



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – January 25, 2016

Attendance: Danielle Sutton, Carolyn Sass, Olivia O’Shea, Simone Greenberg, Rob Antonucci Connor Connaughton, Gioia Cianciarulo, Domenic Cianciarulo, Sophia Paravalos, Emily Keith, John Loughnane, and Trish Tucke

I. **Call to Order:** The meeting convened at the Islington Community Center and was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. **Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** Minutes from the December board meeting were accepted.

III. Director’s Report:

Clinical Services

*There are currently **40 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, the same number as in the month of December: 28 individual clients; 6 family clients; 6 parent consultations.

*There have been **3 new intakes** for counseling services so far in the month of January. There is not currently a waitlist for services, and residents are able to be placed with a clinician or graduate intern with an average turn-around time of two weeks. As always, referrals are triaged so that those residents in most immediate need are prioritized.

*There are currently three sessions of **Structured Play Groups**, with a total of **23 participants**, running each week.

Program Updates

*Marketing and applications for the annual **Recognize-a-Youth (R.A.Y)** program have begun to be disseminated around the community. R.A.Y. awards are given to young people in Westwood who have shown an extraordinary commitment to community service and volunteerism. Please help us in considering applicants for this year, and in spreading the word about the R.A.Y. program!

*The third Thurston Middle School Dance of the year will take place next Friday, February 5th, with our **Teen Center Mentors** and Y&FS staff acting as role models and chaperones for the event.

*The **Bullying Prevention Theater (BPT)** performances will take place for the sixth grade classes at the Thurston this Tuesday, January 26th and Thursday, January 28th. Parent information sessions were held in the morning and evening of Monday, January 11th, and informational packets have been distributed to all sixth grade students, parents and teachers.

*The **Friends Network** program continues, with two groups of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students meeting with their 9th-12th grade Mentors each Wednesday night at the Senior Center.

*The **Thurston Thursday Club** program continues, with middle school students and high school Mentors hanging out and playing games at the Thurston each week.

*Coordination efforts have already begun with the elementary schools and Westwood High School in preparation for the **Body Safety Theater (BST)** program. **BST auditions will be held this Thursday, January 28th**, and performances and classroom visits will be held at all elementary schools in the Spring of 2016.

Community Connections

*On Friday, January 8th, Westwood joined other youth & family services departments in Northborough for a **quarterly meeting of Y&FS departments** from around the Commonwealth.

*Y&FS helped to support **Westwood Community Chest's annual Chiara fundraiser** by connecting with the local chapter of the National Charity League. For the second year in a row, resident and parent, Kathy McInnis, recruited high school volunteers from the Westwood/Canton chapter of the National Charity League for the Chiara event coat check.

*Y&FS has been invited to support WHS in the implementation of their **Signs of Suicide (S.o.S.)** program and first-time (for WHS) depression screening with the 9th grade Wellness classes in March 2016.

*The work to support the families in **Emergency Shelter at the Budget Inn** has evolved and intensified as the state has implemented a new voucher program that will provide families in Westwood with opportunities to move to more permanent housing between December 2015 and March 2016. In addition to current resource programming, the community groups and town and school departments in the Westwood provider group must now consider how to help connect families with the basic necessities required to establish themselves in new apartments and houses.

*Since September, WY&FS, along with the IAM Strong Foundation, have attended monthly **Westwood Disability Commission** meetings as local mental health representatives. The Disability Commission invited this representation as they are focusing on mental health issues throughout this year and into spring of 2016.

IV. Old Business:

Feedback from SAPC focus group: Board members provided feedback that they felt that the focus group was a good use of time and resources. Members from high school group in particular found the facilitator to be open, kind, non-judgmental, and that the facilitator mentioned they took some information away as well. Adult board members found the process helpful in connecting with other parents, and felt they were on the same page as other adults in terms of their concerns for the community.

Information was shared about Westwood Cares and working with the SAPC grant for substance abuse addiction for both alcohol and other substance abuse concerns. Of note was addressing opioid addiction affecting our community. -

One way that the Town is addressing this issue is by providing a medication disposal site at the police department available to residents to properly dispose of leftover medication.

William James Referral Service Update - We received the data from our first month subscribing to the Interface Referral Service. From Nov 1-Dec 31st they referred 32 people from Westwood for services, which is a higher than normal average for towns that are new to the service. -

During the discussion, a board member followed up on a previous idea presented to send out magnets with the Interface Referral Service phone number and information to all residents. Next steps for this would be to figure out costs and funding sources to support this effort. Nothing further was proposed.

V. New Business

The RAY Program was recently launched. Community members and board members are encouraged to nominate a youth who has taken initiative on their own for community services within Westwood or beyond.

Student Board Member Process – Applications will be made available in Feb. and Mar. for high school sophomores interested in applying to serve on the Advisory Board. Applications are due in mid-late March.

Westwood Community Chest: WCC recently received a donation of \$50,000 from a resident. Danielle discussed the benefits of this program aiding families in the community for help with financial aid.

Grief and Loss Support at the Sheehan: Danielle reported that WY&FS will be involved in providing grief and loss support training for teachers at the Sheehan in response to the loss of a parent in the community.

Danielle discussed changes in the department due to maternity leaves ending for Joanna and beginning for her starting in March. Sarah Baroud will be stepping in as the Interim Director during Danielle's leave and will be present at meetings in February and March that are typically attended by Danielle to help with transition of Director duties.

High School: Mid-terms finished up with successful study periods sponsored at the library with snacks! For Juniors, guidance counselors discussed the college admissions and application process.

High school students visited the Thurston to talk to 8th graders about choosing electives and fielding questions about the high school experience.

The Girls' Hockey team visited Rosie's Place where they prepped, cooked, served food for 40-50 people.

Chime Charity Concert is Tuesday with proceeds donated to Myanmar, and an instrument collection will also be available for the community to donate instruments for kids.

Practice for the high school musical, *9 to 5*, is underway. Performances are March 10-12th.

Council on Aging: Trish spoke of the programming put on by the COA and how well attended these events are. She spoke specifically about the multi-generational programs. Each month the COA Vans provide over 200 rides to senior residents.

V. Adjournment

Minutes respectfully submitted by Carolyn Sass and reviewed by Mary Ellen LaRose