

RT '18

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Executive Director, Jaclyn Kochis, signs documents during the closing of our Chapter building sale as President, David Peck, watches over.





**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Michigan Chapter



PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER

www.michiganpva.org



About this Issue:

The MPVA Chapter sold our building in Novi and has relocated to Plymouth!
See the President's Article for more details.

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Disclaimer:

The Rollin' Times is a publication of the Michigan Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America. It is designed to inform the members of the PVA and other interested parties on veterans' issues, legislation, legal decisions, medical technology and other matters deemed to be relevant to the disability community.

The contents of this publication do not always reflect the views or policies of Michigan PVA, and no endorsement or approval is made or should be inferred with respect to products or services advertised herein. Consult an appropriate professional before making use of any product or service mentioned.

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Veterans of America*

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Toll free: (800) 638-MPVA (6782)

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is one of 34 member chapters of Washington, D.C.-based Paralyzed Veterans of America. A Congressionally chartered veterans service organization, MPVA has been assisting veterans with spinal cord injuries or diseases, including Multiple Sclerosis and ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease), in Michigan since 1961.

MPVA programs include:

- Veterans' Benefits
- Wheelchair Sports and Recreation
- Spinal Cord Injury Research
- Equipment Donation
- Advocacy to eliminate architectural barriers and protect civil rights for persons with disabilities
- Referral Services for assistive devices, housing, employment and transportation
- Literature on a variety of topics including self-care, independent living, and disability rights.
- The Pump Guide: an online directory of gas stations throughout Michigan that will pump gas at the self-serve price for persons with disabilities.
- MPVA is a nonprofit organization and receives no federal funding. MPVA relies on grants, sponsorships, and private and corporate donations to support its programs.

The MPVA headquarters is in Novi, Michigan. Our service officers are based out of the McNamara Federal Building in Downtown Detroit.

The Ad Agency

Design & Art Production 734-678-7928



President's Report

By David Peck, President, MPVA

Our New Office Space

Happy Spring members and friends!

I am thrilled to announce we have moved into our new office space in the city of Plymouth! Our move was very successful and we are looking forward to having everyone here to see it. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we are located in the "Michigan Life Science and Innovation Center," another nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization. We thank all of you for your patience and understanding as we moved, and we are happy to



Our new office space has an outstanding café



President David Peck with Rabbi Susskind, the new owner of our former building in Novi, at the closing of the sale

say our phones and internet were only down for one day in that process. We are now fully up and running and back to business to better serve you!

We have many exciting events coming up and our new site is the perfect place for some of them. Our office space is equipped with very spacious and technologically advanced conference rooms for our meetings. We also have access to a great cafeteria that offers plenty of room and delicious food. The location is also very convenient as it's right off Beck Road and M-14.

Some of our upcoming events are as follows:

We are planning our “Open House” to take place here on Thursday, June 21st, so please keep your eyes open for an invitation in the mail. We will be serving food and beverages and have some raffle opportunities!

Another fun event coming up in the near future is our annual MPVA Picnic, it’s scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 4th, at the Miracle League of Plymouth. Keep your eyes open for that invite in your mail as well.

We are also looking forward to hosting some of our upcoming Membership Meetings throughout the state of Michigan, as our move has allowed us to be able to travel more and serve you! Please feel free to contact us with any suggestions you may have on a location near you for a membership meeting! Call us toll free at: (800) 638-6782.

Lastly, I want to mention that we still have a loan closet at our new office that will function the same as it did prior to our move. It will be stocked with durable medical goods such as: wheelchairs, walkers, shower commodes, canes and other items that can assist individuals with mobility. These items are available for pick up during our business hours by calling (800) 638-6782. There are no requirements for our loan closet items—it is first come, first serve! We just always ask that you

schedule a drop off or pick up prior!

Best wishes to all of you and we look forward to



One of the four conference rooms we have access to at our new location

seeing you soon at our events!

Thank you, as always, for your support.



The entrance to the Michigan Life Science and Innovation Center where our new office space is located

St. John Lutheran School wins “Best City Disability Award” in Future City Competition



It was an intense competition, with students from 35 Michigan elementary and middle schools coming together to compete in this year’s Michigan Regional Future City Competition, sponsored by the Engineering Society of Detroit. This year’s Michigan competition was held on January 22nd at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

The mission of the Future City Competition is to provide a fun and exciting educational engineering program for seventh and eighth grade students that combine a stimulating engineering challenge with hands-on application to present their vision of a city of the future.

It’s a team-based program consisting of students, a teacher and an engineer mentor. Each team creates detailed, often fantastic, cities of tomorrow that give intriguing insights to how young minds envision their future. At the same time, their bold designs and innovative concepts provide a refreshing optimistic appreciation of how our nation can realistically deal with the many challenges facing its cities, including environmental disasters, crime, urban decay and urban sprawl. The students then have to present and defend their city to a panel of judges at the competition.

This year’s theme: The Age-Friendly City, which challenged students to identify an age-related challenge

that exists in today’s urban environments and engineer two innovative solutions that allow their future city’s senior citizens to be as active and independent as they want to be.

Once again, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America presented a special award to the school that created a Future City that best addressed the challenges faced by people with disabilities. We want to congratulate St. John Lutheran School, Rochester for winning the 2018 “Best City Disability Award.”

The “Best City Disability Award” recognizes the school that not only addresses the everyday challenges facing the disability community — but more importantly, provides a blueprint for accessible solutions to these challenges. This special award prompts the students to include the disabled community in their thought processes when creating their future cities.


St. John Lutheran School also won this year’s Michigan Regional Future City Competition, earning them the right to represent Michigan in the national contest in Washington, D.C. in February.

Once again, I want to congratulate the talented team from St. John Lutheran School in Rochester, and all the students who participated in this year’s event for a job well done!



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Executive Director's Report

By Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, MPVA

Exciting Opportunities

It's clear that the last few months at the Chapter have presented some exciting new endeavors! The Chapter's new location has offered up more opportunities to get out to you and, as President Peck stated in his report, we want to hear from you as to where you would like us to host some membership events! What places do you patronize in your area? Do you know of a great billiards location, bowling alley, pool hall or even a unique restaurant that is accommodating? Be sure to let me know about it! You can always contact me at our toll free phone number (800) 638-6782 or via email at: jkochis@michiganpva.org.



Noah Currier, MPVA's 2018 Salute to Veterans Keynote Speaker

The Chapter is also preparing for a rousing change to our annual Salute to Veterans event. As you know, the MPVA hosts our "Salute" each year with the hope that we can encourage community followers, supporters, and members to take time out to truly honor veterans on, or around, Veteran's Day. This year, we are trying something new as

we are moving the event to the afternoon, rather than the evening. The "Salute to Veterans Luncheon Gala" will be hosted on Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at the Suburban Collection Showplace, located at: 46100 Grand River Ave, Novi, MI 48375 from 11:00 AM-1:30 PM.

The reason for the change in time from evening to afternoon is two-fold. First, November evenings throughout the state can always provide for an array of challenges with it becoming dark so early and the potential for snow and ice. We know that many of our members have expressed reluctance to come out late in evenings around that time of year and we fully understand!

Second, we had an outstanding opportunity for Keynote Speaker, Noah Currier, to join us and his arrangements only offered an afternoon slot. Due to Noah's dynamic story, we did not want to miss any opportunity to have him join us this November. We are sure you will want to join us at this year's event and hear Noah tell his story, personally. Here is his part of his remarkable bio:

It took Noah Currier all of six years to get out of his "funk." Six years after the traumatic accident that paralyzed him from the chest down, former Marine Cpl. Currier finally found the drive to get back into competitive sports—and has been "Oscar Mike" ("on the move") ever since.

After joining the Marine Corps in 2000, Noah was among the first soldiers deployed to Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11. As a gunner for Charlie Company, he was subsequently deployed to Iraq in 2003 as part of the leading combat units, the "tip of the spear." He returned to Camp Pendleton after seven months in Iraq—days later, a trucker fell asleep at the wheel and Noah suffered a C-6 spinal cord injury.

Six years later Noah finally let go of the funk that was holding him back and, as he says, "became addicted" to

sports. Thanks to friends at Paralyzed Veterans of America (Paralyzed Veterans), Noah regained his motivation to play competitive sports. Since then, Noah has been involved in weightlifting, rowing, skydiving, skiing and his personal favorites, rugby and hand cycling.

It's therefore appropriate that Noah would found a company named after the military term "Oscar Mike." Oscar Mike is a military apparel company that makes, designs, and prints its military-themed T-shirts and

"hoodies" in the United States. The company officially launched on Veterans Day 2012.

Be sure to check out the inside back cover of this issue for more details on tickets and sponsorship levels! We look forward to this year's event, and all of these exciting opportunities!




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By: Stephany Strickland, PVA Service Officer

VA Infertility Services: Evaluation, Treatment and Adoption Reimbursement

Our nation's Veterans bravely serve our country knowing they may return as civilians with service-connected disabilities. However, in deciding to join the military they probably did not consider they might have to sacrifice parenthood. Good news. If you are a Veteran with service-connected infertility, you may be eligible for treatment. VA regulations were amended to offer in vitro fertilization (IVF) evaluation and treatment to Veterans with service-connected conditions that resulted in infertility, as well as to their spouses. This is a long-awaited benefit for many Veteran couples.

VA also provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to all Veterans who are enrolled and eligible for VA health care, regardless of service-connection. Infertility care is available either at your local VA medical facility or through referral to health care providers in your community. Veterans interested in infertility services should contact their VA health care provider. Veterans can also contact their local VA Women Veteran Program Manager for more information about infertility services.

Infertility Treatment

Veterans with certain service-connected conditions that result in infertility may be eligible for infertility treatment and services paid for by VA. Covered services include:

- Infertility assessments
- Counseling
- Hormonal therapies
- Surgical correction
- Artificial insemination
- In vitro fertilization (IVF)

Both eligible Veterans and their spouses are potentially eligible for infertility treatment and services. To be eligible for IVF treatment specifically, Veterans must have a service-connected disability that results in the Veteran being unable to procreate without the use of fertility treatment.

Getting Treatment

1. Evaluation. Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care can schedule an appointment with a VA provider for an evaluation to determine what treatment may be clinically appropriate. To schedule an evaluation, Veterans (male and female) can contact the Women Veterans Call Center at (855) 829-6636 or contact their local VA medical facility.
2. Planning. Based on the evaluation,

VA refers the Veteran (and spouse, as applicable) to a Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) specialist in the community. The community provider will work with the Veteran and their spouse to develop a treatment plan.


3. Treatment. Treatment is provided based on the treatment plan.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) amends its regulation to provide for reimbursement of qualifying adoption expenses incurred by a veteran with a service-connected disability that results in the inability of the veteran to procreate without the use of fertility treatment. Under the Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act, VA may use funds appropriated

or otherwise made available to VA for the “Medical Services” account to provide adoption reimbursement to these veterans.

Under the law, reimbursement may be for the adoption-related expenses for an Start Printed Page 9209 adoption that is finalized after the date of the enactment of this Act under the same terms as apply under the adoption reimbursement program of the Department of Defense (DoD), as authorized in DoD Instruction 1341.09, including the reimbursement limits and requirements set forth in such instruction. This rulemaking implements the new adoption reimbursement benefit for covered veterans. Covered Veterans may request reimbursement for qualifying adoption expenses incurred for adoption finalized after September 29, 2016. For more information on IVF treatment please visit VHA Office of Community Care.






The Veterans Tribute of Oakland Township

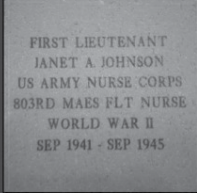
The VTOT, a local non-profit group, is building a unique and inspiring monument to the U.S. Armed Forces & military Veterans, and for hosting public ceremonies, near the intersection of Silver Bell and Adams Roads in Oakland Township, MI.

Here is your opportunity to honor that special Veteran by donating a laser-engraved brick paver as a permanent part of the Tribute.


The MVPA logo and motto will be inscribed here on the granite flagpole base!



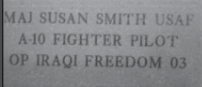
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Go to VTOTMI.ORG to place your order before APRIL 30th, 2018 and have your brick in place for the Dedication Ceremony in July 2018.

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Government Relations & Advocacy

By: Mike Harris

PVA Advocacy & Legislative Training Conference

On March 5-8, PVA Chapter representatives from across the nation descended on Washington, DC to educate their members of Congress about issues of importance to PVA, its members, and all veterans and people with disabilities. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend this year's conference because of health issues. It was the first conference I did not attend since 1996.

I want to thank my sister, Patricia Harris, for attending on behalf of Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America. Approximately 100 attendees listened to presentations from PVA's National Office staff, government officials, congressional staff, and other experts on issues of concern to veterans and people with disabilities.

Presentations focused on PVA's top three policy priorities: protecting specialized health care services, expanding comprehensive caregiver benefits, and improving the air travel experience for people with disabilities. Other topics discussed included oversight of VA's implementation of appeals reform; improvement of benefits for catastrophically disabled veterans, including increasing Special Monthly Compensation and ensuring access to VA prosthetics; efforts to safeguard the Americans with Disabilities Act, and protection of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Following two days of education and training, PVA members and Chapter representatives spent two days on Capitol Hill meeting with their legislators about PVA's priorities. Early reports from the meetings indicated that members of Congress and their staff members were generally supportive of helping protect those who have given so much for this nation. Success was seen in the information presented and the approximately 300

meetings held during the event.

On March 6, PVA National President David Zurfluh testified before a joint session of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees regarding PVA's public policy priorities. President Zurfluh's testimony focused on protecting and strengthening VA's specialized health care services and the expansion of VA's Comprehensive Caregiver program. President Zurfluh also spoke about the difficulties faced by PVA members in Puerto Rico following last year's devastating hurricane

During the week my sister had the opportunity to visit 10 members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation. The legislators that we met with gave MPVA the opportunity to educate them on issues important to our membership. I will give an overview of the main issue discussed with Michigan legislators:

PROTECTION OF SPECIALIZED SERVICES, TO INCLUDE REINSTATEMENT OF ANNUAL CAPACITY REPORT

The Issue

The VA is the best health care provider for veterans. The VA's specialized services, to include spinal cord injury care, most often cannot be duplicated in the private sector. However, these services are expensive and threatened by cost-cutting measures. Even with VA's advances as a health care provider, some political leaders continue to advocate providing health care to veterans by contracting for services in the community. This would move veterans out of the

“veteran-specific” care within VA, lead to a diminution of existing services, and increase health care costs in the federal budget.

Further, the critical mass of patients needed to keep all services viable could significantly decline. All primary care support services are critical to the broader specialized care programs provided to veterans. If primary care services decline, then specialized care is also diminished.

Specialized services, such as spinal cord injury care, are part of the core mission and responsibility of the VA.

While a great deal of attention has been focused recently on reforming the delivery of veterans healthcare, much of that discussion has not fully considered the specialized health care needs of veterans with catastrophic disabilities, particularly spinal cord injury or disease (SCI/D).

PVA members often travel farther than any of the other population of veterans served by VA. It is not unusual for PVA members, and other veterans with (SCI/D), to travel hundreds of miles to reach one of the 25 spinal cord injury centers located around the country. They do this because the VA SCI system of care is far and away the best option they have.

The access problems these veterans face are usually not wait times or distance, but the cost of travel. As a result, veterans may wait to be seen until their condition deteriorates, requiring more costly and intensive care. Congress should expand travel benefits to include non-service connected, catastrophically disabled veterans, who are already granted higher priority, to ensure they are able to receive timely, quality specialty care.

The provision of specialized services is vital to maintaining a viable VA health care system. However, the VA has not maintained its capacity to provide for the unique health care needs of severely disabled veterans. Reductions in both inpatient beds and staff in VA’s acute and extended care settings have been continuously reported throughout the system of care,

particularly since the capacity reporting requirement expired in 2008. Congress must ensure VA is able to maintain its capacity to provide for the special treatment and rehabilitative needs of veterans. With this in mind, we encourage Congress to consider legislation that will reinstate the capacity reporting requirement originally established by P.L. 104-262, the “Veterans’ Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996.”

PVA’s Position:

- Congress should enact legislation providing travel reimbursement for veterans with non-service connected, catastrophic disabilities.
- Congress must reinstate an annual capacity reporting requirement, without a specific end date, for the Department of Veterans Affairs to maintain its ability to provide for the unique health care needs of severely disabled veterans—veterans with spinal cord injury/disease, blindness, amputations and mental illness—as originally mandated by P.L. 104-262.
- Congressional oversight is needed to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs is meeting capacity requirements within the recognized specialized systems of care.

PARTICIPANTS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY NEEDED

Do you experience gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms such as nausea, bloating, heartburn, constipation or an early feeling of fullness when eating? These are often symptoms of a mobility disorder, such as gastroparesis and chronic constipation.

Gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms are a problem for many people with SCI. Finding solutions for these symptoms is difficult because current GI tests often do not study the entire GI tract at once.

Dr. Gianna Rodriquez from the University of Michigan is conducting a study with a device called the Wireless

Motility Capsule or “SmartPill.” Use of this pill has the potential to provide information about GI issues that are not currently available with standard testing. I’m hopeful that the results from my participation in the study will help my physician make better informed decisions on effective treatment for my bowel program going forward.

A patient swallows the “SmartPill” like a normal pill, and as it passes through the body it transmits this data wirelessly to a receiver that can be worn on the belt or carried in their pocket or handbag nearby. Physicians can then download and analyze the data to troubleshoot digestive issues and track how quickly food is moving through certain parts of the system. This data can then inform decisions on effective GI medications.

Depending on how slowly your intestines move, the “SmartPill” typically works its way through your system within three to five days.

If you had to name the single most embarrassing thing about spinal cord injury, it would have to be having a bowel accident. I would imagine much of the embarrassment probably goes back to childhood. One of our first tasks in life is learning to use the toilet — we are praised for learning to use it, even proud of it. This may explain why bowel accidents tend to bring a sense of shame and embarrassment. Unfortunately, for most people with SCI, you can do everything right and still have a problem. The question isn’t if you are going to have an accident, but when.

The majority of people with a spinal cord injury would probably tell you that after the loss of mobility, loss of bowel and bladder control is the next most distressing aspect of SCI. Bowel accidents can lead to isolation and depression. It certainly affects quality of life moving forward with your plans and activities. Fear of even a potential bowel accident is just as powerful. For example, I will not eat anything the day I’m flying somewhere because of the fear of having a bowel accident.

Many people with a spinal cord injury (SCI) will

experience bowel dysfunction known as neurogenic bowel, which means they have a decreased ability to control the natural function of the bowel. A neurogenic bowel can lead to bowel leakage, constipation or both. The degree of severity of bowel symptoms depend on the extent and level of the SCI.

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America has partnered with the University of Michigan, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation on numerous projects over the years that have the ability to enhance the quality of life for our members and the disability community. If you are interested in participating in this study you can contact Teresa McCartney at 734-936-1977 or email her at mccartte@med.umich.edu.

- In order to participate, you must:
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have had a traumatic SCI above the T-12 level for at least one year with associated neurogenic bowel
- Not have a diagnosis of another chronic condition
- Not be pregnant
- Not have a swallowing disorder, a gastrointestinal obstruction or diverticulitis
- Be willing to limit alcohol consumption to 3 or fewer drinks per day during the study
- Be willing to stop using laxatives and rectal medication during study



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Sports & Recreation

By: Ray Brown

Spring Turkey Hunt

The annual Wheelin' Team 457 Spring Turkey Hunt took place May 3-6. Our Wheelin' Team Communications Directors, Harry and Pam Wilcox, opened their barn for kickoff on Thursday evening. The meal and the hunt were blessed. BBQ shredded buffalo was the favorite!

Director of Hunting, Roger Wilcox, passed out directions and instructions as to how the hunt would go. Hunters, their assigned guides and callers, along with property owners, received the coveted new hunting hats and door prizes.

Friday proved to be a morning hunt only with gusts of up to 60+ mph. Not one bird was harvested. We spent most

had just purchased 20 new, big, dog blinds to make it easier for the entry and exit for disabled hunters. Little did we know we would be replacing blinds on this hunt—so, the huge purchase was a God send and the right thing to do.



of the day resetting blinds and gathering up the busted ones as Mother Nature ripped and destroyed them. We



Saturday we all assessed property damage and many were without power. One of our callers lost the roof off his pole barn and a tree fell on a hunter's truck. The hunt went on after we made sure our family, friends, and neighbors were okay. We filled our generators and took to woods. After all that, 17 hunters and 20 guides harvested 11 turkeys and two more took dirt naps on Sunday!

We live and dream to hunt and enjoy the great outdoors. It's in our DNA and our spirit. It makes us who we are

regardless if we're injured soldiers, or disabled hunters. Programs like ours make it happen! They help meet life altering challenges and give our lives worth. We remain ever grateful and appreciate all the efforts made to make a hunt like this happen. I'm very proud of our Michigan PVA Chapter for partnering with us and allowing this

success!

See you in the great outdoors....cause this's is how we roll!!



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Paralyzed Veterans of America

Michigan Chapter

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1 Star Sponsor \$ 250

- 2 tickets to event
- Half-page ad in Gala program booklet

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- Underwrite the cost for a table of 10 for a local University ROTC program
- Full page ad in program book

Sponsor a Veteran \$ 75

- Underwrite the cost for veteran(s) lunch

Your support makes a difference!

By joining us at our Salute to Veterans Luncheon Gala, you can help to make a difference in the lives of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease! Proceeds from this event go on to support the MPVA's mission of advocating for civil rights, assuring quality health care, exploring continuing research and education, and encouraging the healthy living of veterans with disabilities throughout the state of Michigan!

Can't join us as a sponsor or luncheon guest? That's ok! Why not support our **Salute to Veterans Online Auction!** There will be tons of outstanding items at various values for you to bid on at:

biddingforgood.com/mpva/2018

The auction will run from:

October 31—November 14

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Questions?
Contact: Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director




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2018
Phone: 1-800-638-6782

 **Memorial Day**
May 28th, Office Closed.


 **MPVA Open House-June 21st**
1-3:30pm

At new MPVA location: 46701 Commerce
Center Drive, Plymouth, MI 48170

 **Fourth of July, Office Closed**

 **Board Meeting July 12th**
10:30am

 **Membership Meeting July 12th**
Noon

 **MPVA Annual Picnic August 4th**
10:00am-1:30pm
Plymouth Miracle League Field
357 Theodore
Plymouth, MI 48170

 **Board Meeting August 9th**