



## Choice Neighborhood Initiative Planning Grant

### Build Olneyville's EDUCATION TASK FORCE

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#### MINUTES

April 9, 2014

#### 1) Present

John Kelly from Meeting Street, Kathy Carton from EJP Consulting Group, Lisa Castellanos, Melissa Sanzaro, Sorrel Devine and Jose Luis Suazo from PHA, Osvaldo Jimenez, Marga Piminetel, and Hatti Harris from Manton Heights, Nicole Botelho from Children's Friend, Nicole Dufrene from Boys and Girls Clubs, Teresa Guaba from Providence CYC

#### 2) Welcome, John Kelly

John Kelly, Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the Committee members and invited the members to introduce themselves.

#### 3) Update on meeting between CNI education team and CYC

John Kelly and Kathy Carton of EJP Consulting Group reported on their meeting with Rebecca Box and Teresa Guaba of the Children and Youth Cabinet. Rebecca is excited about the opportunity to align the CNI Education agenda with the goals and metrics proposed by the CYC. She has offered to share the Action Plans that the CYC subgroups are working to develop. This should provide an opportunity to identify some specific ways in which the place-based CNI strategy in Olneyville could support and/or align the work of the CYC. In the interim, Rebecca will also share attendance data that she recently received from Providence Public Schools.

#### 4) Discussion about out of school time.

The subcommittee recognizes the importance of quality after-school and summer programs in promoting academic and social skills, increasing safety and reducing the likelihood that youth engage in inappropriate activities. Yet, Manton Heights's student participation in such programs is limited. So the group discussed ways to boost participation.

- **Boys and Girls Club (BCG).** Support and, if possible, provide new and improved facilities for BCG to provide expanded on-site programming. At other sites with better facilities, Executive Director Nicole Reilly noted that

they have been able to attract other partners like City Arts and a karate studio to provide programming. She also acknowledged that participation and membership growth at Manton Heights club has been challenged by frequent changes in site leadership but she has been pleased with the work of the current director. She said they have also been trying to minimize breaks during the school year.

During the summer, BCG provides slots for 25 Manton Heights students M-F off-site at their Bristol camp location. With additional funds, more slots could be made available. In addition, Nicole noted that the national organization has developed a new curriculum named "Brain Gain" that offers a summer enrichment curriculum that aims to stem summer learning loss. Nicole also expressed a willingness to explore the possibility of providing a before school program either at Manton Heights or D'Abate that, coupled with a walking school bus, could address parent concerns about the lack of school bus transportation to D'Abate.

- **D'Abate Elementary.** As discussed in earlier meetings, promote enrollment in the D'Abate elementary. In addition to providing a higher quality of education, the school also offers after-school programming operated by the Swearer Center. Meeting Street is working with the Swearer Center to provide training and curriculum for its volunteers to enhance math and literacy skills.
- **Providence After-School Alliance (PASA).** PASA provides school-based after-school programming at middle schools throughout Providence. The closest school to Manton Heights is Delsesto. Approximately, one-third of Manton Heights middle-schoolers attend Delsesto. Nicole Reilly offered to get specific Manton Heights enrollment data for PASA and BCG after-school programs, so we have better baseline data. One of the proposed strategies is to promote the PASA offerings and maximize Manton Heights enrollments.
- **Limited offerings for High School students.** BCG offers teen nights at "The Club" in Southside. And a few non-profits like AS220 and Urban Arts offer programs in the arts. So increasing enrollment among this student population may prove particularly challenging.
- **Olneyville Community Library.** Participants understood the library to offer some programming related to literacy for the younger kids. And acknowledged that it serves as a defacto after-school program. But further investigation is needed to catalog its full offerings. BCG noted that it operates a library at one of its clubhouse sites and would be interested in collaborating with the library at Manton Heights if space was made available.

## 5) Other Discussion Topics

- **Mind in the Making.** It was noted that Ready to Learn received a three year grant to implement a Pre-K parent education program called Mind in the Making. The program will be offered at Manton Heights. Outreach and recruitment is expected to get underway shortly once the Memorandum of Agreement between PHA and Ready to Learn is finalized.
- **Head Start at Kizirian.** Nicole Botelho of Head Start noted that they have a 4-day, 6 hour/day model located at Kizirian. She was curious about the opportunity to provide early education programming at D'Abate or closer to D'Abate so that there would be better linkages between students/parents and the school.
- **Transportation to High Schools.** Participants raised concerns that the PPS only provides bus transportation for students who live 3+ miles from the high school. As a result Manton Heights students who primarily attend Mount Pleasant and Central have to walk to school 2+ miles to school. In addition to creating serious safety concerns, this likely contributes to the high rates of chronic absence. CYC is advocating reducing the commute distance to 2 miles, which would likely include Mount Pleasant but not Central. If the CNI initiative is successful in better engaging parents around the education agenda, it may be possible to create a constituency that could work with CYC to advocate on this issue.
- **Charter Schools.** There is very limited enrollment of Manton Heights students in charter schools. As part of the parent education and engagement in kindergarten registration, there should also be education about and assistance with applications for the 10 charter school lotteries.
- **Sarah L. Gamble Foundation.** Resident, Hattie Harris, noted that the foundation has a college scholarship fund. She offered to get more information to share with the committee.

## 6) Future Topics

- **CYC committees.** Teresa Guaba offered to present an overview of the CYC committees, so CNI partners understand how the initiative is structured and what they are focused on for the action plans.
- **Parental engagement.** Jose Luiz to invite Janet Pichardo from Providence Public Schools' Family and Community Engagement Office.

## 7) Next meeting date

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 28 at 11 AM at Manton Heights.