

THE NORWALK PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 1/31/24 AT NORWALK CITY HALL

Present: Rob Pennington (NPS Asst Superintendent), Robin Gredinger (NPS Social Worker in residence), Jessica Vivencio (Family & Children's Agency behavioral health director), Karlene Barnett (LADC at Positive Directions), Vicki Oatis (NPL director of youth programming & parent), Tyrone Sawyer (Norwalk ACTS advocate), Angela King (NPS suspension supervisor), Ryan Harold (NPS security director), Brian Weeks (Norwalk Health Dept epidemiologist), Kelley Tomlinson (Norwalk Health Dept educator), Nicole Hampton (parent, person in recovery, High Focus Treatment Centers), Jennifer Mailhot (Child & Family Guidance), Ed Milton (Kids in Crisis TeenTalk counselor at NHS), Dave Walenczyk (Norwalk Youth Services director), Cadence Pentheny (Triangle Community Center educator), Tory Sullivan (BMHS health & PE teacher), AnaVivian Estrella (Norwalk Human Services director), Diamond Sead (HSC school-based health centers coordinator & parent), Anthony DiLauro (HSC executive director), Jake Tejada & Anthony Certo (BMHS seniors, Norwalk Strong club), Dayna Macari (Positive Directions TNP events coordinator), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions prevention director), Nina Chanana (TNP project evaluator)

1. As one of our few in-person meetings, we began with networking, snacks & resources.

2. Announcements of new people, events or resources
 - a. Karlene Barnett, LADC from Positive Directions is newly contracted by NPS to be at NHS/PTECH on Tuesdays and BMHS/CGS on Wednesdays after winter break
 - b. Jennifer Mailhot from Child & Family Guidance gave a brief overview of the Substance Screening Treatment and Recovery for Youth program (SSTRY)
 - c. Tyrone Sawyer is a SAVE Board member, and new community advocate with Norwalk ACTS focusing on social-emotional health advocate
 - d. Angela King oversees suspensions for NPS

3. Update on coalition work
 - a. Reviewed handout of highlights for December-January
 - i. Education/Awareness:
 1. High school students from our Norwalk Strong clubs created and delivered an assembly for all Ponus 8th graders
 2. Screenagers Under the Influence shown to all BMHS/CGS students
 3. Screenagers event + health & wellness fair at Ponus for middle school families - 70 people
 4. QPR training at CGS for Health students
 5. QPR training for 57 NCC nursing students
 6. Spoke to Norwalk Commission on Women
 7. Overdose/Narcan training for Norwalk Health Dept
 8. Vaping awareness tables in both high schools - by Norwalk Strong clubs
 9. Social media campaigns
 - ii. Support:
 1. Bowling Teen Nights Out - 162 RSVPs, 78 participants
 2. Ice Skating Teen Nights Out - 182 RSVPs, 106 participants
 - iii. Planning & coordination:
 1. Planning for Wellness Fair for NHS on March 21st (7:30am-10:30am) - providers please talk to Margaret to be included
 2. Planning for 3rd annual NorWALK for Mental Health: Walk + Wellness Fair -

Save the date Sat March 4th, 9am-12pm, rain date Sat March 11th

3. Grants committee meetings to plan for upcoming Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant reapplication
 4. Working with the Social-Emotional Health (SEH) Committee of Norwalk ACTS to survey youth-serving providers and plan for 2nd annual Day of Training to develop competencies of trusted adults
 5. Alcohol Committee meeting
 6. Parent survey - need more responses!
- iv. 3. Environmental/Policy:
1. Legislative forum - 65 people
- v. Discussion:
1. Rob: teens did a great job - may be able to do similar at other middle schools
 2. Screenagers at BMHS - delivered 3 different ways (house, classes,)
 3. A win! As an outcome from our legislative forum, the City has decided to reactivate its commitment to the coalition and will contribute \$20K per year
- b. Reports from workshops/webinars
- i. Yale webinar on teen co-use of THC and nicotine.
 1. Margaret reported that Yale's presentation emphasized that most teens who vape use both/either THC or nicotine (consistent with our youth survey findings)
 2. Yale says that because CT teens see nicotine as harmful, they report using THC as a harm reduction technique, taking a break from nicotine vapes and switching to dabbing as less dangerous
 3. Yale also reports that blunts are relatively common, and that youth perceive that the wrapper (usually a tobacco leaf) does not contain nicotine. They also found that youth are purchasing commercial blunts and removing the internal part to replace it with cannabis.
 4. Diamond commented that blunts aren't really seen at the high schools. Nina noted that because they emit smoke, youth would use them outside of school
 5. Yale recommends specific education around blunts
 - ii. Opioid settlement fund workshop
 1. AnaVivian reported on the workshop she & Margaret attended yesterday. Call to action - workshop provided resources for planning & decision making
 2. Settlement funds can be used for prevention, treatment, or recovery - but there is nothing to specify that they have to be used across the continuum; they could all be allocated to just treatment, for example - opportunity for advocacy
 3. Decisions about the use of the funds are assigned to Mayor Rilling. He does rely on Community Services and Youth Services for input - but there is no requirement for him to seek out or weight stakeholder input
 4. Norwalk hasn't spent any money yet because we want to come up with a good plan. It's hard to plan well because we don't know the schedule of when payments will come in. At the workshop we were given a schedule showing 18 payments, but we have already received 4, so they aren't necessarily by year.
 5. Receptive schools, leadership, active coalition, commitment
 6. The opioid settlement funds go 85% to the state and 15% to communities. We asked how the state will be allocating the 85% and the presenters (TTASC) will research and get back to us.
- c. Upcoming opportunities for collaboration:
- i. Ed - NHS Wellness Fair 3/21/24, 7:30am-10:30am - providers needed - hope to have it be annual - connect to kids, be interactive, youth to help providers table at the events - be the liaison for the kids -

- ii. Jess - 3rd annual NorWALK for Mental Health: Walk + Wellness Fair, 5/4/24 (rain date 5/11), 9am-12pm on Town Green - providers needed, walk teams, promotions
 - 1. Doubled providers and people
 - 2. Amazing spring day - out by lunchtime
 - 3. Get resources & info - wonderful speakers -
 - 4. Interactive painting
 - 5. Walk from town green to 95 and back - carrying banners
 - 6. Diamond - can do monthly fundraising - let us know about garden catering or anyone like that who would be interested
- iii. Free Mental Health First Aid for Norwalk youth-serving providers - location needed
- d. Upcoming Teen Nights Out
 - i. "Art in the Afternoon" during February break - location needed
 - ii. Decade Dance & Dessert - tentative March 1st - location & DJ needed
 - iii. Minigolf, tacos & ice cream - for April
 - iv. Games / trivia / silent disco for May
 - v. Luau for June - Cranbury / Veterans / City Hall park

4. Logic Model work - Nina Chanana, project evaluator

- a. Our Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant funds most of what TNP does. We are preparing for the reapplication since we are in Year 5, so we have created a Grants Committee which has been looking at our next five years. The Committee is engaged in a process to identify our top two substances we will focus on, the top two root causes for each, the local conditions that we want to change, and the strategies that will help change those conditions. Our February and March coalition meetings are an opportunity to share out what the Grants Committee is doing for coalition member feedback.
- b. To date, the Grants Committee has met and identified alcohol & marijuana as continuing to be our top two substances. We will continue to address other issues as well but these will be the priority. For Alcohol, the committee went through a prioritization process looking at the possible root causes and our data. We identified the top two root causes as *favorable parental attitudes* and *social availability*. For Cannabis, the committee went through a similar prioritization process and identified the top two root causes that we will focus on as *favorable youth attitudes/low perception of harm* and *social availability*.
- c. Nina explained the concept of Local Conditions and gave examples. The coalition members brainstormed Local Conditions related to the identified root causes. The grants committee will meet again in two weeks to use that information to draft strategies, which will be presented back at next month's coalition meeting.