Assemblywoman

Addie Russell

Reports to the People

Spring 2012

DISTRICT OFFICE: Dulles State Office Bldg., Suite 210, 317 Washington Street, Watertown, NY 13601 • 315-786-0284

Assemblywoman Addie J. Russell, Town of Cape Vincent & Cape Vincent Chamber of Commerce invite you to

ESCAPE TO THE CAPE

Where life is naturally spectacular!

Saturday, May 19, 2012

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Recreation Park

Cape Vincent, New York

A Rediscovering Your Backyard event –for local New York and Ontario businesses to exhibit products and services.

Adopting Healthy Habits

Assemblywoman Addie J. Russell is participating in the Adopting Healthy Habits Tri-county Coalition meetings. This group includes area residents, agency leaders and Cornell University Division of Nutrition experts who are working toward the goal of building healthy communities, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and organizations by reducing barriers to making healthy food choices and active lifestyles more achievable.

The Health Initiative in St. Lawrence County, a partner in Adopting Healthy Habits, has been promoting healthy lifestyles through community-based efforts since 1999. The Health Initiative routinely offers support of wellness efforts by local recreation departments, after-school programs, civic groups, and grassroots organizations. Examples of recent support of healthful projects through its Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play in St. Lawrence County program include grants of rental ice skates for nine ice rinks and arenas throughout the county, raised bed vegetable gardens at four senior housing sites, playground equipment, a seasonal ice rink, snowshoes, cross-country skis, physical activity equipment for after-school programs, as well as support of a community garden project.

Assemblywoman Russell's active leadership has championed health initiatives that directly impact and improve the resources of the North Country. There are many organizations, businesses, places of learning and recreation that have benefited. A healthy lifestyle is about the choices we all make—what

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Assemblywoman Russell announces $30.6 million for EPIC restored in final budget

In an effort to help our seniors afford much-needed prescription drugs, I helped include $30.6 million in restorations to the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program in the 2012-13 state budget – helping reinstate co-payment assistance. This crucial measure will allow North Country seniors currently enrolled in the EPIC program to return to paying no more than a $20 co-payment for each prescription drug.

As the cost of living continues to rise, many seniors struggle to pay for the basics, especially the staggering cost of medication. By restoring this vital funding to EPIC, we can help North Country seniors afford these life-saving prescription drugs, protecting their health and well-being during this tough economic time. The coverage will begin January 2013. Program details will be announced later this year. If you have difficulty affording medications until the benefit resumes please contact Asemblywoman Russell to discuss other options that may be available.

The Dangers of Synthetic Marijuana

Synthetic marijuana is a combination of dried herbs or shredded plant material, typically sprayed with chemicals that are similar to THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana and sold in stores under brand names like "K2" or "Spice."

As the synthetic drug's popularity grows, so do its warning signs, as more and more cases of seizures, vomiting, paranoia and delusions are reported. In fact, in 2011, there were nearly 7,000 calls made to poison control centers about exposure to synthetic marijuana.

The Department of Health has taken the first step by banning the sale of these substances, but the push to rid our neighborhoods of this danger does not stop there. In the Assembly, there are currently two bills that would prohibit the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana and establish a criminal penalty for those in violation, both of which are supported by Assemblywoman Russell (A.7231-A, A.7324).

Assemblywoman Russell notes her growing concerns for the dangerous new trend, citing the high number of calls to the poison control centers and stories of young people being hospitalized.

"The truth is, these substances are unregulated and filled with untested and unknown materials that threaten the health and well-being of its users," Assemblywoman Russell said. "What's worse is that this dangerous, man-made drug is geared toward children and can have a long-lasting and damaging effect on users. We need to fully rid our streets of this manufactured drug and protect our children from the dangerous allure of synthetic marijuana."

These numbers reflect the closed human exposures calls to poison centers about exposures to synthetic marijuana as of January 31, 2012.

Year	Number of Calls
2010	2,906
2011	6,959
2012 *(as of Jan. 31)*	639

Cancer Services Program

The Cancer Services Program (CSP) is a life-saving program that provides breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening at no cost to men and women who live in New York State and do not have health insurance, have health insurance that does not cover the cost of these screenings or simply cannot afford these screenings.

The long-standing program has served as an invaluable measure throughout the state, saving countless lives because of early diagnosis. Among the many families that the program has helped, North Country resident Christine Branche shared her story in a letter to Assemblywoman Addie J. Russell, explaining how CSP saved not only her life, but her husband's life as well.

Christine was uninsured and had not had a mammogram for years because of the costs before hearing about the Cancer Services Program. After finding out about CSP, she had the test, which came back positive. Right away, she was given the support services that addressed her needs.

"Hearing Christine's story reaffirms how important it is to remain diligent about our health," Assemblywoman Russell said. "It comes as a relief to many families to know that there are programs like CSP out there to help them in their time of need."

Several years later, Christine's husband used the program for a prostate screening, which also came back positive for cancer. Once again, the program proved to be a life-saving tool for the Branche family.

Photo courtesy of St. Lawrence County Public Health Department.

The program also provides screening for colorectal cancer, which not only can be used to help diagnose cancer, but can help prevent the cancer. "Getting screened for colorectal cancer should not be delayed because you are uninsured or underinsured," Russell stated. "The costs of cancer on your life and family as well as the financial strain are too high, especially when screening can detect problems that can be addressed thereby preventing cancer," Russell said.

For more information on the CSP program, visit www.health.ny.gov/nysdoh/cancer/center/partnerships/ or call 866-442-CANCER (2262).

Farmers' Markets Bring Healthy Foods To You!

2012 Jefferson County Farmers' Markets:

Watertown
Washington Street
Wednesdays 6:30am – 3:00pm
May 30 – Oct. 3

Monday Neighborhood Farmers' Market
203 North Hamilton Street, Watertown
Mondays 3:00pm – 6:00pm
July 9 – October 1

Saturday Farmers' Market
Pavilion at JB Wise Place, Watertown
Saturdays 9:00am – 2:00pm
June 16 – Nov. 3

Carthage
Farmer's Market Pavilion Riverside Drive
Fridays 7:00am – 2:00pm
May 25th – Oct. 26

Stone Mills
Stone Mills Ag Museum, LaFargeville
Tuesdays 4pm – 7pm
June 19 – Sept. 24

Alexandria Bay
Kinney Drugs, Route 12
Fridays 9:00am – 3:00pm
May 25 – Sept. 25

Cape Vincent
Village Green
Saturdays 8:00am – 2:00pm
June 23 – Oct. 6

Clayton
Frink Park
Thursdays 10:00am – 6:00pm
June 21 – Sept. 6

"The pleasure of eating delicious, wholesome food belongs to everyone. The following programs help make farmers' markets and good food accessible to all of us."

- Assemblywoman Addie J. Russell

CSA Bonus Bucks

GardenShare's "CSA Bonus Bucks" program spreads the benefits of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to people living on a tight budget. The program pays $150 of the cost of a CSA membership for limited-income households.

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program assists limited-income seniors, women, infants, and children by providing checks that are redeemable for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets. Besides improving nutrition for these participants, the program is an important source of sales for local farmers. In St. Lawrence County, checks for seniors are distributed at senior centers by the Office for the Aging (386-4730). Checks for women, infants, and children are distributed at WIC clinics by the North Country Children's Clinic (386-8128). In Jefferson County, checks for women, infants, and children are distributed at WIC clinics (782-9222). Checks for seniors are distributed by the Jefferson County Office for the Aging (785-3191).

WIC Vegetables & Fruits Check Program

Until recently, participants in the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program could redeem their monthly checks only at food stores and pharmacies. Thanks to a new WIC Vegetables and Fruits program, moms can now use their WIC checks to buy eligible fresh produce at farmers' markets. Purchases must be made from authorized market vendors. For more information in St. Lawrence County, contact the North Country Children's Clinic at 386-8128.

Food Stamps/EBT Program

The Food Stamp/EBT program brings federal dollars into our community by assisting eligible individuals and working families to purchase food, including fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets. Every $1 spent in food stamps generates $1.84 in economic revenue for our local economy. Yet 23 percent of eligible people in St. Lawrence County have not enrolled—an $8.5 million loss for our farmers and businesses. For a friendly and confidential conversation about your eligibility, call 1-800-782-0814. For information on this program in Jefferson County, contact the Community Action Planning Council at 782-4900.

Assembly District 118 Food Bank Support for January – December 2010

The amount of support in our district for the Food Bank of Central New York has been overwhelming! I would like to personally thank everyone who has helped this great cause. Thanks to you this program has been able to provide incredible services to our less fortunate.

Total Meals Received: 751,918
Total Value of Food Received: $774,905.70
Out of Pocket Dollars Spent: $93,013.30

Highlight:
Return on Investment: 733%!
Return on Investment: 8:1!

Benefits at No Cost:
- $156,165.21 Line of Credit for Food
- $17,446.22 Fresh Produce
- 106 supplemental orders worth $64,414.61
- 5,494 milk coupons worth $14,985.46
- $32,213 in Operations Support and Equipment

All Emergency Food Programs:
Total Meals: 7,307,494
Total Food Value: $8,475,437.64

Announcing the 2nd Annual North Country Department Store

After last year's huge success, Assemblywoman Addie Russell is proud to announce the 2nd annual North Country Department Store to take place on October 27th at Indian River Middle School.

In an effort to encourage North Country residents to shop locally, this event will bring together vendors of all kinds to create a department store-like atmosphere. Assemblywoman Addie Russell is coordinating the event as part of her 'Rediscovering Your Backyard' campaign.

All of the dollars that are spent on our small businesses are far more likely to circulate in this economy and really improve the financial situation of not just our friends and neighbors but of the whole region.

Local vendors that want to participate in this event can register by emailing russella@assembly.state.ny.us or by calling (315) 786-0284.

Summer Reading Challenge

Assemblywoman Russell has announced the kick-off of the Assembly's annual Summer Reading Challenge, which encourages children to read throughout the months of July and August to maintain their skills for school in the fall. This challenge is in coordination with the New York State Library's "Summer Reading at New York Libraries" initiative.

The Summer Reading Challenge is about reducing the summer learning loss and encouraging children and parents to make reading and learning a year-long activity. A little bit of reading each day can have a big impact on our students' success.

To participate in the program, children must read alone or with someone else for at least 15 minutes each day for 40 days throughout the months of July and August. They must mark off the days they read on a calendar and send it to Assemblywoman Russell's office at the end of the summer. Children who complete the challenge will receive a New York State Assembly Excellence in Reading Certificate. Last year, nearly 250 children in Assemblywoman Russell's district completed the challenge.

For more information about the 2011 Summer Reading Challenge, contact Assemblywoman Addie Russell by email at russella@assembly.state.ny.us or call her office (315) 786-0284.

Health Care Reform Signed into Law Includes Support for Breastfeeding

Health care reform was signed into law. There are significant health promotion and disease prevention inclusions in the act, including a provision for breastfeeding mothers in the workplace. It establishes the right to express breastmilk at the workplace where 50 or more are employed. Employers are required to provide reasonable break time to express breast milk for one year after the child's birth. The employer shall make reasonable efforts to provide a private place, other than a bathroom.

Visit www.nysbreastfeeding.org for more information.

Adopting Healthy Habits

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we choose to eat and the activities we participate in every day. Those choices are shaped by the opportunities that surround us. Our communities need to have convenient and cost effective access to healthy choices.

Improving health in a community can take many forms: support a community garden to bring fresh produce to a local food pantry, buy locally from your neighborhood farmer at farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) and farm stands, participate in a healthy fundraiser or be an employer who supports policies and practices that lead to healthier employees. Schools can reduce less healthy food choices, increase fresh fruits and vegetables, and provide opportunities for youth to be active. Communities can create trails, plan to be more walkable, and provide space for gardens. There are solutions that individuals and communities can make to reverse unhealthy trends. Assemblywoman Russell is actively helping communities find these solutions. You too can be involved by implementing some of the ideas above. Contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office to learn about opportunities in your community.

Do you have a question or concern?

Assemblywoman Addie Russell wants to hear from you!

You can contact us at either of our district offices, online or by telephone.

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