



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

May 20, 2025- 1:30 pm In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes/Summary

Attendees:

Allison Bardon (MCC Director), Alyssa Brijpaul (Drew Action Scholar), Jen Caldwell (Drew Center for Civic Engagement), Rozella Clyde (citizen), Jon Finocchiaro (Madison PD), Sean Hewitt (Drew Center for Civic Engagement), Alex Mandala (CHS SAC), Diane Mann (Y CEO), Christine McIntyre (PCP Director), Jordan Parella (MCC/PCP staff), Vanessa Perry (Pastor of Bethel Amy Church), Ed Stoner (Y Vice President), Gabe Suarez (citizen)

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

- Allison calls the meeting to order and thanks everyone for coming. She asks everyone to introduce themselves, which aligns with the above attendance.
- MCC had a great experience with the Drew University Action Scholars with Alyssa, Jocelyn, and JP. Allison was able to visit Drew once a week to meet with the students and it was an amazing collaboration. We are hoping they can come back to intern in the fall because all of their positions have additional work to be done.
- Allison says that in addition to their work, we asked they also make a presentation with a summary of their efforts and role. We are going to start with Jocelyn's presentation, and she is studying abroad in Italy so she prerecorded her presentation.

9:35 Data Collection and Grant Research (Jocelyn Kingsley)

- Jocelyn starts by introducing herself. She is studying abroad in Siena, Italy, but hopes to work for the coalition again in the fall and to meet everyone then. She is from Hamden, Connecticut and just finished her freshman year at Drew University a biology major and public health minor. She is on the basketball team at Drew and she worked as the data collection and grant research intern for MCC this semester.
- She starts by explaining her grant research on the STOP grant and the United Nations DAPC grant.
- She says this year, the STOP grant application due date was March 17th and the purpose of the program is to prevent and reduce alcohol use among ages 12 through 20 in communities throughout the US. She says the duration of the grant is 4 years, and funding is up to \$60,000 per year. Some of the program goals were to address norms of alcohol use among youth, reduce opportunities for underage drinking, and to address penalties. They require evidence based programs, practices and policies, as well as community outcomes in their grant reporting.
- Then, she discusses the DAPC grant which was due on August 14th, 2024. The goal of this grant is to strengthen the capacity of society to prevent drug use globally and empower youth with evidence-based substance prevention programs focused on teens and young adults. The reporting

requirements state that you must use evidence-based prevention of substance and actively support youth participation in communities.

- She moves on to discuss their weekly meetings with Allison and the other Drew interns. She would share what she did the past week and discuss different initiatives MCC was working on. One initiative was about high school prom and preventing drunk driving. They discussed initiatives their own high schools did. This also included discussing prom safety and providing safe alternatives for activities after prom. They also came up with alcohol prevention facts for high school tablings and discussed the vaping prevention signs for Madison High School.
- Jocelyn shares they also did some social media content. First, she worked with Elyse for her introduction post and they also did a day in the life as an intern.
- She continues that from the end of April until now she has been working on building a survey. The first step was discussing the topics of the survey which is alcohol consumption, vaping, marijuana use, and mental health while at college. The target audience currently is other Action Scholars, student government, student athletes, and Drew University residents. Then, she met with Kelli to discuss other surveys, which she used to pull questions for our MCC survey. Since then, she is working on formatting the survey with Kelli to find the best wording.
- Jocelyn shares some sample survey questions and that there are 17 questions on the survey. 7 are mental health based, 4 are on alcohol, and 3 vaping/marijuana questions, 2 on personal usage, and 1 is on their observations at Drew.
- Jocelyn hopes to work for the coalition in the fall to finalize the details of the survey and then send the survey to the target groups. Then, analyze the data and implement initiatives that connect to the data results.
- Allison explains that Kelli is Kelli Keck from Epiphany. When we started working with Jocelyn, it was just an idea since we are coming to the end of the DFC grant. We wanted to explore more with the young adult population to broaden our reach with 3 colleges in our service area. All of the interns are only one year out of high school so their input is extremely valuable. We are hopeful she can pick up where she left off in the fall.
- Rozella says when they ask about support services, they should ask which ones are most helpful. Allison agrees and explains they talked with Kelli at the beginning about understanding what data Drew already has and how we could supplement that.
- Allison asks if there are any other questions about Jocelyn's work, and then she moves onto Alyssa's presentation. They also discuss JP not remembering the time difference as the reason he is not on the call.

9:46 Cultural Competency Intern (Alyssa Brijpaul)

- Alyssa explains that she was the cultural competency intern, which focused mainly on substance use and mental health. She just finished her freshman year at Drew as a public health major and photography minor. She is passionate about helping people and last semester she worked at the after school programs at Madison schools. She wanted to work for MCC because youth need to know how things they do can affect their bodies.
- Alyssa shares that substance use increases the risk of chronic illness, mental health disorders, and infectious diseases. Medicine is difficult for frequent substance users to absorb. 946,000 adolescents needed substance abuse treatment in 2018.

- Alyssa discusses the effect of substance abuse on food and shelter. Substance users lose their appetite when they have drugs in their system. 35% of individuals who are dependent on drugs or alcohol also have eating disorders. They are more vulnerable to illness and disease. They may lose their job, increasing the risk of homelessness and social isolation.
- Her first research question was how are different demographic groups impacted by substance use? This could be based on demographic factors like race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, gender, and LGBTQ+ population. She used census data to learn more about the population in Madison, Chatham, and Florham Park. She mentions some key statistics she found about drug use in the towns. Generally, she found that American Indians had the highest rates of substance use disorders.
- Her second research question asked how disparities affect teens and children differently than adults? She explains the main difference was brain development which is not complete until age 25. This can affect the development of their neural pathways, which can increase the risk of addiction and mental health problems. It can affect physical development like bone density, hormonal changes, and their organ development. Long-term problems include liver damage, heart disease, and respiratory problems.
- Alyssa hopes to come back in the fall and continue with her research.
- Allison thanks Alyssa and explains that her research was the broadest. Allison explains that the main goal of the coalition is to ensure we are inclusive and culturally competent. Her work was laying the groundwork and ensuring the coalition is up to date on the population.
- Allison says we'll move on to the rest of the meeting if no one has questions and see if JP can join us, but if not he can come to the June meeting.

9:54 MCC Updates (Allison Bardon)

- Allison shares the Trump administration released it's skinny budget for 2026. Unfortunately, there was significant cuts to SAMHSA and the CDC. Collectively, there was a 22.6% decrease in funding for HHS from 2025 to 2026. DFC was not listed as a proposed cut, but the STOP grant was. Narcan funding was also cut substantially, which is unfortunate because overdoses are at a steep decline for the first time in years. This is not official until we go through the appropriations procedure, so it can be a good time to write to senators.
- The strategic prevention framework, minority aids, tribal behavioral health, which Alyssa discussed in her presentation as the number one at risk population for substance use disorders. They are also discussing cutting the NIH and moving everything into the Administration for Healthy America. The 26.6% decrease cuts 1 billion dollars from SAMHSA and 3.5 billion from CDC.
- Allison moves on to welcome back Jordan. She is splitting her time between PCP and MCC, and today she is working on graduation bags. Jordan introduces herself, talks about her courses from this past school year, and is happy to be back.
- Allison shares more about their past events. Christine talks about how last week basketball at the Y. There were 15 teens, and it was a great opportunity to have teens come out and the Y staff were there as well.
- Allison says yesterday we had the much-anticipated Stress Down Day at the Academy of Saint Elizabeth. This was our first cohort of the Teen Task Force being back since Elyse's cohort, which we took a year to rebuild after. When we launched our partnership with AOSE in September, there was a group of students who were very eager to be Teen Task Force members. Gabe worked a lot with them during his time working for the coalition.

- Allison explains that AOSE has a uniform, but throughout the year, they are encouraged to participate or volunteer in exchange of being able to dress down. Gabe came up with the idea to do Stress Down Day. It was supposed to be held months ago, but it worked out well because it was during Mental Health Awareness Month instead. 86 students signed up, Allison, Christine, and the AOSE SAC were the adult facilitators. 13 teen task force members were the teen facilitators and they led students through 3 12-minute workshops on mindfulness, managing mental health, and relaxation. There was journaling, our wellness wheel, and coloring. The TTF members designed the plan, created talking points, discussed key takeaways, and it was really successful.
- Allison shows some pictures from the event. The majority of the teen task force are sophomores which is good that we'll have them for a few more years. Many students that were participating asked how they could be involved in the teen task force next year. They look forward to expanding on that event next year and are thankful for the new partnership with AOSE.
- Allison says they have 4 tables at CHS this month for mental health awareness month, and she asks Alex Mandala if she wants to talk about that.
- Alex explains there was a table last week outside of the cafeteria on journaling. Next week, they are doing the wellness wheel outside of the cafeteria and in a classroom to have options for the students to choose where they do the activity. Then, another day, they are doing a tabling on Anxiety is Sour, Coping is Sweet. Then, the day before prom, there will be a table on alcohol awareness. Lastly, for prom, MCC provides cards with information about staying safe and harm reduction with the Good Samaritan Law.
- Allison discusses the prom cards more and explains the MHS prom committee asked about 988 information being included on the card, so they redesigned it to include that. As Alex said, it has some harm reduction included which is not typically what we focus on with our grant, but it is necessary to keep people safe. We do include the legislation that is illegal to purchase or consume alcohol under the age of 21. Then, we also include refusal skills, alcohol poisoning signs, 988 information, and overdose prevention.
- Allison shares that this week is MHS Day of Service and this year they will be doing a table outside of the high school in the morning with Madison PD. We will be handing out materials on binge drinking and vaping cessation. Christine explains that MCC and PCP will be hosting 15 students to work on a kindness project with them. There will be discussion about how there is so much emphasis on kindness in elementary and middle school, but how do we bring that to the high school. The Madison Library is now reopened after 5 years, so we will also be doing some art projects for the library as well. We look forward to the event every year and are very excited. Allison adds that we always include mental health and substance abuse prevention education into the day.
- Allison gives an update on data collection. She went to the Madison Board of Education meeting where the MJS and MHS principals presented their student survey data. Then, she spoke about trends we noticed from the last time we surveyed Madison in 2021. This is a good way to show appreciation to them for allowing us to survey students. We only have 3 data sets from Madison so we can't draw trends, but substance use is down since the last time we surveyed Madison.
- Allison continues that Jordan was trained in doing focus groups last year so we will continue to do those this summer. Then, we'll share our community survey at Fishawack. Right now, we have 100 surveys completed, and we'd like to get 250.
- Allison says that many coalitions don't meet during the summer, but last year we did Coalition Coffees as a casual way to meet with no virtual option. We are going to do that again this summer,

but she is considering changing the day and potentially pushing the time back later in the day. She will send the most up-to-date information in our newsletter.

- Fishawack is June 14th and there will be a table with the Y. This year, we are focusing on parent resources and the role that parents play in underage substance use in Madison and Chatham. We will have our conversation starters magnet as the focal point and then the Now You Know rack cards. Parent permissiveness is exceedingly high compared to other communities, so we want to focus on that as a risk factor. If anyone wants to volunteer, there will be a sign-up sheet in the upcoming newsletters.

10:16 Sector Updates

Project Community Pride (Christine McIntyre)

- Christine shares that MCC and PCP have been working hard to establish a relationship with the Spanish speaking community. We have been working with 25 ESL students at MHS and visiting their classrooms. Gabe worked on building that relationship when he worked here. They learned through these discussions that many of them did not know where the Y was. So, the students took a field trip to the Y and there was a tour given in English and Spanish to share the facility and resources. The group exercise coordinator will also be having a Spanish workout every Thursday. We hope to build on this in the fall.
- Allison shouts Gabe out for all the groundwork he laid with that relationship. Christine added they did breathing exercises in English and Spanish and they are always going to be very conscious of bringing a Spanish speaker to ensure they are able to communicate effectively.

Drew University Center for Civic Engagement (Sean Hewitt)

- Sean thanks MCC for hosting the Action Scholars and that many students have reached out about wanting to get involved with the coalition in the fall. A Spanish speaking professor is also interested in getting involved as well.
- He says with the school schedule they may not be able to come in person, but asks that they are updated as things happen.
- Allison thanks them for the opportunity to host students and says it has been great and they look forward to hosting students again.
- Allison thanks everyone for coming and the meeting closes at 10:24AM.