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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. Along with DC updates regarding WIA reauthorization, federal appropriations and sequestration, Michelle gave an overview of state legislation A7911/S5773 championed by Nily Rozic of Queens and Diane Savino of Staten Island. It would provide critical data for the purposes of evaluating workforce and education programs. Members expressed excitement and optimism around the potential, noting that this effort has never advanced this far in decades. Additionally, Michelle and WIB Chair Kathy Kearns 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 ideas 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 presented recommendations that were independently produced yet significantly aligned regarding 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 highlighted recent progress achieved with the City of the last 12 years, yet all four underscored the need for substantial reforms with an eye to the future.

Reminder for September 2013 WIB Quarterly Meeting

The next WIB Quarterly Meeting will be held from 8:30-10:30am on September 18, 2013, location TBD. Please RSVP by September 6 to Cesar Cardenas (ccardenas@ohcd.nyc.gov or 212-676-0336).

Written July 3, 2013