



Fairfield CARES Community Coalition Meeting Minutes – May 20, 2020

The Fairfield CARES Community Coalition held a regular Zoom meeting at 8:30 am.

<https://youtu.be/5j9eSCzLFvc>

Present: Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Phil Dwyer, Jenn Jacobsen, Reini Knorr, Bernadette Coppola, Andrea Flynn, Wendy Bentivegna, Caitlin (Center for Family Justice), Nina Chanana, Mike Cummings, Gabrielle Diaz, Tim Morris, Dana Bossio

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 8:30 am

Approval of minutes: Jenn made a motion to approve the March 18th meeting minutes, seconded by Reini. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Update - Cristin McCarthy Vahey

Cristin announced Mike Cummings agreed to be the co-chair for the Fairfield CARES Community Coalition and how grateful that Mike understands the total wellbeing of students. Mike stated the work the committee does is integral to the school system and informs the public schools of issues they may not be aware. The State Social Emotional Learning Collaborative is coming up with a suicide assessment tool to use at each of the high schools, helping everyone understand we have to look at school climate, services support and resources available. The committee is looking to address the mental health need as student return to school and everyone is encouraged to add input.

There is a State advisory group is looking into a broad base student assessment of food, shelter, and trauma/mental health before returning to school.

Parent and Student Survey Update - Jenn Jacobsen

- Student and Parent survey was distributed to obtain a pre and post outlook in community and see where Fairfield CARES should target our effort. The survey can be found at this link: <https://fairfieldct.org/surveyresults>
- Parent survey – Mostly parents that are female with high school and elementary students. Evaluated Student stress/anxiety for Corona Virus and the top three are 1. Missing contact with friends, 2. Not know when life will return to normal, 3. School/Academics. Social media was found helpful to students. Evaluated Parents stress/anxiety for Corona Virus and the top three are 1. Not know when life will return to normal, 2. Family member becoming ill, 3. Corona Virus/Covid19. Substance abuse was less and exercising and family time is more. Substance use report an uptick in alcohol. Concerns about mental health, extra circular activities, and job/finances.

- Student survey for grades 6-12 – Mostly female students replied. Evaluated Student stress/anxiety for Corona Virus and the top three are 1. Missing contact with friends at a higher percent than parents, 2. School/Academics, 3. Not know when life will return to normal, 3. Social media was found helpful to students. There seems to be less stress at home. Coping mechanism were family, exercise and social media. The substance use reported alcohol and vaping.
- Things reported that would be helpful, friends, activities, sports, being with friends, teacher live interaction, guidance counseling, libraries, hope and positive news.
- Now what does the coalition do with the information, target, communicate and program.
- How to target the parents not reached
- Flyer or blast talk it out, meditations, healthy eating
- Online clubs to have meaningful liver interact with kids.
- Fairfield CARES provide a lot of information on the website, Facebook and social media.

High School IMPACT Program and Special Education – Dana Bossio

- IMPACT Program was designed to support students with anxiety and depression. There are two social workers and special education teacher with executive functioning and cognitive regulations to organize work. There is group counseling and special education classes throughout the week to access in their local school. There is ongoing consultations with doctors at Yale. The middle school is participating as well for known cases and new cases to support student mental health, food, and financial access.
- Not completing work is the first gateway to uncovering an issue.
- There is a collective trauma and prevention, being mindful and talking can help normalize what everyone is feeling. All things fill together with a balance of being preventative and mindful. The need intervention and recovery is all tied together.

Treasurer's Report - Bernadette Coppola

The LPC grant check is being mailed to the First Select Women's office to be deposited and funds dispersed for coalition administration and capacity building for parents of younger students. There are some additions for \$242 hoot suite account, \$660 for the evaluator services, \$8700 left to spend for the year. There will be a meeting with Positive Directions and the numbers to be updated.

CSC Grant Coordinator Update - Jenn Jacobsen

- CSC Grant is a grant that is through DMHAS.
- Youth Committee - Middle School Campaign concepts and graphics and language were updated and given to Karma Creative to update.
- Fiscal year 2021 implementation plan for DMHAS is complete, reviewed and edited. The State data system has be updated. The plan will be posted to the website.

Programing Committee Update - Reini Knorr

Link for Events: https://www.facebook.com/FairfieldCARES/events/?ref=page_internal

- 5/20 at 6:30 pm webinar Trumbull - Virtual Hidden in Plain Sight
- 5/21 at 5:30pm webinar Presentation on Anxiety with Eli Lebowitz
- 5/27 at 7pm webinar Resilient Families – A Parenting and Self Care
- 5/28 at 2pm webinar CT Clearing House – Anxiety During the Pandemic
- Fairfield Public Library – E-Book/Audio Books are available for mental health
- Immediate Crisis call 2-1-1, Talk it out Hotline 1-833-258-5011 or Visit: www.talkitoutct.com
- At the PTA Council meeting, everyone was invited to attend Fairfield CARES.
- Dana from the Fairfield Public School invited Fairfield CARES to the social work meetings in the next few weeks to share information.

Resource Committee Update - Phil Dwyer & Wendy Bentivegna

- LPC grant has 70 days to use the money, report and file for the next years grant.
- Wendy reviewed the grant disbursements to include \$1900 FLHS and \$1900 FWHS for vaping sensation programs, T-shirts, and Coalition Administration costs.
- Wendy is cleaning up the strategic codes and paperwork for reporting.
- A Zoom meeting will be held next Thursday for next year's LPC application and two people will attend.

The Hub Update – Wendy Bentivegna for Giovanna Mozzo

- Mental Health Awareness month and newsletter
- National Prevention Week – was great and thanks to all of Reini's posts hard work and dedication.
- LPC application emailed and due July 31st. Thursday mandatory meeting next Thursday. Final report due. Grant money to be spent by June 30.
- LPC/Fairfield CARES – The Town should see you as a leader Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Suicide prevention. Post preventions resources and best practices should be reviewed. Memorial parades and funding pages are not best practices.

New Business

- A community action plan should be place for post-prevention for suicides.
- Newtownparentconnection.org has virtual meetings for bereavement support and prevention.

Adjournment: Cristin made a motion to adjourn, passed unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 9:25 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Flynn, Secretary