

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Networks Northwest Professionals Recognized at Youth Solutions' Statewide Summer Summit

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI – **Networks Northwest** is proud to celebrate several members of its Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) team who were recognized during Youth Solutions' Annual Summer Summit, a statewide professional development conference that brings together JMG specialists, managers, employer partners, and youth from across Michigan.

Held in Mount Pleasant, Summer Summit serves as Youth Solutions' annual kickoff to the new program year. The multi-day conference provides professional development, networking opportunities, and strategic planning while recognizing outstanding individuals and organizations that made a significant impact to the program over the past year.

This year, the following members of Networks Northwest were honored for their exceptional leadership and dedication to student success:

Antrim ● Benzie ● Charlevoix ● Emmet ● Grand Traverse ● Kalkaska ● Leelanau ● Manistee ● Missaukee ● Wexford

PO Box 506 ● Traverse City, MI 49685-0506 ● Phone (231) 929-5000 ● Fax (231) 929-5012 ● networksnorthwest.org

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.

Living Our Values Award - Authentic

In recognition of the honesty, vulnerability, and trust you bring to your work - fostering real relationships and making meaningful impact for Michigan's youth.

- **Cathy Schanski, JMG Specialist at Petoskey HS** - *Cathy consistently goes above and beyond to help young people reach their full potential, combining hands-on career preparation with genuine care that makes every student feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.*

JMG JAGForce Jedi! Award

Demonstrated excellence through data. The Force is strong in these folks!

- **Josh Todd, JMG Specialist and Char-EM WBL Coordinator at East Jordan HS, Central Lake HS, Beaver Island HS**
- **Kali McNamara, JMG Specialist at Boyne City HS, Crooked Tree HS, Lakeview HS**

JMG Influencer Award

Utilizes social media for good by celebrating their youth and sharing the JMG story.

- **Eric VanVleet, JMG Specialist at CASMAN Academy** - *Eric consistently shares insights, lessons learned, and advocacy from his programs, organization, and region with his LinkedIn network. By highlighting what's happening in the field and speaking up for the youth and communities we serve, he has established himself as a thoughtful leader and trusted voice in our work.*

6 of 6 Award

6-of-6 National Award is awarded to JAG affiliate programs who have met or surpassed performance standards in six critical areas— graduation rates, employment, full-time placement, positive outcomes, connectivity, and post-secondary enrollment for students. These programs have proven they are dedicated to ensuring young people succeed in education and have a path toward sustainable employment.

- **Kali McNamara, Boyne City HS, Crooked Tree HS, Lakeview HS**
- **Josh Todd, East Jordan HS, Central Lake HS, Beaver Island HS**

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- **Lisa Baldyga, Northwest Education Services CTC**
- **Marc Svatora, Pellston HS, Harbor Springs HS, Alanson, HS**
- **Cathy Schanski, Petoskey HS**
- **LeAnne Bush, Wexford-Missaukee CTC - BBAM & WBL**
- **Kim Benz, Wexford-Missaukee CTC - Culinary, DMP, & CTE Referrals**

JMG Community Service Award Winners

The JMG Community Service Award celebrates programs that exemplify the true spirit of service—going far beyond expectations to create lasting impact. These honorees have inspired change, uplifted their communities, and led with compassion and purpose.

- **Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center - Building Business & Marketing**
- **Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center - Digital Media Production**
- **Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center - Culinary**
- **Crooked Tree High School**
- **Central Lake High School**

JMG Milestone Award

The JMG Milestone Award celebrates individuals who have dedicated 5, 10, and 15 years to making a difference through Jobs for Michigan's Graduates programs. Their continued commitment, leadership, and passion have created lasting impact for youth, schools, and communities across Michigan.

- **Lisa Baldyga, 5+ years of service**
- **Kim Benz, 5 years of service**
- **Tracy Beckley, 5 years of service**

Together, these professionals have helped students overcome barriers, build career readiness skills, connect with employers, and prepare for successful futures. Their commitment reflects the mission of Jobs for Michigan's Graduates and the positive impact the program continues to have throughout the region. "The dedication of our staff is truly commendable. They work tirelessly every day to make a positive impact on their students,

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so it is wonderful to see their hard work and commitment recognized at the state level," said **Sara Keinath, Regional Director for Youth Services.**

"Summer Summit gives us the opportunity to celebrate the incredible professionals who make a difference in the lives of young people every day," said **Roger Curtis, Executive Director of Youth Solutions.** "These award recipients exemplify the passion, commitment, and excellence that strengthen the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates network and help prepare Michigan youth for successful futures."

To learn more about all of this year's award winners, visit our [new awards page](#).

About Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG)

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG), the premier program of Youth Solutions, offers programming for youth in and out of schools at more than 170 locations across Michigan. JMG develops youth competencies in leadership, self-development, workplace expectations, financial literacy, career exploration and training, access to postsecondary education, and hands-on, work-based learning. With the support of a dedicated adult mentor, JMG provides youth with individualized guidance, helping them gain the skills and knowledge needed to identify a pathway to postsecondary success while overcoming individual barriers.

About Northwest Michigan Works!

Northwest Michigan Works! is proud to partner with Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) in serving the region's youth. JMG is the leading program of Youth Solutions, Inc., a premier youth opportunity organization on a mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and win in education, employment, and in life. The JMG program consists of a comprehensive set of services designed to help young people achieve education and career goals. The purpose of this program is to inspire and connect youth to achieve a future beyond imagination. To learn more about JMG visit,

nwm.org/jmg

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Youth Solutions aims to ensure every youth in Michigan has access to career-focused education and graduates with a plan for postsecondary success. Since 2008, Youth Solutions has impacted youth, ages 11-24, across Michigan. For more information about Youth Solutions, Inc. or to become a partner, visit us at www.ouryouthsolutions.org, follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) or “like” us on Facebook at @JobsforMichigansGraduates & @YouthSolutions.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dana O'Dell at 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

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. Networks Northwest's member counties are Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.

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