



2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

BIRMINGHAM YOUTH ASSISTANCE

We are BYA! You are BYA!

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From Our Chair: Ann Nazareth Manning



Youth mental health is a growing concern in our community, with many young people feeling pressure to excel academically or in other pursuits, build strong college applications, and live up to unrealistic social media portrayals. These stresses, compounded by issues like cyberbullying and fears about school shootings, can lead to anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and even suicidal thoughts.

It is essential that caring community members work together, as the proverbial “village,” to teach our youth how to respond to real or perceived pressures in a healthy and balanced manner using proven coping techniques. Parents, teachers, healthcare professionals, and local resources can make a difference by advocating approaches such as mindfulness, physical exercise, safe social media use, and comfort with seeking help when needed. We must also encourage and facilitate open communication within families.

Birmingham Youth Assistance is pivoting to ramp up the priority we place on education for youth and families. In 2024, we hosted “The Magic of Hope,” an impactful event supporting youth mental wellness and family connection. Moving forward, we are planning more pro-



grams to help youth and families manage stress in healthy ways. We are grateful for the leadership of Anna Herbert and the Family Education Committee in this effort. These initiatives complement our existing services, such as counseling from our caseworker Catherine Womack; summer camp scholarships; and the Youth in Service recognition program, which fosters resilience through helping others.

We appreciate the generous support we receive from the Oakland County Circuit Court – Family Division, local municipalities, and Birmingham Public Schools. Special thanks to our dedicated volunteers, including Board Vice Chair Susan Robbins, Secretary Eileen Pulker, Treasurer Dick Stasys, and former Chair Dave Wind.

**For information about upcoming Events
and Programs check out the BYA website
at www.birminghamyouthassistance.org**



Kids' Dog Show Brings Smiles and Wagging Tails for 42nd Year

The Berkshire Middle School gym was bursting with energy on Sunday, February 2nd for the 42nd Annual Kids' Dog Show. The crowd cheered on young handlers and their dogs in five fun events ranging from Musical Sit to Best Costume. New this year, Groves sophomore Marta Jimenez Pelay provided live social media updates and a recap in the Groves Scriptor. Berkshire 8th grader Alen Ter-Azaryan also highlighted winners in his follow-up article.

The event was made possible by Birmingham Public Schools and the support of Mike Palmer and his team at Premier Pet Supply, along with generous sponsors Mills Pharmacy, Beverly Hills Veterinary Associates, Fluff & Tuff, Southern Michigan Obedience Training Club, and Blume Design.

Birmingham Youth Assistance thanks Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard and his deputies for their ongoing support and Captain Ryan Kearny of the Birmingham Police Department for bringing therapy dog Maple to meet kids and families. We appreciate the great training demonstration by Pam Roehr and Linda Marler from Southern Michigan Obedience Training Club and the hard work of our judges: Birmingham Mayor Therese Longe; Chief Curt Lawson of the Franklin



2025 WINNING LINEUP

BEST COSTUME—

Alexis Meathe, 6th grader at West Maple Elementary School, and her Labradoodle, Randy

WAGGIEST TAIL—

Scarlett Swanson, 2nd grader at Pembroke Elementary School, and her Coonhound, Ryder

BEST TRICK—

Sarah Fearon, 7th grader at Derby and her Bordoodle, Charlie

MUSICAL SIT—

Evan and Owen McKenzie, 5th graders at Covington and their Bernedoodle, Benny

BEST LOOKING—

Marie Glisky, 7th grader at Berkshire and her French Bulldog, Lucy

BEST IN SHOW—

Sarah Fearon, 7th grader at Derby and her Bordoodle, Charlie



and Bingham Farms Police Department; BYA Chair Ann Nazareth Manning; dog trainer Pam Roehr; and youth judge Arno Ter-Azaryan.

Special thanks go to three key contributors: Carroll DeWeese for his many years of photographing this event; Berkshire Principal Jason Clinkscale for a decade of serving as event emcee; and Ann Nazareth Manning, for her leadership and dedication to the show's success.

Kids' Dog Show Committee
Meg Sullivan Lopé, Erin Payton and Dave Wind

Youth in Service

On April 29, Birmingham Youth Assistance was thrilled to honor the outstanding community service of 51 middle and high school students at the 14th annual Celebration of Youth in Service, co-hosted with the Birmingham Optimist Club at Groves High School. Students received certificates of commendation from national, state, and local officials. Several also received financial awards, and the Beverly Hills Lions Club presented their Lion's Pride Award.



These students demonstrated compassion, leadership, and initiative through service including:

- Assisting younger students through mentoring, tutoring, volunteering at summer camps, and coaching athletic and debate teams
- Serving children with special needs and supporting mental health through organizations including Friendship Circle, Gigi's Playhouse, school LINK programs, and the Birmingham Bloomfield Community Coalition
- Helping animals through fundraising for and volunteering at various shelters and the Detroit Zoo; students also raised money to support a school therapy dog
- Meeting basic needs of the underprivileged by collecting donated food, clothing, and toys
- Supporting health care providers by volunteering at hospitals and with medical research, as well as providing help to breast cancer survivors and craft kits to hospitalized children and teens



Birmingham Youth Assistance is grateful to the community members who dedicated time and effort to nominating these students and to our inspiring speakers: Judge Amanda J. Shelton, Birmingham Mayor Therese Longe, and BPS Deputy Superintendent Cory Heitsch. Special thanks go to Carroll DeWeese for his expert photography, the Ed Black Jazz Band's Dick Wigginton and Tony Bernardo for providing entertainment at our reception, and the dedicated Youth in Service Committee for making the event possible.

Erin Payton, Youth in Service Chair



2025 YOUTH IN SERVICE HONOREES

Middle School Honorees

Spencer Allen, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Charles Battenberg, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Mia Rose Cox, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Annabel Cusmano, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Kendall Dorfman, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Kaia Heatherly, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Julie Iacco, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Abigail Klenke, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Robert Leotti, University of Detroit Jesuit Academy, 8th grade
 Dylan Lytle, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Jay'ana Maddox, Berkshire Middle School, 7th grade
 Reagan Smith, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Lucy Sowle, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Corinne Stephens, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Asher Sternberg, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Arno Ter-Azaryan, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Charlotte Torrey, Berkshire Middle School, 7th grade
 Pinelopi Tsapatoris, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Dean Wahab, Derby Middle School, 8th grade
 Maxwell Wenger, Derby Middle School, 6th grade
 Claudia Whitelam, Berkshire Middle School, 8th grade
 Maggie Wilcox, Derby Middle School, 8th grade

HIGH SCHOOL HONOREES

Olivia Betanzos, Seaholm High School, 11th grade
 Alexander Chebl, Groves High School, 11th grade
 Anabella Chebl, Groves High School, 9th grade
 Madeline Coon, Groves High School, 9th grade
 Megan Gray, Seaholm High School, 9th grade
 Coco Jelenic, Seaholm High School, 9th grade
 Kabir Kapur, Groves High School, 11th grade
 Kate King, International Academy Okma, 11th grade
 Ireland Kopsch, Groves High School, 12th grade
 Hailey Lossia, Seaholm High School, 12th grade
 Danyah Maarouf, International Academy Central, 11th grade
 Alexandre Martins Mengele, Seaholm High School, 11th grade
 Mateo Milanini, Groves High School, 11th grade
 Samantha Mollo, International Academy Okma, 11th grade
 Olivia Moore, International Academy Okma, 11th grade
 Rachel Mordukhovich, Groves High School, 11th grade
 Abigail Murphy, Seaholm High School, 11th grade
 Michael Murphy, Brother Rice High School, 12th grade
 Hiren Patel, Seaholm High School, 10th grade
 Charlisa Penzak, Groves High School, 11th grade
 Tessa Shane, Seaholm High School, 11th grade
 Isabel Sheldon, Seaholm High School, 11th grade
 Nicholas Slazinski, Brother Rice High School, 12th grade
 Samantha Sweeney, Groves High School, 12th grade
 Alen Ter-Azaryan, Groves High School, 9th grade
 Amelie Wagner, International Academy Okma, 11th grade
 Alexandra Wenger, Seaholm High School, 10th grade
 Isabella Wenger, Seaholm High School, 11th grade
 Carly Williams, Seaholm High School, 11th grade

Touch a Truck



Despite the cool, windy weather on Saturday, May 17, nearly 800 attendees came out for the 15th annual Touch a Truck event at Bingham Farms Elementary. Children of all ages came out to climb aboard a fire truck, flash the lights of a police vehicle, and blow the horns of numerous trucks. Birmingham Youth Assistance provided free hot dogs, chips, and water, with left-over food donated to Grace Centers of Hope in Pontiac. Families generously contributed over \$2,300 to support our work in the community.

We thank Bingham Farms Elementary, its maintenance staff, and the many drivers who donated their time. This event would not be possible without the many communities and organizations who sponsored the vehicles on display:

- Franklin-Bingham Farms (ambulance and rescue vehicles)
- Van Horn Concrete (concrete mixer)
- Franklin-Bingham Farms and Beverly Hills DPS (fire engines and a police vehicle)
- DTE (bucket truck)
- City of Birmingham DPW (dump truck)
- Birmingham Police Department (patrol vehicle)
- West Bloomfield Police Department (Mobile Command Center)
- Durham Services (school bus)
- SMART Bus Electric Vehicle (SMART bus)
- Oakland County Road Commission (snowplow)
- Oakland County Sheriff's Office (water rescue vehicle)

We also are grateful to the Baldwin Library for hosting a craft table. Many enjoyed the opportunity to purchase shaved ice from the Kona Ice truck. Thank you to all the Birmingham Youth Assistance Board members and high school students who volunteered their time at Touch a Truck. We could not put on events like this without your dedication and participation.



Richard Stasys and Curt Lawson, Touch a Truck Co-Chairs

Camp Report

For over 50 years, Birmingham Youth Assistance has provided summer camp scholarships to area children who might not otherwise have access to this opportunity. A camp experience can enhance a child's self-esteem, social skills, independence, leadership qualities, and sense of adventure. It also provides children with the opportunity to cultivate new interests or build on their existing talents. Summer camp is one of those positive alternatives that really help to make a difference in the lives of the families we serve.

This summer, 26 scholarships were awarded for both day and overnight camps selected by the students' parents. The programs included Birmingham Community Education, Franklin Athletic Club, Springhill, MSU Drum Major Camp, Michigan Soccer Camp, Birmingham First Church Choir Camp, Tim Hortons Foundation Camp, and St. Vincent DePaul Camp Ozanam.

We're especially grateful to Birmingham Public Schools, the source of most of our camp referrals, for their ongoing partnership and support.

Richard Stasys, Camp Scholarship Chair



Breakfast with Santa



The 32nd annual Breakfast with Santa took place at the Townsend Hotel on Sunday, December 8, 2024, with two seatings at 9:00 am and 11:30 am. The event, with 202 reserved seats (109 adults and 93 children), was priced at the previous year's level of \$35 for adults, \$25 for children (ages 2–10), and no charge for children under two. A full breakfast was served.

Emcee Andy Acho entertained guests, the Seaholm mini orchestra performed seasonal music, and the Balloon Lady crafted creative balloon art. Excited children colored placemats and wrote letters to Santa in anticipation of his arrival. Each child left with a goodie bag filled

with paper crafts, light-up yo-yos from Bloom Pediatrics, holiday trinkets, and a candy cane. The festive holiday decorations and poinsettia centerpieces added to the event's charm.

The event was a real team effort featuring community volunteers, the Birmingham Youth Assistance Board, and teen students all helping with setup, crowd management, and decorations. Our next Breakfast with Santa will be held on Sunday, December 7 at the Townsend Hotel.



Eileen Pulker and Dick Stasys
Co-Chairs, Breakfast with Santa

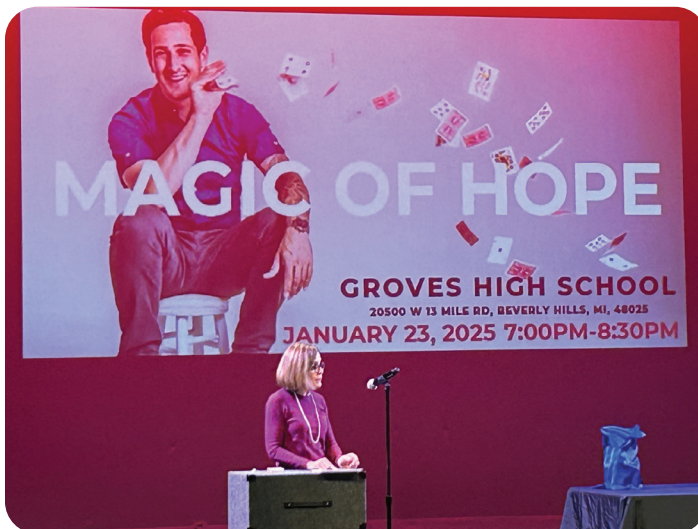
Family Education- The Magic of Hope

On January 23, Birmingham Youth Assistance proudly hosted The Magic of Hope, an event designed to support youth mental wellness and family connection. Held at Groves High School and attended by approximately 150 students, parents, educators, and community members, the event featured the nationally-acclaimed magician and mental health advocate, Anthony Grupido.

The 90-minute program delivered a blend of entertainment and empowerment, using visual illusions and real-life challenges to explore topics such as anxiety and depression; the impact of social pressure and perfectionism; coping with failure and emotional setbacks; and the importance of seeking help and being there for others.

The Magic of Hope provided an accessible, stigma-free entry point for families to engage in mental health dialogue.

Grupido's ability to connect with both teens and parents helped spark meaningful conversations between caregivers and their children.



In alignment with Birmingham Youth Assistance's mission to strengthen families and reduce youth risk factors through education and early intervention, The Magic of Hope provided an accessible, stigma-free entry point for families to engage in mental health dialogue. School counselors from Birmingham Public Schools were available after the presentation to offer resources and answer questions.

Anna Herbert, Family Education Chair



Meet Our Champion: Jill Reichenbach Fill

Birmingham Youth Assistance was proud to name Jill Reichenbach Fill as our 2024 Champion. With over 20 years of service on our Board, including eight years as Secretary on the Executive Committee, Jill has been a key contributor to the Kids' Dog Show since 2015. She and her daughter, GG, volunteer regularly at our events and Jill contributes her artistic talents to designing our annual report, Youth in Service program booklet, and other materials. She also manages logistics for our events held at Birmingham Public Schools facilities.

Welcome to Our New Board Members!

The Birmingham Youth Assistance Board is excited to welcome two talented new members to our team!

ANNA HERBERT

Anna Herbert offered her considerable talents to Birmingham Youth Assistance after her two sons, Alen and Arno, were honored through our Youth in Service program. With a background in finance and volunteer work with other Detroit-area nonprofits, Anna has brought fresh energy and leadership to our Family Education program. She planned the well-attended Magic of Hope event and is overseeing upcoming educational programs. Anna's proactive approach has already made a major difference. Welcome, Anna, and thank you!



CURT LAWSON

Franklin-Bingham Farms Police Chief Curt Lawson is new to the Birmingham Youth Assistance Board but is no stranger to the work of Oakland County's Youth Assistance programs. Lawson played a key role at West Bloomfield Youth Assistance and also has volunteered with the Optimist Club and Birmingham Bloomfield Community Coalition. Lawson's leadership and years of expertise as a police officer and community supporter have already made a big impact. He co-chairs the Touch a Truck and Farmer's Market committees. Welcome and thank you, Curt!

Farmers Market

Birmingham Youth Assistance was thrilled to bring Kids Zone back to the Birmingham Farmers Market for two fun-filled events in fall 2024. During our first visit, families enjoyed hands-on fall crafts that children could either complete on-site or take home to finish. As in previous years, yard games added an extra layer of fun, encouraging playful interaction between parents and kids.

Our second appearance, timed just before Halloween, was a seasonal favorite. With the generous support of the City of Birmingham, we handed out around 250



pumpkins. Children had the opportunity to personalize their pumpkins using stickers, markers, and stencils, making for a festive and creative day with their families. These events would not be possible without the time and energy of our dedicated volunteers. We sincerely thank all our members who helped make Kids Zone a success once again.



Susan Robbins, Farmers Market Chair

Caseworker's Report Catherine Womack, MSW

Birmingham Youth Assistance has supported the community for 63 years, providing family-focused programs and services to youth and families living within the Birmingham Public School District. Families with school-age children, 17 years of age and under, can be referred for individual casework services that include assessment/screening, short-term counseling, education, skill building, and community resources. Evidence-based approaches and tools are utilized in these direct casework services for prevention and early interventions fostering growth, resilience, and enhanced community connection. The case statistics provide a glimpse of who made referrals, referral reasons, and ages of the youth receiving the cost-free casework services in 2024-2025.

The Birmingham Youth Assistance Board and volunteers contributed 1,812 hours to programs and events that enrich youth experiences and support parenting. Many case-load youth also contribute through volunteering. The tri-sponsorship of the Oakland County Sixth Judicial Circuit Court- Family Division, the Birmingham Public School District, and the municipalities of Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Franklin and Bingham Farms, provide the essential structure and support for Birmingham Youth Assistance initiatives. Instrumental to our work are the generosity and engagement of community partners and the mindfulness of referral sources who connect youth and families to Youth Assistance.

2024-2025 CASE STATISTICS

REASONS:

Assault & Battery	6
Curfew Violation	2
Disorderly Conduct	5
Education Neglect	4
Harassment/Threats	2
Home Incurrigibility	3
Malicious Destruction of Property ..	2
Prevention/Intervention	22
Retail Fraud	3
School Incurrigibility	7
School Truancy	10
Sexting	3
THC/Vaping Offense	7

REFERRAL SOURCES:

OC Juvenile Intake	7
OC Prosecutor	9
Parent/Guardian	2
Police	18
School	40

CASELOAD TOTALS:

Direct Service Cases	76
Consult Cases	82
Caseload Community Service Hours	155

YOUTH SERVED DIRECTLY:

Age	Male	Female
6 yrs.	2	1
7 yrs.	0	1
8 yrs.	1	2
9 yrs.	1	1
10 yrs.	1	0
11 yrs.	2	1
12 yrs.	4	4
13 yrs.	5	5
14 yrs.	8	3
15 yrs.	5	7
16 yrs.	10	8
17 yrs.	3	1

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. Birmingham Youth Assistance 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.

Birmingham Youth Assistance Thanks its Generous Sponsors

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Strengthening Families
Through Community Involvement

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