



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## #WarmUpWNY Drive Hosted By Senator Kennedy, Kaleida Health Exceeds 2018 Goal, Collects More Than 8,000 Blankets for Young Patients at Oishei Children's Hospital

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY March 9, 2018

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*Kennedy Launched #WarmUpWNY in 2016 After Hearing from Children's Hospital that Blankets are not Reimbursable; This Year More than 40 Community Partners Participated as Drop-Off Locations*

*In Second Year of Drive, Generous Donors Help Double the Amount of Blankets Previously Collected, Surpassing Goal Set by Senator and OCH President Allegra Jaros*

BUFFALO, NY – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital (OCH) President Allegra Jaros, along with Kaleida Health staff and local community and government leaders Friday to unveil the thousands of blankets people across the region collected for children at OCH, as part of this year’s #WarmUpWNY blanket drive. More than 8,000 blankets were delivered to the hospital for the facility’s youngest and most vulnerable pediatric patients, more than doubling the amount collected last year. Started in 2016, the drive aims to bring the comforts of home to children during hospital stays. Due to overwhelming response last year, this year’s drive was extended by two months, running from October 1st to February 1st, in partnership with more than 40 community and government leaders.

“Once again, Western New Yorkers have gone above and beyond to take care of our region’s most vulnerable kids. We set a goal to double last year’s collection, and the City of Good Neighbors took that as a challenge and surpassed it beyond our wildest expectations,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “One blanket may seem like a small lift, but it has an incredible impact on the life of a child who is anxious about the unexpected that awaits. Whether you were a small business, a student, a friend in labor, or simply someone looking to make a difference in their own way, your generosity is felt and will go a long way.”

“We are so grateful to Senator Kennedy, our elected officials and the entire Western New York Community for rallying around our patients and families,” said **Allegra C. Jaros, MBA, President, Oishei Children’s Hospital**. “Our patients at the new Oishei Children’s Hospital and HighPointe are so special to us. We are overwhelmed by the comfort community members are providing our patients and families. It’s wonderful to see these efforts around making our short-term and long-term care patients’ experience more comfortable during the cold winter months. Buffalo truly is the City of Good Neighbors.”

"The #WarmUpWNY Blanket Drive is an annual event that provides thousands of blankets to young patients to help ease their recovery," said **Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul**. "I commend Senator Kennedy for his ongoing efforts and I'm pleased to take part in this program to benefit the Oishei Children's Hospital. Efforts like these with people coming together to help comfort and provide for pediatric patients is so important and inspiring."

"The response to this year's blanket drive was simply remarkable," said **Senator Patrick M. Gallivan**. "Many of our local school districts eagerly participated by making and collecting hundreds of warm blankets. Others came from Cub Scout packs, local businesses and residents. As we have seen so many times in the past, when our community hears of a need it responds in the most heartwarming and generous way. I thank everyone who donated and I know these blankets will bring some much needed comfort to the patients at Children's Hospital."

"Simply put, being in the hospital is no fun, especially for a kid," said **Erie County Clerk Mickey Kearns**. "Something as simple as being handed a new warm blanket can provide the child and the parent with ease and comfort. Each year I am impressed by the outpouring of support from the community donating blankets to our office. I would like to thank Senator Kennedy and Kaleida Health for continuing the #WarmUpWNY blanket drive."

Kennedy launched the drive last year after hearing from doctors, nurses and parents, who explained how common it was for young patients to become anxious over the "unknown" that a trip to the hospital can bring. They said that even the smallest and simplest items like warm blankets can remind kids of home and help to calm these growing fears, but these items are not a reimbursable expense for the hospital, and therefore they rely entirely on the generosity of the community to provide this small comfort to children in their care. Due to the high volume of young patients these facilities see every day, keeping the supply of blankets stocked is often difficult, which is why Kennedy- and the community

– continue to step in.

A list of sites that participated in the #WarmUpWNY Drive can be found below:

*LIST OF COLLECTION SITES*

*Office of Senator Tim Kennedy - 2239 South Park Ave., Buffalo*

*Office of Mayor Byron Brown - Buffalo City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo*

*Office of Senator Patrick Gullivan - 2721 Transit Rd. Suite 116, Elma*

*Office of Senator Chris Jacobs - 65 Court St. Room 213, Buffalo*

*Office of Senator Michael Ranzenhofer - 8203 Main St. Suite 4, Williamsville*

*Office of Assemblyman Michael Kearns - 1074 Union Rd., West Seneca*

*Office of Assemblyman Sean Ryan - 65 Grant St., Buffalo*

*Office of Assemblywoman Monica Wallace - 2562 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga*

*Office of Assemblyman Ray Walter - 5555 Main St., Clarence*

*Office of Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz - 95 Franklin St., Buffalo*

*Office of Lackawanna Mayor Geoff Szymanski- 714 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna*

*Cheektowaga Supervisor Diane Benczkowski- 3301 Broadway, Cheektowaga*

*Office of Legislator Pat Burke- 469 Abbott Rd., Buffalo*

*Office of Legislator Lynne Dixon at Hamburg Community Center – 4540 Southwestern Blvd., Hamburg*

*Office of Legislator Joe Lorigo - 101 Slade Ave. Buffalo*

*Office of Legislator Ed Rath - 92 Franklin St., Buffalo*

*Office of Councilman David Rivera at Richmond Summer Senior Center – 337 Summer St., Buffalo*

*Office of Councilman Joel Feroletto at North Buffalo Community Center - 203 Sanders Rd., Buffalo*

*Office of Councilman Rich Fontana at the Mead Library - 126 Ludington St., Buffalo*

*Office of Councilman Joe Golombek at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center - 155 Lawn Ave., Buffalo*

*ACCESS of WNY - 609 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna*

*Bethel AME Church - 1525 Michigan Ave., Buffalo*

*Broadway Market - 999 Broadway, Buffalo*

*Cazenovia Library - 155 Cazenovia St., Buffalo*

*Daily Planet Coffee House - 1862 Hertel Ave., Buffalo*

*Elim Christian Fellowship Church - 70 Chalmers Ave., Buffalo*

*Fruitbelt Coalition - 150 Maple St. Buffalo*

*Juran Agency - 1550 Abbott Rd., Lackawanna*

*Lackawanna Chamber of Commerce - 683 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna*

*Lackawanna Parent Teacher Network - 245 S. Shore Blvd., Lackawanna*

*Lackawanna Public Library- 560 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna*

*Northwest Bank- 1248 Abbott Rd., Lackawanna*

*Steel City Church - 1449 Abbott Rd, Lackawanna*

*The River of WNY - 39 Pulaski St., Lackawanna*

*Undergrounds Coffee House – 580 South Park Ave., Buffalo*

*United Way of Buffalo and Erie County & WNY Women’s Foundation – 742 Delaware Ave., Buffalo*

*Yar Mo’s Muse, 700 Main St., Buffalo*

*All Erie County Department of Motor Vehicle Locations:*

- *Downtown Buffalo- 170 Pearl St.*
- *Eastern Hills Mall- 4545 Transit Rd.*
- *Urbandale Plaza- 2122 George Urban Blvd., Depew*
- *Sheridan Plaza- 2309 Eggert Rd. (corner of Sheridan), Town of Tonawanda*
- *ECC South- 4041 Southwestern Blvd., Building 7, Orchard Park*