



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Community Spotlight: Waddington's Historic Clark House

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### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

The Christmas spirit is alive and well once again in the Village of Waddington this year as one of its most historic buildings is serving as the centerpiece for its third annual "Christmas in Waddington" event.

"Christmas in Waddington," is a three-week event—running through December 23<sup>rd</sup>—which encourages people to shop local and enjoy a number of Christmas themed happenings. There are movie nights, concerts and special shopping events.

The Clark House—now officially known as the Waddington Marketplace and Studios at Clark House—is where people can pick up everything from a needed item for that special holiday meal, to decorations and gifts for loved ones. In the center of the village, it is also nearby local restaurants and hotels, making Waddington the perfect place for a day trip or overnight stay on the St. Lawrence River.

The Clark House was originally built in 1893, at a time when Waddington was St. Lawrence County's industrial center. The village was home to numerous mills, shops, restaurants and taverns. The Clark House would serve as a popular stagecoach stop and hotel. It was the social hub for downtown Waddington.

A series of events eventually caused the building to become vacant and it sat empty for a long time. It became a safety hazard and was in danger of being demolished when in 1997, a group of local residents formed a non-profit, community preservation group to work to restore it back to its former glory.

Since that time, the organization—Clark House Preservation, Inc.—has invested more than \$300,000 in private donations and donated services to restore the historic landmark on Main Street. Over the last decade, it has installed new windows, repaired a problematic foundation and added steel support structures to stabilize the basement and second floor.

I was proud to help this effort by securing \$100,000 in state funding for the group to continue to make these critical improvements and in turn, help create a brighter future for all of the businesses and residents in Waddington and nearby.

I hope this Christmas, people from across our region will not only visit the Waddington Marketplace and Studios at Clark House for the “Christmas in Waddington” event, but also to see everything this village and its surrounding communities have to offer.