



The Chairman's Corner

by

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THE YOUTH BUREAU LEADERSHIP AWARDS BANQUET

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As the big night draws closer, the Columbia County Youth Bureau and Executive Director Dan Grandinetti are busy with preparations to honor the top students from the six county-based school districts at the annual Columbia County Youth Bureau Leadership Awards Banquet. In addition, this year the Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School and New Visions/Questar III have been asked to participate.

The Louis A. Pierro and the Richard F. Tracy Awards are given to a Columbia County high school senior (Pierro) and a 7th/8th grade student (Tracy) who demonstrate strong leadership and community service skills. Students are nominated through their school administrators and guidance counselors. The Louis A. Pierro award winner is also presented with a \$1,000 scholarship.

The Youth Bureau Leadership Awards Banquet returned in 2024 after several years of a COVID-induced hiatus. The Richard F. Tracy Award for seventh and eighth grade students was introduced for the first time that evening.

This year's banquet is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21, 5:30 p.m., at the Hudson Elks Club, with 120, including all nominees and parents, expected to attend the invitation-only event. County Clerk Holly Tanner will serve as guest speaker, with Good Eats Catering Service set to provide the evening's meal. Sponsoring the event are the Spark of Hudson, Arica's Insurance, and the county Department of Social Services.

Tasked with sorting through the nominees in preparation for the announcement of the 2025 winners are county Department of Social Services Commissioner Bob Gibson, Arica Cooper, Lisa Gallina, and Amanda Pierro. They will be choosing the winners based on leadership, volunteerism, athletics, community service, academic achievement, and enhanced skill set.

"It's an exhausting but at the same time an exhilarating process going through each application," said Director Grandinetti. "The challenging part is there are 20-plus students nominated and you only get to pick two winners, but you leave the process knowing the future is in good hands."

"I find it to be a great honor to fill the position of Executive Director of the Columbia County Youth Bureau and play a part in this great event. Both of the community giants, Pierro and Tracy, have played pivotal roles in my life personally and professionally," he added. "Also, what we're going to do this year is recognize former county Youth Bureau directors Pat Maloy, Matt Murell, and Jessica Nabozny for their service."

The county Youth Advisory Board is currently composed of Jen Depew, Shari Franks, Brian Neewsom, Don Coons, Jackie Salvatore, Bob Gibson, Matt Perry, Becky Polmateer, Alex Colwell, JB Brantley, Nick Zachos, John Gallo, Elis Richardson, Marcus Walthour, Darren Collins, Tyrone Hedgepath, Arica Cooper, Lisa Gallina, Amanda Pierro, and Peter Frank.

The Youth Bureau office is located in the Department of Social Services building at 25 Railroad Avenue, Hudson. The telephone number is 518-828-9411 x2241. Visit <https://ccyouthbureau.columbiacountyny.com> for up-to-date information on Youth Bureau programs and activities.