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**MEIJER STATE GAMES OF MICHIGAN ANNOUNCES
2023 ATHLETES OF THE YEAR**

*Shari Hoke named 2023 Volunteer of the Year
Presented by Lake Michigan Credit Union*

Grand Rapids, Mich., January 30, 2024 – Officials with the Meijer State Games of Michigan revealed the 2023 Athletes of the Year as well as named Shari Hoke the 2023 Volunteer of the Year presented by Lake Michigan Credit Union. The four categories for the Athlete of the Year award are adult male, adult female, youth male, and youth female. The following names are the award recipients:

2023 Meijer State Games of Michigan - Athletes of the Year

Bios are included below.

- Adult Female: Andrea Hampton – Fencing – Grand Rapids, MI
- Adult Male: Trevor Stephenson – Track & Field – Caledonia, MI
- Youth Female: Elarose Etchison – Figure Skating – Big Rapids, MI
- Youth Male: Collin Harris – Ice Hockey – Livonia, MI

Shari Hoke named 2023 Volunteer of the Year

Shari Hoke, from Greenville, MI, has been a student of Tae Park Tae Kwon Do for 10 years. She often acts as the “mom” in her class and provides support, encouragement, and the occasional treat to make sure everyone hits their goals and does their best. She also loves to volunteer, including at the Tae Kwon Do event in the Meijer State Games of Michigan Summer Games. At the 2023 event, Hoke was the Director of Volunteers and coordinated everyone’s role from start to finish, beginning in March with months of planning meetings. She ensured everything was set up and worked tirelessly to make sure the event was a success. Hoke originally joined Tae Park to spend time with her son and is a proud mom of three and a grandmother of two.

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2023 Meijer State Games of Michigan - Athletes of the Year - Bios

Andrea “Speedie” Hampton, 39, Grand Rapids, MI – Sports, like for many athletes, have always been part of Hampton’s life. She thought her playing days were over when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at 26 years old. Although this news was abrupt and life-changing, that did not stop Hampton from finding new outlets to compete and learned about the variety of sports available to individuals with disabilities through the Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital. With this information, she got into multiple sports, including fencing at the Meijer State Games of Michigan, and softball. She received first place in 2020 and 2022 in the adaptive foil division in the Winter Games fencing competition. In 2023, she competed with all able-body fencers and came in sixth place for women’s foil and ninth place for women’s epee. In addition to fencing, Hampton received the Sportsmanship Award at the 2022 National Wheelchair Softball World Series in Chicago. Her continued vivacity for life and love of sports have allowed Hampton to adapt and find new avenues, have fun, and stay active. She is known for being fearless, friendly, and fun, and never lets her physical limitations define her.

Trevor Stephenson, 23, Caledonia, MI – The success Stephenson has found in pole vaulting is bountiful. He credits his pole vault coach and Meijer State Games of Michigan track and field director, Dave Emeott, his mother and head coach of the girls track team at East Kentwood, Stephanie Stephenson, and his father, Tom Stephenson, for the huge impacts they made on his development as a pole vaulter and athlete. He broke the state record at the Michigan High School State Meet in 2018 with a jump of 16'9.5". Since then, Stephenson competed at Michigan State University under coach Ceith Creekmur. After spending five years at MSU getting his Bachelor's in Marketing degree and a Master's in Finance, meeting friends and his girlfriend, Olivia Lopez, he broke the indoor and outdoor school records at MSU with jumps of 5.66m (18'6.75") and 5.72m (18'9.25) respectively. Stephenson also won the Big Ten Championship in 2023 with 5.49m (18'), placed eighth at the 2023 USATF Outdoor Championships with 5.61m (18'4.75"), placed fourth at the 2023 Indoor NCAA Finals with 5.66m (18'6.75"), and is a 5x NCAA All-American. Currently, he is training and coaching/working at RISE Pole Vault in Joliet, IL under Jake Winder. Stephenson’s passion for the sport is obvious and he opted to compete in the 2023 Summer Games track meet over other opportunities. It paid off, as he hit 18'9.25 and won gold. The dedication, respect, and homage he pays to his former coach is admirable as he continues his journey to Team USA.

Elarose Etchison, 10, Big Rapids, MI – It is safe to say Etchison is a quicker learner, especially in the sport of figure skating. She has only been skating for a year and a half but has found success on the ice. The Meijer State Games of Michigan 2023 figure skating competition was only her second competition. She was extremely nervous, but always remained positive and kept a smile on her face. During her competition day, she

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received first place in both of her events and earned two gold medals. She was thrilled but without missing a beat, she took the time to go up to each competitor individually and tell them they each did an excellent job, displaying wonderful sportsmanship. Opening Ceremony was also another event she took advantage of, where she was the sole athlete who represented figure skating in the parade and proudly held the figure skating sign. She has excelled in this sport in a short period of time and shares her passion with others. Since the State Games competition, she has moved up four levels and practices several hours a week. Etchison also excels in school, testing beyond her grade level and years. She plans to compete in the Meijer State Games in the future and hopes to get her whole club to come in future years. Her lifelong plans include earning her pilot's license, becoming an astronaut, and figure skating in college.

Collin Harris, 13, Livonia, MI – Harris is no stranger to adversity. While excelling on the ice, some of his days off the ice have been trying and tested him at a very young age. Harris started playing hockey when he was six years old but when he was eight, he was diagnosed with both Type 1 diabetes and Graves' disease, which resulted in surgery to remove his thyroid. This caused him to miss a whole season of hockey, yet this did not deter him. When he got back on the ice, he had to work twice as hard as everyone else to catch up, which taught Harris the value of hard work and discipline. The values of determination and camaraderie are instilled in Harris by his coaches and parents, which have proven to help him succeed on the ice. In the Meijer State Games of Michigan 2023 hockey tournament, Harris had the most points on the D4 15U team even though he was the youngest player. Additionally, he scored a hat trick in one of the Games and helped his team earn a bronze medal. Most importantly, he is the first to congratulate a teammate or console one when needed. When he is not on the ice, he can be found playing basketball or shooting pucks in the driveway. Harris's goal is to play hockey for his high school team and to hopefully play competitive hockey in college. The lessons he learned early on were tough but have made him into an incredible hockey player, teammate, and person who exemplifies what it means to be an Athlete of the Year.

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About the Meijer State Games of Michigan: The Meijer State Games of Michigan hosts Olympic-style, multi-sport events that welcome athletes regardless of age or ability level. The Games embody the values of participation, sportsmanship, and healthy living among the residents of Michigan. Since 2010, Meijer State Games of Michigan has hosted over 110,000+ athletes. The Meijer State Games of Michigan has also contributed over \$38 million in estimated economic impact to cities throughout Michigan.