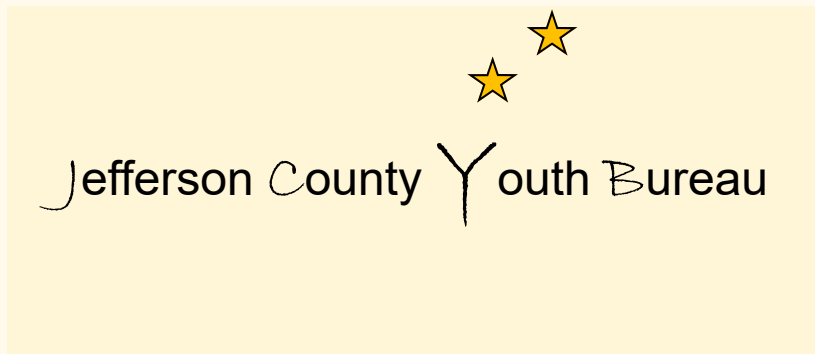




# Annual Report 2023-2024



A Division of Jefferson County Department of Social Services  
250 Arsenal Street Watertown, New York 13601



# JEFFERSON COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU

## Annual Report October 1, 2023—September 30, 2024

During 2023-2024 the Youth Bureau and Advisory Board acted in an advisory capacity to the Jefferson County Board of Legislators through the Health and Human Services Committee

**William Johnson, Chairman of the Board of Legislators**

### Health and Human Services Committee

Anthony Doldo, District 15, Chair  
John Peck, District 7,  
Allen Drake, District 4  
Corey Grant, District 14  
Jeremiah Maxon, District 10  
Francis Calarco, District 12  
Steel Potter, District 13

### Youth Advisory Board

Brooke Roes, Watertown, Chair  
Dan Deegan, Watertown, Vice Chair  
Jane Gendron, Watertown, Secretary  
Robert Cantwell, III, Liaison with Board of Legislators  
Scott Weller, Carthage  
Sharon Chaple, Watertown  
Mary Mathewson, Watertown  
Joe Wargo, Watertown  
Allyson Wargo, Watertown (youth member)  
Veronica Neff, Felts Mills (youth member)  
Neva Bettinger, Henderson (youth member)  
Amy Canniff, Watertown  
Kaytlyn Desormeau, Watertown (youth member)  
Monica Makuch, Brownville  
Natalie Wesseldine, Watertown (youth member)  
Kirsten Widrick, Chaumont (youth member)  
Robin Banks, Watertown  
Katie Ramus, Adams  
Anita Seefried-Brown, Watertown  
Ammrose Souva, Watertown  
Matthew Tucker, Watertown

Robert Hagemann, County Administrator  
Dylan Soper, Deputy County Administrator  
Karen Marcum, Commissioner, DSS  
Tara Altieri, Deputy Commissioner/Youth Bureau Director



*Mission Statement: to provide, promote and expand opportunities for the positive development of all young people in Jefferson County*

## Highlights

2023-2024

### *Youth Recognition Awards*

In recognition of outstanding accomplishments, annual youth recognition awards were presented to:

Promising Ability In Youth Services  
Collin Ditch

Youth Overcoming Odds  
Marcus Castine

Youth Leadership  
Morgan Hodge

Outstanding Youth Volunteer  
Claire Rogers

Outstanding Adult Youth Worker  
Heidi Edgar

It Takes A Community  
FynePrInt (Calvin) Williams

### Community Support

The Youth Bureau provided opportunities for youth serving programs to share information and resources and for the community to respond to identified youth needs. The Youth Services Network provided information on the topics of: Planned Parenthood; New York State Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP); The new YMCA Facility; New York State Education Department Office of Special Education; CHJC -Home Based Crisis Education.

The Youth Services Network gathers information from all attendees about the programs they provide. Minutes are taken and posted on the Jefferson County Youth Bureau website.

### Recreation Scholarships

18 girls & 18 boys ranging in age from five to nineteen received scholarships for activities such as gymnastics classes, Summer Youth Programs, music lessons, sports and various camp opportunities.

# Youth Bureau Funded Programs



## Youth Development

### Funding

**227,811** in funding from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to support:

- ★ Seventeen programs operated by non-profit agencies
- ★ Recreation Scholarships

### The Young People

Programs reported 3,064 children and youth attending Youth Bureau funded programs.

(Children may have been counted more than once if they attended more than one program.)

#### Gender

*53% were boys, 41% were girls  
6% Transgender/Other*

#### Ethnicity

*73% Caucasian ~ 12% African-American ~ 2% Hispanic ~ 10% Two or more races ~ 3% Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian*

**Ages** 165 ~ *under five years old*  
1,129 ~ *five to nine years old*  
1,085 ~ *ten to fourteen years old*  
598 ~ *fifteen to seventeen years old*  
87 ~ *eighteen to twenty years old*  
0 ~ *twenty one and up*

#### *Hearts For Youth*

*(Hearts For Youth Inc. \$13,500)*

A program focusing on life enrichment opportunities that facilitate youth in volunteering and being an active and vital part of their community. After school and summer programs encourage teamwork and comradery, building relationships, developing physical and cognitive skills and encouraging healthy, respectful, productive citizenship.



#### *Education Opportunities for Adolescents*

*(North Country Prenatal /Perinatal Council (NCPPC) -\$10,350)*

NCPPC will provide three types of education with this funding for ages 9-21. The youth will learn puberty education to address many changes that occur during this time (ages 9-12). They will offer workshops for teens transitioning to adulthood (ages 17-21). NCPPC will continue to offer American Red Cross Babysitting and CPR/First Aid Course.

#### *Family Visitation Program*

*(Resolution Center \$5,000)*

This program provides separated families with an opportunity to receive enhanced visitation while promoting permanency and normalcy in the lives of children.





# Youth Bureau

## Youth Development Continued

***SoZo Teen Center***  
***(Children's Home of Jefferson County \$20,000)***

To help local youth become productive and healthy adults, the SoZo Teen Center focuses on health and wellness, academics, job readiness, life skills, and civic engagement. Dedicated staff and volunteers provide positive role models and ensure a safe and enriching environment. Nutritious snacks and hot dinners are served daily. All services are provided free of charge.



***Youth Court***  
***(Resolution Center \$5,000)***

This program exists to hold youth offenders accountable for delinquent behaviors; to provide positive peer-led restorative justice that promotes leadership, self-improvement and a healthier attitude towards rules/authority; and to increase knowledge and enhance refusal skills to avoid future behaviors and involvement in the criminal justice system.

***Lyme Central School***  
***Summer Theater Institute***  
***(\$6,000)***

Participating students in grades K-12 worked together to produce and present a high quality theater production to the local community.



***Recreation Scholarships***  
***(Youth Bureau \$15,150)***

Financial assistance helped to cover the costs of skill-building activities such as gymnastic classes and different camps for children from financially disadvantaged families. There was an increase in the number of youth applying for scholarships to attend overnight youth summer camps.



## Child Abuse Prevention and Family Support

***The Q Center***  
***(ACR Health \$10,000)***

The center provides services, activities and supports for our community's LGBTQ youth. The overall goal of the program is improved health and social-emotional outcomes for LGBTQ youth and their families.



# Youth Sports And Education Opportunity Funding



## ***Inclusive Youth Sports*** ***(YMCA 7,500)***

Free physical activities tailored to accommodate individuals of all physical and cognitive capacities.

Each youth participates an hour a week for 6 weeks.

The staff work with families to provide activities with a



mix of traditional sports experiences like soccer and tennis. The youth also explore physical activities that can be taken home like various ball games, non-traditional gym games and yoga.

## **CHJC Recreation Opportunities** **(CHJC \$11,700)**

CHJC maintains a beautiful campus suited perfectly for the facilitation of various recreation and sports activities. The generous space allows CHJC to provide high quality recreational services to program participants and offers a variety of sports and activities.



## **Encompass Recreational Programs** **(\$14,420)**

This program provides recreational opportunities for youth with higher support needs. Some of the activities included Basketball, Lego Club, Bowling, Swimming, Running, Baseball, Soccer and Fishing.

## **Sports & CPR, First Aid & ED Certification** **(YMCA \$6,333)**

Free opportunity for youth to stay active while participating in activities like snowshoeing and trail adventures, allowing participants to explore the outdoors and embrace a healthy lifestyle. In addition to the physical activities, all youth enrolled in the program participated in 10 hours of comprehensive training and evaluation for the American Red Cross certifications in CPR, First Aid and AED.

# Infrastructure

## **Playground Updates** **(Augustinian Academy \$10,344)**

Updates were made to the existing playground area utilized by the Augustinian Academy students and others in the community at the front of the St. James Church lawn. The existing playground equipment was outdated, and the area was updated with new playground equipment.



## Youth Team Sports



### ***Thousand Islands Youth Hockey*** **( \$40,634)**



The mission of the Thousand Islands Youth Hockey (TIYH) Association is to provide, encourage, and promote a recreational hockey and skating program for youth of all levels of ability, including opportunities for local, regional, national, and international competition. Sports positively impact youth development and promote positive mental, social and emotional outcomes, as well as health and educational benefits.

### **Little Lions Soccer Club** **(\$3,200)**

The Little Lions Soccer Club services children of the General Brown School District and surrounding districts. They educate young athletes in overall body health, teamwork, and soccer specifically. The Little Lions Soccer Club held weekly clinics throughout the summer for children of all skill levels from 3-10. Throughout the year youth also participate in leagues and tournaments.

### **Twisting Stars Gymnastics Team** **(YMCA-\$15,000)**

Team Gymnastics creates an inclusive, supportive, and accessible environment, enabling underserved and disadvantaged youth with disabling conditions to participate and benefit from the sport. They ensure the program is accessible by offering scholarships or reduced fees for economically disadvantaged families. The team participates in competitions with 9 other YMCA's in New York either home or away.



### **Eastern Shore Youth Soccer** **(\$2,300)**

The Eastern Shore Youth Soccer (ESYS) league in Jefferson

County NY allows children, grades 1-7, the opportunity for physical activity each week through practices and games throughout August and September with an additional



“under the lights” game for 6th graders in October of each year. This league supports mental health and wellbeing by keeping team sizes small to encourage connectedness to each other’s teammates.

### **Alexandria Bay Jr. Shooting Sport** **(American Legion– Post 904—\$6,892)**

Post 904 Junior Shooting Sports/4-H is an Olympic style marksmanship program designed to bring a “low to no cost” opportunity for year-round recreation to children ages 8-high school graduation within Jefferson County. They meet weekly at different times to safely accommodate their enrollment. They teach safe and responsible gun and range safety using BB, air rifles, and air pistols (age dependent). Their teaching heavily relies on the focusing of personal responsibilities, positive attitudes and habits, and building self-control through routines and predictable processes, focusing on the small repeatable steps to achieve a goal.