

May 3, 2011

The Youth Bureau Run Down

Erie County Youth Bureau Newsletter

810 East Ferry Street
Buffalo, NY 14211

Volume 1, Issue 2



A Letter From The Director

Greetings from the Erie County Youth Bureau!

On behalf of Youth Board and Youth Bureau staff members, I am pleased to release our second newsletter to the community. Inside you will find encouraging stories about the positive programs our partnering agencies are providing for the youth of our county, a unique partnership the Youth Bureau has been involved in to improve the quality of after-school programming in the City of Buffalo, and we highlight two of the youth members serving on our Youth Board. We are particularly proud to highlight Jasmine Coles and Johan Welch in this issue, and you are sure to be impressed by the leadership they show as members of the Leaving our Legacy program through Erie 1 BOCES and volunteering on our Youth Board. They are great examples of young people working hard to have bright futures while taking the time to give back to their community.

Our Youth Bureau is also proud to announce we have received a Quality Enhancement Funds award from New York State! The ECYB was recognized for our work implementing unique performance measures for each of our partnering agencies in 2010. As seen in our 2010 Annual Report, the outcomes achieved by these agencies were impressive, and we plan to continue improving, enhancing, and taking our performance measures to the next level with this award. We will train our new partners on Results Based Accountability, and even give agencies access to an online tool called the Results Scorecard to track program performance and youth outcomes. We also plan to use our community partners in the Youth Detention Facility to run programs, mentor youth, and work with them upon release with the ultimate goal of improving their lives, while reducing recidivism and providing cost savings for the county. We are both excited and honored to receive this award in these tough fiscal times, and look forward to beginning these projects with our agencies this summer!

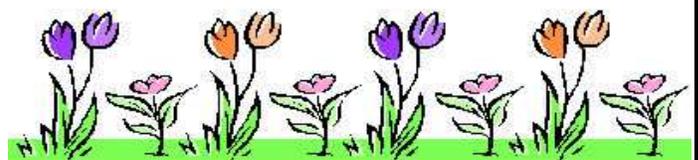
Thank you to all of the agencies who took the time to help share their stories through this newsletter. Thank you to our tremendous Youth Bureau staff and Board Members for their support of this newsletter. Finally, thank you to our AmeriCorps Vista, Kasey Weafer, for all of the hard work she put in designing the newsletter, developing the layout, and writing the stories. Our next issue will be released in August of 2011. If you have any success stories you would like to share,

On behalf of the Erie County Youth Bureau, we hope you have a wonderful spring and summer. We sincerely appreciate the important work you do serving the youth of our community!

Sincerely,
David Rust
Director, Erie County Youth Bureau

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Hope Refugee F.L.Y. Program

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau

Most Erie County residents don't realize that about 1,000 new refugees move to the City of Buffalo every year. For the most part they settle on the west side of the city where many other refugees live and the cost of living is generally low. Once they move to Buffalo, they begin the end of their long journey.

The journey started, for most of these refugees, with the fleeing of their homes in order to escape war and persecution. In many countries, people are still persecuted for race, religion, and political opinion and are forced to flee their home country to be granted refugee status elsewhere. When these refugees can not be relocated back in their home country or have not been able to settle permanently in their temporary country, resettlement becomes the final option. There are ten countries that participate in worldwide resettlement programs, with a few other countries offering resettlement options when it is necessary. The United States helps to provide basic services to refugees settling in the country including applying for a social security number, registering youth for school, ESL classes, medical evaluations, employment, and food and housing needs. After six months of being in the country many of the services provided to refugees decrease. For many of these refugees, six months is not enough time to assimilate enough to live on their own in the United States and without these services many are lost. This is where a local non profit, Jericho Road Ministries, steps in.

Jericho Road is a non profit organization that "is dedicated to helping refugees become contributing members of their community by empowering them to overcome persistent economic, educational, health, and cultural barriers." They work with more than 500 refugees each year, which is about 25% of refugees that resettle in Erie County.

The three main areas that Jericho Road works to help refugees in are Health & Family, Adult Empowerment, and Youth Education. Health & Family helps to meet the basic needs one would encounter living in a new country.

Jericho Road offers five different programs under Health & Family including teaching refugees about having a healthy pregnancy to a clothing pantry that will allow refugees to pick out clothes for the different seasons in Buffalo. The "Adult Empowerment" aspect of Jericho Road helps refugees learn basic finance, how to buy a home, and even how to sew or garden. These are transferable skills that refugees can use in daily life either to make a living or to take care of themselves and their families. These Adult Empowerment classes are very important because many refugees come to the United States and are expected to immediately integrate into society which is virtually impossible. Many of these new residents don't know how to speak English well which greatly interferes with their integration into the United States. These classes help create a base of knowledge and skills to make it easier for refugees to succeed.

Jericho Road also works with Youth and Education. Youth are our future and Jericho Road wants to prepare these youth the best they can for the future. They offer youth in Buffalo three different programs. One of these programs is F.L.Y. (Focused Learning for Youth), F.L.Y. is an afterschool program that runs Monday through Friday from 2:30-5:30 on the west side of Buffalo. The F.L.Y. program has been serving middle school refugees for 3 years now and has a primary focus on academics. There are 33 students currently enrolled in the program, each of whom receive 1:1 tutoring from a handful of tutors a few times a week. This 1:1 tutoring is extremely beneficial to these youth because many of them come to the United States not understanding any English, written or oral. This becomes a problem when these youth have homework in Social Studies, which is mostly reading, and many youth can't comprehend it. There are also small group tutoring sessions for youth four times a week for about 45 minutes. Brain Builders and Peace of the City, other non profit organizations, work (ctd. Pg.3)

<p>TELL ME AND I'LL FORGET.</p> <p>SHOW ME, AND I MAY NOT REMEMBER.</p> <p>INVOLVE ME, AND I'LL UNDERSTAND.</p> <p>-Chinese Proverb</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">An Article by Sherman D. Webb, President, Leaving Our Legacy</p> <p>“The reality of the building does not consist in the roof and walls, but in the space within to be lived in” –Lao Tzu, we the members of Leaving Our Legacy (L.O.L.) as young adults, believe that lack of knowledge around sexual health is a serious problem in our community. We intend to raise awareness and increase the comprehension of sexual education, publicize resources and decrease the occurrences of unintended teen pregnancy, STI’s and HIV/AIDS. In order to implement this solution L.O.L. will work with health care professionals and assets in the community as we establish social capital projecting a pragmatic message of; self-love, self-awareness, self-consciousness, and support in making informed choices.</p> <p>While there were many options for our name, “Leaving Our Legacy” seemed the most plausible. A pun on the acronym it creates, our interpretation is of far greater importance, leaving us with the objective of upholding our name.</p> <p>One of the purposes of Leaving Our Legacy is expanding overall knowledge of sexual and emotional health, while providing tools to ensure the well-being of our generation, by working towards tangible solutions to influence future generations. Though our focus is primarily empowering young persons, we as youth advocates realize the significance of having the entire community educated and involved, thus perpetuating a change in culture, generational habits & statistics.</p> <p>Another goal of our group is to prepare young leaders to be equipped with productive citizenship skills. As a youth driven organization, setting and achieving goals are fundamental in sustaining and maintaining moral integrity as well as funding. After a summer of training and bonding, as a group L.O.L. in partnership with Silent Voices we decided to organize, promote and produce a “Healthy Health Fair.” This event marks the beginnings of what is yet to come, with the program directors and counselors to aid and consult our development; I see nothing but hope for the future of our community.</p>	<p>“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”</p> <p>-Nelson Mandella</p>
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Hope F.L.Y. (from page 2)

with F.L.Y. staff to teach students. By using tracking methods, Jericho Road has shown that students participating in F.L.Y. have shown multiple grade level improvements after participating in the program for their first year.

Not only do tutors work to help youth academically, but they also help to address other holistic needs that may not be met at home. Making sure that additional needs are being attended to is also a major goal for F.L.Y., particularly the social and emotional needs of these students. The F.L.Y. Program allows these middle school students to interact with each other by building friendships through academics during the afterschool program. These friendships extend after the F.L.Y. Program is done for the day and help these young people build support networks that can assist them with the transition to a new country. Also, after tutoring is finished in the afternoon, there are many different activities available to youth that

encourage working together.

F.L.Y. gives youth access to things they normally wouldn't have access to. Once or twice a month youth go on field trips to museums, parks, and even college campuses. This makes these youth aware of what else is going on in Buffalo and gives them opportunities to see what else is out there.

Jericho Road helps to provide a much needed service to refugees and their families living in Buffalo. Although Jericho Road Ministries is almost always full to capacity the message that they want to get out is that this organization is here to stay. They work extremely hard to foster their relationship with refugees as much as possible. This relationship is not only important to the financial success of refugees in Buffalo, but also to their holistic success, which has always been a huge goal of Jericho Road.

Odds and Ends

The Erie County Youth Bureau Annual Report is now available online. The Annual Report is a document that offers information about the Youth Bureau, the services the Youth Bureau offers, as well as the quantifiable data used to report result based outcomes for each agency funded in 2010. Our hope is that this data will be a resource for youth programs across New York State and especially for our 2011 partnering agencies. In order to access the Annual Report just follow these simple steps.

1. Go to www.erie.gov
2. Click County Departments
3. Click Social Services
4. Click on Youth Bureau and Juvenile Justice/Detention Services
5. On the Youth Bureau page, if you scroll to the right, you will see the More Information Section it will be listed as "Annual Report"



2011 Activity Schedule

This year the Juneteenth Festival of Buffalo Inc. is introducing a **NEW** and exciting series of events specifically geared toward enriching & uplifting **YOU** the teens and young adults of Western New York. Over the course of the three-day celebration you can choose from an array of **FREE** events that will empower you :)!

***** Saturday June 11, 2011

Job Readiness Workshop 12-2pm

Location: Buffalo Museum of Science

June-Teen-TALK Forum 2-4pm

Location: Buffalo Museum of Science

Festival Weekend

Saturday June 18, 2011

June-Teen-Job Fair 11-3pm

Location: In front of Buffalo Museum of Science

June-Teen-Black College Fair 11-3pm

Location: In front of Buffalo Museum of Science

June-Teen-200 Gala 7-10pm

Location: The McCoy Center, 853 Clinton St. 14210

***** Sunday June 19, 2011

Let's Talk College Forum 1-3pm

Location: Buffalo Museum of Science

June-Teen-THEATER 3-5pm

Location: In front of Buffalo Museum of Science

June-Teen-LIVE Talent Showcase 5-8pm

Location: In front of Buffalo Museum of Science

For more information about any of agencies in this newsletter you can go to their websites:

-West Side Community Services

www.westsidecommunityservices.org/

-Hope F.L.Y. Refugee Program

<http://www.jrm-buffalo.org/>

-Preventionfocus, Inc.

<http://www.pfocus.org/>

-African American Cultural Center

<http://www.africancultural.org/>



African American Cultural Center, Gatekeeper for Urban Generations

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau

"We sincerely care about youth in the community. Their well being and mental health is important to the African American Cultural Center. Come into the center and get involved, we want them to come here and be part of the family. We want them to grow up and develop into honest, caring, responsible citizens of society."

-Alicia Banner, Assistant Director for African American Cultural Center



The African American Cultural Center is known as the “gatekeeper for urban generations,” and is located at 350 Masten Avenue on the east side. It is one of the few places on the East Side that youth can go during the after school hours. The goal of the AACC is to enrich the academic and social development of youth living in the area. Not only does this include daily homework sessions to help youth with their academics, but it also offers a host of enriching activities that help youth learn about the foundation of African culture. The African American Cultural Center was founded more than 50 years ago by a gentleman named Malcolm Erni who wanted to help address issues that the east side was dealing with. Some of these issues are still around today and the AACC is dedicated to eradicating these issues.

The after school program at this center runs Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2:30-5:30 and Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-4:30. One of the most important parts of this program is the Supplemental Education Services Reading program, which is offered to youth in grades K-4. This class is taught by a certified teacher and is specifically designed for students who are reading below grade level. When they first enter the program they are tested in order to figure out their skill set and after the class they are tested once again to see how they progressed. The WordStart curriculum is used during this reading program and it helps to instill letter recognition, phonemic awareness, reading competency, and high frequency words. Many of the youth who are in this program come in reading below grade level and by the end they are reading significantly better.

One of the focuses of the African American Cultural Center is connecting today’s youth with their cultural history and heritage. Most of the youth that attend the AACC are African American and helping to provide cultural and spiritual direction is an essential mission of the staff of the AACC. They offer cultural direction in a number of different ways including Cultural Enrichment Classes, African Dance & Drum Lessons, and a number of theater productions are put on throughout the year.

The Cultural Enrichment Classes give younger participants the opportunity to learn about the foundation of African culture. Students learn about the people and customs of African nations. For students age 13+ there is more of a focus on masks from different African countries. Through these classes youth get to design their own masks and learn about the foundations of each mask and where they came from.

The AACC Dance & Drum classes are offered to all age groups in the community and are offered three times a week. Youth in the drum classes learn different methods of West African Drummig. Most of these classes are hands on and youth get to sit in a “drum circle” and learn different beats and rhythms, even with solos! Drum circles don’t stop in the classroom, participants in the program are given homework so they are learning outside of class as well. The dance classes also focus on the traditions of West African dance and at the end of the classes there is an AACC Dance and Drum Recital where participants show off the skills they learned in their classes.

The AACC is a one of a kind non profit because of the combination of cultural and academic learning it offers. These children have the option to learn about their cultural history and learn skills like drum and dance that are not only fun, but can be used as techniques for dealing with stress and peer pressure. These activities allow youth to learn how to communicate positively with their peers, which is one of the main goals of Alicia Banner, Assistant Director of the African American Cultural Center, “these teens [at the AACC] need to be communicative with their peers – this means they need to *communicate, positively*. When it is negative they end up killing each other, and they need to know it doesn’t have to be that way, they need to think about what they are doing, *because they don’t have to do it.*” In an area of the city where violence is prevalent for youth, these outlets give youth the opportunity to displace their anger and frustration into different activities. In an area of the city where violence is prevalent for youth these outlets stresses the need for providing the opportunity to displace they anger and frustration into different activities.

Pathways to Progress Out of School Time Initiative

By Brigid Doherty, Executive Director of the WNY Women's Fund

In Buffalo, women are the dominant face of poverty in a region with some of the highest poverty rates in the nation. Teen pregnancy continues to derail thousands of young girls every year in WNY. Women are increasingly raising children on their own, and doing so while living in poverty. As noted in the January 2010 release of the **Pathways to Progress** report, women are on the front lines of society's balancing act of work and family, and are far from parity in leadership roles.

One of the leverage points identified in the **Pathways to Progress** report, as key for removing barriers faced by girls, is access to quality after school and summer programs that include mentoring opportunities, career and technical education, physical activity and academic enrichment opportunities.

To address this leverage point, the **WNY Women's Fund** led several community visioning sessions and created a task force whose members include representatives from the **Buffalo Public Schools, Erie County Department of Social Services - Youth Services Division**, out of school time provider agencies, the **United Way of Buffalo & Erie County** and the **Buffalo Museum of Science**. From that task force the **Pathways to Progress Out of School Time Initiative (OST)** was created based on a highly successful model from Providence Rhode Island called the **Providence After School Alliance**.

The goal of the **Pathways OST Initiative** is that all Buffalo students will have the opportunity to attend a quality out-of-school time program and that all out of school time providers will follow universal program quality standards and offer a wide array of enrichment and learning opportunities. Next fall, the **OST Initiative** will:

- Launch an after school pilot program at **Buffalo Public School #59, the Dr. Charles R. Drew Science Magnet**, that will promote the partnership between out-of-school time program providers, school officials and additional stakeholders. The pilot will incorporate both academic support and a large variety of enrichment activities utilizing existing community resources. The Buffalo Public School and the pilot program will share data, fostering improvements based on the data.
- Institutionalize a nationally-recognized assessment tool, **Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)** in conjunction with the **Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI)**, an improvement program that encourages individuals, programs and systems to focus on the quality of the experiences young people have in programs and the training needs of the staff providing the programs.

The goal for the **OST pilot program** is to enroll 100 students. To read the full **OST Business Plan**, visit our website at www.wnywomensfund.org



Youth Board Member Spotlight: Jasmine Coles and Johan Welch

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau

Johan Welch and Jasmine Coles were selected six months ago to be the two youth members on the Erie County Youth Board. Johan, 17, attends Cleveland Hill High School and Jasmine, 17, attends the Oracle Charter School. Johan and Jasmine have many responsibilities in addition to the youth board which include school work, college searching, and running youth led programs. When asked why they wanted to join the Youth Board, the answer was simple, but powerful. Jasmine said, "We don't want to be the teen on the street, we want to be the teen getting people off the street." Being on the Erie County Youth Board has not only helped them become more aware of issues that young people face today but it has also given them a voice when it comes to important issues in their life, like when it comes to being two of the youth pioneers for L.O.L.

Johan and Jasmine met through a youth led group called Leaving Our Legacy, or L.O.L for short. L.O.L is an educational program that focuses on sexuality and sexual health. The members work towards the goal of informing community members about STI's, HIV/AIDS, and teen pregnancy. This group is made up of 25 peer educators who are teenagers, that want to make a difference in the lives of young people living in Buffalo. They believe knowledge is a powerful tool that can be used to address the problems of sexual awareness and sexual health within the Buffalo community. They work alongside local health professionals to create workshops, presentations, and provide support to those who need it. Under the leadership of Jasmine and Johan there have been many great accomplishments which include participating in a health fair, teaming up with Silent Voices, and helping to organize and run the Juneteenth Festival, which happens the third weekend in June. This year both Jasmine and Johan will play a huge role in the festival. The organizers were so impressed with L.O.L. that the group members were given the opportunity to plan the entire youth aspect of the event from start to finish which will include a skit put on about sexual health, a talent show, and a segment called "Teen Talk." Youth have the opportunity to talk to members of the community and offer advice. For more information on the Juneteenth Festival check out the flyer on page 4.

Both of these youth will carry the skills they have learned from the Youth Bureau and L.O.L. wherever they go. They are certainly two of the most impressive youth in Buffalo and demonstrate extraordinary leadership. For more information about L.O.L., visit the Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/LOL-Leaving-Our-Legacy/122694841120585>

Youth Leadership Conference

Youth Board Members Jasmine Coles and Johan Welch

We, the members of the Erie County Youth Board, Johan Welch and Jasmine Coles would like to thank the Erie County Youth Board for sending us to the Youth Leadership Forum in Albany, NY. We were given the opportunity to experience many different things while on this trip, and we attended two different workshops. One of the workshops we attended was on listening, in this workshop we learned how to actively listen to people when they express their problems. The second workshop we attended was conducted by the U.S. Military, this workshop was on teamwork. We also had the opportunity to ask the military questions to gain knowledge on certain topics. Our first day concluded with a talent showcase and a teen dance. This gave us the chance to come together with other teens in New York State that supports a similar cause.

On the second day, we met for breakfast and started off with a ceremony for teens within the bureaus throughout New York State. These teens were nominated for their outstanding job in the outstanding job in the community by their youth bureaus leaders. After that, we headed to the capitol building to meet our local representatives who are Tim Kennedy and Mark Grisanti. This was a great opportunity for us because it gave us the chance to express our feelings about how budget

cuts are going to affect different youth programs throughout New York State. It was important as youth advocates from Leaving Our Legacy to attend this conference. Leaving our Legacy is a youth lead program with a goal to inform the community about HIV/AIDS, STI's and teen pregnancy. The Politian's seemed very interested in what in what we, as the youth had to say about the budget cut situation and its impact on youth programming. Overall we enjoyed the experience, because it allowed us to experience the day to day activities of an elected official. We would like to thank the Erie County Youth Board for sending us. If we had the chance we would love to experience the youth empowerment again.



Grant Writing Tips Part Two

Submitted by Nadia Moore, Program Coordinator at the Erie County Youth Bureau

Each Request For Proposals (RFP) process has its own unique structure. However, many funders request similar information. The following is an example of the most common sections of an RFP and some guidelines that may help you along the way.

Proposal Summary/Executive Summary – a brief one page summary of the problem/need you will address, what you are going to do to address the problem/need, your organization's experience with this type of issue. This is your agency's first impression with the potential funder. Be clear, concise, brief and make your Summary interesting enough that someone will want to read more about your program.

Organization Introduction – describe your agency's mission, goals, vision and/or philosophy. Give specific examples of past, present and future programs that relate to the mission of the funding source and the RFP. You may give examples of other well known funders that support your agency/program.

Problem Statement/Statement of Need – this can be viewed as the needs assessment. When giving details about the need, don't assume the reader knows the problem. Give specific and well supported information. List examples and statistics that supports your view of the need/problem. Make a connection between the problem/need and your program. Demonstrate your agency's knowledge of the issue, targeted population and ability to effectively offer resolutions.

Program Objectives – one of the most important sections in an RFP. Objectives are sometimes confused with program goals. Goals are general, broad and give an overview of the program's purpose. Objectives are specific statements and measurable outcomes. Objectives tell the reader what will be changed because of this program and on what scope. Many RFP's will give you the desired objective. If it does not state a desired objective, be certain that the objectives you choose meet the needs of the funder. Give specific objectives that are clear and measurable. Be certain you include realistic and attainable numbers. For instance, stating that 90% of participants will increase their grades by 10% or 1 letter grade may not be realistic in high at risk youth populations. Be sure your objectives are attainable so your program can show successful changes to the target population.

Program Design – Specific activities performed during participation in the program. A timeline of events/activities may sometimes be useful in this section. A timeline can be both for the planning-implementation phase of the program and a separate one for the timeline of the activities during the program. A schedule of activities may suffice for programs that are not structured in a timeline format. Describe key personnel working directly in the program by title, qualifications and duties. Give information on collaborating partners and/or community support for the program. Most important as you describe the program, be sure to target things you are able to accomplish with the resources available to your program and agency.

Program Monitoring & Evaluation – monitoring and evaluation sections of an RFP process are becoming increasingly more important. Give specific tasks that will be completed to monitor your program. List the task, the personnel responsible for the task and how frequently during the contract (ctd. pg. 9)

Helpful Grant Tips (from page 8)

period the monitoring tasks will be completed. Review your program's objectives and tell the reader what will be evaluated in the program. Leave room to make adjustments in your program as needed by the monitoring and evaluation results. Most importantly, start the evaluation at the beginning of the program.

Future Funding – most funders want to know if there are other funding sources. List information for this program only, unless requested to list all agency funding sources. Give your plans on how your agency will continue with the program after this requested funding is completed. It is not wise to simply state your agency will keep searching for future funding. Have a well developed plan for the program's future.



Program Budget – usually a budget is requested for the program only. Be certain you understand what the funder is looking for. You may have to give cost allocation methods for personnel, office space, utilities, etc. Check with your agency's accountant. Many times this is already prepared on your agency's tax documents. Only list items that match your Program Design section. For example, if you have not mentioned any field trips for participants, you should not list transportation costs to various field trip sites. Check and double check that the budget is mathematically correct throughout.

West Side Community Services, Hidden Gem of the West Side

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau

West Side Community Services has been serving residents on the West Side of Buffalo for over 30 years. The services they provide residents span from after school programs for youth, to senior citizen programming, and everything in-between. West Side Community Services first opened its door to residents in 1974 when a group of concerned citizens got together to offer services to seniors on Massachusetts Avenue. As the community center began to grow in popularity they realized that they would need more space and the location was moved to 161 Vermont Street, where it stands today.

I had the opportunity to meet with Lucy Candelario, the Executive Director of West Side Community Services, to talk about all of the educational and recreational activities available for youth after school. One of the things that Lucy emphasized was that youth love coming to WSCS because of the recreational and game room activities, but the most important thing is that these students go there to learn. As soon as they get to WSCS after school they are given a snack and then head to academic tutoring and homework help. The tutoring is run in collaboration with Upgrade Tutoring and youth are required to attend for at least an hour a day. Tutoring is extremely important because there is overcrowding in Buffalo Public Schools and students are generally not getting the 1 on 1 attention that many of them need. This creates an additional necessity for learning outside the classroom which WSCS provides. (ctd. pg. 10)



Hidden Gem of the West Side (from page 9)

After tutoring and homework is finished there are prevention programs run. There is a huge need for prevention programming in Buffalo, because growing up in a city, many youth are exposed to drugs, and alcohol. Youth who are exposed to these activities are more likely to try them just from being around them. Prevention programming is helpful because it has been found that many youth who engage in illegal behaviors have not developed the appropriate social skills that would allow them to learn how to solve problems or say no to the use of illegal drugs or violence. Prevention programming helps them learn these social skills. Also, some of the youth growing up in Buffalo have been raised in environments where violence is used as a justified way to deal with a situation. Prevention programming teaches youth different ways to deal with situations using nonviolence.

The younger youth (ages 6 to 12) participate in An Apple a Day and Second Step Prevention Programs. An Apple a Day uses literature to build social skills, behaviors, and attitudes that would allow these students to deal with the ongoing pressure of growing up in our society. The Second Step Prevention Program is primarily a violence prevention program that teaches participants behaviors that resolve conflicts without using violence. Youth go through workshops on a variety of topics including empathy training, conflict resolution and interpersonal problem solving. It is through these prevention programs that students who participated are not as likely to use aggressive behavior as a method of problem solving.

For older youth, there is Project Alert. Project Alert is a prevention program that promotes abstinence from substance abuse and sexual involvement. The tune of this program is a little different because it is geared towards an older age group. All of these prevention programs are hugely popular and helpful for youth living in Buffalo.

One of the biggest draws for older youth coming to WSCS is the cultural enrichment activities. Students have the opportunity to learn to play different instruments like the drums or guitar and participate in the center band called "West Side Caribbean Sounds" or they could try their hands, or should I say feet, out in the "Multi-Cultural Step Team".

In addition, WSCS also offers a computer lab where youth are able to access computer programs and internet. Not everyone has computer access at their homes, so this is a great opportunity for kids to be able to connect to the internet. All of the computers available at WSCS were donated to the organization. WSCS also branches out to the schools that their youth attend and are always looking to collaborate with both schools and other youth serving programs. They feel that collaborating is one of the best ways that they can truly help their youth. Year in and year out the same staff comes back to work for WSCS. The staff really loves the work they do. Working for less than 10 years at WSCS is considered a short time; staff often comes on board and stays for many

Erie County Youth Bureau

Youth Board & Liaisons

LaVerne Ampadu
Jeff Bagel
Aniela Baj
David Caywood, Chair
Jasmine Cole
Magdalena De Leon
Max Donatelli
Donald Gernatt
Karen Hargrove
Ronjonette Harrison
Sean Lora-Hetzner
Tanya Hernandez
Cindy Horrigan
Carolynn Hurley
Jillian Gorman-King
Kathleen O'Brien
Mike Randall
Emma Reid
Tony Williams
Johan Welch
Christine Carr, Liaison
Sue Donovan, Liaison
Christine Garmon-Salaam, Liaison
Susan Morisson, Liaison

Erie County Youth Bureau

Staff

David Rust, *Director*
NeCole Ervin, *Senior Fiscal Analyst*
Nadia Moore, *Program Coordinator*
Donna Mertel, *Senior Account Clerk*
Kacey Weafer, *AmeriCorps VISTA*

Erie County Department of Social Services

Carol Dankert, *Commissioner*
Thomas Lillis, *Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services*

What's Going On In Buffalo?

May 3, 5, 10, 12, 17 & 19

EPIC Ready Set Parent Workshops 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at The Belle Center

May 7

Buffalo Gives Back A Fun Family Resource Festival & Giveaway Event 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at The Belle Center

May 13 & 27

Food Bank (9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) & (1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.) at The Belle Center

May 24

-Community Health Worker "Chew and Chat" (brown bag lunch) 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. at The Belle Center

-Key Bank Neighbors Make The Difference Workshop: Keep safe from scams, fraud & financial exploitation

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. AmeriCorps Room at The Belle Center (only 10-12 people will be allowed - first come, first serve basis)

May 27

Food Express Truck with WNY Food Bank & Holy Cross Church 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. outside of Holy Cross Church (*free food for residents in the 14201 area code*)

*If your organization has an event this summer that you would like to add to this section feel free to email Kacey at Kacey.Weaver@erie.gov

Tom Lillis, Deputy Commissioner of Youth Service is Retiring!

Tom Lillis started fresh out of college when he graduated with a Bachelors degree in Psychology in 1974 and earned a job with the City of Buffalo Division for Youth as a youth worker. After receiving his MSW in 1979 he began work at the Child & Adolescent Treatment Center, where he was employed until he began to work for Erie County in 1982. He worked at the Family Court Clinic in Juvenile Custody Department for over 20 years doing forensic reports and supervision. When the Juvenile Justice System began to change, Tom led the reform and helped to develop new programs to fit lead the changes in Juvenile Justice. After 20+ years he left his administrative job to become the Deputy Commissioner of Youth Services in 2008. For the past 30+ years Tom has been a pillar in the Social Services community. When asked why he choose the youth services field, Mr. Lillis said that even as a teenager he had an interest in psychology, and he watched a few documentaries on psychology which sparked his interest even more. For a man who has accomplished so much and did so many amazing things for the youth of Erie County, Mr. Lillis, is very humble. His proudest moment was when the Juvenile Justice Reform started to show improvements and the number of youth put into placement went down. He has done many tremendous things for the Youth Services Division and he has "a lot of confidence in the people who work in the Juvenile Justice and Family Care Departments. I expect them to continue on reform successfully with Dave Rust's help and I feel positively about combining positive youth development with programs that are involved."

The Youth Services Division will miss the leadership and expertise of Mr. Lillis tremendously, and we thank him for more than 30 years of service to the youth in our community!

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Preventionfocus, Inc.

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau

“We don’t do it alone” was one of the first things the Director of Program Services, Giselle Jackman, said when asked how Preventionfocus, Inc. became such a powerful non-profit in the Buffalo area. Preventionfocus, Inc. works with a number of organizations throughout Buffalo to help reduce problem behaviors that lead to substance abuse, compulsive gambling, and other addictions for every age group. The organizations work together to make communities that are built around prevention of negative behaviors. These “communities in coalition” include libraries, churches, health organizations, workplaces, community centers, colleges, public schools and government organizations. They work in conjunction with Preventionfocus to “empower individuals to be healthy, mainly by preventing harmful involvement with alcohol or other substances, or engaging in high risk behavior.”

There are three subdivisions of Preventionfocus; Womanfocus, Prevention Is Primary, and Teenfocus. Womanfocus has been around for 32 years, the goal of Womanfocus is to work with women to help them deal with the ongoing pressures and unrealistic demands that are placed on them in today’s society. Womanfocus operates through workshops, group trainings and special programming directed towards women. The workshops are based off of life skills like self esteem, anger, literacy and the media, relationships, tobacco and alcohol. All activities and workshops are presented in an atmosphere that is cultivated for growth and supportive relationships for women so that they are able to best learn and grow from them.

The second subdivision is Teenfocus. Teenfocus works with youth in grades 7 through 12. The classes are taught during school time and are on topics like alcohol, peer pressure resistance, social skills, and communication. In today’s society there is more pressure than ever for youth to do what their peers are doing, and in many cases they follow along, unsure of what to do. It is through these classes that youth learn and begin to identify with each other and their school which in turn creates a tight knit youth community. These communities allow students to begin to build a connectedness to their school, and it has been shown that youth with a strong bond to their school are more likely to make healthy choices while around substances. One part of Teenfocus is a program called Advantage After School, which runs from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm Monday-Friday. Homework help is available during this time as well as gender specific classes that help teach teens to deal with daily pressures. This after school program gives youth a positive alternative activity during a time of the day where many of these young people would be home alone. Also, reading is an essential part of this after school program. Reading is such an important program component because higher rates of literacy are equated with higher levels of success, so just by reading for a few minutes a day Preventionfocus can help mold these youth into successful students.

The third program that is run by Preventionfocus is called Prevention is Primary. Prevention is Primary has been around for almost twenty years and works to keep children from using drugs or alcohol. This is an in school program that is run for 7-8 weeks for grades K-6. Every topic is taught by certified educators to ensure that the students understand it.

Preventionfocus, Inc. (from page 10)

Kacey Weafer, AmeriCorps VISTA, Erie County Youth Bureau

One goal of Preventionfocus is to make youth feel involved. The goal is for the youth to want to come to school and stay because they want to, not because they have to. It goes back to the “community” feeling that their programs have instilled into many youth going to Buffalo Public Schools. In addition to classes and after school programs that are offered, staff and teachers also work to get parents involved. This outstanding organization has even gone to the lengths of going to town hall meetings in order to help spread the word about what parents can do to help their children.

One area that Womanfocus has found that they are able to help their members with is providing lessons on healthy eating. Preventionfocus has realized that the eating habits of many American families are not what they should be, this is why they created the Supper Club. Through these Supper Club meetings, young people ages 12-18, are taught about nutrition and how to prepare a healthy meal. This program runs for a few hours every week and during these sessions, topics related to nutrition are discussed followed by cooking instruction including how to read recipes and how to measure ingredients. There are also Dinner Groups offered, Dinner Groups are targeted to young mothers up to age 21. The curriculum is designed so these women can provide healthy meals for their young children and themselves. One of the reasons why nutrition and cooking is a focal point for this organization is because families that eat together three or more times a week have been found to have children that do better in school. Also it has been observed that these youth who participate in these dinners are more likely to abstain from drugs or alcohol. Family dinners play a huge role in drug and alcohol prevention because having meals together creates a routine environment of communication and sharing between parents and kids. This open communication can help to create positive conversation about these topics so they can be discussed

One thing that Matt Smith, Executive Director of Preventionfocus, pointed out is prevention really does work. Smith states that when you honor every person with dignity it will help them endure and work through hard times, it is with those ideals that Preventionfocus offers programs that show such an immediate impact for residents of Buffalo.

Below are some links from the Preventionfocus, Inc’s website for parents and teachers that may be helpful in creating awareness.

For Teachers

www.theantidrug.com

www.health.org

www.nida.nih.gov



For Parents

www.drugfreeameria.org

www.talkingwithkids.org/drugs/html

www.ci.holland.mi.us/police/talkingkids.htm

The Youth Bureau Run Down
Erie County Youth Bureau Newsletter
810 East Ferry Street
Buffalo, NY 14211

Directions To The ECYB Website

1. Go to www.erie.gov
2. Click County Departments
3. Click Social Services
4. Click on Youth Bureau and Juvenile Justice/Detention Services
5. Click the Youth Bureau page, if you scroll to the right, you will see the More Information Section

“Serving youth and families through asset development and advocacy, prevention, and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.”



ERIE.GOV | Your information resource from the government of Erie County, New York

COUNTY EXECUTIVE | ELECTED OFFICIALS | COUNTY DEPARTMENTS | LIVING IN ERIE COUNTY | VISITING ERIE COUNTY | GROWING YOUR BUSINESS IN ERIE COUNTY | STATE- & REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Carol Dankert, Commissioner

Assistance | Employment | Legal | Services for Children, Families & Adults | Child Support | Help Guide

[Home](#)

Youth Bureau

Mission: To serve youth and families through asset development and advocacy, prevention, and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.

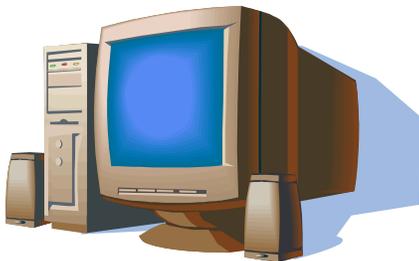
810 East Ferry Street
Buffalo, NY 14211
(P) 716-923-4000
(F) 716-893-7929

Welcome to the website of the Erie County Youth Bureau! The ECYB annually grants funding to over 75 community based organizations providing positive youth development programs throughout Erie County. Funded agencies are selected through a competitive "Request for Proposal" process. Agency's past performance, monitoring, and performance measures are also taken into consideration. In addition, the ECYB enables 11 Municipal Youth Bureaus and 32 local towns and villages to be eligible for New York State aid to run youth service and recreation programs. Youth services are offered in the following funding categories:

- Youth Development/Delinquency Prevention Programs
- Special Delinquency Prevention Programs
- Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs

More information:

- [Youth Board](#)
- [Program Descriptions](#)
- [Year Round Programming - Application Process](#)
- [Summer/Primesime Programming - Application Process](#)
- [A Partnership for Youth Program Descriptions](#)
- [Youth Detention Center Partnerships](#)
- [Results Based Accountability](#)
- [Maps](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Municipal Youth Bureau's, Towns & Villages](#)
- [Forms](#)
- [Darcel Hunter Scholarship](#)



The Erie County Youth Bureau thanks Erika Grande of Jericho Road Ministries, Alicia Banner from the African American Cultural Center, Brigid Doherty of the WNY Women's Fund, Johan Welch and Jasmine Coles of the Erie County Youth Board, Giselle Jackman of Preventionfocus, Inc., Sherman Webb of Leaving Our Legacy and Lucy Candelario of West Side Community Services for their time in helping make this newsletter successful.

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