**Minutes of TNP Marijuana Committee 11/4/21**

**Present:** Anamilena Moreno (Norwalk ACTS), Diamond Sead (HSC and parent), Wendy Mendes (Norwalk Community College & parent), Denise Rollinson, Pete King (Alateen), Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Laila McGeorge (Positive Directions), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions & parent)

1. Updates on actions since last meeting:
   1. **NCC students –** Laila reported on the connection by Wendy to Dr. Nye, a nursing professor. We got 4-5 nursing students who will be able to work with us to conduct an environmental scan of vape and hookah shops.
      1. ACTION: **Laila** will coordinate a meeting with Dr. Nye & her students to get started. We will also keep Lt Denho (NPD) updated.
   2. **Conversation** **with police** – Margaret & Diamond met with Lt Denho and Sgt Gulino, from Community Policing Division. As discussed last time, we wanted to get them involved in our committee work. Sgt Orr, who is the sector rep at the TNP coalition meetings, is based in the schools and we’d like to have connections from community policing as well.
      1. Police have been cut in half! Staff size is down 40 officers. Don’t have capacity to join all our meetings but will have the dates on their calendars and come when they can. If they can’t make it, we will coordinate with them individually every quarter or so.
      2. Great conversation to make them aware of our purpose and how we work. Discussed opportunities to coordinate on backpack drives, national night out, etc.
      3. Told them about the Rowayton beach issue
         1. Police don’t have capacity to respond and don’t (currently) have community support to respond. They said they can’t even take someone’s vape away
         2. As we’ve been discussing, we have to keep showing support for police efforts to enforce laws that protect our kids. On social media, TNP publicly thanks the police whenever they report efforts to identify / cite retailers that sell to minors. Recently we’ve also been forwarding those messages to this committee.
            1. ACTION: **Everyone** please like and reshare these types of messages to show that Norwalk residents support the police taking action to prevent substance use among minors
   3. **Professional development on marijuana for NPS health educators** – On Tuesday, Margaret, Diamond & Laila provided training on marijuana the NHS and middle school health educators and overall health program director. Great discussion, lots of questions from teachers about today’s marijuana. Shared curriculum resources. Also shared a vaping prevention curriculum, *In The Air,* based on a graphic novel format and developed with teens in Rhode Island.
      1. ACTION: Roton MS will pilot test the vaping curriculum and then share their feedback with the other middle schools. **Diamond** will get the materials to Lois Snelson, and **Laila** will check in with Lois Snelson and report back.
   4. **Johnny’s Ambassadors:** This is a website by a nationally known speaker, Laura Stack, whose 19yo son killed himself as the result of cannabis-induced psychosis. She has a book coming out right now and is getting lots of press. Website has great resources: videos, curriculum, parent stories, and more. Ginger & Margaret discussed how the content is very timely because it’s so focused on the potency of THC and how high-THC marijuana has a significant link to addiction and psychosis.
      1. On November 10th there is an informational meeting to learn more about becoming one of “Johnny’s Ambassadors,” in order to deliver their one-hour presentation (teen version and adult version). Training will take place in January.
      2. ACTION: **Margaret** will attend, **Denise** will consider, maybe **Diamond**? **Laila** to blast the info out on social media for anyone interested in attending.
   5. **Alateen:** First Live meeting of Alateen at NHS since COVID happened today! Weekly on Thursdays, 2nd period (starting at 8:40am)
   6. **New prevention interns:** Grace Galeano, a NHS senior, & Sof Ramos, a BMHS junior, are starting prevention clubs in each high school! They’ll be coordinating with each other and Laila. The clubs will be called Norwalk Strong, so they can work individually or also at the community level under the same name.
2. Discussion about need for parent education:
   1. Need to educate parents, and need to involve more parents, esp (for this issue) from Rowayton
   2. Margaret may be able to present to the all-school SGC meeting in 2 weeks which would be a great opportunity to talk directly to parent leaders, gain visibility, get more parents involved
   3. Our parent newsletter is a way to have regular communications out to parents and to announce upcoming events, trainings, presentations. We continue to struggle with getting it out widely to parents.
      1. ACTION: **Wendy** will be liaison to post parent newsletter & other TNP info to Norwalk For Education FB page and Norwalk Community FB page
   4. Freshman Forum will be a great way to reach parents and 9th graders at the same time. When they attend, we will be able to present a calendar of further trainings / films / etc. that will then hopefully be better attended than things we offered last year during COVID. Next Freshman Forum planning meeting is next week.
      1. ACTION: **Denise** cannot attend but will review substance use content and provide feedback.
3. Results of survey on marijuana signage & messaging conducted at October coalition meeting:
   1. Margaret reviewed summary prepared by Nina (see handout for additional details):
      1. **When thinking about all aspects of today's marijuana and the new CT law, what do you MOST want the community (youth, parents, businesses, etc.) to KNOW?** Top responses: 1- impact of MJ on teen brain development, 2- health risks. Other – potency, messaging about peer pressure, adult use only, dangers of buying it on the street, etc.
      2. **To protect our youth when marijuana is available for retail sale next year, which public awareness messages should we prioritize this year prior to legal retail sales?** Top responses: 1- impact of MJ on teen brain development, 2- health risks, 3-role of parents, 4-impaired driving.
      3. **Top places where our coalition members would see or read the messaging:** 1 - social media; 2 – digital sign; 3 – bus ads or bus shelter ads. Restaurant placemats and window clings on businesses were less popula. Write-in options included the mall (previously discussed), movie theater, table events, schools (including when students are caught)
      4. **Resources identified: *Speakers:*** Ginger / Courage To Speak, Dr. Aaron Weiner, Alicia Farrell, Aubrey Grobin, Dr. Steven Dewey, Liz Jorgensen, person in recovery, Caron, John Hamilton. ***Resources:*** TNP has many slideshows and an ever-growing master slide deck so we can present to different audiences; Yale treatment program.
   2. About 10 Drug Free Communities grant-funded coalitions have been collaborating on #mentionprevention campaigns, first for vaping, then alcohol, now marijuana, working with a CT agency named Charge Ahead Marketing (owner Glenn). Right now Glenn is working on 3 short videos (PSAs): one on potency of today’s marijuana, one on the impact on the developing brain, and one on safe storage. 2 of these topics correspond to the messages that our coalition supported. Through Positive Directions’ DFC grant, we can buy in to the campaign.
      1. Discussion: Where do we want to show these?
         1. ACTION: **Margaret** will find out if he’ll deliver them in Tik Tok format
         2. Movie theater – maybe aim toward next year when there will be more people going to the movies
         3. Show at house / advisory meetings in the schools (we are still waiting for approval to have providers and community members zoom in to these homeroom meetings to deliver programs) –

ACTION: Margaret will follow up with **Rob** in terms of reaching out to principals (or with Jim when he’s back)

* + - 1. Are there locations for the videos inside the mall? Have also not heard back yet about showing videos on the huge digital screen on the mall facing the highway - ACTION: Diamond/Anthony from HSC to follow up with their contacts
      2. Paid advertising on social media
    1. Non-video messages
       1. Digital messages on the sports fields, basketball courts – go through schools to find out how to do that – text only, no video / graphics
       2. 3 TVs at NCC can show flyers or powerpoints – not video

ACTION: **Wendy** to let us know how to proceed

* + - 1. Moveable digital sign that is often outside City Hall or near the beach – need ongoing conversation with Common Council

ACTION: **Margaret / Diana / all** to follow up with new Council members

1. Next Meeting:
   1. View PSAs if ready
   2. Work on sample text messages to propose for digital signs
   3. Review infographics and discuss where / how to use them. We will have some for the TNP website and social media on specific issues which we will also embed in our presentations and at Freshman Forum. Committee members should consider what they would be able to use and for what audiences.