



## *Awards Ceremony*

*Join us in our third annual Workforce Development Awards Celebration as we recognize outstanding collaboration in our five-county region!*

*Friday, October the Eighteenth,  
Two-thousand and Nineteen*

# Program

## Refreshments

Upon arrival, please help yourself to light refreshments

## Welcome

**Marcus James**

Chairperson, Michigan Works! Southeast Workforce Development Board

## Presentation of Awards

## Closing Ceremony

**Marcus James**

**Help us celebrate success! Please include these handles in your social media posts:**

@michiganworkssoutheast (Facebook)

@MichWorksSE (Twitter)

#MWSEAwards

*We would like to thank our Legislators for their continuous support!*

# Program

## Award Categories

### **Hall of Fame | Class of 2019**

*Honors individuals for outstanding success and achievement in workforce development programs. Nominees for this award have the determination and persistence that is necessary to overcome obstacles to reach their goals in Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston and/or Washtenaw Counties*

### **Ace of Innovation**

*Recognizes innovative programs and services which have yielded superior results and which significantly improve the workforce development system in Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston and/or Washtenaw Counties.*

### **Leadership Award**

*Celebrates an individual whose extensive work history and leadership in the Workforce/Economic Development system has demonstrated excellence and commitment in the design, deliver, and/or administration of workforce and/or economic development programs in Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston and/or Washtenaw Counties.*

### **Platinum Service Award**

*Distinguishes an individual, corporation, or agency that has demonstrated outstanding commitment and service to their county's workforce and economic development system through voluntary contributions of time, talent or resources in Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston and/or Washtenaw Counties.*

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

Hall of Fame | Class of 2019

## **Andrae Wasson**

Andrae Wasson was involved in a serious car accident that affected him physically and cognitively, rendering him unable to work for years and having to rely on friends and family for support. Andrae was determined to not let this stop him and worked tirelessly to the goal of becoming a truck driver.

His hard work paid off, and he passed his Department of Transportation physical exam. However, he lacked the financial means to move forward with his goal of becoming a truck driver. Michigan Works! Southeast was able to provide him with the financial assistance needed to complete his training.

Andrae completed his training and soon found employment with Watkins Oil Company. An On-the-Job (OJT) training contract was established to assist with getting the training he needed to make it a successful transition to employment. He has worked there almost a year and is now making double his starting wage.

**Greg Eppel, Operations Manager of Watkins Oil Company stated, "Andrae is a great guy and excellent to work with. He is reliable, flexible and a real team player who does what needs to be done to get the job done with a great attitude."**

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## Ace of Innovation

### **Judge Sara Lisznyai**

The definition of "insanity" is doing the same thing and expecting a different result; all too often people suffering from drug addiction are incarcerated and return to their destructive lifestyle after release. Judge Sara Lisznyai breaks this cycle with an innovative approach to the issue of substance abuse.

Working closely with the Drug Treatment Court (DTC), individuals who struggle with addiction are addressed on a more personal level: attempting to find the root of their dependency. The participants are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service, which creates valuable networking opportunities while they give back to their community. As of today, 14 individuals have graduated with only 1 has recidivated: a 92% success rate!

***"Judge Lisznyai and the DTC have made a very impactful, positive change on the participants in the DTC program/Hillsdale community. As a member of the team, I attend weekly meetings where I get the pleasure to see and hear the change in the participants' lives and how thankful they are to be on a path to change. I have heard on more than one occasion a participant say, "Going to jail would have been easier, but I wouldn't have changed my ways, and this program has changed my thinking and my choices." - Kristyn Nicholson, Career Advisor at Michigan Works! Southeast***

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Hall of Fame | Class of 2019

## **Michelle Martin**

Michelle had hopes of entering the medical field, but chronic unemployment, lack of appropriate work clothing, and limited work history made this difficult for her. Despite this, she maintained a bright outlook and worked with Michigan Works! Southeast to find training. Michelle was eventually approved for training at Premier Medical Academy but had to wait before she could start.

In the meantime, Michigan Works! Southeast helped her find a work experience activity with St. Vincent de Paul. Jodi Kirkland, the Volunteer Coordinator at St. Vincent de Paul, spoke highly of her, saying “[Michelle's] bubbly personality, and willingness to help out wherever needed, even coming in extra hours just because she naturally enjoyed giving back to her community.”

Michelle later completed training at Premier Medical Academy and was offered an opportunity to intern with her instructor, graduating at the top of her class as Salutatorian. She stated that she feels like a new person and is eager to soak up even more information.

**“I thank you for all of your kindness, support, and resources while I was finding my way back on my feet. You treated me with dignity from day one, and you had faith in me and built me up when I had no clue where to begin doing that for myself! I will never forget that!” - Michelle Martin**

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## Ace of Innovation

### **Northwest Alternative High School**

Northwest Alternative High School in Jackson has developed a close partnership with Michigan Works! Southeast to provide in-school career readiness instruction and on-site adult education programming. During the 2018-2019 school year, Northwest hosted Michigan Works! Southeast staff who provided employability skills and portfolio preparation activities to their students on a monthly basis. Additionally, Northwest provided the space and technology to become a satellite site for Michigan Works! Southeast's Adult Education services.

In 2018, prior to this relationship, only one senior who graduated from Northwest Alternative found a full-time job. One year later, over 40% of seniors had found gainful employment after graduating! Furthermore, one quarter of 2019 graduates from the Michigan Works! Southeast Adult Education program were referred by or attended class at Northwest Alternative High School.

The staff at Northwest Alternative demonstrated their commitment to the betterment of the community and the improvement of our workforce through their continued willingness to work together and seek solutions for every individual. Principal James Upright and his staff at the Alternative School have been generous, accommodating, and flexible with working with both Michigan Works! and Adult Education staff.

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## Platinum Service Award

### **Technique**

Technique participates in just about every opportunity to develop our local workforce! They have volunteered their time with Michigan Works! Southeast to facilitate mock interviews for graduating seniors and have donated thousands of dollars to Northwest Schools for machinery, computers and program development for their Advanced Manufacturing program. In 2017, they started the only high-tech learning academy in Jackson: TechniqueU, which is an Advanced Learning Academy. This program houses a state-of-the-art learning lab and provides competency-based learning for students in the summer months. They are also the number one employer of the Jackson Career Center and have sponsored the most students in the JAC3 program. Most recently, Technique has partnered with Baker College in Jackson offering dual enrollment opportunities to youth.

Currently, Technique has 13 apprentices working toward Journeyman credentials, and 144 employees with a fantastically low turnover rate of 2.5%! This is due to their commitment to fostering personal growth, high wages, and excellent work-life balance for their employees.

***“[Laura Wright’s] work at Technique as their HR Manager is top notch! She strives every day to make sure their culture is one of training and development, providing opportunity for employees to master their trade. [Laura] only wants the best for her organization...She works around the clock to put workforce programs in place to ensure Technique and it’s employee’s future is secure, stable and bright.” - Alex Masten***

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## **Tyler Hill**

Tyler Hill was laid off from his job in May of 2018 and was ineligible to receive Unemployment. He knew he wanted a career in the growing field of Wind Turbine Technician work but was unable to afford the necessary training.

With the help of Michigan Works! Southeast, Tyler discovered the Michigan Institute of Aviation & Technology, a Canton-based program that excels in Wind Turbine Mechanics. Receiving financial assistance from Michigan Works! Southeast, Tyler enrolled in the program and excelled despite an 88-mile commute and a night job.

Tyler completed his training in 8 months with a high GPA and landed a better paying job within 45 days. He is now making \$10/hour more than his previous job and travels the country with his dog.

***"Michigan Works has changed my life. Without the opportunities that Michigan Works gave me, I wouldn't be where I am. I am SO thankful for my amazing Career Advisor, as she helped me every step of the way. I am very grateful for the opportunity to obtain the education and couldn't be happier with my job placement." - Tyler Hill***

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## **Allen Napier**

Allen had a complicated upbringing, which caused him to encounter some major barriers along his road to success. He was working towards his Associates degree when he was referred to Michigan Works! by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS).

Michigan Works! Southeast and MRS assisted Allen with transportation, acquiring books and supplies, and a few other services to help him continue his education. Eventually he completed his degree on his own and received a promotion at work as a result. Michigan Works! Southeast assisted Allen with two summer classes at Jackson College, which allowed him to earn his bachelor's degree from Siena Heights University through the Hybrid Business Program.

Allen recently accepted a job with Aramark at the University of Toledo as a Food Service & Retail Manager, doubling his income from his previous job. He never gave up on his goals, even when the odds were stacked against him, and worked tirelessly to ensure his past didn't dictate his future.

**Michigan Works! has been a very awesome resource for me. I speak very highly of the organization to anybody in the community that will listen, and I am very thankful for the services I was able to take advantage of. My Career advisor worked tirelessly to ensure my success, and I am forever thankful for all of the extra time she spent making sure I got to where I am. – Allen Napier**

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## **Alexis Regalado**

A single mother of two, Alexis Regalado struggled to provide her children a suitable and healthy environment on her own, as her part-time job wasn't enough to cover their needs. Alexis knew she wanted to work in the medical field, but lacked the means to cover training, mileage, clothing, or supplies.

With the help of Michigan Works! Southeast, Alexis was enrolled in the Clinical Medical Assistance Program at Premier Medical Academy and successfully completed training in Phlebotomy, EKG, and Acute Care. In April of 2019, she started a work-based training with Adrian Urgent Care and was hired permanently after 8 weeks as a Medical Assistant.

**“Having an option like the Paid Work Experience through Michigan Works! Southeast allowed our company to take hiring to a different level. They brought a candidate to me and made placement so simple. It gave our company the ability to maintain payroll all while the candidate was working and training; we weren't locked into hiring unless we felt it was the right fit. I would utilize this program again and again!”-  
Elle Smith, Office Manager, Adrian Urgent Care.**

**“Thank you so much for showing me this opportunity, you've definitely changed the kids and my life”- Alexis Regalado.**

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## Platinum Service Award

### **Wacker Chemical**

A global leader in the chemical industry and a generous partner within the Lenawee community; Wacker Chemical recognizes that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education and job opportunities.

Wacker has been a steadfast advocate for STEM Education. Every year they open their facility for Manufacturing Day where local students gain an immersive look at the skilled trades. They have sponsored 15 robotics teams in Lenawee County and donated equipment to the Center for Science & Industry in Hudson, ensuring students graduate with high demand skills.

Wacker invests just as heavily into their current workforce: evidenced by an impressively low employee turnover rate under 5%! In 2018, they were awarded the Going PRO Talent Fund grant which allowed them to upskill over 150 employees and create countless new jobs.

***“Wacker has had great influence in the workforce/economic development realm, bringing extensive cultural and global experience to Lenawee. They show up when collaborative initiatives arise, and they commit their resources to supporting those initiatives!” – KK Slusher, Business Services Coordinator, Michigan Works! Southeast***

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## Leadership Award

### **Doug Straub**

When asked to describe Doug Straub in one word, our youth said, "BIG Hearted," "Role Model," "Caring," and "Cool Guy." It's easy to see why with his dedication to community and ability to connect with young people!

As Construction Manager for Habitat for Humanity, Doug has collaborated with Michigan Works! Southeast and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) to provide youth an opportunity to explore the construction field through paid work experiences. In addition to real world experience, community service has been a huge factor for United Way and Habitat for Humanity: granting youth an opportunity to give back to their community in the annual Rock the Block event.

**"We greatly appreciate Doug Straub and his support these past years in promoting youth volunteer service with our DAY of ACTION in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity's ROCK the BLOCK program. Youth need a great role model to demonstrate the importance of making the community a better place--together. Doug is that great role model!" - Laura Pipsis, United Way, Lenawee & Monroe**

Doug has consistently impacted the lives of our youth: providing them a steppingstone to a career in construction.

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## Leadership Award

### Joe Yuhas

Joe Yuhas is a Rehabilitation Counselor with Michigan Rehabilitation Service (MRS) where he serves transition students along with a caseload of 120 participants. Joe goes the extra mile for his customers, making sure they have the support they need to be successful. He excels at collaborating with colleagues and other agencies to ensure his participants meet their career goals.

Joe is constantly working with the Career Advisors at Michigan Works! Southeast, referring his participants to their workforce development programs.

**“He is a wonderful advocate and partner for Michigan Works! His dedication to the education, training and placement of his clients is evident every time he brings a customer to Michigan Works! and introduces them to not only a Career Advisor, but also ensures they get an overview of all of our services each and every time.” – Ashley Vandebusch, Career Advisor at Michigan Works! Southeast**

**“Joe is well liked by his co-workers and his clients. He is easy going, funny and ALWAYS willing to give a lending hand. when you meet Joe, you meet someone that is going to help you meet your goals.”  
- Irene Garcia**

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Hall of Fame | Class 2019

## **Heather Englisch**

Heather Englisch's story is marked with hardship, tragedy, and perseverance. Juggling two jobs while pursuing her CNA certification, Heather endured a period of homelessness, 12 family deaths, a car accident, and a back injury while taking in a daughter and grandson.

This didn't stop Heather, however, as she continued to persevere, utilizing resources through several Livingston County community agencies and Michigan Works! Southeast. Eventually she received her certification and landed a CNA position, only to lose it later. Not about to let this setback end her dream, she continued to work hard and landed a new job with the award-winning team at Wellbridge of Brighton.

Heather was recognized for her empathetic and compassionate care by Wellbridge and became a mentor for new CNA hires. She recently started a new position as a Medical Assistant at the University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Infusion Center in Ann Arbor.

***"Heather's strength in the face of adversity is inspiring. Anytime she chose to share with me the difficulties she was experiencing, she always made it clear that she would triumph and that she has certainly done." - Ed Baldwin, Michigan Works! Southeast***

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Hall of Fame | Class of 2019

## **Kim Genella**

Kim Genella has such a warm smile and upbeat personality it's difficult to imagine she could have a background with multiple felonies. Even though her convictions were from years ago, Kim struggled with finding employment. She had even received several good job offers that were rescinded after the background check.

Kim attended workshops and career advising sessions at Michigan Works! Southeast and eagerly applied what she learned: networking with the community and volunteering with Livingston County Community Alliance, a local agency working to prevent youth substance abuse. Soon, Kim was hired as a part time Program Assistant at the Home of New Vision Engagement Center. Her dedication and hard work was recognized and she was offered a full-time position as a House Manager/Client Care Navigator.

***"We at Home of New Vision are very happy to have Kim as part of our team. She is a very dedicated, passionate and effective Recovery Coach for our clients. Her personal story and success is an inspiration for the people we serve, and gives them hope that they also can live a life of recovery. It is not just the clients that are inspired by Kim, her enthusiasm is infectious and it has made our team stronger." - Glynis Anderson, Founder and CEO of Home of New Vision in Ann Arbor***

Kim has truly turned her life around and is helping others who struggle with the same difficulties she experienced.

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## **Safi M'Munga**

Safi M'Munga came to the United States from the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year with her four children, expecting a fifth. She faced many challenges since coming to the US as a refugee: she could not speak English and was illiterate in her own language, lacked formal education, and was totally unfamiliar with American culture and workplace norms. Safi nevertheless was determined to build a better life for herself and her children in the United States!

Showing unabating perseverance, positivity, and sense of humor; Safi worked tirelessly to overcome her barriers. With the help of Jewish Family Services (JFS) she took English classes and learned about the American Workplace. JFS also assisted with transportation and childcare. Safi soon found work as a janitor and her supervisors say she has a fantastic work ethic and positive attitude!

***"The staff at JFS are honored to work with Safi and inspired by her determination and commitment to making a new home for herself and her family here in Washtenaw County." - Shadin Atiyeh, Jewish Family Services***

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## Ace of Innovation

### **Workforce Pipeline Summit**

The mission of the Workforce Pipeline Summit held on March 18, 2019 at Washtenaw Community College is to strengthen our local workforce and community through alleviating the short- and long-term pipeline shortage. Summit organizers are committed to identifying, investing in, training, and shining a light on the available willing and hidden talent pool in our community: look local, build local, hire local.

Attendees of the summit joined other learners and leaders for a hands-on, productive day of discussion and planning for our preferred future as Michigan residents, employers, employees, and students. They started the day by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the workforce issues affecting our state with talks by leading voices in business, economic development, education, policy making, and social services. In the afternoon, attendees participated in rotating breakout discussions moderated by subject matter experts, and then closed out the day with group-generated, sustainable and actionable 2-, 5-, and 10-year Workforce Pipeline Strategic Plans that spelled out the vision and commitments for solving the workforce pipeline problem in our community.

More than 250 people participated in the event, including Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who provided a keynote address. The event was only possible through the heroic efforts of volunteers and the leadership of Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber, NewFoundry, Creative Chambers, and Washtenaw Community College and the support of our sponsors including Toyota, Michigan Works! Southeast, Destination Ann Arbor, UTEC, Grafaktri and many others.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony

**Our purpose is to create connections to a better future.**

**Our mission is to develop today's workforce and tomorrow's economy by engaging employers, job seekers and partners.**

**Our vision is a community which fosters and sustains a strong, diverse economy where people can live, work and prosper.**

## **Our Values Are:**

**Partnership:** We convene partners strategically to better meet their needs, leverage resources, and more efficiently deliver workforce services to the community.

**Responsiveness to Employer Needs:** We promote a demand-driven system that anticipates and responds to employer needs.

**Service with Respect:** We serve job seekers with integrity and dignity by delivering services with respect for cultural diversity, fairness, and differences of opinion.

**Education:** We value the importance of the education continuum of the K-12, postsecondary, and lifelong learning, leading to the development of a sustainable workforce.

**Innovative Leadership:** We foster innovation to maximize the economic impact of workforce funding and resources.

**Continuous Improvement and Accountability:** We evaluate services and programs based on the meeting or exceeding customer satisfaction, tracking performance to core metrics, and implementing continuous improvement processes to ensure a sound return-on-investment of taxpayer dollars.

Michigan Works! Southeast is part of a statewide network of organizations that contributes to the economic prosperity of our communities by developing a strong, talented workforce. The agency serves businesses and job seekers in the counties of Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston and Washtenaw.

Michigan Works! Southeast is governed by a Workforce Development Board, which is comprised of private sector and community representatives, and a Consortium Board of locally elected officials. We would like to thank our board members for their continued commitment to workforce development and demonstrating leadership, resulting in the success of our organization.

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## **Michigan Works! Southeast Workforce Development Board**

**Marcus James**, Chairperson, StableInc, LLC

**Richard Currie**, Vice-Chairperson, Hitachi Automotive Services

**Leslie Alexander**, Inmatech, Inc.

**Rose Bellanca**, Washtenaw Community College

**Mindy Bradish-Orta**, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce

**Rich Chang**, NewFoundry

**Sean Duval**, Golden Limousine International

**Jeremy Frew**, Jackson College

**Paul Ganz**, DTE Energy

**Donald Germann**, County National Bank

**Steven Girardin**, State of MI, MI Rehabilitation Services

**Lee Graham**, Operating Engineers 324

**Steven Gulick**, Huron Valley Area Labor Federation

**Jeremiah Hodshire**, Hillsdale Hospital

**Lynn Matzen**, Matrix Systems LLC

**Scott Menzel**, Washtenaw County ISD

**Sharon Miller**, Consumers Energy

**Kevin Oxley**, Jackson County ISD

**Shawn Planko**, Expedia, Inc.

**Deb Polich**, The Arts Alliance

**Bill Rayl**, Jackson Area Manufacturers Assoc.

**Phil Santer**, Ann Arbor SPARK

**Grace Trudell**, IBEW Local 58

**James Van Doren**, Lenawee Now

**Ambrose Wilbanks Jr.**, Washtenaw County Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Leann Wilt**, Venchurs, Inc.

# *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Michigan Works! Southeast Awards Ceremony*

## **Workforce Development Board Alternates**

**Jolene Chapman**, Jackson College

**Kurtis Condon**, Hillsdale Terminal

**Tim Jackson**, Washtenaw ISD

**John Salyer**, Ann Arbor Electrical JATC

**Michelle Mueller**, Washtenaw Community College

**Monique Vann**, McDonalds

**Marie Harrell**, MRS-MDHHS

**Gina Spadafora**, F&M Enterprises

## **Southeast Michigan Consortium Board**

**Karol KZ Bolton**, Chair, Lenawee County Commissioner

**Dennis Dolan**, Vice-Chair Livingston County Commissioner

**Chris Wittenbach**, Lenawee County Commissioner

**Darius Williams**, Jackson County Commissioner

**Daniel Mahoney**, Jackson County Commissioner

**Julie Games**, Hillsdale County Commissioner

**Ruth Brown**, Hillsdale County Commissioner

**Ruth Ann Jamnick**, Washtenaw County Commissioner

**Shannon Beeman**, Washtenaw County Commissioner

**William Green**, Livingston County Commissioner

## **Retired Board Members**

Jennifer Giannone, Derek Kirchner, Angela Parth, Phil Sponsler

*3rd Annual Michigan Works!  
Southeast Awards Ceremony*

Thank you to our Sponsors

**CNB**

**County National Bank**

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Club of Ann Arbor North  
Celebrating 50 Years of Service  
1967-2017



Trophies were designed and produced by members of Vocational Village





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(844) 200-3206  
TTY: 711  
   