

September 2026

THE GRIGG LEWIS FOUNDATION CHRONICLE



We're thrilled to bring you exciting updates and upcoming initiatives from the Foundation. In this edition, you'll find highlights of new programs, along with the meaningful impact being made by our local nonprofit partners across Eastern Niagara County.

We hope you enjoy this update and all the great work happening across our community!

LOCKPORT SPOKES

Lockport Spokes is a free after-school program for students in grades 7th–12th, running Monday through Friday from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM throughout the school year. Returning Spokes partners include JT Sports and Recreation, Lockport Family YMCA, Kenan Center and Youth Mentoring Services. This school year, three new partners will join the program, expanding the variety activities and opportunities available to students: Lockport Ice Arena, Mental Health Association of Niagara County, and SUNY Niagara Liberty Partnerships.

On Fridays from 3:00- 5:30PM, Lockport Ice Arena, Mental Health Association and Youth Mentoring Services will collaborate on coordinated music-focused programming at the Ice Arena. Students can participate in group jam sessions, create playlist and help select music to be played during hockey games and open skate events. On Tuesdays at Aaron Mosell Junior High, Liberty Partnerships will offer programming focused on cultural enrichment, leadership development, civic engagement, and mentoring. Whether trying something new, building relationships or simply spending time with friend, Lockport teens are invited to find their place at Spokes. To learn more visit www.lockportspokes.org.



10TH ANNUAL BACKPACK DRIVE

The Lockport Family Focus Group's 10th Annual Backpack Drive was a success, with more than 250 backpacks filled with school supplies distributed to families throughout Eastern Niagara County. The Foundation coordinated the drive in partnership with Youth Mentoring Services and the LCSD Family Empowerment Center. The group handled outreach, created flyers, distributed applications, ordered supplies, and organized the packing day. On July 29th, Foundation staff along with volunteers from Family Empowerment Center, Paychex and Cornerstone CFCU, gathered at the Family Empowerment Center to assemble backpacks for children of all ages. Everyone thoughtfully organized the bags based on each child's age and color preferences. The Family Empowerment Center and Youth Mentoring Services distributed the completed backpacks to Niagara County families from August 4–6.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

Letter of Inquiry: October 4th, 2026

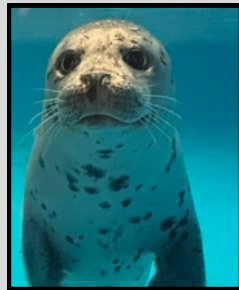
Q4 Grant Application: October 18th, 2026

To learn more, go to www.griggLewis.org

CHRISTA CALDWELL WORKERSHIP PROGRAM

The 2026 Christa Caldwell Workership Program ran from May through August, placing 22 interns at 15 nonprofit organizations throughout Eastern Niagara County. The program provided students with valuable hands-on experience while offering meaningful learning opportunities for both interns and participating organizations. The Workership interns expressed gratitude for the opportunity to hold a paid summer position and shared plans to apply the skills they gained toward their future goals.

The 2026 Workership Intern Spotlights were featured on the Foundation's website, Facebook, and Instagram pages. They received positive feedback and engagement from agencies, family members, and the community. Participating organizations shared their excitement about the program's continued growth and future.



WORKERSHIP RECEPTION

After a six-year break, the Foundation brought back the Workership Reception on June 24th, providing an opportunity for interns and agency supervisors to come together, connect, and share their experiences. The event encouraged participants to engage with one another beyond their individual workplaces while reflecting on their summer goals and discussing what contributes to a successful internship.

As part of the reception, attendees worked collaboratively in five groups to develop a "Workership Success Blueprint." Each group explored their vision of a successful internship and identified the qualities, expectations, and support needed to create a meaningful experience for both interns and supervisors. The activity encouraged collaboration, communication, and relationship-building among the participants involved.

AQUARIUM OF NIAGARA

The Aquarium of Niagara recently welcomed a new rescued resident, Papita, a three-year-old harbor seal who has found her forever home in Niagara Falls. Papita is partially blind and now joins the Aquarium's other rescued harbor seals in the newly renovated Rescue Harbor exhibit, which provides a space for rescued and non-releasable seals to receive specialized care.

Papita's arrival is a meaningful reminder of the Aquarium of Niagara's ongoing commitment to animal rescue, rehabilitation, conservation, and providing vulnerable marine animals with a second chance.

SUMMER SITE VISITS

The Grigg Lewis Foundation board of directors and staff conducted visits to several local nonprofit organizations to meet with agency leadership, receive updates on ongoing projects and initiatives, and discuss potential future funding opportunities. The organizations visited are highlighted below.



American Red Cross



Salvation Army



YMCA Camp Kenan



Kenan Center



Aquarium of Niagara



New Directions



Lockport CARES



HART, INC.

KENAN CENTER

We are thrilled to announce that the Kenan Center has officially opened their expansive new Civic Arena Center on September 5th. The state-of-the-art facility will provide opportunities for sports, recreation, community events, and youth programming, creating a central gathering place for residents of all ages. The Civic Arena Center is expected to have a lasting positive impact by bringing the community together, attracting visitors, and supporting local economic growth. The Grigg Lewis Foundation is grateful and proud to support the Kenan Center in bringing this exciting vision to life and looks forward to the many opportunities it will create for our community.

THE VILLAGE AT KENAN

Along with the opening of the Civic Arena Center, the Kenan Center is expanding its support for local families with the introduction of The Village at Kenan. Set to open this September at the former Montessori school building on Locust Street, The Village will help fill an important gap in family resources throughout Niagara County.

The Village will provide a welcoming and supportive space for families, offering free drop-in play groups, parent education workshops, and parent support groups. It will also serve as a resource and referral hub, helping connect families with essential services and resources to meet their everyday needs. By providing a place where parents can find support and guidance while children have opportunities to play and connect, The Village aims to strengthen families regardless of income.

This new program will positively impact the community by creating a centralized space where families can access resources, build connections, and receive support. We are excited to see The Village at Kenan become an important resource for families throughout Niagara County.

LOCKPORT FAMILY FOCUS GROUP

Lockport Family Focus Group is a monthly collaborative meeting between local nonprofits as a way of networking and sharing available resources for the community. At the June meeting, the group heard a presentation from the Niagara Area Foundation about their grant process and upcoming grant cycle. The group was informed of the eligibility criteria to apply for their grants and their application timelines.

For the August meeting, instead of having the usual layout of an agency presentation, this meeting focused heavily on gathering feedback from members about how the group can improve. With the main topics that were discussed being meeting format, communication, information sharing, and networking opportunities. Members expressed that the group is valuable for connecting agencies, learning about community resources, and identifying opportunities for collaboration, but suggested several ways to make meetings more efficient and useful. The Grigg staff will be applying this feedback as meetings continue.

I WAS THERE- UNTOLD STORIES OF VIETNAM

Since July, the Kenan Center has been hosting *I Was There: Untold Stories of Vietnam*, an exhibit curated by Mary Brennan-Taylor and Ellen Martin at the Lockport Public Arts Council. Following the success of the previous *Secret Weapons on WWII* exhibit, this interactive experience explores the often-untold stories of women and their contributions to the Vietnam War effort through art, music, and books.

There will also be a variety of related events and programs, including an author talk with Erika Robuck, the play *I Carry Your Heart With Me* in the Taylor Theatre, a screening of the classic film *Good Morning, Vietnam* at the Historic Palace Theatre, and a concert by the Stoll Brothers featuring songs from the era.

In late August, the Kenan Center also hosted a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., which was on display for one week, providing visitors with another meaningful opportunity to reflect on the experiences of those who served.