



a program of the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau



What is YAR?

Youth As Resources is a program of the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau. We are a youth philanthropy program that seeks to empower and engage youth as partners with adults in creating positive community change. Youth and adult members govern the YAR board, which provides grants of up to \$1000 to local youth in order to develop and carry out community service and service learning projects that address a clear community need. The funds for grants are made available through a \$30,000 grant from the Community Foundation.

Service Learning & Philanthropy

YAR is committed to having all grant recipients incorporate the methods and goals of *Service Learning* into their community projects. To assist us in integrating the *Service Learning* into all of YAR's endeavors, we have partnered with Youth Voice, One Vision (YVOV) and Nazareth College Department of Service Learning to create Youth Engaged with Service (YES).

The function of YES is to expand upon youth-led service initiatives and youth-adult partnerships by focusing on the area of service learning. YES helps to increase civic engagement on two fronts: by encouraging participants to be more civically engaged in their communities through membership in the community organizations involved, and challenging participants to be more civically engaged through individual volunteerism.

"Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities." Furthermore, "Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content." –Learn & Serve America

How YAR Works

YAR is able to reach thousands of individuals every year utilizing a *three-tiered approach*. This unique system engages youth at each level, allowing for a maximization of resources which increases the impact of our program:

Tier One- The Youth as Resources Board

The YAR board consists of youth and adults from Monroe County. Youth board members range in age from 11 to 21 and come from diverse backgrounds. They gain real life experience as grant-makers through developing grant applications, reviewing submitted proposals, interviewing applicants, conducting site visits, planning community events, as well as planning their own service and service-learning projects. In addition, they learn professional development skills including public speaking, leadership, youth advocacy, workshop and curriculum development, office and administrative skills, and job/college preparedness. Youth can apply their time with the YAR program toward community service requirements at their schools.

Adult board members also come from an array of backgrounds and bring their professional experience to the group. Adults encourage and act as role models for the youth while gaining grant-making experience. Youth and adult board members strive to make their community a healthier and more positive place to live and grow. Each individual brings their unique talents to the table and they all work collaboratively to achieve the shared goals of the board.

Tier Two- The Grant Applicants and Project Leaders

The youth who receive grants gain valuable experience completing the application process and planning, developing, and implementing their project as a team. This experience teaches them the power of youth involvement, youth voice and civic engagement in the framework of the “real world.” They assume the roles of community leader, organizer, and fundraiser, and become agents for positive change in their neighborhood or town. Youth/adult partnerships are also formed and strengthened during this process, with each party learning to value and trust one another to reach shared goals. Through involvement in YAR, youth and adults alike gain confidence, leadership skills, new insights about themselves and others, and the value of contributing to their community.

Tier Three- The Service Projects and the People that They Reach

The scope of our program is evidenced by the thousands of individuals that are reached each year by the service and service-learning projects that are conducted by our youth in partnership with adults. These projects provide needed services, address community concerns and issues, and connect people through access to information. Collectively, the service projects have become a means of bridging the gaps that can exist between our county’s diverse populations. The citizens that their projects serve champion the belief that youth are a valuable resource in Monroe County. The visibility of other community service organizations is increased as well, as the projects must be sponsored by a non-profit organization. The relationships fostered by this interaction can be lasting, strengthening the youth and human services agencies in our area and furthering the goal of civic engagement. When people in a community are given the power to make a change, they are more likely to take part in other community actions, vote in local elections, and take on the role of community leaders themselves.



During the 2009-2010 Grant Cycle:

- **26 youth groups or community organizations** throughout Monroe County were awarded YAR grants
- **434 youth and 100 adults** were engaged in service and service learning projects funded by YAR
- **5,484 youth and 3,296 adults** from our community were served or benefited from these projects
- **3,790 volunteer hours** were logged by the youth and adults involved in the projects

YAR and Positive Youth Development

The Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau utilizes the *40 Developmental Asset* approach to youth development. This approach was developed by the Search Institute, who define the 40 developmental assets as “40 common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible, successful adults. Because of its basis in youth development, resiliency, and prevention research and its proven effectiveness, the Developmental Assets framework has become one of the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States.”

Assets include external factors like high expectations, access to youth programs, and family support; as well as internal factors like self-esteem, responsibility, and a sense of social justice. Studies show that the more of these assets youth have, the more likely they are to become successful adults. “Youth as Resources” is asset number eight—it means

that young people are seen as valuable and are given useful roles in society. We create all of our events with this and all of the assets in mind. If you would like more information about the 40 Developmental assets please feel free to get in touch with our office.

The following fundamental beliefs govern all YAR initiatives:

- ◆ Young people of all ages and backgrounds can - and will - be active, enthusiastic, and creative contributors of service to their communities.
- ◆ Young people can be effective leaders and decision-makers in identifying and solving pressing community problems.
- ◆ Young people, when given the chance and the guidance, can act as responsible partners with adults in all levels of service.

Interested in Becoming a Board Member?

As a board member, you will have the opportunity to enhance the Monroe County community and help others by providing grant opportunities to local residents. You will help solve critical problems and provide needed community services while bringing about mutual understanding and increased trust between youth and adults, leading to strong youth-adult partnerships.

The Work of the Board

- Board Meeting: the 2st Saturday of each month from 10:30-12:30 (this meeting is occasionally scheduled for a different day/time)
- Grant Reviews: During each grant cycle the board is required to review each grant and collectively make a decision.
- Celebrations: Before each grant cycle, there is a recognition ceremony to welcome the new grant recipients, and to recognize the previous cycle's participants
- Site Visits: Board members observe the grant projects that were funded in person. Each board member is required to attend 2-3 site visits each cycle
- Committees: Designed to meet the needs of the board. Board members are not required to sit on a committee but it is strongly encouraged
- Community Events: The YAR Board completes their own service learning projects 2-3 times per year. Events include Be the Change Day, Cardboard City, and Global Youth Service Day.
- Workshops: The YAR Board develops and leads grant writing and service learning workshops to educate applicants before each grant cycle.
- Collaborate with Youth Voice, One Vision - the City/County Youth Council and the staff and students of the Community Youth Development major at Nazareth College to Plan and carry out various community service and service learning projects and events

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