

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Our guest today is Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Community Engagement Officer of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:12 Speaker 1

And I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Tracy.

00:00:17 Speaker 2

Thank you, Ernie.

00:00:18 Speaker 2

Thank you for having me.

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And you're here because you're going to give us an in-depth look at a big event that's coming up for the agency, which is Giving Tuesday.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

First, to give people some background, can you briefly describe the mission and impact of Western New York Independent Living's family of agencies?

00:00:40 Speaker 2

Sure.

00:00:41 Speaker 2

Western New York Independent Living is a peer-directed organization dedicated to breaking down barriers, promoting civil rights,

00:00:49 Speaker 2

and enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities.

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We achieve this through relentless advocacy, strong partnerships, impactful programs, responsible practices, and the incorporation of individual life experiences.

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Each year, we serve more than 6,500 consumers.

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Impressive.

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And everything that we do is guided by the independent living philosophy.

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Can you sketch that out for our listeners?

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Sure.

00:01:17 Speaker 2

The independent living philosophy is based on the idea that people with disabilities deserve the same rights as everyone else to make their own life choices.

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There's several key principles which include self-determination, where people with disabilities should have control over important decisions such as where they live, work, and socialize.

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Consumer control, it emphasizes that people with disabilities best understand their own needs, which is why independent living centers are led and managed by individuals with disabilities.

00:01:52 Speaker 2

Empowerment, the focus is on encouraging independence rather than reliance, so supporting people as they take charge of their lives and seek out support when needed.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

And finally, choice and freedom.

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This philosophy insists that everyone should be free to decide how and with whom they want to live, making choices that reflect their values and preferences.

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And can you explain why Giving Tuesday is so important to our agency?

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Giving Tuesday on December 2nd is an online giving day that is one of the largest fundraisers we organize each year.

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The money raised is used to help our consumers meet their basic needs.

00:02:36 Speaker 1

All right.

00:02:37 Speaker 1

But I'm sure there are some specific programs that the agency does that can highlight just what some of these needs are.

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And could you elaborate on those, please?

00:02:51 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:02:51 Speaker 2

The funds raised on Giving Tuesdays could be used for a variety of things, like buying someone who isn't using our job club work boots so they can start their new job.

00:03:03 Speaker 2

Or we might buy pots and pans for someone who is finally moving into their own apartment.

00:03:08 Speaker 2

All of the money raised goes directly to our consumers.

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For those that want to get involved with Giving Tuesday, what are the best ways for community members to support the agencies on Giving Tuesday, and for that matter, throughout the year?

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To support Giving Tuesday on December 2nd, you can go to our website at wnyil.org and look for the donate button in the top right corner.

00:03:35 Speaker 2

You can also help.

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We have a loan closet.

00:03:38 Speaker 2

So, if you have gently used wheelchairs or other accessories that people with disabilities might need, you can donate those to one of our independent living centers.

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People often call that the medical equipment loan closet, I believe.

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Yes.

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I'm sure people will still have some questions about it.

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What's the best way for them to reach someone that can tell them more about Giving Tuesday?

00:04:04 Speaker 2

They can call 716-836-0822 and ask for Tracy LeBlanc.

00:04:11 Speaker 1

Thank you so much for being with us and prepare for an exciting day ahead.

00:04:19 Speaker 2

Thank you for having me.

00:04:20 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure.

00:04:22 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:04:28 Speaker 1

Our guest today was Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Committee Engagement Officer of Western New York Independent Living.

00:04:35 Speaker 1

And I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.