

Ridgefield Youth Commission
Minutes
April 1, 2009

Present:

Scott Nuechterlein, Kelly Orzechowski, Frank Orzechowski, John Katz, Mark Giglio, Leslie Brown, Linda Caponetti, Denise Qualey, Ruth Leibowitz, John Lionetti, Samantha Nuechterlein, Zach Porterfield, Sean Sulli, Wendy Gannon-Lionetti, Alex Nelson, Jim Moriarty

Minutes:

Inside Out Update

*Inside Out is celebrating 25 years of performing. The group meets every Sunday at The Barn and is comprised of high school students doing improvisational performances covering a wide range of topics effecting kids and families today.

*The Inside Out Players will be conducting a food drive on the steps of Town Hall this Saturday from 11-3pm. There will be music, so stop by with your non-perishable items to be donated to the Ridgefield Food Pantry.

School Updates

*RHS TeenTalk Counselor Leslie Brown said the theme among the kids she has been seeing recently has been stress and everyone including the staff is looking forward to the spring break.

*Congratulations to Zach Porterfield who was accepted to Purchase College.

*Happy Birthday to John Lionetti on April 13th.

Barn Update

*The Barn has raised \$1000. from all their recent fund raising efforts

*A beautifully refurbished pool table has found a great new home at The Barn and all the members love it - A big thank you to Frank Orzechowski for doing an amazing job researching the highest quality, best price and arranging for delivery. As well as contributing to the purchase. Thank you Frank!

*Smoking at The Barn has been a concern for several reasons such as the health dangers, mess, message it sends to the community, and that it is against the law. Youth Officer Giglio shared a new law recently passed states that not only can underage people not purchase cigarettes they now can no longer carry them. So The Barn is instituting a *no-smoking policy*. There will no longer be smoking in front of the building or on the side by the picnic tables. Anyone that chooses to smoke must walk off the property surrounding the building.

*Recently both staff and students at The Barn have noticed a few people coming to The Barn that are involved with drugs. Those Barn members at the meeting feel comfortable letting them know they are not welcome and were very vocal that they do not want an old impression of The Barn to surface again. The Barn staff will be meeting with Kids in Crisis and the Youth Officer to discuss some of the signs to look for and what steps can be taken if someone appears under the influence and shows up at The Barn.

*Linda Caponetti, The Barn Director, will select nights she feels extra staff is need to supervise special events such as a rock house and the Youth Commission will utilize donations to cover the cost. In addition in September we will discuss adding another day for The Barn to be open with donated funds.

Ridgefield Prevention Council

*The council conducted a student survey that will be on the Ridgefield Now we are Talking television program April 7th to discuss the results.

*Zach Porterfield will be representing Ridgefield on May 14th at a prevention council event with other towns regarding the issues of substance abuse.

Safe Rides

The number for Safe Rides is 438-3789

*Samantha Nuechterlein, executive board member from Safe Rides presented to the group the mission and activities of the Safe Rides program in Ridgefield.

- Safe Rides utilizes approximately 200 student volunteers through out the year and a team of parent volunteers
- The program is based at St. Stephens Church. They work in teams of 20 and the parents remain at St. Stephens for support and to be a resource for the students if needed- but the program is organized and run by the students - each team works about 4 weekends a school year
- The program starts home coming weekend and goes until the end of the school year but the board is considering starting earlier next year
- The students partner a male and a female in each car and utilize their own vehicles to pick up young people when they call - The volunteers provide those that call with a ride home from anywhere in Ridgefield - most of those that call have been drinking and do not want to drive or do not want to get into a car with someone that has been drinking-often they are picking clients up from parties - other calls include kids that just don't have transportation
- The students receive training from EMS, have latex gloves and a bucket in the car in case someone vomits - they drop clients off at their homes but do not walk them to the door
- They get about 43 calls a weekend night

Next Meeting June 3, 2009