

CENTRAL SHENANDOAH VALLEY OFFICE ON YOUTH 2019 – 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2019 - 2020 fiscal year was a tale of two halves: the eight (8) months (July ó March) before the coronavirus (COVID) and the three (3) months (April ó June) in quarantine after COVID. Before COVID, Office on Youth (OOY) staff implemented programming throughout our community to fulfill our vision of helping each youth reach their full potential.

In August of 2019, OOO programming was expanded to include Safe Routes to School (SRTS) in the City of Waynesboro. A part-time coordinator was hired in November. This program is funded by a grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation. The program's goal is to increase the number of students who walk and/or bicycle to school. The broader mission is to encourage everyone, young and mature, to be physically active and lead a healthy lifestyle by improving the walkability and bike-ability of the Waynesboro community. The program serves the five (5) Waynesboro elementary schools and the middle school. By encouraging youth to be physically active and live a healthy lifestyle, staff builds lifelong habits that aid youth in reaching their full potential.

Despite the challenges of starting a new program in the time of COVID, the SRTS program enjoyed many accomplishments and is now positioned to make even more of an impact. Program accomplishments included:

- Over 1,600 students participating in Walk to School Day in October.

- Classroom-based instruction in pedestrian safety by the Waynesboro Police Department.
- Hands-on experience learning to ride a bicycle and/or practice in implementing bicycle safety laws and actions on actual bikes to 133 students.
- Recognition of crossing guards.
- Collaborative involvement with the Walkability Institute.
- Tactical urbanism projects that improved safety and encouraged walking and bicycling in the community.
- Unfortunately, due to the shortened school year, only students at William Perry Elementary School received hands-on instruction in learning to ride a bicycle and implementing safety laws.

OOY staff served youth involved in the juvenile justice system for the entirety of last year. The 25th District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts closed for over two (2) months. Despite this delay in processing juvenile cases, OOO staff served only 16 fewer youth than during the 2018-2019 year.

Before COVID, OOO staff taught over 1,000 Staunton students and over 1,500 Waynesboro students in family life and sexual health education in the classroom. Despite the shortened school year, OOO staff were able to serve 81% of scheduled students. Staff taught youth about the impacts of teen pregnancy and helped students identify life goals and plan ways to reach those goals. By avoiding teen pregnancy and making positive healthy choices, staff empower youth to reach their full potential.

Before COVID, OOO staff offered case management to 25 habitually truant youth in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County Public schools. Of those

youth, 68% improved their attendance from the previous year and 60% improved their grades from the previous year. When staff supports youth in overcoming their barriers to attending school, youth gain the power of education and enhance their ability to reach their full potential.

Before COVID, OOH staff served 201 parents through parent education classes and workshops.

During quarantine, staff worked almost entirely from home with occasional days in the office. Like much of the world, we became experts in Zoom meetings and balancing life and work in the same room. But that did not stop OOH staff from working to help youth reach their full potential. Staff volunteered with a host of community organizations to offer youth and families the resources they needed during the difficult time of initial quarantine. Staff pivoted programs to online, ramped up OOH social media presence, created a COVID resource landing webpage, and made contacts with youth and parents via phone call, text message, and email.

During quarantine, staff assisted schools, community organizations, parents, and youth. The staff helped schools by assisting with meal distribution, mask distribution, creating and distributing family activities, and assisting with school "graduations."

During quarantine, staff supported youth directly by volunteering with the Green Hanger Project which provides gently used clothes to low-income youth and families. Staff supported two (2) youth leaders by covering the registration fee and participation in the two-day online national drug prevention conference offered by the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America.

During quarantine, staff supported community organizations such as the United Way by packing care packages for families and sorting and packing small business reopening kits. Virginia Newman participated as a member of the newly formed Community Childcare Initiative which worked diligently through the summer to organize low-cost, accessible childcare to families once school "reopened" in August.

During quarantine, staff supported parents by distributing parenting tips, creating online videos with parenting tips and strategies, and updating parents via social media on a host of topics from how to detect mental health issues in their children to how to talk to children about COVID.

2020 has been a challenging year. But as Robert Schuller said, "Tough times never last, but tough people do." These may be tough times but the staff at the OOH are tougher. No matter the challenge we continue to strive to help youth reach their full potential.

JULY 1, 2019 – MARCH 31, 2020: BEFORE

- **OOY staff taught over 1,000 Staunton students and over 1,500 Waynesboro students in family life and sexual health education.**

Despite the shortened school year, OOO staff were able to serve 81% of scheduled students

- **OOO staff served 90 youth involved in the juvenile justice system.**
- **OOO staff offered case management to 25 habitually truant youth in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County Public schools.**

68% improved their attendance and 60% improved their grades from the previous year.

- **OOO staff served 189 parents through parent education classes and workshops**
- **OOO programming was expanded to include Safe Routes to School (SRTS) in the City of Waynesboro.**

1,600 students participating in Walk to School Day.

133 students learned to ride a bicycle and/or practice bicycle safety on actual bikes.

238 students received pedestrian safety education in the classroom by the Waynesboro Police Department.

Crossing guards were recognized for their service.

A Tale of Two Halves

APRIL 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2020: AFTER

Staff worked almost entirely from home with occasional days in the office. Like much of the world, we became experts in Zoom meetings and balancing life and work in the same room. Staff:

- **pivoted** programs online, ramped up social media presence, created a COVID resource webpage, and made contacts with youth and parents via phone call, text message, and email.
- **assisted** schools with “graduations,” meal distribution, mask distribution, and creating parenting tips and family activities.
- **facilitated** youth leaders’ participation in a 2-day online drug prevention conference.
- **volunteered** with the Green Hanger Project to provide gently used clothes to low-income youth and families.
- **supported** community organizations such as the United Way by packing care packages for families and sorting and packing small business reopening kits.
- **aided** parents by creating online videos with parenting tips and strategies and updating parents via social media on a host of topics from how to detect mental health issues in children to how to talk to children about COVID.