**The Norwalk Partnership**

**Monthly Coalition Meeting held 2/28/24**

**Present:** Margaret Watt (Positive Directions), Nina Chanana (project evaluator), Jennifer Rolinson (NPS nursing), Jake Tejada (Norwalk Strong club at BMHS/CGS), Dyan Sommerville (Norwalk Strong club at NHS/PTECH), Jennifer Garcia (Child & Family Guidance), JoAnn Malinowski (NPS nursing), Shari Van Ness (Norwalk Health Dept), Shaaron Sinvilcin (Norwalk ACTS & NPS parent), Chief James Walsh (Norwalk Police Dept), AnaVivian Estrella (Norwalk Human Services), Jess Vivenzio (Family & Children’s Agency), Kelley Tomlinson (Norwalk Health Dept), Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Brian Weeks (Norwalk Health Dept), Eve St Surin (CAAWC), Diamond Sead (Human Services Council & NPS parent), Anamilena Moreno (Norwalk ACTS), Jennifer Garcia (Child & Family Guidance), Chanelle Campbell (Norwalk Community Health Center), Karlene Barnett (Positive Directions), Jahliah Green (Norwalk Health Dept), Nicole Hampton (High Focus Centers & NPS parent), Jodi Kingsley (CT Counseling Centers)

1. **Introductions of new participants/programs**
   1. Jennifer Garcia, director of the adolescent Substance Screening Referral and Treatment program (SSTRY) out of Child & Family Guidance Center. SSTRY can serve teens with a suspected or known substance use issue. Program provides 1:1 counseling, will have a SMART Recovery teen group, works with parents, can come into homes. Accepting HUSKY.
   2. Chanel Campbell, Norwalk Community Health Center, Patient engagement coordinator
   3. Shaaron Sincilvin, Norwalk ACTS, Director of Initiatives
   4. Karlene Barnett, LADC, LPC-A from Positive Directions, now available at Norwalk High Schools for free Alcohol and Drug counseling through a contract with NPS.
2. **Coalition updates**
   1. **Legislative session update** – Margaret shared tracking sheets on mental health and substance use & highlighted upcoming bills that have public hearings.
      1. 2/29: On-line nicotine education program required for retailers of nicotine.
      2. Margaret will assist anyone who needs help provided public testimony – please reach out to her via email
   2. **Norwalk Strong club updates:** 
      1. Dyan & Jake reported that club members had self-esteem tables in the cafeteria at both HS buildings, where students could look at themselves in a mirror and write a positive sticky note to themselves, then write a compliment on a sticky note and give it to someone else.
      2. Working on bulletin boards for National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week
      3. Updating club-made videos that introduce the school-based resource people, to include the new LADC and the Triangle counselor.
   3. **Wellness Fair** at NHS on 3/21 for 9th & 10th graders to learn about school-based resources
   4. **Teen Nights Out:** Held “Art in the Afternoon” at Norwalk Public Library during winter vacation as a daytime event since school was out.
   5. **LADC in high schools:** Karlene from Positive Directions is contracted with NPS to be available to provide free Alcohol & Drug Counseling to students from all 4 high schools. No parent opt-in required, so any student can see her and anyone can refer to her.
      1. Discussed whether there is enough need to start an after-school support group such as SMART Recovery group. Diamond shared that middle school aged kids were ‘double dosing’ on Benadryl. School nurses & security agreed that middle school is a concern. Diamond will ask her staff at SBHC if they are aware of enough HS students to start a group. Dyan suggested speaking to Ed Milton as a referral source, his office is ‘safe space’ and lots of youth are there and feel comfortable sharing with him. Karlene shared that she already met him.
      2. Karlene is meeting with all the school-based providers and also going to health classes to introduce herself.
      3. ACTIONS: **Margaret** will look at the contract to see if they can expand it to have Karlene work with middle school youth too. Will connect with nurses/security around referrals. **Everyone** please share the flyer about Karlene’s services.
   6. **Drug Overdoses:** Norwalk Health Dept reported that according to the ODMAPS database, the last fatal overdose occurred in January. Have not seen any non-fatal overdoses for one week.
      1. Fentanyl, zylazine, cocaine – multiple overdoses in another Fairfield County town with that combination of drugs. Sharing this so members can be aware.
   7. **Event next week:** FCA is holding a Virtual Conversation called “Parenting Adolescents in a Complex World,” March 7th, 1-2pm on Zoom. Panelists from FCA, Mid-Fairfield Community Care Center, and Positive Directions. Please share to your networks. Register at<https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JxhHDpaoQlyB4vzz8IeEZQ#/registration>
3. **Planning underway:** 
   1. NorWALK for Mental Health: Walk + Wellness Fair - confirmed for May 4th, 9am-12pm (May 11th raindate). Provider signup for tables at [tinyurl.com/2024norWALKtables](http://tinyurl.com/2024norWALKtables)
   2. Please plan to attend the fundraiser for the Walk on 3/19, 4-8pm at the Panera on Route 7. Thanks to Diamond for organizing this.
   3. NHS Wellness Fair 3/21 - invited participants only
   4. Screenagers Under the Influence – being shown at health classes at NHS/PTech
   5. My Ascension film + QPR training - Kelley and Margaret will be at schools to conduct QPR trainings and may also show the film, “My Ascension Film”
   6. Drug-Free Communities Grant: Strategy development meetings held since last time, also 1:1 meetings with stakeholders
4. **Review of Proposed Workplan Strategies -** Margaret went over the updated TNP Logic Models that incorporate feedback from last month’s coalition meeting on Local Conditions as well as the strategies and activities suggested by the Grants Committee. Coalition members were asked to provide input on content.
   1. Dyan suggested community convo style discussion during one of the quieter Teen Nights Out
   2. Toilet Talk sign holders– Where are they? Diamond will try and find them and get them installed; will be used to post Awareness messages in the stalls (managed by Norwalk Strong)
   3. Nicole asked if we can we work with Common Council to regulate smoke shops in Norwalk. Examples of success in Westport and Stamford)
5. **Community collaboration & reaching higher risk populations of focus**
   1. Margaret commented that part of our current strategic plan is to support the mental health needs of students and our LGBTQ population, as our surveys have shown that students experiencing depression and students identifying in the LGBTQ population are at higher risk generally and are large groups. For our next strategic plan we want to continue to focus on them but our strategies involve identifying champions from different cultural / neighborhood groups to focus on other populations as well
   2. Discussion: How do we better reach Hispanic families? Who are the Hispanic groups so we can work more strongly with them?
      1. ESL classes at the Twilight School
      2. Building One Community – looking to provide more services in Norwalk; AnaVivian is in touch with them and will provide contact information.
      3. Family Navigators – use Facebook and Whatsapp to communicate
      4. Faith-based organizations where Hispanic families go
      5. No one could cite a strong Hispanic advocacy group in Norwalk.
      6. NPS Family Center
6. **Community announcements**
   1. Norwalk ACTS is hosting a membership social mingle for everyone to learn about Norwalk ACTS, connect with the backbone staff, learn about the work and how you can get involved. At The Norwalk Art Space. Wednesday March 6th 4-6pm, <https://secure.givelively.org/event/norwalk-acts/norwalk-acts-membership-mingle>
   2. Norwalk ACTS Watch Party on civic engagement. FCCF is hosting a screening of the powerful, award-winning 2022 documentary, *The Young Vote*, directed by Diane Robinson. This documentary follows a diverse group of students and activists during the 2020 election to understand young people's perspective of voting and civic engagement. This event can provide a great civics resource that aims to bring together young people, local leaders and engage community members to discuss the issues raised in the film. The actual screening and event is in Stamford, but Norwalk ACTS will host a watch party in Norwalk for young people and community members to watch. This event will take place on Monday March 11th, 2024 at 6:00pm-8:30pm at The Youth Business Initiative Space, 25 Van Zant Street. Dinner and refreshments will be provided and begin at 6pm. Register here:<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZu7-RJ5xXfGhj6VApsdhl_Ha725dGuIHlL34ZFt5GAdWWQw/viewform>
   3. Norwalk ACTS Quarterly Convening - Wednesday March 13th, <https://secure.givelively.org/event/norwalk-acts/quarterly-convening-march-2024>
   4. Please be on the look out for "Day of Training" for Out of School Time Providers, Youth Serving Adults and Volunteers. Norwalk ACTS, SEH Leadership Team, and community partners are looking at dates in May & June. Next Social-Emotional Health and Out-of-School Time Initiative Meeting on March 28th 12pm-1:30pm. Shaaron will send out more information when he has more details.
7. **Next coalition meeting is 3/27**