



**2024 Recipient ~ Kathleen Heraty
Bronxville High School**

As a dedicated member of the Youth Community Fund (YCF) of Bronxville, Eastchester, and Tuckahoe since my freshman year, I have evolved from an initial volunteer my freshman and sophomore year to a pivotal leadership position as the co-chair of the events committee my junior year. My journey within the YCF has been marked by a commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community, helping hands on my Freshman and Sophomore year leading Diaper Drives for our local non-profit Bundles of Joy, and volunteering at Eastchester Community Action Partnership, helping elementary aged children after school with homework and during the summer serving as a camp counselor. My Junior year I particularly focused on the mental health challenges faced by our youth.

Our committee's work took a significant turn when, through a comprehensive census survey, anxiety emerged as one of the most critical issues affecting teenagers across our three communities. In response, we embarked on a mission to bring the short movie 'Angst' to our local movie theater, a project that I helped lead. The film, featuring Michael Phelps, delves into the struggles of anxiety among teenagers, offering both vivid narratives and coping strategies. To make this initiative a reality, I played a key role in writing and executing a \$5,000 grant awarded to the YCF. This funding was instrumental in not only securing the movie for a local showing but also in facilitating an educational session post-screening. Although logistical challenges prevented us from hosting the healthcare professionals featured in the film for a live Q&A, we adapted by incorporating a pre-recorded session that addressed frequently asked questions, ensuring attendees left with a comprehensive understanding of managing anxiety. The impact of our efforts was palpable on the day of the event. Witnessing the turnout—families, teenagers, and familiar faces—underscored the community's shared concern and eagerness to engage with the subject matter. The sold-out tickets and the attentive audience reflected a communal acknowledgment of anxiety's prevalence, diminishing the stigma associated with it. For me, the event was a poignant reminder of the collective struggles many of us face, and the profound impact such initiatives can have on fostering a supportive community.

In bringing 'Angst' to Bronxville, Eastchester, and Tuckahoe, I not only contributed to raising awareness about teenage anxiety but also experienced a deep sense of pride in our community's willingness to confront and discuss mental health openly. The success of this event reaffirms my dedication to service and the positive change we can effect through thoughtful, community-centered initiatives.