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Aislyn McQueen, *External Relations Assistant* | aislyn.mcqueen@erie.gov

Two Local Volunteers Honored at Statewide Older New Yorkers' Day Celebration for Exemplary Service

Erie County, NY – The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) honored 100 exceptional older adults from across the state during the annual Older New Yorkers' Day Celebration, held on May 27 at The Crowne Plaza Hotel–Desmond in Albany. Among the honorees were two outstanding volunteers from Erie County — John Moffat and Pat LaMonte — recognized for their extraordinary civic engagement, community leadership, and lifelong commitment to service.

Held in conjunction with Older Americans Month, this year's event embraced the 2025 theme, *"Flip the Script on Aging,"* which aims to challenge outdated stereotypes and celebrate the powerful contributions older adults make to their communities. Collectively, this year's honorees represent more than 3,000 years of volunteer service, a testament to the enduring value of civic participation at every age.

The Erie County AmeriCorps Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), coordinated by the Erie County Department of Senior Services, is one of the largest volunteer networks for individuals aged 55 and older. RSVP connects older adults with meaningful service opportunities tailored to their skills and interests — from mentoring youth and supporting veterans to assisting at food banks and senior centers. In 2024, over 425 RSVP volunteers provided 51,951 hours of service, representing more than \$1 million in economic impact to the community.

"Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our community," said **Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz**. "They embody the spirit of selflessness and commitment, and through their service, they make a tangible difference in the lives of those around them."

Honoring John Moffat: A Legacy of Service

John Moffat, a Vietnam Veteran and recipient of the National Defense Service Medal and Navy Good Conduct Medal, has devoted his life to service — both in uniform and as a dedicated community volunteer. For more than a decade, John has been a cornerstone of the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park and RSVP, contributing over 2,000 hours of volunteer time.

As the Park's Volunteer Coordinator, John has been instrumental in recruiting and mentoring volunteers of all ages, ensuring the legacy of America's veterans is preserved and honored. His leadership was key in coordinating a special welcome for AmeriCorps representatives from Washington, D.C., offering them an inspiring introduction to the Park and its mission.

"John Moffat embodies the true meaning of service," said Commissioner of Senior Services Randy Hoak. "His dedication, humility, and deep respect for history and community have left an indelible mark on all who have the privilege of working with him."

Honoring Pat LaMonte: A Voice for Inclusion

For more than 15 years, Pat LaMonte has brought compassion, commitment, and a spirit of inclusion to every volunteer role she takes on. With over 5,100 hours of service through RSVP, her impact resonates across Erie County.

Pat serves as a volunteer reader with the Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service, providing access to news and print publications for individuals who are blind or print-disabled. She also volunteers at the Orchard Park Senior Center, where she is a trusted and uplifting presence, always ready to lend a hand or share vital information with her peers.

A graduate of the Sisters of Charity School of Nursing, Pat built a successful career in healthcare while raising four children as a single mother. Now 85, she continues to serve with unwavering energy and compassion. Her legacy includes mentoring fellow volunteers — one of whom reached out years later to express gratitude for the guidance and encouragement that changed their life.

“Pat LaMonte is a living testament to the power of compassion, perseverance, and community spirit,” said **Commissioner Randy Hoak**. “We are incredibly proud to have her represent Erie County.”

“Every year, it’s an absolute privilege to recognize older New Yorkers who have made their communities a better place through their tireless dedication to serving others,” said **NYSOFA Director Greg Olsen**. “Older adults make a positive impact on every community across our state through their knowledge, economic capital, and civic engagement.”

The Erie County honorees were nominated by the Erie County Department of Senior Services, reinforcing the county’s strong commitment to building an age-friendly, inclusive community. John Moffat and Pat LaMonte stand as shining examples of how older adults continue to strengthen the fabric of society through meaningful acts of service and leadership.

About Older NYers Day:

<https://aging.ny.gov/news/honoring-100-older-adults-their-volunteer-and-civic-engagement-contributions-nysofa-celebrates>

About RSVP:

<https://www3.erie.gov/seniorservices/rsvp>

716-858-8526