



St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SLC Youth Bureau Announces 3rd Annual “Five Hour Free Friday” Initiative

CANTON, NY — The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau, in partnership with the St. Lawrence County Youth Committee Teen Ambassadors, is proud to announce the 3rd Annual “Five Hour Free (from Social Media) Friday,” taking place on Friday, March 6, 2026, from 4:00 to 9:00 PM. This youth-led initiative encourages residents of all ages to step away from social media, reduce screen time, and reconnect with family, friends, and community.

During the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators meeting on Monday, February 9th, Anya Bansal, a sophomore at Potsdam Central School and Chair of the St. Lawrence County Youth Committee, spoke on behalf of the Teen Ambassadors to request the Board’s support and proclamation of the initiative. She highlighted the importance of creating healthy habits around technology use and shared how local youth are leading the effort to encourage positive, real-world engagement.

Anya also outlined a series of simple, intentional activities that Teen Ambassadors are promoting in the days leading up to March 6th to help make unplugging easier and more meaningful. These include mindfulness and relaxation practices, spending time outdoors, cooking with family, and reading. Each activity is designed to build connections, reduce stress, and prepare participants for five hours away from social media.

“Five Hour Free Friday is about giving ourselves permission to pause,” said Bansal. “We want to help our community see that even a few hours away from social media can make space for better conversations, stronger relationships, and healthier routines.”

The initiative is rooted in growing awareness of how increased screen time can impact emotional wellness, sleep, and social connection among youth and adults. The Teen Ambassadors hope this campaign encourages families, schools, and community members to reflect on their technological use and experience the benefits of being fully present with one another.

“Each year, we continue to see more enthusiasm and participation from across St. Lawrence County,” said Alexa Backus Chase, Director of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau. “This is a positive, youth-driven effort that promotes balance, mental wellness, and meaningful



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connection. We are incredibly proud of our Teen Ambassadors for leading this initiative and for advocating directly to our Board of Legislators.”

Community members are encouraged to take the pledge to unplug from social media, cell phones, and digital distractions from 4:00 to 9:00 PM on March 6th and use the time to enjoy activities that strengthen relationships and support personal well-being.

To learn more or take the pledge to participate in Five Hour Free Friday, contact the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau at ACHase@stlawco.gov or 315-379-9464.

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