



www.manisteecountydemocrats.us

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On January 20, 2021 many Americans took an anxious breath in and released a collective sigh of relief as President Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris took their oaths of office without incident. After four years of unprecedented attacks on facts, science, and our democracy we can finally watch as decency and civility are restored to the White House and our nation. As we look to the future, I am hopeful and optimistic that we will see a moderately progressive agenda bringing stability to our country and return faith in democracy to our allies and the world.

As we catch our breath under the new democratic administration, we mustn't become idle at all. There is much work to be done locally, nationally, and globally. Our country is on the verge of real and lasting change that has the possibility to enhance and improve Americans' lives, but democracy is hard-fought and comes with sacrifice, vigilance, and the commitments we make to each other and our beliefs. As pandemic fatigue sets in, it is too easy to stay in our homes, wait, and let someone else roll up their sleeves to do the hard things. With this newly found democratic steam, let us band together and rise stronger than we ever have for ourselves, each other, and Manistee County.

Rebecca Amidon,
MCDP Secretary

MONTHLY INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Informational meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 PM via virtual ZOOM Meetings. February's guest speaker is Covid-19 Contact Tracer Meresa Salisbury. March's guest speaker will be Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel. The Zoom link can be found at www.manisteecountydemocrats.us/ Please join us to learn more about our community and ways you can be involved.

NEW GREEN NEWSLETTER OPTION

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, efficient, and cost effective, the MCDP will now provide an option to opt out of a paper newsletter and deliver your newsletter via email if you choose. If this green option appeals to you, please email Rebecca Amidon at rebeccalamidon@gmail.com.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR



John Helge

Well, it is one down and eleven to go in 2021 and what a ride it has been so far! Can you believe that we witnessed a President of the United States pressure the Georgia Secretary of State to overturn a certified election, and a few days later we got to watch that same guy incite a violent, deadly insurrection by his cult of followers? In spite of all this our fragile democracy prevailed and we experienced the return of dignity and grace to the executive branch at the inauguration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. They have wasted no time getting to work for the greater good of our nation and, right here in Manistee County, the same can be said for your local Democratic Party!

Manistee County Democrats are writing letters to the editor of our local newspaper calling for an end to the BIG LIE and thanking our dedicated election poll workers, canvassers, and clerks who performed admirably in the face of a dangerous pandemic and an avalanche of absentee ballots to give us a fair election. Please consider volunteering to help us with future letters to the editor calling for economic and social justice. If you are interested in writing a letter to the editor, please contact John Helge at johnmhelge@gmail.com.

Manistee County Democrats are collaborating with other county parties in this part of the state to hold our elected representatives in Washington and Lansing accountable for their support of the BIG LIE. Messrs. Bergman, VanderWall, and O'Malley, we will not forget your poor judgement at the ballot box in 2022!

Manistee County Democrats are increasing visibility in our community by volunteering to help those in need at the Feeding America Food Truck at the Manistee Armory. Please volunteer to join us as we continue to work to support projects that benefit the greater good of all residents in our county.

Manistee County Democrats are listening to the voters and soliciting their top three issues to ensure we focus our energy and resources on what they identify as the critical few. Please use this link to give us your input. <https://lg5zqm0gtej.typeform.com/to/oaifLst5>. Share it with anyone who lives and votes in Manistee County.

Manistee County Democrats are providing added value to our members through our monthly information meetings held via ZOOM at 7PM on the third Thursday of every month. Our meeting on February 18 will feature a presentation from a public health professional on her work in the COVID-19 pandemic. Please join us for these meetings and increase your level of knowledge about issues that are important and meaningful. Just click on this link to the Manistee County Democratic Party website to get the ZOOM meeting link. www.manisteecountydemocrats.us/

Manistee County Democrats are thankful that we can gather to discuss, debate, serve, and support each other. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have an idea to make us better and stronger as we continue on our journey to achieving true liberty and justice for all!

MCDP SURVEY

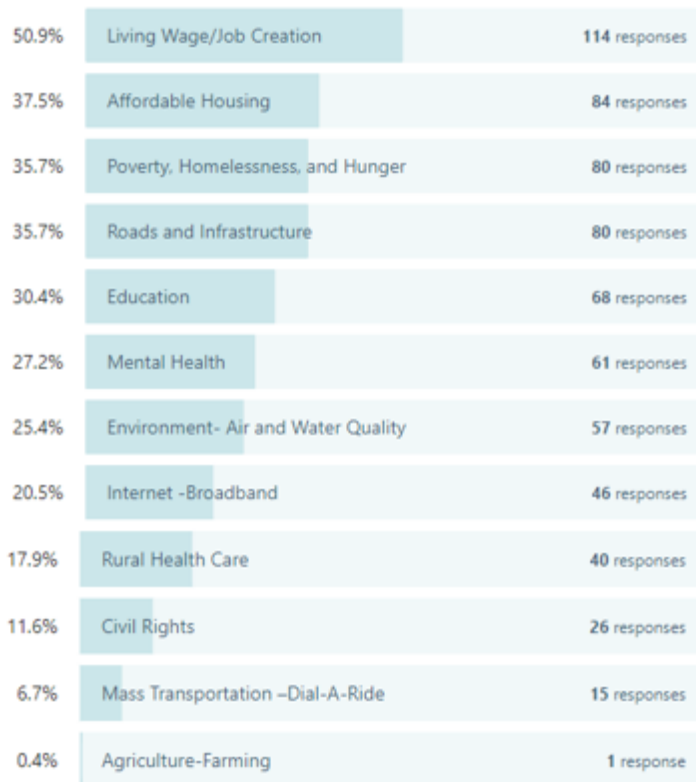
The MCDP wants to provide laser-focused support with our energy and resources for the top three issues of concern to Manistee County voters in 2021. The information below represents recent results. The survey will be available online until February 28, 2021.

Please take the survey and continue to recommend your family and friends living in Manistee County participate in our online survey. The survey can be found at www.manisteecountydemocrats.us/

Views	Starts	Responses	Completion rate	Average time to complete
376	293	224	76.5%	01:46

✓ 1 As a voter in Manistee County please select the top three issues that are most important to you today.

224 out of 224 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The senior center is looking for volunteers to drive for Meals on Wheels. They can use help in driving to all corners of the county. If you can help call 231-723-6477 and ask for Bonnie. We also have two more food trucks planned for Wednesday February 24th and Wednesday March 24th. For more information on volunteer opportunities contact Al Frye at alfrye55@gmail.com.

SPARK IN THE DARK

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

By Kelly Snider

Local nonprofit *Spark in the Dark* is redefining the impact that social media can have on a community by connecting people in need directly with thousands of Northern Michiganders who can provide warm and generous support. Unlike other aid organizations, Spark doesn't have an office. They don't have a large staff. They don't run a food pantry or a resale store. So how have they helped more than 12,000 community members every year, since 2017?

Spark uses the power and accessibility of free social media tools. Facebook to be exact. They create and manage free online membership groups on the popular social media platform. Members either post urgent needs they may have—an unexpected need for baby formula or emergency vehicle repairs for example—or they post items which they would like to donate to families in need.

Spark's members help when they can with what they have regardless of their situation. This creates a deep and lasting positive impact on members self-worth and sense of community. Ultimately it also empowers individuals and the entire group to thrive and support each other through good times and bad with confidence and kindness.

Spark member Kerry recently posted: “This group is just a blessing in disguise. The amount of people who are more than willing to help is just so admirable.”

“I'm originally from Central Pennsylvania and you would NEVER see people help like this,” Kerry continued. “It warms my heart that this group exists.”

Spark member and mother Melissa posted: “This group means a lot to me. I moved to Traverse City almost four years ago after my divorce. Starting over was not easy without the help of this amazing community of folks. Spark folks helped me to furnish my first apartment for me and my kids.

“This group now gives me a platform to give back to my community,” Melissa concluded. “Thank you everyone!”

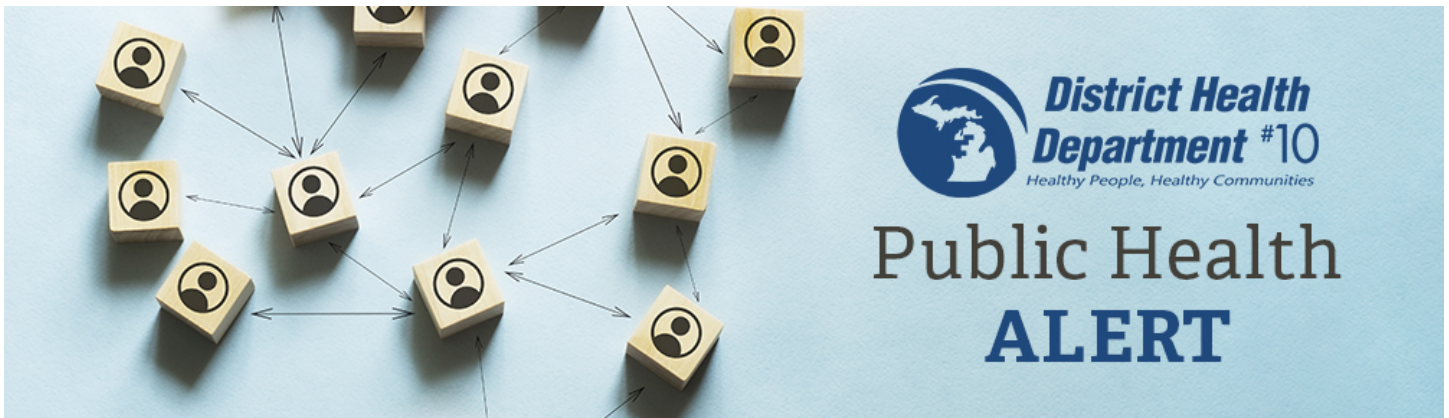
Another grateful Spark community member, Tara, also recently posted: “What I love most is that there is a place for everyone here. I personally love to contribute and help. In fact, I seek the opportunity most days and I am so grateful to have a local site like this!

Spark is working to change the nonprofit sector by using technology and social media to turn online conversations into offline communities. Spark never turns away those with unusual or difficult needs. They walk alongside our members, connecting them to a local community with the resources to help solve their challenges.

At a time when so many people are struggling to meet their basic needs, a group like Spark can be transformative.

However even a small and lean organization like Spark still needs the generous support of their broader community to sustain and grow their work. Having proven their model works, Spark also hopes to expand and create new groups across Northern Michigan over the next several years.

If you are interested in learning more about Spark or would like to support their work, please reach out to their founder and executive director Abigail McKiernan at Abbv@sparkinthedark.org or (231) 360-8919.



DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT #10 ADDS WAITLIST REGISTRATION LINKS TO WEBSITE FOR PHAE 1A AND 1B

District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) added two additional Waitlist Registration Links to their website for those healthcare workers in Phase 1A who have not been vaccinated and for individuals in Phase 1B, except for PreK-12 school staff, to complete. DHD#10 is working directly with school administrators to coordinate vaccine clinics for their staff, so we ask that school staff not register on the waitlist.

Currently, there are three Waitlist Registration Links on the website:

1. Seniors 65+
2. Phase 1A Healthcare Workers
3. Phase 1B Priority Frontline Workers (except Schools)

Please go to <https://www.dhd10.org/covid-19-vaccine/> to review the information. It is important that individuals read all instructions and information posted on the website first before completing the form to get on the waitlist. If you do not have access to technology, consider reaching out to friends or family members to ask for assistance. The fastest way to get on the waiting list is to complete the online registration.

For those seniors 65 and older who do not have access to technology and do not have others to assist you, there is a hotline number to call: 231-715-5557. Someone will complete your forms with you over the phone to get on the waiting list. Once you are on the waiting list, you will be contacted when the vaccine is available so you can be scheduled to receive it. Please know this phone number is experiencing extremely high call volumes. Keep trying if you are having trouble getting through.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

No time to rest—your continued commitment is needed as we engage 2021. Every member's involvement and the strength of membership was integral in the election of President Biden and Vice President Harris and secured Democratic seats.

Our goal is to continue and grow that involvement to advocate for and protect Democratic values and reconfirm the strength of membership. When called upon, please do all that you are able. You can start today, as I have, by renewing your membership.

Karen Kolb,
Membership Chair

Manistee DEMS Membership Year

January 1- 2021 - December 31, 2021

Michigan Democratic Party membership included for the Huron Club and above

How do you benefit from being a member of the Manistee County DEMS?

- Influence local policy and candidates
Receive email, phone, and newsletter notifications about upcoming Democratic events
Attend the monthly business meeting featuring Guest Speakers
Volunteer opportunities for specific events, i.e. Parades, County Fair and Blue Tigers

Optional: set up payment plan with your bank or with our internet: manisteecountydemocrats.us

- Ontario Club (Basic) \$25 per person
Grass Roots - \$0
Young Democrats (18 - 25) - \$5
Huron Club \$100 per household
Michigan Club \$500 per household
Erie Club \$50 per person
Superior Club \$250 per household
Donation to Blue Tigers Scholarship Fund

-----Check all that apply, cut and send back bottom portion-----

Last Name _____ First _____ M.I. _____

Other joining member in same household _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PH#() _____ Cell#() _____ Email _____ @ _____

Membership Level:
[] Grass Roots [] Young Democrats
[] Ontario Club [] Erie Club [] Huron Club [] Superior Club [] Michigan Club
[] Donation for Blue Tigers \$ _____

AMOUNT OF ENCLOSED CHECK \$ _____

_____/_____/2021
Signature Date

***** Make checks payable to Manistee County Democratic Party *****
Mail to : Manistee County Dems, P.O. Box 65, Manistee, MI 49660