



# Youth Court Journal

*A Quarterly Publication of all news related to Bethlehem Youth Court*

## **BYC Holds Graduation and Recognition Ceremony**

On April 11, 2006 a ceremony honoring the new members of Bethlehem Youth Court and recognizing the work of the "retiring" volunteers was held at Bethlehem Town Hall. Bethlehem Youth Court Board of Directors' Co-Chairperson and Assistant US Attorney, Richard Hartunain hosted the event. Connie Mayer, Associate Dean of Albany Law School and BYC Board Member, fulfilled the role of key note speaker.

Thomas Spina, Board Member, co-author of the nationally utilized member training manual, and Assistant US Attorney announced the names of the 36 new members. These new members had recently completed the 18 hours of training required of all Youth Court members which involved lectures, weekly homework and readings, and plenty of "real life" practice

under the instruction of attorneys, judges, and law enforcement officials. For their hard work, the new members received recognition certificates signed by the Division of Criminal Justice Services Commissioner Chauncy Parker, a membership card and a BYC member tee shirt. "I am looking forward to working with these new members. They have shown that they are ready and able to handle the responsibilities that come with being a Youth Court member," BYC director Stacey Whiteley commented.

"Retiring" members, those Youth Court members who are graduating from high school in June 2006, were also recognized for their volunteerism. These young people, some who had been involved with Youth Court throughout their high school careers, were also given cer-

tificates of recognition signed by Commissioner Parker, an alumni tee shirt and membership card, and a cd with a slide show of pictures taken over the past four years.

Ryne Kitzrow, "retiring" member spoke to the large audience regarding his experiences with Youth Court and about the promise he sees in the new membership.

Casey Sheridan, winner of the annual Judge Peter C. Wenger award was also honored and received her award.

Town Supervisor, Theresa Egan closed the evening with words of encouragement for the new members.

*Pictures of the new graduates during training can be found on the web site: [www.BethlehemYouthCourt.org](http://www.BethlehemYouthCourt.org)*

## **Mock Hearing Held For Local Girl Scout Unit 97**

In honor of National Law Day, Bethlehem Youth Court held its second annual Storybook Mock Hearing. This year's hearing was based on the fairy tale "The Three Little Pigs", with the Big Bad Wolf appearing for sentencing for two counts of Criminal Mischief. The audience this year was comprised of about 40 Girl Scouts ages 6 through 11 from local Girl Scout Unit 97.

The girls were split up into juries according to their troops and were charged with deciding what the appropriate sentence would be for Mr. Wolf. Testimony was provided by only two of the little pigs, as the third little pig (owner of the brick house) was too emotionally overwrought to appear and from the arresting officer; the Sheriff of Nottingham. Mr. Wolf

testified on his own behalf, painting a vivid portrait of a young wolf who was upset by his lack of friends and poor social skills. According to Mr. Wolf, he was only trying to welcome the pigs to the neighborhood with a plate of cookies when he asked them to let him in. The pigs' rebuffs of "not by the hair of our chiny chin chin", upset him so much his emotions got the better of him and he ended up destroying the homes.

The juries deliberated under the guidance of Youth Court members acting as a jury foreperson and came to a variety of sentencing options such as baking a new

batch of cookies for the pigs, buying the materials for stronger homes for the pigs, apology letters, and of course community service beautifying Never Never Land.



*Big Bad Wolf Dan O'Keefe with Little Pigs Kyle Palmer and Andy Betor*

"It was great," MacKenzie Fox, a third grader and Girl Scout member, said of the hearing. "The Wolf should help the pigs out now and he should make sure he doesn't do something like that again."

"The mock hearing is a terrific way to introduce young people to the legal system and to civic responsibility," stated BYC Director Stacey Whiteley. "We are already working on ideas for next years mock hearing."



## Message from the Director

Summer is here! The BYC Community Garden is in at the Elm Avenue Park and so far is doing pretty well. The start of the season was pretty rough due to the amount of rain we received, but things have cleared up and the veggies and flowers are in bloom. The cucumbers, peas, and zucchini are growing the quickest and should be ready to harvest with in the next week or so. The offenders and I will happily bring them to the Bethlehem Food Pantry to be distributed to needy families in the area.

The satellite garden located at the Cedar's Rest Home in Selkirk which was created in conjunction with Youth Service Days in April, is really doing well too. This garden is the primary responsibility of the residents and staff of the home, but BYC lends a hand in making sure it stays weed free and watered. The corn is almost four feet high and the zucchini and cucumber plants are flourishing. The residents will

surely enjoy dining on the fresh produce soon.

I'd like to take this opportunity to rave about how terrific our new members are doing. Since their graduation from training, many new members have had the chance to prepare and present a Youth Court case. They are doing remarkably well and I am looking forward to working with them over the next several years.

I have been working with the Association of New York State Youth Courts (ANYSYC) for several years and recently was elected treasurer of the organization. At the present time there are 99 youth/teen/peer/student courts in New York State. Approximately a third of them are involved with the state association. The Association is working hard to get all NYS Youth Courts on board and to this end a quarterly newsletter is sent out to all state Youth Courts highlighting state youth court activities, programs, and volunteers. As I am the editor of

the state newsletter, the BYC program is often featured. If you would like to view the newsletter it is posted on the ANYSYC web site, [www.nysyouthcourts.org](http://www.nysyouthcourts.org).

The Association is a powerful tool that youth courts, including BYC, can utilize to further the Youth Court movement. Keep your eyes out for Youth Court activities on a state level and I will be sure to keep you updated on our progress.

Don't forget...the 5th National Youth Court Month is September 2006. BYC will be participating through our annual display in the front hall of Town Hall, through volunteer juror recruitment, and through a ceremony celebrating our volunteers. I have a few other activities in mind and will be sure to let you know when they are confirmed.

Take care and enjoy the rest of the summer!

*Stacey*

## National Youth Service Days, April 21st and 22nd

On April 21st and April 22nd, BYC participated in National Youth Service Days, the largest service event in the world. BYC volunteers, with grant money secured through the National Youth Court Center, built a raised vegetable garden bed at the Cedar's Rest Home in Selkirk. Adult and youth volunteers toiled in the rain and mud to clear the land, build the garden bed up, and fill it with workable soil. Another group of volunteers raked and cleared brush in the large yard of the

home. As it was too early in the season to put the vegetable plants in, they were planted at a later date. The vegetables will be harvested and consumed by the senior residents at the home.

For more information about NYSD and how other Youth Courts across the county participated, go to: [http://www.youthcourt.net/NYSD\\_2006/highlights\\_2006.htm](http://www.youthcourt.net/NYSD_2006/highlights_2006.htm)

**Thank you and good luck to former Town Justice Frank Milano. We at Bethlehem Youth Court thank you for your time and support of the program. We will miss your impromptu lessons at Youth Court hearings and your sage advice to young offenders. We wish you well in your new position.**



*Judge Milano speaking at a recent BYC event*



# Drinking and Driving By J. P., A Past BYC Offender

*This article was written by an offender who was required by the peer jury to write an article concerning the dangers of drinking and driving as part of his Youth Court sentence. While J.P. was not drinking and driving himself, he was a passenger in a car who's driver was intoxicated and arrested for D.W. I.*

Drinking and driving effects thousands upon thousands of people each year. It doesn't just effect people that are involved in the car accidents but also those people's families that may have to mourn over the loss of a family member.

Some penalties of drinking and driving and injuring someone is up to ten years in prison and/or ten years prohibiting you from driving. If you are drinking and driving and you commit manslaughter, the price you pay through a conviction in court is not even close to the price you will pay in guilt. You will feel so bad that you will wish that you died instead of that person. In addition, you might just get a life sentence in prison.

The saddest part about drinking and driving accidents is that they are all prevent-

able. You could just get a ride home or you could just spend the night; even if that means getting into trouble with your parents. What do you think your mother would rather hear on the phone the next morning? "Mom, I didn't drive home last night because I had been drinking" or "Mom, I killed someone last night while driving intoxicated." Your parents will forgive you if you don't come home one night rather than driving after drinking and possibly killing someone and spending the rest of your life in jail.

The average B.A.C. among fatally injured drunk drivers is .17. Almost half of the fatally injured drunk drivers have a B.A.C. of .20. I got into a car with a friend who was driving that blew a .11 when we were stopped. That is so close to the statistics. If we had gotten into an

accident and I was hurt, I might not of been fortunate enough to play baseball this summer or go to the prom with my girlfriend. Even worse, I might have been killed and then I wouldn't see my family or friends ever again.

I personally think it is better we were caught. If we had gotten away with drinking and driving that night, we would have kept on doing it. You can only get away with things so many times because the time will come when you won't get the chance to correct your mistake because your gone. Don't get into a car with someone who has been drinking. Don't wait like I did to into trouble and then realize it is the wrong thing to do. Make your own decision: LIFE or DEATH?

## New Members

*Congratulations!*

Alex Anneling  
Andrew Betor  
Jesse Brauner  
Olivia Cammisa-Forst  
Patrick Campion  
Elizabeth Carcuro  
Sean Commerford  
Carrie Cunningham  
Ellen Davidson  
Louis DeLuke  
Aaron DeVost  
Lauren Fealey  
Ross Feinberg  
Kyle Gross  
Joseph Hartunian  
Jenna Hooper  
Nathan House  
Theresa Juergens  
Sasha Kassoff  
Michael Louis

Andrew Marler  
Samuel McCaffrey  
Patrick McGrath  
Benjamin Morris  
Ryan Mulhall  
Danielle Osterhout  
Kyle Palmer  
Jack Reese  
Jillian Ricciardi  
Kristen Skelley  
Maxwell Strizich  
Thomas Tryon  
Patrick Venter  
Dylan Welch  
Joshua Wing  
Julian Yalaju



## "Retiring" Members

*Thank you for your dedication and years of service!*

Daniel Abrams  
Adam Augusiak-Boro  
Jordan Betor  
Cameron Betterley  
Eric Braunstein  
Emily Caracandas  
Leigh Collins  
Ann DeLucco  
Emily Drazan  
Denise Feirstein  
Erin Kammerer  
Ryne Kitzrow  
Seth Maher  
Michael Morrill  
Robert Nickles  
Daniel O'Keefe  
David Peterson  
Rose Potenza  
Tricia Primomo  
Thomas Richards

Sydney Schwartz  
Casey Sheridan  
Ian Silverman  
Katherine Spina  
Brian Storey  
Melissa Treadgold  
Katherine Wang  
Kenneth Wilsey



*A few of BYC's retiring members*

## Bethlehem Youth Court, Inc.

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Bethlehem Youth Court, Inc. is a free of charge service provided for youth regardless of race, creed, color, sex, disability, national origin or religion.

## September 2006 Is National Youth Court Month BYC is celebrating in a big way. Check out what we have planned:

- Volunteer Juror Recruitment
- Member In-Service Training
- Photo and Fact Display-Town Hall
- Youth Court Month Proclamation
- Youth Court Month Celebration and Reception
- 2006 Adult and Youth Volunteer Hall of Honor Inductions
- Association of New York State Youth Courts statewide meeting

More events and dates will be announced on our web site.

## BYC's Board of Directors

### Co-Chairpersons

**Richard Hartunitan**  
*Assistant U.S. Attorney*  
**Pamela C. Robbins**  
*Vice President, PRA*

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**Maureen McLeod, PhD**  
*Professor, Sage Colleges*

### Secretary

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*Supervisor, Albany County Probation*

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**Scott Landry**  
*Vice-Principal, BCHS*  
**Connie Mayer**  
*Associate Dean, Albany Law School*  
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*Town of Bethlehem Board Member*  
**Shoham Y. Piorentino**  
*Manager, First Niagara Bank & Trust*

### **Thomas H. Pratt, Jr.**

*Owner, Pratt & Associates*  
**Gene Primomo**  
*Assistant Federal Defender*  
**Charles Radliff**  
*Detective, Bethlehem Police Department*  
**Robert Salamone**  
*BCMS Physical Ed. Teacher/  
Knickerbocker House Leader*  
**Thomas Spina, Jr.**  
*Assistant U.S. Attorney*

**Here are web sites that have additional information about Youth Courts:**

**[www.youthcourt.net](http://www.youthcourt.net) This is the National Youth Court Center's web page. A comprehensive site regarding Youth Court's across the county.**

**[www.ny;youthcourt;org](http://www.ny;youthcourt;org) This is the Association of New York State Youth Courts' web site.**