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Presenting People With Purpose

Data consistently demonstrate that charitable nonprofits provide meaningful impact in their communities. They address immediate and long-term needs of residents. Organizations uplift lives and quality of lives for millions through faith, culture, education, and caring. Plus, very many charitable nonprofits work to improve our environment, overcome discrimination and other barriers to success, and much, much more.

So why don't policymakers know or acknowledge all of this to be true and prioritize policies that enhance rather than hinder nonprofit impact? One answer is because they don't know us; they often don't even see us or know the people motivated by purpose in their communities. The **Michigan Nonprofit Association** is working to change that through its [We are 501c3](#) series of short videos.

Described as "a vibrant showcase of the indefinable work and resilience of nonprofits across our great state," the campaign presents frontline, hands-on nonprofit leaders telling their stories as a way to explore "the diverse tapestry of Michigan's nonprofits." As of this writing, the video series has featured 19 charitable organizations from locations throughout the state. Here is a brief sampling (links are to the short videos):

Remote video URL

Sonia Brown of [Auntie Na's House](#) (1:28) tells the compelling story of the founding and operations of this Detroit charity that provides not just meals in their Nutrition House but also medical access, after-school tutoring and educational programs, clothing and emergency temporary housing support and the community gardens that supports fresh farm to table vegetables to their neighborhood.

Remote video URL

Andre Dandridge, Executive Director of the [NIA Center](#) (1:30), details the impact of this African American cultural nonprofit in Grand Rapids that supports, celebrates, and shares African American culture by exploring the intersections of art, health, wealth, and education.

Remote video URL

Kim Cain shares how the nonprofit she runs, [Have Mercy](#) (1:30), works to keep homeless families together and off the streets while helping them address the underlying issues that led to their homelessness. She explains their view that “we’re only as strong as our community’s weakest member,” and Have Mercy works to help “the community’s weakest members.” As a result, they strengthen the whole community by helping individuals.

Remote video URL

The [Kalamazoo Literacy Council](#) (1:27) is a nonprofit volunteer tutor organization dedicated to improving the lives of adults through reading and writing support. CEO Michael Evans lays out the organization’s mission of improving English fluency and reading levels so individuals can be more successful at work, at home, and in the community. He highlights one grandmother who raised her reading and writing proficiency so that she could write her memoir to preserve her experience for future generations.

[Other videos](#) feature leaders of museums, health care nonprofits, child-serving organizations, housing nonprofits, and more.

The unmistakable point of each video, and all of the videos combined, is that nonprofit people are committed to their missions and their communities. They identify specific areas of focus where they can make a difference. And they are doing it every day.

The campaign demonstrates that together, 'we are more than just nonprofits; we are the heartbeat of community resilience and transformation.' The Michigan Nonprofit Association (and the National Council of Nonprofits) invite you to take time to explore the stories featured on the [We Are 501c3](#) page and witness how charitable nonprofits continue to shape our communities for the better. From small grassroots movements to bigger charitable organizations, every story is a testament to the power of collective effort and the enduring spirit of Michigan. And of America.

Policymakers are well advised to take note: they need to see how much they and the constituents they represent depend on us all daily.