

Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program of Weston Minutes from April 9, 2008 Board meeting

Attendance: Barbara Levi-Berliner, Woody Bliss, Debbie Eldon, Barry Goldberg, Ginger Jespersen, Olga Kunevsky, Emma Lander, Celeste McGeehan, Linda Nash, Susan Seath, Ryan Seymour, Karen Sitney, Danielle Tolkin

Speaker: Barbara Levi-Berliner

Barbara Levi-Berliner is a licensed clinical social worker in Weston, and has served as ADAP's high school coordinator for the last 3 years. Celeste asked her to speak about helping teens cope with loss, depression and suicide. Barbara stated that thoughts of suicide are not uncommon in teens, that teens often perceive suicide as an alternative strategy rather than a final solution. She said that anyone who expresses suicidal thoughts should get professional help and said that peers of any student who may be at risk should strongly encourage them to seek help. The primary cause of teen suicide is relationship problems, followed by issues with sexual orientation, especially when the family is not accepting. The third most common cause is trauma, including another's suicide. Barbara said that copycat suicides or suicide pacts are not uncommon. Advice to parents was to ensure that teens have a non-parent adult who they can talk to, preferably one in the school setting (e.g. advisor) and one in a personal setting (relative or neighbor). She also said parents should not try to talk the teen out of their pain or try to solve the problem, but should validate the pain, and ask the teen how they can help or if they can suggest some solutions. Also, the terms "unhealthy choice" or "unfortunate choice" are preferable to "bad choice" when discussing suicide. Parents should strive to help their children be resilient and resourceful. Woody Bliss asked for an update on how the Kids in Crisis counselor is working out. Danielle responded that Bonnie Rumilly is doing great and is very busy. Kids seem to be encouraging their peers to talk to her.

President's Report: Celeste McGeehan

The next Board meeting will be Wednesday, May 14th at 7 P.M. at the home of Celeste McGeehan, 45 Cavalry Road, Weston.

Celeste thanked Lisa Foster and Karen Sitney for the Mt. Laurel mailing, Danielle Tolkin for making a presentation to the Booster's Club about the YLC Forum, and Susan Earle for keeping the website updated.

Grim Reaper

Celeste reported that she, Barbara Levi-Berliner and Susan Earle had met to discuss how to proceed with Grim Reaper Day in the aftermath of the suicide of a WHS student. They proposed to Mrs. Cipriano that instead of Grim Reaper, ADAP would sponsor a different pre-prom activity, possibly the "Dirt" program. This is a one-man show in which actor/comedian John Morello portrays several

different characters to spotlight several different topics (most drug and alcohol related) to provoke discussion. Staples sponsored this program earlier in the year, and Chris Lemone (who heads the Teen Awareness Group at Staples) said that it was very good. Further information, including an 8 minute video of the show, is available at www.iamdirt.com. Celeste asked that we discuss this further as a board. The Board agreed that we should not hold Grim Reaper Day this year (motion made by Barbara Levi-Berliner, unanimously approved). The Board further agreed to sponsor the Dirt program (again moved by Barbara and unanimously approved), and to supplement the assembly with activities in each classroom run by YLC members. We will also provide T-shirts and balloons with messages as we have done in the past. Chris Lemone felt that the show would have been more effective in smaller groups (they did one performance for the entire HS). Although WHS is half the size of Staples, it was felt that doing 2 performances, one for 9-10 and one for 11-12 grades would be desirable. Danielle suggested inviting the 8th grade YLC members as well. Celeste has found a potential donor to sponsor one show, and proposed that ADAP fund the second out of the Grim Reaper Day budget. The cost for 2 shows is \$2700. The cost to ADAP of funding one show, plus T-shirts and incidentals will be about \$2000. We have sufficient funds in the budget to cover this. Celeste will find out from John Morello if we can be permitted to videotape some or all of the show (could password protect it so that it can only be viewed by WHS students and parents). Barbara also suggested using this day as an opportunity for students, faculty and staff to contribute to a video, similar to what was shown at last year's Grim Reaper Day, in which participants discuss personal experiences of how their lives were affected by drug and alcohol-related incidents. Celeste will discuss our decision with Mrs. Cipriano. The proposed date for this event is Tuesday, May 20.

Secretaries' Report: Karen Sitney

A motion was made by Karen Sitney and seconded by Debra Eldon to approve the minutes of the March meeting. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Debra Eldon

A detailed Treasurer's report was submitted by Debra and reviewed by the Board. The cash balance as of the end of February is \$12,139.91. We received a grant check of \$3500 from Kiwanis this month. We spent \$2,651.58 on YLC this month. We also spent \$36.21 on the newsletter and 281.53 on the Evergreen Dance. Karen Sitney reported that Philanthropy requests of \$500 had been submitted to both WHS and WMS to cover the costs of each of the 2 newsletters printed and distributed so far this year. WHS approved giving ADAP \$334 to cover 1/3 of the cost of the 2 newsletters printed this year. WMS approved the \$500, but as they have already given ADAP \$500 this year to replace the lost check that they gave us for newsletter last year, they asked that we use that check for this year's costs and declined to issue additional funds.

YLC report: Danielle, Emma and Ryan

Danielle provided flyers for Board members to use to help advertise the ADAP and Weston Boosters Club Forum, "Ask the Questions You Only Dream of Asking" on Wednesday, April 23rd from 7:00-8:30 pm at Norfield Church. There has also been an e-mail blast to all parents, including those of 8th graders, an article in the school newspapers and an article in the Forum. There will be a panel of YLC students, moderated by John McGeehan. Panel members will make short presentations on the topics Transitions, Dating/Sex, Parent Gossip, Drugs and Alcohol, Parent-Child Relationships and Pressures of being a teen. Each presentation will be followed by a Q&A period. Note cards and pens will be provided at each seat for parents to be able to ask their questions anonymously. Celeste and Susan will go through the cards to make sure the most provocative questions get asked that evening. Any questions that don't get addressed at the Forum will be answered in writing, either in the ADAP newsletter or on the website or both.

There will be one more meeting to prepare for the Forum, and 3 more YLC meetings for the year. A question was raised about how YLC reps will be selected for next year. There is not a formal process in place, other than that the reps are always seniors, but it was felt that this process should be formalized. The YLC reps will bring this up at an upcoming YLC meeting.

Mt. Laurel: Olga Kunevsky

The dance will be held April 26 at St. Francis of Assisi Church. The invitations were mailed on 4/7, and we have already gotten some RSVPs. A plea for chaperones was sent to the HS to go out in an e-mail blast. Karen will ask for this request to be sent out to 8th grade parents as well. We have had one request for financial assistance. The Board decided to waive the cost for the requestor but not his date (i.e. policy will be to pay half in order to have funds available for all requests). Celeste and Olga are looking into renting a photo booth (approximately \$1045).

WHS PTO Rep: Susan Seath

The Forum and the Mt. Laurel dance were announced at the March PTO meeting. The next meeting is 4/11. Susan will ask for chaperones at that meeting.

Publicity: Linda Nash

The press release to promote the ADAP/Boosters forum was sent to the Weston Forum, but the article hasn't appeared yet.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Foster and Karen Sitney, Secretaries