

**Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council's (GSSAC'S)**  
**Community Coalition Meeting**

*A Gathering of Those Working to Reduce Substance Abuse and Violence  
Through Community Mobilization and Drug Free Communities*

**Tuesday, January 27, 2009**

**MINUTES**

**Location:**

Meeting held at the Spokane Regional Health District  
1101 W. College Spokane, WA 99201  
12:00pm-1:30 pm

**Attendees:**

Gunthild Sondhi, GSSAC Evaluator; Jim Kaufman, Spokane County Prosecutor's Office/GSSAC Board of Directors Member; Terrie Austin, GSSAC Washington Drug Free Youth Coordinator; Mary Ann Murphy, Partners with Families and Children; Diane Jackson, East Central Community Center; Dionne Jennings, Lewis and Clark Student, Craig Hirt, VOA Crosswalk; Alan Zeuge, Spokane County Community Services; Rick Scott, S.C.O.P.E with Spokane County Sheriff's Office; Chris Mullin, Lakeside Recovery Center; Shayna Tulley, NATIVE Project; Dylan Dressler, NATIVE Project; Peggy Gilliland, Spokane County Traffic Safety Commission/GSSAC Board of Directors Member; Allison Sattin, GSSAC Drug Free Communities Coordinator; Linda Thompson, GSSAC Executive Director; David Egly, NATIVE Project; Shelby Hughes, GSSAC Educational Programs Administrative Coordinator; Mark Brownlow, SPARC; Sarah Page, Spokane County Community Services; Jennifer Hansen, Spokane Regional Health District; Tricia Hughes, ESD 101/GSSAC Board of Directors Member; Jill Dickson, ESD 101; Christina Heller, GSSAC Intern/Spokane Falls Community College Student; Annette Ingham, Prosecutor's Office; Carol Beason, Cheney Outreach; Shannon Flemister, Treatment Manager, DASA; Cyndi Beemer, Regional Administrator, DASA; Tom Lloyd, GSSAC's Prevention Center Board of Directors Member; Diana Somerville, Neighborhood Watch, ; Julie Albright, Spokane Regional Health District-Methadone Clinic, Eileen Mayfield, Transitions;

**Welcome:**

Tom Lloyd-GSSAC's Prevention Center Board of Directors Member

**Introductions:**

All of those in attendance introduced themselves and shared the organization which they were representing. Individuals were also allotted some time to share any new developments or up-coming events at their organizations.

**Partner Sharing:**

**Mark Brownlow, Spokane Addiction Recovery Center --SPARC--**Brownlow shared that he is new to the coalition meetings and is eager to get engaged. Currently SPARC is tracking budget cuts and trying to determine where treatment dollars will stand at the end of the legislative session.

**Shelby Hughes, GSSAC--**Shelby stated that the Spokane County DUI Victim's Panel and 24 Hour Jail Alternative Programs are going well even with the lower than usual numbers due to fewer cases in the system. She is always actively recruiting new speakers who can share their stories of the impact of impaired driving..

**David Egly, NATIVE Project** – Egly promoted the NATIVE Project's up-coming events. Included was the February 6<sup>th</sup> Pow-Wow which was originally on December 19<sup>th</sup> but was postponed due to snow. There will still be a free turkey dinner; however instead of an appearance from Santa Claus the Indian Cupid will be present. The NATIVE Project is also still offering their Community Wellness Program which will be explained in further detail by Shayna Tulley.

**Shayna Tulley, NATIVE Project** – Tulley added to Egly's report with some facts on the NATIVE Project's Community Wellness Program. Through this program the NATIVE Project Leadership Council which meets every Tuesday from 6:00pm-7:00pm, will be holding a Healthy Heart in 2009 activity. Youth will write on hearts what they plan to do in 2009 to be healthier. These hearts will then be posted on one big heart and shared at the February 6<sup>th</sup> Pow-Wow. In exchange for participation youth will receive a gift card of some kind.

**Jennifer Hansen, Spokane Regional Health District** – Hansen asked that anyone who is interested in adopting a cessation policy at their work place contact her for more details. Several Local businesses and organization have already partnered with Hansen on this including Rockwood Clinic.

**Jill Dickson, ESD 101 Tobacco Prevention** – Former Spokane Regional Health District employee Jill Dickson introduced herself as the new Tobacco Prevention Specialist at Education School District 101. She is eager to be back working in the schools and still plans to be active in the coalition.

**Diana Somerville** – Somerville shared her yearly Crime Prevention and Neighborhood Watch event Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. People are welcome to have a booth or attend some of the many offered classes. She passed out Neighborhood Watch Newspapers with registration forms.

**Cindy Beemer, DASA** – Beemer shared a little bit about the budget cuts at DASA and bought a fact sheet to share with the coalition. She plans to further update on this issue during the coalition's budget discussion later in the meeting.

**Carol Beason, Cheney Outreach** – Structural damage caused by our recent record setting snow fall has caused Cheney Outreach to move to a new location at the United Church of Christ. Although the facility is less than adequate staff is making due and going to sustain the programs that help families.

**Chris Mullin, Lakeside Recovery** – Mullin shared that due to the flailing economy Lakeside Recovery is looking into other acceptable methods of payment to better accommodate those in need of treatment who cannot afford to pay for it. Mullin also promoted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month Lakeside Recovery holds a Family Seminar to the public. No referral is needed to attend.

**Mary Ann Murphy, Partners with Families and Children** – Murphy talked about up-coming event for April's Our Kids Our Business. She passed out a calendar detailing these events and asked that people add any events that their organizations may be having that month, so that Our Kids Our Business can

highlight them. Murphy also shared that the goal of Our Kids Our Business is to reduce the High School drop out rates in Spokane County through mentoring.

**Diane Jackson, East Central Community Center**– Jackson shared that their Community Mobilization funded program Effective Black Parenting was just completed and that 11 people graduated. A celebration of their accomplishments was held where the graduates were honored.

**Allison Sattin, GSSAC** – Sattin shared her most recent plan to track coalition membership and increase efficiency in contacting members for upcoming events and meetings. Everybody was asked to fill out a coalition membership form which will be used to reference when contact information is needed. Sattin also shared her observations from the Spokane Chiefs game that she attended at the Spokane Arena. Sattin's report brought attention to some of the issues revolving around the arena's alcohol policies. Further action will be taken and reported back to the coalition.

**Linda Thompson, GSSAC** – Thompson shared a recent scholarship opportunity being offered to youth by Kohl's Department Store. She encouraged coalition members to nominate youth for these scholarships, as it is an outstanding opportunity in these financially hard times. Thompson also shared information about GSSAC's Harold Kennedy Scholarship that is offered every year. The scholarship is \$1000 with an alternate scholarship of \$250 also being awarded. It is open to any high school senior in Spokane County. Students must write an essay as to why they are drug free and submit it to GSSAC by March 27<sup>th</sup>. The essays will be judged by the GSSAC Board of Directors and the winner will be invited to come and present their essay at a Board of Directors' meeting.

Additionally, Thompson explained the importance of talking to our Legislators and educating them on the importance of prevention. Key support for programs such as MADD is being cut and will drastically impact our community.

### **Group Discussion: Fiscal Budget Impacts on Our Community**

A group discussion about the most recent Governor's report and the budget cuts that we are all facing was initiated by Linda Thompson. Thompson asked that Cindy Beemer with DASA share with the group some of the cuts that her organization is facing. Beemer discussed the importance of educating our Legislators and used DASA as a key example. Although still facing huge cuts, the deficit funding was decreased from 4.3 million to 1.3 million for treatment due to the advocacy of DASA employees. Beemer also shared that prevention cuts are still unknown and that they are waiting for the March forecast. Providers on the other side of the state have already seen major cuts and are being forced to close their doors. A key program known as ADATSA has also been cut. This program was a funding source for low-income people in need of treatment. It provided them with stipends that paid for treatment costs and sometimes housing. This program will be discontinued as of February 2009 and all associated medical coupons will be going away July 2009.

Mary Ann Murphy of Partners with Children and Families shared that many programs dealing with child abuse have been cut leaving no infrastructure for child abuse prevention. Linda Thompson agreed that this is a huge issue and again stated the importance of educating our Legislators on the importance of prevention.

When in Olympia Thompson noticed that Legislators were not talking much but were listening. It is critical to show the Legislators what the impact would be if they cut certain programs. Thompson also shared with the coalition a list of upcoming bills that are looking to be moved through the legislature. Some of these bills include; a bill that would make it illegal to smoke in your car if a minor is present; and a “take back” bill that would make pharmaceutical companies responsible for disposing unused medications. There is also a bill regarding DUI Panels that sets standards for Panels. GSSAC’s Panel has always fit the criteria. One part of the bill says that a Judge may basically waive the fee. This is not acceptable to the committee who originally started the Spokane County Panel out of respect for the speakers who share their stories. In Spokane the Panel is Court ordered only so it cannot be used to plea bargain down a charge and all of the fees go back into prevention. Waiving the fees diminishes the message of how impactful crashes are on the lives of those hurt, left behind or those who caused the crash. There is also a bill to move the VRDE (Violence Reduction/Drug Enforcement) account into the general fund. This would put the funding generated by the voter approved Referendum 43 which designated pop syrup tax monies to be designated for prevention/treatment/law/justice at risk. These are just a few of many bills that prevention partners and the coalition need to be actively involved in. Again, education of our legislators, many of whom are strong partners/supporters with us, is critical to help protect communities across the state from the impact of substance abuse, and violence.

### **Group “Legalization of Marijuana” Conversation**

The discussion of Legislative bills set the stage for Thompson to present House Bill1177, which would allow for the decriminalization of marijuana for those 18 and older. Currently when a stop for a misdemeanor marijuana possession is made either a criminal citation is issued or an arrest is made. This bill would change the misdemeanor to a civil infraction, i.e. similar to a speeding ticket. Thompson shared that she had talked to several Legislators who are sponsors of the bill (or their staff) including Tim Ormsby and Alex Wood. They believe that this bill will increase jail space by removing individuals who are in the prison system for minor drug charges. It will also give a second chance to young people who have a one time drug charge.

The coalition discussed how difficult a conversation like this is to have because of the multiple aspects of this issue. Many people in prevention are for a bill like this as this type of public policy would free up dollars to use on the prevention end rather than just locking people up. It was stated that the fines from the infractions could be put back into treatment and prevention. Thompson contacted the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs WASPC and their official stand is they are against this bill.

Alan Zeuge brought a fact sheet on the dangers of using marijuana to share with the group. He believes that as prevention people it is our job to decrease the use of marijuana in our community, and that this fact sheet would be a good tool to use in getting our message out. This first sheet is just a draft, Zeuge and his team is open to any input or changes the coalition thinks should be made.

Spokane County Prosecutor Jim Kauffman shared his take on the bill stating that it might impact jail space but it will not be a big decrease. Kaufman believes that it is important to contact our Legislators and talk to them about this bill. It is not necessary to decriminalize marijuana; a more appropriate solution would be to revise our current legislation to allow for the discretion of prosecutors and judges when trying the case of a youth who makes a one time mistake. The message that this bill sends to our youth is that it is okay to smoke dope.

Zeuge then explained that although laws are necessary and important they are not the number one deterrent of substance abuse. Treatment facilities are still filled with individuals who are abusing illegal drugs regardless of what the laws say. Getting good information out to our community is where he believes our prevention efforts should be focused.

Thompson concluded the group conversation by stressing the importance of community norms. With our goal being to reduce substance abuse and violence in our communities, it is important that resources for prevention, treatment and law/justice be in place. It is so important to educate our community and Legislators about the message a bill like this would send to our youth. This bill is just one of many issues that impact the way our youth interpret different situations. Thompson also stated that we want to be supportive of policies and norms that support positive choices and do not make situations worse for those already dealing with poverty, abuse, and tough situations. Again, it is a difficult discussion to have as it moves conversations to harm reduction and other models that need to be considered. Updates in this bill and others will be made regularly through email and subcommittee work.

### **Meeting Schedule:**

Before the closing of the meeting, a group vote was taken on whether or not we should meet again in February or wait until March. It was a majority ruling that there are too many important issues on the table for the coalition to address to wait until March. A February meeting will be held.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

**\*\*\*\*NEXT MEETING – February 24th, 2009 –12:00pm\*\*\*\***

\*\*\*Spokane Regional Health District\*\*\*

1101 W. College\*\*

\*Rm. Auditorium\*

Submitted by: Allison R. Sattin