

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE**

- President's Note 2
- Director's Note 2
- 2nd Annual County Exec's Senior Ball 3
- Islip Joins Thrill The World Event 3
- Massachusetts Avenue Project: An Aquaponics Adventure 4
- Just Because We're Young 5
- Smithtown Youth Bureau Celebrates 30 Years 5
- Washington County Alternative Sentencing Agency 6
- Safe Summer Camp & Sunshine Getaway for Teens 6
- Livingston Co. Youth Council Finds Home for Youth Center 7
- YAR Providing Even More Grants 8

State of the Youth Update

WINTER 2011

100 Best Communities for Youth: Orange Co. Makes the List

Carol Chichester, Executive Director, Orange County Youth Bureau



Orange County is on the map for taking action to help reduce the local drop-out rates and creating brighter futures for our young people.

"The combined efforts of Orange County's many civic, community, youth, human service, business,

law enforcement, academic, and faith organizations as well as many others were honored on November 9, 2010. Working together as a community, we are helping young people to achieve their potential. We are incredibly proud to receive this prestigious award from America's Promise and ING," stated County Executive Edward Diana.

There were 21 partners who made brief statements about the collaborative work with the Youth Bureau that

is happening throughout the County. "The award truly belongs to all of us. We are a county that believes 'it takes a village to raise a child,'" state Youth Bureau Director Carol Chichester. "We are all working with common outcomes in mind, which are connected to the Alliance's Five Promises: Caring Adults, Safe Places, Healthy Start, Effective Education, Opportunities to Help Others."

Orange County and New York City were the only communities in New York State to receive this

Father Baker Chess Tournament

Annamarie Bahny, Youth Board PR, City of Lackawanna Youth Bureau



The City of Lackawanna Youth Board sponsored the 11th annual Father Baker Chess Tournament as its Red Ribbon Week activity. The "Push Pawns, Not Drugs" tournament was held on October 21, 2010 at the Lackawanna Senior Center on Martin Road. The Junior Division consisted of students in grades 1-7 and the Senior Division consisted

of students in grades 8-12. Students from five Lackawanna Schools, seven other schools throughout the surrounding area and four home-schooled students participated.

Each player received a commemorative medallion and a roll-up chess board. Trophies were awarded to



Senior Division Winners

the top three players in both Junior and Senior Divisions. Refreshments were served and players entered for a chance to win donated chess sets, chess pieces, and game timers. It was a grand success! Thanks go out to Matt and Adam Boyle for their expertise and judging the tournament.



Junior Division Winners



Director's Note

Building Futures ... Not Blocking Them

Dear Colleagues:

The efforts of all the youth bureaus, their partner community-based agencies, youth boards, and other stakeholders will rise once again in response to the onerous proposals put forth during this year's budget process. Your grassroots advocacy, public education efforts, and coordinated coalition approach will be necessary, more than ever, to assist in educating the Governor and NYS Legislature on the importance of New York's nationally acclaimed Youth Bureau system. Over the course of decades the Youth Bureau System has proven to be efficient and productive, ensuring success for all youth, including those who are high-risk, by reducing out of home placements, successfully integrating youth returning from care back into the community and reducing high risk behaviors such as gang activity, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school and substance use.

The proposed Primary Prevention Incentive Program (PPIP) eliminates funding for Youth Development Delinquency Prevention, Special Delinquency Prevention Program and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, cost-effective and cost-saving programs. It dismantles the Youth Bureau system that has a proven record of keeping youth, including those who are at high-risk, out of harm's way. Slashing these cost-effective, outcome-driven community supports, programs and services disproportionately by over 50%, coupled with lumping dollars together with no clear structure, direction, outcome measures, or monitoring will lead to an inequitable distribution of services and funding across New York State.

Tough decisions, financial and otherwise, need to be made during these trying times. The Youth Bureau system's strength in community planning around local needs leverages other funds, federal and private, which then become available to the local community. The planning, coordination, and networking programs led by accomplished Youth Bureaus brings additional resources to communities such as AmeriCorps, USDA Feeding, DCJS as well as a multitude of foundation and corporate support. **These funds will not be leveraged through a block grant structure. Why would the State dismantle a system that brings outside money to support the needs of youth in counties, cities, towns and villages?** No one can truly believe that fewer services for youth development and delinquency prevention for New York's youth is reasonable. It is not.

Clearly there is a utility in the autonomous co-existence of youth development, child welfare and juvenile justice. In other words, if community-based youth development structures do not exist and funding is slashed by more than 50%, their current support of specific child welfare and justice reform efforts cited throughout the State will be eliminated or severely compromised. In light of the shift to divert youth from out-of-home care and close State-run juvenile facilities, the community-based infrastructure provided by youth bureaus will be more important than ever. If the long term, youth development allocations throughout New York State are altered, or become inconsistent due to a competitive bidding process, youth services will suffer, county by county, leading to an increased need for high-cost, facility-based treatment for troubled youth and limited resources when they return, thereby increasing the likelihood they will recidivate.

Join with your colleagues, youth and community partners to continue our efforts to collaborate, be creative, and work together with the NYS Legislature, the Administration, NYSOCFS, and other stakeholders toward our one common goal ...

... to ensure that positive youth development and prevention services continue to be available to meet the needs of all youth.

Jackie Negri
ANYSYB Executive Director

Second Annual County Executive's Holiday Seniors Ball

Mike Barry, Youth & Special Needs Manager, Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau

Since 1960, the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau (RMCYB) has served Monroe County's youth as a planning, funding, and coordinating agency. It is dedicated to developing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive system of services for youth and their families by funding and supporting youth development, risk-prevention, recreational and juvenile justice diversion programs; homeless youth and prevention and intervention services, including those for runaway-homeless youth; an annual asset building recognition; and intergenerational events. These address the needs of positive youth development for all county youth.

On December 1, the RMCYB concluded its year-long 50th Anniversary celebration with the second annual County Executive's Holiday Seniors Ball. With the support of County Executive Maggie Brooks and a partnership with the Monroe County Office for the Aging, the Ball was again an overwhelming intergenerational success. Both the RMCYB and MCOFA consistently strive to bring the two generations together to foster learning and offer opportunities to bridge not only the generation gap but also connect the divisions that can occur geographically and culturally between the two. Over 400 "seniors" from the 15 Monroe County Senior Centers and 21 Monroe County high schools

gathered at the Double Tree Inn to share life experiences and have fun on the dance floor as the Johnny Matt Orchestra serenaded the crowd with swing music.



Town of Islip Joins "Thrill the World" Event

Joanne Folber, Executive Director, Islip Youth Bureau

South Shore Community Organization, a Town of Islip Youth Bureau contract agency, joined the ranks of "Zombies," dancing in synchronized, worldwide performances of Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. On Saturday, October 23, 2010, 34 youth "Zombie Dancers" age seven-18 years old met at the Joyce Fitzpatrick Center in East Islip and performed the routine they learned for parents, community members, Thrill the World project representatives, and local press.

South Shore Community Organization registered with the Thrill the World project and offered to sponsor and be the host site for Islip's Thrill the World local event. Participants attended previous practice sessions to learn Michael Jackson's *Thriller* dance routine.

This was only one of the synchronized dance events simultaneously held all over the world. Islip's Thrill the World event was taped and will be incorporated into the official record of worldwide 2010 synchronized events.

In addition to the South Shore Community Organization, Islip's network of community youth agencies includes Youth Enrichment Services, Islip Youth & Family Counseling Program (Brentwood YDC), and the Runaway & Independent Living Programs at YMCA. Together this network of agencies provides the following youth development and delinquency prevention programming: work readiness skills; safe after-school and summer day programs; community service opportunities, violence and



gang prevention; tutoring and homework help; leisure time activities, leadership skills, cultural arts; individual and group counseling and various community and parent education.

To learn more about these services, please contact the Islip Youth Bureau at (631) 224-5320 or email us at youthbureau@townofislip-ny.gov.

Massachusetts Avenue Project: An Aquaponics Adventure

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau



Aquaponics, microenterprise development, community education, organic products, gardening and horticulture—these are not words one generally associates with a youth-serving non-profit, but that is changing thanks to one Buffalo-area organization.

The Massachusetts Avenue Project, or MAP, was started only seven years ago. Since then it has deeply impacted more than 4,500 youth in Buffalo with 375 of them employed by this progressive agency. It is the leading urban farm in the Buffalo area and is nationally recognized as one of the best practices in the country. MAP has transformed vacant lots across the city into urban growing farms that not only serve the youth of the community but give back to the whole community on a number of levels.

The Growing Green Program allows teenagers from the Buffalo area to work on a half-acre farm on Massachusetts Avenue where fruit, vegetables, herbs, and flowers are cultivated through hard work and care. The 50 local teens employed during the school year help MAP address the lack of access to healthy food within the city. With the help of the Growing Green Program, MAP now even has two products sold at 25 locations including Wegmans!

From 3:30-6:30 pm Monday through Friday while the garden is open, the 14-20 year olds not only get their hands dirty working on the gardens, but they also get to work on Buffalo's first Aquaponics system. Aquaponics is an innovative system that combines hydroponics and aquaculture to grow fish and plants in a closed circuit system. The water from the fish tank, including waste, is pumped into plant beds as fertilizer. Any left over water is filtered back into the fish tank. This has shown to be an incredibly efficient way of growing and has had tremendous impact the amount of produce created.

Teenagers who participate in the Growing Green Program have helped MAP reach new heights by creating a "Mobile Market." The Mobile Market is a restored RV that takes produce grown on the farm to multiple locations across the city where people from the community can purchase it. This gives people in local low-income communities access to healthy produce at a more affordable cost. In addition, the Mobile Market accepts food stamps and WIC vouchers. This kind of service is essential to Buffalo as it is the third poorest city in the nation with more than 29% of its residents living in poverty. The Mobile Market served 700 families last year and hopes to serve more in the upcoming year.

In addition to the Growing Green Program, MAP runs the Peer Education Team which is a group of youth who offer after-school workshops about a variety of topics ranging from sustainable urban agriculture to healthy cooking. MAP also heads Be Vocal, Eat Local Week, a local campaign encouraging the consumption of locally grown foods. Diane Picard, Executive Director of MAP, said without hesitation that the best part of the project is the kids and all their work.

The Massachusetts Avenue Project is one of the premier non-profits in the Buffalo area and offers much needed services. Urban growing is an up-and-coming sustainable food source and residents of Buffalo are lucky to have such an impactful local organization.

Youth from Massachusetts Avenue Project doing a demonstration at a local Wegmans



Just Because We're Young

Missy Fite, Youth Board Representative, Genesee County Youth Bureau

On September 29, 2010 I attended a youth town meeting at the City Centre in Batavia. Community members of varying ages and backgrounds came together to discuss youth issues in Genesee County and brainstorm ways to further benefit young people. One of the topics we discussed was a form of discrimination classified as "Adulthoodism". Once this issue was explained to me, I realized that I myself had experienced it on many occasions. Adulthoodism, explained simply, is adults discriminating against youth for the simple fact that they are just that: youth. It appears in many different situations, like when parents won't listen to what their kids have to say, or maybe a teacher ignoring what a student said when s/he presented an idea for a class fundraiser. Sometimes adults see youth as inferior, having less life experience or education, so our opinion matters less. This also appears often with parents do a project for their children, thinking that they would be better off when it is done for them so that they don't mess it up and get a bad grade. Unfortunately, the students learn nothing positive from that.

I have often experienced this when adults have been afraid of my friends and me walking in groups. On a few occasions, adults walking in the opposite direction of us have crossed the street so as to not have to pass us. It's not that we were doing anything wrong, it was simply the fact that we were young.

To me, it is slightly disturbing that this topic even exists. Adults shouldn't discriminate against children simply for the fact that we're kids. It's disheartening and hurtful when we experience this. We feel like we've done something wrong, or that our opinion doesn't matter. It makes us close ourselves off from adults and shuts down essential communication lines that could be very important to both youth and adults alike. It makes us not talk to our parents about important topics, such as sex and substance abuse, and limits our educational opportunities. These topics are very important and could end tragically if it's not open to discussion.

On the other end, I'm happy that there are adults who are willing to discuss adulthoodism and try to begin to fix the problem. Just the acknowledgement of the problem is a big step towards fixing it, so hopefully we'll see a decrease in adulthoodism and more open communication in the near future. The youth town meeting was a very enlightening experience, and I will be sure to attend again in the future.

Smithtown Youth Bureau Celebrates 30 Years

Kelly DeVito

The Smithtown Youth Bureau has kicked into high gear for its 30th Anniversary. This past summer the Youth Bureau, along with the Recreation and Parks Department, held the first summer teen program. Youth from across the town, which includes four school districts, attended two teen nights held at Hoyt Farm. Games, arts and crafts, basketball, tennis and a playground were some of the outdoor activities youth enjoyed during these drug- and alcohol-free nights. High School students were given community service hours for volunteering their time to help make the events a success.

Fast forwarding to the first half of the school year—the

Smithtown Youth Bureau and Horizons Counseling facilitated Too Good for Drugs & Violence at Smithtown West High School. The health classes received every lesson in this evidence-based program. In January, babysitting courses and a leadership group will be introduced to the William T. Rogers Middle School. Youth who attend the Leadership 101 workshop have the option of participating in the full leadership course in the spring. These students will work on a cumulating project to be completed in the community.

The Youth Bureau is excited for the second half of the school year to be as successful as the first. The Smithtown Youth

Advisory Board is planning the second annual Global Youth Services Day and an After High School Forum that will focus on the many different paths high school students can take after their senior year.



Board members after a planning meeting for upcoming spring events

Washington Co. Alternative Sentencing Agency

Mike Gray, Executive Director, Washington County Youth Bureau

The Washington County Youth Bureau/Alternative Sentencing Agency has completed the first year administrating the Family Resolutions Program in collaboration with the Department of Social Services (DSS). This program works with families whose children are at risk of being removed from the home and placed in care.

The goal of the program coordinator is to bring family members, friends and neighbors, community resources, and providers together to support the family by designing a plan to address the safety and risk issues identified by DSS.

The goal of DSS through this process is for families to take ownership

of their problems and find solutions, which will lower county costs for placement. Families will more quickly become independent from services. DSS has again contracted with the Washington County Youth Bureau to provide this service to families in our area.

Safe Summer Camp & Sunshine Getaway for Teens

Karen Stogner, Prevention & Project Coordinator, The Recovery Center

The Recovery Center again sponsored summer activities at Club Getaway in Kent, Connecticut. Thirty-two high-risk youth ages eight to 12 participated in Safe Summer Camp July 26-30, and 16 high-risk teens ages 12 to 16 participated in Sunshine Getaway for Teens August 16-20.

The programs target youth at high risk for substance abuse. The campers came from all parts of Sullivan County through foster care, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), the Department of Family Services, school guidance referrals, and the Strengthening Families program.

The camp-based prevention program is a replicable model that combines targeted prevention education with exceptional mentors in a safe, positive setting where mutual trust, honesty, respect, and support has been developed among the young people. Supporting each other through obstacles and challenging activities like "Crazy Olympics" in a camp setting, the group is able to come together, bond, and support each other in ways they previously never had.

This five-day adventure includes plenty of good times including waterfront activities; swimming; canoeing; speed boat rides; group games; sports; archery; dancing; music; nightly programs or talent shows; rock wall climbing; zip lines; and using the trampoline, trapeze or 30-foot inflatable slip-and-slide. Youth learn that excitement and fun can happen without substances or gambling and are introduced to strategies to help them stay free of substances, avoid risky behaviors, and cope with family and peer pressures.

Each camper learns valuable life skills, such as conflict resolution, to use every day in school, at home, or with friends. As youth open up during the course of the week, counselors explore their situations with them and look at options to solve problems or conflicts. These tools enable youth to deal with higher stress situations. Gains from the camp experience are bolstered by follow-up mentoring reunions in the fall and tie-in to the Strengthening Families program.

It is truly amazing how much the youth can accomplish in just one week. Friendships are made, group trust is earned, and new skills are acquired. When we take the time to teach and listen young people, they will always exceed our expectations. A little mentoring goes a long way in building lasting relationships and developing strong, healthy kids who are alcohol-, drug-, and gambling-free.

These programs are run by the Sullivan County Youth Bureau through partial funding from NYS OCFS. For more information about Safe Summer Camp or Sunshine Getaway, contact Prevention and Project Coordinator Karen Stogner at (845) 794-8080 ext. 117 or PrevTraining@recovery-center.com.

Livingston Co. Youth Council Finds Home for Youth Center

Nita Hawkins, Program Coordinator, Livingston County Youth Bureau

EDIFY Youth Leadership Council is a partnership between the Youth Bureau and Healthy Communities that Care (HCtC). HCtC is a community-based coalition that brings parents, youth and community partners together to improve proactive factors for youth and reduce risk factors funded by a Drug Free Communities grant. Youth members of the council are recruited in a variety of means including the annual Youth Board Teen Recognition Awards. In 2009, 14 year old recognition winner Shane Carman joined the EDIFY Council.

At the time, most of the members were seniors in high school, but Shane felt comfortable with them. He attended meetings and began to share his idea a county youth center. Rachel and Nita, EDIFY Coordinators, responded to Shane's idea with support but admitted they were a bit patronizing. "Oh, that's a great idea, but we have to do a needs assessment," and "Well, it could be done, but it will take two or three years to get something like that up and running."

Shane Carman is unique, though, and when he sets a goal he accomplishes it. He attended "Youth Entrepreneur's Academy." In this course he benefitted from adult mentors and learned how to write a busi-

ness plan, set goals, create a logo, and seek out funding. As Shane moved forward with his plan, Rachel & Nita got on board with him and began to assist him. They believed that the Livingston Youth Center could happen before Shane graduates from high school and began to explore possible space and supporters. A steering committee of adults and youth was formed.

The ABVI/Goodwill was coming to Livingston County, Geneseo specifically. The CEO of the Rochester-based not-for-profit organization resides in Geneseo, and Nita has known her for many years. A Goodwill store in the community means more than having a local thrift store; it means that the organization is there to assist at-risk populations to be self-sufficient and contribute to their families and communities. Before ground breaking began, Goodwill was in the community doing a needs assessment with local agencies to determine how to use a community center space that would be attached to the store. During these conversations, it was discovered that CEO Gidget Hopf had wanted opportunities for youth when her daughters were growing up in Geneseo. She understood Shane's dream and committed to helping him reach his goal.

The store opened Thanksgiving week. The community center had grand opening receptions and special college and teen nights the first week of December. Together, Goodwill staff and EDIFY/Livingston Youth Center planned a teen night that included DJs from a local radio station, a steel drum band, door prizes and gift certificates for the store. Two hundred youth attend the event, 50 signed up to be notified about other meetings and events, and several youth and adults signed up to participate on the committee.

Teens were rewarded with gift certificates if they came to the next regular meeting on December 17. Fourteen youth got together and brainstormed activities, events and policies they wanted in a youth center. The Livingston Youth Center found a home, lead agency, and core group of teens and committed adults that will continue to provide positive opportunities for youth. Shane, co-coordinators, and Goodwill continue to search for additional funding to support a coordinator and equipment. The project is entered in the Pepsi Refresh Project competition for a chance to receive a \$50,000 grant!



YAR Providing Even More Grants

Keith J. Anderson, AmeriCorps VISTA, Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau

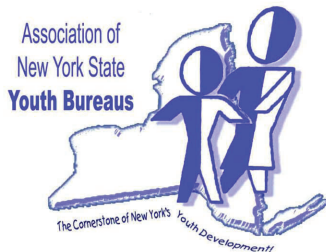
Youth As Resources (YAR) is a youth philanthropy program administered by the Rochester Monroe County Youth Bureau. Because of a substantial grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation and an additional grant from the HEART Coalition for a Drug-Free Rochester, YAR is able to provide grants of up to \$1,000 to young people to design and carry out community service and service learning projects throughout Monroe County. Within the past 10 years, YAR has grown in regard to funding, number of participants, grant recipients,

and lives affected in Monroe County.

Beginning in 1995, YAR gave out grants of up to \$250 and now it gives out grants of up to \$1,000. The YAR Board then consisted of six youth and two adults and now we have 15 youth and five adults who serve on the board. The number of grant recipients could not exceed 15 in 1995. In 2000 YAR broke that limit of 15 and gave 18. In 2008 that number was again increased to 26 and then to 30 in 2010. From 2000-2010, YAR has given out approximately \$175,000 to youth-led organizations so that they could successfully

complete community service and service learning projects.

Within the past 10 years, YAR has given grants to more than 150 different organizations and funded over 200 projects. Hundreds of thousands of service hours were given and the projects completed touch the lives of thousands of people living in Monroe County. The increased number of participants, grant recipients, supporters and believers exist because of our funders, community partners, program coordinators, and, most importantly, the youth.



State of the Youth Update

This edition of Association of New York State Youth Bureaus Newsletter was developed and edited by the Genesee County Youth Bureau

Editor

Angela Barbeau

Please submit all articles and photos to

**Angela Barbeau at
atbarbeau@yahoo.com**

Spring/Summer Edition

Newsletter Deadline:

April 8, 2011

Articles should include author's name.

Thank you for all your submissions!