YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES
Advisory Committee Information

OAK PARK TOWNSHIP

Strengthening our community through programs that support the health and well-being of our community.

Youth & Family Services

Everyone needs help, support, guidance, and connection at different times in their lives, including our youth. Our caring and knowledgeable Youth and Family Services staff provide a network of services for youth that include community programs, counseling, mental health and wellness, substance misuse programming, financial aid, socialization and more. We strive to provide a safe and positive environment that fosters relief, belonging, hope, understanding and trust for every young person as they reach adulthood.

Advisory Committee

Major Goals & Activities: Release an RFP every year and make funding recommendations to other youth serving programs to the Township Board of Trustees. **The committee cycle:** start working on RFP in Sept, October, Finalize in November and release. RFP is due in January, staff compile all documents and Committee hosts Contractor Night in January in lieu of a regular meeting. Committee meets to review RFPs and vote on funding recommendations in February and March (sometimes April if needed) April meeting is the final report review from Contracted Programs. May is the last meeting of the cycle.

Appointment Process

Interested parties must fill out a committee application and the applications are submitted to Kim Henry. Kim then organizes an interview between the applicant, Township Supervisor, and Board Liaison. After the interview the Board reviews the applicant and the Township Supervisor and Board Liaison speak about the interview. The Board then votes to appoint the applicant or not appoint the applicant.

Committee Successes

The committee has a longstanding history of providing funding recommendations to the Oak Park and River Forest Board of Trustees, supporting various youth-serving organizations over the years. In addition to this core function, the committee has taken proactive steps to address critical needs within the community through initiatives such as the establishment of the Youth Hygiene Closet.

Working closely with the Director and Administrative Assistant, the committee diligently assessed required products, curated an Amazon Wish List, facilitated donations, and actively promoted the Hygiene Closet upon its operationalization. Furthermore, they played a pivotal role in extending this support by assisting in the establishment of a satellite Hygiene Closet at the Oak Park Public Library, thus widening the reach of essential resources. In June 2023, Megan Traficano and a committee member were interviewed by American Libraries Magazine about the Hygiene Closet, showcasing the initiative's importance in addressing community needs. The committee's dedication to community welfare transcends the boundaries of individual projects, as evidenced by their active involvement in the annual Back to School Supply Drive. This initiative encompasses various tasks, including fundraising , meticulously preparing backpacks, and generously volunteering their time to ensure its success.

In recognition of the evolving needs of the community, the committee demonstrated forward-thinking by organizing a Joint meeting between the Youth and Family Services Committee and the Senior & Disability Services Committee. This collaborative effort aimed to explore opportunities for Intergenerational Programming, fostering connections and mutual support between different age groups within the community.

YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES
Advisory Committee Members

OAK PARK TOWNSHIP

MEGAN TRAFICANO
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Megan Traficano, MSW, LCSW, has served as the Director of Youth and Family Services at Oak Park Township since 2019. The Youth and Family Services department focuses on providing supportive services and programs for Oak Park and River Forest youth and their families, including the Youth Engagement Program, Girls on the Rise, and Community Justice Programs. Previously, Megan worked for 10 years as a school social worker, clinical coordinator, and assistant principal at a therapeutic day school, which primarily served middle school and high school students with behavior disorders and emotional disabilities, including youth heavily involved with gangs, substance use, severe trauma, and mental health concerns. The school implemented Restorative Justice practices into their everyday work, and Megan had daily dealings, with different public school districts, police departments, community organizations, and hospitals across the city of Chicago and western and southern suburbs.

Megan grew up in Oak Park and graduated from Oak Park and River Forest High School. She received a B.A. in Social Welfare and Justice from Marquette University and a Master's in Social Work from Loyola University, Chicago. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (since 2014) and holds a Professional Educator's License for school social work.

Current Committee Members

The committee's multifaceted efforts exemplify their unwavering commitment to enhancing the well-being of youth and fostering a stronger, more inclusive community in Oak Park and River Forest. Their proactive approach, collaborative spirit, and dedication to service are commendable and serve as a model for effective community engagement. Current members include:

Oak Park Members

Jen Olsen

Joanna Skubish

Anne Fussichen

Debra Taylor

Tracy Templin

Genevieve Grove

River Forest Members:

David Bonner

Cal Davis

Mark Hosty

Colleen Norton

Angelika Rupp

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer committee member for Oak Park & River Forest Townships Youth & Family Services, please scan the QR code below for details and application:

Oak Park Township Youth & Family Services • 105 S. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60302
(708) 445-2727 • oakparktownship.org • youth@oakparktownship.org