



**Office for
the Aging**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIVE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN BROOME AND OTSEGO COUNTIES HONORED FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE ON OLDER NEW YORKERS' DAY

New York State Office for the Aging celebrates Older New Yorkers' Day with video presentation recognizing 90 honorees statewide for their service

Five exceptional community volunteers from Broome and Otsego Counties were recently honored by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) for their exceptional service to older adults and others in the community.

Rose Dillenbeck of Johnson City, **Michael and Carole Lachance** of Fly Creek, **Cathy McGowan** of Binghamton, and **Gary Ray** of West Edmeston were all nominated by their county Area Offices on Aging for recognition at NYSOFA's annual Older New Yorkers' Day celebration.

The virtual celebration premiered November 5 on social media, with a video presentation featuring approximately 90 honorees from around the state, along with remarks from state officials.

- After the 2011 flood in Broome County, Dillenbeck helped restore the Endicott Nazarene Church, which sustained heavy damage from four feet of water, and similarly acted when the Community Bible Church was damaged by melting snow and, later, burst pipes.
- Michael and Carole Lachance established the Cooperstown Senior Community Center in 2018, creating a social and educational space for older adults. During the pandemic, as older adults faced new levels of social isolation, they developed a daily newsletter to keep people connected, created a telephone reassurance project, and obtained a grant to install an air filtration system in the community center so it could host seniors safely.
- McGowan has improved the quality of home care in Broome and Tioga Counties for the last four decades, volunteering over 100 hours per year helping a local home care agency conduct record reviews, audits and compliance procedures while also lending time to the Broome County Home Care coalition to raise awareness about home care services.

- Ray serves as President of the Volunteer Fire Department and Commissioner for the West Edmeston Fire District. He is also an ambulance squad driver. This past year, he helped save two lives in the community, quickly responding to start CPR until other support could arrive.

For a more detailed profile of each exceptional honoree, please see the award program book and get a link to NYSOFA's video presentation on our Older New Yorkers' Day landing page at <https://aging.ny.gov/older-new-yorkers-day-2021-epk>.

Mary Whitcombe, Director of the Broome County Office for Aging, said: "Broome County is honored to recognize Cathy McGowan and Rose Dillenbeck. Cathy McGowan has provided at least 20 hours of consistent service a month to help improve the quality of home care services in our county, impacting hundreds of seniors annually. Rose Dillenbeck, a registered nurse, has likewise been instrumental in helping people remain independent in their homes, working part-time at the Broome County Office for Aging to support the many services we provide. Individuals are drawn to volunteerism because they find it rewarding and they enjoy working with older adults to provide vital help. Cathy McGowan and Rose Dillenbeck have translated this personal drive into a form of service that has become an irreplaceable asset for the care of older adults in Broome County, and I couldn't be prouder of their contributions."

Tamie Reed, Director of the Otsego County Office for the Aging, said: "Michael Lachance, Carol Lachance and Gary Ray are outstanding examples of volunteerism and altruism in our community, providing vital help so their peers – and others – can overcome social isolation to stay safe. As we look around our community at volunteer fire departments, libraries, community centers, civic organizations, food pantries and youth activities, we see older faces. We see activities, events, services and programs that would truly not exist if it weren't for the older adults who dedicate their time to lead and sustain them. We are indebted to these volunteers and it is an honor to recognize them."

New York State Office for the Aging Director Greg Olsen said: "Older adults contribute mightily to their communities. These individuals are a great reason why New York lives up to its designation as an age-friendly state – the first in the nation to receive this distinction. Older New Yorkers not only help their peers in the same age group, but also families and youths as well, with a level of voluntary contribution that is unmatched by any other demographic group. We are so proud to celebrate their incredible contributions. We thank them for their wisdom, their talents, their mentorship, and their service."

Throughout New York State, over 935,000 individuals age 55 or older contribute approximately 495 million hours of service to their communities annually. This translates into an annual economic output of \$13.8 billion.

People over the age of 50 also account for the majority of volunteering, philanthropy, and donation activities in the U.S. Older New Yorkers and Baby Boomers make up 63

percent – \$379 billion – of all the household income generated in New York State, supporting local businesses and schools while contributing significantly to the local and state economy.

About the New York State Office for the Aging and Health Across All Policies/Age-Friendly New York

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) continuously works to help the state's 4.3 million older adults be as independent as possible for as long as possible through advocacy, development and delivery of person-centered, consumer-oriented, and cost-effective policies, programs, and services that support and empower older adults and their families, in partnership with the network of public and private organizations that serve them.

New York is nationally recognized for being the first age-friendly state in the nation. Using the state's Prevention Agenda as the overarching framework, in 2017, New York launched a Health Across All Policies approach, where public and private partners work together to positively impact population health by marrying health care, preventive health, and community design, in concert with addressing social determinants of health, to improve the lives of all New Yorkers, young and old.

Stay connected—visit the NYSOFA Facebook page; follow @NYSAGING on Twitter and NYSAGING on Instagram; or visit aging.ny.gov.

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