

Volunteers needed for Safe Winter Walkways program

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County Senior Services needs your help! The Safe Winter Walkways program kicks off this week and volunteers are needed to help elderly or disabled individuals clear public sidewalks during snow events.

Able-bodied Lawrence residents with a passion for helping others and an enjoyment of winter weather are needed to volunteer for the Safe Winter Walkways program. The goal of the Safe Winter Walkways program is to create safer and more accessible pedestrian walkways. This is a joint effort of the City of Lawrence and Douglas County Senior Services (DCSS). Volunteers will be matched with residents needing assistance with snow removal for the winter season.

In 2015, 92-percent of people who signed up for help did get paired with a volunteer. Last year, 84 households signed up for assistance but 6 households were unfortunately not paired with volunteers due to the demand for the program and a need for more volunteers.

This year, the city is again offering online registration for participants and volunteers. Visit www.lawrenceks.org/safe_winter_walkways to sign up for the program. This year, the program will close participant sign up on **November 18, 2016**. This date has been selected so that participants and volunteers can be matched prior to the holiday season, and hopefully, prior to snow season.

"This program is an excellent resource for members of our community who physically can't keep their sidewalks clear during snow events," said Megan Gilliland, communications manager for the city. "This program is a structured version of what has happens in many neighborhoods - neighbors helping neighbors. With volunteers, we can make certain that the neighbors can count on a volunteer to be there if snow needs to be removed."

"This year, it is critical that anyone who is interested in volunteering sign up in advance," said Gilliland. "Our program is most effective when the volunteers and residents are paired up before bad weather hits and we can react quickly."

Volunteer groups, civic organizations and youth groups are encouraged to consider volunteering as a team. Please contact Larry Woydziak with DCSS to find out how to sign up as a group and requirements for volunteering.

"This program is for public sidewalks only," said Woydziak. "We give priority to homes with public sidewalks and volunteers are not required to provide snow removal for private driveways, sidewalks or walkways – this is left to the volunteer's discretion."

Volunteers can sign up by calling (785) 832-3338 or registering online at www.lawrenceks.org/safe_winter_walkways.

Media Contact: Larry Woydziak, Douglas County Senior Services, (785) 842-0543 or Megan Gilliland, communications manager, (785) 832-3406