



**Minutes of the Bernards Township
Municipal Alliance/ Youth Services Commission
April 7, 2023**

Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending:

1. Ellen Houlihan – Civic Group Representative
2. Catherine Santaiti – PTO Representative
3. Rebecca Fritzky – SAC Representative
4. Lily Wong – Citizen Representative
5. Kaitlin Cartoccio – Health Department Representative/Grant Coordinator
6. Anderson Lee – Student Representative
7. Ed Rubino - Citizen
8. MJ Postal – Senior Citizen Representative
9. Philip Jasina – Bernards Township Police/Chairperson
10. Lucy Forgione - Board of Health

Other Attendees:

1. Susan Visser – Community in Crisis

Members Not Attending:

1. Rabbi Robert Green – Clergy Representative
2. Sanjiv Raghupathy – Student Representative
3. Michele Robertson – Citizen Representative
4. Colin Lochner – Substance Abuse Representative/ Vice Chairperson
5. Tracy Baldassare – Bernards Township Police

Call to Order

Philip Jasina called the meeting to order at 6pm. All attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement was read by Philip Jasina. 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.



WAIVING OF THE READING OF MINUTES March 7, 2023 - APPROVED

Motion (1) Phil Jasina

Motion (2) Lily Wong

MINUTE APPROVAL – March 7, 2023 - APPROVED

Motion (1) Phil Jasina

Motion (2) Lily Wong

Presentation

Comfort Zone Camp (CZC) Krista Collopy, Senior Regional Director and Jenn Baratta, NY/NJ Director of Development

CZC is a non-profit camp for children who have experienced death and grief; 23 years in operation and have helped 23,000 children. No cost for families. However, it costs Comfort Zone Camp about \$600 per child to attend.

Camps starting this month. New after COVID brought children with their parent(s)/ guardian to camp. Also virtual option available as well as suicide specific loss and overdose specific loss.

Camp season runs April – October one-two times monthly. Hoping to run 8-9 in NY/NJ. About 50 – 65 children/ camp session.

Volunteers (15-17year old junior mentors and 18 and older) – match buddies with each camper. Volunteer training coming up on April 15 in Chester.

Follow up with campers includes counselor post-camp conference with parent, referrals to Good Grief or other community resource, one day virtual camp, or invitation to attend again.

Children or parent applies through website. CZC takes time to make sure it is a good fit and good timing for child. Children not ready or not a good fit for 3 day overnight may be referred to other resources in community or option to attend virtual. Encourage 3 month waiting period from application.

CZC is hosting a local fundraiser at Burnt Mills Oct. 27

Rebecca Fritzkly, SAC Representative, recommended participating in Ridge Mental Health Fair in May. Catherine Santaiti recommended connecting with Heartworks in Bernards Township. Phil Jasina recommended making connection with State and local PBA for possible donation. Susan Visser, Community in Crisis (CIC), recommended connecting with CIC to also make connections with organizations who serve families affected by substance abuse.

Staff Comment

Welcome to the meeting and thank you to all in attendance.

Reports

Somerset County Alliance Coordinator (Ebeny Torres) – County Updates:

Next County Meeting is April 19 @7pm via Zoom with Todd Urisi Choices – Social Emotional Learning skills focused on how to make positive choices in difficult situations. Kaitlin Cartoccio is attending and all are welcome. Flyer to be provided. He is also available for school or organization speaking events.



Stigma Free Conference @ RVCC May 19. Stigma Free also hosting a webinar on what Stigma Free is and how to get involved.

LEAD (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) – available K-12. Curriculum is dependent on grade year schools wish to start.

Request for Application will be posted; Municipal Alliance must apply for non-competitive grant. Funds staying the same as 2023. Apply between April 6 – May 9. Bernards Township MA intention to reapply for same funding of programs.

Youth Services Commission (*Monica Sprague*) No report

Community Programs Coordinator (*Kaitlin Cartoccio*)

Received results of PRIDE SURVEY. Will review results and analyze before presenting to Board of Education and releasing to public. May do a full presentation in the fall.

Drug Take Back Day – Somerset County Sheriff's office took over drug boxes. BTPD maintains the boxes and sheriff's office delivers to DEA. Drug Take Back Day will be a drop off day. No drive thru. Phil will review previous year flyer to edit and update.

Agenda Items

1. **Welcome New Member!** *Csilla Csipak – Bernards Township Board of Education*
2. **Twilight Challenge 2023– Sunday, June 4, 2023**
 - a. Posters to be distributed tonight in packs for those who volunteered to display in business districts around town.
 - b. Sponsorship Information available for those members who can make connections to new or existing businesses.
 - c. Sign Up Genius was emailed today. Please sign up for specific tasks or tell Kaitlin you are free certain hours to do anything needed. Sign up for as many positions you can. Your family members are welcome to volunteer or students you know are excellent and reliable volunteers.
 - d. Tuesday, May 23 5:00-6:30pm Twilight Challenge Volunteer Zoom Training Session (optional)
 - e. Please PROMOTE!!
 - f. Reviewed sign up for specific preparation tasks
 - g. Looking for volunteer to take pictures (high school student or adult)
3. **Youth Services Program Updates**
 - a. *REACH (Ridge Education Action & Community Health)*
 - i. Youth Summit Day – April 3rd – LMTI also attended. REACH students performed skit on busting stereotypes that was very well received. Some feedback from students: Those that were in classrooms enjoyed breakout sessions more than those in larger spaces like cafeteria.



Some break out session topics included: Respect and Diversity, Positively Me, Taking Care of Mental Health, Transitioning from Middle School to High School, Pursuing Natural Highs
Day ended with Kevin Wozner – using laughter and humor to get through life's difficult times.

Will keep Youth Summit Day in the spring rather than in the fall as the timing and preparation time allotted was optimal.

- b. Viking Yoga – no update
- c. COPE (Creating Opportunities for Positive Emotions) – no update

4. Upcoming Programs – Save the Date!

- a. QPR Suicide Prevention Training – April 26th 6:30-8:30 pm [Flyer](#)
- b. Youth Mental Health First Aid – May 11th 9 am – 3 pm – CiC Hub, Bernardsville - [Flyer](#)
- c. Mental Health First Aid – May 18th 9 am – 4:30 pm – BT Library, Basking Ridge – [Flyer](#)

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

LOCAL EVENTS / MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE MEMBER COMMENT

No comments

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 8:11p.m.

Motion (1) Catherine Santaiti

(2) Csilla Csipak

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Santaiti, *Secretary*