

ERIE COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES UNIVERSITY EXPRESS PROGRAM CLOSES OUT FALL 2024 SEMESTER WITH FIELD TRIP TO THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

ERIE COUNTY, NY – Erie County Senior Services' University Express lifelong learning program is making it easier than ever for older adults to explore the vibrant cultural treasures of Erie County—completely free of charge! To conclude the Fall 2024 semester, University Express, in partnership with the Buffalo History Museum, hosted a free day of education and entertainment for approximately 100 older adults.

This semester, University Express expanded its programming to almost 400 scheduled classes across 26 partner sites, including senior centers and public libraries. With growing participation and enthusiasm, the program now offers evening classes at several locations, making it easier for busy older adults—particularly those still working during the day—to engage with the enriching educational opportunities on offer. Some classes now attract over 100 participants, while others are held in more intimate venues that accommodate up to 35 attendees. Additionally, the program's virtual and livestreamed classes have seen impressive growth, with attendance doubling since last semester. The program is proud to serve thousands of Erie County's older adults.

One of the standout features of the program is the free field trips for older adults—a move designed to further connect older adults with the local community and foster a deeper sense of belonging. These trips provide opportunities for older adults to visit Erie County's rich array of cultural arts institutions, from renowned art galleries to interactive museums, helping participants rediscover the joy of exploration and learning.

“We wanted to give older adults an opportunity to experience the cultural richness of Erie County, all while socializing with their peers. Social interaction, combined with cultural engagement, plays a key role in improving mental, emotional, and physical health. It also helps to reduce the feelings of loneliness and isolation that many older adults experience” said **Commissioner of Senior Services, Angela Marinucci**.

Through these field trips, participants not only discover new places but also forge lasting friendships, enhance their social connections, and stimulate their cognitive function through shared experiences. These outings have become an essential component of University Express' broader mission to improve the well-being of older adults throughout the region.

“We believe that every older adult, regardless of background or mobility, deserves the opportunity to stay engaged with their community and culture. This initiative is helping us reach that goal and we are so grateful to our partners at the Buffalo History Museum for having us and supporting our goals.” said **Commissioner of Senior Services, Angela Marinucci**.

The success of this program underscores the importance of continuing to innovate and expand opportunities for older adults to remain active, curious, and connected to their community. The program also features a book club ran by the Commissioner, a fantasy football league, and monthly trivia that connects senior centers across the County together. As the program grows, more field trips and educational classes are expected, further enriching the lives of Erie County's seniors.

For more information about upcoming field trips, classes, and events, please visit <https://www4.erie.gov/universityexpress/> or call 716-858-6897.