

## Sports as Positive Youth Development February 17, 2009

### Introductions

### Announcements

- The OSTRC has a new website! Check it out: [www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc)
- 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](mailto:kder@sp2.upenn.edu), at least 5 days before the last of the month.
- Mazzone'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](mailto:abuehler@mazzoni.org)) for more information.
- The George E. Gregory Interdenominational School of Music will be performing the Rosa Parks Story. Contact Stan or Joyce Drayton, [gegisom@aol.com](mailto:gegisom@aol.com), for more information.
- OIC of America, Inc present its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual "Healthy Relationship" Education and Awareness Youth Summit on **Wednesday, March 4th** at the Student Activities Center at Temple University. The event will be held 12pm-6:30pm. Free for all high school youth with ID. For registration information contact a Health Marriage Educator.
- Facilitators are needed for the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, 5 sites of the Salvation Army. Programs are based on the concept of microeconomics. Call Maranjeli Mejia-Rabell at [mmejiarabell@yahoo.com](mailto:mmejiarabell@yahoo.com)
- The **Center for Youth Development** at the **United Way** has just released their training calendar with a core curriculum series. The trainings are for people looking for 3 areas of assistance: youth engagement, program design and training, and assessment and quality improvement. Programs start next week. First Aid/CPR included. All trainings are FREE. To register, visit <http://citi.uwsepa.org>. For any questions or information needed on discounted parking, contact Preston Beckley, [pbeckley@uwsepa.org](mailto:pbeckley@uwsepa.org)

### Panelists

**Lezlie Hiner**, runs **Work to Ride** at Fairmount Park West. She started the program in 1994. She took her love of horses and combined it with her desire to introduce horses to children. She says, "Children will do anything if they are into it." Her program now hosts the only African-American polo team in the world. They compete against 48 states; both boys and girls teams. Working with the horses, playing, is a strong "carrot" in her opinion, for students to do well in school. Her program's goal is to keep the child all through high school. The staff becomes involved with the children all the way through, even becoming involved with the student's academics and home life. She showed a video clip of her program on the Today Show.

The program is open enrollment, though there is a maximum of 20 students. The students must live in Philadelphia and come from low-income families.

**Marirose Roach** works at **Black Women in Sport Foundation**. Her program increases the opportunities for women of color in traditional sports. Her program works with the school district of Philadelphia. Their program has mentors, professionals, and athletes, that work with

the students on both athletic training and life skills. They also teaching the kids about the wide variety of possibilities of sports, such as fencing, soccer, etc.

The program targets grade school children in North and West Philadelphia. The mantra of their program is "Keep playing and having fun." The three basic steps to teaching the kids about sports is 1)Learn 2)Play 3)Compete. They also work to teach their kids that the classroom is the field through their life skills curriculum. For example, in the class they teach students about conflict resolution, which can also be applied to conflict on the field.

**Vinson Houston** is in the process of organizing **Oases Skating Program**. He first became involved in afterschool skateboarding through the Beacon Program. Originally, he worked through Educate to Skate. Vinson noted, "During school I could not live without recess." The success from the afterschool skateboarding come from allowing his kids free independent thinking. He also relates his Skateboarding class to physics, history, creative arts, and strategic thinking. He also notes that sports are a break from technology, saying "Wii games are not enough." Sports are the break from words and linear thinking, and engage kids in 3d reality.

Skateboarding is about adaptation, and it's theatrical. He finds that his students are very imaginative, and need opportunities to play out their ideas. In skateboarding, instructors show what they know, but let the children experiment. He recommends that people engage their students in hands-on activities, such as building a skate park. He also discouraged the audience from setting different standards between girls and boys in the sport. In his program there were all boys in the classroom and one girl. He wanted to challenge her just as much as the boys.

### Questions for the Panel

**Question for Leslie:** *If I had a group of kids can they come to "Work to Ride" for a one day program.*

Leslie: Yes, we have one day fee for service for program. \$5 per child.

**Question for Marirose:** *Althea Gibson might be closing. Who is going provide tennis programming?*

Marirose: For tennis we usually use the gym, because we have the supplies and need a basic space.

**Comment:** Reminder about the mayor budget meetings

### Engagement in Alternative Sports

**Question:** *One of the laments we have in high school is engagement. Football and basketball are easy hooks. How do get our young people engaged in alternative sports? ESPN, always traditional sports. I open the panel for suggestions?*

**Leslie** noted that 95% of her kids get to travel and it is a huge hook. The kids get to meet different people and experience different cultures. **Vinson** suggested two ideas: Visit schools with your program material. Also, encourage your kids to do research on different sports so that they know about them through projects. The staff of **Students Run Philly Style** noted, "The key to our success is having an adult mentor; an adult that believes in them." They also suggested celebratig students in nontraditional sports. Let them wear medals, and hang certificates in their schools. **Katie Derickson** commented, "I'm an adult and I love wearing my team jersey. Create or purchase team gear to show your pride and sense of community."

A professional from the **Arthur Ashe Foundation** noted, "Students want to be asked because otherwise they won't know. There are only so many teams for students to play on for basketball"

Someone else suggested peer to peer mentoring, older students teach younger students **Robb** from Children's Summit Program commented, "Passion is contagious. If you have someone who is passionate about the sport, loves it, they will engage kids differently. Every sport has a culture. Students should watch games from around the world. It sheds a light on the sport on a more international level."

Another person from **Arthur Ashe Foundation** commented, "I work with K-8. With Arthur Ashe, it was difficult to introduce the sports. As soon I made a special invitation for an event, the kids came out to try all the different sports. The students felt special and chosen for the program. I chose kids who had 100% attendance. Find something and someone who the kids can identify with. For example, Rutgers will let kids watch practices and games.

## **Competition**

**Brandon Brown** noted that students can get intimidated by competitive sports. He suggested that directors turn teams into clubs. He believe that clubs are more instructional. **Lezlie** noted that her students play competitively, but she tries to instill good sportsmanship at all levels. **Vinson** suggested that instructors teach their youth to work on comparison before competition.

**Sal Sandone** wanted to return to the emphasis on Positive Youth Development and Competitive Sports. He believes that there is more emotional education involved if you are using a club model. At a certain point, you have to engage your youth in competition, for resiliency. However, kids should not get rolled out into competitive sports right away. He reminded the audience that you are trying to build children's self esteem and self confidence. If they were not cultivated or built up to handle that experience, it could be a negative outcome. Someone else suggested redesigning what it means to competitive. Compete against yourself to be the best that you can be. Reward what you want to see. **Vinson** also noted that the goal does not have to be specifically about winning, but rather about improving.

**Robb** noted that there is a pervasive culture of anti-competition in youth programs. He noted that playing dodgeball in his program is controversial. In that light, why is competition considered positive? Or, why is it considered to be negative?

Discussion – to be continued!