



AMPLIFY

Avon YSAB/ LPC / COC Meeting

March 30, 2021 6:30PM

GoTo meeting – Avon Youth Services

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Suzi Alexe, Youth Service Coordinator

Christine Pescatore, Administrative Analyst, Social Services

Liam Alexe, Avon High School Student

Auradhya Kumar, Avon High School Student

Ryan Steremberg, Avon High School Student

Lauren Lee, Avon High School Student

Makena Logan – Avon High School Student

Officer John O'Neill, Avon Police Department, School Resource Officer

Marisa Hicking, Teen Librarian, Avon Free Public Library

Heather Toyen, Avon High School Counselor

Michael Renkawitz, Avon High School Principal

Maria Mazzicato, Community Member

Kathy Randall – Parent/Community Member

Lori Stanczyk – Parent/Community Member

Deb Steremberg – Parent/Community Member

Meeting called to order at 6:33pm

- I. Welcome and Introductions - Communication from the audience (limited to five minutes)**
- II. US Horse Welfare and Rescue Organization; opportunities for partnership -Avon Youth Services Working with Programs for Youth** – Suzi and Lori Stanczyc have visited the Rescue. Suzi is aware of teen volunteers and also children that are participating in the programs. The Rescue’s website has valuable information on the programs, please share with your contacts. Also if you know of families that would benefit from the program(s) and have a financial need please reach out to Suzi or Christine by email as we may be able to assist. They are still looking for more teen volunteers. Deb shared that her daughter is attending a program at the rescue and she is enjoying it and that the program is wonderful
- III. YSB Coordinator update of current Programs (Suzi Alexe)**
- IV. Updates on Current Programs**
 - **Intergenerational Program – Students/Community Members make Spring cards for local Seniors and local Cancer Center (Marisa Hicking, Suzi Alexe)**
 - **Library TAB (Teen advisory Board) members (Marisa Hicking) Spring Cards for Seniors**

We had a great response for Valentines cards from the local seniors, nursing homes & cancer centers. 1300 cards were requested and the TAB members, Pine Grove School and Roaring Brook School filled the request. We are partnering with the library, and the TAB members and members of the community are in the process of making Spring Cards that will be distributed as well. Christine handed out cards at the Avon Food Pantry and the shoppers loved them.
 - **Input from Student Leaders regarding topics that concern Youth**

Marisa has put out a survey to TAB members to ask about events Teens would like to participate in, such as Teen Paint Night, also to inspire students to do a campaign against vaping, consisting of events such as a trivia night, making posters to put in doctors’ offices.

- **Mental Health Awareness Club (AHS Students)**

May 28th Mental Health Awareness Club is having a movie night, it is in the planning stage. Possibly YSB can have an ad that can be incorporated into the event.

In process of spreading awareness through a newsletter. Looking for ideas to reach more people.

Suzi discussed Angst, and that we are still on hold until we can have it in person.

Suzi would love to partner with the club to raise awareness.

Ryan brought up that April is the deadline for college decision, which can be stressful and that he would like to see something for managing stress. The library has done things in the past such as movie and snack. Ryan thought a take home item, such as coloring sheets or something similar would be great.

Makena mentioned AP tests are also coming up which is also a stressor for the kids. Heather reminded the high school students that there will be no final exams.

Heather said we could also remind people of the simple things that can be done, like going outside for a few minutes, taking a walk or hike, just take a break from the technology.

Lauren would like to find more ways to destigmatize mental health.

Suzi is always available to talk or for any resources you need help with. Please feel free to contact her and offer her information to your friends.

- **Recruit Youth for the Board and Community Projects/ Teen Paint Night, Wellness (Anti Vaping Trivia, Wellness Anti Vaping Campaigns spearheaded by Youth)**

Marisa recapped the card making events she held for Christmas, Hanukkah, as well as non-denominational, and winter celebration which 16 teens signed up, creating about 250 cards. Valentine's day 33 teens, adults and siblings signed up, creating about 600 cards. For spring she opened it up to any age and currently 55 people are signed up. The TAB members voted and decided to do another round of cards for summer, most likely in June.

Marisa did a survey for the teens, and they were some interest the idea of making posters, many liked a family bingo night or trivia night which would also include healthy lifestyle topics such as mental health, anti-vaping, etc. They loved the idea of Teen paint night.

- **Anti-Vaping Campaign Discussion**

We are looking for any ideas that we can do prior to June 30th.

Idea brought up of a presentation and then a treasure hunt or a drive in movie for the families at Winding Trails or the Polo grounds.

Campaign Idea – Social distance from the vape, keep six away from any vaping product.

- **Youth Conference – Suzi Alexe/Lori Stanczyk/ Rocky Hill Youth Services/Farmington Youth Services/ Southington Youth Services – target June 2021**

Looking into having a small youth conference this year with Avon and other surrounding towns. Previous one was at Winding Trails and they did activities such as raft building. They are looking into possibly using Winding Trails and also Susan Mitchell has offered the Horse Rescue as well. Students are encouraged to invite any friends to participate in the conference.

- **Planning Spring Programs - World No Tobacco Day to include Vaping (No school assembly due to Covid 19) seeking alternate activity (APD, Schools)**

One of the anti-vaping programs was World No Tobacco Day, we are looking to see the program will be held in the future, as currently there are no in person school assemblies.

- **Substance Free Graduation (June 10 Date TBD)**

No one was on that had any update.

V. Avon Police Department Update and JRB

- **Partners in Prevention / Truancy / School Refusal Behaviors**

There are no JRBs at this time. There were a couple truancy cases but the situations have been remedied and do not require further action.

It was asked if Avon will be doing drug take back day and about having a drug box at the Police Station. Officer O'Neill spoke with the Lieutenant during our call and the Take Back Day will be happening at the Avon Senior Center on April 24th. Officer Reardon is also working on getting a permanent drug drop box for the lobby of the Police Station.

An idea was brought up about incorporating taking back of vape products at a drug take back event and/or giving out literature about vaping at the event.

Question was asked about the disposal of vapes due to the fact they have batteries. Officer O'Neill stated that if the Police confiscate vapes, they are put into evidence and the evidence officer has procedures to dispose of them. He will ask if they require any special handling due to the batteries.

VI. Community of Concern/ Local Prevention Council - Updates

- **Angst Presentation/Program Date TBD**
- **TBS/ AMS and AHS Program partnered with PTO on Mental Health Spring 2021**

On March 15th the PTO held a virtual event for parents, Are the Kids Alright? Young People and Mental Health with Dr. Alicia Farrell. There were 76 participants in attendance, the program lasted about 2 hours and was very well received.

Suzi asked the students if they had any topics they would like to have a speaker event. Please email her if you are not comfortable speaking at the meeting what topics and best times to hold a program. Ryan would like to have Alicia Farrell, he thinks it would be very popular. Topics brought up were mental health, feminism. We can also have someone come in to speak at the mental health awareness club meeting.

A suggestion is to hold a webinar that is recorded and can be given out for those who registered to view later.

Author talks are also another suggestion that the teens feel would be well received.

An additional program that Suzi is looking into holding for adults in the community is called Hidden in Plain Sight. This program shows parents and care givers different ways that children can hide substances in the home.

Heather stated we had talked about this program at the beginning of the school year, prior to Covid and she feels it would be a great program to invite high and middle school staff to as there are probably things right in front of them that they do not recognize.

Suzi stated the program is really effective in person but also very good as a virtual program. Hopefully we can do work on having holding the program in person during the next school year, but will consider doing it virtual.

Maria knows a marriage and family counselor that may be able to host a virtual event as well. She will find out more information.

VII. Adjournment

Next meeting: May 2021 Date TBD