

**October 20, 2008
PNM Notes**

Registration and Socializing

Welcome and Participant Introductions

Announcements:

- **Zhang Sah's Teen Lounge** will have an open meeting on Tuesday, October 21st 7pm–8pm; contact Nancy Diaz at 215.409-8206
- Fleisher Art memorial has a drop-in teen lounge/art center on 719 Catharine St.
- **The Mazzoni Center** has ongoing trainings on tolerance
- **Atwater Kent Museum** likely will close for renovations in January 2009; looking to do off-site programming. discuss options
- Profile forms are still available for the **OSTRC Peer Mentor Directory**. The purpose of this directory is to identify local OST staff willing to share insights and expertise with colleagues. The OSTRC is *not* creating, organizing, or overseeing individual mentorships; nor is it coordinating adult-to-youth or youth-to-youth mentorships. Rather, this Directory will provide professional contact information with which staff can develop their own single-contact or long-term relationships. Both direct-service and administrative staff are encouraged to participate. See attached Profile Form to include your information in our directory!
- The **OSTRC Training Directory** is now updated through December. Contact Deepa (deepava@sp2.upenn.edu) for a copy of the directory
- Lutheran Settlement Group will be hosting a training for professionals who want to learn more about dynamics of domestic violence on December 3rd
- Send OST related announcements to Katie Derickson (kder@sp2.upenn.edu) so she can add it to the OSTRC listserv newsletter
- The next **OSTRC Peer Networking Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, November 18th, 6:30pm-8:30pm**. We are looking for staff that can bring in their students for our panel. Our discussion will be based on student perspectives on OST. We want to hear student's experiences in programs, what activities they enjoy the most, and what makes them keep coming back!

Panel Discussion "Peer Mentoring: Creating a Culture of Support for Professionals"

Kathy Fadigan, Assistant Professor of Science Education at Penn State University, discussed her work at the Academy of Natural Sciences as shaping her approach to peer networks and mentoring. She spent 8 years working on a variety of youth programs. From this time, she greatly benefited from peer networking. At the Academy of Natural Sciences, she participated in yearly conferences with people doing similar work in museums across the country. At these conferences, she received formal training and became friends with people who shared her interests. Fadigan defined an aspect of peer mentoring as having someone available to ask a question. She has maintained her conference friends for over 10 years and when she works on project even now, she sends emails to bounce ideas, updates her peers, and lets them know what she is doing.

Justin Green, a former high school teacher; supervisor and counselor for a GED program is currently self-employed as a grant writer and consultant. He came to the Peer Networking Meeting to network and talk about his ideas with new people. Green's last two jobs were found through peer mentors. He understands peer mentors as people who can support your professional skills as well as help you gain more skills. With his new grant writing job, he realizes the importance of networking with local non-profits in order to get clients; PN very key to being successful; last great mentor helped to build skills as leader

Nancy Peter, Director of the OSTRC, first began thinking about peer networking when she worked at the Academy of Natural Sciences. She understands networking as enhancing the individual as a professional but also benefits the kids. She explained that things you work on through trial and error are of great value for your peers. Peter explained that the driving hypotheses of OSTRC research is that staff

gain as much, if not more, from peer networking as they do through conferences. She noted that there is not a lot of literature on peer networking, though there is a lot on in-school formal education and adult mentoring. She is interested in doing her dissertation on the efficacy of peer mentoring and networking for professionals.

Peter wrapped up by discussing the OSTRC efforts towards alternative professional development. PNM attendants can receive state credit for coming to peer networking meetings—DPW and PA Keys. She says that she finds her peer mentors through meetings and by participating in grant reviewing. She finds more satisfaction in participating in events where she meets people rather as opposed to spending money on professional development. Like Fadigan, Peters constantly keeps in touch and corresponds with mentors and mentees locally and nationally via email.

At this point, the whole group participated in the discussion. Joyce Drayton had a positive experience with the Association of Fundraising Professionals. At the meeting, she was given a mentor. She worked closely with a young lady who guided her in locating grants and also assisted in writing the grants. She now has an ongoing relationship with the mentor and the organization.

A PNM participant asked the group, “For those who are creative and interested in servicing youth through programming, what is good start to get grants? Fadigan responded that it is important to have conversations with people doing similar work. She suggested that people identify individuals or organizations that you admire and approach them with your ideas. Peter suggested that one of the best ways to learn how to write grants is to review grants.

A large portion of the discussion centered on the concept of sharing and competition in the professional world. Some individuals in the group recalled their own experience with cultivating relationships over time and how it encouraged them to become open and generous. They had not seen their relationships as competitive. Many others in the audience disagreed with the idea that there is no competition, and that it happens frequently. People shared experiences of how they built relationships but that they were often strained due to a shortage of resources. A participant commented that the field of visual arts is very competitive in the city. Rebecca Fabiano, from PYN, reminded the group as to *why* peers *should* share information. She said that it is important to remind one another that ultimately, OST work is for youth. She believes it is important for people to feel empowered, but that they should forget their ego and competitiveness in order to help others.

Sal Sandone pushed the question further, asking “What drives the competition in the non-profit world? In the private sector, it is driven by revenue.” A participant suggested that staff in non-profits may be coming from a corporate world and need to change their mindset from competition to giving. She said her colleagues need to recognize that it’s about teamwork and providing for youth, and that they need to be willing to put their ego aside.

Another participant chimed in that the competition in the museum world is due to a scarcity of resources for programming. However, she realizes that if museums are competing with anyone, it’s with the movie industry and for visitors. She commented, “There is no sense in thinking that I’m competing with my peers, especially when grants reward collaboration. My jealousy happens when other museums are funded. However, it does not prevent me from realizing how valuable my peers are to my work.”

The meeting concluded with more networking time.

Thank you for coming! Please join us for the next Peer Networking Meeting!

“Promising Practices in OST: Student Perspectives”

Tuesday, November 18

6:30pm-8:30pm

at the United Way of Southeastern PA

7 Ben Franklin Parkway