

Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)

Meeting Minutes (Virtual)

Thursday, March 3, 2022 from noon – 1:00 PM

BWC Members Present: Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Sophia Suarez-Friedman (Wayside), Wendy Conroy (Chair, Sexuality Educator), Nadia Foster (EDC, Grant Evaluator), Leah Reed (BWC Intern, Social Work student), Janice Darias (Assistant Superintendent), Mike Crowley (School Committee, Belmont Media Center), Chris Jablonski (Minister at UU Church, parent, LGBTQ+ Alliance), Jonathan Mack (Fitness Director at Waverly Oaks in Waltham, parent), Diana Martinez (parent, Mental Health Counselor), Kim Raubenheimer (Nutritionist and trainer, parent), Melissa O'Connor (School Resource Officer at BHS), Portia Thompson (parent), Hannah Lee (Youth Adult Services at Belmont Library)

1. Welcome [Introductions, Check-Ins]

Members introduced themselves. We said hello to Leah Reed, a Social Work student interning with BWC this Spring. Thank you, Leah!

2. BWC this Spring

- Parent Survey re: parent training needs

Lisa noted that the survey will be going out to parents of Middle and High School students by this weekend. This survey is to get a sense of parents' needs and how we can be supportive.

- BHS PTSO Program *Mental Health, Suicidal Ideation, May 4*

Lisa and Sophia, and guidance counselor Brittany King will lead a training on mental health as a follow-up to the YRBS. Focusing on how to talk about mental health, what to do in a crisis, and how to talk about suicide. Brittany King will share what the crisis team at the High School does.

- BHS Senior/Parent Forum *Social Host, Substance Misuse, April 26 6-7pm*

Lisa will present to High School seniors and caregivers on social host liability, how to talk to kids about substance, and how kids can avoid using substances. This event will be mandatory for students to be able to attend prom and graduation activities.

- Yoga for Students Waverley Oaks offering free yoga for students

Jon offered a free yoga / meditation class for Belmont students.

Location: Mike asked if it could be hosted in the school, and Janice offered that it could be through Community Ed and hosted at the school. Wendy offered First Church which is in walking distance to school.

Focus: for Mind and Body.

Kim will connect Jon to the Rec Department (Brandon) for Community Ed.

3. BHS "Crisis Team" explained

Melissa informed the BWC that the BHS Crisis Team addresses situations that may arise, issues relating to mental health, school threat, death in the community, etc. The Crisis Team is comprised of guidance counselors, social workers, School Resource Officer, school administrators, and sometimes teachers, as available. They meet during a crisis, follow a protocol to provide resources and support

to students as well as to formulate communication for the community.

4. BWC Updates:

a.) Peer Mentorship (PM) Exploration

Sophia noted that we are researching Peer Mentorship by reaching out to other communities to learn best practices around Peer Mentorship and to learn what it costs, what training is involved for peers, how much faculty oversight is needed. Mike noted that this came out of the follow up work to the YRBS. This information will hopefully help us to pilot a PM program in Belmont. Mike mentioned the Peer Program at the Library and that maybe it could be expanded to include Mental Health (MH).

Sophia noted that she is doing a training at the Library this month for the peer mentors around MH. Wendy raised the topic of connecting this work with the National Honor Society (NHS) program at the high school. Hannah has reached out to the NHS to invite them, but hasn't heard back.

b.) LBGTQ+ Alliance

Chris spoke on the LBGTQ+ Alliance. He noted that this is a group to welcome and support LBGTQ+ folks in Belmont. If you'd like to join, let Chris know.

Upcoming Dates:

- **Trans Day of Visibility - Thursday, March 31st** - creating public installations and the Library has a [panel event](#).
- Meeting with Middle and High School GSAs, partnering with them to be a resource to the students.
- **Belmont Pride on June 11th**, more information to come.
- Can get a Bumper Sticker (Progress Pride Flag with "Belmont") from LBGTQ+ Alliance - Reach out to Chris (holtonjablonski@gmail.com) to receive one or even many!

c.) Monthly Parenting Group

Sophia provided the following information on the Parenting Group and its upcoming meetings and meeting topics.

Next Meetings:

Wednesday, March 30, 7:00 – 8:00 PM (virtual)

Topic: *Belmont's Culture of Stress and Strategies to Mitigate*

Wednesday, April 27, 7:00 - 8:00 PM (virtual)

Topic: *Guidance around Supporting Belmont's LBGTQ+ Youth*

Parents are always welcome to join the Parenting Group, and the April 27th group in particular is open to all community members, even if they don't plan on attending future meetings.

Share out with Belmont parents: <https://belmontwellness.org/parenting-group/>

5. BWC Donation Funding: Thoughts on Ways to Spend

Lisa informed the BWC that we received about \$1,400 through the annual Wayside fundraiser, and we need to spend it by July 1.

She asked for ideas in spending this sum. Those present offered these suggestions:

- Portia proposed an idea based on a book she is reading around supporting students. Will email Lisa with more ideas.
- Hannah proposed "self care kits" for students.
 - Could do this with PTSO
 - Chapsticks, fidget toys, worry rocks, mandala coloring
- Wendy wondered about a "relaxation room" for kids to decompress in the new High School.

- Maybe BWC can contribute items for the space.
- Wendy suggested connecting with PTSOs to contribute to their current ideas - such as their therapy dogs. Portia shared that the PTSO is meeting next week on this topic.
- Something to thank the teachers and staff (Teacher Appreciation Day)
- “Appreciation Day” for teachers, Library, Fire Department, Police Department, etc. with a sheet cake and a thank you note from the BWC

Portia offered to help with these efforts - thank you Portia!

6. Closing Thoughts and other Updates

Hannah is planning a “*Teen Futures Fair*” at the Library to focus on career options and alternatives to college.

Reach out to Hannah (hlee@minlib.net) if you are interested in having a table there or know someone who would be.

- Links to weekly video segments can be found on BWC website: belmontwellness.org
- Next BWC Meeting, in April, Lisa will send a doodle.