

# Project Lifesaver

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...was established in April of 1999 as an initiative of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Search and Rescue Company of the Chesapeake County Sheriff's Office in Virginia. Project Lifesaver's mission is to use state of the art technology in assisting those who care for individuals with Alzheimer's and other Related Mental Dysfunction Disorders (ARMD) who become lost. These individuals include the elderly and even the youngest in our community who are afflicted with Down syndrome and Autism.

## Alzheimer's Disease

People with Alzheimer's disease lose their ability to recognize familiar places and faces. Many of these people cannot remember their names or addresses. They may become disoriented and lost in their neighborhood or far from home.

It is not uncommon for a person with Alzheimer's disease to wander; many do repeatedly. This behavior can be dangerous, even life-threatening, as well as stressful for caregivers.

## Autism

Many children with Autism do not understand danger and know how to react in such a situation. Because people with Autism have no identifying physical characteristics, their disability may not be immediately apparent to others. This means that police, firefighters, and the general public may expect responses that the child or adult with Autism may not be capable of. In fact, unexpected behaviors can be misunderstood and actually lead to an emergency.

## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Those who suffer from a TBI have difficulties with memory and processing information. Due to the injury, it is common for the person's brain function to change. The person may no longer be oriented to places or time. Therefore, they may wander randomly.

## How Project Lifesaver Works

Rescue teams from the Otsego County Sheriff's Department are using radio technology to bring this effective life-saving system to our area.

People who are part of the Project Lifesaver program wear a personalized wristband that emits a tracking signal. When caregivers notify the Otsego County Sheriff's Department that the person is missing, a search and rescue team responds in the wanderer's area and starts searching with the mobile locator tracking system. Search times have been reduced from hours and days to minutes.



Senator Seward secured a Public Health Grant to allow for the Alzheimer's Association of Northeastern New York, The Otsego County Sheriff's Department, and The Otsego County Office for the Aging to bring Project Lifesaver to Otsego County

**Alzheimer's Association of NENY**

The Association offers a 24 hour helpline, family education, support networks, guides to local resources, a resource center, and private family care consultations.

**Otsego County Office for the Aging**

The Office for the Aging is a county agency that offers entitlement counseling, nutrition services, health & wellness, tax assistance, lifeline, and safe driving.

**Otsego County Sheriff's Office**

The Sheriff's Office provides professional, responsive and caring law enforcement services to all citizens in Otsego County.

**Call 911 if you are in a Crisis**

**For additional information call:**

**Otsego County Office for the Aging  
607-547-4232**

**Or**

**Leatherstocking Alzheimer's Association  
607-547-1650**

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**Protecting the  
wandering and  
bringing peace of  
mind to families,  
caregivers and  
communities**

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