



## *Inside the Issue*

**Feeling frustrated over maintaining your New Year's Resolution? Check out page 2 for suggestions.**

**Mattie Lomoglio, a Youth Committee member and Sophomore at Potsdam High School offers her perspective on COVID and isolation on page 3.**

**January and February can be two difficult months for anyone suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder or the winter blues. Check out page 4 for some mood lifting ideas.**

Happy New Year, everyone! It was a busy holiday season, in the Youth Bureau, and we wanted to offer a very warm, "Thank you" to everyone who supported our Holiday Card drive! We received approximately 1,500 cards which were delivered to St. Lawrence County residents in need of some holiday cheer! Please consider making cards and notes for our Valentine's Card Drive too. Cards are due to the Youth Bureau by February 10th. Thank you! Here's to a healthier, happier, and supportive 2022!

**-Alexa J. Backus Youth Bureau Director**

**HAPPY**  
New Year  
**2022**

# New Year's Resolutions and Keeping It Real

by Alexa J. Backus



Developing a New Year's Resolution can be a nice way to start your new year. For many, a new year represents a fresh start or even a re-start. However, many teens feel overwhelmed by their new goals.

Here are a few things to consider:

## 1. **Keep your New Year's Resolution**

**realistic.** Consider breaking your resolution into a more manageable goal. Often we make BIG, blanketed resolutions such as losing weight or getting straight A's. By breaking your resolution into a smaller, more manageable goal, you'll maintain the drive and desire to achieve it. Instead of losing weight, commit to drinking more water throughout the day. Instead of getting straight A's, try committing to better grades on quizzes or tests.

## 2. **Enlist support from your friends and family members.**

By opening up communication about your goals, you'll find you'll have a lot of encouragement and maybe even friends who will join you on your betterment journey.

## 3. **Evaluate your goals after 30 days.**

How are you doing? Do you feel happy with your success? If not, it's okay. Take time to reset and adjust your goal so you keep motivated. Good luck!

## According to Modern Teen, the 15 Best New Year's Resolutions for Teens are:

1. **Get in Shape**
2. **Find a New Hobby**
3. **Reduce Stress**
4. **Get Better Grades**
5. **Compliment More People**
6. **Make a Daily Schedule**
7. **Drink More Water**
8. **Practice Better Hygiene**
9. **Make New Friends**
10. **Ditch Drugs and Alcohol**
11. **Go Outside More**
12. **Reduce Your Screen Time**
13. **Learn Things That You Don't Learn at School**
14. **Give Back**
15. **Capture More Moments in Life**

Check Out the Full Article:



## We'd love to hear from you, what are your New Year's Resolutions for 2022?

Email them to [ABackus@stlawco.org](mailto:ABackus@stlawco.org) and we'll post them in February's newsletter!

# TEEN PERSPECTIVE ON COVID 19



Written by Mattie Lomoglio

The COVID-19 Pandemic has created an uproar of emotions throughout the past few years. It has proposed a need for a vaccine, mask mandates, proper hygiene, and store and business closings. Millions of people have been impacted by the pandemic, whether it be physically or emotionally, we have all had to adjust to the new reality that it has created. But one thing that we should all realize is that we are not alone. Millions of other people are experiencing the same feelings or thoughts as well and we are all trying to cope with the emotions that the pandemic has brought.

Isolation and quarantine are some of the biggest effects of COVID-19 that make people feel depressed or alone. Quarantining causes many people to become or feel separated from their family or friends, which can lead to an increase in poor mental health and depression. Teens, in particular, have faced the struggle of being separated from their friends, not being able to fully participate in school, sports, or other extracurricular activities, and adjusting to the new “normalcy” of the world as a result of the pandemic. College students, along with high school students, haven’t gotten a chance to get proper education because of closings, maskings, and quarantining.

Despite the stress and feelings of loneliness that the pandemic brings, now is a better time than ever to grow closer with family and friends, find new things to love, and appreciate the things that we have. One of the ways we can cope with unwanted feelings is by doing things that we love. Listening to music, drawing, watching movies, and communicating with our family whether it be virtually or in person. It is important to know that even in the midst of a global pandemic, there is still so much positivity that can be achieved by doing things that we love. Hopefully, in the near future, we won’t have to wear masks, social distance, or quarantine so that we can go back to living in a normal world where we won’t have to worry about catching the virus.

# FEELING A BIT SLUGGISH AFTER THE HOLIDAY SEASON? CHECK OUT THESE 8 TIPS TO BEAT THE WINTER BLUES-



**From Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center:**

## **1. Lighten up.**

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Your body and your brain are craving more daylight, which makes your body release the feel-good hormone serotonin. Walk outside during the day, even when it's cold, to get some sun exposure. Sitting closer to windows during the day can also help you get an extra dose of sunshine. Doctors usually recommend that people with SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) use a light box (a special light that simulates daylight) for 30 minutes per day. Using a light box may boost your mood even if you haven't been diagnosed with SAD, but keep in mind they can be pretty pricey, and need to be used in a specific way. Everybody, however, can get out during the daytime, even for just a few minutes. You may feel your worst in the morning, but make an effort to open up the curtains and soak in the morning rays. Remember: hibernation is for bears, not you!

## **2. Eat to improve your mood.**

Certain foods such as chocolate have been shown to improve moods and help relieve anxiety. Candy and carbohydrates, like cookies or white bread, on the other hand, feel good when you're eating them, but make you feel worse later when your blood sugar crashes. Little comforts that don't lay on the carbs, like a cup of tea or small piece of dark chocolate, can help you relax without sabotaging yourself later. It's also important to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, which can leave you feeling more optimistic in the long run. Make a pot of vegetable soup or chili to get the cozy feel of a cup of hot chocolate without the sugar crash.

## **3. Get moving.**

More and more research suggests that exercise is a great way to help deal with (and maybe even prevent) depression. Exercise as simple as walking for 30 (or even 10!) minutes can have a significant impact on your mood. Bundle up and go for a walk, play basketball with friends indoors at a community center or gym, or dance around your living room. Staying active helps stop winter weight gain, too.

**CONTINUED...**



#### **4. Listen to an upbeat playlist.**

Research in 2013 from the University of Missouri suggested that listening to cheerful music can improve your mood, even after the song ends. So put away the ballads for the winter, and listen to something with a good beat that you can dance to!

#### **5. Help others.**

Volunteering your time to help someone else can improve mental health and how satisfied you feel with your life. Help out a local organization. Clean out your closet and donate the clothes you've grown out of. Put in some extra effort around the house to help out your family. Do something kind for a friend. The possibilities are endless!

#### **6. Stay social.**

You may feel inclined to spend more time alone. However, spending time with friends and loved ones can have a serious impact on your mood. If you begin flaking on your friends more during the fall and winter, ask someone to help you keep those commitments.

#### **7. Relax.**

Being mindful, doing deep breathing exercises, and meditating can all have a significant impact on how you feel. Try taking several deep, slow breaths, filling your belly as you inhale and letting it deflate as you exhale. Concentrate on nothing but your breathing.

#### **8. Be kind to yourself.**

We've given you a lot of tips on how to deal with feeling down. But when you're depressed, it can be really hard to find the motivation to actually *do* these things. If you skip a workout or stay in all day, don't get mad at yourself. Instead, think about what you'd say to a good friend going through something similar.

These small changes can lighten your mood and help you get through the winter blues.

**Check out the full article-**



# Mood Boosting Recipe-

## Chocolate Chia Pudding

Chocolate Chia Pudding is a healthy dessert made with chia seeds, milk, cocoa powder and maple syrup. It's a sweet, chocolatey and low-carb feel good treat!



5 from 215 votes

AUTHOR [Yumna Jawad](#)

SERVINGS 2 servings

COURSE Snack

CALORIES 237

[From Feel Good Foodie](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons [maple syrup](#)
- 1/2 teaspoon [vanilla extract](#)
- 1 cup coconut milk (*carton refrigerated kind*)
- 1/3 cup [chia seeds](#)

## INSTRUCTIONS




- Sift cocoa powder into a medium deep mixing bowl. Add maple syrup, vanilla extract and pinch of salt. Whisk to combine until smooth.
- Add the coconut milk on top and whisk to combine. Pour the chia seeds on top of the mixture and whisk to combine one more time.
- Cover and refrigerate until the mixture thickens, and becomes pudding like, at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight.
- Enjoy with fresh coconut whip cream and berries, if desired.



# January 2022

## A few National Month observances:

- New Years Day
- National Technology Day
- National Rubber Ducky Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
						1 New Years Day	
2	3	4 	5	6 National Technology Day 	7	8 	
9	10	11	12	13 National Rubber Ducky Day 	14	15 Moonlight Ski/Snowshoe 	
16	17 MLK DAY 	18 DRIVE SAFELY 	19 OFA 5HR Safe Driving Course 		20	21	22 Ski/Snowshoe in Russell 
23 	24	25	26	27	28 	29 National Puzzle Day 	
30	31 National Hot Chocolate Day 						

## FAMILY & YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SPECIAL INTEREST DATES

- 1/15 Nicandri Nature Center Moonlight Ski/Snowshoe Event
  - More Info [HERE](#)
- 1/18-1/19 OFA 5 Hour Safe Driving Course
  - More Info [HERE](#)
- 1/22 Snowshoe/Hike Event in Russell
  - More Info [HERE](#)
- Ogdensburg Pavilion Events
  - Click [HERE](#)
- Waddington Library Events
  - Click [HERE](#)

- 1/1 New Years Day
- 1/2 Science Fiction Day
- 1/4 Spaghetti Day
- 1/6 National Technology Day
- 1/8 Elvis Presley's Birthday
- 1/10 National Clean Your Desk Day
- 1/13 National Rubber Ducky Day
- 1/15 National Hat Day
- 1/17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/17 Michelle Obama's Birthday
- 1/19 National Popcorn Day
- 1/23 National Pie Day
- 1/24 National Compliment Day
- 1/28 National Lego Day
- 1/29 National Puzzle Day
- 1/31 National Hot Chocolate Day

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**

**Email your events  
to [slcyouthbureau@gmail.com](mailto:slcyouthbureau@gmail.com)**

# COLLEGE (PREP) CORNER



Recently, high school Juniors and Seniors haven't been taking college entrance tests like the SAT or ACT since many colleges adopted test optional policies due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Yet, the question remains: should high school students take these tests for college admissions?

**Check out this Q&A by Nicholas LaPoma with Curvebreaker Test Prep:**

**Q: No one's going to submit an SAT score because so many schools are test optional. So why should I spend the money and time to prepare?**

A: Hofstra University, a test optional school in Hempstead, New York, writes that over 75% of their applicants submit standardized exam scores. I haven't been able to find a reliable statistic on how many admitted students submitted test scores, but I'd wager that it's well above 75%. The SAT will be around for a while.

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**Q: I'm applying for college in the fall of 2022. Am I going to need to take the SAT, since COVID-19 has caused so much disruption?**

A: While the move towards test optional policies has been gaining momentum in recent years, COVID-19 seems unlikely to cement test optional policies as the norm in college admissions. Many colleges that have adopted test optional policies due to COVID-19 have stipulated that they are one-year policies and will expire when the now-juniors apply for college in 2022. Yale College, for instance, recently published a statement expressly stating that "transfer applicants and students who intend to apply for admission to enroll in fall 2022 or later should plan to complete the ACT or SAT by the appropriate deadlines."





# COLLEGE (PREP) CORNER CONTINUED...



**Q: I need to earn scholarships to be able to afford college. Can I apply test optional?**

**A:** Many scholarships require students to submit standardized exam scores. Students hoping to earn college scholarships should review that scholarship's conditions to see if they offer awards to test optional students. Most of the scholarships I've seen, like the National Merit Incentive Scholarships, require students to submit SAT scores.

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**Q: I want to apply to specialized college programs. Do I still have to take the SAT?**

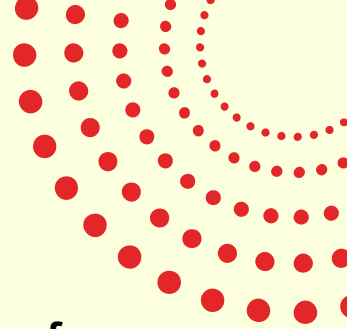
**A:** Students seeking to apply to specialized academic or athletic programs must take standardized exams. George Washington University, for instance, adopted a test optional policy but exempted certain students — NCAA athletes and students seeking to be admitted to their seven-year BA/MD program. Similarly, certain schools within a university system may be test optional while others may still require exams. For instance, SUNY Binghamton requires that applicants submit standardized exam scores, while Purchase College does not. So, based on your individual academic goals, you may still be required to take the SAT even though your prospective institution adopts a test optional policy. Some colleges like the Fashion Institute of Technology use the SAT to place students into higher-level courses. Many colleges also exempt students from introductory classes if they've performed well on SAT II exams. Thus, taking the SAT may allow you to skip those tedious low-level courses and advance your degree more quickly.

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# COLLEGE (PREP) CORNER

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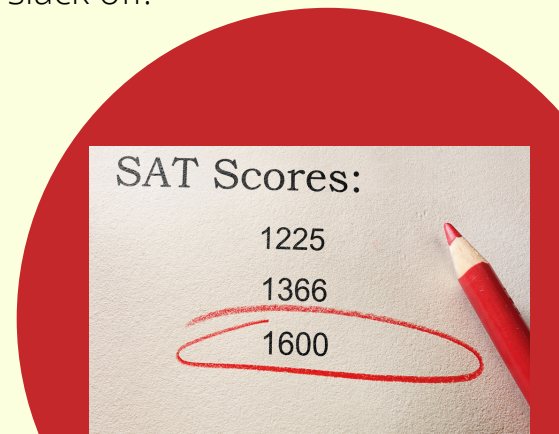


**Q: So if I don't take the SAT, should I spend more time on the other parts of my application?**

**A:** Cornell's Admission Department writes that admissions officers "will consider with increased scrutiny [the] other application documents" from students who do not submit test scores. Without your SAT score, they expect to see clear evidence of "excellent academic preparation," which includes "challenging courses and excellent grades in secondary school... [and] evidence of commitment and effort to pursuing other challenging learning experiences." This statement is fluffed up with collegiate pedanticism, but I believe that the intent is clear: without the SAT, your application needs to explicitly demonstrate your academic potential.

We all overestimate our chances, especially in college admissions. Tens of thousands of high school students apply for the same five-hundred seats every year. So when students tell me that they're considering applying test optional, I always ask what else they're doing to differentiate themselves. How are your grades? What extracurriculars have you been involved in, and to what extent do you participate? How else will you demonstrate your academic, social, emotional, and personal development to your prospective schools? If they can't come up with anything, or their answers aren't truly stellar, I advise them that taking the SAT might be the right path for them. I often say that test optional schools view the standardized exams like an extracurricular, or any other feather in your proverbial applicant's cap. If you aren't investing the time there, you need to do something else to fill that gap. It might make sense for a student to apply test optional when they're taking advanced classes at local universities or pursuing leadership positions in extracurriculars. So, if you're considering applying test optional, everything else in your application needs to be superb. Don't take advantage of the test optional policy to slack off.

**To access Nicholas LaPoma's full Q & A with Curvebreakers Test Prep:**



# COLLEGE (PREP) CORNER CONTINUED...



## SAT TEST DATES

Test Date.....	Registration Deadline
March 12, 2022.....	February 11, 2022
May 7, 2022.....	April 8, 2022
June 4, 2022.....	May 5, 2022

## ACT TEST DATES

Test Date.....	Registration Deadline
February 12, 2022.....	January 7, 2022
April 2, 2022.....	February 25, 2022
June 11, 2022.....	May 6, 2022
July 16, 2022.....	June 17, 2022

## TO REGISTER-

**SAT**



**ACT**





ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING  
AND  
YOUTH BUREAU

# VALENTINE'S CARD DRIVE

Students, of all ages, are invited to make cards, notes, or pictures for the elderly. Let's spread some love and happiness this Valentine's Day!

Please mail or deliver cards by Thursday, **2/10/22** to:  
SLC Youth Bureau 80 SH 310 Suite 4 Canton, NY 13617  
For more information, email [ABackus@stlawco.org](mailto:ABackus@stlawco.org)  
or call 315.379.9464