



# 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

LIVINGSTON COUNTY CARES, INC.



 (585) 515-7770

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# Livingston County CARES

## 2026 Annual Community Report

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## President's Letter to Members, Volunteers, and Donors

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Dear Livingston County CARES Members, Volunteers and Donors:

Thank you for your support and involvement in Livingston CARES programs and services. Each year, we prepare the Livingston CARES Annual Community Report to share the highlights of our events and programs.

In 2026, Livingston County CARES hosted four service trips during spring break in March. Fourteen volunteers led by alumnae Shea Kinsella Donohue worked with Give Kids the World families at the Make A Wish Foundation facilities in Kissimmee, Florida. Four volunteers led by Holly Harvey traveled to Black Mountain, North Carolina to work with Rebuilders on repairing a home heavily damaged by Hurricane Helene. Six volunteers led by Joe Cope worked at the Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi. Andrew Herman led a group of seven volunteers to work with Techos Pa' Mi Gente in San Juan, Puerto Rico on replacing roofs on homes damaged by Hurricanes Maria and Fiona.

Livingston CARES humanitarian efforts continued in 2025–2026 with support for local programs including the Home Away from Home Respite Program for individuals with Alzheimer's and memory-related diseases, and the Father Gordinier Volunteer Awards. CARES is also working with the Livingston County Planning Department and grants from the Rochester Area Community Foundation to address county poverty issues that reduce transportation barriers for low-income individuals and families.

In April of 2026, Livingston CARES announced a new initiative to support projects and programs in Livingston County with Community Improvement Grants. The small grants are intended to provide financial assistance to individuals or groups working to support humanitarian causes in Livingston County. Details and the online applications are posted on our website: [livingstoncountycares.org/grants](http://livingstoncountycares.org/grants).

Again, thank you to our members, volunteers and donors for your support and engagement in Livingston CARES programs and projects and contributions through Gumbo to Go Dinners, ROC The Day on Giving Tuesday, the State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA), and the second annual CARES Awards recognition of Volunteers in collaboration with the Livingston County Board of Supervisors that was held on April 10. If you would like more information on the history and current activities of the organization, please go to our website at [livingstoncountycares.org](http://livingstoncountycares.org) and read our electronic newsletters for information on current events and programs.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Matthews, Ed.D.  
President, Livingston County CARES, Inc.

## Mission and History of Livingston CARES

### Mission

Livingston County CARES is an all-volunteer organization that mobilizes the compassion and generosity of people with ties to Livingston County, New York by providing volunteers with meaningful national and local service opportunities. We are dedicated to supporting humanitarian projects and helping with disaster relief and recovery efforts locally and nationwide.

### A Brief History of Livingston CARES

Livingston County CARES, Inc. is a collaborative effort among groups and organizations at SUNY Geneseo and in the Geneseo and Livingston County community that started in September 2005 to focus on relief and recovery efforts by helping people in Harrison County, Mississippi. The initial groups were members of SUNY Geneseo students, faculty, and staff, the Livingston County Administrator, the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Geneseo, the Village of Geneseo, and the Livingston County Coalition of Churches. Individuals, organizations, schools, local municipalities, and interested citizens were invited to participate in Livingston County CARES' projects and programs. Livingston County CARES, Inc. was incorporated and registered as a New York State non-profit organization in 2006. In March 2007, the IRS granted CARES tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Gifts and donations to CARES are tax deductible. Donations may be given as restricted gifts for specific projects or the general fund. Livingston CARES board members are volunteers and there are no employees and very minimal administrative overhead. The address for Livingston CARES is 31 Center Street, Geneseo, NY 14454, the email address is livingstoncountycares@gmail.com, and the phone number is 585-515-7770. Organizations and individuals interested in volunteering or making contributions should contact Tom Matthews by email at matthews@geneseo.edu.

### *Volunteer Service Trips to Harrison County, Mississippi*

Livingston CARES recruited volunteers to work on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of homes for the victims of Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi from 2006 through 2019, and again in 2025 and 2026. Livingston County CARES sent 971 volunteers on 41 service trips beginning with the first trip in January 2006.

### *Harrison County Mississippi Projects Related to Hurricane Katrina*

Livingston CARES donated funds to support various projects in Harrison County, Mississippi, including the following:

- Livingston County Coalition of Churches Tools for Katrina Project — In the spring of 2006, the Coalition organized the Tools for Katrina Project, delivering tools to two recovery centers in Biloxi.
- Woolmarket Youth Football League — CARES donated \$660.00 to purchase uniforms for five students whose equipment had been destroyed by the hurricane.
- ARC Connections to the Gulf Coast — Board member Lyle Lehman secured a \$4,000.00 donation to the ARC of the Gulf Coast.
- Woolmarket Youth Recreation Complex — CARES donated \$2,000.00 for a flagpole installation. A flag raising ceremony in January 2009 included the presentation of New York State and Livingston County flags to Harrison County.
- Moore Community House — A \$2,000.00 donation was used to purchase equipment for classrooms in the renovated facilities of this East Biloxi day care center.
- Garden Clubs Donations — The Geneseo and Livonia Garden Clubs contributed funds to help replace a southern live oak at Katrina Memorial Park; a permanent plaque honoring volunteers was dedicated in January 2010.

### *Katrina Story Fades But Recovery Work Continues*

Livingston CARES made a commitment to continue working in Harrison County, Mississippi long after the stories faded from the media. After celebrating ten years of work on the Gulf Coast in 2016, Livingston CARES extended its volunteer efforts through a partnership with the Biloxi Back Bay Mission. Service trips to Biloxi were suspended after 2019 but resumed in 2025 and continued with a 2026 trip.

### *Grants to Recovery Agencies in Puerto Rico, Florida and Texas*

Livingston CARES invited the campus community to donate funds for recovery efforts after the 2017 Hurricanes (Harvey, Irma and Maria), in 2018 after Hurricane Michael, in 2019 after Hurricane Dorian, and in 2020 after

Hurricanes Laura and Delta. Funds have been used to provide critical equipment and supplies to host sites in Puerto Rico, Florida and Texas.

### ***Focus on Projects in Livingston County***

In 2009, the Livingston CARES Board agreed to look for ways to focus volunteer efforts in Livingston County. The "Geneseo Goes to Town" volunteer day was launched in 2010 and grew significantly over the years. Livingston CARES has also participated in United Way Days of Caring in 2023 and 2024.

### ***Haiti Relief and Recovery***

In January 2010, the CARES board established a Haiti Relief Fund. Donations totaling \$8,255.30 were given to the HOPE Foundation headed by late Emeriti Professor Rose-Marie Chierici for targeted projects in Borgne, Haiti, including resettlement of two families, teacher boxes, tree nurseries, and over forty water purification kits.

### ***Project Holding Accounts***

The CARES board has supported several civic engagement projects including the Ghana Project (which helped build a school in Besease, Ghana) and the El Sauce, Nicaragua programs (including construction of multiple schools and a microfinance project for women-owned businesses).

### ***Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund***

Livingston CARES established a Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund in November 2012. Nineteen work trips were conducted to Staten Island, Long Island, Brooklyn, and New Jersey from 2013 through 2020, with 152 volunteers serving disaster-affected families.

### ***Hurricane Fund***

In September 2017, Livingston CARES created a Hurricane Recovery Fund to respond to Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Subsequent donations were also directed to relief from Hurricane Dorian (2019), the 2020 Louisiana hurricanes, Hurricane Ian (2022), tornadoes in Kentucky and Mississippi (2022–2023), the Maui wildfires (2023), Hurricane Helene (2024), the California fires (2025), and Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica (2025).

### ***Responding to Recent Disasters***

In 2025–2026, Livingston CARES donated \$1,355 to All Hands and Hearts for hurricane recovery in Jamaica, and the board approved \$5,000.00 each for national/regional and local disaster recovery in the 2026 budget. The board also approved a new Community Improvement Grants program in 2026, using local recovery funds to support humanitarian causes within Livingston County.

### ***Geneseo/Groveland Food Pantry***

The Food Pantry became a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2021. Livingston CARES and the Pantry filed separate tax documents for the 2020 fiscal year and beyond.

### ***Home Away From Home Respite Program***

The Home Away From Home Respite Program (HAFH) serves senior citizens and families with dementia and memory issues at the Geneseo Community Center. In 2022, HAFH was transferred to Noyes Hospital and Christa Barrows took over as manager of the program. The Livingston CARES project line for HAFH continues to accept donations.

### ***COVID-19 Initiatives***

In April 2020, Livingston CARES thanked front-line workers throughout Livingston County with care packages funded by board donations and a Wegmans grant. In early 2021, over 2,600 healthcare workers at 118 sites received handmade gourmet cookies delivered by seventeen volunteer drivers.

## 2026 (2nd Annual) CARES Awards

By all accounts, the event to celebrate the volunteering spirit of Livingston County was a resounding success.

Livingston County Cares, Inc. hosted the 2nd Annual CARES Award Volunteer Recognition Event on April 10, 2026, at the historic Big Tree Inn in Geneseo. The inaugural CARES Awards in 2025 began based on the newly declared Volunteer Month, with April 10 officially proclaimed Volunteer Appreciation Day by the Livingston County Board of Supervisors.

More than 80 community members, leaders, and supporters gathered this year to recognize six outstanding finalists for the 2026 CARES Award:

- Tom Wilson of Geneseo
- Ron Niedermaier of Groveland
- Stephen Rapp of Nunda
- Holly H. Harvey of Geneseo
- Stephen Wiener of Geneseo
- The Volunteers of Cultures Learning Together — Beth Adams, Tim McMahon, Shannon Curly, Kathy Wahl, Lois Heitener, Caroll Williams, Megan Pecenco, Laurel Nelson, Ella Archibald, Tony and Jean Hennessey, and Suanne Grove

Each finalist was honored for their exceptional volunteer service and community leadership and received a handcrafted sculpture by Geneseo artist Jerry Alonzo entitled "Lean On Me." Each finalist also received a Senate Citation from Senator Pamela Helming, a citation from Congresswoman Claudia Tenney, and a Certificate of Merit from Assemblywoman Andrea Bailey.

The evening's top honor, 2026 CARES Volunteer of the Year, was awarded to Ron Niedermaier, who was additionally presented with a one-of-a-kind work of art created by Avon Potter Mike Carroll. The twelve-inch diameter platter was made with clay sourced from the Genesee River flood plain in Avon. The artist created the piece to represent the Livingston County landscape, noting that "it is literally the landscape." It was also inspired by the four seasons and local flora.

The evening's program was led by CARES Awards event Chairperson Lisa Burns. Dr. Tom Matthews, President of the Livingston County CARES Board of Directors, reflected on the organization's 20-plus year history and the critical role of volunteers in its humanitarian mission. Dr. Matthews also introduced the new President of SUNY Geneseo, Dr. Melinda Treadwell, who addressed those assembled. Board member Joe Cope unveiled the new Livingston County CARES Community Improvement Grants initiative, a program intended to provide financial assistance to individuals or groups working to support humanitarian causes in Livingston County.

Livingston County CARES wishes to thank a generous anonymous donor and the Father William J. Gordinier Fund. Special thanks to the Big Tree Inn for their hospitality, Mike Smith of Geneseo for the special music, Sarah Brunskill (SUNY Geneseo student) for photography, Genesee Valley Florist for floral arrangements and the gift of flowers for the Volunteer of the Year, and the Abbey of the Genesee for Monk's Bread gifted to all attendees.

Special thanks also go to our generous partners: Livingston County Board of Supervisors, Livingston County Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Genesee Valley Council on the Arts.

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## Report of Volunteer/Agency Connections Hub Team

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The Volunteer/Agency Connections Hub Team continued its efforts to strengthen local volunteer engagement by hosting a workshop in partnership with the United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes. Volunteer United is used to help nonprofit agencies recruit volunteers by giving them a platform to post volunteer opportunities as well as to help match potential volunteers to opportunities they are interested in. Volunteer United is free to use for both organizations and volunteers, and serves nonprofit agencies in six counties: Genesee, Monroe, Ontario, Livingston, Wayne, and Wyoming.

The session, led by Caitlin Farnung, focused on the use of the Volunteer United website platform as a tool for recruiting and managing volunteers. The session included seven organizations and a total of thirteen participants, and provided practical guidance on how to post opportunities, increase visibility, and manage volunteer engagement through the platform.

Participants also engaged in an informal discussion about shared challenges, particularly around generating interest and effectively promoting volunteer opportunities despite using a variety of outreach methods such as social media, signage, networking, and local publications. One participant shared a best practice emphasizing the importance of keeping volunteers actively engaged during events, so they feel valued, have a meaningful experience, and are more likely to return.

Overall, the session reinforced the value of coordinated outreach and thoughtful volunteer management strategies to strengthen participation across organizations.

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## Addressing Poverty Issues Through Reducing Transportation Barriers in Livingston County

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### Reducing Transportation Barriers Partnership with Livingston County Planning Department

In 2023, Livingston County CARES and the Livingston County Planning Department joined together to address poverty issues in Livingston County by creating a new partnership focusing on transportation services that provide low-income individuals and families access to critical public services.

As a rural county, many residents experience barriers to education, employment, medical care, and grocery shopping due to the lack of transportation. The program established in 2024 was funded by the Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF). Livingston County pays for the mobility managers (represented by Medical Motor Services) who coordinate with case managers to identify unmet needs, broker trips with transportation vendors, and provide communication between residents and the transportation vendors. There is no cost for program administration — all grant funds from RACF have been utilized to pay vendors directly.

In 2025, the program reached new heights:

- 175 total trips funded — up from 67 in 2024
- 1,176 miles of transportation provided
- 14 unique riders served across 3 county departments
- Total 2025 expenditure: \$6,706.36 (median trip cost \$38.00)

Trip purposes include children receiving early intervention care, public health trips for residents, educational opportunities, medical and grocery access for older adults, and trips associated with mental health needs. All clients utilizing the funding are vetted through their local case managers.

Among the individuals helped: 69 trips to the UR Noyes kidney and dialysis center for Peter, Mary, and Katherine; weekly visits for Eloise to see her father receiving hospice care; and reliable rides for 2-year-old Liam to receive Early Intervention services in Mount Morris.

At the Geneseo Summer Festival, the Central Presbyterian Church chicken barbecue event raised \$3,000 that was donated to the transportation fund — at an average cost of \$38 per trip, this provided an additional 78 rides for those in need.

The initial RACF grant of \$2,500.00 in 2024 launched the program. The partners' 2025 budget was \$14,250, and a second application for NYS Department of Transportation 5311 formula grant funds was completed and awarded in 2025, with the Livingston County Planning Department as lead applicant. Forecasting ahead, it is anticipated that additional clients experiencing poverty will be served, yielding greater trips in 2026.

## May 2025 Trip to Puerto Rico

The 2025 (5th) Livingston County CARES service trip to Puerto Rico involved six students and alumni and one faculty leader. The trip ran from May 18 through 24 and provided opportunities for service, exploration, and fun. The travelers were extremely appreciative of both Tom Matthews and Nick Palumbo for all the pre-trip support they provided to ensure a safe and productive experience.

### Those who traveled were:

- Claire Carmen ('28, International Relations)
- Will Carmen ('26, Spanish — his third trip to Puerto Rico)
- Josie Dattilo ('24, MS Accounting)
- Evan Frost ('26, Psychology — his second trip to Puerto Rico)
- Andrew Herman (Communication, faculty trip leader)
- London Patane ('25, Communication & Spanish — her second trip to Puerto Rico)
- Oliwia (Liv) Dominek ('27, Accounting — her second trip to Puerto Rico)

Once again, CARES partnered with Techos Pa' Mi Gente (Roofs for my People), an organization that started in response to roofing needs after the 2017 devastation of Hurricane Maria. Along with replacing damaged roofs, Techos supports programming and resources to help homeowners prepare for future natural disasters through workshops, training, and emergency response materials. This year, Techos faced the sudden loss of their VISTA staff, but despite these challenges our team had a successful trip without significant setbacks.

Most members of the trip flew into San Juan on Sunday afternoon. Sunday was dedicated to settling into the modest apartments at Techos, purchasing food for breakfasts and most dinners (tasty lunches from a local restaurant were graciously provided by Techos each day), and watching orientation and safety training videos to prepare for the worksite.

Each morning, the team gathered for breakfast and left Techos around 7:30 a.m. With Techos professional staff, they traveled about 45 minutes east of San Juan to work on a single-story house that had an old leaking roof. The professional staff provided excellent support and created meaningful opportunities for the CARES team to contribute. The group was joined by two other volunteers: Danny, an engineer from Spain taking a sabbatical year to travel and serve communities around the world, and Susan from Indiana, who had made a longer commitment and was living in San Juan and helping Techos with housing projects.

After the workday, the team would explore the island — Old San Juan, beaches, and waterfalls — and return to Techos to prepare dinner and discuss the day. Tuesday evening stood out as the most unique cultural experience of the trip: after exploring Old San Juan on foot and having a light dinner at a local restaurant, the group attended an evening of salsa dancing lessons, dancing with many locals and Techos staff. Though hot and humid, everyone had a wonderful time.

After five days of work, the team had made significant progress. After discovering that part of the old roof's wall plates had been completely destroyed by termites, the group helped remove the old metal roof, rafters, wall plates, and inside ceiling. By the end of the week, new plates were on the walls and trusses were up and secured with hurricane straps. The following week, a high school group from Boston would complete the project by adding plywood, protective sheeting, and a new metal roof. Edgar, the lead at the construction site, and Danny, the site project supervisor, were very pleased with the progress.

Saturday came too quickly — after washing clothes, packing, cleaning the apartments, and a tour of the fort of Old San Juan, the group departed for home. As 2024 trip leader Dan Martin put it, "Another meaningful trip in the books with a potential new long-term partner in Techos Pa' Mi Gente."

— Trip report prepared by Andrew Herman, CARES Board Member

## March 2026 Trip to Biloxi, Mississippi

From Sunday, March 15 through Saturday, March 21, 2026, a group of six Livingston County Cares volunteers had the opportunity to reconnect with our partners at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi. Over the course of five days, the team learned more about the mission of Back Bay Mission, worked with the center's clientele, and participated in a major reconstruction effort at a local residence. Leadership at Back Bay Mission was extraordinarily generous in providing ongoing orientation and learning sessions covering the history of the civil rights movement in Biloxi, the region's experience with Hurricanes Camille, Katrina, and Nate, anti-poverty and social justice efforts in the local community, and the impact of recent federal policy changes.

Our team included community member Craig Bolesky, who drove to Biloxi from his home in Florida, and five members of the SUNY Geneseo campus community — faculty member Joe Cope and students Tristan Breaton, Amani Rivera, Hannah Loughner, and Mina Maame Takyi — who flew into New Orleans from Rochester. The team arrived on Sunday evening and had the chance to meet fifteen volunteers from the First Congregational Church of River Falls, Wisconsin, with whom we worked closely and productively all week.

Each day began with a 45-minute instructional session in which Back Bay Mission staff detailed the different types of services the organization provides. We heard from the executive director, social workers and case managers, staff at the Micah Day Center and food pantry, and housing reconstruction coordinators. These highly informative sessions helped the entire team understand the broader significance of the hands-on work we did throughout the week.

Our team rotated between several tasks throughout the week: working in the Micah Day Center (an outreach facility providing counseling, clothing, food, and showers to primarily unhoused people in Biloxi), the food pantry, and administrative offices. On Wednesday, the Livingston County Cares team provided lunch — chicken and biscuits with brownies and ice cream for dessert — to approximately 60 Micah Day Center residents. We also assisted with a community resource fair on Tuesday, where health and social service groups helped clients access services, including a critical resource for obtaining state-issued identifications required for most social services. Back Bay Mission is the only facility providing these services on the Gulf Coast between Mobile, AL, and New Orleans.

Our team also worked throughout the week on a residential project in Biloxi. The homeowner is an elderly woman with a mobility-related disability whose home had been damaged in previous hurricanes and only partially repaired. Alongside the River Falls volunteers and under the supervision of a Back Bay Mission construction supervisor, we gutted the bathroom and installed a new walk-in shower and floor, began construction on a wheelchair ramp, and undertook major reconstruction of the foundation and joists under the kitchen. What began as a sagging floor repair expanded considerably when we discovered water and termite damage, a sagging foundation, and disconnected drain lines from the kitchen sink and washing machine — requiring removal of all kitchen cabinets and the subfloor, plumbing repairs, jacking up and reinforcing foundation pilings, and replacing floor joists. It was a genuine learning opportunity. By week's end, the bathroom was fully functional, though the kitchen and ramp projects were estimated to need two to three more weeks of work.

There was time for fun as well — excellent barbecue at The Shed, a concluding meal at the Hard Rock Cafe, a free afternoon at Biloxi Beach, the hurricane monuments in Biloxi, and a walk around Ocean Springs. Although TSA delays at the New Orleans airport prevented the traditional visit to the French Quarter, several of us enjoyed gumbo and beignets while waiting to board our flight home.

All in all, this was a successful and meaningful trip. We were grateful for the chance to renew Livingston County Cares's connections to Back Bay Mission and the Biloxi community, get to know each other better, and work alongside the River Falls volunteers and Mission staff. We returned to Rochester tired but rejuvenated from a week of good work.

— Trip report prepared by Joe Cope, Livingston County Cares Secretary

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## March 2026 Trip to North Carolina

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After weather delayed travels, all four volunteers gathered at Hickory Lodge in Montreat, NC to have dinner with host Toni Ratliff, the Volunteer Coordinator for Fuller Center Disaster Rebuilders, and her husband Aaron, the Rebuilders site construction director. The accommodations were comfortable — just what one might expect for a lodge in the mountains of western North Carolina, where Montreat and Black Mountain blend together into a lovely, peaceful location.

The worksite for the week was on Edwards Avenue in Swannanoa, NC, a mountain community in the valley of the Swannanoa River. In June of 2024, the valley suffered severe flooding from three days of constant rain from Hurricane Helene, which then caused a local reservoir to collapse. The home the team worked on was unique for Disaster Rebuilders — it was a two-family home with two one-bedroom apartments housing disabled veterans. The rebuild required extensive work installing a fire barrier required by code. Once the fire wall (ground to attic) was completed, reconstruction could begin. The team joined the project after drywall had been done but needed seam plastering completed.

On Tuesday, the team attended a Blessing of a house in Old Fort, NC — a 100-year-old home still in the same family, extensively restored by the volunteer community. The team worked on both apartments on the Edwards Avenue property, alternating mudding and sanding depending on which side was ready for the next step. By the end of the last workday, one apartment was seamed, sanded, and primed — ready for painting. The second apartment needed only a final sanding of the seams before priming.

There may have been only four volunteers, but a great deal was accomplished. The apartments were significantly closer to being ready for the waiting disabled veterans.

Our 2026 team: Holly Harvey (Group Leader), Dominic "Pony" Polzella, David Klingman, and Melissa Martinez Clemente.

— Trip report prepared by Holly Harvey, CARES Board Member

## March 2026 Trip to Give Kids the World

This year marked Shea Kinsella Donohue's fourth time leading a service trip to Kissimmee, Florida, accompanying 12 SUNY Geneseo students to volunteer at Give Kids the World (GKTW) Village. GKTW is a nonprofit resort that provides week-long, free vacations to families of children with critical illnesses, referred by wish-granting organizations around the world — most commonly the Make-A-Wish Foundation. GKTW families receive tickets to Disney and Universal theme parks while staying at GKTW, surrounded by families just like theirs. GKTW allows families — especially parents and caregivers — to relax in an environment where they are understood, without worrying about whether activities or meals are suitable for children with disabilities or medical equipment.

GKTW relies on its network of volunteers to serve meals in Cafe Clayton, operate attractions such as the carousel and accessible amusement rides, serve ice cream in Henri's Starlight Scoops Ice Cream Parlor, and fulfill many other positions that allow the Village to operate year-round. During the week of volunteering, students worked in the Rockin' Spa completing hairdos and painting children's nails, played with children during the Village's weekly Winter Wonderland party, and made a difference in the vacations these families are so often unable to take due to the child's illness.

GKTW is celebrating their 40th anniversary this year and has welcomed over 200,000 families since Henri Landwirth, a Holocaust survivor and Florida hotelier, founded the Village in 1986. Our students were not only able to help continue Henri's mission, but also to feel the very real impact their volunteerism has on these families.

Our 2026 team:

SUNY Geneseo student:

Elizabeth Mellen, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Sophia Colleen Kitchens, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Olivia Louise Marra, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Tentse Sherpa, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Alexis Patrick, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Ella Louise Archabald, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Addison Ensminger, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Claire Jane Calhoun-Mullen, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Ella Harvey, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Addison Bosco, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Emily Mikell Lynn O'Neill Wamsley, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Persephone George, SUNY Geneseo Student  
 Katherine Donohue, Community Member and Co-Group Leader  
 Shea Kinsella Donohue ('18), Alumna and Co-Group Leader

— Trip report prepared by Shea Kinsella Donohue ('18), Group Leader

## March 2026 Trip to Puerto Rico

The 2026 (6th) Livingston County CARES service trip to Puerto Rico involved six students and one faculty leader. The trip ran from March 15 through 20 and, though a little shorter than the previous year, provided opportunities for service, exploration, and fun. The travelers were extremely appreciative of the hard work of both Tom Matthews and Nick Palumbo for all the pre-trip support they provided to ensure a safe and productive experience.

### Those who traveled were:

- Sarah Brunskill ('26, Psychology — first trip to Puerto Rico)
- Will Carmen ('26, Spanish — fourth trip to Puerto Rico)
- Cameron Gunther ('28, Early Childhood Education — first trip to Puerto Rico)
- Andrew Herman (Communication, faculty trip leader — second trip to Puerto Rico)
- Annabelle Laibe ('27, Neuroscience — first trip to Puerto Rico)
- Madelyn Robinson ('28, Psychology — first trip to Puerto Rico)
- Megan Wallace ('28, Marketing — first trip to Puerto Rico)

Once again, CARES partnered with Techos Pa' Mi Gente (Roofs for my People), an organization founded in response to roofing needs after Hurricane Maria's 2017 devastation. Techos supports homeowners with roof replacement and also helps them prepare for future natural disasters through workshops, training, and emergency response materials, while serving the immediate community through a garden and secondhand clothing store.

Due to Techos housing other volunteers, the CARES team stayed this year at La Casona de Monteflores, a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) host site that is part of a neighborhood Presbyterian church over 100 years old. The apartment-style accommodations were simple, clean, and comfortable. The team flew out of Buffalo Sunday evening, arriving in San Juan just after midnight, and was ready for Monday's work assignment the next morning.

Unlike the previous year, the team worked on a different house each day, which gave everyone a sense of the full scope of how Techos helps a family — from emptying a home at the start of the process all the way to moving a family back in after completion. The week's work included: emptying a house and loading items into a trailer for storage; removing a roof and unloading building materials; assisting with final stages of a new roof installation; painting the exterior of a completed house; and unloading a trailer into a newly roofed home. Though the team didn't have the satisfaction of seeing one single worksite progress dramatically, the work helped Techos keep numerous projects moving forward and allowed professional staff to focus on more technical needs. At the end of the week, Danny, an AmeriCorps supervisor, sent a message: "Please let your students know that their work made a real difference at every project they touched. Families in PR are better off because of the time and energy they gave."

After each workday the team explored parts of Puerto Rico — Old San Juan, beaches, and the rainforest. Two highlights stood out. On Tuesday evening, the group attended salsa dancing lessons at a local sports complex and then played beach volleyball with locals. On another evening, the team shared a pizza dinner with the pastoral staff of the Presbyterian church, swapping stories and getting to know one another. In a warm surprise, the pastor learned that student Will Carmen was celebrating a birthday, slipped out, and returned with a cake — a gesture that genuinely touched the whole team.

Friday came too quickly. After finishing the day's worksite, the team rushed back to pack up La Casona and head to the airport. The students expressed deep appreciation for the experience and a strong desire to return next year.

— *Trip report prepared by Andrew Herman, CARES Board Member*

## Home Away From Home Respite Program

### Livingston CARES Report — 2025–2026

#### Overview

The Home Away from Home Respite Program serves the needs of both caregivers and their loved ones with memory loss. The program offers activities and socialization opportunities outside the home in an interactive setting for older adults with mild to moderate memory loss due to Alzheimer's, dementia, or TBI. This allows caregivers personal time away to focus on self-care. The program is an alternative to home-based respite and cost effective given the student volunteers — similar hours of home-based respite through an aide service could cost up to five times as much.

#### Collaboration & Funding

The program is a collaborative effort with many partners. Noyes Caregiver Resource Center provides oversight and program coordination. Other partners include Livingston CARES, Livingston County Office for Aging, Geneseo Community Center, SUNY Geneseo Psychology Department, and NYS Caregiving & Respite Coalition.

The NYS Caregiving & Respite Coalition (NYSCRC) provided \$10,000 mini grants in 2022, 2023, and 2024. The program did not receive this grant in 2025, as NYSCRC is now primarily focused on serving new start-up programs serving 25+ caregivers annually. NYSCRC continues to provide online caregiver training for new students.

In 2025, intern student Sonya Lyalikov applied for the SUNY Geneseo Ambassadorship in Innovation grant and received \$5,000 for the program. Grant funds were used for 2026–2027 rental fees, a Smart TV, new games and activity kits, Hooked on Music Therapy and small musical instruments, and a Magic show with Magic Marlin. Two marketing videos were also produced with a campus videographer.

#### Student Participation & Testimonials

SUNY Geneseo students enrolled in a Neuro-Psych course serve as program volunteers and assist in planning activities. In spring 2026, 14 Neuro-Psych students and 4 returning intern students participated. The fact that consistently each semester, 1–2 students return to volunteer on their own time — without college credit or pay — speaks to how meaningful the program is to them.

From one returning intern: "I would be elated to intern for HAH. I absolutely loved my time there and I am touched that I am considered to intern."

#### 2025–2026 Program Activities

Activities include chair exercises, conversation games, table games, baking, painting, music therapy, a magic show, and craft projects with the Geneseo library. Recent pictures can be found on the Noyes Health Caregiver Resource Center Facebook page.

#### Onsite Services for Caregivers

- A Managing Caregiver Stress class is scheduled for May 21, 2026, and a six-week Powerful Tools for Caregivers course will run June 11–July 16, 2026.
- Monthly caregiver support groups on the 4th Thursday of each month, 1:00–2:00 pm, facilitated by the Alzheimer's Association.
- The Empowered Caregiver class: Building Foundations of Caregiving is offered onsite several times per year by the Alzheimer's Association.
- Each caregiver is offered a caregiver assessment and individualized care plan, with quarterly check-ins and a new assessment every six months.

#### Respite Outputs — 2025

- 1,402 hours of community-based respite provided to 15 caregivers in 2025
- Volunteers (students & older adults) contributed 1,132 volunteer hours in 2025
- 100% of respondents on January 2026 satisfaction surveys reported being very satisfied

### ***Caregiver Testimonials***

"The program has allowed me to have peace of mind when running errands and taking care of myself without feeling rushed or guilty. I am comfortable leaving him with the wonderful volunteers and program manager. It is great to see and hear my father socialize and laugh with staff and other program participants. Thank you!"

"I am thankful for the Home Away From Home program and the caring staff providing care."

"This is a great program. We've tried a lot of programs. My husband enjoys this program better than any other he has participated in."

### ***Success and Challenges***

The biggest challenge continues to be consistent outreach and marketing for the program and recruitment of new families. Three families visited the program that ended up not being a good fit; three participants moved to a nursing home. Three new participants were gained in the first quarter of 2026. Marketing and recruitment remain a focus for 2026.

### ***Plans for Summer 2026***

The last day for spring 2026 will be May 14. The program plans to remain open once a week on Thursdays for summer months (May 21 through August 27). Student stipends are being offered during summer 2026 to continue weekly respite services. Five older adult volunteers, one college student, and one high school student have expressed interest in helping this summer.

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## Annual Report on Livingston County Cares 2025–2026 Fundraising Events

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Each year, Livingston County Cares conducts fundraising events to support the volunteer service trips and other humanitarian projects. These events include two Gumbo to Go Dinners, the Giving Tuesday national event known locally as ROC The Day, and the State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA).

### ROC The Day

On December 2, Livingston County Cares participated in the annual Giving Tuesday event known locally in Rochester as ROC The Day. Nine donors gave on the ROC The Day website, and the match from two board members brought the total amount for the 2025 Giving Tuesday to \$3,668.00. Thank you to the 11 donors: Laurel Nelson, Debby Emerson, Sancilio Family, Kurt & Barb Christiansen, Judy Claprod, Tom Wilson, Celia Easton, Ken & Colleen Kallio, Barb & Kurt Christiansen, Eddie Lee, and Tom & Betsy Matthews.

### 2026 SEFA Income

Each year, the State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA) campaign is conducted at all state agencies during November, with donations taken from employee paychecks during the following calendar year. The non-profits receive funds in quarterly payments. Thank you to the sixteen SUNY Geneseo employees who are contributing a total of \$5,181.00 to Livingston County Cares. We acknowledge six donors by name: Kristy Barkan, Wendy Gregory, Patricia Hamilton-Rodgers, Beth McCoy, Kelli Pease, and Roxana Sammons, and ten anonymous contributors.

### Gumbo to Go

Livingston CARES held two Gumbo to Go Dinners in 2025–2026: November 6, 2025 and March 26, 2026. The net profit to Livingston County Cares from the two dinners was \$5,288.02. After both Gumbo dinners, we heard "best ever" many times from our regular customers. Thanks to Brenda Donohue, the events committee, board members and volunteers who sold tickets and helped prepare gumbo, and special thanks to our two key chefs George Hochbruckner and Donna Kennison.

### CARES Awards Event

The second annual CARES Awards event was held on Friday, April 10, at the Big Tree Inn. Since the first awards event in 2025 was so successful, an anonymous donor covered the cost of the 2026 event and no additional donors were solicited for the event. See the full report on this event elsewhere in this annual report.

## Thank You to Livingston CARES Donors 2025–2026

Jerry Alonzo	Deborah Hogan
Anonymous (SEFA donors)	Susan Holmes
Jennifer Apple	Ken Kallio
Karen & KC Bailey	Joe and Lucille Kane
Kristy Barkan	Eddie and Kim Lee
Denise Battles	Tom and Betsy Matthews
Craig Bolesky	Beth McCoy
Lisa Burns	Linda McGorey
Julie Brocklehurst-Woods	Kelli Pease
Central Presbyterian Church	Theresa Pratt
Barb & Kurt Christiansen	Roxana Sammons
Judy Claprod	Jerry Sass (Fidelity Brokerage Services)
Joe Cope	SUNY Geneseo Student Association
Barbara Davis	Tom Wilson
Gregory and Jean Donnan	Wendy Gregory
Celia Easton	Patty Hamilton-Rogers
Debby Emerson	Fr. Gordinier Fund
Geneseo United Methodist Church	

For more information regarding levels of giving, please visit our website at: <https://www.livingstoncountycares.org/>

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## Livingston CARES Board of Directors 2025–2026

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Craig Bolesky	Olivia Marra
Lisa Burns	Dan Martin
William Carmen	Tom Matthews (President)
Joe Cope (Secretary)	Sofia Miner
Brenda Donohue	Louise Murphy
Angela Ellis	Sonja Olbert
Debby Emerson (Treasurer)	Nick Palumbo (Vice President)
Heather Ferrero	Michele Rees
Evan Frost	Tom Wilson
Holly Harvey	
Andrew Herman	
Ken Kallio	
Eddie Lee	
Lyle Lehman (Emeritus)	

## Livingston CARES Service Trips History

### Hurricane Katrina Service Trips Since 2006

Dates	Total Participants	Students	Community Members	Faculty/Staff/Alumni
January 4–10, 2006	33	14	15	4
March 10–18, 2006	55	51	0	5
May 21–27, 2006	8	5	2	1
January 7–13, 2007	20	13	4	3
February 18–24, 2007	23	0	23	0
March 10–17, 2007	49	44	1	4
May 16–23, 2007	16	10	0	6
January 5–12, 2008	25	19	3	3
February 16–23, 2008	10	0	9	1
March 14–22, 2008	55	51	0	4
January 3–10, 2009	25	13	6	6
February 15–21, 2009	11	0	11	0
March 14–21, 2009	55	52	0	3
May 17–23, 2009	28	23	2	3
January 3–10, 2010	29	18	6	5
March 13–20, 2010	59	54	0	5
May 16–22, 2010	20	17	1	2
January 9–15, 2011	27	20	3	4
March 13–19, 2011	28	24	0	4
May 15–21, 2011	27	20	2	5
January 8–15, 2012	28	23	3	2
March 13–19, 2012	28	24	0	4
May 13–19, 2012	27	22	3	2
January 13–19, 2013	21	18	2	1
March 11–17, 2013	28	24	0	4
May 19–25, 2013	14	12	0	2
January 12–18, 2014	20	18	0	2
March 16–22, 2014	21	18	1	2
May 19–24, 2014	13	11	1	1
January 11–17, 2015	21	16	1	4
March 15–21, 2015	21	18	1	2
May 17–23, 2015	13	11	1	1
January 10–19, 2016	22	17	1	4
March 13–19, 2016	21	18	0	3
May 15–21, 2016	13	11	1	1
January 8–14, 2017	20	17	1	2
March 11–18, 2017	14	12	0	2
May 14–20, 2017	5	4	1	0
March 16–23, 2019	5	4	1	0

March 16–22, 2025	7	1	4	2
March 15–21, 2026	6	4	1	1
<b>41 Service Trips</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>

## Hurricane Relief and Recovery Trips Since 2018

Dates	Total Participants	Students	Community Members	Faculty/Staff/Alumni
January 7–13, 2018 TX	13	10	1	2
January 7–13, 2018 FL	13	11	2	0
March 10–17, 2018 PR	10	7	2	1
March 11–17, 2018 TX	8	7	0	1
March 11–17, 2018 FL	7	5	1	1
May 14–29, 2018 PR	9	7	0	2
January 12–19, 2019 FL Keys	14	10	3	1
January 12–19, 2019 PR	14	12	2	0
January 12–19, 2019 TX	13	11	1	1
March 16–23, 2019 FL Keys	13	11	1	1
March 16–23, 2019 FL Panhandle	7	6	1	0
March 16–23, 2019 PR	14	11	3	0
May 18–25, 2019 FL Keys	5	4	1	0
May 18–25, 2019 PR	13	9	1	3
January 11–18, 2020 FL	11	7	2	2
March 17–23, 2024 KY	7	4	2	1
June 7–13, 2024 PR	12	11	0	1
March 16–22, 2025 NC	8	6	1	1
May 18–24, 2025 PR	7	5	0	2
March 15, 2026 NC	4	1	2	1
March 15–20, 2026 PR	7	6	0	1
<b>21 Service Trips</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>

## Hurricane Sandy Trips — Brooklyn, Staten Island, Long Island & New Jersey

Dates	Total Participants	Students	Community Members	Faculty/Staff/Alumni
January 13–19, 2013	19	12	2	5
March 12–17, 2013	16	8	6	2
May 19–25, 2013	7	5	1	1
January 12–18, 2014	7	6	1	0
March 16–22, 2014	14	7	6	1
May 18–24, 2014	7	6	0	1
January 11–17, 2015	7	6	0	1
March 15–21, 2015	7	6	1	0
January 11–17, 2015	7	6	0	1
March 15–21, 2015	7	6	1	0

May 17–23, 2015	6	5	0	1
January 10–19, 2016	7	6	0	1
March 13–19, 2016	7	6	0	1
May 15–21, 2016	5	4	0	1
March 12–18, 2017	6	5	0	1
May 14–20, 2017	6	5	1	0
March 11–17, 2018	6	5	1	0
March 16–23, 2019	5	4	1	0
January 12–18, 2020	6	5	1	0
<b>19 Service Trips</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>

## Give Kids the World

Dates	Total Participants	Students	Community Members	Faculty/Staff/Alumni
January 10–16, 2010	13	12	0	1
January 10–16, 2011	14	12	1	1
March 11–17, 2012	14	13	0	1
March 11–17, 2013	14	13	0	1
March 16–22, 2014	14	13	0	1
March 14–21, 2015	14	13	0	1
March 13–19, 2016	14	13	0	1
March 12–18, 2017	14	13	0	1
March 10–18, 2018	14	13	0	1
March 16–23, 2019	14	13	0	1
March 12–18, 2023	7	5	0	2
March 17–23, 2024	12	10	1	1
March 16–22, 2025	7	6	0	1
March 15–21, 2026	14	12	1	1
<b>14 Service Trips</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>

## Other Trips

Dates	Total Participants	Students	Community Members	Faculty/Staff/Alumni
2008 March, Ohio River Outing Club	20	20	0	0
2012 Sept 21, Southern Tier Food Relief	24	22	0	2
2014 Weekend of Service in Rochester	10	10	0	0
2015 Feb 20–22, Weekend of Service in Rochester	7	7	0	0
2015 March 15–21, Stony Point, NY	5	5	0	0
2016 Feb 19–21, Weekend of Service in Rochester	8	8	0	0
2017 Feb 24–26, Weekend of Service in Rochester	11	11	0	0

2017 Mar 12–18, Detroit MI	7	6	0	1
<b>8 Trips</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

### Summary of All Livingston CARES Trips — January 2006 to April 2026

Total Trips	Total Participants	Students	Community Members	Faculty/Staff/Alumni
103 Service Trips	1,603	1,275	161	167

## Kudos and Thanks

Livingston CARES wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their special contributions and assistance with the trips, projects, and programs.

- Lisa Burns and the Volunteer Recognition Awards Team (Bolesky, Donohue, Ellis, Emerson, Rees and Lee) for their extraordinary work organizing the second Livingston CARES Awards and for working with multiple organizations in the county to make the awards an amazing celebration of volunteer work throughout Livingston County.
- Joe Cope for creating the Livingston County CARES Community Improvement Grants.
- Brenda Donohue for her work on the two Gumbo to Go Dinners and for serving on our Volunteer Awards Committee. And special thanks to our chefs, George Hochbrueckner and Donna Kennison!
- Debby Emerson for service as the Livingston CARES Treasurer and for tracking our income and expenses and preparing the financial reports for board meetings and the annual tax documents.
- Nick Palumbo for his service as Vice-President of Livingston CARES, for his work updating the website multiple times throughout the year, and for managing the registration and training of volunteers for the 2026 service trips.
- Craig Bolesky for his generous donations to our Gumbo to Go dinners and to our other humanitarian projects.
- Julie Matthews for volunteering her time and expertise in preparing our tax returns.
- President Melinda Treadwell and the College for support of the Livingston CARES programs.
- 2026 Service Trip Leaders: Thanks to Holly Harvey for leading the team of four volunteers on the spring break service trip to Black Mountain/Montreat, North Carolina to work repairing homes damaged by Hurricane Helene. Thanks to Shea Kinsella Donohue (Class of '18) for volunteering to lead the team of fourteen volunteers who worked at Give Kids the World in Kissimmee, Florida. Thanks to Joe Cope for leading the service team of six volunteers to work at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi. Thanks to Andrew Herman for leading the March trip of seven volunteers to work on replacing roofs and other projects in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Central Presbyterian Church for serving as our mailing address and for allowing Livingston County CARES to use the kitchen and facilities for our Gumbo to Go dinners.
- Thank you to the student members of the board of directors (Olivia Marra, Will Carmen, Evan Frost, and Sofia Miner) for your service and engagement in our programs and projects. We are honoring our two graduating seniors (Carmen & Frost) with humanitarian awards.
- Special thanks to our board members who are retiring from service on our board of directors and are being honored with humanitarian awards from Livingston CARES: Ken Kallio, Tom Wilson, and Louise Murphy.
- Special thanks to the Student Association for their critical funding for grants to all of the student service trip volunteers.
- Thank you to all of our donors for your support of the work of Livingston CARES and to the individuals who responded to appeals for contributions to disaster relief efforts.



**Mission:** Livingston County CARES is an all-volunteer organization that mobilizes the compassion and generosity of people with ties to Livingston County, New York by providing volunteers with meaningful national and local service opportunities. We are dedicated to supporting humanitarian projects and helping with disaster relief and recovery efforts locally and nationwide.

**Vision:** Livingston County Cares is focused on creating a resilient and engaged community where residents have the opportunity to make a positive impact through volunteer community service and disaster relief efforts.

LIVINGSTON COUNTY CARES, INC.



(585) 515-7770



[HTTPS://WWW.LIVINGSTONCOUNTYCARES.ORG/](https://www.livingstoncountycares.org/)

