



From left to right: Mitchell Vitale, Henry Green, Blaise Galley, Caleb Wickstrom, Klaus Ketkar, Bennett Llerena, Hunter Ban, Lily Richmond, Eve Adler, Alessandra Mirkovich, Liva Ketkar, Jackson Curtright, Angelica Hil, **Auden Madej**, Grace Cook, Bella Wolfe, Eleni Perrelli, Adrienne Rodgers, Francesca Armocita, and Elise Donlea. In front: YAC Chair Andy Richmond and BHS Associate Principal Brad Gillette. (Not pictured: Luke Tepas, Emma Menke, Will Shannon, Sophia Stern, Connor O'Hara, Aybree Sanchez, Charlie Fleming, Grace Menke, and Harley Thalheimer)



YAC Co-Heads Lily Richmond and Henry Green

BACF Youth Advisory Council Makes an Impact

THE BARRINGTON Area Community Foundation's 2025/2026 Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has been hard at work raising funds and learning the principles of philanthropy under the guidance of BACF Board Director Andy Richmond. Recent projects include a Fall Food Drive held November 16 that benefitted Cuba Township Food Pantry with over 300 bags of food and staples that were collected and donated. A cash donation of \$9,900 was also solicited and secured by YAC participants for the pantry.

On December 10, the YAC presented a check for \$7,500 to BHS faculty member Brad Gillette for the "Barrington One Fund" which is a financial assistance initiative at BHS that ensures all students in Barrington 220 can participate in school activities, such as music and sports, regardless of their financial situation. A total of \$10,000 was raised by YAC students who held a Turnabout Dance for charity at BHS earlier this year. The remaining \$2,500 was donated to the BACF Grants Program. We asked the Co-Heads of YAC to share their experience.

HENRY GREEN, BHS SENIOR

"As small or as big a change it may be, be the change you wish to see in the world."

What inspired you to get involved with YAC?

Growing up I was surrounded by influences like my mother, and my grandmother, and seeing both use their influence in their community and outside of their community to give back to the causes they believe in.

How has your experience with YAC impacted your point of view?

It's no secret that Barrington is an affluent community and place to live, but by involving myself in things such as the Cuba Township Food Drive you come to realize that people do need this kind of support even in Barrington. It's a harsh reality. Involving myself in YAC has fueled a drive and responsibility within me to give back and to try to influence my peers to give back as well. It takes all of us.

What advice would you give to students who feel they are "too young" to make an impact?

Whether you are just beginning elementary school or finishing high school, you have the luxury of time. Your entire life is ahead of you with so much yet to experience. No matter how young you are, you can make an impact; it's just about finding a way. At 7 years old, my mother took me to a Chicago based food pantry to experience what it was like to package food and organize it with a group of people. That's when I realized that making a difference isn't just about donations, it's about making time and effort. If you want to make a difference, being too young is not the border. Raising funds can be in any form, from selling homemade hot chocolate outside your local grocery store to going door-to-door handing out flyers about your local food drive. It's all about asking around and finding the right people. And it'll benefit you, too, by creating lasting habits that will follow you through your adult life.

What are you most proud of in your service through YAC?

I'm proud of the connections with other people and peers that I would not have had without YAC. The club has a huge variety of students with different interests and backgrounds that all share the same belief that they can make a difference. YAC helped me create good habits early on that I believe will continue through college and for the rest of my life. I'm proud to say that I've made a difference.

Your experience in one word? Fulfilling.



Members of the YAC attended the President's Society Dinner at Billmore Country Club on December 3. Photo: Linda M. Barrett Photography.

LILY RICHMOND, BHS JUNIOR

"A feeling of gratitude is all that people really need to understand the meaning of philanthropy."

What inspired you to get involved with YAC?

My dad set a huge example for me as a part of Little City for several years. Every year they host a donor gala to help raise money. Usually, my dad had taken my mom and their friends to this gala, but she was going to be out of town. To help fill his table, he invited me, a few of my friends, and their dads to join us at the gala. This was my first experience with philanthropic work.

As one of the chair members, my dad had to make a speech to encourage the audience to donate to the Little City fundraiser to build houses on their property for children of special needs to have more places to stay. Without warning, he invited me up halfway through the speech and introduced me to the crowd. He talked about how fortunate my sisters and I were to have the support system and family we've had to never have to experience the risk of not having a place to stay and having people around who always loved me: while other children in this organization could not all relate. He started to tear up once the donation numbers rose. At this moment, I realized the importance of how giving back can impact the lives of so many.

How has the YAC experience changed your perspective?

I feel this group has given me the responsibility to step up and provide for others when they cannot do it alone. It is OK asking for help, and it's important for people to listen to these calls. With the food pantry, they were desperate for donations this year because they are supporting so many families during winter.

What advice would you give to students who feel like they are "too young" to make an impact?

It doesn't matter what age you are. It takes a heart to give back.

What are you most proud of in your service through YAC?

I think that the food pantry is always the greatest success because you can see the impact and where the donations go. Simply donating the money from the Turnabout Dance, we don't get to observe where that goes. But with food donations, the admiration gleaming from the faces of the coordinators when we stocked their shelves—that moment reflects the most intimate connection.

Your experience in one word? Selflessness.

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