



OVER 50 YEARS OF GIVING YOUTH ROOTS TO GROW AND WINGS TO FLY

# Montgomery County YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU

NOVEMBER 2022

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## Our Mission is:

The Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau empowers children/youth to become responsible citizens through delinquency prevention, community education, youth advocacy, direct services and information and referral.

## A New Program? YES!

By: Cameron Cole

One of the rising concerns that we are seeing in Montgomery County is youth use of tobacco/vaping products. As professionals in this field many of us came together to discuss what we can do about this issue and how can it be addressed. One thing that came up, was could we have teens who get in trouble for using these tobacco products be sent through teen court? After that was discussed we started wondering why we could not just have a separate tobacco court as an extension of teen court. So that is what we did! The Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau is announcing a new Tobacco Court Program. Tobacco Court will act as a diversionary program instead of sending the juvenile through "real court". This program is for youth who got in trouble for using some form of a tobacco product. The youth and their

parent come to Tobacco Court where they will sit in front of a local attorney who is acting as judge and receive a disposition. What their dispositions will consist of is a fee, having to take an in-person tobacco class, and anything else the judge believes would benefit the youth (community service hours, an essay, etc.). The youth are given 60 days to complete the disposition they received. Part of tobacco court as I mentioned is having to take a tobacco class. This class is taught once a month at the YSB and it is through a program called *Catch My Breath*. It is more of a preventative class that we are using in hopes it will educate these youth on the products they are using and prevent them from continuing the use of them. It is a two-hour class, and we just held our first class on October 29<sup>th</sup>. We had 8 youth in attendance. One thing that I found both in tobacco court and in the tobacco class is that

these youth do not truly understand what they are inhaling into their bodies. Many just cared about it "tasting good". This alone proved that this educational class was needed. One of the other major concerns that was brought up, was how many of these youth said that the reason they used these products was to help them deal with stressors in their life. It was really eye-opening to hear how many youth are experiencing stress to a level that they felt the use of tobacco products was an appropriate coping skill. It really gives insight into the mental health issues our youth are facing. This is something that we as a community need to address. If you would like to know more about this program please contact Cameron at [cameron@mcysb.org](mailto:cameron@mcysb.org).

## No News Is Good News

By Shannon Furr

No news is thought to be good news, but truthfully, good news is clearly better! We always have some good news at the alternative school. Though difficult to believe, we are about a third of the way through the school year. Our classes continue to grow, both literally and figuratively. We are serving nearly 25 students from all three county high schools, and they have earned just shy of 60 credits already! For reference, last year was a record year, and we had 45 credits at this same time.

As always, we continue to try to find outlets for students who struggle to remain motivated in the classroom, and we do whatever we can to help them

get back into a working routine. We create a cooperative plan with parents; we write and sign progress contracts; we employ rewards. While some students are intrinsically motivated, others need a little boost, but nearly every single student finds some level of success while they are here. While success may look different from one student to the next, we do not have any students who are not making some progress. Meeting the needs of all students is a challenge in our environment, but we are doing just that. Students who can't sit still are provided with a "wobble disc," a disc shaped, air filled silicon cushion. They can stand on it and redistribute their weight between feet, or they can sit on it and wiggle without

rocking the chair or making any noise. We have under the desk ellipticals they can spin while they read. Did you know that learning and retention are improved by physical activity? We have one student who has already completed the requirements for graduation, and we have five more in a good position to graduate on time (or early) given their current level of progress. We have several students who return to their schools of legal settlement early in November, and we call that progress too. Our news is pretty much the same at this time every year, so we call that no news—which is good news. Look a little closer and see just how great our news really is!

## 50+1 Birthday Celebration

Thank you to our amazing community, our volunteers, donors and supporters who make serving the youth in our community possible. It was so fun to celebrate together! A special thank you to Hoosier Heartland State Bank for being the generous sponsor of our birthday celebration.



## JUMP Program Looking For Volunteers

By: Jill Hampton

Since the Pandemic, the JUMP program has lost many of its volunteers and it has been difficult to recruit new ones. No one is really sure what has changed but it seems many programs throughout the country are struggling with the same issues. One thing that has not changed is the need for children to have mentors and other positive role models in their lives.

The JUMP program is comprised of adult volunteers who are matched with youth in our community who share similar interests. They get together a minimum of 4 hours per month to spend time and develop a friendship. A lot of adults are worried about what they will do with a child during this time but there are so many free things to do in Montgomery County and the surrounding areas that mentors need not be concerned.

The JUMP program manager, Jill Hampton, sends out a list of ideas each month so the mentors can choose from these or come up with something they enjoy on their own. For example, David and Deb Polley took their mentee to the Crawfordsville Airport on Airport day and their mentee got to fly in a plane for free. This is an experience their mentee, Dakota, may not have had the chance to do otherwise. What a great memory for all of them! Many of the mentors in the past have said once they got through the initial get to know each other stage, their mentee just hung out with them as they ran errands. Sometimes they just stayed at home and cooked a simple snack, played a board game or watched a movie. It isn't really about the activity or spending a lot of money, it is more about giving a child some one on one attention and encouragement. In ad-

dition, the JUMP program also offers one free group activity each month that the mentor and mentee can attend, if they choose.

To become a mentor, you must fill out an application, complete some background checks and attend a face to face interview. Once accepted, there is an orientation for the new volunteers to explain agency and program policies, "what ifs" and some statistics and background information on Mentoring.

If you would like more information about the program or if you would like to volunteer to become a mentor, contact Jill Hampton. The phone is 362-0693 ext. 103 or email [jill@mcysb.org](mailto:jill@mcysb.org).

Give the gift of your time to a child in need, you will never regret it!



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## Nourish Program Providing Backpacks With Supply Issues

By: Cathy Kruse

Just like in the grocery stores, food costs for Nourish are increasing and we are having some trouble getting a variety of food items. Our choices are limited, especially with vegetables and fruits. Even pancake mix and granola bars are either too pricey or hard to come by. Despite these challenges we are still able to provide 158 backpacks of food to kiddos for the weekends. We are so blessed with a lot of individual and organizational volunteers who come weekly, every other week

or monthly to pack and deliver the food to the schools.



## From The Executive Director

By: Karen Branch

Not all super heroes wear capes. Superman and Batman are great, but I would rather have our staff, volunteers and supporters any day of the week. Edward Albert said it best when he said, "The simple act of caring is heroic." There is so much divisiveness in our world, but all of you choose to continue to be a force for good and the positive in our world through your actions and support. Generosity, kindness, selflessness, engagement and caring are just a few of your super powers that our youth

get to see every day from your efforts. I know you do not want recognition for all you do, and yet you deserve to be recognized. It is these small and large acts of caring that provide the impact for our youth. You are all super heroes to our youth!

I am filled with gratitude for all that we are able to do for youth because of this community and the heroes who support us. Whether you support us with the gifts of time, talent or treasure, you are helping make such a positive impact on our youth and building a

stronger community. As we come to the end of another year, I feel fulfilled knowing our year has been filled with programs, youth served and immeasurable impact.

So, to all our heroes, your cape and super powers may not be visible to others, but we see you and appreciate all you do for our youth!

## Get Involved!!

Are you looking for ways to get more involved in your community? We have a variety of volunteer opportunities available! **Court Appointed Special Advocate or CASA** is looking for adults who are interested in being the voice for youth involved in the foster care system. Contact Kate at [Kate@mcysb.org](mailto:Kate@mcysb.org) for more information!

**Juvenile Mentoring Program or JUMP** is looking for adults age 21 and older to serve as a mentor for local youth. This is a commitment of 4 hours per month and an opportunity to do some fun things! For more information contact Jill at [Jill@mcysb.org](mailto:Jill@mcysb.org).

**Teen Court** is a diversionary program for youth that has a positive impact on their futures. This program is looking for

youth volunteers in middle school or high school to serve as jury members or attorneys in these real cases. Teen volunteers earn community service hours for time spent at court sessions that add up to look great on college and scholarship applications. For more information contact Cameron at [Cameron@mcysb.org](mailto:Cameron@mcysb.org).

**Youth as Resources or YAR:** Is a program that focuses on youth philanthropy. This group gives grants to local youth completing service projects in Montgomery County. This group also completes service projects around Montgomery County, for example, work days at local nonprofits or appreciation projects for local teachers. Teen volunteers with YAR earn community service hours for time spent at meetings or dur-

ing projects that add up to look great on college and scholarship applications. For more information contact Cameron at [Cameron@mcysb.org](mailto:Cameron@mcysb.org).

**Inspire** is a mentoring program for girls in middle and high school. We focus on helping these girls face tough adolescent topics like self-esteem, healthy relationships, responsible citizenship, healthy eating, and confronting tough emotions. We meet every other Thursday here at the YSB from 5:00-6:30.



## With Heartfelt Gratitude

By: Jane Christophersen

It is that time of year when we start to prepare for Thanksgiving. And ultimately, we think about our blessings and for whom and what we are thankful. Our CASA volunteers rank very high on my list. They give of their time, their hearts, their minds, at times their money, and often their own wellbeing to advocate for their "CASA kids." The last one might puzzle you a bit. I know that volunteers lose sleep, feel heartbroken, have anxiety, and carry the pain of their CASA kids and the parents with them. They sometimes suffer what is called secondary trauma. It's almost impossible to not feel deeply emotional for the families of children whose lives have been so negatively impacted. It's hard to spend a wonderful Thanksgiving with family or friends and not think of the children missing their own family and friends. But our volunteers persevere and provide their CASA kids with attention, love,

kindness, understanding, and fierce advocacy when needed. They give them hope. They make them feel special. It is sometimes thankless because the kids don't really often show appreciation. But I think the CASAs will tell you the smiles they see when families are reunited or kids are adopted into safe, permanent, loving homes are worth all of the secondary trauma. You can't feel the same level of joy when something great happens if you haven't also felt pain along the way. Being a CASA is certainly not for the faint of heart. But I think it makes the heart stronger. I try to tell our volunteers often how much I appreciate them. But I would like to publicly let them know how much I admire and treasure them. Thank you:

Michael Abbott, Ellen Ball, Karen Branch, Cali Bridges, Dave Burget, Melissa Brush, Cathy Caldwell, Jill Canter, Jill Capper, Misty Cassidy, Caren Cross, Mary Lou Dawald, Jeff Drury,

Jennifer Fortney, Glenda Frees, Steve Frees, Beth Griffin, Ruth Hallett, Jill Hampton, Barb Johnson, DeeDee Jones, Sally LeJeune-Jones, Debbie Keller, Ashley Kight, Cathy Kruse, Lynn Larson, Bill Lindemann, Debbie Miller, Amy Munroe, Sherry Nicoson, Kim Nixon, Kristie Ross, Dee Ann Rowley, Sue Runyon, Sandra Salazar, Shawna Simmons, Sheila Sowers, Agata Szczeszak-Brewer, Suzanne Thompson, Debbie Threlkeld, Cindy Tomey, Kathy Walker, and Gina Williams.

I would also like to thank Sue Brassel and Kate Doty, our fabulous staff members who provide outstanding service to both our volunteers and their "CASA kids." I can't ever thank them enough for all they do.

If you would like to know more about the CASA Program, please contact Kate Doty at [kate@mcysb.org](mailto:kate@mcysb.org) or 362-0694, ext. 106.



The Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau

808 W. Pike St.  
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**Sara Clapp:** Program Development Associate  
**Cameron Cole:** Youth Program Manager  
**Kate Doty:** CASA Volunteer Coordinator  
**Shannon Furr:** Alternative School Teacher  
**Jill Hampton:** JUMP Program Director  
**Cathy Kruse:** Nourish Coordinator  
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# JUMP Banquet 2022

