Marquette County will create more affordable housing for seniors, help boost the local economy, and is being spearheaded by Community Action Alger Marquette (CAAM).

"The Jasperlite Senior Housing development is part of a much broader strategy aimed at accessing funding mechanisms to stabilize the local economy and revitalize a key community in western Marquette County," says Michelle LaJoie, Community Action Alger-Marquette executive director. "We are happy to be part of the effort and thank MSHDA, Marquette County and the City of Ishpeming for working with us to make the project possible."

The six-building development will include 36 residential housing units for senior citizens 55 years and older, as well as a community center designed to incorporate green spaces and other open space that may be used for a community garden or farmer's market.

Nearly \$700,000 in low income housing tax credits from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) will finance the site's construction. The project could garner about \$6 million over a decade, according to a formula on the MSHDA website.

"Several million dollars will flow into the local community in the form of engineering services, construction wages, materials and retail as workers will be spending several months on site and in close proximity to downtown," says LaJoie.

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- Professional Development Webinars
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