



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

599 Harris Hill Rd.
Elmira, NY 14903
ChemungYouth.com

"Helping the Youth of Our Community Thrive"

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David Ellis
Recreation Director
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Hello everyone,

I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report for the Chemung County Youth Bureau. This report helps showcase the many programs managed by our agency and it also highlights the partnerships that have been established within the community. These programs and collaborations foster positive youth development and enhance the quality of life for the youth and families we collectively serve.

In 2025, we successfully maintained the numerous programs we directly operate. Our Summer Cohesion, SPOT, Super Saturday, Learn & Earn, Summer Youth Employment, and JAWS programs all continued. Additionally, we were able to be involved in various local community events such as Lawn Fest, Unity in the Community, Strong Kids / Safe Kids, egg hunts, trunk or treats, and other holiday celebrations. In April, we commemorated our 40th Awards Reception, a special evening dedicated to honoring individuals who deliver quality youth service programs in our County.

The ongoing success of the Youth Bureau is evidenced by the numerous partnerships we have formed with local school districts, municipalities, community organizations, businesses, and other State and County departments. These collaborations enable us to offer high-quality programs for our youth and families. We appreciate your contributions to our achievements.

I would also like to acknowledge our exceptional team, which includes our full-time year-round staff as well as our part-time seasonal employees. Each member dedicates their heart and effort to support our families and youth. Their kindness, care, and positive energy infuse enthusiasm and joy into our programs. I am truly thankful to work alongside such remarkable individuals, and I feel very fortunate to serve this department and community.

The Chemung County Youth Bureau is eager to continue our mission of helping the youth in our community flourish. Thank you all once again for your ongoing support!!

Sincerely,

David Ellis

David Ellis
Recreation Director
Chemung County Youth Bureau and Recreational Services

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Chemung County Youth Bureau was created in 1977. Its main purpose is to research the needs of the County's youth and to plan, coordinate, foster and supplement the activities of public, private, and faith-based agencies devoted to the welfare and protection of youth. In the fall of 1993, the Chemung County Youth Bureau was merged with the County Recreation Department to streamline prevention and developmental services to youth and provide a more efficient mechanism of service delivery to youth and families in Chemung County. Today, the Youth Bureau administers over \$1.7 million dollars from Chemung County and the NYS Office of Children & Family Services to provide preventive and recreational services to the children and families of Chemung County.

Total Youth Served* - 12,648

Total Youth Employed* - 187

Ages 4 - 20 Served

* A percentage of youth may be duplicated due to being served or employed by multiple programs.



The Youth Bureau is only as successful as the people who lend their time and talents. Without these people, the Chemung County Youth Bureau would not be able to make its contributions to Chemung County.

Youth Advisory Board

Karen Fitzpatrick, Director, Chemung County Children's & Family Services

Kellie Lockwood, Director, Chemung County Child Care Council

Doris Jean Metzger, Teen Librarian, Chemung County Library District

Lisa Miller, Program Coordinator, City of Elmira Youth Court

Robert Nicholas, Director, Ernie Davis Community Center

Ivan Purifoy, Recreation Director, Town of Southport

Nikole Watts, Storm Water Educator, Chemung County

Caitlin Keenan, Student Member, Notre Dame High School

Adam Loftus, Student Member, Broadway Academy

Kennedy Parker, Student Member, Edison High School

Mikaelie Stedje, Student Member, Horseheads High School

Agency Staff

David Ellis, Recreation Director

Jennifer VonNeida, Senior Account Clerk

Samantha Johnston, Youth Program Coordinator

Hannah Brooks, Youth Program Coordinator

Sarah Kane, Youth Program Assistant

Danielle Follett, Principal Clerk

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION



Cornell Cooperative Extension 4H - After School Programming

Nearly 1,000 youth, county-wide, engaged in project activities with opportunities to go to camp, publicly show their work, travel, host international youth and attend meetings and events at Cornell University. 4-H provides a framework for which young people can develop and build self-confidence, responsibility, and generosity.

EOP-EDCC USA Boxing Program

The USA Boxing program teaches youth respect, discipline, self-worth, and confidence that centers around building teamwork and respect for others who come from diverse backgrounds. This program is free of bullying and harassment and provides youth with a safe space to learn the skills needed to build self-confidence. Once youth are engaged in the program, the discipline and character-building aspects of the USA Boxing program will decrease negative/confrontational peer interactions and promote acceptance and inclusion for all youth.

607 Unity Dance

Their primary objective is to strengthen self-esteem while helping develop talent in dancers. 607 Unity Dance fosters a can-do attitude in children. As they take on and overcome challenges, they believe more and more in their ability to do hard things. The program is overflowing with energetic, dedicated young people excited about dance. They are eager to apply their techniques and learned choreography and ready to share their inspiring performances with the other youth throughout our community and beyond.

Southside Community Center - After School Programming

The Southside Community Center is a drop-in, neighborhood based, recreational youth center. They currently provide free after-school supervision, educational and enrichment activities, snacks, and dinner to youth.

Youth Advocate Program - Reunification/Prevention Program

YAP's service model incorporates strength-based, wrap-around services into an intensive community-based program. Additional emphasis is placed on areas that are most critical to these families and youth including family relationships, school performances, and connection to the community.

Unique Community Events in which we participated:

- 607 Unity Dance Easter Egg Hunt
 - Chemung County Fall Fest
 - Compeer Mini-Golf at Arnot Mall
- County Youth Bureau Family Fun Night at Dunn Field
 - Elmira College Community Engagement Fair
 - ELNOST Legislative Breakfast
 - Halloween Teen Dance at Steele Memorial Library
- Horseheads Holiday in the Square & Santa Sighting Tours
 - Lake Street Lawn Fest
 - LECOM Event Center Winter Fest: Cabin Fever
- Strong Kids Safe Kids at the Chemung County Fairgrounds
- Town of Southport Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat, & Holiday Parade
- Twin Tiers Comic-Con at the Arnot Mall Event Center
 - Twinkle Town at Bradley Farms
 - Unity in the Community at Brand Park
 - Zombie Apocalypse at Steele Memorial Library



COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

On April 29, 2025, Chemung County Youth Bureau's 40th Awards Reception was held at the Clemens Center where we recognized exemplary individuals and programs that make a difference for our youth and families in Chemung County.

2025 Winners

Donahoe Award



Marilyn Christofaro

Polly Sanders Scholarship

Nehemiah Andrews



Corning Christian Academy



Dillan Allyn-Nobles

Edison High School

Lisa A. Bowers Summer Cohesion Synergy Award

Tim Collins



Program Excellence Award

607 Unity



SPOT Summer is a free, supervised, recreation program for youth ages 12-15 years old that reside in Chemung County. The SPOT Program gratefully acknowledges the City of Elmira, the Town of Elmira, the Town of Southport, and the Elmira City School District for making this great program possible.

The SPOT Summer Program has evolved to doing six Premiere Events in the summer operating on Friday nights from 6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. Events included a Foam Party at the Steele Memorial Library in Elmira, Video Game Night at Checkpoint Lounge in the Arnot Mall, and Laser Tag at the Steele Memorial Library. The SPOT Summer Program had 35 teens attend at least one event.

SPOT School is a free, supervised, drop-in, recreational program for students in grades 7th – 9th that reside in the Elmira City School District. SPOT School operates on Friday or Saturday evenings usually from 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. once or twice a month throughout the school year.

Activities and field trips include Roller Skating, Movie Nights, Laser Tag, School Dances, Nerf Battles, Pizza Parties with board games, crafts, and more.

In addition to the Friday night activities, SPOT works together with Broadway Academy and Ernie Davis Academy to encourage positive behavior among students along with academic success throughout the school year by providing various incentives to compliment special events that recognize students.

The SPOT School Program had over 500 students participating in at least one event during the school year. The 2025 SPOT School Program gratefully acknowledges the Elmira City School District and Steele Memorial Library for providing facility use for the SPOT School program to operate.



The Chemung County SafeZones Program continues to provide middle and high school students with a safe, empowering, and non-judgmental environment to learn about LGBTQIA+ history, culture, and relevant topics. SafeZones promotes diversity and encourages acceptance for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

In 2025, SafeZones continued to host students who felt anxious or overwhelmed in the cafeteria during their lunch periods at Broadway Academy and Ernie Davis Academy. SafeZones also serves students in Chemung County by holding SafeZones groups at the Steele Memorial Library once a month. The Program Coordinator also conducted community presentations in the ECSD and throughout Chemung County, including open houses, reading nights, and Pride events.



Super Saturday is a 6-week recreational and enrichment program for youth in grades K-4 who reside in the Elmira City School District. Super Saturday is offered at no cost.

The Program Assistant oversees the program each week, assists staff and students, and answers questions parents may have.

Super Saturday operates two, 6-week sessions during the school year from 9:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M. at the YWCA Elmira & the Twin Tiers.

Online registration is held two weeks before the start of the program with 76 children being registered for the winter session, and 83 children being registered for the fall session. Classes are divided into two age groups, K-1 and 2-4. Each child attends two, 1-hour classes. Recreation Leaders work in teams of two in the classes.

- Arts and Crafts
- Fun & Fitness
- Science

Organizations like Community Arts of Elmira, Chemung County 4-H, TriFit Fitness, Xtreme Hip Hop with Nicole Jackson, and Tim Collins Solo Performer visited the Super Saturday classes and did different activities with the kids that promoted physical and emotional wellness, creativity, and self-expression.

The Super Saturday Program is made possible through partnerships with the Elmira City School District, City of Elmira, Town of Southport, and Town of Elmira.



Summer Cohesion is a six-week, drop-in, recreational, educational, and cultural enrichment program delivered to children 4-12 years old in Chemung County. The program was created in 1974 after the flood and celebrated 51 years in 2025. The 2025 program operated Monday – Friday, July 7th – August 15th from 8:00am-2:00pm at five locations throughout the Elmira, Elmira Heights and Horseheads area.

A total of 554 youth were registered at the following site locations:

- Cohen Middle School
- Hendy Elementary School
- Horseheads Intermediate School
- First Baptist Church in Horseheads
- Riverside Elementary School

Each site is divided into 4 age groups.

- Tot Lot - 4-5 years old
- Summer Friends - 6-7 years old
- Summer Buddies - 8-9 years old
- Summer Club - 10-12 years old

All activities are scheduled and followed through lesson plans to create a well-structured environment.

- Daily activities include indoor-outdoor games, arts-n-crafts, talent shows, daily reading, water games and more.
- Off-site field trips include swimming, hiking, picnics, visits to local museums, and fire departments.
- Local service agencies and businesses provide traveling programs to each site with hands-on activities and presentations that focus on proper nutrition, youth fitness, healthy lifestyles, creative expression, and safety.
- One offsite Softball Tournament took place where youth from all five sites attended.
- Our first annual Kickball Tournament was introduced where all five sites traveled to Chapel Park to play kickball against each other and the Southport Parks Program.
- Hendy Elementary took a trip to Pine City Fire Department for a Water Day!



Our Riverside site having some fun with shaving cream!



The winners of our first annual Kickball Tournament – Horseheads Intermediate School!

- Over 8,000 program brochures were distributed in schools, businesses and youth serving agencies throughout Chemung County in May.
- Online registration ran for two weeks beginning in early June.
- 100% of families participated in the online registration process.

Program fees:

- Full Fee-\$150.00 for each child in the family.
- Reduced Fee-\$85.00 for each child in the family.
- Some families may be eligible for a full scholarship through the Department of Social Services.

2025 Summer Cohesion employees:

Each site has a Site Coordinator, a Senior Recreation Leader, and Recreation Leaders assigned according to the number of youths registered there. A total of 100 employees worked in 2025.

- All staff are certified in Standard First Aid, Child/Adult CPR and AED.
- Site Coordinators – 5
- Senior Recreation Leaders – 5
- Recreation Leaders – 88
- Program Support staff – 2

Site Coordinators are in charge of the site and overall daily operation of the program. Most Site Coordinators are teachers and graduate level students.

Senior Recreation Leaders are the assistant to the Site Coordinator and take care of office organization and keep the Site Coordinator well informed of site activities. Senior Recreation Leaders are typically college students pursuing teaching, business, and nursing degrees.

Recreation Leaders work with a co-leader in the classroom with up to 25 children. Recreation Leaders are high school seniors or college students.

2025 Additional Program Support Staff:

Program Assistant – aids in the overall daily operation of the program, special events and staff training.

Traveling Nurse – travels to all sites and helps the staff with any questions that they may have pertaining to first aid and CPR procedures.

Annual Staff Training:

A comprehensive, 3-day staff training is held to prepare and setup for the six weeks. Staff members attend workshops on: Team Building, Classroom Management, Child Development, Literacy, Child Abuse Awareness, Swimming Safety, Intruder and Site Security, SafeZones and Inclusion, games, crafts and more.



Program Highlights:

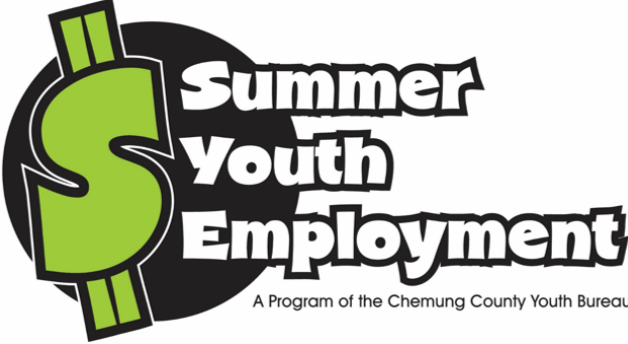
- The USDA Summer Feeding Program provides nutritious meals to children when school is not in session. In partnership with BOCES and the Elmira City School District free breakfast and lunch was served daily at four eligible Summer Cohesion sites. Over 10,000 meals were served to 313 Summer Cohesion youth throughout the summer.
- Summer Reading continues to be a strong focus in the Summer Cohesion Program. Together with program partners, GST BOCES, Chemung County Library District, Elmira City School District, Horseheads School District and the Pawtners Program, sites were well-stocked with reading materials, supplies, activities and volunteers to read to them. The goal was to read every day for at least 20 minutes.
- Summer Cohesion continues to work together with local youth serving agencies to help families with care beyond the traditional hours of Cohesion. This continuum of care is important for all families in our community, providing additional programming for youth each day.
- The YWCA Elmira & Twin Tiers, Kids World Program provided care from 2:00P.M.-5:30P.M. at one Summer Cohesion location, Cohen Middle School in Elmira Heights.
- The Elmira City School District (ECSD) also had their Summer Boost Program in all of the ECSD Summer Cohesion locations. Summer Boost provides a fun and engaging opportunity for youth that promotes learning and education.



- Our First Baptist site getting active with Nicole Jackson with Xtreme Hip Hop!



- Our Hendy site getting sprayed by the fire hose for their water day!

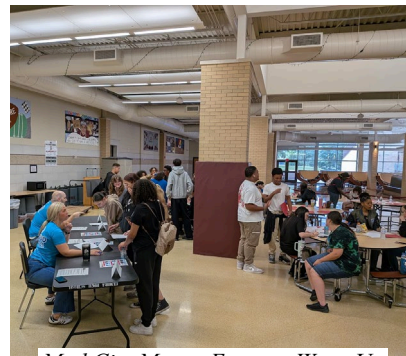


Summer Youth Employment

A Program of the Chemung County Youth Bureau

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is a comprehensive youth employment program for income eligible youth ages 14 to 20 residing in Chemung County. Eligible youth and their families must have a gross income that does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty level. The participating youth are placed in various public, private, and not for profit agencies throughout Chemung County. They are placed based on their interests, where they live, and their means of transportation. Over the course of the six-week summer program, youth have the potential to earn up to \$2,325 by participating in subsidized work experience opportunities. Youth learn valuable workplace skills offered in various trainings and workshops.

96 total youth hired at 42 county-wide worksites	
27	14 year olds
26	15 year olds
17	16 year olds
17	17 year olds
8	18 year olds
0	19 year olds
1	20 year olds

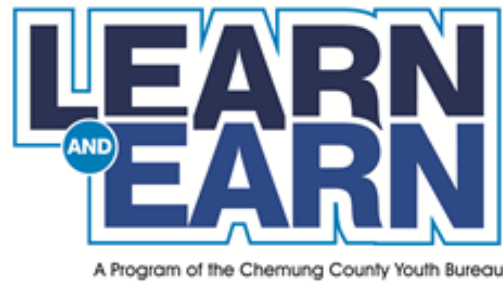


Mad City Money Event at Wrap Up with Corning Credit Union.

- 80 youth successfully completed the Summer Youth Employment Program
- Youth received 11 hours of education throughout the program
- 4 Learn and Earn students successfully applied their skills and completed the Summer Youth Employment Program
- Youth worked an average of 25 hours a week
- The Summer Youth Employment Program provided four hours of Financial Literacy training at all mandatory events; covering topics such as: checking accounts, savings accounts, budgeting, money management, financial preparation for college, and writing checks. The youth also had the ability to open their own account with Corning Credit Union.
- At the first mandatory workshop, the youth received training on how to complete a job application, taught to sign their name, write a check, compose a résumé, and cover letter, and manage their money using a money register.

At our annual Wrap Up Event, the Corning Credit Union hosted a Mad City Money Event. Student participants were provided with a career along with a salary, a spouse, a child, and some loan debt. Participants were then required to purchase needs and wants from merchants to care for the members of their family. The youth also received training on the importance of credit scores as well as stress management techniques.

24% of these youth resided in the 14901-zip code, 42% from the 14904-zip code, 10% from the 14905-zip code and 11% from the 14845-zip code. The program had a 83% retention rate of youth workers over the course of the program. Youth were compensated at a rate of \$15.50 per hour (NYS minimum wage) and youth worked an average of 25 hours per week over July and August having the ability to earn as much as \$2,325 over the course of the summer.



The Learn and Earn Program provides youth program participants with an opportunity to strengthen their ability to become self-sufficient and responsible through a series of basic life and job skills training that will benefit them in a variety of life settings. The goal of the Learn and Earn Program is to enable youth to see themselves as respected, successful, and contributing members of the community and workforce with strong goals for their future.

The program serves income eligible youth, ages 14-18, who are currently enrolled in high school in Chemung County. The program operates in 2 sessions throughout the school year. Income eligibility is based upon the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Department regarding the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF). Youth program participant's family income must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty guidelines.

- 24 youth participated in Financial Literacy and Soft Employment Skills Training
- 20 hours of soft employment skills is taught to each student
- 4 youth who completed Learn and Earn exercised their skills to apply and interview for the Summer Youth Employment Program
- The Learn and Earn Program offered Corning Credit Union applications to ensure all youth who participated in the program had the ability to sign up for a student account.
- The students participated in workshops that reviewed communication skills, decision making skills, teamwork, résumé composure, banking skills, emotional management, how to take initiative, appropriate relationships in the workplace, motivation and goal setting, and stress management skills.
- During each session, students participate in a variety of team building activities to enhance their ability to become leaders within their community.



Dr. Larry Parker II gave tips on accepting feedback.



Tim Collins set our kids up for success for future interviews!

JAWS

Juvenile Assigned Work Service Program

Developed in 1995, The Chemung County Juvenile Assigned Work Service Program (JAWS) is designed to give consequences and prevent further involvement or placement of youth, ages 10 to 17 to all youth in Chemung County currently involved in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System or the Child Welfare System. The Chemung County Department of Youth Bureau and Recreational Services JAWS Program provides a safe, supervised, structured environment in which youth can perform their assigned community service. Transportation is also provided between four convenient pickup sites throughout Chemung County. Referrals received for the JAWS Program are made possible through the collaborative effort between the Chemung County Department of Youth Bureau and Recreational Services and the following referral sources: the Chemung County Family Court System, Chemung County Probation Department, and Chemung County Children's Integrated Services.

- 95% of youth completed all assigned community service hours
- Referral source:
 - 33 referrals came from the Chemung County Probation Department
 - 315 hours community service hours were completed for a value of \$4,882.50 based on NYS minimum wage of \$15.50 an hour.
- The participants of the JAWS Program filled Easter and Halloween bags for holiday events. Youth also had miscellaneous indoor-outdoor duties such as, litter pickup, raking and bagging leaves, clearing brush and weeds, sweeping, mopping, and cleaning.
- The staff hired for the JAWS Program have various full-time positions outside of JAWS including teachers, teacher aids, and various youth programs throughout Chemung County.
- The Town of Southport, Southside Community Center, Ernie Davis Community Center, Horseheads United Methodist Church, Harris Hill, Elmira Parks, and the Chemung County Youth Bureau provide the JAWS youth with adequate spaces and supplies to complete their community service hours.



"Helping the Youth of Our Community Thrive"



New York State Governor's Youth Council

The New York State Governor's Youth Council provides an effective way to engage youth in state government and creates a platform for their voices to be heard by policymakers. This is an incredible opportunity for New York's youth to represent their county on a statewide level! Members of the NYS Governor's Youth Council offer their solutions to key issues facing young people in NYS to the Governor and other policymakers, including how to have better outreach and communication strategies to young people. Youth voice is recognized through this initiative!

Anika Kamaraju is Chemung County's representative on the New York State Governor's Youth Council. Anika graduated from Horseheads High School in June of 2025. We thank Anika for her dedication and bringing a voice to the council for our youth in Chemung County.

