Today, as I prepare this report and reflect on 2020, I celebrate my one year anniversary serving the county as Youth Bureau Director. Last year, I made the journey home to the North Country after having lived in the Chicago suburbs of Illinois for over twenty years.

During 2020, the Youth Bureau served as a community support for families, school districts, and community programs. We established concentrated collaboration and communication, amidst the COVID 19 pandemic, when social distancing, remote learning, racial & political tension, and economic decline challenged many county families. We engaged youth, classrooms, families, and communities through our initiatives and Youth Development Programs with the support of our Youth Advisory Board and Committee.

A warm thank you to Ruth Doyle, Dylan Soper, Honorary Nicole Terminelli, Andrea Montgomery, the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators, and the Youth Advisory Board members for assisting my transition and offering impeccable support.

Alexa J. Backus

ALEXA J. BACKUS
Youth Bureau Director
FIGURE 1. According to Wikipedia, an annual report is a comprehensive report on a company's activities throughout the preceding year.

CONTACT INFORMATION
SLC Youth Bureau
80 SH 310 Suite 4
Canton, NY 13617
(315) 379-9464
ABackus@stlawco.org
RZuhlsdorf@stlawco.org

Our County Website:

Hours of Operation
Monday -Friday
8:00am-4:00 pm

Meetings

Youth Advisory Board
4th Thursday of each month 3:00 pm via Zoom

Youth Committee
3rd Wednesday of each month 4:00 pm via Zoom

Youth Bureau Staff

Alexa J. Backus
Youth Bureau Director
as of March 2, 2020

Rebekah K. Zuhlsdorf
YB Secretary I
as of November 30, 2020

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

- Alexa Backus
  SLC Youth Bureau Director
- Karen Bage
  SLC Health Initiative Coordinator
- Casey Canell
  Gouverneur Recreation Director
- Terri Gilmour
  SLC Dept. of Social Services Employment & Training Counselor
- Ellen Hurlbut
  SLC Health Initiative Youth Development Specialist
- Michele James
  SLC Community Services Stop DWI
- Casey Jones
  Clarkson University Men's Head Hockey Coach
- Pam Lewis
  SLC One Stop Career Center
- Zachary Monroe
  Director PAL of Massena
- Scott Quinell
  EOP Counselor SUNY Canton
- Joanne Sevick
  Retired SLC Youth Bureau
- Amber Sullivan
  SLC Probation Officer
- Hon. Nicole Terminelli
  SLC Board of Legislators

YOUTH COMMITTEE

- Dee Bellinger
  Heuvelton Central
- Drew Demers
  Heuvelton Central
- Abby Hughes
  Potsdam High
- Hannah Hughes
  Potsdam High
- Emma Rutley
  Potsdam High
- Cole Siebels
  Gouverneur High
- Cynthia Snyder
  Lisbon High
- Hailey Williamson
  Potsdam High
- Amanda Woods
  Colton-Pierrepont High

Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Responsibilities

- Prepare Agenda & Notices
- Provide Monthly Director Reports during YAB Meetings
- Record Minutes
- Coordinate all Initiatives

Our County Website:
Background

The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau has been a department of County government since 1978. It is a public planning, funding, advocacy, and coordinating agency for youth development and prevention programs that are funded through the Youth Bureau.

The Youth Bureau is the contract manager for the Youth Development Program (YDP) grant funds through the department’s Resource Allocation Plan (RAP) and Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The Youth Bureau serves as an information and referral center providing technical assistance to organizations and municipalities in the areas of program development, monitoring and evaluation, and planning.

Our Mission

To ensure that children, adolescents, and young adults have access to programs that will help them to be contributing members of society. We are dedicated to preventing delinquency through positive youth development and the implementation of comprehensive youth services to all youth in St. Lawrence County.

Funding

To be eligible for Youth Bureau funding, organizations must respond to a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) that covers three years of program funding. (All programs operate annually January-December calendar year.) Our last RFP was released in June 2018 for 2019-2021 funding years. Applicants must be a county, municipal, or incorporated as a not-for-profit under the laws of New York State and have a tax-exempt status in accordance with the Federal IRS Code. This is an open and competitive process. The next RFP will occur by 3rd quarter 2021 for 2022-2024 funding years.

All applications for funding must be approved by the Youth Bureau’s Youth Advisory Board (YAB), the County Legislature, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

2020 Department Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopted Appropriations</td>
<td>$145,607</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopted Revenue</td>
<td>$95,911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual Revenue</td>
<td>$106,512</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual County Cost</td>
<td>$55,546</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Youth Development Programs (YDP)

Mandated Components:

- Contract Preparation
- Writing/Release of RFP/Grant
- Fiscal Claim Preparation and Management
- Technical Assistance
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Community Liaison
- Quality Youth Development Systems (QYDS) Data entry and oversight
- Annual Administrative Summary

YDP CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Fiscal Years 2019-2021

- Youth Bureau Administration
- Youth Bureau Workshops
- Youth Bureau Advocacy & Training
- Brasher-Stockholm Recreation
- Canton Free Library
- Canton Recreation
- Fowler Recreation
- Gouverneur Youth Development Program
- Hammond Recreation
- Louisville Recreation
- Massena Summer Recreation
- Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club
- Ogdensburg Command Performance
- Parishville Recreation
- Police Activities League of Massena (PAL)
- Potsdam Recreation
March 7 2020, Governor Cuomo declared State of Emergency in New York State causing schools and businesses to close.

In June 2020, the Center for Promise at America’s Promise Alliance conducted a nationally representative survey of 3,300 young people aged 13-19. A few of the findings:

- **75 %** Students dedicated **ONLY 1-4 hrs** of remote learning and homework each day
- **25 %** Students felt disconnected from peers and school
- **MORE than...** **50 %** Students had an increased concern for meeting basic needs, health, and future school success
- **25 %** Students experienced increased feelings of depression, loss of confidence, and lack of sleep

In St. Lawrence County, the Youth Bureau...

- Remained at 50% staffing and delayed filling the Secretary I position until November 2020.
- Dedicated time and assistance to the Office for the Aging and developed a volunteer schedule for meal delivery and kitchen volunteers during peak in April
- Advocated and sought more youth voice, on the Youth Advisory Board, by increasing youth membership over 80% and adding 12 youth members in June
- Provided assistance for Youth Development Programs (YDP) by conducting COVID Summer Planning Zoom meetings and keeping individuals abreast of OCFS feedback
- Suspended 2020 Youth Conservation Corp Summer work programs
- Suspended 2020 Youth Bureau Internship Programs
- Suspended County Tours for general public and area schools
During this national pandemic, our Youth Committee members wanted to provide support to youth feeling the negative affects of COVID. As a result, we conducted a county-wide mask-wearing initiative! Over 190 county students submitted mask designs in September. In October, a winning mask design was chosen and printed on 16,000 masks, putting a mask in each county students' hands. Masks were distributed to all schools in December.

Youth Committee Chairman Cole Siebels, a junior at Gouverneur High School, interviewed with WWNY CLICK TO WATCH
The Winning Design
Logan LaShomb
8th grade Colton-Pierrepont

It gives us all a sense of community. We all stick together.

- Amanda Woods

Cole Siebels
Watertown Daily Time Interview

Ruth Doyle, County Administrator, and Board of Legislators helped deliver masks to area schools.
Our Youth Advisory Board wanted to spread awareness of the importance of voting and students’ roles in the legislative process. They wanted to educate county youth about the voting process and interviewed Tom Nichols and Jennie Bacon with Board of Elections. The video was posted on our Facebook page on October 30, 2020.

Our Youth Committee developed an informative video supporting best COVID practices during the holiday season. This was posted on our Facebook page on December 23, 2020.

In November, we welcomed Rebekah Zuhlsdorf to the Youth Bureau filling the Secretary I position. Rebekah is career driven and cares about meeting the needs of our youth. We are excited to have Rebekah and look forward to her assistance in supporting the Youth Bureau.
In December, we partnered with Office for the Aging and sponsored a holiday card drive. We wanted to spread holiday cheer to the elderly population in St. Lawrence county especially during the stress of COVID 19 social distancing.

We need your Holiday Cards

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

Please mail your cards by 12/18 to SLC Youth Bureau 80 SH 310 Canton, NY 13617
For more information, email ABackus@stlawco.org or call 315.379.9464

Over 2,000 cards were received from county youth.
Social Media Analysis

- 97% digital consumers use social media each month
- In 2019, people spent 2 hrs 24 mins on social media everyday
- Facebook has 2.5 billion monthly users and is 3rd most visited website
- Instagram has more than 1 billion monthly active users

TOTAL FOLLOWERS

Facebook 230
Instagram 132
Accounts established March 2020

TOTAL REACH

Facebook 21,754
Instagram 1556
Reach includes likes, comments, and page shares

The Youth Bureau’s 2020 most popular post:

Design A Mask Contest Announcement
8.19.20

- 11,654 People Reached
- 748 Engagements
- 119 Page Shares

Mask Design Contest
Open to all students K—12th Grade!

It’s your task to wear a mask!

WINNING DESIGN WILL BE PRINTED ON THOUSANDS OF MASKS FOR ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY YOUTH!

Deadline September 22, 2020

Email to: SLCYouthbureau@gmail.com
OR:
Mail to: SLC Youth Bureau, 80 NY 310, Canton, NY 13617

Guidelines:
1) Create your design on the mask template provided
2) Designs should be in color.
3) Design must be submitted with completed entry and release form signed by a parent or legal guardian.
4) Email or mail by September 22nd 2020.
During an unprecedented year, with COVID-19, the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau remained healthy and strong. We added engaged, motivated youth members to serve on our Youth Advisory Board and implemented initiatives for which they advocated.

We rebranded the department, added a new logo, and developed a presence on Facebook and Instagram. This allowed us to reach more families and become recognized as a county resource. Our youth committee members enjoyed conducting television, radio, and newspaper interviews giving them invaluable communications experience.

Lastly, our youth stood up during COVID and ran a very successful "It’s Your Task to Wear a Mask" face mask initiative. We touched over 16,000 youth and ensured all county students had face masks.

We look forward to continued county partnerships, collaboration, and program initiatives. Together, we can positively impact St. Lawrence County youth.

Thank you Joanne Sevick, Lisa Bartalo, and Jerry Mahoney for their time at the Youth Bureau. They’ve positively impacted thousands of county youth during their many years of service. Thank you for your dedication and commitment.