



To the Editor:

St. Lawrence NYSARC-It Matters to Me! I grew up in the North Country and moved away to attend College. Years later, I returned to raise my children in the scenic and safe upstate New York. I was fortunate to be hired by St. Lawrence NYSARC, an organization I knew well growing up. My mother worked for SLNYSARC for 28 years. Many of the employees with disabilities that I met years ago are still working today. They love their jobs, their friendships, a feeling of self-worth and, yes-a paycheck!

My responsibility at SLNYSARC is to work with businesses to secure contracts for meaningful work, suited for people with disabilities. I feel great satisfaction when visiting our sites and having our employees say “thank you” for the work they are doing. How could our government consider closing sheltered work centers and cutting some of the most valuable and meaningful jobs for the most vulnerable members of our society?

St. Lawrence NYSARC employs approximately 150 people with disabilities who clean government buildings under the Federal AbilityOne program. People mow lawns and provide grounds maintenance services throughout the entire County. Our employees scan and shred thousands of documents a year on State contracts and with hospitals, schools and universities. There are several bottle redemption sites where our employees sort and process plastic, aluminum and glass containers. We provide product assembly, kitting and packaging in Ogdensburg. We recently started an electronic waste collection and recycling business in Massena. Our “green” initiatives are not only providing our employees with sustainable employment but also helping keep our environment clean and safe.

For the last few years St. Lawrence NYSARC has been working with Clarkson University to help modernize our container redemption business. Professor Charles Robinson and his students have volunteered endless hours to improve efficiencies at our Massena work center. We are very thankful to all agencies and companies across St. Lawrence County that help contribute to our mission.

I sincerely hope our elected officials will support the Employment First Choice Act and give our employees the choice to work in the setting that is best suited to their needs!

Tracy Tuttle

