



Weymouth Rotary Club - No. 6685
 District 7950
 P.O. Box 52, So. Weymouth, Massachusetts 02190

APRIL 1, 2019

EDITION #33

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Club News and Announcements April 1, 2019

PROGRAM

Early Intervention for Children

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April

- 15 No Meeting—Patriots Day
- 22 Care Packs for Soldiers Raymond— Chair
- 29 Pam Denholm—Weymouth Food Pantry



April Birthday's

- 7 Arthur Sharp
- 9 Dana Myers
- 13 Bob Petrelli
- 19 Jim Bristol III



President Jim extended the invitation from the Weymouth Educational Foundation (WEF) to sponsor a team for Friday's *Who Wants to be a Know-it-All* fundraiser. Jim has appointed Jay Walker as the team captain.

President Jim also announced that the Pancake Breakfast will be postponed from May 19th due to the renovation of the Whipple Center's kitchen renovation. We will reschedule it in the Fall. Stay tuned!

George Raymond announced that the Blood Drive is Friday April 19th from 2-7PM. The Red Cross has limited us to 45 appointments, so if you can go to www.redcrossblood.org and make an appointment they might make more appointments available to the Club.



Dick Smith reiterated what a great time he has had at previous *Who Wants to be a Know-it-All* events sponsored WEF. You get to see people from around town, have a good time, and donate funds to a great cause.



Larry Cassese is happy to be back from "Rotary School", Rotary Leadership Institute. Larry said because he is a member in Weymouth that he already knew some of the answers which made him look wicked smart. He is on to level two.



Tom Rizzo ecstatic to become a member of Jay Walker team to help bring home a victory for the Weymouth Club. Tom is also happy that his pal Shari graduated from Rotary Leadership Institute.



Director Jim Cavanaro reminded us that it is April 1st and the President of the Club is a self employed CPA running the meeting as usual. Kudos to President Jim!!



PP Alden Blaho apologized for putting in the wrong speaker's picture in last week's Wheel. If there were as many editors as critics the job might not be so daunting.



Tim Cronin, the Clubs newest addition to the Wheel Committee, is happy he has a new opportunity at his work to be on a regional scenario advisory committee. The committee will explore affordability and other economic issues on the South Shore.



Susan Sered- Opioid Abuse in Weymouth
Chair- Daryl Cook-Ivan



Daryl Cook-Ivan introduced our guest speaker Susan Sered. Susan is a Professor of Sociology at Suffolk University and Senior Researcher at Suffolk University's Center for

Women's Health and Human Rights. Susan had been the director of the Religion, Health and Healing Initiative at the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions. Her interests include both research and advocacy/activism. Susan is the author of seven books, nearly one hundred scholarly articles, and numerous op-eds and shorter articles focusing on women's health, mass incarceration, and a variety of religious issues.

In April of 2018, Susan exhibited data indicating that the opioid crisis has not impacted all communities to the same extent. Nationally, rates of opioid abuse trend higher among white men in working class neighborhoods than among other demographics. She performed a deeper investigation into the reasons for these disparities and launched a study focusing on the root causes of the opioid crisis at the community level.

Since that time she has carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Weymouth. According to data gathered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Weymouth is one of the Massachusetts towns hit hardest by the opioid crisis. With a majority white population, Weymouth's per capita income is \$36,174.

Susan was encouraged to select Weymouth as a research site by the warm welcome with which my inquiries were met by residents and by the cooperation extended by town officials and municipal employees. Over the past months she spoke with young and old people, teachers and parents, blue collar workers and health care professionals, law enforcement officials and religious leaders, local business owners and people looking for work, bereaved parents and former opioid users in Weymouth. Turning to the people who know their community first-hand, she sought local explanations for opioid abuse in Weymouth.

Residents described the past twenty years as a period in which virtually all major institutions, economic, religious, medical and military all let them down. Good jobs disappeared, the Church turned a blind eye to priests' crimes against children and even military service failed to provide a sense of pride and accomplishment. In this environment, pills that take away pain could almost sell themselves, with the help of full-on advertising campaigns by pharmaceutical companies.

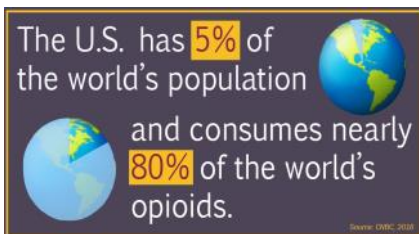
By the 2010s, as stories of overdoses in suburban communities were featured in newspapers across the country, federal and state governments began to clamp down on lax prescribing of pain pills. Hooked on opiates, some people, particularly young adults, turned from pills to heroin, which had become cheaper and more easily available. According to several interviewees, opiate use was not really seen as a problem in Weymouth until people began dying from heroin laced with fentanyl or other toxic chemicals.

Weymouth residents are proud of their blue collar heritage. Weymouth is big with construction, many sheet metal workers and pipefitters. These are physically difficult jobs. Susan states, in working class communities people get injured on the job, and then are overprescribed pills. If they don't go to work they don't get paid so they fight through injuries and then one thing leads to the next and the next.

So, what's the good news? The warmth with which Weymouth residents received Susan and the extraordinary level of cooperation shown by town officials made it clear that this is a community ready and eager to do what it takes to address the opioid crisis at its roots.

According to data provided by the Weymouth Police Department, the number of opioid overdose deaths has declined dramatically in the past year, though it is not yet known whether that decline reflects actual reduction in opioid abuse or only wider availability of Narcan

Whatever the reason, the reduction in overdose deaths is good news. At the same time, the structural conditions that allowed opioids to gain a rapid and deep foothold need to be addressed so that communities like Weymouth will be less vulnerable to the next wave of mood altering substances, whether that is cocaine or methamphetamines, alcohol, or some new elixir dreamed up by drug cartels, pharmaceutical companies, or by regular Americans looking for relief from bodily, emotional or social pain.



Weymouth Rotary Club

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