

# There's bears out there: Community group creates stuffed animal scavenger hunt

BY JOSHUA MALONI  
GM/Managing Editor

Children are home from school, have tons of time on their hands, and can't play with their friends (at least not in groups). So, what's a parent to do to help them pass the hours?

Elizabeth Corey Coffey and Jen Heinze recently invited community members to place bears and other stuffed animals in their windows, thus providing families an opportunity to get in the car and scavenger hunt.

Youngstown's Coffey, who came to the River Region 15 years ago, said, "From the time that I came to live here, there's always been a real sense of community; everybody just wants to help everybody. And I have a ton of friends – because my kids are school-age – that have kids who are school-aged. And all of us together are looking for something to do to keep our kids entertained at this point – besides just trying to get through their school-work."

"And so, I was like, 'You know what? I'm sure that people would love to participate in this.' I just knew I had a good base group of friends that would probably be willing to get in on it. And I have a good area of neighbors. I don't live in an actual

neighborhood, but we have a sense of neighbors around us. And so, I was like, 'I bet my neighbors would probably do this.'

"So, literally, as soon as it got created and posted, my neighbor across the street put a bear out on his porch. And then his in-laws next door to him put a bear out on their porch; and it just kind of turned into this thing."

"I know we live in such a great little community, that I knew that people would probably jump on board."

To date, more than 450 people have participated.

"Everybody has seemed to be super positive and happy about participating," Coffey said. "I mean, I've got friends who don't have kids. Like I said, my neighbor across the street, he doesn't have young kids anymore; his girls are grown and off in college and living on their own. But he was right on board with participating."



"I think it's just something that people need a little light of positivity; and a little bit of hope right now; and something kind of fun," she added. "I don't know about everybody else, but I'm sick of watching the news talking about the virus, and was like, 'Let's do something else instead.'"

Coffey also encouraged residents to place paper Easter eggs in their windows.

"Everybody just needs a little distraction, right now, and this is an inexpensive, simple way that you can all feel like you're doing something together – but you're still 'social distancing' like you're supposed to," she said.

Lewiston resident Stacey Sheehan and her family placed a trio of stuffed animals in their windows.

"I loved this idea so much," she said. "It added an extra layer of interest to our daily walks, but the best part of this is, knowing every time we see a bear (or other stuffed animal) in a window, it feels like our neighbors are saying, 'We're in this together! We're on the same team.'"

"We may be isolated, but our community still exists. It's there. It just looks a little different right now."

Coffey said, "Hopefully, it'll continue and it'll just give us something to do. I know, when we need to get out of the house, we literally just get in the car – any time of the day – and as long as it's light enough for us to see, we just go for like an hour's drive and

look for bears." Though bears can be found in many neighborhoods, observers have noticed more in the East Avenue, Collingwood (off River Road), Youngstown Estates, Fifth Street and Seventh Street areas. Coffey said Victoria's Hair Care and The Country Doctor also got in on the act.

**BRICKHAUS INN**

Located in the heart of Lewiston, within walking distance of Artpark, many shops, restaurants, festivals & music shows.

The Brickhaus has a private entrance with two bedrooms & fully equipped kitchenette & bathroom.

860 Onondaga Street, Lewiston • Reservations 754-7936

**Wheels For Wishes** benefiting **Make-A-Wish® Western New York**

**Your Car Donations Matter NOW More Than Ever!**

- Free Vehicle Pick Up ANYWHERE
- 100% Tax Deductible
- We Accept Most Vehicles Running or Not
- Minimal To No Human Contact

**WheelsForWishes.org Call: (585) 507-4822**

\* Car Donation Foundation db/a Wheels For Wishes. To learn more about our programs or financial information, call (213) 948-2000 or visit www.wheelsforwishes.org



**Wagner's Farm Market and Grill**

**EASTER**

Lilies, Hydrangeas, Hyacinths, Mums, Tulips, Daffodils & More!

LOCALLY MADE EASTER CHOCOLATE

Pure N.Y. State Maple Syrup

2672 Lockport Rd., Sanborn • 731.4440

MARKET OPEN MON-SAT 9-6 • GRILL OPEN MON - SAT AT 11 AM



**Personal friend of the Gecko.**

**Timothy C. Lynch | 716-832-3253**

7474 Transit Rd | Williamsville, NY 14221  
Across from Eastern Hills Mall

**GEICO Local Office**

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, DC 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. © 2020 GEICO

**HIBBARD'S OLD PORTAGE SHOP**  
LEWISTON • 754-8660 • OPEN 7 DAYS

**CLOSED EASTER SUNDAY**

<b>CONFIDENTIAL RESERVA ROSE</b> \$9 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>J. ROGET CHAMPAGNES "COTTONTAIL MIMOSA"</b> MIX W/OJ & GRENADINE \$4 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>ABSOLUT VODKA</b> \$24 <sup>99</sup> LTR	<b>ARBOR MIST ALL FLAVORS</b> \$4 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML
<b>FONTELLA CHIANTI</b> \$9 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>JIM BEAM BOURBON</b> \$16 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>CARMENET CABERNET</b> \$9 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>NICHOLAS SAUVIGNON BLANC</b> \$8 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML
<b>WOODBRIDGE ROSE</b> \$5 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>BAILEY'S IRISH CREAM</b> \$38 <sup>99</sup> LTR	<b>SANTA MARINA PINOT GRIGIO</b> \$6 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML	<b>LONG NECK SHIRAZ</b> \$6 <sup>99</sup> 750 ML

**OTHER DISCOUNTS & CASE PRICING DO NOT APPLY. PRICES GOOD 4/4/20 - 4/11/20**