



Mansfield Youth Services Advisory Board
Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, November 8, 2016
12:00pm @ Mansfield Town Hall
Conf. Rm. B

Board Members

Present:

Ethel Mantzaris, Chair
Patricia Schneider, Human Services Director
Katherine Bell, Youth Services Supervisors
Maggie Ferron, Early Childhood Services Coordinator
Charles Leavens, EO Smith School Counselor
Danielle Annibalini, Youth Services Social Worker
Luke Perry, Student Representative
Eileen Griffin, LCSW

- I. **Call to Order**
 - Meeting called to order at 12:04pm by Ethel Mantzaris
- II. **Introductions**
- III. **Approval of minutes:** October 11, 2016
 - Minutes approved by the board (12:06 pm)
- IV. **Reports**
 - Director's Report - Pat Schneider (12:07pm)
 - Budget planning will begin over the course of the next few months including possible changes in funding with anticipated cuts and rescissions that remain outstanding from the previous fiscal year.
 - Discussion of ending stages of facilities study and current benefits of Youth Services office location. Discussion of challenges in sharing spaces across some departments due to space fees.
 - The Holiday Fund programs have started with over \$2000 in donations thus far and Adopt A Family matching has begun.
 - Discussion of potential administrated challenges related to newer financial policies.

- Danielle Annibalini has passed her LMSW exam since last meeting.
- Youth Services Staff Report (12:23pm)
 - **Interns:** Interns Katie Kahle and Taylor Maranda have been engaged in facilitating X-block counseling at Mansfield Middle School for A block and B block. They have been participating weekly on Wednesday at the COPE program at Southeast Elementary School. They have been working with male staff from the Community Center to start the Boys' Group which meets every other week and started this month. Each intern continues to run their own every-other week Girls' Group. They have been coordinating with Youth Services department staff and Human Services staff to start planning a Fashion Show event as the culmination of these groups. Intern Somaya McDermott is working with MAC to create a local Activities Passport.
 - **Boys' Group:** Boys' Group had its first meeting on Wednesday October 26, led by interns Katie Kahle and Taylor Maranda with support from Mansfield Community Center Staff, Connor Knecht. The group was well attended at its first meeting and boys appeared positively engaged. Boys' group will continue to meet every other week on Wednesdays to help clients build social skills and offer opportunities for positive peer engagement. There are currently seven clients in the group.
 - **Girls' Group:** Girls' groups have begun with Katie Kahle running the 5th and 6th grade Girls' group (with ten clients) and Taylor Maranda running the 7th and 8th grade Girls' groups (with six clients) which alternate meeting weeks. Each group had initially been scheduled to have one extended night in December, this has changed such that all of the girls will attend both of these extended nights on December 9th and December 16th to participate in a Fashion Show event, "Project Funway".
 - **Project Funway:** Girls' Group members are being invited to participate in a fashion show night in order to learn about self-confidence, self-presentation, and self-expression. Donations of clothing appropriate for Middle School age girls are being accepted by the Youth Services office through the end of November. Participants will work with volunteers from the Senior and Wellness Center to learn applied life skills related to minor sewing for repair/alternations, and where participants express interest, hygienic make-up application. A staging and rehearsal night will be held on December 9th where participants will select their outfits and work with volunteers to address any sewing needs and reflect on how clothing and appropriate self-care can impact self-confidence. December 16th will be the event which will welcome families of participants to

attend a fashion show. Healthy food choices will be available at this event to help encourage positive eating habits.

- **COPE:** COPE programs continue to run across the three elementary schools. Sarah Dufresne assisted with staffing during transitional staffing in the Youth Services Department. There are currently 83 students in COPE (31 at Southeast, 24 at Goodwin, and 28 at Vinton), grades K-4, with various familial and environmental stressors working with 32 UConn Volunteers and 1 Eastern Connecticut State University student.
- **Big Friends:** Big Friends began at Town Hall on October 4th with 26 UConn students and 1 ESCU student serving as “Bigs” to the program to 32 youth participants, grades 1-8.
- **Parents’ Group:** Parents’ Group has been meeting concurrently with the Big Friends program, encouraging parents of children in the program to stay and work with one another and staff to talk about parenting experiences. Sarah Dufresne served to facilitate Parent Group and help transition families to working with new Youth Services Supervisor, Katie Bell. Parents participated in a survey to identify and prioritize topics of interest for discussion and potential psychoeducational resources. Top 5 areas of interest include “Hard conversations in age appropriate ways”, natural consequences/rewards, homework habits for success, technology/internet safety, and positive parenting class/webinars. Other highly-moderately endorsed areas of interest include information regarding community activities and resources, financial resources, mindful/compassionate responses in crisis situations, PPT’s/504’s/IEP’s, and co-parenting.
- **Positive Parenting Workshop:** In collaboration with Goodwin PTO, the Youth Services department will be co-sponsoring a free workshop on “Positive Discipline for Children ages 3-14” presented by Ruth Ettenberg Freeman, LCSW to be held on Tuesday November 29, 2016 from 6:30-8pm.
- **X-Block:** Youth Services staff continues informal X-Block lunch groups at Mansfield Middle School on Thursdays. Staff and interns meet with students. Check-ins with students who are involved in Multi-Family Group and/or Big Friends are scheduled during these time blocks, there have been some mixed difficulties with attendance. There are currently 22 students identified as participants in X-block counseling services. Youth Services staff continues to meet with Mansfield Middle School staff every other week to identify and address challenges to help coordinate care and services for identified clients.
- **MAC:** As follow up to the surveys completed last month, MAC is in the process of creating an Activities Passport to help promote awareness of opportunities available in the community in line with

areas of interest related to healthy lifestyle. MAC continues to work with schools and community members to talk about healthy eating and sourcing local foods. At the playground, the last round of blank pickets are being sent out for engraving, the playground instrument is in the process of being selected, and more donor board butterflies are in progress.

- **Staff:** New Youth Services Supervisor, Katie Bell, started October 17, 2017. She has been attending a variety of the Youth Services programs and meeting with school staff to continue to foster and maintain connections, including with E.O. Smith. In meeting with E.O. Smith staff, a need was identified to help transition youth moving from eighth grade into high school in longer-term ways to help youth and families continue to feel supported and connected to care while becoming familiar with services at E.O. Smith.

V. **Old Business – no old business**

VI. **New Business**

- Setting meeting dates (12:45 pm)
 - Meeting times and dates will remain as previously scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month at noon with the exception of the months of July and August.
 - Discussion of potential benefits to identify and recruit other board members including considering a member of a local mental health provider agency, a parent, or a middle school student.
 - Timing of meeting could be revised depending on additional board recruitments.

VII. **Other – no other business**

VIII. **Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at 12:58pm. Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13th at noon.