



Fifth Third Bank Michigan State Fair posts 35% gain in attendance, returns more than 550K to Community Organizations for 2016

Novi, MI: Fair skies and perfect weather helped boost attendance for the **2016 Fifth Third Bank Michigan State Fair**, which posted significant gains in attendance, with more than 151,000 folks enjoying the expansive fairgrounds at the **Suburban Collection Showplace** in Novi. The 35% overall increase in attendance was bolstered by much larger crowds each day of the four day event, as thousands of Michigan families enjoyed the larger Arnold Amusements Midway, presented by Chrysler Pacifica, along with the Ram Truck Test Drive Experience, Honda ATV Test Track, plus larger Shrine Circus, that all spread across the acreage adjacent to the Suburban Collection Showplace. Inside the show hall, livestock, home arts and agriculture exhibit participation also expanded for the 2016 Michigan State Fair, LLC.

“Following the Fair this year, 2016, the Fifth Third Bank Michigan State Fair is returning more than \$550,000 in contributions to a wide spectrum of community organizations, up from about \$400,000 last year,” says **Blair Bowman, Owner of the Suburban Collection Showplace and Michigan State Fair, LLC**, “We are deeply grateful for the enormous groundswell of community support and enthusiasm we are enjoying for the State Fair, it fills us with great optimism for the long term future of the State Fair as a private entity-- and we are so delighted to be able to in turn provide financial support to non-profit organizations across the Metro Detroit area.”

The **Children’s Charity State Fair Preview Gala** on Wednesday August 31 drew an estimated 7,500 Michigan family members involved with local non-profit organizations such as the **Rainbow Connection, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Special Olympics, and Shriners Children’s Hospitals**, as well as active military and veterans. This year the State Fair made a broader community outreach for this very special, invitation-only, free event, and welcomed roughly 36% more fairgoers from last year.

2016 also saw the expansion of charitable giving with the first annual canned food drive for **Gleaners Food Bank** on opening day, September 1, collecting donations for 159 meals, and **Stand Up 2 Cancer Day** on Friday, September 2, sponsored by title sponsor Fifth Third Bank, raising nearly 11,000 dollars for the international research charity. “On behalf of all of us at Fifth Third Bank, we are deeply proud to have contributed well over \$10,000 to Stand Up 2 Cancer research efforts, \$1 for each Friday attendee, and for users of hashtag #HowIFight, at the 2016 Fifth Third Michigan State Fair. ” says **Jack Riley**, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Fifth Third Bank.

Urban, Rural and Equestrian Agriculture Scholarship awards again distributed more than \$40,000 for 2016, with a total of 50 recipients, these scholarship programs are made possible through the dedicated support of State Fair sponsors **C.F. Burger Creamery, Fifth Third Bank, the Detroit Shriners, the MSU College of Natural Resources and Agriculture, Kroger of Michigan and Guernsey Farms Dairy**. Michigan State Fair Gold Ribbon Scholarship Recipients had all received at least one blue ribbon from their local County Fair, and were also reviewed on the basis of their academic and community involvement. Urban Scholars were considered based on their contribution to Agriculture and food

education in cities with populations greater than 30,000. Names and cities of all 2016 Fifth Third Bank Michigan State Fair Scholars follow. The attached image is from the scholar's visit to the State Capitol on Thursday September 24, where both the Senate, courtesy of Senator Mike Kowall, and the House of Representatives, courtesy of Rep. Kathy Crawford, recognized them for their achievements. Photo Credit: Patrick Yockey, State Senate Photographer

The Fifth Third Bank Michigan State Fair Superstar Competition welcomed its third grand prize winner over the weekend, **Redi Choi, 21, of Canton**, First Superstar Contest Runner Up was **Delores Harris** (aka Lady D) of Southfield, Honorable Mention, **Cayenne and Ginger** of Lake Orion.

The State Fair also hosted an exhibit and competition for **Little Free Libraries** decorated by local artists that were also featured at TEDx Labs Detroit last week, with plans for installation at Urban gardens in Detroit this fall and also next spring, stocked with books and aimed at fostering a love of reading for Michigan residents of all ages in the city.

Recent test scores have indicated that literacy rates in Michigan are dropping precipitously; the state is currently ranked in the bottom ten states in the nation for 4th grade reading proficiency. "This is a "grass and farm" roots initiative to create easy access and put books in the hands of youth and adults in the city," says **Steve Masters, State Fair Executive Director**, "We are very excited about long term prospects for this program to foster literacy around the already thriving urban garden hubs in Detroit."

Jerry Ann Hebron, Executive Director, Northend Christian CDC and Oakland Ave Farm Market, adds "We find that the young people we work with in disadvantaged communities are reading well below their grade level, as well as not understanding what they have read. We are hopeful that having access to Little Free Libraries in the community gardens and urban farms, conveniently located in Detroit neighborhoods, will encourage youth and adults to take time to read more."

The 2016 Little Free Libraries Michigan State Fair Prize Winners are:

- 1- **Angelica "Jelly" Estrada**, with 767 votes, "Once Upon A Time"
- Tie 2 & 3--**Gabrielle Gorges**, with 296 likes, "Vibrant Life"
- Pete Coe**, with 296 likes, "Monster Farm"
- 4-**Niagara** - 248 likes, for "Can I Help It if I Love to Read?"
- 5-**Eric Millikin** -216 likes for "The Butterfly Effect: Endangered Reading."

Images of the winning Libraries and all the entries can be found at www.DetroitLittleLibraries.org

The Fifth Third Bank Michigan State Fair is also pleased to announce the winning entries of the first annual Student Poster Design Contest, in collaboration with the Specs Howard School of Media Arts. SHS students were invited to create an original work celebrating the rich agricultural heritage, new urban farm movement in Michigan, or to have fun with a design featuring the new Barbeque Boot Camp stage

First Place: **Cali Bagnall, Grosse Ile**; Second Place, **Ray Harvey, Howell**; Third Place: **Blake Carnagie, Sterling Heights**.

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation **Senior Day** program and activities returned on Thursday, September 1, welcoming all those 65 years of age and older to the State Fair, free of charge, and providing box lunches and refreshments, courtesy of Blue Care Network, St. Johns Providence Health Systems, US Foods, Kroger and Epoch Catering. Buses ferrying seniors from across Southeast Michigan queued up outside the Suburban Collection Showplace, and multi-generations of Michigan families enjoying the Fair together were also very much in evidence. The Honored Michigan Citizen for 2016 was **Jerry Mitman** of Northville.

Two exciting State Fair features also returned on Monday, September 5, the 2nd Annual **State Fair Parade** along Grand River in Novi welcomed more than 200 participants from across Michigan, anchored by the Detroit Shiners mobile brigade, and the **Michigan Mega Jam**, which offered an All-Star band of luminaries paying tribute to decades of Michigan hits, including **Jill Jack, Thornetta Davis, Nadir Omowale, Tosha Owens, Sean Blackman, Brandon Calhoon, Caleb Gutierrez, Yorg Stormrunner, Steffanie Christi'an**, plus past **Superstars Alison Albrecht and Carly Bins** backed by the stellar **St. Cecilia (Todd Glass, James Simonson, Brett Lucas)** with very special guest **Chris Codish** on keyboards, along with **Dezi Magby**, DJ Psycho of the Detroit Techno Militia.

Steve Masters, Executive Director of the **Michigan State Fair, LLC**, reflecting on the successful 2016 Fair, adds, "This was an important year for the State Fair team and Steering Committee to streamline and polish all the work of previous years, to continue the restoration of beloved attractions from the past and fine tune some of the new State Fair offerings. We are so appreciative of the beautiful weather the region enjoyed over Labor Day Weekend, and resulting enormous increases in the number of attendees. We also posted increases in commercial vendors, home arts, livestock and agricultural exhibits, and know we are well on the way to establishing a new model and growth trajectory for the 21st Century State Fair....one that is inclusive and relevant, and that celebrates agriculture, small business and family, plus all the great advantages that come from living in Michigan."

www.MichiganStateFairLLC.com.

For additional information, interviews or hi-res Fair images, please contact Nancy Schoenheide-Phares, 248.486.3424
nphares@michiganstatefairllc.com

Urban Agriculture Scholarship Recipients

First Name	Last Name	Garden Name	Location
My'Kila	Allix	Ohana Gardens	Highland Park
Enrique	Cordero	Cadillac Garden	Detroit
Timothy	Gatewood	Gatewood Family Garden	Detroit
Heather	Gregory	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Alkesha	Griffin	Oakland Avenue Urban Farm	Detroit
Alana	Hutka	Tollgate Farms	Novi
Aaron	Hutka	Tollgate Farms	Novi
Lilly	Keskinen	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Susanna	Khanuk	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Gwendolyn	Klenke	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Christopher	Lara	Cadillac Garden	Detroit
Amy	Meason	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Hannah	Meason	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi

Urban Ag Scholars, continued...

Eli	Meason	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Ricardo	Mecina	Cadillac Garden	Detroit
Tierra	Modock	Oakland Avenue Urban Farm	Detroit
Anthony	Morgan	Morgan Family Garden	Ferndale
Amelia	Oke	Oke Family Garden	St. Clair Shores
Dolores	Perales	Cadillac Garden	Detroit
Christian	Perales	Cadillac Garden	Detroit
Emmanuel	Salas	Sun, Water and Seeds 4H Garden	Novi
Richard	Zarate	Cadillac Garden	Detroit

**Rural Gold Ribbon Scholarship Recipients,
With hometown:**

Category	First Name	Last Name	Home Town
Home Arts	Chelsea	Best	Pinckney, MI
Home Arts	Jaycie	Brown	Pinckney MI
Livestock: Goats	Laura	Coon	Lyons, MI
Home Arts	Ivy	Davenport	Ithaca MI
Home Arts	Lydia	Davenport	Ithaca MI
Dairy	Carolyn	Delong	North Branch, MI
Home Arts	Hunter	Divert	Milan, MI
Home Arts	Tara	Fraley	Petersburg, MI
Livestock: Goats	Mikayla	Gerwig	Ravenna, MI
Home Arts	Emma	Gibb	Lake Orion MI
Equine	Abbi	Hill	Milford MI
Dairy	Adrianna	Jackson	Caro, MI
Livestock: Rabbit	Bryant	Janetzke	Saranac, MI
Equine	Sarah	Liford	Oxford MI
Home Arts	Alexandra	Ludlam	Hopkins, MI
Livestock: Sheep	Samantha	Ludlam	Hopkins, MI
Home Arts	Jessica	Marimpietri	Monroe, MI
Livestock: Poultry	Dale	Mize	Fowlerville, MI

Rural Scholars, continued

Home Arts	Saige	Morgan	Oakland Township, MI
Home Arts	Olivia	Omer	Leslie, MI
Livestock: Beef	Amber	Pickard	Hastings, MI
Livestock: Sheep	Caitlin	Plank	Hillsdale MI
Livestock: Rabbit	Alex	Pouttu	Ortonville, MI
Livestock: Poultry	Thomas	Purves	Clarkston, MI
Livestock: Swine	Madalin	Roberts	Lapeer, MI
Livestock: Beef	Skylee	Sherman	Grand Ledge, MI
Livestock: Swine	Brianna	Stockwell	Dowagiac MI
Agriculture	Tara	Wilson	Highland MI

www.MichiganStateFairLLC.com