



**Westwood Youth  
& Family Services**

**Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting October 27, 2014**

**Members Present:** *Karen Poreda, Domenic Cianciarulo, David Russell, Arlene Kasarjian, Jan Midiri, Kathy Sullivan Wallace, Gioia Cianciarulo, Emily Keith, John Loughnane, Alicia Lamonda, Danielle Sutton, Lucie Duffy, Jillian Donlon, Mary Ellen LaRose*

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting convened in the ICC Sanctuary and was called to order at 7:15pm. Introductions were made around the table for our new board members.

**II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the September 29, 2014 meeting were accepted.

**III. Director's Report**

**Clinical Services**

\*There are currently 31 clients on the WY&FS caseload. 25 individuals, one (1) family and five (5) ongoing parent consultations, down from 35 total clients at last report in September.

\*Ten [10] new individuals or families came off the waitlist or were immediately placed with clinicians in October, a placement rate equal to that of September.

\*Seven [7] new intakes for counseling services were received in the month of October, slightly less than the eleven new intakes received in September.

\*There are currently four [4] residents waiting to receive counseling services. All are elementary-school aged.

\*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 and Girls Only! Group began on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, with a total of 24 participants.

**Program Updates**

\*We have a new Graduate Intern for 2014-2015! Jaymie Silverman, B.S., began at Y&FS on October 10<sup>th</sup> and will be with us through June of 2015. Jaymie is a final-year student in Boston College's GSSW and had a placement last year at the Bowman Elementary School in Lexington, MA with our very own Caroline Cohan!

\*The Holiday Giving program has begun, with advertisement of the program taking place throughout the month in the District Bulletin and through emails to local schools, community groups and programs. Families interested in participating as recipients in the program needed to register with the department by today, October 27<sup>th</sup>. Local sponsors have been contacted and will be provided with gift information in early November. Gifts will be collected and recipients will be able to pick up gifts on December 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

\*On Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sarah and our graduate intern, Carolyn, along with WHS Guidance staff, co-led a Stress Management Group at WHS. Twenty high school students attended.

\*Bullying Prevention Theater began on October 9<sup>th</sup>, and rehearsals are ongoing. We have 27 students in the program and are looking forward to having BPT back in action, with performances for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes at the Thurston expected to take place in January.

\*The first Thurston dance took place this past Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup> and the Teen Center Mentors did a great job chaperoning and acting as role models for the middle school students. 140 middle school students attended the dance. This year's model of collaboration between the Thurston and Y&FS department is working well by all accounts! There was discussion about not scheduling future dates on the same nights as High School Football games.

\*The Friends' Network program is having orientation for Mentors this Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. We were happy to see a large number of students apply and interview to be Friends' Network Mentors and were sorry that we could not take them all this year. We hope to expand the program in coming years to accommodate the interest of high school students in serving as 1:1 Mentors for younger residents.

\*The Thurston Thursday Club program begins this Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, with Joanna and the Mentors providing an after-school experience for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders from 2:30-4:00PM each week.

### **Community Connections**

\*Joanna, Sarah and the Graduate Interns, Carolyn and Jaymie, began this year's Internship Collaborative, held jointly with the Youth & Family Services departments in Needham and Dedham. Y&FS Board Member, Jan Midiri, generously donated her time to present to the group on Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>. Thank you, Jan!

\*On Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Danielle attended a reception at the Dedham Women's Exchange at 445 Washington Street. This organization has donated to WY&FS, as well as to other Westwood departments and non-profits, for many years.

\*On Wednesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, Y&FS Staff met with Thurston Principal, Allison Borchers, to discuss ongoing response efforts in the community following the sudden death of an eighth grade student this September. As a result of these meetings:

-Y&FS will be hosting a Parenting Meeting on Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> from 7:00PM-9:00PM in the Main Library Meeting Room on the topic of "*Grieving and Coping: Helping Children Navigate Their Lives After a Loss.*" This drop-in type session will give parents the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, learn about available resources and speak with counseling staff.

-Y&FS has also agreed to assist in facilitating support groups for eighth grade students at the Thurston Middle School over the coming months. These small groups would provide students with psyche education around grief and coping skills and strategies.

Danielle was invited to speak at the Downey PTO meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup> about strategies for parents to help elementary-aged children manage stress in healthy ways..

## **IV. Liaison Reports**

**Westwood High School** –Jillian, Lucie and Amy shared new developments regarding the Legislative Council and the student body. Recently they took action in response to a new app titled Street Chat which allows for anonymous postings similar to Yik Yak. The apps are having a negative impact on the school environment. The Council along with teachers facilitated an open forum in each homeroom to discuss the apps effect on school morale. Some students voiced that it is their right to use the app.

Others feel it is interfering with school life. Most were appreciative to be given the opportunity to share feelings with one another. Legislative Council is considering adding language to the handbook regarding social media apps. Planning is underway for Spirit Week. The theme will be one of team bonding and supporting one another. Gioia reported that in early November the drama department is putting on *Pricilla Dreams the Answer*. To accommodate all that wanted to be involved the director, Mr. Price has decided to have two casts.

**Thurston Middle School** – John stated he feels like some of the negative aspects of the social atmosphere at the high school are -trickling down to the middle school. Student board members commented that in small class discussions at WHS on topic of social media, this same theme was discussed and some high school students have considered the potential impact on younger students who look up to the high school students as role models.

**Elementary Schools** –Kathy shared that an artist had visited all the elementary schools regarding his project of creating art and leaving it in public place. People are encouraged to take the art home if they promise to smile at others more. Math Leagues are starting up at the school and preparations are underway for the Foundation for Westwood Education Spelling Bee.

**Community Liaisons** – David shared that Trish Tucke is looking for volunteers to assist with sorting canned goods for the Westwood Boy Scout Food Drive on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Alicia reported the Westwood Young Women's Club is working with Lions Club to update the Tot Lot on Nahatan Street.

**V. Old Business**

**VI. New Business** Westwood Cares is working on scheduling Amaura Kemmerer from Northeastern's Office of Prevention and Education to speak to WHS parents in Mid to Late November on substance use and healthy decision-making for teens.

**VII. Adjournment** - All business completed and meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

**Next meeting will be on November 24, 2014, at 7:15pm at the ICC.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose