

Hampden-Wilbraham Partners for Youth – Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 19th, 2020
(1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.) Zoom Video/Phone Meeting

I. Welcome - Tweaking the Meeting Format

Please put your name, agency/sector, and any additions that you would like to make to the agenda in the ZOOM chat box. We will forego round-table introductions, in lieu of encouraging individual introductions and updates throughout the meeting.

Participants:

Jada Rosario, Grade 10 MRHS Student

Brad Sperry, Rotary Club Member

Misty Foss-Trombly, HWRSD Nurse Care Coordinator

Jared Proulx, Supervisor and SUD coordinator, West Central Family Counseling

Sherrill Caruana, HWRSD School Committee Member

Teri Brand, HWRSD Nurse Leader, Sector Rep/Health Professional

Kerri O'Connor, HWRSD Project Coordinator/Case Manager, Student Access to Behavioral Health and Community

Support Program

Terrence Smith, UWPV Vista Volunteer - Opioid project

Tracey Plantier, Wilbraham Volunteer

Joe Kielczewski, Rotary Club President, Sector Rep/Fraternal Organization

Gina Kahn, Director HWP4Y/HWRSD Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program

Ruth DiCristoforo, HWP4Y Coordinator

II. Coalition Discussion

A. Virtual Mid-Year CADCA Training (7/26-30) offers a 4-day unique opportunity for members with 85+ workshops led by prevention experts, coalitions from around the globe and federal agency partners; additional keynote sessions led by national prevention leaders. Access [the training grid](#) to check out the topics. Contact Gina or Ruth if interested in attending. *Ruth informed the Coalition about the online opportunities, available this year, as an alternative to the traditional in-person forum that was scheduled for Nashville, TN. Dates remain the same and workshop schedule and format remain similar, yet in a more creative virtual manner offering training with all dealing aspects of substance misuse prevention and intervention. Attendance was encouraged by any members seeking to deepen their knowledge about prevention and reduction of youth substance use, as well as dig deeper into the SPF Frameworks, Environmental Strategies, and other core DFC strategies creating the framework of our Coalition work. There may be option to attend part of the forum, also. Jada asked about the youth track. Ruth will follow up about part-time options for attending the forum.*

B. Virtual Search Institute Options for Everyone is an Asset Builder Forum - (October 16th and October 17th) *Gina discussed moving ahead with a virtual format for the postponed (March 20th) training, which would be rescheduled as a two-day virtual workshop, on October 15th and 16th, two hours each day, in place of the previous half-day training that was rescheduled for October 16th. Members agreed this was a good format, especially with the shorter format of two hours over two days. Gina will move ahead with setting this up with Mary Shrader and get dates confirmed so the Coalition can send out, Save the Dates, for our 4th annual Community Partners in Prevention Leadership Training. The Youth Leadership forum will be rescheduled, at a later date, when in-person group meetings are possible again.*

III. Coalition Updates

- A. **Work group recap** on May 20th MA PTA/Health Council webinar, *Victims, Vapers, and a Virus* Webinar and HWP4Y *Youth Vaping: An Epidemic Inside a Pandemic* webinar project. *Gina informed the group, at the 12th hour, this **HWP4Y webinar** had to be postponed due to an unforeseen roadblock with a programming issue. A new date will be provided asap.*
- B. **Senior Youth Coalition Drop-offs Completed** (Mike, Alex, and Zeena) *Ruth delivered the Senior gifts mentioned in last month's Senior Spotlight: a framed photo keepsake of each youth member's activities on the Coalition, a newly designed Coalition t-shirt (a Youth Coalition activity), and a Rice Farms Gift Card. The students were most appreciative and very excited waiting for their next steps to happen. Mike is awaiting the call up to enter the USAir Force, with a plan to attend college and medica school after his service. Alex is enrolled at Western New England University to study Forensic Accounting. Zeena is heading to Northeastern University to study Psychology. All students promised to stay in touch when they can, letting us know how they are doing, and agreed to being contacted by the Coalition if they could help in any way.*
- C. [HWP4Y Website](#) Revisions are coming along, more resources added – take a look! *Ruth has been working on the website design, including many new resources being added. She asked members to take a look, offer feedback, and send items to her attention that could be added.*
- D. [HWP4Y Facebook](#) needs your Shares, Following, and Likes! Find us today! *Ruth continues to build the Coalition Facebook page, and needs members to like, follow, and share the page!*
- E. [MAPA](#) reports Nov 3rd Ballot initiative to deregulate alcohol sales moving forward – see page 4 *Ruth reported, how MAPA recently filed an amicus brief to stop an effort funded by Cumberland Farms to put an initiative deregulating alcohol sale on November's ballot. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled against MAPA, meaning the initiative will move forward and voters will be asked to decide whether to deregulate alcohol by eliminating all caps on retail alcohol licenses for food stores on November 3rd, 2020. Any attention that we can give to this would be very helpful, in terms of informing the town about this upcoming ballot question, and also check into the local aspects of the issue. The law would cover any food retail establishment. There was some surprise that this was going on at Wilbraham Big Y. What will be the local impact if this pass? A question on the local control of this, if passed, is still out to Sue Bunnell, Wilbraham BoS, who was not able to attend the meeting. Gina asked Tracey to dig a little deeper into the local impacts on this passing, and report back. Members were also reminded, as a DFC Coalition, we can not lobby for any type of bill. We can educate, inform, and advocate on the behalf of issues critical to our mission.*
- F. **Reporting/Budget:** STOP-Act reports accepted; DFC drawdown before 6/30/20 *Gina reported how our Coalition Federal Partner for the DFC Grant administration and oversight, is transitioning to the CDC, from SAMHSA. This requires all DFC money earmarked through September 30th, must be drawn down by June 30th. The Stop Act will remain with SAMHSA until its conclusion on September 30th, 2020.*

G. School Reopening status—Teri related how the current uncertainties based on the lack of information from the state is problematic. The school district is still waiting on the final word about the Return to School guidelines and mandates from the Board of Education, regarding safety protocols and guidance, that have pushed back since the beginning of June. An Administrative Team has been meeting since March, creating dialog and input from the schools and community. Robust talks and planning around safety, buildings, bussing and medical concerns of the virus have been on-going. The District has three different plans to consider, but needs DOE guidance about the framework to move forward, aligned with current public health guidelines at the time of opening, and amidst operations. Plans need to have back up plans until COVID-19 is deemed under control.

Jared stated how challenging this situation has been for essential workers, who can not be at home to support their children's learning at home, how challenging email communication is with teachers, and how challenging/expensive childcare will be for many families, especially on a rotating schedule.

Sherrill informed the group that 85% of the Department of Education guideline will be non-negotiable. Locally, only the remaining 15% of the plan will be under local school board community control. This is why there is not concrete plan being released until DOE releases their guidelines. Some talk is discussed about a 10-4 plan, four days in school and 10 days out of school learning to mitigate the public health spread concerns of covid-19. However, there is no clear, concrete guidance to date released and still much uncertainly during this public health emergency.

Sherrill added that the challenges to learn at home on teachers is also quite profound, with balancing their own at home world of parenting/teaching their own kids while engaging a classroom of their students, in meaningful ways. Sherrill supports some type of hybrid leaning model going forward, where the in-person teaching can be live-streamed for those students/families who are not able to attend school.

Gina added how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted everyone, youth, families, and the community. There is an overall higher level of need that is not going to go away, perhaps even increase as students return to the classroom (in any proposed model under consideration), how there are many programming challenges ahead, as well as enhancements that will be needed along the way, and finally, how there are inevitable elevated Risk factors for everybody that require a support system that is unique to this crisis for youth, families, youth---serving agencies, etc. As a community, we have all been impacted and there is work ahead of us...

IV. Let's Talk About It... Race, Racism and Coalitions Gina led this discussion, starting off with recognizing how the most recent past events over the George Floyd tragic racial incident, and protests, during the COVID-19 pandemic have brought on a heightened sense of anxiety in the country, calling for being more understanding and open from your heart to listen to each other and find common ground that puts a stop to racial bias and inequity in society everywhere. . She asked, "What has changed in your personal or professional level of understanding about this topic – has anything changed in your world where you operate that is different than before"? Confronting this conversation, collectively, will be a first step the process of creating a better understanding on what the Coalition can and must do to respond to this issue, in our community, and for the safe, healthy, and drug-free childhoods of all of our youth.

Collectively, members identified:

-There is a noticeable increase of 75 – 80% of clients experiencing a sense of anxiety, related to personal safety and the protests. Unity is found in the middle of the understanding that requires opening up of your heart to listen to find that common ground. There are many new resources put out by BSAS, on- line.

-There really is no true understanding of the perspective of color, coming from a white, privileged community without a lot of awareness needed to bring attention to this matter. There seems to be an assumption that everyone is treated the same in this community because this is how you are treated. This outlook just breeds a lack on understanding. We must be willing to listen to others, to really hear those people who have not been treated the same, based on their skin color or heritage. Everyone is in a different stage of learning about this, especially with all the social media and protesting after this horrible incident with George Floyd.

- A while back, The Democratic Committee did a diversity talk, and the things that they would tell , are hard to believe: these people talked about how black people would be stopped in their own neighborhoods in Wilbraham. These were first-hand accounts being brought forward. It is easy for people to take sides because they don't know what people have gone through their entire lives and you can't understand it if you've never been exposed but if you start to hear, you realize that you might be living in a bubble, and people may be under completely different pressures because of the color of their skin. There are many different bubbles, and many avenues for this lack of understanding... we are all in a different stage of learning, and when we see people reacting violently because they don't understand, you need to give them space to understand.

-Anger is an emotion, and everyone is born with it. However, hatred is learned. What are we doing to stop hate?

-At the recent Wilbraham rally, kids from MRHS were speaking, talking about specific situations in which they were overlooked, not belonging. In the HWRSD discipline data, from 2013 – 2019, of 90 – 95 black students, 9 – 15 were suspended and of the 2600 other students, .1% were suspended. Of 244 teachers, there are only 3 teachers of color.

-The rally showed a real agenda of what youth can do now – change how school teaches and gives opportunities for history, poetry, and philosophy on this BLM topic, do more, create the dialogue, change the system. Most of the kids, previous students here, talked about the feeling of not belonging here, being unwelcome.

-This issue of students of color not belonging needs people here to be open, to increase their understanding of what these kids are experiencing, to focus on the racial disparities, intrinsic biases, and micro-aggressions.

-There seems to be the issue of systematic challenges that seem to prompt failure for students of color that other students do not face.

-On the other hand, there seems to be a thread of optimism right now, of hope, where there is some hope, where the whole society is finally engaged—taking some action to change the ways things have been against people of color, which is the only way that society can go through systemic change, in order to truly transform in this critical, human area.

-A systemic issue requires a systemic approach to make sustainable changes.

-Non-BLM people must take the responsibility to understand Racism, and not keep putting this burden on people of color to keep explaining. Everyone needs to understand the injustice and see this as important and be part of the systemic change.

-The Coalition, realized the hard way how we needed to educate ourselves more a while ago when running a suicide prevention/make healthy choices campaign to reach kids who were feeling less connected. Rubber bracelets were ordered with the imprint, My Life Matters. The bracelets were well-received in the community and some locations in the county, including Springfield, also, during the roll out. However, an anonymous email was received that accused the Coalition of being tone-deaf, and co-opting the BLM message, and said we had to understand of what this meant to people of color to see these bracelets on the wrists of youth/people in a white privileged community. At the time, we were blind-sided, and did not clearly see it this way. However, we agreed that if there was a perception of anything that was misconstrued and infringed on this BLM message, we needed to pull the bracelets out of the campaign in place of a different message. Lesson learned: Educate yourself more and be sure your messaging includes an inclusiveness and respect of all people.

-There is a challenge of age-appropriate talking to your kids. However, have the talk! Educate your self first, if you have to and then have the talk... You do not have to have all the answers.

-I was pulled over, as a middle-aged white man, driving a beat-up car on Boston Road. When the officer saw my address, in Wilbraham, he said he lives in town, too, and let me go, stating, "Membership has its privileges" to his partner" as he walked away. All these years later, I still am left wondering if my address was not Wilbraham, what would have been the outcome?

-Unfortunately, at yesterday's peaceful and well-organized rally there were two large trucks, bearing American flags and loud music, interrupting the speakers, riding back and forth. Why?

-Last year, at an out of town kindergarten graduation, my blond-haired, blue-eyed grand daughter was in the minority for her class of graduates, surrounded by a classroom majority of kids of color. I thought, this is beautiful, how my grand daughter is experiencing the diversity world at five years old.

-We need to See the COLOR of people, APPRECIATE it, and get to know each other better and stand together to fight against the injustice of systemic racism.

A. A Comprehensive was given to all participants, posted on the HWP4Y website: *Talking to Kids about Racism* (see attached)

- V. **Upcoming** – At 2:40 p.m. the meeting was called to a close, with the next topics deferred to the July meeting and/or included in the on-going communication updates before the next meeting.
- A. **Rotary Club 2020 – 2021 Collaborations** - Joe and Brad are working on the local application for Rotary International, seeking support for local projects, including a partnership to support a Coalition project, in November.
 - B. **HWRSD Summer Meals program update /Coalition Activity** – waiting on approval by the Superintendent.
 - C. **Fall Positive Community Norm Messaging campaign** with updated Substance Use Prevention/Making Good Choices Messages with new infographics – Will be worked on during the summer and launched before October 1st, 2020
 - D. **Updated H-W Environmental Strategies for Effective Community Change** across core substances: Nicotine, Alcohol, and Marijuana – will be updated during the summer and reviewed at Annual Business Meeting (August)
 - E. **Annual Coalition Business Meeting** – Date TBD for August
 - F. **Potential for Self-guided Wilbraham Trail project** in Phase 4 – project will be revisited when appropriate given local public health guidelines for gatherings
 - G. Via an email to Ruth, Rachel Haggood, **Wilbraham Public Library** Youth Librarian wanted to share the following resources with the Coalition. Also, check WPL out on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. (Resources were put into the Zoom Chat Box):
 WPL Summer Reading for Everyone: <https://libraryaware.com/2109VM>
 Prevent the Summer Slide: <https://libraryaware.com/21407B>
 Book Grab Bags for Kids: <https://libraryaware.com/211AP8>
 WPL Curbside Pickup: <https://libraryaware.com/20R5KZ>
 WPL Art Show for All Ages: <https://libraryaware.com/217Z4Z>
 Our website www.wilbrahamlibrary.org is a great place to find resources and updated info. Please call us at 413-596-6141 Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm if you need assistance.

VI. **Final Remarks**

- A. **Additional Member Input** – Members agreed to meet on Thursdays for the summer monthly meetings in July and August.
- B. **Next meeting-** Members elected to hold a July Meeting; a Thursday was proposed, July 23rd, 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- C. **Date for Annual Business Meeting** – Consideration given to: Thursday, August 20th, 1p.m. – 3 p.m.



United for Safe, Healthy, and Drug-free Communities

We believe preventing and reducing youth substance use is a collective responsibility. We strive to implement a coordinated, comprehensive, and sustainable plan of evidenced based programs, activities and resources that positively impact a healthy childhood development of our youth.



Ballot Initiative to Deregulate Alcohol Sales Will Move Forward

As you are likely aware, MAPA recently filed an amicus brief to stop an effort funded by Cumberland Farms to put an initiative deregulating alcohol sale on November's ballot. We were disappointed to learn that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled against us, meaning the initiative will move forward and voters will be asked to decide whether to deregulate alcohol by eliminating all caps on retail alcohol licenses for food stores on November 3rd, 2020.

Our next phase of work on this matter is to educate the public about the initiative and its associated public health implications. This is, largely, an uphill battle: a small, public health-focused organization versus a mega-chain corporation betting on the public not fully understanding the domino effect of ["eviscerating current regulations that determine the number of retail alcohol licenses a single company can hold in Massachusetts"](#). The Massachusetts Package Store Association states in its December 2019 [press release](#), "Cumberland Farms introduced its ballot question to circumvent the legislative process by confusing voters into giving this single company unprecedented control of the retail alcohol marketplace with a potential 200-store network."

Attorney John Scheft of Bellotti Law Group, who represented our case, accurately explains: *"We know that the odds were slim that the SJC would rule in our favor on this matter. The constitutional framework behind these voter petitions results in minimal substantive review of the real costs of these 'popular campaigns,' which, increasingly in the modern age, are corporate-driven exercises that benefit from a deliberately uninformed electorate.*

The term 'uninformed' isn't a criticism. Many of these proposed laws—including this one—take trained lawyers multiple readings to understand. Voters can hardly be expected to comprehend their potential impact."

As featured on page 6 of the [Statement of Concern](#) signed by over 50 top doctors and scientists in Massachusetts, research has well-established that "low income and minority communities have a perilous history of being targeted by predatory industries that profit from those who become addicted." In fact, overconcentration of alcohol outlets has been identified as an [indicator of systemic racism](#) where liquor stores are disproportionately located in predominantly black neighborhoods and an origin of further health inequity. Further, it is well established that convenience stores like Cumberland Farms are heavily concentrated in underserved, low income, and brown/black neighborhoods and as a [food desert](#) issue this already contributes to inequitable access to high quality food and increased [racist targeting](#) by the tobacco industry. If Massachusetts votes to allow food stores unlimited access to liquor licenses, [the research](#) indicates it will have direct adverse health and safety consequences for our most vulnerable communities.

You can read more about the decision by the SJC and our next steps [here](#).

Talking to Our Children about Racism – A Resource for Families (Gina Kahn)

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced. - James Baldwin

The death of George Floyd has placed a glaring light on the realities of continued personal, institutional and systemic racism in our country, and it has hopefully opened the nation's eyes to the need for action in order to guarantee safety and equality for every citizen. But as adults trying to make sense of the tragedies that have brought us to this point, many of us are also asking, "What do we say to the kids?" Experts tell us that conversations with our children about race and racism may not be comfortable or easy... but they are **absolutely necessary** to achieve the awareness, understanding and actions that fight racism, and the insidious injustice and inequity that it perpetuates. We want a better world for *all* our kids, and we want to help them build a better world for themselves and generations to follow.

The following is not a complete list of the many resources that are available, but places to get started.

Thoughts and Tips for Talking to Kids (all ages)

Getting ready to talk about it--A collection of readings about how children learn about race:

[How Kids Learn About Race | EmbraceRace](#)

Teaching Tolerance. [Beyond the Golden Rule](#)

[A PARENT'S GUIDE to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice](#)

CNN Health: [How to talk to your children about protests and racism](#)

[How to talk to kids about race and racism, according to experts](#)

Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk about Race - Resource Roundup

<https://www.prettygooddesign.org/blog/Blog%20Post%20Title%20One-5new4>

[Anti-Racism for Kids 101—Starting the Conversation](#)

Tweens and Teens:

Anti-Defamation League: [Table Talk About Current Events](#)

[George Floyd, Racism and Law Enforcement](#)

Read with Your Teen: [The Hate U Give](#) by Angie Thomas

[The Hate U Give](#)

Parent/Teen Discussion Guide for The Hate U Give:

<https://www.adl.org/media/10848/download>

Watch with Your Teen:

In this story from Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity, a film from World Trust, author and educator Joy DeGruy shares how her sister-in-law uses her white privilege to stand up to systemic inequity. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9QBnPK6Yg>

TED-Talk: How to raise a black son in America | Clint Smith

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us70DN2XSfM>

Young children:

About Race and Racism for young children:

[Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning about Race and Racism with Young Children and Their Families](#)

Raising Race-Conscious Children

[Raising Race Conscious Children | Resource for Talking About Race & Diversity](#)

Conversation/awareness starters for young children

[100 race-conscious things you can say to your child to advance racial justice](#)

[\(You-Tube Read-aloud\)](#). "Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story about Racial Injustice" by Marianne Cellano (for 4 to 8 year olds)

Books to Read with Your Child:

[Books Matter: Children's Literature](#)

Anti-Racism Resources for Kids and Families (Denver Public Library) Suggested Reading List

[Resources for Talking With Kids About Race | Kids](#)

Adult Reading/Listening Suggestions: Experts also tell us that conversations with our children are most effective when we engage in our own learning about racism and ways in which bias is often unconsciously conveyed.

White Kids: Growing Up with Privilege in a Racially Divided America. Margaret A. Hagerman

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race. Beverly Tatum

Systemic Racism in the United States: Scaffolding as Social Construction. Robbie Tourse, Johnnie Hamilton-Mason, Nancy Wewiorski

So You Want to Talk About Race. Ijeoma Oluo

Between the World and Me. Ta-Nehisi Coates

["Where do I donate? Why is the uprising violent? Should I go protest? And other commonly asked questions by white and/or privileged people, answered by other white and/or privileged people.](#) By Courtney Martin

Being Nice is Not Going to End Racism | [YouTube presentation:](#) Robin DiAngelo