

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Apprenticeship Program Benefits Persons With Developmental Disabilities

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI — A first-of-its-kind apprenticeship in northern Michigan will benefit persons with developmental disabilities. The new Customer Service Representative Registered Apprenticeship Program is being offered through a partnership between Bergmann Center, Inc. and Northwest Michigan Works!. The Bergmann Center Day Programs, Employment Programs, and Resale Shop seeks to provide those with special needs the training, skills, and pay to become productive members of their community. The Apprenticeship program was formally launched at an orientation held recently at the Bergmann Center's Day Program in Petoskey. The apprentices will be working at the Resale Shop in Charlevoix.

Registered under the Northwest Michigan Works! U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Standards of Apprenticeship, the Bergmann Center is providing apprentices with a minimum of 12 months of on-the-job training along with 144 hours of related technical instruction. The related coursework complements the hands-on learning while providing an innovative, fully individualized curriculum. Apprentices will participate in soft skills training and money handling education among other essential customer service concepts.

“The Bergmann Center is proud to offer this innovative training program in collaboration with Northwest Michigan Works,” said Chuck Hayes, Executive Director, Bergmann Center, Inc. “Customer Service Representatives are needed in nearly every industry and completing apprentices will be prepared to serve the community effectively at the Bergmann Center or if they choose to leave, will be qualified through their USDOL National Credential to serve in the for-profit sector. The first cohort includes four very engaged, dedicated apprentices, and we are excited to watch their skills and talents grow through this unique opportunity.”

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Northwest Michigan Works! is a registered USDOL apprenticeship intermediary and sponsor. Northwest Michigan Works! helps employers develop, implement and manage registered apprenticeships specific to their industry. Registered Apprenticeship is a proven training method for businesses to build a talent pipeline of highly skilled, educated workers.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dan Boss at dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. Or phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: 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!, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, 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. Networks Northwest's member counties are Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.