

## Report: Muskegon County Problem-Solving Courts Successful in Lowering Recidivism, Unemployment among Graduates

Muskegon, MI, May 1, 2023 – The Michigan Supreme Court has released its FY 2022 Problem-Solving Courts Annual Report, tracking the progress and highlighting the success of 207 problem-solving courts (PSCs) across Michigan from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. The Muskegon County Courts are fortunate enough to have several problem-solving courts, the Adult Mental Health Court, Sobriety Court, Veterans Treatment Court, Adult Recovery Court, Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program, all of which help justice-involved individuals in our community by helping them overcome underlying issues such as substance use disorders, mental illness, and veteran-specific issues.

“The Muskegon County Courts are extremely proud of our long-standing commitment to, and continued support of, the problem-solving court model. We are also proud of those participants who have done their part by embracing the opportunities afforded to them by these specialty dockets and, as a result of their efforts, have seen drastic improvements to their livelihood and well-being. The data contained in this annual report helps to illustrate for all of our citizens the effectiveness of these programs and the value that they add to our community and to our criminal justice system” said Hon. Raymond J. Kostrzewa, Chief Judge of the 60th District Court and presiding judge for the Muskegon County Veterans Treatment Court. Honorable Gregory C. Pittman, Chief Judge of the 14th Circuit and Probate Court added, “We are pleased and honestly proud of the quality of service that the Muskegon County specialty courts provide. The judges, court staff, and other professionals involved have embraced and committed themselves to having a positive impact, through these initiatives, on the quality of life for our Muskegon County community.”

“Problem-solving courts exemplify how we are working to increase public trust and confidence in the judiciary through collaboration and compassion—an overarching goal of our Michigan Judicial Council,” said Justice Kyra H. Bolden, the PSC liaison for the Supreme Court. “What struck me the most about this report is that these pages are not just filled with numbers and milestones; they are filled with hope and humanity.”

Key report findings:

- Michigan’s adult drug and sobriety programs grew from 98 programs in FY 2018 to 109 programs in FY 2022.
- Graduates of adult drug court programs were, on average, more than **3 times less likely** to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission to a program.
- Sobriety court graduates who used an ignition interlock device were **nearly 5 times less likely** to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission.
- Unemployment dropped by **88 percent** for adult drug court graduates, 86 percent for sobriety court graduates, and 85 percent for hybrid court (drug/sobriety) graduates.
- On average, mental health court (MHC) graduates—adult and juvenile—were **nearly 2 times less likely** to commit another crime within three years of admission to a program.
- Unemployment among adult circuit MHC graduates dropped by 81 percent.
- Average **99 percent improvement** in mental health and 95 percent quality of life improvement.
- Graduates of veterans treatment courts (VTCs) were **nearly 2 times less likely** to reoffend within three years of admission to a program.
- Unemployment dropped by **88 percent** among VTC graduates.
- Michigan remains a national leader with 28 VTCs.

Problem-solving courts focus on providing treatment and intense supervision to offenders as an alternative to incarceration. These include drug and sobriety, mental health, veterans, and other nontraditional courts. The Supreme Court, through its State Court Administrative Office, assists trial court judges in the management of these courts by providing training, education, operational standards, monitoring, certification requirements, and funding.

## West Michigan Water Infrastructure Project Receives Final Approval from State Legislature

### \$60 million in SOAR Funding Approved by Senate and House Appropriations Committees

**Muskegon, MI**—Greater Muskegon Economic Development (GMED) and Lakeshore Advantage, in partnership with Muskegon County, announced today that the Michigan State Legislature has voted to approve the Southeast Regional Force Main infrastructure expansion project. The Michigan Strategic Fund board voted on October 5 to allocate \$60 million to connect users of the Coopersville Wastewater Treatment Plant in northern Ottawa County to the Muskegon County Resource Recovery Center. On November 29, the Senate met and adopted the \$60 million transfer of funds from the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve (SOAR) and on December 7, the House Appropriations Committee approved the project’s SOAR funding with a 23-3 vote.

“We are grateful to our legislators for getting this vital project across the finish line,” said Jennifer Owens, President of Lakeshore Advantage. “This is a major win for our region, and it’s a win for our state as this investment will allow our thriving agribusinesses to continue to grow here in Michigan.”

The Southeast Regional Force Main connection is a 30-inch force main wastewater line that will extend nearly 20 miles between the two communities, allowing food processors to take advantage of excess capacity at the Muskegon County Resource Recovery Center. “This is one of the largest appropriations Muskegon County has received from the State Government Office,” said Mark Eisenbarth, Muskegon County Administrator. “This project will impact our local municipalities by stabilizing sewer rates, providing additional access to wastewater treatment on the east side of Muskegon County as well as parts of Ottawa County, and will provide growth to our expanding agriculture community.”

Dairy producers fairlife, Applegate Dairy and Continental Dairy, as well as Swanson Pickle Company and DeVries Meats will connect to the new line once construction is complete. Total private investment from these companies is estimated at \$187 million, and the addition of 145 jobs over the next 3-5 years. Engineering on the project has already started; construction will take approximately two-and-a-half years to complete.

“Fairlife is thankful for the full support of the local entities and the state representatives to see this through. We are proud to be part of this community for the last decade and look forward to our future growth here in Ottawa County,” said Tim Doelman, CEO of fairlife LLC.

“We are excited about the opportunities that this waste water infrastructure will bring to our area,” said Katie Swanson, CFO of Swanson Pickle. “Not only for Swanson Pickle, but also for agriculture and rural communities in Eastern Muskegon County and Northern Ottawa County.”

“This project is critical to the continued growth of the agri-processing industry in West Michigan,” said Marla Schneider, President/CEO of Greater Muskegon Economic Development. “Our regional partners and state legislators were key to the success in advocating for and approving the funding that will install infrastructure for significant business expansion and attraction opportunities in Muskegon and Ottawa counties.”

**About Greater Muskegon Economic Development:** Greater Muskegon Economic Development (GMED) was founded in 1999 as the primary contact for economic growth in Muskegon County. GMED’s focus is to leverage public and private investment to accelerate business growth, improve our community’s quality of place, advance job growth, and attract and retain talent in Muskegon County. Through utilization of our in-house and partner resources, GMED is uniquely positioned to help local businesses meet their economic objectives. To learn more, visit [developmuskegon.org](http://developmuskegon.org).

**About Lakeshore Advantage:** Lakeshore Advantage is a non-profit local economic development organization started in 2003 by forward-focused business and community leaders to ensure current and future generations want to live and work in our vibrant economy. Lakeshore Advantage assists primary employers,

from startups to large world-class corporations, in West Michigan’s Allegan and Ottawa counties. In 2021, Lakeshore Advantage supported 21 business growth projects, resulting in \$259.9 million in private investment and 694 new jobs. In addition, Lakeshore Advantage supported 271 primary employers, 62 startup companies, and administered a small business grant program that injected \$1.8 million into the local economy. More at [www.lakeshoreadvantage.com](http://www.lakeshoreadvantage.com).

## Francis McCarthy

1/7/1941 - 3/23/2023



Francis “Frank” McCarthy, age 82, of Fruitport, passed away on Thursday, March 23, 2023 at home surrounded by family. Frank was born in Manistee, MI on January 7, 1941 to Lovine R. and Gertrude E. (Kraus) McCarthy. Frank worked for 40 years at Lift Tech

and was a proud member of the Fruitport Eagles. He was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy J. McCarthy, parents, Lovine R. & Gertrude E. (Kraus) McCarthy; brother, Richard E. McCarthy; and daughter, Kathleen M. Kittle. Frank is survived by his brother, Bob (Bev) McCarthy; children, Duane (Gina) McCarthy and Genelle (Dave Vela) Howell; grandchildren, Chi (Tony Jefferson) McCarthy, Ryan (Amy Spring) Kittle, Brandon (Jodi) Kittle, Crystal (Devan) Peterson, Cody (Hannah Moore) Howell, Patricia (Vince) McCarthy-Ma, and Duane Jr. McCarthy; and seven great grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be held at 1 p.m. on Sunday, April 2, 2023 at Fruitport Eagles, 3354 S. Dangi Rd. Muskegon, MI 49444. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations are sent to Bluebird Cancer Retreats, 917 W. Savidge Street #37, Spring Lake, MI 49456. To send a message of sympathy to the family, sign Francis’ online guest book, or to share a favorite memory, please visit: [www.NeptuneSociety.com](http://www.NeptuneSociety.com)

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## Elaine Ella Markham



Fruitport, MI - Elaine Ella Markham, age 89, passed away Tuesday, April 25, 2023. She was born in Leamington, UT on May 17, 1933 to Oral & Ella (Lovell) Nelson and married Thomas Markham on November 16, 1952. Elaine was employed as a product

demonstrator and manager for Show-N-Tell for over 10 years until retiring. She was a resident of Fruitport for over 35 years. Elaine was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Muskegon and enjoyed traveling all over the world and really liked spending time in Hawaii. She also liked hunting for treasures at yard sales. She resided at Robbinswood Assisted Living and was very fond of the Staff.

**SURVIVORS:** 2 sons, Steve (Victoria) Markham of CA, Richard (Ann) Markham of AZ; daughter, Cheryl Thorpe of Muskegon; Son In-Law Donald (Bobbie) Denhof of IL; Grandchildren, Allyson, Kimberly, Kali, Jeffrey, Jeremy, Julie, Jennifer, Matthew, Timothy, Amanda, Andrew, Sam, Theresa; many great-grandchildren and Cousin Linda (Fred) Lovell. She was preceded in death her Husband in 2006, a daughter Kathleen in 2006, grandson Sean Edmondson in 2008; Son In-Law Larry Thorpe, great-grandson Jeffrey Denhof Jr, and Brother Harold Nelson.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE:** Friday, May 12, 2023 at 11:00AM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located at 18975 168th Ave., Spring Lake, MI. with Visitation one hour prior to the service at the Church. Please visit [www.clockfuneralhome.com](http://www.clockfuneralhome.com) to leave a memory or sign the online guestbook.

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