



## Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – March 22 , 2021

**Attendance:** Mary-Carol Waters, John Loughnane, Danielle Sutton, Mary Ellen LaRose, , Diana Martucci, Paul Marino, Eli Wasserman, Christy McKenney, Sophia Hebert, Brian Cole, Anna Rose Ott, Melissa DePina.

I. **Call to Order:** The meeting convened via Zoom Webinar and was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. **Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Christy McKenney and seconded by Diana Martucci to accept the 2/25/21 minutes. All were in favor of approving the minutes.

### III. Director's Report:

#### Clinical Services

\*There are currently **54 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 44 individual clients; 0 family clients; 10 parent consultations. (*This total is compared to 54 at our last meeting in February; ~37 in March of 2020; 52 in March of 2019; and 57 in March of 2018*).

\*There have been **4 new intakes** for counseling services so far in March (*compare to 4 intakes in February; ~4 intakes in March 2020; 8 in March 2019; 8 in March 2018*). There are currently **8 individuals or families on our "waitlist"** for counseling services, (*compared to 9 in February; zero in March 2020; 7 in 2019; and 1 in March of 2018*). Whenever there is a waitlist, we also share the William James INTERFACE Referral Service information as another option for those who do not have barriers to seeking private counseling through their insurance, and also 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 most immediate need are prioritized.

\*On March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>, our **virtual anxiety coping groups for 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders and 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders, titled, *Calm & Cope***, will begin. The curriculum for these six-week groups was developed by our Clinical Coordinator, Sarah Baroud and our Youth Services Counselor, Emily, and each of the two groups will be co- led by one clinical staff person and one graduate intern. Both groups are currently filled to capacity with 13 participants in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade group and 12 participants in the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade group. There are currently 11 children on the waitlist across all grades, warranting discussion of a second group/round of groups after these initial groups wrap up.

#### Program Updates

\*Thanks to Mary Ellen, news of the **Birthday Giving** pilot program went out into the community in the March 15<sup>th</sup> Town Newsletter (received by all households) and we already have a number of interested donors and at least one request for assistance. We will continue to promote the program and to accept donations and requests for assistance.

\***Westwood Writes: An Intergenerational Pen Pal Program** continues to go well with 20 pen pal pairs currently exchanging letters. COA Director, Lina Arena DeRosa, recently shared a lovely letter from a senior resident who wrote to her to express their thanks for the program.

\*Our Youth Services Counselor, Emily Greco, is conducting virtual meetings with Mentors from the **Bullying Prevention Theater** program to update the script and classroom activities.

\*The Y&FS department had a meeting earlier today with the Library and Early Childhood departments to discuss and plan for a collaborative **Spring Story Walk** that will focus on mental health/well-being. Another great idea brought to you by Mary Ellen LaRose!

### **Community Connections**

\*The Y&FS department continues to promote and share a **wellness resource for college, high school and middle school-aged residents: "You are Not Alone," Mental Health Support Modules for Students and Athletes During COVID-19 and Beyond.** These modules are short videos and lessons created by Ivy Watts, a former All-American student-athlete with degrees in Public Health and Psychology, and they cover topics such as self-care, resilience, dealing with uncertainty and how to stay motivated.

This offering is made available free-of-charge to Westwood teens and their families from our regional Community Health Network Alliance (CHNA-18), a coalition of public, non-profit, and private sectors working together to build healthier communities in Massachusetts through community-based prevention planning and health promotion. CHNA 18 serves the towns of Westwood, Needham, Dover, Dedham and additional MetroWest towns.

\*On Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, Y&FS clinical staff joined WHS student services staff to conduct a **well-being screening for all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students**, a variation on the grade-wide depression screening that typically takes place each year.

\*On Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, the newly-formed **Westwood Human Rights Task Force** held its kick-off meeting! All members are appointed by Town Administrator, Chris Coleman, with the goal of having a diverse representation to serve and assist the Town to identify, educate, inform and to assist in matters concerning human rights, and the Y&FS Director has been asked to serve as group co-Chair.

\*Regular weekly construction meetings continue for the **Wentworth Hall Redevelopment Project**. Each Tuesday, WY&FS joins other stakeholders at these virtual meetings to learn about and discuss ongoing aspects of the project construction. This past week, Y&FS staff were invited to take a brief tour of the space and to pick out paint colors for the new office. Very exciting!

\*The Y&FS department continues to work remotely as set up of our **temporary office space in the lower level of Town Hall nears completion**. This space in Town Hall will be our "home base" until we are settled in our permanent office space in the newly designed addition on Wentworth Hall in summer of 2021.

### **IV. Old Business:**

**Birthday Giving Pilot Program:** Mary Ellen gave details on the program and noted that it will launch in March. The Girl Scouts are currently collecting gift card donations for the program.

**Anxiety Coping Group:** Will begin next week. One by Sarah and other by Emily Greco and . Will run for six weeks, 12 in 4th and 5th grade groups and 13 in 2nd and 3rd. Waitlist talking about running another group. In the past we could never get enough interest but tell us about impacts and appetite for a program like this.

**METCO and WY&FS Parent Series:** Danielle followed up with the METCO director waiting to get update. Not sure where things stand. We are ready and available to collaborate whenever the program does happen. she will continue to update the board as planning for this series develops. John thanked Melissa for her role in planning this event and looks forward to hearing more details.

### **V. New Business:**

**Wentworth Hall Update:** We walked through space next week to pick out paint colors, tile and carpeting. Impressed with library, how much was preserved, once Move in date remains steady.  
**Construction**

**Story Walk** - met with Janet Lucey and Lizzie McGovern, current interim director of the library today. In the month of May - Child Mental health awareness, mindfulness, idea came out of survey results, we are looking for something for younger students, heard from parents of young children to do together and support given We will have 3 story walk locations. One at Hale, Sen Ki and University Station, greenway, Were excited

#### **Community Liaisons:**

**Community Chest:** Danielle shared that gala very well done and successful. Happy with results. Campership 5-18 will help will pay for camp for increased with no family cap. Recreation will Please promote and let know

**Westwood Cares:** Sarah will take leadership and reform that group to get back active and see who is interested in being part of reawakening

**Food Pantry:** Mary Ellen spoke about Girl Scout and Cub Scouts Food Drives.

**Early Childhood Council:** Danielle mentioned the council's initiative maintains "Little Free Diverse Libraries" filled with children's books amplifying diverse voices and social justice issues. They are looking for people to decorate the outside of the bookcase. They want them to reflect...school aged or adults if you as an individual or a group to paint these along that theme.

#### **Schools Update:**

**Westwood High School:** Sophia talking a lot of Senior Taskforce, first event is Senior Sunrise first day going back in person, have breakfast together, car decorating, Eli April 5th all going back in person, no hybrid person, custodians are working on they can all meet with 3 feet distance, some classes will be moving to larger spaces, spring sports beginning end of April, Brian in school choir have been able to sing inside for 20-30 minutes with masks on, John asked if Melissa knows more open and ready for collaboration still up for, personal developments, not much more Paul - juniors taking place soon for SATS., AP tests and ACT is coming up

**Thurston Middle School:** Christy preparing for April 5th. Most middle schoolers happy to come bac, . There is anxiety on lunches. Can be stressful pre pandemic. Middle school friend groups have changed. Friend groups Diana mentioned track in Spring. Fun 8th grade activities - yearbooks, t-shirts, Girls on the Run program at Sheehan - 3-5th will begin this spring

**Elementary:** John mentioned school committee consolidated Hanlon and Deefield. Plans are taking shape. At Town meeting interim approval and then for full approval for funding in the Fall. Pool testing has begun looking In order for to be truly work needs to be at 70 percent.

VI. **Public Comment:** Danielle mentioned violence in Atlanta, Letter went out to all with essay from Hunter Lee, with resources specific of how to support AAPI Community, will also share additional resources,

will reshape those on social media, connect resources, demonstrate support. Mary Ellen mentioned Rally in support of AAPI. MOre people that talk and share stories is better, demanding that people do better,

VII. **Adjournment** - The meeting was called to adjournment at 7:54 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose