



# The Regional Review

The latest news from the Western Illinois Regional Council & Community Action Agency  
Now located at 133 West Jackson Street, Macomb, Illinois

JANUARY 2021

VOLUME 31, ISSUE 1

## PROJECT SANTA PROGRAM PROVIDES A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO NEARLY 500 CHILDREN

Every year since 1983, WIRC-CAA's Project Santa Program has provided a happy holiday full of gifts, food, and clothing to children of low-income families in need enrolled in this special program. This year, thanks to the generosity of donors, sponsors, and shopping volunteers, Project Santa was able to assist nearly 500 children living in Hancock, Henderson, McDonough and Warren counties.

WIRC-CAA Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says the agency had a notable increase in applications for their 2020 program. "Many families in our service area



*During the pandemic, Project Santa "elves" practiced social distancing to shop safely for thousands of items on children's wish lists*

have been financially impacted in some way by the pandemic, so we anticipated a higher need this year," said Roth. "Last year, around 300 children were enrolled. This year, 393 children were enrolled in our official program, and, thanks to donations, we were able to assist an

additional 74 children in our unofficial program."

On average, \$75 is spent on each child officially enrolled. Because the families enrolled in the program often worry about putting food on the table, each family is also given a holiday meal to prepare on Christmas Day. Families who would have qualified but submitted a late application are

enrolled in Project Santa's unofficial program, also known as the "Waiting List." The amount of gifts, food, and clothing that Waiting List families receive is dependent on the amount of surplus donations.

Roth continued that while  
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## The Regional Review

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(PROJECT SANTA...continued)

Project Santa does put a focus on toys, the program also aims to provide a sense of security to children over the holiday season. "Some children we helped were more excited about getting a new winter coat than their toys," Roth said. "That is why the program also provides clothing and food; it is hard to be excited about your toys if you are worried about your next meal or not having proper footwear to walk in the snow. The difficult financial situations that these families are in motivates us to help as many families as we possibly can."

Project Santa is funded primarily from donations, and relies on the generosity of volunteers and sponsors who support the program. The agency is grateful for the outstanding support from organizations and individuals this year, including a few local fundraisers and toy drives that were held to benefit Project Santa.

WIRC & CAA is a multi-faceted organization based in Macomb, Illinois that provides community development and social services throughout several counties in western Illinois. For more information about Project Santa, visit <http://wirpc.org/projectsanta/> or call WIRC-CAA at (309) 837-2997. ☺



**To apply for energy assistance, call WIRC-CAA at 309-837-2997**

## MACOMB NALC COLLECTS \$1,000 FOR PROJECT SANTA

Branch 658 of the National Association of Letters Carriers (NALC), Macomb, recently helped to spread holiday cheer to children of families in need by donating \$1,000 to Western Illinois Regional Council-Community Action Agency's (WIRC-CAA) Project Santa Program.

"We are grateful for their continued support over the years and for this very generous donation," said WIRC-CAA Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth.

For more information about Project Santa, visit <http://wirpc.org/projectsanta/> or call WIRC-CAA at (309) 837-2997. ☺

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

### LaMoine Valley Project Santa Raffle

**\$5 per ticket**

#### You could win:

Winchester SXP Buck/Bird Combo  
Pump Action Shotgun 12Ga

OR

Springfield XD-9mm 3" Handgun

OR

\$500 Cash

All proceeds go to WIRC-CAA Project Santa

Drawing to be held February 13, 2021 on the LaMoine Valley Facebook page

To buy a ticket, call WIRC-CAA at 309-837-2997 or LaMoine Valley at 319-759-2459

# VICTIM SERVICES EXPANDS TELEHEALTH OFFERINGS

In order to serve as many survivors of abuse as safely as possible during the ongoing pandemic, WIRC-CAA Victim Services, a local domestic and sexual violence agency, has expanded its counseling options for domestic violence clients. As of JANUARY 2021, clients have the added option to meet with their counselors virtually.

The agency's Domestic Violence Program is using Doxy, a HIPAA-compliant telemedicine software company, to provide this new service to their clients. Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says the agency believes that clients will appreciate the flexibility of this extra option. "Doxy allows our clients to join a secure and confidential counseling session via their home computer or smartphone," says Roth. "This flexibility increases the likelihood that a survivor will be able to find a quiet, safe place away from their abuser to attend their counseling session. Virtual counseling can be a great option for survivors who miss the face-to-face interaction of in-person appointments."

Roth continued that Doxy will be familiar to those who have used video conference tools like Zoom or have made video calls. "The service has a friendly, intuitive interface, even for those who are not technologically-inclined. Clients who choose virtual counseling will be sent a secure, temporary website link from their counselor. After clicking the link, clients need to give Doxy permission to access the camera and microphone on the

device they are using. After that, their counseling session can begin."

At this time, sexual assault clients may have available through their counselor or advocate a similar secure platform to use through Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). Sexual assault clients are encouraged to contact their counselor for more information.

Anyone interested in this new service should request it from their counselor at least one week prior to their first virtual appointment. Telephone-only counseling options are still available. Availability for in-person counseling is subject to state and local guidelines.

For more information about Victim Services, visit <http://wirpc.org/victim-services/>, find them on social media, or call their business line at 309-837-6622. If you have experienced abuse at any point in your life, or if you think someone you know is being abused, call Victim Services' free and confidential crisis hotline at 309-837-5555. ☺

## ***Crisis Hotline Volunteers Needed!***

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

## ***Don't forget to update your address book!***

**WIRC & CAA has moved to:  
133 West Jackson Street  
Macomb, IL 61455**

**YOU ARE NOT  
ALONE.**

**WE BELIEVE  
YOU.**

**YOUR STORY  
MATTERS.**

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

All services are free to survivors and significant others of survivors, including partners, children, family members, and friends.



**24/7 Free and  
Confidential Crisis  
Hotline:  
(309) 837-5555**



## ST. PAUL STUDENTS HELP FELLOW CHILDREN IN NEED



*On November 20, 2020, St. Paul Principal Laura Cody (right) presented WIRC-CAA Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth (left) with Project Santa donations collected by staff and students. The donation included toys, clothing, hand-knit hats and scarves, winter coats and a monetary donation.*

Once again, the students and teachers of St. Paul School in Macomb purchased toys, clothing, and coats for children enrolled in WIRC-CAA's Project Santa Program.

This year, they sponsored and shopped for 25 children in need using their own funds and collected a monetary donation. In addition, the students purchased 19 winter coats for the children.

According to Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth, Project Santa is about more than just getting toys. "Last year, there was a little girl we helped that was more excited about having a brand new winter coat than her toys," says Roth. "Many families enrolled in this program are struggling financially, and simply cannot afford to get basic necessities that many of us take for granted. The toys are meant to boost each child's spirits, while the clothing, coats and

holiday meal are meant to help give them a sense of security."

Roth continued that the agency is thankful for St. Paul School's continued, long-lasting support. "St. Paul School has been helping Project Santa for over 30 years, and we greatly appreciate their time, support and donations," says Roth.

For more information about Project Santa, visit <http://wirpc.org/projectsanta/> or call WIRC-CAA at (309) 837-2997. ☎

### Follow Victim Services on Social Media!

Facebook:  
[@WIRCCAAVictimServices](#)

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

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

## MEG FUND DONATES \$1,500 TO WIRC-CAA

On December 7, 2020, McDonough Telephone Cooperative (MDTC) recognized WIRC-CAA with a generous \$1,500 donation from the McDonough Employee Goodwill (MEG) Fund.

MEG Fund President Joyce Faxon stated that the services WIRC-CAA provides the community is commendable.

WIRC-CAA Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says the donation is greatly appreciated by the social service agency. "We are very thankful for MDTC and the MEG Fund's support," said Roth. "They were pleased to provide these funds to us for technology upgrades that will allow us to better serve our customers in need."

For more information about WIRC-CAA and their social service programs, visit <http://wirpc.org/>, find them on social media, or call 309-837-2997. ☎

*When life's essentials are  
hard to come by, call  
WIRC-CAA at 309-837-2997.*

## You Can Make A Difference!

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

**(309) 837-5555**

# VICTIM SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES ABUSE SURVIVORS FACE DURING A PANDEMIC

Every October, WIRC-CAA Victim Services puts a spotlight on domestic violence for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This year, the annual campaign had a higher sense of urgency due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, as many domestic violence survivors are in prolonged, close contact with their abuser(s).

“Abusers will often use situations like the pandemic to escalate their behavior and further isolate their victim(s) from friends and family,” says Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth. “For domestic abuse survivors, the pandemic is creating a terrifying scenario where they have little-to-no time apart from their abuser(s), which makes it difficult to reach out for help.”

Throughout the pandemic, Victim Services counselors and advocates have continued to provide their free and confidential services by offering phone counseling and following the CDC recommended physical distancing guidelines during face-to-face interactions. They have a crisis hotline monitored by trained staff and volunteer counselors that is available 24/7 by calling (309) 837-5555. Concerned friends and family members are also encouraged to call the hotline if they think someone they know is being abused.

Roth continued that domestic violence survivors who want to leave their abusers often face many challenges such as worrying about homelessness, hunger, being stalked by their abuser, or the well-being of their household pet. “Abusers want to manipulate and control their victims. Sometimes the controlling

behavior is physical, but it can also be sexual, psychological, or financial. It is also common for abusers to threaten to harm or kill household pets when they feel like they are losing control. That is why it is so important for the public to show support of survivors by reiterating that domestic abuse is a crime, they are not alone, and Victim Services has free resources available to help them in their specific situation.”

Victim Services promoted their programs and advocated on behalf of survivors through public events and campaigns. Dark purple, a prominent component of all of their activities, is the symbolic color of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

On October 3, the agency hosted their first-ever Pets Against Violence Awareness Event at Patton Park in Macomb. The event focused on potential barriers that victims with pets may face. Attendees and their pets were invited to take a pledge to end the cycle of domestic violence. Purple leashes, donated by Farm King and Pets Supplies Plus of Macomb, were available for a suggested donation of \$5.00. In addition, Farm King generously donated pooper-scoopers and dog treats. Additional outreach materials about domestic violence and Victim Services’ programs were also distributed.

To raise awareness about financial abuse, Victim Services offered a free one-hour financial abuse training seminar for banks and other financial institutions. Victim Services counselors / advocates who have first-hand experience assisting

survivors of financial abuse taught each seminar that was available virtually or in-person with social distancing guidelines being followed.

Multiple local small businesses, churches, and schools showed their support by displaying signs that stated, “Every home should be a safe home.” Members of the public were encouraged to wear purple, wear a purple pin-on ribbon, or install a purple light bulb on their porch light. Pin-on ribbons, signs, and lights were available from Victim Services for a suggested \$1 donation.

Victim Services also collaborated with local governments and law enforcement agencies through their purple bow and ribbon campaign, including the Macomb Police Department; Macomb Downtown Square; Macomb City Hall; Hancock County Courthouse; Hancock County Jail; Hancock County Sheriff’s Office; Henderson County Sheriff’s Office; Henderson County Courthouse; Warren County Courthouse; and Warren County Sheriff’s Office. Employees and officers at many of those locations also wore pin-on ribbons to show their support.

The annual Take Back the Night March and Rally, hosted in collaboration with Western Illinois University was postponed until Spring 2021 due to the ongoing pandemic.

For more information, call (309) 837-6622. If you have experienced abuse at any point in your life, call Victim Services’ 24-hour free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555.☺

# MACOMB WOMAN'S CLUB RAISES OVER \$1,300 FOR PROJECT SANTA



On November 30, 2020, Macomb Woman's Club GFWC President Brenda Allison (center) presented a check donation for Project Santa to WIRC & CAA Executive Director Tracy Camden (right) and WIRC & CAA Executive Director Transition Facilitator Suzan Nash (left).

On November 7, 2020, the Macomb Woman's Club hosted a drive-by fundraiser to benefit several local organizations and programs, including WIRC-CAA's longstanding Project Santa Program. Thanks to the club's efforts and the generosity of its members, \$1,306 was raised and donated to Project Santa.

Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says the agency greatly appreciates the club's continued support. "The Macomb Woman's Club members have been strong

supporters and volunteer "elves" of our Project Santa Program for many years," says Roth. "We are grateful that they hosted this fundraiser to benefit this special program and are thrilled that it was so successful."

Roth continued that the donation was greatly needed this year due to so many families being financially impacted by the pandemic.

For more information about Project Santa, visit <http://wirpc.org/projectsanta/> or call WIRC-CAA at (309) 837-2997.



## WIRC-CAA Food Pantry



*Open for curbside pickup during the pandemic*

### Hours of Operation:

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays (excluding holidays)

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

133 West Jackson Street  
Macomb, Illinois

(309) 837-2997

*Customers will be instructed to pick up the food at a table near the office's main entrance*



# THANK YOU!

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





# DEER HUNTERS URGENTLY NEEDED TO HELP FILL LOCAL FOOD PANTRY SHELVES

Now needed more than ever, WIRC-CAA is asking deer hunters to donate deer burger to its Hunters Helping the Hungry program. For over 30 years, this annual program has distributed thousands of pounds of deer burger to local food pantries throughout the western Illinois counties of Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Warren. Last year, deer hunters donated just over 7,000 pounds of deer burger to help feed local families.

Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic highlights the serious need for this program. "Individuals and families that have otherwise been financially stable are wondering if they will be able to put food on the table because someone in the household has either lost a job or had their hours cut as a result of the pandemic," said Roth. "We are anticipating demands on our food pantry and our partner pantries to increase, and we want to make sure that a sizeable amount of deer burger is collected to help as many people as possible."

Hunters can take their deer to the following processing centers and request that the deer burger be donated to the Hunters Helping the Hungry program. The participating lockers include: Blandinsville Locker Service, Blandinsville; Bowen Locker Service, Bowen; Bushnell Locker Service, Bushnell; Farmhouse Meat Co., Carthage; and Vancil Locker Service, Stronghurst.

There is a limit on how much deer burger each locker can process. That limit, which fluctuates every year, is dependent on federal grant

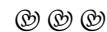
funding. When the limit is reached, WIRC-CAA will not be able to pay for any additional donations of deer; however, hunters that are willing to pay for the processing at their own expense are welcome to pay. The deer burger will be distributed through the pantries.

"This year, our goal is to process 7,500 pounds of deer burger," Roth continued. "We cannot do this program without the help of local hunters, and we want to thank them for being so generous every year."

WIRC & CAA is a multi-faceted organization based in Macomb, Illinois that provides community development and social services throughout several

counties in western Illinois. 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 about the Hunters Helping the Hungry program, call WIRC-CAA at 309-837-2997.



Visit our website at  
<http://wirpc.org> or find us  
on social media!

## STAFF NEWS

### Staff Departures

We are sorry to note we recently had the following staff departures. We wish these individuals the best in their future endeavors.

**Caroline\***

Domestic Violence Legal Advocate

**Dean Torreson**

Planner/HSTP Coordinator

**Kevin Wiehardt**

Assistant Planner

**Ethan Fogg**

Community Development Intern

**Suzan Nash**

Interim Executive Director/  
ED Transition Facilitator

### Staff Anniversaries

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

**One Year**

**Alissa\***

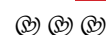
Sexual Assault Counselor

**Kerri\***

Domestic Violence Coordinator/  
Counselor

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

24/7 Free and  
Confidential Crisis Hotline:  
**309-837-5555**



**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**

## 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

