

## Northern Valley Coalition 5/28 Meeting Summary

On May 28<sup>th</sup> the Northern Valley Coalition (NVC), including all committees, met. This was a working meeting to get prepared for a September kickoff. First, all the committees met for 1 hour and then a general meeting was held for 1 hour. Note that the committees have been combined and reduced to: Safe Homes, Community Liaisons, Fundraising, Newsletter, Communications & Public Relations (working with Newsletter), Programs and Student Activities. Below is a summary of the meeting(s).

The Northern Valley Coalition is an organization here to help the youth of our community and the families. When substance abuse occurs in our youth, the families can end up with enormous stress. Someone likened a child becoming addicted to drugs to a parent feeling like their child has been kidnapped. It is also important to remember how much influence parents have in their children's lives even when they are teenagers. That influence needs to be tapped into when it comes to alcohol and drug abuse.

The following provides the status of the NVC. We have a wonderful website up and running, [www.nvcoalition.org](http://www.nvcoalition.org) thanks to Tina Stratton and Nancy Reilly! Make sure to take a look at it and suggestions are always welcome. We also have a Facebook Page – Northern Valley Coalition. Make sure to like the page and you will get the updates and information we post regularly. We also have an email – [nvcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:nvcoalition@gmail.com). One of the 3 of us is usually on it so we will see what you send right away.

We have started establishing liaisons with a number of community organizations the Community Liaison committee will continue with this now. We have been contacting Board of Educations, Law Enforcement, Town Councils, Superintendents, Parent Organizations (which is what we started with), Municipal Alliances, Town Recreation.

With regard to our non-profit status, we have researched all the state and federal paperwork and a generous donor has offered to pay the filing fees. We have investigated what we need to open a bank account in the organizations name. We were looking for an attorney familiar with 501(c)3 setup. Update since the meeting – we have found an attorney and we will sit down and discuss all of this shortly. We hope to have all the paperwork filed this summer.

At this point, each committee made a report (see below). One of the highlights of the committee reports was the report by students on the Student Activities committee. They has great enthusiasm and ideas!

With regard to a budget/funding, we asked each committee who would need funding to identify their costs for us so that we could develop a budget. Donors/grants would like to see what we will be doing with the money. We have been researching one grant in particular and thank you to Joon Chung for her efforts on this grant. This grant requires a student survey to demonstrate a need for their grant. We are looking at the Pride Surveys and talking to the school about it.

The plan is to have an official kickoff of the Northern Valley Coalition in the Fall. We would be at Back to School Night and have handouts for parents. We would have the Safe Homes pledges ready to go, a newsletter, fundraiser and some type of program as well as at least one student activity. The Student Assistance Counselors in the high schools are planning a program in October so we would need to coordinate with them.

Individual committees will be meeting on their own. The next full NVC meeting will be held in September. A lot of planning will be done in the summer.

**We ended with the following quote: Never Doubt that a Small Group Of Thoughtful Citizens Change the World, Indeed it's the Only Thing That Ever Has.**

## Committee Meetings

- ***Safe Homes***

Mark Geerincq volunteered to be the leader of the Safe Home Committee.

The group decided that registration during the September Kickoff would occur at the following events:

1. Freshman Parent Night
2. Back to School Night at all schools
3. Email Registration
4. 8th Grade Parent Orientation held later in the year

The pledge could also be presented in the yearly enrollment form packet, either on line or in paper form.

Registration would occur on a yearly basis. This would help advertise the program and keep the concept foremost in parents minds.

The Safe Home Program will include all school aged youth, grades Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Ideally, an asterisk will be placed next to the family name in the school directory, indicating that this family has pledged. Due to the fact that any family in the district must pay PTO dues to be included in the school directory, the committee decided to also have a list of families who have taken the pledge on the website. This could be divided by town and grade. We referred to the Ridgewood list, which did not have phone numbers or addresses. We approved of this list indicating family name, student first initial, school and grade.

The asterisk may not be a possibility this year in the high school directory. It goes to print at the end of September.

Members volunteered to contact districts to find out what is the Back to School Night schedule for their town.

We discussed the possibility of more than one mailing, stating the importance of this program.

The Committee used the Ridgewood Municipal Alliance form as a reference for our program. We agreed with the first three paragraphs, except for changing the grades to K-12.

Our draft pledge would state:

1. I will not serve nor will I allow anyone under the legal drinking age to consume alcohol in my home or on my property.
2. I will not allow the consumption or use of drugs in my home or on my property.
3. I will take reasonable precaution with securing prescription and all medications in my home.
4. I will not knowingly allow parties or gatherings in my home without proper, responsible adult supervision.
5. I will communicate with other parents, and I welcome calls or emails to "check up" when youth may be visiting my home.

Statement that this is not a legal document.

During the general meeting held later in the assembly room, Chief Powderly of Demarest stated there is a Safe Home program from the 80's or 90's, where a child, if in trouble, could run to a safe home that had a sign in the window. This home owner would have previously gone through a background check. He is concerned that the name of our program would cause confusion in the minds of children or families. He did admit later to members of the committee that this program is not in effect today in Demarest. We asked him if he could see if this program is being used today in Bergen County. He requested if the name of Safe Homes could be changed.

The NVRHS Newsletter has a deadline in one and half weeks. If we want to put a blurb about the program in it, we will have to meet soon.

- ***Community Liaisons***

Julie Gleason offered to head up this committee.

The committee met and clarified their mission statement:

The mission of the Community Liaison Committee is to act as a conduit between the Northern valley Coalition and the community at large to ensure an exchange of information regarding events, programs, policy, goals and relevant data.

We also brainstormed on various subsets of the community where we might develop a relationship with a key member. Groups targeted:

Clergy  
Elected official and town government  
School nurses  
Superintendents – Elementary and High School  
Elementary School PTAs/HSAs  
Chamber of Commerce  
Northern Valley Rotary  
Closter Elks  
Closter Lions (or any other town)  
Real estate Agencies  
Pediatricians/medical groups/hospitals  
Ambulance Corps  
Local Municipal Alliances (MACs)  
Gyms and fitness centers  
Pharmacies  
Local Mental Health Centers  
Newspapers/Television  
Businesses – (United Water, etc.)

We will be working closely with the Communications committee who will be collecting all the information that the NVC would like to disseminate.

We are making sure that all 7 towns have at least one representative from our committee.

- ***Fundraising***

The idea for the fall fundraiser is to have a music event with students in our music programs and possibly some well known talent that lives in the area. The Rotary put on a music program for Japan as a benefit. They found it was harder to sell tickets. Then they dropped selling tickets and had people come to the event and they were asked to donate at the event. The fundraiser was a success. Volunteers will be needed to help with this event. Most likely it would be in October.

- **Newsletter**

We are looking to go out with a newsletter with information for parents in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Information will be gathered and the Hills Valley newsletter will be used to guide us.

- **Communications & Public Relations**

We generated a list of media that we could list our events & other important information with. Mr. Santana had some great free online newsletter generator websites.(and how to possibly distribute them online as well).

We discussed how to condense some of the info that is put in the newsletters to make them a quick and easy read with help ideas, suggestions, calendar info, websites, "help" info, etc.

Some things that were thought of as a PR group were to create those amazing lawn signs to promote our events, create a thank you letter to go to each donor, sponsor, volunteer, etc.

I also think we need some more members, one to do newsletters, one for media contacts (we discussed the importance of having one person establish a relationship w/ the media contacts), someone to handle the poster and fliers and the distribution.

- **Programs**

There were 10 members present at this meeting. The consensus was that we need to come up with a priority list.

We should try to link with the Center for Alcohol and Drug to get a program/event started. There are many resources in Bergen County that we can reach out to.

It was discussed that we really cannot interfere with the health curriculum but we can add to it via our own channels.

Things we should do:

- Table at all Back to School nights.
- Meeting with the HS SACs to compliment programs/events they are having
- Split committee into 2 groups
  - Programs – on going, longer missions
  - Events – one day missions
- Evidence based programs/events – many great ideas for a lot of them, some costing at \$10,0000
- Sticker shock campaign – this can be an easy kickoff, must find out cost
- “Reality Tour” from NREPP site uses volunteers, can set-up as round table event.
- OT, HP, Haworth have DARE program – should it be brought back to the other towns
- Attend other town events to take notes on different programs/events

Tuesday June 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM at Haworth school in Multi purpose room, Wellcore will explain results of Pride survey. Event is called “Bubble Wrapping our Kids.”

Thursday June 12<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the Gym of Harrington Park School, Dr. Adam Fried, DARE officer Murphy and reps from the Center for Alcohol & Drug Resources will do a presentation.

It is urged that members from this committee attend these presentations and other presentations in the area so if we want to have them we know if there were successful or interesting for our communities.

Immediate actions:

- Come up with a calendar of meetings over the summer to get our thoughts in order or communicate via emails.
- Each member (or paired up members) should be responsible for investigating programs/events that may be of interest.
- Divide into 2 groups... Programs and Events
- Find out from the SACs the exact programs they have planned for 2013-2014 (still in question)
  - Tim Shoemaker in October
  - Remembering TJ for January
  - Possible – Chris Herren
- Get complete K-12 health curriculum and see how it can be enhanced via programs/events through NVC
  - Soci, Shari & Melissa have a meeting with Dr. Price and Dr. Nagy on Tuesday 6/3 (also looking to get a meeting with the BOE at some time)

- ***Student Activities***

Students were very excited to run with a bunch of activities, however, Mr. Gouraige and I suggested that they start with just what they (and we) can handle. So, the activities in order of what they would like are...

1) Movie Night

- \* On the turf at NVD
- \* September or early October for NVC GRAND Launch

2) Rec Sports

- \* Thinking 1 sport per season to start (3 total first year)
- \* Would like to Kickoff at the Movie Night to gain a lot of interest

If these work then they are thinking of the following activities:

3) Volunteering Day/Night/Weekend

- \* Possibly a family Hike in the spring where everyone can chip in and clean up the nature center (or wherever).

4) TRICK OR TRUNK

- \* The High School kids will fill their trunks with candy and meet in a parking lot (Maybe 2 - 1 OT and 1 NVD) and let the younger kids in the community come "Trick or Trunk" out of the back of their cars.

5) Coffee House/Open Mike Night

- \* Geared toward the part of the community who isn't interested in sports.
- \* Maybe attach to a charity or purpose

6) Foam Party at SPACE (In Englewood)

- \* Sort of like a modern day School Dance where the entire community or at least both High Schools are doing it together.