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NORTH COUNTRY LIBRARY SYSTEM LAUNCHES CAREKITS PROGRAM

Anti-poverty initiative will provide free access to hygiene items throughout four-county region

(WATERTOWN, NEW YORK) – The North Country Library System is excited to announce the launch of CareKits, a regional anti-poverty initiative providing free, on-demand access to essential hygiene items. Additionally, each kit will provide information about library and community resources and will be available at all North Country libraries across Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties.

North Country Bridges will be partnering with NCLS to promote and assess the CareKits initiative. North Country Bridges will also be offering Bridges Out of Poverty training to member library staff to better help them understand the experience of poverty and provide services to vulnerable members of our communities.

Census data shows the magnitude of the hardship faced by people in our service area, with between 12% and 16% living below the poverty line, depending on the county. A simple hygiene kit filled with personal care products can provide encouragement and hope to those in need. As public spaces, community resources, and trusted messengers, libraries are ideal distribution points for anti-poverty kits like these.

“While most people might not believe it is a library’s duty to help in this way, I believe that it is,” says Flower Memorial Library Director Suzi-Renzi-Falge. “Everyone deserves to feel the basic comfort and dignity of cleanliness. These kits, which will have information on local support agencies, will also connect people to critical resources that will put them on the path to self-sufficiency. We are very honored to be able to offer these CareKits for our community.”

NCLS Executive Director Paulette Roes adds, “I’m proud of our new CareKits program, reinforcing our commitment to serve our community’s well-being beyond books. Together, we’re embracing the power of compassion and access for all.”

CareKits will include a drawstring backpack, toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, wipes, nail clippers, comb, shampoo, soap, tissues, a basic first aid kit, ChapStick, razor, shaving cream, hand sanitizer, deodorant, tampon, pad, and laundry detergent. Also included are cold weather items: socks, a hat, gloves, neck warmer, and hand warmers.

This project is made possible with grant funding from the Northern New York Community Foundation and the Northern New York Library Network.



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To learn more, visit www.ncls.org/carekits.

The North Country Library System is a support organization that delivers services to the 66 public libraries located in Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties. Through shared library services, cooperative purchasing, coordinated literacy campaigns, and training, NCLS maximizes sharing, creativity, and innovation to help improve the lives of North Country residents at home, at work, at school, and at play.