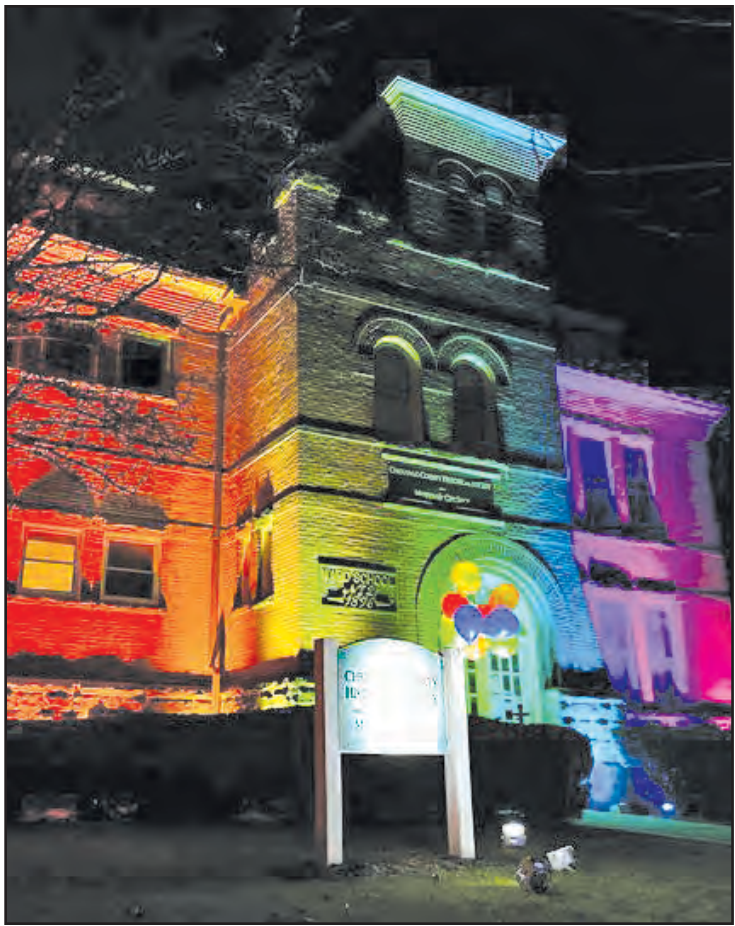


SUCCESS STORY



Birthday balloons and colored lights celebrate Ward School 2’s 125th anniversary. (Submitted photo)

To commemorate 125th anniversary of Ward School 2, CCHS will create short documentaries

*“All the adversity I’ve had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me. You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.” – Walt Disney*

NORWICH – When I first began my role as Executive Director of the Chenango County Historical Society nearly three years ago, I often shared how neat it was to me that Chenango County - specifically the city of Norwich - had a direct connection to Mickey Mouse, a character I’ve loved since I can remember. (Be sure to ask me more about this when you visit the museum!)

Anyway, besides loving Mickey Mouse, I’ve also been inspired by his creator, Walt Disney. While the current public health crisis has certainly been “a kick in the teeth,” one could argue that it might have just been “the best thing in the world” for our museum.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was predicted that 25% of museums in the United States might permanently close. Through strategic planning and creative programming, our team made sure that the Chenango County Historical Society did all we could to counter this discouraging forecast.

During this metaphorical “kick in the teeth,” we have been able to effectively transition our focus from being solely a curator of local history to becoming a community partner, an educational resource, and a regional destination. We developed many on-line and virtual opportunities, including an expansion of our social media initiatives, particularly via Facebook and YouTube. We created hybrid events, and we expanded our facilitation of outdoor programs. Extending our collaborations with Chenango County 4-H and Liberty Partnership allowed us to host new youth programs on our campus.

The 125th anniversary – or quasiquicentennial – of Ward School No. 2 prompted us to turn much of our attention to the care and well-being of this historic structure, which plays a vital role in accomplishing our mission. Early last year, we were awarded a grant by the Preservation League of New York State and its pro-

Continued on Page 37

Raymond Corporation emphasizes customer service as industry booms

By Shawn Magrath  
Sun Contributor

GREENE - Experiencing hiccups caused by the pandemic in the inventory supply chain, coupled with inflationary pressure of a rapidly expanding e-commerce market, the Raymond Corporation headquartered in Greene is forging ahead with its continued emphasis on customer service and meeting the demands of an industry that’s expected to grow roughly 50 percent in the coming year.

Raymond reported record volumes last year, and that’s certainly welcome news, according to company executives. But it also presents unique challenges for the company, being a core part of the logistics industry. Nonetheless, company spokesmen say Raymond is prepared to meet imminent challenges head-on in 2022 through strategic steps which include embracing new technologies, incorporating new training programs, and taking steps to fill the gap in the engineering and manufacturing workforce.



The Raymond Virtual Reality (VR) Simulator serves as a supplemental tool to assist in the education of new and existing forklift operators. (Submitted photo)

“Our industry (in 2022) is going to be 50 percent larger than it’s ever been,” said Raymond Senior Marketing Director Brian Howard.

Howard pointed to several structural changes accelerated by the COVID pandemic over the last two years, by and large a shift in purchasing behavior that favors the e-commerce market.

“If you order something online, somebody has to touch it,” he said. “It has to be picked and it has to be packed and it has to be shipped. It’s very likely that a Raymond product touched whatever you ordered online. It’s an incredibly essential part of the overall supply chain.”

The Raymond  
Continued on Page 36

Chenango Valley Home celebrates 125th anniversary in 2021



The “history club” at the Chenango Valley Home, residents Virginia Chaplin, Sylvia Hubbard, and Laura Hart, and CVH Board Member John Antonowicz. The group created an approximately 90-page book detailing the history of the organization in celebration of its 125th anniversary. (Photo by Sarah Genter)

By Sarah Genter  
Sun Staff Writer

NORWICH — The Chenango Valley Home (CVH) is a sprawling facility located at 24 Canasawacta Street in Norwich that has been serving the community for 125 years. First established in 1896, the home got its start as a center for orphaned children.

Over the years, the organization evolved to care for senior women. After 90 years of operating as a women’s home, CVH evolved once again to allow both male and female residents. Today, the nonprofit provides 30 private rooms and 12 independent living apartments at the facility, to allow for independent and assisted living to area seniors, according to Executive Director Jennifer Randall.

“A group of women in the community started the orga-

Continued on Page 38



## Continued from Page 35

Maintaining this focus has garnered national attention for Raymond over the last year. The company won ten awards in 2021, including the Forbes Best Midsize Company Award in the category of manufacturing and engineering. Its Greene plant was also spotlighted as the winner of the Manufacturing Leadership Award in the Operational Excellence



**A BOCES student participates in Raymond's Virtual Manufacturing Day event. (Submitted photo)**

"We're tremendously proud of what our people have accomplished, both in the pandemic as well as the impact they've had on the industry," said Raymond Executive Vice President Steve VanNostrand. "Our teams recognize how critical we are to the infrastructure of the country and the important role we play in e-commerce by moving products throughout North America. Our people have

Raymond saw record sales in 2021, bringing a record number of products to market by utilizing talent brought in from all over the country. Executives plan a continued investment in technology products in the future while simultaneously balancing the need for Raymond's core products. The goal? To help Raymond's

But reaching this goal isn't easy as Raymond confronts the same challenges in the labor market experienced by manufacturers nationwide. Management continues to conduct open interviews every Wednesday and Thursday at Raymond's headquarters in Greene in hopes of attracting more workers. Help is wanted in all fields, from manufacturing to engineering. The com-

While commitment and quality service remains at

"We truly are a much stronger company than we were two years ago, and I don't think we would be in the place we are if it wasn't for the challenges put in front of us," he said. "We will continue to build on strengths and successes we've had with people and products and helping our customers and communities."

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4-H participates in activities at Chenango County Historical Society. (Submitted photo)

## To commemorate 125th anniversary of Ward School 2, CCHS will create short documentaries —

**Continued from Page 35**

gram partners to support a Limited Building Condition Assessment, which was conducted by The Chazen Companies. To address all of the assessment’s recommendations, we put together an advisory task force which is helping to determine what our next steps toward historic preservation should be. It is our goal to ensure that this beloved local landmark is here for at least another 125 years!

To commemorate this milestone anniversary, we worked with Craig Creative Services to produce documentary-style video vignettes featuring interviews with former students of Ward

School No. 2. These interviews reveal just how important this structure is to the fabric of our community, and we encourage you to view this charming series on our YouTube channel. I have a feeling that we have only just begun to uncover the treasure trove of memories and stories this building has to share.

Over the last two years, the support from our community has been tremendous, with donations far exceeding anything we could have expected. Given that our collective circumstances have been so unpredictable lately, it is truly affirming to see so many generous financial investments in our mission.

We are supremely grateful for these contributions, which allow us the opportunity to share and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of Chenango County.

I encourage you to please visit us - at 45 Rexford Street, or on-line at [www.ChenangoHistorical.org](http://www.ChenangoHistorical.org) - and see just how the most recent adversity we have had has strengthened the Chenango County Historical Society. Hopefully you’ll find a little twinkle of Disney magic and inspiration when you do.

*Jessica Moquin*  
*Executive Director*  
*Chenango County Historical Society & Museum*



Liberty Partnership participates in activities at Chenango County Historical Society. (Submitted photo)



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## SUCCESS STORY

### 2021’s Not-for-profit Agency of the Year Lamb’s Quarters: Six years of teaching agriculture

PLYMOUTH — Lamb’s Quarters, Inc. was incorporated in 2015 and received its 501(c)3 status from the IRS as a charitable nonprofit.

It holds the d/b/a for Lamb’s Quarters Organic Farm, a 90 acre rehabilitation farm in Plymouth.

The farm was awarded “Not-for-profit Agency of the Year” in 2021 by Commerce Chenango for advocating and supporting local agriculture.

The nonprofit has no paid staff and is run 100 percent by volunteers, memberships, donations, and the small income from farm production — eggs, chicken, goose, lamb, goat, and produce.



Lamb's Quarters was the recipient of Commerce Chenango's Not-for-Profit Agency of the Year. (Photo from Lamb's Quarters Farm)

It sells its product at the public farmers market in Norwich, at the farm store, and through its CSA and home delivery programs.

Successes this past year include a grant from the Farmer Veteran Coalition for badly needed fencing upgrades, the donation of a 2005 Chevy Tahoe (in the nick of time to be able to pull a hay wagon from New Berlin to Plymouth several times for this winter’s supply of hay for the livestock), several interns who stayed in the guest quarters for weeks at a time, and a joy-filled lambing and kidding season.

Trainees and interns pay no fees for their training and can also work toward obtaining their own livestock at no cost.

There is a constant need for volunteer craftsmen to help train these future farmers in all areas such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical, mechanics, equipment operation, field crops, forestry, produce, etc.

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# Chenango Valley Home reaches 125th anniversary in 2021 —

Continued from Page 35

nization initially to have a home for orphaned children. And then as they grew their organization ... they changed their mission to take care of elderly women,” Randall explained.

“We have a licensed adult home, we have senior independent living apartments, and then we also have a social adult daycare,” she continued, speaking to the home’s amenities today.

The “adult daycare” is a day program through the Chenango Valley Home’s Adult Enrichment Center that aims to provide socializing opportunities for area seniors.

“Our Adult Enrichment Center, which is open to seniors who would benefit from socialization and supervision, continues to grow,” said Randall. “There is a wide variety of activities offered, as well as the opportunity for personal care if someone is in need. Services are offered hourly, half day, and full days.”

**COVID challenges**

Like many other organizations, the Chenango Valley Home had to adapt to the ever-changing restrictions and guidelines brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. While restrictions have eased since 2020, many of the adjustments have stuck around.

“We have been direct-

ly impacted with constant changes in requirements and guidance. Employee testing, vaccinations, staff and residents required to wear masks, vaccination requirements, and many changes in visitation protocols,” Randall explained. “Last year we were concerned with getting clinics to provide the vaccine to everyone. This year, [we’ll] work to keep everyone diligent in practicing the core principles, receive boosters, and keep focused as we are in a drastic surge of cases locally.”

Additionally, Randall said in the aftermath of the pandemic, CVH is dealing with a lack of staffing that’s seen in many other organizations and businesses.

“Current challenges include staffing. We, like most businesses, unfortunately have vacancies,” she said. “Our home is a nice place to work. We have a wonderful group of residents, staff that work together as a team, and a competitive benefit package. We’d welcome anyone who is interested in making a difference in the lives of our residents.”

Occupancy also declined at the home as a result of COVID-19 concerns. Many prospective residents chose to hold off on making changes to their living arrangements amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, according to Randall.

She added that government officials did not provide clear communication in regard to COVID-19 guidelines, further compounding the challenges the home was facing.

“The government unfortunately was not consistent or forthcoming with clear guidance. Hopefully this experience has given them an opportunity to be prepared in the future,” Randall said.

Despite the lack of clear directives from government organizations, Randall said local departments were a different story. She explained that the Chenango County Department of Health and the Chenango County Emergency Management team responded swiftly, and kept the home informed and stocked with supplies.

“Our local department of health has been very accommodating. Our local emergency management team responded very quickly at the beginning of the pandemic. They provided supplies and kept lines of communication open,” said Randall. “They are very supportive when they are most needed.”

Overall, the Chenango Valley Home did their very best to provide excellent care to their residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Randall said the staff at the home were instrumental in keeping everyone safe by maintaining safety protocols

and open communication.

“We have a caring team of dedicated individuals who were willing to assist in keeping our residents safe in any way they could,” she said. “Our policies and procedures were changed to deal with the additional protocols, and we tried our best to keep communication open.”

**Finding strength in adversity**

Although the pandemic presented unexpected challenges, Randall said that because of those challenges, the Chenango Valley Home is now better equipped to handle COVID-19 and other viruses.

“Our type of facility normally does not stock masks and other PPE, generally we might need masks if there is a flu outbreak. So, universal precaution training and overall preparedness has increased, and we are much better prepared in case of a viral disease,” said Randall.

In addition to this newfound strength, the Chenango Valley Home has also seen exciting new developments recently, including assessment of the buildings and the 125th anniversary of the organization.

“We are also investing in an assessment of our building structure as the first step toward advancing to an Assisted Living Residence Licensure, which will allow us to provide a higher level

of care for our residents,” Randall said.

In celebration of the 125th anniversary, CVH board member and Chenango County Deputy Historian John Antonowicz and CVH residents Virginia Chaplin, Sylvia Hubbard, and Laura Hart started what is best described as a history club. The group researched the history of the Chenango Valley Home organization and their facility, and created a 90-page book detailing their findings.

Efforts began in 2019 and, after a brief hiatus due to the pandemic, the book was completed in the fall of 2021.

“The idea was that we then would have it ready at the beginning of this year for the anniversary. Well, needless to say our lives were changed like everybody else’s,” said Chaplin. “So we had a hiatus where we weren’t writing it, and then we felt that we could manage to have it published in the year. So it’s coming out at the end of the anniversary year instead of the beginning.”

Former board members and employees, CVH Executive Director Jennifer Randall, former CVH Director Vivian Hooks, the Chenango County Historical Society, the Chenango County Historian’s Office, and Guernsey Memorial

Library also contributed to the project.

While the book was not started as a way to keep busy during the pandemic, it ended up serving that purpose in addition to being a fun and informative project.

“For me, I think it was a very therapeutic experience, given that it all took place during the pandemic. And I felt that I got to know the people I was working with better than I did before, and I felt that that was a great bonus, as well as producing something that I think will be interesting for the community to have,” said Chaplin. “We have been here 125 years, which is a long time, where people have been looked after carefully when they’ve needed it, and I think that that’s important.”

Initially, the group only met once a month. But, as work began in earnest on the book, their meetings happened more frequently, until they were getting together several times a week to make sure it was completed by the end of the anniversary year.

“To start, about once a month. And then we started doing every other week, and then every week, and then two and three times a week at the end to make sure we got it done,” said Antonowicz. “This has been ... the most enjoyable, because every week we’d

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Continued from Page 38

find something. You know, cause I'd give them papers or I'd have papers, and we'd go through them and we'd always find something. We all have something I think we really liked."

Copies of the Chenango Valley Home history book are full of color photos, intriguing history, and several interesting stories about life at CVH and its development over the years. Copies are \$15 each, and can be ordered by calling 607-334-6598, or online at [chenangovalleyhome.square.site](http://chenangovalleyhome.square.site).

**Moving forward**

Moving past the height of the pandemic, CVH has some plans in store for 2022, including continued efforts to recruit additional staff, assessment of their buildings, and more projects from the history club.

"They basically have formed a history club, and they plan to assist the Historical Society with some of their projects that they have," said Randall.

"Local histories, yeah, that's our plan in the future," Antonowicz added. "I don't know if it'll be a book or what we'll end up doing, but research and get the information available. Cause it's been a lot of fun, and we didn't really want it to finish."

Randall also expressed her gratitude to the donors who have contributed to the home. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit



The Chenango Valley Home was established in 1896. It was first meant to be a home for orphaned children, and later became a women's home, and today it serves as a senior living facility. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

organization, the Chenango Valley Home relies on donations to keep their services affordable for their residents.

"Our mission is to serve the seniors of our community with premier services," she said. "Through the generosity of our donors, we are able to offset our expenses which allows us to provide quality services at a reasonable cost to residents."

For the Chenango Valley Home, maintaining top quality care and service to their residents is the number one priority. Even through

the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff at CVH were able to provide that same level of care their residents know and love.

"Having been here for four years, it couldn't be any better," said CVH resident and history book contributor Laura Hart. "There's not one thing that they don't do well. Everything is spotless, the help is very agreeable. Everything about this place is perfect as far as I'm concerned."



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