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Heart, Love & Soul launches 2024 holiday appeal to meet growing community needs

Heart, Love & Soul Press Release and Photos

As the holiday season approaches, Heart, Love & Soul is proud to launch its annual holiday appeal to support the growing needs of our community.

This year, the demand is higher than last year – and continues a trajectory in which meal distribution from our pantry has increased 115% between 2021-24. With many families struggling due to tightened budgets and reduced benefits, the need for support has never been more urgent.

Holiday support for families
This December, we are committed to spreading joy and meeting essential needs through several key initiatives:

• Toy drive: In tandem with WNY Partnerships and Toys for Tots, we are collecting toys for children ages 0-12 through Dec. 9. Donations of new, unopened and unwrapped toys can be dropped off at either of the following locations:

√ Heart, Love & Soul: 939 On-



tario Ave., Niagara Falls

√ Upward Chamber of Commerce: 895 Center St., Lewiston

• Food collection: To ensure our shelves remain stocked throughout the season, we are accepting donations of both holiday-specific and everyday pantry items. This year, over 300 families signed up for Thanksgiving, and we anticipate a similar number for Christmas.

• Monetary contributions: The holiday appeal also includes a call

for financial donations to sustain our programs. Every dollar helps us provide food, resources, and critical support to those who need it most.

A vision for the future

While the holiday appeal focuses on addressing immediate needs, it also supports the foundation for our future plans. Thanks to the generosity of our community, Heart, Love & Soul continues to expand its services and deepen its commitment to helping Niagara



Falls families thrive.

This season of giving offers a chance to make a meaningful difference. Whether through donating toys, contributing pantry items, or making a financial gift, your support brings hope, joy and comfort to those who need it most.

For more information on how to donate or get involved, visit our website at HeartLoveAndSoul.org. Together, we can ensure no one is left behind this holiday season.

Alzheimer's Association: Keep loved ones with dementia safe during cold weather

Press Release

As temperatures have dropped and snow has blanketed much of Western New York over the past week, the Western New York Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association offers safety tips for navigating the winter season, as freezing temperatures, snow, ice and early darkness can be challenging and stressful for people living with dementia and their care partners.

By preparing themselves and their homes in advance, caregivers can make a big difference in keeping their loved ones with Alzheimer's or dementia safe. Some tips include:

• Be prepared. Winter storms can be dangerous for anyone. Check weather conditions regularly and have contingency plans in place. If a snowstorm is on the horizon, consider

rescheduling appointments that are not urgent. Tackle to-do lists in one trip to avoid making multiple trips out of the house.

• Bundle up. Help the person living with Alzheimer's to dress warmly for winter weather conditions by covering exposed skin. A good option to consider is wearing several layers of lightweight clothing for easy movement.

• Prevent slips. Balance and mobility can be a challenge for a person living with Alzheimer's or dementia, so assume all surfaces are slick. Assist the person living with dementia by wearing sturdy shoes and walking slowly when outside. Keep sidewalks and driveways clear, use handrails or walk arm-in-arm. Consider acquiring a state-issued handicapped placard to

enable closer access to buildings.

• Prevent wandering. Wandering is one of the most frequent and challenging problems that caregivers face and can be extremely dangerous in colder conditions. If a family member wanders, start by searching the immediate vicinity, including "less-traveled" areas in the home. Outside the home, search the yard and nearby surroundings. Most people who wander are found within a half mile of their homes or starting location. If the person is not located quickly, call 911 to have first responders assist in the search – in winter weather, a missing vulnerable adult is an emergency. Ensure a swift response by alerting the police that the individual has Alzheimer's disease so they can be approached appropriately. Consider installing a

doorbell camera or other outdoor monitoring device to quickly know what the person was wearing and in what direction they are moving.

• Make daylight last. Winter months bring decreased sunlight and shorter days. Visual perception can be a challenge for those living with dementia, causing increased confusion or disorientation in dark or shadowy environments both inside and out. Turn on indoor lights earlier or install timers, open curtains during daylight hours, and consider installing motion detector lights to help illuminate walkways around the home.

To learn more about Alzheimer's disease and ways you can support families and people living with the disease, visit alz.org/wny.

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