

Mansfield YSB Advisory Board Minutes

Tuesday December 15, 2009
12:00pm at Mansfield Town Hall
Conference Room B

Board Members

Present:

Ethel Mantzaris, Chair
Frank Perrotti, Co-Chair
Patricia Michalak, YSB Coordinator
Kathleen McNamara, YSB Senior Social Worker
Kevin Grunwald, Director of Human Services
Eileen Griffin, Social Worker
Jerry Marchon, Police Officer
Candace Morrell, Assistant Principle MMS
Jen Abele, EO Smith Student
Amber Hoyt, EO Smith Student
Lauren DiGrazia, Graduate MSW Intern

Guests: Chuck Leavens, EO Smith Counselor & John Hodgeson, EO Smith Guidance Counselor

Proceedings

- *Meeting called to order* at 12:01pm by Chair, Ethel Mantzaris
- November 10, 2009 meeting minutes were accepted and approved

- Report from YSB Coordinator, Patricia Michalak
 - The activities for the YSB were not discussed. No action was needed on these items.
 - Activities include the following:
 - There was an untimely death of a father who had participated in our grief group. The family made the YSB the recipients of the donations. We have collected over \$1400.00 from these donations in support of our grief group. Pat met with Matt Hart in regards to communications with the public safety offices. Kevin Grunwald and Pat have been asked to develop a procedure with the fire and police departments to open up the line of communication between agencies.
 - People's Bank donated UConn women basketball tickets to the YSB. The tickets were donated because someone had seen the grandparents raising grandchildren group on the website. The recipients of the basketball tickets were thrilled to attend this event in particular the single fathers.
 - The grandparents group met, Janit Romyko is running the group alone until a new social worker is hired. There was very good attendance.

- We have been assisting in identifying families in need for Thanksgiving & Christmas.
 - There has been an increase in cases this month. The schools have been referring many at risk families to the YSB. During the holidays times are particularly hard for families. These referrals have helped us identify more families in need.
- Student Report, Jen Abele (speech)
I want all of you to know that being appointed to this Advisory Group has helped me to focus on school. I realized when I first started that if I'm going to do this I will need to keep my grades up and do well in school. I want my family and the people who believe in me like all of you to be proud of me and to know that you made the right decision in picking me. I want to live up to your expectations.

I have been seeking help with my school work for the past couple of weeks and with that help I have been able to do better and my grades are going up. I have been hearing comments from Ms. Riffle and my teachers that they notice the improvement and that makes me want to try harder.

Pat told me that the Advisory board understands that high school and transitioning can be difficult and that I can make mistakes and that you will help me through them.

During this meeting I would like to be involved by listening attentively and being available if anyone has a question from a student's point of view or if I have participated in any of the programs I can share my experiences.

- *New Business:*
The Challenge Program
-Chuck Leavens presented concerns about the funding of challenge for this upcoming year because the budget has been cut by 50% from last year.
-In order to make up the \$5,000.00 letters were sent out to previous challenge participants to seek donations. So far only \$400.00 has been raised.
-Chuck Leavens is seeking advice for a back up plan if money isn't raised
-Kevin Grunwald was asked to bring this issue back to the YSB advisory board by Matt Hart. Some ideas that were discussed prior to this advisory meeting were charging a fee for individuals to take part in challenge. It was determined that it costs approximately \$600.00 per student to attend challenge.
-Jerry Marchon asked Chuck Leavens what the goals of challenge were. Chuck Leavens explained that challenge teaches kids who are not used to being taught how to challenge themselves physically, emotionally, and socially as well as how to work together.
-The board offered three avenues for funding.
 - 1 – Tri-town coalition for underage drinking grant money since this is a prevention program.
 - 2 – Board of Education
 - 3 – The local ministries

-Chuck verified that the advisory board intended on continuing the challenge program. The board agreed that was the intent.
-John Hodgeson suggested exploring the 3 avenues suggested by the board first and then the board will reconvene. At that point if there is more money that needs to be made then a committee should be formed. The board agreed on this process.

Other New Business

-Jerry Marchon brought up some new business of referrals to Human Services. This was a discussion of how the police department, fire department, and Human Services are working on bridging the gaps between agencies. These departments are building up communication again.
-Jeff Smith will be attending the next meeting to see about joining the YSB board.

- Meeting adjourned at 1:18pm
- Minutes submitted by Graduate MSW Intern, Lauren DiGrazia