



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

Youth and Family Services Board Meeting

5:30- 6:30 pm

11/09/22

Needham Town Hall, Great Plain

AGENDA

5:30-5:35	Approve Minutes of October 12th, 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 October 12, 2022, Board Meeting

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

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

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Minutes September 14, 2022. Mr. Bookston made a motion to approve the September 14, 2022, minutes. Ms. Patkin seconded. The September 14 minutes unanimously approved by voice vote.

Update on Community Needs/Crisis Response

Ms. Shine noted that the MetroWest Survey results have been released. Depression has increased since the pandemic. The middle school numbers went from 9% to 13%. The high school numbers went from 13% to 22%. All the various behaviors also increased including self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Ms. Shine noted that Deb Schmill has been working on a program to reduce social media and internet use at the high school as a part of her Becca Schmill Foundation in memory of her daughter. As Mr. Bookston noted this is not surprising as the school connectedness was missing during COVID. The Board discussed what seems to also be an increase in bullying on social media and how the students are feelings impacted by this. Ms. McMahon also noted there has been an increase in vaping at both the middle and high school level. Ms. Shine discussed that the vaping task force was put into place before the pandemic and the nicotine cessation program was put into place through the school systems. Ms. Shine noted that she could discuss ongoing services with Karen Shannon, SPAN Coordinator.

Ms. Shine discussed the budget process. Some minimal increases in expenses will be requested in addition to a DSR IV that will request the ARPA funded FT position as part of the regular operating budget in FY 25.

Update on Programs, Services and Awards

Ms. Shine explained that there are 65 active clients with 29 youth on the waitlist. The waitlist is still fairly problematic since youth cannot access services as quickly as needed.

Mural Project: Youth & Family Services has started painting 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. Ms. Shine noted that Hometown Weekly covered the story in addition to the cable channel.

Y&FS is working with a local expert, Dr. Chris Willard, on a community presentation - **Mindful Resiliency in the "New Normal"** on November 9th. Chris Willard will explore the foundations of resilience, looking to positive psychology, neuroscience and mindfulness as he explores tools that have boosted human resilience in the face of adversity.

. We will discuss 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 will include many experiential exercises along with simple takeaway tips for yourself and your communities. **To register:**

www.Needhamprograms.com

Ms. Gallardo volunteered to market Chris Willard through her various Facebook groups.

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 Board continued to discuss stories like this and how it can be so impactful to the audience. Ms. Shine talked about another presentation by Kevin Hines who tells his story of coping with mental illness and a suicide attempt. Ms. Shine and the Board also mentioned the "Own your Own Peace Assembly" and "Minding your Mind." which have similar themes to the Hines program.

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. **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.

Ms. Shine is planning a second Family Fun Night for early December modeled on the successful June 28 event.

The Peer Tutoring Program is starting back up. Staff are in the process of interviewing peer tutors and making matches with tutees. Match day is October 12th and we hope to help the matches make a connection as they get their year started. Staff are working on pairing 30 students to work with each other over the course of the year.

The VIP Program planning has started for this year. Staff have started working with big VIPs on getting set up and interviewing little VIPs so that pairs can be matched. We will be working with 20 pairs over the course of the year. Staff are also planning a training for the big VIPs as we have so many new students this year.

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.

Y&FS is planning on hosting another Family Night in late fall. Another one was run this past summer was well attended. Families engaged in arts and crafts, played Bingo and enjoyed a build your own ice cream Sundae bar. The event helped to connect families while also connecting to our services and programs.

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.

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. Staff 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.

Ms. Shine discussed group programming including multiple elementary school groups at Elliot and Sunita Williams, and a drop in mental health group at the High School during X-Block. Members discussed ensuring that students get credit for being in the room as the schools are much more strict about attendance this year. Ms. Shine also explained that there are 2 out of school time groups in the works, one for middle school youth and one for elementary students.

Fee Vote

The Board recommended having swag as an incentive for participating in the Peer Tutor program in addition to helping promote Youth & Family Services. The Board thought long and short sleeved tee shirts with the Youth logo would be the most popular and used item. Mr. Bookston made a motion to approve the Peer Tutor Fee of \$55.00, \$10.00 more than last year, to cover the cost of the tee shirts. Ms. Gallardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Shine noted this was the only fee required. The employment listing fee was eliminated and the Wilderness program is now part of the budget.

Old Business

The Board discussed the draft letter of September addressed to Ms. Fitzpatrick, Town Manager. Edits were made in a group discussion and the letter will be sent by Ms. Stevens later this week. A copy of the letter will be sent to Mr. Tim Muir McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services and the Select Board. 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. Stevens seconded the motion.
Unanimous vote to adjourn by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm**

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

Needham Youth & Family Services

DEPARr-fMENT REPORT

November 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 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.

COMMUNITY ISSUES BEING ADDRESS:

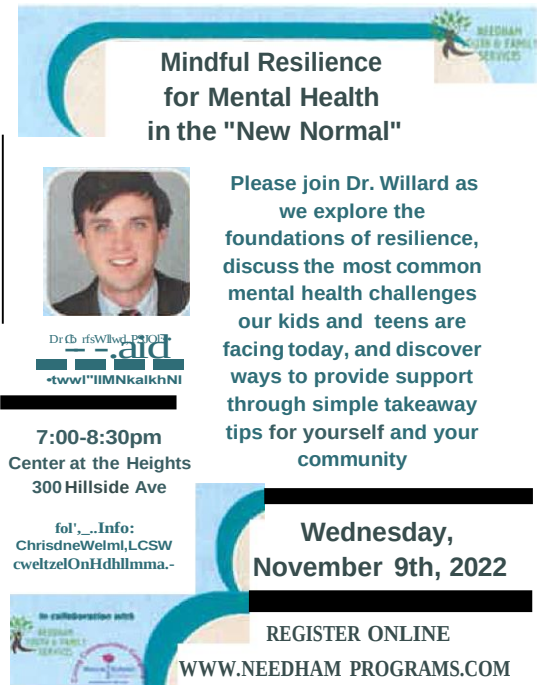
- Highlights from the 2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey finds that in Needham:
 - o For the middle school: reports of mental health issues increased since 2018: 12-month reports of depressive symptoms increased from 9%-13% and self-injury increased from 6%-8%. Life reports of seriously considering 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 is working with a local expert, Dr. Chris Willard, on a community presentation - **Mindful Resiliency in the "New Normal"** on November 9th.

Even as the pandemic shifts to a "new normal," how can we ensure that our families and communities emerge from this time more resilient than ever? Join Dr. Chris Willard as we explore the foundations of resilience, looking to positive psychology, neuroscience and mindfulness as we explore tools that have boosted human resilience in the face of adversity for generations. We will discuss 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 will include many experiential exercises along with simple takeaway tips for yourself and your communities. **To register:**

www.Needhamprograms.com



**Mindful Resilience
for Mental Health
in the "New Normal"**

Please join Dr. Willard as we explore the foundations of resilience, discuss the most common mental health challenges our kids and teens are facing today, and discover ways to provide support through simple takeaway tips for yourself and your community

7:00-8:30pm
Center at the Heights
300 Hillside Ave

fol'...Info:
ChrisdneWelml,LCSW
cweltzelOnHdhilmma.-

**Wednesday,
November 9th, 2022**

REGISTER ONLINE
WWW.NEEDHAM PROGRAMS.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 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.

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. **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.

Y&FS is planning on hosting another Family Night in late fall. Another one was run this past summer was well attended. Families engaged in arts and crafts, played Bingo and enjoyed a build your own ice cream Sundae bar. The event helped to connect families while also connecting to our services and programs.

We are in the beginning stages of planning the annual **Patrick and Patricia Forde Good Person Memorial Award**. We are gathering nominations with a deadline of December 1st. We have not decided how to run the event this year, but will continue to assess based on COVID numbers, trends, and guidelines. The 2023 event 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.

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.



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.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

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 CommissionNouth 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.

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:

Case Management Services: Youth & Family Services staff helped many families in need with various supports such as camps, gym, YMCA memberships, after school programs, chUd 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.

The budgeting process for FY24 is in the beginning stages. Youth & Family Services has submitted their 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.

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 688

Instagram: 540 Followers @NeedhamYouthServices

Twitter: 156 Followers @Needham_Youth

NotifyMe (Listserve): 1135 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 9th	Town Hall
Wednesday, December 14 th	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

