

# **YOUTH BUREAU**

## **Program Description**

The Oneida County Youth Bureau created in 1977 by the County Board of Legislators, has, for 37 years, carried out its mission of planning, advocating for and coordinating services for children and youth under the age of 21. The Youth Bureau administers state funds for recreation and youth service programs and monitors and evaluates said programs.

## **Funding Source**

The Youth Bureau administers two categories of funding made available to the county by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. The total state aid allocation for 2014 was \$264,659.

The two categories of funding are:

- Youth Development Programs (YDP/100%)
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHY/40%, agency match required)

## **Annual Statistics**

The Youth Bureau allocated state aid to 28 programs with local agencies for youth development, prevention and early intervention services in 2014. Forty eight municipalities in the county were eligible for state aid for Youth Development Programs and the Youth Bureau assisted them with 24 applications. Our funded agencies served 12,482 youth ages 0-20 and our funded municipalities served 6,551 youth ages 0-20 in 2014.

## **Major Accomplishments for 2014**

The Youth Bureau continued its tireless work building upon the strong and positive relationships we've cultivated and developed with agencies, school districts and municipalities, enabling us to improve and increase participation in the established, diverse and cost-efficient programming we have implemented.

This January the Youth Bureau forwarded William T. Grant Foundation grant opportunities to all our funded agencies.

The Youth Bureau's regular attendance at Central Region Youth Bureau Director's meetings, Oneida County Youth Council meetings, Oneida County Youth Coalition meetings, Mohawk Valley Housing and Homeless Assistance Coalition meetings, Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force meetings, MVCC Foundation Board meetings and Black River Outdoor Education Program meetings has enabled us to network, stay current with local issues and work collaboratively and effectively to continue to be the leader in Youth Development in Oneida County.

The Youth Bureau continues to be a major outreach and recruitment vehicle for the Black River Outdoor Education Program (BROEP), formerly the Potato Hill Farm Outdoor Education Center. BROEP is dedicated to establishing awareness, understanding and appreciation of the environment and the responsibilities associated with preserving the environment. It provides an opportunity to increase the physical health of visiting youth by engaging them in various outdoor activities. Throughout 2014, 3,044 youth from Oneida County school districts, agencies and municipalities have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to partake in BROEP'S winter (cross country skiing, snow shoeing and interaction with animals) and summer (mountain biking, interaction with animals) programs. \* Since 2008, 42,031 Oneida County youth have participated in BROEP'S programs.

The Oneida County Children Care Initiative, collaboration between the Oneida County Youth Bureau and agencies the Youth Bureau funds that provide programming to youth, successfully completed its sixth year. The intent of the initiative, implemented in 2009, is to introduce our children to the benefits and invaluable life lessons learned through volunteerism. The goal is to have our children be good neighbors in their communities, make their communities a better place to live and aid in providing more worthwhile services while maximizing limited resources. In 2014, 951 youth volunteers from 7 of our youth serving agencies gave residents of Oneida County an incredible 1,996 hours of volunteer service that included, collecting, tagging, assisting mechanics and fitting helmets on children to give 924 repaired bicycles and new helmets to the youth of the city of Utica, making Christmas cards to send to veterans and service members, raising money and walking in Utica's version of America's Greatest Heart Run and Walk, the Walk to end Alzheimer's, Rescue Mission's Walk a Mile in My Shoes and Aids Hike for Life, preparing and serving meals at Hope House and the Rescue Mission, Nursing Home visits and the list goes on and on.



The Youth Bureau Director attended the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Conference in Albany February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The director attended a number of pertinent workshops.

On February 6<sup>th</sup> the Youth Bureau held its Youth Advisory Board meeting at the Underground Café. Beginning in 2014, the Youth Bureau began holding some Youth Advisory Board meetings at agencies we fund. Youth Bureau staff and Advisory Board members toured the facility and saw first-hand the teen after school program we allocate funds to.

The Youth Bureau continues to be a genuine partner with Oneida County STOP DWI. The Youth Bureau also represented STOP DWI at 7 Health Fairs, Community Days and summer recreation programs in 2014. We assisted with setting up STOP DWI speed trailers in New Hartford, Oriskany, Remsen, Rome, Sherrill, Whitesboro and Yorkville. The speed trailers are utilized in areas where people do not abide by the posted speed limit. The trailers are used to deter people from driving over the posted speed limit.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual STOP DWI High School Baseball Classic, an Oneida County Youth Bureau initiative and collaboration between the Oneida County Youth Bureau, Oneida County STOP DWI, the Oneida County Sheriff's Office, New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Police, Insight House and Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES/CORE was held Friday April 25<sup>th</sup> and due to inclement weather, Sunday April 27<sup>th</sup> at Murnane Field in Utica. This year the Baseball Classic was run in conjunction with the annual Teen Traffic Safety Education Program that is presented annually to Oneida County high school students prior to the ball and prom season. The Baseball Classic gives us the ability to expand our mission; making youth aware of the consequences that result from making destructive decisions, by reaching families (elementary school, middle school and high school students, college students, young adults and parents) where our Teen Traffic Safety Program wasn't presented. Over 1,000 people attended the event free of charge. Adults were given a bag filled with educational materials to be shared with their family at home. All spectators had the opportunity to watch 5 games with 10 area high school baseball teams representing all of New York State's high school classes compete. Throughout the event the spectators and the players and coaches from participating teams took advantage of the outstanding presentations that were made by our partners. The Oneida County Sheriff's Office finger printed children and took pictures for SAFE CHILD identification cards. The New York State Department of Transportation gave presentations on texting and driving and work zone safety. The New York State Police gave presentations on the importance of wearing your seat belt utilizing their Roll Over Convincer. Insight House presented on the evils of alcohol and tobacco use and the spectators took part in inter-active competitions while wearing "drunk" goggles. The Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES-CORE PBIS specialists made people aware of the terrible occurrences that result from bullying. The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum presented and gave out literature on their BASE (Be A Superior Example) program. This year the Oneida County Health Department participated and properly fitted children with helmets, explained to the children and their parents the importance of wearing helmets and gave them a helmet "free" of charge. Also, New Hartford High School's Project Purple (youth that pledge to live a sober lifestyle) presented at the Classic. Materials from Oneida County STOP DWI, the New York State Department of Health, AAA New York and Derek Jeter's "Turn 2" Foundation were also distributed.



The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Intergenerational Spring Clean-Up, collaboration between the Oneida County Youth Bureau, the Oneida County Office for the Aging and Continuing Care, Oneida County colleges, school districts, youth organizations and area merchants was successfully held the weekend of May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup>. This spring 325 youth volunteers performed general yard clean-up duties; raking and bagging leaves, sweeping driveways, porches and sidewalks and bringing light refuse to the curb for pickup for senior citizens and the disabled at 81 locations county-wide..



For a sixth consecutive year the Oneida County Youth Bureau teamed with STOP DWI in providing the STOP DWI Teen Traffic Safety Education Program to Oneida County high school students. Realizing the economic crunch school districts have been going through, STOP DWI and the Youth Bureau, once again, brought the program to the schools; saving them monies they may or may not have had for field trips while reaching more students. The Insight House made

presentations on the dangers of smoking and drinking alcohol. The New York State Department of Transportation presented on texting and driving and work zone safety and awareness. The program included a PEER 111 Simulation vehicle and the New York State Police Roll Over Convincer. In 2014 six school districts participated; Oriskany, Rome, Utica, Vernon-Verona-Sherrill, Westmoreland and Whitesboro. In all 3,045 students learned about the consequences associated with destructive decisions.

The Youth Bureau Director and the Youth Program Director attended Youth Bureau training in Rome May 12<sup>th</sup>.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Oneida County Youth Bureau assisted Oneida County Workforce Development with their Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). From May through October, the Oneida County Youth Bureau Program Director monitored work sites and acted as a liaison between youth counselors, workers and site supervisors.

For a third consecutive year, the Request For Proposal (RFP) process was made available on-line. This process saved costs on paper, copies, envelopes and postage while making it easier for applicants to expedite the process.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Oneida County Youth Bureau Sidewalk Art competition was held the week of July 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>. All Oneida County youth serving agencies and municipalities had the opportunity to hold their own age specific (5-7, 8-10, 11-13 and 14-18) competition and choose their winners. This year 1,096 youth county-wide drew a positive image on a single sidewalk slab hoping to reach the finals that was held Thursday July 17<sup>th</sup> on the sidewalks in front of and around Pratt at Munson- Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica. Medals were given to the top 3 finishers in each age specific category. This year Pratt at Munson-Williams-Proctor gave all the medal winners a Pratt MWP water bottle. As always, all 105 finalists were treated to a free tour of Munson- Williams-Proctor Art Institute after the competition.



Saturday August 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup>, a successful USA Luge Slider Search was held in the city of Utica. This was the fourth Slider Search, first since the summer of 2011 that was offered to the youth of Oneida County. The initiative, spearheaded by the Youth Bureau, is a

collaborative effort with the city of Utica targeting boys and girls ages 9-13. It is the official recruiting tour of USA Luge. That weekend eighty (80) Oneida County youth were given the opportunity to partake in this unique experience with the hope/dream of furthering their experience and becoming a United States Olympic luger.

This September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> the Youth Bureau Director attended the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Conference in Buffalo. The director attended many pertinent workshops.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Intergenerational Fall Clean-Up was held the weekend of October 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Again, this initiative is collaboration between the Oneida County Youth Bureau, the Oneida County Office for the Aging and Continuing Care, Oneida County colleges, school districts, youth organizations, clubs and area merchants. This clean-up, had 614 youth volunteers perform general yard clean-up duties for senior citizens and the disabled at 107 locations county-wide.



On Wednesday October 29<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Bureau Director and the Director of the Oneida County Office for the Aging and Continuing Care presented at the Annual New York State Youth Bureau Conference in Liverpool. They presented on their two time award winning Intergenerational Spring and Fall Clean-Up initiatives.

On Monday December 8<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Program Director attended training in Rensselaer.

Wednesday December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Advisory Board meeting was held at Evelyn's House. The Youth Bureau funds a transitional residential program at Evelyn's House; a facility for pregnant and parenting youth (females) ages 16-21. Evelyn's House staff gave a tour of the facility and a thorough overview of the services provided and expectations and goals of the residents.

The Youth Bureau forwarded their annual bullet point letter to all agencies, cities, towns and villages that will receive 2015 funding on December 12<sup>th</sup>. The bullet point letter outlines the policies that all funded programs must adhere to. The letter also assists them with complying with New York State Office and Family Services (OCFS) rules and regulations.

The Oneida County Youth Bureau website continues to stay current while continuing to be one of the most comprehensive one-stop directories for youth and family services.

### **Upcoming Changes for 2015**

The Youth Bureau will fund the following agencies (programs) for the first time in 2015; 1) John Bosco House (Utica)/Transitional Living Care Program for males 16-21. John Bosco House is the only transitional living facility for males in Oneida County. 2) Salvation Army (Rome)/SAYES Program. The Salvation Army Youth Enrichment Program will serve 100 youth grades 1 through high school after school and during the summer. 3) Dodge Pratt Art and Community Center (Boonville)/Tween and Teens Pick Up Steam Program. This after school, art education program for youth ages 10-18 will run during the school year.

The Youth Bureau will critique our current monitoring instrument and develop a new monitoring instrument to better fit the changes in OCFS rules and regulations and Youth Development.

### **Plans or Directions to Improve Service in 2015**

The Youth Bureau is extremely proud of the safe, innovative, positive and cost-efficient programming we've developed and been a part of. The wide range of initiatives we implemented in 2009, due to their successes, are now annual events and participation and services delivered have continued to increase. We continue to critique our initiatives and work hard to make them better and better attended. The Youth Bureau will continue to nurture our current relationships and work tirelessly to develop other new relationships in fulfilling County Executive Picente's mission of bringing agencies, municipalities, school districts and merchants together to deliver the best possible, most cost-effective programming above and beyond what has and is being offered, to all the youth of Oneida County.

The Youth Bureau will continue to hold more of their Youth Advisory Board meetings at their funded agencies, allowing members to see first-hand the programs they recommend for funding.

The Youth Bureau will prepare and forward Request For Proposal (RFP) packets geared specifically for non-profit agencies and specifically for cities, towns and villages.

The Youth Bureau will forward detailed RFP instructions to cities, towns and villages to give them a clearer idea/picture of what is expected of them and why.

The Youth Bureau and the Oneida County Health Department will hold its inaugural Youth Fun & Fitness Run Wednesday August 5, 2015 at Mohawk Valley Community College. The purpose of the run is to promote health and wellness to our youth.