



# Macomb Matters

Keeping You Connected

**February 2016 - Issue 39**

[Click here to view a pdf version of Macomb Matters.](#)

## In This Issue

1. [Mark's Message](#)
2. [How to use the Macomb County Government Perks program](#)
3. [Macomb Community Action - Why did we change our name?](#)
4. [Employee Focus](#)
5. [Macomb's Memories](#)
6. [CARE February Skill Builder](#)
7. [Vanguard education opportunities](#)
8. [Walk for Warmth to take place next week](#)
9. [Recipe Corner](#)
10. [December New Hires-Retirees](#)
11. [Calendar](#)



# Macomb Matters

Keeping You Connected

### **Mark's Message**

February is the month the [American Heart Association](#) launches its [Go Red for Women](#) initiative. The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. This organization uses February, however, to focus specifically on how heart disease affects women. This is important because



there are many myths out there surrounding women and heart disease, mostly that it doesn't affect women nearly as often as men. However, this is false. The fact is heart disease is the number one killer of women, causing one in three deaths each year.

Macomb County, as we did last year, is getting engaged in this initiative a couple of different ways. Starting on Feb. 8, we had the building spotlights at the Macomb County Circuit Court switched to red. Additionally, the Red Hot Macomb Committee is partnering with our office, Westview Orchards, the Greater Romeo-Washington Chamber of Commerce, Beaumont Hospital, the American Heart Association and Heidebreicht Chevrolet. The Red Hot Macomb Paint the Barn Red event will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 23 at Westview Orchards in Washington Township. Tickets can be purchased on the [Greater Romeo-Washington Chamber of Commerce website](#). I hope to see you there (and don't forget to wear red!)

I'd also like to introduce two new members of our Macomb County family. In December, my office welcomed a new deputy county executive, Kathy Bartz. A Macomb County resident, Kathy has, for the past eight years, acted as vice president of sales, marketing and communications at Presbyterian Villages of Michigan. There, she was responsible for managing the sales, marketing, occupancy and revenue development in 26 communities and collaborative properties with \$68.5 million in revenue. Kathy has a tremendous amount of talent and a background that I'm positive will serve our Macomb County residents well.



Additionally, earlier this month, we welcomed a new treasurer to Macomb County who will be filling in due to the unfortunate passing of our longtime treasurer Ted Wahby. Derek Miller is a former assistant Macomb County prosecutor who most recently had been serving in the Michigan House of Representatives. Derek, who is from Warren, was appointed by a three-member panel of county officials on Jan. 29 and sworn in on Feb. 1 by Michigan Supreme Court Justice David Viviano. I do believe Derek's background will help him guide one of our key Macomb County departments with great success.



### **How to use the Macomb County Government Perks program By Jennifer A. Bruzzese, Macomb County Human Resources**

Macomb County has partnered with Corporate Perks to create the exclusive Macomb County Government Perks program. Macomb County government Perks is a free discount program available to all Macomb County Government employees and their families. The partnership between Macomb County and Corporate Perks allows us to take advantage of the purchasing power of Corporate Perks' large network of members. Employees can save on everyday items such as restaurants, pet food and diapers as well as large purchases like computers, cell phones and travel. Discounts are available online and in-store.

Amanda Minuado, senior planner in Macomb County's Planning and Economic Development Department, has really enjoyed using Government Perks.

"I was very excited when I learned about Macomb County's new GovPerks program! I am a big online shopper, and any time that I can get discounts or perks for online purchases, it's a big bonus," she said. "What I love most about the GovPerks program is the variety of stores and services that it offers. Not to mention, it is extremely easy to use. Once you login to the GovPerks website, you click on a store you want to shop at, and it transfers you to the store's website. For example, through GovPerks I purchased some clothing items from Express. I received free shipping and four times the WOWPoints from my purchase."

To create an account, visit <http://macombgov.corporateperks.com> and follow the instructions. If prompted for the company code, enter macombgov78. Once registered, employees can invite up to five family members and friends to join and benefit from the same discounts. Some offers may only be redeemed online and are accessible by a link to the

merchant website. In some cases, you will need to enter a discount code (listed on the offer detail page) as you check out. If there is no discount code listed, the discount will be calculated automatically when you check out. When a discount is offered in-store, there will be a coupon available on the offer detail page. Follow the instructions and click on "print coupon."

Another benefit of the site, in addition to merchant discounts, is that employees are able to earn WOWPoints. WOWPoints act like rewards currency of the site and can be used for future purchases.

"WOWPoints are loyalty points that you can earn and redeem when you shop through this site," explained Minuado. "I now have over \$20 worth of points that I can put toward another purchase made through the site!"

In addition to the discounts provided with national retailers, Macomb County Government Perks offers discounts available at local retailers such as the Detroit Zoo and Sea Life Aquarium. To shop local, visit the Exclusives Offers page.

Minuado said she has, in particular, really enjoyed using deals from Restaurants.com.

"They partner with a variety of local restaurants and offer significant discounts on gift cards. I purchased a \$50 Dooley's gift card for only \$8! In addition to restaurants and retail stores, GovPerks has deals on travel, electronics and so much more. It's definitely a worthwhile program, and I highly recommend utilizing it."

Since its launch in November 2015, Macomb County Government Perks has 1,296 registered users –1,157 employees, plus 139 family members. Check the site often as new retailers are continuously added.

For assistance with the site, Macomb County Government Perks has a set of FAQs, which is located in the Help Center. Or, employees may send an email from the site to the online Customer Success Team.



### **Macomb Community Action - Why did we change our name?**

After many years operating as Macomb County Community Services Agency, also known as MCCSA, the organization that provides vital services and assistance in Macomb County has officially changed its name to Macomb Community Action (MCA). But why?

After completing a comprehensive strategic plan in 2015, the name and mission were changed to better align the agency with its future, which is "persistent action to diminish poverty and promote independence." As a part of Macomb County government, MCA offers a number of services like Head Start, Meals on Wheels, transportation assistance, home weatherization, utility and rent assistance, plus the Macomb Food Program, among many others.

"Our goal is to reduce the cyclical effects of poverty and engage community partners to address the increase in poverty among children and seniors," said MCA Director Rhonda Powell.

Last year, the agency helped almost 4,000 families with their utilities as well as rent and mortgage assistance. The Food Program helps over 250,000 individuals annually with their food needs. Head Start provided comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to approximately 850 low-income children and their families, and Meals on Wheels served nearly half a million meals to seniors.

MCA operates three Action Centers and has a presence at over 50 locations throughout Macomb County. For more information, visit at [mca.macombgov.org/](http://mca.macombgov.org/).



## Employee Focus

### Macomb County Health Department Environmental Services -- Dr. Partow Guity By Sarah Cormier, Macomb County Executive Office

As much as we like to promote Macomb County as being a clean, healthy environment – and it is – the fact of the matter is there are still some hazardous chemicals that can seep their way into the lives of residents.

Few may know that it is one of the many functions of the Macomb County Health Department to not only monitor such cases as they occur, but also to assist residents and make sure they come out of the situation as healthy as possible.

One woman in particular who oversees this effort through Macomb County's Environmental Health Services sector is Dr. Partow Guity.

"She does anything and everything that needs to be done," said Steve Lichota, associate director of Environmental Health Services.

Guity has a PhD in toxicology – she did her dissertation on the toxic effects of lead inside cells – from Wayne State University. She received her bachelor's degree from Tehran University in Iran, the country she was born in.



As a toxicologist for Macomb County, Guity said her main responsibility is to focus on lead poisoning issues in the county. Most of Guity's clients are children, as they are most quickly affected by harmful chemicals, but if an adult needs assistance, she also helps them. She said if a child tests positive for higher than usual lead levels in their blood (this testing is often required for those who have Medicaid insurance), it is her job to find out the source of the issue. Guity said common causes of increased lead levels are paint and toys. She said there were two cases that took longer to figure out; she had combed through every aspect of the two homes and could not find the source of poisoning. Finally she discovered that it was some of the spices the family was using in their cooking that was causing the issue.

"We investigate everything in the house, and I mean everything," she said. "Sometimes poisoning is not very clear. There may just be subtle symptoms."

After the source of poisoning is found, Guity then works with local nurses and doctors to ensure that the child's lead levels are brought back down to a safe level. She also finds herself often working with other agencies such as the Food & Drug Administration and Department of Agriculture to try to ensure that each poisoning case is not repeated again.

"It's a very coordinated effort with other agencies," she said.

Guity said there are still cases of mercury, arsenic and radon poisoning that she also oversees. At any given time, she is working on two to three cases and each case takes approximately two years to see through from start to finish.

In addition to monitoring poisoning that may happen in the home, Guity may be called to the scene of environmental accidents that happen close to Lake St. Clair or other important environmental spots to assist with identifying the substance in question as well as educating responders on what to do with the substance in question.

Guity does training for county departments that may frequently deal with hazardous substances such as Animal Control and the Medical Examiner's Office. Moreover, she is heavily involved in the county's very successful household hazardous waste collection program whereby residents have the ability to drop off the hazardous waste they encounter in their home or garage to this collection where the county will dispose of the substance properly.

"We are very happy that we have this program," she said. "There aren't many counties that have this program."

Guity comes from a family full of physicians. She said she originally wanted to achieve her master's in dentistry, but then an encounter with an academic advisor led her to go into toxicology, a field that had always interested her.

"I said, that's really what I want to do to help people," she said.

"Dr. Guity is not only an asset to the Health Department, she is an asset and advocate for all citizens in Macomb County," said Lichota. "Some of the work she is involved with includes investigating lead levels in children, searching for answers and/or environmental links to unusual health problems and addressing toxicity issues of chemical exposures. Her hard work and knowledge is essential to the maintenance and improvement of the quality of life for Macomb residents."

Guity is the mother of two sons who are both in college, and her husband is an environmental engineer. In her spare

time, she likes to do CrossFit and cook, where she mixes up her recipes, constantly trying new ones.

"My kitchen is a chemistry lab," she said.

Guity, who lives in Harrison Township, said living in Macomb County has been perfect for her and her husband because they are able to be near Lake St. Clair, which indulges their love for anything environment-related.

"It makes me happy to live by the lake," she said, adding that she really enjoys her job. "My job is never boring. It is such a good feeling to help others. Especially because I live in Macomb County, that makes it more personal."

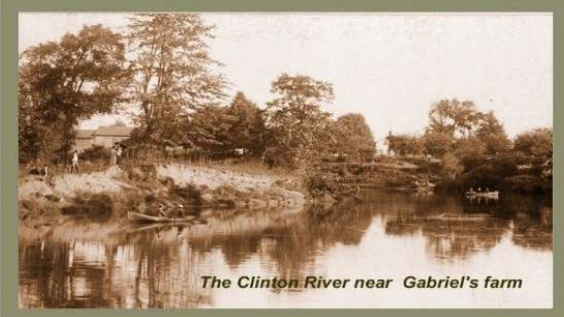
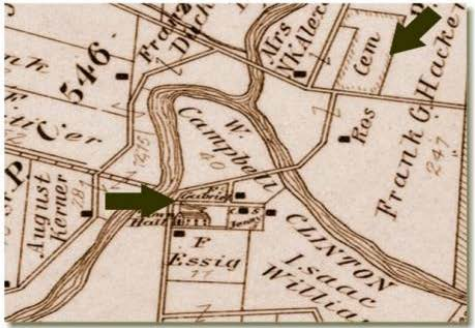


### Macomb's Memories


A tribute to former slave Franklin Gabriel

By Cynthia S. Donahue, Facilities and Operations


The left arrow depicts Frank Gabriel's property on Moravian Drive in 1875. The right arrow shows the Clinton Grove Cemetery on Cass Avenue.



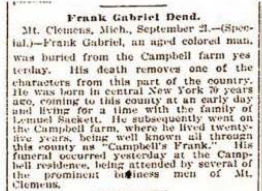
The Clinton River near Gabriel's farm



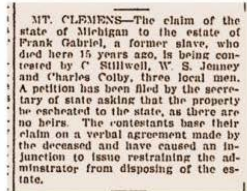
Moxon Drive by F H Hayward



**MT. CLEMENS.**  
**STATE DROPS ITS CLAIM TO LAND**  
Calvin Stillwell Will Get Erin Township Property Left to Him by Frank Gabriel.



**Frank Gabriel Dend.**  
Mt. Clemens, Mich., September 21.—(Special.)—Frank Gabriel, an aged colored man, was buried from the Campbell farm yesterday. His death removes one of the characters from this part of the country. He was born in central New York 36 years ago, coming to this county at an early day and living for a time with the family of Lemuel Sackett. He subsequently went on the Campbell farm, where he lived twenty-five years, being well known all through this county as "Campbell's Frank." His funeral occurred yesterday at the Campbell residence, being attended by several of the prominent business men of Mt. Clemens.



**MT. CLEMENS—**The claim of the state of Michigan to the estate of Frank Gabriel, a former slave, who died here 15 years ago, is being contested by C. Stillwell, W. S. Jouney and Charles Colby, three local men. A petition has been filed by the secretary of state asking that the property be escheated to the state, as there are no heirs. The contestants base their claim on a verbal agreement made by the deceased and have caused an injunction to issue restraining the administrator from disposing of the estate.

Frank Gabriel was one of the first free African Americans to reside in Macomb County. Born a slave in 1819 in Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Frank was but a lad of 6 when Ralph Sackett brought him to New York to reside with his family. In the early 1830s, four Sacket brothers, along with Frank, moved to Clinton Township near the old Moravian Indian Settlement. The Gabriel families in Pittsfield were descendants of John Gabriel, a native of Africa who was stolen and sold into slavery when he was 11 or 12. After becoming free, he served as the body servant of Berkshire County Sheriff Henry C. Brown. The slave trade began in Massachusetts in 1635, where slaves were subject to a four pound import duty payable to the Crown.

The Sacketts, also from Pittsfield, were one of Macomb's leading pioneer families. They chose the Oxbow area on the Clinton River near Moravian Drive for their farms where a little town called Frederick once stood. The town flourished when the Clinton and Kalamazoo Canal was being built nearby, but when the Grand Trunk Railroad depot was built nearer to Mount Clemens, the town slowly died away.

Frank resided with the Sackett family while he made his living as a farmer. He purchased property near Moxon Drive in Clinton Township as early as 1855 and may well have been the first African American to own property in our county. When Ralph died in 1862, Frank moved in with Ralph's daughter, Mary, and her husband, William Campbell, on their adjacent farm. He lived there for over 25 years and was often referred to as "Campbell's Frank." William Campbell reportedly gave the first Free Soil speech in the state of Michigan in the Courthouse Square in Mount Clemens and ran for state senator on the Free Soil ticket. The Free Soil Party, predominantly former anti-slavery members of the Whig party, was basically absorbed by the newly established Republican Party.

Frank's last property acquisition in 1881 was for two acres of land in Erin Township; the township later became Roseville, Fraser, Halfway (now Eastpointe) and St. Clair Shores. Frank lost his closest family member, Mary Sackett Campbell, in 1890. During Frank's final years, he became sickly and made arrangements to be cared for by Calvin Stillwell, who would, in turn, inherit his property in Erin Township. On Sept. 21, 1895, Franklin Gabriel died of old age, and his funeral was held at the Campbell's residence where several prominent businessmen of Mount Clemens were in attendance.

Calvin Stillwell inherited the Erin Township property, but the state of Michigan contested his inheritance on the basis of Frank not leaving a will, thus making it an escheated estate where the state would inherit the property. Calvin appealed the state's decision, and in 1912, the state conceded that the inheritance was not theirs.

In his *Past and Present of Macomb County* history book written in 1904, Judge R. P. Eldredge stated that "He was faithful to his friends and true to himself and no Sackett was ever known to hesitate to recognize and welcome him, and they could well be proud to claim him as a friend."



**February Skill Builder**  
**Focus on cultural diversity**

CARE Worklife Solutions, the county's employee assistance provider, offers several short Skill Builder e-learning opportunities that can be completed in 15-20 minutes that are focused on certain skills to enhance effectiveness. Each Skill Builder course offers a printable certificate of completion.

For the month of February, we will be focusing on cultural diversity in the workplace. Every member of the workforce brings unique skills, background and experience vital to the successful completion of the company's productivity and service goals. Diversity brings to a workforce a rich source of creativity and problem-solving to help reach business goals.

The objectives for this Skill Builder are to:

- discuss strategies for creating and maintaining an inclusive environment.
- understand constructive ways to communicate with others.
- identify methods for building respectful relationships.
- provide tips for practicing cultural sensitivity among coworkers in the work environment.

To participate in this month's Skill Builder course:

1. visit the CARE website at <http://www.careofsem.com/employee-assistance/>.
2. click on "Employee Assistance Log In."
3. enter the password: macombcounty-wls.
4. scroll down to the "Skill Builders" box. Click on the plus sign to view the Skill Builder options.
5. select "Cultural Diversity in the Workplace."

## Recipe Corner

### Low-Fat Full-Flavor Cream of Broccoli Soup

"This low fat version of cream of broccoli soup is so good your family won't know the difference."

Makes 4 servings

Prep 15 minutes, cook 30 minutes

#### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 leeks, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 2 cloves minced garlic (less to taste)
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 heads fresh broccoli, chopped
- 1 (32 ounce) carton low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can fat-free evaporated milk



#### Directions

1. Melt butter in a large pot and cook the leeks, celery and minced garlic over medium heat until soft and translucent, about five minutes (careful not to burn garlic). Stir in salt, pepper and coriander. Reserve about 1/4 cup of small broccoli florets, and cook the rest of the broccoli with the leeks until the broccoli is bright green, about five more minutes. Pour in the chicken stock, bring the soup to a boil, cover, then simmer until the broccoli is very tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Pour the soup into a blender, filling the pitcher no more than halfway full. Hold down the lid of the blender with a folded kitchen towel, and carefully start the blender, using a few quick pulses to get the soup moving before leaving it on to puree. Puree in batches until smooth, and pour into a clean pot. Alternately, you can use a stick blender and puree the soup right in the cooking pot.
3. Return the blended soup to the pot, stir in the reserved broccoli florets and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat, stirring often. Simmer until the broccoli florets are tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat, and mix in the evaporated milk. Serve hot.

#### Nutrition:

Per 1 cup serving

Calories: 219  
Fat: 4.3 grams  
Carbohydrates: 33 grams  
Fiber: 5.6 grams  
Protein: 15.3 grams  
Sodium: 440

Submitted by: MSU Extension

Source: Allrecipes/Lowfat/M.H.Gardner



### **Vanguard education opportunities**

There are upcoming Vanguard educational opportunities for Macomb County's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan.

We are offering "Financial Freedom: Strategies for Reducing Debt and Saving More."

Meeting dates and times are as follows:

#### 457 Deferred Compensation Plan:

Feb. 18

Time: 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Location: VerKuilen Building – Assembly Room B

#### 401 (a) Defined Contribution Plan:

Feb. 18

Time: 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Location: VerKuilen Building – Assembly Room B

These sessions all will be approximately one hour and will allow question and answer time before the next presentation time. There is no registration required, but please be sure that your supervisor is aware of your attendance.

Vanguard will also be offering free quarterly webinars for Macomb County participants in 2016. The topics will include "Financial Freedom" and "Create Your Plan." Both session topics last approximately one hour, please be sure that your supervisor is aware of your attendance.

To register, visit <https://inter.viewcentral.com/reg/vanguard/VFW2016>.



### **Walk for Warmth to take place next week Registration still open!**

Many Macomb County families struggle to pay their heating bills and don't qualify for government assistance. The 26th Annual Walk for Warmth supports those who fall through the cracks by assisting with their heating challenges.

By running or walking on Feb. 27 at Macomb Mall, participants can help warm a house – not something most must think about. But for many in Macomb County, it is a bitter reality.

Walk for Warmth raises funds to assist low-income Macomb County residents with heat-related emergencies like paying utility bills or replacing a broken furnace. Since it began, the event has raised over \$700,000 to help local families stay warm.

"We have thousands of residents in Macomb County that are in





desperate need of heat-related assistance, so every dollar counts,” said Rhonda Powell, director of Macomb Community Action. “Without partners like Macomb Mall, which donated the use of their space, and our financial sponsors, this just wouldn’t happen,” she said.

This year’s sponsors include McLaren Macomb, Genisys Credit Union, Continental Services and Consumers Energy.

Honorary Walkers include Rep. Marilyn Lane, Rep. Henry Yanez and County Treasurer Derek Miller.

Registration is open and costs \$20 per person. To register, visit [mca.macombgov.org/W4W](http://mca.macombgov.org/W4W).

Participants can do the family fun walk indoors or competitive run outdoors. Distance of both are 5K (3.1 miles).

Check-in begins at 8 a.m. inside the mall at the Dick’s Sporting Goods entrance. The indoor walk and outdoor run both start at 9 a.m. Walkers will traverse the mall while enjoying family-friendly entertainment and health-related activities. The outdoor race is managed by Hanson’s Race Management and follows a specially-designed course. Runners can choose to be timed and compete for overall male and female race awards.

Sponsorships are still available and begin at \$500 and go up to \$10,000 and higher. To become a sponsor, visit [mccsa.macombgov.org/W4W](http://mccsa.macombgov.org/W4W) or contact Macomb Community Action at (586) 469-6232.

Macomb Community Action is dedicated to helping families and individuals throughout the life span. It provides essential services for children, families and seniors in accordance with our mission: Persistent action to diminish poverty and promote independence.