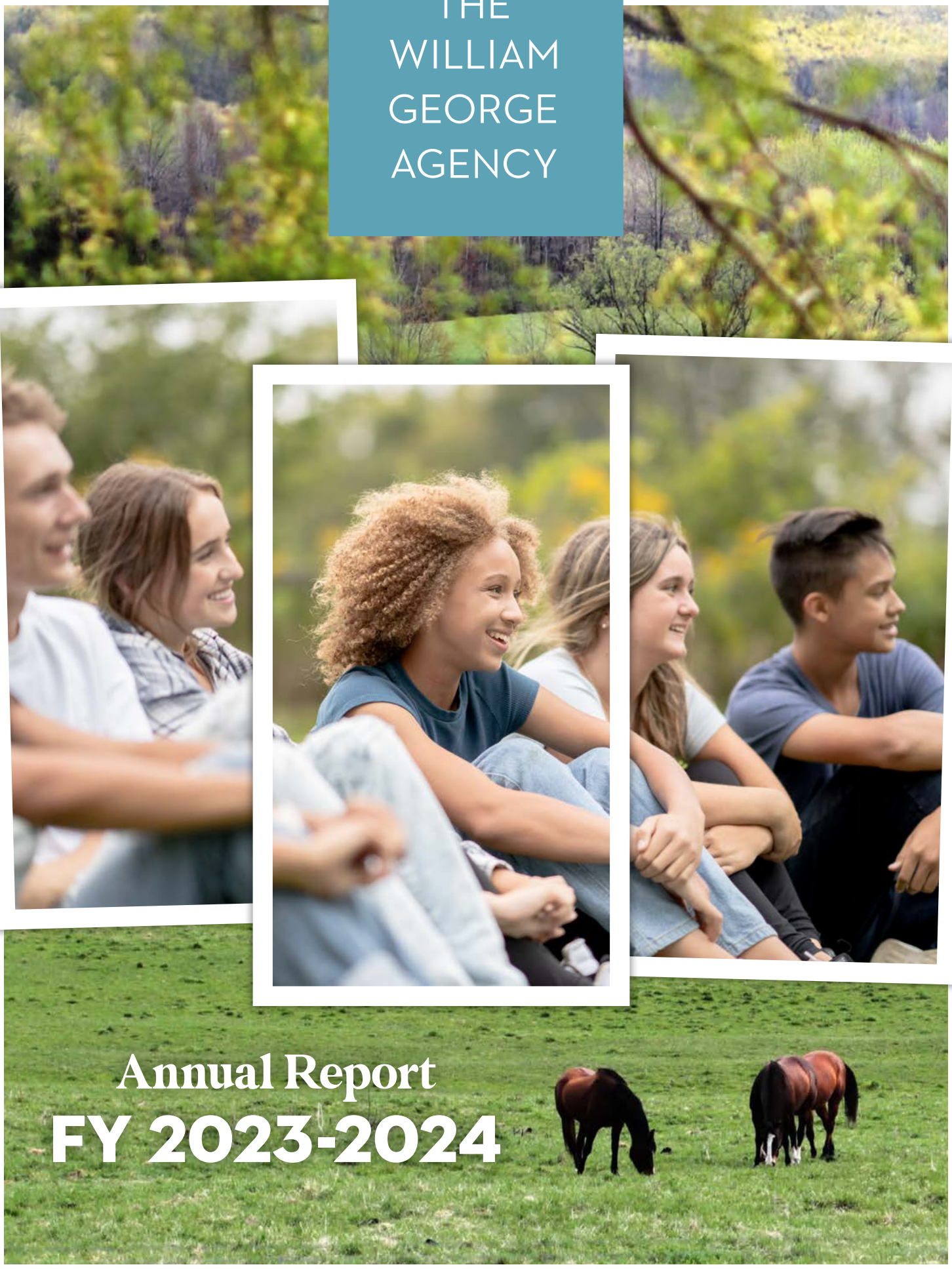
THE WILLIAM GEORGE AGENCY



Annual Report
FY 2023-2024

THE WILLIAM GEORGE AGENCY

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Mission We are committed to providing a safe and caring residential environment supported by proven, therapeutic, clinical and medical care for at-risk youth.

Vision Recognized as among the best in offering innovative, highly regarded programs to serve high need, specialized populations who have historically been underserved.

Values To care first about young people while helping them develop the attitudes, social skills, and self-direction enabling them to become contributing members of the community. To engage, respect, empower, and partner with families to support their efforts in successful reunification and family preservation.

we put care first

OUR TEAM

Lists reflect the period between July 1 2023 - June 30 2024

Board

Richard Banks, *Chair*

Robert McDonald, *Vice Chair*

William T. Caldwell, *Treasurer*

Ron Abad, *Secretary*

Russell Booth

Frederick Butler

Thomas Finn

Mark Glosenger

Katherine C. Hastings

Andrew Kernan

Angus McDonald Jr.

Patrick J. Perry

Sean Whittaker

Ralph Wright

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Leadership

Helen M. Hulings
Executive Director

Sonia L. Apker, C.A.S., M.S.Ed
Superintendent George Junior Republic UFSD

Gabriel Tornusciolo, Psy.D.
Chief Program Officer

Danielle Chase, LCSW, CASAC - Master, C-AAIS, EAGALA Certified Mental Health Professional
Director of Operations; Compliance Officer

David Dankert, MSW
Director of Residential Services

Anita Fowler, MBA
Chief Financial Officer

Justin Herbel, CASAC - Advanced
Director of Outpatient Substance Treatment Program

Ray Ackerman, B.A. Psychology
Director of Therapeutic After-school Program

Tara Warriner, B.S. Applied Mathematics; B.S. Computer Science
Director of Quality Assurance

Wendy Putney
Director of Human Resources

Patricia Bogie, M.A. Leadership
Chief Development & Communications Officer

Dear Friends,

The 2023-24 year was filled with great promise and opportunity at The William George Agency. This can be credited to many things: our dedicated staff, the youth and families we serve and their willingness to engage in the therapeutic process, and to the continued support from community members like you.

Among the top highlights of the year, WGA received high marks from the Voluntary Agency Review (VAR). The VAR is conducted every three years among New York's child welfare providers by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), which licenses our programs. OCFS staff assess practices and compliance regarding the youth and family services we provide by reviewing case records, campus inspections, interviews with youth, families, and staff. I'm proud to report that WGA received a 93 out of 100.

Another achievement was our effort to reduce the turnover rate of residential direct care workers. A pilot program led by our Director of Training and Managerial Services was launched to engage new staff more regularly during the first few months of employment. Initial analysis revealed a nearly 30% reduction in staff turnover after the program began. Retaining a highly skilled and dedicated staff remains a challenge industry-wide and a crucial focus for us to maintain the continuity and quality of care.

Other highlights in the pages that follow include a campus pond reclamation project, the renewal of an agriculture and farming program, and exciting campus-wide improvements thanks to old and new funding partners.

In gratitude for your support,

Helen M. Hulings
Executive Director
William George Agency



23-24 HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESSES

A **holistic treatment** approach is the foundational basis to meeting the unique, and multi-dimensional needs of every child who receives care at The William George Agency.

We seek to equip youth with the tools needed to become self-confident, independent, and hopeful in regard to their future success and personal fulfillment.







Crowds of staff and fellow students cheered eleven graduating youth from the George Junior Republic Union Free School District (GJR UFSD) in June of 2024. As is tradition, seniors rode in a decorated wagon through campus, and attended a luncheon and formal graduation ceremony with family and invited guests in the Field House auditorium. Helping youth advance their education is an important part of the holistic treatment at WGA. Finishing school to achieve the milestone of graduating improves self-confidence and furthers a youth's ability to find better quality and higher paying jobs. It also opens the door to pursue higher education in a desired vocation. This feat is an especially rewarding experience for the families of youth whose school attendance in their home community was poor to non-existent prior to arriving at WGA.

Education takes many forms on the WGA campus, including hands-on, work-based learning experiences in 16 different disciplines. The Vocational Program that occurs on campus is offered in partnership with the George Junior Republic Union Free School District. One program, the Apparel and Merchandise Print Shop (AMPS), staffed a booth in June 2024 at the local Chamber of Commerce Pet Fair. Complimentary custom-engraved Pet ID tags were given to event attendees and engraved with equipment purchased with a grant from The Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County one year earlier. Among other work-readiness skills, the AMPS program taught Noah (pictured with the Director of Vocational Services and AMPS Vocational Instructor) how to properly and safely use and maintain printers, heat presses, and other machines commonly used to create products in the commercial product promotional sector. It also encouraged Noah's artistic abilities which can be seen in the t-shirt he designed and is wearing to represent WGA at the Fair.

Youth at WGA attending GJR UFSD also won an Art Contest at the Fair for their colorful aquarium-themed photo cutout board (pictured). The board was fabricated in the Carpentry vocational program and painted in the school's Art class.

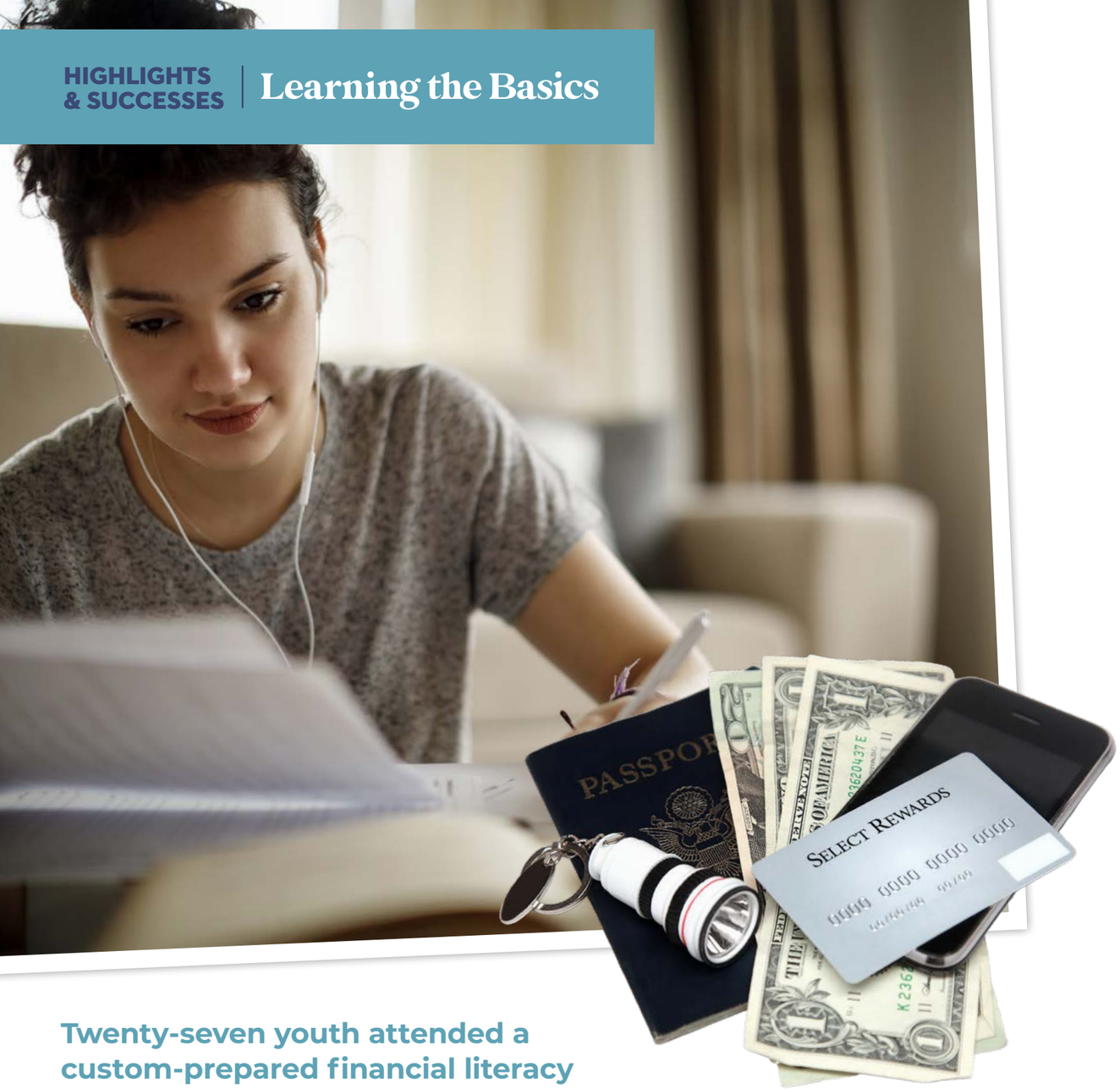






Improving future prospects involves networking with others to create access to opportunities. In 2024, WGA partnered with Frosted Bakery of Cortland to give Tyler (pictured) the experience of a two-month paid internship off-campus. During that time, Tyler learned all aspects of the bakery's daily operations, such has how to mix ingredients, baking times, safe use of equipment, and interfacing with customers. Tyler received a certificate of completion signed by the bakery's owner that he can use when looking for job opportunities in his home community.



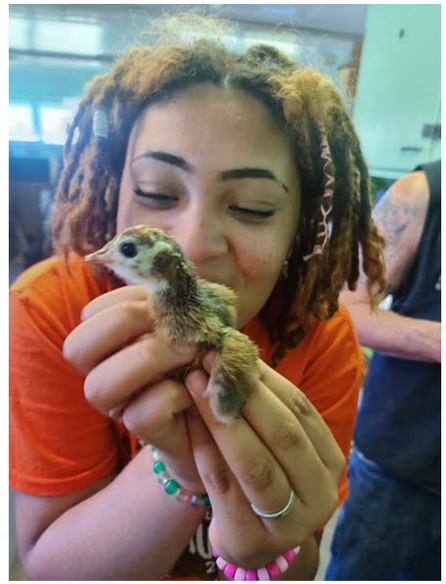


Twenty-seven youth attended a custom-prepared financial literacy workshop in January 2024.

The course was taught by two MBA candidates in the SC Johnson College of Business, Park Fellows Leadership Program at Cornell University. Youth learned the basics of budgeting, smart spending and how to manage their finances more effectively and confidently. And as one youth put it, "How much everything really costs." The popular workshop taught the basics of financial management and helped grow an appreciation for learning as a lifelong opportunity that can improve personal and financial freedom.

WGA kick-started a farming and agriculture program in 2024 that gives all residents, no matter their ability, the opportunity to participate in farm-related activities.

In May 2024, after weeks of monitoring incubators and a disappointing early outcome, some youth experienced a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to watch dozens of chicks and a couple of ducks hatch on campus. The happy event, instigated by WGA's new Farm Supervisor, created quite the buzz. In addition, land was prepared for planting, overgrown trees were pruned, and trails down to the river were re-established near the Horticulture building. The farm provides a space where children can learn about agriculture as well as practice focus, discipline, planning, patience, know-how, and commitment. It is a space where hard work pays off and is readily seen, and where WGA would like to expand its use of animal assisted therapies.





Out at the pond, youth took what they learned in school and were able to directly apply it to the real-life challenge of how to improve a body of water's functional habit to create a healthy ecosystem for fish. They assessed the issue, calculated the cost to reduce excessive algae, and took ownership of the project when presenting their findings to leadership. Fishery permits were obtained from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), a field trip to a local fishery ensued, and plans were finalized to remove decaying trees and years of accumulated silt. Youth also met face-to-face with workers from the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District along with DEC staff, which gave them valuable insight into environmental stewardship jobs. Perhaps most importantly, youth learned that change can and does happen through hard work, imagination, creativity and collaboration.

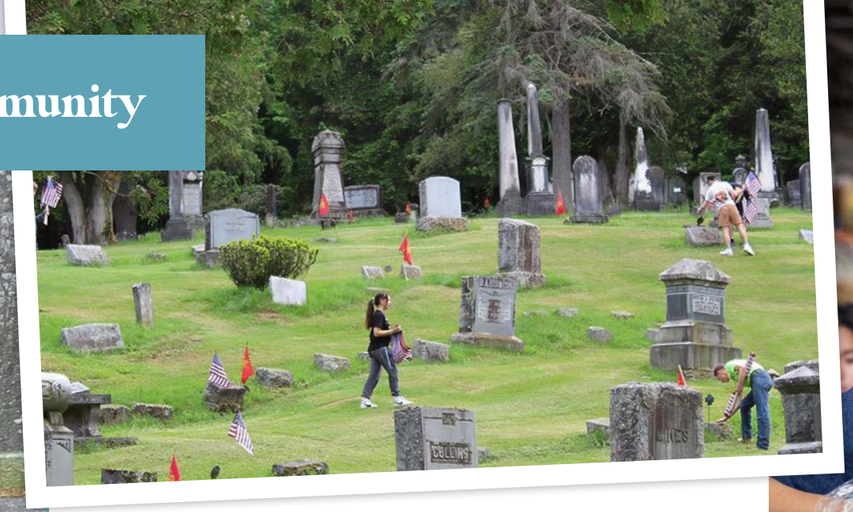






WGA believes the foundation of good citizenship includes helping others.

Sometimes, it's the act of helping another that can transform behavior and improve self-esteem and perspective. That's one of the goals of The Agency's Walk-A-Thon which raises funds for families experiencing hardship. Through the efforts of youth volunteers alongside Agency staff, the annual event and accompanying bake sale raised $3,167 in the Fall of 2023, benefiting six local families enrolled in the Adopt-A-Family program of The Salvation Army Ithaca Corps.



In May 2024 youth volunteers from five residential cottages once again assisted the Homer American Legion (Post 465) with **placing American flags on the graves of Veterans at the Glenwood Cemetery for Memorial Day.** The Agency is grateful to have participated in this annual event for the past 6 years. The simple act of honoring others for their sacrifice and contributions to society serves as a reminder to youth that we are all connected and individual actions do matter.





Several youth volunteered at Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County.

The community kitchen relies on 1,250 volunteer hours a month to provide 3,500 meals to local residents to address hunger and poverty in the local area. Youth lent a hand by washing dishes, serving beverages, and cleaning the floors, chairs and tables after community members left the dining area. The experience is something they can use to build their resume as well.



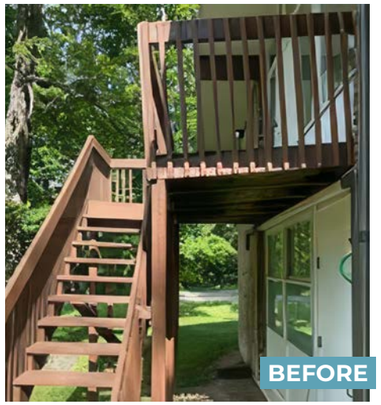
Olympic Days is a much anticipated annual athletic competition on campus among the residential cottages.

The event spans three days in August and kindles a camaraderie among youth that can only be described as fantastic. Friendly competitions in track and field and swimming events culminate in an awards ceremony and pond-side. For many youth at WGA, Olympic Days is an opportunity to participate in fun communal athletics in a way they would not be able to in their home communities.

Where Interest, Access and Opportunity Meet

At The William George Agency for Children's Services, children improve their relationships, make progress in reaching their personal goals, and brighten their future prospects all in one safe, nurturing environment. Self-awareness and discovery is a part of the growing-up process.

For youth like Sam,* many types of learning take place at the vocational training sites on campus. When she arrived, Sam was unsure about which vocational program she wanted to work in. After completing a 10-week career-readiness course offered through The George Junior Republic school, she interviewed for a job in the Carpentry program where there was an immediate opening.





"The readiness class at the school teaches young people practical things to prepare them for applying for any job," says Pat Natale, Director of Vocational Services. "Youth apply and interview for jobs on campus just like they would if they were looking for a job in the community. The jobs are real and so are the expectations. Limited openings make vocational programs competitive, so the process really does mimic what happens in real life when multiple people are applying for one position. We help youth think about what differentiates them from others. What unique talents can they bring? Whatever the outcome, we're there to offer support to help them succeed in their new job, or to learn from a temporary disappointment if they aren't hired."

In the Carpentry program, Sam spent nearly 2.5 hours each weekday for months under direct supervision learning a wide range of skills, including how to replace a door knob, frame an interior wall, repair windows and replace outside decking. The program taught her as much about what she didn't like to do, as what she did.

"She got to try a lot of projects. She built multiple boxes, did some framing, and learned how to measure for stud layout. She ran a nail gun and chop saw. Didn't do too bad using the drill either," recalls Joshua Ryant, her Carpentry supervisor, "but like with all beginners, she beat up on some drill bits. One of the things she found out about herself was that she prefers working indoors."

On-site vocational programming, provided in partnership with The George Junior Republic Union Free School District, offers several benefits for young people at WGA. It introduces them to a potential way to make a living and helps them develop trade-specific skills. It provides a continuous learning environment, with staff skilled in trauma-informed care, that supports simultaneous progress in vocational, social and behavioral goals. The close proximity of vocational sites to residence halls is another advantage that maximizes time on the job rather than time lost to transportation.

Part of a vocational instructor's role is to help young people adopt a healthy attitude toward work no matter the job.

"Sam struggled to make some good choices at times but she was always willing to give it her best shot," says Ryant. "Some of the more routine tasks bored Sam, but she grew in her understanding about the need for the task to get done and that she was depended on to do it."

After some months, Sam inquired about switching vocational programs and doing something different. Staff encouraged her to apply to the Apparel and Merchandise Print Shop (AMPS).

Felicia Tucker, Sam's supervisor in the AMPS program, recognized Sam's talent and potential immediately.

"It was a home run. She was super excited to come to work every day and about what she could do. She loved seeing ideas come to life and into actual projects and designs, and also loved seeing people wear her work," recalls Tucker.

Using a computer and iPad, and drawing on her creativity, Sam worked consistently with two different design programs. She learned industry terminology, how to navigate the programs, how to determine optimum placement of a design, and the unique challenges of working on different surfaces.

"She's super creative and has an eye for graphic design," says Tucker. "I think the Shop helped her to find and focus her natural talents, increase her self-esteem, and keep her concentrating on the positive of making stuff. She did a really good job in the program. I can see her working in a graphics-related field."

Sam did so well, she later earned a much-deserved recognition at a quarterly awards ceremony on campus, along with a letter jacket to serve as a reminder of the progress she made toward all of her goals.

"The variety of vocational programming at The William George Agency can be a game changer for youth like Sam who are unsure about their abilities and what the future holds for them," says Helen Hulings, Executive Director. "We are helping to expand perspective and appreciation when we give young people access to safely explore different jobs and the unique experiences that come with such exploration - even those that don't seem like a good fit at the time. Learning is never a loss, especially when it helps a young person grow toward their independence and a brighter future."

**Name changed to protect privacy.*





MISSION SUPPORT

Lists reflect the period between July 1 2023 - June 30 2024

We are grateful to all the individuals, businesses and institutions that supported WGA's mission through direct contributions, grants or in-kind donations.

Donors

American Foundation

Richard and Maryanne Banks

Benedict Family Fund at Tompkins Charitable Gift Fund

Binghamton Slag Roofing Company, Inc.

Timothy J. Bishop and Shannon Drake

Patricia Bogie

Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC Attorneys at Law

Russell Booth

Frederick & Marie Claude Butler

John & Patricia Callahan

Danielle Chase

Elizabeth Clinch Trust - Arden Trust Company

Cortland Community Foundation on behalf of Shirley Cahill

David & Shannon Dankert

Thomas & Nancy Eron

John Eves, Eves Broadcasting

David A. Feldman

Thomas & Madeleine Finn

Fire Detection Systems Inc.

Anita Fowler

The Fund for The William George Agency for Children's Services

Jim Gilmore, Jr. Foundation

Dr. Mark Glosenger & Lorrine Moran

Ruth Pass Hancock

Katherine Hastings and David Nathans

Evelyn Herman

Howard & Debra Hess

Helen and Jeffrey Hulings

Ithaca Agway/True Value

JM McDonald Foundation

Andrew Kernan

Lamendola Family Foundation

Angus McDonald Jr.

Robert & Maureen McDonald

Moses Group Inc.

The Ruth and Robert L. Newman Foundation

Of the Forest Farm

Patrick J. Perry

Rivers Painting of CNY Inc.

Schickel Architecture

William & Dianne Shepherd

Skyline Electric Supply Co., Inc.

Gabriel and Dawn Tornusciolo

The Triad Foundation Inc.

Ronald & Mari-Jo Trumino

Peter Wells

Maurice & Steffi White

Sean & Jennifer Whittaker

In Honor Of

Ty Coakley

In Memory Of

Donna Benedict

Mary k. Griffith

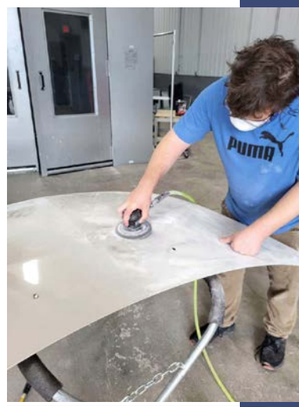
Peter M.

Leo Francis Schickel

thank you for your support

Renovations Expand Learning Opportunities at Auto Shop

Research has shown that integrating vocational and mental health interventions has assisted young adults in both personal and clinical recovery. A popular work-learning site at WGA is the Automotive Technical Shop (Auto Shop), where youth gain real-life, hands-on experience in general automotive knowledge and care. In 2024, WGA expanded its Auto Shop program to better meet the high interest of youth in the program, to increase the technical skills youth develop, and to reduce WGA's out-sourced, fleet-related maintenance costs. Thanks to funding from The Fund for The William George Agency, The Triad Foundation, Lamendola Family Foundation and JM McDonald Foundation, an extension was built to the Heavy Equipment and Auto Shop building, which enlarged the Auto Shop's training area. Youth are now able to learn about body work and collision repair, auto painting, alignment and brake repair, and professional auto detailing as a result of the renovations.





Residents and Equines Benefit from Improvements and New Accreditation

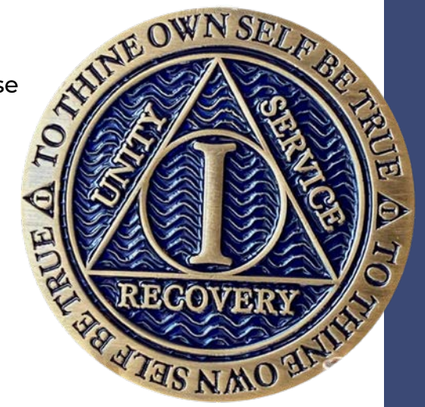
Following a year of facility improvements, training and assessment, WGA's Equine Center received Premier Accredited status with the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) in 2024. Accreditation assists WGA in meeting all health and safety standards and promoting the well-being of both human and equine participants at the Center. To that end, WGA completed improvements to its indoor arena in early 2024 that included replacement of worn footing with dust-free product, relocation of stalls, mending walls, installing a five foot wall to replace compromised panels, and adding a new gate system on the outside of the Center for safety and security. WGA continually strives to meet and exceed standards of professional care that embody compassion and skillfulness.





Grant Supports Sobriety

A $2,500 grant from the Jim Gilmore, Jr. Foundation enabled WGA to purchase sobriety coins for youth in the Van Clef Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Program. The coins are distributed to youth who reach important milestones in their abstinence from drugs and alcohol. The grant also funded the purchase of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous books and book shelves for every cottage, so that youth can have those important supports at their fingertips. WGA provides approximately 167 hours of addiction treatment counseling per month.



Self-Defense Pilot Program in Development

Thanks to a donor advised charitable donation made possible by Shirley Cahill through The Cortland Community Foundation, WGA began shaping a self-defense program for youth in 2024. The aim is to help youth increase their situational awareness and responses to perceived and real dangers. A pilot is planned for early 2025.

Capital Improvements Underway Thanks to Generous Donor

In 2024, The Fund for William George Agency (The Fund) received a gift of two IRAs upon the passing of New York City native Catherine N. Dugan. Having no heirs, Mrs. Dugan desired that resources be used for capital improvements around the WGA campus to aid in the mission of providing a safe, therapeutic environment of the highest-quality for youth.

The Dugan gift, coupled with a matching gift from The Fund, enabled WGA to start several renovation projects in 2024 before the end of its fiscal year in June. These included replacing one mile of exterior fencing at the Equine Center, modernizing space in the Upholstery Shop building (circa 1910) to make room for the Apparel and Merchandise Print Shop program, and renovating the Maintenance Building (circa 1960), which is home to many vocational training sites. Remaining funds will be used to update outside storage needs, construct a Pavilion, furnish a youth fitness physical workout center, add a greenhouse to the agriculture/horticulture program, and construct a much-desired Youth and Family Resource Center.



Mrs. Dugan (pictured with her husband Richard of 23 years) spent much of her childhood in Bermuda returning to New York City in her twenties and beginning work in the publishing industry. She later built a career traveling the world reviewing luxury resorts and hotels for several companies, including the Leading Hotels of the World and Turnberry as the Director of Marketing and Public Relations. Together, the Dugans built a life of love, enjoying time on Shelter Island and at their favorite restaurant, the legendary 21 Club.

A Youth-Centered Community of Compassionate, Trained Individuals

Van Clef Outpatient Substance Treatment Program

- Outpatient substance use treatment clinic
- Individual, group and family counseling
- Licensed by NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports

Article 29-I Medical Clinic

- Full scale medical and nursing services
- Psychiatric services
- Psychological support
- Behavioral Health Services
- Routine dental and vision care
- Community based medical specialists

Therapeutic After-school Program

- Preventative services
- Psychiatric services
- Risk Assessment
- Family preservation
- Family reunification
- Respite services

Wellness & Growth Services

- Animal assisted interventions
- Vocational opportunities
- Community integration therapies
- Adventure based counseling

George Junior Republic Union Free School District

- Accredited New York State “Special Act” Public High School follows New York State Learning Standards Curriculum
- Advanced Regents, Regents, Local and IEP diplomas are awarded to qualifying students
- Day School service contracts with local counties
- Classrooms are structured in 6:1:1 or 6:1:2 ratios
- Individualized Education Plans are developed for each student

WGA accepts a wide range of assets, including securities, real estate, life insurance and retirement funds. Bequests are also welcomed. For more information on ways to give or to support a particular WGA program, please call 607-844-6243. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

To make an online donation, visit **wgaforchildren.org**. *Checks payable to The William George Agency should be mailed to the attention of Donor Services at:* **The William George Agency for Children’s Services, 380 Freeville Rd, Freeville, NY 13068**

FINANCIALS

Operating Report

Year ended June 30, 2024

Operating Revenues

Program Service Fees	35,687,038
Contributions and Other Income	1,308,807
Total Operating Revenues	**36,995,845**

Operating Expenses

Program Services	32,474,079
Management	3,850,475
Total Operating Expenses	**36,324,554**





Consolidated Balance Sheet

Year ended June 30, 2024

Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,541,623
Accounts Receivable	7,079,690
Property	12,532,625
Other	19,205,500
Total Assets	**40,359,438**
Liabilities	6,968,602
Net Assets	33,390,836
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**40,359,438**





THE WILLIAM GEORGE AGENCY

380 Freeville Road
Freeville, NY 13068
607.844.6460

wgaforchildren.org

The William George Agency for Children's Services [EIN 13-1857994] is a private, co-educational, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization situated on 650 acres in New York's Finger Lakes Region. Licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services, WGA specializes in providing out-of-home behavioral, mental health, and addiction treatment services for children ages 12 to 18+ in a safe and therapeutic environment.

PATH INTERNATIONAL
Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International
PREMIER ACCREDITED CENTER

COA Accreditation
ACCREDITED
A Service of Social Current