



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S

REPORT February  
2023

## NEMCSA is starting 2023 off right!

NEMCSA continues to be blessed through receiving multiple monetary and item donations from many community partners - the kindness and generosity is amazing! Our clients are fortunate to be surrounded by such giving communities. As we navigate a new year, NEMCSA is proud to be partnering with other CAA's and school districts to expand the School Success Program into new areas. This expansion allows for additional students to receive the support that SSP offers. Congratulations goes out to our AAA Counseling team for their Navigator Award – well deserved!



## NEMCSA February Board meeting presenter Peter Ruark

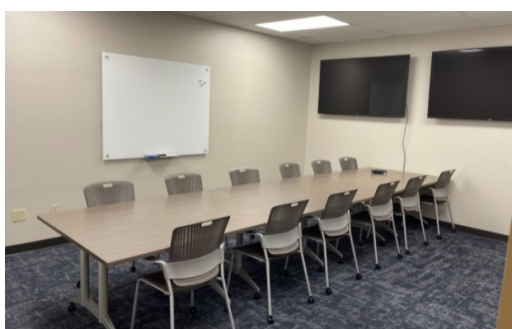
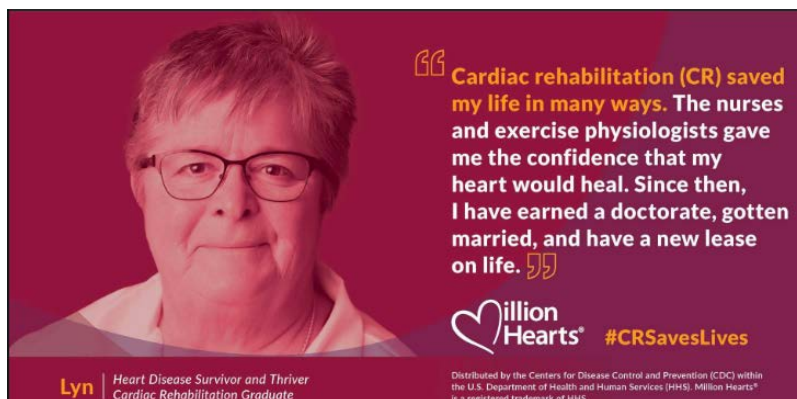


Peter Ruark has worked at the Michigan League of Public Policy since 2001 and currently serves as a Senior Policy Analyst. He specializes in public policy related to adult skill enhancement, college financial aid, job quality, public assistance and corrections. He is active in national groups including the Working Poor Families Project and the Economic Analysis Research Network, and served on the board of the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Peter was awarded the President's Award from the Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education for his advocacy on behalf of adult education funding, and was recently featured on NPR's Marketplace, where he discussed at length Michigan's use of federal public assistance funds for various state programs.

**Enhancing quality of life by empowering individuals and  
strengthening communities.**



New furniture has arrived at the Alpena Main Office! The furniture allows for more effective and comfortable meeting spaces. New work stations are available as well for remote and traveling staff that need a place to land.



The month of February is celebrated as American Heart Month while the first Friday of February is celebrated as National Woman's Heart Day. It is an initiative to spread awareness about women's cardiovascular health, wear a red dress, pants, or shoes.

Dr. Lyn Behnke, featured above, has been an active and involved member on the NEMCSA board since 2015.

The School Success Program has partnered with Northwest Community Action Agency (NWCAA) and Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) to implement NEMCSA's School Success Program into four of TCAPS elementary schools. This work and collaboration began in July of 2022 and we are proud to share as of January 3, 2023 we assisted NWCAA in the hiring and training of four new staff and the program is up and running in TCAPS. NEMCSA will remain the lead on this project and will advocate and house all state funding that is earmarked for this new partnership.

On December 19th and 20th the new TCAPS/NWCAA staff came over to Alpena and shadowed our NEMCSA School Success Liaisons. This two-day training consisted of learning how to implement groups, student individual work, truancy processes, data collection and so much more. Thank you to our NEMCSA School Success Team for your leadership, time and talents in training our new partners. Great Work!



Front row: Lisa Werth, School Success Liaison Besser Elementary APS  
Dorothy Pintar, Community Programs Director, NEMCSA  
Back row: Mikela Wilson, School Success Liaison TCAPS  
Shannon Phelps, Early Childhood Programs Director NWCAA  
Amy Cannon, School Success Liaison TCAPS  
Jolene Price, School Success Liaison, Hinks El. NEMCSA  
Kristen Wisniewski, Area Manager, NEMCSA



Early Childhood  
Services

# PROGRAM IMPACT



## Community Donations Support Early Head Start Families

Pictured are Early Head Start staff and the last-minute gift donations received from the Oscoda Chamber of Commerce and Oscoda Police Department. We were able to get these out to families that same day thanks to the dedication of the wonderful EHS staff in Oscoda. Thanks to community and program teamwork, families enjoyed a brighter holiday.



***Did you know?***  
***Last year, 124 active military and veteran families enrolled their children in NEMCSA Head Start and Early Head Start.***



Apparently, the play kitchen area in our Frederic classroom needed some "repairs." Children learn by watching, and it's clear this little guy is imitating an adult making real repairs around the house.



# PROGRAM IMPACT

Northeast Michigan has stepped up to meet many needs of children and families in our area over the last couple of months. From hats and coats to funding, School Success Liaisons have accepted many donations to keep our students warm through the winter months. A few highlights of recent donations received:

- \$1500 from Dean Arbor in Alpena for warm gear for Ella White Students (pictured on right)
- \$4800 and 296 warm clothing items from Alcona Masonic Lodge for Alcona Community Schools students (pictured on bottom right)
- PYZICAL Thunder Bay Therapy donated \$200 for warm gear for Ella White students
- Ladies Auxiliary donated \$500 for clothing items for Ella White students
- \$500 from AAACU for school supplies for Posen Consolidated Schools (pictured top right)

*Thank you to all who  
donated for holiday support  
programs in the service area!*



## The School Success Partnership continues to grow!

In addition to the partnership with Traverse City Area Public Schools and Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, SSP has expanded to include additional staff. Two Behavior Techs in Alpena Public Schools (Elise Leeck at Thunder Bay Junior High and Rob Adams at Alpena High School), a Truancy Intervention Liaison with Johannesburg Lewiston Area Schools (Christopher Cook) and the return of a School Success Liaison (Alisha Edgar-Travis) at Hillman Elementary School.





Homeless &  
Prevention

# PROGRAM IMPACT

**Our hearts are full, and so is our Kindness Closet!**



*Over 500  
blankets  
donated!*



Thank you to everyone for  
your contributions:

Hunters Harvest - \$750 for  
move in baskets  
losco County Democrats –  
\$900 for holiday gift cards  
for families All Saints Giving  
Tree – 2 truckloads of  
kindness closet supplies  
Tawas Presbyterian Church –  
truck and trailer load of  
kindness closet supplies

And all of our community  
partners, we collected **over  
500** blankets to be given out  
this winter season to the  
unhoused sleeping in cars,  
tents and other place not  
meant to be living.



*2 truck and  
trailer full of  
supplies for  
The Kindness  
Closet*



*over \$1,650 in  
donations*





Volunteer

# PROGRAM IMPACT

## Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions

took a break from the more program focused in-service meetings that take place during the year and enjoyed a day at the museum prior to the holidays. Everyone had an opportunity to enjoy a holiday themed planetarium show, museum exhibits and holiday decorations, and a great turkey dinner with all the fixings at Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan in Alpena. We were lucky the weather was good for travel, and everyone was able to join in.



## The RSVP and NEMCSA

family are so grateful for our WATZ Radio friends and the Alpena area community! RSVP partnered with WATZ for a weeklong veteran's coat and clothing drive, culminating with a live donation drop off on Veteran's Day. The community came out and donated clothing and winter coats, but also needed hygiene and household items. In addition, WATZ was able to collect \$700 cash! All donations will directly help and support Veterans in Northeast Michigan.



THANK YOU, ALPENA!





## Weatherization

# PROGRAM IMPACT

The NEMCSA Weatherization Team is continuing work into the New Year. We are progressing towards spending out Department of Energy formula funds with a total of 58 homes completed and will start focusing on the first batch of the BIL (Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Legislation) homes. This funding will help expand the program over the next five years and it begins right now with about 60 more homes to complete before 9/30/2023. This will be a challenge as we struggle with finding homes that are in suitable condition for weatherization to happen. We have been able to utilize some different types of funding to address these issues and make the homes ready for weatherization. NEMCSA has had good success with the funds, but it does slow the production cycle. We believe this will continue to be a challenge moving forward and hope to continue to find new streams of funding to support the efforts to make the homes ready for our program.

The new Weatherization Inspector, Cheryl Laban, is well on her way to securing an important certification from the State of Michigan that will allow her to complete her training while producing Energy Audits for the program. A great step for her, Congrats Cheryl!

*"I'm very excited to become a Certified Energy Auditor! I've been training since this past summer by taking in-person classes, on-line classes, performing actual home air sealing and insulating measures, and following and assisting Justin and Mark, NEMCSA's current Energy Auditors, during weatherization inspections."*

*-Cheryl Laban*



## HEALTHY HOMES & why we need them



### Why are Homes Important?

Americans spend 90% of their time indoors, which means they are extremely influenced by these indoor environments. The air quality, water quality, and infrastructure of the home all can have important health implications. *The health of our homes is indicative of our own health.*

#### Air Quality

Second-hand smoke, carbon monoxide, dust mites, cockroach and mouse allergens, and mold are all aspects that limit a home's indoor air quality.

#### Fire Safety

Installing smoke detectors, setting up an escape plan in the case of an emergency, and properly storing candles and lighters greatly improves the safety of a home.

#### Lead

Lead is a highly toxic metal known to damage the brain and other vital organs that used to be used in paint for homes. Many homes still find traces of it inside.

#### Drinking Water

Bacteria and viruses, nitrate, lead, and copper, and pesticides can all commonly contaminate a home's water supply.

### Healthy are homes are specifically important for children.

Their brains and bodies are still developing.

For their size, children breathe **twice** as much air as adults.

They also drink more water and eat more food.

Any harmful substance they ingest, they will receive in a higher dosage and will have a harder time fighting off.



### Start Today

There are plenty of federal and local resources available to gain assistance in assessing the health of your home, learn ways to improve it, and share information with others. Visit [www.hud.gov/healthyhomes](http://www.hud.gov/healthyhomes)

Source: [www.hud.gov/healthyhomes](http://www.hud.gov/healthyhomes)



## Food Programs

# PROGRAM IMPACT

Happy 2023! The NEMCSA Food Program's has re-branded both of their programs. The Food Boost program is what we formally call TEFAP and The Golden Grocery Giveaway is what we formally call CSFP. The purpose of the re-branding is to remove confusion from the formal names, offer clearer language in the new names that also is empowering.

Effective January 1, 2023 The Food Boost Program is now completely in house. The food is delivered directly to our warehouse in Ossineke and the food is now being sent out in two different ways. First, the Food Boost items are going out monthly (2-4 items) with the Golden Grocery Giveaway to allow for seniors to receive more food in their monthly boxes and to remove four additional unnecessary distributions a year! The remaining items are going out to pantries across the NEMCSA service area.



A BIG THANK YOU to the wonderful volunteers that are the heartbeat of the food program.

If you have any questions regarding the food program, incoming deliveries for the food program, distributions, pantries, home delivery or more please contact Amanda at 989-358-4712 or Tammy at 989-358-4708.

Please note: If schools are closed in your area due to weather, distribution will also be rescheduled.

## Employee Spotlight

Childhood Dream Job:  
Nurse



Favorite Food:  
White Castle



Years of Service:  
13



First Job:  
Nurses Aide



What You Might Not Know About Me:  
I have helped with a cow giving birth. Many in fact when we owned a dairy farm.



Favorite Hobby:  
Camping



Favorite Holiday:  
Easter



AND THERE IS MORE!!

**Tammy Dean**

- Role: Food Program Coordinator
- What Does That Mean in Your Own Words: I get to help people almost immediately. Providing a service that every one of us may need at one point on our life.
- Three Words to Describe NEMCSA: Busy, Under Rated, Under Utilized
- What About NEMCSA's Mission Resonates With You: Buy giving others a quality of life that they can thrive in enhances the likelihood that they will continue to thrive. Every one of us can fall on hard times. It takes on unexpected emergency for one of us to be in need of that help.
- Most Unique Part of Working for NEMCSA: The non-profit world seems to change daily. Our food programs are forever changing and we never seem to know what's next.



CSBG-D / BOSS program

# PROGRAM IMPACT



The holiday season was merry and bright thanks to all the wonderful community members and staff that helped to bring hope and joy into the BOSS program family's hearts and homes! Before the holidays arrived a giving tree was placed at the NEMCSA main office, where staff members could take a tag off the tree and purchase an item for one of the BOSS program family members. The Amazon wish list was also offered as a shopping option. Each family was able to have a truly beautiful Christmas, thanks to this effort and thanks to everyone who donated and participated.

In addition, multiple NEMCSA staff members donated some of their time to help wrap the presents for each family. THANK YOU!

Each BOSS family was moved when their presents arrived, and most were brought to tears. The BOSS mentors were happy to facilitate this opportunity for their families to ensure they had a holiday, but also that they stayed on track financially to reach their goals that they have set earlier in the year.

Progress with the BOSS program is soaring. We have three families that are transitioning to an as needed support due to their ability to reach and achieve their critical goals that were set. Multiple BOSS families have been nominated for the MCA Client of the Year awards!

Area Agency on Aging  
(AAA)

# PROGRAM IMPACT



Region 9 Area Agency on Aging has been notified that its team of 32 counselors is the recipient of the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) **Navigator Award** for the third quarter of the 2022-23 SHIP grant year, October 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

The Navigator Award recognizes the MMAP team that served the highest percentage of its Medicare population in a quarter as measured by Total Client Contacts reported in SHIPTools. Congratulations and thank you to the staff and volunteers who contributed to achieving the award.

**Health Tip:** Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damage the eye's optic nerve and can result in vision loss and even blindness. Some forms of glaucoma don't have any symptoms, so you may have the disease even if you don't have any trouble seeing or feel any pain. Half of people with glaucoma don't know they have it. If you get a glaucoma test and start treatment early, you may protect your eyes from serious vision loss. Medicare covers a glaucoma screening once every 12 months if you're at high risk for developing glaucoma.

If you have one of these conditions, then you're considered at high risk for developing glaucoma:

- You have diabetes
- You have a family history of glaucoma
- You're African American and age 50 or older
- You're Hispanic and age 65 or older

## Meetings/Trainings

February 8, 2023 – **New to Medicare presentation** at 10:00 am. Contact Kitty at 989-358-4612 to register.

February 10, 2023 – **Virtual Caregiver Webinar Series** – Navigating Difficult Conversations at 1:00 pm. Contact Brooke at 989-358-4616 to register

February 13, 2023 – **State Plan on Aging Input Session** – 1:00 pm at the Crawford COA. Call 989-348-7123 to register. This is a Community Conversation hosted by the Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports (ACLS) and part of the state's three-year plan development process. Join us for this in person event and provide input for aging services in Michigan.



The Let's Talk About Aging podcasts provide alerts about active SCAMS; explains Medicare/Medicaid and provides news about Region 9 Area Agency on Aging services and resources.

Register at [www.nemcsa.org/senior-services/podcast](http://www.nemcsa.org/senior-services/podcast)

**Our mission is to promote lifelong independence and dignity for all individuals and to assist the aged and disabled in meeting that goal.**