



CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER FROM CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Winter 2013

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Township Board:

Supervisor:

Rob Beahan; 949-1500
rbeahan@cascadetwp.com

Clerk:

Ron Goodyke; 949-1508
rgoodyke@cascadetwp.com

Treasurer:

Ken Peirce; 949-6944
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

Trustees:

Jim Koessel
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com

Cynthia Porter Janes
cjanes@cascadetwp.com

Jack Lewis
jlewis@cascadetwp.com

Fred Goldberg
fgoldberg@cascadetwp.com

Department Phone Numbers:

Manager:

Ben Swayze; 949-1500
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

Assessing:

Roger McCarty; 949-6176
roger@cascadetwp.com

Building & Grounds:

Amy Waugh; 682-4836
awaugh@cascadetwp.com

Building Inspections:

Brian Wilson; 949-3765
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

Fire:

John Sigg; 949-1320
jsigg@cascadetwp.com

Planning:

Steve Peterson; 949-0224
speterson@cascadetwp.com

Sheriff / Non-Emergency:
632-6100



FROM THE
SUPERVISOR
ROB BEAHAN

2013 is starting off with significant changes in the Cascade Township office. Brian Wilson will now head the Building Department, taking over after the retirement of Butch Visser. Brian has been with the Cascade Building Department for five years and lives in Cascade with his family.

Also, this past fall, when Bill Cousins announced his intent to retire as Township Manager effective end of January 2013, the Board was able to contract with the Michigan Municipal League to help conduct a search for candidates for the position of Manager. We were quite fortunate that the search process resulted in a significant number of highly qualified candidates applying for consideration.

Cascade Township utilized the Michigan Municipal League as well as our Personnel Committee, which is made up of Trustees Jack Lewis and Jim Koessel, and myself to select the ten strongest candidates for interviews. Once again, we were very fortunate to have the difficult task of finalizing a short list of three candidates to present to the entire board at a public meeting.

After that meeting and interviews with the finalists the Board determined that the position be offered to Ben Swayze. At that time Ben was the City Administrator for Milan, Michigan where he also served as Parks and Recreation Director as well as Public Works Director. Ben started in his new role here as Cascade Manager on January 21st and expects to move here shortly with his wife and four young children.

Please join me in congratulating both Brian and Ben in their new roles at the Township offices. I am confident that these individuals along with our professional and dedicated staff will continue to help us guide Cascade into the future.

GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON JUNE 9, 2013 CONTINUES TO GROW YOUTH IN TRIATHLON

(Grand Rapids, MI) – Tris4Health races, Grand Rapids Triathlon is proud to announce it has received yet another endorsement. Earlier in the season the Grand Rapids Triathlon announced it was chosen for the 2nd year in a row as the one and only Talent ID race in the state of MI – a designation that makes youth participating in this event on the radar for the next US Olympic Triathlon Team. In addition, this event was recently given the Governor’s Council Endorsement as well. Today the Grand Rapids Triathlon announces it has been chosen as the first triathlon in the season for the Mideast Collegiate Triathlon circuit. This means there are thousands of college-level athletes who will be looking at the Grand Rapids Triathlon as part of their race season in 2013.

Known for its personal record course and locale, the 3rd Annual Grand Rapids Triathlon is scheduled for Sunday, June 9th 2013. It takes place in Ada and Cascade Townships, providing a triathlon that interests the beginner to advanced triathlete.

For more information on the Grand Rapids Triathlon:

Contact: Andy Vidro
616.805.3059

www.grandrapidsriathlon.com



GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON 2013

Huntington FOX | MOTORS

EAST PRECINCT NEWS

Spring is shortly around the corner and so are solicitors. Remember that Cascade Township has a solicitation ordinance. That said solicitor has to have a permit to knock on your door (non profit are exempt). They should have an ID card from the township and it must be visible.

This permit from the Township means that the person has had some type of screening done. The solicitor must meet standards before he/she can solicit door to door in your community. Those that do not get a permit may have been denied or would not have passed the screening process from the Township.

We encourage citizens to call the Sheriff's office if non permitted solicitors are in your neighborhood. Dispatch non emergency number is (616) 632-6100.

Along with the warmer weather, more people will be outside walking and biking. Be cautious of them. Please watch speed and pay close attention especially in neighborhoods. I have a few bike safety tips to remind you before spring.

- WEAR A HELMET
- WEAR BRIGHT REFLECTIVE COLORS
- DON'T RIDE AFTER DARK
- RIDE WITH TRAFFIC IF IN THE ROAD
- OBEY TRAFFIC LAWS
- BE CAUTIOUS OF VEHICLES

Be Safe and Aware,

Deputy Ryan Roe
Kent County Sheriff Department
Ryan.roe@kentcountymi.gov



Invasive Species: In Your Neighborhood!

Learn how to identify and eradicate invasive plants.
Sponsored by Cascade Charter Township.

For adults

Sunday, February 10
at 2:00 PM

Cascade Township Branch
2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE

KDL Information.
Kent District Library Ideas.
Excitement!

616-784-2007 • www.kdl.org

WINTER TAXES

The Winter property taxes are due on or before Thursday, February 14, 2013.

If you did not receive a tax statement, please check the township's website or call the Treasurer's office at 616-949-6944. The last day that we will accept 2012 property tax payments is Thursday February 28, 2013.

ELECTION NEWS

Lowell School Voters Only Precinct Location Change

The Lowell Schools are having a millage renewal vote on February 26, 2013. Cascade Township voters in Precinct #5, who normally vote at the Thornapple Community Reformed Church, are asked to vote at the Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church located at 6595 Cascade Road, which is on the Northeast corner of Burton St. and Cascade Road, **for this election only.**

TAX PAYMENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

With the IRS income tax filing deadline approaching, Cascade Township property taxpayers may need to verify the amount of property tax paid in 2012. For your convenience, this information is available thru a link on the Township's website. The link will connect you to our software provider, BS&A, for information on property taxes and assessing information.

Instructions for the link on the website are:

- Assessing Information (from Quick Links)
- **IS Cascade Township (BS&A)**
- Current Tax Search (on the left side of the screen)
- Click in the box marked Parcel Number (you may also search by name or street). Click "Search" when the criterion is entered for your inquiry.
- Click on Parcel Number (This will give you the payment history of the parcel. Click on (+) sign for a detailed history.

DOG LICENSES FOR 2013

Dog licenses are available at the Township office until the end of February. License fees are: \$26.00 or \$13.00 (seniors), and if your dog is spayed or neutered \$12.00 or \$6.00 (seniors). The cost of a dog license doubles after March 1, 2013, and they may only be purchased at the Kent County facilities. Please call the Cascade Township Treasurer's office at 616-949-6944 if you have any questions regarding dog licenses.

FROM THE DESK OF YOUR ASSESSOR.....

Assessment Change Notices will be mailed on or before February 25, 2013.

If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1st, please call our office. Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes at the county level can take up to eight weeks.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- if there was a transfer of ownership in 2012;
- if there is a Principal Residence Exemption on your property for 2013. **If you purchased the property in 2012, please check the PRE status carefully. Contact the Assessor office if the PRE status is wrong.**

Board of Review will hear assessment appeals on March 11 and 12, 2013.

- Appointments will be made beginning on March 1. An appeal application and instructions will be mailed to you when you make an appointment.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available in the Assessor's Office and in the Cascade Township Library beginning February 27.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of your letter and supporting documents must be received no later than March 12, 2013. Please send them to:

Cascade Township Board of Review
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

- An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for residential properties. Commercial / Industrial properties do not have to appeal to the Board of Review to appeal to the State.

PROPOSAL A Reminders...

Property Transfer Affidavits must be filed with the assessor for any transfer of ownership that occurred in 2012.

Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions ...

Filing deadline for new exemptions is June 1, 2013. Filing deadline for Winter only exemption is November 1, 2013. Exemptions in effect January 1, 2013, stay in effect for the calendar year.

You must **rescind** your exemption within 90 days of the date you no longer either own or occupy the property as your principal residence. Exemptions expire on December 31st of the year you move out.

Taxable Value Cap ...

It is the **taxable** value that is capped by Proposal A – not the assessed value. The taxable value is used to calculate your taxes and is capped at 5%, or rate of inflation, unless there was a transfer of ownership in 2012, any new construction, field work, reappraisal changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2012, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2013 because the taxable value was uncapped.

1.024 % is the inflation rate established by the State for 2013.

A special note to those who have purchased property in Cascade Township during the last year... Proposal A does not authorize the assessor to automatically set the assessed value of a property which has sold at one half of the sale price. An individual sale price may or may not be a good indicator of the true cash value of the property for a variety of reasons. Section 27(5) of the General Property Tax Act states that *"the purchase price paid in a transfer of property is not the presumptive true cash value of the property transferred."*

Did you know?

- Annual changes of assessment are based on sales in the neighborhood. We have at least 75 sales neighborhoods in Cascade. Your neighborhood rarely consists of just the homes on your street.
- Your taxable value can never exceed your assessed value.
- The June 1st filing deadline for Principal Residence Exemptions applies to new applications only. You do not need to reapply each year.
- It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your property record card periodically to be sure you agree with all the information that is currently of record.
- The assessing staff is available Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Feel free to come in or call 949-6176 if you have any questions on your property. The assessing system is quite complex, and we are always willing to help our taxpayers understand how the system works.
- **The assessor is not permitted by State Law to automatically set your new assessment at one half of your purchase price.**

BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

Barbara Manus-Averill
John Meyer
Sara Fazio

RETIRED BUT NOT GONE

Bill Cousins, Township Manager

By the time you read this newsletter, I will be three weeks into my new life as a retiree. My last day serving as the Cascade Township Manager was January 25th. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Cascade – to the point that I am staying here in retirement! While my wife and I will be doing a lot of exploring throughout Michigan in retirement (I will be snowmobiling in the UP when this newsletter is published), we will continue to call “Cascade” home.

“Thank You” to every resident that called me with a question, concern or suggestion during my tenure in Cascade. I worked hard to insure that your needs were met. I also thank my employees for their dedication to the residents. Cascade is a great place because we have dedicated employees looking out for the welfare of the residents. God Bless you all!

WATER & SEWER RATES DECLINE

Bill Cousins, Township Manager

Users of municipal water and sewer services in Cascade will notice a pleasant surprise on their next bill – lower rates! The typical user paid \$116.60 quarterly for water and \$143.49 for sewer usage in 2012. In 2013, the bills will reflect a \$5.78 decrease for the water use, and \$7.44 decrease for sewer use. This will amount to an annual savings of \$52.88. The new rates put us just below what we paid for water in 2011 – Good news!!

Cascade Township, along with our neighbors to the west and north, buy water/sewer services from the City of Grand Rapids. The City has worked very hard over the past few years to improve the efficiency of their services to reduce costs while continuing to improve the service quality. They have reduced and combined positions, purchased software to improve operations, and even combined similar activities in multiple departments (combining all customer service functions into one as an example). The Utility Advisory Board (UAB), which all the ‘customer’ communities of the water system are members, has been heavily involved in examining the improvements and making recommendations to the City Commission.

It is important to keep in mind that these improvements, both in quality of service and costs of service, have been accomplished while insuring that the water we drink is of the highest quality possible. The municipal water we consume is tested and treated daily to ensure it is safe to drink. Well users typically have their water tested once during the time they own their home (when they move in).

The water/sewer system will continue to look at ways to improve and save money in the future. Cascade and Kentwood water users will see the costs associated with the construction of the new water tower on Patterson at 33rd St. incorporated in the 2014 bills. The UAB meeting in January included a discussion of improvements that will cost about \$1,200,000 to implement and (from similar actions in other systems) will result in annual savings of \$6,000,000 within three years. Stay tuned!

CASCADE TWP TAXES – SHOW ME THE MONEY!

Bill Cousins, Township Manager

Winter tax payments are due by February 14th. Have you ever wondered where the money goes? This article will show you! The 2012 Summer and Winter taxes are summarized below. Should you have questions after reading this article, please contact the Township Office for answers.

For comparison purposes, the figures used in this article show the tax burden for a single family home that is a principal residence for the family living in it that has a fair market value of \$200,000 (taxable value \$100,000). However, the percentages shown will apply to all homes in the Township (note: There is a small variance among the three school districts in the Township – Forest Hills is used in this example). To keep it simple, hydrant taxes and street light fees are not included as many do not have them.

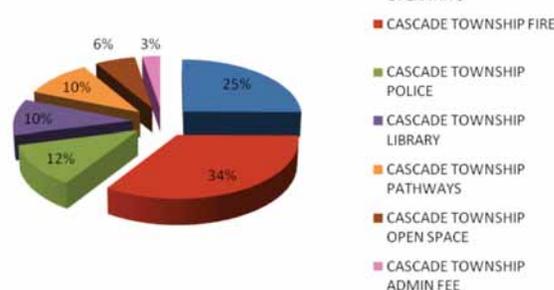
The total taxes paid for the \$200,000 house to satisfy the 2012 tax bills comes to \$3,172.75. The chart below shows the distribution of your taxes. Only \$407.67 (12.85%) of that total is kept by the Township. The rest is forwarded to the County (19.77%) and the educational community (67.38%). The Township’s portion represents a cost for you of \$1.12 per day for the services provided by the Township.

A second chart shows how the township’s portion of the taxes is distributed to each activity of the Township. What does the \$1.12 get you? It pays for the Township office to be open and staffed. It pays for the bond that covered the construction of the Wisner Center (Library). It pays for the East Precinct Sheriff Deputies that patrol our Township. It pays for the parks to be open and maintained including cleaning of the picnic facilities and restrooms. The pathways are maintained as a result of the township’s portion of your taxes. The \$1.12 pays for the planning & zoning functions in the township and covers the costs associated with enforcing the codes. And, it pays for the Fire Department to be staffed, trained and ready to come to our aid in a medical crisis, car accident or fire. That’s a lot for \$1.12!!! As was noted at the beginning of this article, if you have any questions about your taxes, please stop in or call us at 949-1500.

Tax Breakdown per Taxing Authority



Cascade Township Operating Funds



FOREST HILLS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Membership to the FHBA is open to all entities doing business in the Forest Hills area. Membership runs from January through December and is priced at \$150. 2013 memberships are now available! Call for more information on memberships; 616-481-5274 or visit our website: www.foresthillsbusinessassociation.com

Upcoming events are highlighted below:

February 14 –
TWO MEN AND A TRUCK®/
INTERNATIONAL, Inc.
7:30 am - 9:00 am
Featuring: Jon C. Sorber,
One of the Stick Men

March 14 –
HEALTH IN THE BUSINESS PLACE
7:30 am - 9:00 am

March 16 -
FOREST HILLS COMMUNITY EXPO!
9:30 am - 2:30 pm
@ Ada Christian School

Stay informed with Forest Hills information on the Forest Hills Business Association Facebook page and LinkedIn!

Upcoming meetings are open to the public at a \$25 fee.



CASCADE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Cascade Community Foundation is now accepting grant applications for Spring of 2013. Grants from this fund address the needs throughout Cascade and the Greater Forest Hills Area typically focusing on Community Building, Community Enhancement and Community Events. A typical grant award is between \$100 and \$5,000.

<p>Nurturing Neighbors</p> <p><i>Community Benefit Fund</i></p>	<p>Enhancing Places:</p> <p><i>Community Enhancement Fund</i></p>	<p>Connecting Community:</p> <p><i>Activities Fund</i></p>
<p>The Community Benefit Fund provides support to the essential physical and emotional needs of our neighbors to help ensure all community members feel safe and have opportunities to make healthy choices.</p>	<p>In the greater Cascade area, open spaces and wooded environments are more than just scenery. The Community Enhancement Fund helps make these places hubs of activity where neighbors can live and play.</p>	<p>When neighbors connect, communities take root. Grants from the Community Activities Fund, help neighbors come together to share stories and enjoy the treasures that make our community great.</p>

Applications are due by 5 pm, Friday, March 15, 2013. Applications will then be reviewed by the CCF Grants Committee and final decisions will be made by the Board of Directors during their April meeting.

Applicants must be organizations with 501(c) IRS status. To be considered, an organization should use the application available online at cascadecommunityfoundation.com.

Funding for the biannual grants awarded by CCF is made available through earnings on the Foundation's General Endowment. Donations to the CCF endowment fund from individuals and corporations are always welcome and provide a way to make a permanent investment in the community for ever-changing needs. For more information, go to the website at www.cascadecommunityfoundation.com or contact Jim Williams, at (616) 456-1613.



CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Attention mystery lovers! The Cascade Historical Society has a number of unidentified photographs and we ask your help in solving the mystery of their identities. Most are undated but appear to have been taken between the 1890's and about 1940.

Do you recognize this woman? Look carefully. Does her face look like someone you know? The inscription on the back reads, "Taken on 21st birthday, June 29, 1908.

If you know who this young woman is, please call 942-9276.



LAUNCH HISTORICAL SITE PROGRAM

The Cascade Historical Society has launched a program to mark Cascade Historical Sites with special Historical Site plaques. There are numerous sites around the township which have significant importance and should be recognized as such, according to Society members.

The first site to be recognized is the original Town Hall located at 2839 Thornapple River Drive. The building was built in 1898 and first served as the township hall. Later it was used as the library until the Wisner Center opened. It now serves as a museum.

The criteria for designation includes:

1. The site has significant character that is relevant to Cascade Township and the larger community.
2. Character is defined solely or in part by age, interest, the value as part of the development heritage or cultural characteristics of the Cascade Township community.
3. Is the site of an historical event.
4. Exemplifies the cultural political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.
5. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.
6. Owing to its unique location or physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood or the community as a whole.
7. The Cascade Historical Society retains the authority to make decisions based on these or other criteria as deemed appropriate.

Those who wish to submit a site for recognition may send a letter describing the location and photos of the site. The Cascade Historical Society will evaluate the application to determine if it qualifies. If it meets the criteria outlined, the owner may purchase a Cascade Historical Site plaque for \$50. For more information, contact the Cascade Historical Society, 2865 Thornhills Ave., SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546.



CARBON MONOXIDE - THE INVISIBLE KILLER: TIPS TO PREPARE HOME HEATING SOURCES FOR WINTER USE AND PREVENT CO POISONING

Each year in America, more than 150 people die from accidental non-fire related carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning associated with consumer products. These products include faulty, improperly-used or incorrectly-vented fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces.

Cascade Inspection Services would like you to know that there are simple steps you can take to protect yourself from deadly carbon monoxide fumes.

Understanding the Risk

What is carbon monoxide?

CO, often called "the silent killer," is a gas you cannot see, taste, or smell. It can be created when fossil fuels, such as kerosene, gasoline, coal, natural gas, propane, methane or wood do not burn properly.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

CO poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers or cars left running in garages.

What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, nausea and drowsiness. Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal.

CO Alarm Installation

- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Install and maintain CO alarms inside your home to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.
- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each separate sleeping area, on every level of the home, and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, have CO alarms that are interconnected throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Combination smoke-CO alarms must be installed in accordance with requirements for smoke alarms.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.

CO Alarms: Testing and Replacement

- Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace them if they fail to respond correctly when tested. The sensors in CO alarms have a limited life. Replace the CO alarm according to manufacturer's instructions or when the end-of-life signal sounds.

- Know the difference between the sound of the CO alarm and the smoke alarm, and their low-battery signals. If the audible low battery signal sounds, replace the batteries or replace the device. If the CO alarm still sounds, get to a fresh air location and call 9-1-1 or the fire department.
- To keep CO alarms working well, follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

CO Precautions

- Have fuel-burning heating equipment (fireplaces, furnaces, water heaters, wood stoves, coal stoves, space heaters and portable heaters) and chimneys inspected by a professional every year.
- Open the damper for proper ventilation before using a fireplace.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home. The CO gas might kill people and pets.
- When purchasing new heating and cooking equipment, select products tested and labeled by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid CO poisoning. Keep the venting for exhaust clear and unblocked.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Never run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked with snow, ice or other materials. The CO gas might kill people and pets.
- Make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris.
- Only use barbecue grills outside, away from all doors, windows, vents and other building openings. Some grills can produce CO gas. Never use grills inside the home or the garage, even if the doors are open.
- Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from all doors, windows, vents and other building openings to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the home.

If Your CO Alarm Sounds

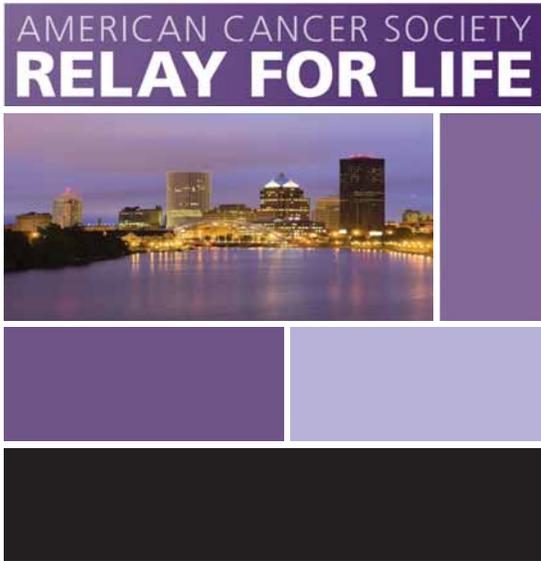
- Immediately move to a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window or door). Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.
- Call 9-1-1 or the fire department from a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window). Remain at a fresh air location until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.



Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE.
Grand Rapids MI 49546
phone: 616.949.1500
fax: 616.949.3918
www.cascadetwp.com

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You Are Invited!

Relay For Life of Forest Hills Kickoff Party

Come and join in the fun! You will receive your *Road Map For A Cure* and learn more about this year's **Bright Lights & Big Cities Relay Event**. Please join your proud community and help the Relay For Life of Forest Hills in the fight against cancer. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Wednesday, February 20, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.
Ada Christian School (Our new Relay location)
6206 Ada Drive SE, Ada, MI 49301

- For more information, please contact:
- Jamie Brenner, Event Co-Chair, at jamiebre@gmail.com
 - Allison Brenner, Event Co-Chair, at allie1323@gmail.com
 - Kayla Eaton, Team Development Chair, at centralkay@gmail.com
 - Rita Goggins, ACS Staff Partner, at rita.goggins@cancer.org


Celebrate. Remember. Fight Back.®
RelayForLife.org | 1.800.227.2345

Check out our website: www.RelayForLife.org/foresthillsmi