



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK GROUP MARCH 10, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was held via Zoom videoconference. Following introductions, Ariel Ruttenberg called the meeting to order at 10:32am.

IN ATTENDANCE

Dan Martin / Village of New Lenox, Ariel Ruttenberg / New Lenox Police Department, Jenny Guiney / Guardian Angel Community Services, Tracy Curtis / Crisis Center for South Suburbia, Amirrah Abou-Youssef / Family Violence Coordinating Council – 12th Judicial District, Sherry Coe / Guardian Angel Community Services, Marie Kress / The Mental Wellness Center of Manhattan, Neesha Stringfellow / HLM Recovery, Abby Gentile / Begin Within Therapy Services, Erin Hanrahan / Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, Jennefer Hofferica / Nadine's Blue Butterfly, Olga Viano / New Lenox Community Park District, Daneen Taylor / Endeavor Health – Linden Oaks Outpatient Programs Mokena, Melanie Skach / Crisis Center for South Suburbia, and Meaghan South / Trinity Services, Inc.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes from the January 13, 2025 Task Group Meeting, which had been disseminated via email to Task Group members, were discussed. Olga Viano made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Marie Kress. After no further discussion, the motion carried and the minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

***"Teen Dating Violence: What Trusted Adults Should Know"* – in support of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**

Ariel Ruttenberg provided a synopsis of this event which was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm, via Zoom Videoconference. Nicole (Nikki) Merriman was the featured speaker who shared her personal story of a dating violence incident (sexual assault) that occurred when she was a teen. Nikki shared how the incident affected her and how she dealt with the stigma attached to the incident. Nikki's presentation was very powerful and those in attendance appreciated Nikki's courage for sharing her story with the intent of helping others. Ariel, along with those in attendance commented on how impactful Nikki's presentation was.

Jenny Guiney, Groundwork Community Outreach Supervisor, Guardian Angel Community Services, defined teen dating violence, discussed the different types of domestic violence relationships, defined abusive behavior, explained why some victims remain in abusive relationships, shared myths surrounding domestic violence and provided information regarding available resources. Jenny did an excellent job covering a wide variety of domestic-violence related topics.

Marie Goulet, LCSW and Lead Social Worker for New Lenox School District #122, discussed the effects that social media have on teens, provided a school perspective on teen dating violence and shared information regarding available resources. Marie also did an excellent job with her presentation. 102 citizens registered to attend via Eventbrite and approximately 65 were in attendance.

Dan commented that it was a very well-rounded panel that combined someone with lived experience with domestic violence prevention professionals.

It was noted that 90 minutes for three speakers plus time for Q & A seemed to work out very well. Those that were in attendance agreed.

Dan thanked the speakers as well as the Planning Team that organized the event.

NEW BUSINESS

“Domestic Violence 101” (aka DV 101)

DV 101 will be held via Zoom Videoconference from 7:00pm to 8:30pm on Thursday, March 27, 2025. Tracy Curtis, Community Education and Outreach Coordinator, Crisis Center for South Suburbia, will be the presenter.

Tracy Curtis provided a brief explanation regarding DV 101.

Jennefer Hofferica mentioned that she attended an in-person version of this program and said that it was excellent.

Dan Martin advised that there are currently over 60 people scheduled to attend this presentation as of today.

“Sexual Violence in a Digital World” – in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Sexual Violence in a Digital World will be held via Zoom Videoconference from 7:00pm to 8:30pm on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Recently, Planning Team Members (Ariel Ruttenberg, Jenny Guiney, Erin Hanrahan, Penny Eriks, Meaghan South and Sherry Coe) held a meeting to discuss this event.

Ariel advised that this event will be in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This event will focus on “tech issues” (social media). Ariel mentioned that Sherry Coe has a lot of material at Guardian Angel Community Services (Sexual Assault Center) that pertains to “tech-abuse” type things. Guardian Angel will primarily be putting together this presentation and Ariel thanked Sherry for agreeing to take the lead on this.

Sherry has identified a colleague who has stepped-up and agreed to do the presentation. Sherry noted that the presenter may not need the full 90 minutes, but there will be an opportunity to open it up for discussion following the presentation.

Ariel noted that there will be professionals in attendance that can add content and / or answer questions from those in attendance. Ariel advised that they need to do some additional planning as to who the professionals in attendance will be.

Marie Kress noted that a presentation will be given at the new Jr. High School in Manhattan tonight. Manhattan PD will deliver the presentation which will cover social media, including legal repercussions for parent of kids that abuse social media.

Erin Hanrahan noted that she would be happy to include a tip / resource sheet for the presentation that includes Cyber Stalking and Technology Abuse. Signs of abuse and safe technology tips will be included.

Dan mentioned that he plans to send out the marketing on this event on / about March 18th. Dan requested the speaker bio and learning objectives before that date.

Future Events and Activities – “A thru Z” Listing of Programs

Dan Martin explained that the below events were placed on the agenda to remind task group members of the good work that has been done since the inception of this task group. Dan noted that most of these programs, which have made a difference in the lives of those who have attended, have essentially been created from scratch. This is a testament to the talent that exists within this task group (individuals and organizations). Dan gave a heartfelt thanks to those that have contributed to these programs, to this task group, and to our coalition. Dan suggested to use this list as a guide for future domestic violence prevention educational programs. The programs listed were:

Building Healthy Relationships with Ourselves and Others

- April 25, 2022
- February 27, 2023
- February 5, 2024

Domestic Violence 101: Awareness, Prevention and Safety

- March 27, 2024

DV 101

- March 27, 2025

One Thing: Speak Up, Speak Out

- October 27, 2021
- October 3, 2022
- October 2, 2023

Sexual Violence in a Digital World

- April 15, 2025

Teen Dating Violence: What You Should Know to Support and Help Prevent

- May 2, 2023

Teen Dating Violence: What Trusted Adults Should Know

- February 25, 2025

GOOD OF THE ORDER / ORGANIZATION UPDATES

Ariel Ruttenberg / New Lenox Police Department, mentioned a new law that will go into effect on May 11th that's called Karina's law. Ariel provided a brief overview on the new legislation which pertains to orders of protection and firearms (FOID, CCL). Ariel advised that she is still learning about this legislation, which has a lot of moving parts.

Related to this, Amirrah is working on bringing in the Kane County State's Attorney on April 24th / 1:00pm, via Zoom on Red Flag Law Training. Although geared toward law enforcement and domestic violence advocates, Amirrah will promote this training widely.

Marie Kress / The Mental Wellness Center of Manhattan, noted how useful all the training is that the Safe Community Coalition and its collaborative partners do. Marie used an example of one of Amirrah's trainings that she found very useful. Marie spoke highly of this group and how she recommends it to others.

Neesha Stringfellow / HLM Recovery, invited anyone to send her information / resources. She's happy to send this information out via her email list.

NEXT COALITION MEETING

The next New Lenox Safe Community Coalition meeting will take place on **Wednesday, March 26, 2025 / 10:30am at Gatto's Italian Restaurant in New Lenox. A FREE luncheon will immediately following the meeting. Please reply to Dan Martin if you plan to attend.**

NEXT TASK GROUP MEETING

The next meeting of the Domestic Violence Prevention Task Group will be **Monday, May 12, 2025 / 10:30am via Zoom videoconference.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:01am.

Domestic Violence Prevention Task Group

“To reduce physical injuries and deaths, and emotional injury and hardships, associated with domestic violence, through the establishment of collaborative partnerships and the implementation of educational programs, strategies and initiatives.”