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Home & Garden

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## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

### How a Lifetime of Renovating Houses Became a Way of Building Family

*Featured Writer*

**Sarah Tranum**

I was eight years old when I picked up my first hammer with the full intention of causing destruction.

Good destruction, of course.

It was demolition, and to an eight-year-old, there are few things more satisfying than learning you are allowed (encouraged, even) to help knock something down. The house was the first one my parents ever bought: a two-family fixer-upper in a rural suburb that they dreamed of turning into a one-family home. “Fixer-upper” is a generous term. The house leaned a little. The windows were cracked. I still remember waking up one winter morning in the bedroom I shared with my two brothers and feeling snowflakes drift in through the broken glass.

But my parents never seemed discouraged.

They had started their family young, my mom at 16 and my dad at 18, and by the



Todd & Sarah Tranum with their children from left to right: Ryan (son-in-law), Lelsea and Calvin (grandson), Law, Anna, Maddie.

time they bought that house, it represented something much bigger than its sagging walls. It was possibility. It was a start. It was theirs.

They had very little money, but they had vision, determination, and faith that made them see what a house could become instead of what it lacked. My dad liked to remind us that the place had

“good bones” and, if you have that, the rest is simply a blank slate of possibility. He was not a trained carpenter, and his early experience came mostly from building tree forts, but he was fearless about figuring things out, and that confidence became one of the greatest gifts he passed down to us.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 8**

## SPRINGING TO LIFE THIS SEASON



Photography by Sheila Webster

Crab Apple buds



Viburnum in bloom

*Featured Writer*

**Sheila Webster**

Leaves are forming on all the trees now, and the crab apples are just beginning to go from bud to blossom. Some of the earliest blooms have come and gone – daffodils, hyacinths, snowdrops. Meanwhile, green shoots in the earth

get larger each day as they grow bit by bit to eventually form lilies, Shasta daisies, coneflowers, iris, and more. It’s still far too early to plant annuals and vegetables, but there’s still plenty to do in the garden.

This is cleanup time in my flower beds. Pruning shears and a rake have been

my most-used tools so far this spring. All winter long I leave the leftover fall debris. Those remaining brown stalks from Black Eyed Susans, Shasta Daisies, and coneflowers, and the inevitable dry leaves embedded around them, provided cold-weather cover for insects. Now that

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**

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Americans spend **\$48 billion annually** on lawn and garden equipment.

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Sources: National Gardening Association, Garden Media Garden Trends Report

Editorial with Lori Cornell

# TURN LOCAL FOR YOUR HOME & GARDEN NEEDS



*Publisher*  
**Lori Cornell**

share their talents with you!

I know it's sometimes a challenge - and I'm certainly not throwing stones in my own "glass house" - but this week is such a testament as to how we can work together as a community to support local businesses as much as possible. Consider the value of your smaller mom and pop shops and neighborhood experts for your home and garden needs this season, and remember the critical role that these small businesses play in sustaining our local economy.

Our community newspaper is case and point. We appreciate this chance to feature home and garden-related businesses, not only to recognize them for the high-quality home improvements they provide, but to highlight them as the contributing community leaders that they are. As Chautauqua County's only free weekly newspaper, we rely upon, and are truly grateful for, the support of our generous business partners. Their support, for and confidence in, our community's weekly newspaper helps ensure local journalism remains strong and that you may keep reading!

Together, we can all do our part to continue to help make Chautauqua County a great place to live, work and do business...and get our home and garden improvements done well this season!

It's finally time to get outside, celebrate and cultivate our Homes & Gardens! We proudly present this annual edition with our trusted recommendations, practical advice and inspiring stories to conjure up your passion to roll up your sleeves and get into project mode! DIY what you wish and/or **we are so happy to connect you with the impressive list of professionals found here on page two**, with their respective ads throughout this edition. Call me personally if you need further direction. These experts truly represent the sort of hard work, ingenuity and beautiful fabric that we know so well in our community.

The entire home improvement industry - from construction and renovations to lawn care and gardens - is a prime example of Chautauqua County's small business community at its best. Look no further than this edition of the Gazette. We are so proud to feature and wholeheartedly recommend over FORTY (!!!) different LOCAL contractors and retailers that stand ready to

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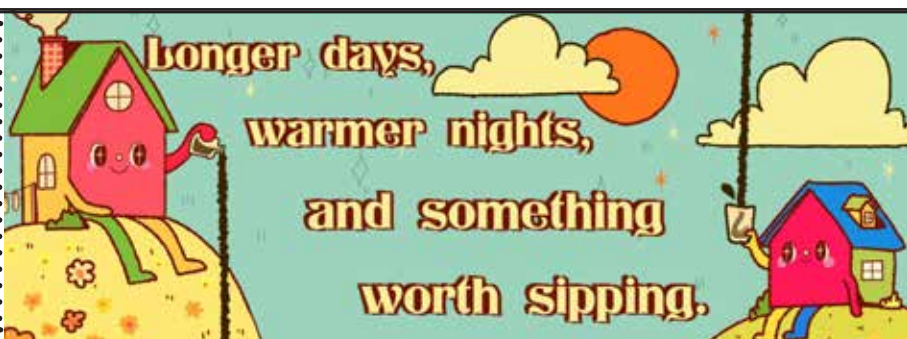
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# Faith Matters

## Get your Hands Dirty



*Featured Writer*

**Rev. Holly Clark-Porter**  
Pastor, Fredonia Presbyterian

Every year around Earth Day, we get a burst of motivation. We buy the plants. We sketch the garden beds. We picture ourselves as the kind of people who casually harvest herbs at golden hour. And then, five minutes in, we remember gardening is dirty.

Not aesthetically messy. Actually dirty. Fingernails packed with soil. Knees damp from the ground. It turns out that one of the biggest barriers to tending a garden is the simple fact that you have to touch the earth.

Which, if you've spent any time in church, should sound familiar. In the Gospel of John, Chapter 9, Jesus heals a man born blind in a way that feels...a little uncomfortable. He spits on the ground, makes mud, and smears it on the man's eyes. It's not sanitized. It's not distant. It's deeply physical, a little strange, and undeniably earthy.

And before we rush to turn that into a neat metaphor about “seeing clearly,” it's worth pausing. Blindness is not a problem to be fixed for someone to be whole or beloved. That's not the point. The point is the method. The medium. The fact that healing, transformation, connection, it happens through contact. Through earth. Through the willingness to get our hands into something real. Which can make a lot of us \*cough, especially Christians\* uncomfortable.

Gardening teaches that whether we like it or not.

You cannot coax tomatoes out of avoidance. You cannot grow basil through good intentions alone. At some point, you have to kneel down and pay attention. What does this soil need? Is it dry? Compacted? Depleted? What has been taken from it, season after season, without being restored?

If we're honest, those are justice questions too.

Because soil doesn't just “fail” on its own. It gets overworked. Stripped. Neglected. Sound familiar? Communities do too. Neighborhoods do too. People do too. And the work of repair, the work of justice, is rarely clean. It asks something of us. Time. Proximity. Discomfort. The humility to admit we don't fully understand what's needed yet.

It's easier to stay on the porch, admiring the idea of a garden. It's easier to talk about “helping” from a safe distance. But nothing grows there.

Growth happens when we step in. When we learn the rhythms of a place. When we listen more than we assume. When we invest in the long, slow work of tending—not fixing, not saving, but tending.

And yes, it will get under your nails.

But here's the thing: that dirt? It's not just mess. It's possibility. It's the place where seeds split open and become something more. It's the place where life insists on pushing up through what looks like nothing.

So maybe this year, as you think about home and garden, you don't aim for perfection. Maybe you aim for participation.

Plant something. Sure. But also pay attention to what you're planting yourself in. What communities are you tending? What systems are you willing to get close enough to actually understand? Where might you need to stop hovering and start kneeling?

Because sometimes, the most sacred thing you can do is get your hands dirty.

*The Rev. Holly Clark-Porter is pastor of Fredonia Presbyterian Church. An irreverent reverend, she's interested in making people feel seen, empowered, and welcome to a big, big table. Holly and husband, KC, love restoring their 1920s home, growing herbs, and doting on their pets. She is a graduate of Schreiner University and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and her expertise/writing has appeared in outlets including Huffington Post and Call to Worship, with features on NPR.*

Pat's Pen with Pat Locke

# SPRING FEVER



Contributing Writer  
**Pat Locke**

blooms remind us that even the longest winters eventually give way to something bright, hopeful and new as does the bright yellow, bell-shaped flowers of the forsythia bushes being a traditional indicator of spring's arrival.

Springtime is the sound of birds returning at daybreak, the distant hum of a lawn mower and the familiar creak of a screen door opening. It's the sight of robins tugging at the thawing ground and neighbors lingering outside just a little longer. These small sights and sounds quietly signal what we've been waiting for all winter, the gentle welcome return of spring.

Spring fever isn't just about the weather. It's about possibility and the quiet feeling that something new is just around the corner. We find ourselves opening windows and breathing in the fresh spring air. And each year, like the season itself, a gentle, familiar and reassuring feeling returns to tell us that brighter days always find their way back.

Springtime reminds us that winter, no matter how long, never gets the final word.

Spring Fever doesn't arrive all at once it sneaks in quietly, usually on a mild afternoon when the sun lingers just a little longer and the air finally loses its winter grip. Heavy coats are left behind and suddenly everything feels possible again. After months of overcast skies and careful steps .. something shifts.

The sight of tulips and daffodils are often the first cheerful signs that spring has truly arrived. Almost overnight, they appear in yards and along sidewalks, brightening spaces that only weeks before were still touched by winter. Daffodils nod gently in the breeze, while tulips stand a little taller as if quietly announcing the season's return. Their colors of soft yellows, warm reds and gentle pinks feel especially welcome. Each spring these familiar

## HILL & DALE GARDEN CLUB



The Hill & Dale Garden Club of Chautauqua & Warren Counties recently hosted a presentation by local author, owner and horticulturist, Adrienne Ploss, at Panama Methodist Church. She discussed the placement of stones & statues to enhance their appeal and enjoyment of our home gardens. Her presentation shared her fourth-generation family farm's history and beginnings as her ancestral immigrants settled near Mayville over 100 years ago. Adrienne combines her love of family and horticulture in her two books: "Go Back You Forgot The Flowers" and another to be published later this year. More info can be found on her Facebook page: Hickory Hurst Farm and website: gobackyouforgottheflowers.com. Come visit her farm!

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## Home Is Where the Heart Is

*Continued from Front Page*

Every house my parents bought had good bones and a very long to-do list. But they had a gift for seeing possibility where others saw burden, and over time that vision changed the course of our family's life. With each renovation, they built equity, stability, and a future that looked very different from where they had started. Neither of them had a college degree, and they knew there were limits to how far a paycheck alone could stretch. So they found another way: with courage, sweat equity, and a willingness to take on what others would have passed by.

As kids, we were part of it all, whether we liked it or not. We knocked down walls, hauled debris, painted rooms, and watched spaces slowly transform. (Going to the dump is still one of my favorite past-times.) I argued with my brothers and whined quite a bit because, let's face it, that was not the "fun" our friends were having at the time. But somewhere in all that noise, something important took root in me.

I learned that I loved it.

I loved the creative problem-solving. I loved seeing something neglected become beautiful. I loved learning how to do practical things that saved money and created value. Most of all, I loved that building was my dad's happy place, and as a little girl, I loved being able to share that with him. Truth be told, I still do!

Looking back, I can see that home was never just about the houses. It was about family. Every house my parents bought became the family home because we all had a hand in shaping it. We did not just live there. We made it ours.

My grandmother often said, "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger." At the time, that sounded like one of those sayings adults repeat because they can. But in hindsight, she was right. Those years gave me more than memories and practical skills. They built resilience. Grit. Confidence. They taught me not to be afraid to try.

That lesson followed me into adulthood.

When I bought my first house with my first husband in 2001, it was a foreclosed-upon "beauty" in the city of Jamestown that we purchased for \$23,000. Other people might have seen a mess. I saw another house with good bones.

Then life shifted, as it does. There was di-



Sarah and her dad, Jim Barnett



Sarah with her grandsons, Oliver and Calvin Fitzpatrick

voice. There was remarriage. There was the beautiful and complicated work of blending a family. I had two daughters. My husband had a son and a daughter. Suddenly, the life we were building no longer fit the house we were in.

That search led us to Maple Springs, a hidden gem in the best little community in Chautauqua County. The house we found was another foreclosure: a three-family home with a detached garage that had been turned into another apartment. Plenty of space, plenty of problems. In other words, exactly the kind of place I had been raised not to fear.

The bones were good, so I did not hesitate. Thankfully, my husband values frugality as much as he enjoys a good adventure, so he was all in too.

What followed was one of the biggest renovation projects of my life, and one of the most meaningful. Blending families can be challenging. Love is there, but belonging takes time. We needed more than a roof over our heads. We needed something that would bring us together. We did what my parents had done: we gave the kids tools and made them part of the process. They knocked down walls with sledgehammers, helped paint, laid flooring, and hung drywall. We built bonfires and burned old decking. We got dirty. We got tired. We laughed a lot. And without fully realizing it, we built more than rooms and hallways. We built connection. We built

trust. We built shared ownership of a life we were creating together.

Just as it had been when I was growing up, family showed up. In our family, when someone has a project, people come. They bring tools, know-how, willing hands, good humor, and a cold drink for the end of the day. There is something deeply moving about a home touched by so many hands. The place belongs not just to the people who live there, but to the larger story of the family itself.

When I was 11, I made a wooden plaque for my parents in the shape of a house. I carefully inscribed the words, "Home is where the heart is." At that age, I did not fully understand the depth of what I was saying. I just knew it was a good thought. My parents knew the importance of those words. That keepsake has been displayed in every house they have owned. Today, it hangs in their kitchen, the place where our family still gathers most often. Because home is not just where you eat dinner or keep your belongings. It is where people gather. Where children learn. Where traditions are handed down. Where hard work becomes memory. Where love takes practical form.

Now I find myself in another full-circle season. Our children are becoming homeowners themselves, and the work continues. They call when they need help with a bathroom, a floor, or a pro-

ject that feels just big enough to be intimidating. My dad still shows up. My mom still helps. But now I am often the one guiding the next step, watching the kids learn to use power tools and trust themselves the way I once learned to.

That may be one of the greatest joys of all: seeing confidence become legacy.

Homes and families have a lot in common. Both require vision. Both demand patience. Both go through seasons of mess, repair, and reinvention. Sometimes things crack. Sometimes they lean. Sometimes they let the snow in. But if the bones are good, if there is love, determination, and a willingness to keep building, then almost anything can be restored.

I picked up my first hammer thinking I was helping tear something down. What I did not know was that I was also beginning a life shaped by building: houses, families, memories, and a sense of home that has carried me through every transition.

Home, I have learned, is more than a place you live.

It is the foundation that holds a family together.

*Sarah Trantum is a proud Do-It-Herselfer and the director of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Jamestown Community College.*



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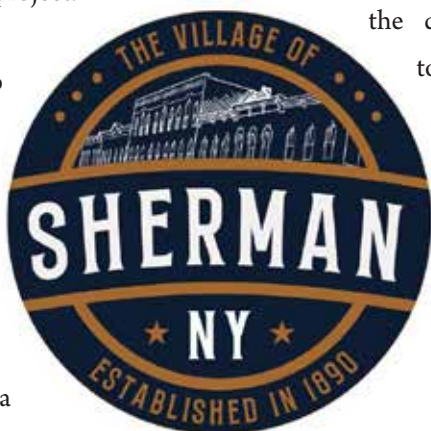
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# Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Design Sherman, NY

*Contributed by*  
**St. Susans Center**

The Village of Sherman is pleased to announce the launch of the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Design Project made possible by the generous support of the **Chautauqua Region Economic Development Corporation** awarding the \$15,000 grant towards the \$30,000 project.

The project aims to provide engineering planning and technical assistance to develop a coordinated conceptual design for a comprehensive Downtown Sherman streetscape improvement initiative. The detailed Engineering Planning Report will include a project narrative, conceptual drawings, preliminary cost estimates, and a phased implementation strategy. The planning effort will assess existing conditions and infrastructure constraints and develop practical, community-focused concepts to enhance pedestrian safety and ADA ac-



cessibility, modernize roadway and parking configurations, strengthen the functionality and appeal of business frontages, and improve connectivity to nearby trails and key community destinations.

This project will establish a clear roadmap for reinvestment in Downtown Sherman. The outcome will position the downtown corridor to support increased economic activity, improved public safety, enhanced walkability, and long-term community vitality.

“We are very grateful to for the **Chautauqua Region Economic Development Corporation’s** commitment to the Village of Sherman,” said Mayor Colleen Meeder. This is the next step in further developing the 2023 Village of Sherman Downtown Visioning and Design Complete Streets Plan supported by Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth and GoBike.

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## Allegany Nature Pilgrimage Early-Bird Registration Through April 24



For those who love the outdoors and want to learn more about it, the 2026 Allegheny Nature Pilgrimage is the place to be Friday to Sunday, May 29-31. More than 100 naturalist-led nature walks, field trips and classes fill the weekend with activities for all ages – like this Beaver Walk. Details and registration at AlleganyNaturePilgrimage.com.

## Springing to Life This Season

*Continued from Front Page*

it's been warm enough, the remaining stems from last growing season can be removed, clearing the way for all the new growth that's already begun under the brush. It's also a great time to divide some perennials, especially lilies and daisies. Spring is inevitably muddy, but it's the perfect time to edge flower beds, pull weeds, and mulch. Rubber garden boots are donned daily and discarded routinely in the garage to keep that mud out of the house.

Despite the routine nature of garden work – planting, dividing, cleaning up, and keeping multiplying plants in check – this spring feels brand new to me. Previous spring work in the garden was confined to evenings or weekends but having recently retired I now have no such time constraints. Frankly, it's a bit disorienting as I find numerous ways to fill my newly found time. Rainy days have so far been spent sewing, writing, and planning projects. But sunny days are for the garden, and I'm so grateful to have had the sun and warmth recently.

When we think about the seasons of life, they sometimes mirror the seasons in the garden. Spring is for new growth and the promise of things to come. Summer is gloriously colorful with flowers in full bloom and trees in full leaf. Autumn is when the summer growth fades and the leaves turn color and then fall. Winter is the cold end when we hunker down and view the garden from indoors. This retirement age is often considered the autumn of our life, as growth fades and we approach winter, but this year I'm viewing the seasons with new eyes.


Spring has arrived gloriously with greenery sprouting forth all around.



Submitted Photo

I've had time to witness miniature buds on the blueberries, and dogwoods as they begin to form flowers. I'm watching daily now as the smallest purple shoots expand into what will eventually become lilacs. The earliest leaves of the forsythia have turned from yellow to green. The emerging colors in the garden are inspiring growth and creativity; feeling like this autumn season in life is a spring awakening sparking fresh, creative processes. After decades of engaging my brain in work-related tasks (albeit some of them creative) this season when I'm not behind a desk feels like a time to stretch and grow and try new things. My head is spinning with possibility and opportunity, just as my garden offers a glimpse of the colorful months to come. Now it's a question of how to reign in and direct these creative sparks into productive processes.


Whether you're a gardener or not, and no matter your age, take a moment to enjoy the natural world unfolding around us this spring. Watching the renewal of trees, shrubs, and perennials is awe inspiring itself, but feeling it in your soul as a metaphor for a new season of life is a daily gift to unwrap, especially if it propels you towards some creative act. Happy spring!



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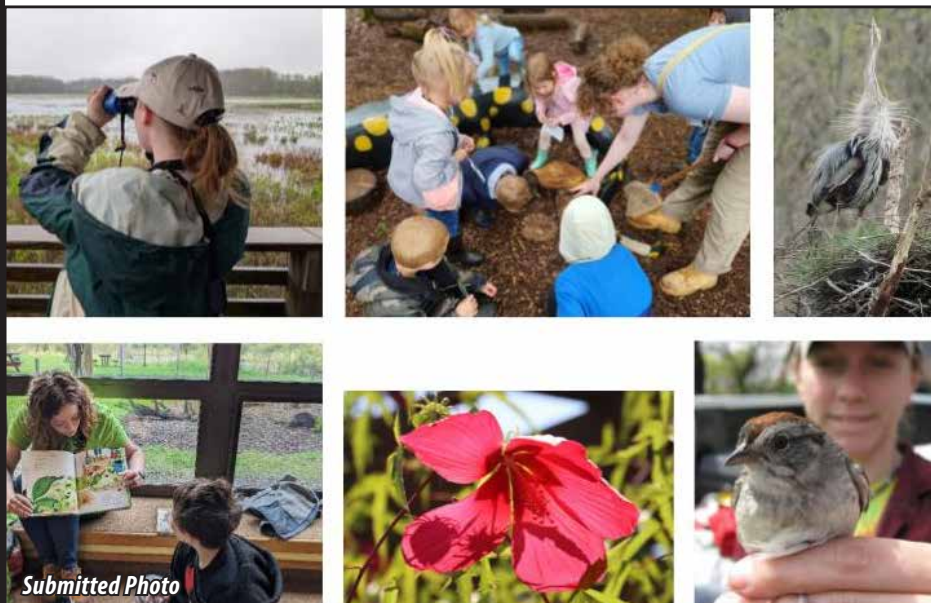
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## JAM-PACKED WEEK FOR AUDUBON!



Submitted Photo

Pictured clockwise from upper left: Support the Audubon Community Nature Center Birdathon at AudubonCNC.org/birdathon-2026. If you love nature, on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 28 and 29, education staff can teach you to be a Trail Guide volunteer for student groups coming for Discovery Walks this spring. Join retired JCC biology prof Jan Bowman at First Friday, 11 a.m., to take a closer look at the plumage and behaviors of both tropical and local birds, like this Great Blue Heron. Come yourself or bring the family to observe bird scientists in action and birds up close at Bird Bandings anytime 7–11 a.m. on Saturday mornings May 2–16. The theme for the Audubon Photography Club on Saturday at 10 a.m. is Flowers or Close-ups; pictured is “Red Flower” by Emma Soto of Gurley, Ala., an Audubon Nature Photography Contest winner. Bring your favorite 2–8-year-old(s) and go on nature reading adventures at First Sunday Story Time, May 3, 12:30–1 p.m. The Nature Center is located at 1600 Riverside Road, one-quarter mile east of Route 62 between Jamestown and Warren. For details on all these, call (716) 569-2345 or visit AudubonCNC.org/events.

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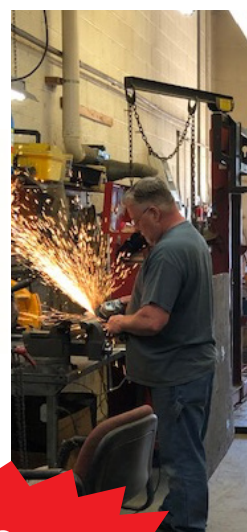
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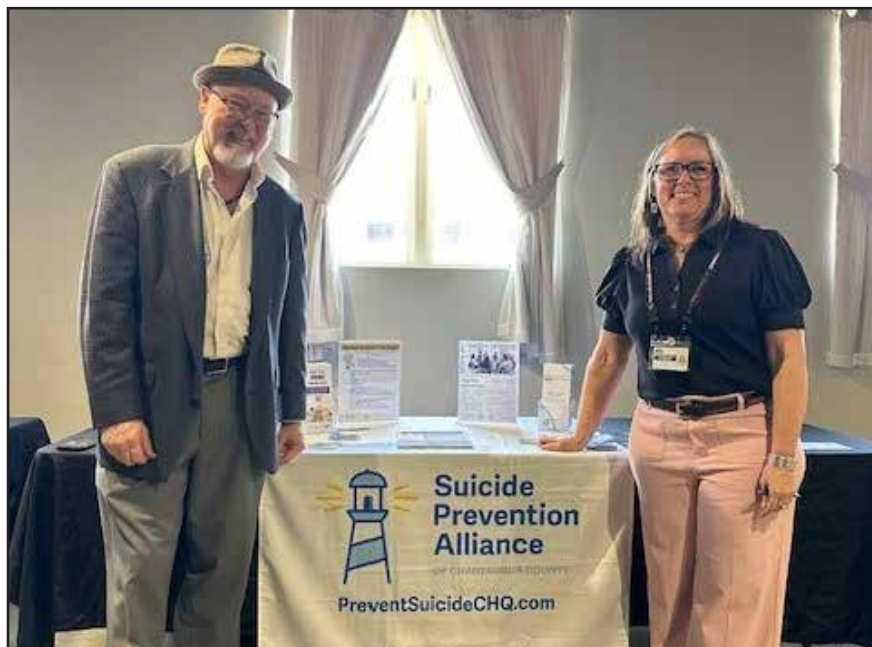
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**Over 40 Chautauqua County Key Leaders Unite to Advance Suicide Prevention Efforts**



*Contributed by Chautauqua County*

Chautauqua County recently brought together leaders, community partners, and individuals with lived experience for the Chautauqua County Suicide Prevention Key Leader Summit, a countywide, half-day working session focused on turning strategy into action.

Held at Wicked Warren’s in Jamestown, the summit created a collaborative environment where participants worked across sectors to examine current efforts, identify gaps, and help shape the future of suicide prevention in Chautauqua County.

Attendees included representatives from law enforcement, education, behavioral health, public health, local industry, other community-based organizations, and members of the Suicide Prevention Alliance of Chautauqua County coalition, all whose voices are essential to this work.

The summit opened with remarks from Carmelo Hernandez, Director of Community Mental Hygiene Services and Commissioner of Social Services, followed by presentations from Garra Lloyd-Lester of the Suicide Prevention Center of New York State /Office of Mental Health and Carri Raynor, Director of the Suicide Prevention Alliance of Chautauqua County.

The working session focused on aligning local efforts with the New York State Suicide Prevention Strategy (2026–2030) while grounding that work in local data and community needs. Discussions were centered around four key focus areas of wellness, education, veterans, and outreach. The group worked to identify gaps, missing voices, and unmet

needs reflecting the county’s current prevention efforts and opportunities for growth.

“Behind every number is a life. A family. A community,” said Raynor. “This work is about making sure our efforts reflect the real experiences and needs of the people we serve.”

Throughout the summit, participants were asked to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities within their systems, while also exploring how to better coordinate efforts across sectors. Key themes that emerged included a strong commitment to prevention across the county, a need for increased awareness and education, gaps in access, particularly among vulnerable populations, and a shared desire for stronger coordination and communication.

As Chautauqua County continues to build on initiatives such as the Lock & Talk CHQ program, the Sudden Loss Care Team, and community-based trainings and events, the summit marked an important step toward developing a more unified, countywide approach to suicide prevention.

“This work cannot be done in silos,” said Hernandez. “It takes shared ownership, collaboration, and a commitment to moving beyond intention and into accountability.”

Next steps will include compiling input from the summit, identifying shared priorities, and continuing collaboration across partners to develop a coordinated action plan aligned with the state strategy.

The summit was coordinated by the Suicide Prevention Alliance of Chautauqua County. A continental breakfast and lunch were provided for attendees.

## Success in Small Spaces: The Power of Container Growing Gardening

Contributed by

**Sharon Rinehart**

Chautauqua County Master Gardener Volunteer  
Cornell Cooperative Extension

For many people, the biggest barrier to gardening is space. But you don't need a large yard—or any yard at all—to grow flowers, vegetables, or herbs. Container gardening offers a flexible, creative, and highly successful way to garden in small or challenging spaces. Whether you live in an apartment, have limited mobility, or simply want to brighten a patio or porch, containers can open the door to a rewarding growing season.

### Choosing the Right Container

The foundation of a healthy container garden begins with the container itself. A good container must have drainage holes so excess water can escape. Most plants thrive in containers that are at least 12 inches wide and 6–8 inches deep, though larger containers allow for more root growth and better moisture retention.

Containers can be made from almost anything—wood, plastic, ceramic, metal, concrete, or paper fiber. Creative gardeners often repurpose items such as milk jugs, barrels, or sections of drainpipe. As long as the container drains well, the possibilities are endless.

For deep containers, fillers such as crushed cans, plastic bottles, or Styrofoam peanuts can reduce the amount of soil needed and make the container lighter. Cover fillers with landscape fabric to prevent soil from settling into the gaps. Large containers can also be placed on wheeled platforms or dollies for easy movement.

### Soil: The Key to Healthy Plants

Garden soil should never be used in containers—it compacts easily and prevents proper water flow. Instead, choose a high-quality potting mix, or create your own using:

- 1 part peat moss
- 1 part garden loam
- 1 part coarse builder's sand
- Slow-release fertilizer (141414)

A soil test can help determine whether additional nutrients or pH adjustments are needed.

### Flower Containers: Instant Color Anywhere

Flower containers are a favorite for adding color to patios, decks, driveways, and entryways. When selecting plants, match them according to their needs:

- **Light:** Don't mix sun-loving plants with shade plants.
- **Moisture:** Keep plants with similar watering needs together.

Plant tags and seed packets provide helpful guidance.

For a visually appealing arrangement, many gardeners follow the “thriller, filler, spiller” method:

- **Thriller:** A tall, eye-catching plant
- **Filler:** Mounding plants that add fullness
- **Spiller:** Trailing plants that cascade over the edge

Odd numbers of plants—three, five, or seven—create natural balance. Mixing flowers with interesting foliage, such as colorful sweet potato vines, adds texture and contrast.

### Vegetables in Containers: Fresh Food at Your Fingertips

Vegetables grow remarkably well in containers, and with succession planting, you can harvest multiple crops from the same pot throughout the year. For example:

- Early spring: lettuce
- Summer: peppers or beans
- Fall: kale or lettuce again

Plant vegetables at the same time you would in a traditional garden. The size of the container determines what you can grow:

- **1-gallon container:** 1 cabbage, or 2 cucumbers, or 2–3 green bean plants
- **2-gallon container:** 1 eggplant or 2 pepper plants
- **3-gallon or larger:** ideal for tomatoes

Vining crops like cucumbers and pole beans benefit from a trellis placed directly in the container.

### Sunlight, Placement, and Watering

Most container gardens need at least 5 hours of direct sunlight, though 8–10 hours is ideal for many plants. One advantage of containers is mobility—move them to adjust for heat, shade, or wind as the seasons change.

Containers dry out faster than garden beds. In hot weather, they may need watering twice a day. Check soil moisture by inserting your finger into the top inch of soil:

- If it's dry, water the plant.
- If soil becomes extremely dry and water runs off, immerse the container in a bucket until the surface becomes moist again.

If your potting mix contains fertilizer, you won't need to add more for 8–10 weeks. Otherwise, use a water-soluble fertilizer at the recommended strength.

### Learning as You Grow

Container gardening invites creativity and experimentation. Keep a gardening journal to track what works best in your space and climate. Each season brings new discoveries, and even challenges become valuable learning experiences. With the right container, soil, and plant selection, anyone can enjoy the beauty and satisfaction of gardening—no yard required.



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*Featured Writer*

**Sarah Sorci**

On a sunny morning in Lakewood, a woman seated in a wheelchair weeds carrots in a table-height raised bed. Across the patio, a young man harvests green beans from a vertical “tower” garden. I use a garden cart to bring tomato planters to a man who prefers to stay indoors. I invite him to harvest the bright red fruit right from his chair.



Sarah and Jesse Slate work together to pot up plants at Aspire of WNY.

Every Thursday morning, I facilitate the Beautiful Blooms Garden Program at Aspire of Western New York’s Mall Boulevard Day Hab facility. The program provides opportunities for individuals to connect with nature and build confidence while contributing to the garden’s success.

The Beautiful Blooms program is shaped by its participants. When we start seeds in the spring, individuals select the vegetables, herbs, and flowers that excite them. Participants’ physical abilities and preferences determine the infrastructure we use. In 2023, Aspire installed an indoor hydroponic garden unit thanks to an Innovations Grant from the New York State Association of Day Service Providers. We cultivate basil, lettuce, and sweet peppers in the unit year-round using grow lights. Plants are arranged vertically from 2 ft to 5 ft in height, providing opportunities to garden from a sitting or standing position. The unit allows individuals who prefer to stay indoors to participate, and it keeps us busy on rainy days.

While working on production farms for several seasons, I reaped the benefits of regular exercise and fresh air. Seeing our vegetable plants thrive and nourish the community was satisfying and empowering. I also saw that farms and gardens can be difficult to navigate for elders and people with disabilities. Several elderly customers struggled to walk on paths made of loose gravel or uneven mulch. Planting exclusively in the ground made my job unavailable to people who use wheelchairs—at least with the tools we had available.

Growing up with my brother Matt, who has autism, showed me that inaccessible spaces are an invitation to design more creatively. I wondered, how can we make gardening and farming available and enjoyable for everyone who wants to take part?

In 2014, I completed a Horticultural Therapy program through the Horticultural Therapy Institute/Colorado State University. The

program introduced me to the world of accessible garden design and adaptive tools. We experimented with pruners designed for people with low grip strength, long-handled tools to reach the ground from a chair, and garden stools for people experiencing fatigue or balance issues. We considered how different plants provide harvesting opportunities at various heights—from ankle-high lettuce to trellised pole beans and cucumbers that tower above my head.

At HTI, I learned that any individual can be matched with a garden design that not only meets their needs, but also helps them achieve their goals. At Aspire, participants use the garden as a tool to meet daily goals around socialization, volunteerism, and more.

Inclusion is possible not only in small gardens, but also on production farms. Care farming uses therapeutic farming to promote health, well-being, and belonging. Care farms are incredibly diverse; examples include veteran-owned beekeeping operations, equine therapy for people experiencing mental health challenges, and vegetable farms employing people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Care Farming Network (CFN) is a national initiative providing networking resources and support to care farms across the U.S. Several Western New York care farms are featured on the member map on CFN’s website.

With therapeutic horticulture, I’ve learned that inviting people with disabilities to lead benefits everyone. Gardening with a raised bed is easier on my body, too. A garden with diverse plantings at a range of heights is more beautiful than a monoculture—and the whole community can enjoy that beauty.

*Sarah Sorci is an herbal educator, therapeutic gardening facilitator, and the owner of Sweet Flag Herbs. She serves as Program Associate at Care Farming Network. She lives in Gerry.*

## 2026 Interactive Festival in Downtown Warren This Saturday



This Saturday, May 2, is the fourth annual Interactive Festival in downtown Warren, Pa. The 11 a.m.–3 p.m. event is free and fun for all ages. John Beard will do his Magic Show, more than 20 booths will have all kinds of activities and foods, free plants will be given away, and the Kalkbrenner Brothers will display Vietnam and World War II memorabilia. Kids Town Books in Warren Antiques, 306 Second Avenue, is giving away 1,000 comic books – first come, first served. For more info, visit Facebook.com/FreeBooksForKidsTown. The Festival is presented by and a fundraiser for Free Books for Kids Town, a Warren nonprofit whose mission is children’s literacy and education. Free Books is raising funds to provide books for all kindergarten through eighth grade students in Warren County before the summer break. Learn more at FreeBooksKidsTown.com.



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# Business of the Week

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## SPRING SPRUCE UP: EVERYDAYS TRUE VALUE READY FOR SPRING PROJECTS



*Editor-in-Chief*  
**Katrina Fuller**

Spring has sprung; there are bees buzzing, flowers bloom and, for many Chautauqua County citizens, to-do lists are growing. From indoor improvements to gardening or preparing for the long-awaited 'outdoor living' season, folks are making plans and finding places to source the things they need. Mike Laurin, owner of Everyday's True Value in Jamestown, is confident his store can help customers get their projects done and make their springtime dreams come true.

"Springtime is the time of year when customers begin transitioning from general repair projects to working on projects that they enjoy," Laurin said. "It's nice to help customers with these projects, and we enjoy seeing before and after pictures. I think most people are just excited to be outside, including us!"

Everydays True Value, located at 797 Foote Ave., is a local hardware store that is family-owned and has a long history of providing area residents with all their DIY, outdoor and repair needs. Laurin said the company's great customer service, dedication to the community and expertise are fundamental to their operation.

"One of our core values at Everyday's True Value is to treat our customers and coworkers as family; it is that relationship that led me to purchase Everyday's," he said. "On October 20, 1998, I began a part-time job at my neighborhood hardware store that would transition to a lifelong career."

In his 28 years with the company, Laurin said his favorite part is knowing everyone who works at the store prides themselves on being helpful to customers. He is proud of the fact that his staff is extremely knowledgeable and has a long history in their respective fields.

"There is always someone here to ask," he said. "If we don't have something, they will try to order it for customers or recommend somewhere else to find it. That's the benefit of working with such a diverse group of people: someone here has seen it before and knows how to help. Even when customers ask for that 'thingamabob,' we usually know what they want."

Laurin said long-time Jamestown residents may remember the store as Southside Hardware or Green Brothers Hardware. He is honored to continue that legacy into the future under the Everyday's True Value name.

"I'm not sure when or who started utilizing the brand 'True Value' at this location, but I'm glad they did," he added. "One thing that remains the same is our mission to provide superior customer service, offer excellent products at reasonable prices and employ trained staff who offer valuable advice in a friendly manner. It is this mission that fosters relationships with our customers and drives us to be the best hardware store in town."

The spring season is especially when the values shine. Laurin said customers often return to his store due to the wide array of products and services that it offers. For example, a customer doesn't need to purchase certain equipment to get their projects done; Laurin said the store rents backhoes, excavators, trenchers, rototillers, aerators and dethatchers for those big outdoor projects. Likewise, the store is proud to stock complete product assortments that ensure customers will find what they need all in one place.

"Stocking the full line of products and services is what our customers need to complete their projects," Laurin said. "If a customer wants to plant a garden, they know we have everything they need. Even renting a rototiller to cultivate new garden soil or fertilizer."

Everydays True Value is also a full-service Husqvarna and STIHL dealer for those looking for lawn care equipment. Laurin said lawn-related projects are particularly popular this time of year.

"It's still fun to see the look on someone's face when we fire up their new tractor, push mower, trimmer or saw," he said. "They always smile and are generally excited to get home and start working. There is also a sense of accomplishment after doing yard work."

For those who already own their equipment, Laurin said there are still services that can benefit them at his store. In his experience, he said the most overlooked service this time of year is a general service for outdoor power equipment, such as garden tractors and mowers.

"Even changing the oil and sharpening the blades can help maintain the equipment longer," he said. "It's also easier and cheaper to maintain equipment than to have to order and replace parts. Customers can also do some preventive maintenance by always using fresh fuel. We see a lot of carburetor repair and equipment not running because the fuel being used has been sitting for months."

Aside from lawn care projects, Laurin said painting projects are another quick but impactful project many people undertake in the spring.

"It's something everyone can do that has immediate results," he said. "Thankfully, True Value manufactures great paint at their paint manufacturing plant in Carry, IL. This allows us to sell great products at a reasonable price compared to large national brands."

For those looking for specific colors for their painting projects, Everyday's True Value has them covered. Laurin said they are dedicated to helping customers find the perfect color for them.

"Paint color matching is the most utilized service we do at Everyday's," he added. "We've had customers bring in all sorts of materials to color match, not just paint chips: we've matched colors from pillows, curtains, jerseys and even a plant leaf."

Whatever the project is, Laurin said the tools and supplies residents need can generally be found at Everyday's True Value. When asked what tools he would recommend homeowners or gardeners should

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 22**

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## Local Founder of Refugee Alliance International Speaks Sunday



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**Destiny Gates** is returned from the Middle East to raise funds for her nonprofit Refugee Alliance International. The Randolph native's program provides emergency medical care, food and water to those in desperate need, orphan sponsorship, and psychosocial support programs to help children heal from trauma. She is presenting **"Voices from Gaza"** at the **Jamestown Unitarian church on Sunday, May 3**. A graduate of SUNY Fredonia, Gates studied at a university in the United Arab Emirates and lived in a refugee camp in Palestine for four years. She will speak on her experiences as well as showcase over 30 art pieces created by children living in Gaza. Refugee Alliance International's website is [www.refugee-alliance.org](http://www.refugee-alliance.org). All are welcome to the 10:30 service and coffee hour that follows at 1255 Prendergast Avenue. To participate virtually, use the link at [UUJamestown.org/calendar](http://UUJamestown.org/calendar).

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## Jamestown Farmers Market Moving to New Summer Location on Third Street

Contributed by

### Jamestown Farmers Market

Jamestown Farmers Market (JFM) announced today a new location for its outdoor summer market, moving from its old Third and Main Street location to Third and Pine Street, after approval of their special events permit with the Jamestown City Council. The summer market series kicks off on Saturday, June 6 and will run every Saturday from 9 AM to 1 PM through November 21.

"After considering repeat feedback from vendors, shoppers and the community with requests to place the market in a shadier, more parklike space, the team sought a location for the market that would provide that environment while also remaining in the core of downtown, accessible to all, and with available parking," said Nick Weith, JFM's Director of Food Access. "This move will activate more of Third Street, provide shade to vendors and shoppers alike, and allow the market to naturally grow as more and more people realize they can make a huge impact on our local food system by supporting local farmers and businesses."

Now a program of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, the Jamestown Farmers Market was originally formed in the 1970s (about a decade after the closure of the historic Jamestown Public Market in 1965) by a dedicated group of farmers, producers and individuals with a vested interest in connecting the community with fresh, local food. While there have been some ebbs and flows in the market's operation since the 1970s, JFM has become a community hub through its range of programs and services, providing access to fresh food almost year-round. JFM is seeking photographs and recountings of the Jamestown Farmers Markets throughout the decades: reach out at [info@jfmny.org](mailto:info@jfmny.org) if you have stories to share.

Cash may be used at any vendor, and some vendors may accept credit cards. Any shoppers who wish to use credit

cards can also purchase tokens at the Market Table that can be used as cash with any of the market vendors. SNAP is accepted at JFM, via exchange at the Market Table; JFM also participates in the New York state FreshConnect Checks program, which includes a dollar-for-dollar match of SNAP of up to \$50 per market. Children under the age of 12 can stop by the Sprouts kids activity tent for a \$2 Sprouts Buck that can be used to purchase any food item.

JFM staff are planning special events and themed market weeks, including ArtFest on July 11 with extended market hours until 3 PM, the JFM 5K on August 15, and additional events to be announced. To learn more about the Jamestown Farmers Market, apply to become a vendor, and connect with JFM, please visit [www.jfmny.org](http://www.jfmny.org).

**About Jamestown Farmers Market:** *The Jamestown Farmers Market (JFM) is a vibrant community marketplace featuring fresh, locally grown produce, handmade goods, and delicious prepared*



*foods from regional farmers and artisans. More than just a place to shop, the market is a welcoming gathering space that celebrates local agriculture, supports small businesses, and connects neighbors. In addition to the Saturday farmers market, JFM operates a mobile market, food box program, community garden, and more. Learn more at [jfmny.org](http://jfmny.org).*

*St. Luke's Episcopal Church, located at the nexus of 4th and Main Sts. in downtown Jamestown, works through programs like the Jamestown Farmers Market, New Neighbors Coalition and the St. Luke's Thrift Store to foster a greater sense of belonging, more economic opportunity and a more equitable community. For questions/concerns, please call the church office at 716-483-6405.*

## Today. Tomorrow. Together. Stories That Connect Us



Contributed by

### Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation

In northern Chautauqua County, the story of community is about what happens when people come together to create something better. Through community funds and grants from the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation, that vision becomes reality for local organizations. At the Chautauqua Children's Gym in Fredonia, that story plays out every day.

Children walk through the doors and find a space where they can simply be kids, laughing, moving, and exploring. Some are there for fun. Others are finding calm, building strength, or learning how to regulate their bodies. Most are doing all of those things at once. The remarkable part is you can't always tell the difference. "One child just loves the swing because it's fun. Another is using it to feel regulated. But they're doing it together," said Executive Director Dawn Manzella. This is what inclusion looks like: not separate, not labeled, just shared experience.

Manzella's path to creating the Children's Gym didn't start with a business plan. It started with a relationship. Working at a nonprofit daycare founded by her mother, she



Dawn Manzella, Executive Director of the Chautauqua Children's Gym

met a young boy who had experienced significant challenges early in life. He struggled in traditional environments, and many saw only his limitations. Manzella saw something else. "I realized I was helping him — but he was also helping me," she said. "I was getting just as much out of that experience as I was giving." As she followed his journey into the school system, attending meetings and hearing what couldn't be offered, she felt a growing tension. "There was so much focus on what he couldn't do," she said. "But I kept seeing what he could do."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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## Today. Tomorrow. Together. Stories That Connect Us

### Continued from Front Page

That realization became a turning point. Manzella began to imagine something different, something outside the constraints of a system that couldn't always meet every child's needs. A space where play could be both joyful and therapeutic. A space where children could build confidence without being defined by limitations. Manzella chose to build it in Fredonia, not just because it made sense geographically, but because it's home. "I was born and raised here. This is where my kids are growing up," she said. "I wanted to create something here for this community." From the beginning, the goal was clear: create a space where children of all abilities could come together, and where families could feel supported rather than isolated. "When you're navigating systems, it can feel really lonely," Manzella shared. "We wanted families to know they're not alone."

Inside the gym, that intention is tangible. Children connect over simple things like their favorite colors, trucks, and games. Parents connect too, often finding understanding in one another's experiences. It's not just a program. It's a community. And like many nonprofits, it runs on a careful balance. Birthday parties help cover rent. Daily programming supports operational costs. Before- and after-school care sustains staffing. But the heart of the gym — the specialized equipment that makes inclusive, therapeutic play possible — tells a different story. "We wouldn't be able to purchase this equipment on our own," Manzella said. "And without it, we wouldn't be able to provide the same level of safety or impact." The Chautauqua Children's Gym has been a recipient of grants from Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation, enabling the purchase of needed equipment.

When donors give to Community Funds at the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation, they are investing in more than a moment. Their generosity is carefully stewarded and directed to organizations creating meaningful, local impact. Through that process, funding reached the Chautauqua Children's Gym, supporting the purchase of the equipment that now fills the space with possibility. Equipment that helps

a child take a risk. Equipment that helps another feel calm. Equipment that allows all children to participate together. And from there, the impact grows. A child gains confidence. A parent feels supported. A community becomes more connected. "What we're able to offer now, it just wouldn't be possible without that support," Manzella said.

In northern Chautauqua County, people care deeply. They want to give back, to be part of something meaningful — they just don't always know how. The Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation connects people with purpose. Through the Community Foundation, generosity becomes action. Action becomes opportunity. Opportunity becomes an impact. And stories like the Chautauqua Children's Gym remind us what's possible when we shift the narrative and focus not on limitations but on strengths. When we invest in today. When we work together. When we build for tomorrow. Every gift has a story, and every story has the power to connect us. Visit [nccfoundation.org](http://nccfoundation.org), call 716-366-4892, or email [nccf@nccfoundation.org](mailto:nccf@nccfoundation.org) to learn more about how you can be a part of shaping the future of northern Chautauqua County.

Since its incorporation in 1986, the NCCF has invested nearly \$25 million in northern Chautauqua County through strategic grantmaking, targeted scholarships, and leadership and community collaborations. The NCCF is a tax-exempt charitable organization inherently committed to enhancing the northern Chautauqua community and encouraging local philanthropy. As a nationally accredited community foundation, the NCCF has proven compliance with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations, demonstrating integrity, equity, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in meeting the needs of its community. For more information on the NCCF, visit [www.nccfoundation.org](http://www.nccfoundation.org) or call 716-366-4892.



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## Chautauqua County Emerges as a Leader in New York for Economic and Income Growth



Chautauqua County Executive Paul M. Wendel Jr. delivers his 2026 State of the County address at the Double Tree Hotel in Jamestown on April 21, 2026 highlighting measurable economic gains, strategic infrastructure investments, and a continued commitment to efficient, results-driven government for Chautauqua County residents. Image by Justin Gould / Media Information Officer

### Contributed by Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth

**During his 2026 State of the County Address on Tuesday, Chautauqua County Executive Paul M. Wendel Jr. announced new economic data highlighting significant progress across the county, reinforcing that ongoing development strategies are delivering measurable results.**

"What we're doing is working," said County Executive Wendel. "The latest data confirms that Chautauqua County is on a strong upward trajectory, and our commitment to smart growth, collaboration, and investment is paying off."



According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in data released in February 2026, Chautauqua County ranked as the ninth fastest-growing county economy in New York State, with a gross domestic product (GDP) increase of 4.6 percent from the previous year. Over the past five years, the county's GDP has grown by an impressive 29 percent.

Household prosperity is also on the rise. Median household income increased from \$46,820 in 2019 to

\$58,351 in 2024, representing a 25 percent gain, according to American Community Survey 5-year estimates. In addition, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that Chautauqua County ranked eighth in New York State for year-over-year per capita income growth.

The county is also experiencing steady social progress. Poverty rates have declined from 19.4 percent in 2014 to 17.4 percent in 2024, demonstrating meaningful improvement in quality of life for residents.

"Our progress is not only reflected in economic output, but in the real, positive impact on our residents," Wendel said. "While there is still work ahead, the trajectory is clear."

Key labor indicators further support this positive trend. Unemployment remains stable at 4.7 percent as of December 2025, closely aligning with the New York State average of 4.6 percent.

County leaders attribute this success to a coordinated approach that includes investing in infrastructure, supporting workforce development, and fostering strong public-private partnerships.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 23**

## Spring Spruce Up: Everyday's True Value Ready For Spring Project

*Continued from Page 17*

have on hand, Laurin harkened back to a trusty MacGyver favorite.

"I would suggest a Swiss Army Knife," he said. "We do have an assortment of pocketknives, including Swiss Army Knives."

However, Laurin said the staff enjoys getting to know about customers' projects and thinking about tools that will help them. "The top-selling tools purchased at Everyday's are probably the 4-in-1 screwdriver, Crescent wrench, tape measure and paintbrush," he said.

Everyday's True Value works to keep up with the current trends in outdoor living and home improvement so customers will always be able to get what they need. Laurin said the top activities and projects this year "revolve around our feathered friends, live plants and grilling." While the store stocks bird food and bird feeders all year, at this time of year, the sales increase as the weather gets warmer.

The store also stocks a variety of live plants this time of year, for those who like to bring a little of the outdoors inside.

"We stock a nice assortment of house plants," he added.

Laurin didn't leave out the grilling enthusiasts who are ready to get outside and prepare their favorite foods on the grill. He said interest in grilling continues to grow and has become a year-round adventure for many customers. As nicer weather approaches, Laurin said the store is ready for increased interest, especially with the addition of Napoleon grills to their inventory.

Everyday's True Value is located at 797 Foote Ave. in Jamestown, NY. The store is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. To get in touch, call 716-484-7188 or visit [www.everdaystruevalue.com](http://www.everdaystruevalue.com) for more information.

## Celebrate the Season in Bloom with a Trip Outdoors in Chautauqua County



The cold is over and the sun is out! It's time to get outdoors and celebrate our natural environment with a walk, bike ride, or hike on any of the 250+ miles of recreational trails in Chautauqua County. (Submitted Photos)

### *Contributed by* **Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth**

With the beautiful month of May upon us, it's a perfect reminder to step outside, breathe deep, and rediscover what makes Chautauqua County such a special place to live and visit. From woodland walks and lakeside paddles to rail-trail rides and purpose-built mountain bike routes, the county offers outdoor recreation that is both accessible and surprisingly diverse. With more than 250 miles of recreational trails across the region, there is always a new route to try, a new view to enjoy, or a new trailhead to explore.

Chautauqua County's natural setting is more than scenery. It is a community asset that supports quality of life, strengthens tourism, and helps define the region's identity. Over time, local partners have expanded public access while emphasizing conservation, stewardship, and responsible use. The result is a growing network of trails, preserves, and waterways that invites residents and visitors to get outside, stay active, and connect with the landscapes that make this place unique.

You can see that commitment in the variety of experiences available throughout the county. Choose short, family-friendly strolls or longer adventures. Hike shaded forest corridors, run along community trail systems, bike routes that connect towns and rural landscapes, ride on shared use equestrian trails, or paddle outings that highlight lakes, streams, and wetlands. Many routes are close to population centers, making it easy to fit a walk or ride into a weekday schedule, while other trailheads create the feeling of a true escape with quiet woods and open views.

Planning is also simpler than ever thanks to the Chautauqua County Interactive Trails Map – located at [CHQTrails.org](http://CHQTrails.org).

Users can find trails by activity, including hiking, biking, paddling or rowing, horseback riding, and more, and sort by landowner or manager. The map helps people compare locations, choose outings that match experience level, and explore confidently without guesswork. Local trailheads often pair well with nearby shops, cafes, and small town main streets, so an outing can become a full day experience. Pack a picnic, bring a camera, and invite a friend or neighbor today.

And it's not too soon to look ahead to summer, when longer days make it easier to explore more miles and try new experiences. One of the biggest highlights is CHQ Trails Day, presented by the Friends of the Chautauqua County Greenways. In 2025, the inaugural CHQ Trails Day was held on Saturday, June 21, the first day of summer, with a countywide mix of guided hikes, group rides, paddles, and other trail focused opportunities designed to welcome newcomers and celebrate regular trail users alike.

Looking ahead, the Friends Group will once again hold a **CHQ Trails Day event in 2026 on Saturday, June 20**. While specific details for this year's event are not yet available, the purpose remains the same: make it easy and inviting for people to get outside, sample new trail experiences, and learn about the organizations working year-round to keep these opportunities strong.

For the uninitiated, the **Friends of the Chautauqua County Greenways** is a collaborative of trail and conservation partners that work closely with the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth to enhance, maintain, and promote outdoor recreation opportunities across the county. Together, the group supports trail stewardship, improved access, and a stronger outdoor culture that benefits both residents and visitors.

## Information-sharing, Recognitions at MHA April Luncheon

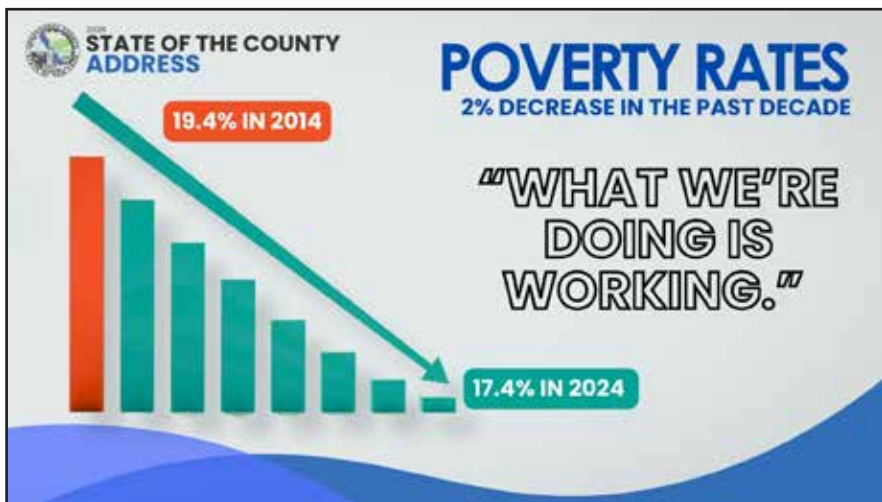


At the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County's (MHA) April recovery luncheon, Ben Colaiacovo was thanked for his volunteer work replacing the concrete step outside the MHA's entry door. Participants were recognized for accomplishments that included being promoted to a manager at their workplace, graduating from drug court, and securing safe housing. It was announced that Nitazenes, a class of synthetic opioids 40 times more potent than fentanyl, have been found locally. Narcan is effective in an overdose but may need to be administered a second time; all drugs should be tested before use. On Wednesday and Thursday, April 29 and 30, the monthly Food Express has free extra supplemental packages of food at 10 a.m.–noon and 1–3:30 p.m. at the Salvation Army, 83 S. Main St., Jamestown; photo ID is required. The Salvation Army welcomes donations of clothing, small appliances, and non-perishable food. For information about the MHA's recovery centers in Jamestown and Dunkirk, call (716) 661-9044 or visit [MHACHautauqua.org](http://MHACHautauqua.org) or Facebook.com/MHACHautauqua.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 25**

## Chautauqua County Emerges as a Leader in New York for Economic and Income Growth

Continued from Page 21



In addition, the County’s continued focus on fiscal responsibility has played a key role in maintaining affordability for residents. Through fiscally conservative budgeting, improved government efficiencies, and a commitment to tax relief, Chautauqua County has strengthened its position as one of the most affordable places to live in New York State. Currently, the county ranks as the second most affordable county in the state for cost of living (based on data provided by The Council for Community and Economic Research).

“We are continuing to collaborate with partners across the county and invest in our strengths,” Wendel added. “By doing so, we are attracting new businesses, creating new jobs, expanding housing opportunities, and bringing new workers to Chautauqua County

— while ensuring it remains an affordable place to live and raise a family.”

Wendel emphasized that ongoing initiatives will help sustain and accelerate this momentum. Efforts to construct new housing, attract new businesses, reactivate strategic properties, and develop shovel-ready sites are expected to further strengthen the county’s economic foundation. “We are seeing our efforts pay off,” Wendel said. “The key metrics used to measure the health of our economy are moving in a positive direction, and we are committed to building on this success for the benefit of all our residents.”

To view Chautauqua County Executive Paul M. Wendel Jr.’s 2026 State of the County presentation, visit [chautauquacounty.ny.gov/soc/2026](http://chautauquacounty.ny.gov/soc/2026).

## SUDOKU

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5					9	4		
	2		4	7		3		
2	1							
8			6				4	3
3				9			7	
	4	8		3		6		
			8			9	3	
	9				4		8	

### Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Level: Beginner

## CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	
11				12		13			14			
15						16			17			
	18				19		20			21		
				22	23				24			
25	26	27	28	29								
30							31					
32								33	34	35	36	37
				38	39	40		41	42			
				43			44					
	45	46	47									
48					49			50	51	52	53	54
55					56				57			58
59					60				61			
62					63					64		

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Egyptian bull-god
- 5. Romanian monetary unit
- 8. Will Ferrell holiday film
- 11. “It Ain’t Half Hot Mum” actor
- 13. Error-related negativity
- 14. Volcanic crater
- 15. Boston Herald columnist Margery
- 16. True market value
- 17. Italian term for exchange rate
- 18. Informal loan clubs
- 20. Men’s fashion accessory
- 21. Children’s craft supply
- 22. Extra benefits
- 25. In an early way
- 30. A judge has one
- 31. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 32. Tractor unit
- 33. Defunct supercomputer developer
- 38. Promotional materials
- 41. A forgetful state
- 43. One who beheads
- 45. Photographers
- 48. Small, rich sponge cake
- 49. Clergy’s vestment
- 50. Expressed pleasure
- 55. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
- 56. Zero
- 57. Ancient Greek word for “earless
- 59. Nigerian governmental area
- 60. Mild expression of surprise
- 61. Places to hang things
- 62. Keyboard key
- 63. Make a mistake
- 64. One-time president of Republic of Korea

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Bridge building degree
- 2. Expression of sorrow or pity
- 3. Large, stocky lizard
- 4. Romanian river
- 5. Communication
- 6. Stoats
- 7. Showcases
- 8. Bird of prey
- 9. King of Thebes
- 10. Cleaving tool
- 12. Large African antelope
- 14. Three are particularly notable
- 19. Meet one’s needs
- 23. C. European river
- 24. Dictator
- 25. Indicates how much out of 100 (abbr.)
- 26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 27. Consume food
- 28. Woman (French)
- 29. Scrape a surface
- 34. Green vegetable
- 35. Pacific Standard Time
- 36. Capital of Brazilian city
- 37. Paddle
- 39. Cause to become insane
- 40. Drier and flakier
- 41. Mimic
- 42. ESPN personality Kimes
- 44. One who moves slowly
- 45. Secret political clique
- 46. Behind the stern of a ship
- 47. Supernatural force
- 48. Sanctuary
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Grayish white
- 53. Engrave by coating
- 54. North Carolina university
- 58. Midway between south and southeast



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# 2026 State of the County: Results Over Rhetoric

*Disciplined finances, strategic investments, and efficient government drive long-term prosperity*

*Contributed by  
Chautauqua County*

County Executive PJ Wendel recently delivered his 2026 State of the County Address and underscored a results-driven approach to governance, highlighting disciplined financial management, strategic investments, and a commitment to building a more efficient, responsive county government focused on long-term prosperity.

“It is a privilege to stand before you and deliver a message of strength, resilience, and accomplishments of our county,” Wendel said. “Over the past year, we have made real measurable progress and today, I will highlight what we have accomplished, and lay out a clear vision for building a stronger, more prosperous future.”

Wendel reported broad economic momentum across key indicators and a steady rise in household prosperity.

“In Chautauqua County, the economy is not just improving — it is getting stronger,” he said, noting five-year GDP growth of 29 percent, rising median household income, and declining poverty rates. He credited disciplined fiscal management and targeted investments that “deliver greater value while carefully managing rising costs.”

The County’s infrastructure agenda advanced on multiple fronts, with shovel-ready sites at Mason Industrial Park and the I-90 Veterans Memorial Commerce Park moving toward completion, and FastNY pre-development funding secured for the 657-acre Eagle Bay site in Sheridan. Highway and bridge work will exceed \$13 million in 2026, and high-speed broadband expansion is set to reach 3,500+ new locations countywide, alongside ongoing fiber deployment in Dunkirk and Sheridan.

Wendel called the final phase of the South & Center Chautauqua Lake Sewer District a “historic milestone—one that will improve water quality, strengthen property values, support economic development, and protect the long-term health of our lake communities.”

Economic development continued with CCIDA-assisted projects and employer expansions, while Choose CHQ and Live CHQ marketing drew more than 110,000 visitors in 2025, 90 percent from outside the county, including national placement on public television. Tourism initiatives expanded, and the County is pursuing commercial air service at the Jamestown Airport, supported by terminal upgrades and new amenities.

Public safety and human services saw

meaningful gains. The County expanded the Fly Car ambulance service to better serve the southwestern region, advanced prevention and re-entry programs through the Chautauqua CARES initiative, and earned national accreditation for the Chautauqua County Jail Health Team. Mobile health clinics reached underserved areas, early-intervention services grew for children and families, the County laid the groundwork for a Lead Rental Registry, and new senior ride services are being implemented to close transportation gaps.

The 2026 budget totals \$309.7 million and continues to deliver tax relief, with a county tax rate of \$6.17 per \$1,000, down \$0.54 year-over-year and \$2.29 since Wendel took office. Assessed property value climbed to \$12.15 billion, while sales tax sharing with local municipalities exceeds \$40 million—more than 41% of collections.

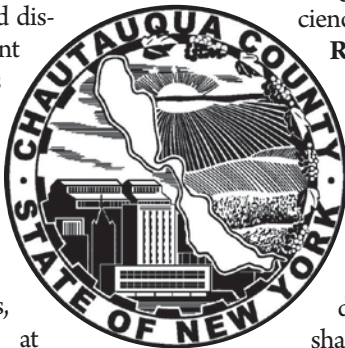
“Our job is clear: deliver the services our residents depend on while protecting taxpayers and fighting for Chautauqua County every step of the way,” Wendel said.

To strengthen government efficiency, the Government Reduction Initiative—unanimously approved in 2025—now supports shared services, departmental consolidations, and special taxing districts with upfront funding, including projects such as a shared multi-municipality dog shelter, a feasibility study on a potential Clymer–Sherman–Panama school district merger, and a North County shared services and consolidation analysis.

“Contrary to what some of you may have heard, these efforts are locally driven,” Wendel noted. “The County is not mandating any of these initiatives; they are all voluntary, led and supported by our municipal partners.”

Wendel closed with a call to keep pressing forward: “We have proven that progress is possible. We’ve cut taxes. We’ve grown our economy—we currently are the 9th fastest-growing county economy in New York State. We will continue to fight for our taxpayers. And we will continue to build a county where opportunity is not just promised—but delivered.”

Hosted in partnership with the CHQ Chamber, this year’s event represented a unique opportunity to expand public engagement by bringing the State of the County directly to the community. Held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Jamestown, the program included a moderated question-and-answer session led by Chamber President and CEO Daniel Heitzenrater. To view the entire presentation and Q&A, visit [chautauquacountyny.gov/soc/2026](http://chautauquacountyny.gov/soc/2026).



# Celebrate the Season in Bloom with a Trip Outdoors in Chautauqua County

*Continued from Page 22*

Chautauqua Rails to Trails is an all-volunteer nonprofit that has worked since 1991 to convert and maintain rail trails for public recreation. Its corridors support walking, running, biking, and nature observation while connecting communities and scenic areas, especially in the northern half of the county.

The Western New York Mountain Bicycling Association supports sustainable shared use trail systems through trail work, education, and advocacy, helping improve trail quality and promote responsible use.

Boutwell Hill Ski Club is a volunteer organization that supports trail stewardship in and around Boutwell Hill State Forest. The club’s hands on involvement helps keep trails cared for and welcoming to the public.

The Chautauqua County Equestrian Trail System promotes the county as an equestrian destination with interconnected riding experiences across multiple trail areas and partners, supporting ongoing trail improvement and safe shared use.

The Chautauqua County Parks Department manages public park resources and supports outdoor recreation through park access, amenities, and reservations where applicable. County parks also serve as convenient gateways to trails and natural areas.

Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy protects water quality and habitat through land conservation, stewardship, and education. The conservancy ma-



nages more than 35 nature preserves in Chautauqua County, many open to the public for walking and nature observation, while also protecting sensitive lands for the long term.

The City of Jamestown has long embraced outdoor recreation through its public parks and the Greater Jamestown Riverwalk trail system. The Riverwalk highlights the Chautauqua Lake outlet and the Chadakoin River while offering residents and visitors ways to experience the waterfront on foot or by bike. The city is also exploring additional outdoor amenities, including a proposed beginner and ADA compliant bike pump track and an advanced pump track at Jackson Taylor Park.

Whether your ideal May day includes a calm walk through a preserve, a family ride on a rail trail, a paddle in quiet waters, a trail run, an equestrian outing, or a group activity, Chautauqua County’s outdoor assets are ready. To explore trail options by activity and location, visit [CHQTrails.org](http://CHQTrails.org), use the Interactive Trails Map, and watch for CHQ Trails Day 2026 updates as details are released.

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**PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**

4	8	7	3	5	1	2	9	6
5	3	6	2	8	9	4	1	7
9	2	1	4	7	6	3	5	8
2	1	5	7	4	3	8	6	9
8	7	9	6	1	2	5	4	3
3	6	4	5	9	8	1	7	2
7	4	8	9	3	5	6	2	1
1	5	2	8	6	7	9	3	4
6	9	3	1	2	4	7	8	5

B	A	T	A	L	E	U	E	L	F					
C	L	E	G	G	E	R	N	M	A	A	R			
E	A	G	A	N	T	M	V	A	G	I	O			
S	S	U	S	U	S	T	I	E	G	L	U	E		
				A	M	E	N	I	T	I	E	S		
P	R	E	M	A	T	U	R	E	L	Y				
C	H	A	M	B	E	R	S	S	R					
T	O	T	E	R				A	P	P	R	O		
				A	D	S		A	M	N	E	S	I	A
				D	E	C	A	P	I	T	A	T	O	R
C	A	M	E	R	A	M	E	N						
B	A	B	A	A	L	B	A	A	H	E	D			
E	B	A	N	N	I	L	A	O	T	U	S			
M	A	F	A	G	E	E	R	A	C	K	S			
A	L	T		E	R	R		R	H	E	E			

**PUZZLES ON PAGE 25**

*“[O]ur conclusions, fallible though they are and mistaken though they may be, represent a real respect and aspiration for the law, and faithful effort to apply law and a veneration for the work of the great minds that have made our legal structure the nearest to a safeguard of freedom that has been devised.”*

*– Robert H. Jackson, U.S. Supreme Court Justice.*

*The Task of Maintaining Our Liberties: The Role of the Judiciary (1953)*

## **RESOLUTION OF THE JAMESTOWN BAR ASSOCIATION**

### **In Recognition of Law Day, May 1, 2026**

#### **In Support of the Rule of Law and an Independent Judiciary**

WHEREAS, Law Day, observed annually on May 1st, was established to celebrate the rule of law and its vital role in the foundation of American democracy and freedom; and

WHEREAS, the rule of law requires that all persons and institutions – including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government – are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated; and

WHEREAS, an independent federal and state judiciary is indispensable to the preservation of liberty, the protection of individual rights, and the equal administration of justice for all people regardless of wealth, status, or political affiliation; and

WHEREAS, the separation of powers enshrined in the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New York reflects the foundational principle that no single branch of government shall exercise unchecked authority, and that the judiciary serves as an essential check on the exercise of governmental power; and

WHEREAS, Judges at all levels of our court system take a solemn oath to uphold the Constitution and to administer justice without fear or favor, and must be free to fulfill that oath without intimidation, political interference, personal threat; and

WHEREAS, public confidence in the courts depends upon a judiciary that is, and is perceived to be, impartial and independent, and upon a legal profession that models respect for the courts and the rule of law; and

WHEREAS, attacks upon the integrity of the judiciary – whether through personal disparagement of Judges for their rulings, threats to reduce court jurisdiction, calls to defy or disregard lawful court orders, or the intimidation of judicial officers – pose a serious threat to constitutional governance and the public’s trust in the legal system; and

WHEREAS, lawyers, as officers of the court and stewards of the legal system, bear a special professional and civic responsibility to defend the independence of the judiciary and to promote respect for the rule of law in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Jamestown Bar Association has long been committed to the administration of justice, the integrity of the legal profession, and the protection of the constitutional rights of all people.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Jamestown Bar Association hereby reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the rule of law and to the principle that no person, institution, or branch of government is above the law;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jamestown Bar Association affirms its strong support for an independent judiciary at the federal, state, and local levels, and calls upon all public officials, institutions, and citizens to respect the authority and dignity of the courts and to comply with lawful judicial orders;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jamestown Bar Association condemns any effort – by any person or branch of government – to intimidate, threaten, or coerce members of the judiciary, to defy or circumvent lawful court orders, or to undermine public confidence in the courts through false or misleading statements about Judges or judicial proceedings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jamestown Bar Association calls upon the members to uphold their professional obligations of candor and civility toward the tribunals before which they practice, to refrain from making statements that unfairly impugn the integrity of Judges or the judicial process, and to speak out when the rule of law or the independence of the judiciary is threatened;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jamestown Bar Association urges civic and community leaders, educators, and citizens of Chautauqua County, New York to join in marking Law Day by renewing their commitment to the constitutional values of equal justice, due process, and the rule of law.

*“[Our] traditional freedoms are less in danger of any sudden overthrow than of being gradually bartered or traded for something else on which the people place a higher current value.”*

*– Robert H. Jackson, U.S. Supreme Court Justice.*

*The Task of Maintaining Our Liberties: The Role of the Judiciary (1953)*

## Shults Auto Group Continues Support of CASA of Chautauqua's Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign



Shults Auto Group and CASA of Chautauqua County staff members holding pinwheels in support of CASA of Chautauqua County's Pinwheels for Prevention campaign.

Pictured (L-R): First Row-Kelly Fiorella, Fund Development Coordinator for CASA Chautauqua County; Kathy Park, Executive Director of CASA of Chautauqua County; Jillian Shults, GM Shults Chevy Nissan Subaru. Second Row-Ed Shults 3rd, GM-Owner of Ed Shults Ford; Rick Bruce, GM Shults Hyundai of Lakewood; Darren Hills, Sales Manager, Nissan/Subaru; Sean Ellsworth, GM-Owner, Ed Shults of Warren and Tim Shults, President of Shults Auto Group.

### Contributed by

#### CASA Chautauqua County

During National Child Abuse Prevention Month this April, CASA of Chautauqua County is once again calling on the community to help raise awareness and take a stand against child abuse and neglect. CASA is grateful for the continued partnership and generous support of Shults Auto Group in support of the annual Pinwheels for Prevention campaign.

Pinwheels for Prevention is a national awareness campaign created by Prevent Child Abuse America that encourages individuals and communities to take action in preventing child abuse and neglect. The pinwheel serves as a symbol of the happy, healthy childhoods all children deserve. Support from community partners like Shults Auto Group plays a vital role in advancing CASA's mission and expanding awareness efforts throughout Chautauqua County. Their ongoing commitment helps ensure that children who have experienced abuse or neglect have a voice and the opportunity for a safe, permanent home.

All funds raised through CASA's Pinwheels for Prevention campaign

directly support the organization's mission of recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers who advocate for abused and neglected children in Chautauqua County.

To support CASA's mission, tax-deductible donations can be made online at [www.ChautauquaCASA.com](http://www.ChautauquaCASA.com) or by mailing a check to CASA of Chautauqua Co., Inc., 2 Academy Street, Suite 5, Mayville, NY 14757.

#### About CASA of Chautauqua

*The mission of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Chautauqua County is to provide an independent voice in court, advocating for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the pursuit of finding safe and permanent homes. CASA of Chautauqua County, Inc. relies on highly trained volunteers who are appointed by a Chautauqua County Family Court Judge to advocate for children in court. These volunteers work with relevant agencies and parties in order to advocate for the best interest of the child. With the information provided by the CASA volunteer, Family Court Judges are better able to make informed decisions as to what is best for the child. CASA of Chautauqua County is a United Way Community Partner.*



## CHAMBER CORNER

### WHAT DOES ADVOCACY MEAN?

Article Contributed by

**Daniel J. Heitzenrater**

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce  
President and CEO

The CHQ Chamber had the opportunity to host the State of the County address by County Executive PJ Wendel last week, immediately followed by a facilitated question and answer session. It was our second Advocacy Event for the year, our first being the State of Business event in January, and our next event will be June 24 where we will host our State representatives, George Borello and Andrew Molitor.

A discussion that we have in our office as we plan these events is, what does advocacy mean? How does the CHQ Chamber advocate on behalf of approximately 900 members spread across various sectors of non-profit and for profit, sole proprietors to large corporations? Some business organizations will use their membership total as a claim to speak on behalf of their entire membership base. At the CHQ Chamber we believe if you put 900 people in a room you will have about 900 different priorities, leading concerns, business objectives, and varying ideas. The one universal truth is that the CHQ Chamber exists for the betterment of our local business community.

The mission of the CHQ Chamber is to build vital connections, provide professional resources, and champion our local businesses. With this in mind, our approach to advocacy has been one of educating our members, connecting them with resources, and providing opportunities to put them in the room and ask questions of, and

build relationships with, our elected representatives.

Building relationships with our elected officials is something that starts when the Chamber assists you with cutting the ribbon for your business alongside our local dignitaries. The relationship continues when you sit down with the Mayor or Trustee of your village at one of our Small Business Sit-Downs or at our September event, Official Introductions. We help build these connections so when the time comes that you need assistance from your elected officials, you already know them, and they are already familiar with the value your business brings to our community.

#### Business After Hours at Westfield Makerspace

The next CHQ Chamber Business After Hours will be held Wednesday, May 13 at Westfield Makerspace. Guests will enjoy complimentary appetizers and beverages while networking.

All local businesspeople are welcome. CHQ Chamber Business After Hours events are free for two people from each Chamber member organization. The price is just \$10 for non-members or anyone above the two-person limit. Registration is appreciated for our planning purposes but is not required. Registering in advance gets you on our "Who's Who in the Room" list. Registration is open now through our web calendar at [www.chqchamber.org](http://www.chqchamber.org).

Business After Hours at Westfield Makerspace is sponsored by Westfield Makerspace, Southern Chautauqua Federal Credit Union, SUNY Fredonia, and Media One Radio Group.

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*"Flowers are restful to look at.  
They have neither  
emotions nor conflicts."*

~ Sigmund Freud



## Westfield Artist's Work Wins Award in "Best of 2026" at the Ohio Craft Museum: May 3–July 3, 2026

Contributed by  
Ohio Craft Museum

Two pieces of furniture by Westfield, NY artist Brian Millspaw are featured in the "Best of 2026," Ohio Designer Craftsmen's 43rd annual juried members exhibition, on view May 3–July 3 at the Ohio Craft Museum. Millspaw received the Ed Honton Award for Excellence for a Body of Work for his pieces "Eva" Armchair and "Pick" Low Stool.



"Eva" Armchair by Brian Millspaw

The "Best of 2026" showcases contemporary fine craft by 69 artists. Juror Carol Sauvion, creator of the Peabody-award-winning PBS series, Craft in America, and the recently retired executive director of the Craft in America organization, selected 73 works in clay, glass, metal, wood, fiber and mixed media from nearly 400 entries. Thirteen artists received awards of excellence (see attached) in Ohio Designer Craftsmen's annual members competition.

After closing at the museum on July 3, the exhibition will travel to the CVA Gallery at Kent State University, in Kent, Ohio, where it opens August 25th.

The Ohio Craft Museum is located at 1665 West Fifth Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43212. The museum is owned and operated by Ohio Designer Craftsmen and receives ongoing funding from the Greater Columbus Arts Council, Ohio Arts Council and the Columbus Foundation.

**Exhibition Details**

**The Ohio Craft Museum**  
May 3–July 3, 2026

**Visitor Hours:**  
Monday–Friday  
10:00 am–5:00 pm  
Saturday, 11:00 am–4:00 pm  
Admission and parking are free.

**Kent State University**  
CVA Gallery  
August 25–October 7, 2026

**About Ohio Designer Craftsmen & The Ohio Craft Museum**  
*Established in 1963, Ohio Designer Craftsmen engages and enriches the community through high-quality exhibitions and education programs and supports and promotes the professional development of fine craft artists. The organization owns and operates the Ohio Craft Museum in the Grandview Heights area and has organized Winterfair in Columbus for nearly 50 years. Ongoing funding is provided by the Ohio Arts Council, Greater Columbus Arts Council and the Columbus Foundation.*

## Dunkirk Walleye Festival Slated at City Pier



Registration is now available for the 6th Annual WNY Walleye Classic presented by Primitive Patriot Outdoors. Pictured above is last year's Dunkirk Walleye Festival tournament weigh in show on the Dunkirk Pier.

Contributed by  
City of Dunkirk

The City of Dunkirk and Primitive Patriot Outdoors are proud to announce the third annual Dunkirk Walleye Festival taking place on June 5 through June 7 on the Dunkirk City Pier. The event is open to the public.

Professional walleye anglers will compete in the 6th Annual WNY Walleye Classic directed by Josh Larsen, tournament director, while the festival portion will be directed by Scott Mekus, Dunkirk Festivals event specialist.

The Primitive Patriot Outdoors WNY Walleye Classic, celebrating 6 years in operation with registration now available, will be the highlight of the festival.

New this year, Big Fish Friday is eliminated to make the event two days (Day 1 - Friday, June 5 and Day 2 - Saturday, June 6) of anglers catching 6 fish each day for a total of 12 fish over a two-day period with fishing from 6 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Anglers can now launch out of any port and fish on any U.S. waters of Lake Erie as long as coolers are returned to the Dunkirk Boat Launch check-in area by 3:30 p.m. sharp.

Presented by title sponsors Doc's Tackle LLC and Lime Lake Marine & RV along with Ronald Viavada - Senior Financial Advisor of Merrill, A Bank of America Company and Vexus Boats, Smoker Craft Boats, Ranger Boats, Nitro Boats, Tracker Boats, Daniel Terhune - Century 21 Turner Brokers, Church Tackle and VT Power and Lighting, the tournament weather determinant make-up date is Sunday, June 8. The host hotel is the Clarion Hotel Conference Center. Pro angler and National Walleye Tour Championship finalist, Craig Sleeman, will also conduct a free kid's fishing clinic and tournament Sunday, June 8 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Dunkirk Pier. The winner of the tournament will win a guided fishing trip with Sleeman and also a winner's plaque. Last year, 45 teams were registered with



Pictured left to right is the 2025 WNY Walleye Classic Champions - Ashton Laird, Andy Travis & Joe Pappalia of Lime Lake Marine & RV with a 38.06-pound winning weight.

over 250 anglers and over \$47,7600 was given in prize money. Sponsorship, vendor and volunteer opportunities are currently being accepted.

The mission of the tournament is to bring the outdoor community together through hosted events and various media sources in hopes to give our area an amazing weekend focusing on Lake Erie's most sought-after species, walleye.



After the 5 p.m. weigh-in shows, both days will also feature live music on the stage from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Food, craft and fishing gear vendors will be on site both Friday (2 p.m. - 7 p.m.) and Saturday (11 a.m. - 7 p.m.).

"This event has grown into one of the best tournaments on the eastern basin of Lake Erie and the goal is to give anglers a fun, yet competitive tournament, that promotes the sport, our city, and the entire community," said Larsen.

"We strive to give the anglers what they want and show the public the best of our area's walleye fisherman. We take pride that our fleet can trust us by having 100% transparency."

To register for the upcoming WNY Walleye Classic as an angler, visit [www.primitivepatriotoutdoors.com](http://www.primitivepatriotoutdoors.com) or call Larsen at (716) 490-4226. Sponsorship, vendor and/or volunteer questions can be referred to Mekus at (716) 366-9848 or [smekus@cityofdunkirk.com](mailto:smekus@cityofdunkirk.com).

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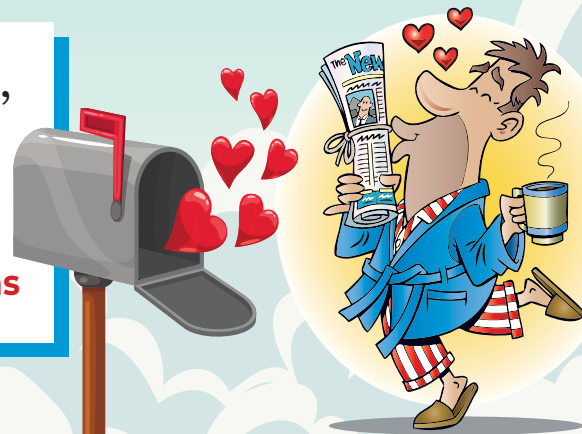
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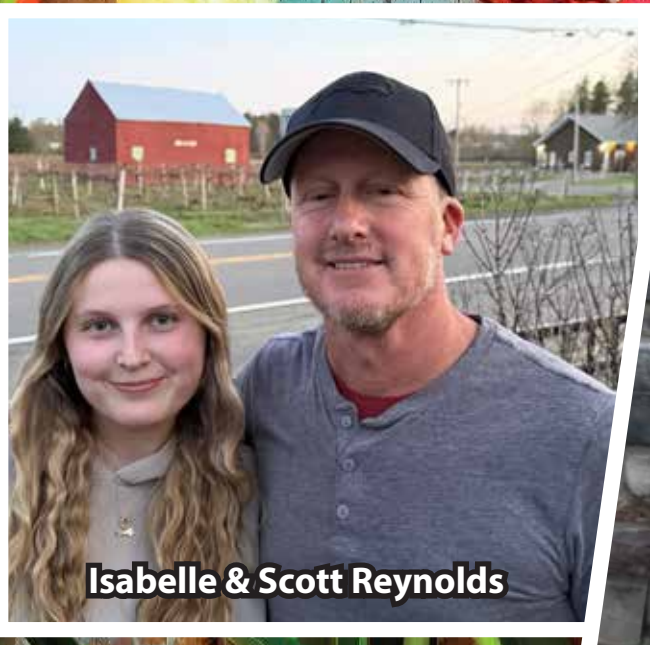
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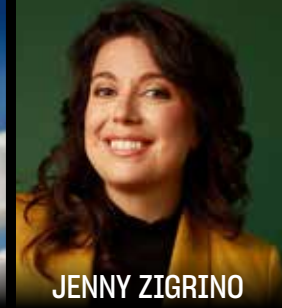
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