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Contact: Amanda Elliott, YouthWork AmeriCorps Director

Phone: (231) 313-8002

Email: [aelliott@cfs3L.org](mailto:aelliott@cfs3L.org)



**YouthWork to Receive National Award for Unique Partnership with Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District**

***YouthWork Conservation Corps to Receive One of Four Awards Nationwide***

**Traverse City, Michigan** – Child and Family Services’ (CFS) YouthWork Conservation Corps is one of four programs nationwide to be awarded the 2020 [Project of the Year](#) from The Corps Network in recognition of their unique partnership with Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD). The Corps Network, the national association of Service and Conservation Corps, presents this prestigious award on an annual basis to Corps that have undertaken especially influential or innovative initiatives.

YouthWork teaches job and life skills to vulnerable youth, ages 16-26, as they complete vital conservation and service projects for local nonprofits and government agencies. In 2018, YouthWork partnered with TBAISD to engage students who have mild cognitive impairments, autism, or other physical or developmental disabilities or delays in the Adult Community Experience (ACE) Corps. Many YouthWork ACE students are also engaged with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Michigan Works!, and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), ensuring they get all the extra support necessary to be successful.

During the 2018-2019 school year, YouthWork’s ACE Corps members collectively served more than 15,000 hours, completing vital projects for over 50 local nonprofits and government agencies. Members constructed nearly 100 picnic tables for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and local parks and recreation departments, replaced over 2,000 feet of boardwalks and stream crossings, planted more than 10,000 trees, restored and constructed some 50 miles of trail including 1.5 miles of trail made ADA-rated accessible, and completed various other environmental, historic, and cultural preservation projects.

“As such a new program, YouthWork is humbled to be selected as the only Project of the Year in the state of Michigan and one of only four programs nationwide. YouthWork members are not your typical National Park visitors, volunteers, or conservationists,” says Amanda Elliott, YouthWork AmeriCorps Director. “Coming from settings of rural poverty, many of our YouthWork members lack stable homes, access to services, successful role models, and mentors who support their social, emotional, and academic development. Some may go to bed hungry and show up for the day without a lunch. YouthWork teaches things like setting an alarm to show up on time, looking someone in the eye as they are introduced, and, sometimes, even basic hygiene. It is these

vulnerable youth that we serve, who in turn serve their community as AmeriCorps members.”

The four winners of the Project of the Year Award will be honored at a ceremony on February 12, 2020 on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC as part of The Corps Network’s 35<sup>th</sup> annual national conference. YouthWork is excited to take two youth members and three staff to DC to accept the award. For more information about YouthWork, please visit [www.cfsnwmj.org/youthwork](http://www.cfsnwmj.org/youthwork).

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## **ABOUT YOUTHWORK**

Based on FDR’s depression-era New Deal Civilian Conservation Corps, Child & Family Services’ YouthWork Conservation Corps is designed to develop young people and their communities through hands on, service-based learning, mentoring, and job and life skills training. YouthWork provides youth, ages 16-26, with real world experience while they earn living stipends, scholarships, and 21st century job skills. Crews of 3-6 youth supervised by a qualified, adult crew leader complete various service-based projects for local nonprofit and public partners. The projects completed by YouthWork are mutually beneficial and achieve two objectives – first, they build job and life skills for vulnerable youth; and second, they save valuable resources, as projects are completed at reduced rate by leveraging strategic partnerships and funding sources. More at [www.cfsnwmj.org/youthwork](http://www.cfsnwmj.org/youthwork).

## **ABOUT TBAISD**

Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD) serves public school districts, public school academies, and private and parochial schools within Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties. Together, the ISD and its local school districts determine the services needed to improve student learning, serve children’s special needs, develop teachers’ expertise and work collaboratively to maximize services and resources on a regional scale. The TBAISD Adult Community Experience program is a proud partner with Child & Family Services’ YouthWork Conservation Corps. For more information about educational services available in the Traverse Bay region go to [www.tbaisd.org](http://www.tbaisd.org).

## **ABOUT THE CORPS NETWORK**

The Corps Network, the national association of Service and Conservation Corps, provides leadership and support to over 130 Corps across the United States. Through advocacy, and providing Corps access to funding opportunities and expert guidance, The Corps Network annually enables more than 25,000 Corpsmembers to strengthen

communities, improve the environment and transform their lives through service. To learn more about The Corps Network, visit [www.corpsnetwork.org](http://www.corpsnetwork.org).