

TrueNorth Community Services

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Circles, Fremont Area Community Foundation Work with MIT on Child Care Study

FREMONT, Michigan —A three-person team of graduate students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management are visiting with TrueNorth Community Services' Circles Newaygo County program and the Fremont Area Community Foundation to conduct research on the lack of childcare's impact on local families and to determine suggested next steps.

Circles Newaygo County takes a long-term, community-driven approach to overcome poverty, working with families and volunteers to create stability and self-reliance. Circles Newaygo County started its third cohort of Circle Leaders (heads of families) this month; and has graduated two earlier cohorts. The program is funded by a Fremont Area Community Foundation grant.

"Having these MIT Sloan students take a close-up look at our community's dynamics is a prime opportunity," said Lisa Daniell, TrueNorth's Volunteer Resource Center Director. "As we help families become self-sufficient, we know the scarcity of affordable, quality childcare keeps many from working.

"Identifying readily accessible solutions means more people can find work and escape the cycle of poverty."

The MIT Sloan students are enrolled in the USA Lab semester-long action-learning course. They are probing how the Cliff Effect, which is when individuals forgo increases in income to preserve assistance for services such as childcare, impacts our community. The team is to analyze what measures stakeholders from both the private and public sectors can take to mitigate the Cliff Effect's impacts.

With all working on Master of Business Administration (MBA) degrees, the MIT Sloan students include Mia Lim, of Manila, Philippines; Amrita Sankar, of Ridgefield, Connecticut; and Georgia Travers, of Hopewell, New Jersey. USA Lab teams are doing projects this spring at seven other sites across the U.S. in Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Oregon, South Carolina and West Virginia.

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About Fremont Area Community Foundation

Fremont Area Community Foundation exists to improve the quality of life for residents in Newaygo County by connecting community needs with the passions of families, businesses, and individuals. Our Community Foundation is one of the largest community foundations in the United States on a per capita basis, serving a population of 50,000 with total assets of \$230 million. For more, visit <https://facommunityfoundation.org> or call (231) 924-5350.

About TrueNorth Community Services

TrueNorth Community Services is a private, nonprofit organization that builds communities with one mission: we empower people and strengthen community to inspire hope and build a brighter future. Founded in 1972, TrueNorth envisions a world where all people have the opportunity to create permanent positive change. TrueNorth offers more than 80 programs and services; and has a service focus touching all of Michigan. For more, visit www.truenorthservices.org or call (231) 924-0641.