

**Minutes**  
**Chester County Caring Communities Consortium**  
**Focus Group Session**  
**February 27, 2004 9:30-11:30**

In attendance: Dana Strobe-Tritle, Camille Richardson, Lauren Attwell-Douglas, Sandy Claus, Janet Wendle, Pat Yoder, Kathy Brauner, Karen Shanoski, Reggie Wade, Carolyn Best, Terry Kenworthy, Nancy Clegg, Doreen DeRouanna, Doreen Ellis, Dolores Winston, MaryAnn Hughes  
Contributor to presentation in absentia – Carol Henson

Terry Kenworthy – opened the meeting and welcomed participants back to the table. She encouraged interactive participation in the morning agenda and started with progress highlights. She reported the task force has met 5 times since last spring including a road trip to Bucks Promise to study their consortium structure and accomplishments. She added that at these sub-committee meetings the benefits of a potential collaboration were further explored. The purpose, name and mission statement were defined, and goals and objectives were established. It was determined that it would be beneficial to provide structure to existing relationships between the CTC sites and Countywide Serving Agencies. Further, a countywide coalition collectively and strategically targeted at prevention could enhance possibilities for all participants. This developmental process yielded itself also to the timely submitting of a capacity building grant application to Claneil Foundation for development of this coalition effort and TA supports to the six existing CTC sites.

Janet Wendle – talked about the experience of visiting the Bucks County Bucks Promise for Youth and Communities. Their experience and challenges building a county coalition, their successes and failures were helpful to the Chester County Task Force.

Terry then referred back to how these findings directed the development of what was pertinent to Chester County. How we began to ask, “do we need a coalition”? How could coalition benefit all? How trust and educating each other to our missions is part of the process of determining how we can best partner.

Terry then asked Kathy Brauner to talk about the collaboration between the Chester County Dept. of Human Services, Chester County Health Department, United Way, and the Community Foundation. These agencies worked together on the Health and Human Service “Planning for a Healthy Chester County”. Kathy talked about the organization as an octopus with tentacles. One of the tentacles would be the prevention coalition. Terry also reiterated the desire is not to duplicate but to strengthen and expand community prevention by connecting service agencies to each other and to the CTC initiatives already in place.

Nancy Clegg brought us back to the focus of our shared charge to prevent and reduce youth problem behaviors, including: substance abuse, school drop out, teen pregnancy, delinquency, violence and continue the mutually beneficial relationships and momentum that has been built beginning with the 6 CTC sites. It is desirable that we continue to reduce risk factors countywide and increase positive recognition, bonding, and skill building opportunities as protection for the youth of our county. She encouraged participants that we can take what we have learned together and now sustain and expand it to benefit more through further collaboration.

Camille Richardson – presented the mission statement that was developed through the Task Force sub-committee meetings:

***“The Chester County Caring Communities Consortium is a web of agencies, individuals, and organizations created to connect resources that promote healthy youth and families throughout Chester County in an effort to prevent and reduce youth health and behavioral issues including substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop out and violence.”***

Camille stated the added benefits of just collaborating, as subcommittee was beneficial to networking resources and relationships.

Nancy delivered the message of the “Importance of participating” that Carol Henson had relayed by phone. Nancy stated that Carol referred to three areas of emphasis:

**Education** – educating each other about what our individual charges are, and educating ourselves on the pieces we want to present to potential board members or funders.

**Increase Public Awareness** – we need to be educated, persuasive, intentional and strategically “painting a picture” of the realities that are happening in our county and communities. (examples: After the Bell, The Point, Across Ages, TATU etc. are all isolated small areas where BIG progress is happening) She cited letting government know what we are doing that’s working, but added, being informed and collaboratively united is vital to the effectiveness of our presentations.

**Investment** – our work now as a pioneer coalition is an investment in developing future prevention possibilities. Together we can hope for *More* to be accomplished.

Doreen DeRouanna referred us back to the Vital Participants piece on the power pt. and expanded on the question of “Why participate?” She reminded us also of our common goals and objectives around taking targeted quality resources aimed at producing healthy youth environments. It was acknowledged that together we might have funding opportunities that would not present themselves otherwise. Terry added that we know that researched evidenced-based prevention works, but now additionally through the CTC Implementation Grant process we have learned and have countywide knowledge of those programs that have higher yield for the amount of implementation time.

Terry let us know there were some action steps already in progress through the Claneil Grant funding. There are funds to help with grant writing in each of the CTC sites. We can provide some technical assistance to communities about evidenced-based programs that would match their individual RISK factors. We can begin to gather Key Leaders Countywide to share and link resources. We can begin closing the gaps by recruiting stakeholders that can help with resources and clout. We can provide training to mobilizers and community leaders to equip them for some of the identified sustaining work that needs to be accomplished. We can begin the process of educating each other about the agencies and resources that *are* funded and available as *now* resources while we begin building more capacity for the future through collaboration.

Mary Ann Huges asked if it made sense to pursue the goal of having a grant writer available to all consortium members. Carolyn Best informally seconded this idea.

Pat Yoder added that a “grant manager” is an often overlooked but needed position to administer a grant. Camille shared some of her experiences with fund development departments. Janet Wendle suggested we consider a “consultant status” grant funded position. Terry reminded us to “be gentle” with each other as we move towards knowing that we need to prepare file information to include histories, needs, and wish lists of “what shall we ask for”, while still maintaining our already over taxed schedules. We can begin by seeing what is substantially in place and building towards a strategic future funding plan.

Kathy Brauner suggested developing of grant templates could possibly come by engaging grad students at West Chester and other surrounding colleges. She thought that perhaps students could develop whole grant proposals.

Terry – then reviewed all the pieces that are activated per Claneil funding, known statistics from the Youth Survey, other countywide assessments that are in place, and sustaining support that is built within communities through previous mobilization, and the training possibilities that are in place.

Nancy then referred back to Carol Henson’s request to “paint a picture”. Two pictures of the coalition seemed predominant. The “charge” to put our “Shields” together shoulder to shoulder and begin filling the gaps on either side of us would create a strong protective front in the county

for our youth. Just as we would not advise a youth to isolate – we would encourage each other by strength in numbers.

There was also the picture that Kathy Brauner presented of the “octopus with tentacles reaching out” to serve throughout the county of collective centralized information informing all the arms of the octopus.

We began to openly brainstorm about who would fill in the gaps. What individuals could we link to on either side of ourselves as agencies and CTC sites to help strengthen our position.

Attendees left the meeting with “the charge” to take these categories and identify the names of people who can represent these entities in our county.

Sandy Claus and Dana Strode-Tritle suggested going out to the ones who have clout that would then release their people to come to the table. A list will be developed and then connecting relationships identified for our March 26<sup>th</sup> Caring Communities Consortium meeting.

Terry ended the CCC Focus Group meeting at 11:30