



NEWS RELEASE

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Greater Lansing CVB & Sports Authority Hold Annual Meeting and Announces Award Winners for Community Support

LANSING, Mich. – The Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau (GLCVB) held its annual meeting on March 13 and announced good news for the local economy and recognized numerous individuals with awards for their vision, dedication and loyalty to the Greater Lansing region.

The region reported a strong 62.8 percent occupancy rate for 2018, and overall hotel room demand increased to over 1,037,000 hotel room nights, according to Smith Travel Research (STR) data. Additionally, the Greater Lansing region experienced an increase in Average Daily Rate (ADR), or average cost per rented hotel room in 2018 compared to the previous year.

“The Greater Lansing community experienced another very strong year,” said Jack Schripsema, President and CEO of the GLCVB. “For the eighth consecutive year the GLCVB destination sales department exceeded its room night goal, the Greater Lansing Sports Authority once again broke the century mark for events hosted and the region saw an overall hotel room demand increase compared to the previous year.”

The GLCVB and Greater Lansing Sports Authority also honored community partners with awards at the annual meeting. The Community Champions program was created to recognize local residents for helping to secure/advocate for group business in the Greater Lansing area. Those recognized as 2018 Community Champions were: **Sean Kottke, Samantha Stevens, Keturah Bouyer, Christina DeJong, Josh Ressio, Caitlyn Vermiglio, Elyse Packard, Dr. Chinwe Effiong and Alexandra Jarvis.**

The GLSA was proud to recognize the Capital City Crushers as Sport Partner of the Year and Michigan Youth Challenge Academy as Volunteer of the Year. The GLCVB also recognized John Rossi, CTA and Barbara Rossi, CTA as the CTA Stars of the Year.

Please see attached for individual bios on the award winners. Photos available upon request please email tpadot@lansing.org. For interviews and more information please contact Jack Schripsema, CTA, GLCVB President & CEO at (517) 377-1404.

The mission of the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau is to promote the region as a visitor destination to impact the area's economy.

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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS:

Sean Kottke

Education Consultant with Michigan Department of Education and Treasurer with the Michigan Reading Association

Sean Kottke had an understanding of the Greater Lansing region's assets from his time as a student at Michigan State University. In his role as past conference chair, Sean had previously attempted to bring Michigan Reading Association's annual conference to Lansing without success. Through his perseverance and collaboration with parties from multiple Lansing facilities and the GLCVB, he was successful in helping to secure the 2022, 2024 and 2026 Michigan Reading Association Annual Conferences and its' 1,500 attendees per year in Lansing. The goal of this award is to celebrate Sean Kottke's dedication to our region through the positive impact of this major, multi-year conference.

Samantha (Sami) Stevens

Director of Licensing for Michigan State University

Sami takes pride in her University and partnered with the GLCVB alongside Top of the World Apparel supplier to bring Top of the World VIP Conference to Greater Lansing in 2018. The visitors attended the University of Michigan vs. MSU football game and other local favorite events while in town. With her creative, motivated spirit, Sami went above and beyond by working with the East Lansing Marriott and the GLCVB to create a pop-up-shop that sold University attire during the big game week. It was so successful, the shop remained open past the original dates, providing an even larger positive economic impact for the Greater Lansing region.

Keturah Bouyer

Founder & Executive Director of The MOVE Conference & Nights for Women

The MOVE Conference is a Christian experience to unite and empower women to share God's love and hope in Greater Lansing. Additionally, The MOVE Nights for Women (also known as The MOVE Nights) are free nights of worship in August, November, and January. Keturah created The MOVE events in 2015 as a way to bring women together regardless of their religious denomination, race, or socioeconomic status. As Director of the MOVE, Keturah has worked hard to grow this conference and its' economic impact on our region. The event now welcomes 400+ attendees and features nationally known recording artists and performers right here in our community.

Christina DeJong

Capital City Comic Con

Christina, along with Bryan Harris and Jeff Walser, created Lansing's first comic convention, Capital City Comic Con. The goal was to focus on the comic book medium, the creators who invent these imaginary worlds, and the collectibles they inspire. Christina and her team have distinguished themselves as a true comic convention by paying homage to the art form that sparks the imaginations of the attendees. This annual event has grown to include more than 1,600 attendees in 2018. In addition to the Comic Con conference, Christina uses the power comics have to ignite a hunger for reading and support literacy in Greater Lansing. By both partnering with the Capital Area Literacy Coalition and establishing the Capital City Comic Con Original Art Scholarship in Comic Studies, Christina has shown she is committed to providing the best exhibition of Comics, Collectibles & Creators in Greater Lansing while providing support to our Lansing community.

Josh Ressio

Battle for the Mitten

Most college students have their hands full with classes, holding down a job and trying to find some time to enjoy the experience. Josh Ressio has raised the bar for all college students. Through his vision, passion and dedication he developed the first ever rugby event to be held at Cooley Law School Stadium. This event pitted Michigan State University against the University of Michigan. Aptly titled, “The Battle for the Mitten”. The match was a roaring success, attracting roughly 2,000 people and showcasing Cooley Law School stadium as a flexible and attractive facility for future rugby matches-and other potential events. The event was so successful, discussion is ongoing to make this an annual event.

Caitlyn Vermiglio and Elyse Packard

Stunt National Championships

Stunt is a varsity sport derived from cheerleading and is currently the fastest growing female sport in the country, combining the athletic skills required in cheer and introduces additional stunt elements, while pitting the teams in exciting head-to-head competition. In only its eighth year of existence, college Stunt Nationals was awarded to Greater Lansing. The event brought teams from across the country to the region to compete for their National Championship. The event was streamed on the ESPN family of networks, driving additional exposure to the region. Michigan State, one of the sports powerhouse programs, also qualified for the event-providing some local flavor. The efforts to bring the event to the region and the hefty requirements to organize it were due in large measure to Caitlyn Vermiglio and Elyse Packard, who both serve as coaches for Stunt and Cheer programs at MSU.

Dr. Chinwe Effiong and Alexandra Jarvis

Michigan State University’s Youth Empowerment Programs

Through the Department of International Studies and Programs Dr Effiong and Alexandra are responsible for leveraging MSU expertise to identify and scale new opportunities for global youth education, entrepreneurship and empowerment initiatives. Dr. Effiong and Alexandra did exactly that by helping bring the Global Youth Advancement Summit to East Lansing in June 2019. The Summit will bring together 200 young leaders between the ages of 18 and 35 to address and develop innovative solutions to major challenges facing people around the world. Focusing on the grand challenge of Global Inequity, delegates will exchange ideas, showcase innovative products and services, pitch their business ventures, and build genuine networks that will enable them to collaboratively define their future in a way that is equitable, just, and sustainable.

OTHER AWARD WINNERS:

Sport Partner of the Year-Capital City Crushers

There is a good chance many in our community don’t realize how strong the sport of disc golf is in our region and how many stellar courses are located in the community. The Capital City Crushers are doing everything in their power to help elevate the sport, not only across Greater Lansing, but across the country. In 2018 the GLSA was fortunate to partner with the club to bid and host the Professional Disc Golf Associations Women’s Championship. While the club is no stranger to hosting great events, the Women’s Championship was a first for our region. The event even tied a record for the most entries ever in the competition. Because of the great work done by the club, Greater Lansing is on the map for future championship disc golf events.

Volunteer of the Year-Michigan Youth Challenge Academy

Traditionally we have recognized an individual with our Volunteer of the Year award. This year we have the opportunity to recognize an organization that not only provides volunteers for GLSA and other events, but one that is committed to providing a second opportunity for our region's youth. Michigan Youth Challenge Academy offers young people between the ages of 16-18 a chance to change and improve their lives by incorporating eight core components that encourage physical, mental and moral development. Part of the program allows select youth the chance to serve their community through volunteer service. Michigan Youth Challenge has been a big supporter of GLSA driven events over the years and have been critical to the success of many events in the region. Volunteers are the back-bone of many of our events, the leadership and students at the Michigan Youth challenge Academy are always willing to volunteer and do so efficiently and effectively.

Certified Tourism Ambassador of the Year – John and Barbara Rossi

Greater Lansing is pleased to announce Certified Tourism Ambassadors of the Year, John and Barbara Rossi. These two individuals have served as long time advocates for the Greater Lansing region for many years and are always out exploring new things to see and do in the community. One way their service to the community is represented has been with 25 straight years as volunteers of the "Be A Tourist In Your Own Town" annual event.

For more information about the Greater Lansing CVB visit www.lansing.org. For more information about the Greater Lansing Sports Authority, visit www.lansingsports.org.