

Tompkins County Youth Services Department

Quarter 3 Newsletter, November 2018

A Message from Bridgette Nugent, Interim Director

Greetings and Happy Fall!

It has certainly felt like a season of transition here at Tompkins County Youth Services. We wished colleagues well in their new professional adventures and welcomed a new team member, all while ensuring the support our Department provides to the Municipal Youth Services System, youth-serving agencies, and the county youth population at large remain uninterrupted.

As the Interim Director of Tompkins County Youth Services, new to the department myself, I remain humbled and impressed by the expertise and knowledge exhibited by the long tenured and dedicated staff of Youth Services. It's apparent that no matter what changes come down the pike, the team at TCYSD will manage without losing sight of their mission.

The search for the new Director is currently underway, and we look forward to sharing updates with you as we learn more. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the articles in our Fall 2018 Newsletter; an introduction to our newest staff member, an update on

our CSEC awareness campaign, a profile of a Youth Services Advisory Board Member, and more!

As always, we encourage you to connect with us with your questions or thoughts. Visit our website or connect via Facebook [@ToCoYouth](#) and Twitter [@TompkinsCoYouth](#).

Happy Reading!

Sincerely,

Bridgette
bnugent@tompkins-co.org



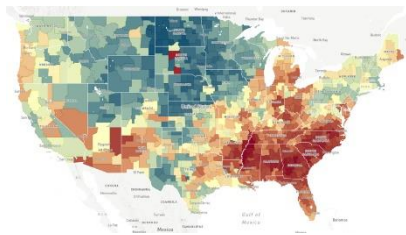
Did You Know?

A key component of our mission is to invest time in data collection and interpretation to better understand the challenges facing youth in Tompkins County. In recent weeks, the Student Survey, a biennial survey disseminated to all Tompkins County students in 7-12th grade was distributed.

A project of the Community Coalition of Healthy Youth (CCHY), a partnership between TST BOCES, Tompkins County Alcohol & Drug Council, Tompkins County Health Department and TCYSD, the feedback gathered from this survey informs much of the data we provide to the community at large. We anxiously await the results of the 2018 survey!

In the meantime, please visit our [website](#) to view regularly updated local youth data. Contact us if you are interested in data that is not currently displayed!

In other neat data news, the recently released [Opportunity Atlas](#) has highlighted several notable themes related to youth, their environment, and social mobility.



Happy investigating!

Meet Shannon Alvord, Community Coordinator for Youth Services!



The Youth Services Department is excited to welcome Shannon Alvord on board as a Community Coordinator for Youth Services. Shannon will be helping to support the organization as we continue to provide backbone services throughout the community. The following interview provides a little background on why Shannon will be a great asset to our team!

1. Can you give me some background on your career? I.e. what led you to this position?

I obtained my bachelor's Degree in Middle School Education from Lesley College in Cambridge, MA, then returned to Ithaca. I worked for a few years as a childcare provider while completing a master's degree in Social Work from Syracuse University. While enrolled at Syracuse, I served as a social work intern at Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services and with the Ithaca Rescue Mission. I began working at Tompkins Learning Partners, an agency

that provides free educational tutoring services, first as an Outreach and Recruitment Assistant and then as the Adult Basic Education Program Coordinator. I worked there for four years, providing case management services for clients, recruitment and supervision of volunteers, and program development support.

2. Does a particular time in your career stand out as the current career highlight?

When I stepped into the role of Adult Basic Education Coordinator at Tompkins Learning Partners, I was able to really dig my teeth into the work that we were doing there. I got to experience the joys and heartbreaks that go along with any client-based work and have a deep, profound respect for adult learners seeking to make improvements to their lives. Their stories I will carry with me forever. In this role, I was also able to work on program development and participate in grant writing opportunities, tasks which have given me experience in organizational development.

3. What inspires you about your new position?

I'm excited to be back involved with youth programming and getting the opportunity to support the efforts of the various agencies in Tompkins County who conduct this work.

4. What unique talent do you feel you bring to the youth services department?

My focus while in school for social work was on macro practice: community organizing, policy, planning and administration. Coupled with my experiences in client services, I feel I have a unique perspective

on how macro design impacts at the ground-level. I will be receptive to the needs and concerns of county agencies and use this insight in shaping better program design.

5. Do you have any hobbies and interests outside of work that you'd like to share?

I enjoy reading, baking, and gardening (I've actually worked for 4 years at 2 different local greenhouse/farm stores) – and now *really* enjoy sharing these activities with my two-year-old daughter.

6. What else do you want others to know about you?

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday, I have three cats and I love all things chocolate.

2019 Pitch Program

In support of Achieving Youth Results, Tompkins County Youth Services is excited to announce its second annual mini-grant Pitch Program!

This unique program provides an opportunity for Tompkins County non-profits to compete for funding “Shark Tank” style. Those selected are matched with community coaches to prepare for their pitch presentation to a panel of judges on March 13, 2019.

To date, over 400 Tompkins County youth have participated in programs funded by 2018 Pitch Program funding.

Application materials for the 2019 Pitch Program will be available on our [website](#) starting **November 16, 2018**.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Awareness Campaign – *Trust Your Instinct*

Utilizing feedback provided by local teens, Tompkins County Youth Services partnered with local design firm Iron Design to create the second phase of the CSEC awareness campaign.

With the goal of directly reaching youth, the imagery and corresponding text seek to highlight common techniques or “red flags” utilized by traffickers to influence their victims. The campaign empowers youth to “Trust Your Instinct.” If something doesn’t feel right, it probably isn’t.

The second phase of this campaign can be seen on county billboards, bus ads, mall blades, posters, and online at: www.listenforthesigns.org. This campaign and other CSEC awareness activities are paid for by NYS Office of Family and Children’s Services Safe Harbour funding.



I Am Jane Doe Film Screening and Discussion

Tompkins County Youth Services hosted a community film screening of the powerful documentary film *I Am Jane Doe* at Cinemapolis on October 23, 2018. This film chronicles the fight of several American mothers in their legal battle against Backpage.com, the site which facilitated the sex trafficking of their teenage daughters.

Following the film screening, Kristi Taylor, Education Director of the Advocacy Center, and Christine Barksdale, of the Ithaca Police Department, addressed questions from the audience regarding the prevalence of online sex trafficking of children in Tompkins County and what action community members can take to increase awareness and end this form of child sexual abuse.

Stay tuned for future trainings and community discussions related to this important issue!

Interview with Youth Services Advisory Board Member

Ian Schachner

Associate Director of Admissions, Cornell
University

Board Member, At-Large

Why did you
join the board?

There are so many great people who support youth throughout the county and I really like that the work of the TCYSD can help all of them. I think anyone who works to support young people knows how tough it can be to get the day-to-day tasks done while also trying to stay up to date on recent research, follow best practices and analyze current ones, and receive relevant training. As a board, we get to learn about and discuss how YSD goes about these and other efforts to help youth-focused organizations reach their potential.



What's your favorite part of the experience so far?

For me, the best part of every meeting is learning from the staff and other board members because there are people who work or volunteer in education, counseling, government, and other areas. You learn a lot about the full range of resources and activities going on in our region, and you get to hear several different perspectives on the issues facing young people today

and the different ways people are working to address them.

What are you looking forward to in terms of board work for 2019?

I think it's a great time to be a new board member. We're looking to fill board positions for those specifically from the Towns of Danby, Caroline and Newfield, as well as some At-Large seats. We also hope to have a new Director begin sometime in the new year, so I'm looking forward to the presentations, meetings, and discussions being planned for them. As a relatively new member, I still have a lot to learn about how the department operates and how the board can contribute to the overall mission, so I look forward to taking this all in and getting to know the new people who join us.

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, Danby, Newfield, Tompkins County youth ages 16-21, and 4 At-Large members**. 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 3rd Thursday of the month 7:00 p.m.
- **The Joint Youth Commission** is looking for volunteers from the **Town of Ithaca, Town of Caroline, and Village of Lansing**, they meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m.
- **The Dryden Youth Commission:** Meets the 4th Wednesday of the month 7:00 p.m.

Contact Bridgette Nugent at bnugent@tompkins-co.org for more information!

Profiles of Margaret and Angie, Two Caring Adults

by Pete Angie
Youth Services Advisory Board Member

Last October the Youth Services Department celebrated adults in our community who play an important role in the lives of youth in TC, both past and present. The effort was in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Youth Services Department. From over one hundred nominations, forty were randomly selected to be honored at a reception. Angie Beeler and Margaret Slattery were two of those adults selected. Youth Services caught up with them recently to profile their continuing efforts to enrich the

lives of young people and talk about the adults who inspired them.

Angie Beeler has owned and operated Ms. Angie's Music since 2012, teaching classes for hundreds of young children and their caregivers, teaching rhythm, harmonic exercises, musical play, and "going through the gamut of what it takes to build a child's musical aptitude." She seeks, ultimately, to enable children and caregivers to connect through music, incorporating movement, spatial awareness, and pretend play too. "It's a musical journey by itself," said Angie, "and an education."

Angie did not always get the message growing up that her love of art and music could be put to good use, but there was a caring adult in her life that consistently sent her just that message. Mrs. Lavender was Angie's art teacher, from third grade through graduation. "She engaged my natural curiosity and validated my natural exploration with (her) excitement." In addition to the multiple lessons Mrs. Lavender taught her, she also encouraged and helped Angie, at 13 years old, to apply for a summer program at the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC. "She encouraged all these unique experiences." Angie still remembers a quotation given to her from Mrs. Lavender, "It's not the clay itself that makes the pot. It's the space in between." This reminded her that it wasn't just having the gift of an artistic eye and a creative mind that mattered; it's what she would do with it. That encouragement helped set her on her journey to be who she is today, and to share her gifts and passion with the children and families in this community.

Margaret Slattery is a family support worker with the Child Development Council of TC. She has been there for eleven years, and prior to that she ran a day care. She is also the parent of a child with autism. She works with young parents, under the age of thirty, who have a child or children under the age of five. She is quick to make a point to say that she does not help people, instead she *supports* them in achieving their goals. They work together on learning how to manage the many trying and wonderful stages of a child's development, communication between parents and child, and securing stable housing, getting GED's, achieving other education goals, and permanent employment. Margaret has worked with many of her clients for several years, and has formed deep, trusting relationships. "The trust part of a relationship can take a long time," she said, however, over time they accomplish a lot. Other hurdles, like navigating relationships, and building positive self-image, are less tangible goals, but not unimportant. Working with young mothers and developing those relationships, says Margaret, "has been really fascinating for me. These young women are truly growing."

Margaret credits her mother, Sandie Firenze (both pictured to the right), as a caring adult who had a positive influence on her as a child. Margaret shared that her mother was raised in foster care and taught her to be



non-judgmental and empathetic toward everyone. "I would be in trouble if I picked on anyone," said Margaret, and added that her mother lived her compassion, and was "so giving."

Youth Services is grateful to Margaret and Angie, the adults who influenced them, and their continuing efforts to enrich the lives of youth in TC.

Youth Worker Training Series

To date we've offered 9 trainings/workshops to over 300 participants!



January: What Does Class Got to Do With It – Part I; Anne Rhodes

February: Mandated Reporter; Kristi Taylor, Advocacy Center & Erin McKenna, Dept of Social Services

March 29: Identifying & Supporting Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Trafficking, Part II; Naomi Barry, Advocacy Center & Christine Barksdale, Ithaca Police Department

April 25: Summer Camp Scholarship Guidelines, Dept of Social Services & Child Development Council

June 28: Adventure Based Learning; Mohawk Valley Safe Schools Program

July 11: Screening and panel discussion of the documentary *Screenagers* at the Cinemapolis Theatre.

September 20: Poverty Simulation; Cindy Martin, Tompkins Community Action & Jennifer Astles, TST BOCES

October 23: Screening and panel discussion of the documentary *I Am Jane Doe* at the Cinemapolis Theatre.

October 30: Project Look Sharp: *Youth Culture & New Technologies, Media Violence & Conflict Resolution*; Cyndy Scheibe, Executive Director and Founder of Project Look Sharp and Professor of Psychology at Ithaca College

Upcoming trainings/presentations:

November 29: Raise the Age presentation: An introduction to the changes within the Juvenile Justice system for 16-17 year olds.

December 12: PATH (*Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*) Workshop

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

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. If you have suggestions on future articles for us to feature, please let us know.

The most dangerous apps of 2018:

<https://educateempowerkids.org/dangerous-apps-2018-2/>

Great article on the latest trends (and concerns) in the online realm and tips for keeping children safe

International Pronouns Day (Wednesday, October 17th):

<https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2018/10/17/why-we-created-international-pronouns-day>

Creating an inclusive, affirming environment through normalizing the process of asking, sharing and respecting pronouns in effort to provide "real, tangible suicide prevention for our youth".

Local action for the prevention of injuries in youth sports:

<https://www.pressconnects.com/story/news/local/2018/10/01/youth-sports-safety-schools-youth-leagues-make-changes/1446598002/>

Learn about ICSD's plans for implementing a holistic approach to student-athlete wellness and safety

Running to Places: theatre program for youth:

<https://ithacavoices.com/2018/06/running-places-theater-company-plans-permanent-location-ithaca-mall/>

Learn more about an innovative program in Tompkins County which seeks to engage youth from 6th grade to 12th grade in the performance arts, currently in the midst of a capital campaign to build a theatre in the mall!