



Special Needs Advisory Council

Nantucket, Massachusetts

Jessica Douglas, Laura Steele – Co-Chairs

SNAC Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2018

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00 PM, with fifteen people in attendance. The meeting was facilitated by co-chair Laura Steele. It was voted that the minutes from the May 23rd meeting be accepted.

Michele Brady introduced new Assistant Director of Special Education, Robin Altman Sherman.

Gennifer Costanzo announced that the Nantucket Autism Speaks Resource Office is no longer located in the school but in St. Paul's Church and the Nantucket Atheneum. Gennifer also distributed the Autism Speaks Respite Events flyer for the coming school year and announced that the popular early-release movie events should be restarting soon.

A presentation by Tess de Alberdi and Hugh Robbins of Fairwinds included an overview of their numerous programs and expanded, specialized services for youth, families and adults. Tess mentioned the recent hiring of new staff, including Dr. Dianne Coscia, who performs neuropsychological evaluations, with no current waitlist. It was stressed that insurance coverage is not a barrier to obtaining services, as Fairwinds offers sliding scale fees. Bilingual translators are also available.

A discussion about objectives for the SNAC for the coming year included:

- Interest in repeat presentations on the topics of:
 - Anxiety in children and teens (Fairwinds / M. Meckler)
 - Dyslexia (Nantucket Public Schools staff)
 - ADHD (Fairwinds / J. Tausig)
 - Special Needs Planning (Fletcher Tilton PC)
 - Expanding opportunities for friendships ('Widening the Circle' - ARC of MA)

- New presentations, workshops and trainings:
 - ADHD (Navigating ADHD, Inc. / Nadine, Nantucket support contact)
 - Think:Kids
 - Jessica Minahan, M.Ed, BCBA – School consultant

With regard to Think:Kids, it was suggested that this might be facilitated through NAMI. Michele Brady noted that there may be commitment requirements related to a grant, and that transportation may be an issue.

Michele noted that she is hoping to engage Jessica Minahan to present to NPS staff at a future date. If so, she will look in to the possibility of Jessica doing a separate presentation for parents as well. It was suggested that such a presentation could perhaps be held in the high school's LGI and be televised.

Special Needs Advisory Council

SNAC Meeting Minutes – September 19, 2018

Page 2

Laura Steele announced a new and important initiative of the SNAC – Exploring a Housing/Residential Program for transitioning students and other individuals with disabilities on Nantucket. The idea was borne from a discussion at the Special Education Director's coffee on September 6th, which was attended by several parents, including two SNAC board members. The discussion focused on the lack of housing options for students transitioning to adulthood who would like to continue residing on Nantucket.

Laura expressed the intention of creating a task force to explore this. Attendees V.M. and S.F. volunteered to serve on the task force. It was recommended that Kim Horyn be contacted for her possible involvement in this project. Tess suggested that the Nantucket Behavioral Health Task Force might be consulted for any assistance, including brainstorming, funding grants, etc. The BHTF meets the second and fourth Friday of every month at Sherburne Commons, with the next meeting taking place on September 28th. The coordinator is Vanessa Emery.

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 PM.

The next meeting of the SNAC will be held on October 17, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora R. Kebbati, Secretary of SNAC
Approved through a vote of SNAC members on 10/17/18.

The SNAC is organized to empower parents, school staff and community professionals to collaborate in a positive decision making process to plan and implement educational programs for students with special needs.

The SNAC will support, guide, advocate, advise and educate parents, Nantucket schools, and the community on the rights and needs of children with disabilities and their families.