



Minutes of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance /Youth Services Commission

December 6, 2022

Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending

1. Colin Lochner - Vice Chair, Substance Abuse Representative
2. MJ Postal - Senior Citizen Representative
3. Rebecca Frtizky (Tritt) - Ridge High School SAC, School Representative
4. Ellen Houlihan - Civic Group Representative
5. Catherine Santaiti - PTO Representative
6. Kaitlin Cartoccio, MAC/Health Department Representative

Other Attendees

1. Anderson Lee, Local Student

Members Not Attending

1. Janice Fields - Chair, Township Committee Representative
2. Tracy Baldassare – Bernards Township Police Department
3. Swapna Uradi - Citizen Representative
4. Karen Gray - BOE Representative
5. Xingyue Huang – Citizen Representative
6. Sanjiv Raghupathy - Student Representative
7. Madison Clowes – Student Representative
8. Michele Roberts – Citizen Representative
9. Phil Jasina, Alternate - Bernards Township Police Department
10. Rabbi Robert Green – Clergy Representative

Call to Order

Colin Lochner called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. All attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement was read by Colin Lochner. The mission of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse is to provide consultation, programs, training, and resources to members of the Bernards Township community with the goal of preventing and reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Three goals of the Alliance: ESP!

1. To **educate** about the damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs,
2. To **support** events & programs that provide healthy alternatives to substance abuse, and
3. To create community wide **presence** in the identification of problems and in designing effective measurable solutions.

Staff Comment

No comments

Reports

Somerset County Alliance Coordinator – (Ebeny Torres)

- Per K. Cartoccio – Ebeny is the new county coordinator; she is working to meet and connect with all of the Alliances in the county.

Youth Services Commission –(Monica Sprague)

- No report.

Community Program Coordinator – (Kaitlin Cartoccio)

Opioid Abatement Funding two \$9,000 awards through Janssen Settlement to do programs that include opioid abuse. May partner with other local organizations for programming. Also have a DMHAS grant of about \$5,000. Please pass along any program ideas. E. Houlihan suggested printing out new Suicide Hotline (988) cards.

Empowerment Day returning to WAMS 8th graders. Revamped to include LMTI guidance on workshops for ½ or full day. Kevin Wanzer returning as speaker. Monday, April 3. Possible change this year – in the past kids would cycle through 3 programs: Natural Highs, Addiction, and Mental Health Resilience assemblies. This year WAMS would like to do them in the classrooms. May have challenges having enough REACH presenters and prefer to have more than 2 presenters in each group. It is beneficial for REACH students to present in larger groups together. Will work with teachers and admins to work out those logistics.

Agenda Items

1. Youth Services Program Updates

a. REACH (Ridge Education Action & Community Health)

REACH continues to meet twice a month. They have been working on their website as well as trifold. Would like to put up vape quitting flyers around Ridge. REACH Thanksgiving celebration last week and holiday party later in December. They are receiving REACH sweatshirt at that party. This year has been all about getting them together in person and bonding. There are about 15 members, and they are working hard.

b. Grab and Go Teen Outreach

This program will officially be ending in December as the second competitive grant has been spent. The last kit pick up is 12/21 & 12/22 and will contain Winter Break Relaxation items including sheet masks, shower steamers, break-open geodes, fidgets, and DIY glitter bottles. There is a new Teen Librarian at the Bernards Township Library, K. Cartoccio will work with the new Teen Librarian to release quarterly or seasonal kits going forward.



- c. **COPE (Creating Opportunities for Positive Emotions)** – Funded for an additional year. K.Cartoccio will work with Cedar Hill Elementary School Counselor, Molly Mooney to figure out what to spend Year 2 of funding on.

2. Program Recap

- a. **Suicide Prevention Week @ RHS** - Kids loved fidgets, keychains, and wallet cards; stickers are popular among staff. Items attract kids to the information table where the REACH students engaged to give suicide prevention information. E. Houlihan and M. Postal were on site to help out.
- b. **RHS Football Game** – in September; Green and White It's 21 For a Reason t-shirts. Good practice for REACH Kids to interact with parents. No adults there at table. Generally, need more support from this group for those events.
- c. **Back to School Nights @ RHS** – Another great opportunity for REACH students to interact with parents. Also noticed REACH seniors helping younger members as this is first in-person BTSN for them since COVID.
- d. **Bernards Township Walks for Mental Health** – October. Raised \$500 for Somerset Treatment Services. Unsure if we will continue next year. We were going to have one in person walk, but didn't get the traction needed.
- e. **Pumpkin Smash** – Successful cross-over event with Parks and Rec.

3. Upcoming Programs – Save the Date

- a. **LIKE – Virtual Documentary & Panel Presentation** – Thurs, Dec 8th 7 pm [Flyer](#)
- b. **PRIDE Drug Survey at WAMS & RHS** – Dec 14th – school is running it.
- c. **QPR Training – Suicide Prevention** – Jan 18th (In-Person) 10 am -12pm [Flyer](#)
Jan 24th (Virtual) 6:30-8:30 pm [Flyer](#)
- d. **John Halligan Presentation @ WAMS** – Dec. 7 for students and Jan 18th Time TBD for parents;
- e. **Race to be Human – Virtual Documentary & Panel Presentation** – TBD Feb 2023
- f. **Twilight Challenge June 4, 2023** – May have a race day coordinator; already reached out

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

LOCAL EVENTS / MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE MEMBER COMMENTS:

Question about the status of Liberty Corner and Basking Ridge First Aid Squads and possibly partnering for suicide prevention (C. Lochner). Is there a way to invite the public to attend our open meetings? (M. Postal)

K.Cartoccio mentioned that current members should look out for email from Municipal Clerk to recommit to the Alliance for 2023. Please respond to that email AND please attend meetings which are now in person.



Thank you to Karen Grey and Janice Fields for their service to MA in 2022

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm

Motion (1) Kaitlin Cartoccio

(2) Colin Lochner

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Santaiti

Municipal Alliance Secretary