

Oneonta Mayor Column – 04-18-2023
600 words

Selfless acts.

In a small city with great aspirations, it's the willingness to extend ourselves for the benefit of others that makes Oneonta such a special place to live.

Selfless acts.

The donation of time, energy, and expertise, without expectation of recognition or compensation, has been an ongoing gift to the community, and knowing that - being able to count on that – fills me with hope and confidence for our future.

Whether providing meals to those in need, mentoring young people, organizing community events, or any number of other efforts, these selfless acts create a culture of caring and compassion that sets Oneonta apart.

On Friday, we saw the collective offerings of dozens of volunteer groups and service organizations on display. These partners in Oneonta's quality of life were gathered to provide newcomers with all the resources and information they might need to become fully integrated members of our community.

That so many people willingly invested their time in this effort speaks volumes about our community's embrace of a vision in which hundreds of are being enlisted to make Oneonta their home.

Selfless acts.

Our student landlords are being confronted with a new paradigm. Consequently, many may consider putting a portion of their housing inventory on the market. Recently I became aware of one landlord, who having the choice of multiple offers, sold at a lower price so that a young family could move to the city.

Selflessness. Putting community first.

The availability of housing is the lynchpin on which Oneonta's successful engagement of new residents will turn. Dozens of community members have been devoting time every month to the strategizing of proposals for action to address many of the obstacles to that availability.

With this column, I am asking you to consider membership in one of our Housing Commission workgroups. We would like to add two new members to each group; Rentals, Infrastructure Utilization, Senior Housing, Neighborhood Improvement, Affordable Housing, and Community Education. If you'd like to add your voice to the discussions and your ideas to the planning, I invite you to visit All4Oneonta.com and contact me with your interest.

As we enter the summer months, enhancing our downtown experience is a priority. We need to make it an attractive, inviting, and vibrant place for residents and for the many visitors we are expecting.

Our plan is to "activate" Muller Plaza as a place where intimate entertainments, art, and other engaging activities are being presented from mid-morning to late afternoon every

day. The effect of this on our downtown experience will be felt immediately, and it will be transformative.

But to infuse Muller Plaza with such energy, and over such a length of time will require the support of dozens upon dozens of musicians, artists, performers, vendors, and creative spirits. We will be determining a vetting process and a scheduling system, but all performances and entertainments will need to be donated.

We will also need volunteers to help organize and assist during the day.

There is no funding for this. But it is beyond worthwhile. So, I ask those who would like to be a part of the summer-long production to contact me soon. Again, the best way to do that is through All4Oneonta.com.

Volunteerism. Donation of time and of talent. It is the beating heart of our Oneonta spirit. It's what makes us special, and our community so inviting.

I've asked for quite a bit in this column. I hope and trust that you will share my requests with your friends and neighbors.

Together we are doing great things.
But have no doubt, there's more to come.