

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Rochester Area

Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement

www.raya-mi.org

ROCHESTER AREA YOUTH ASSISTANCE

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Rochester Area Youth Assistance is a prevention-based, nonprofit organization whose goal is to strengthen youth and families in the Rochester Community and to reduce the incidence of delinquency, abuse and neglect through volunteer and community partnerships.

RAYA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Short-term Counseling and Casework Services are available to young people and their families, ages 5 to 16, who reside in the Rochester Community Schools District. Services are voluntary and confidential and include a \$25 one-time processing fee.

Financial Assistance is available to children K-12th grade for skill-building (sports or dance activities, summer learning classes, etc.), camps. ***Parent or guardian must provide appropriate financial information to be eligible for financial assistance.*

Camp Safari is a low-cost, day camp for children ages 6-12 years of age for qualifying families who reside in the City of Rochester Hills. This program is funded by the City of Rochester Hills, Rochester Area Youth Assistance and Rochester-Avon Recreation Authority. RAYA and RARA work cooperatively to provide this summer camp June to August.

Family Education programs are provided which facilitate family growth and development, including workshops, guest speakers and groups. Current programs available can be found on the RAYA Website.

Annual Youth Recognition Banquet is held each year to honor area young people who have overcome major obstacles to reach their goals, volunteered their time to an individual, an organization or in their community, or who has demonstrated personal perseverance beyond the ordinary. Nominations are accepted all year and can be found at the RAYA website.

Mentors Plus Program is a program which matches a young person with a trained adult volunteer for a one-year commitment with the purpose of providing positive companionship and role modeling.

RAYA CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD REPORT - Debbie Jones, Chairman of the Board

As Chair of the Rochester Area Youth Assistance, I feel honored to be in this position for an organization that has served the families of the Rochester Area for over 60 years. There have been many dedicated Chairpersons that I have used as my guide. Including Jan Iserman who served in that position for many, many years before me.

We have passionate members of the board that are enthusiastic to meet the needs of our community through our Financial Assistance, Mentors Plus, Family Education, Camp Safari and many other programs and services. We appreciate the input from the school and community partners that bring their expertise and serve as liaison's. We honor our mission statement to prevent juvenile delinquency, child neglect and abuse in everything we do.

My goal continues to be partnering with other community agencies that serve the same population. I want to thank Ryan Smith who served as Vice Chair, Dave Murphy as Secretary, Maria Willett as Membership and Steve Greene who stepped in temporarily as Treasurer. Thanks to Jenny Lundy who had been Treasurer for many years and continued to be very supportive during the transition period.

I appreciate all of the Board Members that give so freely of their time and are dedicated to strengthening families in the Rochester Area.

Debbie Jones

Strengthening Families — Invest in the youth of your community!!!

Please consider a tax deductible donation to Rochester Area Youth Assistance. 100% of your donation will benefit children and families in the Rochester Area. Investing in the youth of our community is the best investment we can make!

Rochester Area Youth Assistance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

CASEWORKER REPORT - Paul Tiseo, MS, LLP, Youth Assistance Caseworker

“Life is what happens when you are making other plans”

This is the quote that comes to mind as I reflect on our past year. None of us could have foreseen how much our lives would be turned upside down during this pandemic, the likes of which have not been experienced for over a hundred years. In March 2020, I abruptly began working remotely in response to the State’s directive, yet I was able to continue to serve the youth and families of the Rochester area without interruption. I remember that at the time my colleagues and I assumed that by the fall of 2020 things would be “back to normal.” Obviously we didn’t know what the future held. During this past year my own family has been “in the trenches” as we navigate the challenges of remote schooling, health fears, and the loss of so many aspects of life that give it variety and fullness. In this time where we feel stripped away of so much, we also can gain clarity about what is most important to us with regards to family, education, work, etc. First of all, the importance and value of our work within Youth Assistance has never been more apparent to me. I remain humbled and grateful to accompany Rochester area families as they navigate a wide range of challenges. Depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicide are even more significant concerns as we all struggle to cope with the effects of the public health crisis. These are areas that we will continue to focus our energies in the coming years. Above all, I feel proud to be a part of RAYA as we forge ahead with our mission to strengthen youth and families, no matter the circumstances and obstacles set before us. – Paul Tiseo, MS, LLP

The statistics below provide a snapshot of some of the demographics of the youth we have served in the past year, as well as the reasons which prompted a referral to youth assistance.

Referral Reason	Total	Female	Male
PREVENTION	20	9	11
SCHOOL INCORRIGIBILITY	6		6
ALCOHOL RELATED	3	1	2
POSESSION OF MARIJUANA	5		5
OBSCENE MATERIAL-POSSESSION	6	1	5
THREATENING BEHAVIOR	4	2	2
VAPE RELATED OFFENSE	3	2	1
ASSAULT AND BATTERY	2		2
HOME INCORRIGIBILITY	1		1
CIGARETTES VIOLATION	1		1
SEXTING-EXPLICIT MESSAGING	10	5	5
MALICIOUS MISCHIEF	1		1
TOTALS	63	21	42

Referral Source	Total	Female	Male
POLICE	18	5	13
PARENT/GRD	1	1	
SCHOOL DISTRICT	18	6	12
DHS/CPS	3	1	2
INTAKE DEPARTMENT	3		3
OC PROSECUTOR	20	8	12
TOTALS	63	21	42

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE - David Murphy, Committee Chairperson

One of RAYA’s primary goals for youth is prevention of delinquency. Statistics have shown that the benefits to children and teens who participate in extracurricular activities after school are numerous. The Financial Assistance Program was created to assist families with the cost of skill-building activities, such as sports, dance, tutoring, and for summer camps. Requests for assistance are approved by the committee after parents have submitted appropriate financial information showing need and eligibility. Families qualify by meeting income guidelines provided by Oakland County or by participating in the free and reduced school lunch program offered through Rochester Community Schools. Many of our families qualified as extremely low income (annual income for a family of 4 is \$25, 750 or less) or qualify for free or reduced lunch. The committee carefully reviews each request and views its function as a source of the last resort when other funding sources are not available.

In the 2019-20 RAYA budget year, RAYA approved 12 requests for assistance for students totaling \$4,171 of which parents covered \$657. RAYA covered a total of \$3,044 in funding assistance. In addition to our own budget, the Ashleigh Iserman Boating Safety Foundation Grant helped fund requests aimed at water safety, such as swim lessons and boating safety classes.

The programs and activities for our recipients included the youth sports of basketball, soccer, football, cross country, gymnastics, hockey, skating, bowling, winter guard, adaptive bowling, track and dance. Students were also given assistance for tutoring and other academic support programs. A majority of our funding was allocated for activities that are provided by our sponsors through Rochester Community Schools Enrichment / BASES classes and the City of Rochester Hill’s RARA sports, camps and enrichment programs. We are pleased to funnel our dollars back to our sponsors while serving our community’s children in important extracurricular activities.

RAYA is proud to be able to assist these families with financial assistance for programs in the Rochester Community which will encourage our youth and support positive and productive experiences and life skills. We also thank the generous organizations who have contributed to the youth of Rochester.

Our 46th Annual Youth Recognition Banquet - Jan Willhite-Iserman, Youth Recognition Committee Chairperson, Heather Asti and Lindsay Wood, Co Chairs

Once again, we were left in awe of the incredible young people that were nominated for the 46th Annual Youth Recognition Banquet. Our theme this year was “Stars” and indeed that they were. Nineteen energetic, positive, passionate, and kind students gave of their time to a variety of organizations and causes such as Grace Centers of Hope, Heavenly Paws, Rainbow Connection, Stand Up for the Homeless Club, Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital, Dora Backpack, which gave back packs to needy children in Delfin, a remote village in the Philippines, to name just a few.

Unfortunately, with the COVID 19 virus, our Recognition Banquet had to be cancelled, but not the Community Recognition of these incredible young people. The RAYA Banquet Committee along with other volunteers created a parade that drove to each honoree home, delivering a “Star” themed yard sign with their name, certificates from our local sponsors and dignitaries and a personalized gift. Mariah Foster was the proud recipient of the Coats Family Memorial Scholarship, donated by the Coats Family in honor of Judy Coats.

Our Community is so blessed to have such wonderful students, and RAYA is proud to take this moment to honor them. We look forward to see what 2021 will bring.

CAMP SAFARI SUMMER PROGRAM - Amy Drehmer, Committee Chairperson

Camp Safari went great! We had about 5 kids come every single week which was very similar to the amount our other camps had this special Covid-19 special edition summer. We had two counselors and a supervisor, as well as myself helping to get craft supplies, equipment, games, PPE supplies, special guests, etc. available to the camp. There were special guests that came in weekly in place of field trips. We had the Rochester Fire Department, a recycling group, a magician, an animal show, and a few others that put on shows for the campers. Camp Safari had their own pavilion all summer where they did crafts, games, water activities and other types of activities all summer long. They went on multiple hikes and scavenger hunts throughout Bloomer Park as well as had special treats like ice cream, slushies, etc. delivered to them on Fridays. We thankfully had everyone stay safe all summer long. Safety and health were our main priorities when choosing activities, crafts, special guests and games to do.



MENTORS PLUS - Cheryl Greene, Mentors Plus Committee Chairperson

Mentors Plus, sponsored by Oakland County Youth Assistance (a division of the Oakland County Circuit Court) has been matching caring adults with young people who need them since 1973. Several matches have been made during the past year, but there is always a need for adult mentors to volunteer an hour a week (or more) to be matched with a child in their own community. Being a mentor is an important contribution to a young person's life. Your time together can include anything from sharing a movie, playing a sport together, going to an event, etc. Most importantly, you'll be sharing a bit of yourself with someone who can benefit from your responsible example. Serving as a mentor can make a powerful difference in a child's life. Being a mentor can fill your life with additional purpose.

You can request a general information packet and application, or you can learn when the next orientation session will take place.

For more information please contact:

Oakland County Mentors Plus Program at **248-858-0041**

Ms. Cheryl Greene email: **Cgreene0903@gmail.com**; phone: **586-707-8484**



FAMILY EDUCATION COMMITTEE - Debbie Jones, Committee Chairperson

The Family Education Committee provides presentations and discussion for parents and youth, offering realistic and practical approaches to meet challenges to different life situations.

In 2019 - 2020, RAYA offered the following programs:

- **“Girls Stand Strong – Real Life Situations”** presented by Samantha Walters, LLMSW,
- **“What You Need To Know About Vaping”** presented by Amy Drehmer, Rochester Police Officer in partnership with Ascension Providence Rochester,
- **“Mindful Parenting”** presented by Dr. Caryn Wells,
- **“Do It For Daniel”** a conversation about suicide
- **“Screenagers Next Chapter, Uncovering Skills For Stress Resilience”**
- **“Anxiety: Coping Effectively With The Lies And Scary Stories We Tell Ourselves”** presented by Dr. James Jones in partnership with RH Public Library.

The Family Education committee continues to listen to the concerns of the parents and students in our community and we will try to create programs to meet those needs.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE - Maria Willett, Committee Chairperson

RAYA is always looking for people with a passion for our mission to join our board of directors! Our team works collaboratively with the Rochester Community School Districts, local businesses, and nonprofits to strengthen youth and families in the Greater Rochester Community. Through financial assistance, counseling, programming, and more we continue to make a difference in the lives of our youth.

Responsibilities of board members include:

- Attend meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding June, July & December)
- Participating in committee and fundraising efforts

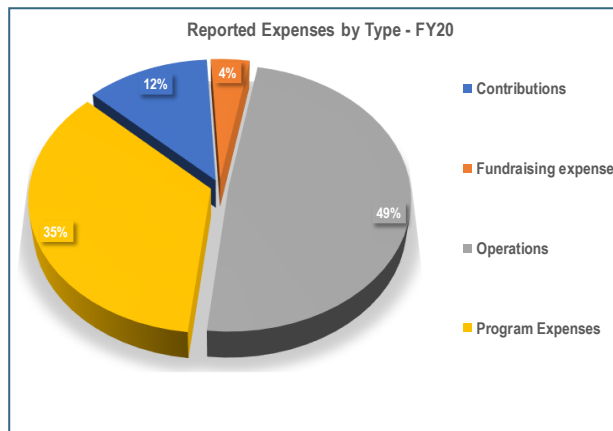
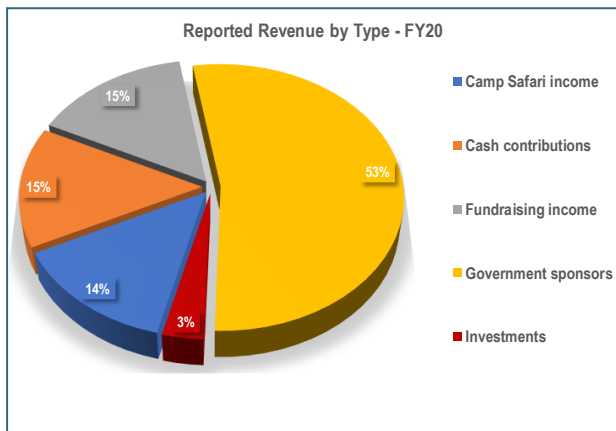
Interested? Please contact Maria Willett at willettm@rochesterhills.org to discuss this leadership opportunity. Potential board members must fill out the application at <https://www.raya-mi.org/>

2019 - 2020 RAYA BOARD OF DIRECTORS			
Debbie Jones, <i>Chairman of the Board</i>		Ryan Smith, <i>Vice-Chairman of the Board</i>	
Steven Greene, <i>Treasurer</i>		Maria Willett, <i>Membership Chairperson</i>	
David Murphy, <i>Secretary</i>			
Heather Asti	Michelle Bueltel	Jan Willhite-Iserman	Jennifer Lundy
Laura Bagley	Amy Drehmer	Amanda Keighley	Theresa Munglioli
Barbara Barnes	Cheryl Greene	Adam Kochenderfer	Kimberly Russell
			Lindsay Wood

From the Treasurer's Desk -

We appreciate the strong support of Rochester Area Youth Assistance as we continue our mission to assistance at risk youth in our community. In addition to our financial support, Rochester Community Schools provides in-kind services such as, office space, computer services, custodial services and utilities at our office located in Rochester Adams High School.

We are very appreciative and continue to be fiscally responsible while still maintaining our level of services and programs provided to our community.



ADDITIONAL THANKS TO

- Rochester Adams High School Staff
- The Coats Family
- Mattina, Kent & Gibbons, P.C.
- David Zemens, 1955 Design
- Rochester Fire Department
- Rochester Downtown Development Authority

OAKLAND COUNTY YOUTH ASSISTANCE

a National Model for the prevention of delinquency, neglect and abuse.

Oakland County Youth Assistance is administered under the auspices of the Oakland County Circuit Court-Family Division. One of such county programs, Rochester Area Youth Assistance operates with the sponsorship of the Oakland County Circuit Court - Family Division, the Rochester Community School District, the City of Rochester Hills, the City of Rochester, and the Charter Township of Oakland.

Oakland County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to its programs, activities or services, as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Oakland County is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.