

ANNUAL REPORT

Clarkston Area Youth Assistance | 2021-2022

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Clarkston Area

Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement





From the Chair
Jan Scislowicz, Chairperson

Executive Committee

Jan Scislowicz, Chairperson
 Jackie Fromm, Vice Chairperson
 John Nicholson, Treasurer

Board Members

Judy Parnes
 Jamie Graves

Program Sponsors

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

Staff

Lauren Klos, Caseworker
 Sharon Roush, Office Admin

Oakland County Youth Assistance

Mary Schusterbauer, Chief
 Nikki Keller, Supervisor



The mission of Clarkston Area Youth Assistance (CAYA) is: ***“to strengthen youth and families and to reduce the incidence of delinquency, abuse and neglect through Community involvement.”***

This remains our focal point when planning programs to meet the needs that arise. In order to fulfill our mission, we at CAYA offer primary and secondary prevention programs. Primary programs are community programs focused on family education, skill building, and promoting well-being throughout the Clarkston area. Secondary prevention involves direct Casework Services to individual families.

I am happy to report that during the 2021/2022 school year, we sent kids to camp, hosted reading and Social Emotional Learning programs at the Homework Club, honored students for accomplishments of well-being at our Youth Recognition Ceremony and planted Pinwheel Gardens that help promote community well-being. CAYA also served as a resource for pay-to-play opportunities and awarded students with skill building scholarships to participate in a variety of activities including sports, dance, music, driver’s training, and student clubs. The CAYA committees that were stifled by COVID are up and running again and anxious to begin their programs. None of this would be possible without the support of our sponsors, donors, advocates, and volunteers and we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. Our partnerships with Easterseals, Clarkston Independence District Library, Clarkston Optimists Club, Clarkston Coalition, and Calvary Lutheran Church are key in offering and implementing programs to youth and their families.

Recently, CAYA has welcomed two new board members who share a commitment to the betterment of the Community. We’re extremely happy to have their help and to have such wonderful people working for a vital cause.

As you read through our Annual Report, please consider joining us as we move forward with enthusiasm and motivation to meet the challenges of our mission.

Sincerely,

 Jan Scislowicz



After several years of dealing with the challenges of Covid, we are all feeling a sense of excitement as we start our plans for this coming school year. We are back to holding our monthly Board of Directors meetings in person and on Zoom to include as many people as we can. We have an active Family Education Committee returning and planning parent education programs as well as student programs. Our Homework Club will be up and running again. Our caseworker is finally able to meet families in person. And, after a two-year break, we are able to hold our Annual Meeting in person.

In addition to getting back to our normal programming, we also plan to actively recruit some new members to our Board of Directors and our committees. We've had some long-time members who will not be able to volunteer this year, so we need replacement task and committee volunteers as well as regular Board members. Task volunteers help at Parent Education programs, our Youth Recognition ceremony and dessert reception or help to deliver and pick up Pinwheels. Committee members work on planning and implementing a specific program. We also need members for the Board of Directors who can attend monthly meetings and help with our decision making.

Just knowing that we can have a huge impact on kids, families, and the community makes it so rewarding to be involved. I have found that the CAYA volunteers are wonderful and dedicated people to work with.

Please think about volunteering with CAYA – either as a task volunteer, committee member or a Board member. As a long-standing member of CAYA, I can guarantee that your time will definitely be worth the investment in changing the lives of Clarkston kids and families.

Sincerely,

Jackie Fromm



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.

The Homework Club

Jan Scislowicz, Chairperson

CAYA is very excited to announce that the Homework Club (HWC) will be up and running again this fall after a two-year hiatus. Modifications have been made to the format of the HWC because of the loss of volunteers during COVID. A supervised learning environment rather than one-on-one tutoring will be offered. Fortunately, over the past few years, the HWC has been able to host Pine Knob Elementary School's Reading and Social Emotional Learning programs during the summer as well as our holiday gift giving.

We will be working with 3rd-5th graders after school, in an apartment donated by Bridgewater Park Apartments. The students will be met by a volunteer at the bus stop after school and accompanied to the apartment. I have often been the lucky recipient of their hugs and lively banter when greeting them at the bus stop. At the club, they will receive their snack, talk about their day and transition into working on homework and/or supplemental learning such as reading and math. The club will be meeting once a week for an hour. Our challenge is to find more volunteers so that we can offer more time to work with the kids.

We are grateful for the generosity of Bridgewater that has allowed us to utilize their space for 18 years. Over 200 students have benefited from the services that we have offered as apparent by their feedback many times over the years, as well as by the comments of their teachers and administrators at Pine Knob Elementary School.

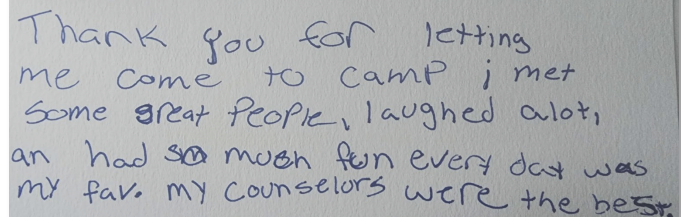
The Homework Club Committee has been collaborating with staff from Clarkston Community Schools and Pine Knob Elementary School to plan our program in a way that is efficient and effective in supporting the students' learning that takes place in the classroom.

The Homework Club is a fun and fulfilling environment for volunteers. Just one hour per week of your time can make a world of difference to a child. Please contact CAYA for more information on how you could help the youth of the Clarkston Area.

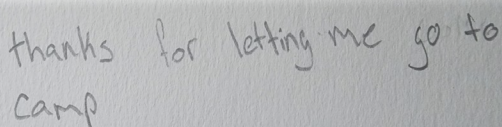
Camp & Skill Building Scholarships

CAYA offers Camp and Skill Building Scholarships to income-qualifying families to help Clarkston area students attend an activity and provide opportunities to discover new skills and/or areas of interest. This past year, CAYA awarded 42 Skill Building Scholarships for youth, which included various activities such as driver's training, tutoring, sports activities, dance, cheer, swimming and counseling. These activities are possible for these families with a CAYA scholarship.

We also sent 4 students to overnight camp at Howell Nature Center and 6 students to overnight camp at Camp Copneconic. Independence Township Parks and Recreation was able to provide Summer Day Camp slots to us again this year. We sent 11 children to the day camp program at Clintonwood Park. Several youth shared with us how much fun they had at camp – playing games, meeting new friends, swimming, enjoying campfires, and more. A few of them never had a camp experience before and absolutely loved it! It gave them an opportunity to just “be a kid.”



Thank you for letting me come to camp i met some great people, laughed alot, an had so much fun every day was my fav. my counselors were the best.



thanks for letting me go to camp

A big “thank you” to our community partnerships for making these scholarship programs available for students to enjoy these experiences: Clarkston Community Schools, Independence Parks and Recreation, Camp Copneconic, Howell Nature Center, Independence Township, David W. Elliot Memorial Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

Family Education

Jamie Graves, Chairperson

The Family Education Committee identifies and plans educational programs to promote family growth and youth development. Topics are chosen based on community trends. In the 2021-2022 school year, the Family Education Committee offered two programs—Prime for Life and Parenting the Love and Logic Way.

Prime for Life is an educational class that teaches 8th – 12th grade students about the risks of substance use. The class was held in Spring 2022, where 7 students attended 3 virtual classes after school – two 2-hour sessions and then one 1-hour follow-up session a month later. Prime for Life was made possible in partnership with Clarkston Coalition for Youth, Easterseals, and Clarkston Community Schools. Students who attended the class provided positive feedback, including how the information helped them think differently about substance use and start making better decisions about using alcohol, drugs, or vaping.

Parenting the Love and Logic Way was offered to families in Spring 2022. In partnership with Brandon Groveland Youth Assistance and Holly Area Youth Assistance, the 4-week class was led by a certified Love and Logic facilitator and delivered in a virtual format. There were 3 Clarkston Area families who attended this class. Several parents shared feedback that they found the class very helpful in learning new parenting strategies, which ultimately helped improve the atmosphere in their homes.

With the Family Education Committee getting back into planning and implementing programs, we anticipate providing even more Family Education programs in the coming year.

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. During the 2021-2022 school year, Clarkston had one mentor match, which has been ongoing for a few years. Mentoring is fulfilling, 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.

Fundraising

Jan Scislowicz, Chairperson

Our 2021 Annual Pet Costume Contest was a great success. Senior entry, Jesse, masquerading as Pirate Jesse the Sparrow took 1st place by popular vote! All our entries were deserving of awards for making this “brighten your day” event possible. Our next pet contest is in the works and will be announced when the details have been finalized. We hope that you’ll join in on the fun!

Due to the restrictions of COVID, we were unable to host our usual Fundraisers; however, we were fortunate to be the recipient of several grants for which we are extremely grateful.



1st Place
Jesse the Sparrow



2nd Place
Halo the Poop Factory



3rd Place
Cat-O-Lantern

Youth Recognition

Judy Parnes, Chairperson

The Clarkston Area Youth Assistance Youth Recognition Program is about recognizing and celebrating Clarkston area children and youth, Young Fives through Grade 12, for personally contributing to the well-being of their class, school, and community, through working on their own well-being and/or for demonstrating concern for the well-being of others. The 2022 Youth Recognition Ceremony and Dessert Reception that honored 64 children and youth took place on the evening of April 20th at Clarkston Junior High School. In the audience were honoree families, and dignitaries including school administrators, nominators, and local government officials. Each honoree received beautiful, personalized certificates from area dignitaries and an affirmation document suitable for framing. The celebration continued at the festive Dessert Reception.

The cornerstone of Youth Recognition are the positive affirmations, based on the words of nominators who use a “well-being lens.” The affirmations are always read aloud for all to hear, as each honoree crosses the stage, receiving congratulatory handshakes/fist bumps from dignitaries. The affirmations capture the moments of well-being— often quiet and small—that can positively impact the life of both the honoree and those whose lives they have touched. **As the affirmations are read aloud, you can almost see the well-being accomplishments transformed from just words to inspiring actions, ensuring children and youth feel connected, seen, valued, and supported:**



2022 Youth Recognition Nominees

- See an honoree making sure new students feel welcomed and included.
- Notice an honoree advocating for others through working with administrators, speaking at a School Board meeting and writing a Letter to the Editor.
- Watch an honoree without hesitation, invite a student who is sitting alone at lunch to sit next to her.
- Look at the honoree going out of their way to recognize each classmate's strengths and value and also helping them see their own strengths and value.
- Behold the honoree who cares about the well-being of others by making every student feel welcomed, heard, and accepted.
- Notice an honoree making tremendous personal growth by unlocking his own talents and potential.
- Watch carefully at a Fun Run, as an honoree in the first grade sees a kindergartener crying and without hesitation jumps in to give the boy a hug along with encouraging words.

Everyone who attended the 2022 Youth Recognition Ceremony felt tremendous pride and joy, while experiencing an inspiring evening of affirmation and well-being! **Know that Youth Recognition is more than a one-day memorable event, as the impact of honoree accomplishments of well-being can be felt for years to come.**

Accomplishments of Well-being

Self (Personal Growth)

- ✓ Developing leadership skills
- ✓ Personal progress
- ✓ Developing problem solving skills
- ✓ Meeting and overcoming challenges
- ✓ Learning to set and meet realistic goals
- ✓ Making positive choices
- ✓ Discovering and unlocking talents/interests

Others (Classroom, School, Community)

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Volunteering
- ✓ Advocating for others
- ✓ Brightening the day for others

Pinwheels for Prevention

Judy Parnes, Chairperson

CAYA's Pinwheels for Prevention Program: 2022 and Looking Ahead!

Growing and Developing from a Wish, to Reminders, to Empowerment!

2022 is the year that the Clarkston Area Youth Assistance Pinwheels for Prevention Program joined together the nationwide campaign, April is Child Abuse Prevention month, and Clarkston's local campaign of developing community well-being, as a way to proactively ensure our children and youth flourish. Clarkston's blue pinwheels have grown and developed—from symbolizing a wish that childhood should be filled with hope, happiness, and kindness, to reminding children, youth, and adults of ways to contribute to community well-being. This year, Clarkston's blue pinwheels added another dimension, **empowerment**: *We are all empowered to help prevent and mitigate child and adolescent adversity in all its forms, including child abuse.*



A World of Difference class



CCS Board Office

Pinwheel Highlights From 2022 to Share with You!

Planted 1714 blue pinwheels in 64 gardens; **Distributed** over 8,000 pinwheel bookmarks to Clarkston Community Schools, local public libraries, businesses, and churches; **Created and debuted** a new PowerPoint, *Learning About ACEs: A Journey of Awareness and Empowerment*; **Developed and debuted** an educational brochure on the Pinwheels Program to introduce information on The ACE Study, the importance of building positive relationships, and how businesses and residents can support and help sustain the Pinwheels Program; **Debuted** small pinwheel pins attached to a message card; **Introduced** a new book mark: "Your small act of kindness could make a big difference to someone else."; **EXPERIENCED** heartfelt Clarkston community support and generosity from CAYA's permanent sponsors, local businesses and residents, Clarkston Independence District Library (CIDL), Independence Township Parks, Recreation & Seniors, Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce, *Positively Oakhurst*, *Clarkston News*, *Clarkston Living Magazine*, and *Clarkston High School's A World of Difference class*, with special contributions from the David W. Elliott Memorial Foundation and Waterfall Jewelers.

LOOKING AHEAD! 2022-2024

Developing Collective Community Knowledge

Our blue pinwheels now have more work to do—developing collective community knowledge that empowers community members to help prevent and mitigate child and adolescent adversity. It is time to connect the dots between child and adolescent adversity and community well-being, where children and youth flourish. There is much to discover and uncover. There are questions to ask, like: What are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)? Are ACEs common? Can ACEs impact community well-being?

Our Pinwheels for Prevention Program Committee looks at this next step as an empowering journey taking place over the next two years. Our journey together will begin and end with GOOD NEWS: We are all empowered to help prevent and mitigate child and adolescent adversity in all its forms, including child abuse.

Caseworker Report

Lauren Klos, LMSW



The 2021-2022 school year brought challenges, but also a new sense of passion for prevention work. After the school shooting tragedy at Oxford High School in November, I received a phone call from a family of a recently closed case. I had worked with the student and guardian for a long time and offered a great deal of resources, support, conversations, meetings, and encouragement while the case was open. The guardian called me after the Oxford incident to tell me how the situation got him thinking about his own student and that he couldn't help but wonder how much of CAYA's and the school's support helped prevent his student from going down the wrong path. That phone call shook me and rocked my world. It made me realize just how incredibly important and vital our prevention work is here at Youth Assistance. And while I still face many challenges within doing casework with families, being reminded this past year of the importance of prevention has fueled me more than ever before.

What we do at CAYA isn't just about the numbers, but it's about the lives that we touch and change forever. Over the past year in Casework, there were numerous students who learned more about the risks of vaping, alcohol, and drug use by completing research projects, participating in the Prime for Life class, or watching anecdotal videos about real-life young adults who struggled with substance abuse. Others shifted their focus from going along with the crowd to fit in, to making better decisions for themselves and focusing on their future goals. There have also been several parents who received support by learning different parenting approaches and engaging in helpful parenting resources, many of whom told me that the fresh ideas helped change their home atmosphere for the better and improve family relationships.

We may never know the full outcome of our interaction with a particular family, but we know that it makes a difference. From small changes to big ones, it all counts toward strengthening a family for the better. Prevention matters!

Trends July 2021 - June 2022

(Red indicates most common trends this past year)

- **Parent support** – connection to mental health resources, emergency needs assistance, basic needs resources (food, furniture, etc.), creating behavior contracts, discussing parenting strategies/ideas
- **Substance use: vaping, marijuana** (CJHS had most marijuana referrals; CHS had most vaping referrals), **alcohol, possession of LSD**
- **Friendships/peer conflicts**
- **Mental health concerns**
- **Family relationships**
- **Decision-making skills**
- **Threats**
- **Social Skills – inappropriate behavior at school**
- **Coping skills**
- **Motivation and engaging in school**
- Anger management skills
- Communication skills
- Diversion cases – completing accountability assignments
- Anxiety
- School avoidance
- Self-esteem
- Inappropriate phone use/boundaries
- Defiance
- Trauma history

Fiscal Year-End Totals

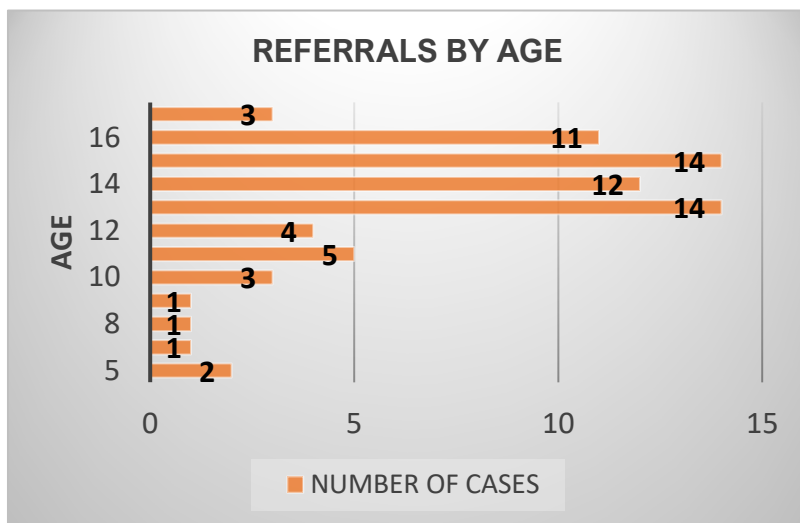
Casework Services: July 2021 to June 2022

103 total cases from July 2021 to June 2022:
71 New Referrals + **32** Open Cases from previous year
16 Information and Referral Consultations
119 total families impacted by Casework Services

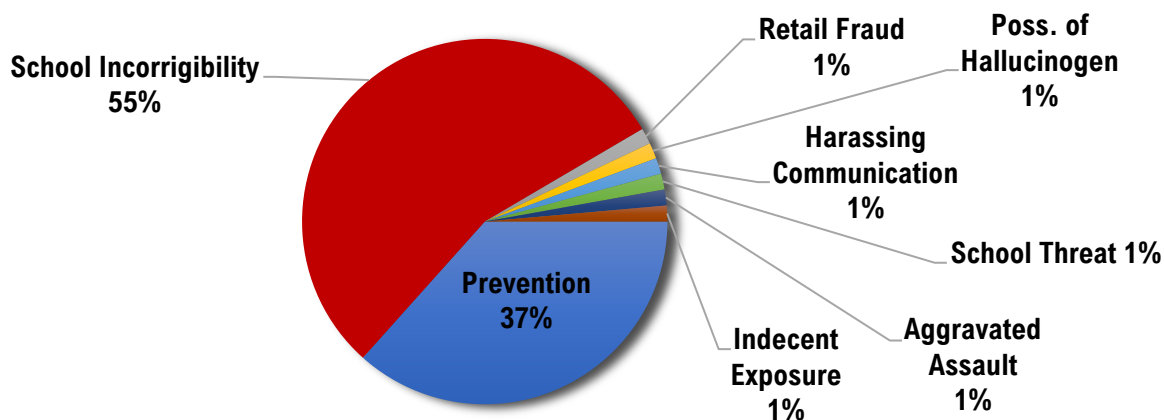
66% of new referrals engaged in services
10% - some contact, but not fully engaged in services yet
13% - declined services
11% - did not respond

Fiscal year-end totals for new referrals:

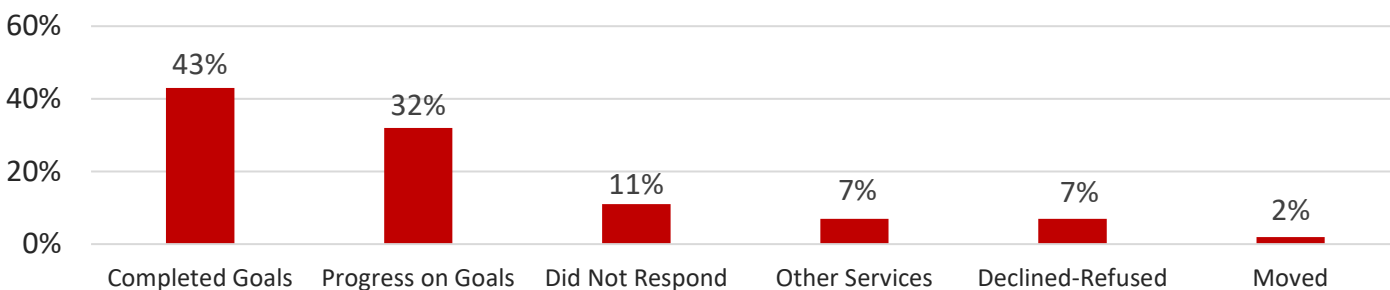
REFERRAL SOURCE	TOTAL CASES
SCHOOL DISTRICT	60
PARENT/GUARDIAN	4
OC PROSECUTOR	4
CPS	1
INTAKE	1
POLICE	1
TOTAL	71



Referral Reasons



Closure Reasons (60 closures in 2021-2022)



CAYA Sponsors



Thank you to our Sponsors, donors, volunteers and community partners. We appreciate the kindness, compassion, and donations that have been contributed more than words can express.

Brandon Groveland Youth Assistance

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

Camp Copneconic

Care House of Oakland County

Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce

Clarkston Coalition for Youth

Clarkston Independence District Library

Clarkston Living Magazine

Clarkston News

Clarkston Principals, Administration and Staff

David Coulter, Oakland County Executive

David W. Elliott Memorial Foundation

Easterseals

Farmington Youth Assistance

Goldfish Swim School

Holly Area Youth Assistance

Howell Nature Center

Independence Township Parks and Recreation

Market Place Pet Supplies

McGrath Basketball

Michael J. Bouchard, Oakland County Sheriff

Michigan State University Federal Credit Union

Michigan Youth Basketball

Michigan Youth Flag Football

Moby Dick Pet Store

Mrs. Melissa Bridgman's A World of Difference class

Oakland County Board of Commissioners

Oakland County Youth Assistance

Pet Supplies Plus – Waterford

Positively Oakhurst

Servant's Heart Isshinryu Karate and Kobudo

Waterfall Jewelers

Waterford Youth Assistance

