

# Tompkins County Youth Services Department

Quarter 2 Newsletter, July 2019



## A Message from the Director

Have you heard the old adage, “There is no I in team?” I know it sounds cliché but I think it is really true. In fact, I do not think it is just enough for those of us who serve in leadership roles to remember that adage, I think we all need to do better. While it does not happen often, when we are given the chance, we need to seize the opportunity to publicly thank those who allow us to lead. With that in mind, I hope you will not mind indulging me a little.

Dear Youth Services Team,

*I had the distinct pleasure of joining your team about four months ago, and it has truly been such an amazing experience. I have learned so much from each of you, and I am inspired every day by your commitment and passion for the work we do. I heard when I was hired that, “The*

*Tompkins County Youth Services Department was the backbone of youth services in our County.” I have to say that I do not think a truer statement could be made of this Department.*

*From the work with the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, the technical assistance provided to the Municipal Youth Services System, to the coordination around the wonderful trainings that we provide to the community, and all the internal coordination that supports all of it, I am in awe of this team. Thank you for all you do to ensure that the youth in our communities thrive in school, work, and life!*

## HAVE YOU THANKED YOUR TEAM LATELY?



*Pictured above (L to R): Theresa, Shannon, Janice, Kate, and Bridgette*

Sincerely,

Kate [kshanks@tomptkins-co.org](mailto:kshanks@tomptkins-co.org)

## Results Based Accountability Spotlight: Family & Children's Services Open Doors Program

*Family & Children's Services of Ithaca provides basic needs, counseling, and supportive services to youth that have run away from home or are at risk of doing so, through the Open Doors Program. The program strives to provide youth with a support system during this unstable period of their lives. Open Doors aims to help youth reunite with their families and loved ones, when that is the safest choice, or assist them to find safe housing in another family setting, when it is not safe to go home.*

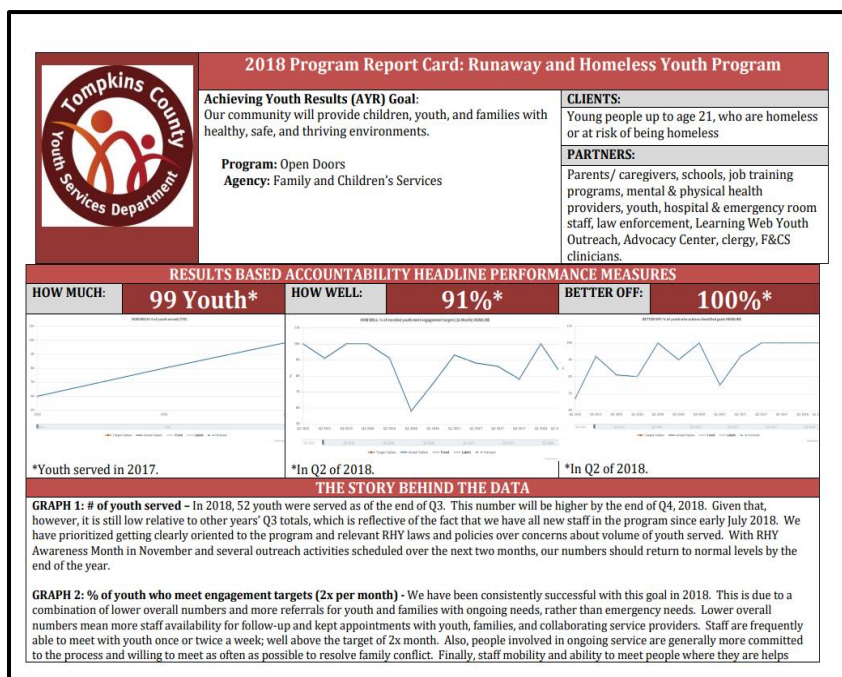
This program supports TCYSD's Achieving Youth Results Goal of: **"Community: Tompkins County will provide children, youth, and families with healthy, safe and thriving environments"**. The measures indicating that they are reaching this goal are identified by the number of youth served, the percentage of youth who meet engagement targets, and the percentage of youth who achieve identified goals.

Since TCYSD began using the RBA system to track Open Doors' measurements in 2016, there has been a consistent increase in the number of youth being served along with the percentage of youth who are meeting their engagement targets and achieving their personal goals. Open Doors reports that their success is due to staff meeting consistently with youth and families and their "ability to meet people where they are" to provide consistent engagement. With action plans for 2019 to increase their outreach to school, partner

agencies, mental health and medical centers, and other community-based organizations, along with continued direct street outreach, Open Doors projects that they will continue to meet these targets. Keep up the good work, Open Doors!

To learn more about TCYSD's Achieving Youth Results and to see other funded program's report cards, please visit our website at:

<http://tompkinscountyny.gov/youth/AYR>

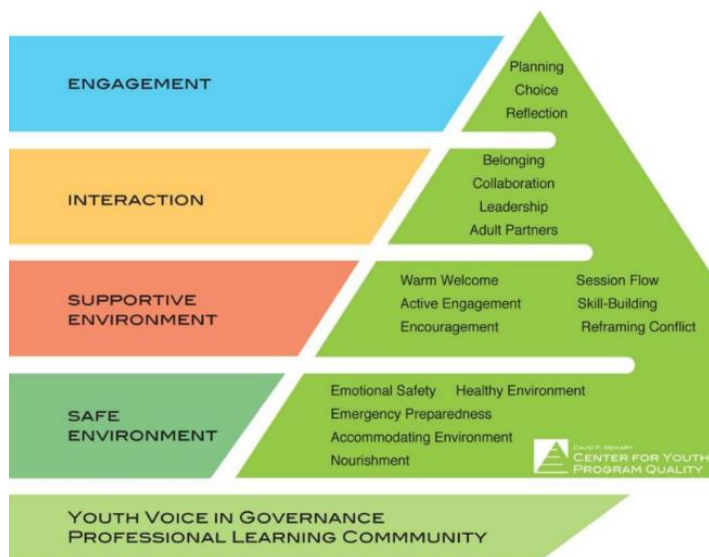


## Program Quality Assessment (PQA) What Is It? How Do We Use It?

The PQA is a validated instrument designed to evaluate the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs. It is based on observation, assessors watch interactions, write notes, and score the tool.

8 Domains are observed;

- Physical & psychological safety;
- Appropriate structure;
- Supportive relationships;
- Opportunities to belong;
- Positive social norms;
- Support for efficacy and mattering;
- Opportunities for skill building; and
- Integration of families, schools, community.



Two staff from Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. observed 9 programs supported by the Municipal Youth Services System April through June 2019.

The Data collected from the scoring of the instrument is passed along to the programs in a report that outlines the areas of

success and recommended training needs and policy development areas. TCYS also uses the information from these observations to identify County-wide training needs.

Assessments are done approximately every two years to give programs time to create or revise policies and provide quality training to staff.

## Calling All Medical Providers!!

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) occurs any time a youth under the age of 18 years old exchanges a sex act or performance (whether by free will or coercion) for something of value. Youth in Tompkins County have been identified as having been trafficked or are at high-risk. Members of the medical community are in a unique position to listen for and respond to the signs of CSEC.

Join TCYSD, the Advocacy Center, and other members of Tompkins County's CSEC Critical Team for a FREE day-long conference on September 25, 2019 at Hotel Ithaca.

Workshops will include Human Trafficking 101 for Medical Professionals and Human Trafficking Protocol Development with components of Trauma Informed Care.

Visit <http://bit.ly/2019CSEC> for more information and to register today!

## Tompkins County Bullying Prevention Taskforce

Did you know?

19% of American high school students report being bullied, and nearly 15% experience cyberbullying.

In New York State, 21.7% of high school students were bullied, which is higher than the national percentage.

Bullying has psychological, physical, and academic effects. It adversely affects youth who are bullied as well as those who engage in bullying. Youth who are perceived as different, especially LGBTQ children, are at greater risk of bullying.

Considering these facts, Tompkins County Youth Services is proud to partner with more than 30 local stakeholder organizations to include: youth, parents, school districts, mental health providers, and other youth-serving agencies through the Tompkins County Bullying Prevention Taskforce to address the serious issue of bullying in our communities.

Launched in March of this year, the Taskforce consists of 6 working subgroups actively focused on the following areas:

- Landscape Assessment
- Community Forum Planning and Community Liaison
- In-School Programs
- Parent/Family Advisory Group
- Student Advisory Group
- Public Campaigns

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, the Taskforce held a community forum to introduce its work to the public and to solicit ideas from the community on strategies to address bullying. Information and feedback gathered through this event will assist the Taskforce in establishing both short and long-term goals. Activity planning will occur throughout the summer months to plan for another community event and campaign, as well as in-school programming in the fall.



*June Community Forum at TC Public Library*

To learn more about the work of the Taskforce please contact Bridgette Nugent at [bnugent@tompkins-co.org](mailto:bnugent@tompkins-co.org).



## County Youth Services supports Tompkins County 100 Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness

In the beginning of May 2019, several stakeholders joined forces to launch the Tompkins County 100 Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness.

Tompkins County was selected as one of four communities nationally this year to take on a 100 Day Challenge via the Rapid Results Institute, a nonprofit organization that designed the methodology behind the Challenge and supports groups as they work towards systemic change. RRI sets this 100 Day benchmark to create a sense of urgency and promote new levels of collaboration.

Tompkins County's goal is to house 50 youth in 100 days (the number of youth ages 16-24 identified as being homeless in Tompkins County as registered in the Coordinated Assessment System) by identifying alternative housing models, pushing for better collaboration with landlords, and ensuring all youth identified have a designated advocate/mentor to serve as a caring adult and connect them with necessary resources.

Team sponsor Liddy Bargar, Coordinator of Housing Initiatives at the Human Services Coalition, said in an interview with the Ithaca Voice for an article published on May 31, 2019 that "youth who are unhoused are often staying with friends and moving often, and though they may be couch surfing and without a stable home, do not necessarily consider themselves homeless. It makes them a pretty invisible population."

The team consists of staff from TCYSD, Child Development Council, First Congregational Church, The Learning Web, Family and Children Services, the Advocacy Center, Ithaca Youth Bureau's Youth Employment Services, Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency, Tompkins County DSS, the Human Services Coalition, and other interested members of the community.

Learn more about the Rapid Results Institute and the nationwide 100 Day Challenges at: <https://www.rapidresults.org/> and follow the local Challenge on Facebook @TC100DC (Tompkins County 100 Day Challenge).

At the time of writing, 6 youth have been housed.

## Summer Youth Employment

Summer Youth Employment (SYEP) is well underway! Through New York State SYEP funding, Ithaca Youth Bureau's Youth Employment Services and Tompkins County Workforce New York's Office of Employment and Training have kicked off the summer with soft skills training and supported connections to first time employment opportunities for over 160 local Tompkins County youth. Youth are gaining valuable experiences at a variety of employment settings, including summer camps, local retail settings, food service, and community-based organization administrative settings.

TCYSD reflects on their first work experiences and the skills gained that carried on to their work today:

*Theresa worked in food & customer service at the Greek Place, located in the basement food court of Center Ithaca. Duties included "doing it all" – she took orders, cooked food, ran the cash register, kept the counter clean, filled supplies/condiments as needed, and cleaned and mopped the kitchen. She gained valuable skills in money management, responsibility and accountability, and work ethics: show up on time, dress appropriately, always do your best, ask questions, pay attention, listen to instructions and to your boss, and respect authority.*

*Shannon did occasional babysitting but began her first professional job at age 16 bussing tables at Hal's Deli in downtown Ithaca, a job which soon turned into a waitressing role. She clearly remembers that first interview experience, the importance*

*of first impressions, and says the skills gained of multi-tasking in a high-pressure environment while providing quality customer service have been integral to all work roles ever since!*

*Janice worked as a newspaper deliverer from age 9-16 and in the summers as a camp counselor. She also had a unique job of counting cars to collect data on traffic volume (no technology to do it at the time). Valuable skills she gained included: sales skills/customer service, handling money, how to pay attention for a long period of time without getting distracted, and to be on time or risk missing a ride and losing out on work!*

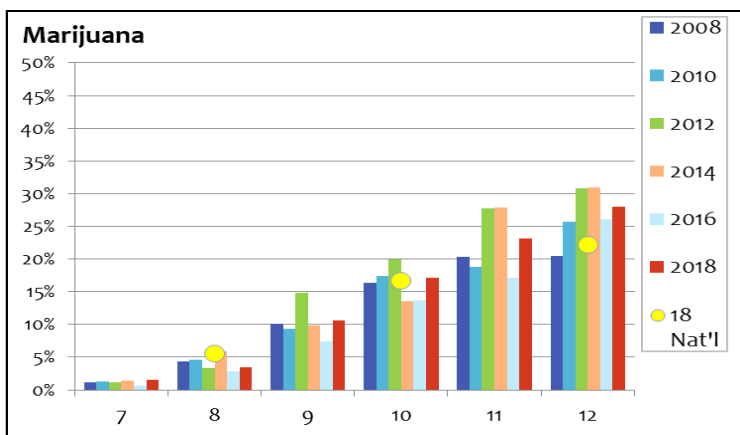
*Bridgette began what would be a long stint in retail at the age of 15 working at Eddie Bauer. She has used the skills she learned in customer service there at every job she's had since!*

*Kate's first job was working at the concession stand at a movie theatre where she ran the register, filled orders for hotdogs, popcorn, cotton candy and purchases of soda and candy. With her first shift being on opening night of the movie Twister, Kate has learned valuable lessons in teamwork and customer service. Kate states that if you are going to be a part of a team, then be a part of a team and do your share of the workload. She also has developed high respect for those who work with the public on a daily basis as people are not always their best selves.*

*(By the way, Kate does not recommend theatre hotdogs and highly suggests getting popcorn fresh from the popper, in addition to checking under movie seats for dropped money). 😊*

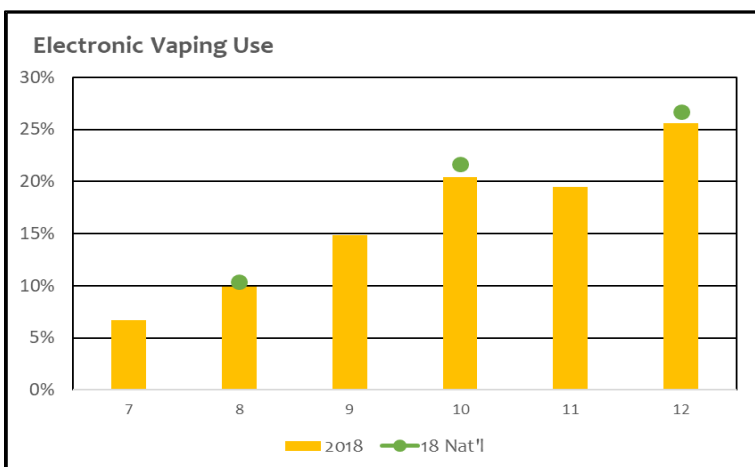
## The Results Are In!

In the Fall of 2018, nearly 4,000 Tompkins County students in grades 7-12 completed the Communities that Care Youth Survey. For most schools, this was the sixth time they participated in the biennial survey, allowing for time-trend analysis since 2008.



In partnership with the Community Coalition of Healthy Youth, TST BOCES, The Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County, and the Tompkins County Health Department, we are pleased to present highlights of this year's survey [here](#).

Visit our website at <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/youth/YouthData> for more updates to data on Tompkins County youth and updated Town Profiles.



## Opportunities for Involvement

Do you support the mission of investing time, resources and funding in communities to enable all youth to thrive in school, work and life? Are you willing to commit to providing your thoughts, insights, and time to help advise the Youth Services Department? If you answered yes to these questions perhaps membership on either a local youth commission or the TCYSD Youth Board is the right fit for you!

Current vacancies include:

- **Tompkins County Youth Services Board** is in need of representatives from **Caroline and Danby**. Youth Board members must be 16 or older and committed to advocating on behalf of the youth in Tompkins County.
- **Enfield Community Council:** Meets the last Thursday of the month 6:30 p.m.
- **Lansing Youth Commission:** Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month 7:00 p.m.
- **The Joint Youth Commission** is looking for volunteers from the **Town of Caroline and Village of Lansing**, they meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m.
- **The Dryden Youth Commission:** Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month 7:00 p.m.

Contact Bridgette Nugent at [bnugent@tompkins-co.org](mailto:bnugent@tompkins-co.org) for more information!

## TOMPKINS COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES BOARD Spotlight

The Tompkins County Youth Services Board serves as an advisory board to the Tompkins County Youth Services Department.

It creates and supports the departmental Resource Allocations and consists of representatives from all of Tompkins County municipalities, and several at-large members.

We hold monthly meetings where we get to hear from each member what is going on in their specific town or village, and then figure out how the Youth Services Department can help focus resources to meet the needs of the local youth throughout.

We thought you might like to meet a couple of our Youth Services Board Members. We sat down with Tamer Elshourbagy, Assistant Vice President and Portfolio

Manager at Tompkins Trust Financial Advisors, to get to know him a bit better. Below are some of the questions we asked and his responses:



**Q: How long have you served on the Tompkins County Youth Services Board?**

*A: I have been on the Board about a month.*

**Q: What makes the Tompkins County Youth Services Department's mission so meaningful to you?**

*A: The children of our community are the future leaders of not just our community but the world. While life presents its challenges across all age demographics, the youth today are dealing with issues never seen before such as the advent of social media and other forms of communication as well as the struggles faced at home and around the community. I'm excited to be part of an organization that helps provide youth with services and experiences that simply allow kids the opportunity to be kids.*

**Q: What skills, connections, resources, or expertise do you bring to the Youth Services Board?**

*A: I currently serve on the board of the Women's Opportunity Center. I believe my experience with the WOC lends itself well to the TCYSD as many of the challenges faced are intertwined with one another. I also bring 20 years of experience in financial services (I'm a numbers guy).*

**Q: We know that it is so important for youth to have caring adults in their lives. As a youth, did you have any adults in your life that really make a difference? If so, can you tell us about that person?**

*A: I spent a few years growing up in the Bay area and became a huge 49ers fan during the glorious 1980s. I followed the great Joe Montana through his years with the 49ers and admired his calmness and ability to*



keep his composure in big game situations. He also faced adversity throughout his entire career due to injuries and age but used that as motivation to prove everyone wrong. Watching Joe on and off the field helped me grow as person in dealing with stressful situations and believing in myself and capabilities.

**Q: Through our work, we know how important it is to help youth find local employment that is both meaningful and fulfilling, as those experiences helps shape their work habits as adults. What was your first job? And how much did you get paid?**

*A: I was an associate at TJ Maxx and was paid the max for the minimum hourly salary of \$4.75/hr. I worked in every department including running the cashiers, jewelry, fitting room, and was the head of layaway.*

**Q: What lessons did you take away from that early employment experience that you still carry with you today?**

*A: I credit TJ Maxx with providing me the foundation for a lifelong skillset that remains at the forefront of my expertise at home in executing the perfect fold of my family's clothes.*

**Q: What career advice would you give the younger version of yourself?**

*A: Take risks and don't be afraid to fail.*

We are so lucky to have so many wonderful individuals who volunteer their time to sit on our Youth Services Board. Each one bringing their own experiences and expertise to bear on the very important conversations around youth development in Tompkins County. We want to thank

each of them, and especially Tamer for taking time out of his busy schedule to answer our questions.

We hope you have enjoyed this, and we look forward to highlighting another Youth Services Board Member in future newsletters.

## Youth Worker Training Series

To date we've offered 10 trainings/workshops, with over 450 attendees.

Be sure to check our [web page](#) for more details!



**January:** STEM Workshop at Cornell University

**March:** Growth Mindset with Christine Bainbridge

**March:** Identifying & Supporting survivors of CSEC and Youth Trafficking

**April:** SAFETalk: Suicide Alertness for Everyone; 2 sessions

**April:** High – Ding Spots

**May:** DSS Summer Camp Scholarships

**May:** Screening of film **Angst** followed by a Q & A session

**May:** Surrounded by Bullying: How to identify what is happening to kids and how to help.

**June:** Ben Cort: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Marijuana; 3 sessions

**June:** Autism 101

### **Upcoming trainings/presentations:**

**September:** Jessica Janniere – *Resiliency*

**October:** Michael Nerney – *The Adolescent Brain, Trends in Substance Abuse*

**November:** Dr. Edward Mainzer – *Keeping LGBTQIA youth safe*

### **Recent Articles that Caught Our Eye**

Here are a few links to interesting research, trends, or program information that may be of interest to those in the youth services world.

- **The Trevor Project's newly released National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health (June 2019):**  
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/The-Trevor-Project-National-Survey-Results-2019.pdf>

This is the first wide-ranging report from a cross-sectional survey of LGBTQ youth across the United States. With over 34,000 respondents, it is the largest survey of LGBTQ youth mental health ever conducted and provides a critical understanding of the experiences impacting their lives. Key findings include: 39% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months and more than 50% of transgender and non-binary youth

have seriously considered suicide; 76% of LGBTQ youth felt that the recent political climate impacted their mental health or sense of self; and 71% of LGBTQ youth reported discrimination due to either their sexual orientation or gender.

- **Resources for families compiled by Tompkins Families, a program of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County:**

<http://ccetompkins.org/family/tompkins-families>

Check out their website for upcoming events and classes, view their Family Resource Directory, sign up to receive their monthly e-newsletter "Family Matters", and more! Like them on Facebook @TompkinsFamilies to stay up to date on current offerings and new opportunities.

- **Do you have a Family Media Plan?**  
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>

The American Academy of Pediatrics has created an easy-to-use online template for creating rules and goals around your family's media use. The purpose of this plan to create family dialog around technology use to reduce its impact on family togetherness, based on your family's own values. Work together to set a plan to increase face-to-face interaction, family-time, outdoor-play, exercise, unplugged downtime and sleep!