

April 2026

Greetings alumni! Here's what's happening at SUNY Empire. Please email us at [alumni@sunyempire.edu](mailto:alumni@sunyempire.edu) with news, updates, and story suggestions.

We hope to hear from you!

### Alumni Director Retires

Kimberly Neher, SUNY Empire's director of alumni engagement, has retired.

Neher has served as the director of alumni engagement since August 2021. In this role, she oversaw alumni programming and events, provided leadership to the Alumni Federation Board of Directors, and served as the liaison between SUNY Empire alumni and other university offices.

"After many rewarding years of serving our alumni community, I have decided it's time to step into the next chapter of life," she wrote in her letter to the Alumni Board.



Kimberly Neher

"The transition comes with mixed emotions — profound gratitude for the opportunities afforded to me and a deep sense of fulfillment from the work we have accomplished together."

Neher began working at the university in 2006. She was previously associate director of alumni and student relations and managing editor of Connections, the alumni magazine. She is an experienced event planner who has managed hundreds of events during her tenure and with other nonprofit organizations.

We wish her the best!

### Alumni Profile: Meet Kathy Lewis '79, '93



For Kathy Lewis '79, '93, the coming of spring heralds another season of Blocks in Bloom.

Lewis has spent a lifetime working to make people's lives better, whether organizing volunteers, writing for an alternative newspaper or combating lead in the city's older housing stock.

The organization she founded is entering its 13th year in 2026 and continues to create gardens in the inner-city neighborhoods of Rochester, NY while strengthening communities.

[Read more](#) about Kathy.

### Happy 111th Birthday to Dorothy Burnham!



Photos of Dorothy Burnham and members of her family.

Dorothy Burnham, a long-time faculty member and mentor at SUNY Empire, and dedicated civil rights activist, recently celebrated her 111<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Burnham was based in the Manhattan location, where she taught science, technology, and mathematics; community and human services; and nursing and allied health. She began her career at SUNY Empire in 1977 and retired in 2014, at the age of 99.

Burnham was born in Brooklyn on March 22, 1915, to immigrant parents. She graduated from Brooklyn College in 1936 with a bachelor's degree in microbiology. While there, she became interested in civil rights.

To honor her legacy and accomplishments, friends and family of Burnham gave through the Empire State University Foundation to create the Dorothy Burnham Scholarship in 2023. The scholarship is awarded to students studying in the fields in which she worked.

In celebration of Burnham's birthday, please consider making a gift in her honor by clicking the button below and selecting the Dorothy Burnham Scholarship. You can read more about Burnham's life and legacy on our [scholarship website](#).

Make a gift in honor of Dorothy

### Save the Date: Topgolf is Coming!

Mark your calendars for a Topgolf outing with President Lisa Vollendorf!

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Dinner, 6 to 7 p.m. | Game play, 7 to 9 p.m.

Topgolf Holtsville, [5231 Express Dr. North, Holtsville, NY 11742](#)

Join President Lisa Vollendorf and members of the SUNY Empire community for an evening of fun and a few swings! Whether you're an aspiring golf pro, picking up a club for the first time, or just looking to connect with SUNY Empire alumni and friends, we hope to see you there. More details coming soon. Watch the [events page](#) on our alumni website.



### Job Fairs this Month

In the market for a new job? Or looking to hire someone? Join us at one of our upcoming job fairs this month:

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

10 a.m. to noon

2875 Union Rd Suite 34, Cheektowaga, NY

[More information](#)

Thursday, April 16, 2026

10 a.m. to noon

Location: 113 West Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY

[More information](#)

Questions? Contact: Anita DeCianni-Brown '12, '15 at [anita.brown@sunyempire.edu](mailto:anita.brown@sunyempire.edu).

### 2nd Annual Earth Day Walk



Wednesday April 22, 2026  
Noon (lasting about an hour)  
Meet at SPAC parking lot on Rt. 50

Kim Marsella, associate director of the Center for International Education at Empire State University, will lead a walk and discuss the park's unique geologic features.

For more information, email: [alumni@sunyempire.edu](mailto:alumni@sunyempire.edu).

### Alumni and SUNY Empire President Gather for Baseball!



Alumni, staff, and friends joined SUNY Empire President Lisa Vollendorf in Tampa Bay and West Palm Beach, FL for NY Yankees baseball. The games were held in early March during the team's spring training.

### BMI Celebrates Black History Month



In celebration of Black History Month, SUNY Empire hosted "Black Women in Law Enforcement Leadership," a panel discussion featuring distinguished law enforcement executives who have broken barriers and reshaped the profession through their leadership.

The event was sponsored by the Black Male Initiative and the Empire State University Criminal Justice Club, both student clubs. It was held at 4 Park Ave., the Manhattan location.

### Smarter Ways to Support SUNY Empire This Tax Season

Every day, Empire State University helps students balance work, family, and education with flexible programs and personalized support designed to meet them where they are. With a tax-smart approach, you can make a meaningful impact—often without using cash from your bank account.

By donating or appreciated stock, making a gift from your IRA (if you're age 70½ or older), or recommending a grant from your donor-advised fund, you can support SUNY Empire in ways that may also provide tax benefits.

Make your tax-smart gift today

Thank you for being part of the SUNY Empire community.

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The Foundation

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