

**Fairfield Cares Community Coalition**  
**March 18, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Wendy Bentivegna, Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Pam Paulmann, Tim Morris, Marty Hauhuth, Catherine Giff, Patsy King, Reini Knorr, Lori Mediate, Alida Ward, Terry Giegengack, Karin Shaughnessy, Denique Weidema-Lewis, Anne Stewart and Caryn Campbell

**Opened:** The general meeting was opened at 8:30am by co-chair Wendy Bentivegna

**Minutes:** By unanimous consent, the minutes of February 18, 2015 were approved.

**Updates:**

**State Budget/ Items to keep an eye on:**

- There is a current budget proposal under consideration which, if approved, would essentially defund Regional Action Councils (RACs) and Regional Mental Health Boards.
- There are several bills moving forward in support of regulating e-cigarettes
- Powdered alcohol, “Palcohol”, has been approved for sale in the U.S. by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, but legislation to ban the sale or possession of powdered alcohol in Connecticut cleared a general assembly committee recently. Phone calls to legislatures in support of the bill to prohibit sales of this product in CT are encouraged.

**School Events:**

- FWHS- badminton Tournament to support Center for Family Justice was a success, with approximately 21 teams. FLHS is holding their tournament Tuesday 3/24 and is expecting 15-25 teams to participate.
- Mock crash scheduled for 5/14 @FLHS
- Senior pre prom speakers: FLHS - Michael Gershe on “The Magic of Life”; FWHS - Family Justice Center and Chief of Police Gary McNamara around the White Ribbon campaign ( to end violence against women).
- Fairfield University is showing “Behind the Orange Curtain”, a documentary that explores the Rx Drug problem in Orange County, California on Thursday 3/19 @ 630pm in the Kelly Center, with a panel discussion to follow.

**QPR to Southport Congregational Youth Group:** Wendy and Lauren are presenting QPR to the Southport Congregational youth group and any interested parents on Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 7pm

**Research/RYSAP**

Denique reiterated her desire to meet with youth to obtain qualitative data on topics which were addressed in recent youth survey. She would like to complete as many as possible by the end of the school year in the survey towns. **Follow up; inquire about interested students through:**

- Tim and Steph- school student groups
- Ginna- town youth group (participated in development of supplemental survey so would be good to speak with them again)
- Alida- church youth groups

**Senior Health Class/college student speakers:** Lori reported that due to a lack of response from our college student volunteers, the student speaker program is cancelled for second semester of this year. There is a meeting scheduled between Maggie Wills, Pam Paulmann and the high school health educators on April 30th to plan for next year, when all health 40 classes will be offered during marking period 3.

**Life After High School:** This program is now scheduled for Wednesday May 13<sup>th</sup> and will be a parent only program this year. Pam Paulmann and Leonora Campbell will be the featured speakers and will focus on 3 main areas: 1) binge drinking, 2) Sex and 3) Rx drug use

- In addition to these prevention related topics, the importance of addressing skills related to time management and available resources for students and parents was recognized and will be incorporated into the presentations.
- Parent Handbook is in production; will share draft with FLHS (do they want to contribute a letter of their own to be available to insert for attending Ludlowe students, or just promote through pta e-mail?)
- Catherine Giff would like to include a hand-out of the "Top 10 things I wish I'd told my kids" and invites all coalition members to e-mail her one or two ideas for that list at their earliest convenience.

### **Publicity**

Sample draft of coalition brochure circulated; hope to finalize by April meeting

### **Marijuana Fact Sheet**

Draft of Marijuana Myths and Facts sheet was shared and final version will be shared electronically with the coalition before April meeting, in hopes of getting it out to parents via pta blasts and Peach Jar. Also available for printing as hand-out as requested.

### **OTHER.**

- Parent Connect program will begin after spring break and will be held at the Library's main branch; awaiting details and promotional materials from FCS.
- Caryn Campbell reported on a February Professional development day where the school counselors and support staff were joined by a panel of community service providers, including : Life Bridge, Family Services Woodfield, Kids in Crisis and a Carron Foundation representative among others.

There is a strong desire to continue conversations with these providers on a regular basis. To that end, Terry Giegengack communicated her intent to schedule, and willingness to work together with FC and the schools to host, a provider breakfast in October for the purpose of getting community resources together. This idea was supported enthusiastically by the entire coalition.

- Mental Health Community Resource packet/brochure: It was noted that this is already underway and Terry and Patsy should touch base to see what already exists vs what may need to be created/updated so as not to duplicate efforts.
- FWHS held a full day program for sophomores entitled "The Truth about Hate" with the Anti-Defamation League; very well received and hope to make it an annual event for sophomores.
- FWHS is being visited and recognized by the Governor (3/18) for its increasing graduation rates in combination with its increasingly diverse population.

The **next meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 8\***, 2015 at 8:30 am. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25am

\*Note this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month vs regularly scheduled 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday due to April break

Respectfully submitted Wendy Bentivegna