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Highlights from WIB Quarterly Meeting on June 20, 2013

Robert Steel, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, celebrated the WIB's legacy under the Bloomberg Administration. Deputy Mayor Steel thanked the WIB for its contribution to strengthening industry connections and providing strategic guidance to the city's workforce development efforts. He also urged the team to think boldly about the road ahead. He shared, "While I can tell you the story of all the good things going on with the economy, the reality is there is a group of people that have not participated to their full potential. That's a hard, disappointing and moral issue for all of us. It's not about politics."

OHCD Executive Director, Michelle Light, shared progress made on legislation to allow city agencies access to Wage Reporting System data and celebrated a former key WIB staffer. Michelle shared that this effort has never advanced this far in the decades that the issue has perplexed the workforce development community. Many members expressed excitement and optimism around the potential of the bill (A7911/S5773). Additionally, Michelle and Kathy Kearns, WIB Chair, thanked Deldreana Peterkin for her 10 years of service as a WIB staff member, especially for her "infectious spirit," and wished Deldreana well in her new role at the NYC Department of Probation.

George Ntim, WIB Member and Director of Diplomatic and Community Relations of New York Marriot Marquis, reflected on a field trip to Food & Finance High School on May 9, 2013. Mr. Ntim and Michelle Light learned, among other things, how to organically raise 17,000 tilapia fish. Mr. Ntim offered recommendations for expanding the program to include opportunities to learn more about hospitality and management that could enhance student employability. He commented, "I was impressed by a student, Lorenzo, who wanted to open a restaurant. I immediately had so many questions about all the skills he might also need to be successful in hospitality." Mr. Ntim invited students to visit the Marriot Marquis to learn more about opportunities available in a hotel environment. At the meeting, he ignited a conversation among WIB members about barriers to providing internships to students, including worker compensation and insurance.

Steven Dawson, PHI/Workforce Strategy Group; Jeanette Nigro, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce; Merrill Pond, Partnership for NYC; and Lincoln Restler, NYC Employment & Training Coalition discussed future opportunities and challenges in developing NYC's workforce. These panelists outlined some of the toughest issues for the current system, including mitigating the effects of the recession and creating a more inclusive system for workers of all skill and educational levels. They urged the WIB to look back at the last 12 years, develop a consistent message about the direction they want to see the city head, and ensure future political leadership aligns our system with the priorities that the employment community has defined as critical.

Reminder for September 2013 WIB Quarterly Meeting

The next WIB Quarterly Meeting will be held from 8:30 to 10:30am on September 18, 2013, location TBD. Breakfast and networking will be from 8:00 to 8:30am. Please RSVP by September 4 to Sherazade Langlade (slanglade@ohcd.nyc.gov or 212-442-9189).

Written July 3, 2013