



Dryden Recreation and Youth Commission

# 2013 Annual Report



Town of Dryden <http://dryden.ny.us>  
93 E. Main St., Dryden ☎ 844-8888  
Mary Ann Sumner, Supervisor

## Mission & Operations

*Help provide a high quality of life for all town residents by assisting in facilitating opportunities to participate in healthy and satisfying recreation and leisure activities, and supporting and increasing access of town youth to programs that build skills, confidence, leadership, and supportive relationships with peers and adults.*



In 2013, the Dryden Recreation Commission and Dryden Youth Commission merged into one expanded Commission, **the Dryden Recreation and Youth Commission**. The DRYC serves as an advisory group to the Town of Dryden Recreation Department and the Town Board and also serves as a liaison to the community, Dryden Central School District, the Villages of Dryden and Freeville, and Tompkins County.

The DRYC is empowered to assess the recreation and youth program needs and priorities of the community and make recommendations to meet these needs. State, County, and local funds are used to support programs.

The DRYC has two grant cycles. In the spring, members review applications for Community Grants from local associations and others to support building repairs and playground improvements, community events, and more. In the fall, applications to support Youth Development programs are reviewed. These programs help build skills for Town of Dryden Youth and may be operated directly by the Town or through contracts with qualified agencies. Recommendations for both types of funding are made to the Town Board.

The Commission is also responsible for periodic review of funded programs to assure that they are meeting the needs for which they were originally designed.



Cover photos: Youth participants in Dryden Youth Services and OURS programs, new Ellis Hollow Community Center accessibility ramp

The DRYC consists of nine members appointed by the Town Board. In 2013 the Commission met eleven times.



### **2013 Member Roster**

*Name*

JoEllen Bailey

Jeff Humphrey\*

Tracy Kurtz

Steve Meyer

Stephanie Mulinos

Sharon Todd

Vicki Wilkins, chair

Vacant (2 seats)

Kris Bennett (non-voting)

Tompkins County liaison

Melissa Bianconi (non-voting)

Town of Dryden liaison

Linda Lavine, Steven Stelick (non-voting)

Town Board liaisons

\* Resigned term during year.



### **Coming in 2014:**

- ◆ The Youth Needs Assessment will be updated to analyze existing youth services and determine gaps in services
- ◆ New, expanded Youth Employment program will train and support first time youth employees in positions within their community
- ◆ OURS program will expand to 4 days a week
- ◆ The DRYC will provide input to the Town Board in the hiring of new Recreation Director

## Community Grants funded in 2013

Since 2006, the Town of Dryden has provided more than \$215,000 in Community Grants. In 2013, 17 grants, totaling nearly \$31,000, were approved to support projects for 9 organizations.



<b>Cornell Cooperative Extension</b>	Van support for OURS program serving youth living in 3 Town mobile home parks
<b>Dryden Community Café</b>	Community events and music programs
<b>Dryden Historical Society</b>	Support for Harvest Festival
<b>Dryden Lake Festival</b>	Support for annual event
<b>Dryden Parents Promoting Positive Change</b>	<i>Rachel's Challenge</i> program to increase youth compassion and reduce bullying and prejudice; provided in middle and high schools and in the community
<b>Ellis Hollow Community Center</b>	Handicap ramp, drainage work on grounds, family-centered events, replacement grill and oven
<b>Neptune Hose Company</b>	Junior Fire Academy summer programs for Town youth
<b>Southworth Library</b>	Summer teen programs
<b>Varna Community Center</b>	Picnic benches, programming for children and for seniors, visit by Cornell Herpetology Club

The Town of Dryden has a long history of supporting youth development programs for local youth. In 2013, a blend of Town, County, and State funds, totaling more than \$61,000, supported 5 programs devoted to providing positive opportunities for local youth to gain important life skills.



**2013 Youth Participation**

<b>Youth Development</b>		<b>Youth Employment</b>	
Cornell Coop. Extension Dryden Youth Services	174	V. Dryden Youth Jobs	1
		V. Freeville Youth Jobs	2
Cornell Coop. Extension O.U.R.S.	65	Cornell Coop. Extension Youth Jobs	3
<b>Total Youth Served in DRYC-funded programs in 2013 (unduplicated count)</b>			<b>229</b>

***Youth Development:*** Any planned and organized activity whose primary purpose is to promote and provide opportunities for youth to gain important life skills and interact with positive role models in a continuous manner. In addition, Youth Development Programs allow youth to have meaningful roles in their communities.

## Youth Development Programs (continued)

### ♦ **Dryden Youth Services (through Cornell Cooperative Extension):**

Full-time Program Manager Dave Hall offered 38 programs during the year, primarily to middle schoolers. All students are welcomed, but youth who do not typically participate in or succeed at school or in community clubs, sports, or activities are targeted. DYS' goals are to provide opportunities for Dryden youth to learn healthy, life-long skills, to feel successful, and to form relationships with youth and adults in a supported environment. Most programs met multiple times over several weeks. While some youth participated in only a few programs, others signed up for many throughout the year. Some of 2013's programs (for a full list contact Kris Bennett, 274-5310 or Linda Schoffel, 272-2292):

**Community Helpers** is a service learning program that lets youth get involved to do something to make their community a better place. They helped the Dryden Sustainability Club with its garden and greenhouse project and removed invasive species from the woods.

**Iron Chef** is a cooking program in which each team of youths create a dish using the same ingredients. Teams are "scored" on creativity, use of ingredients, teamwork, taste, and proper clean up.

**Primitive Pursuits** teaches native living skills, wilderness survival and nature awareness while building participants' confidence and connection to the natural world. Youth built friction fires, shelters and traps, and learned to identify edible plants and procure safe water.



**Success story:** *Early in the year, Dave observed a student who was spending a great deal of time in the office with anger and behavior issues. Dave started making small talk with her in the lunchroom, where she sat alone, and learned she liked to play soccer. Over time, the girl joined Dave's lunchroom group, playing soccer and other group activities. The student whom Dave had never seen smile before now makes jokes, has made friends, enjoys herself, and spends less time in the office.*

**◆ Dryden O.U.R.S. Program (Cornell Cooperative Extension):**

Half-time Program Manager Nikki Nease offered year-round O.U.R.S. (Opportunities, Understanding, Respect, Success) programming to low-income youth living in 3 Dryden mobile home parks. Youth are transported to 4-H Acres by van for programs three times a week. Ninety Cornell student volunteers, trained and coordinated by Nikki, serve as mentors, plan and deliver programs and write grants. During summer and school breaks when most C.U. volunteers are not available, Nikki provides programming. For a detailed annual report, contact Kris Bennett, 274-5310 or Linda Schoffel, 272-2292.

**Monday Mentoring** paired youth with a mentoring volunteer for one-on-one homework support along with help on social skills, teamwork, healthy lifestyles, kindness and sharing. Youth/mentor pairs also learned through experiential activities based on youth interests, including baking, sewing, science, reading, crafts, etc.

**Tuesday Teen/Tween Leadership Council** engages mature youth to take on leadership roles. They devoted efforts to renovation and beautification of 4-H Acres, including removal of invasive species. The Mentor-in-Training component provides the chance for older youth to develop a project to improve OURS programming.

**Fun Fridays for All** gives youth chances to master new skills and work together in groups through participating in one of three experiential projects (nutritional cooking, fitness, arts & crafts).



**Success story:** *Under guidance from their Cornell mentors to build new sewing skills, OURS fabric artists created clothing embellishments, purses, pillows, and scarves; some learned to mend clothes and stuffed animals that they brought from home. Participants entered their projects in the Tompkins County Youth Fair. The youth coached one another through the judging and gained self-confidence as they spoke to the judges about their projects. Many were selected to enter at least one of their projects in the NY State Fair.*

## Youth Employment Programs funded in 2013 by DRYC

### ◆ **Municipal Youth Jobs through Cornell Cooperative Extension:**

Three local youth gained first-time job experience by working in one of 2 sites. Two worked at Southworth Library, helping with assorted library work. One worked at the Dryden Community Café.

### ◆ **Village of Dryden Youth Jobs:**

One local youth worked as a counselor at the V. Dryden Summer Camp, helping with arts and crafts and outdoor activities while promoting a safe and happy environment and gaining work experience.

### ◆ **Village of Freeville Youth Jobs:**

Two young people worked as CIT's at the V. Freeville Summer Camp, gaining leadership skills and job experience while helping a senior counselor prepare and deliver activities for enrolled campers.



### **The Value of Supporting Youth Employment:**

*Youth learn work-relevant skills such as communication, time management, decision making, teamwork, and business etiquette that are critical to success in the workplace. Youth employees build skills as they engage in their community. A first-time job experience acquaints youth with on-the-job experiences and helps tie education to the workplace and can motivate them to stay in school.*

- America's Promise, 2012

*Many of the skills discussed as critical for success in the 21st century workforce are the same skills needed to be capable, competent and contributing citizens, parents, neighbors and friends. The skills demanded in the business world are mirrored by those required for everyday life. Skills for work are skills for life.*

- Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2003

The Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. identified a lack of youth employment opportunities as a concern in its 2012 County Needs Assessment.