

The Foote School PTC Minutes
January 4, 2017
3:15 p.m.

Attendees: Amy Sudmyer (Co-President), Melissa Castleman (Co-President), Christine Pakutka (Secretary), Sumiya Khan, John Turner, Jenette Ganter, Mary Barnett, Chris Pamelard, Matt McCleery, Janice Dreier, Iris Kaminski, Lesley Marion

Welcome/Attendance: Meeting called to order at 3:15 by Amy.

Approval of Minutes: Motion made and seconded to approve December 7, 2016 minutes by Amy.

Treasurer's Report: Current PTC checking account balance is \$12, 117.80.

New Business – Activity Calendar

All-School Social: Yale Men's Basketball coach James Jones will be running a basketball fundraiser. All proceeds go to the PTC. The event will be held on Thursday, January 19th from 5:30-7:30. Younger siblings are welcome to attend. There will be additional activities such as crafts, cookie decorating and a Lego table. Participants can sign up in the Main Office beforehand or you can pay at the door. Price for the tickets will be \$15.

Spring Auction: The auction is scheduled for April 8th. The auction committee is looking for someone to chair the procurement committee that is in charge of asking local businesses to donate items and services to be auctioned.

Guest Speakers: Sarah Burrill and Stacey Wizniewski: Freedom From Chemical Dependency

Sarah Burrill and Stacey Wizniewski from Freedom From Chemical Dependency have been running a substance abuse prevention program with 5th, 7th, and 9th graders at Foote this week. They have found that students already know the names of and information about many drugs. Most likely they obtain their information from TV, music, movies and the Internet. Much of their exposure has been pro-use messaging from movies like the Hangover, which turn blacking out from drinking into a comedy. Pop culture normalizes this kind of behavior and minimizes the consequences. Therefore it becomes our job to counter influence this message. Social norms theory describes how individuals often incorrectly perceive behaviors of peers to be different than their own, when they are actually not. These individuals then alter their behavior to replicate the misperceived norm. What people think that everyone else is doing then becomes the norm. Students overestimate use of drugs and alcohol by their peers because of the pop culture messaging. If we help get kids get closer to the truth we can avoid future behaviors

being driven by false norms. Helping kids to have the necessary conversations will highlight the reality that not everyone is using drugs and alcohol and that there are consequences for those who do.

FCD describes prevention as a climate, not as a program where the focus is on promoting health and defining health as the norm. Addiction should be treated as a disease, but people respond to it differently than other diseases such as cancer. When it's the disease of addiction we face challenges such as silence, secrets, denial and enabling. We need to take out the stigma and shame and talk about it like the disease it is. We need to shift from silence to discussion, secrets to unburdening, and denial to responsibility. Drugs and alcohol stimulate the reward circuitry of the brain. High levels of dopamine are released when exposed to a drug and kids realize this is an easy way to get that release. The second time someone tries a drug or alcohol it's because they liked the way it made them feel the first time. The teen brain is pleasure seeking and prone to taking risks. 50% of people addicted to alcohol started before the age of 15. There is evidence that delaying exposure makes a big difference. Drinking while the brain is developing plants the seed to develop an addiction. 90% of people in rehab for substance abuse started under the age of 18. By having conversations with our children early, we can prepare them for the moment when they are first offered drugs and guide them on how to handle it.

Risk factors for addiction are family history, age of first use (the earlier a student tries it the more likely it will lead to addiction), cravings, tolerance and surroundings (community and pop culture messaging.) 5th graders at Foote brought home a "cravings exercise" this week involving temptation from a bag of candy and treats. This exercise reinforced how difficult it is for some people to stop themselves. Food stimulates the reward circuitry in the brain in a similar way to drugs and alcohol. This is why prevention has been more effective when dealing with substance abuse. Parents play a big role in prevention. Parents are the models. Children are watching you and how you feel about this matters to them. Suggestions for parents are to set clear limits, expectations and consequences. Know what is going on with your children after school, on weekends, during breaks/vacations, and especially when stress is high. Also, get to know their friends and their friends' parents. Eat together, watch the shows and movies they are watching, talk with your teens about alcohol and other drugs, continue to share your thoughts and concerns and spend the time you can with them. Research shows that youths who perceive that their parents disapprove of substance use and who report that their parents are involved in their day to day activities are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco/nicotine or illicit drugs. Visit www.fcd.org to learn more. Other helpful websites are:

<http://www.nida.nih.gov> – National Institute on Drug Abuse.
Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: <http://www.drugfree.org/>
Above the Influence: <http://abovetheinfluence.com/>

Meeting adjourned at 4:25

Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Christine Pakutka, PTC Secretary