

**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Northern Michigan Students Attend National Leadership Event**

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI – Students in the Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates (JMG) program coordinated by Northwest Michigan Works! attended the Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) National Student Leadership Academy December 5 –7 in Washington, D.C. The Leadership Academy focused on developing leadership qualities in students while also giving them the opportunity to network with other JAG students and view important landmarks around Washington, D.C. The event attracted 750 students from around the country.

The northern Michigan students attending the National Leadership Academy were:

Gabriel Koczan, a sophomore from Cadillac High School;

Kaiden Larsen, a sophomore from Cadillac Innovations High School;

Paige Hunter, a senior from CASMAN Academy in Manistee;

Vela Wolniewicz, a senior from Crooked Tree High School in Harbor Springs;

Michael Kline a senior from Alanson in the Char-Em ISD CTE Welding Program at Pellston.

Levi Pepin, a senior from East Jordan in the Char-Em ISD CTE Welding Program at East Jordan;

Caleb St. John, a senior from Kingsley in the Automotive Technology Program at the TBAISD Career-Tech Center;

Abigail Larson, a senior from Lake City in the Hospitality, Retail and Entrepreneurship Program at the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center.

"What a wonderful trip with wonderful people," said Wolniewicz. "JAG is such a great program full of people who want the best for everyone. I'm so grateful I was able to go on such an amazing trip and meet so many new friends and tour beautiful Washington, D.C."

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“When I was in Washington I did a lot of things that I thought that I would never do in my life,” said Abigail Larson. “We met the president of JMG and were told that we were the future of the United States of America.”

JMG staff members Lisa Baldyga, LeAnne Bush, and Cheryl Miller accompanied the students.

JMG helps Michigan's young adults graduate and make successful transitions to postsecondary education or meaningful employment. Northwest Michigan Works! coordinates JMG programs at Cadillac Public and Innovation High Schools, CASMAN Academy in Manistee, Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, the Traverse Bay Area ISD Career-Tech Center, the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center, and Out of School programs in Cadillac, Kalkaska, Manistee, and Traverse City.

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates is the leading program of Youth Solutions, Inc., a premiere youth opportunity organization delivering employability and education services to nearly 3,000 young people across more than 40 cities. Youth Solutions is the state-based affiliate of the national Jobs for America's Graduates organization ([jag.org](http://jag.org)), one of the largest and most successful school-to-work systems in the United States. The JMG model consists of a comprehensive set of services designed to keep young people in school through graduation and improve the rate of success in achieving education and career goals. For more information on Youth Solutions and its Jobs for Michigan's Graduates programming, visit [ouryouthsolutions.org](http://ouryouthsolutions.org).

Photo Information – Jobs for Michigan's Graduates students from northern Michigan visited the U.S. Capitol while attending the Jobs for America's Graduates National Student Leadership Academy in Washington, D.C.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

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