



BETHLEHEM YOUTH COURT

2015 Annual Report

The power of positive peer pressure.
Utilizing peer led sentencing hearings to give youth a second chance.

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Bethlehem Youth Court

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Board of Directors

Co-Chairpersons

Theresa L. Egan, *Deputy Commissioner for Safety, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles*

Thomas Spina Jr., *Assistant U.S. Attorney*

Secretary

Jennifer Miller, *Albany County Probation Supervisor*

Treasurer

Maureen McLeod, PhD, *Sage Colleges Professor*

Ex-Officio Member

Hon. John Clarkson, *Bethlehem Town Supervisor*

Members

Dave Doemel, *Administrative Dean, Bethlehem Central High School*

Adam Katz, *Assistant U.S. Attorney*

Jennifer Kilcoyne, *President, Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce*

Anthony Malizia, *Administrative Dean, Bethlehem Central High School*

Nancy Maurer, *Director, Field Placement Programs, Albany Law School*

Nick Petraccione, *BCSD Supervisor for Social Studies and Business Education*

Gene Primomo, *Assistant Federal Defender*

Pamela Clark Robbins, *CEO, Policy Research Associates*

Julie Sasso, *Bethlehem Town Board Member*

Michael Whiteley, *Detective, Bethlehem Police Department*

Executive Director

Katrina Charland

End of Year Report

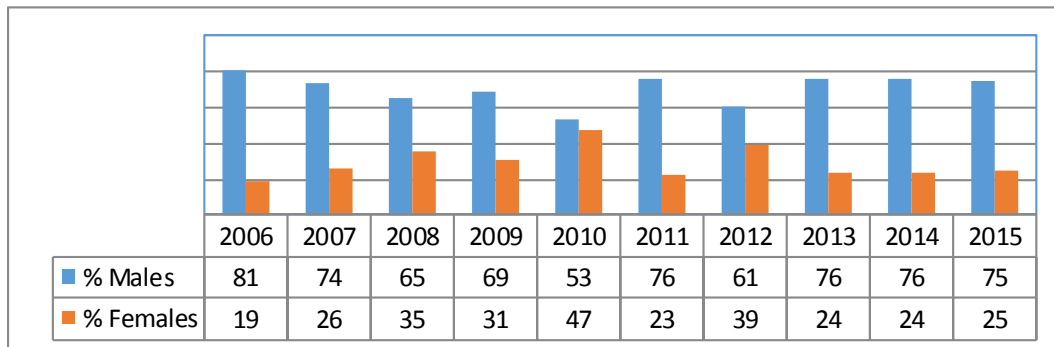
Offender Statistics

Bethlehem Youth Court (BYC) had a rather slow year in 2015, holding 12 youth court hearings and handling 18 different charges. It is important to note that BYC was on a hiatus from the end of August into November while the Director was on leave. Additionally, the trend across New York State is declining numbers of juvenile and youth arrests.

The most common charge heard in Youth Court in 2015 was Unlawful Possession of Marijuana (39%) followed by traffic infractions (22%). Unlawful Possession of Marijuana (UPM) has consistently been one of the most common offenses handled in Youth Court. While Youth Court has handled traffic infractions in connection with a criminal charge or offense for years, 2015 was the first year that a significant number of traffic referrals were handled. Typically these cases are initiated by a traffic related stop, for example having a light out, which then lead to an additional charge, such as Unlawful Possession of Marijuana. Respondents who have traffic tickets, particularly moving violations, stand to benefit from participation in Youth Court in particular because a successful disposition will take care of all DMV reporting matters, which means there are no points, no fines, and no court fees.

The successful completion rate for 2015 was 100%, which means that every participant completed all of their Youth Court requirements and received a full seal on their case. Bethlehem Youth Court boasts an overall 96% success rate over the past several years.

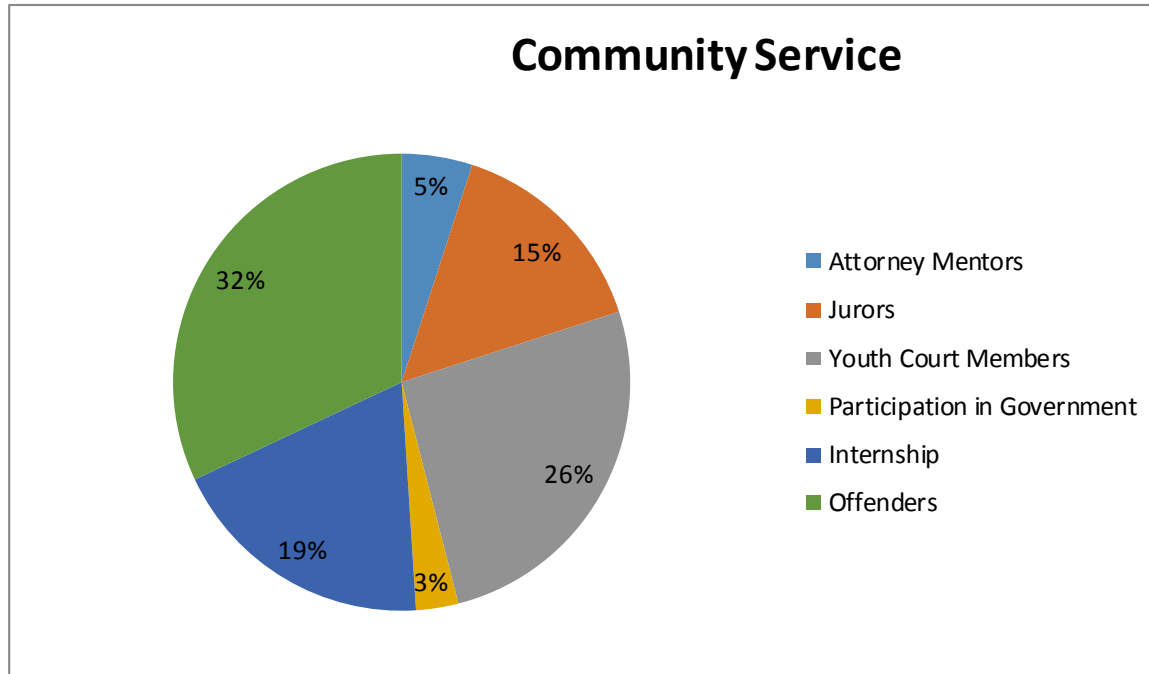
The average age of offenders was 17, which is fairly consistent with previous years. The percentage of male participants (75%) and females (25%) remained very similar to recent past years with both 2014 and 2013 having 74% males and 24% females.



Community Service

Bethlehem Youth Court oversaw the completion of 240 sentenced hours of community service in 2015, with an additional 15 jury duties being performed, for a grand total of 255 hours of community service being completed by offenders alone. When Youth Court volunteers' time is taken into consideration, about 785 hours of service to the community were performed all together. There were 19 different community service sites in and around the Town of Bethlehem and the Capital Region in 2015. The average number of hours sentenced per offender was 20, which is less than last year's average of 28, but more consistent with 2013 (average 20 hours) and 2012 (average 22).

It is also important to note the assistance of an undergraduate intern, Korrinne Newman, who was a previous volunteer with Oswego City Youth Court. Korrinne completed a 150 hour internship consisting primarily of overseeing the completion of community service hours by offenders. She also assisted with trainings, intake appointments and Youth Court hearings.



Board Members

Connie Mayer, who represented Albany Law School, stepped down in 2015 due to consistent scheduling conflicts with our regularly scheduled board meetings. Despite her board member resignation, she continues to volunteer as an Attorney Mentor and with training endeavors. Her vacancy was filled by Nancy Maurer, Director of Field Placement Programs at Albany Law School.

Youth Court Members

In May of 2015, Bethlehem Youth Court hosted a joint Law Day Celebration and Induction Ceremony. The event was very well attended and featured a keynote address delivered by US District Court Judge Mae D'Agostino. In all, 15 high school aged students were sworn in as newly trained volunteer members. In addition to the induction ceremony, the third annual Judge Jordan Memorial Award scholarship competition was held. This scholarship was made possible by contributions from the Bethlehem Police Supervisors' Association and the Police Benevolent Association. Five students participated by presenting oral arguments to a panel of judges. The first place scholarship in the amount of \$750 went to Kieran Taylor, a senior at Doane Stuart. Second place, \$250, was awarded to Laura Hooper, a graduating senior from Bethlehem Central High School.

In addition to the regular training program in the spring, BYC hosted a retraining/tribunal model training for current members in December of 2015. Of the 36 trained volunteers, 17 participated in the elective tribunal model training. This alternative style training was held in preparation for a Truancy Pilot Program.

Financial

The Town of Bethlehem continued to support Bethlehem Youth Court with a budget line item in the amount of \$30,000 in 2015, which is very consistent with past years. BYC requested a slight increase to \$35,000 for fiscal year 2016, which was approved. The Town's financial support continues to be a vital component to the success of the program.

In addition to Town funding, BYC received financial support from the New York Bar Foundation through the Judge Judith S. Kay Youth Court Fund, the Stewarts Holiday Match, and from donations made by community members in response to our annual letter campaign and through the State Employee Federated Appeal (SEFA) and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Association of New York State Youth Court (ANYSYC)

The Director continued to serve in the position of Co-President of the ANYSYC until August of 2015, at which time she stepped down due to family obligations and time constraints. Co-President Dawn Metott of Oswego, also stepped down in August and Claire McKeon of the Town of Babylon Youth Court became the new President of the ANYSYC. The Director continues to participate in regular ANYSYC activities, conference calls, and is currently an Advisory Board Member.



Future

Despite having a slow year, the future of BYC looks bright with ample opportunities to grow and adapt to the community's changing needs. For example, 2016 will see the implementation of a Truancy Pilot Program. The school district has identified the need for intervention in truancy cases and BYC is responding by creating a special program to help address the issue of truancy and help students with attendance problems get back on track.

Additionally, BYC acknowledges changing patterns in drug use, particularly the increased use of prescription drugs and other lower level narcotics, especially for first time users. Marijuana has typically been seen as the most popular gateway drug; the drug that most users start with. However, in recent years more and more drug abusers are starting with prescription drugs, which are easily accessible but very dangerous. BYC has expanded its parameters to include the acceptance of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance cases, particularly very minor cases, with the intention of having a positive intervention at an early stage of drug use and hopefully prevent the youth from going on to use more dangerous drugs in the future.

BYC has been, and will remain, cognizant of the community's evolving needs and will continue to seek ways to assist wherever possible.

Comprehensive Statistics 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Breakdown	
Total # of cases	34	43	23	37	25	12	Total:	174
% of successful cases	97%	93%	100%	95%	92%	100%	Average:	96%
Total # of community service hours sentenced	551	979	481	738.5	708.5	240	Total:	3698
Total # of community service hours performed by program	1466	2866	1530	1888.5	1571.5	785	Total:	
Average # of hours sentenced per offender	15.4	22.7	22	20	28	20	Average:	21.35
Average age of offender	15.6	15.95	16	17	15.6	17	Average:	16.19167
% Males	53%	76%	61%	76%	76%	75%	Average:	70%
% Females	47%	24%	39%	24%	24%	25%	Average:	31%
\$ Restitution Paid	\$100	\$0	\$0	\$230	\$0	\$0	Total:	\$330
Apology letters written	10	17	7	8	7	1	Total:	50
Educational classes sentenced	8	4	8	6	10	3	Total:	39
# of offenders who signed up as volunteers	5	2	3	1	1	1	Total:	13
Most Common Charge	UPM (37%)	Criminal Trespass/Criminal Mischief	UPM (48%)	UPM (28%) / Petit Larceny (28%)	UPM (16%)/Petit Larceny (16%)	UPM (39%)		
Second most common charge	Petit Larceny (8.5%); Criminal Mischief (8.5%); and making graffiti (8.5%)	UPM	Petit Larceny (30%)	Trespass (13%)	Reckless Endangerment 2nd (8%); Harassment (8%); Endangering the welfare of a child (8%); and Unlawful Possession of	Vehicle and Traffic Infractions (22%)		

Breakdown of Offender Statistics

Total cases accepted	12
Total number of charges heard	18
% Male	75%
% Female	25%
% Successful completion	100%
Total hours sentenced	240
Average hours sentenced	20
Total apology letters sentenced	1
Total educational classes sentenced	3
Average age of offender	17
Most common charge	Unlawful Possession of Marijuana (UPM)
Second most common charge	Vehicle and Traffic Infractions

Community Service Hours

Volunteers/Participants	Formula	Total Hours based on 12 cases heard
Attorney Mentors	3hrs/case x # of cases	36
Jurors	Approx. 10 jurors per case x # of cases heard	120
Youth Court Members	4 attorneys (3 hours/case), plus 1 victim advocate (2 hours/case) plus 3 other roles (1 hour/case) x # of hearings	204
Participation in Government	(1) student completing Participation in Government Hours	20
Internship	Undergraduate level internship	150
Offender Hours	Total hours sentenced + total jury duties sentenced	255
Total # of Community Service Hours		785

Community Service Sites

1. Adopt-A-Highway roadside clean-up
2. A.W. Becker School Field Day
3. Bethlehem Community Clean-up
4. Bethlehem Middle School Community Garden
5. Bethlehem Senior Services
6. Bethlehem Outreach Services (Food Pantry)
7. Bethlehem Town Highway (digging out fire hydrants)
8. Bethlehem Town Park (Eggstravaganza)
9. Bethlehem Youth Court – fundraiser assistance
10. Bethlehem Youth Court – Law Day event
11. Cornell Cooperative Extension
12. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Golf Tournament
13. Delmar Dash
14. Glenmont Elementary School
15. Glenmont Job Corp
16. Habitat for Humanity
17. Policy Research Associates – Returning donated cans as fundraiser
18. Ravena Coeymans Selkirk High School
19. The Addictions Care Center

Educational Classes:

Drug and Alcohol Class (January 2015)

Peer Pressure Class (March 2015)

