

LAWRENCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ALLIANCE

MINUTES

October 26, 2021

9:00 A.M.

In-person Meeting

Present: Keith Levine, Lawrence Health Department, Coordinator
Shubha Sharma, Project Graduation
Suzanne Girard, Lawrence Police Department
Kelly Nitti, Community Representative
Ann DeGennaro, Superintendent of Schools Representative
John Ryan, Lawrence Council Liaison

Absent: Malissa Arnold, Community Representative
Naeem Aktar, Community Representative
Jayshree Kalwachwala, Project Graduation
Edward "Chip" Meara, Mercer County Coordinator
Jeff Radice, Lawrence Recreation Department

Minutes

Congratulation to Officer Suzanne Girard who was recently promoted to Detective!

1. Grant Activity Reports

- a. n/a

2. New Business

- a. Discussion around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and how they affect a person's health and mental health. The ACEs model can be a useful tool for understanding drug and alcohol use in a community.
- b. Kelly Nitti has been in contact with Melissa, guidance counselor, at Lawrence Elementary school. All 4 elementary schools are interested in the LADA programming. Currently there are no visitors and it's virtual. They are waiting till February to revisit about converting it to in-person. Campfire is partnering with Office of Resilience to provide ACEs training for school staff. Currently educating staff and students and planning expansion of education to parents. Next training is in December.
- c. Discussion on Office of Resilience. They are small, waiting for funds, trainers are volunteers. Another office recently created by the State is called Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families. This is also a small office dedicated to the specific needs of these families.
- d. Ann DeGennaro reports on several topics including the following:
 - Pandemic impacts she sees with the students, including anxiety attacks, suicide concerns, difficulty regulating emotions, isolation, fragility and the negative impacts of social media.
 - Topic of why the internet is not being listed as an addiction in the DSM-V and proposed the benefits of having an *Unplugged Day*. Campfire is conducting

focus groups with parents and teachers to learn how to better help families. Discussion about incorporating mindfulness techniques as part of the Phys. Ed. classes.

- Discussion around Squid Game and the negative impacts. Children say they are desensitized to these types of media and entertainment.
 - Discussion about educating students on being self aware of when they begin losing control of addictive behaviors.
 - Haunted High Community Fest which was a very successful fundraiser in years past. It was a great activity for the kids and community. Residents donated gently used items for a carnival event. Student organization sponsored about 7 tents.
 - Equity & Diversity trainings in Lawrence, getting teachers involved.
 - Hypersensitivity among students and open communication as a solution. Family dinner time with connection between family members increases resiliency with children.
 - Cutting behaviors are being seen more often amongst young high school female students, sometimes occurring as a result of difficulty with managing emotions, underdeveloped coping skills.
 - One idea to help kids feel more grounded and also connect them to seniors and history is to bring seniors from nursing homes to the library to talk about history to the kids.
 - Last year there was a webinar on grief to help with losses during COVID but it wasn't well attended. There is a challenge to connect with the parents.
- e. Health Officer Levine suggested a Lawrence Township Council meeting as an opportunity to share initiatives of Campfire and other groups working with our Alliance. If any group is interested in presenting to Lawrence Council, please discuss with Keith.
 - f. Mentorship program – Campfire identifies high-risk students and connects them with mentors. Mentors are a group of trained teachers.
 - g. Casino night fundraiser is the process of being planned and discussion about giveaways, food, funding, etc.

3. Old Business

- a. Kelly Nitti reports on The Bronx's Scream Screen event at Rider University. The event was successful with a great turnout for the community and college students and included laser tag, pumpkins, trunk-or-treats (sports theme), vendors and donations from Mercer County Coalition.

4. Next Meeting

- a. November meeting will be cancelled due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

5. Adjournment

- a. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Keith Levine, Coordinator