



ANNUAL REPORT 2024- 2025

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friend of the Community Foundation,

Thanks to over 50 years of experience making thousands of grants, the Community Foundation has a solid understanding of the local nonprofit landscape and the incredible amount of work that goes into providing meals to seniors on a daily basis, making sure readers have the books they want as quickly as possible, maintaining hiking and biking trails, supporting local artists, and so much more.

There is a lot of invisible activity happening around the clock to ensure you have a culturally vibrant, safe, and loving place to call home. In the annual report you are about to explore, we wanted to share some of that behind-the-scenes information with you.

It is our hope that you will not only appreciate the infrastructure created by this work, but you will feel called to get even more involved than you already are. Throughout the pages ahead, you will find calls to action to help you share your time and other resources with the programs that mean the most to you and your family.

You may be familiar with FLX Gives, the 24-hour day of giving we host every November to help over 100 organizations raise money to support their work. Since 2019, this combined effort has raised over \$1 million! We know that a lot of you dig deep on that day and give what you can to your favorite programs.

Since giving at that level would be impossible for the other 364 days each year, we are introducing a new initiative, FLX Cares, to help you tap into other ways to show support by volunteering, attending events, and advocating for organizations as they face adversity. Combined with the work of FLX Calendar to inform us about what is happening around the area, we want you to play an active role in the community you love so dearly.

If we each respond to even one call to action, our combined efforts will be life-changing for our neighbors and, ultimately, for ourselves. It will be our actions that ensure we live, give, and thrive together for generations to come.

Love,



Randi Hewit, President

CALL to ACTION



FLX Gives is the 24-hour day of giving hosted every November by Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes. This special day helps more than 100 local organizations raise money to support their work in the community. Since 2019, FLX Gives has raised more than \$1 million! It's a great way to give back before the holidays.

Look for the FLX Gives icon in this calendar.



FLX Cares is our new initiative designed to complement FLX Gives, throughout the year. It's all about caring, and sharing your time and treasure, in a way that is bigger than you are. Designed to build a community where everyone can thrive, FLX Cares shows you how to volunteer, participate and advocate for the nonprofits you love.

Stories featuring the FLX Cares icon point to specific ways to get involved. Don't miss them.



FLX Calendar takes schedules from local nonprofits and businesses then consolidates them in one place. It's our way of making it a little easier to stay on top of local event scheduling. With so many events in the area, FLX Calendar helps you plan your year, month and week.

Watch for the FLX Calendar icon so you can take an active role in the community and support organizations and businesses you love!





JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Community Access and the Freedom to Learn

Asked to sum up Southern Tier Library System (STLS) in two words, Southeast Steuben County Library Director Pauline Emery chose *Community Access*.

STLS serves 48 libraries, five counties and 270,000 people. “It’s an ecosystem of learning that provides much more than people know,” Emery says.

Serving all ages, STLS manages buildings, people and resources that bring free access to internet, PCs, audio, video, printed and digital books, plus classes and more to an information-hungry public. STLS leverages tax dollars prudently by sharing services and content efficiently and cost-effectively. “Alone, libraries wouldn’t be able to afford these programs, but collaboration makes it work for everyone,” Emery says.

By law, libraries are emergency warming, cooling and water stations for the community. “We see people’s needs firsthand, listen to their interests and concerns, and build programming around those needs. Blending traditional and innovative services for individuals of all generations empowers them to stretch themselves intellectually, creatively and emotionally,” Emery says. For example, an afternoon playing board games like Dungeons & Dragons at the library is a fun idea that has taken off. Kids reading with therapy dogs is another.

Job search, ESL, GED, STEM, and health insurance counseling are further examples of what Emery calls “a beehive of activity, filling our libraries’ calendars with opportunities for every station of life. This is a place where democracy thrives. It’s a safe space for civil discourse. It is not your grandmother’s library, where *shhhhh* was often the only sound heard.”

Sue McConnell, the Southeast Steuben children’s librarian affectionately known as Miss Sue, has helped countless youngsters get their first library card. Emery calls Miss Sue the “child whisperer.” Her story time is the stuff of childhood memories. Kids know her, love her, and shout out her name when they see her around town; many will surely look back and recall Miss Sue and the library as life changers.

Even with a deep love for literature, Emery says, “I got into library work for something more. I believe in intellectual freedom, the right for people to learn what they want, how they want and where they want.” Libraries provide that access and preserve that freedom.

In fact, the only limit to how the library can improve your life is your imagination.

CALL to
ACTION



Go, talk with your librarian and meet your neighbors there.

Use your library so it can continue to support you and your family.

If you don’t have a library card, or the Libby app for downloading books, an STLS librarian can help, and happily put you on the path to lifelong learning.



FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 General Scholarship Deadline Rose's Youth Philanthropists Deadline	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6 Cozy Conversations	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16 Presidents Day	17 Ramadan Begins	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

What's an ELNoST?

Expanded Learning Network of the Southern Tier is a group of agencies collaborating on educational policy, advocacy and best practices for children ages 8-18. It brings agencies together and supports them, so children and youth receive positive, consistent and equitable services during out-of-school (e.g., summertime) and after-school time (3pm-6pm being a "danger zone").

As Bill Caudill, Program Coordinator of the Steuben County Youth Bureau, explains, "Kids under 18 don't vote. So, they don't have a say in programs directly affecting their well-being." ELNoST spotlights youth issues by sponsoring a legislative breakfast each year. "It brings together local, state and national lawmakers to help them understand the out-of-school and after-school needs in our community. We show them the value of investing in youth services. If society agrees that children are our future, then we need to back those good intentions with resources."

The room at a recent breakfast went quiet as two young adults told the legislators their personal stories. One essentially grew up at a youth center and was so moved by that experience that she now works at a center in Elmira. The other, a recent Hornell High School grad, shared her difficult-childhood story and how youth services changed her life.

By working alongside 18 school districts in Steuben, Chemung and Schuyler counties, ELNoST offers schools the best and latest materials possible when it comes to supporting students' ever-changing mental health needs, physical health, sports, arts and more. It's a challenge to stretch resources to support so many schools and youth centers in the area, but the effort pays off in families helped, problems prevented and positive outcomes realized for so many kids that might otherwise slip through the cracks.

Caudill gave a shout-out to two unsung heroes who have dedicated their lives to local youth services. Susan Hooker, the "Mother Teresa of youth programs," is an ELNoST member running the Hornell Concern for Youth Center. Pam Noviello, executive director of the Triangle Fund, is another larger than-life figure behind the region's youth services.

The problems kids face today are real and many. You can be part of the solution.

CALL to ACTION



Be supportive of young people. Participate in youth programs that interest you. Maybe it's scout leadership, mentoring, teaching a kid to cook or coaching a team. Find one youngster who could use an adult role model and be that person. "It takes a village, and you never know: a little time spent with a child can make a big impact on their life," Caudill says. That impact can send positive ripples through society. It might change your life, too.



MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Fund for Women of the Southern Tier Grant Deadline Central Christian Church Fund Deadline	2 Purim	3	4 Holi	5	6	7
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 Ash Wednesday	19 Eid al-Fitr	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Collaboration Improves Quality of Life

Art, history, music, nature, sports—entertainment and enrichment of all kinds—this is the stuff that makes a community a great place to live. Ours has no shortage of cultural institutions, outlets and options.

Rick Pirozzolo, executive director and chief curator of Elmira's Arnot Art Museum and member of the Southern Finger Lakes Directors Roundtable, says, "These organizations that add such richness to our lives are truly the treasures of our community." We need to support them as they in turn support us.

Comprised of a dozen leaders of nonprofit cultural institutions in the region, from Hammondsport to Elmira to Watkins Glen, the Directors Roundtable meets monthly for coffee and conversation. The group includes Arnot Art Museum, Chemung County Historical Society, Corning Museum of Glass, Finger Lakes Boating Museum, Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, International Motor Racing Research Center, National Soaring Museum, Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, The Rockwell Museum, Tanglewood Nature Center, The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes and the Clemens Center.

"As nonprofits we all have institutional problems, sometimes crises. Inevitably, someone at the table has been through similar straits and will share solutions," Pirozzolo says. Government funding is always a challenge, particularly in changing times. But a unified front is a powerful force. "We speak to legislators with one voice to address goals such as improving quality of life, enhancing educational programming, driving tourism and increasing economic impact."

The group ends each meeting with a round robin discussion of success stories. This kind of open-source sharing, communication and collaboration on both the good and the bad is effective. "It benefits each of our organizations individually, and collectively it makes us and our community much stronger."

By aiming to head off calendar conflicts, the group empowers the community to enjoy as many of the area's treasures as possible. Accordingly, each nonprofit enjoys better attendance at its respective events. "The Roundtable makes it our mission to eliminate the timeworn excuses of 'I didn't know that was happening', and 'We couldn't attend both events because they occurred at the same time,'" Pirozzolo adds.

In the spirit of the Community Foundation's FLX Calendar, the Roundtable designs its event and fundraiser schedule to optimize community awareness and participation.

**CALL to
ACTION**



Support the nonprofit(s) of your choice.

Check out the FLX Calendar, find something of interest to you, plan a "culture night," book your tickets and enjoy! Many events are free.

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS

— MARK TWAIN —

NOV. 30, 1835 — APR. 21, 1910

APRIL

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Passover	3 Schuyler County Fund Deadline Good Friday	4
5 Easter Sunday	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Royce Campership Deadline	17	18
19 National Volunteer Week Begins	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Keeping Mark Twain’s Legacy Alive

The legacy of 19th-century author, humorist and wily social critic Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, lives on today thanks to advocates such as the Center for Mark Twain Studies at Elmira College.

Joe Lemak, PhD, is the Center’s director and a professor who inspires the next generation—providing field trips for grade schoolers and scholarly lessons for college students—to keep the Twain flame burning.

“Locals know that Chemung County is Mark Twain country,” says Dr. Lemak. “They may not know that Twain was a pre-Civil War southern gentleman who married into the wealthy and cultured Langdon family of Elmira. Twain’s father-in-law was an abolitionist, a conductor on the underground railroad.” In fact, if not for Twain marrying Elmira native Olivia Langdon, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* may not have been conceived. Twain wrote *Huck Finn*, *Tom Sawyer* and all his major works in the Mark Twain Study, a modest, octagonal gazebo now nestled near a small pond and fountain on the Elmira College campus.

Besides running the Center and Study, Dr. Lemak oversees the preservation and operation of the Langdon family homestead, known as Quarry Farm. This is where the Study was originally built and gifted to Twain as a surprise from his sister-in-law. Here, overlooking the scenic Chemung River valley, Twain spent 20 consecutive summers writing the classics he left behind for us to enjoy. “We maintain Quarry Farm so that Twain scholars the world over can use it, as Twain did, for serenity, contemplation, research and writing.

A mile from the Study are the well-marked gravesites of Mark Twain, wife Olivia and their four children. Visitors often leave coins on Twain’s simple headstone. The Friends of the Woodlawn Cemetery keep the grass trimmed and weeds pulled so all can appreciate the Twain legacy.

Quarry Farm, Mark Twain Study and Woodlawn Cemetery are well worth a visit to honor the life of this adopted son of Elmira.

CALL to
ACTION



“We hope people will read Twain’s books and visit his Study,” says Dr. Lemak. “But we also encourage folks to attend one of the free lectures given by distinguished Twain scholars at Park Church (built by the Langdon family) and in the barn at Quarry Farm. Visit marktwainstudies.com for information, interactive maps, virtual tours and educational resources for the public and scholars alike. And, of course, donate.”



SIGMA CLAI CONSTRUCTION
AKA
ONE WOULD CALL A COMMANDER
I. NO SHOWS
II. RESPECT UNMAY
III. NO DESERT UNMAY
EAT FOUR VEGES
IV. STUDY THE
V. EMOTIONS? EN
VI. NEVER BUNT
VII. TED
X. BEAR

MAY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25 Memorial Day	26 Eid al-Adha	27	28	29	30

Think Vocational Training is a Thing of the Past? Think Again.

"At Greater Southern Tier BOCES, vocational training is booming," says Rob Sherburne, Director of Career and Technical Education & PTECH.

PTECH, or Pathways in Technology Early College High School, provides youth with hands-on training in science, technology, engineering and math. PTECH students may face numerous obstacles in life, but they step up to the challenge and earn their high school diploma along with an associate degree from Corning Community College. Many are the first in their family to attend college.

GST BOCES Career and Technical Education also provides students in our region a life-changing experience. They leave their home school, half days every day for two years, to attend BOCES programming of their choosing.

"We add new career and technical programs each year," says Sherburne. That list already includes auto body, auto tech, animal studies, conservation, cosmetology, criminal justice, culinary and catering, dental assistant, early-childhood education, fashion design and marketing, heavy equipment, nursing assistant, welding and more. Students learn the professional skills employers seek for the jobs young adults need to succeed in today's world. GST BOCES has relationships with 300 business and industry partners in the region, many of whom offer internships. "It's a tremendous service for the community," he adds.

With three career and technical campuses and an overall enterprise of 900 employees serving 30,000 students across 21 school districts from Addison to Waverly, it's an impressive network. Every district uses school tax revenue to pay in to share services, allowing each to offer vocational training. Without this regional education hub, vital academic and support services would not exist.

Today's GST BOCES goes beyond special education. That is certainly a core competency, but there's much more to it. "We are a nonprofit that partners with local school districts and the community to offer so many educational services it's almost impossible to list them all," says Sherburne. "In addition to PTECH, there's New Visions college prep, including a brand-new engineering program offered at our Hornell campus. And, for older students, GST BOCES' tuition-based adult education is a great way to upskill or reskill. There's something for everyone."

**CALL to
ACTION**



Contact GST BOCES for their "customer work." Order new brakes, an oil change, new hairstyle, catering and much more. You pay only for materials, not labor. "Check out our website and social media, take a tour or visit our open houses. You'll be amazed at how much we have to offer," Sherburne says. Other ways to get involved and give back include volunteering to share your story as a guest speaker or funding a scholarship.



NEW YORK

HEELS & WHEELS
CHENUNG COUNTY
TOGETHER, WE CAN DELIVER.

012
Lafayette, Ark
Regular
Ship # 8

JUNE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Community Grant Program Letter of Intent Deadline	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Flag Day	15	16	17	18	19 Juneteenth	20
21 Father's Day	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Delivering Kindness, Love, Caring...and Food

For Meals on Wheels of Chemung County (MOW), food is only half the story. Yes, 204 volunteers cook, package and deliver nutritious, hot meals for 403 seniors daily. But along with each meal, volunteers also bring a smile and a friendly “How are you doing today?” This kindness, love and caring may be the client’s only social contact that day.

Executive Director Katie Boland left the restaurant business to join MOW in 2021. “In addition to home deliveries, MOW has grown to include an event space offering catering services, on-site baker who provides cupcakes for clients’ birthdays, and a café. Every penny raised goes right back to feeding people. And pets too!” MOW’s pet food service, called AniMeals, came about when volunteers noticed clients sharing meals with their pets. Now, they get an AniMeal along with their own meal, so client and pet alike each receive their daily nutrition.

In 2024, MOW delivered 102,162 meals. Volunteers drove 91,611 miles across Chemung County. “We get less than 10% of our funding from government,” Boland says. Donations, grants, Office for the Aging, insurance and private-pay clients comprise about 90%. “There’s this misconception that MOW is only for wealthy or poor people. The truth is no one gets turned away. We provide food for any senior, homebound or disabled individual who needs it, regardless of ability to pay.”

Another less known, yet equally wonderful community service is MOW’s work delivering meals to area cancer centers. Thanks to Meals While You Heal, cancer patients can pick up a frozen meal after their treatment and look forward to heating and eating a nutritious dinner.

It’s said that volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy; you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in. For volunteers as young as Zayne (7), who comes in with his grandma, as well as Mary (a volunteer since 1970) and Dick, both in their 90s, the benefits are many. They include instilling a strong sense of purpose, meeting new people, improving community health (and your own), and boosting happiness. Boland’s 17-year-old daughter has ridden along on deliveries with Mom. “How many times do you hear clients say, ‘God bless you,’ before you start to feel that maybe God really is blessing you,” she remarked.

**CALL to
ACTION**



Sign up for meals if you need them.

If you’re able, volunteer (especially in the winter months when snowbirds move south).

Order MOW cupcakes for your next event.

Donate through mealsonwheelschemung.org, drop off pet food, or send in a check.



JULY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Community Grant Program Deadline	2	3	4 Independence Day
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	

Addressing an Often-Unspoken Part of Life

CareFirstNY, the nonprofit formerly known as Southern Tier Hospice and Palliative Care, has been the sole hospice provider in Chemung, Schuylar and Steuben counties since 1981. Hospice provides comfort, care and dignity to patients and their families navigating a terminal illness, determined by a physician as six months or less to live.

CareFirst also provides palliative care, which offers seriously ill patients symptom care, quality of life, emotional support and coordination of healthcare.

According to CEO Phoebe Reynolds, the U.S. has spent decades educating the public about smoking cessation. Meanwhile, hospice care has remained in the shadows. "End of life is a topic we don't talk about enough. We will all die, but people are not educated well about dying with dignity. At CareFirst, we want people to know about our hospice, grief counseling and palliative care options before they need us."

Reynolds, along with a staff of 65, board of directors, and 35 volunteers, oversees the operation in Painted Post that serves the unique needs of nearly 100 patients at any given time. "Our work happens in patients' homes, where they are most comfortable," she says. "Hospice allows patients to live out their days with great dignity. We have MDs, RNs, LPNs, social workers, mental health practitioners and non-denominational spiritual counselors, all surrounding the whole person with caring and love at a time when it's needed most."

Volunteers are essential and assist with CareFirst events, administration, patient companionship and even light housework. "They do a great job helping around the office, picking up prescriptions for patients, and visiting their homes, if they so choose. Most importantly, our volunteers support family caregivers. They fill in around the medical staff, who can't be there every day," says Reynolds.

CareFirstNY provides quality care to anyone, regardless of background, ethnicity, and/or financial status. Funded through private pay, insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, state and federal grants, and gifts from generous donors, the organization turns no one away for financial reasons. While the cost of hospice and palliative care is significant, government grants and community donations help bridge the gap when Medicare and Medicaid are not enough.

CALL to ACTION



Volunteer. It's meaningful and rewarding.

Donate any amount at carefirstny.org. Be sure to attend fundraisers Brunches in Bloom (Spring), Purse Bingo (Fall).

Attend Summer Good Grief Camp (for kids ages 7-17 experiencing grief).

Reynolds encourages families, "Get to know us before you need us. When you're gathered for birthdays or holidays, take a moment to talk about end-of-life concerns. It's never too early to plan."



AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Keuka Area Fund Grant Deadline	22
23 30	24 31	25	26	27	28	29

Giving Back to the Community They Love

"We want the community to know the Junior League of Greater Elmira Corning (JLGEC) is an active group of women dedicated to volunteering, giving back and improving the community we love," says President Alyssa Pesesky.

Established in 1932, JLGEC's goal is to promote volunteerism and perpetuate social change in the Elmira-Corning communities that will benefit most from it. Membership averages around 30 women, typically ranging in age from their 20s, just out of college, to their 50s. "Sustainers" are members of five years or more. Deb Todd is JLGEC's sustainer representative. "Deb is so good at it," Pesesky says. She loves it and has no intention of leaving!"

By training the next generation of leaders, providing ways to get involved and putting their talents to work, JLGEC makes a positive impact in our community year-round. "While we are part of the Association of Junior Leagues International, we are a completely self-funded non-profit organization," Pesesky says. "Find the Good Day is one international initiative we participate in locally each year. It encourages people to give back in small but impactful ways."

"Essentially, we are a catalyst for good works. By networking and collaborating with other nonprofits, we uplift the entire community," Pesesky says. JLGEC partners with Southside Community Center on after-school programs for children who don't have a place to go when school lets out. JLGEC serves a Thanksgiving dinner for kids and their families. They also work with Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Developmental Services (CIDS) to support families and children's healthy development. "Since 2021, about the time I got involved, we have distributed some 50,000 diapers to anyone who can use them." In addition, JLGEC provides grants and scholarships.

Putting the fun in fundraising, JLGEC runs Jingle Jam, a roller-skating fundraiser. Jingle Jam funds a community dinner aimed at building awareness about, raising money for and increasing utilization of Elmira's Neighborhood Transformation Center, which helps area families by providing a safe and inviting place where no one feels excluded.

JLGEC attracts new members each year. New recruits often adopt a project. "One recent labor of love involved an outreach to retirement centers in town. We give seniors birthday bags including a birthday card and goodies. It's an important group of community residents who unfortunately sometimes get overlooked," Pesesky says.

CALL to ACTION



Anyone can join JLGEC. It's a great way to meet like-minded volunteers and make lifetime friendships. Check their Facebook and Instagram pages, stop by a meet & greet or fundraiser, and apply for membership at JLGEC.org.

Monetary gifts are always welcome through the Support Us tab on the website.



SEPTEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11 Rosh Hashanah	12
13	14	15 Edith Saxton Fund Grant Deadline	16	17	18	19
20 Yom Kippur	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

School Social Workers and Counselors “Build That Bridge”

For Elmira High School (EHS) Social Worker Zakiya Williams, every day is an opportunity to work with students, both behind the scenes and up close and personal, on what she calls “building that bridge.” One day, the bridge might be reconnecting an isolated student with classmates. Then, it’s reaching out to parents to share their child’s successes and challenges. Next, it’s helping students find food, clothing and hygiene products.

In this age of anxiety, it’s no secret that young people are struggling with social isolation, identity, self-esteem, bullying, depression, substances, eating disorders and other mental health problems. Students often need a caring adult outside the home to connect them to mental health resources. School social workers and counselors bridge that gap. “I’d estimate roughly half our students have mental health issues,” Williams says. “I help them at school and point their families to our partner organizations, Children’s Integrated Services, Family Services, Glove House, CASA-Trinity, YWCA and others.”

While academics will always be important, school today is about building that bridge. The EHS motto sums it up well. “Family, School, Community: Together We Succeed.” With that vision in mind, Williams makes her classroom-size office a safe space for all. “I work with kids on their individualized education programs (IEP). But I also make sure their basic needs are met by giving them access to our Clothing Closet (It stocks socks, pants, shirts, even prom dresses, all available for free thanks to generous donors.), Express Cart (Food Bank of the Southern Tier sees that it’s filled with nutritious food for those who need it.), and other resources both inside and outside the school’s walls.”

School counselors handle class scheduling, scholarship guidance and vocational and college planning. Their role overlaps with that of social workers. “Ultimately,” Williams says, “we want kids to be comfortable and confident enough to stay in school, learn, graduate, be successful and contribute to our community and society. My job is to help them during their four years here, but also to make them independent and able to take good care of their mental health.”

CALL to ACTION



Williams encourages you to get involved with your local school: “Get to know the social workers and counselors. We’re here to help! While individually we don’t know all the answers, as a team we are unstoppable!” Student volunteers staff the Clothing Closet and Express Cart,” Williams says, “but we’d love to have adult volunteers donate their time and energy.” Remember, EHS students are the next generation of Elmira-Corning leaders. You have the power to change lives.



Sunrise.
Sunburn
Sunset.
Repeat.

Hug
Dealer

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Royce Youth Fund Deadline	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 Halloween

Bank On It

Food. “We all need it for nourishment,” says Food Bank of the Southern Tier (FBST) Director of Communications Samantha Eck, “but it’s so much more. Beyond meeting a physical need, it’s about feeding people emotionally and socially. Food is how we come together in community.”

Established in 1984, FBST works to build and sustain hunger-free communities throughout the Southern Tier. Begun as a backup to governmental safety nets for food insecure individuals and families, “Today, with government support drastically reduced, FBST is becoming a safety net its own right,” Eck explains. “Feeding America, our national partner, provided six billion meals a year in the U.S. last year. It’s expected that cuts to SNAP alone will lead to a loss of some nine billion meals.”

In FBST’s service area, including Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties, one in seven individuals faces food insecurity, a sobering statistic rivaled only by the fact that one in five children suffers from it. It’s well documented that children who go hungry are less likely to grow, thrive and learn at school.

FBST makes a profound difference in the lives of our neighbors in need. But it may be surprising who those neighbors are, Eck says. “Some of our clients are food secure one month and insecure the next. Many have full-time jobs, even two, yet mounting bills force them to our pantries. Through our 301 food pantries and partners we offer residents fresh meats, produce, and shelf-stable foods they need to make ends meet, without judgement. Our Kids’ Farmers Markets, School Food Centers and BackPack Program provide nutritious food, delivered discreetly, to children who need it.”

FBST’s 60 employees and more than 1,200 volunteers delivered 19.7 million pounds of food in 2024. Volunteers include impassioned individuals, families, corporate groups, churches and schools.

Leveraging relationships with Feeding America, retailers (grocery stores, farms, etc.), government programs and private donors, FBST obtains food to fill its College Avenue warehouse shelves, coolers and freezers. Staff and volunteers sort, pack and load it onto tractor trailers, which deliver it to pantries and mobile pantries throughout the region. There, more volunteers distribute nutritious food to anyone who needs it. Eck says, “We essentially run a huge warehouse, that, along with our partners, creates a food ecosystem to nourish the community.”

CALL to
ACTION



“I encourage people to advocate for the Food Bank at the local, state and federal level,” Eck says. “Volunteer at our warehouse or your local pantry. If you need food, use us; that’s why we’re here. Finally, if you can, donate.” Every dollar donated provides three meals.



NOVEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daylight Savings Time Ends Scholarship Applications Open	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Veterans' Day	12 FLXGives	13 FLXGives	14
15 National Philan- thropy Day	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29	30					

Conserve and Carry On

"The Earth is what we all have in common." — Wendell Berry

Nonprofit Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) has a mission of conserving forever the lands and waters of the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier region, ensuring scenic vistas, local foods, clean water and wild places for everyone.

When you wake up and decide you're ready to take a hike or go paddling, what if the trail, lake or river wasn't ready for you? FLLT helps ensure it is ready and safe and will stay that way.

"Our staff of 22 works cooperatively with landowners and local communities on land conservation and water quality protection," says FLLT President Andy Zepp. "The goal is good stewardship, and we are very strategic in our approach. We look to identify and create win-win scenarios, where the area's ecology, landowners, municipalities and the greater community all benefit."

Those projects could be lands FLLT acquires that then become preserves, such as the Houghton Preserve, donated to FLLT by the Houghton family in honor of their deep commitment to the Corning community. Or a future-minded donor (sometimes anonymous) may provide funds to create other opportunities. This is how the 700-acre Steege Hill Preserve came to be. Other times, FLLT enters into conservation easement agreements, of which they hold 200. The third type of project involves partnering with government entities. An example here can be found near Route 352, along the river, between Elmira and Corning.

Thanks to the support of members, landowners and volunteers, FLLT has increased its number of hiking trails (56 miles), lakeshores protected (six miles), land preserved each year (1,000+ acres), boundaries protected (750 miles), volunteers (200), land parcels permanently preserved (489), land protected forever (35,000 acres), publicly accessible nature preserves (45+), conservation easements (196), nature preserves with deer-hunting by permit (34), overall area they cover (6,285 sq. miles across 12 counties) and time invested in preserving lands and waters (37 years).

CALL to ACTION



Explore and enjoy FLLT's dozens of public nature preserves. As Zepp wisely points out, "We won't conserve what we don't understand." He also urges people to get involved at the local community level, in civic groups and in local government. "This is where intention turns into action," he says. FLLT has all kinds of opportunities to volunteer, work as part of a team, have fun and get to know others who care about land and water quality. Make a donation in honor or memory of a loved one. Or make a planned gift for the future. Your legacy can help conserve our beautiful lands and waters forever.



DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Hanukkah Begins	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

Experience the Great Outdoors in Your Own Backyard

Snow whispers through pines. Water trickles off sun-bathed paddles. Trout rise to take flies as the sun sets against a brilliant fall tapestry.

Montana? No, it's our home. We are blessed to live in an area of natural beauty, where each new season provides delights if we only look for them.

Jim Palmer, an avid outdoorsman who lives eight houses from the Chemung River, volunteers with numerous groups dedicated to conservation, water quality and environmental stewardship.

A member of the Chemung County Federation of Sportsmen, which includes rod & gun clubs, Trout Unlimited (TU), beekeepers, DEC, Farm Bureau, 4H, Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, Pheasants Forever and other organizations, Palmer and fellow volunteers stay active. Their focus is promoting the outdoor lifestyle, with a special emphasis on veterans (e.g., Bath Veterans Association has veterans' fishing days.) and youth. Palmer can often be found fishing with his young grandchildren and hunting with the older ones.

TU runs a Trout in the Classroom program in nine Chemung County schools. Kids learn the importance of water quality by raising trout in classroom aquariums, starting from eggs, feeding and nurturing them, then releasing them in local streams. "It shows teachers, kids and families the idea of taking care of your environment," Palmer says. "TU has 193 members locally, but it's probably a dozen of us that attend the meetings. We need new members."

Friends of the Chemung River Watershed is dedicated to making the Chemung a viable resource and teaching kids water safety. "Kids can get in a kayak and see firsthand what water quality means to the local habitat. They also develop a lifelong love of nature," Palmer explains.

Hunting club Pheasants Forever takes boys and girls on hunts by matching up each youth with a mentor and a dog. It starts with a safety course. Kids then learn about conservation, not through video, but by living it—seeing animals and hearing songbirds in their natural habitat.

Palmer encourages folks to check out the new Outdoor Education Center, on Route 14, near Millport. Developed in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension, it offers a large parking area, pavilion, picnic tables, trees and flowering shrubs, so kids and families can enjoy the outdoors as intended, in a natural setting.

CALL to ACTION



Get out there. Get your kids on a mountain bike or hiking trail, experiencing the great outdoors. "Don't be afraid to come to a local meeting," Palmer says. "Volunteer to maintain your favorite trail or waterway. And donate. Many of these groups don't charge any fees; they survive on donations."

COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

OF ELMIRA-CORNING AND THE FINGER LAKES, INC.

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