

News

Macomb County
Office of Public Affairs



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Macomb bands together for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich. – Macomb County residents are asked to help save a rewarding summer camp experience for grandparents and the grandchildren they're compelled to raise.

Michigan's budget crisis forced the cancellation of a \$10,000 grant for Macomb's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren camp, leaving 150 adult and child campers in limbo. The award-winning Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program was created in 1993 by the county Senior Citizen Services Department; the camp has been offered since 1997. Visit www.macombcountymi.gov for details.

"We're asking Macomb County residents and businesses to help us raise \$10,000 by July 13 so we can save this camp experience," said Dana Camphous-Peterson, vice chair of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. "We have to reach out to the community because our own budget deficit keeps us from replacing the grant money."

Macomb County is activating another **Macomb Together** campaign like the ones that raised nearly \$300,000 for Hurricane Katrina victims and for homeless people here.

The new program, **Macomb Together – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**, asks Macomb County residents to save the Aug. 17-19 camp outing by acting right away.

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Like previous Macomb Together campaigns, anyone wishing to donate to save the camp may write a check to **Macomb Together-GRG** and mail it to a simple address authorized by the Mount Clemens Post Office:

**Macomb Together
Mount Clemens, MI 48043**

Residents also may drop off checks or cash at any of the following locations:

- Macomb County Clerk's Office, 40 N. Main St., First Floor, Mount Clemens
- Macomb County Sheriff's Office, 43565 Elizabeth Road, Mount Clemens
- Macomb County Health Department, Southwest Health Clinic, 27690 Van Dyke Ave., Warren
- Macomb County Health Department, Southeast Health Clinic, 25401 Harper Ave., St. Clair Shores
- Macomb County Department of Senior Citizen Services, 21885 Dunham Road, Suite 6, Clinton Township

All county offices and courts will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, but donations still may be dropped off that day at the Sheriff's Office.

"The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program offers support to people who have stepped up to raise their grandchildren or other relations when circumstances take the parents out of the picture," said Angela Willis, director of Senior Citizen Services.

"These grandparents need and deserve our help because at a time in their lives when they may want to slow down, they are thrust into child-rearing mode again."

In Macomb County, more than 7,500 grandchildren were living with 3,800 grandparents at the last census in 2000 – a 20 percent increase in 10 years. The increase tracks data for Michigan and the United States.

Grandparents taking responsibility for grandchildren saves the foster care system about \$13,534 per year, per child.

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More than 450 families participate in Macomb County's GRG program, which helps them find resources that provide assistance and direction. Referrals are made for housing, food finances, legal, mental health and transportation issues. Training is offered to help with parenting, stress, literacy, legal issues, and coping with raising children in today's world.

One of the most important events each year is the opportunity to enjoy a weekend camp outing at Camp Copneconic in Fenton. Campers enjoy swimming, canoeing, horseback riding, water sports, crafts, games, cookouts and storytelling around a campfire.

"For many of these families, the camp is the only vacation they have the whole year," Camphous-Peterson said.

Although there is no charge to the families for their participation, it costs about \$70 for each person for everything associated with the camp, including transportation.

About Senior Citizen Services

The Macomb County Department of Senior Citizen Services is sponsored by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners and receives County funds for all services. Funding for the department also comes from the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, the state of Michigan, the Older American Act and the State Department of Human Services.

About Macomb County

Macomb County is an enriching community in Southeastern Michigan that has one of the state's fastest rates of growth. Its 841,000 residents make it Michigan's third-largest county, with direct access to Lake St. Clair and Anchor Bay, and a host of cultural and entertainment options. Its highly skilled workforce and investment in new and expanding businesses make it open to enterprise. Active civic leadership translates into balanced budgets and Michigan's second-lowest tax rate. An increasingly diverse population and high quality of life make Macomb County accessible to all.

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