



STRENGTH. PROGRESS. COMMUNITY.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019.





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Michigan United's mission is to build a more just world through community organizing. We win strategic campaigns to address the root causes of poverty and racism.

We believe each individual has the right to achieve their full human potential and to live in dignity. • We believe our government and economy should provide for the common good and be accountable to all our communities, not just the powerful. • We believe in our compassionate obligation toward our neighbors, and to support their struggles toward fulfillment and liberation. • We believe people of conscience and people of faith have an obligation to step forward in leadership to ensure that our government and economy reflect our values of dignity, fairness, equity, and opportunity. • We believe in the power of democracy and non-violence. • We believe it is our mission to work together to build the power we need to win the justice our communities deserve.



Hope for the future.

Sometimes, it feels like the world really has gone crazy.

When you tune into the news or log onto social media, it's almost overwhelming. The daily outrages all blend together. It can be exhausting. The worst part is that after a while, you just feel powerless and go numb. You lose an important piece of yourself when you lose the capacity for anger or love to stir you to action. That really is the challenge for our particular moment: how do you maintain your hope, your energy, and, honestly, sanity in a maddening time?

I find the answer, conveniently enough, in local grassroots organizing. While the daily revelations in Washington DC can feel far away, we always have the power to unite with our neighbors and fight to make things better. We always have the power to invest in each other, and build new generations of leadership. We always have the power to make concrete changes in our lives that, given time, commitment, and the right moment, can add up to sweeping national victories.

Michigan United's work this year has exemplified that empowering grassroots organizing. Whether it's ensuring that local officials make county government accessible to immigrants, or that everyone can find rental housing regardless of their criminal record, we can win. In the process, we build up our communities' capacity to create the world we want. And we take our power back.

Indeed, the commitment of our members is what gives me hope for the future. When our members develop and lead campaigns, run for office, and step forward as leaders, we are truly building our democracy from the ground up.

Ryan Bates
Executive Director



Together we organize.

73 Public Events
with **4,442** Participants

Including press events on deportations, opposing war with Iran, town hall meetings on long-term care and health care, and responding to toxic emissions from the Detroit Marathon plant.

73 Trainings
with **1,212** Participants

on topics as diverse as organizing 101, community-based legal services, how to hold a listening session, holding a legislative meeting, and recovering from trauma.



103 Meetings with public officials
with **626** Participants

From school board up to Congress.

47 Community
Listening
Meetings

To develop the agenda for the
presidential forum.

52 Public
Education
Events
with **1,651**
Participants

Including know-your-rights
meetings and community
presentations

169 Service
Events
with **3,319**
Service contacts

Including citizenship, ESL, intake
and referral.



24,015
Door Knocks

for GOTV and
ranked-choice-
voting educating
in Kalamazoo
and Eastpointe
municipal
elections.

4 Member
graduates of
our Movement
Politics
Academy that
ran for office **2** of which won.

Patrese Griffin earned the most votes in Kalamazoo, and is now the Vice Mayor. Neil Sroka won election to the Grosse Pointe Farms City Council. Graduated 56 future leaders from our movement politics academy.

Media hits

WWJ NEWSRADIO 950 MENU

Southwest Detroit Residents Demand 'Buy Our Homes' After Refinery Smell Snafu

"Did they do this because they're white and we're black?"

FEBRUARY 04, 2019 - 10:24 AM

f t p e +

CATEGORIES: Detroit, News, Local News, Oakland County

WWJ Please buy our homes.

FOX 2 DETROIT Watch Live

Activists take part in 'Build bridges not walls' protest of shutdown

Published January 15, 2019 | News | FOX 2 Detroit

f t p e



Activists gathered in southwest Detroit near the U.S. Canadian border for a 'Build bridges not walls' protest.

DETROIT (FOX 2) - Activists gathered in southwest Detroit near the U.S. Canadian border for a 'Build bridges not walls' protest.

Michigan Government

Bills to bar Michigan 'sanctuary cities' face headwinds in Lansing



Michigan United, a social justice advocacy organization, protested the bills in front of the state Capitol Tuesday. Like other opponents of the bills, they argue the legislation would overwhelm limited local law enforcement resources and encourage racial profiling. (Photo courtesy of Michigan United)

MICHIGAN RADIO WUOMFM 1A

In detention center facing possible deportation, Michigan "Dreamer" says he's still optimistic

By DUSTIN DWYER • FEB 23, 2019

f t p e



WLN5.COM

Advocates working against "racial profiling" bills passed by House committee

f t p e



Controversial bills pass House committees

by Brittany Flowers
Posted: Apr 9, 2019 / 09:37 PM EDT / Updated: Apr 9, 2019 / 09:37 PM EDT

Today immigrant families spoke against two bills at a hearing in Lansing.

'Michigan United' held a press conference outside the Capitol before the hearing to support the families who

FOX 25 NOW

Protesters gather at Michigan Capitol, bringing issues to lawmakers

by Veronica Meadows
Tuesday, April 9th 2019



Protesters gather at Michigan Capitol, bringing issues to lawmakers

710

Capitol Day - "Lame duck, shame duck"



By Amy Murphy | Posted: Tue 4:00 PM, Apr 09, 2019

f t in p e

LANSING, Mich. (WILX) - Capitol Day took place in Lansing on Tuesday, April 9.

It was a day open for constituents to meet representatives with questions about the environment, drivers licenses, family care, or whatever concerns them.

This is an annual event that takes place at the Lansing Center with residents from across Michigan participating.

Michigan United is the organization that hosts Capitol Day, and before the hearing they held a press conference to support the families who

MICHIGAN RADIO WUOMFM 1A

Marathon taken to task at Detroit town hall over odor problems, pollution

By SARAH CWIEK • APR 30, 2019

f t p e

Detroit's Marathon refinery says it's environmentally responsible, and a good neighbor to its surrounding community.

But some of those neighbors aren't buying it.



Marathon defended itself at a town hall convened by the Detroit City Council on Tuesday, saying it has drastically reduced refinery emissions in the past 20 years.

NEWS

Angry Southwest Detroit residents vent to City Council about Marathon oil refinery

Neighborhood residents complain about air quality

Rod Meloni, Reporter, CFP @
Derick Hutchinson, Senior Web Producer
Published: April 30, 2019, 7:24 pm

Tags: Local 4 News AT 6, News, Wayne County, Detroit



DETROIT - For years, the Marathon Petroleum Corp.'s refinery's emissions have brought complaints from Detroit neighborhood residents.

FOX 2 DETROIT Watch Live

Marathon refinery fumes spark concern over air quality at town hall

Published April 30, 2019 | News | FOX 2 Detroit



Marathon refinery fumes spark concern over air quality at town hall

The Arab American News
Established September 7, 1984



Aborted attack inspires call for peace before it's too late. Photo Credit: Detroit Sanctuary Project

U.S. Rep. Andy Levin to stand with faith leaders opposing war on Iran

POSTED: FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2019 5:54 AM

MICHIGAN RADIO MICHIGAN'S NPR NEWS LEADER Donate

WUOMFM 1A

Levin: "There is no purpose for war with Iran"

By SARAH CWIEK • JUL 8, 2019

Michigan Congressman Andy Levin joined a group of interfaith leaders in Detroit on Monday to protest against the idea of war with Iran.

Levin called President Donald Trump's Iran strategy "incoherent." He said that Iran had been following the multi-country deal struck under the Obama administration that



WXYZ

Day of immigration protests ends with candlelight vigil

Posted: 10:17 PM, Jul 12, 2019 Updated: 11:13 PM, Jul 12, 2019



DETROIT (WXYZ) — A day of protests against migrant families in detention was closed out with another march and candlelight vigil in Detroit.

m LIVE Sign in Search

Still in sanctuary: Immigrant family has lived in Detroit church to avoid deportation for 19 months

By Tanya Moutzalias | tmoutzal@mlive.com



One and half years in Sanctuary: Ded Rranxburgaj and his family inside Detroit's Central United Methodist Church

DETROIT FREE PRESS

Detroit leaders: Democratic presidential candidates should address immigration

Niraj Warikoo, Detroit Free Press Published 5:18 p.m. ET July 31, 2019 | Updated 1:48 a.m. ET

Immigrant rights protesters block entrance to international Detroit-Windsor tunnel to bring attention to immigration reform



m LIVE Sign in Search

Dingell, Tlaib urge Democratic candidates to tackle immigration reform

Updated Aug 01, 2019; Posted Jul 31, 2019



sanctuary: Immigrant family has lived in Detroit church to avoid deportation

13 ON YOUR SIDE LIVE 42° Grand Rapids, MI



Immigrant families living in sanctuary at Mich. churches call on presidential hopefuls for immigration reform

Saheeda Nadeem, facing the threat of deportation, has been living in a Kalamazoo church for 17 months.

DETROIT, Michigan — With the focus on Detroit during the Democratic presidential debates, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, Rep. Debbie Dingell and Rep. Luis Guterrez called on presidential candidates to develop

Detroit News HOME NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS AUTOS LIFE

Immigration activists protest 'violence of separating families'

Gregg Krupa, The Detroit News Published 6:33 p.m. ET July 31, 2019

DETROIT — Across Woodward and down the block from the site of the debate among Democratic presidential candidates is a church where members have demonstrated and against government actions since before the Civil War.

On Wednesday, in Central United Methodist Church, they were at it again.

Proclaiming themselves against deporting some immigrants and in favor of churches that provide them sanctuary, about 75 people, including three current or former members of Congress, arrayed side-by-side before the main altar.





Organizer Elder Leslie Matthews with Mayor Duggan and Councilwoman Jenay Ayers at the signing of the Fair Chance Housing Ordinance.

Program Spotlight:

Criminal Justice

The Detroit Fair Chance Housing Ordinance is an example of what happens when you organize with tenacity. Our criminal justice team along with our friends at the ACLU, stayed focused on this campaign for three entire years. As a result of their persistence, landlords can no longer discriminate against returning citizens on rental applications. This is incredibly important for stopping the cycle of recidivism. How do we expect people leaving incarceration to get back on track if they can't access affordable housing?

In Kalamazoo, our work against the school-to-prison pipeline continues. Despite good policies that protect students, many young people in the Kalamazoo Public Schools are still being criminalized and warehoused instead of educated. Parents in Kalamazoo have united to demand reform of school's discipline policies, rather than the continued abuse of young people. Parents took their demands to the school board in December and shared their stories with the superintendent.





Program Spotlight:

Immigration

This year, Michigan United co-hosted the largest convening of immigrants rights organizations in the country: the **National Immigrant Integration Conference (NIIC)**. We partnered with ACCESS and MIRC to bring 1300 people together in Detroit for conversations about strategy, immigrant integration, best practices, and how we're going to win immigration reform. The program was kicked off by Representative Rashida Tlaib and Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist.

The NIIC, a project of the National Partnership for New Americans, brought together legal, organizing, litigation, social service, workforce development, and education groups with local government officials and funders. We truly convened the leadership of our national movement together to promote this year's theme: Solidarity, strength and transformation.

We're proud that 150 grassroots community members, many undocumented, were able to attend the conference through special sessions on drivers licenses for all and becoming a community navigator.

Additionally, this year our immigration service programs reached 3300 people with English classes, citizenship programs, and legal services.



To **stay up-to-date** with what's happening in our organization, please visit us on the web: **miunited.org** and like us on **Facebook** and follow us on **Twitter**. Or join us as a member. Check out **miunited.org** for information on how to join us!

Patrese Griffin, Vice Mayor of Kalamazoo

Patrese got involved with Michigan United as a volunteer about four years ago. First, she started going to events with a family member, but over time started to become a part of the organization in her own right.

She described just sitting in rooms at first, but then, “I discovered my self interest and then I really got involved.” She went on to attending legislative days, then leading meetings, and has grown to become a powerful leader in her community.



She’s most proud of getting the ‘no parking no stopping no standing signs’ removed in Kalamazoo. “Those signs were up for over 25 years. Other people had tried, but were unsuccessful. But we were really able to get community support and get in communication with decision makers,” using the skills that were learned from Michigan United.

She wants people to recognize the level of commitment Michigan United has to get into the community and stay in the community. “It takes a lot of time, a lot of commitment, a lot of energy to do this work.” Michigan United provides the support that makes it possible for people on the ground doing the work to change their communities.

“They gave me the tools I need to be able to effectively make change.”





A Fighter for Families: Cindy Garcia

If you've been involved with our organization, you almost certainly know the story of the Garcia family by now. They were torn apart when husband and father Jorge was deported, and their pain and bravery gained national attention through their willingness to share their story with the media. This Christmas, we were thrilled to join in their celebration as Jorge returned to his family in time to celebrate the holiday together again.

"In our community, what affects one, affects us all."

But to understand why we all felt so strongly about their ordeal, you need to know the history. Cindy Garcia met executive director Ryan Bates many years ago at an event, through a friend who was involved through the labor movement.

She then saw a post about immigration on Facebook, and reached out to get more information because of her family situation. The relationship with Michigan United grew from there. She began volunteering, in order to educate herself on the issues that were affecting her family and other families dealing with the same challenges.

She wants people to know how hard it is on families that the different immigration rules and enforcement always seem to be changing, and how badly people need education and help navigating the system.

She spoke of women whose husbands were deported that didn't know how to go to the bank, how to do many things their husbands did. Of how it affects the kids. Of the depression, anxiety, PTSD....how it all takes a toll.

And that's why you need organizations like Michigan United. "It is an organization that is well-rounded, dealing with different issues – whether it's immigration, climate, voting, foreclosure, ESL classes. Anything that touches the community, they get involved. Just building relationships in the community – they're not here to take your money, we're here to support you. I've built relationships with them that are like family.

It's a coalition we have to keep going."



Program Spotlight:

Hometown Voices

We're very proud that this year we launched our new rural and small-town organizing initiative, Hometown Voices.

Many rural areas of Michigan are struggling with: poverty, chronic unemployment, lack of access to health care, and addiction. Automation, big-box retail, financial consolidation, and lack of government investment have really hurt small towns and rural areas in Michigan. So why haven't these areas signed up for the progressive movement in droves? We believe it's because we haven't asked them to.

That's why we launched Hometown Voices.



We've held dozens of listening meetings and knocked on ten thousand doors across rural areas of Michigan to listen to the issues that matter most to the residents. We're using the techniques of deep canvassing to help people connect their private pain to bigger structures. We're also being up-front about race. That's important, because racism is the tool that's used to divide us against each other even when we share common economic interests.

The team has participants in Tuscola, Macomb, St. Clair and Monroe counties, and will be rolling out a new agenda for rural Michigan in 2020.

Finding Hope in Community: Susan Matthews

After the 2016 election, Susan Matthews knew she had to do something. “I was depressed. I felt that I couldn’t even understand who I lived amongst. I decided I’m going to spend my down time fighting against what’s going on in our country.”

She joined a church, but needed to engage in something that was more active. She tried all different organizations, but found a lot of dysfunction. Then she got engaged with Michigan United.

She volunteered at an event in 2018 and “just fell in love with the organization. Everyone was so nice. It was organized so well, and everyone I met was wonderful.”

“Then I went to the session for rural and small town organizing, and that’s where I met Caitlin. Once I met Caitlin, I thought the world of her. And what she was focusing on was exactly what I thought we needed to do in my area!

“We went out and started doing deep canvasses to start developing the survey –it’s a study done by a couple colleges and universities. Then we went door-to-door ‘deep canvassing’ these people, and we were trying to extend kindness and compassion to get them to open up to us. And this was in northern Macomb county, so a Republican/Trump-leaning area!

“When we started doing this, let me tell you: I have never been so impacted in my life. We would start talking to people, and they would start to change their mind just from talking to you!

“That just having people reach out to you, can make people kinder? It affected me to my core. It was the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done in my life.

“Our society is really messed up. And to be part of turning it around has been one of the greatest things of my life.

“I love Michigan United. If you believe in equality, this is the organization. I’ve



People see me and say, ‘Oh my gosh, you’re happier than you’ve ever been!’ It’s because I’m doing what I believe in and I love.”

–Susan Matthews

never been a part of an organization that truly treated people equally. Everyone is important; everyone matters. Most organizations shut people down, shut people up. This one doesn’t do that.

“They are the most egalitarian organization I’ve ever been a part of. I’ve had some problems, sure, but because of their values, I felt like I could address it myself and get it handled. It’s really the right place for me.

“I went to Capitol Day last year. I can’t wait to go again this year, and be more engaged this time. I tell everyone to go to the website and get involved.

“I feel like I’ve found myself again, and I hadn’t been found since college. People see me and say, ‘Oh my gosh, you’re happier than you’ve ever been!’ It’s because I’m doing what I believe in and I love.”



Care: \$4 Million for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The Caring Majority campaign made big strides this year and won a major victory for seniors and people living with disabilities.

The team spent much of the year advocating to expand the MI Choice Waiver program. MI Choice allows seniors and people with disabilities to use Medicaid dollars to receive care in their homes, rather than being put in a nursing home. This is important — low-income people should be able to receive dignified care at home, with their families, rather than in a nursing home. In-home care provides better health outcomes and saves money overall. However, the state has not properly funded the program, and MI Choice has a long waiting list.

Thanks to a relentless organizing campaign, the Caring Majority won \$4 million in additional funding for MI Choice, allowing thousands of people to access the in-home care they need. Democrats and Republicans came together to support MI Choice — quite an achievement in these polarized times.

The Caring Majority team also held two stakeholder meetings throughout Michigan to listen to care providers, seniors, and people with disabilities about the future of long-term care in Michigan. The input will be part of an official state report on long-term care that we hope to use for future advocacy.

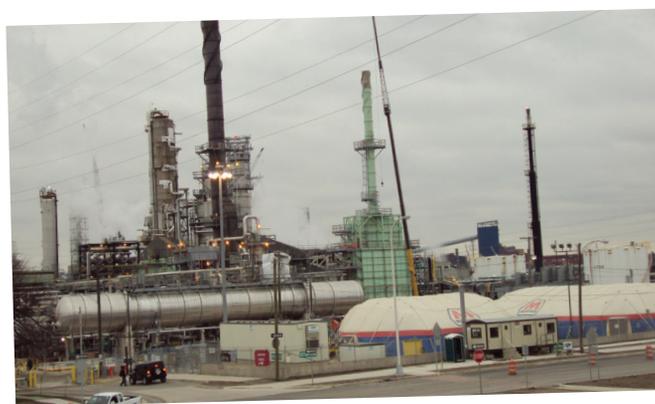




Environment: The Fight for Clean Air and Water in Detroit and Flint Continue

Our work to demand justice from Marathon Petroleum in Southwest Detroit continues. The massive oil refinery situated in a primarily African-American neighborhood continued to burden the community with massive emissions of toxic fumes this year, endangering the health of residents. Our team has kept up the fight, demanding that the corporation buy out the homes of residents who need to leave for their health, just as they did for the residents of a primarily white neighborhood several years ago.

Our environmental justice committee successfully brought attention to two major incidents: a massive gas leak that sent a foul cloud as far north as Macomb County, and a toxic waste spill that caused the death of thousands of fish in the Rouge River. As a result, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform held a hearing on Marathon, led by Rep. Rashida Tlaib, in Detroit. During the hearing, Emma testified about how fumes from the refinery are so bad that she often needs to wear



a mask to sleep at night. The Committee is now demanding that the EPA investigate Marathon.

In Flint, it has been 5 years since the start of the water crisis. Rev. Monica Villareal was the keynote speaker at the rally organized by community members to commemorate the tragedy and highlight the fact that Flint is still suffering the effects of water contamination. Our team continues to advocate for long-term public health and education resources for Flint.



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**Join Michigan United this year as one of our members.
Check out www.miunited.org for information on how to join us!**