



## *St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Youth Bureau Encourages Community to Unplug for "Five Hour Free Friday"**

**CANTON, NEW YORK** – During Monday evening's St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators meeting, four Youth Committee Teen Ambassadors asked legislators to support their teen-led service project, "Five Hour Free (from Social Media) Friday," scheduled for Friday, March 7th from 4 to 9 PM.

Social media overuse has been linked to increased anxiety, depression, and decreased face-to-face social interaction. A 2023 study published in JAMA Pediatrics found that excessive screen time can alter brain development in adolescents, affecting attention span, emotional regulation, and sleep patterns. The study highlighted that teens who engage with social media for extended periods often experience heightened stress levels and lower self-esteem (Source: JAMA Pediatrics, 2023).

"Social media overuse causes poor emotional health and can contribute to depression and anxiety," said Anant Bansal, Youth Committee Chairman and a senior at Potsdam High School. He continued, "Our Teen Ambassadors support a social media detox and encourage time to connect with one another away from screens. During a local survey, we found that teens spend more than 5 ½ hours a day on their social media, and nationally, teens spend more than 8 hours on their phones."

The initiative encourages not only teenagers but also adults to unplug and engage in real-world interactions. "Everyone, children, teens, and adults, needs to take intentional breaks from screens and focus on spending quality time together. Whether it's having a conversation over dinner, playing a board game, or enjoying a walk outside, stepping away from social media can help us reconnect with what truly matters," said Alexa Chase, Director of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau.

The Youth Bureau invites all residents in St. Lawrence County to take the pledge and join "Five Hour Free (From Social Media) Friday" on March 7th. To participate or learn more, contact the Youth Bureau by emailing Alexa Chase at [ACHase@stlawco.gov](mailto:ACHase@stlawco.gov) or calling 315-379-9464.

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