

## December 2009 Peer Networking Meeting Minutes

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Mural Arts Program** – This Wednesday – kids created customized sneakers and are marching to City Hall to rally for support for arts education and programming. 1:00 PM city hall – this Wednesday (half day from school)
- **United Way Center for Youth Development** – winter training schedule will be released soon – listed at [www.uwsepa/trainings](http://www.uwsepa/trainings). Contact: Richard Johnson, [johnsonr@uwsepa.org](mailto:johnsonr@uwsepa.org).
- **JEVS Human Services** is a non-profit organization that offers SAT and ACT tutoring for groups, organizations, schools, and individuals at a greatly reduced cost. Higher scores can mean better schools and more scholarships. We are here to help and support the students. Contact: Susan Schultz, 215-854-1842, [susan.schultz@jevs.org](mailto:susan.schultz@jevs.org). Website: [www.jevshumanservices.org](http://www.jevshumanservices.org).
- **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](mailto:abuehler@mazzonicenter.org), 215-563-0652x251. Website: [www.mazzonicenter.org](http://www.mazzonicenter.org).
- **Philadelphia Foundation** sponsors Youthadelphia, an opportunity for young people to sit on a grant making board that provides grants of up to \$10,000 to organizations serving youth. They are currently looking for young people to be involved.
- **ARC of Philadelphia** – [www.arcpec.org](http://www.arcpec.org) offers a brunch on the first Wednesday of every month, information is available on the website. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month a training is held, related to the topic of individuals with disabilities. Special Education Advocacy Training providing a certification for advocates is also available. Contact: Stacy Charles. Website: [www.arcpddc.org](http://www.arcpddc.org).
- **Eastern University** offers a MS in Nonprofit Management. Courses start in January and June. Contact: Mike.
- **White Williams Scholars** is looking for partners for Global Youth Service Day, in which youth will plan and participate in a service learning project. Contact: Taniqua Neal.
- **Fleisher Art Memorial** holds teen lounge programs on Mondays and Wednesdays. The teen lounge is a free, drop in program. On Wednesdays art programs are provided for teens.
- **Center for Civic Education**- Through the Center for Civic Education, teachers and non profits can receive a free case of the "Project Citizen (PC)" Curriculum. PC is a civic education / service learning curriculum designed for middle and high school ages. Email Keith Bailey at [keithgbailey@gmail.com](mailto:keithgbailey@gmail.com) if you are interested in receiving a set of materials. Phone: 267-575-7148.
- **Urban League of Philadelphia** provides Financial literacy programs for ages 14, 21, a Young Urban Leaders Program for high school students, and Urban Green League Program, and a Behind the Business tour for 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The League also has a college scholarship program for high school seniors. Applications will be available in January. Contact: Zakira Ralling, 215-985-3220, ext. 208, [zralling@urbanleaguephila.org](mailto:zralling@urbanleaguephila.org).

### PANEL DISCUSSION

Before the panelists took the floor, Richard Johnson of the United Way's Center for Youth Development asked a guiding question of panelists and all participants, seeking input on the landscape of youth civic engagement in Philadelphia. He asked, what is the direction we can and should go in youth civic engagement in Philadelphia?

#### **Barbara Ferman from UCCP at Temple University**

UCCP prepares youth and young adults to be leaders through collaboration with organizations that work with youth. UCCP accomplishes their mission through direct programming, training, and short term and long term technical assistance, and applied research, mostly focused on best practices in youth leadership development.

- The bulk of their work is direct programming
- The UCCP Framework is a “Progressive Youth Leadership Development Continuum”
- Temple Youth Voices is their signature program – participants often return again and again.
- UCCP recognizes that youth development doesn’t happen in 6 months, so they developed a continuum of programming.
- Two points of entry to the continuum. The first – Temple Youth Voices, an after school program that operates 2 days a week, one Saturday a month
- 2<sup>nd</sup> point of entry - POWER internship, a credit bearing internship for high school juniors and seniors
- The POWER internship encourages students to identify issues that feel personal to them, research issues, then connect them to systems of power in the community
- Youth develop partnerships with organizations in the community
- Film and media are involved greatly
- Popular issues – poor quality of education, peer pressure, violence
- The Youth Action Institute is a summer program that runs for 6 weeks and focuses on research and community outreach
- The Leadership Development Institute runs for 6 weeks over the summer. Students learn aspects of positive youth leadership.
- The Leaders Corps is a full time staff position in which youth carry out UCCP programs and build capacity.
- V-MEDIA is the media and media training wing of Leaders Corps.
- The idea behind the Continuum is that that youth enter early and stay throughout high school
- Challenges – it is not easy to hang on to people for that long
- Funders think in funding cycles.
- How do we as a community start to gather together to tell funders that these short time frames aren’t working?
- Funders should listen to people in the trenches – the people who really understand the work – this is what its really like, this is what I really need

**Sayeh Hormozi from the Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy (PennCORD) at the National Constitution Center**

PennCORD is a project of the Governor’s Office of the First Lady, the National Constitution Center, the PA Bar Association, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

- 2003 Civic Mission of Schools report found that social studies and civics have been marginalized over the years mostly due to the fact that they are not on standardized tests.
- PennCORD’s goal is to equip every PA student with resources and support to be engaged and active members of their communities.
- PennCORD provides teacher training, professional development and resources, and a program for youth.
- Youth need a push – they don’t know where to start or how to begin with civic engagement.
- PennCORD’s Student advocacy guide is named 26 because 26% of US citizens are under the age of 18, and also the 26<sup>th</sup> amendment gave 18 year olds the right to vote.
- The first few pages of the guide focus on what makes an active citizen.
- Active citizenship vs. good citizenship
- Next few pages - What are students already doing?
- Students - Identify needs unique to community – what makes your work relevant to your life and your community? What are the universal ties?
- Ways for students to get involved - write letters, start afterschool clubs, etc.
- Booklet is distributed to schools, student governments, etc. – distributed for free

**Hillary Kane from the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND)**

The Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development works with college age students, faculty, and administrators in the 5 county region to help college students learn how to become active in communities.

- Students learn how to get off the campus, volunteering and service learning – student involvement through course work
- K-12 service learning – PHENND partnered with School District on Gear Up grant – involved colleges in the project
- Ties between service learning and youth led civic engagement
- Office of Teaching and Learning – high school senior project initiatives – wanted to ramp up quality and academic rigor of senior projects – quality varies greatly

- The idea was to up the quality of these projects – make them more comprehensive, but also involve more of the process – drafts, editing, etc.
- Definition of service learning – School District adopted PHENND’s definition which consists of 2 important concepts – 1. Student voice – choosing, developing, and implementing their project. In afterschool, there is more flexibility, not tied to curriculum or testing. 2. identification of a genuine need
- Hard part in facilitating these projects is matching needs of community and interests of young people creating the projects – encouraging partnerships and mutual benefit
- Sustained student involvement – 1 day projects don't have the benefits or the impact that come from sustained involvement
- Students learn the hard work involved with long term projects
- Rigorous multi disciplinary research – students should learn from different sources about their projects
- Ongoing reflection – this is what is transformative
- “You only learn from things you learn from”
- Assess student learning and project impact
- Celebration of student projects at the end of the term
- Core Curriculum at School District - PHENND has supplements to the core curriculum – there is a set on their website

## **GROUP DISCUSSION**

### **Q: In regards to Temple Youth Voices, are there stipends for the students?**

A: Only during the summer through Philadelphia Youth Network.

### **Q: Cite an example of a youth led civic engagement project that worked well, and also where you see opportunity for advancement**

A. Sayeh: Students from Overbrook and Constitution High School planned a Civic Opportunities Fair. They reached out to organizations for ways for any student in the 5 country area to get involved in their communities. 500 students showed up on their day off. Organizations with tables all really enjoyed it – made good connections.

Barbara: Teen Health Cafe. UCCP asked students what makes a healthy community? The number one thing for students was a safe space. students came from all over the city one afternoon a week to set up a teen health cafe which supported numerous workshops on healthy relationships, HIV testing, 5 dimensions of health. The idea came from kids, adults provided support and logistics.

### **Q: On the topic of Participatory-Based Research – how to engage with young people while doing research?**

A: Barbara: Young people make their own documentary films, often numerous films about violence. Provide space for youth to have a voice – screenings of films, discussion groups about violence. This process involves research – we want the research to lead to action. Students learn how to use films to start conversations to create better systems in society. This research is not really scientific research, but more action based.

### **Q: How do you measure the effectiveness of your programs?**

A: Hillary: When using service learning surveys, pre and post surveys are not so effective. They often show a decline – beforehand students think they can do anything, at the end they know what it is really like. Have students reflect back rather than pre and post surveys

Barbara: Has also seen the decline shown. Supervisors assess students this shows an increase. It is important to get at other things – there is no perfect assessment. Portfolio assessments- more accurate view of student work – deconstructing final products to see skills that went into making them.

Hillary: You don’t have to create your own surveys, there are surveys out there. CART, a website, has different assessments and surveys available that are already tested and valid.

### **Q: What are some of the tools or skills that you think are necessary for facilitators to guide a youth led project?**

A: Barbara: Listening. One of the main reasons that students say when asked why they come to programs – listening. Honesty – young people have really good BS detectors – if they get that you care and that you are honest they respond well. Young people get it and are responsive – listen, don’t talk down. Have high expectations but provide necessary support for achievement. Don’t set students up for failure.

Sayeh: Put on workshops to teach kids skills that they need, don't expect them to know them. Provide support in accomplishing tasks that they want to accomplish. Students realize that the skills they are learning will be useful outside of project that they are working on, and they buy in to the program.

Hillary: Let go of control. You need to be able to go with the flow. Projects may not go the way that you as a leader want them to, but let the youth be in control. It is a fine balance; don't let them go crazy either.

Barbara: Teach the adults who work with young people how to work with youth on the same level, without pretending that you are 15, or trying to control the whole project.

Sayeh: Having a college student there is a halfway point – as interns, you can trust them to be responsible, but also they connect with the kids.

Tamika Chester: Allow youth to make mistakes, respecting their process. The reflection process is one of the most important processes when working with young people.

Ask questions:

1. What did you learn?
2. What would you have done differently?
3. What will you do differently next time?

Trust students, guide them through the process, give them tools and resources, and let them learn from their mistakes.

**Q: Please remember to include young people with disabilities in your programs.**

A: Hillary: At the federal level, in service learning funding, there is a large inclusion initiative. There used to be a special grant for special education and service learning used to train Special Ed teachers to integrate service learning into classrooms by breaking it down into steps. The challenge in this respect is the youth led piece. It depends on skill sets, but there is certainly a place for them in most projects.

**Q: We provide internships for high school and college kids that include civic engagement projects. They have been very unsuccessful. One time we let the kids do the projects that they wanted. One time the kids built a garden, but they didn't like that because they couldn't see its results. One time they collected food for a food drive, but they didn't see the results of that either. It seems that kids don't have satisfaction with a project unless they are working with younger kids.**

**How can we make projects more meaningful to kids?**

A: Barbara: It is better to do longer projects, not just 6 month long projects, although we do work on smaller projects too, but they are part of larger organization.

Sayeh: It is all about the balance between letting kids do what they want (overwhelming, don't know where to begin) and supporting them. You need longer term projects - 7-8 weeks. Students need to take ownership of their projects, knowing that they are addressing needs in their own communities and using their ideas, they can see the outcomes.

Hillary: Recruit college kids who want to work with high school kids. Train the trainer for the kids on working together. The more youth led, the better, but sometimes things must be preordained – also, the art of making people think things are their own ideas.

**Richard Johnson of the United Way is still looking for replies to his question – What people feel are the opportunities where we can and should move forward with youth civic engagement?**