



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – November 23, 2015

Members present: Alicia Lamonda, Domenic Cianciarulo, Carolyn Sass, Jan Midiri, Brad Pindel, John Loughnane, Austin Bushey, Danielle Sutton, Gioia Cianciarulo, Sophia Paravalos, Simone Greenberg, Olivia O’Shea, Arlene Kasarjian, Mary Ellen LaRose

I. Call to Order: The meeting convened at the Islington Community Center and was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

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

III. Director’s Report:

Department News:

The Youth & Family Services department is happy to announce that Youth Services Counselor, Joanna Bengel, has welcomed her second child, Emma Jane Eygabroat, into the world. Emma was born on Friday, November 6th at 12:04PM, weighing in at 7lbs, 15oz. She is doing well at home with her parents and big sister, Ella. Congratulations to the whole family!

Clinical Services

*There are currently **40 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 6 more than in the month of October: 31 individual clients; 5 family clients; 4 parent consultations.

*There have been **9 new intakes** for counseling services in the month of November, comparable to 5 new intakes in the month of October. 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.

*Our first two **Structured Play Groups** (total of **13 participants**) of the year wrapped up on November 10th and 12th, with two new groups scheduled to begin the first week in December. The 12-week **Girls Only! Group** continues through December 16th with **9 group members** attending.

Program Updates

*The annual **Holiday Giving** program is in full swing, thanks to the coordination efforts of Mary Ellen! There are currently **43 Westwood families**, with **75 children**, receiving gifts through the program this year.

*The **Bullying Prevention Theater (BPT)** program rehearsals continue on Thursday night, and performances are expected to take place at the Thurston in January.

*After an intensive interview and matching process, as well as an orientation, in October, the **Friends Network** program began in the first week of November. Each week, high school Mentors meet with their “Little Friends” from the 3rd, 4th or 5th grades at the COA. Thanks to the efforts of Youth Services Counselor, Sarah Baroud, long-time leader, Nina Johnston, and new leader, our Interim Youth Services

Counselor, Nina Banozic, we have been able to expand the program from one to two sessions each Wednesday, allowing for more high school students to volunteer as Mentors and more elementary school students to participate.

*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 and rehearsals will start in January, and performances and classroom visits will be held at all elementary schools in the Spring of 2016.

Community Connections

*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.

*On Wednesday, November 4th, Y&FS attended the IAM Strong Foundation's presentation by **Kevin Breel, "Confessions of a Depressed Comic", at the Norwood Theatre**. Kevin Breel is well known for his TED Talk on the same topic, and is an advocate for de-stigmatizing mental health issues.

Congratulations go out to Y&FS Advisory Board Member, Sophia Paravalos, for her amazing musical performance at the event!

*On November 17th and 18th, Y&FS clinicians were at the Thurston to support their **Signs of Suicide (S.o.S.)** program and screening of the 7th grade classes.

*On November 18th, Y&FS took part in the first meeting of **the Islington Center Task Force**. A group made up of municipal employees, Islington residents and representatives of several local community groups, with the mission of reviewing and discussing the physical attributes and uses of privately and municipally- owned properties in the Islington Center. The group will be making recommendations to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen as either board considers decisions affecting Islington Center. Danielle spoke about changes in the sanctuary space specifically the pews.

V. Old Business

Danielle updated the group on the William James INTERFACE Referral Service. The service became available to Westwood residents on November 1st. A flyer was created using input from board members and has been introduced to the town through the town website, Town Newsletter, Rec. Department Brochure, Council on Aging Newsletter and the WPS district bulletin. Town human services staff and WPS staff will be trained on how it works. The group discussed ways to increase publicity and potentially applying for a grant to use towards publicity efforts.

Mary Ellen gave an update on the Holiday Giving Program collection and distribution of gifts to residents in need.

VI. New Business

Danielle shared with the group that the town is looking into enhancing security for the Islington Community Center. Brad and Austin gave input from their experience on how security is handled at other town and school buildings. Other board members gave ideas. Overall the board was supportive of increasing security.

VII. Community Updates

Alicia spoke about Westwood Young Women's Club hosting Winterfest this year on December 5th.

Food Pantry - Danielle talked about a high school class that is assisting at the food pantry.

Westwood Cares – The group is planning an event for spring 2016. Danielle explained Westwood Cares involvement with a Substance Abuse Prevention Collaboration (SAPC) Grant with the towns of Needham, Dedham and Norwood. Recently Westwood Cares members interviewed community members about substance issues in town. This feedback will help shape what Westwood and regional programming will look like.

WPD School Resource Officer Brad shared that the department will again be running a RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) Program for high school students. Brad is speaking with freshman and 7th grade classes regarding substance abuse.

Middle School – Austin gave an update on the recent SOS (Signs of Suicide) Program. There was a 95% participation rate. The number of students screened in went down from last year. In the future the program may run in health classes with guidance counselors and health teachers co-facilitating. The 1st trimester will be finishing up on December 4th. The school received a Westwood Educational Foundation grant to help start up a Community Service Club. Austin will be leading the group.

High School – Students are fundraising for a Dance Marathon on December 13th. TRI M Society is providing carolers for WYWC Winterfest.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.