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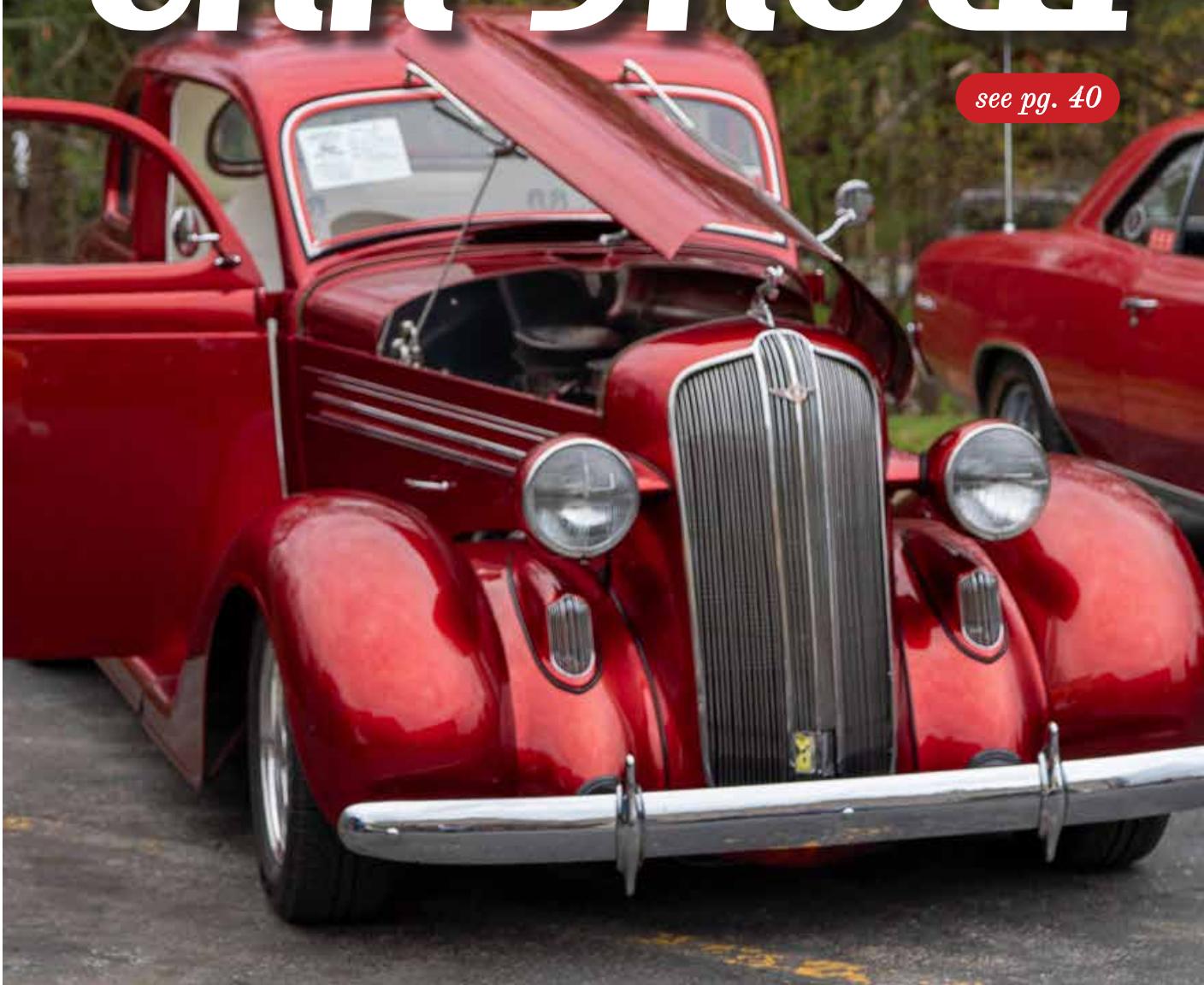


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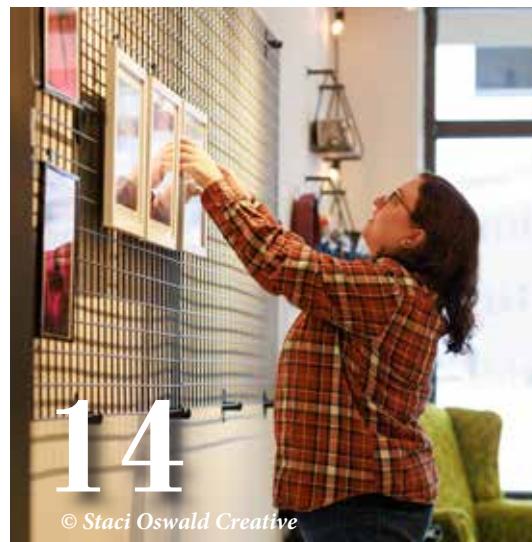
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EMPOWERING GROWTH

How the ARCC Champions Continuing Education



Adirondack Nonprofit Business Council (ANBC) Nonprofit Symposium back in late February 2025.



by **Amanda Blanton**,
ARCC Vice President,
Marketing & Communications
Photos provided

As one of the ARCC's pillars, the focus on education is threaded through many of the Chamber's activities, one of those being panel discussions. Drawing from the myriad industries that make up their membership base, the ARCC periodically organizes panel discussions on topics of interest to the business community.

This past February, the Adirondack Nonprofit Business Council (ANBC) of the ARCC organized a panel discussion on grants and other funding sources for nonprofits. Fifty attendees listened intently as a grant writer, a director of philanthropy, and a banker provided their expertise on funding options for nonprofits.

"We are so grateful to these panelists for sharing their expertise on a subject that some nonprofits don't have the time or resources to dive into," said ANBC Chair Sarah Hoffman (Lake George Land Conservancy). "I have a feeling this conversation will continue in future meetings, and I look forward to hearing success stories from those who were able to apply what they learned."

The nonprofit panel featured Erin Coons (WAIT House), Jennifer Frame (Stewart's Shops), and Tracey Wardwell (Capital Bank).

Looking ahead, the Women's Business Council (WBC) of the ARCC has organized its annual summit event, slated for the afternoon of May 14th in the Carriage House of the Fort William Henry Hotel, Lake George.



Tricia Rogers, Co-facilitator for Women's Business Council Summit event



Tracey Wardell, Co-facilitator for Women's Business Council Summit event



John Lefner, Facilitator of Workplace Wellness Programs

Past topics have revolved around succession planning for family-owned and small businesses. This year, the focus has shifted to managing a multi-generational workforce.

“Are you struggling with how to navigate the changing dynamics of today’s workforce—understanding how to effectively recruit, engage, and retain employees from different generations? The Summit is the place to be on May 14th at The Fort William Henry from 12:30–3 p.m.,” stated Tracey Wardwell, Women’s Business Council past-Chair and Assistant Vice President and Regional Branch Manager at Capital Bank.

It’s no surprise that businesses and organizations of all sizes and across all industries are challenged with managing a multi-generational workforce. This trend presents the challenge of devising strategies to cultivate an environment that promotes high engagement, loyalty, and productivity, despite the

variations among different demographic groups. A multi-generational workforce brings advantages in the form of diverse perspectives, innovative thinking, and unique talents. But it can also create friction and challenges among employees and leadership, resulting in less-than-desirable outcomes. Recognizing this, the Women’s Business Council of the ARCC has assembled a panel featuring Elizabeth Miller (Miller Industrial Manufacturing), Brian Rollo (Brian Rollo Consulting Group), Jennifer Massey (Integra HR, LLC), and Cam Cardinale (Southern Adirondack Independent Living). The conversation will be moderated by ARCC President & CEO Tricia Rogers and Tracey Wardwell. This event is open to everyone.

Next up, the ARCC Workplace Health & Wellness Council is hosting its annual symposium event with a focus on workplace wellness programs that

work. If you don’t have a wellness program in place at your business or are looking to update one, this could be a beneficial conversation for you.

“Over two-thirds of Americans report overwhelming workplace stress, and those stressed-out workers are three times more likely to leave their employer in the next twelve months. When choosing jobs, over eighty percent of those surveyed say an employer’s wellness-based support was a strong factor in accepting a position,” said panelist Bryan A. Flowers, Kripalu YT-500, RISE Facilitator, Mindful Outdoor Guide of Oakwise Soul. “Our goal for the Symposium is to offer a foundation for anyone to start offering this support to their team across the spectrum of needs.”

This program will provide business leaders, HR professionals, and entrepreneurs with actionable strategies to implement or enhance workplace health and wellness programs. These strategies are scalable for employers of any size and offer opportunities for workers in any industry to grow and thrive. The panel features business owners and wellness-focused professionals sharing their experiences with workplace wellness programs. John Lefner, CEO of The Hyde Collection, will lead the discussion along with panelists Amber Bergman, LMHC, RYT-300 (New Moon Healing), Andrea Deepe (CEO, ASCEND Mental Wellness), Bert Weber (Co-Founder, Common Roots Brewing & President of the Common Roots Foundation), and Bryan A. Flowers.

The workplace wellness program panel discussion is being held on May 22nd, beginning at 12 p.m. at The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls.

The ARCC is proud to present these educational programs through partnership and collaboration with its member businesses and organizations. Visit www.adirondackchamber.org/events to learn more and register for events. ■



2024 Women's Business Council Summit event



THE HIGH STANDARD OF CLEAN

Inside Performance Industrial's Commercial Window Cleaning Services



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

When it comes to commercial window cleaning, Performance Industrial isn't just another name in the industry—they're setting a new standard. Under the leadership of Chris Despart, who brings more than a decade of hands-on experience to the table, the company is redefining what it means to deliver high-quality, detail-driven service.

FROM FAMILY ROOTS TO INDUSTRY EXPERTISE

Chris Despart's journey began with a family-run business, Action Window Cleaning, where he started working as a teenager. By his mid-20s, he had transitioned into leadership. Chris joined Performance Industrial, bringing with him not only years of technical know-how but also a deep understanding of what it takes to build a window cleaning business from the ground up.

At Performance Industrial, Chris now oversees both the kitchen exhaust cleaning and industrial cleaning divisions, with commercial window cleaning being a key component of the latter. His background has helped shape a service offering that goes far beyond surface-level clean—it's about precision, professionalism, and delivering on promises.

THE SCOPE OF WORK

Performance Industrial focuses on mid-level commercial structures—typically buildings that are between two and five stories tall. Their clients range from office buildings and apartment complexes to car dealerships, hospitals, colleges and commercial leasing spaces. While they don't tackle high-rises, they specialize in jobs that require thoughtful, strategic approaches to access and safety.

What truly sets the company apart is its investment in specialized equipment, such as a crawler lift that can navigate tight indoor spaces and fit through standard-sized doorways. This machine enables the team to clean hard-to-reach windows in places like lobbies and courtyards, areas where traditional lifts simply won't work. It's a game-changer for accessing difficult spots without compromising safety or quality.



A COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

Safety isn't just a policy at Performance Industrial—it's a priority embedded in every job. All team members are OSHA 10 certified, ensuring they have a foundational understanding of safety practices across various industrial scenarios. In addition, any technician operating a boom lift receives certification through trusted providers like Skyworks or Regeneron.

With team members often working at heights up to 100 feet, it's critical to know exactly where and how to position lifts safely. Chris himself has logged over 10,000 hours operating lifts, and he brings that real-world expertise to every project his team takes on.

GOING BEYOND THE SURFACE

One of the biggest differences between Performance Industrial and many of its competitors is its uncompromising approach to quality. While newer water-fed pole systems are widely used across the industry for their speed and efficiency, they don't always deliver the kind of results that Performance's clients expect—or that the team is willing to accept.

These systems use purified water and telescoping poles to clean windows from the ground, often reaching three to five stories high. And while effective in certain scenarios, Chris emphasizes that they often fall short when it comes to delivering a truly spotless finish—especially on jobs where dirt and grime require hands-on attention.

"Our approach is to do what it takes to get the job done right," Chris explains. "That might mean getting a lift, going up there ourselves, physically scrubbing and squeegeeing, and making sure every edge is wiped clean. That's the difference between 'okay' and 'great.'"

THE EXTRA MILE IN QUALITY CONTROL

Performance Industrial is relentless when it comes to detail. Each project includes not just the cleaning itself, but a full inspection once the job is complete. Walkthroughs are standard protocol, and any spot that needs touching up gets addressed immediately. There's no rushing through jobs or simply checking boxes—the goal is to leave every pane of glass crystal clear.

Chris acknowledges that in many cases, commercial property managers might not scrutinize window cleaning quality closely, especially when servicing multi-tenant buildings. But that doesn't stop his team from holding themselves to a higher bar. "We pay attention to what we're doing, and we make sure it's coming out great every single time," he says.

EXPANDING REACH WITHOUT COMPROMISING QUALITY

Geographically, Performance Industrial covers a broad area. Based in New York's Capital Region, they serve clients from Potsdam near the Canadian border, across to Syracuse and Ithaca, and into parts of Western Massachusetts and Vermont. They're not opposed to traveling further for week-long or large-scale jobs, showing a flexibility that's rare in the industry.

This wide service area is matched by a dedication to maintaining consistency in quality, no matter the distance. Whether it's a local office park or a multi-unit development two states away, Performance Industrial approaches every job with the same mindset: deliver excellence and don't cut corners.

A CLEAR DIFFERENCE

For businesses already using a window cleaning service, Chris offers a bit of advice: take a closer look. If you're seeing water spots, streaks, or areas that consistently seem missed, there's room for improvement. These are often signs of companies relying too heavily on speed-oriented systems like water-fed poles without ensuring thorough results.

Performance Industrial's model is built on experience, proper tools, safety, and attention to detail—all driven by a belief that good enough is never good enough. With a team that's certified, experienced, and willing to go above and beyond, they're carving out a reputation as the go-to for businesses that value quality in their facilities' presentation.

In the world of commercial window cleaning, Performance Industrial stands out by staying grounded in one simple philosophy: do it right, or don't do it at all. ■



Just One More Chapter...



A Journey to Bringing Romance to Upstate NY

by Sean Palladino • Photos provided

When I found out that Glens Falls will be unleashing a new bookstore last summer, I was excited about the continued development and flourishing of Downtown Glens Falls. The idea started with Ashley Brownell, and since her October 2024 opening, her and her husband have had unprecedented success. Quoting from Mayor Bill Collins, "I have not seen an opening day queue this long in many years!" The journey from developing the idea of running a physical bookstore to fruition was wrought with challenges, from seeking out funding sources, building custom bookshelves, acquiring tons of books, and receiving city approvals.

It all began, incidentally, at an Adirondack Winery Boozy Book Fair event last summer. Ashley, a bit tipsy and after spending close to \$200 on books, had an idea: to bring the romance genre to Glens Falls. Within a couple days, her husband, Michael, and

her secured a lease at 14 Ridge Street and the road to opening an independent bookstore began in earnest. Michael was a creative tradesman, so he began working on gathering materials to build the bookshelves, along with upgrading the flooring and other maintenance projects to bring the space to life.

They worked with Jeff Flagg and the Glens Falls Planning Board to help orchestrate the requirements to start a business, even having some funny anecdotal conversations. Given the unique idea, they had to convince the city that they would only be selling romance books as well as book knick-knacks, such as tote bags, bookmarks, and more, instead of their fears that it would become a sex shop. Ashley informed me that there are, currently, only two other known romance bookstores in New York State. One in NYC, called The Ripped Bodice, and in Rochester, NY, called Burn Bright Books.

Through many meetings, forms, and complex work required to secure funding, they were able to receive a portion of the money that the couple put into their bookstore, as they gathered romance books from publishers, wholesalers, and independent authors. Once they secured the final pieces of approvals and finished the organizational work of the space, the opening weekend of October 19th was momentously uplifting, relieving, but intensely stressful. Given the smaller space, hundreds of people waited in line outside, snaking their way down Ridge Street and beyond, to get a chance to see their space and support a new bookstore in town. According to Ashley, they received \$33,000 in revenue the first week, nearly selling out of their collection of their custom tote bags and depleting the initial collection of books to record-setting levels.

They are open six days a week, from Tuesday through Saturday, with shortened hours on Sunday. Ashley thought of the brilliant idea to be open on Sunday's during brunch hours next to a local restaurant, called Farmacy. The tie-in with brunch and books is marketing gold, and she says that they have had lots of success so far. The allure of a romance bookstore has also been a driving factor for customers to travel for hours to be able to visit. Ashley mentioned that there was a group of voracious readers that spent a weekend in the area, with the sole intention of making the trek to her bookstore.

One of the unique aspects of the store are the book page bouquets, lovingly crafted by the couple. It is a perfect way to recycle old books by turning them into lovely decorative pieces, whether to give as gifts or decorate a home. They have monthly paid classes that teach people how to make them. With a nearly endless selection of books in the store (and beyond), finding ways to reuse books is very environmentally conscious, offering a way to limit books thrown into landfills and provide a second life for them. The inspiration and craftiness of the book page bouquets began from happenstance by scrolling through social media, with Michael's handiness and curiosity sparked a desire to learn how to make them.



Given the very inviting seating in the store, they hold monthly book clubs as well as allow patrons (or anyone) to sit down, rest, and read in the store. While the winter season is behind us, the ability to step out of the frigid cold temperatures to hang out at an independent bookstore is a dream for many booklovers. Their rotating design of the storefront is always a welcome sight for anyone strolling along in Downtown Glens Falls. Each month, the team at Just One More Chapter curate a beautiful selection of books to highlight, write a funny message on their sandwich-board, and install decorations for every season, from cozy fall attire to Pride Month and more. It is a welcome addition to Ridge Street, which has had a transformation in the past ten years.

As the city of Glens Falls slowly built up their downtown, they have added two new restaurants, Farmacy and Radici, an event space called 21 Ridge, the Chronicle newspaper headquarters, and the Just One More Chapter bookstore. In fact, according to Mayor Bill Collins, they have opened 28 new businesses in their downtown during the past ten years, a fact that secured Glens Falls, NY as a "model city" for New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

Just One More Chapter expects to remain a beacon for romance book enthusiasts in the upstate New York area. Their amazing design aesthetic, comfortable seating, endless selection of books, and rewards program are more than enough reasons to head to downtown Glens Falls to check them out. Delve into your next romance book and support a local, independent bookstore in the process at 14 Ridge Street.

Sean Palladino has lived in Glens Falls, NY with his husband, Michael Biele, since 2017. His website is SeanPalladino.com, where he writes on his blog, shares his amateur video-editing skills, and contributes to his local community.



LIGHT & LENS STUDIOS

A CREATIVE HUB FOR PHOTOGRAPHY LOVERS

Photos by Staci Oswald Creative • stacioswaldcreative.com



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Located in the Broad Street plaza in Glens Falls, New York, Light & Lens Studios is a sparkling new addition to the local arts scene, bringing photography enthusiasts together in a community-driven space that's as welcoming as it is inspiring. Opened in late February 2025 with a grand opening in March, this studio, brainchild of Jess Keller, is a love letter to the art of photography—both digital and traditional film. With a rentable studio, a rare public darkroom, a gallery for local artists, and a slew of classes and events, Light & Lens is quickly becoming a go-to spot for creatives looking to learn, connect, and capture the world through their lenses.

Jess, a lifelong shutterbug, has been hooked on photography since snagging her first DSLR at 13. From selling prints at art fairs to managing her college photography department at Hofstra University, she's always had a knack for turning fleeting moments into lasting images. By day, Jess is a mental health therapist with a master's in social work, counseling clients Monday through Wednesday. But Thursday through Sunday, she's at Light & Lens, channeling her entrepreneurial spirit and passion for photography into a space that feels like a cozy, creative clubhouse. "I wanted to create a community space to make photography accessible," Jess says, recalling the isolating hours spent editing alone at home. Her vision? A hub where hobbyists, professionals, and curious newcomers can mingle, learn, and grow.

What sets Light & Lens apart is its blend of modern and nostalgic offerings. The studio, available for hourly rentals, is a dream for photographers and videographers needing a professional setup without the overhead of a permanent space. Its flexible scheduling and easily accessible location makes it a practical choice for busy creatives. But the real gem is the darkroom, a rarity within a two-hour radius. Jess, who fell in love with film photography during her college days, missed the magic of developing prints by hand. "There's an art to it," she says, describing the grainy texture and happy accidents—like light leaks or underdeveloped film—that give film prints their unique charm. The darkroom is open to all, with Jess planning to add signs and marked chemical containers to guide even rusty developers through the process.

Light & Lens isn't just about gear—it's about community. Jess, inspired by the collaborative vibe of her college photography department, has packed the studio's calendar with events to spark creativity. The monthly Photo Club is a standout, operating like a book club for shutterbugs. Each month, participants get a photography prompt—like April's "inspired by your favorite photographer"—and head out to shoot. They reconvene the first Sunday of the month (next up: May 4, 3–4 p.m.) to share their work, discuss techniques, and pick a new prompt from Jess's fishbowl of ideas. The club is free, open to everyone, and inclusive of all skill levels—whether you're shooting with a DSLR, an iPhone, or a vintage film camera. Jess even set up a dedicated email (photoclub@lightandlensgf.com) for digital submissions, displayed on a shiny new TV for group viewing. With 14 attendees at the first meeting and more expressing interest online, the club is already a hit.



For those with existing work to share, bi-weekly Critique Nights offer a supportive space to present photos and get constructive feedback. "Everyone's been super encouraging," Jess notes, emphasizing that all cameras, from phones to pro gear, are welcome. Classes and workshops are also in the works, focusing on everything from basic camera operation to film developing and Photoshop 101. Jess is eager to bring in local photographers as independent contractors to teach, with plans for fun, hands-on sessions like making pinhole cameras from coffee cans or exploring alternative processes like cyanotypes. These offerings aim to reintroduce the darkroom to those who haven't developed film in decades and inspire newcomers to dive into the craft.

The studio's gallery adds another layer of excitement, showcasing local photographers' work for sale. Currently, prints by David Aimone, a darkroom maestro, grace the walls, their black-and-white textures a testament to film's enduring appeal. Jess envisions a rotating cast of artists, with formal contracts in the pipeline to make the process official. Her own photography, influenced by French film photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, often captures split-second moments—like birds mid-flight or rushing water—that feel alive with motion. "It's about making the impermanent permanent," she says, a philosophy that drives her work and the studio's mission.

Jess's journey to opening Light & Lens was a leap of faith. After years in a demanding community mental health role, she switched to private practice, reclaiming time for hobbies and sparking the idea for the studio. With help from SUNY Albany's Small Business Development Center, she crafted

a business plan, found a conveniently located space across from her therapy office, and got to work. Joining the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce boosted her networking, connecting her with local creatives and business owners. Despite admitting she's really nervous when meeting new people, Jess has found the Glens Falls community—especially its arts scene—warm and collaborative. "Everyone's trying to lift each other up," she says, citing local support from figures like David Aimone, who invited her to present at the Beekman Street Art Fair.

Looking ahead, Jess is brimming with ideas. She's focused on launching classes, expanding workshops, and building the studio's community vibe. The pricing—designed to be reasonable and accessible—makes it easy for anyone to book studio or darkroom time via lightandlensgf.com/reserve or by contacting Jess directly (lightandlensgf@gmail.com, social media, or a quick text to the studio phone). Walk-ins are welcome too, adding a spontaneous thrill to the studio's open-door policy. "I never know who's going to come through the door," Jess laughs.

For photography lovers, Light & Lens Studios is a playground of possibilities. Whether you're dusting off a film camera, honing your digital skills, or just curious about the art, Jess has created a space where creativity thrives. Check out lightandlensgf.com, follow [@lightandlensgf](https://www.instagram.com/lightandlensgf) on Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok, and swing by the studio Thursday through Sunday. Better yet, join the Photo Club or a Critique Night to meet fellow enthusiasts and let your inner artist shine. In Glens Falls, Light & Lens is lighting the way for a new era of photography fun. ■



Uplifting Creative Communities:



L.A.R.A.C.'S MISSION,



Photos provided

Interviewed by
Michael Nelson



CHALLENGES, & IMPACT

A LEGACY OF EVENTS: THE JUNE ARTS FESTIVAL & MORE

L.A.R.A.C.'s flagship event, the June Arts Festival, marks its 54th year in 2025, a testament to its enduring appeal. What began in 1972 as a small gathering of artists in City Park has evolved into one of the region's premier cultural events, attracting over 15,000 visitors annually with ambitions to reach 20,000–22,000 in coming years. Spanning City Park and adjacent streets, the festival showcases 160–170 artists from across the United States, offering a rich tapestry of creative works—from fine art paintings and ceramics to woodworking, jewelry, metal sculptures, and artisanal foods like jams and jellies. Food trucks, live music on two stages, and family-friendly

activities such as face painting create an inclusive, festive atmosphere.

"The artists are our boss," Casabona emphasizes, underscoring the festival's reliance on community support. "Without patrons, we wouldn't have a building or jobs." L.A.R.A.C. keeps the event free to the public, prioritizing accessibility while striving to balance growth with its original charm. The festival features returning artists—some participating for over 40 years—alongside 30 new juried artists each year, ensuring a fresh yet familiar experience.

Beyond June, L.A.R.A.C. hosts a smaller December Festival at the Queensbury Hotel, featuring around

60 artists in an indoor, holiday-themed market. This event complements the summer festival, offering a cozy setting for art lovers to explore and shop. Year-round, L.A.R.A.C.'s carriage house on Lapham Place serves as a cultural hub, hosting seven gallery exhibitions annually. These shows, ranging from large group displays to solo or duo artist showcases, highlight diverse works, from monotypes to fabric sculptures. For six weeks at year's end, the gallery transforms into a holiday shop, resembling a mini festival market. All exhibitions are free, reinforcing L.A.R.A.C.'s commitment to making art attainable for everyone.



FUNDRAISING: FUELING A MISSION-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION

As a nonprofit, L.A.R.A.C. depends on a multifaceted fundraising strategy to sustain its operations, a task Casabona describes as both essential and daunting. The June Arts Festival is the organization's primary fundraiser, generating \$60,000–\$70,000 annually, while the December Festival contributes roughly \$20,000. These funds support the upkeep of the carriage house, purchased 29 years ago, and cover salaries for L.A.R.A.C.'s lean staff—currently just two and a half employees.

Grants play a critical role, particularly from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), which enables L.A.R.A.C. to distribute \$100,000 each year to artists and organizations in Warren and Washington Counties. However, state funding has been shrinking, with L.A.R.A.C. receiving slightly less this year due to increased competition for a fixed pool of resources. "We're very appreciative for everything we get," Casabona notes, highlighting the \$30,000 allocated to administer the grant program, though it falls short of covering all operational needs.

To diversify its revenue, L.A.R.A.C. secures local grants, such as \$20,000 from Warren County's occupancy tax to boost festival marketing, allowing more festival earnings to support general operations. The organization earns a 35% commission on sales in its gallery and shop, which represents over 80 local and regional artists year-round. Business sponsorships, memberships, and donations provide additional support, but Casabona identifies operating capital as the organization's biggest challenge. "It's 100% our greatest hurdle," he says, noting the high costs of running a nonprofit despite its mission-driven focus. In response, L.A.R.A.C. is launching the L.A.R.A.C. Legacy Donor Initiative, a new effort to attract high-level donors—individuals, artists, and institutions—who align with its vision. "They can see their donation implemented immediately but also invested for long-term financial stability," Casabona explains. This initiative reflects L.A.R.A.C.'s forward-thinking approach to securing its future amid economic pressures that limit disposable income for non-essentials like art.

CHALLENGES: NAVIGATING A COMPLEX LANDSCAPE

L.A.R.A.C. faces several challenges in fulfilling its mission. The perception of art as a luxury rather than a necessity poses a significant barrier, particularly in an economy where rising costs for essentials like food strain budgets. "Not everybody can afford art," Casabona acknowledges, recalling his own sacrifices as a young art enthusiast. This mindset makes it difficult to build consistent support, especially among younger generations prioritizing immediate needs.

The digital age presents another hurdle. While the internet connects artists with global audiences, it also oversaturates the market, complicating L.A.R.A.C.'s efforts to stand out. "There are a lot of artists out there," Casabona says, emphasizing the need for strategic curation to maintain quality and appeal. For aspiring artists, breaking into the professional scene is as daunting as becoming an athlete, requiring resilience and opportunity. L.A.R.A.C. addresses this by offering platforms like its triennial college show, which showcases student artists from colleges within 120 miles, encouraging them to persevere while keeping creativity fun.

Staffing constraints exacerbate these challenges. With a small team, Casabona juggles roles as Executive Director, Festival Coordinator, and Gallery Curator. "I wake up every morning and figure out where to pivot," he says, acknowledging the mental strain of multitasking. L.A.R.A.C. aims to hire a full-time staff member next year, but funding remains a limiting factor.

Grant applications, while vital, are labor-intensive and come with strict requirements. "You're applying for a project that's feasible," Casabona explains, noting that grants must align with L.A.R.A.C.'s mission and capacity to avoid creating unmanageable work. Local grants, such as those from the Tuba Family Foundation or for building signage, are more accessible, but larger federal or state grants often have prohibitive conditions for a small operation like L.A.R.A.C.



A CULTURAL & ECONOMIC CATALYST

Despite these obstacles, L.A.R.A.C.'s impact resonates deeply. The June Arts Festival drives significant economic activity, benefiting downtown Glens Falls' 25 restaurants and hotels during the city's busiest weekend. "It's the biggest event for economic impact," Casabona says, citing its role in drawing thousands of visitors who support local businesses. This economic boost reinforces Glens Falls' transformation from a quiet bedroom community to a vibrant cultural destination.

Culturally, L.A.R.A.C. fosters connection and pride. Its free galleries and festivals invite everyone to engage with art, whether by purchasing a unique piece or simply enjoying the experience. "Everybody is a creator," Casabona asserts, highlighting art's role in human connection and personal fulfillment. By supporting both established and emerging artists, L.A.R.A.C. nurtures a thriving creative ecosystem.

Looking ahead, L.A.R.A.C. remains focused on sustainability—financially, culturally, and communally. The L.A.R.A.C. Legacy Donor Initiative, ongoing grant efforts, and strategic expansion of its programs signal a commitment to resilience. For Casabona, the mission is personal: "I value what we're doing. I think we're making a very positive impact." For the thousands who visit City Park each June or step into the yellow carriage house year-round, L.A.R.A.C. is more than an arts council—it's a celebration of creativity that uplifts an entire region. ■



CONSULTING TRENDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Staff Report

A PANEL DISCUSSION AT THE HYDE COLLECTION

On Thursday, May 15, 2025, from 4:15-7 p.m., The Hyde Collection in Glens Falls, New York, will host an engaging panel discussion titled "Consulting Trends and Opportunities," presented by MeetingPoint. This event promises to deliver valuable insights into the evolving world of consulting, followed by a networking session complete with drinks and hors d'oeuvres. Open to MeetingPoint members and the public, the event caps attendance at 130 participants, ensuring an intimate and interactive experience. Located at 161 Warren Street, this gathering at The Hyde

Collection offers a unique opportunity for professionals, business owners, and curious minds to explore the consulting landscape with a panel of distinguished experts.

MeetingPoint, the driving force behind this event, is a group of trusted advisors dedicated to fostering relationships, sharing knowledge, and creating business opportunities among like-minded professionals. With chapters in Albany, Saratoga, Hudson Valley, and Glens Falls, MeetingPoint cultivates a vibrant, collegial community of

attorneys, CPAs, financial professionals, and select consultants. The organization strategically recruits an elite group of professionals who are influential in business, philanthropy, government, and education, aiming to enhance business opportunities and elevate members' profiles. Charles Amodio from FAZ Forensics spearheads the MeetingPoint initiative, bringing his expertise in forensic accounting and business advisory services to guide the group's mission of connecting and empowering professionals across the region.

The panel discussion, running from 4:15-5:30 p.m., will dive into the roles, benefits, and costs of consulting, shedding light on how businesses can effectively identify and collaborate with top-tier consultants. Topics will span the differences between generalist and specialist consulting approaches, the dynamics of large versus small firms, the transformative impact of artificial intelligence, and the ongoing wave of digital transformation reshaping industries. Following the discussion, attendees can mingle from 5:30-7 p.m., fostering connections over refreshments in the historic setting of The Hyde Collection.

The event boasts an impressive lineup of panelists, each bringing a wealth of experience and unique perspectives to the table. Beth Moeller, founder of Interactive Media Consulting, LLC, has over 30 years of expertise in organizing electronic information for maximum impact. With a PhD in Communication & Rhetoric from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, her research has focused on multimedia user interfaces for learning. A Senior Member of IEEE and a former president of its Professional Communication Society, Moeller's accolades include The Business Review's 40 Under Forty and multiple awards from Clarkson University, where she earned her BS in Physics and Technical Communication.

Michael A. Ramos, CEO of A.M.T.A.E. Solutions, LLC, offers a dynamic perspective shaped by his U.S. Marine Corps service and entrepreneurial journey. A Magna Cum Laude graduate in Business Management from Monroe University, Ramos excels in sales, consulting, and supplier diversity, helping small businesses secure government contracts. His leadership has turned A.M.T.A.E. Solutions into a thriving enterprise, balancing professional success with personal passions like painting and camping.

Neal Stimler, President of Stimler Advantage, LLC, and a MeetingPoint member, specializes in organizational and digital strategy. With a decade at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and roles like Head of Public Engagement at Auckland Art Gallery, Stimler has guided major institutions through open access programs. A board trustee at The Hyde Collection, he holds honors from Miami University and over 500 certifications, making him a powerhouse in digital transformation consulting.

Tim Williams, CEO of The 110 Group, LLC, brings a veteran's resilience to his veteran-owned consultancy. With 20 years of experience across hospitals, universities, and private businesses, Williams leverages data-driven strategies and technology to boost organizational performance. Holding degrees in Biology and Chemistry from Rhode Island College and an MBA from the

University at Albany, he's also an active mentor in the Capital Region's business community.

Rounding out the panel is Dave Vener, President of TAG Solutions, LLC, a visionary leader with a knack for driving growth. From transforming his family's printing business into a \$7 million marketing firm to leading TAG Solutions to record profitability in IT and cybersecurity, Vener's career reflects innovation and team empowerment. A SUNY Buffalo graduate, he balances his professional life with family and outdoor pursuits like skiing and biking.

For those interested in supporting the event, sponsorship opportunities are available at \$250 each, with a deadline of April 30, 2025. Sponsors will be recognized from the podium and have their logos displayed during the event. Attendees are also encouraged to donate to The Hyde Collection, supporting its mission to promote fine arts education and exhibitions for the Glens Falls community and beyond. Donations can be made onsite or online via The Hyde's website.

This panel discussion is more than just a professional gathering—it's a chance to connect with thought leaders, explore cutting-edge trends, and contribute to a cultural institution. Whether you're a business owner seeking consulting insights or a professional eager to network, mark your calendar for May 15, and register to secure your spot at this illuminating event. ■



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STEPHEN ZABALA'S FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *A Podcast to Nourish Body, Mind & Community*



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson
Photos provided

STEPHEN ZABALA, a chef, nutrition enthusiast, and small business owner, is gearing up to launch *Food for Thought*, a podcast that promises to dive deep into the multifaceted world of wellness. With a career rooted in food and a personal journey marked by discipline and self-discovery, Zabala is poised to bring his passion for health, community, and meaningful conversation to a new platform. His upcoming podcast aims to explore not just nutrition but the broader pillars of wellness—physical fitness, mental health, financial stability, spirituality, and creativity—while amplifying the voices of local experts and innovators in Upstate New York and beyond.

FROM KITCHEN TO COMMUNITY: ZABALA'S JOURNEY

At 37, Zabala has spent over two decades in the culinary world, starting as a dishwasher at 16 and working his way up through restaurants. His love for food was always paired with a curiosity about its impact on health, leading him to study nutrition and integrate fitness into his lifestyle. Frustrated by the constraints of traditional restaurant work, where he couldn't fully control the quality or purpose of the food he served, Zabala founded Greenfork, a meal prep company based in the Saratoga area. Greenfork reflects his mission to make nutrient-dense, whole-food-based meals accessible to his community, offering pre-portioned dishes high in protein, complex carbohydrates, and vegetables, all designed for convenience without compromising health.

Greenfork is more than a business for Zabala—it's a vehicle for education and empowerment. Through nutrition talks, community programs like *Food is Mood*, and his hands-on approach to fitness coaching, he's committed to helping people understand the connection between what they eat and how they feel. His philosophy, encapsulated in the Greenfork motto "You are what you eat," extends to the animals we consume, emphasizing that their diet shapes their nutrient density and flavor. This holistic view of food as medicine—or poison, depending on the source—underpins everything Zabala does, from avoiding seed oils in his cooking to advocating for farm-fresh eggs over their pale supermarket counterparts.



THE GENESIS OF FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The idea for *Food for Thought* grew out of Zabala's desire to expand his reach beyond the kitchen and gym. As a self-described "curious" person, he's always been drawn to conversations that unpack what drives people to pursue their passions. Over the years, he's built relationships with farmers, nutritionists, fitness trainers, artists, and financial advisors in his community, each offering unique perspectives on living well. *Food for Thought* is his chance to share these insights with a wider audience, creating a platform where listeners can learn practical tips, challenge misconceptions, and find inspiration to optimize their lives.

"I want to talk to people that are in the community doing cool things that I like, that I'm also kind of into," Zabala explains. His vision for the podcast is broad, encompassing not just food but the entire spectrum of wellness. He sees nutrition as more than what's on your plate—it's the music you listen to, the books you read, the thoughts you nurture. This expansive definition shapes the podcast's structure, which will feature guests from diverse fields, each contributing to one of Zabala's five pillars of wellness: physical health, mental clarity, financial security, spiritual growth, and creative expression.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM FOOD FOR THOUGHT

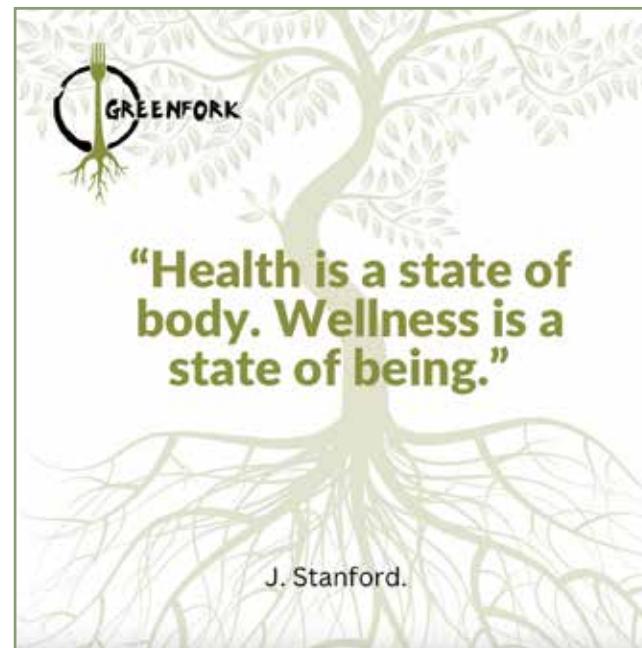
Food for Thought is set to be a blend of education, storytelling, and actionable advice, with a strong local flavor. Zabala plans to kick off with a roster of guests he's already connected with—think farmers discussing sustainable agriculture, nutritionists unpacking gut health, or musicians exploring creativity's role in mental well-being. One early guest will be a passionate powerlifting and nutrition coach, whose journey from CrossFit to coaching promises a lively discussion. Another episode will feature the women behind the *Food is Mood* program, diving into how diet influences mental health, a topic Zabala is eager to amplify.

The podcast won't shy away from tough topics, like the challenges small farmers face in a system stacked against them or the misinformation clouding nutrition advice. Zabala's seen how trends flip-flop—low-fat one decade, low-carb the next—and he's committed to cutting through the noise. "I want to get to the meat and potatoes of it," he says, emphasizing practical, science-backed strategies over fads. Expect conversations about nutrient density, with Zabala breaking down why a vibrant egg yolk or a deep-red venison cut signals more vitamins and minerals than their processed counterparts. He'll also tackle personal finance, inspired by his own late start in learning about investments, and spirituality, drawing from his recent exploration of Buddhist philosophy.

What sets *Food for Thought* apart is its community focus. While Zabala welcomes guests from anywhere, he's particularly excited to highlight Upstate New York voices—people you might bump into at a farmers' market or gym. "I'm lucky enough to know a lot of cool people that are doing really cool things," he says, and he wants listeners to feel that same connection. Whether it's a farmer explaining why pasture-raised pork tastes better or a financial advisor demystifying IRAs, the podcast aims to make wellness approachable, not elitist.

A PERSONAL TOUCH

Zabala's authenticity shines through in everything he does, and *Food for Thought* will be no exception. As a single father and business owner, he juggles a lot, relying on lists and discipline to stay on track—a habit honed by challenges like 75 Hard, a 75-day regimen of workouts and clean eating. While he admits to bending the rules slightly on his latest round, the experience reinforced his belief in structure as a path to clarity. "Those task



lists for me are really big," he says, a nod to his self-diagnosed ADD and packed schedule.

His personal evolution—from a chef to a wellness advocate—adds depth to the podcast's mission. Zabala's not preaching perfection; he's sharing what's worked for him, like swapping seed oils for olive oil or prioritizing recovery over relentless workouts. His curiosity drives the show, but it's his relatability that will keep listeners coming back. "I've been able to bring myself to a pretty good point now, and I just want to keep digging into that and help spread the message," he says.

LOOKING AHEAD

As *Food for Thought* prepares to launch, Zabala is already envisioning its impact. He sees it growing alongside Greenfork, with the podcast fueling interest in his meal prep services and nutrition talks. The show will live on a new website, buyinglocal.us, with QR codes in print publications linking directly to episodes. Social media will amplify its reach, but Zabala's focus remains on substance over flash—real conversations that leave listeners better equipped to navigate their own wellness journeys.

For those eager to tune in, *Food for Thought* promises a feast of ideas, grounded in Zabala's belief that small, intentional choices can transform lives. Whether you're curious about nutrient density, seeking financial peace, or craving creative inspiration, this podcast will have something to chew on. Follow Greenfork on Instagram (@greenforkeats) or visit eatgreenfork.com to stay updated on the launch, and get ready to rethink what it means to be well-fed. ■



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OPERATION GIVE BACK



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Jacques Ecuyer, a tireless advocate for mental health and community welfare, has become a cornerstone of support in New York's Capital Region through his nonprofit, the 4s4life Foundation. His latest endeavor, Operation Give Back, is a vibrant fundraiser set for May 10, 2025, at Slickfin Brewing Company in Fort Edward. This annual event, now in its fourth year, is a testament to Ecuyer's commitment to honoring local veterans by raising funds and fostering community connection. Through Operation Give Back, Ecuyer is not only supporting veterans' mental health and reintegration but also creating a space where gratitude and camaraderie thrive.



Photo: Slickfin Brewing Company

THE HEART OF OPERATION GIVE BACK

Operation Give Back is a day-long celebration designed to uplift veterans and their families while raising money for local veteran organizations. Held from Noon to 10 p.m. at Slickfin Brewing Company, the event transforms the brewery into a hub of music, food, and community spirit. Ecuyer, who founded the 4s4life Foundation to promote mental health awareness, suicide prevention, self-care, and sobriety, sees the event as a way to give veterans the recognition they deserve. Last year, it drew between 1,500 and 2,000 attendees, raising \$14,000 in just five hours despite an hour of rain—a remarkable feat for a grassroots initiative.

The event is packed with activities to engage all ages. Eight musical acts, including local favorites like Richie Ortiz, Jared Stillatank, and Shannon Roy, will donate their performances, filling the air with acoustic and band sets. Two veteran-owned food trucks, Carnivore Brothers and Vested Veteran Grill, will serve up hearty fare, with Adirondack Peer to Peer covering the first \$1,000 in food costs for attendees. Raffles, a 50/50 draw, and a silent auction featuring baskets donated by local businesses add excitement, while every dollar raised goes directly to veteran-focused nonprofits in Saratoga, Washington, and Warren counties.

Ecuyer emphasizes creating memorable moments, like the event's poignant moment of silence. This



year, he plans to enhance it with a rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner on electric guitar, followed by representatives from each military branch holding their flags alongside the American flag. "It's about creating moments," he says, noting that these shared experiences resonate deeply, reminding veterans of the camaraderie they felt during service.

WHY VETERANS NEED SUPPORT

Veterans face unique challenges that make events like Operation Give Back critical. Mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress and depression, affect many, with the VA reporting high rates of suicide among former service members. Homelessness and difficulty accessing benefits further compound these struggles.

Operation Give Back channels funds to organizations like the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition, Adirondack Vet House, and the Argyle VFW, which provide housing, mental health care, and community

support. This year, Ecuyer is exploring equine therapy programs to diversify the beneficiaries. By keeping donations local, he ensures transparency and impact, avoiding the pitfalls of larger charities where funds may not reach those in need.

The event also combats isolation, a silent struggle for many veterans. By creating a welcoming environment with live music, food, and conversation, Operation Give Back fosters a sense of belonging. The brewery's veteran-heavy clientele, particularly Marines, adds to the familial atmosphere, making Slickfin the perfect venue.

A COMMUNITY UNITED

Operation Give Back thrives on collaboration. Sponsors like Winslow Realty and McMillan Construction, alongside volunteers who manage raffles and setup, are the backbone of the event. The community's generosity—from bands donating time to businesses offering gift cards—fuels its success. Ecuyer encourages anyone interested to contribute, whether through donations or attendance, with details available via Slickfin or social media event pages.

As May 10 approaches, Ecuyer's vision is clear: a day where veterans feel honored, families connect, and the community rallies for a cause. Operation Give Back is more than a fundraiser; it's a movement to restore unity and gratitude, proving that even in divisive times, a small brewery in Fort Edward can be a beacon of hope. ■

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Healing Trauma and Championing Mental Health

Tandi Orluk and Set Free Counseling



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

In the heart of the Saratoga Region, Tandi Orluk, a licensed clinical social worker, has built a beacon of hope through her private practice, Set Free Counseling. With a career spanning nearly two decades, Orluk's journey in mental health has been marked by compassion, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to helping individuals overcome trauma. Her practice, rooted in evidence-based techniques like Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), serves clients across New York and Kentucky, offering virtual therapy that transcends geographic boundaries. Through Set Free Counseling, Orluk is not only addressing individual struggles but also shining a light on why mental health matters in today's world.

THE GENESIS OF SET FREE COUNSELING

Orluk's path to founding Set Free Counseling was neither linear nor easy. A native of Kentucky, she graduated from the University of Kentucky and earned her master's degree from the University of Louisville in 2007. Her early career in community mental health exposed her to a wide spectrum of mental health challenges, from severe bipolar disorder to dissociative identity disorder. These experiences, which she describes as a "baptism by fire," honed her clinical skills and deepened her empathy for those navigating complex mental health issues.

After over a decade at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), where she worked with homeless veterans, Orluk moved to New York to be closer to her husband's family. Her time at the VA was transformative, both for her and the veterans she served.

She walked the streets, visited shelters, and built trust with a population often skeptical of institutional help. Her efforts contributed to Lexington, Kentucky, achieving "Functional Zero" for veteran homelessness—a testament to her ability to foster community collaboration and drive systemic change.

A desire for greater autonomy led Orluk to leave the VA. In 2022, she took a leap of faith and launched Set Free Counseling. Starting a business from scratch in New York, with its labyrinthine regulations, was daunting. Orluk faced bureaucratic hurdles, including a year-long process to secure her clinical license reciprocity. Yet, her determination prevailed. "It's not for the faint of heart," she says of entrepreneurship, a sentiment that underscores her resilience in building a practice that reflects her lifelong dream of being a therapist.

Why Mental Health Matters

Mental health is the cornerstone of a fulfilling life, yet it remains stigmatized and underfunded in many communities. Orluk's work underscores the urgency of addressing mental health, particularly in a world where stress, comparison, and trauma are pervasive. She points out that nearly everyone carries some form of trauma—whether it's a “big T” trauma, like a life-altering accident, or “little t” traumas, such as childhood inconsistencies that shape self-perception. These experiences, if unaddressed, can manifest as anxiety, low self-worth, or physical symptoms like a racing heart or tense muscles.

Orluk's perspective is grounded in neuroscience, which reveals how trauma can rewire the brain, trapping individuals in cycles of negative thinking and emotional distress. “Most mental health disorders are rooted in trauma,” she explains, noting that while some conditions have genetic components, many stem from lived experiences. This insight drives her mission to help clients process and release these burdens, enabling them to live with greater peace and purpose.

The broader societal implications of mental health cannot be overstated. Orluk's work with first responders, for instance, highlights the toll of unaddressed trauma in high-stress professions. Firefighters, police officers, and paramedics often face a “suck it up” culture that discourages vulnerability. By educating these groups and offering resources, Orluk is challenging outdated norms and advocating for systemic change. Her collaboration with a local fire department, facilitated through a business networking group, exemplifies how mental health support can strengthen community resilience.



Tandi Orluk

Treating Trauma with EMDR

At the core of Set Free Counseling is Orluk's expertise in EMDR, a therapy recognized by the World Health Organization as the gold standard for trauma treatment. EMDR, which stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, mimics the brain's natural healing process during REM sleep. By engaging clients in bilateral stimulation—often through guided tapping on specific body points—EMDR helps reprocess traumatic memories, reducing their emotional intensity.

Orluk's passion for EMDR stems from its transformative power. She shares a personal anecdote about her lifelong fear of cats, which she traced back to a childhood memory of a burglary where police referred to the suspect as a “cat burglar.” Through a brief EMDR session with her supervisor early in her career, Orluk uncovered this connection and overcame her phobia. “It was like a light bulb went off,” she recalls. This experience solidified her belief in EMDR's ability to unlock hidden traumas and foster rapid healing.

In her practice, Orluk tailors EMDR to each client's needs, recognizing that not everyone is ready to dive into trauma processing immediately. She begins by building rapport and assessing clients' emotional regulation skills. For some, she introduces coping mechanisms like the “butterfly tap,” a self-soothing technique that promotes calm. Others may start with attachment theory, exploring how childhood experiences shape adult behaviors. Orluk identifies four attachment styles—secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized—and helps clients understand how these patterns influence their self-perception and relationships.

The results are profound. Clients from diverse backgrounds—physicians, teachers, students—describe EMDR as “life-changing.” Orluk's goal is not lifelong therapy but empowerment, enabling clients to move beyond triggers and embrace their inherent worth. “I want you out living your life,” she says, emphasizing joy and resilience over perpetual healing.



A Vision for Healing

Set Free Counseling is more than a practice; it's a testament to Orluk's belief that everyone deserves mental freedom. Operating virtually, she reaches clients across New York and Kentucky, offering a safe space to explore their stories. Her website, setfreecounselingllc.com, serves as a gateway for those seeking help, with a HIPAA-secure contact form for initial outreach. Orluk's approach is collaborative, beginning with a phone call to understand clients' needs and culminating in personalized treatment plans.

Despite her aversion to social media—due to its potential to fuel comparison and negative self-talk—Orluk is deeply connected to her community. Through a local business group, she has forged partnerships that amplify her impact, from working with first responders to learning the business acumen needed to sustain her practice. These connections, sparked by a chance meeting with a hairdresser, underscore the power of community in both personal and professional growth.

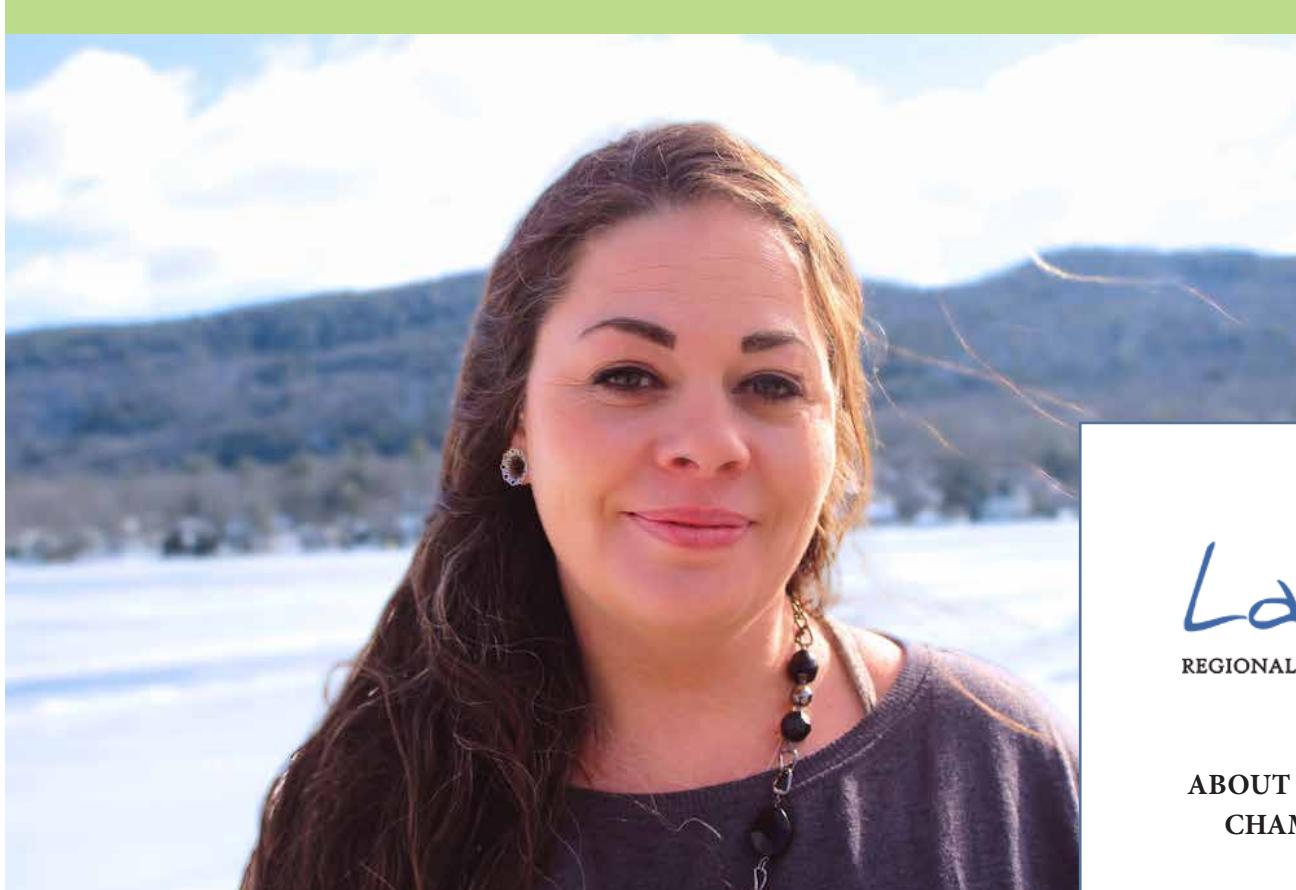
The Road Ahead

As Orluk continues to grow Set Free Counseling, her vision remains clear: to help individuals rewrite their stories and reclaim their potential. Mental health matters because it shapes how we navigate life's challenges, from personal relationships to societal contributions. By treating trauma with cutting-edge techniques like EMDR, Orluk is not only healing individuals but also fostering a ripple effect of resilience and hope.

For those considering therapy, Orluk's message is simple: reach out. Whether grappling with anxiety, past wounds, or a vague sense of unease, her practice offers a path to clarity and freedom. In a world that often feels overwhelming, Set Free Counseling stands as a reminder that healing is possible—and that mental health is a journey worth taking. ■

Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce

Welcomes Trishia Jones



MEMBERSHIP
MARKETING
ASSISTANT



ABOUT THE LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB (LGRCC&CVB)

Dedicated to propelling year-round tourism and nurturing a thriving business community in the Lake George region, the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB, Inc. is steadfast in its endeavors. The Chamber's primary objective is to stimulate the growth and progress of its member enterprises by providing an array of opportunities, including networking functions, educational programs, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, and more.

Established in 1952, this member-centric organization operates as a not-for-profit 501 C (6) corporation. Encompassing a regional perspective, the Chamber boasts a membership exceeding 400 entities spanning diverse sectors of the business landscape.

For deeper insights, please explore lakegeorgechamber.com. Engage and connect with the Chamber across various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Megan Seeley, Marketing Director, Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB (LGRCC&CVB)
518-668-5755
mseeley@lakegeorgechamber.com

The Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & Convention and Visitors Bureau (LGRCC&CVB) is pleased to welcome Trishia Jones to its team as Membership Marketing Assistant.

Jones is a results-driven professional with a strong background in business management, bookkeeping, and customer relations. In her new role, she supports a wide range of initiatives that strengthen business connections and promote regional growth.

Her responsibilities include assisting visitors, supporting membership outreach, managing member resources, event and program support, and contributing to the Chamber's social media and promotional efforts. She also helps oversee operations at the Lake George Village Information Center located at 1 Beach Road. Jones brings entrepreneurial experience from owning and operating T&S Cleaning Services and Jones's Handyman and Cleaning Services, where she managed finance, marketing, HR, and customer relations. "Trishia brings a unique blend of entrepreneurial experience and office management expertise to our organization," said Gina Mintzer, Executive Director of LGRCC&CVB. "Her attention to detail, strong communication skills, and ability to adapt quickly have already proven to be great assets in helping us serve our members and visitors."

Jones also previously served as a Customer Relations Specialist at Pendrick Capital Partners, developing skills in data accuracy, compliance, and client account management. She holds a degree in Office Technology from Mildred Elley and is certified as a Microsoft Office User Specialist in Excel and Access. "I'm excited to be part of a team that plays such an important role in supporting the Lake George region," said Jones. "I look forward to contributing to the Chamber's mission and continuing to build strong connections with our members and the community." ■

WANDA SMITH: SPIRIT OF SOROPTIMIST 2024–2025 AWARD WINNER by Soroptimists of the Adirondacks



Soroptimists of the Adirondacks is thrilled to announce Wanda Smith as the recipient of the prestigious 2024-2025 Spirit of Soroptimist Award. This honor recognizes Wanda's exceptional dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the organization's mission of improving the lives of women and girls through education, empowerment, and opportunity.

Wanda Smith, who joined Soroptimists of the Adirondacks in 2016, has become an indispensable member, consistently demonstrating her organized, forward-thinking approach and unwavering focus on impact. Selected by the club's co-presidents following a thorough nomination process and thoughtful feedback from the membership, Wanda's contributions have been truly transformative.

"Wanda is a cornerstone of our organization," stated SIA Co-President Rachael Hunsinger. "Her dedication and energy across all facets of our

work are truly inspiring. She not only drives our mission forward but also inspires others to join us in making a difference."

As Treasurer and an active member of the Executive and Finance Committees, Wanda's expertise ensures the club's financial stability. Her collaborative spirit fosters a strong, unified team, enabling the organization to effectively serve the community.

Wanda's impact extends to fundraising, where she plays a vital role in generating crucial support. Her leadership as liaison for the Fall Event at West Mountain elevated it to a highly successful and visible event. Her consistent dedication to the holiday-themed raffle has resulted in significant ticket sales, leveraging her extensive network. Notably, Wanda has secured new partnerships, including the club's participation in the Adirondack Wine Festival, a connection made by exhibiting at the ARCC's Business Expo in 2024, expanding the organization's visibility and impact.

Beyond her organizational contributions, Wanda has also strengthened the club's membership by personally recruiting numerous engaged and active members. Her enthusiasm, generosity, and unwavering belief in the Soroptimist mission are truly contagious, embodying the very spirit of the award.

"Wanda, thank you for your dedication and energy," co-presidents Rachael Hunsinger & Sabrina Oberkrieser expressed. "Your contributions have allowed us to increase our flexibility to support meaningful community initiatives and address the evolving needs of local women and girls. We are deeply appreciative of your commitment."

Soroptimists of the Adirondacks congratulate Wanda Smith on this well-deserved honor. Her contributions have left an indelible mark on the organization and the community it serves. ■

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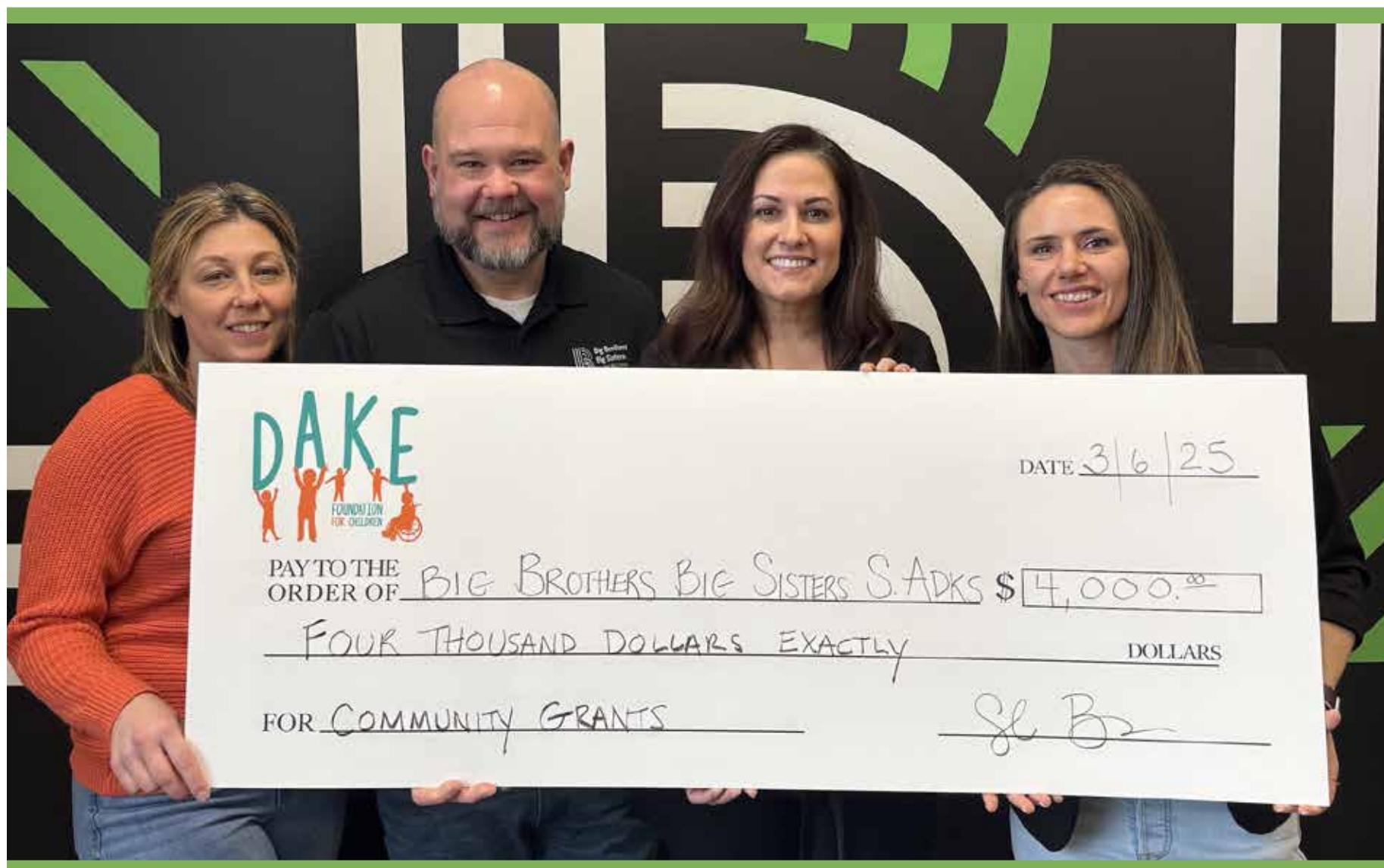


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DAKE FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

Community Grant Recipients



The Dake Foundation for Children has announced six nonprofit organizations that have been selected as recipients of the most recent funding round for their Community Grant program. Founded by Gary Dake, President of Stewart's Shops, the Foundation has provided grants to local children with disabilities since 2009 with a focus on inclusion, independence, and fun. In addition to the individual support the organization provides, the Community Grant program provides assistance to local 501c3 nonprofit organizations seeking to make their spaces or programming more accessible and inclusive.

"We truly view our Community Grant recipients as partners," said Executive Director Sarah Burns. "We love to support organizations who have been living and breathing inclusion for years, but we are also here for guidance when they're not sure where to start in terms of increasing their accessibility. Our community is a better place when all kids have the same opportunities, and we are proud to support it in every way that we can."

The Dake Foundation for Children's Community Grants Program recipients are:

- **All Abilities Productions, Queensbury, NY** – Funding will support inclusive youth theater programming
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Southern Adirondacks, Glens Falls, NY** – Funding will support individuals with disabilities participating in their Group Mentoring program
- **Breakthrough T1D, Albany, NY** – Funding will support their Connections program, providing education and community for children and young adults navigating Type 1 diabetes
- **Double H Ranch, Lake Luzerne, NY** – Funding will support their Adaptive Winter Sports program, providing safe skiing and snowboarding opportunities for children with disabling conditions
- **Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern NY, Albany, NY** – Funding will provide socialization and community support for children and young adults diagnosed with epilepsy
- **STRIDE Adaptive Sports, West Sand Lake, NY** – Funding will support their Learn to Bowl program, allowing children with disabilities to participate in the sport safely with their peers

The Dake Foundation for Children funds their grants by holding events open to the public throughout the year. Their next event is "Boots & Bourbon," taking place on May 28th, 2025 on the grounds of Saratoga Performing Arts Center. They are currently accepting sponsorships, the funds from which will provide opportunities for local children with disabilities to enjoy more independence, inclusion, and fun.

For more information on the event, their grant programs, or to learn more about the Dake Foundation for Children, please visit their website at www.dakefoundation.org.

The Dake Foundation for Children was established in 2009 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization to help children with disabilities access opportunities unavailable through medical insurance and family budgets. Their goal is to provide children with disabilities access to equipment and services that will give them more opportunities for participation within their families, communities, and with their peers. ■

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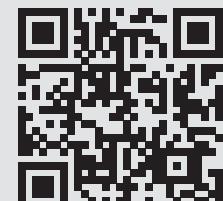
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Adirondack Region

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MORTGAGE TRENDS

MARKET MOVES AND BUYER TIPS



by Kristen Zorda

Kristen Zorda (NMLS# 58751), a registered loan originator with PrimeLending at the Syracuse branch has 20 years of experience in the region and emphasizes a hands-on approach. "I love helping first-time buyers navigate the process and watching them grow into their financial future," she says. Kristen blends personalized service with modern tools to support clients through buying, refinancing, or renovating.



About PrimeLending:

PrimeLending, a subsidiary of PlainsCapital Bank and Hilltop Holdings Inc., focuses on simplifying the home loan experience. With a local presence, the company serves borrowers across various goals—purchasing, refinancing, or building—through a mix of personal attention and digital innovation.

PrimeLending North Syracuse,
6702 Buckley Road, Suite 130,
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Spring is here, and with it comes one of the busiest seasons in real estate.

In areas like Glens Falls and Saratoga Springs, New York, the market is heating up. Homes are selling, rates are changing and buyers are figuring out how to move forward in a market that still feels a bit uncertain.

If you're thinking about buying a home this season, here's what to know about current trends, interest rates and how local experts can help you navigate it all.

Mortgage Rates Are Still Moving

Mortgage rates have been up and down over the past few months. Many hoped for a steady drop this spring, but rates remain higher than they've been in recent years. This is mostly due to inflation, decisions from the Federal Reserve and persistent high home prices.

Andrew Stringer, Executive Vice President of Capital Markets at PrimeLending, explained it this way:

"We're in a highly volatile environment driven by a combination of stubbornly high home prices, elevated mortgage rates and uncertainty surrounding inflation and the Federal Reserve's future policy decisions. Still, opportunities exist to become a homeowner, build equity, and take advantage of growing buyers' market."

In the Glens Falls and Saratoga regions, where demand remains steady, this kind of rate movement has increased the importance of planning ahead and acting strategically.



A Look at the Local Market

In Glens Falls, the median home price reached \$257,500 in February, up more than 36 percent from the same time last year, according to Redfin. Homes are staying on the market for about 60 days, which gives buyers more time compared to larger cities.

In Saratoga Springs, the average home value is around \$561,000 as of March 2025, according to Zillow. Redfin data shows a median sale price of \$728,750, which reflects a mix of larger or luxury homes in the area. Homes are spending a median of 93 days on the market, giving buyers time to explore options and negotiate. Like Glens Falls, Saratoga has seen steady demand, particularly in neighborhoods near downtown and Saratoga Lake, where location and lifestyle remain key selling points.

Both markets reflect a national trend: low housing supply is keeping prices high, even as interest rates limit some buyers' options.



Tips for Today's Homebuyer

If you're planning to buy a home in Glens Falls, Saratoga or nearby communities this spring, keep these tips in mind:

- **Get qualified*** early. Knowing what you can afford helps you move fast when the right home comes along.
- **Understand your options.** Programs like adjustable-rate mortgages or temporary buydowns can make monthly payments more affordable.
- **Be ready to act.** Homes in popular areas can move quickly. Having financing in place gives you a competitive edge.
- **Think long term.** Even in a high-rate environment, buying a home helps you build wealth, especially in growing markets like Glens Falls and Saratoga.

Why Local Advice Matters

Buying a home involves more than finding a property. It's about understanding financing, navigating paperwork and making informed decisions—especially in a changing market. That's where a local expert can make all the difference.

Kristen Zorda (NMLS 58751), a registered loan originator with PrimeLending at the Syracuse Branch serves buyers throughout the Glens Falls and Saratoga area. With years of experience, she helps clients explore financing options, avoid surprises and stay confident throughout the mortgage process.

"Every buyer's situation is different," Zorda said. "Whether you're buying your first home in Glens Falls or relocating to Saratoga, I take the time to understand your goals and match you with financing that fits your needs."

Zorda works one-on-one with buyers to ensure they understand what to expect, how much they can afford and how to prepare for closing.

Why Now May Still be a Good Time to Buy

While higher interest rates are a factor, there are still strong reasons to buy this spring:

- You can start building equity instead of paying rent.
- Home values in Glens Falls and Saratoga continue to rise, which may boost your investment over time.
- You'll have the opportunity to settle into a home and community you love.

There may not be a perfect time to buy, but with the right guidance, this could be the right time for you.

Start by Talking to a Mortgage Professional

Before you browse listings or attend open houses, talk to a mortgage expert. A trusted loan originator can help you get qualified, understand your loan options and set a plan that fits your budget and goals.

Kristen Zorda, NMLS 58751, is your local resource for financing in Glens Falls and Saratoga. With a strong understanding of both the national mortgage landscape and the local market, she can help you make confident choices—step by step.

**Thinking about buying a home this spring?
Contact Kristen Zorda to get qualified and explore your options in Glens Falls or Saratoga.**

*A qualification is not an approval of credit, and does not signify that underwriting requirements have been met. Conditions and restrictions may apply.

Note: This overview is for informational purposes only and not intended as financial advice. Consult a professional for guidance tailored to your circumstances. ■

POWER OF ATTORNEY:

The Swiss Army Knife of Estate Planning



by Phillip Vacchio, Esq.

APower of Attorney (“POA”) in New York is one of the most versatile and essential estate planning documents available. The document grants one or more trusted individuals (the agents) the authority to act on behalf of another person (the principal) in certain financial and legal matters. Whether you are an 18-year-old going away to college, a business owner worth millions of dollars, or a senior citizen living the golden years of your life, every adult needs a valid and enforceable POA specifically tailored to their individual situation, goals, and needs.

As we age, the POA becomes even more critical due to the increased likelihood of incapacity or cognitive decline. In addition, the potential need for costly long-term healthcare services increases as we grow older. In situations where such care becomes necessary, an experienced elder law attorney can employ various strategies to preserve a person’s assets while obtaining government benefits, such as Medicaid, to pay for these services. However, if the person requiring care no longer has sufficient capacity, it is imperative that they have a valid POA, sufficiently broad in scope, to allow the agent to engage in such asset protection planning techniques.

KEY BENEFITS OF A POWER OF ATTORNEY

- **Comprehensive Financial Management:** A POA allows the agent to manage bank accounts, pay bills, file tax returns, continue business operations, and handle investments, among other responsibilities.
- **Estate Planning Tool:** It facilitates the smooth management of assets and finances in case of incapacity or even simply for the principal's convenience.
- **Medicaid Planning and Asset Protection:** A POA can be strategically used to protect assets when planning for Medicaid eligibility, helping to preserve wealth while ensuring access to long-term care.
- **Avoiding Guardianship Proceedings:** A properly executed POA can prevent the need for costly, time-consuming, and stressful court-appointed guardianship proceedings.

GIFTING POWERS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Gifting powers under a POA must be explicitly granted, with the gifting section initialed by the principal, as they are not automatically included in a standard POA form. These powers are crucial

for implementing many Medicaid planning, estate tax reduction, and wealth transfer strategies. They allow the agent to make financial gifts, transfer assets, and contribute to existing trusts or form new trusts on behalf of the principal. The scope of the gifting powers can be tailored to be as broad or limited as the principal desires.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR INCLUDING GIFTING POWERS:

- **Additional Estate Planning:** The agent may be able to address certain "loose ends" in the principal's estate plan if the principal becomes incapacitated. For example, they can designate beneficiaries on financial accounts to avoid probate.
- **Medicaid Planning:** Enables the transfer of assets to qualify for Medicaid to cover the cost of expensive long-term care services while preserving wealth for beneficiaries.
- **Estate Tax Reduction:** Helps reduce the taxable estate through strategic gifting and other methods.
- **Limitations and Safeguards:** The principal can set limits on the amount, frequency, or purpose of gifts to prevent financial abuse. Additionally, by law, an agent under a POA must act reasonably and in the best interest of the principal.

Due to the complexity of the POA document and the required execution formalities under New York law, it is highly recommended to work with an experienced estate planning attorney to ensure the document complies with legal requirements and serves its intended purpose effectively. There have been multiple variations of the POA in New York over the last twenty years, with the most recent significant changes taking effect on June 13, 2021. If the document, when signed, does not comply with the current required format and language under New York State law, it will be deemed invalid and unenforceable.

A Power of Attorney is an indispensable tool in estate planning, providing flexibility and security for managing financial and legal affairs. Whether used for Medicaid planning, asset protection, business management, or general financial oversight, a well-structured POA can offer peace of mind and legal safeguards for the future.

Phillip Vacchio is a Partner at Herzog Law Firm PC, with locations in Saratoga Springs, Albany, Queensbury, and Kingston. Visit www.Herzoglaw.com or call 518.465.7581 to request a free one-hour consultation. ■



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CLIENT MARKET UPDATE:

Tariff Turbulence Rattles Markets, But Long-Term Strategy



by Greenwood Hoff Wealth Management of Cetera Investors

After markets closed on April 1, President Trump announced a sweeping new tariff plan that exceeded investor expectations and sparked renewed volatility in global markets. The announcement triggered a sharp sell-off in equity futures as investors grappled with potential implications for economic growth, inflation, and financial stability. These new tariffs, enacted under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 (IEEPA), aim to address the U.S. trade deficit—an issue the administration has labeled a national emergency.

The rollout includes a 10% blanket tariff on all countries, effective April 5, 2025, followed by a second phase of targeted, reciprocal tariffs on countries with the largest U.S. trade deficits, beginning April 9. Notably, some sectors and trade partners are exempt. Key exclusions include copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber, bullion, and essential minerals not sourced in the U.S. Additionally, goods from Canada and Mexico that comply with USMCA guidelines will remain tariff-free. While these carve-outs help mitigate some of the economic shock, markets remain on edge as the full scope and consequences of the tariffs are still unclear.

The true economic impact of tariffs is notoriously difficult to measure upfront. Exporting countries may absorb part of the cost or devalue their currencies to remain competitive. On the other hand, American consumers may face price increases, especially for goods with few substitutes. However, if domestic or alternative international producers can fill the gap, inflationary pressures may be moderated. Much depends on how trade partners respond, whether negotiations advance, and whether more exclusions are granted as the effects become clearer.



China Responds, Market Volatility Spikes

Global tensions escalated further when China responded swiftly to the U.S. tariff plan with a 34% retaliatory tariff on a broad range of U.S. goods. This tit-for-tat move intensified investor fears and triggered another sharp sell-off, sending the S&P 500 down nearly 6% in a single day. Investors quickly sought safety in U.S. Treasuries, pushing the 10-year yield below 4%.

Still, there are signs that diplomacy remains possible. Both the U.S. and China set their reciprocal tariff dates—April 9 and April 10—just days apart, leaving a window for last-minute negotiations. China's delayed implementation appears calculated: a move that shows strength domestically while allowing flexibility at the negotiation table. Likewise, the U.S. may be leveraging economic pressure to secure favorable trade terms. While the back-and-forth has rattled markets, it may ultimately be more about positioning than permanence.

Broader Economic Implications

It's important to note that tariffs are not paid directly by countries. They are paid by importers, many of whom are American businesses. For example, a U.S. company manufacturing goods in China and importing them into the U.S. will now face higher costs, which may be passed on to consumers. Some companies may explore shifting production to other countries, but such transitions take time and investment. In the meantime, costs could weigh on corporate profits, consumer demand, and overall economic growth.

The Federal Reserve is watching closely, as this situation introduces a complex dynamic. On one hand, tariffs could raise import prices and lead to higher inflation. On the other, they could slow growth and suppress demand, especially if consumer confidence or corporate earnings falter. While some projections estimate that tariffs could raise annual U.S. customs revenues by \$700 billion—about 2.3% of GDP—the economic impact depends largely on how those funds are used. If redistributed through tax relief or direct payments, growth could remain intact. But if applied solely to deficit reduction, a slowdown may follow.

What This Means for Investors

All of this leads to an important question: What should investors do?

The answer, more often than not, is to stay the course. Despite unsettling headlines, your financial plan is built to withstand volatility. Long-term investing requires discipline, and this situation is no different. Emotional decision-making in moments of uncertainty can do more harm than good.

That said, this is a good time to revisit your comfort with risk. If recent swings are affecting your peace of mind, it may be worth discussing whether your investment mix still reflects your long-term goals and emotional tolerance. Risk is personal, and aligning your portfolio with your comfort level can lead to more consistent, confident decisions over time.

Silver Linings: Opportunities in the Chaos

Despite the turbulence, there are reasons for optimism. First, equity valuations, especially in the tech-heavy growth sector, had become stretched. The recent pullback has brought valuations closer to historical averages, offering potential long-term buying opportunities. Additionally, the Federal Reserve has indicated it stands ready to cut interest rates if growth slows, which could soften the blow of tighter trade conditions.

Diversification is also proving its value. So far this year, international and value stocks have outperformed U.S. large-cap growth stocks. For investors with globally diversified portfolios, the benefits of balance are becoming evident.



Our Outlook

We anticipate continued volatility in the weeks ahead as negotiations unfold and additional details emerge. In this environment, it's more important than ever to focus on what you can control. That starts with maintaining a well-diversified portfolio aligned with your long-term goals, managing risk thoughtfully, and relying on a trusted advisor to keep you grounded during periods of market stress.

The coming weeks are likely to bring more headlines, policy shifts, and market swings. While the urge to react is understandable, history consistently shows that the most successful investors remain patient and disciplined amid uncertainty.

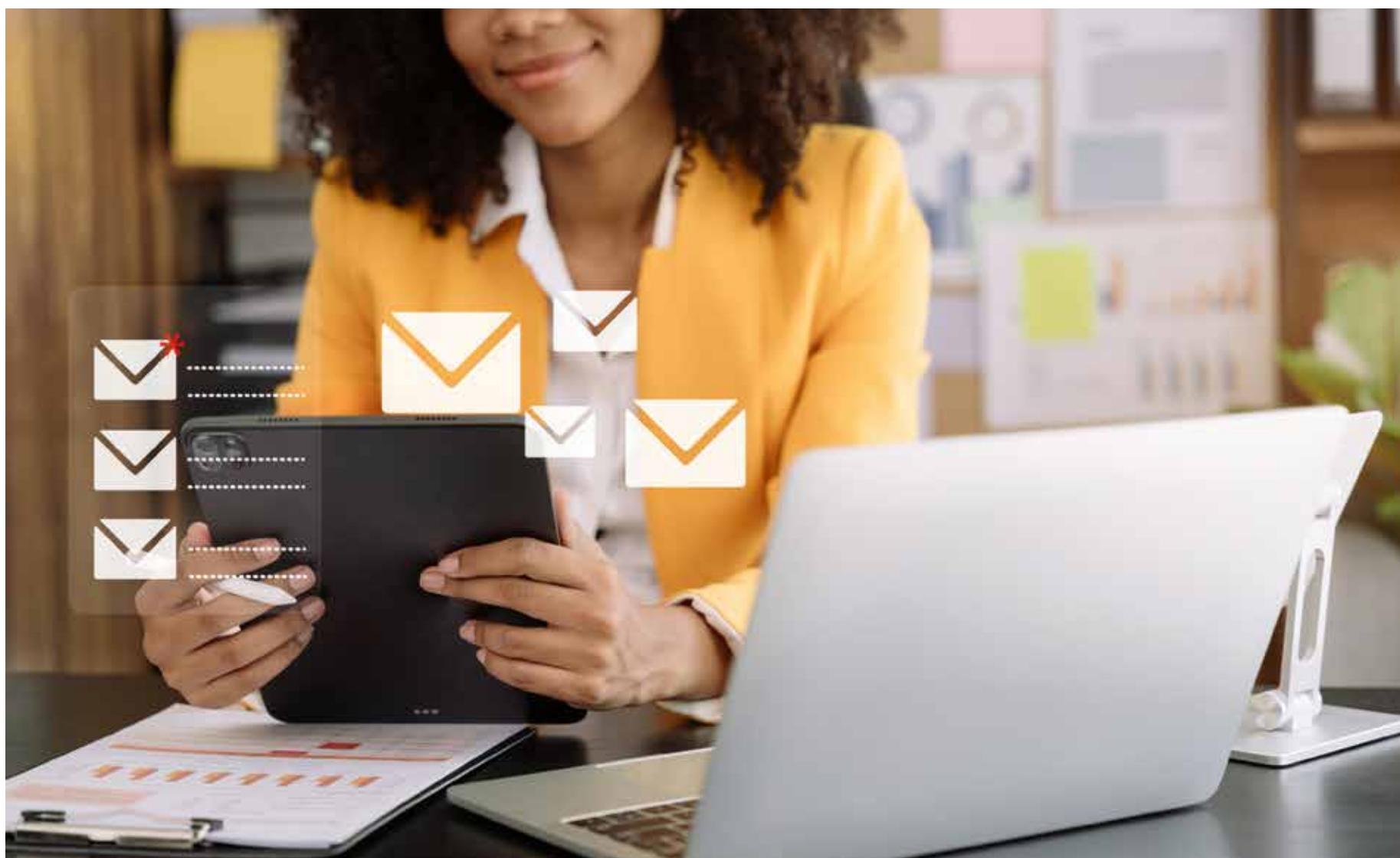
Navigating the emotional ups and downs of investing is never easy, especially when markets are turbulent. But staying calm, focusing on your personal goals, and tuning out the noise can be among the most powerful choices you make.

How We Can Help

In times like these, personalized guidance matters more than ever. At Greenwood Hoff Wealth Management, we act as fiduciaries, always putting your best interests first. Our work goes beyond investment management. We anchor every decision in your comprehensive financial plan, helping you stay focused on your long-term goals, even when markets feel uncertain. Whether you're evaluating risk, planning for a major life event, or simply need a sounding board, our team is here to support you. We proudly offer house calls for added convenience and are committed to meeting you where you are—both financially and personally. If you're looking for a trusted partner to guide you through these unprecedented times, Greenwood Hoff Wealth Management is here to help. ■

Email Replies:

The New Key to Boosting Deliverability



In the ever-evolving world of email marketing, a subtle yet powerful shift is taking place. While click-through rates (CTRs) have long been the gold standard for measuring engagement, a new metric is emerging as a game-changer: email replies. According to a recent article from Ontraport, encouraging recipients to hit "reply" rather than just clicking links could be the simple tweak that skyrockets your email deliverability.

WHY REPLIES MATTER MORE THAN EVER

Email deliverability—the ability of your messages to land in the inbox rather than the spam folder—hinges on how mailbox providers like Gmail, Yahoo, and Outlook perceive your sender reputation. These providers use sophisticated algorithms to assess engagement, and historically, clicks on links have been a strong signal of interest. However, as spam filters grow smarter, they're placing greater emphasis on two-way interaction. A reply to an email indicates a higher level of engagement, signaling to providers that your message is not only wanted but valued enough to warrant a response.

The Ontraport article highlights that this shift aligns with how people naturally interact online today. With inboxes flooded daily, a reply stands out as a deliberate action—far more meaningful than a passive click. This deeper engagement can improve your sender reputation, increasing the likelihood that future emails reach the inbox.

THE DELIVERABILITY BOOST

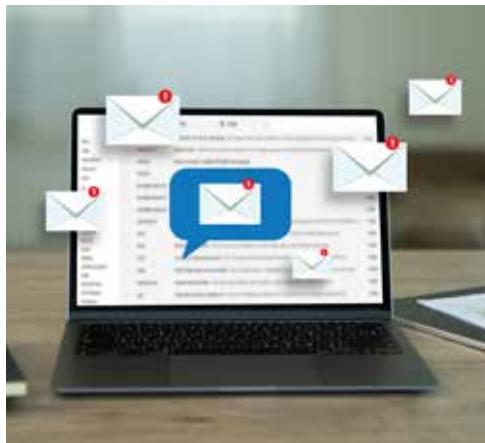
The logic is straightforward: mailbox providers want to prioritize emails that foster genuine connections. When recipients reply, it tells the provider, "This sender is legitimate, and their content resonates." Over time, this can lower your chances of being flagged as spam, even if your click-through rates remain steady. Ontraport emphasizes that this tactic doesn't just help with deliverability—it also builds stronger relationships with your audience, turning one-way broadcasts into conversations.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE REPLIES

So, how do you pivot from chasing clicks to sparking replies? The article suggests a few practical strategies:

1. Ask Engaging Questions:

End your emails with a question that invites a response. For example, "What's your biggest challenge with [topic]?" or "How do you usually tackle [problem]?" Make it personal and relevant to your audience.



2. Create a Conversational Tone: Ditch the formal, salesy language. Write like you're chatting with a friend—warm, approachable, and authentic. This lowers the barrier to replying.

3. Offer Incentives: Encourage responses by offering something in return, like a quick tip, a resource, or even just a promise to reply back. People are more likely to engage if they feel there's value in it for them.

4. Keep It Simple: Don't overcomplicate the ask. A single, clear call-to-action (CTA) like "Hit reply and let me know your thoughts!" can work wonders.

CLICKS STILL MATTER—BUT REPLIES REIGN SUPREME

This isn't to say click-throughs are obsolete. Links to your website, product pages, or blog posts remain vital for driving traffic and conversions. However, the article argues that replies offer a dual benefit: they enhance deliverability while fostering a deeper connection with your subscribers. A balanced approach—combining clickable content with reply-driven CTAs—could be the sweet spot for modern email campaigns.

THE BOTTOM LINE

As email marketing adapts to stricter deliverability standards, relying solely on click-throughs may no longer cut it. Ontraport's insight reveals that replies are becoming the new go-to move for savvy marketers. By prioritizing two-way communication, you're not just gaming the algorithm—you're building trust and loyalty with your audience. So, next time you craft an email, consider this simple tweak: ask for a reply. It might just be the key to unlocking your inbox success. ■

This A.I. summary is based off of a recent article put out by Ontraport.com. To read the full article please scan the QR code.

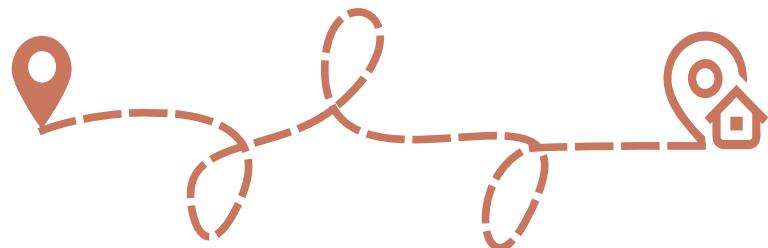


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Kristen Zorda

Loan Originator, NMLS: 58751

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kristen.zorda@primelending.com



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WE ARE HIRING!

WORK WITH US



» **Performance Industrial** **Window Supervisor**

At Performance Industrial, we take pride in delivering top-quality cleaning services with a focus on safety and professionalism. We are seeking a dedicated and experienced Window Cleaning Supervisor to join our team and help lead our window cleaning operations.

JOB TYPE: FULL-TIME

Pay: \$25.00 - \$30.00 per hour

- 8 hour shift, Monday to Friday
- Work Location: In person
- South Glens Falls, NY 12803 (Preferred)

BENEFITS:

- 401(k)
- 401(k) matching
- Dental insurance
- Employee assistance program
- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Paid time off
- Referral program

COMPENSATION PACKAGE:

- Hourly pay
- Overtime pay
- Performance bonus

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Supervise and lead a team of window cleaning technicians.
- Perform window cleaning tasks at various heights, including operating lifts and working off ladders.
- Ensure all safety protocols and procedures are followed at all times.
- Operate and maintain cleaning equipment.
- Coordinate daily work schedules and manage team performance.
- Communicate with clients to ensure satisfaction and address any concerns.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Previous window cleaning experience is required.
- Must be able to work at heights comfortably.
- Experience operating lifts and working off ladders.
- Proven leadership experience, with the ability to motivate and manage a team.
- Strong attention to detail and commitment to safety.
- Reliable, punctual, and able to work flexible hours as needed.
- Ability to Commute / Ability to Relocate:
South Glens Falls, NY 12803
Relocate before starting work (Preferred)

If you have the skills and experience required to excel in this role, we'd love to hear from you! Apply today to join the Performance Industrial team.



Apply directly on our website:
performanceindustrial.com/employment

EVENT

FRI

BNI

Meets every Friday at 7:30 AM
 Southern Adirondack Realtors
 296 Bay Road, Queensbury

09
MAY

**AMA Coffee and
Connections
Capital Region**

8:30 – 9:30 AM
 MochaLisa's Caffe
 22 Clifton Country Road #78,
 Clifton Park

14
MAY

**AMA Coffee and
Connections Saratoga**

8:30 – 9:30 AM
 Kru Coffee
 46 Marion Avenue,
 Saratoga Springs

Bolton Chamber of Commerce Mix & Mingle

5 – 7 PM
 Blue Water Manor
 4436 Lake Shore Drive, Bolton Landing

Members receive one free drink & hors d'oeuvres (beer, wine,
 ready to drink - gratuity not included)

19
MAY

**Lake George Regional
Chamber of Commerce
Golf Tournament**

11 AM – 7 PM
 The Sagamore Golf Course
 46 Frank Cameron Road,
 Bolton Landing

Tournament Details, Contests, Schedule, Registration & Pricing:
 visit lakegeorgechamber.com/events/golf

**SARATOGA COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Annual Chamber
Celebration Night**

4 – 7:30 PM
 1863 Club
 267 Union Avenue, Saratoga Springs
 Fees/Admission: \$225 per member

08
MAY

**Women's Expo Event
at Saratoga Winery**

4 – 6:30 PM
 The Saratoga Winery
 462 NY-29, Saratoga Springs
 Vendor Table: \$125 | Attending as a Guest: Free!

21
MAY

MAY

UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENTS

**ARCC EVENTS****ARCC Chamber 101**

9 – 10 AM
 ARCC Office -
 68 Warren Street,
 Glens Falls

This interactive discussion will show you how to better utilize your Chamber membership. ARCC Vice President, Marketing & Communications Amanda Blanton, and ARCC Membership Manager Ava Kanninen will go over membership benefits that you may not be aware of, or simply forgot! New, prospective, and current members are encouraged to attend.

07
MAY**May Mixer at
Adirondack Winery**

4 – 6 PM
 Adirondack Winery
 395 Big Bay Road,
 Queensbury

Fees/Admission:
 \$15 for ARCC Members
 \$25 for Not-Yet Members

Guests will enjoy an exquisite charcuterie spread packed with artisan goodies from local businesses with free samples of Adirondack Winery's newest wines and ciders to try, along with tours of their event spaces and live music with Jason Irwin! Cash bar will be available for guests to enjoy a selection of wines, cocktails, beer, cider and so much more!

15
MAY

Additionally, there will be a 50/50 & Adirondack Winery Prize Raffle and yard games on the patio area so you can enjoy the outdoors while mingling and making connections! Raffle tickets are CASH ONLY and available prizes are:

- 50/50 Cash Prize
- 2 tickets to the Adirondack Wine and Food Festival (\$100 value)
- 2 tickets to a Dueling Pianos Event
- Winner's Choice

MEETING POINT**Glens Falls Chapter**

11 AM
 EOS Office -
 9 Broad Street
 Union Square - 2nd Floor,
 Glens Falls

05
MAY

**Consulting Trends
and Opportunities
Panel Discussion**

4:15 PM
 The Hyde Collection
 161 Warren Street,
 Glens Falls

15
MAY

**Young Professionals
Meeting**

8:30 AM
 Teal, Becker, &
 Chairmont, CPAS P.C.
 7 Washington Square, Albany

21
MAY

**Saratoga Springs
Chapter**

8:30 AM
 Saratoga National Bank
 171 S Broadway, Saratoga Springs

22
MAY

Albany Chapter

8:30 AM
 22 Corporate Woods
 Suite 501, Albany

23
MAY



CORNELL'S AUTO PARTS CAR SHOW



A CELEBRATION OF CARS & COMMUNITY

Interviewed &
Photographed by
Michael Nelson

On May 3, 2025, Cornell's Used Auto Parts in Greenfield Center, New York, will host its third annual car show, a vibrant event that combines automotive passion with community giving. This year, the event will raise funds for Folds of Honor New York, supporting scholarships and aid for families of fallen soldiers and first responders. With over 800 people already expressing interest on Facebook, the show promises to be the biggest yet, aiming to surpass \$10,000 in donations. Set at 62 South Greenfield Road, the event will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering a day of classic cars, food, trophies, and camaraderie.

Cornell's Used Auto Parts, the driving force behind the event, is a second-generation, family-owned salvage yard established in 1972. Led by general manager Mike Colvett and owner Casey Cornell, the business spans 30 acres, housing around 1,600 vehicles and employing over 45 staff members with six delivery trucks. Unlike the "junkyards" of old—where customers scavenged for parts in

disorganized lots—Cornell's is a modern operation. Its inventory is meticulously tracked through a computer system, with every part photographed, cleaned, and quality-checked before delivery or pickup. "You call us, let us know what you need, and we pull it for you," Colvett explains, highlighting the shift from rusty, self-service yards to a professional, customer-focused model.

The company's commitment to quality extends to its partnerships. As part of Team PRP Northeast, Cornell's accesses over a million parts through a network of 20 recyclers. Each night, parts are exchanged at a hub in Albany, ensuring next-day delivery of pre-tested, cleaned components. "You wouldn't know if a part came from us or a partner—it's all up to the same standard," Colvett says. This network allows Cornell's to serve everyone from DIY mechanics to auto shops, offering engines, transmissions, tail lights, and more at a fraction of OEM costs, backed by a standard six-month warranty and optional extended labor warranties.



Sustainability is also a priority. Unlike old-school yards that let fluids leak into the ground, Cornell's drains all vehicle fluids upon arrival, recycling oil for winter heating and sending antifreeze to specialized companies. Even their pressure washer uses a filtration system to recycle water, minimizing waste. These green initiatives challenge the outdated stigma of salvage yards, positioning Cornell's as an environmentally conscious leader in the industry.

The car show itself began modestly in 2022 as a post-COVID cookout for employees and their families. Posted on Facebook, it drew an unexpected crowd, running out of food and T-shirts while raising \$1,200 for the Franklin Community Center in Saratoga. In 2023, the event grew, attracting over 150 cars and 300–400 attendees, raising \$6,500 for Double H Ranch in Lake Luzerne. This year, Colvett anticipates around 200 cars, from 1920s classics to 2024 trucks, filling the parking lot and nearby fields owned by Casey Cornell and his uncle. "You'll see muscle cars, modern cars, trucks, motorcycles—everything," Colvett says, noting his personal favorite, a 1970 Chevelle with iconic roof stripes.

The event is a true community effort, with all staff volunteering their time to park cars, cook, and manage logistics. Planning began in January, covering food, merchandise, and volunteer coordination. Attendees can expect a relaxed vibe, with car enthusiasts mingling, lawn chairs in tow, and trophies awarded for categories like best modern car, best muscle car, and best in show, chosen by Folds of Honor representatives. Judges evaluate paint, interiors, and engines for the cleanest builds, sparking friendly debates among attendees.

Folds of Honor will enhance the event with flags lining the road and merchandise for sale, amplifying the patriotic spirit. "It's near and dear to our hearts," Colvett says, noting Cornell's ongoing support through golf tournaments and other initiatives. To avoid scams, he advises registering only through him or Casey Cornell.

For more details, visit cornellsusedautoparts.com, call 518-893-0151, or check Cornell's Auto Parts on Facebook and Instagram. The event's Facebook page, "Third Annual Cornell's Car Show," offers updates. As Colvitt puts it, "You can't miss us off Route 9." Whether you're a car enthusiast or just seeking a fun day out, this car show delivers, blending automotive history with a heartfelt cause. ■



FARMERS' MARKETS



SARATOGA COUNTY

Saratoga Farmers' Market

112 High Rock Ave, Saratoga Springs

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, May – October, 9 AM – 1 PM
Wednesdays, May – October, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Spa City Farmers' Market

Saratoga Spa State Park (Lincoln Baths), Saratoga Springs

SCHEDULE:

Sundays, Year-round, 10 AM – 2 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Ballston Spa Farmers' Market

Wiswall Park, Ballston Spa

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, June 14 – October 4

9 AM – 1 PM

Thursdays, June 14 – October 4

3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Halfmoon Farmers' Market

Abele Memorial Park, Halfmoon OR inside Halfmoon Town Hall, Harris Road, Halfmoon

SCHEDULE:

Wednesdays, Year-round, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Clifton Park Farmers' Market

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church parking lot, Clifton Park

SCHEDULE:

Mondays, June – October, 2 – 5 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Stillwater Farmers' Market

662 Hudson Ave, Stillwater Public Library

SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays, May 6 – October 28, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Malta Farmers' Market

Allardice ACE Hardware parking lot, 2570 Route 9, Malta, NY 12020

SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays, May – October, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Route 50 Green Market (Burnt Hills)

802 Route 50, Burnt Hills

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, June 7 – October 25
9 AM – 1 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Town of Greenfield Farmers' Market

Middle Grove Park, 428 Middle Grove Road

SCHEDULE:

Thursday evenings
June 19 – September 18
4 – 7 PM

Contact: 518-893-7432, ext. 307

WARREN COUNTY

Bolton Landing Farmers' Market

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church Parking Lot, 7 Goodman Ave

SCHEDULE:
Fridays, June 27 – September 5
9 AM – 1 PM

Manager Contact: 518-480-9118

Chestertown Farmers' Market

Chestertown Town Hall,
6307 State Route 9, Chestertown

SCHEDULE:
Wednesdays, June 12 – September 18,
10 AM – 2 PM

Manager Contact: 518-494-3336

Glens Falls Farmers' Market (Summer)

South Street Pavilion, Glens Falls

SCHEDULE:
Saturdays, May 4 – October 26
8 AM – 12 PM

Manager Contact: 518-792-4918
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Glens Falls Farmers' Market (Winter)

Aviation Mall Food Court,
578 Aviation Road, Queensbury

SCHEDULE:
Saturdays, November 2 – April 25
9 AM – 12 PM

Manager Contact: 518-792-4918
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

North Creek Farmers' Market

Riverfront Park on the Hudson,
North Creek

SCHEDULE:
Thursdays, June 19 – September 18
2 – 5:30 PM

Manager Contact: 518-251-5210

Warrensburg Riverfront Farmers' Market

Warrensburg Mills Historic District,
River Street (NYS Route 418),
near Curtis Lumber

SCHEDULE:
Fridays, May 30 – October 10, 3 – 6 PM

Manager Contact: 518-466-5497
• FMNP Accepted: Yes



WASHINGTON COUNTY

Cambridge Valley Farmers' Market

SUMMER: Owlkill Commons,
17 West Main Street, Cambridge
Sundays, May – October, 10 AM – 1 PM
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

WINTER: The Old Firehouse,
11 W. Main Street, Cambridge
2nd & 4th Sundays, January 12 – May 11
10 AM – 1 PM
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Canal Street Marketplace Farmers' Market

63 Canal Street, Fort Edward

SCHEDULE:
Thursdays, June 5 – September 25
4 – 7 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Granville Farmers' Market

Granville Village Parking Lot
11 Main Street

SCHEDULE:
Thursdays, June 19 – October 16
2 – 5 PM
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Greenwich Farmers' Market

99 Main Street, Greenwich

SCHEDULE:
Wednesdays, June 7 – October
3 – 6 PM
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Salem Farmers' Market

Village Park Gazebo,
Route 22, Main Street, Salem

SCHEDULE:
Saturdays, June 21 – October 18
10 AM – 1 PM
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Whitehall Farmers' Market

Canal Park Pavilion,
4 Skenesborough Drive, Whitehall

SCHEDULE:
Tuesdays, June 4 – October 8
2 – 5 PM
• FMNP Accepted: Yes



Facilitating the growth and development of Blue Collar businesses. We will showcase REAL Blue Collar businesses in interviews, and use these stories to help educate and empower the next generation of trades workers to become Blue Collar business owners.



EPISODE 69

[Nick Schkrioba of Peoplease](#)

In this episode, your hosts Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems interview Nick Schkrioba, sales consultant with the professional employer organization, Peoplease. Listen in as they talk about workers comp models, maintaining a high retention rate, modern software, and much more!



[SCAN TO LISTEN!](#)



EPISODE 70

[The Farnan Brothers, Northwestern Mutual](#)

In this episode of Blue Collar StartUp, we're mixing things up a bit. When the podcast first launched, we released a series of professional tips called Blue Collar Blueprints. These previously exclusive episodes contain valuable insights that we're excited to share with you! In addition to our regular interview episodes, we'll be bringing these Blueprints to our listeners as well. This episode features an introduction by Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media and questions from Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Services. Today's focus is on Ryan and Thomas Farnan from Northwestern Mutual. Tune in as they discuss personalizing financial plans for every person, not having a minimum limit their clients need to put in to start, and much more!



[SCAN TO LISTEN!](#)



EPISODE 71

[Hudson Valley Preservation and Trades Up](#)

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems interview Mason Lord, co-owner and founder of Hudson Valley Preservation and Trades Up. Tune in as they talk about giving kids hands-on experience with tools, handling the stress of building a business, and much more!



[SCAN TO LISTEN!](#)



EPISODE 72

[Jack Miller Contractors](#)

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems interview Jack Miller and Dan Pratt of Jack Miller Contractors. Join them as they discuss the building science mindset, innovation in the construction field, team growth and the processes behind it, and much more!



[SCAN TO LISTEN!](#)

LISTEN ON



LOCAL PODCASTS



Saratoga, Warren, and Washington County have no shortage of fantastic goods & services to offer! In this podcast, our host Mike Nelson will clue you in on the gems hidden **in your very own community!**



SEASON 3, EPISODE 16

Benefits of Hydrogen Water with Annie Newman

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media interviews Annie Newman, local saleswoman and advocate for hydrogen water. Tune in as they discuss high end water distribution, paying attention to what's in the water you drink, forming connections through business endeavors, and much more!



SCAN TO LISTEN!



SEASON 3, EPISODE 17

Treating Trauma with Tandi Orluk

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media interviews Tandi Orluk, mental health therapist at Set Free Counseling. Join in on the conversation as they discuss helping the homeless veteran population, using EMDR to help treat trauma, different attachment styles, and much more!



SCAN TO LISTEN!



SEASON 3, EPISODE 18

Uplifting Creative Communities with Philip Casabona

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media interviews Philip Casabona, executive director at LARAC. Tune in to hear them discuss supporting and uplifting the local artist community, curating events, obtaining funding for a non-profit, and much more!



SCAN TO LISTEN!



SEASON 3, EPISODE 19

The Power of Proper Nutrition with Stephen Zabala

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media interviews Stephen Zabala, owner of Greenfork and host of the upcoming Food for Thought podcast. Tune in as they discuss nutrition as a balance of everything you're consuming, nutrient-rich foods and how to identify them, personalized vitamins and supplements, and much more!



SCAN TO LISTEN!

LISTEN ON



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