**Minutes of Alcohol Committee 9/15/21**

**Present:** Laila McGeorge (TNP Project Coordinator), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions, NPS parent), Kelsey Ciarleglio (High Focus Centers), Diana Revolus (Councilwoman, child advocate/community activist, parent), Daniella Arias (The Hub), DIamond Sead (HSC, parent), Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation)

1. Laila welcomed everyone back from the summer!
   1. Introductions
   2. Logistics: plan to meet monthly this year on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 3-4pm (this month was the 3rd Wednesday due to 5 Wednesdays in September)
   3. Many hands make light work! Please be active & let us know if you’d like to chair this committee. Role of chair: help plan agenda of committee meetings, facilitate meetings, report out at coalition meetings.
2. Margaret gave a report out on our Norwalk youth data from our June survey. Full results will be shared at coalition meeting on 9/29.
   1. Current vs past use
      1. Alcohol is the most used substance; however, rates of all substance use have gone down since the 2018 Norwalk youth survey. We believe this is because of lack of access and lack of socializing due to COVID.
      2. 1 in 10 middle schoolers (7th and 8th) and 1 in 4 highschoolers said they were drinking
      3. among kids who are drinking, many are using other substances as well
   2. Highest risk groups
      1. LGBTQ, English Language Learners, students with IEPs (special education), girls... The groups that were higher users for alcohol were also higher users of other substances and also had poorer mental health.
   3. Implications:
      1. Education for parents & youth. Focus for this fall: Freshman forum – parents & freshmen together
      2. Newsletter for parents
      3. Supports for highest-risk groups
3. Margaret reviewed the alcohol logic model based on the local conditions we’ve identified from our data. First 2 objectives and strategies for this year were discussed; remainder for next time.
   1. Problem statement: There is underage drinking in Norwalk. Root Causes: Community norms are favorable, and Alcohol is socially available.
   2. Objective 1: Decrease consumption of alcohol on school grounds during band and sports events.
      1. Strategy: Bag checks at games
      2. Discussion: Both youth & parents reported that drinking takes place in the bleachers during band and sports events, and bottles are found under the bleachers. It is illegal for anyone (including adults) to use substances on school grounds. A common way to deal with this is to implement bag checks. When people come in, someone (parent? SRO? to be decided) checks their bags for illegal substances. When implementing this system, we would let people know about this in advance, because we’re more interested in sending a message that illegal activities aren’t allowed on school grounds than in “catching” people. If they know their bags will be looked at, they’re less likely to bring anything in.
      3. Diana raised questions about what kinds of conversations to have with parents.
      4. Need volunteers who want to focus on this.
   3. Objective 2: Decrease visible consumption of alcohol at beach by adults
      1. Strategy: Signage to remind youth and adults that substance use by minors is illegal. (Example of alcohol delivery truck with huge message “We don’t serve minors in CT. neither should you!”)
      2. Discussion: This strategy can work for not only alcohol but also marijuana and vaping since the age is 21 for everything. (Also relates to Objective 4.) Could include QR code for more info. Could be in different languages. Logic model focuses on the beach at first because we have baseline data from kids and adults about drinking at the beach so can measure change. But we can also have signs elsewhere!
      3. Diana suggested digital signage would be very impactful and can be used to share different messages. Has been discussed at City Council but we can bring it back up! Currently the City does use digital signs near the train station from time to time. They exist at both HS’s, the beach, side of mall. On the city side, Nick Staccianelli & Barbara Smyth approve messages & locations for signage. COst?
      4. Diamond and Diana will work on this. Can also use others! Diana can take it on with City Council *after* it comes from constituents.
   4. Objective 3: Increase familiarity with social host law
      1. Parent education
      2. Liquor stickers
   5. Objective 4: Decrease teen drinking at beaches
      1. Signs, lights at beaches
      2. Patrols at beaches
4. Next Steps
   1. Kelsey will report out at the coalition meeting this month (9/29).
   2. Diamond will draft a letter about digital signage to the City Council by next week and will share it to the rest of us. Margaret may be giving a presentation to the City Council on MH/SUD next Thursday 9/23 so can reference it at that time.
   3. Diamond will find out more about options for mall signage by the next committee meeting (10/13).
   4. Next committee meeting: 10/13 at 3pm. Will discuss objectives 3 & 4 and get reports on signage discussion.
   5. Coalition meeting 9/29 at 2-3:30pm.
5. Announcement: Haitian American Collaborative - fundraiser, collection, amazon, etc. **linktr.ee/HAC509**