

YMI CONNECTION Spring 2013

“News, Updates, and Stories from the **Y**oung Men’s Initiative”

At-a-Glance

- Meet Jahmani Hylton, the new Director of the Young Men’s Initiative
- Read about the success of young fathers in the CUNY Fatherhood Academy
- Follow us! We’re on Twitter at @nycyoungmen

Inside this issue:

The Big Picture	1
On The Ground	2
One on One	3
In the Spotlight	3
Beyond NYC	4
YMI in the News	4
MYMI	4
Check It Out	5

The Big Picture

The Big Picture brings you up to speed on the status of the Young Men’s Initiative.

Since 2005 . . . the NYC Department of Education has invested in reforms that have boosted academic success across all grades. Graduation rates for black and Latino young men have increased by more than 72% since 2005; however, only 1 in 10 black and Latino young men graduate from high school properly prepared to succeed in college and in careers.

and Latino boys for college and careers. These 40 schools will receive new funding over three years to invest in innovative strategies to further improve academic achievement, youth development, and school culture. The City will then evaluate which strategies were most successful so that we can apply them to schools city-wide.

ESI is also launching eight

in education reform but in entrepreneurship and management and working directly with youth and families. Over the next 14 months, the Fellows will work to develop the strongest possible model, building on the best research and practices available and drawing inspiration from the technology and entrepreneurial sectors as well as from education reform.

Jobs Plus

This spring, YMI has dramatically expanded Jobs-Plus, an employment program that saturates public housing developments with place-based employment and financial empowerment services and financial incentives to “make work pay.” The model has successfully helped housing residents find employment and improve their finances. Those effects were found both for those who access services directly and also for the larger community which benefits from an improved culture of work. Its significant expansion through YMI is a testament to the program’s strong track record overall and its record serving the high proportions of black and Latino young men that have taken advantage of the services.

Operated as a partnership between CEO, HRA, NYCHA, and the Office of Financial Empowerment, Jobs-Plus will now reach nearly 24,000 working-age NYCHA residents living in 22 developments across all five boroughs. The selected sites bring a



Bedford Academy Principal Adofo Muhammed meets with the parents of 9th grade boys as part of the Expanded Success Initiative’s investment in parent engagement

Expanded Success Initiative
The Young Men’s Initiative launched the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) in 2012 to increase the number of black and Latino male students who graduate from high school and persist in college or in pathways to careers. ESI is investing in 40 NYC high schools that have demonstrated success in preparing black

new high schools that will be specifically designed to prepare black and Latino young men to succeed in college and careers. ESI has hired a class of School Design Fellows who are charged with designing, launching, and leading these eight new schools. The Fellows were chosen through a rigorous application process and represent talent not only

range of experience and capacity, service approaches, and geographic reach, and we anticipate important lessons for creative implementation solutions as the program reaches full capacity.



On the Ground

Close to Home is a juvenile justice initiative that allows NYC youth who have committed a delinquent act to receive services in or close to the communities where they live, instead of in facilities hundreds of miles upstate. Close to Home builds on the juvenile justice reforms that NYC has recently instituted, while promoting public safety by maintaining the low juvenile crime rate and reducing incidents of re-offending.

Phase I involves transferring custody for young people in non-secure placements (NSP) from the NY State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS). ACS began receiving non-secure youth into custody on September 1, 2012. These placements also include youth who have been directly placed into the City's

On The Ground brings you updates on our programs—what's new, what's expanding, and important milestones.

custody by the Family Court. Once NSP is fully implemented, ACS will have capacity to serve about 297 youth at any given time.

ACS is now planning for Phase II, Limited-Secure Placement, which will begin Fall 2013. Like non-secure

placements, youth in limited-secure settings will receive a full range of services and supports. However, limited-secure placements will have more restrictive features to ensure the safety of residents, program staff, and communities. ACS plans to

begin accepting youth into limited-secure placement beginning in Fall 2013 and anticipates a capacity of about 160 youth.

Close to Home staff from the NYC Administration for Children's Services



"[These] eight pilot programs . . . share a single goal: ensuring that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to succeed in the knowledge economy. The LINK initiative will increase access to employment opportunities and provide training that will enable low-income New Yorkers to secure jobs in growing sectors that are critical to New York City's 21st century economy." -NYCEDC President Seth Pinsky

In Spring 2013, the NYC Economic Development Corporation launched the **LINK (Leveraging Innovations and our Neighborhoods in the Knowledge Economy) Initiative**, a set of programs designed to connect low-

income New Yorkers with opportunities in the knowledge economy. These programs are designed to bridge the gap between growth sectors in the economy and the City's disadvantaged communities by strengthening the skills and employability of New Yorkers and by fostering business activity that provides employment opportunities.

One program, Digital-Work NYC, targets young adults ages 16-26 who are neither in school nor working to increase awareness of online work opportunities that allow participants to earn money completing digital tasks, build an employ-

ment history, and create a pathway to digital employment. Technical training in computer and online skills is combined with online work experience to position participants for placement in jobs or paid internships in tech-related firms or relevant education/advanced training.

Another program, the Learn as you Earn Advancement Program (LEAP), targets low-income community college students studying Healthcare IT, General IT, Web-based Work, General Business, or Early Childhood Education with a combination of classroom training and paid internships. The program helps participants gain skills and access

better-paying jobs in their fields of study.

The LIFT (Low Income Fast Track) Entrepreneurship Program offers Bronx-based, low-income entrepreneurs a comprehensive package of support services to support their business growth from a plan to an established business. The program provides incubator space, one-on-one strategic and operational business counseling and technical support, access to low-cost loans, and facilitated relationships with local anchor institutions in the Fordham neighborhood.

These are only three of the eight programs that have launched under LINK. Learn more at <http://tinyurl.com/ndphsz4>

One on One

One on One highlights a participant in one of the Young Men's Initiative programs throughout NYC

Name: Chaka Bernard
YMI Program: CUNY Fatherhood Academy



Chaka Bernard was in the first cohort of the CUNY Fatherhood Academy. He graduated in 2012 and now attends LaGuardia Community College.

One of the toughest barriers to finding employment or quality education, even in NYC, is a criminal record. Too often, failure to pass a background check closes the door on a person who is ready for a second chance. Growing up, Chaka Bernard missed a lot of school and wound up at a juvenile detention center. From there he went into a downward spiral of "criminal things," hitting bottom when he was shot in Coney Island. "I could have lost my life," Chaka remembers, and he thought of his 3-month old son and how, if he had been killed, he wouldn't have been there for him.

Chaka resolved that from then on, he'd make sure he was there for his son. Soon thereafter, a relative told him about the CUNY Fatherhood Academy (CFA) and he decided to enroll. Through CFA, Chaka became a provider for his family,

taking college preparatory classes and getting a part-time job working for CUNY. With the help of CFA counselors and his fellow fathers in the class, he "learned to just talk instead of staying angry." Chaka is now enrolled as a full-time student at CUNY.

Innovative programs like the CFA are giving students like Chaka the ladders they need to overcome barriers to getting a quality education and providing for their families. Chaka transitioned to college in Fall 2012, and is thriving there. His support system still includes his cohort members and counselors at the CUNY Fatherhood Academy.

**The CUNY Fatherhood Academy is supported in part by the Open Society Foundations' Campaign for Black Male Achievement. Thank you OSF for your support!*

In The Spotlight

In the Spotlight highlights an agency or provider working with the City to accomplish the goals of the Young Men's Initiative

This spring, **Jahmani Hylton** joined City Hall as the new Director of the Young Men's Initiative. Prior to joining the Mayor's Office, Jahmani occupied a number of leadership positions at the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Jahmani is a graduate of CUNY's Hunter College School of Social Work. His professional experiences have encompassed work with youth and families, adolescents, youth and adults with developmental disabilities, individuals and groups impacted by HIV/AIDS and the LGBTQ community. Jahmani, the eldest of fourteen children, jokes "I was born to be a social worker." Jahmani's career path has been inspired by a sense of advocacy and the belief that one can be an agent of change.

YMI: Tell us about your shift from social work into government:

JH: In early 2007, when working on a specific case as a social

worker in foster care, I recognized barriers within the system. I wanted to not only improve the situation of the young man I was working with, but broadly improve situations for other kids in the same position. I always viewed social work as a means of making change, but that was the moment when my focus shifted and I was drawn to city government.

YMI: What was your time at ACS like?

JH: During my tenure at ACS I aimed to shift the way work was happening internally. In line with that, two of my New Year's resolutions this year included to "support and enhance." I held several leadership positions within the agency. One day I was called into a meeting with Commissioner Richter. He explained that he had been approached by Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs about a position on the

staff of YMI and he was suggesting me as a candidate. In a few days I interviewed for the position and the following week was offered the job.

YMI: What are your goals for YMI?

JH: I hope to enhance the public knowledge of YMI through the public relations firm that we've contracted with, Fenton Communications. I hope to find opportunities to bring partners and agencies together. In doing so, I hope to increase participation and find where the work overlaps, being mindful in recognizing that young men of color penetrate multiple systems. I also aim to improve efficiency by continuing to ask, "What are the core themes?" Moreover I am

looking forward to the youth summit we are planning for the fall. It will be an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of agencies, stakeholders, and the young people. I hope we never lose touch with the overall goal, serving young people.



*Welcome to the YMI Team,
Jahmani!*

MYMI *MYMI is our list of ways that young people can interact directly with YMI through volunteer opportunities, events, apps, etc.*

On May 7, 2013 the NYC Department for Health and Mental Hygiene released the **Teens in NYC app**. The app is compatible with the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch and provides access to resources which will allow them to practice safe sex.



The Teens in NYC app can be downloaded at the Apple iTunes store or at nyc.gov/digital

YMI believes that teens in NYC have the right to access sexual health services privately, without having to get permission. This application helps

teens find reproductive health services in all five boroughs and provides key information about different kinds of birth control. In addition, the app comes equipped with videos for teens, by teens about what to expect during a visit to a teen-friendly health clinic.

The **My Voice, Our City** competition seeks to empower young black and Latino men (ages 16-24), local organizations, and community leaders to submit program ideas that will brighten the future of New York City. The competition is open



Competition winners are eligible for up to \$36,000 in prizes!

to entries that address one or more of the following topics: business development, employment opportunities, and college pathways. Submit your initiative or idea to strengthen New York City for black and Latino young men by July 24, 2013! Learn more at www.myvoiceourcity.com

YMI in the News

- *Program Keeps Troubled New York Youth Close to Home*
New York Times, May 3, 2013
<http://tinyurl.com/kt33b9l>
- *East NY Neighborhood Opportunity Network and Resource Hub Opens*
News 12 Brooklyn, May 2, 2013
<http://tinyurl.com/pj86rvc>
- *New Anti-Teen Pregnancy App from City Health Department*
New York Daily News, May 8, 2013
<http://tinyurl.com/ppgbuc9>
- *City Plans New Approach to Disciplining Mentally Ill Inmates*
New York Times, May 12, 2013
<http://tinyurl.com/lbb3wzw>
- *From Terrorizing Streets to Making Them Safer*
New York Times, April 24, 2013
<http://tinyurl.com/cdj7a3f>
- *Poetry Workshops for Probationers in Bronx Draw Local Residents; Strengthen Community Ties*
New York Daily News, March 24, 2013
<http://tinyurl.com/na9zbyo>

YMI in the news contains links to articles and other mentions of YMI in the media

BeYond NYC

Beyond NYC provides information about the reach the Young Men's Initiative has outside of the city

On February 25th, 2013, **NYC Dads: The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative** hosted a Fatherhood Roundtable at City Hall, bringing together over 20 representatives from a dozen health and human services agencies that participate in the Mayor's Fatherhood Working Group.

Alan S. Farrell, Citywide Fatherhood Services Coordinator, moderated a robust panel discussion with long standing national leaders in the fatherhood movement including Ken Braswell, Executive Director of Fathers Incorporated; Shawn Dove, Campaign Manager for Black Male Achievement, Open Society Foundation; Dr. Ronald Mincy, Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Policy and Social Work Practice, Columbia University and Brooke Richie-Babbage, Executive Director of the Resilience Advocacy Project.

After living discussion and Q and A, the roundtable led breakout groups with City agencies to discuss how to sustain and further energize the responsible fatherhood movement citywide and nation-wide.

Learn more about NYC Dads at www.nyc.gov/nycdads

Check It Out

Check It Out includes links to articles and resources of interest to our partners and allies

Second Annual Eagle Week Program New York, May 4-11, 2013

http://www.eaglefoundation.com/eagle_week.htm

The Second Annual Eagle Week Program, hosted by the Eagle Academy Foundation, represented a “360 degree strategy to help inner-city young men succeed.” Eagle Week featured a series of events including a Parent Engagement Expo, a Day of Service, and a panel for Mayoral candidates.

Internet Sexuality Information Services (ISIS) Youth Tech and Health Conference

San Francisco, April 7-9, 2013

<http://ythlive.org/>

The YTH Live conference is the premiere event for health and technology professionals to get together with youth, parents and community leaders to advance the health of young people. Hosted by ISIS, the U.S. leader in using technology and new media for sexual and reproductive health, the conference is expecting over 600 national and international attendees.

Harlem Children’s Zone Annual Benefit New York, April 24, 2013

<http://www.hcz.org>

At their Annual Benefit, the Harlem Children’s Zone this year honored George Soros, founder of the Open Society Foundations and a major donor to the Young Men’s Initiative.

The Boys Initiative – Health Guidelines for Adolescent and Young Adult Males

<http://theboysinitiative.org/home.html>

Earlier this month [The Boys Initiative](#) announced the appointment of **David L. Bell, MD, MPH**, to serve as a founding member of the steering committee to guide its groundbreaking project [Health Guidelines for Adolescent and Young Adult Males](#). Dr. Bell is a member of the YMI Advisory Board.

Ebony Magazine’s Saving Our Sons Series

<http://www.ebony.com>

Starting in May 2013, Ebony magazine will be running a four-part series over four months on factors affecting the lives of black boys in the United States. The series will cover education barriers, mental health services, fatherhood and father absence, among many other issues related to the Young Men’s Initiative. In the May issue, YMI Advisory Board members Khary Lazarre-White and David Banks are highlighted for their work at Brotherhood/Sister Sol and the Eagle Academy Foundation, respectively.



Mayor’s Youth Leadership Council Alumna Denise Vivar receives an American Dreamer Award from Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Fatima Shama in recognition of her work mobilizing her school behind the passage of the DREAM Act

The Young Men’s Initiative is on the Web! Connect with

@nycYoungmen nycyoungmen.tumblr.com nyc.gov/youngmen

The mission of this newsletter is to capture the spirit of the Young Men’s Initiative through content that speaks to various stakeholders invested in our work. Each issue will contain program and policy updates, personal stories from our partners and program participants, thought resources and opportunities to get involved. This newsletter is a snapshot of where the Young Men’s Initiative is and where it is headed.

