



2024 Annual Report



Gwendolyn A. Bork
President

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2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear WNY Changemakers,

As we officially begin our 7th year as an organization, 6th year being Federally funded by the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, I'd like to humbly state, we would not be here today without you.

At FOCUS, the WNY Youth Addiction Prevention Coalition, our mission is to prevent/reduce youth addiction through community collaboration. We empower our local community by educating them on current drug trends, resources available through our strategic partners, and hosting drug-free events.

We use data-driven, evidence-based strategies that's proven to be effective over time in changing a community. We collect and analyze our data every 2 years from our 8th, 10th, and 12 grade Lancaster/Depew students, share that data with our strategic partners, and create programming to provide support to our local youth to empower them.

Our goal over the next coming years is to connect with more youth and their families, become sustainable through strategic partnerships that become Legacy Partners or Community Contributors, and continue to grow our network of support for the youth in need; people they can talk to, guide them, mentor them, and be a light to provide hope during their trying times.

When 1 out of 4 of our local youth think they are failure the least we can do is surround them with open arms of acceptance, with eyes of acknowledgment, with a voice of hope that dark days forge us not forget us and with listening ears of intense submission, showing compassion to their pleading heart.

One person can change the world, but that one person does not work alone. Our Legacy board member Audrey Hamernik, may she rest in peace, changed our world with a servant heart, eyes of opportunity and a slew of foot soldiers who pledged allegiance to her causes.

May we see those opportunities that present themselves in our lives as a chance to be a miracle to someone in need; to grab our fellow brothers and sisters who are sitting on the sidelines of war, waiting for their chance to be deployed to assist the souls in search of hope; pleading for the day they get activated and serve the ones silently suffering in the trenches of despair.

When you wake, remember your worth. You may be a man but you're mighty. Seek servanthood and above else, cherish the youth who have yet to see their value. Protect them at all costs. The new world rests in their hands; they are weak from watching a world that's changing faster than they can grasp. Don't give up your ranks in the battles you've won, show them the way; their final hope remains in us leading them to victory.

With Honor,

Gwendolyn A. Bork
President



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Board of Directors 2023-2025



President

Gwendolyn A. Bork

I have a personal passion to empower our youth into becoming the leaders they were meant to be through community collaboration and support. I know where they are because I've been there and my legacy will be in pouring my life into them.



Vice President

Deb LaBounty
Spectrum Health & Human Services

My heart is always with the most vulnerable among us and I believe it is my purpose in life to do my best to support and help them through compassion, education and opportunity.



Secretary

Gianna Ryniec
Depew HS Student

Leadership is something I've been recognized for and is a passion of mine to assist and give back to others.



Treasurer

Jessica Mead
FOCUS

I want to be able to make a difference in our local community.



Member

Debbie Glowny
Bank on Buffalo

I wanted to be a part of the organization because....I love to make a difference and give back whenever possible. If I can help to deter one student from going down the wrong path and getting a bad start in life...then it's all worth it.



Member

Mindy Nowak
Hair Shop 777

Children are our future, and preserving their blossoming minds in an unaltered state is an honor that I am blessed to be a part of.



Honorary Lifetime Member

Audrey Hamernik
Village of Depew

As part of community development chairman of village of Depew, Audrey was instrumental in creating positive change for the youth in our community.

See more at <https://forourcommunitytoday.org/about-us>



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Mission, Vision, Goals, and Tactics



Date Established

January 2018



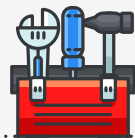
Mission

Prevent and reduce youth substance use in WNY through community collaboration.



Vision

Drug Free Community, Drug Free Youth



Tactics

Through evidence-based, data-driven environmental strategies, and federally approved strategic prevention framework, we create youth-centered, drug free communities.



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How FOCUS Gets Things Done



12 COMMUNITY SECTORS

FOCUS works with all members of the community to effect change

STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

FOCUS uses a comprehensive planning and implementation framework to get things done



SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

FOCUS uses evidence-based interventions to effect community change



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Youth Substance Use Trends

Once every two years, Lancaster and Depew students in grades 8, 10, and 12 are asked to complete an ANONYMOUS survey about their behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and more.

Approximately 1,300 students complete the survey each administration.

The below table shows trends and 2023 national comparisons for **past 30 day use** of key substances addressed by FOCUS' federal funding.

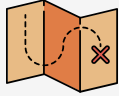
Substance	2019 FOCUS %	2021 FOCUS %	2023 FOCUS %	2023 NATIONAL %
Alcohol	33.2%	14.0%	11.7%	14.3%
Cigarettes	1.3%	1.5%	1.7%	2.1%
Marijuana	12.1%	6.8%	4.9%	10.9%
Opioid Prescriptions	N/A	.6%	.6%	N/A
Vaping Nicotine	N/A	9.3%	7.3%	11.8%
Vaping Marijuana	N/A	4.9%	4.3%	8.6%



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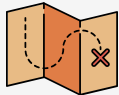
Goal 1 - Decrease past-30 day marijuana use in students grades 8-12 by 2% every two years.



Outcome 1 - From 2021 to 2023, past 30-day marijuana use decreased from 6.8% to 4.9%. This objective was met.



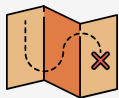
Goal 2 - Decrease past-30 day alcohol use in students grades 8-12 by 2% every two years.



Outcome 2 - From 2021 to 2023, past 30-day alcohol use decreased from 14.0% to 11.7%. This objective was met.



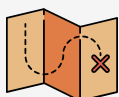
Goal 3 - Increase youth and parental sector stakeholders by eight total individuals.



Outcome 3 - From August 2023 to August 2024, the total number of youth and adult sector stakeholders increased from 16 to 34 (112.5% increase).



Goal 4 - Raise private capital of \$20,000 by 12/31/2024.



Outcome 4 - The coalition raised \$7,012 in private capital by 12/31/2024, or 35% of goal.



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Annual Reach in 2024



20+ Activities Offered - from providing information to changing consequences for substance use



1,600+ Adults Reached - through community events, direct outreach, educational sessions, and more



200+ Youth Reached - through community events, direct outreach, educational sessions, and more



Facebook

926 followers (3% increase)
21,9000 reached in 2024



YouTube

7,300 reached in 2024



TikTok

100 followers
1,600 reached in 2024



FOCUS Website

3,800 reached in 2024



Instagram

165 followers (17% increase)



Digital Campaign

368,000 reached in 2024



Television

284,000 reached during Sweet Buffalo Show
540,000 reached via Channel 4 News
245,000 reached via Channel 7 News



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Community Outreach

In September 2024, FOCUS collaborated with community partners to present the **Erie County Fall Fest**. This event had hay rides, food trucks, activities, and live music. FOCUS shared who we are, what we do, and helped over 30 families complete our special scavenger hunt for a special prize.



FOCUS' **Community Impact Awards** recognize change makers in the WNY community.



FOR OUR COMMUNITY UNITY & SUPPORT

COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARDS

12/09/2024

Recognizing leaders in the community creating social & cultural impact in WNY.
Award Reception and Annual Fundraiser @ 99 Brick Oven, 5-9pm

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEARS HONOREES

Legacy Award - Bank on Buffalo
Inspiration Award - Paula D'Amico, Channel 7
Trailblazer Award - Patrick M. Gallivan, NYS Senator 60th District
Community Champion Award - Tops Friendly Markets
Scholar Award - George Brimmer, Lancaster Central Schools
Purple Heart of Service Award - Colleen Babcock, Horizon Health Services
Passionate for Prevention Award - Vanita Jamison, The Prevention Council for Erie County
Rising Star Award - Emmit Hunter, Depew HS
Emerging Leaders Award—Aubrey Corbett, Depew HS Grad
Next Generation Award - Dwight Lowe, Home Beneath Our Feet
Mission in Motion - Tara A. Ellis, FeedMore WNY
Saint of Servanthood - Prince of Peace Lutheran Church



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Youth Outreach Events

The Great Mystery Room Challenge



Should you try to answer a distress signal from an abandoned spaceship, rewire the computer, and enter the ship's core to discover the truth?

Or should you try to team up with the Princess to face the mighty and terrifying dragon who has broken out of the storybook world and is roaming free in the castle?

We did them all at 5 WITS BUFFALO Adventure Rooms. Free food, resources to parents, and fun for the whole family.



Annual Mini-Golf Tournament

FOCUS held a mini-golf tournament in July 2023 at Broadway Driving Range & Miniature Golf. With donations from Tops Friendly Markets and help from coalition volunteers, youth had a blast and four youth won \$100 in prizes.





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Youth Outreach Events

GLOFEST 2024

A signature event for FOCUS, the annual GLOFEST brings a live DJ, lawn games, vendors, resource tables on mental health and drug prevention, Narcan training, free food from Chick Fil A, refreshments from Tops Friendly Markets, and hundreds of dollars in prizes to participants of a healthy, drug-free night in the local Como Lake Park.

Over 100 youth and parents reached from our local community with the help of over a dozen sponsorships from our local business community.





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Legacy Partner Program

As part of its strategy to become a sustainable coalition, FOCUS launched the Legacy Partner program. This program is aimed at launching and sustaining the FOCUS Foundation for Addiction Prevention.

Platinum Legacy Partners (\$1,000+ donation)

Organizations



Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Robert E Shaff Ltd. Insurance and Real Estate

Individuals

Deb Glowny & Bank on Buffalo
Sally Stier of The Clarity Group
Mike Kelleher of Hogan Willig
John and Linda Bruso of Bruso Family
Glenn Jackson of Jackson Family
Joe and Nancy Weiss of Weiss Family
Deb LaBounty and Family

Gold Legacy Partners (\$500-\$999 donation)

Organizations



Amherst Lutheran Church
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Individuals

The Wood & LaBounty Family
MJ Zak Family
Laura Smith Family



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Sustainability Funding and Opportunities

Funding Update



35% toward 2024 goal of raising \$20,000 in private funding per year from 2020-2024

Other funding source updates:



Federal: \$125,000 per year - Drug Free Communities Grant
State: \$2,500 per year
County: \$0 (-\$20,000 annually since 2021)
Private: \$7,011.79 (39% of \$20,000)

How You Can Help

Here are just a few ways you can help make FOCUS a sustainable part of our community:

- Become a Legacy Partner
- Become a Community Contributor
- Sponsor Events
- Support Impact Conferences
- Provide resources in partnerships for in-kind donations
- Like us, share us and follow us on our social media
- Volunteer!



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Dear Community Impact Leader,

Over the past decade, every community has been impacted by the opioid crisis. However, we understand that this crisis is a symptom of a much bigger epidemic within our country: addiction. In addiction science we know there is one answer to stopping addiction, and that's prevention. We know that every \$1 spent on prevention saves \$10 in Gov't Addiction costs.

FOCUS: For Our Community Unity & Support Inc., The WNY Youth Addiction Prevention Coalition, our mission is to prevent and reduce substance use among our youth through community collaboration. We do this through education, drug free events, and youth empowerment. As we strive to cultivate a healthier and safer community, no single entity bears the sole responsibility for empowering our youth, it takes a community. Our partners include Dept. of Health, Spectrum Health, Kids Escaping Drugs, The Prevention Council of Erie County, our NYS Senate, and Congress. Everything we do is data-driven and evidence based.

Your support and contribution, no matter the size, will play a crucial role in our efforts to reduce overdose deaths, minimize the risk of addiction among our youth, and improve public health in WNY. You will help us expand our reach and overall impact, enhance our programs and events, and empower our youth for their future as they, their parents and our community as a whole lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Join us in the fight against addiction in the next generation.

Legacy Partnership:

- Diamond Level Legacy Partners: \$5k+ donation
- Diamond Level Partners get a live interview on Channel 4 Sweet Buffalo Show
- Platinum Legacy Partners: \$1k-\$4,999 donation
- Gold Legacy Partners: \$500-\$999 donation
- All Legacy Partners are added to website, recognized with plaques and through media
- Average reach 40k through various media channels annually
- Legacy Partners include Bank on Buffalo, Tops Friendly Markets and Chick-fil-A
- [Click here to become a Legacy Partner today!](#)

Community Contributor Monthly Donor Program:

- Contribute \$10-Knight, \$20-Defender, \$30-Admiral, or \$40-Visionary, per month
- Automatic payments through PayPal, cancel at any time
- [Click here to become a Community Contributor today!](#)

Impact Sponsor Program, Sponsor one of our events in 2025 starting at \$100:

- February 21: Buffalo Battlefield Mashup – Youth Outreach Event
- April 11: Community Impact Conference – WNY Leader Conference
- June 24: Annual Mini-Golf Tournament – Community Outreach Event
- August 23: Annual GLOFEST Music Festival – Largest Youth Outreach Event
- December 12: Community Impact Award – WNY Leader Recognition Ceremony

Contact us for more information
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