

# InTouch

A Newsletter  
Published By



THE OHIO MASONIC  
COMMUNITIES  
RESOURCE CENTER

SUMMER  
2026

## Assistance You Can *Trust*



At The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center, our mission is simple: to walk alongside Masons, Eastern Star members, and their families when life becomes challenging. Sometimes that support comes in the form of guidance, connection to resources, or simply having someone who will help navigate a complicated process.

For Eastern Star member Annette Bowman, that support made an important difference during a difficult time. For quite some time, Annette had been struggling with the rising cost of groceries. Like many individuals today, she found that everyday expenses were stretching her budget further than expected. During this time, the resource center was able to step in and provide food gift cards to help supplement her grocery needs and ease some of the financial pressure.

While the gift cards provided immediate relief, the resource center team also worked with Annette to identify longer-term solutions. A resource center coordinator sat down with her and helped complete an application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Navigating assistance programs can often feel overwhelming, but Annette did not have to go through the process alone.

The coordinator walked beside her through each step, helping with the paperwork, answering questions, and providing support throughout the application process until she ultimately received approval for food assistance.

During the waiting period, the resource center continued to provide grocery gift cards to help ensure Annette had food on the table until her SNAP benefits began. Today, Annette has the ongoing support of food assistance, bringing her greater stability and peace of mind. We are honored to support members like Annette and remain committed to ensuring that no Mason or Eastern Star member has to navigate life's challenges alone.



**Read about our upcoming  
Intergenerational Day Camps on page 4!**

# Brothers Helping Brothers

In every Lodge, there are quiet stories unfolding that remind us of what it truly means to be a Mason. One such story comes from University Lodge No. 631, where a simple phone call became a powerful reminder of our shared obligation to care for one another.

Michael Shutek, a Master Mason of 27 years, reached out to Brother Ed Badger, Secretary of the Lodge, to share that he could no longer meet his financial obligations for dues. But beyond the financial hardship, there was something deeper weighing on him—an overwhelming sense of isolation. Battling cancer had left Michael physically weakened, causing severe kidney damage that has progressed to stage four renal failure. Michael was now undergoing dialysis several days each week and nearly dependent on a wheelchair. He expressed sadness not only about his condition, but about the disconnection he felt from the Fraternity that had once been such a central part of his life.



Recognizing the need for support beyond what he alone could provide, Brother Ed contacted The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center and asked that Central Ohio Coordinator Brooke Simonson connect with Michael. After speaking with him, she suggested something simple yet powerful: that Brothers from the Lodge pay him a visit. During these conversations, it became clear that Michael's needs extended beyond companionship—he required an outdoor wheelchair ramp to safely access his home. The cost of such a project presented a significant challenge, exceeding \$5,000, but it was a challenge the Lodge was determined to meet.

Brother Ed organized a small but dedicated team—with Worshipful Brother Craig Haycock — who took on the responsibility of gathering estimates, coordinating logistics, and scheduling the installation. Meanwhile, University Lodge #631, Capital City Lodge #656, and York Lodge #563 rallied together, raising \$700 by “passing the hat”. Additional support came through the Grand Lodge Charitable Fund and the Grand Almoner's Fund through the Valley of Columbus, where Brothers Fred Kile and Ebby Brewer were instrumental in securing approval and assistance. Through their collective effort, what initially seemed like an overwhelming obstacle became a tangible act of relief and brotherly love.

The most meaningful outcome of this effort cannot be measured in dollars or construction—it is seen in the renewed spirit of Michael Shutek himself. There is now a restored sense of connection and belonging where there were once isolation and discouragement. His outlook has been transformed—not only by the physical accessibility the ramp provides, but by the reaffirmation that he is not alone. This is the essence of Masonry: not simply words we recite, but actions we live. Michael's story reminds us that brotherhood does not fade with absence—it endures through compassion, effort, and the quiet determination to care for one another when it matters most.



# You are Home: The Yingling's Story

Charles (Chuck) and Gayle Yingling, who have been married for 62 years, both call Browning Masonic Community (BMC) home. For Chuck, moving to BMC was not just about finding a place to live—it was about finding peace of mind, support, and a true sense of home during a difficult season of transition.

Chuck and his wife became part of the Browning family in 2023. At the time, his wife was experiencing memory challenges related to a previous head injury, and the couple knew they needed a place that could support both of them.

Today, Chuck lives in an independent living apartment on campus while his wife resides in the Pathways Memory Support Neighborhood. Even though they require different levels of care, being able to remain on the same campus has meant everything to them.

Chuck shares, “My wife has done very well here. Her health has not only stabilized but improved. This is our home—we are both right where we need and want to be.”

Chuck says that choosing BMC felt not only natural, but also where the Lord directed him to be. When asked about his experience living at BMC, Chuck shares, “I really love it, it’s like being on a cruise. There’s people, facilities, entertainment, housekeeping, happy hour, and excellent food. It’s a wonderful place.”

Since moving in, Chuck says his own health has improved, and he enjoys the active lifestyle, and the sense of connection the community provides. He especially appreciates the activities, entertainment, accommodations, and opportunities to socialize with others. Chuck can often be found at BMC doing jigsaw puzzles, shooting pool, and visiting with friends. He says that a highlight of living at BMC has been the friendships he has formed, each day meeting up

with friends from the community for meals and conversation.

One thing that stands out most to Chuck is the staff. He shares, “The nurses, aides, dining staff, housekeeping, activities staff—they all work together and want to help. It seems like everyone here loves what they’re doing, and it has created a wonderful atmosphere.”

Although the transition into memory care can be difficult for families, Chuck says seeing his wife cared for so compassionately has brought him comfort. He visits her regularly, and the two continue to enjoy simple moments together like sharing ice cream, going for rides, and spending time talking and reminiscing. Additionally, the

resource center partners with Connecting Realities programming at Browning Masonic Community and Western Reserve Masonic Community to offer memory support groups on campus.

When asked what advice he would give someone considering BMC for themselves or a loved one, his answer was simple, “You are home. Everything you need is here and you can’t ask for a better environment.”

**If you have any interest in learning more about any of The Ohio Masonic Communities campuses, please reach out to your local resource center coordinator. We would be happy to assist you and help connect you with the campus that best fits your needs.**



“  
*You are home. Everything you need is here and you can’t ask for a better environment.*  
”



# Volunteers Partner with the OMC Resource Center Statewide!

## Join us for our INTERGENERATIONAL DAY CAMPS

Intergenerational day camps allow youth to build relationships with OMC residents, teaching youth valuable skills they'll have for a lifetime and greatly impacting the lives of our residents. Events are open to the children/grandchildren of campus staff and residents, and all youth in the community. A portion of funding for this event is thanks to a generous grant from The Christ Foundation.

Children ages 5-18 are invited to attend.

**June 19**

**7:30 am - 3 pm**

**RSVP by June 15**

Browning Masonic Community  
8883 Browning Drive  
Waterville, OH 43566

**July 24**

**7:30 am - 3 pm**

**RSVP by July 20**

Western Reserve  
Masonic Community  
4931 Nettleton Road  
Medina, OH 44256

**August 14**

**7:30 am - 3 pm**

**RSVP by August 10**

Springfield Masonic Community  
2655 West National Road  
Springfield, Ohio 45504

**To register, or for more information, contact Rachel Lancaster today at (877) 881-1623 (Ext 4) or [rlancaster@omcoh.org](mailto:rlancaster@omcoh.org).**

The Masonic Volunteer Program now has volunteers in every Masonic District in Ohio. With the addition of our newest MVP Committee Chairman, Jeff Koesters, each Masonic District has volunteers who partner with their Resource Center Coordinator to help identify and assist Masons, wives, widows and stars who may need support or services. Jeff Koesters, from Celina Lodge #241 in district 4, will be working with NW Coordinator, Janaye Guess, to grow his committee to reach more clients and provide proactive outreach. The chairmen act as liaisons between the volunteers and the resource center by helping coordinate services, keeping track of volunteer hours and activity, providing information on events for coordinators to attend, and networking with chairmen around the state. We have some chairmen who have been supporting the MVP since its return in 2017, like Jeff Gallaher in district 18 and Dave Williams in district 17. We also have chairmen who have decided to give back by offering their time and talents after receiving services from the resource center as a client, like Chris Gibbs, District 9. Chris shares his story of assistance to spread the word about the support and programs offered.

Our volunteers act as our “eyes and ears” out in the Fraternity, allowing us to reach more people than we could alone. If you would like to be a part of your District’s MVP Committee, please contact DeAnna Kinney at [dkinney@omcoh.org](mailto:dkinney@omcoh.org) or (740) 262-1974 and training can be provided via phone, virtually, or in person for groups of 10 or more.

## Welcome Tara Casey: Southern Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator

Tara Casey joins the team with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business and Marketing and a proven track record with strong customer service experience. Through these experiences, Tara was able to both gain customer’s trust and foster opportunities for additional business.



Tara has always had a desire to help those in need, which will prove to be an asset in her role as the Southern Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator. In the last couple of years, Tara has taken on the role of caregiver and guardian for both of her parents. Her strong commitment to ensure her parents have the best care possible and the necessary tools to thrive, have helped prepare her for her new role.

Tara lives on a small farm in Stamping Ground, KY, with her husband, David, who is a preacher at a small country church in Kentucky. She is the mother of four children (3 boys and 1 daughter), has two granddaughters, and cares for a variety of animals on the farm. She enjoys gardening, interior projects, restoration projects, and spending time with family.

# How Can You Help Someone in Grief?

It's human nature to want to help and console those who are in pain. It's hard to see others suffering. Advice such as, "your loved one wouldn't want you to be sad" or anything that begins with, "at least..." is neither helpful nor validating. We don't want to help those in grief look for a silver lining. Instead, consider validating responses such as, "of course you feel that way." Normalize strong feelings of loss as a natural and meaningful response to grief. Practice patience, acceptance, and compassion.

- Let go of expectations
- Listen
- Allow them to be who they are and where they are
- Allow them to feel what they feel
- If they are lost, allow them to feel lost—only they can find their way out
- Their grief is not about you
- Validate their thoughts and feelings
- Validate the magnitude of their loss
- Validate their story
- Validate their timing
- Be present
- Be patient
- Be willing to sit with their pain
- Let go of your own discomfort and awkwardness
- Let go of your own need to think of something comforting or clever to say
- Mirror their tone
- Follow their lead
- Honor their timing
- Honor their need for space
- Remember that thoughts and feelings aren't always rational
- You don't need to make them feel better
- Be comfortable with silence
- Ask directly how you can support them
- Don't judge
- Commenting on how well they are doing is judging
- Don't compare
- Don't imagine how you would feel
- Don't try to fix
- Don't pressure them to talk about it if they don't want to
- Don't project your beliefs onto them

The only way out of the pain is through the pain,  
and this has to happen in their own time.

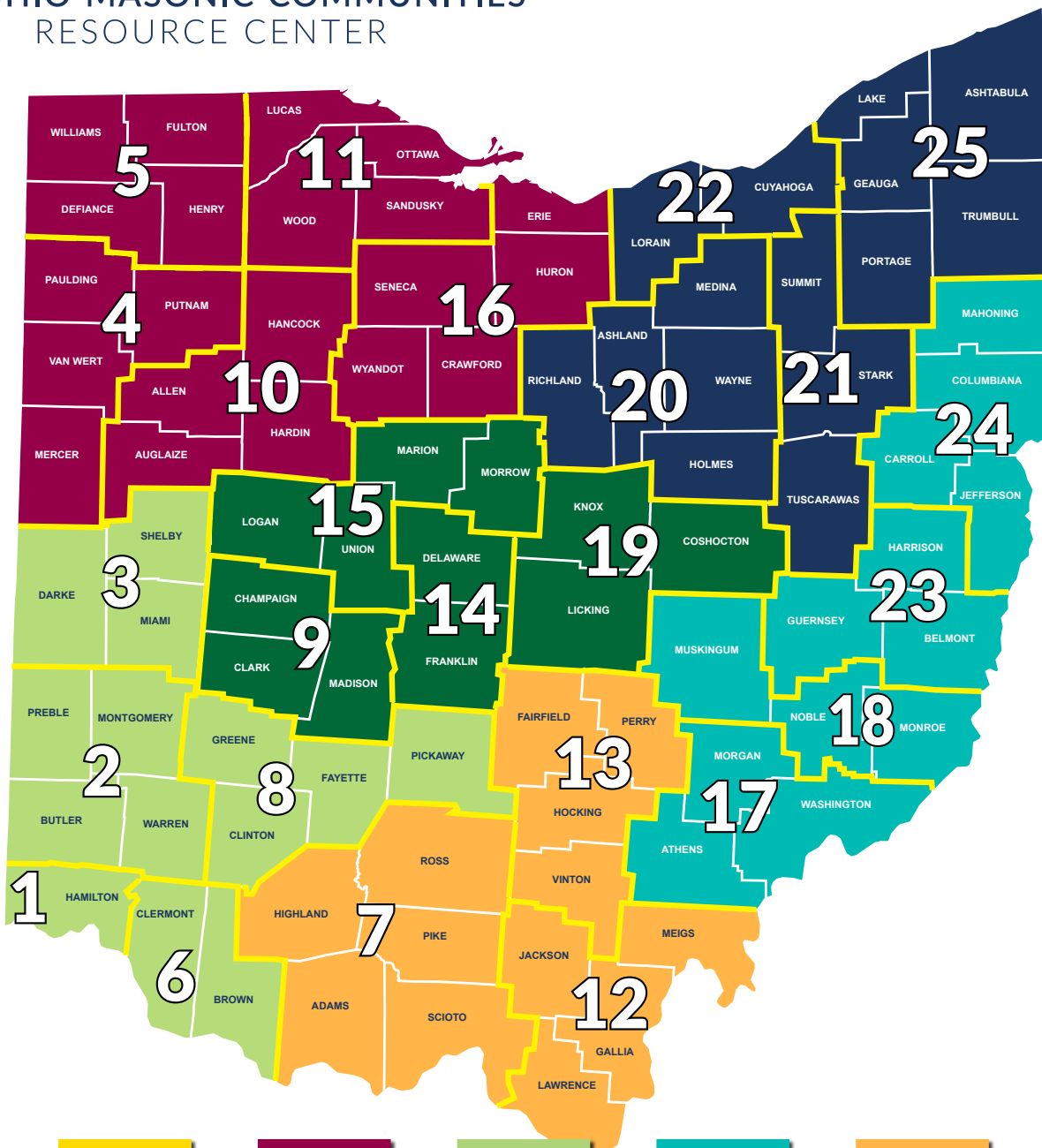


# REGIONAL MAP (MASONIC DISTRICTS)

Main Line:  
(877) 881-1623



## THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES RESOURCE CENTER



**Samantha Loy, MBA-HCM, CDP**  
(937) 504-4407  
Director, OMC Resource Center & NE Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator

**Rachel Lancaster**  
Intake Coordinator  
(877) 881-1623  
Press 4 for the resource center  
M-F 8 am - 4:30 pm

**Janaye Guess, MSW, LISW-S**  
(419) 378-6203  
NW Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator

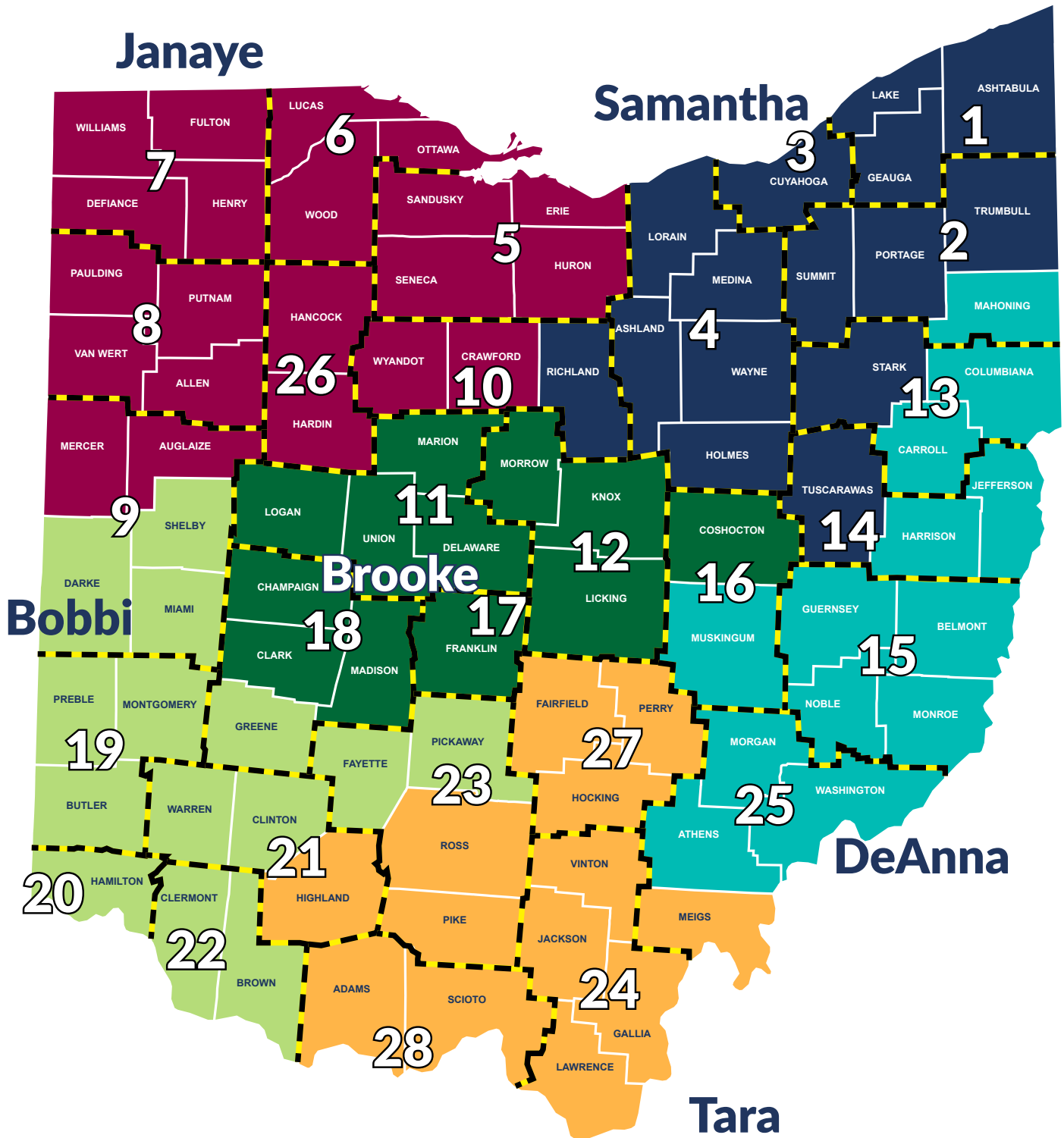
**Bobbi Schickler, CSA**  
(513) 567-1100  
Certified Senior Advisor®  
SW Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator & Masonic Bereavement Program Coordinator

**DeAnna Kinney, LSW**  
(740) 262-1974  
SE Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator & MVP Program Coordinator

**Tara Casey, BSBA, BSMA**  
(740) 970-7903  
Southern Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator

**Brooke Simonson, MSW, LISW-S**  
(330) 410-7983  
Central Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator

# EASTERN STAR DISTRICTS





THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES  
RESOURCE CENTER

*A subsidiary of  
The Ohio Masonic Communities*

2655 W. National Road  
Springfield, Ohio 45504  
(877) 881-1623  
omcresourcecenter.org

*If you no longer want to receive this  
newsletter you may opt out at any time  
by calling (877) 881-1623 (Ext 4).*

## Back to School Program!

The Masonic Youth Outreach Program, through The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center, is excited to host our annual School Supply Drive in support of students preparing for the upcoming school year!

### How You Can Help

Donations of school supplies are greatly appreciated! To arrange a drop-off, please contact the resource center or reach out to Rachel Lancaster:

(877) 881-1623 (Ext. 4) | [rlancaster@omcoh.org](mailto:rlancaster@omcoh.org) | *Donation Deadline: Friday, July 31*

### Need Assistance with School Supplies?

If your family could benefit from help with school supplies for the 2026–2027 school year, we encourage you to apply!

Please email Rachel Lancaster at [rlancaster@omcoh.org](mailto:rlancaster@omcoh.org) with the following information:

- Child(ren)'s name(s)
- Gender (M/F)
- Grade level
- School name
- 1st day of school
- School supply list (if available)

*Registration Deadline: Monday, August 3*



Like us on Facebook to see more of the support we offer!  
[facebook.com/omcresourcecenter](https://facebook.com/omcresourcecenter)