



St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former Teen Ambassador Returns to Inspire Youth Leaders at Lead '26

Canton- The St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau welcomed Cole Siebels as a guest speaker at its Lead '26 youth leadership session on Sunday, February 8th, offering teens an inspiring and full-circle moment rooted in youth voice, civic engagement, and perseverance.

Siebels, a graduate of Gouverneur High School and a senior at St. Lawrence University, was one of the very first Teen Ambassadors when the Youth Bureau launched its Youth Committee in July 2020. Now preparing to graduate this spring with a double major in Political Science and History, Siebels returned to speak with current Lead '26 participants about leadership, growth, and staying true to one's passions.

During his presentation, Siebels shared three key messages with the teens: trust the process, take responsibility, and never give up on your passion. Drawing from his own experiences as a student leader, writer, and ROTC participant, he spoke candidly about navigating challenges, learning from setbacks, and remaining engaged in issues that matter.

In addition to Siebels' presentation, the Lead '26 session focused on developing practical leadership skills, including nonverbal communication, active listening, identifying barriers to effective listening, and participating in 30-second public speaking exercises. These activities are designed to help teens build confidence, communication skills, and readiness for civic and community leadership.

"Having Cole return to Lead '26 was incredibly meaningful," said Alexa Backus Chase, Director of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau. "He is a powerful example of how youth leadership experiences can shape future paths. Seeing our teens learn from someone who once stood where they are now reinforces the long-term impact of investing in young people."

Lead '26 is a four-session youth leadership series that brings together teens from across St. Lawrence County to explore leadership, civic engagement, and public service. The program will culminate in a Youth Engagement Evening this spring, where participants will present on topics reflecting their growth and leadership journey.

For more information, please contact Alexa Backus Chase at AChase@stlawco.gov or call the Youth Bureau at (315) 379-946