



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Buffalo & Erie County Public Library branches honored with two \$10,000 Gifts from Carnegie Corporation of New York**

*Lackawanna Public Library, the system's last original Carnegie building, and Hamburg Public Library recognized for their shared Carnegie heritage as part of [Carnegie 250](#) Initiative.*

**LACKAWANNA, N.Y. – March 3, 2026** – The Lackawanna Public Library and Hamburg Public Library have each received a \$10,000 gift from Carnegie Corporation of New York as part of Carnegie Libraries 250, a special initiative celebrating America's 250th anniversary and honoring the approximately 1,280 Carnegie libraries still serving communities nationwide.

The recognition is particularly meaningful for Lackawanna Public Library. Built in 1922, it is one of the last Carnegie libraries constructed and the only original Carnegie library building in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's 37-branch network across Erie County. Scottish immigrant Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 1,681 free public libraries nationwide between 1886 and 1917.

The Lackawanna library received its original \$30,000 grant on May 3, 1917—just as the Carnegie Corporation was ending its library construction program. World War I delayed construction, making Lackawanna part of Carnegie's final chapter when it opened in 1922.

“Our founder, Andrew Carnegie, who championed the free public library movement of the late 19th century, described libraries as ‘cradles of democracy’ that ‘strengthen the democratic idea, the equality of the citizen, and the royalty of man,’” said **Dame Louise Richardson, president of Carnegie and former head of the University of Oxford**. “We still believe this and are delighted to celebrate our connection to the libraries he founded.”

Patrons are invited to share Lackawanna Public Library photos, stories, and community celebrations at [www.carnegielibraries.org](http://www.carnegielibraries.org).

"Carnegie's vision was that libraries would be 'ladders upon which the aspiring can rise,'" said **Dorinda Darden, Interim Director, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library**. "A century later, that mission drives everything we do. It aligns with our Library's commitment to defending intellectual freedom, and is in the same spirit as the full-throated support of our profoundly public nature."

The system's other Carnegie-rooted branch, Hamburg Public Library, will also receive a \$10,000 gift. This is a meaningful nod to the gift Andrew Carnegie donated to build the community's beloved Center Street library in 1915. Though Hamburg relocated to its current Buffalo Street home in the 1960s, the spirit of Carnegie's investment in that community endures.

## **Preserving History, Honoring Legacy**

Lackawanna Public Library's Colonial Revival architecture, featuring original oak woodwork and fireplaces throughout the interior, has served the Lackawanna community for over a century. The library is a democratic space where knowledge is freely accessible to all and embodies Carnegie's philosophy of opportunity and upward mobility.

Together, the Library and City of Lackawanna are excited to also announce they are actively pursuing the historical designation for the building. The \$10,000 Carnegie gift will support preservation of the building's architectural integrity, original features, as well as further strengthen initiatives that create opportunity and connection in the Lackawanna community.

"This isn't just about preserving a beautiful building," **Danielle Ptak, Director, Lackawanna Public Library**, added. "It is about honoring the investment Carnegie made in our diverse community and ensuring this library continues serving Lackawanna for many years to come."

## **About**

Established in 1836, the **Buffalo & Erie County Public Library** is Buffalo's oldest cultural institution. *Profoundly Public* in all we do, Library locations serve more than 2.35 million visitors annually through 37 branches and mobile services. The Library also houses over 3.2 million resources, extensive digital collections, and innovative programming. With a collection of international and national note, the Library continues to significantly impact community education, equity, and cultural enrichment. In 2025, every dollar invested returned \$4.24 in community benefits, totaling over \$131 million in annual value.

**Carnegie Corporation of New York** was established by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding. Today the foundation works to reduce political polarization through philanthropic support for the issues that Carnegie considered most important: education, democracy, and peace.

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