

LOCAL

Coronavirus pandemic increasing need for foster parents

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ALBANY, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The coronavirus pandemic has created an uncertain environment for foster care parents and children. Due to the risk of COVID-19, fewer foster parents are willing to take kids in fear for they have the virus.

“I just would strongly encourage anyone who has ever had the thought of fostering, now is the time to take some action. It can really make a difference in the lives of kids,” said Albany County Legislator Jeff Perlee.

Perlee has been an Albany County foster parent since 2011 and has fostered a total of six children. He has since adopted three of the six foster children and is in the process of adopting a fourth.

Perlee says the need for foster parents has increased due to the effects of the virus. He said the Albany County Department of Child and Family Services has postponed their in-person training sessions for foster parents.

“The county is doing a good job of addressing the demand. But, you know, as the summer continues, we could face a situation where the number of placements of children could exceed the number of qualified parents,” he explained.

Pastor Greg Clark, of City View Church, and his wife Kristi have opened their hearts to

fostering 14 children. They have officially adopted six children and are in process of adopting two more. The Clarks have worked with the Berkshire Farm Center to guide children to their forever home.

“Lord willing, if we ever got a bigger home, we would have more space and continue to foster or adopt. It is just so exciting to see where kids come from, and how they interact with you. It is thrilling,” the pastor said.

During the pandemic, the Berkshire Farm Center is offering virtual training sessions for foster parents. Clark says there are different types of foster care that could change a child’s life.

“You can foster care part-time, full-time or just on the weekends. You may say, ‘hey, I only have the margin to welcome a kid into my home one weekend a month.’ All of these options are available at the Berkshire Farm Center,” said Clark.

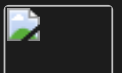
Many agencies say the time is now to foster a child.

“It’s incredibly rewarding whether you’re in a position to foster a child for a long time or just a couple of days,” said Perlee.

For more information on how you can become a foster parent, please contact the Albany County Department for Children, Youth, and Families at (518) 447-7324.

[The Berkshire Farm Center](#) has three easy steps posted on their website to learn more about becoming a foster parent. You can attend an virtual informational session or contact them at 1-844-427-574. You can download their e-book about the top 10 questions about being a foster parent.

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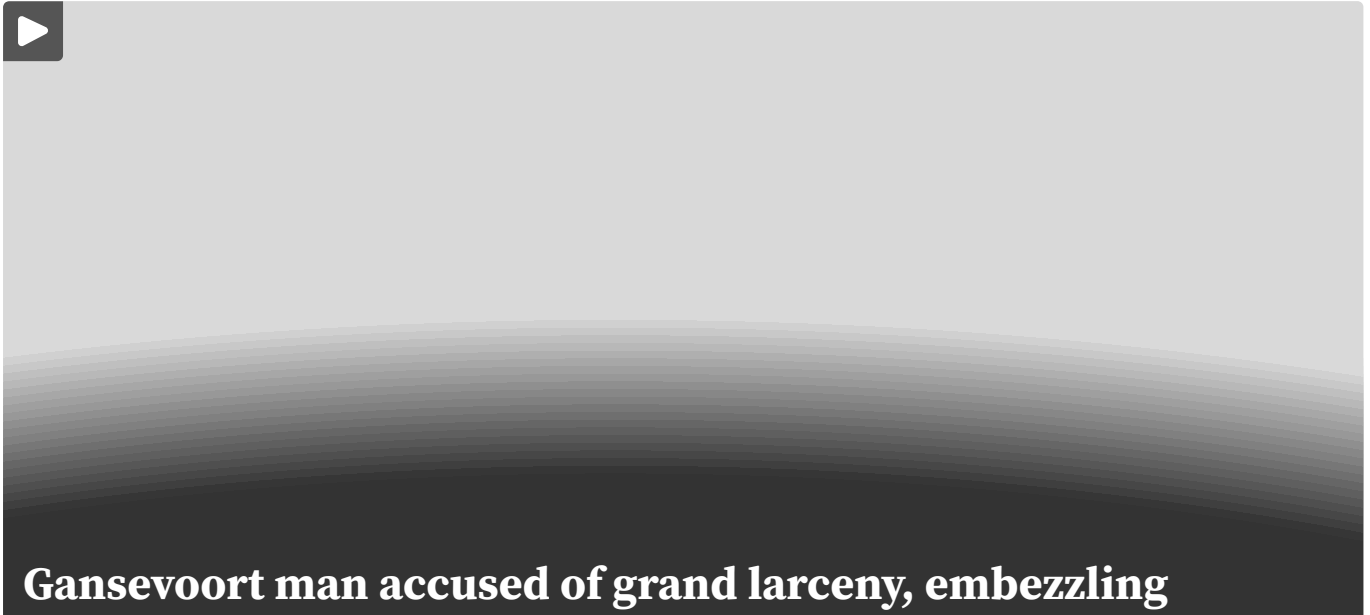
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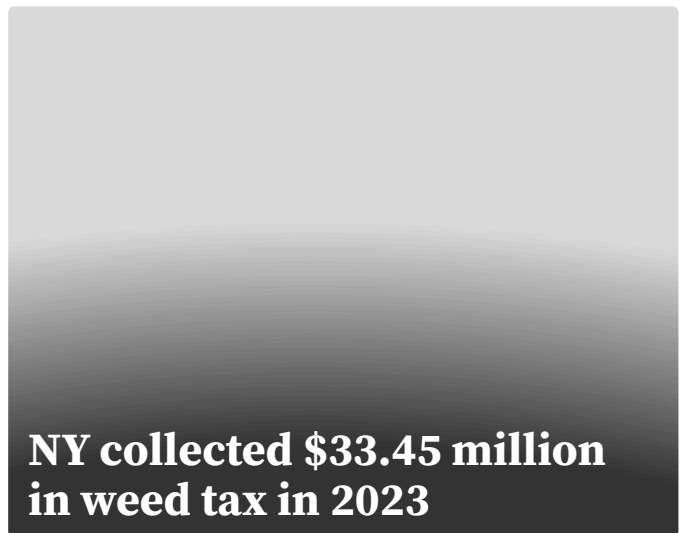
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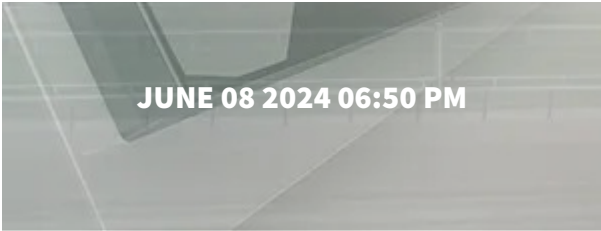
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