

Message from the Director June 2010

Greetings from the Office on Youth! We're happy you have visited our website which gives a great overview of the activities, programs and services that are provided by our Office. You'll find this site to be full of information about our programs, staff, and upcoming events. I hope this site helps you to see what resources the Office on Youth provides to our community. I often think "What would this community be like if this Office were not here?" Here's a glimpse of what the Office on Youth provides:

- Structured programming for kids who are not in school
 - The Pathway Program allows youth to be positively engaged during times of expulsion and suspension while completing school work.
- Employment services for youth
 - The Youth Corps program and Workforce Investment programs provide employment training and connections to youth, starting at age 14 through age 21, including individual case management, work experience, GED prep, and job placement.
- Free after-school programming and summer programming for youth
 - The Youth Power program provides low-income middle schoolers, who may not otherwise be positively engaged, with structured activities.
- Parenting resources to strengthen families and prevent out-of-home placements
 - The OOO provides on-going parent education programming and support.
- An array of crime control services for youth involved with the Juvenile Courts
 - The courts rely on the services the OOO provides for court-ordered youth
- A neutral place for youth and parents to contact in times of need.
 - The OOO partners with, but remains independent from, area human services agencies including the schools, courts, social services, mental health, health dept., etc. Since the OOO is not connected to any of these entities, youth and parents utilize us to help them negotiate these systems when difficulties arise.
- A community response to community issues as they arise
 - The OOO spearheads the SAW Coalition, a community response to the increase in gang and drug activity in our community.
- Support to other youth-serving agencies and initiatives
 - The OOO assists in implementing the Youth Risk Behavior Survey
 - Helps to create and improve local Teen Centers
 - Serves on area Family Assessment and Planning Teams

The OOO has been present in this area for well over 30 years. There used to be two Offices – one in Waynesboro (founded in 1977) and one in Staunton (founded in 1988). These 2 Offices merged in 1998 and in 2000 the County of Augusta came on board resulting in our celebration of 10 years of service as a multi-jurisdictional organization in 2010. This regional celebration is of particular significance to many of our OOO staff who came on board at this time and are

celebrating 10 years of service this year. The OOH recognizes the value we bring to the community and we appreciate the support of our communities, the local governments, and state and federal grantors. We continue to look forward to the future and to be focused on the ways we can meet the needs of youth in our community. Thanks for your interest - there's so much to be done. Come join us!

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Blair". The signature is written in black ink on a light blue rectangular background.

Carol Blair, Director