



DJJ Commissioner Neil Hernandez answers question from audience member at The New School forum.

DJJ Participates in Juvenile Justice Panel

On Thursday, April 17th, DJJ participated in a panel discussion titled “Home is Where I Belong: Juvenile Justice Shifts Back to the Community” presented by the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School for Management and Urban Policy in Manhattan.

The panel, which consisted of DJJ’s Commissioner Neil Hernandez, NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrion, NYC Department of Probation Deputy Commissioner of Juvenile Operations, Patricia Brennan, Director of the Juvenile Justice Project at the Correctional Association of New York, Mishi Faruqee, and the President and CEO of The Children’s Village, Jeremy Kohomban, Ph.D., was moderated by Andrew White, the Director of the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School.

In a packed auditorium filled with juvenile justice professionals, stakeholders, volunteers, students and concerned citizens, the panelists stressed the importance of the juvenile justice system, advocates, and community-based organizations addressing the needs of system involved youth and their families. The panelists all agreed, consistent with the forum’s theme, that connecting youth and their families with the necessary supports in their communities, rather than over-reliance upon detention and state placements, as a primary response to these matters will ultimately decrease the capacity needs of the City and State’s juvenile justice systems.

Commissioner Hernandez emphasized that sustaining and institutionalizing initiatives developed under the Bloomberg Administration’s juvenile justice reform efforts such as the Department’s Collaborative Family Initiative, Release to Parent and Workforce Lifeskills Anti-Poverty Initiatives, are key to the City’s efforts to reduce unnecessary detention usage. The Commissioner added that he is proud of the commitment of the Department’s staff in this regard, and although early in the efforts, the DJJ and its staff have already seen success stories resulting from these initiatives.

