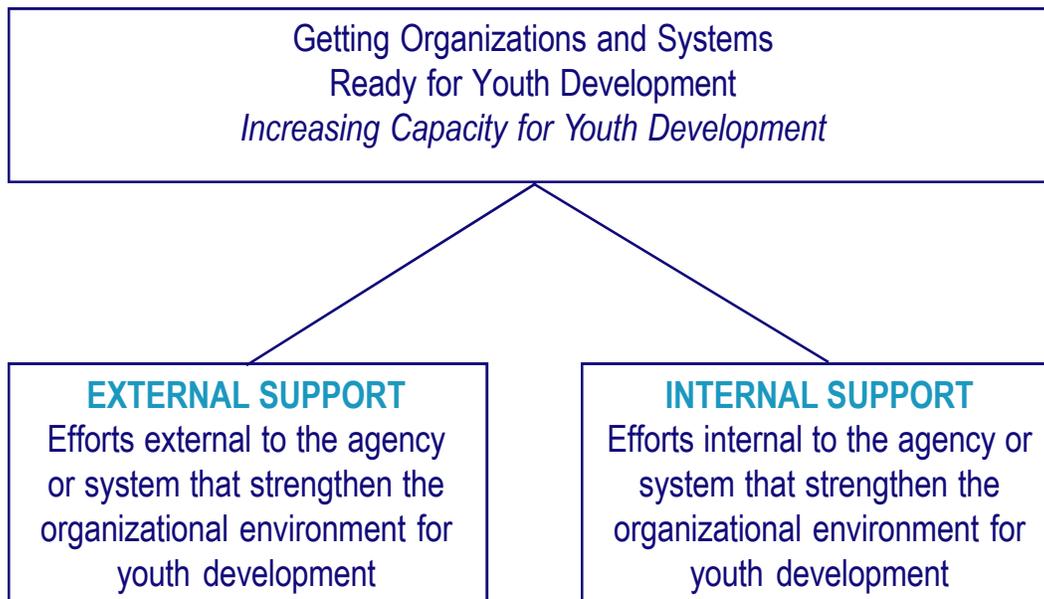

Organizational Readiness for Youth Development Symposium

September 26-27, 2002
Albany Hilton Garden Inn



**US Department of Health
and Human Services**



**Administration on Children,
Youth and Families**

This Symposium was co-sponsored by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence.

The funding for the Symposium came from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families.



Executive Summary

Organizational Readiness for Youth Development Symposium

September 26-27, 2002

This Symposium was co-sponsored by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence. The funding for the Symposium came from the Family and Youth Services Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. The fundamental questions for the Symposium were:

1. What are the elements of practice for organizations to support youth development?
2. What external supports are necessary from the public/private sector to enable organizations to provide those “practice elements”?

The impetus for the Symposium came from feedback received by youth workers trained in the Advancing Youth Development curriculum (AYD) who reported after they returned to work that their organizations or agencies were not set up to support their use of what they had learned. The symposium was designed to promote dialogue on how to get organizations ready to support youth development practice.

Approximately 35 people representing a variety of youth serving agencies in New York State and other states attended the Symposium. Larry Pasti, New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), coordinated the event. Steve Hamilton, Professor of Human Development and Co-director of the Family Life Development Center, Cornell University, provided an overview of the National Research Council Report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. This report can be viewed as an authoritative summary of the state of the art in youth development research. Steve felt its most useful information was the list of features of positive developmental settings. The authors found from the research that the following things make a difference in young people’s achievement of positive outcomes: Physical and Psychological Safety, Appropriate Structure, Supportive Relationships, Opportunities to Belong, Positive Social Norms, Support for Efficacy and Mattering, Opportunities for Skill Building, and Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts.

Nicole Yohalem, Forum for Youth Investment, focused on two strategy areas for strengthening youth development in organizations: staff development/professional development, and developing and implementing quality standards. She presented information from Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers (BEST), a 15-city initiative designed to increase training and education resources for youth workers in local communities. The BEST evaluation found that professional development provided benefits to both youth workers and to organizations, but change at the organizational level takes time, as does sustaining change and continuing to improve services. Professional development should be ongoing and involve a greater proportion of agency staff, including supervisors. Nicole also provided examples of assessment tools for organizations. The tools use different terminologies, but they all covered the same three broad areas: youth experiences, staff practices, and organizational policies and structures. The organizational elements in the assessments were underdeveloped compared to other aspects.

Jessica Mates, Fund for the City of New York, provided an outline of the process used by the Youth Development Institute in New York City to operationalize the components of organizational supports for youth development. They worked with teams of staff from 14 Community Based Organizations. Several committees were formed including one on Organizational Supports. This committee’s goal was to articulate organizational principles, practices, and operational behaviors that could be agreed upon and assessed.

Sue Eldredge, Community Network for Youth Development, San Francisco, provided a dialogue on how to get more organizations to provide strong youth development. Her organization developed a useful developmental framework to summarize existing knowledge, promote genuine accountability, and offer strategies for action. A youth development framework for practice was also put together as a flow chart, with each component leading to the next. The components are: building capacity and conditions for change; implement organizational practices to enhance supports and opportunities; increase supports and opportunities for youth; improve youth developmental outcomes; and improve early adult outcomes. Based on their data, the following kinds of activities lead to increased supports and opportunities:

- Safe, reliable, accessible activities and spaces
- Continuity and consistency of care
- Activities that combine change in policy with change in staff practices
- Activities that promote dialogue about youth
- Activities that have a clear and intentional impact on youth

Presentations on day 2 of the Symposium focused on New York State efforts. Steve Goggin, Cornell Cooperative Extension, spoke about the Advancing Youth Development curriculum, focusing on its treatment of Organizational Readiness for Youth Development.

Prevention Partners for Youth Development (PPYD), Onondaga County, is a coalition of local youth service providers, schools and funders. Four members of the coalition spoke about a youth development training for supervisors they had piloted. The training focused on two concepts: Understanding youth development as it applies to youth, and creating and sustaining successful youth development organizations.

Five professionals affiliated with the Rochester/Monroe County Youth Bureau spoke about the process they used to create a youth-centered, strengths-based approach for their agency. Consultant Marie Watkins developed the following premises of organizational capacity building:

- Staff need a sense of belonging, usefulness, power and competency.
- Begin with the here and now; the felt and expressed reality and needs of the staff (in order to move past the baggage and go forward).
- Outcome measures/standards are developed through the visioning process (bottom up change; it is a formative, developmental, generative process).
- The youth development strategy is the catalyst for organizational change and development.
- Change is not piecemeal:
 - Name what they're doing, name the dynamics
 - Clarify how those link to youth development
 - Revisit/revision of strategies
 - Action
 - Assessment

Jutta Dotterweich, Training Coordinator for the ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence, spoke about a two-part training she conducted with Upstate ACT counties on Organizational Readiness and Youth-Adult Partnerships. She identified the following lessons learned:

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- A clear understanding of youth participation is lacking. Need to think about roles for youth, what meaningful youth participation is.
 - Different approaches to training are needed—how do you reach everyone? Use youth presenters, others.
 - Organizational change involves:
 - Self-assessment
 - Changing organizational structures
 - Creating new tools for youth adult working relationships
 - Preparing young people and adults

In the final small group activity, participants reflected on the cumulative information provided at the Symposium, and identified the most important external and internal supports necessary for organizations to be ready to support youth development. These supports included funding for assessment, training and technical assistance; youth involvement; strong commitment from the community; buy in from leadership; time built in for training and assessment; and recognition for accomplishments. The group also put together a list of what supports were missing, including: support from the academic community, meaningful roles for the business community, strategies to influence CEO's and Executive Directors; more research; a clear understanding of what youth engagement and voice is and of how youth should be involved in organizations.

Organizational Readiness for Youth Development Symposium

September 26-27, 2002 Albany, NY

This Symposium was held under the auspices of the Youth Development State Collaboration Demonstration Project grant administered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. This grant is funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. The Office of Children and Family Services, Office of Youth Development, is appreciative of the funding and support from the Family and Services Bureau for this Symposium and other activity conducted through the grant.

This Symposium was co-sponsored by the ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence, Family Life Development Center, Cornell University, which is supported by funding from the New York State Department of Health. The Forum for Youth Investment has been instrumental in the planning and design of the Symposium.

This meeting was designed to bring together public/private practitioners from the community, county, state and national level to share their efforts to date and to have a dialogue about what has been learned from these efforts as well as what next steps need to be taken. To frame that discussion, the following questions were addressed:

1. What are the elements of practice for organizations to support youth development?
2. What external supports are necessary from the public/private sector to enable organizations to provide those “practice elements”?

After each presentation there was an opportunity for small or large group discussion to delve deeper into the issues. Thus, the format of the proceedings will include a summary of each presentation followed by a summary of the discussion or questions and answers.

Welcome and Introductions

Larry Pasti, New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), opened the meeting and welcomed the guests. He said that part of the impetus for holding this symposium came from feedback received by those in New York who were trained in the Advancing Youth Development (AYD) curriculum. The trainees would report that the AYD curriculum was “great stuff,” but that their organizations or agencies were not set up to support their use of the information when they returned to work. Now is the time for dialogue on how to get organizations ready to support youth development practice. Larry added that a lot of good things for the youth development field happened in the past year, including the release of the National Research Council (NCR) report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. He took a moment to recognize the influence in the youth development field of Linda Pitts, Fund for the City of New York, who passed away last year.

The symposium participants introduced themselves (see attached participant list). Larry introduced Sally Herrick, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and she then introduced the Commissioner, John A. Johnson.

Commissioner Johnson welcomed the guests, particularly those who had come from out of state. He thanked the participants for their hard work on behalf of youth and emphasized the need to promote the concept of asset building. He clearly stated that we can no longer take the risk of letting negative things happen in young people’s lives, and that we all must work together to reach our goals—parents, schools, community, business, and youth themselves need to be a part of the process.

Larry thanked the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner for their comments. He reviewed the agenda for the day (see attached) and announced that another Symposium would be offered in the spring on evaluation. That Symposium would serve as a “part 2” to the current Symposium and would focus on “real world” evaluations. Steve Hamilton, Professor, Cornell University, added that funding for evaluation is often limited and time constraints don’t allow for enough time for youth development programs to demonstrate an impact, so the question is, “what can be done under these circumstances that would be valuable?” Michelle Gambone, an expert in doing real world evaluations will be the speaker. She and other participants will highlight examples of good, low cost, home grown evaluations in New York State and elsewhere. More information about this Symposium will be forthcoming.

Larry provided a brief overview of New York State youth development activities, pointing out that the second OCFS operational framework (notebook), includes an updated family services continuum, which used to be linear, now focuses on community, and the OCFS operating principles which are family-centered, community based, locally responsive and evidence-outcome based (notebook). He also noted the Youth Development Team Discussion Paper, also available in the Symposium notebook, and the Youth Development Resource Notebook which is available on the New York State Partners for Children website at <http://www.nyspartnersforchildren.org/>.

Overview of National Research Council Report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*

**Steve Hamilton, Professor of Human Development and Co-Director of the Family Life Development Center,
Cornell University**

Larry introduced Dr. Steve Hamilton as the first speaker. Steve provided an overview of the National Research Council (NRC) report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, beginning with the history of the National Academy of Sciences, and its operational arm, the National Research Council. Reports coming from the NRC are very rigorously reviewed and carry a tremendous amount of authority. This report can be viewed as an authoritative summary of the state of the art in youth development research. However, research is not the only place we find wisdom. We also find wisdom in practitioners, culture, and tradition. There are also economic constraints and other considerations that guide what we do and don’t do. So you can’t view this as a blueprint but it is a source for the research contribution. The Chair of the Committee that produced the report, Jacquelynne Eccles, admitted she had to do fair amount of “arm-twisting” in the review process, as some committee members were reluctant to keep some information in the report on the grounds that research wasn’t strong enough. It is hoped that the issuing of the report will stimulate further research.

To review what’s in the volume, Steve suggested going back to the 3-part definition of youth development, which can be summarized in 3 p’s:

- **Process** – the natural process of human development
- **Principles** – how you promote that natural process
- **Practices** – that embody principles to foster the process

The NRC report deals with that process in terms of personal and social assets. The Assets terminology was coined by Kretzmann and McKnight, and was popularized by The Search Institute. The biggest difference between the NRC report and what Search did, is that essentially Search first generated a list of 40 assets through discussion, then afterwards they put out a book that cites research in support of all 40 assets. The NRC did it the other way around—they started with the research and then boiled that down to assets. Assets are good in and of themselves and they help you acquire other good things. They represent the things we want young people to have. Another way to think of the 40 assets is the “5 Cs” Character, Competence, Contribution, Connectedness and Confidence. There is not one

universal correct version, and people should use a terminology that makes sense for what they are doing. One way assets can be used is in setting objectives or goals for youth development programs.

The NRC report doesn't really deal with principles of YD, largely because you don't derive principles from research. We can state the principle of youth development simply as "all youth thrive." This combines the universality and the positive thrust of youth development. The NRC report does comment on an ongoing debate between prevention/treatment and youth development. On the one hand, Steve agrees that we shouldn't waste time and energy arguing whether one is better than the other. If you take the idea seriously that all youth should be thriving, then you also need to accept that what all youth need to thrive varies. At the same time, the youth development movement came in response to an over-emphasis on negative behaviors.

The report lists the features of positive developmental settings (see pink handout). This is the most exciting, useful page of the whole report. The authors found from the research that these things make a difference in young people's achievement of positive outcomes:

- Physical and Psychological Safety
- Appropriate Structure
- Supportive Relationships
- Opportunities to Belong
- Positive Social Norms
- Support for Efficacy and Mattering
- Opportunities for Skill Building
- Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts

It seems when the authors talk about appropriate structure and positive norms they're getting at the same kinds of things, but "structure" is what adults do and "norms" is what kids do. Similarly, Steve found "supportive relationships" to be mostly about adult relationships with youth and norms were more about peer relations. In the item "support for efficacy and mattering", they are dealing with the youth voice/youth engagement issue. They're using it in two slightly different ways - efficacy means, "I have some control". Mattering means, "what we're doing here is important." A good illustrative example is community service. It would be interesting to use this as a kind of template in a community – to ask, "do we in our community provide these opportunities for every young person?" "Are there enough places where these happen so every youth can find them somewhere? This would be a constructive and probably sobering exercise. There may be one set of kids who have access to all of them." The NRC report is a gold mine of information. It is instructive, and can help improve practice. It is an authoritative source to justify what we do and want to do. It is also a good source of theory and research for thinking about what we want to do, and it also includes a nice compendium and a table of validated programs.

Jacquelynn Eccles concluded by saying that we know a lot about what works, but much less about how to create and sustain programs that represent what works. The NRC report gives us a rationale and template for what we want to accomplish. Our challenge is to understand, adapt and make use of what is there, and carry it to this question of organizational readiness.

Small group discussion followed this presentation. The topic being discussed was: Is there a difference between features of settings for programs versus organizations? If yes, what are they?

Highlights of Small Group Discussions

- There are differences in settings—safety issues, for example.
- Appropriateness of programs is always changing based on development and interests.
- With programs it is important to inform adults and get “street level” buy in.
- Leadership needs to commit to principles.
- There is a need for infrastructure to support youth development.
- Funding issues and their relationship to what grantees do.
- How do you measure the development of an agency?
- List of “Features of Positive Developmental Settings” is applicable to any setting.
- A lot of people are practicing youth development without knowing it. How do we name it and validate it?

Overview of Work to Date — Indicators of Organizational Supports

Second presentation: Nicole Yohalem, Forum for Youth Investment

The NRC report does a good job of showing what youth development looks like and what settings need to be like. It acknowledges that:

- creating settings that do this is really hard— recognizing it is easy, doing it is really hard.
- good practice happens inside an infrastructure; it doesn’t happen in a vacuum.

Recommendation number 3 in the NRC report says that communities should put in place some locally appropriate mechanism for monitoring the availability, accessibility, and quality of programs. It does not, however, say how to set up this necessary infrastructure. The Forum for Youth Investment interviewed key stakeholders several years ago to address the critical challenges facing the field of youth development. There were three categories of responses that remain relevant today (See handouts titled Recognize and Support What it Takes):

- Climate issues — create a climate conducive to action.
- Strengthening infrastructures for coordinating programming—strengthen infrastructures for coordinating, managing, delivering, monitoring, and sustaining efforts.
- Saturate neighborhoods with effective and sustainable services, supports and opportunities.

While the NRC report doesn’t present an agenda, it does a lot more than interpret the evidence base. It raised a lot of critical policy issues we need to pay attention to. Who is best situated to address the concerns raised by youth development stakeholders? We need a broad range of players (see handout titled Recipe for Action). We will focus on two strategy areas for strengthening youth development in organizations where the field has made some important progress:

- Staff Development/Professional Development
- Developing and Implementing Quality Standards

When these two things are done well they are totally intertwined. We are starting to understand how these kinds of interventions can make a difference for organizations and youth workers. The recent evaluation of the BEST initiative (Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers) added to this knowledge.

The BEST Initiative is a 15-city initiative designed to increase training and education resources for youth workers in local communities, and has been underway since 1996. The local sites provide training that is based on the AYD curriculum. The recent evaluation (report in notebook) had the following impacts.

Impact on Youth Workers:

- Deepened understanding of youth and youth development
- Shifted youth programming focus from adult-centered to youth-centered
- Fostered application of youth development concepts in their work with young people
- Increased youth involvement in program development and assessment of own strengths as youth workers
- Fostered a common language about youth development among youth workers
- Increased networking opportunities and interactions with other youth workers

Impact on Organizations:

- Increased supports for professional development
- Fostered a greater collaboration among organizations and networking within the youth-serving sector
- Increased commitment to youth development

Youth workers cautioned that change at the organizational level takes time, as does sustaining change and continuing to improve services. Professional development should be ongoing and involve a greater proportion of an organization's staff, including supervisors. Youth workers and stakeholders cited the need for organizational policies that foster a youth development approach.

Comments and Questions

- Discussion followed regarding youth workers' comments that supervisors need more training. Supervisors and youth workers want the same thing with regard to youth development, but have different roles. Administrators and supervisors have to deal with certain things that direct service workers don't have to deal with; everyone needs to get on board to make the organization more effective with regard to youth development
- Translating youth development into concrete mechanisms for organizations that clearly relate to the youth development philosophy is very difficult to do. The idea of being able to talk in concrete terms about what an effective youth development organization looks like in practice is harder than you think
- New paradigm for training—it cannot just be cognitive development. A technical assistance piece needs to be built in to allow people time to come back and talk about how to put this into practice within their organization.

Several assessment tools have been developed by researchers and organizations (list in Notebook). These tools are different, they use different terminologies, but they all have items that cover three broad areas: *youth experiences*, *staff practices*, and *organizational policies and structures*. The following commonalities exist across all tools:

- **Youth opportunities** for membership and mattering; reflection and expression; exploration and skill building; planning and decision-making; work and service.

- **Staff Practices and supports** that create fair, supportive environments; provide individual supports; promote learning and skill building; promote real life skill using; involve families and community.
- **Administrative and management policies and structures** that ensure consistent, well-staffed inviting environments; safe, healthy environments; well trained, high performing staff and volunteers; high quality programming; connections to families and community.

Small Group Discussion

Each person was assigned an assessment instrument to review. The task was to identify which items on the assessment were organizational issues, and then assess what was missing for organizations on the assessments. The following were identified as missing for organizations:

- Any integration of services related to youth development
- Youth voice
- Clear statement of mission of organization versus staff responsibilities. New employee training should delineate this
- Norms or the unwritten ways of doing things
- Adequate resources, pay and benefits for staff
- Involvement and responsibility of Board Members
- Staff voice, not just youth voice
- Use of space, tone or climate of organization
- How are people oriented when they come in; process of orientation for new people

These organizational elements in the assessments are underdeveloped compared to other aspects.

Components of Organizational Supports

Third presentation: Jessica Mates, Fund for the City of New York

This presentation outlines the process that was used by the Youth Development Institute in New York City to operationalize the components of organizational supports for youth development. They brought together 14 Community Based Organizations (CBO's) over 6 years, with the mission of looking at the field of youth development, and articulating and hashing out different elements of the field. They were also looking at how to provide effective technical assistance. Each CBO provided a team of people that came together and were organized into committees. Each committee worked on an area such as Best Practices, Outcomes, etc. In the last 3 years, they started the Organizational Support committee to look at how to support best practices. The goal of this committee was to articulate organizational principles, practices, and operational behaviors that could be agreed on, and could be assessed. Jean Thomases served as a consultant to the committee to bring in the broader issues going on in the field. They started with eight basic categories that people were already thinking about: *Leadership; Culture; Financial Resources and Allocations; Programs; Staffing; Training and Staff Development; Physical Environment; and Community and Family Linkages.*

The committee listed each category, provided a clear definition and articulated examples and indicators for each category (see document "Components of Organizational Support for Youth Development" in Notebook).

There are some outstanding issues the committee talked about a lot and continues to struggle with:

- When you put materials together you don't want to just create a checklist because every organization is very different, and there has to be commitment to organizational change. For agencies that participate in staff training, is the agency committed to long-term change? A checklist can't address that.
- Wanted to make sure we are looking at things that are realistic.
- What are agencies and their executive directors willing to be held accountable for?
- What's the actual organizational support for youth development vs. a good solid organizational support? You need to ask does it really make a difference for a youth development organization and youth development practices.
- Physical space. Many programs are located in schools; have less control over physical space.

What's been interesting about this chart is that we see the parallels in other work we're doing. We're involved now in working on family strengthening – what do youth agencies do to support families? When we are looking at specific practices of family strengthening, we look at the same basics. Similarly, we brought together 8 agencies (2 from networks, 6 new) to look at family strengthening. They came up with organizational practices, and their list included similar information.

Finally, part of reason we did this work was to have standards, and partly it was to figure out how we could better support organizations. We use this chart as a framework for working with organizations to build capacity, and to help them provide more effective training and technical assistance.

Question: *What do you do when all the self-assessments come back glowing and you know there are issues?* You need to communicate that it is ok not be perfect. We want to be realistic and start working in the right direction. The chart should be used to form an action plan where people can figure out where they are, and where they need to focus attention. You can also use peer assessments rather than self-assessments.

Fourth presentation: Sue Eldredge, Community Network for Youth Development, San Francisco, CA

This presentation provided a dialogue of how we get to the place where organizations are providing strong youth development.

The Community Network for Youth Development is an intermediary organization that in its first few years focused almost exclusively on training for youth workers and program directors. However, as they worked with agencies around practice issues and with youth workers, they began to “hit walls” — youth workers would report that they were getting it, but their executive directors or funders weren't. The Community Network for Youth Development was part of the BEST initiative. They were able to focus on the youth development principles embedded in the AYD curriculum, and in partnership with Michelle Gambone, adapted a framework of quality youth development practice linked with the organizational supports that needed to be in place. They focused on addressing three areas:

- Common understanding and expectations
- Organizational/program intersects
- Organizational improvements/investments that increase the youth experience

People in the field were talking about youth development, but were not using the same language. They wanted to create a youth development framework –something simple enough to give people a focus and common understanding. They wanted to look at organizational/program practice, but specifically look at the link or intersect between program

practice and organizational supports that were strong levers for quality programming. A useful developmental framework was created to:

- Summarize existing knowledge
- Promote genuine accountability
- Offer strategies for action

A youth development framework for practice was also put together (see handout Youth Development Framework for Practice). This framework was organized as a flow chart with the following components and elements, with each component leading to the next:

Youth Development Framework for Practice	
Components	Elements
Building Capacity and Conditions for Change	Awareness, knowledge, engagement, commitment
Implement Organizational Practices to Enhance Supports and Opportunities	Effective youth/adult ratios; youth involvement; community involvement; safe, reliable activities and spaces; continuity and consistency; high, clear and fair standards; ongoing staff and organizational improvement process; flexible allocation of resources; range of diverse, interesting skill building opportunities
Increase Supports and Opportunities for Youth	Safety, relationship building, youth participation, community involvement, skill building
Improve Youth Developmental Outcomes	Be productive; be connected; navigate multiple environments-home, school community
Improve Early Adult Outcomes	Economic self-sufficiency; healthy family and social relationships, contributor to community

It is important to focus on supports and opportunities because they *matter* in and of themselves and in terms of getting youth where they need to go; they are *measurable* in a practical and rigorous manner; and they are *moveable*; that is programs can be expected to effect supports and opportunities. If programs improve, the outcomes should, too.

The first step in their assessment process was to measure agency supports and opportunities. To do this they taught agency staff to customize and administer the youth survey developed by Michelle Gambone. The agency staff was trained to analyze the survey results and then to report back in a detailed way about what their young people were experiencing.

Step two involved setting targets for improvement (this involved sharing the survey results with staff and youth, looking at various assessments and setting targets for improvement).

Step three was action planning which involved gathering ideas, prioritizing actions, assessing resources (it takes agencies about four months to come up with an action plan); and,

Step four involved reassessing supports and opportunities by re-administering the survey and looking at changes (the survey instrument is not long, and takes about 20 minutes to complete).

Jim Connell and Michelle Gambone are about to release a paper that looks at long term data that validates their framework and describes the threshold analysis. She wants to take this process and adapt it for use with other youth agencies across the country.

In conclusion, the following kinds of activities lead to increased supports and opportunities:

- Safe, reliable, accessible activities and spaces
 - develop clear consequences for ground rule violations; train staff and youth in positive discipline, clear communication and conflict resolution
- Continuity and consistency of care
 - increase amount of non-task time staff have available to be with participants to enable them to deepen knowledge of youths lives; ensure ongoing training
- Activities that combine change in policy with change in staff practice
- Activities that promote dialogue about youth
- Activities that have a clear and intentional impact on youth

Questions:

- *How did you make this process seem helpful to agencies rather than just another bunch of paper work?* The trick is to allow data to drive the change. The tool can be customized and is very concrete. The data they got back made sense to them and can really drive change.
- *Why would an agency go through this if they weren't required to?* If they believe in the youth development principles and trust us it makes sense—they want to improve. This process can be powerful for practitioners. A lot of organizations go through a strategic planning process out of self-interest—they are motivated to improve.
- *What are the costs involved?* It takes two staff people doing training, on site with the whole group, and costs approximately \$4,000.00 per agency. They offer a sliding scale for agencies and most end up paying \$700-\$1,000.

Larry thanked the presenters and ended the first day with some observations. As we look at capacity building, let's think about how we can make it an empowering process rather than a "gotcha" activity. How do we use this in a constructive, capacity building way? There is an aspect of art to youth work; it is not just a science. Larry recommended the book *The Art of Youth Work* by Kerry Young (from UK). Young discusses the youth workers' role in engaging young people so that they develop the motivation and capacity to examine values, deliberate on their own moral judgments and commit to action.

Organizational Readiness for Youth Development Symposium

Day Two

Advancing Youth Development

Steve Goggin, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Steve reviewed the history of Advancing Youth Development (AYD) in New York State as a three-way partnership among the Office of Children and Family Services, the New York State Youth Bureau Association and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The AYD Curriculum was developed 6 years ago (BEST Initiative), and in New York serves as a statewide system to deliver educational expertise on youth development around five basic concepts:

- Youth Development Outcomes
- Adulthood
- Youth Voice/Youth Participation
- Services, Opportunities and Supports
- Youth Worker Competencies

There are about 60-70 teams of facilitators in the state now, and about 1200 youth workers have been trained. AYD has a web site, a list serve and a quarterly newsletter. They have just published a curriculum on youth development basics for supervisors and volunteers. About 45 minutes during AYD training is spent on the topic of organizational readiness. Steve reviewed with the group how AYD handles that piece of the curriculum.

There are a lot of lists out there for what is needed for youth development and organizational readiness. This list from the AYD curriculum complements the others.

What is needed for Organizational Readiness for Youth Development (AYD Training)?

- Key concepts are reflected in the written language of an organization's mission and leadership.
- A mechanism is in place to be sure boards and supervisors know these concepts.
- Staff know the kids they are working with; about their lives and the issues they are facing.
- Reflection is a key term: effective youth development programs have a way to stop the wheels and think about what is happening. How are we doing as a group? Have we reached our goals?
- Mechanisms in place that create group membership. Youth have a sense of belonging, identity with group.
- Promote ways for youth to get involved in service, and the work itself. Not just work for pay. Kids have ways of getting out to the community to make a contribution.
- Emotional supports.
- Motivational supports.
- Strategic supports: have in depth knowledge about what agencies offer and what SOS –they know how to pull off connecting kids to services.

After the AYD facilitator trainings, participants are given a copy of the Youth on Board organizational assessment to use back in their workplace to identify strengths and weaknesses. The Youth on Board materials are very concrete and well done, especially around organizational effectiveness.

Part of AYD's responsibility for 2003 will be to address organizational readiness. The information generated from this Symposium will inform that process.

Questions and Comments

- *How much time will key decision-makers want to take to think about this and deal with these issues? What is the intention and duration required to move an organization to a youth development centered approach? We need to "sell" these ideas to agencies, and we need to be realistic about what can really be accomplished. It is hard to know which approach is better—to you work intensely with a few groups or to work more superficially with more groups to get the message out.*
- *It is a tough challenge to do technical assistance with an agency that is not ready to accept it— agencies have strong practice norms — how do you change the system? Assessments need to be done to see where agencies are—they can be in very different stages of readiness. There has to be a partnership among the funders, agencies and workers for change to happen.*
- Thom Carter added that the Youth Development team members should be trained in youth development basics. Perhaps they need to develop an education strategy.

Prevention Partners for Youth Development, Onondaga County

Denise Dyer, Renie Kehres, David Vermilya, Marnie Annese

Denise Dyer

The Prevention Partners for Youth Development (PPYD) is a coalition of Onondaga County youth services providers, schools, and funders. There are 60 organizations involved in the partnership. They work to promote youth development, mobilize communities around youth development work, translate research to action and work toward system change.

Renie Kehres

They piloted a youth development training for supervisors. They worked with AYD trainers and decided that what they needed was synthesis. They have all kinds of lists and they needed to make sense of all the information — that was their task as they developed the training. They worked with eight different trainers to be sure they had a diversity of experience, and the result was a 6-week cognitive development training focusing on two concepts:

- Understanding youth development as it applies to youth (theory base). The first part of the training is devoted to the paradigm shift from deficit to positive; explanation of the five C's, and youth as trainers – youth train the trainees about what youth need.
- Creating and sustaining successful youth development organizations (Safe Havens from Private Ventures Report).

They decided to do a 6 month follow up with the trainees to process what had happened and to figure out how to break down barriers within their organizations and institute changes.

Outcomes from the first 6-month follow up:

- Research base of youth development, with theory (participants were able to identify youth development outcomes).

- Program practices were associated with high levels of youth development.
- Participants were able to understand youth perceptions of effective program.
- Participants liked and were still using the training manual; found it to be user-friendly, colorful, and nice.

David Vermilya

David has been a teen center worker for 32 years. Supervisors participating in the training came to his teen center to meet and have a dialogue with youth. David discussed the positives that came out of these talks. In both urban and suburban settings, supervisors were able to see youth development principles in action. Adult supervisors wrote questions for youth on cards in advance of the meeting. Youth were invited to come sit around a circle with the adults to respond to the questions. The questions were in one of four areas:

- How did you find this program?
- Relationships formed with adults
- Value of the experience you have had
- Obstacles to participation (transportation, etc.)

As the Teen Center worker familiar to the kids, David read the questions. There was a very rich discussion of the issues raised. Both the supervisors and the youth enjoyed the experience. The youth felt “puffed up” to have had the exchange with such “important” adults. Some of these kids are now volunteering more of their time—it has led to other things for the kids.

Marnie Annese

Marnie is a Program Monitor for the Onondaga County Youth Bureau. She is an AYD trainer and has experience as a youth worker and a supervisor. PPYD is meant to go along with the AYD training. She is committed to the concept of organizational readiness. The Youth Bureau and the United Way are two funders who are committed to using a common language around youth development and this makes the supervisor training process much easier. There are many challenges to the process including the time commitment for training for supervisors and executive directors, the involved process of creating change and integrating youth development throughout an organization. There are also financial issues in going through the assessment process, and maintaining organizational change.

Questions/Comments:

- *Are there plans to reach out to other agencies/organizations?* Yes, and we are continuing to work with the old ones, too.
- *Are other counties doing similar work?* Yes, they are taking the lessons learned from PPYD into other communities, but there are not other coalitions forming in other places. A full-time worker staffs PPYD and that helps make it a strong coalition.
- The New Haven, CT BEST project and the Boston, MA BEST also do a supervisor training that started as a 30-hour long training but has been reduced to 15 hours, a more realistic time frame for supervisors. They also added a cultural competence piece. There is a big shift for people who are becoming supervisors. They are used to working directly with kids—now they have to motivate staff to work with kids.

Rochester/Monroe County Youth Bureau

Chris Dandino, Deborah Ellwood, Stephanie Fitzgerald, Marge Amubuske, Marie Watkins

Chris Dandino of the Monroe County Youth Bureau stated that they used to do “one shot” trainings, and while that was helpful it didn’t lay any consistent foundation. Six years ago they decided that they needed to create a youth-centered, strengths-based approach. There needed to be a shared understanding of core competencies. New workers come from diverse background, and some do not have a background in adolescent development. They used AYD and took core competencies from work done by the Fund for the City of New York. They created the Best Practices Partnership Project with 10 organizations, and created a cross system training team. They got signed commitments from the executive directors. Power rests with the organization—if you want to make change, bring the leadership of the organization on board.

Our premises and knowledge help us move along in the pyramid scheme (see blue handout, Learning Pyramid for Youth Development of Rochester and Monroe County). The following are the *lessons learned* from this process:

- All youth are developing; all youth have strengths; all youth have needs; all youth can contribute to their communities; all youth are valuable
- Problem free is not fully prepared
- Development occurs when youth are engaged, active and respected
- All adults can contribute and be resources for youth
- Youth development happens everywhere through caring adult relationships
- Youth/adult relationships are respectful and recognize cultural strengths and differences
- Youth development is the responsibility of all
- Youth development requires diverse partnerships between youth, families, and all aspects and sectors of communities
- Youth development environments must be safe, healthy, accessible, flexible, and provide choices and opportunities
- Community resources are prioritized to develop all youth
- Playfulness and fun nurture the spirit and are part of the developmental process

Chris also mentioned another project in Monroe County, the Youth Development Outcomes Measurement Project. Working with staff from the University of Rochester, evaluators Jon Klein and Sheryl Ryan, they created a measurement tool and cd-rom. The purpose of this project is to understand the results of and continuously improve the outcomes of youth development programs to reach consensus among funders and providers on a core group of youth development outcomes that programs in our community will measure; and to adapt or develop and implement a common tool to measure agreed upon outcomes.

Stephanie Fitzgerald, Center for Youth Services

We are lucky in that our staff get paid to do the AYD training. They have learned the following lessons:

- Change is a process; it happens in increments that are not evenly paced; sometimes it looks like we are going backwards which causes frustration. Supervisors do need to be trained as well, but they are less available time-wise.

- Parallel process of AYD, meet kids where they are at, build on their assets and plan in partnership to move where they want to go. We have not been using that same process in our agencies. Out of good intent, we decided on AYD as the way to go, but we haven't met agencies where they are. We haven't moved them forward in the same way we deal with kids.
- Strong asset movement in Monroe County, lots of training which permeated community; we are working to join together the different assets initiatives.
- They have added two pieces to their curriculum: Group work, and how to work with youth who have challenging behaviors in a youth development perspective.

Marge Amubuske, Bureau of Recreation, City of Rochester

Marge's organization is getting ready to move to a youth development focus. The staff had a lot of baggage and did a lot of complaining about the process. There were communication issues on both sides and trust issues as well. They created four committees as they worked on the visioning process: Youth Development, Program Development, Personnel, and Organizational Communication. All levels of staff were involved in the process, low, middle and high level. A management person was on each committee.

The change process had many ups and downs, workers needed to be committed and have ownership. They needed to be able to stay focused and not get bogged down in the "baggage." The staff worked with consultant, Marie Watkins to guide the process.

Dr. Marie Watkins, Consultant, Rochester Monroe County Youth Bureau

Dr. Watkins worked with agencies to help them put youth development in the center, and to address the question, "How do you look at your agency/organization and conduct strategic planning? Youth development is not the outcome here—it is a tool to use to interact with each other and support youth. The process is based on the following premises of organization capacity building:

Premises of Organizational Capacity Building*

- **Staff need a sense of belonging, usefulness, power and competency**
- **Begin with the here and now; the felt and expressed reality and needs of the staff (in order to move past the baggage and go forward)**
- **Outcome measures/standards are developed through the visioning process (bottom up change; it is a formative, developmental, generative process)**
- **The youth development strategy is the catalyst for organizational change and development.**
- **Change is not piecemeal:**
 - **Name what they're doing, name the dynamics**
 - **Clarify how those link to youth development**
 - **Revisit/revision of strategies**
 - **Action**
 - **Assessment**

**This material developed by Dr. Marie Watkins and Robert McCarthy, Consultants to the Rochester Monroe County Youth Bureau.*

Comment:

Jane Powers, Shep Zeldin and Linda Camino are working on tool to measure youth voice in organizations.

ACT for Youth

Jutta Dotterweich

In Year 2 of the ACT for Youth project, Jutta conducted a two-part training on Organizational Readiness (half day for adults) followed by a full day on Youth Adult Partnerships (with adults and young people.) The two part trainings were conducted with each of the ACT Community Development Partnerships and were interactive. The Organizational Readiness training included the following components: Meaningful Roles for Young People; Benefits of Youth Involvement for Youth, Adults, Organizations; Organizational Obstacles and Possible Solutions; Recruiting and Retaining Young People.

The Youth/Adult Partnership segment of the training involved identifying strengths and needs and expectations of each group; teambuilding; and concrete tools for visioning and action planning.

The participants raised several organizational obstacles. They included:

- Adult attitudes
- Adult's reluctance to give up control
- Diverging views of youth development
- Organizational environment unfriendly to youth
- Policies, regulations, legal restrictions
- Lack of funding
- Recruiting, preparing, and retaining youth

The following lessons learned were identified:

- A clear understanding of youth participation is lacking. Need to think about roles for youth, what meaningful youth participation is.
- Different approaches to training — how do you reach everyone (e.g., those who don't attend trainings)? Use local youth presenters, advocacy groups, others.
- Organizational change involves:
 - Self-assessment
 - Changing organizational structures
 - Creating new tools for youth adult working relationships
 - Preparing young people and adults

Final Small Group Discussion

The final small group activity asked participants to reflect on the cumulative information provided at the Symposium. The groups were asked to identify key items under three categories: "Important external supports for organizational readiness", "Important internal supports for organizational readiness", and "What's missing for organizational readiness". Three small groups came up with the following:

Important External Supports:

- Funding for capacity building linked with assessment
- Training/technical assistance infrastructure, network of technical assistance providers
- Effective, professional marketing strategies
- Community, city, stateside leadership/momentum on youth development
- Recognition system for effective agencies; incentives and celebrations
- Increased knowledge in field about effective capacity building models
- Acceptable documentation for organizational change
- Federal grant for youth development
- Forums like this, more frequent
- Articles, publications, web sited, instruments
- Flexibility needed
- Coaching and mentoring
- Youth participation in agencies, involving youth in mutually beneficial ways
- Evaluation focused both on youth and ingredients of program
- Put the message in powerful, clear, simple language
- Build role of youth, importance of youth, into community
- Professional association
- Need to find more visible players to support it—community involvement

Important Internal Supports:

- Buy-in/involvement from all players in organization (youth, staff, leadership, board)
- Internal leadership and commitment (director has to want this to work)
- Time
- Commitment to training and professional development for all staff and board members
- Review and revision
- Board development
- Commitment and investment of leadership
- Heart, passion, fire in the gut
- Coaching and mentoring
- Youth participation in agency, involve youth in mutually beneficial ways

-
- Evaluation focused both on youth and ingredients of program
 - Put the message in powerful, clear, simple language
 - Build role of youth, importance of youth, into community
 - Incentives and celebration
 - Professional association
 - Institutionalize change to youth development – organizations need to adopt it as a whole
 - Communication
 - Simpler tools – synthesis of what’s being generated.
 - Agency should make public their principles and mission, premises and goals.

What’s Missing?

- Academic community needs to understand youth development and teach it
- Meaningful roles for the business community
- Strategies to influence CEO’s and Executive Directors
- A common understanding of what youth engagement/voice is, and of how youth should really be involved in organizations
- Community involvement, including schools, business/corporate, local government
- Organizational development research, tied to youth development (look at what is happening nationally)
- Management support for agencies that are not linked to a national affiliate
- Advocacy
- Youth development professional identity / affiliation
- Funder’s education
- Strengthen Youth Bureau network to engage in organizational readiness/development around youth development
- NYS Parks and Recreation need a model—could use the Rochester parks and recreation model
- Professional isolation
- Adequate funding



Next Steps

These written proceedings will be shared widely within New York State to help inform policy and practice. The State's Youth Development Team will be a primary conduit for this information. A second symposium focused on evaluation will be held in the first part of 2003.

Any comments or feedback on these proceedings can be shared with Larry Pasti, ICP Project Director, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, 144 Boynton Avenue, Plattsburgh, New York 12901; phone: (518) 561-8740 or email: Larry.Pasti@dfa.state.ny.us

Appendix A

List of Handouts from Notebook

Organizational Readiness for Youth Development Symposium September 26-27, 2002

Overview Current NYS Activity

Operational Framework: Second Edition, May 2002. NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Youth Development Resource Notebook, January 2002. Compiled and created by Youth Development Team – Partners for Children.

Overview NCR Report

Community Programs to Promote Youth Development, Implications and Applications of the Report of the National Research Council, September 2002. Stephen F. Hamilton.

Personal and Social Assets That Facilitate Positive Youth Development, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Features of Positive Developmental Settings, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Off the Shelf and Into the Field – Making the Most of the National Research Council's New Report: Community Programs to Promote Youth Development by Karen Pittman and Nicole Yohalem, April 2002. The Forum for Youth Investment (www.forumforyouthinvestment.org)

Overview of Work to Date

Nicole Yohalem, Forum for Youth Investment

Youth Program Quality Assessment Tool Summaries, Forum for Youth Investment, March 2002.

Readiness Survey for Program Improvement and Accreditation in Out-of-School Time Programs, Susan O'Connor, Research Associate, National Institute on Out-of-School Time (formerly the School-Age Child Care Project), Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, November 1997.

The Forum for Youth Investment Our Mission, Our Vision, An Agenda for the Next Decade(s).

BEST Strengthens Youth Worker Practice: An Evaluation of Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers (BEST): A Summary Report, conducted by the Center for School and Community Services, Academy for Educational Development, New York City, 2002.

Components of Organizational Supports

Components of Organizational Support for Youth Development, Organizational Support Action Planning, Youth Development Institute – Fund for the City of New York.

How Can a Developmental Framework Impact Organizational Support for Youth Programs? A Project of the Community Network for Youth Development and Youth Development Strategies, Inc. Community Action for Youth project – a cooperative project of Gambone & Associates/Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

Training for Building Capacity

Overview: Advancing Youth Development (AYD) Partnership, September 2002. Stephen Goggin, Department of Human Development, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Kay Telfer, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County.

Handout 5.8: Implementation of Best Practices for Youth Development: Draft Guidelines for Organizations, adapted from Fund for the City of New York/Youth Development Institute/Networks for Youth Development.

Youth Development Training for Supervisors and Administrators, Prevention Partners for Youth Development.

Youth Development Training for Supervisors and Administrators: Executive Summary, prepared by Dr. Pam Imm, Ph.D.

Request for Applications for Consultant Services for Effective Supervisory Practice within Organizations, Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau.

Request for Application: Organizational Capacity Building to Implement Youth Development, Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau.

Youth Development Outcomes Measurement Project, project co-sponsors: Youth Services Quality Council, United Way of Greater Rochester; Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau.

An Interactive Approach to Supervision

Youth Development Group Work: Professional Development Series for Youth Workers

Learning Pyramid for Youth Development of Rochester and Monroe County

Summary of Best Practices Partnership Series

Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA) Program Enhancement Suggestions For After-School Programming, intended as a supplement to National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) Standards with a focus on programming.

Youth Participation: How do we make it happen? Jutta Dotterweich, Technical Assistance and Training Coordinator, ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence, September 2002.

Supplemental Information

New Haven's B.E.S.T. Initiative on Youth Development: Youth Development Training and Resource Center, New Haven, CT.

Connecticut for Community Youth Development

Professional Development Opportunities on Youth Development 2002-2003, CCYD.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Brochures:

Prevention Partners for Youth Development: Working Together to Protect Youth and Promote Development

ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence

New Haven's B.E.S.T. building Exemplary Systems for Training: Technical Assistance Network Series

Appendix B Participant List

Organizational Readiness for Youth Development Symposium
September 26-27, 2002

Name	Organization	Phone	Fax	Email
Marge Amubuske Recreation Supervisor	Bureau of Recreation, City of Rochester 244 Parsells Avenue Rochester, NY 14609	(585) 428-7294	(585) 428-7112	margeambuske@aol.com
Marnie Annese Program Monitor	Onondaga County Youth Bureau Civic Center 421 Montgomery Street, 13th Floor Syracuse, NY 13202	(315) 435-2362		marnieannese@ongov.net
Frank Barry ACT Project Director	ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence Family Life Development Center MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 255-7456	(607) 255-8562	fb12@cornell.edu
Deborah Benson Director of Policy	NYS Council on Children & Families 5 Empire State Plaza, Suite 2810 Albany, NY 12223	(518) 473-3652	(518) 473-2570	debbie.benson@ccf. state.ny.us
Lissette Brooks Program Director	PASE 120 Broadway, Suite 3048 New York, NY 10271	(212) 571-2664		Lissette@pasesetter.com
Hronn Brynjarsdottir ACT Project Assistant	ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence Family Life Development Center MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 255-7736	(607) 255-8562	hb47@cornell.edu
Thom Carter Research Scientist V	NYS Department of Health Tower Bldg. - Room 890, ESP Albany, NY 12237	(518) 474-6968	(518) 473-2015	tpc01@health.state.ny.us
Bob Dagostino Project Director	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 52 Washington Street South Building – Room 309 Rensselaer, NY 12144	(518) 402-3296	(518) 402-3715	Bob.Dagostino@dfa. state.ny.us

Name	Organization	Phone	Fax	Email
Chris Dandino Acting Executive Director	Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau 50 West Main Street 4160 City Place Rochester, NY 14614	(585) 428-4926	(585) 428-9033	cdandino@ monroecounty.gov
Jutta Dotterweich Training Coordinator	Cornell University FLDC MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 255-4108	(607) 255-8562	jd81@cornell.edu
Denise Dyer Regional Youth Development	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 2 Clinton Square, Suite 205 Syracuse, NY 13202	(315) 423-5432	(518) 423-5499	denise.dyer@dfa.state.ny.us
Newell Eaton Director Strategic Planning	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 52 Washington Street Rensselaer, NY 12144	(518) 473-1274		Newell.Eaton@dfa.state.ny.us
Sue Eldredge Executive Director	Community Network for Youth Development 657 Mission, #410 San Francisco, CA 94105	(415) 495-0622	(415) 495-0666	sue@cnyd.org
Deborah Ellwood Vice-President	Rochester Area Community Foundation 500 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14607	(585) 271-4100	(585) 271-4292	dellwood@racf.org
Stephanie Fitzgerald Education & Training	The Center for Youth Services 905 Monroe Avenue Rochester, NY 14620	(585) 473-2464	(585) 271-8134	sfitzgerald@ centerforyouth.net
Steve Goggin Senior Extension Associate	Cornell Cooperative Extension G06 MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 254-5457	(607) 255-9856	seg12@cornell.edu
Stephen F. Hamilton Professor	Cornell University Department of Human Development MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 255-8394	(607) 255-8767	sfh3@cornell.edu
Sally Herrick Assistant Commissioner	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 52 Washington Street South Bldg. - Room 309 Rensselaer, NY 12144	(518) 473-8455	(518) 474-8957	Sally.Herrick@dfa. state.ny.us

Name	Organization	Phone	Fax	Email
Christine Heywood Associate Commissioner	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 52 Washington Street Rensselaer, NY 12144	(518) 474-9465	(518) 474-9452	Christine.Heywood@ dfa.state.ny.us
John A. Johnson Commissioner	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 52 Washington Street Rensselaer, NY 12144	(518) 473-8437		
Renie Kehres Youth Development Coordinator	Prevention Partners for Youth Development 421 Montgomery Street, 10th Floor Syracuse, NY 13202	(315) 435-3981	(315) 435-3279	rkppyd@ dreamscape.com
Jessica Mates Deputy Director	Youth Development Institute Fund for the City of New York 121 Avenue of the Americas, 6th Floor New York, NY 10013	(212) 925-6675	(212) 925-5675	MMATES@FCNY.ORG
Kristine Mesler Director, Adol. Health Programs	NYS Department of Health Bureau of Child & Adol. Health ESP, Corning Tower-Room 208 Albany, NY 12237	(518) 486-4966		kxm04@health.state.ny.us
Sharon Morris Child Family Services Specialist	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 52 Washington Street Rensselaer, NY 12144	(518) 473-9099	(518) 474-9452	Sharon.Morris@dfa. state.ny.us
Larry Pasti ICP Project Director	NYS Office of Children & Family Services 144 Boynton Avenue Plattsburgh, NY 12901	(518) 561-8740	(518) 562-8665	Larry.Pasti@dfa.state.ny.us
Jane Powers ACT Evaluation Coordinator	ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence Family Life Development Center MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 255-3993	(607) 255-8562	jlp5@cornell.edu
Joshua Santola Prevention Specialist	Prevention Partners for Youth Development 421 Montgomery Street, 10th Floor Syracuse, NY 13202	(315) 435-3355	(315) 435-3279	jsppyd@dreamscape.com

Name	Organization	Phone	Fax	Email
Junius Scott Program Director	HHS Regional Office Youth & Family Services Division 26 Federal Plaza New York, NY 10278	(212) 264-2890		
Sedra Spano Resource Information	ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence Family Life Development Center MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	(607) 254-2894	(607) 255-8562	sgs8@cornell.edu
Deborah Stewart Director	Youth Development Training & Resource Center 389 Whitney Avenue New Haven, CT 06511	(203) 789-7645	(203) 562-6355	dstewart@ theconsultationcenter.org
David Vermilya Co-Director	Camillus Town Shop 1076 Lynch Road Baldwinsville, NY 13027	(315) 635-6495	(315) 488-8983	
Marie Watkins Assistant Professor of Social Work	Acting Director Center for Service Learning Nazareth College 4245 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14618	(585) 389-2752	(585) 586-2452	mwatkin4@rochester. rr.com
Nicole Yohalem Manager, Learning & Research	Forum for Youth Investment 7064 Eastern Avenue Washington, DC 20012	(202) 207-3333		nicole@iyfus.org

