



Erie County Youth Bureau Chronicle

Spring

Spring 2019

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And...you? We're always seeking dedicated & motivated members to join our Youth Board. Interested? Email Ben Hilligas @ benjamin.hilligas@erie.gov.

Welcome Back Letter From the Editor

Exactly two years to the day after leaving the post of Youth Services Planning Coordinator with the Erie County Youth Bureau, I'm back! I spent the past two years helping families achieve the dream of first-time homeownership with Habitat for Humanity Buffalo. I can look back fondly on my time there and the relationships developed. Yet I am focused on what is ahead as I re-join forces with Ben and Talisa (no, she hasn't left) to help build additional capacity for those whom we serve—you as providers of positive youth development and juvenile delinquency prevention/intervention—and of course the youth whom you and your great organizations serve directly.

Any qualms or questions about returning to this position were quickly laid to rest during my first two weeks on the job. My fellow co-workers have been most accommodating. Equally as important, all of you have been most welcoming since my return. It is nice to feel appreciated. And yet I cannot lose sight of the real reasons why this work is so important. The risks and the challenges that our youth face today are as real as ever. As adults, role models, and community leaders, there has never been a greater opportunity to get in front of these problems and head them off. The funding that we fight for is so important because we know that it provides all of our partnering agencies/local youth bureaus with the tools that they need to provide our communities' young people with the tools that they need to thrive: physical, social, and emotional well-being; cultural awareness and competency; a positive sense of self; and a resilient spirit. Let's do this.

John Kordrupel, Editor

Meet Our AmeriCorps VISTA, Manenfy Tavarez

The Erie County Youth Bureau is thankful for the opportunity to have our second AmeriCorps VISTA in as many years. Manenfy Tavarez has been with us since last Fall. She is helping to build capacity in order to allow the ECYB to do more to serve our funded agencies and their youth. Manenfy will be with us through early August 2019. A native of Bronx, New York, Manenfy came to Buffalo five years ago on a scholarship to Canisius College in order to study psychology and criminal justice. After graduating, she decided that she wanted to give something back to the Buffalo community that has helped to provide her with an education—both personally and professionally. She decided to dedicate a year of her life to serve her country and community through VISTA, specifically with the ECYB. She has enjoyed the opportunity to meet and network with professionals in the fields of youth development and juvenile justice. Her favorite part of the job? The site visits, which for her have been very enriching. Manenfy isn't done learning; she is currently working on a Master's in Criminalities and plans to graduate next year. After that, she is considering a doctorate in mental health psychology.

We are thankful for the privilege of having Manenfy as part of our team, if only for a few more months. Be sure to say "hello" to her the next time you see her. Thanks for all that you do, Manenfy!



Anti-Bullying Task Force Taking On Tough Issues

The Anti-Bullying Task Force is an exciting collaboration between Erie County Juvenile Justice and the Buffalo Public School District. The two entities have collaborated on several occasions in the past. The issue of bullying—prevention and intervention—is a focus of both entities. Convened in late 2018, the Steering Committee meets on a monthly basis, while several sub-committees meet on a bi-monthly basis. Here's what else you should know about this important venture:

The issue of bullying and how to deal with it is near and dear to the stakeholders. This includes the following members of the Steering Committee: Erie County Family Court Judge Brenda Freedman; Eric Jay Rosser, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent for Student Support Services; and North District School Board member and lawyer Hope Jay. Judge Freedman sees cases involving bullying come across her desk on a regular basis. The issue of bullying is a platform issue for BPS Superintendent Kriner Cash.

The task force is comprised of four sub-committees and over 100 members. The sub-committees include: Data & Research; Interventions; Laws & Regulations; and Youth Voice. It's important to mention that the leadership of these sub-committees (as well as the Task Force as a whole) is comprised of prominent experts in many fields. These fields include but are not limited to the juvenile justice system, education, anti-violence, community-based organizations (many of them grassroots), mental health, social services, law enforcement, concerned citizens, parents, and students. Prominent experts leading these efforts include the following: Amanda Nickerson, Director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention at the University at Buffalo; Jamie Ostrov, Ph.D., Professor in UB's Department of Psychology; and Judy Gerber, Chief Attorney with Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo.

The entire Task Force membership will meet next month, with recommendations expected by late Summer. The meeting will comprise over 100 individuals from many fields and will represent a cross-cut of the larger community. A Public Community Meeting & Report of the Anti-Bullying Task Force will convene on May 21st, 2019 from 2:30-4:00pm. The meeting will take place at The Buffalo Museum of Science Main Auditorium. All are welcome to attend! Recommendations from the Task Force are expected to be made public by the end of August 2019. Recommendations will be made to the Buffalo Public School District.

You can (and should) get involved in the effort to address the issue of bullying. Regardless of your profession, there are opportunities for everyone to be a part of the solution to help identify instances of bullying, to reduce these instances and their severity, and to help build resilience in today's youth to give them the tools that they need to stand up to bullying or to avoid it.

F BITES & Chef Bobby Anderson: Transforming Lives through Food

F BITES, which stands for Food Based Interventions w/ Technology, Energy & Science, is a program founded by Chef Bobby Anderson. We are a Work Based Learning Program that works with individuals to address issues from the chronically unemployed to generational poverty and places our graduates of F BITES from ages 16 - 60 in jobs within the local community.

F BITES operates in dozens of schools and community centers around Erie and Niagara County. For several years, the organization has also run programming out of the Erie County Secure Youth Detention Facility, located at 810 East Ferry Street in Buffalo. Chef Bobby and his staff bring an energy and enthusiasm for cooking and for working with young people that is infectious. His passion comes through clearly throughout a hands-on lesson.

F BITES operates several programs, each with a specific focus and population to be served. The *Re-Entry* program is geared toward those incarcerated, with the goal of giving these folks both hard and soft skills that they can use upon re-entering the community. *Saturday Academy* is operated every Saturday morning during the school year at schools around Buffalo. The *Workforce Development Program* is described in detail below. *After School Enrichment* takes place at schools and community centers and is geared toward youth in grades 5-12. It features hands-on learning, peer support, and guest speakers.

Students who experience the Workforce Development Program benefit in the following ways: gain general knowledge about the culinary industry, including how to set up a table and serve customers in a professional manner; develop advanced culinary skills that will help to set them apart from their peers; soft skills and work ethic; career planning and management, including exposure to a real-world working environment; and the benefits of being mentored by a seasoned culinary professional.

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ECYB Mission: “To serve youth and families through support of positive youth development programs and juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.”



www2.erie.gov/socialservices or Google
“Erie County Youth Bureau”

UPCOMING DEADLINES/COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- **Wednesday, May 15th:** 2020 YDP RFP’s due by 5:00pm @ 810 East Ferry Street, Buffalo, NY 14211
- **Tuesday, May 21st:** Public Community Meeting & Report of the Anti-Bullying Task Force @ Buffalo Museum of Science—Main Auditorium (1020 Humboldt Pkwy., Buffalo, NY 14211), 2:30-4:00pm
- **Wednesday, June 5th:** Interviews for 2020 YDP funding @ True Bethel Church, 1:30–7:30pm
- **Wednesday, June 24th:** 2019 Primetime programs commence!

We welcome submissions of community events at any time, so please consider sending us notices of upcoming events that you believe might be of interest to your colleagues. Thank you!