

NEWSLINES

OF THE DIVISION ON AGING, DISABILITIES AND VETERAN SERVICES



John P. Curley
Freeholder Liaison

SPRING 2015

Tel. 877-222-3737
732-431-7450

www.visitmonmouth.com/aging

A busy year for Human Services

By: Michael Ruane, Director, Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services

With this being our first newsletter of the year, it is a great time to take a look at the work of the Human Services Department in Monmouth County. The Department's various divisions work to address the needs of our most vulnerable citizens; more than 140,000 Monmouth County residents receive one or more services from the various divisions each year.

"The demand for these services has never been greater," said Freeholder John P. Curley, liaison to the Department. "Monmouth County's population of 630,000 residents includes people struggling to recover from the lingering economic downturn and Superstorm Sandy."

Freeholder Curley spoke about the continuing increase in the demand for the Human Services Department's programs in his remarks at the County's organization day in January.

"Social service needs continue to grow. In 2014 the average active caseload for the County's social service programs was 55,250: this was a 39 percent increase over the previous year," said Curley. "The divisions of Human Services deliver important and life sustaining services to our residents every day of the year."

Other 2014 Social Services statistics are:

- Current active Medicaid caseload: 34,410 (70% increase from 2013)
- Current active Senior Nutrition AP caseload: 19,504 (9% from 2013)
- New applications for all programs: 34,509
- Client visits to Freehold and Ocean offices: 57,379

The County's Transportation Division, that includes the SCAT program, transported between 900 to 1,200 seniors and disabled residents daily. The program also received two new buses and secured \$150,000 in grants. Two out of service busses were donated to the towns of Neptune City and Bradley Beach.

The Mental Health and Addiction Services division administered 55 contracts, totaling \$3.5 million for treatment and prevention services. The County Adjuster's office scheduled 1,517 Initial hearings and processed 5,373 gun permit applications in 2014.

The Division of Planning and Contracting successfully provided more than \$3 million to residents who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, through a Continuum of Care Application to US Housing and Urban Development for supportive housing dollars. The division received and managed nearly \$1 million in state grant funds to provide

programs for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Residents impacted by Superstorm Sandy received more than \$12 million through the Sandy Homeowner/Renter Assistance Program (SHRAP); the program has continued this

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year with an anticipated total distribution by program end of more than \$16 million.

The Office on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services frequently works with each these divisions to coordinate and deliver services where needed. Facts for 2014 included more than 6,000 calls and walk-in visits from clients seeking information and assistance about public benefits, home and community services, and financial aid for seniors and disabled residents.

The Office on Disabilities assisted 932 clients with case management, transportation and other issues. The Veteran Services Office (VSO) also received more than 6,000 calls and office visits from veterans and their families. The staff completed 133 compensation and pension awards and adjudicated with Veterans Affairs for County veterans almost \$2.1 million; 374 cases are currently in development. Overall, veterans received more than \$5.5 million in 2014 from compensation and pension claims handled by the County VSO. 2015 is expected to exceed that amount in revenue secured for County veterans.

In his remarks, Curley also thanked all of the Human Services Department staff, including Jeff Schwartz, Acting Director of Human Services and Charles S. Brown, the former director who retired in 2014. "Charlie was a tremendous asset to the County and the residents we serve. He has set a great example and paved the way to continue to provide excellent services to our residents in need."

County marks Armed Forces Day

The County Veterans Services Office will hold a Veterans Appreciation Day open house on Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 3000 Kozloski Rd. behind the Human Services building.

"This is a great opportunity for people to come and see everything that the Veterans Services Office offers," said Freeholder John P. Curley, liaison to the County's Veterans Services Office. "The County has helped over 400 veterans to date and we are hopeful that this open house will help spread the word about the dedicated staff and the many services provided by the County's Veterans Services Office. In 2014, Monmouth County veterans received over \$5.5 million as a result of the efforts of our county Veterans Services Officers. Come on out and meet them."

The open house will feature veterans' information booths, a "Missing Man" observance, military vehicle and equipment displays, light refreshments, and music by Goldenseal.

Veterans can stop by the office located at 3000 Kozloski Rd. in Freehold from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, call 732-683-8675, or visit the Veterans Services section of the County website at www.visitmonmouth.com.



Calling all Centenarians!

HAZLET, NJ - "It's never too early to plan your birthday celebration," said Freeholder John Curley. "So, if you will be 100 years of age - or more - you should make plans to be part of Monmouth County's Centenarian Celebration at noon on Monday, May 11."

Curley recently announced plans for the third annual birthday party for centenarians that the County's Office on Aging hosts together with Regency Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 3325 Highway 35 in Hazlet. The party plans include a luncheon, music, gifts and of course, a birthday cake.

"We want to invite all Monmouth County centenarians who will be 100 years old or older this year to join this celebration," Curley said.

If you know a centenarian who would like to attend this great celebration of life, please send their name, address, phone number, and a copy of their birth certificate to the Monmouth County Office on Aging at 3000 Kozloski Road, Freehold, NJ 07728. For more information, please call 732-431-7450.

Wireless Emergency Alerts

Have you ever noticed a unique sound and vibration coming from your cell phone? You may have received a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) - a nationwide emergency alert system notifying you of a pending emergency in your area.

These messages provide information about extreme weather warnings, local emergencies, AMBER Alerts™, and Presidential Alerts during a national emergency.

WEAs look like a text message and show the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, and the agency issuing the alert. If you receive a WEA, follow any directions advised by the message and seek additional information from local media or authorities.

WEAs are sent by authorized government agencies through your mobile carrier. Government partners include local and state public safety agencies, FEMA, the Federal Communications Commission, the Department of Homeland Security and the National Weather Service.

WEA messages can save lives! To learn more check out FEMA's WEA Public Service Announcements and the Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings: www.ready.gov.

Last Chance for NJ Home Repair Advocacy Program (HRAP)

There are still funds available for Monmouth County seniors (over age 60) and residents with disabilities affected by Superstorm Sandy through the NJ Home Repair Advocacy Program (HRAP).

Eligible residents must submit their application prior to May 31.

"There is still money available to residents whose primary homes were damaged by Superstorm Sandy," Freeholder John P. Curley said. "The program is designed to help our residents with disabilities and our seniors, who have additional challenges in the rebuilding process."

The services provided by this program include, but are not limited to, replacement of interior wall boards, mold remediation, restoration of heating and cooling systems, electrical repair work, roof repairs, cutting or removing trees and replacement of major home appliances.

Applicants must attest that they have not received funding from any other state or Federal agency, private insurance or charitable organization for the current items and/or services being requested on this application.

In addition, documentation must be provided regarding what programs were applied for and the amount received, or copies of denials from homeowners insurance, FEMA and flood insurance.

HRAP eligible households could receive up to \$5,000 in assistance and up to \$10,000 with a valid waiver. Some

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Jointly funded by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the
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assistance may be available for raising homes through another grant program.

Funding for this program is being distributed to all of New Jersey's 21 counties for qualifying Sandy-impacted families and individuals through a federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) to the state Department of Human Services (DHS).

For more information or to request an application, call the Monmouth County Office on Aging at 732-431-7450.

Upcoming Events!!

Monday, May 11, noon - 2 p.m. - Centenarian Birthday Party (see article), Regency Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 3325 Highway 35, Hazlet

Friday, May 15, 1:30 - 3 p.m. - Office on Aging Advisory Council, AG Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold

Saturday, May 16, Saturday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Veterans Appreciation Day (see article), Human Services Building (rear), 3000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold

Wednesday, June 17, 1:30 - 3 p.m. - Office on Aging Public Hearing, AG Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold

Friday, June 19, 1:30 - 3 p.m. - Office on Aging Advisory Council, AG Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold

Friday, Sept. 18, 1:30 - 3 p.m. - Office on Aging Advisory Council, AG Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold

Michael T. Ruane, Executive Director

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P.O. Box 1255
Freehold, New Jersey 07728

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