Building Community Capacity to Work with Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

Rev. Rubén Austria, Community Connections for Youth
Tshaka Barrows, W. Haywood Burns Institute
Clinton Lacey, NYC Department of Probation

Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Washington DC
May 4, 2013 @ 10:30 AM
Workshop Outline

- Why Build Community Capacity?
- Promising Practices in Community Capacity Building
- Barriers to Community Capacity Building
- Strategies for Community Capacity Building
Question: what is the ultimate goal of our juvenile justice reform efforts?

Effective and Efficient Practice
- Reduce Detention
- Reduce Violations
- Improve Outcomes
- Improve Services
- Improve Compliance
- Interagency Coordination
- Efficient Budgets
- Happier Personnel

Good Services & Accountability for Youth
- Effective Programs
- Targeted Interventions
- Appropriate Sanctions & Rewards
- More Successful Completions
- Less Recidivism

Help Young People & Make the World a Better Place
- We want youth to behave well
- We want safe communities
- We want to see youth become into healthy, productive, responsible adults
Why Build Community Capacity?

- Getting juvenile justice back into the DNA of the local community leads to:
  - Support for young people long after their formal juvenile justice involvement ends
  - Preventative measures taken before young people have formal juvenile justice involvement
  - Support for entire families, including siblings
  - A much broader cross-section of the community (CBOs, faith-based organizations, businesses, etc.) taking responsibility for young people.
Why Build Community Capacity?

- If the Ultimate Goal is Healthy Youth and Safe Communities… then Community Partnerships are a **MUST**
- System-Focused Efforts Alone will not get us where we need to go
- Community Capacity Building is **is** Juvenile Justice Reform!
Why Build Community Capacity?

- **Benefits for Communities**

  - Community Capacity Building Restores the Ability of Community Members to Effectively Engage Youth
  
  - Community Capacity Building Leads to Safer Neighborhoods
  
  - Community Capacity Building Restores Youth as Community Assets
  
  - Community Capacity Building Efforts Bring Resources into Under-Resources Communities
Why Build Community Capacity?

- **Benefits for Juvenile Justice Agencies**
  - Community Capacity Building Provides Systems New and Valuable Insights, Information, Perspectives and Relationships that Only Community Stakeholders Can Provide
  - Community Capacity Building Injects and Develops a Heightened Sense of Urgency to Confront Major Issues
  - Community Capacity Building Begins to Shift the Paradigm from “Community as Recipient of Justice Services” to “Community as Partner in Visioning What Justice Is, Defining how Justice is delivered and Determining what Impact it is Having on People’s Lives
South Bronx Community Connections

- **Program Basics**

  - **Target Population**: youth ages 13 – 15 arrested for low to mid-level offenses; eligible for pre-court diversion
  - **Geographic Area**: South Bronx
  - **System Partners**: Judges, Prosecutors, Probation, Police, Schools
  - **Community Partners**: CCFY + 5 Grassroots Faith & Community Organizations
  - **Services**: Community Coaching, Neighborhood Improvement Projects, Family Strengthening (SFP), Youth Development Programming
Target community # 1

- Mott Haven is in the 40th Police Precinct
- Community District 1
- Zip Codes 10451 (partial), 10454 (all), 10455 (partial)
- “149th and below”
- Patterson Houses, Mott Haven Houses, Mitchel Houses, Milbrook Houses, Betances Houses
Target community # 2

- 44th Police Precinct
- Community District 4
- Zip Codes 10451 (partial), 10452 (all), 10454 (partial)
- Highbridge, Concourse, Morrisania
- 2nd Highest Juvenile Referrals in NYC in 2012
- Primarily School Related Offenses
“All youth need to develop core competencies to become productive adults. While risk factors can mitigate against doing so, exposure to and bonding with positive community role models facilitate pro-social youth development and enhances civic capacity.”
Core values: strengths

- Local Capacity Building vs. Top Down
- Grassroots Community Networks vs. Professionalized Service Delivery
- Positive Youth Development vs. Risk-Based Approach
South Bronx Community Connections

- Site Placement (Youth Development Programming)
- Community Coaching (Mentoring)
- Neighborhood Improvement Projects
- Strengthening Families Program (SFP)
Local cbos

BETANCES COMMUNITY CENTER

FRIENDS OF BROOK PARK
Local cbos
SBCC Entrance Points

Department of Education
- Arrest/Suspension Diversion

NYPD Arrest
- Arrest diversion

Probation
- Adjustment

Corporation Counsel
- Decline to Prosecute

Family Court
- Adjournment in Contemplation of a Dismissal / Conditional Discharge

South Bronx Community Connections
Basic Demographics

Sex of SBCC Youth

- Male: 40
- Female: 21

Ethnicity & Race of SBCC Youth

- Hispanic Multiracial: 48%
- Non-Hispanic Black: 47%
- Hispanic: 5%
YASI Risk factors

Overall Risk Level

- Low: 31%
- Moderate: 30%
- High: 39%

Contributing Risk Factors

- Legal History: 40%
- Family: 46%
- School: 57%
- Community/Peer: 43%
- Alcohol/Drugs: 20%
- Mental Health: 34%
- Aggression: 26%
- Attitudes: 66%
System involvement

Prior Juvenile Justice Involvement

- yes: 47%
- no: 53%

Top Charge At Arrest

- assault, robbery: 39%
- trespass, assembly, obstruction: 26%
- weapon: 11%
- theft: 11%
- marijuana: 13%
Key partners

Youth

CCFY

Dept. of Education

Corp Counsel

Probation

NYPD 44th

Local CBOs

Family Members

COMMUNITY

SYSTEM
Local collaborative

- Monthly meetings with all key stakeholders to share & discuss data
- System & community stakeholders together
- Targeting “hot spots” with preventative tactics
- Restorative Practices & Peacemaking in schools & the community
KEY OUTCOMES TO DATE

• Of the 41 youth who had mandates that ended prior to 3/31/13, 34 youth (83%) successfully completed their mandate. Six of these mandates (15%) were 6-months in duration. The remainder (85%) were only 60 days in duration.

• Of the 34 youth who successfully completed their mandates prior to 3/31/13, 19 youth (56%) participated in SBCC activities post-mandate.

• Of the 34 youth who successfully completed their mandates prior to 3/31/13, 12 (35%) are still actively participating in the program.
South Bronx Community Connections

Key Outcomes to Date

- The average (mean) duration of engagement for youth is 173 days.
- Youth have participated in an average (mean) of 23 SBCC activities, or an average (mean) of 3.2 activities per month.
- Nineteen youth showed periods of intense engagement (multiple events per week for multiple weeks). The average (mean) duration of engagement for these youth is 254 days.
- The parents/families of ten youth engaged strongly with staff and/or community partners of the SBCC initiative. The average (mean) duration of engagement for these youth is 333 days.
Asbury Park Community Intervention Coaching

PROGRAM BASICS

• Utilize data to identify the target population and develop strategic community based intervention.
• Community Coaches work with youth on probation who are having serious difficulty meeting the standards of their probation.
• County grant identified; RFP written; strategic outreach to inform organizations in the target neighborhood (very important!).
• Must build a collaborative to implement the program and make any necessary adjustments as well as monitor utilization and effectiveness.
Total client population:  
Adult 24,800  
Juvenile 2,200

Our client population is mostly:

- **Young**
  34%  24 years old or younger
  54%  under the age of 30

- **Male**
  83%  of adults
  81%  of juveniles

- **African American/Latino**
  85% combined adult & juvenile
Compelling Challenges:

- Extremely difficult to engage over time
- Most Disconnected young people in NYC
- Marginalized from participation in a law abiding, pro-social, productive lifestyle
- Vulnerable to continued involvement and further penetration into the CJ
- Mental Health and Emotional Issues
  - Untreated Trauma
- Educational Barriers
- Chronic Unemployment
Strengths and Assets:

- Resiliency
- Talents and skills
- Creativity
- Highly Energetic
Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONS)

Probation staff co-located in community-based organizations, designed to increase community engagement, enhance access to services, and promote pro-social behavior in five NYC neighborhoods with high probationer concentrations:

Harlem
Brownsville
Bedford Stuyvesant
East New York
South Bronx
Jamaica
Staten Island
Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON)
Promising Practices in Community Capacity Building

- **ARCHES**: Building Community Capacity to Provide Transformative Mentoring: a case study in progress…
  - Conceptualizing the Model
    - Face to face conversations with community based organizations
  - Issuing the RFA
    - Targeted community outreach
  - The Selection Process
    - Assessing organizational “readiness” to engage in transformative mentoring
  - Building a Learning Community
    - Getting help
    - Teachers & Learners
What Community Partnerships Offer

- In every community there are neighborhood faith and community organizations that are rich in providing:
  - Networks of Pro-Social, Caring Adults
  - “Credible Messengers”
  - Youth Development Programming
  - Employment/Internship Opportunities
  - Relational Supports for the Entire Family

- If this is the case, why aren’t there more system-community partnerships for youth in the juvenile justice system?
Barriers to Community Capacity Building

- The Engagement Gap
  
  - Lack of resources to support community capacity building
  - System stakeholders don’t easily see the benefits of investing in community capacity building
  - Frustration with the time and effort involved
  - Underlying feeling or belief that the resources should go towards system capacity building
  - When partnering with neighborhood organizations to build community capacity, system stakeholders default into the role of looking for failure
Effective Strategies for Building Community Capacity

- **Engaging Community Members**
  
  - Engaging Community Members requires a strategic approach and will take some additional work.
  - Utilize community members’ knowledge to identify community resources in target neighborhoods.
  - Identify monetary resources including grants and fee-for-service contracts with the understanding that additional support will be needed.
  - Identify skills development including training and consultation.
System Barriers to Partnerships

• **Bureaucratic Culture:**
  
  • Lack of vision and imagination
  
  • Learned Indifference (often masking sense of powerlessness)
  
  • Distrust/disdain for young people and communities being impacted (often masking fear)
  
  • Inadequate skill and experience
  
  • Politics: lack of bold leadership
Effective Strategies for Building Community Capacity

- **What system stakeholders can do to build community capacity**
  - Make a commitment to increase and enhance community engagement
  - Ask for help
  - Re-introduce yourself to the communities you serve
  - Expand outreach beyond current network of “usual suspects”
  - Seek and identify opportunities for formal and informal partnerships
  - Create vehicle/avenue to receive and utilize community voice
  - Go local
Community Barriers to Partnerships

- The Skills/Resources Gap
  - Lack of Juvenile Justice System Knowledge
  - Lack of Court Reporting Experience
  - Lack of Knowledge of Specific Program Interventions
  - Lack of Funding and Organizational Capacity
Effective Strategies for Building Community Capacity

- **What communities** need to build their capacity to serve youth in the juvenile justice system
  - Understanding the Juvenile Justice System
  - Matching Program Services to Risk/Needs
  - Monitoring, Documentation, and Reporting
  - Using Evidence-Based and Promising Practices
  - Ongoing Training & Technical Assistance
CCFY’s ATI Training Institute
Funding Considerations

- Sustainable Community Partnerships are not Free
- The Benefits Far Outweigh the Costs
- The Cost of a Pilot Community Capacity Building Project
The Community Coach Model

Lead Agency coordinates intake, assessment, reporting, service delivery

CBOs/FBOs provide youth development activities, community coaches

CBO

Lead Agency

FBO

Project Coordinator provides administrative and case management support

Community Coach

Coaches work 10-15 hours per week at $10-15 per hour

Each Coach works with 3-5 youth at any given time

CBO

Community Coach

Project Coordinator

Community Coach

Community Coach
Contact Information

Rev. Rubén Austria, Executive Director
Community Connections for Youth
ruben@cc-fy.org 347-590-0940

Tshaka Barrows, Deputy Director
W. Haywood Burns Institute
tbarrows@burnsinstitute.org 415-321-4100

Clinton Lacey, Deputy Commissioner
NYC Department of Probation
clacey@probation.nyc.gov 212-