

# MINUTES

## The Center for Youth Program Committee Minutes

*Meeting Held through Video Call* | June 1, 2022 at 9:00 AM | *Meeting called to order by* Cheryl Gossin at 9:04 AM

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### In Attendance

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**Board/Committee Members Present:** Lorraine Braveman; Margaret Burns; Cheryl Gossin; Bruce Kielar; Richard Kreipe; Kermin Martinez-Hernandez; Barbara Rivera; Martin Weingarten.

**Ex Officio Member Present:** Mike Piccolo

**Board/Committee Members not Present:** Neisha Dillard; Daryl Gaston; Shaun Nelms; William Turner,.

**Non-Voting Program Committee Member Present:** Cedrick-Michael Simmons

**CFY Staff Present:** Elaine Spaul; Paul Clark; Kathy Cummins; Valerie Douglas; Nolica Murray; Lindsey Graser; Lavonne Richards Sr.; Minerva Davila; Tawana Jackson; Deon Willis.

**A quorum was present. Meeting was facilitated and minutes were recorded by Cheryl Gossin.**

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### Approval of Minutes

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The May 4, 2022 Program Committee Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Kermin Martinez-Hernandez and second by Martin Weingarten.

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### Business

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#### Executive Director Update by Elaine Spaul

- Center's leadership were on a call with a group of people on violence, racism and whether they are a public health crisis?
  - o Tensions rose in the meeting because Public Health systems are going about their days rather than addressing the crisis
  - o This is not business as usual, we need more attention outside of the traditional medical care. How do we combat violence/racism?

#### Discussion on The Center's Anti-Violence Work

- The Center's leadership staff participated in a meeting with organizations including Teen Empowerment, The Black Agenda and The Children's Agenda to discuss the public health crisis of violence.
- A statistic shared at the meeting: pre-Covid,, 15% of students accessed social-emotional counselors. Post-Covid, it is now 80% students.
- Following the tragic Uvalde shooting, the RCSD asked that each of The Center's staff hold restorative circles with the kids in every school building. RCSD asked Paul and Nolica to host as many healing circles as possible. If mass shootings are a public health crisis, how do we address it?
- Paul talked about the need to take care of our own staff during these challenging times. As the staff is leading restorative circles to help others, they are taking on a lot of grief and sadness.
- Paul talked about the End of the Year celebration that went to a conversation about the past year's violence/racism, the discussion focused on the increase in intense hate.
- At a recent restorative circle, Nolica shared that the kids are fighting more because they are so scared. They don't feel safe in school.
- Valerie encouraged The Center to "take the lead" in supporting various smaller, grassroots organizations to work together on this effort and, for The Center to focus on how to make sure youth voices are heard and that they have an equal seat at the table. We could potentially use funds to pay youth for their time and for a staff person to be tasked with supporting the youth involved, including training them and working with them to use their voice.
- Valerie introduced Deon Willis, the new Program and Grant Administrative Specialist, who will be participating in Program Committee meetings.
- A Program Committee member remarked how important it is to take care of the caretakers.

The Committee members broke into three groups to discuss two questions: What can The Center do more of within its walls? What can the Center do in the community?

**Notes from first group:**

- We do an excellent job of making youth feel safe and giving them a safe space to speak up.
- Voting. Political Empowerment and showing how it impacts our everyday lives.
- Infrastructure. Money, we are stretched thin, and if people are more focused on their specific roles, it will allow for more productivity and creativity
  - Having our pedal to the metal limits creativity.
  - We are stretched thin. We must still focus on doing things well and meaningfully to ensure we are putting our best foot forward.
- Self-Care. A self-care day.
  - We must ensure that we are okay to ensure that our youth will be okay as well.
  - Self-Care Practices. What does self-care look like on an individual basis? (We all have different ways of self-care and different things that we enjoy?)

**Notes from second group:**

- We need to support staff and the work they do. How can the Board be involved?
- Do we know what the staff think will be helpful? Get better ideas of what would the staff find beneficial?
- Staff, like others in the community, are feeling the overwhelming responsibility for all this.
- How do we get youth access to mental health supports when guardians aren't signing off or being supportive? Val is going to send a Bill currently in the Senate on the issue of guardianship and allowing young people to have a voice in their own mental health issues.
- Provide more clinical consultation support for staff to debrief and destress from their work.
- Do staff have internet access and computers at home to tap into support services?
- What can the Board do to fortify the work in the next two years to support staff, professional development and increased wages? One example, at Boces One, the Board needed to adjust wages mid-year because they were not getting people in the door. After raising wages, more applications came in immediately.

**Notes from third group:**

- It was noted that Committee members have feelings of anger, sadness and helplessness.
- Tawana raised a concern about staff burnout and trying to help the staff in some way. She has a staff member who clocked in 150 hours in one pay period. How can we take care of the staff and provide some relief?
- The staff is all stretched so thin. Could there be a combination of Board Members, staff and youth leaders to get together regularly to discuss this topic more?

The meeting ended by appreciating and recognizing the talent in the group. And acknowledging that working together will help to come up with positive actions and good solutions to take care of each other and support youth.

**Action Items**

- *From May 2022 mtg:* Have Tyshauna attend a future meeting to give a full update on Teen Court, including expansion into Felony Part 5 and Greece.
- *From March 2022 mtg* - Regarding the School-based report, there was a request to triangulate data over time to show longer-term trends. Believe the school district will be looking for longer-term trends.
- *From January 2022 mtg* - Enhancements discussed for future reports: show data and trends quarter over quarter and YTD; include goals and progress; and include demographics overall and for each program.

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**New Business**

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N/A

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**Adjournment**

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 AM by Cheryl Gossin.

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**Next Meeting**

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July 6, 2022 at 9:00-10:15 am | Location – Virtual Meeting