

BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS // VOL. 33, NO. 7 // JULY 2022



14TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

PAGE 20

■ Senate Passes Summer Gas Tax Pause // PAGE 8

■ Ohio Map Crisis at an End? // PAGE 8

INTRODUCING THE NEWEST MEMBER OF



*Melissa
Stockwell*

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columns

02 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Planning is Different Now

04 C-STORE NEWS & VIEWS
How to Measure Success with Foodservice

06 GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT
How Movements are Won

10 MICHIGAN LIQUOR REPORT
Successful Past, Bright Future
– With Safety in Mind

departments

12 FUEL RETAILING
Consumers and Independent Retailers
are Paying the Price at the Pump

14 RETAILER SPOTLIGHT
Sahara: A Staple in the Detroit
Restaurant Scene

16 SPOTLIGHT PROFILE
Taking an Artistic Look at
One of MIRA's Own

18 ASK THE MEMBER
What Are You Most Concerned About
as we Head Into Midterm Elections?

32 SUPPLIER DIRECTORY
Your Resource for Products and Services

36 MIRA CALENDAR
Upcoming Industry Events

BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS
VOL. 33, NO. 7 // JULY 2022

features



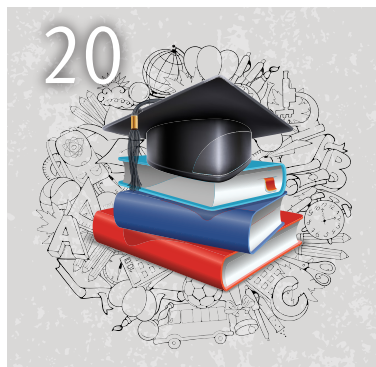
MICHIGAN LOBBYIST REPORT // **SENATE PASSES SUMMER GAS TAX PAUSE**

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OHIO LOBBYIST REPORT // **MAP CRISIS AT AN END?**

After several months of the Ohio Redistricting Commission fighting with the Ohio Supreme Court over constitutionally redistricting the maps for Ohio House and Senate members, no agreement was reached. The federal courts stepped in and picked the third map submitted by commission and set the primary election date for August 2nd. It's still possible that a higher federal court could intervene but unlikely.



COVER STORY // **THREE CORE PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS**

Standing 7' tall, Tim McCormick moved around the Detroit Athletic Club talking to college students at the MIR Foundation's 14th Annual Scholarship Luncheon on June 14th. "I have been attending this event for all 14 years," said Nabby Yono, former chairman of the MIRA board to McCormick after his talk, "and, this is by far one of the best keynotes we have ever had."



president's message

EDWARD WEGLARZ // MIRA PRESIDENT & CEO

Planning is Different Now

If you read my columns regularly, towards the end of the year I usually encourage you to plan for the future in the December edition of the Bottom Line magazine. If you follow my advice, you have a one-year, three-year and five-year plan that you developed to provide guidance as time unfolds.

Well, these are unprecedented times, and we may need to deviate from those plans. The pandemic seems to be over; inflation is running rampant, fuel prices are at an all-time high, customers are working from home, and employees are difficult to find. We can no longer think that these challenges are a temporary condition, and everything will revert to 2019 in the foreseeable future. We must learn to live in the present to survive.

I do not know the entire serenity prayer, but I do the part that mentions change the things you can change, endure the things you cannot change, and pray for the ability to decipher between the two. Maintain your curiosity level, be aware of what is new and different. Embrace change. We cannot continue to do things the same way as before. You need to make changes that reimage your store as “destination.” Provide goods and services that today’s consumer wants and needs. And delete those outdated, slow turn-over items that are on your shelves only for nostalgic purposes. The market has changed, the consumer has changed, and you must change.

Discuss your ideas with your sales reps. Ask what other stores are selling to accommodate the customer. Check out the rebate and discount programs available from MIRA’s supplier members listed on our website. Not every program would apply to every business, but MIRA is adding and changing programs regularly, so keep updated. Watch for and open the mail you receive from MIRA. We usually send out flyers outlining new or revised programs.

MIRA is here to help but we cannot analyze your business to determine what works best in your trade area. Only you know that information. But work with the tools that we have available to you to prosper in the topsy-turvy environment. ■

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c-store news & views

JIM GREEN // MIRA VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

How to Measure Success with Foodservice

When talking with independent retailers about foodservice you can get vastly different views on what it means to be successful. There are retailers that make an investment into a grab-n-go cooler, roller grill, microwave, and a small freezer and define success by getting a return on their investment and generating incremental sales beyond their initial investment. They are happy to execute with prepackaged sandwiches and other low labor products. Other retailers have invested into kitchens and a full-time staff and have a much different expectation. Judging your success with foodservice through your own perceptions and biases can be misleading. Retailers should dive into the industry data to see how they stack up to what is transpiring in the c-store industry and compare that to what they are doing to determine if they are on the right track to be successful.

The *NACS State of the Industry Report* is a great guide for retailers to use for benchmarking and goal setting. In 2021 foodservice accounted for 22.5% of in-store sales. Compare that to ten years ago when it accounted for 16.8% of in-store sales. Foodservice now accounts for 35.5% of in-store gross profits, compared to 29.2% in 2011. There are far too many independent retailers that are nowhere near achieving these types of foodservice numbers. They are far below 10% of in-store sales and that should be setting off alarm bells. What they must do is ask themselves “Am I achieving 22.5% of in store sales and 35.5% of in-store gross profits with foodservice?” If the answer is no, they must develop a plan that gets them there.

Yes, it is true that industry numbers are driven by large c-store retailers like Sheetz, Getgo, Royal Farms, WAWA, QuikTrip, Casey’s, etc. Independent retailers

need to understand why it is important to adopt a model that produces these types of foodservice results. Look at what is happening to transactions since 2019 – in store transactions are down 6.9%. The industry has been able to make up for this by increasing the average in-store basket 6.3% in 2021 and has grown 22.4% over the past two years. These large retailers are using food service to increase basket size and to bring new consumers into their stores. These numbers are averages so retailers that have a strong foodservice offering are not experiencing being down 6.9% with transactions and the basket size has grown more than they average. Retailers that do not have a strong foodservice offering are experiencing even less transaction and are below the average basket.

Unfortunately, this has led to the decline of the single store operator. This decline continues a multi-year trend that started prior to the pandemic. At year end 2021 there were 148,026 convenience stores operating in the United States, a 1.5% decrease in the number of stores in operation (150,274) at the close of 2020. That means the industry contracted by 2,248 stores. What is alarming is single store operators declined at 3.1%, which represents a decline of 2,860 stores. This is also the rate of decline in 2020. Simply stated, single store operators are declining and chain retailers that have invested heavily in food service are growing! Keep in mind this is in an environment where total in-store sales increased to a record \$277.9 billion in 2021! Everywhere you look chain retailers are expanding through buying stores or building new sites. WAWA announced they have a goal to double their store count by 2030. The reason is simple, investing heavily in foodservice works in the market!

It is not going to be easy because foodservice is not easy. It requires a financial investment, a commitment to labor, setting the bar high on quality control, execution, continuous effort to refresh your menu, and marketing. MIRA has programs with various vendors that can help you. I encourage MIRA members who are not using Team Sledd or SAS to look at what they have to offer. Lipari is also a great partner that can help MIRA members develop a food service program. The time is now! ■

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government relations report

JUAN ESCAREÑO // MIRA DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

How Movements are Won

“The great movements of our time have never originated in the press of the great cities. They rise and store up their energies in political cliques, in popular gatherings, and spoken rumors long before they appear in this main instrument for the spreading of news.”

– HILAIRE BELLOC

How do we win? First, how not to win. Many folks believe that if we simply repeat what we want over and over again, we will achieve our objective. As a father of six children, I can assure you that every so often a child may nag me to a quick victory but in most cases they will lose. Just because it's repeated a thousand times won't make it happen.

Or what if we guilt folks into doing what is right? Maybe we can lay a sob story out for them and hope that by pulling at the heart strings, we will achieve our objective. This issue “will hurt me and my family, please do the right thing” hasn't won me many fights in the public arena.

My favorite is the bully. If you don't do this, we won't do x or y. Most of the time these attempts show more our weakness than our strength. We will be rebuffed or worse, ignored in the future for attempting to be tough.

The most hilarious attempt at winning is the martyr. Forward! Like Soviet troops during World War 2. No account for the casualties or cost to the organization. Forward at any cost! At any cost tends to cost the martyr nothing. It tends to be at the cost

of the collective. No matter the issue, no matter the cost, throw everything at it because we will die by martyrdom. In my faith tradition, as a Catholic, we are filled with thousands of stories of martyrdom. The difference is that the martyrs died to not surrender their dignity and eternal soul to damnation. I firmly believe the issues we confront are not at the peril of our eternal souls.

So how do we win? I will layout a few brief points in my experience of winning campaigns and seeing others win.

- You must know your adversary and what they have the capacity to do against your issue. How much money do they have and who do they listen too? Who pulls their strings? What do they want in the end?
- Be humble. Humility is truth. What are we capable of accomplishing? Who listens to us, who can we build a relationship with? How many resources (e.g. money) do we have at our disposal?
- Expand your reach to surround the adversary with others that want the same thing. Make your circle bigger.
- Compromise. Be willing to be flexible to achieve the best result. It doesn't mean sell out or give up your key concerns but be willing to move the meter more towards you. Is it better to walk away with nothing or with something tangible that can at least make your business better? We aren't going to win them all, so should we surrender everything for the sake of the perfect?

I want to win. In politics, winning is never certain. It's rare to have the issue that galvanizes all the important people onto your side. I believe in chipping away at a problem as if it was a mountain. Little by little we will win. Eventually our hard work will pay off. It always does if we take a long view on winning. And in the end, we will learn how power truly operates. ■



FOR THE
HUSTLE





michigan lobbyist report

MATT MINER // CAPITOL STRATEGIES GROUP

Senate Passes Summer Gas Tax Pause

The Michigan Senate passed a gas tax vacation package to temporarily suspend both Michigan's gas tax and the sales tax on motor fuel, hoping to sidestep projections of gasoline prices hitting over \$6 per gallon this summer. In March, republican lawmakers attempted to cancel the state tax on motor fuel from April 1st to September 30th. The Governor vetoed the legislation, as it would bite out around \$750 million from the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) for the current Fiscal Year of 2022, potentially impacting ongoing road projects - although it aimed to reimburse them with an excess in General Fund dollars.

Senate Bill 1029, introduced by Senator Roger Victory, would pause the state tax of 27.2¢ per gallon on gasoline and diesel fuel

until September 15th. The bill would utilize approximately \$192.6 million from Michigan's General Fund to reimburse project money lost by county road commissions. It would also use around \$107.4 million to compensate for revenue lost among cities and villages.

Senate 972, 973 and 974 would also eliminate the sales tax and the use tax on motor fuel within the same timeline of June 15th to September 15th of this year.

According to the Senate Fiscal Agency (SFA), the School Aid Fund (SAF) obtains around 73.3% of sales tax revenue, and one-third of use tax revenue. Cities, villages and townships also acquire 10% of sales tax revenue assigned to them via constitutional revenue sharing provisions. The SAF would lose between \$266.3 million and \$280.5 million in revenue for the present-day Fiscal Year of 2022. Local units of government participating in constitutional revenue sharing could also lose between \$36.3 million and \$38.3 million.

Governor Whitmer has not yet signed these bills, but has expressed interest in finding state solutions for easing the pain at the pump. ■



ohio lobbyist report

TERRY FLEMING // TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

Map Crisis at an End?

After several months of the Ohio Redistricting Commission fighting with the Ohio Supreme Court over constitutionally redistricting the maps for Ohio House and Senate members, no agreement was reached. The federal courts stepped in and picked the third map submitted by commission and set the primary election date for August 2nd. It's still possible that a higher federal court could intervene but unlikely. Now that legislative leaders know when the primary is, they can get back to the business of passing bills.

A bill to allow teachers to have guns in schools was passed and sent to the Governor. Two constitutional amendments were passed and will be on the ballot in November: one would prohibit non-citizens from voting and the other would require judges to set a high bail for people arrested who may be a threat to society. A number of other social issues were passed in one House and waiting to be considered in the other.

Of interest to MIRA members is SB 269, which would allow the

State Lottery Commission to establish internet lottery games (not including scratch offs) and winnings could be redeemed at brick and mortar stores as if they were purchased there. The bill is now in the House and not likely to move till fall. HB 447 would establish that if a worker was injured while working at home on a business project they would be subject to Workers' Compensation. HB 515, would allow a person who sold his or her interest in a business to be exempt from State income tax. SB 134, the Business Fairness Act, would protect businesses from future pandemic situations. SB 307, dealing with tax exemption for utility companies that establish recharging stations and for auto manufacturers who sell electric vehicles.

At the Federal level, the FDA is proposing to ban menthol flavored cigarettes and cigars. MIRA is working with a coalition to oppose this action.

If members of MIRA have any questions on any bills they have an interest in, please don't hesitate to call. MIRA has had meetings over the past three weeks with legislators who we believe will be in leadership roles in 2023 and it's never too early to begin those relationships. ■

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michigan liquor report

PAT GAGLIARDI // CHAIR, MICHIGAN LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

Successful Past, Bright Future – With Safety in Mind

According to Forbes, for the 12th year in a row, strong consumer demand for premium spirits resulted in unprecedented growth in the U.S. spirits industry.

The Commission also continued to see major growth last year, making Michigan the top control state in the country in volume and dollar sales. We realized a 4.2% increase in total spirits sales to \$2.16 billion and an 11.2% increase in volume since 2019* making it the most successful year ever in Michigan, despite supply chain issues. As the national spirits industry goes, so it goes in Michigan.

In its annual report on the U.S. spirit industry, the Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. highlighted three primary factors responsible for the continued rise in spirits revenues: 1) the gradual reopening of restaurants and bars; 2) consumers trading up to super-premium spirits for at-home consumption; and 3) a hot premium tequila market. The same could be said for Michigan.

Michiganders were trading up last year as we saw a high-end demand for tequilas, bourbons, cognac, and scotch whiskies. We were fortunate in Michigan that we had at least some supply of most major products and categories, unlike many neighboring states.

Looking at a five-year comparison (2016 to 2021) of Michigan's market share of distilled spirits by category, it has largely remained constant. Vodka is still king in the state but dipped slightly from 35.3% in 2016 to 32.3% in 2021. Notably, tequila in Michigan jumped up from 4.8% in 2016 to 8.9% in 2021 (not unlike the national trend as mentioned above). Rum dipped from 12.8% in 2016 to 10.6% in 2021. American whiskey gained slightly at 12.8% (compared to 10.8% in 2016), while Canadian whiskey dipped to 11.5% in 2021 (down from 12.2% five years ago). Cordials/liquors also dipped slightly from 8.4% in 2016 to 8.2% last year. Brandy/cognac remained the same at 7.7%, as did "Others" at 8.0%.

Categories of alcoholic beverages are not as clearly defined and easily recognizable as they once were. Back in the "old days" producers stayed in their lane and focused on reaching specific consumers. The once predictable and dependable consumer is fading away because of their changing consumption patterns.

Consumers today are increasingly switching between beverages and

trying out new beverages, according to the International Wine and Spirits Record (IWSR) Drinks Market Analysis.

What is exciting is that the Commission is constantly adding new spirits products to meet consumer demand. (To that end, the Commission has greatly improved its inventory management by whittling down almost 13,000 SKUs in our price book to around 10,500 and hope to get down to 10,000. Many SKUs were no longer relevant; we removed product codes that were no longer applicable.)

Among the vast store aisles, the once clear lines between beer, soda and spirits are blurring. Promoting public health and safety is more important than ever because alcohol is no ordinary commodity.

Pamela S. Erickson of Public Action Management, PLC, recently penned an important reminder about why alcohol should not be treated as just another product in grocery and convenience stores. She noticed a new array of alcohol products such as hard seltzers and canned cocktails (big box store, western state) were positioned next to the original non-alcoholic product.

More and more of these products are made by soft drink companies in collaboration with an alcohol company – diversifying of course, to gain market share. Coca-Cola continues to expand its activities in beverage alcohol. The company works with Molson Coors to make its Topo Chico brand hard seltzers; its latest move is a partnership with Brown-Forman to introduce Jack (Daniel's) and Coke cocktails. Pepsi is working with the Boston Beer Company to make "Hard Mountain Dew." E & J Gallo Winery makes High Noon hard seltzer.

Alcohol should not be sold like an ordinary commodity just because it is a "legal product," for reasons we know all too well. Over consumption of alcohol causes a lot of deaths, injuries, and health problems; contributes to violent crimes and underage drinking; addiction adversely impacts families and relationships; and costs society a lot of money for law enforcement, prevention, and public health.

As long as public safety remains a priority, we can anticipate steady growth for Michigan's spirits industry. Keep the lemonade and "hard" lemonade separate in the aisles and at home, and out of reach of those underage.

The most recent indicators from the IWSR reinforces alcohol's resilience and status as an affordable luxury. Despite the current challenges we face in doing business – ongoing supply chain disruptions, inflation, gas prices, the war in Ukraine and retail's slow return to pre-2019 levels, the future of the business of beverage alcohol in Michigan looks bright.

Have a safe and profitable summer. ■

** Source: Impact Databank and the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association.*



INTRODUCING

GRAN CORAMINOTM

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**HARD WORK
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Consumers and Independent Retailers are Paying the Price at the Pump



■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING*

People are not commuting as much as they were in 2019. More people are working from home post COVID-19. “Perhaps the public outcry is not as loud as it would be if more people were commuting to offices outside the home,” said Ed Weglarz, MIRA president and CEO. “You only have to take a look at the Renaissance Center in Detroit and understand that permanent changes have been made due to the pandemic. The Renaissance Center is like a ghost town. Major companies are downsizing or completely moving out of office spaces as people continue to work from home.”

In March of this year, American Automobile Association (AAA) reported that the price of a gallon of regular gasoline broke a 14-year record in the U.S., as the national average gas price soared past its previous peak of \$4.144 per gallon, set in July 2008, and continued rising to hit \$4.318 per gallon. “I don’t think you can point at any one reason for the drastic increase as of late,

but as cliché as this sounds, we are in a perfect storm,” said Michael Mitchell, Vice President of Markham Enterprises Inc. and Markham Oil Company. “I worked at our family’s station in the 1980s when we had shortages and embargoes and waited in line for fuel; the 2008 economic crash was rough and consumers were very unhappy and often vented frustrations on us or our team members. I feel that because of the news coverage and dialogue concerning our current situation, that the consumer is more and better informed than ever and realize that independent retailers are not the problem.”

In 2008, gas prices climbed into the late spring and summer months, surpassing the national average of 2008 when President Obama was in office.

Mitchell adds that politics play an important role in all businesses and government policies have a huge impact on oil and gas. “The amount of money that flows into the federal state and local government from gas and oil is staggering,” he said.

“The rise of fuel prices, in my opinion, is deliberate and is hurting not only our industry but our nation,” said John Abbo, owner of Hartland General Store. “Everything happening now is politics and due to political policies. Every policy being done by the current administration is the opposite of what they should be doing. In my opinion, it is a deliberate sabotage of our economy.”

Politics are playing a part in the cost of fuel. “President Biden blames the Russia and Ukraine war, yet some experts are saying that Ukraine has nothing to do with gas – the world has created uncertainty and the push for electric vehicles,” said Weglarz. “With the zealous move to go all electric vehicles and the concern about the energy industry, prices go up. When you don’t know what to do, the cost of goods and services rise.”

Michigan drivers are now paying an average of \$5.04 per gallon for regular unleaded, which is another record high within the last 30 days. This price is 74¢ more than this time last month and \$2.02 more than this time last year.

Motorists are paying an average of more than \$75 for a full 15-gallon tank of gasoline; an increase of about \$25 from when prices were their highest in November 2021.

As of that first Monday in June, the national average for a gallon of regular gasoline has increased by 24¢ to \$4.85. Metro Detroit’s current average is \$5.12 per gallon, \$1.42 more than this time last year.

“Saudi Arabia is benefitting greatly from the profits,” said Weglarz. “They punch a hole in the ground, and they hit oil. The world market is selling oil at \$118 a barrel right now” (as of early June).

President Biden has issued warnings over the last year to gas station owners not to price gauge. “The retailer is in line with the supplier when it comes to the cost of fuel,” said Weglarz. “There is no price gauging at the retail level. That is understood at the state level because we are constantly educating our elected leaders on why gas prices are rising. If there is gauging going on, it would be at the crude oil level.”

The current instability in the country and world is contributing to the cost increase of goods and services. “We have no idea what is really going on with this administration,” said Weglarz. “There is war with Russia and Ukraine and issues are rising up in Afghanistan. These contribute to the problem, but are not the only reason for prices increasing. Biden says he will open more land leases from the government to drill, but there is a hold up in the permitting processes, so even though companies can lease land, they can’t get permits from the EPA to drill.”

The process takes time. As Weglarz noted, you can’t just flip a switch and



start drilling oil. “There is no guarantee there will be oil when companies drill,” he said. “It takes time when it comes to drilling. India and China are gobbling up the crude oil, because they are using internal combustion engines.”

There are much stricter regulations regarding the environment here in the United States than other parts of the world. “The reality is that we are in this bathtub with the whole world, and we are trying to keep our part of the bathtub clean,” said Weglarz. “We are putting a noose around our manufacturing and suppliers while India and China are much laxer on environmental restrictions than we are in the United States.”

The high fuel costs cause a domino effect on the price of goods. Truckers charge a fuel surcharge to the wholesaler, to the retailer and eventually to the consumer. “Once you pay higher prices on gasoline, everything else goes up,” said Weglarz.

And the dominos continue to fall right onto the consumer and convenience store owner. “The consumer will only understand the pocketbook,” said Abbo. “There is less disposable income.”

In addition, credit card company fees are based on percentage of sales. “They are making out like bandits at the pump,” noted Weglarz. “Consumers now see an increased cost of food on credit cards because more people use credit cards today. Also, wages have gone up and gas stations are paying higher wages and this cost gets passed on to the customer. When motorists are paying more at the pump, they spend less in the convenience stores attached to the gas stations. Many people are on a fixed income. Paying \$100 plus to fill up a tank, most likely means that driver is not going into the store to buy a bottle of pop, chips, or lottery tickets. This is less profit for the owner. So no, our retailers are not price gouging.”

A significant challenge for retailers today is that fuel prices change every day around 6p.m. “We cannot bargain a better price or buy from another supplier because we are contractually bound,” said Mitchell.



REGULAR UNLEADED GASOLINE *(as reported on June 27th):*

	June 27th	Last Week	Last Month	One Year Ago	Record High
National	\$4.897	\$4.981	\$4.599	\$3.095	\$5.016 <i>(June 2022)</i>
Michigan	\$5.049	\$5.157	\$4.562	\$3.108	\$5.223 <i>(June 2022)</i>
Ohio	\$4.865	\$4.979	\$4.44	\$2.969	\$5.065 <i>(June 2022)</i>
Illinois	\$5.435	\$5.509	\$4.963	\$3.299	\$5.562 <i>(June 2022)</i>

Compare current national and state prices at www.gasprices.aaa.com.

“Over the last few months these daily changes are often 10 or 20 plus cents per gallon. That means that if my competition across the street took a delivery at noon and our delivery comes after a 6 o’clock price change and they lower their price, we either must match them and lose money or appear to be gouging. Things are NOT always what they appear to be!”

There is a political push for electric cars. “It would make more sense if we transitioned from hybrid cars to electric cars, but this push from gasoline to fully electric doesn’t seem to be effective. We went to making our lives about speed and getting things done faster as we fuel up from full service to self-service to paying at the pump and now, we want to ask motorists to wait even longer by waiting for a charge, it doesn’t seem to make sense,” said Weglarz. “There is something going on behind the scenes that we don’t seem to understand because it appears the industry and the current administration are on board to go full electric and not looking at hybrid transition model.”

Meanwhile, Abbo says he will add electric charging stations at his Hartland business when he sees more of a need.

“We are still trying to gauge how and when we will make changes for electric vehicles. Even using current available grant money, the cost of adding chargers show a very poor return on investment,” said Mitchell. “I personally have a great concern with our power distribution grid being able to handle the ‘great transition’. As fossil fuels are phased out, what will happen to the prices of all byproducts made from resources gained by oil? The

power and control of electricity will be astronomical and we will depend on electric companies to heat and cool our homes, light the dark, cook our food and power our vehicles. We have rolling blackouts now when AC demands peak.”

Weglarz notes the insecurity in the world again as we look at the continuing inflationary pressures on all products and projects. “When the government changes the rules every couple of months, you are nervous to make major investments,” he said. “There seems to be no continuity to the administrations to decision making. There is no way to predict what will happen next. When you talk to companies charged with building roads, they are hesitant to invest millions of dollars on products when they are not certain what new rules or regulations the government will implement. Getting rid of the road tax may seem politically good for instance, but it is not a good idea to take away from funds you claim not have enough of in the first place.”

Retailers appreciate that consumers understanding that they do not control the oil supply or prices. “Please treat the retail service people in every category kindly,” said Mitchell. “They work hard and do not have work-from-home options. Many employees worked during the highest level of COVID-19 transmission to keep us supplied and please retire the Joe Biden “I Did That” stickers. Labor is tight and they don’t come off easy! Staff has to take time away from serving the customer to clean off the stickers.” ■

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Sahara: A Staple in the Detroit Restaurant Scene

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING*

Sahara Restaurants have been a staple in metro Detroit since the 1980s when Saad Attisha opened the first location. Born in Iraq, Saad is the eldest of eight children and was only 16 when he moved to the United States. Three years after his move, he started the first Sahara in Ferndale.

Since then, Sahara has grown and moved around many times. In the beginning, Saad catered mostly to the Chaldean community. He placed his restaurants strategically, finding space in the heart of the community and close to Chaldean churches. “As time has gone by, Middle Eastern food has become more popular,” said his wife, Zeana Attisha, who helps run the restaurants. “We now have a diverse community of patrons and businesses that dine with Sahara.”

Zeana was born in Detroit and graduated from Marian High School. She continued her education at Michigan State and Wayne State Universities and earned a degree in Business Administration. She worked in insurance for ten years until she sold her agency to raise her children.

Sahara has a long history and many different locations in the community. Not long after the first location opened in Ferndale, Saad closed it and moved the restaurant to Oak Park. In 1996, he opened Sahara West Bloomfield, but after a few years, sold it to another restaurant. In 2004, he opened a location in Sterling Heights.

The following year, Saad opened Sahara Market & Bakery in Warren. “We make many fresh food items and carry a wide variety of Mediterranean bulk foods and grocery,” Zeana said. “Our baked items are very popular with many Chaldean/Arabic customers.” Their most popular item, Zeana said, is the famous and award-winning ranch dressing. The recipe is a secret.

In 2014, Saad sold the Sterling Heights location and relocated to his own shopping center. This location has a beautiful dining hall and a full-scale banquet room. It is also located next to Myst Hookah Lounge, which opened this year.

Perhaps the most exciting development for Saad and Zeana is the addition of a new location in downtown Detroit. “We are currently in construction for a third location,” Zeana said. “It’s in the District Detroit, next to Fox Theater and Comerica Park.” The address for the future restaurant is 77 Columbia Street.



“We want to create an Urban Mediterranean atmosphere at this new location,” Zeana said. “Olympia Development has built many wonderful places to visit and accommodate people. Many new, exciting businesses are coming to Detroit near the new Sahara location.”

As for MIRA, Zeana said they are very happy to be part of the organization. “MIRA is a great outlet to network with other companies. They keep us informed of changes in the industry and upcoming news and events,” she said.

COVID-19 was the biggest issue Sahara has faced in a long time. During the worst parts of the pandemic, Sahara was operating at a revenue loss, and it took a lot of time to rebuild from that point. Large banquet events that took hours of planning were canceled on the spot.

Like all restaurants, since Sahara wasn’t open for some time, many trusted employees had to leave and find other work. Some of them left the restaurant industry permanently. Zeana emphasized how difficult this was for Sahara especially, because of its specific recipes and the high standards to which they hold themselves.

As a result, many famous people have dined at Sahara and became regulars. Athletes, political and religious dignitaries, singers, and other types of celebrities are known to frequent their location. DJ Khaled has been to Sahara twice, according to Zeana, and she said it’s one of his favorite spots when he’s in Michigan.

Despite the recent struggles, Sahara is looking forward to a positive and even more successful future. Saad has tried other ventures, including a hair salon, tanning salon, and a gas station. “What has remained tried and true is Sahara Restaurant,” Zeana said. “What we like most about the restaurant business is the engagement with our local community. At our banquet center, we serve with pride and enjoy being a part of many special occasions. We watch families grow from baptisms and birthdays to graduations and weddings.” ■

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Taking an Artistic Look at One of MIRA's Own

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING*

Her soft-spoken voice and inviting demeanor helps engage the members at Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA).

What members might not know about Raneen Samona, who has been working at MIRA for more than four years, is her creative side. She is a painter.

"I began painting when I was very little because my dad was a painter, he would hang up some of his work for the public to see at his business called La Fendi Restaurant," she said. "Seeing those paintings at the restaurant and seeing him in the creative process inspired me to dive in and explore any possible skills in art that I may have."

Growing up, art class in school was her favorite. Other than art class and the art club in school, Samona hasn't had any formal art training, but the average person wouldn't know that by looking at her art. "Social media including TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram have numerous art accounts that are inspiring," she noted.

She started working at MIRA in December of 2017 when the association was known as the Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers (AFPD). "I was able to witness the name change and see how the association evolved to serve its members better," she said. She was originally hired as the Front Desk Administrator. "I enjoyed learning and growing with the association, today I am the Administrative & Finance Assistant."

Samona's day-to-day at the office consists of a list of tasks to accomplish. "I am working on different projects such as editing the monthly magazine, processing the dues and renewals for membership, inputting monthly data in the finance department, processing the rebates that go to each member, as well completing administration tasks such as mailings and answering phones with the staff," she noted.

It's the people at work who keep Samona motivated. "Something that I like most about my job are the people that I work with; everyone is helpful," she notes. "When one department needs help, other departments jump in. Teamwork is valued here at MIRA. I really enjoy being part of the organizing process for the monthly magazine too, it keeps me up to date with the latest news, trends and perspectives of the grocery and retailer industry. I learn something new every day at MIRA."

Like any job, hers has its challenges and like many businesses, lack of employees and supplies are some of the biggest obstacles today. "We connect our members with suppliers for their stores, but the suppliers are hurting just as much as the members are when it comes to product and employees," she said. "It is a major issue that has affected the entire industry in all directions. MIRA, the suppliers, and the members are facing this challenge today, yet we are supporting each other together through this time."

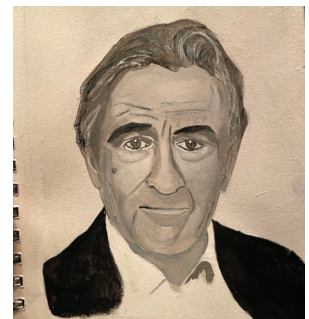
She has learned a great deal over the years, including the strong connections within the industry. "The members that have MIRA as a connection have benefitted in numerous areas within their business, whether it be from receiving rebates from a supplier rebate program that is exclusively through MIRA, or the connections that we have with lobbyists and government relations that will help fight for the independent retailer," she said. "On a personal level, something that I have learned here at MIRA is that effort is everything. Meaning that doing your absolute best that you can for a member will keep this association up and running. We would not still be around for over 100 years if we did not care and put in full effort for a member."

She has had many memorable moments that includes those connections she has made herself with her coworkers - over lunch and while working and at MIRA events. "The staff at MIRA has always been so friendly and is fun to work with," she said. "Also meeting members at events is always refreshing, because I can finally put a face to the name when I meet the members."

When she is not working, Samona enjoys spending time with her family and friends, "going out to eat, going on trips, or just watching a movie with them," she said. "Quality time with the people that I love is important to me, especially with my nieces and nephews. I also enjoy painting a great deal, my favorite subject to paint are iconic movie scenes and celebrity portraits."

She has gifted her art away to family members. "My family, cousins, aunts/uncles have always been so encouraging of this hobby, as it reminds them of my dad who passed in 2009 and the skill that I share with him. I plan to sell copies of my art online and in art exhibits," she said. "I have created an Etsy page called *NinasLens*, where I can sell my paintings and photography. I started taking photos in high school of architecture, churches, landscapes, and candid photos of strangers when I visit different states and countries." ■

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What Are You Most Concerned About as we Head Into Midterm Elections?



“We need to get serious about tackling inflation and people choosing NOT to work.”

– STEPHANIE ACHO TARTONI



“Elections have consequences. Inflation is going to surge with all the policies that this White House is implementing. The interest rate is going to rise, and it might be more than 7% by this time next year which is going to bring the real estate market to a halt. The oil prices are surging, and the consumer is paying the highest price for gasoline that I can remember. It's going to take away from them going shopping, buying food, buying clothes, and other daily necessities. My concern heading into the midterm elections for all retailers are the following: With higher fuel prices the retailer is experiencing very high credit card fees that's attached to that in some cases the retailers are paying approximately \$.15 per gallon just on credit card fees; it's not sustainable. Retailers need to be smart and think about margins first versus volume to make sure that they can pay their bills and continue to survive in this economy. Obviously, the current policies are not working for the American people nor are they working for the small or medium-size business. Like always, I hope the midterm elections will bring changes to get us back on track.”

– PAUL ELHINDI



“Short supply on products and gas prices are hurting the bottom line. The shortages are really hurting us. We cannot give our customers what they want. With the gas prices, customers have less money to spend in the store. I really hope the midterm elections will turn things around.”

– HAITHAM THOMAS GALLOZI



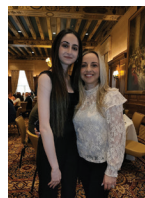
“Our leaders at top are the problem. I don't like their policies. The economy does fluctuate, but the problem is the leadership in this country. I am hoping things will change during the midterm elections.”

– MAHER KONJA



“They need to cap gas prices. The prices need to come down and we need to control wages. We are paying more money for employees, and we are forced to raise our prices. The economy is hurting the bottom line.”

– KHALDOON KIZY



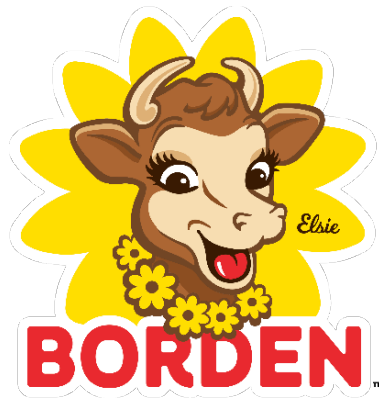
“The lack of leadership and no concern for working class families. We have inflation issues, and safety issues. No one is looking at the middle class.”

– SAHAR KONJA



“Gas prices need to change. We need to get people back to work. There is a disconnect. No one is motivated. People are unhappy. There are people who can work, but they are not back to work. There is this sense of entitlement. I don't know if they are being paid to stay home. There are programs out there for rent as an example, but what is motivating them to get back to work? There are young people on the corner begging for money, yet we can't find workers. I see them on Northwestern Highway and in Canton. Maybe we are so polarized, I am not sure. We lost a connection with our youth. Political parties are so divided and there is so much negative news. The media and social media are contributing to the divide. It is a wakeup call for the United States to be more independent. We have shortages of baby formula. We need to bring back the middle class and the small business owners. They are big employers, and they keep the economy going. There used to be more of us to fill in the gap when one person's business wasn't not doing well. To be dependent on two companies to make baby formula, for example, is not good, just look at what happens when one has an issue. We need to focus on the middle class and small business owners.”

– MAY AND RICK KOUZA



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Three Core Principles for Success

Retired NBA basketball player delivers scholarship luncheon talk

Standing 7' tall, Tim McCormick moved around the Detroit Athletic Club talking to college students at the MIR Foundation's 14th Annual Scholarship Luncheon on June 14th. "I have been attending this event for all 14 years," said Nabby Yono, former chairman of the MIRA board to McCormick after his talk, "and, this is by far one of the best keynotes we have ever had."

McCormick is a retired American professional basketball player from Detroit who played eight seasons in the National Basketball Association (NBA). Asking questions to the scholarship recipients, McCormick engaged the audience throughout his 20-minute talk.

He shared strategies and success ideas for the students to take out into the real world and to "knock them dead," he noted. "I love being around young people who are hungry and passionate and who can't wait to get out there and achieve their goals and dreams."

McCormick acknowledged the hard work of the parents in the room for raising such kids and wish all the dad's a happy Father's Day. "I only have 20 minutes to change

your life," he said, comments followed by laughter. He introduced himself in a one-minute monologue that recapped 40 years of his life that included several knee surgeries and being traded to various NBA teams during his basketball career.

McCormick holds a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Michigan. He has worked as a consultant with NBA players over the last two decades teaching strategies to improve performance. He also runs the NBA Players Association's TOP 100 Basketball Camp for the elite one hundred high school players in the nation. He is the author of *Never Be Average*.

The former New York Knicks player shared three core principles that he believes are necessary to reach a level of excellence. "You must have a **Gameplan**. Success is not random," he said. There is a reason why certain people whine and complain while another group just gets things done." He continued to share personal stories of having been coached by Patrick Riley and playing against Michael Jordan. He recalled a message from his great coach just before a game against the Chicago Bulls, "No one is going



to give you anything in life, you have to go out there and take it.” McCormick went on to say, “If you don’t have a great gameplan, you will get beat by those who do.”

The second core principle McCormick suggested is to **Build Your Brand**, “Who you are, what you stand for and where you are going with your life,” he said. “I feel this generation is missing out on having a great brand.” He went on to explain five actions to building a brand:

1. Start your day with enthusiasm.
2. Have a strong handshake.
3. Eye contact offers a window into your soul.
4. A big smile is a single greatest sign that a relationship is going well.
5. Be likable.

People do business with others they like, respect and trust. “Ask questions and care about people. That is branding. If you develop a strong brand, you will dominate and be unstoppable,” he continued.

The third core principle is **Hard Work**. It is the most basic building block of championship performance. He continued the story of his father’s encouragement to work hard as a basketball player. “Be committed, my dad said.” He had a goal to improve his game one percent every day and that is exactly what McCormick did for years until he ended up as an NBA player.

Continuing the luncheon program, Juan Escareno, MIRA Director of Government Relations, delivered a mediation sharing a reading from St. Thomas Aquinas and Mike Cavin, of RNDC – and one of the luncheon’s sponsors – led the participants in singing the National Anthem. MIRA president and CEO, Ed Weglarz, served as the Master of Ceremonies, introduced all the winners and presented them with their scholarship checks.

Meet the 2022 scholarship winners on pages 22–30. ■

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MEET THE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



MARY KATHARINE ACHO TARTONI

Mary Katharine is a freshman at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. She is graduating from Mercy High School where she was a member of National Honor Society, served as an officer of Student Government, Junior Classical League, Commissioner of Link Crew, and Treasurer of the International Thespian Society. She also played field hockey and tennis, both teams which she captained. Mary Katharine currently volunteers at Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Christine's Soup Kitchen, and the District 37 Michigan Youth Government Council.

"Work as if everything depends on you. Pray as if everything depends on God." - St. Ignatius Loyola

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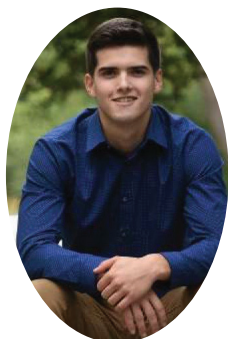
MEGAN BENNETT

Megan is a freshman at Hope College and attended Northern Michigan Christian School in elementary, middle school, and high school years. She played volleyball, basketball, and soccer and will be continuing her basketball career in college. She was a member of National Honor Society and Student Council, Homecoming Committee and she was the president of Christ Committee, her school's chapel team. Megan also had lead and supporting roles in her high school's theater program all throughout high school. She volunteered in her community and her church during her free time while also holding a position at Ebels Clothing Department and The Bridge Coffee Shop. At Hope, she'll be majoring in Sociology with a focus in Criminal Justice and is very excited about what the future has in store for her.

"We must dare to be great; and we must realize that greatness is the fruit of toil and sacrifice and high courage." - Teddy Roosevelt

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AIDAN BRENNAN

Aidan is a freshman at Michigan State University studying communicative sciences and disorders. He graduated from Howell High School and was very involved in the T.I.E.S (Together Including Every Student) program where he worked with students with various disabilities. Aidan also participated in baseball and basketball and served as a captain of the baseball team. He also spends his time doing community service with Gleaners Food Bank and Salvation Army.

"Do what is right, not what is easy nor why is popular." - Roy T. Bennett

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PAIGE BRUGGEMAN

Paige is a freshman at Rhodes State College studying nursing. She graduated From Marion Local High School and was a member of National Honor Society. During her time in high school, Paige was involved in many activities including softball, cross country, yearbook editor, photographer, ad manager, and was a member of the Marion Catholic Community. Paige currently volunteers with the elderly in the community and has also spent time making care packages for the military.

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." - Thomas A. Edison

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SUBMITTED THROUGH: CHICKASAW QWIK STOP



MEET THE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



RYAN ENDLEIN

Ryan is a senior at Cornerstone University studying Environmental Biology. He was homeschooled through high school and was active in a homeschool band and co-op. Ryan has played the flute for 12 years and has played for the Salvation Army Red Kettle, at church, and at retirement homes. In college, he has worked with his professor to collect data for the Midwest Bat Hub.

"To those devoid of imagination, a blank place on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable part." - Aldo Leopold

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RAEGAN ESCH

Reagan is a freshman at Madonna University studying nursing with future plans to become a pediatric nurse practitioner. She graduated from Fowlerville High School, where she was a captain of the track team and National Honor Society President. She was also an active member of her class council and graduated Valedictorian of her class. Reagan participated in dance, track, and cross country and was main-editor of her school's yearbook. She loves spending time with her family and friends.

"Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, leave the rest to God." - Ronald Reagan

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LOGAN FRANCKZKOWSKI

Logan is a junior at Youngstown State University studying middle childhood education with a focus in science and language arts. She graduated from Austintown Fitch High School where she was a member of National Honor Society, Spirit Club, Link Crew, and captain of the track and field team. In college, Logan is continuing her track career, and is part of the honors college. Last year, she set up a small painting session, where everyone was able to come paint pictures for a local nursing home to brighten up their day during quarantine. This year, she has been writing with Pen Pals every other week at Girard Middle School. As Logan pursues her degree, she is a part of Project PASS, which is an organization that volunteers to tutor students from Youngstown City Schools.

"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." - Marian Wright Edelman

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SERINE JAFFAL

Serine is a freshman at John Carroll University, as a leadership scholar, studying chemistry and neuroscience. She is a graduate from North Olmsted High School where she was president of Key Club, senior class Vice President, member of National Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, yearbook, and other leadership/service groups. Serine has spent her time in high school volunteering at the local mosque, Islamic Center of Cleveland, and Fairview Hospital, Cleveland Clinic which sparked her love for helping people and medicine, which she plans to pursue in the future.

"Stand on the battle front of your dreams and fight." - Mahmoud Darwish

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MEET THE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



MAYA KERBER

Maya is a freshman at Olivet College where she will pursue a degree in criminal justice and social work, as well as play on their soccer team. She graduated from Hopkins High School where she was a three sport athlete and team captain, a member of National Honor Society and was the leader for the Wellness Club. Her volunteer work included the Helen Devos Children's Hospital Toy Drive, Recycling and Blood Drives around the community.

"Before you can achieve, you must believe in yourself." - Carl Lloyd

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DUNYA KIZY

Dunya is a junior at Grand Valley State University starting her second semester at the Kirkhof College of Nursing. She graduated from Mercy High School where she was a part of National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, the school newspaper, and the varsity softball team as team captain. At Grand Valley State University, Dunya is an honors mentor, a leader of Rotaract Club, a member of the Student Nurses Association, and has achieved placement on the Dean's List in the past two years.

"You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated." - Maya Angelou

SPONSORED BY: REPUBLIC NATIONAL DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (RNDG)

SUBMITTED THROUGH: PARTYVILLE LIQUOR



GRACE KIZY

Grace is a freshman at Grand Valley State University studying pre-veterinary medicine. She graduated from Mercy High School and was the Reference Editor for the school yearbook. Grace swam on the Mercy varsity swim and dive team for all 4 years. She is also a big animal rights activist and was the leader for animal rights club her junior and senior years.

"I am thankful for all those who said no to me. It is because of them I'm doing it myself." - Albert Einstein

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JOSEPH KONJA

Joe is a sophomore at Wayne State University majoring in both finance and accounting. He graduated from Detroit Catholic Central High School, where he was the vice president of his DECA club and a member of the track and field team. Joe enjoys volunteering with several organizations and is currently working as a tax intern with Masco.

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." - Wayne Gretzky

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MADISON KONJA

Madison is a junior at University of Michigan where she is majoring in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience and minoring in Biochemistry on the pre-medical track. She has a passion for reducing the mental health stigma in under served and underrepresented communities and currently holds a 4.0 GPA. During the school year, she works as a research assistant for two Michigan labs to discover the connections between the environment and genetics for mental health disorders. To give back, she volunteers for Crisis Text Hotline as a crisis counselor and she is a Neurology Clinic Assistant at Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital.

"You never fail until you stop trying." - Albert Einstein

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TOMAZ KONJA

Tomaz is a freshman at Kent State University pursuing a degree in Architecture. He graduated from Woodhaven High School. Tomaz has worked with his family for a number of years at their store and also worked a summer at the airport assisting elderly and handicap persons get to their gate. Although Tomaz has experimented with all types of activities, such as soccer and track, his true passion has been in design.

"I believe that bad taste is vulgar. It's like cursing. I think the world can be saved through good design, because what is the most distasteful thing someone can do? Kill someone. So, good taste is the opposite of that." - Kanye West

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SUBMITTED THROUGH: VREELAND MARKET



NICHOLAS KOUZA

Nicholas is a sophomore at Wayne State University, where he is double majoring in finance and marketing. A graduate of the University of Detroit Jesuit High School & Academy, Nicholas served as class vice-president and captain of the varsity football and lacrosse team. He also received many awards including the All-Catholic League Award and was named All-State, All-Regional, and All-Detroit. Nicholas founded and served as president of Labre Ministry at Wayne State University; a group that prepares and hand delivers food to the less fortunate in the City of Detroit. Upon earning his bachelor's degree, Nicholas plans to pursue a career in Law.

"Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck." - Dalai Lama

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SUBMITTED THROUGH: SAVE-A-LOT ROCKWOOD



GEORGE MIKA

George is a first-generation college student pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Pre-Professional Health Sciences at Oakland University. He has goals to advance his education further by going to medical school to achieve a doctorate degree in human medicine. George occupies his time with doing various activities involving volunteering, specifically with the community and organizing events that contribute to charity organizations. He has also been recognized on the Dean's List every semester since he started at Oakland University.

"It is never over until you quit; quitting is never an option." - Jon Jones

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JAYLA MOOREHEAD-CURTIS

Jayla is a freshman at the University of Cincinnati majoring in law and minoring in social work. She graduated from Philo High School, where she was president of the Key Club. She was also a two year letterman in cheer and track & field. Jayla currently volunteers at Muskingum Arc Housing, where she teaches life skills to developmentally disabled adults.

"Believe you can and you're halfway there." - Theodore Roosevelt

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SUBMITTED THROUGH: SOUTH 60 MARKET



AHMAD NASRALLAH

Ahmad is a freshman at University of Michigan-Dearborn studying technology, as he believes that technology is the future. He graduated from Dearborn High School. Ahmad considers himself being very friendly and outgoing and loves creating as many memories as he can. He received his seal of Biliteracy after completing 4 years of Arabic in high school.

"I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them." - Andy Bernard

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KRISHNA PATEL

Krishna is a Sophomore at University of Michigan studying social theory and practice. She graduated from Bridgman High School and was involved in National Honor Society, Key Club, Interact Club, and was a member of band for eight years, playing alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone. Krishna was also a member of the varsity tennis team and cheerleading team. She currently volunteers with Circle K at University of Michigan and the CAN program in Washtenaw County, as well as Come and See Farm in Berrien County.

"Courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it." - Nelson Mandela

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NIYATI PATEL

Niya is a freshman at University of Michigan studying biology, health and society on the pre-med track. She graduated from Hawken High School where she was a member of several teams and clubs. Niya played on the Hawken junior varsity soccer team and served as the Speech and Debate team captain. She is also involved in Indian Classical dancing. Niya volunteers for the Refugee Response, Shiksha Daan, and the American Red Cross, tutoring students in Cleveland and helps out at local blood drives.

"It always seems impossible until it's done." - Nelson Mandela

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JULIANA RABBANI

Juliana is a junior at College for Creative Studies in Detroit where she is studying advertising design and graphic design. She has made the Dean's List every semester and is currently the treasurer of Ad Club. She is a full time owner of two businesses: Just by Juliana where she offers custom artwork on canvases, shoes, walls and more; and Radi8, which is a clothing brand that embodies happiness and gives back to the communities around us.

"Whatever you are, be a good one." - Abraham Lincoln

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KOBY ROSILES GUZMAN

Koby is a freshman at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and recently graduated from Cristo Rey St. Martin High School. He is planning to study and seek experience within the computer science and business fields. Koby was part of the basketball team during his sophomore year and has volunteered with Northern Illinois Food Bank and in a Summer Leadership role with the Corporate Work Study Program at his high school.

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." - Albert Einstein

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SARINA SAGMANI

Sarina is a junior at Oakland University studying health sciences. She graduated from Walled Lake Central High School where she was a member of National Honor Society, on the board of the CASA Club (Chaldean American Student Association) and had honors all four years of high school. Sarina has volunteered for organizations such as PB&J Outreach to provide food and supplies to the homeless, including churches, shelters and schools.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." - Gandhi

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PAEDYN SCHULTE

Paedyn is attending Douglas J Aveda Institute to study cosmetology. She graduated from Howell High School where she always had a passion for hands-on work. She was part of the construction program where she and her classmates built a house from the ground up. Paedyn was also a member of the link crew where she would meet with 3 freshmen on a weekly basis to give advice and be a helping hand for them to succeed in their upcoming years at Howell High School.

"Life's a dance you learn as you go sometimes you lead, sometimes you follow, don't worry about what you don't know."

- John Michael Montgomery

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SUBMITTED THROUGH: BOOZE BARN



MEET THE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



SELENA SHAMO

Selena is a senior at Oakland University studying health science. She is currently applying to the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program and is determined to be an admired PA in the near future. Selena graduated from Walled Lake Central, where she played volleyball. At Oakland University, Selena is part of the Pre-PA Society, Chaldean American Student Association, and holds her place as the social media director for the American Medical Women's Association. During the pandemic, Selena secured her spot as a Medical Assistant at an urgent care. Her passion for treating and diagnosing patients is rooted in teamwork. Selena's most memorable volunteering experience was with the PB&J outreach, where she served food and care packages to Detroit's most vulnerable residents. This past December, Selena volunteered at a COVID-19 vaccine popup clinic, administering vaccines.

"With God all things are possible." - Matthew 19:26

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GABRIEL STACEY

Gabe is a freshman at University of Western Michigan's Lee Honors College studying business and film studies. He graduated from Berkley High School where he was the section leader for the school's drum-line. Gabe started a clothing brand called Society Disbanded last year when COVID-19 was at its worst and has been working at two other jobs since. Gabe just recently completed his Eagle Scout project and is waiting to attend his court of honor. He is also a part of National Honor Society and he was awarded the Summa Cum Laude award for academics.

"Take advantage, do your best. Don't stress, you was granted everything inside this planet. Anything you imagine, you possess."
- Kendrick Lamar

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SUBMITTED THROUGH: HOLIDAY MARKET



ALEXANDER STERLING

Alexander is a freshman at the University of Notre Dame where he is majoring in astrophysics and aeronautics. He graduated from North Farmington High School, where he tutored in National Honor Society, earned the rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts, and served with Youth Group on multiple mission trips. At the University of Notre Dame, Alexander serves as the Secretary of the Science Olympiad Club and President of the Chess Club. In his free time, Alexander loves to play tennis and works at Busch's.

"Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is looking." - C.S. Lewis

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IVY STROLLER

Ivy is a senior at Michigan Technological University studying accounting and data analytics. She has been a member of the Alto Active Achievers 4-H Club for 15 years, where she has enjoyed learning leadership skills as the president and as a mentor to young members. Ivy spends her time volunteering with Christian Aid Ministries' projects and the Apostolic Christian HarvestCall working on disaster relief projects and food packing for those in need. She is hoping to do accounting work with agriculture and small businesses when she graduates.

"Beware of little expenses. A small leak will sink a great ship." - Benjamin Franklin

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MEET THE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



SABRINA THOMAS

Sabrina is a freshman at Oakland University studying clinical and diagnostic sciences. She graduated from Mercy High School as magna cum laude and was a member of National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. Sabrina was a student government class officer and a Science Club leader. Additionally, she volunteered with many different organizations throughout her time in high school.

"Go as far as you can see; when you get there, you'll be able to see further." - Thomas Carlyle

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ANOOSHA VEMULAPATI

Anoosha is a senior at Wayne State University. She is a part of the Rotaract organization on campus, as well as a student ambassador for the Office of Sustainability. Outside of campus, Anoosha uses her Japanese proficiency to volunteer as an English tutor for Japanese students with the Hinoki Foundation. She has done Taekwondo for 6 years and currently holds a black belt.

"You can ask the universe for signs all you want but ultimately we'll only see what we want to see...when we're ready to see it." - Ted Mosby

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LUCY WEGLARZ

Lucy will be a sophomore at University of Minnesota studying bioproducts engineering with a minor in Spanish. She graduated from Wheaton North High School where she served as flute section leader in marching band. Lucy was also in musicals, on the math team, a member of the speech team, as well as serving as an executive board member for Tri-M Music Honor Society. She volunteered for both St. Michael's Church and St. Petronille's Church, as well as the middle school band program. Lucy currently plays flute in the university band, and participates in the Society of Women Engineers and Catholic Students United at the U.

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you got to put up with the rain." - Dolly Parton

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RASHA YOUNES

Rasha is a freshman at University of Michigan studying health and human services and majoring in Public Health. She graduated from Edsel Ford High School with a cumulative GPA above a 4.1. Rasha was part of National Honor Society and Key Club for four years, serving as the vice president for three years. She has also taken part in the French National Honor Society for two years.

"So, surely with hardship comes ease." - Quran 94:5

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A close-up, profile view of a smiling woman with dark hair, looking towards the left. She is holding a black sign with the word 'OPEN' in white capital letters. In the background, a boxing ring with white ropes is visible, and the scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor arena at night. The DTE logo is in the top left corner, and the text 'POWERING POSSIBILITY' is in the middle right. A paragraph of text is in the bottom right.

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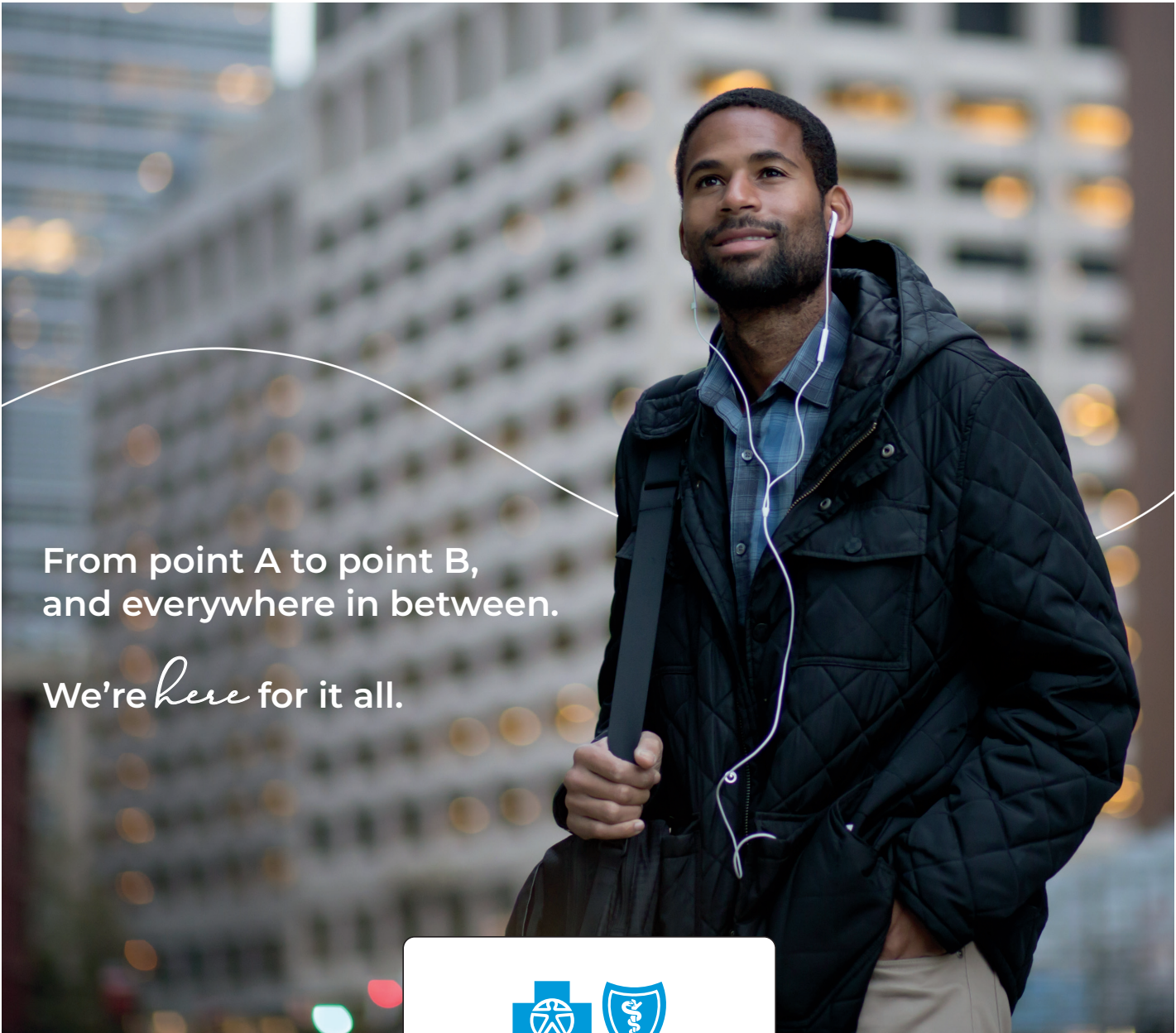
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Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center // Plymouth, MI



AUGUST 9, 2022

MIRA'S 17TH ANNUAL OHIO GOLF OUTING

This outing is a social event where retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and service providers all come together to have a little competitive fun. A day on the course includes breakfast, dinner and 18 holes of golf!

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SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

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NOVEMBER 17 & 18, 2022

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As the holiday season approaches, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation turkey drive committee has pledged to put a turkey on the Thanksgiving table of over 6,000 needy families throughout Michigan, Ohio and Illinois that may not otherwise enjoy this special meal.

Michigan // Ohio

publishers statement

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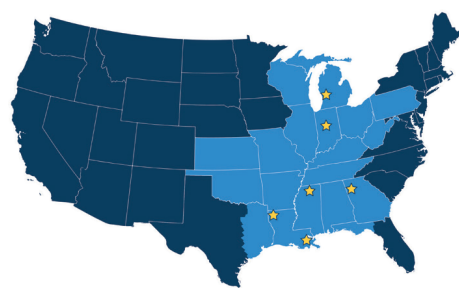


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