



## COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SERVICES

Dear Friends,

From 2011 to 2016, 800 children with special needs went missing across the nation. The fear of a child wandering off or going missing is a constant stress and anxiety for so many special needs families. To help address this, Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro is pleased to bring to Dutchess County the **Life Button Program** to help families and first responders be able to track children who wander or go missing and ensure their safe return using the Life Button 24 device.

Life Button is a device that provides geo-fencing of a property and alerts parents if a child has left the safety of their premises. Geo-fencing defines geographical boundaries, such as a homeowner's property, a school property or a specific radius area. If the child wearing the Life Button leaves the defined area, the device will immediately alert the Life Button call center to send a text to alert the parent. Within minutes, if the text goes unanswered, Life Button call center will immediately contact local emergency dispatch with an alert that a child has gone missing. The Life Button's GPS locating system works anywhere in the Continental United States where there is cellular service. Parents can also use the device to locate their child by texting the word TRACK, to receive a GPS location directly on their cell phone on the location of the child.

Having successfully launched a small pilot of the Life Button program in the fall of 2017 for individuals who are diagnosed with a developmental disability and present a significant risk behavior of wandering or going missing this program is now being expanded into the scope of services Dutchess County can offer families. Please visit the "ThinkDIFFERENTLY" website at [www.thinkdifferently.net](http://www.thinkdifferently.net) to find an informative fact sheet that provides detailed information about the program, including eligibility and participants' responsibilities and the application for this program. If you are interested in participating in this program, please fill out the application and fax it to 845-486-3034, or mail it to:

Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services  
60 Market Street,  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601  
Attention: Sharon Avila

We look forward to providing the added safety of the Life Button program and for helping us to all #ThinkDIFFERENTLY to make Dutchess County a more inclusive and supportive community.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, JD, MPH  
Commissioner

Toni Marie Ciarfella, Ph.D, LCSWR, MPA  
Deputy Commissioner for Special Needs