



2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

**SAFE SCHOOLS MOHAWK
VALLEY (SSMV)**

ANNUAL REPORT



Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Anne Lansing

As I wrap up 20 years as CEO of Safe Schools Mohawk Valley, I am humbled knowing we have positively impacted over 35,000 students and families throughout the years. The stories of success I hear each day from incredibly resilient students validate the importance of the work each of our staff contributes to our schools and our community. 20 years has allowed me to see firsthand how we have come full circle by hiring former students who are now imparting their skills and wisdom to the next generation.

There are many challenges facing youth today. From our perspective, we see significant financial instability, rising costs, epidemic proportions of anxiety and other mental health concerns, social media, and now AI. In spite of all of this, I see hope and a positive future for each student in our programs. They are learning necessary and life-transforming skills to meet these challenges and flourish through our support and services.



Schools are becoming more adaptable, supportive, and effective in helping all youth to become resilient, prepared, and civically minded individuals. I feel privileged to have Safe Schools Mohawk Valley lead in our community, working with schools to develop and foster our future leaders.

I am honored to continue our vital work with a committed team that continually inspires and motivates me.

This report highlights our achievements from the 2025-2026 academic year.

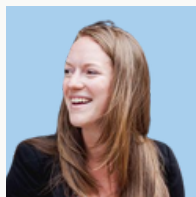
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CARRIE MCMURRAY
Board President



DIANNE DIMEO
Board Vice-President



LAURA COHEN



ROSS KRAFT



**JENNIFER
VANWAGONER**

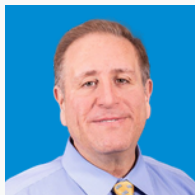


**JOHN
SYROTYSKI**

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*



TAMMY BUTCHER
Associate Director



MELISSA LEMIEUX
Associate Director

WE'RE ON A MISSION.

We aspire to keep kids in school by reducing barriers to learning while supporting their social and emotional well-being.

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 and/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.

2,941
Students
served in
2025-2026

24
Elementary
Schools
in 2025-2026



9
School
Districts
in 2025-2026



9
Middle
Schools
in 2025-2026



9
High
Schools
in 2025-2026

36
Staff working
inside schools
daily

TIER 3 | SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE

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, and **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 **Student Management Plan**, which enhances 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.

Students enrolled in
Diversion Services
(Tier 3)

339

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.

TIER 1 & 2 | SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE

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.

Students who
received Tier 1 or
Tier 2 Services

2,293

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.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Behavior, School Disengagement, and Attendance are the largest driving forces of student referrals to Safe Schools Mohawk Valley.

8 / 10

Students improved their school **BEHAVIOR**

8 / 10

Students improved their school **ENGAGEMENT**

6 / 10

Students improved their school **ATTENDANCE**

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

6 / 10

More than half **improved** their **GPA**

TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



162

School District
Staff Members
Trained

Training conducted
by SSMV Certified
Trainer, James Franco

Trainings completed:

- Crisis Communication
- Emotional First-Aid
- Crisis Co-Regulation
- Teaching New Coping Skills
- Crisis Supports Protocols Training
- Conflict Resolution
- Elements of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Emotional Competency

96%

Would **Strongly**
Recommend this training

90%

Excellent rating for overall
quality of the training and
the effectiveness of the
trainer

Participants said...

"Extremely compelling presentation. It made me cringe about some of the things I've said and done to my kids. I am determined to do better!"

"Outstanding instructor who made the class interesting and got people to participate."

"The training was a great reminder of how best to effectively do my job."

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

HIGH SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM

Safe Schools piloted a new after-school group program at a high school, running six groups — three for girls and three for boys — each meeting weekly for eight weeks. Of the 26 students enrolled, 22 successfully completed the program.

Girls' groups focused on themes including **self-esteem, healthy relationships, confidence, and respect**, while boys' groups centered on **hygiene, critical thinking, along with positive and effective communication**.

Student feedback reflected the impact of the program, with participants sharing that they learned:

- The importance of respect for others
- How to respond to negative people and feelings
- Positive mental health practices
- How to respect myself
- How to positively express myself



Students show off their own creative branding for self-esteem in these t-shirts.

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 academic success, strengthen the family relationships, and reduce the risk of further involvement with the juvenile justice system.

SSMV provides intervention services 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 to college, or enhancing their skills in a career field. We teach tools to build 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.

62

Students received Tier 3 services

26%

Successfully completed the program and/or achieved their program goals

42%

Continued in the program to stay out of placement

32%

Needed a higher level of care, went into placement or refused services

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 the 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.

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

247

Students received Tier 2 Mentoring services



URBAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

FIRST RESPONDER ACADEMY | 2025

Since 2011, our Urban Leadership Institute (ULI) has brought high school students from across the Mohawk Valley together each summer to build confidence, develop leadership skills, and discover what they're capable of.

In 2025, students spent the week immersed in the world of emergency services. From **August 18–22**, participants got a hands-on look at what it means to be a first responder — and at the career pathways available to them in public safety right here in their own community.

Beyond career exploration, ULI focused on the leadership skills that carry students well past the summer. Participants strengthened their communication, decision-making, and teamwork abilities while learning from professionals who model those same skills in high-stakes environments every day.

August 18-22, 2025

37 Students participated

100%

Reported **loving** the First Responder Academy and learning about the first-responder field



Throughout the week, students visited multiple municipal departments and agencies, building a picture of how emergency services connect to one another:



Utica Police Department — immersive experiences including crime scene investigation scenarios, where students applied critical thinking and analytical skills in realistic situations.



Utica City Court — a behind-the-scenes look at the judicial system and its role in community safety.



Utica Fire Department — hands-on training and insight into fire safety, rescue operations, and emergency medical response.



Oneida County Department of Emergency Services — coordinated emergency response and disaster preparedness protocols.



Oneida County Probation and Cityscape — an introduction to community-based corrections and rehabilitation programs.



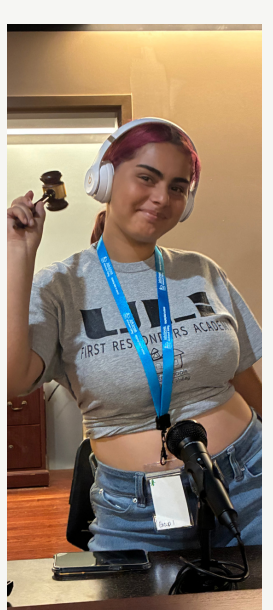
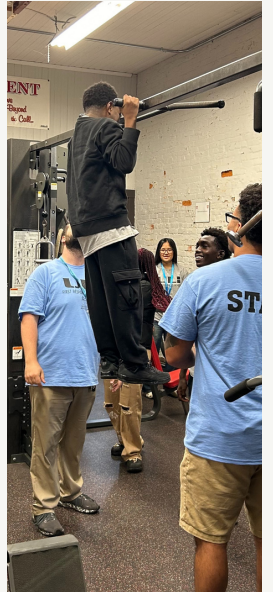
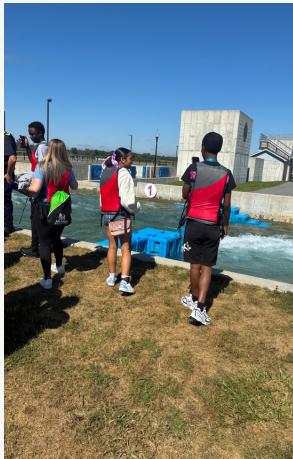
WHAT ULI PARTICIPANTS SAID ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

“This has been the best summer hands-on activity I have done. I really appreciate the support and encouragement you give to be ourselves. I hope I can join this again.”

“My favorite part was interacting with the probation program because in the future I might take a step into that role. Cityscape is so awesome because of the realistic places.”

“I was very excited for the first day because I never had an opportunity like this. I’m glad we met those important people, and I’m glad we got to share the moment with each other!”

“My favorite part was getting to enjoy the experience of being a firefighter. I loved all of it, and I’m very glad I got to have this experience.”



FEEDBACK

IN-SCHOOL STAFF

At the close of the 2025–2026 school year, SSMV asked the teachers, counselors, social workers, and other school staff who work most closely with our students to share what they observed. Staff completed end-of-year surveys covering students from Pre-K through 12th grade, rating each student's progress in three areas that drive most referrals to SSMV: **behavior**, **attendance**, and **engagement** in school and classroom activities.

90%

Said they would recommend the student continue in the Safe Schools program the following school year.

90%

Improved Behavior at School

81%

Improved Attendance

93%

Improved Engagement in School

Where staff saw the most growth:

- Emotional regulation and coping skills
- Class participation and engagement
- Social and peer relationships
- Attendance
- Academics and work completion
- Confidence
- Self-advocacy

Staff Said...

"Safe Schools Mohawk Valley does a great job at connecting and engaging with the youth in our school. They provide a safe and welcoming place for students to connect with supportive adults who genuinely care about their safety and wellbeing."
— Guidance Counselor

"Safe Schools spends a lot of time building relationships with students. This rapport has improved student attendance, engagement with their peers and with the curriculum, and helping build student confidence and self-esteem."
— Special Education Teacher

"The work done by Safe Schools has been extremely important and beneficial to our school community... They are always willing to step in when additional assistance is needed, providing resources, guidance, and extra hands to support both students and staff."
— Teacher

FEEDBACK

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

SSMV surveyed building administrators who partner with us on student support. Every administrator rated SSMV's services as impactful for students and for their schools as a whole, and all reported interacting with SSMV staff daily or weekly. Their feedback reflects both the value of having consistent, trusted adults in their buildings and their priorities for how our partnership can grow.

Every administrator rated SSMV's services as **impactful**, both for students and for the school.

"The program has always served as a great intervention for students and families."
— **Chris O'Neil, Director of Pupil Services**

"Seeing students grow with the support you provide throughout the year is wonderful!"
— **Abby Broekhuizen, Assistant Principal**

"Every worker we have had has been incredibly supportive of our mission to assist students both academically and emotionally."
— **Dominick Stewart, Assistant Principal**

PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians shared the changes they noticed in their children after working with SSMV. Here are a few of their words.

"Had a great year and improved his social skills."

"She likes school much better now."

"Has a better attitude about school this year."

"He is a lot more positive about school."

"He does not get frustrated and is much more positive."

"Has a positive attitude about life."

"Attitude has improved a lot."

"My child is happier and friendlier at home."

"My child was awarded Student of the Month."

"My child wants to go to school."

"My child likes learning with Safe Schools."

"My child has new skills to help when mad."

FEEDBACK

STUDENTS

At the end of the 2025–2026 school year, students shared their experience with SSMV through an end-of-year survey. They told us how the program makes them feel, the skills they've learned, and what they accomplished this year. Here's what they shared.

98%

Said working with SSMV helped them feel better at school or with friends

92%

Like or really like working with their SSMV Youth Case Manager

91%

Feel they changed in a good way this year

90%

Were interested to continue in the SSMV program the following year.

How the student feels when they are part of our programs

SAFE

78%

SUPPORTED

86%

HEARD

71%

HAPPY

73%

EXCITED

47%

Skills learned or improved

- Talking about my feelings: 69%
- Asking for help: 67%
- Solving problems: 63%
- Staying calm when I am upset: 63%
- Being kind to others: 58%
- Making friends: 52%
- Walking away from fights: 47%

What students liked most

- Talking with someone who listens to me: 79%
- Feeling safe and supported: 74%
- Having someone to check in with: 70%
- Having someone believe in me: 68%

What students accomplished

Top responses.

- Better grades, passing classes, or making the honor roll
- Managing anger and behavior, and staying out of fights
- Making friends
- Coming to school more often
- Staying on track to graduate

FEEDBACK

STUDENTS

Relationships and feeling supported

"This program is one of the most exciting and most helpful things I have ever had in my life. They support me so much." **(11th grader)**

"This was a great place to go to when I was feeling overstimulated and overwhelmed." **(11th grader)**

"Safe Schools staff does anything and everything she can do to help." **(10th grader)**

"I love going with Safe Schools." **(3rd grader)**

Confidence and speaking up

"I have been able to speak up more for myself without being scared." **(6th grader)**

"Asked for help when needed, gained confidence, created new friendships, and went back to school full time." **(8th grader)**

"I have been working toward asking for help, with teachers specifically. I have also been able to self-regulate more efficiently." **(11th grader)**

"Being nice to others. Landing roles in plays to break out of my shell." **(6th grader)**

Academic Achievement

"I have been on the Honor Roll twice for the first time." **(6th grader)**

"I raised my history grade, got better at Spanish, and participated a lot more in class. I also have felt more comfortable socializing." **(7th grader)**

"I have not been skipping class and have not been suspended." **(10th grader)**

"I got student of the month and perfect attendance awards." **(1st grader)**

"I'm making better decisions and better test scores." **(3rd grader)**

Managing emotions and conflict

"I learned to use bright side thinking and not overthink a lot of situations. I accomplished having positive conversations with people, and not needing to be rude just to feel good." **(8th grader)**

"I think before I react and walk away quickly if I get upset." **(11th grader)**

"Being okay when others win at a game and not getting upset." **(3rd grader)**

"Walking away from people bothering me and not walking out of the classroom." **(4th grader)**

"I accomplished controlling my mind, feelings, and habits." **(12th grader)**

Friendships

"I have accomplished finding friends who are genuine to me, and it has made me so much happier." **(7th grader)**

"I did a good job in all my classes, and got closer with my classmates." **(5th grader)**

"I am being kind to new friends in class." **(Kindergartener)**

Attendance and staying in school

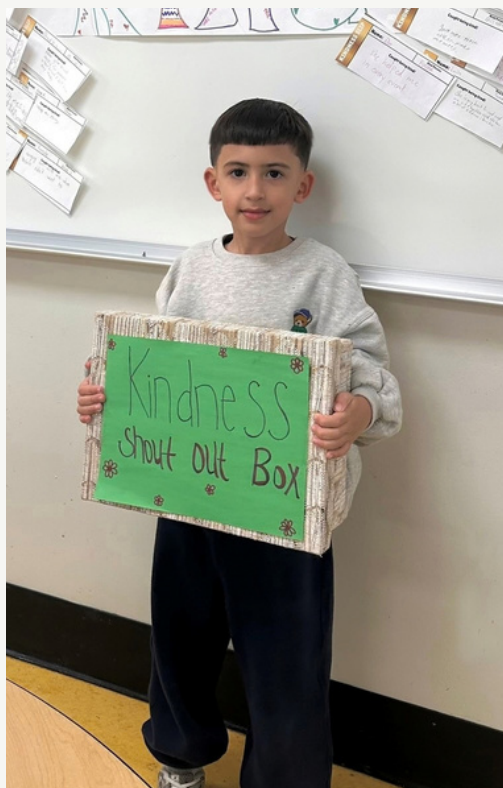
"I have been coming to school a lot more, reporting things that bother me, talking when I am not doing good, and asking for help." **(7th grader)**

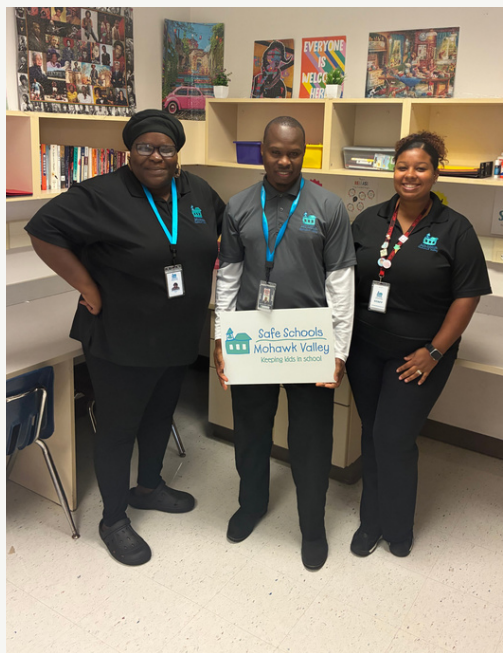
"I attended more days at school. Safe Schools made me want to come to school." **(8th grader)**

"I have gotten better with my attendance and dealing with my anxiety throughout the day." **(11th grader)**

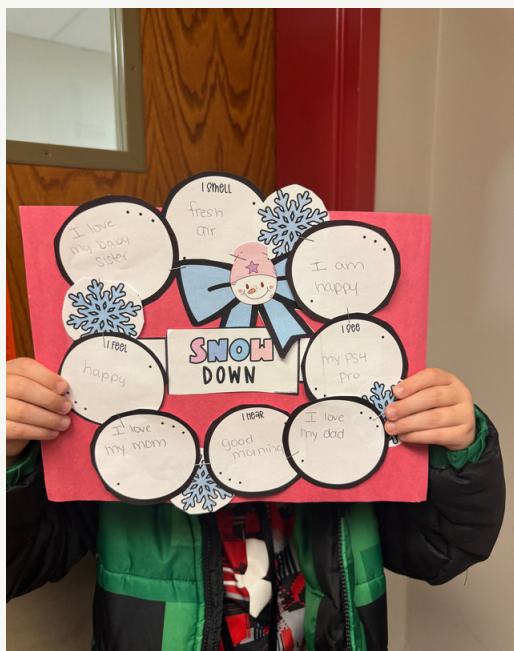


Our programs
and services
help kids in
school by
reducing
barriers to
learning





while
supporting
their social
and emotional
well-being.



How to reach us

Safe Schools Mohawk Valley

-  (315) 733-SSMV (7768)
-  110 Lomond Court, Utica, NY 13502
-  info@ssmv.org
-  www.safeschoolsmohawkvalley.org



Connect on Social Media

-  www.facebook.com/SafeSchoolsMohawkValley
-  www.instagram.com/safeschoolsmohawkvalley/
-  www.linkedin.com/company/safe-schools-mohawk-valley/

Anne Lansing, CEO

alansing@ssmv.org
(315) 733-7768 ext. 202

School and Community Based Services

Melanie Adams
madams@ssmv.org
(315) 733-7768 ext. 204

Professional Development/Staff Training

James Franco
jfranco@ssmv.org
(315) 733-7768 ext. 203