

**BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6**  
**YOUTH/HUMAN SERVICES/EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**September 23, 2015**

**PRESENT:**

P. BELLENBAUM  
E. FELDER  
F. JEAN  
B. SOLOTAIRE

F. BROWN  
K. GURL  
C. ROBELLO  
R. UNDERWOOD

R. CERVONE  
T. JACKSON  
A. SHEFRIN

**ABSENT:**

J. BROWN  
L. HILL  
C. PETERSEN

E. CAUSIL-RODRIGUEZ  
J. LI  
S. TURET

R. FREEMAN  
A. MEHTA

**GUESTS:**

VICKI SELL - REP. FOR HON. BRAD LANDER, CITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
N. AMATO

A. SAUNDERS

E. JACKSON

**\*\*\*MINUTES\*\*\***

**Presentation and review of a proposal by Redemption Point, Inc. to establish a New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) certified substance abuse treatment program at 236 Hoyt Street (between Butler/Douglass Streets.)**

Presentation led by Alfred Saunders, founder and CEO of Redemption Point, and Nancy Amato, Program director at Redemption Point.

Introduction:

- Redemption Point was founded five years ago and was initially based at 540 Atlantic Ave, where it had the support of Brooklyn's CB2. They have moved to a new location at 236 Hoyt Street in CB6's district.
- They wish to make their services known to the CB6 community and welcome CB6's support.
- Mr. Saunders has a personal connection to the area, having grown up in Gowanus.
- They are awaiting certification to become a treatment program; right now are functioning as a prevention program
- Overview of services offered: group and one-on-one counseling, job skills training, housing referral assistance, anti-gang seminars, resume writing, employment assistance, mobile food pantry, etc.

Background:

- Mr. Saunders shared his story of his own history of participating in illegal drug-related activities in Gowanus. He spent 25 years in prison, where he became determined to help young people in the community avoid the same path he had taken. After prison, Mr. Saunders worked as a substance abuse counselor for 8 years before establishing Redemption Point. He provides every client with his cell phone number and makes himself available 24 hours a day to offer assistance and counseling.
- Ms. Amato met Mr. Saunders while working with him during his sentence. She explained that Redemption Point also has a re-entry program staffed by social workers and educators to help people who are returning to their neighborhoods after time spent in prison.

Goals:

- Redemption Point plans to open a 24-hr telephone hotline for clients to reach staff.
- OASAS certification will allow them to pursue more funding streams; right now they are self-funded through donations and their personal contributions.
- Staff follows up with clients and is keeping statistics so they will have data on how successful the program has been.

Discussion moved to next agenda item:

**Presentation by Vicki Sell of City Council Member Brad Lander's office on his School Diversity Initiative and other education-related issues.**

- Ms. Sell provided some background, explaining that the School Diversity Initiative was developed during the last few years in response to hearing from people within the community who were concerned about the segregation of the districts' schools.
- Districts 13 and 15 worked together to prioritize diversity when creating PS133 in 2012; they worked to look at admissions differently and were able to get DOE approval to set aside a number of seats for who are English Language Learners, or eligible for free & reduced price lunch.
- Through this process, they learned that many districts citywide are interested in doing the same thing and working together to address segregation issues.
- Council Member Lander put forth the School Diversity Accountability Act, which "will require the Department of Education to issue an annual report on diversity (or the lack thereof) in NYC schools. The report will include extensive school-by-school data, down to the grade level (and within specialized programs like gifted and talented programs), as well as the Department's specific efforts and initiatives to strengthen diversity." (source: bradlander.nyc)
- Council Members are writing a letter to NYC Schools Chancellor Fariña to urge the DOE to work with CECs throughout the city to strengthen diversity in the schools. NYC Council Members are participating in meetings in Washington DC to talk about diversity in education nationwide.
- CECs are also reviewing the practice of middle school choice and its impact on diversity.

Question from YHSE committee member: How is this effort different than other past attempts to address diversity?

A: This effort is coming from the community. Local CECs are driving the initiative to have the DOE make diversity a priority. The zoning/admissions policy for PS133 is a promising start.

Question from YHSE committee member: How does CB6 fit into this process?

A: working together in public meetings, building political will, establishing a broad coalition in the community.

Question from YHSE committee member: How can diversity within academic programs be increased? (Gifted & Talented programs, for example.)

A: The new reporting being requested will include data on that, which will help when urging the DOE to reprioritize admissions to those programs.

- Discussion turned to capacity issues, specifically the issue of new housing construction in areas where “good” schools are already over-crowded. It was generally agreed upon that there needs to be better marketing of under the radar schools that have open seats; and an urging of upper class parents to get involved in schools in their neighborhoods without regard to test scores or demographic make-up of the schools.
- Discussion on school crossing guards:
  - New schools don’t automatically get crossing guards assigned to them
  - There is a lack of transparency about how/where guards are deployed
  - City Council is lobbying for better pay/conditions for guards; reporting due soon that will allow them to better understand how guards are allocated.
  - There is hope that the DOT’s school safety engineering dept will work more closely with local police precincts to evaluate traffic safety issues.
- DOE might be developing a policy on when/where to install scanners in schools. Right now, decisions on scanners are left up to individual principals.

Discussion moved to committee business:

**Orientation: Rules, regulations and procedures governing committee participation.**

- YHSE Committee meets at 6:30 pm on the fourth Wednesday of each month (with adjustments for holidays)
- Meeting locations change within the district
- Consistent attendance is encouraged; we need a quorum in order to make motions.
- A committee member needs to make a motion when deciding whether or not to support something; a member needs to second the motion; committee votes.
- Committee members can submit ideas, ideally with an action item—something that needs resolution, a letter of support, a workshop or event for us to attend, etc.
- YHSE Committee is interested in producing events. Past events have included: workshop on post-partum depression and a youth opportunity event, which will take place again this year.

**Minutes from the June 24, 2015 YHSE meeting were approved with 12 Yeas.**

Committee member Tracy Jackson made a motion that we write a letter of support for Redemption Point’s OASAS application. Committee member Carmen Robello seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Possible future topics of discussion:** activities for kids affected by Little League cancellations due to the toxic conditions of the Red Hook ball fields; affordable housing for seniors, particularly for those who are low-income but still don’t qualify for the city’s affordable housing options.

Meeting was adjourned. The minutes were submitted by Tracy Jackson