



1471 Highland Avenue - Town Hall
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www.needhamma.gov/youth

Youth and Family Services Board Meeting

5:30- 6:30 *pm*

12/14/22

Needham Town Hall, Highland Conference Room

AGENDA

5:30-5:35	Approve Minutes of November 9th, 2022
5:35-6:00	Discussion of Community Needs and Crisis Response
6:00-6:20	Update on Programs, Services and Awards
6:20-6:30	New/Old Business
6:30	Adjourn

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from November 9, 2022, Board Meeting

Meeting Commenced at 5:35 pm, in person in the Highland Room, Needham Town Hall.

Board in Attendance: Susan Patkin, David Bookston, Julie Stevens, Will Holland, Jill Mullaney, Massie! Gallardo

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Minutes October 12, 2022. Mr. Bookston made a motion to approve the October 12, 2022, minutes. Ms. Gallardo seconded. The October 12 minutes unanimously approved by voice vote.

Update on Community Needs/Crisis Response

Ms. Shine noted that the latest theme is there is mental health stigma -seeking help-both at the middle and high school has become an issue. Ms. Shine is working with various school personnel to brainstorm how to break down the stigma.

Ms. Shine noted she would like to role out the teen mental health training but there are only five trainers, and the class requires either 6 45-minute sessions or 3 90-minute sessions. Reaching one grade requires 25 classes x 6 sessions, a total of 150 classes. The hope is that this first year will be a pilot year and some of the SALSA students and VIP/Peer Tutor "bigs" will have the opportunity to be trained.

A discussion ensued on ideas for reaching students. One idea that was discussed was having the students involved in making a video commercial about mental health, the importance of seeking help when needed and highlighting Y&FS. There was also discussion around having videos played on the HS news that plays in all homeroom classrooms so all students who see the video.

The Board also noted that all seniors need to do community service to meet graduation requirements so the video production could count.

The Board agreed that if the videos are put together by students, they will have a much greater impact.

A discussion ensued on how to reach middle school students. The Board suggested a comics/graphic novel design-to tie in with services and use the advising department to advertise for students. Middle school has community service hours too-the Board mentioned six and again this would be a peer-to-peer outreach effort.

Update on Programs, Services and Awards

- There are 59 active clients
- We currently have 34 youth on our waitlist
- We have provided 16 Parent/Community consultations
- We have had 4 emergency consults this month
- Fall Groups - planning for ongoing groups is underway.
 - o Friendship Files is a group for 6th graders. The focus of the group is to engage members in learning how to make and keep friends, develop confidence and build social skills, practice how to cope with anxiety and change, and plan for middle school success.
 - o Social Skills groups at Sunita Williams and Elliot. Multiple groups are being implemented at both schools.
 - o NHS drop in groups during X Block - topics that are addressed include social skills, depression, anxiety, work stress and relationships
 - o An elementary aged coping skills group. Staff are implementing a 6 weeks group to help elementary students address issues around stress and how to cope with these stressors.

Dr. Chris Willard's program is tonight- "Mindful Resiliency in the 'New Normal'". There are 75 people signed up for the event. This workshop will discuss coming mental health challenges and ways to help. The workshop will include many experiential exercises along with simple takeaway tips.

Youth & Family Services is working with the Needham Exchange Club on hosting **Ryan's Story** for the second year. Ryan's Story is a community presentation that is focused on bullying, social media use and suicide prevention. Last year this event was very successful and well received by the community. The presentation will consist of two presentations, one for parents and one for parents and children together. Thank you to the Needham Exchange Club for making this event possible. The hope is that next year there will be a similar presentation by other people with lived experience, such as Minding your Minds.

Y&FS is working with a local expressive art therapist, Tova Speter, on providing workshops for the community. These workshops will center around mindfulness and expressive arts. Two workshops were run last school year and both were full to capacity. The first one is scheduled for November 29th and is aimed at middle and high school. This one will involve the students helping to put together a giant Light Bright that will tour around the greater Boston area. There may be another one that involved paint that changes color with the rain but this is in the very early stages of development. **Tova Speter, LMHC** consultant based at Gorse Mill Studios in Needham, Massachusetts. With a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and Art Therapy, she has over 20 years of experience working at the intersection

of arts and healing, and offers art therapy and mental health counseling services through her private practice. Tova is also a practicing painter, installation artist, and community muralist. All of her work is based on her belief that engaging in art-making is inherently therapeutic and formative. More at www.tovaspeter.com.

The next Family Fun Night is December 8th; advertising begins the week of November 14th. This has proved to be a good outreach program for Youth services and fun for the families. Families will engage in art projects, bingo and cookie decorating.

The annual **Patrick and Patricia Forde Good Person Memorial Award** is being planned for. Nominations are being collected with a deadline of December 9th. The Forde Award will be held in person for the first time since COVID. Ms. Shine noted she needed a review committee and Ms. Stevens, Ms. Patkin and Ms. Gallardo volunteered. The awards ceremony will be on January 30, 2023, at Powers Hall.

Students Helping Older People (SHOP) - Y&FS is piloting an intergeneration program where we pair students with older adults to make connection and help the older adults with their grocery shopping. We hope that this program will give students volunteer opportunities in addition to connecting with the older population. The hope is that this program will pick up this fall.

Youth & Family Services staff have taken on the role of the adult advisors in for the Take Back the Night club. This club organizes the Take Back the Night event every year in addition to building awareness around domestic violence.

The Peer Tutoring Program is back up in running with 20 pairs. All matches have been made and students are meeting at the library.

The VIP Program is up and running. A training was held for the big VIPs and there have been 2 sessions so far with 23 pairs. The room is full of youth engaging and having fun together.

Volunteers Around Needham was a huge success this year. Youth & Family Services had over 30 volunteers who registered and earned community service hours. Staff hosted 6 days with Parks and Forestry, the Council on Aging, Needham Community Council, Needham Fire Station and the Needham Community Farm (2 days). Staff are planning dates for February and April school vacation weeks.

Employment Program Update: Youth & Family Services help connect residents to students who are looking to do various residential jobs such as lawn care, shoveling, babysitting and odd jobs. Staff are in the process of reaching out to students who are currently on the list and recruiting new students. Staff are also hoping to start a volunteer list as well so that people who need assistant but may not be able to afford to hire someone can still receive the services.

Community Collaborations: There are a number of meeting that continue to occur regularly to help support community members. These include the Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham, the Domestic Violence Action Team, the Community Crisis Intervention Team,

Youth Resource Network, Youth Commission MetroWest Meeting and the Community Health Resource Group.

There is a need for more funds in the Crisis Donation Fund. This past year the fund helped a family avoid eviction by paying some bills and paying for a hearing aid for another family's child. The Rotary Club will help raise funds in January as an emergency can quickly deplete the funds. Youth & Family Services is also spending a significant amount of time helping families in crisis, connecting to resources and helping them to stabilize.

Ms. Shine is serving as the gatekeeper for Interface Referral Services. Youth & Family Services is assessing the usefulness of the service compared to the MetroWest Care Connection, another free referral services.

The budget has been submitted and Ms. Shine is attending the various budget meetings that are coming up. Y&FS has requested a minimal increase in budget for consultation services in addition to keeping on the ARPA funded FT position longer term.

New/Old Business

The Board discussed the letter re: staffing and reviewed the edits made at the October meeting. Final edits were agreed on. Ms. Stevens will send it this week. Ms. Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, may attend a future Board meeting. The letter argues strongly for increased staffing and office space support for Youth and Family Services due to the length and acuity of the counseling wait list.

Mr. Bookston made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gallardo seconded the motion. Unanimous vote to adjourn by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm by voice vote.

Notes by: Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary
Edited by: Sara Shine, Director

Needham Youth & Family Services

DEPARTMENT RE.PORT

December 2022

CLINICAL SERVICES

Youth & Family Services is providing individual and family therapy for residents and have significantly increased our capacity for this. While we typically focus on youth and their families, we are aware that there are many people in the community who need extra support. We have been able to offer crisis/urgent supportive services to all residents and have been able to help in these crisis situations.

- There are 65 active clients
- We currently have 31 youth on our waitlist
- We have provided 13 Parent/Community consultations
- We have had 7 emergency consults this month
- Winter Groups - planning for ongoing groups is underway.
 - Friendship Files is a group of 6th graders. The focus of the group is to engage members in learning how to make and keep friends, develop confidence and build social skills, practice how to cope with anxiety and change, and plan for middle school success. This group starts January 10th and runs for 6 weeks.
 - Kelsey and Grace just finished weekly lunch groups at Eliot for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. The guidance counselors select the participants based on their needs. Students meet with their lunch, and we check in, do an activity and check out. The activities are focused on a therapeutic conversation or game. We meet with each grade for 20 minutes. We plan on starting a new lunch group series in January.
 - The first round of 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade Lunch Group/Friendship Groups are ending at Sunita Williams with Ellen and Grace. The school is asking to have another round of lunch groups and there will be a additional grade to these new groups. Similar to the groups at Eliot, students eat their lunch and engage in therapeutic games and activities.

- o **Coffee Talk** - Coffee Talk meets at Needham High School every Thursday morning during the x block. It is open to all high schoolers. It is a program that began at the end of last year and recently started again. The program is designed for students to drop in for a donut and a cup of coffee and discuss anything on their minds. So far, the topics have included; active shooter drills, homework stress, NHS cellphone policies, and end-of-the-semester exams. We plan on continuing to offer Coffee Talk indefinitely.
- o **Divorce Group** - The NYFS team sees a need in the community for a group for children/adolescents to process divorce in their families. We are currently deciding the target age group. We anticipate beginning the group in the New Year.
- o **Candid Conversations** is coming to an end after 8 scheduled group sessions. We had a very active group of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders who participated weekly in the group activities.

COMMUNITY ISSUES BEING ADDRESS:

- Highlights from the 2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey finds that in Needham:
 - o For the middle school: reports of mental health issues increased since 2018: 12-month reports of depressive symptoms increased from 9%-13% and self-injury increased from 6%-8%. Life reports of seriously considering suicide also increased from 10%-12%. This increase in mental health concerns in increasing consistently among various genders.
 - o For High School Students: depressive symptoms increased from 13%-22%, self-injury increased from 9%-16% and seriously considering suicide increased from 9%-12%. All of these areas also grew substantially in the Metro-West region.
 - o For both middle school and high school, the proportion of youth spending 3 or more hours on screen time on the average school day increased substantially (50% for middle school and 52% in high school).
 - o For both age groups: the indicators of school connectedness are lower in 2021, reports of having a friend to talk to about personal problems decreased (M:68%-62%/HS: 73%-66%), and reports of adult supports at school have also decreased (MS:72%-70%/HS:75%-72%).
- We are assessing addition community needs and virtual programming.

- o Our focus is to continue group treatment to increase the number of youth accessing services
- o We are working on increased training for staff in trauma informed care
- o We are working closely with a school group on helping support the school community and families on many different levels.
- o We are planning some community presentations to help educate and support residents
- o We are finding nontraditional ways to address mental health such as expressive art therapy workshops and community outreach projects
- Helping to address issues of racism and inequalities and ensuring that all have access to services if needed

PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES:

Y&FS hosted Dr. Chris Willard , on a community presentation - **Mindful Resiliency in the "New Normal"** on November 9th. Dr. Willard discussed the most common mental health challenges our kids and teens are facing today, from depression and anxiety to addiction, self-harm and body image concerns, and ways to help support them. This workshop included many experiential exercises along with simple takeaway tips. This event was very well attended with about 40 participants in person and many more who are watching remotely.

Mindful Resilience for Mental Health in the New Normal

Please join Dr. Willard • we explore the foundations of resilience, discuss the most common mental health challenges our kids and teens ... face today, and discover ... to provide support through **simple** tips for yourself & you, community

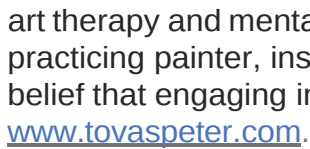
7:00-8:10pm
at the Holts
300 Highland Ave

For more info:
Christine Wolzof, LCW
cwolzof@needham.org

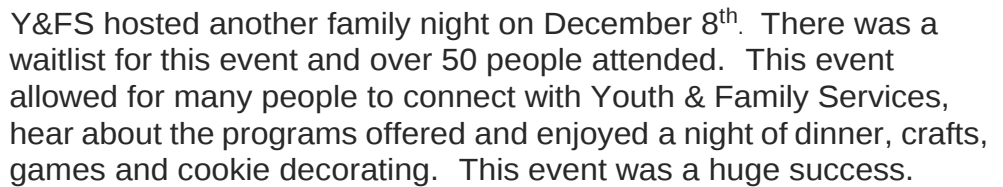
Wednesday, November 9th, 2022

REGISTER ONLINE
WWW.NEEDHAMPROGRAMS.COM

Youth & Family Services is working with the Needham Exchange Club on hosting **Ryan's Story** for the second year. Ryan's Story is a community presentation that is focused on bullying, social media use and suicide prevention. Last year this event was very successful and well received by the community. The event will take place late January/early February. Thank you to the Needham Exchange Club for making this event possible.



art therapy and mental health counseling services through her private practice. Tova is also a practicing painter, installation artist, and community muralist. All of her work is based on her belief that engaging in art-making is inherently therapeutic and formative. More at www.tovaspeter.com.



Y&FS hosted another family night on December 8th. There was a waitlist for this event and over 50 people attended. This event allowed for many people to connect with Youth & Family Services, hear about the programs offered and enjoyed a night of dinner, crafts, games and cookie decorating. This event was a huge success.

The annual **Patrick and Patricia Forde Good Person Memorial Award** is not far off. We have finished gathering nominations and hope to have an award recipient decided on in the next couple of weeks. We have many amazing candidates who have been nominated so the decision is not going to be easy. For the first time since the pandemic, the 2023 event is going to be in person and is scheduled for Monday, January 30th.

Mural Project: Youth & Family Services is in the middle of the mural project. The project is in the tunnel connecting Defazio Park and Pollard Middle School, which has also been the target of graffiti. Over 150 people have been part of painting this project so far. This project has been heavily supported by the Needham DPW. We are hoping that the project will be

completed in the next couple of weeks. There have been a few graffiti incidents since the mural was completed that had to be painted over which has slowed down the project.

Students Helping Older People (SHOP) - Y&FS is piloting an intergeneration program where we pair students with older adults to make connection and help the older adults with their grocery shopping. We hope that this program will give students volunteer opportunities in addition to connecting with the older population. The hope is that this program will pick up this Winter.

Youth & Family Services staff have taken on the role of the adult advisors in for the Take Back the Night club. This club organizes the Take Back the Night event every year in addition to building awareness around domestic violence.

Peer Tutor - Peer Tutor is a program that offers tutoring to 4th thru 8th graders in Needham at no cost! The tutees are matched with a tutor (Needham high schooler) based on academic needs. The tutor and the tutee meet weekly at the library. Tutors receive community service hours for participating in the program. This year we have 28 matches!

The **VIP (peer mentoring program)** is up and running this year. The program began at the end of October, and it meets weekly through mid-April. It is currently at capacity with 24 pairs of Needham high schoolers meeting with 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade Needham students at the Center at the Heights. The pairs are playing board games and card games and learning a whole host of important social skills. It really is so great to watch the peer mentoring relationship develop over time and see the eager and excited faces of the kids (both young and teens) as they arrive each week.

Volunteers Around Needham was a huge success this year. This summer, Youth & Family Services had over 30 volunteers who registered and earned community service hours. Staff hosted 6 days with Parks and Forestry, the Council on Aging, Needham Community Council, Needham Fire Station and the Needham Community Farm (2 days). Staff are planning dates for February and April school vacation weeks.



Members of the Health and Human Services team have been trained to teach **Youth Mental Health First Aid virtually**. Youth Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that teaches participants how to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms that suggest a potential mental health challenge, how to listen nonjudgmentally and give reassurance to a youth who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, and how to refer a person to appropriate professional support and services. We are planning to run a couple of classes in the fall. In addition, 5 staff have been trained to be teen Mental Health First Aid trainers which teaches teens how to help their peers experiencing a mental health challenge. Staff are working closely with the school department on training this to students in the schools.

Employment Program Update: Youth & Family Services help connect residents to students who are looking to do various residential jobs such as lawn care, shoveling, babysitting and odd jobs. Staff are in the process of reaching out to students who are currently on the list and recruiting new students. Staff are also hoping to start a volunteer list as well so that people who need assistance but may not be able to afford to hire someone can still receive the services.

Y&FS has also started helping students with independent volunteer projects to then give back to the community and get their community service hours. Staff are collecting proposals and helping students to implement their volunteer ideas. There have been some very impressive proposals so far and the students seem excited about the opportunity.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

Youth & Family Services has joined a homelessness committee that helps assess needs in the areas and helps to prevent homelessness. This meeting occurs monthly.

Youth & Family Services continues to work closely with the students involved in our **Chapter 84**, which is a peer to peer led nicotine prevention group. One of our members is part of the 84 Leadership Team and has taken the lead on many initiatives. The Needham Chapter was also won the 2022 Outstanding Chapter Award.

Youth & Family Services' staff regularly attend the meetings of **SPAN** --- Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (formerly known as the Needham Coalition for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention). Youth & Family Services is represented on all 3 action teams and are also represented on the steering committee. There are several initiatives coming out of this group including creating online substance use supports, peer support, community activities and educational webinars.

The **Domestic Violence Action Committee (DVAC)** has started meeting. Youth & Family Services has a representative at these meetings. Some of the Y&FS staff have attended various trainings to help support their committee work around domestic violence.

Staff have continued to be involved in the **Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT)** and attend these meetings regularly. This meeting is attended by the police department, fire, town social workers from various divisions, the health department, a SPAN representative, and Riverside Crisis Team. The team discusses community members in crisis who may need additional supports. Quarterly there is a larger meeting that includes other community partners including the hospitals, Walker, local mental health and substance use organizations. Quarterly this team meets with larger community providers (including local mental health agencies, BID, NWH, Walker) to discuss the overall community needs and trends.

The Youth Resource Network is a roundtable including representatives from multiple youth-serving organizations that meets during the academic year to address specific needs of school-age youth and families that reside and/or attend public school in Needham. These meetings

have been very popular this year as there are so many families in crisis. Y&FS chairs this meeting monthly.

Staff are attending the quarterly **Youth Commission/Youth Services meeting**. Represented at the meeting are directors from towns such as Northborough, Bedford, Burlington, Westborough, Winchester, and several more. We have also joined a smaller group of Directors from the Metro-West region to increase collaboration. There has been effort to bridge gaps between programs so that staff have more co-workers to collaborate with. There have also been conversations about working together on therapeutic groups and community presentations.

Y&FS is now part of the **Community Health Resource Group** which gets local agencies/departments together for information sharing/support. This meeting is attended on a regular basis.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

Youth & Family Services was recently interviewed by the NHS news station as they are running a story around mental illness and how students can get services when needed. This story is going to air in January and will be shown in all homeroom classes.

Case Management Services: Youth & Family Services staff helped many families in need with various supports such as camps, gym, YMCA memberships, after school programs, child care and transportation. In addition, Youth & Family Services worked closely with Team Bonding and Thermo Fisher on getting 25 backpacks filled with school supplies for families in need.

Youth & Family Services has submitted the FY24 budget for review, requesting some additional funds for clinical consultation that has been funded by grants over the past 2 years. Youth & Family Services will begin to advocate for keeping the FT 24-30 months ARPA funded position as well. The Finance Committee will be meeting to review the proposal in January.

Y&FS continues to raise money for family in need by promoting the **Crisis Donation Fund**. Most recently there have been a number of donations from various Clergy Association Members and 100 Women Who Care of Needham. There is now the ability to donate to this fund online electronically, making it easier for people to donate.

We are in the process of working with William James College to continue the **Interface Referral Service** to the town. BID-Needham, the Needham Community Council and Needham Public Schools have generously offered to help fund the program, but they are significantly increasing their cost. We are moving to a gatekeeper model so that we can reduce the cost this year while exploring other referral services options.

We have welcomed our graduate level intern, Grace Burnham from Boston College who is getting her Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling. We are excited to have her this year - she will help meet with clients individually, help with therapeutic groups and with some programming. Youth & Family Services has recently received a grant of \$7,500 to help support the intern program.

Y&FS has been very focused on training staff to make sure that staff have the clinical skills necessary to manage the current mental health crisis. 3 staff members have recently attended a SMART trainings and one staff member is going to be trained in EMDR. All of these are trauma based treatment modalities. Staff have also attended a number of suicide prevention trainings. All staff are also being trained by Walden Behavioral Health on how to work more directly with students struggling with disordered eating.

We have been building our social media platforms in hope to reach more community members with the information, programs and events our department has to offer.

Facebook: Facebook.com/needhamyouthservices 691

Instagram: 541 Followers @NeedhamYouthServices

Twitter: 156 Followers @Needham_Youth

NotifyMe (Listserve): 1136 signed-up

Below are the voted upon meeting dates for FY 2023:

Wednesday, September 14 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, October 12 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, November 9 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, December 14th	Town Hall
Wednesday, January 11 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, February 8 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, March 8 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, April 12 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, May 10 th	Center at the Heights
Wednesday, June 14 th	Town Hall