

Initial Strategy Session for Adolescent Outreach in Smith Hill.

Tuesday March 18th, 2008, Selim Rogers Recreation Center

Present :

Heather Gaydos, Director of Youth Programs, Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence

Tou Pathoummahong, Streetworker, Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence

Karl Brown, Salim Rogers Recreation Center

Anne Bickel, Community Outreach Coordinator, SHCDC

Christian Caldarone, Project Manager, SHCDC

Issues:

- Overall lack of youth and adolescent programming in Smith Hill. Needs are great for activities, job training and jobs, particularly in the Laotian community. There exists a paucity of non-profits serving this population as well.
- Need for regularly scheduled activities for Laotian youth in Smith Hill
- Due to limited resources, we discussed the importance of maximizing neighborhood and organizational resources.

Concrete steps:

- Thursday Night Group
 - Rec. Center will be available on Thursdays from 6-9 for Tou's programming for area Laotian youth.
 - Heather will engage in coordinating services as necessary for this group. One particular area is job training.
 - SHCDC and The Nonviolence Institute will partner in an April neighborhood clean-up. Youth volunteers will be sought from Tou's group and Anne's regular YouthRap participants. There are also a number of adolescents who need to fulfill community service hours required by their high schools. Karl suggested making the clean-up coincide with school vacation.
 - The Thursday evening group will begin informally. Issues will be addressed as needed. For instance, summer programming.

Issues for further Exploration:

- Tennis
 - Karl offered Rec. Center tennis equipment and transportation.
 - Where?
 - There are 2 tennis courts at Nathaniel Greene School which would require resurfacing and nets.
 - Karl could bus group to other courts.
 - We discussed this activity as potentially directed towards girls.

- SHCDC will follow-up on these issues.
- Computer labs
 - There are two GTECH grants of \$15,000 each for every city neighborhood. So far SH has only received one of these grants. SHCDC will investigate.
 - The need for community computer lab was addressed. The challenges of running such a lab were discussed.
 - This conversation also brought up a possible connection between the SH branch of the library and the Rec. Center, specifically for Tou's program.
 - SHCDC will investigate
- Jobs for adolescents
 - Karl stated that he does not have any general staffing needs for the summer, but the city has a standing need for lifeguards. Karl stated that he would hire certified life guards.
 - Tou and Christian talked about how to encourage lifeguard training and certification in his group. One issue is how to lower the cost of the training.
- SHCDC Initiatives
 - We discussed how to bridge gaps within the neighborhood by helping each other recruit for initiatives run by our respective organizations. The SH Walking Club is one activity where the Rec. Center could help recruit members.
- Continuing this dialogue with the goal of expanding programs for youth and adolescents were generally agreed upon by all present. Heather stated that the Smith Hill neighborhood is underserved by non-profit organizations whose mission is focused towards youth services. Groups like New Urban Arts, Community Music Works and The Broad Street Studios are having a tremendous impact on the youth in the areas in which they work. One thing we can accomplish through our partnering on these issues is to focus attention on this great need and possibly lure like-minded organizations to our neighborhood.

Submitted by Christian Caldarone

CC – Anne Bickel, Karl Brown, Heather Gaydos, Tou Pathoummahong, Ward 12 Councilman, Majority Leader Terrence M. Hassett, Francis Smith SHCDC Executive Director