



# **Avon YSAB/ LPC/ COC**

**January 03, 2023**

**6:30PM- 8:00 PM**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting called to order at 6:35 by Suzi Alexe, Youth Services Coordinator**

### **I. Welcome and Introductions - Communication from the audience**

Suzi introduced herself and gave a brief description of the Youth Services roles to include education, prevention, truancy, and juvenile review board partner.

Attendees introduced themselves, and what brought them to the YSAB.

Ani Gisnarian, Board Member of Amplify, Inc. (North Central Regional Mental Health Board) attended the meeting.

Ani from CAC 18 (Catchment Area Council) for Amplify. She was appointed to the Amplify board by the DTC (Democratic Town Committee) in Avon. Having been in the volunteer position for over a year, she has had the opportunity to attend many trainings, including participating on a subcommittee for gaming/gambling addiction. Since she is not currently practicing psychology and there is no mental health clinic in Avon, there's no established channel for disbursing the information, so after mentioning this to Wende Cooper (at Amplify) she was put in touch with Suzi to attend the YSAB meetings.

### **II. YSB Coordinator update of Programs and Local Prevention Council**

#### **a. Calm Kits for Students for Mid Term Exams (Avon TAB members, Avon Youth Services, Avon Library)**

Calm kits contained stress reducing items such as stress balls, coloring sheets and utensils, snacks, powered drink mixes, and information on mindfulness and handling stress. The items were donated by Avon Youth Services and the kits were assembled by the Avon Library Teen Advisory Board.

#### **b. Gingerbread house building program.**

The Gingerbread program will be held at the Avon Free Public Library, on January 31, 2023. There will be 2 sessions, open to all ages and sign up will be required.

Session 1, 5-6pm

<https://www.avonctlibrary.info/event/session-1-winter-gingerbread/>

Session 2, 6:15-7:15pm

<https://www.avonctlibrary.info/event/session-2-winter-gingerbread-615/>

### **c. Valentine's Day Cards for Seniors**

Card making began as an intergenerational program, where the K-4<sup>th</sup> graders at Roaring Brook and Pine Grove schools made Valentine's cards for seniors. Supplies were sponsored by Youth Services and distributed to the schools, the cards picked up and delivered to area seniors by Avon Youth Services. When the Covid-19 pandemic began, the program was expanded with the help of the Avon Free Public Library and Avon Youth & Social Services Departments to add seasonal card making. The seasonal cards are made by community members, with supplies sponsored by Avon Youth Services, the supplies distributed, and cards collected by the Avon Free Public Library. The cards are then picked up by Avon Social Services and distributed to area nursing, rehabilitation, and cancer centers. This intergenerational program has brought a bright spot and many smiles to our friends at Avon Health Center, Apple Rehab, Arden Courts of Avon and Farmington, River Ridge, Hartford Health Care Cancer Institute, Avon Senior Center, The Residence at Brookside, Cherry Brook Health Center, Touchpoints Rehab, Middlewoods of Farmington, Farmington Gables/Brookdale Senior Living, Farmington Station Senior Living, Amberwoods of Farmington, Governor's House, Beldon Forest Court and Anthology of Farmington.

## **III. Board Member Updates**

Nathalie Caso spoke about the various needs of our community children on the autism spectrum, as well as children with other special needs. Specifically, she mentioned the isolation that many children feel due to their diagnosis and spoke about the possibility of creating a "buddy" program between younger and older kids on the spectrum. She shared her experiences with similar programs that have been successful in the past. Nathalie also initiated a discussion around the need at the high school for some sort of "quiet space" where students (both neurodiverse and neurotypical) can decompress. She shared the idea of her son's senior capstone project that involved creating a mobile quiet space using a pop-up tent and noise canceling headphones.

**IV. Guest – Emily Cintorino – Director of Community Programs at Interval House**

Ms. Cintorino was unable to attend and is planning to attend the next meeting.

**V. Input from Student Leaders regarding topics that concern Youth**

Lauren Lee spoke about the AHS Mental Health Club Survey, she was able to meet with Mr. Renkawitz, the previous Avon High School principal, with the Mental Health club supervisor. Though the club didn't release the survey that was sent out to the AHS community, similar ideas/questions posed in it came from the survey we were making.

She mentioned that AHS has a big gallery, in which a small space could be made for a "safe space", as it may help those with autism or need some time alone. Students often go to the bathrooms to talk, since teachers and staff can't/aren't watching. The actions taken by the administration seem to be retaliation to the vaping and vandalization issues (along with people hanging out in the bathrooms) but they aren't addressing the root of the problem. The new rules also include not being able to go out of the classroom in the first and last ten minutes of class, when teachers are probably not in the 'bulk' of their lecture.

Makena Logan spoke to what is going on at the high school, restating what was discussed at the last meeting, that mental health and stress are still an issue that can be better addressed, students do not feel they are being heard. Lots of stress this time of year and in general, school is a major cause of stress for many, policies could be changed - training and awareness needed as well as more student voices are needed, to help with the lack of response, even when students bring concerns to teachers about stress, teachers don't seem to know how to respond, and nothing changes. She agreed with Lauren that the school instituting a quiet space would be beneficial to many students.

**VI. Avon Police Department Update and JRB**

**a. Partners in Prevention / Truancy / School Refusal Behaviors**

No Police were present at the meeting.

**VII. The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm**

**Next meeting: March 2023 Date TBD**