

### DIRECTIONS

Suzan Nash, Executive Director



## Spring is in the Air

April is upon us and for me, it is the real start of spring. We tend to see more robins, the birds are singing, and the rains tend to be heavier, washing away the winter snows and ice. It epitomizes the month of cleansing.

April is also the month that we try to further awareness to the issue of sexual violence. As in the past, this is a nation-wide effort to draw attention to the assault and abuse of women, children and men in our society. As an agency, we have several activities planned for the month in order to further the public understanding of the magnitude of this problem.

April is also Volunteer Appreciation Month. With that in mind, I want to thank all of the individuals and organizations that provide assistance to this agency in any way. We are truly fortunate to have a wonderful number of volunteers who help us to complete our jobs and responsibilities and make them a little easier in the

process. We have volunteers who serve on our Boards and committees, who assist with Victim Services, the Clothing Center, Project Santa, Hunters Helping the Hungry, and the food pantry but to name a few programs. In most instances, we couldn't do our job as effectively if it weren't for our volunteers. It is not just individuals who have helped us, but entire organizations that mobilize and provide us with the person power to get the job done in addition to donations.

Having said that, it is with deep gratitude on behalf of my staff and myself that I take this opportunity to say thank you to our volunteers, for being there for us when we need you and for caring enough to donate your time, talent and resources to this agency and to those who are less fortunate.

Happy Spring!

## Recent Staff Changes

Kevin Wiehardt assumed the duties of the Community Services Director effective March 1, 2007. In his new role, he will continue directing the activities of the Community Action Agency and will expand his responsibilities to grant writing and other technical assistance as needed within the Community Development Department.

Royal White was promoted from Housing Specialist to Housing Programs Manager, also effective March 1, 2007. In his new role, he will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the IDHA and CDAP housing program grants, including supervision of the housing program staff.

## 2006 Staff Anniversaries

Big congratulations to the following staff that celebrated special employment anniversaries during the year 2006:

### One Year

*Rebecca Cox*, Victim Services  
Legal Advocate  
*Josh Mercer*, Victim Services  
Prevention Educator  
*Naomi Taylor*, Victim Services  
Prevention Educator  
*Chad Frederick*, Community  
Development Assistant Planner

### Five Years

*Anne Lobdell*, Community  
Development Solid Waste Educator  
*Shannon Duncan*, Community  
Development Planning Coordinator  
*Benny Ritchey*, Community  
Action Housing Specialist

### Fifteen Years

Kelly Clauson, Fiscal Director

### Twenty-five Years

Kevin Wiehardt,  
Community Services Director

## Don't Miss These Victim Services' Activities

April 4 - Hands Around the Courthouse  
12:15 - McDonough County  
Courthouse, Macomb  
April 5 - A Day to End Sexual Violence  
1:00 pm - Proclamation Signing  
Macomb City Hall Community Rm.

For more information on Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month activities, contact Victim Services at (309) 837-6622.

# RAPE HAPPENS: Fighting the myths

We live in a rape culture where rape myths continue to prevail. These myths silence the victim and shift responsibility for the rape from the perpetrator to the victim. Many of these misconceptions are prevalent throughout society and seriously need to be addressed in order to free the victim from further pain, humiliation and blame, and to place the responsibility back on the perpetrator.

Law enforcement personnel, State's Attorneys, and judges have the responsibility of protecting people, maintaining the standard that rape is a crime that won't be tolerated, and punishing those who sexually assault others. Unfortunately, myths continue to be present in the criminal justice system, keeping police from believing victims, creating victim blaming, and possibly keeping juries from convicting rapists.

Because these myths are so prevalent and education is so important, WIRC-CAA Victim Services will be holding a mock rape trial on April 11, 2007 at 7:00 pm in the McDonough

County Courthouse's main courtroom (Room 201). It is intended to increase the community's awareness of sexual assault and the criminal justice process regarding sexual assault. The public is welcome.

**Consensual Sex or  
Rape?  
YOU BE THE JURY!**



You are invited to a  
**MOCK JURY TRIAL**  
Wednesday, April 11 at 7:00 pm  
McDonough County Courthouse  
Macomb, Illinois

Sponsored by WIRC-CAA Victim Services

Victim Services  
24-Hour Crisis Line (309) 837-6622  
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Programs

### Grant Applications for Infrastructure Assistance Submitted for Area Communities

The WIRC prepared grant applications for five area communities and submitted them to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) in February, requesting a total of \$1,750,000 for infrastructure assistance. The cities of Bushnell and Macomb and the villages of Biggsville, Gladstone and London Mills are all seeking funds to implement municipal water source or system improvement projects. Grant announcements will likely be made in the latter part of the summer.

### Village of Norris Completing New Sanitary Sewer Collection System



The Village of Norris, in Fulton County, is in the process of completing its new sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. The community will utilize a new lagoon storage and land application system that will enable them to eliminate the local health and safety risk associated with the current usage of private septic systems. The total cost of the project will be over \$2,300,000. Norris received grant funds from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). The community will also be utilizing grant funds from the IEPA to finance the project. The photo above shows the new treatment facility shed and application fields.

### Other Funding Possibilities

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will be accepting applications for two different recreational grant-in-aid programs throughout the next several months.

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### Making a Home a Reality



The Western Illinois Regional Council-Community Action Agency was recently awarded a \$576,000 grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority to administer a two-county Homebuyer Program. The Homebuyer Program will be made available to potential homebuyers in Hancock and McDonough counties, and will operate from March 2007 until March of 2009.

The program provides several components that will make homeownership a reality for 16 individuals/families in Hancock and McDonough counties. The WIRC works with local banks and USDA-Rural Development to secure mortgages and then provides other financial assistance to the potential homebuyer. The Homebuyer Program will pay up to \$2,000 for closing costs and \$8,000 for down payments.

According to Kevin Wiehardt, Community Services Director, a unique benefit of the program in comparison to other IHDA loan programs is its rehabilitation element. Agency housing staff first inspect the home chosen by the participant to ensure that it can be rehabilitated to meet building codes and health and safety standards. If the home can meet all standards and codes, then the participant is allowed to proceed with financing. The WIRC averages \$22,000 on rehabilitation of homes. Wiehardt comments, "all mechanical systems of the house must be in perfect working condition, lead hazards eliminated, and other areas like roofing, siding and windows be adequate. Basically, when we finish our rehabilitation work, there should be minimal maintenance required on the home over the next 15 to 20 years."

Another very important component of the program is that all participants must attend a three to four hour homebuyer counseling session. Such topics as understanding the home purchasing process, general maintenance of the home, and budgeting are discussed. Homeownership counseling during and after the purchase is also offered. Wiehardt states that "one thing we emphasize is if homebuyers have problems paying the mortgage, they should contact their financial institution. Any reputable financial institution will go to an extreme to help the customer through a tough time and catch up with mortgage payments. We like to set persons up for success in this program and reduce the potential for failure."

## Regional Collection Facility Now Processing Paint



Regional Collection Facility Assistant Greg Kent has been busy processing and reformulating paint at the TCRCF.

As previously reported, a deal worked out with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) allowed the Tri-County Regional Collection Facility (TCRCF) to ship two semi

truck loads of sorted paint in October and December. The shipments amounted to nearly 80,000 pounds of paint and saved staff an estimated 35-40 working days of processing. The TCRCF has subsequently processed another 60,000 pounds of paint into 55 gallon drums, bringing the in-house total to 72,000 pounds. The TCRCF staff is happy to report that they are finally caught up and now processing and reformulating paint as originally intended, as it is received. Thanks again to the IEPA for its assistance accommodating the Facility's backlog.

## Other Funding Possibilities (continued)

Programs available are: The *Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program* (OSLAD) is a state financed grant program that provides funding assistance to local

government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space. The federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) program is a similar program with similar objectives. Both are managed in Illinois by the Department of Natural Resources with concurrent application due dates, equal grant maximums and similar general rules. Applications must be submitted to IDNR between May 1 and July 1.

Boat Access Area Development Program - *The Boat Access Area Development Program* provides financial assistance to local government agencies for the acquisition, construction, and expansion/rehabilitation of public boat and canoe access areas on Illinois' lakes and rivers. Applications for grant assistance must be received by IDNR between July 1 and September 1.

For more information on these programs, contact the Community Development Department at (309) 837-3941.

NetWIRC is funded in part by WIRC local member governments and by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity



## Western Illinois Regional Council

Dedicated to People and Communities for 30 Years