

February 26, 2015 Easthampton Coalition Youth Engagement Work Group meeting notes

Attendance: Tricia Dandrea, Bryan Delaney, Jacob LaPrade, Heidi Baj

Note taker – Tricia Dandrea

The group discussion began with a review of our Jan 21st meeting discussion.

The following ideas were discussed:

- 1) Research hiring of AmeriCorps Service member who might create a student improvisation theatre group that could work on teen issues, including substance use prevention. Peer Theatre Education is a model to be considered. Heidi shared that often college age students are very excited to be working with high school youth. Might the particular AmeriCorps member chosen have specific expertise in theatre?
- 2) Engaging the Arts into youth substance prevention work. Is there someone at the high school who might be able to talk with Art Graphic teacher to see if they might be interested in helping to create positive messaging posters? Possibly Ruth, as she works at high school sometimes during the day. Can this work be embedded in the students' classwork, which would engage more students, who might not otherwise be involved? Heidi stated she would speak with Art teacher at WBMS to see if there is any interest in partnering on an art project.
- 3) Follow up conversation about the EHS "smokers' corner". It is unclear why this issue is so complicated in seeking solutions.
- 4) Barriers to engaging more youth in extracurricular activities. Might it be helpful to educate parents about this as a "protective factor"? We discussed the concern that many parents choose not to "gently push" their youth into trying an extracurricular activity, especially once they move to high school. If parents educate about how this helps youth, i.e. brain development, positive brain pathways, etc., they might take a different stance. Our discussion concluded that this idea might be better serviced by the coalition Parent Work Group.

Written 3/12/15 mpd