

Southeast Queens Press, 1/16/07 - *Businesses Go Back To School At York*

BY KARLENE HAMILTON

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall and the Department of Youth and Community Development sponsored a panel presentation at York College Thursday to provide non-profit organizations with information on how to compete successfully for funding for youth programs and services.

“This part of a city wide strategy we’re addressing the need to work closer with community based organizations and the city so everyone can have an opportunity to partake of the services we offer,” said Commissioner Jeanne Mulgrav.



Not-for-profit business owners gather at York to learn. PRESS
Photo by Ira Cohen

“We want to work with community based organizations to show them how to strengthen their entire infrastructure, how to better understand the evaluation process and the proposal process. Just being signed up with us allows them to receive ongoing information.”

DYCD also provides individuals who are aiming to start a non-profit organization with support so they know the basic criteria for start up of a community based organization.

“We’re committed not only to the public forums but to whatever needs they may have because sometimes we have to go to that organization and show them how they can diversify their funding,” said Dawn Walker. “That can’t happen in a larger setting. That’s very individualized so to have a lasting impression we need to have that type of consultation.”

A follow-up workshop will be held at the Jamaica Arts and Learning Center Friday, March 16 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

“We’re not just coming in to deliver a workshop on what we do but we’re sustaining that workshop because the organizations here understand the culture, the language that’s spoken,” said Mulgrav. “In many instances you have newcomers and immigrants and we rely on the non-profits to give us that kind of understanding and to provide services that are uniquely tailored to the community.”

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott related how he started his non-profit organization about 30 years ago.

“I started out as a teacher at Amistad 32 years ago,” he said. “I had a very unique experience. I was the only male teacher in the school; in fact, the only black male teacher in the school.

“A lot of the young boys would gravitate to me because they didn’t have fathers in their homes. I quit my job because I had a dream so I went on unemployment and started a big brother program.”

Walcott said he organized and created a 501(c) 3 and started the Big Brother program for boys aged 5 to 12.

“I felt it was important that they had a father figure at an earlier age. I matched myself up with two younger brothers. I incorporated and formed a board of directors and formed three office spaces on the corner of Archer Avenue.

Walcott said his business grew after he got exposure on Channel 5 and in the Daily News.

“I got such an overwhelming response that I could not handle all the requests that I was getting but I learned a lesson,” Walcott said. “I had not established a foundation and was not prepared for all the requests that came from the promotion. I didn’t have the capacity. So what DYCD is doing is so important. It is important to know how to network with people who can provide in kind services as well because funding is not the only important thing, and this is what DYCD is about.”

For further information, visit www.nyc.gov/dycd.