

**Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 15, 2011**

In attendance: Staci Allan, Michael Amadei, Andrea Bateman, Dave Beery, Terry Cendejas, Kirsta Cholewa, Rozan Dein, Cheryll DeYoung, Evelyn Fennell, Rose Garlasco, Gene Haring, Jaime Hecker, Jerry Kloberdanz, Joan Lampert, Art Lyons, Duane Mellema, Dan Paustian, Margaret Polovchak, Kim Radoy, Ramon Sanchez, Laura Smail, Sarah Stollenwerk, Tom Swoboda, John Wanty, and Tricia Williams.

**Introductions**

David Beery, District 207 Director of Communications, was the Ambassador/Greeter.

**Community Reporting**

Margaret Polovchak (MCYAF) reported that 80 high school students participated in an *Above the Influence* activity. Julia K. from Maine South was one of three winners of a personal slogan contest with “Why Be Something Else? Be Yourself.” The three winning slogans will be considered for use in the national *Above the Influence* campaign.

Cheryll DeYoung (MCYAF) said synthetic marijuana has been banned for sale in the city of Chicago and will be banned across the State of Illinois effective January 1, 2012.

Kim Radoy (MCYAF) reported that approximately 150 sixth grade students and their parents from Nelson School in District 63 took part in a celebration on December 13<sup>th</sup> for completing the All Stars prevention program. During the celebration, the students shared their commitment videos when they pledge to make healthy choices.

Kirsta Cholewa (The Youth Campus) said the Reality Theater performed for students in the Alternative Residence Center of The Youth Campus. They addressed topics such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs and bullying.

Rose Garlasco (Maine South) reported that during a canine search of 1 ½ rows of cars in the parking lot, there were 10 hits with three subsequent arrests. Rose believes the results will send a message to students not to bring illegal substances to school. In addition, some other students were arrested when they left the (closed) campus and returned under the influence. She could not attribute the arrests to anything specific.

Mike Amadei (Iroquois School – D62) said MCYAF’s puzzle yard signs are up at all District 62 schools. They are preparing for the Illinois Youth Survey to be administered after the first of the year. Gang activity has increased recently, which Mike feels may be tied to difficult socioeconomic issues. It was also a rough couple of weeks at Iroquois School. A school bus with

6 Iroquois students struck and killed a pedestrian. On the same day, the mother of a Maine West (and former Iroquois) student was struck and killed while crossing the street.

Dan Paustian (Maine West) added that two Maine West students also died this semester because of health-related issues. WADA students will participate in a Photo Voice project, initiated by Duane Mellema (Park Ridge Police) of the Youth & Education Committee. Students will use art/photography to answer questions such as “What keeps you alcohol and drug free? What are you looking toward in your future?” Their photos will be exhibited in a display in the spring.

Gene Haring (Des Plaines Park District) said the puzzle ad message was included in the Park District’s *Spectrum* printed brochure and online at no cost to MCYAF. It is distributed to 23,500 households in Des Plaines and has a shelf life of 3-4 months. Margaret noted that this is an example of how an organization can help carry a consistent message throughout the community and reach unique markets (such as parents of parochial and home schooled students).

### **CAT Report**

Tricia Williams announced the CAT Team has been discussing how to track and promote *MCYAF 101* and the *2-Minute Tool*. Tricia gave examples of who they could be presented to. The goal is to use these tools to educate more people about alcohol, tobacco and drug issues and bring those people to the MCYAF table.

Bob Kampwirth (Park Ridge Police) presented *MCYAF 101* to Park Ridge Police patrol officers. Katie Neidich (District 63) presented it to Gemini Jr. High administrative staff.

If you use either *MCYAF 101* or the *2-Minute Tool*, please report to whom it was presented and how it went.

CAT is planning for the January and February partnership meetings. In January, the Community Conversation will include a history of how MCYAF has tried to engage youth in policy work, and the February meeting will include how other coalitions engage youth.

### **Medical Marijuana Update**

Margaret Polovchak gave an update on medical marijuana. During the veto session, 3-4 pro-marijuana legislators were missing. There is a very tight margin between the yes and no voters.

During the spring session that begins January 31<sup>st</sup>, there is a concern that those who are not up for re-election in 2012 will vote however they want (rather than party line) and the legislation may pass. The statewide coalition is preparing talking points on the correlation between marijuana and organized crime and the effects of marijuana dispensaries on a community.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### Evaluation Subcommittee

Art Lyons said the Evaluation Committee is working with CAT to develop agendas for the January and February partnership meetings, followed up with the Police Explorers, and is developing materials for the drivers' education curriculum.

They are also preparing questions for a parent survey and the Illinois Youth Survey (IYS). An IYS pre-test will be given to a small group of students who have worked with the Youth & Education Committee on the wording and understanding of this year's additional IYS questions that MCYAF supplies.

The Evaluation Committee is also working with Chief Kaminski to evaluate the Parent Patrol, including an email or phone call survey to past parent volunteers.

### Public Policy Subcommittee

Jerry Kloberdanz said Margaret Polovchak met with Mike Amadei who has offered to be a conduit to other District 62 administrators. Public Policy is working with Mike on a campus problem at Iroquois that involves alcohol in the neighborhood and its impact on students.

The three communities of Des Plaines, Niles and Park Ridge are analyzing commonalities in alcohol policies and distribution and sales of alcohol. The three Police Chiefs continue discussing their youth adjudication process, looking for common language and/or practices.

### Youth/Education Subcommittee

As a result of last month's community conversation and ideas from the coalition, Margaret Polovchak submitted a letter to the editor of several local newspapers thanking teachers for being good role models and for all the great things they do for children. Pioneer Press will pick up her letter. The Youth & Education Committee is also discussing ways that students can thank or recognize teachers anonymously.

Four Maine South students are scheduled to report at the Park Ridge City Council meeting on January 16, 2012 on zero incidents at Homecoming at all three Maine Township High Schools.

## Parents as Partners Subcommittee

Tricia Williams said a successful meeting with 12 District 62 Latino parents was held recently. Terry Cendejas was one of the presenters. As a result of the meeting, a new connection with the Family Center Coordinator for District 62 was made. She has been trained in facilitating focus groups and will be an active partner in an initiative with Latino parents in our community. A District 64 teacher was also a presenter and has agreed to work with MCYAF and Latino parents in the future.

Tricia passed around a sign-up sheet for upcoming volunteer needs. The Parents as Partners group will do the *Stay Out of My Room* exhibit at Emerson Middle School in February. MCYAF representatives were on site during Parent-Teacher Conferences in November at the three Maine Township High Schools and Gemini Jr. High.

## **Community Conversation**

Gene Haring led a Community Conversation to continue the discussion about *Starting from Yes* that was introduced at the September MCYAF meeting. He briefly reviewed the original presentation including why it's easier to say NO (because it requires commitment and no risk) and harder to say YES (it is more satisfying with positive results). Our task is to try and move people from NO to YES using targeted marketing for specific audiences.

Partners broke into the original three groups and were asked to review and edit, if necessary, their initial message, and divide their target market into sub-groups. For example, educators might be divided into teachers, coaches and counselors. In addition, groups were asked to try and develop a slogan or "battle cry". Gene referenced familiar slogans such as "Buckle up for safety" and "Don't leave home without it."

Ultimately, the final slogans will be tweaked further by the Evaluation Committee and put out in the community so partners can see the slogans at work.

The Parents as Partners group is still discussing its slogan. The Educators group discussed students nominating teachers and other adults who are good role models. The Youth group discussed using language in their slogan about being authentic and real, with an edgy twist to it that will appeal to young people.

## Announcements

There were no announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m. and partners proceeded to break into subcommittees.