

**NYC Department of Juvenile Justice**  
Neil Hernandez - Commissioner



**The Local Business Community  
And The Juvenile Justice System**

Ecuadorian Chamber Of Commerce Of New York  
March 20, 2008

**Commissioner Hernandez Discusses Link Between Local Chamber of Commerce and the Juvenile Justice System**

On Thursday, March 20, 2008, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Commissioner Neil Hernandez visited a gathering of the Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce of New York to discuss local business communities and their relationship with the juvenile justice system in New York City.

The event, held at the Queens Museum of Art in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, attracted numerous small business owners from across the City who learned about the mission and operations of DJJ, as well as the relationship the juvenile justice system has with local communities and the impact on local economies. Particularly, business owners learned how they can support youth while in detention and when they return to the community by sharing their resources and experiences to foster skills in the youth.

Commissioner Hernandez discussed DJJ's launch of the Workforce/Life Skills for Youth in Detention Initiative in collaboration with the Mayor's Center for Economic Opportunity. The Workforce/Life Skills Initiative is intended to provide youth in detention with workshops to help them succeed in school and later in life once they return to the community.

The local business leaders in attendance also learned how young people will receive services from two community based organizations once released from detention, Good Shepherd Services in The Bronx and the Center for Community Alternatives in Brooklyn. These two organizations will serve as a central contact point for the youth when they return to the community and will administer programs to encourage youth to succeed and avoid reentering the juvenile justice system.

The community based organizations will also provide opportunities for businesses to support youth as they return to the communities by arranging internships or similar programs, providing important skills to the youth.

Commissioner Hernandez also discussed additional juvenile justice reform efforts being undertaken by the Agency, including the continued evolvement of the Release to Parent Initiative as well as the continuance of the Collaborative Family Initiative. Among the trends discussed were decreased detention usage, signaling success among DJJ initiatives, and the increase in youth entering detention with mental health needs.

The discussion with the Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce of New York is part of an ongoing effort by the Department to encourage stakeholders citywide to participate in the juvenile justice system by providing industry specific services to youth in detention and youth released from detention.

