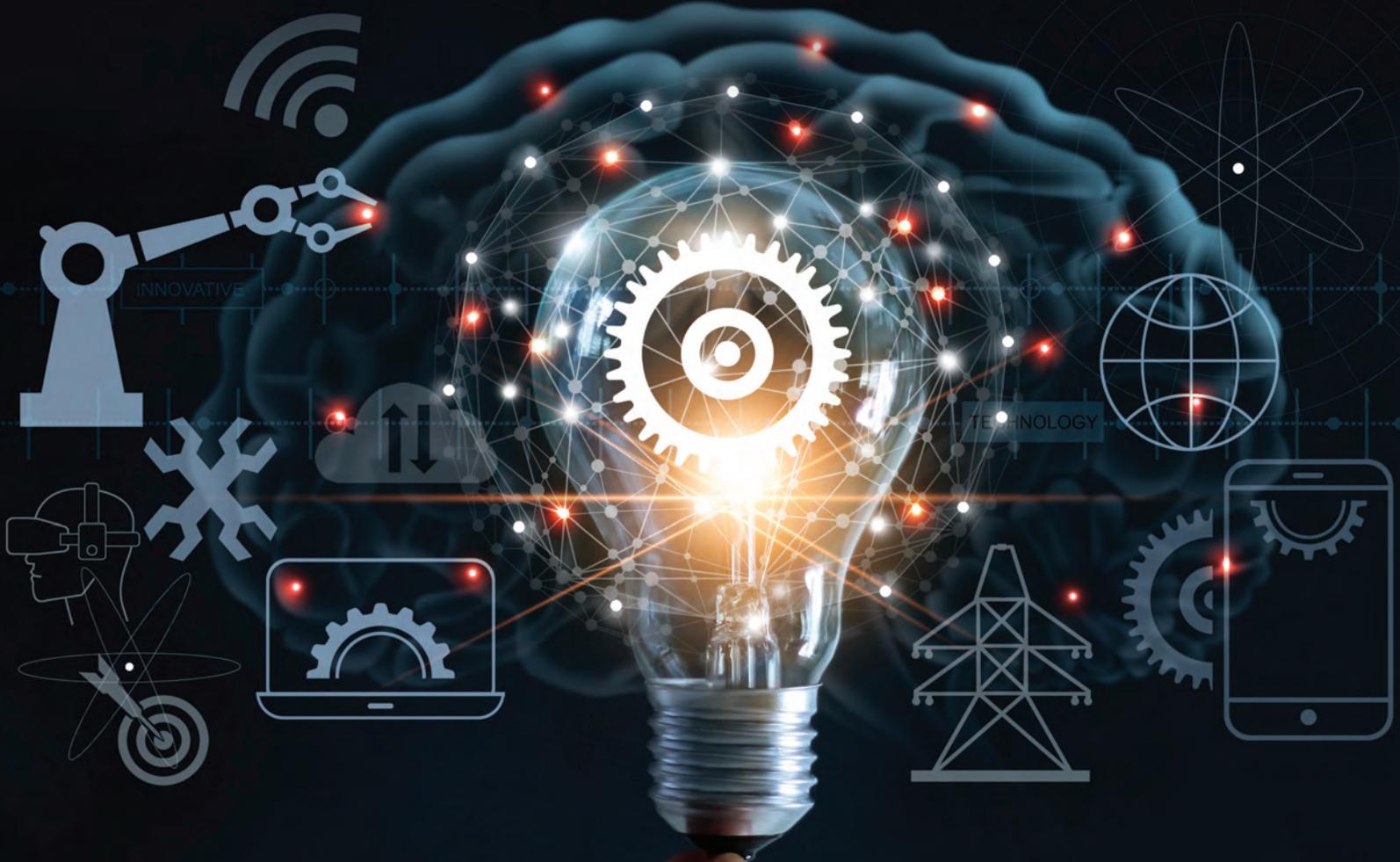


# FOCUS

THE MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE • JUNE 2020



## HOW COVID-19 HAS FUELED BUSINESS INNOVATION IN GREATER LANSING

### IN THIS ISSUE:

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER: TIME TO RELAUNCH GREATER LANSING | LEADERSHIP LANSING ZOOMS ACROSS THE FINISH LINE  
DAVENPORT UNIVERSITY PREPARES NEXT GENERATION OF NURSES



**TIM DAMAN**  
*President and CEO  
 Lansing Regional  
 Chamber of Commerce*



# RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Returning to a Thriving Economy

**WE HAVE ALL HAD TO NAVIGATE CHALLENGING TIMES** during the COVID-19 pandemic. At first, we had to deal with coming to grips with the magnitude of the crisis as it relates to the health and safety of our families, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and community. Sheltering in place brought with it a shift to teams working remotely. Businesses saw their operations curtailed or closed. We have witnessed the heroism of our health care employees and first responders. We have also seen the overwhelming generosity of those who, despite their difficulties, have reached out to those in need. Campaigns were started to encourage support of local business during and after the crisis.

It has been gratifying, though not surprising, to watch as COVID-19 fueled a wave of innovation throughout our region, as organizations had to reinvent themselves to deal with the new realities thrust upon them. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) was in a similar situation. Our events that provide valuable opportunities for our members to connect with the business community had to be canceled. Our team quickly shifted to provide our same monthly offerings – from webinars to Business Roundtables to Economic Club – but, on a digital platform that allows members to get the same valuable content and connections. We also ramped up our communications platforms to ensure we have been reaching the community with the latest and most relevant information in this rapidly changing situation.

Our region is entering a new phase of the COVID-19 era. People are returning to work. We are in the process of restarting our economy, which is exciting news for us all, despite challenges.

“As we begin to reopen certain aspects of our regional economy, now is the time to remain diligent in taking necessary precautions in providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees, customers, and our community. We are confident that RELAUNCH Greater Lansing will thoughtfully lead the region into a successful transition leading to a return of a thriving, robust regional economy.”

The LRCC has led an effort to create RELAUNCH Greater Lansing: Economic Rehabilitation Task Force to develop a thoughtful and strategic approach during this economic transition. The task force consists of prominent and trusted leaders in business, government, healthcare, and education who are dedicated to creating a successful regional relaunch strategy for Greater Lansing.

The task force is focused on developing a comprehensive strategy for industries within the Greater Lansing region to reopen business safely and successfully. As part of that effort, the task force will identify best practices and responses with proven success; provide a resource guide to serve as a

blueprint for restarting business operations; ensure proper health protocols are in place; re-establish consumer confidence in restoring business operations and build economic resiliency.

The RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force also understands the critical role of education in our regional economy. The group will work closely with educators in supporting strategies to restart K-12 and workforce-related issues. Business, education, and community leadership need to work together to find a balance that incorporates both safety and economic opportunity so our region can continue to prosper, and our children’s future remains bright.

As we begin to reopen certain aspects of our regional economy, now is the time to remain diligent in taking necessary precautions in providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees, customers, and our community. We are confident that RELAUNCH Greater Lansing will thoughtfully lead the region into a successful transition leading to a return of a thriving, robust regional economy. ■

**JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE**

Leadership Circle members are proven business and community leaders. We value their commitment and applaud their efforts to strengthen our region with their leadership and appreciate the important role they play in advancing our organization.



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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is a trusted convener of professionals, influencers and leaders in the Lansing region. The COVID-19 pandemic has led the LRCC to think of new, innovative ways to stay connected to its members during a time of mandated social distancing.

The LRCC has hosted numerous webinars that have provided valuable content and information related to the COVID-19 crisis, as well as virtual weekly roundtables for business, community and government leaders to connect and share what is going on in their community.

The LRCC is currently exploring additional virtual opportunities for larger events, such as Member Mixers, Chamber University and Economic Club luncheons. **The LRCC encourages members to check their email, follow LRCC social media channels and visit the LRCC website for the most updated information on additional educational offerings and networking opportunities as we move forward.**

### CHAMBER UNIVERSITY

#### Outstanding Customer Service: Seize the Moment with the Question Behind the Question

Date: Thursday, June 11 from 10 to 11 a.m.

**Presenter:** Kevin Jurek, facilitator for Institute for Professional Excellence at Davenport University  
**Details:** Hosted by Fraser Trebilcock and Fifth Third Bank, the upcoming Chamber University will be held virtually. The event will feature Kevin Jurek and discuss how success depends on the willingness and ability to ask the right questions. Asking more questions enables organizations and staff members to improve communication, take personal accountability, and learn outstanding customer service principles. Outstanding customer service takes place during moments when someone sees and seizes an opportunity to create an experience that draws the customer back. The ability to offer excellent customer service is founded in asking the question behind the question, "What can I do right now to go above and beyond?"

Without questions like that, there won't be much personal accountability. Without personal responsibility, there won't be any seizing of moments. Registration is available on the LRCC **website**.

### VIRTUAL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

All virtual roundtables are held from 9 to 10 a.m. Business roundtables allow community and government leaders an opportunity to share what is going on in the community and determine ways to advance the tri-county region. Registration is available on the LRCC **website**.

**June 3:** Delta Township – Eaton County

**June 10:** Lansing

**June 17:** East Lansing–Meridian Township

**June 24:** Clinton County

### LRCC EVENTS

For more information about Chamber events, tickets or sponsorships, contact Ashlee Willis at (517) 242-7434 or [michiganpremierevents@lansingchamber.org](mailto:michiganpremierevents@lansingchamber.org).

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**CHAMBER MILESTONES**

We'd like to offer a special salute to these great organizations who reached milestone anniversaries as Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) members this month. Thank you for your continued support throughout the years!

**H Business Development & Consulting**  
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LRCC members have unparalleled access to company and staff profiles on the LRCC website. To access and update this information at any point, visit [lansingchamber.org](http://lansingchamber.org) and enter your username and password. If you have not yet logged onto the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions. Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.



**Working Together to  
 Move Business Forward**

Visit M3 Group's COVID-19 small business and community resources page today [m3group.biz/covid-19-community-resources](http://m3group.biz/covid-19-community-resources)

# Beating Stress. Building Immunity: It's Time to Play Offense

**MUCH OF OUR REACTION TO THE COVID-19** has been in the form of playing defense – wearing masks and gloves, social distancing, and sheltering in place. According to health and fitness expert Chris Johnson, it is time to play offense. Johnson shared his thoughts on beating stress and building immunity during a webinar on May 8, hosted by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC).



Johnson

“Playing offense is all about how we rest, how we eat, and how we move,” said Johnson. “We need to develop a new rhythm.”

Johnson, founder and CEO of Bath Township-based On Target Living, said stress is mostly physical and shows up in a higher heartbeat, rise in blood pressure, muscular tension, digestive troubles, and immune suppression. He offered three tips on resiliency to stress; practicing deep breathing two to three minutes per day, improving sleep habits, and generating white space or personal time free of other commitments.

“There has never been a better time to expand white space,” said Johnson. “After the pandemic, don’t let your white space slip away.”

Johnson stressed the importance of nutrition in building up the immune system. He urged diets with more PH balance – less acidic foods (processed foods, coffee, alcohol, soda, etc.) and more alkaline or foods with strong mineral content (fruits, vegetables, etc.). He also underlined the importance of drinking lots of water daily – the number of ounces equaling half your body weight. Johnson advocated a diet that includes Omega-3 fats and superfoods such as flaxseed, cod liver oil, frozen wheatgrass and spirulina chlorella. Johnson also advocates prebiotics (oatmeal, bananas, onions) and probiotics (sauerkraut, yogurt, etc.).

When it comes to exercise, Johnson said the most important thing is to move the body 15-20 minutes a day — that has become especially important since the COVID-19 pandemic has more people spending more time in front of computer screens.

“The greatest benefit to moving your body is what it does for your mind,” said Johnson. “It calms you, creates energy, and changes your attitude.”

For more information, contact Chris Johnson at [chrisjohnson@ontargetliving.com](mailto:chrisjohnson@ontargetliving.com) or visit [www.ontargetliving.com](http://www.ontargetliving.com). ■

## Federal Reserve Executive Tells Business Leaders Economy Will Pick Up Slowly in Second Half of 2020

**A REBOUND IN THE ECONOMY** following the reopening of the economy will, in large part, be determined by how safe consumers feel as we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis of the past couple of months, according to the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Charlie Evans shared his thoughts on the economy with business leaders during a webinar sponsored by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce on May 11. Evans said it is reasonable to assume slow growth in the second half of 2020 and into 2021, but much depends on how the nation and future outbreaks of the virus.



Evans

“Uncertainty is high,” said Evans. “A second outbreak of the disease and a wave of bankruptcies are reasons for concern.”

Evans said he is particularly encouraged by many recent conversations he has had with manufacturers, including the auto industry, who share how they have successfully created safe work environments that should keep productivity high.

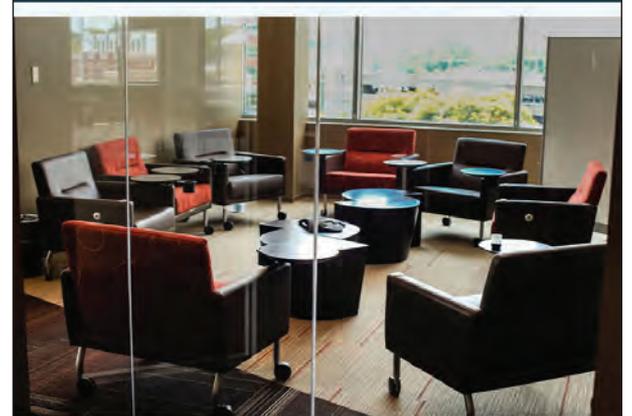
“The fundamentals are good,” said Evans. “There is no reason we can’t navigate this well. Keeping COVID-19 at bay is a concern for everyone.”

Evans said he is confident that the President and Congress will do more to support small businesses coming out of the crisis. He also noted that the federal government might need to step up and help state and local municipalities that have been hurt by the COVID-19 crisis.

“Tax revenues are greatly reduced,” said Evans. “It is important for employment to return to pre-pandemic levels. It will also be important for the federal government to consider support.” ■

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# Solar Power Purchase Agreements Create Jobs

BY: THASIN SARDAR AND JOSEPH HESS, GREATER LANSING UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

## THE GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

should be a clear illustration of the wisdom embodied in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pandemic has forced the reduction of travel and the burning of fossil fuels, which has resulted in remarkable temporary clearing of air pollution over major cities of the world. The physical health damage of past air pollution has made those infected with the virus more susceptible to severe forms of the disease leading to hospitalizations and deaths. It is a strong reminder of the need to permanently reduce pollution.

Affordable clean energy (SDG 7) and climate action to slow global warming (SDG 13) are essential steps toward slowing the trajectory of a world more prone to pandemics, premature deaths, and natural disasters.

Fortunately, the opportunities for transitioning to cleaner energy sources are increasing in number and affordability. They open the door to new business growth and a variety of new careers and employment opportunities. A business model that is approved in Michigan and is gaining acceptance among nonprofits, businesses, local governments, and colleges is the Solar Power Purchase Agreement (SPPA).

According to the EPA website, a SPPA is a financial arrangement that a third-party developer owns, operates, and maintains the photovoltaic system, and a host customer agrees to site the system on its property and purchases the system's electric output from the solar services provider for a predetermined period. This financial arrangement allows the host customer to receive stable and often low-cost electricity. At the same time, the solar



## UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### Greater Lansing Chapter

services provider or another party acquires valuable financial benefits, such as tax credits and income generated from the sale of electricity.

With this business model, the host customer buys the services produced by the PV system rather than the PV system itself. This framework is referred to as the "solar services" model, and the developers who offer SPPAs are known as solar services providers. SPPA arrangements enable the host customer to avoid many traditional barriers to installing on-site solar systems: high upfront capital costs, system performance risk, and complex design and permitting processes. Also, SPPA arrangements can be cash flow positive for the host customer from the day the system is commissioned."

As the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce begins its campaign to reinvigorate the business environment and employment opportunities in Mid-Michigan, facilitating the development of more SPPAs and other clean energy business models should be on the list. They would benefit Greater Lansing's economy, contribute to a more permanent and cleaner atmosphere, and lower health risks during future pandemics.

The federal solar investment tax credit is 26% for the remainder of 2020, drops to 22% in January 2021, then 10% in 2022. This is an added financial incentive to explore and invest in solar this year. ■



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# Making Decisions in a Crisis

BY: DAVE HEISEY, PRESIDENT, DRH ENTERPRISES, LLC – AN AUTHORIZED LICENSEE OF CRESTCOM INTERNATIONAL

## IN THE COMING DAYS AND WEEKS,

leaders will have a great many decisions to make. They will face hard choices about their businesses, their families, and their communities. Concerns about the coronavirus and its effect on all aspects of our lives will continue to grow. How do we make these smart decisions when the data is elusive or changing by the minute?



Heisey

One way to approach decision-making in times of uncertainty is to use a tool often used by the military, called Scenario Analysis.

Scenario analysis is a method for creating responses to various possible futures. This approach may work well in the current COVID-19 situation, defining your strategy given different duration scenarios.

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Scenario analysis will help you determine the possible outcomes that can result if you take different actions. When done well, it can bring alternative solutions that might not have been thought of otherwise. To use scenario analysis, you can follow these simple steps:

1. **Define the situation.** What do you want to achieve, or what decision needs to be made at this moment?
2. **Gather data.** Identify the facts, trends, and uncertainties that will affect your plan.
3. **Identify what is certain and what is not.** Separate the certainties in the situation from what is uncertain. Then, list the uncertainties with the most significant at the top, and the least significant at the bottom.
4. **Develop your scenarios.** Start with your top uncertainty and think of a moderately good

outcome and a moderately bad outcome. Then, develop a scenario around each that includes what is certain in your situation. Repeat this process with the next few uncertainties on your list.

5. **Use these scenarios to make a plan.** Finally, you will use these possibilities to evaluate the best path forward.

Using scenario analysis also develops both critical and creative thinking. By looking at both possible positive and negative outcomes for each possible action, you increase your readiness for a range of possibilities. Running possible scenarios with your team creates a safe space for people to share their ideas, even if they are different from yours. Psychologists also say that these thought exercises can help relieve anxiety in times of crisis, because you will feel more prepared for whatever comes next.

For more information, contact Dave Heisey at [dave.heisey@crestcom.com](mailto:dave.heisey@crestcom.com) or call (517) 906-6247. ■

# Ronald McDonald House Celebrates 20 Years

**FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS,** the Ronald McDonald House of Mid-Michigan has allowed families to focus on their recovering resources and comfort. They are only 480 walking steps away from Sparrow Health System's pediatric and neonatal units. During the past two decades, over 2,800 families have been served at the eight bedroom, 13,000-square-foot home. Amenities include a library, community kitchen, laundry room, playroom, family-style dining room, dayroom, and recreational room with a pool table, video games and television.



Since it opened its doors, Ronald McDonald House of Mid-Michigan has served 6,680 adult family members and 456 siblings, which has allowed children to get better faster by being able to stay with their families. The homes 20 years of impact has also included:

- 77,666 bed nights
- 2,897 new stuff animals and quilts have been donated
- 16,902 loads of laundry
- 7,300 family-style meals

Families can always depend on the support of the Ronald McDonald House of Mid-Michigan.



“In 20 years, no family has been turned away if they could not donate the cost of their stay,” said Carolyn Hurst, executive director, Ronald McDonald House of Mid-Michigan.

Twenty-seven percent of the Ronald McDonald House revenue was raised through community fundraising in 2019, including the Run for the House and Golf for the House events. ■

# AF Group's People First Relief Program to Provide Millions in Relief During COVID-19

## AF GROUP ANNOUNCED A NEW PEOPLE FIRST RELIEF PROGRAM

that ensures the health and safety of its workforce, as well as offering more than \$20 million in immediate financial and operational assistance to its valued agents, policyholders, and injured workers. The multi-tiered program will support vulnerable businesses and provide resources to support community service organizations across the country.



# AF Group

“Our partnership with agents, policyholders, injured workers and our communities has led to remarkable and shared success for more than a century,” said Lisa Corless, president and CEO of AF Group. “The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges to many, and this important relief program reflects our commitment to supporting our customer base and our communities. All of this is predicated on our amazing workforce’s efforts, which is why we’re also working hard to protect the health and safety of more than 1,500 teammates nationwide. Their dedication to our collective success is allowing us to make a lasting impact.”

The People First Relief Program is ensuring the health and safety of AF Group teammates through enhanced cleaning and social distancing practices in its offices. Additional benefits have also been extended during the stay at home orders, including flexible leave options, free onsite lunches, and paid leave for teammates with existing COVID-19 health issues.

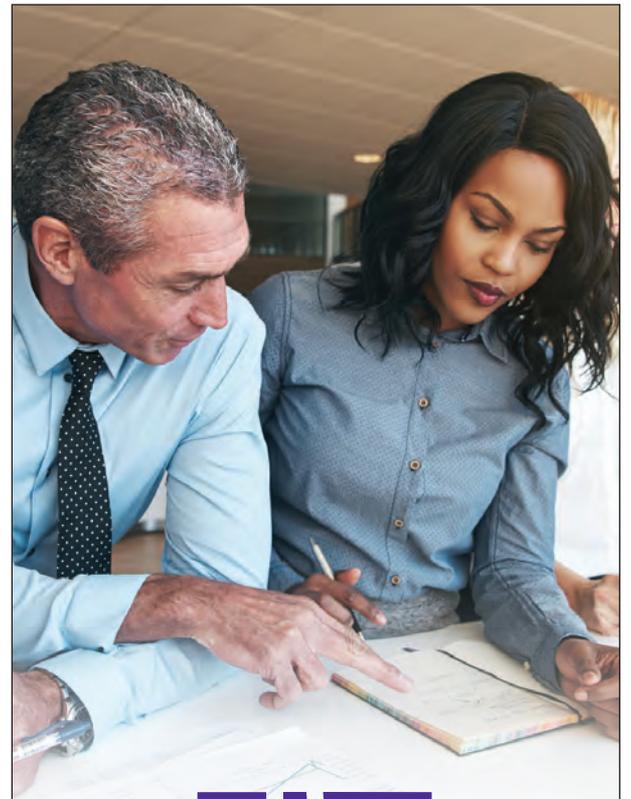
For AF Group’s agents, the People First Relief Program includes options for accelerating agency commissions and profit sharing for qualifying agents, opportunities for partnering with food service policyholders to provide food for essential workers, and new online resources to help agents to stay connected with their customers.

For policyholders, flexibility is being offered to extend payment due dates and to ensure policies are not canceled for non-payment, as well as expedited processing of payroll changes to adjust premiums to provide more immediate financial relief. For injured workers, the benefit of electronic fund transfer (EFT) is allowing quicker access to claim payments, and new telehealth services featuring virtual medical and physical therapy services are available.

In local communities, AF Group has continued to support charitable organizations in Michigan. These donations will increase nationwide over the next several months in the communities where employees work and live.

“Through the years, our collective success has been the direct result of the tireless commitment of our teammates and our remarkable partnerships with agents and policyholders,” said Corless. “We consider it an honor and a privilege to protect our teammates while exploring every opportunity to help sustain these partnerships for a shared, successful future.”

For more information, visit the [People First Relief Program page at AFGroup.com](#). ■



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# A Healing Center for Grieving Children & Teens

BY: KRISTINE KUHNERT, DIRECTOR, ELE'S PLACE CAPITAL REGION

## IT'S 4:48 AM.

My heart and mind are racing as I wonder what will happen today.

Life is not the same anymore.

Our world has abruptly stopped.

We have not been through anything like this in our lifetime, and yet this stress and uncertainty feels all too familiar to me.



true for all of us as we come out of this fog.

Becoming a widow at 45 and leading Ele's Place, a healing center for grieving children and teens, has given me a unique perspective on life, death, and the grief process.

Many of us are finding the positives of the quarantine. Family dinners, long walks, time to clean and organize and take stock of our lives. It's okay to find silver linings in a challenging situation.

If we do that, we can become a better, more compassionate community on the other side. And maybe that is what we gain from the loss.

*Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, Ele's Place continues to serve grieving children, teens, young adults and their families across the state of Michigan, at no cost to them. Please visit [www.elesplace.org](http://www.elesplace.org) to learn more about these services and how you can help. Additionally, Ele's Place invites you to share your joys and challenges of this journey through this pandemic <https://www.facebook.com/groups/elesplacecr>.* ■

I have been here before.

December 5, 2014 was a typical night for my family. My husband, Scott and I divided parental responsibilities for the weekend. He chose to go to our oldest son's hockey game an hour, and a half away and I was with another of our three boys returning pop cans for the 8th grade fundraiser to Washington D.C.

I received a phone call from my oldest son, who was delayed by a car accident. Two hours later, a police officer was at my door with a message no one ever wants to receive: I regret to inform you that your husband was killed by a drunk driver this evening.

I couldn't breathe. My body started to shake uncontrollably.

My world had abruptly stopped.

First, there was shock. This isn't happening. Complete disbelief. Is it really happening? Anger. Why is this happening to my family?

Feelings I — and I suspect others — are experiencing right now.

We are collectively grieving.

We are grieving the loss of life, certainly given the deadliness of this virus, but also the loss of our way of life. Jobs, social interactions, routines, funerals, celebrations, and milestone moments — weddings, graduations, birthdays, senior trips, sports team rituals — have all been wiped out.

I often talk about my life before Scott died and after Scott died. My gut tells me this will hold

We also are sad, angry, and frustrated with the lack of control. And that is okay, too.

Our emotions can change like the ocean. The water may be like a wave that tickles our toes or knocks us hard at the knees, or it may be like a tsunami.

Right now, anxiety and uncertainty are intense emotions many of us are experiencing. We are worried about ourselves, our families, and our children; Will I have a job? Will my elderly parents be okay? How do I make my child feel better when they are so sad about all that they have lost?

An ice cream cone, a Happy Meal or even a hug cannot take away the pain.

We are a society that is used to fixing problems fast. However, grief is messy and grief is not linear. It is okay to not have answers right now. It is ok to just sit with someone and feel sad. Somedays, the best we can all do is take things one day, one hour or one breath at a time. All feelings are okay, which is one of our guiding principles at Ele's Place.

As the world reboots, in a very different reality than we lived just two months ago, we must continue to embrace the grief process and support our kids, teens, and families as they journey through it.



## Small start-ups to big business

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# Michigan State University Federal Credit Union Supports Local Restaurants

BY: CASSADEE JACKSON, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

**LOCAL BUSINESSES AND RESTAURANTS** have been drastically affected since the novel Coronavirus transpired throughout Michigan. In 2019, small business contributed to 1,868,885 jobs across Michigan, 243,661 in accommodation and food services alone. Local businesses have had to change everything about the way they operate under Governor Gretchen Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order.

As a unique way to support local businesses and encourage people to pay kindness forward, Michigan State University Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) launched the #MSUFCUEatsLocal Giveaway social media promotion.



"This initiative provided another way for MSUFCU to support small businesses and bring the community together during this challenging time," said Deidre Davis, MSUFCU chief marketing officer. "It was wonderful to see our members in communities across the state participate in this promotion, and it was also fun to see that many local restaurants shared, liked, and commented on the posts."

Each participant captured a photo of takeout or delivery from a local restaurant and shared it in the comments on #MSUFCUEatsLocal posts using Facebook or Twitter.

Once a photo was shared, participants were automatically entered to win a \$25 gift card. Each winner also received a \$25 gift card to pay it forward to someone else. One randomly selected winner was chosen daily between April 22 and May 13. During the promotion, MSUFCU had more than 50 entries.

"MSUFCU is hosting a similar contest for its employees, but they posted their takeout or delivery photos to the Credit Union's intranet site or on their social media accounts using #MSUFCUEatsLocal," said Davis. "Fifty-two entries were submitted by employees. Employees shared they planned to use the gift cards to order more from area restaurants and share the cards with their children's teachers."



Giving back to the community is one of MSUFCU's core values and part of the "people helping people" philosophy on which credit unions were founded. The support, membership, and participation of MSUFCU members contributes to the ability to provide community philanthropy. MSUFCU provided a total of \$2,100 in gift cards to the community during the #MSUFCUEatsLocal Giveaway.

For more information about Michigan State University Federal Credit Union, visit [www.msufcu.org](http://www.msufcu.org) or contact Deidre Davis at [deidre.davis@msufcu.org](mailto:deidre.davis@msufcu.org). ■

# Jack Davis: The Consummate Leader in Business, Community Advocacy, and Philanthropy

**THE GREATER LANSING REGION LOST A LEGEND** when Jack Davis passed away on May 28, 2020. When one considers the term ‘community leader,’ a vision of Jack Davis and his legacy come to mind. There was hardly a worthwhile cause or important community endeavor that did not have Jack’s involvement and leadership.

Jack Davis was a Lansing kid – a product of the Lansing schools, graduating from Lansing Eastern before attending the University of Wisconsin and Harvard Law School. In 1966, he joined Loomis Law firm, where he went on to become a highly successful attorney and businessman.



Davis

Jack was deeply committed to building a better region. One of his most notable leadership roles came when he chaired the blue-ribbon task force to Keep GM in Lansing during the late 1990s. Those efforts led to the eventual decision by General Motors to reinvest in the Lansing Grand River Assembly Plant and

build the Lansing Grand River Assembly Plant. Those investments retained and created thousands of jobs in the region.

“He always showed up, and he always followed through,” former Lansing Mayor David Hollister told the Lansing State Journal. “There wasn’t any major project in the city or region that hasn’t been impacted by Jack, directly or indirectly.”

Jack Davis was a leading voice in the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) throughout his career. He served as chair of the board in 1997 and was extremely active in the LRCC’s political action committee, LRC-PAC, helping raise funds and elect candidates to local, state, and national offices. Among the numerous accolades, he received during his career was the Chamber’s Community Service Award in 2002.

“Jack was dedicated to helping the Lansing region realize its full potential, said Tim Daman, president & CEO, LRCC. “His philanthropic work over the years helped support our non-profit community provide help to those in need. Most importantly, to all of us who have had the privilege of knowing and working with Jack, he was a good friend. Our deepest condolences to Jack’s wife, Susan, and family during this difficult time. Jack Davis will be deeply missed by us all.” ■



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# HOW COVID-19 HAS FUELED BUSINESS INNOVATION IN GREATER LANSING



“Greater Lansing has always featured a strong entrepreneurial spirit that has led the region through peaks and valleys for more than a century. That spirit has most evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue into the next phase and beyond.”

## COVID-19 HAS ROCKED OUR WORLD.

Since the global pandemic slammed the U.S., our everyday lives have been disrupted. Our entire economy has been impacted as business, education, government, and non-profit organizations have seen their operations curtailed or shutdown. Healthcare has been overwhelmed in its efforts to keep pace with the onslaught of COVID-19 related cases.

Many employees have been furloughed. Remote workers have faced daily pressures of balancing their professional responsibilities with home life, which has been complicated by issues such as having children of all ages home due to school closures. Zoom has become a national pastime as face-to-face meetings have been replaced by video conference.

If there is a silver lining to be found during the COVID-19 crisis, it may be in the surge of innovation that has ramped up across multiple industry sectors. Manufacturers retooled their idle plants to respond to emergency needs brought on by the pandemic. General Motors used its Kokomo, India facility to produce VOCSN ventilators, as well as Level 1 surgical masks at its Warren, Mich. facility. Closed schools quickly shifted to online delivery of classes. Restaurants and grocery stores expanded to takeout and delivery services. Entertainment and cultural organizations that depend on in-person visits found ways to connect with their audiences through online platforms.

### PUTTING MICHIGAN BACK TO WORK

Governor Gretchen Whitmer worked with leaders in business, health care labor, and education to develop a six-stage plan to reopen Michigan's economy. The *MI Safe Start Plan* did not set a specific timeline for each phase, but instead tied the eventual reopening of the economy to various stages of the slowdown in the pandemic.

The automotive industry, long critical to Michigan's economic vitality, could restart on a limited basis in mid-May. All manufacturers began to come back with additional safety measures and guidelines.

Eaton Rapids-based Dowding Industries is a world-class manufacturer of metal stampings, fabrication, precision-machined components, and assemblies. Company President Jeff Metts said COVID-19 caused a 36% drop in volume, which is very significant in his business. Metts says the company has taken every safety precaution since the outbreak.



Metts

“We have 200 employees, and about 75 are working from home,” said Metts.



Dowding Industries in Eaton Rapids

“We are doing everything possible, including taking temperatures at the door and creating a safety circle that shows what six feet of distancing looks like exactly. Since that time, we have not had any instances of COVID-19.”

Going forward, Metts thinks entrepreneurship is going to boom. He also predicts manufacturing will start to come back to the U.S. from overseas.

“People in business are thoughtful people, said Metts. “They are always looking for ways to improve and reinvent themselves. I think this is a tremendous opportunity for a current business and new business to develop different ideas.”

### OPPORTUNITIES AROUND AMID CRISIS

The husband and wife team of Corey and Latasha Potter opened a small home-based business within the entertainment industry a little over one year ago. The business was going great as they were booked out for over a year, and the “phone wouldn't stop ringing.” Then, COVID-19 brought business to a screeching halt.

“Cancellations, brides requesting refunds, event deposits transferred, you name it,” said Latasha Potter. “Also, due to the uncertainty, no one was calling to book us in the future.”

Thinking about the needs for the future and combining their skills in marketing and Latasha's background in Human Resources, the couple discovered a need for immediate delivery of personal protective equipment. The HealthyLivingCompany.com was born!



The Healthy Living.com company was born during COVID-19 to fulfill need for immediate delivery of personal protective equipment.

“The Healthy Living Company sources and supplies only the best certified personal protection products to organizations across the nation including masks, face coverings, gloves, wipes, disinfectants, thermometers, and much more,” said Latasha Potter. “We are very excited to get the word out about our communicator covering, which provides a clear vinyl window that removes barriers for those who rely heavily on visual communication, including our hearing-impaired community and new mothers.”

Bath Township-based On Target Living is a company dedicated to transforming the health and wellness of individuals and organizations. Much of the company’s revenue is derived from speaking engagements around the world. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke, On Target founder and CEO Chris Johnson said the company lost 17 speaking engagements in four days.

“My wife asked me, ‘what are we going to do,’ said Johnson. “Our next speaking job isn’t until October 28, and I don’t know if that is going to happen.”

Johnson and the On Target Living team quickly shifted from public speaking to a webinar-based approach, scheduling 60 webinars as a means of connecting with their client base and attract new customers to their business.

### REDESIGNING OFFICE SPACE POST-COVID-19

Jim Baker launched Innovare, formerly Corporate Office Interiors, in 2008 as a one-man entrepreneurial enterprise. He wanted to create a business that focused on superior customer service. He believed office design was most effective in face-to-face meetings where he could see firsthand where the office furniture he sold was going and would be used as part of the business. This enabled him to closely connect with businesses and the people they served, including their employees.

The idea that was the foundation of Baker’s early business has grown the company into a premier dealer of trusted furniture vendors. In addition to offering an array of top furniture brands and industry leading office design expertise, Innovare also remanufactures Herman Miller workstations to affordably meet clients’ needs with solutions customized with beautiful textiles and fabrics.

As concerns about social distancing have mounted in recent weeks and brought with them an increased emphasis on working remotely, Innovare recognized the impact the “new normal” would have on the physical structure of the corporate office going forward. The company responded by developing a new product that



Saddleback BBQ Co-Owners Matt Gillett (left) and Travis Stoliker (right).

will protect employees sitting at their workstations. The new product, InnoVide, helps businesses easily transform workspaces in minutes to protect employees from the spread of illness in the workplace while still maintaining employee engagement.

“Over the last few years, many of our customers have moved to open workstation environments because they are a great solution for collaboration,” said Baker. “Our product allows employers to easily adapt those workspaces with higher barriers such as glass, plexiglass or an acoustical product on top of their existing panels without replacing or harming their existing design investment.”

Baker foresees a continued trend of working remotely. He also expects employers to utilize more shared workstations, for which he feels his new product is a perfect solution.

### RESTAURANTS ADAPT TO COVID-19 SURVIVAL THREAT

The restaurant industry, noted for thin profit margins, was particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. Restaurant dining rooms in Michigan were closed for over two months. Restaurant owners scrambled to shift their services to takeout, curbside pick-up, and delivery in a bid to generate some cash flow during the shutdown.

Saddleback Barbeque with stores in Lansing and Okemos already had online ordering, curbside and delivery for a couple of years. Once the COVID-19 shutdown forced the dining room to close, Saddleback had laid off 12 people because of uncertainty over what would happen to sales.

Restaurants face an uncertain future, especially when it comes to customers returning to the dine-in experience. Saddleback co-owner Travis Stoliker assumes that restaurants will reopen dining rooms at a much lower capacity than before COVID-19. The question will revolve around how customers are going to feel about the experience.

“Before all this happened, we had all our barbeque sauces on the table,” said Stoliker. “Most likely people are not going to be comfortable with that, so do we have to remove those from the tables? The other question is, are people even going to want to eat out in a restaurant?”

One certainty the Saddleback team had from the beginning of the pandemic was the desire to support those in need in the community. Once it was announced schools were closed, the Saddleback team reached out to help children in the region who needed meals.

“If there is a silver lining to be found during the COVID-19 crisis, it may be in the surge of innovation that has ramped up across multiple industry sectors.”

# HOW COVID-19 HAS FUELED BUSINESS INNOVATION IN GREATER LANSING

“We knew those kids were going to need food, so we immediately started a program where customers could donate \$5 towards a kid’s meal,” said Stoliker. “The entire meal cost about \$7. We covered the delivery and the additional charges for the food.”

Saddleback started a similar donation program to support health care workers. They also created a video called Lansing Strong, which celebrates the essential workers that have been so critical during the pandemic.

Setting competitive feelings aside during the crisis, Saddleback Barbeque created a website that lists all the local restaurants that have been open during the pandemic.

“A lot of our friends in the restaurant industry don’t have the online presence that we have,” said Stoliker. “That website has about 20,000 views. We do not view the other restaurants as competitors. We want people to support locally owned businesses.”



School districts in the Ingham Intermediate service area served over one million meals to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## REMOTE EDUCATION EVOLVES

Over the past decade, remote education has grown dramatically, especially for adults who like the convenience of the online experience when seeking a degree or certification. COVID-19 forced cancellations of K-12 and higher education classes, which brought online learning into homes across the country. That was a big adjustment for educators, something that had to be tackled in a short period.

“Moving to distance learning was very foreign to us,” said Jason Mellema, superintendent of the Ingham Intermediate School District (Ingham ISD). “Most states that have implemented an e-learning platform did so over 18 months to two years. We did that in five weeks. I applaud what our teachers and leaders in our school districts have done. It is amazing to see how we have adjusted.”

School districts within Ingham ISD also had to reach out and meet family needs beyond the classroom, which means schools have pivoted from what they do regularly. During this time, it has included meal distribution, coordinating childcare for essential workers, and dealing with families’ social and emotional needs.

“Since March 16, over one million meals have been served by the school districts within the Ingham ISD service area,” said Mellema. “It speaks to the challenges that our communities are facing as well as how they have turned to schools to be partners. We are walking side-by-side with them to let them know we are in this together, and we are going to be okay in the end.”

Looking forward to the fall, Mellema thinks expectations will be for schools to provide greater online learning experiences than what has previously been the norm. It presents challenges for teachers who will need to bolster their professional development. For students with special needs or those challenged with poverty or living with trauma, it also raises serious questions in terms of access and equity. Some inequities need to be addressed in terms of access throughout communities to robust broadband.

Professional training raises a challenge because it may require hands-on experience that could be difficult to provide online. Ingham ISD’s Wilson Talent Center has 850 students that participate in 19 different programs. This year, students had already gained numerous hands-on experiences, which made the shift to online learning more manageable. Should we have to start the upcoming school year in an online format, it would add a layer of challenges as students would not be able to rely on prior knowledge. Understanding that there are many unknowns regarding next year, Ingham ISD is considering various options to support continued quality learning opportunities for students.

“For instance, we know that cosmetology students need a certain number of hours to get their license,” said Mellema. “Although we are currently shutdown through June 30, we are offering students an opportunity to come in July and gain the hours they need. We will need to have this kind of flexibility in the future, while meeting minimum certification requirements.”



Construction restarts for Forsberg Real Estate Company at Elevation Apartments in Okemos.

## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS THE REBUILD

Construction was one of the first industries allowed to restart in early May. This was good news for hundreds of commercial construction projects in the region, including McLaren Greater Lansing’s new hospital on the city’s southside.

Spring is also prime time for the residential housing industry, which is still

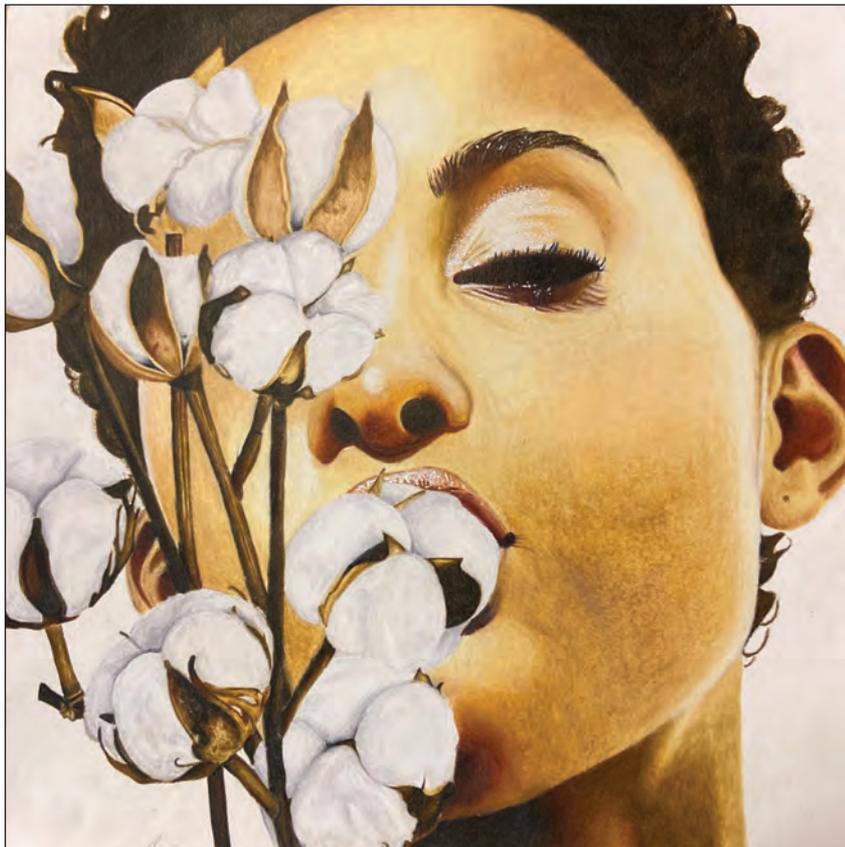
working to recover to pre-recession construction levels fully. Brent Forsberg, president of Okemos-based Forsberg Real Estate Company, says there had been a good uptick in the housing market before the COVID-19 outbreak. During the shutdown, the company sold homes at Lakeside Preserve and Looking Glass in Dewitt and Riverwalk Meadows in Mason. Forsberg crews are back at work on several projects around the region, including Elevation apartments near Okemos and Jolly Road.

“We had a pent-up demand that we think is going to plug this gap for the next couple of months,” said Forsberg. “The question for us moving forward is how fast do jobs come back.”

Forsberg thinks the next trend because of COVID-19 will be an exodus of people from more densely populated urban areas, which could benefit markets like Lansing.

“This is a good time for us to be pushing the quality of life and affordability advantages we have in attracting people,” said Forsberg. “This is a real opportunity for regions like this.”

Longer-term, some of the things the Forsberg team are looking at include the possibility of sterilization stations on porches, using UV lights in the kitchen that can be turned on when you bring your groceries in and trying to understand the impacts of viruses like COVID-19 on HVAC systems.



The Lansing Art Gallery and Education Center took its high school competition virtual. Cotton Field Blues is created by their Grade 12 Portfolio Award Winner, Jasmyn B., from Williamston High School.

## TOURISM AND THE ARTS

The tourism industry was affected immediately by the COVID-19 forced shutdown. Many major events have been canceled, including a national event for the Boy Scouts that would have brought 8,000 people to town in July. Julie Pingston, CEO of the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, says the tourism and hospitality industry, which is known for bringing people together, will recover slowly.

“The perfect thing is that our hotels have not closed,” said Pingston. “They

have been very intent on making all the safety precautions available to guests immediately and have been providing accommodations for medical personnel and first responders.” The new normal for hotels will mean that things like breakfast buffets may be replaced by grab and go and pre-packaged boxed meals.

Something in Lansing’s favor, according to Pingston is that it is a drivable destination being within 90 miles for 90% of the population in Michigan, which is perfect for a day trip. The region is also a small town with big-city opportunities to experience within an easy drive.

“We have a lot of outdoor activities including trails, the Riverfront, Rotary Park, kayaking, and other activities that are attractive opportunities for visitors in the short term,” said Pingston.

The arts and museum communities also depend on face-to-face and hands-on interaction with the community. Most organizations laid off their staffs following the Governor’s original Executive Order in March. Barb Whitney, executive director of the Lansing Art Gallery and Education Center, was determined to avoid layoffs and challenged her team to develop a new mindset.

“We challenged them to come up with non-traditional and virtual ways of engagement,” said Whitney. “Out of that came our first online art show for our high school exhibition which is in its 35th year and the first in which it was digital.”

A collegiate show, now in its third year, is in place at the Gallery.

“We created a true virtual tour of the physical space where you can enjoy the artwork from your home,” said Whitney.

Despite the apparent setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Whitney and her team are optimistic they can move forward with ArtPath, a popular outdoor art display along the downtown River Trail. Two major sponsors, Rathbun Agency and Auto-Owners, along with the city of Lansing have pledged their support. Local artists are also on board, paving the way for the third year of the event.

As an agency that depends on revenue from artwork sales and classes, Whitney acknowledges that their financial picture is uncertain. However, she has been greatly encouraged by the donor base that has been responding by stepping up their support to keep the organization financially stable.

## MOVING TO THE NEXT STAGE

Many experts have suggested that as the workforce begins to return and we restart the economy, employers should develop a map or plan for what it is going to look like. The first emphasis should be on health and safety for employees, customers, and vendors. Though caution is a crucial watchword, Jeff Metts suggests it is important that we not let fear consume us and hold us back.

“I am ready to go back to work. I am not fearful,” said Metts. “I would encourage people to get away from fearful thoughts and get on with life.”

Though there will be challenges along the way, there are also good reasons for hope and encouragement.

“The new normal means that change is constant which is exhausting,” said Whitney. “The silver lining is that we are learning together as a society. We know that people are all coming from different places, and situations and we are trying to be thoughtful and careful and offer ideas for inspiration and engagement.”

Greater Lansing has always featured a strong entrepreneurial spirit that has led the region through peaks and valleys for more than a century. That spirit has most evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue into the next phase and beyond. ■

# Eaton RESA Career Preparation Center Student Chosen as a U.S. Presidential Scholars Program Semifinalist

**NATALIE WALLAS, A SENIOR FROM GRAND LEDGE HIGH SCHOOL**, was recently selected as a semifinalist in the United States Presidential Scholars Program. Nominated by MaryEllen Brocklehurst, student services coordinator and counselor at the Eaton RESA Career Preparation Center, Ms. Wallas has exemplified all the aspects of a Presidential Scholar. Ms. Wallas is a student in the Mechatronics and Robotics program at the Career Preparation Center and was previously a student in the Diesel Equipment Repair program.



According to the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was created to recognize and honor some of the nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. Each year, up to 161 students are named U.S. Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. Students can become Presidential Scholars based on three paths of accomplishment, broad academic achievement, academic and artistic achievement in visual and performing arts or creative writing and outstanding accomplishments in career and technical education fields, which is the case for Ms. Wallas and just nineteen other students.

"This honor took a lot of hard work to accomplish, so to find out that I am a semifinalist is very exciting! I cannot thank Mrs. Brocklehurst and everyone else

who played major roles in the process enough. I was truly touched by the support I received from all those involved at Eaton RESA and Grand Ledge High School. I look forward to seeing the outcome," said Natalie Wallas.

"Natalie is very deserving of this honor in her pursuit of quality academic work and support to fellow students. She is an amazing young woman with multiple talents and demonstrates excellence in everything she does. I am grateful to have known her the past two years while she was a student at Eaton RESA along with serving as a state officer for SkillsUSA Michigan," said MaryEllen Brocklehurst.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars will review all semifinalists' applications based on the same criteria used by the initial review committee. The Commission selects up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars each year. All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during the National Recognition Program, held in June in Washington, D.C.

The Scholars are awarded the U.S. Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House to commemorate their achievement. In the fall, Natalie will be attending Michigan Technological University to obtain a degree in mechanical engineering. ■

## VOICE OF BUSINESS

### Keeping You Connected

**THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (LRCC)** holds virtual business roundtables every month. It consists of LRCC business members as well as public officials from every level of government (city, county, state, and federal), including school districts. A variety of issues relevant to the business community and region are discussed during the roundtables. ■



### Social Districts

**THE LRCC SUPPORTS HOUSE BILL 5781** sponsored by State Representative Mike Webber (R-Rochester Hills), which would amend the Liquor Control Code to allow social districts to benefit on-premises licensees, similar to what is under consideration in Toledo and other states and cities around the country. Understanding that restaurants and bars are likely not to be brought back online at 100% capacity would allow local governments to designate social districts and create common areas that would expand square footage for businesses within the boundaries. ■



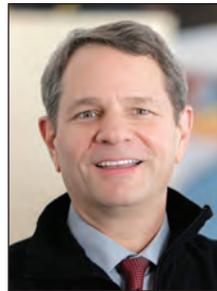
Questions can be directed to Steve Japinga, vice president of public affairs, LRCC, at [sjapinga@lansingchamber.org](mailto:sjapinga@lansingchamber.org).

# Lansing Community College Announces New President

## Steve Robinson Becomes Seventh President

**LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE (LCC) ANNOUNCES** that Steve Robinson will become the college's seventh president.

After a nationwide search, the LCC Board of Trustees selected Steve Robinson, current president of Owens Community College in Perrysburg, Ohio, as the college's next leader.



Robinson

Robinson succeeds President Brent Knight, who will retire June 30.

Robinson brings a rich community college career that spans 23 years and includes teaching, management, and organizational operations. Prior to being named Owens Community College's seventh president in 2018, he served as their vice president of academic affairs and provost. He also led the college through a serious financial crisis, placing the institution on sound fiscal footing.

Familiar to the state of Michigan, Robinson has worked at Mott Community College in Flint as the executive dean of planning and research, the University of Michigan-Flint as a graduate faculty member in English, and faculty advisor and chairperson in the Doctorate in Community College Leadership program at Ferris State University.

"Dr. Robinson has shown expert skills in managing complexities and has been successful at overcoming challenges," said Lawrence Hidalgo, Jr., LCC Board of Trustees chair. "We look forward to him working in tandem with our students, faculty, staff and the Board of Trustees to make LCC the best it can be."

Brent Knight endorsed the decision. "I trust that the Board of Trustees have selected a very capable successor and I am confident that LCC will continue to serve the community with distinction."

Robinson holds a Ph.D. in English from Michigan State University, where he also earned B.A. and M.A. degrees. His master's degree is specifically in English Community College Teaching. He began his teaching career at LCC as an intern teaching WRIT 121, and will now return to mid-Michigan as the college's next leader. ■



## Leadership Lansing Cohort Completes 2019-2020 Session on Zoom

### THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

caused seismic shifts in how we conduct business in the past few months. For Leadership Lansing, the crisis forced the cancellation of its planned activities in April. However, the 47 participants in this year's Leadership Lansing cohort were not going to be denied the opportunity to meet together again and finish out what has been a most successful season.

Leadership Lansing met via Zoom on May 12. Six teams of participants presented projects on which they had been working for the past several months. The presentations featured outstanding assets that make Lansing a great place to live, including Old Town, Horrock's, Makers and Shakers, Lansing Brewing Company, The Perfect Ladies Night Out, and High Caliber Karting.

Tiffany Dowling, founder and CEO, M3 Group spoke to the group about her journey leading up to establishing and building a successful business. Tiffany also shared thoughts on the importance of commitment to community and managing during a crisis.

Leadership Lansing is a program designed to develop and equip the next generation of community leaders. Congratulations to Leadership Lansing Cohort 5 for their participation in and completion of this year's program! ■



# Davenport University: Providing Multiple Pathways for Today's Nursing Profession

BY: MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

**“OUR GRADUATES TELL US THAT** although they have never seen a pandemic like this, Davenport provided the foundational knowledge regarding how to communicate, assess, and utilize critical thinking, which makes them feel so much more comfortable treating patients.”

These are the words of Dr. Amy Stahley, associate dean of nursing at Davenport University. Davenport offers these pathways and more for students varying experience from the bachelor's pre-licensure (BSN) to the master's (MSN) program.

The MSN option, offering three concentrations: family nurse practitioner, nurse educator or MSN, is for those looking to build on their bachelor's degree. All courses are taken online so students can work while they study.

For those just graduating from high school, Davenport offers its BSN pre-licensure program. There is the BSN Completion program for RNs who already have their associate degree and way to become a bachelor's prepared nurse. In the completion program, students will be awarded up to 31 credits upon entry, allowing the BSN to be earned faster.

Lastly, the Practical Nursing diploma is designed to prepare students for the role of a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).

Whether a high school senior or postgrad, Davenport has several options to ensure



students receive the highest quality nursing education to prepare students for successful careers. First-year students are welcomed immediately as nursing students, which differs from other nursing programs.

“You don't begin at Davenport and then wait to apply for the nursing program to know if you'll be admitted. Additionally, clinicals begin in the second year, where many other schools only initiate clinicals junior or senior year,” Stahley said. “Our mission is to provide as much exposure as possible in various sectors of the nursing profession.”

Students can dive into specialized areas, gaining surgical experience at Mercy Health Saint Mary's and Metro Health University of Michigan or primary care work at Veteran

Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic, to highlight just a few of Davenport's partnerships.

Now more than ever, the world looks to health care professionals.

“We prepare students to be safe, novice nurses,” Stahley said. “At Davenport, they have a great foundation. They are ready to work in the field right away.”

For those interested in applying for one of Davenport's nursing programs, the next application review dates are June 12 and July 10. Visit [Davenport.edu/Nursing-application](http://Davenport.edu/Nursing-application) for further details on nursing programs at the Lansing, Grand Rapids, Midland and Warren campus. ■



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# Lansing Regional Chamber Connections Move Online

BY: MICHELLE RAHL, VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**I REMEMBER A SIMPLER TIME** when my daily concerns were the traffic, my email inbox, or what was on the menu for dinner that night. Our current situation is much different and more complex as we navigate the ongoing realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the more things change, the more they stay the same. And one business need that has not changed is the importance of relationships and connectivity. We realize now more than ever the value of those networking events, cups of coffee, and impromptu conversations.

One of the primary functions of a chamber is to serve as a convener of people, and to be a trusted source of information. Both of those needs have been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have provided the most current and needed information for businesses to take the next step through the robust and thorough Resources page on the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) website.

A more fundamental shift was required to meet the connectivity needs of the membership, and how to take our successful events and programming and shift them to the digital space. Our first efforts were webinars focused specifically on COVID-19 topics and immediate business needs. The LRCC's membership team also launched intimate Chamber iChats to meet with industry-specific sectors of our members.

We are most excited about the launch of the virtual versions of the Lansing Economic Club and Member Mixers. These two events are some of our

most popular ways to connect, grow, and thrive. Our partnership with MessageMakers allows us to transition Economic Club online seamlessly. The format takes various components of the popular in-person program and weaved them into an innovative and exciting virtual experience. We will continue to tweak the program to meet the needs of the membership.



Taking large-scale networking online is a daunting task, but the technology available to business leaders allows us to be agile and innovative. Utilizing the ubiquitous Zoom platform, we were able to welcome 100 members into a virtual Member Mixer. Breaking the group into smaller breakout rooms mimics the feel of a real networking event and gives folks a chance to make a more intimate connection.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mandated social distancing, the landscape, and the way we do things may look different. However, the LRCC is excited to find new ways to continue to convene the Lansing community and still offer a lineup of speakers who are subject matter

experts, prominent business professionals, and leaders in their respective fields.

We hope the return of Economic Club and our Member Mixers, albeit in digital form, signal somewhat of a return to normalcy. We recognize that it cannot be business as usual, but we all strive to do business as much as possible. Until we can see you again in person safely, we look forward to seeing you at an upcoming virtual event! ■



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## NEW HIRES



Ramírez-Montagut

**Michigan State University** announced the appointment of **Mónica Ramírez-Montagut** as director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum (MSU Broad). Ramírez-Montagut currently serves as the director of the Newcomb Art Museum at Tulane University in New Orleans and will assume her new role at the MSU Broad on July 1. Ramírez-Montagut brings nearly 20 years of arts and cultural experience to the MSU Broad, and her background as a trained architect. Throughout her extensive career, her approach to art is known for being both publicly engaged and socially conscious.

## AWARDS

**Mayberry Homes** is thrilled to be awarded the 2020 Avid GOLD Award - North Central U.S. This award is presented to builders with the highest scores in their region on the New Home Move-In Experience Survey, which is taken from the purchasing experience to the first 90 days of ownership. Every region is eligible for one award each for Production, Custom, and Small Volume builder categories.

**Peptinovo Biopharma, LLC**, a Michigan-based medical technology startup looking to revolutionize cancer treatment efficacy, will continue to advance its mission and work towards improving chemotherapy outcomes for patients with support from a Business Accelerator Fund (BAF) award the company secured through LEAP's regional SmartZone program. Founded in 2014 by Dr. Ren Homan, Ph.D. and Dr. Bill Elliot, Ph.D., Peptinovo is

working to address the debilitating side effects of chemotherapy endured by many cancer patients. The company's patented drug-delivery platform, Peptide-Amphiphile Lipid Micelle (PALM), reduces or eliminates one of the most severe side effects threatening outcomes for world-leading chemotherapy drugs. PALM works by helping redirect higher doses of chemotherapy drugs directly into tumors while keeping them away from other healthy tissues.



**Eaton RESA's Meadowview School** has received a 2020 Education Excellence Award and a \$2,500 grant from the SET SEG Foundation and Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB). The Education Excellence Award is being awarded to Meadowview School's Peer-to-Peer program. Meadowview School serves students with many diverse abilities. In 2016, they added an Emotional Impairment Program, and staff seized this opportunity to implement a Peer-to-Peer program. Classrooms in the new Emotional Impairment program were paired with classes in the existing Cognitive Impairment program. Students are provided opportunities to develop positive relationships with their peers, which results in improved behavior.

**Mason Middle School**, eighth-grade student, **Melody Meyer**, was announced as one of 10 statewide winners of Farm Bureau Insurance's America and Me Essay Contest. The theme of the annual contest is "My Personal Michigan Hero." Melody's essay earned 9th place out of approximately 3,500 essays submitted by students from over 350 Michigan schools. Open to any eighth-grade student in Michigan, the America an Me Essay Contest was developed in 1968 to encourage Michigan youth to explore their roles in America's future.



Fouty

**Lansing Community College** has announced that **Marvin Fouty** received the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award posthumously at this year's virtual commencement ceremony. Fouty had a long career as a professional land surveyor, real estate broker, land developer, and author. He opened his land surveying firm in 1974 and became an independent real estate broker in 1985. He had an extremely successful career, including his 1993 development of the Pineknoll Estates subdivision on the Red Cedar River in Williamstown Township, and 70 Lot Hunters Crossing subdivision in Bath Township.

## DISTINCTIONS



Martin

**Martin Waymire** president and co-founder **Roger Martin, APR**, has been recognized for his long and distinguished career in journalism and public relations with a 2020 Outstanding Alumni Award from the Michigan State University (MSU) College

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of Communications Arts & Sciences. Roger is among six alumni selected for the honor, which recognizes ComArtSci graduates who have obtained the highest level of professional or academic achievement and demonstrated service to the college and community.

PROMOTIONS



Pray

**Morgan Pray** has been promoted to assistant manager of LAFCU's West Lansing Branch. In her new position, Pray will oversee branch operations, including teller and lending functions, and has staff supervisory responsibilities.



Brisboe



Daugherty



Reetz

Two nursing leaders and a chief financial officer have been named presidents of three Sparrow community hospitals, which provide quality,

compassionate care throughout mid-Michigan. Effective May 1, **Mark Brisboe**, **Beth Daugherty**, and **Linda Reetz** were promoted to serve as presidents of Sparrow Carson, Sparrow Clinton, and Sparrow Ionia Hospitals, respectively. Each has been serving as acting hospital administrators for the past few months and bring decades of healthcare leadership experience to their new roles. The community-based boards of directors of each hospital unanimously selected the trio.



Buell

**Resch Strategies** announced it strengthened its team by hiring **Carly Buell** as its digital marketing specialist. In her new role, Buell will be responsible for writing, creating, and monitoring digital content for Resch Strategies' growing client list, while also assisting with other client projects and initiatives. Buell graduated this spring with honors from Michigan State University, where she earned a degree in advertising with a double minor in public relations and organizational leadership.

COMPANY NEWS

**Junior Achievement of Mid-Michigan** is releasing a free resource for teens titled *Making Sense: Understanding the Financial Impact of COVID-19*. The guide is designed to answer teens' questions about the economic implications of COVID-19, including "Why are some store shelves empty?", "Why are some people losing their jobs?" and "Are we going into a recession or even a depression?" The guide is available at [JA.org/MakingSense](http://JA.org/MakingSense).

To support organizations and communities throughout its international network, including the State of Michigan, **Crestcom International, LLC** proudly announced the launch of its *Crestcom Cares* initiative. Crestcom is offering free webinars on relevant leadership topics, open to everyone. Crestcom also donated \$100 to a local food bank for every new participant enrolled in its year-long leadership development experience during May.

**Martin Commercial Properties**, a leading privately owned real estate services, and development company, recently brokered the sale of a six-building portfolio in west Lansing. Creyts Holdings, LCC purchased the portfolio. The seller, Woodlake, LLC is owned by Donny Luberto and purchased these properties in 2015 and desired to sell them once the properties were over 90% occupied. The six-building portfolios comprised of 36,827 square feet, with five of the six buildings fully leased by Martin Commercial Properties as the listing agent. The portfolio is located just west of the I-496/ I-69 interstate

exchange and less than a mile from national retailers such as Target, Burlington, and Meijer.

The **Food Bank Council of Michigan** welcomed news of the USDA's \$3 billion in food purchases through the newly created Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. In addition to supplying fresh emergency food, the program supports U.S. farmers by providing \$100 million monthly for dairy, produce, and meats. The news, although applauded, presents new challenges to Michigan's food bank network as they navigate a new federal program and timely deliveries to multiple locations. Michigan Farm Bureau is collaborating with commodity organizations and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to determine how Michigan's great agriculture products can be included in the food assistance program.

Amid the evolving economic impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** remains steadfast in supporting communities across the region by accessing and distributing relief funds. LEAP, with support from the **PNC Foundation**, announced continued investment in public art and support for artist-entrepreneurs, by awarding \$30,000 for public art through LEAP's Public Art for Communities (PAFC) grant program. LEAP's 2020 PAFC grants will expand the Lansing region's growing collection of public art by welcoming three new pieces. The PAFC 2020 grant awardees include the cities of Williamston and Lansing, and Delhi Township, which will each receive \$10,000 to advance permanent public art projects.



When EMC Insurance wanted to expand its branch office in the greater Lansing area with a new custom-designed building, they sought an investor/developer and commercial real estate firm who could deliver on all fronts. The two-year project started when **NAI Mid-Michigan** presented an agreement that included the purchase of EMC Insurance's existing building as a trade-in property. It was a priority for EMC Insurance to trade its current structure as part of the development agreement. From there,

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NAI Mid-Michigan and its resident partner, TMN Builders, Inc., guided both the landlord and tenant through the interplay of the lease, design, construction, timing, and financing, and a thorough program of due diligence. TMN Builders, Inc. completed construction in just under 11 months, and EMC Insurance took occupancy in February.

A partnership between state government, **Meijer**, and the Food Bank Council of Michigan will help feed a growing number of residents turning to food banks during the COVID-19 crisis. The collaborative project between the State Emergency Operations Center and Food Bank Council directly responds to the massive need to be placed on Michigan's seven regional food banks. Through a memorandum of understanding, now serving as a model for other states, Meijer initially sourced \$1.6 million in food products with delivery to Michigan food banks.

**Martin Commercial Properties**, a leading privately owned real estate services, and development company, recently brokered the sale of 3001 W. Main Street in Lansing. The building is 25,256 square feet and was previously owned by Sinto America, Inc (dba Roberts Sinto Corporation). The company is consolidating its

employees to be based from their headquarters in Grand Ledge, and no longer needed their office on Main Street. It was purchased by Acoustics Inn LLC.



Parents looking for support while schools are using distance learning can keep the learning going and sharpen students' skills with locally owned **Sylvan Learning** centers. Sylvan of Lansing, Sylvan of Brighton, Sylvan of Jackson, and Sylvan of Grand Blanc have revamped their face-to-face tutoring and center-based

services. The new offerings include digital services for students and parents to aid in e-learning, including **free parent resources** and free consultations from certified, local teachers to help identify need and opportunity areas.

Employees at **MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU)** raised \$44,627 for local charitable organizations during the first three months of 2020, in keeping with the Credit Union's mission of giving back to the community. Each year, Credit Union employees select local charities to support through a yearlong fundraising initiative. This year's charities in Greater Lansing are Capital Area United Way (CAUW) and Helping Women Period. Each organization received \$11,156.

To increase opportunities for underserved individuals across Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties to pursue entrepreneurship and small business ownership successfully, **LEAP** has launched **One&All**. This inclusive entrepreneurship program that will provide \$2,500 grants and a hybrid model of incubator and accelerator business support for up to 120 startup or small-business entrepreneurs from underserved populations across the Lansing region. **One&All** is the first program of its



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kind in the state of Michigan. It is generously funded with a \$300,000 contribution from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Innovative Fund and \$200,000 from the Consumers Energy Foundation.

To assist COVID-19 response efforts in Lansing, **General Motors** was able to donate N95 masks, gloves, and surgical gowns to Lansing hospitals. Local GM plants have also contributed a \$65,000 grant to the Greater Lansing Food Bank. These funds will help provide emergency food to individuals and families in need throughout mid-Michigan. In total, GM has invested more than \$2.65 million in COVID-19 response funds to 40 nonprofits serving the communities where their employees live and work.

**Clark Construction** created a GoFundMe initiative to raise funds for food banks, healthcare workers, and community-based organizations. Clark Construction matched employee donations dollar-for-dollar. The Food Bank Council of Michigan earned a spot on the list for its tireless efforts to feed thousands of individuals, families, and seniors in need of emergency food. The \$8,000 raised by Clark Construction will benefit the work of the Council's seven regional food banks that feed residents in all Michigan's 83 counties.

The founders of the Defeat the Breach Coalition, **Providence Consulting, Truscott Rossman** and **Fraser Trebilcock** are excited to announce that DFI Forensics, a digital forensics firm headquartered in Vancouver, BC, has been accepted as their first affiliate member. DFI Forensics has been a great supporter of the Coalition since Tyler Hatch, B.A., LL.B. brought them onto his podcast in January to talk about cybersecurity awareness.

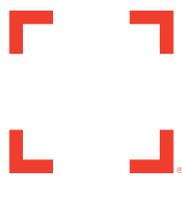
**MSU Federal Credit Union's** philanthropic foundation, Desk Drawer Fund, marked its first anniversary, with \$114,124 donated to 43 organizations in 2019 and \$56,700 to 10 organizations so far this year. \$170,824 has been donated to 53 organizations since the foundation's inception in April 2019. The Desk Drawer Fund provides support for numerous initiatives across five pillars to support organizations within the communities the Credit Union serves: arts and culture; stable housing; empowering youth; financial education, and fostering entrepreneurialism. The foundation's goal is to fund as many local organizations as possible to support the maximum number of community members.

**MiWomen** announced a new initiative to help entrepreneurs safely reopen their businesses in

this new normal. With the generous support of MEDC, the SBA, NEI, and many notable corporate and individual donors, the \$1.5 million Michigan Entrepreneur Resilience Fund provides grants and loans to entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups.

**Davenport University** announced that it has created a scholarship to support unemployed, laid-off or furloughed individuals because of COVID-19. Davenport's new Launch Scholarship provides up to \$8,000 per year for up to four years of education.

**McLaren Health Care** has been awarded \$626,328 in funding for expanded telehealth services from the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program. McLaren is one of 30 health care providers nationwide approved for this special allocation at this time. This FCC program provides immediate support to eligible health care providers responding to the pandemic. They do so by fully funding their telehealth platform services and equipment necessary to provide critical connected care services. The funding allows for 12 of McLaren's hospitals across Michigan to enhance telehealth connectivity between providers and patients statewide. ■



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