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## **“Mugs for Rugs” program begins in Oshkosh**

**OSHKOSH, Wis., December 13, 2021** – The Oshkosh Fire Department has started an innovative program to help decrease the number of falls by older adults in Oshkosh. “Mugs for Rugs” allows residents to bring one or more throw rugs (4 x 6 feet or smaller) to a participating location where they may exchange rugs for a free mug. Participating coffee shops will then fill the mug one time for free. Free refills will not be available due to health code standards.

The Oshkosh Fire Department has seen an escalation of EMS calls that are related to falls. Recent data reflects that approximately 20% of Oshkosh EMS calls are fall related. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among adults 65 and older, most often occurring in the home and more specifically in the bedroom and bathroom. Throw rugs contribute to many of these falls. Oshkosh Fire Chief Mike Stanley said, “Mugs for Rugs will help older adults to be safer at home and avoid falls. As our population ages, it’s critical for us to find ways to improve the health of our older adults and their ability to remain independent.”

The Mugs for Rugs initiative received a \$1000 grant from the Ladies Benevolent Society of Oshkosh, and mugs were donated by 4imprint. Local business partners include Caramel Crisp Corner, Mike’s Place Family Restaurant, New Moon Café, Pilora’s Café, and Planet Perk Coffee Houses. The Oshkosh Seniors Center is also participating. Residents may turn in as many rugs as they want within the 4’ x 6’ size limit, in exchange for one mug. For more information about this program, contact John Holland, Oshkosh Fire Department Public Information Officer, at (920) 236-5249.

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