

Syracuse Agencies Win \$197,000 from Health Foundation for Western & Central New York for Elder Caregiver Support

Grant sponsors a 2-year Onondaga-Erie County demonstration project

SYRACUSE, NY, USA, January 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Health Foundation for Western & Central New York has awarded a \$197,000 demonstration project grant to a coalition of agencies in Onondaga and Erie Counties to devise and test innovative approaches to assist family caregivers of older adults. Project SECURE (Supporting the Experience of Caregivers to Upstate Region Elders) is spearheaded by Syracuse Jewish Family Service (SJFS) and co-led by Buffalo's Erie County Senior Services. The coalition includes Onondaga County Office for Aging and Long-Term Care along with 12 other senior care organizations from Central and Western New York.

"Our project has a single overarching goal," said SJFS Director Judith Huober: "To make it more rewarding and fulfilling to support an aging person in our lives. To achieve that, we know family caregivers need more than just a lighter burden -- they really need different kinds of support on several distinct levels."

The project is designed to test the hypothesis that the caregiving experience can be qualitatively and cost-effectively improved by aligning services along a 4-level, multi-directional hierarchy of caregiver needs that build upon and then expand beyond basic respite services.

Right from the beginning, the project identified the need to give overwhelmed caregivers a break. However, Huober explained, "It becomes an issue when both caregivers and outside helpers follow the common tendency to exclusively focus on respite. Respite is a 'necessary but insufficient' factor in transforming a negative caregiving experience into a positive and welcome phase of life."

The 4-levels of caregiver needs are similar to the hierarchy of human needs developed by psychologist Abraham Maslow. Level 1 consists of basic respite from hands-on caregiving duties, increasing an individual's and family's bandwidth to tackle other stages of experience. Level 2 is met by expert guidance through the caregiving journey, establishing a primary foundation to support social relationships between the caregiver and outside world in addition to the caregiver and their loved one. Level 3 covers the individual learning and skill-building that creates efficiency and further reduces caregiving burden, including emotional stress. Level 4 comprises creative and therapeutic activities for each the caregiver and the care recipient separately, as a pair, or in groups of caregivers. These activities can lead to better understanding and acceptance

of the caregiving role, a deeper and more affirmative caregiver- care recipient relationship along their journey, as well as helping the caregiver attach meaning and emotional/spiritual fulfillment from their experience – all of which correspond to Maslow’s “self-actualizing” stage.

Key to making the hypothesis work is an innovation in the service delivery mechanism: a new type of enhanced, better-paid, and more broadly effective elder care provider. This new, non-medical team member, the Caregiver Partner, will provide direct services in the home while establishing a deep relationship over time with the caregiver, fueled by mutual familiarity and trust. With additional training in gerontology, active listening, observation and interdisciplinary teamwork, the Caregiver Partner is the point of bi-directional connection or communication to a highly-trained Care Manager, and in turn, to a wide range of community resources. The Caregiver Partner facilitates access and helps integrate those resources into the home. The demonstration project will develop and test this new role, focusing on enhancing the Caregiver Partner’s ability to provide the ongoing physical, emotional and spiritual support that helps the Caregiver achieve the healthiest, most satisfying caregiving experience possible.

The coalition anticipates that a higher level of pay, better training, empowerment to be involved in more holistic and rewarding care interactions, and open-ended career pathways will attract health aides and certified nursing assistants, as well as Senior Companions and transitioning aging services providers to the new job.

Joanne Spoto Decker, Director of the Onondaga County Office for Aging, has expressed excitement that “both Erie and Onondaga Counties are working together to develop new models of caregiver support. The innovation might not be what new services are offered but how we deliver services that will make a difference. The organizations in Onondaga County we have assembled represent caregiving for the general elder population as well as those working with people of other cultures (InterFaith Works), hearing loss (WHOLE ME), substance abuse challenges (Prevention Network), or have experienced mistreatment (Vera House). These experts will help train the new workers in their areas of expertise and provide support for specific caregivers who need it. WVRO Public Media is partnering to help us expand our use of communication technologies when in-person services can’t be delivered.”

“When we consider the stress that family caregivers deal with—especially in these difficult times—it’s no surprise that many see a negative impact on their physical, mental or emotional health,” said Nora OBrien-Suric, PhD, President of the Health Foundation. “In addition, paid care providers play a critically important role and deserve to be valued and supported as they help ease some of the burden on family caregivers. The innovative work being developed through this project could help improve the lives of everyone - the family caregiver, direct care workers and the person receiving care.”

“A project like ours has potential on several levels – which makes it exhilarating and the kind of project the Health Foundation said they were looking for,” Huober noted. “We started out thinking we would just be innovating on the service level, but we ended up with a project that

can also impact the workforce and help change the way we deliver care. But most importantly, it is caregivers in our communities who will benefit," Huober concluded. "Our goal is to demonstrate new ways to lessen caregiver burden and help them to experience caring for their loved one as a positive, rewarding journey. That's why our coalition partners in Buffalo and here in Syracuse are working hard to implement the Health Foundations' generous grant for our communities."

###

About Syracuse Jewish Family Service

Syracuse Jewish Family Service (SJFS) is a nonprofit human service agency that is dedicated to helping individuals and families in the Jewish and general communities of Onondaga County maximize their self-determination, realize their potential and live with dignity. SJFS is dedicated to holistic, preventive, wellness-oriented integration of social and human services offered without regard to race or creed to all residents of Central New York.

We envision a community in which older adults with and without cognitive impairment, and their care partners and support networks:

- Maintain nutritional, cultural, social and spiritual well-being at the highest possible level of independence
- Can live at home safely or make safe transitions into an appropriate level of care
- Enjoy emotional well-being, quality of life, and the highest cognitive functioning
- Are free from depression and have the skills and supports to achieve their goals
- Have a sense of positive well-being and
- Are socially resilient (have the capacity to foster, engage in, and sustain social relationships and the capacity to endure and recover from stressors and social isolation).

The Health Foundation for Western & Central New York

The Health Foundation for Western & Central New York is an independent private foundation that advocates for continuous improvement in health and health care for the people and communities of western and central New York. For more information, visit www.hfwcny.org.

Website link: <https://menorahparkofcny.com/syracuse-agencies-win-197000-from-health-foundation-for-western-central-new-york/>

Molly Lane

Menorah Park of CNY

+1 3154469111

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/534022463>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

