



**Birmingham**  
Strengthening Families  
Through Community Involvement

# 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## BIRMINGHAM YOUTH ASSISTANCE

### We are BYA! You are BYA!

#### **Birmingham Youth Assistance**

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Catherine Womack, MSW

*Administrative Assistant*

Lynne R. Zacharias

## From Our Chair: Dave Wind



Having completed my third year as chair of the BYA and tenth year as a BYA board member, I am pleased to report an outstanding full year of events and accomplishments. The last two years of our operation were greatly influenced by the pandemic, causing curtailment of some of our traditional programming and outreach to the local community, families and children we serve. However, we adapted to this unique environment and were able to offer limited but enriching community events, along with virtual programming support.

This fiscal year, our 61st year of operation, continued our mission to “strengthen families through community involvement” by servicing youth and families within our geographic boundary of the Birmingham Public School District. Included in the array of community in-person events were: The Kid’s Zone at the Birmingham Farmers Market (October); Breakfast with Santa (December); Kids Dog Show (February); Youth in Service (May); Touch-A-Truck (May); and the Food Truck Rally (June) supporting West Bloomfield Youth Assistance. Details of these events are included in this report. Summer camp scholarships and the Mentors Plus program continued to be offered to children in our community. Finally, our partnership with the Baldwin Public Library included an informative presentation by BYA to the public in October.

Our caseworker, Cathy Womack, was able to provide her important counseling and outreach to youth and their families, from both our office in Seaholm High school and “virtually” when required.

We said “good-bye” to our administrative assistant, Ruth Gerber, last year and were delighted to welcome Lynne Zacharias into this position at the beginning of 2023. We also welcomed three new board members: Meg Lopé, Lisa Nardone and Erin Reemmer.

I would like to thank all of our board members for their support and participation especially our executive committee: Ann Nazareth Manning (vice chair), Shelly Taub (past chair), Eileen Pulker (secretary), and Dick Stasys (treasurer).

**For information about upcoming Events  
and Programs check out the BYA website  
at [www.birminghamyouthassistance.org](http://www.birminghamyouthassistance.org)**

## Kids' Dog Show

More than fifty local families had a barking good time at the 40th annual Birmingham Youth Assistance Kids Dog Show on Sunday, February 5 in the Berkshire Middle School gym. All were excited that the show was back following a two-year break due to the pandemic. A number of families who competed in the last Kids' Dog Show in 2020 returned, including three dogs defending their first place event titles.

In the Best Costume event, Rocky, a Toy Poodle dressed as a plate of spaghetti and meatballs, took first place. His owner, Isabella Woodley, is a sixth grader at Birmingham Covington School.

The winner of the Waggiest Tail contest in the 2020 Kids' Dog Show successfully defended her title and came in first place again. Bella, a Boxer/Lab mix, impressed the judges with her very waggy tail. Bella's owner, Lily Bailey, is a sixth grader at Berkshire Middle School.

Sarah Fearon and her Bordoodle, Charlie, wowed spectators as they won the Best Trick competition. Charlie did some high flying, leaping first over Sarah's leg and then over the back of a student down on all fours, all while dressed in a Supergirl costume. Sarah is a fifth grader at Pembroke Elementary.

The Musical Sit event is a canine variation of the popular children's game of Musical Chairs and requires good communication between pet and owner. The winning team was Goldendoodle Teddy and his owner, Camryn Powell, a sixth grader at Berkshire Middle School.

The last contest attracted the largest field of competitors for any event. Rosie, a Treeing Walker Coon Hound, stood out among the thirty dogs and claimed the title of Best Looking. Rosie's owner is Dylan Roth, a second grader at Beverly Elementary.

Finally, the judges had the unenviable task of choosing a single standout from among the five impressive category winners. Teddy, the Goldendoodle owned by Camryn Powell, was presented with the Best in Show Trophy.

The Kids' Dog Show was supported by the generosity of its sponsors: Premier Pet Supply, Fluff & Tuff, the Southern Michigan Obedience Training Club, Beverly Hills Veterinary Associates, Mills Pharmacy, and Blume Design.

Birmingham Youth Assistance is also grateful to Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard, who realized this show would be a great opportunity to share with kids the important role that his K-9 deputies play in the community. Five deputies were on hand with cuddly King Charles Cavalier Spaniels from the Comfort Dog program for families to meet, and two additional deputies with their German Shepherd "working dogs" impressed families with the dogs' skill in catching faux perpetrators. Pam Roehr and Linda Marler, of the Southern Michigan Obedience Training Club, presented a helpful demonstration of obedience training.

The Birmingham Youth Assistance Kids' Dog Show has been an annual tradition since 1982, not only for kids and their dogs, but also for some very dedicated volunteers. "The Kids' Dog Show wouldn't be the wonderful event it has become without the loyal, multi-year support of a few amazing people," said Ann Nazareth Manning, BYA Vice-Chair and Kids' Dog Show event chair since 2015. "Mike Palmer of Premier Pet Supply has been a driving force for this event, through both his generosity and the hours he dedicates, for 26 years. Pam Roehr of the Southern Michigan Obedience Training Club has done demonstrations at the show for 28 years, former Birmingham Commissioner Carroll DeWeese has been the event's photographer for 13 years, and Berkshire Middle School Principal Jason Clinkscale has served as the event's dynamic Master of Ceremonies for ten years."

Mark your calendars for the 41st Annual Kids' Dog Show, to be held on Sunday, February 4, 2024.

**Kids' Dog Show Chair  
Ann Nazareth Manning**



# Caseworker's Report

## Catherine Womack, MSW

### 2022-2023 CASE STATISTICS

#### REASONS:

Alcohol .....	3
Assault & Battery.....	7
Computer Misuse .....	5
Disorderly conduct.....	9
Home Incurrigibility.....	3
Prevention.....	30
Retail Fraud.....	7
School Incurrigibility.....	13
School Threat.....	4
School Truancy.....	6
Trespassing/B&E.....	10
Unlicensed Driver.....	3

#### REFERRAL SOURCES:

DHHS/CP .....	1
OC Prosecutor .....	11
Parent .....	8
Police.....	48
School.....	39

#### CASELOAD TOTALS:

Direct Service Cases.....	107
Consult Cases.....	82
Caseload C.S. Hours.....	340

#### YOUTH SERVED DIRECTLY:

Age	Male	Female
5 yrs.	1	0
6 yrs.	2	1
7 yrs.	1	0
8 yrs.	2	0
9 yrs.	0	1
10 yrs.	2	0
11 yrs.	7	1
12 yrs.	7	9
13 yrs.	12	5
14 yrs.	6	9
15 yrs.	17	7
16 yrs.	8	3
17 yrs.	3	3

As every parent knows, raising happy, responsible, well-adjusted children requires commitment, time, attention, and continuous updating of parenting tools and resources to keep up with our children and the ever-changing influences youth and families navigate in this fast-paced world.

Birmingham Youth Assistance Casework Services provide a proactive program within the community to turn to for guidance, resources and partnerships that support our youth and families, and to divert offenses at risk of official court involvement. Confidential, short-term professional services focus on opportunities for strengthening growth and learning through prevention approaches, while nurturing a connectedness with the local community, schools and county. As a free program for families, Youth Assistance prevention efforts continue to be an economically sound service available for youth through the age of 17 years old and their families residing within the boundaries of Birmingham Public Schools.

Many thanks to the very dedicated and talented Birmingham Youth Assistance Executive Board and Board of Volunteers who donated 1,777 hours of their time to Birmingham Youth Assistance operations, planning and programs for healthy family events in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Along with this tremendous group of volunteers, the commitment of our tri-sponsorship, community partners and mindful referral sources are integral in the strengthening of Birmingham area youth and families.

### About Youth Assistance

Oakland County Youth Assistance has been dedicated to the prevention of juvenile delinquency, child abuse, and neglect since 1953. Twenty-six offices in Oakland County provide programs to serve youth and their families, under the auspices of the Oakland County Circuit Court-Family Division. Youth Assistance programs work because they are community-based and developed by volunteers who have their fingers on the pulse of the community. The County of Oakland does not discriminate on the



basis of disability in admission or access to its programs, activities or services as required by Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. The County of Oakland is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Since 1962, Birmingham Youth Assistance has been a non-profit community-based service organization committed to serving youth and their families through a variety of programs and resources since 1962. BYA operates with the sponsorship and generosity of the Oakland County Circuit Court—Family Division, as well as the City of Birmingham, the Villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, and Franklin, and the Birmingham Public School District. Principal funding is supplied through the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

# Camp Report

## 2023



For over fifty years, BYA has provided camp scholarships to area children whose lives could be enriched and improved with a summer camp experience. Unfortunately, summer camp may not be obtainable for many of those who would most benefit from a camping opportunity because of the various challenges they face in their lives. Birmingham Youth Assistance is committed to helping these children and their families.

This summer, fifteen camp scholarships were awarded to Birmingham children. This included both overnight residential and day camp programs that the parents chose. Some children received multi-sessions at day camp. These are the camps selected by parents: Birmingham Community Ed., YMCA, Springhill, Camp Copneconic, and some specialty camps.

Summer camp is one of those positive alternatives that really help to make a difference in the lives of the families we serve.

Camp gives children the opportunity to develop independence, social skills and positive life lessons in a healthy and fun environment.

Most of the referrals for camp came from the Birmingham Public Schools and BYA is grateful for their partnership and cooperation.

For more information about our summer camp scholarships, please contact the BYA office at (248) 203-4300.

BYA helps make the camp experience a reality for children.

**Richard Stasys, Camp Chair**

# Youth in Service Appreciation Awards



On May 1st, Birmingham Youth Assistance (BYA), along with event co-sponsor the Birmingham Optimist Club, held its 12th annual Celebration of Youth in Service at Groves High School to honor Birmingham-area students who have excelled in “giving back”. The Honorable Jeffery S. Matis, Chief Circuit Judge for Oakland County, and Birmingham Mayor Therese Longe reflected in their opening remarks the appreciation of all present for the students being recognized.

The 26 high school students and seven middle school students who received awards found a wide range of ways in which to lend a helping hand to others, ranging from protecting wildlife to assisting the elderly and those with special needs. They demonstrated leadership and initiative, as well as kindness and strong values. All of the students were presented with certificates from national, state and local elected officials and several also received financial gifts.

Many of the students found ways to share their knowledge and skills with others. Several tutored their peers in traditional academic subjects, while two high school students mentored younger musicians. One young woman tutored a middle school student in Detroit in mathematics, while another served at an early childhood center, helping toddlers learn basic skills through art and play. Two young men dedicated their time to supporting youth in their temples’ religious classes. A middle school student opted to support the educators, working several days each week after school to help teachers clean up their rooms and prepare for the next days’ classes.

Serving the special needs population was the community service of choice for multiple students. The mother of a student on the autism spectrum nominated four young men for recognition to mark the difference they have made in her son’s life. They volunteered one class period daily for one or two years in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classroom, helped students learn valuable social skills, befriended them, and greatly enhanced their high school experiences. Participating in organized sports often is not possible for those who need extra support, but one of these young men also has volunteered with the Easter Seals Miracle League baseball team and bowling league, as well as the Special Olympics Figure Skating Team. Another student volunteered for a summer and the subsequent school year helping the special needs youth at Friendship Circle.

Meeting the needs of the underprivileged was the focus of several honored students. They rang the red kettle bell for the Salvation Army and combatted food insecurity by providing meals through Lighthouse and Focus Hope. One young man collected donated items to assemble 141 birthday cake kits for a local food pantry, so economic hardships would not prevent families from celebrating their children’s birthdays with cake and candles. Two young women separately served the homeless population by leading drives through school clubs to collect menstrual products and 300 pairs of socks.

Eight students focused on ways to enhance the lives of the elderly. Among them, three made it a habit to regularly assist their older neighbors with a variety of chores including shoveling snow, walking dogs, cleaning garages, and hanging holiday decorations. Four young musicians formed a string quartet while they were in the 7th grade that has been performing at senior living facilities across the county for the past five years. They also graciously performed at the reception to celebrate the honored students.

Other recognized students worked to strengthen their local communities in a variety of ways. One young woman has been a featured speaker at two school events, speaking about how students can make an impact on their communities. Two acted

*(Continued on next page.)*

as coaches for a Catholic Youth Organization basketball league, a program that exists only through the efforts of volunteers. Two volunteered at Baldwin Public Library in teen roles that included growing the library's social media presence and increasing youth participation in events. And two middle school students took it upon themselves at the beginning of the pandemic to build a 1.5 mile mountain bike course in Beverly Park; they subsequently have worked weekly to repair, expand, and maintain the course for the enjoyment of community residents.

A final category featured those students who set out to protect the environment and protect wildlife. Several have planted trees and cleaned parks. One student served as a trainee counselor at a Detroit Zoo summer camp, educating second graders about animals. Another has served for ten years with a nonprofit that cleans and mows abandoned parks in Detroit and removes trash from waterways. Independently, after researching the risk to wildlife posed by discarded fishing line, he installed four fishing line recycling bins in Wayne County parks and raised funds to cover shipping the line to a recycling center.

Pivotal to the success of a recognition program like BYA's Youth in Service are the nominators. These community members were aware of the good deeds being performed and took the time to nominate them online for recognition. Without their action, it would not be possible to give these students a much-deserved moment in the spotlight. Nominators this year included teachers and administrators, local nonprofits, neighbors, and the parent of a student who benefited from the actions of others. BYA asks community members to look out for youngsters who are working to help others and take the time to nominate them on our website beginning in January 2024 for next year's program.

**Youth in Service Chair  
Ann Nazareth Manning**

## **2023 Youth in Service Honorees**

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOREES**

*Molly Brunt, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade*  
*Beatrice Chekal, Berkshire Middle School, 6th grade*  
*Owen Hanson, Our Shepherd Lutheran School, 8th grade*  
*Kolya Reemer, Berkshire Middle School, 7th grade*  
*Alen Simonyan, Berkshire Middle School, 7th grade*  
*Xavier Vazquez, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade*  
*Aaron Weintraub, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade*

### **HIGH SCHOOL HONOREES**

*Sloane Bialas, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Spencer Boegner, Seaholm High School, 12th grade*  
*Magnus Branstrom, Seaholm High School, 10th grade*  
*Andrew Fedor, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*William Fedor, Seaholm High School, 9th grade*  
*Sophie Hanawalt, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Hope Hughes, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Leo Kim, Seaholm High School, 10th grade*  
*Dexter Klein, Seaholm High School, 12th grade*  
*Luke Linovitz, Seaholm High School, 10th grade*  
*Hannah Marshall, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Andrew McLean, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Lea Milanini, Groves High School, 12th grade*  
*Luca Mollo, International Academy Okma, 10th grade*  
*Mark Nardone, Seaholm High School, 10th grade*  
*Gabriella Nastovski, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Milan Patel, Seaholm High School, 10th grade*  
*Owen Reibscheid, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Elizabeth Scicluna, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Annabel Shady, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Sam Shady, Seaholm High School, 11th grade*  
*Jordan Snyder, Seaholm High School, 12th grade*  
*Oliver Srock, Seaholm High School, 12th grade*  
*Aydin Ulrich, Seaholm High School, 12th grade*  
*Grace Werthman, Seaholm High School, 12th grade*  
*Faith Whitted, Groves High School, 12th grade*

## Breakfast with Santa 2022



The annual Breakfast with Santa was held at the Townsend Hotel on Sunday, December 4, 2022, in Salons III and IV from 9-11:00 a.m. Shelley Taub and Dick Stasys worked with Lizz Smith, the Catering Sales Manager at the Townsend Hotel, to create a contract for the December event. This year there was a single seating with a slight increase in cost: \$30 per adult, \$20 per child (ages 2-10) and no charge for children 1 year-old or under. A full breakfast was served with 142 reserved seats.

It was a team effort with volunteers from the community, the BYA board, teen students, and mini-orchestra, members who helped with set-up, crowd management, and decorations. Andy Acho acted as emcee and entertained the group while families enjoyed breakfast, the music of the Seaholm mini orchestra and balloon crafts from the Balloon Lady! The excited children colored special placemats and wrote letters to Santa while anxiously waiting for Santa's arrival. Upon leaving, each child received a goodie bag full of fun paper crafts, holiday trinkets, and a candy cane. The festive Townsend holiday decorations, along with our table poinsettia centerpieces, made it a lovely event.

**Shelley Taub and Vicki Sower**  
Co-Chairs, Breakfast with Santa

## Food Truck Rally 2022

The West Bloomfield Youth Assistance office revived their successful Food Truck Rally after a two-year hiatus on August 26, 2022, and sought the partnership of other Youth Assistance offices. With unanimous board support, Birmingham YA, along with YA offices from Farmington, and Bloomfield, agreed to help with staffing and promoting the all-day event. We were able to field many BYA Board members and volunteers for the event. Not only did the West Bloomfield Youth Assistance organization raise much need revenue to support their community outreach, but BYA was also rewarded with their share of the net profits.

## Food Truck Rally 2023

The West Bloomfield Youth Assistance office held another Food Truck Rally on June 10, 2023, and were assisted by the Birmingham and Bloomfield Youth Assistance boards. BYA again helped with promoting and staffing the all-day event, which began a few hours earlier this year. This event included family-friendly activities such as face painting and bounce houses, in addition to the many food trucks which were very busy all day. Once again, we were able to field many Board members and volunteers for the event. West Bloomfield Youth Assistance organization raised much needed revenue to support their community outreach and BYA was also rewarded with their share of the net profits.



## Farmers Market

BYA hosted two Kid Zone events at the Birmingham Farmers Market in the fall of 2022. For the first event, fall crafts were provided for children to do either onsite or take home. At the event before Halloween, we gave away approximately 150 pumpkins, donated by the City of Birmingham, and provided stickers, markers, and stencils for the kids to decorate with their parents while at the market. Many thanks to our members who make these events possible through generously volunteering their time. We are already making plans to return to the Birmingham Farmers Market for fall 2023; September 17th and October 29th.

**Susan Robbins**  
Farmers Market, Chair

# Birmingham Youth Assistance Thanks its Generous Sponsors

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Andy Acho  
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Shelley Goodman Taub  
David Wind

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Oakland County Water  
Resources Commissioner  
Premier Pet Supply  
Seaholm Orchestra  
Southern Michigan  
Obedience Training Club  
Star EMS  
The Townsend Hotel  
West Bloomfield Youth Assistance  
Van Horn Concrete



## Touch A Truck

Saturday, May 20, 2023 turned out to be a beautiful day for the 13th annual Touch -a- Truck (TAT) event held at Bingham Farms Elementary School. Girls and boys of all ages came out to climb aboard a cement mixer, flash the lights of a police vehicle, practice riding in a school bus, and even hopping aboard a sheriff's boat.

This year's TAT event was a huge success with more than 1,500 adults and children attending. This was nearly triple the number of attendees from the year before. The record crowds helped us raise \$2,000 for BYA programs and services.

Other highlights included free hot dogs, bratwursts, chips and water bottles for participants to enjoy. Baldwin Public Library also gave away over 200 bags of take home crafts to kids who wanted to create truck art of their own. BYA volunteers also handed out free pencils and shared information about our organization.

BYA would like to thank Bingham Farms Elementary School, the maintenance staff, and the drivers who donated their time and vehicles to make this event possible. Star EMS, Van Horn Concrete, Franklin-Bingham Farms Fire Department, Oakland County Sheriff's Office, Franklin- Bingham Farms Police Department, City of Birmingham DPW, Durham School Services, Beverly Hills DPS, Birmingham PD, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner and Oakland County Road Commission provided vehicles. Again, this year we enjoyed the arrival of the Mounted Police Horse provided by Franklin-Bingham Farms Police Department; always extra fun for everyone.

I'd also like to thank the BYA Board members and high school students who volunteered their time at TAT. We could not put on events like this without your dedication and participation.

**Richard Stasys, TAT Chair**

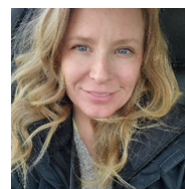
## Welcome to Our New Board Members!

**THE BYA BOARD IS EXCITED TO WELCOME THREE TALENTED NEW MEMBERS TO OUR TEAM.**



**Meg Sullivan Lopé** is the owner and President of Meg Lopé & Associates, a marketing and communications company. A Birmingham resident, she brings a wealth of strategic marketing communication skills as well as a history of varied volunteer experience.

**Lisa Nardone** is a retired advertising professional. She has many creative interests and a history of volunteerism. A Birmingham resident, Lisa is the mother of three children, two of whom have been honored by BYA through the Youth in Service program.



**Erin Reemmer** is a corporate flight attendant who has volunteered with Crossroads of Michigan. She is a Beverly Hills resident and the parent of two boys, one of whom has been honored through the Youth in Service program.

## Mentors Plus Program

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE - ONE PERSON - ONE CHILD AT A TIME**

As a Co-Chair of the Birmingham Mentors Plus program Jay Reynolds can attest first hand to the efficacy of the program. Mentors really can make a difference in a life; one child at a time. The Mentors Plus program is a committee of Birmingham Youth Assistance, a subset of Oakland County Youth Assistance, which pairs pre-screened adult volunteers with youth in the community who have been identified as needing a positive role model. These are not necessarily young adults who have been, or who are, in trouble.

Often they, like everyone, are presented with choices in life. Sometimes, due to a lack of maturity and/or a positive role model in their lives, they may be susceptible to making ill-advised or plainly bad choices. A mentor can often be a factor in guiding these soon to be adults down a more appropriate path. Often it doesn't take much to "nudge" the child in the right direction. Just a little time, a little listening, and a bit of talking.

The Mentor's Plus program has helped by one- on-one mentoring, literally hundreds of children in our community, through Oakland County Youth Assistance.

Although a number of adult individuals have expressed an interest in participating in the program in the past several years, we are continuing to look for new adult mentor volunteers. There are many children, male and female, that would benefit from the relationship with an adult mentor. The actual time commitment is flexible, depending on each case. It takes a minimum of an hour or so a week. Mentors and Mentees find that it is a very rewarding experience. If anyone knows of someone interested in joining the Mentors Plus program, please contact the Birmingham Youth Assistance office at (248)203-4300. Please check out our website for further information at <https://www.birminghamyouthassistance.org/mentors-plus>.

A small commitment of time can make a huge difference in the life of a child.

**David R. Walker & Jay Reynolds, Co-Chairs, Mentors Plus Committee**