

**The City of Cohoes
Human Services Department
Youth Bureau
2010 Annual Report**

The Human Services Department is staffed by a full-time Human Services Director who is also the part-time Youth Bureau Director and a part-time assistant to the Human Services Director. The overall goal of this department is to coordinate and address quality of life and youth issues affecting the City of Cohoes.

Human Services Department Core Objectives

- To conduct an ongoing needs assessment within the community.
- To provide further recreation and enrichment programs to foster positive growth amongst our youth.
- To communicate with organizations, agencies, schools, etc., that work with youths to expand upon services offered within the city.
- To provide referrals or information to youths, parents or families in need of services.
- To further expand programs for the youth and elderly populations.
- To build upon the Character Education and PBIS initiatives offered in the Cohoes City Schools.
- To foster a stronger sense of community spirit amongst city residents.

The following is an outline of the programs and contributions that the department has made over the past year, which support the core objectives of the Human Services Department. Several of these programs were made possible due to the collaborative effort of agencies and organizations within the community, as well as with contributions from local businesses.

Recreation Opportunities Available through the Human Services Department and Youth Bureau

Municipal Swimming Pool at Lansing Park

This summer we experienced an increase in the number of pool patrons from 2009 (> 1,000) as well as an increase in participants with our Learn-to-Swim program. This program is highly attended as it is a free program that is offered to our residents. In addition, adult swim continued on Thursday nights with the addition of a water aerobics class which was highly successful and hoped to be continued in 2011. Fun Fridays were continued at the pool which allowed the staff to participate in relays, competitions, water sports, etc. with pool patrons. Fun Fridays consist of a theme which is carried out with decorations and giveaways for the kids.

As far as supplies and maintenance of the pool, we will need to purchase a new pump within the next year. Below is the overall attendance of patrons for 2010 at Lansing Park Pool.

11,089 Cohoes residents
615 Out of town folks
11,704 TOTAL

2010 Summer Sports Academy

The Summer Sports Academy completed its 27th Season with attendance continuing to increase with an average of 80-90 kids per day attending one of the many camps that are offered. Our overall over the course of the summer season rounded out at 656 Cohoes youths. Each week, participants have the opportunity to learn and practice a new sport. The sports covered this year included basketball, soccer, lacrosse, tennis, football and baseball. 15-Love participated in our tennis program this year; Valley Cats came to our baseball segment as well as the ice cream

truck as a promo from Capital Communications Federal Credit Union. The High School football coaches provided assistance in the football segment which had a much higher attendance record than previous years. We were also fortunate to have a local Karate expert provide a special presentation each week that provided the kids an opportunity to learn more about karate and Judo of Japan which is located in Cohoes.

Summer Parks Program

The summer parks program was altered this year to fit the needs and demands of our youths. Participation has been low the past few years therefore we relocated park attendants to Lansing Park, Heartt Ave Park and Craner Park which have been more attended than others. Lansing Park had over 246 participants, Craner Park had 161 participants and Heartt Ave Park had 106 participants with an overall of 513 participants over the course of the summer. Each week park attendants scheduled a new activity for those that attended which kept kids interested and returning each week. Fun Fridays were carried over into the parks program and consisted of competitions, ice cream and activities. Due to inclement weather, movies in the park unfortunately had to be cancelled.

Movie's In the Park

Along with our Fun Friday's hosted at Lansing's Pool and the Summer Parks Program, we hosted a series of Movie's In the Park. Unfortunately, this summer the seldom days it rained was the days were hosting our movie nights. We were rained out of all three! Our Youth Advisory works hard at these events along with the Kiwanis club. It has been a very big success and source of free entertainment. We have continued this program throughout the course of the year holding the movie nights inside at each different school; unfortunately we have come into an issue with copy writing. I am working to see if we fall under the Library's umbrella to show movies, otherwise it is a \$500 fee to show a movie each time. This fee makes it unfeasible for us to show movies under our budget constraints.

Beautification Program (Swifties)

The Beautification Program, also know as the Swifties Crew, ran from June 28 to August 20, for those that were able to continue, we extended the program until August 27. We were able to extend a week for those who were able to work till the 27th. The Swifties were very instrumental in the opening of Lansing Pool, ensuring that the bathrooms and locker-rooms were cleaned as well as making sure the pool was vacuumed and the grounds were cleared of debris and trash. The Swifties were responsible for raking leaves, cutting the overgrown vines from the park/pool fence, and weed-whacking overgrown areas throughout the park

Council Member provided listed of specific areas and locations that they wished to be addressed for the season which the Swifties were able to complete in addition to maintaining their daily assignments. Those assignments included, but were not limited to, vacuuming the pool, cleaning the bathrooms & locker rooms at the pool as well as collecting garbage.

The Beautification Program has remained successful and provides youths an opportunity for summer employment. The Swifties were commended for their efforts with an end of season party hosted at Lansing's Pool.

This season in particular, we had many extra hands thanks to the work program from Albany County and Rensselaer County. We had 15 extra workers from Albany County and 5 extra workers from Rensselaer County. The coordination was a bit complicated, but it worked out very well, funding for these programs are unsecure for the 2011 summer program.

Youth Soccer League

The Cohoes Youth Soccer League is a combined effort with League organizers and the City of Cohoes Human Services Department, the Cohoes Community Center and the Cohoes City School District. The soccer program is growing every year and has expanded now having travel program and summer clinics. The league services children from kindergarten through eighth

grade with four different divisions which are divided by age groups. The four divisions are the clinic, minors, intermediate, and an expansion division for the oldest children. The games are played primarily on the weekends, with a few played on Wednesday evenings. The program services over 450 children every year, and Lansing Park is filled with kids, parents and coaches every weekend throughout the fall. The coaches are comprised of parents and volunteers within the community that give their time to make this program a success.

Over 30 Winter Basketball

This is an informal basketball program for men over 30. They gather on Wednesday nights from mid-November until early spring in the Middle School Gym. They have open gym from approximately 7:00 – 9:00pm as long as the school does not need the gym for their own programs. We are very grateful to the school district for allowing us use of their gyms for these winter programs!

Over 40 Winter Basketball

This program is run very similar to the Over 30 Program except that they meet at the Harmony Hill Gym on Wednesday nights. This is also an informal league that has open gym nights from mid-November through early spring.

Skate Park

The Skate Park is currently a skate at your own risk facility. We've had great feed back through the skating community stating that they really enjoy the skate park hours and flexibility. We are extremely pleased with the amount of use that the skate park received this year and are hopeful that within a few years we could expand the park to include more apparatus'.

The DEN

Due to budget constraints and the condition of the facility, the Den is temporarily closed until further notice. The Den became officially closed in September of 2009. Other opportunities have been assessed for temporary relocation and are still being worked on. We submitted the Central Facility out to bond; the Central Facility would include a new home for our Den.

During 2007 the City received a Community Youth Investment grant in the amount of \$30,000 to create a central facility that would house the Den, concession stand, locker rooms, lifeguard office and restrooms. The project has not been completed.

Although the Den is in need of much repair, the attendance was fairly steady. Over the past year we have seen a major increase in attendance with some evenings during the summer seeing over 35 kids.

Possible Lansing Soccer Complex

We have been dealing with drainage, building and space issues for some time now at the Lansing Park soccer fields, Den and Pool area. We had been approached in the spring of 2010 by Tony Urban with the Army who is working on schematics for new fields, drainage, concession stand, pavilion etc. at the Lansing Park area. At this time, surveys have been completed.

Special Events and Activities

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

This year's Easter Egg Hunt at George Street Park was held on Saturday, March 27, 2010. The event was a combined effort of the Lansing Street Neighborhood Watch, the City of Cohoes Human Services Department and Youth Bureau, The Office of General Services, and several volunteers from within City Hall and within the community. Over 4,000 eggs are given out along with prizes and a special appearance from the Easter Bunny. Again, "Golden Egg" prizes were awarded to one boy and one girl in each age division. It was extremely cold for this year, however the turnout was larger than ever and all had a very good time.

Annual Halloween Parade and Party

This year's Halloween Parade and Party was a huge success! Due to the fact that Halloween was held on a Sunday, we moved the parade & party to Friday, October 29. The previous year we noticed that there were several opportunities and activities that other agencies were hosting, so in order not to compete with them and provide a weekend of events we decided to push it a night earlier, which worked out great for everyone. Again, our Character Counts! group marched proudly in the parade carrying the Character Counts Banner and balloons. This year we actually had the youth LEAD the parade and they were so proud. They were the first group in the parade and many parents and spectators were taking picture after picture of their kids carrying the Character Counts Banner. It really was an exciting evening.

This year we again had over one hundred children march and several parents also joined. This year's party was again held at the Cohoes Community Center and a great time was had by all. Kiwanis again set up several games throughout the gym and had hotdogs and drinks available for the kids. Several volunteers assisted in running the games and showing the children just how to play the game. The Human Services Department purchased the candy for the event and each child walked out with a trick or treat bag full of candy for their efforts in playing the games that night. All of the kids were dressed in their costumes and had a great time!

Pumpkin Festival

We hosted the Pumpkin Festival again this year. The festival was held at the Farmer's Market on October 1. The Cohoes Youth Advisory Committee did an excellent job hosting this event in place of the Haunted House and Hayride. We offered free pumpkins, face painting, apple cider, donuts, pumpkin painting contests, a magic show and a hayride. The DPW department also put on a bonfire. The past few years we had worked with the Middle School Family Festival, but this event was canceled due to budget constraints on the school districts behalf. Not to mention we were unable to hold a movie night due to the issue of the copy writing. The festival was a huge hit this year, even without the Middle School Family Festival.

Annual Cohoes Turkey Trot

The 47th Annual Cohoes Turkey Trot was again held on Thanksgiving morning and was a huge success. Tee-shirts were offered to the first 250 registered participants. The shirts were sponsored by the City of Cohoes, Marra's Pharmacy, Sticky Fingers Apples, Brookfield, Hudson River Federal Credit Union and Capital Communications Federal Credit Union. 'Flash' the fastest Thanksgiving turkey was center stage at this year's event. Paradise Tree Service donated a turkey costume and one of our Youth Advisory members offered his turkey ability. It was a great hit with the children and helps organize the races. The theme for this year's event was "Can you beat 'Flash' the fastest Thanksgiving Turkey?"

Approximately **500** participants pre-registered to receive a tee-shirt and contributed a non-perishable item. We had a total of over **600** participants in this year's Turkey Trot altogether and had over **25** boxes of non-perishable food items to donate to the Albany County Community Partnership (Co-Cap).

We gave out medals to every child runner, which eliminated the confusion and chaos with parents at the end of the races. Medals were awarded to every 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of each division in the 3.5 mile Run/Walk. The medals had the tee-shirt logo on them and had plats on the back that had their place and division on them. The plats are removable for reuse purposes. Leftover medals can be used for next year's event; the plat would be melted down to cut down on costs.

Again this year we had The Albany Running Exchange do all of our timing for this event, which was a huge help and a big hit. Our concerns from last years issues were rectified and the event ran very smooth. We also were able to provide a goody bag full of coupons, water bottle, shirts and more. Thanks to Running World and the Racelist. Award's-By-Walsh's donated the water bottles with the Cohoes Turkey Trot logo on it.

A hospitality table was provided by McDonald's of Waterford, Dunkin Donuts of Cohoes, Panera Breads of Latham and Price Chopper of Cohoes. The hospitality table included breads, pastries, donuts, bagels and cream cheese, juice, coffee, water and hot chocolate.

A big thanks was given to all of our volunteers, the race really runs on help and support from the community.

Winter Carnival

Due to inclement weather, we had to cancel our 8th Annual Winter Carnival.

Youth Advisory Board

The Youth Advisory Board has enjoyed a successful year in 2010. As an advisory board they are consulted on all City of Cohoes efforts connected with our Human Services Department and Youth Bureau. As a group they have provided valuable insights as to how to best serve the youth of our community. YAB membership includes student representatives from grades 8-12. Adult members represent Cohoes education, recreation, community action, and law enforcement organizations. For the 2010-2011 school year, the YAB officers are students; Bailie Tetrault & Joe Sorel, Chair, Zach LeMay, Vice-chair, Kyleigh Roby, Secretary.

The Committee hosts over 12 Movie Nights a year, which were cancelled due to copy writing issues. They participate in various events hosted by the City as well as projects that they create on their own. The Committee has taken a new lead and is working on getting projects completed in a timely fashion. Sub-committees were created to work two different projects at a time. The committees include the After-School Program Committee and the Job Shadowing Committee. Each sub-committee is staffed by an adult. The sub-committees meet outside of the regular scheduled Youth Advisory Board and inform the Board of what their status is.

Community Character Committee

The Character Counts Committee has taken a new lead with the school district. They are working on combining both efforts of the PBIS Committee and the Character Counts committee so that efforts are not duplicated on school districts end and cities end. It is in the process and has not had much information posted. They also work to promote the words of the month through different events or programs. We had a presence at Beautification Day this year as well as the Turkey Trot, Memorial Day Parade, creating the Caring Wreath for the Holiday Season, etc. To show our generosity in City Hall, the staff members again adopted a needy family during the holiday season and helped to make their Christmas a little brighter.

Parks and Playgrounds

During 2010, we had storm damage that allowed us to receive money from FEMA. George Street Park was hit badly and we were able to replace the playground equipment and put in a new \$40,000 playground. Heartt Street Park is still in the process of funding and has not yet to be completed as of today. A park audit was completed in August 2008 and suggestions of each park have been made and reviewed. The dog park has not yet begun which was a project from 2007; however Dogi I-Pods were purchase for each park. This will help owners clean up after their dogs. The Central Facility has come to a halt due to lack of funding.

Final Thoughts

In addition to providing the schedule events and activities hosted by the city, the Human Services & Youth Bureau Department aids other events and programs in the community. Some of these include the Doug Ellet Memorial 5k Run/Walk, Neighborhood Watch meetings & Events, School District Initiatives, United Way campaign, Local Food Pantry, and much more. The Human Services & Recreation Department is able to provide many services, events and programs to our residents at little to no cost, which we will continue to do for year's to come depending on the continued funding.

IN-KIND SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Pumpkin Festival at Farmer's Market Square
- Cohoes Turkey Trot
- Winter Carnival
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Halloween Parade & Party

The following community-based organizations have received in-kind, technical and/or financial support from the City of Cohoes in 2010:

- Cohoes Multi-Service Senior Center
- Cohoes Public Library
- Kiwanis Club of Cohoes
- Cohoes Youth Soccer League
- Cohoes Little League Baseball
- Cohoes Girls Softball Program
- Cohoes Intermediate Baseball League
- Cohoes Neighborhood Watch
- Cohoes Basketball Club
- Cohoes Babe Ruth League