



## Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – October 24, 2022

**Attendance:** Jan Midiri, Jeremy Stern, John Loughnane, Diana Martucci, Nicola Midiri, Christy McKenney, Julia Ritzenberg, Mary-Carol Waters, Gioia Cianciarulo, Ethan Walsh, Seowon Park, David Russell, Mary Ellen LaRose, Katy Colthart, Daniel Tryder, Trish Tucke, Nyla Bacchus, Brad Pindel

**I. Call to Order:** The meeting convened via Zoom Webinar and was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

**II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Gioia Cianciarulo to accept the 9/19/22 minutes. Brad seconded the motion. All were in favor of approving the meeting minutes.

**III. Old Business:**

**CORI paperwork reminder:** Mary Ellen explained the CORI process and the town's requirement and reminded WY&FS Advisory Board Members to complete and submit a CORI check form.

**IV. Director's Report:**

### Administrative Updates

We welcomed Shea Lonergan at the end of September. Shea is settling in nicely, seeing clients, running groups, and overseeing our theater programs.

We have also welcomed back Sarah Spinello (Westwood resident, consultant in years past) and last year's intern Liz Craig as consultants this year. They will be helping with programming and running some of our elementary-aged groups.

Katy is currently enrolled in the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership & Management program. She has completed 1/5 of the course and will graduate in May. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

### Clinical Services

There are currently **42 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 35 individual clients; 1 family client; 6 parent consultations.

There were **7 new intakes** for counseling services since our last report in September and we anticipate more referrals as school progress reports are going out.

There are currently **30 individuals or families on our "waitlist" for counseling services**, whenever there is a waitlist, we also share the William James INTERFACE Referral Service information as another option for residents and offer a one-time meeting with a Y&FS clinician so that families might have some initial resources while waiting. As always, referrals are triaged so that those residents in the most immediate need are prioritized.

Our group programs are starting this week. **Calm & Cope (our anxiety coping skills group)** is running on Mondays (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade) and Tuesdays (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade) this fall. We are holding a **K/1<sup>st</sup> Structured Play Group social skills group on Thursdays**. All groups have a maximum capacity of 8 group members.

We are already in the planning phase for the next round of groups and we will be offering **Structured Play Group social skills groups** for all ages groups this winter.

### Program Updates

We're happy to report that our **Mentor programs** are up and running. We had a total of 102 high school mentors apply this year and were able to fill 95 mentor spots in our programs.

#### **-Be SMARRT (Students Modeling and Advocating Respectful Relationships @ Thurston**

We currently have 10 mentors in the program. Auditions were held last week and roles will be assigned at the next meeting. We continue to work with Thurston administration to make appropriate changes to the skits and content for classroom discussions. *Thank you to Shea and Abby for overseeing this program with a shout out to Adina who has been coordinating all programs until Shea's arrival.*

#### **-Friends Network**

We currently have 30 Big Friends in this year's program. We had to waitlist ??? as of this writing. We are still interviewing all accepted Bigs and Littles. The Big training is scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup> and the program begins on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. *Adina, Christa, and Liz are doing a fabulous job organizing all these moving parts.*

#### **Teen Scene @ the Library is up and running.**

We have 20 mentors helping at the library on half-day Wednesdays and Friday afternoons this season. We made some changes to how the program would run this year and the changes seem to be working well. *Thanks again to Adina for collaborating with Felicia, the teen librarian, on this program.*

Thanks again to the entire staff for marketing, recruiting, and interviewing all the mentor applicants. We will be marketing later this fall for our Body Safety Theater program which will start in February 2023.

**Westwood Writes**, the intergenerational pen pal program that we piloted during the pandemic in partnership with the COA has **19 students** this year! In addition, we have collaborated with other Human Services departments to recruit more seniors that feel could benefit from the program. We have reached out to Recreation and the Library. Thanks to Claire's hard work at the Islington Branch we have **5** more seniors interested, for a total of **24** matches this year.

**Holiday Giving** is in full swing and Mary Ellen is doing a fabulous job coordinating this effort. Emails for donors and recipients have gone out and referrals are coming in. We are collaborating with WPS to be inclusive of students in the Metco program and are getting the word out to Westwood residents and WPS students. Mary Ellen will speak more about this program during the program focus portion of our meeting.

**Yoga Flow for Middle Schoolers** is currently full! Ellen O'Hara, Certified Yoga Instructor and Certified Trauma-Informed Yoga Instructor has offered to run a yoga program for us this fall. We piloted this idea last spring and had the chance to run another section this fall for Middle school-aged students. The program is limited to 12 participants and we marketed and sold out within a week.

### Community Connections

Y&FS staff is participating in the following local groups, boards and committees this fiscal year:

**-Community Chest**

**-Deerfield Site Council**

**-Human Services Function Group**

**-Community Crisis Intervention Team**

**-Early Childhood Council**

**-BIDMC-Needham Community Meeting**

- MMA Human Services Council
- Regional Internship Collaborative
- Westwood Cares
- WHS Legislative Council
- WPS Wellness Review Committee

- Regional Youth Commission Meetings
- WHS Child Study Team
- WHS Site Council
- WPS Incident Management Team

In addition, we are working with WPS and the School Committee to bring a Safe Gun Storage event to Westwood. The event will be held on the evening of November 16<sup>th</sup> at Wentworth Hall.

Katy continues to reach out/meet with community partners to explore how the department can better service the community

**V. WY&FS Program Spotlight: Holiday Giving Program:** Mary Ellen gave a brief overview of the history of the program and how it has evolved over the years. The program has expanded to include all students and their families enrolled in Westwood Public Schools. Residents who are interested in donating or receiving gifts should contact WY&FS by November 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **VI. New Business:**

**Wentworth Hall Update:** Katy commented that a lovely dedication ceremony was held on September 28<sup>th</sup> and she encouraged board members to stop by the building and check out the new space in the lower level when they have a chance. The space now has three separate meeting spaces that the Recreation Department, Library, Early Childhood Department and WY&FS are currently using for program. A user group has formed and will meet regularly to plan for space needs and other issues and opportunities that may arise.

#### **Community Liaisons:**

**Community Chest:** Katy will attend and represent the town and school department at the next meeting.

**Early Childhood Council:** Katy recently attended the council's first in-person meeting of the school year. She shared that the library and WECC are working on a parenting program that will bring parents together for mutual support. WY&FS Staff will facilitate and support this effort.

**Food Pantry:** Trish took part in the Interfaith Walk for Hunger in September. It was well attended and brought in donations for the pantry and pantries in surrounding towns. The pantry continues to add new clients weekly. The Johnny's Box of fruit and vegetables which is delivered monthly to participating clients is very popular and appreciated. The Townwide Food Drive which is part of the Cub Scouts "Scouting For Food" program will take place on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at Thurston from 9-12 p.m.. This is traditionally the pantry's largest drive of the year.

**Police Department:** Brad noted that early voting is taking place at the Police Station. He will be visiting 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade wellness classes in the coming weeks to speak on substance abuse. Brad recently spoke about Westwood policing with students enrolled in the WHS class – Crime in America.

#### **Schools Update:**

**Westwood High School:** Ethan mentioned that WHS drama members will perform *Farnsworth Invention* in early November at the high school. He also shared information about how Junior public speaking classes will now include curriculum on civic action and engagement. Julia talked about the Key Club's food drive that is running in November to benefit the Food Pantry and an effort to plant tulip bulbs at the Bean Farm. Nicola noted that the Cheer Team will be competing in a tournament for the first time in two years. Daniel mentioned that Golf team is headed to the state tournament. Jeremy talked about an upcoming induction

ceremony for the National Spanish Honor Society students. John noted that the football team is off to a successful season so far. Seowon spoke about the end of term one approaching and that many clubs have had their first meetings. She also talked about the Passport program that encourages students to learn more about life skills during their S block.

**Thurston Middle School:** Christy spoke about upcoming teacher/student/parent conferences. Last year was the first year the conferences were student-led. It worked well so they will continue the model for this school year. She also mentioned she is serving on a committee to find the town's first poet laureate. Once an adult poet is found the committee will focus on finding a student to serve as a youth poet laureate for the town.

**Elementary:** Gioia spoke about upcoming parent teacher conferences at the elementary level and talked about student council elections at Sheehan.

VI. **Public Comment:** Jan shared information about the Mason's Angel Fund program for residents in need. David gave some background about the group and it was mentioned it might be a good idea to have a Mason representative share information at a future meeting.

VII. **Adjournment** - The meeting was called to adjournment at 7:51 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose