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**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Susan Jackson, 417.581.1466, 703.598.8775, [susan\_jackson@experienceworks.org](mailto:susan_jackson@experienceworks.org)

**Michigan Employers Gain Experience the Smart Way by Hiring Older Workers**

*National Employ Older Workers Week, Sept. 21-27*

Bay City, MI –As the fastest-growing sector of today’s workforce, Americans age 55 and older play a vital role - a trend the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) says will continue through the 21st century.

Experience Works, a national nonprofit organization providing training, community service, and employment opportunities for older workers in 30 states and Puerto Rico joins the DOL in celebrating the contributions of older workers and the great value they bring to the workplace during National Employ Older Workers Week, September 21-27, 2014.

According to DOL, nearly half of all employers think the loss of their older employees over the next decade could be a problem for them. Forwarding-thinking employers are developing strategies to attract and retain older workers. Older workers’ experience enhances their decision-making skills, they keep institutional memory within a business, and can help reduce employee turnover.

“Employers are beginning to recognize that by developing an intergenerational workforce, they can increase their competitive advantage,” said Sarah Biggers, Chief Executive Officer for Experience Works. “It’s all about creating opportunities to succeed – not only for the business, but for the older worker as well.”

The DOL and the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate older workers will make up 25 per cent of the U.S. civilian labor force by 2020, up from 13 percent in 2000. Experience Works (SCSEP) provides training and paid community service assignments in public and nonprofit organizations as a way to help update job skills and build confidence for unemployed, older individuals age 55 and older who have been struggling to find work.

“We help older workers get the skills they need to be successful, while offering employers skilled and qualified candidates for local job openings,” said Andrea S. Bridgewater**,** Michiganstate program manager for Experience Works, operating the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in 58 Michigan counties.

Julia Stacey age 57, of Mio is one of many people in Michigan enrolled in the program who has used their training and certified nursing assistant training as a springboard to employment. Stacey landed a job as a Director with Lydia’s Gate, where oversees general operations, schedules volunteers, and completes intakes.

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| Experience Works is always looking for new partnerships and opportunities for older workers. For local information serving Grand Traverse County and surrounding, contact Angela J Murphy at 231-922-3768, [angela\_murphy @experienceworks.org](http://angela_murphy%20@experienceworks.org) or visit [www.experienceworks.org](http://www.experienceworks.org).  ### |
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