

Higgins announces \$1.22 million-plus in federal funding for local organizations to help homeless youth

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Dale Zuchlewski, executive director of the Homeless Alliance of WNY (HAWNY) explained the application process began three years ago and the organizations were turned down twice previously. He added that Erie and Niagara counties are only one of 22 urban communities to receive the grant.

In addition to the application process itself, a collection of local partners, including a youth action board, spent months developing a "Coordinated Community Plan for Ending Youth Homelessness." Per the plan, "approximately 750 unaccompanied and parenting youth in the region experience homelessness annually and another 1,600 are at risk of becoming homeless."

\$370,182 of the funds will go to Pinnacle Community Services to support its Family Ser-

Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino addresses the media as Congressman Brian Higgins and Homeless Alliance of WNY Executive Director Dale Zuchlewski listen.

gagement Team, which will serve youths ages 12-24 across Niagara County. The program will focus on providing family mediation and wrap-around case management for youth and their families to help youth quickly resolve their homelessness or divert them from experiencing homelessness.

"We really want to stress the importance of the collaboration between HAWNY and all of the organizations within our community as we were competing for this great grant," said Pinnacle Community Services President and CEO Laura Pennington Gawel. "We really needed to work together over the three-year time period to determine what was the need for youth in our community and figure out the best ways to do that. ...

"Because of that, and all of the work that went toward bringing this money, we can now offer services for Pinnacle 3D, which stands for 'dare, dream, drive.' ... We are supporting youth across the county and that's really important because we have always found that, throughout the county, there were gaps in service in some of our rural areas; in



some of our central city areas." Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier will receive \$850,468 to administer joint transitional-rapid rehousing services to youth ages 18-24 across the county. The project will provide housing support through a transitional housing site at 1622 East Falls St. in

Niagara Falls. Youths will then proceed to a rapid rehousing program to help them obtain their own apartment in the community.

Other support will include intense case management, life skills development and linkages to counseling, mental health and substance abuse treatment,

education, workforce training and employment.

Restaino applauded the organizations for their efforts and noted their continued collaborative measures would be vital to addressing the issue of youth homelessness in the area.

"If there is any benefits ... to this situation that we all find ourselves in, it's the fact that so many of the service organizations have learned that we lean on one another; that it's important before us to collaborate and work closely with one another to be able to accomplish the task that's ahead of all of us," Restaino said. "This is an excellent signature of that and the opportunity for these two fine institutions ... that will confidently and capably take the tasks that's presented to them use these funds wisely to help attack what is not just a problem here in Niagara County, (but a) problem all across the country.

"As we face the difficulties that this pandemic has brought about - the loneliness and the abandonments - all of those things that lead to this type of homelessness for youth and young adults - those are the things that these type of agencies really can attack and to bring their efforts to bear to help remediate this."

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IN THE NEWS

Early voting continues in Niagara County

Voters already have been out in large numbers taking advantage of early voting opportunities in Niagara County.

The region has two certified early voting poll sites for the Nov. 3 general election:

- St. John De LaSalle Center, 8469 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (Niagara County Fair-

grounds), 4487 Lake Ave., Lockport

Each site is accessible to voters with physical disabilities.

All registered voters in Niagara County can vote early on the following days and times:

- ✓ Friday, Oct. 30, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- ✓ Saturday, Oct. 31, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- ✓ Sunday, Nov. 1, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Niagara County Board of Elections will be open expanded

hours for absentee balloting, from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Oct. 31, at 111 Main St., Suite 100, Lockport.

For more information, visit <https://elections.niagara.ny.us/> or call 438-4040 or 438-4041.

Winter parking restrictions in NT

City of North Tonawanda Mayor Arthur G. Pappas reminds the residents of North Tonawanda that the off-street parking restrictions begin Sunday, Nov. 1. There is no parking permitted on any city street between the hours of 3 and 6 a.m. until April 1.

Celebrate Wilson Thanksgiving basket raffle

Celebrate Wilson is hosting a Thanksgiving basket raffle with two bountiful tubs to be raffled. A drawing will be held at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 15, at The Cookie Cottage, 257 Young St., Wilson.

One basket offers a Thanksgiving dinner package that includes a fresh local raised turkey (approximately 15 pounds). The second features Thanksgiving décor items. Both baskets are on display in the window at the Cookie Cottage.

Tickets can be purchased for \$2 apiece at The Cookie Cottage, Fat Papa's Diner (291 Young St.) or from members of Celebrate Wilson now through Nov. 14.

For more information, contact Celebrate Wilson President Janet M. Hoffman, at 751-0165.

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