



MERCY CARE FOR THE ADIRONDACKS

A Mission Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy

Enhancing the Fullness of Life of Elders Living in their Community

Newsletter • Spring 2024

The *Circle of Mercy* includes not only the elders we assist but also our kind and generous volunteers who help their elder neighbors age in place more successfully.

ERRANDS OF MERCY – LOVE IN ACTION

Mercy Care’s vision is for people everywhere to nurture, respect, and foster caring relationships with their elder neighbors to build more inclusive and thriving communities. Mercy Care assists older adults in the Adirondacks to age in place more successfully, be less lonely, and be more connected to their communities. Mercy Care’s impact is best illustrated by our Elder Friends and their Volunteers:



From an Elder: “My Friendship Volunteers take me for appointments and other needs. They also visit and keep in touch. Couldn’t get along without them. Mercy Care is a blessing for our area.”

From a Volunteer: “Thank you for the beautiful recognition of our service to our sweet elder population. We enjoy and appreciate this population so much and thank God and Mercy Care for this opportunity to assist wherever we can.”

On September 7, 2023, Mercy Care held its Friendship Picnic at Guggenheim Lodge on Lower Saranac Lake. Katherine Rhodes, Elder Care Manager, announced Mercy Care’s Volunteer Recognition Awards presented by Melissa Eisinger, Mercy Care’s Board President.

MERCY CARE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Volunteer of the Year receives the Catherine McAuley Volunteer of the Year Award. Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831. She reached out with courage and love to people in need in her time, as Mercy Care reaches out with courage and love in our time. The Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to **Paul Guerrette**.

Mercy Care remains deeply grateful to all our Volunteers, with some contributing over 100 hours over the past year to enhance the lives of their Elder Friends and caregivers. To **Kathy Daggett, Darlene Donnelly, Alanna Fox, Margie Gallagher, Paul Guerrette, Martha Holmes, Cathy Johnston, Tracy Klossner, Colette Lettero, and Kathy Strack**, we say a special thank you for your commitment and dedication.



Melissa Eisinger, Mercy Care Board President
Presents Volunteer of the Year Award to Paul Guerrette

Several Volunteers have been a dedicated part of Mercy Care for many years. Melissa Eisinger, Board President, thanked these Volunteers for their kindness and friendship to their Elder Friends.

Carolyn Comegys, Heidi Holderied, Kathy Daggett, Diane Bryjak, and Barb Dempsey received five-year service pins.

Jill Zagrobelny received a ten-year service pin.

Pat Loud, Frank Lescinsky, Janice Connors, Greg Dennin, and Pearl McCahill received fifteen-year service pins.

Several “above and beyond” awards were presented to: **Sheila Venezia** - Appreciation Award, **Tom Connors** - Novice Volunteer of the Year, **Cindy and Dan Santerre** - Caring Heart Award, and **Leo Demong** - World of Difference Award.

GIFTS OF MERCY ARE IN ABUNDANCE

Over the past year, Mercy Care recruited and trained new Friendship Volunteers, where they are expressing their gifts of generosity, compassion, and kindness to their Elder Neighbors.



New Friendship Volunteers trained in Lake Placid in May 2023

L -R: David Griffiths, Trevor Fravor, Cynthia Baerman, Ann Hough, Keith Freeman, Susan Lindteigen



New Friendship Volunteers trained in Saranac Lake in October 2023

L -R: Debbie Thompson McLean, Scott Baerman, Lynne Hunter

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING MAY 15, 2024 IN LAKE PLACID PLEASE JOIN US!

Mercy Care invites people of all faiths or no faith to become Mercy Care Friendship Volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer, please contact our Program Director, Lexi Bevilacqua at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or by calling her at 518-523-5446.



New Friendship Volunteers trained in Tupper Lake in January 2024

L -R: Eileen Mowrey, McKenzie Marcellus, Sarah Wardner, Susan Steen

MERCY CARE ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL FORUM AT PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE JUNE 18, 2024

Keynote Presenters Creating More Livable Communities for People of All Ages: Climate Impact, Resilience & Restoration



**Keynote Presenter,
Danielle Arigoni
Author,
Climate Resilience
For An Aging
Nation**

**Topic: Why Older
Adults Should Be
the Lens through
Which We Plan for
Climate Change.**

Danielle Arigoni is the author of *Climate Resilience for an Aging Nation*. Danielle Arigoni is an urban planner and community resilience expert. She currently serves as Managing Director for Policy and Solutions at National Housing Trust, where she provides strategic direction for the organization's sustainability and resilience policy efforts, and oversight and guidance for NHT's state and local advisory services. She is also author of *Climate Resilience for an Aging Nation* which explores the impacts of climate change on a rapidly growing demographic – people over 65 – and the need for community-scale solutions to reduce risk for all.



**Keynote Presenter,
Dr. Leo Bachinger
Program Manager,
NYSDEC Office of
Climate Change**

**Topic: Climate
Impacts on
Vulnerable
Communities**

Dr. Leo Bachinger is the Program Manager at NYSDEC Office of Climate Change. Dr. Bachinger also co-leads the State's extreme heat adaptation planning initiatives. Before joining DEC, he advised governments and local communities in Europe and the US on advancing equitable and community-led policy solutions to climate change.



**Greg Olsen
Acting Director,
New York State
Office for the Aging
Panel of Experts,
Moderator and
Facilitator**

Greg Olsen is the Acting Director of New York State Office for the Aging. Working with public and private partners at the state and local level, Greg is leading the effort to combat ageism, generalizations, and stereotypes about what aging is and demonstrating value in addressing social determinants of health and their role in helping older adults maintain their independence with dignity. Greg speaks regularly, across the nation, about how New York frames aging, and the way New York serves older New Yorkers.

Panel of Experts:

Curt Stager, Professor of Natural Sciences at Paul Smith's College.

Becky Preve, Executive Director of the Association on Aging NY.

John Bernardi, President & CEO of United Way of the Adirondack Region.

Leslee Mounger, Funds and Program Officer at Adirondack Foundation.

To register for the Forum, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Program Director at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call her at 518-523-5446.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

For the period July 1, 2023 – present, 84 Mercy Care Volunteers provided friendship and assistance to 129 Elders in our Tri-Lakes communities where they donated 2,644 hours of service, drove 16,250 miles, and completed 1,561 requests for assistance.

The errands of mercy provided by our Volunteers are best illustrated in the words of Mercy Care's Elder Friends, their families, and their Volunteers:

From a Mercy Care Elder Friend: "My Friendship Volunteer has helped me with transportation to medical appointments. I do not drive and am very grateful to Mercy Care for this help. Thank you."



MERCY CARE FACILITATES AND HOSTS THE CAREGIVING WORKING GROUP OF THE NORTH COUNTRY

Mercy Care's guest presenters at its fall 2023 Caregiving Working Group meeting included Meg Everett from Leading Age New York, who discussed what's ahead in Long Term Care and Aging Services, and Jeremy Baumann from St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment & Recovery Centers, who presented on the topic of Volunteerism and How it Helps Promote Healing and Value.

In addition to the guest presenters, Donna Beal, Mercy Care Executive Director, engaged the group in discussion around a collaborative initiative proposal – an awareness campaign, which resulted in the final creation of *Reframing Aging in Rural Adirondack and North Country Communities*.

Meg Everett, Policy Analyst, Home and Community Based Services, LeadingAge New York



SPIRITUALITY RETREAT – JUNE 2024 CARING FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN TIMES OF CRISES

Mercy Care will host a one-day retreat for Parish Nurses, our Age-friendly Communities Mission Extension partners, Friendship Volunteers, clergy, and those who care for Elders, on the topic of Caring for the Human Spirit in Times of Crises. We are blessed to have Jane Stratton, MS, RN, NPD-BC Faith Community Nurse Consultant, facilitate the Retreat.

To register for the Retreat, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Program Director at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call her at 518-523-5446.



Reflection time at Parish Nurse Retreat held at Guggenheim Center in Saranac Lake

REFRAMING AGING IN RURAL ADIRONDACK AND NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITIES

The Age-friendly Communities Network Awareness Campaign was developed by the Caregiving Working Group of the North Country facilitated by Mercy Care for the Adirondacks.

The purpose of the campaign is to be a voice for Adirondack and North Country Elders to raise awareness about their extraordinary contributions and unique caregiving needs to empower older adults to age in place more successfully in North Country communities.

Our goal is to enhance deeper understanding of the value older adults contribute to our rural Adirondack and North Country communities, while at the same time, advocating for programs and services to empower them to age in place more successfully.

We want to empower North Country communities to seize the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Master Plan for Aging in New York State being developed by New York State Department of Health and New York State Office for the Aging.

Email to submit comments to Master Plan for Aging: MPA@health.ny.gov

Master Plan for Aging website: www.ny.gov/mpa

If you would like more information about the Reframing Aging Campaign, contact Donna Beal, Executive Director at dbeal@adkmercy.org

Reframing Aging in Rural Adirondack and North Country Communities

Age-friendly Communities Network Awareness Campaign
Developed by the Caregiving Working Group of the North Country

Facilitated by Mercy Care for the Adirondacks
2023 - 2025



Age-friendly Communities Awareness Campaign Purpose

To be a voice for Adirondack and North Country Elders to raise awareness about their extraordinary contributions and unique caregiving needs to empower Older Adults to age in place more successfully in North Country Communities.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES MISSION EXTENSION INITIATIVE

Mercy Care has received significant grant support from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to extend the successful model of its Age-friendly Communities Initiative in the Tri-Lakes region to other communities in the North Country. Mercy Care has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Community Health Center of the North Country, a Federally Qualified Health Center in St. Lawrence County; with Elizabethtown Community Hospital, a critical access hospital, and its health centers in southern Essex County; St. Alexander's Church in Clinton County; with the Greater Massena Ministerial Association in St. Lawrence County; and most recently with St. Mary's Church in Ticonderoga. Mercy Care provides technical assistance, training, and tools to help each of our Mission Extension project partners establish and operate their own Age-friendly Community Initiatives.



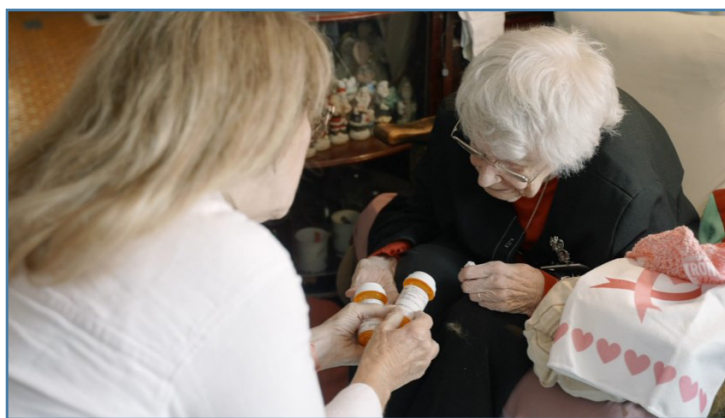
Father Mark Reilly and the members of the Greater Massena Ministerial Association introducing the framework of the Fourth Coast Companion Program in the Greater Massena area.

PARISH NURSE PROGRAM

Mercy Care has trained more than 50 Parish Nurses throughout the North Country. Lexi Bevilacqua, Program Director, directs Mercy Care's Parish Nurse Program in coordination with Parish Nurse Educator Consultant, Jane Stratton, MS, RN, NPD-BC. Parish Nurses are licensed registered nurses who facilitate holistic health of body, mind, and spirit. They promote health and spiritual healing. They serve as health educators, advocates, health counselors, facilitators, and spiritual caregivers. Parish Nurses do not perform direct or hands-on care, and they do not duplicate other nursing or medical services in the community.

From a Parish Nurse: "Parish Nursing frees me to be the nurse I always envisioned – it allows me to use my years of experience and the gift of God's grace to support others. It is...personal care, holistic care, community care, impactful care – it is Mercy Care!"

If you are interested in the Mercy Care Parish Nurse Training program, please contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Program Director at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call her at 518-523-5446.



MERCY MINUTE & SPIRIT OF MERCY

Lexi Bevilacqua, Program Director, is leading Mercy Care's Mission Integration Program to ensure the charism (gifts of mercy) of the Sisters of Mercy is sustained in perpetuity. Lexi leads our team weekly in "Mercy Minute," a prayer or reflection leading to team discussion. Mercy Minute is sent to Volunteers and posted to Mercy Care's Facebook Page. Each Mercy Care Board meeting begins with the agenda item, "Spirit of Mercy."

Forgive

Forgive someone. Today forgive.
Turn from bitter to positive.
End frustration, anger, pain;
Wash the anguish from your brain.

No need to reconcile or tell;
Just feel better and get well.
A brand new, peaceful life to live,
That's your gift, when you forgive.

By Joanna Fuchs
Poemsource.com

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES EDUCATION NETWORK



As part of its Age-friendly Communities Initiative, Mercy Care has launched its newly created Age-friendly Education Network in the Adirondacks. We provide in-service and education programs to Volunteers and host workshops to inspire Creativity in Aging for Volunteers to help the Elders they assist have happier and fuller lives. We invite and include our Mission Extension collaborating partners and their Volunteers and Elder Friends in the network to share knowledge, experience, and mercy.

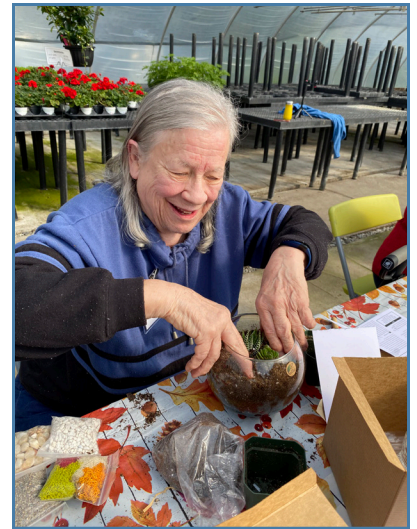
Writing- Creativity in Aging Workshop

From an Elder Friend: "I had a wonderful experience – meeting new people – sharing a meal – playing games – turning strangers into friends! This event got me out of my home after being isolated for 6 months!"

In September 2023, Tyler Barton from Adirondack Center for Writing led a group of Mercy Care Volunteers and their Elder Friends through an exercise of creatively composing their life events.

In September 2023, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks hosted a Build and Learn Terrarium Workshop at SL Hot House & Garden Center. Mercy Care Volunteers and Elder Friends created and learned how to care for terrariums under the guidance of knowledgeable Hot House staff.

In December 2023, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks hosted their Friendship Volunteers and Elder Friends for a Holiday Craft Event at Raquette River Brewing in Tupper Lake. Guests were able to create multiple holiday ornaments under Friendship Volunteer Debbie Thompson McLean, who generously provided her expert guidance and direction, while socializing and enjoying treats from Spruce and Hemlock in Tupper Lake.



Terrarium Building – Creativity in Aging Workshop



Holiday – Creativity in Aging Workshop

In March 2024, Scott Baerman, Mercy Care Volunteer, led a group of Friendship Volunteers and their Elder Friends in a workshop at High Peaks Church in Saranac Lake to assist with questions and existing frustrations with personal devices, as well as learn new tips, tricks, and skills. Jerry Manor, from SeaComm, also presented common technology scams to be aware of and avoid.

Technology Assistance – Creativity in Aging Workshop



MERCY CARE BOARD LEADERSHIP

Mercy Care is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and governed by a local Board of Directors which includes: Melissa Eisinger, President; Art Devlin, Vice President; Ann Cantwell Telfer; Denis Chagnon, MD; Stefanie Holderied; Cathy Johnston; Sr. Eileen McDonnell, RSM; Paul O'Leary; Kathryn Reiss; Shawn Stuart; Kathleen Trainor; and Rev. John Yonkovicg.



DEEPEST GRATITUDE - RECENT GRANTS RECEIVED

Mercy Care is most grateful to the following foundations and corporations, which have recently awarded generous grants of \$1,000 or more to help support Mercy Care's work to enhance the fullness of life of Elders in our community.

To make a donation on-line, visit www.adkmercy.org and click on Donate.

Adirondack Bank
Adirondack Foundation – *Aseel Legacy Fund*
Adirondack Foundation – *Frances Douglass Silleck UMCF*
Adirondack Foundation – *Joan Grabe Family Fund*
Adirondack Foundation – *Kathleen and Robert Trainor Designated Action Fund*
Adirondack Foundation – *Kathleen and Robert Trainor Family Fund*
Adirondack Foundation – *Caroline and Serge Lussi Designated Action Fund*
Adirondack Foundation – *Meredith M. Prime Fund 4*
Chapel Hill Foundation
Charles R. Wood Foundation

Chur Family Foundation
Cloudsplitter Foundation
Frances L. Carpenter Foundation
Infant Jesus of Prague
J.M. McDonald Foundation Inc.
Jacob L. Reiss Foundation
John D. Picotte Family Foundation
Joseph C. Nugent Family Charitable Trust
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
Sisters of Mercy Fund for Ministry Grant Program
The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
The McCutchen Foundation
The Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation

THE CIRCLE OF MERCY



*“The Circle of Mercy
is timeless—
it holds us in God’s
loving care.”*

The Circle of Mercy honors friends who have named Mercy Care for the Adirondacks in their estate plans. Gifts may include bequests, trusts, life insurance policies, annuities, real estate, and pension plans.

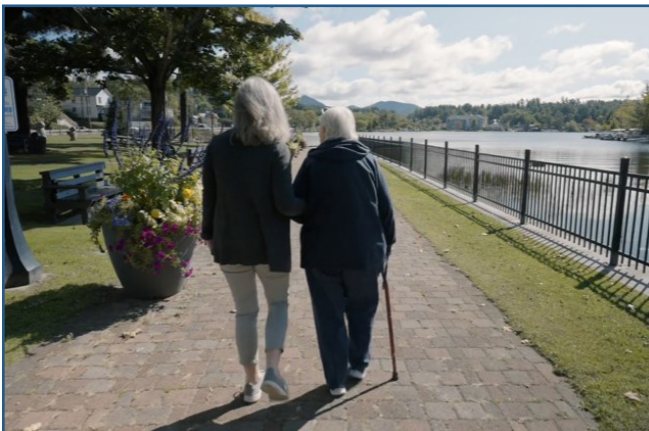
Mercy Care expresses its deep gratitude to the following individuals who have made a commitment to the future through their statement of generous intent to include Mercy Care for the Adirondacks in their wills or estate plans:

David Aldrich & Chandler Ralph
Anonymous
Jack and Pauline Crahan
James and Christel B. Crane
Eileen Crary Estate
Melissa and Dominic Eisinger
Cathy and Wayne Johnston
Judith Meagher
Albert Pozzi
Paul & Rosemary Reiss
Ellen Vopicka

We remember those whose legacy gifts have already helped to strengthen Mercy Care’s ability to carry out our mission of love in practical ways.

Robert Timmons - 2016

Lorraine Bryant - 2018



**If you wish to receive more information
about the Circle of Mercy, please contact
Donna Beal, Executive Director,
at 518-523-5581 or by email at
dbeal@adkmercy.org**