

The February meeting for AYHSC was held on February 11th, 2016 from 5:30-7:00pm at the Whittemore Robbins House.

In Attendance:

Adults: Ivy Laplante, Karen Dillon, Colleen Leger, Joe Curro, Steve Porciello, Kathy Hirsch, Carlene Newell, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Kevin Flood, Jack Flood, Mike Leach

Students: Haley Hirsch, Megan Laurendeau, Olivia Graceffa, Sana Mohtadi, Catie Blair

I. Welcome

Introductions: Student Advisors and community members all introduced themselves and shared their respective roles in our community. Participants also named one Coalition accomplishment or initiative they participated in during the past month that they are proud of.

II. Old Business

January Meeting minutes: Carlene moved to approve, Kathy Hirsch seconded; all approved the January minutes.

Project Purple: Project Purple Event at AHS was a great success. Students organized the event on their own and managed a table. Fantastic outreach that provided name recognition for the Coalition, Project Purple and distributed prevention materials.

Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Night: Ivy presented an overview of a well attended night that we organized in collaboration with AHS, the Samaritans and AYCC. The panel discussion at the event was important and there was a great number of community members present.

Students reported on the Samaritan counselor, Lauren, that spoke to Jrs and Srs. She might be interning in working at AHS guidance next year.

A. Student Coalition Updates

CADCA Conference: Sana reported on the event that took place Feb. 1-4 in MD. Ivy Laplante and Jared Blake took 6 youth. 49 out of 52 states represented. Government reps spoke to youth about policies to prevent substance abuse. Students went to Capitol Hill where they listened to presentations from people in recovery, visited with staff from Congresswoman Katherine Clark's office, and met and spoke to Senator Elizabeth Warren. There were 5 or 6 other coalitions from MA in attendance including Natick, Stoneham and Wakefield. Senator Warren asked the students what issues they are concerned about in our community, and students expressed concerns about marijuana use. Students learned a great deal from students from other regions in the US. They were surprised by the students dealing with opioid use and overdose particularly in rural places like South Dakota.

B. Current Project Updates

Potential Youth Center: Open response answers from students indicate that kids drink because they have nowhere to go to have fun. We are exploring the option of opening a youth center and this was something the students discussed at CADCA. Jared Blake who co-chaperoned the CADCA trip also is backing the idea of a teen center and wants to be involved in the planning.

Kevin Flood from the AB&G Club informed the Coalition about some excited developments at the club. Their Friday teen nights have become a great success and they have hired a Teen Coordinator to run the programs on Tuesdays and Fridays. In her role she will coordinate trips, facilitate events on site and make sure the program is safe and thriving. While the hire was open to outside candidates, she is from Arlington and the club believes her knowledge of the town and familiarity of our demographic makes her a great fit.

Arlington Patriot's Day Parade: Parade will take place on April 17th (Sunday), and there will also be the traditional road race. The Coalition would like our students to represent the Coalition and march in the parade. Student volunteers are: Sana M, Olivia G., Megan L., Haley H. and Catie B. The more the merrier, we hope other students will join the fun.

Student Resource Handbook: Our intern from AHS, Rebecca Choi, created the handbook. We are ready to print it and make it available in Arlington locations. We asked Coalition members where it might be helpful and made available. Suggestions included: Pediatrician's office, Orthodontist, Guidance at AHS, Media Center, Library (teen area), AYCC and houses of worship.

The Media Center at AHS has a rotating display and we will secure a date to feature AYHSC and the handbook.

Alcohol Compliance Checks: Conducted by police and youth from another community. Press release announced plan to do checks. Goal is to reduce access to alcohol. Our school resource officer mentioned the many places in town where alcohol is available. It is not just restaurants but liquor stores, theaters etc. Youth asked why we use youth buyers from another community in the checks, and Steve said it was for their safety and because they are not familiar in Town.

Question was raised: Do movie theaters have a limit on how many drinks someone can purchase at a time? Someone suggested partnering with a real estate company sponsor next time to underwrite costs.

Prom:

Prom season is coming up. It's unfortunately a time when kids tend to drink or binge drink. There is a community problem of parents allowing underage drinking in their home.

Suggestion: Robo call from police reminding citizens of the penalties and laws. Potential mention of notoriety and community responsibility to protect our youth.

Specific local condition: Parents providing alcohol or environments where they can drink after prom (hotels, summer cottages etc.)

YRBS: The survey was a success at AHS last month. Surveys are mailed to evaluator and we are waiting for results. We will need a subcommittee to decide how to present results to the community. Feedback from youth is that the test is too long and has some areas of redundancy. Cindy SC suggested conducting the survey annually and/or breaking it up by topics. Coalition also discussed questions to potentially remove in future surveys. The cost of evaluation services might make this unreasonable and if so, businesses could potentially underwrite the costs. Catie B brought up a good point about about cross-tabulation.

B. Community Update- "What's Happening in Arlington?"

Meeting Adjournment 7:00 pm

Next Coalition Meeting - March 3, 2016 at 5:30pm at the Whittemore Robbins House