

Assessment & Planning for Youth Services
Information, Education and Training
Research Source on Best Practices
Research Source on Youth Issues
Coordination of Youth Services
Allocation of State Funding
Technical Assistance

**PUTNAM COUNTY
YOUTH BUREAU
2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

Healthy Communities...Healthy Youth

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SUMMARY

The mission of the Putnam County Youth Bureau is to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for youth services in Putnam County. The Youth Bureau fulfills its mission in the following ways: assessment and planning for youth services; information, education and training; research source on youth issues and best practices; coordination of youth services; allocation of state funding; and technical assistance.

The Putnam County Youth Bureau offers services to schools, community agencies, recreation departments and community groups as well as allocates New York State funding for an additional five community based programs and twelve municipal programs. In 2009, 30,541 youth (some may participate in more than one program) participated in total for all Youth Bureau funded programs.

2009 Youth Bureau Highlights:

- The Putnam County Youth Bureau faced significant budget cuts from both the County and State in 2009 that will affect our 2010 programs. The Teens N Kidz Mentoring program in the Haldane, Mahopac and Putnam Valley Schools were eliminated from the budget. The youth from the local high schools, middle schools and elementary schools were all impacted from the lack of funding. Four part-time Youth Bureau employees were laid off due to these budget cuts. The Youth Bureau still receives numerous phone calls each week from parents, school personnel and youth asking how they can get involved in this program or any other mentoring type of program.
- The Youth Bureau and the Mahopac School District have collaboratively created a curriculum to help train athletes to go into Middle School classrooms and to talk to the students about various topics. Some of the topics discussed were substance abuse, bullying, diversity, time management, self-esteem and problem solving. This partnership with the school district has proven to be very successful and will become an annual training event for the students.
- The Youth Bureau has completed the fifth year of the Communities That Care Process. This is a five step comprehensive prevention approach that provides research-based tools to help communities identify and address the risk and protective factors associated with substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout and violence. The Youth Bureau has identified key leaders in the Mahopac, Carmel and Putnam County communities to address the risk and protective factors.
- The Youth Bureau, National Council on Alcoholism, Stop DWI, Putnam Family and Community Services, and the Sheriff's Department have partnered to purchase (SIDNE) – Simulated Impaired Driving Experience. Members of these agencies will be trained to bring SIDNE to community and school events and educate them on the effects of driving while impaired.
- The coordination and activity of positive youth development occurs today through a coordinated system of which the Putnam County Youth Bureau is a leader. Through programming and collaboration at the Youth Bureau, we have partnered with youth development programs to meet the needs of our community.

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2009 Communities That Care Highlights :

The Youth Bureau, members of the Communities That Care Community Board and members of our community meet with parents of juniors and seniors to educate them about the dangers of underage drinking, and heightened risks specifically during prom season. Brewster High School, Carmel High School, Mahopac High School and Putnam Valley High School worked with the coalition and concerned parents to institute a school policy where a parent or guardian of any junior or senior that was planning to attend the prom had to attend a brief presentation. This presentation outlines the risks and responsibilities of prom season, including host liability laws, limo companies, underage drinking issues and safety.

The Communities That Care Board have written and distributed numerous educational articles on topics such as steroids, binge drinking, Inhalant Abuse, The Truth about Energy Drinks and Parent Alert-Tips for Parents During the Holiday Season. These educational articles can be accessed through the Youth Bureau website as well as Putnamhelp.com.

Family Day is a National Day that is held in September each year. The Youth Bureau and many agencies partnered to help spread that word that the more times parents and children eat dinner together during the week, the less likely their children are to use marijuana or tobacco and drink alcohol. According to research from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) shows that parents and children should eat dinner at least five times a week to help prevent these risky behaviors.

The Youth Bureau in partnership with the National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies and through the Communities that Care Coalitions brought both Michael Nerney and Dennis O'Sullivan to Putnam County. On October 6, 2009 Michael Nerney presented to approximately 80 providers and parents at the Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services. He spoke about the Current Trends in Adolescent Substance Abuse. Dennis O'Sullivan from the American Athletic Institute (AAI) was a former New York Jet football player who spoke to over 900 student athletes at Mahopac High School and about 600 student athletes at Carmel High School. The American Athletic Institute's primary focus is the education of athletes on the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The presenters are substance abuse professionals who were also once professional and world class athletes. It is this combination of experience coupled with their own scientific research that makes them unique in the prevention/education field and the world of sport.

- The Putnam County Drug and Alcohol Task Force, in cooperation with the Underage Drinking Coalition and Communities That Care, has proposed a new law to strengthen the penalties for parents and adults that host underage drinking parties in their homes. The law specifically targets those adults who provide underage children with alcohol in their homes, labeling this act a Class A Misdemeanor which is punishable by up to one year in jail and /or a \$3,000.00

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fine. All Town Boards in Putnam County have adopted this law. The County Executive Task Force has created a new campaign to spread the word about the abuse of prescription medicine.

- The Youth Board and Youth Bureau sponsored its 24th Annual Youth Awards Celebration in April 2009. Sixteen outstanding Putnam youth volunteers were recognized for their significant contributions to our community as well as one adult volunteer for major personal contributions to the positive development of youth in Putnam.
- Continued full implementation of *Reality Check*, a statewide youth empowerment movement where youth work to spread the word that the tobacco industry is targeting teens. *Reality Check* youth plan and coordinate recruitment and awareness events as well as represent Putnam on the NYS Reality Check Board.
- The Youth Board and Youth Bureau continued their efforts to improve the resource allocation process with the goal of making the process responsive to the needs and resources of the community.

2009 Mission and Operating Philosophy

The Putnam County Youth Bureau is committed to taking positive action for Putnam youth. The fundamental belief is that youth are the key to Putnam's economic and social future. To meet this end, the Youth Bureau employs two models of youth development: the Developmental Assets model offered through the Search Institute and Communities That Care model offered through Developmental Research and Programs.

Developmental Assets offers a framework, which brings community-wide attention to positive youth development. The Developmental Assets framework identifies 40 specific assets all youth need to grow up to be competent, caring and healthy. Building assets in our youth is everyone's responsibility; nearly all children and adolescents need more developmental assets than they now have. The Youth Bureau employs this model in an effort to bring this challenge to every facet of Putnam County and build healthy communities for our youth.

The Communities that Care model provides Putnam with research-based tools which help promote the positive youth development of children and youth and prevent adolescent problem behaviors that get in the way of positive development, including substance abuse, delinquency, school dropout and violence. The Putnam County Youth Bureau has utilized the Communities That Care model by mobilizing and engaging members of the Putnam community who have a stake in the healthy future for children and youth and by establishing a collaborative planning structure to integrate diverse community efforts addressing youth and family issues. Tremendous progress continues to be made in working closely with key community leaders for the selection of an appropriate data collection instrument that would reflect the Putnam community.

In 2009, the Youth Bureau continued to provide the community of youth, parents, community groups and agencies with presentations and training on a variety of youth

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developmental issues, strategies and solutions. The Youth Bureau also offered several community groups and agencies assistance with grant writing, researching funding opportunities and technical assistance with program planning and policy development.

The Youth Bureau continues to improve the resource allocation process in an effort to make it available and accessible to all eligible community agencies. The Youth Bureau and the Youth Board continued to work diligently to revise policy and protocol to maximize funding opportunities in the service of all Putnam County youth.

The Youth Bureau also continues to be a fieldwork residency placement for social work student interns from Western Connecticut State University, Adelphi University and Mount Saint Mary's College. The Youth Bureau each year has a student volunteer from Mahopac High School who participated in the Wise Individual Senior Experience (WISE) program.

The staff of the Youth Bureau is sincerely grateful for the consistent support and guidance of the County Executive, the County Legislature, the Commissioner of Social Services, Mental Health and Youth Bureau, and our many colleagues throughout the county. We look forward to the year ahead and the further development of healthy communities for healthy youth in Putnam County.

In support of the commitment of the Youth Bureau to continue the development of healthy communities in Putnam, Youth Bureau staff actively participates on the following committees and task forces:

Advancing Youth Development Putnam Training Team
Association of New York State Youth Bureaus
Bureau of Emergency Services Indian Point Drills
Carmel Communities That Care Community Board
County Communities That Care Community Board
County Executive's Drug and Alcohol Task Force
Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services
Hudson Valley Leisure Services Association
Integrated County Planning Team
Mahopac Communities That Care Community Board
National Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Dependencies of Putnam
National Foundation for Children of Alcoholics
New York State Recreation and Parks Society
POW'R Against Tobacco, Putnam Chapter
Putnam Coordinated Children's Services Initiative
Putnam Interagency Council
School to Work Partnership
Taconic Youth Bureau Association
United Way Board
WIA Youth Policy Board

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2009 Putnam County Youth Bureau Programs

- ***Teens-N-Kidz Mentoring Program*** –Due to State and County budget cuts this program has been eliminated in the Haldane, Mahopac and Putnam Valley school districts.
- ***Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Coordination*** –2009 continued to focus on expanding the data base collection system to include runaway and homeless youth over age 16 in need of independent living services. The Youth Bureau continues to advocate for access to funding streams to address the needs of this population. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Coordinator and the Executive Director of the Youth Bureau and Director of Putnam County Mental Health and Putnam County Alcohol & Substance Abuse Services continue to participate with Putnam County Housing Corporation which recently received funding for homeless housing. The Youth Bureau may provide support services for homeless youth in these households. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Advisory Committee continues to explore a meeting venue which addresses the needs of runaway and homeless youth as expressed by NYS Office of Children and Family Services.
- ***Coordinated Youth and Family Services*** – Includes assessment and service coordination, Coordinated Children’s Services Initiative and the Effective Practices in School Base Mental Health Services Program in the Mahopac School District.
- ***Youth Court*** – In 2009, forty-eight Putnam County teens completed a 10 week Youth Court training program bringing the total active membership to 145 youth. Our training program prepares youth volunteers to be part of one of the fastest growing crime prevention and early intervention program in the nation. Under the supervision of adult staff, Youth Court volunteers serve as judges, clerks, bailiffs, prosecutors, and defense counselors for first time youthful offenders charged with a crime.

Youth Court turns peer pressure into a positive influence. Through this process, defendants are not only held accountable for their actions, but given the opportunity to re-build relationships with family, peers and their community. Satisfaction reported among parents and youth involved in Youth Court is high as is the ongoing success rate of this program.

New members had the opportunity to observe County and local courts in session and visit the County’s Correctional Facility, learning many valuable lessons about the justice system, their rights and responsibilities. This past year, four Youth Court members received Putnam’s Outstanding Youth Award.

- ***Youth Forum*** – A successful 2009 annual conference for high school students planned and run by high school students. Approximately 150 high school students representing every town of Putnam attended the 2009 conference. The Youth Forum is the direct result of a partnership the Youth Bureau has with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

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- ***Reality Check*** – Reality Check-the youth action initiative against tobacco- has completed another successful year. Though we suffered deep cuts at the state level, we managed to regroup and continue to provide county residents with our tobacco prevention and advocacy programming. In 2009 we conducted outreach in every town in Putnam. We participated in health fairs at Haldane Schools, Putnam Valley Middle School, and Mahopac Middle School. We set up interactive educational displays at the Putnam Hospital Kids Day, the Child Safety Fair, and the Relay for Life. In addition we conducted educational campaigns that involved youth from every high school in the county. We presented to health classes at Henry Wells Middle School, and conducted workshops at Putnam Valley Middle School. Throughout the year, we could be found with our trivia prize wheel at various events and schools throughout the community delivering our pro-health message. We ran successful radio ads featuring the voices of local youth on WHUD. Our youth have been trained in various skills including public speaking, media advocacy, and advocating with decision makers. In June we helped to plan and implement a press event in Central Park to call on Hollywood to eliminate smoking in youth rated films. Four Putnam youth from our program played an integral role in making this event a success. Our event featured presentations by youth members, Health Commissioner Daines, the State Attorney General's Office, the World Health Organization, and Stanton Glantz of Smokefreemovies.
In July, after a competitive bidding process, we were among only 16 programs statewide to be awarded a five year grant to continue our programming in Putnam. With the support of so many Putnam County residents, businesses, school boards, town and village boards, the county legislature, and our County Executive, we will continue to work to educate the community and provide safe places for children to play, swim, and shop free from tobacco promotions and secondhand smoke.
- ***Pegasus*** –An eight week program held twice a year that offers education, support, and hope to children and families struggling with alcohol and/or drug dependence. In 2008 sixteen children and their families participated in the Pegasus program. Whether families seek the Pegasus Program voluntarily or are mandated to attend, their participation increases their knowledge of addiction and provides them with skills, resources and support. Parents and caregivers (who attend an Adult Group simultaneously) gain a better understanding of the impact substance abuse has on their children and concrete ways to help their children cope. The children learn that there *is* a better way and their parent's addiction does *not* mean that they will abuse drugs and alcohol themselves. Pegasus is truly about prevention, treatment and recovery. For nearly twenty-five years, the Youth Bureau has provided this invaluable and unduplicated service to the residents of Putnam County.
- ***Summer Leadership Institute*** – Due to budget cuts this program was eliminated from the 2009 budget.

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- ***Youth Council*** – Due to budget cuts this program was eliminated from the 2009 budget.

2009 Putnam County Youth Bureau Supported Programs

- ***Green Chimneys/Arbor House*** – Arbor House continues to provide services to at-risk, runaway, homeless and street youth. Services provided include crisis intervention, emergency shelter, individual and family counseling, advocacy and life skills training. The goal is to strengthen and support the family unit.
- ***Putnam Family & Community Services*** – The Student Assistance Services/School-Based Prevention counselors implement substance abuse prevention programming in Brewster, Haldane, Putnam Valley and Mahopac High Schools. These counselors also provide on-going crisis evaluations, classroom presentations related to depression, suicide prevention, coping skills and stress management.
- ***Student Advocacy*** – Student Advocacy ensures that all youth receive the educational services guaranteed by law. Student Advocacy responds to family requests for assistance with educational problems.

2009 Putnam County Youth Bureau Supported Municipal Programs

- Carmel Recreation Department
- Carmel Police Youth Officer
- Kent Parks and Recreation
- Kent Police Youth Officer
- Patterson Recreation
- Patterson Youth Services
- Philipstown Recreation
- Philipstown Youth Services
- Putnam Valley Parks & Recreation
- Putnam Valley Ambulance Corps
- Southeast Recreation
- Southeast Youth Services

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STATISTICS FOR 2009

Youth Bureau Direct Programs

Community Service	51
Coordinated Youth & Family Services	173
Information and Referral	621
Pegasus	22
Reality Check (core planning group)	15
Reality Check (events implementation)	918
Summer Leadership Institute (program eliminated)	0
Teens-N-Kidz Mentoring Program	78
Youth Awards	16
Youth Council (program eliminated)	0
Youth Court	158
Total served directly by Youth Bureau	2,052

Youth Bureau Supported Programs

Putnam Family & Community Services	
School-based Prevention Program	4,066
Youth Assistance Program	426
Green Chimneys/Arbor House	
Runaway and Homeless Youth Services	85
Student Advocacy	6
Youth Forum (in partnership with CCE)	150
Total served by YB funded programs	4,733

Municipal Programs

Town of Carmel Recreation Department	305
Town of Carmel Police Youth Officer	10,850
Kent Parks & Recreation	4,210
Kent Police Youth Officer	4,538
Patterson Recreation	300
Patterson Youth Services	18
Philipstown Recreation	100
Philipstown Youth Services	100
Putnam Valley Ambulance Corps	23
Putnam Valley Recreation	1300
Southeast Recreation	1900
Southeast Youth Services	112
Total served by municipal programs	23,756