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## PRESS RELEASE

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## IL Department on Aging Celebrates Older Americans Month *Releases PSAs to encourage everyone across the state to “Make Your Mark”*

**Springfield, IL** - May is Older Americans Month in Illinois and the state’s Department on Aging (IDoA) is encouraging all Illinoisans to “Make Your Mark” in the lives of our older adults. “Make Your Mark” is the theme of this year’s recognition, which highlights the differences everyone can make in the lives of the state’s more than 2.7 million older adults and in support of our more than 70,000 caregivers.

In recognition of the month, IDoA released two 30 second Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to create awareness of how important it is to support our older family members, friends, and neighbors especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The PSAs are also meant to raise awareness of programs and services available for seniors through IDoA, our 13 Area Agencies on Aging, and 46 Care Coordination Units.

Specifically, in one 30 second PSA, IDoA Director Paula Basta highlights options available to everyone on how they can Make Their Mark.

*We want you to know that you are never too old - or too young - to participate in activities that Make Your Mark on our seniors. Delivering a meal, writing a letter, or just a simple phone call to check-in will certainly bring a smile to anyone’s face. Show them you care. Now, more than ever, let’s do what we can to Make Our Mark in the lives of our older adults!*

Legendary television journalist, producer, and news anchor, Bill Kurtis assisted with the second 30 second PSA.

*Their eyes have seen history first-hand. They’ve seen good times, hard times, dangerous times, and these times. Our seniors have Made Their Mark on our world; Now it’s our turn. May is Older Americans Month in Illinois. Make Your Mark with them, through support, interaction, communication, friendship. And you’ll see life, through their eyes.*

“It’s a privilege to be a part of this campaign,” said Bill Kurtis. “I know when I heard that being over 60 put you among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus, it took me a while to realize how far into the bracket I am at 79. How hard it was to face the reality that these warnings were meant for me, along with the countless other older Illinoisans. After decades of being the caregivers, and the ones on the front lines, we now need to turn to rally all the non-seniors to be ever more caring and concerned about the physical and mental health and well-being of those we honor this May - Older Americans Month.”

When Older Americans Month was established by President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens in 1963, there were only 17 million Americans 65 years of age and older, about a third of older Americans lived in poverty, and there were few programs to meet their needs. Today in Illinois, people 85 years of age and older is the fastest growing segment of the older population, and by 2030, individuals 65 years of age and older will represent almost 25% of Illinois’s population. Members of this age

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[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)  
The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

group, along with individuals with underlying medical conditions, are among those most at risk for health complications related to COVID-19.

For more information on how you can *Make Your Mark*, and for programs and services available to assist older adults in Illinois, visit our website at [www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging) or contact our **Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 888-206-1327)** or by email [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov).

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