

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June
2024



Bus advertisements were one of the many ways the Region 9 AAA promoted the Advancing Caregiving Through Technology Conference. The Arenac Transportation Authority buses were covered with these advertisements.

Legislative Day at The Capitol

Some of the dedicated NEMCSA staff had an incredible time in Lansing for the Legislative Day at the Capitol, where they had the opportunity to meet with elected officials and discuss the important work NEMCSA does in the communities. The event included a speech from Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The Staff were thrilled to see some amazing clients and volunteers recognized for their contributions, including Gerald, who overcame homelessness and mental health challenges to rebuild his life, and Judy and Billy, who have volunteered over 2,000 hours each through the RSVP Program, making a significant impact in the community.

Additionally, attendees celebrated Trinidad Flores, whose journey from homelessness to stability has been marked by his dedication to giving back through volunteer work. Trinidad found housing and employment with NEMCSA's support and now volunteers at a nursing home, creates hats for cancer patients, and participates in the BOSS Program. These inspiring stories of resilience and community support highlight the vital role NEMCSA plays in transforming lives.



Program Impact

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

MMAP UPDATE

Region 9 MMAP Counselor Bradd Chisholm is featured in the first of several N & R Publications interviews/articles to illustrate what MMAP (Michigan Medicare Assistance Program) does for Medicare beneficiaries. Brad talks about how he nearly fell victim to a suspected fraud event and how he now educates others in his volunteer work. The article can be found at: Medicare Billing Fraud is a Growing Concern • N&R Spotlight (newsreview.com)

ADVANCING CAREGIVING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Region 9 AAA and MSU School of Social Work hosted a free Caregiving Through Technology Conference in Arenac on May 17, 2024. Twenty-nine participants attended the conference with eight vendor exhibits. The conference's focus was demonstrating how technology can be used by caregivers and older adults to make their lives easier. The keynote speaker was Beth Nolan, Director of Research and Policy at Positive Approach to Dementia Care who discussed how to develop activities that have meaning for those living with Dementia. One participant stated, "I found this conference very educational and valuable to me."



DRUG TAKE BACK EVENT

As part of its Aging Opioid Grant through the ACLS Bureau, the AAA has been working with local Councils/Commissions on Aging and other community organizations to host Drug Take Back and Education events.

Pictured below is one of the events in Rogers City. Attendees were given Deterra Bags, boxes of Narcan, and a drug lock box as a door prize.

Events have also been held in Iosco County where they gave away lock boxes and Narcan. For the events that took place in Alpena and Rogers City, attendees were provided Deterra bags in partnership with Catholic Human Services/UP North Prevention and the Michigan State Police or local law enforcement, the events were a success. The police officers at the events handle the medication.

STAFF TRAINING DAY

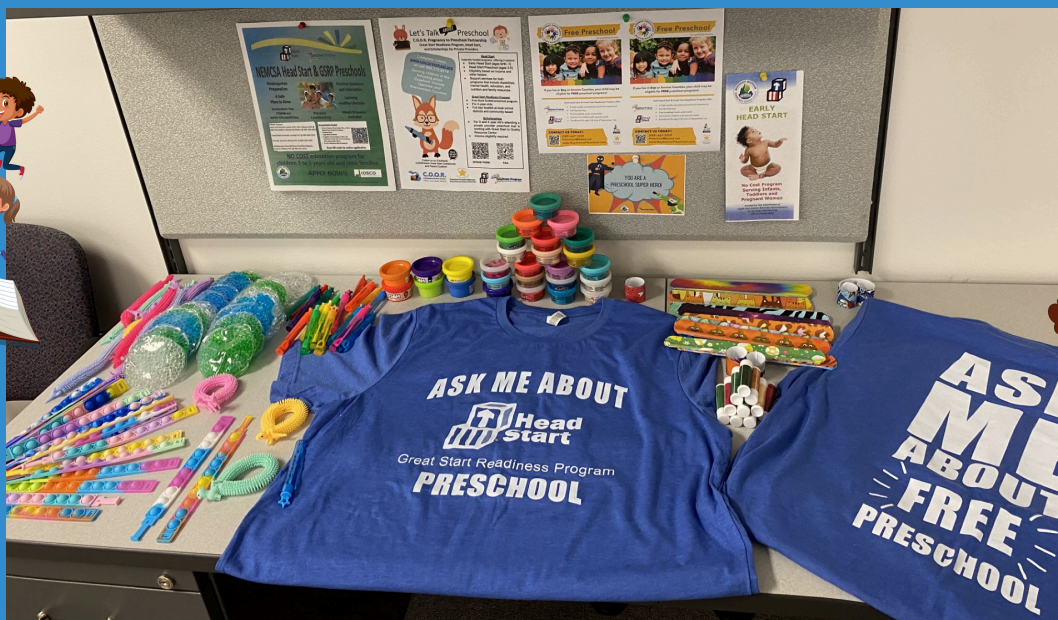
On May 21, AAA staff and partners were provided a free Long Term Care and Medicaid Boot Camp training by Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices. Attorneys Valerie Kuth and Susie Chalgian provided a full day of invaluable education at no cost to the agency.



Program Impact

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

RECRUITMENT



Recruitment for Head Start and Early Head Start is a year-round effort, but the Family Services Staff are especially active in the community right now. Some examples of recruitment activities and staff who attended them include:

- Attending Kids Day as part of AuSable River Canoe Marathon events to distribute flyers and recruitment materials – Penny Crawford
- “Plant a Seed with Head Start” at Mitchell Creek Park in Big Rapids. Staff filled bags with seeds, pots that could be colored, crayons, potting soil, and our agency information – Anastasia D’Arcy and Jessica Windquist
- 48th Annual Thumb area Old Engine and Tractor Association of Michigan Show. Staff will have tractor-themed craft for children and distribute flyers – Kayla Langmaid
- Serving on local food bank board, along with summer-long volunteering at the local baby pantry, baseball park, boys and girls club, at the fair, and the local child protection council – Angie Masson
- Gave bags to WIC in Montmorency with different recruitment items and program information for families – Branton Burd
- Have recruitment table at T-ball fields and distribute water bottles with Head Start labels and contact information along with flyers – Traci Kroetsch

Call 989-358-4619 for more information!

EXCITING NEWS!

PNC Bank has teamed up with the Dolsen Head Start site for some amazing volunteer work as part of their Grow Up Great Program. Recently, they presented Tera Keller (left) and her team with a \$20,000 donation! This generous gift will be used to create a full outdoor classroom from Lakeshore, giving all the children a fantastic new space to learn and play. Thank you, PNC Bank, for making a difference in our community!



Program Impact

BRIDGES OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Community Resource Coordinator & BOSS Program Update

Community Resource Coordinators, Amanda and Madison, have excelled this month, supporting NEMCSA programs with innovative graphic design, updated flyers, and targeted marketing strategies. This has greatly contributed to increased enrollment in volunteer opportunities, staffing, and ECS classrooms. Amanda also attended a Family Café with FSC Robyn Hart, speaking to families about NEMCSA's programs and offering additional support and information on employment opportunities and resources.

Accomplishments:

- **Support Rendered:** Assistance provided to 149 individuals, families, and community partners, including 30 NEMCSA staff—a notable 88% increase from March.
- **Vehicle Repair Program:** For the first time in NEMCSA's history a program went viral. Within 24 hours, the Facebook post was shared over 430 times and staff had to stop accepting applications for the program. The program also facilitated \$26,000 in repairs, ensuring essential transportation for work and school for the month of April!

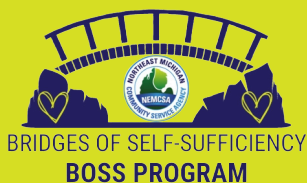
BOSS Program Highlights:

- **Family Inspiration:** A BOSS mentor's weekly wins and inspiring comments have cascaded through a family, encouraging positive interactions across generations.
- **Employment Success:** Participants have secured full-time jobs!!! Through the BOSS Program, mentors have assisted with purchasing required clothing to get them set up for success in their new roles!
- **Educational Support:** Participants are advancing in their education, with assistance in purchasing laptops for school, enrolling in new courses, and pursuing degrees in nursing.
- **Personal Development:** Notable improvements in participants' organizational skills, mental health, and overall attitude, attributed to structured support and resources like daily planners and emotional coaching.
- **Life-Changing Impacts:**
 - **Mobility and Independence:** Participants have achieved significant milestones like purchasing a new van and overcoming legal hurdles with mentorship.
 - **Community and Family Engagement:** The BOSS Program funded essential needs like gas cards, vehicle and home repairs, and even a shared meal experience that fostered family bonding and skills development.

Testimonials:

"The BOSS Program is so powerful, I wish I could use it with all of my families!" - BOSS Mentor Chris P.

"My car is literally driving better than when I first bought it! The help you extended was life-changing. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!" - Vehicle Repair Program Recipient.



This project was supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRF4951 awarded to The State of Michigan by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Program Impact

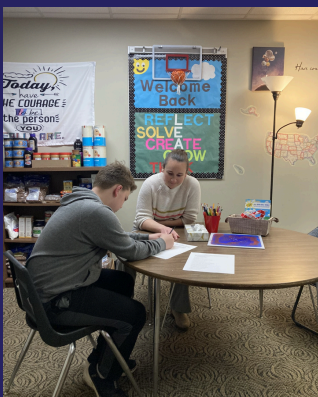


SCHOOL SUCCESS



Journey to Junior High! Thunder Bay Junior High in Alpena organizes an annual event for incoming 6th grade students in preparation for the following year. It is a very well attended and fun event where providers, teachers and student council provide tours and information, and host an amazing scavenger hunt. It is so great to see students smiling and getting familiar with the building in advance. Thank you to our School Success TBJH team for showing up and interacting with families and students! Pictured from left to right, Elise Leeck, School Success Liaison, Rick Voltz, Behavior Tech, Julie Benson, School Success Liaison. Not pictured but offering a huge support to the TBJH AXIS room this year; Julie Meyers, SSP sub. Not pictured: School Success Attendance Liaison, Jeana Bellanger.

When working as a liaison on the secondary level, it requires a lot of skill and patience in the areas of academics and life skills. It is critical to sit with students to discuss academic and life challenges, work through assignments and identify what resources a student needs to be successful and feel good about being at school. Pictured below is Gina Murphy, School Success Liaison, connecting with a student at Tawas Middle School/High School.



STUDENT
SUCCESS

PARTNERING
FOR PROGRESS



The School Success Program collaborated with Iosco & Ogemaw Alternative Educational programs on May 3rd to present at the Michigan Alternative Education Organization's (MAEO) spring conference. The theme was Partnering for Progress, and it underscored the importance of the School Success Liaison role when working with students that attend alternative educational settings. The School Success Program partners with the Iosco and Ogemaw Alternative Educational Academies in West Branch, Tawas and Oscoda. Pictured from left to right, Tina Williams, Director with Alternative Educational Academy (Iosco/Ogemaw), Liz Skiba, School Success Program Area Manager, Taylor Ignaczak, School Success Liaison at Ogemaw Alternative Educational Academy and Sam Achtabowski, Teacher/Mentor (former Michigan Works Career Navigator).



SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Joy Garrison, School Success Liaison at Clara B. Bolen Elementary in Tawas, is diving into SPOT (social-emotional learning) books. Joy had a brilliant idea to extend the social-emotional work into the summer by offering a class activity and a book to take home. The first picture is a second-grade class, covering their faces with their books but saying 'thank you' for allowing the purchase for them to continue this work through the summer months with these individual books. This was the first group to receive their book. In a first-grade classroom, they made SPOT the emotion cookies. Each student picked out three colors and made their own emotion SPOT to eat. They also made their own spots with pompom and "googly" eyes. It was a fun project for both classes. Beautifully, important work!

Program Impact



TRINIDAD FLORES

2023 Client of The Year

From Homelessness to Hope: Trinidad Flores' inspiring journey showcases resilience and community support. With help from NEMCSA, he found housing, a job, and joined a church in Roscommon County.

Trinidad volunteers at a nursing home with his dog, weaves hats for a cancer center, and has been accepted into the BOSS program. Recognized for his dedication,

Trinidad received an award in Lansing on May 22, 2024. His story is a powerful reminder of the impact of perseverance and community.

GERALD NICHOLS

2023 Client of The Year

From Homelessness to Hope: Gerald Nichols' inspiring Journey is a powerful testament to resilience. After an accident left him unable to work, he became homeless, living in his car and struggling with addiction and mental health issues. With help from NEMCSA, he moved into his first-ever apartment, stabilized his mental health, and created a solid budget to maintain his new home.

Gerald's hard work was recognized in Lansing, Michigan, and he now seeks to give back by volunteering. Despite immense challenges, Gerald has rebuilt his life, showing us the incredible strength of the human spirit.



To find out more about Homeless & Prevention Services, Call: 989-358-4678.

Program Impact

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

- In the month of May, staff worked with three households to complete Pre-Purchase Counseling to better help them become prepared to complete the homebuying process, completed three Homebuyer Education classes, and four households participated in Rental Counseling. These households were all previously homeless and are working with staff to be able to maintain their housing.
- NEMCSA Financial Coach met with BOSS mentors and participants at the beginning of the month and completed a Financial Literacy class with them. The focus of the class was reducing expenses and finding creative ways to create and manage their monthly budget.
- At the end of January, NEMCSA created internal assistance to help prevent households from experiencing foreclosure due to property taxes. The funding was recently expended, and the program was successfully able to assist 19 households, 24 adults and seven children, with maintaining their housing.
- The Family Self-Sufficiency Program currently has 29 active participants. This number is always changing as new people are enrolling or people deciding that they don't have to participate and are exiting.

To find out more about the Financial Empowerment Programs, Call: 989-358-4627.

WATER PROGRAM

During the Month of May:

\$24,950

WATER BILLS PAID

\$7,795

PLUMBING REPAIRS

\$32,635

TENATIVE PAYMENTS

PENDING JOB COMPLETION

121

PEOPLE ASSISTED

To find out more about the Water Program, Call: 989-358-4675.

WEATHERIZATION

Weatherization Staff are busy this month working on closing out the program year, attending trainings for the new software system, empowOR, and getting ready to attend Energy Out West in Houston, TX hosted by DOE. With the waitlist growing daily and the continuous closing of jobs, the program looks forward to what is to come this summer!



To find out more about the Weatherization Program, Call: 989-358-4700.

Program Impact

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

SENIOR COMPANION & FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAMS



On Tuesday, May 17th The Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs recognized their hard-working and dedicated volunteers at the Annual Recognition luncheon. The day started with opening remarks from NEMCSA's Chief Financial Officer, Kimberlee Hincka, who very elegantly highlighted how the programs fit NEMCSA's mission. She was followed by Annie Hepburn, Director of the Alpena Senior Citizens Center who spoke of the value and necessity of the Senior Companions, and Lisa Fluharty, NEMCSA's Head Start Manager who spoke of the importance of having an adult role model in the classroom giving hugs and extra help to the students. The day's highlight was honoring the longest-serving volunteer, Garnet Ellis, who has been a volunteer for 23 years. She began her career in volunteerism as a Foster Grandparent for 17 years and transitioned to the Senior Companion program for the last six. She is pictured with her station supervisor, Jennifer Altman, who presented her with a plaque recording her many years of service. Garnet spoke of how volunteering has given her the opportunity to give to her local school and seniors in her community. In return, she has been able to fill her days with purpose and feelings of usefulness. She cherishes being able to serve others and is grateful to the programs which enable her to do so. There was also a great representation from the many teachers and station supervisors who joined us in paying tribute to the volunteers. Many thanks to the NEMCSA Board Members who attended including Vice President Patricia Rondeau, Carol Wenzel, and Lisa Hilberg. The support in honoring the programs' volunteers is greatly appreciated!

RSVP



AmeriCorps RSVP Volunteer Program held their volunteer recognition event on May 2nd at Kirtland Community College to show appreciation of the volunteers time, service, and dedication to their community. There was a great buffet lunch and a gift raffle for the volunteers. Over the past year, the program has increased to more than 300 volunteers who have served almost 35,000 hours. Tammy Dean has begun working Part Time with the program. The program welcomes Tammy and knows that she will be a great asset. Tammy will help cover the Northeastern counties for the volunteer program.

Program Impact

FOOD PROGRAM

The Food Program is in the final two months of distribution. In May, we started to clear out the Ossineke office and were able to donate many items to the Center of Charity in Alpena as well as donating the chest freezers to some Food Boost Pantry Partners.

The organizations that received the donated items were extremely appreciative.

Recently, the Michigan Department of Education advised the Community Action Agencies to not go over caseloads. The State, as a whole, took a decrease in caseload. This means that agencies will have to start a wait list for participants and become very diligent of removing those participants that have not picked up for three months in a row. In the years that NEMCSA has had the Food Program, having a waitlist has never happened. This is definitely a sign of the changing times.

CONNECTING THROUGH RESOURCES

EMPOWERING A FAMILY THROUGH SUPPORT & RESOURCE CONNECTION.



A single mother, Mary and her son Thomas moved from Kentucky to Michigan and stayed with Mary's sister and her family. Mary worked at a local café and struggled to meet sufficient hours to pay for an apartment or house. When the family applied for preschool for Thomas, Mary was excited as this allowed her to work more hours to try to secure housing.

Eventually, Mary saved enough money to get housing for her and Thomas and they were eager to move in. After NEMCSA ECS staff checked in with Mary, she informed them they had an issue with skunks living in the attic. After speaking to the landlord about the issue, Mary was told it was her responsibility to take care of it, which she could not afford to do. With permission, staff reached out to the housing department and shared resources, the family is currently in the process to correctly handling the pest situation with the best legal advice. Thomas is a special needs child and the situation was very frustrating for Mary. Staff continue to support Mary and is staying in contact hoping to hear encouraging news soon!

NEMCSA'S IMPACT