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**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Petoskey YouthBuild Program Recognizes its First Graduating Class**

PETOSKEY, MI—Nine young adults will receive certificates of completion when the Petoskey YouthBuild program holds a ceremony to recognize its first graduating class June 29, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. at the Crooked Tree Arts Center in Petoskey.

Along with certificates of completion, each of the Petoskey YouthBuild students will receive a nationally recognized construction certification and OSHA safety certification. The students have also completed a total of more than 500 hours of civic service.

YouthBuild is a national construction training and education program for low-income youth. It gives young adults without high school diplomas the opportunity to earn their GED, and students who already have their diplomas can improve their math and literacy skills. All the students learn entry-level construction, work readiness, and leadership skills. Hands-on construction training takes place while building affordable housing within the community.

YouthBuild Northwest operates programs in Petoskey and Cadillac. The program is administered and partially funded by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, in partnership with Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District and Northwest Michigan WORKS!

For more information about YouthBuild Northwest go to: [nwm.org/youthbuild](http://nwm.org/youthbuild) .

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Tom White at [tomwhite@nwm.com.mi.us](mailto:tomwhite@nwm.com.mi.us) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5044. Check our online Media Room at: <http://nwm.org/media.asp>

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, founded in 1973, facilitates and manages services and programs for 10 counties in the region. These programs include Regional Planning and Community Development, Northwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, Northwest Michigan Works, Workforce Development Board, Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center Region 2, Hospitality Skills Alliance, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center program, KAL-TEC, Healthcare Skills Alliance of Northwest Michigan, and the Regional Repository for US Census data.

Some services of NWMCOG are in direct support of the counties, some are independent services provided to the public and businesses at large. NWMCOG is able to leverage several collaborative partnerships to extend limited resources and provide economies of scale for projects that operate on a regional basis. NWMCOG's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.