



# Sherman Central School

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October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Ms. Karen Utz, Regional Director REDC  
95 Perry St., Ste. 500  
Buffalo, NY 14203

RE: VILLAGE OF SHERMAN - NY FORWARD GRANT APPLICATION ROUND 3

Dear Ms. Utz

As a lifelong resident of the Village of Sherman, elementary teacher at Sherman Central School for 26 years, and volunteer member of The Stanley Hose Company since 1993, I am writing this letter in full support of the Village of Sherman's NY Forward Grant application aimed at revitalizing this quaint little village.

The Village of Sherman is a place of profound personal significance to me, having been my family's home for nearly 80 years. Four generations later, my family has watched this community evolve, from one focused on dairy farming to become a village focused on economic, educational, and recreational opportunities for families and residents of all ages. I am thrilled that the village is applying for the NY Forward funding which, if awarded, would expedite and ensure the successful restoration of empty, aging buildings; create additional housing to support the growing, diverse community; improve the multi-use trail and upgrade recreational space; among other smaller yet equally beneficial projects.

As a schoolteacher and father of a special needs child, I am partial to the development of the We Rock the Spectrum – Sherman sensory gym as it will provide a safe environment for children of all abilities to learn and play together. Funding from NY Forward will expedite the opening of this anchor project, benefiting my family and families from all over Chautauqua County. The location of the gym along the Chautauqua Rails to Trails, and proposed Autism Trail will be mutually beneficial to all, drawing more residents and visitors to Sherman.

I am very supportive of the restoration and reuse of the many empty buildings, the preservation of our heritage at the French Creek Yorker Museum, the trail development, upgrades to the Minerva Free Library, and the creation of additional living spaces through mixed-use buildings and new developments. I believe these projects will all aid the stimulation of economic development and instill a renewed sense of pride in our village.

I give my full support of this application to NY Forward, and respectfully request that you consider awarding the Village of Sherman this critical funding. Such an allocation would provide a catalyst for the transformation and regeneration of this rural community.

Respectfully,

Joel Fisher – Sherman Central School

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Mrs. Leslie Melquist • PK-12 Principal  
Mrs. Ann M. Morrison • Director of Pupil Services &  
Data/Grant Coordinator

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