



TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH BUREAU

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2023, the Town of Southampton Youth Bureau put forth a number of initiatives and programs addressing our mission of supporting local youth and families through empowerment, total health and well-being and developing life skills. This was accomplished by our individual work with youth and families and collaboratively through public-private agencies, religious organizations, and social institutions. 1,066 youth participated in 34 Youth Bureau programs which included workshops, weekly skill building activities, and special events. The following is a summary of the work accomplished in 2023.

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SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH BUREAU

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PROGRAM OFFERINGS AT THE FLANDERS YOUTH CENTER AND SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH SERVICES (SYS)

The Youth Bureau expanded after school programming at the Flanders Community Center and Southampton Youth Services for elementary age children.



In 2023, the Youth Bureau introduced a STEAM and literacy program for youth attending the Kids Club program at Southampton Youth Services (SYS). Including a STEAM and literacy component to Kids Club gave youth a structured environment which promoted skill building and improved behavior management and engagement. The Youth Bureau provided five staff through 2023 to support the Kids Club program at SYS.



At the Flanders Youth Center, the Youth Bureau increased after school programs to three days a week. Riverhead School District agreed to transport youth at dismissal from Phillips Ave School to the Flanders Youth Center so that the Youth Bureau could provide after school care for families in the community. Elementary after school care is often very expensive and difficult to arrange, specifically for families on a tight budget. The reprieve provided through the Youth Bureau gives parents an opportunity to finish their workday and pick up their children by 6:00pm. There is no other service like this provided in the Flanders, Riverside, and Northampton Community. With support, the Youth Bureau hopes to expand to a five day a week program in September 2024.

New programs introduced at the Flanders Youth Center this year include:

No Contact Boxing Club - While youth are participating in this program, they learn confidence, discipline, focus, and socialization, in addition to self-defense and fitness.

2Rs4Fun is a new collateral connection with East End Arts. 2Rs4Fun is a literacy program where 3rd and 4th graders are matched one to one with adult mentors. Everyone is assigned a novel to read which youth and adults discuss between them. Creative writing is also used to summarize the story and explore other stories they may think of. This mentoring program helps youth gain communication, reading and writing skills, and builds confidence.

This year, the Youth Bureau also collaborated with the Peconic Ballet Foundation, providing professional dance instruction at the Flanders Youth Center. Dance with Project LEAP helped students build confidence, self-expression, communication, and creativity through hip-hop and ballet.

Other programs we have continued to build on at the Flanders Youth Center include Homework Help, Chess, STEAM activities, and an introduction to culinary arts. **183 youth participated** in our programs at the Flanders Youth Center in 2023; a substantial increase from previous years. We currently have reached enrollment capacity and have created waiting lists for most of our programs at the Flanders Youth Center.

The Youth Bureau was also able to secure additional funding through a Sports Grant offered through New York State. \$8,000 was used for the purchase of a Gaga Ball Pit and Funnel Ball equipment for use at the Flanders Community Center. Our goal is to seek additional funding in 2024 to continue adding outdoor activities for youth.



COMMUNITY SERVICE & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Youth Bureau has continued to build capacity in our teen middle school and high school skill building and community service programs. Enrollment in Youth Advisory Committee, Teen Views, and Youth Court have increased substantially from previous years. After taking a brief hiatus, the Youth Bureau reintroduced Youth and Government under the guidance of Councilman Tommy John Schiavoni and partnered with the Southampton Cultural Center to provide support to our Teen Views program and Teen Entrepreneurs program.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (CONT.)



Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is a group of students from across the Township that assists the Youth Bureau in developing programs and services, and perform community service projects that are designed to support local residents and/or other non-profits. This past year **77 middle and high school youth participated** in this program. The Youth Advisory Committee partnered with the Senior Services division by hosting a Pancake Breakfast to raise money for local youth causes. The event was very successful with more than 100 individuals from the community in attendance. YAC also participated in various community clean ups and raked leaves for senior citizens in coordination with the Highway Department, along with constructing new flower beds for the community garden at the Flanders

Community Center. YAC also attended a leadership workshop at a statewide youth conference in Albany, and contributed many hours providing support to special events sponsored by the Youth Bureau throughout the year.



In **Teen Views** students meet weekly to create credible news stories that are filmed and produced for local television. In this program students learn how to research issues pertinent to youth in Southampton Town. Through listening to professionals, learning to interview, filming and editing video, participants develop the ability to differentiate between infotainment, opinion, and fact. They also learn bias and empathy by listening to other people's stories. Through a collaboration with the Southampton Cultural Center, students are able to record and edit video content in a professional film studio. In 2023, students had the privilege of interviewing a holocaust survivor and participate in a meaningful discussion about her life experiences. Students also worked on stories regarding the

relationship between land stewardship and the Town's Community Preservation Fund, and the introduction of a new program called Teen Entrepreneurs.



Teen Entrepreneurs was a new program introduced with collaboration from the Southampton Cultural Center and Hampton Youth Performing Arts in October & November 2023. Youth worked with an experienced business coach to create and develop an original product or service to sell. At the end of the program, students were able to sell their product at a culminating market and sale which took place in December 2023. In 2024, the Youth Bureau has plans to grow this program with assistance from the Southampton Cultural Center and Rogers Memorial Library.



Youth and Government is a program sponsored by the New York State YMCA that was reintroduced in the Youth Bureau's program offerings in 2023. High School students practice experiential civic engagement and learn about the democratic process in this program. With the help of Councilman Tommy John Schiavoni, youth learn how to write their own bill in proper format and discuss and debate issues that affect citizens of New York State. In March 2024, youth will be given the chance to deliberate their proposed bills in the chambers of the NYS Legislature at a state conference in Albany.



Youth Court is a peer restorative justice program for first time and non-violent offenders. In 2023, **156 teen volunteers** handled approximately 12 trials. Referrals were made by Southampton Town and Village Police Departments, Suffolk County Probation, and Hampton Bays High School. Referred cases included substance misuse violations, harassment, petit larceny, trespassing, and graffiti among others.



Broader Horizons is a seasonal program that offers summer employment and job training for teens ages 14 - 17 with little or no experience. **15 student interns** were placed in various town departments, and local non-profits. Interns also gained over 14 hours of job skills, career exploration, and money management training at Southampton Town Hall.

SPECIAL EVENTS



The Youth Bureau provided many special events throughout the year designed to provide healthy and fun alternatives during free, unstructured, and high-risk times. In 2023, the Youth Bureau sponsored several activities such as a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament, Extreme Rec Day, Glow Recreation Night, field trips to local amusement parks and attractions, basketball clinics, and affordable summer enrichment programs. **Over 403 youth participated** in these programs.

We also provided several opportunities for youth to express and showcase their creativity by hosting four Open Mic Nights at various local establishments such as Hampton Coffee Company, Nice Place Coffee, and Good Ground Park, a Creative Arts Contest and Exhibition which showcased local youth's interpretation of Hope & Recovery, and sponsored the 20th Anniversary Battle of the Bands at Ponquogue Beach. **Over 277 youth participated** in these activities.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES

The Youth Bureau provided 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. We also have signed agreements with SUNY Stony Brook, Adelphi University, and Fordham University accepting Social Work interns to supervise and train. These students have been very helpful in keeping up with demand for crisis evaluation and counseling for youth and families in Southampton Town.



Community Partnerships - In conjunction with the East End Partnership for Youth, the Youth Bureau helped organize and plan the annual East End Youth Leadership Summit at Suffolk County Community College. **85 youth** from eight local school districts participated in this year's summit which brought together youth and community leaders for a day of unity, education, and awareness through the exploration of issues affecting teen lives in our community. Workshops included presenters from HUGS, Inc., Long Island Prevention Resource Center at Family Service League, Riverhead CAP, Southampton Youth Bureau, and The Retreat.

The Youth Bureau also administered the Teen Assessment Project in high schools and middle schools in seven districts in December 2023 in conjunction with Stony Brook University. The project is a self-administered survey that asks youth about their lifestyles, their engagement in risk behaviors, and the risk and protective factors that affect their decision making. Stony Brook University's School of Social Welfare provided technical assistance, did much of the data analysis, and wrote the initial report draft. The findings will be available on the Youth Bureau's website at www.southamptontownny.gov/youthbureau.

2023 YOUTH BUREAU ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

Tracy Kolsin, LCSW who previously served as Assistant Director of Youth Bureau, was appointed to serve a new role as Youth Bureau Director in May 2023. Tracy has been with the Youth Bureau for over 20 years and oversees the overall program development, day to day operations, and budget. Tracy also provides clinical supervision of youth counselors and social work interns.

Peter Strecker who most recently served as Community Relations Specialist, was appointed in July 2023 to serve in a new role as Assistant Director of Youth Bureau. Peter has been with the Youth Bureau for over 10 years, eight of which were in full-time roles. Peter is responsible for managing publicity and community outreach operations along with providing program support, and supervision. Peter also co-facilitates the Youth Advisory Committee and Youth & Government programs, along with planning special events.

Xiomara Arango, MSW was a previous social work intern at the Youth Bureau and was upgraded as a Bilingual Youth Counselor in March 2022. Xiomara is responsible for providing individual and family counseling services, assessment and case management. Xiomara also provides youth center program support.

Cara Conklin-Wingfield was appointed full-time in July 2023 and was most recently upgraded to Youth Services Specialist. Cara is responsible for publicity distribution, coordinating the Teen Views program, providing program support at Kids Club, and handling incoming program registrations.

Justin Lettieri, LMSW was also a previous social work intern at the Youth Bureau. Justin was appointed in November 2023 as a Youth Counselor to coordinate the Youth Court program, summer enrichment program and STEAM program, and provide individual and family counseling services, assessment, and case management when needed.

The Youth Bureau is excited to continue offering the broad range of services and activities as outlined in this report. Our goal for 2024 is to not only continue these initiatives, but expand our operations with additional support so that we can assist young people in our township with the ability to achieve their full potential at school, work, and beyond.