

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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has asked us to co-sponsor this important hearing,
and I want to thank both our public library systems,
the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public
Library, the Queens Library for the work that it has
always done with young people involved in the
Juvenile Justice System. As well as many of our
cultural institutions group members, and our smaller
non-profit cultural organizations who have been
reaching out, and who have programs and who have been
doing this work without much fanfare and without much
notice. And I think it's important that we share
with the City Council and with the Administration
that kind of work that is already going on to meet
the needs of young people. So it's very, very
exciting to be here, and to have so many people in
the room who are doing this work. And as I often
say, nothing good in a city happens without culture
and the arts, and libraries as a central part of
that, and this is no different. So, we want to have
this hearing, and learn what's happening. Maybe
there are more things we can do. Maybe there are
more things we can do to support that work, but it is
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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1 them occupied and engaged, but also help them to find
2 a better path in life. Effective cultural and arts
3 programs designed to help young people harness and
4 focus positive energy, building confidence and
5 teaching them how to trust them. Providing young
6 people with the space and time to express themselves
7 and encourage these young people to think about their
8 future, and make them feel it is worth--it is worth
9 it to stay out of trouble. Additionally, spending
10 time in cultural and arts activity provides them an
11 outlet, and can give a sense of freedom to young
12 people who are in detention. For this reason,
13 cultural and arts programs present a unique
14 opportunity to provide off-ramps for young people
15 from the Juvenile Justice system that would keep them
16 from the Criminal Justice system. I hope to learn
17 more about what cultural and arts services are being
18 offered to aid this youth in achieving long-term
19 success, and how effective these programs are. In
20 particular, I hope to hear about programs that could
21 support young people over time as they re-enter the
22 community including ongoing programs and those with a
23 mentorship component. I look forward to hearing from
24 the Department, and from the stakeholders regarding
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: An
increase in total?

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: Oh,
okay.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

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

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Skyrocketed.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER PRUSSACK: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And what's the-- from the allocation from DYCD, do you happen to know 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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1 actually do some of this impressive community of
2 foster (sic) care of our young people. And it seems
3 that, and again, not for--because of us, because of
4 who they are, they have been able to actually create
5 a collaboration among themselves. I think we should
6 encourage that in New York--in New York City and even
7 more make sure they're sustainable, and make sure
8 that actually they're really competing with the bad
9 elements in the communities where our kids return to,
10 and they are the frontlines of making that happen.

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

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

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

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

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

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1 communities, and, um, I just want to say that for the
2 record. And I also want to say for the record that I
3 didn't expect any of our culturals or libraries to
4 come up here and say they don't need any more money.
5 [laughter] I--because I believe that they all could
6 do more of the great work that they're doing were we
7 able to further increase funding for both our
8 libraries and culturals over and above what we were
9 able to accomplish last year. And, at the Department
10 of Cultural Affairs with more funding, we would be
11 able to also create more partnerships as well. I
12 want to recognize Council Member Helen Rosenthal from
13 Manhattan who's joined us in the Cultural Affairs
14 Committee as well. And do any of the--Council Member
15 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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1 non-secure placement side, I believe the number today
2 is about 168, but I will need to double check. And
3 then, we have about seven kids in limited secure. So
4 these are young people who have actually been through
5 detention and adjudicated, and now are with New York
6 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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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: But you know the system in New York is known for the particularly disproportionately minority based. So, again, most of the kids that we said are African-American are Latino kids. Most of them come from poor abilities. Again, 95% of them come from seven neighborhoods in the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay, yeah. Thank you.

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

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

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

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --Helen Rosenthal.

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

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Sure.

Again, the relationship directly with providers are
that ACS is fairly new with the contact with DYCD.
So we are working with our sister agencies to figure
out the metrics or--or the [coughing] right amount of
metrics to look at outcomes. They have very
stringent attendance requirements, which actually the

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1 providers have struggled with. I mean very specific
2 in terms of those search and a lot of hours that have
3 every young person needs to keep. I think that at
4 the end of the day what the providers, DYCD and all
5 of us want to get out of this unique short experience
6 on lives and culture within detention it's just a
7 springboard. I mean what we really are looking for
8 if it really works that young people find the spark,
9 which I think is kind of what the Chairman talk
10 about, but that actually is continued with this. So
11 that's why I think that's mentioned a few times all
12 of this fantastic work and we are blessed to have
13 your support. But the real work happens whenever we
14 come back to the community, and these cultural
15 institutions need to be funded to be available in the
16 neighborhoods where they are needed, and that's what
17 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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1 crime while they're waiting for their education. But
2 we are in Close to Home. So as part of the Close to
3 Home process, again it's a new program, you need a
4 few years before you can actually look at 36 months
5 of recidivism. We will be doing it, but also we are
6 looking at other outcomes. So we are beginning to
7 look at educational attainment, and possibly these
8 outcomes that actually we believe are going to
9 influence the likelihood of kids having successful
10 transition programs.
11

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

[background comments, pause]

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

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the amazing work that they all do in--in this field.

It's been an amazing partnership with ACS to--to

really to make groundbreaking in terms of--of this,

as you all know. So, you know, it really showed the

power of arts and culture to engage young people and

to get them on track. I'm going to focus as quickly

as I can on two aspects of what Carnegie Hall does.

Our direct service to young people is in secure and

non-secure settings, and also secondly our efforts to

build pathways so they don't go back into the system.

So some of this has been touched on already by--by

ACS. So I will be brief about. We've been in this

field about seven years. We made a deep investment

to work in the city's Justice system and we provide

a variety of musical experiences, which have been

described to you already. In ACS settings we provide

song writing workshops in Horizons and in Crossroads.

We also do work with ACS with-- In addition--in

addition to ACS we work with Belmont Academy and DYCD

to bring workshops to non-secure placement. Belmont

Academy in the Bronx and Bronx Hope and we reached

about 300 young people this year. These---these are

songwriting workshops. Each kid gets about 28 hours

of focused music learning, songwriting, rehearsals,

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

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

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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

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

Thanks to you all.

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

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

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Whittlesey. I'm the founder and Executive Director of Drama Club, a non-profit that provides theater programming to incarcerated youth in New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to share the powerful work we are doing with the population that is commonly referred to as the most vulnerable youth in New York City. Current--we currently do year-round classes at both Crossroads and Horizons and we are also at Rikers Island with the--the youth in the adolescent jail there. We directly serve approximately 100 youth per facility, and 50 at Rikers per year. In order to address young people's limited ability to focus impulse control issues and varied literacy rates, Drama Club relies heavily on improvisational theater as our core curriculum. Improvisation is play. It involves health risk taking and decision making in a safe environment allowing youth to establish and explore the rules of the world they have created, an empowering and self-reflective exercise. Improvisation is an especially powerful tool for youth, as this is loosely structured so that participants can establish the rules of the world they are creating. The program--program cultivates focus, self-expression, impulse

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1 build programs that have deep impact on young people
2 involved in the court system." I ask you today let's
3 continue Judge Kaye's vision to fulfill the dream of
4 our children and give them a brighter outlook for the
5 future. Thank you for listening. On behalf of
6 Lincoln Center Education, I hope you'll continue to
7 support cultural institutions working in the Juvenile
8 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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1 know, subsidize and then how could you increase that--
2 -that level of commitment that your organization
3 already has?

4
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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DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Yeah, we've got--we
have our work cut out for us.

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

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]
Sure.

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

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

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

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Lincoln Center,
anything to add?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1 and then there was poetry that came out of that to
2 young people. And I was just sitting there just
3 dumbfounded of their, you know, just the vast amount
4 of talent that is there. I was talking to
5 Commissioner Carrion about this yesterday. I wanted
6 to ask you, somebody mentioned families. I think
7 families are key in the restoration of young people.
8 Can you talk to me what--what's the level of
9 participation that you see with families? And also,
10 what do you do when a family--when families don't
11 show up and they are performing? How do you deal
12 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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1 last family days at Horizon we did some theater games
2 and we invited all the family members to come up, and
3 we made this massive circle. I was just surprised
4 how many family members, mothers, siblings. It was a
5 pretty beautiful. We played theater games altogether
6 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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1 there are multiple points of participation for the
2 family members. If they don't make one, they might
3 be at another, and--and exactly the same kinds of
4 things around having a community. So the peers are
5 there, other people are--are there. Because it--
6 there is--this--this--for people in challenging
7 circumstances showing up to these--to these things
8 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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1 more credible messengers just like we are instituted
2 with the cure of violence because it's a trust factor
3 at the end of the day. And they--they establish
4 those relations while they're there 30 days, 60 days,
5 90 days and some of them are there over a year
6 especially in the detention center. So--so when they
7 get out it's now like trying to get them established
8 in a new relationship with a new set of people. Is
9 there a plan towards that? Is that happening
10 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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JOSIE WHITTLESEY: --wanting to support them with the social services, and I think you're absolutely right. That's what we need to do is really collaborate with all the folks that want to help and get them on the table together because they need social services. They need employment and they need programs to help them with their relationships, which is exactly what you're talking about when you're bringing in people who have been in their shoes and are in their corner.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Excellent.

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

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE WHITTLESEY: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

18
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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detention or their placement. And so we really want to make sure that our staff provides a place for them and their families to come and get services, and make sure that they understand that the public library can be a really welcoming and warm place for them. I'm going to have Miles say a couple things about some of the poetry work we've been doing.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right.

MILES HODGES: Yeah, hi--

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]

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

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

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

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

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

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Awesome.

MILES HODGES: Yeah.

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

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SARAH BALL: Manager of Correctional
Services.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh.

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

MILES HODGES: [off mic] Amazing.

SARAH BALL: [laughter]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1 and Brooklyn Public Library is eager to help the city
2 address those challenges. And--and we will join our
3 city and non-profit partners in efforts to make
4 family unification an accepted norm at all stages of
5 a child's justice involvement through in-person
6 programming and visits and use of innovative
7 technology like video conferencing. I just want to
8 say thank you. We're all proud to partner with the
9 city to serve Brooklynites from every walk of life.
10 Thank you for giving us the chance to do what we do
11 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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Jackson we were doing pioneering work with Rikers
and--and other facilities as well. So, why don't we
hear from the Queens Library.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay.

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

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1 And then when they are outside, and they're at Long
2 Island City, they're like hey it's Cassandra. I
3 remember you, yes, and she's like yes I'm helping you
4 and I'm working with, and I can provide those same
5 services. So when we're working with them on the
6 inside, we're able to say, oh, you need--you need
7 additional case management services or do you need to
8 find a GED program, or do you need to find help with
9 child care? So, we're able to just take that from
10 Queensboro and take it right to the library and
11 provide that. So that See You on the Outside Program
12 has been extremely beneficial because then we're able
13 to bring them to our job and training programs, and
14 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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1 thank you for coming to present testimony. In the
2 testimony about Queens Library there's a notation
3 that the Department of Probation of the approximately
4 8,800 16 to 24-year-olds on probation, more than 70%
5 do not have either a high school or an HSE diploma,
6 and that's really very appalling, and we know in part
7 that's because of the economic job situation that
8 we're in. But simply in terms of getting students
9 prepared to move forward in that regard, it's really
10 necessary that they move forward. So do you know
11 what kind coordination goes on between those on
12 probation, and the services that the library offers?
13 Is there a connection between the probation--
14 probation officer saying to the student okay, you're--
15 -you're not 21. So you're still able to go to a DOE
16 program. Do you know what kind of coordination goes
17 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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1 of their probation required to go? I don't know if
2 perhaps the Council Member Cabrera could give us that
3 information. What are they required to attend
4 because they're on probation, because they're under
5 the age of 21? What is there--is there an
6 encouragement for them to do that? But finally, I
7 just want to say I'm so pleased to know that the New
8 Lots branch will be included and tell a story. And
9 there is so much that's going on now at the New Lots
10 branch. It's really moving forward, and we're
11 looking to see how we can't do some perhaps major
12 construction in terms of adding another floor. Or,
13 perhaps highlight the fact that the New Lots branch
14 was built on what was at one point a burial ground.
15 And when the remains were reinterred across the
16 street at the New Lots that's Reform Church, the
17 remains of the Whites were reinterred, but the
18 remains of the Blacks were not. And according to the
19 Daily Evil at that time were left bleaching on the
20 side of the road. So at this point there have been
21 studies that showed there are no remains still there,
22 but first a school was built on top of that site.
23 Now the library exists on top of that site. So we're
24 looking to see perhaps not establishing a third
25

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

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

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

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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large facing the difficult challenges of adolescence.

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

developing--developing their adult identify, and in

may cases this process is made difficult by the

challenges of poverty and racism. So CCA endeavors

to address these issues in the youth present by

emphasizing personal empowerment, self-respect and

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

experience working with court involved youth in

community and in various facilities. We observed a

marked improvement regarding how the services now--

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

partner with the Administration for Children's

Services, Department of Youth and Community

Development and the New York City Department of

Education to operate the SONYC schools in New York

City after school programming at both the Belmont

School and the Crossroads Detention Center. So, for

me it's important from everyone to realize how we

came about, or we conceptualize our program. So for

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

idea of multiple intelligencies. Howard Gardner has

mentioned there are three multiple intelligences

theory free from--he posits that youth are

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

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1 treatment and other mainstream efforts to address and
2 improve their behavior. However, as helpful as these
3 approaches often are, they're not the--they're not
4 the best approach for all young people. I am--at CCA
5 we believe that the young people who are in the
6 Juvenile Justice system are there because they have
7 not had their strengths recognized and were
8 supported. These are often activities, which are
9 more strength based and empowering, which provide a
10 young person with the strength needed to overcome and
11 persevere. It is incumbent upon all of us who seek
12 to serve these young people to continue to consider
13 the create and holistic interventions and to help
14 them. So, and I'm hopeful that I have the
15 opportunities to be questioned about funding and
16 other issues that I think that [laughter] that--that
17 could be addressed. Because I do have some thoughts,
18 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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1 teaching artist with the Education Program, and I'm
2 the founding Artistic Director of the Stargate
3 Theater Company, one of company's programs for court
4 involved young people. Now, because this is a
5 complex subject, I'm submitting extended written
6 testimony for further information. MTC has been a
7 leader in the education field for more than 25 years.
8 Our education program reaches one or more schools in
9 eight of the districts represented by this committee
10 and this Council. Reaching court involved youth is a
11 special focus of ours, and we have been working in
12 the Juvenile Justice system for over 20 years. We
13 focus on these kids because they are so dramatically
14 under-served by the arts, and because of the great
15 value arts holds for them. Through our Stargate
16 Theater Company and our student play writing program,
17 which we call Write on the Edge or WROTE, court
18 involved young people build reading and language
19 skills through creative writing and critical thinking
20 about plays. They learn to express themselves
21 constructively, develop empathy as they identify with
22 characters and learn cooperation as they collaborate
23 with their peers. Now, our programs also give young
24 people opportunities to process past experiences, and
25

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

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

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

JUDY TATE: Yes.

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

JUDY TATE: Please do.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

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

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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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1 vegetables and sustainable produce. Kids in our
2 Lineage classes are taught on the inside mediation
3 and mindfulness practices to help them stay centered,
4 calm and in control of their actions. But their
5 families can't afford the \$20 to \$28 or more price
6 tag of going to a yoga studio in New York City. So
7 we urge the Council to increase its investment in
8 cultural programming for city's youth with a
9 particular concentration on neighborhoods with the
10 largest reference--representation in the justice
11 system, and we can change kids. We can change kids'
12 communities, and as Chair Cabrera spoke about, we can
13 close the back door and we can also close the front
14 door. You have an important role to play. Thank you
15 for staying through the length of this hearing.
16 [laughter] And partner with us to make this happen.
17 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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pad, and I just wanted to give you an example of what
some of the cultural institutions are up against and
we're spending. At MTC we commit over a million
dollars annually to our education program, and I
described who we serve. Donations and grants cover
about 30% of that. Fees from schools and, you know,
including, you know, the DOE--the DOE fees is 8%, and
the remaining \$600,000 has to be covered by operating
funds, and that's roughly equivalent to our annual
operating deficit. So, [laughs] that's--that's the
kind of gap that we're seeking to bridge. So it's
unclear how long that we can sustain this kind of
work without dedicated funding. And we've got an
incredible demand for our services. People are
calling us all the time, and we can't meet it, and we
want to have further iterations of the Stargate
Theater Company, which I really--I really have to say
watch the video, the WLIW hour-long documentary
because it's in a-- It's--it's the only kind of
program of its kind. Kids actually are paid. They
learn--they learn workplace readiness skills for
continuing a productive life. They're paid as
actors. They're paid as writers, and the kind of
self-esteem that comes with that is unbelievable, and

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

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

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

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

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

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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LAURA SCHNEIDER: [off mic][interposing]

All right.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --conclude our
hearing.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Could you please
start?

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

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

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1 family unit. This family unit has watched me grow
2 from a wild teenager into a respectable young woman.
3 My family has given me tools that have made me
4 stronger and wiser. In a nutshell, Artistic Noise
5 showed me inner strength I was not aware of. Then it
6 gave me space in which I could test it out and build
7 it. So that is from 20-year-old Ebony. Again, I
8 think the work that we do it is so clearly important
9 to these youth. We reach a small group of students,
10 but I think that group has--we've had cataclysmic
11 change. So, yeah, I'm trying to keep it short, but
12 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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1 now. So thank you. I won't go through all the
2 formalities because that would take up time. So my
3 name is Victoria Sammartino and I'm joining you today
4 as the founder and Executive Emeritus of Voices
5 Unbroken. I'm--I'm here with Leslie Britt who is the
6 current Executive Director. So Voices Unbroken is a
7 Bronx based non-profit organization that makes high
8 quality creative writing workshops accessible to
9 vulnerable youth throughout New York City with a
10 particular focus on working with young people who are
11 in the Juvenile Justice and Adult Justice system.
12 But 70% of the young people that Voices Unbroken
13 served in 2015 are in the Juvenile Justice system.
14 About 48% of those young people are in residential
15 Juvenile Justice facilities either in secure or non-
16 secure detention or non-secure placement. I've
17 listed all of those facilities for you on my
18 testimony. Or, in--there was--there was another 23%
19 that were in alternative detention programs. So I
20 found Voices Unbroken in 2000 with a single workshop
21 on Rikers Island. Around that time in 2001, I
22 actually had my first opportunity to work in Juvenile
23 Justice system as a teaching artist with the Brooklyn
24 Public Library. I know they left, but at Crossroads.
25

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

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one of the things with the SONYC rollout is that while the funding may be new, much of the programming is programming is that has been there for some time. So Voices Unbroken works from a positive youth development framework, and we're very craft based. So we really look at the craft of poetry as a youth development tool. We also as a general rule we specifically ask that youth not be asked to self-select for workshops. We want to work with everyone. We believe everyone has the opportunity--has the need to express themselves, and deserves the opportunity to do that. And so, we hire really talented professional teaching artists as part-time staff who then facilitate workshops. I've given you lots more information in my testimony, but I will say that Voices Unbroken's work is funded [bell] by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs--and we appreciate that--by the New York Council and by the National Endowment for the Arts and by a number of private foundations including the Pinkerton Foundation and the Novo Foundation. We also are really honored to be in fee for service partnerships with some of the agencies, the private agencies that are running non-secure detention, and non-secure

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

I am wonderful, but never perfect.

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

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

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

VICTORIA SAMMARTINO: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Okay, but you provide--

LAURA SCHNEIDER: --it works.

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

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

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much.

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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.

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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