

Allegheny County Youth Bureau: Annual Report 2014

During 2014 the Office of Children and Family Services allocated \$50,679 to Allegheny County for youth programs. For the first time, money was received in one allocation, with funding to be determined by the counties. All agencies and town/village recreation programs were allocated funding with an increase from the 2013 funding levels. Over 12,000 youth participated in 22 programs funded through the Youth Bureau.

The Youth Bureau continues to actively collaborate with governmental, civic and not-for-profit agencies throughout Allegheny County in order to meet the needs of all County youth. For example, as a member of the Partners for Prevention in Allegheny County (PPAC) and several of its sub-committees, this agency continues to work with others to address identified gaps in services to our county youth and families. Significant time and effort is spent on initiatives to reduce risk factors leading to alcohol/substance use, teen pregnancy, violence and school dropout. The PPAC collaborative effort is working to create a healthy environment for our youth. The Director continues to be a member of many boards and committees, including the Youth Court Board, Traffic Safety Board, and PPAC which address needs of our youth.

The Bureau continues to work with other agencies to provide assistance to troubled youth so that they may successfully remain in the community. Specifically, funding for these "high risk" youth is granted to programs such as Allegheny Council Week of Alternatives, Mental Health Association Compeer Program and Literacy West Success Tracks. Through these programs, targeted youth are given jobs, mentored, learn life skills and earn their GEDs, and are held responsible for their actions while earning a second chance to follow a law-abiding life.

The Youth Bureau continues to work closely with the various towns and villages which administer youth recreation programs. These contacts are valuable for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and also for networking and sharing information between and among youth organizations. Town and Village recreation programs continue to be utilized heavily, with many programs adding components such as nutrition and reading programs. Several Towns and Villages have waived their allocations to the Rushford Lake Beach due to the limited reimbursement amount and lack of resources to maintain a summer program.

In September of 2009 the Youth Bureau assumed the responsibilities of the Juvenile Arson Program. Seven referrals were received this year. Three referrals from Probation for an arson incident were closed with no action. One referral from Child Protective Services was closed with no action. Two referrals from the Fire Service were closed due to lack of cooperation by the families. The final referral was made by a family member and closed due to a refusal to cooperate.

The Allegheny County Youth Bureau is committed to encouraging the development of innovative youth programs which are based upon the principles of Youth Development.

Linda Edwards, Director
Allegheny County Youth Bureau