

Meeting Minutes
Peer Networking Meeting
November 18th, 2008

Registration & Socialization

Welcome & Introductions

Announcements

- The **OSTRC Newsletter** is distributed on the first business day of the month. If you have an OST Job, Event, or Publication to advertise email it to Katie Derickson, kder@sp2.upenn.edu, at least 5 days before the last of the month.
- The **OSTRC Directories** are now available! These directories provide information about resources in the Philadelphia area for out-of-school time staff. Please contact Deepa Vasudevan, deepava@sp2.upenn.edu, for your copy of the Traveling Services, Training, and Field Trip Directories.
- Mazzoni's **Ally Safe School Program** offers free staff development on working with LGBTQ youth. They also provide Technical Assistance for schools. Contact Allison Buehler (abuehler@mazzoni.org) for more information.
- The **Community College of Philadelphia** now offers **classes and certificates in Youth Work**. They are currently registering students for January 2009. Day and evening courses, part-time options, financial aid, and transfers to four year colleges are available. Contact Pete Watkins (pwatkins@ccp.edu) for more information. Or, visit, www.ccp.edu/site/academic/degrees/youth_work.php
- Everyone is welcome to join the Friends and Family Thanksgiving Dinner on Tuesday, 5-8pm on November 25th at the Boys and Girls Club. Visit www.bgcphila.org for more information.
- **The United Way** will be holding its **2008 Youth Development Conference** on Thursday, Dec 11th, from 8am-5pm at the Philadelphia Convention Center. The conference will have a series of workshops to inspire both youth and adults to participate in community action and youth development. To register online, go to www.greatsettlements.org. For more information, contact Naomi Roberson, nroberson@uwsepa.org.
- **The Philadelphia Free Library** encourages after-school programs to sign up a team for the **Philadelphia Reading Olympics**. Registration continues until January, but hurry because slots are being filled! Contact Mark Wolfe, mwolfe@freelibrary.org for more information.
- **The Salvation Army** will be having a **Fire Department Safety Training** from 6:30pm-7:30pm on Thursday, December 4th at Philadelphia Citadel Corps, 5830 Rising Sun Avenue, 19128. There are 20 slots available. Contact Monica, Monica.Ning-Menton@USE.SalvationArmy.Org, for more information or to register.

Panel Discussion

Sal Sandone started Zhang Sah in 1998. He wanted people to use martial arts for people to live up to their full potential. He introduced Katie McFadden to the audience, a student in his program who started in the kindergarten class. He refers to her batch of students as "lifers," because she was part of the program since its inception. He wanted to give students a voice in his organization through have elections to sit on the board. Kate was nominated by her peers to attend board meetings.

Katie noticed Zhang Sah Martial Arts Center while walking to school and asked her mother about the Karate program. As she continued classes and got older, she began helping as a volunteer for camp sessions. Katie says she keeps coming back because there is always something to do at the center. She takes classes every day. There is also homework club for students that she helps with every week. The program also includes snack time. "DoJo games" are very popular amongst students, in which the kids play together in the main room which has mats. She really likes Zhang Sah because of the staff's relationship with the students. She also noted that the kids are also really close to each other and help each other. Katie noted that there are times that she felt busy, but she never wanted to quit. She noted that other programs, that weren't as flexible, are ones that she hasn't been able to continue.

Mikyael El-Mekki, chess instructor for ASAP, coaches chess players at Blankenberg School and at two other schools. He has played chess against his brother since he was a child. The principal at his school invited him to be an assistant for the chess club, and he was introduced to a world of competitions and scholarships. Mikyael has calls chess an "empowerment tool;" it increases self confidence, teaches the kids the ability to problem solve, use critical thinking skills, and take losses.

Mikyael's student, Sharock Griffen, has been playing chess for 3 years. He was introduced to chess by his little brother. He joined a team at his school and started playing and developing his skills. As a member of ASAP (After School Activities Partnership), he also has the opportunity to participate in other activities, such as scrabble. Griffen enjoys his program because it encourages him to think, and gain knowledge and strength. His participation in the program as made him question himself as who he is and what he wants in life. He has encouraged others to join because he feels that his program keeps people off the streets. He used to get in trouble until his coach recruited him. His coach works at a lot schools, so they are managing their time a lot. He is now in charge of planning an upcoming trip.

Ninette Cooper is a former after-school student of Nancy Peter at the Academy of Natural Sciences Museum. She started participating in an after-school program as a student 13 and received a promotion when she was 15 and 17. She went to Drexel and then grad school, receiving a Masters in statistics to evaluate youth programs. All those years ago Nancy started her on a track.

Ninette introduced her student, Jessica Sledge, who joined The Boys and Girls club when she was 3. She recently graduated high school. She currently helps the children with homework and assists with childcare. She has been part of the drill team since she was 16 and they have won two national championships. She keeps coming back because of her interaction with the staff.

To start the discussion, Nancy commented that each student noted that they enjoyed their program because they have a strong relationship with staff and participate in a leadership position. Windsor Jordan asked the students what inspired them to be leaders at their organization. Katie said that as she got older, the younger students at Zhang Sah started looking up to her. She was also required to do community work through her school, and decided to incorporate service into her passion. Both Sharock and Jessica said that their family as well as their peers in the program inspired their decision to take leadership roles.

Mikyael commented that from an adult perspective, staff often forget what they can learn from their students. He said that Sharock continues to teach him and motivate him. When Sharock advocates for his peers, Mikyael takes Sharock's opinion into consideration.

Continued Socializing

Conclusion

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

"Teaching Tolerance"

Monday, December 15th
11:30am-1pm
at the United Way of Southeastern PA
7 Ben Franklin Parkway