

## ***ONEIDA COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU***

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

*The mission of the Oneida County Youth Bureau is to be pro-active, collaborating with agencies, municipalities and school districts to provide safe, innovative and positive programming to all the youth of Oneida County,*

*The Youth Bureau operates under the auspices of the Oneida County Department of Social Services, and is responsible to the County Executive for the purpose of planning, coordinating and supplementing the activities of public, private and religious agencies devoted in whole or in part to the well-being and protection of youth.*

# **YOUTH BUREAU**

## **Program Description**

The Oneida County Youth Bureau created in 1977 by the County Board of Legislators, has, for 42 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 2019 was \$304,485.

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 22 programs with local agencies for youth development, prevention and early intervention services in 2019. Forty eight municipalities in the county were eligible for state aid for Youth Development Programs and the Youth Bureau assisted them with 18 applications. Our funded agencies served over 27,000 youth ages 0-20 and our funded municipalities served over 36,000 youth ages 0-20 in 2019.

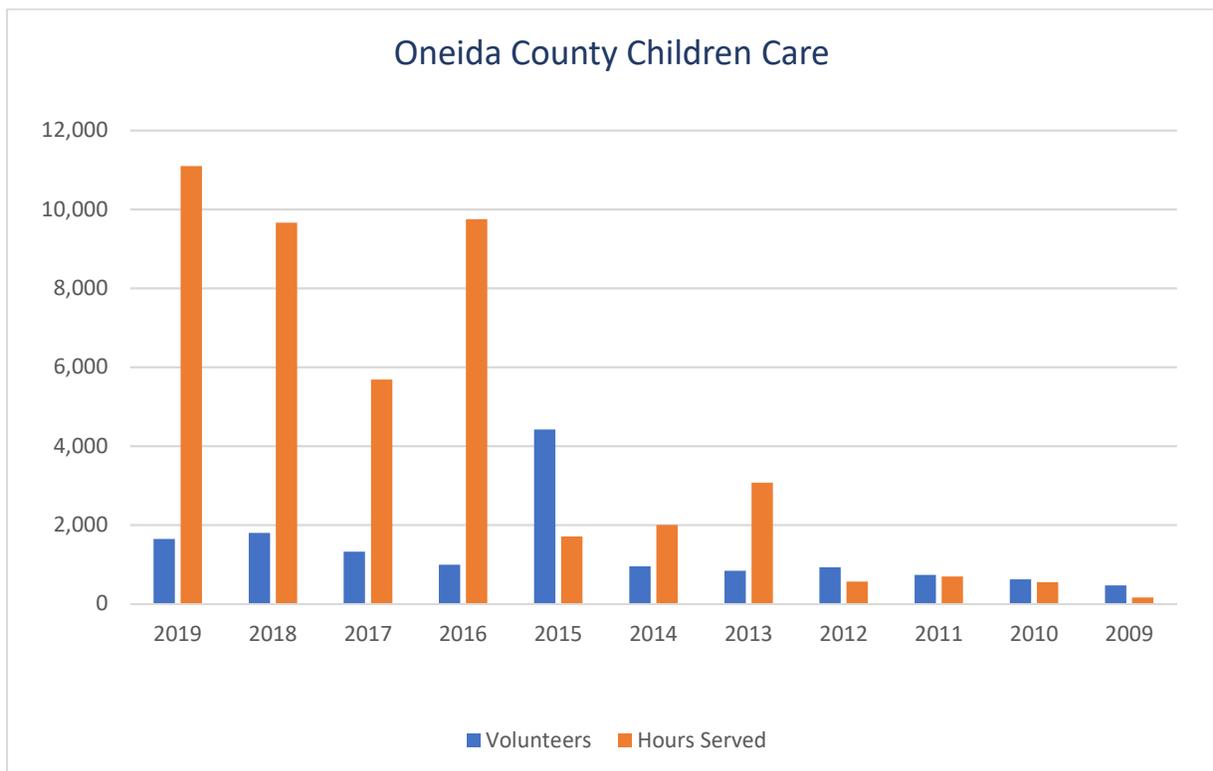
## **Accomplishments and Initiatives**

The Youth Bureau continued its relentless work building upon the strong and positive relationships 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.

In 2019, the Oneida County Youth Bureau effectively attended/participated at the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Development Training Conference in Albany, Director Kevin Green is serving a (2) year term as President of the Oneida County Youth Services Council, Board Member for Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, conducted “What We Do Presentations”, completed Supervisory Training with Deb Cabral, attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Invisible Youth Summit and the

Oneida County Opioid Task Force Kick-Off Summit, attend Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force meetings, and several other professional development opportunities which have 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. Another 2019 highlight for the Oneida County Youth Bureau was being recognized at the Women’s Empowerment Resource Center luncheon as the “2019 Peaceful Partner Award” recipients.

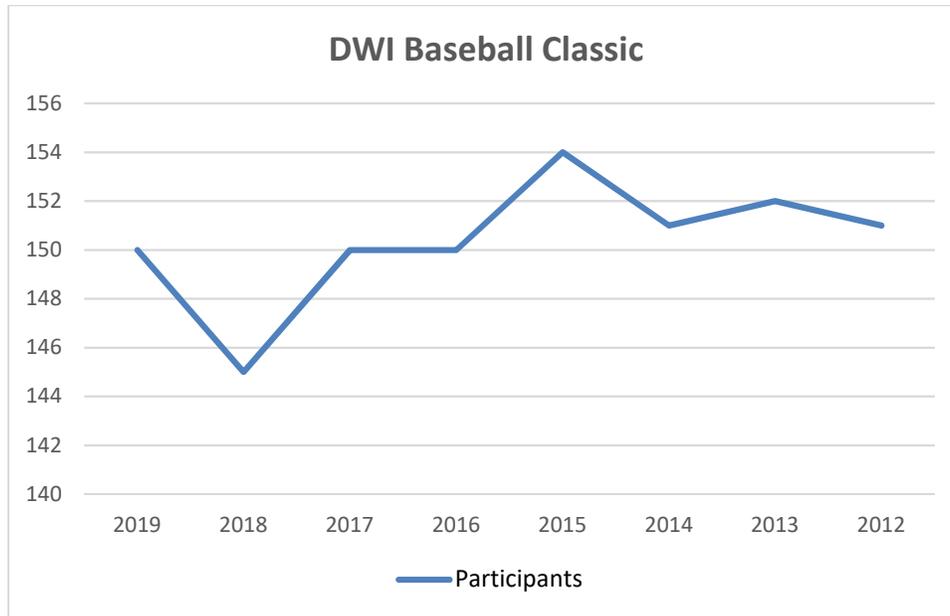
The Oneida County Children Care Initiative, collaboration between the Oneida County Youth Bureau and agencies the Youth Bureau funds that provide programming to youth, successfully completed our eleventh year. The intent of the initiative, implemented in 2009, is to introduce our youth to the benefits 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 2019, over 1,641 youth volunteers from 7 of our youth serving agencies gave residents of Oneida County an incredible 11,096 hours of volunteer service that included assisting flood victims, making Christmas cards for veterans and active service members, wrapping gifts for Toys for Tots, Agriculture Literacy Week, Community Gardening, Making Strides to end Breast Cancer Walk, preparing/delivering Care Bags for Cancer patients, cleaning senior citizen’s yards, preparing food and serving meals at local food pantries, youth mentoring and tutoring and many other community activities and the list goes on and on.



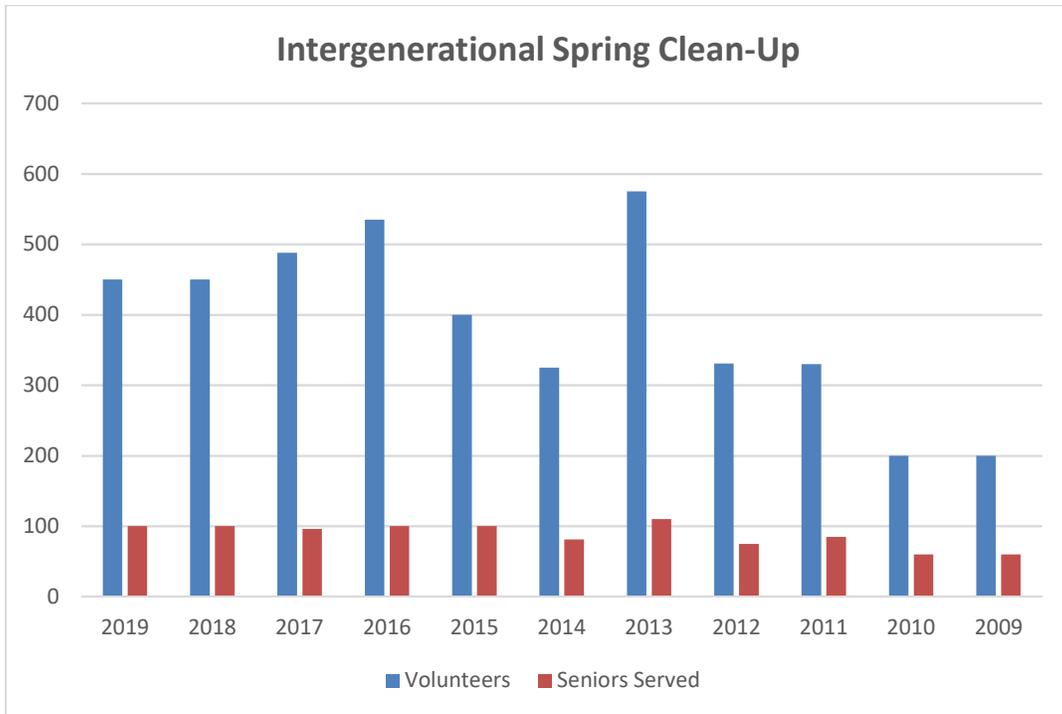


The Youth Bureau continues to be a genuine partner with Oneida County STOP DWI. The Youth Bureau represented STOP DWI at Health Fairs, Community Days and various summer recreation programs in 2019.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual STOP DWI High School Baseball Classic is a collaborative initiative between the Oneida County STOP DWI and Oneida County Youth Bureau departments. This year, the Baseball Classic which is 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 was scheduled to be held at DeLutis Field on Friday April 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> in Rome. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather the games were re-scheduled and played later in the spring. The Baseball Classic gives us the ability to expand our mission of educating both youth and our community as a whole. Typically up to 1,000 people attended the event free of charge. Throughout the event the spectators, players and coaches from participating teams take advantage of the outstanding presentations made by our partners. The Insight House (Dangers of Opiates & Heroin), Center for Family Life and Recovery (Dangers of Marijuana), YWCA (Teen Dating Violence) and The New York State Police are on hand with their Roll-Over convincer which illustrates the importance of wearing your seat belt.



The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Intergenerational Spring Clean-Up, collaboration with 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 4<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup>. This spring 450 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 100 locations countywide.



For the tenth 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 not have for field trips while reaching more students. Our educational partners joined us once again, as we educated students on the dangers and consequences of making destructive

decisions. Seven local school districts participated including Holland Patent, New York Mills, Notre Dame, Oriskany, Rome Free Academy, Vernon-Verona-Sherrill and Westmoreland respectively. Up to 3,000 students were reached through the Teen Traffic Safety Educational Program.

For the tenth consecutive year, the Oneida County Youth Bureau assisted Oneida County Workforce Development with their Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Beginning in 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.

“Oneida County’s Summer Youth Employment Program is one of the most important investments in the future of our region. This program helps youth get hands-on work experience. This program is a start. It opens the door for youth to learn about a career, learn about the community, or just learn the ways that the world of work is so very different from the world of school. On behalf of Oneida County, we are proud that our efforts could bring youth this opportunity. Our young people had a summer of earning and learning that moved them closer to achieving their dreams,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr.



County Executive Picente, the Oneida County Youth Bureau and Veterans Department recognized 10 youth and 3 adults at their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual 2019 Oneida County Youth Awards Dinner. The event, sponsored by The Friends of the Oneida County Youth Bureau, was held at Daniele’s Banquet Specialists on Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. We were honored to have as our 2019 keynote speaker, County Executive Picente, who shared words of encouragement and gave praise to and for our honored award recipients.

This year an award recognizing “Commitment to Military Service” was added to the 2019 program. We honored (5) such youth who are considered some of Oneida County’s “Most Brave.” This first year collaborative recognition award connected our Oneida County Veterans Department headed up by Mr. Joe Perrone. All (5) youth recipients made the courageous decision to serve and defend all of our freedoms by enlisting in the Armed Forces / Military Academy or the National Guard. There were more than 150 guests present to celebrate this occasion with these fine Oneida County youth and adult representatives.

“This initiative gives us another opportunity to recognize standout youth and adults within Oneida County that are doing exceptional work, have overcome obstacles and continue to strive for the improvement of themselves and others through volunteerism, setting attainable goals and leading with their heart,” said Oneida County Youth Bureau Director Kevin Green. “This initiative took a year to plan and we thank County Executive Picente, our community sponsors and our Youth Advisory Board Members for their vision and hard work in making this award ceremony a success.”

Those honored were anonymously selected by a reading committee comprised of Youth Advisory Board members. Congratulations to the following Class of 2019 Oneida County Youth Awards recipients:

**\*Distinguished Youth Volunteer Award**  
Maheen Qureshi (Whitesboro High School)

**\*Spirit of Success Youth Award**  
Blair M. Kahler (Whitesboro High School)

**\*Positive Change Leading to Success Youth Award**  
Jacob Cooper (Proctor High School)

**\*Exceptional Youth Leadership Award**  
Gu Nay Ku (Proctor High School)  
Molly Williams (Waterville High School)

**\*Commitment to Military Service**  
Jamilex Neris (Proctor High School)  
Nicholas Clayton (Oriskany High School)  
Matthew Pietryka (New Hartford High School)  
Madeline Peyton (Notre Dame High School)  
Michael Stappenbeck (New Hartford High School)

**\*Distinguished Youth Employee Award**  
Ariana Westfall (Safe Schools Mohawk Valley Employee)

**\*Rising Star in Youth Services Award**

Nicole Weis (Safe Schools Mohawk Valley Employee)

**\*Connecting Our Community Award**

Walt Savage (Utica City School District Employee)

“The leadership, determination and commitment displayed by these honorees should serve as an inspiration to our entire community,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “I look forward to seeing this event continue to grow for many years to come.”



This recognition ceremony presented by Youth Bureau Director, Kevin Green, has helped spark another way of improving and increasing participation and opportunities for the youth of Oneida County. The Youth Bureau established the Friends of the Oneida County Youth Bureau agency fund at The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties. The goal of this fund is to continue to improve and grow offerings, programming and opportunities for Oneida County’s youth. In 2019, the Oneida County Youth Bureau received donations from the following local companies, friends and business owners within our community that strive to help youth:

- Gilroy Kernan and Gilroy
- The Waterville Teachers Association
- Mr. David O’Brien
- Mr. Patrick Sullivan
- The Utica Teachers Association
- Mr. Lloyd Ploof (Square One Coating Systems)
- Mr. and Mrs. Steve DeGrace (Dragonfly Dreams Daycare)
- Walmart
- The Brothertown Optimist Club
- The Utica Gas and Electric Federal Credit Union

In 2019, the Youth Bureau continued their Experience Glimmerglass Arts initiative which turned out to be a banner year for youth participation. The arts are about different ways of human communication, i.e., music, dance, verse, theatrics, drawings, etc. Our overriding goal is to communicate with underprivileged and underserved teens, to help them to understand themselves and the world around them, and to show them different ways of communicating with us and each other. This initiative gave youth direct access to theatre as well as opportunity for one on one conversation with professional performers, musicians, directors and staff. The youth toured the Glimmerglass Theatre and visited with staff members in pursuit of fulfilling their dreams of someday becoming a professional performer, musician, dancer or director to name a few. Through this opportunity, youth were able to directly connect with professionals, ask questions regarding real interests that they seek in their lives and the hope is our youth will feel empowered that they can achieve their individual life goals. Research has shown that youth involved in these types of hands on learning experiences adopt more positive attitudes toward personal and professional achievement.

The Experience Glimmerglass initiative served 150 underprivileged and underserved youth and 20 adult chaperones in 2019. Students and chaperones alike were treated to the live performances of “Showboat” which depicted a time when American Slavery was prominent and to the Opera “Blue” which is a story of an African-American family headed by a police officer, whose son was shot and killed by a White police officer. Through the hard work and collaboration with other Oneida County youth advocates, Experience Glimmerglass provides opportunity for youth to become more educated through the fine arts.



The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Oneida County Youth Bureau Sidewalk Art competition was held for All Oneida County youth serving agencies and municipalities. Over 1,000 youth countywide drew a positive image on a single sidewalk slab hoping to reach the finals that were held Thursday July 18<sup>th</sup> on the sidewalks in front of and around Pratt at Munson - Williams - Proctor Art Institute in Utica. Medals were given to the top 3 finishers in each age specific category. As always, all 90 finalists put forth tremendous effort and displayed their best and brightest positive artwork around the museum.

**2019 Sidewalk Art Champions:**

**5-7 Age Category**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Angelina Perez  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Mikayla Harrington  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Damonte Glover

**Park/Agency Represented**

Thea Bowman  
 Salvation Army  
 Thea Bowman

**8-10 Age Category**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Vivi Anni Fedele  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Ronnie Swartahout  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Jasmin Perez

MWPAI  
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 Thea Bowman

**11-13 Age Category**

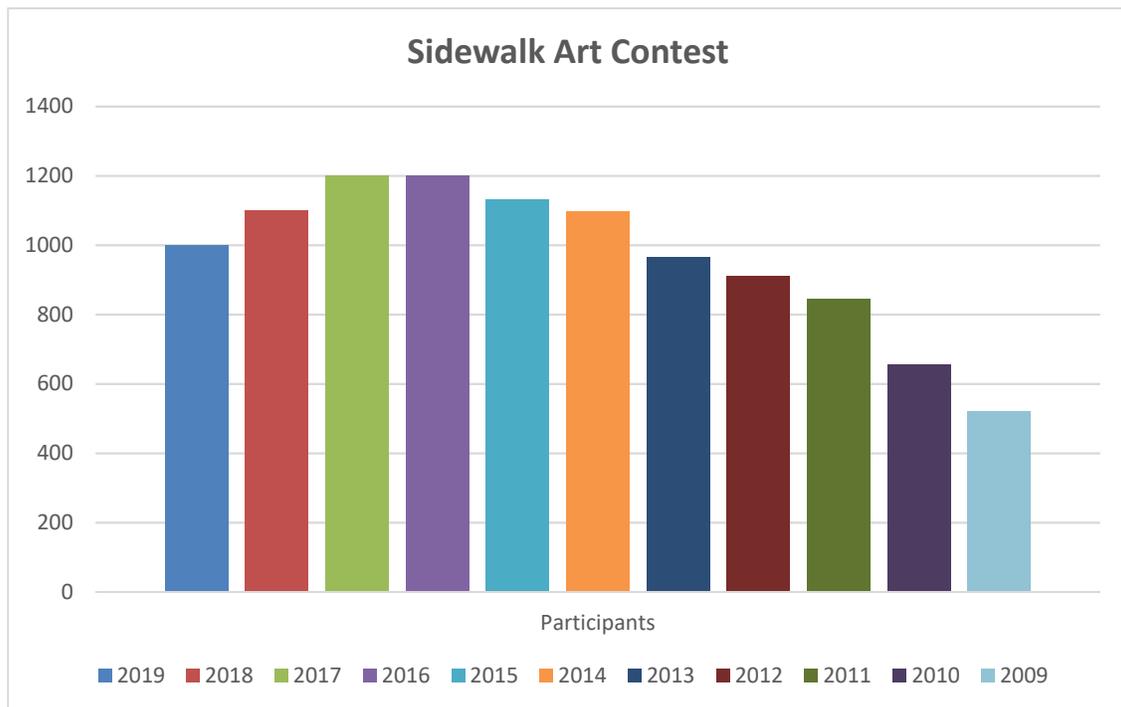
1<sup>st</sup> Place: Caitlin Mazzotta  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Olivia Maynard  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Brooke Scarchilli

Our Lady of Lourdes  
 Our Lady of Lourdes  
 Our Lady of Lourdes

**14-18 Age Category**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Zahra Perkins

MWPAI





The Oneida County Youth Bureau completed their fourth year of the Baseball Skills Clinic on July 15<sup>th</sup> held at historic Murnane Field. The weather was perfect for the youth of Oneida County to participate and attend this FREE one day event. The Baseball Skills Clinic, presented by the Utica Blue Sox players and staff, entertained 105 Oneida County youth that took advantage of an amazingly well run, organized and structured baseball learning experience for the kids.

Much credit goes to the Utica Blue Sox players and coaching staff for their “first class” approach to giving back to our community. These young men made an investment in to our kid’s future by giving of their time and volunteering their baseball knowledge to our children. Youth participants were given a free ticket to the Blue Sox game and the opportunity to run on to the field for introductions alongside a Blue Sox player for the playing of the National Anthem. In addition, Blue Sox players signed several autographs for these young aspiring student-athletes!



The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual 2019 Youth Fun & Fitness Run was completed on Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at the MVCC Outdoor Track. The Youth Fun & Fitness Run once again offered the youth of Oneida County a physical fitness component and an educational experience. Over 200 children and their families highlighted this annual event. There were 95 children ages 4-13 that participated in their respective age specific race:

- 4-6 yr. olds = 21 runners
- 7-8 yr. olds = 29 runners
- 9-10 yr. olds = 26 runners
- 11-13 yr. olds = 19 runners

We would like to thank and recognize the following for donating healthy snacks and other related items/services to the participants of the 2019 Youth Fun & Fitness Run:

- MVCC Event Staff
- The Utica Zoo Mobile
- United Way (Boxed Lunches)
- American Dining Creations (Apples, Oranges, Granola Bars and Bottled Water)
- Emblem Health (Tooth Brushes, Floss and Lip Balm)
- McDonald's (Dessert Coupon)
- NYS Fair (Admission Tickets to the Fair)

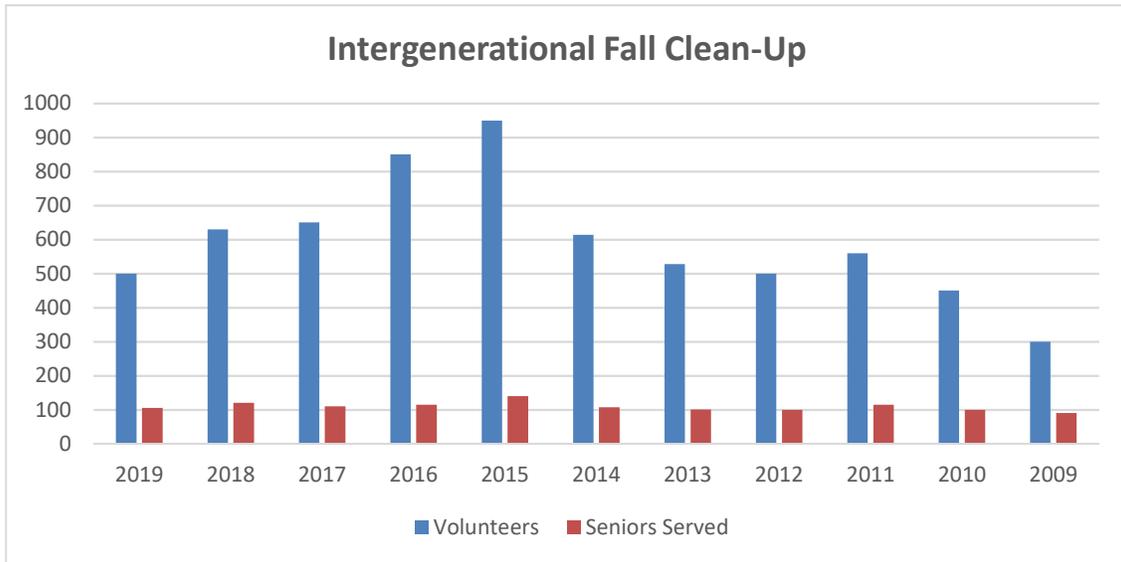
To our educational presenters:

- Oneida County Health Department
- Oneida County Sheriff's Office
- Oneida County Stop DWI
- Food Bank
- F.I.E.R.C.E Foundations
- Fidelis
- Eat Smart NY
- Insight House
- Helio Health

A special thank you goes out to Lieutenant Christine W. Reilly from the Oneida County Sheriff's Office and to the Mohawk Valley Police Academy recruits for volunteering to run side-by-side with the youth of Oneida County in the 2019 Youth Fun & Fitness Run.



The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Intergenerational Fall Clean-Up was held the weekend of October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<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 500 youth volunteers perform general yard clean-up duties for senior citizens and the disabled at 105 locations countywide.



The Oneida County Youth Bureau in partnership with the Utica College Men’s Basketball program completed their third year of a FREE basketball clinic offered for youth ages 8-17 at the Todd & Jen Hutton Recreation Center at Utica College. Under the direction of Head Coach Sean Coffey and his players they provided 2 hours of basketball skill and drill training to 100 Oneida County youth. Coach Coffey and his players were enthusiastic, entertaining and encouraging to the children and families in attendance. This fourth year endeavor between the two organizations is offered to both boys and girls, giving the kids a safe and enthusiastic environment to have fun and learn. We are so proud to report that over the course of our 4 year partnership (2016-2019) the Utica College Men’s Basketball Program and Head Coach Sean Coffey have served over 525 Oneida County youth for FREE. The clinic is intended to teach youth about the fundamentals of basketball while interacting with other peers of various skill

levels and backgrounds. Participants were drilled on defensive positioning and movement, shooting technique, ball handling skills and much more! The parents in attendance raved about and were impressed with the professionalism exhibited by Sean and the Pioneer Basketball student-athletes. Additionally, parents commented about how awesome the student-athletes looked in their matching Utica College Basketball attire as a TEAM! It was refreshing to see a group of young men look and act as one unit! All along the UC players were instructing each group of children with energy and genuine excitement!



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 and beyond, 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.

Over an 11 year span from 2009 to 2019 the Oneida County Youth Bureau has served over 38,478 youth from Oneida County through our initiatives including the Oneida County Children Care, Sidewalk Art Contest, Oneida County Youth Awards Dinner, Baseball and Basketball Clinics, The Intergenerational Spring and Fall Clean-Ups, Stop DWI Baseball Classic, the Youth Fun & Fitness Run, Capital Days and Experience Glimmerglass.

For the eighth consecutive year, the Request for Proposal (RFP) process was made available online. This process saved cost on paper, envelopes and postage while making it easier for applicants to expedite the process. The Youth Bureau prepares and forwards Request for Proposal (RFP) packets geared specifically for non-profit agencies and specifically for cities, towns and villages. Also, the Youth Bureau forwards detailed RFP instructions to cities, towns and villages to give them a clearer idea/picture of what is expected of them to complete the RFP efficiently and effectively.