

Trevor Wassink
Owner
Tanglewood Winery

The Power of Inclusivity:
Strengthening Community
and Business

Who is ALICE?
Understanding Financial
Hardship in Ottawa County

The Impact of Mentoring
Relationships

Tanglewood Winery: A Legacy of Blueberries and Bold Innovation

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The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce serves as a catalyst for business growth, a convener of leaders and influencers, and a champion for our thriving community. The Chamber serves its 1,200 members by building businesses, advocating for issues that matter, developing leaders, and supporting initiatives to build an inclusive community where all feel welcome.

The West Coast Chamber has been recognized with the U.S. Chamber's prestigious Five Star Accreditation. Less than 1% of Chambers in the country receive this distinction.

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VP of Membership

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Member Engagement Coordinator

Colleen Schipsi
VP of Operations

Hannah Bowen
Program Manager

Emmy Riemersma
Membership & Marketing Coordinator

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

272 E. 8th Street
Holland, MI 49423
616.392.2389
www.westcoastchamber.org



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The West Coast Way

Editor: Emmy Riemersma, emmy@westcoastchamber.org
Advertising Inquiries: Jessica Lynch, jess@westcoastchamber.org
Design: Holland Litho

The start of a new year brings a sense of excitement and anticipation as we look ahead to all we hope to accomplish in 2025. For our business community, the new year often represents a fresh chapter filled with opportunities for growth, development, and connection — and the Chamber is ready to play a key role as a catalyst for these advancements.

We're inspired by the innovative spirit of businesses like Tanglewood Winery, our Innovation Award winner, who transformed their family blueberry farm into an award-winning winery and tasting room. We're excited to share their journey of overcoming challenges — a shining example of how bold ideas can lead to extraordinary outcomes.

One of the Chamber's core values is "Be a Trailblazer." This value drives us to embrace an innovative mindset that creates positive impact for our members and the community as a whole. As we step into 2025, let's carry this trailblazing spirit forward. Together, we can make this year one of transformation, collaboration, and meaningful progress.

Jodi Owczarski
President & CEO
Michigan West Coast Chamber
of Commerce



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The Power of Inclusivity: Strengthening Community and Business

By Emmy Riemersma | Membership & Marketing Coordinator, West Coast Chamber

For a community to thrive, it is essential to have a space where individuals can share their perspectives and feel valued for their contributions. The Chamber strives to provide opportunities for individuals from different industries to connect and learn from each other.

We sat down with Robert Heath Sr., CEO and founder of the Legacy Leadership Consulting Group, to hear his insights on the power of inclusivity in building stronger businesses and a stronger community.

How do you define inclusivity, and why do you believe it is important for a community or business?

Inclusivity is all about making people feel like they can be a part, making people feel like they can belong, and that they can bring their whole selves to whatever we're doing. It's the best way for us to get the most use out of all the talent that we have in our community. It's not just good for the community and for how we feel but it's also good for the bottom line. There are a number of studies

that show that teams that are more diverse, whether it be gender diversity, racial diversity, or even just ideological diversity, make better business decisions 87% of the time.

How does the Chamber support inclusion within the business community?

The Chamber is really committed to bringing people together and helping us to figure out how we can all be better together. One of the things that I love that the Chamber does is that it asks us “how can you bring everything that you have to make our community better”, and that’s something that I think is really important. The Chamber is constantly putting on events that allow us to learn about people from different industries, people from different backgrounds, and different demographics and so there’s all these opportunities for us to interact with each other.

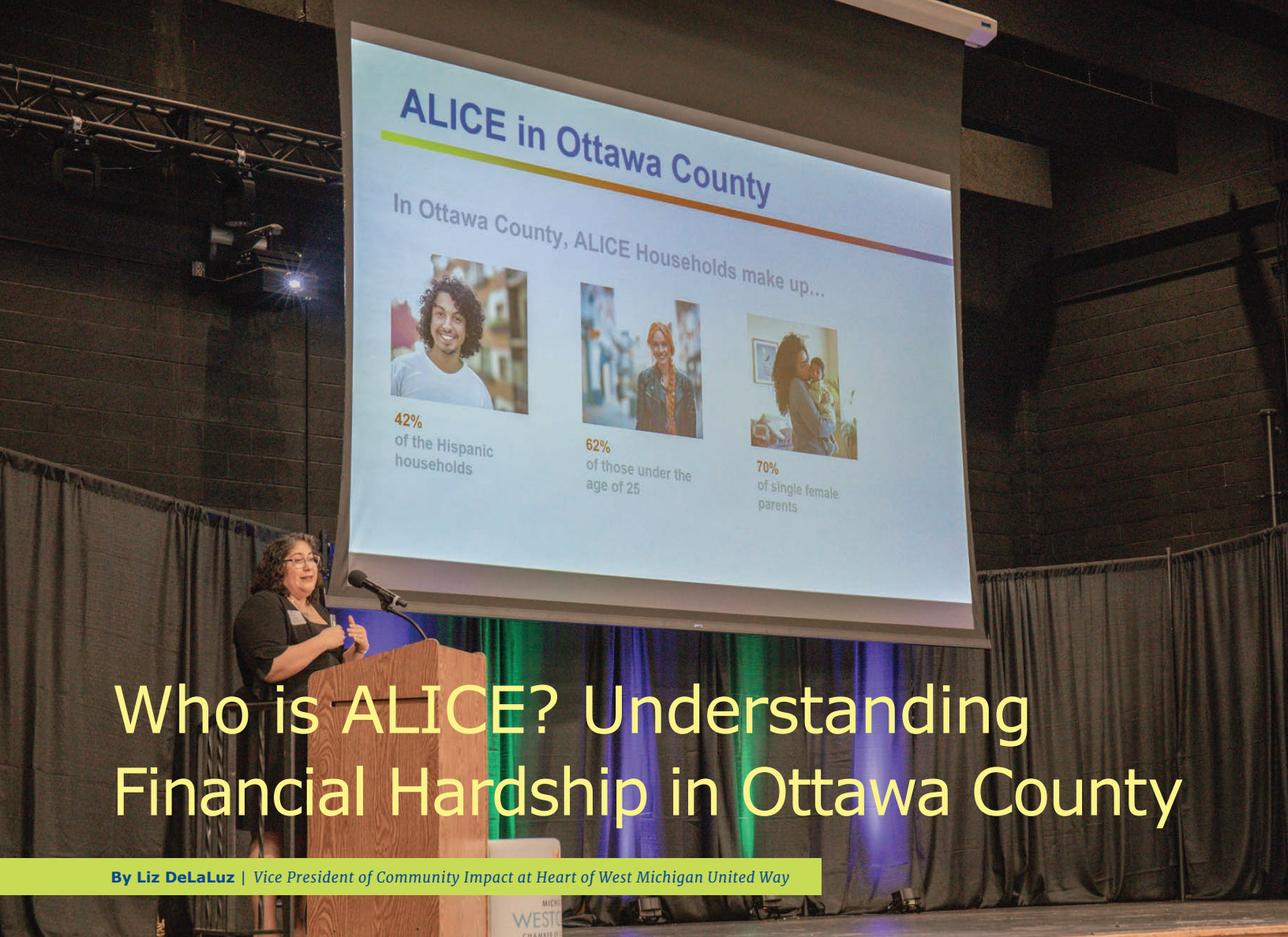
What are some ways the Chamber can come alongside businesses and help build a more inclusive community?

As a former keynote speaker at Forward Together, one of the big things that we talked about is how can we have the right conversations? How can we interact with each other so that people feel seen, people feel heard, and people feel valued? Bringing people together to have conversations that are difficult. One of the beautiful things that we have in this community specifically is a number of us who are training and helping community



members to have those conversations and what we call “courageous conversations”. If we can continue getting people, the skills, and the tools to be able to hear and be heard, see and be seen, so that we can actually come together and find mutually beneficial solutions. That’s something that I think the Chamber is doing and can continue to do to make our community more inclusive and make it so that we can all get better together. It’s really important for us to be engaged, to be involved, and if there’s something that you see or something that you want, make sure you speak up. The Chamber listens and they act, and they’ll take care of you.





Who is ALICE? Understanding Financial Hardship in Ottawa County

By Liz DeLaLuz | Vice President of Community Impact at Heart of West Michigan United Way

Ottawa County is a wonderful place to live, work and play in. However, for many in our community, making ends meet each month is a challenge. In fact, one in three households in Ottawa County is facing financial hardship, and it is likely that someone you know—whether a friend, colleague, or family member—is among them.

Who is ALICE?

ALICE is an acronym that stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. These are individuals that are working yet struggle to provide the essential needs for themselves and/or their family. ALICE households are those that are above the federal poverty level and below the household survival budget, the budget estimates the actual bare minimum cost of household necessities.

The budget is also based on household types and essential needs such as housing, food, healthcare, childcare and technology.

What does ALICE look like in Ottawa County?

For the purposes of this article, ALICE will include those households below the ALICE threshold and those below the federal poverty level. The data used is from 2022, and it highlights some key trends in Ottawa County. The population increased by 1,716 people from 2021, while the number of households increased by 1,380. The labor force participation rate in the county stands at 68%, surpassing Michigan's state average of 52%. Lastly, the median household income in Ottawa County is over \$85,000, compared to the state median of just over \$67,000.

In 2019, pre-COVID ALICE families made up 30% of households in our community. In 2021, stimulus dollars and public assistance extensions were winding down ALICE families were at 29%. The most recent data in 2022 shows our ALICE families at 33% with all safety net supports gone and those families that were on the cusp of being above the ALICE threshold have now fallen below. Meaning that more of our friends and neighbors are struggling to support the basic needs of their households.

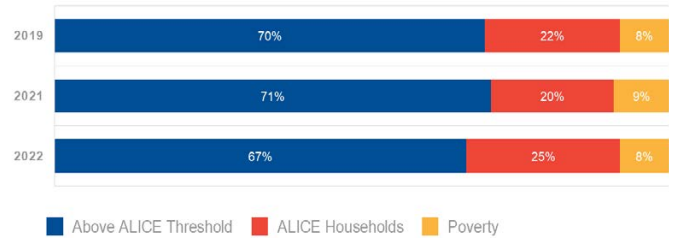
When taking a closer look at who makes up those ALICE families in Ottawa County, it shows that 65% of all Black households and 42% of all Hispanic households are below the ALICE threshold. It also shows that 62% of households under 25 and the largest group are Single Moms at 70% that are below the ALICE threshold. When you look at our local municipalities Zeeland City has the highest concentration of ALICE households at 51%, while Zeeland Charter Township is 22%. Holland City is at 41% of households that are ALICE, while Holland Charter Township is at 38%.

Another breakdown shows that a senior couple that is struggling needs more than \$53,000 annually with health care being their largest expense. Our single parents with one child need over \$49,000 to survive with housing and utilities being their largest expense and food coming second. Overall, the ALICE Essentials Index, the change over time of the survival budget is increasing at a greater rate than the Consumer Price Index, which measure all consumer items at multiple levels of income.

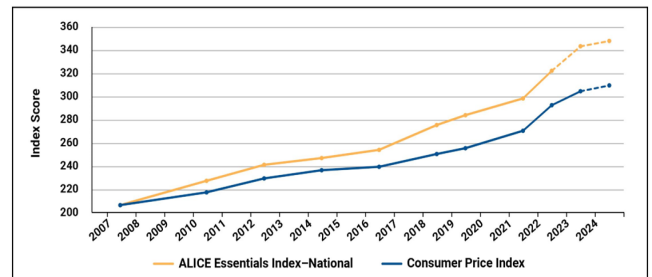
As we reflect on the increasing number of ALICE households in Ottawa County, it is clear that many individuals and families are facing financial hardship

Ottawa County Trends

Three-year comparison of households below the ALICE Threshold



Why an Increase in ALICE?



despite being employed. With 33% of households now struggling to meet basic needs, the challenges they face are undeniable. But this also presents an opportunity for our community to come together and support those in need. By understanding the realities of ALICE families, we can work towards solutions that provide better access to resources, support, and opportunities. Together, we can help lift up those who are working hard but still falling short, ensuring that Ottawa County remains a place where everyone can thrive.

Liz DeLaLuz is the Vice President of Community Impact for Heart of West Michigan United Way. For 20 years she has led the community investment process through which more than 1000 volunteers have invested 15,000+ volunteer hours and over \$19 million in local community programs. Liz has been the project lead for the Tri-annual Community Assessment for Ottawa County, an in-depth analysis of Health and Human Services in Ottawa County. She serves on the Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey committee, the Ottawa County Community Health Needs Assessment committee, and Healthy Ottawa Advisory Council. She is an alum of United Way Worldwide Resident Fellows program, LEAD365 and a Leadership Holland graduate. A 1993 graduate of WMU, Liz was the first in her family to attend college and earn a degree. Liz is currently a board member for Corewell Health Zeeland Hospital. She is also the Chair for the Lakeshore Latina group under the Tri-Cities Puentes Initiative, a member of Women of Color Give and the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department Victim Services Unit. Liz is a Mom and Stepmom of six and a Grandma of four. She enjoys volunteering in the community, planting succulents and crocheting baby blankets for friends and family members.



Transforming Lives: The Impact of Mentoring Relationships

By Karen Pearson | *President, Kids Hope USA*
Kara Nguyen | *Director of Generosity and Growth, Kids Hope USA*



Have you ever looked around our community and wondered how each of us, making a small commitment, could catalyze a movement of change? How nurturing healthy relationships could brighten the outlook of individuals, families, neighborhoods, or even whole cities? Imagine what our community might look like as lives are changed through the accumulated investments of time, wisdom, and encouragement from a group of people called mentors.

Think back on your childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood. Did you have a mentor (or two) who was a faithful and positive presence in your life? A mentor simply comes alongside another person, usually someone younger, to provide encouragement, advice, and influence to help them flourish. Some mentoring relationships are seasonal, and others last for years. The common denominator is this: mentoring lifts both the mentee and mentor through listening and learning together.

The best mentoring relationships are built on reciprocity, recognizing that both the mentor and mentee have something to offer and something to learn. It's this mutual exchange that drives real, lasting transformation.

For 30 years, Kids Hope USA has been at the forefront of fostering transformation, through the power of one-on-one mentoring relationships. Kids Hope USA, a national mentoring organization founded in West Michigan, invites churches, businesses, and community organizations to mobilize their members to serve as volunteer mentors in local elementary and middle schools. Each of these volunteer mentors meets with just one child for one hour a week during the school year. Through play, conversation, academic work, and creative projects, mentors help students gain confidence and improve attitudes that help them thrive at school and at home.



"I mentor because I can see the positive impact our one hour together makes for my student! In the last two years my student has gone from scowling, angry, and not wanting to spend time together, to a smiling girl who is eager to tell me everything that has happened since we last met and doesn't want me to leave!" (Amy R., Mentor)

Mentors serving in Kids Hope USA programs across the country are helping shape the lives of students through consistent, caring, one-on-one time and attention. These relationships extend beyond academic help—they also provide emotional and social support, giving students the tools they need to grow into confident, engaged members of our community.

Throughout West Michigan, nearly 1,500 adults are serving as mentors in a Kids Hope USA program, investing thousands of hours throughout the school year in the lives of students in our community!

"Kids Hope provides a way to serve our local school, and there is something sacred about being in the school, having lunch with a kid and simply giving our best attention for an hour a week." (Mike M., Pastor)



January is National Mentoring Month, a time to reflect on the power of mentorship and its potential to shape the next generation and learn something new along the way! We encourage you, as a member of the West Michigan business community, to consider how you or your organization can engage in this meaningful work. Whether as an individual mentor or by supporting local mentoring programs, your involvement can make a lasting impact.

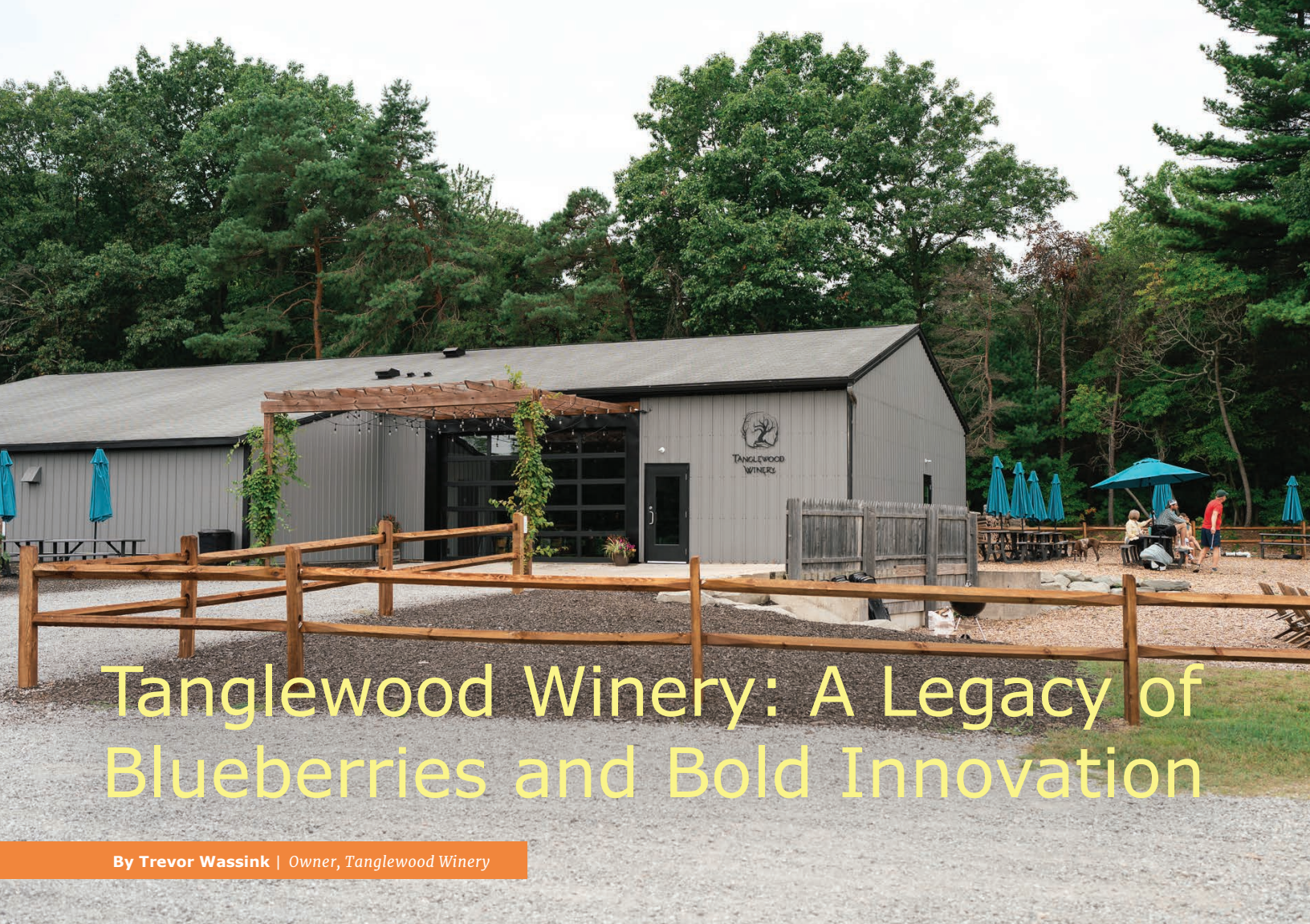
Imagine the smiles, the confidence, the joy, and the success that can be unlocked simply by choosing to be a mentor.



Karen Pearson has led Kids Hope USA for the past 5 years with excellence, fueled by her experience in higher education, vibrant faith, and ongoing commitment to mentoring. From our national office in West Michigan, Karen provides leadership, oversight, and vision for Kids Hope USA across the country.



Kara Nguyen leads our fundraising and program expansion efforts, sharing her passion to mobilize generous communities through their gifts of time, talent, and treasure! As an enthusiastic mentor herself, Kara knows firsthand the challenges and joys of building relationships. Kara has served Kids Hope USA since 2018 and has stewarded key community, district, and donor relationships.



Tanglewood Winery: A Legacy of Blueberries and Bold Innovation

By Trevor Wassink | Owner, Tanglewood Winery

For those of you that have never visited (or just heard of us recently), Tanglewood Winery is a family-run blueberry farm and winery located just a couple miles from the lakeshore in Holland, Michigan. Although the winery is relatively new, the roots of the farm stretch back three generations — to when my grandfather Gordon Wassink first started farming blueberries in the early 1960's.

The Evolution of a Family Farm

In the 60's and 70's, blueberry farming was still new and began expanding rapidly in this area. The soil was a beautiful loamy sand with a low pH that caused blueberries to thrive, and the lake-moderated climate kept them safe. As time went on, my father Doug Wassink began to take over the farm. There were some good years in the early 2000's and the farm grew to nearly 160 acres.

While growing up, I always wanted to be a blueberry farmer. I originally went to Grand Valley State University for Organic Chemistry but switched after two years to Michigan State University for their small fruit horticulture program. Upon finishing this, I was ready to start farming full-time — except the industry had other plans.

Turning Challenges into Innovation

Right around graduation, we were hit with the "Blue Wave." Blueberries from other growing areas were flooding the market — what was once worth \$1.50 per pound was now worth \$.50 or less. Juice grade fruit became worthless and we were dumping thousands of pounds of it. Many small farms were struggling and needed to get creative with special marketing or value-added products. It was about this time I had an idea.



I have always had a love of chemistry, wine, and food. I hated to see the wasted fruit and I was determined to do something with it. I began making blueberry wine to mitigate waste and hopefully have something to share with friends and family. I had no formal training at this time so I used 100% blueberries with no water — something unheard of in the fruit wine industry. Although it took a significant amount of experimenting, my background in organic chemistry finally paid off, and I was able to pioneer a unique winemaking process with consistently high-quality results. After sharing this new wine with family and friends, we decided to pull the trigger and fully move the farm in that direction.

Building the Future of Tanglewood Winery

Rather than start off in a new industry with no experience, I began taking classes through VESTA — a winemaking program that consolidates wine and

viticulture classes from multiple different colleges into its own program. As I took classes, I also began pulling licenses and we began restoring an old barn that would eventually become Tanglewood Winery. It started slow at first by intention. We took four years to perfect the wines we were working on, while just selling to local restaurants and liquor stores. Then, in 2019, much of our hard work paid off. After entering many competitions, we started receiving some incredible awards. The Indie International Wine Competition gave our Traminette Double Gold, and every wine we entered placed in the top three. Then, the biggest competition of our lives, The New York International Wine Competition, gave us multiple gold medals and dubbed us “American Fruit Winery of the Year.” It seemed too good to be true, but right when it came time to celebrate, a pesky virus (perhaps you remember it) shut down everything — including our chance to capitalize on our newfound notoriety.





We offer U-pick blueberries and raspberries as well as food trucks every weekend, and bands throughout the warm-weather months. Most recently we have also added a full outdoor area, trails to walk, fire places, and yard games.

This year we also had the honor of receiving a truly humbling award: The Innovation Award from the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce. We are deeply thankful to the Chamber, as well as all the fans and customers that have made our dream a reality. I hope I have shed some light on how our path of innovation came to be.

Undeterred, my father and I decided to make a risky move: Hire a friend of mine that was just graduating college, Jake Langerak, and build a tasting room in the barn. In hindsight, this was our saving grace, and truly ended up propelling us to where we are now. We now offer 17 different wines made in our signature style with 100% fruit, no water, and no flavorings. In the years since COVID, we have steadily grown and have no plans to stop.

My name is Trevor Wassink. I am a third-generation blueberry farmer and a first-generation Winemaker in Holland, Michigan. I love organic chemistry in all of its forms — whether that be soil science with respect to farming, or food science with respect to winemaking and cooking. I am married with three children, all of whom love playing on the farm, eating fruit, and learning the ropes of fermentation. I work at Tanglewood Winery alongside my key business partner Jake Langerak, my father (who is co-owner), my mother, my sisters, and my wife.



Holland Hospital Expands Access to Primary and Specialty Care

By **Bradley Gordon** | Marketing Coordinator, Holland Hospital

Holland Hospital Opens Primary Care Office in Hudsonville

In the neighborhood and close to home, Holland Hospital's new office in downtown Hudsonville offers expert primary care, same-day appointments and convenient access to walk-in lab and X-ray as well as mammography, ultrasound and CT by appointment.

"Recognizing the growing needs of Hudsonville residents, Holland Hospital is pleased to expand its services within this community, offering residents convenient access to primary care and advanced diagnostic services," said Michael Pawlak, Vice President of Regional Development at Holland Hospital. "Holland Hospital is proud to continue its commitment to helping ensure access to top-quality care for this growing community."

Located at 3440 Chicago Drive, Suite 105, the new office features:

- 13 exam rooms plus one procedure room
- Consultation space for care managers and diabetes educators
- Mammography, offering the latest stand-alone screening technology
- Ultrasound and CT by appointment
- Walk-in lab and X-ray

The experienced team of providers includes Mary Mier, DO, Jennifer Bienz, PA, and Lauren Douma, PA,—all accepting new patients. This provides ready access to primary care which is much needed in the area and often with long wait times to be seen.

Holland Hospital Primary Care-Hudsonville offers comprehensive primary care services for all ages, including well-child visits, annual physicals and health screenings, immunizations, the treatment of skin conditions plus allergies and asthma, and managing of chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease, and wellness education.

New patients can call (616) 394-3200 to schedule a primary care appointment.



Holland Hospital Primary Care – Hudsonville

3440 Chicago Drive, Suite 105
Hudsonville, MI 49426
(616) 796-9560
hollandhospital.org/hudsonville



The New Destination Center for Orthopedic Care

Holland Hospital and Shoreline Orthopaedics announced the opening of the Orthopedic Center & Surgery Center at Westpark. Located in Zeeland, the center raises the bar for outstanding orthopedic care in West Michigan.

The expansive center offers a full range of services including expert orthopedic care, orthopedic urgent care, outpatient orthopedic surgery, physical therapy and return to work and sports rehabilitation. This means that patients can receive care for a variety of orthopedic conditions, all in one convenient location, making it easier to get the treatment where and when needed.

"This joint venture is a significant step forward in enhancing access to exceptional orthopedic care for West Michigan residents," Patti VanDort, Holland Hospital CEO, said. "The collaboration leverages the strengths of both organizations and builds on the legacy of service and clinical excellence, leading to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction."

The Orthopedic Center & Surgery Center at Westpark is designed to meet this increasing need by offering a one-stop shop approach to ensure that patients can receive expert orthopedic and musculoskeletal care, tailored to their specific needs, in one convenient and accessible location.

The 40,000-square-foot Orthopedic Center & Surgery Center at Westpark includes:

- 15,000-square-foot Shoreline Orthopaedics clinic and orthopedic urgent care, their third location in the region.
- 5,000-square-foot outpatient physical therapy and return-to-sport or work rehabilitation services provided by Holland Hospital's Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation team with indoor turf and sports court areas.
- 19,000-square-foot Surgery Center at Westpark with two operating rooms, two procedure rooms, 16 post-anesthesia and recovery stations and equipped with Mako SmartRobotics™ technology.

Orthopedic Center & Surgery Center at Westpark

8251 Westpark Way, Zeeland MI 49464
hollandhospital.org/orthocenter



Scorecards: A Simple Tool for Big Impact

By **Britt Delo** | Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

As we step into the new year, many of us are thinking about ways to enhance focus and drive improvement in our organizations. A scorecard can be a powerful tool to accomplish this. For those who feel a bit of apprehension and want to turn this page at the thought of a scorecard, please hear me out. I wasn't always a super fan, but implementing a scorecard has been a game changer for me and my organization. Here are some insights and tips that have helped us along our scorecard journey. As we look to achieve our goals for the new year, these may help stay on course.

It's Alive!

A scorecard is a living and breathing document, so it's a work in progress and there is always room to dive deeper and make adjustments. The best way to get started is to

think of a scorecard as the key data points that you would want and need to know about your organization if you were stranded on a remote island. Let's pretend you're on vacation though, and not stuck forever. Regardless, what are those critical pieces of information that would let you know whether your organization is staying afloat or veering off in the wrong direction? Some key metrics may always be relevant such as revenue numbers and client retention percentages, but other numbers may adjust over time. For example, we've tracked a number of different marketing stats from email open rates, to click rates to website traffic, and not always all of them at the same time. The point is, it's only worth tracking the data if it drives a behavior. Don't be afraid to drop a number that no longer provides value and add data points that will drive meaningful action.

Red or Green, No In Between

Yellow does not exist on a scorecard. You're either on track (green) or you're off track (red). It sounds harsh, but this is the rule. Let's say your retention goal on the scorecard was set at 90% and your team hits 89.99%. That's a great accomplishment, but it's still red. The red/green concept holds us accountable and pushes us to strive for excellence. Staying true to this concept also provides leading indicators when we start seeing trends in either color. Multiple red blocks on the same goal means it's time to discuss an action plan. What can the team do to help? Is there a shift happening in the market? Are we lagging in our service? Do our prices need to be adjusted? Red means we need to take a deeper dive and evaluate potential causes and implement a solution to get back on track. Lines that hit green for 90 days or more may indicate the goal needs to be set more aggressively, or maybe that number is no longer relevant to track. The red and green standard will drive positive results and help your team avoid potential issues before it's too late.

If Everyone is Accountable, No One is Accountable

It's alright if multiple people contribute to the goal, often that may be the case, but ultimately, only one person can be accountable for that goal. That person is responsible for ensuring the goal is accomplished on a week to week basis. Either they will be the one either getting the job done or they will lead the team to accomplish the determined goal. It's that simple. Pick one person per datapoint and you'll save yourself and your team a whole lot of hassle while giving the gift of ownership and clarity.

Dig Deeper

A few years ago, I launched a departmental scorecard. The intent of this scorecard was to measure the actions being taken that would ultimately drive the higher level



goals that were being tracked on the corporate scorecard. It started as a simple document with only a few data points, but as my team has grown and evolved, so has our scorecard. It has become an incredible driver of accountability and intentionality in our processes. It creates clarity for our department and allows us to trouble shoot before there is a potential impact on the entire organization. Whether you are a one person department, like I was when I first began, or you have a large team, consider the benefits of digging deeper and launching a departmental scorecard to drive data with even more data. Who's having fun? I know I am!

There's no better time to lean into the continuous improvement that a scorecard offers. These insights have guided our organization, but the journey doesn't end here—it's always evolving. As a curious learner, I'm excited to hear any tips, tricks, or recent wins from others on a similar path. Let's keep this momentum going and make this a year of growth and accountability, fueled by the data that matters most. Here's to another year of data-driven success—happy data diving!

For the last seven years, Britt has proudly led the Chamber's membership team, working to engage, connect, and grow the business community in the Holland/Zeeland area. Just recently, she began a new role in strategic initiatives, which she is incredibly excited about. The new role will be shaping the Chamber's role in workforce development and education initiatives, in addition to facilitating the Chamber's West Coast Leadership program.

Britt was an Ambassador with the West Coast Chamber for several years prior to joining the team. Her background is in business development, customer service, and retail management. She is passionate about her role at the Chamber and serving her community — this is exactly what she was meant to do. When she's not at work, you'll find her spending time with her three-year-old son Lake, one-year-old son Haze, husband Josh, her dogs Banjo and Goose, and her cat Bella.



Driesenga & Associates: Celebrating 30 Years of Innovation and Service

By James Henning | President, Driesenga & Associates, Inc.

Driesenga & Associates, Inc. is a full-service professional engineering company offering Civil Engineering, Land Surveying, Geotechnical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and Construction Materials Testing & Inspection services. Dan Driesenga founded the company in 1995 with a handful of employees operating out of incubator space in the former Chris Craft building on Aniline Road. At that time, the company focused primarily on providing Geotechnical Engineering, Materials Testing, and Environmental Engineering to the West Michigan area. After the first couple of successful years, our client base began asking us for referrals for additional services. That led to the purchase of Joiner Engineering in Spring Lake in 1997 and Sandell, Chappell Associates in Whitehall/Grand Haven in 2000 which allowed us to also provide Civil Engineering and Surveying services.

As we continued to grow along the Lakeshore, we started picking up work further east and began opening new offices to accommodate our workload — Grand Rapids in 1998, Kalamazoo in 2001, Cadillac in 2003, and a small field services office in Detroit in 2004. We were riding the wave of the residential boom in the early 2000's and a large portion of our design work was focused on large residential subdivisions for local and out-of-state homebuilders. We decided to move out of state where the markets were expanding, opening a new office in Indianapolis in 2005, and a couple offices in North Carolina (Charlotte and Raleigh) in 2007. Everything was going very well and the future looked bright until the housing market crashed very rapidly in 2008. Our residential builder clients instructed us to stop working on all of their projects, our workload in the other market segments reduce significantly due to the poor economy, and we had to make tough decisions to keep the company operating. We quickly closed our North Carolina and Indiana offices and were forced to reduce our workforce while focusing on serving our core clients in Michigan to help get us through the next few years of the recession. After rolling up our sleeves and suffering for a



few years, we started to get back on track around 2010/2011. We were able to begin a slow growth trajectory and got our feet back on solid ground, expanding the business once again within Michigan.

After nearly 25 years of the ups and downs, Dan Driesenga made the decision to retire in 2019 and passed the reigns to Jim Henning, who is the current President. Jim was one of the founding members and has been with the company since 1995.

As we get close to celebrating 30 years in business, we have grown to our current staff of nearly 100 professionals and field staff providing services throughout Michigan from five offices (Holland, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, and Ypsilanti). We attribute our success to a common trait of our employees to "super serve" our clients and to be an asset to the communities where we work. We have a talented team of dedicated employees that are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure a project is completed to the satisfaction of everybody involved.

Upcoming Programs



To **register**, visit our website or scan the QR code on this page.

January 9, 2025

Leading Edge Workshop: Become A Productivity Ninja

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

Start your day with a deep dive into Microsoft Copilot, a revolutionary AI tool designed to save time and money and transform your work. Featuring guest speakers from InsITe Business Solutions, this workshop will help you learn the tools you need to boost your productivity.

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

January 14, 2025

Economic Forecast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Engedi Church

Join us as economist Dr. Paul Isely of Grand Valley State University shares the economic forecast for our local and state economy. This forecast will be crucial in helping your business make important decisions in the new year.

Program Sponsor: [Huntington National Bank](#)

January 23, 2025

Power Lunch

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Macatawa Golf Club

Get ready to build connections and expand your network at Power Lunch. Enjoy four rounds of structured networking and the chance to win door prizes after enjoying a delicious meal. Grab your business cards and make new connections.

Program Sponsor: [Hungerford CPAs + Advisors](#)

Display Tables Available

February 5, 2025

Leading Edge Workshop: Boost Your Brand – Social Media for Small Businesses

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

Join us for a workshop designed to help small business owners enhance their social media presence. Presented by Yellow Lime Creative and the Chamber, this session will cover content calendar creation, caption writing, engaging with your online community, and when to use paid ads. Whether you're new to social media or refining your strategy, you'll gain practical tips to boost your brand visibility and connect with your audience.

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

February 7, 2025

Advocacy in Action

7:45 AM – 9:00 AM

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

At this Advocacy in Action program, Kevin Courtois, Executive Director of Congressional and Public Affairs at the

U.S. Chamber, will be sharing updates on tax policies, tariffs, and other issues that impact our business community.

Program Sponsor: [Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan](#)

February 11, 2025

Wake Up West Coast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Haworth Hotel

Join us for Wake Up West Coast with Abbey Johnston, Executive Coach and Partner at AG Collaborative. Abbey will share a fresh perspective on leadership and equip attendees with practical strategies to create immediate positive impact both at work and at home.

Program Sponsor: [Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge](#)

February 18, 2025

Social Hour with the Chamber

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Sperry's Moviehouse

At the Chamber, we're all about making connections and building relationships. This month, we are proud to partner with Sperry Moviehouse for a Social Hour hosted in their second-floor bar area. Join us to build connections, both old and new. Bring a friend or two and add some fun to your day.

Program Sponsor: [RedWater Group](#)

February 26, 2025

Employment Law Update With Miller Johnson

8:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Haworth Hotel

The 2024 state and federal legislative sessions, and agency action, brought a substantial number of changes to employment laws in Michigan. As you and your organization enter 2025, join the West Coast Chamber and Lakeshore Human Resource Management Association for this annual program featuring employment law updates from attorneys at Miller Johnson. These interactive Q&A presentations will highlight the biggest developments and provide participants guidance on how to reduce or avoid their risk.

Program Sponsor: [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan](#)

February 27, 2025

Lakeshore Women Connect

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Haworth Corporate

At Lakeshore Women Connect, we welcome new women to our business community and celebrate those who have taken new leadership roles. Attendees will enjoy networking with other women over some light appetizers and drinks, followed by a short program celebrating the honorees! Come expand your professional network and enjoy an evening connecting with women at all stages of their careers.

Sponsorship Opportunities Available



Pine Rest cut the ribbon on their new location in Zeeland, ready to serve patients in our community.



The West Coast Leadership class toured businesses like Mission Design & Automation during Innovation Day.



Old and new connections were made at Women Inspiring Women.



Midwest Construction celebrated their new offices in the old Zeeland Record building with a lively ribbon cutting ceremony.



To celebrate the launch of their new Patient Assistance Fund, Psychological Insights held a ribbon cutting and open house.



Members make new connections at the Bam Cave during Social Hour with the Chamber.



Members of the Exponential Health team at a ribbon cutting for their new office in Holland.



Topsie VandenBosch poses with Jodi Owczarski at November's Wake Up West Coast program with embracing your unique leadership journey.



The Ambassador team gathered at Boatwerks for a fun and lively holiday party.



LVZ Financial Planning unveiled their newly refreshed space in downtown Holland with a joyful ribbon cutting ceremony.



Jodi Owczarski, Chamber president, poses with Congressman Bill Huizenga at Breakfast with our Congressman.



PowerStrength Training Systems commemorated the opening of their newest location in Holland with a ribbon cutting.

Renewing Members

It's All About YOU

The West Coast Chamber's **Why** boils down to this: It's All About You. Being a partner for you, a resource for you, and an ally for you. When you renew your Chamber membership, it tells us that we are being responsive to your needs and providing value, and that you trust us to be here for your business whenever you need us. Your renewal is the ultimate source of feedback on the positive impact the West Coast Chamber has on fostering strong businesses that support a thriving community. Thank you!

We appreciate our members who recently renewed their memberships:

* Indicates years of membership

Above the Top Roofing
 Advantage Benefits Group
 American Dunes Golf Club
 ARIA Leadership Coaching & Consulting, LLC – 5*
 Avancer Executive Search
 Biggby Coffee Zeeland – 5*
 Bosgraaf Homes
 Broadview Product Development Corp.
 Central Park Law
 Coppercraft Distillery
 Crane's Pie Pantry Restaurant and Winery – 5*
 Cran-Hill Ranch
 Crown Motors Toyota/Volkswagen
 DSA International – 20*
 Eastbrook Homes
 Eckhoff & DeVries Painting
 Elwood Staffing
 Flash Bridge Co., Inc. – 30*
 GDK Construction
 Gordeaux Consulting
 Hamilton Community Schools

Hampton Inn of Holland
 Health Alliance Plan (HAP)
 Holland Aquatic Center
 Holland Screen Print
 Holland Symphony Orchestra
 Holland Terminal, Inc.
 Hollandia Outdoors
 Hops at 84 East
 INONTIME
 ITC Incorporated
 Jaqua Realtors
 Jubilee Ministries
 Kamer Agency Insurance Solutions
 Lakeshore Family Chiropractic, PLC
 Lakeshore Memorial Services, Inc.
 Lakeshore Property Management, Inc. – 30*
 Love's Travel Stops
 Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
 Macatawa Technologies
 Midwest Construction Group, Inc./ Geerlings Development Company
 Mosaic Counseling



National Bulk Equipment
 Nephew Physical Therapy
 New Holland Blueberries Corp.
 Nuvar Inc.
 Ottawa Animal Hospital
 Paradise Bound Thrift Shoppe
 Parkview AFC
 Pine Creek Construction
 Prein & Newhof
 Shoreline Container
 Shoreline Orthopaedics/Sports Medicine Clinic, PLC
 Sperry's Moviehouse – 5*

Springhill Suites Holland
 The House Next Door
 The Village at Appledorn
 Tulyp Hotel (formerly CityFlatsHotel)
 Two Men and a Truck/Lakeshore, Inc.
 University of Michigan Health-West – 5*
 VanDenBerge Pest Control
 VentureSource Solutions
 Watershed Strategies
 WB Pallets
 Wightman
 Zeeland Christian School

New Members

Welcoming these new members who recently joined the West Coast Chamber

**American Medical Response
 Alexandria Truman**
 (616) 459-8197
www.amr.net

**Benjamin F. Edwards
 Christopher Hebel**
 (616) 974-3000
www.benjaminfedwards.com
chris.hebel@benjaminfedwards.com

**Emerson Lounge
 Candice Grant**
 (616) 283-3308
www.emersonlounge.com
info@emersonlounge.com

**Fellinlove Farm
 Cheryl Kaletka**
 (616) 283-7555
www.fellinlovefarm.com
fellinlovefarm@gmail.com

**Leaves Personal Care
 Brian Wilson**
 (616) 575-8519
www.leavespersonalcare.com
brian@leavespersonalcare.com

**Moms Bloom
 Kimber Wager**
 (616) 828-1021
www.momsbloom.org
info@momsbloom.org

**Net Prophets Technology, LLC
 Grant Koops**
www.nptsolution.com
gkoops@nptsolution.com

**Ottagan Plumbing
 Morgan Langejans**
 (616) 392-6053
www.ottagan-plumbing.com/
morgan@ottagan-plumbing.com

**PowerStrength Training Systems
 Aubreigh Alberts**
 (616) 805-4054
www.powerstrengthpro.com
info@powerstrengthpro.com

**Randstad
 Rob Budreau**
 (616) 306-0991
www.randstadusa.com
rob.budreau@randstadusa.com

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WE ARE the West Coast Chamber: Sharing Your Stories

By Emmy Riemersma | Membership & Marketing Coordinator, West Coast Chamber

At the 2024 Annual Awards Celebration, the Chamber proudly launched the WE ARE campaign to celebrate and amplify the incredible stories of our members and the impact they make on our community. Each member of our community plays a unique and vital role in shaping the fabric of our shared success. Whether you're leading a large organization, running a small business, or contributing as a nonprofit, your story matters. The WE ARE campaign shines a spotlight on those stories, inspiring others to join in building a stronger community together.

As part of this campaign, we are honored to spotlight three community leaders who exemplify the values and impact that make West Michigan extraordinary. Through their stories, we celebrate their dedication, innovation, and contributions that inspire and uplift our community.

This campaign is about more than recognition — it's about fostering collaboration, connection, and pride. Together, WE ARE the West Coast Chamber.



Chad Mesbergen
Director of Operations and Events, Tulip Time

Why is your organization a Chamber member?

Tulip Time's membership with the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce is a reflection of its commitment to connecting with the Holland community and its local businesses. The Chamber provides invaluable resources that support the festival's growth and success, including networking opportunities, marketing platforms, and educational events designed to strengthen businesses and community initiatives alike. As a member, Tulip Time gains

access to a vibrant network of local leaders, collaborative forums, and promotional support, all of which help expand the festival's reach and enhance its economic impact in the region. This membership is not just a business decision; it's a dedication to thriving together with the Holland community.

What impact have you seen the Chamber make on your organization and the community?

Through targeted initiatives like Community Impact Day or West Coast Connect, the Chamber makes it easy for businesses to get involved with non-profits like Tulip Time in meaningful ways, from financial support to employee volunteerism. By connecting businesses with local non-profits, the Chamber not only enhances each organization's impact but also builds a stronger, more resilient community where businesses and non-profits alike can thrive.

Finish this sentence: "WE ARE..."

A collective voice for positive change.



Patti VanDort, CEO
Holland Hospital

Why is your organization a Chamber member?

We believe the Chamber has long served as a convener for all businesses, big and small in our community, and we want and need to be a part of that. The Chamber has their finger on the pulse of what is happening in our community and where there is opportunity to make a positive impact.

What impact have you seen the Chamber make on your organization and the community?

In the broader community, I would first say that one of the many strengths of the Chamber is that they are proactive versus reactive, constantly thinking ahead about how to best help our communities thrive. The biggest impact I've seen to

date is the Community Impact Day; what an amazing event that supports so many businesses in our region. As for the future, I'm so excited about the Reimagining Education initiative which I believe will support my organization as well as the community at-large.

Finish this sentence: "WE ARE..."

Making an impact.



Rebecca Dernberger
President, Avancer Search

Why is your organization a Chamber member?

When starting Avancer Executive Search in late 2017, one of our first phone calls was to the Chamber to become a member. Joining the Chamber is one of the best decisions a business can make. The resources, connections, exposure, and community involvement are just a few of the reasons why a Chamber membership is a solid investment.

What impact have you seen the Chamber make on your organization and the community?

The Chamber is here to be a resource for West Michigan businesses — no matter where that business might be in their business lifecycle. The solutions, impact, and value are highly personalized to the needs of the business.

For our small business, I have experienced impact by attending events, connections, learning, and being exposed to the wider West Michigan community.

Finish this sentence: "WE ARE..."

Here for our local business community to help them be the best they can be.





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