



Community Impact

2019

Detroit Free Press





On the cover

FROM TOP LEFT, CLOCKWISE: Michelle Hughes of Flint said her Ford car sits in disrepair. (Photo: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press); Shalandra Jones-Scott looks out the window of her home while watching her grandchildren in Detroit in October 2018. (Photo: Romain Blanquart, Detroit Free Press); Paul Olden studies barbering as he waits for a customer at Evolutions Barber and Beauty in Detroit. (Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press); Phil Coe of Oakley works on his Dodge Dart in his driveway in July. (Photo: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press)

FROM THE EDITOR

Our commitment to Michigan

Dear readers,

To say these are complicated times in the news business is, to put it mildly, a great understatement.

The relentless and misguided attacks on a free press continue, and our industry will also continue to push forward through the complex transition from print to digital.

Nonetheless, to borrow from Mark Twain, reports of our demise are greatly exaggerated. The Free Press is a healthy institution financially and journalistically, and one quickly and successfully evolving with the times.

I've had the great privilege to lead the Free Press newsroom for more than two years. I've admired the deep commitment metro Detroiters have for this community and making change for the better. And I continue to be impressed by the dedication, intelligence and commitment to truth-telling my colleagues bring to you every day. This Community Impact Report is a testament to that commitment.

Our guiding principle in the Free Press newsroom is to do important, revelatory and unique journalism and to continue to grow our digital audience. This section lays out some of the remarkable work done this year by our journalists — work that has helped to make a real difference in this community. Our digital audience will once again bring in a billion (yes, billion) page views.

In 2020, expect more of the deep-dive investigative reporting and engaging storytelling that is our hallmark. Expect detailed reporting of the presidential campaign in Michigan. Expect more nuanced coverage of Detroit. And dive in as we provide more news in more places using video, audio and podcasts.

Most of all, thank you for reading the Free Press and at freep.com, and best wishes for 2020.

Peter Bhatia
Editor and Vice President



Michelle Hughes looks out the window towards her 2012 Ford Fiesta parked at her home in Flint on Wednesday, June 26, 2019. (Photo: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press)

We take on tough stories because we're committed to spurring change

The Detroit Free Press has been on guard since 1831 — a job we take very seriously. We measure our impact not in terms of website traffic or newspapers sold but in the difference we've helped to make in our community. This year, we exposed issues that affect Michigan residents from all walks of life, not only shining a spotlight on significant problems but also sparking real-world change.

Congress calls for Ford investigation, automaker extends warranties for defective transmissions

In April 2019, Ford Motor Co., in the last paragraph of a 70-page filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, disclosed that it could face significant liability in lawsuits over the transmission used in Focus and Fiesta cars for nearly a decade. We wrote about the disclosure and began hearing from vehicle owners around the country about years of problems with the cars — and from a former Ford engineer who'd been involved in damage control over the transmissions. That led to a trove of internal documents that showed Ford knew before putting the cars on the road that the transmissions

were defective. "We cannot achieve a driveable calibration," one engineer emailed to project leaders shortly before the 2012 Focus went to dealers. After publication of our first "Out of Gear" investigative package on July 11, three members of Congress called for federal safety regulators to investigate. On Aug. 14, Ford extended the warranty on 600,000 of the vehicles' transmissions. More Ford whistleblowers reached out. Their information resulted in a second major investigative piece in December showing a fearful atmosphere that led to silence and the downgrading of a risk assessment "for political reasons." These entry-level cars were sold to working-class families to take to work and school, and 1.5 million remain on the road.

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Wrongfully convicted man released from prison, exonerated

In July, James Clay walked out of the Macomb Correctional Facility after serving a 25- to 50-year prison sentence for a 1997 rape he did not commit. His release followed a Free Press investigation into his case. “It took for the media to get involved to get this case resolved,” Clay said moments after he was freed. In 2017, a jury relying on DNA evidence convicted Clay of raping a teen in an alley on Detroit’s east side. The case took 20 years to go to trial, in part because the victim’s rape kit was ignored for years. Her kit was one of about 11,000 untested kits discovered in a police property storage facility in 2009. It was later tested and DNA found inside the victim matched Clay. Earlier this year, she saw a picture of what Clay looked like when he was younger — and she recognized him as someone she’d had an intimate relationship with when she was a teenager, around

LEFT: Following a Free Press investigation published in July, James Chad-Lewis Clay was exonerated after being wrongfully convicted of rape. Here he hugs his brother, Jeremy Lyons, following his release from the Macomb Correctional Facility in Lenox. (Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press)

the time she was raped. Both she and Clay said during the long period the case remained unsolved their memories faded and appearances changed, contributing to them not recognizing each other in time to prevent the conviction. After we reported her story, the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office launched an investigation that eventually freed Clay from prison. Expert witnesses testified during his trial that unidentified DNA was also present in the rape kit. It remains unknown who the other DNA came from.

Jamaica orders audit of resort security after rapes reported, TripAdvisor adds safety feature

In the fall of 2018, we reported on the rapes of two Detroit tourists in Jamaica — a story that exposed a much wider problem in one of the world’s most popular island getaways. Our investigation showed that Jamaica has a historic and unchecked sexual assault problem — with at least one American raped a month — and that multiple resorts have tried to cover it up and silence the victims with payoffs and nondisclosure agree-

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ments. Our investigation triggered an island-wide security audit of the resorts, and prompted TripAdvisor (the world's largest online travel company) to add a new safety feature that now alerts travelers about hotels that have had sexual assault problems. Our reporting also revealed a troubling development within the State Department, which in 2019 stopped publishing Jamaica's crime data after more than a decade of doing so.

Michigan's largest autism therapy provider loses \$8 million

A 2018 Free Press investigation into whistleblower allegations against Centria Healthcare, a fast-growing Michigan-based company that provides autism therapy services, halted millions in taxpayer-provided grant funds from going to the company while it was under investigation by the Michigan Attorney General's Office. The newspaper for months had been investigating claims by former employees of Medicaid fraud and other problems before the state investigation was launched. The company denied any wrongdoing. After we published our first report,

which included details of the attorney general probe, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation decided to postpone an \$8 million grant it had already awarded to Centria to support its expansion in Michigan. The Centria grant was never awarded. We documented numerous problems with Centria across Michigan, but the attorney general ultimately closed its main investigation without pursuing criminal charges.

Reserve cop with sex offense in past resigns, Michigan considers putting in standards

A Free Press investigation in late 2018 found that thousands of volunteer civilian officers — including some with histories of questionable, even illegal, conduct — were operating across Michigan with no state oversight. Through Freedom of Information Act requests, we found about 3,000 unlicensed civilians supplementing the ranks of law enforcement agencies across Michigan. Often, they are armed and in uniform and many of them lacked the same level of training as licensed officers. A subsequent Free Press investigation in 2019 revealed that a leader



Oakley trustee Norman Wolfe sits on the deck of his trailer in the village in July. "I had bad vibes that something was going on," Wolfe said. (Photo: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press)

of the Wayne County Sheriff's reserve unit was once on the state's sex offender registry, before his felony conviction was later vacated. He resigned after being interviewed by our reporters. Another high-profile example was the tiny Village of Oakley, where the now-former police chief built a reserve force of more than 100 volunteers, including metro Detroit businessmen,

a former professional football player and a famous musician. The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, the state agency tasked with licensing and training of police officers, gained the power in 2017 to regulate unlicensed civilian reserve officers — but hadn't exercised it. After our 2018 investigation, the agency

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Diver Chris Roxburgh of Traverse City picks up some golf balls from Lake Michigan off of Arcadia Bluffs Golf Club's 12th tee box in July.
(Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press)

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formed a committee to study the issue and possible standards.

Golf course stops filling Lake Michigan with balls

One of Michigan's most prestigious golf courses, Arcadia Bluffs, for years encouraged golfers to hit balls into Lake Michigan from one of its holes on a bluff overlooking the Great Lake. "Go ahead and do it, everyone does," the hole description said on the course's website. "Once you've launched a ball into Lake Michigan, on purpose, turn your attention to the native bunker ..." We commissioned a photographer to dive off the course's bluff hole and see what years of that activity looked like underwater. It was startling: More than 200 golf balls were found along the Lake Michigan bottom, in various stages of deterioration, in only about an hour's time. When we contacted Arcadia Bluffs, it they immediately removed the urging to hit golf balls into the lake from its their website. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy investigated. Within weeks, a split-rail fence was installed along the lake edge of the bluff hole, along with a sign: "Out

of respect for the environment, please do not hit golf balls into Lake Michigan!" The golf course also hired its own divers, who recovered 225 golf balls from the Great Lake.

Michigan Attorney General conducting criminal investigation of Detroit mayor

In late 2018, and throughout 2019, we have been conducting an on-going investigation of conflict of interest concerning Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and connections to a high-profile nonprofit that has received significant city support and resources. Days after our first story, the Detroit Office of Inspector General announced an investigation. Six months later it produced a scathing report confirming our reporting. The Michigan Attorney General's Office is conducting a criminal investigation as well.

Change within reach for harmful foreclosure auction

Originally intended to make derelict property quickly available for redevelopment,

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Detroit's Sabrina Beal with children Ajanae Beal, 16, Armanii Beal, 9, and Emanuel Wilson, 6, in front of their new home on Detroit's west side in June. (Photo: Nancy Kaffer, Detroit Free Press)



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Wayne County's tax foreclosure auction instead has become a vehicle of displacement in the city of Detroit, selling hundreds, sometimes thousands, of occupied homes in Detroit each year. Systemic failures have made it worse: Because the city offers a property tax exemption for homeowners who live in poverty, some Detroiters lost homes to foreclosure that shouldn't have had to pay taxes at all. And an estimated 10,000 of those homes were foreclosed and auctioned based on illegally inflated assessments. Auction critics have long said the city and county should offer impoverished Detroiters a retroactive exemption. A constant drumbeat of coverage from our news and opinion teams, along with other media reports and the hard work of community leaders, were key in changing perception of the auction, in documenting the failures of programs intended to mitigate the auction's harm, and in advocating for change. In October, city and county officials announced a new program (currently awaiting legislative approval) that would dramatically reduce back taxes for Detroiters living in poverty.

Feds investigate Detroit's problem-riddled demolition program

Our reporting over the past year and some of 2018 has revealed how Detroit's blight remediation programs have exposed residents to asbestos and lead, operated with poor management and oversight, and embarrassed the city by knocking down the wrong houses. Members of Congress and the Michigan Legislature have called for hearings on Detroit's demolition program as a direct result of our reporting. In November, a blistering Detroit Auditor General report confirmed what we found — that the city's demolition program has been mismanaged and beset with significant problems for the past four years. Our reporting also led to the launch of a federal audit of the program.

Federal, state investigators looking into LCA worker's death

A Free Press story about the death of an electrician during construction of Little Caesars

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Detroit Tigers pitcher Matthew Boyd smiles as he walks through a cornfield in Uganda, where the Boyds have opened a non-profit aimed at ending child sex slavery. (Photo: Kingdom Home)

Arena prompted the U.S. Department of Labor and the Michigan Attorney General's Office to open investigations. Our reporting also prompted the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration to force out inspector James Zoccoli, who investigated the death of Michael Morrison and labeled it an accident, contrary to the wishes of his bosses, who wanted it declared a suicide. One of those

supervisors, who ordered inspector James Zoccoli to close the case, resigned following publication of the story. The story also revealed that MIOSHA destroyed Zoccoli's handwritten notes. Federal OSHA and the office of Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel promised to investigate MIOSHA's handling of the situation. At issue: both the Detroit Police Department and the Wayne County Medical Exam-

iner concluded the death was an accident, but MIOSHA management sided with the arena's prominent developers and builders in insisting it was a suicide. Following our reporting, the U.S. Department of Labor, in its annual monitoring report on MIOSHA, said it would conduct a "special study" to "verify that MIOSHA is following their procedures when conducting fatality investigations."

60 sponsors sign up for Ugandan children, donate thousands

Detroit Tigers pitcher Matthew Boyd and his wife, Ashley, are on a mission to end sex slavery in Uganda and our coverage had an immediate impact on the couple's charitable efforts. We wrote about

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their mission and you responded. Ashley wrote us: “Throughout the days immediately following the article being published, over 60 people signed up to sponsor children and we raised thousands of dollars in one-time donations.” This was one of many Free Press stories that made national headlines in 2019.

Meijer pharmacy chain makes sure patients won't be denied medicine

We first reported in October 2018 the story of Rachel Peterson, a 35-year-old Ionia woman who was 11 weeks pregnant when she had a miscarriage. She tried to fill a prescription for a drug called misoprostol to help her complete the miscarriage, but the pharmacist at a Meijer store in Peto-skey, Michigan, refused to give her the medicine because of his personal religious views. He also would not transfer the prescription to a different store. Misoprostol is used in combination with another drug to cause abortion or to help a woman complete a miscarriage. Peterson was humiliated. She had to call her doctor to get a new prescription and drive to another

store in a different city to get her medication. Because of our coverage, Meijer changed its policies to ensure that patients can no longer be denied medication, even if a pharmacist has a moral objection.

State agency changes contracting practices over industry influence

In June of 2019, we told how the lobbyist for Michigan's gravel industry secretly steered a Michigan Department of Transportation report showing a looming gravel shortage in the state. Using emails obtained under Michigan's Freedom of Information Act, we showed how the head of the Michigan Aggregates Association recommended the consultant MDOT hired, set out the scope of work and how to price the study, and even spelled out the expected findings. The story resulted in two audits that said the report should not be relied on and called for changes in the contracting practices of MDOT, which said it agreed with the findings.

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Rachel and Robby Peterson of Ionia, Mich., with their dogs, Ditka and Hector.
(Photo: Katiemac Photography)





Machelle Pearson, who was paroled from Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, talks about health conditions at the prison in 2018 in Southfield, Mich. (Photo: Kimberly P. Mitchell, Detroit Free Press)

State rebids safety grant over links to trucking lobbyist

In August of 2019, we reported on how millions of dollars in state taxes that would normally go to fix Michigan's roads had instead been paid to an arm of the trucking industry's lobbying organization, through truck safety education grants that were not competitively bid. The story documented how the Michigan Center for Truck Safety, a nonprofit organization, shared office space and staff with the Michigan Trucking Association and used some of the grant money to pay the lobbying organization tens of thousands of dollars annually in rent and other expenses. After the story ran, the state announced it would rebid the grant sooner than planned and take steps to encourage other bidders and prevent conflicts of interest.

2,000 women get medical care for rash in prison

In January of 2019, we told how a Flint doctor solved an undiagnosed itchy rash mystery at Michigan's only women's prison that had lasted more than a year. The dermatologist said he was compelled to push his way into the prison and examine the women after


reading a series of reports in the Free Press throughout 2018. We reported on the women's suffering and the shifting explanations from the Michigan Department of Corrections on what was causing the rash. The doctor diagnosed scabies — a finding the department had earlier rejected. That resulted in the prison being quarantined so all 2,000 prisoners could finally be treated.

News tips

What should we investigate? Send story ideas and news tips to city@freepress.com or investigations@freepress.com, or call 313-222-6601. The safest way to send secure information is by U.S. Mail. You can reach us at:

Newsroom Tips
Detroit Free Press
160 W. Fort St.
Detroit, MI 48226

Thank you

Thank you to all of our subscribers. Your support of public service journalism helps make our communities better, more equitable and more democratic. If you haven't subscribed yet, please consider doing so at freep.com/impact. 

Community support for our work ensures that a free press matters and has a place in Michigan's future. This year, you helped expand a student journalism program, support workshops on the Freedom of Information Act, begin coverage of people returning home after serving time in prison, and more.

FOIA workshops

The Free Press teamed up with Michigan Community Resources to host four workshops throughout the city of Detroit on the Michigan Freedom of Information Act. Michigan Community Resources works with local nonprofits to provide legal services, so it is in a unique position to see how organizations and individuals can use FOIA. Meanwhile, the Free Press uses the law every day, as it seeks public documents for its investigations and news stories. A grant by the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund made this program possible. The fund, a partnership of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Ford Foundation, aims to involve residents in telling the city's stories.

Robin Luce Herrmann, who leads the media law practice at Butzel Long and works closely with the Michigan Press Association, anchored the events, with a presentation on how

the Freedom of Information Act works in Michigan. For each panel, Robin was joined by Free Press journalists and local residents who talked about how they put the law into practice. Free Press reporter Kat Stafford and Senior Editor for Investigations Mark Rochester were among several journalists who offered their best tips, including:

- See what you can find outside of a FOIA request to avoid fees
- Use a spreadsheet to keep track of every letter and response
- Ask to come in to review documents to avoid copying fees or ask for them in electronic form to lower copying fees
- Nearly 200 residents took part. After each event, we offered to help them gather the information they need. In addition, we published an online primer on the Michigan Freedom of Information act at www.freep.com/foia.

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Stephen Gray, 25, of Detroit, left, gets help from tutor and mentor Anthony Tejada of Allen Park in July as he studies to take his GED. Gray was featured in a Report for America story in October. (Photo: Mandi Wright, Detroit Free Press)

Funders and subscribers support a free press, student journalists

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Report for America

The Free Press seeks opportunities to augment its reporting through new funding sources. In 2019, the Free Press was one of more than 60 newsrooms across the country to receive support from the GroundTruth Project, a nonprofit journalism outfit that started Report for America to help fill coverage gaps across the country. Report for America funds a portion of a reporting fellowship and helps newsrooms raise money to fund the reporting.

Through the program, we brought on a Report for America corps member for a yearlong fellowship in the newsroom to cover the experiences of people who have been incarcerated and their families. Jail and prison time can create lifelong barriers to employment and housing, which are fundamental to rebuilding one's life. Angie Jackson, a Michigan native who most recently covered criminal justice issues in Charleston, S.C., is writing about the challenges returning citizens face with a focus on solutions that are in the works across the country. What started as a one-year reporting fellowship has expanded to two years thanks to support from the Detroit-based Hud-

son-Webber Foundation for this partnership.

For 2020, the Free Press has support from Report for America to bring on two additional one-year reporting positions.

One reporter will focus on the issues and obstacles affecting economic mobility, primarily in Detroit. This wide-ranging beat will bolster the Free Press' coverage of housing and water affordability and issues important to small business owners.

For a second new one-year position, the Free Press is teaming up with PolitiFact to train a reporter who will fact-check claims made in the 2020 elections.

If you'd like to support any of these reporting positions, please contact Jewel Gopwani, the Free Press' senior editor for engagement and events, at jgopwani@freepress.com. The Free Press maintains editorial control of this coverage and all other funded projects.

Summer Apprenticeship Program

The Free Press Summer Apprenticeship Program brings high school students from

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Paul Olden studies as he waits for a customer at Evolutions Barber and Beauty in Detroit. Olden was featured in a Report for America story in September. (Photo: Junfu Han, Detroit Free Press)

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across metro Detroit to work in the Detroit Free Press newsroom for six weeks. Throughout the program we provide training for students, who are placed in departments across the newsroom. Each student gets a mentor and an editor. After receiving training, they get assignments and make story pitches just like any other Free Press staffer. Students leave the program with writing samples, newsroom experience and a network

of journalists who can be mentors throughout their careers. Over the years, many Free Press apprentices have returned to the newsroom for internships and full-time jobs. The Apprentice Program has long benefited from in-kind support from Wayne State University's Journalism Institute for Media Diversity and the program expanded in 2019 thanks to support from the Lipinski Journalism Fund at The Michigan Daily. 🌐

Thank you to our funders and supporters

- Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- GroundTruth Project
- Hudson-Webber Foundation
- The Lipinski Journalism Fund at The Michigan Daily
- Wayne State University's Journalism Institute for Media Diversity
- Michigan Community Resources
- Doris J. Duchene and Donald L. Duchene Sr. Foundation

Subscribing to the Free Press is another way of supporting public service journalism and inspiring change. To become a subscriber, go to freep.com/impact.

To support the Apprentice Program, please reach out to Jewel Gopwani, senior editor for engagement and events, at jgopwani@freepress.com.

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The 2019 Free Press summer apprentices, supported by the Lipinski Journalism Fund at The Michigan Daily, stand together at the Free Press in June. (Photo: Kimberly P. Mitchell, Detroit Free Press)

Here's what two apprentices had to say about their experiences in the program:

"I will never forget my second day in the newsroom, when my editor sent me an assignment to cover a Wayne County Ethics Board hearing at nine that morning. I learned so much about the news cycle in general — how to combine efficiency, timeliness and quality reporting — but also gleaned some finer points like how to chase after and approach a lawyer for further statements and how to make observations into an investigative tip. Through this, I worked with a great mentor who exposed me to many skills of the trade. And it was the greatest surprise of all to learn that it would be a front-page story the next day! At risk of sounding cliché, this was an opportunity that has defined me not only as a student journalist, but as a person."

— **Julie Heng, senior, Huron High School**

"Before the program, journalism was just something I could follow in high school. But now I have the experience and knowledge to pursue my dream for the rest of my life. ... I really appreciate you giving me the chance to prove, to myself, that I have what it takes to be on this level."

— **Grace Osmialowski, senior South Lake High School**



THE FREE PRESS REACHES
1.36M
 PEOPLE EVERY WEEK

FREEP.COM

HAS MORE ONLINE VISITORS
 THAN ALL FOUR DETROIT TV
 STATIONS **COMBINED**

FREEP.COM

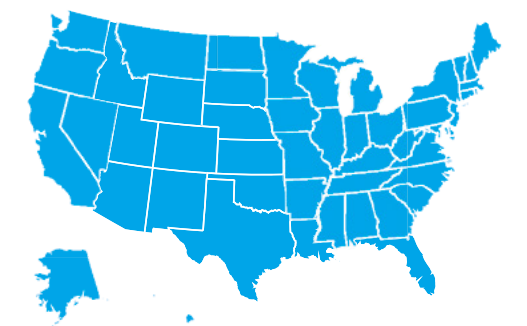
8.8
 MILLION
 Monthly
 online
 visitors

**DETROIT TV
 STATIONS**

7.1
 MILLION
 Monthly
 online
 visitors

OUR REACH

THE FREE PRESS REACHES
 PEOPLE IN ALL **50 STATES**
 AND **MORE THAN**
200 COUNTRIES



WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE
 THE FREE PRESS



SOURCE Comscore Media Metrix® U.S. Multi-Platform, March 2019; Nielsen Scarborough



The marathon, Film Festival and Free Press are a part of this community

ABOVE: Duane Smelser of Ira Township dances before the showing of “Boy Howdy: The Story of Creem Magazine” during the opening night of the Freep Film Festival at the Fillmore Theatre in downtown Detroit in April. (Photo: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press)

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The Detroit Free Press is part of the foundation of this community and the oldest company in the state. One of our first editorial campaigns was for Michigan to become a state, which it did in 1837. Today we host events and form partnerships that enrich the lives of Michiganders all year.

Detroit Free Press/ TCF Bank Marathon

For 42 years, the marathon has been an important part of our mission and vision to change the lives of thousands of people. Participants and spectators from Michigan, the United States and all over the world travel to Detroit to run in the only marathon that crosses international borders twice, including the world’s only underwater mile — the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel. This year, they pumped \$16.9 million into our local economy and small businesses. The marathon is also a charity fundraiser, collecting more than \$2.3 million for 45 official charities. Special gifts include \$8,500 for the Michigan Humane Society raised at our “Conquered” afterparty, a truck bed full of gently worn running shoes given to Fort Street Presbyterian Church’s Open-Door Program for the homeless people, and more than 18,840 pounds of food and water do-

nated to the Forgotten Harvest food pantry. With 26,009 registered participants and more than 60,000 Health and Fitness Expo attendees, our community impact is how we measure success, and we are always striving to do more. For more information on the marathon, check out freepmarathon.com.

Freep Film Festival

Now in its seventh year, the Freep Film Festival has grown from hosting 12 events at two venues in its inaugural year (2014) to 100 events at 15 locations.

While we book top documentary films from around the country, we put special emphasis on documentaries with strong connections to Detroit and Michigan. Great journalism and great documentary storytelling can inform, inspire and help push the region forward — shining light on our challenges and celebrating our achievements.

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Andrew Barnhart of Reading, MI talks with a reporter after crossing the finish line during the disabilities division race of the 42nd Detroit Free Press/TCF Bank Marathon in downtown Detroit in October. (Photo: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press)


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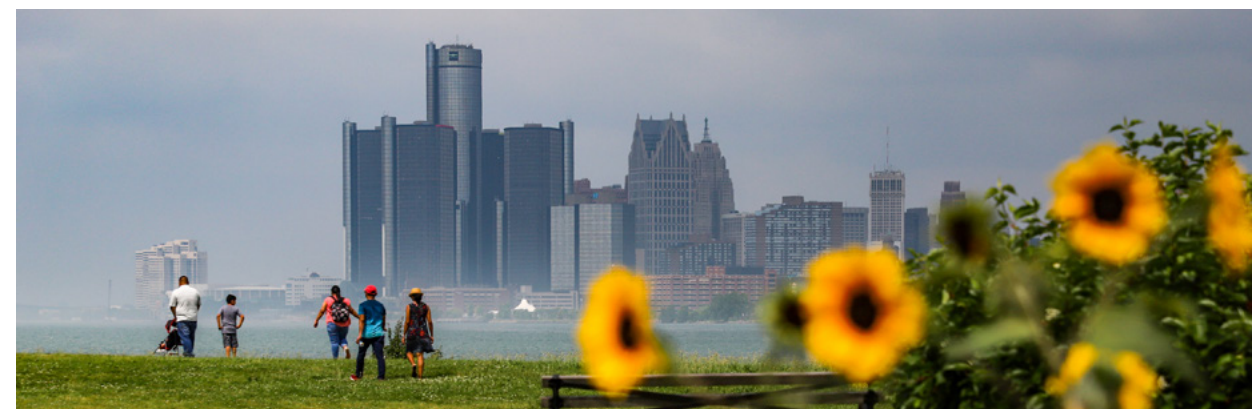
Several films that have held their world premiere at the festival have gone on to streaming deals, national broadcasts or both, including “White Boy,” “12th and Clairmount,” “Detroit 48202” and “The Russian Five.” A signature feature of the festival is the in-depth panels we host after screenings. These panels spotlight not only the films, but also the issues they raise. The discussions marry the festival vibe with our journalistic mission, and usually feature our journalists as on-stage moderators.

We offer free educational events geared toward the filmmaking com-

munity, including works-in-progress tutorials, gatherings that connect local filmmakers with national experts, and panel discussions offering insight into the craft of documentary filmmaking.

The festival has received financial support from the Ford Foundation, the Knight Foundation and Doris J. Duchene and Donald L. Duchene Sr. Foundation.

For more on the Freep Film Festival, check out freepfilmfestival.com. To become a sponsor, contact Katie Camaiani at KCamaiani@michigan.com or 313-223-4537. 



Among the other events we produce:

- Breakfast Club
- Top 10 Takeover/Restaurant of the Year
- Top Workplaces
- High School Sports Awards
- Wine & Food
- Whisked
- Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards

For event sponsorship opportunities, contact Katie Camaiani at kcamaiani@michigan.com or 313-223-4537. For event promotions, contact Aimie Rosner at arosner@michigan.com.

Detroit Free Press

We're the biggest newsroom in Michigan.

We're journalists and also volunteers and mentors, parents and community members, voters and citizens. Free Press journalists aim to tell the stories that matter to you and your community, to hold our elected officials accountable and to spotlight the people and places that make our city and state unique. Along the way, we have garnered some recognition, including 10 Pulitzer Prizes and four national Emmy awards.

But none of that matters to us as much as our mission:

To be on guard for you.

160 W. FORT ST. • DETROIT, MI 48226 • 313-222-6601
CITY@FREEPRESS.COM • FREEP.COM