

Chippewa Valley coalition holds year-end meeting

Highlights progress from past school year



Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families' meeting and year-end celebration June 11 focused on highlights from the past school year.

Photo by Alex Szwarc

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP — Several members of a local coalition group provided community updates and more at a recent meeting.

Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families held a meeting and year-end celebration June 11 at the Chippewa Valley Schools Administration Building in Clinton Township.

The meeting highlighted the coalition's progress from the 2018-19 school year and addressed what is planned for the summer.

"At the end of the school year, we take a quick look at what we've done and where we're going," Charlene McGunn, executive director of the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families said.

The meeting also provided members a chance to provide feedback and generate ideas on how to improve the coalition.

Over the past school year, the coalition brought in a number of guest speakers who presented on topics like new perspectives of youth suicide, national drug trends, and fetal alcohol syndrome.

Another improvement made in the past year, coalition members say, was the launch of an updated website.

"It has a lot of new materials and event information," McGunn said.

Kaitlin Maloziec, director of prevention at CARE of Southeastern Michigan and a member of the coalition's executive board, described how the board operates.

"We meet monthly and are responsible for the budget, also making sure we're in compliance with our drug-free communities grant," she said.

McGunn said the coalition's work continues in the summer with executive board and committee meetings, investigating new approaches to parenting education, and preparing for the Red Ribbon Campaign, which is a nationally recognized campaign for a drug-free America.

"We have some new initiatives we're going to be working a lot on this summer," McGunn said. "One is a program to create a framework for building youth resiliency."

She added that for the Red Ribbon Campaign, the Drug Enforcement Administration has reached out to the coalition for a future partnership. The two will meet this summer and roll out some ideas and materials to be presented in October. The coalition's mission is to join school, family and community in a partnership to prevent and reduce youth substance use and its negative consequences.

It consists of several task groups and committees, such as youth alcohol use prevention, youth vape prevention and youth prescription drug abuse prevention.

One community partner that attended the meeting was Family Youth Interventions, a nonprofit organization whose core purpose is to provide hope and healing.

"We have three programs that work with young people and we target ages 12-20," Family Youth Interventions Outreach Coordinator Heath Achatz said. "The young people we work with typically have run away or been kicked out of their house."

Corey Beckwith, public health coordinator for the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, or ACCESS, discussed youth trends in vaping on behalf of the coalition's youth vape prevention committee.

"Michigan for a long time was the only state that didn't have any age limit set for selling vape products," he said. In May, the state legislature passed a bill that sets the age limit at 18 for purchasing vape products. Beckwith said the law classifies vape products as non-tobacco products in their own category.

The coalition consists of 90 adult members and 150 youth members. To learn more, visit cvcoalition.org.