

# NEWS



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## 05-18-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

May is Older Americans Month. It's our opportunity to show appreciation and support for our senior residents as they continue to enrich and strengthen our communities. In Orange County, we are blessed with a vibrant and active senior population that believes in giving back to their community.

I had the pleasure of joining more than 400 Orange County seniors at Anthony's Pier 9 for the 37<sup>th</sup> annual Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) luncheon. This event is our opportunity each year to honor and thank the many seniors who give of their time and their talent for their dedication and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for everyone who lives in Orange County.

In 2010, more than 800 RSVP participants contributed 120,000 hours of service to more than 45 community agencies in Orange County. They helped deliver nearly a quarter of a million hot, healthy meals to more than 1,350 seniors. They worked in hospitals, prepared tax returns, made bonnets and blankets for babies, tutored adults in reading and writing, and performed countless other essential tasks to help our local non-profits. To learn more about the RSVP program or become a volunteer, call 615-3728.

This month is also Mental Health Month. This recognition began in 1949 to raise awareness of mental health conditions, as well as mental wellness for all. Every day, Americans are affected by the challenges, stresses, and demands on their lives. Every day, there are people seeking help in responding to those challenges. The good news is that there are many effective tools that are readily available right here in Orange County to help residents improve and enhance their mental well-being.

Mental Health Month is an opportunity to raise awareness of issues and encourage people to take action to protect their mental health and wellness. To learn more about the broad spectrum of programs and services available in Orange County, visit the Mental Health Department pages on our website at [www.orangecountygov.com](http://www.orangecountygov.com) or contact the department at 291-2600. Please remember, good mental health is just as important as good physical health.

Finally, let's close with a bit of history. On May 16, 1801, the prominent politician and diplomat William Henry Seward was born right here in Orange County, New York. He held many public offices throughout his career, including Governor of New York, U.S. Senator, and Secretary of State. His most notable achievement as Secretary of State was the negotiation of the 1867 Treaty with Russia (ridiculed as "Seward's Folly") for the purchase of Alaska for just \$7.2 million. Upon his death on Oct. 10, 1872, in Auburn, N.Y., Seward was hailed as one of the greatest secretaries of state in American history.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness.

Edward A. Diana  
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