



## Inside this issue:

-Youth Leadership Forum	1
-After School Network	
-Youth Board Spotlight: Kenny Simmons	2
-NYS Youth Council	
-Erie County Youth Ser- vices—Contact Info.	3
-Deadlines / Events	
-Misc. flyers and event infor- mation	4-6

## Erie County Youth Board:

- Liza Acanfora
- Iman Abuhamra  
(Youth Member)
- Kelli Blakeley
- Nichelle Brown
- Alan Carter-Fambo
- David Caywood
- Jeffrey Davis
- Paul Denning
- Dialo Rivera-Stevens  
(Youth Member)
- Jasmine Fluker
- Veronica Golden
- Melissa Jones
- Jack Kavanaugh
- Charity Lulas
- Susan Lumadue
- Aneesa Masaed
- Brian Rochford
- Kenny Simmons
- Sean Tulumello

# Erie County Youth Bureau Chronicle



Spring 2020

## NYS Youth Leadership Forum A Success

Cheektowaga's youth voice just became much louder. On February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, seven local students were sponsored by a Legislative grant received by the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus to attend the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Youth Leadership Conference in Albany, NY. The conference allowed these students to meet Representatives from their local district and express to them the importance of funding for youth programming and the providers of those services. The first day in Albany started with keynote speaker Dewayne Hill presenting his "Magic with a Message", which helps youth cope with issues in school such as bullying, drug use, etc. After the presentation the 120+ youth, from all over New York State, were assigned to different work sessions (ex. Problem Solving and Leadership, Goal Setting/Life Planning, Restorative Justice, Team Building, etc.). Even though these Cheektowaga students had been up since 6am, traveled on a bus for five hours and attended different workshops, they were still energized enough to participate in the coffee house/talent show and take a dip in the hotel pool later that night.

The students had the opportunity to meet with Cheektowaga's Senator, Tim Kennedy and Assembly woman, Monica Wallace. Both the Representatives were very informative about state government and very receptive to the youth's requests not to cut funding for the Youth Bureaus throughout New York State. Both the representatives have been immensely supportive of youth and families in Cheektowaga. Some other highlights of the trip included, walking around the Assembly and Senate room floors and getting a tour of the beautiful Capital building. The young leaders from Cheektowaga returned home to share their experiences and new knowledge of leadership with their peers and communities.



*Thank you to Jillian Gorman-King, Executive Director of the Town of Cheektowaga Youth & Recreational Services for graciously providing this write-up and photos!*



## After School Network of WNY

Hosted by the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, the After-School Network of Western New York (ASNWN) serves as an intersection point for after-school and out-of-school time stakeholders in Erie and Niagara County. The network engages in systems-level work around policy, partnerships, and quality assurance to create conditions for programs to operate effectively and meet the diverse needs of young people in the region in out-of-school time settings. ASNWN brings together program staff and community leaders to advance a vision of quality out-of-school programming for all students in the region. ASNWN meets quarterly and operates several standing committees: (1). Steering, (2). Advocacy, (3). Systems Building, and (4). Professional Development/Capacity Building. All out-of-school time stakeholders are welcome to join the network and affiliated subcommittees. The ASNWN is led by Ben Hilligas (Erie County Youth Bureau) and Nekia Kemp (Police Athletic League).

The Advocacy Committee works on events, which highlight the importance of out-of-school time programs. The committee is the lead on organizing the ASNWN yearly events. These events include the following: Lights On After School; Legislative Coffee Hour on March 13<sup>th</sup> at Southside Elementary School; Summer Learning Day; and advocacy meetings in collaboration with other agencies throughout the year. This committee works closely with the statewide network (NYS Network for Youth Success) in developing advocacy materials and communicating to ASNWN members on current policy and statewide advocacy initiatives. This committee meets once a month generally on the last Tuesday of the month at the Delavan Gridler Community Center at 877 E. Delavan Ave, Buffalo, NY 14215. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact the chair Talisa King at [talisa.king@erie.gov](mailto:talisa.king@erie.gov). -Talisa King

For more information, please visit the group's Facebook or Twitter pages (@ASNWN). To sign up for the After-School Network of Western New York regional listserv, click here: <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/NewYorkStateNetworkforYou/subscribe.html>

## Youth Board Spotlight: Pastor Kenneth “Kenny” Simmons

For this newsletter, we would like to spotlight one of our very own Youth Board members, Kenneth Simmons. “Pastor Kenny”, as he is also known, has shepherded the Cold Springs Bible Chapel in Buffalo, NY since 2013. He also works with youth in a professional capacity with both the City of Buffalo as Director of Youth & Recreation, and Erie County as Senior Chaplain at the Youth Detention Center in Buffalo. Kenny is an acclaimed leader, motivational speaker, and a recipient of numerous civic and community awards. His is both a compelling and inspirational story.

Kenny did not have an easy upbringing, but it served to make him stronger and more resilient in the process. Kenny was no stranger to the challenges facing many of today’s urban youth, growing up in a city lacking the resources of its more affluent suburban counterparts. Both of his parents struggled with substance abuse—his mother with drugs and his father with alcohol. His father was not always around, and Kenny found himself to be a father at 14 years of age. Kenny confesses that through God’s grace, he was eventually delivered from a life of drugs, gangs, violence and crime.



As is the case with so many young folks who eventually find their way, he had strong mentors along the way. One such mentor is fellow Erie County Youth Board member and fellow City of Buffalo employee, Sue Lumadue. Kenny credits Sue for “taking me under her wing and guiding me on a path toward healing”. Sue continues to serve as a mentor and friend of Kenny as they both strive together to ensure that the youth of Buffalo and Erie County have their voices heard and their needs met. Kenny is now able to give back this gift and to serve as a mentor to youth and adults alike.

Kenny joined the Youth Board in January 2017. He was a 2018 recipient of the Mayor’s Youth Award, bestowed by Mayor Byron W. Brown for service to young people. He is also a co-founder of Most Valuable Parents (MVP) of Buffalo. Kenny is the former Chairman of Commissioners for the City of Buffalo Board of Citizen’s Rights and Community Relations, Board Member of Johnnie B. Wiley Sports Pavilion, President of the NICYO Little League Baseball, Chairman of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, former Erie County Democratic Committee Zone Chairman in Fillmore Zone 10, the first African-American to hold that elected position. Pastor Simmons is also the City Lead for the National Movement of Cities United.

We are thankful for the voice that Kenny is able to provide on the Youth Board. We appreciate the challenging path that he has taken to get here. He is able to connect with troubled youth in a unique way, given his own background and the road that he has traveled to get to where he is today. Thank you, Kenny for your service to our Youth Board and for being an example of persistence and success!

## New York State Youth Council Taking Shape

Hundreds of applications from all over New York State were received in response to a call for nominees to the Governor Cuomo’s New York State Youth Council. First announced in Governor Cuomo’s State of the State address in 2019, the Youth Council will increase participatory democracy by involving 62 young people – one youth from each county – to advise Governor Cuomo and state and local policymakers on key issues facing young people and on outreach and communication strategies. The Association of NYS Youth Bureaus had been selected as the vendor to coordinate this effort with the assistance of county youth bureaus through a grant with NYS Office of Children & Family Services.

The Youth Council will provide policy recommendations on education, youth violence, the opioid crisis, juvenile justice, environmental justice, cyberbullying and civic engagement, among other issues. It will address issues that are of relevance to young women and girls, including sexual assault and harassment, female empowerment, economic opportunity and wage parity.

The Youth Council will be run by youth, ages 13 to 21, who will develop its organizational structure and prioritize key issues while its members will gain hands-on experience in the democratic process. The members will serve two-year terms.

All youth who were nominated by counties but who not selected to advance to the statewide round have since been notified. Youth Bureau directors and youth will be notified of the appointments upon the conclusion of the statewide judging. Youth appointees are expected to be notified in early March. An orientation for selected youth and their Youth Bureau Directors and/or parents/guardians will be held March 27-28th in Albany, NY. Specific location and further details forthcoming.

Thank you to all who nominated youth, and thank to all youth who applied for this prestigious opportunity! Erie County is hopeful that some local youth who did not advance to the final round of judging will consider joining Erie County’s own Youth Board/Youth Council. Stay tuned for further updates as the process continues to unfold.





## Erie County Youth Services

**Deputy Commissioner—Youth Services:** Paul Kubala  
Phone: 716-923-4065; Email: [paul.kubala@erie.gov](mailto:paul.kubala@erie.gov)

**Sr. Youth Bureau Director:** Ben Hilligas  
Phone: 716-923-4051; Email: [benjamin.hilligas@erie.gov](mailto:benjamin.hilligas@erie.gov)

**Youth Services Planning Coordinator:** Talisa King  
Phone: 716-923-4009; Email: [talisa.king@erie.gov](mailto:talisa.king@erie.gov)

**Youth Services Planning Coordinator / Newsletter Editor:**  
John Kordrupel  
Phone: 716-923-4008; Email: [john.kordrupel@erie.gov](mailto:john.kordrupel@erie.gov)

**Supervisor of Claims:** Ruby Jain  
Phone: 716-923-4047; Email: [raveela.jain@erie.gov](mailto:raveela.jain@erie.gov)

[www2.erie.gov/  
socialservices](http://www2.erie.gov/socialservices) or Google  
"Erie County Youth Bureau"

**ECYB Mission:** "To serve youth and families through support of positive youth development programs and juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities."



### UPCOMING DEADLINES/COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- See attached flyer (pg. 5) for upcoming "Positive Youth Development Training", being led by Sara Jablonski (Cornell Cooperative Extension) and Talisa King (Erie County Youth Bureau) on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> (two-day training) at JFK Community Center in Buffalo. Registration fee is \$30 which includes lunch on both days.
- Upcoming (March) "Mental Health First Aid" trainings that Compeer Buffalo holds monthly. Cost to register is \$20; however, fees may be waived for groups at Compeer's discretion. A one-pager on what to expect in the training is attached (pg. 4). Registration links provided as follows: <https://ymhfa3-3-20.eventbrite.com>
- "She Started IT Buffalo"—March 7th, 2020, 10am-2pm @ Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (Central Branch): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/she-started-it-tickets-81747291349>. See attached flyer (pg. 6).
- "5th Annual Willie Hutch Jones Educational & Sports Program Science Fair"—March 7th, 2020, 12-3pm @ Burchfield Penney Art Gallery: <http://whjse.org/the-5th-annual-whjsep-science-fair/>
- "2020 Expanded Learning Opportunities Legislative Coffee Hour", Convened by After School Network of WNY—March 13th, 2020, 3:30-4:30pm @ Southside Elementary School. See attached flyer (pg. 5).
- NYS Network for Youth Success 25th Annual "School's Out, Make it Count" Conference – March 20-21 @ Troy, NY: <http://networkforyouthsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020-Brochure1.30.20.pdf>
- Information pertaining to "Working with LGBTQ+ Youth", hosted by SUNY Albany - PDP on April 15<sup>th</sup> from 12-6pm at West Side Community Services in Buffalo. See registration form attached to email.

We welcome submissions of community events/recaps at any time, so please consider sending us notices of upcoming events and/or photos/videos that you believe might be of interest to your colleagues. Thank you!

## Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8 hour public education program which introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. Mental Health First Aid uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect young people to professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

### WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, AD/HD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Participants **do not** learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling – rather, participants learn to support a youth developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis by applying a core five-step action plan:

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies



The Youth Mental Health First Aid USA curriculum is primarily focused on information participants can use to help adolescents and transition-age youth, ages 12-18.

### WHO SHOULD TAKE THE COURSE?

The course is designed for adults who regularly interact with adolescents (teachers, school staff, coaches, youth group leaders, parents, etc.). In January 2013, President Obama recommended training for teachers in Mental Health First Aid. Since 2008, the core Mental Health First Aid course has been successfully offered to more than 1 million people across the USA, including hospital staff, employers and business leaders, faith communities, law enforcement, and the general public.

### WHO CREATED THE COURSE?

The National Council for Behavioral Health was instrumental in bringing Mental Health First Aid to the U.S. Mental Health First Aid USA worked with experts at the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development to develop the youth program.

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about the Mental Health First Aid USA, or to find a course or contact an instructor in your area, visit [www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org](http://www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org).



# PYD 101: An Introduction

*Positive Youth Development training for afterschool professionals*



**Thursday, February 27th, 9am to 2:30pm AND**

**Friday, February 28th, 2020, 9am to 2:30pm**

**JFK Community Center, 114 Hickory St., Buffalo**

**Cost: \$30**

**Includes lunch  
both days**

This **two day training** is a crash course in youth development for anyone who works with young people, especially youth in late elementary to high school. Join us to **sharpen your skills** and learn **new concepts & strategies** to enhance the positive impact you have on young people's lives.

To register, go to: [https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/PYD-2-2-2\\_214](https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/PYD-2-2-2_214) by Monday, February, 24 or scan:



Led by: **Sara Jablonski, 4-H Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, and Talisa King, Youth Services Planning Coordinator, Erie County Youth Services Division**



**ASN WNY**  
AFTER-SCHOOL NETWORK OF WESTERN NEW YORK

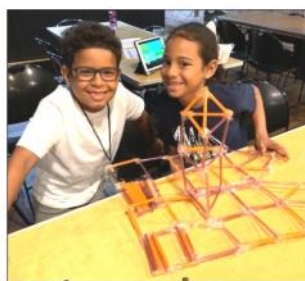
**Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Erie County**



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County provides equal program and employment opportunities. Accommodations for persons with special needs may be requested by contacting Sara Jablonski by Friday, January 18th at 716-597-7361 or [sej57@cornell.edu](mailto:sej57@cornell.edu)

**After-School Network of WNY presents...**

## **2020 Expanded Learning Opportunities Legislative Coffee Hour**



Inviting all stakeholders to experience a day in the life of an afterschool program. We want YOU to know how you can have an impact on our community's youth. The event will include a tour of the afterschool program, a gallery of student work, a short presentation and light refreshments.

**March 13, 2020, 3:30-4:30pm  
Southside Elementary School  
430 Southside Parkway  
Buffalo, NY 14210**

**RSVP to [Talisa.king@erie.gov](mailto:Talisa.king@erie.gov)**



**ASN WNY**  
AFTER-SCHOOL NETWORK OF WESTERN NEW YORK



**NEW YORK STATE  
NETWORK FOR  
YOUTH SUCCESS**

Join us for...

# « SHE STARTED IT »

## BUFFALO

**An event based on the acclaimed documentary, *She Started IT*, directed and produced by Nora Poggi.**

Calling all aspiring **girl founders** for interactive demos and discussion with WNY female tech founders and professionals!

**Register at: [tinyurl.com/SheStartedIT2020](http://tinyurl.com/SheStartedIT2020)**



**FREE EVENT!**

**March 7, 2020**

**10 AM - 2 PM**

**Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo NY 14203**

\*This program is designed to be appropriate for girls 10 years old/6th grade through 16 years old/10th grade.

Presenting Sponsor:

