

Name of Committee: MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee		
Name of Subcommittee: Youth Policy Stakeholders Group		
Date: December 2, 2008	Start time: 10:04 a.m.	End time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: Cholla Room		Scribe: Rachel Brito
<p>Attendance:</p> <p>Kim Bauman, City of Tempe Allie Bones, Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence Greg Dicharry, Magellan Laura Guild, Arizona Department of Economic Security Chris Lopez, City of Avondale Ginger Montague, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community High School Daniel Morgan, City of Scottsdale Rosemary Ybarra-Hernandez, Aguila Youth Leadership Institute</p> <p>Amy St Peter, MAG Rena Tenney, MAG Rachel Brito, MAG</p>		
<p>Discussion Points:</p> <p>Overview of Youth Empowerment Project</p> <p>Rena Tenney, MAG, gave a brief overview of the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP). She said YEP was formed three years ago and is funded through the Innovative Domestic Violence Prevention Grant Program. The focus for the Youth Empowerment Project is addressing teen dating violence, promoting the Web of Friends Web site (www.weboffriends.org) and promoting the Public Service Announcement (PSA) competition. The PSA competition invites teens to craft messages about dating violence and encourage their peers to visit the Web site. The competition this year is accepting entries in print ads and Web banners.</p> <p>Ms. Tenney said the project has been very successful and the number of hits to the Web site has increased from 1,100 last year to 11,000 this year. The “Resources” section of the Web site has received the most hits thereby providing teens access to information. The Resource section includes two fact sheets and resource lists for teens and parents. Peer testimonials are also available on the Web site. Presentations about teen dating violence and distribution of the Web of Friends business-like cards have also led to great connections in the community.</p> <p>Amy St. Peter, MAG, said the YEP has been one of the more impactful experiences with teens. She said it has been amazing to see the difference it can make, not just in a technical way, but by making an impact in their lives. She added that teens from the east coast have also contacted MAG staff for assistance.</p> <p>Future of Youth Empowerment Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Youth Program • Focusing on Gaps in Service <p>Ms. Tenney said the focus for today’s meeting is to look at the next stage of the YEP and to look at ways to continue the program if it is needed. The program is currently in its third year of existence.</p> <p>Ms. Tenney provided a brief overview on what teens are seeing as trends in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of healthy relationships such as communication and space • Signs of unhealthy relationships such as control or abuse • Signs when to use caution in a relationship include arguing and insecurity 		

- Outreach methods include parents, friends and the internet
- End teen dating violence by talking to abusers

Ms. Tenney stated that teens suggested talking to the abusers as a way to end the issue. This brought the realization that YEP is really focused on assisting the victim and does not provide resources for teens who abuse or who may be high risk for abusive behavior.

Ms. Tenney opened up the discussion to identify trends and new approaches to ending teen dating violence. Ms. St. Peter also took a brief moment to thank everyone who had assisted in conducting the focus groups.

Laura Guild, Arizona Department of Economic Security, asked for the source of the feedback from teens. Ms. Tenney noted meetings with the Scottsdale Mayor's Youth Council, Avondale's Youth Commission, the Sun-Diamondbacks Education Academy and Coronado High School. Another meeting is scheduled with the Boys and Girls Clubs for the evening of December 3rd. She said this group will have representatives from across the valley.

Ms. Tenney was asked if teens have any ideas for YEP and what they would like to see being done. Ms. Tenney shared some suggestions from teens which included:

- Have a "Gender Night". The focus would be on gender roles and gender issues.
- Have more special events and speakers with presentations that are fun but meaningful.
- Have age appropriate activities.

Suggestions received from other teens included:

- Reaching out through the internet. Several focus groups said the Web of Friends is geared toward the victim and mentioned the need to talk to the abuser – to look at what they've been through.
- Looking at better intervention programs that are relevant and geared toward teens.

The stakeholder group discussed developing a risk assessment tool that would be available on the Web site. Many teens don't think they are doing anything wrong, therefore an assessment tool may help them identify behaviors that they need to look into or to seek assistance.

The group also felt it is important to include controlling behavior as part of the assessment tool and to clearly identify the meaning of violence. The group stressed that teens need to understand that violence is not always physical, but could also include power and/or control over someone. Examples include cell phone monitoring or text messaging incessantly. Many teens consider these types of behaviors as warning signs, but do not make the connection to these acts as being violent. Some of these patterns are learned at home and teens then learn about relationships from their parents. In these situations, even when teens know the behaviors are wrong, those are the coping mechanisms they have learned.

Additional suggestions included

- Having more teen anger management, coping, and healthy social skills classes.
- Having counselors available for teens to talk to or discuss the assessment results with on a one-to-one basis. Also noted was that by using the Web site, teens can also find links to local community contacts.

Greg Dicharry, Magellan, asked if domestic violence will remain the exclusive focus for YEP or if the committee will be considering a broader focus in the future. Ms. St. Peter said the intention is to keep the focus on teen dating violence, but the program could be supportive of another broader program.

Mr. Dicharry asked if YEP can be linked with other youth groups that are similar in focus allowing them to become more involved and more empowered. Some examples for getting youth involved would be to have them judge the PSA contest, or by creating a MAG Youth Council.

Rosemary Ybarra-Hernandez, of the Aguila Youth Leadership Institute, gave a brief overview of their college preparatory program for youth. She said the program serves 70 different high schools. Students are very involved in different issues such as debate teams and visiting different high schools. She said one of the common issues seen among some students is that they are very controlled. Sometimes this behavior is recognized when they have the opportunity to meet students from other schools. Through talking to other teens, they become aware of the situation they are in.

Ginger Montague, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community High School, pointed out that culturally, there are differences in how abuse is approached and/or viewed. Ms. Ybarra-Hernandez went on to share about a project in which students conduct oral history interviews of their family. She said students love this exercise because they have an opportunity to learn about their friends and other students. Interestingly, there appears to be a correlation among some families of dealing with substance abuse. She said it is important to focus on the issue of violence, because youth may not understand that it not only occurs among their peers, but may also be generational within their families.

The group also discussed how families in lower economic standing report a greater level of physical violence and are more likely to identify the police as a resource.

In terms of creating an assessment tool, the group felt that caution should be used so as to not make assumptions, that culturally sensitive language should be used, and that the criteria for warning signs is similar across the board without regard to social economic standing. Overall, teens need to be educated about violence. It was also suggested that the assessment include a menu linking teens to resource information within their region or community.

Another item discussed was the availability of a toolkit that can be used by schools or youth practitioners to bring information to students about teen dating violence. Ms. Tenney advised that the MAG Web site has a short video available addressing the issue. The video was sent out to all community cable sessions and can be made available on DVD.

Ms. Ybarra-Hernandez said Raul Yzaguirre, Professor Of Practice, Community Development & Civil Rights, ASU, in partnership with the Aguila Youth Leadership Institute, is developing a program for young men focused on developing core values called Men of Honor. One of the values is respect for women.

Other resources available through community partners include

- Smart Moves (substance abuse-related curriculum)
- Passport to manhood curriculum
- Girl power curriculum

The group was not aware of a batter intervention program, or assessment tool, for abusive teens.

Other agency resources to follow-up with include:

- Juvenile Court
- CASA
- Peer Solutions
- Stand and Serve

- Faith Community
- Governor's Youth Commission's newly formed domestic violence subcommittee

Another suggestion from the group is to form a network by creating a comprehensive list of the various Youth Commissions. The Governor's Office was suggested as a source for gathering this data as they involve all Youth Commissions in the State Youth Leadership Day.

In terms of getting information to teens, everyone agreed that teens like free things. They are not likely to keep business cards, but do like bracelets, dog tags, posters, pens, tote bags, or water bottles, which can have a message imprinted on it. The key is to make teens answer questions and engage them in conversations. And, while they don't email as much, they do communicate by texting or Web sites such as facebook.com or myspace.com.

The YEP also had a one time event stimulating text messaging in which friends text messaged each other to encourage their friends to visit WebofFriends.org.

Ms. St. Peter explained the Smart Dating event used at the annual press conference this year follows the concept of speed dating. In this exercise, students get an opportunity to discuss signs of healthy, unhealthy, and cautious relationships. After completing two rounds, the report back on their results. These results were then used for the PSA contest. She said the model has been very successful and they have responded to requests to facilitate the exercise at various events throughout the region.

Other similar exercises include a mentorship program where kids rotated with mentors to get to know them, and then determined which mentor they would choose for themselves. The Wild Wild Train, used by the Aguila Youth Leadership Institute, involves lining students up in two rows, giving them an opportunity to talk and then shifting to the next person. Both exercises are fast paced, keep their attention and allows them to talk to a couple of different people.

Ms. St. Peter informed the group that the notes from this meeting as well as feedback from the focus groups would be shared with the Domestic Violence Council on Thursday, December 4, 2008. The next MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee meeting will be in January. By that time, both groups will have met and can take action in formalizing part of the agency's work program for next year.

Some final thoughts from the group included having police officers do presentations for teens. Their straightforward and direct approach will often capture a teen's attention. A video made by doctors and emergency room staff that talks about what they see also captures a teen's attention because they are authentic and real.

The group said age-appropriate dating is another issue that needs to be addressed. It was felt that the legal system turns a blind eye on this issue because it happens so often, specifically when the teen is around 17 years of age. This topic also considers a broader focus such as healthier relationships, not just violence. Things to consider when discussing age-appropriate dating are what is the motivation to date someone years younger and what other risks can occur, such as abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and trafficking.

To broaden the focus, it was suggested to change the words from dating violence to something like the cycle of violence, or escalation of violence or continuum of violence. However, it was noted that the words "Cycle of Violence" have another connotation and should not be used for this purpose.

Other suggestions include using the Power of Control wheel available through the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, expanding the use of "safe place" symbols to identify locations where teens can get information or get in contact with people who can assist them, and assembling a youth group of speakers from

varying backgrounds to talk to other teens/students.

A final topic that the group suggested should be addressed is how drugs and alcohol affect teen dating violence and how they are often used a tool to establish control. They felt that there is not enough awareness about how drugs and alcohol are being used as tactics.

Decisions:

1. Recommend that YEP be expanded to include the following:
 - Risk assessment tools for victims and abusers with resources particular to different parts of the region;
 - A focus on abusers and teens at high risk for abusive behavior;
 - Tool kits for teens and practitioners serving youth that would include the public service announcements developed through YEP and a corresponding curriculum;
 - A speakers bureau of teens who can address teen dating violence.
2. Recommend that MAG HSCC organize a list of all municipal youth commissions and related organizations to be featured on the MAG Web site.
3. Recommend that WebofFriends.org and related resources be kept online even after funding expires if at all possible.

Next Steps

Action	Person responsible	Due date
1. Present recommendations to MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council for approval.	Renaë Tenney	12/4/08
2. Present recommendations to MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee for approval.	Amy St. Peter	1/20/09
3. Upon Committee approval, seek funding and community partners to support the expansion of YEP to include resources for abusers and risk assessment tools.	Renaë Tenney	5/09
	Amy St. Peter	7/09
4. Upon Committee approval, establish a regional network of municipal youth commissions and related organizations on the MAG Web site.		