



# The Regional Review

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

SPRING 2020

VOLUME 30, ISSUE 2

## Staying the Course

by Suzan Nash, Interim Executive Director

During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, Western Illinois Regional Council (WIRC) and Community Action Agency (WIRC-CAA) staff want to assure the public that we are still providing many services to the community; however, we have implemented new procedures out of concern for the health and safety of our clients and employees, while we also try to adhere to the state and federal directives.

Until further notice, the agency's front lobby is closed to the public. Employees are available to answer questions via telephone between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone numbers for the WIRC and CAA are 309/837-3941 and 309/837-2997 respectively.

The Clothing Center is closed until further notice and we ask that persons do not attempt to make donations or drop off articles at our building. Donations cannot be accepted during the temporary closure; again for health and safety reasons.

Community Development staff are available to answer questions via phone on grant opportunities and other related information.

The Food Pantry is currently operational during its normal schedule for curbside pickup only, although the procedure for pickup has been adjusted. Clients needing food assistance should call (309) 837-2997 when they arrive at the office to pick up their food. Via telephone, staff will ask for the client's name. Staff will bring the food items out

to a table that is located just outside of the main entrance. Clients are asked to either stay in their vehicle or keep a distance of at least 6 feet away from the table during this process. The Food Pantry is open between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

Applications are still being taken for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This program helps income-eligible individuals in Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Warren counties with paying their winter energy bills. Instead of meeting face-to-face, applicants will submit their application materials via mail. Staff will contact applicants by phone. Due to the Coronavirus, this season's

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## The Regional Review

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program deadline has been extended to June 30, 2020. Additionally, while some electricity vendors are putting a temporary hold on disconnection notices, interested and potentially eligible applicants for this type of program assistance should apply as soon as possible. Those who have not applied for the program since October 1, 2019 should call WIRC-CAA at (309) 837-2997 for information.

The Tri-County Resource and Waste Management Council's Regional Recycling Center is closed until further notice. Paint and electronics drop-offs cannot be accepted during this temporary closure.

The Victim Services staff is continuing to provide services to survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence, although face-to-face interactions are being limited. Scheduled counseling appointments are temporarily being held over the phone. Advocates and counselors are continuing to assist survivors with filing Orders of Protection, Civil No Contact Orders, hospital advocacy, emergency shelter, and/or creating safety plans on a case-by-case basis. Clients must adhere to the CDC guidelines during any direct interaction. For more information, call the domestic violence business line at (309) 837-6622 or the sexual violence business line at (309) 836-2148. Anyone in crisis who needs to speak with a counselor immediately is asked to call the 24/7 free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555.

The WIRC-CAA and the programs we provide are considered essential services. We as an organization and staff are attempting to navigate providing these services in a safe manner during this

unprecedented crisis. We apologize for any inconvenience these changes may cause, and want to emphasize that temporary closures are in place out of concern for the safety of our clients, employees and the community that we are all a part of.



The main priority of the WIRC-CAA Victim Services is maintaining the health and well-being of our clients, staff, and community. We understand the concern and uncertainty surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and are doing our best to monitor the situation closely. At this time, we are taking active measures to prevent the spread of the virus while still providing services for our clients - victims of domestic violence and sexual violence. Many of these precautions are happening internally and involve facility disinfection, closing our offices to visitors, limiting staff travel, etc. Please note: If you are a current client, your counselor/advocate will



be reaching out to you to discuss your options.

Counselors and advocates are available to answer non-emergency questions by calling the domestic violence business line at 309-837-6622 or the sexual violence business line at 309-836-2148.

If you are in crisis and need to speak with a counselor immediately, call the Victim Services 24-hour crisis hotline: 309-837-5555.

Our staff will discuss safety and service options with you. This may include an Order of Protection, Civil No Contact Order, hospital advocacy, emergency shelter, or a safety plan.

At this time, because we are limiting in-person contact to limit the spread of the virus, counseling services will be completed via telephone. Please call one of our non-emergency business lines before you come to the Victim Services office for an appointment.

We will do our best to use good judgment in serving victims in the best way possible, on a case by case basis, through this unprecedented time. Victim Services will continue to monitor this situation closely and take the necessary precautions needed to keep everyone safe and healthy. We will keep you informed should things change and with any updates.



**WIRC-CAA Clothing Center is temporarily closed due to ongoing concerns about the Coronavirus (COVID-19).**

***Crisis Hotline  
Volunteers Needed!***

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

**Visit our website at [wirpc.org](http://wirpc.org)  
or find us on social media!**

**New LIHEAP Application  
Deadline: June 30, 2020**

# WIRC RECEIVES \$6,000 DONATION



*McDonough Power Cooperative President/CEO Mike Smith (right) presented Western Illinois Regional Council with a \$6,000 donation to purchase a needed technology system on April 30, 2020. Pictured from left to right are WIRC Fiscal Director Tracy Camden, WIRC & CAA Interim Executive Director Suzan Nash, WIRC CSBG and Solid Waste Coordinator Tim Lobdell, and McDonough Power Cooperative President/CEO Mike Smith.. [Jamie Roth/WIRC]*

On April 30, WIRC received a combined \$6,000 donation from McDonough Power Co-op Cares, CoBanks Sharing Success Program, and Operation Round-Up. The donation will be used to purchase a new technology system to coordinate and provide services to people in need their service area.

WIRC is a multifaceted organization based in Macomb, Illinois. The agency's Community Development department provides technical assistance to local governments and elected officials

facing complex community and economic development issues. WIRC's Community Action Agency department provides efficient and diverse human services to help individuals and families help themselves, as well as providing services to survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence. For more information, call (309) 837-3941 for Community Development, (309) 837-2997 for Community Action, (309) 837-6622 for Victim Services, visit [wirpc.org](http://wirpc.org), or find them on social media.🌀

## WIRC-CAA OFFERS PROGRAM TO HELP WITH HOME HEATING BILLS

### Application Deadline Extended

WIRC-CAA in Macomb is still open during the Coronavirus pandemic and continuing to offer an energy assistance program to help people in need. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded program designed to help low income individuals with paying their winter home energy bills. WIRC-CAA administers the program in Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Warren counties in western Illinois.

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; and \$3,219 for a four-person household. For each additional household member, add \$553.

In an effort to follow the CDC guidelines, LIHEAP applications are being taken by phone and mail until further notice.

Households who have not applied for this program since October 1, 2019 should call WIRC-CAA to apply at (309) 837-2997 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or visit [www.helpillinoisfamilies.com/](http://www.helpillinoisfamilies.com/).

Beth Carson, WIRC-CAA's LIHEAP Coordinator, reports the deadline to apply for this season's program is now June 30, 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Carson is encouraging households to apply sooner rather than later in

order to allow enough time for their application to fully process before the deadline. She also says individuals who have recently lost their job or had their hours significantly reduced are encouraged to apply.

The CAA department provides efficient and diverse human services to help individuals and families help themselves. For more information, visit [wirpc.org](http://wirpc.org), find them on social media, or call (309) 837-2997. ☎

**You are valued.  
You are not alone.**

## WIRC EMPLOYEE RECOGNIZED FOR 15 YEARS OF SERVICE



*Planning Coordinator Josh Mercer is presented with a clock for his 15 years of service to WIRC on May 5, 2020. [Jamie Roth/WIRC]*



**Parents: are you tired of  
teaching and need a break?**

**Contact Debbie at  
WIRC-CAA Victim Services!**

**Free Virtual One-on-One Lessons  
for Pre-K through 2nd Grade Levels**

**How to Tell Grown-ups About Sexual Abuse**

***Lesson 1: Play It Safe***

***Lesson 2: Good/Happy & Bad/Uncomfortable Touch***

***Lesson 3: Secret Safety***



To schedule a lesson, email [deborah@wirpc.org](mailto:deborah@wirpc.org)  
or call (309) 836-2148, ext. 141.



# WIRC-CAA SECURES HOUSING GRANT FOR GALESBURG

Through grant submissions by Western Illinois Regional Council-Community Action Agency, the City of Galesburg has been awarded a \$470,000 Home Rehabilitation Grant by the Illinois Housing Development Authority Board of Directors. This competitive grant is provided through the State of Illinois' Single Family Rehabilitation program. Grant funds will be used to address health and safety hazards and code violations. Examples of repairs include, but are not limited to, roofing, plumbing, and electrical.

A public hearing will be scheduled later this summer to start the program.

Western Illinois Regional Council, based in Macomb, is a multi-faceted organization that provides community development and social services throughout several counties in western Illinois. WIRC's Community Action Agency department provides a wide range of social services to those in need in its service area, including housing rehabilitation. For more information about their programs,

visit [wirpc.org](http://wirpc.org), find them on social media, or call (309) 837-2997. ☎

## You Can Make A Difference!

If you suspect that someone  
you know is being abused, call  
our free and confidential 24-  
hour crisis hotline:

**(309) 837-5555**



## FOOD PANTRY PICK UP IS NOW CURBSIDE ONLY

1. PLEASE STAY IN YOUR VEHICLE
2. IF YOU WALK UP, CALL FROM UNDER THE AWNING
3. DIAL 309/837-2997
4. GIVE STAFF YOUR NAME
5. STAFF WILL BRING FOOD OUT TO THE TABLE
6. YOU MAY TAKE IT FROM THERE.

**PLEASE DO NOT ENTER THE LOBBY DUE TO CONCERN  
FOR YOUR SAFETY AS WELL AS OURS.**

WE THANK YOU FOR HELPING FLATTEN THE CURVE AND KEEPING SOCIAL DISTANCE.

***WIRC-CAA Food Pantry, 223 South Randolph Street, Macomb, Illinois***  
*For more information, call 309/837-2997.*

# VICTIM SERVICES OFFERS VIRTUAL LESSONS ABOUT IMPORTANT TOPIC

Victim Services is offering a new way for parents to start the conversation with their children about a significant topic: how to tell a trusted adult about sexual abuse. Victim Services Preventionist Debbie, whose full name is kept confidential in order to protect her safety and the safety of her clients, is providing free virtual one-on-one lessons about this subject.

Many teachers and school administrators are familiar with Debbie, as she typically gives educational presentations about sexual abuse to students and instructors throughout the year. Due to schools closing because of the Coronavirus pandemic, Debbie and many other prevention educators in Illinois are using video conferencing tools to continue their outreach.

Debbie believes it is very important for parents to have this difficult conversation with their children at an early age. "One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center," says Debbie. "These lessons provide information on staying safe, the differences between good touch and bad touch, and the differences between good secrets and bad secrets. It is extremely important that children have a trusted grown-up that they can disclose to and that the grown-up believes them."

Debbie understands that some parents may feel hesitant about trusting her to discuss this topic with their children. "Parents are

welcome to be present for the lessons. Each lesson is age appropriate and language sensitive. It is taught in a manner that will provide them with the tools and resources they need without getting into sexually explicit content," says Debbie. She added that her lesson plans are available for preview online at <http://wirpc.org/prevention/>. Parents can also visit the website <http://www.erinslaw.org> to learn more about prevention education and why it is important.

Currently, Victim Services is offering virtual lessons by appointment for Pre-K through 2nd grade level students. Lessons for advanced grade levels may be provided at a later date, depending on demand.

To schedule a virtual one-on-one lesson, email Debbie at Deborah@wirpc.org or call (309) 836-2148, ext. 141 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

If you have been abused at any point in your life, or if you suspect that someone you know is being abused, call Victim Services' 24-hour free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555.☎

## Follow Victim Services on Social Media!

Facebook:  
[@WIRCCAAVictimServices](#)

Instagram:  
[@wirccaa\\_victim\\_services](#)

Twitter:  
[@WIRC\\_VS](#)

# KATHY SIMMONS 5K POSTPONED

Due to ongoing concerns regarding the Coronavirus, the Kathy Simmons Memorial 5K Walk/Run/Roll has been postponed until September 2020. Event organizers will be in contact with those who have already registered and businesses who have donated. Additional details regarding the event date and location will be announced closer to September.

Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says the decision was made out of concern for the safety of participants and employees. "Last year, we had over 60 participants of all ages join us to support domestic violence survivors in western Illinois," says Roth. "We are taking the CDC guidelines very seriously, and look forward to seeing everyone in September."

The 5K, sponsored by Victim Services, is held every year in memory of Kathy Simmons and in support of survivors of domestic violence. Ms. 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. All proceeds from the event are used to provide free services, such as crisis advocacy response and counseling, to domestic violence survivors of Victim Services.

For more information, visit [wirpc.org/simmons/](http://wirpc.org/simmons/), find "WIRCCAA Victim Services" on social media, or call (309) 837-6622.☎



# Federally Funded Energy Assistance Program Taking Applications for Limited Time

Individuals who have not applied  
since October 2019:

**Apply for LIHEAP!**

LIHEAP is designed to assist eligible  
households with paying their home  
energy bills.

**Application Deadline:  
June 30, 2020**

Application number for Hancock,  
Henderson, McDonough, and Warren  
counties in Illinois:

**WIRC-CAA  
(309) 837-2997**

LIHEAP COVID-19 FB Ad 04/2020



**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.  
WE WILL BELIEVE YOU.  
IT'S 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**

# STAFF NEWS

## Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following staff that recently celebrated special employment anniversary milestones:

### One Year

**Angela\***

DV Case Manager/Counselor

**Sally\***

DV Children's Counselor

**Micah Otey**

Weatherization Assessor/Inspector

**Richard Peterson**

Housing Assessor

**Ireanna\***

SART Advocate

### Five Years

**Rana Quesal**

Fiscal Assistant

### 15 Years

**Josh Mercer**

Planning Coordinator

### 35 Years

**Teresa Cadle**

Clothing Center Manager/  
CD Clerical Support

## Staff Departures

We are sorry to note we recently had two staff departures after many years of service to the Agency and its mission:

**Jeff Cozadd**, Housing Program Coordinator, retired after 17 years

of service. He has taken an new position in Destin, Florida.

**Jane Evans**, LIHEAP Outreach Worker, retired after 37 years of service.



*Clothing Center Manager Teresa Cadle is presented with a necklace for her 35 years of service to WIRC in November 2019. [Jamie Roth/WIRC]*

*\*Full names of Victim Services employees are kept confidential out of concern for their safety and the safety of their clients.*

## 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 Business Line**

309-837-6622

### **Sexual Assault Business Line**

309-836-2148

### **24-Hour Free & Confidential**

### **Crisis Hotline**

309-837-5555

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

