

Vision: Norwalk is a community that fosters mental wellbeing and supports safe and healthy behaviors across the lifespan.

Mission: The Norwalk Partnership brings our community together to prevent substance misuse among youth and young adults by addressing local conditions.

TNP Coalition Meeting Minutes

May 31, 2023

Norwalk Public Library

Attendees: Kelley Tomlinson (Health Dept), Jodi Kingsley (CT Counseling Centers), Nicole Hampton (High Focus Centers & parent), Ginger Katz & Larry Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Jim Martinez (Norwalk Public Schools), Rob Pennington (Norwalk Public Schools & parent), Vicki Oatis (Norwalk Public Library and parent), Dajuan Wiggins (Youth Business Initiative), Diamond Sead (HSC & parent), AnaVivian Estrella (City of Norwalk Human Services), Jess Vivenzio (Family & Children's Agency), Anamilena Moreno (Norwalk ACTS), Chief Jim Walsh (Norwalk Police Dept), Cadence Pentheny (Triangle Community Center), Eve St Surin (Community Action Agency of Western CT), Ed Milton (Kids in Crisis), Nina Chanana (project evaluator), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions & parent), Ben Fitzgerald (AmeriCorps service member, PTECH '21), Dayna Macari (Positive Directions)

1. **Networking & Introductions** – time for in person connections
2. **Year in Review** – members of the TNP Leadership Team presented the Year in Review. See attached slideshow. Comments made in response to the slides:
 - Youth Survey, data sharing, parent survey
 1. Jim Martinez – NPS has had ongoing data requests from schools and the community. NPS uses the data to illustrate the need for additional mental health supports for students. Lots of positive data this year, but also look forward to seeing where things are moving forward.
 2. Rob Pennington – having the youth survey data allows NPS to go out for competitive grants.
 3. Margaret Watt – Mid-Fairfield County Child Guidance has utilized the Youth survey data in multiple grant applications and received an Impact Fairfield County Impact grant.
 4. Parent Survey – we are launching a parent survey (in Spanish and English) and request TNP members to disseminate and collect from their networks.
 - Education for teens, parents, and health teachers
 1. Freshman Forum – Thanks to the support of NPS, we were able to execute the first Freshman Forum for 9th graders and their parents. Event included both an interactive activities / resources fair and an hour-long presentation with youth and adult speakers & videos. Forum was offered at both Norwalk high schools in English and Spanish and again later at the Family Center in Spanish.
 2. Multiple educational programs were offered throughout the year.
ACTION: Please let Margaret or Dayna know if you'd like to bring any of these trainings to a group you are involved with:
 - QPR suicide prevention trainings to ~300 teens
 - Johnny's Ambassadors marijuana peer education by teens
 - SPORT Prevention Plus Wellness for teens

About Us: Our coalition seeks diverse representation from the many cultures and groups that make up Norwalk, including youth and families, individuals in recovery, schools, community and volunteer groups, municipal services, business, faith-based groups, treatment providers, law enforcement, and others.

We are funded by the federal **Drug-Free Communities** grant to **Positive Directions** and the state's **Local Prevention Council** grant to the **Human Services Council**.

- Drop-in teen Q&A sessions about vaping, marijuana, coping skills
- Courageous Parenting 101 (English & Spanish)
- Hidden in Plain Sight parent awareness trainings (English & Spanish)
- Overdose awareness/Narcan trainings
- Foro para familias sobre salud mental y uso de sustancias
- MADD Power of Parents
- Today's Marijuana: What Parents Need to Know
- Screenagers: Under the Influence
- Education for health teachers

- Teen support programs and clubs

1. Positive Directions got a City ARPA grant to fund our "Moving On" program for Norwalk HS-aged youth, responding to the 2021 survey findings. We've run mental health support groups for boys and girls over the course of the year in conjunction with YBI and hosted at their location, and provided promotions and food for SMART Teen groups run by HSC at YBI.
2. Teen Nights Out – Funded by a City ARPA grant; substance-free social activities for Norwalk HS aged teens. 3 have been completed to date and will continue in coming months.
3. Norwalk Strong Clubs – Youth coalition clubs at both Norwalk high schools; participate in multiple coalition events and activities.

- NorWALK for Mental Health the 2nd annual mental health walk and wellness fair was on May 6th; there were at least 35 community partners at the event.

- Liquor Stickers campaign – redesigned the materials; available in English and Spanish; an awareness campaign for parents and community members "keep alcohol out of the hands of anyone under age 21."

ACTION: Please let Margaret or Dayna know if you'd like to have a supply on hand for parents you work with.

- Cannabis advocacy and legislative forum – 2nd forum and partnered with Westport; led to multiple legislative bills being submitted. Slide presented included an Action Alert on 3 active bills currently awaiting final vote.

4. Recognition – Ginger Katz and Diamond Sead presented coalition members with certificates and gifts recognizing their contributions:

- Outstanding Leader Award: Jim Martinez (leaving NPS and stepping down from leadership team)
- Outstanding Leader Award: Denique Weidema-Lewis (leaving Norwalk ACTS and stepping down from leadership team)
- Lifetime Youth Supporter & Leadership Award: Tory Sullivan (stepping down from leadership team, remaining as coalition member)
- Advocacy Award: Nicole Hampton
- Sector of the Year: Norwalk Public Schools (presented to Jim Martinez and Rob Pennington)
- Community Partner of the Year: Norwalk Health Department (presented to Kelley Tomlinson)

5. New Leadership team members

- Cadence Pentheny, Triangle Community Center, representing the fraternal sector
- Chief Walsh or Sgt Gulino, Norwalk Police Department, representing the law enforcement sector
- Rob Pennington, NPS Assistant Superintendent, representing the school sector

6. Looking forward:

How you can help:

- Help push out our parent survey
- Join our marijuana/vaping, alcohol, Teen Nights Out, or data committee

The Norwalk Partnership

PREVENTING SUBSTANCE MISUSE
AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

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- Please sign Coalition Involvement Agreement today!
- Subscribe to thenorwalkpartnership.org, follow us on social media, and *share to your network*

Upcoming dates (please share!):

- Pride in the Park: Saturday, June 10th, 12-8pm at Veteran's Park this year
- Day of Training for out-of-school time providers: June 21 (jbuccolo@norwalkacts.org)
- YBI Community Day: July 22 ([dwiggins@ybict.org](mailto:dwiggin@ybict.org))
- Overdose/Narcan trainings: July 7, 4pm & August 31 (bfitzgerald@positivedirections.org)
- Summer planning & 2023-24 calendar will be sent out (dmacari@positivedirections.org)

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