

Fairfield Cares Community Coalition
October 15, 2014 Meeting Minutes
9:00 am - Sullivan Independence Hall

Attendees: Wendy Bentivegna, Lorraine Mazzo, Philip Dwyer, Bob Muro, Cristin McCarthy-Vahey, Nina Chanana, Pam Paulmann, Tom Mrozak, Steve Zawacki, Jenn Jacobsen, Marty Hauhuth, Hudson Hector, Christine Vitale, Michelle Walker, Leonora Campbell, Liz Decker, Catherine Giff, Denique Weidema-Lewis, Alida Ward, Lori Mediate, Patsy King, Reini Knorr

1. Introductions

2. Confirmation of meeting secretary- Nina Chanana

- Secretary sign-ups – Lenora Campbell will forward the sign-up sheet for the remainder of the year. November 2014 needs a recording secretary.

3. Approval of September 24, 2014 minutes –Minutes were approved.

4. Follow-up from last meeting/updates:

a. Wellness

- Senior Health Class/college student speakers – Lori Mediate has been working with Maggie Wills at FU to have her students speak to HS seniors in health class at both Ludlowe and Warde High Schools. Wendy Bentivegna attended the FU class to preview the topics which included: Night Life – perception vs. reality; ER situations and your response; student athlete issues – challenges and rewards; substance abuse issues; time management issues; and others. Wendy said the topics were varied and interesting and the students were open to feedback. This is the first semester that the program will be implemented. There is discussion to see about getting Sacred Heart students to work at the HS's for the second semester as Maggie will be on sabbatical and it would be nice to see Sacred Heart involved, if not this year then perhaps in the future. A small group will meet to discuss how the program can be continued when Maggie is on leave and how best to reach all seniors at both high schools.

b. Mental Health

- Phil Dwyer recently came across a report from the Stamford schools on what their approach is regarding mental health. He will bring this up at the next sub-committee meeting as the group is looking at what the community provides and how all the different bodies work together. Michelle Walker commented that she knows college counselors often do depression screening.
- Cristin McCarthy Vahey commented that Margaret Watt, from SWRMHB, was recently in Fairfield at a SEPTA event and did provide screenings for people that were in attendance; a Turning Point representative was also there. There might be some work collaborations with AFSP in the future as the coalition continues to look into mental health issues in the community.
- Pam Paulmann – do they offer Fresh Check to high school seniors in Fairfield? No; it is very effective at FU and SHU (reported by Pam and Leonora Campbell).

- Nina Chanana commented that the SWRMHB has a great handout that references many mental health agencies and services; Denique Weidema-Lewis will send an electronic copy; Denique has many resources from the SWRMHB that she can share with the group.

c. Substance abuse

- Freshman Forums are scheduled for the 13th at Ludlowe HS and the 19th at Warde HS – they will be using surveys at both events to get feedback from those in attendance.
- Tobacco Program – Wendy Bentivegna reported that we need to look for another option for spending our tobacco prevention funds, as the program they had hoped to bring to seniors at both high schools is not feasible as presented. There is limited interest from the teachers and coordinating a senior assembly is not an option.
- Lori Mediate raised the question regarding other avenues that Fairfield Cares can use the tobacco money (\$1000). She asked the state for ideas and she has forwarded them onto the teachers to get feedback. It really depends what the group wants to use the money for. Lori thinks it might be worthwhile to get materials on e-cigarettes that can be posted throughout both high schools.
- Catherine Giff added that the coalition can also add a handout to the forum packets.
- Pam Paulmann commented that because there is so much information and misinformation in the community regarding e-cigarettes (there are vapor stores open in Fairfield) handing out materials and educating the public on this issue would be helpful. The coalition agreed.
- Lori will forward a recommendation on e-cigarette materials to Wendy.

d. Research

- Presentation of survey data –
 - Bob Francis, RYASAP, is meeting with all health teachers on Election Day
 - Presentation on October 16th, 7:30 at Ludlowe HS PTA meeting; open to Warde as well
 - Anyone who wants to schedule a presentation please contact Denique Weidema-Lewis.

e. Publicity – 202 followers on FB page;

- Brochure – Michelle Walker has started a mock-up of a brochure and will work with Nina Chanana and Wendy on finalizing the content.
- November Press Release – Cristin and Wendy would like to put out a press release on the new RYASAP student survey data; they will be asking a coalition member to help with this.
- Christine Vitale commented that the questions regarding the survey data presentation will be around what action is being taken in the Fairfield community. As a PTA what can we do to support the students and the schools? Catherine Giff has put together a powerpoint presentation which includes data from 2008 through 2014 and it will be presented at the Freshman Forum.
- Marty Hauhuth commented that the strength of the coalition is that it is able to bring together and use many agencies to work on the issues. Cristin remarked that as a coalition we are building our capacity in the community and working together to build links and tackle issues.

- Wendy will speak briefly about Fairfield Cares at the PTA meeting: letting parents know who we are and how we partner in the community to address these issues.

f. Other Updates/Announcements

- Chris Herron – for anyone interested Chris Herron is speaking at Wilton HS, October 21st.
- Wendy shared information on a program being offered at Staples HS. The TAG students have put together a DUI event with the Westport PD that includes riding a golf cart while wearing fatal vision glasses, DUI tests, etc.
- Recently there was a distracted driving program offered to juniors and seniors at Ludlowe HS which was put together by the Support Our Students club (one of the health teachers is the advisor). Each year the club takes on a different topic. This was a free program offered by the DOT and included a video, discussion, and simulation (driving while distracted).
- The Staples Teen Awareness Group (TAG) is expanding and would love to connect with any local schools (possibly in Fairfield?).
- Parent Connect – Liz Decker will be running the program through Fairfield Counseling; it has been running for the past 2 years; she is excited to run parent groups by age/topic. This is an informal group facilitated by licensed counselor. One idea is to use the library as some people might not want to meet at Fairfield Counseling; it is hoped that the program can be publicized by the library as it is a free program. Cristin commented that one topic idea is “how to host a party for your child?” as many parents struggle with this issue.
- Youth Engagement/Leadership Conference – this is a conference in Wilton at the Trackside Teen Center and is open to interested Fairfield youth or youth groups. Lauren Lanham will share permission slips when they become available. The event is scheduled for Saturday, November 15th from 10-2pm and is \$20/student. Last year’s topic was QPR and it varies year to year; this year there will be a speaker who was a victim of sexual assault and also a session on stress and anxiety. Anyone who is interested in participating or knows of youth who might be should contact Wendy.

g. Next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19th