

**Youth Investment Council
Minutes
January 18, 2005**

Attendees: Curtis A. Myers – ASPIRE Youth Development
Kenila Xavier – Burlington County Community Action Program
Darlene C. White - Burlington County Board of Social Services
Fred Aiken – Burlington County Institute of Technology
AC McIntosh – Division of Youth and Family Services
Lauren K. Williams – DRENK- School Based Youth Services (Pemberton)
Paul Porter - Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey
Robert Eugene - Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey
Rebecca Schwartz – Joint Action in Community Service, Inc.
Jane Guillard - Juvenile Justice Commission
Arthur Davenport – New Jersey Youth Corps
Gloria Kraft – Rutgers Cooperative Extension/4-H Youth Development
Kathy Cardell – WAWA Food Markets
Barbara Weir - Workforce Investment Board

The Youth Council meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM

I. Youth Council Schedule 2005

A copy of the Youth Council schedule was circulated to all members. Barbara asked if the Council still wanted to meet every month or switch to every other month. Majority present felt that every other month would be sufficient and that if necessary other meetings could be arranged. Barbara will revise the existing schedule and re-send to all members. Meetings that were removed from the line up are February, April and October.

II. Youth Job Fair/Career Fair

Barbara reported that the initial date requested by the Council needed to be changed (May 19th) due to a conflict with the County's Youth in Government Day. The Youth Job Fair was moved up a day to May 18th, from 2 PM to 6 PM. It was believed that information reported to me regarding this conflict may be incorrect. Curtis reported that Youth in Government Day is usually the third Wednesday, not Thursday. He will look into this and get back to me. Either way the Youth Job Fair will be held in May.

Barbara asked the Council's feedback as to whether the Youth Job Fair should be closed to serve only the youth enrolled in the Youth Opportunity Program. Majority present felt, "if it's worked before why change it". Therefore, the Youth Job Fair will remain open to youth residing in Burlington County between the ages of 16-21.

Barbara reported that it is difficult to obtain actual numbers (of youth who gained employment) from Employers. Most do not return surveys or return them incomplete. If the goal is to see how many youth received employment; which would ultimately tell if the Job Fair was successful, then the focus should be on surveying youth participants. Difficult as it may be, to survey youth, if a "carrot" was presented to youth participants that just might be enough for them to cooperate in the survey. Suggestions to achieve this are having youth include their e-mail address when signing in upon arrival. Within a month time period those individuals would be sent a series of questions (no more than four) to answer regarding their employment status. If youth wish to participate in the "elective" survey then they would be given their "carrot"...movie tickets, gift certificate, etc. Majority of the Council agreed that this would be the best way to get youth to respond. Barbara will have a draft copy of the four (4) questions to be asked (of youth) for the Council to review at the next meeting in March.

III. Employer Survey

Barbara reported that she attended a workshop in Atlantic City where several suggestions were made regarding participation by the Private Sector in regards to hiring youth. One suggestion in particular was surveying Employers to see why they choose to or why they don't choose to hire youth. Barbara felt it was important, at this time, to market the Youth Opportunity Program's ability to assist youth with the problems most Employers face, Workplace Readiness Skills, Life and Interpersonal Skills. A copy of the Draft letter to the Private Sector was read by members of the Council and it was determined that it was precise and to the point enough to send as is. Barbara explained that this would also be a good way to recruit for the Youth Job Fair. The Council also agreed that only fifty (50) Employers should be surveyed. Barbara will use the Youth Job Fair data base to pull fifty (50) Employers.

IV. Youth Opportunity Program Update

Darlene reported that there are currently 269 youth enrolled in the Youth Opportunity Program. The Youth Program held a two-day Winter Workshop which focused on Health Issues. Approximately 30 youth participated, with guest speakers from the AIDS Coalition and the Red Cross. All youth were certified in First Aid at the close of the workshop. The Program is currently working on setting up for the Spring Workshops that will be held in March on Personal Responsibility. Guest Speaker will be Curtis Myers of ASPIRE Youth Development. The Program is also holding Workplace Readiness Workshops that will run from January through March. Youth who attend these workshops will become eligible for the Summer Work Experience piece in July. There are other workshops that interested youth must attend, but the main one is Workplace Readiness.

Darlene reported that there is a tentative day scheduled for the Youth Graduation, June 21, 2005 to be held at the Human Services Facility.

Darlene reported that the youth offender population (Juvenile Justice Commission) is in place and will be spearheaded by Robert Eugene of Goodwill (Collaborative partner with the Youth Program). Robert reported that beginning on Thursday, January 20th he will be entering the Burlington County Detention Center and the Burlington Day Program to teach the youth offender Life Skills, Interviewing Skills and Workplace Development Skills. He will also be working on the recruitment of Employers who are interested in hiring a youth offender after the necessary "program(s)" are completed. Vernon Hill of the One-Stop Career Center will be conducting the certification process to determine eligibility.

V. Guest Speaker

Barbara introduced a new face to the Youth Council, Kathy Cardell the Regional Recruiter for WAWA Food Markets. Kathy is a recently appointed WIB member, who has years of experience within the Private Sector. She is a welcomed addition to the Youth Council, as well as to the WIB.

Kathy reported that there are a total of 32 stores within Burlington County. She is the recruiter for those stores, as well as several in Ocean and Camden Counties. Kathy recruits mainly for Full Time positions, such as Management or Customer Service Representatives. Many individuals can, however, be considered Part Time staff, but work Full Time hours. Kathy happily reported that WAWA DOES hire youth 16 years and older. However, WAWA cannot hire any individual who have prior offenses, i.e. robbery, assault, firearms, etc... Kathy will look into minor offenses such as, runaway or truancy. Youth can be charge with these offenses, but it may not be an "offense" that could hinder them from employment with WAWA.

VI. New Business

There was no new business to report.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM

Next Meeting: March 15, 2005
 Goodwill's EmployAbility Institute
 798 Woodlane Road
 (Next to the WAWA and across from the Human Services Building)