



County of Onondaga
Office of the County Executive

J. Ryan McMahon II
County Executive

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Media Release

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County Executive McMahon Honors Local Seniors at 2024 Older Americans Month Celebration Luncheon

Awards given in 4 categories

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – County Executive McMahon and the Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care today celebrated Older Americans Month at the annual Celebration Luncheon held at Drumlins. The event brought together community members, dignitaries and honorees for an afternoon of recognition and gratitude.

Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon said, “Our local seniors are the backbone of our community. It is because of their hard work and efforts that we have the wonderful community that we do today.” McMahon continued, “The awardees being honored today are perfect examples of the incredibly important role our seniors continue to have in our community. Congratulations to each of them for this special honor and most importantly thank you for all you do for our community.”

The awardees are as follows:

Serving Senior Awardees:

Janine Sonnick: Director of Activities for the Senior Adult Ministry, recognized for her exceptional leadership in creating exceptional senior-focused events that foster community, health, creativity and connection among seniors.

Diane Taylor: President of the Ecumenical Council of the Minoa-Bridgeport-Kirkville Area, honored for her extensive community involvement, her success in opening a new Senior Dining Site and tireless commitment to the continuous growth and improvement of services for seniors.

Caregiver of the Year:

Linda Brown-Robinson: Immediate Past President of the Syracuse Onondaga NAACP and NYS NAACP Western Regional Director. The award celebrates her tireless advocacy and dedication to justice and equality.

Senior Citizen of the Year:

Josephine D'Alessandro-Thomas: A pillar of the community with a distinguished career spanning social work, government and education, recognized for her exceptional communication skills, endless volunteerism and boundless compassion.

Esteemed Elder of the Year:

Van Robinson: Former Syracuse Common Council President and community activist, honored for his lifelong dedication to civic engagement and community activism. Van is a Navy veteran and a recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including the naming of the prestigious Van Robinson Pan-African Village at the NYS Fair.

NOTE: Van was ALTCS Onondaga County Office for Aging's 2024 Older New Yorker's Day Nominee for NYS Citizen of the Year, and the NYS Office for Aging recently selected him as the official winner. He will be honored in Albany on May 14th.

Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services (ALTCS) ALTCS offers a variety of programs and services that provide support to improve the quality of life and overall well-being for adults and those with long-term care needs. Those looking for more information can call (315) 435-2362 or visit www.ongov.net/adult.

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