

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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MEDIA RELEASE

December 28, 2015



Legislator Spencer speaks to residents at Paumanack Village. From left to right: Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D.; Richard Holmes, Vice President of the Greenlawn Civic Association; Mr. William Davidson, President Paumanack Village Senior Housing; Mr. Christopher Blohm, Manager, Larkfield IGA; and Darryl St. George, President of the Greenlawn Civic Association.

Community's Own Secret Santa Helps Local Seniors in Their Time of Need

Greenlawn, NY- In the true spirit of the holiday season, officials, residents and community stakeholders gathered at Paumanack Village in Greenlawn to announce additional relief and joy coming to the seniors as they cope with the closure of Waldbaums supermarket. This morning, Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. was honored to unveil the identity of the Secret Santa, Charlie Reichert, who will be reimbursing Paumanack seniors for their travel fare on the HART bus to and from the IGA supermarket in East Northport.

Over the course of the last several months there has been great angst in the Paumanack Village Community, a federally subsidized housing development, home to almost 500 seniors, due to the closing of the only supermarket and pharmacy available to them within walking distance. As most of

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the residents do not have cars and live on a fixed income, this has posed a tremendous hardship. Since the closure was announced in October, numerous partners have been working collaboratively to help seniors adjust to the change and maintain their independence. CVS, Value Drugs, and Mid-Village pharmacies are now delivering to Paumanack, Stop & Shop Peapod is delivering groceries at a discounted delivery rate, and the HART Bus has a dedicated route to the facility.

“Within our capacities, we have made advancements and this kind gesture is another way we can ease the burden on the residents. This is what being a community is all about.” said Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. “I can’t thank Charlie and his family enough for stepping in to help during this time of need.”

Charlie and his wife Helen are local residents and the owners of the IGA supermarket in East Northport. Time and again, they have dedicated themselves to helping others and giving back our community. Over the years, they have been generous benefactors to the Vanderbilt Planetarium, the Dolan Family Health Center, and have donated handicap accessible playground equipment throughout Suffolk County.

“This is wonderful news!” said Dot, a Paumanack Village resident. “It’s extraordinary how people can be so kind.”

“We’re happy that Legislator Spencer has been so involved and helpful to us in arranging the bus fare agreement with Charlie Reichert. This makes a big difference for the seniors, and we thank him for his efforts.” stated Bill Davidson, President of Paumanack Village Senior Housing.

"The Greenlawn Civic Association is proud to have been a part of this effort and is deeply grateful for the generosity of the IGA. We believe this is what can be accomplished when government at multiple levels works alongside civic organizations and members of the private sector." said Darryl St. George, President of the Greenlawn Civic Association.

Of the 500 residents, only about 150 of them have cars. The Town of Huntington has devoted a HART bus route to shuttle the residents to the shopping center at Larkfield and Clay Pitts Roads, twice per week. For the residents who can afford the \$6.00 round-trip fare, the HART bus has been the easiest way for them to get their shopping done. The service is timely, passengers are welcomed and assisted by friendly staff, and it is much more cost effective than the \$17 round-trip taxi fare. However, there are a significant number of residents who cannot afford the added fee and have taken to walking to Pulaski Road to ride the regular bus at a cost of .75 cents.

Again, Charlie and his family are giving back. For as long as the seniors need it, he has committed to reimbursing each resident for the \$6.00 round-trip fare on the Hart Bus. The seniors will receive the discount off the final cost of their grocery bill at each visit.

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