



LIVINGSTON COUNTY
CARES

Newsletter

September 2026

Livingston County CARES 2027 Service Trips to Florida, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico



Livingston County CARES is inviting students and community members to apply for three life-changing service trips scheduled for **March 14-20, 2027**, offering opportunities to make a meaningful difference while serving communities in Florida, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico. Applications opened September 1, 2026, and are due October 1, 2026.

The annual service trips provide participants with opportunities to engage in humanitarian, social justice, and disaster recovery work while forming relationships with communities facing ongoing challenges. The 2027 programs will take place in **Kissimmee, Florida; Biloxi, Mississippi; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.**

One team will travel to **Kissimmee, Florida**, where volunteers will serve at **Give Kids The World Village**, a nonprofit resort that provides a home-away-from-home experience for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families. Participants will share their time, talents, and compassion while supporting the organization's mission of creating memorable experiences for families during difficult circumstances.

Another group will travel to **Biloxi, Mississippi**, for Livingston County CARES' **42nd service trip to the Gulf Coast**. The organization's relationship with Biloxi began in 2005 following Hurricane Katrina and has developed into a longstanding partnership with the local community. Volunteers will work with **Back Bay Mission**, assisting with housing rehabilitation, food pantry operations, meal assistance programs, and other initiatives designed to support community members through education and empowerment.

A third team will travel to **San Juan, Puerto Rico**, where volunteers will participate in ongoing recovery efforts supporting individuals and families affected by Hurricanes Maria and Fiona. Participants will engage in hands-on projects, including roof replacement and home repair work, under the supervision of a local host agency. These efforts will help provide safer housing and continued support to communities still recovering from the effects of natural disasters.

Livingston County CARES believes service experiences foster leadership, empathy, and a deeper understanding of community needs. Through these programs, participants will have opportunities to work alongside local residents, build meaningful relationships, and contribute to projects that create lasting positive impact.

Interested individuals can find more information and apply through Livingston County CARES.

<https://www.livingstoncountycares.org/service-trips> SUNY Geneseo students may apply for grants, partially funded by Student Association, to help with travel expenses. LC Applications open **September 1, 2026**, and must be submitted by **October 1, 2026**.

Spring 2027 Service Trip Course

INTD 204 Livingston CARES Service Learning

This course is limited to participants in Livingston CARES Service Learning trips occurring throughout the academic year and summer. Participants will have an opportunity to extend their service-learning experience through analysis of core and self-selected texts, personal reflection, participation in focused conversations, and a reflective critical paper written after the service experience. Students will discuss race, class, gender, family, community, and other elements that impact responses to natural disasters and life-threatening illnesses. The concept of privilege is especially relevant, as the class examines how natural disasters impact poor (often rural) communities. Students will maintain reflective journals during their service trips to better record experiences and reflections and better inform the final paper that is required. This 1-credit, pass-fail course will be taught on Tuesdays from 5-6:30 pm for six weeks starting in February.



Livingston County Cares Leadership Changes

At the September 1 meeting of the Board of Directors, the board regrettfully accepted the resignation of Vice President Nick Plaumbo from the board of directors. The board honored Nick for his thirteen years both as a student volunteer and as an officer. Nick participated in and led several service trips and served as the manager of Livingston CARES services from 2018-2026. He also managed the transition of Livingston County CARES from the College to an independent humanitarian organization in Livingston County. The resolution honored Nick Palumbo with the 2026 Distinguished Humanitarian Award.

The board elected Eddie Lee to serve as Vice President. Officers are elected to one-year terms and board members are elected to three-year terms, except for students who serve one-year terms. Elections of board members and officers take place in May.



Nick Palumbo



Eddie Lee

GUMBO TO GO

Dinner includes Hot Gumbo, Fresh Cornbread and Homemade Pralines. Vegetarian Option Available



Mark your calendars
November 5, 2026

Student Board Member Spotlight

Tristan Breaton '27

**Communications and Marketing Major
from Syracuse, NY**

I joined Livingston Cares because it gave me an opportunity to help a community greater than Geneseo. I've had a sense of service my whole life and since joining the program I've felt like I've done so much for myself and others around me.



Melissa Martinez Clemente '29

Political Science Major from Queens, NY

I decided to volunteer for Livingston County Cares after my service trip. The trip gave me a new perspective and motivation to help others who, like many, are struggling with issues as big as protecting their home or having something to eat. I also enjoy having the opportunity to reach out to my peers in the community to help alongside me, who also love to make a change.



Livingston Cares Donation to Nepal Relief and Recovery Efforts

Each year Livingston CARES donates to relief and recovery efforts for major disasters. Our disaster response team reviews possible humanitarian agencies that are credible and with low overhead and recommends donations for the board to approve.

Livingston CARES has made a donation of \$1000 in response to the flooding in Nepal. The donation was sent through Direct Relief because that organization guarantees that 100% of the funds go directly to the Nepal Flood Relief Fund. Donations are directed toward medical support.

Additional information about Direct Relief and their efforts in Nepal can be found at: https://www.directrelief.org/emergency/nepal-floods-2026/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=24181907754&gbraid=0AAAADEzrS-



Meet Our New Community Board Members

Dennis Grove

Denis Grove grew up in Warsaw, New York and recently retired from a career in the Engineering Department at Morton Salt in Silver Springs. He enjoys volunteering and learned about the Livingston CARES service trips through Gumbo and other CARES activities at the Central Presbyterian Church in Geneseo. He is looking forward to participating in the 2027 service trip to Biloxi and hopes to use his home repair skills to help with Back Bay Mission projects.



Rocio Vallejo-Alegre

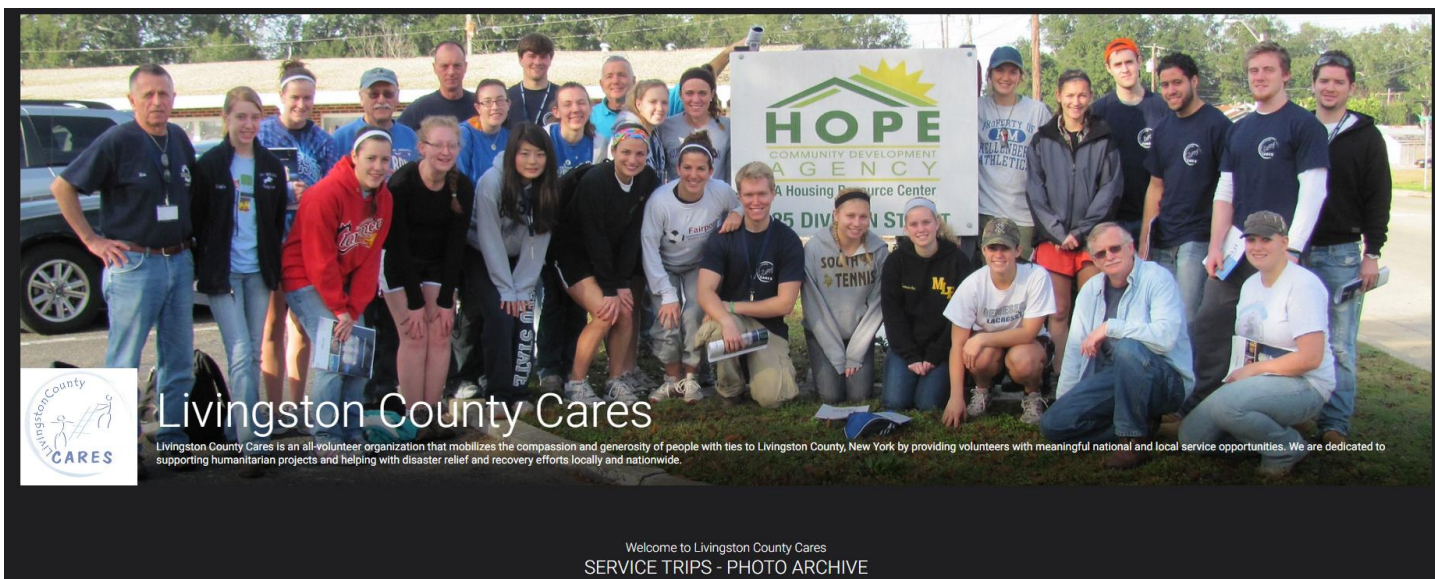
Rocio retired from SUNY Geneseo in 2020 after more than a decade of teaching. Born in Mexico, she has spent years serving the local region through medical Spanish translation projects, support for the Livingston County Migrant Center, and the TOGETHER program to reduce language barriers and isolation. Her service on the Livingston CARES Board allows her to extend this dedication to community building and disaster relief initiatives.



VOLUNTEER *opportunities*

During the last few months, Livingston CARES has been working on a project to help individuals who are interested in giving back with local agencies and organizations seeking volunteers across a wide range of interests and community needs. Our new **Volunteer Opportunities** website pages include links to websites and/or Facebook sites of 120 agencies in Livingston County that need volunteers. The sites are organized by types of service available. We are also partnering with United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes to promote Volunteer United, a free online platform that helps match volunteers with opportunities that align with their interests, skills, and availability. Together these resources are intended to support stronger community connections, increased volunteer engagement, and meaningful opportunities to make a positive impact locally. Visit

<https://www.livingstoncountycares.org/volunteer>



Livingston CARES Photo Archives

Since 2006, Livingston County CARES has sent 1,603 volunteers on 103 service trips to multiple states to help with disaster recovery efforts rebuilding homes, restoring parks and neighborhood projects, and helping families with cancer. We collected over 5,000 photos from the trips, and the gallery is our growing photo archive telling the stories of the hard work, the laughter, the friendship formed, and the communities we've had the privilege to serve alongside. To view the collection organized by year, month, and location, visit <https://livingstoncountycares.smugmug.com/>. If a trip is missing and you have photos, please use directions below to upload photos and note the year, the month, the location, and any names you wish to share. Every photo tells a story--of a roof shingled, a garden planted, a family helped, or a group of strangers who became friends over a shared project. Help us preserve that history.

Livingston County Cares Now has a Photo Archives

Please help us add to our gallery of past service trip photos!

How to Upload Files to SmugMug

- 1. Open the Upload Link**
Click or paste this link into your browser:
<https://livingstoncountycares.smugmug.com/upload/mzJFWs/upload>
- 2. Add Your Files**
 - Once the page opens, click **“Choose Photos”** (or similar button),
 - OR **drag and drop** your photos/files into the upload area.
- 3. Select the Files**
 - Browse your computer or device,
 - Select one or multiple files, then click **Open**.
- 4. Wait for the upload to Complete**
 - A progress bar will show the upload status,
 - **Do not close the page** until all files are finished uploading.
- 5. Add Your Name or Notes (if prompted)**
Some upload pages include fields for your name, email, or captions; please fill them out if requested.
- 6. Confirm Submission**
When complete, you should see a confirmation message indicating your upload was successful.