

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2011 AT THE MARBLE HILL COMMUNITY CENTER 5365 BROADWAY

**Attendees:** Andrew Cohen, Youth Committee Chair, CB8; Georgia Santiago, CB8; Colleen Hanley, CB 8; David Lehmann, Bronx Smoke Free Partnership; L'Tisha Henry, Bronx Smoke Free Partnership; Robert Press, CB8; Nicole Stent, District Manager CB8; Sylvia Alexander, CB8; Dan Eudene, Riverdale Neighborhood House; Kathy Gilson, Riverdale Community Center; Don Bluestone, Executive Director, Mosholu Montefiore Community Center; Giselle Melendez, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center; Derwin Greene, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center; Warren Zorrilla, Childrens Arts and Sciences Workshop at Marble Hill Community Center

Meeting began at 1:09pm

#### **DYCD Budget Cuts**

Mr. Donald Bluestone, Executive Director of the MMCC, addressed DYCD grant cuts and the effect they would have on the OST at P.S. 95. Mr. Bluestone is not fully aware of what is happening with the budget cuts. The MMCC recently received the OST budget for the year. Mr. Bluestone made some major cuts on the Summer OST budget in anticipation of huge cuts per DYCD warnings back in December (2010) and January (2011). He is now in the process of restoring the entire budget funds previously cut. The DYCD appears to be running two years concurrently. 2011 Summer is part of the 2010 FY. The DYCD has provided more funding for the Summer of 2011 than they did last Summer (2010). The DYCD informed Mr. Bluestone that he cannot carry over a penny from Summer 2011 programs into September/Winter programs. Mr. Bluestone does not know what is going to happen in September 2011. Therein is a perfect example of the rigidity the MMCC encounters in dealing with City Agencies because they (MMCC) cannot save money from the Summer for the Winter. When the Commissioner tells the MMCC there are cuts on the way, the OST program at PS 95 is generally excluded from those cuts because the Commissioner is quite fond of the OST @ PS 95.

To further clarify the threat of budget cuts, Mr. Bluestone described a program called OST 2. This is a program best described as a Public/Private partnership. The OST2 Program used to be totally separate under the State of NY, which would give the MMCC funding that had to be matched dollar for dollar with foundation money. This funding used to be controlled by the local Community Board until the Mayor took control of the program. The Commissioner cut the OST 2 program last year by 50%. The MMCC fought tooth and nail to have funding restored, which was subsequently used to fund a program at 143 which then formed a partnership with Marie Curie HS. Marie Curie is located on West 231<sup>st</sup> Street in CB8. The school was created by the MMCC. Marie Curie has a 91% graduation rate. The administration screens prospective students by asking them to complete a questionnaire to gauge how well rounded they are (hobbies, teacher recommendations, etc.), but not to test their academic proficiency levels because the students generally arrive at the school with 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading levels. There is a College Bound Access Program at Marie Curie. Two College Advisors provide guidance and College planning services to 500 children. One Counselor is paid for by the MMCC, the other is paid for with Marie Curie DOE school funding. The Commissioner is planning to cut 100% of the College Bound program. The College Bound Program is in trouble. In the rest of the City, in OST, there are OST programs in the boroughs located within Middle Class communities. The City Council restored funding to many of the OST programs located within the five boroughs. The Commissioner will cut 100% of a lot of the budget, but Mr. Bluestone feels much of the money will inevitably be restored.

The main issue is, when you request funding you are in a rough position when dealing with the City of New York. In many good ways, Out of School Time programs have been created far more now than ever. The downside is the volume of paperwork that the various providers of

OST services must tackle. There is no income requirement, so any child is eligible, yet the MMCC is probably going to see some pressure because everything is looped in together.

Chairman Cohen asked Mr. Bluestone if he had any specific needs for the OST program at PS 95. Mr. Bluestone responded that the OST at PS 95 is secure. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century program (federally funded), makes it possible for the MMCC to be secure in funding for the next two years. What Mr. Bluestone would like to see is a Teen Program for the teens in the Van Cortlandt Village Community, many of whom utilize the MMCC on Gun Hill Road. All Directors present from the KHCC, RNC, RCC and MMCC concurred that Teen Youth Centers are desperately needed within Community Board 8. The Kingsbridge Heights Community Center just lost a federal grant. The only funding that KHCC has left is that received from the Department of Youth & Community Development, Neighborhood Development Area Program.

In lieu of OST funding, Mr. Bluestone asked for a basic Teen Program:

- 1) A gym (PS 95 would be an ideal location if Principal Davis agrees to allow the program to operate in his school)
- 2) Maximum of 4 nights a week
- 3) Youth workers
- 4) Funding would be somewhere in the realm of \$75,000 per center

Derwin Greene of the KHCC requested additional funding for the programs that are already in place for teens at KHCC

Nicole Stent reminded all attendees that the Youth Committee is focusing on funding for teen and youth centers. We are fortunate because we have existing spaces/buildings. Therefore, any resolutions must specifically state that we wish to:

- 1) Maintain funding for existing programs
- 2) Request additional funding for Teen Centers or extending the hours or reinstating them or creating them.

Providers have to request each budget item individually and focus in on separate amounts with a brief description in five to ten words. CB8 has capital budget requests (40) and expense budget (25) requests. Chairman Cohen would be happy to advocate for whatever the attendees come up with, but he cannot guarantee funding. Chairman Cohen has already started the conversation with Oliver Koppell. All are in agreement that we need teen centers in CB8.

Nicole Stent respectfully requests the following:

- 1) Each center must send CB8 a letter with their budget requests
- 2) Please be specific in your requests

Mr. Bluestone stated the Teen/Youth Centers would be a great political statement. Gangs are back, teenage unemployment is back. Everything is connected. We have lost an entire generation of kids who had no sports teams to participate in because of the Mayor and the Parks Department taking away space from kids. The good kids who aren't in trouble are being thrown under the bus for the kids who have proven to be problematic because at-risk status Youth are easier to secure funding for and saving troubled teens looks good for all concerned parties.

**All budget requests should be submit to CB8 no later than Friday May 20, 2011.**

### **Introduction to Our Gracious Host**

Warren Zorilla is the Program Director of the Childrens Arts and Sciences Workshop at the Marble Hill Community Center. He extended an open invitation to host all CB8 Youth Committee meetings on premises.

### **Bronx Smoke-Free Partnership Presentation**

The Bronx Smoke-Free Partnership gave the Youth Committee a great presentation courtesy of Mr. David Lehmann and Ms. L'Tisha Henry. There is a rally planned on May 31, 2011 in Union Square for teens to send a message to the Tobacco Companies and shops to stop marketing cigarettes to young people.

L'Tisha Henry is working on an initiative to make all buildings smoke free. The Bronx is # 2 in the volume of smokers in the five boroughs.

Nicole Stent added that we have six different neighborhoods in CB8. There is a high smoking risk in Riverdale but the majority of Riverdale has health insurance. If you take certain areas, for instance, Van Cortlandt Village, Marble Hill and Kingsbridge, there have been dramatic changes in health status/needs and insurance issues **for the worse**. Derwin Greene added that teenagers are savvy and can easily obtain cigarettes at neighborhood stores more so than alcoholic beverages.

### **Resolution**

A Resolution in full support of the restoration of funding for the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program at Kennedy High School (RAPP) was unanimously approved.

We will be meeting at the Riverdale Neighborhood House next month, Wednesday May 25<sup>th</sup> @1pm.

Meeting adjourned at 2:28pm

Respectfully Submitted by Colleen R. Hanley