



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



VANESSA L. GIBSON
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

PAOLA M. MARTINEZ
CHAIRPERSON

ANTHONY R. JORDAN
DISTRICT MANAGER

Education, Youth & Young Adults Services Committee Minutes

December 10th, 2025

Stephane Calzado, Committee Chairperson

DRAFT

Introductions and Meeting Commencement

- Member Christina Cover initiates the meeting, noting the absence of the chair, Stephanie, and introduces herself as Christina Cover, a teacher and committee member.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan reminds attendees that the meeting is being broadcast live on YouTube and emphasizes the importance of stating names for the recording.
- Member Christina Cover thanks everyone for attending and announces the agenda, starting with new business.

Presentation by East Side House Jobs Plus

- Griffik Negroni and Michael Steedly present on the CNA training program, which starts in January and includes 13 weeks of school and 11 weeks of paid training.
- They discuss the availability of spots for CNA, PCT, and EMT training, emphasizing the prerequisites and the limited number of spots.
- The presentation covers employment services, including job fairs and events, and the support provided for re-entry services, such as navigating social security cards and state IDs.
- Griffik Negroni highlights the importance of long-term career positions, like corrections and law enforcement, and the challenges of getting people to consider these careers.

Q&A and Discussion on Employment Services

- Member Joyce Pulphus asks about the GED program and its associated costs, to which Griffik Negroni responds that there are no enrollment fees and no age limit.
- Member Mohammed Sheikh inquires about services for people with mental health issues and housing insecurity, and Griffik Negroni explains that they help with mental health screening and direct people to other agencies for housing.

- Michael Steedly adds that having a PO Box number is acceptable for job applications, as mandated by the state.
- Member Christina Cover asks about the presence of East Side House employees in schools, and Michael Steedly confirms their involvement in providing workforce development programs.

Challenges and Strategies in Employment Services

- Herman Francis Jr asks about the biggest challenges in employability matches, and Michael Steedly and Griffik Negroni discuss the difficulties of working with justice-impacted individuals and the need to earn community trust.
- Michael Steedly emphasizes the importance of customer service skills in job applications and the need to prove themselves to the community.
- A member of the audience inquires about the process for referrals and workshops, and Michael Steedly explains that they can accommodate walk-ins and have events scheduled for various training programs.
- A member of the audience asks about participation in networking events, and Griffik Negroni mentions their involvement in job fairs and events organized by other organizations.

Story Land Presentation

- Sulma Arzu-Brown introduces Story Land, the Bronx Book Haven, as the first children's book lounge in New York State, focused on literacy and books.
- The presentation highlights the signature class trip program, which includes mindful movement, positive affirmations, and meeting real-life authors.
- Story Land provides a full meal for the kids and ensures they leave with a complimentary book, emphasizing the importance of making reading fun and accessible.
- The presentation includes a video showcasing the space and the program, and Speaker 11 from the Drew Barrymore show visits Story Land to highlight its impact.

Q&A and Discussion on Story Land

- Member Chrisina Cover asks about the availability of space for volunteer opportunities, and Sulma Arzu-Brown confirms the need for volunteers and provides contact information for those interested.
- Member Christina Cover inquires about the possibility of high-dosage tutoring or reading tutoring at Story Land, and Sulma Arzu-Brown expresses interest in collaborating on such initiatives.
- Sulma Arzu-Browns staff explains their strategic approach to attracting funding and building community relationships.

- Member Jadeen Buxton asks about addressing children who have already decided they don't like reading, and Sulma Arzu-Brown suggests finding books that relate to their interests and engaging them in different ways.

Old Business: Book Exchange Initiative

- Member Christina Cover discusses the success of the book exchange initiative, which collected hundreds of book donations and plans to continue on the first and third Saturdays of each month.
- The committee discusses the need for more tables, a cart, and a banner for the event, and Member Joyce Pulphus offers to purchase a foldable table.
- Herman Francis Jr. suggests connecting with the Genealogical Society to help participants write their own stories and books.
- The committee plans to promote the book exchange at the next general meeting and create a sign-up form for volunteers.

Old Business: Autism Awareness Workshop Series

- Member Jacqueline Dejesus introduces the first workshop in the Autism Awareness series, which will bring together different organizations offering services for children with autism and other abilities.
- The committee discusses the logistics of the event, including the number of presenters and the format, and plans to finalize the details in a follow-up meeting.
- The committee emphasizes the importance of networking and connecting with various community resources to support families with children on the spectrum.

Sourcing Furniture and Materials for Events

- Member Jacqueline Dejesus mentions a party center going out of business and offers to scout for furniture for events.
- A member of the audience suggests Materials for the Arts in Queens as a source for various materials donated from television productions.
- Member Christina Cover and Member Joyce Pulphus discuss the possibility of renting tables for events and the benefits of having transportable furniture.

Concerns About Committee Member Attendance

- Member Joyce Pulphus raises a concern about the ideal time for monthly meetings to maximize committee participation.
- Member Joyce Pulphus suggests discussing the best time for meetings to ensure the chair and other members can attend.

- Member Joyce Pulphus emphasizes the importance of participation and making changes to attract more people to the committee.

Executive Committee's Role and Participation Issues

- District Manager Anthony Jordan explains the executive committee's role and the need for consistent participation from board members and public members.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan mentions the upcoming executive committee meeting where decisions about committee operations will be made.
- Member Joyce Pulphus stresses the importance of leveraging each other's strengths and serving the community effectively.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan highlights the borough president's emphasis on joint committee participation and the need for a plan of action.

Discussion on Vice Chair and Bylaws

- Member Jacquelin Dejesus asks about the role of the vice chair and the bylaws regarding committee membership.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan clarifies that the bylaws require a board member and a public member as co-chairs, with no identified vice chair.
- Member Christina Cover and District Manager Anthony Jordan discuss the nomination process for the chair in the absence of the regular chair.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan emphasizes the need for backup and the importance of following the bylaws.

Community Toy Drive Initiative

- District Manager Anthony Jordan announces a community toy drive for Christmas, aiming to partner with existing celebrations like YMCA and Lincoln Hospital.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan encourages members to suggest places to donate toys and mentions the goal of putting smiles on young people's faces during the holiday season.
- Member Christina Cover thanks Anthony Jordan for the information and asks if there are any other items to discuss before closing the meeting.
- Member Mohammed Sheikh makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, which is seconded and approved by all members.

Action Items

- Discuss with the executive committee the issue of low attendance and participation from committee members, and explore solutions to improve engagement.
- Explore options for purchasing or renting portable tables and other equipment to use at the book exchange events.
- Prepare a sign-up form for volunteers to help with the book exchange events.
- Finalize the details for the first Autism Awareness workshop, including the date, time, presenters, and logistics.
- Reach out to Material for the Arts organization to inquire about potential donations of materials for the book exchange and other events.