



# Alana's Foundation

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Eleventh Edition

2025 IN REVIEW

December 2025

## Letter from the Executive Director

It is hard to believe this is our ELEVENTH newsletter and 22 years since Alana's death. It doesn't seem possible. Her death is the driving force behind everything we do - outreach clinics, speaking opportunities, flu challenges, family support and flu vaccine grants. We hope to continue until our services are no longer needed.

In the meantime, we anticipate this flu season to be a challenge due to the severe season the Southern Hemisphere, experienced AND the continued decline in flu vaccination coverage across the US. Sentiments about immunizations are still shifting in the wrong direction since Covid. Sadly, there were **281 pediatric flu deaths** - under 18 yrs. of age - nationally last season of which **14 were in Michigan**. Worse, 90% (nationally and in Michigan) were NOT vaccinated. It is not unreasonable to think this will keep happening as school vaccination waivers have also increased in Michigan.

For the 2nd consecutive year, most of our clinics had lower than expected participation. This is reflected in national statistics as well. According to the CDC, flu vaccine coverage for the 2024-2025 season was lower for all age groups: children 6 months - 17 years old (49.2%) and adults 18+ (46.7%) were lower than the 2023-24 season.

Although no one knows what the current 2025-2026 season will bring, these downward trends may very well negatively impact the outcomes of flu

illnesses. It remains important to prioritize getting an annual flu vaccination. With decades of safety data, the flu vaccine remains the best defense against influenza.

Our committed partnerships - **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Michigan Community VNA, and National Kidney Foundation of Michigan**, all help provide convenient, affordable flu vaccinations to vulnerable populations in and around Michigan.

Alana's Foundation continues to be gracious for your support amid difficult financial times. We are **extremely grateful to YOU, our loyal donors**. Your contributions, no matter the size, allow us to ensure no one has to experience the lasting pain of losing a loved one to a vaccine-preventable disease.

Before this year concludes, we **estimate** we will have:

- **Subsidized \$12,500 in vaccinations** to uninsured/underinsured individuals at our sponsored clinics

- **Sponsored 39 school/community clinics** administering over to 1,550 doses of flu vaccine.

- **Awarded over \$18,700 in grant money to colleges and universities** that participated in the college/university flu vaccination challenge to purchase flu vaccine for their uninsured/underinsured students, and **medical clinics** that provide free health care to those without insurance or who are homeless.

Because of your continued contributions, together we **ARE making a difference** supporting families in need and keeping our students and communities healthy and flu free.

With **sincere thanks, gratitude, and appreciation**,

**Zachary Yaksich**  
**President/Executive Director**

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Year End Newsletter



# 2025

Established in 2009, Alana's Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in memory of Alana Yaksich who died of influenza in February 2003. Recognition includes the 2012 Michigan Honoree for the Center for Disease Control Childhood Immunization Champion Award, the 2012 Alliance for Immunization in Michigan Outstanding Achievement Award, the 2015 National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit - Immunization Excellence Honorable Mention for Influenza Season Campaign and the 2016 AIM Bulls-Eye Award, and the 2022 SEEN Magazine Community Changemaker Award. Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent provided by the law. Federal Tax ID #: 26-4353167

## Who We Are

### Board of Directors

Zachary Yaksich  
President/Executive Director

JoAnna Yaksich  
Secretary/Board Member

### Board Members

Jordan Attisha, MS, PA-C  
Carlo Bautista  
Rudy Gomez, MD  
Daena Nicholas  
Katina Nicholas, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC

Read profiles here: <https://www.alanasfoundation.org/board-of-directors>

### Our Mission

"To prevent deaths caused by influenza, a vaccine preventable disease and provide support for families whose child has died from any illness."

We are 100% volunteer board relying solely on donations from private individuals and businesses to fulfill our mission.

### Benefits of Flu Vaccination 2023-24 Flu Season

**7.4-15 Million  
illnesses prevented**

**3.6 - 7.4 Million  
medical visits prevented**

**3.5 - 34 Thousand  
deaths prevented**

**100 - 200 Thousand  
hospitalization prevented**

source: 2023-2024 CDC Estimates ([https://bit.ly/23\\_24BenefitsOfFluVax](https://bit.ly/23_24BenefitsOfFluVax))



## Stay In Touch

Web:  
[AlanasFoundation.org](http://AlanasFoundation.org)

Facebook:  
[facebook.com/AlanasFoundation](https://facebook.com/AlanasFoundation)

Instagram:  
[instagram.com/AlanasFoundation](https://instagram.com/AlanasFoundation)

Youtube:  
[youtube.com/@alanasfoundation](https://youtube.com/@alanasfoundation)

Email:  
[info@AlanasFoundation.org](mailto:info@AlanasFoundation.org)

## Clinics

This year, we scheduled and hosted 39 clinics (including outreach to new locations in mid-Michigan) and had zero cancelations! All the clinic host sites were enthusiastic about offering flu vaccinations yet most sadly underperformed expectations. Ann Arbor Public Schools still led the way with 280 doses in 4 hours. Michigan Community VNA, our vaccination administrators, are consistently patient and compassionate with all ages to ensure everyone received a flu vaccination as quickly and pain-free as possible. All recipients are grateful for the convenient, affordable opportunity to get their annual flu shot together as a family.

As of this writing, we estimate we'll have administered over 1,500 doses this season. Although, some clinics had lower numbers, this total represents a neutral difference in the total doses administered compared to last year. Given the evolving sentiments on vaccines, overall it was a successful clinic season.

**K-12 School Clinics** In partnership with Michigan Community VNA, **1111 doses** of flu vaccine were given to Kindergarten - 12 grade students throughout metro Detroit. We continue to hear that many people count on getting their annual flu shot at one of our clinics. We still had a handful of **"first timers"** and are so thankful they took time to get vaccinated especially given the increasing vaccine hesitancy.



**Community Clinics** This year, we were so pleased to partner with the **Blossom Children's Center** in Brighton, Novi and Canton. They specialize in early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder and other special needs. So grateful to protect 72 staff, family and students for this important population. In addition, medical students from **Wayne State University** hosted outreach clinics at Amigos Medicos providing much protection to those in need from underserved populations. From Detroit to Mid-Michigan, an estimated **429 doses** of flu vaccine were administered at community outreach events representing approximately **27.8% of all doses administered** by Alana's Foundation.



## Fundraiser

**Cocktails for a Cause** For the 4th consecutive year, we gathered at Belle's Lounge by Valentine Distilling Co., generating over \$15,300. That's a up 12.9% over last year so we feel very blessed. We sincerely **THANK** our **sponsors** who made it all possible: **PRESENTING** Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan **GOLD** Premier Auto Wash **SILVER** Classic Auto Wash, Yaksich/Bouchar Family **BRONZE** Cranbrook Partners, Cranbrook Pavement, Michigan Community VNA, Anonymous, Moshoula Yaksich, **PATRON** Dan and Julie Collins, Hartland Dental Care, Michael and Rae Khoury, Paul Kovacevich Join us next **AUGUST 6, 2026**, when we meet again.



**FLU FACT:** With **281 deaths**, the **2024-2025** season recorded the **2nd highest number pediatric flu deaths** during a flu season, since the CDC began tracking in 2003. A total of **14 pediatric deaths** were in Michigan, the highest ever.



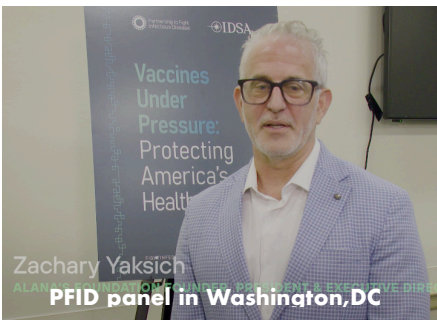
## Vaccine Assistance Grants

**Ten grants** totaling over **\$18,200** were **awarded** to a medical clinic (*Cass-Costea Clinic*), and 5 colleges and universities (*Adelphi University, Austin Peay State University, Dominican University, Oakland University, Saint Xavier University*) all helping to fund flu vaccinations for uninsured/underinsured students. As of this writing, we estimate over 800 doses will be administered funded by these grants.

## Outreach

**Community involvement** Alana's Story remained an important part of our outreach efforts at each clinic and/or event we were involved in.

In September, Zack, Alana's Dad participated in **Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease** (PFID) panel discussion in Washington DC. So grateful for the opportunity to participate and tell Alana's story and remind everyone of the importance of getting an annual flu shot. In May and September, he spoke at the **Detroit and Jackson County Vaccine For Children** (VFC) provider meetings respectively to bring a personal perspective on the importance of annual flu vaccinations.



This fall, **students** from **Madonna University, and Rochester Christian University**, helped administer flu vaccinations at clinics held on their campuses. RCU also administered flu vaccine at the Auburn Hills Community Center Clinic. We are honored to provide the next generation of medical professionals valuable practical outreach opportunities inspired by a personal story to help influence a person's decision to vaccinate.

## Flu Vaccination Challenges

The **"Alana Yaksich Memorial Trophy"**, was awarded to the schools with the highest number of flu doses administered between September and December, 11, 2024. The **2024-2025** winners were:

**Catholic School Challenge** **Mercy High School**

**College/University Challenge** This competition continues to be an effective tool to help increase flu immunization rates on campuses. This year, the **Alana Yaksich NATIONAL College University Flu Challenge** has **18 schools from 12 states** working extra hard to make sure their students and surrounding community are healthy and flu free.

Congratulations to the **2024 winners**:

### NATIONAL

Small: *Saint Xavier University, IL*

Medium: *Brown University, RI*

Large: *University of Wisconsin - Madison, WI*

### MICHIGAN

Small: *Rochester Christian University*

Medium: *Western Michigan University*

Large: *Wayne State University*

**2025 Michigan and National champions will be announced mid-December.**

**FLU FACT:** Since 2003, more than **2,892 children** ( $\leq 18$  yrs. old) have **died** from influenza. An average of **80% of pediatric flu deaths** were previously healthy and **not vaccinated**.



## Flu Resources

**US Center for Disease Control**  
[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

**Michigan Department of Health and Human Services**  
[www.michigan.gov/flu](http://www.michigan.gov/flu)

**Influenza Key Facts**  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm)

**Flu Near You**  
<http://flunearyou.org>

**I Vaccinate**  
[www.IVaccinate.org](http://www.IVaccinate.org)

## Grief Support

### Michigan

**Angela Hospice**  
[www.angelahospice.org](http://www.angelahospice.org)

**Ele's Place**  
[www.elesplace.org](http://www.elesplace.org)

**New Hope**  
[www.newhopecenter.net](http://www.newhopecenter.net)

### National

**Centering Corporation**  
[www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)

**GriefNet.Org**  
[globaljusticerc.org/griefnet/](http://globaljusticerc.org/griefnet/)

**GriefWatch**  
[www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)

**Compassionate Friends**  
[www.compassionatefriends.com](http://www.compassionatefriends.com)

**The Dougy Center**  
[www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)

## Busting Flu Myths

"The flu shot can give me the flu."

**Flu shots have INACTIVATED viruses, so they cannot cause infection.**

"Vaccines are not proven to prevent the flu."

**If you get the flu vaccine, you are about 60% less likely to need treatment for the flu.**

"I should wait to get vaccinated so I'm covered through the end of the season."

**People should get vaccinated as soon as flu shots are available as it takes about 2 weeks to develop antibodies.**

"It is better to get the flu than to get a flu vaccine."

**A flu shot helps reduce illness and time lost from work.**

source: [cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/misconceptions.htm](http://cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/misconceptions.htm)

## Get involved

Want to help support Alana's Foundation? Need community service hours? Want to join the host or planning committee for our annual fundraiser? Email us your interest today:  
[info@alanasfoundation.org](mailto:info@alanasfoundation.org)

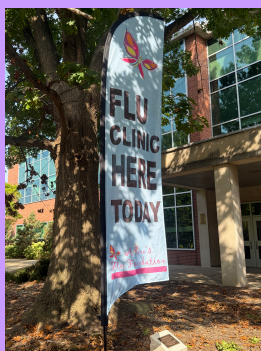


ALANA'S FOUNDATION  
C/O 5788 BURNHAM RD.  
BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48302

## Sober Reminder

Every year our mission is to share Alana's story with as many people as possible so no one has to experience the death of a loved one due to a vaccine preventable disease. Many believe it won't or cannot happen to them. While that may be true, and death from influenza is certainly the worst case scenario, it is important to remember the **possibility of other catastrophic outcomes** in addition to death.

Children in the state of Michigan from several counties (Genesee, Wayne, Oakland, and Jackson) had to have limbs amputated as a complication from the flu. It is hard to imagine



the adjustment for the patients, their families and the impact on the rest of their lives. Sadly, we were told that none of them had their flu vaccination.

While Americans continue to face financial pressure, we humbly ask you to consider making a year-end donation to help ensure all those who want a flu shot area able to get one. Mail the enclosed donation envelope, visit [AlanasFoundation.org](http://AlanasFoundation.org), or scan QR and help us make a difference in the community.

SCAN QR code to donate



**Thank you for your kind consideration and have a blessed New Year!**

## Alana's Dream Project



Weeks before Alana died, as part of a lesson on Dr. Martin Luther King, her class was asked to write down their dreams. Alana's dream was that "one day there would be Rainbows all over the world".

When Alana wrote her dream, she did so through the eyes of an innocent child.

We continue to invite you to participate and send us your picture of a rainbow and/or tell us your dream.

**Visit our website** and click the link for Alana's Dream Project to **Learn more about this very special endeavor:**

[www.alanasfoundation.org](http://www.alanasfoundation.org)

## Power of One

We have said in the past our most valuable resource is our **personal story** of a local family who actually **lost a HEALTHY child to a vaccine preventable disease**. The same remains true. It never fails, at each one of our clinics, at least one (1) person is moved enough to get a flu vaccination, often for the first time ever.

We encourage you to **share our story** with friends, family and co-workers. **Use** our **website, brochure, YouTube and Social media**, as powerful resources to ensure the message is heard.

Please, feel free to call us for **speaking opportunities** in your school or community as testimony to the seriousness of this potentially deadly virus.



## "By the Numbers"\* (since 2009)

**Value of Doses Administered**  
\$906,242

**Value of Doses Subsidized**  
\$167,758

**Value of Doses Donated**  
\$75,000

**Value of Doses purchased with AF awarded Grants**  
\$504,260

**Value of Family Assistance Grants**  
\$29,387

**# Vaccination Events**  
430

**# Outreach Events**  
61

**# Speaking Engagements**  
48

**# Awards**  
7

\*Through October, 2025