



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – September 26, 2016

Attendance: Daniel O’Connor, Zane Rahabi, Jan Midiri, Simone Greenberg, Austin Bushey, Olivia Goldberg, Brad Pindel, Olivia O’Shea, Sophia Paravalos, Domenic Cianciarulo, Robbie Antonucci, Danielle Sutton, Mary Ellen LaRose, David Russell, John Loughnane, Trish Tucke, Alicia Lamonda

I. **Call to Order:** The meeting convened at the Islington Community Center and was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

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

III. Interim Director’s Report:

Clinical Services

*There are currently **36 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 29 individual clients; 2 family clients; 5 parent consultations.

*There were **15 new intakes** for counseling services over the months of August and September. 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.

***Girls Groups** and **Structured Play Groups** are up and running with 25 participants across three weekly groups.

Program Updates

*Thanks to the work of Sarah in her Interim Director role, as well as to Mary Ellen and Nina, we welcomed a new school and two new Graduate Interns to our **Graduate Internship program**. Stephanie Miller and Stefanie O’Brien, both of Simmons School of Social Work, will be working and learning with us over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year.

*This year’s first **Thurston Middle School Dance** event took place on Friday, September 16th, with Mentors interacting and helping to chaperone the great crowd of middle school students.

***The Dub Club**, formerly known as Thurston Thursday Club, began last week. The program will run on Thursday afternoons throughout the school year. Thanks to the middle school for incorporating us into their sign-up process for after-school programs!

*The auditions for this year's **Bullying Prevention Theater** (BPT) program took place last Thursday night, and rehearsals for high school Mentors will start up this week. Performances typically take place at the Thurston in January.

***Friends Network** will begin in the first week of November with record numbers of participants! There are currently 30 3rd-5th grade students registered, and a pool of over 40 high school Mentor applicants, for the two sessions that will run each Wednesday evening from November-April.

Community Connections

*WY&FS participated in this year's **Westwood Day** event with all staff members volunteering on Friday night or Saturday to help the Recreation Department with the monumental task that is Westwood Day!

*Over the summer, Sarah worked with **WestCAT** to coordinate filming here at the Y&FS department. Stay tuned to your local cable access channel to see staff introductions and descriptions of programs and services. The critics are calling the performances, 'inspired' and 'captivating'... ☺ Board members requested to be notified when spots will be broadcast on WestCAT.

*In addition to the marketing on WestCAT, Mary Ellen has continued to add to our online presence through frequent, informative and interesting posts to the **Y&FS Facebook, Twitter and Instagram** accounts.

*On August 18th, Y&FS again joined other community leaders from Westwood at a **Regional Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative** meeting held in Needham. This is a multidisciplinary collaborative created out of the Regional Substance Abuse Prevention grant that Westwood (via Board of Health) secured along with the towns of Needham, Dedham and Norwood.

*On September 12th, the Y&FS department, along with the other human services departments of Westwood, was presented to the **Board of Selectmen** as a way of informing the newest Selectman, John Hickey, and updating the Board as a whole.

*WY&FS continues to take part in the **Islington Center Task Force**, which is moving along in the process of gathering resident input and reviewing proposals for development in the area.

Domenic thanked Danielle and the staff for hosting "Open Office Hours" on Saturday, August 13th for Westwood residents in need of support due to the sudden death of two young adults in our community.

V. **Old Business:** None

VI. **New Business**

CORI checks – All junior class student members submitted their information.

WY&FS Parent Survey Results: The group reviewed the results/data and gave feedback on the Parent Survey that was conducted this spring. WY&FS received 301 parent responses. The group will continue the discussion at future meetings. Some highlights included coming up with new ways to inform the community of the services WY&FS provides, connecting parents to additional parenting information perhaps in a webinar series, additional online links and continued collaboration with WestCAT.

Community Liaisons:

Westwood High School: Sophia and Robbie noted the student section “the Den” at the WHS games has been more active this year. Simone mentioned clubs are starting. Zane talked about Tri M’s first meeting and Olivia talked a bit about National Honor Society. There was a short discussion about the college application process and deadlines.

Thurston Middle School: Austin shared Curriculum Night was a big success. The school is piloting an Advisory period this year. Advisory block is 20 minutes long and the class sizes are small between 10-12 students per group. All staff members conduct an advisory group and ongoing training is taking place on how to build good relationships in these classes. Two purposes of the block is to build community and give the students a break in their day. Danielle commented she has heard these types of classes can decrease stress levels and increase the level of connection students feel in a school. Austin’s after school group “Choose to Be Nice” should be up and running soon with possible collaboration with the peer leaders program.

Westwood Cares: David reported the group is hosting a fall speaker on November 15th. The group is planning on expanding to include student membership.

Food Pantry: The pantry is a bit sparse at the moment but due to a generous donation, they will be able to shop at the Boston Food Bank. In November the pantry will be looking for volunteers to help with their sorting day after the Boy Scouts Food Drive.

Westwood Community Chest: Alicia reported the Community Chest is planning their annual Chiara fundraising event for the last Monday in January. The group continues to work on outreach to the community and encourages applications for financial assistance.

Westwood Police: Brad reported the construction for the new police stations is moving along quickly. He is currently working with the elementary schools on bus evacuation drills.

VI. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose.