

# ANNUAL REPORT FY 2024

## Youth & Human Services

---

[www.colonialheightsva.gov](http://www.colonialheightsva.gov)

804-520-9286

201 James Avenue

Colonial Heights, VA 23834

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter to Council	3
Office on Youth	4
Partnerships, Boards, Coalitions	5
Youth Services Commission	6
Interagency Prevention Team	6
Youth Advisory Council	7
Children's Services Act	8
Juvenile & Domestic Violence Task Force	9
Cadre/Impact Coalition	10
Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention	11
Mental Health Awareness	12
Kids' Achieving Progress	13
Summer Leadership	14
Youth Conservation Corps	15
Prevention & Diversion Programs	16
Community Events	17
Contact Information	18

Office on Youth & Human Services

Honorable T. Gregory Kochuba  
Honorable Members of the City Council  
Douglas Smith, City Manager  
City of Colonial Heights  
P.O. Box 3401  
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Dear Mr. Smith, Mayor Kochuba & Members of Council:

It is a pleasure to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report for the Office on Youth & Human Services.

It was a year filled with many activities, programs, professional development, connections with colleagues and community partners all centered around serving youth & families. More than 1,000 youth were served through prevention, diversion and leadership programs.

The Office on Youth is appreciative of the many partnerships with city departments and community partners. A highlight this year was the first annual “No Excuse for Abuse” event. The Juvenile & Domestic Violence Task Force spent many months planning this event; it was well attended and the support from City employees and departments was greatly appreciated. Many City departments are members of the task force, so it really was a “team” effort.

In closing, the Office on Youth, the Youth Services Commission, and the Youth Advisory Council appreciate the continued support, and we value your commitment and advocacy for the youth and families in our community.

Sincerely submitted,

Becca Lynch  
Youth & Human Services Administrator



# Office on Youth

The Office on Youth & Human Services serves Colonial Heights citizens by working to develop and improve community assets which assist families in raising healthy children. The Office on Youth partner, collaborate, and support the work of City groups and organizations. OGY serves the community through prevention, diversion and leadership programming, education and mentorship by utilizing a growth mindset with an emphasis on tolerance, fairness, balance, inclusiveness and respect. As a team, we believe that children and families are resilient and are capable of growth, learning and change. Positive outcomes are achieved through the recognition of their strengths and putting a focus on innate abilities, knowledge and capacities.

Becca Lynch, HS-BCP  
Administrator

Christian Velez-Ortiz  
Youth Program Coordinator

Lloyd Hawthorne  
Youth Program Coordinator

Yvette Hawthorne, QMHP-C  
Youth Program Coordinator

## Summary of Services

**Information & Referral** - provides information on youth related issues and services; a searchable Community Resource Directory is located on the Office on Youth webpage

**Planning & Program Development** - works with community organizations, groups, and agencies to develop resources for youth and families

**Public Information** - Staff are available to speak to community groups and civic organizations on a variety of topics related to youth and family functioning.

## Professional Development

In FY24, in recognition of the importance of continuing education and professional development to meet the needs of the families we serve, staff accrued over 100 hours of education and training on topics related to youth development and family engagement.

***YOUth Matter in Colonial Heights***



## PARTNERSHIPS, BOARDS, COALTIONS

The Office on Youth & Human Services serves as a community partner with other organizations to meet youth and family needs. In this role, the Office on Youth is active in local, regional and state efforts.

Colonial Heights Public Schools

District 19 Community Services Board

VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation

Department of Juvenile Justice

Substance Abuse Free Environment

Colonial Heights Fire

Community Criminal Justice Board

CAAN-DUU

School Readiness Coalition

Southside Trauma Informed Care Network

Juvenile & Domestic Violence Task Force

Commonwealth Attorney/Victim Witness

Community Multi-Disciplinary Team

Emergency Food and Shelter Program

Colonial Heights Library

Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Social Svcs.

Southside Trauma Informed Network

Chesterfield Health District

Children's Services Act

Community Coalitions of Virginia

12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court

Colonial Heights Police

Davis Child Advocacy Center

Colonial Heights Food Pantry

Partnership for Youth

CADRE/Impact

The James House

Families First

Interagency Prevention Team

Positive Parenting Coalition

United Way

Brightpoint College

Virginia State University

Virginia Dept. of Health

***"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." CORETTA SCOTT KING***



# YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION

The Youth Services Commission meets monthly to identify, address and resolve issues that affect youth and families. Commission members either reside or work in Colonial Heights and are interested in advocating for youth and families. They strive to facilitate access to existing community resources and identify service and resource gaps. They are active supporters of the Youth Advisory Council with projects and activities.

## Commission Members

Bland Campbell - Chair	Brittany Hinton	Kim Dobson
Dr. Laura Poe - Vice-Chair	Doug Harris	Dalanais Serna
Keili Loran - Secretary	Nick Schmahl	Angie Woody
Thad Johnson - CHPD	Dr. Ann Sorensen	
Andrew Davenport, YAC President	Carson Young, YAC Representative	

## Interagency Prevention Team

The Interagency Prevention Team is a multi-disciplinary community-based team which collaborates with youth and families to identify services to enhance opportunities for success at home, in school, and in the community. In FY 2024, 6 youth and their families received recommendations for issues regarding school attendance, behavioral concerns, and legal matters.

## Prevention Team Members

Becca Lynch, Youth & Human Services  
Mary Knapp, Colonial Heights Public Schools  
Julie Pond, Colonial Heights Public Schools  
Dana Barefoot, Colonial Heights Public Schools  
Kayla Barner, Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Department of Social Services  
Amanda Newville, 12<sup>th</sup> District Court Services Unit  
Destiny Wells, District 19 CSB  
Monique Brown, Colonial Heights Health Dept.

*A community that is engaged and working together can be a powerful force.*

# YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL



In FY24, YAC members contributed more than 200 volunteer hours in and around the community. Some highlights were, planting pinwheels for the prevention of child abuse, participating in city-wide cleanup, donations for the Animal Shelter and Food Pantry, participating in the "No Excuse for Abuse" event with set-up, leading the walk and creating signs. Members also purchased items and assembled hygiene and self-care kits for the James House. Scholarships were awarded to three graduating seniors. (pictured below)

## Council Members

Andrew Davenport | Carson Young | Parker Hanshew | Kendall Ackerman | Kiera Smith  
Jenna Ackerman | Emma Hanshew | Evalyn Lopez | Caleb Valesquez



Parker Hanshew



Kendall Ackerman



Andrew Davenport



*Volunteerism builds character.*



## **Chesterfield-Colonial Heights CHILDREN'S SERVICE ACT**

The Children's Services Act (CSA) is a law enacted in 1993 that established a single state pool of funds to support services for eligible youth and their families. State funds, combined with local community funds, are managed by local interagency teams who plan and oversee services to youth. Eligibility and services are determined through the local Family and Assessment Planning Team and funding is coordinated through the local Community and Policy Management Team. Youth and families are referred through Colonial Heights Public Schools, District 19 CSB, Dept. of Social Services, 12<sup>th</sup> District Juvenile Court, or parent.

In FY 2024, 52 youth and their families received community-based services, therapeutic foster care, respite services, day school programs, residential treatment (in-patient), out-patient services (mental health and substance abuse).

Of those 52, 29 (56%) were referred from Colonial Heights Public Schools; and 23 (44% were referred from the Department of Social Services).

### **Community Policy Management Team**

Dr. James Worsley - County of Chesterfield

Becca Lynch - City of Colonial Heights

Lavinia Hopkins - CSA Representative

Karen Reilly-Jones - County of Chesterfield

Christopher Campbell, Chesterfield Private Provider

Danicka Ricks - Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Social Services

Lauren Magruder - Chesterfield CSB

Sherri Ball - District 19 CSB

Marilyn Brown, Chesterfield Juvenile Detention

Elaine Gould, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Christy George, Colonial Heights Public Schools

Lawanda Dunn, Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Health District

William Stanley, 12<sup>th</sup> District Court Services Unit



## JUVENILE & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TASKFORCE

The Colonial Heights Juvenile and Domestic Violence Task Forces works to create and develop an alliance designed to coordinate agencies and community efforts to respond to juvenile and domestic violence.

In FY24, the Juvenile & Domestic Task Force hosted the first annual "No Excuse for Abuse" event. This event took place in the month of April, which is recognized for "National Child Abuse Prevention". At this event, there were vendors that provided information and resources for youth, adults, and families, mental and physical health, domestic violence shelters, and crisis stabilization. Participants walked together to show support in ending violence while carrying signs. This event brought in over 100 people from the community.

### Task Force Members

Davis Child Advocacy Center

Aetna Health

Youth & Human Services

Central VA Legal Aid

Colonial Heights Police Dept.

Colonial Heights Public Schools

Central VA Legal Aid

Colonial Heights Victim/Witness

Bon Secours

The James House

District 19 CSB

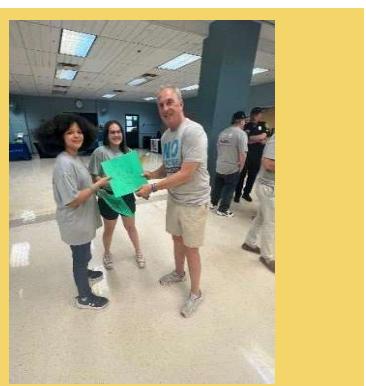
12<sup>th</sup> District CSU

Dept. of Social Services

Commonwealth Attorney

Colonial Heights Health Dept.

Colonial Heights Recreation & Parks

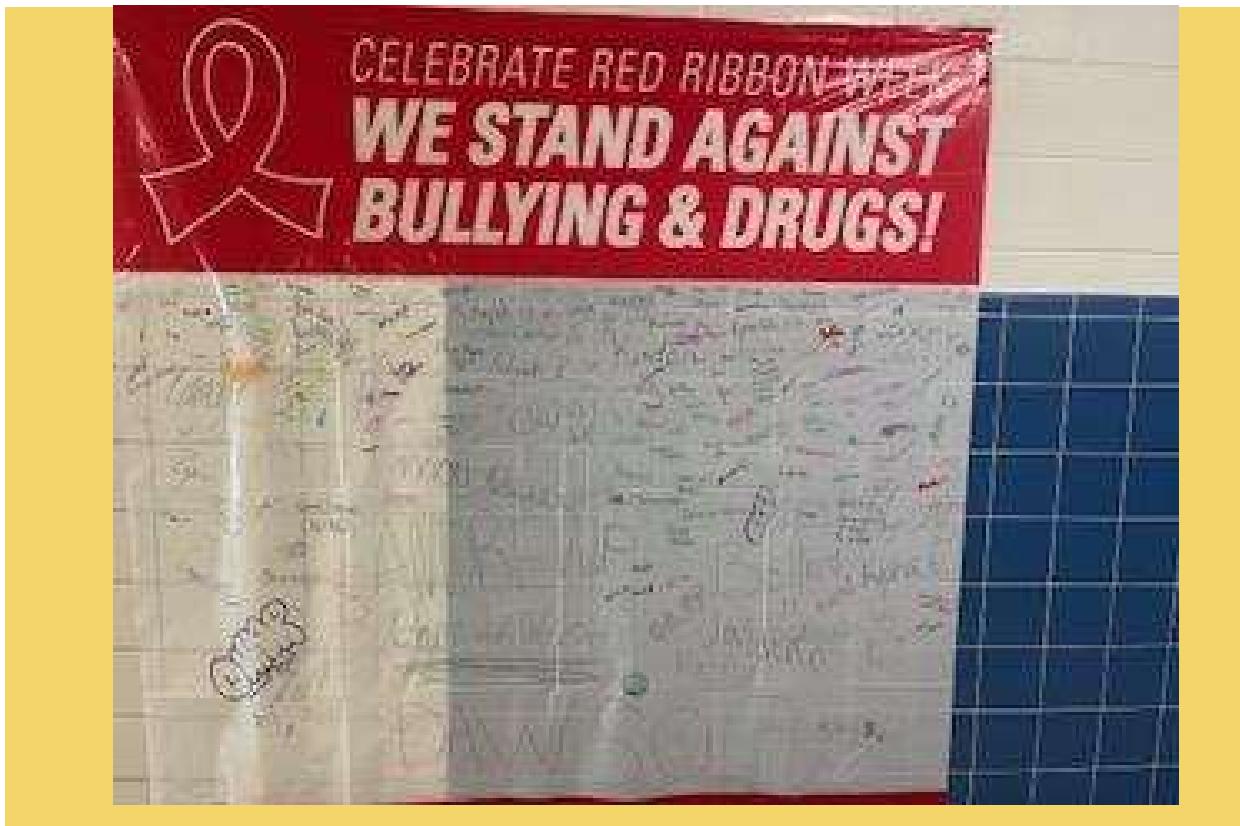


*Working together to make a difference.*

## CADRE/IMPACT COALITION

Office on Youth partners with Colonial Heights High School to offer youth an opportunity to raise awareness for the prevention of the use of alcohol, drugs, and other substances by youth. Youth learn leadership skills needed to address common issues among youth. The club is led by adult advisors from CHHS and the Office on Youth. Club meetings take place after school as scheduled. Youth plan and lead events throughout the school year such as Red Ribbon Week, Project Sticker Shock and YADAPP. In FY24, youth chose “Choose to Refuse” as their theme. During Red Ribbon week, wristbands with the **“Choose to Refuse”** message were given out. Members asked classmates to join in standing against drug use by signing a pledge poster

[CHHS Red Ribbon Pledge Poster](#)



Youth Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Projects



[Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority \(ABC\)](#)



# CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

April is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention month. Becca Lynch accepted a proclamation from City Council on behalf of Office on Youth. Each April, Office on Youth hosts Blue Day and raises awareness about child abuse. City employees participate by wearing blue. Pinwheel gardens are created at the city buildings and schools. Pictured below are city employees. This year's theme, "Doing Things Differently; Moving from the Challenge to the Change."



*Our greatest natural resource is children.*



# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

May is recognized nationally as Mental Health Awareness month providing an opportunity to raise awareness, combat stigma, and promote mental health resources. Experiencing mental health issues can make it challenging to live everyday life and maintain recovery. Beyond the individual, these challenges ripple out through our families, our communities, and our world. Becca Lynch accepted a proclamation from City Council on behalf of Office on Youth. Employees received mental health bags encouraging self-care prepared by OOY staff.

## Warning Signs:

Sleep or appetite changes	Unusual Behavior
Excessive worry, anxiety, sadness	Mood changes
Decrease in work/school performance	Illogical thinking
Excessive use of drugs or alcohol	Changes in hygiene
Avoiding friends and social activities	Apathy

## Fast Facts:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14



# KIDS' ACHIEVING PROGRESS AFTERSCHOOL

The Kids' Achieving Progress is a referral-based afterschool program for youth in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades. The program promotes academic improvement, positive behavior, self-esteem and physical fitness. Youth meet after school with mentors who support these goals through learning activities, team building and academic support.

In FY2024, 35 youth were enrolled from Lakeview, Tussing, and North Elementary. 75% showed overall improvement with grades. 49% of referrals based on academic need, 37% of referrals were based on social-emotional need and 14% of referrals were based on behavioral needs. Some participants were referred for multiple reasons.

Staff = 12 | Interns= 2 | Volunteers = 32 (Brightpoint, VSU, CHHS, and Fort-Gregg-Adams



# SUMMER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Each year, Office on Youth plans and implements a leadership program for rising 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. This two-week program teaches youth about being leaders in their school and community. Speakers throughout the two weeks reinforce the idea of responsibility, accountability, and leadership through experiential activities and field trips. In FY 2024, youth visited the fire station, police department, and courthouse. They enjoyed talks with the Mayor and the City Manager. The program ended with a Lemonade Stand in the City Hall parking lot. Youth created posters, prepared lemonade and asked for donations. They raised \$600 and all funds were given to the Colonial Heights Animal Shelter.

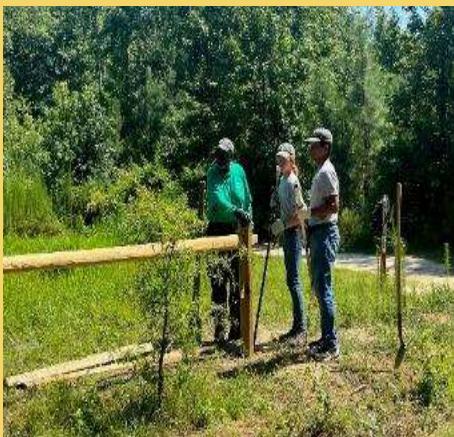


*The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. - Nelson Mandela*



## YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

Office on Youth partners each year with the Chesterfield Adolescent Resource Program to give teens an opportunity to work alongside conservation staff at Pocahontas State Park. Fifteen youth are selected each summer for the three-week education and service program. The program is designed to encourage positive youth development. Teens learn the principles of natural resource stewardship and the importance of sustaining Virginia's unique natural environment. YCC was established to heighten respect for the environment, increase stewardship of public lands and foster teamwork, self-esteem, improved citizenship and social responsibility. Office on Youth receives a yearly grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation which allows each teen to receive a stipend when the program is complete.



*Work, Learn, Play, Grow*

# PREVENTION AND DIVERSION PROGRAMS

Community-based programs funded by state and local government to divert youth from the courts, and provide sanctions, education, and services. Programs are funded through the City of Colonial Heights and the Virginia Community Crime Control Act grant.

## Assessments

Contract with District 19 to provide substance abuse assessments to youth referred by the 12<sup>th</sup> District Court. FY 2024, 10 youth completed assessments.

## Community Service-Learning Program

Court ordered program for youth to complete community service hours. In FY 2024, 24 youth completed 405 hours.

## Shoplifting Diversion Program

Court ordered program to educate youth and parents about shoplifting, the laws, and the impact on the community. In FY 2024, 98 youth completed the program.

## ATOD

Court ordered program to educate youth and parents about the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco and drug use. In FY 2024, 3 youth completed the program.



## Botvin Life Skills Middle School

Prevention program for youth to develop personal self-management skills, general social skills and build effective defenses against pressures to use tobacco alcohol, and other drugs. In FY 2024, 417 (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade) youth completed the program at CHMS.

## Tackling Tough Skills

Prevention program for youth to develop strategies for healthy decision-making, build healthy relationships, and learn the consequences of substance use and risk-taking. In FY 2024, 38 youth at the Community Day School completed the program.





# COMMUNITY EVENTS

We are thrilled to be invited to community events to build strong relationships.

Pictured below are staff enjoying interacting with the community at school events.



**CHMS Family Literacy Night**



**TUSSING ESL TITLE I NIGHT**



**LAKEVIEW LEARNING LUAU**

# Office on Youth & Human Services

201 James Avenue  
P O Box 3401

Colonial Heights VA 23834  
804-520-9286

[www.colonialheightsva.gov](http://www.colonialheightsva.gov)

**Visit Us Here**

