



Mission: Prevent and reduce youth substance use and abuse in the communities of Madison, Chatham Borough and Chatham Township through collaboration, education and community-wide change.

Madison Chatham Coalition Membership Meeting

April 22, 2025- 9:30 am In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes/Summary

Attendees:

Allison Bardon (MCC Director), Jen Caldwell (Drew Center for Civic Engagement), Rozella Clyde (citizen), Sam Dooley (Morris County Sexual Trauma Center), Sean Hewitt (Drew Center for Civic Engagement), Alex Mandala (CHS SAC), Kristin Perconte (PCP), Elyse Wheatley (MCC staff)

9:30 Meeting is called to order (Allison Bardon- MCC Director)

- Allison calls the meeting to order and thanks everyone for coming. She asks Elyse to start with her updates.

9:32 MCC Updates (MCC Staff- Allison Bardon, Elyse Wheatley)

- Elyse explains that she has been working a lot on social media. She is happy with how it is going because there has been a post every day for the past 3 weeks and there have been a lot of informational posts. First is the sports wellness series which JP from Drew has been working on. April is Alcohol Awareness Month, so every week there is a post related to alcohol education. This month is also Sexual Assault Awareness Month, so this week there is going to be a spotlight with the Morris County Sexual Trauma Center. Lastly, Fentanyl Awareness Day is at the end of the month. Overall, she says they have been able to share some really valuable educational resources.
- Elyse then gives an update on the Drew Action Scholars. JP is helping with social media and working on compiling research for posts. He will be doing all of the posts next week and he has been very organized and communicative with everything. Alyssa is the cultural competency intern, and she is working on researching health disparities and how that plays into substance use within minority groups in our community. Jocelyn's focus is on grants, and she is researching the STOP grant, which is a similar goal to MCC, with college-aged students. Elyse shares that Jocelyn, Allison, and herself will be meeting with Kelli Keck from Epiphany to discuss a survey for college students to demonstrate a need for the STOP grant in our community. We will be able to apply for that grant next year.
- Allison shares that the Action Scholars have been great. The goal initially was that they would come here and spend time in the Y, but office space is limited. She has been meeting with the students at the on-campus library. They wanted to all meet together instead of separately. The first part of the meeting is everyone going through what they have been working on, then Allison asks for feedback on what Elyse and Allison have been working on. They have been a good source for opinions because they were our target audience less than a year ago and they come from different parts of the country. They will come to our May meeting to share what they have been working on, but it'll have to be on a different day than usual.
- Allison continues that Alyssa started by updating our census data from our last community needs assessment and now is focused on health disparities. MCC is data-driven, and as we age out of

our DFC grant, we need to think more broadly about new potential grants. The STOP (Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking) grant is administered by SAMHSA and encompasses the young adult population. The stronger our local data is, the stronger our application is. Drew and Farleigh Dickinson are within our reach, and we are excited to be able to talk to students on these campuses more. Alyssa has been a really great connection to students since she is a student athlete. We have started to work on creating questions and thinking about the data we need to collect. We are meeting to talk with Kelli about the types of questions to make it a simple survey that students feel is easy to participate in. Alyssa is also thinking about incentives for students who complete the survey. Beyond that, we are starting to consider ways that we could use the funding to enhance student experience at Drew and other universities.

- Allison shares that we are hopeful that all three of them will be able to come back to MCC in the fall to continue working on this.
- Allison thanks Sean and Jen. The students were so helpful, and it was the perfect time for them to start working.
- *Rozella asks about the total student population at these colleges. Allison asks Sean about Drew. Sean answers that FDU is the largest, but Drew's undergraduate population is around 1,700, and the total population is about 2,200. Saint Elizabeth's is comparable to Drew, and FDU is larger. He also thanks MCC for hosting the students and they can continue to work for this semester until June 30th and then can put hours after then towards next semester. Next fall, there will be additional students joining the program, so more students could get involved if needed.*
- Allison explains that we have had interns previously and they work on meaningful projects, but it is sort of random. This has been more meaningful because they signed up for projects because it helps their role to be more targeted.
- Rozella adds there is a rabbinical college in Morristown that may be looking for service work, which could be another good resource for the coalition.
- Allison explains that hearing Jocelyn and JP's experiences from schools in Texas and Connecticut is interesting compared to experiences in Madison and Chatham.

9:46 Upcoming MCC Events (Allison Bardon)

- Allison moves on to discuss upcoming MCC events. First, she will be at AOSE for a tabling about alcohol. This is a time of year where alcohol awareness is very important with so many social events like prom, graduation, summer, etc. Right after, she will be meeting with Teen Task Force members which is being held next week.
- Next Saturday, the Y has their Healthy Kids Fair from 11-1 and MCC and PCP will be tabling at it together. It is typically for young children up to age 10. Our table is focused on mindfulness with bubbles, coloring sheets, and stress relief.
- May 1st will be Stress Down Day at the Academy of Saint Elizabeth. This has been in the works for a long time. Students are being incentivized with a dress down day, but to receive that pass they have to attend our 3 10-minute workshops during their school wide study hall. TTF members are leading the workshops with Allison, Christine, and an AOSE counselor. The topics are stress relief during the school year, mindfulness, and other topics. The goal with this is that every student builds a toolkit of mental health resources.
- *Rozella asks if they are all Teen Task Force members.* Allison explains that Elyse's cohort graduated two years ago, and they have been working on rebuilding. MCC started going to AOSE, and it worked well to have them meet during school hours. The problem is that it limits the TTF to only AOSE students, which is a capacity issue we need to work on. We are hoping to work on fixing that problem for next year.

- Allison explains we have a tentative plan for a nutritionist for a teen topics workshop on May 1st, but we don't have the location finalized yet. It could be at CHS, but it may end up being at the Y like our traditional teen topics.
- Allison shares that they are hosting Madison ESL students, which Gabe started to plan. They will be walking over with their teacher and along with our goal for cultural competency. When we first visited the ESL class, they didn't know about the Y. We want them to tour the Y, see the offerings, and show that we are a safe place for them, especially during high-risk times. Some Y staff that are Spanish speaking will be doing tours and then we will be doing mindfulness activities. That is happening on May 7th. *Rozella explains that the state Board of Education is shifting language from ESL to multi-language learners.*
- May 9th is the next Basketball at the Y and the next tentative date is in July.
- Allison shares that we are hosting Madison students for Madison High School Day of Service. It always is a really good day and is normally 1-2 days before Memorial Day weekend. Every student has a different assignment to attend.
- Allison says there is no news on funding changes. She is getting emails about temporary restraining orders, and we can keep operating the business as usual. We submitted our continuation application so that it looks like funding will be available for next year.
- Allison moves on to discuss project graduation, which is bags given to graduating seniors at Madison and Chatham. It started as only resources for binge drinking in a drawstring backpack with make good choices and the MCC logo on it. MHS students get that bag on the Day of Service because they attend an assembly on rules for the end of the school year instead of completing the service aspect. CHS students get them from the PTO when they give them their alumni t-shirt and their lawn sign. We have added PCP materials for a few years, MHA provided 988 materials, and this year Sam Dooley is giving resources for this year's bag too.
- Rozella explains that Drew University has given stylus a pen on the end. That could be a good thing to add to the bag. Allison agrees and says that could be a good giveaway for tabling events.

10:05 Now You Know & Conversation Calendar (Allison Bardon)

- Allison starts passing out our new ...Now You Know cards and explains this is what Elyse worked on for our social media campaign last summer. We had cards focused on marijuana, borgs, binge drinking, LGBTQ+ disparities, and mental health on college campuses. We are working on creating rack cards for all of the post topics.
- The first we created is a binge drinking card for teens and a borg card for parents. We didn't want students to have the borg card because it gives ingredients on how to make a borg. We also formed one for impaired driving, which focused on marijuana and drinking. The last one we currently have done is on oral nicotine pouches, or Zyns. We have lots of these ready for Fishawack and Bottle Hill Day in the fall.
- Next, we have been working on creating a conversation calendar. Allison explains that there are so many monthly observances. We correlated the month with an observance and included one conversation starter. For example, January is Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month, and the question is what does stigma mean to you and how does it relate to substance use disorders? The idea is that for parents who don't know where to start, this is a good place to start. It is a magnet so it can easily hang on your fridge, and it has a QR code that links to a presentation that has additional resources and conversation starters.
- Allison shares that these two things are going to be our focus for Fishawack. We know that parent permissiveness is a huge factor for our teens, so we want parents to be the most informed they can be to bridge the information gap between what students are learning in school and what

parents don't know. Since the presentation is where the bulk of the information is, we can update it regularly.

- *Rozella shares that she loves this idea because it reminds them of the necessity of starting a conversation.* Allison explains that this came from a discussion in a coalition meeting wanting something more interactive. We want that to be the model of how the coalition works.

10:11 Social Hosting Campaign (Allison Bardon)

- Allison explains that she wants feedback on this upcoming discussion. She explains that Parents Who Host Lose the Most has been an ongoing campaign that was started by a DFC coalition and Chatham participates in it. It seems to have become just a sign in the ground and there is not any additional resource for it. A previous TTF cohort wrote a letter to the editor and Elyse's cohort did a video letter to the editor, which both supplemented Parents Who Host Lose the Most. It talked about why parents should not host parties and that has been it.
- She says that at Bagels and Brainstorming with law enforcement they discussed how they build on that campaign. Officers shared they feel parents disassociate from that messaging and think it applies to someone else. Another issue is that it has become so commonly seen that it has slightly lost its meaning or message. She explains that she loves getting the law enforcement perspective. An officer brought up that there are a lot of myths about social hosting, like they want a safe place for their child to try alcohol. The reality is that no matter how 'safe' the home is, you don't know what the kids took before they came to your house.
- *An officer explains that even on private property if anything happens at the party or once they leave the party because of what they consumed at your house, you are liable. Sam Dooley asks if there are any parent groups you could talk to because that could be a more effective form of outreach.* Allison explains that she normally thinks of the PTO as the only parent group, but there are definitely more ways to connect with parents. *An officer adds that when they provide this information to parents at presentations, it is always the parents that already know and do not allow their child to consume alcohol. We need to be able to connect with the parents that need the messaging.* *Rozella explains that Fishawack and Bottle Hill Day are a good setting to be able to connect with a wider population of parents.*
- Allison explained that an early TTF cohort explained that they thought parents giving children alcohol for parties at their house was cringey. It could be good to have it come from a parent perspective, but hearing from teens also gives another perspective.
- Allison asked the Drew Action Scholars who were in high school last year about how their parents would receive this information most effectively. They all said school is the best way to communicate with parents. She explains that she also wants law enforcement to be involved in the campaign too.
- *Rozella asks if there is any data around this. Law enforcement officer explains that we would have to compile data.* Allison adds that students attend parties outside Madison and Chatham, so the data may be more compelling within the entire county.
- *Rozella explains that this needs to be a reoccurring message that frequently comes up to remind parents of the consequences.* Allison agrees that we need a tagline, and once we have that, we need to think about who else we want to get involved with. We could give it to schools, tuxedo rental places, florists, etc. that would connect with parents. We would want them around the community to be subconsciously impacting parents.
- *Sam asks if schools would consider doing a permission slip for teens to get to go to prom. This could have social hosting information on it for parents. Jennifer Caldwell asks if we have ever*

partnered with the Madison Educational Foundation or through boosters. Allison thinks that could be a good idea.

- *Elyse explains that she doesn't feel like prom is the place to focus, at least in Chatham, since students go down the shore and it isn't a hosting event. Also, she adds that the same houses and parents host parties, which we have also heard from the listening sessions. Parents figure at graduation parties that the student is about to go to college and they should drink first in a 'safe' place. Using 'scare tactics,' like you don't know what they had before might be the most effective thing.*
- Allison explains that it's unfortunate but scare tactics work. We have looked at prom as more of a harm reduction focus because seniors are going to the beach, and there is not much a way to stop that from happening. That is why we give them the resources to stay safe on the prom cards.
- Allison thanks everyone for talking about different ideas and asks if anyone who wants to talk more about this please email her. The May meeting will be earlier than normal but there is no set date because we have to find time for the Drew students to present.

10:31 Sector Updates

Sam Dooley- Morris County Sexual Trauma Center

- She shares they are having their annual Survivor Speak event on May 8 from 5-7 at the Morris County Library. It's an event where survivors' and community members are going to share creative works and performances. We have a bunch of artwork that's going to be out, and there will be people singing and performing poetry. There will also be food and information. She says they are still accepting artwork and performers, so let her know if anyone is interested. Allison says they will hang the flyer in the Y and will send it in the newsletter.

Kristin Perconte- Project Community Pride

- She explains that they hosted a workshop titled the impact of social media and screens at MJS. It was a really great event for parents.
- Allison thanks everyone for coming and says she will share the May meeting day whenever she figures it out.
- The meeting closes at 10:34AM.