



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 2025

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:

“I first wanted to personally thank you for your understanding, compassion, and help. I believe God brings certain people to light who have a special heart and can sincerely be there to help and guide others who are in need. I believe you are one of those people.”

From a Volunteer: “Thank you for the work you do to bring generations together and combat isolation throughout the year. Let’s keep growing the seeds of genuine connections and friendships in our rural community in 2025.”

On September 5, 2024, Mercy Care held its Friendship Picnic at Guggenheim Lodge on Lower Saranac Lake. Katherine Rhodes, Director of Elder Care and Volunteer Services, 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. Sue Lackmann exemplifies what Catherine McAuley taught us about mercy and compassion as she serves elders in our community.

Mercy Care remains deeply grateful to all our Volunteers for the gifts of companionship and friendship given to the Elders they serve.

Contributing over 100 hours for the past year to enhance the lives of their Elder Friends and caregivers, we say a special thank you to Denis Chagnon, Tom Connors, George



Katherine Rhodes, Mercy Care Director of Elder Care and Volunteer Services Presents Volunteer of the Year Award to Sue Lackmann

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DeChant, Stacey Dodd, Alanna Fox, Paul Guerrette, Martha Holmes, Cathy Johnston, Sue Lackmann, Colette Lettero, Susan Lindteigen, Penny McGill, Debbie McLean, Dan Santerre, and Susan Steen.

For driving over 1000 miles the past year carrying out “errands of mercy”, we say a special thank you to Denis Chagnon, Tom Connors, George DeChant, Leo Demong, Stacey Dodd, Alanna Fox, Paul Guerrette, Colette Lettero, Susan Lindteigen, Debbie McLean, Susan Steen, and Sheila Venezia.

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.

Margie Gallagher received a five-year service pin.

David Aldrich, Brita Chagnon, Paul Guerrette, and Colette Lettero received ten-year service pins.

Margo Cooper received a 15-year service pin.

Several “above and beyond” awards were presented to: **Jonathan Kaplan - Appreciation Award, Debbie McLean - Novice Volunteer of the Year, Stacey Dodd - Caring Heart Award, and Susan Lindteigen - World of Difference Award.**

GIFTS OF MERCY ARE IN ABUNDANCE

Over the past year, Mercy Care recruited and trained 24 new Friendship Volunteers. We are most grateful for their generous gifts of time, compassion, and kindness to their Elder Neighbors.



**New Friendship
Volunteers
trained
in Lake Placid
in May 2024**

(Standing L -R) Annabelle Favet, Lorraine Becker, Diane Armstrong-Kane, Peggy Silverstein, Valerie Ireland, Keith Murphy, Marge Murphy
(Seated L - R), Peter Roland, Cindy Gallagher, Debra Story, Maxine O'Reilly, Paul Collins



**New Friendship
Volunteers
trained in
Saranac Lake in
October 2024**

(L -R) Mel Blazer, Lori Hoffman, Jeff McLean, Carolyn Walrath, Tamara Venne, Chuck Spotts (missing from photo: Barbara Hathaway)



**New Friendship
Volunteers
trained in
Tupper Lake
in January 2025**

(L -R:) Bonnie Kausner, Ginette Abbanat, Chuck Bruha, Kathy Regan, Jhen Kramer

From a Mercy Care Volunteer: “I just wanted to say a huge thank you for those lovely gatherings, crafts, and workshops you provide. It has made such a difference in my life, increased my joy and connectedness to a great community of people.

I'm very honored to be a part of you.

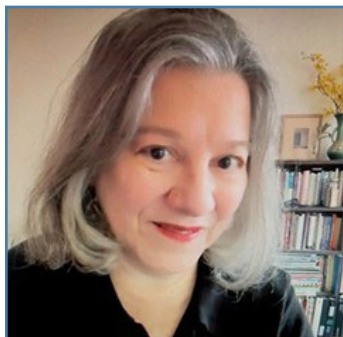
Thank you so much!”

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING MAY 15, 2025 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 Director of Programs and Mission Integration, Lexi Bevilacqua at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or by calling her at 518-523-5446.**

MERCY CARE ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL FORUM AT PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE JUNE 18, 2025

Age-friendly—Growing Up, Growing Older, and Living Well



**Keynote Presenter,
Jeanette Leardi
Author
AGING SIDEWAYS:
Changing Our
Perspectives on
Getting Older
Topic: AGING
SIDEWAYS: Let's
Change How We
Get Older!**

Jeanette Leardi is the author of AGING SIDEWAYS: Changing Our Perspectives on Getting Older. Jeanette Leardi is a social gerontologist, community educator, writer, public speaker, and aging wellness leader who has a passion for empowering older adults and helping them identify and share their wisdom with others. Her decade of experience as a caregiver to her parents inspired her encore career goals of changing perceptions about the aging process and promoting awareness of elders' inherent dignity, wisdom, and unique value as mentors and catalysts for social change. Leardi's efforts include giving engaging in-person and virtual presentations, workshops, and classes to people of all ages; writing articles for Next Avenue, 3rd Act Magazine, and other publications; and appearing on national broadcasts. Her editorial experiences include positions at Newsweek, Life, People, Condé Nast Traveler, and Sesame Street magazines, and The Charlotte Observer. She has an M.A. with honors in English from Rutgers University and a gerontology graduate certificate from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.



**Keynote Presenter,
Greg Olsen,
Director, New York
State Office
for the Aging
Topic: Value of
Older Adults in the
North Country**

Greg Olsen is 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.



**Keynote Presenter,
Julia Hotz
Author
The Connection
Cure
Social Prescribing
- Reconnecting to
What Matters**

Julia Hotz is the author of The Connection Cure. Julia Hotz is a solutions-focused journalist based in New York. Her stories have appeared in The New York Times, WIRED, Scientific American, The Boston Globe, Time, and more. She helps other journalists report on the big new ideas changing the world at the Solutions Journalism Network. For her insights on social prescribing, she has been invited to advise health and community organizations, teach in medical schools, deliver talks at TEDx, university symposiums, and international conferences, and write editorials for publications including The Wall Street Journal, Slate, and more. She proudly serves on the board of Walk with a Doc, and as an advisor to Social Prescribing USA.

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

COMMUNITY IMPACT

For the period July 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025, 104 Mercy Care Volunteers provided friendship and assistance to 194 Elders in our Tri-Lakes communities where they donated 2,587 hours of service, drove 26,740 miles, and completed 1,333 requests for assistance.

Heidi & Barbara



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

Mercy Care's guest presenters at its fall 2024 Caregiving Working Group meeting included David McNally, Director of Government Affairs & Advocacy at AARP NY, who released and discussed the Rural Caregiving Survey Results; Lori Bellingham, Vice President for Community Impact at Adirondack Foundation, who presented the Adirondack Regional Social Safety Network 2024 Report; and Linda Beers, Director at Essex County Public Health who discussed Essex County Public Health updates.

In addition to the guest presenters, Donna Beal, Mercy Care Executive Director, engaged the group in discussion around the collaborative initiative – Reframing Aging in Rural Adirondack and North Country Communities.



Lori Bellingham, Vice President for Community Impact at Adirondack Foundation

SPIRITUALITY RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 17, 2025, LIVING WELL: CARING FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN TIMES OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

Mercy Care will host a one-day retreat for Parish Nurses, Spiritual Care Companions and Friendship Volunteers, our Age-friendly Communities Mission Extension partners, clergy, and those who care for Elders, on the topic of Living Well: Caring for the Human Spirit in Times of Growth and Change. 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, Director of Programs and Mission Integration, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call her at 518-523-5446.

Lexi Bevilacqua, Director of Programs and Mission Integration, directs Mercy Care's Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer Program, and the Parish Nurse Program, in coordination with Parish Nurse Educator Consultant, Jane Stratton.

REFRAMING AGING IN RURAL ADIRONDACK AND NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITIES



The Reframing Aging Awareness Campaign was adopted 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.

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



Reflection time at the 2024 Spirituality Retreat at Paul Smith's VIC

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 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 and Our Lady of Lourdes Churches in Ticonderoga and Schroon Lake. 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 Christopher Looby and Donna Beal introducing the framework of the Southern Adirondack Compassionate Companion Program in the Ticonderoga area.

PERMANENT LOAN IPAD PROGRAM

Mercy Care is further developing and enhancing its iPad Permanent Loan Program to help Elders connect to community, family, and friends; use telemedicine; and seek information and entertainment. Entertainment could include virtual travel to unseen places and museum visits around the world. Participating Elders receive an iPad and one-on-one, face-to-face instruction from trained Friendship Volunteers.

MERCY MINUTE & SPIRIT OF MERCY



Hope has holes in its pockets. It leaves little crumb trails so that we, when anxious, can follow it. Hope's secret: it doesn't know the destination it knows only that all roads begin with one foot in front of the other.

~Rosemary Wahtola Trommer

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

PARISH NURSE PROGRAM

Parish Nurses are Registered Nurses who volunteer their time and professional knowledge to the members of their church congregation and their local community. They advocate for whole-person care – body, mind, and spirit – with special emphasis on the spiritual. Mercy Care welcomes nurses of all faiths and serves persons of all faiths. Parish Nurses do not perform direct or hands-on care, and they do not duplicate other nursing or medical services in the community.

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

NEW MERCY CARE SPIRITUAL CARE COMPANION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM LAUNCHED



Twenty Spiritual Care Companion Volunteers participated in the March 19, 2025 inaugural program training.

A Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer receives training to accompany an elder on their spiritual journey who may be experiencing loss, grief, spiritual or physical distress, changing living circumstances, joy, or blessings. The Spiritual Care Companion serves as a caring presence and compassionate listener to issues of concern to the elder by being present in mind, heart, and soul to the elder's experience of loneliness, pain, struggle, or joy in telling their story. Mercy Care offers spiritual care in accordance with each elder's personal desires, values, and faith community, or no faith community.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES EDUCATION NETWORK

As part of its Age-friendly Communities Initiative, Mercy Care has further developed its Age-friendly Education Network Events in the Adirondacks. We provide age-friendly social care and engagement events to Volunteers and their Elder Friends to empower them to have happier and fuller lives and to build community among them. We invite and include our Mission Extension collaborating partners and their Volunteers and Elder Friends in the network to share knowledge, experience, and mercy.

From the daughter of a Mercy Care Elder Care Receiver, “Thank you for remembering Mom. She thoroughly enjoyed everyone’s company and all the special programs. Thank you for being a part of her life. Love to you all.”

Finding Community in the Garden– Creativity in Aging Workshop

In May 2024, Mercy Care Volunteers and Elder Friends planted a vegetable garden at the Lake Placid Community Garden. They tended to the garden throughout the growing season for harvest and enjoyment. Any weekly surplus was donated to the Lake Placid Food Pantry. In addition to the variety of vegetables planted, there was an abundance of sunshine, socialization, friendship, and happiness experienced by all participants.



*Terrarium Building –
Creativity in Aging Workshop*

In September 2024, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks hosted a Build and Learn Terrarium Workshop at Saranac Lake Hot House & Garden Center. Mercy Care Volunteers and Elder Friends gathered with members of the Lake Placid Garden Club for a terrarium-building workshop, with direction from the Hot House team, where they learned how to build and care for succulent terrariums.

In November 2024, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks hosted their Friendship Volunteers, Elder Friends, and members of the community for a Holiday Connection with Community Event at Raquette River Brewing in Tupper Lake. Attendees made a beautiful centerpiece to take home and enjoy through the holidays.

Our Holiday Event evaluation survey posed a question: What did you like best about participating in the Holiday Workshop? **A Mercy Care Elder Care Receiver responded: “Visiting with the other ladies. I miss interacting with other adults and it is wonderful to feel a part of something.”**

Throughout 2024, Mercy Care hosted Technology Assistance Workshops for our Volunteers, Elders, and members of the community at BOCES in Saranac Lake. These quarterly workshops are led by Mercy Care’s Director of Programs and Mission Integration, Project and Technology Manager, and a Mercy Care Volunteer, an experienced



Holiday – Creativity in Aging Workshop



technology instructor. The Workshops are designed to assist those at the very basic level to a slightly more advanced intermediate level with their phones, tablets, and iPads. The group instruction and one-on-one learning goals are to develop skills needed to use technology. Mercy Care has broadened its program to invite community members to attend its age-friendly technology workshops to help them use their electronic devices more effectively.

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; Cathy Johnston, Vice President; Denis Chagnon; Tom Connors; Stefanie Holderied; Sr. Eileen McDonnell, RSM; Kathryn Reiss; Eli Schwartzberg; Shawn Stuart; Ann Cantwell Telfer; Kathleen Trainor; and Rev. John Yonkovig.



Mercy Care Fundraising event hosted by Judy Meagher at her home on Upper Saranac Lake

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 online, visit www.adkmercy.org and click on Donate.

Adirondack Foundation – Aseel Legacy Fund

Adirondack Foundation – Generous Acts Sybil A. Pickett Fund

Adirondack Foundation – Joan Grabe Family Fund

Adirondack Foundation – Kathleen and Robert Trainor Family Fund

Adirondack Foundation – Caroline and Serge Lussi Designated Action Fund

Adirondack Foundation – Frances Douglass Silleck UMCF

Adirondack Foundation – Meredith M. Prime Fund 2

Adirondack Foundation – Kiwassa Fund

Adirondack Foundation – W. Scott and Catherine D. McGraw Family Fund

Chapel Hill Foundation

Charles R. Wood Foundation

Chur Family Foundation

Cloudsplitter Foundation

Edelweiss Foundation

Frances L. Carpenter Foundation

Infant Jesus of Prague

J.M. McDonald Foundation Inc.

Jacob L. Reiss Foundation

John D. Picotte Family Foundation

Mother Cabrini Health Foundation

NBT Bank

Price Chopper's Golub Foundation

Sisters of Mercy Fund for Ministry Grant Program

The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation

The McCutchen Foundation

Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation



*“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. Their generous intent for the future recognizes that all members of our community are our neighbors, especially those in most need of our love, friendship, and companionship.

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 Estate
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**