



Board of Commissioners

PRESS RELEASE

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Board of Commissioners Launch Phone Pal Program for Isolated Seniors

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, February 24, 2023 – The Board of Lake County Commissioners is excited to announce the launch of the Phone Pal program, which is designed to promote social connection and address senior loneliness, thereby increasing the ability to age in place and remain independent.

The Phone Pal program is a telephone reassurance program that matches volunteers with older adults that might be lonely or isolated, and looking for a pal to chat with twice a week. The program is made possible by an AmeriCorps Seniors grant obtained by the Board of Commissioners with matching funds from the Senior Services Levy. “We are thrilled to offer this program to Lake County seniors,” said Commissioner John R. Hamercheck, President of the Board of Lake County Commissioners. “The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this growing public health crisis and we hope this program will help alleviate some of the residual effects.”

Getting started with Phone Pal is easy! Individuals may self-refer, or be referred by another person or agency. When your referral is received, we will make phone contact with you in order to complete a screening. Once approved for the program, older adults are matched with a volunteer who has completed training and has had a successful background check. You may visit <https://www.lakecountyohio.gov/senior-services/> and follow the online interest form on the ‘Phone Pal Program’ tab, or call (440) 350-2020 to get started.

“Facilitating social connections amongst our senior population is critically important to a healthy community,” said Commissioner John Plecnik. “Research shows that programs like Phone Pal have significant positive impacts on loneliness, depression, and anxiety for participants who need it.”

Unique to this program, is that it uses a software system that allows approved matches to call through a special phone line, eliminating the need to exchange phone numbers or report volunteer data. “The software will enable us to measure outcomes, track calls, and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program,” said Commissioner Richard J. Regovich. “We will be able to utilize this software to ensure older adults aren’t slipping through the cracks.”

For more information on Phone Pals, please call (440) 350-2020. If you are interested in being a Phone Pal volunteer, contact the Lake County Volunteer Network at (440) 350-5360.

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