



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release
Monday, May 20, 2024

COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES MONROE COUNTY RECEIVES AARP DESIGNATION AS AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced AARP designated the county as an Age-Friendly Community. A top priority of the Bello administration has been to establish the county's first age-friendly livable community plan in preparation for the increasing population of older adults. The plan, "Creating a Community for a Lifetime," was developed in partnership with the Monroe County Aging Alliance (MCAA), and provides a collaborative plan for governments, non-profit organizations, funders, and residents to improve our community and make it a welcoming place to live for people of all ages.

Our older adult population is growing. For the first time in Monroe County history, 25% of county residents, or 192,000 people, are age 60 and older. This number is projected to increase to 215,000 by 2030. The suburbs are seeing much of this demographic change with 82% of county residents 65 and older living in our surrounding towns.

"Today we recognize the successful partnership that was formed to create a community where people are able to age well," **said County Executive Bello**. "One of my first actions as County Executive was to direct all Monroe County departments to integrate age-friendly practices into their programs and make decisions through an age-friendly lens."

"Our elders are the backbone of our community, whose wisdom and experience we rely on, so the AARP age-friendly community designation means that Rochester and Monroe County are becoming better places for everyone, whether they be age 6, 60, or 106," **said Mayor Malik D. Evans**. "We are working together to ensure that our elders have access to the housing, transportation, health and social networks they need to fully participate in our community."

The MCAA is a joint initiative of the Rochester Area Community Foundation and the United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes, and it includes 20 member organizations with representatives on aging, healthcare, academia, and city and county government.

In December of 2021, the MCAA researched community assets, surveyed older people and community stakeholders and developed a set of recommendations to make Monroe County a more accessible and inclusive across nine areas: respect/inclusion,

communication/information, housing, transportation, outdoor spaces/buildings, social participation, employment/volunteerism, economic security and health.

“Monroe County Aging Alliance, in partnership with diverse community stakeholders, is integrating age-friendly planning principles throughout Rochester and Monroe County, enhancing accessibility and inclusivity in our community spaces, services, and places. We are collectively building a more inclusive community for all generations,” **said Leanne Rorick, co-director, Monroe County Aging Alliance.**

“As president of Lifespan, I want to commend and congratulate the County Executive and the Mayor for their foresight in seeking an Age-Friendly designation for our community. Making our community a great place to age well is imperative,” **said Ann Marie Cook, president/ CEO of Lifespan of Greater Rochester.** “Our region is seeing an historic demographic shift. It bears repeating that right now - for the first time in our history - one in four Monroe County residents is 60 or older. We must commit to ensuring that age is never a significant barrier to lifelong interest and activities and that opportunities exist for fulfillment and engagement as people live longer. Making Rochester a great place to age well has been part of Lifespan’s mission for decades. We look forward to partnering with the county and city to ensure we meet the goal of becoming a healthier, more age-friendly, more livable community for all.”

“When we create livable communities for older adults, we make our community stronger for everyone,” **said Jaime Saunders, president & CEO of United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes.** “Focusing on access benefits everyone – just as a curb cut for the mobility of an older adult helps a mom with a stroller – increasing services that are accessible for people of all ages. We are proud to partner with Monroe County and a dedicated network of Aging Alliance partners to imagine a future where older members of our communities are empowered and included.”

“Now is the time to make Monroe County more inclusive and provide opportunities for our older neighbors, friends and family members to thrive right here at home,” **said Simeon Banister, president and CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation.** “Thanks to the Monroe County Aging Alliance and the group of aging service providers, funders, and government representatives who met informally for more than a decade to make these initiatives possible.”

“As we live longer and healthier lives, it is important that opportunities in our community are available to us at all ages. We all want to live in a community where we are included, where we can all grow up and grow old,” **said Steven Newcomb, MPA, director, Monroe County Department of Human Services, Office for the Aging.**

Monroe County has achieved several age-friendly goals, including opening the first new Senior Nutrition Program in the City of Rochester in over a decade, making accessibility and inclusivity improvements in our parks facilities, building pickle ball courts in county parks, and hosting digital literacy classes for older adults.

For a complete list of projects that have earned Monroe County the recognition as an age-friendly community, view the report produced by MCAA and published on Monroe County's website: <https://www.monroecounty.gov/aging>.

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