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Feb. 2025



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Todd Mullin said the recent IronMind walk to draw attention to suicide prevention drew 350 people to downtown Massena.

Provided photo

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inside*

**NORTHERN NEW YORK'S FOREMOST HEALTH PUBLICATION
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Emergency doctor joins St. Lawrence Health

Rochester Regional Health's St. Lawrence team is pleased to welcome Matthew Chang, DO, as its newest Emergency Medicine team member. He is treating patients at Canton-Potsdam, Gouverneur, and Massena hospitals.

Dr. Chang earned his Doctor of Osteopathic (DO) Medicine

degree from Western University, Pomona, CA; and completed his residency at Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY; where he was also honored as Senior Resident of the Year.

He further received an Emergency Ultrasound Fellow and completed the Fellowship at Maimonides Medical Center.

He comes to the St. Lawrence Region with 13 years of experience in Emergency Medicine, and is looking forward to taking advantage of area rivers and learning about the local cultures.

"I like rivers and was first charmed by the images of the rivers of the North Country I saw online. Later I learned about the

St. Lawrence River's importance in American history, dating back to indigenous and colonial times. I'm further intrigued by how the many rivers and local history continue to contribute to the daily lives of those who live here," Dr. Chang said. "I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this beautiful region and hope to contribute my share to its communities."

As a member of the Emer-

gency team, Dr. Chang treats patients with chest pain, numbness, sudden paralysis, seizures, poisoning, severe burns, heavy bleeding, electric shock, deep wounds, and more.

To learn more about Emergency Medicine at Canton-Potsdam, Gouverneur, and Massena hospitals, visit <https://www.rochesterregional.org/locations/emergency>.

Lewis County Health System welcomes compliance officer

Staff report

LOWVILLE — Lewis County Health System (LCHS) welcomes Jennifer Wendel as corporate compliance officer and director of operations. As the chief compliance officer, Mrs. Wendel ensures that the hospital follows the best practices that govern healthcare and meets applicable laws, regulations and guidelines. In addition, she will oversee day-to-day hospital operations for several of the hospital's ancillary service departments.

"Jennifer is a welcome addition to the senior leadership team," said Gerald R. Cayer, LCHS chief executive officer. "I am confident that her experience in healthcare compliance, leadership and regional healthcare operations will play a vital role in advancing patient care and quality throughout the health system."

Mrs. Wendel received a bachelor of science in health care management from Independence University in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is a registered respiratory therapist who earned her associate of arts and science in respiratory care from Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica. She is pursuing her master of business administration, focusing on healthcare management.

She joins Lewis County Health System from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Chautauqua in Jamestown, where she served as the director of re-



Jennifer Wendel

spiratory, sleep center, and neurology services and the compliance and privacy officer during her tenure. She also served as the director of patient services for a federally qualified health care center, The Chautauqua Center, and an adjunct faculty member for the respiratory care program at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania.

"My role will collaborate with all areas of the health system, and I look forward to working with our team to ensure we continue to operate with integrity, transparency, and to the highest standards of regulatory compliance," said Mrs. Wendel.

"Jennifer will help us grow existing operations and ensure we uphold the highest standards of compliance, ensuring the delivery of quality healthcare for the residents of Lewis County and surrounding communities," said Mr. Cayer.

Lewis County Health celebrates CNA graduates



The certified nursing assistant (CNA) program graduates are, from left, Jennifer Parker, Jolanta Vienneau, Jessica Hooper, Kayla Platt, Kimberly Holman and Arianna Baxter. Photo provided by Lewis County Health System

Staff report

LOWVILLE — Lewis County Health System hosted a celebratory graduation on Jan. 7 for students from the most recent certified nursing assistant (CNA) program.

Registered nurse Jessica Nichols, clinical educator for long-term care, praised the graduates for their commitment and hard work, which led them to complete the program.

"CNAs are the front line of nursing and a critical part of the care team," Mrs. Nichols said. "The work, while physically, mentally and emotion-

ally demanding, will be one of the most rewarding careers you can have in healthcare."

The New York State-approved course includes clinical and classroom instruction in resident care and prepares students to sit for the CNA certification. In the skills lab, students practice taking vital signs and assisting with resident mobility and hygiene. The clinical experience also allows students to work with residents in the Lewis County Residential Health Care Facility, helping with activities of dai-

ly living and basic needs.

Chief Executive Officer Gerald R. Cayer spoke about the value of seeing new CNAs trained locally in the health system.

"You represent the future of our healthcare system team," he said. "From this first step on the career ladder, along with some experience, you may be able to pursue an LPN or RN license. The steps on the career ladder are in front of you, and we are here to help you pursue your healthcare dreams!"

Samaritan Medical Center Welcomes Palliative Care Specialist

Watertown, N.Y. Samaritan Medical Center is pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Jane Simpson, a board-certified palliative care physician, to its healthcare team. Dr. Simpson will be providing expert palliative care services to patients and their families, focusing on enhancing the quality of life for individuals facing serious illness.

Dr. Simpson completed her medical degree at Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Blacksburg, VA. She completed her Family Medicine residency at UHS Wilson Memorial Hospital, Binghamton, NY and a Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship at Brown University Warren Alpert School of Medicine, Providence, RI. Doctor Simpson is Board Certified by the American Board of Family Medicine for Family Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine. She is a North Country native and is excited to be back home to provide compassionate care to her neighbors.

Palliative care is a specialized medical care that provides relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for any age and any stage in most serious illnesses, not just cancer. Dr. Simpson brings experience in palliative care, specializing in symptom management, pain relief, and psychosocial support. With a deep commitment to patient-centered care, Dr. Simpson works alongside oncologists, nurses, and other specialists to develop personalized care plans that address the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of cancer patients and their loved ones.

“Palliative care is an es-



Dr. Jane Simpson. Contributed.

“Palliative care is a sequential component of serious or life-threatening illness, aiming to improve the well-being of patients and provide support during challenging times,” said Dr. Simpson. “I look forward to joining the dedicated team at Samaritan and helping to ensure that each patient receives the care they deserve.”

As a compassionate and skilled physician, Dr. Simpson will work closely with patients to manage complex symptoms, assist in decision-making, and provide comfort to patients and families navigating difficult decisions related to treatment. Palliative care is an integral part of the multidisciplinary approach to care, emphasizing quality of life and dignity at every stage of the illness.

“We are excited to have Dr. Simpson join our team,” said Kay Sullivan, director of oncology services at the Walker Center for Cancer Care. “Her expertise in palliative care aligns with our mission to provide the most comprehensive and compassionate care to our patients.”

To learn more about palliative care services at Samaritan, visit samaritanhealth.com/palliative.



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Registration open for 2025 EMS Spring Fling

From staff reports

WATERTOWN — Registration is now open for the 24th Annual North Country Regional Emergency Medical Services Council's (REMSCO) Spring Fling Conference for all regional volunteers, EMS providers and fire rescue squads.

The 2025 Spring Fling Conference will be held on April 11 and 12 at the Edgewood Resort & Conference Center in Alexandria Bay. This year's conference will include continued support of the north country's emergency personnel with interactive hands-on learning, advanced cardiovascular life support refresher courses at a discounted rate, live music from Josh Cox and the Rattlesnakes at the Regional EMS Awards dinner and more.

Throughout the conference, learning sessions will be held for both basic life saving (BLS) and advanced life saving (ALS) with breakout Lunch & Learn Sessions focusing on "When the State Comes Knocking" (an overview of what to expect during state inspections and state updates) as well as federal, state and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) updates.

"This annual event is integral to the ongoing skills enhancement of our regional emergency medical professionals throughout the region and state," said Jonathan Cole, director of FDRHPO's Emergency Medical Services Program Agency, said in a statement. "The event continues to grow in support and attendance due to the exceptional speakers, dynamic topics, and the convenient and hands-on format. We are especially looking forward to this year's event."

The North Country REMSCO is seeking nominations for the annual state Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services awards.

Annually the Department of Health and the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services present awards in several categories. These categories in-



EMT personnel participate in a team building emergency escape room during the 2024 EMS Spring Fling Conference at the Edgewood Resort and Conference Center in Alexandria Bay. Provided photo

clude Advanced Life Support Provider of the Year, Basic Life Support Provider of the Year, EMS Agency of the Year, EMS Communications Specialist of the Year, EMS Educator of the Year, Excellence in Quality and Safety, Registered Nurse of Excellence, and Youth Provider of the Year.

To submit a nominations, visit <https://shorturl.at/OJHwq>.

"The Regional Awards give us an opportunity to spotlight our unsung heroes. Our Region has many professionals – both paid and volunteer – who give selflessly. These EMS providers are well-trained and deserve the recognition of their peers. The award winners will then be submitted to New York State for consideration of the awards at a State Level," Debbie Singleton, chair, North Country REMSCO, said in the statement.

Anyone interested in registering for the event can visit www.fdrhpo.org/spring-fling.

Registration is required with payment due prior to the event.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available to any group or organization that wishes to

participate in the event which draws over 200 EMS providers on Friday and 300 EMS providers on Saturday from across the state and includes all levels of EMTs.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities or the 24th Annual Spring Fling Conference please call 315-755-2020 option 2.

Community Health Workers Integrate into Rural Healthcare Practices

NEW 3-YEAR GRANT IMPROVES HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FOR HIGH-NEEDS INDIVIDUALS

By **HOLLY BONAME**

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Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) has been awarded a 3-year Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Northern Border Regional Commission grant that will improve the healthcare system for high-needs individuals in the North Country.

The grant titled “Using the Community Health Worker Model to Improve Clinical and Social Outcomes of Rural High-Needs Individuals,” will deploy Community Health Workers, employed by the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL), in six rural hospital-based primary care sites (Clifton-Fine Hospital, River Hospital, Samaritan Medical Center’s Clayton clinic, and three

Carthage Area Hospital/Claxton-Hepburn Medical Campus clinics located in Ogdensburg and Canton).

“NRCIL is honored to partner with FDRHPO on this important project,” said Aileen Martin, Executive Director at NRCIL. “Community Health Workers give the people in our community a non-judgmental neighbor to turn to for guidance to learn how to navigate the new steps being added to the dance we call life.”

Community Health Workers foster trusting relationships with the populations they serve and function as a link between healthcare providers and patients. Three full-time Community Health Workers, along with a supervisor, will be deployed and assigned at practices that they will remain working in for the entirety of the grant period.

“Carthage Area Hospital and Claxton-Hepburn Medical Campus are grateful for the ongoing support and commitment of the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization in ensuring healthcare remains local and accessible,” said Richard Duvall, President & CEO of North Star Health Alliance. “This initiative to integrate Community Health Workers into rural practices is a vital step forward in improving care and outcomes for our high-needs populations.”

The Community Health Workers will conduct outreach to rural residents who are elderly, disabled, and/or low-income to engage them in physical, behavioral, and social services, for example facilitating engagement in wellness visits, chronic care management, immunizations, cancer screenings, and other primary care services; assisting patients in securing transportation services in preparation for their next appointment; linking individuals to recommended specialty, social care, or behavioral services; conducting health-related social needs screenings with patients; assisting individuals in learning how to use telehealth technology in preparation for an upcoming visit; assisting individuals who have literacy or health literacy barriers in completing forms; and participating in primary care appointments alongside individuals deemed as appropriate; and other interventions as identified.

“To reach any community there must be an ability to understand, on an individual level, the lives, the challenges, and the success of that community,” said Heather Petrie, Practice Transformation Specialist with

FDRHPO and the North Country Initiative. “Community Health Workers belong in all places where change or understanding is needed; they are the roots of their community.”

Ms. Petrie has first-hand experience as a Community Health Worker in her past role with the North Country Family Health Center (NCFHC) and her work has revolved around addressing patient barriers to care, including social determinants of health.

“With their lived experience and passion for listening to the ‘small things,’ Community Health Workers can hear the human story and collaborate with individuals to support the changes they want to see in their lives,” she said.

Ms. Petrie explained, “Every story, every need is different. Our rural communities face challenges with their healthcare that can be diverse; knowledge of services can often be scarce. The rural Community Health Worker is an expert on services that are available in their communities and help ensure people receive the care and services that many are not aware are available to them.”

“Helping people gives me a sense of purpose and fulfillment,” said Dyna Eastman, Community Health Worker at Clifton Fine Hospital and Canton Health Center in Canton. “Community Health Workers are in place to build relationships with both the patients and the providers which in turn helps to provide better access to healthcare and community resources.”

“Community Health Workers are so important in healthcare. They live and work in the communities they are serving and often are the experts on the needs

of those communities,” said Felicia Parker, Operations Manager at the Samaritan Family Health Center in Clayton. “Community Health Workers help patients navigate the healthcare system, helping to find primary care services, providing education on disease management, and breaking down barriers to accessing healthcare services such as housing and transportation. Most importantly, Community Health Workers advocate for an equitable healthcare system to meet the needs of patients as well as educate healthcare providers and community stakeholders about the communities being served to help bridge the gap. Our Clayton patients will greatly benefit from this role being embedded into their care. We are fortunate to have this opportunity in rural healthcare.”

The project will measure the number of target population members engaged in Community Health Worker interventions, participating members’ health outcomes (e.g., rates of preventable inpatient admissions and emergency department visits, care gap closure, and social care referral closure), and reimbursement volumes for project-related services (e.g., Transitional Care Management, Chronic Care Management, Social Determinant of Health Risk Assessment, Community Health Integration services, and Principal Illness Navigation services).

By the end of the 3-year grant, the goal is for the target population who engaged with Community Health Workers to have 10% fewer potentially preventable inpatient admissions and emergency visits; the closure of at least 35% of care gaps that have been identified, and the closure of at least 50% of the identified health-related social needs referrals.

The project will conclude in September 2027.

This program was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$250,000 with 0% financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit HRSA.gov.



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Samaritan to make \$5.8 Million Investment in Samaritan Caregivers and an Increase in the Starting Wage for Certified Nursing Assistants

Watertown, N.Y. – Samaritan Medical Center is proud to announce a \$5.8 million investment in its staff with market rate wage adjustments across the organization for non-union employees. This initiative underscores the organization’s commitment to providing competitive compensation in line with the current healthcare job market, improving recruitment and retention efforts, and ensuring that staff across all departments are compensated for their hard work and dedication.

Samaritan’s senior leadership team and Board of Trustees carefully reviewed compensation data. They identified opportunities to align wages with industry standards better, reflecting staff’s critical role in delivering exceptional patient care. These market rate adjustments will apply to a wide range of positions across the organization; over 1,400 titles were impacted. This investment comes on top of major adjustments already made in 2024 for several other titles and through contract negotiations.

“We are deeply committed to supporting our employees, who are the heart of our mission,” said Samaritan’s President and Chief Executive Officer, Thomas H. Carman. “Over the past few years, a national workforce crisis struck every

industry, and healthcare was uniquely impacted due to the specialized training, credentials, and experience needed to fill the roles we have. We must continue to offer competitive wages to recruit and retain the talented individuals who make our health system a trusted place for care. We will continue to work hard to ensure we can financially cover the steep increases in wages we have experienced over the past few years. It is a necessary investment to continue our role as the region’s largest healthcare system and anchor acute care hospital.”

In addition to market rate adjustments, the Board of Trustees approved a discretionary, one-time payment for non-union staff based on job grades and titles, weighted more heavily to those who earn the least. The market rate adjustments and one-time payments will take effect in late January 2025.

Along with the \$5.8 million workforce investment, Samaritan will also significantly increase the starting wage for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) as part of a broader effort to address staffing shortages and retention efforts for a population of caregivers with a higher turnover rate. Recruiting, training, and retaining skilled CNAs

is essential to maintaining excellent service and care standards for our long term care residents. Effective January 1, 2025, the starting wages for all new CNAs were increased to \$20 per hour at both Samaritan Keep Home and Summit Village.

“Certified Nursing Assistants play a critical role in the daily care and well-being of long term care residents, and we want to convey how essential they are to us by ensuring they are compensated for the care they provide,” said Carman. “By increasing the starting wage for CNAs, we are not only investing in our workforce but also demonstrating our dedication to creating an environment where our employees feel valued and supported for the care they provide.”

The \$5.8 million investment and increased starting wage for CNAs are intended to improve wage equity and meet market demand in a competitive healthcare environment. By investing in its people, Samaritan hopes to enhance employee satisfaction further, reduce turnover, and create a positive work culture that fosters excellence in patient and resident care. By adjusting compensation to meet market expectations, Samaritan reinforces its position as an employer of choice for healthcare professionals in the region.

Watertown youth named Children’s Miracle Network 2025 Champion

Times staff report

WATERTOWN — Eight-year-old Raelynn Graveline of Watertown was announced Friday as the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals of Northern New York’s 2025 Champion.

Each year, 170 Children’s Miracle Network hospitals across the country identify a champion in their community to serve as the face for children treated at their hospital. Children’s Miracle Network of Northern New York at Samaritan Medical Center has chosen an annual local champion since 2019. The 2024 Champion was Sophia O’Connor of Carthage.

“Raelynn and her family have been actively involved with our CMN program since she was an infant,” Angie VanWormer, director of Children’s Miracle Network at Samaritan, said in a statement. “She had a rough start, but now she’s spunky, spirited, and excited to take on

this role. Her family is always looking for ways to give back, and we are grateful that they are part of our CMN family.”

According to Samaritan’s statement, Raelynn’s journey began with an unexpected diagnosis: Tetralogy of Fallot, a complex heart condition. At just 21 days old, she underwent open-heart surgery, followed by a rollercoaster recovery filled with challenges. She needed a second surgery, and the financial strain on her family grew.

That’s when they learned about the Direct Family Assistance Program offered by CMN at Samaritan. The program provided crucial financial assistance for medical expenses and travel, according to the statement, and today, Raelynn is thriving, and her family is thankful for the support that helped them through their darkest days.

“You never know when it could be you,” Raelynn’s mother, Amanda, said of the

assistance provided by CMN, “I certainly didn’t expect to need it, but when you do, it’s a blessing.”

“CMN has helped us out so much, and any time we get a chance to help them back, we take it,” Raelynn’s father, Michael, said in the statement.

Samaritan said through the Direct Family Assistance Program, CMN continues to be there for Raelynn and kids like her to help ease the financial burden of medical care. This program is available to children in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties who are facing a health crisis to help with out-of-pocket costs related to necessary medical care, including travel to specialists and expenses not covered by insurance.

For more information on Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, contact Samaritan Medical Center at 315-785-4053 or cmninfo@shsny.com



Raelynn Graveline. Provided photo

Kids and healthy eating: Gobble up these body-friendly food practices

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Y retreat options offer a refreshing way to inspire your team to embrace balance and well-being in both their personal and professional lives.



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Metro Creative Connection

Despite being pint-sized people, children can have some very big personalities and opinions. Parents know that kids have strong feelings on everything from the clothes they wear to the foods they eat.

Although not all children are inherently picky eaters, most go through phases of picky eating during their childhood development, particularly when they are toddlers. The UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals also says some children naturally are more sensitive to certain tastes, smells and textures, which could make certain foods less desirable to youngsters. Others may mimic their parents' picky food tendencies. A child who has strong aversions to trying new foods can make it hard to plan meals, especially ones that include nutritious fare.

Getting kids to eat more healthy foods and be excited about them could take some time and effort. Parents can try some of these strategies to change kids' perceptions about healthy eating.

TAKE THE LEAD

Parents can model healthy eating behavior every time they sit down to a meal. Research suggests parents' eating behaviors significantly influence their children's food preferences and dietary habits. Given their influence, adults should choose healthy foods often enough so that the process becomes habit for the entire household.

MAKE IT A TEAM EFFORT

Children may refuse foods because it gives them a modicum of control in a world where adults seem to be making all the decisions. When children are included in meal planning and shopping, they are more likely to

eat foods that are healthy. While the bulk of foods should be healthy ones, a few treats or special ingredients can be thrown in every so often.

CREATE FAMILY MEAL EXPECTATIONS

Routines are essential to children's well-being. By eating together as a family and serving meals and snacks around the same time each day, kids will thrive knowing what is coming next. Mealtime is a good time to talk about healthy eating habits and table manners as well, says the Cleveland Clinic. Parents can model how half of the plate should be made up of vegetables and some fruit.

RESPECT EATING QUIRKS

One child may only eat broccoli if it is dunked in ketchup. Another might only embrace a turkey sandwich if it is cut into triangles. Parents should pick their battles regarding food. Parents should go with the flow if kids are eating right, even if their choices are a little unorthodox.

MAKE IT A GAME

Incorporate some fun into meals by encouraging children to come up with funny names for their foods, however ridiculous they may be. Make competitions of healthy eating by seeing who can eat the most vegetables during the week and earn a prize. Kids likely will respond better to these positive choices rather than ultimatums about foods they "have" to eat.

Healthy eating may not come easily to all children, especially if they are picky eaters. Some patience and flexibility on the part of parents can help kids become more excited about healthy food choices.

MASSENA HOSPITAL
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-Donna,
Wound Care Patient

Scan to hear Donna's story and find out more.



ROCHESTER
REGIONAL HEALTH

Suicide prevention walk draws hundreds in Massena

By **BOB BECKSTEAD**

bbeckstead@wdt.net

MASSENA — The first Massena walk to raise awareness about suicide prevention was a big success, according to organizers.

They had put the word about the IronMind walk on Facebook.

“We aim to fill the streets and make a powerful statement for this crucial cause. All proceeds will fund local suicide prevention awareness groups,” they said.

And fill the streets they did, with the walk starting at Sacred Heart Church, proceeding down Main Street, and ending at the fire department.

Todd Mullin said the IronMind walk drew hundreds of volunteers to downtown Massena.

“It was wonderful. We ended up having 350 people on the streets, and we definitely created awareness,” he said.

The walk ended six months of planning.

“I’m not a T-shirt salesman or an event organizer, but I had a plan and a vision, and about six months of planning from the time of our event, we made it come through and it was wonderful,” Mullin said.

He thanked Village Administrator Monique N. Chatland for



Todd Mullin said the recent IronMind walk to draw attention to suicide prevention drew 350 people to downtown Massena. Provided photo

arranging the permit, and the fire and police departments and Department of Public Works for their assistance with the event.

“Everybody did an amazing job,” he said.

Mullin said he returned to Sacred Heart Church after the event to pick up some tables and a tent, and the area had been cleaned up.

“You talk about amazing. Three hundred fifty people showed up. There wasn’t one piece of garbage,” he said.

He said he has already talked

with Jason Hendricks from H3 Designs about the 2025 event. Hendricks assists in planning events in Massena.

“We’re planning again to do another event this year, hopefully tied in with Pumpinpalooza,” Mullin said. “There’s maybe a few little things we can do. I actually have someone else, a friend of ours, who is going to help assist us, too. But, I think we have all the leg work done, so it’ll be much easier.”

More information about IronMind events can be found

at <https://www.ironmind-events.com/>, where organizers explain the purpose behind the organization.

“Welcome to IronMind, where we honor resilience and fight stigma in memory of Dylan Mullin. Founded with a purpose, IronMind stands as a tribute to Dylan’s life and the enduring spirit he embodied,” organizers said. “Dylan E. Mullin, a cherished son, brother, and friend, left an indelible mark on all who knew him. With a heart as expansive as the river

he loved, Dylan touched lives with his kindness, his infectious smile, and his unwavering support for others. He lived passionately, finding solace in the outdoors, especially on the waters of the Raquette River, where he shared countless moments of joy with loved ones.”

The website also contains resources for individuals who want more information about suicide prevention.

Canton-Potsdam Hospital members named Employees of the Quarter

POTSDAM — Rochester Regional Health’s St. Lawrence senior leaders have announced the Canton-Potsdam Hospital team members who were chosen as 2024 Employees of the Fourth Quarter.

These individuals were nominated by both patients and colleagues for the exceptional work they perform each and every day.

One team member from

ancillary services, in-patient services, and Behavioral Health/Clinical Network were chosen.

Canton-Potsdam Hospital (CPH) recipients are Patient Registration Clerk Thelma Brown with Registration; Ted Palmer, RN, with the Emergency Department; and Family Medicine Physician Emily Wood, MD, with Clinical Network.



From left, St. Lawrence Region and CPH Chief Operating Officer Michael Rulffes, award recipients Thelma Brown and Ted Palmer, RN; St. Lawrence Region President Donna McGregor, and St. Lawrence Region Vice President of Nursing Christina Latta. St. Lawrence Region photo

SAMARITAN NOVEMBER 2024 DAISY®, AND BEE AWARD RECIPIENTS



Page Boutiette Nursing Assistant



Anne Tyler, Registered Nurse

Samaritan Medical Center is pleased to announce its DAISY, and BEE Award recipients for November 2024. The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses® recognizes exemplary nursing staff, and the BEE Award honors other outstanding staff members for being excellent every day, both at the hospital and outpatient clinics.

Anne Tyler, a Registered Nurse (RN) at Samaritan’s Car-Freshner Center for Women and Children received the DAISY Award. Page Boutiette, a nursing assistant (NA) on Samaritan Medical Center’s Progressive Care Unit received the BEE Award.

The nomination for Tyler came from the mother of an infant who had been in the pediatric unit. They described Anne’s care and compassion not only for their infant child but for them as the mother who was scared and felt alone.

For receiving the DAISY Award – which is an international award backed by The DAISY Foundation – Tyler was presented with a certificate commending her as an extraordinary nurse, a DAISY Award pin, and a symbolic sculpture called “A Healer’s Touch,” which is hand-carved by artists of the Shona Tribe in Zimbabwe. A larger

version of this sculpture has also been installed in the Healing Gardens at Samaritan Medical Center in honor of all DAISY and BEE Award winners to come. It was purchased using funds donated by the Samaritan Auxiliary.

Boutiette was nominated for the BEE Award by Sarah Lockwood, a Registered Nurse (RN) on Samaritan’s Progressive Care Unit, saying:

“Page is an exceptional nursing assistant. Despite working dayshift, Page is always willing to help nightshift as well. He is the type of nursing assistant every nurse hopes to have. His kindness and compassion for his patients is obvious and he is exceptionally helpful to nurses as well, even if he isn’t the assigned aide for their patients.”

Boutiette was presented with a certificate, a BEE Award pin, and a gift bag with other tokens of gratitude.

These awards will continue to be presented throughout the year, and nominations can be submitted by patients, families, or colleagues at any time. To make a nomination or to learn more about the Samaritan DAISY, and BEE Awards, visit www.samaritanhealth.com/daisy-bee.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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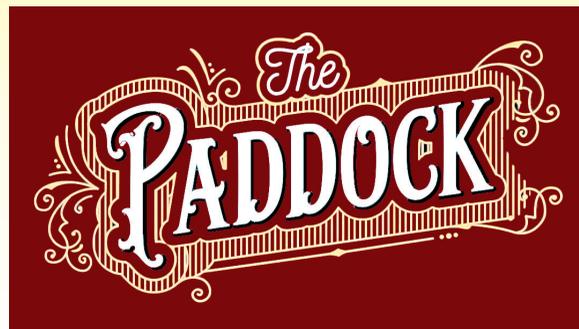
Awards who meets the following criteria:

- A role model in their profession
- A leader in their business and community
- Dedicated and successful in their vocation
- Active volunteer and community participant

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Watertown Daily Times



Scrub Clubs promoting health careers in north country schools



Students from the 2024 Knickerbocker Scrubs Club learn Stop The Bleed training from Beth Solar, FDRHPO workforce outreach program manager. Provided photo



Students from the 2024 Knickerbocker Scrubs Club visit Samaritan Medical Center for hands-on learning about health care fields. Provided photo

Times staff report

A curriculum that offers students hands-on introduction to health and health care careers is about to be launched across the north country.

Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization is partnering with regional schools to introduce a Scrubs Club program to students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Designed to immerse students in the dynamic world of health care, Scrubs Club provides firsthand insights into the roles, responsibilities and rewards of serving in the healthcare field.

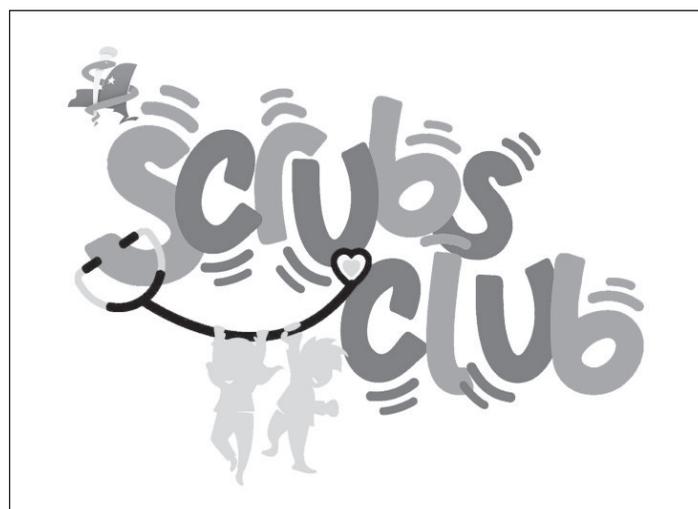
FDRHPO said that in a statement that through engaging, hands-on activities and interactive exercises, students have the opportunity to experience various health care occupations through the program.

In 2024, FDRHPO launched the first-ever Scrubs Club at Knickerbocker Elementary School with the support and instruction of Tara Elmer, technology integration STEM K-12 teacher in the Watertown City School District.

By developing a dynamic curriculum and creating engaging content, students gained hands-on experience in taking temperatures, listening to heart rates, and much more.

Elmer said in the statement that attending a health care careers club after school offers young children with numerous benefits.

“It provides early exposure to a wide range of career options, from doctors and nurses to lab technicians and therapists, sparking curiosity and interest in the field,” she said. “Through fun,



hands-on activities, children can develop essential STEM skills while enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.”

Elmer said that she believes these clubs also “promote empathy and social awareness by highlighting the importance of helping others, alongside teaching healthy habits and self-care practices.”

She said that by exploring meaningful careers, children gain confidence, motivation and a sense of purpose, setting the stage for long-term goals.

Additionally, the pro-

grams provide a safe and enriching environment where children can build friendships and stay engaged in productive, supervised activities after school.

She said the program, which now has three clubs running in the Watertown district, has the full support of teachers, administrators and parents, as well as excellent attendance. Last year, the program reached 10 students; this year it is up to 39 and the hope is to reach another 39 students in the fall.

Patrick A. Fontana, deputy director of FDRH-

PO, said the organization is seeking additional schools in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties interested in starting Scrub Clubs.

Beth Solar, FDRHPO’s workforce outreach program manager, leads the Scrub Club program and has worked for over 20 years as a licensed practical nurse II lending to her understanding of the importance of reaching school-aged children with this experiential learning, according to the statement.

“It is incredible to see the elementary students light up when learning about health and health care,” she said. “From learning wound care to touring area hospitals, these students are becoming more and more acclimated to medical knowledge and language.”

For more information about the program, visit www.fdrhpo.org/health-workforce.

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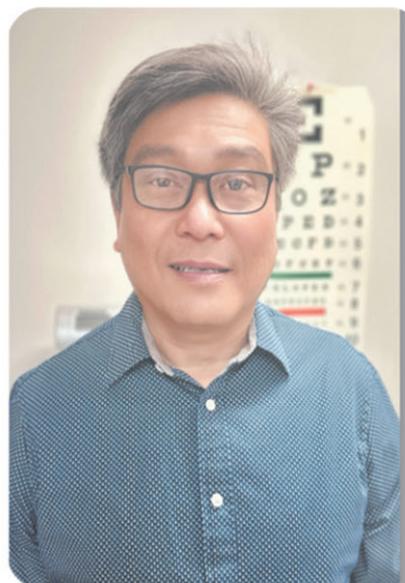


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Initiative to target lead paint in apartments

By **CRAIG FOX**
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN—The city has been designated one of 23 cities in New York as “communities of concern” under a new state program to reduce the risks of exposing children to lead paint poisoning.

The Jefferson County Public Health Department and the city codes office are teaming up to run a new Lead Rental Registry program that requires rental property owners with two or more units to register their apartments and have them inspected every three years for lead-based paint. The inspections would be conducted on rental properties built in 1980 and older.

City codes supervisor Dana Aikins and Faith Lustik, director of preventive services with the county’s public health department, discussed the efforts during a City Council work session on Monday night.

Watertown was designated as one of the “communities of concern” because of the city’s aging housing stock could expose children to peeling and chipping of lead paint in apartments where they live, she said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, “exposure to lead can seriously harm a child’s health and cause well-documented adverse effects.”

Those include:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

Jefferson County Public Health Director Stephen A. Jennings said Tuesday that children and adults are at risk of exposure in Watertown.

“It’s a problem, no doubt about it,” he said.

City specific data was not

readily available, but We Act for Environmental Justice, an advocacy group for renters and the underserved population, reported that 12 percent of children born in New York in 2019, 28,820 children, have been diagnosed with elevated levels of lead in their bloodstream.

“Childhood lead poisoning rates for communities across New York State are five to six times higher than those in Flint, MI at the peak of its water crisis,” the organization posted in a study on its website. “And studies show that Black children living below the poverty line are twice as likely to suffer from lead poisoning as poor white children.”

A map of New York state of current lead exposure risks published online by valueofleadprevention.org shows Jefferson County in the 7.5 % to 10% category. It is the second lowest on the scale which extends to 12.5% and more for areas including

Onondaga County and New York City counties.

The public health department was awarded a five-year contract to receive \$554,200 in funding annually to work on the program with the city’s codes office.

The funding will be used to hire temporary city code enforcement employees to conduct the inspections and testing with no cost to property owners, Lustik explained.

Under the plan, property owners would have to pay if they used their own certified inspectors. The units will need to be recertified every three years. The program is patterned after one in Rochester.

But Councilman Benjamin P. Shoen criticized that approach, calling it “an over reach” to require owners to force them to do the inspections in that matter. He’d like to see property owners be reimbursed.

“I think it’s an invasion to

property owners,” he said.

Through another state program, owners could receive \$40,000 to mitigate lead paint from their properties.

If the program gets going, the county would be in line to receive more funding to combat lead poisoning, Jennings said.

Councilwoman Lisa A. Ruggiero asked about how the state plans to enforce the inspections.

Lustik said that hasn’t been determined, adding that the state is in the process of completing putting together regulations for the program.

The state is accepting public feedback from the draft legislation until Feb. 22.

The public health department also received a \$326,641 grant for Neighbors of Watertown to remediate 18 units in the city of lead poisoning. The agency also runs a program to educate the community about lead paint poisoning.

Massena Hospital names Employees of the Quarter



From left, St. Lawrence Region and CPH Chief Operating Officer Michael Rulffes, St. Lawrence Region Clinical Network Medical Director Jan Close, MD; award recipient Emily Wood, MD; and St. Lawrence Region Clinical Network Chief Administrative Officer Sinead Ingersoll. St. Lawrence Region photo



From left, St. Lawrence Region President Donna McGregor, award recipients Chandra Kavi, Jennifer Perez and Andrew Sienkiewicz, st. RN; Vice President of Nursing Christina Latta, and Massena Hospital Associate Chief Operating Officer Brent Bishop. St. Lawrence Region photo

MASSENA — Rochester Regional Health’s St. Lawrence senior leaders have named the Massena Hospital team members who were chosen as 2024

Employees of the Fourth Quarter.

These individuals were nominated by both patients and colleagues for the exceptional work they

perform each and every day.

One team member from ancillary services, in-patient services, and Behavioral Health/Clinical Net-

work were chosen.

Massena Hospital (MH) recipients are Monitor Technician Chandra Kavi with Medical/Surgical, Facility Greeter Jennifer

Perez with Registration, and Nurse Manager Andrew Sienkiewicz, RN, with Wound Care.



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