
New York State
Office of
Children & Family
Services

Public Information Office
Phone 518-473-7793
Fax 518-486-7550

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CONTACT: Edward Borges, Director of Communications

PRESIDENT BUSH HONORS NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES EVENING REPORTING CENTER IN SYRACUSE

President Praises Youth for Service to the Syracuse Rescue Mission

President George W. Bush has honored the New York State Office of Children and Family Services' (OCFS) Evening Reporting Center (ERC) in Syracuse with the President's Volunteer Service Award in recognition of the many hours of service the youth in the program have provided to the Syracuse Rescue Mission.

The President's Volunteer Service Award goes to Americans who dedicate at least two years to serve others at home or abroad.

"I could not be more pleased by this national recognition of one of the programs that is fundamental to the successful ongoing transformation of New York's juvenile justice system," said OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq. "ERCs are critical to a child's transition from a residential center back to the community; I never imagined OCFS receiving this kind of recognition for this program so early in our transformation."

Evening Reporting Centers (ERC) are highly structured evening schools for teenagers recently released to the community after serving time as juvenile delinquents at OCFS Division of Juvenile Justice residential centers.

The Syracuse Rescue Mission feeds hungry families and individuals.

An average of five youths, between 12 and 17 years old, volunteered at the Rescue Mission every Friday. They served meals to the homeless, prepared take-out trays, and cleaned up afterwards. The program is ongoing.

Jean Case, chairperson of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, thanked the ERC staff and the students for "their dedication to volunteer service and for making our nation a better place."

ERC Program Supervisor Bruce Sedlak said: "The children had fun and worked well together while helping the needy. They also impressed everyone with their professionalism: they quickly learned the health and safety measures and were always polite to their customers."

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