2015



Everyday Heroes





When we think of heroes in America, we tend to think big.

We think of superheroes, who use their super-powers and their super wits to fight evil. We think of action-movie heroes, who brave explosions and car chases to bring bad guys to justice. We think of firefighters and police officers, who run into danger when others are running away. Or we think of military heroes on a battlefield, who risk, and, all too often, sacrifice their lives for freedom, or democracy, or country.

So while it's good that we honor the heroes who fight the great battles for justice and freedom, it's important that we remember the words of Henry Ward Beecher — who was, himself, a heroic voice for social justice. He wrote: "The world's battlefields have been in the heart, chiefly; more heroism has been displayed in the household ... than on the most memorable battlefields in history."

We're here tonight to honor people who have displayed that heroism. Some of those battlefields have been in their own hearts — as they have struggled to find the strength, the courage and the endurance to overcome the challenges that life dealt them. Others have endeavored to change the hearts of others — as advocates for the care, dignity and rights of others. And others have demonstrated their heroism simply by going beyond what's expected, beyond what's "good enough"... only because that's the kind of people they are.

That is the kind of heroism that Beecher was talking about. That is the kind of heroism we are here to honor tonight ... as we celebrate people who have triumphed over adversity, people who have helped others face challenges, and people who have worked tirelessly, often behind the scenes, to make our community a safer, healthier, kinder, better place.

Thank you for being here tonight as we honor our 2015 Everyday Heroes.

Sandra M. Lindsey

CEO, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority

Everyday Heroes Program

6:30 p.m. Welcome, Sandra Lindsey, SCCMHA CEO

6:45 p.m. Introduction of Dignitaries

Introduction of SCCMHA Board

of Directors

6:50 p.m. Introduction of Julie Battle, Emcee

6:55 p.m. Invocation, Reverend Doug Leffler

7:00 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Everyday Hero Recognition

Carl Booker Sparkles Dickson Nicholas Fowler Yvette Gonzales

Irene Gray

Monique Latimore Michael McGovern

Annette Sian Brion Younk

8:00 p.m. Agnes Rambo Quality of Life Award

Saginaw Meadows Crisis Residential Unit

Bernice Barlow Community Partnership Award

Michigan Public Health Institute

Improving Practices Champion Award

Ruth Frais, LLPC, CACD

Rapson Living the American

Dream Award

Warren "Ben" & Sue Leonard

Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy and Family Support Award

Judith Taylor, Ph.D.

Special Hero Recognition

Jean Colby & therapy dogs

Sgt. Gary Fitzmaurice

Julie McCulloch

Kathleen Meyer

PALSS (Peers are Linked for Social

Success) of Freeland Schools

Sharon Patton

Officer Doug Stacer

Susan Smith, Judge Boes &

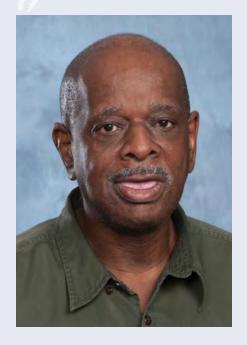
Judge Borchard

Temple Theatre (Tanya Blehm,

Tom McGarrity, Mike Bacigalupo)

Lynn White

8:45 p.m. Dancing & Entertainment, TCT



Carl Booker

Carl Booker has spent more than half of his 68 years participating at SVRC Industries, Inc. and donating his time to Meals on Wheels. Carl truly gives with his whole heart, improving the lives of people who can't leave home in his community by greeting them with warmth, understanding and genuine friendship while he makes sure they receive hot meals for dinner.

Carl's kind and generous spirit was first noted in 1983, when a psychological examiner observed that Carl was "...friendly and chatty, and greeted me in a friendly and familiar manner, despite the fact that it was our first contact." Everyone who knows Carl will tell you this description fits him perfectly. Even if he doesn't know you yet, he'll treat you as if you were a lifelong friend, and he'll be happy to sit with you and hold a conversation all day.

Carl approaches his volunteer work with the same purpose, warmth and enthusiasm. Despite his age and his health issues, Carl strives to do every task to the best of his ability. His accomplishments may not be well-known or even noticed by the world at large, but for the individuals that have been receiving meals from him for years, he is a hero. He truly enjoys helping, and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

Carl has said many times: "I love my life and I am very blessed."
But it's we who are blessed to know and love Carl. If more people took the time to slow down, make the time to listen and truly care about how the other person's day was going — in short, if more people were like Carl Booker — the world would be a better place.

Carl slows down and makes that time to touch the lives of everyone he meets. His years of giving to the community, his warm and compassionate heart and his inspirational attitude are what make him an Everyday Hero.

Sparkles Dickson is a shining example of what you can accomplish when you believe strongly in what you want from life and when you never, ever give up on yourself.

When Sparkles began working with SCCMHA Supported Employment Services, she had some challenges facing her. She'd been incarcerated in the past and had experienced negative contact with the court system. She did not have a high school diploma or GED. But she did have a fierce desire to improve her life — and the drive to work hard and make things happen.

When she heard about a possible job opportunity at the Temple Theatre in Saginaw, Sparkles applied without hesitation. She was invited to interview and, in October, received a job as a part-time usher. Since then, she has been an exemplary employee who is well-liked by her employer. (She's also known for being a sharp dresser.)

"Having a job like this makes me feel great about myself," says Sparkles. Her favorite part of the job, besides greeting and seeing a variety of different people, is being able to take her two children to performances.

"We get the chance to see shows I didn't even know about," she says.

Sparkles has seen other successes in her life. After living in an Adult Foster Care (AFC) home for a year, she proved she was ready for Semi-Independent Living (SIP). Six months later, she moved into her own apartment where she is independent of assistance. Sparkles is also participating in the Mental Health Court program, and will be graduating within the next few months.

"Things are going so well," says Sparkles. She is thankful for all the opportunities SCCMHA has helped her find. "They've helped me accomplish great things."

For Sparkles, every day is a chance to better herself. She's actively looking for additional employment to supplement her income, and one day wants to become a licensed beautician and own her own salon. In her spare time, she enjoys doing hair and spending time with her two-year-old daughter and twelve-year-old son.

We thank Sparkles for her strong spirit, her incredible determination and her positive attitude. She truly "Sparkles" inside and out, and her willingness to chase her dreams and make every day count make her an Everyday Hero.



Sparkles Dickson



Nicholas Fowler

Fourteen-year-old Nick Fowler loves the Smurfs, monster trucks and his collection of Matchbox cars. He wants to be a movie director when he grows up, and is always excited to go on an adventure. He is caring, thoughtful, and, according to his mother, Sharon Fowler, a "big teddy bear" and "the biggest blessing in my life."

Diagnosed with schizophrenia, Nick began receiving services through SCCMHA in 2010. Prior to that, he had acted out violently towards his family and those around him, and spent time receiving psychiatric services at the Hawthorn Center. Nick had a long road ahead of him, but his mother knew he possessed the potential to succeed. The staff of SCCMHA knew it too.

Nick was assigned a wraparound team, which is a group comprised of a child, his or her family and team members determined by the family, often representing multiple agencies and informal supports. Nick's team was able to research and find coordinated services to help him and his mother get the support they needed in order for Nick to live his very best life.

Since being involved with the wraparound team and the approach/support they provide, Nick has not had any extended hospitalizations.

"I appreciate his staff so much," Sharon says. "They're training Nick in daily living skills and giving him the tools he needs so he can be as independent as possible. I wouldn't be able to do what I do without them."

Through hard work and his team's dedication, Nick has made great strides. He's active in the community, he has positive days at school and enjoys family outings. He has a bright and shining future ahead of him.

"I'm so proud of him," says Sharon.

We salute Nick, for believing in himself and for his hard work. Like his mom, we are proud of all he has accomplished and all that he will accomplish in the future. In the movie of Nick's life, he is definitely the star, and an Everyday Hero to all of us.

If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. That expression has never been more true than when describing the path of Yvette Gonzales.

Yvette first became a Bayside Lodge Clubhouse member when she was living in an Adult Foster Care (AFC) home. Her initial goals were to develop her independent living skills so she could move back home with her husband. and to be able to visit her mother and sister more often. However, at the time, Yvette did not have a strong sense of self-confidence. Because of this, she didn't fully participate in Clubhouse activities and functions that would have helped her develop the skills she needed to achieve her goals. Within a year, she had become inactive at the Clubhouse.

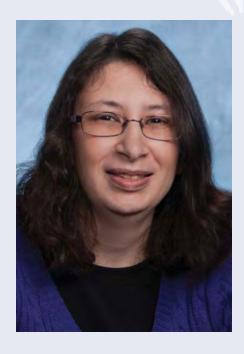
Then, Yvette decided to try again. She re-activated her membership at Bayside and dug deep to find the confidence she needed to participate fully in Clubhouse activities. Yvette began working in the Kitchen Unit, learning how to cook, clean and do laundry. As she participated more and more, her self-confidence grew by leaps and bounds.

Then came her most difficult test to date: Yvette's husband decided he wanted a divorce. Although this news was shocking, Yvette made a promise to herself: she would choose to not let her husband's decision derail her personal progress and recovery.

So Yvette forged ahead and has seen success upon success. In the past year, Yvette has moved into a Semi-Independent Living (SIP) home, and has completed a full semester at Delta College with plans to return this fall. And she continues to be an active, participating member at Bayside. Today, she's focusing on developing her employment skills so that she can soon find a job.

"I'm doing better and better every day," says Yvette. "I've come a long way to get myself together, and I feel very good now."

Yvette is exemplary of everything we can accomplish when we believe in ourselves. Her grace when faced with obstacles, her confidence in herself and her dedication to achieving her goals make her an Everyday Hero.



Yvette Gonzales



Irene Gray

The universe helps those who help themselves, and no one knows that better than Irene Gray.

At one point, Irene found herself very close to being evicted from her apartment. She was struggling with depression and found that life was completely overwhelming. Fortunately, Irene knew she needed help, so she reached out. With the help of her Training and Treatment Innovations (TTI) case manager — and her own self-determination — Irene asked for and received community living supports in order to take more control over her future.

And take control she has! She's an incredible self-advocate, and has completely embraced the philosophy of being the employer of her support staff. Thanks to the support she has received, Irene has maintained her housing (with A+ landlord inspections, we might add), and she's become her own payee so she can manage her own money.

She's also gone back to school, and once she finishes her GED, she plans on taking computer classes. She currently works at Goodwill, and is working towards getting a job at TTI in the janitorial department. In time, she hopes to become a peer support specialist for SCCMHA.

What makes Irene so successful is that she is incredibly driven and isn't afraid to ask for help. For example, when Irene started going back to school, she asked for an increase in her CLS hours, because she knew she would need the additional support to help her be successful.

Her success has inspired her to help others succeed as well. Once a week, she leads an Emotions Anonymous group of about fifteen people at Friends for Recovery Center, where she was recently elected to the board.

"I'm grateful for the support I've received and I'm proud of the accomplishments I've made so far," says Irene. "I can't wait to see where things go in the future."

We applaud Irene for always reaching for her potential, for inspiring others to be their best selves and for her courage in asking for the help she needs in order to soar high. She is an Everyday Hero because she demands the best from herself — and she achieves it.

A stellar worker. A kind spirit. An amazing young woman. These are all phrases that come up time and time again when describing Monique Latimore. A deeper look at each of these phrases only serves to paint a clearer portrait of a remarkable Everyday Hero.

A stellar worker. Everyone who has ever worked with Monique has praised her work ethic, her professional demeanor and her beautiful, catching smile. She works two days a week at SVRC Industries, Inc., where she's a dedicated employee who does quality work. Monique also works in the Administration Unit of the Bayside Lodge Clubhouse, learning the skills she needs to apply for a transitional employment position. It's Monique's dream to someday work in a hospital or healthcare setting.

A kind spirit. Monique has a big heart, and her daily life is filled with acts of caring and generosity. She lives with and assists her grandparents, Vera and Joe Jackson, by cleaning their home and helping her grandmother put away groceries. Monique's assistance allows her grandparents to continue living in their own home. Monique is also an active and passionate member of

Truvine Baptist Church, and she's also taken on a role as mentor and role model to fellow consumers who are working to become their very best selves.

An amazing young woman.

Monique's dedication, hard work and belief in herself have enabled her to overcome depression and be an advocate for herself. Her confidence level has soared, and she is known to all as a strong, caring, funny individual whose laughter and sense of humor are infectious. Not only is Monique always willing to try something new in order to stretch herself and reach her full potential, she is there to show care and concern for other members who may be going through a rough time.

"I'm happy and excited,"
Monique says. "I'm getting over
my shyness and I talk more now.
I've worked very hard to be where
I am, and I will continue to work
hard to be even more successful
in the future."

Monique deserves recognition for her good heart, her incredible work ethic and her belief in her potential as a worker and as a person. For all the things that she does and all the things that she is, Monique is truly an Everyday Hero.



Monique Latimore



Michael McGovern

"How can I help you today?"

If you're lucky enough to be one of Michael's co-workers these are probably the first words you hear when he arrives to work each morning at Training and Treatment Innovations (TTI).

For the past three years, Michael has worked at TTI as a Certified Peer Support Specialist. He's an invaluable — and incredibly busy — addition to the team. He co-facilitates TTI's Family Psychoeducation and Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment groups, and he and a co-worker are in the process of implementing the Whole Health Action Management (WHAM) group at TTI. As thanks for everything he does and continues to do, Michael received the Peer Support Specialist of the Year Award from TTI in 2013.

As a consumer himself, Michael enjoys being able to use his own recovery story to inspire and support, and finds great joy in hearing the recovery stories of other consumers.

"I'm incredibly passionate about being a peer," says Michael. "By sharing my own story, I hope to show others that there's hope for recovery, any time and any way, if they're willing to put their minds to it." Michael also helps consumers have more active lifestyles. He'll work one-on-one with individuals to help meet their health goals, whether they want to lose weight or just get out in the community. One consumer's desire was to just get out and see helicopters and planes, so Michael takes him to MBS International airport to watch the planes, or they drive to St. Mary's Medical Center to watch technicians work on the FlightCare helicopter.

Outside of work, Michael and his wife are very active volunteers. During the football season, Michael is an usher at the football stadium at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend. For the last nine years, he and his wife have been a host family to the Saginaw Spirit hockey team, enabling Michael to promote his recovery story to the young hockey players and inspire them to reach their own dreams.

We thank Michael for his drive, his passion, his energy and his ability to gain the trust and respect of everyone he meets. His unquestionable commitment to helping consumers grow and thrive is why he is an Everyday Hero.

Today, thanks to the help she's received from her advocates, supporters and — most importantly — herself, Annette Sian is living her very best life possible.

Annette has struggled for years with mental illness and substance use disorder. Because of this, she has a long history with the mental health system and has had her share of troubles with the legal system. She has spent time in correctional facilities and has been institutionalized.

But it's in these hard times that Annette found the strength and help she needed. She completed her court-ordered community service, and in July of last year, graduated successfully from the mandated Mental Health Court program.

These successes have been the building blocks that have enabled Annette to continue to make strides to improve her life. Today, she's living in a Semi-Independent Placement (SIP) home near SCCMHA, and she plans to soon move into independent living.

It's safe to say that Annette has turned her life around and is recovering from her dual diagnosis. Her case manager, Angela Lonsway, couldn't be more proud of Annette's recovery, and says that Annette is feeling great and is doing better than ever.

Annette is proud that she's learned from her past and has gained valuable insight into her illness. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, is an active member at Bayside Lodge Clubhouse and is a core member of the Dual Recovery Anonymous Group.

Annette continues to take her medications every day, and even recognizes when she needs a little extra help — like when she knew it was time to return to the Co-occurring Disorders Group in order to maintain her recovery. And every day, Annette works toward the goals she's set for herself. She is truly an inspiration for her friends, family and others who are going through their own recoveries.

Annette has given herself the chance to fully experience life. Her belief in herself and her courage to chase her dreams are why, today, we name her as one of our Everyday Heroes.



Annette Sian



Brion Younk

Brion Younk is, in a word, impressive. He's a graduate of Michigan State University, where he played in the marching band (he even went to a bowl game in Hawaii). And he's been a top sales representative at a large tech company.

Brion Younk is also, in another word, inspiring. When his father was diagnosed with a potentially terminal illness, Brion became his caretaker. And as an SCCMHA consumer himself, Brion uses his personal experience to encourage and show others that mental illness will not block you from living a successful and exciting life.

In his current job at the SCCMHA Salter Place Housing Resource Center, Brion helps people who are homeless successfully find housing. His co-workers say that Brion is incredibly skilled at making everyone who meets with him feel important. He takes the time to be present and really listen to what consumers have to say. He also makes sure that they

always have choices when it comes to living their best lives. Although he will always present a variety of housing options, he listens to the consumers' opinions and ideas, which allows them to take an even more active role in their recovery.

Since he's a consumer himself, Brion is able to use his personal experiences to motivate others. As a Certified Peer Support Specialist, when asked, he shares his story with others to show them that recovery is possible.

The housing assistance that Brion gives as a service provider allows consumers the opportunity to succeed. But it's his caring heart that gives them a reason to dream.

We appreciate Brion's efforts to help others soar high. He encourages, inspires and brings joy to the lives of everyone he meets, and that's why we are proud to name him an Everyday Hero.

Agnes Rambo Quality of Life Award

A crisis is defined as a time of intense difficulty, trouble or danger. At Saginaw Meadows Crisis Residential Unit (CRU), consumers are able to rise above crisis-like situations thanks to exemplary services and passionate, dedicated care.

Saginaw Meadows CRU is the only program of its kind in Saginaw County. It's a short-term licensed specialized residential adult foster care home with staff specifically trained to focus on impeccable, individualized service — creating a homelike atmosphere for those in crisis.

Because of its smaller size, staff members are able to tailor healthcare services to meet each consumer's changing needs. Everything from group didactics, case management, nursing services and counseling services are developed with the specific individual in mind; it's never a cookie-cutter solution. A Certified Peer Support Specialist is also on-staff to assist with goal-setting and to be an advocate.

CRU promotes individual and community health as part of a holistic treatment program, and they encourage consumers to walk or do other exercises during their stay. The staff also believes that peer interaction plays a key role in support and recovery, so they organize activities and other opportunities that allow

consumers to talk about their issues with each other, so they can find advocates and support along their path to recovery.

CRU is also to be commended for continually looking for ways to improve activities, services and quality of life for residents. Much of this is due to Katrina Lisik, the Home Manager, who is tirelessly devoted to training and maintaining an involved, dedicated and compassionate staff.

Involvement in the daily activities of the CRU is not only supported, it is encouraged. Some of the activities consumers can participate in are helping cook for the facility, and playing board and interactive video games. The staff members have found that when consumers are involved in activities, they're more likely to discuss their problems, concerns or just share their thoughts.

Thanks to the caring, thoughtful and thorough work of Katrina Lisik and her staff, Saginaw Meadows CRU has consistently exceeded benchmarks in all their audits, achieving 97 percent compliance. Their dedication to providing quality, supportive short-term crisis care and giving consumers the tools they need to achieve recovery, are why we honor them with the Agnes Rambo Quality of Life Award.



Saginaw Meadows
Crisis Residential Unit
Left to right: Katrina Lisik, Kati
LaPan, Ashley Buckingham

Bernice Barlow Community Partnership Award



Elaine Beane, Ph.D.



Clare Tanner, Ph.D.



Michelle Maitland, MSN, RN-BC

IVISIN, RIV-BC

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Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) Michigan Pathways to Better Health Team

The Bernice Barlow Community Partnership Award is given yearly to an individual or organization that has shown commitment to the power of partnerships with SCCMHA, in turn improving services to Saginaw County citizens. This year, we are pleased to honor Dr. Elaine Beane, Senior Program Director for the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI); Dr. Clare Tanner, MPHI Program Director; and Michelle Maitland, RN, Informatics Nurse Specialist at MPHI. They are the key members of the team responsible for bringing Michigan Pathways to Better Health to Saginaw and the creation of Saginaw Pathways to Better Health.

In 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded MPHI a three-year, \$14 million innovation grant to implement Michigan Pathways to Better Health (MPBH) in three high-need Michigan counties (Ingham, Muskegon and Saginaw) in partnership with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and local community agencies. MPBH supports the CMS' goals of better health, better care and lower cost through improvement, by assisting beneficiaries to address social service needs and link them to preventive healthcare services.

MPHI's efforts and support, under the leadership of Elaine, Claire and Michelle, have resulted in the creation of the Saginaw Community Care HUB under the aegis of SCCMHA (and one of the first in the nation to achieve certification. under a pilot initiative funded by the Kresge Foundation) which also is the lead agency/fiduciary. In addition, we now have a cadre of trained Community Health Workers hired, supervised and deployed by Care Coordination Agencies (Health Delivery, Inc., Covenant/Visiting Nurse Special Services, St. Mary's of Michigan/ Center of HOPE and the Saginaw Department of Public Health) who have helped about 1800 of our adult citizens with two or more chronic health conditions get connected with needed health and social services. Additional project partners include our coconveners, Alignment Saginaw and Michigan Health Improvement Alliance, as well as our outreach partner agencies: Mobile Medical Response and 2-1-1 Northeast.

The work of the MPHI team exemplifies the creation and sustenance of effective community partnerships, resulting in improved services to the citizens of Saginaw County. Because of this, we are pleased to present Dr. Elaine Beane, Dr. Clare Tanner and Michelle Maitland with the Bernice Barlow Community Partnership Award.

Improving Practices Champion Award

When an SCCMHA staff member or provider becomes a champion by advancing the implementation of evidence-based mental health practices in our community, we honor them with the Improving Practices Champion Award.

For Ruth Frais, LLPC, CACD, her relentless work ethic and her passion for improving lives is second nature. In her role as a therapist specializing in addiction and substance use disorders, she continues to research and improve her knowledge of evidence-based practices. For example, she has recently familiarized herself with gambling addictions so she can better serve consumers who may use gambling to deal with mental illness.

Ruth has been an indispensable help to the SCCMHA Community Support Services (CSS) team, taking on a variety of roles to implement evidence-based practices. She's served as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) group facilitator, Thinking For Change (T4C) group leader, forensic therapist and Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT) group facilitator. She has also trained as a motivational interviewer in order to better support and encourage consumers' self-esteem.

And because her tasks don't keep her quite busy enough, Ruth has also volunteered to become a state hospital liaison for Caro, Kalamazoo and Ypsilanti hospitals, and work with consumers who have been adjudicated as NGRI (not guilty by reason of insanity).

Ruth is the embodiment of a "can-do" attitude. No matter what type of situation she finds herself in, she is always gracious, kind and willing to work through any obstacles. Her clinic supervisor says, "Ruth is always the first to volunteer for clinical tasks that benefit consumers' recoveries. She never hesitates to ask for help when needed, and always keeps the consumers' well-being and recovery in the forefront of her mind."

For her spirit of volunteerism, her relentless work ethic and her tireless determination to implement and improve evidence-based practices for consumers, we are pleased to honor Ruth Frais with the Improving Practices Champion Award.



Ruth Frais, LLPC, CACD

Rapson Living the American Dream Award



Warren "Ben" & Sue Leonard

The Rapson Living the American Dream Award is given to an individual or individuals who have shown commitment to the vision of freedom, choice and independence, and who have helped turn dreams into realities for persons with disabilities in the Saginaw community.

For more than a decade, Warren "Ben" and Sue Leonard have donated their retirement years to help consumers dream big. As former employees of the Saginaw County school systems, they understand how providing travel and recreational opportunities can broaden minds and, frankly, just be a lot of fun.

Ben taught at Saginaw High for 39 years, while Sue was an occupational therapist with Saginaw-area schools for 33 years. After retiring, they began serving with organizations dedicated to providing affordable housing for individuals with physical disabilities. Sue has served on the board of Saginaw Cerebral Palsy Non-Profit Housing Corporation for 10 years, and Ben and Sue have been on the board of Together With Friends Housing Corporation for 12 years.

But that's not all. Ben and Sue also donate their time to the Millet Center, and are instrumental in organizing and putting on the Center's bi-yearly power wheelchair basketball games. Sue is in charge of arranging and running the pizza party, while Ben helps purchase, deliver and serve the food, while running the scoreboard during the games.

Their contributions get even sweeter. For 23 years, Ben has stocked and organized a one-man candy stand. The proceeds from this endeavor go to fund the wheelchair basketball games and the Community Travel Program, which sponsors trips for school students with physical challenges. Some of the trips made possible by Ben and Sue have included Mackinac Island, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Toronto, Frankenmuth, various camps and even a trip to the Bahamas. Ben and Sue also assist as chaperones, and their sunny dispositions and smiling faces are a wonderful addition to trips that are, for many of the participants, the experience of a lifetime.

Together, Ben and Sue Leonard have expanded and improved the lives of Saginaw County individuals with physical disabilities by providing access to travel and recreation experiences, as well as independent living opportunities. Because of this, we are proud to name them recipients of the Rapson Living the American Dream Award.

Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy and Family Support Award

The Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy and Family Support Award is reserved for an individual who has shown commitment to leadership, advocacy and family support, which in turn has improved services to Saginaw County citizens. This year, no one has embodied the spirit of this award more than Dr. Judith Taylor.

Throughout her long career, Judith has been a tireless advocate for adequate and equitable funding for community mental health systems in Michigan. She has exhibited personal integrity, initiative and intense commitment in meeting the needs of persons with behavioral health conditions.

Judith began her career at the Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Counties, serving in a variety of roles including Executive Director. In 1995, she became a member of the Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH) Board, where she held the offices of President and Treasurer.

Judith was a member of the first Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) team that developed the Medicaid Managed Mental Health and Substance Abuse Special Supports and Services. She also worked with the State Actuary to develop capitation rates, and worked with MDCH to develop the general fund equity methodology for community mental health service programs in Michigan.

Judith has worked on a contract basis for Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards (MACMHB) for many years. She's been a consultant for the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority, and for Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services. She is a long-standing consultant for the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and MACMHB, and she wrote the community mental health service provider financial history section for Governor Jennifer Granholm's Mental Health Commission report. These are but a few of the organizations that have been lucky enough to benefit from her leadership.

In 2011, Judith consulted with SCCMHA on rate-setting historical factors analysis to assist in financial planning and advocacy. Her knowledge about how to best navigate the financial ins and outs of the mental health system is the best in the business, and we have benefitted tremendously from her knowledge and expertise.

Judith has been the recipient of many awards over the years, including the MACHMB's Nick Filonow Award of Excellence and the Go To Bat Award. Today, we honor her with one more, as the most recent recipient of the Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy and Family Support Award.



Judith Taylor, Ph.D.



Jean Colby, Joey & Mia

Jean Colby is no stranger to volunteering. For the past 18 years, she's donated her time by volunteering in hospitals and working with children. But for the past four years, Jean has been a Special Hero for the consumers of SCCMHA.

Every other week, Jean, accompanied by her certified therapy dogs Joey and Mia, brightens the lives of consumers at the two St. Mary's of Michigan Guardian Angel Respite and Adult Day Services locations.

When she visits, Jean and her golden retrievers play games with the participants. Every individual gets a chance to interact with Joey and Mia by giving them commands to perform tricks. For example, Mia plays cards with the consumers (who have to watch her, because sometimes she cheats). And in one of Joey's exercises, consumers set up colored cones and tell her what color they want her to go to. It's both a learning activity and a fun social interaction for both the two-legged and four-legged participants.

Jean, Joey and Mia also participate with consumers in special events throughout the year. For

Guardian Angel's annual talent show, Jean and the participants put together a variety of acts that include a group of individuals and one of the dogs. The trio also helps out at carnivals, where a booth is set up so people can learn more about the benefits of therapy dogs. And during the holidays, you'll always see the three of them dressed up in bunny ears, Santa hats or whatever the season calls for.

The staff at Guardian Angel says that the participants' faces just light up every time Jean and the dogs come to visit. "She is able to make everyone feel important and special," says Annmarie Sitkewicz, a recreational therapist.

"The consumers are so thoughtful and they're so good with the dogs," says Jean. "I love that we can bring smiles to their faces. Joey, Mia and I are the lucky ones to be able to share our time with these special people."

Jean, Joey and Mia have come to love the Guardian Angel staff, participants, family members and caregivers like family. And the feeling is definitely mutual for these Special Heroes.

Sergeant Gary Fitzmaurice is an exceptional law enforcement official for the Saginaw County Sheriff's Department. He is also a member of the Saginaw Mental Health Court. But he is a Special Hero for SCCMHA because of his advocacy, empathy and genuine compassion for mental health consumers in the court system.

"Before I became involved with these efforts, I didn't realize how many people mental illness affected, particularly in the court system," says Gary. "Now I'm incredibly passionate about it, because I see the need to make adjustments in our system so these individuals can get the help they need."

Steve Gonzalez, an SCCMHA clinical supervisor who interacts with the Saginaw Mental Health Court, describes Sgt. Fitzmaurice as someone who "has social worker in him" and who truly believes that, when given the opportunity, people can change and turn their lives around.

Gary's assistance to mental health consumers goes beyond helping them appear in front of the judge. He's been known to advocate for consumers in the Saginaw County Jail who are diagnosed with a persistent mental illness and who pose a risk to themselves and others in the community.

Gary, along with another law enforcement officer, received mental health first aid training, and he now goes out into the community to instruct others on how best to serve and interact with persons with mental health conditions. He's looking forward to eventually implementing more comprehensive mental health training at police academies statewide.

"My goal is that new officers get training at the state level on day one, even before the uniforms are put on," he says. "It'll help us make better judgment calls on the streets, save the taxpayers money and keep individuals who need help out of jail. It's definitely a team effort."

Gary's firm, compassionate manner allows him to be an advocate for mental health consumers without being an enabler. He holds each individual responsible for their actions and does everything in his power to help them successfully navigate the mental health court system and follow their court orders.

He's already a hero for his high professionalism and dedication to his job. But for the individuals whose lives he changes on a daily basis, Gary is truly a Special Hero.



Sergeant Gary Fitzmaurice



Julie McCulloch

If you haven't taken the time to fully explore the new SCCMHA website, please do so ASAP. Open every page. Follow every link. Watch all the videos or browse through the available resources. Find a provider manual, search for a program site or fill out a job application. Practically everything you've ever wanted to be able to do on our website is now possible.

After you've found everything you need, take a look at the site itself. See how easy it is to navigate? Notice the attractive, eye-catching layout and design? Now, imagine telling a friend or consumer how to find a certain resource on the website, and having the confidence that they'll be able to find the information they need easily. Compare this new reality to what you remember from the old site and doesn't it seem — well — like a miracle?

We owe this magnificent transformation — and so much more — to Julie McCulloch, Quality Systems and Public Information Supervisor. As our very first webmaster, Julie has shaped and directed every single

aspect of our new, multifunctional website. Her fingerprint is on everything you see, from the colors and fonts to the design of every graphic, link and photo.

Throughout this entire process, Julie showed persistence, patience and positivity. She organized our thinking, and then rearranged it to make it concise and understandable. Then, after soliciting feedback and contributions from all members on the project, she organized and reorganized yet again. It took almost two years, but thanks to Julie's dedication and persistence, we now have the beautiful, functional, cutting-edge website that you see today.

Of course, those who have the pleasure of knowing and working with Julie know she deserves to be celebrated for more than just the labor of love that is our website. Every day and in every way, Julie is committed to providing high-quality care and assistance to consumers. She is an invaluable co-worker, friend and advocate. In short, she is a Special Hero.

When you hear the title "accountant," you don't normally think of the word "hero." But we think you should make an exception when you're talking about Kathy Meyer, accounting supervisor for the Saginaw County Department of Public Health (SCDPH). You see, she's not just a hero — she's a Special Hero.

Kathy's been working in the health department for 43 years and she still loves what she does. Over the years, Kathy has held a variety of responsibilities from building management to overseeing the daily operation of the department's dental division. In her current role of Accounting Supervisor, Kathy manages the financial planning and budgeting needs for the entire department. As you can imagine, her daily duties generally include putting out financial fires and resolving various departmental budget issues. However, no matter how complex, basic or redundant a task or inquiry might be, Kathy is always positive, efficient and helpful, delivering exemplary service with a smile.

Kathy often represents Saginaw County and shares her expertise with larger-scale projects undertaken by the Health Department. She played a major role in helping in the regionalization efforts of new substance abuse and mental health initiatives. When the Health Department underwent accreditation, she took an active role in the process, sharing her accounting knowledge and resources. Thanks to her assistance, the Health Department received an Accreditation with Commendation—the highest ranking a provider can receive.

Mr. Konrad Edwards of the Michigan Department of Community Health Local Services said of Kathy: "She demonstrates expertise in best practices of accounting standards, and is considered a great mentor in the profession of governmental accounting."

Her co-workers praise Kathy for her tremendous attention to detail, following policies and procedures to the letter, and being collaborative and proactive in everything she does. She is logical, exercises good judgment and is always willing to take reasonable risks to provide the best possible service for her consumers.

"We're all part of community health," says Kathy. "At the end of the day, that's what we're here for."

For everything she has accomplished in four decades at SCDPH, Kathy is a role model, a valuable employee and the definition of a Special Hero.



Kathleen E. Meyer





Left to right: Kim Miller, Cathy Childs, Lynne Loiselle, Scott Harrison, Dawn DaFoe, Heidi Zwerk, Tricia McLaren, Pat Delong, Jon Lefevre, Carol McDonald, Suzanne Ferguson and Tricia Cripe.

Eight years ago, a special program was started at Freeland Elementary School to help support three students with autism spectrum disorders. It was called PALSS — Peers are Linked for Social Success — and was founded on the philosophy that students with autism and their peers have a lot to learn from each other.

Each year, elementary students receive a training session about autism and the challenges students with autism face. Students are then "recruited" as volunteer peers. Currently, 17 students on the autism spectrum are supported by nearly 200 of their peers through the PALSS program.

PALSS (Peers are Linked for Social Success) of Freeland Schools

Each student has a support group of peers who serve as good role models, champions and friends. At least once a month, the group gets together to share positive notes about the student, note any challenges they're facing and brainstorm solutions. The supporting peers also get mini-lessons about autism and coaching on how to understand the challenges their student is facing.

The benefits from PALSS go both ways. The student being mentored gains acceptance and gets to have age-appropriate social interactions, which helps increase their independence. The individuals participating in the program gain an understanding of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and learning/social needs while developing leadership and problem-solving skills.

And sometimes, they're able to touch lives in unexpected ways, like on April 10, 2014, when an 11-year-old boy with autism disappeared from his grandparents' home in Freeland. Local and state police agencies and fire departments deployed helicopters, troopers, deputies and K9 units to track down the missing boy.

A half-mile away from the search party, some children playing in their yard noticed a young boy. Unusually dirty and without shoes, he had stopped to pet their dog.

One of the children in the yard, who was a member of PALSS, used her training and observations to determine that the boy might have autism and be in trouble. The children alerted an adult, who quickly took charge of the situation and helped reunite the young boy with his mother and grandmother.

Not every success story from PALSS is as blockbuster-heroic as this one. However, the everyday teachings of compassion, understanding, acceptance and sense of responsibility are impossible to measure. Everyone involved in the PALSS program is a Special Hero for truly making a difference in the life of each and every child they reach.

Author, lawyer and civil rights activist Marian Wright Edelman said: "Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." She could have written this with Special Hero Sharon Patton in mind.

Thirty-one years ago, Sharon began her career with SCCMHA as a home manager in what was then called a Community Living Facility (CLF) group home. Through the years, Sharon served as a vehicle operator, a member of the direct care staff and a supports coordinator. In November of 2005, Sharon became part of the Continuing Education Unit and began serving as a mental health trainer.

"Miss Sharon," as she is known in the classroom, trains individuals in the required skills needed to become direct care staff for consumers living in residential settings. However, she gives her students more than just a training curriculum. She teaches others to see the potential in themselves. She instills confidence and pride for one's job, and inspires her students to always do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

"No matter what, the show must go on" aptly describes Sharon's work philosophy. Time and time again, she makes sacrifices to put the students in her classroom first. She takes every opportunity to learn new skills and continually improve her teaching style or knowledge. In her years of teaching, no student has ever lost pay because a class was canceled. Her students finish the courses on time and receive their promised pay raises for completing their training. And consumers living in residential settings receive the best care possible, thanks to Sharon.

Sharon has a great compassion for her students, and encourages them to be the very best they can be. Thanks to her integrity and enthusiasm for her work, her students leave her care feeling successful — sometimes for the first time in their lives.

Miss Sharon weaves integrity throughout everything that she says and does. She advocates for people who don't have a voice. She teaches from the heart. She changes peoples' lives. In everything she does, Sharon is a Special Hero who makes our community a better place.



Sharon Patton



Officer Doug Stacer

Special Heroes come in all shapes, sizes and species. For the past three years, Officer Doug Stacer, along with his four-legged partner Canjo, has served as a K9 officer for the Saginaw Police Department. Doug and Canjo spend their time fighting and preventing crime in the community. When they're not on the beat, the two spend time out in the community, being goodwill ambassadors for the police department.

Brad Rose, a consumer of SCCMHA services with severe anxiety and agoraphobia, has had many challenges and obstacles in his life. As a child, he dreamed about becoming a police officer. He had always been very interested in first responders and the work they do. When he met Doug and Canjo at a car show in 2014, it was the beginning of a very special friendship.

"It helps a great deal to know that police officers or firefighters are nearby when I go outside," says Brad. "Having Doug and Canjo around make it easier for me to leave my apartment, because I know I've got heroes looking out for me." For Doug, the friendship is mutual. "Brad really makes me feel good about the work we do," he says. "We know we have support, but we just don't hear it very often."

Now, Brad gets out of his apartment and comes to every event the police department holds or participates in. Oftentimes he and Doug will meet up, just to chat. The bond between the two men is apparent to all who know them. In fact, both Doug and Brad view each other as a brother.

To honor their friendship, Doug recently presented Brad with two special plaques. The first displays the Police Officer's Prayer to St. Michael with a photo of the two of them, Canjo, and another K9 officer. The other plaque features the Police K9's Prayer. They're now Brad's most prized possessions.

For everything he has done for Brad, and for everything he continues to do for his community, Officer Doug Stacer is much more than a public official. He is a mentor, a friend, an advocate, and above all, a Special Hero.

10th Circuit Adult Felony Drug Court of Saginaw County

The 10th Circuit Adult Felony Drug Court of Saginaw County was developed with one mission in mind: to provide high-risk, highneed offenders with early, continuous and intense court-supervised treatment for their addictions.

Susan Smith, Judge Janet Boes and Judge James Borchard believed strongly that with this type of support, the likelihood of success would increase significantly for these individuals. So they, along with an advisory board developed by the county, established a program in the fall of 2012.

In the program, all services and treatments stem from the philosophy of more effectively holding offenders accountable for their actions, with an eye toward transforming them into positive, contributing, healthy members of the community.

Two Drug Court staff members work with the individuals to reduce their substance use, and also help them get the treatment they need to begin the recovery process. They also work with

them to avoid future involvement in criminal behavior, and conduct random drug screens.

To date, nine participants have graduated from the program, with two to three more anticipated in the next month or two. These successful graduates are not only substance-abuse free and released from court supervision, they are also now productive citizens — employees earning a living and supporting their families, and parents positively engaged with their children.

"We are so grateful to have our son back again," says one parent whose child graduated successfully from this program. "We are so thankful you were able to see the real person who we never gave up on."

It takes a Special Hero to help a person achieve his or her true potential. And that's exactly what Susan, Judge Boes, Judge Borchard and the staff of the 10th Circuit Adult Felony Drug Court of Saginaw County have done for the individuals who have achieved success thanks to their vision.



Susan Smith



Judge Boes



Judge Borchard



Tom McGarrity, Mike Bacigalupo, & Tanya Blehm

Temple Theatre

The theatre is a place where imagination, hard work and wonder come together to create magical experiences. For the Temple Theatre and SCCMHA's Supported Employment (SE) Services, it is also a place where consumers have the opportunity to achieve, thanks to some very Special Heroes.

In September 2014, Tanya Blehm, Box Office Manager of the Temple Theatre, attended a Percolator Breakfast being held by the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce. Also at that breakfast was Jeff Mathews, one of the peer support staff of SE services. Jeff was looking for local businesses that would be interested in partnering with SCCMHA to provide employment opportunities for consumers. Coincidentally, Tanya found herself in need of staffing help at the Temple.

So, Tanya and Jeff set up a meeting. They talked about the needs and missions of both their organizations — which ended up matching perfectly. At the end of the meeting, Tanya invited any job seekers from SE services to apply for the Temple's job openings.

Within twenty-four hours, SE had twenty-four consumers who had completed applications for jobs at the Temple. From that pool, seven candidates were chosen for interviews and a tour of the facility. From there, four candidates were offered positions — and three accepted.

Currently, two individuals from SE services work at the Temple. The staff at the Temple — in particular Tanya, Chief Operating Officer Mike Bacigalupo and House Manager Tom McGarrity — have an open-door policy and work collaboratively with SE services to make sure consumers have a successful and meaningful work experience.

Besides offering job positions, the Temple has helped provide opportunities in other ways, too. On November 7, 2014, the Temple Theatre hosted the 2nd Creating Employment Opportunities Bazaar. At this open-to-the-public event, nearly 100 consumers participated in selling handmade jewelry, key chains, fishing lures and other microenterprise items.

Thanks to the Special Heroes of the Temple Theatre, consumers have a chance to experience the magic of the theatre by being valued and supported employees. That's a happy ending that deserves a round of applause.

One word that always comes up when describing Lynn White is service. For 19 years, Lynn has provided smiles, support and, yes, service, for the consumers she assists in the Support Coordination department at SCCMHA. She's seen a lot of changes in her department, but she's adapted to every one of them with grace and dignity, all while keeping the needs of those she serves as her number one priority.

Another word that is used to describe Lynn is dedication. Time and time again, she has gone above and beyond to support, advocate for and care for consumers. Last year, she had to move three consumers into new group homes due to an emergency. Lynn worked into the wee hours of the night, helping them pack their belongings and transporting them to their new living situations. She stayed as long as was needed to help them get unpacked and settled into their new homes.

Excellence is another great word that defines Lynn. Behind the scenes, she is a powerhouse. Her records are always in compliance, and she has received perfect charts on every waiver audit. She is accountable, knowledgeable and above all, professional.

But perhaps the best words to describe Lynn are the words that come directly from consumers. Here are just a few of the many positive comments Lynn received from a recent consumer satisfaction survey:

"I receive superior assistance from Lynn. No matter what the issue, she's always there to help me get the answers. She always treats me with the greatest respect and takes the time to listen to me. I am lucky to have people like Lynn in my life."

"Lynn continues to be a fantastic support to me and my family. She always returns calls promptly and makes herself available at all times if possible. We don't know what we would do without her."

"I am so very lucky to have Lynn as my case worker. She is a very caring person."

There are many other glowing words we could use to describe Lynn, but we'll end with just two: Special Hero.



Lynn White



<i>lotes</i>
x X

Consumer/Consumer Advocate Involvement in SCCMHA Committees

Consumer Leadership Group

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A belief in potential

A right to dream

An opportunity to achieve

SCCMHA Mission Statement

As the public manager of supports and services for citizens with mental illness,
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SCCMHA actively strives to develop a system of care and a community that values and
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Thank you to SCCMHA staff and network providers for supporting consumers and helping them become Everyday Heroes!

SCCMHA would like to extend a very special thank you for the proclamations prepared by the Michigan Legislature for each of our award winners.

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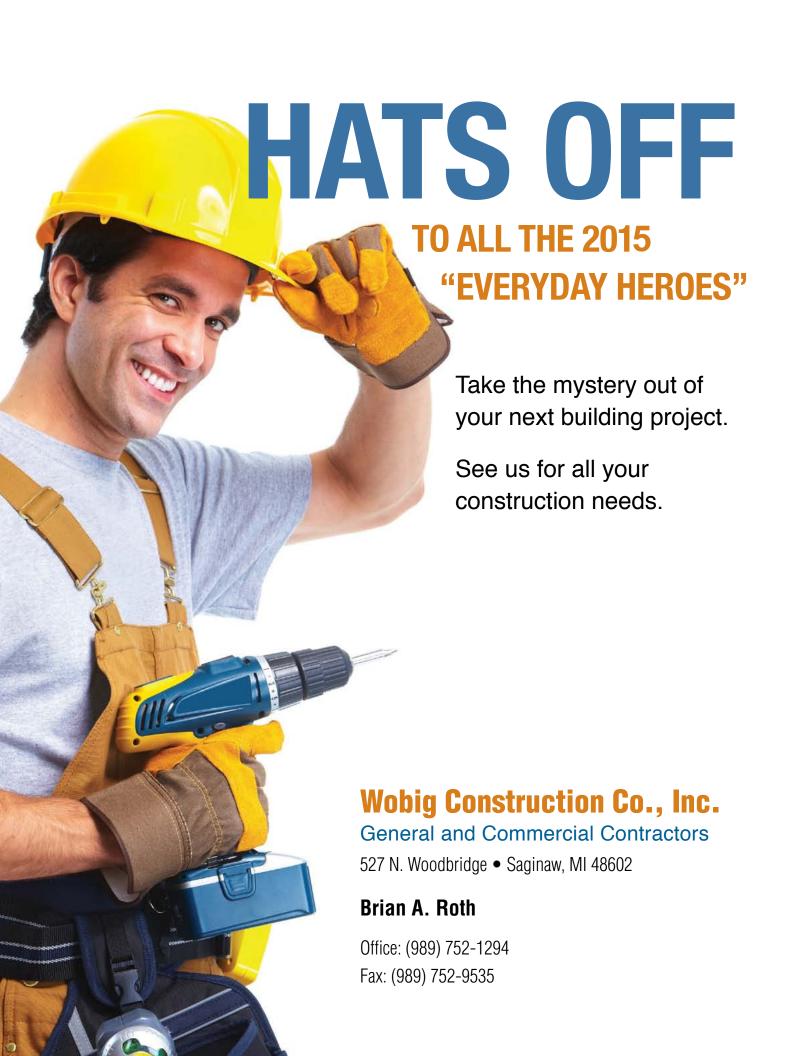
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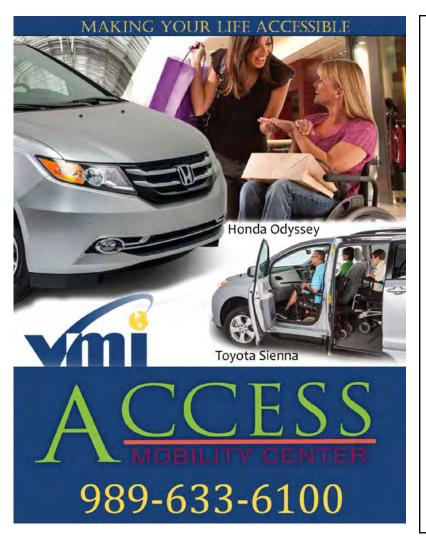
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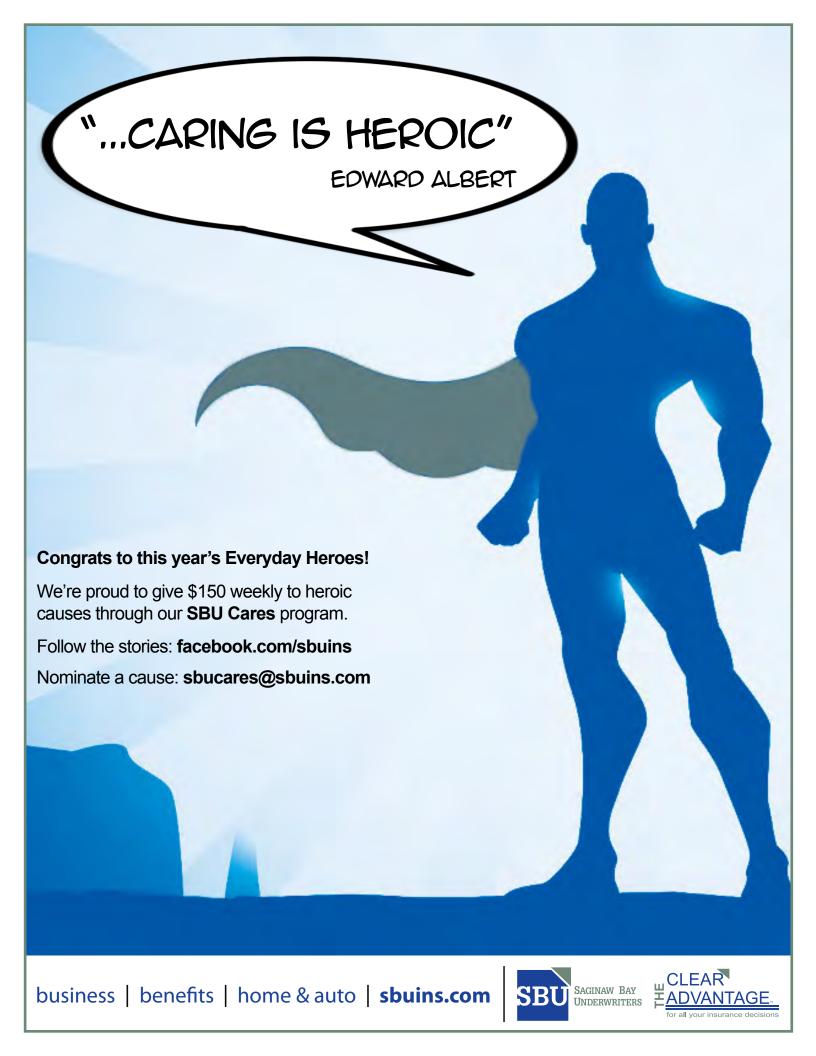


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SVRC Apartments

3749 Barnard Rd. Saginaw, MI 48603

Saginaw Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities (S.A.I.D.)

919 Veteran's Memorial Parkway Saginaw, MI 48601 (989) 752-6104

Visit us on the Web: www.svrcindustries.com

If you would like to learn more about available services ~ or are interested in becoming a VOLUNTEER, please contact us! (989) 752-6176

















Programs and Services:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- MyChoice: Skill Building, Community Living Supports, and Supported **Employment Services**
- **Industrial Operations** (ISO-9001:2008)
- Janitorial Services
- S.A.I.D. (Saginaw Advocacy for *Individuals with Disabilities)*
- Westlund Guidance Clinic Child and Adult Counseling Services Behavioral Health & Autism Services
- Placement Services
- Work Force Development PATH
- SISD Workforce Investment Act Career Links Program
- Saginaw Youth Build
- Prisoner Re-Entry Services
- Retail Training SVRC Café / Ice Cream Shop at Healthsource
- **Educational Services** Saginaw Learn To Earn Academy





A Place for Grace Child Care supports SCCMHA Everyday Heroes

Michigan's first daycare for special needs children Located Saginaw Township www.aplaceforgracechildcare.org (989) 607-1741

Cognitively Impaired—Autistic—Developmentally Delayed—Speech & Language Impaired—Emotional Impaired & more





