

# Marquette University, UWM: Students continue Make a Difference Day amid pandemic

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MILWAUKEE — Student and staff volunteers from Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee will work together, Saturday, Nov. 7, to support older adults across Milwaukee County in getting their homes ready for winter in Wisconsin.

The effort cohosted by the two universities is part of an annual nationwide event called “Make a Difference Day,” during which organizations join forces to elevate community service.

Student and staff volunteers will visit more than 100 homes in Milwaukee County as they prepare for the winter season ahead. The volunteers will do various projects to winterize the homes of seniors such raking leaves and other yard work.

Make a Difference Day participants will serve outdoors only and are required to wear face masks and practice social distancing to comply with current federal, state, city and university health orders as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Make a Difference Day event is also in partnership with Eras Senior Network, a local nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage and support seniors in leading meaningful lives.

Kathy Gale, executive director of Eras, said Make a Difference Day truly does make a difference in the lives of older adults.

“Every year seniors look forward to volunteers from these institutions arriving to help with fall projects,” Gale said. “Without help, seniors may try to do the work themselves and be at risk of falls in their home. Falls can be devastating for seniors, resulting in hospitalizations and loss of independence. The students’ hours of service are making an appreciable difference for vulnerable neighbors.”

One-third of older adults live alone, and many cannot complete the outdoor tasks required as the winter months approach. In addition, according to the Milwaukee County Department on Aging Area Plan 2019 – 21, when compared to the state of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County has higher percentages of people aged 65 and over living alone.