

SPORTLIGHT

Winter 2023



Special Olympics

Michigan

Area 30

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Editor: Mary Adams

AREA DIRECTOR CORNER

Hello everyone! My name is Lisa Schwager, and I am the new Area Director for Area 30 Special Olympics Midland County. I am so excited to have been afforded this wonderful opportunity and am eager and enthusiastic to represent Area 30!

Just a little bit of information about myself. My sons (Lucas and Jacob) and I moved to Midland about five years ago. I immediately got Jacob involved with Special Olympics and shortly thereafter, I started volunteering my time and coaching and helping out wherever I could.

I currently am coaching Basketball, Soccer, and assisting with Flag Football. I truly am enjoying every minute of it!! When I was asked about becoming Area Director, I was thrilled to jump on board and serve this amazing program!

I am looking forward to meeting every athlete, coach, parent/guardian, and volunteer. Thank you all for your support!

Our area email is: area30@somi.org. Please use this email for any questions/concerns.

The Special Olympics phone number is still the same: 989-832-9443.

Our Area Management Team (AMT) has been reorganized. On the following page, there is a flowchart of the new AMT, along with contact information.

THANK YOU!!

Thanks to everyone who has supported our program throughout the past! With your help, our program of sports training and competition have provided our athletes an unique opportunity to further develop their true potential. Without your community spirit and support, our program would not be a success. Thanks for all your sharing, caring, and support!! We are looking forward to restarting our new year of sports training and competition.

WITH AGE COMES EXCELLENCE!!

Can you believe that our newsletter is celebrating its 31th year (*note: we did not publish the newsletter for the past three years due to Covid*). We're happy to bring you all of our Special Olympics events and activities. This would not be possible without your support—whether it be monetary or manpower. A special thanks to QRP PRINTING who prints our quality newsletter. We also thank all the athletes, parents, guardians, staff, friends, and our special volunteers who have held tough during Covid. We're glad to be back!

2023 SPORTS CALENDAR

Inside this issue is our 2023 Sports Calendar. On the back side of the calendar are our guidelines for attending state tournaments. This is a handy pull-out reference sheet, which we hope you will post on your refrigerator or other convenient place. Make sure you keep a copy of this calendar. If you misplace your copy or have not received one, call Lisa Schwager @ 989-832-9443 to get another one.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FORMS

NOW is the time to get your Special Olympics form filled out. This form needs to be signed and dated by a doctor and the athlete's legal guardian. If an athlete is their own guardian, they may sign the form. This form is valid for three years. An athlete will not be allowed to participate in Special Olympics until their form is updated. The form is available through Lisa Schwager. Call her @ 832-9443 to see if your form is current.

Lisa Schwager, Area Director
4116 Arbor Drive
Midland, MI 48640
989-832-9443
area30@somi.org

John Muisenga, Assistant Area Director
989-859-1595
jamuisenga@charter.net

CONTACT INFORMATION

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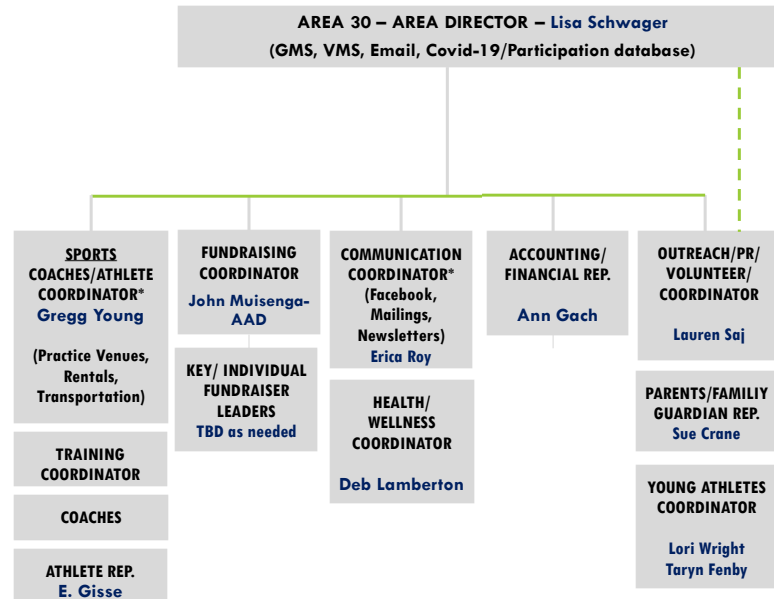
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LAUREN SAJ
Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator
586-863-3428
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AREA 30 MIDLAND ORGANIZATION CHART



* Can serve as Assistant Area Director (AAD) as needed, ie vacations, etc.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PRACTICES

by: Jerry Kaczynski, Coach

Cross Country skiing has been holding conditioning sessions on Saturday mornings @ the Rail Trail. The team of five skiers (Jim Bernard, Elizabeth Gisse, Craig Hall, Joe Kaczynski, and Laura Lamberton) have been joined by Miyami Yokomizo and her parents as we walk, talk, and enjoy the nice weather—but sadly no snow. The sessions started in December and will continue through January. Thanks to Frank How for assisting with athletes.

SNOWSHOE PRACTICES

by: Mary Adams, Coach

Snowshoe practices are being held @ Plymouth Park (by the pool) from 10:00-11:00 am on Saturday mornings during January. Thus far, we have had no snow, but we are doing conditioning practices. Athletes this year include: Kevin Davis, Kristian Davis, Bruce Fahlgren, Christina Graf, and Justine Wenzel. This is Kristian's first year of snowshoe; the other athletes are "old pros"! The following coaches/volunteers have assisted with practices: Kay Harley, Ann Gach, Lori/Kirk Wright, and Deb Schultz. It has been a fun season, and I am so thrilled to be coaching snowshoe again after a two-year hiatus.

ALPINE SKIING

by: Ann Gach, Coach

The Alpine Ski team consists of four athletes and three coaches. Our athletes are: Josh DiMercurio, Misty Holloman, Heather Wellman, and Miyami Yokomizo. Our coaches are: Ann Gach, Vince Mathews, and Lynne DiMercurio. We ski on Sunday's @ Caberfae Resort. Practices are held on January 8.22 and February 5. At our first practice, the Area 22 Saginaw Coach—Sandy VanHarren— joined us. We will ski with the Saginaw team— date to be determined. We are looking forward to an awesome season!





BASKETBALL PRACTICES

by: **Gregg Young**

Our Males basketball program started in December, and our Females basketball program started in January. We have four teams—two Male, one Female, and one Skills team. The Males teams are the Timberwolves (higher-skill level team) and the Celtics (lower-skill level team). The Female team is the Super Cats. The Shooting Stars team are our skills athletes. Following is our schedule:

Monday Evenings (Jefferson)

TIMBERWOLVES TEAM → Coach: Lisa Schwager
7:00-8:30 pm

Tuesday Evenings (Siebert Elementary)

SHOOTING STARS SKILLS TEAM →
Coaches: Paul & Maria Kalitta, Sue Crane, Erica Roy
6:30-7:30 pm

Tuesday Evenings (Jefferson)

SUPER CATS → Coach: Lauren Saj
7:00-8:30 pm

Thursday Evenings (Northeast)

TIMBERWOLVES TEAM → Coach: Lisa Schwager
7:30-9:00 pm

Friday Evenings (Jefferson)

CELTICS TEAM / Coaches → Jeff Dyer/Jeff Pitt
7:00-8:30 pm

Note: Monday evenings could be used for games by the Celtics or Super Cats as needed.

The Timberwolves and Celtics will compete in the Area 7 Alma tournament on Saturday, January 21 in Shepherd. Each team will play three games. Good luck teams!!

The Super Cats will play in the Area 7 Alma tournament on January 21. They will play three games.

The Super Cats automatically qualifies for the State Basketball tournament on March 17-18 in Grand Rapids as there is no Female District Basketball Tournament.

Good luck to all our basketball teams!! You have the best basketball coaches who are teaching you skills, technique, and sportsmanship!



DISTRICT SENIOR MALES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

by: **Gregg Young**

The District Basketball Tournament for the Senior Male teams will be held on **Friday, March 3 @ CMU**. The Celtics and the Timberwolves will compete in this tournament @ Morley Courts in Mt. Pleasant. Teams that win their respective division will then attend the State Basketball Tournament in Grand Rapids on March 17-18. Good luck to our teams!!

STATE SENIOR MALES/FEMALES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The State Seniors Males/Females Basketball Tournament will be held in Grand Rapids on **March 17-18**.

In order to attend this tournament, the Senior Male basketball teams will attend the District Basketball Tournament in Mt. Pleasant and must win their respective division in order to advance onto state competition. Our Female team will attend the State Basketball Tournament. Good luck to all the athletes!



BASKETBALL SKILLS REGIONAL TOURNAMENT

Our annual Basketball Skills Tournament will be held on **Tuesday, March 7 from 6:30-8:00 pm @ Siebert Elementary School**. Athletes will compete for medals from Midland and Roscommon. Come out and cheer on the athletes and watch them showcase their awesome basketball talents! Medals will be awarded to all athletes, and at the end, refreshments will be served by the Midland Civitan Club. This is also the last day of practice for our basketball skills athletes.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE FORM

Is your Special Olympics form up to date? If not, an athlete will not be allowed to compete until the form is current. Forms are available through Lisa Schwager; call her @ 832-9443 to check your form status.



AQUATICS PRACTICES

by: **John Muisenga, Coach**

Area 30 swimmers returned to the pool for a full 2022-23 season beginning this past October. We are looking forward to our Area 30 Regional Aquatics Meet on March 11 and the Area 9 Swim Meet in late April. We've added some new swimmers this year; we typically have 12-15 swimmers @ Northeast Pool.



REGIONAL AQUATICS MEET

Our Regional Aquatics Meet will be held on **Saturday, March 11 @ Dow High School** from **9-3 pm**. In 2019, we had 95 athletes (the most ever!) competing from Bay City, Mt. Pleasant, Roscommon, Saginaw, Traverse City, and Midland. We need volunteers to ensure the success of this regional meet. Please contact John Muisenga @ 859-1595 if you can volunteer.

TRACK-N-FIELD / BOCCE PRACTICES

Practices will start on Saturday, April 1 and continue every Saturday through May 13. Practices will be held @ **Dow High School track** from **9:30-12:00 noon**. Ann Gach is the track coach. Contact Ann @ 954-2841 if you are interested in doing track. Gregg Young is the Bocce Coach; call Gregg @ 492-2029 if you want to do Bocce.



YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM

by: **Lori Wright, YAP Coordinator**

The Young Athletes Program is designed for children aged 2-7 with intellectual and physical disabilities. We have taken sports that our athletes currently participate in and have adapted them for the younger athletes.

I am the new YAP Coordinator. We are excited to integrate our younger athletes with the rest of our Special Olympics athletes.

After a three-year hiatus, the program will tentatively start in the Fall.

If you know any young athletes that would be interested in joining, please let me know! Also, if you are interested in volunteering, we would love to have you! The parents of the young athletes will be present, but having extra volunteers would be appreciated. Contact me @ 859-1544 or klwright6@chartermi.net.



ANDY'S CURLING LEAGUE

by: **Gregg Young**

Andy's League is alive and well and going strong!!

We meet on Saturday mornings from **9:00-12:00 noon @ the Midland Curling Club** on all weekends between November 1 and March 15—when there is not a competing event. Our dates for the remainder of this season include:

- January 14.21
- February 4.11.25
- March 11

Andy's League was created for people with physical and/or developmental disabilities—along with their families, friends, and support staff. Anyone is welcome—athletes, family, and staff. There is no cost to participate. All you need is to dress warmly—air temperature on the ice is about 40°F. We will provide gripper rubbers to fit over your shoes. We use sticks to deliver the stones so anyone can do it, including people in wheelchairs. We provide all the equipment and training you will need.

The Midland Curling Club is located @ 2009 Jefferson Avenue. For more information or if you have questions, contact Gregg Young @ 492-2029 or Gregg@youngassocinc.com. Hope to see you on the ice. Curling Rocks!

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MICHIGAN (SOMI) NEW IMPROVED WEBSITE

Check out the SOMI website. It is very easy and user friendly. To view our area webpage, follow these steps:

1. Log into the website → www.somi.org
2. Click on: "Find Your Local Area" on top of the page
3. Select "Northern Region", then "Area 30"

This page is specific to our area and has many forms you can access. Our sports and contact information is listed. We also have a link to our area Facebook page. This webpage is updated continuously. Feel free to share this with your family, friends, co-workers, etc.

Any questions, contact Erica Roy @ 989-418-9859 or email: ericadavis9009@gmail.com

Do you know someone who could benefit from participating in Special Olympics sports training and competition? If so, contact our Area Director—Lisa Schwager @ 989-832-9443 or area30@somi.org. Special Olympics athletes develop physical fitness and self-confidence that helps them succeed at home, school, and work.

2023 SPORTS CALENDAR

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MIDLAND COUNTY

Basketball Practices

January - March

Location: Jefferson Middle School

7:00-8:30 pm (Monday)

7:00-8:30 pm (Friday)

Location: Northeast Middle School

7:30-9:00 pm (Tuesday)

7:30-9:00 pm (Thursday)

Location: Siebert Elementary

6:30-7:30 pm (Tuesday - SKILLS)

Cross-Country Practices

Saturday mornings

January 7.14.21.28

10:00-12:00 noon

Location: Rail Trail

Snow Shoe Practices

Saturday mornings

January 7.14.21.28

10:00-11:00 am

Location: Plymouth Park

Alpine Skiing Practices

Sunday (all day)

January 8.22

February 5

Location: Caberfae Ski Resort

Aquatics Practices

Wednesday evenings

January - May

October - December

7:00-8:30 pm

Location: Northeast Middle School

POLAR PLUNGE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, February 18

9:00-3:00 pm

Location: Dow Diamond

Basketball Skills Regional Tournament

Tuesday, March 7

6:30-8:00 pm

Location: Siebert Elementary

District Males Basketball Tournament*

Friday, March 3

Location: Mt. Pleasant

Regional Aquatics Tournament

Saturday, March 11

9:00-3:00 pm

Location: Dow High School Pool

State Basketball Tournament

March 17-18

Location: TBD

Male Teams must qualify; Female teams will attend

Young Athletes Program

TBD

Track-n-Field/Bocce Practices

Saturday mornings

April 1.8.15.22.29 / May 6.13.20

9:30-12 noon

Location: Dow High School Track

WALK-A-THON FUNDRAISER

Saturday, May 20

9:30-10:30 am

Location: Dow High School Track

Area Summer Games

Saturday, May 20

11:00-3:00 pm

Location: Dow High School Track

State Summer Games

May 31 - June 2

Location: CMU, Mt. Pleasant

Family Hall of Fame Banquet

Wednesday, August 16

6:00-8:00 pm

Location: Plymouth Park, Shelter F

Golf Practices

Saturday afternoons

June - September

1:00-4:00 pm

Location: Currie Golf Course

Soccer Practices*

June - August (TBD)

6:00-7:30 pm

Location: Midland Soccer Complex

Softball Practices*

June - August (TBD)

6:00-8:00 pm

Location: Midland High School

Softball Skills Practices*

June - August (TBD)

6:00-7:30 pm

Location: Midland Miracle Field

Softball Skills Tournament

Tuesday, August 22

6:00-8:00 pm

Location: Midland Miracle Field

Cycling Practices*

July - September (TBD)

4:30-5:30 pm

Location: Midland Tridge (Rail Trail)

Flag Football Practices

September - October

6:00-8:00

Location: Midland High School

GOLF OUTING FUNDRAISER*

TBD in August

8:00-3:00 pm

Location: Sandy Ridge Golf Course

State Fall Games*

(Soccer/Softball)

TBD

LETR FUNDRAISER*

TBD in September

4:30-7:00 pm

Location: Law Enforcement Center

State Fall Games*

(Flag Football/Cycling/Golf)

TBD

AREA 30 SPECIAL OLYMPICS GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE AT STATE TOURNAMENTS

Following are a list of guidelines for selecting athletes to attend state tournaments (i.e. basketball, soccer, track, softball, etc):

1. PRACTICE

To qualify for a state tournament, the athlete must attend a minimum of six (6) practices. All of our sport seasons consist of at least an 8-week training program. It is only fair to take an athlete to the state meet who participated in the training and competition versus an athlete who has not. Our philosophy is that an athlete who is not trained will not be ready for sports competition.

2. FREQUENCY

This means how many times an athlete attends a state tournament. Generally, athletes that have never been to a state meet or have not attended one within the past year will be selected. However, there are exceptions. For example, it is the swimming coach's discretion to choose the swimmers; many of our swimmers have been in the program for years, and they may be continuously selected to attend the state swimming tournament. If an athlete participates in all the Special Olympics sport events (i.e. soccer, basketball, softball, etc), *generally* they are not chosen to attend the summer games. WE TRY TO BE AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE. WE WANT EVERYONE TO HAVE THEIR TURN; HOWEVER, THEY MUST FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES TO BE CONSIDERED.

3. INDEPENDENT

The athlete must be fairly independent. The chaperones have responsibility for four (4) athletes and cannot be expected to devote their full attention to just 1 athlete. We do not and will not have time to "pamper" them; one must not stifle the ability an athlete has if allowed to show it. THIS IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR THE ATHLETE. Let's not ruin it by suffocating the athlete.

4. BEHAVIOR

The athlete must display good behavior. They must be able to take DIRECT ORDERS from the chaperones. They must behave appropriately. We will tolerate misbehavior at times; however, we will not endure misbehavior constantly from anyone.

NOTE: Misbehavior consists of the following: bad attitude, unwilling to listen or cooperate, stealing, unexplained absences, excessive foul language, overly aggressive behavior, running away, etc.

5. ATTITUDE

If an athlete refuses a ribbon or medal at a state tournament, they will not be allowed to attend that specific tournament of a period of 1 year.

6. UPDATED FORMS

In order for an athlete to participate, their Special Olympics Health Appraisal Form must be updated. This form includes a medical portion, which needs to be signed and dated by a doctor, and the legal guardian section which needs to be signed and dated by the athlete's legal guardian. If an athlete is their own guardian, they may sign that portion.

FUNDRAISING NEWS!

POLAR PLUNGE 2023

Our second annual Polar Plunge will take place on **Saturday, February 18 @ Dow Diamond**. Registration starts @ 11 am. There is also a virtual 5K option to support Special Olympics. Portions of monies will go to our area. Any questions, contact John Muisenga @ 859-1595 or jamuisenga@charter.net.

SPONSOR-A-CHAMP FUNDRAISER

Our annual SAC fundraising campaign is planned for April/May. This fundraiser will help support our "full" return to State Summer Games @ CMU this June.



WALK-A-THON FUNDRAISER—MAY 20



Our second annual Walk-A-Thon will be held on Saturday, May 20 @ the Dow High track, preceding our Area Summer Games Meet. Sue Crane will be coordinating this fundraiser. More details to follow. Thanks Sue!

WHEELHOUSE/GOLF OUTING—AUGUST 6

Mark your calendar for the third annual Wheelhouse/Special Olympics Midland Golf Outing to be held @ Sandy Ridge Golf Course on Sunday, August 6. More details will be coming in the Spring. We are grateful to have Chris Noel coordinate this golfing event.



FALL SPAGHETTI DINNER/ATHLETE APPRECIATION DAY

This fundraiser and the Athlete Appreciation day details are being discussed. However, no dates have yet been determined. More information will be forthcoming.

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!!

Have you "LIKED" us on Facebook? We post several times/week. Check out all the latest happenings on our Facebook page: www.Facebook.com/Midland.Area30

Erica Roy is our administrator. Feel free to contact her if you would like something added to the page.

- Erica Roy—ericadavis9009@gmail.com

AMANDA BROWN POETRY

Amanda is a Special Olympics athlete who is multi-talented. Besides participating in sports, she is also an accomplished photographer and poet. We are proud to publish Amanda's beautiful poetry and hope you enjoy future poetry from Amanda.

INSPIRATION

By: Amanda Brown

You don't even know how
you think how you affect
me in some amazing ways
like my faith and my

Endurance, it was you
that taught me "what
you do to others, others
will do to you" I

Want to make a difference to
the world like you do
I want to impact others
and to be heard too

I hope you know I
love you so and I
use what you taught me
through all my years with you.

AREA 30 WELCOMES NEW ATHLETES!

Welcome to the following athletes who have
joined our program within the past two years:

*Anna Barnes
Kristian Davis
Betsy Johnston
Cathy Knox
Renee Morris
Christina Oliver
Cody Packard
John Rummer
Josh Shouse
Jessalynne Smith*

THANK YOU!!

A special THANK YOU to the following people and organizations for their generous contributions:

- *Charles Davis*
- *Interstate 46 LLC*
- *Knights of Columbus #8043*
- *Deb/Brian Lamberton*
- *Midland Civitan Club*
- *United Way*

THANK YOU to **ABVM Catholic Church** for their annual donation from their Fall Rummage Sale.

THANK YOU to the donors that gave a memorial donation in honor of **Larry Houghtaling**.

THANK YOU to the donors who gave a memorial donation in honor of **Dennis/Ricky Blevins**. The contributions are still coming in so donors will be listed in the Spring newsletter.

A special thank you to everyone who contributed to our pop can drive coordinated by Chris Burns these past two years.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!!

Thank you to THE STROSACKER FOUNDATION for a generous grant!! This grant will help cover registration expenses. This is our largest expense.

The generosity of The Strosacker Foundation will help keep our program running, and will benefit many Special Olympians within our community.

We sincerely thank you for your community support and goodwill!



Birthdays

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY To Our
Special Athletes and Volunteers!**

October

Jameson Baker
Jennifer Banaszak
Tanner Bowerson
Jen Chwastek
Jacob Crane
Cathy Knox
Sue Haremski
Laura Lorenzo
Vince Mathews
Jan McNeil
Duane Moe
Karen Muehlfelt
Dustin Sutton
Kendall Thiel
Matt Waibel
Elaine Yokomizo
Jim Yokomizo

December

Jon Donker
Sara Gach
Frank How
Hollie Kayden
Tina Kocsis
Mike Logsdon
Tony Peariso
Lauren Saj
Josh Shouse
Tim Spitnale
Dave Stickles
Eric Strack
Jon Thiel
Candice Weeks
Devon Zimmerman

November

Mary Adams
Jim Baker
Jacob Balcirak
Lynne DiMercurio
Blake Douroujalian
Thomas Drout
Ann Gach
Lindsay Haremski
Betsy Johnston
Laura Lamberton
Tucker Mashue
Kevin Moe
Gordon Powell
Steve Roy
Carter Roy-Davis

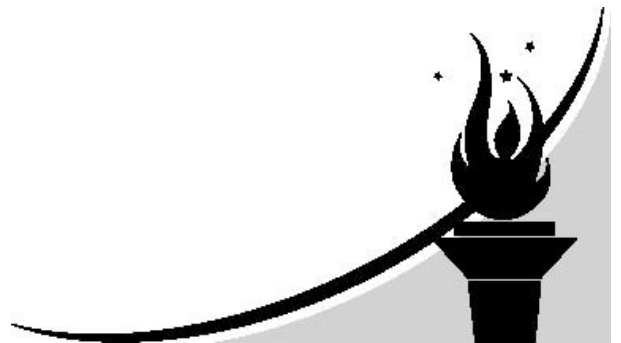
January

Jenny Adamcik
Lincoln Barringer
Gilian Bond
Jeff Butkiewicz
Sue Crane
Justin Dyer
Robert Goulette
Kyle Hutek
Mary Kaczynski
Brayden Meyers
Silas Pitt
Matt Teer
Andy Tudethout



A BLAST FROM THE PAST!!!





COME SHARE THE SPIRIT OF AREA 30 SPECIAL OLYMPICS

- ☐ Send information on enrolling athletes in Special Olympics
- ☐ Send information on volunteering for Special Olympics
- ☐ Send information on how I can involve my organization
- ☐ Accept the enclosed tax-deductible contribution

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to: Area 30 Special Olympics, 4116 Arbor Drive, Midland, MI 48640
or Contact: Lisa Schwager, Area Director (989)832-9443 / area30@somi.org