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State of the Youth

Collaborating with Senator Ball to Combat Bullying

By Janeen Cunningham, Deputy Director, Putnam County Youth Bureau

The staff from the Putnam County Youth Bureau and New York State 40th District Senator Greg Ball (R, C) met with over 40 youth from Putnam County school districts to discuss the issue of bullying.

On Friday, March 4 students from Brewster, Carmel, Mahopac and Putnam Valley Middle and High Schools attended a forum to discuss how bullying affects them. The Senator invited the youth to help him frame the language of bullying legislation that he is co-sponsoring with 41st District Senator Stephen Saland (R).

"This was a wonderful opportunity to have a New York State Senator ask the opinions of our youth on such an important issue," said Janeen Cunningham, Deputy Director of the Putnam County Youth Bureau.

There was a lively discussion about the experience youth had with bullying in their schools. One student shared that he had been

bullied so much he had to switch schools. Another girl talked about her fear of speaking in public and being bullied. She proudly stated that this forum gave her the courage to speak up. The audience erupted with applause for her bravery.

The students had great advice for Senator Ball. They felt strongly that bully prevention starts at home and that any bullying campaign must include a parent education component. It should also be treated as a serious issue by lawmakers and school administration. Students who bully should be given a warning before being penalized.

Another young man expressed his concern that funding cuts to youth programs would lead to more problems with bullying in the future. The Senator echoed his concerns and reaffirmed his commitment to the

youth of New York State.

The Putnam County Youth Bureau's primary responsibility is to advocate for the youth of Putnam County. The Youth Bureau promotes positive youth development based upon the belief that families and extended families are the fundamental sources of care, support and guidance for children and youth. Our schools and other community-based services and organizations, formal and informal, are appropriate and effective complements to this foundation.



With Youth, For Youth

By Patty D'Amico, Executive Director, Ontario County Youth Bureau

Wow, did Ontario County's youth seize the opportunity to use their voices when they gathered at the recent With Youth, For Youth (WYFY) events! There was a new energy among the adults and teens after coming together to lay a foundation for joint, meaningful community action to promote positive youth development.

On May 13 & 14, WYFY youth and adult participants exchanged ideas and helped shape a plan to make our communities friendlier, more supportive environments for young people. These marvelous, diverse, caring teens sought avenues to grow their skills,

demonstrate their talents and engage them all for the community's benefit. They did this with a sense of energy, kindness and genuine concern for each other, their families, and the future. There were many teachable moments and our youth were teaching the lesson.

Since April 1, WYFY facilitators have been conducting these sessions in Canandaigua, Geneva and Victor — in libraries, the Boys & Girls Clubs, the YMCA, schools and faith-based organizations. More than 140 participants, ages 13 to 20, spoke about their lives, their communities, and their

concerns. In follow-up gatherings, these young people spoke to parents, mayors, school personnel, law enforcement, recreation department and other community leaders and then finally came together for a county-wide meeting.

Something important has begun in our communities. When the final report comes out by mid-summer, area residents will see how helpful these collaborative sessions have been and appreciate the changes our young people and interested adults would like to see occur. Stay tuned!

Ontario County Outstanding Youth Awards

By Patty D'Amico, Executive Director, Ontario County Youth Bureau



*L to R: Bryanna Love–Victor High School;
Michael DeRosa–DeSales High School;
Melanie Ellis–Canandaigua High School; and
Honorable Judge Craig Doran*

The Ontario County Youth Bureau Advisory Board held its Annual Youth Recognition Awards Ceremony held on Tuesday, June 7, 2011 at the Ontario Co. Safety Training Facility.

These awards are presented to Ontario County's outstanding ninth, 10th, 11th and 12th grade youth. Each high school in Ontario County was invited to nominate its deserving youth who have demonstrated resiliency, character, leadership and community service.

Alex Senglaub introduced the Honorable Judge Craig Doran Youth Advocate Award. This award has been established in Judge Doran's name and persona and will be given to an adult who has advocated for youth and demonstrated commitment to the causes of youth in Ontario County. Doran was present to also deliver a message of hope for the future, recognizing youth for their meaningful contributions to their community.

Guitarist Katelynn Vaughn and vocalist Lindsay Wyman, both from Canandaigua Academy, performed the song "Ride" by Martina McBride for an audience of 110 who attended the ceremony. These two

performers were also presented with certificates and gifts of appreciation for their three years of volunteering to perform at the awards.

Board members Tara Beth Clark, Alex DiDuro, Brianna Newton, Marlea Thomas and Sabrina Wilferth presented the Outstanding Youth Awards with the assistance of the Honorable Judge Doran and Youth Bureau Director Patricia D'Amico to the following students: Melanie Ellis, ninth grade, Canandaigua Academy; Bryanna Love, 10th grade, Victor High School; Michael DeRosa, 11th grade, DeSales High School; and Ashley McNulty, 12th grade, Midlakes High School.

Youth Use Creative Talent for Mural Project

By Dawn Metott, Oswego City Youth Activities Coordinator



The Oswego Springboard Mural Project began over three years ago as a City-sponsored community development plan to address graffiti issues. The project is a youth-focused initiative. The concept and implementation is directed by local young people with the support of the Springboard Mural Committee. The Mural Committee is a collaboration comprised of Oswego City & County youth, artist mentors, City of Oswego officials, Oswego County Opportunities Youth Services, Oswego YMCA, and the Oswego City-County Youth Bureau.

"There are multiple benefits related to the success of this project," states Dawn Metott from the Oswego City-County Youth

Bureau. "The students who participated in this project have become more involved in their community, graffiti issues are being addressed, and relationships have been developed by a wide cross-section of the Oswego community. Instead of just covering the graffiti the community has come together and invested in something special that reflects the sense of community pride which has made this project successful."

Over the last three years one very large and eight smaller murals have been designed and painted along the riverwalk on West Linear Park near the Utica Street Bridge. Seventeen designs have already been submitted by 15 youth artists and one Committee member and were approved by the Oswego City Common Council. This year, the Committee was approached by a local day camp wanting to be involved in the project as well. The Committee submitted two designs and will have youth from the local day camp come and participate in the painting of these murals.

The Committee has also

involved other youth in this project that need to complete community service hours for the local Youth Court program. These youth will be painting over the graffiti that is currently on the walls and priming the walls in preparation for the murals to be painted.

Dawn Metott further stated, "This project has been a great success and has been able to involve many different groups of youth, adult mentors and community leaders. The support from the City officials and Mayor has been wonderful."

The Springboard Mural Committee plans to continue this project as long as it can get students interested and maintain support from the City of Oswego.



Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau Keeping Busy

By Mike Barry, Rochester-Monroe Co. Youth Bureau

The Spring and Summer months have been busy and productive ones for the Youth Bureau, as our youth have had plenty of events to display their care for the community and their individual talents as well. With the support of County Executive Maggie Brooks and the guidance of Department of Human Services Commissioner Kelly Reed, the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau (RMCYB) has provided our county's youth with some exciting opportunities, and will continue to do so, even during these tough budget times.

In April, nearly 250 youth, parents and seniors participated in the 3rd Annual Intergenerational Fishing Derby at Powder Mills Park. Youth received free fishing rods courtesy of the Monroe County Fishing Advisory Board and competed for prizes for biggest fish caught.

Also in April and again in May, the RMCYB partnered with the Monroe County Sports Commission and Rochester Red Wings to host the "Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit and Run Competition" for the second straight year at Frontier Field. We also continued "Positive Youth Development Night" at Frontier Field during the May 23rd Red Wings game, where before

and during the game, youth organizations showcased all the opportunities for youth advancement in the concourse.

The RMCYB also continued to recognize the positive actions and accomplishments of our community's youth in June at the 2011 Monroe County Legislative Youth and Youth Advocate Awards at Monroe Community Hospital. Along with the County Executive and members of the Monroe County Legislature, we honored 73 individuals who have either achieved or promoted excellence in our community's youth.

Our Youth As Resources (YAR) program has also been especially busy. In the spring, YAR organized the Second Annual Youth Recognition Ball. The Youth Action Team planned and carried out the community event which recognized the good works and positive activities that youth from throughout Monroe County have participated in over the past year. The goal is to highlight and focus on the positive efforts that youth in our area take part in and show them that they are valued and necessary to our community. YAR also created the Bridging Project, where youth planned and staged an art show with artwork from

Monroe County youth. The goal is to bridge the social divide that exists between the suburban and city communities while instilling in each youth a personal vision of future goals and aspirations. Organizers hope to broaden the experiences of not only those who create the artwork, but also those who see the work at the Community Place office. YAR also just completed the second of its annual grants and presented them to ten groups who support positive youth development at its YAR Kick-off event.

The RMCYB's efforts will continue throughout the Summer and into Fall with events such as the Summer Reading Program, Trivia Bowl, Transition Mentors, Cardboard City, and the Intergenerational Fall Clean-Up. Especially in these trying economic times, the Youth Bureau is proud to keep bringing these great opportunities to our youth and their families to continue to make Monroe County a great place to live, work and raise a family.



New Adventures with Project Venture

By Nancy Lynott, Southampton Town Youth Bureau

Southampton Town Youth Bureau, in partnership with Alternatives Counseling Services of Southampton, has begun a new program called "Project Venture". Project Venture is the first Native American prevention program to nurture both Native and non-Native youth leadership potential through adventure-based learning and service to family, community and nature.

Twenty-four Native American and non-Native American youth in seventh and eighth grades were selected to participate in the pilot program. The youth are involved in activities designed to help them step out of their comfort zones to foster leadership, trust, and self-awareness.

This strength-based program has five basic "rules" to empower youth to self-manage and create a physically and emotionally safe learning environment. We encourage the students to use these rules in their everyday lives. These rules are referred to as the Full Value Commitment: Be Here, Be Safe, Speak Your Truth, Set Goals and Let Go & Move On.

All the activities, programs and events are designed to prepare the students for a three-day wilderness camping trip on the Shinnecock Nation Reservation. After completion of the program, students are encouraged to become student leaders for new participants to continue to foster the philosophy of the program



Director's Note

Jackie Negri, Executive Director



Dear Colleagues:

ANYSYB is pleased to announce that the Association has been identified by the New York State Office of Family and Children Services as a leader to educate Youth Bureaus and their county partners statewide on the basis of readiness in the three areas of focus for Ready by 21 Quality Counts: Collaborative planning, Program assessment and Youth Worker training.

The anticipated outcomes of this project are to improve youth bureau capacity to achieve cross systems outcomes for youth and families in and out of the child welfare system by increasing the use of a data driven decision making process (planning); interagency alignment of resources across systems that contribute to long term outcomes such as reduction of child abuse or increase in self-sufficiency; assessment of program quality as it contributes to achievement of outcomes; and assessment of an agency's capacity to deliver quality services.

ANYSYB will be contracting with nationally renowned expert Karen Finn, Results Leadership Group, to provide training across the State for youth bureau directors, staff and their county partners in September and October, 2011. It is anticipated that youth bureaus and county partners will understand the benefits of successful collaborative comprehensive planning processes and identify practices for program assessment related to improving outcomes for youth and families in and out of the child welfare system and juvenile justice. ANYSYB will also convene a youth stakeholder advisory group at our Youth Leadership Forum (February 13, 2012, Albany, NY). This will allow for enhanced youth stakeholder voice and input to assist in determining how to best incorporate youth development principles, practices and services statewide, to best serve all youth, especially those in and out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

This training will also allow youth bureaus and county partners to learn about New York's leading counties in youth development that are already embracing the Results-Based Accountability (TM) framework. This framework has allowed public-sector leaders to collaborate, make data-driven decisions, and align the performance of their programs and initiatives, most importantly youth development, with the impact that they create in the community.

This is an exciting opportunity for ANYSYB. We look forward to sharing the results of the trainings at our Annual Director's Retreat, October 26 & 27th and our Annual Training Conference, October 27th-28th at the Holiday Inn Wolf Road, Albany, NY.

Your continued work and collective voice on the importance of youth development is appreciated. We look forward to your participation at these events.

President's Note

Jennifer Pettys, ANYSYB President



Dear Colleagues:

The summer is such an enjoyable time to be in youth development. I am always pleased to see the many programs and services we offer come to fruition. Sometimes as we are battling onerous cuts in funding and programs, the light at the end of the tunnel appears dimmer. However, seeing the joy we bring to children and families, especially throughout the summer, reminds us of the need to continue our fight for youth development.

Please take time to invite your Legislators, both State and County, to your many programs and events. Take the extra effort to promote the many services offered to the youth and families in your community with local media. The time is now to educate your Legislators about the importance of the services your youth bureau provides. Let them know that with more cuts, these youth will be out of services and programs which will be detrimental to your community.

At ANYSYB, the board and leadership continue to discuss the need to save and strengthen youth development across the State. We continue our dialogue with policymakers to increase their awareness on youth development. Your support of the Association is critical during these challenging times.

We hope you will attend the Quality Enhancement Trainings across the State and also the ANYSYB Director's Training, October 26-27, 2011 and the ANYSYB Conference, October 27-28th, at the Holiday Inn Wolf Road, Albany, NY. Look soon for brochures highlighting state-of-the-art programming on youth development.

*State of the Youth Newsletter is developed and edited by
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Articles should include author's name

Thank you for your submissions!