

**Community Board 9
890 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225**

**Report from the
Forum on Homeless Youth
April 13, 2015
St. Francis College Auditorium**

Attendance:

Jacqueline Welch – CB9

Ada Terry – CB9

Pearl Miles – CB9

Beverly Newsome – CB 9

Judge Evelyn LaPorte

Karen Chambers – Hon. Kenneth Thompson

Kicy Motley – Hon. Bill DeBlasio

G. Davis-Elliott – Hon. Walter Mosley

Lucas Pershing – Dept of Education – Pre-K

Quest Fanning – PLGNA

Betty Stanton

Nevon Watson

Andrea Nieves

Anne

Faye

Pauline Edwards

Brenda Zubay

Amanda Bennett

Tinneesia White-Flores

Audrey Hayes

Amy Albert presented a series of examples of youth people she has represented in Brooklyn who are homeless and have been unable to find crisis shelter. The problem is that 16 and 17 year olds cannot stay in adult or family shelters without an adult and there are no shelters for adolescents in Brooklyn beyond a single location in Sunset Park for LGBT youth only. While ACS is responsible for youth who are legally neglected, when adolescents have complex conflicts with their families of origin about sexuality, teen pregnancy, criminal justice involvement or conflicting values, they are not always considered "legally neglected." Also, ACS doesn't have enough beds for teenagers.

Jamie Powlovich, Residential Director at Girls Education and Mentoring Services and a member of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Advocacy Coalition, explained that there are three tiers of services currently available to homeless and runaway youth under 18: drop-in centers with no available beds, crisis shelters and long-term residences. However, there are very few crisis shelters and long-term residences. The state spends very little money on this population which, in New York City is estimated anywhere from 3 to 9 thousand young people. The Legal Aid Society has sued the City for its failure to provide services to this population. The State passed a budget increase in the last budget for this population but Brooklyn is not likely to see much of this money. One problem is that current definitions of homelessness -- as defined HUD-- lead to an undercount of homeless young people. Another problem is simple lack of attention to the issue.

Members of the audience brought up a range of ways they already help to address this issue informally: one member of our community talked about taking in youth to sleep on her coach that her 18 year old met at First Saturdays at the Brooklyn Museum, another talked about helping to run a homeless shelter in her church.

Members of the Youth Committee talked about getting private developers to fund and provide long term housing for homeless youth.

A young person who attended provided valuable insight about the lack of attention paid to homeless young men of color who sometimes resort to petty crime to have a place to sleep.

Councilmember Eugene committed to meeting with the committee to speak further about this issue and write a joint letter to the Mayor.

The attendees determined that a three prong approach would be helpful:

1. Developing a central location for collection of informal resources for homeless youth while we try to develop more long term assistance and a network of people interesting in addressing this problem;
2. Assisting with more accurate counting and identification of homeless teens in need of assistance in Brooklyn;
3. Developing more long term and crisis beds in Brooklyn particularly for young men of color in conjunction with other community boards and area leaders;

It is the hope that the committee will continue to work on this issue, and together with Councilmember Mathieu Eugene will formulate a letter, for the Board's approval, to submit to Mayor DeBlasio.

Thank you to our presenter, Ms. Jamie Powlovich; the Honorable Judge Evelyn LaPorte; District Manager Pearl Miles for her assistance in doing the outreach to the elected officials, Brooklyn Community Boards and the community at large; and for attending tonight's forum.

Respectfully submitted
Amy Albert
April 21, 2015