

CHESTER COUNTY CARING COMMUNITIES COALITION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2006 - 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM, EXTON, PA

IN ATTENDANCE:

John Bakken	COAD Executive Director
Wendy Beck	COAD, Recovery Expo
Mitch Bernstein	Brandywine YMCA
Gary Blair	Chester County Juvenile Detention Center
Kim Bowman	Chester County Drug & Alcohol Services
Allina Boutilier	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Nancy Clegg	COAD
Jennifer Clement	Center for Resolutions
Kathy Collier	Great Valley Partnership for Healthy Youth
Pam Dunn	Girl Scouts of Freedom Valley
Joshua Grove	COAD, Community Prevention Services
Ceil Harkness	Chester County OIC/ I CAN
Brooke Hedderick	Crime Victims Center/ Great Valley PHY
Carol Henson	Childhood Education Coalition of Chester County
Mary Ann Hughes	Downingtown CTC
Bob Hume	Octorara CTC
Paul Karaman III	New Life Youth & Family Services
Terry Kenworthy	United Way of Chester County
Kim Lewis	Chester County Juvenile Probation Office
Fran Luft	YWCA of Chester County
Ellen Moeller	ARCH/ COAD
Terry Mullineaux	Chester County Intermediate Unit
Patti Olenik	Kennett CTC
Dolores Perry-Hunter	COAD/ PHY
Meg Polvino	Chester County Drug & Alcohol Services
Linda Reddon	Downingtown CTC
Danielle Salada	Octorara CTC
Barry Schickling	Childhood Education Coalition of Chester County
JoAnn Tarrant	New Life Youth & Family Services
Erin Taylor	COAD Student Assistance Program Coordinator
Christina Valocchi	West Chester Area CTC
Sandra Vaughan-Lewis	Domestic Violence Center of Chester Co.
Kendra Weible	Dept. of Children, Youth and Families

Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was opened by Nancy Clegg, meeting facilitator. She welcomed everyone, and then introduced John Bakken, the new Executive Director of The COAD Group, Mitch Bernstein of The Brandywine YMCA, and Erin Taylor, Student Assistance Program Supervisor of The COAD Group. The attendees were invited to introduce themselves by the five prevention focus areas (substance abuse, school drop out, teen pregnancy, delinquency, & violence). This was a continuation of an exercise from the previous meeting,

which was to encourage each participant to be aware of the potential for collaboration by getting to know the others at the table by way of the work that they do (and the focus areas that they address).

Old Business Ellen Moeller, acting secretary, announced that a new email distribution list has been made, using the contact information that we have been given. Using this new distribution list, the minutes from the 1/27/06 meeting were distributed. Also, the most recent copy of the Partner Member Directory was distributed electronically. Each recipient was asked to notify Ellen of any changes that should be made. Minutes for this coalition are distributed electronically and corrections are solicited, electronically. No corrections for the 1/27/06 minutes were noted. Continue to contact Ellen Moeller at EMoeller@coadgroup.com to communicate changes or updates to minutes or contact information.

New Business Nancy reported that the temporary steering committee has continued to meet, to address the task of writing (and proposing) bylaws for this coalition. Barry Schickling was introduced, who gave an update summary on the committee's work, to date. Barry explained that the steering committee has been exploring how to structure the coalition so that it can run efficiently, and so that it can be of maximum benefit to the participating members. Early in the planning phase of this coalition, the hope was that the coalition could write letters of support and/or partnership for participating members who were grant-writing for funding. He explained that the steering committee came to a fork in the road in their discussions.

1. If we take responsibility for writing letters of support or partnership, we incur liability issues. If we are vulnerable to liability issues, we must have insurance. If we must have insurance, we must have money. If we have money and a budget, we need additional structure built into the coalition.
2. Stay as we have been so far—a loose confederation or gathering of organizations with a “weaker central government” with less structure, and *without* the ability to write letters of support. A participating member might still ask another member to write a support letter, however, the coalition, as a whole, would not write letters.

Barry explained that the steering committee has paused in its work to seek input and direction from the entire coalition before continuing with the writing of bylaws.

A discussion among members at the table proceeded, discussing the pros and cons of the Board having a fiduciary bond. One idea that the steering committee was asked to pursue is to research and compare how other coalitions deal with this clarification of structure. The Family Partnership Coalition was mentioned as another group in Chester County that has recently written bylaws. Members may be contacted to see how they addressed these questions. Other coalition participants volunteered to contact other groups to explore these options. They will report back to the bylaws committee.

The participants also discussed the level of accountability between letters of “support” vs. letters of “partnership,” and whether the potential for liability is different for one vs. the other.

The discussion also included the question of what happens if a group wishes to join, but it may be a group whose mission is not supportive of the Caring Communities Coalition mission. It was

clarified, that in order to join this coalition, the group must embrace the mission statement of the coalition. (Mission Statement: The Chester County Caring Communities Coalition is a web of agencies, individuals, and organizations aimed to prevent and reduce youth health and behavioral issues including substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop out and violence through connecting resources that promote healthy youth and families throughout Chester County.)

It was noted in the discussion that last grant-writing cycle of spring '05, Family Service of Chester County was the recipient of a multi-year grant to bring a researched based program into Chester County. In part, they may have received that grant because the C-5 minutes were able to demonstrate the support that coalition participants are giving one another.

The question was raised; will we have trouble finding people to serve on the Board? Will those individuals be willing to risk personal liability?

Other questions and discussion focused on not living in fear vs. living and working in faith because of the work we do and the children we serve. It was acknowledged that there will always be some risk.

It was asked if we might look at joining with another organization for the purpose of accessing umbrella coverage for board liability insurance. We are not 501C3, but is there a way to affiliate with an agency that is?

Patti Olenik shared her experience with a coalition in Kennett, Bridging the Community. She has watched it succeed with no defined infrastructure, but by the passion of the community participants. It has survived for several years as a valuable networking resource. They do not provide one another with letters of support, but they do provide *value* through the ongoing networking and relationships.

There was further input about State and Federal grants moving in the direction of wanting to see collaboration on a couple of different levels. A "Letter of Support" acknowledges that the program brought before the board addresses an identified need in the community and supports that this program could meet this need.

A "Letter of Partnership" includes the criteria listed under "Letter of Support." In addition, it offers a commitment by the members of the Coalition to help support this program by reviewing reported progress and outcomes as well as identifying potential resources and or partnerships to assist in the implementation and sustaining phase of the program. Supporting the program may include but not be limited to: marketing the program, brainstorming challenges, supplementing program efforts, and when possible, assisting in linking additional needed resources to strengthen the program in all phases. (Request for Program/Project Proposal Support Guidelines & Criteria document 9/20/05)

Follow-up Action Plan – Nancy asked if others would step up to assist the temporary steering committee by doing further research and presenting any findings to the committee. The action plan is to continue exploring, to do the research, receive input and report back to this body at the

June meeting. The committee will not plan to have a product to vote on until after the June meeting.

Reports from CTC Sites

The **Downingtown CTC** report was given by Linda Reddon. The Big Brothers Big Sisters After School Mentoring program has 90 matches. Parenting Wisely is partnering with the Freedom Valley Girl Scouts to target a new group for parent education. Terry Muzzy's Movie Night was successfully launched this month with over 100 students attending. A second movie night is scheduled for April 7. These events provide a forum for youth and adults to meet together to share perspectives about the movie and have meaningful conversation with one another. Breakfast Club is a before school activity for new incoming students to meet others and engage in informal conversation.

Downingtown CTC is also working on collaborative efforts for increasing youth opportunities. Crime Victims Center, CTC, and a local church youth group combined efforts to present materials about dangers of underage drinking and negative dating experiences. Downingtown CTC and the Upper Main Line YMCA are also collaborating on teen nights out.

Mitch Bernstein, of **Brandywine YMCA** announced the 3rd annual Battle of the Bands on Saturday, April 29, from 1:00 to 6:00 PM, at Caln Park. Agencies are invited to attend and provide information for teens, parents, and families. Contact Mitch for more information.

The **Great Valley PHY** report was given by Kathy Collier. The Great Valley High School Youth Focus Group was held on March 10. Fifty-two young people participated. The Middle School version will be held on April 21. The spring series, "Shaping Children's Behavior," had a surprise attendance of 28 on the first day of the program. Parent Information Night, in conjunction with Great Valley School District offered opportunities for parents to learn from Bryn Mawr's Cruisin Not Boozin program and from Crime Victims' Center. This event was a direct result of Parenting Resources Focus Groups.

Guiding Good Choices is another parenting series they are running.

PHY recently submitted a PCCD grant proposal and expressed thanks for letters of support. They are also actively working on a current Risk and Resource Assessment. John Bakken raised the question if personal development credit is granted to individuals who participate in the parenting series, and if so, if this helps to improve enrollment.

Patti Olenik gave the **Kennett CTC** report. Several kids in the Kennett area were asked to tell their stories for the United Way grant allocations committee. They shared how their lives have been changed by involvement through CTC programming and the opportunities offered at The Garage Youth Center. This was a meaningful leadership opportunity and sharing experience. On April 18, at the annual Garage fundraising banquet, several of the students will be given another opportunity to share their stories. The Huddle is a group, for young men, which meet after school on Thursdays to hear various speakers that offer positive life perspective. Local

youth band concerts are being hosted at the Garage. These provide both drug-free fun for kids and opportunity for youth leaders to plan events and recognize their peers' performance.

They have begun a new partnership with Exelon Corporation. This is their first corporate mentoring relationship.

They have hosted a Diversity Panel. They also brought in a guest speaker, who made a presentation to Latino students.

They are participating in a community collaborative with several organizations. Together they are exploring implementation of Project Green Light in the Kennett Area Community. This program offers tax credit and encourages educational improvement for students.

Danielle Salada gave the **Octorara CTC** report. The Project Alert researched based program is now in health classes in the Octorara School District and well received by both students and teachers. There are 15 adult/student mentor matches of Big Brothers Big Sisters. For the '06-'07 fiscal year, they are looking to implement the BIGS after school peer mentoring program. "It's Great to Be Girls" program is going well, addressing self esteem issues, college planning, etc. CTC Family Fun Night has been offering programming every other month in partnership with OCRC (Octorara Community Recreation Commission). A family movie night will be held in April and a family game night is being planned for June. May 20 will be Community Health Day in Octorara. Caring Communities Coalition participants are invited to set up table displays and hand out information to the community at this event. CTC has also partnered with SADD for a Drink Milk campaign that is being used effectively in the schools.

The **West Chester Area CTC** report was given by Christina Valocchi. WC Area CTC continues in "restructure mode". This year they have been working on a strategic plan, a logo contest, and partnering with United Way on youth leadership opportunities. As a youth leadership initiative, they conducted a youth focus group at The Melton Center. In cooperation with West Chester University, they will have a video product of the event to share and to present back to the youth. On April 22 the youth will also participate in the Chester County African American Health & Wellness Expo. WC Area CTC has just completed writing a PCCD sustainability grant proposal and is moving towards programming mode, with a focus on youth programming as funding is made available.

The **Phoenixville CTC** mobilizer was unable to attend the meeting. Pam Dunn, of Phoenixville Community Watch program gave a report. On April 22, "Bust A Crime Concert & Contest" will be an event that encourages youth to be more active in community policing. They will also raise money for scholarships for youth in the Phoenixville area who may be interested in pursuing a criminal justice career. Agencies are invited to attend and to represent their own agencies as part of the festivities of the day.

Christina Valocchi gave an update on **CTC SE Regional**. On May 5, there will be a training entitled "CPR for CTC," held at the Montgomery County Human Services Center. It is an opportunity to learn more about CTC. On May 18, a training entitled, "Return on Investment,"

will be held as a part of the regional meeting in Chester. Contact Christina for more information. On August 17, the quarterly SE Regional meeting will be held at COAD.

On the **State CTC** level, there will be a state symposium on April 18-19, in State College. This will be an opportunity for some important training and networking. Contact Christina for more information.

Presentation from Pro-Act (Pennsylvania Recovery Organization) Act 106. Kim Bowman, Executive Director of Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services introduced the presenter, Babette Benham, Pro-Act client advocate and volunteer coordinator. Act 106 is an important resource for prevention because it requires insurance companies to pay for the treatment of addiction. Many youth are not able to access the care they need in a timely way. Some parents have lost their children without knowing about this law and how to access the level of treatment they needed to recover. This law sets the minimum components of group insurance policy for addiction treatment. The PA Department of Insurance enforces Act 106. According to Act 106, the only prerequisite for addiction treatment is certification and referral by a licensed physician or psychologist. Discussion around the table involved some brain storming about ways to raise public awareness of Pennsylvania's law. A new consumer booklet is being drafted. Legislators can be encouraged to put Act 106 in their newsletters. Doctors are being educated in the law. Local churches can be asked to place a brief paragraph about Act 106 in bulletins and newsletters. School districts can disseminate this information as well.

Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services is promoting National Alcohol Screening Day on April 6. Training to be an alcohol screener will be Wed. 3/29 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, and 3/31, from 12 noon to 2:00 PM. Contact Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services for more information.

Kendra Weible, Department of Children, Youth and Families announced that she used the C5 member directory to distribute a message about the Family Group Decision Making training on March 28th. This is free training regarding equipping agency representatives to empower families to be a direct part of their own care plans. Spaces are still available and Cindy Scott is the contact person.

Nancy Clegg adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM, with the encouragement to network with one another and to check the resource table for handouts and additional information.

The next Coalition meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 23, 2006, 9:00 – 11:00 AM, at The COAD Group in Exton.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Moeller
Acting Secretary