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News Release

Planning begins for Marquette Alger College Access Network

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MARQUETTE – A cross-sector team of community leaders in Marquette and Alger County are coming together to coordinate and strengthen services that help students get into, and succeed in, education after high school.

The Great Lakes Center for Youth Development (the Center) has received an \$8,000 planning grant to facilitate development of the Marquette Alger College Access Network (MACAN). The Center has convened a team including leaders in education, the nonprofit sector, business, government and philanthropy to design a strategy to increase college participation and completion rates in the two counties.

Over the next several months, the team will explore the community's assets and needs and then build a plan to create a college-going culture and coordinate programs, services and resources for students and their families. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting students from low-income and first-generation college-going families.

"The Marquette Alger College Access Network will play a critical role in helping strengthen our community's economy," said Linda Remsburg, Youth Development Associate at the Center. "By coordinating efforts, we can help our young people – even the most vulnerable – get the education they need to fill and create the kinds of jobs that are the backbone of a thriving economy."

Current partners include Marquette, Gwinn, Munising and Burt Township schools, Marquette Alger RESA, Northern Michigan University, Big Brothers Big Sisters, YMCA, Lake Superior Community Partnership, Michigan Works!, Wattsson and Wattsson Jewelers and the Marquette County Community Foundation.

Community organizations, businesses or individuals wishing to join the team should contact Remsburg at lremsburg@glcyd.org or 228-8919 ext. 26.

The planning grant was awarded by the Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) with funds from the Kresge Foundation and U.S. Department of Education. MCAN supports the creation, expansion and sustainability of community-based college access networks through training and funding opportunities.

There are currently 41 local college access networks in Michigan including four in the Upper Peninsula which also cover Keweenaw, Houghton and Baraga counties, Delta and Schoolcraft counties and Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac counties.

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Only 35.6 percent of Michigan's 25 to 64-year-olds possess at least an associate's degree, ranking Michigan 33rd among all states. Michigan's rate lags behind the national average of 37.9 percent. MCAN's goal is to increase Michigan's postsecondary educational attainment rate to 60 percent by the year 2025. For more information about MCAN, visit micollegeaccess.org.

The Great Lakes Center for Youth Development provides youth-serving and nonprofit organizations with expertise, training and learning opportunities so that all youth can thrive in healthy communities across the Upper Peninsula. For more information about the Marquette Alger College Access Network and the Center, visit glcyd.org.

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