



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

April 11, 2020

CONTACT: Peter Anderson / Peter.Anderson@erie.gov
Phone: (716)858-8500 / Mobile: (716) 270-7842

ERIE COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES, PARTNERS SEEK VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST WITH TRANSPORTATION, DELIVERIES, MORE FOR SENIORS AND THE DISABLED COMMUNITY

EC Office for People with Disabilities joins Senior Services, community partners in volunteer outreach effort

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Senior Services, in conjunction with the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities, Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action, the IDEA Center at the University at Buffalo, Wegmans and others has announced a new partnership to assist with transportation, deliveries, and social connections for seniors and the disabled. The Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (“NFTA”) and AARP are also joining in the new effort to create opportunities for volunteers to connect older adults and people with disabilities to volunteer transportation for medical needs, grocery and essential needs delivery and social connections such as friendly phone calls.

Erie County Senior Services Commissioner David J. Shenk said, “Seeing all these organizations come together to help seniors and the disabled community during the COVID-19 pandemic has been great. I thank Dan Szewc of the Senior Services Department and Aaron Carlson of Hearts and Hands for leading the Task Force to create this group and for co-chairing this new partnership.”

In operation since 2002, Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action is a best efforts volunteer program available free of charge to care receivers and providing medical and social transportation, in-home services such as laundry, light housekeeping, and minor home repairs as well as caregiver respite services such as shopping and delivery, companionship, phone pals, and pet sitting to rural and suburban communities. In the new partnership Hearts and Hands will temporarily expand their capacity and service all municipalities in Erie County to address the needs of the entire county during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, services have temporarily been limited to emergent medical transportation, grocery and essential needs delivery, and friendly phone calls.

Shenk added, “Volunteers in every city, town and village are needed to increase the capacity to help older adults and people with disabilities access transportation, delivery of groceries and essential need items, and in making social connections. If you can transport someone, go grocery shopping for someone, or want to have a friendly phone conversation with someone please sign up with Hearts and Hands to volunteer.”

The volunteer application can be found at <https://www.hnhcares.org/> or by calling (716)-406-8311.

Volunteers are reimbursed for mileage and have supplemental insurance coverage through Hearts and Hands. Volunteer safety is of utmost concern and all COVID-19 precautions are observed. Additional opportunities for volunteers to work from home are available.

Hearts and Hands is supported by the New York State Department of Transportation, Erie County Department of Senior Services, Niagara County Office for the Aging, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, Amherst Generations Foundation, Odd Fellow and Rebekah Foundation, multiple faith partners, and private donations.

This capacity initiative is specifically supported by a grant from the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York. The Health Foundation is an independent private foundation that advocates for continuous improvement in health and health care by investing in the people and organizations that serve young children and older adults.

For more information:

On the Erie County Department of Senior Services, visit <https://www2.erie.gov/seniorservices/>

On the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities, visit <https://www2.erie.gov/ecod/>

On Hearts and Hands, visit <https://www.hnhcares.org/>

#