

DIRECTIONS

Suzan Nash, Executive Director

Project Santa: Bringing Holiday Smiles to Children for 25 Years

Another Project Santa program is completed, topping off a very exciting year for the WIRC. We've been very busy throughout 2008 with our regular programs and workload and then there was the flood, the economic downturn and the housing crisis. Before I elaborate on anything else, Project Santa assisted 142 families and 335 children in the four county region.



The caring and kindness of so many assisted us in making the season special and in bringing happiness to both children and adults alike.

The staff and I know that we could not provide this wonderful program if it were not for the many local businesses, donors, volunteers, and persons who participated in this program in some way. The caring and kindness of so many assisted us in making the season special and in bringing happiness to both children and adults alike. I again want to thank all those who assisted this agency in any way with Project Santa. Aside from the tremendous effort on the part of Teresa Cadle, Naomi Taylor, Santas Tim Manock and Tim Howe and the staff Elves, this continues to be a real community undertaking. To name a few of those who contributed to the program this year: Hy-Vee Foods, St. Paul School, Curves, Family Video, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and many more. Again this year, we received a significant outpouring of generosity from many individual and civic/organizational contributors through the donation of money, gifts, coats, the sponsorship of a family or child, and/or their time and talents to this undertaking by shopping or wrapping. And again this year, the members of the Lamoine Valley Chapter of ABATE held a fundraiser at Hagy's Bar and Grill in Dallas City and provided a substantial donation to assist us

in this program. I think in this, the program's 25th anniversary year, we were especially touched by all of the support and generosity given the state of the economy. And I think I can say that this was a very special and happy year because the families that we

helped were so appreciative; were excited to see "Santa" and give him a hug; and we knew, based upon what was said, that we were truly making a difference in the season through this program. I think one family that really touched me was the single mother with a young teenager who was recently laid off and who had already been struggling prior to this happening. She had tears in her eyes as she hugged us and thanked us for being there for her family.

As we start this new year, looking toward change in the face of so much uncertainty in the economy and world, I must say that these are troubling times. I worry about what may be in store for those who are already in need and becoming more desperate. With unemployment reaching over seven percent, with more layoffs forecasted, and with the significant number of foreclosures in the housing crisis, it is truly worrisome. The number of clients we serve is rising and we anticipate that this will continue. I am never one to be the harbinger of gloom, so on the positive and with time, I believe that things will turn around.

That having been said and to end on a positive, I wish all a Happy New Year!

Putting the Fun in Fundraising!

Like to get together with friends? Like to test your trivia knowledge? Like a little competition? Well, we have just the event to help you do all three. Join us for an evening of fun, facts, and friends at our first "Trivia Night" fundraiser on Saturday, February 28, beginning at 7:00 pm at the Elks Lodge, 401 Deer Road in Macomb. The event will be limited to 25 teams. Each team can have up to eight people. Each team pays \$80. Team slots may be reserved by contacting Josh Mercer at (309) 836-2148 or josh@wirpc.org. A \$40 deposit is required to reserve a table. Payouts will be determined by the number of teams participating.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes April 18!

Mark your calendars today to join Victim Services as it hosts its first annual "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes:"[®] an international men's march to stop rape, sexual assault and gender violence. Begun in 2001, the men's march started out small but has grown each year with 124 cities in the United States, Canada, Australia and South Korea participating.

The walk is an excellent way to bring awareness to violence that many think are only "women's issues" in that it:

- Encourages men and women to come together to make the world a safer place by preventing sexual assault and gender violence;
- Expands the dialogue between men and women on gender differences, gender relationships and gender violence;
- Gives people the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their courage and commitment to preventing gender violence;
- Encourages the community to talk about these important concerns;
- Helps men better understand and appreciate women's experiences; and
- Encourages men to literally walk a mile in women's high-heeled shoes (optional).

As the date gets closer, more information will be provided. If you are interested in helping with the walk or becoming a sponsor, please contact Josh Mercer at (309) 836-2148 or josh@wirpc.org.

Agency Initiatives

By now you have noticed the little card contained in your newsletter. We ask that you complete the card by February 13, apply a stamp and drop it in the mail to us. All this is an effort to reduce costs due to printing and postage, while positively impacting the environment. At WIRC, we are making an effort to reduce the amount of paper we consume, thus looking at doing more electronically where possible. So for those of you who have computer access and would like to receive NETWIRC in an electronic format, please provide us with that essential information. Also, tell us if you wish to continue receiving the newsletter and if you need it in a hard copy format.

This is the first step to a process that will take a bit of time. Our goal is send the spring issue in email format. We appreciate your assistance.

Staff News

There were a few milestones that took place in 2008, with congratulations to the following staff that celebrated special employment anniversaries during the 2008-year:

5 Years

Jeff Cozadd (January), Assistant Planner/Homebuyer Program Specialist

25 Years

Jeff Elam (February), Housing Specialist

30 Years

Rose Elam (February), Administrative Assistant/Office Manager

Make a New Year's Resolution to Not Let Our Children Down

As we begin the new year, we tend to make resolutions that affect us personally. We vow to lose weight, exercise more, save more, etc. I would challenge each of us to look not at what we are doing for ourselves, but what it is we are doing, or could be doing, for the children in our communities. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German Protestant theologian and anti-Nazi activist, stated, "The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children." Sadly, in America, we too often close our eyes to the crisis endured every day by our children. We fail our children every day in this county as the following statistics show:

Every Day in America...

- 4 children are killed by abuse or neglect
- 5 children or teens commit suicide
- 8 children or teens are killed by firearms
- 32 children or teens die from accidents
- 78 babies die before their first birthday
- 155 children are arrested for violent crimes

These calculations are based per day (180 days of seven hours each) and are from the Children's Defense Fund website: www.childrensdefense.org 3/08

Resolve this year to put children first and to do at least one new thing to improve their lives. April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. That is just a couple of months away. Don't wait to do something meaningful. Begin today, take a few steps and reach out. Get other friends and family involved. The following are examples of how you can help.

What You Can Do...

- Mentor a child.
- Volunteer at an after-school program.
- Volunteer with children who are homeless or in foster care.
- Listen to a child who is upset, recognizing that children may be acting out of anger or neglect and that you can improve their lives simply by listening.
- Educate yourself about issues affecting children.
- Prepare care packages of new clothes, personal toiletries and a welcome gift for a child placed into foster care or going to emergency shelter.

The list is endless. Be part of the solution.

Grant Awards Fund Infrastructure Projects



Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has announced its most recently funded cycle of Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) Public Facility grants. Five area communities were each awarded \$350,000 in grant funds to assist in the financing of local infrastructure development or improvement projects. The grants that were awarded are as follows:

Village of Altona - \$350,000 - Water system improvements

Village of Biggsville - \$350,000 - Water source & system improvements

City of Colchester - \$350,000 - Sanitary sewer system improvements

Village of Gladstone - \$350,000 - Water source improvements

Village of Tennessee - \$350,000 - Sanitary sewer development

WIRC is currently in the process of writing new CDAP applications for the 2009 funding cycle. If your community is interested in pursuing construction funding in the 2010 fiscal year, please call WIRC staff.

WIRC's Community Development Department provides experienced technical assistance and administrative services to local units of government.

Housing Grants Will Improve Homes and Neighborhoods

The Illinois Housing Development Authority recently announced that the Western Illinois Regional Council will receive \$576,000 to administer a Homebuyer Program for the counties of Hancock, Henderson, McDonough and Warren. The program works with local lenders who provide the mortgages to income eligible and credit worthy homebuyers. All participants are provided assistance with down payment, closing costs and moderate rehabilitation of the home to bring it within applicable building codes.

The WIRC-CAA has administered the program for over ten years and has assisted approximately 60 families to become homeowners. Homebuyer Program Specialist Jeff Cozadd said the beauty of the program is the rehabilitation element. "We are able to take real estate that may not be moving because of the condition of the home and make a very saleable property". The rehabilitation of the property also goes a long way in improving the entire neighborhood.

Cozadd stated that public meetings will be held this spring for interested families/individuals and staff will begin taking applications after that. If you know of anyone interested in this program, please have them call the WIRC office so they can be placed on the Homebuyer inquiry list.

The Illinois Housing Development Authority has also announced that the City of Nauvoo will receive \$410,000 in funding to rehabilitate 10 homes. Community Services Director Kevin Wiehardt stated that the application was submitted in October of 2008. He is very pleased that the application was funded and at the \$410,000 level.

The WIRC-CAA received \$128,400 to administer the Home Modification Program for the Elderly and Disabled in Hancock and McDonough counties. The program assists very-low and low-income elderly and disabled homeowners and renters to make modifications to help them stay in their homes. Modifications could include enlarging doorways, wheel chair ramps and modifications to bathrooms and kitchens.

OPPORTUNITIES *Community Development Assistance Design-Engineering Grants* -Time is still available for those communities wishing to seek design-engineering funds in the 2009 cycle. Income surveys must be submitted for this process **no later than early March**. Contact Shannon Duncan at (309) 837-3941 or shannon@wirpc.org (as soon as possible) for assistance with this process. *Community Development Assistance Housing Rehabilitation* -The WIRC will begin preparations for Community Development Assistance Program housing rehabilitation applications later this spring. If your community is interested in this program, contact Kevin Wiehardt at (309) 837-3941 or kevin@wirpc.org. **We need to know if your community is interested no later than June 2009.**

Community Action

WIRC-CAA Offering \$1,500 Scholarships

The WIRC-CAA will offer five \$1,500 scholarships to individuals desiring to further their educational training through an Illinois community college, vocational school, college or university. Applicants should be pursuing employment in a high need field and must be a resident of Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, or Warren counties. Scholarship recipients may apply the \$1,500 towards tuition and fees, textbooks and supplies, or campus room and board.

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of financial eligibility, scholarship potential, and commitment to civic affairs, career goals and personal interviews. Applications will be available beginning February 20, 2009 from high school guidance counselors, college financial aid offices, and the WIRC-CAA office, 223 South Randolph Street, Macomb (309) 837-2997. Completed applications must be received at the WIRC-CAA by 4:00 pm on March 27, 2009.

Tri-County Resource & Waste Management Council

Talkin' Trash Newsletter Goes Electronic



Talkin' Trash Newsletter
Tri-County Resource & Waste Management Council
Volume 13 - Issue 1

Providing recycling news for
communities, businesses and schools

In October 2008, all subscribers of the Talkin' Trash newsletter were notified that the newsletter would be changing frequency of publication from 6 to 4 times a year, and would be sent electronically. The response we received supported the idea of saving paper and conserving monetary resources. The choice to continue to receive a hard copy of the newsletter was also an option. If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, email Patti at patti@wirpc.org. If you need to receive it in hard copy, let us know that, too. You can also read the newsletter online at <http://www.tricountyresource.org>.

Future of Recycling in Danger

Recent recycling headlines were "Price Meltdown Roils Markets," and "Scrap Markets Dropped Along with the Economy." These recent economic issues have the recycling world very concerned. More than ever, it is important to know alternatives to dumping valuable resources into the trash.

Domestic and overseas manufacturing has decreased sharply, which has significantly softened the demand for raw materials, including scrap and recycled paper. The biggest concern is that this will effect single-stream recycling programs that have been so successful in rural communities. Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) are charging for processing the mixed materials, whereas just a few months ago, MRFs were paying for these commodities. In most cases, the "tipping fee" for processing mixed recyclables is \$50 to \$75 a ton. This fee is more than the \$35 plus tipping fee at the

landfill for garbage. The recycling customers need to be aware of this situation so they know why the cost of recycling has gone up, and to be sure that their recyclables are not being landfilled. Recycling is a huge part of the energy equation. The general public needs to understand this fact as we work our way through this slowing economy.

Can-Do Contest Results

Tri-county 4th graders participated this fall in the TCR&WMC's 7th Annual Can-Do Contest. By collecting 3,277.8 pounds of aluminum cans, St. Paul Elementary School was awarded an all expense paid trip to Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. Other participating 4th grade classes included: West Prairie South in Colchester - 1,030.4 pounds; Immaculate Conception School in Monmouth - 865 pounds; and Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary (combined classes) - 458.2 pounds.

