



UNIVERSITY EXPRESS PROVIDES 130 OLDER ADULTS WITH FREE MUSEUM DAY AT THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

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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 130 older adults at the museum's iconic location in Buffalo.

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 standouts 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.

"Our goal is to continue to provide older adults with the chance to explore the cultural vibrancy of Erie County while connecting with others in their community. Engaging socially and culturally is essential for enhancing mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It also combats feelings of loneliness and isolation, which many older adults often face," said **Commissioner Randall Hoak**.

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.

"For this program to truly thrive, it's crucial to have incredible partners who share our commitment to combating social isolation and reducing loneliness among older adults. Their support and belief in this mission are what make it possible to create lasting connections and foster a sense of belonging for those who need it most. We thank the Buffalo History Museum and all of our partners for believing in our mission and supporting us throughout the way" says ***Commissioner Hoak***.

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 fantasy football league, a March Madness league, and a 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.

The Spring 2025 semester kicks off the first week of May. Catalogs will be available online and limited at senior centers in Mid-April. Don't miss out on the fun!

For more information about upcoming field trips, classes, and events, please visit <https://www4.erie.gov/universityexpress/> or call 716-858-8526.