

July 16, 2002

Jeanne Mulgrav
Commissioner
Department of Youth & Community Development
156 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: Youth Services RFP

Dear Commissioner Mulgrav:

First, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). We welcome your arrival and look forward to working with you productively on addressing the multiple needs of the young people in our city.

Regrettably, however, our first communication to you must focus on an issue within your Department about which we are extremely concerned. We are deeply troubled about both the process and the results – to the extent we know them - of the recent contract awards process for youth services in our neighborhoods.

As you know, an RFP for youth services was issued well over a year ago. Like many others, our community board was actively involved in making recommendations about the allocation of the community share component of the available funds. This represented a continuation of a long-standing practice, which acknowledged that local community members most often have the best insight into the particular needs of their neighborhoods and the best options for services. Given the woefully inadequate amount of funds available for core youth services, this kind of input has been especially critical to ensure that these funds are used as well as possible.

For reasons unknown to us, there was an inordinately long delay in completing this process. We have just learned that DYCD recently communicated its awards decisions to applicants and that those awards represent a dramatic redistribution and redirection of funds from previously funded programs. We are not at this point questioning the merits of particular proposals that might have been funded – although we are disturbed that we cannot even get information as to what groups or activities have been awarded grants. However, we are deeply troubled both that long-standing, solid, vital programs in our and other community boards have been precipitously eliminated or severely reduced and that the role of the community board in directing those choices seems also to have been eliminated or significantly reduced.

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We would very much appreciate an opportunity to discuss with you or an appropriate Departmental representative how this process evolved, what youth programs will be available in our district, what total amount of funds have been allocated for services within our district, and what you anticipate the role of community boards to be regarding planning for youth services in the future. Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Simone Sindin

Chair

Manhattan Community Board No. 4

Lynne Chaleff

Co-Chair

Youth Services Committee

Jai Nanda

Co-Chair

Youth Services Committee

cc: Mayor Mike Bloomberg
C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Local Electeds