

Amherst Community Coalition highlights from 2022

The year 2022 was certainly one of unique events. While trying to combat the opiate epidemic, the COVID-19 crisis hit in a way that changed the way people lived and worked. Then the Ukraine invasion took place.

Everyone has their own highlights of the year, and the Amherst Youth and Community Coalition thought it would be interesting to hear a few of them. Below is what we heard:

High school student age 17: "The invasion of the Ukraine. It was truly terrifying to see a country fall to its knees as Russian troops began to invade. But what this really showed was the resilience of the Ukrainian people. Having the bravery to stand up to forces larger than you takes guts. Because of this, the world has also decided to unite to protect freedom and true bravery."

Isabella, age 16: "Reflecting upon 2022, an event that stands out to me, is the worldwide effects of the war in Ukraine. Even though it started many months ago, communities are still experiencing its effects, especially from the economic standpoint. The effects of this war have trickled down to my daily

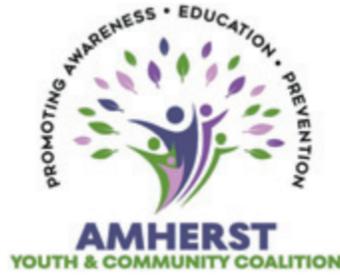
life as I notice increased prices of goods affected by supply chain disruptions stemming from the conflict abroad."

High school student age 16: "A personal community experience that stands out for me in 2022 is the death of two students at Williamsville South High School, Lauren Taggart and Luke Malinich.

As everyone at the school grieved them, and continue to grieve, we have never been so united and supportive as a community."

Paige, age 17: "Three things that stood out to me most in 2022 is my volunteer work at a food pantry. Helping families get food and seeing their smiles makes me feel happy, knowing that I am giving back to my community."

Rosa, adult: "In the last couple of years our world has been re-shaped; pandemic, changing weather patterns, our general acceptance of violence, gambling, and marijuana. However, I feel optimistic, we are getting smarter and our young adults are leading the way. We can't go backwards, we have to move forward and support each other in a new way. Our challenges are not as deep as our capacity to meet them."



Because of the number of comments submitted and

the topic which allows us to better understand one another, this subject will continue in next month's column. When we take the time to learn what is important to one another, we take the time to build strength in our community.

Comments on the column as well as suggestions for future topics are welcome

and appreciated. Please forward them to DFC grant@Amherst.ny.us.

Watch for the comments from the continuation of this article in the next month's issue and thank you for your continued support of the coalition as we continue to build a community safe and healthy for our youth.

Give the gift (Continued from page one)

Dec. 16 and Jan. 2, donors will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

"We ask that you give" a blood donation "for patient care over the holidays," Hall said. "We thank the community for support-

ing the American Red Cross."

Appointments are not required but are preferred. To make an appointment for a blood or platelet donation, visit www.RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS. Valid identification is required.

Senior Center (Continued from page one)

"We will have hot cocoa and popcorn," Public Relations Coordinator Christina Yensan said. "There will also be cookie decorating, a face painting station, and children can write letters to Santa. All the volunteers for the event are inter-generational with youth and seniors from the community working side by side at the different stations."

The Amherst Youth Ensemble will perform between 6 and 7 p.m.

"Bringing in the community and partnering with local

schools is important," Abel said. "The youth and rec department brings a fondness for outdoor activities. There will be outdoor games such as a ring toss and corn hole type game."

At 7 p.m., there will be a tree lighting ceremony and carol singing with the cast of O'Connell and Company's "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

The big man himself, Santa, will be on hand along with Mrs. Claus to visit with the children. They will be joined by other holiday

characters to greet children and families.

Abel said they are hoping to light a bonfire if the weather cooperates.

"The event is free and open to the public," she said. "This has become a tradition for families that come year after year. We see children, parents and grandparents come each year as a whole family."

For more information about the senior center, call 716-636-3050 or visit www.amherstcenterforseniorservices.com/.

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