



## Summary of Findings

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Once here, people seem to stay: Over half have lived in Geneseo more than 20 years or all of their lives.

- Only one in 10 has been in the community less than five years.

So what qualities drive people to Geneseo and keep long-time residents in the community?

- Geneseo residents strongly indicated that *a great place to raise a family* and the *small-town atmosphere* were specific reasons for choosing to live in Geneseo.
- Those are also two of the five primary ways Geneseo positively impacts the overall *quality of life* for residents:
  - *Safe place to live*, 4.60
  - *Family-oriented*, 4.45
  - *Community pride*, 4.37
  - *Geneseo Community Schools*, 4.36
  - *Small-town values*, 4.30

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There are four primary types of residents in Geneseo/Henry County. Each type differs according to opinions and perceptions.

- Pillars of the Community (39%): Older, established residents who have mostly glowing perceptions of their community, and who were born and raised in the community.
- Future Pillars (29%): Likely children of Pillars. Primarily lifetime residents of Geneseo who have young families and voice generally positive opinions and perceptions of their community.
- Newcomers (23%): Young families who have been in Geneseo shorter-term for the most part, and who are still not comfortably “in the fold” of the community yet.
- Passing Through (9%): Residents who do not have high opinions of Geneseo and do not see living there as contributing to their quality of life. These are likely short-term residents.

Clearly, there is much work to be done in making newcomers feel welcome, especially according to the youngest residents.

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## **The Geneseo Brand: Setting priorities**

An important element of building an umbrella brand is finding the universal messaging that will resonate across the community.

All residents, no matter which cluster they are in, gave high marks to:

- Living in a safe community with excellent schools that is family-friendly and provides a small-town environment.
- Programs and messaging that build community pride.
- Educational excellence.
- A supportive environment for raising families in a safe community with small-town advantages.

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## Obstacles to overcome

The biggest brand issue Geneseo has is the perception among some residents that it is not a welcoming community. It's important to address this because of the impact it has on the ability of the community to grow.

- Those ages 40 to 59 are most likely to see Geneseo as unwelcoming. These are likely people who have moved to Geneseo to work in the community. Attracting a quality work force is important for Geneseo's ability to grow, and making those new to the area feel welcome will be a benefit in many ways.
- More than half of those in the Newcomers cluster feel Geneseo is unwelcoming to newcomers. Newcomers, who make up about a quarter of Geneseo residents, have a lot to offer the community, but at this time, they're not as engaged or enthusiastic as other groups.
- Those in the Passing Through cluster really do not feel welcomed. Three-fourths of this group said Geneseo is not welcoming to newcomers. While Geneseo may not be the right fit for many of these residents, increasing the welcome factor with them will improve their perceptions of Geneseo and the word-of-mouth they generate after they move elsewhere.

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## **Building engagement**

No matter the age or length of residency in Geneseo, community members are likely to embrace messaging that appeals on an emotional level to the importance of family, the significance of small-town living (including safety), and the relevance of education/schools today and well into the future.

Even more engagement will be built by implementing tactics that help all residents feel more welcome and included in the community.