



CITY OF NORWICH
ESTABLISHED 1659
CONNECTICUT

NORWICH YOUTH, FAMILY, & RECREATION SERVICES
75 Mohegan Road, Norwich, (860) 823-3782, Fax (860) 823-3793

MINUTES

Youth & Family Advisory Board

March 14, 2023, 3pm

In Attendance: Erin Haggan (YFR), Sarah Warzecha (YFR) Teairez Atunbi (DCF), Sue Dubb (Uncas Health District), Gerald Dillenbeck (Community Member), Jen Croce (Mobile Crisis)

Absent: Kimberly Siefert-Charles (excused), Jon Turban (excused), Bob McKinney (excused), Michael Garcia (unexcused)

1. Old Business

Review & Approval of Minutes: No quorum, tabled to next meeting

Program Updates: YFR Staff shared staff updates including new Program Coordinator, and Assistant Program Coordinator who are on staff. Notified Board of job openings on City Website for Summer Positions. Shared upcoming program flyers, and draft of Spring/Summer Program Book.

2. New Business

• Community Outreach/Strategies for 2023

- The Board Chair Teairez brought up concerns around getting the word out to as many people as possible about the programs we offer. YFR Manager shared developed plan for program promotion with the Board, who added additional ideas, such as:
 - Youth interns speaking to peers in various community settings, while simultaneously getting feedback from their peers on current, and needed programming.
 - Providing program information to Mobile Health Van and Food Pantries
 - Creating an opt in setting on Civic Rec for people to be added to email notification system
 - Send programs to SEMHSOC list
 - Do Paid Ads
- Another suggestion was to have events/programs available for exclusively one culture: ie. Having a program for all Spanish speaking or Haitian creole speaking people so that they are not having to have everything interpreted, but rather everything would be exclusively in their native language

Program/Community Concerns/ Recommended Service Needs

- Lack of communication between children, and their parents. Discussion related to youth, as well as parents being dependent on their cell phones
 - Discussion focused on teaching nonviolent communication skills that help to build trust, resilience and mindfulness. Also helping people to begin to share what they feel and need.
 - Explored mindfulness and communication activities to include creative approaches, such as music, dance, family yoga or other family mindfulness events.
 - Waitlists for mental health services continues to grow, with virtually no services for children under 13. PHP no longer working with kids under 13 because they don't have the staff. Waitlist for kids over 13 is at least 2 months, and no more IICAPS.
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Next Meeting: May 9, 2023, 3pm

Location: Youth, Family, & Rec Building, 75 Mohegan Road, Norwich
