

NYC WORKFORCE WEEKLY

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NYC's One Stop for Workforce and Economic Development News.



Taking Youth to New Heights

Washington Heights Program Connects Youth to Employment

When the state Department of Education cracked down on large failing high schools in the late 1990s, New Heights Neighborhood Center in Washington Heights, with a largely Dominican population, was the first to feel the change. Its local George Washington High School was restructured into smaller schools with new administrations.

“The kids that no principal wanted because they weren’t going to get diplomas got lost and they came here,” says executive director Evelyn Fernandez-Ketcham. “We acted as an information and referral center. The adults did not know English so there were few referrals. All we could do was help them with unemployment insurance.”

Much more is going on now – preparation for the GED in the mornings in partnership with the City’s Department of Education, and in the afternoons its Worker Advancement Through Technology program for work readiness. New Heights, with a staff of six, has a \$700,000 budget, half of which comes from in-kind services.

Youngsters between the ages of 17 and 21 who drop out of school are those whom the DOE refers to as the over-aged and under-credited who are entitled by law to an education. Students at New Heights tend to arrive with no more than Sixth Grade Literacy and Fourth Grade math skills. Earning a GED, which requires passing a five-subject test, can take two years. Though many drop out, attendance in GED classes at New Heights is about 85 percent, thanks to a rigorous

(New Heights, continued on pg. 3)



A Chill on Wall Street Felt in Albany State Will Feel Impact of Financial Sector Losses

The projected state budget gap has increased by \$650 million, to \$4.3 billion, largely because Wall Street bonuses, and taxes paid on those bonuses, are not expected to match the bounty of previous years.

The subprime mortgage crisis, which caught big financial services firms by surprise, and the credit crunch, plus foreclosures around the nation, have also led to layoffs in the financial services sector. Bonus blues and layoffs will mean decreased personal income tax collections and slower growth in the Corporate Franchise Tax revenues. Wall Street's straightened circumstances account for an estimated \$500 million, or 77 per cent, of the projected \$650 million shortfall.

The drop reflects the importance of New York City as the state's economic engine, but it will lead to budget battles as Governor Spitzer and the Legislature negotiate over increased spending for schools, including the public university system, as well as incentives to energize upstate economic development and other issues.

State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli issued a report detailing the impact of Wall Street performance on New York city and state, saying "The fourth quarter will ultimately define 2007. The duration and depth of job losses, bonus trimmings and declining profits will determine the seriousness of the problem."

His Securities Industry in New York City reveals that each job added on Wall Street creates two additional jobs in New York City and one additional job in the suburbs, indicating how that sector's travails will ripple through city and state economies.

Although Wall Street accounts for 5 per cent of city jobs, it receives 23 per cent of its wages, according to the report. Between 2003 and 2006, Wall Street created 41 per cent of all new jobs and generated 52 per cent of income gain. The average Wall Street salary was \$339,910, an increase of 17 per cent in 2006. The average salary for other city workers was \$59,530, up five per cent from the year before. **Further details can be found at:**
www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/oct07/103007.htm.

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NYCETC is an association of more than 200 workforce development providers - small and large community-based organizations, community colleges, and union training programs - that provide employment services to approximately 500,000 New Yorkers each year in concert with our city's business community.

Executive Director – Tim Ford

Deputy Director – Rebecca Brown

(New Heights, continued from pg. 1)

orientation process that weeds out students who lack motivation. Those who complete need guidance in negotiating the GED application that itself is a test of knowledge and patience. In the early days of the program, students would finish class in June and wait until September to take the test. Fernandez-Ketcham says, "One of my staff now drops off the GED applications and picks up appointment dates at the same time, usually for the following Monday."

Employment and training services involve building a resume, self-esteem and work experience. New Heights is located on the second floor of the Armory Track and Field Center, which is also home to the National Track and Field Hall of Fame. Through the New Heights Guide Program, participants are hired as temporary guards and are paid a stipend by New Heights. The Armory gains entry level workers for free, increasing its willingness to give risky new workers a chance. "Once the Armory takes a risk, other employers will take a risk," she says.

Such job experience is of course good for the resume. "That is a big piece of our program. We re-define baby-sitting. We get them to think in terms of their strengths, not what they are lacking. They have to write out their resume themselves, even if they type it with one finger. It is the essential tool for the job interview," Fernandez-Ketcham says. Students search for jobs and post their resumes on the Internet using the Community Technical and Learning Center located in adjacent offices to New Heights.

Students themselves under the

supervision of counselors call employers to see if jobs are open, and a few have gotten interviews based on their calls. New Heights staff also stage mock taped job interviews. Students evaluate their performance themselves before and after they view the tape and change their approaches accordingly.

In addition, the center has developed internship and employment programs with local employers, who interview students at the center where they feel secure. Employers who have participated include Hostos and Borough of Manhattan Community Colleges, D'Agnostino, Prime America and Millenium.

As participants work and go to school, counselors check their progress through workshops and surveys. "We keep careful numerical count of their responses. If 13 of 20 say they aren't happy with the hours they are working, we call them in for a workshop or phone them individually. If the survey shows that their job is causing problems at home we call them to see what needs to be done," Fernandez-Ketcham says. Employers also fill out a survey. "If someone isn't working out we might be able to prevent their losing the job or help them leave on good terms."

Clearly Fernandez-Ketcham is proud of her program, but realistic about the challenges her participants face. "Retention has a new meaning with young adults. Young people traditionally move on to other jobs in six months, but some funders think it's a problem if disconnected youth do the same. Not even adults stay at jobs for five years anymore, unless

they want to make partner."

The Community Education Pathways to Success program, an initiative of the Youth Development Institute, helps fund New Heights. Peter Kleinbard, YDI director says, "Even among the number of sites that stand out, Evelyn's is exceptional. She comes from the community and is close to it and the youngsters obviously trust and respect her."

New Heights has moved from helping over aged dropouts seek unemployment insurance to helping them begin to build career ladders. "Only a handful of these kids will go to college," she says, "My premise is that these young adult would do better to be in a union job in a hospital with the chance for advancement. They had trouble navigating high school. They aren't ready for college, which involves expense. If they have a job, after a few years their job might pay tuition."

U.S. Schools Are Factories for Failure

More than one in 10 high schools across the nation is a “dropout factory,” according to an analysis of Education Department data conducted by Johns Hopkins University for the Associated Press. In some 1,700 regular or vocational U.S. schools, no more than 60 percent of those who enroll as freshmen enter the 12th grade. “How is this living in the land of equal opportunity?” asks Bob Balfanz, the Johns Hopkins researcher who coined the term.

He acknowledges that some students transferred, but maintains that most dropped out. He studied senior classes for three consecutive years to separate events like factory closings that might have affected the rates.

Large cities and high poverty areas in the South and Southwest, most with high proportions of minority students, had the highest concentration of dropouts. Nationally about 70 percent of students graduate in four years with a regular diploma. For Hispanic and black students, the percentage drops to half. The four-year graduation rate in New York City is 60 per cent, according to the city’s Department of Education.

Proposed legislation in the House and Senate calls for a renewal of the 5-year old No Child Left Behind Act with more money for high schools and more pressure to improve graduation rates. The law currently focuses on math and reading test results in elementary schools.

Updated Reference for Workforce Resources

The U.S. Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration has published its updated 2007 Catalogue of Workforce Information Sources: Decision Making Assistance for Regional Economic Development. Introduced in 2003, it has been updated annually to identify and organize workforce and labor market information from myriad public and private sources.

Organized in three sections, it examines traditional sources such as the DOL and Small Business Administration, web-based information delivery systems, and new data and analytical tools developed by the private sector and Federal Government. **For full report:**

<http://www.doleta.gov/Programs/pdf/environmental-scan-report-final.pdf>

Pennsylvania Gets Workforce Development Funds to Back Up Wall Street

Wall Street West, a non-profit partnership of more than two dozen Pennsylvania agencies, has awarded half of its more than \$2 million funds to improve the financial services skills of north-eastern Pennsylvania students and workers.

Wall Street West obtained a \$15 million Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development grant from the Department of Labor to help it establish back-up and back-room operations in event of a disaster.

The first six recipients of the WIRED funds are Originate Ventures Internship, Bridging the Gap, Wall Street West Academy, KIZ Intern Program, The Financial Literacy Institute for Junior and High School Teachers and Students and Workforce Development Program for Financial Services.

Go to www.wallstreetwest.org for further details.



Hiring Freeze at City Agencies

Foreseeing a drop in revenues due to a cooling real estate market and dwindling Wall Street profits, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has imposed a hiring freeze for all city agencies and directed commissioners to reduce spending by 2.5 per cent this fiscal year and by 5 per cent the next. This is the first such freeze since October 2002. Budget Director Mark Page reduced revenue estimates for fiscal 2008 by \$238 million and for fiscal 2009 by \$577 million. See Albany Update for the latest on revisions to the state budget.

Kingsbridge Armory Development May Favor Local Residents and Contractors

With a developer for the long vacant 575,000 square foot Kingsbridge Armory in the about to be named, a retail workers union and Bronx community groups and churches are demanding that the deal include a local hiring program and a requirement that 75 per cent of Armory tenants pay \$10 per hour, plus benefits.

The Economic Development Corp., which in coming weeks will award the project to either Related Companies or Atlantic Development Group, previously announced that it would favor projects that provide retail jobs in that pay range. This is common for city service contractors but not developers.

Jeff Eichler, an organizer for the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union, told Workforce Weekly that the group also seeks a labor peace agreement that would restrict new tenants to those that would not compete with existing businesses. It also seeks to improve public transportation to the Armory to discourage auto traffic that would clog the streets.

Bronx community groups have long sought to link Armory development to construction of new elementary and high schools to provide 2000 new seats for students. The Department of Education has resisted the idea. Eichler says, "We want a common vision of the development and for the winning bidder to negotiate with the Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance for the good of the community."

For more information: www.nycedc.com and www.rwdsu.info/en

NEW DATE FOR SBS EVENT

Everything You Need to Know About the New NYC Training Guide

The NYC Department of Small Business Services is preparing to launch a new online training provider directory that will replace the state's Eligible Training Provider List in New York City. Whether your organization currently accepts ITAs or plans on doing so in the future this session will help you to understand the training guide, how to enter the required data, how your organization can get the most use out of the new expanded features, and more. The event is free.

Event Details

Date: Friday, Nov. 30, 1:00-3:00 pm
(please note date change)

Location: Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)
199 Chambers St., Ground Floor,
Richard Harris Terrace
Between Greenwich and West Sts., Tribeca

For more information, please contact Milta Torres, SBS, mtorres@sbs.nyc.gov.



WORKFORCE MARKETPLACE

www.nycetc.org

Workforce Marketplace is the gathering place for act-on news such as funding opportunities, RFPs, job postings, training program recruitment, and event announcements. For other job announcements, visit www.nycetc.org. For information on submitting items to Workforce Marketplace, contact Lisa Moore lmoore@nycetc.org or 212/253-6811.

Jobs

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp. seeks a Director for its Information Technology Education Center, which provides training and placement assistance. For this and other open positions, go to www.crenyc.org.

East River Development Alliance has an opening for an Accounts Manager to develop jobs and services and to coordinate with employers to meet and exceed program goals. For more information e-mail Hannah Roth at jobs@alliance.org.

Events

The Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association is holding a free program to encourage women to enter the retail automotive industry at the Center for Automotive Education & Training at 15-30 Petracca Place, Whitestone Queens on Saturday Nov. 3 from 10:30 am to 2 p.m. For more information e-mail diana@nyada.com.

St. Nichols Brooklyn Business Center is offering a free seminar "Speaking Money Financial Literacy for 21st Century Businesses" on Wednesday Nov. 14 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at 4 Chase Metro Tech Center. For more information contact espears@brooklynbusinesscenter.com or 718-388-5454 ext. 162.

The Center for An Urban Future is sponsoring a free panel "Developing New York's New Workforce: Could Enhancing English-Language Programs Boost the State's Economic Competitiveness" on Tuesday Nov. 27 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Albany. For more information, contact cuf@nycfuture.org or phone 212-479-3341.

Internships

The **NYC Department of Youth and Community Development** is seeking applicants for its 14-week internship program for low-income New Yorkers aged 16-24 who are not working and not in school. This year-round program, serving approximately 1,440 per year, incorporates ongoing education, as well as other participant and employer supports. For more information on YAIP, please consult www.nyc.gov/dycd.

NYCETC Events

2007 Workforce Policy Forum - "Moving Workforce Development Forward" - Join top city, state and federal government officials for NYC's leading workforce development policy conference – the NYCETC's 2007 Workforce Policy Forum.

Monday, Dec. 3, 2007
9:00 am-3:30 pm
United Federation of Teachers
Headquarters, 52 Broadway, 2nd floor
auditorium B, Lower Manhattan

Register online today at
<https://www.acteva.com/go/nycworkforce>

2008 Labor Market Outlook Forum
Mark your calendars for this popular annual event on the labor market outlook for the coming year. Look for more information at www.nycetc.org soon!

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2008
9:00 am-Noon
Con Edison Headquarters
4 Irving Place, 19th floor, Union Square

For more information on all NYCETC events please visit,
www.nycetc.org.