

Metuchen Municipal Alliance Meeting - 3/8/12

Irene Morris-Nann - Chairperson
Brenda Lewis
Judi Cheung
Steve Kitsko
Kieran Esposito
Mike Garni
Mark McCreary
Michael Scheller

Kathy Liss
Dorothy Rasmussen - Borough Council Liaison
Dave Liantonio - Police Liaison
Marcus Hicks
Beatrice Moskowitz
Danielle McMahan
Dan Delmonaco

- The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Morris-Nann at 7:31 pm.
- The minutes from the February meeting were approved.
- Dave Liantonio reported that the mini-grant for \$12,500 was submitted. He also reported that the Friendly's parking lot will be a possible location for the National Night Out. Friendly's may be willing to let the Alliance use its parking lot and also be a co-sponsor of the event.
- The Magic Show is scheduled for Friday, April 20 at Campbell School at 7:00 pm. The same magician from last year will be used. Set up for the event will begin at 6:30 pm. Steve Kitsko, Kathy Liss, and members of the Youth Alliance will be at the event to help set up and run it. Kathy Liss and Beatrice Moskowitz will bring flyers to the preschools. The Youth Alliance will hang flyers on Main Street.
- Kathy Liss has organized an author visit event on April 29 at the Metuchen Library. Carol Plum Ucci, author of "The Body of Christopher Creed," will visit to discuss her books and teen issues including bullying, alcohol use, and coping with grief. The Alliance and the Friends of the Metuchen Library will cosponsor the event. Copies of "The Body of Christopher Creed" will be purchased by the Friends of the Metuchen Public Library and the Metuchen Municipal Alliance and donated to the MHS English Department. Two classes will read the book as part of the curriculum and attend the author visit. Flyers for the Alliance and Friends and information from Judy Cheung will be available at the event.
- Coalition Involvement agreements were signed by each member present for the Drug Free Community Grant.
- Kathy Liss introduced the Safe Homes program to the Alliance. Metuchen parents would sign a pledge not to serve alcohol to minors in their homes and join a directory of families that took the pledge. The directory would be distributed to parents that took the pledge so they would be able to contact each other. The program could possibly be implemented at the Country Fair, Back to School Night, or some other event that parents would be present at. There was much discussion about the program. Chairperson Morris-Nann will have a representative from the Hunterdon Coalition come to the May Alliance Meeting to discuss effectiveness of the Hunterdon Safe Homes program and answer any questions the Alliance might have. A vote on the program and if the Alliance should proceed with it will occur at the June meeting.
- Mark McCreary and Michael Scheller presented their work on the "Town Talk."
 - The alcohol awareness month "Town Talk" will take place on April 17 at 7:15 pm.

- The town talk will deal with the health, social, and legal aspects of underage drinking.
 - It will be held at the high school because the venue will be more appealing to high school students and take place from approximately 7:15 to 9:00 pm.
 - The majority of the evening will be made up of a panel discussion by invited speakers about underage drinking and its effects. This panel will include Senator Barbara Buono, the principals of MHS and St. Joe's, a local lawyer, a member of the clergy, a Borough Council member, local parents, and others that have dealt with the effects of underage drinking.
 - The order of the event will be the panel discussion, the reading of winning essays, and a question and answer session with the panel.
 - The essay contest will be open to local students and award prizes to the writers of the winning essays. The winning essays will also be printed in a booklet that will be handed out and the writers will be asked to read them at the event. Essays must be approximately 250 words and address one of the following topics:
 - How have drugs/alcohol impacted your lives personally?
 - How do you think drugs/alcohol affect your peers? Emotionally? Physically?
 - How do you feel drugs/alcohol usage by minors affects society today?
 - For the question and answer portion of the event, it was suggested that questions be submitted anonymously by the audience. The members of the Alliance will also be asked to submit questions that will stimulate discussion and keep the event moving.
 - Council Liaison Rasmussen suggested that this first alcohol awareness Town Talk be used to assess how the town reacts to the event and to see how we should proceed with further events of this nature.
 - Beatrice Moskowitz, Mark McCreary, and Michael Scheller will be meeting with the principals of St. Joe's and MHS and with Judy Cheung to discuss their involvement and their respective schools' involvement with the event and the essay contest.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.