

# Middle school Banking Club to begin Sept. 20 at Shipman Youth Center

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## Education

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The Shipman Youth Center in Lake Placid is seen here in 2019. (News photo — Andy Flynn)

LAKE PLACID — Middle schoolers in Lake Placid and Saranac Lake are getting into banking. That is, the Banking Club, a new project hosted by Shipman Youth Center and the Saranac Lake Youth Center. This free 12-week educational program aims to teach middle schoolers financial literacy skills so they can get a good start in life.

Classes will be taught by people from Tri-Lakes Federal Credit Union and Community Bank. The topics and pace are designed for middle schoolers. Learning will cover opening and running a checking and savings account, how to budget, earn, spend, save, use credit and plan for your future. Free snacks will be available at each class meeting. And there is an excellent bonus if you complete the program: cash to open a bank account.

One on one tutoring will be available for those students who want or need it to complete the program, or just to work on their math. Adults or high school students who are interested in being math tutors for the project are encouraged to contact Jason Hooker at Shipman Youth Center, or Jenn Keller at Saranac Lake Youth Center. Tutors receive an hourly wage.

Since the program links two communities ten miles apart, free transportation is provided by the Lake Placid Central School District. When classes are in Saranac Lake, a Lake Placid bus will bring students from Lake Placid Middle High School to the Saranac Lake Library, and back. When classes are at Shipman Youth Center, the Lake Placid bus will get students at Saranac Lake Youth Center and bring them back there after class. The Banking Club, which is already approaching half full. The sessions are Wednesdays after school from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., and run from Sept. 20 through Dec. 13, with a break for Thanksgiving week. The opening and closing activities will be at Shipman Youth Center.

The Banking Club got its start at a Lake Placid Rotary Club meeting where volunteer and project creator Martha Pritchard Spear said, "I felt inspired by the success of the bus shelter project and establishing the Tina Leonard Award, which proved that a small amount of people who are determined can make a lasting difference in our community. I saw another opportunity to help, and knew I had the skills and network to be useful."

While this program will occur one time, that does not have to be the end of it. Spear says volunteers in other communities can create their own financial literacy programs using this or another model.

"The Banking Club is easily replicable and we are happy to share what we know, if you want to start your own," Spear said.

This project is financially supported by the Adirondack Foundation's Generous Acts Fund, the Rotary Club of Lake Placid, and Tri Lakes Federal Credit Union. Heather DeForest, CEO of the Credit Union, said, "Teaching financial literacy to our youth is very important for their futures. Getting them into responsible financial habits now will make things better for them as they grow to adulthood. And along the way we are showing them the practical use of the math curriculum they are being taught in school."

## **Local News**

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