

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2022

OUR COMMITMENT TO MICHIGAN



Day care owner Betty Henderson, 51, applauds as siblings Marz Simpkins, 3, and Montana Dunlap, 4, hug at Angels of Essence Child Care Centre in Detroit on Oct. 21. Free Press readers responded to Henderson's story of running a 24-hour day care with a flood of donations and diapers for the children.

SARAHBETH MANEY/DETROIT FREE PRESS

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

Welcome, everyone, to our fourth annual accounting of the Free Press' impact on our community, the metropolitan area and our state. • Our work never happens on a schedule nor does it go the way we think it might. We all expected a chaotic election season in 2022, yet it went without the kind of major issues and post-election cacophony that we experienced two years ago. I celebrate the amazing work of our political reporters through this year's campaigns — which had its own impact on helping Michiganders make voting decisions — and it is significant that the election was without major incident or a repeat of the relentless volume of post-election nonsense (at least in Michigan). • In many ways, the work this past year reflects our traditional commitment to watching out for those who our society tends to ignore.

We've done a series of important stories demonstrating the use of false testimony of snitches to obtain wrongful convictions. Anthony Kyles is out of prison today because of our reporting. (And we have more of this work coming.)

There also was a series of investigations and stories that spoke up for children.

We revealed the abysmal state of Wayne County's juvenile hall and spurred calls for reform and moving of the kids to a less onerous location. We detailed the story of a child not being allowed to attend school, which sparked further investigation. "Trapped and Traumatized" detailed educators used seclusion and restraint practices a staggering 94,000 times over the past five school years in Michigan. Most of the students have disabilities. This work prompted calls for reform.

I have always believed that it is one of the fundamental responsibilities of journalism to be a watchdog on children's issues, to do all we can to create a better future for the next generations.

The staff of the Free Press remains an incredibly talented and hard-working group of journalists whose compassion for Detroit and Michigan is without peer. Regardless of topic, they bring a commitment that is powerful and impressive. They tell the truth every day. They reveal the issues that matter here.

Your readership is very important to us. Thank you for your ongoing support. If you haven't signed up for a digital subscription, please do so at freep.com/subscribe. It supports all we do.

Here's to a great 2023. Whatever happens, you can count on the Free Press.

Peter Bhatia
Editor and vice president, Detroit Free Press and freep.com
Regional editor, Michigan and Ohio, USA TODAY Network



Cody Masson, 33, of Traverse City, sits on a commode seat in the living room of her apartment on March 31 where she is left for hours in between shifts of caregivers. Following our investigation into public mental health services, Michigan's health department is revising how it compiles data on abuse and neglect.

RYAN GARZA/DETROIT FREE PRESS

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Detroit Free Press

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

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.

FREEP.COM REACHES

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READERS AGREE

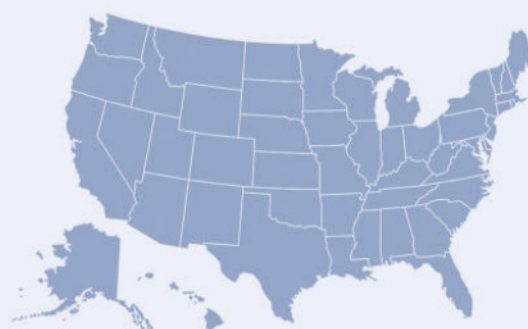
THE FREE PRESS HAS A POSITIVE MISSION TO **HELP THE COMMUNITY BY KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED**

"I like that the Free Press is working to expose corruption and injustice like journalism is supposed to do. You don't see that very often today."

"The Free Press is vital to our region. We need you! Thank you."

OUR REACH

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



SOURCE Comscore Media Metrix U.S. Multi-Platform, Free Press reader survey, 2021

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Keith Gambrell, of Detroit, is seen in a window in the front of his house while in quarantine with COVID-19 symptoms on April 10, 2020. Gambrell's father had been turned away by hospitals, refused coronavirus testing and died April 7, 2020. Their story inspired Oprah Winfrey to make the documentary, "The Color of Care." RYAN GARZA/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Free Press stories that made a difference in 2022

Anjanette Delgado | Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

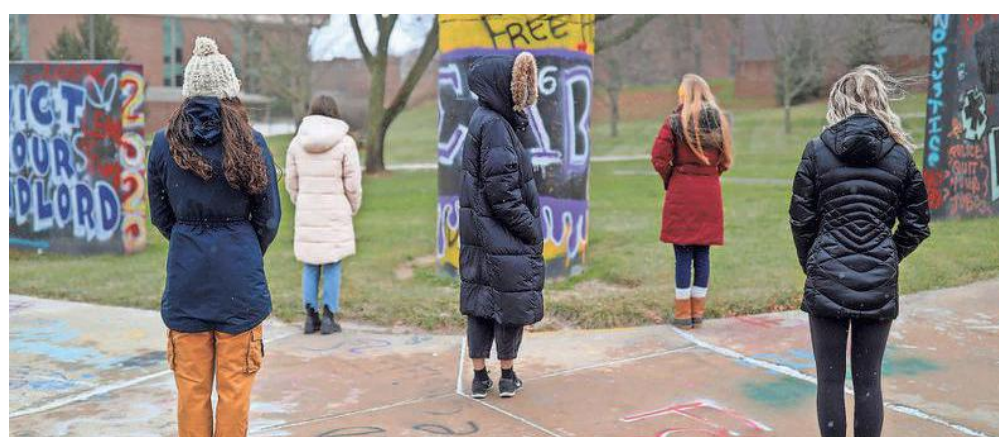
Improving our community through journalism is our mission at the Free Press. As journalists we stand on guard, ready to investigate wrongs, report on the workings of government, explore the issues of the times, uplift local voices and break news. ● These are challenging times for us and most likely for you, too, as we work our way out of the pandemic while struggling with inflation and other economic woes. Yet the stories that follow my words here light a way forward for us all, make a promise that what we do can and does spark change. ● We began publishing annual reports like this one in 2019. Our impact, however, dates to our roots in 1831 when editors making the first editions of what would become the Detroit Free Press campaigned for Michigan to become a state. ● Today, we mark the Free Press stories from the past year where the wrongfully convicted met freedom, where we inspired Oprah Winfrey to make a documentary film about inequities in health care, where sex assault survivors felt a small amount of justice, and where neighbors stepped up to help one another. For these, and so many more stories, we are all better off.

Story of Michigan man's death and photo of his grieving son haunted Oprah Winfrey, inspired documentary

Early in the coronavirus pandemic, Keith Gambrell took his father, Gary Fowler, from hospital to hospital, trying to get him the medical care he needed. But Fowler was repeatedly turned away, refused coronavirus testing and died April 7, 2020, in his favorite blue recliner in his Grosse Pointe Woods home. Gambrell first told the story of the family's struggle to get medical care to the Detroit Free Press. The account also was published in USA TODAY. That is where Oprah Winfrey saw it and was stirred to action not only by the words, but by a haunting image taken by the Detroit Free Press picturing Gambrell looking out the window of his northwest Detroit home. Winfrey made a documentary, "The Color of Care," highlighting the death of Gary Fowler and a dozen other families. It detailed the racial health disparities that have led to a disproportionate number of deaths in communities of color from COVID-19. The film aired May 1 on the Smithsonian Channel and also will be shown to medical students, doctors and others in partnership with the Association of American Medical Colleges. Winfrey aims to raise awareness of health inequities with the hope of making change.

Eastern Michigan University commits to regular external Title IX reviews, lawmakers introduce bills for sex assault survivors

In 2020, amid questioning by the Detroit Free Press



Women who testified about sexual assaults they experienced are photographed at Eastern Michigan University, where the rapes occurred while they were students. Lawmakers introduced bills to extend the statute of limitations for civil recourse of sex assault survivors.

KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/DFP

ahead of an article and during reporting on three sex assault cases, Eastern Michigan University hired an outside firm to review its actions in three Title IX cases. In May 2022, EMU released the results of that investigation. While it lauded the conclusions as proof it did nothing wrong (while facing lawsuits), the firm found deficiencies in the school's Title IX files in the cases, with key communications and notes missing. It also stated that lack of information limited the understanding of the school's response. The school announced it had begun to work on its record-keeping, committed to external reviews every three years, and said it was considering a reporting system that allows anonymous reporters to continue to message with Title IX staff after their initial report. Michigan lawmakers introduced House bills to extend the statute of limitations for civil recourse for survivors of sexual assault. One woman

who stood with lawmakers during the announcement for the introduction said she didn't understand until much later after her sex assaults at EMU — not until news of assaults at the school started pouring out — the harm the school had done. The Detroit Free Press broke the news of the assaults. Under the proposed legislation, individuals would have until their 48th birthday, 10 years after the assault, or seven years after discovering their abuse, whatever is latest, to make a claim, according to a news release. There would be no time limit if a criminal conviction took place, groups like agencies and universities would no longer need to get written notice ahead of an individual's legal filing and there would be a two-year revival period so survivors with claims prior to the legislation have a second shot at filing.

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Lawmakers and others call for more oversight of Michigan's home-school system

A Free Press article about a 12-year-old Michigan girl, Jo, who struggles to read and has rarely stepped foot into a classroom, has some lawmakers and advocates contemplating ways to prevent educational neglect. Jo's parents did not send their three children to school, and told

investigators with Children's Protective Services that they were home-schooling Jo and her two siblings. But family members, friends and court documents contradict the parents' claim. State Sen. Jeff Irwin, D-Ann Arbor, said he's exploring what legislative reform might look like. "I know that

certainly Michigan could strengthen its laws around educational neglect," Irwin said. The Student Advocacy Center said publicly the system needs to change.

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Multiple organizations and individuals, including the Detroit Public Library, reached out to help Mama Shu and her fledgling Homework House, a quiet, safe place for neighborhood children to complete their homework. RYAN GARZA/DFP



Earlene Hall, right, talks with one of many people in line on Sept. 20 during SDM2 Projection Education's weekly food giveaway in Detroit. Hall received the Dr. Arthur L. Johnson Community Leadership Award from Wayne State University. ERIC SEALS/DETROIT FREE PRESS



Five of the Detroit City Council members who were expected to vote on a \$60 million tax break for Dan Gilbert's downtown development project received large campaign contributions from a Gilbert-funded political action committee. After we published these revelations, council members delayed the vote and spent about a month listening to citizens. DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ/DFP



Kai Atallah swings as he listens to his mom, Cassie Atallah, reads to him during his home-school lesson Sept. 9. Kai, an autistic child, has been home-schooled for more than two years after the use of restraint and seclusion in the classroom. CODY SCANLAN/HOLLAND SENTINEL

2022 stories

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Governor creates committee to address juvenile residential bed shortage and quality of treatment

Amid our ongoing investigation into problems at Wayne County's juvenile hall and others, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced the creation of the Michigan Juvenile Residential Facilities Advisory Committee. The group will examine residence standards, staff training, case management and data collection. The Free Press was the first to report complaints that youths have been confined to their rooms for long periods and deprived of basic care, including daily showers, recreation time and medication. In one case, a state investigation found a youth had been secluded in his room for 18 days. "This committee will work to ensure that situations like this don't happen moving forward," said a spokesman for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Wayne County moves juveniles out of unsafe, overcrowded jail

Following our investigation into conditions at the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility, county commissioners called for "drastic" and quick action. The concern from officials came after our reporting found the state health department relaxed staffing and lockdown rules at the facility because of its staffing problems and that complaints had grown about youth being confined to their rooms, sometimes for days, and only being allowed out sporadically for recreation and

showers. One commissioner told officials during a meeting she was "astounded" after reading the article and said: "We've got to do something drastic, and we've got to do it fast." Sure enough, the county later moved all 120-plus juveniles to an empty adult jail, abandoning the juvenile facility in its entirety.

Publisher reaches out to help after reading Free Press story

Jackets for Jobs founder Alison Vaughn, who was featured in the Free Press in December as part of the "Detroit Is ..." series, recently received a volume of resource books from the publisher of the Dummies series. The publishing company came across our story on Vaughn, in which she mentioned using the Dummies series to learn how to start her nonprofit to help Detroiters find and sustain employment, and sent the volume of books to share with clients.

Detroit invites advocates for input, introduces community meetings

The Free Press and Bridge Detroit published an article about how the city of Detroit promised to end water shut-offs for low-income residents, but longtime water advocates we interviewed felt in the dark during the process of developing a plan. Our story put pressure on Detroit's Water and Sewerage Department, which met with most of the advocates quoted in the story. DWSD also implemented a 60-day engagement period following advocates' requests and has launched a series of enrollment fairs.

Unemployment insurance bills waived

Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency said it

would give waivers to unemployment insurance claimants two days after the Detroit Free Press highlighted that certain people who received Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits were accused of misreporting their income and were to repay the excess benefits they had received.

Evictions reporting cited in research brief

Several eviction-related articles from 2020-22 were cited in a June 2022 research brief from the University of Michigan Poverty Solutions initiative about evictions in Detroit before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Owner receives multiple new contracts to train students

Kimberly Harrington, owner of Phlebotomy Express Training Center in Detroit, received significant new contracts to train students following a feature story we wrote about her business. The contracts with major hospitals will not only help Harrington but also the students, who gain entry into the medical profession, and their home communities.

Russian hockey player fired, sentenced after Free Press breaks news of sex assault case

Former NHL player Reid Boucher was fired from his Kontinental Hockey League team after the Free Press broke the news of his sentencing in a Michigan sexual assault case from a 2011 incident involving a 12-year-old when he was 17. Boucher's contract with the Russian team Lokomotiv Yaroslavl was terminated on Feb. 18.

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Ford workers get bonus increase after disparity exposed

Ford Motor Co. informed employees Feb. 14, 2022, that it planned to revise its just-revealed annual bonus formula for salaried workers after a backlash that triggered executive strategy meetings. The pivot included top executives taking a significant bonus cut so regular workers could get

compensation. This announcement came on a Monday, as the Free Press reported Friday through the weekend and revealed to Ford Motor Co. that it had reviewed internal audio, video and emails plus interviews with employees documenting the issue. The reversal, confirmed to the Free Press by Ford

CEO Jim Farley, happened in real time as the expose was ready to publish. Rather than provide a reason for the wildly unpopular decision, Farley revised the policy.

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Jackets for Jobs founder Alison Vaughn, who was featured in the Free Press in December as part of the “Detroit Is ...” series, recently received a volume of resource books from the publisher of the Dummies series. The publishing company came across our story on Vaughn, in which she mentioned using the Dummies series to learn how to start her nonprofit to help Detroiters find and sustain employment, and sent the volume of books to share with clients. KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/DETROIT FREE PRESS



Amera Alexander, 26, of Detroit, takes photos at left as her sister Shanae Kyles, 30, of Pontiac, hugs their dad Anthony Kyles, 54, with his sister Alicia Kyles, 53, of Pontiac, after he was released from the Carson City Correctional Facility on Oct. 12 after serving nearly 25 years in prison after being wrongfully convicted. MANDI WRIGHT/DETROIT FREE PRESS

State Rep. Shri Thanedar won the Democratic primary and the 13th District seat after we revealed one of his opponents, state Sen. Adam Hollier, was supported by a millionaire with ulterior motives. ERIC SEALS/DFP



Kimberly Harrington, owner of Phlebotomy Express Training Center in Detroit, received significant new contracts to train students following a feature story. MANDI WRIGHT/DFP

2022 stories

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He had a suspended jail sentence made part of his sex assault sentencing. The judge sentenced Boucher in a closed court hearing after the Free Press broke news of the sex assault case and that the survivor was incensed with the judge previously promising no upfront jail time. The survivor had already raised multiple concerns about this to the judge and prosecutors to no avail before the Free Press broke the story. Following the sentencing, the survivor said she was thankful for the suspended jail sentence, saying it was a change and she was glad for a semblance of justice. Perhaps most importantly, the survivor told us our story was the first time in the entire process that she felt heard. It was her first real bit of healing. In all this, it also came out that the Holmes Youthful Trainee Act, which gives eligible offenders in Michigan the chance to get criminal offenses dismissed, was being applied for a similar case involving an 8-year-old, raising alarms for advocacy groups and the Larry Nassar prosecutor who said the law is not being applied appropriately.

Governor, others call for law changes after Free Press investigation into ‘barbaric’ school practices

For years, Michigan educators routinely physically restrained or isolated troubled children in ways deemed traumatic by experts. In 2016, lawmakers promised to tamp down such practices, pointing to the death of at least one student. But a Free Press investigation called “Trapped and Traumatized” uncovered that educators used controversial seclusion and restraint practices nearly 94,000 times over the past five school years. In four out of five cases, the students involved had diagnosed disabilities. The Free Press investigation also found multiple instances where educators violated the letter or spirit of the law, from secluding children for too long or for banned rationale to obscuring how often seclusion and restraint are used through shoddy record keeping.

Former Lt. Gov. Brian Calley, a Republican and longtime advocate against both seclusion and restraint, heralded the work and said more change is necessary.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, agrees. “Former Lt. Governor Calley made great strides to limit these practices, but it’s clear that there could be improvements to the law, which already prohibits seclusion and restraint except in emergency situations, to keep students, teachers, support staff, and education professionals safe. We are eager partners with anyone who wants to take proven steps to protect students,” said Whitmer spokesman Bobby Leddy in a late-November statement. The work also prompted the CEO of the Autism Alliance of Michigan to call for better training and more resources in public schools, indicating state Rep. Julie Calley is working on related legislation to “eliminate barriers to inclusion of behavior analysts and other medical and behavioral health clinical professionals in a school setting.”

GM forced to tell Cadillac Lyriq participants an NDA does not forbid them from reporting safety issues to NHTSA

Our exclusive story “GM offers rebate on Lyriq if consumers sign an NDA and agree to be tracked” raised eyebrows at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over concerns that making customers sign a nondisclosure agreement could make them hesitant to report any vehicle safety issues to the government regulation agency. NHTSA launched conversations and investigations with GM after the story ran, and GM was forced to send a letter of clarification to the consumers participating in the study explaining that the NDA does not preclude them from reporting safety issues to NHTSA and other agencies.

Michigan health department revising how it compiles data on abuse and neglect among mentally ill, intellectually and developmentally disabled

In investigating the oversight of care received by recipients of public mental health services, we discovered that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services had undercounted the number of cases of abuse and neglect in its annual report to the state Legislature. The department is now working with its IT staff to develop a better, more updated system for compiling this data, which it collects from 46 local community mental health agencies.

Congressional candidate loses tight race after investigation exposes ties to millionaire contractor

State Rep. Shri Thanedar won the Democratic primary and then the 13th Congressional District seat anchored in Detroit after we revealed that one of his main opponents, state Sen. Adam Hollier, was being supported by a millionaire with ulterior motives involving a plan to mine Metamora. Metamora is a hilly township in Lapeer County (Mich.), known for horses, Boy Scouts and fox hunting. The Edward C. Levy Company, which deals in asphalt, concrete and other products used in road construction, had been trying for about 20 years to convince officials in Metamora to allow them to start a massive gravel mine near a Superfund site when Hollier sponsored legislation in 2019 to put state environmental officials in charge of mining decisions. Edward C. Levy Jr., Linda Levy and two Levy executives gave generously to Hollier’s 2022 congressional campaign. The Levys were also influential with political action committees that spent millions supporting Hollier.

Man exonerated of murder following Free Press investigation

Six months after the Detroit Free Press published an investigation showing evidence in Anthony Kyles’ murder case had emerged raising doubts about his guilt, Oakland County’s Conviction Integrity Unit concluded he was wrongfully convicted. On Oct. 12, Kyles was freed. He spent nearly 25 years in prison for a house fire in Pontiac that killed four people, including three children. The Free Press’ investigation said a fire expert re-examined the case and determined the initial investigators “committed a grave error” concluding the fire was arson. A key witness has recanted, saying he lied to the jury about what he saw. And the Detroit Free Press found that the witness appears to have received a break in his own criminal case despite a prosecutor’s assurance to Kyles’ jurors that he did not. Before the Free Press’ investigation was published, the director of the Conviction Integrity Unit said her unit would review the case. That review led to Kyles being released from prison. One of the first things Kyles did once free was visit his mother’s grave. She died in 2005. In 2006, his father died. Kyles missed both of their funerals. Stand-

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Detroiters get better deal after reporters reveal council members’ conflicts of interest

Five of the Detroit City Council members who were expected to vote on a \$60 million tax break for Dan Gilbert’s signature downtown development project received large campaign contributions last year from a Gilbert-funded political action committee. After we published these revelations, council members

delayed the vote and spent about a month listening to citizens, Gilbert’s team sweetened the deal and the two council members who initially recommended approving it reversed course and voted against the better deal. Council narrowly approved a 10-year local tax abatement, valued at \$60 million for

Bedrock, only after Bedrock agreed to several concessions for more community benefits, including raising the amount of affordable housing in the firm’s Detroit portfolio to 30% from 20%, and improving the affordable level of that housing to 60% from 80% of the area median income.

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'Coldwater Kitchen' challenges our thinking on incarceration

Kathy Kieliszewski
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

In the Free Press' new documentary, "Coldwater Kitchen," Chef Jimmy Lee Hill has run a highly regarded culinary training program out of a prison in Coldwater, Michigan, for more than 30 years. The film follows Hill and three of his students as they struggle to adapt to different stages of incarceration, re-entry and redemption using food as a catalyst for positive change.

"Coldwater Kitchen," which had its world premiere at DOC NYC in November, is a timely film that comes as the national conversation around the criminal justice system — which touches 1 out of 3 Americans — has begun to shift, moving from punishment to habilitation and into an area where there may be rare bi-partisan support for reforms. As a communications tool, "Coldwater Kitchen" is a snapshot of lived experiences that gives viewers a chance to be in closer proximity to issues around incarceration, and the opportunity to question them. Namely: What is prison for? How and why does it affect certain communities? How can we make it more humane? What kind of reforms are needed? And what does rehabilitation even mean?

Our daily mission at the Detroit Free Press is to educate and inform the communities we serve about the pressing issues of our day, paying particular attention to marginalized communities while shining light into areas of government the general public has limited access to. This mission is in line with our goals for "Coldwater Kitchen." Through the film, we hope to raise awareness of the challenges of prisoner re-entry while humanizing people who have been incarcerated, who



Brad Leonard prepares a multi-course meal at Lakeland Correctional Facility in Coldwater. Leonard is a student in the food tech program, a unique culinary class designed to teach incarcerated men the intricacies of fine dining.
BRIAN KAUFMAN AND MARK KURLYANDCHIK/
DETROIT FREE PRESS

are often maligned and caricatured in mainstream media. We hope to offer up Chef Hill's program as one example of how a more humane criminal justice system could work. The culinary program isn't treated as a panacea without its challenges and pitfalls, but spotlighting the program will force audiences to confront their preconceived notions of what prison is for. We also see potential for the film to drive policy change by raising awareness of the Michigan Department of Corrections' so-called "overfamiliarity" rule that prohibits someone like Chef Hill from maintaining contact with his students at the most critical point of their journey — their re-entry to society.

"Coldwater Kitchen" is supported through a fiscal

sponsorship with The Film Collaborative. Tax deductible donations can be made to support the film's impact campaign through The Film Collaborative website: <https://www.thefilmcollaborative.org/fiscalsponsorship/projects/coldwaterkitchen>.

To learn more about the film, go to <https://coldwaterkitchen.film/> and sign up for email updates and follow the film on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/coldwaterkitchendocumentary>.

Kathy Kieliszewski is senior news director at the Detroit Free Press. She's also the artistic director of the Freep Film Festival and a producer of "Coldwater Kitchen."

2022 stories

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ing next to his mother's headstone, he told her: "I'm home."

Donations pour into Mama Shu's Homework House

Multiple organizations and individuals, including the Detroit Public Library, reached out to help Mama Shu and her fledgling Homework House after our story was published. The Highland Park, Michigan, house is a quiet, safe place for neighborhood children to complete their homework, meet with a tutor, read, play music and get a free meal.

Story on veteran suicides leads to \$10,000 in donations to pay for medical dogs to save lives

On July 15, 2022, we published an article with graphic details, statistics and firsthand accounts from veterans about their struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideations. The ones who are better, credit it to their medical service dogs literally saving their lives. The story was in connection to the Michigan National Guard looking to raise enough money to buy one veteran in all 54 states and territories a medical service dog by 2024. Within the first hour of the story running online, the Michigan National Guard said it had received \$300 in donations; by the time the story printed in the newspaper, donations had risen to at least \$10,000.

MSU board conflict with president dragged out into public, president resigns

The Detroit Free Press was the first to report that members of the Michigan State University Board of Trustees had asked President Samuel Stanley to retire. The report sparked significant conversation on campus, leading to Stanley resigning, saying he had lost confidence in the board.

24-hour day care receives diapers, donations

We wrote about Betty Henderson and her 24-hour day care, which, like many other child care centers, operates at a loss at great personal expense to Henderson despite how essential it is to the parents who use it. After the story ran, Henderson received just under \$2,000 from a handful of readers, including one who sent her a check for \$1,000 and organized a bagel breakfast for her staff. Henderson was able to buy new carpets for her toddler story time area and plans on installing mini-libraries stocked with books. Two other readers sent her boxes of diapers. Normally, when a child arrived at school with no diapers or ran out of diapers, Henderson would have to send the kid home. Parents were upset at

having to leave work to pick up their kid, but Henderson cannot care for them without diapers and some of the parents can't afford to always keep them stocked. With the diaper donations, Henderson thinks she'll have enough backup diapers to cover her kids until the end of the calendar year, and their parents will get to stay at their jobs. Just before Christmas, one reader who'd donated earlier returned to deliver Christmas gifts for "all her babies."

Michigan proposes 32 juvenile justice reforms

In July 2020, the Detroit Free Press partnered with ProPublica and Bridge, a nonprofit newsroom in Michigan, to report on Grace, a 15-year-old who was sent to juvenile detention for not doing her online coursework during the pandemic. The story brought national attention to her plight, leading to her release that same month and the creation of the Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform to review Michigan's juvenile justice system. In July 2022, the task force made 32 recommendations that aim to transform what happens when young people get in trouble with the law, including keeping low-level offenses out of the courts, limiting when children can be detained and ensuring juveniles have access to attorneys trained in juvenile matters. Other proposed changes would eliminate most fines and fees charged by juvenile courts and provide more oversight of residential facilities.

High school football coach fired, can't coach in Michigan for two years

Jermain Crowell has been fired as Belleville's football coach and it will be impossible for him to get a job in Michigan anytime soon. The Michigan High School Athletic Association extended Crowell's penalty for violating the undue influence rule, barring him from coaching any sport at any school for the next two academic years. The inquiry began when a student at another school told a Detroit Free Press reporter Crowell contacted him before he entered the ninth grade. He also said that Crowell picked him up and drove him to summer practice sessions and seven-on-seven competitions. While investigating those allegations, the MHSAA discovered a 2018 episode of the TV show "Sports Stars of Tomorrow," which carried a segment on Belleville seniors the show claimed were living with Crowell.

Four Detroiters honored by community after their stories appear in the Free Press

Four Detroiters have received, or have been selected to receive, special recognition after members of community groups read about them in the Free Press' Detroit Is series.

- **Luther Campbell:** Spirit of Detroit Award from Detroit City Council Member Angela Whitfield Calloway to honor outstanding achievement or service.
- **Earlene Hall:** Dr. Arthur L. Johnson Community

Leadership Award from Wayne State University. Johnson, former senior vice president of Wayne State University, was a civil rights and community leader, educator, and administrator. These eponymous awards honor an individual and an organization exemplifying Johnson's commitment to community and making a positive difference in Detroit and beyond.

- **Chris Johnson:** Holiday Appreciation Award given to volunteers by the Grandmont Community Association.

- **JoAnn Watson:** On Nov. 11, students at Wayne County Community College District named a "Get Out The Vote" award in her honor in response to the Detroit Is story linking Watson to the legacy of Erma Henderson, the first African American woman to serve on the Detroit City Council.

Young woman changes understanding of competitive sailing

A 14-year-old girl planned to navigate a 36-foot sailboat alone for hours during the 204-nautical-mile Mackinac race in Michigan. Her father, with her on the race, would be getting essential rest below deck at this point during the 30- to 60-hour journey. After we shared her story and it was picked up globally, letters poured in from readers who said they, as young girls, had wished their fathers had trusted them as this father did. Sailors and so many non-sailors said the story affirmed family, faith in our children and fearlessness.

How we track impact: We define impact as real-world change that happens as a result of our journalism. We track 12 different types of change, including new laws and policies, legal action, government investigations, individual actions and benefit to source (the person or people we wrote about or photographed saw some sort of benefit afterward, most commonly a donation or other offer of help). We must believe, through additional reporting or social science methods, that our work was a catalyst for that change in some way. If not, we don't include it here.

One impact of our work not yet mentioned is that this year more news organizations like ours have been inspired to track impact and report it to their communities as well. We support this and have helped to champion the work that others in this field have done. This collective reporting contributes to researchers' ability to better understand the role journalism plays in modern society. Our democracy depends on a functioning, watchdog press.

If you'd like to contribute to this work, please consider subscribing, donating to our reporting fund, tipping us to something we should investigate or simply sending us feedback. We cannot do this work alone.

Anjanette Delgado is an executive editor at the Detroit Free Press. She also contributes to the Media Impact Project at USC Annenberg's Norman Lear Center, which studies the effect of media on society. Email: adelgado@freepress.com.

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

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Special message to those who fund, support the Free Press

Jewel Gopwani and Anjanette Delgado
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In addition to subscribers, the impact you see on freep.com and in the pages of the Detroit Free Press is propelled by philanthropy, donors and a host of partnerships with other media organizations, university programs and community groups. Here's a look at the difference this work is having on the community and our democracy. If you are interested in supporting Free Press journalists today and into the future, please contact Jewel Gopwani, senior editor for engagement and events, at jgopwani@freepress.com.

Report For America

The Free Press is proud to partner with Report for America, which has placed nearly 300 journalists in newsrooms across the country to help fill coverage gaps. We welcomed a third Report for America corps member in 2022 to cover a new beat focused on the well-being of children, who joined reporters covering economic mobility and political fact-checking as well as threats to democracy in Michigan. Their work has helped fill information gaps for people struggling financially, compelled people to open their hearts and their wallets to support their fellow Michiganders, and informed people about their rights and choices as they headed to the polls.

In June 2023, the Free Press will welcome another Report for America corps member to cover the culture of youth sports, exploring the role that sports plays in bringing communities together and telling the tales at the heart of sports programs across the region.

Report for America is an effort by the GroundTruth Project to support local journalism. Report for America pays for a portion of each corps member's salary, the Free Press pays for a portion and we raise money to cover the balance. Our partnership allows readers to donate to support the work of Report for America reporters. If you'd like to support their work, you can make a tax-deductible donation at <https://bit.ly/freepRFA>.

Economic mobility

The Free Press' economic mobility beat covers a range of obstacles that prevent people who struggle financially from achieving stability. The coverage focuses on community concerns such as housing affordability, the issues renters face and unaffordable water rates. Through this coverage, we aim to fill gaps in the understanding of complex issues and practical information, connecting Detroiters to resources that can help address acute needs — all while putting the person at the center of coverage first. One person featured in an article about the financial struggles that people with disabilities face wrote: "I feel truly represented. ... Thank you so much for this article and for helping all of us you interviewed have our voices heard."

The Free Press is partnering with nonprofit media organization Bridge Detroit on this coverage, which is informed by Bridge Detroit's community priorities model. That model uses several inputs, including interviews with Detroiters and surveys of Detroiters conducted by the University of Michigan, to identify priorities of residents across the city.

Democracy in Michigan

Through our partnership with Report for America, the Free Press has bolstered fact-checking and coverage of the future of democracy in Michigan. We debunk misinformation, closely track efforts to change election laws and report on the challenges that election officials across the state face. Ahead of the 2022 November election, we debunked misinformation before it spread widely and offered readers in-depth explainers about the three proposals Michigan voters saw on their November ballot.

This partnership also helped the Free Press lead the state in coverage of Michigan's first independent, citizen-led redistricting process, one of the most consequential changes to Michigan's political landscape in decades. We diligently covered the process, including heated debates over draft district maps, the approval of final maps, the first election with new political districts and, most recently, the lawsuits the commission faces.

The well-being of children

With support from Report for America, the Free Press in the summer of 2022 introduced a new beat focused on the well-being of children in the summer of 2022. This reporting examines how children are doing, from their physical and mental health to their economic and social conditions, in an effort to see the cracks in the systems meant to support them, uncover policy failures and identify solutions to remedy those failures.



Boxes of signed petitions for Michiganders for Fair Lending are scanned and hauled into the Austin Building in downtown Lansing on June 1. The Free Press is proud to partner with Report for America, which has placed three reporters with the Free Press, one with a focus on political fact-checking.



Eric Hayes, 10, of Pinckney, sits at the dinner table with his grandparents Antoinette James and Anthony James on Sept. 27. James and her husband are foster parents to their two grandsons. With support from Report for America, the Free Press in the summer of 2022 introduced a new beat focused on the well-being of children.

PHOTOS BY RYAN GARZA/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Focusing on kids is a part of the legacy of the Free Press, which championed the well-being of kids in a decadeslong "Children First" campaign. This coverage brings more attention to that mission and has already identified a shortage of placements for children who have been abused and neglected and a lack of options for families dealing with their children's severe emotional disturbances. This work also has prompted readers to help the people whose stories we've shared, including grandparents who are raising their grandkids and "Angels of Essence," one of the city of Detroit's few 24-hour daycare operations, which has been a lifeline for parents.

Free Press Summer Apprentice Program

The Free Press' annual Summer Apprentice Program selects high school students with a demonstrated interest in journalism to join the Free Press newsroom for a summer. The 2022 apprentice program was possible thanks to support from the Lipinski Journalism Fund, endowed by John and Holly Madigan, and The Michigan Daily.

In 2022, our newsroom operated remotely, and so the apprentice program went virtual. Eight students joined our staff, taking part in journalism training, taking on assignments and pursuing their own story ideas. Among their stories in 2022: Coverage of the annual Neighborhoods Day of service in Detroit, a preview to the annual Friendship Circle walk to help people with special needs, voter information for people headed to the polls for the August primary and a look at fundraising efforts at Northwood University to help Ukrainian students on their campus.

Through this program, apprentices improved their writing and interviewing skills, forged friendships with like-minded young journalists and built a network of professional journalists they can lean on throughout their careers. The Free Press' apprentice program has helped launch the career of many journalists. The talented young journalists who joined us in 2022 have

bright futures.

Thank you to our funders

- Albion College, for an opinion writing internship
- Bridge Detroit and Outlier, for reporting support
- Ford Foundation, for the Freep Film Festival
- Report For America
- The Duchene Foundation, for a Freep Film Festival intern from Wayne State University
- The Lipinski Journalism Fund at The Michigan Daily, for the Free Press Summer Apprentice Program
- The National Press Foundation
- The Rogovy Foundation, for "Coldwater Kitchen" documentary film
- University of Michigan English Department, for a journalism internship

Thanks to the Free Press' many partners

The Free Press wants to recognize its partnerships with community organizations and other media organizations and groups. We appreciate each of these partnerships. Large and small, they have strengthened our connections with the community, enhanced coverage for Free Press readers and helped the Free Press identify important issues for coverage throughout 2022 and beyond. These partners include: Bridge Michigan, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, Michigan Radio, WDET, Bridge Detroit, Outlier Media, Detroit Documenters, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Chalkbeat Detroit, PolitiFact, Detroit Public Television, Michigan Press Association, ProPublica, the Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, Columbia University School of Journalism, Documenting COVID-19 project at Columbia University's Brown Institute for Media Innovation and MuckRock, and Traverse City Record-Eagle.

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Join us in 2023

To learn more about supporting journalism in 2023 and funding efforts like the Free Press Summer Apprentice program, internships for aspiring journalists and coverage of crucial issues like economic mobility, democracy and the well-being of children — or other coverage

areas that contribute to a more equitable and informed community — please reach out to Jewel Gopwani at jgopwani@freepress.com. Subscribing to the Free Press is another way to support public service journalism and inspire change. Subscribe at freep.com/subscribe.

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2022



Shannon Anderson, left, and Amanda Kuchenberg pause for a photo as they make their way across the Ambassador Bridge at sunrise during the 45th Annual Detroit Free Press Marathon in Detroit on Oct. 16. DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Free Press Marathon raises \$1.2M for charity

Steve Byrne
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

When it comes to the many great cultural and sporting activities that populate metro Detroit's entertainment landscape, the Detroit Free Press is probably best known for its coverage of them.

But we are also deeply committed to producing events that help shape life in southeast Michigan. In partnership with our business arm Michigan.com, we presents offerings like the Detroit Free Press Marathon, Freep Film Festival and the Top 10 Takeover dining series, all of which have become signature happenings.

Here's a rundown of some of our key efforts from the past year:

Detroit Free Press Marathon

The marathon once again was an international race, following a two-year absence due to the pandemic.

The trip along the Ambassador Bridge on the way to Canada and the return to the U.S. via the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel have long been among the most beloved features of the race. So after the COVID-19 pandemic made race-connected border crossings untenable in 2020 and 2021, it was big news for the running community when we added Canada back to the course for 2022.

We unveiled an all-new course, designed to spotlight some of Detroit's most notable attractions, including Eastern Market, the Dequindre Cut and a finish line at the foot of Campus Martius.

The marathon's 45th edition drew more than 18,000 registrants across the race weekend, which includes two half-marathons, a 5k, a competitive 1-mile and more. As always, the marathon included a robust charity component, with more than \$1.2 million generated for 24 official fundraising partners. Over the event's history, runners have raised upward of \$25 million for marathon-connected charities.

The 2023 race weekend arrives Oct. 13-15, with the marathon itself happening on Oct. 15. Registration for races opens on Jan. 1, with discounted pricing in the early-bird period.

Freep Film Festival

The documentary-focused festival continued its return to theaters in 2022, following a virtual-only festival in 2020 and a downsized event in 2021.

A highlight was the local premiere of "Gradually, Then Suddenly: The Bankruptcy of Detroit," a recounting and recontextualizing of Detroit's 2013 bankruptcy. In a break with preceding years, the film's Opening



From left, Ike McKinnon, former deputy mayor and police chief for the city of Detroit; local activist with Detroit Will Breathe and one of the lead organizers of Detroit's anti-police brutality protests, Tristan Taylor; and Ira Todd, a former Detroit homicide detective; participate in a discussion led by Bill McGraw, a former Detroit Free Press columnist, after the film "Riotville, USA" during Freep Film Festival. KATHY KIELISZEWSKI/DFP

Night screenings at the Detroit Institute of Arts' Detroit Film Theatre and Michigan Science Center were presented free of charge. Thanks to the support of the Kresge Foundation, the film was also available for free at-home streaming for several thousand viewers.

As always, the festival was heavy on films with strong local connections, including "Bad Axe," a family story set in the small Michigan town of the same name; "America You Kill Me," about the crusading Detroit gay rights activist Jeffrey Montgomery; and "The Pez Outlaw," about a Michigan farmer who gains fortune by smuggling collectible versions of the popular candy dispensers.

The festival also hosted numerous free education events geared to the local filmmaking community, all presented with the support of the Ford Foundation.

Top 10 Takeover

It's a longstanding tradition for the Detroit Free Press each year honor the best in metro Detroit restaur-

rants. In 2015, it founded the Top 10 Takeover series, which presents special dining events at venues honored in the Free Press coverage.

This year, 13 restaurants were featured in partnership with Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers. With each ticket sold, \$3 went to Forgotten Harvest, the Detroit organization that rescues unused food and distributes it to those in need.

Other events the Free Press produces include:

- Top Workplaces
- Detroit High School Sports Awards
- Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards

Contact us

For information related to any of the Free Press' events, contact Aaron Velthoven, vice president of marketing, communications and events for Michigan.com, at avelthoven@michigan.com.