



WCCY MINUTES

Wakulla County Coalition for Youth

Date | time 02/04/26 12:30 pm-1:30 p.m. | *Meeting called to order by* James Lewis

In Attendance

Karen Zak, James Lewis, Patrick Allison, Yolanda Carlson, Tamika Rich, Chase Savary, Tom Mallon, Bonnie Wertemberger, Kimberly Mattox, Lisa Sherry, Karley Gordon, Marquesas Blimes, Olivia Piazza, Emily Kohler, Jenness Jones, Josh Lawhon, Amanda Gruebel, Caden Gruebel, Novella Franklin, Lottie Roy, Rebecca Sahar, Carl Roach, Stephanie Cash, Karley Gordon, Kaizsa Threatt, Rev. Renita Dixon

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from January 2026 Meeting – A motion was made by Caden Gruebel and seconded by Rebecca Sahar to approve. The motion carried.

Agenda Items/Presentation

1. Kimberly Mattox on Fundraising Committee Update:

- **Champions for Change Brunch**

- **Date & Time:** May 2nd, 10 AM – 1 PM
- **Location:** Community Center, Crawfordville Room
- **Purpose:** Honor youth and adult volunteers, including those who have passed but made lasting impacts in Wakulla County
- **Features:** Brunch + Silent Auction
- **Current Sponsorships/In-Kind Donations:**
 - Firehouse Subs: 50 subs, 50 bags of chips, 4 dozen cookies, 2 gallons of tea
 - Dunkin' Donuts: Box coffee with sugar, creamers, stirrers
 - Additional business contributions pending

- **Restaurant Fundraiser Nights**

- **Firehouse Subs Share Night:** March 29th, 10% of proceeds go to WCCY
- **Pending:** Zaxby's and DQ share nights under discussion
- **Purpose:** Raise funds to support youth programs and discourage drug/alcohol use

- **Back-to-School Summer Event**

- Planning a fun, activity-based event (basketball, volleyball, or pickleball)
- Goal: Engage youth in positive, safe activities
- More details to come

- **Action Items**

- Contact fundraising committee for sponsorship or in-kind support
- Fundraising Committee meets every Friday at 11 AM via Zoom.

2. Karen Zak on Drug-Free Communities Grant:

- **CADCA Conference & Coalition Work**

- **Location & Event:**
- **Where:** Washington, D.C.

- **Event:** CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Conference
- **Attendees:** Florida coalitions including Wakulla, Broward, Brevard, Sumter, and others (~27 people in total)
- **Purpose of Visit:**
 - Meet with **Senator Moody** and **Senator Scott**
 - Represent Wakulla and share the coalition’s community work
 - Advocate for continued funding of **primary prevention programs** (prevention saves money long-term)
- **Key Highlights & Action Items:**
 - **Champions for Change Brunch Flyers:** Available in-person; volunteers can pick up and distribute in the community
 - **Next Poster (#6):** Ready for distribution; volunteers encouraged to post around the community
 - **School Programs:**
 - Coordinated with Kat Epperson, Coast guidance counselor
 - **“Too Good for Drugs” program** to begin the week after next
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Bring back insights from CADCA conference to share with the coalition
 - Continue outreach and advocacy for prevention programs in the community

County Report

Josh Lawhon: No county updates currently.

Sheriff Report

Lt. Tom Mallon/Chase Savary:

- **Upcoming Events & Community Outreach**
 - **Upcoming Event: Golf Tournament**
 - **Date:** May 7th
 - **Purpose:** Fundraiser to support the **Community Outreach Unit**
 - **Support:** Proceeds donated by local businesses
- **Other Upcoming Events (This Month):** Valentine’s Day activities, African-American Parade, and Various community events to engage youth and residents

School District Report

Simeon Nelson was not in attendance.

Treasurer Report

Lottie Roy:

There was no monetary activity during the month, with the exception of a \$15 service charge in January. The current account balance is \$3,506.37.

An update was shared regarding compliance matters. Contact has been made with a representative at the IRS to determine how many prior years must be filed to ensure the organization’s 990 filings are current and to maintain active status. Additionally, communication has taken place with a representative from the state department overseeing charitable solicitation. The organization’s solicitation filing has been submitted; however, a financial report for the fiscal year ending October 30, 2025 has been requested. Clarification is pending regarding the specific documentation required.

It was also noted that a 990 postcard was submitted in October under the understanding that it was due October 15th; however, it was determined that the upcoming 2026 filing must be completed between January 1st and May 1st. Plans are in place to complete that filing within the next week.

Partner Reports

Novella Franklin (Zeta Phi Beta Sorority): 10th Anniversary Gala on 4/11/26 5:30 PM at the Wakulla County Community Center. Keynote Speaker is past International President, Mary Breaux Wright. Tickets are \$75. You can also purchase ads for the event. Proceeds will go toward the chapter's first scholarship for a high school student in Wakulla County.

Caden Gruebel (Future Leaders of Wakulla/4H): Third annual Senior Citizen prom will take place on 2/13 at the Wakulla County Senior Center; if anyone would like to donate pastries or cookies, please bring them to the Extension office at 84 Cedar Ave by 2/11. Prevention Before Intervention teen town hall will take place on 4/25 with more details coming soon.

Carl Roach (Career Source Capital Region): Two upcoming workforce-focused events were discussed. Find a Job Friday will be held on Friday, February 13th at the county office. Approximately nine employers are expected to attend. A flyer listing the scheduled employers was prepared; however, technical issues prevented it from being shared. The second event, the Internship Showcase, will take place on Thursday, March 5th and will focus on summer jobs and internship opportunities for high school students and out-of-school young adults. The purpose of the event is to connect young people with employers who are interested in helping them develop workforce skills, gain experience, and increase community involvement. Flyers for the Internship Showcase are available and will be distributed.

Rebecca Sahar (Wakulla Co Public Library): Tummy Time for Moms and Babies starts 2/5. Check online calendar for times.

Emily Kohler (Big Bend AHEC): A tobacco cessation program update was provided. Group quit classes are available either in person or virtually based on community need, interest, and referrals. Current incentives include a \$25 gift card per session for the four-week class, with a \$50 bonus gift card for attending all four sessions. Participants in the one-time, two-hour class receive a \$50 gift card. Individuals may participate in one option only and cannot receive incentives for both formats.

An update was also shared regarding aging program services. There has been community interest in offering Tai Chi for older adults. Certified instructors are available, and the program runs for six weeks, meeting twice per week. The focus includes strengthening, stretching, and fall prevention. There are currently challenges securing a location locally, but discussions are ongoing. Additionally, a diabetes education and empowerment program is available. Assistance is also offered for families needing help applying for children's health insurance coverage. Contact information was shared for any follow-up questions.

Patrick Allison (Caroline's Agape Project): First, the nonprofit resource group that had previously been placed on hold will resume meeting. The group will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 3:00 p.m., following the coalition meeting, at the local chamber office. This group is intended for invited nonprofit organizations, and members are encouraged to invite others who may benefit. The purpose is to promote collaboration and resource-sharing among nonprofits in the county.

Second, plans were announced for National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month in April. A pinwheel garden display, representing the national blue and silver pinwheel symbol, will be installed at the south entrance of a local park beginning at noon on April 1st and will remain in place throughout the month. Community members are invited to attend the kickoff at noon on April 1st to help raise awareness. Sponsorship opportunities are available at \$100, which includes recognition on press materials and signage.

Lottie Roy (LWREA): An update was provided regarding the fifth-grade essay contest. The retired educators association has completed its essay collection, and Shadeville Elementary submitted 35 essays. A scoring meeting is scheduled for the

upcoming week. To ensure fairness, it was noted that recusal from scoring essays submitted by Shadeville will occur due to local affiliation, and instead essays from Leon County will be scored. Members from Leon County will score the Wakulla County submissions. Leon County submitted fewer essays than Wakulla County. Appreciation and pride were expressed for Wakulla County's strong participation and representation from local schools.

Tamika Rich (Wakulla County Christian Coalition): An update was provided regarding the upcoming African American Heritage Celebration taking place February 20th through February 22nd. On Friday, the Arthur Andrews Memorial Scholarship Gala will be held at the community center. Tickets must be purchased in advance, as none will be sold at the door. Those interested are encouraged to connect with a coalition member to secure tickets. On Saturday, a celebration in the park and parade will take place from 10:00 a.m. to approximately 2:00 p.m. Community members are invited to attend and participate in the festivities. The weekend will conclude on Sunday with an African American Read-In focused on youth literacy. The event will include book giveaways, Kindle giveaways, local authors, children's authors, and a variety of children's books to help promote literacy throughout the county. Community members are encouraged to come out and support the weekend's events.

Stephanie Cash (Healthy Families Franklin/Wakulla/Gulf): An update was provided on behalf of a home visiting parent support and education program serving local families. It was announced that a new full-time, Wakulla-based home visitor has been onboarded. She comes from a medical background, which will be a valuable addition to the team, as this is the first team member with clinical experience. She officially began on Friday and is currently completing training and orientation. It is anticipated that she will begin serving families in the field within the next few weeks.

Yolanda Carlson (NWF Health): An update was provided by a bilingual community relations specialist representing a regional health network. Community partners were encouraged to visit the resource website to review available listings. Agencies were asked to verify that their organization is included, particularly if they provide free or sliding-scale services. If an agency is not listed, there is an option on the website to request to be added, or partners may reach out directly for assistance with updates. The goal is to ensure that all available resources across the region are centralized in one location and kept current. Contact information was shared for follow-up and support.

Karley Gordon (Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center): The organization recently held its annual event, which was reported as very successful. Following the event, a silent auction is being hosted with a variety of items available for bidding, including unique jewelry, vintage purses, weekend getaways, artwork, and sports tickets for football, softball, baseball, and basketball. A link to view and place bids was shared with attendees.

Lisa Sherry (DISC Village): An update was provided regarding upcoming educational presentations on medication safety, titled **Remove the Risk**. These presentations are designed for families with children, seniors, or anyone interested in learning about safe medication practices. Attendees of the presentations receive giveaways, including products that safely destroy medications, such as DeTerra and DisposeRx. Coalition members were encouraged to share opportunities to host these presentations with any interested groups.

Kaizsa Threatt (MADD): An update was provided on upcoming awareness and outreach events. The Northwest Florida victims' walk in Tallahassee is scheduled for April to honor those lost in traffic crashes. Additionally, a cycling event, **Ride Like MADD**, will take place, encouraging participants to log miles in competition with others across the state to honor crash victims. The organization also offers **promposal presentations** during prom season, and members were encouraged to reach out for more information or to participate in any of these events.

Marquesas Blimes (FAAST): The organization provides services to all Florida residents, with a focus on individuals with disabilities. Services include free loans and training on assistive technology devices to support people with hearing, vision, speech, learning, or other disabilities. Devices may include hearing aids, screen magnifiers, iPads with learning or communication apps, and other tools. The goal is to help individuals with disabilities access technology that enhances daily living and independence. Contact information and a website link were shared for further information and to explore the lending library.

Rev. Renita Dixon (Unity in the Community): An update was provided expressing appreciation for recent conversations with coalition members. Community members were invited to get involved with the **Unity in the Community** initiative and were encouraged to reach out for more information or to participate.

Olivia Piazza (Safe Kids Big Bend): An update was provided regarding upcoming family-focused events. Plans are underway to host additional **car seat safety events** this year, though dates are still to be determined. It was also noted that a local hospital is planning a **baby and family fair**, with the official date yet to be announced. Further details will be shared when available.

Rebecca Sahar moved to adjourn the meeting. Emily Kohler seconded the motion. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM.

Next Meeting

February 4, 2026 at 12:30 pm at Wakulla County Public Library & Virtually