



## Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – September 28, 2015

**Members present:** Austin Bushey, Carolyn Sass, Sophia Paravalos, Olivia O’Shea, Simone Greenberg, Gioia Cianciarulo, Domenic Cianciarulo, John Loughnane, Trish Tucke, Robbie Antonucci, Emily Keith, Arlene Kasarjian, David Russell, Danielle Sutton, Brad Pindel, Jan Midiri, Mary Ellen LaRose

**I. Call to Order:** The meeting convened at the Westwood Senior Center and was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

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

**III. Nominations:** David accepted official nominations of Dominic Cianciarulo for president and John Loughnane for vice-president. The motion was accepted and seconded. The board voted unanimously in favor of the two candidates.

**IV. Introductions:** The group broke into pairs for a “get to know you” activity similar to one used in our Structured Playgroups.

### **V. Director’s report:**

#### **Department Updates**

The Youth & Family Services department will be going through a variety of transitions this fiscal year! We’ve just welcomed our two new graduate interns, Carolyn Sass from Boston University’s School of Social Work and Hannah Jellinek from Boston College’s School of Social Work. Both will be with us through June of 2016. Soon, our Youth Services Counselor, Joanna Bengel, will head out on maternity leave with her second child, due in November.

Then, in March, just after Joanna is expected to return, our Director, Danielle Sutton, is expected to go out on maternity leave with her first child.

Rest assured we have a great plan in place to provide stability to the department and to ensure that residents have access to all of the same quality services and programs throughout the year!

Thanks to the support of our Town Administration and our Human Resources department, we will have a position to provide coverage in the department from October through July, spanning both maternity leaves and allowing for crossover between outgoing staff and interim coverage staff.

We are currently interviewing for the position of Interim Youth Services Counselor. The chosen applicant will serve in the role from October through July, covering Joanna’s maternity leave and then continuing to provide coverage at that level while our other Youth Services Counselor, Sarah Cleveland, steps into the role of Interim Director.

We are lucky to have such support from the Town, and to have Sarah and Mary Ellen holding down the fort throughout this year of transitions!

#### **Clinical Services**

\*There are currently **32 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload: 23 individual clients; 4 family clients; 5 parent consultations.

\*There have been **6 new intakes** for counseling services in the month of September. There is not currently a waitlist for services, and residents are able to be placed with a clinician or graduate intern with a typical turn-around time of two weeks. As always, referrals are triaged so that those residents in most immediate need are prioritized.

\*Y&FS is employing a new system to address anticipated waitlists. If a resident requests counseling services and they are not able to be placed immediately due to a waitlist for services or another type of delay, Y&FS clinicians

have set aside time each week to perform one-time “**Consultations**”. This will be a one-hour meeting with the individual, family or parents/guardians to better assess the situation and to offer ideas, resources and support that might sustain them until such a time when ongoing counseling services can begin.

\***2015-2016 Structured Play Groups and Girls Only! Groups** have begun. There is currently a 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade Structured Play Group on Tuesday afternoons, a K/1<sup>st</sup> Structured Play Group on Thursday afternoons and a Girls Only! Group on Wednesdays. The Structured Play Groups are filled to capacity, and there are a total of 26 participants between the three groups.

### **Program Updates**

\*The **Mentor program** for high school-aged residents has begun. All 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders were invited to participate in volunteer programs with younger residents. Mentor programs include: **Body Safety Theater; Bullying Prevention Theater; Friends Network; Teen Center; Thurston Thursday Club.**

\*Thanks to the work of our Youth Services Counselors, Sarah and Joanna, we now have a completely **online registration** for our Structured Play Group and Girls Only! Group programs, as well as for the Mentor program.

\*Thanks to Mary Ellen’s leadership and ongoing efforts we were able to relaunch our social media platforms this summer, increasing activity on our **Facebook and Twitter** accounts.

### **Community Connections**

\*WY&FS has been named as the lead agency to coordinate a new community resource, the **William James’ INTERFACE Referral Service**. Starting on November 1<sup>st</sup>, any resident of Westwood can call this service to receive free resources and direct connection to mental health services. This service is being provided through a two-year subscription, funded in a 50/50 split between the Town of Westwood and the Westwood Public Schools. Forty-four communities in the state including Boston use this service. We are looking for suggestions on how to spread the word to residents. Danielle and the town are hopeful that this service will continue to break down the barriers to service for residents in need. Y&FS will appear on the resource list and in their database.

\*On Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, WY&FS was represented at a regional meeting of Youth & Family Services departments in Hopkinton, MA.

\*Y&FS continues to hold a leadership role in organizing monthly provider meetings for those town, school and state employees, as well as clergy members and motel owners, involved in supporting families staying in **Emergency Shelter** at the Budget Inn in Westwood. These meetings have been productive in terms of coordinating resources and efforts to support homeless families. Examples include an ongoing Food Pantry delivery program, the opportunity for every age-eligible child to attend summer camp and a resident who donates weekly pizza dinners for every family.

\*Y&FS continues to hold a leadership role in **Westwood Cares**, the local group dedicated to providing substance education and awareness in the community. Thanks to the coordination efforts of the group and funding from the WHS PTO and Westwood’s Celestial Lodge of Masons, there will be a fall speaker for parents of children from 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Speaker Joani Geltman will present on the topic of, ***Drugs and Alcohol: How Does Your Teen’s Personality Style, and Your Parenting Style, Impact Their Experimentation with Drugs and Alcohol?***

VI. **Old Business:** Advisory Board members submitted CORI check paperwork.

VII. **Adjournment** at 8:20 p.m. Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose