



First Choice
of Saginaw

Today's Presentation

- History and Focus of First Choice of Saginaw
- Relationship Between First Choice of Saginaw & SCCMHA
- Who & How SCCMHA Consumers Benefit From First Choice
- How First Choice of Saginaw Raises & Uses Funds
- What You Can Do To Support First Choice
- Where To Get More Information About First Choice

History & Purpose

- Initiated as an administrative quality project of Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) in 2005.
- Based on SCCMHA system-wide recognition of impoverished adults with serious disabilities living in adult foster care settings with little or no personal discretionary funds.
- Goal of improving quality of life for these adults.
- Goal of providing some disposable income for such adults who are then enabled to choose how to spend personal funds.
- Initial gift cards distributed in December 2005.
- From 2005 through 2021, 5,152 cards have been distributed.

First Choice of Saginaw, Inc. Facts

- Became a separate Michigan legal business entity and a federally recognized 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in 2007.
- Governed by a small non-profit Board of Directors.
- Guided by Friends of First Choice Committee who provide annual planning and monthly leadership on fund-raising activities.
- Completely staffed by volunteers in all aspects of annual fund-raising efforts. There are no paid staff.
- Sole purpose is to provide discretionary funds through gift cards for persons with disabilities residing in adult foster care homes.
- First Choice has distributed gift cards since 2005.

First Choice Relationship to SCCMHA

- First Choice & SCCMHA are two separate, legal entities:
 - First Choice of Saginaw is a local, private non-profit organization.
 - SCCMHA is a local, separate, public, governmental agency.
- First Choice & SCCMHA have a written collaborative agreement:
 - Gift card recipients are identified annually by SCCMHA case managers/supports coordinators (employees and contract providers) as well as home providers.
 - SCCMHA provides in-kind supports to First Choice, including meeting space, communications and promotional supports, etc.
 - First Choice benefits persons served by SCCMHA.

Fund-raising Activities & Sources of Support

- Welcomes & solicits individual & company cash donations.
- Conducts fund-raising events staffed by volunteers (SCCMHA staff, contractors, community volunteers, consumers) who offer time or in-kind support.
- Applies for available non-profit supports through various community benefactors and local opportunities, such as churches, SVSU Battle of the Valleys, etc.
- Receives some SCCMHA staff voluntarily elected payroll deductions specifying First Choice of Saginaw.
- Accepts donations of can and bottle returnables at SCCMHA sites.
- Benefits from Amazon Smile program.

Types of Fund-raising

*Scheduled events vary based on annual plan.

- Examples hosted at SCCMHA sites: hot dog sale, ice cream social, home hostess sale, pie sale, jewelry and card sale, candy grams, etc.
- Corporate sponsored or hosted events such as business casual day donations or other company charitable efforts designating First Choice of Saginaw as beneficiary.
- Community group(s) offered support such as varied philanthropic or service organizations, Leadership Saginaw, etc.
- Annual solicitations made to community businesses, partners and past donors.

Annual Gift Card Distribution

- An annual holiday theme event in early December.
- Solicitation of recommendations for eligible card recipients made to key staff and contractors in late fall.
- Other home residents and staff may attend the event in addition to card recipients for cookies, giveaways and holiday cheer.
- Homes sign responsibility for cards and staff must document card usage as consumer personal funds.
- Card recipients must be allowed to spend the gift card on their personal choice(s).
- For those who do not attend the event, cards are delivered to the homes.

Gift Card Recipients

- Must reside in a licensed adult foster care setting.
- Must be an adult SCCMHA consumer with a mental health related disability.
- Must be requested in writing by a case manager, supports coordinator or home manager by the annual deadline.
- Must be financially needy/eligible. (Persons with spend downs are generally not eligible.)
- Homes are notified in writing of each year's card recipients before the distribution event date.

How Consumers Spend Gift Cards

- Needed clothing or personal items.
- Hobbies or activities supplies.
- Gifts for family or friends.
- Snacks or special treats.

*These are examples only; see the pictorials on the First Choice of Saginaw website for actual recipient stories for all years that cards were distributed.

*Consumers are not restricted in any way on how to use their gift cards.

How Funds Raised Are Used

- First Choice is completely volunteer supported.
- No paid employees or staff.
- As close to 100% as possible all funds raised annually are used solely for purchase of recipient gift cards.
Other costs include only:
 - Minimal necessary local and state business expenses: annual Saginaw City business license and Michigan state business fee.
 - Purchase of necessary fund-raising supplies and event give-a-ways, if/when cannot be otherwise covered by specific in-kind donations.
 - Annual event venue cost, if not specifically covered by a donor.

\$ Amount of Gift Cards

- In early years of First Choice of Saginaw, initial amounts were determined by limited funds raised.
- Annual card value amount has increased due to successful fund-raising.
- All cards distributed are the same dollar amount value for all eligible recipients.
- In recent years, First Choice of Saginaw has given out \$50 cards to Meijer, to allow for maximum choices and provide a overall purchase discount on total card cost.
- In recent years, over 300 persons have received cards annually.

How You Can Help

- Watch for notices to volunteer with an in-kind event donation or give of your time, as little or as much as you wish.
- Refer eligible consumers or remind others to do so in the fall. (Note: Some eligible consumers have been missed in previous years when the case manager/supports coordinator and/or home failed to request a card for that person.)
- Donate to First Choice of Saginaw in any way you can.
- Help promote SCCMHA and community information about First Choice of Saginaw and fund-raising events.
- Participate in fund-raising events.
- Refer interested persons to First Choice of Saginaw website.
- Offer leads on possible community sources of funds for First Choice of Saginaw.

Thank You!

If you
have supported
First Choice of Saginaw
in the past in any manner
and/or plan to do so in the future,
THANK YOU SO MUCH !!!

Questions?

Thank you for your time!

For More Information on First Choice of Saginaw

- Web site: www.saginawfc.org
 - Pictorials of past years' card recipients.
 - 10- and 15-Year Reports
 - Past donor and volunteer information.
 - Pay Pal on-line donation option.
 - Other general organizational information.
- Facebook
- Phone: 989.799.6451
- Mailing Address: 500 Hancock Street, Suite 200, Saginaw, MI 48602
- SCCMHA Administrative Contact Person: Jenna Brown, Administrative Assistant (jbrown@sccmha.org, 989-498-2269)