

Chittenango

BY JOEY PAGANO

Yellow brick sidewalks line Genesee Street in Chittenango, each brick a tribute to Chittenango-born author L. Frank Baum, who wrote the series of books that served as the foundation for the “Wizard of Oz” film and musical. Although the iconic film is entrenched in village life, the area is much more than that. The completion of the Erie Canal led to the growth of the village in the 1800s, and it has evolved into a quiet suburb elevated by its engaged residents.



SHOP LOCAL

Florist **Olive Branch** also offers gift items and Chittenango-themed merchandise. Spruce up your landscaping with shrubs, plants and mulch from **Sorbello's Gift & Garden**, which brings in decor and local food products such as Ontario Orchards cider. Find fresh corn, tomatoes, seasonal fruit and milk at **Durfee's Stand at Tuscarora Dairy**. Looking for a bargain, try newly opened **Yellow Brick Thrift** or head north to **Monkey See Monkey Do It Again Thrift Store**; proceeds benefit **Kirkville Animal Rescue and Education**. Start your home maintenance project at **McGowan's Hardware**. In addition to a variety of floor coverings, **CNY Flooring** installs custom tile showers and backsplashes. Pick up something for a special someone at **Chittenango Jewelers**.

GRAB A BITE

Snag a sandwich, burger or daily special for lunch during the work week from **DeMario's Eatery**. Feeling extra hungry? Dig into a super quesadilla at **La Cocina**. Check out **New China King** for Chinese favorites. For pasta and specialty pizzas, go to **Nina's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant** or check out **Buck's Pizzeria's** full menu. Head to **Fat Bottom Grills** for big breakfasts and to take advantage of their outdoor dining. **Maple Leaf Market** has regional and local food items, plus a large selection of Turning Stone Grab & Go food. Fuel up with breakfast pizza, sandwiches and loaded fries from **Lakeport Market**. Satisfy your sweet tooth at **The North Pole** (and stay tuned for the attached **Serendipity Café** opening soon) or **Dad's Ice Cream**.



Above, breakfast at Fat Bottom Grills, a pop-culture themed restaurant.

HAVE A DRINK

Darlene's Kitchen is the local spot to gather for hot coffee and a great breakfast or lunch. (If you go during the school year, you may experience a breakfast theme based on books that local elementary school students are reading.) Stop into **Ten Pin Restaurant and Tavern** to savor cold drinks and pub fare. **Chittenango Discount Liquor & Wine** offers frequent tastings.

PHOTOS BY DAVID LASSMAN, JARED PAVENTI



ANNUAL EVENTS

In spring, the Chittenango Garden Club holds a **garden tour and plant sale** selling annuals and perennials grown from their own gardens. Cast your line in the **Chittenango Lions' Walleye Derby**. **Oz-Stravaganza** — the village's largest event of the year — features a carnival, writing and costume contests, a special showing of "The Wizard of Oz" and fireworks set to music from the movie. Throughout the summer, **Tuesdays at the Park** brings everyone together for live music, classic cars and local vendors. Join the **Tour the Towpath** bicycle ride along the Old Erie Canal. The fall **artisan festival** is a craft market with food trucks, face painting and music. Put on a Halloween costume and your running shoes for the **Eerie Canal Run**. The **Halloween Shop Small** event includes a festival at the Botanical Park followed by trick or treating at local businesses. Around the holidays, get in the spirit with shop local events such as the garden club's **holiday bazaar**, the **village tree lighting** and a **holiday decorating contest** where residents' creativity shines.



Left, attendees in costume during the Oz-Stravaganza. Above, giraffes at The Wild Animal Park, and Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum.

THINGS TO DO

The **All Things Oz Museum** celebrates the life and work of L. Frank Baum, best known for the Wizard of Oz books. Step into the past at the **Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum** to experience the life-size canal boat replica, interact with a blacksmith and learn more about the canal's importance to our area. Bring your children and the young at heart to the **Lions Botanical Park Fairy Garden**. The **Sullivan Free Library** offers passes to local parks and attractions. Animal lovers can meet the wildlife at **The Wild Animal Park**, book a private animal encounter or enjoy the drive-through safari. Try your luck at the **Yellow Brick Road Casino** or hit the bowling lanes there. Get a massage at **Healing Hands of CNY** or receive a holistic wellness treatment at **Allmond Wellness**. The **Sullivan Community Council** organizes a variety of fitness classes throughout the year, put on by **Chittenango Fitness**.

GET OUTSIDE

Follow the **Yellow Brick Road sidewalk** around for a self-guided tour of the village. Enjoy the **Creek Walk** which follows Chittenango Creek to the southern end of the village near the Village Acres neighborhood. By the end of the year, the village will complete the connection between the Creek Walk and the Erie Canal. Visitors can also enter Chittenango by biking or walking in from the **Erie Canal Trail**. Fly fish on **Chittenango Creek**, which features public access spots and a wheelchair accessible fishing platform behind the downtown stores. There is an area dedicated to those learning about fly fishing. Launch your kayak at the **Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum** to paddle the canal. Take advantage of outdoor amenities including playgrounds, pavilions, tennis, volleyball, bocce, baseball diamonds, and a skate park at village green spaces **Sullivan Park**, **Community Recognition Park**, **Stooks Park**, **Legion Fields**, **Kirschenheiter Park**, **Stickles Park** and **Dr. West Memorial Park**. It's only a quick 20-minute drive to enjoy **Oneida Lake**.

"We have a great community that is super supportive and seems to be growing... it makes us excited for the village's future."

Tom Sorbello, general manager, Sorbello's Gift and Garden