

PRESS RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

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Pictures by Blake Wright

HAMMONDSPORT STUDENT ATTENDS RYLA

The last week in June on the campus of Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua twenty-four students, sponsored by their community's Rotary Club, participated in the Rotary Youth Leadership Award program (RYLA).

RYLA is an intense and incredibly challenging leadership program, sponsored by Rotary District 7120, and was designed to engender passion, resilience, determination, mental toughness, gratitude, and compassion. The students had the opportunity to participate in a character building program which focused on leadership, effective communication, trust, and cooperation. Personal commitments and shared insights were set as goals, and the participants gained an increased sense of confidence in themselves and their team. They had the opportunity to exchange ideas about current issues and discuss leadership and personal development with knowledgeable, local and regional leaders, including District 7120 Rotarians. The program was designed to develop leadership skills which will be most beneficial to the participants in future endeavors.

The instructor for this year's RYLA was Chris MacDonald, an inspirational and motivational speaker, a service worker, and a Rotarian. The program's activities included leadership training classes with hands-on projects, team and trust-building activities, program projects, diversity awareness discussion groups, personal safety, goalsetting group sessions, personal challenges, and self-confidence building activities.

Blake Wright, son of Bob and Tonya Wright of Hammondsport, who recently completed his junior year at Hammondsport Central School, attended the workshop; he was sponsored by the Bath Rotary Club. At the local school Wright was the Alumni Association Junior Class Representative, Student Council President, and member of the school's track and cross country teams. He has been elected by his peers to serve as Senior Class President. He has been consistently on the High Honor Roll at the local school.

Wright stated that the RYLA program included a rigorous and very informative series of lessons and activities that truly demanded the attributes of leadership from each individual. The discussion-driven lessons with Chris MacDonald and bouncing ideas among all participants about various leadership skills and situations were his favorite parts of the program. The biggest challenge for him was leaving his new friends at the end of the week. However, he will always be able to recall his experience and remember these new friends by looking at the 2022 RYLA Yearbook on which he worked as a staff member.

“This opportunity to connect with a great mentor and fellow student leaders has been an amazing and magical experience,” remarked Wright. “It has simply been one of the highlights of my leadership career. Going forward I hope that I can take a little piece of everyone I met at the program and incorporate it into my leadership roles. I cannot advocate enough for this program, and I hope it continues to have an impact on students like it did on me.”

(Listed below are the cutlines for the 2 pictures attached in the email sent.)

Picture # 1 – Blake Wright, a student at Hammondsport Central School, attends RYLA 2022.

Picture #2 – Fellow RYLA 2022 participants (standing left to right) are: Erika Newcombe, Ella Frazer, Cassie Cook, Erika Allison, Maggie Bacon, Mollie Asquino, Troy Dingman, and Blake Wright.