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## News Nook

[Veterans Services expands no-cost tax preparation services through September 30](#)

[Department of Roads announces more than \\$100 million in road, bridge, and traffic projects and urges motorists to help keep work zones safe](#)

## Message from Mark



Hello and welcome to the April edition of Macomb Matters, our employee newsletter covering the accomplishments and activities of the County workforce.

Let me begin by asking: Do you know an employee deserving of recognition within this space? Perhaps they received an accreditation or certificate? Or maybe they welcomed a new addition to their family?

It could even be someone who went above and beyond serving the public in their role. No matter the reason, we want to hear from you! From our employee accolades section, to employee focus, we've got special spots to highlight our County workforce in a number of ways. So if you have an idea, reach out. Contact Tom Lehrer at [tom.lehrer@macombgov.org](mailto:tom.lehrer@macombgov.org) with your feedback and your story may appear in an upcoming edition of Macomb Matters!

Now, we just celebrated National Administrative Professionals Day on April 24, so I would like to give special thanks to all county administrative professionals who are often the unsung heroes behind the scenes keeping everything running smoothly in our departments.

We also just marked National Work Zone Awareness Week, so our Macomb County Department of Roads team announced some tips which are helpful reminders for all of us as we travel our roadways:

- **Plan ahead.** Expect delays, plan for them, and leave early to reach your destination on time. When you can, avoid work zones altogether by using alternate routes.
- **Obey road crews and signs.** When approaching a work zone, watch for cones, barrels, signs, large vehicles, or workers in bright-colored vests to warn you and direct you where to go.
- **Slow down.** Look for signs indicating the speed limit through the work zone. Keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead of you and follow the posted speed limit.

[Macomb County Health Department to host Infant Safety Expo](#)

## Blog Log

[Top 5 things to do outside downtown Detroit during the NFL Draft](#)

[Ask the expert: WM offers tips on recycling the right way](#)

## Events



### [Stepping Out With The Stars](#)

Saturday, May 2; 5:30 p.m. - 11 p.m.



### [May the 4th Adoption Event - The Shelter Barks Back](#)

May 4, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Macomb County Animal Control



### [Macomb Business Awards](#)

Thursday, May 9, 2024



- **Move over.** Most state move-over laws apply when passing work crews and official vehicles parked on the shoulder with flashing warning lights.
- **Avoid distractions.** Keep your eyes on the road and off your phone at all times.
- **Watch for sudden stoppages.** Don't make sudden lane changes in front of trucks that are trying to slow down.

In closing, as we're all aware, it's been a beautiful start to spring - with plenty of sunny days and some warm weather. In my opinion, there's no better time to experience all that Macomb County has to offer. From our [parks and trails](#), to our [fun local events](#), there's something for everyone. So join me in getting out and connecting with your community this season. You'll find out why Macomb is a great place to call home.

Mark

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Employee News and Accolades



### **Chelssee Swarthout welcomes twins**

Chelssee Swarthout, event coordinator for Macomb County Planning and Economic Development, welcomed Spencer and Simon Swarthout in late December. Spencer was 4lb 12oz and Simon was 5lb 3oz upon arrival. Three months later they are happy and healthy. Congratulations to Chelssee and her husband, Matt.

Is there someone in your office who deserves a "pat on the back" for an outstanding achievement? If so, please let the Macomb Matters committee know about it! Email [Megan.Ochmanek@macombgov.org](mailto:Megan.Ochmanek@macombgov.org) with the details.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Employee Focus: Megan Smith

As the County welcomes more people into our workforce, the Macomb Matters team would love to spotlight the IT Department's very own, Megan Smith. Keep reading to see what she has to say about her new job and life outside of work!

### **What is your current position and what do you do?**

As a Security Administrator with the IT Department, my main goal is to protect our organization from cyber threats. This involves implementing security measures, identifying weaknesses, and preparing for potential security incidents. I also contribute to establishing security policies, conducting audits, and providing educational resources to ensure our systems remain secure. Additionally, staying updated on the latest cybersecurity trends is essential to maintaining our proactive security approach and staying ahead of potential threats.

## [Macomb Community Action 60th Anniversary Event](#)

Saturday, May 18; 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.



## [Walk for Warmth](#)

Saturday, May 18, 2024



## [Selfridge Air Show/Open House](#)

June 8 and June 9; Free admission



## **What led you to this career and what are some of the challenges you face?**

I first entered the field of Information Technology with technical focus and grew an interest in cybersecurity along the way. I enjoy the challenge of staying ahead of cyber threats and protecting information. Everyday brings new puzzles to solve and an opportunity to make a positive impact by safeguarding individuals and our organization from harm. It's a field that demands continuous learning and adaptability, which keeps me motivated and engaged.

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## **Retiree spotlight**

### **Beth Naftaly Kirshner**

The Macomb Matters team would like to congratulate Beth Naftaly Kirshner, assistant prosecuting attorney and chief for the Family Support Division in the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office, on her retirement in January. Beth worked for the County for more than 30 years and was an integral part of many programs and initiatives.

### **How many years have you been with the County?**

I have been employed for over 30 years. I started in 1993.

### **What will you miss most about working for Macomb County?**

My coworkers. I work with a committed and talented group of people at the Prosecutor's Office.

Click here for a [list](#) of retirees

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## **In Memoriam**



### **Sandra Wolff**

Sandra (Sandie) Wolff, a Macomb County Head Start teacher aide, passed away on March 18, 2024 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Sandie began working for Macomb Community Action Head Start as a substitute teacher aide in 2009. She was promoted to a full-time teacher aide in 2021. Her work in Head Start spanned 15 years.

Linda Azar, division director with Macomb Community Action shared: "Sandie was dedicated to serving the

Head Start program, our families and children. Her dream was to be a Head Start teacher and she obtained her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Rochester College. Sandie was dedicated to doing the best to support the classroom teacher and the children each and every day. She used her dream to motivate herself to get well and returned during each of her times in remission."

Our hearts go out to Sandie's husband, family and the Head Start family.

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## Did you know?



### Macomb County employees are eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness

There are plenty of benefits from working in government, one of them being this:

Those who have worked in public service for 10 years or more (not required to have been consecutively) can qualify to have their entire student debt canceled!  
(Source: [The White House](#))

This includes those who have worked in federal, state, tribal government, the U.S. military and even at a non-profit organization. Those who do not qualify include those who have worked for labor unions, partisan political organizations and for-profit organizations, including for-profit contracted organizations.

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## Get involved!



Macomb Community Action's 2024 Walk for Warmth



During colder days, many of us kick up our thermostats and stay cozy indoors. But for some families and individuals in Macomb County, this isn't an option. We've heard from parents who have to choose between putting food on the table and paying utility bills. Then there are elderly and disabled individuals who cannot afford to fix their furnaces. It's heartbreaking.

Macomb Community Action works to combat this issue through emergency grants and assistance (utility bills, furnace repair and replacement) that keep heat running in hundreds of homes - but we also need your help too. Our 34th annual Walk for Warmth is one way you can pitch in. Join us for this pet-friendly 5K Fun Walk on Saturday, May 18th. Everyone is welcome!

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## A message from Andy McKinnon



In brainstorming/researching this article, I was searching for a good definition of my idea of civility. Ultimately, I found this definition from Merriam-Webster:

- civilized conduct, especially : COURTESY, POLITENESS;
- a polite act or expression;
- archaic : training in the humanities

And this through one of the Google pull down menus:

Civility is the act of showing regard for others by being polite, like the civility you showed in speaking kindly to someone who has hurt your feelings. Civility comes from the Latin word *civilis*, meaning "relating to public life, befitting a citizen," in other words, being friendly and nice to everyone.

While I liked both, they just didn't encompass my understanding of civility. Further, the use of the word in the sentences provided, seemed to always focus on the lack of civility. That's not where I believe our focus should be.

There are times where we do not need to be "friendly and nice to everyone.", but it doesn't excuse us from our obligation to practice civility. We often hear stories where an employee goes into their boss's office to ask for a raise that has been legitimately earned and they are spoken down to or belittled. In that situation it would be a disservice to all to continue to be "friendly and nice to (that boss)" as the person who has not acted civilly may have no understanding that their words and actions were out of line or harmful. I looked on.

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## Healthstyles

Health Styles is pleased to provide employees with two exciting events:

- **Cooking Demo//Healthy BBQ Sides with Amy Ervin, RDN**  
Amy is a public health educator with the Macomb County Health Department. In this workshop, learn how to make healthier side dishes for the BBQ season! Join us Wednesday, May 15 from Noon to 1 p.m. at the Central Health Center (43525 Elizabeth Rd Mt. Clemens, MI 48043). Please RSVP by May 10 to [Healthstyles@macombgov.org](mailto:Healthstyles@macombgov.org) In person attendance is limited, but you can also join virtually.
- **Six week yoga series**  
Instruction from Maria Marino's Fitness Pros. All Levels of Experience are welcome! Join us Wednesdays from April 17 to May 22, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Verkuilen Building - Senior Services Auditorium. Advance registration is required. Contact [Sandy.Birkenshaw@macombgov.org](mailto:Sandy.Birkenshaw@macombgov.org). You must bring your own mat and a \$48 payment is due on your first day of class. Cash or check only.

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## Providing support by keeping it casual



The Board of Commissioners has announced the continuation of the Macomb County Casual Day Charitable Collections Program. Participating employees (with department leader permission) may wear casual clothing to work on Fridays (or other designated day), if they donate at least a dollar. Participating departments will be monitored, and donations are sent in a timely fashion. Collected donations are then sent by the Board Office to the assigned charities.

Earlier this year, the BOC announced the [full list of programs](#) it will support in 2024. Stay tuned for additional announcements on the topic, and in the meantime, if you are able, please participate in the upcoming Casual Days that will help:

### **Live Rite Structured Recovery Corp**

Dedicated to helping residents of Macomb County and the surrounding area by addressing substance use and mental illness.

**May 3, 10, 17, 24**

### **Anchor Bay Community Giving Tree**

Provides assistance to local families around the holidays.

**May 31**

### **Susie Q's Kids**

Provides comfort bags to kids in need that are tailored to the needs of the kids in various nonprofits.

**June 7, 14, 21, 28**

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## Meet Jessica Braboy, HRLR Training Assistant



Human Resources and Labor Relations would like to introduce employee Jessica Braboy, the new training assistant.

Jessica started her position as the Macomb County Training Assistant in December 2023. In this role she supports all countywide training and development activities. Jessica has been a key member of the HRLR team with assisting the implementation of the new Learning Management System (LMS) Workday Learning.

Prior to joining Macomb County Jessica was a social media manager, responsible for digital marketing in Arizona for local companies.

[Click here to read more.](#)

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## IT Download



### **A message from Jako van Blerk: Microsoft 365 email migration**

Along with the changes we all enjoy with the transition into spring, this year we have another big change – the migration from Gmail to Microsoft Outlook email. As the weather warms and becomes more agreeable, we hope this change follows that same pattern.

As you may imagine, this is a very large effort that impacts all of us. The Information Technology department would like to extend great thanks to everyone we have worked with for their migrations, as well as everyone we will be working with in the coming weeks. Your cooperation and patience are greatly appreciated as this is truly a group effort.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Mark your calendar!



### Macomb Community Action is having a party and you're invited

Join Macomb Community Action on May 18 for a Community Action 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. The entire community is welcome to the free family fun event. The event will serve as a celebration of community action in Macomb County and highlight the life-changing services that mean so much to so many in Macomb County.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Recipe Corner



### Avocado Breakfast Bruschetta

**Number of Servings:** 2

**Serving size:** 1 slice

**Start to Finish:** 10 minutes



**Cost per serving:** \$2.25

**Cost per recipe:** \$4.51

*Cost is an average for the state of Michigan*

**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 avocado
- 1 tomato
- 1 egg - hard-boiled or fried or scrambled
- 2 Tablespoons ricotta cheese
- 2-4 leaves of fresh basil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Lemon juice to taste
- 2 pieces of whole wheat bread

**Directions:**

Remember to wash hands and prepare food safely.

1. Wash your hands for 30 seconds with hot water and soap.
2. Sanitize all food prep surfaces and cooking utensils.
3. Rinse and scrub all produce.
4. Cut up half of avocado, tomato, hard-boiled egg and basil and add to bowl.
5. Add salt, pepper and lemon juice to bowl and stir together.
6. Toast bread and spread cheese on each slice.
7. Top with veggie mixture.
8. Enjoy!

Download a [PDF version](#)

**Recipe credit: Adapted from Produce for Better Health Foundation;  
[fruitsandveggies.org](http://fruitsandveggies.org)**

[Click here to read more.](#)



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