



CAREGIVERS OUTREACH: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



**A STATEWIDE INITIATIVE TO IDENTIFY AND
SUPPORT YOUTH CAREGIVERS IN NEW YORK**



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THE PROBLEM

Case Study: “Jasmine’s Story” – A 16-Year-Old Youth Caregiver

Age: 16

Family Structure: Lives with mother and 9-year-old brother diagnosed with autism and complex developmental needs

The Situation

Jasmine is a 11th-grade student who, like many teens, should be focused on school, friendships, and personal growth. Instead, much of her day revolves around caring for her younger brother.

Her brother requires:

- Constant supervision due to elopement risk
- Assistance with daily living tasks (meals, hygiene, routines)
- Behavioral support during sensory overload and meltdowns

Her mother works long hours to support the household, leaving Jasmine as the primary caregiver after school and on weekends.

A Day in Her Life

- 6:30 AM: Helps her brother get dressed and ready for school
- 3:00 PM: Rushes home/cannot stay for extracurricular activities
 - Afternoon/Evening: Prepares snacks and meals
 - Manages behavioral episodes
 - Assists with homework (her own and sometimes her brother’s routines)
- Late Evening: Completes her own schoolwork—often exhausted

Impact on Jasmine

- Frequently late or absent due to caregiving responsibilities
- Declining grades despite strong potential
- Unable to participate in after-school programs or social activities
- Feels isolated from peers
- Reports feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and “always responsible”
- Experiences guilt when feeling frustrated or wanting time for herself
- Chronic fatigue from lack of rest
- High stress levels

What’s Missing

Jasmine’s school has no formal mechanism to identify youth caregivers.

Her family has limited access to respite services.

Healthcare providers focus on her brother but no one asks about Jasmine.

She remains invisible in the system.

Call to Action

Jasmine’s story is happening right now in every district.

COYE provides the framework to identify, support, and empower youth caregivers. We don’t need more awareness alone; we need action, partnership, and investment.



ABOUT US

Caregivers Outreach, established in 2006, is a Bronx-based nonprofit dedicated to advancing caregiver education, training, and system coordination. COYE (Caregivers Outreach: Youth Empowerment) is our youth division focused on supporting **young people ages 10-21 who provide care to a loved one.**

A youth caregiver is a child or young adult who supports a family member with chronic illness, disability, mental health challenges, substance use, or aging-related needs. These responsibilities often include managing medications, assisting with daily living tasks, and providing emotional support.

Nationally, an estimated **5.4 million youth caregivers** exist in the United States, many of whom remain unidentified in schools, healthcare systems, and community settings.

COYE's mission is to identify, support, and empower this hidden population through coordinated systems across education, healthcare, and community-based services.

EDUCATION IMPACT

Youth caregivers face significant barriers in education:

- Higher rates of absenteeism and lateness
- Lower academic performance and engagement
- Increased behavioral misclassification
- Limited participation in social and extracurricular activities

Research shows:

- Young caregivers **miss an average of 23 school days per year**
- Nearly **half are persistently absent in secondary school**
- Up to **79% of schools report no identified young carers**, highlighting a major identification gap

Without identification, schools are unable to address the root cause of these challenges.

HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Youth caregivers experience:

- Increased anxiety, stress, and isolation
- Disrupted sleep and physical health
- Limited access to their own care and support

National and international findings show that caregiving responsibilities can significantly impact long-term life outcomes, including education, employment, and overall wellbeing.

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A SYSTEMIC GAP

Despite the scale of the issue:

- There is **no standardized identification system** in New York
- Youth caregivers are **largely invisible in policy** and data systems
- Support is inconsistent and often dependent on individual institutions

This creates what global research describes as a “postcode lottery” of support, where access depends on location rather than need.

COYE’S SOLUTION: A SCALABLE STATEWIDE MODEL

COYE offers a **replicable, system-based model designed** to integrate into schools, healthcare systems, and community organizations.

1. Identification & Awareness

- School-based screening and educator training
- Youth self-identification tools
- Healthcare and community referral pathways

Key principle: Youth caregivers cannot be supported if they are not identified.

2. Tiered Support Model

COYE utilizes a **three-level support framework**:

- **Level 1: Awareness & Early Support**
 - Education, peer engagement, and caregiver recognition
- **Level 2: Targeted Support**
 - Structured groups, academic coordination, and family navigation
- **Level 3: Intensive Support**
 - Care coordination, case management, and respite support

This model aligns with multi-tiered systems already used in education and healthcare.

3. School-Based Implementation

Schools serve as the **primary access point** for identifying youth caregivers.

COYE supports schools through:

- Staff training and designated “Youth Caregiver Champions”
- Peer support programs (SHARKS model)
- Integrated student support strategies

International models demonstrate that school-based approaches significantly improve:

- Identification rates
- Attendance and engagement
- Student wellbeing





WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM UNITED KINGDOM

The UK has developed one of the most advanced youth caregiver systems globally. Key lessons include:

- **Early identification is critical** – many youth caregivers go years without recognition
- **Schools and healthcare systems must work together**
- **Dedicated roles (e.g., caregiver leads/champions) improve outcomes**
- **Government investment and policy alignment are essential**

UK data suggests:

- Up to **10-13% of students may have caregiving responsibilities**
- Many youth caregivers remain **unidentified and unsupported**

These findings strongly indicate that New York is likely facing a similar, unmeasured need.

New York Opportunity: Policy + Research Alignment

New York is uniquely positioned to lead nationally on this issue. COYE is currently working in alignment with **Senator Jamaal Bailey's caregiver legislation**, which seeks to:

- Advance recognition of caregivers across systems
- Support research and data collection on caregiving populations
- Strengthen policy infrastructure for caregiver support

This creates a critical opportunity to include **youth caregivers as part of the broader caregiving agenda**.

The Research Gap in New York

Currently, there is **no comprehensive data on youth caregivers** in New York State.

To effectively address this issue, the state must invest in:

- A **statewide prevalence** study of youth caregivers
- Integration into Department of Education and Department of Health data systems
- Longitudinal research on educational and health outcomes
- Cost-benefit analysis of early intervention

What we don't measure, we can't solve.



Funding & Capacity Building Strategy

To implement a statewide COYE initiative, targeted investment is needed in:

1. Infrastructure

- School-based program expansion
- Training systems for educators and healthcare providers
- Data collection and reporting systems

2. Workforce

- Program coordinators
- Care navigators
- Youth engagement specialists

3. Pilot to Scale Strategy

- Phase 1: Pilot in high-need communities (e.g., Bronx, NYC)
- Phase 2: Regional expansion
- Phase 3: Statewide integration



Expected Outcomes

With implementation, COYE will:

Short-Term

- Increase identification of youth caregivers
- Improve attendance and school engagement
- Connect families to support services

Long-Term

- Improve academic outcomes and graduation rates
- Reduce mental health strain
- Strengthen workforce readiness and economic mobility

Conclusion & Call to Action

Youth caregivers are a hidden population with **significant impact across education, healthcare, and economic systems.**

COYE provides a ready, scalable solution to address this issue in New York.

We are seeking partnership to:

- Launch a **New York State Youth Caregiver Initiative**
- Support implementation of the COYE model
- Advance research aligned with Senator Bailey's caregiver legislation
- Build a coordinated system of identification and support



Together, we can ensure that no young caregiver remains unseen, unsupported, or left behind.

RECOGNITION

The NY Yankees Corporation
News 12
BronxNet

Alzheimer's Association
Bronx Borough President Clergy Task Force
Old Field Planters, Inc.
The Donald Hertz School PS 83





GET IN TOUCH!

Partner with COYE to Lead New York's Response to Youth Caregiving. Connect with us to advance policy, pilot solutions, and invest in a model that is already changing lives.

Schedule a briefing or partnership meeting today:

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COYE is an initiative of
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