

The Jamestown Fire Department is announcing a new service, which will be available to all Jamestown residents beginning today. Through our Community Outreach And Support Team (COAST) we will be offering rides to Jamestown residents to go to medical appointments in Jamestown, North Kingstown, East Greenwich, Narragansett, and South Kingstown in the West Bay, and Portsmouth, Middletown, and Newport on Aquidneck Island. At least 48 hours' notice must be given for a ride to an appointment. Should a resident who has been medically discharged from South County or Newport Hospitals need a ride home, we can provide that also. In all cases, residents must be ambulatory (able to get in and out of vehicles without assistance) and receive medical clearance from the hospital.

All COAST services are free of charge. Call (401) **423-5904** to be registered and scheduled.

COAST also provides health education, advocacy, and support for residents dealing with mental health and substance use challenges, medication management, and health insurance difficulties. We offer medical equipment on loan through the JFD Loan Closet, home safety assistance (including smoke/CO alarms), personal advocacy support, and referrals to agencies that can provide more in-depth services.

COAST was created by Jamestown residents and volunteer members of Jamestown's Emergency Medical Services. They recognized that some of the folks they transported to hospitals might have difficulty returning home without assistance. With support from the Jamestown Fire Department leadership, the JFD Auxiliary was expanded to include COAST activities. COAST members bring knowledge and experience from a wide variety of professions. These include primary medicine, mental health, substance use, healthcare administration, public health research, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, education, law, business, architecture, the arts, and other disciplines. Although the COAST volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise, we do not function as providers of healthcare services. However, we will assist Jamestown residents in navigating and engaging with local and state resources to live more successfully and independently at home.

COAST began by taking responsibility for the loan closet, culling through medical equipment and relocating it to the Fire Department on Narragansett Avenue. Throughout the year, we have distributed over 125

loan closet items to 85 residents and have made over 70 visits to 16 residents. Simultaneously, we renewed the File of Life initiative and held events at the Senior Center and Pemberton Apartments to distribute these important and potentially lifesaving documents to seniors and anyone who wants one. We sponsored a blood drive at the Fire Station and a training about falls (prevention and recovery) at the Senior Center. We partnered with Newport Mental Health to offer support for residents, guests, and responders. In November, in conjunction with Jamestown's Recreation Department, we sponsored a Mental Health and Wellness Resources Fair. In January, we facilitated a Survivors of Suicide Loss Day at St. Mathews Church, and a Talk Saves Lives (suicide prevention) event at the Library. We have also facilitated training for First Responders, including an upcoming Critical Incident Stress Management training on 2/27. We are also working with town administration to offer mental health training for town employees, which will provide them with basic skills and knowledge to better assist individuals who come to them with challenges that may require additional services and supports.

And now, we can also provide rides to and from medical appointments in our area. Call (401) 423-5904 to be registered and scheduled.