



BETHLEHEM YOUTH COURT

2017 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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www.BethlehemYouthCourt.org

Board of Directors

Co-Chairpersons

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

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

Secretary

Detective Michael Whiteley, *Bethlehem Police Department (September-December)*

Treasurer

Maureen McLeod, PhD, *Sage Colleges Professor*

Ex-Officio Member

Hon. John Clarkson, *Bethlehem Town Supervisor*

Members

Dave Doemel, *Bethlehem Central High School and Interim Principal, Bethlehem Middle School (resigned Sept. 2017)*

Adam Katz, *Assistant U.S. Attorney*

Jennifer Kilcoyne, *President, Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce*

Anthony Malizia, *Administrative Dean, Bethlehem Central High School (resigned Sept. 2017)*

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

Jennifer Miller, *Albany County Probation Retiree*

Jacqueline Munroe, *Bethlehem Central Middle School Hall Principal (joined Sept. 2017)*

Nick Petraccione, *BCSD Supervisor for Social Studies and Business Education (resigned Sept. 2017)*

Gene Primomo, *Assistant Federal Defender*

Pamela Clark Robbins, *CEO, Policy Research Associates*

Julie Sasso, *Bethlehem Town Board Member*

Michelle Sleurs, *Albany County Probation Supervisor (joined April 2017)*

James Smith, *Bethlehem Central High School Hall Principal (joined Oct. 2017)*

Executive Director

Katrina Charland

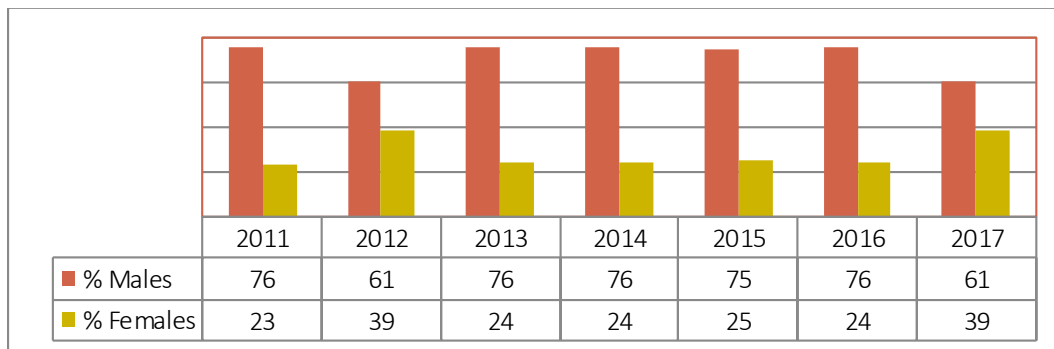
End of Year Report

Offender Statistics

Bethlehem Youth Court (BYC) handled 31 cases and heard a total of 40 charges in 2017 through peer led sentencing hearings. This represents an increase from last year's 21 cases and 34 charges. The offenses varied widely in 2017, with the most common charge being unlawful possession of marijuana (27.5% of offenses) followed by petit larceny (15% of offenses heard). The third most common offenses were unlawful possession of alcohol and criminal trespass 3rd, both of which constituted 12.5% of charges. Previous years' data show that both unlawful possession of marijuana (UPM) and petit larceny have been very common offenses heard in BYC, however the deviation from the past two years' second most common offense, which had been traffic related charges, is worth noting. There was a drastic drop in traffic cases from 2015 and 2016 (22% and 32% respectively) down to just 5% in 2017.

There was a 97% successful completion rate in 2017, with one case being returned to criminal court on the basis of non-compliance. Of the 31 cases heard, 3 were referred directly to Youth Court from the police department through our Direct Referral Diversion program. This process allows juveniles (those 15 years old and younger) to be referred directly to Youth Court without any actual arrest or charges filed. This diversion process has been a wonderful resource for the community and has been well supported by victims, families of offenders and the police department.

The average age of participants remained steady at 17 years old. We saw a slight increase in female involvement (39% of cases) compared to recent past years.



Traffic Referral Pilot Program

At the request of town justices, BYC has been working on implementing a traffic referral pilot program to address the issue of distracted driving and other offenses that could lead to crashes involving young drivers. This pilot program would utilize educational components, such as participation in a driver safety course, which would address the root cause of the initial violation.

Community Service

BYC oversaw a total of 1,632 hours of community service in 2017. Of those hours, 682 were performed by respondents who were sentenced to community service hours by their peers as part of the diversion process. The remaining 950 hours were performed by volunteers and mentors. The average number of community service hours sentenced in 2017 was 20.5, which is up slightly from last year's average of 18. Community service was performed at over 30 different sites in and around the Town of Bethlehem, with

a heavy concentration of hours being performed right within the town. Some of the most consistent project sites were the Bethlehem Middle School garden, rail trail clean-ups, and highway clean-ups. BYC almost always has some presence at most community events, such as National Night Out, the Eggstravaganza, and the Bike Expo.

Youth Court Members

BYC hosted a combined Law Day Celebration and Induction Ceremony for newly trained members in May of 2017. There were 22 new volunteers who graduated from the training and were sworn in as official Youth Court members by Judge Donovan.

BYC was proud to host the 5th annual Judge Jordan Scholarship Competition during the ceremony. This scholarship, which was made possible by contributions from the Bethlehem Police Supervisors' Association and the Police Benevolent Association, highlights Youth Court members' talents as they deliver oral arguments to a panel of judges in front of the audience of event attendees. The scholarship honors the late Judge Jordan, who was a tremendous supporter of BYC. The first place winner was Grace Cavanagh and second place was Hannah Merges. In addition to the Judge Jordan scholarship, BYC sponsors the Judge Wenger Scholarship. The 2017 winner of the Judge Wenger Scholarship was Louise Xie.



From left to right: Volunteer members Ethan Royka, Jonathan Caldwell, and Sarah Cohen

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In November 2017 BYC hosted its 2nd Annual Skills Development Day for current members. This day focused on professional development, additional training, and included guest speakers, a luncheon and workshops. Volunteer members expressed a great sense of appreciation for the opportunity to gather as a group outside of the usual courtroom setting. One of the most well received workshops was led by senior Youth Court member, Ryan Fisk, during which volunteers sat in a circle and had the opportunity to debrief, discuss challenges, and share experiences with one another in the interest of learning and improving skills.

Left: Grace Cavanagh, winner of the 2017 Judge Jordan Memorial Scholarship.
Right: Louise Xie, winner of the 2017 Judge Wenger Memorial Scholarship.



Board Members

As a result of several changes in Bethlehem Central School District's administration, we also saw a few changes in board members in 2017. Upon his promotion to High School Principal, Dave Doemel resigned from our board and was quickly replaced by James (Jim) Smith. Nick Petraccione, also a long time board member, was replaced by Jacqueline (Jackie) Munroe, who diversifies our school representation since she is a Bethlehem Middle School Hall Principal. Having a representative from both the Middle School and High School will surely be a positive attribute in the future. Anthony Malizia resigned from the BYC board after accepting a new position at Niskayuna High School. We welcomed Michelle Sleurs as a new board member representing Albany County Probation.

Financial

BYC's financial support from The Town of Bethlehem remained consistent from 2016 to 2017 with an annual contribution of \$35,000 to the program. The Town's financial support has been, and continues to be, a vital component to the success of the program.

BYC continues to apply for grants, such as the New York Bar Foundation Youth Court Grant and the Stewarts Holiday Match, which helps offset program expenses. Additionally, funding is sought each year through our annual letter campaign, which generates about \$4,000 in contributions from the generosity of community members and local businesses. The State Employee Federated Appeal (SEFA) also provides funding through donations made by New York State Employees.

Association of New York State Youth Court (ANYSYC)

The Director became the secretary once again of the ANYSYC in 2017, having served as the secretary in the past as well as co-president. Although ANYSYC activities have declined, BYC remains an active member and continues to contribute to statewide endeavors.

Future

BYC is committed to serving the community's ever changing needs. Through the use of pilot programs, BYC has the ability to evolve and try new concepts before making permanent policy changes.

Youth court stands to benefit not only the young offenders who enroll in the program, but also the community as a whole. Volunteers, victims and community members alike all benefit from the early positive intervention that Youth Court provides to at-risk youth.

Comprehensive Statistics 2012-2017

Additional years' data available upon request

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Breakdown	
Total # of cases	23	37	25	12	21	31	Total:	149
% of successful cases	100%	95%	92%	100%	100%	97%	Average:	97%
Total # of community service hours sentenced	481	738.5	708.5	240	381	636	Total:	2549
Total # of community service hours performed by program	1530	1888.5	1571.5	785	1031	1632	Total:	6806
Average # of hours sentenced per offender	22	20	28	20	18	20.5	Average:	21.6
Average age of offender	16	17	15.6	17	17	17	Average:	16.52
% Males	61%	76%	76%	75%	76%	61%	Average:	73%
% Females	39%	24%	24%	25%	24%	39%	Average:	27%
\$ Restitution Paid	\$0	\$230	\$0	\$0	\$160	\$45	Total:	\$390
Apology letters written	7	8	7	1	4	7	Total:	34
Educational classes sentenced	8	6	10	3	4	14	Total:	31
# of offenders who signed up as volunteers	3	1	1	1	2	0	Total:	8
Most Common Charge	UPM (48%)	UPM (28%) / Petit Larceny (28%)	UPM (16%)/Petit Larceny (16%)	UPM (39%)	UPM (41%)	UPM (27.5% of cases)		
Second most common charge	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%)	Vehicle and Traffic Infractions (32%)	Petit Larceny (15%)		

Breakdown of Offender Statistics

Total cases heard	31
Total number of charges heard	40
% Male	61%
% Female	39%
% Successful completion	97%
Total hours sentenced	636
Average hours sentenced	20.5
Total apology letters sentenced	7
Total educational classes sentenced	14
Average age of offender	17
Most common charge	Unlawful Possession of Marijuana (UPM)
Second most common charge	Petit Larceny

Community Service Hours

Volunteers/Participants	Formula	Total Hours based on 31 cases heard
Attorney Mentors	3hrs/case x # of cases	93
Jurors	Approx. 10 jurors per case x # of cases heard	310
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	527
SUNY Albany Master's Student	Assisted with hearings as part of a diversion class	20
Offender Hours	Total hours sentenced + total jury duties sentenced	682
Total # of Community Service Hours		1632



Community Service Sites

1. Adopt-A-Highway roadside clean-up
2. Albany County Foster Care Awareness Walk
3. American Red Cross Blood Drive
4. Bethlehem Community Clean-up
5. Bethlehem Middle School Community Garden
6. Bethlehem Senior Services
7. Bethlehem Outreach Services (Food Pantry)
8. Bethlehem Opportunities Unlimited (BOU) Spelling Bee
9. Bethlehem Town Court – courtroom clean-up
10. Bethlehem Town Park (Eggstravaganza)
11. Bethlehem Town Park Bike Expo
12. Bethlehem Youth Court – fundraiser assistance
13. Bethlehem Youth Court – Law Day event
14. Capital City Rescue Mission
15. CMOST Museum
16. Colonie Senior Service Center
17. Community Outreach Food Bank (Troy)
18. Delmar Dash
19. Grassroot Givers
20. Habitat for Humanity
21. Helping Harvest Food Bank
22. Hope United Methodist Family Fun Day
23. Katarina Ellis Org.
24. Kenneth's Run
25. National Night Out
26. Policy Research Associates – Returning donated cans as fundraiser
27. Rail Trail Monitoring
28. Regional Food Bank
29. Rudy A. Cicotti Center
30. St. Peters
31. St. Thomas School
32. Teal Ribbon Run/Walk
33. Teresian House
34. USPS Stamp Out Hunger

Educational Classes:
Drug and Alcohol Class
Decision Making Class
Peer Pressure