



Richard Shay Human Services Award

In 2001, the Family Counseling Services Board of Directors created this award to honor former Cortland County Family Court Judge Richard Shay for his vision and efforts to establish an agency to offer family counseling services. Recognizing a critical shortage of counseling services for persons coming into his court, Judge Shay secured a grant from the Ford Foundation in 1970 to establish Volunteer Family Counseling Services of Cortland County. The effectiveness of the volunteer program led to the expansion of services and the addition of professional counseling staff. The name of the agency was eventually changed to Family Counseling Services of Cortland County following the transition from volunteer staff to all professional counselors. The agency has grown substantially since then and now provides services in five counties throughout Central New York and the Southern Tier. In 2020, the agency name was changed to Family & Children's Counseling Services to better reflect our regional presence.

Each year, the Richard Shay Human Services Award has been given to a student who has been actively involved in school and community service as exemplified by Judge Shay. His dedication to the community, recognition of the importance of family, and belief in the power of volunteer leadership and guidance serve as an inspiration to others. Recognizing the expansion of our service area, the agency will now present a \$500 award to a deserving student in each of the following counties: Cortland, Broome and Madison counties.

Applicants should demonstrate a commitment to a career in human services, counseling, law, criminal justice or a related field. The applicant must be a graduating high school senior who will attend college starting in the fall of 2026.

To qualify for the Richard Shay Human Services Award, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Reside in either Cortland, Broome or Madison county;
- Participate in school-related activities;
- Volunteer for community activities;
- Graduate in June 2026;
- Intend to pursue a career in human services, counseling, law, criminal justice or a related field;
- Be accepted into a full time program at a college or university, and must apply the award to their education expenses.

Application Process:

- Submit a completed application form and supporting documents by April 30, 2026.
- Write and submit a typed double-spaced essay stating why the student would like to pursue a career in human services, counseling, law, criminal justice or a related field (500 word limit).
- Provide a copy of their high school academic record
- Provide two letters of recommendation – at least one from a school principal, teacher or guidance counselor
- Provide a letter of admission/acceptance from a two or four year college or university