

Weston Commission for Children and Youth Minutes from the May 4, 2015 Meeting

In attendance: Lynn Phillips, Jeff Drobner, Ellen Weyrauch, Chris Spaulding, Cathy Minter, Dan Doak, Michelle Albright, Charlene Monn, Carl Filsinger, Dan McNeill

Meeting called to order at 5:43 pm by Michelle Albright.

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from the April 6th meeting were approved with the revision of a second l added to Dan McNeill's name.

Program Updates

- Michelle facilitated a Tackling workshop on April 7th focused on resilience; although RSVP numbers were low in the days leading up to the event 20 parents attended. Promoting these workshops via our WYS database, and both the Moms in Weston and Moms Beyond Facebook pages seems to have helped raise interest and attendance.
- Youth and Social Services sent annual spring letters to families reminding them to submit updated documentation to ensure continuing eligibility in our programs. At this time of year we primarily get requests for assistance with camps and end-of-year activities like graduation, prom, and class trips.
- We co-sponsored a BBQ on Thursday April 30th at WHS as part of Color Clash week with funds from the Counties donation. Student government helped to coordinate and publicize this event and it was a huge hit with over 150 students in attendance.
- We are continuing to explore opportunities to collaborate with Lachat and are planning to offer two free activities for parents and children during the summer at the farm. Once the farm is up and running, we hope to offer additional afterschool and summer programs.
- Approximately 150 attended Robert Brooks' afternoon presentation in Weston and approximately 70 attended his evening presentation in Wilton. We had many attendees from neighboring towns due to cross promotion, and feedback was very positive. (Oh, and Lynn wanted to make sure I noted that she congratulated me on the success of the event!)
- WYS also cosponsored Matt Bellace as the spring speaker for HS students. Dan discussed how Matt used humor and research/statistics in his presentation and how students seemed receptive to his message.

Additional business

- Members discussed the success of both the Robert Brooks event and the HS BBQ; cross promoting Robert Brooks across towns and using additional outlets like the Weston Forum and Westport PYD mailings certainly seemed to raise awareness and many parents seem very interested in the topic of resilience. However members debated whether Dr. Brooks connection to Harvard, status as an author, and general reputation truly contributed to attendance as we have had other speakers with connections and expertise who haven't been able to draw a comparable crowd. The success of the HS event is likely related to the ownership the student government took in planning and promoting the event, and is a good reminder to actively involve students in future program planning.
- Members also discussed "hot topics" such as alcohol and drug use and how these have historically been handled by parents and children. Carl noted that he has seen recurrent issues over the years and that an SRO embedded in the school community may be the most influential way to target these issues among students. Members also discussed the importance of providing parents with information and education that complements and reinforces what is being presented to students.
- Michelle asked members to consider what worked well this year and what we may want to do differently in the year ahead. Members briefly discussed enhancing coordination with school-based initiatives, increasing programs aimed at children ages birth to five, and more social events for middle and high-school students. To further discuss these we will hold a strategic planning meeting on **Monday June 1st at 5:30 pm** to review programs held this year and plan for 2015-2016.

Meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Albright

Minutes approved: June 1, 2015