

Bob Richards and Jessica Lane named Employees of the Year by SAEF for 2025-2026



In a surprise move, the 2025-2026 Stockbridge Community Schools Employee of the Year, awarded by SAEF, was presented to two recipients, agriculture and technology teacher Bob Richards and payroll and benefits specialist Jessica Lane. Photo credit Julie White

specialist in Business Services.

Richards was recognized for the number of roles he has filled—educator, mentor, advocate, coach, veteran, innovator, and community leader—and for filling those roles with passion, integrity, and excellence.

See Employees of the Year on page 7.

Stockbridge area policing affected by millage defeat and budget shortfalls



by Mary Jo David

On Aug. 4, Stockbridge Township voters voted down a public safety millage proposal. That proposal would have earmarked 2.4 mills specifically for police services, including operating expenses, sworn police officers, administrative staff, operations, replacement and additional equipment and vehicles, and for related program support for public safety.

As a result of the millage not being passed, the Village of Stockbridge police are no longer available to patrol or respond to calls from Stockbridge Township. Previously the Village had been contracted for providing 40 hours per week of policing services to the Township. That contract ended in August.

Stockbridge Township residents in need of police services are directed to dial 911, where the dispatcher will forward the call to the responding public safety department—either Ingham County Sheriff's Office or the Michigan State Police.

Meanwhile, the Village of Stockbridge is also wrestling with budget shortfalls, and these will impact the Village police department. In an effort to address its obligation to build up and maintain a 25% general fund reserve for the Village, the municipality is planning cuts to the current police department. On Aug. 20, the Village of Stockbridge Council voted unanimously to continue funding the police department, but to reduce the force from one chief and two officers to one chief and one officer. The Council also authorized Chief Krause's request to sell the 2016 Ford Explorer.

3 district athletes win silver in the Special Olympics state softball tourney



Silver medalists from Stockbridge Jr./Sr. High pictured l-r: Braden White, Logan Van Loo, and Emmett Huhman. Photo provided by Naomi Carson

by Naomi Carson

Three athletes from Stockbridge Jr./Sr. High School and their Mason Comets team joined competitors from across the state at the Special Olympics Michigan State Softball Tournament on Aug. 21 in Canton. After a great day of softball, teamwork, sportsmanship, and celebration, the Comets returned home triumphant after winning the silver medal. The community is incredibly proud of Emmett Huhman, Logan Van Loo, and Braden White for their accomplishments on and off the field.

See more photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com. All photos provided by Naomi Carson.



- Faces of Addiction:** Learn about new recovery incentive programs in Michigan in the newest installment of Faces of Addiction on page 3.
- Welcome Back Breakfast:** See page 6 for photos of Stockbridge Community School's newest, and most senior, staff members.
- Community Calendar:** See page 9 for a list of community events happening this month.
- Voices of Service:** Learn about a longtime Stockbridge firefighter continuing to protect our community on page 12.
- Stockbridge Fall Sports Schedule:** See page 16.

Rural Perspectives: Colorful northern flicker can eat up to 5,000 ants daily



Diane Gray Constable

by Diane Constable

The northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), which translates to chiseler-golden, is our most colorful woodpecker and has some interesting behaviors.

As one of our larger native woodpeckers, it is 11 to 12 inches long, has a 16-to-20-inch wingspan and weighs in between 4 and 5.6 ounces. It has a distinctive color pattern of pale brown, speckled with black spots and crescents. The under wings and tail feathers are a bright golden yellow. The northern flicker also has a red spot on the back of its neck, a white rump patch, and a black crescent on its chest. In addition, the males have a black streak on either side of the bill, referred to as a "moustache."

In early spring, you can often hear the loud drumming of the male flicker as it pounds on hollow trees or even metal to declare its territory and to attract females. Both male and female help build the nest. These are carved out in rotting tree cavities or abandoned holes can be used. They have a floor of wood chips where the flicker lays five to eight eggs, which hatch in about 12 days. The male does the bulk of the incubation. But both feed the chicks until they leave the nest after three and a half to four weeks. The chicks will live about seven years.

The northern flicker is our only woodpecker that migrates south in the winter, though it flies just far enough to find unfrozen soil.

Unlike other woodpeckers, the northern flicker is more likely to be found on the ground in lawns or other short ground cover, rather than in trees, foraging for anthills. Its preferred food is ants and other small ground insects and larvae. This makes it helpful to control crop pests such as the European corn borer larvae. It can eat up to 5,000 ants daily. Although mostly insect eaters, flickers also eat various wild fruits like poison ivy, dogwood, and sumac, and they can sometimes be seen at a suet feeder.

Fun Facts: Northern flickers have the longest tongue in the North American bird world; it stretches 2 to 4 inches beyond its bill. They also have sticky spit and tiny backward-facing hooks to capture their prey.



The northern flicker is pale brown, speckled with black spots and crescents. It also has a red spot on the back of its neck. Photo credit Diane Constable

Flickers will spread their wings over anthills and use ants to help clean their feathers, as the ants' acid also deters parasites.

As an avid photographer, Diane Constable regularly puts her formal education in both nature and photography to good use. Diane also enjoys gardening and her dogs. She serves on the board of the Ann Arbor Dog Training Club and is editor of the club's newsletter.

North Lake United Methodist Church in Chelsea celebrates 190 years

Information provided by North Lake Church

North Lake United Methodist Church is celebrating the past and building for the future. The church is recognizing a remarkable milestone this year: 190 years of ministry, faith, and service in the community. Since its founding in 1836, North Lake UMC has been woven into the story of the local community. For generations people have gathered to worship, celebrate life, mourn losses, raise families, serve neighbors, and grow in faith together. Now, 190 years later, the church is celebrating its legacy while building for what comes next.

"Our history is significant as it is a reminder that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves," said Pastor Trish Farrell. "As we celebrate, we are also building on that legacy foundation for what God is calling us to next."

The church, located at 14111 North Territorial Road in Chelsea, is committed to fostering a spirit of inclusion, compassion, and engagement in both local and community life while embracing a forward-thinking approach to ministry that combines modern life with creativity and relevance.

On Sunday, Sept. 20, the 190th Anniversary Celebration will feature guest speaker Bishop Rev. David Bard in worship at 10 a.m. Presentation and celebration will follow with guests including founding families, former pastors, and state/local leaders.

For more information, visit www.northlakeumc.org or contact church office at 734-475-7569.



Since its founding in 1836, North Lake UMC has been woven into the story of the local community. Image credit North Lake UMC

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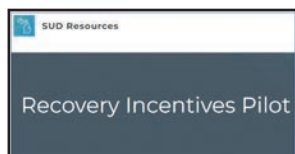
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Faces of Addiction

Local LifeWays agency assists in rolling out Michigan's Recovery Incentives Pilot



The state of Michigan's Recovery Incentives Pilot provides motivational incentives to people living with a substance use disorder who are able to achieve their treatment goals. Image credit michigan.gov



LifeWays, a mental health agency serving Jackson and Hillsdale counties, is assisting the state in implementing the Recovery Incentives Pilot for individuals seeking support along their recovery journey. Image credit lifewaysmi.org

by Tina Cole-Mullins

August closed with communities across the country pausing to acknowledge the weight of Overdose Awareness—honoring lives lost, lifting up grieving families, and naming the crisis that continues to touch every corner of society. As September opens into Substance Abuse Awareness Month, the focus shifts toward prevention, recovery, and the ongoing work of supporting those still fighting for their lives.

In this season of reflection and renewed commitment, LifeWays, a mental health agency serving Jackson and Hillsdale counties, is participating in a powerful state resource for individuals seeking support along their recovery journey.

The Recovery Incentives Pilot

The Recovery Incentives Pilot program through the state of Michigan (search for the pilot at michigan.gov) is an initiative that provides motivational incentives to people living with a substance use disorder who are able to achieve their treatment goals. The program is designed to help participants stay engaged, motivated, and connected as they work toward sobriety and long-term stability. Through structured incentives and transportation assistance, with a team dedicated to celebrating progress at every step, the program creates a pathway where people feel encouraged, supported, and perhaps most importantly, seen.

So what is the Recovery Incentives Pilot and why does it matter?

At its heart, this pilot brings a simple but powerful truth into recovery spaces: Encouragement changes outcomes. When someone is working to break free from stimulants or opioids, the brain's reward system is often out of rhythm. Contingency management—the model behind this pilot—

uses small, meaningful incentives to help rebuild that pathway and reinforce healthy choices. These incentives aren't extravagant; they're practical supports like gift cards for food or gas. Each week that a participant provides a negative drug test, the incentive grows. If someone has a positive test or misses an appointment, the incentive resets and begins building again as they re-engage. The structure isn't about punishment; it's about keeping people connected, motivated, and moving forward. The pilot is available across several regions in Michigan, all with one clear goal: make recovery services more accessible, more encouraging, and more effective for the people who need them most.

LifeWays: A local implementation partner

With that foundation in place, I spoke with Kaily Enbody, LPC and lead therapist at LifeWays, one of the agencies assisting the state in implementing the Recovery Incentives Pilot. Enbody offered insight into the local program's successes and challenges.

"So far, we have had eight participants complete the 24-week program! There are currently 11 consumers active, two completing within the next month, and many already scheduled to get started."

These numbers, she explained, reflect sustained engagement—one of the strongest indicators of recovery stability. As with many pilot initiatives, long-term sustainability depends on documented outcomes and continued financial support.

Enbody says, "The program's continuation is all based on funding. As a pilot location, we are sending in our success stories and how the program is positively impacting our consumers in hopes that we will be able to continue doing contingency management."

She also shared some of the lessons learned along the way.

"The biggest challenge when starting out was how to advertise that we were offering the Michigan Recovery Incentives Pilot program and transportation options for our consumers. Our PR team at LifeWays has done an amazing job with designing our pamphlets, creating videos/commercials, and spotlighting this program through our social media pages. Along with our PR team, our transportation team has really tried to work with us on offering transportation when available but also assisting with transportation resources in the community as well."

Outreach and accessibility often determine whether individuals can engage with recovery services. Collaboration between LifeWays' teams helped remove barriers and ensure the program reached those who needed it most.

See Recovery on page 7.

Bridge to Wellness

2026 5HF Farm to Table event features 'Picnic at the Lake'

by Matt Pegouskie

There's no better way to celebrate the bounty of our communities than by gathering around a table filled with fresh, locally grown food. We invite you to join us for the 11th annual Farm to Table Fabulous Feast, themed "Picnic at the Lake," on Sept. 13 at Grass Lake County Park.

This event always sells out, so get your tickets soon.

The 2026 Farm to Table Fabulous Feast hosts food lovers from our communities



The 2026 "Picnic at the Lake" Farm to Table Fabulous Feast will be held at Grass Lake County Park and hosts food lovers from our communities and beyond. Image credit 5healthytowns.org

and beyond. All enjoy an unforgettable evening that brings together local farmers, foodies, and neighbors in celebration of the people and places that make our community special.

Your ticket supports five farmers markets, including the Open Air Market of Stockbridge, and gives you an opportunity to savor delicious food, connect with others, and experience the best of the season. The event is supported locally through a sponsorship from Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition, seed funding from 5HF, and a team of volunteers. This year's event in Grass Lake comes on the heels of Stockbridge's 2025 Farm to Table Fabulous Feast, which was held at Gee Farms.

Bring your appetite and we'll save you a seat at the table! The volunteer planning committee is pulling together a seasonal menu sure to offer something for everyone. The multi-course menu includes bruschetta topped with goat cheese and caramelized pear, pimento-cheese hushpuppies, fresh seasonal salad, bacon-wrapped pork tenderloin roasted with herbs and marinade, herb-roasted chicken thighs, buttermilk mashed potatoes, piperade and polenta cake, dill biscuits, and ice cream served with fresh fruit pies.

WHAT: 5 Healthy Towns Farm to Table Fabulous Feast, a multi-course dinner and silent auction.

WHEN: Sunday, Sept. 13, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Gates open at 3 p.m.)

WHERE: Grass Lake County Park, 400 North Lake St.

COST: Tickets are \$75, available online.

To volunteer, purchase tickets, sponsor, or donate, visit the Farm to Table Fabulous Feast event website at www.5healthytowns.org/farm-to-table-dinner/



This column is sponsored by the Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition (SAWC). Matt Pegouskie is the community investment manager.

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Who We Are

Founded in 2016, the Stockbridge Community News is a Michigan nonprofit organization, IRS-licensed to operate as a 501(c)(4) organization (# C4-4001565).

An unpaid, volunteer board of directors oversees all SCN operations.

Our monthly, printed newspaper is free and mailed at no-cost to members of the local community. Complementary printed copies are also made available at strategic locations in the community. Print subscriptions are available for a fee to those outside SCN's postal distribution boundaries.

Articles are posted online throughout the month and are available to view for free at stockbridgecommunitynews.com

Our Mission

To promote the common good and shared well-being of residents in the greater Stockbridge area through the collection and publication of local news and useful community information.

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Our Writers

Stockbridge Community News depends on our team of talented, local writers who regularly volunteer their time to ensure we deliver newsworthy content each month. Writer names are reflected in the bylines that appear with each story.

Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

Patrice Johnson, an SCN founder and first editor-in-chief (2016-2021)

We would love to hear from you!

Please share any article ideas or community events you think SCN readers would be interested in. You are also encouraged to contact us with your advertising questions or for information about volunteering.

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Outreach in Action

Outreach and Chelsea Hospital heading off changes to federal assistance projected for 2027

by Jo Mayer and Paul Crandall



Kara Kestner, from Chelsea Hospital's Community Health and Well-Being Program, is in the Outreach office in Stockbridge on Wednesdays to help people navigate the assistance programs for which they are eligible—like Medicaid. Photo credit Jo Mayer

Against a profoundly uncertain backdrop of deep cuts to the federal social safety net, agencies committed to serving the most vulnerable are looking for partnerships to help them accomplish their missions.

Stockbridge Community Outreach maintains several of these collaborations, from food banks to Ingham County commissioners to area churches and organizations. But no joint effort is more important than the partnership between Outreach and Chelsea Hospital. Chelsea Hospital, co-owned by Trinity Health and the University of Michigan, provides substantial funding through its Community Health and Well-Being Program to

cover operating costs at Stockbridge Community Outreach.

Concerned about restrictions to food assistance benefits and upcoming limitations to Medicaid, Outreach reached out to Chelsea Hospital to compare notes.

Chelsea Hospital President Ben Miles emphasized that Trinity Health has been a "thought leader" regarding changes to federal coverage coming in 2027 and has developed a plan to deal with them. Miles said this plan is outlined in an online article by Dr. Chiquita Berg, in which she explains an approach dubbed "Coverage is Care." In short, Berg describes Coverage is Care as a patient-centered initiative to help eligible people stay covered and connected to care by making Medicaid changes easier to understand and overcoming avoidable barriers, thus maintaining their health care coverage.

Working alongside Outreach and other community partners, the approach aims to reduce confusion and strengthen access to care in 2027.

Core elements of Trinity Health Michigan's 'Coverage is Care' approach

- **Early awareness:** Helping people understand that changes are coming—before paperwork is missed or coverage is interrupted.
- **Clear guidance:** Helping patients and community members better understand what may be changing, why it matters and where to go for reliable next steps.
- **Support when barriers arise:** Coverage is Care is intended to help people break through barriers, such as confusion, literacy, language, technology access, or life circumstances, that make the process harder to navigate.

See Outreach on page 11.

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Reading Between the Lines In 'The Glassmaker,' Chevalier masterfully weaves a story through time while ensuring minimal breakage along the way

by Don Porter

"The Glassmaker," by well-known author Tracy Chevalier, is a work of historical fiction. It features the city of Venice and, as importantly, the island of Murano, which is across the lagoon from the main island.

The story begins in the year 1486 with the heroine, Orsola Rosso. From there, it takes you on a journey through more than 500 years that span a vibrant trade life, the plague, and multiple wars before arriving at current days. Although the novel employs the technique of "time skipping," Orsola and her family are constants through the centuries.

Murano glassmaking was initiated by the Doge of Venice—the head of state for the Republic of Venice. As both an art and a trade, glassmaking was moved to this island in the last decade of the 13th century to primarily ensure the rest of Venice was safe from possible fires. As a trade, glassmaking was an occupation practiced by a limited number of men in select Venetian families. The artistic demands required a tremendous amount of skill and hard work.

The story unfolds with Orsola, along with her mother and sisters, dealing with the responsibility of helping to raise children and keep the family fed and cared for. There is little time for Orsola to entertain dreams of her own.

By fate, she connects with Maria Barovier, a historical glass artist who has mastered the skill of making glass beads. Barovier teaches Orsola the basics of the art and encourages Orsola to become a master of the art as well.

Working through a German merchant and trader, Orsola has to sell her beads in secret due to male domination of the glassmaking trade and rigid rules within its guild. Over time, Orsola's developing skill becomes vital to the Rosso family as events cause men's glassmaking skills to steadily decline and almost disappear at times. Throughout their lives, the Rosso family faces numerous hardships and tragedies, but it's the beadmaking that helps them to survive.

Venice was a major world trading center and, as such, it was home to all sorts of intriguing historical events over time. Famous for Cassanova as well as the gondoliers who traverse Venetian canals, this reader can speak from experience that Venice is a fascinating place. In fact, it's highly likely that the visit my wife and I took to Venice helped to make "The Glassmaker" even more relatable.

As with most good novels, "The Glassmaker" has an underlying love story that is quite unique. A surprise visit for Orsola at the end of the book brings the story to an unexpected end.

If you like historical fiction as I do, I think you will find "The Glassmaker," by Tracy Chevalier is a great read.

Don Porter is a former Stockbridge Schools deputy superintendent. He also served as assistant principal at the Jr./Sr. High School and then principal at Smith Elementary, Katz Elementary, and Heritage School. He and his wife, Tammy, live in Stockbridge and enjoy fly fishing, golf, traveling, and working in the yard.

Thank You

The Stockbridge Community News team would like to thank those in the community who continue to send donations. Special thanks to those listed here whose donations were received between April-August, 2026. We truly appreciate the support of our community, and we look forward to continuing to provide a quality, local paper. Donations can be sent to Stockbridge Community News at P.O. Box 83, Gregory, MI 48137.

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Welcome Breakfast: New superintendent kicks off school year for SCS teachers and staff

by Mary Jo David

On Aug. 17, the Stockbridge Community Schools district welcomed back staff at its annual Welcome Back Breakfast. By 8 a.m., teachers, administrators, and support staff filled the cafeteria at the Jr./Sr. High School. The agenda included introductions of new staff, years-of-service acknowledgements, recognition of the Helen B. Mitteer Employee of the Year, and the unveiling of the district's theme for the 2026-27 school year. After an intermission, the program included a presentation by Joe Vercellino from The Lion Heart Experience who created the striking lion painting in the gym during last year.

Who's who this year. Jeff Trapp opened the day's program in his new role of superintendent by introducing the three members of the school board who were in attendance: Carrie Graham, Justin Richardson, and Richard Ramalia.

Next, Central Office staff were introduced with a few changes called out by Trapp, including Kim Killinger, who has moved into a new role as executive assistant; Carolyn Malinski, who is the new transportation director; and of course, Jeff Trapp as the new superintendent.

All three schools in the district have new principals: Smith Elementary's Nicole Greiter is new to the district, Julie White has moved from Smith to the principalship at Heritage, and Meghan Kunzelman has moved into Jeff Trapp's previous role as the principal at the Jr./Sr. High School.

Each principal announced new staff at their schools. Those changes are reflected in the photos accompanying this article.

Promoting consistency through milestone anniversaries. Trapp reiterated that some things have not changed. For example, the district will remain a cellphone-free district for students this year. Now in its second year, since this policy was implemented the schools have seen increases in test scores, positive behaviors, and graduation rates, and a decrease in absenteeism. In addition, the increase in the high school's AP scores was notable enough to be recognized by the state.

Trapp also announced that this year the district is implementing ParentSquare, a unified messaging platform to connect the entire K-12 school district, and send a consistent message: You belong here!

See Welcome Back on page 7.



MILESTONES: Recognized for five years of service are (front row, l-r): Nakita Heiman, Jeanette Wetzel, Erin Walz, Amanda Mathews. (Back row l-r): Carolyn Malinski, Deborah Wightman, Donald Anderson, David Rowse, Brandon Vince, and Melissa Marcum. Not pictured: Michelle Szilagyi, Alexandra Doering.



MILESTONE: Recognized for 10 years of service: Sonja Creps



The heroes of the day were the Stockbridge food service team members who did not rest until all of the staff had been fed at this year's Staff Welcome Back Breakfast (l-r): Marcella Tracy, Stephanie White (food service director), Lori Cook, Kim Machette, Laura Fitzsimmons, Teresa Michalski, and Jodi Steenbeke. Photo credit Mary Jo David



School board members (l-r) Justin Richardson, Carrie Graham, and Richard Ramalia were on hand to welcome school staff back for the 2026-2027 school year. Photo credit Joan Tucker



School administration treated returning faculty and staff to a music video to kick off the school year. Photo by Mary Jo David



NEW/CHANGED STAFF: CENTRAL OFFICE (l-r): Carolyn Malinski (transportation director), Kim Killinger (executive assistant). Not pictured: Jeff Trapp, superintendent.



NEW/CHANGED STAFF: HERITAGE ELEMENTARY (l-r): Misty Welch (office manager), Julie White (principal), Audrey Austin (third grade teacher).



NEW/CHANGED STAFF: SMITH ELEMENTARY (l-r): Nicki Jude (office manager), Ashley Sala (first grade teacher), Maddisen Chinavare (first grade teacher), Ashley Quick-Drossart (first grade), Nicole Greiter (principal). Not pictured: Amanda Mathews (returning to Young 5s), Emily Hoard (returning to K-6 literacy coach).



NEW/CHANGED STAFF: JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL (l-r): Josh Nichols (assistant principal), Meghan Kunzelman (principal), Kristina Skyotis (student intern), Marissa Petiprin-Ball (FFA/AG science teacher), Katee Buddenborg (office manager), Brad Buddenborg.

Welcome Back page 6



MILESTONES: Recognized for 25 Years of Service (l-r) Lissa Avis, Michelle Hedding, and Kevin Smith. Photo credit Julie White

Consistency is one way to raise the bar academically, and returning teachers and staff help to drive consistency. For the fourth year running, the Staff Welcome Breakfast has been a place for recognizing staff members for their years of service. See accompanying photos for 5, 10, 20, and 25-year recognitions.

When all was said and done, it must be said that, aside from Employee of the Year, the next biggest highlight of the morning was the airing of a music video by school administration. The general feeling was, you haven't lived until you see Superintendent Trapp in a bright orange tracksuit!

Look elsewhere in this edition of the Stockbridge Community News for coverage, including photos, of the SAEF Employee of the Year award (there's a surprise!) and a story about the unveiling of this year's theme for the school year.

Except where indicated, all photos by Julie White.

Employees of the Year page 1

Says Superintendent Jeff Trapp about Richards, "His vision and leadership have transformed educational opportunities within our district. His influence can be seen in the success of his students, the strength of his programs, and the lasting impact Bob has made on Stockbridge Schools and the community as a whole."

Richards shared the following with Stockbridge Community News: "I'm honored to be selected as this year's award recipient. I'm looking forward to growing our agricultural education and computer science programs here at Stockbridge Community Schools. It's important for teachers and students to try new things and explore all the opportunities available to us if we want to improve our schools and instructional programs."

Lane was recognized for putting the needs of others first and not hesitating to step in wherever needed.

According to Trapp, "I have experienced this firsthand. Jessica's ability to adapt, learn new responsibilities, and continue providing the same high level of support in all her positions is truly admirable and reflects her strong work ethic and dedication to our district."

Lane told the Stockbridge Community News, "I am so incredibly blessed to have a job I love, in a community I love, with a ton of awesome coworkers. I am truly humbled and felt the love."

Both Lane and Richards had family on hand to surprise them when Trapp announced the awards.

Since 2013 the Teacher of the Year award is accompanied by \$1,500 to be put toward any educational pursuit desired by the winner. This award has been made possible by a generous donation from the Mitteer family in honor of Helen Bullis Mitteer, who began teaching in a one-room schoolhouse in 1929, and continued to teach in Stockbridge schools for the next 40 years.

Recovery page 3

"This program is meant to encourage engagement and open the door to other services in the hope that consumers want to continue to invest in their recovery," Enbody said. "Our team members here are true cheerleaders and anyone wanting to implement a program like this needs to be the cheerleaders for their participants."

Her advice is simple and powerful: Encouragement matters. Recovery is not just clinical—it's relational. Communities hoping to adopt similar models must be ready to champion their participants with consistency and compassion.

"People want to be seen," Enbody said. She added, "No matter where someone is in the stage of change, they deserve the time and resources that could better their lives. The Michigan Recovery Incentives Pilot program opens the door and can really be a way for consumers to stay motivated and feel seen."

Her closing reflection captures the heart of the program. At its core, recovery is about connection—being recognized, supported, and valued at every stage of change.

Resources

- Recovery Incentives Pilot at LifeWays: Phone: 517-780-3332. Email: kaily.enbody@lifewaysmi.org
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: Phone: 517-241-3740.
- State of Michigan Recovery Incentives Pilot email address: MDHHSRecoveryIncentives@michigan.gov.

Journalist Tina Cole-Mullins covers a range of topics and issues for Stockbridge Community News, including her Faces of Addiction and mental wellness contributions. A lifelong Dansville resident, she volunteers as a community outreach facilitator, helping ensure individuals and families can access the resources they need.

STOCKBRIDGE COMMUNITY NEWS

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Clyde Whitaker

Clyde's Corner They called me 'Coach' as the years flew by

by Clyde Whitaker

Usually an object or picture will spark a story in me. Today it was a community education shirt I wore that said "Stockbridge" on the front and "Coach" on the back.

Coaching over the past 40 years has brought me much joy, working with the kids, seeing them improve with smiles on their faces, and watching them grow up to be good people—many with kids of their own. Watching my grandchildren play also always brings a smile to my face.

The years flew by and I loved coaching the kids in baseball, basketball and yes, two years of soccer! Meredith Hanna, community education director at that time, needed a soccer coach for Grant's team. She approached me, asking if I would be interested in coaching. I told her I knew NOTHING about soccer, then in the next moment, she tossed me a book, "Teaching Soccer." Guess who was the new coach!

I coached all of our four children: Aaron, Josh, Angie and Grant. They were good athletes and went on to become All-League players, Josh in baseball and Angie in soccer. Aaron was a good basketball player and a good golfer. Grant was good in baseball and basketball. He played football until injuring his knee in a practice.

I didn't start feeling old until one year, coaching the seventh grade basketball team at tryouts, I had a player with a lot of talent. He was shooting the 3-pointers, and fast. I asked his name and he said "Mitch Fletcher." Well, that caught my breath, because I had coached another seventh grader named Mitch Fletcher—turns out, it was HIS DAD!!

As a coach, I never told players they must win. I told them to work as hard as they could, play fair, and HAVE FUN! Over the years I have had many kids with lots of talent, like Thomas Lovachis. Thomas was such a good athlete and could have 40 points per game if he wanted to. But he understood the team concept, making others around him better. I told him he would be on varsity as a freshmen. He was!

I believe all coaches pretty much want the same thing from the kids we coach: play hard, no excuses, be a good teammate, be a good student, and be a good person.

Those coaching years will never be forgotten. Now it's time to watch the grandkids play, support our community the best I can, and sit with Bob Myers in the corner of the gym watching our Panthers play.

Nice.

See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

Clyde Whitaker is a 1973 Stockbridge graduate. He and his wife, Mary, raised four children in Stockbridge, and they still reside in the Stockbridge area.



Clyde Whitaker, scorebook in hand, early in his coaching career. Photo provided by Clyde Whitaker

Stockbridge preschoolers to explore nature, build science skills with grant help

by Kelsey Rasmussen

On any given morning at Smith Elementary, you might find a 4-year-old crouching on the nature trail, magnifying glass in hand, studying the underside of a leaf or rock. Or listening, perfectly still, for birdsong in the outdoor classroom. Or building a tiny shelter from sticks and cardboard and asking, "What kind of bugs will make this their home?"

That is the vision behind a new science special coming to Smith Elementary's preschool classrooms in September 2026. It started, like many good things in a small town, with a few people sitting down to solve a problem together because they all cared about the same kids.

The existing Great Start Readiness Program allows Stockbridge families to enroll 4-year-olds in full-time preschool at no cost. The program was expanded from four days a week to five last year. Families love it, but the change removed a full day of planning each week for the teacher to prepare, reflect, and write detailed records required by the state grant.

As a Stockbridge parent, village trustee, experienced secondary science teacher, and senior fellow with the Knowles Teacher Initiative—a nonprofit dedicated to elevating science and math education nationally—this writer saw an opportunity for the kids of our community. My Knowles senior fellowship enabled the applying for a seed grant to fund educational improvement initiatives. Upon discussing with Amanda Mathews, who was then Smith's early childhood director (and currently a Young 5s teacher), we saw potential for developing a weekly science special. The special would be designed to give teachers an hour of independent work time while delivering rich science experiences to students.

Knowles awarded the \$8,800 grant, including \$3,500 for materials. With help from Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Amy Hodgson, Stockbridge Schools committed to contribute over one-third of project costs—a meaningful investment that signals this work is built to last.

The new special, to be led by this writer, will emphasize the school's extraordinary natural setting. The nature trail, the outdoor classroom, the changing Michigan seasons—all of it becomes a living classroom. Students will use their senses to observe birds, insects, and the weather, ask testable questions, keep nature journals, learn to use a compass, and watch caterpillars become butterflies and tadpoles become frogs in their own classrooms.

See Science on page 15.



The outdoor classroom before cleanup (left) and in-progress (right). Next step: painting bench tops. Photo credits Kelsey Rasmussen.

All You Can Eat Country Breakfast



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Community Calendar

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays – Prepared Meals for Seniors, noon to 2 p.m., Stockbridge Area Senior Center.

Mondays

- LEGO Club, 4 to 5 p.m. at CADL Stockbridge. Library closed Labor Day.
- Walking Group, 7 p.m. at Veterans Park.
- First Mondays: American Legion Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post.

Tuesdays

- Fiber Arts Group meets for knitting, crochet, weaving, spinning, etc., 3-5 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library.
- Pickleball, 6:30 p.m. at Veterans Park, beginners welcome.
- First Tuesdays: Sons of American Legion Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post.
- Fourth Tuesdays: Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post.

Wednesdays

- Discovery Storytime (For Babies, Toddlers, and Children), 10:30 to 11 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library. No session on Sept. 16.
- Pop-up food distribution for anyone in need, 1 to 3 p.m. at Stockbridge Community Outreach.
- Bingo, 6 p.m. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion.
- Tabletop Role-Playing Game, 6-7:30 p.m. Village Hall, 118 N. Center. St. Led by experienced facilitator. Ages: middle school. Free but requires a refundable deposit. (Runs Sept. 2 through Oct. 21.)

Thursdays

- Coffee chats, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library.
- American Legion Thursday meals, 4:30-7 p.m. Open to the public.
- Ladies Night, 6 to 9 p.m. at Trillium Gardens.
- Celebrate Recovery, Stockbridge at Crossroads Community Church. A welcoming, community-focused format. Dinner (free) is at 6 p.m. Large Group at 7 p.m. Open Share at 8 p.m.

Fridays

- Discovery Storytime (For Babies, Toddlers, and Children), 10:30 to 11 a.m. Stockbridge Library.
- Open Air Market of Stockbridge, 4 to 7 p.m. at Veterans Park (See ad on page 15).

Sundays

- Adults, all ages Cardio Drumming, 7 to 8 p.m. at the the Senior Center (SASC).

Sep. 2 - Art with Ms. Tiffany, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at CADL Stockbridge.

Sep. 3 - Morning Trivia, 9:30 to 10 a.m. at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center.

Sep. 5-7 - CADL Stockbridge Closed for Labor Day Weekend.

Sep. 7 - Labor Day

Sep. 8 - Drop-In STEAM Lab at CADL Stockbridge.

Sep. 9 - Henrietta Township Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Henrietta Township Hall.

Sep. 10 - Unadilla Township Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Unadilla Township Hall.

Sep. 12 - Sewing Club, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at CADL Stockbridge.

Sep. 13 - Pop-Up Storytimes at Michigan History Museum, Lansing, 1:30-2:30 p.m., babies through preschoolers.

Sep. 13 - 5 Healthy Towns Farm to Table Fabulous Feast, 4 to 6 p.m. at Grass Lake County Park. See page 3 for more information.

Sep. 14 - Book Club, 11 a.m.-noon, at the Stockbridge Library. Book: Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law by Mary Roach.

Sep. 14 - Stockbridge Community Schools Board of Education meeting, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Sep. 15 - Stockbridge Community Schools Fall Picture Day.

Sep. 16 - Music with Ms. Beth, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at CADL Stockbridge.

Sep. 17 - Morning Trivia, 9:30 to 10 a.m. at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center.

Sep. 18 - Stockbridge Community Schools Homecoming.

Sept. 18 - Unadilla Twp. Farmers Market, 4-8 p.m. at Unadilla Twp. Community Park (Barnum and Hadley roads).

Sep. 20 - All You Can Eat Country Breakfast, 8 a.m. to noon at Stockbridge First Presbyterian Church.

Sep. 20 - North Lake United Methodist Church 190th anniversary celebration, 10 a.m., 14111 North Territorial, Chelsea.

Sep. 20 - Ballstars Kickball, 2 to 3 p.m. at the Gregory Ballfield.

Sep. 21 - Drop-In STEAM Lab at CADL Stockbridge.

Sep. 21 - Read with Remington, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at CADL Stockbridge.

Sep. 21 - Stockbridge Township Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge Township Hall.

Sep. 22 - Waterloo Township Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Waterloo Township Hall.

Sep. 25 - Stockbridge Harvest Fest. See ad on page 16.

Sep. 26 - Stockbridge Harvest Fest. See ad on page 16.

Sep. 26 - Craft Supplies Swap, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at CADL Stockbridge. See information at CADL Stockbridge Facebook page.

Sep. 27 - Foraging Basics with CADL Stockbridge, 1 to 3 p.m. at the Beckwith Nature Preserve in Stockbridge.

Sep. 27 - Author Visit with Hanif Abdurraqib, 2-3:30 p.m., at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Ctr., East Lansing. Discuss the book, "There's Always This Year: On Basketball and Ascension." All ages.

Sep. 30 - Grades 7-12 Conferences Stockbridge Community Schools.

For an online calendar of more community events visit:
www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.



Jeffrey Trapp

Superintendent's Desk

Moving beyond information sharing to more meaningful communication

As the calendar turns to September and we settle into the rhythm of the new school year, I find myself reflecting on the energy that has filled our hallways these past few weeks. It has been a joy to see our students reconnecting with friends and teachers. As I have shared before, this community is my home, and serving as your superintendent is a responsibility I hold dear. One goal this year is to move beyond just information- sharing toward true, meaningful connection. Our school is truly about the people, and we want to foster open, trusting communication between our families and our schools. As we begin a new school year, I want to focus on two things regarding communication: how we communicate and our desire to be accessible to our families and community.

One district. One communication platform.

This year, Stockbridge Community Schools has moved to ParentSquare as our primary communication platform. Our goal is simple: make communication easier, more consistent, and more accessible for everyone. Instead of information being spread across multiple apps and platforms, ParentSquare gives families one central place to receive district and school updates and communicate with staff. We want you to have the information you need when you need it.

We are here to listen.

While ParentSquare is an important tool, people are at the heart of communication. We want our families and community members to know that we are available, approachable, and ready to listen. If you have a question or concern, please reach out. The best way to get an answer is to start with the person closest to the situation. Questions about a classroom should begin with the teacher. Building concerns should begin with the building principal. If an issue needs to move further through the district, we will make sure it gets to the right person. Following the chain of communication helps us respond quickly, solve problems at the appropriate level, and ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard. (See accompanying "Chain of Communication" and "Contact List.")

My door is always open, and I encourage you to reach out. We want to hear from you, we want to work with you, and we want to continue building trust together. At the end of the day, communication is about relationships. When we work together and keep the lines of communication open, our students ultimately will benefit.

We Are Stockbridge. Go Panthers!

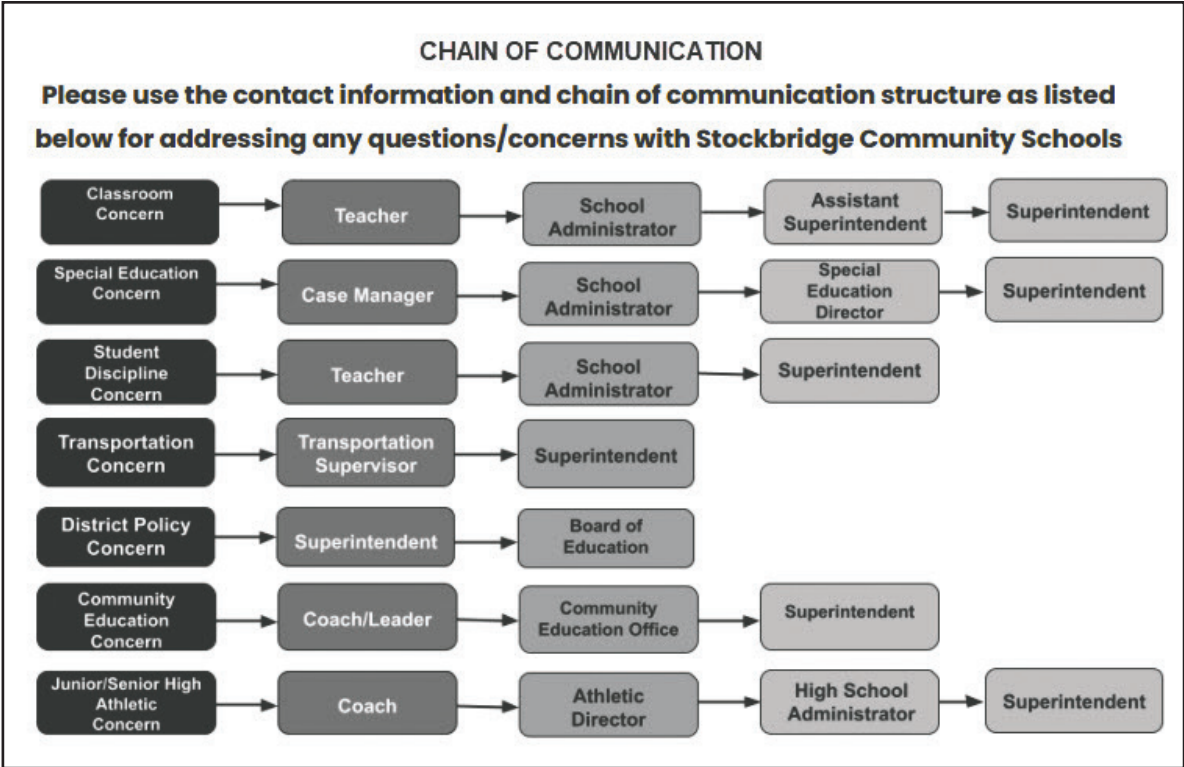
Jeff Trapp

Superintendent

Stockbridge Community Schools

View SCS contact list to the right. Go to the school website at panthernet.net to locate teacher contact information.

Smith Elementary Principal (517) 851-7735 ext. 3210	Nicole Greiter	greitern@panthernet.net
Heritage Elementary Principal (517) 851-8600 ext. 4116	Julie White	whitej@panthernet.net
Junior/Senior High School Principal (517) 851-7770 ext. 6405	Meghan Kunzelman	kunzelmanm@panthernet.net
Junior/Senior High School Principal (517) 851-7770 ext. 6403	Josh Nichols	nicholsj@panthernet.net
Pass Program Director (517) 851-7770 ext. 7654	Steve Allison	allisons@panthernet.net
Transportation Director (517) 851-8452	Carolyn Malinski	malinskic@panthernet.net
Athletic Director (517) 851-7770 ext. 3207	Dan Stafford	staffordd@panthernet.net
Community Education Coordinator (517) 851-8600 ext. 4129	Dena Sommer	sommerd@panthernet.net
Special Education Director (517) 851-8600 ext. 4131	Kelsey Jennett	jennettk@panthernet.net
Assistant Superintendent (517) 851-7188 ext. 6406	Amy Hodgson	hodgsona@panthernet.net
Superintendent (517) 851-7188 ext. 5501	Jeff Trapp	trappj@panthernet.net
Board of Education (517) 851-7188 ext. 6407	Central Office	killingk@panthernet.net



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Around the Market

Community impacts of local markets are economic and social



This summer in particular has been an important one for local farming vendors who have supplied fresh produce to our communities via the Open Air Market. Photo by Kristen Stromski

by Kristen Stromski

The Open Air Market is so much more than just a place to shop. Each week, we work to bring community members together to support our vendors while creating opportunities for connection, collaboration, and community. Some may imagine that a local farmers market is simply a place for vendors to showcase their offerings, but it is so much more than that. A local market such as ours helps build a stronger community by giving local businesses, farmers, makers, and residents a place to come together, support one another, and build meaningful relationships.

This summer in particular has been an important one for local farming vendors who have supplied fresh produce to our communities. Farmers worked hard to plant, pick, and provide their local produce to ensure families still have access to fresh vegetables. This is a great example of what we aim to offer at the Open Air Market: opportunities for community members to purchase fresh offerings directly from local vendors while supporting local small businesses.

Community is not built solely through formal organizations, but rather through repeated, casual interactions at places just like the Open Air Market. This is one of the reasons we are grateful to be located at Veterans Memorial Park this season. Families can enjoy more than just the market by creating memories with their children, playing at the park, enjoying the pump track, and watching local musicians perform on Friday evenings.

See Market on page 15.

Outreach page 4

• **Community partnerships:** Working alongside community partners, like Outreach, to help reach people throughout the Chelsea Hospital service area. Working with those partners to strengthen and increase community access points for guidance and support.

Strong partnerships expand reach, particularly for patients who may not regularly engage with health care, but who may come to places like Outreach for food or other assistance.

Chelsea Hospital's Community Health and Well-Being Program, led by director Kate Yocum, recognizes that the hospital needs local, on-the-ground, community connections in order to reach people who may not know how to access health services.

So, beyond funding that helps Outreach keep its doors open and lights on, Chelsea Hospital's Community Health and Well-Being Program has placed a community health worker, Kara Kestner, in the Outreach office every Wednesday. Kestner helps Stockbridge-area people navigate the many online systems, access resources such as food and housing, and maintain active status in programs for which they are eligible—like Medicaid.

"Outreach and Chelsea Hospital both have primary goals to serve the underserved and the most vulnerable," said Yocum. "We will meet people where they are and walk with them through the doors to get what they need."

Medicaid changes anticipated for 2027 include more frequent eligibility checks and new administrative requirements that could make it easier to lose coverage due to missed paperwork or misunderstandings—even among people who remain eligible.

Yocum explained that her team wants to work to eliminate all the barriers to care and to help clients prepare for 2027.

See Outreach on page 14.

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STOCKBRIDGE TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2026

Stockbridge Township Supervisor Cg Lantis called Stockbridge Township Regular Board Meeting to order on August 17, 2026, at 7:01pm at the Stockbridge Township Hall. Members present at the Stockbridge Township Regular Board Meeting; Supervisor CG Lantis, Treasurer James Wireman, Trustee Ed Wetherell, Member absent Clerk Becky Muraf, Trustee Terry Sommer

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

Wetherell motion to accept the Stockbridge Township Regular Board Meeting agenda as printed. Wireman second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Citizens Comments None

Wetherell motion to accept the Stockbridge Township Board meeting minutes from July 20, 2026, as printed Wireman Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Wireman motion to accept the Stockbridge Township Financial Report as printed Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Police update Calls for service to the Township decreased 7% from the month of June, while calls for service in the Village increased by 8%. Total Calls for Service within Village 97 Total calls for Township 94

Memorial Plaque None

Old Business

Discussion on public safety revenue sharing funds Supervisor Lantis will reach out to Sheriff Wigglesworth and will be discussed next month

New Business

Wireman motion to decrease the Stockbridge Township Planning Commission board from 7 with a quorum of 4-to-5-member board with a quorum of 3 Wetherell Second Roll Call Vote Wireman Yes, Wetherell Yes, Lantis Yes, All in Favor Motion Carried

Wireman Motion to spend up to \$1,200.00 on Halloween Candy for Stockbridge Township Square Halloween trick or treat Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Stockbridge Township Police Millage did not pass on the August 2026 Ballot. Stockbridge Police will patrol Stockbridge Township until August 31, 2026 after that Stockbridge Township will have to contact Ingham County 911 for all police matters

Clerk Muraf arrived at 7:39PM

Wireman motion to spend up to \$40,200.00 on the Stockbridge Township Hall drainage issues on the north side of the building starting October 1, 2026. Wetherell second roll call vote Wireman Yes, Wetherell Yes, Muraf Yes, Lantis Yes All in Favor Motion Carried

Muraf motion to spend up to \$17.00 an hour for 15 hours a week for up to a year along with \$1,500.00 on equipment to start the process to make Stockbridge Township Records digitalized wireman Second Roll Call Vote Muraf Yes, Wetherell Yes, Wireman Yes, Lantis Yes All in Favor Motion Carried

Wetherell motion to pay the monthly bills in the amount of \$82,208.15 Wireman Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Citizen Comments Discussion

Lantis adjourn the Stockbridge Township Regular Meeting at 7:49PM

Voices of Service

Doug Sommer: Nearly six decades answering calls, aiding the community

by Melissa McPherson

At 77 years old, lifelong Stockbridge resident Doug Sommer has spent nearly 60 years as a volunteer for the Stockbridge Fire Department (now SAESA). When you hear about that kind of longevity, you might imagine he spent his boyhood dreaming about being a firefighter. But until the day the township supervisor asked him to help put out a grass fire in the area, Sommer had given no thought to firefighting at all.

That was in 1968, and since then, he has served in nearly every role the department has to offer. He began as a firefighter and later served as lieutenant, captain, assistant chief and then staging officer. Today, after decades of service, he continues to serve his community as a truck engineer.

When asked what inspired him to continue to serve after that first fire, Sommer said simply, "I just started, and I never stopped."

The Stockbridge Fire Department looked very different when Doug first joined. Pagers...cellphones...they didn't exist. Fire calls came through a dedicated phone line installed in firefighters' homes. When the distinctive, steady ring sounded, everyone knew it was time to go.

More often than not, that call came at night, as it did on Aug. 17, 1971.

"The call came in during the middle of the night," Sommer recalled. "I got up to answer the phone and looked out the front window. The whole sky was red."

The grain elevator at the Stockbridge Elevator Company, which processed local beans, hay, and grain had caught fire. The elevator stood directly along the old Grand Trunk Western railroad tracks, a critical transit corridor for mid-Michigan's agricultural production. The blaze was so massive and hot that the radiant heat could be felt fiercely from blocks away. The wooden structure was completely consumed by the flames, leaving behind only the concrete foundations. Miraculously, no one was hurt in the fire, but following its destruction, local farmers shifted to more modernized facilities.

For Sommer, who has spent his entire life in Stockbridge, working for the small volunteer fire department is more than just a community service, it is personal. Growing up in Stockbridge means many calls involve friends, neighbors and familiar faces.

One night, he responded to a fire on the road where his wife Terry had grown up. He and Terry had been in 4-H together and had started dating as teenagers. As he drove the fire truck toward the scene, he realized the burning house was her childhood home, still owned by both his wife and her brother.

"My heart just sank," he recalled.

Though no one was injured in that fire, Sommer has been witness to plenty of loss. He has experienced heartbreaking moments that tested both his strength and his training, including discovering family members after tragic accidents.

It's easy to imagine being overwhelmed by the loss that goes with the job, but instead, Sommer uses it as motivation to keep helping his community. His wife Terry believes being a firefighter is what helped him get through those tragedies.

She said, "I think his training helped him keep it together." Terry added, "He knew what to do. He knew who to call. It helped him handle situations that would have overwhelmed almost anyone else."

Despite the difficult memories, Doug never considered walking away from the department.

Instead, he continued answering calls while balancing life on the family farm and raising three children with Terry—Melissa, Eric and Todd. Today, their grown children remain close to home, with Melissa and Eric living in Stockbridge and Todd in Jackson.

A lot has changed in the nearly 60 years since Sommer began working for the department—both for him, personally, and for the department itself.

See *Voices of Service* on page 15.



In his nearly 60 years with the Stockbridge Fire Department (now SAESA), Doug Sommer has served in nearly every role in the department. Photo credit Terry Sommer

SEWING AND ALTERATIONS

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Positive Parenting

Travel with little kids is not a vacation



Vacationing with little children is not relaxing. I bring activities. I pack little surprises. These work for maybe three minutes at a time. Photo credit Dr. Erin Clifton

by Dr. Erin Clifton

Vacationing with little children is not relaxing. It is not rejuvenating. And yet, we keep doing it.

The night before we leave, I lay out the girls' clothes for the next day. By that I mean their pajamas, because I am not changing children into daytime clothes when, at 3 a.m., we will be carrying them downstairs and loading them into their car seats thinking, "They'll sleep on the way to the airport." No such luck.

Getting through security isn't too bad until we get the stroller through and only one child wants to go back in it. Somebody is hungry. Somebody is tired. They cry and complain about every little thing. Then we board the airplane.

Have you ever tried keeping a 20-month-old on your lap without allowing her to intrude into

the space on either side of you? Even when the person sitting next to you is her own sister? A foot touches a thigh, and it's, "Don't touch me!" "She's in my space!" "She's pushing me!"

Then comes the moment I've been dreading. We still have an hour and a half left in the flight when I smell it. Poop.

I glance around to see if anyone else has noticed. I actually convince myself that maybe—maybe—we can hang in there until the flight is over. But, not five minutes later, my toddler loudly announces, "Ewwww, she stinks! I think sister pooped!"

OK. We're going in! I gather "sister" and supplies and make my way to the back of the plane, where I squeeze myself and a 20-month-old into a bathroom about the size of a shoebox. It's loud and confined, so she immediately starts screaming bloody murder.

I pull down the diaper-changing station and attempt to wrestle her shoes and pants off while she is completely losing her mind. I finally get the dirty diaper off. She kicks it and the diaper flies off the changing table. It hits my foot first, then the floor. At this point, I am moving as quickly as humanly possible while silently praying, "Please don't have landed poop-side down. Please don't have landed poop-side down."

I wipe her down, get a fresh diaper on her, dress her, grab the dirty diaper (which thankfully had landed poop-side-up), dispose of the evidence and finally open the bathroom door, only to discover the beverage cart is blocking the aisle back to our seats.

Back in our seats, my kids are still too little to leave headphones on for any meaningful length of time, so watching a movie is not an option. But I'm prepared. My mom used to pack little surprises for us when we took long road trips. I loved that, so I try to do the same. I have new toys. I bring activities. I pack new markers

and little surprises. These work for maybe three minutes at a time. Then something gets dropped ... or a marker rolls under a seat ... or someone inevitably wants whatever her sister has.

Vacations with little kids are difficult largely because everything that normally keeps them regulated gets thrown out the window. They don't sleep on schedule. They don't nap on schedule. Their routine is completely altered. Then, because they don't sleep enough, they're cranky. And when they're cranky, they are especially cranky with me. Sure, I am their safe space, which means they would crawl back inside my body and return to the womb if that were possible.

One of the biggest changes I've made is simply readjusting my expectations. I leave plenty of time on vacation to move at my children's pace instead of trying to jam everything into the schedule. Sometimes the thing I thought would be the highlight of the trip lasts 20 minutes, and the thing they love most is so blazingly simplistic. Sometimes we need to go back to the hotel because somebody needs a nap or to veg watching ParaNorman for the billionth time.

I know Embassy Suites may not be everybody's cup of tea, but when traveling with little kids, it scores some serious points with me. First, they usually have a huge, open common area in the center of the hotel. Nobody seems particularly bothered when your children use this area to run around like banshees, screaming with delight. When they get tired of running, they can wave to people riding the glass elevators. Free entertainment! Additionally, Embassy Suites guest rooms include a separate sitting area off the bedroom. This is huge when you have little kids. You can fit a family of six into one room, the price is still manageable, and the breakfast is pretty darn good.

One rule I have learned to follow upon returning home is to give myself at least a day and a half—preferably two days—before real life starts again. These are not bonus vacation days. These are recovery days. We unpack, do laundry, and try to catch up on sleep. We get food back in the house and slowly get everybody back onto something resembling a normal routine.

Traveling with little kids is exhausting. It is also messy and loud and hard on everyone's nervous system. It is absolutely not relaxing. But I don't think that means we shouldn't do it. We just need to stop expecting a vacation with little children to look anything like vacations we took before we had them. Slow way down. Leave room in the schedule for chaos. Accept that, sometimes, the glass elevator is going to be more exciting than the activities we paid for. Realize the memories they retain may be of trivial moments.

Someday traveling with them won't be this hard, but I have a feeling I may miss the clingy "Velcro stage" when that happens.

Just not the airplane poop. I will never miss the airplane poop.

Dr. Erin Clifton DC, CACCP, is a partner in Positively Chiropractic in Stockbridge, Michigan. Her specialty is pediatric, pregnancy and family health care. She is "mom" to two sons and two daughters and leads various health and wellness classes in the Stockbridge area. Dr. Erin has a personal passion for achieving optimal health, while educating and inspiring those in the community to work with the body, not against it.

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Fall Lessons Begin Sept. 8

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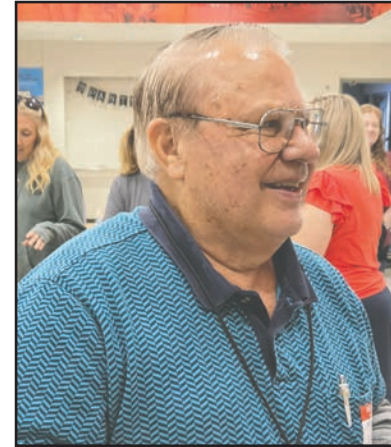
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Team 190: Stockbridge educators, staff and community are all in this together



Mike DeMint is beginning his 57th year working for Stockbridge Community Schools. Photo credit Mary Jo David

To commemorate Stockbridge educational history, all staff members were presented with a Team 190 shirt. Photos by Joan Tucker and Jeff Trapp

by Mary Jo David

At the 2026 staff Welcome Back Breakfast, Jeff Trapp unveiled the theme for the 2026-2027 school year: We are all in this together!

The new superintendent emphasized that everyone in the school district needs to believe in each other, encourage each other, play nice together, and work as one team. Although he's a die-hard MSU fan, Trapp took one for the team by quoting the famous words of U-M's Bo Schembechler: "The Team. The Team. The Team."

"We are all in this together," he announced, adding, "Together we make an impact," and that's when Trapp introduced TEAM 190 to a room full of puzzled onlookers. Trapp went on to explain that the first Stockbridge school was established 190 years ago in 1836, and he reviewed more school history from there:

1836 First school in Stockbridge.

1895 First graduating class.

1931 Stockbridge schools had 13 teachers, one for each grade.

1945 The year "Team 109" hired Richard Howlett as a teacher. He'd later become a principal and then superintendent.

1970 Mike DeMint was hired 57 years ago and still works for Stockbridge schools today.

2026 Team 190 begins the school year with an emphasis on "We are all in this together!"

To commemorate this history and celebrate that "we are all in this together," all staff members were presented with a Team 190 shirt.

Health exploration station now booking school visits

Information provided by Trinity Health

The Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum and Leslie Science & Nature Center, in partnership with Trinity Health Michigan, is now booking school visits to the Health Exploration Station for the 2026-27 school year.

Located inside Trinity Health Medical Center-Canton, the 3,500-square-foot interactive learning center offers hands-on health and wellness education for students in pre-K through sixth grade. Age-appropriate programs focus on body systems and healthy habits, with exhibits exploring nutrition, physical activity, mental health, anatomy, and substance use and vaping prevention.

The Health Exploration Station served Southeast Michigan families for more than two decades before closing during the COVID-19 pandemic. It reopened in December 2025 following extensive updates and a successful pilot program.

The center is located on the lower level of Trinity Health Medical Center-Canton, 1600 Canton Center Road. Educators can learn more and reserve a field trip at discoverscienceandnature.org/exploration.

Outreach page 11

"The stakes are high," notes the Trinity Health website. "Coverage disruptions can lead to delayed care, worsening health conditions, increased uncompensated care, and greater strain on the health care ecosystem."

Chelsea Hospital's president confirmed the hospital's desire to work with organizations like Outreach: "Our mission won't change with the changes in funding," said Miles. "But we're not trying to do this on our own. Where there's an opportunity to partner with like-minded organizations, we want to take advantage of that. We can help each other meet our missions."

Our local food pantry, crisis, and referral center is located in the Stockbridge Activity Center (old middle school) near Cherry and Elm streets in Stockbridge. Office hours are 1-3 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday and by appointment. Contact us at Outreach49285@gmail.com, 517-851-7285, or find us on Facebook.

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Active Aging

SASC gives back for a cycle of community strength

by Alexa M. Ten Eyck

Receive. Participate. Give. Repeat.

A strong community takes advantage of this cycle. In action, it looks like support across people and organizations creating opportunities to participate. Participation puts that support into motion, while giving carries its value back into the community. Active aging requires a determination to remain fluid within that cycle. The key is not simply receiving community support but, instead, helping move it forward to another person or generation.

This summer, that cycle became visible at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center. First, a partnership with Redbear Bikes raised \$500 to help provide bicycles for two local students. Within just a few days, members and volunteers rallied around the effort to turn an opportunity to receive and participate into immediate give-back action.

Then the cycle repeated through the SASC Rummage Sale where at least 96 volunteer hours turned donated items into affordable finds for neighbors in an effort to support the center. The effort reached beyond ordinary fundraising. In a generous donation, Granger provided two dumpsters toward the event. Both were filled by volunteers, resulting in the SASC rummage sale establishing itself as part of a community cleanup effort. The work involved put usable items back into circulation while also clearing away items deemed no longer useful to the community.

Receive, participate, give repeats once more with the communitywide Highest Praise Worship Center Backpack Giveaway. Through a team-driven collaborative effort, the SASC staff and members contributed \$210 toward school supplies. In typical SASC fashion, a generous amount of volunteered time turned those donated dollars into a table full of supplies pictured with this column.

This incredible combination of donated funds and volunteer hours represents active aging as it keeps a lifetime of care and experience in circulation. Thus, every contribution received by SASC creates opportunities to give back to the community in a meaningful way.

While summer closes, the cycle continues endlessly. As SASC receives community support, members continue to transform it into participation that gives value back to Stockbridge. There is always an opportunity for more people to take advantage of this cycle, for more people to contribute to the strength of the community. SASC



welcomes all to join in, participate, and help keep it moving.

Receive. Participate. Give. Repeat.

Alexa M. Ten Eyck is president of the board of the Stockbridge Area Senior Center (SASC)—a great place to spend time.

Experience firsthand a sense of connection and well-being at the SASC. For information, visit stockbridgeareaseniors.org, call 517-

480-0353, or stop in at 219 W. Elm St.



In an example of participation and giving, senior center staff and members contributed toward school supplies for the local Backpack Giveaway in August. Photo credit Lisa A. Cornish

Market page 11

Ultimately, local markets are an important reflection of our communities. The Open Air Market is an example of a simple concept with a huge impact, fostering community ties and connections. These markets not only support social connections but also generate economic impact for small communities, allowing small businesses, farmers, makers, and young entrepreneurs to circulate cash flow throughout local communities rather than to large box and chain stores.

Local markets demonstrate how shopping, collaboration, and shared experiences can all contribute to a stronger, more connected community.

Science page 8

(Thank you to the six community volunteers who've transformed the outdoor classroom to be usable again!)

Stockbridge has a lovely opportunity here to nurture children's love of nature and curiosity about the world. The district has beautiful outdoor assets most schools would envy, and we aim to use every bit of them. This writer is deeply grateful to Ms. Mathews; Ms. Hodgson; and district leadership, including Nicole Greiter, our new Smith principal, for believing this work matters and for supporting it.

The science special is also designed to build lasting connections between science, math and literacy. Those responsible for the program at SCS, will meet quarterly to explore these connections. A teacher guide will also be designed for future use.

The Knowles Teacher Initiative supports dedicated science and math teachers across the country in developing as leaders who improve education beyond their own classrooms. Learn more at knowlesteachers.org.

Voices of Service page 12

"The equipment has changed so much," Sommer said. "The apparatus, how you attack fires, and the training, it's all improved."

Yet while technology and training have advanced, the heart of the job has remained the same.

"It's serving the community," he said. "Being available to help preserve life and the community."

Sommer doesn't focus on titles, awards or recognition. What has kept him returning, year after year, is something much simpler.

"It's rewarding," he said. "Helping people when they're in need."

His dedication is a reminder that service isn't always measured by dramatic rescues or headlines. Sometimes it's measured in thousands of quiet moments—answering the phone, climbing into a fire truck, and showing up whenever the community needs you.

For nearly six decades, Doug Sommer has answered the call.

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Township Square | Village Hall | Veterans Park
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 Trillium Gardens | Library | Senior Center



Football

**Homecoming*
Sept. 18th

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|-------|--------------|
| • Aug 28 | 7:00 PM | Home | Leslie |
| • Sep 3 | 7:00 PM | Away | Bronson |
| • Sep 11 | 7:00 PM | Away | Quincy |
| • Sep 18 | 7:00 PM | *Home | East Jackson |
| • Sep 25 | 7:00 PM | Away | Union City |
| • Oct 2 | 7:00 PM | Home | Homer |
| • Oct 9 | 7:00 PM | Away | Reading |
| • Oct 16 | 7:00 PM | Home | Maple Valley |
| • Oct 23 | 7:00 PM | Home | Springport |



- | | | | |
|----------|----------|------|-------------------|
| • Aug 27 | 6:30 PM | Away | Lenawee Christian |
| • Aug 29 | 12:00 PM | Away | Perry Inv |
| • Sep 2 | 5:30 PM | Home | Unknown |
| • Sep 9 | 5:00 PM | Away | Quincy |
| • Sep 12 | 10:00 AM | Away | Onsted Inv |
| • Sep 14 | 5:30 PM | Away | Bronson |
| • Sep 16 | 5:30 PM | Home | TBA |
| • Sep 17 | 6:00 PM | Away | Olivet |
| • Sep 21 | 5:30 PM | Away | Maple Valley |
| • Sep 24 | 5:30 PM | Home | TBA |
| • Sep 28 | 5:30 PM | Home | TBA |
| • Sep 30 | 5:30 PM | Away | Hillsdale Academy |
| • Oct 1 | 5:30 PM | Away | Calhoun Christian |
| • Oct 5 | 5:30 PM | Away | Bronson |
| • Oct 7 | 7:00 PM | Away | Manchester |
| • Oct 12 | 7:00 PM | Away | Pottersville |

Soccer



- | | | |
|----------|--|--------------|
| • Sep 1 | Barney Roy Invitational | Marshall |
| • Sep 9 | Springport Invite | Springport |
| • Sep 12 | Bath Invitational | Bath |
| • Sep 15 | Blackhawk Invitational | Leslie |
| • Sep 22 | Big 8 Jamboree 1 | Union City |
| • Sep 26 | Jackson Invitational | Jackson |
| • Sep 29 | Big 8 Jamboree 2 | Springport |
| • Oct 3 | Stockbridge Invitational | Stockbridge |
| • Oct 6 | Big 8 Jamboree 3 | Bronson |
| • Oct 10 | Hudson Booster Inv | Hudson |
| • Oct 13 | Big 8 Jamboree 4 | East Jackson |
| • Oct 17 | Greater Lansing Cross Country Championship | Lansing |
| • Oct 31 | MHSAA LP Region 26-3 | Algonac |

Cross Country



- | | | | |
|----------|---------|------|-------------------|
| • Aug 29 | 9:00 AM | Away | Perry Invite |
| • Sep 2 | 5:00 PM | Home | Tri-Meet |
| • Sep 9 | 6:30 PM | Home | Homer |
| • Sep 15 | 6:45 PM | Away | Concord |
| • Sep 17 | 6:45 PM | Home | Maple Valley |
| • Sep 19 | 8:30 AM | Away | Clinton Inv |
| • Sep 22 | 6:45 PM | Home | Quincy |
| • Sep 24 | 5:00 PM | Home | Tri-Meet |
| • Sep 26 | 9:00 AM | Home | Stockbridge Inv |
| • Sep 29 | 6:45 PM | Away | Springport |
| • Oct 1 | 5:00 PM | Away | Pinckney |
| • Oct 6 | 6:30 PM | Away | Union City |
| • Oct 8 | 6:30 PM | Away | Bronson |
| • Oct 13 | 6:30 PM | Home | Reading |
| • Oct 15 | 4:00 PM | Away | Grass Lake |
| • Oct 20 | 6:45 PM | Away | East Jackson |
| • Oct 24 | 8:30 AM | Away | Big 8 League Meet |
| • Oct 27 | 5:00 PM | Home | Tri-Meet |

Volleyball

