

CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT AWARD

This award represents some of the many attributes that Carol Chichester, retired Youth Bureau Director, demonstrated during her more than 25 years of dedicated service. They include a clear commitment to working across systems - breaking down silos and infusing Positive Youth Development. It was created in her honor, to be given to an adult who serves in a supervisory capacity, who continues to promote and maintain high standards in ensuring quality youth-serving programs.

2013: Jerome Christie

Cornell Cooperative Extension (retired)



(with Rachel Wilson & Carol Chichester)

2014: Christine Brinckerhoff

City of Middletown Recreation



(with County Executive Steve Neuhaus & Carol)

2015: Angela Turk

Orange County Department of Mental Health



(with Mr. Neuhaus, Rachel, Carol, & Susan Murray-Tetz)

2016: Nancy Kosloski

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County (retired)



(with Rachel, Carol, and Susan)

2017: Jodie Yankanin-Rogers

Orange-Ulster BOCES (retired)



(with Carol, Mr. Neuhaus, Rachel, and Susan)

2018: Kevin White

Boys and Girls Club of Newburgh



(with Jackie Negri Exec. Director, Assoc. of NYS Youth Bureaus, Rachel, Susan, & Orange County Legislator Paul Ruszkiewicz)

2019: Anne Caldwell

Orange County Department of Social Services



(with Susan, Carol, Rachel, Deputy County Exec Harry Porr)

2020: Rosie Otero-Walsh

Town of Wallkill Police Youth Coalition



(with Carol, Rachel, and Susan)

2021: Christopher Molinelli

HONORhg



(with Susan and Rachel)

2022: ??? - - 10th Awardee

2013: Jerome Christie – Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau - Orange County Youth Board Affectionately referred to as the Youth Development Guru for Orange County, Jerome Christie is the perfect match to receive this well-deserved recognition. Serving as the 4-H Youth Development Issue Leader at Cornell Cooperative Extension, Jerome leads the county's Advancing Youth Development training team. He has been instrumental in bringing the Positive Youth Development message across the many systems throughout the county. Jerome empowers youth workers and volunteers to enhance their professional skills and program quality, while serving as a great role model for youth & youth workers and making time for his family a priority!

2014: Christine Brinckerhoff– Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau - Orange County Youth Advisory Board

A lifetime resident of Middletown and affectionately known across the County as Brink, Chris works with adults, develops partnerships with municipal leaders and business owners, walks the streets to talk with kids and families, and really, really understands how to bring a whole community together to support kids. The “go to gal” for almost any and everybody's needs, whether programmatic, brainstorming, youth worker support, or reaching out to a particularly difficult youth, family, or potential partner, the City of Middletown Parks and Recreation Department's very own Christine Brinckerhoff embodies the spirit of the Beacon of Life Award. In her free time, she labors for her family and friends and stays active with her dog Munson.

2015: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Angela Turk– Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

Angela has demonstrated a dedication to the Department of Mental Health since 1990. Angela has dedicated her entire professional career to meeting the needs of children and families, serving as a supporter, advocate, and change agent to encourage systems to better benefit children and families. In 2006, she was named Director of Children's Mental Health where she demonstrates true passion about providing quality services and addressing the needs of youth and families. Angela has a dedication to promoting professional development training about poignant mental health related topics for families and the professional community. She is described as a collaborator, partner, and problem solver, and promotes youth voice through her quiet dignity. Angela embodies the true spirit of the Beacon of Light Award in all that she does.

2016: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Nancy Kosloski– Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

Nancy is the newly retired Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County. For over 38 years in this role, she served the children of the community by developing mentoring services throughout the county. The mentorship matches that have been set up are so important in the positive youth development of our young people. Many of these “Littles” only have their “Bigs” as a consistency in their lives. During her leadership, programs have been developed bringing youth into mentoring relationships with: West Point Cadets, Mount Saint Mary College Students, area high school students, local businessmen and women.

Nancy has been a leader, a mentor and an advocate for children and families. Through research and experience, she believes that a caring adult in the life of a child can be the pivotal turning point for helping youth see the strength within themselves. Nancy's been quoted as saying “when a child is mentored by a caring adult, they first learn to give to themselves, then to others and then to the community.” As an advocate for youth development, she has brought other life skills programs to our county's youth, helping them gain the knowledge and develop the skills to make informed, quality decisions for their futures. Through her years of service, she has also served as a Big Sister to several young women, remaining that caring support even now into their adult years. Nancy has put a tremendous amount of pride, sweat and tears into her job. As she exits her Executive Director role, we know Nancy will always be a strong advocate for children.

2017: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Jodie Yankanin-Rogers – Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

Jodie has been a strong supporter of youth programs for the past 25 years. She dedicated her career to ensuring that all students would have opportunities that would lead them to success in their career or college. She has contributed in so many ways to our school communities as a member of several Boards and Committees, including: the Orange County Youth Bureau's Youth Advisory Board as its

1st Vice President and President and member of its Awards Committee; Orange County Community College Foundation; Leadership Orange; Zone 4 Chair for Career & Technical Center; Drug Abuse Council of Orange County; and SUNY Board of Directors.

Nominators described Jodie as being "an unquestionable example of administrative excellence," "a truly dynamic and compelling leader in her field," and "having the gift of recognizing and cultivating the unique expertise of her staff and those she works with to provide the best possible learning environment and opportunities for students." Jodie is not only an outstanding educational leader, but more importantly her enthusiasm and dedication to staff, students, families, community partners and programs is truly remarkable. She has contributed in so many ways to organizations and programs that have greatly impacted the opportunities and services that youth in Orange County benefit from. She is an excellent example of the high standards set when selecting the recipients of the Carol Chichester *Beacon of Light* Award!

2018: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Kevin White – Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

Kevin is the epitome of everything the Carol Chichester Beacon of Light represents. He is not afraid to take risks when the outcome benefits youth and families. An example of this is when he rose to the challenge and successfully merged the Newburgh Performing Arts, a thriving nonprofit he co-founded with his wife, with the Glenn E. Hines Boys and Girls Club, a nonprofit struggling financially. Through his diligent efforts and careful strategic planning, Kevin managed to bring the two organizations together and improved the financial health and organizational stability of what is now known as the Boys and Girls Club of Newburgh. He continues to strive towards a long-term vision of growing this organization.

The bar for professionalism is set extremely high by Kevin, who invests time and money into the ongoing Professional Development of his staff. He is also a key player in community collaborations, working hard to ensure that the needs of children, youth and families are being identified and addressed. Kevin sees the value in partnering across systems, including Education, Government, Business, and Community. He has been a strong leader in working with the Newburgh Enlarged City School District, City of Newburgh Police Department, TEAM Newburgh, and the County departments of Social Services, Probation, and Youth Bureau.

Kevin's administrative and supervisory roles do not keep him at an arm's length from the youth he serves. No job is "beneath" him as he sees the direct benefit each has on the youth. Although he's usually seen in business suits, other times he can be found wearing jeans and working on the agency van! He also sees the value and necessity of working alongside the parents and caregivers of the youth he serves, having set up ongoing parenting groups to keep them actively engaged in their kids' lives.

Without a doubt, Kevin is an instrumental role model for the many youth and their families he serves, the staff he leads, and the community partners he collaborates with. If space permitted, one could easily continue for pages about the impact he has made over the years in so many people's personal and professional lives. He inspires others to stay focused on both the individual and collective impact we can all have in promoting positive youth development!

2019: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Anne Caldwell – Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

Anne has been actively engaged as a Youth Bureau Advisory Board member for just over 16 years, representing the Orange County Department of Social Services (DSS), serving as a program administrator, the County DSS lead for the Orange County Safe Harbor Prevent Youth Trafficking Initiative and is a leader for Juvenile Justice reform.

Always volunteering to help further the mission of the Youth Bureau and its Advisory Board, Anne serves on multiple committees, including Nominating/Membership (Chair), Planning, Monitoring, and Marketing. Anne has been instrumental in assisting with the annual Youth Leadership Forum and Legislative Day in Albany through the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus. She also served as past 1st and 2nd Vice President and President for the Advisory Board.

When asked what serving on the Advisory Board means to her, Anne shared "As a 30+ year employee of the Department of Social Services and a licensed clinician serving the community, I have enjoyed sharing my knowledge of service needs, available resources, and best practices while serving in various capacities with the Advisory Board. I have also learned much from the Youth Bureau staff and fellow Board members, which has in turn informed and influenced my professional work and community

service. It is truly inspiring to collaborate with this distinguished group of dedicated professionals and youth, to continue to support and promote positive youth development that is outcome-based, fiscally responsible, innovative, and youth informed.”

Anne has made many contributions by infusing Positive Youth Development principles in Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice (including Persons In Need of Supervision - PINS Diversion), Safe Harbour (Human Trafficking Prevention), System of Care (Mental Health Services), and many other initiatives. She has helped to promote prevention programs that fill gaps across systems and has been at the table as a strong partner to implement new initiatives and policies as they pertain to improving the systems of care for children, youth, and families. Anne has also worked closely with Law enforcement on several initiatives to promote safety and diversion through treatment and prevention services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Anne is a strong promoter of Positive Youth Development as evidenced by her involvement in the Youth Bureau Board and YB activities and community activities such as Girl Scouts!

Anne is well respected as a caring and giving person who has used her leadership roles to serve as a mentor for youth and staff and serves as a true Beacon of Light!

2020: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Rosie Otero-Walsh – Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

This year’s award is presented to Rosie Otero-Walsh, Program Coordinator for the Town of Wallkill Police Youth Coalition!

Rosie has served in this role for since 2008. She works with youth to have them lead monthly meetings and helps them plan events for community service activities, building leadership skills, and for social engagement. She organizes skill-building and awareness activities such as Financial Workshops, Driver’s Safety, Flag Presentations, Safe Dating, Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention, and Homeless Facilities. She teaches youth how to advocate for positive change and encourage their peers from their own experiences. She also fosters stronger relationships with the community and families by including adult community council members, such as police officers, Chief of Police, and parents/caregivers. She regularly speaks on a local radio station and advocates for youth and the community.

Rosie is a former police officer who has been described as a “mother figure” to many of the youth in the Coalition. She has been instrumental in helping to develop the Coalition in a manner that helps youth to make new friends and build a positive and lasting relationship with their family members and local police officers, which helps to unite their larger community. She continues to further her own leadership skills by attending workshops.

The youth respond positively to her energy and passion as she promotes the Coalition’s motto: “BUILDING A BETTER WORLD FOR OUR KIDS OF TODAY, OUR LEADERS OF TOMORROW!”

2021: AWARD: CAROL CHICHESTER BEACON OF LIGHT

Christopher Molinelli – Nominated by Orange County Youth Bureau / Orange County Youth Advisory Board

This year’s award is presented to Christopher Molinelli, Executive Director for the HONOR (Helping Others Needing Our Resources)!

Through his role as Executive Director at HONOR, Christopher Molinelli has been a champion in Orange County by leading his staff to partner with him to embrace those experiencing homelessness with dignity, respect, and compassion. He lives by example to help promote independence, self-sufficiency, and ultimately fostering HOPE in those that may have lost theirs.

Chris has dedicated his career to weaving HONOR’s Hope Through Hospitality motto throughout their residential services, youth services, recovery mission, support services and care management. It is there that hope begins through all the programs offered for children, adolescents, families, and adults.

The Youth Bureau has worked closely with Chris and his team through the allocation of County of Orange and New York State Office of Children and Family Services Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) funding and provision of RHY Coordination for A Friend’s House. Since 1992, A Friend's House has played a pivotal role in providing support to some of Orange County's most vulnerable youth.

Chris works hard to make sure that agency staff are trained to deliver necessary services to their clients and connect them with many supports in the County, like transportation to their schools, counseling, and developing an Individual Living Plan that is coordinated with the youth, family, and

community-based services. Staff working with youth are trained in Positive Youth Development principles and Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Recognizing that meeting HONOR's mission is more than he can accomplish on his own – and true to his humble nature about the “work” he is so passionate about, Chris expressed his appreciation for being selected for this award by sharing that “This recognition is much reflective on the work by the great people that surround me each and every day”.