CLARKSTON AREA YOUTH ASSISTANCE



ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

Mission Statement:

To strengthen youth and families and to reduce the incidence of delinquency, abuse, and neglect through community involvement.

Executive Team



Jackie Fromm
Chair



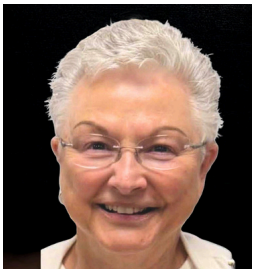
Judy Ableser
Vice Chair



Jan Scislowicz
Advisor



John Nicholson
Treasurer



Belinda Seal-Sweet
Secretary

From the Chair
Jackie Fromm

It is so surprising that my "interim" year as Chair of CAYA is already coming to a close. I am grateful to all the members and task volunteers of CAYA for their dedication and hard work this year as well as years past. I have great pride in being a part of CAYA as we celebrate our 65th birthday this year. I love this organization and all that it stands for. What could be better than helping the kids in our own community?

We are able to provide support due to the generosity of our sponsors, the donors who contribute to help with our work, and grants that we've received. Skill building scholarships and camping opportunities are some of the ways we help individual children. This year, we expanded our partnership with the David W. Elliott Memorial Foundation, which will provide additional financial help with scholarships.

We continue our recruiting efforts for additional Board members as well as task volunteers. We have had several new dynamic members join us this past year, but still have work to do to get additional members as circumstances change for some and they are unable to continue their work with us.

Please consider our mission and see if it aligns with the time you have to offer and give our office a call at **248-623-4313**. Check out our website at **www.caya-mi.org**. Committee members are asked to be on a committee for a specific program. Task volunteers work for a project or help at a particular event. To join our Board of Directors, a potential member would fill out an application and meet with our caseworker and a volunteer to discuss where their interests and talents may be a good fit for our needs.

Thank you again to all our volunteers! It is with great confidence that I pass the gavel to our new Chair, Jan Scislowicz.

Sincerely,
Jackie Fromm

Board Members

Tricia Delude
Jamie Graves
Judy Parnes
Lauren Rinke
Jennifer Sherby
Dee Smith
Kevin Underwood

Program Sponsors

Sixth Circuit Court Family Division

Clarkston Community Schools

Independence Township

Springfield Township

The City of the Village of Clarkston

Staff

Lauren Klos
Caseworker

Sherry Snudden
Office Manager

Oakland County Youth Assistance

Liz Csizmadia
Chief

Anna Torres
Supervisor

YOUTH ASSISTANCE
Clarkston Area
Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement

Music Mashup
Dee Smith, Chair

Music Mashup is a seven-week afterschool enrichment program developed by CAYA volunteers in 2024 for 2nd through 5th grade students. The group meets once a week and has been held at Pine Knob Elementary and North Sashabaw Elementary. It introduces students to the joy, creativity, and cultural diversity of percussion music. Through hands-on exploration, students learn about a variety of percussion instruments, including the Djembe, Cajon, Buffalo Drum, Triangle, Tambourine, and Maracas. Each session gives students the opportunity to listen to, handle, and play different instruments while building a basic understanding of rhythm, beat, tempo, note values, and rests.
The program is designed to be accessible and engaging for students of all musical backgrounds. Students are encouraged to participate actively, experiment with sound, and discover how percussion instruments can be used to create patterns, communicate ideas, and support group music-making. In addition to learning musical concepts, participants explore the geographic origins and traditional uses of selected instruments, helping them connect music to history, culture, and community.

Throughout the seven-week session, students practice active listening, teamwork, focus, creativity, and self-expression as they play individually and as part of a group. By the end of the program, each student has had the chance to try every instrument, learn foundational percussion skills, and experience the fun of making music together. The program culminates in a Grand Finale during the last week, where parents and teachers are invited to celebrate the students' learning and enjoy a shared musical experience. Music Mashup provides a welcoming environment where students can build confidence, develop an appreciation for music, and celebrate rhythm as a shared creative experience.

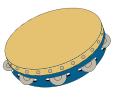













MUSIC MASHUP

Family Education
Judy Ableser, Committee Member

Family Education aims at fostering family growth and supporting youth development through educational programs. Program topics are selected annually based on community needs and trends. This past year, we continued our very successful podcast series, noting that we can reach a far wider audience through this medium, while also providing some in-person programming. This past year, we had more than 650 downloads of the podcasts; extending the reach of our family education programming. Last year's inaugural podcasts aimed at supporting parents (Parenting Under Stress) and this year's series was directed toward youth (Talk it Out for Teens). All sessions are 15-30 minutes and can be accessed at: https://cayaconversations.buzzsprout.com/ or by using this QR code.

2025-2026 Podcast Series - CAYA Conversations

This year's series helped teens navigate what it means to grow up in a fast-paced, always connected world. Each session was cohosted by therapists from Giesken Counseling Services.

Talk it Out for Teens

1. Why the Feed Hurts: Algorithms, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and your Mood
2. Protect Your Peace - Healthy Relationships
3. Stress, Tamed
4. Substances, Choices, & Limits
5. When Anger is a Signal, Not the Story
6. Riding the Wave: Real Talk on Grief



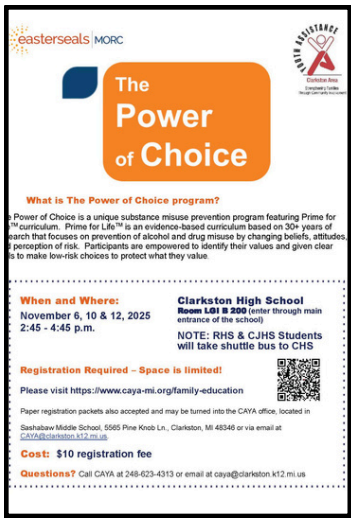
Face-to-Face Programs

We continued to offer two successful in-person programs this past year in conjunction with Easterseals MORC. In October, we offered a four-week, one-hour workshop on Smarter Choices for middle school students on the risks of vaping and marijuana. In November, we offered The Power of Choice, an evidence-based curriculum on prevention and the misuse of alcohol and drugs. Eleven students participated in Smarter Choices and eight enrolled in The Power of Choice.

Thank you

CAYA and the Family Education Committee extend our heartfelt thanks to Jamie Graves for her years of service as Committee Chair and for recording and promoting all 12 podcasts.





Youth Recognition
Judy Parnes, Chair

CAYA's Youth Recognition Program culminates each spring in a beloved Ceremony and Dessert Reception that brings together school administrators, local government officials, nominators, families, friends, and CAYA volunteers to celebrate students, Young Fives through Grade 12, who strengthen the well-being of their class, school, and the community. The Youth Recognition honorees are recognized for working on their own well-being and/or demonstrating their concern for the well-being of others, serving as role models for other students, and as an inspiration to all of the adults in their lives.

This year, the CAYA Youth Recognition and Dessert Reception was held on April 28 at Clarkston High School (CHS). In the weeks leading up to the ceremony, Committee members and nominators worked together to ensure the experience would be enjoyable for everyone. Honorees and their families were welcomed and congratulated from the moment they entered the building. CHS students played beautiful music as nearly 400 guests took their seats.

The MC, Cari Neubeck, opened the Ceremony, setting a tone of dignity and respect. Sean Miller, who gave the Sponsor Remarks, noted, "It's truly a joy to stand before you and celebrate something that doesn't often get the spotlight it deserves, young people doing the right thing—showing kindness, perseverance, leadership, and compassion even when they think no one is watching, and sometimes when it is really hard to do." Staci Puzio, as the Keynote Speaker, spoke of "the contributions of our young people, making Clarkston a place of true well-being and kindness… Tonight, we gather to honor the light our students shine into the world—a light that brings warmth, hope, and connection."

As each of the 70 Honorees walked across the stage, their affirmations were read aloud, and school administrators and local officials congratulated them. Everyone heard the stories about how each Honoree helped others feel supported, welcomed, seen, heard, and valued. The affirmations were formed from the words of the nominators, who joined the audience in a special reserved section.



The Dessert Reception was decorated for a party! Close to 400 guests came together to thank the Honorees. More than 800 mostly homemade desserts were enjoyed as Honorees, their families, and guests, glowed with joy, pride, and connection. It was truly a night of well-being for all who attended.







Pinwheels for Prevention
Judy Parnes, Chair

The focus of the Pinwheels program is to prevent child and adolescent adversity in all its forms, by strengthening well-being through small acts of primary prevention. Everyone has a role to help ensure that all our children and adolescents have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments in which to thrive.

4 KINDS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT!

Pinwheel Gardens Project:

- 1,457 blue pinwheels were planted in 87 pinwheel gardens of prevention throughout the community
- Gardens demonstrate support to help our children and adolescents feel safe, hopeful, and welcomed
- Donations raised help to support CAYA's primary prevention programs
- Students from the CHS A World of Difference (AWOD) class recycled pinwheels

CAYA's Pinwheel for Prevention Community Kick-Off Project:

- About 40 community members attended the March 12 Kick-Off, TOGETHER FOR PREVENTION, done in partnership with Clarkston Community Schools (CCS)
- **Lauren Klos, CAYA Caseworker,** presented A Little Brain Science
- **Staci Puzio, CCS Administrator for Student Growth and Well-Being,** presented Fully Present Moments with Children and Adolescents Are Powerful (Dr. Bruce Perry)
- **Video Clip, Dr. Bruce Perry,** Renowned Neuroscientist and Psychiatrist, (GPS Parent Series) "It is better to be present in the moment, than to have a lot of presence when you are not engaged"
- **Dr. Shawn Ryan, Superintendent of CCS,** presented The Last Word--about working together, where different elements of our community are taking small steps to make great things happen

Bookmark Projects: A collaboration between CCS, CIDL, and CAYA (with support from the AWOD class)

Elementary Bookmark Project: 3,000 bookmarks distributed by classroom teachers

- Elementary libraries have a dedicated section for teachers of over 24 books that reinforce the elementary bookmark message: "Blue pinwheels remind me to be kind and welcoming"

Secondary Bookmark Project: Close to 3,200 bookmarks distributed by English Language Arts (ELA) teachers

- ELA teachers help to connect literature to the pinwheel bookmarks, "Blue pinwheels remind me to be kind and welcoming and stand up for others" AND "Your small act of kindness could make a big difference for someone else"
- AWOD students distributed vinyl kindness stickers to SMS students

NEW THIS YEAR!

- The Committee individually recognized and celebrated all school secretaries and office clerks, for positively impacting the well-being of the students in their buildings on a daily basis. Each individual was presented with a pinwheel lapel pin









Camp & Skill Building Scholarships



CAYA offers financial assistance with camp and skill building scholarships to income-qualifying families within the Clarkston Community School District. These scholarships provide youth with opportunities to enjoy fun and valuable learning experiences.

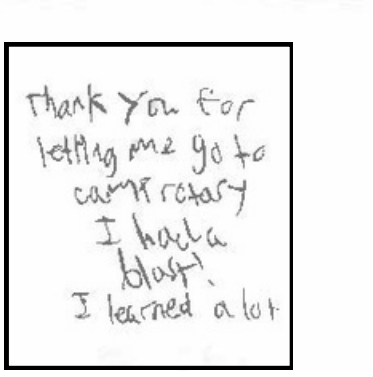
We would like to thank the following community partners and donors for partnering with us to make these programs available:
David W. Elliott Memorial Foundation, Clarkston Community Schools, Independence Township, The City of the Village of Clarkston, Springfield Township, Independence Township Parks & Recreation, Camp Copneconic, Camp Skyline, Carter Bryson, Braelyn Conley, Grant Phillips, The Matt Boczar Foundation, All About Driving, Clarkston Junior Wolves, Michigan Youth Basketball, and an anonymous donor. With their support, students were able to discover new skills and areas of interest including driver's training, math tutoring, dance, cheer, basketball, First LEGO League, Cross Country, Robotics, Winter Guard, and football, as well as enjoy enriching camp experiences.



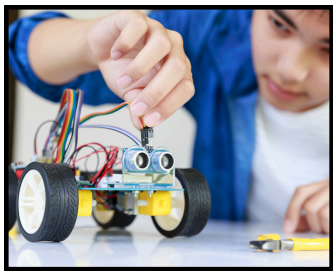
It was so much fun, I never wanted to leave. There were so many different activities and I got to learn how to cook and there are so many cool counselors and I made so many friends!

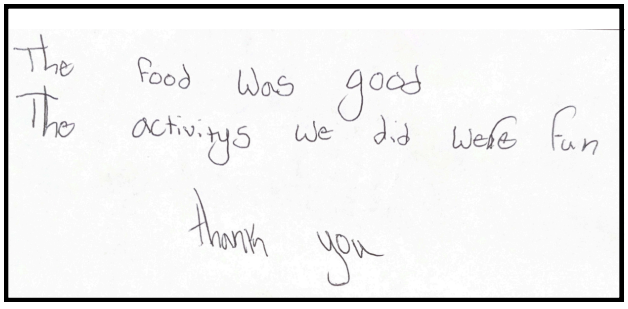
-Camp Skyline Overnight Camper





-Scout Camp
Scholarship Recipient





-Independence Township
Discovery Camper

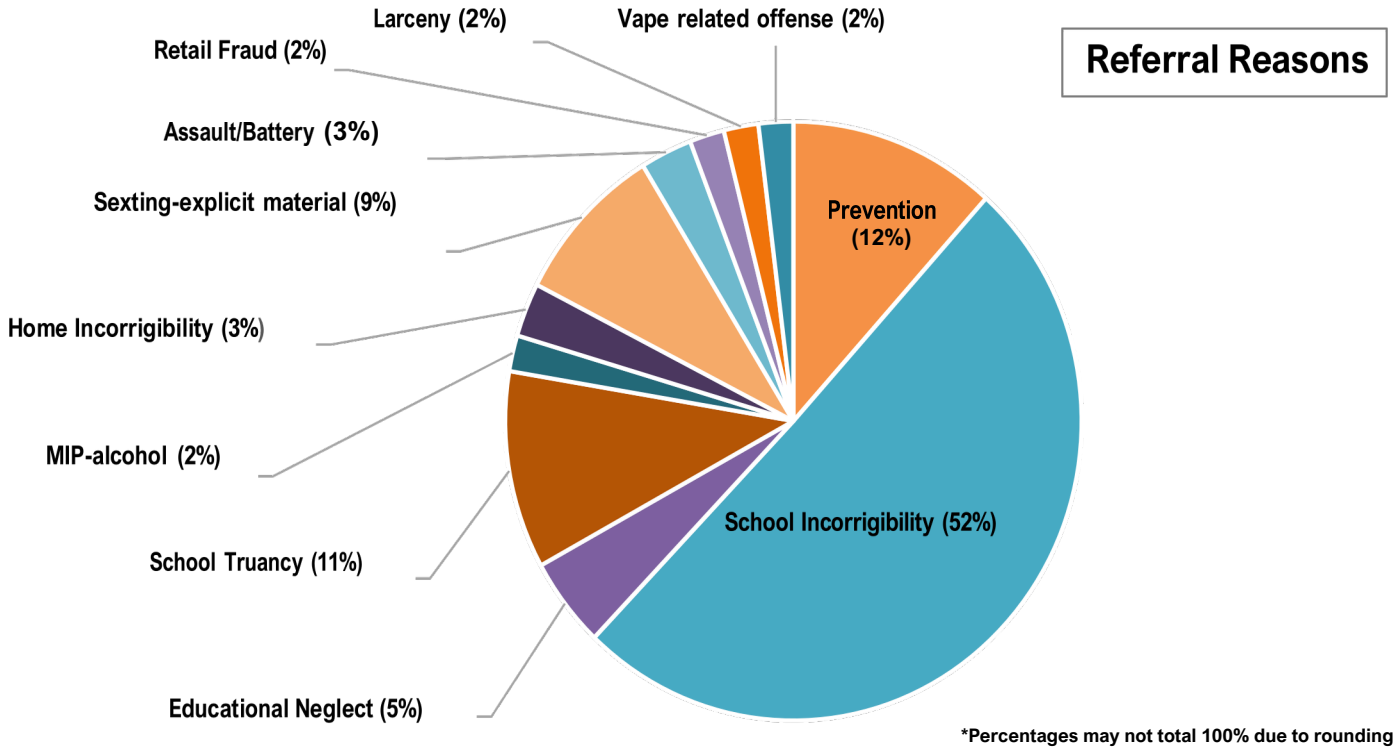
Caseworker Report
Lauren Klos, LMSW

The past year in Casework Services can be summarized by the word "pivot." When Michigan's Juvenile Justice Reform was passed in 2023 and went into effect in 2024, several changes and new requirements began to slowly roll out for juvenile courts across the state. Since Youth Assistance is administered under the auspices of the Sixth Circuit Court Family Division, this also meant changes for our department with casework processing and procedures. As these new requirements were implemented, I found myself pivoting often to accommodate all the changes that were happening. It truly has been a year of growth and learning.

One of the new requirements involves completing the Youth Level of Service (YLS) assessment. The YLS is used for youth 12 and older in all Michigan juvenile courts. This assessment tool measures the risk of criminogenic behavior in eight domains, including prior offenses, family and parenting, education, peer relations, substance abuse, leisure and recreation, personality/behavior, and attitudes/orientation. It's not labeling a youth as a criminal, but helps measure areas of risk that could lead to potential criminal behavior. The higher the score, the higher the risk. In Youth Assistance, we started using the YLS in October 2025. The YLS results help guide our case plan and give insight into other areas to work on in addition to the referral reason.

Despite having a new way of conducting assessments, I have found the YLS to be a useful tool with families. It provides guidance for establishing goals and objectives, as well as tangible evidence of improvements. As I work with a family, I may complete a reassessment to measure progress or determine if there are new concerns and adjust the case plan as needed. At case closure, I also complete an exit YLS assessment and compare the scores from the beginning to the end. Most often, cases end with a lower risk score – it is encouraging to see the scores decline and provides visual evidence of the positive changes that a youth and family have made.

Change can be difficult, especially when I was used to a certain routine in working with families. This year was filled with many changes and moments of pivoting, yet the new tools and procedures have been worthwhile. They have strengthened our casework services for the better, ultimately improving the quality and effectiveness of our work with families.



Fiscal Year-End Totals
Casework Services: July 2025 to June 2026

108 total cases from July 2025 to June 2026
66 New Referrals, plus 42 Open Cases from previous fiscal year

25 Information and Referral Consultations

133 total families impacted by Casework Services

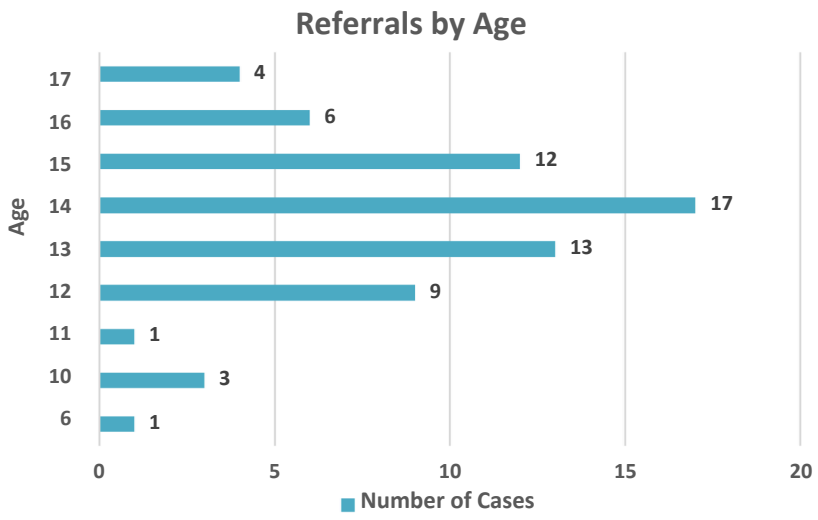
65% of new referrals engaged in services

12% - partial engagement

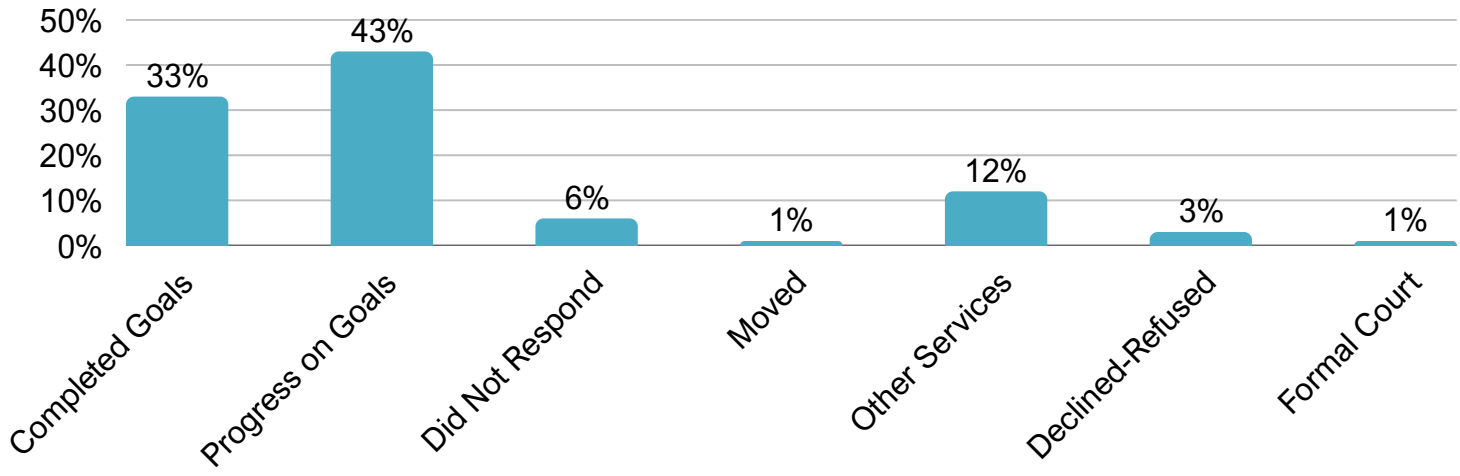
23% - did not engage in services

Fiscal year-end totals for <u>new referrals:</u>

REFERRAL SOURCE	TOTAL CASES
SCHOOL DISTRICT	51
POLICE	8
OC PROSECUTOR	2
PARENT	2
OC JUVENILE INTAKE	2
MDHHS/CPS	1
TOTAL	**66**



Closure Reasons (69 closures in 2025-2026)



*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

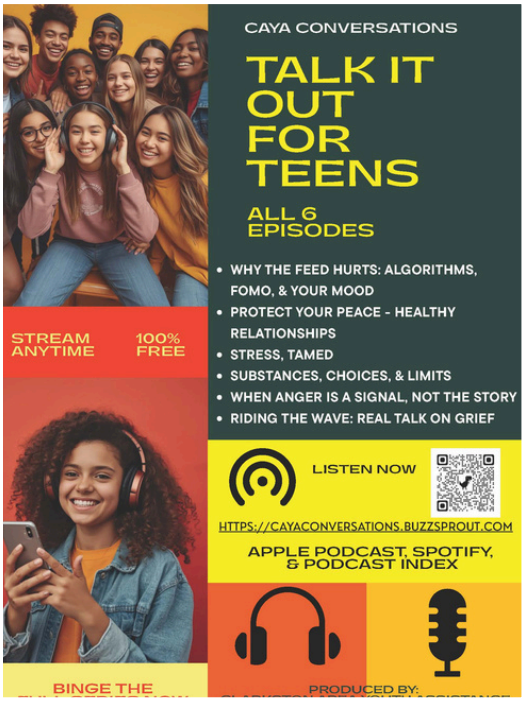





YOUTH ASSISTANCE
Clarkston Area
Fully present moments with children and adolescents are powerful.
Dr. Bruce Perry


C
snack
snack


EXIT


CAYA CONVERSATIONS
TALK IT OUT FOR TEENS
ALL 6 EPISODES
• WHY THE FEED HURTS: ALGORITHMS, FOMO, & YOUR MOOD
• PROTECT YOUR PEACE - HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
• STRESS, TAMED
• SUBSTANCES, CHOICES, & LIMITS
• WHEN ANGER IS A SIGNAL, NOT THE STORY
• RIDING THE WAVE: REAL TALK ON GRIEF
STREAM ANYTIME
100% FREE
LISTEN NOW
HTTPS://CAYACONVERSATIONS.BUZZSPROUT.COM
APPLE PODCAST, SPOTIFY, & PODCAST INDEX
BINGE THE
PRODUCED BY:


CUMC Pickleball Tournament
CUMC Pickleball Tournament
CUMC Pickleball Tournament
May 17 2026
Date
Pay to the order of CAYA
$ 1970.00
One thousand nine hundred seventy dollars
For Kingdom Assignment Pickleball Group
Carter Bryson
Braelyn Conley
Grant Phillips





CAYA SPONSORS

Thank You

to our sponsors, volunteers, and community partners. We appreciate your kindness, compassion, and donations that you have contributed.

Clarkston Area

Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement

Thank you to the Following Generous Contributors and In-Kind Partners

All About Driving
Anonymous Donor
Matt Boczar Foundation
Carter Bryson, Braelyn Conley & Grant Phillips
Camp Copneconic
Camp Skyline
Clarkston Independence District Library
Clarkston News
Clarkston Principals, Administration & Staff
David W. Elliott Memorial Foundation
Easterseals MORC
Friends of Clarkston Independence District Library
Independence Township
Independence Truck Repair
Denise McLean
Michigan Youth Basketball
Janet Modesitt
John Nicholson
Mark & Nancy Roeder
Oakland County Board of Commissioners
Oakland County Youth Assistance
Real Estate One
Belinda Seal-Sweet
Andrea Smith-Knieper
Starbucks
Tri-County Equipment
Vibe Credit Union

Pinwheels for Prevention Donors:

Judy Ableser
Kelly Adair
Michele Aenlle
Karey Bassett
Benny's Bagels
Big Oak Books
Bowman Chevrolet
Brioni Café & Deli
Calvary Evan. Lutheran Church
City of the Village of Clarkston
Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce
Clarkston Coalition for Youth
Clarkston Community Schools & Board Office
Clarkston Dental Care
Clarkston Family Dental
Clarkston Family Farm
Clarkston Fraternal Order of Eagles 337
Clarkston Independence District Library
Clarkston United Methodist Church
Culver's of Clarkston
Tricia Delude
Dort Financial Credit Union
Ellie Mental Health-Clarkston
Essence on Main Mercantile
5th Tavern Clarkston
The Gateway
Hamlin Pub
HealthQuest Physical Therapy
Independence Market
Independence Township
Inscribe Books
Karmanos/McLaren Clarkston
Katie Kremer
Lowrie's Landscape
Rochelle Mazurek
M-15 Family Medical Center
Mike McIntyre
Steve & Leah McLean
Rochelle McLetchie
MLC Building
Janet Modesitt
Jennifer Montano
Michael & Nancy Moon
Morgan's Auto Service
Amy Morris
Neiman's Family Market Clarkston
Oakhurst Golf & Country Club
Oakland Behavioral Center
Jessica O'Donnell
Oxford Bank-Clarkston Branch
Lisa Pambid
Sara Reynolds
Jan Scislowicz
Belinda Seal-Sweet
Stacia Serafin
Jaclyn Sivers
Sherry Snudden
Springfield Township
Michael Stefaniak
Laura Valerian
Elizabeth Vejcik
Waterfall Jewelers
Waterford Bank N.A.
Lewis E. Wint & Son Funeral Home
Melissa Bridgman's A World of Difference Class

Clarkston Area Youth Assistance is a volunteer-driven community organization. It is one of 26 Youth Assistance programs in Oakland County. Oakland County Youth Assistance is administered under the auspices of the Sixth Circuit Court Family Division. Principal funding is provided through the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. Each local Youth Assistance office operates with the sponsorship and financial support of its local school district and municipalities. Volunteers work with the Caseworker to plan and sponsor local prevention programs for youth and their families. More financial information is available in the office.