

# 2025 PROGRESS CHENANGO

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## Aunt Mary's House to offer safe and secure living for women in crisis

**BY KELLI MILLER**  
EVENING SUN

NORWICH - Aunt Mary's House (AMH) will soon open and provide emergency and transitional shelter to homeless pregnant and parenting mothers, ages 18 and up through an application process.

The non-profit organization supports women with a hand up in a safe and secure living environment, helping mothers and children to move from crisis to stability.

"AMH will have a sustainable and measurable impact on Chenango County by helping break the generational cycle of poverty, abuse, and homelessness," said AMH Executive Director Brenda White.

White explained that access to prenatal care, as well as a healthy and stable living environment, significantly reduces the rate of low birth weights and other medical complications that are common among young mothers.

By providing house residents with their basic needs and wrap-around support services, AMH will reduce rates of complications during birth and support healthy first years of life.

"AMH will also provide the

residents with mental health, educational and employment support services," she continued. "Without assistance that goes beyond meeting basic needs, mothers and their children are vulnerable to poverty, neglect and abuse."

Aunt Mary's House and Improve Norwich Now (I.N.N.) President Jen Westervelt said she is honored to be part of the incredible team that has formed to spearhead the creation and realization of Aunt Mary's House.

"Brenda's level of care and compassion have already served mothers in crisis in our community, and I am eager to see how opening our doors will catapult the success of women and babies who are currently constrained by unfortunate circumstances," said Westervelt.

"My personal desire to break generational patterns of struggle is a driving force in this vital work: the foundation of success is laid in the beginning of one's life, so the sooner we can help our youngest community members realize their full potential, the better for us all," she added.

In 2024, AMH received the Chobani Grant to complete

Continued on page 15 ►



Another great day of work was completed by volunteers joining Aunt Mary's House (AMH) President Jen Westervelt and Executive Director Brenda White. The transformation continues with hard work and determination. (Submitted photos)



## The Place supports and empowers local youth



Members of the 2024 Chenango Youth Philanthropy Council (CYPC). The CYPC is made up of students in the Norwich, Sherburne-Earlville, and Unadilla Valley School Districts, and gives members a chance to learn more about local nonprofits, complete volunteering hours, and select organizations to receive grant funding. (Photo from The Place)

**SARAH GENTER**  
EVENING SUN

NORWICH — The Place is a nonprofit organization located at 22 East Main Street in Norwich that serves the Chenango County community with childcare, programs for teens, and resources for families.

Founded in 1983, the organization's mission is "to provide programs and support to youth and families, helping them realize their full potential as they become responsible contributing members of society."

They fulfill this mission by providing a safe and supportive atmosphere for the county's youth, while providing empowering programs and teaching life skills.

### Programs and services

The Place offers a variety

of programs for Chenango County youth, including the KIDS Program and EPIC Program, formerly known as the Teen Program.

The KIDS Program is a licensed childcare program for school-age children through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. This program offers before- and after-school childcare during the school year, where children receive nutritious snacks, receive help with homework, and enjoy educational programs.

Children enrolled in the KIDS Program also receive visits from outside organizations such as 4-H, Eat Smart New York, and the Chenango County Historical Society, as well as participate in arts and crafts activities, cooking, games, and The Place's outdoor playground and basket-

ball court.

In the summer, The Place offers SummerCare, an "all-day program filled with fun activities such as swimming, trips to the playground, field trips, special guests and more." Children in the program also receive breakfast, lunch, and healthy snacks.

The Place's Teen Program was recently rebranded as the EPIC Program, and aims to provide a safe space for local middle and high schoolers to hang out after school.

The Place Executive Director Sharon Vesely said one of their major goals for 2025 is to expand the program to offer additional hours and programs in other areas of the county.

"Our main thing this year is we're going to be expanding and shifting gears with

Continued on page 16 ►



# Chenango Story



The 66th annual Canasawacta Country Club member-guest tournament was held in August. (Photo from Alysha Brooks)



The Canasawacta Country Club, located at 261 County Road 44 in Norwich, includes a restaurant and golf course and venues for weddings and parties of all sizes and types. (Submitted photo)

## Canasawacta Country Club hosts thousands of games a season and offers fine dining

**BY SOPHIA ROOT**  
EVENING SUN

NORWICH – More than 20,000 rounds of golf are played annually at The Canasawacta Country Club. The business was founded in Norwich in 1920 and purchased by Carson Family Enterprises in 1984. The current owners are Tim and Mary Carson.

The country club is in the restaurant and banquet business, as well as the golf course business. They host weddings and parties of all sizes and types, from baby showers to memorial of life services. Tim Carson states, “We have hosted parties for over 1,000 people and love to host more intimate groups, our tables of two.”

According to Carson, “A huge ben-

efit of operating the club is the friendly population of people that live in this area, and call The Canasawacta Country Club home. People do not need to be a member to dine or play golf here.”

In the warmer season the Canasawacta Country Club operates a restaurant open to the public. Carson said, “We are continuing to grow our restaurant base with delicious and creative menus as well as expanding our event menu and catering business.”

The Country Club engages with the community through word of mouth and social media. Carson claims that a current struggle for the country club is the visibility of their restaurant and services; he wants the public

to be more aware of his business’ expanded offerings.

“Canasawacta Country Club is excited to add an RV park to our property,” Carson states. “We intend to initially have eight luxury spots available and add eight additional spots and four cabins in the second phase.”

The Canasawacta Country Club is open seven days a week, April through September. Hours vary in the off-season months. The club is currently open for dinner Wednesday through Saturday from 4 p.m to close.

To learn more about the club, visit [www.canasawactacc.com](http://www.canasawactacc.com). For those seeking employment, stop by and pick up an application.



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# Aunt Mary's House to offer safe and secure living for women in crisis -

Continued from page 13 ▶

their kitchen and dining room renovations which included a pantry. The grant will also help keep the pantry and refrigerator stocked, so that the women will always have access to nutritious food.

White said additional grants received included two anonymous foundations that allowed them to start and complete the renovations necessary to the home they are leasing for AMH. Also donations were received from The Norwich Rotary, The NYCM Foundation, The Roger Follett Foundation, The Greater Norwich Foundation and The Everett and Pearle Gilmour Foundation.

"We have three churches that have committed to monthly donations (Cvfree Church, City Church, and Emmanuel Episcopal Church), as well as several other churches that made donations to our program," said White. "We have also had several local businesses donate to our cause, including: Hale St. Medical, The Raymond Corporation, Baillie Lumber, and Golden Artist Colors."

She noted additional support came from local restaurants either through direct donations or spotlighting their cause during a "give back night", which included Moi's Center City Bistro, Nina's and Gilligan's.

They had their first Mother's Day Brunch Fundraiser in May, hosted by Miles of Love in McDonough and catered by Nina's, where they auctioned off items donated from an array of local businesses. White said the event hosted 100 guests and raised just over \$3,000.

"We hope to make this a recurring signature event for Aunt Mary's House every year," said White.

Aunt Mary's House President Jen Westervelt said, "When Improve Norwich Now started in January 2019, I anticipated great things would happen for our community, but I did not know exactly what that would look like."

"Reflecting back, I am simply humbled and honored to be part of an opportunity to come alongside those who are vulnerable in our community through Fostering Futures NYCC, Aunt Mary's House, and our literacy initiatives," she said.

"In my opinion, encourage-



**Aunt Mary's House (AMH) Executive Director Brenda White at the Saturday in the Park raising support for the emergency and transitional shelter of homeless pregnant and parenting women. (Submitted photo)**

ment and optimism need to remain at the forefront in order for people to see transformation is possible," Westervelt added. "We do not have to be relegated to cynicism nor limited by past decisions."

She said breakthrough is possible: generational patterns of struggle do not have to continue, and it is her hope and prayer they will continue to break down barriers and provide support so all community members can reach their full potential.

White looked back over the 2024 year and said if she were to give herself any advice, it would be to enjoy the whole journey and process of creating AMH and to not get lost or overwhelmed with the to-do lists and tasks that needed to be done.

"To take time to truly take in what we were building and how we would be able to change lives in our community," she added. "I would also tell myself to ask for help and delegate more, that way everything I did would get a full 100% from me."

### Major plans for 2025 and challenges ahead

"We plan to open our doors in February to our first guest of AMH," White said. "Once we are open and have our first guest in, we will continue to work on filling the home with moms, babies, love and laughter."

"I think our biggest challenge right now is the unknown

as we do not know how many women we will have at any given time or what state they will be in when they arrive at AMH," she said.

Policies are in place with procedures, house expectations, rules and guidelines to be able to be prepared for every scenario, but White said "this is exploratory work". As challenging as that seems, she is very optimistic they will learn as they go.

"We haven't seen an effort like this in our area, and we are excited to be the first and pave the way," she added.

Six years ago, Aunt Mary's House was just an idea as a way to help with the homeless population in our community, White explained. Several other community members took that idea and turned it into a reality with time, dedication and hard work.

White said she was hired in 2022 and began working to secure grants, funding, business partnerships and community support to secure a home to lease, funds to renovate the home, and coordinate volunteers to help with everything that needed to be done at the house.

She also made connections to partner with resources in the community to ensure the guests of AMH will have every opportunity and resource Chenango County has to offer them.

"We are also always looking to expand that network, so we welcome contact from any

resources interested in partnering with us," said White.

### 2024 highlights and positive outcome

"Even though the house is not yet open, I was able to help several women in their time of need," White said. "I gave out diapers, wipes, food, blankets, clothes, car seats, pack n plays and also guided the women to resources that would help them with their needs."

White said they also had many community members come together to help in a large variety of ways, with volunteers serving on committees and hosting a table on Saturdays in the Park to share AMH with the community.

"Norwich high school football players gave their time to help us clean out the donated storage units at All in Storage and Rentals to Go, which included some very large pieces of furniture," said White. "They helped move everything to a building in town where a generous community member allowed us to sort all of our donations."

She said Alvogen employees volunteered their time to help them with landscaping, alongside the community, Cvfree Church and City Church members helping with cleaning, setting everything up in the house, assembling furniture, washing dishes, clothes and linens and even with purchases from the AMH Amazon wish list.

"We are so thankful for all of the support we have received from our community and friends," said White.

### Benefits and challenges of being located in Chenango County

AMH is in Norwich and within walking distance of all of the resources Chenango County has to offer, including the County Office Building, DSS, UHS CMH Hospital, Women's Health Clinic, WIC, grocery stores, pharmacies and several employers.

White noted this is of extreme importance in helping AMH mothers learn to utilize the services they need. She said transportation is not guaranteed, so residents will walk or use taxis to get to their destinations.

"The challenge of running a non-profit in Chenango County, especially a program like Aunt Mary's House, is that our community is already facing many socio-economic challenges," White said.

"We hear things such as how our population is aging and decreasing, and economic opportunities for individuals and families are not at the same scale as larger, more populated areas," she said.

"One of the most useful things someone can give a non-profit is unrestricted cash donations, but we know many local individuals and families are actively struggling to support their own needs," said White.

She stated even with these challenges, local businesses and private donors have been incredibly supportive, and they have had people from all sorts of backgrounds volunteer their time, skills, and compassion - which go a long way.

AMH is always looking for volunteers. At times it is difficult to find enough volunteers to fill every need for their organization, as there are only so many in Chenango County and most volunteer for several non-profits.

"But we do have an amazing group of volunteers in our community, and most of them give time to several agencies," White said.

"We are sharing our mission, vision and goals with everyone, and our hope is that those who are passionate and share a heart for the same things we do will see that and bring them to our organization," she added.

White explained they have seen an increase of those in need in the area over the last few years and seemingly fewer resources to help everyone with everything they need.

"Our community is working hard to be able to offer as many resources as possible to address the homeless population, increase housing availability and keep food pantries open," said White.

"AMH will close the gap in these areas by offering a safe, warm home, nutritious food, and the resources necessary to teach the guests of AMH how to be independent and self-sufficient," she said.

White stated they will help them develop the foundation needed to sustain themselves and their families once they are ready to leave AMH and go out into the community on their own.

AMH will take time to ensure their residents are receiving everything they need to succeed, but there is concern amongst White and the Board of Directors if they can continue to offer non-residential programming in the future.

"While we aren't looking to expand the physical home, we ask ourselves how we can expand our future reach and support women and babies in similar situations, even while not living at AMH," she added.

AMH is a residential home with no hours of operation. White and/or background-checked volunteers will be at the home from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the week, and will have board and community members on call after hours and on the weekends so someone will always be available.

AMH has one staff member, six board members, about 30 volunteers and "Friends of AMH" who support efforts through recurring or one-time monetary or in-kind donations.

White said they are always looking for volunteers and "Friends" (donors and partners) to come alongside AMH as they equip moms and babies for success.

For more information call 607-238-3392, email [executivedirector@auntmaryshouse.net](mailto:executivedirector@auntmaryshouse.net), visit their Aunt Mary's House Facebook page and/or their website at [auntmaryshouse.net](http://auntmaryshouse.net).

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## The Place supports and empowers local youth -

Continued from page 13 ▶

our Teen Program. So we will be switching gears to make it more of a teen center and re-marketing that in a little bit of a new way that we've renamed it, we're trying to rebrand it, but we hope to have it known as EPIC, standing for Empower, Prepare, Inspire, and Connect," said Vesely.

"We'll be adding some additional evening and weekend hours, and we recognize the fact that food stability is a huge concern in our community as well, so we'll be providing meals and snacks - nutritious things for youth involved in those programs during the outside-of-school hours. So that's a huge undertaking."

The Place EPIC Program Coordinator Elizabeth Hathaway said she'll be hosting drop-in hours two Sundays per month. One of the days will feature a fun activity, such as karaoke, bingo, or kickball. The other day will focus on teaching participants how to cook a meal, such as macaroni and cheese, homemade pizza, or hamburgers.

"Those life skills, that's what the focus is. Empowering them and building stronger community members in the years to come," said Vesely.

One major goal for The Place is to make their programs more accessible to youth outside of the Norwich area.

"Part of us reaching out to different areas of the county that aren't served like the City of Norwich is served, is recog-

nizing the fact that transportation is a huge issue for our entire county, particularly for teens to get to programs and services," Vesely explained. "So we wanted to make sure that we were branching out and providing some services into areas that we're not typically in, because they're part of the county, too."

To accomplish this, the EPIC Program will be partnering with the Bainbridge Teen Initiative to offer services and programs in that area.

"We will be expanding to the Bainbridge community. So there's a group down in that community, the Bainbridge Teen Initiative, who were looking for some additional support in getting their programs up and running," said Vesely. "We have 40-some-odd-years experience with working with teens and implementing programs, so we will be expanding down to Bainbridge to provide programming there."

The Place's Teen Babysitter Training Class has also been taken across the county to Greene and Sherburne, and Hathaway said she's working with Otselic Valley to host a class there as well.

Hathaway said she's also looking to expand programs offered through the EPIC Program.

"For my teens, we're looking toward poetry or writing classes. We're looking at intergenerational discussions, which are going to kind of be like TED Talk style things," she said. "Just keep building those relationships to keep

getting the youth and families and other people that just would like to be involved, involved in the community as much as possible."

In 2024, The Place was able to engage 920 youth from every school district in Chenango County through their programs and initiatives, and served 9,704 meals and snacks to youth and families participating in their programs.

### Youth philanthropy, advisory, and employment

The Place also offers opportunities for local youth to get involved in their community through the Chenango Youth Philanthropy Council (CYPC), Youth Advisory Council, and the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

The CYPC is made up of students in the Norwich, Sherburne-Earlville, and Unadilla Valley School Districts. Students involved get to learn about local nonprofits and what they do, complete volunteering hours, fundraise, and select community organizations to receive grant funding.

In 2024, The Place hosted a Nonprofit Showcase at the SUNY Morrisville Norwich Campus, where local nonprofits set up to educate the community on what services they offer. Members of the CYPC also attended to learn more about nonprofits in the area.

Vesely said the Nonprofit Showcase is not only a great chance for students to learn, but also for community members to connect with resources, as well as provide networking

opportunities for the nonprofits.

"The thought behind that is to give yet another opportunity for our Youth Philanthropy Council members to become more familiar with nonprofit agencies and organizations in the county, and on the flip side of that, it's an event where, if nonprofits are looking for board members or additional volunteers, since it's open to the community, nonprofits can solicit for those, too," said Vesely. "What we have found is it's a huge networking opportunity for nonprofits, not just to gain additional resource information, but to learn about other services in our community, too. So it has been successful since we've had it."

The CYPC was formed in 2014, and since the council's inception, they have provided more than \$60,000 to local nonprofits.

The Youth Advisory Council was formed in 2023, and serves as a way for local youth aged 12 to 17 to help improve their community by discussing current programs and services, looking for ways they can be improved, and what services and programs are lacking in the community.

Additionally, The Place also offers the Summer Youth Employment Program to help local teens find working opportunities.

### Connection to community

Vesely said one of their main goals is to stay aware of needs within the county, and address them when they can without replicating existing services.

"We're just trying to keep our thumb on the pulse of what our needs are in our community and respond to them," said Vesely. "There's always been a need for youth programming and programs and support for families, and without replicating services. Obviously we don't focus on sports the way the YMCA focuses on sports. So we're not replicating services. But I think there's always going to be a need for youth and family services and programming."

"We just keep reshaping to fit the needs of the community. We had the clothing closet for a bit, we had the craft bags during COVID. So we just keep noticing what is lacking or what we could help with and just keep trying to provide that," Hathaway added.

Vesely stressed that they

aim to provide services and resources to the entire county, not just the City of Norwich, where they are based.

"When we talk about community, we talk about Chenango County as a whole community, not just here in Norwich," she said.

In 2024, they worked to address a variety of needs as well as provide programs that didn't exist within the county. One of those programs was a free teen photography class taught by local artist and photographer Jill Kraft.

The six-week program teaches local teens the basics of photography, with a focus on a particular style of photography, such as cityscapes or portraiture. The class culminates in a gallery show at Tabryn's Marketplace in Norwich, where participants get to show off their work and one lucky teen is chosen to win their own digital camera.

Vesely said they were also able to offer a new resource last year: a Halloween costume closet.

"We had someone, a community member, actually call to say, 'hey, I've got all these new kids' halloween costumes, can you use them?' And I'm never one to say no, because you never know when you could use something. So we said sure, bring them in. That's how we started this costume closet type thing, and then we had families trading in costumes," she explained.

"We're looking on building that for 2025 as well, because everything is expensive and typically costumes are only worn for a few hours, once. So that was a small success, but it's something that we'll be building on this year as well."

In 2024, The Place received grant funding from the Community Foundation of South Central New York Women's Fund to start a free self defense class known as "Strong Women" for Chenango County women and girls.

The classes are held on the third Friday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Norwich High School cafeteria, and are taught by instructors with the Oneonta Jiu Jitsu Academy. The program aims to teach basic self defense strategies to women and girls, utilizing the grappling style of jiu jitsu.

Vesely said she felt starting this program was important as nothing like it is offered in the area.

"There is interest, and one

of the reasons I decided to put a proposal in for the grant and try to get the funding and make the connection to the group in Oneonta is because there isn't anything offered like that in Chenango County, and it's important. Our world is getting a little less safe," she said. "If the response is good and we can perhaps secure funding to keep it going, that's always a possibility."

They've also worked to continue existing programs, such as their Babysitter Training Class, a free class for Chenango County teens to learn about caring for children of various ages, first aid and CPR, how to handle emergencies, how to write resumes, preparing for job interviews, and more.

Hathaway said they plan to continue looking for areas of need in the community, and address those needs however they can in the coming year.

"Sharon [Vesely] has been really good, she has a really good pulse on the community. She notices a need somewhere and we just try to step in and fill it," said Hathaway. "That's been what we've been trying to do aside from just the youth services; we've been trying to help families and provide enrichment when available. So I know we're going to keep trying to do that."

### Community partnership

One of The Place's many strengths is their ability to connect and partner with other organizations in the county to provide needed and valuable services. In 2024, they collaborated with 77 other organizations to implement new programs and services.

In June, The Place partnered with the City of Norwich Youth Bureau and the Guernsey Memorial Library to implement the "Storybook Path" in local parks and trails. Each Storybook Path features a different children's book, with each page displayed on signs along the path.

"We have all this green space here, and reading as a family is important. That helps to strengthen families, and when you have strong families you have stronger communities," said Vesely. "Being physically active and walking and enjoying the outdoors is huge. It's just a healthy lifestyle, and so we tapped into the resources here and partnered with the Youth Bureau."

Continued on page 17 ▶



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# The Place supports and empowers local youth -

Continued from page 16 ▶

Vesely said they were able to partner with the Chenango Greenway Conservancy as well to feature “Going on a Bear Hunt” by Michael Wayne Rosen on their Patsy’s Riverview Trail.

This program was funded by the Community Foundation of South Central New York and the City of Norwich Youth Bureau.

Girls on the Run will also be continuing this year, and Vesely said they were able to expand the program to include the Norwich Middle School as well as Perry Browne Intermediate School in 2025.

Girls on the Run is a “physical, activity-based, positive youth development program that inspires third through eighth grade girls to be joyful, healthy, and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running.”

Participants in the program spend the season preparing for a 5K, learning emotional and life skills, and planning and completing a community service project. In 2024, the approximately 20 Perry Browne students in the program supported the Chenango SPCA by crafting homemade dog and cat toys as well as posters to encourage adoption.

Vesely said the community is a great supporter of their mission. In 2024, they were able to provide free school supplies to over 300 Chenango County youth at their School Supply Giveaway thanks to the generosity of a number of local organizations.

The Place also partnered with Zappone Subaru in Norwich for “Operation Warm,” an initiative that provides winter coats to children and families in the area. Vesely said they will be collaborating again this year to give out winter coats in February.

Vesely said both the School Supply Giveaway and Operation Warm are great opportunities to further connections within the community by allowing local nonprofits to have tables at the events.

“When we had the Back to School Supply distribution in late August, early September, we did offer it as a tabling event for nonprofits as well to come and distribute information to families. So we will be offering the same thing when we distribute the winter coats in February,” said



**Students from Perry Browne Intermediate School who were part of the 2024 Girls on the Run team. Team members spent the season preparing for a 5K, learning emotional and life skills, and completing a community service project. In 2024, the team chose to support the Chenango SPCA. The Place has announced they'll be expanding the program in 2025 to include the Norwich Middle School. (Photo by Sarah Genter)**

Vesely. “Circumstances of families change. So maybe they didn’t need information from an agency that was here in September, but maybe circumstances have changed and they are in need of that information now in the new year. So it’s just another opportunity to plant the seed and to make the connections.”

The Place also received donations from hundreds of local organizations, businesses, and individuals in 2024, and had many community members get involved through volunteering, which Vesely said shows just how much the people of Chenango County care about their community.

“Organizations in the community work hard at providing positive experiences and services for families that are in need,” said Vesely. “They’re truly invested and I think that’s a huge benefit, that sense of caring about your neighbor.”

“We receive unsolicited donations from businesses and organizations that are not in any way shape or form connected with youth and families,” she added. “That’s a huge benefit, I think, just the caring sense of the people and the businesses in our community. It’s huge.”

### A visible impact

The overall goal of The Place is to support and empower local youth through their programs and services, allowing them to reach their full potential, and create strong families.

Vesely said there are moments where they can really see the positive impact their programs have on the youth they serve, such as when she

overheard one child comforting another.

She said there was a young girl who was upset, as she was in the foster care system and in the process of being adopted. Another little girl, who had also been adopted, was comforting her.

“Another girl was rubbing her back, and I heard her saying, ‘it’s going to be okay. I miss my mom, too. But my new mom is the best, and it’s going to be okay,’” Vesely said. “The compassion and empathy that this second child offered was just, it was heartwarming.”

Vesely said she believes this is the result of one of the curriculums used in the KIDS Program called “Too Good for Violence.”

“That helps children identify feelings and emotions. They build conflict resolution skills, and it also talks about building empathy, and being a kinder, gentler person. We’ve been using that for at least five years, and just to see that these are the results, that’s just huge,” she said.

In 2024, The Place saw a total of 51 youth demonstrate “an increase in positive behavior and conflict resolution skills.”

Hathaway said she can also see the impact The Place has on local youth, who are often excited to return to the EPIC Program after aging out of the KIDS Program.

“I just was recently talking with a mom, we had a board game night the other day and she was calling to sign up her kid, because we had actually switched the date of the board

game night. So she was like, ‘oh, he can come now, he’s so excited!’” said Hathaway.

“He can come work here this summer, which he’s been talking about doing forever. So he can come and do Summer Youth Employment, and he is beyond excited,” she continued. “He was wondering how he was going to get a ride here every day, and he has this camp, he was all worried, would he be able to work here while going to this soccer camp this summer? He was just so invested in coming back and he was just excited and worried, and it was really heartwarming that we made such an impact on this kid that he just wants to keep coming back.”

One Sherburne-Earlville

School District student named Gaven, who was involved in the Chenango Youth Philanthropy Council last year, explained the impact the program had on him.

“Youth Philanthropy Council helped push me toward economics, the major I am currently committed to college with. Being able to see what nonprofits do around the community, as well as the challenges they face, certainly made me more interested in learning the systems by which it all occurs,” said Gaven. “Youth Philanthropy served as a launching pad for my interest in taxes, accounting, and business as a whole.”

He said he enjoyed the spirited debates with his other council members, which he

said was “a great environment to get a feel for debating.” Gaven said he plans to return to the Youth Philanthropy Council in 2025.

“I decided to join again this year because of my pleasant experience last year. I learned a lot, and continue to learn. I fostered friendships and felt like I was making a difference,” he said. “I hope to continue learning and having fun this year with the Youth Philanthropy Council.”

### More information

The Place currently has nine employees, including Executive Director Sharon Vesely, Office Manager Megan Blackman, Chenango Youth Philanthropy Council Coordinator Anna Natoli, EPIC Program Coordinator Elizabeth Hathaway, KIDS Program Coordinator Tori Foster, Savana Wightman, Maggie Meza, Halea Eaton, and Abby Flynn.

The Place Board of Directors includes President Lois LoPresti, Vice President Jeanne Urie, Secretary Stephanie Lockwood, Treasurer Matt Boland, and members Warren Nash, Krista Porter-Moore, Norma Kinney, and Linda Hopson.

The Place’s administrative office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For more information on The Place, visit [ThePlaceNorwich.com](http://ThePlaceNorwich.com), The Place Facebook page, or call 607-336-9696.



# Norwich Wealth Management

## *2025 Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Team*



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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rjshook/2025/01/09/methodology-best-in-state-wealth-management-teams-2025/>

*2025 Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams: Awarded January 2025; Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on the time period from 3/31/23 - 3/31/24 (Source: Forbes.com). The Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams rating algorithm is based on the previous year's industry experience, interviews, compliance records, assets under management, revenue and other criteria by SHOOK Research, LLC. Investment performance is not a criterion. Self-completed survey was used for rating. This rating is not related to the quality of the investment advice and based solely on the disclosed criteria. 11,674 wealth management teams were considered for the rating; 5,331 (45.66% percent of candidates) were named 2025 Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams.*

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