



Northern New York  
Community Foundation



Community  
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# Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge

**7th-, 8th-, and 9th-graders in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties —  
\$10,000 in grant awards are in YOUR hands!**

**T**he Northern New York Community Foundation, with support from hundreds of generous donors, presents the 2025-2026 Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge. This program provides an opportunity for **seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade students** attending schools in **Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence** counties to explore the concept of community and support a charitable organization they feel best embodies their definition of community and makes it a great place to live, work and play. A total of **\$10,000 in community grant awards** will be distributed through this initiative, now in its ninth year. **Ten students** will be selected to each present a **\$1,000 grant** to a charitable organization of their choice. This initiative is made possible through contributions to the **Northern New York Community Foundation's Friends of the Foundation Community Betterment Annual Fund**, major corporate support from **Community Bank**, and a major gift from an anonymous donor.

## Important Dates

- The 2025-2026 Youth Giving Challenge begins on **Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025**.
- Entries must be postmarked, hand-delivered, or submitted online by **Friday, Jan. 30, 2026**, to: **Northern New York Community Foundation, 131 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601**.
- Announcement of winning submissions will be made no later than **mid-February**, before students depart for winter break.

## Eligibility

- Students in **7th, 8th, and 9th grades** attending school in **Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence** counties.
- Students who were selected to award grants in previous years are **NOT ELIGIBLE** to apply.
- Students **must be available** to personally meet with staff at their chosen charitable organization and present their grant. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the grant.

## Eligible Organizations

- Charitable organizations with current nonprofit 501(c)(3) designation located in **Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence** counties are eligible to receive grant awards. An organization may receive **ONLY ONE** Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge grant per year.

## Judging

- A grant review committee will judge all entries, and a total of **10 students** will be selected as winners.
- **Creativity counts!** Students should research local charitable organizations of all sizes, scope, and mission.
- Your definition of "community" should be your own, not a dictionary citation.

## Important Considerations

- Return completed entries to: **Northern New York Community Foundation, 131 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601**.
- Incomplete or illegible entries will **NOT** be considered.
- Students **MUST** include a current, personal contact phone number and **non-school** email address that they regularly check as a Community Foundation representative will contact students to coordinate visits to their chosen organizations.
- The Community Foundation's Board of Directors will approve all grant awards.
- **Questions?** Contact the Community Foundation, **315-782-7110**, or **info@nnycf.org**. Additional entry forms and supporting program materials are available on the Community Foundation's website, **nnycf.org/givingchallenge**



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Student \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Personal phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Personal email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / guardian phone \_\_\_\_\_ Parent / guardian email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 1:** (Use the space below or attach an additional sheet.)

**In your own words, what does community mean to you? DO NOT provide a dictionary definition or citation. Tell us what makes a community, what you love about your community, and why it is a great place to live, work, and play. In writing your response, please provide answers to the following questions: 1) Where do you live? 2) What is it that you love about your community that makes it special?**



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**QUESTION 2:** (Use the space below or attach an additional sheet.)

Select a charitable organization located in Jefferson, Lewis, or St. Lawrence county that you believe best embodies your definition of community and helps to make it a better place to live, work, and play. Explain why you feel the organization supports what you believe makes your community a great place to live based on your answer to question 1. When writing your response, please include the following: 1) Full name of the organization you wish to support and its location. 2) Why is this nonprofit important to you? If you have had a personal experience with the organization, please include details about the interaction you've had and how it has impacted you and/or your family.

Return to Northern New York Community Foundation, 131 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601. All entries must be postmarked or hand-delivered no later than Friday, Jan. 30, 2026. Eligible organizations must have current nonprofit 510(c)(3) status and be located within Jefferson, Lewis or St. Lawrence counties or directly serve residents of those counties. Winning students are expected to personally meet with staff at their chosen organizations and present their grant awards. Students and parents agree that students may be included and featured in any publicity, including social media and media releases regarding the Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge or their grant may be forfeited.

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_