Steering Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 28th, 8:00-9:30  
Portland High School

Present:  
Sue Steele, 21 Reasons Steering Committee Chair, Portland Public Schools  
Officer Bethany Murphy, Portland Police Department  
Officer Coreena Behnke, Portland Police Department, School Resource Officer, Portland HS  
Sgt. Andrew Hutchings, Portland Police Department  
Debi Migneault, Principal, Portland HS  
Ellen Popenoe, Portland Parent, Neuropsychologist  
Sister Patricia Pora, Director, Hispanic Outreach, Diocese of Portland  
Caroline Raymond, Director, Day One  
Tom Handel, Director, Community Television Network 5  
Ronnie Katz, Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, City of Portland  
Jo Morrissey, Project Manager, 21 Reasons  
Carol Swicker, Project Manager, 21 Reasons

Absent:  
Jim Bourque, Vice President, Nappi Distributors  
Sam Beal, Executive Director, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Maine  
Marcie Oechslie, Educator, Sexual Assault Services of Southern Maine  
Jeanne Whynot-Vickers, Director of Education, LearningWorks

NOTE: DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS, WE RESCHEDULED OUR NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING TO WEDNESDAY 5/9 @ 8:00 A.M., TO BE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY THE TEXTING WORKGROUP.

I. Opening  
Jo Morrissey welcomed attendees & introductions were made. Committee Chair Sue Steele described our Steering Committee Ground Rules. Jo informed the group that Sam Beal, Executive Director extraordinaire of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Maine has agreed to join our coalition. Due to Sam’s limited capacity he will not likely attend many meetings, but has agreed to act as a resource to us in our efforts to increase the capacity of adults who work with youth. Jo and our cadre of coalition members who work on improving and implementing THE GAME, our adult training module, will be working with Sam. We are extremely excited to have Sam in the fold!
II. MIYHS Report

Jo reviewed the highlights of the 2011 MIYHS data. She then led a discussion about how 21 Reasons efforts are reflected in the data and how the data can guide our future efforts.

- 7% point increase in high school kids who report their parents talked to them about drugs or alcohol. Is this increase because of the work of 21R or OSA? We can determine somewhat by comparing Portland data to Maine data. Intervening variables include that Portland is a major media market.
- Decrease (but not significant) in the number of high school students reporting that someone gave them alcohol. Increase in middle school students reporting that someone gave them alcohol from 11% to 32%. Discussion about where else kids would get alcohol besides being given it by someone, how the question is worded, what the other choices are, and who is giving.
- 30 day usage rates have not changed significantly. There was surprise among the group that 30 day rates are not higher. Discussion about 30 day use versus longer term use (e.g., 45 day use, lifetime use). There was discussion on the believability of the data: whether perception of use was skewed depending on an individual’s personal experience. (ie: those who work in law enforcement or counseling who see a high percent of kids who use may tend to think most kids use) There was also the discussion if there were possible misperceptions among youth depending on who they hung out with. Suggested using the reported use rates in a ‘social norming’ type of campaign to support the reality that most of youth don’t drink. (note: while 33% of 9-12 graders report past 30-day use rates, usage rates increase with each grade. Actual numbers to come.) Working more closely with middle school students is important here as well.
- Perception of being caught by parents remained flat. To address this measure we need to work both on increasing parental perception of risk (so they are motivated to act) and educating on specific monitoring techniques.
- Perceived parental disapproval for alcohol and MJ remained flat.
- Usage rates for MJ in high school increased from 24% to 28%, and remained stagnant in Maine.
- High school students who thought there was slight or no risk of regular use of marijuana increased from 40% to 48%. Discussion about the impact of medical marijuana, decriminalization, and advertising for head shops and hydroponic growing supplies on this perception. How do we increase the perception of risk? Ideas included having MDEA agent talk to parents and/or kids about the possibility of MH being laced, focusing on brain development and increased risk to mental health disorders. Some strategies educating youth on the risks for alcohol would not necessarily work with MJ: Sticker shock, media literacy and being manipulated by BIG alcohol marketers are irrelevant to an illegal, small dealer, “Buy from your Local Marijuana Farmer” product such as MJ. In addition, when it comes to knowledge of risk, it’s pretty hard to counter the claim, “No one I know ever died of a MJ overdose.” Clearly more to talk about here.
- Past 30-day reported Prescription drug use remains low and has not increased significantly among youth in either Portland or Maine. This surprised the group, given the publicity around prescription drug use being epidemic. However, the use may be more among adults than among youth. Youth may not use as much because of the cost. Coreena stated she has never found prescription drugs on a student during a search, but has found lots and lots of marijuana.
- There are significant differences in the Parent Phone Survey between parental attitudes towards girls and boys. Parents of girls are less likely to see drinking as inevitable and less likely to feel hopeless. According to the MIYHS, girls perceive a higher risk for regular use of alcohol and marijuana.
- Perception of being caught by law enforcement has increased slightly in Portland (not significantly). Nice job, guys. The work with youth in positive ways is paying off. (positive tickets, youth officer, explorer programs...)

- **Significant increase in the number of students saying they were offered substances in school.**
  Contributing to this may be increased retention of high risk youth, economic opportunities for selling drugs within a difficult economy, mixed messages about marijuana, lack of criminal penalties for MJ. This increase was experienced in Portland, Cumberland County and statewide.

- Suggested strategies for reducing marijuana usage included appealing to kids dislike of “corporations” or organized drug dealing/production; educating parents on the increased potency of MJ in the past generation; asking kids who don’t smoke MJ why they don’t and building prevention strategies from there; focusing on parents who smoke MJ to increase their knowledge of risk for their child and perhaps adult role modeling—although these parents may not be ready for that.

- Discussion about who decides the questions on the MIYHS and if we can request additional questions. Jo explained the complicated process for changing the instrument and the numerous stakeholders who fund the MIYHS whose questions take precedence. In addition, Maine’s DFC Coalitions are already working with OSA to add questions to be in compliance with DFC reporting requirements. However, we can consider other tools and qualitative data sources to get a clearer picture of youth use, perception of peer use, and perception of risk.

### III. Parent Campaign Proposals

21R has joined forces with other DFC and substance use prevention coalitions in Cumberland County to develop a multi-year community campaign. Based on the suggestion from 21R steering committee, the same message will carry throughout the three years in order to have more impact. The group has talked about common goals and community needs, and have reviewed campaigns from other communities (nationally).

We released an RFP to designers asking for concepts and received two responses. One response provided a concrete concept that could form that basis of the campaign. The other response suggested a process for group work to create a vision, focus, etc. but did not provide a specific concept yet. Overall, the group liked the process proposed in the second proposal. There was a concern raised that this process could take a long time. The group likes concepts that are more provocative than the one proposed by the first designer (We Are One). Concerns were also raised that whatever design we choose reflect the diversity of Portland, and that we get feedback both from culturally diverse groups including parents in recovery.

### IV. City Council resolution/Prevention Week

Rather than ask the City Council to issue a proclamation for April as Alcohol Awareness month as we have done in years past, 21R is working with Healthy Portland and Maine Alliance of Substance Abuse Providers (MASAP) on Prevention Week activities which falls on May 21st through 26th. Prevention week focuses on alcohol, marijuana and prescription drug misuse. Activities include: asking City Council adopt a Resolution declaring the week of May 21st Prevention Week, to sign an oversized Resolution, and ask them to take the pledge. We will display the Resolution and an oversized Proclamation at that Wednesday’s Farmer’s Market. There we will have laptops available for folks to sign onto the pledge online. We will also promote the proclamation via FaceBook both locally and statewide. Healthy Portland has received a small stipend for these activities and has invited us to join it. The group was enthusiastic. *(PLEDGE ATTACHED)*
V. SADD Presentation

SADD members, with leadership and support of Officer Corina Benke are working on a presentation to Lincoln and Lyman Moore middle school students in their Health classes. The focus will be on the reality of what role alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs play school climate, and as well as any other expectations. SADD students will also review some advice about transitioning to high school, and address any questions or concerns. 21 Reasons shared with the SADD group the MIYHS 30 day use rates to SADD to help illustrate most kids don’t use.