



# Michigan League FOR Human Services

Annual Report 2009

*Using data-driven advocacy to improve the lives of low-income citizens*

## League rises to big challenges

In 2009, the Michigan League for Human Services rose to the enormous challenges facing Michigan with renewed determination. League staff crossed the state to explain why health care, education and other needed services for the people of Michigan are in great peril and to offer solutions. Among accomplishments, the League:

- Emerged as a go-to source on tax and revenue issues with the publication of the popular Facts Matter series outlining revenue solutions and an invitation to testify before the House Tax Policy Committee;
- Brought statewide attention to the needs of low-income children and their families by highlighting the decline of supports over several decades;
- Sponsored forums on the Recovery Act and the state budget challenges and brought in nationally recognized economist Jared Bernstein;
- Continued to find new ways to communicate through its e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, live Webcasting, e-surveys, and a reorganized Web page;
- Tracked 600 uses of League materials or comments in the traditional media;
- Alerted lawmakers to the need to decouple from the federal business depreciation rules, saving \$172 million during a tight budget year;
- Advocated successfully to protect the children’s clothing allowance, the cash assistance grant and working poor tax credits;
- Joined other organizations to advocate for early childhood programs, restoration of adult Medicaid benefits and to promote health care reform;
- Participated in key state groups working on health care, children’s issues, adult education and low-wage work; and
- Delivered important local and accessible data about child well-being, poverty, public assistance, health insurance and unemployment.



The League joined other advocates in a Capitol rally to save preschool programs for disadvantaged children



## PUBLICATIONS

The League produced some 140 reports, analyses, statements, letters and other communications throughout the year. Among key publications:

- Kids Count in Michigan Data Book
- Tracking the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in Michigan
- A Case for National Health Reform
- Michigan’s Incredible Shrinking Safety Net
- Looming Cuts in Michigan’s Budget Threaten to Widen the Gulf in Health Disparities
- Keeping the Lights on in Michigan: How a Federal Stimulus Package and Smart State Choices Will Help
- Food Assistance – Feeding Michigan’s Economy and Families
- Tax Dollars At Work
- Beer Tax: Held Harmless for Forty Years
- Senior Tax Preferences: Can Michigan Afford Such Generosity?
- (Quarterly) Economic Security Bulletin
- Tax Expenditures: Silently Draining the State Budget
- Poverty Trends in Michigan and its Counties
- Plus numerous timely budget issues, letters to policymakers and press statements.

## 2008 MLHS Contributors

### The League's national affiliations....

#### The State Fiscal Analysis Initiative

The League is part of a 38-state project that works to improve state tax and budgeting systems, strengthen policies for low- and moderate-income families and expand public debates over budget issues. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities coordinates the SFAI network. Funding in Michigan is provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Karen Holcomb-Merrill directs the state fiscal project for the League.



Holcomb-Merrill

#### Kids Count in Michigan

The Kids Count in Michigan project is part of a national network supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that provides a community-by-community picture of the condition of children. Michigan's Children is a project partner.



Zehnder-Merrell

The project produces an annual report, Kids Count in Michigan Data Book, which tracks local trends in child well-being. It also works to release the national KIDS COUNT report that measures child well-being at the state level.

Jane Zehnder-Merrell, a senior research associate, is director of the project.

#### EARN

The League is part of the Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN). It's a network of state and regional multi-issue research, policy, and advocacy groups coordinated by the Economic Policy Institute.

EARN's mission is to improve the lives of Americans through state and local policy, and change the nature of the national policy debate-state by state.

Peter Ruark, a research associate, is the director of the EARN project in Michigan



Ruark

#### Working Poor Families Project

The Working Poor Families Project (WFPF) was launched in 2002 by national philanthropic leaders who saw the need to strengthen state policies affecting these working families. The national initiative is now supported by the Annie E. Casey, Ford, Joyce and Mott foundations. The WFPF focuses on the states because many of their policies and investments critically affect the lives of working families.

#### Individuals

Joan Abbey  
Michael Addonizio  
Mary Aikey  
John Altena  
Virginia Balint  
Scott Birdsall  
Lynn Black  
Jo Ann Bohrer  
Donald & Mary Brown  
Delois W. & Wilson  
Caldwell  
Kyle & Juliann  
Caldwell  
Jim & Jan Carpenter  
Toby Citrin  
Rob & Diane Collier  
Gale R. Colwell  
Patricia Conway  
Michele Corey  
Bob Deneweth  
Doug Drake  
Patience Drake-Rosenbaum  
Gail Duncan  
Scott Dzurka  
Diane Emling  
Elizabeth Ferguson  
Dale Fickle  
Sherry Franklin  
Karl D. Gregory  
Larry Good  
David P. Hecker  
Susan Herman  
Brenda Hunt  
Frederick & Janet  
Jansen  
Joseph & Janette  
Jerrold  
Lon Johnson  
Lynn Jondahl  
Donald E. Jones  
Phyllis Killips  
Ellen Kisinger-Rothi  
Glenn Kossick  
Richard & Ann Kraft  
Marsha Kreucher  
Joyce Ladenson  
George Lafkas  
Gail Lanphear

Bob Lathrop & Carol Linteau  
Fred & Patricia Lawless  
Robert Lovell  
Alice MacDermott  
Melany Mack  
Ann Marston  
Olivia Maynard & Olof Karlstrom  
Mable Meites  
John & Debbie Mellein  
Carol Meyers  
Susan Miller & Allen Batteau  
Barbara Moorhouse  
Steve F. Morykwas  
Margaret Nielsen  
Nadine Nosal  
Robert Paramo  
Grant Parker  
Cynthia Paul  
Lana Pollack  
Peter Pratt & Linda Headley  
Judy Putnam  
Kay Randolph-Back  
Joseph & Linda Reeser  
Jim & Jane Richardson  
David Rogers  
George Rouman  
Vaira Rozentals  
Louise Sause  
Jim Schaafsma  
Mary Scoblic  
Colette Scrimger  
Kevin Seitz  
David Shaltz  
Kim Sibilsky  
Connie Soma & Tom Hinsberg  
Terri Stangl  
Kathleen Straus  
Margaret Talburtt  
Sheila Taylor  
Darrell & Jacquelyn  
Tennis  
Marianne Udow-Phillips & Bill Phillips  
George Van Antwerp  
Deborah Weatherston

Ellen Weaver  
Benjamin Wells & Nancy Stark  
Lary Wells  
Robert Wells  
Sally Wells  
David & Beverly Wiener  
Charles Wilbur  
Lisa Wilson  
Marjorie Ziefert & Chuck Kieffer  
Ruth & Andrew Zweifler

#### Organizations

Adult Well-Being Services  
American Indian Services  
Christ Fellowship  
Missionary Baptist Church  
International UAW  
MICAP  
Martin Waymire  
Advocacy Communications  
Michigan AFSCME  
Council 25  
Michigan Catholic  
Conference  
Michigan Health  
Council  
Michigan Health & Hospital Association  
Michigan Nurses  
Association  
Middle Cities Education  
Association  
Paterson Group, LLC  
Public Policy Associates  
Region 1-D, UAW  
Riverside Health Clinic  
St. Michael Parish  
UAW Local 6000  
W. K. Kellogg  
Foundation

#### HOW TO HELP

Tax-deductible donations may be made to the Michigan League for Human Services. Mail to 1115 South Pennsylvania, Suite 202, Lansing MI 48912-1658. For information on membership, go to [www.milhs.org](http://www.milhs.org).



## League advocates for those who need it most

— by Rick Garcia, executive director of United Way of St. Clair County

Advocacy is defined as the pursuit of influencing outcomes that directly affect people's lives.

Part of advocacy is speaking out about issues. Anyone can champion a cause whether they speak out to improve people's health and income or availability of services in their community.

For years, the United Way of St. Clair County has been advocating on behalf of these issues with help from the Michigan League for Human Services.

A United Way-funded agency, the Michigan League for Human Services, also known as the League, is a nonprofit, statewide policy group that uses data to educate the public and inform policymakers about issues important to low-income families.

The group takes particular interest in issues regarding the health and welfare of children. The League's roots date back to 1912 when it was known as the Conference on Charities and Corrections.

In 1938, it incorporated with the stated purpose of promoting "social well-being by facilitating the discussion of methods which will make for social progress."

The League did this by assisting charitable organizations and institutions, by disseminating information concerning

social conditions and social work and by taking action to produce practical results among individuals and charitable organizations engaged in public or private welfare work. The League compiles resources for federal, state and local policymakers, service providers and the general public. Its resources include:

- In-depth reports, fact sheets and briefs on key issues related to the public safety net and health, work and wages and budgets and taxes.
- Kids Count reports, part of a national effort to improve the lives of children.
- Presentation of information through the media to local community groups across the state about specific policy issues and programs.

In today's economic climate, our local health and human service agencies are proactively engaging local officials and state legislators to help shape public policy or to secure funding by educating officials on the hard facts—which in most cases—were provided by the League.

*Originally ran June 29, 2009 in the Port Huron Times Herald*



Garcia

## What others say about the League

"I count on MLHS for quality analysis, good data, and advocacy for the population we serve at Cabrini Clinic. I am proud that Cabrini Clinic is an organizational member of MLHS, and happy to support their good work--one of our better investments."

— **MARY ELLEN HOWARD**

Executive Director  
St. Frances Cabrini Clinic, Detroit

"Your advocacy on behalf of Michigan citizens, and especially our less fortunate family, friends, and neighbors is appreciated."

— **DOUGLAS WILLIAMS**, Director  
Department of Human Services Oakland County

"Thank you for putting together this terrific presentation! The information is incredibly useful, particularly the slide showing how breadwinners can't support families in four out of six Michigan top jobs."

— **AVERY EENIGENBURG**  
Grant Writer/Researcher  
Starfish Family Services, Inkster

"I appreciate the League's evolving efforts to keep the field informed about critical issues. The First Tuesday Newsletter and Member Alerts have an immediacy and poignancy that is helpful and brevity that makes the information approachable."

Over the years, the League's Forums have provided me with a foundation of understanding about the mechanics of state and federal budgets. The League's current communications add to my base of knowledge to improve the effectiveness of my advocacy efforts on behalf of those served in the workforce development system."

— **SUPROTIC STOTZ-GHOSH**  
Business & Community Development  
Coordinator  
W.E. Upjohn Institute/Kalamazoo-  
St. Joseph Michigan Works!

"I have long admired the work that you and your colleagues do. You make visible the life situations of our most vulnerable citizens. As their well-being has a direct impact on the well-being of all citizens, it is imperative we have this information."

— **LIZ BAUER**  
Member, State Board of Education



# The challenges have never been greater in Michigan

Over the course of the last year I have been struck by how many times I've heard praise for the work of the League. This doesn't surprise me. After all, I've been with the League since 1977 and know that the staff and the board are incredibly hard-working, talented and committed.

But these kind words come at a time when the challenges have never been greater in Michigan. Our economy has been battered, critical public services have been curbed and the needs in our communities continue to mount. The League's activities throughout 2009 were focused very carefully on addressing these challenges.

The League has played a key role in articulating the need to modernize Michigan's tax structure, to strengthen safety net programs for our most vulnerable residents, to ensure that our kids succeed, and to invest in the large pool of human capital that is currently untapped in our workforce.

These efforts have paid off. The state EITC benefit will increase to 20 percent, as scheduled. The basic cash assistance grant and the children's clothing allowance were also spared in the budget-cutting process.

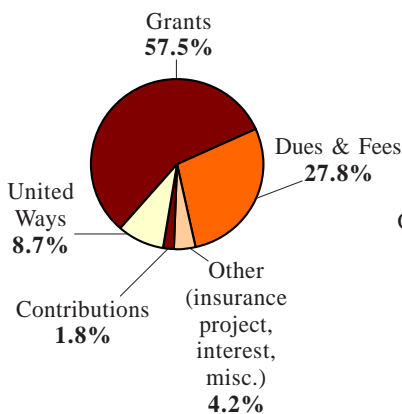
Many harmful cuts were made, however, and the state is still a ways from having its fiscal house in order. The League will continue the high quality of work, grounded in the conviction that Michigan can be a great state that cares for all of its people.



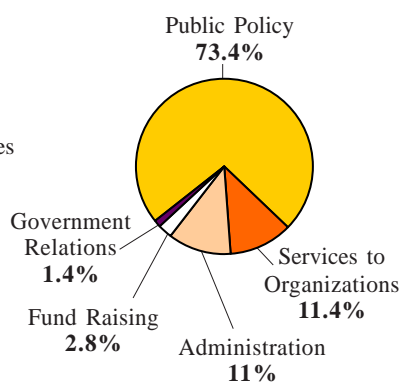
**Sharon Parks**  
President and CEO

## Sources of Funds and Expenditures—FY 2008-2009 (audited)

Sources of Funds – \$1,131,141



Expenditures – \$1,174,898



## League Staff

- Jackie Benson**, Secretary I
- Jacqui L. Broughton**, Planning/Research Associate
- Paul Diefenbach**, Data Manager
- Karen Holcomb-Merrill**, State Fiscal Project Director
- Jan Hudson**, Senior Planning/Research Associate
- Phyllis Killips**, Administrative Secretary
- Tillie Kucharek**, Secretary III
- Mary Logan**, Secretary III
- Sharon Parks**, President and CEO
- Judy Putnam**, Communications Director
- Peter Ruark**, Planning/Research Associate
- Ben Wells**, Insurance Associate
- Lawrence Wells**, Chief Operating Officer
- Jane Zehnder-Merrell**, Senior Research Associate & Director, Kids Count in Michigan

## Board of Directors

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- Marsha Kreucher\***                      **Cynthia Paul**
- Kim E. Sibilsky**                      **Robert W. Swanson\***
- Margaret A. Talburtt**

\*member of the Executive Committee



**OUR MISSION**—To help low-income people achieve economic security.

**OUR WORK**—The League is a nonpartisan, nonprofit statewide policy group that uses data-driven advocacy to improve the lives of low-income citizens. It has a network of 1,500 representing business, labor, human service professionals and faith-based organizations as well as concerned citizens.

**OUR HISTORY**—The League began in 1912 as an “independent association of citizens interested in the health and welfare of Michigan.”

**OUR SUPPORTERS**—The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Council of Michigan Foundations, the Economic Policy Institute, The Ford Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, the McGregor Fund, the Michigan Poverty Law Program, the Skillman Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

