

Advancing Our Community

April 4, 2007
Centennial Hall

In attendance: Ryan Kauffman – Peer Helpers; Curt Ledford – Community Schools; Alison Dunlap – SEARHC Behavioral Health; Doug Osbourne – SEARHC Health Promotions; Bob George – SCPS; Dan Etulain – Northstar TV; Kelly Warren – Raven’s Way; Willow Griffin – SAIL; Cheri Hample – SEARHC Behavioral Health; Matthew Turner and Kayla Boettcher – AOC facilitators.

May reflection/evaluation

Last spring, Matthew and Kayla sent out a 2-page coalition evaluation, and they want to do it again this year. The evaluation asks AOC members how much they’re engaged with the coalition, and how much do they get/give to AOC. Last year there was a luncheon for the May meeting, the group talked about the evaluation and heard a facilitator’s report on what happened during the year. The group decides to do this again this year; instead of the first Wednesday in May, however, they change it to May 9. Matthew and Kayla will make the main course, but hopefully others will help with side dishes.

City grants

The City Commission on Health Needs and Community Services has a work session with the Assembly at 6 pm on Tuesday, April 10. They presented a proposed process to the Assembly, who gave them some feedback, which was incorporated into revised document. The commission feels there is a good chance of the process being adopted, except they’re not sure if the Assembly will agree to any set \$ or % amount. There’s some question about the legality of allocating percentages. Willow will send the commission’s revised report to Matthew; he will put it on the AOC website. Willow reminds AOC that last year the coalition submitted a resolution on this topic to the Assembly, and AOC asked for a 60/40 split between allocations to human service agencies and other community organizations. She wonders if that’s still a huge issue for AOC. The commission is using that advice, but they are also placing emphasis on the process, as opposed to how the money is divvied. AOC members seem to agree that getting the process in motion is more important right now.

Announcements

Community Schools, SEARHC WiseWomen, and Sitka Trail Works are planning an opening for the Heart Lake Trail and a Heart Disease Survivors walk on May 5.

Sitka Community Hospital, SEARHC, and Community Schools successfully wrote a tobacco prevention and cessation grant, which will help fund Ryan’s position as the Peer Helpers coordinator.

Community Schools Peer Helpers program had a great spring break trip to help build a house for Habitat for Humanity in Tacoma. Students from all three high schools raised \$8000 to go on this trip. Hopefully students will have at least a biannual opportunity to do this service trip; perhaps eventually it will be combined with a local house-building effort and maybe even an exchange program to have volunteers come to Sitka to help build houses.

The first ever internationally sanctioned speed stacking competition will be held in Sitka on April 28, 1-4pm at Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School.

Bowl for Kids Sake will be held April 21. All individuals and organizations are encouraged to help support this fundraising effort for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Community Schools will host a picnic at the recycling center, 11-1 on April 21.

SEARHC Health Promotions, with help from Peer Helpers and Pacific High School students, had a successful comedy night fundraiser for SAFV. Participants felt there was really a nice level of student involvement in that event, and it demonstrated a great collaborative effort.

The Inhalants prevention grant through SEARHC Behavioral Health is wrapping up – the retailers and schools were very supportive of their efforts to raise awareness about the potential harm in everyday products, but there still needs to be some ongoing education about inhalants and how common products are being abused in Sitka. They're looking for ways to extend this work after the current grant expires.

Stephen Aldana, author of *The Culprit* and *The Cure*, will be in Sitka April 26-27 to present a series of speeches and workshops. The big community-wide event will be Thursday evening, April 26, at 5:30 – Aldana will speak at Harrigan Centennial Hall in the auditorium. Preceding his speech there will be an awards ceremony to recognize Sitka organizations that promote healthy lifestyles. The event also includes dinner and a book signing. Participation is free, but you must RSVP – call 966-8888. Aldana will also be speaking at other events geared toward policy making and building bridges among non-profits and health providers. Watch local media for more details on those events.

The contract for Sitka's Affordable Housing Coordinator will come up for renewal in June, and within the next month the Assembly will decide to extend it or not. AOC members present at today's meeting seemed to agree that his work is important, especially with regard to securing agency staff and teachers, and should be continued. AOC as a group will write a letter in support of his position; individuals are also encouraged to contact Assembly members.

SCPS will begin a new session of their Prime for Life ADIS program for youth next week. The 12-hour class will be held Thursday and Friday night from 4-8, and Saturday from 9-1.

Raven's Way will begin a new course May 15 – contact them if you know of potential participants. They're also doing a postcard campaign to build awareness about adolescent treatment and the work they do – if you want to be on list, contact Anita.

Braveheart Volunteers (formerly known as Sitka Faith In Action) is in the process of incorporating their name change. They have submitted a grant to extend support for their caregiver support group. In the near future, they will offer a program on music and experiencing emotion – taking music and movement to express a range of emotions and transition from angst to peace. They've found the cohort model to be very successful for their grief support groups. When asked if youth can participate in the grief support groups,

Cheri said they are welcome to, but scheduling may conflict with school. Call for more information.

The AOC website tries to maintain a comprehensive collection of local surveys and other data. If you're in the midst of grant writing, don't forget to check here for helpful local data: <<http://www.sitkaaoc.org/Data.html>> Also, if you have data that fits into AOC's mission, let Matthew know – we can put it up there.

Also on the AOC website there is a calendar of events largely composed of announcements from AOC meetings. You can also use the front page of the site for promotional/story telling efforts (especially for collaborative efforts).

An observation from helping with the Peer Helper grant process – part of the process required applicants to identify underserved youth and involve them in their projects, and the token group of youth is Pacific High. But there are other underserved youth in this community. Another part of the Peer Helper grant process was to use the Peer Helpers group as a resource for identifying other underserved youth and reaching out to involve them. Furthermore, if you know kids that need to be plugged into things, or kids that need service hours, there are projects going on in Peer Helpers that they could get involved with; projects that create vocational skills, form bonds with adults and the community, promote healthy choices, etc.

Sitka's annual Bike Rodeo, sponsored by the Rotary, will be held May 12 at the Coast Guard Station. Highly trained bike mechanics will be there to work on bikes for free – they've seen some dangerous kids' bikes there in the past. The event also includes free helmets, hot dogs, races and fun.