



The Regional Review

The latest news from the Western Illinois Regional Council & Community Action Agency

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A Tribute to Nathan

by Suzan Nash, Interim Executive Director

As the executive director of the Western Illinois Regional Council, I hired Nathan Cobb in June 2009. I remember interviewing him and thinking, not only did he have the right qualifications to work in the Weatherization program; I also felt he had the attributes and qualities to be someone who could do anything he set his mind to, and that is exactly what he did. He did a wonderful job as a housing specialist and then an opportunity presented itself for him to move to the grant writing and administration side of the Agency. He took this task on with gusto and what was so special about him in this role, was that he was always looking to expand his knowledge or look for new and exciting opportunities for the Agency. Nathan was never one to just accept the status quo. He wanted to know the how and the why and his inquisitive side led to new



In June 2019, Nathan Cobb received a plaque recognizing his ten years of distinguished service, dedication, and commitment to WIRC.

opportunities for the Agency such as the energy efficiency grants; one of which was granted to Macomb's Airport for a lighting project.

In 2014 with the pending retirement of the McDonough County Public Transportation Program Transit Director, a new

opportunity presented itself for Nathan to advance again. He applied for the position and was overwhelmingly the choice given his work ethic and abilities. In that position, he did an outstanding job. All the staff saw Nathan as a rising star and destined for excelling, whether it was at the WIRC or elsewhere. Anyone would be proud to call him a friend, co-worker or colleague.

I spent a lot of time with Nathan over the years and before my retirement. He would come to the main office and ask how my day was going. That is something that he did with every one of the employees at WIRC. His smile and kindness to care and ask how someone was doing touched everyone. After I retired, we would try to have lunch at least every couple of months. He would (see **TRIBUTE** on page 2)

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update me on how things were going and ask my opinion on others. And it was just such an enjoyable time for talking and catching up.

One of my fondest memories of Nathan was the day he took me flying last fall. It was a rather windy, bumpy day and Nathan kept apologizing because of the turbulence. I told him not to worry because I felt like I was on a roller coaster, albeit 1700 feet in the air and just the ground below, but this was fine. My husband Tim and friend Tracy in the back seat weren't having as much fun as I was though since I was in the front seat and they apparently were bearing the brunt of the rocking and rolling. At one point, Nathan turned to me and asked me if I wanted to fly the plane. I immediately said yes and he turned it over to me which certainly took a lot of trust on his part since I had never done anything like this before. Granted, it was only for about five minutes or so, just long enough for me to further cause rocking and rolling for the backseat passengers, until I told Nathan he better take back the controls. We both had fun and I know Nathan relished the fact that I had enjoyed this flight so much. This memory will always remain special to me.

Nathan was a kind and gentle soul, with a big and generous heart. Those who knew him well have shed many a tear over his loss. Those that didn't know him well but who he might have come in contact with him have commented that any time they saw him, his caring and compassion would always shine through by his pleasant and heartwarming smile and demeanor. Nathan was very special for all of the kindnesses he shared and for being the very special

person that he was.

Nathan is missed by so many aside from his immediate family including his WIRC family, his family at the Transit Facility and all that he touched in this community, the region, the state and beyond. Nathan's passing will remain heavy on our hearts for a very long time to come. We have all lost with Nathan's passing; this bright and shining star of a young man, who has left us far too soon.☹

KIRBY RETIRES FROM WIRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Suzan Nash (right) presents a commemorative plaque to Mike Kirby (left) in honor of his over two decades of service to the WIRC Board of Directors.

Mike Kirby, Village President of Roseville, was presented with a plaque of recognition by Suzan Nash, former WIRC Executive Director, at the Roseville Village Board's meeting on January 6.

Mike retired from the WIRC Board of Directors after serving 27 years, from 1992 to 2019. Mike served as Board President from 2004-2012 and served 13 years as First and Second Vice Presidents. Thank you, Mike, for your service!☹

WIRC ANNOUNCES GRANT AWARDS FOR LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS

Through grant applications prepared and submitted by Western Illinois Regional Council (WIRC), six communities have been awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds by the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. Five of the awarded grants are for public infrastructure and one grant is for housing rehabilitation.

Public infrastructure CDBG grants were awarded to the following communities: the City of Abingdon in Knox County (\$450,000 for water system upgrades); the City of Bushnell in McDonough County (\$500,000 for a new well); the City of Farmington in Fulton County (\$500,000 for sanitary sewer upgrades); the City of Macomb in McDonough County (\$500,000 for a water main replacement); and the City of Monmouth in Warren County (\$500,000 for a water main replacement).

The City of Colchester in McDonough County was awarded a \$500,000 CDBG housing rehabilitation grant.

WIRC, based in Macomb, serves its member communities in the six-county region of Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties. WIRC Community Development staff assists local governments in addressing public infrastructure and housing needs by utilizing state and federal funding opportunities. For more information, call WIRC at (309) 837-3941, find them on social media, or visit wirpc.org.

WIG & TURBAN PROGRAM AIMS TO HELP CANCER PATIENTS



In order to try to help cancer patients feel better about their situation, WIRC-CAA's Wig & Turban Program has a variety of wig styles available for them to choose from.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis is a life-changing, emotional event. Chemotherapy often saves lives, but the treatment can cause hair loss, among other side effects. With the rising costs of healthcare, purchasing a wig or turban may not be financially feasible for some individuals. In order to try to help cancer patients feel better about their situation, WIRC-CAA's Wig & Turban Program provides free wigs and turbans to individuals suffering from this terrible disease.

"A person may have a lot of money going out for treatment, and being able to get a wig and turban for free helps take some of the pressure off," said Program Coordinator Teresa Cadle. "Losing your hair is one of the hardest parts of chemo."

The only eligibility requirement for the program is the individual must have a cancer diagnosis; no paperwork is required. Interested individuals are asked to make an appointment so they can browse in privacy. To obtain an appointment,

call WIRC-CAA at (309) 837-2997 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Wig & Turban Program has been in place at WIRC-CAA for over 20 years, and it relies on donations from the public in order to provide these items to those in need. Monetary donations can be mailed or brought to: WIRC-CAA, 223 South Randolph Street, Macomb, Illinois 61455. The program also accepts new and/or gently used donations of wigs; turbans; brassieres; and silicone breast forms. At this time, the program is most in need of turbans.

WIRC's Community Action Agency department provides efficient and diverse human services to help individuals and families help themselves. WIRC-CAA offers a wide variety of programs designed to help those in need, including a clothing center, an energy assistance program, and a food pantry program. For more information, call (309) 837-2997.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE THROUGH WIRC-CAA



WIRC-CAA has several \$2,000 scholarships for individuals desiring to further their educational training through an Illinois community college, vocational school, college, or university.

Applicants must be a resident of Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, or Warren counties. Scholarship recipients may apply the \$2,000 award towards tuition and fees, textbooks, supplies, or campus room and board.

Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of financial eligibility, scholarship potential, commitment to civic affairs, career goals, and personal interviews.

Beginning February 17, applications became available from high school guidance counselors, college financial aid offices, the WIRC website at wirpc.org, and the WIRC office, 223 South Randolph Street, Macomb. Completed applications must be received at the WIRC office by 4:00 p.m. on March 31, 2020. For more information, prospective applicants should visit wirpc.org or call (309) 837-2997 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.,

Monday through Friday.

From emergency services to housing needs to educational opportunities, WIRC-CAA, based in Macomb, provides efficient and diverse human services to help individuals and families help themselves. Equal Opportunity Employer.☸

TRADE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

WIRC-CAA has scholarship funds available for individuals studying a vocational trade. Successful applicants will be provided financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, fees, and books to complete a specified training program through to certification. Potential fields of study include, but are not limited to: automotive technology; commercial driver training; cosmetology; computer information systems; HVAC; plumbing; welding; or another allied

trade through an Illinois vocational-technical program.

As this is a grant-funded scholarship requiring eligibility determination, successful applicants must be a resident of Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, or Warren counties and be a member of an income-eligible household. Successful applicants have the option to take classes at academic institutions outside of the five-county area. Income eligibility will be determined by WIRC-CAA staff during the application process.

To apply, prospective applicants must send a cover letter to Western Illinois Regional Council, 223 South Randolph Street, Macomb, Illinois, 61455, detailing the following information: why they are interested in this scholarship; the vocational trade they plan to study; where they plan to study the vocational trade; the timeframe (as determined by the school) that they are required to complete their chosen program; the expected cost of completing their studies; how they plan to pay their bills (rent, food, etc.) while studying a vocational trade; their transportation needs while they attend classes; and employment opportunities they plan to pursue after graduation.

For more information, prospective applicants should visit wirpc.org/community-action/ or call (309) 837-2997 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Applications will be accepted until grant funds are exhausted. Equal Opportunity Employer.☸

THANK YOU!

With your continued support, you are making a difference in the lives of families in need.

WIRC & CAA'S PROJECT SANTA STAFF SAY THANK YOU



Santa Claus asks Project Santa children what gifts they are hoping to receive for Christmas. Project Santa provides a happy holiday full of gifts, food, and clothing to children in need in Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Warren counties.

This was another busy year for our Project Santa (PS) Program! The PS program and its small staff and band of merry elves and volunteers provided a happier holiday season to 121 families and a total of 313 children in the four Community Action Agency counties of Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Warren.

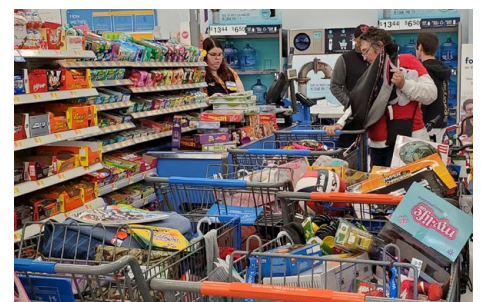
As in previous years, all of our donors, sponsors, and volunteers came through helping us to complete the season, as this program requires an intensive effort on the part of many to make the PS Program happen. In addition to the tremendous effort on the part of the staff and the volunteers, this continues to be a substantial community undertaking. A few of those who contributed to this

project include: WIU departments and organizations; Colchester Lions Club; Laverdiere Construction and employees; Macomb Women's Club; Macomb Master Gardeners; Macomb Kiwanis Club; Macomb Ladies Auxiliary Post 1921; McDonough County Health Department; No Place Like Home; Industry United Methodist Church; Lomax Christian Church; Community of Christ Church, Carthage; Blandinsville First Christian Church; Blandinsville Blue Ribbons 4-H Club; West Prairie FFA; St. Paul School for the coats and gifts; McDonough Telephone Cooperative employee goodwill fund; the Day of Pie event; the Vino & Vinyl event; Macomb Wal-Mart; LaMoine Valley for the donation as a result of the Hancock/

Henderson fundraiser held in Blandinsville at Slup's Bar and Grill; Girl Scout Troop 5686; Jamie and Matt McClure and family; and many other clubs, schools, teachers, students, businesses, organizations, and individuals who so generously contributed money, gifts, coats, the sponsorship of a family, child, or several children, and/or time to this undertaking by wrapping or shopping.

We would like to send our thanks again this year to the volunteers who spent hours wrapping and organizing as we undertook that daunting task of wrapping several thousand gifts. Special thanks to Tim Howe for his volunteering to be Santa in Carthage, staff person Tim Manock for volunteering his time to be Santa in Macomb, Gary Ziegler for his assistance sorting gifts, and to Kevin Six and the members of LaMoine Valley for the delivery of the gifts and food in Dallas City for both Henderson County and a portion of Hancock County.

Thank you, again, to everyone who participated in our program in some way. You are the reason that we saw so many smiles on the faces of so many children. We know we couldn't have done it without you!🌟



Thanks to monetary donations, Project Santa staffers and volunteers purchase gifts for children in need.

5K TO BE HELD IN HONOR OF LOCAL NURSE

Kathy Simmons was a compassionate nurse at McDonough District Hospital, a resident of Hancock County, and mother of three children. On March 26, 2003, she became a fatal victim of domestic violence by the hands of her husband of 25 years. The Kathy Simmons Memorial 5K Walk/Run/Roll, sponsored by WIRC-CAA Victim Services, is held every year in memory of Ms. Simmons and in support of survivors of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a daily reality for many people in Macomb and the surrounding area, as it was for Ms. Simmons and her family. In 2019, Victim Services assisted 445 clients, including 67 children, who were affected by domestic violence. On a national scale, the CDC reports that nearly 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner (e.g. the abuser punched, kicked, and/or threatened the survivor with a weapon). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice found that 1 out of 15 children have witnessed intimate partner violence. While these



Kathy Simmons of Hancock County, Illinois, became a fatal victim of domestic violence by the hands of her husband.

statistics are devastating, Victim Services believes it is possible to stop the cycle of domestic violence, and that events like the Simmons 5K can raise awareness and show unity against this sometimes deadly crime.

The 2020 event will be held on Saturday, May 2 at Citizens Bank Plaza, 220 South Randolph Street, Macomb. Check-in begins at 7:30 a.m., and the event starts at 8:00 a.m. Kiryn Evans, Ms. Simmons' daughter and an advocate for domestic violence awareness, plans to give a brief presentation before the race. All age groups and abilities are welcome. Walkers and non-competitive individuals are encouraged to participate. Dogs on a leash are also welcome.

Those who want to participate can register online at <https://contacc/39ovU18>, call Victim Services at (309) 837-6622, or pick up a

paper registration form at Western Illinois Regional Council, 223 South Randolph Street, Macomb. The registration fee is \$30 per person if paid by April 7, 2020; the fee increases to \$35 per person if paid after April 7. T-shirts are guaranteed to those who register on/before April 7. Ribbons will be awarded to the top male and female winners following the 5K. Complimentary healthy snacks and drinks will be available to participants.

Tentatively starting at 9:00 a.m., a silent auction/raffle and a free outdoor yoga class are scheduled near the finish line at Citizens Bank Plaza. Those who wish to show their support without participating in the 5K are encouraged to take part in those activities.

Victim Services provides free and confidential services in a safe environment with knowledgeable staff members who are ready to provide emergency services, advocacy, counseling, professional training, and public education. All services are provided free-of-charge to survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence. For more information, visit wirpc.org/simmons/, find "WIRC-CAA Victim Services" on social media, or call (309) 837-6622. If you or someone you know are being abused, call their 24-hour free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555.☎



Dogs on a leash are welcome to attend the Simmons 5K.

**Crisis Hotline
Volunteers Needed!**

If you would like to volunteer for the crisis hotline, call (309) 837-6622.

LOCAL PROGRAM HELPS OFF-CAMPUS COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH THEIR ENERGY BILLS



College can be an exciting time for many students, but for some it can also include economic struggle. WIRC-CAA, based in Macomb, wants college students to know they have programs that can help them. One of their programs, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), can help income-eligible students living off-campus in Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Warren counties with paying their energy bills.

A household may qualify to receive energy assistance if the gross income for all household members for a 30 day income period does not exceed the following levels: \$1,561 for a one-person household; \$2,114 for a two-person household; \$2,666 for a three-person household; \$3,219 for a four-person household. For each additional household member, add \$553.

Persons applying for assistance must provide the following information to document eligibility for the program: proof of gross income for all household members for a 30 day income period; a

complete and current copy of the heating and electric bills; and social security cards for all household members.

The general low-income population is also welcome to apply for LIHEAP.

To obtain an appointment, call WIRC's Community Action Agency department at (309) 837-2997. Local outreach sites are available for filing an application. This season's program ends May 31, 2020.☎

WIRC-CAA Clothing Center



Open Mondays, Tuesdays, and
Wednesdays (excluding holidays)
9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

223 South Randolph Street
Macomb, Illinois 61455
(309) 837-2997

LONGTIME WIRC EMPLOYEES CELEBRATED



WIRC Interim Executive Director Suzan Nash (left) stands with retiring LIHEAP Outreach Worker Jane Evans (center) and outgoing Housing Programs Manager Jeff Cozadd (right) on February 13, 2020.

Longtime employees Jane Evans and Jeff Cozadd were celebrated by their fellow WIRC employees on February 13.

After 37 years of employment, Jane Evans announced her retirement, effective February 28, 2020. Evans is familiar to many as WIRC's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Outreach Worker. She traveled throughout western Illinois, often in bad winter weather, in order to help low income households apply for financial assistance with paying their winter energy bills.

Jeff Cozadd, outgoing Housing Programs Manager, was employed at WIRC for 17 years. He was at the forefront of many lead remediation, blight reduction, and housing rehabilitation projects throughout several counties in western Illinois. Cozadd has taken a new position with the City of Destin, Florida.☎

Visit us online at wirpc.org
or find us on Facebook!

WIRC Phone Directory

WIRC is the parent agency to WIRC-Community Action Agency and WIRC-CAA Victim Services. Each department within the agency has its own unique services and programs. Please refer to this phone directory when seeking information about our services. We look forward to hearing from you!

Western Illinois Regional Council

309-837-3941

- Community Development Block Grant Inquiries
- Economic Development District
- Grant Writing & Administration
- Human Services Transportation Plan Inquiries
- Local Technical Assistance
- McDonough & Hancock County Public Transportation
- Tri-County Resource & Waste Management Council
- Membership Benefits

WIRC-Community Action Agency

309-837-2997

- Clothing Center
- Community Services Block Grant Inquiries
- Food Pantry / Non-Food Pantry
- Homeless Prevention Assistance
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Hunters Helping the Hungry
- Home Weatherization
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Project Santa
- Scholarships
 - Scholastic scholarships
 - Technical scholarships

WIRC-CAA Victim Services

Domestic Violence Program

309-837-6622

Sexual Assault Program

309-836-2148

24-Hour Crisis Hotline

309-837-5555

- Advocacy
- Counseling
- Domestic Violence Services
- Emergency Services
- Prevention Education
- Sexual Assault Services

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

WE BELIEVE YOU.

IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT.



Domestic and sexual violence can happen to anyone of any age, ability, sexual orientation, income, education level, religion, gender identity, or ethnic background.

24-Hour Free and Confidential Crisis Hotline:
(309) 837-5555

