

VE QUARTERLY

Free

A Village Engaged Magazine

Free



FALL 2025

ISSUE NO. 1

Engaging the Village of Hamburg, NY and Beyond

Village ENGAGED

Empowering Neighborhood Growth, Action,
Goals, Empathy & Dignity

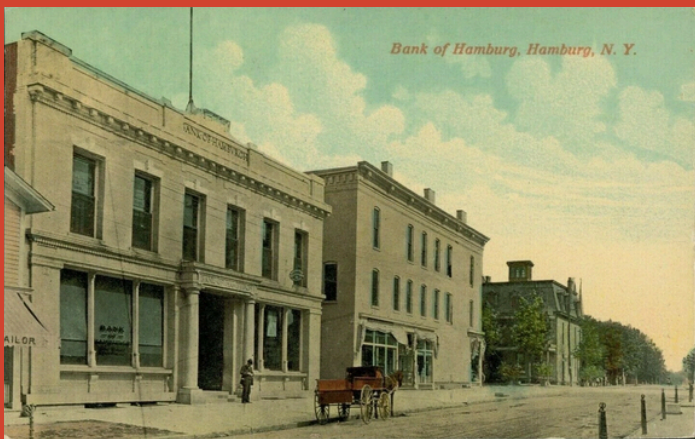


WHO WE ARE: The VE Mission

We believe that our differences are our strengths and that working in harmony is humanity's natural state. We defend that all humans desire security, respect, and to be seen. Our mission is to build and maintain a community where everyone feels welcome to thrive, using age-old tools of connection and compassion.

- **Education**, so factual information can crowd out misinformation
- **Communication**, so we can build relationships within our community and remember that humans are all inherently good
- **Recreation**, so that we can feel the joy of our work
- **Philanthropy**, so we can carry as we climb
- **Ceaseless curiosity**, so that we never stop to judge, but instead understand

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A PROPER FAREWELL

BY HOLLY PARK

VE BOARD PRESIDENT EMERITUS

First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to lead such an amazing nonprofit. It has been an absolute honor to lead this team for the past 2 1/2 years. I have grown both personally and professionally during my time and will cherish the memories and experiences I have made. I am so very proud of the accomplishments we have achieved as a team.

We have successfully empowered people, Improved neighborhood growth by teaming up with other community groups and the THRIVING community

clothing closet, action by stepping up with our Rapid Response team when there is a need. Setting goals for our mental wellness by creating space for our programming for youth, postpartum groups, and more. Education with our community events and dignity by building an atmosphere of acceptance, where people feel comfortable being their true selves. Anyone is welcome to come to our free programs, no judgment.

I want to thank every one of you for your hard work, and the unconditional love that will remain with all of you, but especially the core founding members. When we sat around multiple fires, we started this full of passion, determination, love, and a whole lot of ideas. We did this together and have built something beautiful and I love how we don't have to fit in a box. I truly feel we are the heart of this community, we represent real people and create space for those who need to connect.

I am confident Village ENGAGED will thrive under the new leadership with Anna. I have faith in the capable hands of my successor, who I am sure will bring fresh ideas and new strategies to bring this organization to new heights.



Message From The Prez

By: Annamaria Masucci, VE Board President

It feels rather peculiar to pen the inaugural Letter from the President for the Village Engaged newsletter, especially since I am not the first to hold this esteemed title. While I typically refrain from speaking on behalf of others, I believe the entire VE committee would join me in expressing our heartfelt gratitude to Holly Park, the former VE President and one of the many luminous founding members.

What I admire about Holly is her remarkable ability to create environments where individuals can authentically be themselves, which embodies the true essence of Village Engaged. It serves as a space and community for those who may feel isolated. Whether you're seeking like-minded individuals or wish to gain insights into different perspectives, VE invites you to join us at our table.

We offer a variety of events and resources, including our Community Closet, Youth Village Engaged programming, educational Community Discussions, the whimsical Sh*tty Craft Club, and many more exciting offerings on the horizon. Our intention is to continually foster an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels welcome, experiences joy, and feels seen.

Village Engaged emphasizes the strength of connection within a community. We aspire for you to experience this sense of belonging as you enter our space or interact with one of our members. Happy May, y'all! I hope this month brings us warmer temperatures, sunshine on our faces, vibrant flowers, and a deeper awareness of mental health.

COMMUNITY CLOSET

FALL IS HERE!

Autumn is upon us, and the closet is bursting with fall fashions for everyone! We're thrilled to offer top-notch threads that bring dignity and respect to our community, all thanks to the big-hearted folks showering us with donations. Kindness and love are the real MVPs in these ever-changing times, so let's keep the support train rolling!

A SPECIAL PLACE

Our Community Closet is a magical, donation-powered wonderland, offering outfits at zero cost! To keep the style flowing for all, we ask you to limit selections to 1 bag per visit.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

We're all about in-season goodies like clothes, shoes, and purses. Remember, the bin outside the church isn't ours—it belongs to another organization, so drop your treasures with us to keep our clothing closet rockin'!

NEW POLICY: 1 bag of clothing per visit/per person

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TO GIVE IS TO RECEIVE

Got some fashion treasures to share? Swing by during our Open Shops and we'll gladly welcome your gently loved garments into our collection. When donating, please ensure your fab fashion finds are clean and in tip-top shape.



Visit our site for
store hours



The Magic of VE

By Mallory Russo-Gang, VE
Board Member



Margaret Wheatley said, “There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.” That quote has stuck with us from the very beginning and it’s something we see in action all the time at Village ENGAGED. When we were first getting started, we’d gather around kitchen tables, in backyards,

dreaming out loud about what Village ENGAGED could be. There were a lot of ideas, a lot of scribbled notes, and probably too much cheese. But one thing was clear: we wanted to create a space where people could come to discover what matters most to them. A place where people see the best in each other and in themselves.



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Since then, we’ve had the privilege of watching that dream come to life. We’ve met people who walked through our doors not sure where to start, and ended up leading projects, building connections, and making real change. We’ve seen neighbors show up for each other in quiet ways and bold ones. And we’ve realized something important: Village ENGAGED isn’t just an organization. It’s a living, breathing community.

It doesn’t belong to a board or a few founders. It belongs to everyone who brings their heart and hands to the work. Watching our community take ownership of this space, and make it theirs, has been one of the most rewarding parts of the journey.

We’re grateful every day to be part of something that’s rooted in care, connection, and collective action. We truly believe we can’t do anything alone. But together? There’s no limit to what we can create.

SH*TTY CRAFT CLUB

What is Sh*tty Craft Club? **By Kami Callahan**

Technically it is a book by Sam Reese and a club she started in NYC. I found the book at one of our local libraries and fell in love! We always offered activities for kids but we quickly learned that adults need time to create with no pressure also. I contacted Sam and we have her permission to start our own club.

The point of SCC is to use what we can gather at home and have fun. The crafting is kept simple so that we can relax our brains. Feel like making a button flower? A noodle frame? A collage of playing cards? Then come join us for an evening of acceptance and crafting fun with a side dish of just the right amount of chaos!

We meet on the last Friday of each month from 6-8 p.m. in our Village Engaged space.

Sh*tty Craft Club

Last Friday of the month | 6:00-8:00 pm
18+ are invited for a fun Friday night!



Feature Craft



**Village
ENGAGED**

Empowering Neighborhood Growth
Action, Goals, Empathy & Dignity
www.villageengaged.com

The Quarterly Wellness Tip: How to Calm Anxiety

By Beth Licata Cooke, VE Board Member



Anxiety is a normal part of the human experience. Most of us feel some form of anxiety from time to time. It can help to understand that the human experience is layered, and that we are more than just busy minds. The symptoms of anxiety (elevated heart rate, rumination, exhaustion, disconnection, insecurity, etc.) can show up in our physical, mental, energetic and emotional experiences. The following are some of my favorite ways to address anxiety within those different layers.

Managing anxiety in our physical experience

- 1.) Hard candy. The flavor of a peppermint can focus our senses.
- 2.) A tight, long hug. Get wrapped up in an embrace and breathe.
- 3.) Pet your pet. Feel their calm and invite joy into your experience.

4.) Cold! A cold shower, ice on your neck, or a splash on your face can reset an anxiety response.

5.) Move. Put on a song and dance! Hop. Shake. Move your bones!

Dealing with anxiety through our pranic (energy) experience

- 1.) Note the temperature of the air in the nostrils on the inhale and the exhale.
- 2.) Inhale slowly through the nose, and slowly exhale through the mouth like you are blowing out candles.
- 3.) 5 rounds of breathing deeply into the belly and releasing completely.
- 4.) Scan the energy centers (crown, forehead, throat, heart, navel, low belly, base of spine) and relax into any spaces of tightness.
- 5.) Moving and breathing. Help energy flow more fluidly by lifting arms on the inhale and releasing them on the exhale.

Quick ways to work with anxiety in our wisdom/ intuition experience

- 1.) Write down an intention for the next 10 minutes
- 2.) stand up and take 10 little hops, shake your hands like there are no paper towels in a public bathroom
- 3.) Wash your hands and then apply a hand lotion that you like to them. Try not to rush it.
- 4.) Write down something that feels like a falsity, or burden. Tear it up or throw it away.



141 Pine Street, Hamburg, NY 14075

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Beth@villageyogaWNY.com

Working with anxiety in our experience of divinity/ love and connection

- 1.) Place your hand on your heart and breathe. Notice the life force moving under your hand.
- 2.) Say a short prayer
- 3.) look or go outside
- 4.) Be silent and still



YOUTH VILLAGE ENGAGED

Village ENGAGED celebrated the conclusion of our 3rd annual Summer Arts Initiative (SAI) on Friday, August 22nd. With the SAI program, youth age 13-18 selected a class of their choosing and attended 5 evening sessions throughout the Summer that ended with a celebration Showcase of their creativity and talent. Class options included topics like art, creative writing, Dungeons & Dragons and an actual band (named the Solar Frantic's). We are grateful to Legislator John Gilmore for sponsoring our Summer Arts Initiative!

SAI is a summertime extension of our Youth Village ENGAGED (YVE) program. The YVE program has historically been offered during the school months (September through May) for youth ages 13-18 and included an art or Dungeons & Dragons session and a band session once per month. Both our SAI and YVE have been free for participants thanks to our incredible community and sponsors.

Stay tuned to our socials to see what is in store for our youth program offering this Fall!

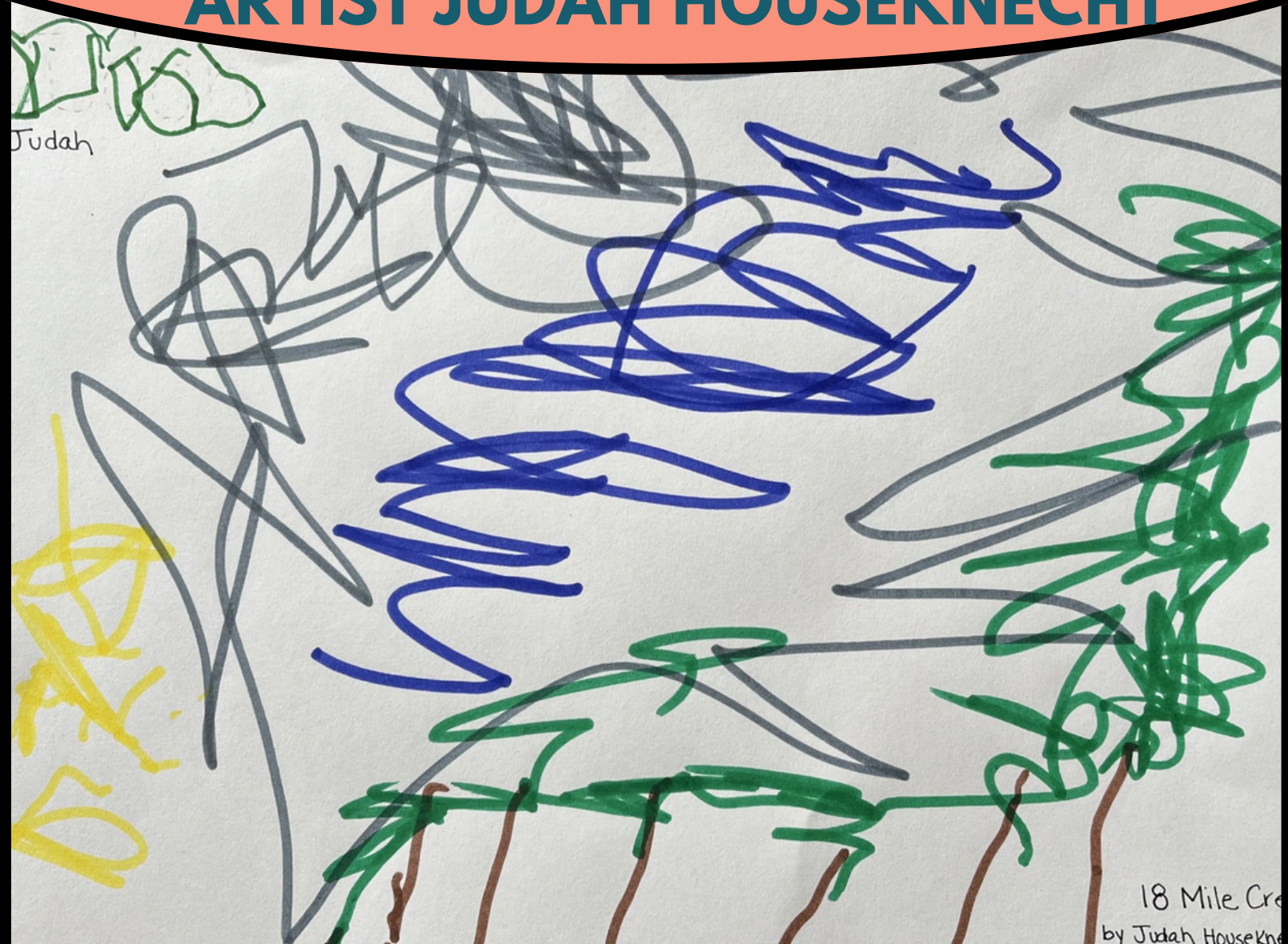


Visit our website for
UPCOMING YVE EVENTS



PEOPLE PAGE

ARTIST JUDAH HOUSEKNECHT



Judah Houseknecht, age 3, says that **one of his favorite things about Hamburg is the 18 Mile Creek.** This talented artist and lifelong resident advises that the area right across from St. Peter & Paul's is especially fun to explore

KNOW AN ARTIST WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT? **DO TELL!**
VILLAGEENGAGEDWNY@GMAIL.COM

PEOPLE PAGE

POET MONTY COOKE

'We Forget Our Mother'

I've heard that we were formed from clay,
And baptized in river, creek, and stream,
And dew drops graced our fragile skin,
And language was learned from whispers of wind,
But prisoned in oil and captured by greed,
We're stolen from our mother.

I am bound to oblige to the wails of my mother,
As from her nature they found my clay,
But I was nurtured to plunder and greed,
I steal and I take, though my nagging tears stream,
And I forgot how to listen to the comforts of wind,
And I don't recognize my skin.

I tear sapwood from bark, like muscle from skin,
And a fawn watches me until she's hid by her mother,
Then the pair leave, through the trees they wind,
Striking ground with hoof, the doe condemns my clay,
Yet it is the same as the clay from the stream,
Just tainted and distorted by greed.

With the bark on the ground I still hunger and greed,
So I turn from the tree and I pull at my skin,
And the flesh that I tear falls into the stream,
And I am unworthy of this gift from my mother,
And I hope that the skin will return to the clay,
And my breath returns to wind.

In this clouded haze, my ear catches the wind,
It urges I forget my addiction to greed,
Greed too, can become as foreign as clay,
With ease, I'd forgotten that she birthed my skin,
And if I was convinced to abandon my mother,

I can let this unnatural greed slip down the stream.
So I crouch to the stream and I molt from my greed.
And when I feel the wind caress my skin,
I hear mother sing and she calls to my clay.

Poetry Spotlight



Monty is an English Education major at SUNY Fredonia and the regular host of Village Engaged Poetry Slams and Open Mic nights.

A favorite thing about Hamburg for Monty is Comfort Zone beverages.

Keep your eye out for one of Monty's upcoming events!

Hey, poets! **WE WANT YOU!**
Let us know if you've got original work for an upcoming edition of VE Quarterly!
villageengagedwny@gmail.com

PEOPLE PAGE

RECIPE RESOURCE CATHERINE HOEPFINGER



Catherine has been a resident since 1983.

What she likes most about Hamburg is:

- 1. that it is a friendly community**
- 2. it is very walkable**
- 3. is has a great farmer's market**
- 4. it is home to great restaurants, and**
- 5. it's close to Lake Erie and Chestnut Ridge.**

Catherine's Granola Recipe

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large pyrex bowl.

6 cups whole rolled oats (I do not use quick oats.)

1 cup unsweetened coconut

¾ cup roasted, unsalted sunflower seeds

¼ cup unsalted pumpkin seeds

1 cup chopped nuts

(Any combo that you like: I use chopped almonds and chopped pecans)

2 teaspoons cinnamon

Mix the wet ingredients together in a glass jar or 2 cup measuring cup.

½ cup/4 ounces oil

(I prefer almond oil but any nut oil is fine.) (Do not use olive oil.)

(Place the oil in the jar first: The mixture will flow out easier.)

¾ cup/6 ounces honey

(Soften the honey in the microwave for a few seconds if necessary.)

2 teaspoons vanilla

Mix the wet ingredients well and pour over the dry ingredients.

Mix the dry ingredients as you pour the oil/honey into the mixture.

You want to distribute the coating as best you can.

There are 2 options for cooking the granola. (I prefer option 1. It takes longer but it is easier to stir.)

Option 1: Place the glass bowl in the oven on the middle rack.

Cook for ~25 minutes at 350 degrees.

Remove from the oven and stir.

Cook for ~ another 16 minutes.

Remove from the oven and stir again.

Cook for ~ another 8-10 minutes.

Option 2: Spread the mixture into a shallow 12x14 broiler pan.

Cook for ~18-20 minutes at 350 degrees.

Remove from the oven and stir well with a spatula.

Cook for ~ another 12 minutes.

Cool completely before placing into a storage container.

You can eat it by the handful, as cereal, in yogurt or in pancakes

PEOPLE PAGE

CHUCK HEROD'S SWEET RIDE



Chuck says: We have been Hamburg residents for 20 years.

We simply love Hamburg and pinpointing one thing about Hamburg that I love is difficult. I truly enjoy the entire community.

Chuck's car is a 1965 Cadillac Eldorado

HAVE YOU SEEN A GREAT CAR AROUND TOWN?

LET US KNOW!

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PEOPLE PAGE

PHOTOGRAPHER HANNAH VENNING



Hannah Venning is studying visual arts and English at Fordham Lincoln Center. HV says,

“I love public libraries, vintage clothes, dying my hair, and film photography. This photo was taken at 18 Mile Creek, and it features my best friend in one of her favorite spots. One of my favorite things about Hamburg is the plethora of scenic swimming spots it has to offer”



FANCY A FEATURE PHOTO? VILLAGEENGAGEDWNY@GMAIL.COM

PEOPLE PAGE

BIRDIE & HER HUMANS ERIN & DAN SELIG



Birdie is a 9-month old Red Heeler mix rescue who made her way up from Texas in December 2024. Birdie loves everything about living in Hamburg, even the snow! She can be found adventuring around Hamburg on walks and runs with her humans in the village, on canoe trips in the 18-Mile Creek, at great events like Pride in the Park, on hikes at Little Rock City, and making friends wherever she goes.



Birdie is truly a Hamburg dog about town. She is seen here enjoying the snow, chilling at Fattey's, sharing a laugh with Erin and Dan Selig at Burgerfest, and being awarded Top Dog in training class at Ruff Relations. Birdie's the best!

PEOPLE PAGE

MUSIC LOVER PETE PROHASKA



WHAT PETE'S LISTENING TO:
'PLAYING CLASSICS' BY WATER FROM YOUR EYES

WHY HE'S LISTENING:
"IT RIPS. NEW RECORD JUST CAME OUT."

A FAVORITE THING ABOUT HAMBURG:
"SUPER BIKEABLE/WALKABLE"

**COME PARTY
WITH PETE ON
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SECOND ANNUAL

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OCT.
18

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HAMBURG

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PM

DANCING | FUN

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GOT A SONG RECOMMENDATION?
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PEOPLE PAGE

DAD JOKER BRIAN MACDONALD



Brian asks:

WHAT DO YOU CALL AN ANGRY CARROT?

A STEAMED VEGETABLE!

About this edition's Dad Joker:

One of Brian's favorite things about Hamburg is it is very walkable. Brian says, "You can take a different stroll every week (if not day) of the year. Take the dog and grab a coffee along the way."

Pictured here is Brian and his dog Emma.

**GOT A GREAT DAD JOKE? IS IT A REAL KNEE SLAPPER?
TELL US ALL ABOUT IT! [VILLAGEENGAGEDWNY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:villageengagedwny@gmail.com)**

A photograph of a large, two-story brick house with a gabled roof. Overlaid on the image is a circular logo with the text "Roofs by Bryan .com". Below the logo, the following text is displayed:

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A historical black and white illustration of a large, multi-story hotel building with many windows and a central tower. The text "KOPP'S HOTEL" is visible on the building's facade. In the foreground, there are horse-drawn carriages and people. At the bottom of the illustration, the text "KOPP'S HOTEL, Hamburg, N.Y., GEO. KOPP, Proprietor." is written.

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COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

The community discussions are a magical part of the Village ENGAGED experience. In the past we have had speakers talk about serious things, such as how to manage your inner critic, how to safely navigate a traffic circle, how to tune in to your intuition, and how to calm yourself down in stressful parenting situations. We have also had super fun connection opportunities such as belly dancing and free retreats. The spirit behind the community discussions is to take the screen away, and bring back the face to face. Let's learn together, let's play together, let's talk to one another! One of the most powerful tools we have is each other!

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PLEASE REACH OUT TO
BETH@VILLAGEYOGAWNY.COM IF YOU
HAVE AN IDEA FOR A COMMUNITY
DISCUSSION!

Community Discussions are hosted at
Village Yoga & Wellness (VYW)
141 Pine St. Hamburg, NY 14075

It Takes A Village Postpartum Support Circle



VYW is also the home of the It Takes a Village Postpartum Support Circle. Join facilitators Carly Story, Taylor Licata, and Kailey Kolanaros for a safe non-judgmental space where moms can connect, feel truly heard, relieve stress, sharpen skills, and build community. This group is led by moms who believe in the power of peer support, authenticity, and community connection. Come build the circle with us! It takes a Village!

Check our website for upcoming events



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING VE

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED & STAY CONNECTED!

- **Attend VE Events**
- **Bookmark our website**
villageengagedWNY.com
- **Follow us on social media,**
and like, share, and
comment!
- **Volunteer!**
- **DONATE!**
- **Contact us today!**



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