

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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September 9, 2015  
Start: 10:28 a.m.  
Recess: 1:08 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:  
MATHIEU EUGENE  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Annabel Palma  
Darlene Mealy  
Margaret S. Chin  
David G. Greenfield  
Andy L. King  
Laurie A. Cumbo

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Susan Haskell  
Deputy Commissioner of Youth Service  
Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)

Tracy Garcia  
Director of Service Learning  
Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)

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Project Manager, Service Learning  
Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)

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Dr. Meghan Groome  
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Power Play NYC

Dr. Sat Bhattacharya  
Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good morning. I'm Mathieu Eugene, and I am the Chair of the Youth Services Committee. Thank you so very much for coming here today to discuss our youth mentoring programs in the city, and whether or not our goals for our youth are being met. My personal commitment to our young people began substantially before I ever contemplated public office. My years in the not-for-profit sector as a provider of services to youth was only one of the ways I worked toward ensuring a better future for our children and our youth. Before that, I taught sports (sic) to children to aim just at youth to assure our self-control and discipline are very important tool they needed to be successful in school and life, and also in our society. Children who enrolled in my classes and received mentoring, have grown into intelligent and compassionate young men and women. And I want to say also--I've got to mention that I couldn't do all these things by myself. I don't want to take the credit. It was possible because of wonderful people who were part of my team, especially parents. And I can't tell you how many times I've been stopped on

the street and been told by a young person--by a young person thank you very much. An especially memorable moment happened when a young man approached me and said Mr. Mathieu, you don't know what you have done for me and for my friends. If it wasn't for you, I would be on the street right now. You took me away from so much negativity, and so I will always be grateful. Sometimes we don't always know the impact we have had on a child until years down the road. Just taking a few moments out of our day to go the extra mile with a child or with a teenager to have a profound effect on the course of her life.

We can mentor for so many of our young people in every community in New York City and that need and testify in an area where there is rampant poverty and less opportunities for our children and our youth. As the experts study the impact of mentoring programs have informed us in numerous studies too many kids grow up in a family environment that actually increase the risk for violence. And safe abodes (sic) and schools that are organized narrowly and primarily for our currently well performing youth only increase the likelihood that too many children will grow up without the positive

influence they crave and need, and most importantly deserve. All children deserve to have positive adult influences in their live. That is why today's hearing is so important. We are the proverbial adult in the room, and we need to understand the scope of what works and what doesn't work in the mentoring universe so that we may act with intelligence and knowledge to begin to dissolve this problem. We must help our young people in New York City. Because failure to do that is our failure as a city. This good city and this great Council and the wonderful city of New York has to get it right because the young men and women later will nurture and the teachers of today will become the leaders of tomorrow. Failure is certainly not on our front.

Before we move forward, let me acknowledge that we have with us Council Member Margaret Chin and Council Member Andy King, and I want to thank also from the bottom of my heart the wonderful staff members who worked very hard to make this even possible this morning, and I want to thank Kimberly Williams. Thank you very much. Michael Benjamin and Jessica Dodson. Thank you, and I want to

thank also my staff Barry Jess Wallace (sic) and Vanessa. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Now, let's call the first panel. Cynthia Malave-Baez, Project Manager and Service Manager from DYCD. Thank you for coming and Tracy Garcia, Director of Service Learning also from DYCD, and Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner from DYCD. And to all of you her from the panel, and all of you who are here today this morning, I want to thank you also especially for being here for your concern, and every wonderful thing that you have been doing for our young people because when I say that New York City it is a team work. No one alone can do, you know, a positive impact on the lives of their children, and no one organization can do it, but as a team all of us will be about to make such a good difference in the life of all children. And again to all of you, thank you very much. So you begin any time. This way. Can you come this way. Excuse me. One minute, please. (background comments) Could please raise your hand and state that you will now say the truth and all the truth. Will you? All three of you?

PANEL: We will. [in unison]

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,  
3 and you may start any time. Please state your name.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thank you.

5 Good morning, Chairman Eugene and members of the  
6 Youth Services Committee. I'm Susan Haskell, Deputy  
7 Commissioner for Youth Service of the Department of  
8 Youth and Community Development. I'm joined by Tracy  
9 Garcia, Director of Service Learning, and Cynthia  
10 Malave-Baez, Project Manager, Service Learning.

11 Thanks for inviting us to testify today. My  
12 testimony will focus on DYCD's Cornerstone Mentoring  
13 Programs. As you know, DYCD funded provider  
14 organizations, operate Cornerstone programs in New  
15 York City Housing Authority community centers.  
16 Programs offer services and activities to youth,  
17 adult and families that include after school  
18 programming and recreational and enrichment  
19 programming. The DYCD Cornerstone Program began in  
20 February of 2009 with 25 centers, added 45 center in  
21 January of 2014, and has grown to 94 centers as of  
22 fiscal year '16.

23 Since January 2012, all 25 original  
24 Cornerstone centers have been operating mentoring  
25 program funded by the city's Young Men's Initiative,

YMI. YMI was launched in 2011 as cross-agency initiative to relieve the disparities and outcomes between young Black and Latino men in areas related to education, health, employment and criminal justice. The YMI Cornerstone Mentoring Program targets youth in fifth through ninth grade who are at risk of dropping out of school. Programs are located in every borough in neighborhoods such as Soundview, Mott Haven, Highbridge, Bronx River, Morrisania, East New, Bushwick, Canarsie, South Jamaica, Astoria, Flushing, Far Rockaway, East Harlem, Washington Heights, and State Island's North Shore. Cornerstone Mentoring Program receives \$32,000 in YMI funding to serve 12 mentees. A designated mentor coordinator works with the Cornerstone director to implement the program and mentoring is delivered in a group format with up to four youth matched to an individual volunteer mentor, and it occurs for at least one and a half hours each week. Each Cornerstone has flexibility to customize the design of the mentoring program based on the needs of the youths served and their community. DYCD provides guidance to the programs and supports on-site technical assistance through the Mentoring Partnership of New York, a non-

profit focused on growing the city's mentoring capacity. Mentoring program staff can attend training and networking events, receive materials on effective mentoring practices, and obtain one-on-one support from a staff member who is a mentor specialist.

In fiscal year '15, 303 youth ages 10 to 17 participated in Cornerstone Mentoring Programs. 95% between the ages of 10 to 15. About one-fifth of the participants were female; 68% of the participants were Black; and 25% were Latino. Mentees were recruited from the Cornerstone after school participants. Cornerstone directors, and mentor coordinators have discretion to identify participants based on a perceived need, or the program may accept applications on a first come, first served basis. Mentoring activities vary across programs, but usually include group discussions, sports, field trips, meals, academic support and community service projects. Specific examples of such activities include poetry, spoken word workshops facilitated by Urban Word NYC, nature walks in New York City parks and trips to Governor's Island, basketball games at Barclay Center and end-of-the year Broadway shows,

food and toy drives, park cleanups and neighborhood beautification and tree plantings.

Through Cornerstone Mentoring Programs, youth develop relationships with positive and caring adults who support them in school and in life with the ultimate goal of keeping youth on track in school and looking forward to college and successful careers. Program mentors are recruited in various ways. Most of the mentors are Black and Latino men connected to their local Cornerstone program. Some are staff members in nearby schools or housing facilities, while other are adults who grew up in the community and are now working professionals. Some are selected through NYC Services online website of volunteer opportunities. Additionally, for two years, 22 mentors were placed in Cornerstone centers through a partnership between DYCD and The New School where the mentors completed youth mentoring course. All mentors must successfully complete a criminal background check with fingerprinting. Mentor coordinators receive centralized training from DYCD at the beginning of the school year, and in turn train the mentors with materials and resources from the Mentoring Partnership of New York. DYCD's

Cornerstone Mentoring Programs have had a very positive impact on the mentees who have participated.

The 2013- 14 Evaluation Study by Policy Studies Associates contained encouraging findings. When patterns of participation of mentees were examined, we learned that mentoring participants are more engaged in other positive activities in Cornerstone programming than their peers who are not enrolled in mentoring. And the retention rate in the Mentoring Program is higher than retention rates typically found in traditional after school programs. 43% of Mentoring Program participants were in their second year of mentoring at the time of this study, compared to 35% of middle-school youth over multiple periods in DYCD's COMPASS programs. The study also identified four programmatic tools or best practices used in the Mentoring Program to participate in participant growth, dialogue, role modeling tips and academic support.

Through formal or informal dialogue, mentors and middle-school youth discuss pertinent issues together. Dialogue was consistently present in the programs as mentors were charged with engaging participants in relevant age-appropriate

conversation. Mentors were positive role models and represented caring, successful and admirable adult figures for youth. Mentors understood that a primary responsibility was to serve as a strong positive adult for the mentees, and as educated adults they helped to reinforce the value and importance of school and education. Mentors also help mentees learn how to navigate the complicated terrain of race and class and importantly to build and sustain positive relationships with adults.

Trips or excursions out of the neighborhood were a regular part of the mentoring experience and a big draw for participants. They were an integral component of the mentoring programs since it augmented program recruitment and retention, providing enriching experiences, and engaged and exposed participants to new ideas and environments, and provided an avenue for mentors and mentees to bond and strengthen relationships.

Academic support including tutoring and homework help allowed program staff to have to set high academic expectations while encouraging the mentees to do their best. Mentor coordinators and mentors expected participants to go to school and do

their homework and reinforced these expectations by checking in with mentees frequently about their education. Finally, the study found the impact of the program on participants was threefold. Mentoring program participants reported positive attitudes about their abilities to do well in school and beyond compared to non-mentoring participants in the Cornerstone Program. Mentoring Program participants are engaged in the learning experience. Mentees had very positive perceptions about their mentor, and reported high levels of trust and positive relationships with their mentors.

The Evaluation Study also surveyed the attitude changes of program participants across eight indicators, and the mentoring participants ranked higher than the non-mentoring participants in the following questions: I feel like I can succeed in middle-school. I have more ideas for what kind of job I want when I'm older. I feel more confident in myself. I feel better prepared for high school. I have a better idea of my strengths. I'm more willing to take risks and stand up for what is right. I feel better prepared to be a leader at school. I feel better prepared to be a leader in community.

To conclude, I'd like to share quotes from the focus groups we've held where we spoke with mentoring participants about the program's positive impact on their lives.

The Mentoring Program helped me focus and think better. Most of us knew each other, but we didn't get along. Now we're friends. It helps us to develop and learn to resolve arguments. It gets you to think about the future, about what we want to be when we grow up, what we want to happen in the next ten years. The program helps. It gives us good experiences. We learn how to make better choices and how to choose a better path in life doing it step by step. So when we graduate from high school and we become parents, we'll be able to help our kids make good choices. We learn to do good things like service projects because it helps the community. People appreciate it, and they are fun.

As I testified today, the Cornerstone Mentoring Program fits squarely within best practices of quality youth development program especially giving youth the chance to form caring adult relationships. We have been very pleased with the program's success, and look forward to strengthening

it even further. Thank you again for the chance to testify today. We're happy to answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony. With respect to the process to select the programs of the organization, can you tell us how DYCD selects the service providers? What are the requirements? What is the process? Can you give us any detail how you select the service providers, the organization that are going to provide or that are providing mentoring to the young people?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The program was, um, in the original 25 Cornerstone community centers in NYCHA facilities, and they were--they were selected through an RFP process as the Cornerstone provider, and it's that same CBO that implements the mentoring program through YMI. So we use the Cornerstone community center provider as the mentoring provider.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you mentioned, you know, there were in certain NYCHA facilities, right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What about the children or the youth who are not part of the NYCHA system?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Who are-- excuse me. Did you say are not part?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Who are not part.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We--it's not exclusive to NYCHA residents. Young people participate in Cornerstone programs who don't live in NYCHA housing. It's open but being housed within the NYCHA community center makes it easily accessible for those who live there.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And can you give us the percentage--the percent--can you give us the percentage of young people who are part of the NYCHA system and those who are not part of the NYCHA system that are enrolled in the Mentoring Program.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That's a good question. I don't think we have that data with us today, but I would be happy to get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Would you please it tomorrow or at least on (sic)--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --the statistics because I do believe that all the children, all the youth regardless if they are part of NYCHA or not, they should have the same opportunity. Because what we are seeing in our city right now a lot of young people and I would say that the majority of them need assistance. They need mentoring and I would appreciate that DYCD continues to extend the program in order for all the young people can receive the same opportunities. Thank you very much and in your testimony, you said that one-fifth of mentees are female, that you believe that the young women need also the same benefit from the Mentoring Program as well as the--the--the--the young men. Because I think there's a disparity between, you know, the number of the young men and the number of the young females.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We do, and I will invite Tracy Garcia to add to this because she was with the program since the beginning. Initially, the Young Men's Initiative was aimed specifically towards boys and young men, and we learned through beginning to implement the program that a community-based organization would have a young--a young woman

or a girl who was interested in the program, and we decided to make it open to girls. So while the target of the Young Men's Initiative is boys, we--we have opened it up and girls are eligible to apply for mentoring as well. So we've seen an increase. This past year I think we had 66 girls out of the 303 enrolled.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But we still have one-fifth of the mentees are female? I mean one-fifth. This is a huge difference, a huge difference, and we are seeing in the City of New York the young men and male and female they are all facing the same challenges. I don't know if you remember the--they called it the Brooklyn Fight or the Fight--I don't remember the title, but it was a huge big situation among the young girls. They were fighting and beating on one, you know, young person, and if you--if I remember vividly, the posted it on Social Media. And that means that they--the young females they do need the same opportunities. And I would urge you and I would ask you to do anything possible to make sure that all the young people regardless of sex or gender, regardless of where they're living, the social and economic situation, they can have the same

opportunities. If we don't do that, something is wrong.

TRACY GARCIA: Good morning. We have seen some of our programs take small steps to opening up to young ladies even further. So they're--they're actually introducing YWI, Young Women's Initiatives at their centers, but it's something that's taking its baby steps, and we do hope to grow it. But it's just in its inception stages. So we do see the number as been a big disparity, but at the ground level, the centers themselves are growing the programs to fit females, to have a greater number of females in their programs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Let me ask you also. It seems that, you know, only a fraction of the Cornerstone has a Mentoring Program. Is there any plan to expand the program to all the Cornerstone Programs.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We--as I said in my testimony, it was just last January that we expanded to 70 and just July 1st that we got to 94. So we are thinking now that when we implemented the program we had 25 centers and we now have 94. We thinking about how we can expand that to make sure

that there's a Mentoring Program in all of the Cornerstone centers, and we're communicating with YMI about how we can make that happen.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. You mentioned also, but remember that that fairness (sic) is very important I think for you and for my colleagues and I think for all of us. I am going to put emphasis on that that we are offer the same opportunities to all the young people in New York City especially now. These numbers, too, these are important. That should be on the top of your priorities and we from the Youth Services Committee, my colleagues and myself and the City Council we would be more than happy to sit down with DYCD to work on that. This doesn't make sense in New York City some young people have the opportunities, you know, got access to the opportunities, and other young people who are in the same condition they don't have the opportunities, similar opportunities. That shouldn't happen. We cannot, you know, waste too much time talking about the past, but I hope in the future for the next budget, you know, the fiscal year budget or the next year, we will work together to fill the gap because we have to do it. Otherwise, I don't think that we

can do a good job. Now, let me call Council Member King who has some questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You are welcome, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Deputy Commissioner, welcome back.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: And welcome back to us all. I hope everyone had a wonderful summer. I know we have an Indian summer now, but I think I prefer a T-shirt than shoveling snow any time. I appreciate the Department of Sanitation. So, I appreciate that as well. But I want to say to you that while I commend the work that you have done, and you will continue to do as a youth advocate long before I took this job, my commitment is with you. And anything that I could say, do, advocate, kick, pick up a rock, throw something, do whatever you need, I'm Council Member King, and I know the rest of the committee is there on board to help DYCD especially when it comes to our youth and our young women, our young ladies. I listened to your testimony, and I'm glad to hear

early good reports, and as we'll still continuing to grow. I have roughly about three questions that I want to ask in regards to the retention rate from the time of the beginning of the program of the year that young men enroll. What is your retention rate by the time of the conclusion of the school year?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: I do not have the specific numbers. However, I can testify that the majority of the participants that are enrolled in the Mentoring Program continue until they reach the ninth grade and then stay in our programs and continue to participate after that. So we do have high rates of retention for the program.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay. I heard you mention the number of neighborhoods that you are servicing, and I wasn't seeing that in the North Bronx, but that's okay. We'll--we'll get somebody up on the next Bronx.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: We are in East Chester Gardens.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: East Chester.  
Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: And that's  
3 Cornerstone. Okay, that's right, with Ramsey and one  
4 up there. Okay.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: All right. So  
7 those who do not participate, what is the plan to  
8 encourage more young people to participate, and what  
9 does your kind of numbers look like through our  
10 programs. I don't know the exact numbers. So let's  
11 say--let's guesstimate. If there were 10,000 young  
12 men from ages 13 to 21 that you service, are we  
13 servicing 200 of them? Are we servicing 5,000 of  
14 them? What's--do we know what our numbers look like?  
15 How many young men we're reaching out to?

16 (background comments)

17 TRACY GARCIA: Sure. So the way it  
18 breaks down to it's 25 Cornerstone centers, and of  
19 the 25 is 12 mentees per center. For the current  
20 fiscal year we topped that up to 303. We young--as--  
21 I'll reiterate Cynthia's statement prior, too. We  
22 encourage young people to stay as long as the  
23 duration of the program can take them. We do expect  
24 young men to age out by ninth grade, or their 15th  
25 birthday, whichever comes first.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Uh-huh.

TRACY GARCIA: And from there, we've only been around less than four years now, but we can safely say that the retention rate for those who started, we have a small cohort that have transitioned from elementary to middle-school who are still mentees in our program, and we don't just see this in the data that we have. But we also see this because we sponsor the field trips and the large scale community events. So we see a continuum of the same young men. What we found this summer for the first time we're seeing is that we are seeing a larger cohort of older kids that are--now have been in here probably since seventh and eighth grade, and are now in the tenth graders moving up to be rising tenth graders. And so now we're at an interesting place where we're looking at what can we do with these ninth graders that are now tenth graders. And there are some at the ground level. There are some peer models that the centers themselves are creating, but we're looking at that to see how we can grow that with them and support them on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Uh-huh.

2 TRACY GARCIA: So, no one is kicked out  
3 of the program.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Uh-huh.

5 TRACY GARCIA: They do remain part of the  
6 center, and now the coordinators are working with  
7 them to build these peer models.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay. So do you  
9 find from--I guess I want to talk about the trust  
10 business because when it comes to young people, how  
11 do you establish trust in order to keep them coming  
12 back?

13 TRACY GARCIA: Uh-huh.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: What has been your  
15 challenges if you've found anything of trust in being  
16 able to build and recruitment of the young people who  
17 could benefit from this service?

18 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: I believe that  
19 trust has not been an issue. We have higher rates of  
20 participation for the participants that are part of  
21 the Mentoring Program. They--they don't want to go  
22 anywhere, and the activities that the coordinators  
23 assign to get them engaged and to build that trust  
24 with the support of our technical assistance  
25 provider, is a testament of the work that is being

done. So how we mentioned in the testimony, the trips, the basketball games, activities that are-- that are interesting to the youth, and the youth boys is what allow us to get them to be engaged and to continue to come to the program.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, I'm going to wrap it. I think I went from three to about four right now. I think I'm on number four right now. Okay, so as far as your trust is concerned, we're-- we're okay with that. So, in order to build--are all your sites operating at capacity right now, full capacity.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Yes, our--our goal is that each program has 300--as a whole of 25 we have to have 200 participants. Just last year we had 303 participants.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: That many?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Just for the fiscal year that finished we had 303 participants when our target is 300. So we are serving--

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Each site?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: No. Sorry. 12 participants per sit.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, okay. All right, then this is my last question. If you're ever thinking about expanding I know you're after school in NYCHA and you compared yourself to other after school programs, have you ever thought of, or is it possible to take your services during the day to help young people. You know, working with the DOE to figure out-- Because one of the challenges-- sometimes we can wait until a child comes to us after school but it could have--it could have made a mess of the day. If we could have gotten to them earlier in the day to help them with a rap session during the middle of the school day, to help them get through the next couple of hours in school. So just food for thought. I say that because I work with children all the time, and handling some of the issues outside of the classroom that has an effect when they're trying to learn their fractions. You know, maybe you might want to start working with the DOE that one part of the day to provide the service to keep some calm and sanity in our young men so they don't blow themselves up. But I want to thank you all again. Thank you for answers, and Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. Thank you very much Council Member King. We have been joined by Council Member Laurie Cumbo and also Council Member David Greenfield. And now I'm going to call Council Member Chin for some questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair. Good morning and thank you for your testimony. I'm really glad to hear about some of the initial success, and I know that the funding that you talked about the Young Men Initiative it was targeting mainly Black and Latino male. And it was a pleasant surprise to see that at least we have one-fifth of the participants of females, which is great. So, we're going to add a lot and we want to build on that. And also from the testimony, it's really good to hear that you're doing the recruiting of the mentor also from the neighborhood, people who grew up in the neighborhood--who can share their experiences growing up and how they were able to struggle through and make their lives better, and I think that--that is really a great role model.

So one of the questions that I wanted to ask is that how much parent involvement are there when you are recruiting the mentees so that there is

also support from home when they are coming to this program?

TRACY GARCIA: Good morning. So as--as part of buy into the program not only when the young--when the young men or young ladies are selected to the program. As part of the process the model mandates that you have to have parent orientation, and also a parent commitment, a parent letter, commitment letter that the young person is a part of this program. There are also in a lot of the training tools that we use with Mentoring Partnership of New York, the training that the mentors receive as well as the coordinators and we, our staff have received, is also the equal sharing of the power on mentoring the child. And so parents are brought in very early on so they understand that they're not handing over their child to a mentor to parent them. That it's--it's--its a whole village, and we're all going to be part of this mentoring process. So as part of the training for the adults and then as part of the beginning of the program there's the orientation piece that parents participate in at the center level.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And in part of your evaluation and from your testimony, you have some quotes I guess from the participant. I think it would also be interesting to really hearing some feedbacks from the parent how they thought about the program because if they're really excited about the program and they really feel positive about the program, they're going to help us spread the word and get other people to be involved. So I think, you know, we should also kind include that in your evaluation. The other thing is as we all know is funding, right, and I think many of us who have been in this for a long time, you know, fighting for our youth, we know that mentoring programs do work. And to hear that you're only able to provide services, this program to only 12 participants in each center, it's just--it's such a small number. So besides the Young Men Initiative, is DYCD looking at additional funding that we can help advocate for, right. Because it's a program, but from you initial result. It's powerful, right. It works. It really help our young people. So how do we get the resources that we can expand this program to every Cornerstone Program so more people in each center. Have you thought

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2 about like what is the goal that you want to get at?  
3 What is the budget, an amount that we need to make  
4 this program a bigger success?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That--that  
6 point is well taken. I want--you know, when you  
7 think about the number 12 it does sound low, but I  
8 want to say this is a one former model for mentoring,  
9 and as you know, we have so greatly expanded our  
10 services for our young people and children through  
11 after school, which is the foundation for this  
12 mentoring model. And in all of our programs,  
13 approximately a thousand, more than a thousand  
14 programs, more than 100,000 young people served in  
15 after school, that that caring adult relationship,  
16 relationships, relationships, relationships. It's  
17 the foundation of a good after school program. So  
18 there is mentoring happening in a much larger scale  
19 in a different informal model, and now that we've  
20 seen success in this former model, we will be  
21 thinking about how to--how to expand that so that  
22 more young people get the more intense services.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, this is the  
24 model that you're targeting kids who are in danger of  
25 dropping out, who are in danger of getting into

trouble. If it works, it could help them get out of that mess. So it's something that we really have to focus on expanding because there's a lot more kids who are in that situation, right. Definitely I'm sure there's more than 12 in each center. So we really have to look at if this can help them, how do we expand this program and get the resources that we need? If the, you know, if the Young Men Initiative is not enough money, how we get enough resources so we could also help other young women that are in this situation, because it would make a big difference in their lives, right. And if we don't help them now, they won't have a bright future ahead. So it's so critical so that what is the amount of money that you're talking about? Have you talked about it with the commissioner? Because we're--we just finished the last budget, but it's never too early to think about the next budget, right. To make something really happen, we've got to start advocating now, and the program that you work very hard on, and you do see success, and I'm sure that you do see other young people that really could use this help, and you're not able to provide that service right now. So, as someone who is in that position now, I'm asking you

do you have, you know, any goals in mind that we, you know, on the committee can help and also during the budget time we'll kind of advocate and make sure the administration puts the money in to help expand the program?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, we know, you know, it's \$32,000 per site for the 12 mentees, but we want--we're looking at ways we can possibly structure that to serve as many young people as possible. And we also this year will be releasing an RFP for the Cornerstone programs. So we're looking at all of the services that we have at Cornerstone Programs, and the budgeting to see how we can maximize services. We look forward to working with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes, so I ask the Chair with the committee if we can follow up with DYCD. Just keep us, you know, updated and informed so that we can work with you to advocate for more resources. Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much Council Member Chin. Thank you. So now I'm going to call on Council Member Cumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you Chair and thank you for your testimony. This may have been asked already, but just wanted to focus in terms of some of the other programmatic funding that could potentially be out there. It says that the importance of youth mentoring has been recognized on a national, state and local level in January's National--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Excuse me, Council Member Cumbo. I don't want to interrupt, but just one--if you would allow me to ask just one question?

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Just to piggyback on the question of Council Member Chin, and we were talking about the involvement and participation of the parents. Is there any connection or contact or conversation between the parents and the mentors before the children, you know, start into the program?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Yes. As part of the orientation that parents attend the mentors are there as well so that they can be introduced to each other, and so that the parents can know who is part of the program that their children are part of.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Is there any situation I mean where the parents, you know, really greet for the children to be matched with such and such mentor for any other reason.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: I'm sorry. The question is where they're not reachable?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: No, no, no, If, you know--do you have any situation--

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --where the parents disagree on the matching, you know, between their children and the mentors?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: We...we have not encountered a situation in which the parents did not agree to the match that was part of their children. No.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Council Member Cumbo, please.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I wanted to focus on January being National Mentoring Month, and it said here that in 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Corporate Mentoring Challenge to encourage private sector support of mentoring. And in December, Governor Cuomo proclaimed January as New

York Mentoring Month. And want to know when these types of national initiatives or statewide initiatives or the Governor proclaiming January National Mentorship Month, does this come with resources in anyway, shape, form or fashion? How do they then intersect with DYCD because we often hear a lot about a lot of these types of national campaigns, but then such as the Big Brother Campaign and others. How do those intersect with your budget?

TRACY GARCIA: Well, directly there's direct partnership with our partners. Our partners are a tremendous resource to us around that. They keep us abreast on the national front and the local front, and usually what happens around that time there are other events that are going on, and they expose all other mentees and mentors to those activities as well. Around that time there's a national convention in Washington, D.C. that takes places, and we have been invited to speak. We have spoken. We have--I want to say two of our mentors have been nominated as mentors of the month and mentors of the year. As Cynthia herself has been acknowledged nationally by the organization Mentoring Partnership.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Congratulations.

TRACY GARCIA: Our outstanding leader and Mentoring Coordinator of the year. So they--they bring not only that attention to our--to the agency, but on the ground level. Our partners they go out and they visit our Cornerstone programs as well, and they support them at the ground level. There are other national events that take place, and they keep the coordinators informed of them. There's continuous training throughout the year. It's not like a one-shot deal at the beginning of the program. Training is always available on a monthly basis. Our doors are always open to our coordinators, our mentors. They even provide training in the evenings, and they have come to I want to say at least a third of the centers, but evening trainings on a Saturday to provide updated information, the latest--the latest trends on what's happening with mentors. And so, they're always providing, ensuring that information is accurate.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: So it's more educational or convening or training, that sort of thing that happens, but not real resources or dollars

that hit your bottom line to be able to provide more opportunities for mentorship?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: We as an agency also organize a lot of activities and large-scale events that the programs can partake on.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uh-huh.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: So, for example, just this June we had a field day where all the mentors and mentees were able to come and partake, and not only participate themselves as one program, but also connect with the other programs that are under our portfolio. So we have opportunities for them, and then as Tracy mentioned with our partnerships, and as you mentioned the national--the--the Mentoring Month in January they--they get invited to those other activities by mentoring partnerships. Such as last year, last June they went to the circus. So the other opportunities they might not be direct dollars, but we do have opportunities for them to partake and be part of.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Now, this might be more clear to my other colleagues, but I'd like more clarity in terms of there are programs that DYCD authors in terms of mentorship programs, and then

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40

2 there are also programs that you contract with, other  
3 providers who also provide mentorship services. Is  
4 that correct or no? Or maybe I'll give you an  
5 example like how you have the Mentorship Program  
6 that's happening at the Cornerstone, but then you  
7 could also have a program like Big Brothers Big  
8 Sisters that's separate and apart of DYCD. How many  
9 programs do you have that are with outside  
10 organizations that would fall under your Mentorship  
11 portfolio, and how many do you author yourself or  
12 created or conceive of.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: This is the  
14 only formal mentorship program that we fund at DYCD  
15 directly that's not--that doesn't, you know, come  
16 from a Council discretionary grant.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Which one?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: For example  
19 for--this Cornerstone Mentorship Program is the only  
20 direct mentoring. We have mentoring as a component  
21 of other more comprehensive programs that we run, but  
22 this is only--the only like discrete mentoring  
23 initiative that we fund directly as part of, um, our  
24 portfolio at DYCD. We do have discretionary funding  
25 from the City Council that we pass onto organizations

like Big Brothers Big Sisters, but we don't have-- this is the only mentoring specific program that is part of the our portfolio right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And it's a program that you function and you operate and that you're in control of in that way?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We do it as all of our--as we do all of our work through community-based organizations. In this case, 25, and those 25 that we fund to do the mentoring are also the Cornerstone Community Center provider of 25 NYCHA residences so in the community centers. So it's the same provider that--that runs the Cornerstone Community Center. Also gets an enhancement to do the Mentorship Program.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Do they have benchmarks or goals that they have to achieve? So when you're saying it's in 25 center that are servicing this many young people, do they have to meet those benchmarks or are there ways to evaluate if they're making or achieving those benchmarks?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, we have--we were evaluated by Policy Study Associates, and we have some--we have some real data on the

success of the program. We fund--you know, they're accountable for 12, to serve 12 mentees at each of the 25 sites, and Tracy can elaborate on the four specific goals that we're--

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Sure.

TRACY GARCIA: So, there are specific goals that are outline in the initiative, and one is that the young people must cultivate an ethic of service. They have to develop youth leadership skills. Young people have to achieve positive attitude change towards others in the future--

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uh-huh.

TRACY GARCIA: --and they have to adjust to new school environments. Specifically that transition from elementary to middle and middle to high. Those are the four overarching goals. And then what was nice is--it's in our testimony as well is that the Policy Studies when they did the research they actually were able to target which goals or what areas of improvement that they saw with social and emotional development that were seen based on the goals that are in the report.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And I have a--I represent the Fort Greene and Clinton Hill area, and

at Ingersoll we have a Cornerstone there, and it's an excellent program.

TRACY GARCIA: Thank you for that.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Certainly. Well, thank you, and I'm very pleased with the program. I wonder through that program, through Cornerstone do they then also contract out with other organizations to provide services, or could another organization in addition to the Cornerstones be included in providing the services to-- As you say here, there are 25 Cornerstones, which makes it seem like it's only be contracted out to Cornerstone. Could it be contracted out to other providers as well to provide the mentorship service?

[background comments]

TRACY GARCIA: So, I mean it could very well be that way moving forward, but in 2011, when the initiative was introduced to DYCD, at--at the time we had the Cornerstone Initiative, the RFP was just responded to. The 25 centers were up and running, and we thought this would be a great component to have at the NYCHA centers. So that was the vision then. We have a new--we have new ideas on what it could look like moving forward--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uh-huh.

3 TRACY GARCIA: --but right now it's just  
4 targeted for the 25 NYCHA centers, but it had to do  
5 with the--with the timeline at the time.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And I will  
7 add we like that model. Like that it's the  
8 Cornerstone Program and the community-based  
9 organization that really knows the young people. So,  
10 for example, Cynthia was telling me yesterday like  
11 summer services, summer program is a great  
12 opportunity for the staff, the group leaders to see  
13 young people and say, you know what, this one needs a  
14 little extra support. Identify young people who  
15 might be good for the Mentorship Program. So the  
16 fact that we're using the community-based  
17 organizations that's embedded in that center like all  
18 year long, you know, evenings, days and weekends, I  
19 think brings strength to the program that we might  
20 not see if we contracted out to organizations. It's  
21 something to think about.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I want to thank  
23 Chair Mathieu Eugene for bringing this particular  
24 hearing to us today. And would also encourage you--  
25 and I always do at these hearings--to utilize your

council members in your recruitment efforts for mentors because we really have our finger on the pulse of the community, and those individuals that may want to participate in a program like this. And it's always great for us to be able channel. We have our emails, our social networks, people that come into our office, people that we engage with on a regular basis. So definitely utilize your 51 members because I know--I know for a fact that Council Member Andy King has one of the largest bases of young people that I've ever seen a council member work with in his time in office. So I'm definitely thankful that you're here, and thank you so much, Council Member Eugene for calling us together.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Council Member Cumbo. Thank you very much. Commissioner, you have been talking about the activities, the different activities provided in the Mentoring Program, and you say that mentoring activities varies across program, which usually includes group discussions about field trips, and you mentioned about poetry, enrichment work (sic) basketball programs. All those programs are very important, and you have a presence of activities.

But we know that to make a big positive impact on the life of the young people, we have to take into consideration also their social-emotional and cognitive with reality.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But have you been in your strategy to design those programs, have you been taking into consideration the social, emotional and cognitive of those young people? Can you give us some detail about that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Absolutely. That is central to the activities. I'm going to let Cynthia elaborate more. She sees the activities on a regular basis, but that is certainly a focus.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Yes. An example of that is as listed in the testimony that Poetry Spoken Word workshops that were facilitated by Urban Word NYC, and that activity, the mentees had an opportunity to explore and express themselves through those workshops. And so those kind of activities we always make sure that we are thoughtful when we design all these project-based activities to give them opportunities to express themselves, and explore

the themes and attitudes about themselves and others and their futures, and being thoughtful about that.

TRACY GARCIA: Do you want me to add? We also held--we had an annual what we call the Mentee Mentor Mini Conference, and at that conference we offered a variety of workshops, and it wasn't just exclusive to the mentees, but mentors have to attend these sessions with the young people. And repeat it back on the Spoken Word event. It wasn't so much the conference was titled--fortunately and unfortunately it was around the time of all the protesting and Black Lives Matters events. And so there was an opportunity for young men to express themselves through writing about what they were feeling, the challenges they were having and what protest meant to them. And the civil unrest that was happening, and all the positive energy that was in the room, and they worked out these--these spoken words or these essays with their mentors. And they did that prior to coming to the event where they were able to share with a larger group, and then they also went back to their centers and worked on that. And that was a--a very like moving project for the mentors and the mentees together.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh. We all  
3 know that human beings are emotional beings.

4 TRACY GARCIA: Uh-huh.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And also they are  
6 the product of their society. Have you been doing  
7 any research or study, and go back to find out what  
8 is environmental situation in the families of those  
9 young people? What they are facing, what they have  
10 been facing to be, you know, in the situations they  
11 are? If they come from broken families, emotional  
12 parents. If they have been victims of certain, you  
13 know, abuse or situation. Because we know that many  
14 of the families--many of the young people are facing  
15 challenges, and who are on the negative path. They  
16 come from families and trouble where the parents did  
17 not provide them with education that they need, and  
18 the parents cannot be the role model they are looking  
19 for. Is there any connection? Is there anything  
20 that you have been doing to ensure that you  
21 understand exactly the social-emotional situation of  
22 those young people, what they have been facing in  
23 their families for you to better address their issue?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Do--do you  
25 want-- I know, for example, some of those social and

emotional situations that happen in the school or at a center or in the community around. Let's say bullying or young people, you know, being harassed, feeling that they're in poor situations around their peers. We haven't seen a lot of testimony here about their home situations. I don't think that means that the mentors aren't helping them confront those situations. It may be that they're just not providing quotes about it? Do you have any more detail about young people and their families getting help--getting help from the mentor, support from the mentor to--of the family?

TRACY GARCIA: As part of the--the training, we do have--we do have cultural diversity, cultural competencies as part of the training that the mentors receive in case they are presented with hot topics or issues or dialogue that they're not comfortable in discussing. There is always a resource for them to come back on how to learn, how to share out, and bring that situation to the Director at the Center, and then walk through that. You know, I can speak on that, and then there's the--we have had--there's not much like challenging or really hard, you know, sad stories reported in terms

of the families or our young people. But that's not to say that it's not happening. We just haven't encountered any specific to report on. There have been small instances, but nothing--they have been far and in between incidents. We did have one incident in Brooklyn, and I think our Mentorship Program has handled it very well. They turned a tragedy that happened at Ingersoll into a positive event, and the mentees were pushing the center at the forefront to bring that situation to light. There was a--they lost a member at the center due to violence in the streets. And it was the mentees and the mentors who wanted to put together a new program that was designed to bring new awareness of the violence in their communities. So those issues are, you know are with our kids, but we are not, you know.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I don't think we would encourage the mentors to get involved in family conflict, but it's, you know, the training would give them the resources that they could refer those situations to a trained professional.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Yes, at that level they--their instructions would be to rely on the community-based organizations, which are the leaders

or experts that know and have the background in how to address those situations. I think that the majority of the family dynamics that could--that were brought to the front in our programs are situations about doing homework or not wanting to do homework, or not wanting to clean your room. And, you know, the mentors just encourage them and try to help them, and try to help them understand that the parents are looking for their wellbeing, and the importance of listening to their parents. The only situation that we've encountered of that magnitude like Tracy said was the one at Ingersoll where the mentees took the lead. And they had donuts and chocolate and they were, you know, just inviting the community to come to the center and take the community back in and just keep positive and give a safe space for everybody to deal with their emotions.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. I admire, you know, yourself to serve these young people. And we all know that the Mentoring Programs are very, very important, and I had the opportunity also myself to meet the many young people, and to provide many services, mentoring services and activities to young people. But I'm telling you that

the reason why the young people took a negative path are more complex and serious than that. And many things you won't be able to see their situation emotionally, situation--mental situation that will require professional intervention. And I think that part of this program. And in this program you should put also professional, you know, people in terms of addressing the emotional status of the children and the mental status of the children. Because some of the children, the young people, the reason they are on a negative path is because they come from broken families. And we have to know exactly the reality to better match them. We need to provide them people--to match them with people who can assess the situation they're in, too. Otherwise, then they fail to address the situation, and I think that I am advising you strongly to consider that. And now also as the members of the youth based community we are willing to work with you to address that because we have many mentoring programs. But the question we also ask ourselves, and this is the reason of this public hearing, to find out what works and what doesn't work. Because are we reaching our goal? Because when we see what is going on in New York

City, it is a critical situation. We spend a lot of money in many programs, and don't get anywhere. I'm not trying to blame anyone, but because even the programs, our wonderful run, good programs, there is always room for improvement. We have to every single day to review our strategy, to review our outcome, and to ask ourselves did we reach our goal? It's not what can we do? It's how can we do it better? But I think that this is a very important issue, and a very important thing to do to make sure that we have competent professional people to make sure that we match young people with other mentors that address their situation. Talking about mentors, could you talk a little bit more in detail the requirements for somebody to become a mentor? What are the requirements? And somebody say that the mentors are included in various ways. Most of the mentors are Black and Latino men connected to their local Cornerstone Program. Is it only that or are there other requirements for somebody to be a mentor? Because we've got to consider this person is going to be in contact with the children for a long time. So that means what are the other requirements of that?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Mentors are at least 18 years old. They go through an application and interview process as well as well as a background and SCR fingerprint screening. They come from different backgrounds, as you mentioned because we are--the programs target the local neighborhoods. So that's why we have a majority of Black and Hispanics. In terms of their education, the majority of them are in college or have at least a bachelor's degree. The majority are between 18 to 40 years old.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So that--can you repeat it?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: They are--the majority of our mentors are 18 to 40 years old, and the minimum age is 18 as well as going through the interview and application and the screening process.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You mentioned bachelor degrees. Is that correct?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: It's not a requirement but we--we realize that the majority are--have that experience.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, Council Member King, please.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I'm sorry. I just need to jump back in. I--I used to work in the Beacon Program, and while I appreciate it, it helps the 18 year-old. It helps the 19 year-old, it helps the 21 year-old, but there comes a point in life that sometimes especially in this day and age a 19 year-old still acting like a 15 year-old and I don't know how much information that a 19 year-old can actually mentor a 14 year-old when they're still trying to figure out life themselves. So, I don't know how you make these adjustments, but I would really ask to see if there's a way that when you're looking for mentors that you push up the scale on mentors--the age on mentors. And maybe do a--whether it's a trial period that you do mentors that are from about 35--35 and up because you bring a lot of wisdom to kids at that age who might not have a dad around. And sometimes you're just not going to that with them at 24 and 25. It might be good to pay them \$8.00 or \$10.00 an hour, but you're not going to get that kind of wisdom, that--that teen really needs. So I just wanted to put that on there because I know from my experience what in there is that the older ones were able to--able to guide the kids, the young brothers a whole

lot better than the younger brothers that were still in search of themselves. So just something that might help improve.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, very much, Council Member King. I'm--I'm sorry, your answer? Your--does anyone want to answer to the comment of Council Member King?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that's good feedback that they need support, you know. (laughs) As an older person, I can appreciate your--your sentiment.

TRACY GARCIA: I would--I would just add that all of our mentors are 100% volunteers. There is no payment whatsoever.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: (off mic) I'm glad they're volunteers.

TRACY GARCIA: Yeah, it takes a little bit or maturity if you can do something without pay, but yeah I just wanted to add that, and the commitment is at least 90 minutes per week, and you have to commit to a year to the program at the mentor level so...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: (off mic) What feedback do they get from it like the mentors? Do

they ever tell you how they are applying something to work with their guys? (sic)

(background comments)

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: So, we have good mentor stories (laughs). Um, not only the mentors but also the participants have always supported and championed the mentors. We have programs that have taken it upon themselves to select ways to celebrate the mentors. They have Mentor of the Month at one of our programs. We also celebrate the mentors by highlighting those mentors that have shown commitment to the program and to the mentees.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: (off mic) One last question.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Do you have a Mentor/Mentee day?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: (laughs) We have.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: (off mic) Processes studies, giving them stories that you know, Something that might help that 18 year-old. A time for the mentees and mentors to come together and have mentor sessions between themselves?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: The mentors meet with the mentoring coordinators at least once a week formally, and informally on the day-to-day when they come to the program to have a session. They mentoring coordinators do meet with the mentors. In turn I have regular meetings with the mentoring coordinators to give them advice and support and help them with navigating.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: (off mic) They meet one-on-one?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: As a group and also one-on-one as needed. So they have my contact information. I always check on them. So it does happen, and both group and--

TRACY GARCIA: And we've had one--we've been able to plan one by mentoring day where we've had the more seasoned mentors meet in the afternoon with the--with the incoming mentors, and that was facilitated by Mentoring Partnership as well, and that was a full Saturday and that was in probably midway into the program. And so, now we're looking at how this might happen again now that we have mentors who have been in the program for two years now.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Let's hope for  
3 that. (laughs)

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, Council Member  
5 Cumbo.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Do you partner  
7 with CUNY at all your recruitment efforts? Because  
8 they also have a Young White Males Initiative as  
9 well, and I feel like it would be a very ideal  
10 partnership to partner with CUNY in that way for  
11 potential new mentors to come out.

12 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: (off mic) I  
13 don't.. (laughs)

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: It's a  
15 great idea.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, thank you.

17 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: It's something that  
18 we've definitely had conversations about, and it's  
19 just putting it in--we have it in our agenda.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I feel like all of  
21 these great initiatives particularly around young  
22 Black African-American males and Latino males somehow  
23 I feel like they all need to get together to find out  
24 what everyone is doing so that they can bridge those  
25 partnerships and complement one another in the work

that we're doing because I think we sometimes often work in silos. So it would be really great if some of those partnerships can happen, and we should think on the Council side how we can bring a lot of these initiative groups together.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Council Member Cumbo. I want to mention that we have been joined by Council Member Darlene Mealy. I don't know if she has questions. (laughs) Now, let me ask you--Do you have a question. I'll continue. Give me one minute. One minute only. Tell me about the mentors. I know that you have an application (sic). You investigate. You're conducting an investigation about the mentors, and also you do a background check I believe I saw--I saw references to know about those people. And I do know that we have wonderful mentors, committed people, dedicated people. But we are responsible also for the safety of those children. What can you tell us about the follow-up, the supervision of the program. The relationship between the mentor and the men--the mentors and mentees? Are we--we--what--what are you doing to ensure that the places the mentor, you know, bring the mentees are appropriate? What type of

relationship between the mentors and mentee? What do you have in place to make sure that those children, those mentees, they are safe through process of the Mentorship Program?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: So not only they go through the background review, and before coming on board to the program they also receive trainings by the Mentorship Program of New York. They receive trainings on the role of a mentor, managing expectations, what kind of activities they will be taking part of, confidentiality and disclosure, and also on closure. Because at the end of the day, you know, relationships end. In terms of systems that we have in place, as I mentioned, the mentoring coordinator meets regularly with the mentors to assess how everything is going in the program. I meet with the mentoring coordinators, and I also go to the sites to visit and observe and assess program quality.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So thank you very much. Council Member Mealy now. Okay, very good. You know, are the children that are out, that is out committed to other programs, and can be committed to other mentors when they age out? Is there any follow

2 up? Is there any effort to commit them with other  
3 mentors?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I don't  
5 know do we--about that follow up specifically, but I  
6 think it was very encouraging in the findings to  
7 learn that young people who were serving as mentees  
8 get involved with other activities, and we would want  
9 to keep encouraging that because the more connection  
10 they have to other activities, the more they'll stay  
11 sort of like on a--a pathway to--from one activity to  
12 the next as they grow older.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh. I'm going  
14 to ask a very simple question, but I think it is  
15 important also because it is a nice business (sic),  
16 and mentoring season and being part of different  
17 mentoring program. Do the mentors need to have a  
18 car, a car?

19 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: A car?

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: A car.

21 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: No.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Is it a requirement?

23 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What about the, you  
25 know, mentoring one-to-one Mentorship Program when

they have to move from place to the other place with the mentee, is that--?

TRACY GARCIA: Well, it's grouped--by design it's group mentoring, and so what it could typically look like at the center level it would be one adult mentor with at least three to four young people with him at any given time.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: There's no one-to-one mentors?

TRACY GARCIA: Not one-to-one mentoring. So a lot of the interns of the oversight, who's monitoring who and are the mentors prepared to be in these situations with young people? The coordinator is the additional adult that's part of that group that helps the mentor manage the group as they get familiar with each other, and matching generally doesn't happen at the early stage of--of a mentoring process. So there's large scale activities that are taking place. So in the first quarter likely sometime between September and November you could very well see twelve mentees and three mentors and one coordinator in a large group activity taking place over three or four weeks. And then at some point the matching process happens, and the matching

process is not one-on-one again. It is a group design. So there's familiarity, which appears. There is the building relationship, which appears, and then you get to break off into these little pods and do the remainder of the programming in these pod formats. So you come together as a large group again for the excursions and the community service events.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And what happens when a relationship, you know, doesn't work between the mentor and the mentee?

TRACY GARCIA: Because it's the group design, and they've had that four or five or six weeks knowing each other as a cohort of 12 and 4, it's--it's not--I don't want to use the word easier to swap off, but you can reassign group dynamics.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see.

TRACY GARCIA: It's a little less complicated to do when you're doing it that way, when they follow the right steps. And in terms of re-matching that we don't--we haven't had to re-match any of the--the 25 cohorts, not individuals.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So now how often is a real problem arising between the mentor

and mentee so you have to take an action? How often, you know, is there this type of situation?

TRACY GARCIA: Any help--did we have a conflict between the mentor and the mentee that we needed to intervene on or are we aware of any?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: (off mic) No.

TRACY GARCIA: We're not aware of any.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: It never happened?

TRACY GARCIA: Well, we're certainly not aware of any. (laughs) We're not.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Does that mean that you--

TRACY GARCIA: No.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --this situation doesn't exist in--?

TRACY GARCIA: What--what, we have had reported to us is groups have matched as opposed to being re-matched. We've--we've--we've seen some folks take longer in matching the group and--as opposed to reassigning or de-matching, which can cause complications if you don't stay on track. Because then they don't know who their mentor is, and you have to build that relation right away. That has been a challenge. So that's been the adverse effect.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that question about, um, about mismatches and the question about travel and your question about supervision that all three of those kind of hit on the strength of our model again that we're embedded in this community center. Because it helps. Like you're part of a larger activity there you can be connected with. You don't feel so like me and this guy, and if we don't get along then it's out on the streets, and then whatever we're doing, it's, you know, it's a disaster. The fact that they really get to know each other, and are supported by the community center I think helps. You know, they don't have to--they're not traveling anywhere. They are supported by other mentees and mentors, and there are many eyes in the community center observing what's going on. I think that's definitely one of the strengths of our model.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Well, if you had to go to a program, the Mentorship Program-- (coughs) excuse me--what would be the grade that you would actually give to your Mentorship Program, A, B, C, 100% successful (laughter), 50% successful. What would it be there?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think  
3 we're--we have consensus for an A+. (laughter)

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: A+? You know, with  
5 all due respect--(laughter)--with all due respect,  
6 and the admiration that I have for you, I don't  
7 believe that in this world there's 100%, you know,  
8 success in anything.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Right.  
10 Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I believe that  
12 my daddy used to say that. He used to say, My son,  
13 there is no perfection. Every single day you've got  
14 to strive and give effort to improve what you are  
15 doing. There is always room for improvement. If I  
16 were to ask you what is the biggest challenge that  
17 you are facing in term of, you know, of providing the  
18 Mentorship Program and then leading your program,  
19 what would it be?

20 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Mentor recruitment?

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mental?

22 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Mentor recruitment.  
23 Getting more mentors to service more participants.

24 So one of the--the things that came earlier on in the  
25

testimony was that we are only serving 12 participants.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh.

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: In order for us to serve more participants, we need more mentors. So definitely have a lot of young people in our programs that are ready for a mentoring relationship. However, some of the programs might have a greater challenge of getting more mentors to our centers, and that is also a problem of national scale. This s in the world of mentoring is a common challenge.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And why do you believe that it is so difficult to get mentors? Why--what do you think is the reason, the cause of that? What do you think?

TRACY GARCIA: Time commitment. Time commitment is--is the number one key. And then--but once you get them to the door, and you hand hold them on what this time commitment really means, you can--you can retain them once they're there. But getting them through the door, and if they just have to read the application and see how much time it looks on paper, it is a bit overwhelming to someone.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Well, I don't have to know what we have been doing, (sic) when there's a crisis or there's a problem, we look for a solution, and that's the reason we are where we are, that we learn new stuff every single day, technology, advancement. What you have been doing to increase the chance to have more mentors? What you have been doing? Have you have been addressing this situation, or what do you have in place?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: One thing we're definitely working close with NYC Service, and they've made mentor recruitment part of their strategic plan for this year. So we're working closely with Paula Gavin at NYC Service to do more recruitment. We've heard some great ideas today, you know, continuing to pursue a partnership with CUNY, reaching out to the Council to help with recruitment in various neighborhoods. What else do we have for it?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Our--our 10 Assistants Provider Mentoring Partnership helps us also by putting together a workshop to help the coordinators think and explore other ways of recruitment. So, we recruit towards and other website

that--such as Ideally, Idealist.org. So putting advertisement out also in the community, putting flyers so that the community can see that there is a need, the program coordinators, you know, use also word of mouth and sharing, as you mentioned the need that there is in the community.

TRACY GARCIA: And--and we also use the--the staff of other community centers. We advertise internally to our--to our NYCHA facilities and we do staff hearing. And so, we--we open it up to staff who want to be volunteers, and want to be part of their center. They may work in another community, but want to be part of a program in their community, and so if it's available for them, we have the centers advertise that way. We do.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And that's good. I commend you for that effort, but since you started the--the effort to increase the number of mentors, did you see any improvement, an increase in the numbers of the mentors, and what is the percentage?

TRACY GARCIA: For Fiscal Year 13 we peaked at--our goal was to get 75 mentors for the year. At some point of the first fiscal year, which was FY13, we peaked at 75, but we lost maybe like

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71

2 three or four mentors that year. And since, Cynthia  
3 has been on board, we are now at--

4 CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: 81.

5 TRACY GARCIA: --81 mentors, which is six  
6 over our recruitment target.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.  
8 Council Member King, please.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: (off mic) I'm just  
10 going to throw this out and like see where it goes.  
11 (laughs) First you mentioned--(on mic) first you  
12 mentioned that you don't hire mentors at all,  
13 correct?

14 TRACY GARCIA: It's 100% volunteer.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: How many--how many  
16 men do you have on staff, and is it possible--just a  
17 thought--that we hire staff to do one issue, and then  
18 part of their responsibilities is also being a mentor  
19 at another part of the day. I heard you mention time  
20 can be an issue. So what I do this from 9:00 to  
21 12:00. I do this, and then I become a mentor from  
22 3:00 to 6:00. I'm mentoring. That's part of my  
23 responsibility. You could kind of recruit guys  
24 because there are a lot of men out there that would  
25 probably appreciate it. But, you know, if I am--I

don't know. If I am responsible for maintenance along from 11:00 to 3:00 and then from 3:00 to 6:00, I'm doing mentoring to the young brother who I'm always cleaning up for or watching play basketball. You know, just a new way of recruiting, and figure out how do you have a paradigm shift.

(background comments)

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: We do have staff from the program who do stay and volunteer after they finish their shift at the center.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: They're not 75? (sic) (laughter) It's just something I just wanted to see where you are on that, and it could be a new wave of how you hold and retain mentors. Because, you know, part of their job description is to be half the day as a mentor or whatever other responsibilities you come up with for them, you know, or whether they help facilitate keeping the neighborhood clean, and they may grab a child. Just food for thought.

TRACY GARCIA: Uh-huh, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, Council Member King. What are the different groups of youth when we talk about regular youth, quote, unquote and

at-risk youth? Because some of the youth they are in worst situations than others, and in terms of the choosing of the--the mentors, of the requirements for the mentors, are they the same for those mentors who are going to mentor regular youth or youth who are not too much at risk? Those mentors who are going to mentor at risk youth, do they receive the same type of training, or do they have the same type of requirement? Well, I think we are talking about two different groups of young people, and depending on, you know, of the nature of the group the young people belong to, if we are dealing with at-risk youth, I think, you know, we need a different approach than we--if we are dealing with all the young people who are not at risk, we need a different approach. Are they--the training are the same, actually are the same? If they are different, what are the differences?

(background comments)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We--the goal of the program is really to support young people. I mean it's a--it's a modest number. We have, you know, 12 at each site. The goal is to recruit 12 mentees who are at risk. That's really

the intent of the program is to support vulnerable young people have a better--to have a caring adult in their life to help advise them, and I think the training is the same for all of the mentors.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Do we have--do you want to talk a little bit about how training helps mentors deal with young people who are facing adversity or how--? What are some of the training topics like?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: (off mic)

TRACY GARCIA: So the--the training is uni-uniform. Anyone who comes through the door and gets to stage 1 meaning the interview process we see as the exact same form of training. Some of the training topics that someone could receive is What's the Role of a Mentor? Managing My Expectations, Confidentiality and Disclosure then Closure Process. Those are just some of the topics that anyone who is already at that stage that are trained to be a mentor will receive. We haven't divided our training into if an at-risk youth is your mentee, this is the type of training you get. The training that is received is pretty much intense, and at a particular level

that could satisfy if you have an non-at-risk mentee or an at-risk mentee in your cohort. Did you want to add?

CYNTHIA MALAVE-BAEZ: Yeah. I--I would add to that. I would add to that there are webinars and resources by the National Mentoring Partnership that do address those topics, um, and others. They have put out webinars in terms of dealing with closure and dealing with gender issues, and dealing with all of those sensitive--sensitive topics. So that information is available for free, and we do share those resources with our programs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So I think that you have been doing a good job. So, and as I said at the very beginning, I know you are all convinced that Mentorship Program are a good way and the good intervention to address the need of at-risk youth, and to try to resolve the different program challenges that they are facing. I would say that we know also, as I told you, I don't believe there is one other person, you know, successful all the time, and I do believe also that we will be more successful if we work as a team. And that what we have been doing, and that what I believe we have to continue to

do. And I thank you for what you are doing, for everything that you are doing, and I'm looking forward to working together with DYCD, and give my regards to the Commissioner. And I know that it is not easy the job that you are doing, and that the job that we are doing at the City Council members. You know, it is not easy for us also, but by working together, we will have more success, and we will have completed much more. And, I'm looking forward to continuing to--continue working together with you for the benefit of the young people, and the benefits of the families also. Thank you very much. Have a wonderful day. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Next panel. (background comments)

HECTOR BATISTA: We are going to call the next panel. Hector Batista from the Big Brothers and Big Sisters. [pause] And Meghan Groome from New York Academy of Sciences; Christian Breton I believe from New York Academy of Science; and Jim Kong from Mentoring Partnership of New York City. At this time, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Deputy Commissioner Stacy Lynch for being here. Thank you very much. Thank you. (background noise, pause) Thank you very much. Thank you. Would you

please raise your hand and swear to--to the best of your ability you will say the truth and also--and respond on all questions and also in your testimonies. Will you?

HECTOR BATISTA: I do.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. Please state your name before you start. Anyone of you can start any time.

HECTOR BATISTA: Okay, good morning.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good morning.

HECTOR BATISTA: I mean actually, almost good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good afternoon (foreign language). (laughs)

HECTOR BATISTA: My name is Hector Batista. On behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City, and the children we serve, I'd like to thank Council Member Eugene and the Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to testify today. As I stated, I'm Hector Batista. I'm the Chief Executive Officer for Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. We are proud to be the founding agency of the nation's mentoring movement. For over 110 years, we have been committed to serving disadvantaged youth

and their families with supportive and caring--  
carefully screened professional trained adult  
mentors. In the past year alone, we served over  
5,100 youth throughout the five boroughs. This  
represents a 21% increase from the 4,000 youth we  
served the year before. Nearly all the youth are  
from low-income single parent households and some  
live with other challenges. They live in foster care  
homes, have incarcerated parents, have been in  
trouble with the law, have learning disabilities or  
have recently immigrated into this country. Our  
program provides all these children with the hope and  
opportunities helping them develop the skills and  
positive attitudes that will help them grow into  
healthy contributing members of society. We have two  
main programs to meet these needs, the community  
based program and the site-based program. Our  
community based program our bigs meet our littles 8  
to 10 hours a month and participate in activities  
that promote cultural understanding, community  
engagement and self awareness. We have several site-  
based programs such as the SONIC Program we run in  
two schools, one in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn.  
In addition, we have a Community Impact program with

a high school in East Harlem, and we provide the students in that school with mentors and group activities. And finally, we have our workplace Mentoring Program, which the committee may recall was the focus of my last testimony. And this program stems from New York City public schools, are brought to partner companies during after school hours to be mentored by employees introducing littles to the world of business. Our recently enhanced education initiative also provides the kids an out program with the resources and support needed for their academic success. This includes enrichment programs such as high school and College Readiness Workshop, ACT and SAT prep courses and college tours.

I am proud to say that the research has consistently shown that our model of mentoring is making a tremendous impact in the lives of the children in our program. In particular, high school graduation rates are higher than the overall city rate. In fact, last year alone, 97% of our littles were promoted to the next grade. 96% of our high school seniors graduated and 94% of them were accepted into college. Our youth also experience in gains in self-confidence, relationship peers--

relationships with peers and adults, and avoidance of risky behavior.

To further document the positive impact of our program made on a child, BBS of New York City commissioned a study with Philliber Research Associates. The last study was done by the power of mentoring in 1995 by PVB. Our goal is to refresh the study, which was now some 19 years old, and quantify the impact of mentoring. We chose Philliber Research Associates because of their reputation and experience working with human service organizations. They have-  
-they have evaluated the Robin Hood Foundation. For two years, the study followed a group of kids participating in our program along with a control group of children who did not receive a mentor. We looked at things like academic achievement, behavior, school bullying and violence and substance abuse. The result of the study confirmed what we believed for over a century, that mentoring has the power to change lives. While I'm happy to provide the committee with a complete study, I do want to highlight three important points. While risky behavior potentially increase our children entering the pre-teen and teen years, kids in our Mentorship

Program remains stable. The impact was also visible after just six months of being matched with a mentor. And mentoring was an effective tool to both boys and girls. This factor declined by 25% among mentoring youth while increasing 13% of our non-mentoring youth. Additionally, 24% of mentored youth reported a greater number of risk factors as follows, which is as expected, as kids grow up compared to 52% of non-mentoring you. Finally, we recognize that we cannot do this work alone. To further impact New York City youth, we partnered with Fordham University. We created a sensible and professional development over 20 years, which trains an organization how to implement their own mentoring program with the highest standards. Since then, the training center has reached over 1,500 organizations and impacted over 50,000 children.

As I hope you can see, the Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City works hard to provide the children in our community with the support and resources to help them reach their full potential and achieve success in life. I thank the Council for the part support of our organization, and I look forward

to continue working with you to serve the youth of New York City. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Mr. Batista. Thank you very much. The next speaker, please, and before you start I want to take the opportunity also to thank Mr. Anthony Young from DYCD for being here also. Thank you. Yes, you may start please.

MEGHAN GROOME: Good morning, and thank you for inviting me to testify before the Committee on Youth Services. My name is Dr. Meghan Groome, and I'm the Executive Director of Education at the New York Academy of Sciences. My colleague Christian Breton here who's a Director in the Education Department, and runs our after school program is also here with me. For nearly 200 years the New York Academy of Sciences has brought together extraordinary people working at the forefronts of discovery and has promoted vital links between science and society. The Academy has a history of building scientific communities for our over 20,000 members constructing innovative connections amongst and extensive scientific network, and driving path breaking initiatives for scientific, social and

economic benefit. In recent years, the Academy has redoubled its efforts to bring New York's wealth of scientific resources to bear on the needs of the city's schools, with the focus on improving science education for all students especially those traditionally under-represented in the STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields.

Our Education Department has the simple mission to identify high impact scalable pathways for scientists to directly increase the number of children who are STEM that are--our theory of change relies heavily on the core competencies of the Academy to serve as a connector between the well resourced scientific community and the under-resourced education community including high need students and teachers.

In 2012, (coughs) in fall 2012 I gave testimony about our after school STEM Mentoring Program and I'm so pleased to report back our success. To give you a short history, in 2010, a group of deans and faculties affiliated with the city's research and medical universities, ask the Academy to create a program to provide their top young scientists with an opportunity to learn how to

teach science. At the same time, the Department of Youth and Community Development approached the Academy to find a partnership opportunity to provide more STEM education. This led the Academy to placing scientific mentors in DYCD's COMPASS, SONIC and begin sites. This mutually beneficial relationship is designed to increase the city's youth access to role models and provide them with 20 plus hours of inquiry based course work. While this may not sound like a lot, consider that the average student receives 2.3 hours of science instructions a week and that many of our mentors report that they are the sole source of science in a child's day. For the young scientists, and we have over 8,000 of them in our membership banks, the program is designed to increase our teaching and mentoring skills in a community service setting. Now, as we begin our sixth year of the program, we've worked with over 1,000 young scientists, 13,000 children and delivered more than 150,000 hours of instruction in all five boroughs.

I want to speak briefly about the importance of STEM mentoring in after schools settings. After school programs typically offer smaller class sizes, freedom from state and local and

academic standards, reduced anxiety over testing performance indicators and more fluid uses of time freed from the traditional school day structure. The after school STEM Mentoring Program takes advantage of the existing infrastructure of DYCD programs, which provides hundreds of community based organizations charged with the intellectual and social/emotional safekeeping of the children in their care. As science continues to be marginalized in the formal classroom, the role of the after school program is increasingly viewed as an important area for academic enrichment. Expanding this school day through after school programs offer the opportunity to increase a student's exposure to high quality STEM education by leading to three elements--leading to an individual's persistence in STEM careers: Engagement, continuity and capacity. While continuity and capacity are important factors, there is evidence that engagement is potentially more important than achievement or course enrollment. By infusing STEM into existing community based after school programs with strong curriculum partners, the program can bypass the constraints of the formal classroom by providing relevant hands-on curriculum,

opportunities to interact with young diverse scientific role models, and addition content knowledge and resources. After school programs reach large swaths of urban students, and provide safe, structured informal learning environments that will allow for creative and enriching STEM programs.

We are often asked why we don't work directly with schools, and the answer is we do. We are on our third year of piloting the Scientists and Residents Program with the Department of Education. Through this effort we recruit scientists to be paired with a school teacher to develop their own research project. However, through the After School Mentoring Program, we realize that we have a great opportunity to serve the needs of our young scientists to learn in an environment where the children's social, emotional and educational wellbeing are a top priority, while hewing to the hands-on activity learning spirit of the after school programs.

In 2011 and 2014, we received National Science Foundation grants to better study the effect of the program in our partnerships. And I'm happy to report that our external evaluations have shown

statistically significant improvements in content knowledge and attitudes towards STEM that students are more likely see themselves taking a job in STEM and have increased self confidence in their ability to do STEM.

Additional research shows that 10 to 15% of our mentors are teaching or looking to teach in our schools. A more recent Intercept grant links up-links us with Pace University and the Harbor School Foundation, and many other partners such as Good Shepherd Services to see how we could expand their groundbreaking work in career and technical education in the middle grades. We have also partnered with the CUNY Service Corps to recruit, train and place our community college undergraduate and graduate students in our program. As a result of this success we've had with the current After School STEM Mentoring Program, we have doubled down our outreach efforts by providing mentors during the summer.

With generous and sustained support from our funders and DYCD, this summer we've matched 48 mentors to 24 sites to deliver programming centered on nutrition and health through our Foods Connections curriculum. This summer we also partnered with DYCD

to pilot a program called Hack Your Health or five different summer camps to our offices at 7 World Trade Center just a few blocks away for a day to learn how their bodies produce data while they--where they're active and can be tracked with simple coding and sensors. Through this effort, over 600 students experienced STEM enrichment that was fun and memorable. In school year 2016-17, so next school year, we plan to offer more computer science programming and launch our Pre-K through 2--2nd Grade Robotics and Computer Science Coding Program. Our goal is to provide a mentor to every DYCD site that wants one, and we appreciate your continuing support.

I often speak about our program with DYCD at conferences around the world, and so many different organizations, governments and universities have requested to start up their own chapter of the After School STEM Mentoring Program. Looking back on all that we have achieved in the past five years, I'm proud to testify that we have recruited over 1,000 of New York City's most talented scientists from over 25 universities to work in 100 different sites all funded by DYCD. The end result is that over 13,000 underserved students have benefitted from meaningful

contact with mentors totaling over 150,000 contact hours. Due to City support, we plan to continue and expand our efforts whenever possible so that youth become STEM literate, and see themselves as future STEM leaders. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.  
Dr. Groome, thank you. Any other speaker? Yes.

(background comments)

JEAN COHEN: I am Jean Cohen. I am the Executive Director of the Mentoring Partnership of New York. I won't take a long time to speak because you have some exemplary mentoring programs here speaking, and I am not a mentor program. But what I am is a resource to any mentoring program that is interested in providing best practices, quality standards, safety and success, and we serve all the mentoring programs in the city, Long Island and now the state. You've got some of the best at the table here, and I just wanted to answer some of the questions you raised earlier about mentoring. So one of the first things I will say is the Mentoring Partnership is an affiliate of Mentor, the National Mentoring Partnership. And in your brief calling for this hearing, you cite the research that the

Mentoring Partnership, the National Mentoring Partnership has developed. We are the local affiliate here that helps put that work into practice here in New York City and around the state. One of the most important things, and you'll hear from the testimony from these programs is following the best practices, the elements of effective practice for mentoring. First created 24 years ago by a blue ribbon panel of mentoring experts including people from Big Brothers Big Sisters, and many others. It's in its fourth revision now. It's going to be released in about three weeks. The fourth revision of the Elements of Effective Practice and Mentoring taking into account all the new research that says how do we get the most impact for the young people we're serving? So that's what the Mentoring Partnership does. That's what the National Mentoring Partnership does. The programs you've heard today follow all those best practices. One of the reasons I bring it up is when we talk about expanding capacity at a mentoring program, it's not like--well, it is like an elastic band. You can stretch it a little bit to add more mentors and mentees, but to really follow the quality standards, you have to make

sure that there is appropriate supervision based on the number of children being served, and the number of mentors. So it's not infinite. The case supervisor, the case manager needs to be able to be responsible for an appropriate number of mentoring programs. And that's one of the reasons that money and funding plays an issue in how much you can--any great mentoring program can expand because they want to do it safely. They want to do it successfully. So one of the things I wanted to mention was not money from the Mentoring Partnership, but if you really want to expand quality mentoring for certain programs, they have to have the funding to do that safely. You mentioned mentoring in the schools. There are several mentoring initiatives in the schools. There is actually a department at the DOE, the Department of Mentoring that works with high schools trying to get companies to be corporate mentors. But there also are over 100 schools as part of the Success Mentors Initiative that brought community members, CBOs and AmeriCorps members into fight chronic absenteeism. They served in 100 schools, and they were supplemented by teachers and staff in those 100 schools who volunteered as

mentors. I just did a training last week for the DOE for the new 56 AmeriCorps members who are placed-- being placed in the community schools. They will be serving 20 to 25 students in each school of those 56 schools. So there is definitely mentoring going on in the school system. Of course, there is no school where we're filling the completed need of the children in that building because our kids have so many issues that they're facing. (coughs) Excuse me. And those were the four things I wanted to bring to your attention and, of course, I will answer any questions. Just so you know, my services are generally and my colleagues' are generally low cost or no cost. So some of the mentoring training and support that the DYCD program, the YMI was provided through a small contract, but many of the other classes or the site visits that we have done are part of our general work with mentoring programs. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Okay. Let me take the opportunity to thank Andy Kleinman(sic) and also the member from the Big Brothers Big Sisters, and also the representative of the New York Academy of Science for bringing a very

component in the mentoring of our children and these outstanding opportunities in this after school programs. Because we all know that now science and technology they are the backbone of our civilization now. And moving forward I think all the children we have should go to the science and technology. Thank you very much for this very important component. My first question is to both of you, to both institution and also to any member of the panel, what are the goals of your program with respect to your mentoring program? And also, are you reaching those goals, and how do you know? What is the process to evaluate, to qualify, you know, your success?

HECTOR BATISTA: Oh, sure. You say what's--what's the--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What are your goals?

HECTOR BATISTA: For our program?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What are you looking for your students? Yes.

CHRISTIAN BRETON: Okay, that's a pretty broad question, but I'll--I'll answer it the best that I can. I mean it's--for us it's to provide any young person in New York City who wants and needs a mentor--mentor in their life. So we do it in

multiple ways. We have a community based program where the big goes into the community, and gets the child and works with the child and doing activities. And then we have our site based program where we bring the high school kids to 40 about 50 something of the top companies in New York City where they get an opportunity to companies get an opportunity to-- the employees in those companies get an opportunity to mentor those young persons. In terms of evaluation, I think I mentioned that and I gave you a copy of a summary of our evaluation. We recently evaluated our program. It was conducted by Philliber Associates, which is the official evaluator of the Robin Hood Foundation. And the reason we did that is we wanted to make sure the work that we've been doing for over 110 years that we continue our--continue to implement sort of the best practices, and that our program is as effective as we believe it is. And what it did was it basically validated everything that we believed. It also showed us that there were some areas where we needed to kind of do a little bit more in terms of training for our volunteers, and along those lines. But really the--the study really validated. It tracked--it took 300 kids and put them

in a control group and took another hundred kids and put them through our program. And we compared on six months, a year and a two years, and after two years of being mentoring in the program with Delta was that the kids that were non--the non-mentored, those behaviors went up by about 52% and they went down with the kids in our program. So it really shows that mentoring is an effective tool having that support mechanism in your life, the things that you and I take for granted really is an effective tool that helps young people sort of do better. Really, the other thing that it shows is that from an academic point of view our numbers or the kids in our program are doing so much better in school. 97% of them are getting promoted to the next grade. 96% of them are graduating from--from high school and 94% of them are going on to college. So the numbers are really pretty strong. So right, what we're doing is try to really enhance our educational part of the program to make sure that kids have as much support as they can so we can continue to sort of be successful and really go onto college or the job market with having the skills that they need. I mean

I think that's--that's as best as I could respond to your question.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Now before I have the next speaker, because you mentioned that there-- that there are areas where you have to do more. But can you give me only two or three main challenges that you are facing--

HECTOR BATISTA: Well, there are--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --in your effort to do more?

HECTOR BATISTA: Sure, an area--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Just two or three main challenges.

HECTOR BATISTA: --where we need conversation (sic) I think is youth servicing field. One of our biggest challenges is getting more men to become mentors. In our program, for every three women volunteers, we get one man. So our ratio right now we're--we're servicing--about 55% of the kids that we service are young girls and 45% are young boys. So we have more demand from men especially men of color because it is--and especially men that come from the Bronx. We do very well in Brooklyn, Queens. Those are areas that we have challenges in terms of

me. So that's one area in particular that we're--  
And then the second I think is--is--is just making  
sure that we're--we're--we're continuing to provide  
those volunteers with the support that they need to  
deal with the challenges that are--that the children  
are dealing with. I mean I think the key to our  
success is we have a master level social worker that  
on a monthly basis talks to the volunteers and make  
sure that they deal with the challenges that they're  
dealing with in the recent--at that moment. And our  
case worker deals with a host of different stuff from  
bullying to, you know, sexual activity. So all kinds  
of things, and these are well-intended people who  
want to be a mentor. But in some cases they don't  
have kids of their own, right. And so, they need  
that support in order for them to be able to continue  
to provide that young person with the kind of  
guidance that they need. So, those are I think two  
particular challenges that we face as an  
organization.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Well, it seems  
that, you know, that our sisters are more dedicated,  
you know, to help the young people than ourselves,  
our brothers. And I wish that, you know, our

brothers and we men we make more effort to--to support to be part of this wonderful program. Because by experience we know that it is very important for--especially for the young men to see that as a male figure, a father figure a role model. It is very, very important. That makes a big difference. Of course, we know that our sisters, I mean, you know, the women they are doing a wonderful job also in terms of, you know, serving or providing good services to our young people. And then, thank you very much. Thank you for answering, but you mentioned also in your testimony that--you mention about apart from your supervision, Mr. Batista, you--you mentioned appropriate supervision.

HECTOR BATISTA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What can you tell us about what you mean by appropriate supervision?

HECTOR BATISTA: Well, I mean we have one of the most thorough background checks in the country when it comes to volunteers. We don't want a--a volunteer to be mentoring a child without being properly screened, and I think the secret to us, the sauce, the secret sauce to us that says is that there the volunteer, the big, the little and then there's a

master level social workers that provides the supervision to make sure that the match is going health, that the volunteer is getting whatever issues they're dealing with that they're getting support in dealing with those issues. And then the families are--that we address whatever family dynamics are taking place at the time. For example, we know that a child cannot have a really strong mentoring relationship if the family is dealing--is in crisis in terms of housing or other activities. So we try to refer those families and help those families deal with whatever crisis they are in. And so that supervision is not only to make sure that there is nothing going on from a child safety point of view, but just to make sure that that volunteer and the family are getting the support that they need. Because we know that when they get that support, the relationship is so much stronger.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh. I love this part because that was--that was one of my questions to the--to this panel to try to investigate and find out what is the reality of those families where the children come from. Because if they come from broken families. Are they in trouble? We have to identify

those problems? Not to be involved in family relations. This is not what we are looking for. To have a better idea of the needs of those young people, and that we have both to better serve them and better match them to the appropriate mentor. Thank you very much.

HECTOR BATISTA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes.

MEGHAN GROOME: So, our goals are really to provide all kids that want it with an opportunity for fun hands-on science experiments from a school year or a more intensive summer. We know that it's really important for this age group so 4th through 8th graders to have something that is fun that they feel like is part of themselves, and that isn't necessarily tutoring, though that's--their grades in coursework are important, but that they really see science as something that they can do, and that people who are like them can do. So we think the-- what we call Near Peer Role Models with the graduate students who are typically in their early 20s who often look and sound like them. We think that that role modeling is a key element for getting kids more interested in science in STEM careers so that is our-

-our number one main goal. We have goals around building capacity within our different CBO organizations. We have goals for our universities, mostly so that the CBOs have a direct connection with the universities and the students that are there. And one of our main goals is to figure out how we can have our mentors have this positive experience themselves so that they are thinking about whether or not they want to go into public school teaching themselves. So one of the areas for our exploration is really to figure out if we can convert more scientists into public school teachers. And I would also say that our middle-school program is not meant to be selective. We do have a couple of STEM clubs or robotics clubs that are in there, but if you could imagine the way that we think about it is that this elementary and middle-school grade we want everybody to have this positive experience--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Sure.

MEGHAN GROOME: --with science, and we have more selective programs at the high school level. So we--we--this is not a selective program, and we find that students who have been classified as not particularly interested in science or not good at

math, whatever it is, really come alive when they are put working closely with someone who is young, dynamic and well trained, and properly screened to be able to work with them. And just to answer your question about challenges, our main challenges are really building and finding programs fast enough. We have so many mentors from the scientific community who want to do this work. We have an overwhelming response from the universities from different companies to find and create placements for them that we're starting to build virtual programs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Hmm.

MEGHAN GROOME: We're expanding to a Pre-K through 2. We're looking--we're working more and more with CUNY. But we find the appetite on the scientific community side to be huge for mentoring. These are top scientists at the top research universities and they want to do this type of community service. So we've been working with DYCD to figure out how to scale up our programs, how to use more virtual components, and how to really provide this demand from the scientific community for more mentoring and more training.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Well, it seems that your situation in terms of recruiting mentors is different from the other group, the other program because it seems that because it is a familiar other program, their problem, their challenges, one of their challenges is to recruit mentors.

MEGHAN GROOME: Right. So we were--the graduate students in post-docs--post-docs that we work with, um, have an incentive to do this. They do want to do community service and this is volunteer work for them, but they also have an economic incentive to have this type of community service and teaching on their resume.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh.

MEGHAN GROOME: So many of them come to us because they want to improve their teaching and mentoring, and they know that we have the seal of approval from the National Science Foundation. So there's a--a strong both incentive for them from a job seeking perspective, but then also a strong ethic of community service within the--within the scientific community. And the program is designed in a way that it is an afternoon a week. So we try to--we try to design it in a way that's user-friendly for

1    them, and also that they have the approval of their--  
2    the person whose research lab that they work in. But  
3    we've seen overwhelmingly positive responses from  
4    this particular community.

5                    JEAN COHEN: Can I say something about  
6    that recruitment.

7                    CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh.

8                    JEAN COHEN: Your raised a very good  
9    question about recruiting mentors. If the job  
10   description of the volunteer is very specific, we  
11   find it's easier for people to volunteer. So when  
12   have a STEM program, it's clear you're going to be  
13   teaching electricity or about atoms or a very  
14   specific topic. It's easier for a person to see  
15   himself or herself being able to do that. Whereas,  
16   the wonderful program of Big Brothers and Big Sisters  
17   we're asking them to form a healthy relationship, to  
18   be in relationship with a child for at least a year,  
19   and to help with whatever issues might come up.  
20   That's a little more vague about what things will I  
21   experience, and so some people are not sure about how  
22   they will be able to do a good job. So from our  
23   research nationally about what makes people  
24   volunteer, the more specific the job, the easier it  
25

is for people to volunteer. However, we also want to make sure that there are mentors for children facing all kinds of issues, not just STEM issues. So it's critically important to be able to recruit the general kind of mentor like in Big Brothers and Big Sisters where no matter what issues the children face, the mentor is there to help the child through it.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, very good. So in terms of the--the mentors, can you please explain to us in detail and, you know, to the best of your ability what type of training do the mentors receive? What are also the requirements for somebody to become a mentor?

HECTOR BATISTA: Sure and I'll--I'll speak to my program. We--they have to be 21 years and over. You have to--we have to be able to track information about you for the last past seven years in the United States, and you go through a very thorough multi-screening process where we just--we find out a lot about your life. And during that same process, we also are talking to the families, and we're getting information about their child. The idea is just to try to find out a mentor with a child

they have some sort of similar interests because that really helps in the relationship.

MALE SPEAKER: (off mic) At 17 years of age. (sic)

HECTOR BATISTA: In terms of training, we--before you're--you're matched, you go through our training center where you're sort of taught--we talked to you about sort of the best practices in terms of mentoring, what are some of the things, some of the challenges you might find dependent on the age group of the child that you're going to be mentoring. And then during the course of the mentoring experience, we will bring--either bring you back, or for example, if you are doing supervision, you have identified that your--your little is dealing with bullying. We have bullying sort of workshops where we'll bring you in with the little and the family so you can understand sort of how to deal with that, or you know, you have during the course of that relationship that young girls is pregnant. And, you know, so how do we--how do you deal with those situations. So there are a lot of different things that we sort of bring you back for additional training. But at the beginning of the--before your

match, we--we spend some time with you sort of preparing you, and--and of sort of talking to you about in 110 years of practice what some of the things that you should be--you can expect in terms of dealing with that young person. But, what--I think what makes our program so successful is the--sort of all the work that we do prior to being mentors because the key to it is how we match that young person with that mentoring.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank you.

MEGHAN GROOME: So--so for us the majority of our--our mentors in New York City and we have many other--we have other locations around the state internationally. Typically, you're enrolled at a university as a PhD or a post-doctoral fellow. You're required to have a letter of recommendation from the person who is your--essentially your boss. We go through all of the background checks that are required by the community-based organization and DYCD. So in terms of that, and then we also do an application process. Many of our applications, many of our mentors at this point are what we call alumni mentors, and they come back year after year after year. I think it's like 40% of this year's returning

class are alumni mentors. So we have people who have been with us for years. For training, they go through two different training phases. The first is they go through what we call a youth development and pedagogy training, which is how do you work with kids who are different than you? What are the basics of working with 4th through 8th graders? The dos and don'ts. We have a section called Awkward Questions because kids will ask you all sorts of awkward questions, as anybody with a teenager knows. So we want to be prepare them for how do you answer questions like do you sleep in the same bed as anybody else? Or I don't believe in evolution, and you're teaching me about evolution. So we--we sort of go through the typical curious questions that kids will ask a trusted adult in that youth development and pedagogy training. And then, we also give them training on how do you teach the particular curriculum? So if you're teaching our Computer Science Python Coding curriculum, you will learn what you're doing on day one, what you're doing on day two, what you're doing on day three. And all of these trainings have a video library that go with them so that if you don't remember how to dissect a

chicken leg, which is a fairly terrifying thought with a group of 25 children, you can just go back and re-watch that training video to help the kids and CBO staff person lead them through that activity. At the same time, we also have once you've been placed at a site, we also have staff members who do site visits and check in and office hours and all those things. So the placement does also come with help and support when it's needed, and that's provided mostly by the Academy staff. And we do have, like I said, now close to 1,000 mentors, some of whom are available for support if you need it. So we have those alumni mentors as we call them.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. What about the involvement, the participation of the parents? Is there any training or orientation for the parents to better--to know about the program their children are going to be part of, and what would be their responsibility? Is there any participation required from the parents?

MEGHAN GROOME: Yeah, a couple years ago we started what we call Family Science Night, and Family Science Night is--what we do is we send four to five mentors. They wear their lab coats, and they

show up with a, you know, a couple of boxes and grocery bags full of hands-on STEM activities that they do with families. So it can be done. It's been done at pickup time. The families come into a gym. They file in and there's 12 different tables of activities that they can do, and then also we've done it at Valentine's Day dances. We've done it at--we did it--we did Spooky Science Night at a Halloween event last year. For Valentine's Day we did a heart health one, and the goal of that is really to get the scientists out talking to the parents and the caregivers about what a wonderful job the kids are doing in STEM, all of the fun things that they're learning. And also, provide the parents with a little bit of help so that when the kid goes home and asks all of these questions like, you know, mom, dad, can we do STEM? You know, can I do this, can I do that, the parents have a little bit more familiarity with STEM and some different resources. What we want to start to do, and are in the process of planning is also be working with the parents around things like so you have a 4th grader who you think is really interested in math, what does it take to get into the selective city high schools? What are the types of

middle school programs that are out there? So that our scientists can also be delivering not just sort of public health messaging like this heart health thing, but also messaging around the great high schools that are here in New York City, other informal STEM education programs that are of interest to your kid. What do you need to have a student who wants to go to college? What are the math classes that they need to take? So in addition to public health messaging, we also want to have them start to deliver some of these high school and college readiness messaging. And we think we're primed to be able to do that at the 4th through 8th grade level.

HECTOR BATISTA: For our program it basically--it really starts at intake when the parent brings the child into the program. In case--in a lot of cases, these children don't have parents in their life. I mean we--most of the kids that we service come from single parent households, but in a lot of cases they're aging out of foster care. So whatever support mechanism they have with them, they're involved in that process. So it's at the beginning of intake. And then doing the supervision on a monthly basis, we call the parent, the big, the

little just to make sure that everything is going well, and to see where--where they're getting stuck. So they're involved through this whole journey through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank you very much. Mr. Batista, you said in your testimony that nearly all of our youth are from low-income single-parent households, and suddenly with other challenges. They live in foster homes, have an incarcerated parent, have been in trouble with the law, have a learn--a learning disability, and also have been currently or have currently immigrated. This is a very special type of population, very, very special type of population with different or specific challenges. We're talking about immigrant children, youth who came from a different culture. Some of them are, you know, have a language barrier, cultural barriers, and we're talking about children who have parents who have been incarcerated. So this is a very special, you know, type of population of young people. Based on your experience and your track record, what do you think that we should do? What do you think that we should do to better address the needs and the challenges of those young people in

this category of young people? Because I believe that their challenges are different from many other young people. What do you think that we as a city, we as a society, we should do to better address their--their needs.

HECTOR BATISTA: (off mic) I'm going to try answer--(sic) (on mic) I mean look I--I'm going to try to answer two different ways, and I'll give you just a very quick study--study of one of our kids in our program. We had a young man who was failing math class, and the reason he was failing math class was because his mother, single mother was getting up at 6 o'clock in the morning, leaving him to deal with his sister--little brother and little sister and, you know, to--to get the off to services, right. And the mother was working three jobs, and this kid was failing math. So we when we started mentor--when we started working with this young person, we sort of began to deal with the family dynamics. We uncovered that this was happening. We quickly intervened and provided services to that family. And the reason he was failing math was he was getting to the math class at 10 o'clock and the math class started at 9:00 or he was getting there at 9:40. He was getting there

late. So once we were able to address the issues that that young person was dealing with, I'm happy to report that young person is now getting a B in that math class, and is on his way to really do well. And I think the challenge is that--and again, I'm not here to be critical of the Board of Education or anyone. I'm just talking about my programming. I think our young people are dealing with a host of different issues. Some of them not created by them. Some of them are just circumstances, and you can have one thing to deal with each of those children. As I mentioned, we have kids that are coming out of the foster care system. We have to have social workers that are trained in a program and volunteers that are trained to deal with that child that's coming out of the foster care system. We have kids that are coming that have parents that are incarcerated. We've got to have a social worker that is trained to deal with those issues around parents being incarcerated, and son and so on. And I think that there's no magic bullet to one thing. I think you've got to have different things to--different ways to sort of address all the challenges that these young people are dealing with, and there are a host of challenges

that they're dealing with. And, I think the secret to what we try to do is we try to really do a really thorough job of making sure that that volunteer that we're matching with that child has kind all the support that they need to be able to address issues. But the most important thing is the social worker that has those skills and those resources to be able to address the family dynamics, and that's what makes our program successful. I'm not quite sure if I answered your question completely, but I think that's the way that I could sort of best address your question.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Any comments from the--the speakers?

MEGHAN GROOME: I just wanted to say in terms of--of, um, supporting, we work pretty much exclusively here in the city with DYCD, and I--I have never seen such an incredibly powerful, impactful agency, and it's something that's somewhat unique to New York City. When I travel and, of course, travels around the world and talk about this program, they sort of ask how we do it, and we describe what DYCD is. And so many different government leaders say, oh, can we also get a DYCD. So what we see within

DYCD is a group of people who care greatly about the children, are highly trained, and are really eager to do this type of academic fun enrichment that fits within the culture of their site. So my--my encouragement to you is to continue to, you know, not just fund DYCD, but spotlight what a unique resource the kids of New York City have. I encourage organizations like us. You know, we're a nearly 200 year-old scientific society. Encourage the types of policies that make it easier for us to work with the different city agencies. We have a very simple background check process that we go through that makes it much easier to work here than in other places. The DYCD staff is well versed in how to deal with partnerships like ours, and the same with the community-based organizations. So, the most valuable thing that we have in terms of being able to turn out those thousand scientists, and these amazing academic institutions is the partnership and strength of DYCD. And we always--so many different places wish they had a DYCD. So I just want to encourage you to support them and the policies that make them a great agency.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

My last question is I know that, you know, you have

been doing a lot of effort to save those young people, to help them. What--what do you believe--why do you think that we from the City Council, what can we do to better help you help those young people? Is there any advice we need to know? Anything you believe that we can do to better help you continue and have more success in helping the young people?

MEGHAN GROOME: Yeah, I mean we would love this--you know, we would love to be able to increase the amount of money that we bring in from the city in terms of financial support. But I would encourage you look at the wonderful work that the CUNY Service Corps has been doing. It's a relatively new unit with CUNY. Our--we think and very strongly believe that the--the way that we will unlock serving the most underprivileged kids in New York City will be to work closely with CUNY and the CUNY Service Corps is a wonderful mechanism for us to be able to do that. So as we try to continue to service, there's sort of a corridor of Eastern Queens to Northern Brooklyn. That's one of our target groups. That's going to be best served by students who are in CUNY and this Service Corps has been a wonderful institution for us to be able to work with.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.  
3 Now, Mr. Batista.

4 HECTOR BATISTA: And, I--I think that if-  
5 -if--from my point of view, obviously funding. I  
6 think that the city needs to get serious about  
7 funding the Mentorship Program. I think it's  
8 something that's talked about, and it's sort of out  
9 there and, you know, we do it in pieces. But I think  
10 that if we want to be serious in dealing with the  
11 issues that the kids are facing in today's society,  
12 in order for them to become--be able to graduate.  
13 You see the staff. I mean these are staff that are  
14 pretty remarkable. We're not doing anything-- You  
15 know, we're doing--all we're doing is providing these  
16 young people with some in their life who cares about  
17 that.

18 MEGHAN GROOME: (off mic) I got you.

19 HECTOR BATISTA: It's not--it's not that  
20 difficult, right, and I think, you know, when you  
21 have--when you hear ratios of 500 to 1 in the school  
22 in terms of counselor versus student, I mean how can  
23 these children sort of be successful if they don't  
24 have-- And they come from a single-parent household  
25 and the mother is working three jobs, and they're --

they're left to just kind of deal on their own. So the idea is that if we really want to be serious about this, you see the numbers. The numbers are not--they speak for themselves. You know, 97% of those kids are getting promoted to the next grade. 96% of them are graduating from high school. That's--the reason that's happening is because they support. They have somebody who's there for them, someone who's supporting them, making sure that they're making the right kind of decisions. I mean in some cases, having that person is am I going through the right door or the wrong door. I mean the things that I took for granted, my--having parents in my life, and I could go on and on, and give you a long speech about it. But that's the reality. You at the Council you have the ability and you already are doing some of that. You know, you're--you're providing very important needed funding through our organization, and I think it's important for you to really look at mentoring and provide the kind of funding that it needs.

JEAN COHEN: The--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: U-huh.

JEAN COHEN: The Mentorship Program works with over 400 different mentoring programs, and I will say some of them are general mentoring programs. Some of them serve children in foster care, children of incarcerated parents, children who have been adjudicated themselves, children who are homeless. But what we find--and they serve over 50,000 children, but 95% of those programs at capacity. They can't take on more children, and one of the jobs that the Mentorship Partnership does is try to find funding opportunities for mentoring programs to apply for grants, to apply for other resources because that's the limiting factor for them to be able to expand and do it successfully and safely. So I would echo what these people say is true across all the mentoring programs that serve New York City youth is most of them are at capacity. They could do more good work, and they've demonstrated their ability to do good work, but they don't have the resources to keep expanding indefinitely.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much to all of you. Thank you for what you're doing to improve the quality of life of the children, the youth, and thank you also for making our city better.

Thank you. Have a wonderful day. (background comments) Now, we are going to call the next and last panel I believe. Dr. Sat Bhattacharya. I hope that-- thank you very much--from Sloan Kettering. Kate Banks. Is it Kate Banks?

KATE BANKS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Okay from Power Play New York City. Thank you very much. (background comment) Even though I don't have the formal--the sworn statement, but I would like to ask that you raise your hand and to swear to the best of your ability to say the truth.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: (off mic) Yes.

KATE BANKS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: (background comments) Okay, you can start. Anyone of you can start at any time. Please, before you start state your name for the record.

KATE BANKS: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good morning.

KATE BANKS: My name is Kate Banks. I'm the Community Relations Manager with Power Play NYC.

I'd like to begin by thanking Chairman Eugene and the rest of the committee members for your time this morning. Power Play NYC is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring and educating girls through one of a kind sports and academic enrichment programs. Sports serve as our hook, and once we have the girls' attention, we build life skills, develop healthy eating habits, and start a dialogue about what success for girls can look like. Power Play connects girls with strong women role models and prepares the girls for college and the world of work. Power Play serves the 1,100 participants from all five borough in New York City and it continues with a continuum of services for these girls ages 6 to 19. (coughs) As a--as a result of the Council funded STARS Citywide Girls Initiative, Power Play can offer services to 50 sites this year for after school programming. That's up from 42 in the previous year. This funding will help more girls in New York City grow strong through our programs focused on the importance of healthful living, get them looking ahead to and preparing for college, preparing both participants and their parents, and require them to become engaged young citizens active in their

communities and develop leadership skills through volunteerism.

Power Play knows mentoring is important, and in our informal way we build supportive relationships with caring, passionate adults who serve as coaches in our programs. That's why in programs like our Leadership Academy for our high school girls our emphasis is on workforce and career development, and connecting our girls with these adults. If girls don't see it they won't do it. Quality mentoring programs are an excellent and cost-effective workforce development tool and can lead to economic independence for our youth at risk. We also recognize that the power of mentoring should not be limited to adult-child relationships. That investing in youth mentoring and peer-to-peer learning means benefits for younger students and older youth such as leadership development and community service experience.

This year Power Play launched its first Youth Coach Mentor program with 31 participants assisting adult coaches in our after school program for younger kids. Everyone knows the bad news that in New York City public schools less than 60% of

students will graduate, an even lower number of kids are ready for college, and the teen pregnancy rate remains high. But here's the good news: support for quality mentoring programs produces results. Power Play has 100% graduation rate from high school. 100% of our participants show a shift in attitude toward greater school attachment, and in healthy body image. Over 90% of our girls create their resume--create resumes, visit at least one college or college fair, and go on to attend college, and we won't stop there. Our targets are set on 100% for next year. We encourage the Council to support organizations like ours to increase quality mentorship opportunities to help young people succeed in school, career and beyond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

You're up.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: Good afternoon, Chairman. In fact, we've interacted some--quite some time ago, and you've supported our programs. I'm Dr. Sat Bhattacharya from Sloan Kettering Cancer Center--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: --and a few other institutes. Fifteen years ago I started this

program, this non-profit organization called the Harlem Children Society. I saw that there was a serious under-representation of various under-resourced minorities, African-American, Hispanic and Native Americans in the higher echelons of science and medicine especially in hospitals and research institutions and even engineers. So when I looked into the--what was going on, I felt that there was something missing in the high school and even middle school. But since--as a doctor it was very difficult for me to extricate myself. I just went on and took three students from a few schools in Harlem and then the Lower East Side. And then took them on in my laboratory--I mean hands-on research experience. Pretty much like the New York Academy of Sciences that we heard before. Actually, I helped the New York Academy of Sciences some eight years ago to found that program that we just heard.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Uh-huh.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: So--but our program is strictly a base for below poverty line students. So, all students have to be below \$35,500. That's the base salary of, but in the last few years, many of the families have become even worse. In

fact, any of the families are \$12,000, \$11,000, \$6,000 for five, six, you know, students. So, what I realized is get those students, and the reason why those students are falling back is because they don't have the opportunity like other--other high schools in other neighborhoods where they have the opportunity to come to such good programs like the New York Academy of Sciences. But, we have these students not just in the program in Harlem, but also it is--it's a citywide program. So we reach out to the schools. So I took these three students on in my laboratory, and then others--other laboratories in the hospital came to know about it. So they do strictly science research starting during the summer, and then an after school program all year round. And over a period of 15 years, starting from three students it expanded to 50, 100 even 400 and 800 students per year.

So over the last 15 years, more than 3,000 students have gone through the program. Many students come back year after year. All of the students are from the public school systems from over 300 high schools spread across New York City. And also, in fact, the presidential candidate Bernie

Sanders had invited me to implement the programs in Vermont about four years ago. So, he originally is from Brooklyn. So--and then many of these students go through a mentoring program. All our mentors are seasoned researchers. There are about 20,000 contacts that we have evolved over all these 15 years. And one of the characteristic things is they do the summer research, and once a week we organize lectures for all the 300, 400 students, and the students are required to make Power Point presentations on the research. I bring in other seasoned lectures, Nobel Laureates to give talks to the students. So the students are required to write everything from morning to evening, and this--they have to submit everything online to us. So many of the reasons why high school students especially from the public school system don't succeed in the university or the African-American and Hispanic students especially from--from very tough areas, tough neighborhoods is the public school system doesn't prepare for these--for these young students to succeed in a university. That's number one.

Secondly, there's a culture shock. Many of these students live universities live in--in the

neighborhoods, which would sort of go to--go to the same school and all these students are from the same background. So when they go to the university, they have more of a--more of a culture shock than even a student coming from abroad. And, this is specifically more for students in--the males, for example, African-American males who don't quite know how to express themselves. And they soon fall behind classes and within a semester or two they drop out. So, these--this--this issue has to be addressed, and go and reach out and also intermingle them. So one of the reasons why we have our lecturers that brings in students from South Bronx to Brooklyn or the Lower East Side or the Upper West Side is that they all are below the poverty line, but they all come from different backgrounds. And being that this is New York City, consistently over the last 15 years, I've seen that 30 to 35% or sometimes a little bit more are African-American, an equal number of Hispanics, 5 or 6% are Caucasian and immigrants of different backgrounds. Now, these students when they com from South Bronx and Brooklyn and Bronx, Upper West Side, Upper East Side, and they bring the different cultural backgrounds, we mix these students together

so that they are interacting with one another during these lecture sessions. And that is extremely critical when they go onto college because when they go onto college, they--they learn now to ask questions, and the learning process continues on.

The other thing is our program is not just a high school program, but it continues on through undergraduate years. So we hold onto these students for four, five, six, seven, eight years. Many of our students are there for seven, eight years even nine years, since high school, all the way to graduate school. And, at the end of the program, they have to have an extensive report. They have to make a Power Point presentation, and then three or four years ago we used to do a science street fair and festival. The idea was to bring--have these students share the science right on the streets. Now, we--we take our students to various science conferences, but those are specialized science conferences from all around the world. But these are events geared at sharing science to the community directly. That's one of the reasons where there is the direct participation.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Thank you to both of you. But, Doc, I want to ask you--I--I--I--you raised very critical issues, very important issues, and you have now brought to your organization. You've been doing a lot of good services, providing good services to those young people who come from below poverty families. Let me ask you, in terms of your role are you reaching your goal or not? If not, what is the biggest challenge?

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: The biggest challenge has been there--these last three--two to three or four years ever since the economy has collapsed. Now, I started this organization from literally scratch at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Of course, it's an independent organization with Harlem Children Society and all, but these last--and many other foundations have supported us, and institutes (sic) have supported us. But we have--we cycled out at the wrong time when the whole economy was going down. In fact, many of the--most of the foundations liked it so much that they supported us. Usually there's three--three years and then there's a hiatus. But they support us for six years and even more, sometimes nine years, and then the economy went

down. So one of the--one of the main things that we did was, and I realize this. In fact, that's how the program started. We give all our students a stipend or anywhere from \$800 to \$2,000. Now, this is extremely critical because the student has to work because if they're--if the student is not getting that, the student will be working at McDonald's or cutting someone's grass. Which is okay, too, but our students if the student is bright, if--if they do not have the money coming in, the parent or the household will send the student to get some money into the household. Now, these last three years, it has been extremely difficult, and we--we also try to work with the DYCD especially the Summer Youth Program. But the Summer Youth Program the couple years that we worked was almost a disaster because we don't have any leverage. Because we reach out to all the schools and universities, and--and they have to pre-select the students. I interview more than--I and many of us past students interview them so all 8,000 to 1,500 students, out of which we select about 400--3 to 400 students. So it's a very selective process. Why? Because we have to send these students to a particular laboratory, or with working with say my

lab or someone else's lab. And so we have to have a certain background that we are not sending a totally problem person--child. So we have to train that child and send them back to that neighborhood school so they become role models. That's how the program has evolved is this student who has come to our program who is challenged economically and other situations challenged, they in turn become role models in their own school. Because we tell them to make the Power Point presentations and the posters and all, and in turn other students become--become engaged. But if they're not getting the money--and that's what has happened the last three or four years--this portion of our student population has gone down substantially.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: What I suggest from DYCD is now with the summer youth program, I am blinded. We reach out to all these SYEP sites, but I don't have the--I cannot select a good student that's against DYCD or SYEP. So we need something that we can select these students based on their abilities. I know I don't--I don't--we don't care about an A+ student. I know we are not going to get an A+

student. We cannot even get a B--a B+ student, but we can work with a B student because if there is a woman--a girl child or a male child, he or she is looking at the brothers and sisters at home. There are situations on the home front, and they're not-- they're not going to get an A. But if you change the situation, make them economically independent, and in the sense of pride, then everything changes and this what we have seen for not 15 years, but the past--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: --few years has been difficult.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Thank you so much. And Ms. Banks--

KATE BANKS: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --you mentioned that your organization has been providing sports activities to the mentees--

KATE BANKS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --and to improve the self-esteem and confidence, and this is wonderful because I know that's what you represent, and I can tell you, you know, you know, the sports I have done, you know, participate in sports I can say that, you

know, it's part of who I am today. You know, I'm grateful to my brother, my dear brother went to teach into sports because really can provide to the young people a good way to improve their self-esteem and self confidence. But I am going to ask you the same question. Are you reaching your goal, you know, by providing the activities that you are providing to the young people? If not, what is your challenge?

KATE BANKS: I think that I would have to say that one of our biggest challenges is along the lines of what other people who have sat at this--in this spot before have mentioned about providing mentors, and asking them to come back and retaining them. That's been a challenge for us because of the--well, because they're obviously part-time--part-time employees. And so, when they leave the relationships when the kids leave and then the--that can take a whole other year to grow that relationship. And the child may at that point when their mentor leaves or that significant person they may struggle again with feelings of self-worth or their attendance my stutter. So that's definitely been one of our main challenges.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So now at this time I know that it is getting late. I don't want to keep you too long. So I want to thank you all for everything that you have been doing to address the issues, and the challenges faced by the young people, and thank you so very much for everything that you are doing for the good City of New York.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I am looking forward to working together with you--

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --in order for you to continue to serve our young people. Thank you very much.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: Than you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Have a wonderful day.

DR. SAT BHATTACHARYA: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you and this hearing is now adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 13, 2015