

# A focus is put on seniors

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. recently announced city officials will focus on the health and safety of senior residents during September.

Hawkins said Monday the Orange Police Department has begun cracking down on speeding in the neighborhoods around senior buildings in response to motor vehicle complaints near Oakwood Towers. He said police conducted a vehicle checkpoint and pedestrian-decoy operation on Friday that resulted in 88 summonses.

"Seventy-four were issued for failure to stop or yield for a pedestrian; 14 for other offenses; and two vehicles were towed," Hawkins said. "Lt. William Boggier commanded this operation at no cost to the city. The operation was funded by a New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety grant the city recently received."

Hawkins said the operation focused on Oakwood Avenue, between numbers 268 and 400, in an area containing a "high concentration" of senior citizen residences.

"Our seniors notified me of concerns in their area related to speeding vehicles and we responded with a motor vehicle crackdown to ensure their safety," Hawkins said. "I want to assure residents that the Orange Police Department is prepared to repeat this operation whenever speeding in the area gets out of hand. This operation is one piece of our comprehensive approach to keep the residents of Orange safe."

Hawkins said the crackdown coincides with his administration's creation of a street-crimes unit that was formed to combat other public safety concerns. He said both initiatives are a continuation of policies related to senior citizens that he has discussed many times in the past and most recently at the annual senior picnic in August.

During the picnic, Hawkins discuss some of the activities and programs available to senior residents, including the Orange Health and Wellness Alliance, Farmers Market Vouchers, and the Senior Volunteer Program.

"Orange has an Office of Older Adults that provides city seniors with daily office assistance as well as a wide variety of social activities to enjoy throughout the year," Hawkins said. "Over the past three years, we have expanded services for seniors to include the Health and Wellness Alliance, low-cost prescription drugs, and now, a new farmers market voucher program."

"A program of films for seniors is being launched at the Orange Public Library this month," he continued, "and we also provide a schedule of recreation, education, and health programs throughout the year."

Hawkins said that any seniors interested in participating in city-sponsored activities can call his office at 973-266-4005.

*Additional information about the senior programs is available of Page 3.*

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# Seniors briefed on services

During the annual senior picnic at the Orange Reservoir in August, Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. spoke to attendees about services that are available to them.

- The Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs to senior residents.

The program is administered through the city by the state Departments of Agriculture and Health and Senior Services and the Essex County Division on Aging.

Local farmers are recruited and trained to be Certified Farmer Vendors. The farmers benefit from the programs by directly marketing their produce to eligible participants at farmers markets.

Hawkins said Orange will shortly announce when it will host a farmers market for all residents. Eligible senior residents will receive four \$5 checks or vouchers and will be able to be redeem them for fruits, vegetables and herbs at the farmers market.

- The Orange Health and Wellness Alliance provides health education services, preventative health care and primary medical care for senior citizens. In cooperation with Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and the Saint Barnabas Healthcare system, Orange conducts a weekly mini-health clinic in Oakwood



Photo Courtesy City of Orange

**Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. of Orange meets with a resident during the city's annual senior picnic in August. He discussed services that are offered to Orange's older residents.**

Towers, the city's largest senior-citizen complex. It also provides in-home visits by a nurse practitioner for home-bound patients.

The clinic is staffed with physicians, nurses, pharmaceutical support, physical therapists, social workers and other medical specialists on a rotating basis. Services

such as MRIs and X-rays that are not available at the clinic are provided at Beth Israel.

A Senior Wellness Action Team provides an exercise program.

- The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program recently was created, said Hawkins, to connect volunteers older than 55 to service

opportunities in Orange that match their skills and ability.

Hawkins said senior volunteers will be able to utilize their talents and share their skills and knowledge with others in the community.

Contact the Office of the Mayor at 973-266-4005 for additional information about these programs.