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**Hope Farm Gets Harvesting Help from the Knights Order LEMC and the Knights of Columbus**

**(LOCH SHELDRAKE, NY – September 23, 2021)** The roar of motorcycles approaching marked the arrival of over a dozen energetic volunteers at Hope Farm, located on the grounds of SUNY Sullivan. Ready to help with the annual fall harvest, on September 19, bikers from the Knights Order Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club (LEMC), a group made up of law enforcement, first responders, military/veterans, and civilians, and the Knights of Columbus from the Church of Saint Peter in Monticello, assisted with the busy harvesting season. Everyone spent their afternoon picking vegetables at the 3-acre organic farm, which is operated by New Hope Community, of Lock Sheldrake, NY. Working alongside people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, the volunteers unearthed 211 lbs. of farm fresh potatoes and picked 70 lbs. of peppers.

Hope Farm, a cooperative project between New Hope Community and SUNY Sullivan, is a unique and rewarding setting for the employees and volunteers who live in New Hope Community’s residential homes. “The people we support love planting, growing and harvesting a delicious array of fresh vegetables. It’s wonderful to see them learning so much about nature and appreciating the value this brings into so many of our lives,” said Debra J. McGinness, Chief Executive Officer of New Hope Community. “The fall season is a busy time of year and we thank the Knights Order and the Knights of Columbus for generously spending their time to help with the harvest. They really showed a lot of heart!”

Each year, more than 11,000 pounds of fresh organic vegetables are grown on the farm and are used in New Hope Community’s residential homes, by the college’s culinary arts students in meal preparation, and are donated to community nutrition programs and food pantries to combat food insecurity.

The volunteer event was coordinated by David Lee, a retired Monroe, NY, detective and member of the Knight’s Order, Orange County Chapter, who planned the event in honor of his son David Joshua, a resident of New Hope Community. “Helping out at the farm is a really good cause and I am proud that the Knights Order can honor my son with this day of service. We have a great group of people in the club and are always looking for a way to give back to people in the community,” he said. The Sullivan County Chapter of the Knights Order joined in right away once they learned of this local event.

After a quick tour of the farm, led by Head Farmer Megan Greene, the volunteers went to work.

“We were all excited to have the Knights Order and the Knights of Columbus visit us at the farm. Everyone was so friendly,” Greene said. “They engaged with our individuals, were ready to work and were a huge help to us. We would love to have them back again!”

The motorcycles were also a hit with the men and women New Hope Community supports, including Dean, who was thrilled to spend time with the seasoned bikers. Attired in his signature denim vest adorned with Harley Davidson patches, he grinned, saying, “They’re so cool!”

Tara, a resident of one of New Hope Community’s 42 residential homes, arrived promptly for work just in time to welcome the motorcycles as they rolled in. She also shared her knowledge of the farm and explained how she enjoys “helping people and harvesting the crops” before it gets cold out.

Farm Associate Anthony, who has worked on the farm since its inception and participates in New Hope Community’s supported employment program, summed it up, saying, “We could use the extra help and we thank the Knights for everything.”

**About The Knights Order**

Founded July 15th, 2018, The Knights Order is a social organization formed as a Law Enforcement

Motorcycle/Public Safety Club that is dedicated to the support of our fellow brothers, their families

and our community through not-for-profit fund raising efforts. Our members share a passion for

motorcycles and uniting on the open roads to show a unity between law enforcement,

military, first responders and our fellow citizens in the establishment of one cohesive unit. The

strength of the Knights Order LEMC relies solely on the Loyalty, Bravery, Honor and

Commitment of its members and supporters.

**About New Hope Community**

New Hope Community is a not-for-profit human services organization providing supports for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Established in 1975 to serve as a nurturing and caring alternative to large institutions which were found to have violated the most basic human rights and conditions, New Hope Community has become recognized as a leading provider in the human services field. In January 2020, New Hope Community merged with Select Human Services, Inc. (SHS) of Pleasantville, NY, a not-for-profit voluntary agency providing services in Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland Counties. New Hope Community’s breadth of services includes clinical and nursing care, residential services, day programming, community habilitation, self-direction, support brokers, service navigators, education, recreation and leisure activities, a robust supported employment program, summer programs for youths, and so much more. New Hope Community has always maintained a person-centered approach toward enhancing the lives of people with disabilities and actively advocates for individual choice in a person’s efforts to live, work and participate fully in his or her community. New Hope Community and SHS, combined, provide services to over 700 people and employ more than 1,000 staff.