

April shines spotlight on donating life, preventing child abuse

With the month of April upon us, I know we are all looking forward to warmer weather and the hope that spring will soon kick into high gear. April is also a month where we bring awareness to two important issues: organ donation and child abuse prevention. I want to touch on both.

Last week, I had the pleasure to join County Clerk Joe Jastrzemski and Sarah Diina from ConnectLife to raise the ConnectLife flag at the Niagara County Courthouse to kickoff National Donate Life Month. ConnectLife is WNY's only organ, eye, tissue and community blood center. During this month, people are asked to consider registering as organ, eye and tissue donors, and to honor those that have saved lives through the gift of a donation.

According to Donate Life America, more than 100,000



Becky Wydysh
Chairwoman

women, men and children are waiting for lifesaving organ transplants. Every nine minutes, another person is added to the waiting list. Right here in New York state, there are nearly 8,500 people in need of a lifesaving transplant and a shot at a second chance for life. Unfortunately, 17 people die each day across the country waiting for that transplant.

I registered to be a donor many years ago. In fact, more than 51% of all licensed drivers in Niagara County are registered. One organ, eye and tissue donor can save and heal more than 75 lives. If you are a donor, April is the month we say thank you.

If you are not, please consider doing so. You can simply visit <https://donatelifeny.gov/> or do so at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) when you replace, renew or upgrade your driver's license or non-driver identification. Nearly 80% of New York's organ and tissue donor enrollments comes through the state's DMVs. It's never been easier to register, and your decision could have a lasting impact for generations.

As I mentioned, April is also Child Abuse Prevention month. During the pandemic, especially early on, the number of reported child abuse cases actually decreased. The sad fact is that this was not because there was less child abuse, but rather teachers, coaches and others who interact with youth and are often those who report potential issues were not interacting with children due to COVID restrictions. As

restrictions eased, we saw a definite increase in reported cases. Last year, the Niagara County Department of Social Services investigated over 3,700 reports of child abuse and maltreatment, or about 10 reports every day.

Niagara County's Child Abuse Intervention Project (CAIP) is a multidisciplinary team of professionals from child protection, law enforcement, prosecution, medical, victim advocacy and the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara that responds to reports of child abuse in a coordinated, child-centered manner. The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara provides a safe and comfortable environment for victim interviews, medical evaluations, trauma therapy, advocacy and other support services dedicated to preventing further harm.

Of course, stopping child abuse before it ever happens is the desired goal. The Child Ad-

vocacy Center also has programming to support parents, provide knowledge of positive parenting and child development, and offer social connections and nurturing. Helping create safe, stable, nurturing relationships between children and parents or other caregivers plays a crucial role in preventing abuse.

The Child Advocacy Center is hosting a number of awareness events in April, including a social media campaign that the community can participate in. For more information and prevention resources, or to request a training, visit their website at www.cacofniagara.org, or call 716-285-0045.

And always remember: If you are concerned that a child you know is being abused or neglected, contact the New York State Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-342-3720.

RRG calls for greater public access to upcoming CWM hearings

With the recent announcement by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation Siting Board on plans to hold its first hearings on the long-awaited CWM Chemical Services applications to determine the site's future, the citizens environmental group Residents for Responsible Government is calling on the state to provide greater access for the public to view these hearings virtually.

In a release, President Vincent Agnello said RRG, along with numerous stakeholders, has been working to oppose applications by CWM Chemical Services to construct and operate a new hazardous waste landfill in the towns of Porter and Lewiston.

"The proposed facility would bury PCB and toxic waste here, primarily imported from outside New York for what CWM claims would be 29 years. Both EPA and

New York have determined there is no need to site a new toxic waste landfill, because there are 17 other such operations in the U.S. adequate to handle the nation's needs for at least the next 20 years. And CWM disposal operations here have been closed for seven years," Agnello said.

RRG urges the state DEC and the CWM Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Board, as soon as possible, to provide the computer

link that will allow the public to view the first in a series of CWM hearings, which will be virtually held via Webex (similar to Zoom) during the daytime hearings beginning April 11.

Agnello said it is also imperative that DEC and the Siting Board avail a rebroadcast of the hearings available virtually for a period of two weeks immediately following the hearing, so that residents unable to view the hearing during

normal business hours may do so when they are home.

"In the past 22 years, literally thousands of residents have attended countless hearings to make their opposition to a CWM dump known. DEC has acknowledged 'intense public interest' in the CWM proposal and should provide the public with more appropriate access," Agnello said.

For more information, Agnello can be contacted at 716-946-3937.

IN THE NEWS

St. Peter's Lutheran sets Chiavetta's BBQ

St. Peter's Lutheran School in Sanborn/Wheatfield will hold a drive-thru Chiavetta's chicken barbecue from 4-6 p.m. Thursday, April 7, at the school, 6168 Walmore Road.

Dinners are priced at \$14 and include one-half chicken, baked potato, corn, roll and dessert. Proceeds benefit St. Peter's School.

Youngstown Lions Easter egg candy event

The Youngstown Lions Club will hold its annual Easter egg candy distribution event on Saturday, April 16, at Fort Niagara State Park in Youngstown. Open to children between the ages of 1 and 10 years old, the event will begin at 11 a.m. in the parking lot area adjacent to the swimming pool complex. It will conclude at noon, or when all candy bags are distributed to visitors.

Lions Club President Terry Cummings said that, due to continuing coronavirus pandemic, the Easter Egg event would be held in the same fashion as 2021.

"Keeping with COVID-19 concerns, drivers and passengers will be required to stay in their vehicles," he said. "The Youngstown Fire Co., the New York State Parks Police, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office and the Youngstown Police will assist with traffic control. The Easter Bunny and Lion, along with members of the Youngstown Lions Club, will distribute bags of candy to the children."

For more information, contact

event chair Debbie Fleck at 716-799-5024.

Lions scholarship

The Youngstown Lions Club reports student applications for its annual Neil Riordan Memorial Scholarship are currently available in the Lewiston-Porter High School counseling center.

Up to three award recipients will be chosen for the scholarship, with awards of \$1,500 per student.

Applicants must be a graduating high school senior living in the Lewiston-Porter School District. Parochial and home-schooled students are included.

Guidelines specify the student applicant must be enrolled full-time in a college, university or trade school, with a September start date of the scholarship year. Students who are pursuing careers proving a service to the community, such as nursing, education or the skilled trades, are encouraged to apply.

All applications must be returned to the Lewiston-Porter High School counseling center by Friday, May 13. For more information, visit www.lew-port.com and link to the high school counseling center.

WBA 2022 scholarship

The Wheatfield Business Association announced student applications for its WBA 2022 scholarship program are now available. The award is open to all graduating seniors who are a resident of the Town of Wheatfield and accepted into an accredited college, university or trade school

program. A dollar amount for the award has yet to be finalized.

Students are asked to write an essay of at least 300 words and not greater than 550 words, with a description of the applicant; their views on building a better business atmosphere; any employment history and plans for the future; and a recommendation from a school, community or business leader.

All applications and materials will need to be completed and returned to: Danny Maerten, chair, WBA scholarship committee, 2346 Niagara Road, Niagara Falls, NY 14304. Applications must be received by Saturday, May 7. Scholarship winners will be notified by Monday, May 9, and must be able to attend the WBA scholarship dinner on Monday, May 16.

For more information, contact Maerten at 716-228-3162 or danielmaerten1954@gmail.com.

Niagara Falls Memorial announces 2022 board appointments

The Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center board of directors confirmed its 2022 slate of officers, and reelected three incumbent members to the board at its annual meeting on Monday.

Reappointed as officers were Chairman James C. Roscetti, an attorney with the Niagara Falls law firm Roscetti & DeCastro P.C.; Vice Chairperson Cynthia A. Bianco; Treasurer Charles G. Rader, Ph.D.; and Secretary Margaret M. Toohey.

Reelected to three-year terms were Robert L. Bradley, Ronald R. Campbell and Don J. King.

Continuing on the board will be

Tina Abrams, Seneca Nation of Indians councilor; Rajinder Bajwa, M.D., chief of infectious disease at Memorial; Matthew Feldman, attorney with Feldman Kiefer LLP; Gerald Gorman, M.D., chief of emergency medicine and NFMCC medical staff president; John "Jack" L. Greco, executive director of TECHSTARS; Marion B. Lavigne, Ph.D., president and

CEO of Launch New York Inc.; Judith A. Nolan Powell; Mark D. Perry, M.D., chief of diagnostic imaging at NFMCC; the Rev. Craig D. Pridgen, senior pastor of True Bethel Church, Niagara Falls; and NFMCC President and CEO Joseph A. Ruffolo. Serving ex-officio is NFMCC Vice President and Chief Medical Officer Vijay Bojedla, M.D.

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