

PRESS RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

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Bath ROTARY Club



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Pictures by Markus Tompkins &
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BATH ROTARY CLUB SPONSORS TWO STUDENTS TO RYLA 2023

The last week in June on the campus of Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua 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 Julie Carney, District 7120 Governor; Nancy Latour, District 7120 Assistant Governor; Gareth Evans. The program was designed to develop leadership skills which will be most beneficial to the participants in future endeavors.

The lead facilitator 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.

Markus Tompkins, son of Andrew and Deanna Tompkins, who recently completed his junior year at Hammondspport Central School, attended the program; he was sponsored by the Bath Rotary Club. At the local school Tompkins was Class President and Class Student Council Representative as well as a member of the following: Academic All-Stars, Drama Club, Senior Trip Service Project Committee, Jazz Band, Marching Band, Cross Country, and Varsity Basketball. He is also a National Honor Society member, a Scholar Athlete, and consistently on the High School Honor Roll at the local school.

"RYLA was an incredible experience, and I am most thankful that the Bath Rotary Club sponsored me. In the few days I was at RYLA, I learned about several different styles of

leadership and how and when to use each effectively,” stated Tompkins. “I also learned about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion which helped me to further understand how to be a leader. My fellow participants and I learned about these leadership skills and ideas from the outstanding guest speakers who came each day. We also spent much time working on our communication and teamwork skills through a variety of activities from creating a song to trying to get each of us over a piece of rope without touching the rope, to forming a human pyramid, etc. We also worked nightly in teams in order to create something which would commemorate our time at RYLA. I was tasked with being a part of the Paper Plate Award and Snack Committee.”

Tompkins continued by noting, “My favorite part of RYLA were the relationships that were made with others of different backgrounds, aspirations, and goals and the fact that the program forced me to step outside of my comfort zone and become a more confident person and true leader. RYLA truly changed my perspective on how I see the world.”

Abigail Prichard, daughter of Brad and Heather Prichard, who recently completed her junior year at Bath-Haverling Central School, also attended the program; she was also sponsored by the Bath Rotary Club. At the local school Prichard is a member of the school’s softball and swim teams. She has served as an instructor for young children in the pool. In addition, she has served as Historian for the Haverling History Club and has consistently been on the school’s High Honor Roll.

“RYLA was such a life changing experience. It helped me develop a different perspective on what it takes to be a leader. It brought out both my strengths and weaknesses and showed me what I need to work on in order to be a good leader. Indeed, I believe in the adage that great leaders don’t set out to be a leader – they set out to make a difference,” stated Prichard. “Finally, I want to recognize Julie, Nancy, and Gareth, our counselors, as well as the Bath Rotary Club who sponsored me.”

(Cutlines for the 3 attached pictures are printed below)

1st picture (labeled as picture #2): Some of the 2023 RYLA participants display their diplomas. Standing in the first row, 3rd from the right is Markus Tompkins, the student from Hammondsport Central School who was sponsored by the Bath Rotary Club.

2nd picture (labeled as picture #5): The students at RYLA 2023 participated in a team building game of trying to get each other over a rope without touching the rope.

3rd picture (labeled as picture #6): The RYLA members participated in a team building game of building a pyramid. Markus Tompkins, the student from Hammondsport Central School who was sponsored by the Bath Rotary Club, is seen kneeling at the left on the 2nd row.