



Coalition for Resilient Youth, Inc.

Annual Report: RGA-2023-DBH-01-OPIOI: Opioid Abatement Programs

Successes/Achievements: Our goal is to connect on a more deliberate way with our three core regional demographics: Urban, Suburban and Rural communities. In terms of Urban we are focusing on underserved neighborhoods within Manchester (west side).

Rural:

In the late winter/early spring of 2024 we partnered with one of our rural communities (Auburn) to assist with the coordination of a Project Safety event at the school. Through this effort we were able to expand our relationship with school staff, law enforcement and members of the community. This event was successful, over 40 7th grade students and their parents (57) were in attendance. We provided workshops for Over the Counter (OTC) medicine safety and Vaping awareness – to both the youth and parents. In addition, this allowed us to provide information regarding our Listening and Learning series, along with Strong as Granite materials. We are working with community members to schedule their full community Listening and Learning session for late fall 2024.

Suburban:

Our Listening and Learning sessions began with the community of Hooksett. This was a small but very

engaged event (15 + MIH staff). Throughout the session we learned that the library (where event was held) is the 'community center' for this community. In attendance were representatives from parents, school staff, library staff and representatives from two civic organizations – which both express great interest in our ability to bring free mental health first aid trainings to both the library (community level) and to their civic groups. Great concern was expressed regarding substance misuse/use among young people. In addition, they voiced the challenges they have reaching and engaging high school youth, as this community does not have a high school. Also, a concern, being 'lumped' in with Manchester. Law enforcement raised concerns over mental health concerns with recent spike in suicidal individuals. Sharing resources such as strong as Granite, 988/rapid response access, and explaining text, chat, or call features was well received. We have been able to schedule talk saves lives sessions (15 ppl) as well as a Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR) training session (24 ppl). A revisit session will be planned for the fall of 2024 in collaboration with school open house.

Urban:

Westside – Rimmon Heights, a neighborhood just across the river, but often isolated from city prevention efforts - That was the comment we got when our staff attended a Rimmon Heights

community meeting. Through our Wellness on Wheels initiative, we met a few members of the Rimmon Heights community group who invited us to attend their meeting and share information about the Listening and Learning session concept. This was a fantastic connection and very eye-opening for our staff and this project. They are a very proud, tight-knit neighborhood. After a series of meetings, listening to their concerns and building trust, we are now working with this group to plan a full Listening and Learning session which we will promote at their upcoming Rimmon Heights block party in September 2024. Through our research we identified that there is a lack of substance misuse/use treatment and recovery offering on the westside. We

plan to invite representatives from the treatment and recovery organization that service the city to the meeting to hear directly from community members about their concerns and work together to identify potential support solutions

Challenges:

Slow start-up: Makin' It Happen was thrilled to be selected to receive these funds over a three-year period. We were notified in December of 2022 that we had been selected. Our first-year funding (FY23) was finally approved to begin implementation in late May of 2023. With the end of FY23 being just one month away, we could not responsibly spend down the funding in that time period. Fortunately, leadership at the state level took the action step of allowing FY23 funding to move into FY24. This gave us time to plan a smart rollout. Utilizing the SAMHSA ACPIE model we began to move through the key steps of Assessment,

review of Capacity, set our Planning structure, and begin Implementation. Through this process we identified a few challenges. We were able to add staff over the summer of 2023. After completing an onboarding process, a portion (50%) of their time was dedicated to this project, rather than 100%. This was a timing issue. While we were on hold waiting for the Abatement funds to be approved at the state level, other projects that were time sensitive came in that needed to be completed by mid/late fall. This resulted in a slower than expected start of the Listening and Learning sessions for this important project. Although the team was able to complete initial outreach and awareness efforts, and expand our social media messaging, efforts to assemble community representatives and scheduling of Listening and Learning sessions pushed into the beginning of 2024. For FY25 we hope to be able to dedicate FTE of 2.5 people to this project to keep up the momentum and ensure that we can follow through on any requests, trainings or sessions that are identified in the planned sessions.

Community Readiness:

In the process of reaching out to our suburban and rural communities we began to realize that some of our rural communities were experiencing staffing and scheduling challenges. This of course is part of community capacity building. Being flexible and supportive of their challenges illustrated our commitment to bringing a session to their community at a time that we can ensure

representation from the key community sectors (Business, Government, Education, Health, Safety/Law Enforcement, Community/Family) are at the table. We began by bringing resources such as the Strong as Granite initiative, harm reduction prevention supplies (Narcan/leave behind kits, deTerra bags, etc.) and supporting National Prescription drug takeback events at all eight communities within the region. We scheduled coffee chats with available community representatives and when appropriate we attended community-based meetings to listen in and learn how we can develop our listening and learning sessions for their unique communities.

Conclusion:

Throughout our work in FY24 we were reminded that community capacity building has its own timetable. In August we will be holding our Listening and Learning session in Goffstown. This is set to take place mid-month and will be in partnership with the Crispin's House Youth coalition – which has a new executive director that is excited to team up with us to bring prevention, treatment and recovery information and resources to the community together.

In September we will be heading out to Deerfield for a Listening and Learning session. The interest and momentum for this session was sparked through someone who lives in Deerfield, works in Manchester and attends our Community of Care meetings through their work position. This is a great illustration of the importance of including our core community sectors in our prevention efforts.

We look forward to continuing this important initiative in FY25 and hopefully beyond!

With grace and gratitude, Mary Forsythe-Taber

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