



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, April 4, 2020

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**MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF THE
GOOD NEIGHBORS NETWORK AS PART OF BUFFALO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Campaign will connect residents to the assistance they need through an innovative and broad social network, while still maintaining the physical distancing that is necessary to help keep people safe

Buffalo, NY - Mayor Byron W. Brown and the City of Buffalo continue to work to ensure public safety, prioritize the health and welfare of residents and visitors, and reduce circles of exposure to COVID-19 in our community. Today, Mayor Brown announced the launch of the Good Neighbors Network (GNN), a timely initiative that leverages the existing goodwill and social networks of Buffalo's neighborhoods into a way of connecting residents without violating the physical distancing that is critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Mayor Brown stated, "In difficult times, the City of Buffalo shines and we are going to overcome this crisis by demonstrating compassion, kindness and a resolve to be there for each other. Our ability to be strong for each other will help see us through this challenge and that is why the Good Neighbors Network is going to play a vital role in our response to the COVID-19 emergency."

Over the course of this weekend, individuals who have registered with the City's volunteer website will join block club leaders and members, as well as police officers and recruits, in safely placing door hangers at the homes of residents throughout Buffalo as part of the GNN initiative. All distributors will be practicing proper social distancing measures, and wearing gloves.

The door hangers have two sides, one which provides basic information on the Good Neighbors Network and another, brightly colored side, which residents can choose to place on their door handles indicating that they may need some form of assistance. After a door hanger has been delivered, residents are being asked to bring it inside and only hang it outside again, with the brightly colored side facing out, when they think they might be in need of assistance.

- If a resident wants to call 311 directly, they can still do so. Some people may not feel comfortable indicating they need help with the door hanger, while others may feel that is the best way to let their friends and neighbors know they could use a good neighbor. Both ways of contacting the City are always available and residents should do what they feel most comfortable doing
- This is for non-emergency assistance
- If there's an emergency, call 911

When a block club leader or member, volunteer or police officer see a brightly color sided door hanger they will alert the Division of Citizen Services and a case file is created for that residence.

- Staff from the Citizen Services will contact the resident and then determine their specific need for non-medical COVID-19 related service

- 311 Operators and other participating staff have been given a special resource guide that is regularly updated and contains information regarding operating food pantries, prescription delivery services, grocery delivery services, closures, and other critical information
- Once the staff person has contacted the resident indicating they need help, they will work with that resident to identify and contact the service providers they need
- If the resident's need is of a medical nature, the person will be referred to the appropriate entity to help them deal with that

The Good Neighbor Network builds on the capacity of the City's robust 311 Call & Resolution Line and significant outreach programs, like Clean Sweeps, to more pro-actively let residents know that there are ways to access help if they are in need. Again, Residents can still directly call 311 for any non-emergency related need and they should call 911 for any type of emergency. GNN participants have been given instructions on how to maintain their health and safety and practice physical distancing while they are distributing door hangers, and submitting requests for assistance through a Building Blocks App.

Once the door hanger distribution phase is over, participating GNN neighbors will continue to walk or drive down every block looking for door hanger requests throughout this crisis.

- Again, if a resident needs someone to check on them and it's not an emergency, they are asked to put a door hanger on the outside of their front door with the pink side facing out. If no one calls or visits within one day, please call 311
- No volunteer will ask residents to open their doors, or for any personal information or for any compensation or reimbursement No one will ever ask residents to open their doors, or to enter anyone's home
- The only people knocking on a resident's door will be a first responder or a neighbor who has contacted you by phone first; they will talk with residents through a closed door or window
- If anyone tries to acquire a resident's personal information or enter their home then they should call the police immediately
- If a resident sees a neighbor in need, or a door hanger(with the pink-side facing out) on any home in your community, please call 311; If you believe it's an emergency, call 911 and request a "wellness check" by Buffalo Police at that address

In closing, Mayor Brown stated, "I want to thank all of the volunteers, block club leaders and members, our City workforce including police and 311 operators, and everyone else that has worked to put the GNN program in place. By working together and being there for each other we are demonstrating how a City of Good Neighbors responds in crisis. I am so proud of the City of Buffalo. God bless us all."

Here are a few other reminders for Saturday, April 4, 2020.

- City residents and visitors can order and collect their pre-paid Easter goods at the BROADWAY MARKET CURBSIDE PICK-UP, beginning Monday, April 6th through Saturday, April 11th. Please know that slots are limited. Buyers will need to pre-pay all orders and reserve a pick-up timeslot. Note: Buyers can order from multiple vendors but will be assigned only one pick-up timeslot. For more information and a list of participating vendors, go to www.buffalony.gov
- In an effort to connect those in need with emergency resources, Mayor Brown is helping to promote a food distribution event. On Monday, April 6th, St. Mary's School for the Deaf will hold a food giveaway to help anyone in need. The event, located at 2253 Main Street, runs from 9am to noon, and is sponsored by the Food Bank of Western New York.
- Mayor Brown directed the Buffalo Landmark Illumination Team (BUFFALOLIT) to light their structures Red and White this Sunday, April 5th, in honor of health care workers and first responders on the front lines of this health emergency
- Join BuffAlert today. Text "Join BuffAlert" to 30890 to enroll

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