SENECA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT



2019 Annual Report

Judge Jay A. Meyer

It is an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Seneca County.

FROM JUDGE MEYER:

I am extremely proud of the positive impact of Juvenile and Probate Court. The decisions of the bench and the support of a dedicated staff allow for protection of the community and offender accountability.

As Judge, I have the responsibility to administer the many and varied functions of the Courts and the Seneca County Youth Center. With both part and full-time employment, the Court employs approximately 52 individuals. The Court operates from 3 different locations. The Youth Center is a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week facility, and the Probation Officers and Public Guardian are on call 24/7.

My staff and I consistently and carefully evaluate all of our services and responsibilities with a goal of effective stewardship of the resources available. I pledge to continue our dedicated efforts to keep our costs down while providing excellent services to our citizens.

Juvenile and Probate Courts are required by law to provide specific services. The Courts are guided by the mission and promise to "serve the citizens of the community with dedication, integrity and professionalism. We will strive to assure the safety, security and best interests of those we serve to the best of our abilities."

The Juvenile and Probate Courts moved into the annex section of the Justice Center and opened to the public on October 23, 2018. We have occupied this facility for a little over a year. We are grateful to the Commissioners for supporting the move into our new space and we are thrilled to be a part of the Seneca County Justice Center.

I invite you to review this report and also our website at www.senecajpcourt.com. If you have additional questions, please call. You will find phone numbers on our website.

Respectfully

Judge Jay A. Meyer

103 East Market Street



Seneca County Justice Center



2018 Home to all Tiffin and Seneca County Courts and the Clerk of Courts

Teresa Copp – Court Administrator Jillian Banks – Administrative Clerk

JUVENILE COURT	PROBATE COURT	
Beth Brown – Chief Deputy Clerk/ Bailiff	Dana Eborg – Chief Deputy Clerk/ Investigator	
☐ Linda Frank — Deputy Clerk	☐ Amy Littlejohn – Deputy Clerk	
☐ Jenny Harris – Deputy Clerk	☐ Tiffany Corfman/ Samantha Gruss — Deputy Clerk/ Investigator	
☐ MeKenna Klaiss/ Melissa Bowers — Deputy Clerk	☐ Nicole Fretz – Deputy Clerk/ Investigator	
☐ Cathy Bean—Deputy Clerk	☐ Beverly Foos/ Jay Rishty — Public Guardian	
☐ Chloe Seislove – Deputy Clerk		

The Bench

The Honorable Judge Jay A. Meyer was elected by Seneca County Voters to serve as their Juvenile and Probate Judge in 2008 and re-elected in 2014. He announced his plans to run for re-election in 2020. Judge Meyer is a graduate of Tiffin Columbian High School. He received both his BA and Juris Doctor degrees from Ohio Northern University. Judge Meyer supports Seneca County youth, families, and the Court's Mission.

Magistrate

Tiffany E. Cavanaugh was appointed as Magistrate by Judge Meyer in January of 2016.

Magistrate Cavanaugh received her Juris Doctor degree from Ohio Northern University.

Mediator

Ms. Cavanaugh also serves as the Court's Mediator. She was appointed by Judge Meyer as Mediator in May of 2013. Tiffany is a qualified Mediator exceeding Ohio Supreme Court requirements as established under Rule 16.



Magistrate

Donald S. Bennett was appointed as Magistrate by Judge Meyer in June of 2009. Magistrate Bennett received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Toledo College of Law.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Bennett was in private practice for 20 years, concentrating in the areas of juvenile, domestic, and criminal trial practice.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, Judge Meyer guided the staff of Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Court through several phases of professional development. This initiative was launched with a lunch for staff with guest speaker, Lee Martin. Mr. Martin provided an entertaining and motivating view of professional development.

The next step involved the preparation of position descriptions by Magistrate Cavanaugh, the Court Administrator, and supervisors for all jobs in the Court. These were reviewed with staff in the position, updated with their input, and then signed for acceptance.

The Court invited a member of "The Employers' Association" to meet with staff for a three hour session on development of self and its impact on individual success and a valued work environment.

The Court completed the Juvenile and Probate Court Employee Handbook which became effective as of November 1, 2019. The firm of Montgomery, Rennie and Jonson provided the Court with a handbook package as a template. We also incorporated sections from the Seneca County Board of Commissioners Personnel Policy and a sample policy from the County's risk management agency, CORSA.

2019 APPROPRIATIONS

General Fund; Grant Funds; Court Funds – Total \$2,665,409



PROBATE COURT

Under the first Ohio Constitution of 1802, the Court of Common Pleas had exclusive jurisdiction over all Probate matters. The updated Ohio Constitution of 1851 shifted this power by creating a separate Probate Court in each of Ohio's 88 counties.

Seneca County's Probate Court was established in 1851. William Lang was the first Probate Judge serving from 1851 – 1855. He wrote *History of Seneca County: From the Close of the Revolutionary War to July 1880.*

Probate Court handles wills, administration of estates and trusts, adoptions, marriage licenses, name changes, and appointments of guardians for minors and incompetent adults.

[Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 2101.24]

Judge Meyer is the Judge for both Seneca County Probate and Juvenile Court.



Probate Court Case Breakdown - 2019

	OPEN	CLOSED
MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED	301	
Estates	268	292
Minor Guardianships	0	3
Incompetent Guardianships	26	22
Trusts	2	6
Civil	20	17
Adoption	16	17
Mental Illness	9	9
Minor Settlement	7	8
Name Change	24	23
Conservatorship	0	1
Wrongful Death	0	0
Delayed Birth Registration	4	4
TOTAL	376	402

Probate Court Year in Review

Projects implemented/completed during the year:

- ☐ A draft of the updated Guardianship Handbook was completed and under review.
- Court records were prepared by Probate Court Staff to be to be microfilmed and scanned by Bowling Green State University Center for Archival Collections. This is a continuing effort to preserve and retain Court records.
- A draft of updated Probate Court Local Rules were completed in 2019 to take effect in 2020.
- Updated server and workstations.

Goals for 2020:

- Continuation of the preservation of Probate records through imaging and/or microfilm.
- □ Sharing the updated Guardianship Handbook in print and on the Court's website.

Seneca County Guardianship Program

- The Seneca County Guardianship Program provides guardianship and conservatorship assistance to indigent incompetent elderly. This life maintaining and life sustaining program would not be possible without the generous grant funding provided by the Allen Eiry Fund. In 2019, additional funding was received from the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandot counties to provide guardianship services for indigent incompetent individuals under the age of 55.
- The Allen Eiry Fund was created in 1983 through The Columbus Foundation in Mr. Eiry's name for the benefit of elderly citizens in Seneca County. The local Allen Eiry Advisory Committee consists of 5 individuals, 2 of whom are appointed by the Seneca County Probate Court. On behalf of the seniors who are served, the Court thanks the Foundation and the local Allen Eiry Committee members.
- Modified Superintendence Rule 66 implemented by the Supreme Court of Ohio went into effect June 1, 2015. The new rule significantly impacts guardianship training requirements. All guardians of adults are now required to receive six (6) hours of fundamental training followed by three (3) hours of continuing education each year thereafter, unless exempt by the Seneca County Probate Local Rule 66.



History of the Allen Eiry Fund ... Mr. Allen Eiry passed away in 1974 at the age of 80. He never married and was remembered for his eccentricities. He was frugal. The Green Springs house he owned was a modest duplex, and when he owned it, inside bare walls were visible where plaster had fallen off years before and there was second-hand linoleum on the floors. He was known as knowledgeable and an interesting conversationalist. He minded his own business and worked as an automobile dealer. He was an investor in various properties and in a pipeline operation in the County.

Mr. Eiry remembered his friends living at the "poor farm", the Seneca County Home, and visited regularly. He left an estate valued at \$1,700,000.00 to be used for the benefit of the residents of the Seneca County Home. Investments made by The Columbus Foundation enlarged the fund to \$2 million, but the fate of the fund grew fuzzy after budget cuts forced the home's closing in December of 1986. Then in March of 1987, after a court-filed request by a local committee for a decision on the matter, Probate Judge Gerald D. Meyer ruled the money would go to the "needy elderly and infirm persons" in the county. In June of 1987, the first grants from the funds were announced. The grants come from the money generated from investments made on the \$2 million and The Columbus Foundation handles the investments.

Judge Gerald D. Meyer, father of Judge Jay A. Meyer, recognized the need for a guardianship program for the elderly in Seneca County and implemented the program in 1987 with the help of Allen Eiry funds. Since 1987, the Seneca County Public Guardian program has received \$1,194,500.00 from the generosity of the Allen Eiry estate. The Program has grown over the years and now provides 24-hour, 7-day a week on call guardianship and conservatorship services to Seneca County residents over the age of 55, who are indigent and who suffer from incompetency or mental impairment and have no one in their lives who can serve in that capacity.

Juvenile Court

The Seneca County Juvenile Court handles the filing and processing of the following types of matters:

- Juvenile Delinquency and Unruly
- Juvenile Traffic
- Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency
- Paternity
- Custody and Child Support
- Some Adult Criminal Cases

The Juvenile Court System was created in 1902, The Honorable Hal W. Michaels was serving as Probate Judge during this time. When the Juvenile Court System was created, the Probate Judge assumed responsibility over Juvenile Court as well. At age 29, he was the youngest judge to be elected as Seneca County Probate Judge. He served as Judge from 1903-1909.



Juvenile Court Cases - 2019

	OPEN	CLOSED
Delinquent	247	255
Traffic	195	189
Abuse/Neglect/Dependent	55	43
Unruly	35	34
Adult	32	26
Permanent Custody	0	0
Change of Custody	171	180
Support Modification	476	508
Parentage	5	3
UIFSA	1	3
Other	19	19
TOTAL	1236	1260
TRUANCY - DIVERTED		6

Juvenile Court Year in Review

Projects implemented/completed during the year:
 Successful processing of E-Citations submitted by the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Updated Courtroom #1 with mobile conferencing cart. Updated server and workstations.
Goals for 2020:
Continue in the reduction of paper records in juvenile delinquency and unruliness actions by scanning and, if applicable, sealing and expunging.

☐ Continue scanning of old parentage records in partnership with CSEA.

TRAFFIC DIVERSION PROGRAM



Seneca County Juvenile Court implemented the effective "Traffic Diversion Program". This program is offered to juvenile traffic offenders that have received their first traffic violation for speeding and the recorded speed being less than 20 miles per hour over the posted speed limit.

Upon the youth's admission to the traffic complaint, he/she is required to read <u>The Traveler's Gift</u>, a book by Andy Andrews. This book is a unique blend of fiction, history, and inspiration and offers a modern day story of one man's choices and the attitudes that make the difference between failure and success. The juvenile must then submit a typewritten report summarizing the book's "Seven Decisions that Determine Personal Success" along with providing a verbal summary to the Court's Diversion Officer. In addition, the juvenile must complete six hours of community service, attend and successfully complete the 4-H CARTEENS Program.

Following the successful completion of all requirements, the case is dismissed.

MEDIATION

SENECA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT OFFER MEDIATION SERVICES.

MEDIATION IS A PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS IN WHICH A NEUTRAL PROFESSIONAL (MEDIATOR) FACILITATES COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARTIES REGARDING IDENTIFIED ISSUES. THE MEDIATOR HELPS PARTIES DEVELOP A PLAN THAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THEIR CHILDREN WITHOUT MAKING DECISIONS FOR THE PARTIES.

MEDIATION WORKS BECAUSE:

- · Both sides have the opportunity to be heard.
- · The parties are in control of the agreement.
- · Multiple ways of solving problems are explored.
- · The final agreement is acceptable to the parties.
- · Communication is clear and specific.

For 2019, the Court Mediator provided services in 88 truancy cases and 2 civil cases.



TIME TO INVEST

After several years of planning, Seneca County Juvenile Court was proud and excited to launch the "Time to Invest" Program (TTI). TTI is an alternative to detention developed by Judge Jay Meyer and staff of the Seneca County Juvenile Court, Court Services, and the Seneca County Youth Center to address the criminogenic needs of our youth by efficiently and impactfully improving their educational, vocational, therapeutic, and socialization deficiencies. TTI utilizes intervention philosophies that align with nationally recognized evidence-based models to provide intensive services for youth not likely available to them at their home schools.

TTI is designed to accommodate up to twelve youth between the ages of 12 and 18 at any given time. The Program operates primarily in a designated and separate location inside the Seneca County Youth Center Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 1:40 p.m. during the school year.

Research evidence reveals that academic support, coupled with counseling, workforce development, case management, mentoring, and family interventions are more successful in preventing recidivism and developing a path to success for youth. In Seneca County, we have developed TTI to apply this new line of thinking in our community.

JUVENILE COURT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Seneca County Juvenile Court works closely with area higher education institutions to provide internship opportunities to qualified students.

In 2019, four students logged <u>570</u>
hours as part of the Juvenile Court
Internship Program. The students
who completed these hours were from
Tiffin University and Heidelberg
University.



Department of Court Services Kendra Shearer - Director

Linda Cohen*	Probation Officer
Jay Rishty/Kody Brewer	Probation Officer
Amy Chalfin	Probation Officer
Jason French	Probation Officer/ Court Compliance Officer
Abbi Norville	Diversion Officer
James Jarrett*	Director of Community Outreach

The Department of Court Services helps to connect youth and families with interventions and services available in our community as soon as they make contact with the Court, and it continues to do so throughout the youth's involvement with the Court. Court Services houses and coordinates the:

- > Probation Program
- ➤ Diversion Program
- ➤ Community Service/Restitution Program

Seneca County Juvenile Court endeavors to achieve a balance of community protection, imposition of accountability, and the development of skills and competencies necessary to improve family functions. The Court's approach involves basic balanced and restorative justice principles, as well as evidence-based practices and interventions that measure risk, intervention, quality, efficiency and outcomes. Our community has a right to be safe and secure. To achieve a safe community, the Juvenile Court focuses its attention on prevention, supervision and control.

The Court believes in and operates in accordance with the principle of the least restrictive setting required to protect the community. This principle, supported by outcome measures and a large volume of research, suggests that the more restrictive settings do more harm than good to low and moderate risk youth. Accordingly, Judge Meyer and our Court Services team work together with community partners to help create individualized plans and services for each youth and family so as to create the appropriate balance of accountability and assistance.

Court Services

The Department of Court Services is largely funded by RECLAIM Ohio.

WHAT IS RECLAIM OHIO?

RECLAIM stands for:

<u>Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors.</u>

It is a funding initiative which encourages juvenile courts to explore community—based options to meet the needs of juvenile offenders and youth at risk of offending.

RECLAIM Grant funds pay for the following programs:

- Program Administration
- Probation
- Project HOPE
- Seneca County Family Fulfilment Program

- Restitution/Community Service
- Monitoring/Surveillance
- Diversion
- Educational Services PACE

HOW WE USED OUR RECLAIM GRANT FUNDS IN 2019	
Program Administration: *Funds provide the salaries of the Director of Court Services and 60% of the salary of the Administrative Clerk	The funding supports Motivational Interviewing, quality assurance training and additional training for Court Services employees. Administrative supplies and operational expenses are paid through RECLAIM. The Training is provided through Case Western Reserve, Ohio Department of Youth Services, and the Judicial College. An evidence based tool, The Carey Guides, was also purchased for staff use.
Probation: *Funds provide the salaries of 3 full-time Probation Officers *Served 178 adjudicated youth in FY 2019	Used to provide supervision and case management of adjudicated youth with the goal of reducing subsequent delinquent behavior. Cumulative research indicates that individuals most likely to reoffend should be provided with intensive resources rather than placed in secure detention. Seneca County Juvenile Court uses the research-based Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) to determine the risk level for reoffending. In addition to salaries, RECLAIM funds provide for the operational expenses of Probation and to purchase a Digital Fingerprinting System.
Community Service/Restitution: *Served 173 adjudicated youth in FY 2019	This program addresses youth who are in need of completing Court ordered restitution and community service hours. Funding is used to purchases program supplies and pay for the operational expenses.
Monitoring/Surveillance: *Served 52 adjudicated youth in FY 2019	This program uses ankle monitors to closely track youth who require intensive supervision, as an alternative to detention.
Educational Services – PACE: *Served 18 adjudicated youth in FY 2019	The PACE program targets youth that are struggling in school by providing contracted tutoring services through Heidelberg University
Diversion: *Funds provide for the salary of 1 full-time Diversion Officer *Served 95 youth in FY 2019	Used to deliver informal supervision to first-time offenders in hopes of helping them avoid an official Court hearing
Project HOPE: *Served 10 youth in FY 2019	Project H.O.P.E. (Horses Opening People's Eyes) Equine Assisted Therapy helps youth develop in areas such as accountability, responsibility, self-confidence, problem solving skills and self-control. It provides a special atmosphere that can increase motivation to change. This group also focuses on trauma and grief issues.

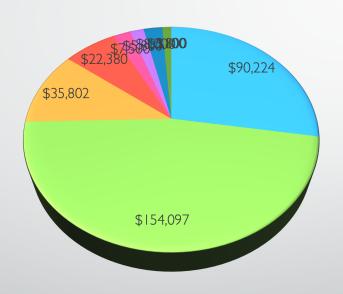
the evidence based program Strengthening Families.

Partnering with Firelands, the Seneca County Family Fulfillment Program provides the youth and families

Seneca County Family Fulfilment Program:

*Served 2 youth and their families in FY 2019

RECLAIM Ohio Total FY 2019 Budget \$327,704



- Program Administration 27%
- Probation 47%
- Diversion 11%
- Restitution/Community Service 6.8%
- Family Fulfillment Program 2.2%
- Educational Services PACE 1.8%
- Monitoring/Surveillance 2.4%
- Project HOPE 1.1%
- HB 153 Training .03%

Community Service/ Restitution

- As part of the Community Service/ Restitution Program, Seneca County Juvenile Court offers youth an opportunity to participate in a Work Program. The Work Program allows youth owing victim's restitution a chance to earn an hourly credit of \$8.55 (state minimum wage) to be paid to a victim. Youth can earn up to a maximum credit of \$1,000.00.
- In FY 2019 \$8,932.35 was paid to victims through this program.

DIVERSION PROGRAM – ORC 2151.18(B)

Seneca County Juvenile Court's Diversion Program was established to assist the Juvenile Court Judge and Magistrates by diverting unruly and delinquent offenders from a formal adjudication, with the attempt to hold the youth accountable for his/her actions while at the same time to minimizing penetration into the Juvenile Justice System.

The Court's Diversion Officer maintains the Diversion Program by providing an opportunity for first time, low risk, unruly/delinquent offenders to be diverted from the official Court process.

In 2019: A total of 95 youth were served. 70 successfully competed, 6 unsuccessfully completed, and 19 were carried over into 2020.

Of the 95 youth served: 7 were truancy cases. Of the 7 truancy cases, 5 successfully completed and 2 were unsuccessful and adjudicated.

Juvenile Court Court Habilitation Programs

- Reality Works
- PACE Program
- 4-H CARTEENS
- Project HOPE
- Strengthening Families Program
- Carey Guides*

*Research demonstrates that traditional methods of supervision are ineffective in reducing recidivism among adult and juvenile offenders. For behavior change and recidivism reduction to be possible, offenders must understand the personal and environmental factors underlying their offending behavior and be taught the skills they need in order to make positive changes in the future.

The Carey Guides are designed to equip corrections professionals with the information and tools they need to support these changes among their clients.

• 3rd Millennium Classroom:

Respect & Resolve

Marijuana 101

Nicotine 101

Under the Influence JV

Stoplifting

Conflict-Wise

Parent-Wise



Project HOPE
Equine Assisted
Therapy –
Therapeutic
Riding

4-H CARTEENS Program—

a teen facilitated traffic safety program for first time juvenile traffic offenders

Partnership with OSU Extension

3rd Millennium Classrooms

Offers on-line courses with evidence- based strategies for behavior change intervention



interactive technology used to educate youth on topics such as fetal alcohol syndrome, prenatal drug exposure, shaken baby syndrome, and pregnancy prevention





PACE Program –

academic tutoring offered in partnership with Heidelberg University

Strengthening Families Program

this scientifically tested curriculum:

helps parents/caregivers learn nurturing skills that support their children, teaches parents/caregivers how to effectively discipline and guide their youth, gives youth a healthy future orientation and an increased appreciation of their parents/caregivers, and

teaches youth skills for dealing with stress and peer pressure.

SENECA COUNTY YOUTH CENTER



- The Seneca County Youth Center is a division of the Seneca County Juvenile Court. It is a 24 bed detention facility. The facility's construction began in April 2012 and was completed in February of 2013. This facility replaces a facility that was constructed in the 1950's. This facility was made possible with a grant from the State of Ohio, forethought of the County Commissioners, and the work of three Juvenile Court Judges.
- The Seneca County Youth Center houses both male and female juveniles who have committed or have been convicted of a delinquent act.

YOUTH CENTER STAFF...

Greg Sehlhorst – Operations Manager Sarah Canalos – Program Manager Tiffany Mercado – Administrative Manager

Other Positions Include:

2 full time Activities Supervisors

2 full time Head Supervisors

4 full time Shift Leaders

8 full time Juvenile Corrections Officers

Numerous part time Juvenile Correction Officers (based upon need)

EDUCATION at the Youth Center...

- North Central Ohio Educational Service Center (NCOESC) provides all educational services for the youth at the Youth Center.
- All of the youth are required to attend school while detained. This includes a minimum of 5.5 hours per weekday during the school year and a minimum of 2.5 hours per weekday during the summer.
- Residents receive individual work assignments from their respective schools.
 Basic skills in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies are available through electronic education programs.

Counseling at the Youth Center

Residents have the opportunity to participate in mental health counseling during their time spent at the Seneca County Youth Center.

Funding for the SCYC Behavioral Health Program is paid in part by local Seneca County levy funds from Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties.

2019

	Primarily MH Service Hours	and the second s		Unsuccessfully Discharged
257	434	434	276	0

• Along with attending school, youth in detention are kept active from breakfast until bedtime. The Youth Center offers an array of programs, and each youth attends approximately 20 hours of programming per week. Some of programs offered include:

- *Thinking for a Change
- *Drug & Alcohol Education/Awareness
- *Life Skills
- *Job Application & Resume Education
- *First Aid/CPR
- *Arts & Crafts
- *Guest Speakers
- *Physical Education
- *Activities to Work on Self-Esteem, Anger Management, Trauma, and Peer Pressure



2019 Youth Center Intake Statistics

FELONY OFFENSES	39
Misdemeanor Offenses	287
Other (status, tobacco, alcohol)	6
Seneca County Intakes	171
Other County Intakes	159
Seneca County Sentencing	88
Other County Sentencing	110

Partnerships and Relationships

The Seneca County Juvenile and Probate Courts have many wonderful partnerships and relationships that work together for the benefit of the residents of Seneca County.

- COMMUNITY ACTION FOR REDUCING SUBSTANCE ABUSE (CARSA)
- FIRELANDS COUNSELING AND RECOVERY SERVICES
- SENECA MENTORING YOUTH LINKS (SMYL)
- TIFFIN PARK AND RECREATION
- SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT
- MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES BOARD OF SENECA, SANDUSKY AND WYANDOT COUNTIES
- SENECA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
- ALL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- AREA COUNSELORS AND COUNSELING SERVICES
- HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY
- TIFFIN UNIVERSITY
- SENECA COUNTY FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST COUNCIL

- TIFFIN-SENECA PUBLIC LIBRARY
- FIRST CALL FOR HELP
- OHIO STATE EXTENSION SERVICE
- UNITED WAY
- TIFFIN COMMUNITY YMCA
- COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)
- ST. FRANCIS EARTH LITERACY CENTER
- CAMP GLEN
- CAMP FIRE BOYS AND GIRLS
- FOSTORIA COMMUNITY YMCA
- PATCHWORKS HOUSE
- FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
- SENECA COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES