

PRESS RELEASE

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City to recognize special students for cleaning streets

On Tuesday, February 26, 2008, at 5:30 p.m. the City of Muskegon will recognize a special group of students with an Honorary Ambassador Award. The students were nominated and earned the award for cleaning up trash weekly on the sidewalks, streets, and alley of a four block area. Mayor Steve Warmington and the Muskegon City Commission will hand each of the 15 Third Street Transition Center Students a certificate at the beginning of their monthly meeting at the Muskegon City Hall, City Commission Chambers, at 933 Terrace Street in downtown Muskegon.

The students, who range in age from 18 to 26, have moderate to severe disabilities. They reside in the Muskegon, Mona Shores, Ravenna, Montague, Reeths-Puffer, and Muskegon Heights school districts. They come together each week day in a community-based transition center operated by Wesley School and the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District. There they learn and practice the life skills needed to be successful.

In addition to their work cleaning up trash, the students shovel snow, rake leaves, grocery shop and clean for senior citizens who live in Jefferson Towers, clean the Neighborhood Investment offices, assist with a food give-away once a month at the Loaves & Fish Food Pantry, shred paper, and clean up yards and a small neighborhood park as needed. The students have also actively participated in Hackley Park Clean-Up Day, planted beach grass downtown, decorated three outdoor Christmas trees, and weeded, raked and planted grass at Grand City Park as part of the United Way Day of Caring.

The MAISD and Wesley School operate six Transition Centers in Muskegon County. In January one of these centers was relocated to 25 West Center Street in Muskegon Heights. The centers provide **instruction and guided practice** for students with a goal of maximizing each student's independence within the community. Students use the community classroom as "home base" as they participate in various **learning activities within the community**. Community-based vocational training, mobility skills, daily living skills, functional academics, socialization, and recreation are areas that are emphasized. Students use public transportation to access "physical education" at the YFCA, travel to work experience sites, and go shopping for necessary food items used to prepare lunches. **Specific goals** for each student's transition plans are developed by the student and his/her family in cooperation with the community classroom teacher and representatives from Community Mental Health, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and other involved community agencies.

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