

# The Citizen

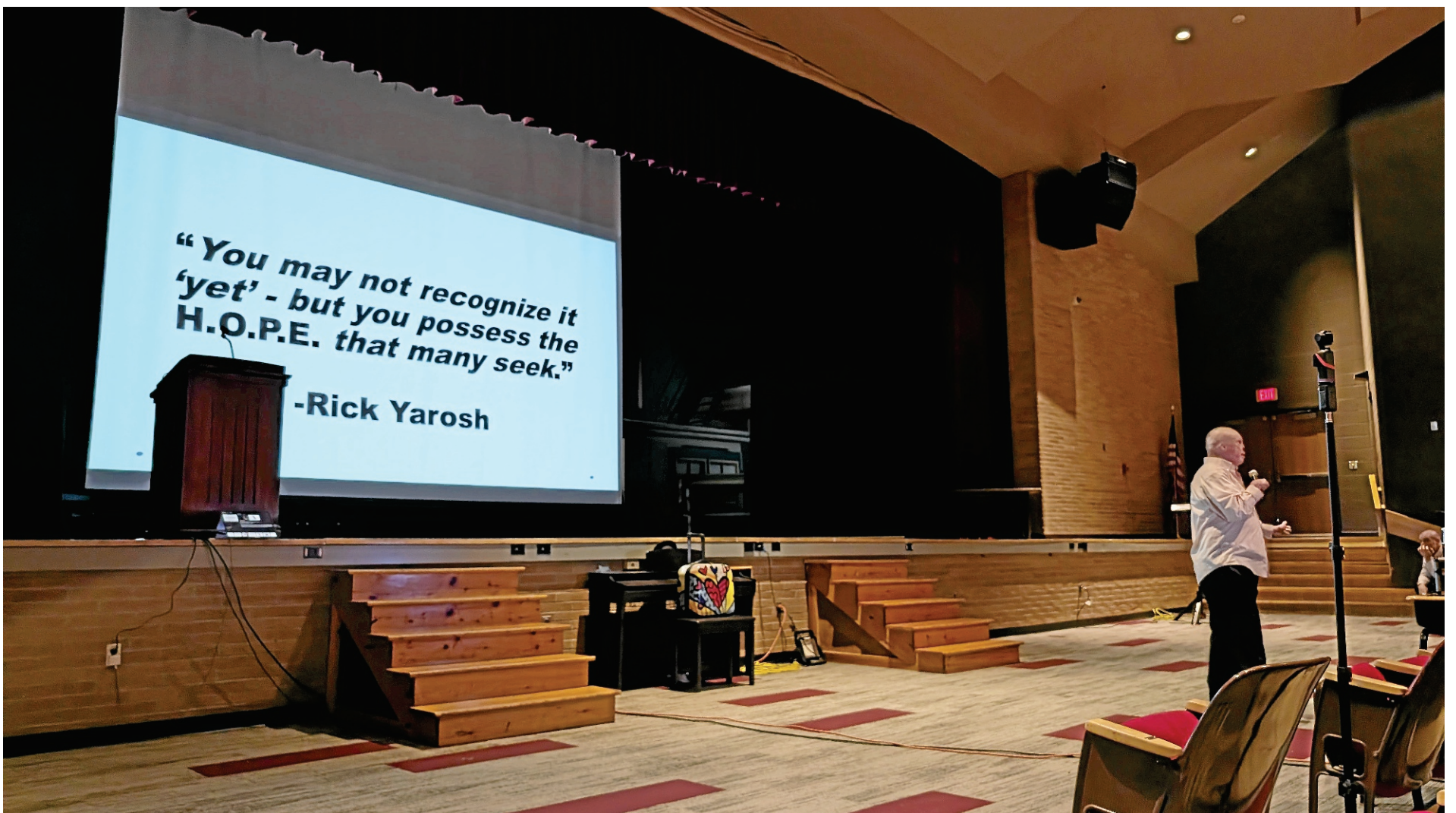
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## EDUCATION

# SUPPORT SYSTEM



PROVIDED PHOTOS

Sgt. Rick Yarosh tells Auburn High School students about his "HOPE" model, which he created for Sweethearts & Heroes, during a March 18 assembly at Auburn High School.

## Auburn students attend anti-bullying presentation

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A national youth leadership organization visited Auburn High School last month to offer resources for students struggling with mental health and tools to connect with their peers and prevent bullying.

Sweethearts & Heroes, founded by Tom Murphy and Sgt. Rick Yarosh, brought laughter and smiles to the school's auditorium on March 18, the organization said in a news release. Its presentation included student-led acting scenarios, training for upper-class students to guide their younger counterparts and communicating in a circle to build compassion and empathy.

Tom Murphy, an entrepreneur and former mixed martial arts fighter from Vermont, founded Sweethearts & Heroes in 2006 alongside Army Sgt. Rick Yarosh, of Vestal.

Yarosh served in Iraq in 2006 and suffered severe burns over most of his body from an IED explosion. Despite the life-altering event that took his right leg and limits movements in his hands, Yarosh didn't let it slow him down, he said. He used it as an opportunity to establish the "HOPE" model, an acronym for "hold on, possibilities exist," which is now a key facet of Sweethearts & Heroes' presentation.

Through a partnership with H.



Sweethearts & Heroes CEO Tom Murphy leads a student assembly in the auditorium of Auburn High School March 18.

Richardson & Sons Utilities, an electrical contractor based in Geneva, Sweethearts & Heroes presented to the Auburn students what Murphy called the "stop, drop and roll of bullying." The organization has presented it to more than 2.5 million students in the U.S. and Canada since 2010.

"We have already had several students come forward to share how deeply these

messages resonated with them," said Sarah Passarello, the district's assistant superintendent for student services, in the news release. "As a result, they are now connected with the services and support they need."

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## BUSINESS

# ESL Federal Credit Union names Rogers new CEO

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ESL Federal Credit Union, which has two branches in Cayuga County, is under new leadership.

Tom Rogers has succeeded Faheem Masood as ESL's president and CEO. Masood announced his retirement in October.

Rogers previously served as the credit union's chief operating officer. He joined ESL in 2013 as chief financial officer and later added marketplace director to his title.

ESL Federal Credit Union's board of directors unanimously approved promoting Rogers to the top job.

"I'm pleased to lead ESL into the next chapter of growth and prosperity, while remaining true to our core values and commitment to delivering superior experiences," Rogers said in a statement. "It's a

privilege to lead an organization so deeply committed to its mission, and I look forward to the work to support our customers, invest in our community and create lasting connections across our service area."

The Rochester-based credit union has more than 30 locations, mainly in the Finger Lakes region. The acquisition of Generations Bank, which was finalized in January, allowed ESL to expand its reach into Cayuga County. The institution kept the former Generations Bank locations on North Seward Avenue in Auburn and Cayuga Street in Union Springs. It closed a drive-thru location on Osborne Street in Auburn.

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Tom Rogers is the new president and CEO of ESL Federal Credit Union, which has branches in Cayuga County.