

**C**LARKSTON

**A**REA

**Y**OUTH

**A**SSISTANCE



Clarkston Area

Strengthening Families  
Through Community Involvement

## Mission Statement

To strengthen youth and families and to reduce the incidence of delinquency, abuse and neglect through community involvement.

**Annual Report**  
**2022-2023**

## Meet Our Executive Team



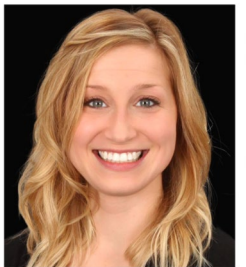
**Jan Scislowicz  
Chair**



**Jackie Fromm  
Vice Chair**



**John Nicholson  
Treasurer**



**Kristina Kohler  
Secretary**

## From the Chair



With a new school year beginning, I can look back at last year and say that it was a good year for CAYA. Our donor support as well as granted CDBG funds were strong, which allowed us to offer more opportunities for kids to go to camps and participate in the variety of activities that are detailed in the Annual Report.

These opportunities have the potential to increase a child's confidence, realize more options in life, and have more exposure to caring adults. Our Sponsors play a significant and vital role in keeping CAYA active in helping the community. CCS provides our office spaces that are used for daily work as well as family and board member meetings. In addition, Independence and Springfield Townships, as well as CCS, have been consistent in providing their yearly sponsorship funds which help to keep us financially stable.

CAYA volunteers and staff work many, many hours to plan and implement the programs that we offer. They are the energy of the organization and are responsible for what we do. When working with students, we have all dealt in one way or another with post Covid issues and no one has done that more than our highly dedicated caseworker, Lauren Klos.

We are saying goodbye to Sharon Roush as our Office Manager as she has decided to pursue other passions at this time and will be welcoming someone new. We are grateful for the time that Sharon filled that role.

Please consider learning more about CAYA and offering help as a donor or volunteer. The more dedicated volunteers that we have, the more students and families we can support in the Clarkston area community.

Sincerely,  
Jan Scislowicz

## From the Vice Chair



I've been an officer of CAYA for many years, holding all offices except Treasurer. But this past year was my last year as an officer as I'm taking on the specific role of Advisor for the upcoming year. It means that I can still stay very involved while having our new members take over officer positions. These new members bring fresh ideas and energy to our programs. There are still many tasks to do for CAYA so I am sure I can keep busy.

Having been involved in CAYA for so long, it's interesting that the needs still seem to be the same: 1. Have the organization be recognized in the community, 2. Recruit more volunteers, and 3. Gain more members. We've been fortunate to have three new members in the last couple of years and we're so happy to have them.

Our volunteers are listed in three ways:

- a. Task volunteers help with one or more programs that we have, such as the Youth Recognition Ceremony.
- b. A committee member works with any committee or committees, such as tutoring at the Homework Club or working with the Family Education Committee.
- c. A member joins our Board of Directors.

We look forward to having many more new members. CAYA is a wonderful group of people working hard for the benefit of the children in this community.

Sincerely,  
Jackie Fromm



### Board Members

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Jamie Graves  
Judy Ableser  
Judy Parnes  
Tricia Delude

### Program Sponsors

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Oakland County Circuit  
Court-Family Division

Clarkston Community  
Schools

Independence Township

Springfield Township

The City of the Village of  
Clarkston

### Staff

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Lauren Klos, Caseworker  
Sharon Roush, Office Mgr

### Oakland County Youth Assistance

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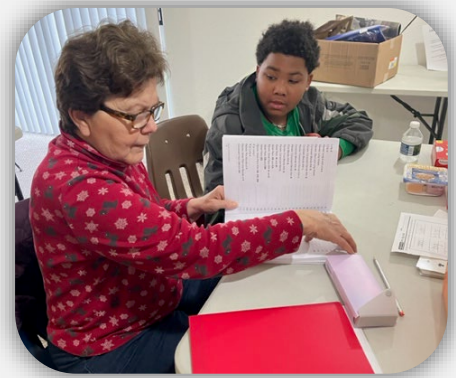
Liz Csizmadia, Chief  
Anna Torres, Supervisor

*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

3rd through 5th grade students met after school one day a week at an apartment donated by Bridgewater Park Apartments. The students were met by a CAYA volunteer at the bus stop, who accompanied them to the apartment. Typically, from the time the students got off the bus until the end of HWC, an hour later, lively conversations ensued. They are always excited to share the days' happenings with their tutors and then engage in reading and math exercises that have been tailored for each student's needs.



We are grateful for the generosity of Bridgewater that has allowed us to utilize their space for 19 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. This year, we had 14 tutors and 12 students.

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 46 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 3 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 23 children (2 children attended 2 weeks) to the day camp program at Clintonwood Park and Bay Court Park.

**31**

Skill Building  
Scholarships  
granted

**15**

PTP & Club  
Fees Waived

**25**

Weeks of  
Day Camp  
granted

**6**

Weeks of  
overnight camp  
at Camp  
Copneconic

**3**

Weeks of  
overnight camp  
at Howell  
Nature Center

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, Michigan National Flag Football, Servant's Heart Isshinryu Karate and Kobudo and an anonymous donor.



## Family Education

Jamie Graves, Chair

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 2022-2023 school year, the Family Education Committee offered **seven programs**; two Electronic Screen Addiction presentations (one for grades 4-7 and one for grades 8-12), three Substance Use presentations (Vaping, Underage Drinking, and Marijuana), two Power of Choice classes, one Safe Social Media presentation, and one Magic of Hope presentation.

The **Electronic Screen Addiction** interactive presentations were done by Maria Barretta, MA LPC and were designed for both students and parents to participate. Topics covered included recognizing electronic addiction symptoms, understanding the risks, and learning strategies to help. There were **43** total attendees including parents and their children.

The **Substance Use** presentations were in collaboration with Clarkston Coalition for Youth and were presented by the Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities. Each presentation was focused on what parents need to know, how to educate teens on the dangers, and tips on how to deal with substance use in the home. The first presentation was on Vaping, the next one was on Underage Drinking and the last one was on Marijuana. In total for all 3 sessions there were **13** attendees.

**Power of Choice** is an educational class that teaches 8th-12th grade students about the risks of substance use. The classes had a total of **12** attendees and were held in collaboration with Clarkston Coalition for Youth and Easterseals.

The **Safe Social Media** presentation was by Dawn Flood, LMSW and covered how to evaluate social media use and protect ourselves and our children. It was held in collaboration with Waterford Youth Assistance and had **17** attendees including parents and children.

The **Magic of Hope** was a family event presented by Anthony Grupido covering the topics of mental wellness, resilience, anxiety, depression, and stress. This presentation was in collaboration with Calvary Lutheran Church, On a Dragonfly's Wings, and Clarkston Coalition for Youth. There were a total of **54** attendees that included parents and children.

The Family Education Committee hopes to continue planning and implementing programming this upcoming year based on the needs of the community.

## Fundraising

In order to support our program costs, the fundraising committee plans and implements fundraisers and accepts donations and grants. This past year, CAYA received:

- \$6500 Optimist Club Grants
- \$5000 Clarkston Community Schools
- \$5000 Independence Township
- \$5000 David W. Elliott Foundation
- \$3500 Springfield Township
- \$3500 CDBG Funds from Independence Township
- \$3450 In Kind donation – CCS Clubs and Sports Fees
- \$3210 In Kind donation – Parks and Rec Day Camp
- \$2100 In Kind donation – Camp Copneconic
- \$1550 In Kind donation – Howell Nature Center
- \$1376 Real Estate One
- \$675 In Kind donation - Servant's Heart Isshinryu Karate & Kobudo
- \$350 Fundraiser from Leo's Coney Island
- \$135 In Kind donation National Flag Football
- Digital Signage In Kind donation - Waterfall Jewelers





The 2022-2023 year at CAYA was challenging, yet successful in our Casework Services. In August of 2022, I returned to the office full-time and provided in-person services for the first time since the COVID pandemic started in 2020. I was ready to hit the ground running and get back to providing face-to-face support to families again. It was truly wonderful to re-connect with families in this way, as well as get reacquainted with many school personnel and community members.

The year started fast with new referrals pouring in right away in September and it never really slowed down. Every month, I received 8-13 new referrals. February was the slowest month with 6 new referrals. Typically, I receive less referrals in the winter and summer months; however, that was not the case with this past year. I was not the only YA office experiencing an increase in new referrals – several other areas saw this trend as well. To me, it speaks of the current needs that youth and families have, especially as we are coming out of the pandemic. With the increase in needs, especially for mental health, there were also challenges with accessing the resources to help meet those needs. Several therapists or counseling agencies had waitlists and families had to wait for months before starting much needed therapy services. It was a challenging year, but with advocacy, short-term counseling, and offering support, I did my best to help families in whatever way I could.

I feel happy I feel like change a bit  
and I'm grateful that I met miss Lauren she change  
my life.

Written by Caseload Student

Despite the difficulties, several youth and families on my caseload saw success and made a positive turnaround. There were youth who quit using substances and actively worked to avoid them. There were families who learned better ways to communicate and positively connect with each other. There were students who learned new ways to cope, de-stress, handle negative peers, think through decisions, and improve self-esteem. There were families who needed appliances, food, or help catching up on bills and we were able to connect them with community resources to get them what they needed.

It was a demanding yet rewarding year, to say the least. Being in the “trenches” with families and fighting the good fight is never easy, but the victory is worth it – seeing families be strengthened, grow, and thrive.

### **Trends July 2022 - June 2023**

(Red indicates most common trends this past year)

- **Parent support** – connection to mental health resources, emergency needs assistance, basic needs resources (food, furniture, appliances, transportation, housing, car repairs, etc.), parenting strategies/ideas/resources
- **Substance use: vaping, marijuana** (CJHS had most marijuana referrals; CHS had most vaping referrals and THC & Nicotine vape referrals; SMS also had marijuana and vape referrals)
- **Friendships/peer conflicts**
- **Mental health concerns** (includes suicide risk/concerns, needs for intensive services)
- **Family relationships**
- **Decision-making skills**
- **Threats**
- **Coping skills**

- **Motivation and goal setting**
- **Fighting**
- **Communication skills**
- **Diversion cases** – completing accountability assignments
- **Self-esteem**
- **Defiance & home incorrigible behavior**
- Anxiety
- School truancy (avoidance and refusal)
- Social Skills – inappropriate behavior at school
- Anger management skills
- School success strategies
- Organizational Skills
- Inappropriate phone use/boundaries
- Inappropriate pictures/viewing explicit material
- Trauma history

# Fiscal Year-End Totals

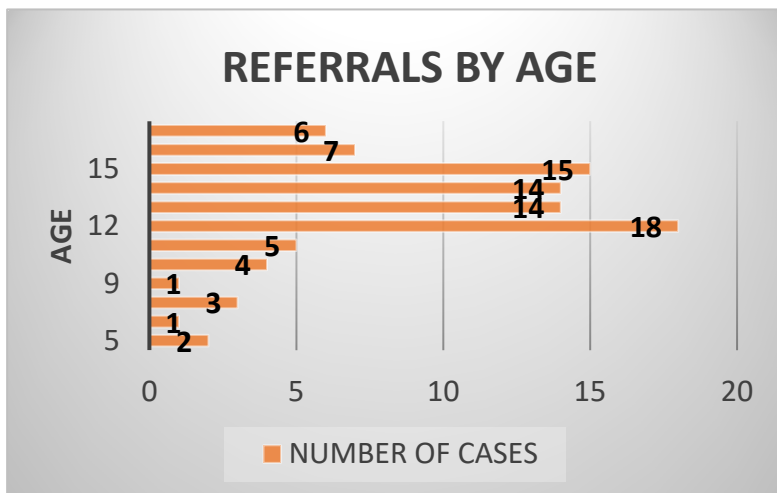
## Casework Services: July 2022 to June 2023

**142** total cases from July 2022 to June 2023:  
**90** New Referrals + **52** Open Cases from previous year  
**41** Information and Referral Consultations  
**183** total families impacted by Casework Services

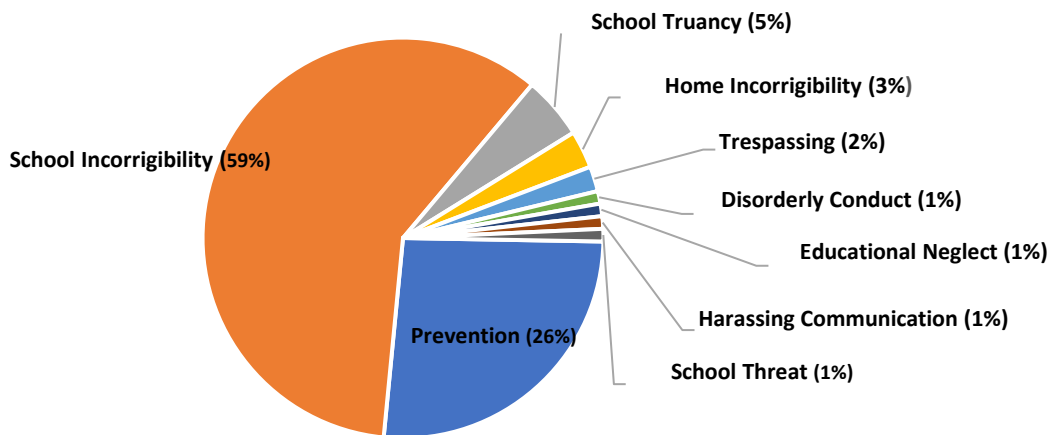
**63%** of new referrals engaged in services  
**2%** - some contact, but not fully engaged in services yet  
**7%** - started services, but did not finish  
**28%** - did not engage in services

### Fiscal year-end totals for new referrals:

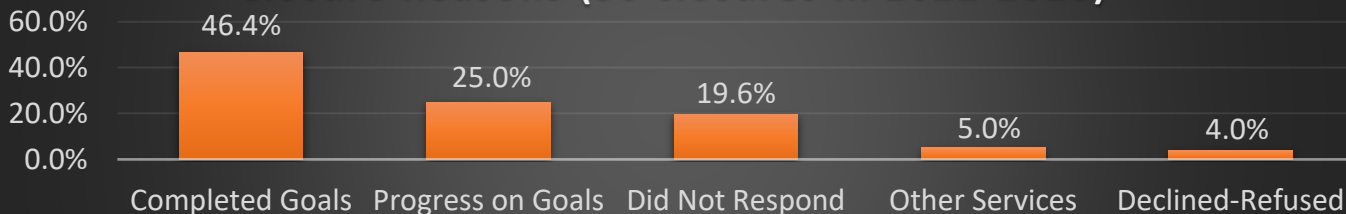
REFERRAL SOURCE	TOTAL CASES
SCHOOL DISTRICT	77
PARENT/GUARDIAN	5
OC PROSECUTOR	4
CPS	3
POLICE	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>



### Referral Reasons



### Closure Reasons (56 closures in 2022-2023)



## 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 2022-2023 school year, Clarkston had no mentor matches, unfortunately. 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.

### Youth Recognition Judy Parnes, Chair



## CAYA'S YOUTH RECOGNITION PROGRAM: 2023 CELEBRATING YOUTH WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH WELL-BEING

The 2023 CAYA Youth Recognition Ceremony and Dessert Reception took place on April 26 at Clarkston Junior High School. The 70 Clarkston area children and youth, Young Fives through Grade 12, were recognized and celebrated for personally contributing to the well-being of their class, school, and community, through working on their own well-being (personal growth) and/or for demonstrating concern for the well-being of others. The evening began with entertainment by the Clarkston High School Jazz Combo. MC, Cari Neubeck, Independence Township Clerk, started the Ceremony addressing the audience including approximately 340 honoree family members, 40 nominators, and 61 honorees. About 400 guests attended the festive Dessert Reception that followed the Ceremony.

The Clarkston Area Youth Assistance Youth Recognition Program is about highlighting the importance of developing well-being among and between Clarkston children and youth. Keynote Speaker, Staci Puzio, CCS Director of Student Growth, Well-Being, and Community Partnerships, noted that these students, “intuitively know how we are all interconnected and must hold a space for one another—recognizing and embracing the value of each person.” Sponsor Remarks made by Paul Brown, Independence Township Treasurer, reflected on his time growing up in Clarkston, and how important the positive impact of classmates can be.



The cornerstone of Youth Recognition is the positive affirmation for each honoree, based on the words of nominators. The affirmations are read aloud for all to hear as each honoree crosses the stage, receiving congratulatory handshakes from 17 dignitaries, including CCS school administrators and government officials from Independence Township and Springfield Township. The affirmations capture the often quiet and small moments of well-being, that can positively impact the life of both the honoree and those whose lives that they have touched. *As the affirmations were read aloud, you could almost see the well-being accomplishments transformed from words to inspiring actions helping the honorees and the children and youth they impact feel: I AM Connected! Valued! Welcomed! Acknowledged! Worthy! Supported! Visible!*

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. Each honoree received personalized certificates from dignitaries/ CAYA sponsors, and an affirmation document suitable for framing. *The honorees are an inspiration to all of us because they have learned: I know that what I do can make a positive difference.*



## Pinwheels for Prevention

Judy Parnes, Chair

### 2023 Pinwheels for Prevention Program: TOGETHER FOR PREVENTION

The CAYA Pinwheels for Prevention Program was created in 2016 to bring the nationwide campaign, **April is Child Abuse Prevention month (CAP)**, to our community—because it is such a good fit with the CAYA mission. CAP month is about raising awareness that PREVENTION focuses on TAKING ACTION BEFORE THE CHILD ABUSE HAPPENS. Prevention strategies work best for child abuse when we are able to transcend our images of sadness and feelings of anger and move toward taking action to strengthen youth and families. At the local level, this is about helping to develop child, youth, and family well-being, where all children and youth feel visible, welcomed, supported, safe, belonging, valued, and loved. April's blue pinwheels remind us that everyone has a role in prevention.

When a child walks in the room, your child or anyone else's child, do your eyes light up? That's what they are looking for.

Quote from Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize winning author



This year:

- 1,387 blue pinwheels were planted in 44 community Gardens of Prevention
- 7,000 pinwheel bookmarks were distributed to CCS students and staff, and the CIDL — with support from the CHS World of Difference Class
- 55 community members attended PowerPoint presentations to start building collective community knowledge on Adverse Childhood Experiences, which includes child abuse
- Clarkston News, Clarkston Living Magazine, Waterfall Jewelers, and Parks & Recreation promoted CAP
- **New!** CAYA, CIDL, AND CCS collaborated to make the elementary pinwheel bookmark, “Blue pinwheels remind me to be kind and welcoming” more meaningful and interactive by creating toolkits for each elementary school, including nine books focusing on kindness

The Annual Community Kick-Off for CAYA's Pinwheels for Prevention was held on March 14 in partnership with the Clarkston Community Schools: TOGETHER FOR PREVENTION

Our speakers:

- **Tonya Womack**, Facilitator from CARE House of Oakland County, reminded us that child abuse is happening in our county, with CARE House providing strategic intervention and treatment
- **Lauren Klos**, Caseworker for CAYA, helped us understand that there are things we can do as individuals and community members to help with primary prevention - making sure that abuse does not happen in the first place - such as making connections with children in your life to help them feel safe, loved, and special, offering to babysit for a neighbor, or raising awareness by planting blue pinwheels
- **Staci Puzio**, CCS Director of Student Growth, Well-Being, and Community Partnerships, reminded us, “It's not about moving a mountain every day. Our collective focus on well-being is an opportunity for our eyes to light up for every child in our community”
- **Dr. Shawn Ryan**, CCS Superintendent, inspired us by inviting joyful preschoolers to come in and say “Hello,” focusing our thoughts on the potential and promise we want for all children and youth



# CAYA Sponsors



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**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.**

B.R.A.D. Foundation

Brandon Groveland Youth Assistance

Bridgewater Park Apartments

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

Camp Copneconic

Care House of Oakland County

Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce

Clarkston Area Optimist Club

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

Goldfish Swim School

Holly Area Youth Assistance

Howell Nature Center

Independence Township Parks and Recreation

Mark and Nancy Roeder

Michael J. Bouchard, Oakland County Sheriff

Michigan State University Federal Credit Union

Michigan Youth Flag Football

Mrs. Melissa Bridgman's A World of Difference class

Oakland County Board of Commissioners

Oakland County Youth Assistance

*Positively Oakhurst*

Real Estate One

Servant's Heart Isshinryu Karate and Kobudo

Waterfall Jewelers

Waterford Youth Assistance