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Meredith in Motion: Celebrating Progress, Shaping the Future

Greater Meredith Program Hosts Successful 2026 Annual Meeting

MEREDITH, NH — The Greater Meredith Program (GMP), a 501(c)(3) community development organization, hosted its Annual Meeting, *Meredith in Motion: Celebrating Progress, Shaping the Future*, on January 15, 2026, at the Church Landing Ballroom in Meredith, New Hampshire. Approximately 100 community members attended the event, which celebrated another successful year of collaboration, creativity, and volunteer-driven impact.

The evening featured Judie Milner, Meredith's new Town Manager, who shared updates on community-wide initiatives and discussed how town priorities align with GMP's mission, Main Street efforts, and long-term strategic vision. Attendees also heard from GMP leadership, including Heather LaDue, Executive Director, Dick Pendergast, Treasurer, Michelle Brown, President, and Wendell Rizzo, Vice President.

In her Executive Director's Report, Heather LaDue highlighted GMP's continued commitment to strengthening Meredith through community events, economic vitality, historic and cultural preservation, and town-wide beautification.

"As many of you know, the Greater Meredith Program exists to capture and extend the energy, collaboration, and vision that make Meredith such a special place to live, work, and visit—not just seasonally, but year-round," said LaDue. "For more than 20 years, GMP has helped create and enhance community assets through thousands of volunteer hours, generous in-kind support, and deep collaboration across organizations. This past year was no exception."

Under the leadership of President Michelle Brown and the Board of Directors, GMP experienced a strong and productive year. All five standing committees, along with two subcommittees, successfully completed their 2025 workplans, and volunteer engagement increased across all program areas.

One of the year's most exciting developments was the creation of a new Volunteer Task Force under GMP's Economic & Community Development Committee. The task force is focused on better connecting willing volunteers with meaningful opportunities across

Meredith—making it easier for residents to get involved and contribute to the community.

2026 Board of Directors

A key component of the Annual Meeting was the introduction of GMP's 2026 Board of Directors, including the welcoming of three new board members:

- Stacie Street
- Karin Nelson, *Laconia Daily Sun*
- Janine Neggers, Alternate Board Member

“These individuals bring valuable experience, diverse perspectives, and a shared commitment to Meredith,” said Heather LaDue, Executive Director. “We are thrilled to welcome them and look forward to their leadership as we continue to build on the momentum of our work.”

Throughout 2025, GMP continued to advance initiatives that residents and visitors experience every day, including:

- Design & Beautification efforts, in partnership with the Community Garden Club and Town departments, helping keep Meredith vibrant despite a challenging summer drought
- The Meredith Sculpture Walk, now in its 12th year, featuring a refreshed exhibit that continues to bring national recognition and increased foot traffic to the village
- Economic & Community Development initiatives, including collaboration with the Town on long-term Main Street planning, infrastructure, housing, revitalization, and trail connectivity projects
- Continued growth of the Career Partnership Program, in partnership with the Inter-Lakes School District, connecting students to real-world career exploration and hands-on learning experiences
- A robust calendar of Promotional and Community Events, including Street Dances, the Scarecrow Stroll, holiday lighting, banners, *Do the Loop* publications, and safe Main Street Trick-or-Treating

Dick Pendergast, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report, followed by the presentation of the 2025 Greater Meredith Program Community Awards by Michelle Brown, President, and Wendell Rizzo, Vice President.

2025 Greater Meredith Program Award Recipients

Board Member of the Year –

The Greater Meredith Program proudly recognized Andrea Harper for her outstanding service and dedication to the organization and the Meredith community. Since joining the GMP Board of Directors just 18 months ago, Andrea has jumped in headfirst—always willing to lend a hand and consistently giving her best. She currently co-chairs the Economic Development Committee, serves on the Fundraising Committee, and represents GMP on multiple Town committees. Known for her positivity, warm smile, and humble leadership style, Andrea has also been a trusted partner to Executive Director Heather LaDue, offering steady support, insight, and encouragement.

Volunteer of the Year –

The Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Tom Witham in recognition of his unwavering dedication, leadership, and service to the Meredith community. A longtime volunteer with the Meredith Historical Society, active participant in Town Meeting and planning efforts, and member of the GMP Promotion Committee, Tom's impact is far-reaching. Most notably, his leadership helped guide Heart in Hand through an exceptionally challenging year, ensuring continuity of services during a transition to a new space. His long-standing support of the Meredith Sculpture Walk and the Lakes Center for the Arts exemplifies the very best of community volunteerism.

Outstanding Business Supporter –

GMP recognized Cackleberries Garden Center and owner Laurie Perry as the Outstanding Business Supporter of the Year. For many years, Laurie has generously donated flowers and plants that enhance the town fountain area and has supported additional plantings throughout Meredith. A former GMP board member, her continued generosity and commitment have left a lasting and visible impact on the community.

Community Spirit Award –

The Community Spirit Award was presented to Andrew Eaton, owner of Art of Turning, in recognition of his exceptional commitment to community, creativity, and collaboration. In his first full year of business in Meredith, Andrew helped generate more than \$8,000 for local nonprofits and played a key role in bringing back Meredith Old Home Day for the first time in nearly 75 years. His leadership of the inaugural Art of Turning Woodworking Competition showcased innovation and community spirit while raising meaningful funds for local causes.

Special Recognition Award – Vint Choiniere

The Greater Meredith Program presented a Special Recognition Award to Vint Choiniere in appreciation of his many years of dedicated service to the Meredith community. As the longtime Parks and Recreation Director, Vint oversaw a wide range of programs and facilities and was a valued partner to GMP on projects such as Swasey Park improvements, including trail repairs, benches, interpretive signage, and ADA

accessibility enhancements. As he prepares for retirement, GMP recognized Vint's lasting contributions, collaborative spirit, and commitment to accessibility.

As GMP looks ahead to 2026, the organization remains focused on expanding its impact, aligning closely with town-wide priorities, strengthening Main Street, and continuing to create opportunities for residents, businesses, and volunteers to help shape Meredith's future.

About the Greater Meredith Program

The Greater Meredith Program (GMP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization dedicated to enhancing Meredith's economic vitality, historic character, and quality of life through community engagement, Main Street initiatives, and strategic partnerships.