From the Desk of the Executive Director...

Happy Holidays, Everyone!

Rachelle Madrigal, the Board of Directors business representative from the Pittsburgh Pirates was elected Chairperson for 2013 at the Coalition's Annual Meeting. Serving with her as Vice Chairperson is Manatee Schools SAFE Coordinator Steve Rinder, along with Certified Public Accountant Reba Rogers (AAA Bookkeeping) as Treasurer and Jane Testa (Manatee Glens) as Recorder.

New members on the board include Brena Slater, Community Development Administrator with Florida Department of Children and Families and Holly Quillian, Corporate Office Manager at Just for Girls.

Calendar

12/6
Board Meeting
2 p.m.
3rd Floor Community Services Conference Room

12/12
Coalition Meeting
3 p.m.
United Way of Manatee
1701 Tamiami Trail, Bradenton

Attention:
Festival Scan Training
Conducted by Sharon Kramer &
Holly Quillian

The Board meets on **December 6** to plan for their January 10th orientation/retreat. A major focus of the January meeting will be a review of the National Guard's Coalition Kaizen completed at the November coalition meeting. Coalition Kaizen is an evaluation tool that helps community partnerships continuously improve their work by surveying members on the Strategic Prevention Framework which includes assessment, resource capacity building, planning, implementation and evaluation.

**VetCorps CORNER**
*by Dick Cusack*

On November 20th MCSAC Vet Corps hosted its first Task Force meeting with community leaders to discuss veteran substance abuse, mental health, employment, and educational challenges. Thanks to leaders from United Way, Manatee County Community Services, The Harvesters, Manatee County Veteran Services Division, Jewish Family and Children's Service, Volunteers of America, Manatee Glens, Suncoast Partnership, Hope Family Services, Bay Pines Health Care, Bay Pines VAHCS, Community Coalition on Homelessness, Alcoholics Anonymous, LECOM, Salvation Army, Suncoast Workforce, Palmetto Police Department, and University of South Florida for partnering with the MCSAC to address Manatee veteran needs and service gaps.

Dr. Tom Griffin from The Transition House Inc., St. Cloud, Florida provided an overview of his successful transitional housing program that accommodates three hundred homeless (including veterans). His facilities provide educational programs, healthcare and job training, and highlighted possibilities for Manatee to consider. Anyone interested in veterans’ issues is welcome to join the group at the **January 20th meeting** which will be held **10 am-12pm** in the **4th Floor Manatee Conference Room, Manatee County Government Administrative Center**.

VeterCorps Coordinator Dick Cusack is gathering data on
veterans and their needs in the identified challenge areas and the task force will complete a resource/capacity assessment to help attendees understand gaps in services and identify future efforts to address the needs.

**Manatee County Youth Commission Update**

by Jessica Spencer Zemanek
It's been a quick-moving two months for the Manatee County Youth Commission (MCYC). Students staffed a table at the Manatee County Children's Services-sponsored Children's Summit (Convention Center) on Oct 6th where they showcased their Fatal Vision Goggles along with information on MCYC for attendees. New youth commissioner Ella Biggins, along with MCSAC staff and Board members, met with Representative Greg Steube on Oct 19th. Rep. Steube is very supportive of MCYC efforts, leaving the door open for further communication and suggesting collaboration on a possible MCYC field trip to Tallahassee as well as providing appropriate training for the group.

October also saw two full leadership training days for the MCYC (Oct 21 and Oct 28), both of which were extremely successful. First, Manatee County Health Department's youth advocacy group, Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) invited MCYC to attend their training (thanks Jessica May, SWAT Coordinator). Students had great fun learning about activism from a professional advocate. MCYC member Becky O'Brien said, "By attending the SWAT training we were taught methods of raising awareness and enacting change that can be applied to a variety of the issues that affect youth."

The following week MCYC students spent a day together in team-building and leadership training at Dayspring. MCYC member Lindsay Wheeler commented, "The (leadership) training outlined the true qualities of what embodies a committed member and a leader. It was a day well spent because we accomplished various team-building activities together." She noted that the students learned the importance of collaboration with others in order to be successful while they were building a boat out of unconventional materials during an exercise conducted by Pathfinder, Inc. Additionally, the training gave the MCYC students basic group dynamic skills to develop norms they would like to see in their group as they move forward.

On November 7th, the students elected an executive committee. Each of the MCYC Prevention Workgroup Committees - Bullying, Substance Abuse, Teen Pregnancy - have identified Chairpersons, met and begun working on preliminary data research and investigation that they will use to develop Action Plans for 2012-2013.

Manatee County Youth Commission has 170 'likes' on Facebook at the time of this publication. Have you liked them yet?!
MCYC Co-Sponsors Red Ribbon Event

140 community members attended this year's 10th Annual Red Ribbon Breakfast. The inclusion of local policymakers had a huge impact on all in attendance, especially Manatee County Youth Commission (MCYC) students. In preparation for Red Ribbon, MCYC worked very hard writing and refining questions for local representatives. The students applied skills acquired from training by Hillsborough County Intergovernmental Relations Manager Brandon Wagner who has served as a legislative aide in Tallahassee. He shared his expertise in the field as an invited speaker during a recent MCYC regular meeting, offering an in-depth look at how the political system works and the best way to get their point across in a succinct manner.

MCYC students asked policymakers their views on several important issues: tobacco with candy flavor; using best practices when serving alcohol at community festivals; addressing the 1800% increase in Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome; legalizing marijuana; the surge in use of K2/Spice; and the cost of prevention vs. treatment and rehabilitation.

To increase public awareness about the Red Ribbon Breakfast, MCYC members Ella Biggins and Lindsay Wheeler were interviewed on ABC 7 Sunrise show with Hayley Wielgus. Lindsay noted, "I loved representing the youth commission on ABC 7's Sunrise Show. Even though I had to wake up very early (4:00 am), it was a memorable experience that I would definitely do again. I learned about the preparation it takes to be able to answer questions on live TV and how important local shows are to the community."
Nineteen MCY Commissioners were in attendance at the Breakfast and each had the opportunity to mingle with local policy makers and community members. MCYC would like to give a heartfelt thanks to the individuals that came to the breakfast and supported them this year. **We encourage you to mark your calendars in advance for next years Red Ribbon Breakfast on October 22!** We hope to see you again!

### Coalition Contact Information

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