

Manhattan Community Board #9
Youth, Education and Libraries Committee

Meeting Minutes - October 12, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 6:47 p.m. by co-chairs Joe Rogers, Jr. and Winston Majette. There was no quorum as the meeting was called to order.

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members:

Present: Winston Majette, Kyle Doyle, Tisha Jackson, Dr. Vicky Gholson, Joe Rogers, Jr., Yvonne Stennett

Board Members:

Judith Insell, Alyson Gordon-Browner, Patricia Jones, Tiffany Alston

General Public:

Cyndie Berthezen, The Time In Children's Arts Initiative; Kevin Matthews, Double Discovery; Matt Camp, Teachers College; Nancy Streim, Teacher College; Kayode Bentley, 4T's Productions, Inc.; Pat Delices, 4T's Productions, Inc.; Marsha Levine, U.N. M.D.G. Youth Video Awards; Emily Neil, Columbia Spectator; Tiffany Alston, NY Public Library – George Bruce Branch; Victoria Mason Ailey, Columbia University

After introductions of all present, formal presentations began.

PRESENTATIONS

Cyndie Berthezene, Founder and Executive Director of The Time In Children's Arts Initiative.

Referred to the Committee by Judith Insell. Ms. Bellen-Berthezene wanted to introduce the committee and community to her program, which features the use of opera, music and art to engage young people. Program offers scholarships for disadvantaged youth who wish to participate. Works with at-risk children ("the ones most difficult to teach"), during school hours, exposing them to the world of opera as well as art (gallery hopping), as a means to stimulate their learning ability. The children range from 4 to 7 years old. There is a 5-to-1 pupil-to-artist ratio, providing for better reinforcement of lessons taught. Program works with only public schools, but presently not in any Harlem schools, and only Title 1 public school. Last year the program worked with 225 children, but it can double its capacity. The cost to schools is approximately \$3,000 per class per year. (A video was shown to the committee and others in attendance).

Nancy Streim, Associate Vice President for School and Community Partnerships and Jeanene Worrell-Breeden, Founding Principal of the Teachers College Community School.

The school currently operates with two kindergarten teachers and two special education teachers, one paraprofessional, a parent coordinator, a school secretary, and the principal. Enrollment stands at 50 students from Districts 5 and 6, 40% of whom are from Community Board 9. Next year, the hope is that the percentage from CB9 will be higher, based on the move to the newly renovated site at St. Joseph's. The current attendance is 100%, with bussing of the children now much smoother than when classes began. Bus pick-up times range from 7:15 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. Breakfast is offered from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

After-school programs and faculty support in the form of professional development are offered through Teachers College. Graduate students are on site frequently. Social/emotional issues are addressed. The

school day is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:55 p.m., and after school programs operate from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Additional support from community-based organizations includes nutritional education, acting, music appreciation, karate, physical education, and art.

Next year at the St. Joseph's site, the school will have a 31,000 sq. ft. facility with the capacity to accommodate 300 students and 17 classrooms. The following spaces are currently under renovation by the School Construction Authority: science, music, playground, demo kitchen, offices, library/technology. Also, remodeling of stairs, appropriate egresses, and generally making sure the building comes up to code. There is no work taking place on the roof. There are no green elements being added. Lead removal is in progress due to the age of the building (built in 1886). The building is on track for completion for the 2012-13 school year.

Kindergarten enrollment will always be conducted via lottery; all other grades are by choice. Only guaranteed placement in the school is through sibling preference. The wait list ends this school year and a new wait list starts in the new school year. The lottery for next year will be held in March. TC and the school will conduct outreach to parents through existing head start programs and community-based organizations, and in collaboration with Community Board 9. The school is slated to be Pre-K through 8th; however, TC and the school leadership are still negotiating with the DOE, the state (Pre-K) and other parties as to how to ensure that provision of the West Harlem Benefits Agreement is fully actualized.

Kevin Mathews, Executive Director - Double Discovery Center.

Started by Columbia University, each year this program works with approximately 1000 high school students and 100 middle school students. The program resides on the college campus, but the program staff often travel to community centers and schools to deliver services. All the students are from low-income families. Among the schools that the program currently works with are Martin Luther King H.S. and George Washington H.S. The program operates afterschool, Saturdays and during the summer. The first couple of years, the program population consisted of students from all over the city; now it targets schools in the uptown area of Manhattan. Program is federally funded, thus income information for each student must be gathered and kept on file. Program does not enroll students who are performing above 90%; designed to help students struggling with academics, with low GPA. Currently does not enroll students of charter schools. Students are 9th and 10th graders (no seniors, unless they have not had college introduction and support). There is a rolling admission process; registration occurs every semester. Friday workshops are conducted separate from regular classes. Summer program begins in July for middle school and high school; half day for high schools. The Upward Bound Program conducted during the summer months provides for students to live on campus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-chair Joe Rogers, Jr. announced that the next Youth Resources Expo will be held on Saturday, December 10, 2011 at the Manhattanville Houses Community Center.

Pat Jones (Community Board 9 member) announced that the RFP for the Out of School Time (OST) Program offered by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is now available.

Tiffany Alston of the George Bruce Library announced that Tai Kwando programs are being provided at the Library on Saturdays from 2 to 4 p.m. for ages 3 to adulthood. Computer access is also available; however they could use help with staffing and funding. The capital budget request for 2013 included a renovation of the George Bruce Library. Also, she shared on behalf of her colleague Branch Manager Carol Small that the Hamilton Grange Library has opened the newly renovated Teen Center.

Mr. Kayode Bently - President and Founder of 4T's Production

Provided an overview of his program which focuses on bridging the disconnect between high schools and elementary schools in order to reduce the dropout rate. They look at the natural skill set and attributes of a student and help them create a strategy for going to college. Program began in 1992.

Dr. Gholson commented on the NBC Educational Summit that presented key data on dropout rates and other school-related statistics, and recommended that the Committee send a letter to NBC thanking them for presenting the data.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.