

Hampden-Wilbraham Partners for Youth – Notes  
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

12 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Zoom Video/Phone Meeting <https://hwrzd-org.zoom.us/j/83680063238>

I. Welcome/Attendees:

Staff: Gina Kahn, Director; Jenna Swotchak, Coordinator  
Gina Anselmo -- District Attorney's office  
Teri Brand - HWRSD- Nurse Leader (Health Professional)  
Tom Brennan- Bethlehem Church, Youth Pastor (Faith Organization)  
Sherill Caruana -- HWRSD School Committee (Local Government)  
Kathy Fuss -- Jr. Womens' Club of Wilbraham, Volunteer  
Rachel Hapgood -Teen Librarian, Wilbraham Library (Youth Serving Organization)  
Danielle Maurice -- Parent (Elms College, Higher Ed Partnership)  
Paul McNeil - CLOSE Coalition Director (Prevention Organization)  
Kerri O'Connor -- HWRSD- Resource Specialist (School Sector)  
Michael Roy - MRHS/HWRSD Athletic Director (School Sector)  
Jaclin Robinson--MRHS Student (Youth)  
Terrence Smith - United Way Pioneer Valley, Vista Intern (Volunteer Organization)  
Brad Sperry - Rotary Club, Member (Fraternal Organization)

II. Parenting Now--Coping in the Covid World/ MassSupport Webinar: January 27, 2021

Jenna reported on the recent program: Parenting Now-- Coping in the Covid World. MassSupport Network Crisis Counseling Program Senior Team Leader, Sarah Gaer, presented information to parents and community members on the MassSupport Massachusetts COVID19 trauma response. She discussed the timeline society often experiences from "pre-disaster" to "reconstruction," and noted that a source of a great deal of debate these days is what constitutes an event, what makes an event traumatic, and considerations about a general environment of neglect or lack of safety. Sarah helped to fully understand trauma and toxic stress, particularly in relation to COVID19 and living in a circumstance where there's a threat that's always around us. Sarah discussed "shattered assumptions" and provided a cognitive explanation that may help people realize they are *vulnerable but not helpless*. She outlined the five domains affected by trauma, including biological, neurological, relational, affective, and information processing; and both the immediate and long term impacts. Sarah explains that "when we think about protecting our children, one thing that is really important is making sure that we are taking care of parents," and provided a 10 step "resilience prescription" to utilize during these unprecedented times in the COVID world. Sarah then explained the various MassSupport Services that are available and how the MassSupport Network can help both individuals and communities during this challenging time and offered further National and State resources available to the public.

The next section of the program focused specifically on local resources. Kimberley Lee, Vice President of Resource Development and Branding for the Mental Health Association provided information about the agency. She highlighted the Best Life program, MHA's Emotional Health and Wellness Center, an outpatient behavioral health clinic, which is available to support families and individuals, including substance use and addiction recovery. The next local resource guest speaker was Kathleen Cordier, Family Support Specialist for the Family Resource Center at Behavioral Health Network, which is a newly available resource center in the area. The program is open to all, has no qualification requirements, and is free of cost.

Kerri O'Connor, Family Resource Coordinator for the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District, provided a number of community-based support agencies and organizations that are available.

In the meeting, Kerri discussed some of the resources available. She encouraged coalition members to contact her if they need more information. Gina added that the additional resources presented at the recent seminar: Mass Support, Family Resource Center, and the Massachusetts 211 helpline, were all free services open to anyone who is looking for assistance.

### **III. Youth Initiative: ATI club members update and calendar distribution**

Jaclin gave an update on the ATI club which included the guest speaking event with Tony Mandarich that she and 25 other ATI members attended. The members got to hear his story and have a q/a session in the socially distanced auditorium seats. They also just finished a clothing drive for Providence hospital. A handful of members also went to Stoneyhill school to hang up their posters with positive messaging.

Coalition members were reminded that ATI club calendars have been purchased by the Coalition and are available for anyone who would like one. Please email Jenna Swotchak : [jswotchak@hwrsd.org](mailto:jswotchak@hwrsd.org) and we will put one in the mail for you!

### **IV. Social Media workgroup... general goals, volunteers and first meeting date?**

**The coalition** discussed forming a social media workgroup. Kerri O'Connor and Tracey Plantier volunteered to be a part of the group. Jenna will send out an email so that we can discuss a first meeting date that will work. ATI members/ MRHS student Jaclin Robinson will ask her fellow members if they are interested in being a part of this workgroup as well.

### **V. YRBS Survey -Workgroup update**

Gina Kahn gave an update on the YRBS survey development. The workgroup has cut questions from the survey to make it more accessible to students during this unusual time. They have eliminated about 30 questions off the working draft. They have also been drafting COVID related questions. Catherine Brooks gave an overview about the method and some of the questions they are working on. The Coalition discussed accessibility and survey delivery logistics, including the impact that the past few months have had on remote learners and the value...and difficulties... associated with the option of offering it remotely. We agreed that these data would be valuable if we could overcome the logistical barriers that we will encounter by administering remotely: questions about confidentiality, monitoring of administration practices, parent consent variables, etc. Gina will explore logistics with the high school/middle school and review potential remote

administration options with Catherine to make sure that these would be viable ways to collect additional data.

#### **VI. Potential upcoming program focus: Search institute- developmental assets for parents / what's the next focus/event? (early March) Topic/presenter**

As we explored possible topics for continuing the "Parenting Now" series through the end of the school year, Gina Anselmo informed Coalition members about the Youth Advisory Board and the programming they have been providing on the topic of Internet/Social Media Safety. The program has a social media focus and discusses safety precautions, cyberbullying, etc. There is both a presenter portion and Youth Panel for Q/As. The program runs about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes. The Coalition was very interested in this collaboration and have set a tentative date for February 24th as part of the Parenting Now Webinar Series. Jenna, Gina and Gina will follow up.

Gina Kahn also discussed the potential of a Search Institute program: Strengthening Families a Workshop for Parenting Adults. This will tentatively be the focus for March's programming. Outreach has been made to Search, and we are awaiting feedback. Ideally we would have our March date so that it could be communicated at the same time that we are sending out information about the Internet/Social Media session, and the YRBS.

Paul McNeil shared examples of programming that the CLOSE Coalition in Longmeadow has offered: the AVOID platform, Minding your Mind, and Third Millennium Classrooms. Our Coalition has hosted a Minding Your Mind session (just prior to school reopening) but we have not looked at a similar program for students, and Paul spoke highly of the program that was brought in for LPS middle and high schoolers.

#### **VII. DFC grant administration update (including upcoming Annual Coalition Progress Report)**

**Gina discussed the upcoming administration duties of the grant including the Annual Coalition progress report.** She also informed the group that the District was pursuing an application to SAMHSA for a Mental Health Awareness Training Grant, due 2/5/21, that would-- among other things-- assist us in promoting Youth Mental Health First Aid training throughout the community.

**VIII. Partner Updates:** Tracey Plantier mentioned that she has been in contact with Girls on the Run, a program that promotes a healthy mind/body connection are a strong part of the solution in keeping children healthy and positive. Mike knew about the Girls On The Run program and actually thought the suggestion of the McDonalds Nature Preserve would work very well. We noted that this was a perfect thing for the Coalition to be involved in, but in order to support it we would need to be able to include Hampden, as we serve a regional school district for both towns. Tracy will discuss with the group if students from our Hampden area are welcome as well.

Sherill Caruana discussed the District is currently developing their strategic 5 year plan. The development will involve lots of interviews, focus groups, and surveys and Coalition members might be a great resource for this information.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17 at noon, but it was noted that this is a professional development day in the school district and might create challenges for participating District personnel as well as parents in our group as school will not be in session. Gina asked that folks stay tuned for a possible schedule change. Meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm