



KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
Lawrence A. Stelma – Sheriff

701 Ball Avenue, N.E. • Grand Rapids • Michigan • 49503



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2014

Contact: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7182

**Winter Weather Prompts “Shoveling
Snow Angels” into Action**

GRAND RAPIDS – Kent County Emergency Management reminds you that snowfall can make it difficult or impossible for many residents to get around, and causes problems for some emergency vehicles. Bus stops get lost in snow banks, fire hydrants and storm drains are buried, and some residents struggle to keep their sidewalks clear. Over the past nine months, area agencies including The Rapid, Disability Advocates of Kent County, Disability Advocates of Kent County, Kent County Emergency Management, Health Department, Road Commission and Administration, Heart of West Michigan United Way and the leaders from the cities of Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Wyoming, and Walker have been working to find a solution, but we need your help.

“Kent County residents should be able to get to school, work, stores and medical appointments without having snow and ice making sidewalks dangerous,” said Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator. “You can help by becoming a participating organization for the **Shoveling Snow Angels** program.”

By becoming a Shoveling Snow Angel, you are promising to make sure your sidewalks and curb-cuts, fire hydrants, bus stops and storm drains are clear of snow and ice. “Shoveling Snow Angels are – first and foremost - making sure their property is passable, especially for school children and people with mobility concerns,” said Dave Bulkowski of Disability Advocates of Kent County. “But they also volunteer to clear snow from areas that may otherwise be missed. Participating organizations can connect these volunteers with sites in their area which need to be shoveled, and then provide recognition for their volunteers when the shoveling is done.”

Examples of sites which may need volunteer Shoveling Snow Angels include:

- Unsheltered bus stops (bus shelters and BRT stations are cleared)
- Fire hydrants
- Storm drains
- Sidewalks and driveways of neighbors who need help due to age or disability

Types of recognition may include:

- MyGRCityPoints (details on how to provide MyGRCityPoints are below)
- Shoveling Snow Angel buttons (available from Disability Advocates of Kent County)
- Recognize outstanding volunteers on your website, in your newsletter, or via social media
- Certificates of participation
- Recognition by Disability Advocates of Kent County or local media

To be eligible for MyGRCityPoints:

1. Participating neighborhood associations and organizations list Snow Angel opportunities as “express interest” opportunities on HandsOn Connect (the volunteer management program that Heart of West Michigan United Way uses to display volunteer opportunities on their website); listing it on HandsOn connect will allow it to show on HWMUW website and on mygrcitypoints. We will work with you if you need help getting started!
2. Individuals interested in volunteering as a Shoveling Snow Angel can express interest in volunteering via the web either on HWMUW’s website or on mygrcitypoints; when the volunteer expresses interest, an email will go directly to the participating organization that they expressed interest with, and that organization can then coordinate with the volunteer.
3. 2-1-1 can field calls from interested volunteers and refer them to the participating organization closest to them that can coordinate with them.
4. The volunteer coordinator at the participating organization will coordinate with the volunteer to let them know where they need additional help with snow removal and when they need it.
5. The volunteer will volunteer their time removing snow as requested.
6. Upon completion, the volunteer can let the coordinator know that they are done for the day; the volunteer coordinator can then include a mygrcitypoints code in a thank you email for the volunteer.
7. The volunteer then logs in to his/her mygrcitypoints account and redeems the code to instantly earn their points.

Other things that you can do to help:

- Remind your residents to obey any odd/even parking restrictions! This makes it possible for City plows to clear the streets, allowing access for emergency vehicles and Go!Bus.
- Remind businesses in your neighborhood to clear snow from sidewalks, bus stops, fire hydrants, and storm drains.
- Encourage residents in your neighborhood to be aware of neighbors who may need extra help shoveling!

To date, the City of Grandville and Seeds of Promise (Madison Area Neighborhood in Grand Rapids) have signed up to be involved in the program. To become a Shoveling Snow Angel participating community or organization, contact Disability Advocates of Kent County at 616.949.1100. Residents interested in assisting a community or organization can contact the Heart of West Michigan at 211 to find a nearby participating organization.

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