

**Advancing Our Community**  
**February 7, 2007; 2:30-3:30**  
**Centennial Hall**

**In attendance:** Curt Ledford – Community Schools, Willow Griffin – SAIL, Doug Osbourne SEARHC Health Promotions, Kathy Blizzard – Pacific High, Barb Morse – Big Brothers Big Sisters, David Sliefert – SEARHC Clinic 2, Maria Gaonne – Youth Court, Maybelle Filler – OCS, Steve Warren – Sitka Community Hospital, Dan Etulain – Northstar TV, Anita Didrickson – Raven’s Way, Emily Herman – Center for Community, Ryan Kauffman – Peer Helpers, Jill Williams – YAS, Julia Smith – SAFV, Chris Bauman – SAFV, Felix AuYeung – Sitka Affordable Housing Coordinator, Grace Brooks, Kayla Boettcher.

**Town Meeting**

Willow and Grace give an update about the upcoming Town meeting, to be held February 12 at 6 pm in Centennial Hall. The goals of the Town Meeting are to:

- open up a community dialogue with youth about teen choices;
- empower youth to become a part of the solution; and
- make effective connections between the community, youth, schools, parents, and providers.

There will be an opportunity for agencies to identify specific ways the community can be more engaged in your programs or in other ways to make Sitka an even better place for young people.

**Peer Helpers Incentives Grants**

The Peer Helpers have \$5000 in funds from QS2 that they are funneling to community projects that are fun, have an underlying element of alcohol/substance abuse prevention, and engage youth and adults in an activity together. The projects will be scored on how much they involve all these categories. Awards of up to \$1000 are available. The deadline for proposals is February 23, awards will be announced March 5, the money can be spent through Aug 31. Peer Helpers must be involved in the project in some way, but this does not mean they have to be the target participants – they can help in the planning or promoting. Contact Ryan Kauffman at 747-8670 for more info.

**City’s community grant allocation process**

The Commission on Health Needs and Community Services has been working on an improved process for how the city allocates money to community agencies and programs. Assembly and Admin asked the commission to do something to help, Rasmussen provided a facilitator. They’re looking to make the process more fair and transparent. They recently had a public process meeting to get input, and received several suggestions to separate categories between human services and cultural/recreational, as well as requests that the commission continues to be involved in implementing change and advising the allocation process.

**Announcements**

Community Wellness Fair and Gear Swap will be held March 3; forms for exhibitor registration and gear swappers/sellers were distributed.

SAIL is offering a free American Sign Language program on Thursdays, 4:30-5:30 pm. Call

SAIL for more info: 747-6859

Hundreds of kids are involved in community schools activities; the website is getting updated; the Town Meeting is also part of Community Schools.

Pacific High is initiating a career/job opportunity awareness program; they're involved in making workplace placements – if you know of any possible sites, contact PHS.

Big Brothers Big Sisters just had a successful region-wide volunteer campaign to raise awareness and recruit more volunteers. April 21 will be the Bowl for Kids Sake fundraiser in Sitka.

SEARHC Mental Health is going through lots of staff changes and transitions. David says its cool to see young faces and energy at these AOC meetings – very hopeful.

Youth Court is starting volunteer recruitment for next year.

SEARHC health promotions: Wise Guys meets every Tuesday at Salvation Army; this group doing a fundraiser on St. Patrick's Day for SAFV – they're hosting a comedian, who will also do workshop for young people about how he develops material, etc. Tentative date for the comedy night fundraiser is March 17. One WiseGuy said, "If we can sell all the tickets before the show, I'll wrap my body in duct tape like a mummy for the audience." Tickets will be available at the end of Feb.

Maybelle Filler introduces herself as the new hire for OCS. The OCE offices are trying to reach out to the community through meetings, staffings, trainings, etc. It's structured a little differently – instead of one case worker and supervisor, there are now two case workers, and supervision comes from Petersburg, but they talk to supervisor all the time. OCS and the police department are trying to have more trainings – good to go every year to cover mandated reporting. Call office 7-2802; fax 7-5542.

Tobacco cessation program is working on prevention in the schools. They've been successful in working with teachers; but still need to work on teen perception of tobacco use and community permission – we're not enforcing tobacco laws in Sitka, and by not disapproving, it may appear as though we're approving of teen tobacco use. The community need to take a long hard look at how we deal with that addiction, and not ignore teens who are openly smoking. They also just received an RFP from the state tobacco control program – one thing they will pursue is policy changes.

Dan encourages everyone to use and exploit the media, all facets of the media: paper, radio, and TV. "If you do a good job but don't promote it, it's not as good a job as you think." Splash TV airs Monday morning through Wed evening, about 30 plays, every two hours. Biggest show on Channel 11. If you'd like to be on, call Denalee.

The Raven's Way course is going well – they're out on expedition right now. The next course starts March 14 – if you know of potential students, let them know. They're trying to get word out more about the services we have through a postcard campaign – this will provide the community with nuggets of info about best practices on treatment, and what

Raven's Way does to address that. If you're interested in receiving those postcards, or just being on their mailing list in general, let Anita know. To add to the topic of tobacco addiction, she says one of the top reasons kids want to leave a Raven's Way course in first week is their craving for tobacco – they're not willing to go without it, speaks to power of that addiction. Their next cohort will have their 1000<sup>th</sup> student.

The Center for Community's Early Childhood Development has an early child needs survey ready to go out. On Feb 20 at 6 pm, SAFV and Safe Start will host a training on the effects of domestic violence.

Peer Helpers is organizing a group from all 3 high schools to go on a Habitat for Humanity trip this spring and they're seeking donations to fund the trip. You can make a donation at Community Schools, Lakeside, SeaMart, or Twin Dragon.

Youth Advocates of Sitka has an ongoing in-school program, where a staff person is in school with students identified as having behavioral needs; they also have day treatment at MEHS now too. YAS is working on reaching out to other agencies, getting their clients tied into other community activities.

SAFV is recruiting young people to be teen educators and help with high school programs that promote healthy relationships and prevent intimate partner violence. If you or someone you know is interested in being a Teen Educator, contact Julia at SAFV: 747-3370. The program includes interactive activities that spark discussions about healthy relationships. Youth in the training group will present information through entertainment and skits, hopefully through ongoing classes in school on healthy relationships; it may also include travel to Kake and Angoon.

Also at SAFV: the White Ribbon Campaign, which is men working to end violence against women, meets twice per month – the next is February 23, 1-2 pm. The group is always open to new members.

SAFV will also host the Family Fiesta, a dinner and dessert auction on Feb 24; they're now accepting dessert donations.

Sitka will soon have an official **affordable housing non-profit**, complete with a 9-member board. Also, it is likely that the Assembly will hear a report from Felix AuYeung, the city's affordable housing coordinator, at a special work session on March 27. Results of the community survey and policy priorities will be presented.

Felix is also exploring an idea he has for a new project – a coop house for non-profits, where multiple agencies can share admin resources and common rooms.