

LEADING A PATH TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Troy

Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement

ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021

From The Co-Chairs:

Troy Youth Assistance continues to be a vital organization dedicated to the protection and advancement of at-risk youth throughout our city. We are committed to the prevention of juvenile delinquency, child neglect, and abuse through community involvement and family education. Through the collaboration of our capable staff and volunteers, Troy Youth Assistance continues to advocate for our youth.

Troy Youth Assistance made several organizational changes this past year. As we continued to look at how to best meet the needs of Troy children, we revamped our annual Youth Recognition. In better alignment with TYA's mission, we provided Boost Grants to 7 students. In total, these grants provided \$12,000 for students to help them overcome obstacles and continue on their journey toward reaching their professional and academic goals.

In the context of COVID-19, Troy Youth Assistance also continued to provide increased digital services. From Zoom board meetings to digital counseling services, we did our best to meet the constant needs of our families during evolving times. Many thanks to Susan Holle and Zetter Slappy for their steadfast efforts!

On behalf of everyone associated with Troy Youth Assistance, it is our privilege to present the 2020-2021 Annual Report, which highlights just a sampling of the important functions we provide to our deserving constituents.

Thank you for your continued support!

Shari Pawlus & David Recker
Co-Chairpersons



Youth Recognition

Youth Recognition had a different look and purpose in 2021. Instead of an in-person event to showcase self-motivated young people, we looked to the economic and social challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and what that meant for students who had set lifetime achievement goals, made progress toward those goals, and were “staring at a wall” to take the next step.

Our Youth Recognition budget and generous donations by some wonderful community members enabled us to award \$12,000 as “Boost Grants.” The seven students chosen had a nominating sponsor. Each student was required to present their goal and progress, as well as how the grant would be beneficial to them or the community. Questions regarding progress, challenges overcome and yet to be overcome had to be answered. Additionally, each student requesting a grant had to prepare a detailed funding request.

In the end, the seven grants covered needs as different as the students requesting them. The grants paid vocational training or college tuition, funded laptops and auto repairs so that college or job-seeking could happen.

Congratulations to the seven student recipients of TYA's first “Boost Grants.”



Camp/Skillbuilding

Our Camp/Skill Building program was developed to help youth benefit from positive learning experiences designed to enhance self-esteem or develop a specific skill. Last year financial assistance was awarded to 21 children ages 4-16 years old to attend programs such as soccer, football, baseball, preschool activities, and Camp Emanuel. Allotments ranged from \$95 to \$300. Per TYA policy, parents were required to pay part of the cost, as well as meet financial requirements.

Fundraising

We are very grateful for all the donations we received. A big thank you to the Troy Police Department, City of Troy, Troy School District, Troy Women's Association, First Presbyterian Church of Troy, Michigan Schools & Government Credit Union, and the private donors and advocates for their generous donations. Thanks to everyone that supported TYA this past year!

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Youth Involvement

Youth Involvement is geared toward empowering our youth and developing their unique skill sets through a variety of activities focusing on showing kindness, comforting others in need and being a positive influence in the community. During a traditional school year, TYA would visit one school each year and host Youth Involvement Parties with elementary school students, middle school peer mentors, and high school supports. COVID-19 safety mitigation protocols did not allow for us to gather groups of students together during the 2020-21 school year. However, Troy Youth Assistance was determined to still have a positive, meaningful impact on student life.

We met separately with our Title I School Leaders to determine how we could creatively utilize our resources to benefit their school community. Principal Mike Cottone from Troy Union Elementary School partnered with volunteers from Woodside Bible Church to thoughtfully create “Boo Bags” for students filled with fun and engaging materials for home-school connections. These were distributed in fall of 2020 and were warmly received by Troy Union families.



At Morse Elementary School, Principal Stephanie Zandler leveraged their funds for a Red Pillar project to thank our essential workers. TYA provided materials to make posters and signs for family members to work together on a home project. These messages of gratitude were displayed throughout the TSD Community.

Wattles Elementary School focused their resources for a shared experience during March is Reading Month by inviting local author Maria Dismondly in as a guest reader (virtually). Dr. Brasington, Principal at Wattles Elementary, stated, “Maria Dismondly encouraged students to believe they can accomplish their goals by working hard, learning from their mistakes, being resilient, and persevering even when the work is hard. Her message was enthusiastically received by staff and students.” These TYA funds also went toward purchasing each Wattles student a t-shirt for March Is Reading Month to promote a sense of belonging and engage them in shared goals for literacy in March.

Although TYA was forced to pivot from traditional structures, our teams were grateful for the partnerships with Troy School District to still have a positive impact on student life. At the close of the 2020-21 school year, Youth Involvement participants had shared experiences to promote their sense of belonging in the TSD Community.

Family Education

The Family Education youth workshops and parenting programs in 2020-21 continued to be affected by the state and school district mandates and regulations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Offerings for youth and parents are interactive opportunities, some of which were adaptable to a virtual format. However, taking into consideration that students were spending hours daily in front of their computers, the presenters opted to pause their programs for face-to-face participation when the bans were lifted. Unfortunately, that wasn't until the Spring, which the Family Education committee recognized is not typically the best time of year to offer our programs due to conflicts with Spring sports and the end of the school year.

The presenter of *Girls Stand Strong*, a program for girls in grades 4-6, offered the workshop virtually through Zoom. Ten girls participated on Zoom for four weeks in March with their parents joining them for the final session. *Girls Stand Strong* is by far one of the most popular TYA student workshops and fills up almost as soon as it is advertised.

The Family Education Committee will resume meeting in August after a one-year hiatus. We look forward to planning youth workshops and parenting programs which will meet the needs of the Troy community within the guidelines of the Troy School District.

We welcome new faces to join the TYA Family Education Committee. Currently, the committee meets from 9-10:30 am on the third Thursday during the months of August thru June, but we are open to change to accommodate committee members. Please contact TYA if you are interested in talking with us about joining the committee.

Mentors PLUS

Troy Youth Assistance and Oakland County run a program that connects a child in need with a caring adult called Mentors PLUS (People Listening, Understanding, Sharing). The young people in the program benefit from having positive adult figures in their lives. This helps them develop the skills and confidence to believe more in themselves and to resist getting drawn into negativity that is sometimes around them. The motto is to be a friend while listening, understanding, and sharing.

Mentoring is fun, creates new friendships, and allows volunteers to share their lives with a child who needs attention and support. The time commitment is only 2 hours per week for a year. The mentors choose their own ways of connecting with the young person. Activities and meetings are planned on a one-to-one basis, which is completely up to the mentor and the mentee.

This truly is a rewarding experience for both of the parties. Oakland County Youth Assistance provides an orientation, where they share information about the program and discuss the Mentor relationship and the roles. It is our sincere hope that you will feel the same excitement as we do about the difference a caring adult can make in a child's life.

During 2020-2021, with COVID we have had a lot of changes to the mentoring program in terms of restriction in meeting the mentee personally and travelling with them to external events and locations. Yet we try to help the best we can, leading a way to success for these young people. Please reach out to the TYA office for more information.

THANK YOU SPONSORS
Working together for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, child neglect and abuse through community involvement:

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 Honorable Lisa O. Gorcycya
 Honorable Lisa Langton
 Honorable Julie A. McDonald
 Honorable Lorie N. Savin

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TYA ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

Mission Statement

Troy Youth Assistance is committed to strengthening youth and families by preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, child neglect and child abuse through community involvement.

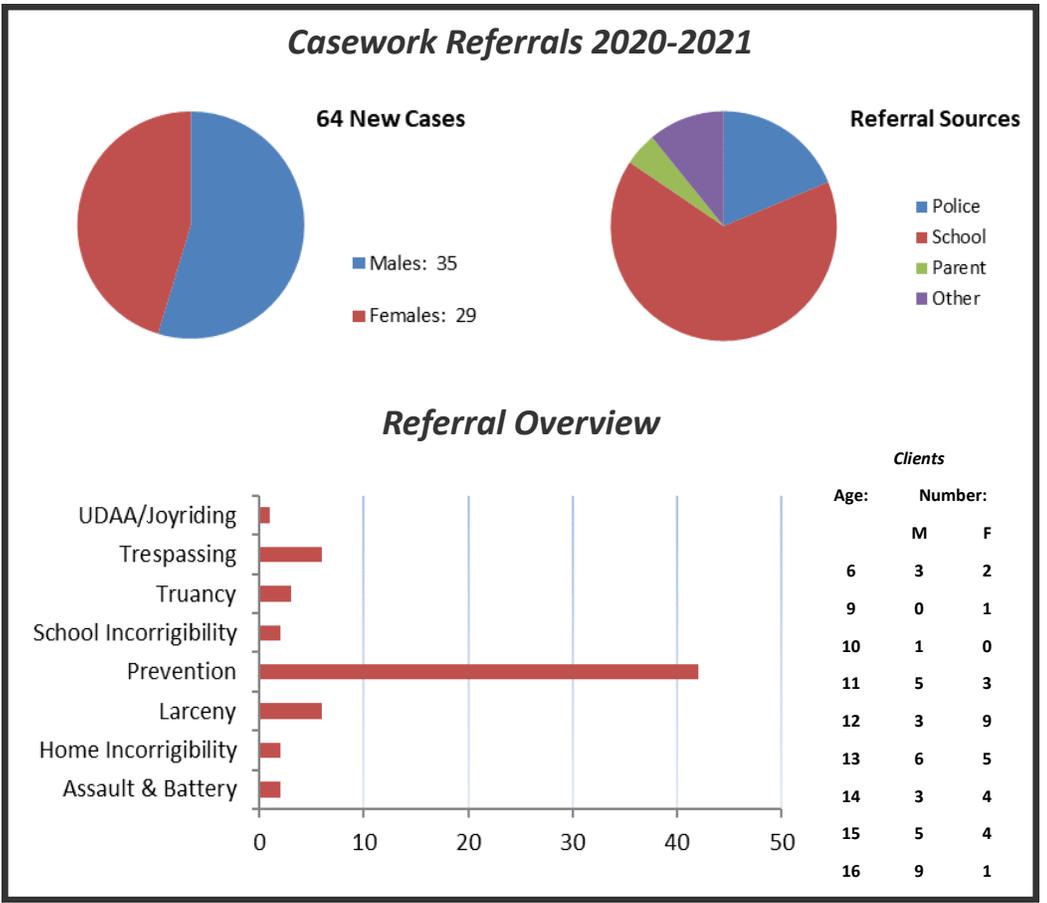
Troy Youth Assistance is a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is one of 26 Youth Assistance programs in Oakland County. Each local Youth Assistance office is tri-sponsored by the Oakland County Circuit Court-Family Division, the local school district, and the city therein. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners provides major funding for a professional counselor in each unit. Volunteers work with the professional counselor to plan and sponsor local prevention programs for youth and their families.



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