

QUARTERLY WFLI TEAM MEETING – RECAP

The December WFLI Team Meeting in Lander was a huge success with over 80 people attending during the two day period. Day one included a pre-session for first time attendees to provide an overview of the vocabulary and concepts associated with environmental approaches to prevention. 53 people attended the pre-session workshop. Substance Abuse Division Administrator Steve Gilmore opened the afternoon session followed by a welcome from Lander Mayor Mick Wolfe, Lander Council Member Linda Barton, Lander Police Chief Dave Hockett, Riverton Mayor John Vincent, and Riverton Police Chief John Snell.

A roundtable report of local initiatives demonstrated that there's a great deal of energy and effort taking place across the state. Highlights included: active youth groups in most communities who have selected alcohol as a primary issue; monthly Town Hall meetings have been taking place and are scheduled through April 2006; there's considerable local action on implementing various model ordinances to restrict youth access to alcohol; increased enforcement of MIP laws and enforcement and prosecution on the Social Host law; Park and Laramie counties have initiated parent awareness campaigns through their respective Block Grant providers; Fremont County is actively pursuing state level legislation to enable the collection of a local use option tax on alcohol similar to the current lodging tax.

Dr. Rodney Wambeam from the Wyoming Survey Analysis Center provided an overview of the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG) including the data collected to date and the process being used by the Epidemiology Workgroup assigned to the project and the role of the State Advisory Council. A copy of this presentation is available. Contact Dr. Wambeam at rodney@uwyo.edu for more information.

Ernie Johnson, Johnson and Associates provided background information on the Wyoming First Lady's Initiative and the evolutionary process that has taken place to get where we are today. The WFLI originated as a specific media campaign designed to increase adult awareness of the health and safety issues related to childhood drinking. The last minute addition of localized messages and messengers, using trained volunteers, has become the "heart and soul" of the initiative. This facilitated team approach with quarterly training meetings, regular contact and updates via the web site has proven to be an excellent tool to keep the movement fresh, relevant and on message.

Ernie also walked WFLI Team Members through the recently released Alcohol Arrest Report. This report provides a detailed snapshot of alcohol factors in arrests over a six-month period in selected communities. The report was conducted by the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police through funding from the Wyoming Department of Transportation. A copy of the report is available on the WFLI website.

An update on the Wyoming Response to the IOM/NAS Report was provided by Jim Kyritsis, Governor's Substance Abuse and Violent Crimes Advisory Board. The Wyoming Response is available for public comment through December 31, 2005 at www.wfli.org. WFLI team members have been requested to review the document and respond with the top three (3) priorities in both the state and local level recommendations no later than February 15, 2006. These priorities will form the basis of the next quarterly WFLI Team Meeting scheduled for March 2-3 in Cheyenne.

WFLI Team members should also mark their calendars for two other important events:

- 1.) March 28, 2006 - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently announced plans to facilitate a nationwide Town Hall Meeting on issues related to underage drinking. Wyoming will participate in the project via a live presentation by the First Lady and others on Wyoming Public Television on that date. Local communities are encouraged to participate in the live audience in Riverton or through a facilitated call in process.
- 2.) May 24-26, 2006 -Alcohol Education Showcase Snow King Resort, Jackson Hole

Nicky Anderson, Governor's Planning Office is the state contact for the March SAMHSA Town Hall Meeting project and the May Alcohol Showcase. For details or more information she can be contacted at 307-777-8571 or nander@state.wy.us

The bulk of the second day was dedicated to highlighting various Youth Leadership programs: Christine Revere from the Department of Education reported back on an effort to form a statewide youth council. Students from 16 communities met via the WEN video network on November 30 to discuss organizational details for this effort. For more information on the statewide youth council contact Christine at crever@educ.state.wy.us.

12 students from Cody along with their sponsor Deb White presented information on the Cody CAN program and the statewide Wyoming Youth for Justice (WYFJ) initiative. WYFJ has submitted a bill to the 2006 Legislature to make Keg Registration mandatory statewide. The students will be on site during the session to educate legislators on the merits of the bill. WYFJ is open to all students. Information on both the CAN program and Wyoming Youth for Justice is available by contacting Deb White at dmcwhite218@hotmail.com or go to their web site at <http://www.codycan.com/>

Cornelia Dereemer announced that in this second year of the program the Cheyenne CAN has expanded to include Central High School. During the 2004-05 school year the program was only available to East High School students. The support from classroom teachers has been so positive it's taking both Corny's time as well as that of a part time volunteer to manage the mentoring aspect of the program alone. She is looking at various ways to expand their funding for the future. To learn more about the Cheyenne CAN program contact Cornelia Dereemer at dereemerc@laramie1.k12.wy.us or 307-771-2167.

Ann Schlick from the Addictionology Department at Casper College and Randall Larson, Assistant Principal Natrona Co. High School accompanied three students from Casper who shared information about the Casper Super Stars and their relationship with the Casper Stars program at Casper College. For more information contact Ann at 307-268-2100.

Twenty-one students from the newly formed Riverton CAN program attended with their sponsors Jill Reddon, JoAnne Flanagan and Marissa Root. This program is new. The group traveled to Cody earlier this year and spent time on site with their counterparts and are working locally to implement the program. In addition to mentoring younger students the Riverton CAN members have been actively working to educate policy makers about best practice environmental prevention strategies including encouraging their support for the local use option tax bill being presented to the state legislature during the 2006 session. Jill Reddon is the primary contact for Riverton CAN and she can be reached at 307-856-6499 or jreddon@fremont25.k12.wy.us

The take-away message from the December meeting is that the WFLI is not only alive and well; it is growing by leaps and bounds every day. Awareness is expanding - we're able to speak with one voice across the entire state. By being grounded in the research and recommendations from the IOM/NAS Report, we are better able to confidently stay on message and move proven strategies forward to change the norms around youth access to alcohol in Wyoming.

So mark your calendar for the next WFLI Quarterly Team Meeting - March 2-3, 2006 at the Little America in Cheyenne. On line registration and a tentative agenda will be available January 15, 2006 at www.wfli.org. For room reservations call Little America in Cheyenne at (307)-775-8400. A block of rooms is being held under the code WFLI at the hotel.

You are encouraged to make your room reservations early as this meeting date is during the 2006 legislative session.