

## MACOMB COUNTY WELCOMING WEEK EVENTS, 2015

Date: Tuesday, September 15  
Event: Employee Lunch 'n Learn on Chaldeans and Chaldean Culture  
Sponsors/Collaborators: OneMacomb, Chaldean Community Foundation  
Location: VerKuijen Building, MCCSA Conference & Training Center  
Time: 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Date: Wednesday, September 16  
Event: Welcoming Week Statewide Convening  
Sponsors/Collaborators: Welcoming Michigan; OneMacomb  
Location: Macomb Community College, South Campus  
Time: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Welcoming Michigan is hosting a statewide convening in Macomb County. The day – long program will be held at Macomb Community College, south campus for our municipal and community leaders, Welcoming leadership committees, Welcoming Cities and Counties, partners across Michigan, and those new to this work are all invited.

Date: Thursday, September 17  
Event: Immigration 101: What Every American Must Know  
Sponsors/Collaborators: Michigan Immigrant Rights Center; Macomb Community College  
Location: Macomb Community College, South Campus (AM) and Center Campus (PM)  
Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm South Campus  
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Center Campus

A Michigan Immigrant Rights Center attorney will present Immigration Basics, What Every American Must Know, explaining how immigration works, the various kinds of visas and why the process takes different amounts of time for different people, etc.

Date: Friday, September 18  
Event: Naturalization Ceremony  
Sponsors/Collaborators: OneMacomb; U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services; Lorenzo Cultural Center, Macomb Community College  
Location: Lorenzo Cultural Center, Macomb Community College  
Time: 10:00 AM

OneMacomb is hosting a naturalization ceremony where immigrants take their final step by pledging their allegiance and becoming United States citizens.

Date: Friday, September 18  
Event: "It's a Trip!" Welcoming-Themed Storytelling Event  
Sponsors/Collaborators: Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers; OneMacomb; Welcoming Michigan  
Location: Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History  
Time: Doors Open at 7:30 PM  
OneMacomb and Welcoming Michigan will participate in a travel-and-diversity themed - evening of storytelling with The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers.  
<http://www.twistedtellers.org/event/its-a-trip>

Date: Saturday, September 26  
Event: Citizenship Workshop  
Sponsors/Collaborators: The New Americans Campaign (Chaldean Community Foundation, International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, Michigan United, South Asian American Voices for Impact); OneMacomb  
Location: VerKuijen Building, 21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, MCCSA Conference & Training Center  
Time: 9:00 AM  
This workshop is for those who wish to become naturalized citizens and need some guidance regarding the process.

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# News

Office of Macomb County Executive  
Mark A. Hackel



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## For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Pam Lavers (586) 493-4877

Date: September 1, 2015

### Macomb County to celebrate Welcoming Week

Macomb County will join many other municipalities throughout the United States in celebrating National Welcoming Week, which is Sept. 12-20, with a variety of activities designed to highlight Macomb County as a welcoming community.

National Welcoming Week was started by Welcoming America, a national membership organization which offers tools, resources, and a national network to help nonprofit and government partners transform their communities into more welcoming places. Welcoming Week is a nationwide event that highlights the contributions of immigrants to American communities.

Macomb County is hosting a number of events during Welcoming Week, many of which are being put on by OneMacomb. OneMacomb was started by Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel to support Macomb County's increasing cultural diversity and inclusion efforts.

"It is important that Macomb County acknowledges its diverse population by participating in initiatives such as Welcoming America," said Hackel. "We want all of our residents to know that we appreciate their making Macomb County their home."

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, Welcoming Michigan is hosting a statewide convening in Macomb County. The day-long program will be held at Macomb Community College, south campus for our municipal and community leaders, Welcoming leadership committees, Welcoming Cities and Counties, partners across Michigan, and those new to this work are all invited. OneMacomb is a proud partner.

Thursday, Sept. 17, a Michigan Immigrant Rights Center attorney will present Immigration Basics, What Every American Must Know, explaining how immigration works, the various kinds of visas, why the process takes different amounts of time for different people, etc. The attorney will speak and answer questions from 10 a.m. to noon at the South Campus Library of Macomb Community College, and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Central Campus Library.

Additionally, OneMacomb is hosting a naturalization ceremony on Friday, September 18, where immigrants take their final step by pledging their allegiance and becoming United States citizens. The event is at 10 a.m. at the Lorenzo Cultural Center at Macomb Community College.

Later on Friday the 18th, OneMacomb and Welcoming Michigan will participate in a travel-and-diversity-themed evening of storytelling. The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers will be at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, 315 East Warren Avenue, Detroit, at 7:30 p.m. See <http://www.twistedtellers.org/event/its-a-trip/> for more information.

Saturday, Sept. 26, a citizenship workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Verkuilen Building, entrance C, 21885 Dunham Road in Clinton Township. The workshop is for those who wish to become naturalized citizens and need some guidance regarding the process.

“In order for Macomb County to be competitive in the global market we need multicultural perspectives in our community. Immigrants bring cultural perspective, work skills, pay taxes and buy goods in our region.” said Assistant County Executive Pam Lavers, who leads OneMacomb. “This week serves to celebrate the County’s diversity and OneMacomb is proud to be part of this year’s National Welcoming Week celebration.”

For more information on Welcoming Michigan visit <http://welcomingmichigan.org/>.

OneMacomb works to promote multiculturalism and inclusion in Macomb County. For more information, visit OneMacomb on Facebook, Twitter or <http://diversity.macombgov.org>.

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MACOMB COUNTY

# Macomb County hosts naturalization event

By Thomas Franz

September 22, 2015

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Applicants for American citizenship take the oath of citizenship during a naturalization ceremony at the Lorenzo Cultural Center at Macomb Community College on Sept. 18. (Photo by Sean Work)

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — Luis Pastora was just a toddler when he and other family members fled his homeland of Nicaragua in a Red Cross caravan in 1980.

They grabbed whatever they could fit in a car, and fled to Honduras to seek safety from fighting that was going on in their home country at the time.

For 20 years, Pastora and his family lived in Honduras thanks to a job Luis' father was able to get through a connection he had while working as a consultant in the agriculture industry.

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When the environment in Honduras became unsettled, Pastora flew to Michigan in 2000 to live with other family members who had previously fled Nicaragua.

Leaving Honduras meant that he would also be leaving behind some of his family, including his father, Carlos.

In 2009, Luis, who's now 39, was able to bring Carlos, 75, to the U.S. to join him in Rochester Hills.

On Sept. 18, the two exchanged a teary-eyed embrace, as they celebrated Carlos' naturalization ceremony to become an official U.S. citizen.

"We were without a country for a long time, and now this is our country," Luis said.

Their story was one of several told at a naturalization ceremony hosted by Macomb Community College and One Macomb Sept. 18. Overall, 87 applicants representing 32 countries participated in the ceremony to become official U.S. citizens.

The event was part of Macomb County's celebration of the nationwide Welcoming Week, an event that serves to highlight the contributions of immigrants to American communities.

Assistant County Executive Pam Lavers said that the number of applicants for this year's naturalization event was double from 2014, the first year in which Macomb County government hosted a naturalization event.

"It's one of the most exciting parts of my job, is being able to host these events," Lavers said.

During a speech she made during the event, Lavers said the Macomb Intermediate School District is home to 12,000 students who come from homes where another language besides English is spoken, and that 100 languages are spoken throughout the district.

Mike Klinger, a Detroit field office director with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, provided more statistics on immigration in Michigan.

His Detroit office holds three naturalization events weekly at the federal court in downtown Detroit. His group also holds a pair of naturalization events throughout metro Detroit each month, and twice monthly in Grand Rapids.

Annually, 12,000-13,000 people participate in naturalization ceremonies through the Detroit office to live in Michigan, and that number has remained consistent since 2011, Klinger said.

To be naturalized, he added that applicants typically have lived in the U.S. for five years — three years if they're married to a citizen — have learned English and U.S. history, and have been upstanding citizens who have contributed to their communities with good moral character.

"Everybody has a different story, and that's what's great about this," Klinger said. "There's people who came for work and stayed or became a part of neighborhoods and didn't want to leave. There are people who came here as students, met someone, fell in love and established families; or refugees, people who didn't have another option but to come to this country. It's a wide variety."

For the Pastora family, the event provided an opportunity to gain back what they lost in Nicaragua.

"I'm very happy now because of the fact I'm free again," Carlos said. "I was born free and didn't want to live in oppression, under any other regime other than freedom. Now that I'm a U.S. citizen, I have that freedom back, and I want to die free."

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Official Proclamation of the Board of Commissioners  
Macomb County, Michigan

**A Proclamation Recognizing National Welcoming Week and  
Proclaiming September 12 - 20, 2015 as Welcoming Week in Macomb County**

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners Offers the Following Proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, America has always been a beacon of liberty and opportunity for those seeking to build a better life for themselves and their families; and

**WHEREAS**, National Welcoming Week was founded by Welcoming America to help people work together to build healthy, strong communities, no matter where they were born; and

**WHEREAS**, Macomb County's foreign-born population totals approximately 94,000 residents - 11 percent of the population - and is the third highest in Michigan in terms of percent of population; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing regarding key issues impacting the refugee and immigrant community and, through Official Resolution 294, urged leaders to review and take action on a list of key items which will support refugees and immigrants and help to build more inclusive and prosperous communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Macomb County is involved in the Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative, whose goal it is to recognize the diverse people from around the world who make up our communities, welcome the fresh perspectives and introduction of new ideas they offer, and to encourage the economic development and entrepreneurship that is brought about as a result of the opportunities that are available here; and

**WHEREAS**, by working together, we can achieve greater prosperity and make our community the kind of place where diverse people from around the world feel valued and want to put down roots and continue the work to build communities in which every resident has the opportunity to contribute their best; and

**WHEREAS**, recognizing the wide range of contributions that a diverse population makes in creating a vibrant culture, as well as a growing economy, and acknowledging that welcoming activities are important to encourage prosperity and a sense of inclusiveness to all who call it home are vital.

**Now Therefore**, Be It Resolved By The Board Of Commissioners, Speaking For And On Behalf Of All Citizens As Follows:

I

**That By These Presents**, the Macomb County **Board of Commissioners** hereby publicly calls upon all of its citizens and upon all, to observe the week of **September 12-20, 2015, as National Welcoming Week**.

II

**Be It Further Resolved** that the Macomb County Board of Commissioners urges municipalities throughout the County to observe National Welcoming Week with activities and events which raise awareness and recognize the many contributions made by a diverse population.



# NATIONAL WELCOMING WEEK

SEPTEMBER 12-20, 2015



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