



STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN WOMEN'S COMMISSION
DETROIT

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

Susy Avery
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 20, 2015

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor, State of Michigan
State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Snyder,

Pursuant to Public Act 1 of 1968, wherein it is stated that the Michigan Women's Commission shall submit an annual report to the Governor including recommendations based on its studies, we are pleased to submit to you the 2014 Annual Report of the Michigan Women's Commission for the calendar year of January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014.

In its strategic plan, the Michigan Women's Commission identified specific goals: identifying the needs of the more than 46,000 Michigan women veterans through an outreach focused on acquiring Michigan-specific data to help advocacy efforts on their behalf; increasing awareness of human trafficking in Michigan through a collaborative initiative with local, state, and federal partners; and helping Michigan women in business through an advocacy initiative which includes increasing information exchange utilizing the Michigan Women's Commission website and finding options for more Michigan women to have leadership roles on corporate boards. We worked to accomplish our statutory goals, and in doing so, helped to improve the quality of life for Michigan women by taking the following actions:

1 - A working group of our Commissioners, under the leadership of our Chair, a Navy veteran, successfully designed and distributed a survey of Michigan women veterans. Such a survey had not been done before. It was made available online and in hard copy format. The response to the survey has been very good, and we are confident that our final report will provide statistically significant data useful to policy makers. We hope to have the preliminary results of the survey presented at our April, 2015 meeting in Grand Rapids, with a goal of submitting a final report and recommendations to appropriate Michigan agencies and legislative committees by early summer. Our partnership with Jeff Barnes, Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA), and the MVAA staff was extremely helpful in both developing and distributing the survey. Both Director Barnes, a featured speaker at a commission meeting, and his staff have helped us make a connection with Michigan's women veterans and understand their concerns. Our close working relationship with Ingrid Tighe of the MVAA has kept us informed of new programs like the Michigan Veteran Reboot events, and allowed us to assist in publicizing such

events through social media. We have utilized our Michigan Women's Commission website to promote a better awareness of women veterans that include their successes as well as their challenges.

In addition, our Chair, along with other Commissioners and staff, volunteered at veterans' events, including job fairs and stand downs, during 2014. We met with other state groups, such as the West Michigan Veterans Coalition, to better coordinate our efforts to help women veterans. We provided funding for transportation to a southeast Michigan veteran service provider event for Michigan women veterans who have been challenged to find access to services. Another one of our Commissioners took the lead and established a partnership with Grand Valley State University's Public Television station and its We Are Veterans™ project that raises awareness about, and enhances connection to, resources positively affecting the well-being of veteran warriors and their families. The Commissioners plan an upcoming visit to Ohio to attend the Ohio Women Veteran bi-annual conference in order to study and report on that state's best practices. We are fortunate that our Chair and another Commissioner are veterans whose stewardship to our State of Michigan includes helping other women veterans.

2 - A second working group of our Commissioners, under the leadership of another Commissioner, worked to expand human trafficking awareness efforts throughout the state, with an emphasis on working collaboratively with regional human trafficking task forces. For example, the Southwest Michigan Trafficking Task Force arranged for a human trafficking awareness billboard to be viewed on eastbound I - 94 for five months; supported legislative initiatives; participated in a pilot national educational program with St. Joseph High School, the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor, and The Bridge Academy; partnered with Grand Valley State University Public television to support community screenings of the documentary, *A Path Appears*; and helped provide funding for law enforcement training on human trafficking by working with local stores and high school clubs to sell bracelets to raise funds. This group also met with the Southwest Michigan Tourism Council and Shoreline Hotel/Motel Association, and provided banners at various southwest Michigan locations to promote human trafficking awareness.

A major effort this year was raising awareness of human trafficking among medical professionals. We assisted in a new project of the Macomb, Oakland and Wayne County medical societies: the development of an educational video targeting the health care professional community to enhance knowledge and awareness about human trafficking. Our Commissioners worked with Jordan Greenbaum M.D., Ph.D., Medical Director of the Child Protection Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, to bring her to Michigan to share her expertise in human trafficking with the Mott Children's Health Center, the Genesee Medical Society, and the Wayne County Medical Society. Dr. Greenbaum made presentations in Flint, Detroit, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids to members of the medical and legal professions.

Our Commissioners helped facilitate numerous forums across Michigan to discuss human trafficking. These events included events sponsored by the four Michigan women senators to raise awareness of human trafficking. We participated in a panel held by Michigan State University's Center for Gender in Global Context on human trafficking. In addition to their participation in various human trafficking task forces across the state, Commissioners and staff

attended monthly meetings of the Michigan Task Force on Human Trafficking and participated in their training activities. The culmination of all these efforts led to our Commissioners attending the Governor's bill signing in October, 2014, of the human trafficking bills that had been passed by the Michigan legislature.

3 - A third working group of our Commissioners helped us design, edit, and roll out our new Michigan Women's Commission website, www.michigan.gov/womenscommission . Although our site is very new, we are already hearing many compliments on its updated look. Our site can now be displayed correctly on any mobile device with the additional complement of ease of navigation. We know we will have a much bigger impact on helping the women of Michigan by publishing helpful resources and relevant information. We would like to thank the staff of e-Michigan for their assistance in website development.

This group of Commissioners also focused on women in business, and leadership development. They investigated and attended events sponsored by the Michigan Women's Foundation, Inforum, and other statewide associations. They arranged for speakers to address the Commission on the topics of woman in business and leadership development. We heard presentations from the President and CEO of Popeye's Chicken (a Michigan resident) on her career path and how women could learn from her success; a former corporate executive, author and leadership expert on the roles of women in business; and a panel of faculty members on the impact of STEM education for Michigan women. We also heard a presentation from Mary Kramer, publisher of Crain's Detroit Business, on the history of Detroit and how she rose to her position within the world of news publishing.

This group of commissioners is developing an initiative on increasing women's participation on corporate boards in Michigan. They have discussed how to better engage women in positions on corporate boards with Beverly Burns, Michigan Encore Executive in Residence. They initiated a conference call with a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors on how to start a chapter in Michigan so as to better position Michigan women to be considered for corporate board appointments. They accessed information on all Michigan public corporations and their corporate board compositions including gender, terms of office, and nominating committees, to better understand how women participate in corporate leadership. This group is now considering the various options to push this initiative to its operational level.

4 - Other activities in 2014 included meeting with and sponsoring (and being very impressed with) two groups of high school women to attend Detroit Economic Club luncheons with speakers Mary Sue Coleman, former President of the University of Michigan, and Lily Eskelsen, President of the National Education Association. We participated in numerous events throughout the state, including the Detroit Regional Chamber Policy event, various Inform events, the Governor's Immigration Address with Detroit City Council, the 'Big Four' discussion during the Detroit International Auto Show, the Michigan Society of Association Executive's policy conference in Lansing, Crain's Newsmaker of the Year event highlighting Mayor Mike Duggan, the Michigan Press Association Reception at the Amway Grand Hotel in Grand Rapids, the Detroit Regional Chamber Policy Conference on Mackinac Island, Michigan's Digital Government Summit, and meetings with various administration officials. In addition, we met with representatives of Detroit's Eastern Market concerning women's business opportunities,

and made a trip to Madison, Wisconsin to study their state Women's Commission and meet with some of their lawmakers. We appeared on several local Detroit television programs to promote Women's History month. We met with the organizers of the new Oakland County Women's Advisory group to lend our thoughts on setting up this new commission in Oakland County. We met with the Ingham County Women's Commission president to discuss strategic planning efforts.

We continue to serve as a member of the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Aging, representing the interests of older Michigan women as the SAC develops its policy agenda.

To help fill our charge to recognize the accomplishments of Michigan women, we sent over 75 letters to notable Michigan women congratulating them on their accomplishments and awards they received in 2014. Commissioners participated in the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame awards ceremony in October. We strengthened our partnership with the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame by assisting in the creation of an exhibit that focuses on Michigan's female veterans through the lens of American Legion Post 535 NUWARINE, the only Michigan all-female Post which has membership from WWII to the present.

We continue to work closely with Michigan's colleges and universities on women's issues. We continued our relationship with Michigan State University's Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen) as a member of their community advisory board. We participated in April's community discussions concerning the economic impacts of intimate partner violence. We also participated in GenCen's international women's leadership training for women leaders from South Africa and Tanzania. We also met with executive directors of the Women's Center at the University of Michigan – Flint, and the Wayne State University's President's Commission on the Status of Women. Throughout the year, we have participated in the Women's Poverty Project, which focuses on the urban areas of Detroit and Flint, conducted by the University of Michigan Center for the Education of Women.


On behalf of the Commission and staff, we want to express our appreciation for your commitment to improving the quality of life for Michigan women.

Finally, we want to recognize the support of many state agencies, the partnership of many organizations and your Executive staff's assistance in furthering the mission of the Michigan Women's Commission.

Sincerely,



Anne (Brook) Thompson
LCDR USN, Ret.
Chair



Chris Etienne
Vice Chair



Susy Avery
Executive Director