

Transition Bulletin - Winter Issue

To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve...Through Communication

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MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CHALLENGE PROGRAM INNOVATIVE TRANSITION YOUTH PROGRAM IS RECOGNIZED AT THE MRS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

By Shelly Neal, Rehabilitation Counselor, Ann Arbor Office

At the Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Leadership Council on December 6, 2012 several achievements across the state were recognized including the Michigan High School Summer Challenge Program out of the Ann Arbor District Office. This program is a collaborative effort between MRS, Work Skills Corporation, Livingston Educational Services Agency, and Mott Community College and is in its seventh year and with the goal to assist students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) into postsecondary education and employment.

The number of students with ASD continues to increase dramatically in Michigan and around the country. At the same time, successful completion of postsecondary training and achievement of employment outcomes for this population is low. To address this issue, the Michigan High School Summer Challenge was developed using a multi-prong approach to assess the interests, aptitudes and abilities of Transition students with ASD to assist those students to select obtainable job goals and provide necessary supports for success in postsecondary training and employment. The program also provides students with ASD opportunities to explore postsecondary training and employment opportunities.

The program is divided into three parts. The first part allows students to take a technology course in a community college setting (Mott Community College). The course gives an overview of business curriculum including: Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint certification training. Students also take an Adobe Flash Animation course that is a pathway to certification and possible future employment. Students are also expected to engage in online forums, blogs and emailing to practice and develop written communication skills using different modalities.

The second component involves two three week work rotations at various sites. Employment skills, expectations, and behaviors are discussed and reinforced throughout the six weeks. Students receive minimum wage for their work that provides valuable work experience to include on student resumes.

The third component of the program is life coaching which focuses on disability awareness, disclosure and self-advocacy. Problem



solving is stressed as students with ASD often struggle with change and anxiety. This component of the program also emphasizes the use of calendars/planners, communication, and transportation which are all critical for future success in postsecondary training and employment.

In the seven years that the Michigan High School Summer Challenge Project has been in existence, 76 students have participated in the project. Outcome data is available on 67 of the students who are at various stages of the MRS rehabilitation process. Of the 67 students, 34% became employed. At the present time, 21% of the students that became employed have been closed successfully rehabilitated. Many of the students are still in high school and are preparing the transition out of high school in the near future.

Cannot locate in system	1	1%
Closed Other (Cannot locate or contact, moved or not interested in receiving services)	26	39%
Closed Rehab (Closed successfully after being employed for more than 90 days)	14	21%
Employed (Currently working but have not reached their 90 th day)	9	13%
School (Currently attending or heading to school in the fall)	11	16%
Eligible (Starting process with MRS)	4	6%
Service/Placement (Working with MRS to find employment)	6	9%
Data as of 7/11/12		

Given the challenges that students with ASD face when they strive to achieve success in postsecondary training and employment, the outcomes of the Michigan High School Summer Challenge Project are promising. Congratulations to the MRS Ann Arbor District Office!

MRS AND MTSA COLLABORATIVE PROJECT UPDATE: TWO WORK-BASED LEARNING PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN SELECTED

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and the Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) have worked together to create a funding source for two collaborative projects in Michigan to provide work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Funds were made possible by a donation from MTSA to MRS which was used to capture federal matching funds making \$64,815 available for the projects. This is the first time this particular funding stream has been available.



Seven projects were submitted for review and were evaluated on the following areas:

- Demographic information
- Background/Statement of Need
- Project Objectives
- Project Collaborative Activities
- Project Outcome Measures
- Project Creativity and Innovation
- Budget Plan

Two projects were rated the highest and will be awarded funds. The two top projects are:

- ◆ Hillsdale ISD/Ann Arbor MRS District Office
- ◆ Kent County ISD/Grand Rapids MRS District Office

Congratulations to the winners! Both projects will present their concept at the MTSA Conference in Frankenmuth on March 20 – 22, 2013. Stay tuned!

MORE DISCONNECTED YOUTH ARE JOBLESS, OUT OF SCHOOL: FEWER JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR TODAY'S TEENS, YOUNG ADULTS

The following article was written by the Michigan League for Public Policy, formerly the Michigan League for Human Services, and is a statewide, nonpartisan policy and advocacy group dedicated to achieving economic security for all in Michigan.

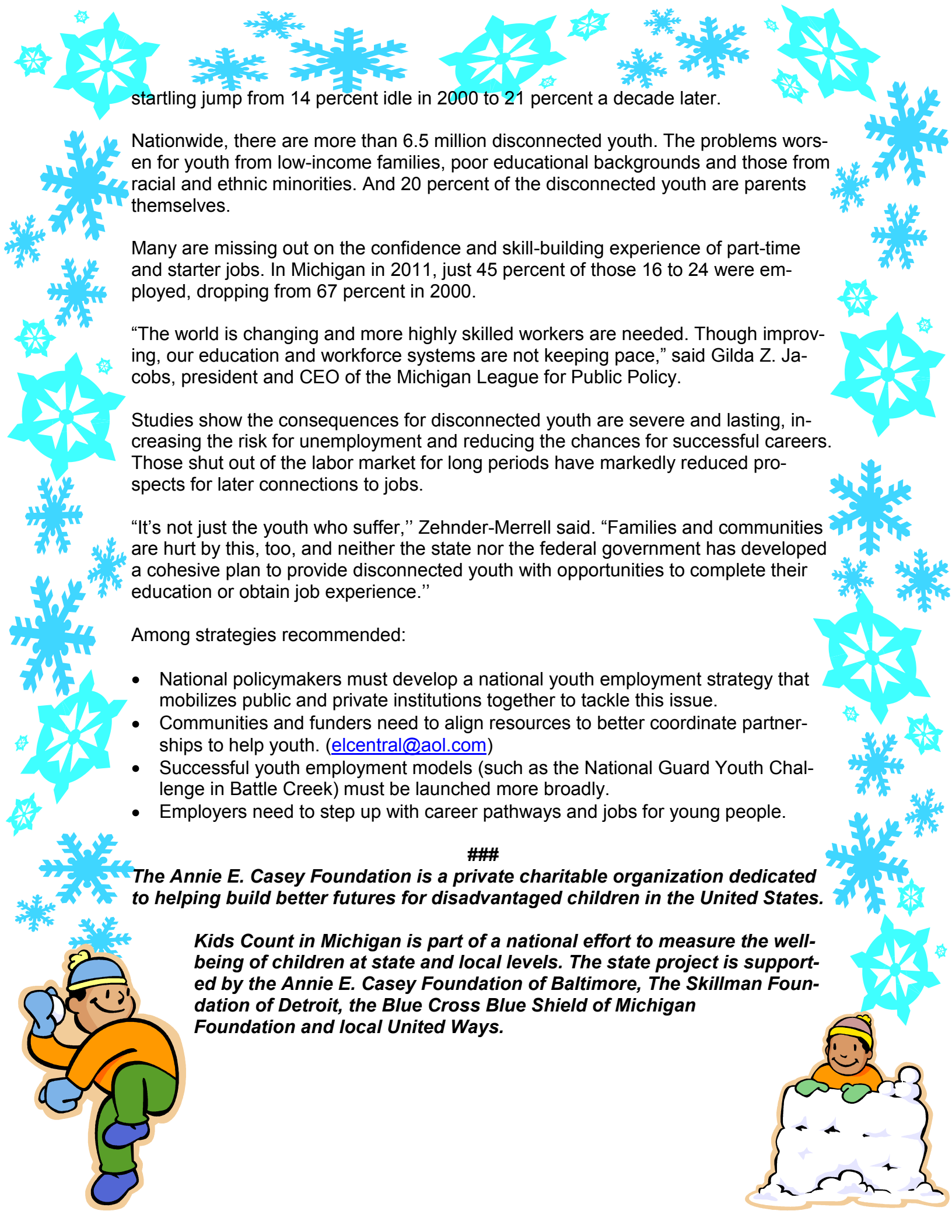
[LANSING, Mich.] – More than 220,000 teens and young adults in Michigan are not in school and jobless, stranding them without a path to a successful career, a new KIDS COUNT report concludes.

[*Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity*](#), released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, shows just how dramatic the impact of the economic decline has been for young people. One in five young adults in Michigan ages 20 to 24 were not working and not in school in 2011, and less than half of 16- to 24-year-olds held any kind of job.

“With fewer jobs in our state and so many experienced workers searching for jobs, the opportunities for youth are especially diminished,” said Jane Zehnder-Merrell, Kids Count in Michigan project director at the Michigan League for Public Policy. “The doors to a financially successful future are closed to many young people in our state.”

In 2000, 13 percent of Michigan teens and young adults (ages 16 to 24) were considered idle or disconnected, meaning they were jobless and not in school. By 2011, that had jumped to 17 percent -- representing 222,000 disconnected youth in Michigan. Nearly two-thirds of the disconnected youth were ages 20 to 24 with a





startling jump from 14 percent idle in 2000 to 21 percent a decade later.

Nationwide, there are more than 6.5 million disconnected youth. The problems worsen for youth from low-income families, poor educational backgrounds and those from racial and ethnic minorities. And 20 percent of the disconnected youth are parents themselves.

Many are missing out on the confidence and skill-building experience of part-time and starter jobs. In Michigan in 2011, just 45 percent of those 16 to 24 were employed, dropping from 67 percent in 2000.

“The world is changing and more highly skilled workers are needed. Though improving, our education and workforce systems are not keeping pace,” said Gilda Z. Jacobs, president and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy.

Studies show the consequences for disconnected youth are severe and lasting, increasing the risk for unemployment and reducing the chances for successful careers. Those shut out of the labor market for long periods have markedly reduced prospects for later connections to jobs.

“It’s not just the youth who suffer,” Zehnder-Merrell said. “Families and communities are hurt by this, too, and neither the state nor the federal government has developed a cohesive plan to provide disconnected youth with opportunities to complete their education or obtain job experience.”

Among strategies recommended:

- National policymakers must develop a national youth employment strategy that mobilizes public and private institutions together to tackle this issue.
- Communities and funders need to align resources to better coordinate partnerships to help youth. (elcentral@aol.com)
- Successful youth employment models (such as the National Guard Youth Challenge in Battle Creek) must be launched more broadly.
- Employers need to step up with career pathways and jobs for young people.

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States.

Kids Count in Michigan is part of a national effort to measure the well-being of children at state and local levels. The state project is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore, The Skillman Foundation of Detroit, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation and local United Ways.





NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, Nov 7, 2012

Contact: Justin Caine,
517-803-9464

BOOM AWARDS AIM TO BLOW UP STEREOTYPES ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CAN DO.

Nominations from across Michigan sought for people excelling as entrepreneurs, athletes or employees.

Traverse City, Mich. - Looking to foster greater recognition for the contributions of people with disabilities as entrepreneurs, athletes and employees, the BOOM Awards were unveiled today at the annual statewide conference of service providers for people with disabilities.

The announcement came on the first of the three-day "re: con – The Convention of New Beginnings," which attracts more than 400 people and is organized by MARO, an association of community service providers, and the Michigan Rehabilitation Association. It is being held at the Grand Traverse Resort.

"The goal of these awards is to provide role models for individuals with disabilities that encourage them to achieve their optimal potential," said Justin Caine, who is co-owner of the Lansing-based Good Fruit Video production company and has a brain injury that resulted from brain cancer surgery. "The best way to drive someone to push their perceived limits is to show them someone who's done it and succeeded spectacularly – that's what we hope the BOOM Awards will do."

Caine has spearheaded the awards, underwritten in part by Dean Transportation, which provides bus transportation for nearly 20,000 students with disabilities across Michigan. In-kind sponsors include MARO, Good Fruit Video and Truscott Rossman, a strategic communications firm with offices in Lansing, Grand Rapids and Detroit.

"Dean Transportation is committed to getting people with disabilities where they want to go," said Kellie Dean, owner. "We do that in a very literal sense with our bus service, but we are also proud to sponsor initiatives like BOOM that support people with disabilities in other ways".

The first BOOM winners will be announced at the November 2013 recon conference, where the awards – hand-crafted by people with disabilities – will be presented.

Three individuals will be honored annually as the Employee of the



Year, Entrepreneur of the Year, and Athlete of the Year. Award winners will receive recognition of the accomplishments, including a one-minute video produced about their journey.

In addition, winners will be invited to join the BOOM committee to help nominate and select future award recipients.

Nominees must be residents of the state of Michigan and have demonstrated excellence over an extended period.

The BOOM Award Committee will issue a call for nominations in February, along with complete information on how to apply.

For further information on the awards contact Todd Culver, MARO assistant director 517-484-5588 or tculver@maro.org.

Additional information about the BOOM Awards can be located at: <http://www.facebook.com/BoomAwards?ref=ts&fref=ts>

SAVE THE DATES

TACE IV Transition Webinar
Tuesday January 22, 2013
1:00pm - 3:00pm Eastern

Guideposts for Success: Innovative Strategies for Serving Youth
<http://www.tacesoutheast.org/webinars/2013/012213/index.php>
Presenter: Curtis Richards, Director of the Center for Workforce

MTSA Transition Conference
Bavarian Inn
1 Covered Bridge Lane
Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Wednesday-Friday, March 20-22, 2013

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