



YOUTH BUREAU NEWS

A St. Lawrence County Monthly Newsletter

March 2025

Vol 5 Issue 3



Inside the Issue



Local Teen Ambassadors traveled to Albany to meet with legislators, advocate for youth issues, and participate in leadership workshops.

2nd Annual Five Hour Free (from Social Media) Friday

Join us and unplug from social media for five hours and engage in meaningful, real-world connections.

Our Ambassadors promote safe driving habits in St. Lawrence County, addressing distracted & impaired driving, and seatbelt use to keep young drivers safe on the road.



From the Youth Bureau

Events and Initiatives

2025 ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

FEBRUARY 3RD & 4TH, 2025



Eleven Teen Ambassadors from St. Lawrence County attended the Youth Leadership Forum and Legislative Day in Albany on February 3rd and 4th, 2025. The two-day event featured a keynote speech, hands-on workshops, and meetings with Senators Mark Walczyk and Dan Stec and Assemblyman Scott Gray.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

On Monday, February 3rd, Teen Ambassadors joined the Youth Leadership Forum. They listened to keynote speaker Jeremy Butler from ICAN, who gave a presentation called *“Empowering Tomorrow: The Critical Role of Youth Voice and Engagement.”* He shared the famous quote by Helen Keller, *“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much,”* reminding everyone of the power of teamwork.

After the presentation, the teens joined several breakout sessions, including:

- **Test Your Knowledge with Kahoot:** Busting myths about drug use and substance use disorders
- **QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer):** A suicide prevention and awareness training led by Alexa Chase, Director of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau
- **Speak Up, Stand Out:** Mastering effective communication
- **NYS Youth Council-Roundtable**
- **Get Ready, Get Hired:** Employability 101



“I really enjoyed the trip to Albany. The keynote speaker’s presentation was important to me. I’m trying to be a voice for my community and that helped me gain courage in that regard. I loved meeting with the Senators because it felt like I might actually have some influence in the choices made for our county.”

-Ben Weaver, Ambassador

PARTICIPATING ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY AMBASSADORS

Anant Bansal

Potsdam (Clarkson School) 12th gr.

Anya Bansal

Potsdam 9th grade

Elif Cetinkaya

Potsdam (Clarkson School) 12th gr.

Prudence Cutwa

Lisbon 11th grade

Tyree Hawkins

Madrid-Waddington 11th gr.

Kaitlyn Holmes

Canton (HC Williams) 10th gr.

Angiolina Hukovic

Morristown 12th grade

Dino Hukovic

Ogdensburg 12th gr.

Stanley LaFave

Heuvelton 10th grade

Alivia Sochia

Parishville-Hopkinton
(Clarkson School) 12th gr.

Ben Weaver

Madrid-Waddington 11th gr.

Legislative Day

On Tuesday, Ambassadors met with Senators Mark Walczyk and Dan Stec and Assemblyman Scott Gray. They discussed new ideas and asked for more funding for youth programs in St. Lawrence County. Topics included their **"Five-Hour Free (From Social Media) Friday"** initiative, which aims to reduce excessive social media use, and their upcoming **Teen Safe Driving** service project. They also supported Governor Hochul's budget proposal, which includes a \$7.5 million increase for Youth Development and Youth Sports & Education programs, potentially boosting local funding.

The teens also enjoyed a guided tour of the Capitol Building. The tour included stops at the Legislative Chambers, the Hall of Governors, and the Hall of New York. A highlight of the tour was the new Ruth Bader Ginsburg portrait carving, which added a modern touch to the historic building.

"This experience was not just about leadership and advocacy; it was about personal growth, camaraderie, and seeing firsthand how our voices can make a difference. Watching each of you step up and embrace the moment was amazing."

-Anant Bansal, Ambassador & Youth Committee Chairman

"The biggest eye-opening experience. It allowed me to connect with like-minded individuals while learning about the impact of youth advocacy on a larger scale. The trip was truly inspiring and reinforced my commitment to supporting positive change for young people in our community."

-Elif Cetinkaya, Ambassador

"The trip was a really great experience. I got to connect with people from other Youth Bureaus around New York State, as well as get to know the other teens from St. Lawrence County."

-Kaitlyn Holmes, Ambassador

Albany was a great experience, and it was a very unique experience. Being able to see people from around the state with the same passions for community service left an impact on me that I wouldn't have had without this trip with the Youth Bureau.

-Prudence Cutwa, Ambassador



A Special Thank You

The event was hosted by the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (ANYSYB) and brought together more than 150 teens from counties across New York State. ANYSYB provided a tasty dinner and a fun trivia night on Monday, giving the teens a great chance to meet each other. We extend our sincere thanks to ANYSYB and its Executive Director, Jackie Negri, for making this event a big success.

Association of
New York State
Youth Bureaus





“The Albany trip is a great way to get to know your fellow ambassadors more and even make new friends. It is also a great learning experience to learn more about our senators & assemblymen and get to have conversations with them. The Albany trip is a great experience and I definitely recommend it to anyone interested.”

Stanley LaFave, Ambassador



ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Unplugged



FIVE HOUR FREE FRIDAY

Free from Social Media
Free from Cell Phones

AND

Free from Distractions



FRIDAY, MARCH 7TH
4:00 TO 9:00 PM

Why?

To disconnect from social media and engage in meaningful activities and reconnect with family and friends!

144 MINUTES*

Average time spent per DAY on social media

72 HOURS

Average time spent per MONTH on social media

5.7 YEARS

Average time spent per LIFETIME on social media

How?

TAKE THE PLEDGE TO UNPLUG:



Sponsored by:



*Source: Datareportal.com



YOUR ROAD. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. THEIR LIFE.

Drive Safely!

Is distracted driving a serious issue among teens in St. Lawrence County?



Most Common Distractions while driving

- Texting
- Talking on the phone
- Eating & Drinking

93%

Teens identified texting while driving as the top distraction.

Biggest reason teens text while driving

"I feel like I have to respond to my texts right away!"

Have you ever been in a car with a driver who was texting while driving?

74.9% YES

IN 2022, 3,308 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES INVOLVING DISTRACTED DRIVERS.

How did it make you feel?



Teen Safe Driving Pledge

DON'T TURN YOUR PASSENGERS' FEAR INTO REALITY!

SCAN HERE



By pledging today, the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau will send a signed certificate and gift

*The St. Lawrence County Youth Committee's Teen Ambassadors launched a Teen Safe Driving Survey, on November 18th 2024, and gathered insights from 537 high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors (living in St. Lawrence County) on distracted and impaired driving, seatbelt use, and driving anxiety. A separate survey for law enforcement and emergency service professionals collected additional perspectives. This teen-led initiative, supported by a grant from Youth as Solutions (YAS), with the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), will help shape future efforts to improve teen driving safety and raise community awareness.



Mental Health Matters

Tips and Strategies



A report titled, *Unpacking Grind Culture in American Teens: Pressure, Burnout, and the Role of Social Media*, asked 1,545 teens, ages 13-17 about the specific pressures they face, and how people and technology impact those pressures for better, or worse.

While social media plays a role in amplifying anxiety, often bullying and other trends make significant headlines. The report does not blame social media solely for the increased anxiety. The pressure to “grind” the way to academic success, for example, comes from several sources.

Pressure from all over, starting with Adults

Teens reported that “significant” pressure comes from adults, many of which have their own issues with pressure - but also teens reported their own “internal feelings and standards” causing significant pressure.

Social Media Helps, but also hurts. It’s complex.

The report notes that, while teens are more likely to say social media increases pressures, not all social media and it’s impact is equal.

48% of teens who felt appearance pressure said social media made it worse, however 7% said social media decreased that pressure, and 31% reported a mixture of both.

Self-care Is Important, but lacking.

Self-care isn’t always bubbles, aroma therapy, and ocean sounds. Teens report gaming as a form of self-care. The report noted that teens who participated in self care, often had lower burnout rates. The report also indicated alarming numbers about basic self-care practices.

[LEARN MORE](#) 

STUDENTS ARE FEELING BURNED OUT!

Here’s how adults can help!

LIFE PLANNING

56% of American teens feel pressured to have their life plan figured out, for example: college, career, relationships.

ACHEIVEMENT

53% of teens feel pressure to be exceptional through their achievements, for example: honors classes, good grades, jobs.

APPEARANCE

51% of teens feel pressure to look their best, and present themselves in a certain way.

SOCIAL LIFE

44% of teens feel pressure related to having an active and visible social life.

FRIENDSHIP

41% of teens feel pressure to stay available and be supportive to friends for example: responding to texts and social media right away.

ACTIVISM

32% of teens feel pressured to do good for their community, or to be informed about ongoing issues.



STUDENTS ARE FEELING BURNED OUT!

Here's how adults can help!
Part 2 of 2

How Adults Can Help

Acknowledge feelings

Let them know that you understand their feelings, but also that you are there to help. Avoid minimizing phrases.

You're in it together

Let them know that no matter how overwhelming things feel, you'll work together to ensure it doesn't last.

Make a to-do list together

Active coping skills, like making a to-do list, can help provide control and teach prioritization

Strategize

Making a list of tips to keep the mind and body well and focused. Let them control the list to avoid it feeling like another task or nagging.

Take a Break

Taking a quick break can boost mood and energy. Stepping away and returning with fresh eyes often leads to better productivity than working nonstop.

Practice Self-Care

Even for just a few minutes. A short walk, a glass of water, or a few deep breaths can help clear your mind and relax. See the following article for more.

Carve out time for fun!

Humans, including teens, are social by nature. Get your teen out of the house for a change of scenery, and add a friend if you can. Activities like hiking or visiting local spots help boost both social and physical well-being.

Prevention is Paramount

Help your teen build and track healthy habits that support their brain and well-being. Though they're maturing, you're still the parent and guiding them toward balance is essential at this stage.



[MORE INFO](#)



Self Care While You Study

Self-care is personal and involves actions that help maintain your well-being, no matter what's happening in your life. It should be a daily habit, not just something done when convenient. During stressful or anxious times, it can be difficult to manage thoughts and emotions. Here are some simple coping strategies that require no special tools or training and take little time.

01.

60-Second Desk Cleanup

Set a timer for one minute to organize loose papers, put away supplies, and toss trash. Regularly tidying your desk helps you stay organized, productive, and reduces stress.



Healthy Snacks Can Help!

Healthy snacks like nuts, granola, bananas, and peanut butter at your desk can help you stay energized and fight off the 3PM "hanger." This, accompanied with hydration, can be especially helpful on long days where lunch isn't easily obtained.

02.

03.

Stretching is Important

Stand up, close your eyes, and stretch your arms overhead, moving them side to side. Doing this daily helps clear your mind, relieve tension, and boost productivity while reducing stress. Doing this can also help prevent poor posture habits.



To Put It Simply:

Set a five-minute timer to breathe and unwind. Self-care at work doesn't need to be complicated or time-consuming. Start with simple routines and build on them to support your mind and body throughout the day.

04.

Look for more tips here!

COPING STRATEGIES

Healthy

VS.

Non-Healthy

Active Coping

Taking direct action to solve a problem. This works especially well if there is a task causing stress.



Avoidance

Pretending a stressful situation is not happening, rather than facing it.



Creative Expression

Art, in all its forms – from poetry and doodles to music – expresses ideas, evokes emotions, and explores experiences, offering perspectives shaped by both personal and shared circumstances.



Misdirected Anger

Using anger to mask, or release, other difficult emotions. May lash out at others, objects, or even themselves in ways that may be unfair or disproportionate.



Meaning Making

The power of re-framing a situation, or looking at it differently can change the way we feel about it. Journaling can also be helpful in reflection.



Social Media Overuse

Using social media or other screentime as a distraction from painful feelings. Studies have shown that increased screentime leads to higher levels of anxiety.



Choosing healthy strategies like active problem-solving, creative expression, and meaning-making can lead to resilience and growth.

Avoiding unhealthy coping mechanisms helps us navigate challenges in a more positive and constructive way.

[LEARN MORE](#)



DIY (Do it yourself)

Recipes and Crafts

Healthy Shamrock Shake

A better option over the fast food mint shake!

SIMPLE RECIPE

Ingredients

- 1 cup ice
- 1/2 frozen medium banana
- 1/2 cup plain or vanilla Greek yogurt
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 4 fresh mint leaves (or 1/4 tsp. peppermint extract)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup milk any kind or non-dairy alternative

Optional additions

- 1/8 teaspoon xanthan gum helps thicken the shake
- additional sweetener of choice maple syrup, honey, sugar, stevia, monk fruit, 5 medjool dates
- whipped cream for topping
- cacao nibs/reduced sugar or sugar free chocolate chips for topping

Directions

- Add all ingredients to a high-powered blender in the order listed, including xanthan gum if using.
- Blend until smooth.
- Pour into glass and top with whipped cream and/or cacao nibs/chocolate chips if desired.

Notes

For more of a shake consistency/taste, substitute reduced sugar vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt.

Nutrition

Serving Size-One | Calories: 451kcal | Carbohydrates: 54g | Protein: 25g | Fat: 16g | Saturated Fat: 4g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 10g | Cholesterol: 25mg | Sodium: 349mg | Fiber: 8g | Sugar: 13g



Upcoming Events

Local events for youth, teens, and families



Second Annual Prom Dress Drive

Sponsored by EnRiCH

- Donations are available at no-cost to prom-goers.
- Donations accepted through 03/24/2025.
- Drop off available at Luna in Canton, Edwards Knox Central School, Russell Public Library, or call Connie to make other arrangements.

Connie Bessette
mcb2033@yahoo.com
(315) 486-6915

Heuvelton Central School & Clarkson University's
Occupational Therapy Department Present

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PRESENTATION

Learn How To Provide Support To Your Children

WHEN:

Tuesday, March 4th, 2025 / 6:00 – 7:30 PM

WHERE:

Heuvelton Central School Auditorium

WHAT:

To share information about:

- Common mental health diagnoses in children
- How they might present in a child
- Suicide awareness and prevention
- Mental health resources for seeking help

WHO:

Parents, caregivers, teachers, and paraprofessionals from **any** school district within St. Lawrence County.

Children over the age of 13 years old are welcome to attend with an adult caregiver.



Clarkson™
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Kaylee Wood, OTS

Dr. Ashleigh Graveline,
OTD, OTR/L, CPRP

In 2023, more than 5.3 million adolescents aged 12-17 years had a diagnosed mental or behavioral health condition.

Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10 – 14 and 25 – 34.

Between 2016 and 2023, children experienced a 61% increase in diagnosed anxiety conditions and a 45% increase in diagnosed depression.

Event Registration:



Questions?

Ashleigh Graveline
Clarkson University
agraveli@clarkson.edu

"There is no health, without mental health"

Together We Can Stop the Stigma.



What Brings You Joy

ART SHOW

April is recognized as National Child Abuse Prevention Month: *Supporting Child and Family Well-Being*. Every year, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) highlights everyday action steps that make a big difference in the lives of children and strengthen families and communities.

What Brings You Joy?

Research shows that positive childhood experiences help children grow into healthy, resilient adults. Spending time doing things that bring joy help children form and strengthen relationships, feel a sense of belonging, explore, learn, reduce stress, and face challenges.

Spread Joy Across New York State!

OCFS invites children and youth to join us in celebrating What Brings You Joy.

- Draw, sketch, paint or make a collage about what brings YOU joy.
- Submit the artwork to us for use in a virtual art show by emailing a copy of your artwork to WhatBringsYouJoy@ocfs.ny.gov.
- Invite family and friends to visit the virtual art show on the OCFS website and share your joy!

Submissions Accepted February 24, 2025-March 14, 2025

Artwork submissions should be sent to WhatBringsYouJoy@ocfs.ny.gov prior to March 14, 2025 to be displayed in the virtual art show. By submitting artwork, you are giving permission for the work to be included in a virtual art show. We will only use children's first names. Please do not include full names on the artwork.

Virtual Art Show: April 1-30, 2025

Artwork will be displayed virtually at ocfs.ny.gov/WhatBringsYouJoy, April 1-30, 2025. OCFS is also working with the NYS Office of General Services to showcase art at a digital exhibit at the Empire State Plaza Concourse in Albany, NY.



Job skills for teens

Resume building, job search, interview skills, understanding paychecks, and more!

March

26

4-5 PM

**Massena
Public
Library**

Registration not
required



NEW YORK STATE

Maple Weekend





Romeo & Juliet

Friday, March 28, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Eben Holden Center

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Saturday, March 29, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Eben Holden Center

Romeo & Juliet

Sunday, March 30, 2025 at 12:30 pm

Eben Holden Center

TICKET INFORMATION

Free and open to the public

Ogdensburg Public Library

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
²	³	⁴ No Music and Movement	⁵	⁶ No Story Time	⁷	⁸
⁹	¹⁰	¹¹ Music and Movement 11 am	¹² Life Sized Pacman 5 pm	¹³ Story Time 11 am	¹⁴ Children's Craft: Good Luck Charm 4 pm	¹⁵
¹⁶	¹⁷ Library Break In 3:30–4:45	¹⁸ Music and Movement 11 am	¹⁹ Food Lab: Edible Slime 5 pm	²⁰ Story Time 11 am	²¹	²²
²³	²⁴	²⁵ Music and Movement 11 am	²⁶ Library Lego Time 5 pm	²⁷ No Story Time	²⁸	²⁹

Preschool Activities

18 months—4 years

Music and Movement

Tuesdays @ 11am

Story Time

Thursdays @ 11am

Take Home Crafts

3 and up

Crafts available to pick up and complete at home. New each week.

Monday—Saturday All Month

Library Break In

5 and up

A small green figure was seen breaking into the Ogdensburg Public Library causing mayhem.

Please help us identify the suspect.

3/17 @ 3:30 pm

For Grownups

Fishing Lures with Jerry Lincoln

3/12 @ 6pm

Classical Inklings Book Club

3/19 @ 4:14pm

Crafts and Activities for Teens

11 and up

Life Sized Pacman

3/12 @ 5pm

Edible Slime

3/19 @ 5pm

Crafts and activities for Children

5 and up

Good Luck Charm

3/14 @ 4pm

Library Lego Time

3/26 @ 5pm

315-393-4325



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