



Brighter Futures

Meeting Summary: September 15, 2009

For information:

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Speaking the language of youth means using their tools of communications

There are all sorts of ways to involve youth, and Emilio De Torre and Jason Hargis of the Wisconsin chapter of the ACLU demonstrated some of them at the September 15th Brighter Futures meeting at Aurora Family Services.

Using an active manner with much questioning of the audience, De Torre showed many tactics to involve youth. Later Hargis outlined many of the new ways of communicating with youth, such as the use of Facebook or My Space, Twitter, iPhones and texting. The tactics covered both means of connecting face-to-face with young people as well as using modern technology.

De Torre opened the sessions on "Youth Organizing and Outreach" with a unique icebreaker, bringing everyone up and out of their seats to form a large circle; each person was asked to tell name, agency and to make a favorite sound. The audience quickly got into the game, responding with sounds ranging from a giggle, a "grrrrr," a moan, to various forms of squeals.

There are other icebreakers, he said, and each one offers a new opportunity to win the attention of the youth, even though some may at first be reluctant.

Jason Hargis outlined the various communications services through the Internet and various mobile phone systems. He noted that technology is changing regularly, citing the growth in popularity of Facebook, with the drop in popularity of My Space, which previ-



Emilio De Torre of ACLU Youth program opened presentation with a vigorous "ice-breaker."

ously was the favored site of youth.

Hargis and de Torre provided some tips on the use of Internet communications:

- **Don't send out repeated messages, since people will soon begin to ignore them. If you're publicizing an event, space out the messages, for instance 30 days in advance, then maybe a week before and a final reminder.**
- **Facebook and Twitter can be combined to make for more effective messages.**
- **When creating a group on line, organizations must consider: "What do you do?" "Who do you do it for?" "To whom do you do it?" and "Why do you do it?" (De Torre noted that there are great differences among people and even more so among**

Today's technology opens new venues to reach youth

youth, complicating how organizations can form their messages. "You need for find some common ground in your messaging," he said.)

It's important to always bring youth along, he said. Most workers are older and in spite of their closeness to youth still cannot fully understand the young people, he added.

The two also always bring young people along with them on projects, so as to show them how things work, and to get them to understand the work that goes into advocating something. "We take them along to council meetings to show them how boring it can be," he said. "To show 'em how to tie a tie."

The concept to use, De Torre suggested, is "power-sharing." Workers need to show the youth that they care; they must demonstrate "longing," must practice "inclusion" and show "competency."

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Treating youth with respect is urged

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He urged including both educational and "fun" activities in meetings with youth. He cited how they involved youth in fighting a Common Council proposal to ban gatherings of more than three persons as part of an anti-gang enforcement plan. Using Facebook, the youth were able to gather 800 signers opposing the plan on the basis that it would be overly restrictive.

In response to the ordinance, the ACLU group developed a video that showed youth the consequences of congregating and violating the rule; he said the fine could be \$5,000. The video was viewed widely and helped to educate young people about the ordinance.

The two recommended linking Twitter and Facebook, and using both to send messages, largely because the audiences are different. Twitter can be used for "press releases," De Torre said.

Hargis noted that Twitter is limited to 140 characters, while Facebook can combine longer presentations. Many persons use both Facebook and My Space, even though MySpace is no longer as popular, Hargis said.

They also provided different hints for utilizing the Internet.

In discussing how to communicate, De Torre said that the methods of speaking to young people are changing constantly. In a sense, you have to have a "gimmick," such as a method of addressing people or presenting yourself; yet, you also must have substance to your message, or else you'll lose the young people, he said.

Conventional ways such as flyers, handouts, door-to-door stops, printed advertisements, blogs, direct mailing and cold calls, have some use, but usually are limited in effectiveness. Citing blogs, he said it is difficult to keep them up on a regular basis.

Emails, websites and cabling are important ways to communicate, he said.

It's important to get young people involved from the groups that organizations are trying to reach, De Torre said. It is important, too, to beware of stereotyping various groups of people, he said; sometimes such stereotyping can be inadvertent, but nonetheless it may prevent getting your message across. Such statements as "people like that" or "them" tend to turn the youth off, he said.

He said he usually asks 15 and 16-year-olds to edit materials, since they will understand the way to best reach youth.

It's important too not to "attack" potential listeners with accusatory messages.

Others to avoid are the "uniformed" who try to carry a message without knowing "what they're talking about," De Torre added.

Never insult a youth, such as trying to be "funny" in warning a youth about using a cell phone or texting during a presentation; he said it may be funny to the presenter, but it insults the youth and his friends in the room.

"Stick to the script," he recommended, urging presenters not to stray from their message.

Try to talk loud enough for all to hear, but also vary the level of voice, sometimes growing softer in the voice.

They said they are available for programs and other assistance to other organizations. They can be reached by email: Emilio De Torre at edetorre@aclu-wi.org and Jason Hargis at jhargis@aclu-wi.org.

Emilio De Torre (right) and Jason Hargis led the discussion on involving young people.



Next Brighter Futures Meetings

General Meetings:

9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Oct. 20, at Aurora Family Service, 3200 W. Highland Blvd.

MCAPS Public Policy

2:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 9, at United Way, 225 W. Vine St.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network

Noon, Thursday, Nov. 12, at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, 5460 N. 64th St.

Teen Parent Work Group

1 p.m., Monday, Nov. 9, at United Way.

REPORTS: Teen Pregnancy Prevention/MCAPS/Family Resource Connection

TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION NETWORK. Anthony McHenry said there were 176 kids at the Aug. 18th summit at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center. He gave special thanks to Jody Rhodes of the Neu-Life Center for putting together the teen summit program. Another summit is being planned for November at a time and place to be decided soon.



This year, he said the teen conferences were being put into schools that have the kids who are most likely not to be involved in the programs and who would also likely be the most at-risk. This year, he said, the summits are to be in two schools. The youth it is to be hoped would in the future become more involved in the program, he said.

He announced the 3rd Annual Family Unity Night, scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 8, stressing its importance in promoting the concept of families eating together in order to develop family conversations. "There are a number of ways to prevent teen pregnancy, but is there any better way of getting parents and children together to talk of the issues that are important to them," McHenry said.

Unfortunately, he said, most families are not sitting together to have such conversations in today's world. "This is to remind parents how important it is for them to realize that they are most important teacher in their children's lives," he added.

The second point is to show parents "how" to have conversations with their teens, he said, since many parents have trouble getting into such discussions because they rarely do it.

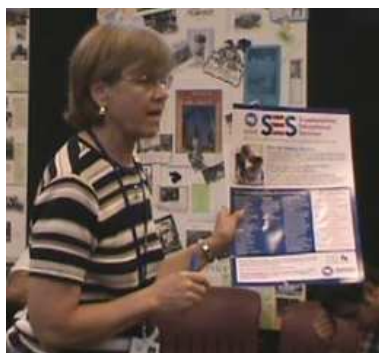
He urged families to also sign a pledge that the families will participate in the future in family dinners; those who sign pledges will be eligible for a raffle, he said.

MCAPS REPORT. Jan Buchler, representing the Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition, announced two "brain development" seminars in September. She reported that three MCAPS groups meet regularly: the Teen Parents Task Force meets at 1 p.m. every other second Monday at United Way (the next meeting being Nov.

9) and the Public Policy group meets every second Monday, also at United Way, at 2:30 p.m. (the next meeting being Oct. 12).

She announced the Fatherhood Summit to be held Oct. 9 - 10.

FAMILY RESOURCE CONNECTION. Trudy Ranallo, of Parent Plus, reported that the third committee of the MCAPS group, the Family Resource Connection, won a \$1,000 Blue Ribbon Award from the Child Abuse Prevention Fund for staging the most creative event for its April event; she said the committee works without any direct funding, and she said it shows "how a group of people who work together can accomplish much." The next organiza-



tional meeting will be on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at the Special Needs Center, 900 W. Wisconsin Ave.

She announced a free tutor program for students in 45 MPS schools under the Supplemental Educational Services program. There are openings for up to 12,000 students

to receive these free services; in the past year, only one-third of the of slots were taken. She urged agencies to promote the program among their families.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*** Lesley Salas reported that Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee member LaQuita Grinnage was a finalist for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Youth of the Year Program. The Youth of the Year is the most prestigious title any Club member can receive. She is a participant at the Don & Sallie Davis Boys & Girls Club. For information, go to: <http://www.boysgirlsclubs.org/page1741913.aspx>

*** Jan Wilberg announced a "Planners & Grant Writers Roundtable" entitled: "Collaboration: On Paper and In Practice" to be held from 9 to 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 21 at the Nonprofit Center, 2819 W. Highland Blvd.

Meeting Attendance Sept. 15, 2009—Hillside Family Resource Center

NOTE: All Brighter Futures funded agencies are expected to attend monthly MY-FDA meetings, according to their contract

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Emilio	De Torre	ACLU of Wisconsin
Jason	Hargis	ACLU of Wisconsin
Antoinette	McKee	Aurora Family Service
Christina	Treiber	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Sandy	Malone	Boys and Girls Club
Lesley	Salas	Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milw.
Kari	Nervig	COA YFC - Riverwest Ctr
Racquel	Bell	Community Advocates
Andi	Elliott	Community Advocates
Aricka	Evans	Community Advocates
Kenneth	Germanson	Community Advocates
Joe	Volk	Community Advocates
Wendy	Mc Carty	Dept. of Children and Families
Mark	O'Neil	Diverse & Resilient
Martha	Rummler	Hope House
Patrick	Schrank	Hope House
Maxine	May	Howard Fuller Educational Fdn
Matricia	Patterson	IMPACT
Betsy	Heinen	La Causa FRC
Cristina	Ledezma	Latino Community Center
Eilene	Buege	Marquette University - Penfield
Deborah	Bryant	Milwaukee Adolescent Health
Lenora	Shaw	Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program
Shirley	Senaya	Milwaukee Health Dept.
Julie	Bock	Milwaukee LGBT
Lagail	Hurt	My Home Your Home
Odell	Chalmers	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Tracy	Hrajnoha	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Jody	Rhodes	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
David	Scholl	Ombudsman
Fessahaye	Mebrahtu	Pan African Community Assn.
Trudy	Ranallo	Parents Plus, Inc.
Sherri	Daniels	Pathfinders
Joseph	Stanley	Pathfinders Youth Shelter
Kelly	Hennese	Pearls for Teen Girls
Gerry	Howze	Pearls for Teen Girls, Inc.
Joanna	Love	Penfield Childrens Center
Marge	Kreuser	Perez-Pena, LTD
Quinton	Cotton	Planning Council
Anthony	Mc Henry	Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
Theresa	Post	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Jan	Buchler	The Parenting Network
Erin	Ebert	The Parenting Network
Crisela	Zavala	The Parenting Network
Georgann	Moore	United Health Care
Daphne	Jackson	United Healthcare
Reggie	Moore	Urban Underground
Stephany	Pruitt	Vincent Family Resource Center
Marissa	Lopez	Walker's Point Youth and Family Ctr.
Sally	Ladky	WI Abstinence Coalition
JohnRae	Stowers	Wis. Foundation of Independent Colleges

Milwaukee Brighter Futures:

A better community
through prevention

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