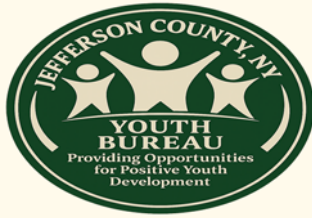


# Annual Report 2024-2025

Jefferson County Youth Bureau

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



# JEFFERSON COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU

## Annual Report October 1, 2024—September 30, 2025

During 2024-2025 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  
Karen Freeman, District 7,  
Tina Bartlett-Bearup, District 4  
Corey Grant, District 14  
Christopher Bolio, District 10  
Francis Calarco, District 12  
Robert Cantwell, District 1

#### **Youth Advisory Board**

Brooke Roes, Watertown, Chair  
Joe Wargo, Watertown, Vice Chair  
Anita Seefried-Brown, Watertown, Secretary  
Robert Cantwell, III, Liaison with Board of Legislators  
Scott Weller, Carthage  
Sharon Chaple, Watertown  
Mary Mathewson, Watertown  
Allyson Wargo, Watertown (youth member)  
Veronica Neff, Felts Mills (youth member)  
Neva Bettinger, Henderson (youth member)  
Monica Makuch, Brownville  
Natalie Wesseldine, Watertown (youth member)  
Kirsten Widrick, Chaumont (youth member)  
Robin Banks, Watertown  
Katie Ramus, Adams  
Ammrose Souva, Watertown  
Matthew Tucker, Watertown  
Erin Fazio, Watertown  
Caroline Feasler, Evans Mills  
Kael Hoselton, Watertown  
Hayley Richards, Watertown

Ryan Piche, County Administrator  
Dylan Soper, Deputy County Administrator  
Karen Marcum, Commissioner, DSS  
Nicholle Lacey, 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

### 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: Jefferson-Lewis Childcare Project; NCPPC Family Opportunity Center; House of the Good Shepard; The Workplace; Planned Parenthood of NNY; Juvenile Delinquency, Probation; Community School Liaison Program; Access-VR.

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

24 girls & 17 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.

2024-2025

### *Youth Recognition Awards*

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

Promising Ability In Youth Services  
Eleshia Bennett

Youth Overcoming Odds  
Jesiyah Metcalf

Youth Leadership  
Joseph Canzonier

Outstanding Adult Youth Worker  
Julie Houghmaster

It Takes A Community  
Kayla Schultz  
Marsha Gibbons



## Youth Bureau Funded Programs



### Funding

**\$208,629** in funding from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to support:

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

### The Young People

Programs reported 3,578 children and youth attending Youth Bureau funded programs.

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

#### Gender

*40% were boys, 59% were girls  
1% Transgender/Other*

#### Ethnicity

*83% Caucasian ~ 8% African-American ~ 2% Hispanic ~ 6% Two or more races ~ 1% Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian*

#### Ages

*269 ~ under five years old  
958 ~ five to nine years old  
1,525 ~ ten to fourteen years old  
713 ~ fifteen to seventeen years old  
113 ~ eighteen to twenty years old  
0 ~ twenty one and up*

### Youth Development

#### *Hearts For Youth*

*(Hearts For Youth Inc. \$19,377)*

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.



#### *Inclusive Youth Sports*

*(YMCA \$6,920)*

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.

#### *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 \$30,000)***

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.

***Salvation Army***  
***Kids Club (\$8000)***

This program is focused on citizenship and civic engagements as the priority. All of the activities will take place at the Salvation Army Corps building with the exception of community service projects. They will be focusing on the youth drop-in program, camp and summer activities.

***Recreation Scholarships***  
***(Youth Bureau \$17,000)***

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 Team Sports



### **Thousand Islands Youth Hockey** ( \$28,787)

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.



### **Xtreme Elite Cheer of NNY** (\$7,000)

Xtreme Elite Cheer of Northern New York, empowers youth of all backgrounds through inclusive cheerleading .

The goal is to inspire confidence and success, equipping young athletes to reach their full potential. As a recreational program, they compete at skill levels appropriate for the athletes they coach.

They hold skill assessments to ensure their athletes are on a team that showcases their abilities. Cheerleading is for everybody, and financial hardship should not prevent youth from being able to participate.



### **Little Lions Soccer Club** (\$3,500)

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.



### **Alexandria Bay Jr. Shooting Sport** (American Legion– Post 904—\$14,000)

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.

### **Blue Sharks Swim Team** (YMCA-\$8,460)

The YMCA Blue Sharks Swim Team creates an inclusive, supportive, and accessible environment, empowering underserved youth with physical, developmental, and learning disabilities, as well as those with communication, emotional, behavioral disorders, and chronic health conditions. Coaches receive training to address individual needs and foster a safe, welcoming environment. The program promotes relaxation, mindfulness, and stress reduction, encouraging team bonding and confidence-building activities.



# Youth Sports And Education Opportunity Funding



## CT Sports of New York (\$10,000)

These programs (Softball, Basketball, Baseball, Soccer, Sports Official, etc.) are dedicated to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of youth participants through a

comprehensive approach of clear and firm policies and procedures aimed at providing a safe environment for children



giving them the ability to be involved with physical activity, gaining access to health services when needed, and having the opportunity to excel physically and mentally. Camps and clinics are put on by college and high school coaches.



## Encompass Recreational Programs (\$14,223)

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 \$5,000)

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.