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Youth & Education Committee
June 10, 2008
Community Board 11 Office
1664 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10035

- Present: Chester Asher, Donna Brueger, Edward Franco, Alvin Johnson, César Ortiz, Nadine Verna
- Absent: Lidia Calleja, Deycy Avitia, Wanda Latchman, Kyndell Reid, Antonio Rivera, Carlos Rosario
- Excused: Jewel Jones, Brunilda Vega, Hilda (Candy) Vives-Vázquez
- Guest(s): Scott Guerrero, Deborah Castellano, Henry Vega, Ray Rosado, Laura Benítez, Brandon Tollinchi, Elsie Encarnación, Eliz Encarnación, Rayniel Pizarro, Sabina Ellentuck, Caitlin Dean, Elory Armstrong

Discussions:

D8YC Youth Fair

Laura Benitez, President of the District 8 Youth Council gave an update on the 2nd Annual Youth Fair which took place on August 30th, 2008. This year the Youth Fair took place on East 104th Street (Between Lexington & Third Avenues). The event included many performances, food, giveaways and information booths. The event was a success and they are already looking forward to next year

Upcoming Year

The committee took this opportunity to look forward and discuss what their priorities would be for the upcoming year. Committee Chair Ortiz stated that he was interested in organizing a College Fair for East Harlem students. The committee agreed that this was something that they would like to see come to fruition this year.

The committee then discussed what some of the priority areas they felt the committee should focus on were. Chester Asher introduced the "Polling for Justice Survey". This survey is part of a study being done by Professors in the CUNY, Graduate Center, Ph.D program in Psychology. The goal of the Polling for Justice Study is to generate policy relevant information about young people's experiences and perceptions of their education, health care and criminal justice systems.

The committee reviewed the survey and Chester Asher made a motion that the Youth & Education Committee help administer the survey in East Harlem. The motion was seconded by Ed Franco and passed (1 Against: D. Brueger).

Alvin Johnson then raised the issue of the lack of after school programs that target academics, especially Math & Science. He stated that non-academic after school programs are important but that he felt that in a community suffering with academics it was important to have after schools that would address these issues.

Chester Asher raised the issue regarding standardized testing in the school system. He explained that students are becoming overburdened with the amount of tests and that they are not learning enough from the tests. Other committee members felt that testing was important but agreed that currently there is an over-emphasis on it.

Another issue that the committee wanted to investigate further was the issue of mayoral control. Reports and news articles are already being released and more is expected as the date of renewal gets closer. The committee felt that it was important that they take an informed position on this issue sooner rather than later and would likely be talking about this issue in October.

Youth employment and job training were two other issues that the committee felt were very important to focus on. Developing strategies to improve Youth Employment was a long term priority that the committee, in conjunction with the Economic Development committee, would be working on. Expanding the Summer Youth Employment Training Program and advocating for more apprenticeship positions were two ideas that the committee felt was worth pursuing.

Announcements

- Randall's Island Kids: still offering free sports programs and after school activities
 - Hired a community coordinator, Lawrence Vargas
- The Girl Guides are starting a NYC Chapter and are looking for participants. For more information email them at info@girlguidesusa.org or visit their website www.girlguidesusa.org
- Community Conversations in Education Project, presented by the NYC Mission Society and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Hosted at Creole Restaurant on September 11, 2008 from 9:30 – 11:30 AM.

Action Items

1. Chester Asher made a motion that the Youth & Education Committee help administer the survey in East Harlem. The motion was seconded by Ed Franco and passed (1 Against: D. Brueger).

Adjournment

Chester Asher moved to adjourn; motion was seconded by Ed Franco and passed unanimously.