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## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

NCCAA holds community-wide picnic in recognition of 50th anniversary

By **JESSICA O'BRIEN**  
 Staff Writer

MICHIGAN CITY — In 1966, the North Central Community Action Agency formed — evolving from the Michigan City Fair Housing Committee which was established to address housing discrimination in the city.

Now, 50 years later, the NCCAA provides energy assistance, weatherization, a senior congregate feeding program, before and after school youth

programs, rental assistance and more to La Porte, Starke, Pulaski, Newton, Porter and Jasper counties.

And on Saturday, a community-wide picnic and festival was held to celebrate these many decades of serving this population.

Cynthia Davis, executive director of the NCCAA, said she has been around for much of the organization's 50-year history. She worked for the organization for 16 years, served as a board member for 10 years and has been director for the past eight years.

When asked about the impact the NCCAA has had on the community over the past 50 years, Davis recalled a time when the NCCAA took part in a

community softball league with teams coming from the city's east side, west side, Harborside Homes, Lakeland Estates and more.

She mentioned community leaders of today like Councilman Bryant Dabney and Michigan Township Trustee Rodney Washington. Both of these men, she said, took part in these types of programs offered by the North Central Community Action Agency.

"Being involved in a neighborhood center had an impact in their lives and I hope we had a small part in that," she said.

During Saturday's celebration, NCCAA recognized NIPSCO as one of its top community

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Photo by Jessica O'Brien

The North Central Community Action Agency marked its 50th anniversary on Saturday with a community-wide picnic and festival. Pictured at the celebration, from left, are NCCAA Executive Director Cynthia Davis, 8-year-old Arionna Smith and NCCAA Board President Willie Milsap.



Photo by Jessica O'Brien

During a 50th anniversary celebration of the North Central Community Action Agency, Sgt. Chris Yagelski of the Michigan City Police Department plays basketball with 1-year-old Zyr Dawson.

### 50 YEARS

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partners by presenting the company with the Hazel Thomas Community Action Award.

Named for longtime board member Hazel Thomas, Davis said this award acknowledges the way NIPSCO goes above and beyond for the community.

"NIPSCO is always there for us when we have different programs and need funds. They are always available," Davis said, adding that the most recent contribution from NIPSCO was a \$25,000 donation for weatherization.

The 50th anniversary

celebration, which was sponsored by Horizon Bank, Swanson Center, The Inspector and more, offered a variety of family-friendly fun like face painting, a balloon artist, games and food.

Twenty-five bicycles were raffled off during the event, courtesy of the Michigan City Police Department. Chief Mark Swistek, who is on the NCCAA board, said some of the bikes were donated by Walmart and others came refurbished from the department's unclaimed bike stock.

The Michigan City Fire Department also attended the celebration, bringing along a fire truck for some educational entertainment.