



Board of Commissioners

PRESS RELEASE

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Telephone Reassurance Programs Help Older Adults

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, November 1, 2023 – Two new programs for older adults in Lake County launched earlier this year by the Board of Lake County Commissioners and Lifeline, Inc. Both programs are designed to promote social connection, address loneliness, and enable older adults to remain independent at home.

The Phone Pal program works to match volunteers with older adults that might be lonely or isolated, and looking for a pal to chat with twice a week. The program works hard to ensure participants and volunteers are matched based on similar interests. “Our core of volunteers and the quality of matching has really made this program a success,” said Commissioner John R. Hamercheck, President of the Board of Lake County Commissioners. “Participants know their volunteer will be checking in on them regularly and if there are any concerns or unanswered calls, the volunteers are diligent about following up with staff.”

The program 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. To learn more about Phone Pal, call (440) 350-2020.

The Are You OK program is a safety assurance program for older adults who may be isolated or living alone. Participants enroll in the program to receive a daily automated monitoring call designed to provide security and ease the concerns of friends and families. If the daily call is not answered after three attempts, a safety alert is sent to Lifeline’s 211. Lifeline’s 211 team will contact emergency contacts and, if necessary, local law enforcement for a well-check visit. Older adults wanting to learn more or enroll in Are You OK can call Andrea Johnson at 440-354-2148 ext. 207.

“Research shows programs like Phone Pal and Are You OK have significant positive impacts on loneliness, depression, and anxiety and enable older adults to remain independent and living at home,” said Commissioner John Plecnik. “We are glad we can help facilitate these programs in Lake County.”

Program participants for both programs must be a Lake County resident and aged 60 or older. There is no cost to participate in either program.

“Both of these programs are great examples of the Board of Commissioners working with local agencies to meet the needs of older adults,” said Commissioner Richard J. Regovich. “We hope to continue to create partnerships and programming that keep older adults safe, independent, and living as home.”

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