



# Progress CHENANGO 24

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## The Place is shaping the future through youth support and services

**SARAH GENTER**  
EVENING SUN

NORWICH — The Place has spent another year furthering their mission to “provide programs and support to youth and families, helping them realize their full potential as they become responsible contributing members of society.”

The 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located at 22 East Main Street in Norwich offers a wide variety of youth programming to the Chenango County area, including childcare, after school programs, youth training classes, youth employment opportunities, and much more.

The organization spent 2023 providing quality childcare and programming to the community while also updating their building, forming and strengthening community partnerships, implementing new programs, and planning for the future.

### Programs for all ages

The biggest way The Place supports local youth is through their numerous programs available to kids and teens in Chenango County.

The Place’s KIDS Program is there for youth aged five to 12



In 2023, The Place Teen Program Coordinator Julie Dealing brought Girls on the Run to Perry Browne Intermediate School, where 19 third, fourth, and fifth graders learned about empowerment, empathy, and confidence while also staying active. (Photo by Sarah Genter)

years old, and provides before- and after-school programming during the school year, and childcare during school vacations and the summer months.

Children in the KIDS Program are provided with healthy snacks, homework

assistance, fun learning activities, field trips, arts and crafts, games, and visits from educators and other organizations, including the Chenango County Historical Society, 4-H, Eat Smart New York, and more. They also have access to an out-

door playground and basketball court.

Additionally, The Place reaches out to local schools to get involved in the lives of kids who may not be in

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## The next evolution of The Silo is open and ready for business in 2024



The Silo Retreat’s Owners John Hinman and Judy Hinman stand by their recently renovated carriage house which serves as the main structure of their new short-term rental business. (Photo by Zachary Meseck)

**ZACHARY MESECK**  
EVENING SUN

GREENE - The Silo was an iconic restaurant in Chenango County for decades, and after a fire in 2021 its new owners hope to bring some of that spirit back as The Silo Retreat.

The Silo Retreat Co-Owners John Hinman and Judy Hinman purchased what remained of

The Silo two years after the fire following discussions with former owner Gary Kurz.

Since being purchased, The Silo Retreat has seen more than \$100,000 worth of renovations, and is open for rent as an event center with options for short-term housing rentals as well.

### Creating The Silo Retreat

John Hinman said his family

had been looking for a special location to start their new business, and one day decided to reach out to Kurz to see what he planned to do with The Silo. He said on June 22 of 2023, they closed on the business, and they have been developing it into an event center ever since.

“For almost a year we couldn’t come up to see it,” said Hinman. “The fire broke our

hearts, and after spending so much time there over the years it was tough to think about it not being there anymore.”

“It wasn’t until a cold and rainy February day much later on, that my wife said we should check it out.”

Hinman said one day they drove out to what remained of

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## Business SPOTLIGHT

### Northeast Classic Car Museum



On October 11, the Northeast Classic Car Museum held the drawing of the annual Ford Mustang Sweepstakes. Lawrence Loy from Utica, NY, was the lucky winner of the 1967 Red Ford Mustang Convertible. Above: Northeast Classic Car Museum Past President RC Woodford, City of Norwich Mayor Brian Doliver; Northeast Classic Car Museum Board President, Richard Schutt; Chenango County Board Chairperson George Seneck; and NECCM Executive Director Robert M. Jeffrey. (Submitted photo)

**SOPHIA ROOT**  
EVENING SUN

NORWICH – The Northeast Classic Car Museum (NECCM) continues to attract more visitors each year, and in 2023, set another record for admissions.

The museum continues to see an increase of visitors from outside of Chenango County and from across the United States.

In 2023, almost 97% of the museum’s visitors were from outside of Chenango County. Approximately, 10% of the Museum’s visitors were from outside of the United States from Countries such as Canada, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Russia, China, Japan, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Israel.

Thanks to the efforts of local businessman, George E. Staley and his family, the museum has grown into a major first rate tourist destination with over 200 classic cars, motorcycles and trucks on display in five connected buildings.

Robert M. Jeffrey, Executive Director of the Northeast Classic Car Museum, said “For the past 26 years the Northeast Classic Car Museum has expanded its physical footprint, quadrupled the number of vehicles on display, significantly increased the numbers of visitors to the museum and advanced its reputation as a world class museum. The museum would never have made it to our 26th Anniversary year if it was not for our donors, exhibitors, supporters, volunteers, staff and dedicated members of the Northeast Classic Car Museum’s Board of Trustees.”

Jeffrey added “Thanks to the late George Staley who made our museum possible and his sons, Jim Staley and Claude Staley, who continue the Staley family support of our wonderful museum.”

The NECCM completed a major façade improvement project in 2022 with the intention to be transformative, to help promote the museum’s image to visitors as a world class museum, and to reflect the automobile display that exists inside the museum.

Jeffrey said, “As a result of the completed façade project, the museum has seen record numbers of visitors the past two years, which was the ultimate goal of the façade project to generate increased visitor traffic.”

In 2023 there were 29 volunteers who generously donated over 5,400 hours of their time and energy to make the Northeast Classic Car Museum a great place to visit.

“The number one factor to the museum’s success is the level of dedication displayed by the volunteers, staff and the

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## The next evolution of The Silo is open and ready for business in 2024 -



The Silo Retreat received approximately \$140,000 worth of upgrades in its first year of operation including a new cabin, a new living room, and renovated bedrooms. According to the owners even more are planned for 2024. (Photos by Zachary Meseck)

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The Silo, and decided to call the former owner to see what they planned to do with it.

"We were looking to start our own business, but a big piece of this for both of us was that we wanted to make sure we honored The Silo's memory if we did purchase the property," he said. "Judy and I spent a lot of our time at The Silo, and we know how much it meant to the people who visited over the years."

"We have a memorial to The Silo in the dining area, and elements of what remained from the fire on display including some of the original dishes that survived the fire."

Hinman said his wife created

a business plan that focuses around The Silo Retreat acting as an event center. He added that they also offer short-term rentals for their remodeled carriage house and newly built cabin on Airbnb, vrbo, and booking.com.

"In total we put about \$140,000 into this project," said Hinman. "We hope to invest more as we grow, but it's important to us that we work with some of our community partners and build relationships with local businesses before we do that."

### Planning For The Future

When asked about the long-term plan for the business Judy Hinman said they hope to take things relatively slowly for now, but they want The Silo Retreat

to be an event center that leaves a great impression.

"We would like to build a new pavilion by the end of June so that way there is more covered seating space," said Hinman. "We have a lot of people calling about weddings and events - we have a tent which is lovely, but we would like to do more."

She said the plan is designed to allow for rentals throughout the year in addition to those special events.

"We have one cabin, and three bedrooms which can all be rented out separately if needed," she added. "We're also looking at finishing another cabin, and really expanding on the space as a whole."

She said the cabins will have access to an outdoor bathroom, and they are considering adding bunk beds for families if they want to stay during the summer.

"The biggest thing for us long-term is that we would really love to build connections with local businesses like Raymond. We want this to be a place where professionals can meet and host events - so we'd like to talk with businesses like them, and see what their needs are," she added.

Hinman said community connections could play a big role in the overall success and expansion of The Silo Retreat for future years. She added that another aspect they considered is how much of a role The Silo

played in the community, and what they can do to carry on that legacy.

"We're so grateful and honored to have Michelle Whitbeck back with The Silo Retreat," she said. "Michelle stopped by when we started renovating, and shared that she started gardening at The Silo in 1998."

"She asked if she could continue to work here, and we said yes absolutely."

Hinman said having Whitbeck on board helps them maintain the authenticity of the former business, while also helping them branch out and make the space their own. She said Whitbeck continues to help bring the outside back up to speed, and there are discussions

about recreating some of The Silo's iconic outdoor features.

### How to reserve your stay at The Silo Retreat

When asked about reservations, Hinman said they try to make everything as easy as possible so that people are able to enjoy the space hassle free. She said they also added safety features including coded doors to add another layer of safety for anyone during their stay.

She said for anyone interested in renting the space for an event, please call them directly at (607) 765-6507 or reach out via Facebook at The Silo Retreat.

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# The Place is shaping the future through youth support and services -

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the KIDS Program. This past year, The Place Teen Program Coordinator Julie Dealing spent several weeks with 19 Perry Browne Intermediate School third, fourth, and fifth graders for Girls on the Run.

Girls on the Run is a youth development program for girls in third through eighth grade that teaches empowerment, empathy, and positive self advocacy.

In addition to teaching these skills, Dealing, along with three other volunteer coaches, spent the season working with the girls to prepare for an end-of-season 5k in Oneonta. The Place Executive Director Sharon Vesely said around 500 girls and 200 community members registered to run in the event.

The group also spent the season learning about empathy and supporting others by working on a Community Impact Project. Dealing said the team decided to collect donations of non-perishable food items, which were given to the United Way of Mid Rural New York to be added to their blue cabinet – a publicly available cabinet of food for individuals in need.

The Place KIDS Program Coordinator Elizabeth Hathaway said their programs are shaping the future by instilling positive values in the youth they work with, while also helping to shape them into well-rounded individuals.

“While working with kids we are able to instill good morals, good values, we can give them coping skills, we can help them just really be productive members of society,” she said. “So that’s an investment in the future right there, because we’re



**The Place requires all students in the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to receive first aid and CPR training and certification. (Submitted photo)**

just helping the children to better the world, really.”

Dealing agreed, and said The Place’s Teen Program works to teach local teenagers how to better themselves and break out of cycles of generational trauma.

“[The] afterschool program every week gets social/emotional learning topics. Like [recently] with Martin Luther King Day, we talked about grassroots advocacy, what that means to be able to self advocate, individual advocacy, and assistance advocacy, and the different levels and how they can be a part of that, too. And that’s an ongoing lesson that we continue to talk about very regularly,” said Dealing.

“Our youth are our future, so if they don’t know how to do those things, if they don’t know how to advocate for themselves or their peers or their community, then those cycles are just going to keep happening,” she

continued. “So just really giving them the tools and the resources to really know what’s going on, being aware of what’s going on in your community, being aware of what’s going on on a statewide level, and giving them opportunities to be involved in some of those initiatives and some of those campaigns, and things like that.”

The Place’s Teen Program includes several programs each month that range from fun activities to educational opportunities. Programs in 2023 included movie nights, a teen photography program, classes on financial literacy, a holiday cookie exchange, Friendsgiving, cooking classes, mental health awareness, and many more.

In the past year, Dealing also recognized a gap in programming for local youth who aged out of the KIDS Program, but weren’t ready for the Teen Program. To make the transition from kid to teen easier, she

created the Big Kids Program and the Teen Life After School Program.

The Big Kids Program began last summer, and transitioned into the Teen Life After School Program for the school year, as a way to bridge the gap between programming for kids and teens at The Place. Hathaway said it was largely due to one KIDS Program attendee who was aging out and didn’t want to stop being a part of The Place environment.

“She didn’t want to not be a part of the environment we’ve created here at The Place. She loves it, she just wanted to continue being involved,” said Hathaway.

“She’s a big part of why I did the Big Kids Program over the summer to help bridge that, because we knew that she was going to be aging out and that she was having a lot of anxiety about that and she didn’t want to, so we were like well alright,

how can we help her?” Dealing added. “So she’s a big part of why Big Kids Program over the summer happened, and why the after school program is happening now.”

Dealing said youth in this program learn about topics like self management, self awareness, and social awareness, and have also helped to create a proposal to go on a field trip, and are exploring ways to fundraise and get other local youth involved in the program.

She also hopes to get more kids into her programs who may have traditionally adult responsibilities, such as working to help their parents pay the bills.

“We’ve already mentioned the generational trauma that our county experiences, so that goes along with the generational poverty and substance use, and these kids having adult responsibilities that they have to take care of. And that makes it really hard for them to come to programming when they have to go to work because they have to help their parents pay the bills,” she said. “That is a major challenge, at least for my program, because the transitional age, trying to get kids here when they are in survival mode, is really difficult. So that’s something we’re going to be looking for too: how do we get them out of that?”

Local teens are also given opportunities to get involved in their community through The Place’s Youth Philanthropy Council and Youth Advisory Council.

### Getting youth involved in the community

The Youth Philanthropy Council focuses on local nonprofits and philanthropic work.

Students from Chenango County school districts who participate in the council each year must complete volunteer hours, sit in on a nonprofit board meeting, interview nonprofits, and give a presentation to the rest of the council on a nonprofit of their choice.

Students also get a taste of fundraising in Youth Philanthropy Council. Vesely applies for a grant through the Community Foundation, which serves as a base amount in their “funding pot.” Then, the councils from each participating school district come up with plans for fundraising, and all money raised is added into the pot.

They then meet together to create a Request for Proposals (RFP), which local nonprofits can apply to for grant funding. Students review the proposals, and around the end of the school year they host a ceremony to award the grants.

“They can decide, when they go to do their RFP, if they want to concentrate on one specific need that’s in the community or if they want it to be a general RFP and any nonprofit can apply, no matter what needs they’re serving or what population they’re serving,” said The Place Youth Services Coordinator Breanne Heath. “They really go through the whole process from start to finish about giving up their time, and then obviously they’re not giving up their money, but they are fundraising and then going through that whole process.”

The Youth Advisory Council was first implemented in 2023. Vesely said the program was made possible through funding provided by the Louise

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# The Place is shaping the future through youth support and services -

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Burchard Pierce Memorial Fund (American Baptist Home Mission Society), the RC Smith Foundation, and through a contract with the Chenango County Department of Social Services.

Chenango County students aged 12 to 17 can join the council, which focuses on needs in the area and what resources can be promoted, supported, or implemented to help fill those needs.

Dealing said the Youth Advisory Council also gives local youth a voice and the chance to play an active role in their community.

"A youth advisory council is a council made up of youth and young adults so that way they can have a relationship with the adults within the system. In this case, this is a county-wide advisory council to help support the youth-serving programs within the county," Dealing explained. "I worked for an organization in the past where we had a youth advisory council, and basically their job was to make sure that me and my coworkers were working toward the goals that youth today thought were important."

She said participating students are currently working on creating resources for the community to raise awareness on teen substance use and healthy relationships for teens.

"They recognize generational trauma is a big factor in our community. So they are working really hard right now to create some of those resources to give to their friends and their peers at school, and then hopefully some of that information will trickle to their family members and community members and then it's hopefully just common knowledge," said Dealing.

"There's a lot of anxiety that goes into asking for help, especially in a small community," she continued. "So their goal is to have brochures and stuff so everything can just be right there, you don't necessarily have to start a conversation until you feel more comfortable knowing, 'alright, this is the person I need to talk to,' or 'this isn't normal, I know now this really isn't how it should be, so now I feel more confident in saying, okay, I do need help.'"

A future goal for the Youth Advisory Council is to reach more schools within the county. Dealing said ideally they would have students from every town

or village. As their numbers increase, she also hopes to start hosting the meetings in a different town each month. Students who can't attend in person are given the option to attend the meetings virtually.

"The goal is when we have more members for the council in neighboring towns that we'll actually rotate where we're meeting," she explained. "So it won't always be here in our conference room, it'll be like this month we're going to meet in Sherburne, next month we're going to meet in Afton, and really make sure that our members have the opportunity to meet in person as often as possible."

This is also a goal for the Teen Program, as transportation can often be a barrier preventing youth outside of Norwich to attend programming.

"Transportation is a huge factor, not only for adults, but for youth as well. Getting into Norwich for a babysitter class, or getting into Norwich for a Teen Program event. So it's important not just for us, but to our youth and community too to reach out and know that they're not forgotten about," said Vesely.

The Place staff is also working to get students involved in the community through their Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), which creates a partnership between The Place and local businesses and nonprofits to give Chenango County students the opportunity to gain work experience.

In the past, students have gotten summer jobs with The Place, the Chenango SPCA, the Chenango Greenway Conservancy, the City of Norwich Youth Bureau, the Cottage Bakery, Friends of Rogers, the Town of Bainbridge, the Town of New Berlin, Lamb's Quarters, United Way, Camp Fiver, the Chenango County Historical Society, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Chase Nursing Home, the Oxford Veteran's Home, and more.

SYEP is a state-funded program, and requires The Place to include an educational component. Vesely said participating students meet at The Place one day a week for educational days, where they cover topics such as financial literacy, sexual harassment, resume and cover letter writing, mock interviews, and substance use awareness programs through LEAF.

While it's not a state requirement, Vesely said all participating students also receive CPR and first aid training and certification.

### Community support

The Place continues to grow and improve so they can keep offering support and opportunities to the youth of Chenango County, and that task is made



**The Place's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provides job opportunities to Chenango County youth with local organizations and businesses. Part of the program is weekly educational days, where students learn about topics like financial literacy, resume and cover letter writing, and sexual harassment. Pictured, SYEP students are participating in a substance use awareness class from LEAF. (Submitted photo)**

easier by the overwhelming support of the local community.

In 2023, the organization completed building renovations that were funded by an anonymous donor. Vesely said the donation was provided before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and has allowed them to remodel their kitchen, replace carpeting and windows, install LED lighting throughout the building, and repaint all interior walls, which wrapped up in 2023.

Community partnerships will continue to be a focus for The Place this year. In 2023, the organization partnered with 69 other organizations, and Vesely said those numbers increase every year. These partnerships help The Place with programming, referrals for resources, summer youth employment opportunities, financial support, and more.

Vesely said United Way of Mid Rural New York has been a big supporter of The Place, as have local churches. Local businesses and organizations also support The Place through volunteering, such as GE/Unison, Alvogen, GHS, and Improve Norwich Now.

"When you live here and you grow up here, you pretty much know everybody and everybody knows you," said Dealing. "In most cases it's really good, because obviously it takes a village, and we're fortunate

proof in some way, and then posting them either on like a trail or a path, but outside in the community so children and their significant adult are outside reading, maybe doing some activities related to the book, getting some fresh air and exercise," Vesely explained.

She said their plan is to collaborate with the City of Norwich Youth Bureau to set up the paths, and her hope is to focus on a different book every six weeks. She also hopes to expand the program to other areas in the county, such as the Rogers Center in Sherburne.

The Place is also working on developing a childcare center for infants and toddlers under the age of three at the new Achieve facility located at 96-100 East Main Street in Norwich. The center would be able to care for 56 children and employ 10 to 17 staff members.

Vesely said The Place will spend 2024 securing funding to make the project happen, and hopes to get the project started by 2025.

"New York State just put out a capital project grant funding opportunity for childcare, so we are working with Commerce Chenango to submit an application for that. And we have some other things that we're working on to help that as well, the funding aspect. So that will be the big focus this year," she said.

In addition to outside organizations supporting The Place, The Place aims to continue to serve organizations and families in Chenango County.

To support other nonprofits, The Place held their second annual Nonprofit Showcase event at the SUNY Morrisville Norwich Campus on February 7. The event gave local nonprofits the opportunity to set up a table and educate community members and Youth Philanthropy Council members

on the work they do.

Events like these help spread the word about resources that are available in the county. Vesely said The Place also hopes to keep up with the needs of the area so they can provide additional supports and services.

"We try really hard as a team to just constantly be in tune with what the needs of the youth and families that we serve are. And that's changing, that's always changing. So we just try to keep on top of what's going on and if there's a need, you know, to come up with something," said Vesely. "Then it's my job to go out and make sure we have the funds to fill that need, and do our best to help the youth and families of our community."

Part of that is ensuring their existing programs can reach youth and families across the county. Dealing said she's planning to collaborate with other municipalities in Chenango County to be able to offer Teen Program services outside of their Norwich location.

Hathaway will be working to expand The Place's babysitter course outside of Norwich as well.

"We take teens 11 to 16 and I teach them how to properly watch children, how to do first aid and CPR. So one thing that we're planning this year is to not just do it in house, we're going to push out into the county more," she said. "I have one scheduled for Sherburne coming up, and then I've been reaching out to other places to see if we can schedule them there."

"We can't really think that the community, the county as a whole, is going to keep sustaining our youth if there's not a reason for them to be here," said Vesely. "We really need to reach out. So we're taking most of our shows on the road."




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# Business SPOTLIGHT

## Northeast Classic Car Museum

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museum’s Board of Trustees,” said Jeffrey.

The Northeast Classic Car Museum’s Exhibit Committee was busy in 2023 updating the museum’s exhibits in the Pre-War and Post-War exhibits as well as the new special exhibit “Motion from Across the Ocean” which features 26 foreign sports cars in all spanning from the early 1950s to the turn of the 21st Century.

For the first time in the museum’s history, visitors will experience an entire exhibit centered on cars from foreign countries. The exhibit features an assortment of iconic car brands from BMW, Porsche, Austin Healey, Triumph, MG, Jaguar and more.

Jeffrey stated, “The Motion from Across the Ocean Exhibit has some very rare and iconic foreign sports cars dating from the 1950’s to 2000’s. As long as the automobile has been in existence, people have wanted the top performing and fastest

vehicles; and with sport cars, people get fast and stylish vehicles.” said Jeffrey, “For the past 26 years, it has been a main focus of the museum to display American-made vehicles that detail the history of the automobile, so this foreign sports car exhibit is a first ever for the Northeast Classic Car Museum.”

This exhibit will be on display through April 2024.

The Northeast Classic Car Museum is focusing its marketing efforts in multiple ways: word of mouth from guests, brochures, TV, print, billboards, social media, and special events. The museum has expanded its brochure distribution into the Northern New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania markets as well as in the Catskill and Hudson Valley regions. However, the best form of promoting the museum is the 1-10-100 rule by word of mouth or social media. As a result of the great experience our guests receive from the volunteers when they visit the museum, they in return tell 10 of their friends and they each tell 10 of their friends.

This helps promote the museum and there are no marketing costs.

The NECCM is an educational facility dedicated to the collection, preservation, and exhibition of vehicles related to the evolution of transportation, with particular emphasis on the role of the automobile and its impact on American culture.

Additionally, it is the museum’s mission to impact positively on the local economy and promotion of the region by bringing visitors to the area.

The museum is open year round, seven days per week, except on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and Easter Sunday. The museum is on one level, is wheelchair accessible and scooters are available. If you would like more information about volunteering at the museum, call (607) 334-2886 or visit our website at [www.classiccarmuseum.org](http://www.classiccarmuseum.org).

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Golf carts have become a fun affordable way to  
get around. With the right golf cart accessories,

they can also become handy  
for performing work around  
the yard.



A Textron Company

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• Gas & Electric Available • New & Used  
We buy, sell and repair carts  
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# No matter what your project is, or what you need... the Curtis Lumber team is ready to help you!



## Norwich Store Customer Service Team

*From Left to Right:* Bob Walling, Joe Ward, Jamie Hill, Ray Winton, Richie Layman, Raushanna Sutton, Bob Moore, Shane Thompson, Tracy Edwards, Joe Bryant, John Jablonski, Kevin Kerr, Molly Montgomery.



### Contractor Sales & Service

**For Outside Contractor Sales**  
Contact Kevin Kerr: 607-335-4075  
or 315-750-2790 (cell)  
email: kevin.kerr@curtislumber.com

### For Inside Contractor Support

Contact Joe Ward:  
Office: 607-337-9322 ext. 6345  
or Cell: 607-437-6246  
email: Joe.Ward@curtislumber.com



### Kitchen & Bath Specialists

**Shane Thompson:** 607-793-5409 (cell)  
email: shane.thompson@curtislumber.com

**Jamie Hill:** 518-912-7759 (cell)  
email: jamie.hill@curtislumber.com

## We're easy to do business with!

Remember what good customer service is like? Curtis Lumber customers know the difference. That's what we do every day for every customer. Not sure why? Give us a try.

- **We strive to continually add new products and services to satisfy our customers needs.**
- **We have added more jobs to increase our customer service in all departments.**

Curtis Lumber offers premium products, superior lumber, tool and hardware variety, award winning design and delivery service, knowledge and a well trained customer service staff with the expertise to cater to both builders and homeowners.

## Fast & Easy Pickup / Delivery Service!



### NORWICH

48 Hale St. • (607) 337-9322

DELHI Route 10 • (607) 746-2386

FORT PLAIN 6236 NY-5S • (518) 993-5755

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NEW BERLIN 3106 Co. Hwy. 18. • (607) 847-6101

RICHMONDVILLE 1181 State Rte. 7 • (518) 519-2001

SIDNEY 101 Main St. • (607) 335-4170

WATERVILLE Corner Rtes. 12 & 20 • (315) 841-4111

[CurtisLumber.com](http://CurtisLumber.com)