



# TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH BUREAU

# 2019 - 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2019/2020, the Town of Southampton Youth Bureau, along with the Southampton Youth Board and the Youth Advisory Committee, put forth a number of initiatives and programs to address their charge to work collaboratively with public and private agencies, religious and social institutions, and local youth and families within the community to promote the moral, physical, mental and social well-being of the youth of Southampton, to work to strengthen family life and to enable all youth to attain their full potential. The following is a summary of the work accomplished from September 2019 through August 2020. This includes the period of the coronavirus pandemic shutdown (March through June), which forced radical changes in service needs as well as services delivered.

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**SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH BUREAU**

**@SOUTHAMPTONYB**

# YOUTH BOARD INITIATIVES & ACTIVITIES

*The Youth Board is a group of youth and adult stakeholders who are charged with advising the Town Board and the Youth Bureau on local issues affecting children, youth, and families.*

**Vaping Education** - In response to sharp increases in the use of vape products among local school students, The Youth Board, with assistance from the Town's CRC, developed informational content on the Youth Bureau's web page for teens and for parents on the facts about vape products, how vaping affects the body and the brain, and how to stop vaping.



**Anti-Bullying and Harassment Education** - In October 2019, the Youth Board and Councilwoman Scamera brought together youth and staff from each of the middle schools in the Township to be part of a Bullying Prevention Summit, to learn more about the impact of bullying on youth and strategies to prevent it from happening. It was a well-attended session (**52 youth and 9 adult participants**) held at the Muses at the Greek Orthodox Church, with presentations by educators from Hampton Bays High School Peer Educators, HUGS, Inc. and Imaginarium Theater.

**Fundraising for Scholarships** - In order to provide all youth in Southampton the opportunity to be part of youth development programs throughout the Township, regardless of cost, and to access funding sources that are only available to non-profit organizations, the Youth Board finalized the formation of Friends of Southampton Town Youth, a 501c3 corporation in the State of New York, a private organization that would be able to meet both these goals.

# YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE INITIATIVES & ACTIVITIES



**Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)** is a group of **52 high school aged youth** from across the Township that assist the Youth Bureau in developing programs and services, and perform community service projects that support local residents. Meetings, held every other week, are structured around group work and peer leadership training. Volunteer projects are chosen monthly by the committee to assist other not for profits or people in the community. Some community projects recently completed include: set up and helping out at events such as the Good Ground Park Halloween Event, cleaning leaves during the fall for local senior citizens, and participating in an annual statewide Youth Leadership Conference in Albany while meeting with our local legislators. The Youth Advisory Committee also worked with the Watermill Center, offering participants different artistic perspectives in self-expression. The Retreat educated youth on dating violence and healthy communication. The New York National Guard discussed the harmful effects of vaping, while the Tobacco Action Coalition discussed marketing strategies aimed at youth to sell harmful tobacco products. Other agencies YAC worked with include the East End Food Institute and Human Understanding and Growth Services (HUGS).



# YOUTH BUREAU SERVICES & PROGRAMS

## **2019-2020 Highlights: Pandemic Pause Response (March through June) -**

When the State initiated the Pause in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Youth Bureau quickly restructured our programs for youth and families to meet the challenges, and requirements, posed by the pandemic. Below is a summary of the work that was done during the Pause period:

**Food Insecurity** - recognizing immediately the food insecurity that arose when schools closed and families lost their sources of income, the Youth Bureau began distributing bags of healthy snacks (Grab and Go Healthy Snack Kits), one per child, directly to families. There was a tremendous response from the community, and we distributed several hundred bags over the course of one week.

# YOUTH BUREAU SERVICES & PROGRAMS (CONT.)

Unfortunately, because of concern of possibly transmitting coronavirus through the distribution process, we had to end this valuable program. A listing of how to access free food resources throughout the Township was compiled and distributed widely.

**Information & Referral, Counseling** - continued, and increased, throughout the Pause via telephone and video sessions, reflecting the heightened level of anxiety, depression, social isolation and family strife experienced by local youth.

## Programs:

**Youth Advisory Committee** - YAC continued to meet virtually through the pause, and hosted a few game nights for their peers

**Girls Group** - group for 6th to 8th grade girls continued weekly meetings and enrolled new participants

**Youth & Government** - continued in a completely virtual format

**TLC** - karate classes continued weekly through April and May

**Chess Club** - weekly classes continued virtually via Zoom

**Karate** - classes continued via zoom and were available 3 days per week

**Amerikids** - weekly sessions held via Google classroom

## Social Media:



**Creative Arts Contest** - 8 youth submitted 10 art pieces related to the environment through Instagram

**Hamptons Got Talent Showcase** - Performance videos were featured weekly through April and May

**Educational Campaign** - Daily Facebook and Instagram posts featuring self-care, health and safety information, fitness, and virtual opportunities for youth. COVID time capsule kits for youth were created and made available for pick up at the Flanders Youth Center.

**YouTube** - staff made and posted instructional videos, including STEM, fitness and cooking topics



# YOUTH BUREAU SERVICES & PROGRAMS (CONT.)

**Ongoing Youth Development Programs** - activities with a focus on improving social and emotional health, life skills, and community service, involving **147 youth**. Because COVID-19 arose halfway through the year, the second 6 months of programs were significantly limited in participation to allow for social distancing and to protect the health and safety of youth and staff involved.



• **Act TWO drama troupe** - this group of **12 teens** meet weekly to do research on issues important to them, develop educational skits, and rehearse them. They conducted three community performances on the topics of healthy relationships, making good choices, and intergenerational similarities.

• **Teen Leaders Care** - this program is for youth with Autism and other developmental disabilities. It helps to integrate these children into community activities through the support of their peers. TLC served **17 youth** and involved **6 peer volunteers** in adapted karate classes.

# YOUTH BUREAU SERVICES & PROGRAMS (CONT.)

- **Youth Court** - is a peer restorative justice program for first time and/or non-violent offenders. This program year **81 teen volunteers** handled 13 trials; an additional 6 were referred back to the referring agency during the Pause period, when court closed. One hundred (100%) percent of the respondents successfully completed their dispositions. Referrals came from Southampton Town and Village Police Departments, Suffolk County Probation, and Hampton Bays High School. One third of the referred cases were substance misuse violations; other offenses included harassment, petit larceny, false reporting, unlawful surveillance, and underage drinking, among others.

- **Youth and Government** - entering its second year as a Youth Bureau offering, this program involved **10 participants** in a statewide mock legislature program. Youth work in groups to draft proposed legislation to be considered on the state level. In the spring, these bills are presented to all participants in New York State, where they are debated and voted on. Five members participated in the virtual state wide conference in the first week of May; of these 5, 2 made it to the final round and their bill was passed.



- **Broader Horizons** - includes a seasonal employment program, and work in the Flanders Farm Market. These programs employed **11 youth** in jobs, including comprehensive job readiness training.

**Mental Health Support** - providing individual, group, and family services to support residents facing significant life challenges, including Information and Referral, Case Management, Counseling, Crisis Intervention, and, through Family Service League, Clinical Services. A support group for young adolescent girls was started in this program year and served **15 youth** in weekly meetings. **Over 50 youth and families** were served by Youth Bureau staff in this program year. **Approximately 400 Town residents** were served by Family Service League.

**Alternative Activities** - consist of after school/youth center programming during the school year, monthly events, and summer activity programming that provide safe spaces for youth to spend time, meet youth from other communities, learn health/wellness and skills for taking care of yourself, develop skills such as chess, karate, and performing arts, have new experiences, and just blow off steam. In the 2019/2020 year, these programs served **645 youth** during the school year and **187 youth** in summer activities.



**Community Involvement** - engaging with service providers, community organizations, surrounding Townships, and the public, the Youth Bureau works to create a community where children and youth can thrive. These collaborative activities include the Long Island Association of New York State Youth Bureaus, the New York State Youth Court Coalition, the Sheriff's Youth and Justice Task Force, Southampton UFSD Health and Wellness Committee, Eastern Suffolk BOCES Literacy Zone project, the East End Mental Health Awareness Initiative, and the Teen Assessment Project Steering Committee.



The Youth Bureau continued to play a critical role in three different community driven Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions, two of which are funded by SAMHSA, and a third that is preparing to seek the same funding. The three communities actively pursuing prevention of substance misuse among youth are Sag Harbor, the greater Riverhead area, and the greater Westhampton area. In a related effort, the Youth Bureau assumed a co-leadership role with the newly formed Southampton Town Addiction and Recovery Committee, whose efforts center around substance use disorder awareness and community education. The Youth Bureau also continued to lead the East End Partnership for Youth, which focuses on education and training activities with youth and those who work with youth. A particular focus of this group is child and adolescent mental health prevention and treatment services.