

Peer Networking Meeting
October 22nd, 2009
9:30-11:30

Introductions

Announcements

-**The Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC)** has weekly social/health groups for Southeast Asian women. Amy Jones, the coordinator, is looking for speakers on health, parenting, exercise, arts and social service topics. Contact: Amy Jones, ajones@seamacc.org, 215-467-0690x14. Website: www.seamaac.org.

-**Women Against Abuse's** education department is focusing on teen dating violence. Please contact them if you are interested in having WAA hold a one or two time interactive presentation with the youth you work with in your program. Contact: Hannah Jones, hjones@womenagainstabuse.org, 267-304-7622 or Amy Jones, ajones@womenagainstabuse.org, 267-240-4961. Website: www.womenagainstabuse.org.

-**OIC of America** recently received a **Strengthening Communities Fund Nonprofit Capacity Building Grant**. This project will provide financial support and technical assistance to nonprofits in North, Northwest, and West Philadelphia. Contact: Anthony Powell, apowell12@yahoo.com, 215-236-4500. Website: www.oicofamerica.org

-**OIC of America** will be holding an afterschool kick-off jam on October 23rd, 2009 from 4-8pm. The event is open to all child, teen, and young adult based programs. Contact: L'Erinne N. Capers, lerinnemoore04@yahoo.com.

-**Mazzoni Center** provides free professional development services for staff of OST programs on creating safer, more welcoming, and more inclusive climates for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) youth and families. Contact: Allison Buehler, abuehler@mazzonicenter.org, 215-563-0652x251. Website: www.mazzonicenter.org.

-**Lutheran Settlement House Bilingual Domestic Violence Program** provides training to professionals. They also offer teen dating violence and technology safety presentations by request. All presentations are free. Contact: Naomi Faszczyk, nfaszczyk@lutheransettlement.org, 215-426-8610x279. Website: www.lutheransettlement.org.

-**Mercy Neighborhood Ministries of Philadelphia** announces its first Health Fair to be held at Mercy Family Center, located at 1939 West Venango St, Philadelphia, 19140. Everyone is invited. Contact: Barbara Coleman, 215-227-4393. Website: www.mercyneighbors.org.

Panel Discussion

Jennifer Chiu from Welcoming Center, Project Bridging Cultures

The Welcoming Center's program Project Bridging Culture serves to promote immigrant education. She first became involved in the program in 2006 and is currently the program manager. Jennifer herself was an English Language Learner (ELL). ELL's are a growing population, about 10% currently. Jennifer shared a few things that are important to keep in mind when working on behalf ELL students:

- When you have a diverse group, know that what they have in common is that they need to master English in their everyday life
- ELLs should have opportunities for explicit language instruction
- Most students only speak 90 seconds a day in their classes
- Encourage students to speak English
- Keep resources such as dictionaries in many different languages and level readers
- Keep games and magnetic poetry
- Foundations, Inc. has activities for ELLs
- Many ELLs are immigrants and some of them have limited formal education
- If your program has an academic components, ELLs need homework help.
- Be sure to contact teachers, there are several references that the Welcoming Center provides
- Provide information about college and career opportunities, include basic information about financial aid, job opportunities
- Share information with ELLs about American history, culture, civics
- ELLs part of youth in general and their own community
- 40% of ELLs are born in the U.S. Make sure there are informal opportunities to learn about each other by creating clubs and learning service opportunities
- Provide information about services available through students so that their families can learn too

Dialya Avegnon from HMS school for Children with Cerebral Palsy

Dialya (Dee) Avegnon works at HMS school, close to Clark Park. She has been working for 22 years with special needs students and is currently the director of residential services. The school uses the term cerebral palsy fairly generically, but includes students with the most severe development delays and retardations. These were some of Dee's thoughts on children with learning and physical disabilities:

- They needs to be with their peers
- They also need to have fun with student with abilities
- Is your facility accessible to children with disabilities? Be mindful
- Make sure you have a disabled bathroom, or a room with a mat
- When working with students with disabilities, be sure to ask for specifics for example, they might be tube fed or have severe allergies to latex, peanuts

Michael Birnbaum from Variety – The Children's Charity

Michael works at Variety, an organization that works with both low incident and high incident disabilities. Current, 1 in 100 children is autistic. Variety works with multiply disabled kids at University City High School. They like to work with communities in their school and accept any of the students if they don't fit in and fall in the cracks. Variety provides vocational training, post secondary education, and internships with job coaches. They train students to make eye contact, incorporate therapeutic arts, and attempt to bring kids out of their shells. The program works on building the student's soft skills, creating a resume, and identifying interests through an inventory.

Stacey Charles from ARC of Philadelphia

The ARC of Philadelphia has been advocating on behalf of students with disabilities for the past 64 years at PDDC. Stacey's vision as a parent of a child with special needs is inclusion. She encourages organization to let the families know about state legislative. If you are running a program, focus on their everyday lives.

Group Discussion

Q (Anthony Powell): OIC of America is focusing on the topic of healthy relationships. We want to look at this concept holistically and want to know how to integrate special needs with the concept of healthy relationships.

A (Michael): Be sure you have a special education teacher to consult with you and create a planning team.

A (Dee): We focus on the students so much, we forget about the siblings who may be resentful. How do they feel about it? They were sometimes jealous, angry or feel left out.

A (Jen): Is there going to be a cultural component? As Philadelphia has many new immigrant populations, they don't have a lot of experience interacting with one another. Discrimination and race issues should be a component of a health relationships campaign as well.

Q: We run an art class and we found out that her daughter has mild down syndrome and a mild case of schizophrenia. In working with us, she has a vision called GINA, "girl in need of acceptance." We are trying to create this community project with the mom in mind. She is very committed to doing this but they need TA and help outside her expertise. How can she be linked to people in West Philadelphia?

A (Michael): Monday through Thursday 3-6 Variety has a program at University of City High. We can do an exchange with GINA.

Q: We at the Frankford OST are willing to have students with disabilities. Are there resources to have assistants?

A (Dee): Many of our students already bring nurses, etc. We have been there for afterschool trainers as well.

A (Michael): Pennsylvania offers TSS – Therapeutic Support Services. You should look into that opportunity.