



## Health & Community Services

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### Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Kalamazoo County Celebrates Elderhood

**Kalamazoo, Mich. [January 24, 2017]** – You are invited to *Celebrate Elderhood* in 2017! Throughout the year there will be opportunity to honor centenarians, recognize excellence in businesses, service providers, and individuals who work to serve elders, as well as an increased focus towards geriatric care and education. *Celebrate Elderhood* is a community-wide initiative to raise awareness of aging issues while showcasing how this stage of the lifecycle enriches individuals, families and the whole community.

*Celebrate Elderhood* is coordinated in partnership between the Kalamazoo County Area Agency on Aging IIIA, Kalamazoo County Older Adult Services Advisory Council and Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues. Together and with the support of many other community partnerships and volunteers, *Celebrate Elderhood's* goal is to set a standard where elders and the people and organizations that make up the network of service providers are valued, respected and supported so that Kalamazoo County is known as a great place in which to grow up and grow older in.

Primary components of the initiative include:

- Partnering with community organizations on events such as the film screening for “Being Mortal,” a documentary by Dr. Atul Gawande, hosted by Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan and the “March for Meals” hosted by Senior Services Southwest MI. Details for these events and others can be found on the *Celebrate Elderhood* webpage.
- Celebratory Luncheon on April 21, 2017 to honor and learn from those in the community who are 100 years old or older. These individuals have lived through a depression and great recession, two World Wars, Civil Rights and Women’s Rights movements, as well as the first man on the moon, presidential assassination, and discoveries in science and technology that once appeared only on *The Jetsons*!
- Scholarships for:
  - ✚ Students who plan to work with elders in a variety of disciplines; and
  - ✚ Individuals who are currently working with elders who wish to increase their understanding of dementia care.
- *Celebrate Elderhood* community recognition event on May 18, 2017. Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues (KCSI) invites the community to an event that will recognize World War II Veterans, Senior Olympians, winners of a 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing contest, and the businesses, faith-based organizations,

service providers, direct care workers, and other individuals who have been nominated for excellence, innovation, and best practices in serving the elders of Kalamazoo County.

Elderhood is not only about becoming older or aging; it is about leaving a legacy from the knowledge and experience of a lifetime of work, both paid and unpaid, that has contributed to the well-being of our community and country. Elderhood is meant to be acknowledged and celebrated!

For more information on Celebrate Elderhood, please contact Judy Sivak, Director Area Agency on Aging IIIA, at (269) 373-5153 or at [jasiva@kalcountry.com](mailto:jasiva@kalcountry.com) . To see details about upcoming events, and for the application for scholarship and recognition nomination forms, please visit [http://www.kalcountry.com/aaa/celebrate\\_elderhood.htm](http://www.kalcountry.com/aaa/celebrate_elderhood.htm)

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*Celebrate Elderhood* events are funded through individual contributions and local grants. Local grantors include the John E. Fetzer Institute Fund – Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Bronson Healthcare, Mike & Sharon Seeyle Foundation, Schupan and Sons, Disability Network Southwest Michigan, Presbyterian Villages of Michigan- Village of Sage Grove. Information on how to donate and become involved is available on the webpage.

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