



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
**730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476**  
**Phone: 781-316-3000**

**webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us**

## Minutes 3\_15\_12

**AYHSC Minutes – March 15, 2012**  
**5:30-7:00pm**

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room ~ *Community Safety Building*

**I. Welcome:** (12) Judith Carroll, Joe Curro, Mary DeCoursey, Ethel Doyle, Laura Juitt, Kathy Hirsch, Lynn Horgan, Colleen Leger, Carlene Newell, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Natasha Thorne, Ned Walsh.

Colleen welcomed members, passed out agendas, and asked for members to submit volunteer worksheets.

### **II. Upcoming Trainings and Events**

Wellness Summit: March 18, 2012 (1:00-4:00PM), WaylandCares; Wayland High School

This event features a variety of health and wellness topics including depression and anxiety, stress management, drug and alcohol prevention, current legislation, sexuality, texting and on-line social media. The program is appropriate for all adults in the community as well as middle-and high-school students.

Coalition member John Scheft will be running a workshop on legal issues pertaining to marijuana possession/consumption.

Understanding Social Host Liability: March 27, 2012 (6:30-8:00PM); Watertown Youth Coalition; Watertown Police Department, and representation from DA office.

Marijuana and the Adolescent Brain: April 2, 2012 (9:00AM-2:00PM), Middlesex Partnership for Youth. Middlesex Community College, Lowell. Colleen encouraged interested members to attend, and informed them that the Coalition would cover registration fees. This is a good opportunity to check out presenters, as AYHSC plans to expand its focus on youth marijuana use in the upcoming year.

DEA National Take-Back Day: April 28, 2012 (10:00AM-2:00PM): AYHSC & Arlington Police Department.

Location: Community Safety Building. Volunteers needed to help separate and dispose of medications, and remove personal identifiers from bottles. Ethel offered to assist with this event. Note: Arlington will hold a community collection on 4/14/12 from 9-1 at the Town Yard. Details to follow at next meeting.

### **III. Coalition Updates**

#### Isis Nation

Laura Juitt educated members on her newly developed program called *Isis Nation*. She will be offering two, 8-week pilot workshop series for 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls in the coming months. Each workshop can accommodate up to twelve girls. *Isis Nation* evolved from Laura's educational training, work and volunteer experiences, and her desire to support struggling teenage girls by offering opportunities for social and emotional growth.

Sessions are designed to encourage group bonding, and to help girls build confidence, express gratitude, and develop a sense of hope and purpose. Each session will include inspirational, therapeutic activities such as art, movement, and a healthy dose of fun. Coalition members received an informational packet about *Isis Nation*, and offered suggestions to help promote the program. Carlene suggested the Advocate; Ethel offered to post the flyer at the Arlington Boys & Girls Club; Cindy offered to bring it to Fidelity House; Mary recommended the Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC); Natasha suggested reaching out to teaching and guidance staff at Ottoson Middle School; and Kathy mentioned that there are English language learners new to Arlington and Arlington High School who might benefit from the program. Judith offered her

assistance with getting food donations from Whole Foods, and Colleen offered Coalition funding for supplies.

### Social Norms Campaigns

AHS: The Coalition has been working with middle- and high-school students to promote positive social norms around substance use. Last spring, AHS students from Kambiz Vatan's Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) class incorporated data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to highlight the healthy norm around drinking, specifically "64% AHS students don't drink". This spring, the Coalition is working with CADD students once again to develop positive messages that emphasize the various reasons students choose to be alcohol free. This is an effort to bring authenticity to the statistic highlighted in the previous campaign. In April or May, Coalition members are invited to review the CADD class submissions and cast their votes.

OMS: In the fall, the Coalition collaborated with Mt. Auburn, the Arlington Enrichment Collaborative (AEC) and youth peer leaders to promote tobacco-free education. The first phase involved an eight-week curriculum covering tobacco history, media literacy, new tobacco products, and social norms. It culminated in the development of a PSA and multiple school activities relating to the Great American Smoke Out. The project focused on increasing student awareness of the school's social norm around smoking, specifically that "93% of Ottoson students have never tried a cigarette." The second phase of the social norms campaign, currently underway, is similar to the AHS campaign. Ten students are participating in a grass roots community awareness project, called *Photovoice*, in which students use photographs (taken by them) to answer the question "what would you like the community to know about your decision to be tobacco free."

Mary explained that photo voice involves students going into the community to capture these images (not people) and later, describing their photos in words. These creative images can be used as an advocacy tool, as well as an opportunity to enhance the student's voice, confidence and leadership skills in the community.

Coalition members identified community locations to display final designs, and suggested transforming these pieces into murals. Kathy suggested reaching out to AHS Art teacher Nancy Muse, and Mary and Lynn suggested Suzanne Owayda of Mosaic Oasis.

### Diversion Expansion

Colleen provided an update on this collaborative project between AYHSC and Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC). The goal of Diversion Expansion is to understand and address the treatment needs of underserved, substance-involved youth. Six focus groups were conducted (58 people) in January and February. Focus group attendees included AHS students, OMS students, AHS guidance and administrators, and community parents. Common themes included the stigma associated with substance use, the desire for non-judgmental intervention opportunities, the need for individual and group based options, peer support, and accountability. Parents reported needing a stronger parent network at Ottoson and AHS. Students do not perceive marijuana use as a big deal. This grant will provide an opportunity to implement appropriate treatment interventions to meet the range of needs identified.

### Raising Awareness & Parent Engagement

The Coalition offers a number of informational and skills-building opportunities to parents in the community, including parent forums and Guiding Good Choices (GGC) workshops. However, the impact of these programs is limited in scope. Carlene and Mary shared concerns on behalf of the Board of Youth Services (BYS) that community parents need more information and skills building opportunities related to raising teenagers. The BYS is interested in working with the Coalition to offer a Parent Night geared to parents of outgoing 8<sup>th</sup> graders or incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Members discussed making these presentations mandatory by connecting them to proms or 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation. Several topics were suggested, including "how to stay connected to your teen", "substance use and the damaging effects on the developing brain" and "current information on marijuana". Members agreed that it is important to emphasize that, while some kids are drinking and using drugs, especially among older AHS students, the majority of middle- and high-school student do not. A tentative decision was made to collaborate with BYS on a parent night, either in the fall for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders or in the spring for graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

## **IV. Parent Forums**

Lynn provided an update on "Table Talks", revised and renamed "Navigating the Teen Years." This spring, the Coalition will offer 2-3 parent forums, and will incorporate aspects of the Navigating the Teen Years model to facilitate parent discussion. The forums will likely take place at the Ottoson Middle School, and will

be offered to parents of graduating 5th graders, as well as parents of middle school students. Based on feedback received from multiple sources (focus groups, surveys etc..) we know that people who parent children in the Arlington community are looking for guidance and opportunities for support on addressing teenage issues. Committee members met and tailored program materials to the community. Lynn provided a program overview and asked for members' feedback on two components of this model. Lynn passed out a revised "quiz" that was administered in a previous meeting, and asked members to complete it. Following quiz corrections and discussion, members suggested additional options for "tough questions/situations" that parents may be tackling. Outreach will focus on notifying PTO representatives from the elementary schools, Middle School email lists and perhaps a backpack drop for 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

**V. Meeting Adjournment:** Next Coalition Meeting 04/12/12