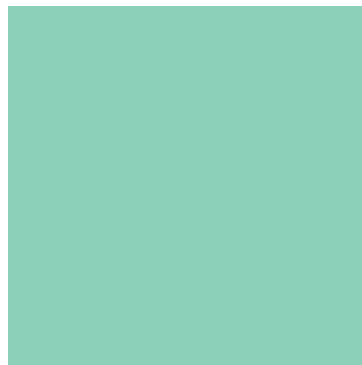


SAFE SCHOOLS MOHAWK VALLEY (SSMV)

# Annual Report

2024-2025

Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders.



# A Message from the CEO

## ANNE LANSING

In 2025, Safe Schools Mohawk Valley marks 25 years, and I celebrate 20 years as its CEO. Since we began, we have more than doubled in size, expanded our footprint, and continued to evolve to meet the dynamic needs of the students and families we serve every day.

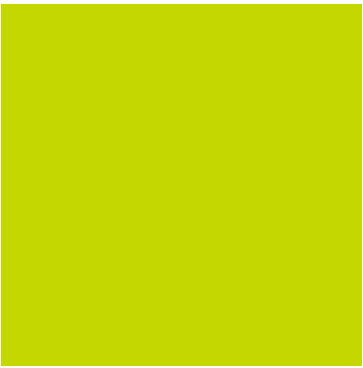
From the beginning, we have been committed to meeting students and their families where they are, nurturing the skills and tools they need to achieve daily accomplishments that lead to long-term, sustainable success. Student, family, and school needs drive our services and provide valuable insights into how we might further enhance and expand our offerings to support their definition of success—whether that means exploring their options, entering the workforce, excelling in a trade, or attending a 2-year or 4-year college. Our purpose is to help them harness their skills and build confidence and capacity to pursue the future they desire and deserve.

I look forward to continuing to lead this agency and our staff who inspire me every day with the profound impact they have on students and families throughout our region.



*We are here to help students build their skills and discover their talents so they are successful in school and in life.*





# Our Mission

To keep kids in school by reducing the barriers to learning, while supporting their social and emotional well-being.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**CARRIE MCMURRAY**  
*Board President*



**DIANNE DIMEO**  
*Board Vice-President*



**LAURA COHEN**



**ROSS KRAFT**



**JENNIFER VANWAGONER**



**JOHN SYROTYNSKI**

## SSMV LEADERSHIP TEAM



**ANNE LANSING**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



**JAMES FRANCO**  
*Chief Operating Officer*



**MELANIE ADAMS**  
*Deputy Chief Program Officer*



**BERNADETTE LEONE**  
*Director of Programs*



**JENNIFER BOTTINI**  
*Director of Operations & Program Development*

# Where & Who We Serve

Safe Schools Mohawk Valley works with at-risk youth and their families in the Mohawk Valley, NY region to keep them in school, help them graduate high school, and prepare them for college or a career.

Our unique evidence-based approach is proven to reduce barriers to learning while supporting youth's social and emotional well-being. School and community-based programming is customized to help each youth meet their goals and reach their fullest potential.



**Counties**

**5**

**School Districts**

**9**

**Students serviced in  
2024-2025 school year**

**2,573**

**Elementary Schools**

**21**

**Middle Schools**

**10**

**High Schools**

**9**



# Diversion Services Through Our Initial Response Team (IRT)

Safe Schools Mohawk Valley's **Diversion Services** address three critical areas affecting challenged students: **attendance issues**, including truancy, tardiness, **behavioral problems** such as disciplinary referrals and classroom disruptions, and overall **school disengagement**.

Through a comprehensive wraparound approach, we provide a continuum of services modeled on nationally recognized, evidence-based programs that have demonstrated significant success in improving student attendance, academic performance, and behavioral outcomes.

The program's core components include the **Behavior Management Plan**, which works to enhance protective factors in students' lives while addressing at-risk concerns. The **intensive Check & Connect** program provides research-based mentoring support to build strong student-school connections.

The **Initial Response Team (IRT)** offers the most intensive intervention through an individualized, team-based approach targeting issues of incorrigibility, truancy, and juvenile criminal offenses by developing comprehensive intervention strategies.

Additionally, **Peer Mediation** services help divert youth from volatile situations that could otherwise result in suspension or school removal.

All Diversion Services are grounded in research and evidence-based practices recommended by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), ensuring that interventions are both effective and appropriate for the students served. This approach helps redirect students toward positive educational engagement while preventing more serious consequences.

Students enrolled in Diversion Services (Tier 3)

**331**

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

**6 out of 10**

Students improve their school engagement (which includes attendance, tardies, skipping classes, etc.)

**8 out of 10**

Students improved their school behavior as measured by classroom behavior, ODR, ISS and OSS.

**6 out of 10**

More than half of the students we worked with improved their GPA.

*Keeping students engaged in school and improving their behavior also increases their academics.*

# Intervention Strategies

Safe Schools Mohawk Valley delivers comprehensive, research-based intervention strategies to support students, families, and school communities in creating safer learning environments. These evidence-based services combine preventive and responsive approaches to address behavioral and disengagement challenges effectively.

Key preventive services include **Mentoring** that builds essential life skills such as social competency and self-regulation, **Resiliency Skills** programming that uses interactive methods to strengthen social capabilities, and the specialized **Reset!** program that helps students who struggle with social skills and inappropriate responses to negative emotions develop more positive behavioral patterns.

SSMV extends support beyond schools through **Family Conflict Resolution** services that apply mediation principles to family dynamics, and **Grief and Loss Support** that create safe spaces for processing difficult emotions. The program's **Mediation** services help divert youth from serious consequences by addressing volatile situations before they escalate.

Additional services include school-wide Bully Prevention programs and the Check In Check Out monitoring system that reinforces positive behaviors through staff guidance. When crises arise, our trained staff provide Crisis Intervention Support using proven de-escalation techniques and safety protocols.

Students who received Tier 1 or Tier 2 Services

**2,242**

**Behavior, School Disengagement, and Attendance are the largest driving forces of student referrals to SSMV.**

# Professional Development Training

We bring over 60 years of combined training experience across multiple industries. Our certified instructors use adult learning principles to deliver engaging, interactive sessions that help participants learn by doing.



## 250

Approximate number of school staff trained during the 2024-2025 school year.

### What our Training participants had to say...

*"Extremely compelling presentation."*

*"Great presenter, kept us engaged and focused."*

*"Loved the energy."*

*"Great training! Wonderful & useful information."*

*"Very informative! Wonderful training. I would recommend this training to everyone."*

### Professional Development Trainings were provided for:

- Updated School Threat Assessment policies & Protocols
- De-Escalation Strategies
- Crisis Intervention Techniques
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Active Listening and Student Engagement
- Student Behavioral Support Techniques
- Crisis Communication
- Elements of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

### Most popular Professional Development courses:

- De-Escalation Strategies based on elements of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)
- School Threat Assessment Policies & Procedures

# After School Programs

We provide enrichment activities for students to build self-esteem, make positive decisions, practice active listening, learn how to make friends, and deal with strong emotions, to name a few. We use games, arts, recreation, reading, and writing to teach and reinforce pro-social skills.

## 300

Approximate number of students supported through our after-school programs.

**10 Elementary + 1 High school participating.**



## RIYS (Restorative Integrated Youth Services)

This program is a collaboration between the Oneida County Department of Family and Community Services (OC DFCS), CNYHHN, and SSMV. All cases are referred and monitored by OC DFCS.



The RIYS program provides comprehensive, individualized case planning services and evidence-based interventions in the home, school, and community to youth who are at-risk of out-of-home placement or further involvement in the juvenile justice system.

RIYS uses person-centered, trauma-informed, and restorative practices to support the youth and family in their goals and plan to address the underlying issues and challenges that are causing the negative behavior, improve their social and emotional well-being, increase the youth's academic success, strengthen the family relationships, and reduce the risk of further involvement with the juvenile justice system.

SSMV focuses on providing intervention services that are tailored to the individual youth's needs through our Youth Diversion Specialist. We meet with the student and family to determine a plan that incorporates their goals, which can include graduating high school, going on to college, or enhancing their skills in a certain career field. We teach and give each youth tools to build their resiliency skills, increase their coping strategies, and improve their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships. These skills help youth navigate obstacles and barriers throughout their life to stay on a positive path.

51

Students received Tier 3 IRT services.

42

Successfully completed the program and/or achieved their program goals.

## Resiliency Project

The Resiliency Project was created to strengthen connections between youth, families, schools, and communities by providing supportive, collaborative interventions. Our goal is to ensure that children and families receive the resources and guidance they need to thrive—at home, in school, and within the community.



This program is a joint initiative led by Oneida County Department of Family & Community Services, CNYHHN, Connect ED NY, Rome Alliance for Education, and SSMV. By working together, these organizations ensure that every child and family has access to customized, meaningful support to address their needs.

SSMV primarily focuses on the school needs of the children involved in the program through our Youth Engagement Specialists. We provide an assortment of evidence-based model programs that can include any one of our services to meet the specific needs of each child in the Resiliency Project. Referrals to the program come from schools and Oneida County Department of Family and Community Services.

When the basic needs are not met, it can have detrimental impacts on housing instability, hunger, unmet medical needs and school disengagement. Working with our partners, we ensure access to supports and programs to meet these needs.

Currently, we provide services to the following school districts: Adirondack, Camden, Holland Patent, and Rome.

241

Students received Tier 2 Mentoring services

# School Staff Feedback

*Of the 633 surveys completed, 621 students (98%) reported improvements in at least one of the following areas:*

- BEHAVIOR
- ATTENDANCE
- ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

*Students working with SSMV have improved their attendance*

*The student “..is better at taking breaths and listening to adults when upset.”*

*The student is “..more receptive to support.”*

*The student “..has learned to regulate emotions.”*

# Parent/Guardian Feedback

*884 parents/guardians completed an end-of-year survey. The majority indicated they saw improvements in their child in at least one of the following categories:*

- AT HOME
- AT SCHOOL
- OTHER ACTIVITIES THEY ARE INVOLVED IN

*My child “..is staying home more instead of roaming the streets.”*

*My child “..is following the rules.”*

*My child “..has better attendance.”*

*My child “..has better grades in school.”*

*My child uses nicer words.*



# Classroom Teachers

*Consistent services through SSMV have helped the students.*

*180-degree change with the student since the beginning of the year.*

*Thank you, SSMV, for all the hard work and dedication to helping the students be successful.*

*SSMV has consistent services for elementary students.*

# Social Workers

*SSMV has done a great job at our school in achieving higher grades with students.*

*SSMV staff work amazingly with students and families.*

# Guidance Counselors

*SSMV services benefit the students.*

*Thank you to SSMV for all your hard work.*

*SSMV has fostered a sense of positivity to students.*

*SSMV provides students with a stable foundation of care and concern for students' academic and emotional needs.*

# School Administrators

*SSMV holds students accountable using restorative practices.*

*I can count on SSMV.*

*SSMV makes a difference in our schools.*

# Student Feedback

611 students completed an end-of-year survey. Here's what they shared.

Like or really like working  
with their SSMV Youth  
Case Manager

**92%**

Of the 611 students surveyed, **600 (98%)** said they improved by feeling better at home, school, and/or with their peers.

## How the student feels when they are part of our programs

More than 2,300 responses were shared. The most common words were:

SAFE

**21%**

SUPPORTED

**22%**

HEARD

**20%**

HAPPY

**20%**

EXCITED

**14%**

## Skills learned or improved in

2,200+ responses were given. The most common phrases were:

**TALKING ABOUT MY FEELINGS**

**STAYING CALM WHEN UPSET**

**ASKING FOR HELP**

**SOLVING PROBLEMS**

**BEING KIND TO OTHERS**

**MAKING FRIENDS**

*Other responses included*

*Coming to school*

*Having more respect*

*Coping skills*

**69%** of students said they feel they have grown or changed in a good way during the year.

Students who said they would like to continue being part of the SSMV program if they could

**83%**

# Students shared their personal accomplishments from the year



*"I overcame a lot of my anxiety and frustration issues. Being able to have someone like [SSMV Youth Case Manager] Mrs. G to talk to has helped me. I know I have a long way to go, but her encouragement helps me as well."* **9th grade**

*"I am proud of passing every single class because I have never done that before. I completed all my labs for Regents, and I actually did my work this year."* **10th grade**

*"[I improved by] applying for a job and asking how to ask for help. Knowing the SSMV staff who are there to help."* **9th grade**

*"Less acting out and talking through my emotions instead of staying home."* **10th grade**

*"I got two 'student of the month' awards this year."* **3rd grade**

*"I am very proud of myself for chasing my goals and working on them. [My Youth Case Manager] has helped me a lot, and I probably wouldn't have been able to do it without her."* **12th grade**

*"I made the basketball team; improved behavior; improved maturity."* **8th grade**

*"I have been able to make friends and transition well into middle school."* **7th grade**

*"I have made new friends in my class and I am completing my homework every day now."* **2nd grade**

*"I learned to apologize and take accountability, and my grades went up."* **7th grade**

*"I gained a feeling of self-worth."* **9th grade**

*"I follow school rules."* **5th grade**

*"No judging people as quickly, talking to people I normally wouldn't talk to and being kind to others even if they were mean to me in the past."* **10th grade**

*"Making it through without giving up."* **12th grade**



13th Annual

# Urban Leadership Institute (ULI)

Conservation, Climate Change, and Personal Impact

August, yearly

Since 2011, our Urban Leadership Institute has been transforming high school students across the Mohawk Valley into confident, capable leaders. This distinctive program creates a dynamic environment where teens build self-confidence, develop empowerment skills, and cultivate self-reliance while mastering collaboration and inclusive decision-making.

What sets ULI apart is our safe, supportive atmosphere where students feel empowered to step outside their comfort zones, embrace new challenges, and discover the leader within themselves. Each summer brings fresh themes and new adventures, with programming continuously enhanced through student feedback to remain relevant and impactful.

Our 2024 program focused on "**Conservation, Climate Change, and Personal Impact**," connecting global environmental challenges to local action and personal responsibility. Students explored how they, as emerging leaders, can drive meaningful change in their communities and beyond.

Field trips included:

**North Star Orchards** (*students learned about farming*)

**Howe Caverns**

**The Wild in the Adirondack Mountains**

**Empire Recycling Center**

**Utica Marsh**

**Iroquois Museum**

**28** Students enrolled

**24** Students graduated

**100%**  
of students shared that they loved the field trips to learn about our community

*Through thirteen years of service, the Urban Leadership Institute continues to prove that when we invest in young people with the right tools and environment, they become the leaders our communities need for tomorrow.*





Summer 2024

# Summer Library Program

Solar System : Healthy Eating & Mindfulness : The Arts

Safe Schools Mohawk Valley (SSMV) hosted an engaging three-week summer program in July and August 2024, designed to provide youth with enriching educational experiences in a supportive environment. The program ran for two hours each day.

**Week 1: Solar System (July 23-25)** Students explored space through interactive learning about the solar system, moon phases, and constellations. Activities included read-aloud sessions with library books, hands-on craft projects creating solar system models, and research into stars and constellations.

**Week 2: Healthy Eating & Mindfulness (July 30-August 1)** The focus shifted to wellness and self-care, introducing participants to the MyPlate nutrition guidelines, mindfulness techniques through videos and activities, and yoga practice. Students engaged in educational games and projects that reinforced healthy eating habits and stress-reduction strategies.

**Week 3: The Arts (August 6-8)** The program concluded with an exploration of creative expression through dance, music, and visual arts. Participants learned dance moves and choreographed a group performance, experimented with instruments including drums and guitars, and completed a "Sip and Paint" art project.

Throughout all sessions, SSMV emphasized community building through group dynamics games, collaborative rule-setting, and healthy snacks. The program successfully combined education, creativity, and wellness to create a well-rounded summer experience for youth in the Mohawk Valley community.

24

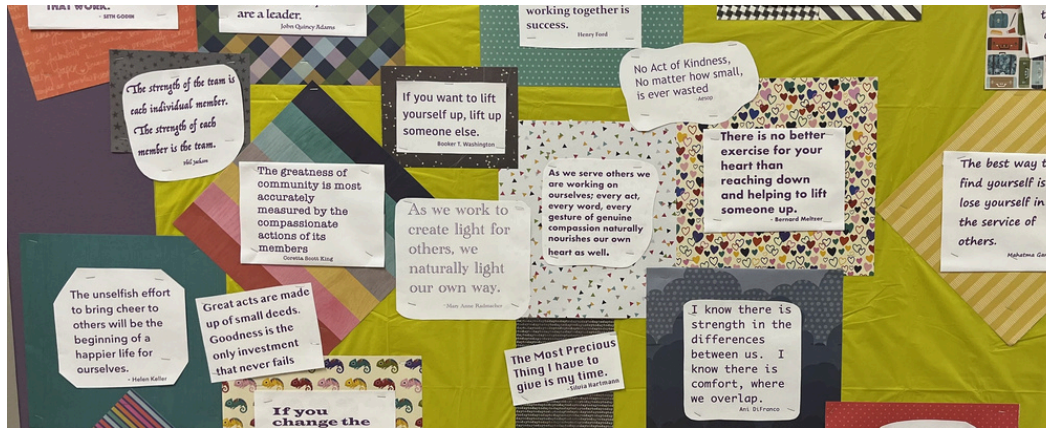
Students attended the 2024 Summer Library Program

All participating students reported loving the program and wanted it to run longer than three weeks.

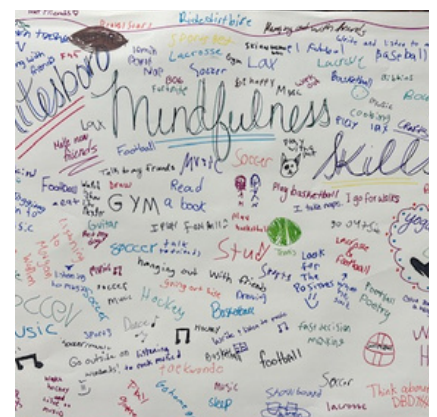
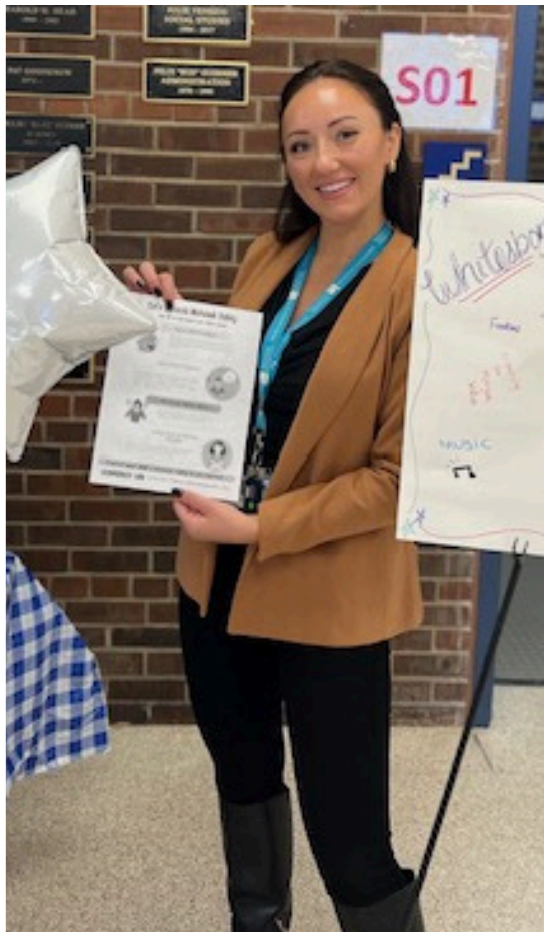
All students reported learning something new and making new friends.



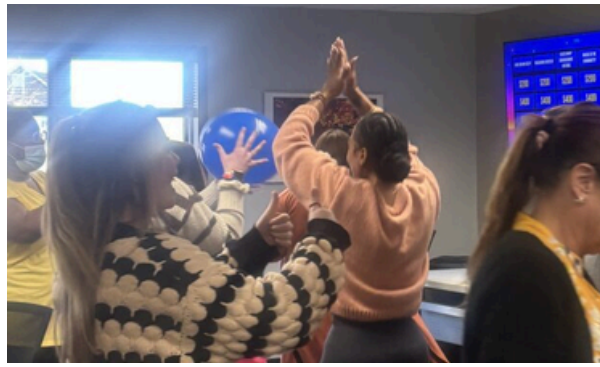
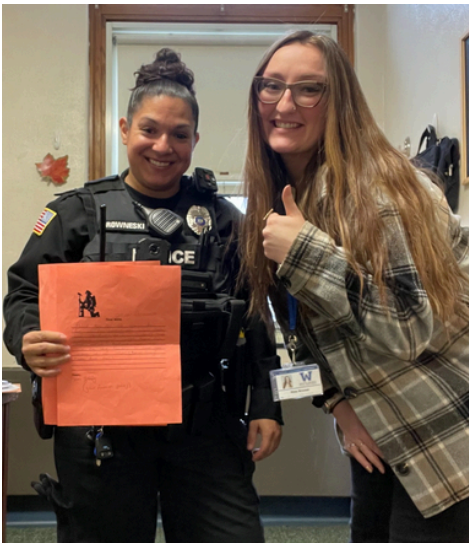




# SAFE SCHOOLS MOHAWK VALLEY







# AT WORK IN OUR SCHOOLS





# How to reach us

## Safe Schools Mohawk Valley



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## Connect With Us on Social Media



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www.linkedin.com/company/safe-schools-mohawk-valley/

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