

City of Norwich Youth Bureau

2024 Year-end Report

I would like to share with you the success the city of Norwich's Youth Bureau has had over the last 12 months. In 2024 the Youth Bureau offered new programs, like karate and ultimate frisbee, while also continuing to grow our traditional programs like the junior wrestling program. In 2024 we had 1,058 participants register for our programs and trips, the most participants going back to 2011, the last year for which I have data. This is an increase from 2023's 1,020 registered for our programs.

The winter recreation programs had 228 kids registered for our programs, which included soccer, wrestling, cheering, baseball, softball, winter fun club and bowling. Bowling continues to be sponsored by the Norwich Elks Club, without whom we would not be able to offer.

Due to our inability to make ice at the Weiler Park ice rink, a temporary ice rink was set up in East Park. The rink was free to use. The Youth Bureau did loan skates for people to use. Twenty skaters borrowed skates over the six weeks the rink was up. The number of skaters is unknown, but the feedback was positive.

In February, we sponsored our annual Presidents Day movie at the Colonia Theatre. While we had given out ninety-eight tickets only fifty people showed up for the movie. Attendance was low as President Day coincided with the weeklong winter break.

The summer recreation programs had 431 participants in twelve different programs. The programs offered included karate and ultimate frisbee, for the first time, baseball, softball, cheer, flag football, soccer, summer fun club, basketball, tennis, pickleball, and swimming lessons.

The Youth Bureau also offered six trips this summer: Rail Explorers, Ross Park Zoo, tickets to a Rumble Ponies game, The Wild Animal Park, Water Safari, and Wonderworks. We offered fifty tickets for each trip. Bus transportation was provided on all trips except for the Water Safari trip. Overall, we had 399 kids and adults sign up for the trips, unfortunately we could only take 318.

Registrations for the programs and trips were as followed:

Winter Programs

Baseball / Softball – 35
Bowling – 28
Cheer – 31
Wrestling – 71
Soccer – 42
Winter Fun Club – 21

Summer Programs

Baseball/Softball – 27
Basketball – 38
Cheer – 19
Flag Football – 30
Karate – 37
Pickleball – 15
Soccer – 29
Summer Fun Club – 7
Swim Lessons - 200
Tennis – 26
Ultimate Frisbee – 3

Trips

Rail Explorers – 65
Ross Park Zoo – 72
Rumble Ponies – 70
The Wild Animal Park – 69
Water Safari – 74
Wonderworks – 49

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To staff the programs the Youth Bureau hired forty-three area high school or college age students, along with nine adults. For many of the high school and college students this is their first job, which provides them with valuable experience.

This summer Kurt Beyer Pool was open from June 26th through August 31st, one week longer than last year. This summer's weather conditions allowed the pool to open all but one day this summer. With the great weather, attendance at the pool increased to 5,383 swimmers this year, with an average daily attendance of eighty-four swimmers.

We also extended the hours of Kurt Beyer Pool to remain open until 8:00 PM on Friday nights. The feedback was positive.

Swimming lessons remain extremely popular at Kurt Beyer Pool with two hundred kids receiving lessons this summer. Lessons are open to kids from 0 to 21 years of age. We provide two sessions of lessons, each lasting 4 weeks in length.

The Youth Bureau teamed up with The Place on two events this Summer. First was the Story Walk project. A story walk combines physical activity with literacy. It takes a children's book, displayed page by page along a walking path. This Summer two stories were displayed along the walking path at Weiler Park.

Second, we teamed with The Place for Movie Night at Kurt Beyer Pool. With the help of Guernsey Memorial Library, the movie *Pirate of the Caribbean* was shown at Kurt Beyer while those in attendance were allowed to use the pool. The Youth Bureau provided the lifeguards.

The Youth Bureau also worked with The Place's summer work program in cleaning and place mulch at the trails at Rotary Park. Lead by Dr. Thomas Holmes, six youths employed by The Place cleaned and removed brush from along the trails, then placed mulch on the paths.

Once again, we partnered with Alvogen for their employee give back day. Four Alvogen employees help clean and patch the liner of the temporary ice rink.

All five towns have agreed to renew their contracts for 2025 with the Youth Bureau. Revenue from all five towns was received by year-end.

Revenue for the dasher boards is the same as last year. We lost two sponsors but picked up two new ones: Commerce Chenango and Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango.

The Youth Bureau's expenditure was below budget again this year. Overall, the Youth Bureau was just under \$8,000 below budget. Due mostly to the Personal Services for the Youth Bureau Director's and Recreation Coordinators' time being below plan. Revenue was slightly behind planned due to the not receiving the state reimbursement by year-end.

The total number of registrations in our recreation programs for 2024 was 659, making our cost per registration \$113.79, less state aid and revenue from the towns (educational trips are funded

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by grants and donations, therefore the number of registrations for the trips is removed from this calculation). The cost per registration is up compared to 2023 when the cost per registration was \$87.89. Partially due to not receiving the state reimbursement prior to year-end, along with the increase in minimum wage.

Overall, the year was successful for the Youth Bureau. We continue to expand our programs while remaining within our budget constraints. I remain optimistic that 2025 will be as successful as 2024, while expanding our program offerings and partnerships.