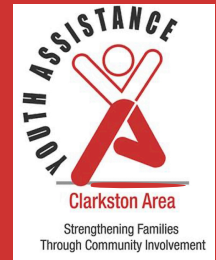


ANNUAL REPORT

Clarkston Area Youth Assistance | 2020



Executive Committee

Jackie Fromm, Chairperson
Jan Scislowicz, Vice Chairperson
John Nicholson, Treasurer
Amy Keely, Secretary

Board Members:

Judy Parnes
Dawn Schaller
Shelby Ettinger
Jamie Graves
Jessie McDonald

Program Sponsors:

Oakland County Circuit Court -
Family Division
Clarkston Community Schools
Independence Township
Springfield Township
The City of the Village of Clarkston

Staff:

Lauren Klos, Caseworker
Joanna Montgomery, Office Admin.

Oakland County Youth Assistance:

Mary Schusterbauer, Chief
Nikki Keller, Supervisor

Mission Statement:

Clarkston Area Youth Assistance (CAYA) is committed to strengthening youth and families and preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, child neglect and child abuse through community involvement.



Jan Scislowicz and Jackie Fromm at the 2019 Bowl-A-Thon Fundraiser

From the Chair

Jackie Fromm, Chairperson

What a change in the world since we last reported to our sponsors and supporters! Who would think seeing everyone wearing masks would be the norm? And a new word in my vocabulary, "Zoom," has come to the forefront. Our Executive Committee and our Board of Directors have been meeting via Zoom since the school district had to shut down. Using Zoom has encouraged us to work on creative ideas for using such technology now and in the future. Lauren Klos, our Caseworker, has been working remotely during this time and keeping lines of communication open with children and parents. Hopefully, we'll be able to work out of our office in the near future. And hopefully, we'll be able to plan programs and activities that we will all be able to attend in person rather than via Zoom.

We would like to introduce our new Office Administrator, Joanna Montgomery. Joanna has been a great addition to CAYA. She was instrumental in getting our website up and running - please check it out at CAYA-MI.org. Joanna has also been extremely helpful in navigating technology in order to keep the office going in a remote setting.

We are also very happy to report that we have a new CAYA Board Secretary, Amy Keely. She has only been with us a couple of months and already adds new ideas and enthusiasm.

Our Annual Meeting is usually held in the Fall; however, our Board decided not to attempt any type of meeting during this time of COVID-19, so this report to our sponsors and supporters will hopefully enlighten you as to how we continue to support the children in the Clarkston area. Although our

(From the Chair, continued)

school year was cut short, we continued with a virtual Prime for Life program in the Spring and posted information about various resources on our website and Facebook page.

Please take the time to read through this Annual Report to see how a small group of dedicated people take the time to work for the well-being of youth and families living in the Clarkston Community School District and make our community a better place to live.

Youth Recognition

Judy Parnes, Chairperson

CAYA's Youth Recognition Program, aligned with community efforts and interests in developing a culture of well-being, recognizes and honors Clarkston area youth in Kindergarten through Grade 12, for contributing to the well-being of the community through working on his/her own well-being (personal growth) and/or showing his/her concern for the well-being of others. In 2019, the number of honorees doubled from 100 to 200 for the traditional April Youth Recognition Ceremony and Dessert reception.



It was time to address the increasing number of honorees. Starting in 2020, the traditional Youth Recognition Ceremony and Dessert Reception would honor up to 115 youth, keeping the school-night ceremony to one hour. **A second approach** specially designed for individual schools provides an opportunity for more staff to recognize and honor youth for accomplishments of well-being than could be accommodated at the traditional ceremony. Clarkston Area Youth Assistance school-level Youth Recognition Award(s) was unveiled in early Spring 2020.



2019 Youth Recognition Honorees



Both approaches are accomplished without ranking and ordering, giving each honoree equal importance. Affirmations for each honoree, the centerpiece for both approaches, are based on what nominators share **using a well-being lens.** Both approaches create wonderful memories for honorees and their families to draw upon for years to come.



COVID-19 did result in the cancellation/interruption of both approaches. Although the nomination process was interrupted and the 2020 Ceremony was canceled, 62 honorees still received personalized certificates from area dignitaries and an affirmation document suitable for framing which were mailed to honorees in Fall 2020. The Youth Recognition local school awards will begin at a time deemed appropriate by school administrators.



Thank you to nominators, Clarkston Community Schools administrators, and area dignitaries for your support! Recognition of accomplishments of well-being help honorees flourish, as well as those whose lives they have touched!

Accomplishments of Well-being

- Developing leadership skills
- Personal progress
- Meeting and overcoming challenges
- Learning to set and meet realistic goals
- Discovering & unlocking his/her talents/interests
- Developing problem-solving skills
- Making positive choices
- Volunteering
- Advocating for others
- Brightening the day for others
- Respectfully assisting and supporting others
- Exhibiting day-to-day acts of kindness
- Showing compassion and empathy for others
- Making all students feel welcomed and included

Fundraising

Jan Scislowicz, Chairperson

2020 had its share of challenges for our fundraising expectations. We were unable to hold our Bowl-A-Thon this year due to COVID-19, but we did launch our First Annual Pet Costume Contest in October, which proved to be a great source of joy and provided some much needed funds. While it did not bring in the same amount of financial support as our Bowl-A-Thon, it certainly lifted the spirits of our volunteers and staff as well as that of the contestants' owners and those viewing our website.

For the holidays, CAYA sold products from Motown Soup which is a non-profit, 100% volunteer organization that donates all profits to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, food banks and free medical clinics throughout the state of Michigan. They produce soups, dips, breads and desserts packaged in the form of mixes. Most of their products do not have added chemicals/preservatives. That fundraiser also brought in funds to support CAYA's services to the community as well as supporting Motown Soup and their projects. It was a win-win situation.

As 2021 rolls in, we will plan our fundraising projects as best as we can for the year. Currently, we anticipate having our Bowl-A-Thon, our Second Annual Pet Costume Contest and our Motown Soup fundraisers.



Coco - 2020 Pet Costume Contest Winner

Family Education

The Family Education Committee identifies and plans education programs to promote family growth and youth development. Topics are chosen based on community trends. In the 2019-2020 year, the Family Education Committee planned several programs, many made possible through partnerships with Clarkston Coalition for Youth, Easterseals, and a grant from the Clarkston Area Optimist Club.

The Prime for Life class was a great success again this year. This educational class educates students on the risks of substance use and was put in place to help prevent and reduce substance use among youth, especially with vaping, alcohol, and marijuana use. This program was in collaboration with Clarkston Community Schools, Easterseals, and the Clarkston Coalition for Youth and yielded positive results in reducing substance use among the participants.

The Girls Stand Strong program was a great success as well and was especially popular among middle school girls. This program ran four weeks, focusing on participants learning various skills in communication, friendships, assertiveness, and more. We had also planned to partner with Calvary Lutheran Church and Clarkston Coalition for Youth to host the play, "Every Brilliant Thing." Unfortunately, the event was canceled due to COVID-19. We hope to bring it to the community sometime soon.

2019-20 Family Education programs and number of attendees:

- ◆ **Prime for Life** - CHS and CJHS student groups - 27
- ◆ **Girls Stand Strong** - SMS and CJHS student groups - 20
- ◆ **Technology & Teens** - parent seminar - 13
- ◆ **Flirting vs. Harassment** - parent/student seminar - 7

The Homework Club

Jan Scislowicz, Chairperson

The Homework Club (HWC), planned and implemented in 2004, offers the opportunity for school-aged kids to come to an academically and emotionally supportive environment twice a week after school. The program has operated successfully since that time due to the efforts of our sponsors and community volunteers who provide mentorship and tutoring as well as a nutritious meal. Bridgewater Park Apartments has been instrumental in the continuation of the HWC program by donating an apartment that the HWC has used since its inception.



*Volunteer Tutors and Students at
The Homework Club*

The 2019/2020 school year brought 3rd through 5th grade students to the Homework Club eager to get started in the program. 14 tutors and two meal planners/preparers were ready for the charge at hand.

HWC students worked on homework and supplemental educational materials with their tutors. When homework completion was not an issue, often the students would gather in a group where a book would be read to them followed by comprehension questions. Topics including geography, science, culture, and math were introduced into daily sessions, and questions regarding those topics would be asked to students before they left for the day.

As expected in school, HWC students were encouraged to be kind and thoughtful to one another as well as to themselves. Completing and understanding homework promoted self-confidence and a more positive feeling about going to school.

The program operated smoothly until COVID hit and schools were forced to shut down. The HWC operates only when school is in session. Realizing the financial hardship the pandemic was creating for the HWC families, we provided food to these families that we dropped off each week until the school district started a weekly distribution. The hope is that once schools are back in session, the program can start up and operate as usual.

Camp & Skill Building Scholarships

Clarkston Area Youth Assistance offers Camp and Skill Building Scholarships to income-qualifying families to help Clarkston area students attend an activity and give them exposure to new skills and/or areas of interest.

This past year, CAYA awarded 29 Skill Building Scholarships for youth, which included various activities such as driver's training, tutoring, sports activities, dance, cheer and counseling. We also sent one student to overnight camp at Camp Ohiyesa. Due to unfortunate circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, Independence Township Parks and Recreation was unable to provide Summer Day Camp slots, so we were unable to scholarship students this year for day camp.

We would like to thank our community for supporting the efforts that afforded the opportunity for these students to enjoy these experiences!

Pinwheels for Prevention

Judy Parnes, Chairperson

APRIL IS BLUE PINWHEELS MONTH IN THE CLARKSTON COMMUNITY!

April is the month you expect to see bright blue pinwheels spinning throughout the community in Pinwheels for Prevention Gardens, demonstrating support for preventing and reducing child abuse—the maltreatment of children and youth in all of its forms. COVID-19 interrupted April 2020's pinwheels from blooming, but hopefully, April 2021 pinwheel gardens will come back even stronger!

POSITIVE CHANGE! The CAYA Pinwheels for Prevention Program has two overlapping focuses promoting positive change. First is the nationwide campaign, "April is Child Abuse Prevention Month," which the Pinwheels for Prevention Program sponsors and supports for the Clarkston community. Since 2016, 2900 blue pinwheels have been planted in 135 Gardens of Prevention, increasing awareness and attention. The second focus aligns with the community interest of creating a culture of well-being—where all children and youth can thrive! Bookmarks were created to remind all of us to be kind and welcoming to others.



REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION ON CHILD ABUSE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE! The growth and development in research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed approaches, well-being, and resiliency is reframing the conversation. Sharing this knowledge with the community is an important aspect to reduce and prevent child abuse because it reminds us how everyone has a role to play.

GRATEFUL! Each year there are many to thank for supporting and working with CAYA's Pinwheels for Prevention Program, representing a cross-section of the Clarkston community and the Clarkston Area Youth Assistance permanent sponsors. While April is Child Abuse Prevention month, every month, every week, every day, and every moment is an opportunity to positively impact someone's life, especially in these uncertain times.

THINGS WE CAN DO NOW TO CREATE A CULTURE OF WELL-BEING!

- ❖ *Blue pinwheels represent the happiness and hopefulness of childhood: reminding us to help children and youth feel safe, hopeful, and welcomed throughout the community.*
- ❖ *Positive relationships with caring adults throughout the community help children and youth feel supported and help to develop resiliency.*
- ❖ *A small act of kindness can leave a lasting impact. You never know when your small act could make a big difference to someone else.*

Mentors Plus

The Mentors PLUS Program matches pre-screened volunteers with local children who need a positive adult figure in their lives. Mentors and mentees meet weekly to engage in fun, meaningful activities together. Due to COVID, mentors and mentees have been meeting virtually. During the 2019-2020 school year, Clarkston had two mentor matches.

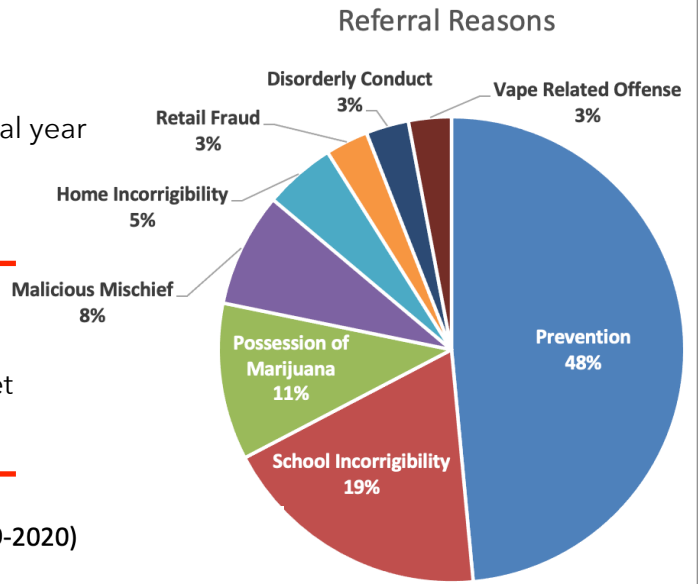
Mentoring is fun, creates new friendships, and allows volunteers the opportunity to share their lives with a child who could benefit from their attention and support. If you are interested in joining the Mentors PLUS Program, please contact the Mentors PLUS office at 248-858-0045.

CAYA Caseworker Report

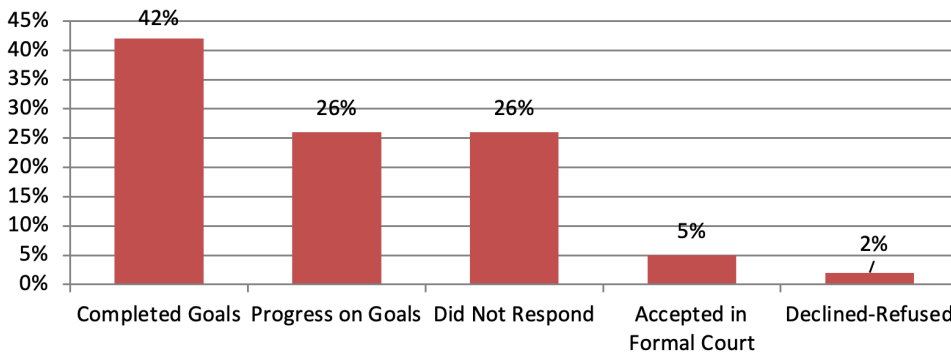
Lauren Klos, L.M.S.W.

94 total cases from Sept. 2019 to Aug. 2020:
 37 new referrals, plus 57 open cases from previous fiscal year
 22 Information and Referral Consultations
 116 total families impacted by Casework Services

59% of new referrals engaged in services
 16% - came a couple times but did not finish
 8% - some contact, but not fully engaged in services yet
 16% - did not respond



Closure Reasons (43 closures in 2019-2020)



REFERRAL SOURCE	TOTAL CASES
SCHOOL DISTRICT	23
POLICE	6
OC PROSECUTOR	5
PARENT/GUARDIAN	2
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION	1
TOTAL	37

REFERRALS BY AGE



Clarkston Area Youth Assistance is a volunteer-driven community organization. It is one of 26 Youth Assistance programs in Oakland County. Each local Youth Assistance office is tri-sponsored by the Oakland County Circuit Court - Family Division, the local school district, and the local municipalities. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners provides major funding for professional casework staff in each unit. Volunteers work with the Caseworker to plan and sponsor local prevention programs for youth and their families. More financial information is available in the office.