



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

December 15, 2024- 9:30 am In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes/Summary

Attendees:

Allison Bardon (MCC Director), Jen Caldwell (Drew University Civic Engagement Coordinator), Sam Dooley (Morris County Sexual Assault Trauma Center), Diane Mann (Y CEO), Christine McIntyre (Project Community Pride Director), Ed Stoner (Y VP of Advancement & Strategic Initiatives) Gabe Suarez (MCC Staff), Rozella Clyde (Chatham- citizen)

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

- Allison starts the meeting and thanks everyone for coming. She mentions that December meetings are tough with attendance, but we have a lot going on that we want to share.
- Allison asks Gabe to give a recap of the events since the last meeting.

9:32 MCC Updates (Gabe Suarez- MCC Staff)

- Gabe says that August through November has been very busy with tablings at the school, but we do have a few things scheduled for the rest of the month. We will be at Madison Junior and High Schools on Wednesday, and on Thursday, we will be at Chatham High School doing a workshop with their mental health club, Mending Minds.
- He then speaks about tablings from earlier in the month. First, at Academy of Saint Elizabeth's, they hosted a wellness table that focused on breathing techniques that help coping with stress. We had many different strategies for them to try including bubble breathing, sensory stickers, and a guided breathing machine that helps time breathing. Students took many of the resources we offered.
- Gabe shares that the student counselor also let us use the school study period for a Teen Task Force meeting. 15 girls were there for the meeting and the majority of them carried over from our meeting last month. Gabe explains they talked about the new initiative they want TTF to focus on next month. January is Mental Wellness Month. Academy of Saint Elizabeth's students wear uniforms but will occasionally have dress-down days for a donation or cause. They want to host a "stress-down day," for students that attend mental health workshops that are led by the Teen Task Force. TTF will prepare the questions and ideally, they will lead the conversations.
- Allison explains that as the Teen Task Force has evolved, they have always focused on having teens taking the lead in interacting with their peers. The group at St E's seems super eager and interested in the ideas they have come up with. They also will include substance use education in the workshops by discussing refusal skills. The students will be in small groups and we are really excited about it. We are grateful that the school has let us come in to work with the students and they all live in different areas. The goal is to make the meetings very accessible for their students by meeting during their study period. She explains the only obstacle with that is there are MHS students interested in joining and we will have to figure out how to make that work for meetings.
- *Rozella Clyde asks if it is an all-girls school.* Allison answers that it is an all-girls school. She adds that Kiana, the Teen Task Force advisor, used to work for Saint E's, but just left about 6 months

ago. Previously, MCC has worked more with Saint Elizabeth University, but this is our first time working with the academy and they have been very welcoming.

- *Rozella Clyde shares some of her thoughts on outreach right now. She explains that as the days get shorter people don't go outside as much and spending time in nature is important to wellness. She also likes the idea of bubble breathing because it practices breathing, but it also is calming to look at and brings back nostalgia.* Allison agrees that the girls really enjoyed it, and things we view as giveaways (like 25 cent bubbles) are things they really enjoy.
- Gabe thanks Rozella for bringing up the emotions that come from shorter days in the winter. He mentions they are working on a campaign with Vicky Bukey from PCP, which they will talk more about in a second.
- Allison adds to Gabe's updates that this will be out 4th time at Mending Minds at CHS. The wellness table at MHS will be on impaired driving with our fatal vision goggles that simulate alcohol and marijuana intoxication. She adds the next Basketball at the Y event will be on January 17th and law enforcement will be there for that.
- *Rozella says that reaching out to Chatham Day School could be a good idea to connect with their older grades that could potentially join the Teen Task Force in the future.* Allison and Gabe agree that would be a good idea.

9:45 Community Needs Assessment (Allison Bardon, Gabe Suarez, & Elyse Wheatley- MCC Staff)

- Allison updates that from the last meeting our community needs assessment campaign has evolved and is launching this week. She shares that Elyse has worked on it a lot, and they play a video of Elyse giving an update.
- Elyse shares that her priority has been on preparing the campaign surrounding the community needs assessment and we are currently in the middle of posting that. There will be posts Monday through Saturday and we explored different posting techniques on Instagram. One being the grid takeover with our campaign logo on 9 posts. Monday's post was focused on the basics of the community survey, Tuesday is focused on Draw the Line, then 2 reels, Friday will be a call to action, and Saturday will be a conclusion post.
- Elyse continues that the ultimate goal is to inform people about the survey and increase the response rate. She explains that last meeting it was just a concept, and she is really proud of how we all worked together to make it come together.
- She adds that they coordinated with Allison Adams, an MCC member who owns a dental practice. Gabe and Allison will be dropping off bookmarks to Adam's Dental that have the QR code to the survey which will be in the patient bags. Dr. Adams also asked for some wellness coloring sheets for her patients. She explains that we are really excited about this community partnership, and we are hoping to expand those partnerships in the community soon.
- Allison and Gabe then lead members through the posts and campaign organization.
- *Rozella Clyde asks if we plan to collaborate with faith-based organizations. Allison replies church bulletins are often very expensive, but if there are community boards at these places, then we can put the flyers up there.* Gabe plans to go around Madison and Chatham on Wednesday to place the flyer around town. *Rozella explains to them that they don't want an advertisement in the bulletin, they need to tell the church they want to place a flyer in the bulletin. The bulletin has inserts in it all of the time for the community. She also mentions law enforcement sharing it with the community.* Allison replies that they are meeting with them in the coming weeks to discuss Basketball at the Y and will also discuss that. *Rozella suggests liquor stores and supermarkets too.*

- *Sam Dooley asks if Chatham and Madison Schools send a newsletter to parents every week.* Allison replies that Madison does, but they are waiting for them to share student survey data. The principal agreed to send it, and they plan to ask him to send it when they publish that data.
- Rozella mentions that Madison and Chatham have active community boards on Facebook that the survey could be posted to.

9:58 MCC Website Updates (Allison Bardon- MCC Director)

- Gabe pulls the MCC website up on the screen. Allison shares that they have been working on updating that slowly.
- She explains that the first thing that when opening the website is a pop-up with the link to the survey. To access the website, you have to click out of the pop-up.
- Allison explains the website is not completely up to date yet, but things look cleaner, and they are working on updating it more frequently.

10:00 Winter Blues Series (Allison Bardon- MCC Director)

- Allison shares that her, Gabe, and Vicky Bukey recorded a podcast last week for the end of the year, called the Winter Blues series. This is going to be connected to the MCC podcast, Continuing the Conversation: A Prevention Podcast, which they hadn't recorded anything for in two years. We are very happy to bring this back.
- Vicky Bukey (PCP Counselor) did a lunch & learn for Y staff last month about seasonal affective disorder. They were focusing on that and substance use for the podcast. There are 5 mini episodes that are 10-12 minutes each. The topics focused on what seasonal affective disorder is, a self-care inventory to check on yourself and teens, supporting friends/family in recovery, how to access mental health resources. We talked about how teens and college students are home for break, and this is a good opportunity to talk to them about substance use. They will be highlighting conversation starters and tips on how to make this a conversation in a household.
- They recorded 45 minutes worth of audio last week and they will be recording one more episode tomorrow. The episodes will all be posted next week. It will be on social media, the website, and also on the podcast website, PodBean.
- Allison plays an audio recording of the podcast with Vicky speaking: Vicky explains that holiday blues are feelings of sadness and stress around the holidays. This relates to celebrating the holidays which could be for many reasons, like guilt, loss, finances, etc. Stress is generally higher during the holidays with increased pressure and events. Seasonal affective disorder is very rare. Feelings of anxiety and sadness are things everyone will experience in their lifetime and generally, people recover from these experiences without a lot of intervention.
- *Rozella asks if you can change the volume of the person speaking in the recording.* Allison says yes but it also depends on the timbre of the voice. You can see the sound waves while recording and it is a process to try and mix it.
- They are fast-tracking the recording and editing so it should be out next Monday. We are excited to have this in our library for families and hope to continue to record more as time goes on.

10:06 Potency Matters (Gabe Suarez- MCC Staff)

- Gabe introduces the potency matters project that they spoke of last meeting. Sue Heffernan, a Madison parent and MCC member, brought this idea to MCC. She wanted to make an informational resource to explain to parents the basics behind marijuana. We started this campaign for Bottle Hill Day with a poster including information about distillates, edibles, and more.

- He explains there are two goals for the campaign. First is education, they are using a Prezi to make the presentation more interactive and easier to follow. Sue's idea was relating to a kite to visualize getting high. The presentation has a kite and as you go up the kite the potency of the substance is increasing as well, from concentrates to vape oils. It is dangerous for teens and parents need to be aware of what it looks like. This would be an easy resource for parents to get a start on the information they may be seeking.
- The second goal is to make an advisory component between Gabe, Allison, and Sue. The idea would be that after looking through this source, they could reach out to one of them for additional, confidential resources. We can help them find additional resources and connect them with other organizations for their teen. Gabe refers to the presentation from Sam Dooley (Morris County Sexual Assault Trauma Center) and how they have advocates who will go to court with the survivor, and they want to carry a similar idea of advocacy to MCC. Gabe explains that oftentimes parents feel they are the only one going through this issue and having someone there to support them could help them feel more comfortable.
- Rozella shares that she thinks this is a very valuable resource. There is so much information being given to parents and making it easy to access is crucial. A glossary with pictures could also be very helpful and suggest conversation starters for parents.
- Gabe reiterates the goal is to empower parents to have conversations and be informed.
- Allison explains that the design will evolve and be the style/design from the flyer at Bottle Hill Day. She sees this initiative to be similar to Draw the Line with a coalition-wide effort that comes from our community survey, environmental scans, and now building an initiative that connects to the data we collected. This demonstrates that we are data-driven which is a goal of the coalition.
- Gabe hopes to have the presentation more finalized for the January meeting.

10:16 Sector Updates

- Allison asks if any sectors have updates to share.
- *Christine McIntyre (Project Community Pride)*: she shares that they met with Sam Dooley about the coaching program that they run and are hoping to bring that into the towns PCP works with. They learned valuable information about violence prevention and how we can share that with teens.
- They will be cohosting Basketball at the Y with MCC on January 17th. The police will be there and we are ordering shirts for the events.
- *Sam Dooley (Morris County Sexual Assault Trauma Center)*: She shares they have an upcoming advocate and 24-hour hotline training, if anyone is interested in volunteering, reach out to her.
- *Jen Caldwell (Drew University Civic Engagement Coordinator)*: She thanks MCC for the job descriptions they sent Drew, they have shared them with the students. Allison thanks her for inviting them to the career fair and MLK day events. Jen shares they wanted to plan a "Drew Good" week for MLK Jr. Day week, but students come back that week, so they are pushing it back a week. They applied for grants but didn't receive funding, so they scaled it back some. If anyone has volunteer opportunities, share them because students and staff are encouraged to volunteer.
- The next meeting is scheduled for January 14th, but they are talking about moving meetings to Thursdays. She will send a poll to assess availability and interests. We will present our year-in-review and evaluation report at that meeting. Kelli Keck will come in February to talk about it more in-depth.
- She thanks everyone for coming and wishes everyone a happy holidays!
- The meeting closes at 10:22AM.

Next Meeting:

January 14, 2025 @ 9:30AM

Hubbard Room

Madison Area YMCA