

Meeting Minutes: SWWA REGIONAL FYSPRT Meeting 8/17/26 – Hybrid

Presentation: Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington Outreach Program

Presenter: Izzy Queisser, Program Director of Outreach

Overview

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington Outreach Program provides gang and group violence prevention and intervention services for youth and young adults in Clark County.

The program uses the broader term group violence in addition to gang violence so services can reach youth who may not identify as gang members but are experiencing risk factors or participating in group behaviors that could increase their likelihood of becoming involved in violence or criminal activity.

The program also serves youth who are impacted by gang or group violence through friends, siblings, neighborhoods, schools, or other environments.

Risk Factors

The program works with youth experiencing factors such as:

- Exposure to drugs and alcohol
- Exposure to weapons
- Violence within neighborhoods
- High levels of police activity
- School disconnection
- Bullying
- Loneliness and social isolation
- School suspensions
- Fighting or aggressive behavior
- Criminal justice involvement
- Gang or group involvement

The Boys & Girls Club model intentionally places services within under-resourced neighborhoods to increase protective factors and improve access to positive youth development opportunities.

Individualized Youth & Family Support

Outreach services are individualized rather than prescriptive. Staff work with youth to identify their goals and determine what supports will help them succeed.

Supports may include:

- Mentoring
- Academic support
- School engagement
- Family support
- Community resource navigation
- Food assistance connections
- Housing resource navigation
- Individual or family counseling referrals
- Community activities
- Goal setting
- Crisis support
- Referrals to partner programs

Staff may also work with schools, counselors, security staff, law enforcement, DCYF, behavioral health providers, and other systems involved with a youth.

Family involvement varies by individual case, but the program emphasized that collaboration with caregivers can make it easier to support youth and coordinate services.

Relationship-Based Approach

Relationship building is central to the Outreach Program.

Staff emphasized:

- Showing up consistently.
- Doing what they say they will do.
- Avoiding promises they cannot keep.
- Being honest with youth.

- Supporting youth through mistakes without labeling them as bad people.
 - Celebrating progress and successes.
 - Helping youth navigate consequences while identifying positive next steps.
-

Three Levels of Outreach Services

The Outreach Program operates across three levels of prevention and intervention.

1. Prevention

Prevention is the earliest level of intervention and is embedded within Boys & Girls Club locations.

Youth may be identified for additional support when staff observe risk factors such as:

- Exposure to drugs, alcohol, or weapons
- Neighborhood violence
- Frequent police activity
- Bullying
- Loneliness
- Lack of connection at school
- Need for additional mentorship

Youth participating in prevention services are connected with mentors and weekly programming focused on:

- Positive self-worth
- Conflict resolution
- Healthy relationships
- Positive decision-making
- Building protective factors

Prevention caseloads may include approximately 30 youth at each clubhouse, depending on availability.

2. Intervention

Intervention services are available for youth and young adults approximately ages 12–24 who are experiencing increased behavioral or community risk factors but may not yet have significant criminal justice involvement.

The Outreach Program's coordinators provide group case management and activities such as:

- School check-ins
- Lunch meetings
- Community service
- Field trips
- Goal setting
- Communication skill development
- Positive recreational opportunities
- Community engagement

Youth at this level may be experiencing:

- School suspension
- Fighting
- Behavioral concerns
- Difficulty succeeding in traditional youth programs
- Early aggression
- Difficulty remaining engaged in classroom settings

Each outreach coordinator carries a caseload of approximately 30 youth.

3. YET – Youth Engagement Team

The Youth Engagement Team (YET) provides the program's most intensive level of one-on-one mentorship and case management.

YET is designed for youth experiencing significant or acute concerns, including:

- Criminal justice involvement
- Gang involvement
- Detention or incarceration
- Reentry needs
- Significant behavioral concerns

The YET case manager works closely with youth at the courthouse and in detention and helps youth navigate court involvement and reintegrate into the community following release. The YET caseload is approximately 15 youth, allowing for more intensive individualized support.

Crisis Support

Crisis assistance is individualized and may include:

- Responding to school behavioral escalations.
- Supporting youth when law enforcement becomes involved.
- Coordinating with WISE teams.
- Helping youth understand why other service providers are involved.
- Providing a trusted connection between the youth and other systems.

The program clarified that its crisis support does not replace formal crisis or WISE services but can complement those services through the established relationship between the mentor and youth.

YET Committee

The Youth Engagement Team is also supported by a community committee made up of stakeholders and partners from throughout Clark County.

Committee members help the program connect youth with systems and resources, including school district supports and other community services.

New Outreach Program Space

The Boys & Girls Clubs Outreach Program announced the opening of its first dedicated outreach program space at Evergreen High School.

The space will provide:

- Offices for outreach staff
- One-on-one meeting space
- Small group programming
- Greater confidentiality for participating youth
- Increased access to services on the east side of Vancouver

The new location is intended to reduce transportation and geographic barriers that previously required staff to transport youth to other Boys & Girls Club locations.

Referrals

The Outreach Program accepts referrals from:

- Youth themselves
- Parents and caregivers
- Schools
- Juvenile Court
- Community organizations
- Other community members

A digital HIPAA-compliant referral form and paper referral option are available.

The program strongly encourages a warm handoff so youth and families understand why they are being contacted and what information has been shared.

Participation is voluntary and youth-driven. Schools, probation officers, parents, and other systems cannot require a youth to participate in the program.

FYSPRT Community Event

Making Connections in the Community

Date: August 18, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM–4:00 PM

Location: River City Church

Cost: Free

Planned activities and resources include:

- Community resource tables
- Lunch
- Kona Ice
- Live music from School of Rock
- Raffles

- Free haircuts
- Youth and family activities

Narcan Training

The Southwest Washington Accountable Community of Health (SWACH) will provide a Narcan training focused on youth and families.

NAMI Ending the Silence

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will provide an Ending the Silence presentation featuring young adults sharing their personal experiences with mental health challenges, recovery, hope, and their plans for the future.

Community Updates & Events

Upcoming community opportunities shared during the meeting included:

- August Forest Walk at Columbia Springs
- Community movie nights
- Sunflower Festival
- Vancouver Farmers Market
- Various late-summer and back-to-school events

Participants were encouraged to share community resources and activities with youth and families.

FYSPRT Tri-Lead Updates

System Partner Tri-Lead

Angelo Gonzales announced that he will be leaving his role as the FYSPRT System Partner Tri-Lead.

He thanked the group for the opportunity to serve in the role and reflected on the experience of bringing community partners together. Angelo plans to remain connected to FYSPRT as a community partner.

Youth Tri-Lead

Emma Ocampo also announced that she will be leaving her role as the FYSPRT Youth Tri-Lead after more than four years.

Transition planning is underway to ensure the next Youth Tri-Lead is prepared and supported in the role.

YAE (Youth Advocacy & Empowerment) Update

YAE will continue meeting at Legacy High School during the school year.

Regular Schedule

Typical Meeting Day: First Monday of each month

Time: 4:00–5:30 PM

Location: Legacy High School

Meetings may be moved to the second Monday when the first Monday falls on a holiday.

YAE provides a youth-centered environment for participants to connect, discuss issues important to them, and build youth voice and leadership.

Washington State Community Connectors

Participants discussed the Washington State Community Connectors (WSCC) caregiver training weekend planned for September.

WSCC serves as the statewide family network and provides opportunities for parents and caregivers to:

- Connect with other families.
- Participate in trainings.
- Learn about behavioral health systems.
- Build advocacy skills.
- Engage in statewide behavioral health work.

Travel and lodging assistance may be available for eligible participants depending on distance and available space.

Statewide Behavioral Health & Legislative Work

The group reviewed how regional FYSPRTs connect to statewide behavioral health policy and legislative work.

FYSPT concerns and identified gaps can be elevated through the Children & Youth Behavioral Health Work Group and its subgroups.

The Youth and Young Adult Continuum of Care (YAC) focuses on behavioral health needs for youth and young adults ages 13–25 across the continuum, including:

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Treatment
- Crisis
- Recovery

Washington State Community Connectors has also been actively involved in advocacy and YAC discussions, including conversations regarding family involvement in behavioral health treatment.

Back-to-School Discussion

Participants discussed back-to-school resources, events, supplies, and the changing needs of students and families.

Community Events

Events discussed included:

- Backpack and school supply giveaways.
- Community resource fairs.
- Back-to-school celebrations.
- Events in Clark County and neighboring regions.

A back-to-school event at Hazel Dell Community Park was shared for August 23, with the Native American Rising Generations Foundation identified as a sponsor.

Participants also shared information about regional back-to-school events offering:

- Backpacks
- Books
- School supplies
- Community resource tables
- Opportunities for system partners to connect directly with families.

School Supplies & Student Resources

The group discussed how school supply needs have changed over time.

Topics included:

- Increased reliance on Chromebooks and digital materials.
- School-based resource closets.
- Availability of backpacks, hygiene supplies, and classroom materials.
- Teachers providing supplies when students do not have them.
- Differences in requirements between elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Continued financial barriers for some families.

IEPs, 504 Plans & Technology

Participants discussed challenges related to technology and accommodations, including:

- Difficulty obtaining paper assignments when digital work is challenging for students.
- Differences in how schools respond to accommodation requests.
- The importance of documenting accommodations through an IEP or 504 Plan when appropriate.
- PAVE as a potential resource for families seeking special education information and advocacy support.

Youth perspective was also shared regarding:

- Increased use of digital textbooks.
- Restrictions placed on school-issued Chromebooks.
- Difficulty accessing websites needed for coursework because of school technology filters.
- Students reusing supplies across multiple school years.
- Availability of school-based resources for students experiencing housing instability or financial need.

Back-to-School Mental Wellness

The group discussed the importance of considering emotional and behavioral health needs during the transition back to school, not only school supplies.

NAMI's online back-to-school resources were highlighted for:

- Students
- Parents and caregivers
- Educators

Resources include topics such as:

- Bullying warning signs
- Setting boundaries
- Mental wellness
- Supporting students and educators during the school transition

The information will be shared with the FYSPRT distribution list.

Next Meeting: September 21, 2026 – virtual