



Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office
Christopher J. Gramiccioni, Acting Prosecutor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 20, 2016

www.prosecutor.co.monmouth.nj.us

CONTACT: Charles Webster

Public Information Officer

Desk: (732) 431-7160 ext. 7535

Mobile: (732) 637-3382

COUNTYWIDE SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY LAUNCHED

FREEHOLD – A comprehensive and voluntary program dedicated to serving citizens with special needs was launched today. Acting Monmouth County Prosecutor Christopher J. Gramiccioni was joined by Sheriff Shaun Golden and the Monmouth County Chiefs of Police to introduce the Monmouth County Special Needs Registry.

The Monmouth County Special Needs Registry is the first countywide registry in New Jersey and one of few nationwide. The goals of the Registry are simple and obtainable: Provide first responders with vital information they need about citizens in the community with special needs to better assist them; and improve relationships between law enforcement, first responders, and the special needs community.

“This comprehensive, voluntary program is a proactive approach to aid and assist all citizens who live, work or go to school in Monmouth County, but who may have special needs that if known to first responders, can help us better assist them in an emergency,” Gramiccioni explained. “All information is strictly confidential and for use by first responders under emergency circumstances. Everyone involved with the Registry benefits from having this valuable information available before first responders arrive at the door.”

The Registry was created to help police, fire and other emergency personnel better assist citizens with special needs. About 10 percent of Monmouth’s population can be characterized as having special needs, according to the latest Census figures. That’s more than 60,000 people with some level of special needs. The registry is open to any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity due to a physical or intellectual disability.

“As a committed advocate to this cause, it’s been my priority to be in the forefront when it comes to assisting individuals with special needs,” said Sheriff Golden. “Through our agency, more than 500 members of law enforcement have been trained on how to respond to those with special needs. The launch of this registry is another vital tool and the latest step for the Monmouth County Sheriff’s Office, the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office and our partners in law enforcement to address this serious subject.”

“We are urging everyone who qualifies to take advantage of the benefits offered by the Registry. The Registry is open to permanent or seasonal residents of Monmouth County, students at any of the numerous academic institutions within the county, and any employee of a business with offices in Monmouth County,” said Police Chief Sorrentino, President of the Monmouth County Police Chief’s Association.

– more –

Anyone can register by visiting the website of the Monmouth County Special Needs Registry at www.mcsnrnj.org and providing pertinent information about any special needs individuals within their household. The information collected by the Registry is strictly for use by first responders. The system is designed to alert first responders of specific situations or conditions that exist at a particular location. The information will be made available to first responder's responding to a call for service at a registry address.

Some examples of how the Registry could work:

If a person experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) could be negatively impacted by the sounds of loud sirens or flashing lights, first responders can now be alerted to that fact before they are on scene so as not to exacerbate the situation and arrive under quieter conditions in an effort to maintain calm.

If an elderly resident uses a wheelchair or has trouble hearing or is affected by dementia, first responders can adjust their response plan in an emergency accordingly if this information is known to law enforcement from the moment 9-1-1 is contacted.

If a registrant with autism were to be reported missing, the Registry provides current photographs to first responders immediately. The photographs can be utilized and disseminated quickly to aid in search efforts.

“Imagine a child with autism who goes missing, who is naturally drawn to nearby bodies of water. Having that type of information in hand before arriving and jumping into action to find the child helps get that search of on a track towards success much earlier and hopefully averts a tragedy,” Gramiccioni added.

People with special needs present unique challenges and can pose a myriad of issues for arriving first responders, but the information contained in the Registry can increase the likelihood of a more positive and successful outcome.

“The Monmouth County Sheriff’s Office, Communications Division provides 9-1-1 services to 50 municipalities and dispatches for 111 agencies which include police, fire and EMS. It is staffed with 101 public safety telecommunicators. They are the first and immediate contact on the other end of that emergency call. If that call involves a registered special needs individual, the information provided through the registry will automatically appear on the screen. The public safety telecommunicator will know if someone is oxygen-dependent, if a person is disabled, has PTSD or autism, and will dispatch that information to the first responders,” Golden explained.

To-date, the Special Needs Registry has been successfully launched in Eatontown, Monmouth Beach, Ocean Township, Sea Bright and Tinton Falls. The Special Needs Registry is now available online for every municipality in Monmouth County.

#