

## HOWELL MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE, MEETING MINUTES

**MEETING:** 1-19-21, 12:30 pm    **ZOOM MEETING**

(agenda and Zoom log in information emailed to committee members 1-13-21 ahead of meeting)

**NEXT MEETING:** 2-16-21, 12:30 pm, town hall or Zoom (3<sup>rd</sup> Tues. of month)

1. **APPROVE MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING:** Approved by Ron Sanasac, seconded by Jeanna Ribon (minutes for approval were emailed to committee members 1-13-21 ahead of meeting)
2. **Attendees:** Brief introductions (name and organization), if in-person meeting
3. **Alliance member voting (see funds requests, if any; member votes are counted on separate tally sheet):**
  - Please attend meetings where votes are required so we achieve a quorum
  - No voting matters
  - **Co-chairperson voting will take place at 2-16-21 meeting;** nominees by committee members: Marni Elson-Victor; **PLEASE ATTEND THE MEETING SO WE HAVE A QUORUM TO VOTE!** We will vote at the beginning of the meeting if time is a factor for you. Delayed from this meeting to 2-16-21 meeting because of alerting new members that we will be voting
4. **Alliance finances/budgets:**
  - Fundraised account balance as of 1-13-21 is \$12,555.40, no change since last meeting
5. **Alliance members/guests:**
  - **2021 code of conduct forms due to clerk's office ASAP** (were mailed and emailed to members)
  - Prevention-related updates
  - **2021 Alliance goals: 1. community awareness, 2. parent involvement, 3. programs**
  - **Each member's goal/task: What is your goal for the Alliance in 2021? What Alliance programs/projects will you contribute to implementing in 2021 as your task to complete? What updates do you have on your programs/projects?**
    - See last meeting's minutes on member-specific goals and programs/projects shared during the meeting; post-meeting on 12-15-20, Jonathan Mazza of High Focus Centers emailed his goal as community awareness and his task as substance use prevention webinars and support for community initiatives; Frank Masone emailed his goals as community awareness and parent involvement and his task as project support in these areas
    - Jeanna Ribon, Howell K-8 SAC: 54 essay submissions for annual Elks prevention essay contest (Middle School North has put forth the state winner 2 years in a row); started virtual LEAD with SROs; National Alcohol and Drugs Facts Week in March will be virtual (will collaborate with Alliance and high school SAC); exploring options for virtual presenters to replace in-school prevention assemblies (180 Turning Lives Around and Generation SOS)
    - Camille Mussari, former Howell High School SAC: develop our own Heroes and Cool Kids mentoring program similar to program we did through them to continue high school mentoring of middle schoolers
    - Julie Adkins, Howell High School SAC: had first SADD virtual meeting last week with 50+ students participating in club's overview and brainstorming ideas
    - Mary Lou Mack-Kaplan: joining Alliance to help with our prevention efforts; has experience in addiction and recovery
    - Doug DeNoia: program support any way he can

- Jonathan Mazza, High Focus Centers: become a resource to connect community members with treatment and share trends High Focus is seeing in treatment to inform our prevention; collaborate with Ken Pecoraro from CPC Behavioral Health to do educational webinars
- Suzanne Brennan, Howell Township Public Defender: seeing aftermath of COVID-19 and restricted communication in person; lack of personal connection is affecting those already struggling and needing support; will continue to research Alliance merchandising options to market our prevention efforts aligned with being stigma-free; presented rock painting initiative prototype and will present it to businesses for collaboration; quoted Freeholder Susan Kiley “Stigma can be cured with kindness.”
- Laura Roth: getting to know Alliance to see what she can offer with her expertise in mental health and gender studies/gender-related substance use and mental health issues
- John Alliano, Optimist Club: 4-26-21 golf outing; Howell is top club in district for essay and oratorical contest submissions and delivery of contest; giving out \$13,000 in scholarships this year to Howell-resident high school seniors; 30<sup>th</sup> year of the club
- **Next meeting preparation: organize a brief proposal/outline of your program plan, including professionals who can do virtual presentations on substance use prevention/mental health awareness**

6. Alliance updates: (programs, events, resources, and initiatives)

- Trends in substance use/mental health and legislature:
  - Relaxed attitude surrounding underage marijuana with legalization
  - COVID-19 fatigue and “compassion fatigue” with parents, teens, and behavior health/ health care professionals; high school is seeing increase in referrals to High Focus Centers; High Focus Centers is seeing more acute/crisis situations and not seeking help until someone is mandated to do so
- Project Medicine Drop: Howell collected 473 pounds of unwanted medications in 2020 through anonymous Project Medicine box drop-offs at the Howell Police Department, calls to Howell police for at-home pick-ups, and our fall DEA Take-Back at Walmart on 10-24-20
- Howell Police Dept. stats: 2020 totals: overdoses: 45 (8 fatal); suicide completions: 6; suicide attempts/threats: 63; crisis calls: 643; juvenile arrests: 41; medicine pick-up calls: 7
- OD Mapping 2015-2020: Christa Riddle finished 4<sup>th</sup> quarter final data map completion and will partner with Captain John Storrow to plan community awareness and P/R campaign to release map to community members
- Howell Township Business Recovery Task Force: Christa Riddle meeting with task force to provide Howell business owners with mental health resources to address population’s stress, anxiety, and depression during COVID-19 (per recommendation of Deputy Mayor Tommy Russo and request of task force)
- Howell tobacco/smoking/vaping: Christa Riddle reviewing other municipalities’ smoking/tobacco/vaping ordinances to update Howell’s ordinance; projected for completion by year’s end (in sync with timeline for Prevention Coalition of Monmouth County’s ENDS/Tobacco Task Force ordinance goal)
- Howell Alliance by-laws: more involved than initially thought; Christa Riddle working with township attorney and Alliance member/attorney Suzanne Brennan to first amend Alliance ordinance 2-47, then to amend by-laws now that we are not with GCADA; trying to include electronic voting; Alliance members will vote on revised by-laws draft once it’s done (mayor and council have to vote on ordinance revisions before we can do by-laws)
- Substance use/mental health trends and legislature: with marijuana legalization legislature still in the works, Alliance will focus on disseminating factual information about marijuana’s risks, how it will remain illegal for those under 21, and how marijuana presents dangers for still-developing brain
- Prevention Press: next issue will be in spring

- Howell PAL: PAL reached out about grant PAL is applying for that can include the Alliance's opioid prevention initiatives and for Christa Riddle to present to PAL Youth Leadership mental health strategies during COVID-19 at upcoming Zoom meeting
  - Mental Health First Aid: Marni Elson-Victor to keep us in the loop about switching to virtual trainings that the Alliance will sponsor 1 training per quarter throughout 2021 (adult and youth component); first training 2-27-21 with virtual option if social gathering restrictions affect in-person training?
  - SAMHSA grant for mental health awareness training: Christa Riddle reviewed grant requirements and data collection and grant administration are beyond our capacity; Christa Riddle will look to take advantage of free programs implemented in NJ, if any, through grant award at the state level (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
  - Howell High School-NJEA FAST Program: PTA president reached out to collaborate with Alliance on mental wellness program through NJEA FAST program funding; Howell was one of just 2 in Freehold Regional High School District to respond and submit a program proposal for 1-15-21 deadline; Howell Alliance's program will be "Mental Health Support for Teens During COVID-19," including 6 virtual workshops (45 minutes each, 15 minute Q&A at the end) featuring a variety of educational and behavioral health experts from our Alliance, with topics such as causes of stress, mindfulness, resiliency-building THC/nicotine addiction, suicide ideation/self-harm, depression/anxiety, social media/tech addiction, and help/support resources available; we are charging \$975 per session for \$5,850 total, part of which will pay for professional services used and part will go to the Alliance
  - Optimist Club partnership: annual essay and oratorical contest: 45 essays and 20 speeches submitted this year; 2-4-21 is oratorical contest with 1 contestant at a time (11 total) due to social gathering restrictions; from Alliance, Christa Riddle and Jeanna Ribon served as judges and Alliance sponsored awards for winners; Alliance will partner with Optimist Club on other youth-oriented programs, such as bringing back HOT Kids/Teens and Howell High School Octagon Club (in partnership with Howell High School SADD possibly); Ron Sanasac, Jeanna Ribon, and Julie Adkins will collaborate on this project with Christa Riddle for planning and implementation
  - Friends of the Howell Township Municipal Alliance Facebook page: 660+ followers, with posts and shares of posts reaching 100 to 1,500+ people; excellent content exposure and awareness during COVID-19
  - Training: Christa Riddle will register to take youth life coach/mentor certification training spring/summer 2021 (not winter 2021 session) in hopes of starting youth mentoring program through Alliance; also, looking into Don't Get Vaped In virtual training (should be available starting in March); Christa Riddle's \$500 scholarship carried from 2020 application
  - SurveyMonkey: next survey will be on teen vaping (delayed due to beginning of year administrative tasks for Christa Riddle)
  - Generation SOS: contacted Christa Riddle offering free virtual, interactive presentations featuring young adults in recovery who share their stories to connect with youth; 1-20-21 Zoom meeting with Generation SOS to learn more about their program (meeting includes Julie Adkins SAC, Jeanna Ribon SAC, Christa Riddle, and Camille Mussari)
7. Howell is a Monmouth County Stigma-Free community!
- What is Stigma-Free Monmouth County? <https://www.stigmafree-monmouth.org/>
  - Have your organization, agency, or school take the stigma-free pledge to get listed on the Monmouth County Is Stigma-Free website: <https://www.stigmafree-monmouth.org/toolkit/>;
  - **How many member organizations have taken the stigma-free pledge? 5;** (Howell Township resolution), Howell Alliance, Howell K-8 School District, Howell High School, Land O' Pines School, CPC Behavioral Health (High Focus Centers and Howell Optimist Club going to do pledges)
8. Alliance volunteers at upcoming events!
- 2-4-21 Optimist Club Oratorical Contest (restricted attendance)

- 2-27-21 Mental Health First Aid training pending virtual option if in-person cannot take place, update will be provided
  - 3-22 to 3-28-21 is National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week (virtual)
9. Meeting adjourned by Suzanne Brennan, seconded by Jeanna Ribon