

Advancing Our Community Coalition
December 6, 2006
Centennial Hall

In attendance: Denise DeGroot – Salvation Army, Anita Didrickson – Raven’s Way, Mark Wilbur – Big Brothers Big Sisters, Cheri Hample – Faith in Action and SEARHC Behavioral Health, Willow Griffin – SAIL, Kathy Blizzard – Pacific High School, Curt Ledford – Community Schools, Bob George – SCPS, Dan Etulain – Northstar TV, Ryan Kauffman – Peer Helpers, Annette Becker – STA Safe Start, Roby Craig – STA Education, Emily Herman – Center for Community, Felix AuYeung – Sitka Affordable Housing, Matthew Turner and Kayla Boettcher – Advancing Our Community facilitators.

Announcements

Salvation Army has a soup kitchen, 11-12:30 M-F; about 6-18 homeless have been coming in.

Raven’s Way has new brochures; even though they require substance abuse as primary for treatment, they also treat secondary conditions, i.e. ADHD. The next cohort starts the first week in Jan – taking recommendations now.

Faith in Action hosting Braveheart Bowl fundraiser at UAS tomorrow night, 5-7 pm. FIA in the process of evaluating whether to change their name – they spend a lot of time explaining about “faith” even though it’s not religious – implications of religion is sometimes a barrier to participating or supporting; they are compassionate caregivers, respite, end-of-life care. FIA hosts a caregiver support group monthly; also grief support with cohorts – people who need a facilitated way to process grief and loss.

Behavioral Health at SEARHC – thanks SCPS for co-teaching Alcohol Drug Info School (ADIS) class to finish certification – Julie and Alison and Cheri will all be certified to teach in other SEARHC communities. Harmful Everyday Legal Products (HELP) program - Wrangell, Haines and Kake have modified life skills curriculum; it’s still a research project, but hoping it will be an ongoing program in SE – they’ve had good feedback on the impact. The feasibility study has wrapped up; life skills curriculum and tech support is the 2nd phase; the summary of year 1 is still in progress.

The Commission on Health Needs and Community Services had a work session with the Foraker group to work on grant allocation process for Assembly; next Thursday there will be an all-day meeting at SEARHC to look at the process for allocating grants – call Willow for more info: 7-6859.

Community Schools just sent in a prevention grant to state – it looks great. Last night they got approval from the school board to send a group of kids during Spring Break to Habitat for Humanity project in Tacoma; Ryan K and possible a JV will chaperone; Tacoma; want to include SHS, PHS, MEHS but haven’t gotten MEHS approval yet (b/c no spring break); they need to raise \$10,000 by mid-March. Recommendations of students to go on the trip can be given to Ryan.

SCPS is working with MEHS to deliver a Too Good for Drugs program in 9th grade. They also have a new clinician now and another on the 19th.

Peer Helpers will kick off a MADD red ribbon campaign on Dec 15 – awareness and prevention of drinking and driving.

STA Safe Start is intervention, treatment and prevention for 0-6 year olds exposed to domestic violence. Jan is one of the highest months for reported cases of domestic violence – Safe Start has functions planned to promote awareness.

STA Christmas party will be Dec 18 5:30-7:30.

STA is hiring for its Home to School Liaison program – closing those positions Dec 8, interviewing 12th, hope to hire 5 positions starting in Jan. STA just hired a Boys and Girls Club coordinator, hope he'll start next week – B&G Club will be an open club, career counseling, graduation goals; starting to recruit students to join; there will be an open house, but no date yet.

STA and Shee Atika Corp. collaborating to provide sports and music scholarships up to \$350.

The Center for Community's Early Learning Program hosts play groups for 0-6 yr olds on Tues and Fri 10-11 am at Pioneer Home chapel.

A housing non-profit will be forming here soon, in a position to assist SAFV, YAS, etc. to do housing projects.

White Ribbon

Men's movement to end violence against women and to increase awareness about a movement that's been largely organized by/for women. SAFV is working to get more students involved; questions can be addressed to Julia Smith at SAFV.

Early Childhood Issues

Several Sitka entities have early learning grants, which are all focused on early childhood education – they are working together in community, looking to identify needs, input about current child care situation. There seems to be a need for support in the childcare field.

They're working on a childcare needs assessment – what services available for parents with young children, meeting their needs, spaces, hours, overall programs available, etc. Also looking at providers and how to support them; several orgs need workers – high turnover, not well-paid, no benefits. Currently have funding available, but it's going underutilized because of low income guidelines required by fed law. In the new grant there is money available for preschool assistance, can set income levels here – looking for feedback from parents about their situations, help children get into preschool. It's not to create a new preschool but to help get students into existing preschool slots, although there may not be many; lining more students up with programs can help think about staffing and provide some infrastructure there. Some of it is Alaska Native specific.

Meetings are open to others that are interested – keep lines open between AOC and Safe Start.

Town Meeting

Grace Brooks and Willow Griffin are coordinating a Town Meeting – they recently held a meeting with the school district and got lots of direction from them. So far, a high school statistics class has developed a survey on youth perceptions of use and community perception – survey will be given to students after Christmas. Town Meeting will likely be in

February. AOC's role is to be present at that meeting and show community the programs and activities in place for youth in Sitka.

Facilitator Report

The Association of Alaska School Boards recently presented the results of a School Climate and Connectedness survey – basically, how do kids feel about school, are they part of the community, how much are they witnessing violence/negativity. The good news is that Sitka rated slightly above average overall; it's year 2 of survey, and this year's scores were slightly better than last year.