

**CITY OF LEWISTON PRESS STATEMENT**  
**January 5, 2021**

**Lewiston Youth Advisory Council Partners With**  
**Healthy Androscoggin to Provide a Light in the Dark**  
**January 11<sup>th</sup> Launch**

**LEWISTON:** In a new partnership with Healthy Androscoggin, the Lewiston Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) is sharing their voice and some favorite views to advocate for mental health awareness, a topic they feel strongly about especially amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The approach they are using is Photovoice, a participatory action research methodology created by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the early 1990s where *“people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique.”* LYAC’s project is called ***“The View and Voice of LYAC . . . A Light in the Dark.”***

LYAC Chair Hope Rubito states, *“As a council of teens, we saw and felt firsthand how much of a struggle mental health has been amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. With this in mind, we decided to partner with Healthy Androscoggin to showcase a variety of unique photos dedicated to those who may be struggling themselves, and we wanted them to realize that they are not alone.”*

LYAC member Keira Potvin adds, *“It was important for LYAC to partner up with Healthy Androscoggin in this Photovoice project. Many of us have become aware that members of our community have been struggling with mental health. This project is a good way to show that everyone has their tough days, even when it seems as if they don’t.”*

**PROJECT LAUNCH:** Photos and narratives will ***“launch”*** virtually on Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, on various social media platforms, and different aspects of the project will be posted daily for two weeks. In addition, nearer to February 14<sup>th</sup>, Valentine’s Day, LYAC hopes to have their photos and narratives printed and on display within the community. Corrie Brown, LMSW, PS-C, Healthy Androscoggin Substance

Misuse and Tobacco Prevention Manager, who has been working with LYAC on the project, will be seeking venues for an exhibit presence.

Brown notes, *“Healthy Androscoggin is excited and honored to partner with LYAC on this Photovoice project. Good mental health, coping skills, and resiliency are key to preventing substance use among youth. LYAC is a dynamic group of youth who have the power to positively impact their peers.”*

LYAC member Julia Paquette appreciates the collaboration, *“I’m glad the Lewiston Youth Advisory Council partnered up with Healthy Androscoggin to do the Photovoice project because it helped me and the other members to find a little bit of hope during these tough times.”*

LYAC member Elena Ray Clothier concurs, *“2020 was a hard year for us all, but as we enter a new one, I think it is important to reflect on the bits of happiness and light that helped us get through it. May they continue to comfort us and push us onward, and I sincerely wish that what gives us hope gives others some as well.”*

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