

Advancing Our Community Coalition

August 23, 2007; 1:30 pm

Centennial Hall

In attendance: Curt Ledford – Community Schools; Stacie Bolan Community Schools JV; Livvy King – Community Schools AmeriCorps; Matt Walsh – Community Schools/AOC JV; Amy Christel – SAIL JV; Willow Griffin – SAIL; Scott Harris – Sitka Conservation Society; Annette Becker – YAS; Kristi Coltharp – Blatchley Student Assistance program; Gordon Blue – SCPS; Dan Etulain – Northstar TV; Faith Lee – Community schools; Maite Lorente - outreach coord for SAVF; Julia Smith – SAFV; David Voluck – YAS; Doug Osborne – SEARHC Health Promotions; Marilyn Lande – SEARHC Neurodevelopmental coordinator; Kathryn Winslow – community member.

Curt and Willow introduce the four new volunteers (AmeriCorps and Jesuit Volunteers) who have just recently arrived in Sitka and are starting their jobs at Community Schools and SAIL.

Sitka Community Foundation - Willow Griffin, Commission on Health Needs and Community Services

Willow gives an update of the Commission's work to start a community foundation in Sitka. Through the process of helping the City create a new fair and transparent process for granting City funds to community organizations, they realized there is a need to establish a larger pot of money for these organizations and non-profits. One way to do this is through forming a Foundation. The Commission held two public meetings last week to present the idea, and a summary of those meetings will be available soon on the City website. and they are now looking for ideas and support for proceeding this with idea. They would also benefit from hearing about the needs of organizations and insights about how they would use foundation funds. She emphasizes that the establishment of a foundation needs to be generated by the public, not the commission. For more information, or to share your ideas with the commission, contact Willow at 747-6859.

- Someone suggests that maybe the commission could use AOC as the brain trust representing Sitka – the group to get things rolling. Matthew suggests that the Steering Committee take up this topic at their next meeting, on September 6.

Bicycle-Friendly Sitka - Matthew Turner and Doug Osborne

As part of the ongoing efforts for Sitka to receive official designation as a Bicycle-Friendly Community, there will be a Community Bike Ride on Saturday at Centennial Hall. The fun begins at 9:30 (including quiz that makes you eligible for prizes, bicycle safety check, and entertainment), with the parade/ride at 11:30. Awards are being offered: 3 new bikes, most reflective youth and adult, safe/spirited, etc. After parade, several longer, guided rides will be offered: mountain biking, road biking, and a ride for new bikers/commuters. Helmets and bikes will be available to borrow.

Big Focus Topics for AOC - ideas for focused discussion this year

At the May meeting, people had the idea to offer special discussion/learning topics sponsored by AOC. Some ideas: Assembly candidates forum, Affordable Housing, Early

Childhood, Minor Consuming, how to retain Behavioral Health personnel. In the future, open up some of these items a little more – i.e., how do we want to address them? But right now, most immediate is to host a panel discussion of candidates for Assembly and School Board. A small group of the Steering Committee agreed to meet to craft questions; MT & KB will do marketing and inviting. Ideas for questions can be sent to admin@sitkaaoc.org.

Community services conference

Every year, we get a lot of new people in town working in human services, people who are not familiar with local services. There is an idea of having AOC host/coordinate a 2-day “conference” to bring together a lot of these folks to share resources, discuss collateral issues, and have brief presentations to help providers get broad understanding of what’s going on community-wide.

Willow, Kristi, Maite, Julia, David, Gordon, and Doug volunteer to help brainstorm topic ideas and overall strategies. The following were suggestions from the group:

- make it fun!
- Collaboration brainstorm at the end, about how to work together better,
- orientation to the local “alphabet soup”, and show the faces to go with the agencies/services
- Could plan it in blocks/units, so not everyone has to be there for the full two days
- another topic is cultural sensitivity – bring people in to speak to that (may be helpful for them – STA, e.g. – to do just one presentation, rather than every agency);
- also Filipino community, learn more info about them;
- domestic violence basics and non-violent intervention;
- include brief time about facilitation/meetings dos and don’ts,
- how to do special events/fundraising in Sitka,
- self-care,
- celebrate people that are doing the work and the services that are available
- Do it in cooperation with schools – during an inservice day, to get counselors there; etc. Also talk with Steve B about inservice possibilities – the school requires certain trainings – probably would support this effort to cover those topics
- Good nutrition for meetings and environmentally-friendly meetings
- Also include options for volunteering – offer the chance to sign up on the spot.
- Have tables with brochures, agency reps to talk;
- Create a calendar of required trainings, where they overlap – start to pull that calendar together

Announcements, events, and pleas for help

Recovery Month Picnic: Sept 8, 11am – 3 pm at HPR Rec, there will be a picnic celebrating Recovery Month sponsored by SCPS and local congregations. Some food will be provided, but it is also potluck style. People are also encouraged to bring musical instruments.

Prostate Cancer Awareness Fun Run: Sept 3, 5:00, starting at Centennial Hall shelter and running through Totem Park, followed by a salmon bake and prizes.

VA Training: Anchorage Veterans Administration will be presenting a training in Sitka on September 14. The morning session will focus on how to access VA benefits, and will be

held from 8-9 am at the SEARHC CHS 3rd floor conference room. The afternoon session will be about PTSD, including new information about caring for returning vets. This session is scheduled for 1-5 pm in the SEARHC Hospital Conference Room B.

American Sign Language classes will be offered free to the community. Contact Willow Griffin at SAIL for more information.

SAFV annual volunteer training will begin Sept 8, and held every Sat and Mon through Sept 24.

Domestic Violence Awareness in Oct – some events in planning;

White Ribbon Campaign – always interested in more participants, contact Julia with interest;

TRAIN – collaborating with STA and Ellen Frankenstein to produce films promoting healthy relationships in connection with the Peace Pole to be raised on Oct 20. TRAIN meets Tuesdays, 7-9 in Centennial Hall.

YAS is now licensed by State to license foster homes in Sitka – goal is to start encouraging and supporting foster families. YAS can help with support, respite, and training. They have entered an experimental stage, starting with one therapeutic care family. Contact YAS if you know of solid families who might be interested in providing regular foster care or high-needs/therapeutic support.