



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting December 15, 2014

Members Present: *Domenic Cianciarulo, David Russell, Alicia Lamonda, Arlene Kasarjian, Lucie Duffy, Jillian Donlon, Gioia Cianciarulo, Connor Connaughton, Matt O'Connor, Brad Pindel, Jan Midiri, Danielle Sutton, Mary Ellen LaRose*

I. Call to Order:

The meeting convened in the ICC Sanctuary and was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the November 24, 2014 meeting were accepted.

III. Director's Report

Clinical Services

*There are currently 31 clients on the WY&FS caseload, three fewer clients than at last report in November.

*There are currently 11 residents waiting to receive counseling services, one fewer than at last report. Four residents began receiving services in December. David Russell asked if WY&FS sees an uptick of services during the holiday season. Danielle responded that in the past there have been some acute intakes but the surge of intakes tends to be in the months of January and October.

*Placement to all staff and to our graduate intern is ongoing. At this time we are able to place most ongoing parent consultations, high-school aged and middle-school aged residents immediately (depending on their availability). Elementary-school aged clients are typically taking longer to place with clinicians due to limited afternoon availability. As always, referrals are triaged so that those residents in most immediate need are prioritized.

*The first sessions of Structured Play Groups ended the week of December 8th, and new groups will begin the week of January 5th. Sarah Cleveland has organized the girls' groups program and that is ongoing through the year.

Program Updates

*The Holiday Giving program is in full swing, thanks to the leadership and organizational efforts of Mary Ellen! Local sponsors have been contacted and were provided with gift information in early November. Sponsor donations were collected up through today, and recipients will be able to pick up gifts on December 18th and 19th.

*All Mentor programs, with the exception of Body Safety Theater (BST), are up and running at this time. BST is slated to begin in January of 2015. We are again requesting funding for BST from the elementary school PTO/PTA's, with letters being sent to elementary school Principals week before last.

*Bullying Prevention Theater (BPT) rehearsals continue, with performances for the 6th grade classes at the Thurston expected to take place in the last week of January. Sarah is coordinating with Thurston Guidance Staff to plan for performances and classroom visits by the Mentors.

*The Thurston Thursday Club program has run each Thursday in November, with Joanna and the Mentors providing an after-school experience for 6th, 7th and 8th graders from 2:30-4:00PM each week. We continue to note low attendance to Thurston Thursday Club, with fewer than 10 middle school students in attendance each week. This seems to be due in part to more after-school offerings for Thurston students, including open gym which is a draw for many of the students who have typically attended Thurston Thursday Club.

*The second Thurston Middle School Dance took place this past Friday, December 12th and Joanna and the Teen Center Mentors were there to provide a good experience for those middle school students in attendance. 63 Thurston students attended, a low turn-out for a Thurston Dance event.

*Sarah and our graduate interns, Carolyn and Jaymie, along with WHS Guidance staff, continue to co-lead a Stress Management Group at WHS. The interns are wrapping up their first semester with school and with our department.

*Y&FS staff began leading two 8-week support groups for eighth grade students at the Thurston Middle School, beginning on Tuesday, December 2nd and Thursday, December 4th. These small groups have the goal of providing students with psycho-education and support around grief and coping skills. Sarah and Danielle lead one day a week and Joanna and Danielle the other day.

Community Connections

*Advisor visits and mid-year evaluations have been completed for our graduate interns, Carolyn and Jaymie. The Boston College Graduate School of Social Work is very pleased with Y&FS as an internship site, and we are all pleased with the work of the interns so far this academic year.

*Y&FS is taking a leadership role in organizing provider meetings for those town, school and state employees, as well as clergy members and motel owners, involved in supporting families involved in Transitional Assistance and staying in temporary shelter at the Budget Inn. These meetings have been productive in terms of coordinating resources and efforts to support homeless families in Westwood. Meetings are held monthly, with the last one taking place on Thursday, December 4th.

IV. Liaison Reports:

Westwood High School: Matt mentioned that the High School blood drive was a success with an increase in donors from last year.

Jillian noted that Engineering classes will be going to see a presentation they helped developed at Olin College. The Student Council is selling candy canes and the money raised will be donated to Westwood Community Chest.

Lucy stated that Holiday Music concerts have been a highlight this month.

Gioia gave an overview of the upcoming production of Godspell. There will be a cast of 41. Rehearsals will begin after the holiday break and performances will be in Mid-March. Computer Science students ran a mini-course at Martha Jones.

Student board members and Danielle spoke about the stress some seniors are feeling around college acceptance and rejections letters that are trickling in this time of year.

Thurston Middle School: Danielle noted that Teen Center dances have had rather low attendance. Middle School administrators are reaching out to students on interest going forward.

Principal Borchers will be filling in as interim assistant superintendent while Emily Parks is on maternity leave.

Elementary Schools: Jan thanked Danielle for her well-received presentation on parenting at the Downey.

V. Community Liaisons: Officer Pindel mentioned an OUI grant from the state that Westwood officers are taking part in. He also spoke about distracted driving and teens. It was mentioned this might be a topic to consider for Westwood Cares.

David recently spent time working at the Westwood Food Pantry and found the experience to be very humbling.

Alicia spoke of the Westwood Young Women's Club recent fundraiser, Winterfest. Despite the weather, the day was a success.

David and Danielle talked about recent developments with the Westwood Cares group. The high school PTO will have a representative on the board and principals have been attending on a more regular basis. The group continues to explore presentations for students and parents. David notes that Westwood Cares is a great opportunity for our board to expand what we are doing.

VI. New Business:

Danielle discussed that even with an additional clinician WYFS continues to have a waitlist for services. She suggested that it might be a good idea to explore a referral service such as The **MSPP INTERFACE Referral Service** which collects and categorizes a wide range of valuable resources related to mental health and wellness for the benefit of the general public children and families. A number of surrounding communities including Needham and Newton use this service. Towns pay a set fee based on population each year to subscribe. Any resident could call the hotline for assistance and the MSPP does the leg work to set them up with a clinician or services either through the town Y&FS office or a private mental health professional.

VII. Adjournment – All business completed and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Next meeting will be on February 23, 2015

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose

