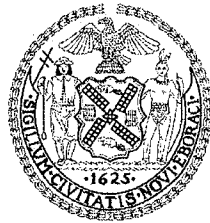


NYCTM
**Administration for
Children's Services**



**The New York City Council,
Committee on Juvenile Justice
April 14, 2016**

***“INT 949: Requiring ACS to Report on Programs and Services Provided to Youth in Placement
and Detention Facilities”***

**Testimony by
New York City Administration for Children's Services
Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner
Division of Youth and Family Justice**

Good morning Chair Cabrera and members of the Committee on Juvenile Justice. I am Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Youth and Family Justice at the New York City Administration for Children's Services. With me today is Stephanie Prussack, Associate Commissioner for Detention Services and John Dixon, Associate Commissioner of Close to Home. On behalf of Commissioner Carrión, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony about Introduction 949, and about the health, education, and recreation programs and services that are provided to young people in our secure and non-secure detention facilities, and in our non-secure and limited secure placement residences.

ACS and our contracted partners work to promote public safety and improve the lives of youth, families, and communities by providing safe and secure custodial care. As the Committee knows, our most recent innovation, Close to Home, is a radical transformation of the way New York City handles juvenile justice. Instead of warehousing children in institutions hundreds of miles from their families, Close to Home keeps them in or near their home communities, so that families can participate in their rehabilitation.

But there is more we need to do to make this program safe for youth AND communities. Yesterday the Department of Investigation issued a report on a terrible incident that involved a former Close to Home non-secure placement provider in June 2015. We thank DOI for its work and would like to take a moment to share with the Council more information about our focus on safety and security and the additional work we are doing in this area.

ACS is committed to providing robust oversight of our providers to ensure that an incident like this does not happen again. We have taken major steps – before this incident occurred, immediately after, and in the aftermath – to transform and strengthen our juvenile placement system

In 2013, ACS implemented system-wide changes to decrease AWOL incidents (in which young people leave or fail to return to their Close to Home program without permission). As a result of these changes, the number of AWOLs decreased by 69% between 2013 and 2015. This success is due in large part to ACS dedicating additional training and additional staff to address the issue. We assigned six Investigative Consultants—former NYPD detectives who now are employed by ACS – to work with providers and the NYPD to locate AWOL youth. We also issued new requirements to our providers around reporting AWOLs, monitoring youth, and enhancing security measures.

Despite these significant efforts, on June 1, 2015, three youth escaped from a Boys Town facility and perpetrated a horrifying assault. When we learned of the incident, ACS took immediate action: we closed the site where the incident occurred that very day, and, after assessing the safety and security of their other facilities, ACS and Boys Town agreed that Boy Town would cease all Non Secure Placement operations in July 2015. Between June and August 2015, ACS conducted site visits to all 27 of the NSP sites to ensure compliance with ACS' security and safety regulations. ACS also retained a nationally recognized expert in quality assurance for juvenile justice programs, Dr. Kelly Dedel, who is working with us to implement a comprehensive quality assurance system for Close to Home.

In 2016, ACS is also initiating longer-term strategies towards improving our system. We are increasing the number of visits to each of our sites to, at a minimum, eight per year. This will include one overnight unannounced visit to each site every quarter. NYPD crime prevention officers are visiting every Close to Home site to assess safety and security and recommend changes where necessary. In addition, in order to appropriately oversee our providers and conduct robust quality assurance, the de Blasio administration is adding \$4 million to ACS' Close to Home budget which will allow ACS to hire for 35 new positions across ACS. Eight of these positions are dedicated to monitoring the provider agency staff. The additional staff will improve our ability to respond to

critical incidents, continue the steep downward trend of AWOL incidents, and develop a data-driven approach to inspecting and evaluating program. We are also updating policies for our providers and enhancing requirements around security protocols within Close to Home residences.

This summer ACS will begin implementing Performance Based Standards (PbS), an established program that works with nearly 200 programs in over 30 states across the country to ensure strong practice in juvenile justice settings. We will also promulgate strengthened revised Quality Assurance Standards for our provider agencies.

Overview of DYFJ Residential Care

The safety and security of the community and of our young people is of paramount importance to ACS. The Boys Town incident highlighted the need for vigilant monitoring of our provider agencies, but it also highlights the importance of targeted programming for our young people in care to keep them engaged, to address their trauma, and to prevent risky behaviors. This is why the work we do with young people in our residential facilities is ever so important and why I am grateful for the opportunity to talk to you today about the services and programs DYFJ and our partners provide in residential care.

ACS provides secure and non-secure detention (NSD) services for Juvenile Delinquents and Juvenile Offenders whose cases are pending in Family or Criminal Court. DYFJ directly operates two secure facilities (Horizon Juvenile Center in the Bronx and Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brooklyn). DYFJ also oversees 11 not-for-profit provider agency-operated NSD group homes across the City. Given the relatively short length of stay for most young people in detention, the mission for this population is to ensure on time court appearances and expose young people to positive programming and services to encourage them to get on the right path upon discharge from residential care.

As you know, New York City's placement system, Close to Home, allows New York City youth who are adjudicated Juvenile Delinquents by the Family Court to be placed in residential programs closer to their families and home communities. A judge may order a youth to be placed in a residential placement program if the judge finds that the youth committed an offense and is in need of rehabilitative services.

Under Close to Home, young people receive therapeutic services at small group homes in or near the five boroughs where they are close to resources that can support their treatment and transition back into their communities. Currently, ACS' non-profit partners operate 25 non-secure placement residences and five limited secure placement residences. In contrast to detention, Close to Home placements last a longer period of time, thus the facilities are able to provide a lengthier timeline of intensive and therapeutic programming to youth in placement, including aftercare services. As such, we actively connect placed youth to programming that can be continued in the community while they are on aftercare.

Programming in Detention

Youth in our secure detention facilities receive education, health care, mental health services, dental care, recreational activities, and case management onsite. Within 72 hours of admission our young people receive a comprehensive medical evaluation, including a complete health exam and mental health assessment. To further support the mental health needs of youth in detention, ACS contracted with NYU /Bellevue Hospital to provide psychiatric and psychological services. Each secure detention site now has a full time psychiatrist and psychologist and youth are systematically screened for trauma exposure. Other services available to youth include assessment, evaluation and medication management.

Youth in secure detention attend the Passages Academy, a full time educational program that is operated by the NYC Department of Education (DOE) within both secure facilities. DOE schoolteachers execute a standard curriculum that includes English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, and enables youth to earn credits toward graduation. Each class is currently comprised of approximately eight students who share similar levels of academic need. The school day consists of eight periods, including lunch, and each period lasts 44 minutes. In addition to providing tutoring sessions, DOE teachers work with middle and high school students to help them prepare for Regents and English Language Arts examinations.

DYFJ partners with not-for-profit provider agencies to operate non-secure detention residences throughout the City. Non-secure detention offers a less restrictive residential setting than secure detention, so young people are able to leave the residence under staff supervision to attend school, medical appointments, and certain recreational activities. Youth in non-secure detention also receive health, mental health, recreational and case management services similar to those offered in secure detention.

Non-secure detention residents travel to one of two stand-alone community schools that solely serve juvenile justice-involved youth. The DOE provides instruction for NSD youth at two Passages Academy sites: Belmont in Brooklyn and Bronx Hope in the Bronx. As with their peers in secure detention, youth in NSD receive full academic instruction and accumulate DOE credits towards graduation.

DYFJ and our partners provide a range of recreational programs and services to justice-involved youth in secure and non-secure detention facilities. Through positive activities and strong role models, we hope to develop the skills young people need to redirect their lives in a positive direction when they leave our care. Within our residences, we and our providers partner with groups such as Carnegie Hall, Voices Unbroken, Columbia University, NYU, Lineage Project, and the

Center for Community Alternatives. We also partner with faith-based institutions to provide spiritual services. We are constantly reviewing our programs, including our arts and enrichment programs and are always looking to expand our portfolio of programming and services.

Close to Home

Young people in Close to Home receive individualized clinical services that are shaped by evidence-based models, which integrate psycho-education, cognitive-behavioral curricula, peer mentoring, interpersonal processing, and life skills development.

ACS has partnered with eight non-profit agencies to deliver strengths-based placement program models in 25 non-secure placement residences located in and near New York City. All eight providers have experience in serving juvenile justice populations, and each program offers structured residential care for six to twelve youth in a small, supervised, and home-like environment. In contrast to traditionally larger juvenile detention halls and placement facilities, all NSP programs have been intentionally designed to ensure participation in program while preserving the safety and security of youth, staff, and the surrounding community. Young people in NSP, while under strict staff supervision, are able to leave the residence to attend school, medical appointments, and certain recreational activities.

Limited Secure Placement, which opened in December 2015, currently has programs operating at four sites: two in the Bronx, one in Dobbs Ferry and one in Queens. In contrast to NSP, all programming and services are provided to young people on site, including medical, dental, psychiatric, and education. LSP residences also feature additional security features, such as perimeter fencing, closed-circuit TV monitoring, and door locking mechanisms.

Young people in NSP and LSP receive individualized educational services that are accredited by the NYC DOE. This allows academic credits earned in placement to count towards a

high school diploma. After school tutoring is also available to young people in NSP through the DOE, and they participate in a wide range of after school recreational activities through the School's Out in New York City (SONYC) program, which is offered through partnership with the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development.

As a way to help engage the community and foster meaningful relationships with the surrounding neighborhood, our partner agencies also work with outside service providers and community partners to provide recreational services to young people in our placement residences. Some of the most popular programming options in Close to Home include art and music therapy programs. Individual sites have also engaged charitable foundations, professional sports teams, service learning opportunities, and mentoring organizations to supplement the recreational programs offered to young people in placement. NSP providers have partnered with organizations such as Sadie Nash Leadership Project, and Warriors Mentoring Program to provide services, and also utilize local parks for recreational activities.

Current Reporting

ACS currently reports information regarding several aspects of our juvenile justice system, all of which is accessible via our agency's website. Information regarding children who receive ACS services at juvenile justice facilities is available, and ACS' monthly flash reports include statistics such as DYFJ's total monthly admissions to detention, monthly average daily population, and Close to Home intakes. Local Law 44 of 2013 requires ACS to post quarterly reports regarding incidents, annual reports regarding demographic data, as well as annual reports of child abuse allegations for detention and non-secure placement.

DYFJ's primary goals are to assure that our facilities are safe and secure, to provide youth in detention and placement with appropriate health and mental health services, and to provide services

to prevent youth from returning to the juvenile justice system. As reflected in the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for Fiscal Year 2016, we are doing a better job at linking our young people to mental health services as we have seen an increase in referrals from 50% during the first four months of Fiscal 2015 to 54% during the first four months of the current Fiscal Year. The percentage of young people who received mental health services rose from 46% to 56% during that same time period.

New York State Social Services Law section 404 requires ACS to submit an annual Close to Home report to the Office of Children and Family Services, the Senate President and the Assembly Speaker. Our Annual Close to Home report contains outcomes data, as well as detailed information on aftercare services, educational advancement, and community engagement.

Introduction 949

ACS is committed to maintaining transparency in the work that we do, and we are happy to share information about the programs and services we provide throughout our juvenile justice continuum with the City Council. We support the City Council's interest in learning more about the programming our youth receive while in care and share the Council's dedication to enhancing and maintaining positive programmatic approaches for justice-involved youth. Together we can work to define the parameters of this bill so that ACS is better able to provide the information the Council needs in a way that will most effectively suit the purpose of this legislation.

To better understand the requirements of the bill, we would like to work with the Council to clarify the meaning of "services and programs." The term can refer to the array of well-being services that we are required to provide for young people in our care, such as medical care, mental health services, education and recreational activities. The term can include different types of intensive evidence-based therapeutic programming that help young people change their behavior

and improve their outcomes, and it can also refer to the variety of “extracurricular” enrichment opportunities which we and our contract agencies partner with organizations in the community to provide for our young people. Without clarity and specificity in the definition of “services and programs” we are unable to determine whether ACS has the capacity to aggregate the required data, nor are we able to conceive of the form in which a report under this bill would take.

The daily schedule of services and programs throughout DYFJ’s continuum of residential settings varies from residence to residence, and are offered to young people based on their individualized needs. Because of this variation (and depending on the definition of “service or program”) it would be difficult to report the average number of hours per month that each “service or program” is provided, as well as the monthly percentage of young people who participate. Intro 949 would also require ACS to supply the daily schedule for each NSD residence, secure facility, NSP residence, and LSP residence- this would amount to the submission of 365 schedules multiplied by a total of 43 residences, for a total of 15,695 schedules per report.

We appreciate and applaud the interest this Committee has shown in the needs of justice-involved youth and always welcome opportunities to partner with the Council to address the interests of young people in residential care. We are concerned that Intro 949 does not capture this goal in its current form, however we wish to continue the cooperative relationship we have enjoyed with the Council and are glad to work with you to help achieve it.

Closing

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Intro 949 this afternoon. We also thank you for the opportunity to share with you the targeted actions ACS has taken to fortify safety and security in Close to Home so that we can prevent tragedies like the Boys Town incident from happening again. We have to get security right so we can continue to do the therapeutic work that we know benefits

youth and the community. As always, we are happy to work with the Committee in our continuing efforts to improve the system and to provide services for the City's justice-involved youth. We are happy to take your questions.

**New York City Council Oversight Hearing:
Testimony of Lineage Project, Inc.
Presented by
Gabrielle Horowitz-Prisco, Esq., M.A.
Executive Director**

**Re: Int. 949 - In relation to requiring the Administration for Children's Services to report on
programs and services provided to youth in placement and detention facilities**

**Submitted to the
Committee on Juvenile Justice
April 14, 2016**

I think meditation is a good way to relieve stress. Before I started taking the class I would have a lot of problems because of my temper. But now I can control my temper thanks to the yoga class.

Jose, 17, former Lineage student

My name is Gabrielle Horowitz-Prisco. I am the Executive Director of Lineage Project, Inc (Lineage). Founded in 1999, Lineage began its work by teaching adolescents on Rikers Island. Lineage currently serves New York City youth, age 10-24, who are incarcerated, homeless, suspended from school, and at high risk of dropping out and/or justice-involvement. The majority of the youth Lineage serves come from neighborhoods with a high police presence and high levels of poverty, inadequate housing, and under-performing schools. An understanding of the traumas and challenges these youth face and our deep belief in their inherent wisdom, resilience, and strength inform Lineage's culturally responsive programming. Lineage also serves the frontline staff members who work with justice-involved young people, recognizing that staff are often extremely taxed and under-resourced. Our mindfulness-based programs help youth and staff consciously manage stress, increase self-awareness and self-regulation, and cultivate compassion and non-violence.

Each year, we deliver our unique program model to young people age 10-24, in approximately 35 classes a week, in juvenile detention centers, alternative-to-incarceration programs, alternative learning centers for suspended youth, high-needs public schools, and a homeless shelter. We teach caregivers, staff, schoolteachers, and administrators alongside young people. Lineage works extensively with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) across multiple sites as detailed below.

Thank you to the Chair and members of the Juvenile Justice Committee this opportunity to testify.

I will begin with an outline Summary of Recommendations, each of which is detailed at the end of this testimony. I will then present 1) background on Lineage's programming overall; 2) an overview of Lineage's programs in ACS sites; 3) outline the benefits of SONYC Horizon, a DYCD, ACS, and Lineage Project partnership; and 4) conclude with detailed recommendations.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations Re: Int. 949

1. Int. 949 should be amended to include the collection and release of data related to the impact of programming on incidents such as fights, restraints, and room confinement.
2. Int. 949 should be further defined to clarify the distinction between programming and a "one-off" activity such as a basketball game or an outing.
3. If needed, ACS should be given funding to improve its data collection systems, including for any necessary technological upgrades.

Recommendations Re: Programming for Youth in Detention/Placement Generally

1. The New York City Council should create a "Programs for Justice" fund to provide additional funding for community-based non-profits serving youth in the justice system.

2. The City Council should lead efforts to leverage state and federal dollars to support programs for youth in detention and placement.
3. The City Council should increase funding for programming in the community.

Background on Lineage Project's Programming

Lineage's 3-part teaching model includes 1) meditation; 2) mindful movement practices (including yoga, Tai Chi, and Qigong); and 3) group life skills discussions focused on a theme such as "anger," "fear," "choice," or "acceptance."

Our model is based on resiliency theory, relational and trauma theory, and the research of Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn who demonstrated the positive impact of mindfulness-based practices on incarcerated populations. Dr. Kabat-Zinn defined mindfulness as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment by moment." Mindfulness practices have a unique capacity to make individuals conscious of the mental and emotional processes that occur beneath their ordinary reactions. By bringing consistent attention to this level of consciousness, youth can begin to break habitual patterns of action and reaction, and make positive choices in character and behavior:

Lineage has built the groundwork to evaluate the impact of mindfulness-based practices as a cutting-edge preventative and rehabilitative intervention for justice-involved and at-risk youth. We are one of only a few organizations developing and honing a direct service model in this modality, and capable of evaluating impact. In 2014, a statistical summary of the Lineage Program Evaluation Surveys showed that Lineage helped 86.8% of participants become more aware of their body, 90.8% more aware of their thoughts, 84% feel more calm and relaxed, and 73.7% to discover better ways to manage stress.

Lineage participants and staff also express these benefits in their own words:

Kayla, a former Lineage Project Student said: "Before learning yoga if I got angry I would hurt someone. So not only is my life saved but their life is saved from me."

Summer Deaver, a former Lineage teacher, shared this anecdote: Kimberly is about four feet tall, wiry and full of pent-up anger and energy. The first thing she said to me was not 'hello,' but 'I'm gonna throw you out the window.' She was a time bomb. Over the next few months, I saw tremendous change in all of the girls who attended my classes, especially Kimberly. Then, one morning, about then minutes into class, the door flies open, a girl runs in, gets into Kimberly's face and screams terribly nasty things to her. The class goes into chaos and all the girls run out the door. I found Kimberly in another room and beckoned her back into the room with the yoga mats. 'Let's look at how you reacted. What did you do, Kimberly?' Kimberly said, 'I didn't do nothing, but I wanted to punch her in the face.' I asked her, "What would you have done a month or two ago?" Kimberly said, 'I'd have beat the s*** out of her.' I asked, 'What stopped you today?' Kimberly took a breath and said, 'Myself.'"

Current Lineage Programming in Administration for Children's Services Sites

Lineage has been working with youth in New York's justice system for approximately sixteen years. An overview of our work with justice-involved youth in ACS care follows.

Lineage at Horizon Juvenile Center

Lineage has provided mindfulness programs to youth and staff inside Horizon for over a decade. Until September 2015, we offered these programs free of charge, which was very challenging for our small organization, as it is for our colleagues at other community-based organizations. In July 2015, we were awarded a SONYC contract by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to manage a comprehensive afterschool program in Horizon, discussed in a separate section below.

In addition to our regular bi-weekly classes at Horizon, in August 2015, we offered a five-day intensive for young women and staff at Horizon, filling a service gap. During the summer, there is no summer school and few other special programs are offered to fill the hours of confinement. Youth often become restless and bored, and tensions in New York City's detention centers tend to rise. Additionally, programming for young women is historically an undermet need within the detention system. This intensive model gave Lineage teachers the opportunity to connect in a personal and consistent way with the young women and staff, breaking through many of the participants' initial resistance. Facility staff reported a distinct and positive change in the atmosphere of the halls housing the participants.

Of participants in the intensive who completed the Lineage Project Class Evaluation Survey, 100% reported the classes helped them become more aware of their body, 80% reported the classes helped them become more aware of their thoughts, 60% reported the classes helped them become more aware of their emotions, and 100% reported the classes helped them discover better ways to manage stress. Youth reported using mindfulness practices at night, when they were alone in their cells, in order to calm themselves when they got worked up. One resident said, "I use it [mindfulness] to fall asleep." Another resident commented: "I learned how to be quiet."

Lineage's SONYC Horizon Program

In September 2015, Lineage Project launched the DYCD-funded SONYC afterschool program at Horizon. As the lead contractor for SONYC Horizon, Lineage both manages a comprehensive afterschool program and provide its own mindfulness-based classes for detained youth. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that community-based cultural programs have received compensation by the city for their work in Horizon.

Together, Lineage and our sub-contractors, working closely with Horizon and ACS staff, provide a wide-ranging set of creative and empowering programs designed to promote:

- 1) enrichment, including reading, writing, math, communication, teamwork, problem solving, and critical thinking;
- 2) leadership development, including service learning and civic engagement; and
- 3) physical activity and healthy living.

As part of SONYC Horizon, Lineage offers its own mindfulness classes and sub-contracts with and

manages the following programs:

- **Building Beats** (DJ, music production, entrepreneur and life skills): Building Beats' Teaching Artists teach youth how to produce music that fuses the digital with the traditional, while giving them insight into careers in the music industry and challenging them to work collaboratively. Youth create their own original music, and are exposed to and taught to use exciting musical technology. Participants' music can be shared with other staff and youth in detention and with families and caregivers. For example, a compilation of original music from the Building Beats program provided the soundtrack to a Horizon Family Day.
- **Carnegie Hall** (building music connections): Carnegie Hall's Artist in Residence fosters music connections for youth, including those who do not believe they have musical talent. Their program includes music creation, production, and performance, and represents a multi-year collaboration between the city and this world-class music organization. Youth in Carnegie's program build pathways to continue their interests in music, with a focus on those youth continuing onto a justice placement, and staff are invited to actively engage alongside youth.
- **Drama Club** (theatre, empathy and skills building, and mentoring): Drama Club provides youth with theater programming as a means of developing empathy, promoting academic growth and empowering the individual through self-expression. Drama Club offers the opportunity for such creative, academic engagement and leadership, while developing mastery of the four Language Literacies, and the Common Core State Learning Standards (CCLS).
- **Flex Dance** (movement and freestyle performance, life skills): Flex uses skilled dancers from the local community to communicate life lessons and emotional equanimity. The program seeks to create an authentic routine that will elicit trust and cooperation between the residents and staff. The Flex community frequently holds dance events, freestyle sessions, and competitions where young people can get involved after their release. Transforming energy into a positive, non-verbal expression may help the program participants find personal solutions to conflict in fundamentally non-violent ways.
- **Power Writers** (literacy, creative writing, and poetry): Power Writers' sessions focus on literacy and writing. Power Writers' core curriculum includes writing and reciting poetry, a student-lead comment and response component, individual commentary by teaching artists/mentors on participants' own writing, discussions about major current events that may be relevant to participants, a section in which students read aloud and analyze a selected passage of text, and exploration of other forms of writing such as essays, letters, speeches, fiction or academic papers. The goals and objectives of the Power Writers curriculum are the effective and practical mastery of the four language literacies: Reading; Writing; Public Speaking; and Active Listening. Power Writers programs will also help youth gain mastery over the Common Core State Learning Standards (CCLS).
- **Shadow Box Theatre** (puppet making): Using a problem-solving method developed by a formerly incarcerated Teaching Artist, Shadow Box Theatre, students participate in puppet-making workshops where they learn new and old puppet techniques with the goal of learning ways of creating and reimagining the self, and negotiating social life.
- **4As through Community Connections for Youth** (credible messenger mentoring): A leadership initiative for youth who, by virtue of their prior experience with the justice system and their desire to give back to their communities, are "Credible Messengers." The 4As

Mentors (Credible Messengers) facilitate a mentoring group at Horizon, using the Change Companies Interactive Journaling curriculum. This group-mentoring model engages participants in a variety of leadership development activities, and supports emotional literacy, community awareness and family relationships. The 4As program is a project of the Bronx-based Community Connections for Youth.

Benefits of SONYC Horizon: A DYCD, ACS, and Lineage Project Partnership

SONYC Horizon programs allow youth to explore their interests and find interests they never knew they had. Many of our programs have expressive and creative elements, offering youth opportunities to find their voices, express their truths, create something positive, and share their creative expressions with other residents and staff. One young girl, Felicia, was seen by many at Horizon as just a problem. When she got to the Power Writers SONYC program and was able to share her poetry, people were amazed at her talent. Lineage SONYC staff believes those who heard her poetry, especially facility staff, saw Felicia as more whole and three-dimensional, and were able to recognize her strengths.

Anecdotally, it appears that programming reduces the incidents of altercations and other disruptions in the facility. For example, Lineage ran SONYC programming on one school holiday and was informally told by staff that incidents were lower than they usually are on school holidays. Traditionally, NYC detention has struggled to provide programming during school holidays. SONYC Horizon has a limited holiday schedule and works hard to provide programs during times when school is on break.

As detailed in the “Recommendations” section below, Lineage Project recommends strengthening Int. 949 by including a recommendation that ACS collect and publicly release data that tracks and measures the relationship between programming and incidents, including fights and altercations between youth, the use of restraints on youth, and the use of room confinement. The City Council, through Local Law 44 of 2013, already requires ACS to collect and publish quarterly and annual Incident Reports.¹ This data, disseminated through ACS’s website, cannot currently be analyzed with regard to programs. For example, policymakers, providers, and the public are currently unable to evaluate whether youth who participate in programs get in less fights, are restrained less frequently by staff, or are less frequently subjected to room confinement. This means that providers, the Council, and other policymakers cannot meaningfully evaluate the impact of programs on these critically important measures.

SONYC Horizon has fostered a deep collaboration between ACS and Lineage. Lineage also works very closely and collaboratively with DYCD staff. Lineage has a staff member, the SONYC Horizon Program Manager, on site four times a week. The Program Manager works extremely closely with ACS’s frontline and administrative staff, ensuring that programs run smoothly within the detention setting. Lineage has also met with ACS leadership to review and improve programming within Horizon. On the DYCD side, Lineage closely collaborates with DYCD staff. For example, DYCD’s Deputy Director of Older and Vulnerable Youth Programs suggested a creative and wonderful idea for the creation of an Activity Book that Lineage could offer youth who cannot attend programming. Lineage is now working to realize that idea, and will create an Activity Book, with activities from various SONYC providers, that youth can use when they are not in programming, and after they

¹ See <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/data-analysis.page>

leave the facility (either through transfer to another facility or after release to their families and communities). In another example, the same Deputy Director attended a “Listening Session” at Horizon, where students in the SONYC-funded Building Beats program shared music they made with staff and other youth, and had the opportunity to speak to this audience about how and why they made their own music, and what their music meant to them. ACS, DYCD, and Lineage staff also had the opportunity to respond to the students’ music and share some words of reflection with the youth participants. The fact that a community-based mindfulness program has a staff member housed in a city detention facility, combined with this level of engagement with both DYCD and ACS, is remarkable and speaks to the hard work being done by ACS, DYCD, and community based organizations to positively shift the culture inside detention.

Increased data transparency, such as that reflected in Int.-949, is another important tool to promote a culture shift within ACS facilities. Increasing transparency and evaluation of programs within ACS sites will help promote positive youth development and programs that recognize and build upon young people’s unique strengths and talents. Programs for justice-involved youth can also help directly address the kinds of behavioral issues that, for many youth, undergird involvement in the justice system, a topic I will now turn to.

SONYC Horizon Benefits: Helping Youth Respond to Violence

Unfortunately, some months ago, there was an altercation involving residents at Horizon. One of the young men, who we will call Jay, was significantly hurt in the altercation and was being transferred out of the facility. Jay had a history of challenging behaviors and required intensive staff supervision in a previous facility. He also expressed an interest in yoga. After the incident, Lineage staff requested the opportunity to speak with Jay. Lineage’s SONYC Program Director spoke to Jay about his wonderful participation in SONYC programs, and his leadership skills, creativity, and maturity. Lineage’s mindfulness teacher asked if he might take anything from the mindfulness classes to his new facility. Jay said he remembered the “body breathing meditation” taught by Lineage. The Lineage’s teacher offered Jay the opportunity to learn another meditation that he could take with him. Jay was interested, and Bart led a meditation with Jay sitting down, talking to Jay about how he might soften in the body where there might be pain or where attention is drawn, drawing his awareness to body breathing, and guiding Jay on framing whatever state/emotion he felt by studying it. Afterward, Jay said it was helpful even though he was a little distracted. Lineage staff also asked Jay if he had his journal with him from the Power Writers SONYC program since he had been writing prolifically. He did not have it with him and wanted it. Lineage let an ACS staff member know, and the staff member brought Jay his journal, Bible, and books. Here is a poem Jay wrote in Power Writers:

LOST AND FOUND

I am lost
but I'm trying to be found
even though I was never lost
I am lost to myself

A world of nothing
a path I will take if I choose to do wrong

Lost & found

I am a young man

waiting to be found

I feel as if I live in an empty space

with no one around

Why

Because when I need support and help

there is nobody to be found

this world is full of hatred

that EVERYTIME I listen

There is never a calm and collective sound...

Jay said: “when I need support and help there is nobody to be found.” But we as adults can and must create networks of support and help so that youth like Jay do not feel so alone. And we can and must equip young people with tools that enable them to gain a sense of competency, build resiliency, and make more skillful choices in their daily lives. Programming in the youth justice system is an integral part of such efforts, and can often reach youth in a way that purely educational or therapeutic programs cannot. Programs reach youth where they are often most receptive—in their hearts, through their words and bodies, and through their connections to other people and their deepest selves.

While the kind of anecdotal evidence presented above is powerful, as noted elsewhere, we believe that increased evaluation of the impact of programs on violence in facilities will enable an even greater investment in programs. With this kind of data, the city and providers can make a stronger case to outside philanthropy and other funders (such as the state and federal governments) about the need for greater investment.

SONYC Horizon Benefits: Family Engagement

SONYC providers regularly participate in Horizon’s Family Days, engaging caregivers and youth in our programs and exposing caregivers to their young people’s skills. For example, several SONYC Horizon programs participated in one recent Family Day. A group of youth participated in a dance performance facilitated by Flex Dance. As noted earlier, as caregivers and youth visited with one another, a soundtrack of powerful and original music created by youth in the Building Beats program played in the background. Drama Club facilitated games for residents and their families, including their younger siblings. Residents who participated in Drama Club programming helped lead and facilitate the games. Power Writers had students perform their original poetry, and one student sang. In just a short time, we have seen an increase in residents’ participation and confidence from one Family Day to another. For example, at our first SONYC Family Day, only four youth chose to participate in the Flex Dance performance. That number doubled by the next Family Day.

These are just a few examples of Lineage’s SONYC program in action and the myriad benefits youth experience. SONYC Horizon goes far beyond any program or service currently offered at Horizon. We believe this model of a comprehensive afterschool program for justice-involved youth has serious potential for national replication, and are interested in learning how we might help the program model expand beyond New York City.

Lineage at Crossroads Juvenile Center

Lineage began teaching mindfulness classes at Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brooklyn (secure detention) in 2008. As with Horizon and Bridges (where we taught for six years prior to its closing), prior to the SONYC organization, Lineage worked for many years without pay, which was stressful for our organization.

Beginning in September 2015 and running through mid-April 2016, Lineage's work at Crossroads transitioned to the umbrella of SONYC programming under a sub-contract with the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA). As part of SONYC Crossroads, Lineage offers one 90-minute class a week at Crossroads, available to both youth and staff. Lineage teachers at Crossroads offer mindfulness based programming using yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, and meditation.

Lineage at Passages Academy at the Belmont School

As part of another SONYC grant managed by the Center for Community Alternatives, Lineage offers classes at the Belmont School (Belmont), part of Passages Academy (within the NYC Department of Education's District 79). Belmont serves NYC youth within both Non-Secure Detention (NSD) and Close to Home Non-Secure Placement (NSP). Belmont is predominantly a high school, although it also serves youth who are not yet in high school. Staff from NSDs and NSPs are embedded in the school, and work with youth and teachers.

Recommendations

New York City, particularly the Department of Youth and Community Development and the Administration for Children's Services, deserve recognition and validation for their recent and concentrated work to increase programming for youth in the justice system. Now we must continue and build upon these groundbreaking efforts. Lineage urges the City Council to play an active leadership role in expanding programming for youth in detention and placement, and respectfully supports Int. 949 and offers the following recommendations:

Recommendations Re: Int. 949

1. Int. 949 should be amended to include the collection and release of data related to the impact of programming on incidents such as fights, restraints, and room confinement. As noted above, Lineage has received some minor anecdotal reports that the existence of SONYC programming has had a positive impact on incidents in Horizon. Concrete data on these metrics would be of great use to the city and providers in efforts to seek increased external program funding. As also described in more detail above, Local Law 44 of 2013 passed by the New York City Council already requires ACS to post quarterly and annual Incident Reports. This kind of data cannot currently be analyzed with regard to programming. Thus, policymakers, providers, and the public are unable to evaluate the impact of programs on fights and altercations between youth, the use of restraints by staff, and the use of room confinement.

2. Int. 949 should be further defined to clarify the distinction between programming and a "one-off" activity such as a basketball game or an outing. While both programs and activities are important and should be measured and reported on, there are meaningful distinctions between the kinds of ongoing programs that Lineage and other providers offer and single activities such as a

movie viewing or a sports game. The City Council should further refine the resolution to make this distinction clear and the data released by ACS should clearly reflect this distinction.

3. If needed, ACS should be given funding to improve its data collection systems, including for any necessary technological upgrades. Data collection in the context of detention and placement centers can be complex and difficult to implement. In addition to the day-to-day logistical demands of facilities operation, there may be technological limitations. Outdated technology should not be a barrier to data collection. If necessary, ACS should receive funding sufficient to overcome these barriers.

Recommendations Re: Programming for Youth in Detention/Placement Generally

1. The New York City Council should create a “Programs for Justice” fund to provide additional funding for community-based non-profits serving youth in the justice system. As noted above, the DYCD-funded SONYC programs represent the first time, to our knowledge, that community-based programs are being compensated for their work. Although this is a significant improvement and DYCD and ACS should be widely acknowledged and applauded for this visionary effort, many programs operating in the justice system are not part of SONYC and are still operating without any city payment. As an organization that (prior to SONYC) served youth throughout the justice system for approximately 15+ years without any city payment, Lineage can speak first hand to the fiscal challenges this creates. Also, it appears that the true costs of programs, taking into account both direct and indirect costs, for both “lead” organizations and their subcontractors may be greater than reimbursement under the SONYC contracts and subcontracts. Finally, the SONYC contracts are reimbursable contracts that are not paid until the completion of a lengthy contract registration process that can span many months. This can create challenges for providers relying primarily on contract reimbursement to fund programs. Operating programs without any city funding or receiving less than complete reimbursement for all costs, including all indirect costs, can place financial stress on providers and stymie organizational growth, directly impacting the number of New York City youth an organization can serve overall. These financial hardships are most significantly felt by small community-based organizations. DYCD should not shoulder this financial burden alone. The Council has an important role to play in helping to fill these gaps. Creating a “Programs for Justice” fund that community-based non-profits could apply to for additional funding in order to serve court-involved youth would be an important step forward.

2. The City Council should lead efforts to leverage state and federal dollars to support programs for youth in detention and placement. The City Council has the chance to exercise leadership in this area and should prioritize identifying and pursuing opportunities to leverage state and federal dollars for cultural programming. The City Council should dedicate staff to actively search for such funding opportunities and collaborate with community-based cultural programs to apply for these opportunities once identified.

3. The City Council should increase funding for programming in the community. The bulk of the kids in the justice system come from approximately seven to ten neighborhoods. These are the same neighborhoods that lack theatre and music programs, accessible yoga studios, and many of the other programs that can now be found behind bars. It is devastating and wrong that the first time many young people ever have the chance to perform a song or poem they wrote is after they are locked up. Kids in a NYC detention center have the opportunity to grow vegetables and learn about

healthy eating, while their home communities lack access to affordable fresh and healthy produce. And kids in a Lineage class on the inside are taught practices that can help them stay centered, calm, and in control of their actions even in difficult situations, while they and their families cannot afford the \$20 to \$28+ price tag of many city yoga studios. The City Council should increase its investment in cultural programming for our city's youth, with a particular concentration of funds on those neighborhoods with the largest representation in the justice system. In addition to exposing children and families to the kinds of interests and experiences that can enrich their entire lives, this investment will pay priceless dividends by keeping youth out of the justice system to begin with.



New York City Council Hearing

Testimony Re: Int. 949 – In relation to requiring the Administration for Children’s Services to report on programs and services provided to youth in placement and detention facilities

Judy Yu, MPH, Director, Juvenile Justice Project, Correctional Association of New York

4/14/2016

I am the Director of the Juvenile Justice Project of the Correctional Association of New York. The Correctional Association of New York is an independent, non-profit organization founded by concerned citizens in 1844 and granted unique authority by the New York State Legislature to inspect prisons and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature, the public and the press. The Juvenile Justice Project works to reduce incarceration of children and youth, and create a safe, publicly transparent and accountable youth justice system. Through advocacy, coalition building, youth leadership development, and public education, we promote child centered policies and practices that protect the dignity, safety and human rights of youth who come into contact with the law.

Thank you to the Juvenile Justice Committee Chair Fernando Cabrera and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify.

The Correctional Association of New York (the CA) supports Int. No. 949, a local law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, requiring the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to report on programs and services provided to youth in placement and detention facilities. The CA commends the New York City Council Members for proposing this law. We provided testimony in January 2015 urging enactment of such legislation. Our testimony noted that providing comprehensive and effective programs and services to young people in ACS detention and placement facilities is important for young people's well-being and growth, and has been shown to both reduce recidivism and increase long-term positive outcomes. We noted in our testimony at the time that Council Members, community and family members, and advocates should have access to information about the programs and services in detention and placement to fully understand and analyze the provision of such programs and services. We support the proposed legislation and have additional recommendations to enhance its effectiveness. My testimony will focus on the following recommendations:

- 1) ACS should report the percentage of youth in each facility utilizing such services and programs disaggregated by gender¹, age, and race/ethnicity.**
- 2) ACS should provide a summary accompanying the report that provides a brief description of each program/service provided at each facility.**
- 3) In its report, ACS should explain how they define "utilization" of services and programs.**
- 4) The law should mandate reporting about family engagement in programs/activities for youth in placement and detention.**
- 5) The law should require ACS release incident data filtered by participation in programs/services.**

¹ Close to Home and non-secure detention facilities are generally single sex. However, Horizons and Crossroads have both male and female units so it is necessary to see the percentage of youth in the male units and the percentage of youth in the female units who participated in programs and services. If there are any non-secure detention or Close to Home placement facilities where youth designated male and female are housed together, ACS should report by gender the percentage of youth utilizing programs/services at those facilities as well.

6) To understand how the program/services needs of LGBTQ youth are being served the law should require that ACS: 1) report on the percentage of staff in each detention and placement facility that received LGBTQ training; and 2) report on the programs/services that have any LGBTQ specific content embedded in the curriculum.

The Need for Reporting on Programs and Services

As discussed in our testimony from January 30, 2015, the need for youth in the youth justice system to receive programs and services is critical. Research shows that programs focused specifically on promoting youth's positive development are the most effective interventions and have the potential to reduce recidivism rates by up to forty percent.² We commend ACS for its commitment to enhancing the programs and services they are offering to youth, particularly programs and services that address youth's significant mental health needs and which are trauma-informed. A high number of young people entering the justice system—between seventy-five to ninety-three percent nationally—have experienced trauma and/or suffer from mental illness.³ Effective mental health programs can reduce recidivism by up to eighty percent, but since involvement in the system and specific interactions can also further traumatize youth, thoughtful and systematic programming is crucial.⁴ Research shows that the best programs place an emphasis on behavior change, decision-making, and the development of social skills among different groups.⁵ Furthermore, our testimony pointed out that children in the justice system are still children. Like all children, youth in facilities thrive when programs are offered that stimulate their imagination, creativity and sense of possibility in the world. It is critical that programming and services for youth provide not only therapeutic options, but also places and spaces to safely play, explore, and grow.

As ACS continues to develop and expand its programming for youth in placement and detention, it is equally important that Council Members, community and family members, and advocates should have access to information about the programs and services for children in detention and placement. Parents in New York City have access to information about their child's education, including daily schedule, classes, and activities. They can find out their child's school's graduation rate, suspension rate, attendance rate, and a host of other metrics. They are also able to call their child's school, visit the school, and observe classes and activities. We recognize there are important differences between a school setting and a confined youth justice setting in which complex clinical and safety issues may be present. However, parents, caregivers, community members, advocates, and members of this and other legislative bodies have a right to know what is happening to and for youth inside locked facilities, how their tax dollars are being spent, and what those dollars are buying in terms of outcomes.

Recommendations

² Elizabeth Seigle, Nastassia Walsh & Josh Weber, *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* 19 (2014).

³ Justice Policy Institute, *Healing Invisible Wounds: Why Investing in Trauma-Informed Care for Children Makes Sense* 1, 10 (2010).

⁴ Paul Gendreau & Claire Goggin, *The Principles of Effective Intervention with Offenders*, in *Choosing Correctional Options that Work* (1996).

⁵ Justice Policy Institute, *Healing Invisible Wounds: Why Investing in Trauma-Informed Care for Children Makes Sense* 1, 10 (2010).

As proposed by Int. No. 949, ACS must report on all services and programs provided to youth in each facility during each six month period of a year, including daily schedule of services and programs; average number of hours provided of each such services and programs each month, by type of program/service; the percentage of youth in each such facility utilizing such services and programs in each month, disaggregated by type of program/service; and average total expenditure for youth residing in each such facility disaggregated by expenditure category. While this is an important start, it will not inform families and the greater public if youth in custody are receiving a robust or even adequate amount of programming/services, and if the programs/services meet the diverse needs of the population in care. Therefore, we recommend the following additional information be reported.

1) ACS should report the percentage of youth in each facility utilizing such services and programs disaggregated by gender⁶, age, and race/ethnicity.

It is vital that families and the public to have information about whether the programs/services in detention and placement reflect the backgrounds, identities, and cultures of youth in custody. It is also important to track whether girls in the system are responding to the programs/services being offered. We noted in our previous testimony on January 30, 2015 that girls make up a growing percentage of the youth justice population nationwide, but their needs are often not met by a youth justice system that was primarily designed for males.⁷ Detention and placement settings are not designed to address some problems that may be specific to or more prevalent among girls, including trauma and sexual abuse (issues that boys also face), certain physical health problems, and the needs of pregnant and parenting girls.⁸ There is a need for more gender responsive programming—programs that are comprehensive, safe, empowering, community and family focused, and relational.⁹ At the same time, it is critical that gender-responsive programs do not fall into stereotypes about girls (such as focusing solely on feelings and not providing opportunities for girls to learn concrete skills, such as mechanics). It is also crucial for staff and program providers to understand and work with gender in a nuanced way, including the fact that not all young people who are identified as female at birth identify as female or as girls, and that programming/services for girls should include transgender girls. We are heartened by efforts Commissioner Carrión and her staff have made toward incorporating gender responsive programming and services, including a recent all day convening on the issues girls in New York City's foster care and youth justice systems face and innovative and effective responses. It would be helpful for City Council and the public to see how many girls in the system are being served.

2) ACS should provide a summary accompanying the report that provides a brief description of each program/service provided at each facility.

⁶ Close to Home and non-secure detention facilities are generally single sex facilities. However, Horizons and Crossroads have both male and female units so it is necessary to see the percentage of youth in the male units and the percentage of youth in the female units who participated in programs and services. If there are any non-secure detention or Close to Home placement facilities where youth designated male and female are housed together, ACS should report the percentage of youth utilizing programs/services disaggregated by gender at those facilities as well.

⁷ Liz Watson & Peter Edelman, *The Juvenile Justice System for Girls: Lessons from the States* ii (2012).

⁸ Vanessa Patino et al., *A Rallying Cry for Change: Charting a New Direction in the State of Florida's Response to Girls in the Juvenile Justice System* 35, 41-42 (2006); *see also* Erica J. Adams, *Healing Invisible Wounds: Why Investing in Trauma-Informed Care for Children Makes Sense* 6 (2010).

⁹ Francine T. Sherman, *Pathways to Juvenile Detention Reform: Detention Reform and Girls, Challenges and Solutions* 53 (2005).

To understand further if ACS is serving the needs of all youth with diverse needs, we recommend that ACS provide a description of each program/service provided at each facility. This should include whether any programs/services are specifically for certain populations of youth, such as young men, young women, and LGBTQ youth, whose needs we will discuss in more detail later in this testimony. In addition, we recommend ACS provide descriptions of the major needs or issues each program/service aims to address, such as special education, substance use, problematic sexual behaviors, limited English, commercial sexual exploitation, serious emotional disturbance, and developmental and intellectual disabilities.

3) In its report, ACS should explain how they define “utilization” of services and programs.

The proposed law will result in a report that shows that a percentage of youth utilized programs/services per month at a facility. To get a better sense of youth engagement with programs and services, we recommend that the law require the agency to define what they consider utilization. For example, if a youth attends a program one time in the month, is that considered utilization of that program? While it is unrealistic to expect 100% attendance rates for all programs and services, erratic or rare youth participation in programs and services will not be as beneficial as consistent engagement. For greater transparency and clarity about youth’s participation in programs and services, we recommend that the law ask ACS what they consider “utilization” when reporting this data.

4) The law should mandate reporting about family engagement hours in programs/activities for youth in placement and detention.

Forty years’ worth of research has consistently found that family engagement improves outcomes for justice system involved youth, including reduced violent incidents while in care and improved recidivism rates.¹⁰ According to a recent report from the Vera Institute on family engagement, facilities in places like Indiana, Oregon, Vermont, and Wisconsin, allow families to visit every day and have seen positive results, and youth with frequent contact with families show dramatically lower incidents in the facility. The Annie Casey Foundation’s Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) updated their Juvenile Detention Facility Assessment to promote family engagement, which included the elimination or reduction of barriers to connect with family through phone or visits. Family engagement and identifying supports in the community such as mentors, extended family members, or positive peers, can help with successful reentry and ultimately prevent recidivism. We recommend that the City Council require that ACS report on the amount of family engagement for each youth in each facility by type of program/service. This should include family therapy or other therapeutic activities that involve family members directly, as well as family attendance at recreational or celebratory activities. These informal opportunities for family members to connect with their children while they are in custody are equally valuable for the positive development of youth in the system.

5) The law should require ACS release incident data filtered by participation in programs/services.

ACS was placed under a Corrective Action Plan from NYS OCFS regarding the excessive use of restraints and room confinement in its detention facilities, although it is our understanding that due to improvements ACS will be released from the plan shortly. In their Secure Detention Focused

¹⁰ Shanahan, Ryan and Margaret diZerega (2016). Identifying, Engaging and Empowering Families: A Charge for Juvenile Justice Agencies. Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and Vera Institute of Justice.

Review, OCFS specifically stated that ACS should increase the availability of programming for youth during the day and evening. OCFS also stated that increasing the assortment of activities, including recreational, social and cultural programming, and educational and vocational programming, would contribute to enriching the day to day environment in detention and would engage youth in a healthier way.

A research brief from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids notes that studies show that after school programs can reduce youth crime and violence.¹¹ The report further cites that keeping youth engaged in such programs helps reduce gang involvement and criminal behavior. Keeping youth in detention and placement meaningfully engaged in programs and activities likely will reduce incidents with staff and among youth in custody. Therefore, we recommend that ACS release incident data filtered by program/services participation. Specifically, ACS should report what percentage of youth involved in peer-on-peer altercation, youth-on-staff altercation, physical or mechanical restraint by staff member, and room confinement per month received programs/services that month. This will provide an initial understanding of the relationship between youth engagement in programs/services and use of force and incident rates at detention and placement facilities.

6) To understand how the program/services needs of LGBTQ youth are being served the law should require that ACS: 1) report on the percentage of staff in detention and placement at each facility who received LGBTQ training; and 2) report on the programs/services that have any LGBTQ specific content embedded in the curriculum.

National data indicates that there are disproportionate numbers of LGBTQ youth in the youth justice system, with one study finding that 20% of youth in detention identified as LGB or gender non-conforming.¹² This same study found that 40% of girls in the system self-identify as LGBTQ. We applaud ACS for its strong LGBTQ anti-discrimination policy and guidelines, developed in collaboration with advocates, including the Correctional Association. We also laud ACS for mandating that Close to Home providers adhere to this policy. However, it is unclear whether this policy is meaningfully implemented at all facilities and whether LGBTQ youth in detention and placement are receiving LGBTQ affirming programs/services. Discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression has a serious impact on an LGBTQ GNC youth's ability to participate meaningfully and successfully in programs. The report should provide some information about whether there are LGBTQ affirming programs/services. To this end, and given the limited data currently available, we recommend that ACS report on the number of staff in each detention and placement facility that completed mandatory training on working with LGBTQ youth. We further recommend that ACS specify the program/services that have any LGBTQ content embedded in the curriculum. As discussed earlier, we recommend that the agency provide a summary of programs/services at each facility and that the summary includes information about any programs/services that are designed specifically to serve a particular population, including LGBTQ youth.

Conclusion

¹¹ Fight Crime Invest in Kids. New York City's Out-of-School Time Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement (Brief) (2007). Please see: <http://www.fightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/reports/NYC%20AS%20%20%20pager.pdf>

¹² Irvine, Angela. LGBT/GNC Youth in Juvenile Justice, National Council on Crime and Delinquency (2015). Please see: <http://www.nccdglobal.org/blog/lgbtgn-youth-in-juvenile-justice>

The Correctional Association supports Int. No. 949 and commends the City Council Members sponsoring this bill for their dedication to increasing the transparency of the City's youth justice system. Family members, community members, advocates, and legislators have the right to know how youth in our detention and placement facilities are spending their days. In addition, providing a rich array of programs and services to support the growth and development of youth improves outcomes for youth and communities. A report that provides data on youth participation in different programs/services and the fiscal investment in such programs/services also helps family members, advocates, and other community stakeholders engage in informed conversation with ACS about detention and placement programs, and can encourage meaningful feedback on how to improve such programs. We believe the proposed legislation and our suggested additions can encourage greater transparency, accountability, and clarity about the utilization and impact of such programs and services. The Correctional Association believes ACS and this Council has a strong foundation on which to build, and we will enthusiastically continue our work with both bodies to improve our youth justice system's transparency and effectiveness, and outcomes for the city's youth and public safety.

TESTIMONY ¹

by

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**to the
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
regarding**

Int. No. 949

**TO AMEND THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, IN RELATION TO
REQUIRING THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO REPORT ON PROGRAMS
AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH IN PLACEMENT AND DETENTION FACILITIES**

April 14, 2016

Committee Room - City Hall

Good afternoon.

My name is Jeffrey Butts and I am director of the Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, part of the City University of New York.

I am here today with my colleague, Emily Pelletier.

We would like to thank the Chair and other members of the Council for the opportunity to speak today about the quality of interventions for justice-involved young people in New York City.

My professional career began in social services. Emily started out as a lawyer. Today, we are both researchers focusing on the effectiveness of justice systems.

We live and work in New York, but between us, we have worked in and around the youth services and youth justice systems of Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington, DC. If you include our funded projects to improve policies and practices at the State and local level, we have worked all over the U.S. and several other countries as well.

Most relevant for today's hearing, we have also worked to improve the data collection and data analysis capacities of many youth-serving organizations here in New York City.

¹ Views expressed are the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, or any of their sponsors and funding partners.

We are currently working with the staff of the Administration for Children's Services to support their efforts to track a wider array of outcomes among the youth and families served by ACS.

After reviewing the Bill under discussion today (0949-2015), we offer the following observations.

Today's Bill mandates regular reporting of service activities by ACS. This is a laudable goal, but it is not sufficient. If we want to establish policies that ensure effective oversight of services for justice-involved youth, we should pursue three critical tasks:

1. We must build information systems with individual-level data, not aggregate data;
2. We must collect data from an array of partner agencies and work to integrate the data across organizational boundaries; and
3. We must assemble outcome data on a range of indicators and not be satisfied to judge the effectiveness of youth justice based on the simple and often inadequate measure of "recidivism."

The Bill being discussed today requires ACS to report aggregate and group-level counts of service delivery on a periodic basis, which is fine for baseline auditing.

However, if the Council intends to determine which City-supported programs are effective and which are not, you must demand routine collection of data at the individual level rather than the group level.

Certainly, it is helpful to know how many young people in a given program, or served by a particular provider, actually participated in services. As a temporary strategy, this is a natural step in building good data systems. But, when agencies are required to provide only aggregate data, they are not incentivized to look *beyond* aggregate data.

Emily and I work at the City University of New York. If CUNY supported its important decision-making with aggregate data alone, the university would need only to monitor how many students are currently enrolled in classes, or how many classes are offered, or the average attendance rate across classrooms.

Any parent of a college-aged student, of course, would want to know much more. Specifically, of all students who begin taking classes in one year, how many go on to graduate within four to five years? What is the grade point average of all students? Does it vary by age, or by family income? Which academic specialties have the highest average grades, the highest rates of graduation, and the highest rates of post-graduate employment? Are there identifiable factors that would increase a student's chances of reaching these positive milestones?

These questions can only be answered by tracking individual-level data over time. The university would need to collect ongoing information about each student's activities and correlate them with the most important outcomes.

This information would have to be maintained for every student and kept in a way that allows the newest information to be appended to the oldest information. In other words, graduation records would have to include individual identifiers or ID numbers that allow analysts to attach today's outcome data to previous data about the students enrolled four, five, or ten years ago.

The data management challenges facing ACS are at least—if not more—difficult than those facing a university.

Reducing delinquency and youth violence among justice-involved young people is a complicated business. Public safety is best protected when youth justice providers work with young people in their own communities, and when the efforts of courts and children's services are coordinated with prevention agencies, schools, social services, neighborhood organizations, and faith-based groups.

The most effective youth justice systems offer a broad menu of interventions that are managed collaboratively and across sectors. No single agency can do it all.

From a data perspective, it would be easier, of course, if New York just put all its young offenders in one place—under the supervision of one agency. If we confined all youth in a big, prison-like facility where we could control their every movement, it would be easy to demonstrate that we were making a real effort to protect the community.

We actually did that for decades, as we all know, and we found that this strategy was ineffective, incredibly expensive, and harmful.

Instead, youth justice systems around the country are moving toward community-based networks of private providers that are managed and overseen by public agencies.

This is exactly what ACS has been doing very successfully, which is why the agency is increasingly watched by youth justice experts nationwide.

Of course, youth justice is never perfect. Interventions are often poorly funded and sometimes delivered inconsistently. Agencies do not always communicate well with one another and it is impossible to avert every crisis.

Obviously, when your clients are identified specifically for their bad behavior, sometimes your clients will behave badly.

Yet, we cannot lose focus and shift our core strategies every time a terrible crime is committed. We must use reliable data to track our efforts and we must work to ensure that we never lose an opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.

Children and youth services in New York are, in fact, becoming more transparent, more accountable, and more effective.

Just 20 years ago, it was much harder to determine how effective the youth justice system was because the agencies making up that system were incapable of generating useful data.

Today, the citizens of New York City know much more about how youth are dealt with by the police, by the courts, by probation, and by ACS.

Serious challenges remain, of course, but New York's community-based approach, called "Close to Home," is backed by research and increasingly admired by youth justice experts.

If the City is to have a fully accountable youth services system based on solid data, it will also have to collect information about a range of outcomes and not simply focus on recidivism.

Recidivism is not a sufficient measure of effectiveness in youth justice because it is not a measure of youth progress or well-being. It is the result of interactions between individuals and the State, as well as the policy environment in which they come together.

Recidivism is not a crime measure. It captures the sequence of person-bureaucracy interactions that follow a crime. Not all crimes are reported, and only some reported crimes are followed by arrest and prosecution. Recidivism does not offer a comprehensive measure of effectiveness.

For this reason, youth justice systems need to compile data on a wider range of outcomes – especially those representing positive improvements in a youth's social development and the likelihood of future success.

In our written testimony, we include a number of conceptual frameworks that are available for youth justice systems seeking to enhance their measurement of positive youth outcomes.

They include the following:

Positive Youth Justice

- Positive Youth Justice is a model that I developed with some colleagues. Our report was published by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, a national membership organization of state and local youth justice agencies. The report is also available on the website of our research center at *JohnJayREC.nyc*.
- The Positive Youth Justice model encourages youth justice systems to focus on protective factors as well as risk factors, strengths as well as problems, positive outcomes as well as negative outcomes, and generally to focus on facilitating successful transitions to adulthood for justice-involved youth (Butts, Bazemore and Saa Meroe 2010).

40 Developmental Assets

- This model, created by the Search Institute, fosters the development of adolescents into healthy, caring, and responsible individuals through the cultivation of internal and external assets. Adults (e.g., parents, teachers and faith leaders) offer youth the external assets of support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time, while youth use their own internal assets to commit to learning and attaining positive values, social competencies, and a positive self-identity (Scales and Leffert 1999).

- Youth exposed to an increased number of assets tend to display healthier development during adolescence and into adulthood due to the internal and external developmental assets acting as protective measures against at-risk behavior (Scales and Leffert 1999). Youth with more developmental assets present indicators of thriving: school success, leadership, valuing diversity, physical health, helping others, delay of gratification, and overcoming adversity (Scales et al. 2000).

The 5 Cs

- The 5 Cs model, developed by Richard Lerner, establishes five categories of positive youth development to indicate a youth is thriving: competence, connection, character, caring/compassion, and confidence. Together, the 5 Cs address positive outcomes in five main areas of development: physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social (Lerner and Lerner 2013).
- The 5 Cs model promotes positive change for adolescents by aligning their individual strengths with the “growth promoting resources” available in their families, schools, and communities (Bowers et al. 2010). Youth who have high levels of the 5 Cs tend to have a lower likelihood to engage in at-risk behavior. (Jelicic et al. 2007).

Youth Program Quality Assessment and Improvement

- The David Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality established the Youth Program Quality Assessment and Improvement model, which promotes positive youth development through encompassing a focus on supportive and safe environments, interactions with staff, and engagement in the program (David Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality).
- The YPQA model rests on seven key elements: 1) a safe environment, 2) a supportive environment, 3) interaction, 4) engagement, 5) youth-centered policies and practices, 6) high expectations for youth and staff, and 7) youth access to staff and programming. Youth involvement in YPQA/I-based programming demonstrated positive changes in various protective factors, including academic motivation, self-confidence, development of authentic relationships, trust norms, higher order thinking skills, project planning, and the ability to teach others self-assessment (David Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality).

Youth Thrive

- The Youth Thrive Framework, created by the Center for the Study of Social Policy focuses on five protective and promotive factors that encourage positive youth development and well-being: (1) youth resilience, (2) social connections, (3) knowledge of adolescent development, (4) cognitive and emotional competence, and (5) support in times of need (Harper Browne 2014).
- The framework highlights the differences between risk reduction and the promotion of well-being; protective factors reduce risk, but the promotive factors identified in the framework enhance wellbeing through strengthening hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-control, and perspective (Harper Browne 2014).

Each of these frameworks was created to guide the efforts of youth justice policymakers and practitioners as they build intervention systems that are compatible with behavioral science and our growing knowledge of adolescent development.

Using these frameworks to design data monitoring and evaluation structures would allow us to broaden the collection of youth outcome data to include not only risk factors that we want to control, but protective and positive factors that we want to support and nurture among the City's young people.

We thank you again for your time and we would be pleased to answer any questions or to discuss our testimony now or in the future.

#

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C E N T E R
FOR
C O U R T
I N N O V A T I O N

Center for Court Innovation Testimony

New York City Council

Committee on Juvenile Justice

April 14, 2016

Good Afternoon Chair Cabrera and members of the Committee on Juvenile Justice. My name is Dory Hack and I am the Director of Youth Justice Capacity Building at the Center for Court Innovation.

The Center for Court Innovation is committed to improving outcomes for young people impacted by the justice system. The Center grounds its youth programming in the robust body of research on adolescent brain development, childhood trauma, youth development, and positive youth justice. Our youth programs emphasize participants' strengths, building core skills and competencies, promoting positive connections to peers, family, and community, and providing opportunities for youth to learn and practice healthy behaviors. Our juvenile justice programs serve as vibrant neighborhood resource centers – offering participants new pathways that lead away from system involvement and towards academic, social, and vocational success.

The Center supports the Council's efforts to create more transparency and accountability within juvenile detention and placement facilities. The Center is currently a service provider within the detention facilities operated by the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS), so our services would be included under the proposed legislation. The Brownsville Community Justice Center has provided arts-based programming for young people detained at Crossroads Juvenile Facility in Brownsville, facilitating workshops and providing young people the opportunity to express themselves creatively. Similarly, in the Bronx, Save Our Streets is

piloting a new version of violence prevention at the Horizons Juvenile Center. Each week, SOS staff engage young people in conflict resolution workshops and other interest-based activities.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the services provided to young people back in the community after leaving detention or placement facilities. While this hearing has focused on what takes place within the facilities, the Council must consider the types of resources and programming available to young people and their families as they return home. Reentry planning should begin once placement has been determined, and ACS, Close to Home facilities operators, schools, social service providers, and community-based organizations should work together to ensure that young people and their families receive appropriate services to support their transitions back into their communities.

The Center for Court Innovation has been working in collaboration with ACS to provide aftercare services for youth returning to the community from Close to Home placement sites. Our services provide a structured, strengths-based community aftercare continuum for youth in key neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx, Staten Island, and Queens. We receive referrals from ACS of youth leaving Close to Home facilities and provide a robust array of services at our Harlem Community Justice Center, Brownsville Community Justice Center, Queens Youth Justice Center, and Staten Island Youth Justice Center. Our strategies include early engagement while young people are still in placement, ongoing collaboration, and communication with all ACS workers and other service providers, and family engagement. Young people receive individualized case management services and clinical interventions, including referrals to other providers. Our Justice Centers also offer a host of after-school programs, including competency-building workshops; recreational, artistic, and cultural activities; and internship opportunities and referrals for summer youth employment. We engage families as partners in the aftercare process with family team meetings and family events. We promote community engagement by offering youth-oriented service learning opportunities and community leadership development programming, including Youth Court and Neighborhood Justice Councils. In addition, we provide educational advocacy, collaborating with the Department of Education and families to ensure appropriate school placements and educational services.

We are proud to collaborate with ACS in building an aftercare model and expanding community-based services and programming for youth leaving Close to Home facilities. We hope that the Council can support expanded youth programming that extends beyond the time that young people are under the authority of ACS and/or Family Court, to help those young people who have spent time in placement facilities achieve enduring success back in the community. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Remarks to City Council re: Int. No. 949
Jennifer Havens, MD
April 14, 2016

I'm Dr. Jennifer Havens, the Director of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Bellevue Hospital Center. I oversee Bellevue's continuum of emergency, inpatient and outpatient mental health services for youth as well as mental health services in the ACS Children's Center and in juvenile detention.

The Bellevue team has been working in juvenile justice since 2012 when we received a federal grant to implement trauma informed care in the two secure detention facilities in the Bronx and Brooklyn. This project had 3 main components: (1) train all facility staff in the impact of trauma on the youth in their care, using a training curriculum called Think Trauma, developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network; (2) address the lack of identification of trauma exposure and its mental health impact through the implementation of systematic screening at intake for trauma exposure, trauma symptoms, PTSD, depression, and problematic substance use; and (3) establish groups for youth to educate them about the impacts of trauma and build their skills in recognizing feelings, coping, and managing interpersonal situations.

An important feature of this project was its emphasis on building the skills of front-line staff in these facilities. From our previous work we know that individual clinical services are important and necessary, but for youth in residential settings, they are not enough. In addition, the staff that work with young people around the clock need the skills and support to give a consistent, positive response. So we wanted to create a shared language about trauma, build staff's skills in working with traumatized youth, and create supports for staff as they work with a difficult-to-engage population.

Another important part of our work has been the systematic implementation of screening for trauma and related symptoms when young people enter detention. This is a highly traumatized population, and for many of them, entering detention is the first time that the impact of trauma on them has been identified. For some, it's also the first time someone has helped them understand the impacts trauma has had on their emotions, behavior, and interpersonal relationships. And when we assumed responsibility for psychiatric and psychological services in detention, the screening results helped us connect the young people with appropriate diagnosis and appropriate treatment. In a lot of cases, this has meant putting kids on less medication, and more appropriate medication. For example, in our experience, antipsychotic medications are overused with young people in the juvenile justice system, and stimulants for ADHD and antidepressants for depression are both underused.

The third part of our trauma grant was establishing skills groups for residents. So in the same way that we train staff about the effects of trauma on young people, we also train the young people themselves. We use a 3-session version of a curriculum that we developed for the Bellevue adolescent psychiatric inpatient unit. The three groups teach feelings recognition, coping skills, and interpersonal skills, and young people develop a personalized safety plan for themselves over the course of the 3 sessions. In the same way that we focused on the front-line staff with the staff training, we also engaged them from the start with the trauma skills groups.

Each group is run by one mental health clinician, either from Bellevue or from START, and one Juvenile Counselor, the front-line juvenile justice staff. Implementing these groups with front-line staff as co-leaders served to reinforce the training in trauma they had received, help support the spread of a common language around trauma impact throughout the facility, and communicate respect for the essential role front-line staff play in the care of the detained youth.

As an outgrowth of work implementing trauma-informed, in 2014 our clinical team began collaborating with ACS to develop an expanded model of mental health service delivery for secure detention. In October 2014, we were awarded a contract for full-time, on-site psychiatric services serving both the secure and non-secure detained populations, and we were asked to establish a psychological service, in part to provide assessment of residents going to Close to Home placements. Our staffing model includes 2.5 psychiatrists and 3.5 psychologists, along with 2 administrative staff members.

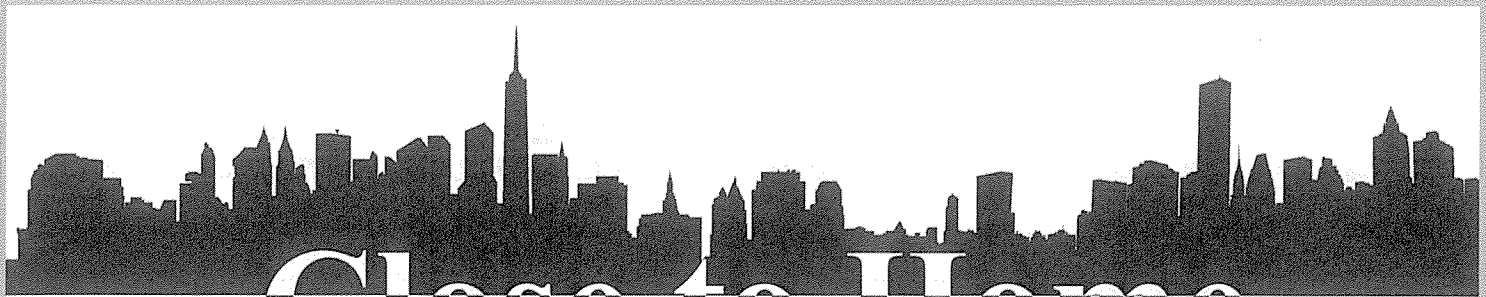
Our psychiatry and psychology service provides 40 hours/week of on-site coverage at both secure detention sites. In addition to serving both the secure and non-secure detention populations in this capacity on weekdays, there is also on-site psychiatry coverage on weekends, and availability by phone for consultation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Referrals for psychiatric evaluation can come from a number of different sources including Floating Hospital Medical services, START Treatment and Recovery Centers, residents' guardians and attorneys, facility case-management, as well as court-ordered evaluations, thus helping to ensure that vulnerable youth with psychiatric treatment needs have multiple paths by which they can be identified for psychiatric intervention. Outside of performing full diagnostic evaluations and psychopharmacological consultations, psychiatry also provides medication monitoring and regular clinical follow-up of those residents who are on medication, individual therapy, attendance of family meetings and transitional meetings when residents are placed in the Close to Home continuum, and closely collaborates with facility administration and frontline staff in identifying and discussing the specific treatment needs of individual youths. Psychiatry has also cultivated a very close and collegial working relationship with the Floating Hospital Medical service as well as frontline staff, and actively practices a treatment model that encourages a multi-disciplinary approach in caring for residents.

The Bellevue Juvenile Justice Mental Health Service also works very closely with START Treatment and Recovery Centers, an ACS-contracted organization that employs Master's-level mental health clinicians to provide individual therapy and group interventions. START additionally collaborates with Bellevue in the development of care plans for those youth who engage in high-risk behaviors while in detention, as well as provides crisis intervention, participates in STAIR interventions, attends transitional and family meetings, and supports frontline staff.

Screening for symptoms of psychopathology is a vital function of any mental health service – START screens each youth in detention between day 5 and 8 of their admission using evidence-based screening tools for symptoms of depression (PHQ-9), PTSD (the UCLA PTSD Reaction Index), and problematic substance use (the CRAFFT). Elevated scores on any of these screening tools generate an automatic referral to psychiatry or psychology for further evaluation and intervention. Treatment modalities include diagnostic assessment by both psychiatry and psychology, medication management, individual and group psychotherapy, psychological testing, support for crisis management, providing recommendations for Non-Secure and Limited Secure placement and service planning in the Close to Home continuum, family engagement.

On the most basic level, it is important for young people's healthy development, and for the safety of secure facilities, to keep them occupied with structured, well-supervised activities (the same as in their families and communities). But in our view it is important to also understand the distinction between recreational and therapeutic activities. Some activities are purely recreational, and that is appropriate. Some activities promote positive development and general resilience-building, for example a cooking group or one that engages young people in animation projects. Some activities though, focus more heavily on either therapeutic skill-building or instilling positive behaviors, for example our STAIR trauma-focused skill-building groups. All of these types of activities serve a vital purpose, but they exist along a continuum, with the more therapeutic activities being led by clinically trained staff, with structured goals.

I would like to say a word about outcomes. While process outcomes (how many, who received, etc.) are a good reflection of effort, they do not tell us if we are reaching our goals in this work. In our work implementing trauma informed care, we are focusing on facility wide outcomes which will indicate whether we have succeeded in culture change, such as reductions in assaults and staff injuries. In our mental health work, we are focusing on the accurate identification of mental health problem, the implementation of effective treatment plans, and importantly, implementing and evaluating strategies to improve communication about youth's mental health needs as they transition out of detention. These kinds of data allows us to assess if we are truly reaching our goals, which include operating a safe facility which serves to address the mental needs of its residents, and ultimately, changing the trajectories of youth in our care.



Close to Home

Administration for Children's Services

Close to Home:

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Fall 2015



NYC
Administration for
Children's Services

Gladys Carrión, Esq.
Commissioner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview.....	2
Highlights	3
Non-Secure Placement (Agencies)	4
Specialized Programs (Boys & Girls).....	5
Youth Served	6
Race/Ethnicity	6
Borough of Origin	7
Age	7
Placement Adjudication: Male	7
Placement Adjudication: Female	7
Incident Reporting.....	8
Incident Trends.....	8
Recorded Incidents	9
Absent Youth.....	9
System-Wide Awol Incidents: Calendar Years 2013 And 2014	10
Quality Assurance, Monitoring, And Corrective Action	11
Heightened Monitoring Status Calendar Year 2014	12
Permanency And Family Engagement	13
Education	14
DYFJ Field Operations Unit	14
Aftercare	15
Aftercare Service Referrals	15
Non-Secure Placement Aftercare Providers	16
Returning Youth	17
Modifications	17
Transfers Within Acs Non-Secure Placement.....	17
Community Engagement	18
ACS Infrastructure.....	19
Conclusion	19
ACS Contact	20

OVERVIEW

During the last decade, New York City has worked with New York State to reform the juvenile justice system; these reforms have resulted in improved public safety and better outcomes for youth and families. Since 2008, juvenile arrests in New York City have fallen 53%, highlighted by a 43% reduction in annual felony arrests, from 5,245 to 2,991 in 2014. Admissions to detention during this period decreased over 50%, from 5,570 in 2008 to 2,928 in 2014, while the number of New York City juvenile delinquents and juvenile offenders in placement fell 70%, from 1,399 to 428 in 2013. Simultaneously, New York City invested and prioritized the development and expansion of community-based services to meet the myriad needs of system-involved youth and families. With this unprecedented decline as a backdrop and the emergence of innovative community-based research-backed interventions as a platform, Governor Cuomo in partnership with New York City took another step toward reform by signing the landmark Close to Home legislation as part of the 2012-2013 State budget.

Under Close to Home, young people adjudicated as juvenile delinquents in New York City Family Court who are determined to be in need of non-secure or limited-secure placement are placed into the custody of the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Prior to Close to Home, young people adjudicated as juvenile delinquents were typically placed in facilities hundreds of miles away, presenting geographic barriers to family visitation and staying connected to their home communities. Although many received academic credits through local upstate school districts, they encountered considerable difficulties when attempting to transfer credits to local NYC schools. Close to Home enables ACS to match youth to small, resource-rich residential programs located in or near the five boroughs, affording young people the opportunity to accumulate academic credits towards a high school diploma or promotion into or from middle school and providing youth and their families access to community-based resources that support safe re-integration upon release.

Close to Home implementation is occurring in two phases. In Phase I, launched on September 1, 2012, ACS assumed responsibility for New York City youth who are adjudicated juvenile delinquents and determined by a Family Court Judge to be in need of non-secure placement (NSP) services. In Phase II, scheduled to launch in fall 2015, ACS will assume responsibility for New York City youth who are adjudicated juvenile delinquents and determined to be in need of limited-secure placement services (LSP).

ACS, in partnership with OCFS, has collaborated with nine local non-profit agencies to implement non-secure placement (NSP) and, beginning in September 2013, five local non-profit agencies began providing aftercare services. In 2014, ACS provided residential placement and community-based aftercare services to more than 700 young people.

Starting with an overview of the NSP system and demographic information for youth served, this report reviews Close to Home comparison data for calendar years 2013 and 2014. The report also covers incident trends by program, the corrective action process for provider agencies, system-wide efforts to facilitate permanency and family engagement, and a description of Close to Home aftercare services and the conditional release process. To close, a narrative highlighting community engagement and ACS infrastructure in the context of Close to Home will be presented. As detailed in this report, the majority of Close to Home youth have met or exceeded program expectations – building insights and learning new skills to reach individualized treatment goals, all while respecting the rules of their NSP residences, participating in recreational, cultural, and group activities, and earning academic credits in New York City public schools.

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

- ACS provided residential placement and community-based aftercare services to more than 700 young people in 2014.
- In 2014, 308 young people were referred to ACS for placement in NSP, a 21.8% decrease from 2013.
- Two-hundred and forty-four young people successfully completed Close to Home services in 2014.
- Two-hundred and forty-one (98%) of young people who successfully completed Close to Home services were released to their parents or a family member.
- AWOLs decreased by 55% in 2014.
- The majority of youth placed in 2014 were initially matched to an NSP residence located in, or adjacent to, their home borough.
- The majority of youth served in residential placement were 15 or older.
- More than 80% of Close to Home middle school students were promoted during the 2013 – 2014 school year.

NON-SECURE PLACEMENT

In 2014, ACS partnered with nine non-profit agencies to deliver strengths-based placement program models in 31 non-secure placement residences located in and near New York City. All nine providers have juvenile justice experience, and each program offers structured residential care for six to twelve youth in a small, supervised, and home-like environment. In contrast to traditionally larger juvenile detention halls and placement facilities, all NSP programs have been intentionally designed to ensure participation in program while preserving the safety and security of youth, staff, and the surrounding community. Low staff-to-resident ratios foster ongoing engagement and relationship building, and all program staff members are trained in a comprehensive crisis intervention system. In addition, all facilities are equipped with security cameras, locked or delayed exit doors, and alarms on all windows and doors.

While developing Close to Home, ACS engaged national leaders so that evidence-based models, contemporary research findings, and best practices were woven into program design. Provider agencies have developed an array of therapeutic treatment models, integrating psycho-education, cognitive-behavioral curricula, peer mentoring, interpersonal processing, and life skills development. The result is a system tailored to meet the individual needs of each youth while emphasizing group development and positive peer support, and providing a host of services including pro-social activities, access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, coordinated education and health care services, and family therapy at the program residence or in the home.

Multiple layers of oversight and quality assurance mechanisms promote public safety and high quality services for young people in placement. All programs have comprehensive operations manuals, which include specific plans to satisfy ACS training requirements and adhere to programmatic standards and regulations. Within the Division of Youth and Family Justice, the newly formed ACS Office of Planning, Policy, and Performance oversees quality assurance, the corrective action process, and targeted technical assistance. Representative of the collaboration that has defined Close to Home, ACS works closely with the OCFS Office of Close to Home Oversight and System Improvement to provide that all programs are licensed and remain in compliance with New York State regulations. OCFS provides additional technical assistance, further enhancing ground-level program support and supporting the ACS quality assurance process.

Non-Secure Placement Provider Agencies

Provider Agency	Number of Sites
Boys Town New York	6
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services	3
Good Shepherd Services	2
Jewish Child Care Association	1
Leake & Watts Services	1
Martin de Porres Group Home	3
SCO Family of Services	7
St. John's Residence for Boys	2
The Children's Village	6

Note: SCO Family of Services closed one program site in October 2014; Episcopal Social Services officially changed to Sheltering Arms in February 2015

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Non-Secure placement is divided into general and specialized residential programs. Although all NSP programs are service-rich and prioritize individualized treatment, additional residential programs serve youth with specific high-level needs (e.g. mental health diagnoses, intellectual and developmental disabilities, prior fire-setting behaviors, problematic sexual behaviors, a history of commercial sexual exploitation, and substance abuse and addiction). Specialized NSP programs maintain a lower youth-to-staff ratio than general programs and augment the comprehensive NSP staff training regimen with treatment modalities tailored specifically to the population served. Particular emphasis is placed on providing that youth and families are equipped with the knowledge, support, and resources necessary to continue intensive treatment upon release. Of the 31 NSP sites in operation in 2014, 9 are dedicated to serving youth with specialized needs.

Specialized Programs for Boys

Program Type	Number of Beds
Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	12
Serious Emotional Disturbance/Fire Setting Behavior	9
Substance Abuse and Addiction	9
Problematic Sexual Behaviors	6

Note: The fire setting program is integrated with a serious emotional disturbance program, representing 9 beds

Specialized Programs for Girls

Program Type	Number of Beds
Serious Emotional Disturbance / Substance Abuse and Addiction	20
Commercial Sexual Exploitation	6

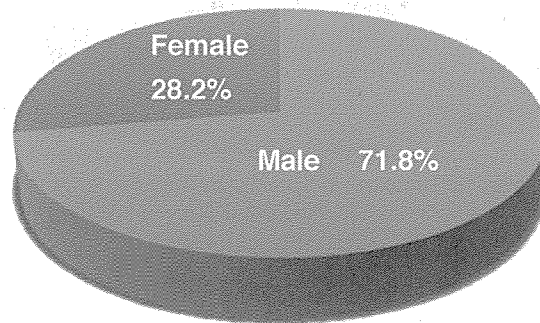
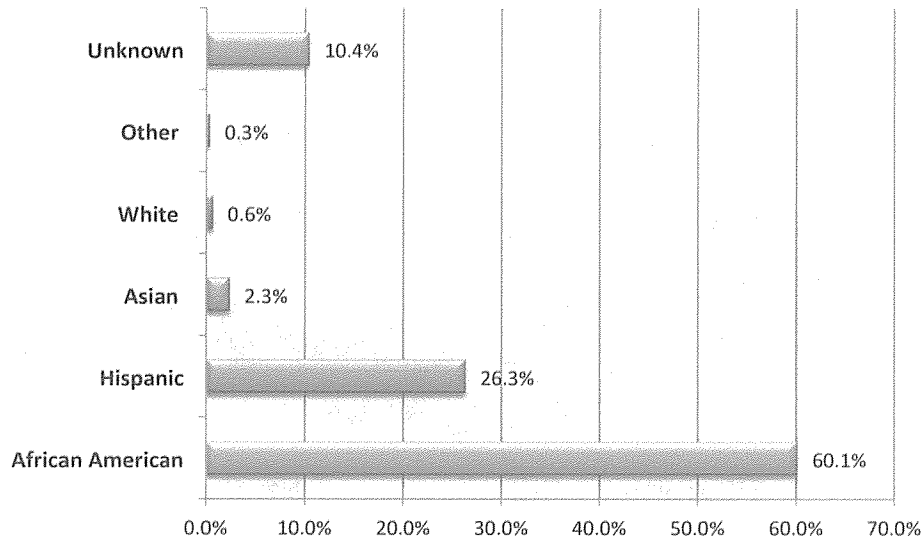
Note: The 20 bed program serving girls with serious emotional disturbance and substance abuse and addiction operated as two separate 9 bed programs for much of the reporting period

YOUTH SERVED

During the reporting period, 308 young people were referred to ACS for placement in NSP, a 21.8% decrease from 2013. The average daily population in residential care increased 5%, from 191 in 2013 to 201 in 2014, while the average number of days from placement to discharge (including aftercare) decreased from 352 to 277. These changes can be attributed to continuous system-wide development and growth, the arrival of a full spectrum of contracted aftercare services in fall 2013, and the complete transition of non-secure placement services from OCFS to ACS, as 72 young people were transferred from OCFS to ACS custody during the first three months

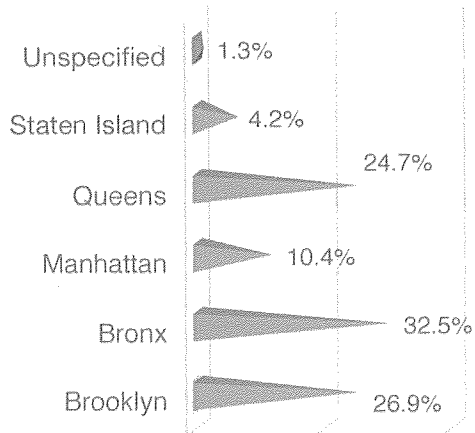
The charts below reflect demographic information for the non-secure placement population served by ACS in 2014:

Race/Ethnicity

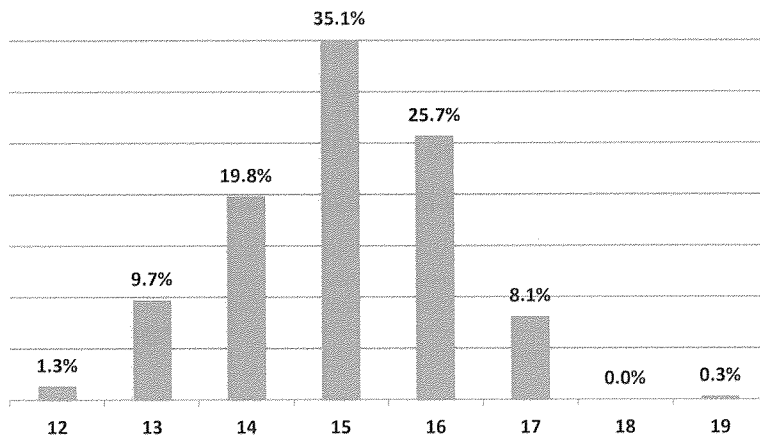


YOUTH SERVED

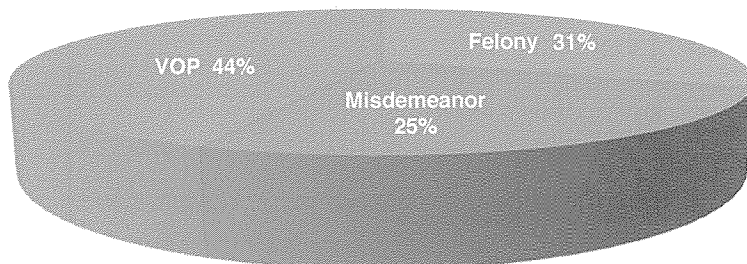
Borough of Origin



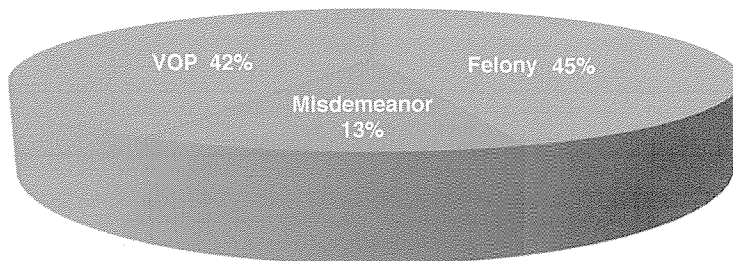
Age



Placement Adjudication: Male



Placement Adjudication: Female



Note: VOP stands for "Violation of Probation"; ACS is working closely with City and State partners to further delineate technical violations from those that stem from a new charge or offense total beds.



INCIDENT REPORTING

All incidents involving NSP youth, staff, or residences require appropriate attention and timely reporting by provider agency staff to the ACS Movement Control and Communications Unit (MCCU). ACS requires provider agencies report incidents accurately, thoroughly, and timely (e.g. within one hour of occurrence or as soon as staff members become aware of an incident). Incidents are documented on ACS incident reporting forms, recorded in appropriate logs and databases, and distributed internally and shared with OCFS on a daily basis. On occasion, the circumstances or details of an incident necessitate an additional report to the New York State Justice Center for entry into the Vulnerable Person's Central Registry (VPCR) and further investigation if needed.

ACS demarcates incidents into two categories: incidents and critical incidents. An incident is an event which might adversely affect the health, safety, and/or security of youth, staff, or the community or which affects a facility, the agency, or agency property.

A critical incident is an incident which is likely to have a serious negative impact at or beyond the program level, adversely affects the health, safety, and/or security of youth, staff, or the community, or has a significant adverse or negative impact on the residence, provider agency, or the agency's property. Critical incidents include suicide attempts, serious illnesses, accidents, injuries, or illness requiring hospitalization, calls to 911 for emergency assistance, AWOLs, major service disruptions, altercations, and child abuse allegations.

Incident Trends

Incident data is particularly useful in identifying service needs, discovering gaps in training, and strategizing technical assistance resource deployment. As is anticipated during the rollout of a developing system, the early stages of Close to Home presented a number of challenges related to incidents and critical incidents. The NSP system has been successful at addressing these challenges, particularly safety and security concerns. This is due in large part to improved communication which has been reinforced by enhanced internal and external operational support, streamlined technical assistance, improved adherence to reporting protocol, and a workforce more comfortable performing necessary interventions to keep youth, staff, and local communities safe. Increases in specific indicators, particularly arrests while AWOL, youth assaults and altercations, and physical restraints, can be attributed in part to improved incident reporting and communication.

Furthermore, system-wide increases in staff interventions appear to be linked to the dramatic reduction in AWOLs; there was a 55% decline in AWOLs in 2014. Mandated training in crisis intervention and de-escalation instructs practitioners to utilize restraints only as a last resort to protect young people and ensure their safety. In collaboration with provider agencies and experts in trauma-informed de-escalation strategies, restraints are a practice area targeted for reduction and improvement in 2015.



RECORDED INCIDENTS

The following charts details incidents recorded by ACS during the reporting period:

NSP Safety Incidents: Calendar Years 2013 and 2014

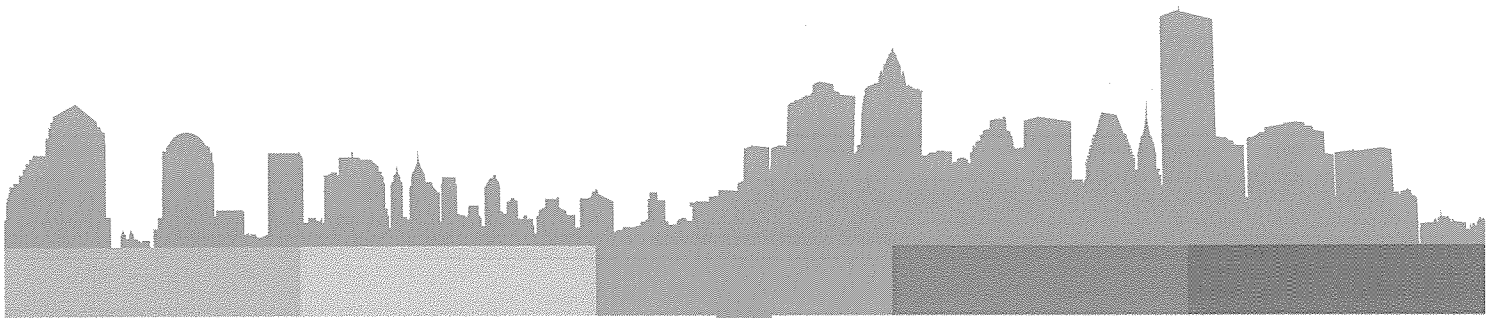
Category	2013	2014	% Change
AWOL Incidents	740	363	- 50.9%
Youth that AWOL'ed	278	171	-38.5%
Total Assaults and Altercations	537	615	14.5%
Youth on Youth	380	460	21.1%
Youth on Staff	157	155	-1.3%
Child Abuse Allegations Indicated	14	1	-92.9%
Restraints	579	728	25.7%
Hospital Runs	336	291	-13.4%
Contraband	267	276	3.4%

Note: "Hospital Runs" capture any instance of youth being transported to a hospital

Absent Youth

Despite significant system-wide progress in youth and family engagement, a subset of Close to Home youth leave the program or presence of the person responsible for their supervision during an off-grounds trip or home visit without permission. In addition to diligent monitoring of NSP provider agency performance and targeted technical assistance to address absent youth (such as the hiring of former law enforcement officials to serve as AWOL investigative consultants), ACS has worked closely with our City and State partners, including OCFS, the New York City Police Department, Department of Probation and the Office of Court Administration to address this issue. As a result, the 2014 system-wide rate of young people absent without leave (AWOL) decreased more than 50% from the previous year.

The following chart highlights the number of AWOL incidents and individual AWOL youth for each NSP residence during the reporting period (opposite page).



SYSTEM-WIDE AWOL INCIDENTS: CALENDAR YEARS 2013 AND 2014

NSP Facility	AWOL incidents		Number of youth that AWOLED	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
A	13	11	9	7
B	7	8	4	2
C	29	15	13	9
D	-	21	-	17
E	14	11	10	8
F	28	15	16	13
G	19	4	7	3
H	39	25	13	14
I	10	11	8	9
J	41	10	15	7
K	5	2	4	2
L	11	3	9	3
M	19	1	13	1
N	16	11	14	8
O	15	8	12	4
P	10	10	5	7
Q	6	3	6	2
R	17	9	10	8
S	16	2	8	2
T	9	8	7	5
U	24	10	11	6
V	17	14	9	11
W	18	9	9	6
X	17	13	9	10
Y	30	7	13	4
Z	29	26	12	10
AA	0	4	0	2
BB	-	0	-	0
CC	35	25	15	13
DD	21	Closed	14	Closed
EE	46	Closed	11	Closed
FF	42	Closed	14	Closed
GG	47	Closed	25	Closed
SCHOOL	46	38	22	29
HH*	16	0	1	0
II*	28	5	10	3
JJ*	-	4	-	1
KK*	-	20	-	2
SYSTEM	740	363	278	171

Note: School data represents any AWOL from any school in the system; *Indicates a non-contracted facility (i.e. mother/child, MTFC, etc.)

QUALITY ASSURANCE, MONITORING, AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

Within the Division of Youth and Family Justice, the newly formed Office of Policy, Planning, and Performance (OPPP) oversees quality assurance, the corrective action process, and targeted technical assistance for ACS juvenile justice programs. The monitoring and evaluation process has evolved over time, particularly as Close to Home operationalizes experiential knowledge into practice borne out of continuous quality improvement. As innovation remains a system-wide priority, ACS has partnered with the national experts and developers of therapeutic treatment models utilized in NSP to integrate measures of model fidelity into ongoing monitoring and quality assurance. In addition to contractual accountability, these partnerships afford ACS the opportunity to support evidence-based models and best practices across the juvenile justice continuum of care.

The quality assurance process relies on a comprehensive set of data indicators and information gathered from direct communication and interaction with NSP provider agencies, OPPP staff closely monitor and assess each program for proficiency in critical practice areas. These indicators focus on operations, safety, and programming and include: youth, residence, and community safety due to AWOLs, assaults, and other serious incidents; recurring presence of contraband; quality and quantity of clinical services, programming, and recreation; incident reporting and documentation; medication administration; and, staff recruitment, training, and retention.

In the event a facility or provider agency does not meet established standards or expectations in one or more principal practice area, an enhancement to monitoring may be instituted. Historically, discovery of programmatic struggles would lead to a formal corrective action status known as Heightened Monitoring. In an effort to support provider agencies and individual programs before being placed on Heightened Monitoring, OPPP has developed and implemented an intermediate level of support customized to meet the needs of provider agencies. When a program is found to be in need of supportive monitoring, the provider agency collaborates with ACS to develop a four-to-twelve week plan with benchmarks in practice areas identified and targeted for improvement.

If a program or agency fails to meet the benchmarks outlined in the collaborative improvement plan, a decision can be made to place them on Heightened Monitoring. While on Heightened Monitoring, the provider agency is expected to exhibit urgency and commitment to improvement; in most cases, this elevated status leads to programmatic improvements and eventual step-down. During the reporting period, five provider agencies were placed on Heightened Monitoring due to performance concerns. In four instances, Heightened Monitoring applied to all NSP residences; in one instance, Heightened Monitoring was applied to one of seven programs operated by the provider. In each case, ACS requested a corrective action plan to address identified concerns, and followed up on this plan at regular intervals for the duration of Heightened Monitoring.

While placed on Heightened Monitoring, OPPP increases the frequency of monitoring activities, particularly site visits, in-person meetings, and conference calls. This increase in direct contact is at once supportive and collaborative with a dual focus on short-term triage and long-term sustainability, and often involves DYFJ Field Operations, OCFS, and other Close to Home stakeholders. Although each program placed on Heightened Monitoring in 2014 encountered unique challenges, all faced some combination of safety and security concerns and broader programmatic issues, such as high staff turnover rates or long-term leadership voids.

HEIGHTENED MONITORING STATUS CALENDAR YEAR 2014

The outcome of each status/plan is listed in the following charts:

Program	HMS	HMS Start	HMS End	Outcome
E - J	HMS	July 2013	October 2014	Three residences returned to regular monitoring status.
EHJ	HMS	October 2014	Ongoing	Agency still working to address concerns at three individual facilities.
Q	HMS	January 2014	May 2014	Residence returned to regular monitoring status
A - D	HMS	January 2014	December 2014	Residences returned to regular monitoring status.
CC	HMS	May 2014	September 2014	Program closed, contract terminated.



PERMANENCY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Permanency and discharge planning requires intensive collaboration between ACS and the contracted NSP provider, as well as ongoing engagement with the youth and family. To ensure release planning begins as soon as a youth enters residential care, each young person is assigned to an ACS Placement and Permanency Specialist (PPS) immediately upon placement. The PPS works with residential program providers, family members, community-based programs, and schools to achieve long-term permanency for the youth and avert re-entry into the juvenile justice system.

After reviewing the dispositional order to determine if the court has placed any limitations or mandated additional supervision for home visits, the PPS works closely with the provider agency to commence home visits as soon as practicable for all youth in care. Throughout a young person's stay in residential placement, progress toward earning home visits and the outcome of supervised and unsupervised home visits are tracked by the PPS. This is crucial to a young person's gradual transition home, as each visit presents an opportunity to practice coping skills, behavior management, and personal safety plans while at home in the community. In 2014, 95.5% of youth placed during the reporting period went on at least two overnight home visits prior to release. The remaining 14 (4.5%) youth did not have a visiting resource in the community. In these rare situations, ACS and the NSP provider agency work closely to develop a meaningful and practical community reintegration plan.

Communication between residential placement providers, foster care agencies, preventive agencies, ACS Family Court Legal Services attorneys, and other stakeholders is vital to case planning for those youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The PPS participates in family team conferences and/or family meetings, and may initiate permanency hearings to aid in the achievement of the young person's permanency goals. If a permanency plan indicates a youth will not return home (either from the beginning of placement or determined at some point during placement), the PPS facilitates the completion of a permanency plan. This plan includes a projection of when a youth may be released to their home community or to an alternate living arrangement.

Of the 244 youth who completed Close to Home Services and were released to a permanent discharge resource in 2014, 241 were released to their parents or a family member. Of the remaining three, one young person had a permanency goal of APPLA (Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement), and two youth transitioned into the family shelter system. These significant achievements in family permanency are evidence of the priority placed on engaging families in permanency planning from the moment a youth enters placement.

EDUCATION

Educational advancement is one of the pillars of the Close to Home Initiative. In partnership with the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) District 79 Passages Academy, Close to Home youth in non-secure placement realized significant achievements during the 2013-2014 academic year:

- Of the 257 students who attempted high school credits while enrolled at Passages, 61% earned 5 or more credits and 19% earned 10 or more credits;
- Thirty-nine young people passed Regents exams, 26 of whom are students with disabilities;
- More than 80% of Close to Home middle school students were promoted during the 2013 – 2014 school year;
- Among those students with pre and post-STAR® Reading and Math assessment data, 49% progressed the equivalent of one or more reading levels and 43% progressed the equivalent of one or more grade levels in math during enrollment at Passages;
- Of the 96 students with prior and post-attendance data, 39% have a school attendance rate at least 10 points higher than their attendance rate prior to enrollment at Passages.

These numbers do not include those youth who are earning transferable DOE credits in placement residences located in Westchester County, which are also part of Close to Home. Given the multiple challenges confronted by these young people, we consider these achievements especially noteworthy.

DYFJ Field Operations Unit

The DYFJ Field Operations unit consists of school liaisons who work in partnership with the Department of Education and NSP provider agencies to foster a safe and secure environment for students to learn and excel. School liaisons coordinate and control group movement throughout the school day to ensure students transition safely and orderly from class to class, assist providers with supervision, and lend support to de-escalate and manage crises as they occur. In the event of a critical incident, the school liaisons provide Field Operations directors with pertinent information to inform follow-up and facilitate the safety plans for youth returning to school after suspension, AWOL, or other attendance interruptions.



The Field Operations unit serves as the lead for all school field trips and community events, visiting proposed sites, conducting walk-throughs, and ultimately developing a security plan that includes recommended student-teacher-staff ratios. The Field Operations unit assists in determining student eligibility for attendance on field trips and provides supplementary supervision during the events. In addition, Field Operations coordinates ACS-sponsored activities in school and in the community, such as basketball tournaments and spirit week. As the primary eyes-and-ears-on the ground, the Field Operations team visits all NSP residential programs when school is not in session to observe program operations while building relationships with youth and provider agency staff.

In coordination with the DYFJ Office of Planning, Policy, and Performance (OPPP), the Field Operations unit provides technical assistance targeting specific practice areas of concern or as an immediate response to direct observations. The focus of all training, feedback, and coaching is to support and improve safety, security, and overall program operations. In the process, program-specific concerns gathered during site assessments are shared with OPPP to augment the monitoring and quality assurance process, while youth-specific concerns are shared with Placement and Permanency staff to further inform ongoing treatment planning for youth.

AFTERCARE

Release planning begins immediately upon placement, with the intent of ensuring young people and their families receive robust aftercare services when they return home. Initial release from residential care is conditional and can be revoked, as youth remain in ACS custody until their dispositional placement order concludes. A primary goal of Close to Home is to release all youth as soon as practicable, with consideration to public safety, individual progress in residential care, enrollment in a community-based school, and the development of a comprehensive aftercare service plan. Aftercare services are tailored to the strengths and needs of the young person and family and focus on educational transition planning.

To supplement and support the work of Placement and Permanency Specialists, ACS hired and deployed Community Support Specialists (CSS), staff who are dedicated to supervising conditionally released youth. As youth approach their release from residential placement, the individually assigned PPS and CSS work together to finalize aftercare service plans and promote a smooth transition from residential placement to the community. After this critical transition has occurred, the CSS assumes primary case coordination responsibility for the duration of each young person's dispositional order.

Aftercare Service Referrals

Aftercare is a critical component of successful community reintegration, and ACS has developed and procured a full network of contracted service providers to support youth upon their initial return home. In 2014, the majority of youth transitioning out of residential placement were referred to a service provider utilizing one of the following evidence-based models (EBM): Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multi-Systemic Therapy-Family Integrated Transitions (MST-FIT), the Boys Town Model, or the Family Connections Model.

During the reporting period, five non-profit agencies provided contracted aftercare services for 213 NSP youth. In some instances, ACS and the residential provider have determined that an alternative aftercare plan is most appropriate and a youth may not be referred to a provider offering services through an EBM. The remaining 88 youth were referred to services through the ACS family support services network and supervised by ACS Community Support Specialists. The chart below details the five provider agencies, as well as ACS Community Supervision, and the populations served:

Non-Secure Placement Aftercare Providers

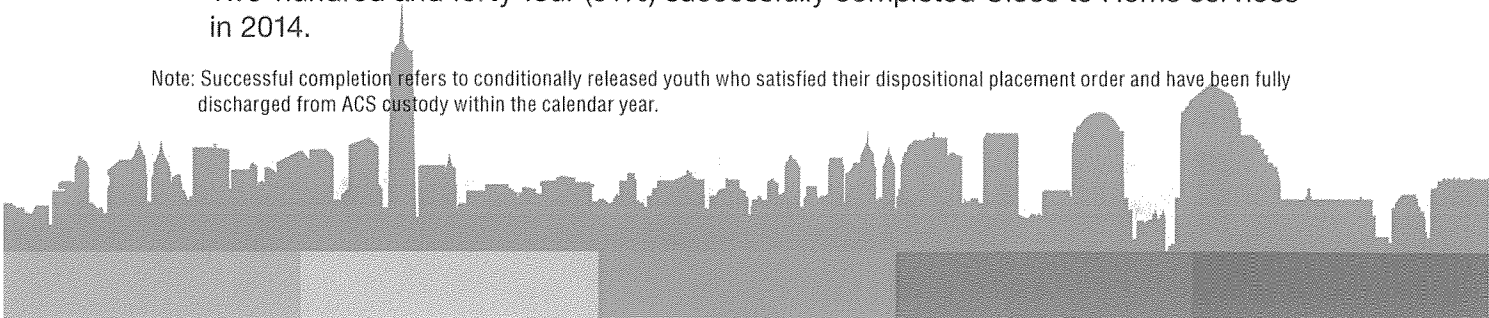
Agency	Population Served	Model	Slots
Boys Town New York,	General NSP-Boys Town	Boys Town	22
Children's Aid Society	General NSP-Youth Returning to Brooklyn/ Queens/Staten Island	FFT	53
The Children's Village	Youth with Sexually Abusive Behaviors	MST – FIT	8
The Children's Village	Youth with Severe Emotional Disturbance or Fire-Setting	MST - FIT	18
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services	General NSP-Youth Returning to Manhattan and the Bronx	FFT	35
New Alternatives for Children	MR/DD	Family Connections	6
ACS Community Support Specialists	General NSP-City-Wide	ACS Community Supervision	N/A

Note: The MR/DD contract was voluntarily terminated by New Alternatives for Children in 2014

During the reporting period, 213 youth released from residential placement were enrolled in contracted EBM aftercare services, representing 70% of the 301 youth conditionally released in 2014. Of those youth conditionally released:

- Two-hundred and eighty-one (93%) remained in their home community, while only 20 young people were revoked and subsequently returned to placement;
- Two-hundred and forty-four (81%) successfully completed Close to Home services in 2014.

Note: Successful completion refers to conditionally released youth who satisfied their dispositional placement order and have been fully discharged from ACS custody within the calendar year.



RETURNING YOUTH

Reducing further system-involvement and recidivism is among the primary goals of Close to Home, a particularly critical goal for youth entering the juvenile justice system in their formative years. Although recidivism measures can take years to realize, an early marker of success is the limited number of young people returning to placement after successfully completing Close to Home Services the previous calendar year. Of the 308 youth referred to NSP in 2014, 4% (13) had completed Close to Home services in the previous calendar year. Furthermore, less than 2% of youth served in 2013 and 2014 were placed in an OCFS limited-secure facility on a subsequent charge as of December 31, 2014.

Modifications

ACS aims to serve youth in the least restrictive setting consistent with maintaining public safety as well as the safety of provider agency staff and other youth in care. When a young person encounters recurring challenges and/or barriers to progress in NSP, ACS works with the provider agency and the young person's family to modify treatment plans. In a limited number of circumstances, ACS has determined that a youth requires a higher level of structure than can be provided in NSP. In these instances, ACS has filed petitions to modify youth to limited-secure placement (LSP). During the reporting period, a total of 25 youth in ACS custody were modified by a NYC Family Court Judge from non-secure placement (NSP) to limited-secure placement (LSP), a slight increase from 22 in 2013.

Transfers within ACS Non-Secure Placement

Upon receiving notification of placement from the New York City Family Court, the ACS Close to Home Intake and Assessment Unit has 15 days to determine where to place a youth. Designed to place young people with NSP providers that can best cultivate their strengths and address their needs, initial placement is supported by a comprehensive intake, assessment, and matching process. While the majority of youth have remained in their initial placement, some young people have required transfers from one NSP program to another. In 2014, there were 176 lateral transfers within the non-secure placement system, a decrease from 213 the previous year. In collaboration with provider agencies, lateral transfers is a practice area targeted for continued reduction in 2015.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The advent of Close to Home marked a historic moment for New York State and positioned New York City as a model for juvenile justice reform at the national level. Nonetheless, the potential impact of this initiative cannot be achieved without the backing of New York City's expansive network of service providers, business leaders, and grassroots organizations. Through the cultivation of thoughtful and durable community partnerships, NSP programs enhance services for youth during placement while fostering meaningful relationships with the surrounding neighborhood. Community Advisory Boards (CAB) are a key part of this strategy.

As part of the quality assurance process, ACS monitors the engagement of each NSP provider with the surrounding community through recurring Community Advisory Board meetings. Each of the 31 NSP programs operating during the reporting period held at least one CAB meeting in 2014, signifying a shift in focus from operations and safety to building and enhancing community partnerships. In addition, the majority of NSP programs held three or more CAB meetings, with 37% holding four meetings and 33% holding three.

Agencies have also brought outside service providers or community partners into their residences as part of their community engagement work; eight of the nine agencies, and 30 of 31 sites (97%) reported bringing multiple outside service providers in a variety of disciplines into their NSP program. The most popular programming options include art and music therapy programs, while individual sites have engaged charitable foundations, professional sports teams, service learning opportunities, and mentoring organizations. Seven of the nine agencies, and 28 of the 31 sites (90%) reported engaging neighbors, civic leaders, and other community members in proactive volunteer efforts. Some agencies also supplement their own clinical programming with mental health and substance abuse consultants on-site.

Engagement with police precincts is also an important facet of community engagement; 26 of 31 sites (84%) report a supportive and strong relationship or linkage with their local precinct. Commonly, this occurs through police participation in the agency CABs, with one agency conducting CAB meetings at the local precinct one quarter per year. Three of nine NSP provider agencies report standing calls, ongoing positive interactions, and recurring communication with their local precinct.



ACS INFRASTRUCTURE

ACS recognizes the need to provide support to youth and families beyond what is offered by residential and aftercare provider staff. In order to understand and meet these needs, the agency engages with the community and consumers of service through its Office of Advocacy. Staff in this office offer support for parents, foster, parents, children and other individuals who have concerns related to child welfare and work to achieve solutions for all parties. Common issues include clarification of child welfare law and procedures, ensuring families receive needed services toward permanency goals, and visitation barriers. In 2014, the ACS Office of Advocacy added two Residential Care Advocates (RCAs) who confidentially investigate and resolve individual concerns of, or on behalf of, youth in placement. The RCAs serve as the main point of contact at ACS for youth and families who have concerns, questions, or wish to file grievances.

Of the 308 residential placements made in 2014, 165 (54.3%) were initially matched to an NSP residence located in, or adjacent to, a young person's home borough. This represents a 6.3% increase from 2013 and, in combination with the reduction in NSP transfers, highlights ACS' commitment to ensuring youth stability while in placement. The remaining 143 youth were initially matched to a residence that was not located in, or adjacent to, a young person's home borough. However, all residences are accessible by public transportation. The proximity of this robust and holistic infrastructure increases the practicability of family engagement, home visits, and successful community reintegration.

During the early stages of implementation, ACS was unable to conduct transitional conferences for every youth placed in the agency's care. The Intake Unit now has expanded capacity to conduct and maintain records of all transitional conferences for individual youth. ACS is in the process of developing a mechanism for tracking the aggregate number of transitional conferences held for youth entering residential placement.

CONCLUSION

Close to Home has provided a unique opportunity for the City of New York to build a system tailored to meet the diverse needs of New York City's justice-involved youth and families. The accomplishments and challenges of the past year, highlighted in this report, underscore ACS's continued commitment to the fundamental principles behind the initiative.

In the year ahead, ACS will focus on further strengthening partnerships with juvenile justice service providers, enhancing quality assurance mechanisms and developing a comprehensive performance management and outcome measurement system.

ACS remains committed to helping youth succeed, build stronger bonds with caring adults, increase educational or vocational engagement, improve decision-making, strengthen attachment to their communities, and ultimately, end involvement in the juvenile justice system.

¹ A close borough is defined as the following: Westchester County or Manhattan are considered close boroughs for Bronx youth; Queens or Staten Island are considered close boroughs for Brooklyn youth; the Bronx is considered a close borough for Manhattan youth; Brooklyn is considered a close borough for Queens and Staten Island youth.

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ACS is grateful for the collaboration and dedication of our many partners across New York City and State that have worked diligently to make Close to Home a reality.



Testimony of the Children's Defense Fund – New York
Before the Committee on Juvenile Justice

RE: Requiring the Administration for Children's Services to
report on programs and services provided to youth in
placement and detention facilities

New York City Council
April 14, 2016

Beth Powers
Director, Youth Justice



Children's Defense Fund – New York
15 Maiden Lane, Suite 1200 New York, NY 10038
(212) 697-2323 www.cdfny.org

The Children's Defense Fund's (CDF) Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life, and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF provides a strong, effective and independent voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor children, children of color and those with disabilities. CDF-New York's unique approach to improving conditions for children combines research, public education, policy development, community organizing and statewide advocacy activities, making us an innovating leader for New York's children, particularly in the areas of health, education, early childhood and juvenile justice.

We would like to thank the Committee on Juvenile Justice and Chair Cabrera for the opportunity to present testimony on Introduction Number 949, requiring the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to report on programs and services provided to youth in placement and detention facilities.

CDF-NY supports the proposed reporting requirement which would increase the City's accountability in appropriately treating New York's most vulnerable and at-risk young people. Proposed reporting requirements include information on programs offered in total as well as daily, the frequency per month that a service is offered, utilization of each program by youth, and total expenditure. We applaud the Council in taking steps to closely examine the types, frequency, and utilization of services for youth in detention and placement. Knowledge of both the frequency and percentage of youth who are able to access particular services are important elements in determining if youth have sufficient access to services. We encourage ACS to utilize this information to analyze which youth are not offered services and programming as often as others and take necessary steps to address barriers illuminated by the analysis.

We encourage the Council to further this opportunity to emphasize the need for culturally competent and gender-responsive programming for justice involved youth. Gender responsive and culturally relevant programming is critical to best meet the needs of all justice system impacted youth, particularly girls and LGBTQ youth. Girls impacted by the justice system have unique needs that the justice system is often ill fitted to address.¹ We applaud ACS for the strides they've taken to specifically assess the needs of girls in acknowledgement of this reality.² In addition to girls, LGBTQ youth are at times vulnerable to failed interventions due to lack of affirming programming³. In recognition of the need for culturally competent and gender-responsive programming we recommend including disaggregation of the proposed data collection by gender. ACS should provide information on programming utilized in detention and placement in regard to whether it is both offered to male and female youth and also on whether programming is designed to meet the needs of boys, girls, both, or unspecified. Similarly ACS should examine and report on the ability of programs to meet the needs of LGBT youth in custody. We recommend that ACS offer a short description of each service noting whether the

¹ New York State Offices of Children and Family Services. Close to Home – Year One Review. Retrieved October 26, 2015 from: http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/rehab/close_to_home/CTH%20Year%201%2003%2011%2014.pdf

² The New York Women's Foundation. Blueprint for Investing in Girls and Young Women. Retrieved October 26, 2015 from: http://www.nywf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/FINAL_VFTF_9-24_Full-Report_single-pages.pdf

³ Urban Justice Institute and Street Wise and Safe. Locked In: Interactions with the Criminal Justice and Child Welfare Systems for LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YSWW Who Engage in Survival Sex. Retrieved October 26, 2015 from: <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000424-Locked-In-Interactions-with-the-Criminal-Justice-and-Child-Welfare-Systems-for-LGBTQ-Youth-YMSM-and-YSWW-Who-Engage-in-Survival-Sex.pdf>

program is designed to meet the needs of boys, girls, or youth of all genders, as well as if each service offered is affirming to LGBTQ youth.

Nationally, a high percentage of girls involved with the juvenile justice system have significant histories of trauma. An examination of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) of girls in Florida's juvenile justice system in 2014 found that 45% of system impacted girls had experienced 5 or more ACEs. Thirty-one percent had experienced sexual abuse compared to 7% of boys, a rate 4.4 times higher for girls⁴. Research such as this highlights the importance of gender responsive programming designed to meet the needs of all youth. While representing a difficult time in the lives of youth, juvenile detention and placement can become an opportunity for youth to receive services that would help them improve their lives. The need for intervention in the lives of justice system impacted youth is critical. Justice system impacted youth have a mortality rate four times higher than the general population – a startling statistic that is even more alarming when broken down by gender showing that justice system involved girls have an eight times higher mortality rate than the general population⁵.

We are encouraged by ACS's attention to the needs of girls in juvenile justice settings. There has been recent national attention to the unique needs of girls encountering the justice system. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) youth as well as Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) youth are disproportionately represented within the justice system and represent a subset of girls for which attention is needed to ensure their needs are appropriately met. Girls entering the justice system have high rates of histories of trauma including elevated rates of past sexual abuse⁶. It is critical that justice systems appropriately assess youth in a gender responsive manner and implement gender-responsive programming to meet the needs of all youth. We urge ACS to ensure youth are assessed with gender-responsive tools and provided gender-responsive programming to ensure the needs of all youth are met.

CDF urges the use of culturally competent programming for youth in ACS custody. It is critical that programming adequately meet the needs of all youth to optimize future success. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Introduction 949. We are grateful for your attention to youth impacted by New York's juvenile justice system. Please feel free to contact CDF-NY should you have any questions regarding this testimony.

⁴ Sherman, F. and Balck, A. (2015). Gender Injustice: System-Level Juvenile Justice Reforms for Girls. http://www.nationalcrittenton.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Gender_Injustice_Report.pdf

⁵ NYC Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence. (2016). Disparity Report. http://www.capitalnewyork.com/sites/default/files/Disparity%20Report%20with%20letter_palacio_buery_FINAL.pdf

⁶ Saada Sar, M., Epstein, R., Rosenthal, L., Vafa, Y. The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story. Retrieved from: http://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015_COP_sexual-abuse_layout_web-1.pdf

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

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Name: Victoria Sammartino

Address: _____

Voices Unsilenced

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Name: RANSFORD JEFFERY ODOI

Address: 1303 ST JOHNS PL.

I represent: THE FLEX DANCE PROGRAM/SONK

Address: HORIZONS JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL

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Appearance Card

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Date: 4/19/2016

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Name: GABRIELLE HOROWITZ-PRISCO

Address: Executive Director

I represent: Lineage Project - a provider w/in ACS sites

Address: 10 Plaza St E #7F Brooklyn NY 11238

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Name: Elizabeth McCordley

Address: 305 7th Ave

I represent: Sheltering Army

Address: 305 7th Ave

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 in favor in opposition

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Name: San Parko - Martin de Porres

Address: 218-24 136th Avenue

I represent: Springfield Gardens Ny

Address: _____

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rev. Wendy Adams Payne

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: Bronx Connec

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in favor in opposition

Date: 4/14/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judy Yue

Address: ~~2090~~ 2090 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd

I represent: Correctional Assn. of NY

Address: above

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Havens MD

Address: 462 First Ave

I represent: Bellerose JS Mental Health Ter

Address: same

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in favor in opposition

Date: 4-14-16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeffrey Buffs & Emily Pelletier

Address: John Jay College

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Appearance Card

[]

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Dory Hack*

Address: _____

I represent: *Center for Court Innovation*

Address: *520 Eighth Ave NY NY 10018*

**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: *4/14/16*

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Stephanie Krussack*

Address: *150 William St*

I represent: *NYC ACS*

Address: *150 William St.*

**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Felipe Ferris*

Address: _____

I represent: *ACS*

Address: *150 William Street*

**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/17/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Dixon

Address: 150 William St.

I represent: NYC ACS

Address: 150 William St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/14/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yumari Martinez

Address: _____

I represent: ACS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 949 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4-14-16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yumari Martinez

Address: 150 William Street, NY, NY

I represent: NYC Administration for Children's Services

Address: _____



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 949 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/14/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jill Krauss

Address: 150 William Street, NY, NY

I represent: NYC Administration for Children's Services

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/14/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Felipe Franco

Address: 150 William St.

I represent: NYC ACS

Address: 150 William St.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms