

# Herkimer County Newsletter

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2022



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Mental Health Visits</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Legislature Meeting Dates</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Budget</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Retirement</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Office for the Aging</i>	<b>4-8</b>
<i>Senior Picnic 2021</i>	<b>9</b>
<i>Information Services</i>	<b>6,7</b>
<i>HCCC</i>	<b>10, 11</b>
<i>Catholic Charities</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>ETA</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>Stop-DWI</i>	<b>13</b>

## Cornell Cooperative Extension -- Herkimer County Fall 2021 4-H Government Intern Program



The 4-H Government Intern Program, sponsored by the Herkimer County Legislature and administered by Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program of Herkimer County, was back in person this fall, after having to cancel half way through in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19. Participation in the program is by invitation only for youth that are interested in taking their leadership to the next level. Special emphasis is on the participants "youth voice" in working for solutions to community issues in Herkimer County.

The program is limited to 20 youth participants upon the recommendation of Administration and teachers from each school district in Herkimer County.

The overall program goal is to increase student awareness regarding government by involving youth of Herkimer County through experiential learning. Four students from three Herkimer County school districts participated by exploring current issues and learning more about the functions of their county government through the committee system. Students reviewed issues, toured county facilities, interviewed county legislators, and attended a county legislature meeting.

Students included Jayda Estey from Dolgeville High School; Amaya Chabrier and Cheyenne Garlock, from Herkimer High School; and Luca Bellino from Frankfort/ Schuyler High School.

Key presenters involved in the success of this program included: Jim Bono, Chairman of the Herkimer County Legislature; Joann Mower of the P.I.N.S. Unit; Budget Officer Sheri Ferdula; Kim S. Tranter and Rob Drumm from the Board of Elections; Linda Patten from the Department of Social Services; Probation Department; Herkimer County Clerk Sylvia Rowan; Kim Enea County Treasurer and Family Court Judge Thad Luke.

At the final session, the interns staged a simulated legislative mock meeting and provided presentations on current issues confronting county government. Topics discussed were:

- Entertainment needs for Youth in Herkimer County.
- Fundraising for remodel of Youth Centers
- Peer youth led community projects

Students thanked all of the participating Herkimer County Legislators for their visits and help in researching topics that made the program an engaging experience.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County

Legislators Pictured R-L:

Honorable Peter Manno  
Honorable Mark Gaworecki  
Honorable Ray Donley



**Upcoming 2022 Legislature Meeting Dates:**

- January 3— 2:00 PM
- January 26—7:00 PM
- February 16—7:00 PM
- March 16—7:00 PM
- 

All meetings are held in the Legislature Chambers  
109 Mary Street  
Herkimer, NY 13350  
Check our website for Meeting minutes at [www.herkimercounty.org](http://www.herkimercounty.org)

**LEGISLATURE MEETING 12-15-21 :**



**Civil Service Exams:**

- February 5
- February 19
- March 5
- March 19

Please visit [www.herkimercounty.org](http://www.herkimercounty.org) and click on "Civil Service Exams" for more information!



After a COVID-induced hiatus, Chairman Bono and his wife, Mrs. Rose Bono graciously hosted the 2021 Legislative Christmas party at PK's Pub in Herkimer. Attendees included members of the legislature, past and present, department heads and spouses, and legislative support staff. Guests were asked to bring a wrapped gift to contribute to the longstanding tradition of the annual Christmas party auction instituted by Chairman Bono at the very beginning of his tenure with the legislature. Bidding began following a lovely dinner and proved festive and fruitful with proceeds of \$2,700 raised to benefit the Herkimer County Department of Social Services. Shown above is Tim Seymour, Commissioner of Herkimer County Department of Social Services accepting the check at the December 15, 2021 legislature meeting. The monies raised will be put to use assisting with household incidentals ranging from toothpaste to smoke alarms to emergency supplies, new foster parents with startup supplies, and even toward graduation gifts, and other day-to-day expenses. Chairman Bono stated "For those who may be a little short in their own needs this time of year, for whatever reason, it's always a good feeling to help." A heartfelt thank you to all who participated.

**Legal Holidays. All Herkimer County Offices will be closed:**

- December 31 – New Years Day Observed
- January 17—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 21— Presidents' Day

\*Highway and Deputy Sheriff's Association Employees excluded



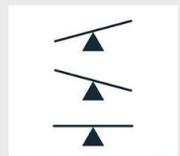
County Office Building  
Winter Hours  
8:00AM—5:00PM  
September 2021 to May, 2022



**FROM HERKIMER COUNTY BUDGET OFFICER:**

The 2022 Budget has been completed and was adopted at the December 15, 2021 Legislative meeting. This budget includes appropriations of \$107,416,273, which represents an increase of \$4,681,565 or 4.56% from the 2021 budgeted appropriations. Revenues for the 2022 Budget are recorded at \$45,994,233, up \$1,949,918 or 4.43% from 2021. There was NO increase to the County property tax levy, and due to changes in equalization rates the average tax rate will drop from \$4.88 to \$4.71 per \$1000 of assessed value.

Through the combined efforts of the Ways & Means Committee, the full legislature, County Administrator, budget office and department heads, the 2022 Budget developed into a solid, fiscally smart financial plan without any increase to the taxpayer. Thanks to all involved for your cooperation and effort in developing the 2022 Budget.



**MENTAL HEALTH VISITS**

Mental Health Clinic Visits		
Sept: 386— in person 343— telehealth	Oct: 329—in person 345 - telehealth)	Nov: 258—in person 375— telehealth)

Mental Health Jail Visits		
Sept. - 54	Oct. - 45	Nov.— 54

# HONORABLE RAYMOND SMITH’S RETIREMENT :

WHEREAS,

Hon. Raymond “Dutch” Smith is a lifelong resident of Dolgeville, born there in 1933, and graduating with the class of 1952; and

WHEREAS,

following graduation, Dutch served his country by joining the Army until 1955; and

WHEREAS,

Dutch was united in marriage with his beloved Joyce (Eaker) in 1956. Of the many blessings that union bore is their four children, 12 grandchildren and a handful of great grandchildren, numbering up any day now; and

WHEREAS,

Dutch was employed as a manufacturing engineer with Mohawk Data Sciences from 1970 until his retirement in 1993; and

WHEREAS,

Dutch’s devotion to his family and to his community is omnipresent. He has served as a Cub Scout leader, active for the very first Webelos Pack of Dolgeville, coached not only little league but Babe Ruth and American Legion baseball, was a member of the Spofford Hose Company (1951-1980), has been a Mason since 1964 (Master in 1974), was elected to sit on the Manheim Town Board in 1966 for 23 years, was elected Supervisor of Manheim in 1989, holding that seat for 10 years, is a parishioner of the United Methodist Church, President of the Dolgeville Cemetery Assoc., and is an active participant with the Herkimer County Republican Committee, currently serving as the Chair for Manheim since 2012; and

WHEREAS,

Dutch’s immersive civic involvement is a testament to his love of this area and it spans many seats in the County Legislature since the beginning of his tenure in March of 2000. Dutch served as Vice Chairman from 2006–2007 and Chairman of the Legislature from 2008–2011 and Also on various committees including County Properties, Public Safety/Emergency Management County Personnel, Highways, County Planning & Development, Human Resources, Education and Ways & Means; and

WHEREAS,

Dutch will retire after 22 years of exceptional dedication to his constituents, this Legislature and the residents of Herkimer County; *Now, Therefore, be it;*

RESOLVED,

That I, VINCENT J. BONO, do deem it fitting and appropriate to proclaim Thursday, December 16, 2021 as “HONORABLE RAYMOND ‘DUTCH’ SMITH DAY” in Herkimer County and urge the residents of the County to join in the recognition of his many years of service.

Dated: December 15, 2021.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the County of Herkimer,



VINCENT J. BONO, Chairman  
Herkimer County Legislature



## FROM HERKIMER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING:

Office for the Aging placed gift tags on the Christmas tree in the lobby of the County building in Herkimer. With the help of county employees, Legislators, the Peacemakers Quilt Guild of Ilion, local churches, and many other community members and organizations the Office for the Aging was able to distribute over 132 Christmas gifts to older adults in Herkimer County. We also distributed 30 bags of food items, thanks to the employees at Tractor Supply Distribution Center in Frankfort. These older adults who received the gifts and food were so thankful that someone was thinking of them.



Office for the Aging staff delivered the packages to the older adults. The staff were greeted with smiles. These individuals appreciated the generosity of all of those individuals who contributed to this effort.

We hope to continue this event in 2022 and hopefully we will be able to provide additional older adults a bit of Christmas cheer. Office for the Aging staff would like to thank all individuals who assisted with this effort. Every gesture of kindness helps make our community a better place to live.

The Office for the Aging would like to remind community members to stop in and visit with an older adult during this time of the year. You will make their day especially this year.

For more information or for questions please contact the Office for The Aging/NY Connects office at 315-867-1124. Or visit the OFA website at [www.herkimercounty.org](http://www.herkimercounty.org), go to departments, then to Office for The Aging. If anyone is interested in volunteering please call. Check us out on [facebook](#).



## Herkimer County Office for the Aging Cost Saving Programs & Assistance for Older Adults

**Medicare Savings Program:** This program helps those on Medicare get the premium they pay for their Medicare Part B back in their Social Security check.

**To qualify you must be on Medicare and be under the income levels:**

Individuals: \$1,469 Couples: \$1,980

There are also two programs to assist with the cost of prescription medications- Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) and the Low Income Subsidy (LIS). You can call the numbers below to see if you qualify.

**If you are interested in applying call NY Connects Office for the Aging at 315-867-1121 or HIICAP at 315-894-9917**

**The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** is a nutrition assistance program. SNAP provides benefits to eligible low-income individuals and families via an Electronic Benefits Transfer card. This card can be used like a debit card to purchase eligible food in authorized retail food stores.

**If you are over 60, to qualify your income must be under the income levels:**

1 person household: \$2,147                      2 person household: \$2,903

**If you are interested in applying call Herkimer County DSS at 315-867-1291 or Catholic Charities of Herkimer County at 315-894-9917 Ext. 235 or go to [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov)**

**Food Pantries: Local Food Pantries can provide food items.**

To find the Food Pantry nearest you call NY Connects/OFA at 315-867-1121 or visit [www.nyconnects.ny.gov](http://www.nyconnects.ny.gov) and search Food Pantries of Herkimer County.

**Food Sense Food Co-op Program:** Food Sense is a great way for individuals to save money and purchase quality foods for less. Each package of food or unit is filled with high quality meats, vegetables, fruits, and grocery items. **There are no restrictions-if you eat you qualify.**

**For more information and place an order call Catholic Charities at 315-894-9917.**

**Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)-** The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes.

**Household of 1: \$2,729                                      Household of 2: \$3,569**

**To see if you qualify if you are over 60 yrs call 315-867-1195 or if under 60 yrs call 315-867-1220 or visit [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov)**

**Low Income Household Water Assistance Program-** This programs assists with overdue water and wastewater bills. **To see if you qualify visit: <https://otda.ny.gov/LIHWAP>**

**Rental Assistance: You may qualify for funds to help pay your rent.**

Little Falls Housing: 315-823-2540                      Herkimer Housing: 315-866-2252

Ilion Housing: 315-894-2159                      Dolgeville Housing: 315-429-9548

**Please call the area that you reside in and for all other areas call Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency at 315-624-9930.**

**Property Tax Relief: These programs could assist you in reducing your property taxes.**

Star Credit: To apply call 518-457-2036 or visit: [www.tax.ny.gov](http://www.tax.ny.gov)

Senior Citizens Property Tax Exemption: Contact your assessor or visit [www.tax.ny.gov](http://www.tax.ny.gov) to locate your assessor or call 315-867-1235

Veterans Exemption: Contact you assessor to receive an application or visit [www.tax.ny.gov](http://www.tax.ny.gov)

**Veterans Benefits-If you are a Veteran you may qualify for assistance.**

To see if you are eligible contact Herkimer County's Veterans Office at 315-867-1235.

**Adult Protective Services (APS)-** APS can assist an adult age 18 or older who may not be able to meet their own needs and have no one to assist them.

**Please contact APS at 315-867- 1231**

**Working Solutions Career Center:** The center can assist you in finding employment or training opportunities. **Please contact Working Solutions at 315-867-1400.**

**NY Connects/Office for the Aging:** Our goal is to assist older adults to remain in their homes by providing services such as; transportation, meals, services to assist with personal care and housekeeping, caregiver services, legal aid, & Information & Assistance to individuals of any age. **If you need assistance call 315-867-1121.**

OFFICE FOR THE AGING CONT'D:



*Senior Citizen of the Year*  
*Gail Domion*



*Outstanding Contribution*  
*Ralph Dow*

**Gail Domion resides in Ilion.**

Gail Domion serves the residents at Prindle Apartments and the greater community continuously and she has done this work for several years.

Gail prepares traditional Sunday dinners for the residents each week. For a small contribution and with little assistance she cooks a three course meal for 25 to 30 people. For many of the residents this is the best meal they have each week.

Gail is also a volunteer driver for the Catholic Charities RSVP program. She feels very passionate about this service for our elderly and has shared with me her concerns for the health of our senior population. Often times she will spend an entire day with someone at Cooperstown or Syracuse as they complete what they need to do for their medical care.

Gail has been an RSVP volunteer since 2008. To date she has donated over 6300 hours of her time to those in our community through various volunteer jobs. Gail started with RSVP by donating her time to the food sense program and when the volunteer coordinator of Food Sense became ill a few years ago and could no longer volunteer Gail stepped in and took the program over and has been coordinating the program ever since. In addition to running the program she takes orders from residents at Prindle, processes food stamp orders, completes the Food Bank paperwork and packages the orders for pick-up. On delivery day Gail is there to ensure that the orders go to the correct people. She has even delivered the groceries to the apartments needed.

**Ralph Dow resides in Newport.**

Ralph Dow was born at his family home in Westdale, NY on September 24, 1930. His parents taught him volunteerism at an early age by teaching him to help at fundraising at church suppers. He still remembers the correct plate setting he learned at the age eight. From the ages 18-20, he was an advisor and leader for a church youth group and for two years, gave sermons at three local churches on Youth Sunday. In October 1950, he voluntarily joined the United States Navy and served until August 19, 1954 as a Korean War veteran.

In his thirty's, he was a member and elected president of the Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce). Later, he joined the Knights of Columbus and was chosen to serve as Financial Secretary and Grand Knight.

After moving his family to Newport, NY in 1977, he became very active in St. John's Catholic Church serving as trustee, Eucharistic Minister. Later he was a Sunday school teacher, Bingo chairman, Parish Council Chairman, Finance chairman and for a few years led communion services. He also led communion services at County Manor Rest Home for 19 years.

In 1990, he was asked to help form a local council in the Knights of Columbus which began January 9, 1991. He was chosen as District Deputy and one year as Chairman of the Board of District Deputies for the Syracuse Conference. He has also been an active member in the VFW Post #7220 for 19 years.

*Senior Citizen of the Year*



*Outstanding Contribution*

Since 2009 Gail has also devoted much of her time to the RIDE program at Catholic Charities. She has driven thousands of miles and has helped our older adults in Herkimer County remain healthy and independent in their own homes and communities.

Gail has also volunteered at the food pantry by picking up bread donations and delivering hot meals for the holidays. She has also provides assistance to her friends and neighbors by providing transportation to various non-medical appointments and cooking meals on the weekend. She was awarded the Catholic Charities of Herkimer County Volunteer of the Year Award at the Catholic Charities of the Albany Diocese Annual Gathering in 2017 for her outstanding contributions in serving those in need, especially our senior population.

Gail visits a woman up in Utica who has no family and is confined to bed in a rehabilitation facility. She helps her with legal issues and important correspondence of all kinds. Gail may be her only visitor and she gives her time, support and companionship freely. Very few people are even aware that Gail does this.

The world is a better, kinder place because of generous caring people like Gail. May we all be inspired to consider and care for others more.

Ralph has been an RSVP volunteer since 1999. To date he has donated over 11000 hours of his time in service to those in our community through various volunteer jobs. Ralph started with RSVP by volunteering at the Kuyahoorra Food Pantry and in 2003 he became the Food Pantry coordinator. Over the years he has spent countless hours working to make the Kuyahoorra food pantry its own free standing not for profit entity and last year his hard work paid off. He also secured a new location and was able to get the food pantry out of the church basement to better serve both his volunteers and clients. If Ralph gets a call that someone is in need of food and pantry isn't open, Ralph will open the pantry to serve them. Ralph is the Kuyahoorra Food pantry. If you ask his volunteers why they volunteer it's because he inspires them. He is 89 years old and still going strong. In addition to the time he spends at the pantry, Ralph also serves on the Ecumenical Food and Shelter Council and RSVP Advisory Board and was a volunteer transporter for the RIDE program. Ralph has earned several awards over the years for his volunteer work. Ralph said, "My extensive volunteerism has made me a more loving and caring person, giving me purpose in my life. To me, doing God's Will is what I must do."



OFFICE FOR THE AGING CONT'D:



*Senior Citizen of the Year*  
*Doug Capraro*



**Doug Capraro** resides in West Winfield. Doug Capraro has been a volunteer for the RSVP program through Catholic Charities since December 2012. Over the past 8+ years, Doug has been a dedicated driver for the RIDE program at Catholic Charities of Herkimer County. He has donated 4,356 hours driving over 135,000 miles, assisting hundreds of older adults get to their medical appointments. The main goal of the RIDE program is to get older adults to their medical appointments so they can maintain their health but the program also provides a social benefit so our older adult clients feel less isolated and alone. It is common for clients to request Doug by name when they call in with their appointment. While Doug's volunteer role with Catholic Charities has been a driver, he has been known to help the organization in other ways when he is available. Doug is a member of the American Legion & the Knights of Columbus. Doug is a veteran of the US Army Medical Corps. Doug has been known to assist Veterans and other community members who do not have means of transportation.

He was awarded the RSVP Miles for Others in 2014 in recognition and appreciation for the thousands of miles driven and hours donated, providing medical transportation and escort services for the frail and elderly in Herkimer County.

Doug is married to his wife Joanne and they have one daughter and two sons. They also have six grandchildren.

Doug's advice for other people thinking about volunteering in the future is:

"Give back what the community has given to you, I have very blessed and happy to give back to those who need it."







FROM HERKIMER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

## BILL PELZ HONORED WITH HALL OF DISTINCTION INDUCTION

In recognition of an extraordinary career, William Pelz was inducted into the Genesis Group's Education Hall of Distinction. Herkimer College's Provost Michael Oriolo accepted the award on behalf of Pelz who was unable to attend the event. The following presentation was made to introduce Pelz:

In 2018, with 50 years of service, William Pelz retired from Herkimer County Community College. He was the longest-serving faculty member at the College.

Bill joined the faculty in 1968, as instructor of social science, and was promoted through the ranks to professor in 1980. He also served in the roles of director of learning systems technology, distance learning coordinator, and webmaster. And at one time, Bill was chairperson of the Humanities/Social Science division – it was during that time he founded the first computer-based college learning center.

Bill was a leader in the development and implementation of the Internet Academy, and he served as instructional designer for online learning for 20 years. Bill's innovative work and leadership led to an incredibly successful Internet Academy that has grown to offer 21 degree and three certificate programs entirely online and accounts for approximately 20 percent of the College's enrollment.

During Bill's tenure, Herkimer's Internet Academy was the recipient of the 2016 Institutional Achievement Award presented by the National University Technology Network, recognizing effective use of technology in teaching and learning and organizational administration that is exemplary, demonstrating leadership and commitment, but also advancing the field as an institutional model.

In addition to his work at Herkimer College, Bill was a lead trainer for the SUNY Learning Network from 2000 to 2010. He facilitated workshops and provided training to nearly 3,000 new SUNY Learning Network professors in the SUNY system. He also was invited by universities in Chile and South Africa to visit their campuses and advise them on development of their online programs and train their faculty. Bill also served as associate editor and content contributor for the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching project.

Bill received not one, but two prestigious SUNY Chancellor's Awards for Excellence. In 1994, he received the Excellence in Teaching Award, and in 2004, he received the Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. Additionally, Bill was the recipient of the Sloan Consortium Award for Excellence in Online Teaching in 2003, and was named a Sloan Consortium Fellow in the field of online learning in 2013.

Upon his retirement in 2018, Bill was honored by the Herkimer County Community College Board of Trustees with the title of Professor Emeritus, recognizing his excellence and commitment to Herkimer College.



## Herkimer College is one of 23 schools to receive support from Chobani/Swipe Out Hunger partnership



Swipe Out Hunger and Chobani recently announced a partnership to support 23 colleges in Idaho and New York, including Herkimer County Community College!

As a result of this partnership, Herkimer College received a \$4,500 grant to enhance its efforts to assist students with food insecurity. A portion of the grant has been applied to the purchase of a refrigerator for The General's Cupboard, Herkimer's on-campus food pantry. Funds will also be spent on perishable foods to stock the refrigerator, additional metal shelving and other supplies for the pantry, as well as to help provide students in critical need with access to hot meals.

"We are very grateful to Chobani and Swipe Out Hunger for the generous support of the work we are doing to provide our students in need with access to nutritional food. By addressing food insecurity issues, we believe students will have a better chance at achieving academic success and completing their degrees," said Rebecca Ruffing, chair of the General's Cupboard Steering Committee.

[The General's Cupboard](#) opened in 2019 and is a free food and personal care source for any Herkimer County Community College student who may be experiencing hunger and/or struggling to attain food due to financial hardship. All currently enrolled Herkimer County Community College students are eligible to receive assistance from The General's Cupboard.

Pictured is Herkimer College Human Services student, Kayla Suppa, who is completing an internship in The General's Cupboard.

## HCCC CONT'D:

## Genesis Group Awards for Herkimer College COUNSELING CENTER RECOGNIZED AS OUT- STANDING PROGRAM



Herkimer College's Counseling Center was recognized as an Outstanding Program by The Genesis Group at their Celebration of Education held November 18th at Harts Hill Inn. Under the direction of Wendy Marchese, the Counseling Center already had a strong reputation on campus as a place where students could seek mental health services, in a comfortable, unbiased and confidential environment. When the College had to "go virtual" in spring of 2020, the Counseling Center quickly rose to the occasion and transitioned in creative ways to maintain their known level of services for students in a virtual environment through tele-counseling.

The Counseling Center offers students a wide range of programming and training, beyond the traditional counseling services. From prevention programming around topics of suicide, domestic violence, and substance abuse, several events are coordinated by the office annually to bring awareness to both the college campus but also the greater Herkimer community.

The staff has brought additional programs to Herkimer College to help students who are in recovery and to prevent underage drinking and drug abuse. A new Collegiate Recovery Room is provided on campus for students to have a comfortable place for support meetings, recovery coaching, wellness programming, and visits with Renegade, Herkimer's beloved golden retriever therapy dog.

*Pictured from left: Madeline Snyder (College Prevention Coordinator for Alcohol & Substance Abuse), Amy Fahey (Prevention Services Coordinator), Wendy Marchese (Director of Counseling), Mary Greene (Counselor), Kaitlyn LaPolla, (Counselor), and Paula Fallon (Technical Assistant, Counseling Center). Not pictured is Dr. Lynn Martin (psychologist).*



FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES:

"National Runaway Prevention Month brings to light the issues runaway and homeless youth face every day and the local resources available to support youth in crisis. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHYP) of Catholic Charities of Herkimer County provides a 24-hour hotline with crisis services, counseling services, emergency housing, life skills, and other positive youth activities that make a significant difference to youth who have run away, as well as those living on the streets.

To highlight the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program during November, a handmade bench was constructed with the question "Can You See Me" prominently displayed on it. This message signifies the "invisibility" of runaway and homeless youth as they struggle with their issues of abandonment, homelessness, and fear. Runaway and homeless youth often do not look like the stereotype of an adult homeless person. They often try to hide their situation and therefore the issue remains invisible.

The bench was displayed outside the Herkimer County Office Building on North Washington Street for the month of November, to remind our youth that they are not invisible or alone, and that our community cares about them.

Catholic Charities thanks the Administration of Herkimer County for their support, including County Administrator James Wallace, Commissioner of Social Services Tim Seymour, and Executive Director of the Youth Bureau Gina Giacovelli. Also pictured are Catholic Charities Executive Director Maureen Petrie, RHYP Director Rachael Case, RHYP Outreach Coordinator Robin Spanfelner, and Youth Representative Alexis Edgett."



FROM HERKIMER EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING:



CanCode Communities, a nonprofit organization training non-traditional talent for software career opportunities, announced the launch of its initial HerkimerCanCode program: Digital Literacy Training, which will enable individuals in the Mohawk Valley to gain basic computer skills that are critical to pursuing and securing tech jobs in today's information economy.

Classes will begin on February 1, 2022, and are open to residents of both Herkimer and Oneida Counties. An information session will be held on January 6, at Herkimer College and via Zoom, to provide more information and answer questions.

The Digital Literacy Training curriculum teaches basic computer usage skills, including Google Docs and Microsoft Office; use and management of email and calendars; word processing and spreadsheet use; and using the web to conduct safe and productive internet job searches.

Students may include those who have used a computer frequently in a professional environment, as well as those who have rarely used a computer and feel nervous about doing so.

"We're excited to kick off our first HerkimerCanCode program, and thrilled to partner with a group of outstanding organizations committed to creating and sustaining a vibrant region," said CanCode Communities Founder and CEO Annmarie Lanese. "We look forward to providing individuals with the skills necessary to build successful tech careers, and to giving companies access to a diverse pipeline of local talent that will strengthen the Mohawk Valley."

To register for the information session to be held Thursday, January 6 at 4 p.m., click [here](#). There is no cost to attend. For further details, call (518) 238-6808 or email [info@albanycancode.org](mailto:info@albanycancode.org).

HerkimerCanCode offers computer coding courses to equip individuals with the skills needed to pursue job opportunities in the tech industry, while also establishing a diverse, inclusive pipeline of tech talent to serve the needs of the business community. It represents a partnership between CanCode Communities, Herkimer College, Herkimer County, Herkimer Working Solutions, and the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties.

"Herkimer College is excited to join CanCode Communities, Herkimer County, Herkimer Working Solutions and the Community Foundation on this exciting initiative," said William McDonald, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Herkimer College. "We look forward to being an active partner in this effort to provide community members with marketable skills leading to lucrative careers and to strengthen the local tech industry workforce."

"We already know that we possess a valuable workforce in our county and we believe that this unique opportunity could appeal to an otherwise untapped section of that workforce," said Vincent J. Bono, Chairman of the Herkimer County Legislature. "Partnering with Herkimer College, The Community Foundation and CanCode Communities to start HerkimerCanCode is an exciting first step in making workforce development training in the tech industry available in our county."

"Leaders in Herkimer County recognize that opportunities available in the tech industry are increasing," said Karin Piseck, Director of Employment & Training for Herkimer County and Manager of Herkimer Working Solutions. "We think it's the perfect time to offer this entry-level look into the digital literacy and software coding field."

"HerkimerCanCode brings wonderful opportunities to our community and its residents," said Alicia Dicks, Community Foundation president/CEO. "The Community Foundation sees unique learning avenues like this that support technology careers and workforce development as critical to building and sustaining vibrancy in our two-county community."



## FROM STOP-DWI:

### DID YOU KNOW???

#### SNOW, ICY ROADS DON'T CAUSE CRASHES!

“Rain, snow, fog, sleet, or icy pavements have never caused an accident.” This is a direct quote from the Loss Control Department of Utica National Insurance Group. I would have substituted the word crash for accident, but this is a true statement. The operative word is “caused”; snow and ice may be contributing factors, but they can’t cause a crash.

We have had a slow start to winter weather so far this fall, but winter driving is just around the corner. Stop and think about the above statement from Utica National and give some critical thought to your own driving habits. Adverse weather conditions are not a valid excuse for losing control of your vehicle. These conditions merely increase the hazards of driving. The real cause is failure to adjust driving to the prevailing weather conditions, or to think that you are such a good driver that you can still drive fast even though the road conditions dictate otherwise.

Failure to utilize proper winter equipment can also contribute to winter crashes. Included here could be failure to use snow tires with adequate tire tread, or chains, failure to clean off your headlights and taillights, trying to drive without a clear, unobstructed windshield and rear window, and failure to use your headlights to make yourself more visible to other drivers under adverse conditions.

Section 1180 (a) of Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) states: “No person shall drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions and having regard to the actual and potential hazards then existing”. If you read this sentence carefully, it becomes clearer that snow and ice don’t cause crashes. And what about black ice, you may say? Read the VTL again – especially the last part of the sentence, that states: having regard to the actual and potential hazards then existing. Isn’t black ice a potential hazard when driving in winter?

Remember, posted speed limits are for good driving conditions. In poor weather, including snow, ice, fog, rain, wind etc., the posted speed limit is often too fast for safe driving given adverse conditions existing at the time.

So, don’t blame vehicle crashes on weather conditions – rather, the blame lies with the driver who failed to recognize that a potential slippery condition might exist and thus neglected to reduce his/her speed, and/or failed to properly equip or present his or her vehicle in a proper manor for the poor weather conditions.

Take responsibility for your vehicle’s condition and for your driving actions, and don’t blame the weather. Stay safe this winter.

This article was submitted by the Herkimer County STOP-DWI Office. This article is one in a series of articles developed and published by the Franklin County Traffic Safety Board and is being reprinted with their permission.

