

ARCH Community Meeting
October 6, 2004, 8:30 AM
Meeting Notes

Attendance: S. Poritsky, M. Gibson (VFMS), L. Boyle, P. Clark, T. Donovan (CHS), T. Armstrong (Easttown Police), B. Zerr (UMLY), J. VanHorn, J. Vidlock (TESD), W. Cerminaro, L. Lenker, J. Hagy, P. Littlewood (TESD), E. Moeller, and B. Lyon.

The meeting was held at 8:30 AM at the ESC, Berwyn. Bonnie Lyon conducted the meeting. The monthly topic of marijuana was introduced and a brief video entitled “The Myths of Marijuana” was shown and discussed. An assortment of literature was made available for people to take home. An effort will be made on a monthly basis, to offer a topic for information and discussion, with literature available. Some felt that the same topic, marijuana, should be repeated—others expressed interest in addressing alcohol as a topic. The decision was not finalized and ARCH officers will make the decision. E. Moeller will put a summary of this month’s video on the ARCH website.

The group continued a discussion that was begun last month, in establishing goals and objectives for ARCH 2004-2005. We referenced the ARCH Mission Statement and continued to brainstorm ideas. The following themes emerged. Five strategic goals with potential committees began to take shape.

1. **Communication with all stakeholders to build awareness** of significant factors affecting the lives and choices of our youth. In particular, ARCH strives to build awareness of substance abuse among our youth, but this does not exclude communicating issues of health and wellness, too.
2. **Providing avenues for support, sharing information, providing education, networking, and encouragement** among parents, families, and others in our community, in guiding youth toward healthy decision-making. Again, this includes, but is not solely focused on, addressing issues of substance abuse by our youth.
3. **Supporting partnerships between and among community groups that are involved in guiding our youth to make healthy choices.** These partners may include our schools, healthcare facilities, police departments, community agencies, faith-based and religious groups, and recreational organizations, among others.
4. **Developing and/or promoting already existing social and recreational opportunities for the youth in our community.** Partnering with our youth, and actively seeking their ideas, plans, goals, and hopes, is crucial.
5. **Seeking funding sources to enact our plans.** Explore available grants, ways to solicit funds, consider membership drives, and other ideas.

At the conclusion of the meeting, those in attendance were already beginning to sign up to serve on these committees. Specific committee objectives are yet to be formulated. An effort will be made for committees to meet during the regularly scheduled monthly community ARCH meetings. Committees are also encouraged to meet outside of ARCH meetings, as needed.

Anyone who is interested in participating in the committee process is encouraged to call **Bonnie Lyon**, 610-687-6389 or BLCL140@comcast.net, or **Ellen Moeller**, 610-783-6301 or ELLMOE@aol.com, to get contact information for people who have begun to organize these groups.

Other information that was shared at the meeting:

- Conestoga High School will feature a club fair next week. REACH, SADD, and TATU are groups that focus on drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free messages. There are multiple service clubs, recreational clubs, and special interest groups. One estimate is that there are close to 100 clubs. Contact: Susan Yates, Assistant Principal: 610-240-1000.
- ARCH is seeking liaisons with each PTO in the district, including elementary schools, so that all school parent-groups in the district have representation.
- ARCH plans to use the data from the results of our Youth Survey to drive the topics we select to highlight. **The 2003 Survey results will be shared at a public meeting on Monday, November 8, 2004, from 7:30 – 9:00 PM at the Upper Main Line YMCA, 1416 Berwyn-Paoli Rd, Berwyn, PA 19312.**
- ARCH sponsored an information table at the recent Grand Opening of Wilson Farm Park. Thank you to Lisa Lenker for organizing, and to Susan Poritsky, students of REACH, and Bonnie Lyon for helping!
- The local police report that locally they are seeing use of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and prescription drug abuse by people in this community. (These appear to be the most prevalent—other drugs are also being abused.)
- Use of local schools for community sponsored dances, recreational sports (such as basketball, etc.), places for local youth bands to perform, and for kids to just hang out are being discussed. Multiple faith-based youth groups are active in our community.
- Many kids feel pressure to do well and are sensitive to competition they experience in school.
- Recent canine sniffs held at the high school have apparently been successful in keeping drugs out of school. The students do not know the timing of the sniffs.
- The middle schools and high schools are developing more intramural sports (and clubs) to address the limits placed on numbers of kids that can play school sports.
- Some ARCH members would like to sponsor a youth focus group to find out what the kids in our community think. The Great Valley Partnership on Healthy Youth has done this and could provide a model.

- Some communities have developed a whole campaign around the fact that MOST kids are not using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Most kids aren't using – why not focus on the positives and what is going well.
- The COAD group in Exton has lots of information on grants that are available, and J. Videlock of TESD has offered to share her expertise in grant writing.

Upcoming Events to Remember

1. ***Conestoga High School Club Fair***, week of October 11.
2. ***TESD Safety Committee***, October 20, 1:30 PM, ESC Building. Preview of Presentation of 2003 Youth Survey Results.
3. ***Next Community ARCH meeting***, Wednesday, November 3, 2004, 8:30 – 10:00 AM, ESC Building.
4. ***2003 Youth Survey Results presented in Public Forum***: Monday, November 8, 2004, 7:30 – 9:00 PM, Upper Main Line YMCA, Berwyn, PA

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Moeller
ARCH Secretary