Our Mission
Through immersive experiences, we enrich life today by connecting people with history, art, and nature.

Our Values
Collaboration, Exploration, Inclusivity, Authenticity, Responsibility, & Stewardship

Our DEAI Commitment
Genesee Country Village & Museum (GCV&M) is actively committed to broadening our understanding of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion, and making it part of everything that we do. Guided by our mission, values, and inclusive culture of curiosity, we strive to dismantle inequity and address erasure through ongoing dynamic interpretation, communications, research, and outreach. We celebrate the stories of our shared past; connect the rich diversity of the 19th century to the present; and collaborate with the communities we serve to create welcoming spaces for learning, work, exploration, and play.
2023 marked the start of many exciting projects and programs at Genesee Country Village & Museum, with great results.

It was our first full year of implementing our new strategic plan, which focuses on three things: making the visitor experience more relevant and engaging; generating additional funds to increase the Museum’s financial sustainability; and adapting our infrastructure, staff, and Board to meet our strategic priorities. As you will see throughout this report, work was done on all three areas and will continue through our 50th anniversary in 2026.

In particular, we were thrilled to make the Museum a year-round destination for visitors by remaining open on weekends in October, November, and December, something we continued into January and February of 2024. We received much positive feedback on this change—it also helped our attendance to grow by more than 10,000 people and our member renewal rate to increase to 60%. We also increased attendance from school groups by 3,000 students throughout the year.

GCV&M offered a variety of events, including new exhibits in the John L. Wehle Gallery, programs in the newly-renovated Genesee Country Nature Center, and the Genesee Valley Great Outdoors Festival in July, which highlighted the rich environmental history and recreation opportunities in the Genesee Valley for thousands of visitors. This program and others allowed us to partner with many organizations and businesses throughout Western New York to expand the stories we tell about the history, art, and nature of the region.

We added several new senior staff who have brought fresh ideas and perspectives and six new Board members, who have done the same for the Board. Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility work also continued via staff trainings and community collaborations that were featured at a variety of events throughout the year.

Our partnership with RIT is now highlighted in perpetuity in the new Student Hall for Exploration and Development (SHED) on the RIT campus. Thanks to the generosity of Phil and Anne Wehrheim, the Wehrheim Gallery both shares the history of the Museum and features rotating exhibits of the collaborations that have happened between RIT faculty, staff, and students and GCV&M.

We are deeply grateful for the many ways that you supported us in 2023 and helped all of these exciting undertakings to come to life. Thank you from our staff and Board for believing in our work, and we look forward to seeing you at the Museum in 2024.

Elizabeth A. Wehle
President & CEO

Scott M. Turner
Chair, Board of Trustees

Becky Wehle

In the Wehrheim Gallery. From left: GCV&M Philip K. Wehrheim Curator of Collections Peter Wisbey, Anne & Phil Wehrheim, RIT Museum Studies Program Director Dr. Juilee Decker, GCV&M President & CEO Becky Wehle

Attendees at this year’s Whirl fundraiser

David Churchill
GCV&M

Rakibul Ahmed
Local Guide - 117 reviews - 175 photos

Absolutely great place to visit the living 1800s village museum, as well as their many special programs! LOVE that their 39 Museums for All tickets are available for special events and programs! I would highly recommend a visit, children of every age should find something to enjoy here.
2023 Highlights

This year, Genesee Country Village & Museum opened a new chapter of strategic growth and change that will take us through our 50th Anniversary celebration in 2026. We are expanding our programming, developing new ways to make the Museum relevant and accessible for visitors on- and offsite, and ensuring you can enjoy GCV&M for another 50 years!

Exciting changes commenced in 2023 with the renovation of our Nature Center. The space was physically transformed, with construction completed and new exhibits, interpretation, and an outdoor educational kiosk installed. Two large-scale wall murals depict our local habitat for visitors – and you will see we are utilizing our taxidermy specimens in the murals as well. Stop by to see our new Genesee Valley Watershed exhibit, and the new animal enclosures, pollinator exhibit, and many more interesting displays that will be installed in 2024! The Nature Center was also the focus of our first annual Genesee Valley Great Outdoors Festival, featuring fun programming sitewide from a variety of community partners, including the New York State Lumberjack Association, Letchworth State Park, the Genesee Valley Greenway State Park, and the Rochester Museum & Science Center.

Throughout the year in the Nature Center, Campers experienced new classes, youth and families encountered new programs like Toddler Storytime, and our maple sugaring expanded into the Village – where we tapped eight new trees.

The Historic Village bustled with visitors, new interpretation, and preservation projects. In our second year of Camp Hard Hat, 14 dedicated youth learned construction, project safety, and proper use of tools from certified instructors as they built and shingled a roof for our base ball grandstand and also repaired the concessions stand. The Hastings Law Office, Romulus Female Seminary, and Stow Insurance Office exteriors received fresh coats of paint, as did the rebuilt Livingston-Backus House and Jones Farmhouse fences. Our biggest restoration project for 2023 was the Town Hall tower clockworks – listen for its chime and admire its restored clock face the next time you visit thanks to Rochester Area Community Foundation and other donors! And outstanding interpretive partnerships continued in the Village all year long: Jamie Burton, a guest cook from “The Slow Oven” YouTube channel hosted several workshops during Celebrating Chocolate Week; Kayla Loebermeier from Under a Tin Roof food and lifestyle brand signed books and demonstrated hearth cooking; and the Black Storytelling League of Rochester added much to our Honoring Juneteenth programming and interpretation.
Visitation to the John L. Wehle Gallery saw a 49% increase over 2022! The Gallery's newest exhibit, Becoming Gendered: Garment as Gender Artifact, offers guests a discussion and display of a wide variety of gendered garments for adults and children spanning over a century. The exhibit was highlighted in Early American Life Magazine and in City Magazine’s “Best of Rochester” issue. Gallery visitors also enjoyed two full-day symposia and the final year of Duck Duck Shoot! The Story of American Waterbirds, which was digitized and is currently available for viewing on our website. GCV&M looks forward to using this digital capture technology to ultimately make all our Gallery exhibits and Village buildings accessible to the public from anywhere. The Gallery received a partial new roof and the installation of automated entry and restroom doors – these structural and accessibility improvements were made possible by the Lisk Morris Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

As GCV&M works to incorporate Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion into everything we do, 2023 marked the release of a new public commitment and action plan (both available on our website) to address inequity and erasure through ongoing dynamic interpretation, communications, research, and outreach. Through staff trainings and sustainable, long-term partnerships, GCV&M is working to more fully represent our community’s history and remove physical and financial accessibility barriers. We are proud to report that 2023 offered more ASL interpretation at events than ever before, and was the first full calendar year that the Museum participated in the national Museums for All Program. Sponsored by ESL, this program provides heavily discounted admission for low-income visitors, and 639 individuals visited GCV&M using this program in 2023 who otherwise may not have been able to attend.

Our Education and Interpretation teams worked together to welcome 18,157 school visitors from 72 public school districts, 18 counties, and 2 states in 2023, in addition to those who participated via virtual and off-site programs. Our educators increased field trip offerings at both the Gallery and Nature Center, and partnered with the Antiracist Curriculum Project to audit existing field trip curriculum guides and co-create new ones. The Museum’s annual Home for the Holidays school field trips in November and December were revamped to honor wintertime holidays around the world, and the Museum hosted several local educator workshops to provide professional development and new ways for educators and their classes to engage with GCV&M. Together with our partners, we provided over 60 hours of educational talks at events throughout the year, on topics ranging from the life of a soldier to musical history, in addition to daily interpretation. And thanks to a generous grant from the Kilian J. & Caroline F. Schmitt Foundation, our costuming department could rebuild much of its older stock in inclusive sizing.

Special events throughout 2023 saw record attendance and participation. Our Agricultural Fair had the highest attendance in a decade with 4,131 visitors, and exceptional partners like Homesteads for Hope, Wild Hill Farm, Genesee Valley Woodcarvers, and WellVentions infused new energy and products into this event. Our annual Fiddlers’ Fair & Making Music Weekend included 58 young student musicians and a member of the Rochester Music Hall of Fame, Joe Beard! Independence Day also surpassed our highest recorded attendance in recent years as we welcomed 50 new American citizens at our annual naturalization ceremony. Thanks to a Monroe County Community Festival Support grant, 326 youth also visited admission-free to celebrate this special day.

Our Hodinöhsöni’ partners provided historical interpretation at events including our Maple Sugar Festival and Agricultural Fair; plus Preparing for Winter, Honoring Juneteenth, and Civil War Living History Weekends. And our Yuletide in the Country tours included new scenes highlighting French Noël and local historical figure and Black entrepreneur Jacob Morris, with cultural advisement from community experts.
Meet Our Newest Board Members

William Barnecut-Kearns
Founder & Owner, AB Williams Design, LLC

Jennifer Berrios
Counsel, Nixon Peabody LLP

Matthew Carrigg
Partner, Nixon Peabody LLP

David Ciurzynski
President & Owner, Ciurzynski Consulting, LLC

Pete Giovenco
Sr. Vice President of Operations, G&C Foods

Dr. Shirley J. A. Green
Commissioner, Department of Recreation & Human Services, City of Rochester

We were pleased to have six new Board members join us this year. They are active community members in leadership positions all over the Western New York area—business leaders, lawyers, and public servants with vast experience in retail operations, finance, construction and general contracting, law, architecture and engineering, real estate, higher education, and nonprofit Board service. All have skills, knowledge, and a passion for GCV&M that will continue to help us grow and serve our audiences in new and exciting ways.

In Memoriam

Bill Ely

A Museum Board member for almost six years and a friend of the Museum for more than 20, Bill’s insight and generous nature will be missed and remembered at GCV&M for years to come. A successful business owner and active member of the Rochester philanthropic community, Bill shared his valuable time contributing to the Museum’s facilities committee. As an avid fisherman, he also spent many hours on Oatka Creek.

2023 By the Numbers

- 88,055 total on-site visitors
  - plus 2,187 online and off-site guests!
- 1st time GCV&M walked in the Rochester Pride Parade
- 25th Anniversary of our Antique Show & Sale
- 319 items added to our historical collections
  - including 173 glass pieces from Dr. William Bassett
- 705 adventurers attended Day Camps
  - 69 on full scholarships
- 1 million individuals engaged with our Facebook page
  - Follow us at @GCVMuseum!
- 8,677 volunteer hours logged by 176 amazing volunteers
- 20,986 handmade baked goods sold in our historic Confectionery
- 107 Moveable Museum programs brought GCV&M into the community!
- 800+ Scotch eggs served during Celtic Faire
Genesee Country Village & Museum had a successful year of continued attendance and earned revenue growth. Along with generous donations from our many supporters, the funds reserved from 2022’s budget surplus helped GCV&M meet rising costs for goods and services and cover the 2023 budget shortfall.

Copies of the Museum’s financial statements, audited by Bonadio & Co., LLP, are available upon request.

Tribute Gifts

This list encompasses gifts at or above $40 from January 1 to December 31, 2023

In Honor of...

Scott Turner
Centra Financial Group
Nixon Peabody, LLP

Richard Minster
Teresa Connors
Janet Friedman
John & Lindsay Garrett
Walter Gilges
Carol & Ed Johnston
Leo & Charlotte Landhuis
Dennis Lavoie
Larry Lawson
Georgia & Fritz May
Clint & Ann Merley
Eileen Minster
Ronald & Susan Roberts
Noreen Selinger
William & Lucia Shaw
Andrew Saum
Peggy Savlov
James & Bonnie Smith
Elizabeth Wehle
Phil & Anne Wehrheim
Douglas & Jean Whitney
Bobbie Young
Mark Young

Jim Phillips
Elke Phillips
Lucian Signore
James Signore
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Richard Hayden
Michael & Colleen Husted
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Thomas & Barbara Radley
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Karen Saludo

Eileen Vogt & Colleen Trevisan
Elizabeth Wehle
Howard & Susan Wilson
Jeffrey Waterman
Jeanice Keaton
William Murphy
David Binsack & Eileen Pines
Bob Whitmore
William & Lucia Shaw

In Memory of...

Elizabeth Bolger
Peggy Savlov

William Ely
A. Thomas & Nan Hildebrandt
William & Lucia Shaw
Elizabeth Wehle

Norma Embling
Jeff & Joanne Barker
Dorothy Grant
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