



# MERCY CARE FOR THE ADIRONDACKS

A Mission Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy

Enhancing the Fullness of Life of Elders Living in their Community

Newsletter • Spring 2026

The Circle of Mercy includes not only the elders we assist but also our kind and generous volunteers who help their elder neighbors age in place more successfully.

## ERRANDS OF MERCY – LOVE IN ACTION

Mercy Care’s vision is for people everywhere to nurture, respect, and foster caring relationships with their elder neighbors to build more inclusive and thriving communities. Mercy Care assists older adults in the Adirondacks to age in place more successfully, be less lonely, and be more connected to their communities. Mercy Care’s impact is best illustrated by our Elder Friends and their Volunteers:



**From an Elder Care Receiver who attended a Mercy Care Social Engagement**

**Event: “Had the best time being here today after being shut-in for 1.5 years. I met new friends.”**

**From a Volunteer: “I love spending time with my elder friends, getting to know them, and supporting them. I love the activities organized by Mercy Care and connecting with others through them. I also feel very appreciated and supported by the Mercy Care staff.”**



On September 3, 2025, Mercy Care hosted its Friendship Picnic at the Lake Placid Club Golf House. We honored our kind and compassionate volunteers for their exceptional support of our Elder friends and announced Mercy Care’s Volunteer of the Year.

Mercy Care Friendship Picnic at the Lake Placid Golf House – Volunteers and their Elder Friends enjoyed a presentation by Seth McGowen from the Adirondack Sky Center and Observatory located in Tupper Lake.

## MERCY CARE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Volunteer of the Year receives the Catherine McAuley Volunteer of the Year Award. Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831. She reached out with courage and love to people in need in her time, as Mercy Care reaches out with courage and love in our time. Sheila Venezia exemplifies what Catherine McAuley taught us about mercy and compassion. Sheila was one of Mercy Care’s first volunteers and served her elder neighbors with friendship and kindness for seventeen years.

Mercy Care remains deeply grateful to all of our Volunteers for the gifts of companionship and friendship given to the Elders they serve.



Mercy Care Volunteer of the Year, Sheila Venezia, with Elder Friend

Contributing over 100 hours for the past year to enhance the lives of their Elder Friends and caregivers, we say a special thank you to **George DeChant, Leo Demong, Stacey Dodd, Paul Guerrette, Martha Holmes, Cathy Johnston, Colette Lettero, Debbie McLean, and Penny McGill.**

For driving over 1000 miles the past year carrying out “errands of mercy”, we say a special thank you to **Tom Connors, George DeChant, Leo Demong, Stacey Dodd, Paul Guerrette, Martha Holmes, Colette Lettero, Susan Lindteigen, Debbie McLean, Deb Story, and Sheila Venezia.**

Several Volunteers have been a dedicated part of Mercy Care for many years.

**Denis Chagnon and Margie Gallagher** received a five-year service pin.

**Nancy Duncan, Jerry Hayes, and Peggy Jones** received a ten-year service pin.

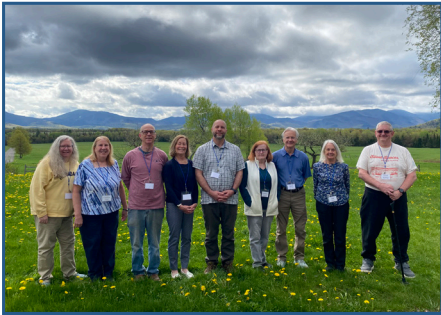
**Bernie Clarke and Mary Merrill** received a fifteen-year service pin.

Several “above and beyond” awards were presented to: **David Aldrich - Appreciation Award, Ginette Abbanat - Novice Volunteer of the Year, Penny McGill - Caring Heart Award, Bernie Clarke and Carmine Salvo - World of Difference Award.**

---

## GIFTS OF MERCY ARE IN ABUNDANCE

Over the past year, Mercy Care recruited and trained 24 new Friendship Volunteers. We are most grateful for their generous gifts of time, compassion, and kindness to their Elder Neighbors.



**New Friendship  
Volunteers trained  
in Lake Placid  
in May 2025**

(L -R) Catherine Fresh, Carolyn Weber, Darren Abbanat, Claire Skidmore, Dave White,

Pat Hofbauer, John Licari, Sue Pagano, Laird Bishop



**New Friendship  
Volunteers trained  
in Saranac Lake  
in October 2025**

(L -R) Diana Webster, Ann Marenick, Beth Barrett, Janet Reichert, Judy O'Dell, Miona Amoriell, Doug Rauhe



**New Friendship  
Volunteers trained  
in Tupper Lake  
in January 2026**

(Front L - R) Marylou Dooley, Rachel Neild

(Back L - R) James Keeley, Cate Michalik, Joanne Nemias, Chuck Damp, Kenneth Appell, Beth Hesselstine

**From a Mercy Care Volunteer: “I just wanted to say thank you for all you do - the special Tech classes, Friendship luncheons, and Christmas crafts. All the new friendships I have and continue to make with you all have been a huge blessing in my life. Thank you and God Bless you all!”**

**FRIENDSHIP  
VOLUNTEER TRAINING  
MAY 27, 2026 IN LAKE PLACID  
PLEASE JOIN US!**

Mercy Care invites people of all faiths or no faith to become Mercy Care Friendship Volunteers. **If you are interested in becoming a Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer, please contact our Director of Programs and Mission Integration, Lexi Bevilacqua at [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or by calling her at 518-523-5446.**

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

Currently, 123 available Mercy Care Volunteers provide errands of mercy to 218 enrolled Mercy Care Elder Care Receivers. Over the past year, our kind and compassionate Volunteers donated 3,728 hours of service, drove 38,512 miles, and completed 1,853 requests for assistance.

*Friendship Volunteer and Elder Friend*



## MERCY CARE ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL FORUM AT PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE JUNE 17, 2026

### My Plan, My Power - Growing Older and Living Well



**Keynote Presenter,  
Dr. Corinne Auman,  
Author  
Keenagers: Telling  
a New Story About  
Aging**

**Dr Corinne Auman is the author of *Keenagers: Telling a New Story About Aging*.** Dr. Corinne Auman is a developmental psychologist, keynote speaker, and founder of Choice Care Navigators, where she helps families and organizations navigate the complexities of aging and senior healthcare. With over a decade of experience as a professor specializing in adulthood and aging, she brings research-based insight and real-world practicality to every stage. Dr. Auman is the author of *Keenagers: Telling a New Story About Aging* and a leading voice in anti-ageism advocacy. Her engaging, thought-provoking talks challenge outdated narratives about aging and equip audiences with tools to build more inclusive, compassionate systems for people of all ages.



**Keynote Presenter,  
Greg Olsen,  
Director, New York  
State Office  
for the Aging  
Topic:  
The Evolving  
Needs of Elders**

**Greg Olsen is Director of New York State Office for the Aging.** Working with public and private partners at the state and local level, Greg is leading the effort to combat ageism, generalizations, and stereotypes about what aging is and demonstrating value in addressing social determinants of health and their role in helping older adults maintain their independence with dignity. Greg speaks regularly, across the nation, about how New York frames aging, and the way New York serves older New Yorkers.



**Keynote Presenter,  
Dr. Dawn C. Carr,  
Director  
Claude Pepper  
Center at Florida  
State University  
Topic: Resilient  
Aging: The Role of  
Volunteering**

**Dr. Dawn C. Carr is the Director of the Claude Pepper Center at Florida State University and also serves as Professor of Sociology.** Her mission as a scholar and gerontologist is to identify and leverage factors that bolster older adults' ability to remain healthy and active as long as possible. Her work over the last decade has focused on understanding the complex pathways between health and active engagement during the second half of life. She has particularly focused on evaluating the health consequences of major stressors and life transitions such as those related to later life employment, retirement, engagement in new social roles (e.g., volunteering and caregiving), social networks and social relationships, and major health events such as onset of disabilities, and critical health setbacks or diagnoses. Her recent work pays increasing attention to the role of early life experiences and exposures over the life course, and the ways in which individual psychological resources facilitate resilient outcomes in later life.

To register for the Forum, visit Mercy Care's website at [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Director of Programs and Mission Integration, at [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or call her at 518-523-5446.

## REFRAMING AGING IN RURAL ADIRONDACK AND NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITIES

### *Reframing Aging in Rural Adirondack and North Country Communities*

Age-friendly Communities Network Awareness Campaign  
Developed by the Caregiving Working Group of the North Country  
Facilitated by Mercy Care for the Adirondacks  
2023 - 2025



#### Age-friendly Communities Awareness Campaign Purpose

To be a voice for Adirondack and North Country Elders to raise awareness about their extraordinary contributions and unique caregiving needs to empower Older Adults to age in place more successfully in North Country Communities.

The Reframing Aging Awareness Campaign was adopted by the Caregiving Working Group of the North Country facilitated by Mercy Care for the Adirondacks.

The purpose of the campaign is to be a voice for Adirondack and North Country Elders to raise awareness about their extraordinary contributions and unique caregiving needs to empower older adults to age in place more successfully in North Country communities.

Our goal is to enhance deeper understanding of the value older adults contribute to our rural Adirondack and North Country communities, while at the same time, advocating for programs and services to empower them to age in place more successfully.

If you would like more information about the Reframing Aging Campaign, contact Donna Beal, Executive Director, at [dbeal@adkmercy.org](mailto:dbeal@adkmercy.org)

## MERCY CARE FACILITATES AND HOSTS THE CAREGIVING WORKING GROUP OF THE NORTH COUNTRY

Mercy Care's guest presenters at its summer 2025 Caregiving Working Group meeting included Jessica Casey, Vice President of Population Health at Hudson Headwaters Health Network, who presented an overview of Care Management Resources; Amanda Bola, Director of Quality and Community Benefits at University of Vermont Health Network Elizabethtown Community Hospital, who presented the Essex County Community Health Data – ECH Collaboration.

In addition to the guest presenters, Donna Beal, Mercy Care Executive Director, engaged the group in discussion around the collaborative initiative – “My Plan, My Power – A Guide to Plan for Growing Older and Living Well”.

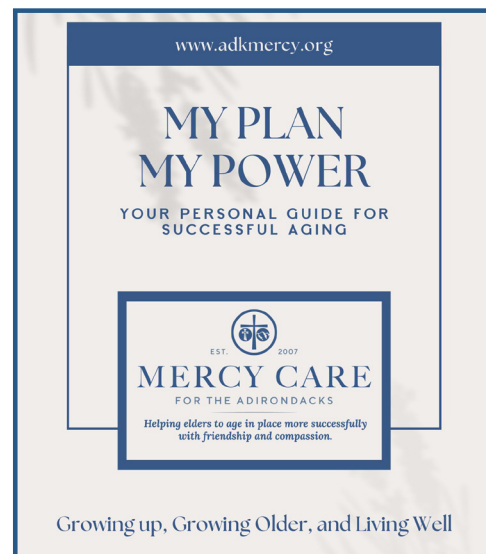


Jessica Casey, Vice President, Population Health, Hudson Headwaters Health Network

## MY PLAN, MY POWER “YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL AGING: GROWING OLDER, AND LIVING WELL”

With support from The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, and in collaboration with the Caregiving Working Group of the North Country, has developed this tool to help older adults consider their own personal plan for how they want to grow older and live well. By preparing this plan, individuals and couples are developing their own proactive approach to age in place successfully.

To get your free fillable copy to begin preparing your plan, go to [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) and on the home page, click “Your Personal Guide” to download. Click “Resource Guide” to download compiled resources to reference.



## SPIRITUALITY RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 17, 2026, GROWING OLDER AND LIVING WELL— A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Mercy Care will host a one-day retreat for Parish Nurses, Spiritual Care Companion Volunteers, Friendship Volunteers, Health Care Companion Volunteers, our Age-friendly Communities Mission Extension partners, clergy, and those who care for Elders on the topic of **Growing Older and Living Well – A Spiritual Journey**.

**To register for the Retreat, please visit Mercy Care's website at [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Director of Programs and Mission Integration, at [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or call her at 518-523-5446.**



*Reflection time at the 2025 Spirituality Retreat at Paul Smith's*

## PARISH NURSE PROGRAM

Parish Nurses are Registered Nurses who volunteer their time and professional knowledge to the members of their church congregation and their local community. They advocate for whole person care – body, mind, and spirit – with special emphasis on the spiritual. Mercy Care welcomes nurses of all faiths and serves persons of all faiths. Parish Nurses do not perform direct or hands-on care, and they do not duplicate other nursing or medical services in the community.

**If you are interested in the Spiritual Care Companion Program, or the Parish Nurse Program, please contact Lexi Bevilacqua at [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or call her at 518-523-5446.**

## MERCY CARE SPIRITUAL CARE COMPANION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer accompanies an elder on their spiritual journey who may be experiencing loss, grief, spiritual or physical distress, changing living circumstances, joy, or blessings. The Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer serves as a caring presence and compassionate listener to issues of concern to the elder by being present in mind, heart, and soul to the elder's experience of loneliness, pain, struggle, or joy in telling their story. Mercy Care offers spiritual care in accordance with each elder's personal desires, values, faith community, or spirituality.

## AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

As part of its Age-friendly Communities Initiative, Mercy Care has further developed its Age-friendly Education Network Events in the Adirondacks. We provide age friendly social care and engagement events to Volunteers and their Elder Friends to empower them to have happier and fuller lives and to build community among them. We invite and include our Mission Extension collaborating partners and their Volunteers and Elder Friends in the network to share knowledge, experience, and mercy.

***From the daughter of a Mercy Care Elder Care Receiver: "Thank you for all that you do! My mother was so blessed by your caring dedicated volunteers."***



*Disaster Preparedness In-service April 2025*

## PERMANENT LOAN IPAD PROGRAM

With healthcare, social security and other benefits moving online, many older adults risk being left behind. Mercy Care's iPad Permanent Loan Program for older adults is offered on a first-come, first-served basis to address digital exclusion. Mercy Care offers older adults in the Tri-Lakes region monthly in-person instruction sessions for their digital devices, and quarterly Technology Assistance Workshops to help them access vital services and connection to their community. The program gives older adults tools to access health care and other essential benefits they may need. For more information, please contact Mike Magurk at [mmagurk@adkmercy.org](mailto:mmagurk@adkmercy.org) or by calling him at 518-523-5582.

## AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES EDUCATION NETWORK

In June 2025, Mercy Care Volunteers and Elder Friends planted a destination garden with vegetables and flowers for cutting at the Lake Placid Community Garden. They tended to, or visited, the garden throughout the growing season for harvest and enjoyment.

*Finding Community in the Garden—  
Creativity in Aging Workshop*



In November 2025, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks hosted their Friendship Volunteers, Elder Friends, and members of the community for a Holiday Connection with Community Event at Raquette River Brewing in Tupper Lake. Attendees made a beautiful wreath to take home and enjoy through the holidays.



*Holiday – Creativity in Aging Workshop*

Our Holiday Event evaluation survey posed a question: What did you like best about participating in the Holiday Workshop?

**“A Mercy Care Elder Care Receiver responded: “Meeting new people. Getting out of my home to enjoy making my Christmas wreath. Enjoying the noise.”**

Throughout 2025, Mercy Care hosted Technology Assistance Workshops for our Volunteers, Elders, and members of the community, at BOCES in Saranac Lake. These quarterly workshops are led by Mercy Care’s Director of Programs and Mission Integration, Project and Technology Manager, and Mercy Care Volunteer technology instructors. The Workshops are designed to assist those at the very basic level to a slightly more advanced intermediate level, with their phones, tablets, and iPads. The group instruction and one-on-one learning goals are to develop skills needed to use technology.



*Technology Assistance – Creativity in Aging Workshop*

## PAUL J. REISS LOVE & MERCY AWARD

The Paul J. Reiss, Love and Mercy Award recognizes those individuals or organizations that act upon an understanding that all members of our community are our neighbors, especially those in most need of our love, friendship, and companionship.

Fr. John was honored for his love in action extending mercy to those in need, for building community where it is scarce, and respecting every person’s self-worth, undiminished in value or dignity by age or infirmity.



*Rev. John Yonkovic accepting the inaugural Paul J. Reiss Love and Mercy Award from Cathy Johnston, Board President*



## MERCY CARE BOARD LEADERSHIP

Mercy Care is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and governed by a local Board of Directors, which includes Cathy Johnston, President; Denis Chagnon, Vice President; Ann Cantwell Telfer; Tom Connors; Melissa Eisinger; Eileen Hayes; Stefanie Holderied; Jonathan Kaplan; Sr. Eileen McDonnell, RSM; Kathryn Reiss; Eli Schwartzberg; and Kathleen Trainor.

## DEEPEST GRATITUDE - RECENT GRANTS RECEIVED

Mercy Care is most grateful to the following foundations and corporations, which have recently awarded generous grants of \$1,000 or more to help support Mercy Care's work to enhance the fullness of life of Elders in our community.

*Mercy Care Fundraising event hosted by Stefanie Holderied at her home on Lake Placid.*

**To make a donation online, visit [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) and click on Donate.**



Caroline and Serge Lussi Designated Action Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Cristina F. Lussi Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Frances Douglass Silleck UMCF  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Generous Acts Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Joan Grabe Family Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Kiwassa Fund at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Meredith M. Prime Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Robert and Kathleen Trainor Family Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Sybil A. Pickett Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
Trust for Civic Life  
at Adirondack Community Foundation  
W. Scott and Catherine D. McGraw Family Fund  
at Adirondack Community Foundation

Adirondack Bank  
Chapel Hill Foundation  
Charles R. Wood Foundation  
Chur Family Foundation  
Cloudsplitter Foundation  
Edelweiss Foundation  
Frances L. Carpenter Foundation  
Friends Foundation for the Aging  
Infant Jesus of Prague  
J.M. McDonald Foundation Inc.  
Jacob L. Reiss Foundation  
John D. Picotte Family Foundation  
Loyal Order of Moose S L Lodge #457  
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation  
NBT Bank  
Price Chopper's Golub Foundation  
Rockwood Charitable Foundation  
Sisters of Mercy Fund for Ministry Grant Program  
Stewart's Shops / Dake Family  
The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation  
The McCutchen Foundation  
Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation



**“The Circle of Mercy  
is timeless—  
it holds us in God’s  
loving care.”**

The Circle of Mercy honors friends who have named Mercy Care for the Adirondacks in their estate plans. Gifts may include bequests, trusts, life insurance policies, annuities, real estate, and pension plans.

Mercy Care expresses its deep gratitude to the following individuals who have made a commitment to the future through their statement of generous intent to include Mercy Care for the Adirondacks in their wills or estate plans. Their generous intent for the future recognizes that all members of our community are our neighbors, especially those in most need of our love, friendship, and companionship.

David Aldrich & Chandler Ralph  
Anonymous  
Jack and Pauline Crahan  
James and Christel B. Crane  
Melissa and Dominic Eisinger

Cathy and Wayne Johnston  
Judith Meagher  
Albert Pozzi  
Paul & Rosemary Reiss Estate  
Ellen Vopicka

We remember those whose legacy gifts have already helped to strengthen Mercy Care’s ability to carry out our mission of love in practical ways, helping to ease isolation and loneliness among elders, and adapting our strategies to respond to changing times.

Eileen Crary - 2026  
Lorraine Bryant - 2018  
Robert Timmons - 2016

*We wish to express our deepest gratitude for Eileen Crary’s generous legacy gift. Her generosity ensures a lasting impact on our mission to help elders age in place more successfully with friendship and compassion.*



**If you wish to receive more information about the Circle of Mercy, please contact  
Donna Beal, Executive Director, at 518-523-5581  
or by email at [dbeal@adkmercy.org](mailto:dbeal@adkmercy.org)**