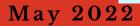
YOUTH BUREAU NEWS

A St. Lawrence County Monthly Newsletter





Vol 2 Issue 5



Inside the Issue

The SLC Youth Committee has launched a Sextortion and Teen Suicide Prevention campaign. Check out the art and video contest for middle and high school students to educate, advocate, and prevent teen suicide and sextortion. **Deadline** has been extended to Friday, May 20th. Please note: Content in this issue contains sensitive information and discussions of teen death, suicide, sextortion, and asphyxiation, which some readers may find difficult. If you need support, at any time, please call St. Lawrence County's REACHOUT crisis hotline at 315.265.2422 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800.273.8255 May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Check out the youth self care workshops Kat Manierre, with SLC Health Initiative, offers this month.

Additionally, our Teen Ambassadors will lead a virtual discussion on Reducing the Stigma behind Mental Illness on Tuesday, May 24th at 7:00 pm





AN EVENING OF CONVERSATION

THURSDAY MAY 5, 2022 7:00 PM

A Message from the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau Director

On the eve of Xander's Conversation, I feel it's appropriate to dedicate our May newsletter to the Worthley family. Shane and Sondra Worthley, Xander's parents, have shown great courage to come to us and have the desire to share Xander's story. Xander, 12 years old and in the 7th grade, passed on March 21st by unintentional strangulation from the choking game or challenge. In the following pages, you'll find information on the choking challenge and what you can do to proactively prevent this from happening again.

I appreciate the time Shane and Sondra have spent with me and I'm honored to have learned more about Xander. Xander enjoyed playing Minecraft with his brothers, Kaden and Kolten. He also enjoyed time outdoors on his bike or bowling with his family. He had plans of rebuilding a truck, which Shane is currently doing in Xander's honor. Xander was no different than your typical middle school tween.

We urge you, the parent, to understand that there are no boundaries or immunity when it comes to the dangers kids face online every single day. It is our responsibility to become aware of these dangers, educate ourselves, open dialogue, and monitor screen time. Last year, we learned that 66% of St. Lawrence County parents are NOT monitoring their child's screen time as answered by 696 teens in the 2021 Youth Bureau Needs Assessment. Through our advocacy efforts, our hope is to support our families, in St. Lawrence County, in becoming very proactive in equipping our children with a stronger skill set to be safe online, learn how to say, "NO' to peer pressure, and how to have honest, real conversations about very tough topics.

Lastly, the Worthley's message is clear, "*talk to your children and know what they are doing online.*" Thank you, Shane and Sondra, for being so passionate about helping other families during your grief.

-Alexa J. Backys

What is the Choking Challenge?

- A dangerous activity, mainly by tweens and teens, in which purposeful strangulation occurs to experience a brief euphoric high.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns that the game can escalate from suffocation to death in less than three minutes.
- According to the CDC, 82 deaths were reported from 1995-2007. In a 2008 study, the CDC reported that most of the reported deaths were boys ages 11-16.
- Data is very difficult to accurately measure because often deaths are reported as asphyxial suicide.
- According to the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, the most common age for participants is 12, an age when children are susceptible to peer pressure and do not consider the consequences of risky behavior. The next most-common ages are 13 and 14, and 89 percent are boys.
- Items such as belts, ropes, scarves, dog collars, and shoelaces are used.



OTHER NAMES FOR THE CHOKING CHALLENGE

- Pass-Out Game
- Space Monkey
- Space Cowboy
- Airplaning
- Purple Dragon
- Cloud Nine
- Scarf Game
- Blackout Game

According to Time.com, evidence suggests children have been playing this game since the 1930's.



- Curiosity
- Peer Pressure
- A high without the use of drugs or alcohol
- Dares

Signs that a child could be participating in the game:

- Marks/bruising around the neck
- Pinpoint blood marks under the skin of the face and eyelids
- Blood shot eyes or eye problems
- Frequent, severe headaches
- Uncharacteristic hostility
- Secretive behavior
- Ropes, scarves, belts or other items tied to objects like door knobs
- Wearing clothing that covers the neck even in warm weather
- Confusion or disorientation after being alone for awhile
- Presence of dog leashes, ropes, scarves, bungee cords, belts
- Wear marks on bedposts, door knobs
- Frequent need for privacy
- Talking about the game

Resources: Children's Hospital of Los Angeles The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Erikscause.org

What to do if you suspect your child is experimenting with this activity:

- Talk honestly and openly. Communication is essential.
- Explain the dangers, which include coma, brain damage, concussion, broken bones, eye damage and death.
- Increase your supervision of your son or daughter.
- Remove items such as belts, scarves, collars, and ropes.
- Alert the school since other children may be at risk. Talk to your child's Guidance Department.
- Talk to your child's Pediatrician or health care professional.
- Seek help from mental health professionals.



REACHOUT St. Lawrence County Crisis Hotline

(315) 265-2422

Resources: Children's Hospital of Los Angeles The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Erikscause.org



Tips for Teens, from Tik Tok, if you see an online challenge





STOP: Pause a moment.

THINK:

Is it safe? Is it harmful? Is it real? If you're unsure, check with an adult or friends, or look for more information from authoritative sources online.





DECIDE:

If it's risky or harmful, or you're not sure if it is, don't do it. It's not worth putting yourself or others at risk.

ACT:

Report harmful challenges or hoaxes in-app. Don't share them.

How to report dangerous online challenges on Tik Tok

Attention Teens:

If you come across anyone who has been promoting any dangerous challenges report it immediately.

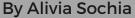
To report a challenge, on TikTok, follow the steps below:

- Click on the white arrow on the right-hand side of the video
- Press the icon that says 'report' with a flag symbol
- Select "suicide, self-harm, and dangerous acts"

NOTE:

If you come across anyone who has been asking you to do any dangerous challenges, do NOT engage, and report the person immediately.

Sextortion





Alivia is a freshman at Parishville Hopkinton High School and a Teen Ambassador



The FBI describes Sextortion as "A serious crime that occurs when someone threatens to distribute your private and sensitive material if you don't provide them images of a sexual nature, sexual favors, or money."

In many cases there is a blackmailer and the person being blackmailed. The blackmailer cons the person being blackmailed into sending explicit images, money or etc. With the threat of private or sensitive information like explicit images.

October 2013-April 2016, there were one thousand four hundred twenty-eight reported counts of sextortion on minors made to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. 78% were female, 15% were male, the other 7% were non-binary, gender was unknown, or preferred not to put a gender. The ages of the reported children ranged anywhere from eight to seventeen. I would like to emphasize that these are only the reported cases, yearly many get unreported. Whether that is because of fear or etc.

If you are accused of committing Sextortion against a minor, you could be charged with sexual exploitation of a minor under 18. The law states that any person who forces or persuades a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct can face up to 30 years in federal prison. But for non- minors the charging is different. Sextortion also carries the same penalties as other forms of extortion, meaning this felony offense is punishable by 2 to 4 years in prison and an attempt to commit this crime can be charged as a Felony or Misdemeanor, resulting in 1 to 3 years in jail or prison.

As a result of Sextortion, victims commonly experienced a range of negative outcomes, including hopelessness, fear, anxiety and depression. With some type of negative outcome, it was indicated that about 1 in 3 children had engaged in self-harm, threatened suicide or attempted suicide as a result of the victimization.

In our area, this has become a first step of the issue. Sextortion leads to teens becoming unaware of any other options because of the looming fear of exploitation. Over the years and the rise of technology has made the ability for Sextortion to happen and for the number of victims rise. With this rise it's important for families to be able to talk to their teens about topics like Sextortion. Teens need to know that you don't know who you are really communicating with on social media, and you should not send images or texts that you don't want shared with others. And if something goes wrong, even terribly wrong, in social media interactions all is not lost. There are people who can help.

The Art and Video design project on Sextortion and Teen Suicide is a great way to help advocate against the issue of Sextortion. Teens submit an art or video design educating, advocating, and preventing teen suicide or Sextortion by Friday, May 20th.

Did you say contest?

SEXTORTION and TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION









ART & CONTEST

Submit an **art design or video** educating, advocating, and preventing teen suicide and sextortion by **Friday, May 20th**.

Consider the following for your design piece or video:

- Be COURAGEOUS because YOU can get out of any situation
- REACHOUT for help
- Find an ADULT
- There's always HOPE
- Don't REACT....RETHINK

A winning art design and video will be chosen for each category of Sextortion and Teen Suicide Prevention at both the Middle and High school levels.





OR Contact your school's Youth Committee Ambassador or the SLC Youth Bureau at 315.379.9464 -Alexa Backus at ABackus@stlawco.org





PRIZES

2022 2nd Annual Trash Dash





Thankyou

A big "thank you" is extended to several county departments who helped to make our Trash Dash a success:

- Department of Weights and Measures
- County Highway Department
- Sheriff's Department
- Community Services
- Office for the Aging

What is a Trash Dash?

Answer: Walking the distance of a 5K (3.1 miles) while picking up trash.

Each year, our Youth Committee Ambassadors help organize and promote this county wide initiative. Five locations were chosen for the roadside trash clean-up which included Ogdensburg, Potsdam, Massena, Canton, and Gouverneur. The Youth Bureau received a \$500 grant from the Hershey's Heartwarming Project and the Allstate Foundation. Cole Siebels, a senior at GHS, wrote the grant application. The grant monies were used to purchase supplies for the event. This year approximately 125 youth and teens registered to attend which included several organizations such as Gouverneur High School's Honor Society, PAL of Massena, Ogdensburg Key Club, Reality Check, Massena Interact Club, and Heuvelton's Boy Scout Troop 9.









2022 Trash Dash Results:

Gouverneur 123.69 pounds (2.2% tobacco items) Potsdam 254.64 pounds (16.8% tobacco items) Ogdensburg 125.8 pounds (0.6% tobacco items) Canton 246.02 pounds of garbage (16% tobacco items) Massena

71.22 pounds of garbage (20.6% tobacco items

Included 95.52lbs. of tobacco based items









2022 2nd Annual Trash Dash

























WRITTEN BY: ALIVIA SOCHIA



COVID IMPACTS ON EARTH DAY



Earth day is an annual event globally to support environmental protection. Earth day is a day to bring importance and awareness to pollution. By the time this newspaper is released Earth day will have passed, in spite of that, the meaning and passion of Earth day shouldn't be lost any other day. COVID has had many effects worldwide and in every corner of existence in many ways shapes and forms. Pollution is an unexpected one.

As young school age children we are taught to love the Earth and take care of it. Making Earth day an important day to children. But as we get older it becomes a less important day. On Earth day of two thousand twenty-two, what did you do to help the environment? On Earth day you could do something as simple as taking a quick walk around the block to pick up trash or planting a tree. To make more permanent changes to make everyday Earth day, implement the three 'R's', Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in your life.

We all consume products that often require raw materials and energy to be created and which generate waste when we are finished with them. These habits are so incorporated into our daily lives, and they are eliminated so quickly, that they hardly register in our minds. This ongoing consumption is having a devastating impact on our oceans, our wildlife, and our health. By employing the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle system we can minimize the negative environmental impacts of our everyday living.

In the wake of Covid-19 you may have noticed an increase of COVID related trash on the side of roads or sidewalks. Trash like used blue surgical masks are a common sight on sides of roads or storm drains after this exhaustive pandemic. Four hundred fifty, that is how many years it is speculated to take for the masks to decompose.

Surgical masks are not made of paper, but polypropylene, which is part of the thermoplastic family. A mask thrown away on the street will most likely probably make its way to marine waters through sewers and rivers, adding to the millions of debris floating on the surface of the ocean. Over time, it will break down into microplastics that are likely to get ingested by fish and other animals. In due course it could cause irreversible damage to the environment.

Earth day is a crucial day, it is only one day in three hundred sixty-five. But spending that one day a year doing good for the environment, is key. I myself spent time cleaning up a stretch of roadway in my community, dedicating an hour or two a day, on the week of Earth day to clean up the stretch of drive. The Youth Bureau held their second annual Trash Dash, in many locations in St. Lawrence county. The Trash Dash is meant to clean up a stretch of highway, with the distance being that of a 5k.

Celebrating Earth Day was key even before the pandemic, pollution is a serious issue that has been increasing over the years. COVID added to this international issue by placing this unexpected pollution like adding more clouds on an already foggy day. By celebrating Earth Day everyday, you could help your community. Even more than your community, you're environment. You're World.



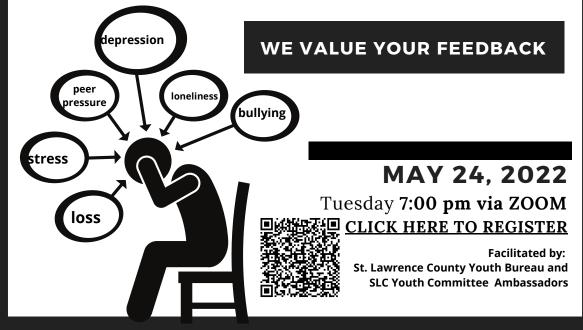


FOR YOUTH GRADES 6-12

YOUTH VIRTUAL MEETING

YOUTH PERSECTIVE:

"How are you doing?" Reducing the Stigma Associated with Mental Illness



K	P -202.	 A few National Month observances: Military Appreciation Month National Get Caught Reading Month National Lyme Disease Awareness Month Teacher Appreciation Week 1st-7th Nurses Week 6th-12th EMS Week 15th-21st 				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mother 1 Goose Day School Principal Day	2	National Teacher's Day	4	5	6	Strut Your Mutt & 7 Craft Fair HeLa Cells & Microscopes
Mommy & Me Paint & Sip	9	10 Clean your room Day	11	12	13	Sandstone Spring Classic
15	16	17 Charlotte's Web OFA	18	19	20	National Armed 21 Forces Day
22	23	24	25 Bridge to Wellness Spring Fling	26	27	28
29	MEMORIAL DAY	31				

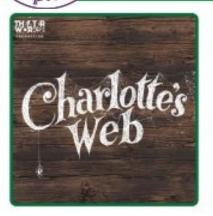
St. Lawrence County Calendar of Events for Families



A LIFELONG LOVE OF THEATRE BEGINS HERE... NOW, MORE THAN EVER, CHILDREN NEED A CHANCE TO LAUGH

2022 YOUTHEATRE: CLASS ACTS...

Order Right Away! Shows Fill-Up Quickly! Reservations are processed in the order they are received! [Performances will be canceled if OFA is closed]



adensh

Charlotte's Web May 17 - OFA - 9:15 & 11

Based on E.B. White's loving story of friendship between a pig named Wilbur and a spider named Charlotte. To help with Wilbur's problem: how to avoid winding up as pork chops, Charlotte will create a "miracle." Spinning the words "Some Pig" in her web, Charlotte weaves a solution which makes Wilbur a prize pig and ensures his place on the farm forever. This treasured tale, featuring madcap and endearing farm animals, explores bravery, selfless love, and the true meaning of friendship.

(Grades 3-6) \$3.50

<u>Click Here for an order form</u>

HEW YORK Council on the Arts

This season is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York State Legislature

SUNY Potsdam's CREATIVE **atts** camp

JOIN US...

July 25 - August 6, 2022 SUNY Potsdam Performing Arts Center

Saturday August 6th is showcase day! All campers present the work they have done the previous two weeks.



For more information & registration go to: **potsdam.edu/cac** Questions? Call (315) 267-2547

Please register your child by the year of school they are going into in the Fall of 2022.

Camp registration includes a t-shirt and free tickets to the final performances. Campers must provide their own lunch. LEARN MORE



BOARD RENTALS THROUGH POTSDAM RECREATION

Wednesday - Sunday | 10am - 5pm 10 Raymond Street Potsdam 315-274-9380

HeLa Cells and Microscopes

Saturday, May 7th, 11:00am and 2:00pm

To celebrate Mother's Day, we're zooming in on the Mother of Modern Medicine, Henrietta Lacks, and using microscopes to look at our own cells!

Mommy and Me Sip & Paint

Sunday, May 8th, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Mommy and Me Sip n' Paint Mother's Day Event at the Museum! Join our arts educator for a fun guided painting event to celebrate Moms and creativity. The museum will provide sparking cider to this first of its kind event to honor the mothers in our lives.

No need to preregister

Programs included with membership and admission Visit https://northcountrychildrensmuseum.org/events/ for more May Events!

Potsdam Humane Society 13th Annual Strut Your Mutt Dog Walk & Craft Show

> Free Admission **Pine Street Arena** Saturday May 7th WALK REGISTRATION 8:30am-9:30am Walk begins promptly at 9:30am

Free Parkins ft Fair 9:00am-2:00pm

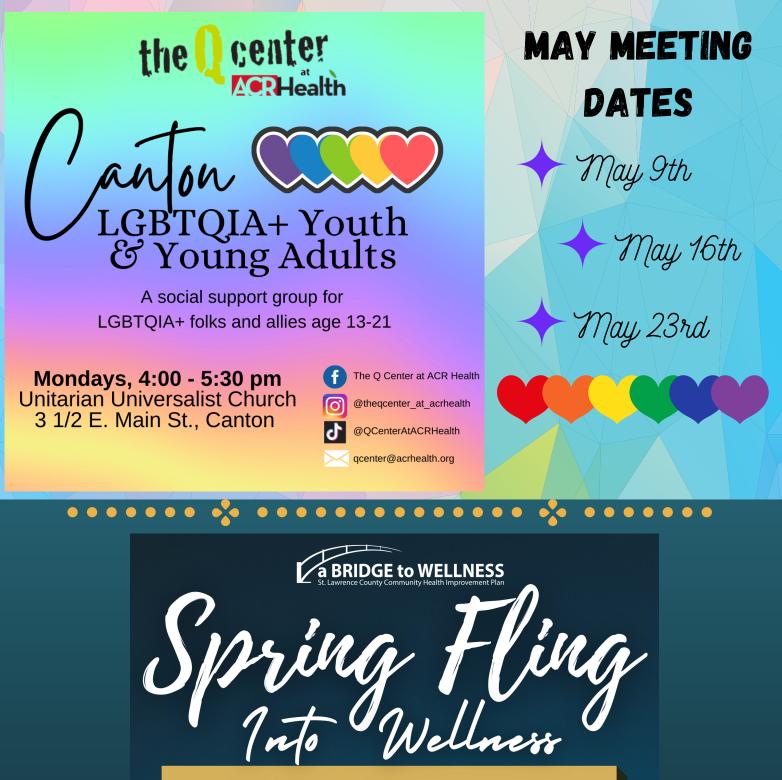
Food and Family Activities

Mother's Day

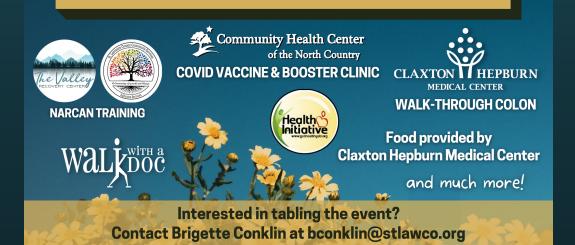
STEAM

Activities

The day kicks off with our benefit dog walk- which offers a relaxed event with water stops along the way. Walk eligibility is by collecting pledge donations from family, friends, and co-workers- OR - making a donation on behalf of yourself. NO SET MINIMUM! Every bit helps! All walkers have chances to win many prizes donated by local businesses.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022 2PM - 6PM NEW YORK AVE PARK, OGDENSBURG



Teens are invited to join the Health Initiative in celebrating

SEX ED FOR ALL MONTH!



Jamey@gethealthyslc.org

The more you attend, the more you could win!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

The CAPP Program is taking time this month to focus specifically on youth and adolescent mental health by providing free, 45-minute self-care workshops to middle and high school students in St. Lawrence, Lewis, and Jefferson County. Adolescence is a crucial period for developing life-long habits necessary for physical, mental, social, and emotional health and well-being. Coping skills and self-care strategies play an essential role in positive youth development. Our self-care workshop is designed to help youth explore the concept of self-care and create a self-care plan tailored to their specific needs.

In this workshop participants will:

- Define self-care and what it means to them,
- Discuss the importance of self-care,
- Brainstorm specific activities from multiple dimensions of self-care, and
- Create a personalized self-care plan through a crafting activity.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule this workshop, please contact Kat Manierre, CAPP Health Educator Supervisor at Kat@gethealthyslc.org.

May is Sex Ed For All Month!

Did you know that May, once previously recognized at Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month is now Sex Ed for All Month? This is an opportunity to raise awareness and call for investment in sex education in our schools and communities.

The shift to Sex Ed for All Month marked a turn away from messaging that could be seen as problematic and stigmatizing. Instead, we want to stand with young people, so they are empowered and have the right to access the sexual health education and healthcare they need to achieve the best outcomes for themselves. Sexual health education encompasses so much more than just risk reduction and disease prevention. The shift to Sex Ed for All Month allows an opportunity to adjust the lens through which sexual health education is viewed and address the sex education young people deserve in a more holistic way so they can make healthy decisions, have healthy relationships, and have positive health outcomes. To celebrate Sex Ed for All Month, our CAPP team will be offering virtual workshops for teens every weekday during the week of 5/23 from 4-5pm each day. Topics will range from LGBTQ+ 101, to healthy relationships, to birth control, and more! Email jamey@gethealthyslc.org for more information and to get the Zoom link. Eligible teens will be entered to win \$25 gift cards in a raffle at the end of the week!



CAPP Health Educator Supervisor to schedule!

kat@gethealthyslc.org



ALK FOR A VOICE **SUICIDE AWARENESS**

This is the fourth year the non profit organization "Ride For a Voice" has raised money for **Suicide Awareness** for St. Lawrence County and The New Beginnings food pantry

In light of the increased suicide rate due to the national pandemic, we invite all to take part in our fundraising efforts

Madrid-Waddington Central School Track Sunday, May 22, 2022 **Registration will begin at 11:00am 11am-2pm**

Ask friends and family to sponsor you and invite them to join you

Checks can be made out to Ride for a Voice, money can be handed in on the day of the event

To Print a Pledge Sheet Click Here

Raise over \$50 to receive a free t-shirt

BASKET RAFFLES & 50/50 REFRESHMENTS

AVAILABLE

Money this year will be donated to Citizen Advocates for their new crisis center in **Ogdensburg**, NY and **Madrid New Beginnings**

SLC Youth Committee Ambassadors

BE A LEADER

HAVE A VOICE

make a differe**n**ce

Contact

Alexa Backus

ABackus@stlawco.org 315.379.9464 Now Recruiting from the following schools:

- Clifton Fine
- Edwards Knox
- Madrid-Waddington
- Hammond
- Hermon DeKalb
- Morristown
- Norwood-Norfolk
- Ogdensburg
- St. Lawrence Central

GOALS

The St. Lawrence County Youth Committee has openings so that every high school has a teen ambassador to support initiatives, programs, and peers. Contact Alexa Backus at **ABackus@stlawco.org**

if your high school doesn't have a teen ambassador.





These magnets can be placed inside your locker



¥AY!s

Coming to your St. Lawrence County school, Teen Take Charge cards are magnets this year and are available for students!

Magnets will be delivered to area schools throughout April. Call the Youth Bureau at **315.379.9464** with any questions.

IEENS TAKE CHARGE							
ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY, NEW YORK							
COUNSELING RESOURCES							
LC Mental Health Clinic Services							
Community Resources							
LC Public Health Department							
alvation Army - Ogdensburg							

CRISIS,	HELP,	AND	EMOTIONAL	SUPPORT
1		· ·		045 065 0400

Massena

Reachout of St. Lawrence County	
St. Lawrence Valley Renewal House	
Planned Parenthood - Canton	
Ogdensburg	
Suicide Prevention Hotline	1.800.273.8255
Child Abuse Hotline	1.800.342.3720
Domestic Violence Hotline	1.800.942.6906
Stop Smoking Hotline	1.866.697.8487
Runaway Switchboard	1.800.786.2929
SLC Sheriff's Office	

