



St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gizmo Comes to St. Lawrence County

CANTON, NEW YORK- The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau, in partnership with the People Project, has launched a county wide interactive read-along program based on the children's book, *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*, to third and fourth grade classrooms. *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide* promotes positive mental health habits and thoughtful communication with trusted adults.

Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health takes a proactive approach to support youth mental health and wellness. It is data-driven and evidence informed. The Guide introduces mental health and teaches self-care strategies in a non-threatening way that encourages self-identification of warning signs and healthy coping exercises. It also introduces characteristics of trusted adults and how to practice talking to (trusted) adults about uncomfortable feelings and fears. It promotes proactive communication and gives youth the opportunity to create a personal mental health plan that can be used daily. The Guide's message is child-friendly and features Gizmo, A Mi-Ki dog, who lives in Manchester, Connecticut.

Mary Wills, Coordinator with People Project, recently presented Gizmo to students at Morristown Central School and stated, "The students (at Morristown) were so attentive and responsive to Gizmo. I felt they opened up and wanted to share their stories from the start."

Recently, St. Lawrence County Teen Ambassadors received training to present and read Gizmo to classrooms within their school district. Every participating student receives a copy of the book and each classroom receives a Gizmo stuffed plushie.

"I am so appreciative that I get to be a part of something I believe is so important. Giving younger students the skills they will undoubtedly need in the future is an amazing thing, and I believe that these kids will be able to prosper in ways that my generation couldn't as a result," said Madalyn Richards, a senior at Heuvelton Central and Teen Ambassador after completing her training.

Contact the Youth Bureau at (315) 379-9464 or email AChase@stlawco.org for more information about scheduling Gizmo at your school.

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