Letters to the Editor

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Meals on Wheels needs support from community

I want to respond to the recent Bee Heard piece about Meals on Wheels’ funding. I should begin by saying that I cannot speak for Amherst Meals on Wheels, a program managed out of your local senior center. Our program, Meals on Wheels for WNY, covers the vast majority of Erie County — including Williamsville and Clarence.

Any program that receives part of its funding from the Older Americans Act (as MOW-WNY does) is prohibited from doing any “means testing” with clients.

We can ask for a voluntary contribution; however, people receive the meals and lifesaving service whether they are able to contribute or not. Our “all-in” cost for a two-meal unit is $11.42 a day (food, production, lights, heat, social work, registered dieticians, etc.).

Our suggested voluntary contribution is $7 per day for the two nutritionally appropriate meals. Our average actual contribution is $2.07 per day. The more effective MOW-WNY is at serving the vulnerable in need, the larger the potential funding gap we face. This is very different than the idea of a sliding fee.

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EXCLUSIVE

Bee Poll

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Click to vote on this Bee Poll TODAY!

Will you attend the planned forum regarding the opioid crisis?

‘Buy American’ Alliance

Every once in a while a new idea or packet or proposal appears that makes much sense and doesn’t get the usual amount of follow-up for debate. One of these was the ‘Buy American’ alliance, formed by manufacturing leaders to encourage foreign state voters: It adds up to jobs and supports Buy American Act when it comes up for a vote in Congress, according to its leaders.

The alliance was formed in February by leading domestic manufacturers and the United Steelworkers union, with a goal of strengthening American manufacturing through smart trade policy.

The group reports that a recent survey of state lawmakers and foreign manufacturing jobs and tax base have been lost and businesses that lose foreign contracts lose business and tax revenue slide.

“State governments have a double problem by using foreign-made goods in procurement,” a representative said, “so there’s an opportunity to build the ‘American’ products and agencies and programs and products made in America in procurements over the next two years.”

Of course, there’s another story. Governor Cuomo, who has always been a champion of this kind of policy, has been in the running for the Democratic nomination for president. It’s unfair to say that the alliance is a distraction. The alliance of manufacturers is crucial to the ongoing discussion on how to deal with the opioid crisis.

The alliance of manufacturers has gathered during the past year and come up with a plan to address the crisis. The plan includes raising awareness, increasing funding for addiction treatment, and creating more opportunities for people to get help. The alliance has been able to bring together businesses and organizations from across the state to ensure that the crisis is being addressed in a comprehensive way.
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scale, which by its very nature means that you are assessing clients' financial means.

MOW-WNY is one of thousands of programs that receives part of its budget from the Older Americans Act. This funding is just one piece of a complex puzzle, but it is an extremely important piece. We also work tirelessly to diversify revenue and to aggressively raise funds to ensure availability of services.

Programs throughout the nation are not all as fortunate; it is not uncommon to see long waiting lists and a discontinuation of service when funds are depleted.

Despite the work we've done locally to make our program strong, make no mistake — a severe cut in federal funding would have a significant impact on local programming and its availability to those in need.

Tara A. Ellis
President and CEO
Meals on Wheels WNY

‘Bass’ entire life was about service

It should be noted that Adolph Charles Bassanello, known to his friends as “Bass,” died on March 31.

Bass was one of the founding members of the Jolly Boys of Williamsville, a charitable organization that quiet-