



**Office for
the Aging**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIVE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS SERVING CORTLAND, SCHUYLER AND TOMPKINS COUNTIES RECOGNIZED 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 were recently honored by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) for their exceptional service to older adults and others in Cortland, Schuyler, and Tompkins Counties.

Lisa Gould, William Hopkins, Sandra Monroe, Margaret Ohlinger and Margaret Snow were nominated by their county Area Office 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.

- Gould, of Ithaca, has volunteered hundreds of hours to Foodnet's congregate and home-delivered meal programs over the past five years. She also provides home meal delivery for residents in senior apartments, supports Cornell University's video-dining project as a companion diner, and volunteers in Foodnet's diabetic cooking series project, helping to connect participants with additional resources even long after the course ends.
- Through the Alzheimer's Association, Hopkins, of Homer, has developed a Memory Café, which supports individuals with dementia and their caregivers. He also wrote a book on the subject: "An Informal Guide for Caregivers of Those with Alzheimer's Disease." He has also been a constant voice educating the public about transportation challenges in Cortland County, is active in his church, and has served for 20 years as a consulting psychologist at the J.M. Murray Center.
- Monroe, of Millport, is truly in her element when she volunteers at the Silver Spoon Cafe in Montour Falls, ready to support the nutrition department and the needs of older adults in Schuyler County. She contributes 40 hours per month so that older adults in Schuyler County have a healthy, safe and fun space to meet.

For the past six years, she has helped collate the Golden Glow newsletter, joining a group of volunteers that meets every other month to prepare the publication for distribution to over 1,200 business and residences of Schuyler County.

- Dr. Ohlinger, of Burdett, was inspired to volunteer by the fond memories of her mother delivering for Meals on Wheels of New Rochelle, New York. She started her volunteer journey with the Schuyler County Office for the Aging in April of 2020, delivering over 45 meals per day, three days a week. She also assists in other Office for the Aging programs including the Hello Neighbor phone chat, Shopping Assistance, and Advisory Council. Dr. Ohlinger was co-founder of the Finger Lakes Thoroughbred Adoption Program of Farmington, New York, formerly known as the Racehorse Retirement Program within the Humane Society of Schuyler County, serving as Executive Director from 2002 to 2005. She was awarded the Lavin Cup (the highest award for equine welfare) at the annual conference of the American Association of Equine Veterinarians in 2007 in Orlando, Florida.
- As a volunteer for hospice, Snow, of Groton, has visited the homes of people who are actively dying – to be with them when they have no one else by their side. "It was an honor to walk with someone at the end," she says of her work, which also included bereavement calls to families who had lost a loved one. As part of the Development Committee at Habitat for Humanity, Snow spearheaded a new fundraising program in the pandemic, organizing a gingerbread house competition via Zoom to raise funds in a creative and safe way. She also volunteered with the Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service.

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>.

Elizabeth Haskins, Director of the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging, said:
"The Cortland County Office for the Aging is proud to recognize Bill Hopkins for working to support older adults and their caregivers coping with dementia. Bill is a prime example of an individual whose expertise serves a broader community good through volunteerism. From his career as a psychologist, Bill is applying his knowledge and skills to fulfill a serious need for the growing number of individuals caring for adults with Alzheimer's Disease or dementia. By organizing the Memory Cafe, Bill has created a truly special place where individuals and their caregivers can find relief, stimulation, and the trusted company of peers facing similar experiences."

Lisa Monroe, Director of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, said:
"Throughout the pandemic, older adult volunteers have extended themselves to provide critical services such as delivering meals, groceries, supplies, medication, transportation to medical appointments and phone calls to older adults to combat social isolation. This volunteerism is a crucial extension of the services that our office provides and is a core

part of our mission to keep people in their homes and communities. This past year, we've seen time and again how friends, neighbors, and businesses have found new ways to support each other. Lisa Gould and Margaret Snow are exceptional examples of older adults stepping into these important roles. Their commitment to our programs and community organizations has helped us respond to the needs of our clients during these uncertain and difficult times. They have dedicated their skills, talents, and experiences for the benefit of others and have made connections and engagements that build strong, resilient communities. The value of their volunteerism is immeasurable, and we thank them."

Tamre S. Waite, Director of the Schuyler County Office for the Aging, said: "I continue to be highly inspired and motivated by all I see, read and hear about our incredible pool of volunteers. Schuyler County is very blessed by the work of Sandy Monroe and Dr. Margaret Ohlinger. They both possess a most kind and caring heart and the desire to help others. Through their selfless acts of giving, they have provided for countless individuals, be it through a home-delivered meal, the therapeutic benefits of our robotic pet program, a phone call, or being served a meal at a congregate site. Doing so throughout COVID has been simply awe-inspiring and heroic. It is an honor to know these women and to recognize their ongoing contributions to others within our community."

Kim Pound, Volunteer Coordinator at Schuyler County Office for the Aging, said: "Sandy Monroe has been an amazing addition to the Schuyler County Office for the Aging volunteer program. Each month she goes above and beyond, spending a few hours each day assisting the kitchen staff at the Silver Spoon Cafe congregate meal site in Montour Falls. She has a warm and welcoming demeanor that allows attendees to feel at home as they enjoy a healthy meal and the opportunity for recreation, nutrition education, nutrition counseling and health-related activities offered at our congregate meal site. Margaret Ohlinger started with Schuyler County Home Delivered Meals at the height of the pandemic helping with meal delivery, shopping assistance and our advisory council. She is a retired veterinarian and her care and devotion to animals easily translates into the love of older adults. She enjoys driving and meeting new people, and she has even reconnected with some former clients on her meal route, reminding us again of our bonds as a community."

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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CONTACT:

Roger Noyes – (518) 549-8983 (office); (518) 265-2864 (cell)
communications@aging.ny.gov