

MINUTES
Youth Board/WIB Youth Council
December 3, 2009
Department of Youth and Community Development
156 William Street
New York, New York
8:30 AM to 10:30 AM

Present:

Youth Board/Youth Council members¹:

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| Ana Garcia Reyes * | John Rhea * ³ | Rae Linefsky * |
| Anthony Sumpter, Sr. * | Kurt Sonnenfeld, EdD * | Raymond Codrington * |
| Arnold Dorin * | Lena Townsend * | Reg Foster * |
| Ellen Chen * | Lynette Velasco | Rev. Michel Faulkner * |
| Erana Stennett * | Maureen O'Connor * | Richard F. McKeon * |
| Gregory Hambric * | Milga Morales Nadal, PhD * | Rick Amato |
| Howard Knoll * | Nancy Wackstein * | Robert Purga |
| Ikra Ahmad | Nadine Reid | Sgt. Margaret O'Gara |
| Issa Spencer | Neil Hernandez * ⁴ | Sibyl Silberstein, PhD * |
| Ivelisse Fairchild * | Omoniyi Amoran * | Susan Royer |
| Jeanne B. Mullgrav * | Peter Borish * | Tom Pendleton * |
| John Mattingly * ² | Peter Kleinbard * | |

Guests:

Juan Ramos, Deidra Gilliard, Daphne Montanez, Miguel Almodovar, Philip Weinberg, Melinda Mack, Robin Evans, Kate Yager, Samantha Bernadine, Shawanda Scott, Anu Omodugba, Tashelle Cooper, Nina Franchi, Vivian Vazquez, Faisal Rahman, Ryan Dodge, Bill Chong, Suzanne Lynn, Susan Haskell and Christopher Cesarani

Welcome and Call to Order

Youth Council Chair Reg Foster called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and introduced Commissioner Mullgrav.

Commissioner's Report

Youth Board and Youth Council Executive Meeting

Commissioner Mullgrav began her update by highlighting the November 30 meeting with Youth Board and Youth Council executive officers to discuss youth services and DYCD priorities. She noted the members' concerns about budget reductions, especially: supporting and

¹ An * indicates the member's presence at the meeting.

² Mary Kelly was in attendance for Commissioner John Mattingly.

³ Deidra Gilliard was in attendance for Chairman John Rhea.

⁴ Juan Ramos was in attendance for Commissioner Neil Hernandez.

strengthening the key agencies that provide services in our communities; examining capacity issues of agencies and supporting infrastructure; considering the most vulnerable youth and the geographic areas of highest need in decision-making; advocating for youth employment at the highest levels of city, state and federal government; and, the importance of partnership and collaboration – especially across public and private sectors. She also noted the members commitment expressed to her to make an impact on these issues from advocacy efforts to research and examination of emerging issues. She thanked Reg Foster for hosting this meeting at IBM.

New York State Budget Proposals

Commissioner Mullgrav next provided an update on 2010 state budget proposals. She explained that, due to increasing budget deficits, which could rise as high as \$10 billion in the next state fiscal year, the Governor has proposed a \$5 billion deficit reduction plan which would be implemented with a 10% across the board cut on undisbursed funds as of November 1, 2009. These cuts are projected to impact in the following ways on DYCD youth development programs: a \$2.1 million reduction on Out of School Time programs; and, a \$378,505 reduction on Runaway and Homeless Youth services.

City of New York – Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG)

Commissioner Mullgrav explained that at this time last year there was a detailed discussion with members about the impacts of the economic downturn to DYCD programs, where DYCD outlined its priorities for funding reductions at that time, which included: maintaining core programs; identifying efficiencies; no across the board cuts; not destabilizing communities where we have just invested; drawing down funds from other sources; and, evaluation and performance analysis. She continued that on November 16, the City Office of Management and Budget announced that the disparity between spending and revenues remains a problem. As a result of this, she informed the members that DYCD will have to target savings of 4% for FY 2010 and 8% for FY2011. She explained that later this week DYCD will finalize recommendations for savings and that PEG submissions will be approved prior to January 2010.

OST Sustainability Committee

Next, the Commissioner reminded the members that Youth Board member Peter Borish has agreed to Chair the OST Sustainability committee – a committee the Wallace Foundation recommended be created in its “OST Initiative Business Plan”. Mr. Borish noted that there has been significant interest in the committee. He informed the gathering that he has spoken with several of the members interested in joining the committee, as well as DYCD staff, about the work of the committee. He added that the first meeting would be scheduled soon and looked forward to establishing goals and develop a plan for the committee with members and the Commissioner moving forward.

Out of School Youth Request for Proposal

Commissioner Mullgrav noted that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Programs, is scheduled to be released in December. She reminded the members that the Concept Paper released last June outlined the agency’s approach to this important field –an integrated services model that addresses the educational, employment, and social service needs of low-income youth, ages 16 to 21, who are not in school and not working. She explained that the programs will be funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and will incorporate the elements and outcomes required by the federal statute and New York State. As such, she noted that within that context, the RFP will emphasize educational skills gains, collaborations, and green-collar jobs.

Free Screening of “Precious”

Commissioner Mullgrav next directed the members’ attention to the meeting book cover and informed them that on November 12, DYCD hosted a free screening of the film “Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire” at BAM Rose Cinemas. She continued by commenting that for many young New Yorkers, “Precious” will stir strong emotions and compel them to share their own stories of hardship with a trusted adult, and that the screening was followed by a panel discussion featuring Linda Lausell-Bryant, Executive Director of Inwood House; Kirsten De Fur from MOCDV; Mr. Fletcher; Dr. Derek H. Suite from Full Circle Health; and Dianne Heggie, Associate Executive Director at the Council on Family and Child Caring Agencies. Further she described how the panelists provided information on how to respond to the immediate and long-term needs of young people who know Precious’ story all too well. She noted that the event was made possible with support from The Wallace Foundation and that partners in the event included Inwood House, a leading pregnant and parenting teen support agency; Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting (MOFTB), Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (MOCDV), and Geoffrey Fletcher, who wrote the film’s screenplay.

New York City Commission for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Runaway and Homeless Youth

Commissioner Mullgrav informed the members that on October 5, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced the appointment of 25 civic leaders to the New York City Commission for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Runaway and Homeless Youth. She explained that the Commission is charged with devising strategies to address the unique needs of LGBTQ youth before they leave home, to provide runaway or homeless youth with shelter and the support they need to live independently, and to help them reunite with their families when appropriate. Specifically, she highlighted that the Commission will: create an agenda for meeting the diverse needs of LGBTQ youth, who are disproportionately represented among runaway and homeless youth; make recommendations to address the root causes of homelessness among LGBTQ youth and provide a blueprint for innovative and evidence-based solutions; and, will evaluate best practices to bolster existing services in order to more effectively foster healthy communication among LGBTQ youth and their families, and provide shelter and effective support services to homeless youth. She continued that the Commission held it’s first meeting on November 18 and the Chair, Ana Oliveira, President and Chief

Executive Officer of The New York Women’s Foundation kicked off by identifying sub-group topic areas and providing a charge to members, including our own Nancy Wackstein who is a member of the Commission. She informed the members that she will serve as the Director of the Commission and DYCD staff will provide coordination and logistical support. She also looked forward to sharing further developments, and invited members input in one of the several opportunities for broader input that will be arranged, including a hearing on December 17.

Presentation: Building Capacity to Serve Disconnected Youth with Low Skills

Commissioner Mullgrav noted that today’s meeting presentation would focus on serving disconnected youth with low skills. She introduced Deputy Commissioner Suzanne Lynn, who would highlight a DYCD/CEO program addressing this topic and Youth Council member Peter Kleinbard of the Youth Development Institute (YDI) and his colleague Vivian Vazquez, who, with several young clients present, would describe their work in building the capacity of organizations to deliver services in this area.

Ms. Lynn began her presentation by providing some background on the disconnected youth population in the city, that it is estimated between 117,000 and 160,000 with some estimates going as high as 200,000, and that within this group, approximately half have high school degrees, while others struggle with basic literacy skills and many other challenges. She noted that an estimated 65% of students age 16-60 assessed by GED prep programs read below an eighth grade level and that programs meant for adults are attracting more disconnected youth. She continued that approximately 3,000 16 to 24 year olds or 25% of the nearly 12,000 served by DYCD Adult Literacy Programs are age 16 to 24. She added that recognizing the problem, DYCD proposed the “Young Adult Literacy Program” to CEO to offer basic literacy and math instruction for young adults, with a focus on employment, incentives to sustain attendance, and support services. The programs are being implemented by the Queens, Brooklyn, and New York Public Library systems, and several CBO, and currently serve 328 youth.

Peter Kleinbard and Ms. Vazquez next informed the members about the YDI Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS) initiative. Mr. Kleinbard explained how CEPS helps community-based organizations strengthen their services for young people ages 16 to 24 who have dropped out of school with low reading and math levels – levels below eighth grade. He highlighted how CEPS teaches a highly structured approach to youth services that helps community based organizations build capacity and effectively focus on those youth who are ineligible for GED preparation due to low academic skills. [Following Mr. Kleinbard’s presentation, several young people present were introduced to share their experiences in the YALP programs. The young people described how they gained skills while developing a respect and appreciation for literature and learning in preparation for ultimately taking a GED exam.]

Youth Council Report

Reg Foster thanked Mr. Kleinbard and Ms. Lynn for their presentation. He noted that as work and discussions on WIA reauthorization move forward, best practices through programs like YALP and CEPS will help inform policy decisions on training programs for older low skilled disconnected youth.

Mr. Foster introduced Philip Weinberg, President of the NYC Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to the members. He asked Phil to share updates on a new WIB pilot. Mr. Weinberg described a new pilot between the Department of Education Career and Technical High Schools and the sector-focused Workforce1 Career Centers. He highlighted that this initiative is being informed by a workgroup, which includes DYCD, and that future discussions will also explore connections between sector-focused Workforce1 Career Centers and DYCD programs serving disconnected youth.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.