

# YOUTH BUREAU NEWS

A St. Lawrence County Monthly Newsletter



December 2024

Vol 4 Issue 12



## Inside the Issue



Read about the Youth Bureau's partnership with local Girl Scouts and how their **Duffel Bag Project** benefits county youth and teens

The holiday season is typically a time for reflection. Check out how we can help young adults **find connection and purpose within our communities**

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

Check out December **events and announcements** from area organizations and programs



DECEMBER 10, 2024

# HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

DECEMBER 10, 2024 MARKS THE 76TH ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST GROUNDBREAKING PLEDGES, THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS LANDMARK DOCUMENT ENSHRINES THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS THAT EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO AS A HUMAN BEING - REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOUR, RELIGION, SEX, LANGUAGE, POLITICAL OR OTHER OPINION, NATIONAL OR SOCIAL ORIGIN, PROPERTY, BIRTH OR OTHER STATUS.



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# BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR RESILIENT YOUNG ADULTS

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*Amid rising rates of anxiety and depression among teens and young adults, it's clear that many are struggling to find connection, purpose, and balance in their lives. By fostering caring relationships, offering service opportunities, and encouraging exploration of personal and community history, we can help guide them toward greater well-being and fulfillment.*



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Young adults in today's world face many challenges, with recent studies showing national anxiety rates at 36% and depression at 29%. Dr. Richard Weissbourd, a Harvard psychologist and founder of *Make Caring Happen*, highlights two key contributors to this troubling trend: overwhelming achievement pressure and a profound lack of meaning and purpose. These insights compel us as families, educators, and community leaders in St. Lawrence County to reimagine how we can support the next generation.

***One critical approach is fostering caring relationships.*** Connection is a cornerstone of mental well-being, and communities can play a vital role by creating spaces where young adults feel valued and understood. This could mean inviting teens to engage in service opportunities, participate in community

projects, or take on leadership roles that reflect their passions. Volunteerism not only strengthens communities but also gives young adults a sense of purpose, building confidence and reducing isolation.

Another suggestion from Dr. Weissbourd is to explore identity and history. ***Encouraging young adults to learn about their ancestors, family traditions, or the history of our county can instill a deeper sense of belonging.*** These connections to the past can serve as a powerful reminder that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Finally, consider inviting young adults to explore spaces that nurture reflection and community, such as churches or interfaith gatherings. Even without a focus on religion, these settings often foster meaningful conversations, community engagement, and opportunities for self-discovery.

*As we enter this season of giving and reflection, let us prioritize supporting young adults in finding purpose and connection. Whether through mentoring, sharing stories of local history, or simply showing up to cheer them on, small actions can have a profound impact. Together, we can create a culture where every young person feels valued, supported, and ready to thrive.*

Let's make St. Lawrence County a place where young adults find not just success but true fulfillment. For more ideas or to get involved, reach out to the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau by emailing [Alexa Chase AChase@stlawco.gov](mailto:AlexaChase@stlawco.gov).

***“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”***

***— Mahatma Gandhi***

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# NOW HIRING

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR

This position manages the financial and administrative tasks related to programs funded by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). This role includes coordinating allocations and reimbursements, collecting data, and monitoring funded programs to ensure they meet youth needs. The Youth Development Program Coordinator will work closely with the Youth Bureau Director and may perform related duties as necessary.

### SALARY

\$45,706 with excellent benefits

### BENEFITS

Generous vacation and sick time allowance, Public Service Loan Forgiveness eligibility and the option to enroll in the St. Lawrence County's health insurance or opt out of the insurance and receive a buyout in the amount of \$2,000 for single coverage or \$4,000 for family.

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Possession of Bachelor's degree in Education, Social Work, Psychology, Human Services or a related field; **OR**
- B. Possession of Associate's degree in Education, Social Work, Psychology, Human Services or a related field AND two (2) years of full time paid experience in a recognized youth activities program or a program working with youth oriented activities; **OR**
- C. Possession of a High School Diploma AND four (4) years of full time paid experience in a recognized youth activities program or a program working with youth oriented activities.

### NOTE

Submission of a resume does not relieve you of the responsibility for completing ALL sections of the official application. Your resume is a supplement to the application, not a substitute for it.

### ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

**This is a provisional appointment.** The successful applicant will need to take a civil service examination and score within the top three interested candidates in order to be permanently appointed.

Applications accepted until position has been filled.

Applications can be obtained from the St. Lawrence County's website:

<https://stlaw-portal.mycivilservice.com/>

or by contacting Human Resources

Send application/resume to:

St. Lawrence County Human Resources Office

48 Court Street

Canton, NY13617

(315) 379-2210

POSTED: 11/19/2024

AA/EEO



# Youth Bureau Supports Girl Scouts in Annual Foster Care Duffel Bag Project

*The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau proudly collaborated with local Girl Scouts on their annual Foster Care Duffel Bag Service Project, a heartfelt initiative that supports youth entering foster care through the St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services. This year's effort was a shining example of teamwork and community care.*

In November, the Youth Bureau donated 45 duffel bags to the project. On November 21, three of the Youth Bureau's Teen Ambassadors: Prudence Cutwa, Angiolina Hukovic, and Stanley LaFave personally delivered the duffel bags to the Heuvelton Girl Scout Troop. These bags will be distributed across all five Girl Scout Service Units in St. Lawrence County: International Rapids, Nikentsiaki, Oswegatchie, Picquet, and Raquette Valley.

Each bag is thoughtfully packed with essential comfort items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, baby diapers, bottles, crayons, pencils, coloring books, notebooks, mittens, and gloves. These items are collected by the Girl Scouts, with each troop member contributing to the effort.

“Our Girl Scout troops love supporting the Foster Care Duffel Bag Project because they see the direct impact of their efforts,” said Julie Bush, a dedicated Girl Scout volunteer. “Each contribution fills a bag with care and comfort for a child during a very stressful time. Unfortunately, the need continues to grow in our county, making this project essential.”

“This collaboration is a perfect example of the positive impact we can achieve when we work together,” said Alexa Backus Chase, Director of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau. “The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau, Girl Scouts, and Youth Advocate Program remain committed to supporting vulnerable youth and fostering hope through acts of kindness.”

The duffel bags will be formally presented to the Youth Advocate Program (YAP) in January at the Raquette Valley Service Unit's 2025 Cookie Kick-Off celebration at the Norwood-Norfolk School cafeteria. YAP will ensure the bags are distributed to youth in foster care and those in the PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) program.

**The Foster Care Duffel Bag Project** has become a tradition in St. Lawrence County, thanks to the unwavering commitment of the Girl Scouts, the Youth Bureau, and the Youth Advocate Program. This initiative not only provides critical support to youth in need but also teaches young people the importance of community service and compassion.



Pictured above: Heuvelton Girl Scout Troop 50223  
Back Row: Teen Ambassador Prudence Cutwa, Nina Hukovic, and Stan LaFave

# The Power of Community Service

## Benefits for Youth and Teens

Engaging in community service is much more than just a way for young people to fulfill school requirements or college applications. It's an enriching experience that provides countless benefits for youth and teens, shaping their character, building essential skills, and instilling a sense of purpose.

### Developing Life Skills

Community service allows teens to develop critical life skills that are not always taught in the classroom. These include teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, communication, and time management. By volunteering, youth gain hands-on experience that helps prepare them for future challenges in both their personal and professional lives.

### Building Empathy and Social Awareness

Participating in service projects helps teens understand the needs of others and the challenges faced by different communities. Activities like helping at food banks, assisting in foster care initiatives, or organizing local events provide insight into societal issues and foster compassion and empathy.

### Enhancing Mental Health

Giving back to others can improve mental well-being. Studies show that volunteering can reduce stress, combat feelings of loneliness, and increase happiness. The sense of accomplishment that comes from helping others boosts self-esteem and provides a positive outlook on life.



### Strengthening Community Connections

Through community service, teens build relationships with peers, mentors, and other community members. These connections can inspire lifelong friendships, provide valuable networking opportunities, and deepen a young person's sense of belonging in their community.

*“Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.”*  
— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

### Encouraging Civic Responsibility

Volunteering helps teens understand the importance of contributing to their community. They learn the value of taking initiative and being an active, responsible citizen. These experiences often inspire a lifelong commitment to service and social good.



### Exploring Interests and Career Opportunities

Community service projects can help teens discover new interests and passions. For example, participating in environmental cleanups might spark an interest in sustainability, while volunteering with children could inspire a career in education or social work. These experiences provide valuable insight into potential career paths.

### Making a Lasting Impact

One of the most rewarding aspects of community service is seeing the tangible impact of one's efforts. Whether it's filling duffel bags for foster care youth, organizing food drives, or mentoring younger children, teens can take pride in knowing they've made a difference in someone's life.

At the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau, we encourage youth and teens to engage in service projects that align with their interests and passions. Not only do these activities strengthen our community, but they also empower the next generation to become compassionate, capable leaders.

For more information on how to get involved in community service opportunities, or to become a Teen Ambassador in St. Lawrence County, email Alexa Backus Chase at [ACHase@stlawco.gov](mailto:ACHase@stlawco.gov).

# DECEMBER HOLIDAYS

December, 2024



## Christmas

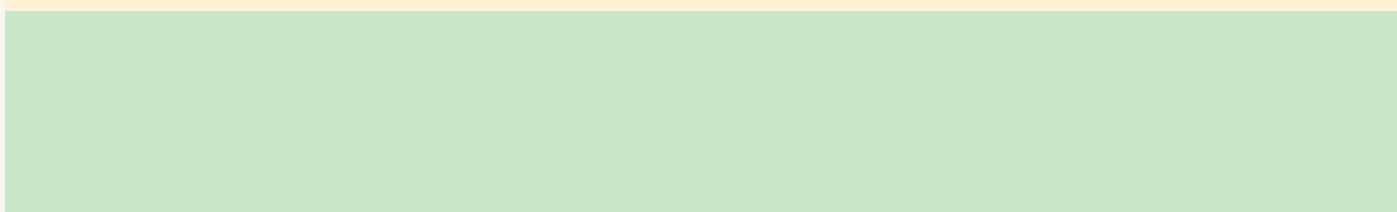
Celebrated  
December 25th  
By Christians  
representing the  
birth of Jesus

## Hannukah

December 25th-January 2nd  
Hanukkah is a Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple at the beginning of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BCE.

## Kwanza

December 26th-January 1st  
Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture culminating in a communal feast called Karamu, usually on the sixth day. It was created by activist Maulana Karenga, based on African harvest festival traditions from various parts of West, East, as well as Southeast Africa.



**SLC Youth Bureau's**

# ANNUAL HOLIDAY CARD DRIVE

SLC YOUTH BUREAU  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

Students of all ages are invited to make holiday cards, notes, or pictures for older adults this holiday season. Let's spread some cheer!



Mail (or drop off) cards by  
**Friday, December 13th**  
to SLC Youth Bureau 80 SH 310 Canton, NY 13617

 Contact us   
if your organization would like to receive cards



Questions?  
Email [achase@stlawco.gov](mailto:achase@stlawco.gov) or  
call 315.379.9464





# Christmas traditions

## 01/ Decorate the Tree

December 7th is national tree dressing day! that means get all your Christmas decorations out of storage and decorate the tree as a family!



## 03/ Gingerbread Houses

Buy the kits from the store or make them homemade! Have a gingerbread making contest and the winner gets family bragging rights!



## 02/ Send Christmas Cards

Get together and take a winter family photo. Send them out to all your friends and family. Decorate the house with the ones you get back!



## 04/ Christmas Pickle

This is a funny and uncommon one. Get a pickle ornament and hide it well in the tree. When someone finds the pickle it brings them good luck and they get an extra Christmas present.



[CLICK HERE](#)

for the recipe



# CHRISTMAS GINGERBREAD COOKIES



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup room temperature butter
- 3/4 cup and 2 tablespoon sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. Mix together the flour, cocoa powder, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, and pepper; set aside.
3. In an electric mixer, beat the butter on medium-high speed until creamy. Then slowly add the granulated sugar on medium speed until smooth. Add the egg and mix well. Add the molasses and corn syrup and beat until incorporated. Mix in the flour mixture and beat on low speed until a dough forms that pulls away from the sides of the bowl.
4. Place the cookie dough on a lightly floured surface and roll it to 1/3 inch thick. Then use cookie cutters to cut the dough and then place the individual cookies onto the parchment.
5. Bake for 7 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the edges are lightly toasted. Cool on baking sheets for a few minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.

[CLICK HERE](#)

for the recipe



# CHRISTMAS SUGAR COOKIES



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup softened butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon almond flavoring
- 1 large egg
- 3-4 cups of flour
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoon water
- 1 tablespoon light karo's corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. In an electric mixer, mix the butter and sugar on medium speed until smooth, about 1-2 minutes. Add the salt, vanilla, egg and almond flavoring and mix well on medium speed. Then add flour gradually until it cleans up the side of the bowl.
3. Place the cookie dough on a lightly floured surface and roll it to 1/4 inch thick. Then use cookie cutters to cut the dough and then place the individual cookies onto the parchment.
4. Bake for 8 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the edges are lightly toasted. Cool on baking sheets for a few minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.
5. To begin working on icing, add powdered sugar, water, corn syrup, and vanilla to a bowl and beat until desired consistency. Add powdered sugar or water as needed.
6. Using a piping or ziploc bag, frost the cookies using your royal icing!

# GINGERBREAD HOUSE IDEAS



# SECRET SANTA

## HOW IT ALL STARTED

Secret Santa is a fun holiday game that can be played among friends, family or even coworkers. To play, you get together a group of people and draw names out of a hat. You then buy a gift for the person that you drew. The catch is that they don't know who their "Santa" is! This fun traditional is loosely based around a Scandinavian custom of leaving gifts on people's doorsteps, knocking and running away. Talk about a thrilling ding dong ditch! It was introduced more into the western culture in Kansas where a man named Larry Dean Stewart would anonymously gift \$100 bills.



## GAMES AND RULES

There are other Christmas gift exchanges such as white elephant where everybody buys a gift and then you pick from wrapped ones. However, Secret Santa allows you to purchase a more personalized gift while still remaining anonymous. Each group may have different rules but it's common to set a budget for the exchange and give people the freedom to pick whatever they would like.

## EASY GIFT IDEAS

A typical Secret Santa budget might be \$25-\$30. Here are a few gift ideas that you can bring to exchange this holiday season!

- Tumbler cup or water bottle
- Chia pets
- Puzzle set
- Fun shaped waffle maker
- Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza card game

*Christmas is right around the corner, so we're bringing you holiday traditions to bring people together and show appreciation for one another in a small but powerful way.*



On December 23, 1823, a poem called "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" was published anonymously in the Sentinel, the local newspaper of Troy, New York.



'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.  
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow  
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."

## ***Explicit Vocabulary Instruction for Parents***

December 10th, 10am-11:30am on Zoom

The North Country FACE Center is pleased to offer this training which is designed to help parents understand the importance of vocabulary instruction for their children in the elementary grades. They will learn ways to incorporate explicit instruction and vocabulary instruction in the home.

Click Here to  
Register or Scan  
the QR Code Below



## ***How to Foster and Support Self-Determination in All Students***

December 11th, 4pm-7pm on Zoom

The purpose of this training is to foster and support the development of self-determination skills for students of all ages utilizing a collaborative school and family approach. It provides participants with foundational concepts, resources, and strategies to implement and incorporate practices that promote the development of self-determination throughout a student's day and across all ages.

Click Here or Scan  
the QR Code to  
Register



# Nurturing Potential



## Thriving Families



### When?

Wednesday, December 11th  
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

### Where?

Human Services Building // 2nd floor conference room  
80 State Highway 310, Canton

Join Michele Catlin, DCCC, Diabetes Program Specialist and Sarah Dupree, BSN, RN, for a FREE in-person presentation on helping your kids eat healthy with a focus on picky eaters and youth with diabetes. They will provide tips and tricks to get your kiddos eating healthy, well-balanced meals and answer questions. This event is hosted by the St. Lawrence County Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program.



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# DECEMBER HUMANS DON'T HIBERNATE CHALLENGES



## PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGE

**Defrost December:** Warm up by completing 30 minutes of movement for 5 days in a row. Take a photo of you enjoying moving your body more to complete this challenge.



## NUTRITIONAL CHALLENGE

**Hydrate & Feel Great:** Increase water consumption. The goal is 64 ounces or 8 cups of water/day. Reach this goal for 5 days in a row and take a photo with your favorite water bottle to complete this challenge.



## MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE

**Reindeer Games:** Host a family/friends game night to relax and enjoy your time together. Share a photo of the winner to complete this challenge.





**Northern Area Health  
Education Center**



**SUNY MASH  
CANTON CAMP  
Spring 2025**



**February 17th-21st, 9am-3pm**

34 Cornell Dr, Canton, NY 13617

**For high school Freshman and Sophmores**

**[Apply Here](#)**

**Learn about careers in healthcare including educational and skill requirements and job duties from current healthcare professionals. Participate in hands-on healthcare related activities.**



- Learn about SUNY Canton's programs
- Become CPR and Stop the Bleed Certified
- Explore health careers and simulations
- Participate in nursing workshops
- Get hands on learning experience

**Questions?**

Contact Bryn Donovan, [bryn@nahecnet.org](mailto:bryn@nahecnet.org)



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# RESILIENCE IN ACTION:

## Overcoming Stigma in Emergency Response

Join us for a presentation designed for law enforcement, EMS, and first responders, led by seasoned professionals in the field, focusing on the overdose epidemic, addressing the stigma associated with its use, and the importance of connecting people to resources.

CMUs Available

 **Monday, December 9, 2024**

 **PRESENTATION @ 6:00PM**

 **Heuvelton Fire Department  
95 North State St  
Heuvelton, NY**

 **Dinner Provided (5:30 PM)**



**REGISTRATION  
REQUIRED**

<https://forms.gle/3tNRqxGc7kpe7aSQA>

# SPEAKER



**Chief Brendan Cox  
(Ret.)**

Albany Police Department  
Board Chair

Chief (retired) Brendan Cox is the Director of Policing Strategies at the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) National Support Bureau where he provides strategic guidance on the implementation of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion/Let Everyone Advance with Dignity to jurisdictions around the world. Cox was previously employed with the Albany, New York, Police Department where he retired as chief of police in 2017.

## SPONSORED BY:



Questions? Email [phogle@stlawco.gov](mailto:phogle@stlawco.gov)





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