



Chairman Nicholas Himidian & District Manager William Rivera  
Youth and Education Committee Meeting **Minutes**  
**February 8, 2018**

**Meeting Location:** BRONX CB9 OFFICE

**Meeting Start Time:** 7:00 PM

**Board Members Present:** Chair of Committee Venus Williams, Felipa Manaiza, Lisa M. Diaz, Abnunoman Rahman, Harry Dunlap, Chairman Nicholas Himidian

**Board Members Absent:** Committee Vice-Chair Nicole Washington, Hannia Godinez

### **Introduction**

- A. Committee Chair, Board Members & Guest
- B. The Youth & Education Committee represents the community's interests with regards to education and programs that target the youth and acts as a liaison between community members and the NYC Department of Education including Parent Advocates, PTA's, Educators and Principals, School Safety, the Administration for Children Services, the District Attorney's Office, NYC Department of Youth & Development and local organizations and nonprofits

### **Guest Speakers**

- A. Luc James Dieudonne, Forever DC Mentorship Program  
Representatives spoke on behalf of the Forever DC Mentorship Program. The purpose of this program is to introduce financial literacy to youths ages 13-21. Daquan Cooper is the inspirational for this organization. He was a youth killed in Parkchester some time ago. Due to Daquan's entrepreneurship, in his honor, this organization's purpose is to teach youths skills in areas such as the stock market, investment in real estate, budgeting, saving, and entrepreneurship. With the program Pick Your Passion, this organization plans to match an inspiring artist with a leader in their field to mentor them. The program is hoping to launch in June. They have reached out to other organizations for partnership. Their hope is that the launch event will be a basketball tournament. The program is also looking to host a school supply giveaway and donate supplies to local schools. One of the organizations' long term goal is establishing an after school program. They hope to integrate with other community programs and nonprofits that are already working with the youth in the community. Their hope is to partner with local after school programs to present their program/curriculum. They are also hoping to expand outside of the Bronx and NYS eventually. The organization also hopes to create community centers which they feel is a need that is in high demand within the community.

As per BM Venus Williams, will this be a co-ed mentorship program. As per Forever DC Mentorship Program representative, yes, this will be co-ed.

As per Chairman Himidian, please elaborate on Pick Your Passion. As per Forever DC Mentorship Program rep. Pick Your Passion is going to be a fundamental part of the organization. We will present youths with options throughout various art fields in order to partner them with a mentor most aligned with their interest.

As per Chairman Himidian, is this program established anywhere as of yet? As per Forever DC Mentorship, they are still in the process of building.

As per Chairman Himidian, Sotomayor Center may be ideal for this program. Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club may also be a good fit.

As per BM Venus Williams, Forever DC Mentorship should also come to present at CB9's general board meeting later this month. Ms. Williams also volunteered to be a mentor with this program. Program was also invited to attend a College Prep Course.

B. Lloyd Donders, Special Education Law Attorney

Mr. Donders arrived late but was available to present. Mr. Donders is a special education attorney who has a son with special needs. He went through a battle to get his son the services he needed and as Mr. Donders, this made him think of all the kids that are unable to get the services they need. Specifically in areas of low income and resources where parents do not have money to pay for legal fees. As a Special Education Attorney Mr. Donders helps children get the support they need and are entitled to from their school. Mr. Donders educates parents as to what their kids are entitled to. When a child is wronged, and case is won, the schools pay for his attorney fee. Federal Laws are the ones that are in place for children with special needs. The state laws are there to implement the federal mandate. Mr. Donders explained Child Find, which means that schools are obligated to go out and find children who are in need of special education services. Evaluations was another topic of discussion. Mr. Donders knows how to get parents free private evaluations for their children. FAPE is very basic to special education. It stands for Free Appropriate Public Education. If school does not give them appropriate education than parents have the right to sue schools to achieve this. Mr. Donders also explained Least Restrictive Environment. This means that Children with disabilities have to be educated with everyone else/non-disabled peers. Early Intervention Services is for children within the ages of 0-2 not meeting their milestone, NYDOH is responsible for giving these children services. CPSE: Committee on Pre-School Special Education is handled by the district and is for children 3-5 years old. Mr. Donders focuses on Committee of Special Education, which services children Ages 5-21 years old with special education needs. These children are entitled to education until they graduate from high school or until they turn 21. IDEA-Individual with Disabilities Education Act is a federal law to keep in mind. Independent Education Evaluation-IEE, is an evaluation of a student thought to have a disability by a qualified examiner not employed by the district. The issue is that evaluations by DOE, as Mr. Donders, are poor. As a result, he advises clients that an IEE is done. Mr. Donders can get parents with little money the same evaluation that a parent with money is able to afford as this will be paid by the district. NYC DOE is the largest school district in the country, it has 1.1 million students and 1,800 schools of which 2,000 students have IEPs-Individual Educational Program. When IEP's are not kept, Mr. Donders as an attorney can get private services for these students. By state law, DOE is required to give parent training and counseling to help manage children at home. Schools do not always have the ability to provide services in schools for what children need, so they give parents vouchers of providers nearby, however, the vast majority of people on the list do not participate in related services because DOE does not pay competitive rates. As per Mr. Donders this should not be the responsibilities of the parents. As a result, 91% of these vouchers are not being used. Mr. Donders works to get children who have not received these services, services with a private service provider paid for by district as a result of lawsuit. Pamphlets and business cards were shared with meeting participants and board members.

As per Chairman Himidian, Mr. Donders may be interested in being a mentor or can maybe point Forever DC Mentorship Program in the direction of a mentor.

In response to a participant's question, Mr. Donders stated that in the IEP process parents are an active members and are able to be involved in the determination of services.

- C. New teacher Peter Rosado at St. Helena's Elementary School and BM at Bronx CB2 was present to talk to committee regarding St. Helena's condition. As per this teacher, the school is 75 years old and looks 75 years old. He is requesting assistance with locating funding for improvements in the school. As per Mr. Rosado, low enrollment in archdiocese schools due to competing enrollment from charter schools and lack of additional city funding has been affecting the quality of archdiocese schools. As per Mr. Rosado, the school has experienced wifi shortage and lack of resources such as laptops and electronics. As per BM Venus Williams, CB9 is able to draft a letter of support to elected officials regarding requesting wifi and computers as a donation on behalf of CB9. As per Chairman Himidian, have you looked into grants? There is also computer sites that have sponsorship programs to some capacity. As per BM Venus Williams, in regards to the cosmetic of the school, she suggested throwing a paint party and inviting the community to paint. As per Chairman Himidian, St. Helena's should contact Councilmember Diaz in regards to funding for computers.

As per BM Venus Williams, Mr. Rosado should explore DELL as a donation source as well as Optimum. As per Chairman Himidian, you should also check with Verizon.

As per BM Venus Williams, Home Depot can also participate with supplies for a paint job and invite local electeds, media and community members.

As per Chairperson Himidian, school should also check Clinton Foundation and Bill Gates Foundation. CGI in 125<sup>th</sup> Street is definitely a place to go to. Councilmember Salamanca may also be a good venue for pointing Mr. Rosado in the right direction for city funding

### **New Business**

- A. Easter Egg Hunt and College Prep Course were tabled by Committee Chair Venus Williams in consideration of time.

### **Meeting Adjourned: 8:21 P.M.**

Minutes Transcribed by CB9 Staff.

#### **OFFICE INFO**

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