



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S

REPORT June
2023

"We celebrate diversity in all it's many forms. We are a nation stronger because of it, not in spite of it."
- Lisa Bolen, NEMCSA Executive Director/CEO

Pictured to the right, Tricia Grifka, Early Childhood Services Director, Frances Ommani, Strategy & Development Director, and Lisa Bolen, CEO, who traveled to Washington D.C last month to meet with elected officials.

These worthwhile meetings are very important to continue the advocacy efforts regarding NEMCSA's many programs!



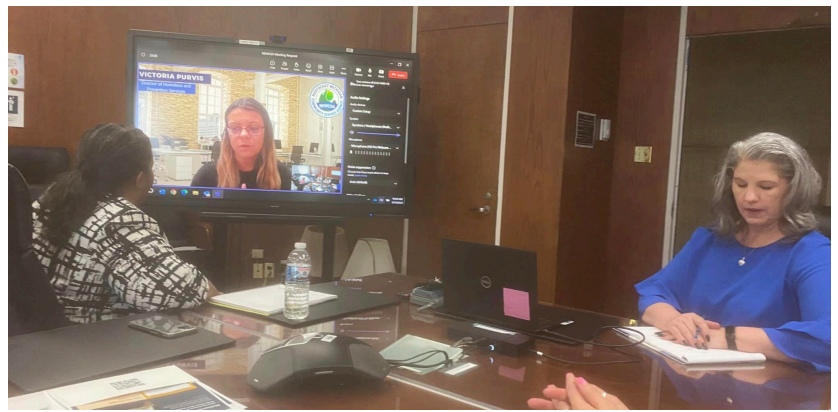
Lisa Bolen is pictured above with Denise Harlow, the National Community Action Partnership (NCAP) Chief Executive Officer.

NCAP is a national hub that links the nations 1,000+ Community Action Agencies to each other and to federal, state, and local leaders looking to connect Americans to greater opportunity.

Pictured left are NEMCSA staff with United States Representative Jack Bergman, of Michigan's 1st District.

Enhancing quality of life by empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

While in Washington DC, NEMCSA staff visited the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) headquarters to meet with Sherri Boyd, Senior Program Specialist and Deputy Director, Tonya Proctor.

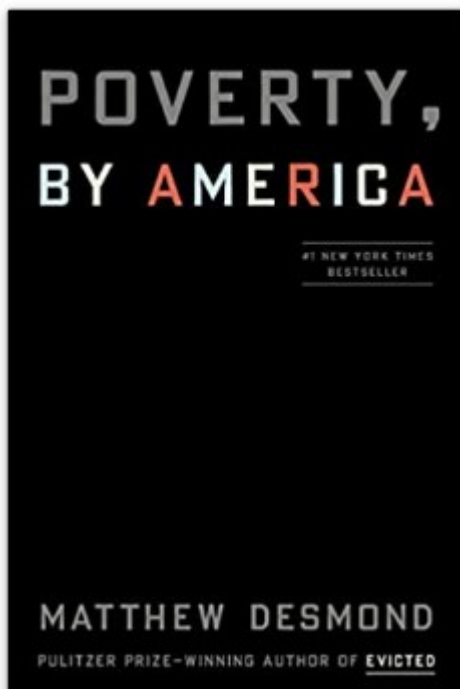


Victoria Purvis, Director of Homeless and Prevention Services, joined the meeting with HUD virtually to connect and ask questions regarding the HUD funding that NEMCSA is slated to receive.



Last month NEMCSA staff were in Lansing connecting with elected officials and attended the 2023 Community Action Awards where NEMCSA clients and volunteers were honored for their contributions and achievement over the past year.

More information is available in this report under the BOSS, Housing and Volunteer Program Impact pages.



"Poverty By America" by Matthew Desmond is a serious wake-up call! It tackles the pressing issue of basic needs in our country, and it demands action. Desmond throws down the gauntlet, asking everyone - community organizations, employers, schools, political parties, courts, towns, families, and churches - what are we doing to fight poverty? It's time for all of us to step up and make a difference.

Desmond pulls no punches when he says poverty is a dream killer, a potential destroyer, and a national disgrace. But here's the thing - he also believes we can put an end to it. He challenges us to recognize our roles in perpetuating poverty and encourages us to take a stand, march, and even make sacrifices for a better future.

The book brings to light how poverty robs people of opportunities. It stifles artists, poets, diplomats, visionaries, and all sorts of folks who could be making a real impact. Desmond wants us to imagine a world where we break down the walls and unleash the full potential of our country. Talk about inspiring!

- Review from Amazon

Early Childhood Services

PROGRAM IMPACT



Ready for Kindergarten!

Visiting the cafeteria helps our Head Start children be ready for kindergarten in the Fall. Transition activities like this help children experience better long-term success in school because they feel confident and know what to expect.

This school year, NEMCSA helped 800 children prepare for kindergarten!



Shirt by Jacelee Morrison, Caro

Tricia Grifka, NEMCSA Early Childhood Services Director was part of a panel at the Michigan Head Start Association Spring Assembly in East Lansing discussing Head Start's role in Universal Preschool. Early childhood professionals support expanding access to preschool and are investigating ways to utilize current, effective systems like Head Start and the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) to make that happen. Leveraging state and federal dollars will provide opportunities for more children to attend preschool and lay a strong foundation for their future.





PROGRAM IMPACT

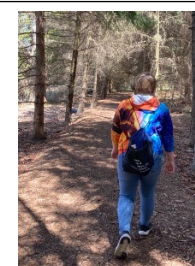
The end of the school year brings the opportunity for learning through experiences and many School Success Liaisons are included in many field trips to help support our student's academic experiences outside the school setting. Pictured below are the PIVOT students on a Vernal Pond Experience with Amy Hunt, School Success Liaison, and Anne Proctor, School Success Liaison on a Tall Ships Field Trip with Lewiston Elementary Students.



Mon, May 8, 2023 - Fri, May 12, 2023 was teacher appreciation week and schools/parent groups recognized and thanked all their school staff during that week.

Shannon Oliver-Allen (Alcona Middle/High) and Taylor Ignaczak (Alter native Educational Academy of Ogemaw County) facilitate Run Clubs with their students.

These groups not only give the students an opportunity to get outside and be active but also gain life lessons in perseverance and meeting goals and a safe place for conversation.



Thank you ACES Academy students who volunteered to pack food boxes with the NEMCSA Food Programs on a recent community field trip!

*Homeless &
Prevention*

PROGRAM IMPACT



Tarin Presler (*Lead Housing Specialist*), Ashley Gagnon (*Financial Coach*), and Victoria Purvis (*Homeless & Prevention Director*) – not pictured, attended the annual Building Michigan Communities Conference last month.

The scope of the conference was to address the housing crisis across the state of Michigan. It was the first time the conference has been in-person since the pandemic. Michigan is nearly 190,000 housing units short across the state right now; housing is expensive. Staff attended the home buyer courses learning homeownership is far out of reach for more and more Michigan families. In the last 10 years, cost of single-family homes has gone up 84% while income has only gone up by 25%. Staff connected with regional housing partners to discuss the tasks needed to address the first ever statewide housing plan which is the foundation of creating a successful housing ecosystem.



Congratulations to 2023 Michigan Community Action Award Winner, Whitney. Her supportive advocate, Traci Schuelke, has guided Whitney in completing her GED, obtaining full-time employment, enrolled in college and has obtained childcare for her 2-year-old daughter.



*Financial
Empowerment*

PROGRAM IMPACT

Building Michigan Communities Conference

This month staff attended the Building Michigan Communities Conference in Lansing. This is an annual conference that covers different topics and expands on ways to grow communities. Staff attended a number of break out sessions and were able to network with professionals from around the state. Staff discovered new ways to expand current programs and create new partnerships to allow the programs to continue to grow and thrive within our communities.

Rental Counseling

Staff continue to meet with individuals that are looking to become renters or are new to renting. In each counseling session, participants discuss their housing goals, create a budget, review their credit report and create a plan for how to achieve their housing goals. Program staff have partnered with Housing staff to meet with each of their participants so that they have a more in depth look at their finances and housing goals, and everyone can work together to make sure the individual doesn't return to homelessness. Programs that are funded through HUD are required to utilize a HUD Certified Housing Counselor to assist participants with budgeting and money management. Having staff certified as HUD Housing Counselors has put the agency in a great place to be able to assist individuals within our communities.

"Thank you so much for helping me understand the homebuying process. I can't wait to become a homeowner."

- Homebuyer Education participant

Staff are still working with members of the communities to assist them with applying for assistance with the MIHAF program through MSHDA. Homeowners that have fallen behind are able to apply for assistance with the following items:

- Delinquent Mortgage
- Delinquent Property Taxes
- Condo Dues
- Homeowners Insurance
- Mobile Home Lot Rent
- Land Contract Payments
- Utility bills
 - Heat
 - Power
 - Water
 - Internet



Weatherization

PROGRAM IMPACT

The NEMCSA Weatherization Team is busy wrapping up the regular DOE funding program year that ends June 30th. We are on track to meet our production goal of 58 homes completed and will spend out the entire fund, which is great news!

The new program year does bring a slight increase in funds and a higher average cost per home, which is good news for clients and their families. This should allow the program to increase energy saving measures installed in each home. We also received some excellent news related to LIHEAP funds, a second increase in allocation was announced late last month and an additional \$30,000 will be added to the program. This is on top of the first reallocation announced in April, which basically double the initial allocation of funds. LIHEAP is used to help balance the average cost per home and this funding is more flexible than DOE allocations. That translates to a more complete package of measures installed for our clients. An example of this flexibility can be seen in replacing unsafe cooking appliances, primarily gas ranges, that produce large amounts of carbon monoxide, which can make people ill over time. A great use of these funds to help keep clients safe in their homes.

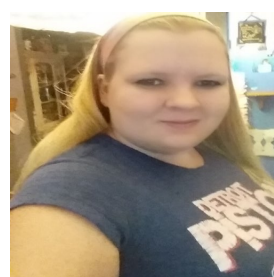
A picture of a new cook range installed with LIHEAP funds; this client's existing range was producing high amount of dangerous carbon monoxide.



Weatherization Staff Spotlight

Nicole Hammond

- **What is your role within NEMCSA?** Weatherization Navigation Specialist
- **What does that mean in your own words?**
I assist clients with getting their name on the waitlist for Weatherization. I also go to their homes and help them complete the application needed. Basically, I am the first contact for the clients.
- **Years of NEMCSA service:** Two
- **What 3 words describe NEMCSA?** Flexible, Empathetic, Unique
- **What about NEMCSA's mission resonates with you most?** Not only helping individuals but helping communities as well.
- **What is your favorite NEMCSA memory?** Getting an email from a client letting the Weatherization team know how much we helped them in their home.
- **What is the most unique part of working here?** The people I talk to every day.
- **Favorite food-** Meat and Potatoes
- **Childhood dream job-** Teacher
- **First job-** Child Care worker
- **Favorite pet-** Copper (My Beagle dog)
- **Favorite hobby-** Baking or Crafting
- **Favorite holiday-** Halloween and Christmas
- **One more quirky fact (thing that people might be surprised to know about you)-** On Labor Day every year my family walks the Mackinaw Bridge and have been doing it for 33 years.



FOOD PROGRAM

PROGRAM IMPACT



Pictured left: Monica from Child and Family Services receiving the first round of pantry food!

Pictured Right- NEMCSA Food Program Staff and Volunteer assisting at a Golden Grocery Distribution.



The Food Program saw an increase in attendance during Golden Grocery Giveaway distributions throughout the month of May! In addition, many new applications were processed for individuals to start receiving food services.

The Food Boost Program established a new pantry partner- Child, and Family Services of Northeast Michigan!

At the end of May, Food Program staff from Northwest Community Action Agency stopped by the Ossineke Warehouse for a visit, to learn about how we have incorporated The Food Boost Program into a new model of additional food with The Golden Grocery Program and with pantry partnerships!



Pictured left: Mark & Chuck from NW Community Action. Kevin-NEMCSA Food Program Warehouse Staff and Jason-NEMCSA Volunteer.

CSBG DI/ BOSS PROGRAM

PROGRAM IMPACT



A BIG congratulations to three BOSS families that received 2023 Client Community action awards from Michigan Community Action Agency in May!

As the first year of the pilot program is coming to an end, program staff are reflecting on the lessons learned and successes.

A lesson learned to improve transition periods: Adopt a tiered approach to allow intensive case management support to transition gradually to an as needed support. This method encompasses a participant centered care approach by ensuring that support is continued in a manner that best supports the participant.

Successes: Six families have received life coaching sessions, intensive case management support, referrals to other services and direct service assistance. In addition, four families have reported improvement of financial well being and have transitioned to as needed support due to successful accomplishments towards their goal of self-sufficiency!

Volunteer

PROGRAM IMPACT



Foster Grandparent Donna Mackey being presented with her 20 year plaque by her teacher, Gretchen.



2023 Recognition theme: Volunteers Make the Ordinary Extraordinary!



Medilodge of Rogers City Senior Companions Helen Eagleson, Pam Nichol, Doreen Parish, Garnet Ellis and Mary Rice with their supervisors, Jennifer Altman and Stephanie Sterns.

In honor of our Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions demonstrating that **Volunteers Make the Ordinary Extraordinary** daily, we celebrated the volunteer's years of service and yearly accomplishments during the combined Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Recognition luncheon held May 9th at JJ's Conference Center, Alpena. Highlights include presenting Grandma Donna Mackey with a commemorative plaque for her impressive 20 years of service, opening remarks from our very own CFO Kimmi Hincka, a tribute to the Foster Grandparents from Grandma Donna's teacher Gretchen Tolan, and praise to the Senior Companions from Jennifer Altman, Activities Director, Medilodge of Rogers City. Our three outstanding speakers nearly stole the show from the volunteers with their praise and personal accounts of how FGP and SCP make a difference to everyone around them. The event marked the 48th (FGP) and 38th (SCP) years of NEMCSA's sponsorship of the programs.



RSVP Volunteer Wins 2023 MCA

Volunteer of the Year

Congratulations to RSVP volunteer, Nina, for being one of the 2023 Michigan Community Action Volunteer of the Year winners! In May, Nina received her award in front of a room full of community action members and volunteers in the Capitol building in Lansing. Nina was recognized for her community service work in both Roscommon and Crawford counties, accumulating over 1700 hours of service with a variety of appreciative organizations. Thank you so much for all your hard work Nina!



Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

PROGRAM IMPACT



Older Michiganians' Day 2023

Over 200 Area Agencies on Aging staff and advocates from across the state joined together on the Capital lawn on May 17th to advocate for these priority issues:

1. Increase access to home and community-based services.
2. Expand access to MI Choice.
3. Support and strengthen the direct care workforce.
4. Support formal and informal caregivers.

Region 9 AAA was able to share its stories and impacts of these needs in northeast Michigan with several elected officials. Attending from Region 9 were Lorelei King (Crawford), Dale Evilsizer, Josef and Karen Drozdowski (Iosco), Chuck Corwin, Marc Milburn and Evelyn Maciha (Roscommon), and AAA Director Laurie Sauer.



Over 400 letters were signed by northeast Michigan constituents and hand-delivered to Legislators.



Region 9 Contingent



Senator Hoytenga's aide pictured in the blue.



Representative Ken Borton pictured in the middle.

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging has been awarded a \$122,841 Michigan Health Endowment Fund grant. The grant, Aging–Non-Emergency Medical Transport Needs in Iosco County, will study the impact of transportation challenges on home-delivered meal recipients in Iosco County.



Advisory
Committee



Food
Programs



Office
Assistant



Outdoor
Work



Classroom
Helper



Deliveries



Event
Organizing



Fundraising



Handyman
Work



Much
More!

BECOME A NEMCSA

SHINE BRIGHT

VOLUNTEER!

WHERE CAN YOU SHINE BRIGHT?

You have the power to shine bright and help your community become a stronger, safer, healthier place for all to live.

The Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency has ongoing needs for volunteers to serve our communities through fulfilling our mission of "Enhancing quality of life by empowering individuals and strengthening communities." Selfless acts of volunteerism can enhance the quality of life of others and make our communities better places to live. JOIN US TODAY!



**Call
Today!**

To get started today contact:
NEMCSA Shine Bright Volunteer Program
Phone: 989-358-4637
Email: shinebright@nemcsa.org

