

BY: Senator O'MARA

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of Chemung
County Youth Bureau's Summer Cohesion Program

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which are dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, the natural resources of New York, recognizing the role all citizens have in protecting the environment and the quality of life in this Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Chemung County Youth Bureau's Summer Cohesion Program, to be celebrated at a Family Fun Night at Eldridge Park in Elmira, New York, on Thursday, June 27, 2024; and

WHEREAS, The Summer Cohesion Program serves to better meet the needs of children and families within Chemung County with recreational, educational, and cultural enrichment programming; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Hurricane Agnes and the infamous flooding it brought about wreaked widespread destruction throughout Chemung County, emphasizing the critical need for the community to conduct collaborative program planning for summer youth programs; and

WHEREAS, The Elmira City School District, along with seven key partners: the United Way, the City of Elmira, the Town of Southport, ARC, the Jewish Community Center, YMCA, and YWCA, all came together to meet that need; in 1974, the program now known as Summer Cohesion was created; and

WHEREAS, The founding board members of the Summer Cohesion program include: Bill Cieri, Jake Hover, Dave Mathes, Roberta McDonald, Polly Sanders, Tom Tranter Jr., Ellen Wohl, and Marty Yenawine, under the supervision of whom the program began to flourish; and

WHEREAS, This innovative approach to summer youth programming centralized administration and planning and also provided a more efficient use of community resources; program duplication was eliminated, and programs were provided in areas where they previously did not exist, ultimately allowing for members of the community to be assisted in new ways, for the betterment of the county and state at large; and

WHEREAS, From 1974 until 1976, Summer Cohesion was administered through the Elmira City School District, and officially became a county program when it was placed under the newly formed Chemung County Youth Bureau in 1977; although a county-operated program, Summer Cohesion still maintains its collaborative roots as demonstrated with the 30+ community partners it boasts today; and

WHEREAS, A true asset to its community and local economy, the Summer Cohesion Program has provided summer recreational, educational, and enrichment programming to over 50,000 young people throughout the community in the past 50 years, and has provided summer employment opportunities and life skills training to over 6,000 young adults since 1974; and

WHEREAS, Receiving due praise for the program's dedicated and unwavering efforts, the Summer Cohesion Program has been commended by the Chemung County Youth Board, the National Association of Counties, the New York State Recreation and Park Society, the United Way of the Southern Tier, the New York State Division for Youth, and the Genesee Valley Recreation and Parks Society; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals and organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of the great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Chemung County Youth Bureau's Summer Cohesion Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the leadership of Chemung County Youth Bureau's Summer Cohesion Program.