

Community Board #4 Regular Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, June 17, 2009  
Hope Gardens Multi Service Center  
195 Linden Street (Corner of Wilson Avenue)  
Brooklyn, New York 11221  
6:00PM

The Chairperson, Julie Dent, called the board meeting to order for Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at 6:05PM.

**-Public Hearing Item-**

**NYC – Agency for Children Services (ACS) Community Partnership: Keeping Children Safe  
BMCI: Bushwick Making Children Important**

Bushwick Community Partnership Initiative in partnership with NYC Children's Services and  
Community Board 4 Presents: Child Safety and Recruitment Forum –

Mr. Raul Rubio –Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) Liaison presented a slide show  
presentation:

Bushwick Making Children Important-(BMCI) child welfare network started in 1998 with all of the  
ACS contract service providers getting together. It was ACS intention for their contract service  
providers to create networks in their community so that they could work better to address the  
issues that were happening in the community as community providers. As they moved on they  
learned that they needed to encompass the community, so during 2000-2 they started to expand  
the membership offering other community based organizations, domestic partners, people in  
housing, and the schools to get involved. Through that an education forum was done and they  
provided training to all of the schools in District 32. They made a presentation before 200 school  
staff who got to understand a little bit about the network and how they work and how they were  
trying to work within the community.

ACS is continuing this work through the Community Partnership Initiative (CPI). This is a citywide  
initiative and is currently running in the 11 most needed neighborhoods. The focus is not so  
much about what ACS expects from the community but more so how they are presenting the  
issues that they are dealing with and they are giving the community an opportunity to come up  
with some of the solutions.

Mr. Boniface Eze, Assistant Commissioner ACS Community Affairs: ACS is relying on the  
community to partner with them because the government can not do it alone. Their goal is to  
make sure that the children's needs are being met. They want to make sure that they are safe,  
that their well being has been met and that they have a better permanency.

In 2008, 133 children went into placement from Bushwick, ranking Bushwick as #21.  
In 2007, 177 children went into placement from Bushwick, ranking Bushwick as #18.  
Since fewer children are going into the system this shows that the system is working, however  
they just have to find a way to make the system work even better.

Vernon Shako, Deputy Director at the Brooklyn Borough Office (718-942-8631):

Borough Offices in Brooklyn are divided into zones. The borough office that Mr. Shako is in  
covers 6 zones, zone A-F. Bushwick is CD4 which falls under zone C. Zone C is the zone that  
he is the Deputy Borough Director. Any reports of abuse and/or neglect would be handled by  
zone C as long as it comes from Bushwick. Zone C also covers Brownsville which is CD16.  
Mr. Shako pointed to Ms. Jacqueline Anderson (718-942-8630) and said that she covers CD4  
and CD16.

Ms. Iasia Tyre -ACS 1274 Bedford Avenue (718-623-4715), she covers specifically CD4 and she knows a lot about what is going on in CD4.

Mr. T. Epemolu- CAC: works in the sex abuse unit and he would handle the investigations of any sexually abused victims. (718-330-5415)

Raul Rubio presented on Bushwick's Demographics & Risk Factors:

The population is 71% Latino, which is 2 times more than the NYC average and 3 times more than the average in Brooklyn. Of the foreign born population 66% are not legal citizens.

Some of the immigrant population do not go to the authorities nor trust them when they need services. This is due to the fear that they have regarding their immigration status. They are also afraid that there will be some type of repercussion. Some of the foreign born population can not receive services because of their illegal status.

ACS does not ask persons about their immigration status and they do not check into it. If someone is in need of services and they are an immigrant they should not be afraid to seek help or consider that as a hindrance.

47% of the adults over 25 have a high school degree or higher, this is 25% lower than the city average. Education is a big issue in Bushwick. 60% of the children in Bushwick perform at grade level or lower in math and 41% for English.

Unemployment rate in Bushwick is 16.90%. The City's rate is 9.7%. The borough of Brooklyn's rate is 11%. For the country it is approximately 8.5%. 49% of the children under 18 live below the poverty line. 44% of the families in Bushwick make \$25,000 or less.

Abuse & Neglect data for 2008:

There were 1,291 investigations in Bushwick and out of that number 37.1% involved abuse and neglect. The victimization rate is 20.6 for Bushwick, 15.0 for Brooklyn and 17.4 for New York City. This means that out of every 1,000 children at least 20 of them are victims of abuse & neglect.

Foster Care Population by race as of May 2009: Latino 43% and Afro Americans 53.1 which is about 10% more than Latinos.

Even though there is more of a Latino population in Bushwick than there is of a Black population the reason why the Black percentage rate is higher could be for a number of reasons, stated Mr. Rubio. One reason for this could be because the Latino population is afraid to ask for services. Two, they could be afraid to get involved or to notify the authorities.

In 2008, 133 children went into foster care from Bushwick. Out of those 133 children 27.8% remained in Bushwick homes. That means that the rest of these children disappeared from our daycares, after school programs, churches, parks, schools, etc.

CPI's goal is to make sure that some of these children stay in Bushwick. To do that they need more foster homes in Bushwick. They are asking the community to support them at ACS to keep children safe.

Ms. B. Smith stated that Mr. Rubio stated that 71% of the Bushwick population is Hispanic and that most of the children in foster care in Bushwick are Afro-American. Ms. Smith mentioned that there are a lot of Hispanics as well as some of the other races that do not report because they are here illegally. She stated that it would be more correct if Mr. Rubio was to say that ACS has more children from Bushwick in foster care.

Mr. Rubio suggested that they might not be reporting because they are afraid, however those are the numbers that they have.

Mr. Wright: What has ACS found to be the number one reason why children go to foster care?

Mr. Rubio: Abuse and Neglect.

Mr. Wright: What preventive measures are being used to address this?

Answer: Although difficult, ACS has made many efforts to try to educate parents. One way they try to do this is by going out to visit different organizations, for example they visit the women shelters and they talk to parents about the various ways to discipline children. They try to get parents to think about various ways they could have done things differently.

ACS cannot do this alone they need help from community partnerships. It is a very challenging process. ACS would like for the children to be safe so that is why they are reaching out to the community. His office is also in charge of parent education. If anyone would like for ACS to come to a tenant association meeting or any other group organization meeting ACS would arrange for someone to be attend.

Mr. Wright suggested that ACS should partner with the 1400 parent coordinators who visit thousands of children everyday because they are the ones that know the parents.

Ms. Brown: What age is the child transitioned out of foster care or becomes independent of the system?

Answer: 21 years of age. If the foster child is 21 years of age and they are attending college they would be allowed to finish college, or any other school until they graduate.

Maritza Marrero-King, ACS-Child Care Network: Ms. King stated that the ACS workers that were present at the meeting were understating themselves. She mentioned that ACS workers do a lot. They help the foster children with translation, getting Medicaid assistance, childcare, food stamps, etc. They also go with them on their appointments and they help them get back into school.

Ms. King also stated that the reason why there are so many problems now is because 50% of the women that are entering ACS for childcare are children themselves. They have 16-17 year old ladies who are more concerned about getting their nails done then in taking care of their own babies. She stated that ACS is not doing anything wrong it is just that our babies are having babies she said and this is the issue that needs to be address. She went on to say that the issue regarding sex and what is going on in the community as well as around the world needs to be addressed.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Rubio for his excellent presentation and she also thanked Tracy Johnson from ACS for coming to the Community Board #4 meeting tonight.

The Chairperson then asked that the new board members and the re-appointed board members stand up so that they can be welcomed.

The new board members were asked to introduce themselves, they were: Mary McClellan, Jason Andrew, David Russell, Robert Camacho, Gladys Puglla-Jimenez, Miriam Lamboy, Rachel Devlin and Francheska Howard.

The Chairperson asked the, District Manager, Nadine Whitted to call the 1<sup>st</sup> roll call:

**Roll Call:** 30 members are present constituting a quorum.

Julie Dent thanked Ms. Elvena Davis the Chairperson of the Civic & Religious Committee for her excellent job in making Community Board #4's Parade a success. The parade was held on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> Brooklyn Queens Day.

Ms. Dent also thanked Ms. Nadine Whitted, District Manager of Community Board #4 and her staff for their excellent work.

The Chairperson asked for a motion to accept the agenda with any necessary corrections. The agenda was accepted by Mr. Cyril Joseph and second by Ms. Elvena Davis. All members present were in favor.

The Chairperson asked for a motion to table the previous meeting's minutes until September 2009. The motion was accepted by Ms. Martha Brown and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Roberto Camacho. All members present were in favor.

Ms. Italia Guerrero from the Brooklyn Borough President's Office representing the Honorable Marty Markowitz presented Board Members who had excellent meeting attendance last year with a Perfect Attendance Award:

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|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Felix Ceballos  | 4. Rev. Matthew Rae    |
| 2. Ms. Avellar Hansley | 5. Ms. Barbara Smith   |
| 3. Mr. Cyril Joseph    | 6. Ms. Ruby Clinkscale |

### **Chairperson's Report**

The Chairperson asked that the Elected Officials and/or their representatives stand and introduce themselves announcing their office with their respective telephone numbers.

- 1) Francisco Mercado - Councilmember Diana Reyna, 444 South 5<sup>th</sup> St., 718-963-3141
- 2) Italia Guerrero – Brooklyn Borough President, 209 Joralemon St., 718-802-4032
- 3) Michael Caver – Assemblyman William Boyland, 476 Thomas Boyland, 718-498-8681
- 4) Yanuski Rodriquez – District Attorney Charles Hynes - 350 Jay Street, 718-250-2565
- 5) Roy Sawyer – Assemblyman Darryl Towns – 840 Jamaica Avenue, 718-235-5627

### **District Manager's Report**

The fire house will stay open.

Saturday, August 1, 2009 –The Street Co-Naming Ceremony in Tribute to Jose Sucuzhanay will be held on the corner of Kossuth Place and Bushwick Avenue at 11:00am -1:00pm. The commencement speaker will be the honorable Council Member Diana Reyna. For more information please contact: Francisco Mercado 718-963-3141

There will be a march prior to the ceremony, starting at 218 Wyckoff Avenue at 9:30am.

### **Announcements:**

Mr. Orelland, 145 Linden Street – Mr. Orelland is concerned about a liquor store opening up 2 doors from his home. He mentioned that there are already problems on the block (corner) and is concerned that this will cause even more problems. He wanted to know if the store is legal and is it possible to stop the liquor store from opening their doors.

The Chairperson asked Mr. Orelland to call the District Manager at her office or he could speak to her after the meeting.

### **Douglas White, Vice Chairperson of Broadway Bushwick Community Coalition:**

Mr. White introduced his associates Mr. Rick Jones-Chairperson and Mary McClellan-Community Representative. Their goal is to improve the quality of life in the area.

Mr. White spoke about the graffiti removal program and how graffiti affects our children. He stated that a lot of gang members put their messages on the streets and on the buildings and he want to remove that so the gangs will not have a means to communicate to each other.

Meetings are held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 871 Bushwick Avenue corner of Himrod Street at 7:00pm. There next meeting will be June 18, 2009.

For more information call Mr. Jones: 718-452-0610, Mr. White: 718-574-4842

Mr. Sonson from Decatur Street is concerned about the cab drivers who lay on their car horns when they come to pick someone up in the early morning hours.

The District Manager asked Mr. Sonson to call the 311 for complaints such as this when they occur. The District Manager also asked Mr. Sonson and others who have complaints to contact her office and speak to her or a member of her staff because at her office they are better equipped to handle such complaints. 718-628-8400

Every cab company gets renewed and if there are complaints that will affect their renewal.

Alzen Whitten – Brooklyn District Public Health office:

Greater Health Coalition will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2009 from 1:30PM to 4:00PM. Bed-sty Open House Food & Fitness Expo will be held Sunday, June 20, 2009 at Tompkins Park. A similar event will be held on Sunday, July 26 in Bushwick and RBSCC will be hosting it.

Zealie Blyden – Brooklyn Public Library: Out of the \$17.5 million that was going to be cut due to budget cuts, most of the monies has been restored. There have been no layoffs and they still have 6 day service. This is all due to the help of the community members and leaders putting pressure on the mayor and the city council. She thanked the Community Board for all their help.

Jackie Herron - Institute for Community Living (ICL): They have two locations 1) 25 Thornton Street between Bushwick and Broadway 2) Halsey Street between Evergreen and Central Avenues. On Saturday, July 25 Family and Friends are invited to a Celebration. Join ICL at 25 Lawton Street for Music, Talent Show, a Fashion Show, Games and food and refreshments. RSVP Lorena @ 718-919-3900 ext 1602.

Michael Cavers –Assemblyman William F. Boyland Jr.: 1) June 30<sup>th</sup> Job Fair at 444 Thomas Boyland Street  
2) The Assemblyman in conjunction with New York State Foster & Adoptive Parent Association, Inc. is sponsoring a Town Hal Forum on Foster Care. The event will be held Wednesday, June 24, 2009 at 1958 Fulton Street (between Ralph & Howard Avenues) at 6:30pm sharp. For more information contact NYSFAPA at 718-725-3657

Cathy Crawford – End of summer and back to school party on August 31, 2009 at the Maria Hernandez Park. Anybody that would like to get involve please contact her.

Francisco Mercado - Councilmember Diana Reyna: Engine 271 has been able to remain open, a number of day care center and classrooms have been restored. The budgets cuts will affect DOE, crossing guards, teacher aids and taxes will go up .5%.

On July 1, Personal Finance meeting – this meeting will help teach people how to build their savings and give credit information during these critical times.

Diana Reyna is running for a 3<sup>rd</sup> term. The Campaign Office is now open and located at 300 Bedford Avenue. Monday – Friday they are open from 9am to 9pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Volunteers are welcomed.

Ms. Barbara Smith - President of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Precinct Council: June 26, 2009 After Father's Day Dance from 8pm to 1am tickets are \$10.00

July 7<sup>th</sup>, Police Department is hosting Harmony Day where the Police Department feeds everyone and provides games for the children. 11am to 3pm

Tuesday, August 4, 2009 – National Night Out Against Crime at Maria Hernandez Park. Anyone requesting a table should call the Community Affairs Department at 718-574-1697

Cyril Joseph – Linden/Bushwick Association: Sponsoring their 2<sup>nd</sup> Farmers Market starting July 1<sup>st</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from 10am to 6pm.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Roll Call:** Meeting adjourned 9:00 pm