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CONTACT: Aislyn McQueen / [Aislyn.mcqueen@erie.gov](mailto:Aislyn.mcqueen@erie.gov) / 716-858-6046

## **Erie County Celebrates Mental Health and Older Americans Month**

### *100 older adults taking a guided field trip to the Burchfield Penney Art Center through Senior Services' University Express program*

ERIE COUNTY, NY – On May 1, 2024, Erie County Department of Senior Services University Express program partnered with the Burchfield Penney Art Center to send 100 older adults on a morning adventure exploring the current collections for free. Erie County is celebrating Older Americans Month and Mental Health Awareness Month in May, and the University Express field trip exemplifies one of the instances where the Erie County promotes the mental wellness of older adults in Erie County.

This activity had a strong response and spots filled up quickly; Senior Services is already planning a second “field trip” for the fall. “We have a tremendous set of instructors who are experts in their field who volunteer to design and teach these classes. It is a wonderful experience for everyone involved.” **said Commissioner of Senior Services Angela Marinucci**, “These classes and the act of learning encourage connections within the community, support overall mental health and wellness, and combat social isolation for our county’s older adults.”

“Programs like this one that we are highlighting for Mental Health Awareness Month underscore our collective commitment to promoting mental wellness and supporting individuals of all ages in Erie County,” **said County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz**. “Through collaboration and innovative initiatives, we are creating a community where mental health is prioritized and accessible to all.”

[University Express is a free lifelong learning program](#) tailored for older adults across Erie County. Online and in-person classes at multiple locations, giving participants the opportunity to explore topics like history, law, finance, science and medicine, health and wellness, technology and more. University Express offers 172 unique class topics over a total of approximately 374 sessions for the Spring Semester. The classes serve around 1,000 individual older adults in Erie County each semester.

Other Erie County programs that support on mental health for older adults and across all ages include:

#### **EriePath**

The Erie County Department of Mental Health (ECDMH) plays a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being of individuals across Erie County through a comprehensive system of community-based programs for mental health, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, and children's care. Recognizing the importance of mental wellness across all age groups, ECDMH launched the [EriePath app](#), a groundbreaking initiative that has swiftly gained traction countywide. This innovative app serves as a vital bridge to connect residents of any age with essential mental health resources within their community. By prioritizing mental wellness and providing easy access to support services, ECDMH fosters a culture of proactive care and resilience, emphasizing that mental well-being is crucial at every stage of life.

*ECDMH and Erie County Senior Services have united with community partners under the banner of Live Well Erie, a collaborative initiative dedicated to nurturing holistic well-being throughout the county, irrespective of age or demographic. Drawing upon the collective resources and expertise of diverse community organizations, Live Well Erie endeavors to cater to the distinct needs of residents across Erie County.*

**Resources:**

[Senior Services](#)

[Erie County Mental Health](#)

[Burchfield Penney](#)