

Lakeside Community Report – May 2026

Overview

A Season of Revival

Lakeside enters the 2026 season with clarity, momentum, and a shared sense of purpose. Over the past two years, we have strengthened our cultural foundation, sharpened our organizational focus, and imagined a future worthy of Lakeside’s mission and history. This year, we move from imagination to activation. As the strategic framework notes, “Revival is not a theme for inspiration alone. It is a strategic posture for the next phase of Lakeside’s growth.”

In 2026, “Revival” becomes our operating system, guiding how we serve guests, steward resources, strengthen relationships, and prepare Lakeside for its next chapter. It is grounded in three forms of return that shape every decision we make: ROI (Return on Investment), ensuring financial and operational stewardship; ROM (Return on Mission), aligning our work with Lakeside’s spiritual, cultural, intellectual, and physical purpose; and ROR (Return on Relationship), building trust, unity, and shared purpose across the community. Together, these principles ensure that Revival is not rhetoric, but action.

This spirit of Revival is already visible across Lakeside. Teams are preparing earlier, strengthening systems, improving guest-facing processes, and aligning daily work with mission and long-term stewardship. The momentum you’ll see throughout this report—financial strength, operational readiness, improved coordination, and growing generosity—reflects a community and organization moving forward together.

Lakeside is entering the 2026 Chautauqua season with strong momentum. Across the organization, teams are preparing earlier, strengthening systems, and improving the guest experience. This report provides a clear, community-facing update on financial health, season readiness, staffing, safety, infrastructure, and mission-aligned growth.

Financial Health & Stewardship

Lakeside Association closed the fiscal year in a strong financial position. Operating revenue reached **\$12.17M**, exceeding budget expectations and last year’s performance. Net Operating Income finished at **\$1.24M**, supported by disciplined expense management and strong attendance.

Philanthropy continues to grow. Total giving reached **\$2.27M**, with the Impact Fund surpassing its goal at **\$964,402.27**. Donor participation expanded to **996 donors**,

with 51% being donors in the prior year and 49% being new donors. This broad base of engagement strengthens Lakeside's long-term sustainability.

Unrestricted cash increased to **\$3.62M**, allowing Lakeside to move forward with planned capital investments, including the Streets Project and other infrastructure priorities.

Beyond the Impact Fund, designated giving is strengthening the heart of Lakeside's mission. Restricted gifts have grown dramatically, from \$500,136.40 at this time last year to \$1,098,097, supporting everything from Hoover Auditorium and Cherry Park to Hotel Lakeside's 150th celebration and essential facilities care. Every gift, whether \$25 or \$250,000, is helping sustain the experiences, spaces, and programs that shape the Lakeside we love. As we move toward the 2026 season, we invite every household to participate in this spirit of generosity. Your giving—at any level—directly strengthens the mission, deepens community impact, and ensures Lakeside remains a place of renewal for generations to come.

Preparing for the 2026 Season

Programming & Events

Teams are preparing a full slate of mission-aligned programming, including:

- The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall
- Dogs of War and Peace exhibit
- Lakeside Spelling Bee
- Educational and cultural programs across all Four Pillars

Early-season events—such as Easter weekend activities, movies, yoga, arts and crafts, and family programs—drew strong participation and positive feedback.

Group and private events continue to grow, with **54 events booked** for 2026 and **37 additional leads**. Improvements in event coordination, vendor partnerships, and guest experience are underway.

People & Staffing

Seasonal hiring is ahead of previous years. Highlights include:

- **80+ seasonal hires** completed
- **14 job fairs** attended or scheduled

- **150+ interviews** completed or in progress
- **15 international students** placed for the season

HR has also completed major compliance and administrative projects, strengthened onboarding, and improved consistency in hiring and volunteer processes.

Some roles remain open—particularly lifeguards, waterfront, gates, and general labor positions, and recruitment efforts continue.

Safety & Preparedness

Safety Services has strengthened Lakeside’s readiness through:

- Updated incident reporting and inspection procedures
- Improved coordination with Danbury Police
- Reinforced staff awareness of AED and shelter locations
- Support for large events and daily operations

Recreation teams have advanced risk-reduction efforts through SOPs, checklists, first-aid kits, and early preparation of pools and waterfront areas.

Facilities & Infrastructure

Municipal Services is completing readiness tasks earlier than in past years and shifting toward long-term stewardship. Key initiatives include:

- Research on sustainable materials for Hotel Lakeside siding
- Support for Hoover Auditorium preservation
- Campground expansion planning
- Street project progress
- Improved internet access points
- Transition to a new VOIP phone system

The team is moving from temporary fixes to durable, long-term solutions that enhance guest experience and protect Lakeside’s historic assets.

Mission-Focused Growth

Departments are working to expand Lakeside’s reach beyond the summer season through:

- Off-season retreats and shoulder-season programming
- New partnerships with civic organizations and community groups
- Strengthened group sales and hospitality retention
- Collaboration with Miller Ferry and other peninsula partners

These efforts support sustainable, mission-aligned growth.

Current Focus Areas

Area	What's Happening	How We're Responding
Staffing	Some seasonal and full-time roles remain open	Targeted recruitment, job fairs, revised job descriptions, pay adjustments
Venue Capacity	High demand for shared spaces	Improved calendar coordination and event planning
Communication & Role Clarity	A faster pace requires clearer responsibilities	Reinforced accountability, earlier escalation, and respectful communication

Looking Ahead

In the coming weeks, Lakeside leadership will focus on:

- Finalizing seasonal hiring and training
- Completing summer readiness across all departments
- Advancing emergency preparedness and safety equipment needs
- Strengthening group sales and event procedures
- Continuing retreat/shoulder-season planning
- Reinforcing communication and accountability as the season begins

Appreciation

Many staff members are working behind the scenes to prepare Lakeside for the season. Their efforts—in HR, Municipal Services, Safety Services, Programming, Education, Recreation, and Events—are essential to creating a welcoming, mission-centered experience for all.

Community Takeaway

Lakeside enters the 2026 season with real momentum. Across departments, systems are strengthening, coordination is improving, and teams are preparing earlier and with greater discipline. The spirit of Revival—moving from imagination to activation—is already shaping how we serve guests, steward resources, and strengthen relationships. As we step into the season ahead, we do so with clarity, unity, and a shared commitment to delivering a mission-centered experience for every person who comes through our gates. The work underway now is building a stronger Lakeside today and an even more vibrant Lakeside for generations to come.