



# SEPTEMBER 2024

## Newsletter | Vol. 1, Issue 1

### Youth Ambassador Program

#### What is YAP:

Beaver County's **Youth Ambassadors Program (YAP)** is a youth centered, youth driven program operating in Beaver County schools that promotes awareness of current issues that youth face today. Any youth who reside in Beaver County from 6th through 12th grade is eligible to participate by contacting their school counselor. YAP participates in all Beaver County High Schools, hosting three county wide events. This past year we expanded to include two middle school events as well.

#### What do the Youth Ambassadors do?

Participate in countywide events to learn about mental health, wellness activities, and available services.

Youth then represent the program by being "change agents" that teach others about YAP and mental health. Youth Ambassadors spread the information to other youth, family members, and the community.

#### SHOUTOUT:

**YAP** has grown so much over the last 8 years.

While we have seen the students change year to year, the one constant has been Susan Smith. Ms. Susan, as students know her as, is an employee of BCRC, has been a YAP coordinator from the beginning and a champion for youth mental health. Over the years, Ms. Susan has been in and out of schools supporting YAP and other county-wide wellness endeavors. She has been an amazing asset to our community and the overall success of YAP.

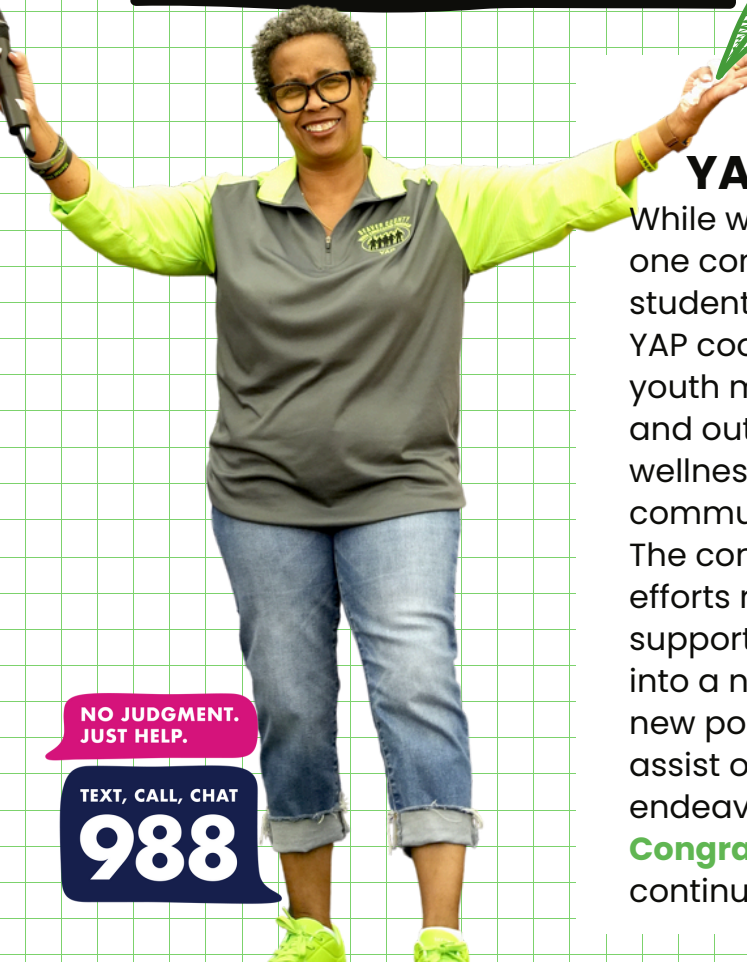
The continued growth of YAP and the county's outreach efforts require more support and time. Who better to support these efforts, then Ms. Susan and has transitioned into a new position as the *County Outreach Specialist*. This new position will allow Ms. Susan to spend more time to assist our youth, schools and community in their endeavors to promote mental wellness.

**Congrats Ms. Susan!** Thank you, for all you have done and continue to do for our community.

NO JUDGMENT.  
JUST HELP.

TEXT, CALL, CHAT

988



# SPOTLIGHT:

## PEER GENERATION TRAINING

This year will mark the fourth cohort of Beaver County's Peer Generation Youth Empowerment Training program. Peer Generation is a youth-driven and youth-developed curriculum that offers an introduction to youth peer to peer support. The training focuses on practical

ways to be inclusive toward diversity, strategies for resiliency, and equips youth to practice peer support in real-life situations. In partnership with the Copeland Center and Youth MOVE PA, Beaver County's System of Care has been able to train 60 local Beaver County high school students to be peer mentors. Two school staff from each school in attendance are also trained on the curriculum to help support the peer mentors. Youth who have participated in Peer Generation have demonstrated an increase in confidence around their ability to share tools for wellness with others and their ability to make oneself feel better when distressed. This year, for the first time, we will be inviting back all the previous cohorts for one day of joint training to further increase connections between youth and to strengthen the training they already received.

### STUDENTS REPORTED LEARNING:

# 53.7%

## INCREASE

**In confidence & ability to share tools for wellness & resiliency with others.**



# 60

**BEAVER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BECAME PEER MENTORS**

## FALL 2023 YAP IMPACTS:

**526** Youth attended the TWO YAP Events this past Fall.

**309** Attended the High School Event.

**217** Attended the Middle School Event.

**160** First time attending YAP Event.

**288** Youth participated in the survey.

**54.7%** Survey completion rate.

Average age **15.2** Years old.

**76.7%** Have had close friends or family members who have dealt with the presenting concerns.

**62.8%** Have had lived or first hand experience with any of the presenting concerns.

## TOP 3 SCHOOLS REPRESENTED:

**HOPEWELL | BIG BEAVER FALLS | SOUTHSIDE**

**17 of 20** YAP SCHOOL DISTRICTS REPRESENTED WITH A RANGE OF **1-60** STUDENTS'.

**16.9** AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH A MEDIAN OF **15** STUDENTS.



@beavercountyYAP



# MAKE YOUR MARK:



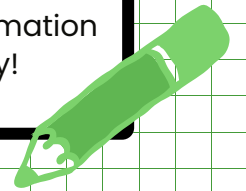
## T-Shirt Design COMPETITION

**YAP** is holding a t-shirt design contest to find a new design for the 2024-2025 YAP shirt. The winning design will be used at the YAP event in January. The winner of the contest will be presented with a gift card. The shirt design should incorporate mental wellness and the YAP program in some way. The deadline for submissions is November 21st, 2024. Entries (or questions) should be submitted to [kimberlyhall@ect-pa.com](mailto:kimberlyhall@ect-pa.com) in a JPEG format.



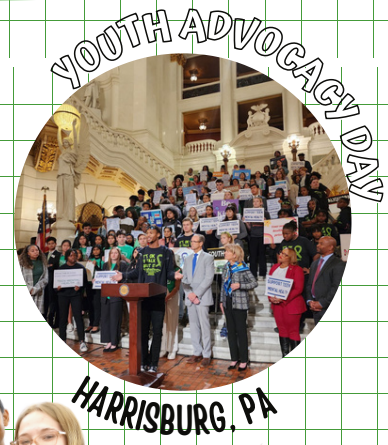
## SCHOLARSHIP!!!

The Coordinators for YAP are excited to announce that they will be awarding (2) \$500 scholarships to two graduating Youth Ambassador seniors who will be attending college or a vocational/technical school. These scholarships will be awarded based off participation in YAP and a short essay. Further information about the application process and deadline for submission will be posted in our winter newsletter. Both scholarships will be awarded at our spring YAP event. Stay tuned for more information about this awesome opportunity!



*The Youth Ambassadors planning committee has already started to plan for the three high school and two middle school community-wide events. The dates have been scheduled and distributed to schools. If you are a youth who is interested in attending one of these events, please contact your school sponsor or school counselor.*

## CLUB ACTIVITIES FROM 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR



## RECAP



# WELLNESS TOOL KIT:



As everyone is setting into the new school year, we just want to remind everyone the importance of taking care of your mental health and all of the amazing resources out there to support a healthy mind! Your wellness toolkit is where you can look for ways to practice self-care and cope with the many stressors a young person faces.

## FEATURE TOPIC: SUICIDE PREVENTION

The month of September is Suicide Awareness Month and the following resources can be useful when talking with someone who might be in distress.

### WARNING SIGNS:

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Having a plan to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless
- Increasing use of drugs or alcohol
- Acting anxious, agitated, reckless, or displaying extreme mood swings
- Sleeping too much or little withdrawing or isolating
- Showing rage or seeking revenge
- Giving away possessions
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Have a change in daily routines

### HOW TO HELP:

- **Recognize** the warning signs in yourself, your friends, and on social media.
- **Connect.** Listen, be accepting, don't judge.
- **Confirm.** Ask if your friend has thoughts of dying or suicide.
- **Encourage** them to talk to a trusted adult for help, such as a parent, coach, counselor, or teacher.
- **Protect.** Take any threats seriously. Do not agree to keep a secret!
- **Stay.** Do not leave a person alone if you are concerned about them being at imminent risk.
- **Act.** Call for help immediately.
- **Engage.** Follow up and stay in touch after a crisis.

## COPING SKILLS/RESOURCES

### ONLINE LINKS:

[HTTPS://WWW.THETREVORPROJECT.ORG](https://www.thetrevorproject.org)  
[HTTPS://WWW.NAMI.ORG/YOUR-JOURNEY](https://www.nami.org/your-journey)  
[HTTPS://WWW.MHANATIONAL.ORG/YOUTH/KIDS-AND-TEENS](https://www.mhanational.org/youth/kids-and-teens)



### BREATHING TECHNIQUES:

Take a moment to be mindful:  
 Inhale to the count of 4  
 Pause, gently holding your breath, for the count of 4  
 Exhale to the count of 4  
 Pause for 4 again  
**Repeat this cycle as needed**



### CREATE A SELF-CARE PLAN:

Self-care keeps us healthy. These activities often involve comfort and slowing the pace of life. A Self-Care plan should include things you like to do, activities that relax you, and supportive people you can contact.



### CONNECT WITH OTHERS:

Reach out to a supportive friend or family member. Don't isolate yourself when you are struggling. If you can't talk to someone you know, connect with a therapist or crisis line.



### DO'S

Let the person talk & listen to them without judgment.  
 Reassure them that treatment & help is available.  
 Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult.  
 Reduce access to lethal means (such as firearms & medication) among persons at risk of suicide.  
 Be direct. Talk openly about suicide.

### DON'T'S

Don't try to minimize problems, dismiss their feelings or shame a person.  
 Don't promise confidentiality.  
 Don't leave them alone.  
 Don't tell them to "get over it" or "you are overreacting."