



Herkimer Next, Inc.  
Empowering Connections  
Across Herkimer County and  
The Mohawk Valley

Dear Friends,

## **Keep The Pool Open This Summer for Little Falls' Children and Families Ensuring the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool Opens in 2026**

If you grew up in Little Falls, chances are the Francis Skinner Municipal Swimming Pool is part of your story.

It is where summers were spent, friendships were formed, and memories were made; memories that still connect many of us to the place we call home. For generations, the pool has been more than a recreational amenity; it has been a cornerstone of community life in Little Falls since the early 1960s.

Today, that legacy is at risk.

Like many municipalities, the City of Little Falls is navigating a challenging financial period and must make careful decisions to balance essential services. As a result, funding is not currently available in the 2026 city budget to operate the municipal pool.

This is not a matter of interest or commitment by city leadership. It is simply a matter of resources. City leadership has been clear that this is a temporary situation, not a reflection of the value placed on the pool or the families it serves. The City believes it will be in a stronger financial position next year. This is a one-time opportunity for the Little Falls community and its alumni to help bridge the gap and keep the pool open for the 2026 summer season.

With your support, the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool can open this summer and continue to provide a safe, affordable place for children and families to gather, play, and cool off, just as it did for so many of us.

## **What Is Needed to Reopen the Pool in 2026**

The estimated cost to operate the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool for the 2026 summer season is **\$100,000**. This includes:

- Department of Public Works labor to prepare the pool for opening and to properly close it at the end of the season
- Lifeguard staffing
- Chemicals and basic operating supplies
- Operational support for the City's Parks Program, which utilizes the pool as part of its structured recreational and enrichment activities for children through out the summer.



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In addition, the pool requires overdue planning to ensure its long-term future. Approximately **\$30,000** is needed to engage mechanical, electrical, and plumbing consultants to complete a comprehensive facility assessment. This review is the critical first step toward securing future capital funding and positioning the pool for long-term operation.

## **A Community-Led Solution, City Supported Effort**

In response to this one-time need, a group of Little Falls, Pool-Friendly residents have stepped forward to support the continued operation of the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool and to begin planning for its long-term future. This effort reflects a collaborative partnership between the City of Little Falls, committed community volunteers, and **Next**, with each playing a distinct role and working together to ensure the pool can open for the 2026 season and be thoughtfully positioned for the years ahead.

To provide transparency, accountability, and proper handling of donations, **Herkimer Next (Next)**, a locally based nonprofit organization, will serve as the fiscal sponsor for this campaign. Next works in partnership with municipalities and community groups to strengthen communities through capacity-building, project support, and strategic investment. In this role, Next will manage donations, provide contribution documentation, and ensure that all funds raised are transferred directly to the City of Little Falls for the sole purpose of pool operation and related improvements.

For more information about Next, please visit <https://www.herkimercountynext.org/>

## **Why This Matters**

Between **75 and 100 people use the pool each summer day**. As summers become increasingly hotter, access to safe, affordable places to cool off is no longer a luxury, it is a public health need. For many children, the municipal pool is their primary access to swimming, physical activity, and safe summer recreation.

The pool also supports a free summer program that provides lunches to children at no cost. Many children who receive free meals during the school year face increased food insecurity when school is not in session. Access to these meals, along with structured activities and a safe environment, is essential to supporting children and families throughout the summer months.



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## How You Can Help

We are asking members of the Little Falls Alumni Network, residents, businesses, and friends of the city to contribute, at any level, to help restore this vital community asset.

- **The primary goal of this campaign is to raise \$100,000 to operate the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool and Summer Program for the 2026 summer season.**
- **A secondary goal** is to raise an additional \$30,000 to complete a comprehensive facility assessment, a required first step toward long-term upgrades and future capital funding.
- **Any funds raised beyond the operating goal** will be applied toward planning, assessment, and future capital improvements to ensure the pool's long-term sustainability.

A generous, pool-friendly donor has already pledged **\$1,500 in seed funding** to help launch this effort. We hope others will follow their lead.

By contributing, you are not simply funding a pool. You are investing in a shared community asset and ensuring that today's children can experience the same summers that so many of us remember.

Thank you for standing with Little Falls and for helping to save summer for our children.

Warm Regards,

*Michele Hummel*

Michele Hummel  
Executive Director, Next

**Contributions may be made by scanning the QR code below, accessing the online link, [Save Summer for Our Children](#), or completing the enclosed form. Checks should be made payable to Herkimer Next, Inc., with "Little Falls Pool" indicated in the memo line.**





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## Save the Summer for Little Falls' Children and Families

### Francis Skinner Municipal Pool – 2026 Community Campaign

Thank you for your support of the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool and for helping ensure it can open for the 2026 summer season.

#### Donor Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

- Please keep my donation anonymous
- I would like to receive updates on the pool and future community projects

#### Gift Amount

\$35     \$75     \$150     \$300     \$600     Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- My gift is designated toward:
  - 2026 Pool Operations
  - Facility Assessment and Long-Term Planning
  - Where it is needed most to support the pool

#### Payment Method

- Check enclosed (Payable to:)

**Herkimer Next, Inc.**  
**34 Central Plaza**  
**Ilion, NY 13357**



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## **Important Information**

Herkimer Next, Inc. is serving as fiscal sponsor for this one-time, 2026-only community effort. All funds raised through this campaign will be transferred to the City of Little Falls and used solely for the operation of the Francis Skinner Municipal Pool and related planning and improvements.

Herkimer Next, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. A receipt will be provided for all donations.

Thank you for helping keep summer open for Little Falls' children and families.