



NATIONAL GRANGE LAUNCHES PROJECT SUSTENANCE

All Granges urged to take part in 'signature program'

by Amanda Brozana

National Grange Membership & Leadership Development Director

Food security, personal sustainability and community and individual resilience: Grange programming and outreach across the nation have for generations have focused on these areas. In 2025, these efforts and innovative new projects, programs and outreach focused on these topics, will be celebrated under the banner of a "recognizable signature" program called **Project Sustenance**.



A special introduction to the program will be held live on Zoom on Tuesday, January 14 starting at 8:30 p.m. All members are invited to attend to learn more about the project and how their Grange may be recognized for current work that aligns with Project Sustenance or take on a new project using resources that will soon be available. Join at <https://grange.biz/nationalzoom>.

The initiative was first discussed by National Grange President Christine Hamp during her addresses at the 158th Annual National Grange Convention in November. In those speeches, Hamp noted that while each Grange meets the needs of its community through different programming and service activities so many currently fall under one of these three pillars of the Project Sustenance banner, making it an idea "recognizable signature" program of the Grange.

"This signature initiative will allow most Granges to build on already established

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UPCOMING

January 14
8:30pm ET / 5:30pm PT
National Grange Night
Project Sustenance

Join:
<https://grange.biz/nationalzoom>

January 20
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day of Service
All Granges and members are encouraged to participate

Learn more:
<https://americorps.gov/serve/volunteer/mlk-day>

SET RESOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR GRANGE AND COMMUNITY

by Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

The calendar turning to a new year is an ideal time for Granges to reflect on their accomplishments and set goals for the future. Just as individuals make New Year's Resolutions to better themselves, Granges can also set resolutions that align with their mission to serve their communities and strengthen the fabric of their hometowns. By setting intentional goals, your Grange can deepen its impact and become a more vibrant, engaged organization.

Here are some resolutions your Grange might consider to enhance its mission and reach and engage more effectively with your community:

1. Resolve to Be More Social

One of the foundational elements of the Grange is fostering community through fellowship. In today's world, social connections are more important than ever. Resolve to host more social events, both for members and the broader community. These events don't need to be elaborate—think game nights, potluck dinners, or casual coffee hours. The key is to create spaces where people can gather, build relationships, and feel a sense of belonging.

Encourage your members to also think of the broader community - visit Grange members, family, and friends who may be in retirement communities or in need of a visit. Even something as simple as sending a card or a note keeps your Grange relevant while boosting the moods of your community.

Embrace social media to share your activities and successes. A consistent presence on platforms like Facebook or Instagram can help you reach new audiences and keep your members informed and engaged. Highlighting your Grange's efforts online showcases your commitment to community and invites others to join your mission.

2. Resolve to Listen to Your Community

Every community has unique needs, and one of the best ways to serve is by listening. Resolve to regularly engage with your neighbors to learn about the challenges and opportunities they see. This can be done through surveys, open forums, or informal conversations at local events.

Once you've gathered insights, take action. If your community needs more food security, consider starting a food pantry - or expanding an existing one - or a free "food library." If mental health resources are lacking, explore partnerships with local or national organizations to host workshops or support groups. By listening first, your Grange's initiatives will be more impactful and relevant.

3. Resolve to Empower Your Members

Your Grange's greatest resource is its members. Resolve to invest in their growth and development by offering workshops or training sessions that build skills like public speaking, event planning, or grantwriting. Encourage members to embrace leadership roles and mentor them as they do.

Also prioritize intergenerational collaboration. Younger members bring fresh ideas and energy, while seasoned members offer invaluable wisdom and experience. By working together, all members can learn from one another and strengthen the Grange as a whole.

4. Resolve to Advocate for Your Community

With an enduring legacy and present mission of grassroots advocacy, resolve to be a stronger voice for your community by identifying key issues and advocating for them at the local, state, and national levels. This might involve writing resolutions to be adopted by your State Grange, meeting with elected officials, or organizing letter-writing or calling campaigns.

Focus on issues that resonate with your members and align with the Grange's values, such as rural broadband access, agricultural policy, or educational opportunities. By speaking up, your Grange can influence positive change and demonstrate its commitment to the greater good.

5. Resolve to Be Inclusive

A thriving Grange is one that reflects the diversity of its community. Resolve to be intentional about inclusivity, welcoming people of all backgrounds, ages, and perspectives. Consider hosting events that cater to different cultural or generational interests, and make your Grange Hall a space where everyone feels valued.

6. Resolve to Measure Your Impact

Finally, resolve to track and celebrate the difference your Grange is making. Set measurable goals for your initiatives and evaluate their success regularly. Share these successes with your members and the community to build momentum and inspire continued involvement.

As you set these resolutions, remember that progress is a journey. Focus on a few achievable goals to start, and build on them as your Grange gains momentum. By committing to these resolutions, your Grange can enhance its mission, strengthen its community, and ensure a bright future for generations to come. Here's to a successful year ahead!

PROJECT SUSTENANCE

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programs, (and) allow members to showcase skills and knowledge...," Hamp said.

"In addition to making strides to eliminate food insecurity in our hometowns, I feel it's important that we also offer members, and our neighbors who have not yet joined us, the opportunity to invest in themselves, the tools to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, and the knowledge and skills to chase, capture, and live out their American dream."

A series of resources and a toolkit for Granges to use, complete with recipes for success – descriptions of programs, outreach, services and projects Granges have taken on to improve food security, self-sustainability and resilience – are rolling out over the next several months on the National Grange website, social media and in publications like *Grange Today* and *Good Day!* magazine.

"Granges across the country are doing amazing things, and we must ensure our good work is not siloed – we must share our good works among our Granges so one of our most precious resources – volunteer time – is maximized," Hamp said.

She also noted that the National Grange will work to "establish partnerships, seek grants and sponsor dollars, and promote our deep connection with personal sustainability and food from farm to fork for every American."

More resources and information

about how your programs, projects and outreach initiatives can be featured as part of Project Sustenance will be coming soon and will be sent to each State Grange in 2025 for inclusion in newsletters and other correspondence with local Granges.

NATIONAL GRANGE NIGHT

A MONTHLY ZOOM PROGRAM

*This month, join us on **January 14** to learn more about the National Grange's new signature program: **PROJECT SUSTENANCE!***



2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

8:30PM ET / 5:30PM PT

<https://grange.biz/nationalzoom>

**Submit your
stories,
events, and
ideas to...**

GRANGE

Today!

<http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit>

NEW JUNIOR DIRECTOR, YOUTH TEAM SET THE PATH FOR ENGAGEMENT AND GROWTH

by Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

and Jennie Gentry

National Grange Youth Team



The National Grange is thrilled to announce Rebekah Hodgson as the new Junior Grange Director. A dedicated Jonesboro Grange #357 member in Jonesboro, Maine, Hodgson brings a deep appreciation of Grange values and a passion for community service to her new role.

Rebekah's journey with the Grange began with her grandparents, Helen and Edward Brooks, who were active members of Robbinston Grange in Robbinston, Maine. Her own involvement took root about six years ago when she joined Jonesboro Grange to help save it from closure, inspired by her father's determination to preserve its legacy.

Since then, Rebekah has been an enthusiastic advocate for Grange activities, making her mark through projects like the Crush Cancer Lobster Crawl 5k, Candyland, the free 10,000 Easter Egg Hunt, and Grinch at the Grange.

Outside of her work with the Grange, Rebekah is a K3 preschool teacher and K4 preschool assistant, a Girl Scout leader, and a licensed commercial lobster fisher—a skill she's honed since age 10. She currently lives in Illinois with her husband Garrett, an active-duty Coast Guard Chief, and their two children, Jase (7) and Kennedy (5). Her family shares her passion for the outdoors and community engagement.

As Junior Grange Director, Rebekah has ambitious plans for the year ahead. She aims to foster stronger bonds between Junior and more senior members, spark interest in new Junior Grange chapters, and deepen young members' love for the Grange through creative, engaging programming. Inspired by her connection to the ocean, she plans to incorporate aquatic-themed activities into Junior programming, especially at this year's National Convention aboard the Carnival Horizon.

Rebekah's vision for the Junior department centers on empowering young members to be future leaders of the Grange. "Junior members are the voice of tomorrow," she said. "By utilizing their energy, passion, and eagerness to learn, they can create

meaningful change and preserve the traditions that connect us all."

Her advice to those hoping to engage more young people in the Grange? "Find out what interests them and incorporate that into your Junior Grange! Show them the joy and sense of family that comes with being part of the Grange through welcoming, free events and fun-filled meetings."

National Grange President Christine

Hamp is confident that Hodgson's creativity, leadership, and dedication will inspire the next generation of Grange members, ensuring the organization's legacy continues to thrive.

"Rebekah's engaging energy and excitement are exactly what we need to create meaningful experiences for our youngest members," said Hamp. "I can't wait to see the positive impact she and her team bring to our Junior Grange Program."

Hodgson will be assisted by the Junior Advisory Team, consisting of Emily Hartsell (NC), Makayla Piers (RI), and Gayle Reyburn (PA).

Email junior@nationalgrange.org for more information.



Rebekah Hodgson and her children at the 2024 National Grange Convention in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Photo by Molly Newman

Youth, Young Adults Set for a Strong Year



The National Grange Youth Team is looking forward to a great year for our Youth and Young Adults in 2025. They have been working hard to collaborate with other departments and finalize the program guide for the year, so it will be in your hands soon. There will be some changes to

almost every contest, award, or leadership position, so please be sure to read over each item to note those changes.

The Team consists of Matt and Lynn Clark (NH),

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Installation Ceremony; Installing Officer

JUNIORS, YOUTH

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Jen and Ken Danko (PA), Jennie Gentry (NC), and Samantha Hanson (IA).

This program aims to offer meaningful activities in which our youth and young adults can get involved to boost leadership, confidence, and personal growth. The Youth Team wants young Grange members to have experiences that help them as they grow up, go to college, enter the workforce, and become the best people they can possibly be. To aid in reaching these goals, all programming will be based on these values: advocacy, leadership, community service, communication, and membership. By focusing on these areas, the Team hopes to give young people the tools they need to go out and make a difference in the world around them.

While 2025 will be different with the National Convention on a cruise ship, the Youth Team encourages you to continue participating in these programs because they are beneficial and can lead to some fantastic opportunities in the future. There WILL be youth and young adult activities at the National Grange Convention this year, including Youth & Young Adult Officers and Ambassadors. The Team is also working to get internet sponsored in rooms housing Juniors, youth, and young adults so that they can complete any schoolwork on the ship if needed.

Another new, exciting part of the cruise will be our *Leadership Academy at Sea* for our young Grangers who will be attending. Intertwined with fun cruise activities, the National Grange Youth Team will offer this unique leadership experience for youth and young adults that will help train them as leaders. This professional training will look great on future college and work resumes and will include a certification of completion after the convention.

With new contests, new leadership experiences, and special recognitions to honor our young Grangers, we want to encourage all state, Pomona, and local Granges to support these opportunities for youth by helping them to get more involved. There is no better place than the Grange to help our young people thrive in 2025!

For more information or to answer any questions, please email youth@nationalgrange.org.

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT: AMERICAN INCOME LIFE

Through a partnership with American Income Life Insurance Company, an AD&D benefit and other no cost offers are being provided to all members of National Grange.

Since 1990, American Income is proud to have paid over \$1.5 million in life, health and no-cost AD&D benefits to Grange Members and their families.

Learn more at MyBenefits.AILife.com

Enter access code: SGLHD

Included:

- A Group Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit
- AILPlus Health Services Discount Program
- Child Safe Kit
- Needs-Based Analysis



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Through a partnership with American Income Life Insurance Company, an AD&D benefit and other no-cost offers are being provided to all members of National Grange.

Included:

- ☂ Group Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit
- 🏠 AILPlus Health Services Discount Program*
- 👶 Child Safe Kit®
- ✅ Needs-Based Analysis

Since 1990, American Income is proud to have paid over over \$1.5 million in life, health and no-cost AD&D benefits to Grange Members and their families.

All National Grange members should have received a letter of introduction to the no-cost offerings provided by the National Grange at no cost!

Learn more at **MyBenefits.AILife.com**

Enter access code: **SGLHD**

*AILPlus Health Services Discount Program is not available in NY. Lab Testing not available in MD, NJ, or RI. This is a solicitation for insurance.

An AIL representative will contact members who return the reply card by mail or respond online to arrange a convenient time to deliver their certificate of coverage and other no cost offers and review other supplemental insurance benefits that may be available.



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