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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 13, 2016

The First Muskegon STAR! Students

The popular Muskegon STAR! Certified Community Specialist Program is now certifying its first high school "STAR! Students". A group of North Muskegon High School students are in the midst of a six-week course modeled after the four-hour Muskegon STAR! certification course. These 25 freshmen and sophomores are obtaining a better understanding of the community's resources, leaders and assets through classroom study, projects, guest speakers and field trips to more than 12 destinations!

"When we launched the STAR! Program last year, we knew how important it was to bring it to local high schools," says Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce President Cindy Larsen. "Sharing community information with students and teaching them how to use it effectively with family, friends, guests, residents and employers creates a positive Muskegon experience. These positive experiences help grow our local economy, enhance pride and increase quality of life."

This high school elective program is taking students to local businesses and attractions including the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center, ADAC Automotive, Harborfront Interiors, West Michigan Works!, the Farmers Market, the Waste Water Treatment Facility, the Hall of Justice, local farms, the Lakeshore Museum Center, and others. Students will learn about Muskegon's rich history, attractions, governmental structure, manufacturing assets, educational opportunities and more.

"The Muskegon STAR! Student class is the perfect fit for Place Based Learning and weaves well with a cross curricular element of environmental stewardship," says Toni Seyferth, the class instructor. "For the last few years a team of staff from North Muskegon have been integrating Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, a community based program into our curriculum. When I discovered the movement to celebrate the Muskegon Lakeshore through the STAR! program, I found it a magical match to encourage civic minded young people."

Students will tour the community via walking, biking, and traditional busing. The class requires students to research, listen, use soft skills, collaborate, take notes, and experience the community in a meaningful manner ending with a presentation celebration. It also energizes students to feel connected to West Michigan and build a concrete knowledge about this unique geographic area and the wonderful people who live here; hopefully creating a sense of pride!

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and North Muskegon High School are working with the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District to launch this program into more area high schools next fall.

Education is one of the three pillars of the Watch Muskegon community-wide image campaign, along with beautification and marketing. This training program is one of the ways in which area organizations are working to improve the community's image. More than 350 Muskegon STARS! have been certified since the training program launched last fall. The Chamber and West Michigan Works! have partnered to offer monthly trainings and on-site corporate trainings, by request. At the conclusion of each class, participants are administered a test and then become certified "Muskegon STARS!" They receive an official Muskegon STAR! pin, a certificate of completion, and an "Experience Pass" allowing entry to several Muskegon County attractions to get a hands-on experience of the community's assets.

For more information on the Muskegon STAR! Training program, visit www.muskegon.org/muskegon-star/

About the Muskegon STAR! Certified Community Specialist Program:

Coordinating Program Partners: Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and West Michigan Works!

Additional Partners: Muskegon County Convention and Visitors Bureau, United Way of the Lakeshore, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District and the Watch Muskegon Campaign.

Training Dates and Times: The next scheduled trainings will be held Wednesdays, June 8, July 20, August 17 and September 21. Classes run from 1pm – 5pm.

Training Location: All scheduled sessions are held at the Michigan Works! Office at 316 Morris Avenue, Suite 300, inside Terrace Plaza in Downtown Muskegon.

Training Cost: The cost to become a certified Muskegon STAR! is \$25 per person. Companies interested in having an on-site training with 10+ employees can pay a nominal fee to have the training brought in-house. Those interested in a corporate training, can contact the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce at 231-722-3751 to schedule.

How to Register: You can register for upcoming trainings at www.muskegon.org or by contacting the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce at 231-722-3751 or mlcc@muskegon.org

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ABOUT THE CHAMBER

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce is the premier business membership organization on the lakeshore representing approximately 1,150 businesses and organizations. The Muskegon Chamber represents businesses of every size and type all over West Michigan. The Chamber is celebrating more than 120 years in operation working to sustain an environment for business success through community leadership, promotion, inclusive business advocacy and valued member services. The Muskegon Chamber is a four-time award winning Chamber, being named Chamber of the Year for the State of Michigan in 2006, 2010, 2012 and 2015 by the Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals.