

APRIL 2021
OAK PARK TOWNSHIP ANNUAL REPORT
YOUTH SERVICES AT A GLANCE
Submitted By: Megan Traficano, Youth Services Director

Youth Services supports programs and services that address youth through the implementation of prevention techniques, crisis intervention, restorative justice, therapeutic involvement, case management and coordination of wraparound services with other community partners and agencies. Youth Services also advocates for programs and services which enhance the social /emotional development of youth and their families. Youth Services is committed to promoting positive opportunities for youth and families and to helping the youth and their families access needed services.

Youth Services activities are in 3 areas as detailed in the Budget document including: Youth Programs, Contracts and Development, Restorative Justice, and the Youth Interventionist Program.

In the past Fiscal Year, Youth Services provided a variety of services both directly and indirectly including but not limited to:

- 14** Contracts with agencies/organizations
 - 2** River Forest
 - 4** Joint OP and RF
 - 8** Oak Park
- 64** Youth received Clinical Intervention through the Youth Interventionist Program
- 634** Telehealth sessions conducted by the Youth Interventionist Team (due to the COVID 19 pandemic)
- 42** Girls participated in the Girls on the Rise Program
- 11** Financial Assistance Scholarships for Youth in OP
- 1** Financial Assistance Scholarships for Youth in RF

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HIGHLIGHTS FOR FY 2021

Girls on The Rise

- 77 Sessions of Girls on the Rise held
- 42 Youth participated in Girls on the Rise

Girls on the Rise offers a custom group curriculum specifically for Black and Brown girls that focuses on helping girls improve self-esteem, self-worth, build leadership skills like self-reflection, critical thinking, sound decision making, goal setting, clear communication, and personal accountability. A typical group serves 10-15 girls in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Participants share feelings, struggles, hopes, and similarities and serve as a sounding board and or support system for one another while discussing and participating in a variety of activities geared for young teens. Topics might include communication, advocacy, mental health, decision making, improving relationships with family and friends, body image etc. The program gives adolescent girls an opportunity to feel empowered, improve daily problem-solving skills, gain self-awareness, understand culture bias, improve self-esteem, feel connected with other girls, make healthy decisions, and own their Magic.

This fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic all Girls on the Rise Sessions were conducted virtually. District 97 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls were offered to participate in Girls on the Rise Sessions as part of their school day, during Advisory Time. This is the first year that Girls on the Rise was embedded as part of the school day for District 97. High School freshmen and sophomore girls were able to attend after school groups twice a month. While Girls on the Rise had its challenges this year due to the pandemic the girls were still able to meet and help support each other, work on hands on activities (staff volunteered their time to drop off supplies to each individual girls' homes) and complete the curriculum.

Contracted Programs

In fiscal year 2021, Youth Services Contracted for 14 Programs, of these programs: 8 were specific to the OP Community, 2 were specific to the River Forest Community, 4 serve both communities.

Program	Contracted Amount	Billed Amount	Number of Youth Served (as of Jan. 2021)
RIVER FOREST			
Connections (RF) RF Public Library*	\$ 8,383.76	\$ 2,980.84	61
I-Search (RF) RF Police	\$9,125.00	\$9,028.84	Due to COVID this program was unable to offer in-person presentations. Curriculum content was adapted into a video format and distributed to schools in January 2021
Total RF ONLY	\$17,508.76.00	\$12,009.68	

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JOINT	(OP 80%, RF 20%)		
Operation Snowball/Snowflake	\$5900.00	\$0	10
STEM 4NE1- Robotics Camp	\$17,732.00 (OP 50%, RF 50%)	\$15,843.00	17
Intramurals	\$7,000.00	\$3,960.00	No reports were submitted
OPPL- Try-It Thursdays and Living History Project	\$4,800.00	\$4,404.54	131
Total JOINT RF 20%	\$35,432.00	\$24,207.54	

OAK PARK			
Program	Contracted Amount	Billed Amount	Number of Youth Served (As of Jan. 2021)
Friday Night Place Fellowship CS	\$50,000	\$50,000	No data of attendance given in monthly report
OP Park District Scholarships	\$8,000	\$8,000	13
CUC-SMART	\$50,000	\$49,503	11
Oak Park District 97 Julian MS- makers Space	\$5,500	\$5,496.14	No data of attendance given in monthly report
Longfellow Homework Helper	\$2,000	\$0	No reports were submitted
Longfellow Mentoring	\$1,455.00	\$0	No reports were submitted
Mann HH Club	\$ 3,000	\$0	No reports were submitted
SLAM	\$6,000	\$0	Not in session due to COVID
Total Oak Park	\$120,455.00	\$112,999.14	

- *Final numbers on youth served via contracted programs due May 25, 2021

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Financial Assistance Scholarships (FAS):

In fiscal year 2021, 10 children received FAS funding in Oak Park. OP children were funded to participate in 8 programs (see below).

Oak Park FAS

Organization	Program	Dollar Amount	Number of Youth
Ovation Academy	BRAVO Program	\$250.00	1
	Encore Camp	\$750.00	3
	Ovation Summer Camp	\$250.00	1
Park Distric of Oak Park	Youth Sports-Tee Ball	\$83.00	1
	Gymnastics Team Program	\$134.00	1
Kindness Creators Preschool	Pre-School Program	\$250.00	1
River Forest Youth Baseball-Softball	Spring 2021 Teeball	\$250.00	1
	Softball Majors	\$260.00	1
Oak Park and River Forest Pony Baseball	Leage-2021-OPRF Pony House	\$275.00	1
Total		\$2,502.00	11

In fiscal year 2021, 1 child received FAS funding in River Forest and funded to participate in 1 program (see below).

River Forest FAS

Organization	Program	Dollar Amount	Number of Youth
River Forest Park District	Multi Sports Camp	\$52.00	1
Total		\$52.00	1

*COVID-19 Crisis Impacted the FAS requests, due to the majority of extracurricular programs either being shut down, only allowing for minimal participants, or youth/families did not feel comfortable and safe enough to participate.

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Restorative Justice:

TIME Program

The TIME Program managed by Susan Stearns is a Youth First Offenders Program that gives local adjudication judges the option of allowing local youths to perform community service to work off their infractions.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic local Adjudication was suspended from April 2021-July 2021 and resumed for remote cases in August 2021.

From August 2021-March 2021

7 Youth Were referred to the TIME Program

7 Youth Completed their required Community Service Hours

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic Adjudication hearings have been virtual and there have been limited options for community service, due to safety of volunteers and organizations. During the fiscal year youth were able to complete community service hours at the Oak Park Farmers Market, Beyond Hunger, Oak Park Township, the Economy Shop, or attendance at the FACE-IT Program. The TIME Program Manager worked closely with local adjudication officials to find more creative ways for youth to complete hours such as youth being able to write an essay on how the pandemic has affected them to count towards hours.

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The Youth Interventionist Program

The Youth Interventionists provide clinical intervention and therapeutic support and services to youth who are experiencing anxiety/depression or other mental health issues, trauma, anger and behavioral issues, school refusal or gang involvement.

9 local tax bodies provide funding via an Intergovernmental Agreement. Fiscal Year 2021 also had funding for the Youth Interventionist Program from the Helen Brach Foundation for **\$5,000**. Fiscal Year 2021 served a total of **64** youths (current caseload at April 1, 2021 plus referrals taken throughout the fiscal year) with a total of **42** referrals. Clients were referred for multiple reasons, including **16** youth having secondary referral reasons:

42 Primary Referral Reason:

- Anxiety and Depression: **22**
- Crisis Intervention/Trauma: **4**
- Behavioral Issues/Aggression: **14**
- School Refusal/Attendance Issues: **2**
- Gang Involvement: **0**

16 Secondary Referral Reason:

- Anxiety/Depression: **5**
- Crisis Intervention/Trauma: **1**
- Behavioral Issues/Aggression: **3**
- School Refusal/Attendance Issues: **7**
- Gang Involvement- **0**

**Not all referrals are taken due to different reasons, also youth may be re-referred if needed, after exiting the program.*

Of those clients:

- **59** were Oak Park residents **6** were River Forest residents
- **1** of these youths were classified as Homeless.
- **36** identified as male and **28** identified as female
- Ranging from **6-18** years old; grades: **Kindergarten-12th**
- Youths attended the following schools: Oak Park and River Forest High School, Trinity High School, Fenwick High School, Roosevelt Middle School, Brooks Middle School, Julian Middle School, Irving Elementary School, Whittier Elementary School, Mann Elementary School, Longfellow Elementary School, Holmes Elementary School, Lincoln (OP) Elementary School, Willard (RF) Elementary School, and University Prep Art and Design Middle School.

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During the COVID-19 pandemic Interventionists moved to a “tele-health” model. Interventionists conducted **634** “tele-health” sessions with youth. All sessions were conducted virtually, either via Zoom or FaceTime, except for **14** sessions being able to be conducted in person, at an outside location. The Interventionists also provide support in Oak Park and River Forest Public Libraries during youth group activities (due to the COVID-19 pandemic all in person Library activities were suspended), in the Oak Park and River Forest parks and public spaces weekly throughout May-September/October. Interventionists also participated in Culture and Climate Meetings at District 97, Parent Tips: Talking to your Children About Uncertainties Presentation, Youth Discussion with OP Park District on the Community Rec Center, AMENS Group, and Welcome to Fatherhood Group. Interventionists also attend many trainings throughout the course of the year, topics included: COVID-19 and Telebehavioral Health Ethical Considerations During a Public Health Emergency, Developing Competence in Working with LGBTQ+ Communities, Child and Adolescent Mental Health in an Uncertain Time: Reintegration Strategies for Classroom and Community, Supporting Grieving Children and Teens During COVID-19 and Beyond, and Working Remotely and HIPAA Course.

Partnerships

The Youth Services Director represented the Township and provided leadership, consultation, and support in several arenas including: Social Services Taskforce (started during the COVID-19 pandemic), Rotary Club of Oak Park and River Forest, the Community Justice Center Steering Committee, the Homevisiting Taskforce, AITCOY (Association of Illinois Townships Committees on Youth), Social/Emotional Transition Planning Meetings with District 97, Youth Services Committee and multiple community workshops, including the Restorative Justice Conference at the Oak Park Public Library, Parent Tips: How to Talk to Your Children During Uncertainties Presentation, Youth Conversation with Oak Park Park District about the Community Rec Center, and Board meetings for some of the Oak Park and River Forest Taxing Bodies to talk about ways Township Youth Services could support youth in the different organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Youth Services Director also participated in Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace workshops over the course of 5 weeks through Loyola University’s Baumhart Center.

Youth Services Director also worked collaborated and worked on youth initiatives with the Social Services Team at the Oak Park Public Library, staff from the River Forest Public Library, staff from the Park District of Oak Park, Senior Director of Equity and Culture and Climate Coaches at District 97, Oak Park Police Department and River Forest Police Department. Youth Services Director also developed the current Youth Interventionist Program Intergovernmental Agreement and presented to multiple Boards in Oak Park and River Forest about the agreement.

All Youth Services staff also participated in the Oak Park Township Culture and Climate work

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with RGW, Inc. which included individual, small group, and all staff meetings. They also volunteered with several Senior Services opportunities including, Home Delivery Meals, Farmers Market Coupon Pick Up Days, and the COVID-19 vaccine registration hotline. The Youth Services Department also had a master's level intern from University of Illinois Chicago for the year, the intern worked in the Youth Interventionist Program and the Girls on the Rise Program and participated in all youth services meetings and initiatives.

We look forward to continuing our work in restorative justice, collaborations, youth focused events and initiatives and good work with our partners, volunteers, youth and families.