

## NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Christy Nelson Honored with MACAE Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Adult Education

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN— **Northwest Michigan Works!**, a program of Networks Northwest, proudly announces that Regional Director of Adult Education, **Christy Nelson**, has been awarded the prestigious *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the Michigan Adult, Community & Alternative Education Association (**MACAE**), recognizing more than 25 years of exceptional service and leadership in adult education.

Nelson has dedicated her career to advancing opportunities for adult learners across Northwest Michigan, serving as a driving force behind innovative programming, equitable access to education, and workforce readiness initiatives. In her role as Regional Director of Adult Education at Northwest Michigan Works! Learning Labs, she has transformed countless lives through a steadfast commitment to helping individuals overcome barriers and achieve their educational goals.

Known for her strategic vision and collaborative leadership style, Nelson has strengthened regional partnerships and aligned programs with both statewide priorities and local

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Networks Northwest and Northwest Michigan Works! are supported by the State of Michigan and are proud partners of the American Job Center Network. Projects may be funded with the authorized and appropriate use of federal funds. Contact Networks Northwest for additional information. Equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the Michigan Relay Center by dialing 711.

workforce needs. Her efforts have resulted in improved educational outcomes and expanded access to critical learning opportunities for underserved populations. The Adult Education program is delivered in collaboration with **Northwest Education Services**, ensuring a strong regional approach to meeting the educational and workforce needs of the community.

“Christy’s work exemplifies what it means to lead with heart and purpose,” said Kristen Swiantek, Director of MACAE. “Her dedication has not only elevated adult education in our state but has also created lasting impact for the individuals and communities she serves.”

“Christy’s dedication to adult education is astounding and inspiring. This award is so very well deserved. She has been a fierce advocate for adult learners for decades, and exemplifies what it means to truly be an educator. Her passion is unrivaled and her work has changed countless lives for the better in our region,” said Jessica Willis, Director of Northwest Michigan Works!.

Under Nelson’s guidance, both staff and students have thrived in an environment that emphasizes persistence, progress, and educational growth. Her legacy is marked by resilience, innovation, and a deep commitment to empowering others.

In accepting the award, Nelson reflected on the meaning of her career and the importance of giving back: “This award is not just a celebration of the past; it’s a reminder of responsibility. If I’ve learned anything over the years, it’s that success means little unless you turn around and help light the path for others. To the next generation: stay curious, stay generous, and don’t be afraid to do the work with care and integrity. That’s where the real achievement lives.”

The MACAE Lifetime Achievement Award honors individuals who have made significant, long-term contributions to adult and alternative education in Michigan. Nelson’s

recognition highlights a career defined by service, vision, and compassion—one that continues to shape the future of adult education throughout the region.

To learn more about Adult Education services at Northwest Michigan Works!, visit [nwm.org/adult-ed](http://nwm.org/adult-ed).

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dana O'Dell at [dana.odell@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dana.odell@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. Or phone (231) 929-5075. Check our online Media Room at [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10-county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works!, APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC), various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business, and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our website, [networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org). Networks Northwest's member counties are Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.

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