



## **Avon YSAB/ LPC / COC Meeting**

**February 7, 2022 6:30PM**

**GoTo meeting – Avon Youth Services**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **In Attendance:**

Suzi Alexe, Youth Service Coordinator

Christine Pescatore, Administrative Analyst, Social Services

Makena Logan – Avon High School Student

Marisa Hicking, Teen Librarian, Avon Free Public Library

Heather Toyen, Avon High School Counselor

Deb Steremberg, Parent/Community Member

Maria Mozzicato, Community Member

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

Kathy Randall – Parent/Community Member

**Meeting called to order at 6:33pm**

**I. Welcome and Introductions - Communication from the audience (limited to five minutes)**

- **Suzi Alexe** – started introductions and let everyone know the meeting is being recorded to assist with the preparation of the meeting minutes.
- **Suzi Alexe** – **Three** new board members were appointed by the Town Council at their February 3, 2022 meeting. We have not been given their information as of this meeting but look forward to meeting them soon.
- At our November meeting we had speaker Lisa Gray from A Promise to Jordan discussing counterfeit pills, which led to a discussion on Narcan. A question was asked at that meeting as to who has access to Narcan at the schools. The answer is at the high school the nurses and the resource officer are trained and have Narcan on hand. Suzi stated if anyone has an interest in Narcan training, to contact her and if there is enough interest she will arrange a training that will be open to the public. Maria asked if another school staff were to get Narcan trained would they be able to access in the school. Officer O'Neill stated that at this time only the resource officer and the nurses have access and if that were to change, the directive would come from administration. Debra asked where Narcan can be obtained, Suzi replied that it is available at many drug stores, but to get it free of charge you would obtain that information at the training you attend. Maria asked if they have had to use Narcan in any of the Avon schools, Officer O'Neill responded that they have not used it in any of the schools but they have used it in town.
- **YSB Coordinator update of programs and Local Prevention Council.**
- Suzi Alexe/Marisa Hicking - 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 donated 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 donated 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. This year the community and the schools made approximately 900 cards each.
- Youth Services and the Library's Teen Advisory Board teamed up to make calm kits for grades 9-12 during mid-term exams. The kits contained stress balls, snacks, crafts and

information on mindfulness and stress relief. The teens loved the kits and want to have them again for finals.

- Marisa mentioned that the Library has limits on the amount of participants for programs. Kathy asked who made the decisions on those limits. Marisa responded that last year at this time the Library was closed from 2-4pm so there were no afterschool programs, it was the director's decision to start the programs again with limited participation. Anyone can come to the Library at any time but you cannot come to sit and stay for any programs without registering or if there is a space available.
- Heather gave an update on the high school, everything is business as usual with the exception of no assemblies due to Covid. They are required to wear masks but no longer have the shields. The decision on mask wearing once the Governor lifts the directive, will come from the Board of Education with recommendations from the Farmington Valley Health District.

- **Input from Student Leaders regarding topics that concern Youth**

- Makena Logan responded to what is going on at the high school by stating that mental health and stress are still an issue that can be better addressed, she feels students do not get input in how things are handled or policies that are made. She thinks that having an open forum where students can discuss their concerns and input on solutions on topics such as mental health and stress would be very beneficial to the student population.
- Suzi suggested also getting in contact with the student representative at the high school who attends the Board of Education meetings and having a discussion with them to have possible input at the Board of Education meetings.
- Heather stated that the two high school reps are Senior Sawyer Hernandez and Junior Charlotte Perry. Makena said most know who they are but were most likely not aware that they could speak to them about topics that they feel should be voiced to the Board.
- Suzi mentioned that the PTO from the high school and possibly the middle school are looking to bring back Dr. Alicia Farrell for a program for stress and anxiety, although this program is geared more for parents and how to help them with their children.
- Suzi had a meeting with Vice Principal Kimball regarding having a program for the freshman on vaping that should be taking place before the April break. The State of CT's primary focus this year is vaping, but mental health and wellness is by no means forgotten. The program is for the students, as a peer to peer with college students presenting to the high school students using trivia and a nonjudgmental, open discussion on vaping and how to stop.
- The Town of Avon has received and will be receiving more funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and Suzi has asked for \$120,000.00 to be put toward mental health funding for Avon residents. Alan Rosenberg presented the proposal at the February 3, 2022 Town Council meeting and the decision is pending approval.

- Deb asked about what Officer O'Neill has seen regarding stress in school. He responded that he has not seen any issues in the schools, they have had a couple issues outside of school which have been addressed.
- Heather said the pandemic has exasperated stress and mental health for students compared to other years.
- We will look into doing more programs to reduce stress, such as paint nights.
- Angst was planned for Jan 2020, it had to be postponed till March 2020, then the pandemic hit and it has been on hold since then. It is a good presentation about stress and anxiety for students and their parents. We are hoping to have the program soon.
- **Avon Police Department Update and JRB**
  - **Partners in Prevention / Truancy / School Refusal Behaviors (Officer O'Neill)**
    - No current JRB cases.
    - No current requests for Truancy
    - Social Media platforms – Bullying at Thompson Brook via Tik Toc. The police have had discussions with students about what is and is not appropriate on social media.
- **Open Conversations**
- Suzi is open to suggestions for outside spaces for holding programs.
- Christine will send out a doodle survey to obtain a date for our March meeting. We will decide closer to the date if it will be virtual, in person or hybrid.

## II. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:36pm

**Next meeting: March 2022 Date TBD**