



≡ Menu

- [Home](#)
- [Community Programs](#)
- [About Us](#)
 - [Board of Directors](#)
- [How You Can Help](#)
- [Our Support](#)
- [News](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Contact](#)

Youth Court

[Ontario County Youth Court](#) is a voluntary alternative to the traditional criminal justice system for young people who have committed certain violations, misdemeanors or have breached a student code of conduct. The goal of the Youth Court is to intervene in early anti-social or delinquent activities, reduce the incidence and teach new behaviors and coping skills.

This peer-based program is designed to promote education about the judicial process, promote accountability for actions and reinforce responsibility to society through community service and educational sentencing.

Why It Matters

Youth Court is the only peer-based court in Ontario County. The Youth Court is needed to continue positive outcomes for our youth who find themselves in first-time contact with the law or faced with the possibility of school suspension. Retired NYS Chief Justice Judith Kaye shares her perspective on Youth Courts in the January 2011 New York State Bar Journal by saying. “Should it really be our incarceration statistics that distinguish us as a nation, that we lock up more young people, and destroy more young families than any other nation in the world?. Why not second chances for deserving offenders to avoid the lifetime scar of arrest and conviction? Why not healthy programs in civic education and public service for youth court members?”

Youth Court is unique in that the program is youth staffed and youth directed. Not only do volunteers staff the courtroom, they determine the direction of the program and its development while learning the skills of leadership, public speaking, critical thinking, conflict resolution and mediation. This opportunity for meaningful civic engagement that delivers genuine community impact is unique.

Youthful offenders have the opportunity to make amends for their anti-social or delinquent activities, learn from their mistakes and continue forward with a “clean slate” while participating in a pro-social environment. Once they have completed their sentence requirements, offenders proceed with a “clean slate.”

Results

With financial support from Ontario County, United Way, The Feinbloom Supporting Foundation and the New York State Bar Foundation, Youth Court has provided peer-directed intervention to juveniles and young adults accused of non-violent offenses since 2000. It is critical in today’s tight budgets to ensure that services provided are effective and evidence based. While many programs point to national studies to provide evidence to support their effectiveness, Ontario County Youth Court has sought to validate its program by trying to learn as much as we can about the subsequent juvenile and criminal histories of the youth our volunteers have assisted.

Based on information available to Ontario County probation and juvenile officers in Canandaigua, Geneva and the Ontario County Sheriff, a review of recidivism from 2007-2012 was conducted in 2013. The statistics show that Youth Court is highly successful at diverting youth from further juvenile and adult offenses.

2007-2012: 91% of youthful offenders who participated in Youth Court completed their Youth Court sentence.

JUVENILE RECIDIVISM:

- 91% of youth who participated in the program had no further involvement in the juvenile justice system
- Only 4 were petitioned to Family Court for a juvenile delinquency offense

ADULT RECIDIVISM:

- 82% have not been charged with a Misdemeanor or Felony crime as an adult
- 92% have not been charged with an adult Misdemeanor or Felony crime within 3 years after Youth Court participation
- NONE of the adult participants spent time in a NYS prison

Get Involved

Youth Court accepts volunteer applications from youth age 13-19, from all nine school districts as well as home-schooled youth. Please [click here for the Youth Court application](#). Training takes place in the fall and spring. Adult volunteers who have a legal or education background are invited to participate as trainers and/or mentors in the courtroom.

Contact Deb Holland at 585-396-4519 or debOCYCC@gmail.com. Our courtroom hearings are confidential, but we are always happy to schedule a mock hearing for groups or individuals interested in observing the courtroom process. For more information, visit OntarioCountyYouthCourt.com.



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The Partnership for Ontario County, Inc. added 2 new photos. October 21 at 9:24am

Please join Jim Ritts from the Ontario County District Attorney's Office and Partnership Board member, and Jennifer Brownell, Program Director the Partnership's Child Advocacy Center who will participate on a panel discussion

Upcoming Events

OCT 27 Tue
(<http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/events-calendar/action-one>)

7:00 pm A Community Forum on the Heroin ... @ Victor Early Childhood School (http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/event/a-community-forum-on-the-heroin-epidemic/?instance_id=38)

ay/extra
ct_date
~27-10-
2015/)

OCT

29

Thu

(http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/events-calendar/action-one-day/extra-ct_date~29-10-2015/)

8:00 am "Believe" Conference @ Ramada Geneva Lakefront
(http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/event/believe-conference/?instance_id=39)

NOV

19

Thu

(http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/events-calendar/action-one-day/extra-ct_date~19-11-2015/)

4:00 pm Volunteer Reception @ Sutherland B&B
(http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/event/volunteer-reception/?instance_id=40)



View Calendar → (http://partnershipforontariocounty.org/events-calendar/)

Partnership for Ontario County
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