

Adult comments

Strengths & skills of youth

"Tech savvy. Energy. Curiosity."

"Willingness to engage in community activities. Care for their neighbors."

"I see the area youth have a great sense of pride in their community. They are interested in the environment and the area farm lands. They engage well with each other and adults. There is also a genuine friendliness within the community and with visitors. The youth are smart and caring."

"They care about other people, they see the value of volunteer work, they are intelligent and thoughtful, and they want to make a difference in the world."

Challenges facing youth

"In a world of gadgets and experiences that are focused on the individual, creating experiences of team building and finding community."

"Part time job opportunities, lack of mentors, limited public transportation in outlying areas."

"Too many are anxious and depressed about our planet and our country – worried about money, sucked into technology."

"Cyber bullying and unsafe use of technology."

"They face a lot of pressure with homework. They are not immune to the general anxiety and lack of connection in our culture."

Conclusions

Funding priorities should continue to support:

- ~ Work readiness programs that build job skills and provide subsidized employment
- ~ Youth development programs that build life skills through varied activities

Target audience should remain on:

- ~ Youth in late elementary school, to help with a successful transition to middle school
- ~ Middle schoolers, including those referred by school personnel as needing additional support
- ~ Early high schoolers, to help with first time employment and job skills

Additional steps the JYC will take:

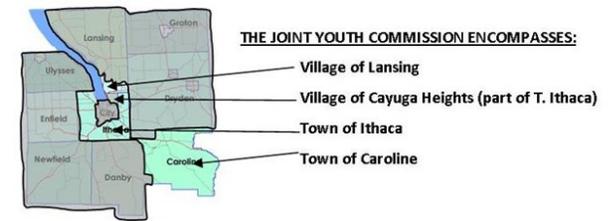
- ~ Share results of the needs assessment with JYC municipalities
- ~ Share results with funded agencies and draw attention to programming suggestions
- ~ Share transportation-related suggestions with ICSD, TCAT, Way2Go
- ~ Encourage funded agencies to increase outreach efforts and to advertise programs and services earlier, including using their own and JYC's social media for this purpose

For more information about the Joint Youth Commission or to inquire about serving on this advisory group, please contact: Evie Karnes, JYC chair, ekarnes22@gmail.com.

Report prepared by Kris Bennett, liaison from Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. to the JYC

A detailed version of this assessment can be found at www.tompkinscountyny.gov/youth/publications

2018 Joint Youth Commission Youth Needs Assessment



The Joint Youth Commission (JYC) recommends how local funds should be allocated to address the needs of youth living in the Town of Ithaca, Town of Caroline, Village of Cayuga Heights and Village of Lansing. The JYC has two program priorities: employment training, career exploration, apprenticeships and first-time youth employment; and youth development and life skills.

In 2017-18, the JYC conducted its most recent needs assessment to understand the needs of youth in the community and update and inform its priorities and funding.

Needs Assessment Process

This needs assessment encompassed:

- ~ review of available youth data
- ~ feedback from program staff serving JYC youth
- ~ survey of 400 area youth, ages 10-19
- ~ survey of 65 adults residing in JYC area

Best things about our community for young people, ages 10-18

| Youth | Adults |
|--|---|
| Schools/teachers/school offerings – 56% | Many and diverse youth-focused programs – 41% |
| Supportive community/caring adults – 51% | Natural resources/outdoors/parks – 39% |
| Many activities/festivals/sports – 38% | Schools (including clubs and sports) – 29% |
| Many community resources – 33% | Supportive community/caring adults – 25% |
| Local businesses – 28% | Public libraries – 20% |
| Natural resources/outdoors/parks – 19% | Safety – 14% |

Youth were twice as likely as adults to mention that the community is supportive of young people. Both noted availability of many activities aimed at young people and both groups noted our many outdoor parks and natural resources. Youth and adults also both cited good schools and school extracurriculars such as sports and clubs as benefits they appreciate. 28% of youth mentioned specific local businesses (Ithaca Mall and the Commons were most common) as things they appreciate about the community.

Changes needed to make our community a better place for young people

| Youth | Adults |
|--|---|
| School (improve climate, less homework, more clubs, change curriculum) – 42% | More youth programs & activities/better outreach – 94% |
| More youth programs & activities/better outreach – 41% | Improve social justice/services/transportation/ affordability – 31% |
| Improve community climate & safety – 27% | School (more clubs, better curriculum, more support for stress) – 30% |
| Improve social justice/services/transportation/ affordability of services – 23% | Safe, supervised places for kids to hang out – 30% |
| Better businesses (better mall, better Commons, more stores and restaurants) – 19% | Better businesses/more welcoming to youth – 26% |
| More parks, gardens, recreation facilities, playgrounds – 18% | More youth jobs/programs to build job skills & apprenticeships – 19% |
| Safe, supervised places for kids to hang out – 11% | Improve community climate & safety – 15% |
| More youth jobs/programs to build job skills – 5% | Increase funding for youth programs – 11% |

Adults and youth agree that there is a need for more programs, activities and hang out places for young people. Nearly 1 in 5 young people mentioned wanting more outdoor parks and areas to play; this was not mentioned at all by adults. Adults were far more likely than young people to list youth jobs and job skill building as a need. This may be because 64% of the youth survey respondents were 13 or younger; a job may not be a current priority. In contrast, 60% of adult respondents with children living at home have children 14 and older.

Participation in extracurriculars

70% of youth reported participating in one or more extracurricular activity, offered either by the school or in the community, in the past year. Most common were sports, academic, theater/arts/music, clubs, and volunteering.

The most common reasons for not participating: (more than 1 answer possible):

- Don't see activities that interest me – 48%
- Need to get home to do homework – 37%
- None of my friends participate – 26%
- Not offered at convenient time – 25%
- Transportation – 19%
- Cost – 19%
- Don't know about activities – 19%

Adult comments

JYC focus on job skills

"I think that it is right on target, though probably not enough businesses are on board."

"Youth should be encouraged to explore a variety of interests and given multiple opportunities to explore their desired career interests as they evolve."

"In a perfect world, it would be great to support second- and third-time jobs, etc. as well."

"It's valuable but not the only need. They need safe social opportunities. Mentors. Access to public transportation."

"Jobs for youth are not as important as the skills to build a healthy social and emotional life."