

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES  
AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS  
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

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January 29, 2016  
Start: 10:03 a.m.  
Recess: 12:21 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Room  
14th Fl.

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
Chairperson

CARLOS MENCHACA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Elizabeth S. Crowley  
Julissa Ferreras-Copeland  
Peter A. Koo  
Stephen T. Levin  
Andy L. King  
Costa G. Constantinides  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Inez D. Barron  
Rory I. Lancman  
Barry S. Grodenchik

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

Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Youth and Family Justice  
Administration for Children's Services

Stephanie Prussack, Associate Commissioner  
Detention Services  
Division of Youth and Family Justice  
Administration for Children's Services

Jennifer Romelien, Executive Director  
Detention Programs  
Division of Youth and Family Justice  
Administration for Children's Services

David Freudenthal  
Carnegie Hall

Josie Whittlesey  
Founder & Executive Director  
Drama Club

Carol Prud'homme Davis  
Shadow Box Theater

Vivienne La Borde  
Lincoln Center

Julian Alberti  
Poet-Linc Program  
Lincoln Center

Sarah Ball, Manager  
Correctional Services  
New York Public Library

Miles Hodges  
Youth Engagement Program Coordinator  
New York Public Library

Nick Higgins, Director  
Outreach Services Department  
Brooklyn Public Library

Kim McNeil-Capers  
Outreach Coordinator  
Queens Public Library

Rosalind Barber  
Administrative Chief of Staff  
The Public Theater

Hans Menos, Director  
Youth Services  
Center for Community Alternatives

Judy Tate  
Manhattan of Theater Club  
Founding Artistic Director  
Stargate Theater Company for Court Involved Youth

Gabrielle Horowitz-Prisco  
Executive Director  
Lineage Project, Inc.

Laura Schneider, Director  
Art Entrepreneurship and Curatorial Program  
Artistic Noise

Victoria Sammartino  
Founder & Executive Director Emeritus  
Voices Unbroken

Leslie Britt, Executive Director  
Voices Unbroken



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2 [sound check, pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning  
4 everyone. We are anxious to start this very  
5 important hearing on time, and I want to welcome  
6 everyone. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer, and I'm very  
7 proud to be the Chair of Cultural Affairs, Libraries  
8 and International Intergroup Relations. I'm very  
9 excited to have our first joint committee hearing  
10 with the Committee on Juvenile Justice and its  
11 hardworking Chair Council Member Fernando Cabrera on  
12 a very important issue, and I want to thank Council  
13 Member Cabrera for bringing this topic to the  
14 forefront, and urging our joint hearing today. And  
15 say that this population that we're talking young  
16 people at risk and certainly in need of as many  
17 support services as possible and the arts have the  
18 power to really change people's live, and  
19 demonstrates really powerfully the good that is  
20 within all of us. And, finding your own power and  
21 enhancing your self-image and self-esteem and having  
22 a creative outlet for all of the things that are  
23 going on in one's heart and mind is incredibly  
24 important on the path to a better life. And I'm  
25 really, really thrilled that Council Member Cabrera

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2 has asked us to co-sponsor this important hearing,  
3 and I want to thank both our public library systems,  
4 the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public  
5 Library, the Queens Library for the work that it has  
6 always done with young people involved in the  
7 Juvenile Justice System. As well as many of our  
8 cultural institutions group members, and our smaller  
9 non-profit cultural organizations who have been  
10 reaching out, and who have programs and who have been  
11 doing this work without much fanfare and without much  
12 notice. And I think it's important that we share  
13 with the City Council and with the Administration  
14 that kind of work that is already going on to meet  
15 the needs of young people. So it's very, very  
16 exciting to be here, and to have so many people in  
17 the room who are doing this work. And as I often  
18 say, nothing good in a city happens without culture  
19 and the arts, and libraries as a central part of  
20 that, and this is no different. So, we want to have  
21 this hearing, and learn what's happening. Maybe  
22 there are more things we can do. Maybe there are  
23 more things we can do to support that work, but it is  
24 an incredibly important hearing, and moment for us.

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2 And I want to thank and turn it over once again to my  
3 co-chair Council Member Fernando Cabrera.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

5 Good morning. Welcome to today's joint hearing of  
6 the Juvenile Justice and Cultural Affairs Committee.

7 My name is Fernando Cabrera, and I am Chair of the  
8 Juvenile Justice Committee. I want to personally

9 thank Chair Van Bramer for co-chairing this hearing  
10 today. You have been truly a leader. Many things

11 have truly changed this time around as a result of  
12 your leadership. So I want to thank you for that.

13 Arts are very, very, very important especially  
14 dealing with this type of population we're going to  
15 be talking about today. So thank you co-chair.

16 Also, we want to thank our staff for putting this  
17 hearing together. We are here today to examine the

18 effectiveness of cultural and arts programs that are  
19 utilized in the Juvenile Justice system. When people

20 enter the Juvenile Justice, they have started down a  
21 potentially destructive path that with some will

22 ultimately lead to--lead them to the Criminal Justice  
23 system. When they enter the Juvenile Justice system,

24 they are held accountable for their actions, but can  
25 also be engaged in a productive way to not only keep

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2 them occupied and engaged, but also help them to find  
3 a better path in life. Effective cultural and arts  
4 programs designed to help young people harness and  
5 focus positive energy, building confidence and  
6 teaching them how to trust them. Providing young  
7 people with the space and time to express themselves  
8 and encourage these young people to think about their  
9 future, and make them feel it is worth--it is worth  
10 it to stay out of trouble. Additionally, spending  
11 time in cultural and arts activity provides them an  
12 outlet, and can give a sense of freedom to young  
13 people who are in detention. For this reason,  
14 cultural and arts programs present a unique  
15 opportunity to provide off-ramps for young people  
16 from the Juvenile Justice system that would keep them  
17 from the Criminal Justice system. I hope to learn  
18 more about what cultural and arts services are being  
19 offered to aid this youth in achieving long-term  
20 success, and how effective these programs are. In  
21 particular, I hope to hear about programs that could  
22 support young people over time as they re-enter the  
23 community including ongoing programs and those with a  
24 mentorship component. I look forward to hearing from  
25 the Department, and from the stakeholders regarding

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2 the effectiveness of these programs. And, whether  
3 the department has sufficient resources to serve our  
4 troubled youth with cultural and arts programs.  
5 Again, thank you for being here today, and let me  
6 just say I've been majorly impressed especially going  
7 to Horizons and Crossroads for the work that the all  
8 cultural groups are doing. They are seeing it first  
9 hand, and I'm looking forward to hearing more in  
10 detail the work they're doing. And with that I'm  
11 going to turn it over to the Administration  
12 Commissioner, Felipe Franco and also Stephanie  
13 Prussack and Jennifer Romelien from ACS. Thank you.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Thank you.  
15 Good morning, Chair Cabrera.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic] You need to  
17 swear them in.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I'm sorry. I have  
19 to swear you in.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Would you all please  
21 raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the  
22 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
23 your testimony before this committee, and to respond  
24 honestly to council member questions?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yes, I do.

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2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Good

4 morning, Chair Cabrera. Good morning Chair Van  
5 Bramer and members of the Committee of Juvenile  
6 Justice and Cultural Affairs, Libraries and  
7 International Intergroup Relations. I'm Felipe  
8 Franco, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Youth  
9 and Family Justice. With me today is Stephanie  
10 Prussack, Associate Commissioner for Detention  
11 Services and Jennifer Romelien, Executive Director  
12 for Detention Programs. Thanks for the opportunity  
13 to discuss the cultural programs and services that  
14 ACS and our many, many programs provide for our youth  
15 in Juvenile Detention facilities. Also, on behalf of  
16 Commissioner Carrion and everyone in Crossroads, I  
17 would like to commend Commissioner--Chair Cabrera and  
18 the Juvenile Justice Committed for going out of their  
19 way for--and recognizing 27 of our most dedicated  
20 staff yesterday at the Crossroads Juvenile Center  
21 during yesterday's proclamation ceremony. It means a  
22 lot to one of the hardest working folks in New York  
23 City who they two days of 24/7, sometimes two days--  
24 days on--on the road after a big snowstorm work to  
25 take care of our children.

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2 Overview of the Division of Youth and  
3 Family Justice. But especially for Children Services  
4 Division of Youth and Family Justice oversees a  
5 continuum of services and programs for youth at every  
6 stage of the juvenile justice process. Our mission  
7 is to provide outcomes for young people who come into  
8 our care. We strive to accomplish by partnering with  
9 agencies that support youth in the community. These  
10 alternative programs, secure and non-secure  
11 detention, non-secure placement residents and limit  
12 the secure placements residences. The Division of  
13 Youth and Family Justice Secure and Non-Secure  
14 Detention Services to young people who are waiting  
15 the conclusion of their family or criminal court  
16 case. New York distinguishes between juvenile  
17 delinquents, which is a young person between the age  
18 of 7 and 15 who commits a crime considered a juvenile  
19 delinquent act, and a juvenile offender, which is a  
20 13, 14 or 15-year-old child who commits a more  
21 serious or violent act such as murder, manslaughter,  
22 assault, sexual assault, murder, burglary or arson  
23 working mapping. (sic) And they are being treated  
24 under the law as an adult in the criminal court. ACS  
25 13 Non-Secure Detention Residents served as juvenile

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2 delinquents in our two secure detention centers,  
3 Horizon Juvenile Center and Bronx--or in the Bronx  
4 and Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brooklyn serve both  
5 juvenile delinquents and juvenile offenders. The  
6 number of juveniles admitted into detention has  
7 continually decreased for some time now. The number  
8 has continued to decrease from up to 2,928 in 2014 to  
9 a total of 2,722 in 2015. This actually has occurred  
10 due to a reduction in the number of juvenile arrests  
11 in New York. Also because of the hard work of the  
12 Department of Probation and others to make sure that  
13 only those kids who need to be in detention are  
14 coming to detention, and a full array of community-  
15 based alternative programs designed to divert young  
16 people from the Juvenile Justice system.

17 JENNIFER ROMELIEN: While young people  
18 are in our care, ACS seeks to expose young people in  
19 detention to positive programming and services to  
20 encourage them to get on a better path. DYFJ and our  
21 partners maintain a range of programs and services  
22 that provide structured, fun and developmentally  
23 appropriate activities, and culturally enriching  
24 experiences for juvenile involved young people. Our  
25 partner agencies and community based organizations

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2 offer high quality services to our youth, and help  
3 ACS enhance and expand a network of activities. This  
4 testimony will highlight some of the cultural  
5 activities that take place within our detention  
6 facilities. We are fortunate to have a number of  
7 collaborative partnerships with our sister city  
8 agencies and with cultural and educational  
9 institutions that provide positive services to the  
10 youth in our care. Many of these programs that we  
11 speak about--that I will speak about today are  
12 funding through awards by the New York Department of  
13 Youth and Community Development, Schools Out New York  
14 City Program, and some are funded by the Department  
15 of Cultural Affairs through its Cultural Development  
16 Fund. One of our partnerships is with Carnegie Hall,  
17 the respected New York City musical institution.  
18 Once a year through Carnegie Hall's Musical  
19 Connections Program both--and youth in both of our  
20 secure detention facilities work with professional  
21 musicians to develop and record original composition.  
22 Youth perform these musical works in concerts at the  
23 facilities, which are attended by their family  
24 members, DYFJ staff and fellow residents. These  
25 performances are culmination of two weeks of

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2 collaboration between our residents and Carnegie Hall  
3 artists that include lyric development, song writing,  
4 track record, track fixing and song rehearsal. We've  
5 seen a great benefit from the Musical Connections  
6 program. Staff have reported a positive change in  
7 the tone and temperature around these times the  
8 programs take place. Detention youth get to showcase  
9 their talents or discover new ones, and gain exposure  
10 to positive activities, which they can continue when  
11 they return home. Detention runs a number of other  
12 performance art workshops each of which emphasize  
13 different skills, and all of which provide an outlet  
14 for creative expression. Drama Club gives our youth  
15 an opportunity to learn, write, perform their own  
16 skits and plays. Drama Club also features unscripted  
17 performances and role playing, which youth learn  
18 through positive problem solving and conflict  
19 resolution skills. With the help of artists from the  
20 Shadow Box Theater, a puppet making and performance  
21 workshop our youth make their own puppets and perform  
22 puppet shows with skits they create themselves. Flex  
23 Dance gives young people opportunities for self-  
24 expression and self-esteem building through urban  
25 dance. Collaborative dance scenes and projects

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2 require youth to work together and cooperate, which  
3 in turn reinforces team building. Building Beats  
4 allows youth to create their own music--electronic  
5 music. Detention staff have played the music created  
6 by youth in this program such as family visiting days  
7 and other facility events, which allows parents,  
8 staff, and others to experience and enjoy the musical  
9 creativity of our young people. Youth in our non-  
10 secure detention group homes have had the opportunity  
11 to explore and experience some of our most vulnerable  
12 cultural institutions throughout the city. Through  
13 Arts Connection, an arts and educational organization  
14 in the city and its Hi Five tickets to the arts  
15 program, NSC youth have watched performances by Alvin  
16 Ailey American Dance Theater up in New York City  
17 Center, the Joyce Dance Company and Blue Men Group.  
18 They have seen on and off Broadway plays, and shows  
19 at the Apollo Theater, and have visited several  
20 museums throughout the city including the Museum of  
21 Modern Art. DYFJ also partners with several  
22 community based organizations that use creative  
23 writing to encourage in positive self-expression.  
24 Through the Bronx Writer Corp, youth engage in  
25 creative writing, and with established authors. At

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2 the completion of the program, the youth's work is  
3 compiled and published in a book. In a similar  
4 program, youth work with Voices Unbroken, which  
5 provides youth the opportunity for creative self-  
6 expression through the crafts of poetry. Another  
7 program Power Writers allows youths to participate in  
8 judgment-free writing activities, poetry and spoken  
9 word. Our youth have also had the opportunity to  
10 express themselves through their own artwork. Art  
11 Start is an award winning creative arts organization  
12 that provides creative art workshops in New York City  
13 shelters and alternative schools such as Passages  
14 Academy in both of our secure detention facilities.  
15 Doing Art Together is a non-profit arts organization  
16 that provides hands-on programs to understood  
17 audiences. Doing Art Together programs builds skills  
18 that enhance the ability to learn and easily  
19 transferred from the classroom to life. Doing Art  
20 Together aims to offer high quality art education  
21 programs that level the educational playing field for  
22 children and youth ages 2 through 22 who come from  
23 under-resourced communities. Our youth have  
24 participated in several meal projects with artist  
25 from Groundswell Project and artists from Creative

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2 Artworks. These murals express messages of hope and  
3 transformation from our youth, and are displayed  
4 throughout both secure detention facilities. Two  
5 murals created by Youth at Horizons are now on  
6 display in a community health clinic at Montefiore  
7 Hospital in the Bronx. The Animation Project is a  
8 digital technology non-profit that provides animation  
9 through art therapy. The Animation Project uses  
10 digital art technology as a tool to change the lives  
11 of youth.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: [off mic]  
13 Thanks for the--[on mic] Thanks for the opportunity  
14 to share the important work we are doing to address  
15 the cultural needs of young people in our Juvenile  
16 Justice facilities. I want to thank everyone in the  
17 audience. I mean the attendance today I think is a  
18 highlight of the amount of commitment that our  
19 organizations have to turning around--around the life  
20 of the most needy kids in New York City. We have  
21 been doing this for years. I'll be surprised since--  
22 since my arrival to New York City government about  
23 the wealth and the passion that our administration  
24 have to whatever work. I think we should be  
25 highlighting on the national level our arts, another

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2 core of real education in our Juvenile Justice,  
3 something that is not--not seen anywhere else in the  
4 nation. We appreciate the Council's ongoing support  
5 as we continue to strive to where we're including  
6 services to New York City's most vulnerable youth.  
7 As the Chairman mentioned before, arts have a unique  
8 way of sparking excellence in our young people, and  
9 thank you to everyone in the audience for doing that  
10 everyday on their own for years. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
12 much Commissioner. Before I turn it over to my co-  
13 chair for--to start the questioning, I wanted to  
14 recognize that we've been joined by two colleagues  
15 both from Queens, Council Member Barry Grodenchik,  
16 who's a member of the Committee on Juvenile Justice,  
17 and Council Member Peter Koo who is a member of our  
18 Committee on Cultural Affairs and Libraries.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
20 I just have a few questions. How many programs  
21 overall do we have that provide the cultural arts  
22 services to the detentions that we have, and also to  
23 close to home? [pause]

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: I would  
25 say there are over 20 groups or more coming to each

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2 of those secure facilities, and the non-secured  
3 detention facilities to give cultural education  
4 programming.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So--so have you  
6 seen an increase within the last ten years? I don't  
7 know which of you have been around the longest.  
8 [laughs]

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: An  
10 increase in total?

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: Oh,  
13 okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, what's--  
15 what's--

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: It's an  
17 extreme increase. (sic)

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: We have  
20 strived for years to bring in programs, and we have,  
21 but in the--I would say in the last five it's--it's-

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Skyrocketed.

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's very  
25 encouraging to hear. What's--what's--what the

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2 process that you use to evaluate the quality of the  
3 programs?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: I think, you  
5 know, we won't have--I mean right now I think  
6 Jennifer mentioned that. I think the other thing on  
7 the youth perspective is our first line of  
8 revelation, and--and again, you know, we notice that  
9 sometimes we actually even, you know, look at, you  
10 know, we have the perception that we could maybe look  
11 at the data. I mean when these programs are place,  
12 and I think we mentioned that we are at Carnegie  
13 Hall, but it happens with all of them. I mean since  
14 co-work (sic) I mean young people are engaged, their  
15 Focus (sic) staff is actually engaged in Focus (sic).  
16 The attendance tends to be lower and safety tends to  
17 be better. We're looking into more ways of  
18 integrating them. That's how competent (sic) we are,  
19 and I think that we working better in integrating the  
20 more people programs that we are blessed to have into  
21 our paradigm to change the lives of young people, and  
22 in our clinical work we will get better.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And so, the budget  
24 streams are coming from where again?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yeah, I  
3 think not until recently and Stephanie can talk about  
4 that, has ACS had funds to directly support cultural  
5 programs, and actually I think we're doing it for the  
6 first now. Recently we actually had support for the  
7 Division of Youth and Community Development, DYCD  
8 with and RFP as part of their after school continuum,  
9 and that actually happened last year for the first  
10 time that I know in the history of--of their agency.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: Yeah,  
12 so from DYCD we've received a--a--after school  
13 funding for the first time. It started in the  
14 beginning of the school year in September of 2015,  
15 and there's a myriad of services and all sorts of  
16 wonderful programs, and a lot of the folks are here  
17 today, and will probably testify later about those  
18 programs. And for years we've had other programs who  
19 are partially funded we believe by the Department of  
20 Cultural Affairs, but--and now we also have some of  
21 our own ACS money that we are going to be using for  
22 cultural programs as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And what's the--  
24 from the allocation from DYCD, do you happen to know  
25 how much it is?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yeah, DYCD  
3 actually has a pilot, and again it was intended to be  
4 in mind for \$1 million to be divided among four  
5 providers. So, it's two provider--one provider for  
6 Crossroads, one provider for Horizons, one provider  
7 for our non-secure placement and non-secure detention  
8 school with Passages of Belmont in Brooklyn and one  
9 for our non-secure school for NSB and LSB kids at  
10 Hope Academy in the Bronx. This is actually a very  
11 small project with the leadership of Commission Sean  
12 (sp?) to kind of experiment, though you've had that  
13 actually after school program and it could help in  
14 the lives of kids.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you feel that we  
16 have enough cultural groups coming and providing  
17 services at this point.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yeah, we--  
19 we--we are always more. I mean, you know, we--I mean  
20 I think before I--

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] I had  
22 to ask.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: --well, you  
24 know, before here--we're--we--we heard some of the  
25 folks talking among each other, and they--they

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2 actually do some of this impressive community of  
3 foster (sic) care of our young people. And it seems  
4 that, and again, not for--because of us, because of  
5 who they are, they have been able to actually create  
6 a collaboration among themselves. I think we should  
7 encourage that in New York--in New York City and even  
8 more make sure they're sustainable, and make sure  
9 that actually they're really competing with the bad  
10 elements in the communities where our kids return to,  
11 and they are the frontlines of making that happen.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
13 I'm going to turn it over to my Co-Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
15 much, Chair Cabrera. I want to recognize we've been  
16 joined by Council Member Rory Lancman, also of Queens  
17 who serves on the Committee on Juvenile Justice. We  
18 are very Queens heavy on this side of the aisle, and  
19 I just wanted to follow up with a few quick  
20 questions, Commissioner, and ask if you believe that  
21 these programs and--and--and the power of--of--of the  
22 arts both the dance that you talked about and some of  
23 the other theater programs. I really believe in the  
24 power of theater and dance in particular because they  
25 are so expressive forms, and--and I've seen an early

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2 program in my local school in Queensbridge actually  
3 have a dramatic impact on the lives of the young  
4 people who--who are part of that program. (A) to  
5 talk a little bit about the changes that you see in  
6 the young people, and the power of the programs; and  
7 then also if you--if you had more funding, what  
8 would--what would you do with it? Let's just say you  
9 had a--a million more dollars. You've got a million,  
10 and you add another million, what would you do with  
11 that, and how would you partner with the cultural  
12 organizations and institutions to increase what I  
13 imagine would be the answer to the first question,  
14 which is the positive impact on the lives of young  
15 people in our Juvenile--Juvenile Justice System?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: I don't have  
17 actually. I'm looking on A. I believe if you think  
18 about our work, and what we do at the Division of  
19 Youth and Family Justice, and though--and--and what  
20 we need to do on behalf of kids. You can think about  
21 it in two ways. I mean we really to do a lot of  
22 internal work in helping them develop the  
23 competencies, the skills, and the abilities to  
24 regulate their emotions and their behavior better.  
25 But I think you cannot talk about that. I mean arts

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2 have a unique way of allowing people to positively  
3 express what they feel. A lot of the young people  
4 that we work with really struggle with that, and  
5 they--they get angry. They explode. I mean they  
6 have been through a lot of trauma through a lot of  
7 situations that actually never really allowed them to  
8 figure out how to express what they feel or what they  
9 think about in a positive way. And I think art does  
10 that very well, but also arts have the opportunity of  
11 doing unique ability of getting folks to feel, and  
12 our young people a sense of efficacy. Suddenly, they  
13 have control over their body through dance, or their  
14 proud of their poetry or of art, and that's  
15 important. They meant--many of them have never had  
16 the sense of success in the schools. We are allowing  
17 them to have that, to be proud. I mean whenever we  
18 have a performance, you could see them. You could  
19 see the staff. You could see the families seeing  
20 them in a different light. And the third thing that  
21 actually arts would do, particularly well, and we  
22 continue to do more of that at ACS and elsewhere, is  
23 that they create positive connections. I mean we--  
24 our real challenge is connecting young people to  
25 positive peer cultures and, you know, Councilman

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2 Cabrera have been really instrumental in helping us  
3 think about neighborhood networks I mean for peer  
4 violence and other interventions. But I think  
5 Cultural Affairs is actually and cultural programs  
6 and CBOs are actually what really could connect our  
7 young people to positive peer networks. I think  
8 we're doing well when it comes to us for youth in a  
9 bit of time in detention and placement, but they go  
10 back to the same community. And I think that is--  
11 that is--there's where the real work really happens.  
12 And everything that the Council could do to support  
13 organizations at the neighborhood level, you know, to  
14 really come and connect to our kids while they're  
15 with us but really sustain those relationships,  
16 that's what is really going to make a difference in  
17 terms of their success and safety in New York City.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And, um, so--  
19 and--and I realize it's difficult to do, but if you  
20 could expand the programming like you've mentioned  
21 the million dollars and the four ways in which it  
22 will be directed. How--how--if in--in the best of  
23 all scenarios--

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO:

25 [interposing] Uh-huh.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --you were able  
3 to achieve more and do more, how would it do--how  
4 would you do it, and--and what would you--what would  
5 you ideally love to see happen?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: So there are  
7 many. There's is no right way of answering the  
8 question, but I don't think we need for us at ACS. I  
9 think, you know, these locations where I think you  
10 need more of this support. I mean we are--we're  
11 doing well, and we could do a little bit better with  
12 also connecting with them right there with us. I  
13 think the really challenges will happen when the  
14 youth return back to their neighborhoods. And I  
15 think the City Council looking at those neighborhoods  
16 where young people are impacted by crime and  
17 challenges, and figure out a way of creating this  
18 great team of shared leaders to be ambassadors in  
19 those neighborhoods waiting for our kids with good  
20 activities, good poetry and good art to be done.  
21 That's what actually will really change the art for  
22 our young people.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I appreciate  
24 that, and I--I think you know how committed the City  
25 Council is to those young people, to those

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2 communities, and, um, I just want to say that for the  
3 record. And I also want to say for the record that I  
4 didn't expect any of our culturals or libraries to  
5 come up here and say they don't need any more money.  
6 [laughter] I--because I believe that they all could  
7 do more of the great work that they're doing were we  
8 able to further increase funding for both our  
9 libraries and culturals over and above what we were  
10 able to accomplish last year. And, at the Department  
11 of Cultural Affairs with more funding, we would be  
12 able to also create more partnerships as well. I  
13 want to recognize Council Member Helen Rosenthal from  
14 Manhattan who's joined us in the Cultural Affairs  
15 Committee as well. And do any of the--Council Member  
16 Koo, did you have questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Good morning. Thank  
18 you Chair Van Bramer, and thank you all the  
19 commissioners and directors coming here to testify.  
20 My question is how many youths are currently enrolled  
21 in the City's Juvenile Justice system, and they're  
22 detained in security detainment facility. And also  
23 in the long secure detention facility.

24

25

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yeah, so if  
3 we wanted to do one moment in time, I'm going to give  
4 you the numbers for retention first.

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: So  
6 today's detention total count is 161 youth, and it--  
7 in our non-secure detention group homes we have 60  
8 youth today, and at Crossroads and Horizon we have 50  
9 and 51 respectively for a total 101. So the total  
10 population is 161.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: And that's  
12 for--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [interposing] And  
14 that's it?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: That's  
16 in detention.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: That's for  
18 detention.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yeah, as--as  
21 you may know, New York City is one of those few  
22 places that actually runs a self-contained Juvenile  
23 Justice system. As now we have under the custody of  
24 ACS all the young people who are adjudicated who is  
25 to be placed formally under state custody, and on the

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2 non-secure placement side, I believe the number today  
3 is about 168, but I will need to double check. And  
4 then, we have about seven kids in limited secure. So  
5 these are young people who have actually been through  
6 detention and adjudicated, and now are with New York  
7 City close to home in each of these.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay, so what about  
9 the demographic breakdown like by age, by race, or  
10 educational status, and also by like socially  
11 grounded status.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yes. I don't  
13 have it with me, but I will get them to you quick. I  
14 mean the--I mean most of our young people the average  
15 age is 16--

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK:  
17 [interposing] 15.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: 15 in  
19 detention and about 16 in placement.

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: Okay.  
21 The majority are African-American and Hispanic  
22 orientation. 48% of our--our kids are 15; 23% are 14  
23 and 18% are 16 or older, and in terms of the other  
24 demographics we--we'll have to get back to you.

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: But you know  
3 the system in New York is known for the particularly  
4 disproportionately minority based. So, again, most  
5 of the kids that we said are African-American are  
6 Latino kids. Most of them come from poor abilities.  
7 Again, 95% of them come from seven neighborhoods in  
8 the city.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay, yeah. Thank  
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Commissioner, thank  
12 you so much. I--I just want to accentuate a point  
13 here that you guys are doing a fantastic job. The  
14 tone that you have set forth in the leadership and  
15 with your staff it has created I believe an  
16 environment that the cultural groups could come in,  
17 and the numbers--I know my colleague was a little  
18 shocked when he heard that the numbers were so low.  
19 I mean indeed they are--they are low, and--and you  
20 are to be commended, and Commissioner Carrion is to  
21 be commended, and the administration because we  
22 really are--are I believe more than ever really  
23 targeting the kind of work that we need to do in  
24 providing the assistance we need with our youth. The  
25 youth that before were placed, and then we had a

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2 business being placed there, and you have really  
3 created a structure and a system that really makes  
4 sense. And with that, thank you so much. Oh,  
5 another question. I'm so sorry. Council Member--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
7 That's all right.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --Helen Rosenthal.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
10 much. Sorry, that you had--Hi. It's nice to meet  
11 you all. Thank you for your hard work. I'm curious  
12 if you've done--if you guys track the evaluation of  
13 these programs and, you know, in terms of the  
14 student--the young people attending the classes, and  
15 you know, the impact that you think it--I know it's a  
16 qualitative and then quantitative, of course. but  
17 whether or not you have some sort of performance  
18 evaluation?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Sure.  
20 Again, the relationship directly with providers are  
21 that ACS is fairly new with the contact with DYCD.  
22 So we are working with our sister agencies to figure  
23 out the metrics or--or the [coughing] right amount of  
24 metrics to look at outcomes. They have very  
25 stringent attendance requirements, which actually the

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2 providers have struggled with. I mean very specific  
3 in terms of those search and a lot of hours that have  
4 every young person needs to keep. I think that at  
5 the end of the day what the providers, DYCD and all  
6 of us want to get out of this unique short experience  
7 on lives and culture within detention it's just a  
8 springboard. I mean what we really are looking for  
9 if it really works that young people find the spark,  
10 which I think is kind of what the Chairman talk  
11 about, but that actually is continued with this. So  
12 that's why I think that's mentioned a few times all  
13 of this fantastic work and we are blessed to have  
14 your support. But the real work happens whenever we  
15 come back to the community, and these cultural  
16 institutions need to be funded to be available in the  
17 neighborhoods where they are needed, and that's what  
18 we all strive for.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well, do you  
20 track--is it within New York jurisdiction to track  
21 recidivism?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: In--not in  
23 detention. I mean it's actually not a parameter that  
24 we'll be--we will be looking to detention. The  
25 purpose of detention is just keeping someone out of

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2 crime while they're waiting for their education. But  
3 we are in Close to Home. So as part of the Close to  
4 Home process, again it's a new program, you need a  
5 few years before you can actually look at 36 months  
6 of recidivism. We will be doing it, but also we are  
7 looking at other outcomes. So we are beginning to  
8 look at educational attainment, and possibly these  
9 outcomes that actually we believe are going to  
10 influence the likelihood of kids having successful  
11 transition programs.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: And we have  
14 a recent report, which I could share with all you  
15 guys.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [off mic]  
17 Great. [on mic] Great. That's great. Thank you so  
18 much then it's like I'm looking forward to the  
19 hearing we're going to have in two years--

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO:

21 [interposing] Okay.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: --when you  
23 report back.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs]

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
3 much. Thank you, Chairs for holding this hearing.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
5 much, Council Member Rosenthal, and as you leave I  
6 just want to reiterate that, um, the power of these  
7 programs are--the story I referenced before at PS11  
8 and in Queensbridge one of my CASA programs, is the  
9 Alvin Ailey Dance Company, and they came in and did a  
10 program. And at the end of the school year they  
11 always had a big performance of the kids, and one  
12 young woman was so amazing and so dramatic in her  
13 performance, and at the end of it I went on stage and  
14 I said to her, "You were just spectacular." And  
15 later the principal pulled me aside and she said you  
16 know that young woman that you rightly congratulated,  
17 wouldn't talk to anyone, and then the school year  
18 stated, and she was going through an incredibly  
19 difficult period in her life. But this program  
20 dancing on that stage with those Alvin Ailey dances  
21 has changed her life. We're honoring that young  
22 woman at our African-American heritage celebration  
23 next month. But I just wanted to talk about the power  
24 of--of these programs, and how I've seen it first  
25 hand. SO thank you for being here, for your

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2 testimony and your work. And now we want to hear  
3 from some of the cultural organizations who are doing  
4 this work followed by, of course, our library  
5 systems. Because some of these folks have already  
6 been mentioned, and I'm going to call up four at a  
7 time, and we will have everyone on a three-minute  
8 clock. But David Freudenthal from Carnegie Hall;  
9 Carol Davis from the Shadow Box Theater; Josie  
10 Whittlesey from the Drama Club; and with Julianne  
11 Alberti from Lincoln Center Education. Also, it  
12 looks like Vivian La Borg is here from Lincoln Center  
13 for the Performing Arts. So, we can have all of you  
14 sit there, share there and choose who wants to go  
15 first, and then we'll go down the line.

16 [background comments, pause]

17 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Are we--[pause]--uh,  
18 good? Okay. Chairman Van Bramer and Cabrera and  
19 Council Members Rosenthal, Koo, Grodenchik, Lancman.  
20 Did I get everybody? Thank--thanks for--for you  
21 interest in this super important topic. I want to  
22 start by complimenting Commissioner Carrion, Deputy  
23 Commissioner Felipe Franco and Jennifer Romelien and  
24 Stephanie Prussack who are here for their fantastic  
25 work and also all of our colleagues in the room for

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2 the amazing work that they all do in--in this field.  
3 It's been an amazing partnership with ACS to--to  
4 really to make groundbreaking in terms of--of this,  
5 as you all know. So, you know, it really showed the  
6 power of arts and culture to engage young people and  
7 to get them on track. I'm going to focus as quickly  
8 as I can on two aspects of what Carnegie Hall does.  
9 Our direct service to young people is in secure and  
10 non-secure settings, and also secondly our efforts to  
11 build pathways so they don't go back into the system.  
12 So some of this has been touched on already by--by  
13 ACS. So I will be brief about. We've been in this  
14 field about seven years. We made a deep investment  
15 to work in the city's Justice system and we provide  
16 a variety of musical experiences, which have been  
17 described to you already. In ACS settings we provide  
18 song writing workshops in Horizons and in Crossroads.  
19 We also do work with ACS with-- In addition--in  
20 addition to ACS we work with Belmont Academy and DYCD  
21 to bring workshops to non-secure placement. Belmont  
22 Academy in the Bronx and Bronx Hope and we reached  
23 about 300 young people this year. These---these are  
24 songwriting workshops. Each kid gets about 28 hours  
25 of focused music learning, songwriting, rehearsals,

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1 our recording session and then there's a final  
2 performance at the facility. And then further  
3 friends, family, peers. There is also an event at  
4 Carnegie Hall. Participants develop music skills,  
5 but they actually get a lot more than that. They  
6 work closely with their peers. They build  
7 connections to schools in neighborhoods. They get an  
8 increased sense of agency and personal motivation  
9 while reinforcing positive decision making. They  
10 learn about their strengths and interests and build  
11 positive self-esteem in a time of uncertainty.  
12 Their--their experience--they experience tangible  
13 accomplishments and build pathways to continue their  
14 interest beyond music. I just want to touch quickly  
15 on a concert that we had with--with Belmont Academy  
16 this past Wednesday at Carnegie Hall. It was  
17 amazing. The songs were really powerful. The 20  
18 young people participating get a letter for  
19 recommendation for their case file. They earn half a  
20 credit--a general--a general elective credit for the  
21 Department of Education. They also get an  
22 introduction to opportunities ahead. [bell] You  
23 know, our--oh, our--we told our young participants to  
24 look at the kids in the back working in production  
25

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2 and how they were in a similar place last year. And  
3 we emphasized they can, you know, be doing the same  
4 work next year. I--if I--if I may--if I may  
5 continue. So the second part of this that's kind of  
6 our direct service. We--we think thinks it's really  
7 important to be supporting these kids through the  
8 programs in non-secure placement, and get them--  
9 essentially to ensure they don't cycle back. And  
10 we're investing and doing this both--we do both these  
11 things not just the direct service, but making sure  
12 they don't go back in. We're working with Community  
13 Partners to set up three pathways to four young  
14 people to make sure that they--to guide their--their  
15 way out as they--as they transition out of system.

16 School. Many kids return to schools with  
17 no arts programs. We're talking District 79's  
18 Transition Specialist to formalize pathways for  
19 talented young people to continue art--arts  
20 engagement after leaving placement. We're also  
21 talking to Celia Cruz High School, the performing  
22 arts high school about transitioning these talented  
23 kids to these performing arts high schools as a way  
24 to keep them engaged. That's one.

25

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2 Community partnerships. Through our  
3 partnership with Close to Home, which was touched on,  
4 the CCA, Sheltering Arms, DYCD, Good Shepherds, SCO  
5 and others, and--and the Door, a center for all  
6 communities. Young people can find pathways to job  
7 training and placement, health and mental--mental  
8 health services, legal assistant--assistance, VED and  
9 ESOL classes, homework help, college prep, job  
10 training and placement, supportive housing, sports  
11 and rec activities, arts, nutritious meals. We're  
12 working with the Arts Education Roundtable. We're  
13 also engaging our colleagues in arts organizations  
14 all over NYC and I'm sure my colleagues are going to  
15 talk about this and providing service to the--to the  
16 kids. We're also working with the Department of  
17 Probation and leveraging opportunities through Neon  
18 Arts, not the topic of this hearing.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: David, all--all  
20 of this--

21 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: [interposing] Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --is credible.

23 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: It's late, yeah.

24 I'll wrap up. [laughter]

25

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: The--three-  
3 minute timeline--

4 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: [interposing] Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --is a  
6 suggestion to--to start to wrap up.

7 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: I'm sorry. Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And we have a  
9 lot of colleagues that we want to hear from so--

10 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: [interposing] I  
11 understand.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --if you could  
13 begin to wrap up.

14 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Sure. Craig (sic)  
15 Eagle is doing a lot of direct service for these kids  
16 also with our education wing. I just want--I'm going  
17 to make four recommen--four--five quick  
18 recommendations to the Council on work to do. I'm  
19 sorry. Building on strengths. Much of what is--  
20 things that you should be supporting. Much of what  
21 is assessed in Juvenile Justice is risk based. We  
22 must work together to find the young people's  
23 strengths, interests and talents to find the right  
24 opportunities to engage them towards success. Art can  
25 do that. To build on technology and transparency.

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2 Many adults are working together in this effort. We  
3 need to continue to look for ways technology and  
4 transparent communication helps networks of adults  
5 coordinate on behalf of young people. Invest in youth  
6 development. Give young people a voice. Continue to  
7 invest in youth development strategies, and invest in  
8 evaluations as was touched on. Through our own work  
9 we have an NEA funding evaluation. There's a need  
10 for more research and evaluation and, of course, I  
11 want to reinforce the need for raising the age.  
12 Thanks to you all.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
14 much, David. I want to recognize Council Member  
15 Steven Levin from Brooklyn who has joined us, and  
16 then ask everyone to do a better job than David  
17 Freudenthal [laughter] in staying to your time.  
18 [laughs] And I say that with great respect and  
19 admiration for David and Carnegie Hall, who are good  
20 friends, and great leaders in this work and I mean  
21 that seriously, David. So feel free.

22 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: Good morning Chair  
23 Cabrera and members of the Committee on Juvenile  
24 Justice and Chair Van Bramer and members of the  
25 Committee of Cultural Affairs. My name is Josie

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2 Whittlesey. I'm the founder and Executive Director  
3 of Drama Club, a non-profit that provides theater  
4 programming to incarcerated youth in New York City.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to share the powerful  
6 work we are doing with the population that is

7 commonly referred to as the most vulnerable youth in  
8 New York City. Current--we currently do year-round

9 classes at both Crossroads and Horizons and we are

10 also at Rikers Island with the--the youth in the

11 adolescent jail there. We directly serve

12 approximately 100 youth per facility, and 50 at

13 Rikers per year. In order to address young people's

14 limited ability to focus impulse control issues and

15 varied literacy rates, Drama Club relies heavily on

16 improvisational theater as our core curriculum.

17 Improvisation is play. It involves health risk

18 taking and decision making in a safe environment

19 allowing youth to establish and explore the rules of

20 the world they have created, an empowering and self-

21 reflective exercise. Improvisation is an especially

22 powerful tool for youth, as this is loosely

23 structured so that participants can establish the

24 rules of the world they are creating. The program--

25 program cultivates focus, self-expression, impulse

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2 awareness, teamwork, self-esteem and a sense of  
3 accomplishment in participants. And I'm going to use  
4 quotes from the kids here to illustrate the kind of  
5 the core program benefits. So the first one is  
6 conflict resolution. This is from one of our kids:

7 I like acting 'cause you get to be  
8 different people. Like you get to have a lot of  
9 personalities. When you step in their shoes like  
10 some are crazy, and some you can understand. Next  
11 time you come into a situation, you can solve it.

12 Harnessing Emotion: I think Drama Club  
13 is kind of cool. It allows you to express your  
14 feelings and take out anger in a positive way and  
15 that is a sentiment we hear a lot.

16 Connecting with Others: I found out my  
17 fellow peers is talented. I thought a lot of them  
18 couldn't do anything but get locked up, but they're  
19 talented. [laughter]

20 Improved Communication: I like the Drama  
21 Club for the simple fact that I get to release my  
22 expressions. I learn certain things like trying not  
23 to be nervous and trying not to be shy. It's good to  
24 learn these things 'cause to me it's learning a way  
25 of life.

2 An emphasis is placed on final  
3 performances with the program culminating the showing  
4 for families, peers and staff. Placing an emphasis  
5 on the final act encourages the youth to persevere  
6 with the program even on the more difficult days.  
7 Most importantly, it allows the participants to feel  
8 successful, receive positive validation for their  
9 accomplishments, and build self-esteem and positive  
10 self image, something to which these youth typically  
11 do not have access. These performances are mutually  
12 beneficial for children and their families, and it is  
13 also immensely meaningful to family members to  
14 witness their loved one succeed in front of a  
15 supportive audience.

16 Recently, a proud mother stated: "My  
17 child was given a chance to show her talents." And  
18 here daughter said, "I had a lot of strange people  
19 coming up to me [bell] talking about good job. My  
20 mom was crying. She was really proud of me. Really,  
21 really proud of me." Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Um, that was--  
23 that was perfect in [laughter/comments] in--in every  
24 way. It was actually really beautiful and moving,  
25 and--and--

2 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: [interposing] Thank  
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --a very  
5 powerful testimony. So I want to thank you for that.  
6 We'll keep going down the line.

7 CAROL PRUD'HOMME DAVIS: All right. Yes,  
8 now I'm going to follow that. My name is Carol  
9 Prud'homme Davis. I'm with the Shadow Box Theater,  
10 and actually I got lured into arts education from  
11 George Soros when the Task Program was just  
12 beginning. I say that on the top to say I've been  
13 working with arts education many years. This works.  
14 These children are engaged and focused, have a lot to  
15 say and they're talented and their stories are right  
16 on their skin. We run a CASA program at the Horizon  
17 Center in the Bronx. Our team is made up of two  
18 gentlemen who were incarcerated in their youth as  
19 well as a renowned puppeteer and performers. So our  
20 curriculum is our two advocates, our two gentlemen  
21 who have been incarcerated. They work with the youth  
22 talking about self, who you are no, where you want to  
23 go, and how to get there, and you can hear a pin  
24 drop, and you can hear a lot of discussion back and  
25 forth. They trust these people because they know,

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2 you're one of us. We use that material to create  
3 puppets, to prepare--to create backdrops and  
4 performances, and the youth then perform taking their  
5 material from the curriculum and reflections and the  
6 explorations they're having about themselves. What  
7 they say afterwards now that I know that's a good  
8 thing to talk about, but it is I got to play like a  
9 child for the first time. I think we're doing good  
10 work. I want to see it continue. I do think the  
11 formula of having incarcerated folks mixing with the  
12 arts and the curriculum works and it's powerful.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
15 much. That was beyond perfect. [laughter] And we  
16 will keep going down the line to--

17 VIVIENNE LA BORDE: You want to do this?  
18 Okay. I am Vivienne La Borde from Lincoln Center.  
19 I'm just going to let my colleague here--

20 JULIAN ALBERTI: Let me get out of the  
21 way Let me get out of the way.

22 VIVIENNE LA BORDE: I'm just going to let  
23 my colleague here do most of the talking so that I  
24 don't take up most--most of the consenter's time.  
25 She's Julian Alberti. She works with our Poet-Linc

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2 Program. We run our Poet-Linc Program through the  
3 partnership with the Passages Academy, and I'll let  
4 her take it from here.

5 JULIAN ALBERTI: Thank you. Good  
6 morning, Chairman Cabrera, Chairman Van Bramer,  
7 council members and committee members on Juvenile  
8 Justice. As Vivienne said, I'm Julian Alberti. I'm  
9 pleased to speak with you today about Lincoln Center  
10 Education's work with the young people at Passages  
11 Academy. As the birth place of aesthetic education,  
12 and one of the first cultural institutions in America  
13 to bring professional artists into public schools,  
14 Lincoln Center Education has a 40-year track record  
15 of improving education, and leveling the playing  
16 field for all kids through the arts. Our mission at  
17 LCE is to enrich the lives of all students through  
18 engagement with the arts, and we wouldn't fulfilling  
19 this mission if we didn't serve young people involved  
20 in a core system. Under the leadership of our  
21 President, Jeff Bernstein Lincoln Center Education  
22 has been deepening its relationship in the community  
23 by increasing programming in public schools,  
24 libraries, homeless shelters and more across the five  
25 boroughs. At the urging of our beloved Lincoln

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2 Center Education Board Committee Member and Juvenile  
3 Justice advocate Judge Judith Kaye guided by our  
4 principle of, "Anyone, any time, anywhere" Lincoln  
5 Center Education launched a pilot program in 2014 for  
6 young adults who reside in non-secure placement  
7 facilities. With the deep belief that the arts can  
8 cultivate indispensable skills, LCE adopted a program  
9 called Poet-Linc that builds a creative community of  
10 young creative writers and spoken words artists at  
11 Passages Academy and Boys Town in Brooklyn. Over the  
12 course of six workshops, the students identified  
13 special talents, sounded their voices and enhanced  
14 their collaboration and communication skills, and  
15 began to imagine alternate futures for themselves.  
16 Poetry from select Passages and Boys Town students  
17 was incorporated into a broader showcase at Lincoln  
18 Center. David Rubenstein opened for a public  
19 audience in April of 2015, and was included in a  
20 published anthology released in October. In  
21 Practices of Action, a conference for school  
22 injustice practitioners with engagement through--I'm  
23 sorry--pieces at John Jay College for an audience of  
24 about 300 people were performed from the Passages  
25 students at the Restorative Practices and Action

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2 Conference for School Injustice participators. With  
3 engagement through social media channels including  
4 the New York City's First Lady showing of praised  
5 blog, the students' performances reached an  
6 additional 96,500 people, and we believe the  
7 experience has changed these young people in positive  
8 ways. Due to the success and popularity of this  
9 Poet-Linc program, at Passages Boys Town, LCE will be  
10 expanding programming this fall to spring and has  
11 begun Poet-Linc residencies in three sites: Passages  
12 Brownsville; Belmont and Crossroads Secure Detention.  
13 We know that these experiences will provide our  
14 budding poets with a sense of accomplishment, and  
15 have a last impact as they re-enter their communities  
16 and school. And we hope that we can continue to be  
17 there for them. LCE plans to continue increase our  
18 present in New York City's Juvenile Justice System  
19 and collaborate with our esteemed colleagues in the  
20 arts education [bell] field such as Carnegie Hall to  
21 provide a network of work for youth as they  
22 transition. Following the performance, the poets  
23 that I mentioned answered questions from the audience  
24 about how Poet Linc has made a difference in their  
25 life in such a short time. They spoke about how it

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2 changed their behavior and about how they found an  
3 outlet through poetry to express themselves in ways  
4 they haven't before. They talked about how they were  
5 able to channel their anger into writing, and how  
6 calm they felt when they were able to express  
7 themselves. They talked about how this program also  
8 gave them confidence not only to write and perform,  
9 but for hope for better things to come in the future.  
10 These statements from these young people were proof  
11 to me that our is having a deep impact on children in  
12 our system and that LCE and the field at larger needs  
13 to more closely, and why the arts have a profound  
14 impact on kids in the system. I will end with this  
15 closing with a quote from Judge Kaye in her remarks  
16 at a meeting of the Juvenile Justice initiative at  
17 Philanthropy New York in 2010. Judge Kaye said, I  
18 quote, "Remember Field of Dreams, build it and they  
19 will come. This is what we have to do in New York.  
20 It's in our hands, all of us working together to  
21 build up partnerships, the interventions, the off-  
22 ramps from disaster so the dreams of our children and  
23 the dreams of our nation can be fulfilled. Arts and  
24 cultural organizations are already and need to  
25 continue to be strong partners to help imagine and

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2 build programs that have deep impact on young people  
3 involved in the court system." I ask you today let's  
4 continue Judge Kaye's vision to fulfill the dream of  
5 our children and give them a brighter outlook for the  
6 future. Thank you for listening. On behalf of  
7 Lincoln Center Education, I hope you'll continue to  
8 support cultural institutions working in the Juvenile  
9 Justice system.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all.

11 I was sort of emotional when I recognized that we've  
12 been joined by Council Member Costa Constantinides or  
13 the Cultural Libraries and International Intergroup  
14 Relations Committee, and also a member of the Queens  
15 Delegation, which has been very strongly represented  
16 here today on these two committees. [laughter] And  
17 I want to ask a few questions, and then obviously  
18 open up to our--our colleagues, and--and David  
19 obviously I'm impressed with the--the--the breadth  
20 of--of the--the programming, the commitment to the  
21 work. And some folks have mentioned how they were  
22 funded whether it's through CASA. But I'm wondering  
23 how those programs are funded? How much does that--  
24 does--does Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in  
25 particular maybe pick up on--on their own or--or, you

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2 know, subsidize and then how could you increase that--  
3 --that level of commitment that your organization  
4 already has?

5 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: [off mic] Thank  
6 you. Yeah. [on mic] So I'll just say that we have--  
7 we've gotten some support through member items from--  
8 from your colleagues in the Council and we're very  
9 grateful to support programs in their districts or  
10 sites in their--in the districts. We've had some  
11 partnership with the Human City--Human Service  
12 Agencies for just great components of the work.  
13 We've gotten some foundation funding which is, in  
14 fact, running out this year I'm sad to say. So we  
15 have about \$600,000 of Scope on the table that we--  
16 that we are seeking to continue this work in the--in  
17 the coming year, and so--

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]  
19 So it's specifically Juvenile Justice related?

20 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Yeah, that's the work  
21 in--that's the work in, um, in secured and non-secure  
22 and--and high-risk youth, high-risk youth, yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's a big,  
24 um, big number

25

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2 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Yeah, we've got--we  
3 have our work cut out for us.

4 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: [off mic] And can I  
5 say one--

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]  
7 Sure.

8 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: --one collaboration--  
9 note jails collaborates with us and pays for the  
10 travel of one of our gentlemen who was incarcerated  
11 who now lives in--

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] I'm  
13 sorry, you have to get--you have to get it closer to  
14 the mic so those people literally watching right now.

15 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: I'm sorry. Um, note--  
16 jails is collaborating with us and actually paying  
17 for the travel for one of our staff who has been  
18 incarcerated because he now lives in North Carolina,  
19 and also have been supporting us with supply money.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Lincoln Center,  
21 anything to add?

22 VIVIENNE LA BORDE: We have received  
23 generous support in the past from wonderful council  
24 members like Helen Rosenthal for Poet-Linc. We are  
25 always looking for other additional sources of

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2 funding. Right now I believe most of our support has  
3 been coming from our operating funds.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. Great  
5 shout out for Council Member Rosenthal. [laughter]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I should give  
7 a shout out to my chair. [laughs] If I may, Chair, I  
8 mean you've done an extraordinary job with students  
9 from a school that has--with kids with particular  
10 challenges, and I've seen your work. It's  
11 exceptional, and I'm trying to pass along money, and  
12 as much as I can and you know who's opening up the  
13 doors is Chair Van Bramer. So, I thank him for all  
14 your efforts on that. It allows us to pass it along  
15 to these institutions that really know how to get it  
16 done. So thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. Are  
18 there any--Council--Council Member and Co-Chair  
19 Cabrera.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
21 Again, thank you for all you do. I've seen first  
22 hand the work that indeed it's having a large  
23 reaching effect on the young people. Yesterday, I  
24 was honoring some of the staff to Crossroads, and one  
25 of the young ladies stepped out, and she sang a song,

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2 and then there was poetry that came out of that to  
3 young people. And I was just sitting there just  
4 dumbfounded of their, you know, just the vast amount  
5 of talent that is there. I was talking to  
6 Commissioner Carrion about this yesterday. I wanted  
7 to ask you, somebody mentioned families. I think  
8 families are key in the restoration of young people.  
9 Can you talk to me what--what's the level of  
10 participation that you see with families? And also,  
11 what do you do when a family--when families don't  
12 show up and they are performing? How do you deal  
13 with the aftermath of that?

14 CAROL PRUD'HOMME DAVIS: I'm going to  
15 address when the families don't show up because that  
16 is something that has come up for us. On average it  
17 seems like three out of five failing kids that we  
18 work with have family members that show up. That's  
19 just been our average. And we try to--we try to  
20 bring in some of our volunteers to the performances  
21 so that they can be the kid's family for the day to  
22 give them that support. Because I think it is  
23 difficult for them when the other kids have their  
24 families show up, and we also try--we make an effort  
25 to show up at the family days as well, and play. The

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2 last family days at Horizon we did some theater games  
3 and we invited all the family members to come up, and  
4 we made this massive circle. I was just surprised  
5 how many family members, mothers, siblings. It was a  
6 pretty beautiful. We played theater games altogether  
7 and that was fun.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Anybody who wants  
9 to address that? What do you do when family members  
10 don't show up?

11 JULIAN ALBERTI: We just haven't had the  
12 occasion to work with that--with family members yet.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

14 JULIAN ALBERTI: So we don't know that.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah. Yes, David.

16 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Yeah, I believe that  
17 you captured it exactly the kind of things that one  
18 does. There's a lot of work. You know, so much of  
19 it is with having strong partnerships with the--with  
20 the--the agency. Sort of, you know, there's much  
21 work that they're doing on the ground to, you know,  
22 in advance and--and part of our work is around having  
23 a series of events. It's, you know, our projects  
24 accrue over time as do--as do many of these. So  
25 there's a sort of building to a culmination. So

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2 there are multiple points of participation for the  
3 family members. If they don't make one, they might  
4 be at another, and--and exactly the same kinds of  
5 things around having a community. So the peers are  
6 there, other people are--are there. Because it--  
7 there is--this--this--for people in challenging  
8 circumstances showing up to these--to these things  
9 it's--is really hard despite the best of intent.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Are--let me--you  
11 know I--last year this last fiscal year I was able to  
12 allocate some funding for a pilot program in my  
13 district because my greatest concern is when they get  
14 out. Because when they're inside in a safe  
15 environment, the peer pressure is not as--as great as  
16 when they are on the streets. They're not being  
17 pulled from here and there, and so, you know, what I  
18 did I get some funding for follow up and I'd love to  
19 see this citywide to--for those kids to be followed  
20 up and to be engaged. Talk to me what would that  
21 look like with the arts, or if there is anything that  
22 you're doing right now when those young people get  
23 out how do we have continuity?

24

25

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2 JULIAN ALBERTI: So our program was a  
3 pilot last year. As I mentioned, we only had five  
4 participants. So what we've done because this is a  
5 real focus for us especially--[coughs] excuse me--as  
6 we're expanding is that we have reached out to those  
7 five students who have since found a home through  
8 their provider agencies, through the assistance as  
9 well. At Passages we work closely with and invited  
10 them to participate in programming we have at Lincoln  
11 Center, and currently we have--one of the girls is--  
12 is working out now. So the transportation is just  
13 from where she lives in New Jersey to participate so  
14 that's a real focus for us.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And just to be  
16 clear, you invited five and one showed up?

17 JULIAN ALBERTI: One is in the process of  
18 figuring out how she's going to--yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, and what was  
20 the feedback with the other four?

21 JULIAN ALBERTI: The providers just  
22 haven't been able to get in touch with them yet to  
23 find out if this has really been happening, and if  
24 that's the whole week.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So--

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2 JULIAN ALBERTI: [interposing] So we're  
3 waiting and hoping that they'll also come.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So what--what kind  
5 of a brace do we create before they come out? Is  
6 there like some kind of a session where you sit down  
7 with them, and say look, this is what we have for  
8 you. What does that look like in your programs?

9 JULIAN ALBERTI: That's what we've been  
10 discussing at Lincoln Center Education a lot about  
11 because we really are focused on this, but at the end  
12 of the program in the Passages are the detention  
13 centers. We would make these other programs a  
14 Lincoln Center available to the students, and serve--  
15 just addressing the men and then continue to follow  
16 up with their transition coordinators once they're  
17 final.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Let--let me make a  
19 suggestion. I heard somebody mention what I will  
20 call really credible messengers, young people now--  
21 young adults that they are going back in. You know,  
22 they experienced what they experienced, and that is  
23 what I learned with young people is it's all about  
24 relationships. I mean even with the crews it's all  
25 about relationships. But perhaps we start engaging

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2 more credible messengers just like we are instituted  
3 with the cure of violence because it's a trust factor  
4 at the end of the day. And they--they establish  
5 those relations while they're there 30 days, 60 days,  
6 90 days and some of them are there over a year  
7 especially in the detention center. So--so when they  
8 get out it's now like trying to get them established  
9 in a new relationship with a new set of people. Is  
10 there a plan towards that? Is that happening  
11 already? Yes.

12 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: Let's see what I've  
13 got here.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And I believe  
15 you're the one who talked about those two young kids.

16 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: Yes, but I know that  
17 the programs at Horizons are really working closely  
18 together, all the non-profits trying to come up with  
19 getting all of our resources together. I know our  
20 last family day we worked at inviting organizations  
21 that wanted to hire the incarcerated youth when they  
22 got out--

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing]  
24 Right.

25

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1  
2           JOSIE WHITTLESEY: --wanting to support  
3 them with the social services, and I think you're  
4 absolutely right. That's what we need to do is  
5 really collaborate with all the folks that want to  
6 help and get them on the table together because they  
7 need social services. They need employment and they  
8 need programs to help them with their relationships,  
9 which is exactly what you're talking about when  
10 you're bringing in people who have been in their  
11 shoes and are in their corner.

12           CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Excellent.

13           DAVID FREUDENTHAL: [interposing] Mr.  
14 Chairman, I just quickly--

15           CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] Yes.

16           DAVID FREUDENTHAL: --want to say what  
17 Carnegie Hall is doing on this for the--for the  
18 roughly 300 kids in our program. Three tracks:  
19 Getting them into schools where they--where they're  
20 essentially getting them back into schools where they  
21 can develop their and continue their--their artistic  
22 talent, connecting them to community partners with  
23 the slate of partners that I mentioned, and  
24 continuing in our own programs to learn technical  
25 skills, sills behind the stage. So this actually,

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2 we've got a whole focus on exactly what happens when  
3 they leave the system and in tandem with our--with  
4 many of our partners here.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So let me ask a  
6 question. What kind of funding you would need if we  
7 were to have a citywide coordination towards that  
8 goal? I--I tried to get an initiative last time. I  
9 was unsuccessful. So I'm going to recruit my co-  
10 chair this year, too--but gives a real sense of what  
11 would it take to have a real level coordination?  
12 Because I--I think, and tell me if I'm wrong, you  
13 would need someone to coordinate all of the agencies  
14 to be able to follow up with the kids--because that's  
15 a lot of work--and be able to make sure that the  
16 follow-up is in place and that the kids stay in this  
17 program. And then we can close finally the back  
18 door. Because the vast majority of those kids keep  
19 coming back and coming back. As a matter of fact,  
20 yesterday one of the kids that was giving a poetry he  
21 had been there a few months before. I--I would hate  
22 to see the kids keep coming back, and we need to  
23 break the cycle.

24 DAVID FREUDENTHAL: One--one of the  
25 things we say is that every day a kid is not--is--is

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2 in our program. They come once a week, is a day that  
3 they're not back in the system.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So how--in terms of  
5 dollars and cents, what do you think it would take  
6 to--to run a program like that?

7 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: Well, first someone  
8 like us we're a small organization. We--we don't  
9 have a space. We're not Carnegie really. You know  
10 we don't a place that can come, and that is actually  
11 a huge priority for this year is trying to find a  
12 place in the South Bronx and in Brownsville,  
13 Brooklyn. These are areas we've identified that most  
14 of our kids go home to where it--in the communities  
15 so that they can come and find us real easily. So  
16 that would be probably our biggest expense is the  
17 rent.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you think it  
19 will make more sense, however, instead of  
20 establishing one place because a lot of kids are  
21 afraid to go to somebody else's neighborhood.

22 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You know especially  
24 they're involved in--

25

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2 JOSIE WHITTLESEY: [interposing] Yeah,  
3 yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --in groups. Do  
5 you think it makes more sense to work with  
6 established relationships? For example, the one I'm  
7 working with right now is Good Shepherds. I give  
8 them capital funding to have their own studio, music  
9 studio, video studio. They're going to be recording,  
10 they're going to get in the Bronx Net. I mean we're  
11 going to have a huge thing happening over there. But  
12 the kids who are from my district, they'll be able to  
13 stay within the district rather than to ask them to  
14 go all the way to other side of the borough, which  
15 they--they want to say, hey, you know, somebody from  
16 another crew. I don't want to be in that area. And  
17 so do you think it will make more sense that when  
18 they come out of your programs, but perhaps even your  
19 programs would come into the district, and there is  
20 that continuity, and there's no--you know, there's  
21 less obstacles.

22 VIVIENNE LA BORDE: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That--that would be  
24 helpful, and no dollars and cents right now, right.  
25 No, no sense?

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VIVIENNE LA BORDE: [interposing] I

think--

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Half a million

dollars.

VIVIENNE LA BORDE: [interposing] I

think--

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: A million dollars.

VIVIENNE LA BORDE: I think gathering the

people who really care about this and letting them

know we want to hear from them, and yes we want to

work for them as a first step, and I don't know what

the dollar amount of that is.

DAVID FREUDENTHAL: I would add that the-

-that this--the human services agencies in this

administration have done better work than we've ever

experienced in coordinating thinking about how--how

they can plan around next steps for these kids. ACS,

DYCD, the Department of Probation. Who am I missing?

The Department of Education, District 79. You know,

there's--this is super hard and I--and what I would

say is common to us is that art is a wonderful way to

bridge this. So there's--there's greater thought

about this.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I couldn't agree  
3 more. I think we couldn't agree more, and obviously  
4 all of you should ask for as much you possibly can.  
5 [laughter] Don't regurgitate against yourselves here  
6 in the public hearing. So, I want to say thank you  
7 to all of you for the amazing work that you have  
8 done, that you continue to do in the partnerships  
9 that we have with--with all of you. And with that,  
10 we want to turn to our public libraries. This panel  
11 is excused. Miles Hodges from the New York Public  
12 Library. I believe Sarah Ball also from the New York  
13 Public Library is here. Kim McNeil-Capers from the  
14 Queens Library, and Nicholas Higgins from the  
15 Brooklyn Public Library is--did I miss someone from  
16 the Brooklyn Public Library?

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] So, but you  
18 just did.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh, okay. We--  
20 we saw the list to call, but we're going to do a

21 [background comments]

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We're going to  
23 do a library panel, and then back to similar culture.  
24 Are all the systems represented here? Okay. Who

25

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1 would like to go first? Go for it. Just take the  
2 mic and just start.

3  
4 SARAH BALL: Thank you. Good morning. I  
5 am Sarah Ball and I'm the Manager of Correctional  
6 Services of the New York Public Library, and joining  
7 me today is Miles Hodges, our Youth Engagement  
8 Program Coordinator. I'd like to thank Mr. Van  
9 Bramer and Mr. Cabrera for having us today and the  
10 entire City Council for holding this hearing and  
11 allowing us to testify. I appreciate the opportunity  
12 to speak today about the contributions that our  
13 system provides to the patrons in the Juvenile  
14 Justice system. NYPL Correctional Services team has  
15 served incarcerated New Yorkers since the '80s.  
16 Although the majority of our program participants are  
17 adults in the city, state and federal facilities, we  
18 have many dedicated and talented team specialists in  
19 the NYPL system who advocate for teens who can't make  
20 it into our branches. My team and I identify branch  
21 staff who are particularly passionate about serving  
22 disconnected youth, and then we're able to match them  
23 with the sites near them that need more programming.  
24 Just as an example, we have our Kips Bay branch who  
25 are already doing that kind of work. And then, of

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2 course, with the help of ACS we realized that the ACS  
3 center in the Kips Bay neighborhood was close by, and  
4 that making, you know, visits to the library and  
5 collaboration between the children's librarian and  
6 the teen--teen librarian there, making going to the  
7 library a regular part of life was a really important  
8 thing for these. We work with the amazing librarians  
9 at the Passages Academy School and we--we use our  
10 relationship with them to introduce the--the student  
11 to the public library, and we want to make really a  
12 continuum between the school and the neighborhood  
13 library. So that it--when it's waiting for them when  
14 they return home, they feel comfortable using it.  
15 And they might even recognize the familiar face of  
16 the librarian who went to visit to them in there.

17 We have staff members from across the  
18 system who have delivered programming at the four  
19 Passages sites that Crossroads and Belmont and  
20 Horizon and Bronx Hope. And we've done job readiness  
21 workshops. We've done book talks and we've done  
22 library card sign-ups with orientations. So that the  
23 students can get their card on their way out--on  
24 their way home and use it right when they get home.  
25 We participate in their regular career fairs, and we

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1 involve the young people how to use the public  
2 library to look for work, but we also tap the  
3 rewarding career opportunities in the library, and  
4 it's very fun trying to convince a 15-year-old to  
5 become a librarian. It's not--it's hard sell, but we  
6 do our best. And we also--the--the Passages  
7 librarians who are--I can say enough great things  
8 about them, but the Passages librarians are working  
9 closely with public librarians in State Island  
10 anticipating the opening of a new Passages site. And  
11 they want the relationship with the public librarian  
12 in Staten Island to be strong right from the start.  
13 So we're excited about that. Finally, the Passages  
14 librarians work with NYPL staff to advise us on the  
15 challenges and the opportunities of working with  
16 court involved youth. [bell] Is that it? [laughs]  
17 Just to say a couple more things.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Add a few more  
20 things, yes.

21 SARAH BALL: Okay. [laughs] We--my teen  
22 and I have trained teen librarians across the system  
23 to recognize how to better serve court involved youth  
24 in the branches. We recognize that these kids are  
25 our library patrons before, during and after their

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2 detention or their placement. And so we really want  
3 to make sure that our staff provides a place for them  
4 and their families to come and get services, and make  
5 sure that they understand that the public library can  
6 be a really welcoming and warm place for them. I'm  
7 going to have Miles say a couple things about some of  
8 the poetry work we've been doing.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right.

10 MILES HODGES: Yeah, hi--

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]

12 Again, it's still three minutes because it's another  
13 person so.

14 MILES HODGES: Yeah, I--hopefully I won't  
15 use all those. So, yeah, my name is Miles Hodges.  
16 I'm the Youth Engagement Coordinator. I also happen  
17 to be kind of NYPL's in-house and spoken word  
18 performance person. Essentially, it just means that  
19 we're going into sites performing for them, and also  
20 giving them some of the language around word shops  
21 [bell] to be able to tell their stories and then  
22 passionate and articulate the type of fashion. It's  
23 really important to provide them with an example of--  
24 of literature that is not necessarily high brow and  
25 elitist rights. As opposed to offering Robert Frost

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2 we offer Tupac, right, and--and find some specific  
3 ways in which language can be used to be powerful  
4 and--and relatable. So that's--that's something that  
5 we're--we're doing, and we're excited about. It's an  
6 example of proactive library services that I think  
7 are--are really important and cool.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's awesome.  
9 How--how do you become that poet laureate of the New  
10 York Public Library?

11 MILES HODGES: So I wouldn't call myself  
12 a laureate necessarily. [laughter] Not--not quite  
13 yet, but--but what you do is you perform at bars on  
14 the Lower East Village for a very long time and do  
15 the sittings and convince somebody that your--that  
16 your work is worthwhile.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Awesome.

18 MILES HODGES: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Not the task  
20 likely for me, but [laughter] I'm too old to be  
21 hanging onto bars in the Lower East Side, quite  
22 frankly, but, um, um, but that's awesome. I think  
23 it's awesome and I actually wanted to ask your  
24 colleague. When you started you mentioned your  
25 title. What is--what is your title again?

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1  
2 SARAH BALL: Manager of Correctional  
3 Services.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's really  
5 awesome that such a title exists and I really  
6 appreciate New York Public's, you know, commitment to  
7 that work.

8 SARAH BALL: Yeah, and, um, it's--it's  
9 such an--an amazing department and it has a really  
10 wonderful history, and actually my predecessor is  
11 sitting right next to me.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh.

13 SARAH BALL: We've switched. I used to  
14 be a Brooklyn. He used to be at NYPL. It's just,  
15 you know.

16 MILES HODGES: [off mic] Amazing.

17 SARAH BALL: [laughter]

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Um, I won't ask  
19 you about that, but you're trading. It was a trade  
20 between Brooklyn and New York Public Library, and,  
21 um, so thank you, and then I guess we'll maybe go to  
22 Brooklyn.

23 Sure. It's always nice to be in  
24 Brooklyn. Thank you. Good morning everyone.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It's always good  
3 to be in Queens, too.

4 NICK HIGGINS: Yes, of course, of course,  
5 at Brooklyn, right. Okay. Good morning, good  
6 morning. I'm Nick Higgins. I'm the Director of  
7 Brooklyn Public Library's Outreach Services  
8 Department. I'd like to thank Chairs Cabrera and Van  
9 Bramer and all the committee members for the  
10 opportunity to testify today. BPL's Outreach Team  
11 serves veterans, seniors, immigrants and other  
12 Brooklynites with unique and often overlooked needs  
13 including those in the City's correctional systems.  
14 The library has longstanding relationships with  
15 several juvenile educational and correctional  
16 institutions with the ACS secure and non-secure  
17 detention sites, and DOC facilities, housing  
18 adolescents. We have hosted book giveaways and  
19 career days at--with Passages Academy and have  
20 regularly deployed the book mobile to Crossroads  
21 Juvenile Center in Brooklyn to deliver library  
22 materials to residents conducted--and conducted  
23 library card drives at the center. In the past year  
24 we've also worked with ACS and staff in non-secure  
25 sites to offer photography classes in partnership

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2 with Josephine Herrick Project, and this year with  
3 the support of the American Library Association and a  
4 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities,  
5 we plan to offer a Great Stories Book Club with  
6 Passages Academy in Crossroads. We are also pleased  
7 that we've been able to provide services for adults  
8 and adolescents detained in the city's Department of  
9 Correction facilities for several years. The RNDC DC  
10 facility on Rikers Island is now home to 21 small  
11 reading rooms that were established last year by the  
12 Brooklyn Public Library to serve incarcerated  
13 adolescents. In partnership with the DOC, a jail  
14 cell was taken offline in each of the 21 housing  
15 areas. The toilets, the sinks, the beds were all  
16 taken out, and DOC provided bookshelves and they were  
17 stocked with books by the Brooklyn Public Library.  
18 And our team now makes weekly visits to refresh the  
19 collections and talk to the young men about their  
20 reading and programmatic needs. Another program with  
21 which we are particularly proud is Tell-A-Story,  
22 which facilitates virtual story times, sing-alongs  
23 and other bonding activities for fathers detained in  
24 any of our city jails and their children. The  
25 program, which is unique among U.S. libraries invites

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2 children to come to our libraries to visit with their  
3 incarcerated parents through live video. Since its  
4 launch in the spring of 2014, we have expanded Tell-  
5 A-Story to invite parents to sit with their  
6 incarcerated teen--to visit with their incarcerated  
7 teen children. We know that frequent and positive  
8 family interactions can help incarcerated young  
9 people reintegrate more successfully into the  
10 community upon their release. Last spring a mother  
11 asked if we could facilitate a video conference with  
12 their son, a detainee at the RNDC Facility at Rikers  
13 Island, and outside of his sort of tan uniform he was  
14 just any other teen kid. He was a little bit  
15 nervous, but he was trying not to be nervous. But  
16 the--the visit itself was a success. Mom and son got  
17 a chance to talk about his educational sort of  
18 engagement, the plans for when he [bell] wanted to  
19 come home. And they visited three more times, but  
20 the--they did have to call off the visits eventually  
21 because he was--he said he was experiencing some--  
22 some harassment in the--in the housing area because  
23 he was being pulled out for these special visits for  
24 his--with his mother. So, you know, clearly we face  
25 enormous challenges in the Juvenile Justice system,

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2 and Brooklyn Public Library is eager to help the city  
3 address those challenges. And--and we will join our  
4 city and non-profit partners in efforts to make  
5 family unification an accepted norm at all stages of  
6 a child's justice involvement through in-person  
7 programming and visits and use of innovative  
8 technology like video conferencing. I just want to  
9 say thank you. We're all proud to partner with the  
10 city to serve Brooklynites from every walk of life.  
11 Thank you for giving us the chance to do what we do  
12 best for the people who need it the most.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
14 much, and very powerful and I--I--I see that the next  
15 line of your testimony mentions the New Lots Library.  
16 So I want to recognize Council Member Inez Barron and  
17 also make sure that she sees that you're expanding  
18 your Tell-A-Story program to the New Lots branch in  
19 February among others and use you're making in Sunset  
20 Park. I also want to recognize Council Member  
21 Elizabeth Crowley from Queens, a member of the  
22 Cultural Affairs and Libraries Committee. Before we  
23 hear from the Queens Library, and I remember when I  
24 worked at the Queens Library, the Langston Hughes  
25 Community Library and Cultural Center led by Andrew

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2 Jackson we were doing pioneering work with Rikers  
3 and--and other facilities as well. So, why don't we  
4 hear from the Queens Library.

5 KIM MCNEIL-CAPERS: Sure. Good morning.  
6 My name is Kim McNeil-Capers. I'm the Outreach  
7 Coordinator for Queens Library. Thank you Chair Van  
8 Bramer and Chair Cabrera, and the members of the  
9 Committee for holding this hearing, and allowing me  
10 to testify today on the important work that Queens  
11 Library has done, and is doing to serve youth in the  
12 Juvenile Justice system. In addition to serving this  
13 population, Queens Library Queens provides  
14 educational programs and services for at-risk youth,  
15 as well as those recently released from  
16 incarceration. Queens Library prides itself on the  
17 dynamic range of programs and services offered to our  
18 customers. It might be surprising some present to  
19 learn that Queens Library is celebrating 100 years of  
20 doing correctional outreach. At the Queensboro  
21 Correctional Facility, we provide youth with multiple  
22 program choices such as book clubs, resume writing  
23 workshops, transitions to technology workshops. And  
24 we have a real special program called See You on the  
25 Outside, which is a program that once they leave,

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2 they can go to the Long Island City Library and  
3 receive some additional services that are really  
4 pretty--pretty exciting. As a part of the city's  
5 Young Men's Initiative, the library received funding  
6 from the Department of Probation period to help  
7 implement a program called Community Education:  
8 Pathways to Success. The program components included  
9 instructional math and literacy classes, case  
10 management, referral services, service learning and  
11 job shadowing. The goal of the program is to raise  
12 literacy levels for youth on probation to help them  
13 attain high school equivalency diploma--diploma, and  
14 perhaps pursue a higher education. Queens Library is  
15 also working with the District Attorney's Office, and  
16 was an active participant in their Second Chance  
17 Program for more than 15 years. We funded and  
18 conducted teen empowerment programs, self-esteem  
19 building programs, resume workshops, employment, and  
20 school alternative programs, artistic and financial  
21 planning, and served approximately 800 youth in the  
22 past 15 years. Our most--our most--newest program is  
23 our partnership with the Queens Law Associates, which  
24 has implemented a Youth Justice Court program at the  
25 Queens Library for teens. And that's located in Far

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2 Rockaway. This was made possible by funding from  
3 Councilman Donovan Richards. So a special thank you  
4 to him for this, and his steadfast support for the  
5 work that we do. So, the Youth Justice Courts are an  
6 essential tool for facilitating both accountability--  
7 accountability and opportunities for exposure to peer  
8 intervention and the positive impact it provides.  
9 The Youth Justice Court is court run [bell] young  
10 adults in the community who choose to become members  
11 of the program. The program empowers them to become  
12 peer leaders in both the school and in their  
13 community by developing a sense of civic  
14 responsibility. I'm going to kind of jump down, and  
15 go a little bi--and just to let you know, it started  
16 on--in July--July 2015. They had a six-week  
17 intensive training program and the members were  
18 trained to function. They were trained by judges,  
19 prosecutors, defenders, attorneys. The trainings  
20 incorporated a variety of teaching meth--methods with  
21 lectures and relations, discussions. Some of the  
22 partners included NYPD, Queens Criminal Court,  
23 Defense Bar, Department of Probation, Queens DA's  
24 Office. And, there have been 30 youth who have been  
25 participating in the program.

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2 The Queens Library is proud of the work  
3 it does to serve at-risk youth and those that are in  
4 the Juvenile Justice system. We look forward to  
5 continuing to work with our partners in government  
6 and community and in an effort to expand, provide  
7 more of these types of services for our--our  
8 population so sorely in need of it. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all.  
10 I think it's incredibly important that our library  
11 systems be fully engage in this work, and the work  
12 that you can do combines everything we've been  
13 talking about today, both the cultural programming  
14 aspect and then you bring in literacy, job training,  
15 resume, workshops and job shadowing. And both in the  
16 facilities themselves but then also on the other  
17 side, and making sure folks are getting the services  
18 they rightly deserve. So I'm really proud as someone  
19 who loves libraries very much that you're all doing  
20 that work, and I know that Council Member Liz Crowley  
21 from Queens has some questions, and if any other do,  
22 [off] I will recognize you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Good morning. I  
24 want to thank both the Chairmen for having this  
25 important hearing for the panel for the work that you

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1 do. I'm just curious--[coughs] excuse me--is this  
2 for your job position, are you 100% dedicated of your  
3 time to the Department of Correction work of all four  
4 of you there or no?

5  
6 NICK HIGGINS: It--it varies. So, I'm--  
7 I'm the Director of the Outreach Services Program,  
8 which has other arms of service. It includes  
9 immigrants, older adults and veterans. It does have  
10 a--a service arm that deals with--that serves people  
11 who are impacted by the justice system, and also  
12 people who are cycling in and out of the shelter  
13 system. So, I have a Coordinator of Transitional  
14 Services who is our Correctional Services Librarian  
15 equivalent who dedicates his full time to work with  
16 the DOC, the state and federal institutions.

17 SARAH BALL: Yeah, I manage the  
18 Correctional Services Program and so I am dedicated  
19 strictly to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated  
20 people, mostly adults, but juveniles, too. And we  
21 have currently--we right now have a team of six who  
22 are 100% dedicated to--which is a--a pretty new  
23 number. We've had--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
25 And that--sorry, you're Brooklyn?

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SARAH BALL: New York Public.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: New York and  
you're Brooklyn?

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MIKE HODGES: Um, yes, so I'm--I'm not

actually. Some of my work is--it pivots around

building programming for--for New York City youth at

large. Although, I think it was really important to

me to think about incarcerated youth as a form of the

actual public as what we do at the New York Public

Library is position for--for all New Yorkers, right,

no matter what their narrative kind of is. So it was

really important for me to consider that as like a

high priority area, and--and group to address it.

KIM MCNEIL-CAPERS: Hi, Queens Library.

I do most of the correctional outreach, but then we

also have a case manager. So we do have a part-time

case manager who kind of works with us also.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Do you do ESL or

GED programs with incarcerated inmates?

SARAH BALL: That's an excellent question

and the answer is no. At Rikers Island for instance

the Department of Ed conducts the high school

equivalency prep.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
3 Right, but don't they limit that to--

4 SARAH BALL: [interposing] Yes, it is  
5 very limited.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: At what--what  
7 age do they stop doing that?

8 SARAH BALL: Um, well, in each facility  
9 there are DOE classes available for adults 22 and  
10 over who are not, you know, mandated to have DOE  
11 classes, but space is very limited. I don't know the  
12 exact number. But we don't do ESL. The library does  
13 not conduct ESL within the correctional facilities  
14 now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And do you find  
16 with your work with those that are incarcerated that  
17 there's often literacy problems?

18 SARAH BALL: Absolutely, yes. The--the  
19 majority--like I said, the majority of my work is  
20 with adults, and I see every level of literacy from  
21 illiterate to extremely well read. And then the work  
22 with youths, you know, that seems to be a real  
23 challenge. When you visit schools like Passages and  
24 the youths are all trying to catch up to, you know,

25

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2 sort of what would look a normal high school student  
3 level.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But the  
5 partnership or the work with the Department of  
6 Education doesn't necessarily connect with the work  
7 that you do?

8 SARAH BALL: In Passages it does much  
9 because we are working directly with the librarians,  
10 and so the librarians are very much on track with the  
11 English teachers. You know, the programming that  
12 they give is always in line with DOE because they do  
13 work for the DOE. And so, in Passages is much more  
14 than the work we do at Rikers Island.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay.

16 KIM MCNEIL-CAPERS: If I can answer the,  
17 um, at--at Queens Library the benefit for having the  
18 case manager who we work with, who works on the  
19 inside she's the same person that's on the outside of  
20 the Long Island City Library that works in the Pre-  
21 HSC and works in the Literacy Program and our Adult  
22 Learning Program. So the benefit of See You on the  
23 Outside because she's on the inside twice a month,  
24 and we're in there on the inside, we have that  
25 relationship that's carried over when they leave.

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2 And then when they are outside, and they're at Long  
3 Island City, they're like hey it's Cassandra. I  
4 remember you, yes, and she's like yes I'm helping you  
5 and I'm working with, and I can provide those same  
6 services. So when we're working with them on the  
7 inside, we're able to say, oh, you need--you need  
8 additional case management services or do you need to  
9 find a GED program, or do you need to find help with  
10 child care? So, we're able to just take that from  
11 Queensboro and take it right to the library and  
12 provide that. So that See You on the Outside Program  
13 has been extremely beneficial because then we're able  
14 to bring them to our job and training programs, and  
15 all our other programs and make tons of referrals.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And you think  
17 the representative being there twice a month is  
18 enough, or would it be better to have somebody more  
19 regular than that?

20 KIM MCNEIL-CAPERS: Oh, more if I get a  
21 repeat. Fantastic. It's Queensboro.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
23 So soon there--Soon they'll be a vegetarian.

24 KIM MCNEIL-CAPERS: Queensboro, you're  
25 welcome. Absolutely, absolutely. Yes.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay, no further  
3 questions. Thank you.

4 NICK HIGGINS: Could I--could I also add  
5 that the--at the RNDK facility that houses  
6 adolescents on Riker Island since we built those 21  
7 reading rooms our services are more in line with the--  
8 -with the DOE's efforts. So we're supporting them  
9 with collections at this point, and then additional  
10 with book clubs outside of schools. So, it's  
11 becoming much more close to that--that particular  
12 partnership. We've always had a really good  
13 relationship with the DOC, and now we're becoming  
14 much more in line with their--their educational  
15 efforts with the DOE.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
17 much, Council Member Crowley, and I just want to say  
18 I am so proud to have the Long Island City Library in  
19 my district where all of this amazing work is  
20 happening. And I'm truly proud of--of that facility,  
21 and--and all of the lives that are being changed  
22 there as a result of the work that we do together.  
23 And now, Council Member Barron.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
25 Chairman and thank the chairs for this hearing, and

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2 thank you for coming to present testimony. In the  
3 testimony about Queens Library there's a notation  
4 that the Department of Probation of the approximately  
5 8,800 16 to 24-year-olds on probation, more than 70%  
6 do not have either a high school or an HSE diploma,  
7 and that's really very appalling, and we know in part  
8 that's because of the economic job situation that  
9 we're in. But simply in terms of getting students  
10 prepared to move forward in that regard, it's really  
11 necessary that they move forward. So do you know  
12 what kind coordination goes on between those on  
13 probation, and the services that the library offers?  
14 Is there a connection between the probation--  
15 probation officer saying to the student okay, you're--  
16 --you're not 21. So you're still able to go to a DOE  
17 program. Do you know what kind of coordination goes  
18 on there?

19 NICK HIGGINS: Between--Oh, I'm sorry.

20 KIM MCNEIL-CAPERS: I--I can say that  
21 there is a tremendous amount of coordination. I mean  
22 they--there are meetings that occur with staff.  
23 There are trainings. There are--I would say yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Because they  
25 certainly don't--they're not as I don't think a part

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2 of their probation required to go? I don't know if  
3 perhaps the Council Member Cabrera could give us that  
4 information. What are they required to attend  
5 because they're on probation, because they're under  
6 the age of 21? What is there--is there an  
7 encouragement for them to do that? But finally, I  
8 just want to say I'm so pleased to know that the New  
9 Lots branch will be included and tell a story. And  
10 there is so much that's going on now at the New Lots  
11 branch. It's really moving forward, and we're  
12 looking to see how we can't do some perhaps major  
13 construction in terms of adding another floor. Or,  
14 perhaps highlight the fact that the New Lots branch  
15 was built on what was at one point a burial ground.  
16 And when the remains were reinterred across the  
17 street at the New Lots that's Reform Church, the  
18 remains of the Whites were reinterred, but the  
19 remains of the Blacks were not. And according to the  
20 Daily Evil at that time were left bleaching on the  
21 side of the road. So at this point there have been  
22 studies that showed there are no remains still there,  
23 but first a school was built on top of that site.  
24 Now the library exists on top of that site. So we're  
25 looking to see perhaps not establishing a third

2 floor, and having that as a museum dedicated to the  
3 fact that this is a significant place in history of  
4 New York City, and specifically in African-American's  
5 history. Thank you.

6 NICK HIGGINS: It's really--it's really--  
7 really nice to hear you say that. New Lots was one  
8 of my first branches--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] Oh,  
10 okay.

11 NICK HIGGINS: --and a system in--in  
12 Brooklyn and it's--it's such a wonderful--wonderful  
13 team there now.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It is very nice,  
15 and a very nice space.

16 NICK HIGGINS: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
19 much, Council Member Barron, and I'm a big fan of the  
20 New Lots branches who as you know, I was glad to  
21 visit there with you and appreciate all the great  
22 work that you are doing for the Brooklyn Public  
23 Library, most particularly those in your purview. I  
24 want to thank all four of you, and you should  
25 definitely send us some of your Spoken Word

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2 appearances, Miles, and we'd love to--to check that  
3 out, and with that, we will say good-bye to the  
4 Libraries for now, and we have a Cultural Panel to  
5 follow that, and Rosalind Barber. No, Barber from  
6 the Public Theater. Hans Manos, the Center for  
7 Community--

8 HANS MANOS: [off mic] Alternatives.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Alternatives.

10 Yes. Judy Tate, Manhattan Theater Club, and Judy is  
11 with us, and is Gabriel Horowitz-Frisco, Gabrielle.  
12 Sorry about that, and we have only two or more after  
13 that. So we'll save those for those a second panel.  
14 So one person doesn't have to sit there by  
15 themselves, [laughter] and the four of you can start  
16 and we're on the clock.

17 ROSALIND BARBER: Hi. I'm Rosalind  
18 Barber. I'm the Administrative Chief of Staff at the  
19 Public Theater. Thank you so much to Chair Van  
20 Bramer and Chair Cabrera for holding today's hearing,  
21 and I just want to acknowledge that a lot of the  
22 testimony you'll hear from me today is supported by  
23 the work of our Institutional Strategy and Planning  
24 Manager, Dr. Kyra Murphy. So conceived nearly 60  
25 years as one of the nation's first non-profit

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2 theaters, the public has served as a model both in  
3 terms of mission and programming for non-profit  
4 theaters, but it blossomed throughout country since  
5 that time. The public engages a large and diverse  
6 audience in New York City in a variety of venues  
7 including the Delacorte Theater. It's landmarked  
8 Downtown home on Astor Place, which houses five  
9 theaters and Joe's Pub and the Mobile Shakespearean  
10 Net, which tours Shakespearean productions for  
11 underserved audiences throughout New York City's five  
12 boroughs. Through all of its programs, the public  
13 serves approximately 300,000 people a year. The  
14 originating impulse (sic) for the Public Theater was  
15 to bring Shakespeare to the people, and was first  
16 realized by the Public Theater's original mobile unit  
17 in 1957. The Public Theater's current mobile unit  
18 led Director of Special Artist Project, Stephanie  
19 Ibara (sp?) was revised in 2010 and proved a powerful  
20 remedy to the demonstrable lack of professionally  
21 produced theater and other art forms available to  
22 culturally under--under-resourced, such as  
23 neighborhoods of New York City. For the last five  
24 years, the mobile unit serving diverse portfolio of  
25 venues including juvenile detention centers, homeless

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2 shelters, state and federal prison, community center  
3 and the New York City parks has endeavored to bring  
4 free high quality professionally produced adaptations  
5 of Shakespeare's work to communities most underserved  
6 by arts and theater in all five boroughs. Via  
7 partnerships with community organizations, the mobile  
8 unit strategically identifies and reaches communities  
9 with the highest need. The mobile unit has partnered  
10 extensively with the New York City Department of  
11 Correction and the Administration for Children's  
12 Services thereby creating many strong relationships  
13 with correctional facilities here in New York City  
14 including visits in 2013 and 2014 to the Crossroads  
15 Juvenile Detention Center in Brooklyn and the Horizon  
16 Juvenile Center. Furthermore, we've partnered with  
17 groups such a Dream Yard and Fortune Society since  
18 the inception of the mobile unit, and have grown  
19 those partnerships to include them as founding  
20 partner organizations of another public theater  
21 community engagement program Public Works. Among  
22 other key partnerships has been the Parks Department,  
23 with whom we partnered to strategically target stops  
24 of the Mobile Unit tour to locations within the  
25 Community Parks Initiative zone. So--okay, I'm going

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2 to try to say it under time. I'm going to wrap. In  
3 March, we're going to begin our fifth touring  
4 production, Romeo and Juliet to 18 sites across the  
5 five boroughs and bring many more communities to  
6 attend performances of the public. We invite all of  
7 you to come and check it out either in your borough  
8 [bell] or at the public, and I look forward to seeing  
9 you there, or at your local site.

10 [background noise, pause]

11 HANS MENOS: Good morning. My name is  
12 Hans Menos. I'm the Director of Youth Services at  
13 the Center for Community Alternatives. Thank you for  
14 the opportunity to testify today regarding all of our  
15 youth particularly our traumatized youth and our  
16 youth who are detained in the Juvenile Justice  
17 System. So briefly about CCA. CCA has about 30  
18 years of experience working in the field with  
19 community based alternatives to incarceration.  
20 Generally, our mission is to promote the--is promote  
21 re-integrated justice and the reduced reliance on  
22 incarceration through advocacy services and public  
23 policy development. CCA operates six programs, five  
24 of which work directly with youth in the justice  
25 system, and our--and our young people are by and

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2 large facing the difficult challenges of adolescence.

3 Basically, that--what I mean by this is that they are

4 developing--developing their adult identify, and in

5 may cases this process is made difficult by the

6 challenges of poverty and racism. So CCA endeavors

7 to address these issues in the youth present by

8 emphasizing personal empowerment, self-respect and

9 concern for one's community. As I mentioned, CCA has

10 experience working with court involved youth in

11 community and in various facilities. We observed a

12 marked improvement regarding how the services now--

13 are now available. And we're happy and delighted to

14 partner with the Administration for Children's

15 Services, Department of Youth and Community

16 Development and the New York City Department of

17 Education to operate the SONYC schools in New York

18 City after school programming at both the Belmont

19 School and the Crossroads Detention Center. So, for

20 me it's important from everyone to realize how we

21 came about, or we conceptualize our program. So for

22 us we focus on--and I this an original thought--the

23 idea of multiple intelligencies. Howard Gardner has

24 mentioned there are three multiple intelligences

25 theory free from--he posits that youth are

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1 intelligent or people are intelligent in many  
2 different ways. So these--these--these intelligence--  
3 -these intelligences are--there's numerous so I'll--  
4 I'll focus on the ones that are arts-based for now:  
5 Musical and rhythmical, interpersonal, visual and  
6 spatial, linguistic and naturalistic. So these are--  
7 these are what we focus on as perhaps the theory  
8 behind what we're all saying today is what makes the  
9 arts-based programming so particularly impactful and  
10 important to focus on. So, across all these programs  
11 we intentioned--we focused intentionally on building  
12 skills and awareness because we realize or we--we  
13 focus on the idea that young people have untapped  
14 intelligence and, therefore, untapped potential. And  
15 we seem to exposed these to many different aspects of  
16 programming with discover and hone their strengths.  
17 I'll skip to the end here and so we--we're happy to--  
18 to partner with Art Start Drama Club, Voices Broken,  
19 the Animation Project, Carnegie Hall, Spot by Design  
20 and the Dalenius (sp?) Project in our programming  
21 [bell] both internally and to the CCA websites, and  
22 at our SONYC locations. In closing, the young people  
23 we care about so deeply are indeed in need of  
24 support, which focuses on mental health, drug  
25

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2 treatment and other mainstream efforts to address and  
3 improve their behavior. However, as helpful as these  
4 approaches often are, they're not the--they're not  
5 the best approach for all young people. I am--at CCA  
6 we believe that the young people who are in the  
7 Juvenile Justice system are there because they have  
8 not had their strengths recognized and were  
9 supported. These are often activities, which are  
10 more strength based and empowering, which provide a  
11 young person with the strength needed to overcome and  
12 persevere. It is incumbent upon all of us who seek  
13 to serve these young people to continue to consider  
14 the create and holistic interventions and to help  
15 them. So, and I'm hopeful that I have the  
16 opportunities to be questioned about funding and  
17 other issues that I think that [laughter] that--that  
18 could be addressed. Because I do have some thoughts,  
19 but I don't want to monopolize it here.

20 JUDY TATE: Hello. Thank you for this  
21 opportunity to testify. My name is Judy Tate. I'm  
22 speaking on behalf of Manhattan of Theater Club, a  
23 not-for-profit theater company that produces eight  
24 plays a year, mostly new work and off Broadway. I'm a  
25 member of the MTC Board of Directors. I'm a senior

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2 teaching artist with the Education Program, and I'm  
3 the founding Artistic Director of the Stargate  
4 Theater Company, one of company's programs for court  
5 involved young people. Now, because this is a  
6 complex subject, I'm submitting extended written  
7 testimony for further information. MTC has been a  
8 leader in the education field for more than 25 years.  
9 Our education program reaches one or more schools in  
10 eight of the districts represented by this committee  
11 and this Council. Reaching court involved youth is a  
12 special focus of ours, and we have been working in  
13 the Juvenile Justice system for over 20 years. We  
14 focus on these kids because they are so dramatically  
15 under-served by the arts, and because of the great  
16 value arts holds for them. Through our Stargate  
17 Theater Company and our student play writing program,  
18 which we call Write on the Edge or WROTE, court  
19 involved young people build reading and language  
20 skills through creative writing and critical thinking  
21 about plays. They learn to express themselves  
22 constructively, develop empathy as they identify with  
23 characters and learn cooperation as they collaborate  
24 with their peers. Now, our programs also give young  
25 people opportunities to process past experiences, and

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2 the consequences of their actions in a supportive  
3 environment. And, a chance to envision and express  
4 positive ways of engaging with their communities and  
5 society at large. Research shows that creating such  
6 fictional alternative images of one's life through  
7 theater making can have a strong positive impact on  
8 real world behaviors. MTC's work in the Juvenile  
9 Justice system began in the early 1990s with the  
10 WROTE Program. It is a play writing residency in  
11 which kids in incarcerated facilities or kids at risk  
12 work with a teaching artist like me to write a play  
13 that has been performed by a professional set of  
14 actors. Last year, MTC provided about 30 WROTE  
15 residencies to schools throughout the city serving  
16 575 students including more than 60 at secure and  
17 non-secure facilities such as Crossroads, Horizons,  
18 East River Academy on Rikers Island. And this year  
19 we will pilot a residency at a newly--at the newly  
20 established low security placement in the Bronx.  
21 Most of our WROTE residencies for non-incarcerated  
22 students take place at alternative high schools for  
23 at-risk populations. Now, recognizing a need for in-  
24 depth programs for court involved young people, MTC  
25 launched the Stargate Theater Company in 2013. Each

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2 summer Stargate provides workforce training and  
3 theater making [bell] opportunity for about 10 to 15  
4 formerly incarcerated young men. This is a job.  
5 Guided by professional theater artists participants  
6 are minimum wage as theater company members, and they  
7 write, they rehearse and they perform a theater piece  
8 in a seven-week intensive program. And they  
9 ultimately perform it for invited audience, and  
10 you'll be able to-- This is important. You will be  
11 able to look at this amazing project through an hour-  
12 long documentary produced by Public Television WLIW,  
13 and the broadcast premieres on February 6th. Get  
14 that everybody, February 6th at 4:00 p.m. A full  
15 list of air dates is in the written testimony, and we  
16 also invite you to come to City Center on Monday,  
17 February 8th at 6:30. You can speak to one of my  
18 colleagues about that. But in closing, I want to  
19 talk to you guys about money because you've been  
20 asking about that, and so I want to make it real for  
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] Can--  
23 can we do that when--

24 JUDY TATE: Yes.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --when I come back  
3 in February.

4 JUDY TATE: Please do.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

6 JUDY TATE: Because I'll--I'll have some  
7 numbers for you.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

9 GABRIELLE HOROWITZ-PRISCO: Thank you.

10 My name is Gabrielle Horowitz Prisco. I'm the  
11 Executive Director Lineage Project, Inc., an  
12 organization that brings mindfulness and Yoga to kids  
13 who are incarcerated, homeless, suspended from  
14 school, and at risk of justice involvement. In the  
15 words of Kayla, one of our students, before Yoga if I  
16 got angry I would hurt someone. So not only is my  
17 life saved, but their life is saved from me. Each  
18 year we deliver our unique program model to roughly  
19 2,500 young people ages 10 to 24 in approximately 35  
20 classes a week in both juvenile detention centers in  
21 New York, Crossroads and Horizon. And an Alternative  
22 to Incarceration program at Cases at the Alternative  
23 Learning Center Schools for Suspended Youth, at high  
24 needs public schools and at a homeless shelter. In  
25 the justice system we teach in addition to Crossroads

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2 and Horizons at OCFS' Ella McQueen at the Belmont  
3 Academy where we work in partnership with CCA, and as  
4 well as in Alternatives to Incarceration programs as  
5 I mentioned. I'm going to--you've, you know, heard a  
6 lot from some of the people I work with. We manage  
7 the SONYC Grant, which is the grant by the Department  
8 of Youth and Community Development at Horizon. It  
9 was a \$180,000 grant, and we both offer our own  
10 programming, and we subcontract out to a number of  
11 providers including those you've heard from today.  
12 We subcontract our with Building Beats, Carnegie  
13 Hall, Drama Club, Flex Dance, Power Writers and For  
14 Ace.(sic) And Chair Cabrera, For Ace is a leadership  
15 initiative by youths who are credible messengers. So  
16 youth who have graduated through a mentoring program  
17 who have been justice involved and they now  
18 facilitate a mentoring program. Our SONYC program  
19 allows you to explore interests to find interest they  
20 never knew they had, and to share something positive.  
21 You've heard about-- You know, we heard from one of  
22 your colleagues about the impact of a young person  
23 having access to cultural programming, how that can  
24 transform themselves and how people see them. I want  
25 to talk a little bit about recommendations. New York

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2 particularly the Department of Youth and Community  
3 Development and the Administration for Children's  
4 Services and the Department of Ed deserve recognition  
5 and validation. As you've heard, the work that  
6 they've done groundbreaking. I don't think this work  
7 is being done anywhere nationwide. I'd actually like  
8 to see a delegation from New York presenting across  
9 the country on what we're doing here. And at the  
10 same time, there's a lot more to be done. I have  
11 four recommendations.

12           The first is that the Council provide  
13 additional funding for cultural programs. It is  
14 critical to know that all of the programs you have  
15 heard from are either operating without pay or with  
16 pay that is not equivalent to the actual true program  
17 costs. Lineage Project provided programming inside  
18 the Justice System for 15 years without compensation,  
19 and it's for the first time being compensated through  
20 DYCD, which again is a gift, and what-- It's  
21 actually not a gift. It's a contract, but it's a  
22 really blessing to be able to have that contract.  
23 However, it doesn't cover the true cost of programs,  
24 and I think the Council could really play a  
25 leadership role in increasing that payment, and sort

2 of making more opportunities. And again [bell]  
3 recognizing DYCD and ACS and DOE and now seeing how  
4 do we get other agencies, and leverage other dollars?

5 The second recommendation is for the  
6 Council to lead efforts to leverage state and federal  
7 dollars to support cultural programs. We know  
8 resources are tight, but we think that we could go  
9 after federal and state dollars. We urge the City  
10 Council to delegate a staff members, perhaps one of  
11 the Council staff members, to be a lead on  
12 identifying and pursuing leveraging state and federal  
13 dollars and to work with the people in this room to  
14 apply for those dollars.

15 The third is that the Council should fund  
16 and support technical assistance and capacity  
17 building funds for smaller community based  
18 organizations to compete and administer large-scale  
19 government grants. Operating a large-scale  
20 government grant like the ones that many of us have  
21 is tremendously difficult for a small community based  
22 organization. I know the Mayor and the Council  
23 supports community-based organizations becoming part  
24 of a larger role in these kinds of grants and in  
25 these types of contracts. And I think it's critical

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2 that there be capacity building and technical  
3 assistance for smaller based organizations like many  
4 of us in the room so we can administer and  
5 effectively manage these kinds of government  
6 partnerships.

7           And the fourth is for the Council to  
8 increase funding for cultural programming in the  
9 community. Deputy Commissioner Felipe Franco this  
10 morning spoke very movingly about this. It's been a  
11 recurrent theme in our hearing, and I will end with  
12 this: The bulk of the kids in the justice system  
13 come from seven neighborhoods. You heard Deputy  
14 Commissioner Franco speak about this. Those are the  
15 same neighborhoods that lack theater and music  
16 programs, accessible yoga studios, safe green spaces.  
17 The kids in those neighborhoods don't have access to  
18 the programs we offer them behind bars. It's a  
19 disgrace that children have to be locked up to get  
20 these kinds of services, and that they don't exist in  
21 their communities, and we are all responsible for  
22 that. And so, kids in a detention center have the  
23 opportunity to grow vegetables and learn about  
24 healthy eating with Spot by Design, but in their home  
25 communities, they don't have access to fresh

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2 vegetables and sustainable produce. Kids in our  
3 Lineage classes are taught on the inside mediation  
4 and mindfulness practices to help them stay centered,  
5 calm and in control of their actions. But their  
6 families can't afford the \$20 to \$28 or more price  
7 tag of going to a yoga studio in New York City. So  
8 we urge the Council to increase its investment in  
9 cultural programming for city's youth with a  
10 particular concentration on neighborhoods with the  
11 largest reference--representation in the justice  
12 system, and we can change kids. We can change kids'  
13 communities, and as Chair Cabrera spoke about, we can  
14 close the back door and we can also close the front  
15 door. You have an important role to play. Thank you  
16 for staying through the length of this hearing.  
17 [laughter] And partner with us to make this happen.  
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
20 much. That was very powerful, and passionate and I  
21 agree. I--I--I know that there was a request to  
22 discuss some funding and maybe ways in which we could  
23 enhance or discuss funding. So, Judy you want to--

24 JUDY TATE: Yeah, and I think what you  
25 said was just wonderful, and it was a great launch

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2 pad, and I just wanted to give you an example of what  
3 some of the cultural institutions are up against and  
4 we're spending. At MTC we commit over a million  
5 dollars annually to our education program, and I  
6 described who we serve. Donations and grants cover  
7 about 30% of that. Fees from schools and, you know,  
8 including, you know, the DOE--the DOE fees is 8%, and  
9 the remaining \$600,000 has to be covered by operating  
10 funds, and that's roughly equivalent to our annual  
11 operating deficit. So, [laughs] that's--that's the  
12 kind of gap that we're seeking to bridge. So it's  
13 unclear how long that we can sustain this kind of  
14 work without dedicated funding. And we've got an  
15 incredible demand for our services. People are  
16 calling us all the time, and we can't meet it, and we  
17 want to have further iterations of the Stargate  
18 Theater Company, which I really--I really have to say  
19 watch the video, the WLIW hour-long documentary  
20 because it's in a-- It's--it's the only kind of  
21 program of its kind. Kids actually are paid. They  
22 learn--they learn workplace readiness skills for  
23 continuing a productive life. They're paid as  
24 actors. They're paid as writers, and the kind of  
25 self-esteem that comes with that is unbelievable, and

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2 we'd like to do lots more iterations of it. So  
3 that's the kind of gap we're looking to bridge.

4 HANS MENOS: Absolutely, and if I could  
5 build on that, I think that as Gabrielle mentioned,  
6 we--in SONYC programming we're asked and even in--in  
7 our ATINTD (sic) programs, we're attempting to  
8 contract with the local organizations. So, and we're  
9 put in the unfortunate position of having to  
10 negotiate with them, and ask these small non-profits  
11 who are not asking for very much. Sometimes under  
12 \$300 to lower it to \$250 or \$200 and, you know,  
13 because--and as a credit to them, they're willing to  
14 operate at a loss, and willing to do things just  
15 because they care about the young people. But it's  
16 not where I think New York City should be when--when  
17 talking about offering to lean to our young people.  
18 So we're--we're in a really unfortunate situation to  
19 do that, and I think some dedicated funding could  
20 alleviate that as well as alleviate some other  
21 problems that we're having. Specifically, right now  
22 we're at a position where although we know right from  
23 the evidence-based perspective that perhaps a small  
24 group of seven or eight young people will be most  
25 effective, most impactful for all of them. We are--

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2 we have--we have attendance mandates. So we try and  
3 make that for 15 young people. So in a lot of cases  
4 that's problematic because as we all know, we have  
5 social and emotional problems that--that may exist in  
6 the group. And even if they--even if that did not  
7 exist, these are adolescents and smaller group is  
8 always better. I think we talk about that in the  
9 kindergarten level that it's better to have some  
10 whole groups. You know, at the university level we  
11 talk about it as well. So, it's no different in our  
12 Juvenile Justice system but, you know, because of--  
13 In part because of the funding requirements these  
14 groups are larger, and that presents other problems.  
15 SO, with funding we would--we would double a number  
16 of groups and, therefore, cut the size of groups in  
17 half. In addition, collecting data. I think we all  
18 mentioned that we, you know, we can talk about it  
19 here. We can talk about what we had anecdotally  
20 observe, but we want to be able to say, and we ran  
21 some stats on this, and these five or six metrics as  
22 far as behavior, as far as the outlook on life, as  
23 far as feelings of accomplishment have been measured.  
24 And we can say that these rows went down, or maybe  
25 they didn't and we need to do something else. And

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2 so, in addition to that, I think that one of the  
3 focuses for me is that I want to--I'd like to reframe  
4 how we consider cultural programming. And I almost  
5 consider that when compared to academic programming.  
6 If a young person, and in a specific way it means  
7 that we treat that we--we--we treat that as right or  
8 a need as opposed to a reward or a treat. So, our  
9 young people now maybe similar to how, you know, I  
10 was raised is that if you don't do well, you can't go  
11 to football practice. Or, if you don't do well, you  
12 won't get your piano lessons. That's not how I think  
13 we should consider especially for our young people  
14 who need this as an outlet. So, in order to do that--  
15 -now that, I can preach about that for a while. But  
16 the reason why that is the type of funding is because  
17 we need to train the staff in the facilities, and  
18 build the capacity of the facilities to understand  
19 that although it may seem like a treat to send  
20 someone to Yoga, and may seem like it's really nice  
21 to send someone to a music theater--a music program,  
22 in fact these are things that help them socially and  
23 emotionally. And I think that if we can reframe that  
24 in the facility by building the capacity, then we  
25 could avoid issues that we sometimes see, which

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2 result in the young people not being allowed to  
3 participate or attend, or even begin because of  
4 issues related to their behavior. Which ironically,  
5 as we mentioned. I think that we're trying to  
6 address those programs.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, let me just  
8 cut in there, and say--

9 HANS MENOS: [interposing] Oh, of course.  
10 [laughs]

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and--and say  
12 that-- No, I wanted to actually just agree. I think  
13 our cultural literacy wellbeing is the right of  
14 every--as human beings it should. Um, we believe  
15 that in the Cultural Affairs world. That's for sure.  
16 Are there any questions for this panel? If not, we  
17 are going to say thank you for your work, and your  
18 passion and you thanked us for staying. But, there  
19 are still two more people who have--if they're still  
20 here--have waited a long time, and we want to thank  
21 them. So Laura Schneider from Artistic Noise and it  
22 looks like Victoria Sammartino from Voices Unbroken.  
23 If you two are still here, which you are, thank you  
24 for being here, and that will--

25

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2 LAURA SCHNEIDER: [off mic][interposing]  
3 All right.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --conclude our  
5 hearing.

6 [background comments, pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Could you please  
8 start?

9 LAURA SCHNEIDER: Great. I'm Laura  
10 Schneider. I'm from Artistic Noise. I am the  
11 Director of the Art Entrepreneurship and Curatorial  
12 Program at Artistic Noise, which is a very innovative  
13 program. Artistic Noise began in Boston actually in  
14 2001. So, we've been working with youth,  
15 incarcerated youth, youth in the Juvenile Justice  
16 system for 15 years. It started in New York in 2008.  
17 Now, we've work at Alert with over 900 court involved  
18 youth, and in part of the program that I direct, Art  
19 Entrepreneur--Art Entrepreneurship and Curatorial  
20 Programs, we work with small groups of youth. This  
21 is actually a job readiness program. So they work  
22 with me two to three times a week. They are paid  
23 minimum wage, and at the end the culminating event  
24 that we do is they curate--they do all the work for a  
25 large exhibition of all the artwork made by students

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2 in Artistic Noise programming throughout all the  
3 boroughs. Now, this--I--I want to talk a little bit  
4 about the commitment that these young people show. We  
5 cap at about eight or nine people. We usually have  
6 about seven, and these kids are traveling to Harlem  
7 from Far Rockaway from foster care, from shelters  
8 sometimes. And, they are sticking with us through  
9 this whole program. I have worked with some kids.  
10 I've been at Artistic Noise for about three years.  
11 I've worked with some kids for three years. And I  
12 want to share a quote from one of our young people  
13 named Ebony who is now transitioning into staff,  
14 which is one of our goals. Ebony says, "I got  
15 involved with Artistic Noise through a re-entry  
16 program. I'm not going to lie. At first, I was  
17 intrigued by the money because it is a job readiness  
18 program. But later as I got more involved with the  
19 program, I found love is a concept of making art.  
20 The program has changed my life in many ways.  
21 Artistic Noise introduced me to things in life I had  
22 no idea about. It taught me how to express myself in  
23 a non-violent way. Artistic Noise gave me an outlet  
24 in which I was able to express myself freely.  
25 Artistic Noise is my home away from home. We are a

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2 family unit. This family unit has watched me grow  
3 from a wild teenager into a respectable young woman.  
4 My family has given me tools that have made me  
5 stronger and wiser. In a nutshell, Artistic Noise  
6 showed me inner strength I was not aware of. Then it  
7 gave me space in which I could test it out and build  
8 it. So that is from 20-year-old Ebony. Again, I  
9 think the work that we do it is so clearly important  
10 to these youth. We reach a small group of students,  
11 but I think that group has--we've had cataclysmic  
12 change. So, yeah, I'm trying to keep it short, but  
13 yeah. So thank you very much from Artistic Noise.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
15 much. You did wonderful. The testimonials are  
16 always--they're so powerful. So thank you for that.

17 LISA SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I should say  
18 actually our Director in Boston was the incarcerated  
19 youth that was the first youth in the program. She  
20 was 17 when she started. She is now the Director of  
21 Boston, and one of our missions is to have the people  
22 that we work with take over the program.

23 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: That's a tough act  
24 follow. She nine seconds short. All right. So,  
25 good--good afternoon. Good morning. Good afternoon

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2 now. So thank you. I won't go through all the  
3 formalities because that would take up time. So my  
4 name is Victoria Sammartino and I'm joining you today  
5 as the founder and Executive Emeritus of Voices  
6 Unbroken. I'm--I'm here with Leslie Britt who is the  
7 current Executive Director. So Voices Unbroken is a  
8 Bronx based non-profit organization that makes high  
9 quality creative writing workshops accessible to  
10 vulnerable youth throughout New York City with a  
11 particular focus on working with young people who are  
12 in the Juvenile Justice and Adult Justice system.  
13 But 70% of the young people that Voices Unbroken  
14 served in 2015 are in the Juvenile Justice system.  
15 About 48% of those young people are in residential  
16 Juvenile Justice facilities either in secure or non-  
17 secure detention or non-secure placement. I've  
18 listed all of those facilities for you on my  
19 testimony. Or, in--there was--there was another 23%  
20 that were in alternative detention programs. So I  
21 found Voices Unbroken in 2000 with a single workshop  
22 on Rikers Island. Around that time in 2001, I  
23 actually had my first opportunity to work in Juvenile  
24 Justice system as a teaching artist with the Brooklyn  
25 Public Library. I know they left, but at Crossroads.

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2 A little bit after that, a few years later about four  
3 years later we developed a partnership with the then  
4 Department of Juvenile Justice and Sonya Golaza (sp?)  
5 to offer workshops at Horizon Juvenile Center. We  
6 then in 2007 had a contract with the Department of  
7 Juvenile Justice to make poetry workshops accessible  
8 to all of the girls in secure and non-secure  
9 detention throughout the city. And I'll note that  
10 that funding came--it was discretionary funding that  
11 came from the City Council, and was given to the  
12 Department of Juvenile Justice every year. I--I  
13 believe that ended somewhere around the Recession.  
14 Maybe it was around 2008 or 2009, but it should be  
15 reinstated. So I've given you more information about  
16 Voices Unbroken's programming in the testimony. In  
17 2000--in 2005, we facilitated 33 workshops for youth  
18 in the Juvenile Justice system, 28 of which were for  
19 young people in residential Juvenile Justice  
20 facilities. And when I say a workshop, I mean about  
21 ten 90-minute sessions. Voices Unbroken is currently  
22 partnering with the Center for Community Alternatives  
23 through the SONYC grant to--to work at Crossroads--at  
24 Crossroads Juvenile Center. I--I will note that  
25 we've been there for a long time. So I think that

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2 one of the things with the SONYC rollout is that  
3 while the funding may be new, much of the programming  
4 is programming is that has been there for some time.

5 So Voices Unbroken works from a positive youth  
6 development framework, and we're very craft based.

7 So we really look at the craft of poetry as a youth  
8 development tool. We also as a general rule we

9 specifically ask that youth not be asked to self-  
10 select for workshops. We want to work with everyone.

11 We believe everyone has the opportunity--has the need  
12 to express themselves, and deserves the opportunity

13 to do that. And so, we hire really talented

14 professional teaching artists as part-time staff who  
15 then facilitate workshops. I've given you lots more

16 information in my testimony, but I will say that

17 Voices Unbroken's work is funded [bell] by the New

18 York City Department of Cultural Affairs--and we

19 appreciate that--by the New York Council and by the

20 National Endowment for the Arts and by a number of

21 private foundations including the Pinkerton

22 Foundation and the Novo Foundation. We also are

23 really honored to be in fee for service partnerships

24 with some of the agencies, the private agencies that

25 are running non-secure detention, and non-secure

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2 placement facilities. I'm just going to close with a  
3 really short poem by a young person that Council  
4 Member Van Bramer spoke about, the child in Queens  
5 who kind of learned to speak through dance. And so  
6 this is a 16-year-old in Horizon Juvenile Center, a  
7 girl:

8 I am wonderful, but never perfect.

9 I am a girl that never speaks and tries  
10 to dream.

11 Okay, thank you. I'd love to talk about  
12 money, too so [laughter] let's--let's do it.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you to  
14 compare, you--you did, um, um, actually mention that  
15 in your, um, or mentioned the funding stream that  
16 ended in the Recession.

17 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And--and what--  
19 what specifically was that? Could you--do you have  
20 any more specifically?

21 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: It was--  
22 understanding is that this is before the agencies  
23 merged, but when--my understanding is that the City  
24 Council came--the City Council members came together  
25 right here, and gave the Department of Juvenile

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2 Justice a block grant. It was kind of a--a set  
3 amount of money that you all then figured out how to  
4 allocate to different groups. Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. So we'll  
6 definitely--

7 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: [interposing] I  
8 think you all should definitely do that that again.  
9 [laughter]

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs] I got  
11 that sense and, um, I appreciate that, and definitely  
12 we'll look--we'll take a look at it. I know that  
13 Chair Cabrera and then Council Member Barron have  
14 questions as well.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I just have one  
16 quick one. Victoria, you've been around for a while.

17 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: I've been around  
18 for a while.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, I--I--let me  
20 ask you this question: What do you think--I started  
21 my first question to the Administration what was the  
22 process, whether they thought it should be the  
23 process to evaluate the quality of the arts program.  
24 Do you have any idea--

25

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2 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: [interposing] We're  
3 really happy to answer that.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --what should we do?

5 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: I think one of the  
6 challenges that Hans, I know it, but he--he noted  
7 it's--for the individual organizations that are  
8 working inside, there are all kinds of  
9 confidentiality issues. So, like I'm giving you  
10 quotes that--of what young people said about our  
11 programming using initials. I can't tell you. I  
12 can't say their names. We're limited to what we can  
13 collect. So it makes it extraordinarily difficult  
14 from a data collection perspective, and so I think  
15 that's one thing. I think the other thing is that  
16 there aren't--there aren't like wellness indicators  
17 so that the system tends to look at young people. It  
18 tends to be about like avoiding bad behavior as  
19 opposed to thinking about like what we want to--how--  
20 who we want them to be as adults. Like what tools  
21 they're going to need to do that. So I think that all  
22 of--meant all of the organizations that I can think  
23 of that are working inside are coming from a really  
24 solid like positive youth development framework where  
25 they're thinking about growth. So how do we track

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2 young people's growth? So Voices Unbroken tries to  
3 do that in a number of different ways. So we like  
4 collect surveys from young people. We survey the  
5 staff who have been in the room with juvenile  
6 counselors. And then we--and then our teaching  
7 artists provide information about every single young  
8 person every single time they--they are with a young  
9 person, they're telling us this is a young person--  
10 they're rating them on different kind of metrics that  
11 we've developed internally. And we want to know did  
12 the young person write? Did they share their  
13 writing? Did they participate in a group discussion?  
14 Did they support their peers? Do they participate in  
15 any other kinds of activities, right, like games or  
16 icebreakers or whatever? So I think for us it's  
17 thinking about young people from a really full  
18 perspective. And, I think that for individual  
19 organizations like Gabrielle said, I think the  
20 individual organization's capacity to do that I think  
21 is somewhat limited. I--the--the Council or other  
22 public funding sources could make resources available  
23 to organizations, which I know all organizations  
24 would be extraordinarily grateful for. But from the  
25 system perspective, if they--if there was a

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2 standardized way that--if there was a way, an easier  
3 way of asking for permission to collect certain  
4 information. Right now, you have to go through the  
5 institutional, and we've asked for like aggregate  
6 information. Like don't tell them about the kids,  
7 but like if we're in a housing unit and we do a  
8 workshop can you tell us if there are less incidents  
9 or how many incidents there are? Like really basic,  
10 and if we give you--you know, if you have the names  
11 of all of the kids we work with in a year, could--can  
12 we get again aggregate information from--from the  
13 department? And we've been told with the agency now,  
14 we've been told that they--that we would have to go  
15 through the Institutional Review Board, and that we  
16 just don't have the capacity to do that. So--so I  
17 think some standardized way of like asking for--to  
18 collect certain information would be extraordinarily  
19 helpful.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay--

21 LAURA SCHNEIDER: [interposing] Because I  
22 think just like the administration we want to tell  
23 our story, too, just like they're trying to prove  
24 what they're doing.

25 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: Right.

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2 LAURA SCHNEIDER: They're just a giant  
3 agency, and we're just a four-man show.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right.

5 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: Yeah, a woman.  
6 We're like a dozen right now.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's awesome.  
8 Council Member Barron.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chair. I have a question I think for Artistic Noise.  
11 You said your headquarters is in Harlem--

12 LAURA SCHNEIDER: [interposing] Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --and that  
14 students come to you from many of the other boroughs.

15 LAURA SCHNEIDER: Oh, yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Who pays for  
17 their Metro Card? How do they get-- -

18 LAURA SCHNEIDER: [interposing] Yeah, we-

19 -

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --funding to get  
21 to where you are to be able to enjoy that service?

22 LAURA SCHNEIDER: Yeah, um, so there are  
23 paid to the program that I direct because of the Job  
24 Readiness Program. So minimum wage is \$9.00 an hour,  
25 but we do offer Metro Cards as well, and we're trying

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2 to work with them to help them sort of budget. But,  
3 yeah, that's--I'm--I'm actually a stand-in. I'm not  
4 totally sure how--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

6 Okay, but you provide--

7 LAURA SCHNEIDER: --it works.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --them with a  
9 Metro Card.

10 LAURA SCHNEIDER: But we bill the  
11 Probation and--and I believe that it's coming from--  
12 from there because they're all checking in with  
13 probation officers.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

15 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: But that's another  
16 thing the City Council could do. I--you know, Metro  
17 Cards are really expensive and for organizations that  
18 do want to work with young people when they're  
19 leaving it's--it's--there's no discount for  
20 organizations. You just have to--you have to pay for  
21 Metro Cards like everyone else. It would be nice if  
22 non-profits got a discount.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
24 much.

25

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2 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: Yeah, it's a huge--  
3 yeah, it's a huge expense. Yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Council Member  
5 Barron--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --thank you so  
9 much, and with that I want to thank all three of you  
10 for--for staying with us, for a couple of hours. Um,  
11 believe it or not some people wait even longer to  
12 testify.

13 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: [interposing] Yes,  
14 I have waited longer.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But, but, um,  
16 I'm glad that--that three council members were here  
17 at the very end to--to hear your testimony, and I  
18 want to thank my colleague and Chair Council Member  
19 Cabrera for again asking to co-host this very  
20 important, um, hearing, and raising these issues.  
21 And, um, you know, he has my commitment to work  
22 around these issues, and a possible initiative that  
23 came out of this hearing. And, I want to thank him  
24 again, and I throw it to him for a closing comment.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I want to thank  
3 you, co-chair and really a leader on the cultural  
4 affairs in the city. I believe that we can make it  
5 bigger, broader and better difference, and I believe  
6 that this hearing will have such an effect. You gave  
7 us some valuable information. So we want to thank  
8 all the programs and the administration for the work  
9 they're doing. Thank you so much.

10 VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: Thank you.

11 LAURA SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And with that,  
13 we are adjourned.

14 [gavel]

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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 February 11, 2016