**Community Board 17**

**Social Services Committee Meeting**

**Monday, November 28, 2022**

**Present: Guest: Excused:**

Rhonda Joseph Colette Boston Diana Gay

Sharon Marshall

Judith Destin

Monica McKain-Brown

Lulu Friesdat

Janice Reid

Sabine Jacques

Simone Colbert

Antoinette Smart

Enid Dillard

Jorge Tait

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The **Social Services Committee Virtual** meeting was held on **Monday, November 28, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Ms. Rhonda Joseph** called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

**Roll Call**-Rhonda Joseph, Judith Destin, Colette Boston, Janice Reid, Lulu Friesdat, Monica McKain-Brown, Antoinette Smart,

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Ms. Joseph** said the Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022 from 6-9pm at Paerdegat Park located on Albany Avenue between Foster Avenue and Farragut Road.

Borough President Antonio Reynoso will be having a State of Brooklyn Address, scheduled for January 10, 2023.

She asked if they received the September and October meeting minutes? They will table the minutes because they do not have a quorum tonight.

The NAB 17 attended the September meeting and their numbers for the survey are at 417 for this district only and Citywide, they have completed over 20,000 surveys to date and they will be collecting surveys until December 21, 2022. She asked that they complete the survey and share it with other community residents so they can get more numbers in for this district. If anyone needs a survey, let her know and she will get it to them.

**Ms. Enid Dillard** said this is Diabetes Awareness Month, and the new program that One Brooklyn Health has brought to light is their Diabetes Center of Excellence, which is located at 1110 Eastern Parkway, operating out of the Pierre Toussaint Outpatient Specialty Center. OBH is comprised of 3 different hospital systems, Kingsbrook Jewish, Interfaith and Brookdale Med. Centers. Since their integration, diabetes has been an incredible interest of theirs in terms of the incidences in the community. All 3 of their sites and the 13 off-site facilities specialize in diabetes care and this site has been on the horizon for some time. The Chair of Quality for OBH, Dr. Curt Caldwell, a Board-Certified Endocrinologist, runs this particular center. The center is designed to improve care for people living with diabetes and enabling patients and community residents to achieve the highest level of care. The center provides access to **(INAUDIBLE)** and that means there are people from different health care backgrounds to help diabetic and pre-diabetic patients enhance their quality of life. The center also has Cardiologists, Podiatrist for foot care, Ophthalmologists for eye care, as well as vascular Doctors, because diabetic patients are known to suffer from vascular issues. The real highlight of the program is that the center’s program collaborates with health people, which is a unique training program, NY’s leading Peer Program in diabetes. The program trains other community residents in the prevention of diabetes. There is a diabetes self-management program and a diabetes prevention program, where they are educating peers to help others. What is great about their program is the collaboration with health people, and those that are trained become certified in diabetes self-management and can take that education anywhere they would like, inside or outside of the community. This gives them the opportunity to spread the education on how to prevent or manage diabetes, which seems to be a difficult component when one gets a diabetes diagnosis.

November 14th was Diabetes Awareness Day, the 1st graduation of the 1st cohort of 16 Peer Educators from the OBH Health People Program. Registration is open for this program and information is available for those interested in this training.

**Ms. Collette Boston** said she is one of the graduates. **(INAUDIBLE)** People who are taking the classes are telling others and they are also taking the classes and it has impacted their lives in so many different ways. The training is **(INAUDIBLE)**

**Ms. Dillard** said the training is 4 days of intense training and it does take some sacrifice.

**Ms.** asked what happens after they finish the training?

**Ms. Dillard** said they work with them at OBH to target persons in the community who need this training and go into schools, Churches and other places they might find there is a need to create this level of education. They serve all 5 boroughs.

**Ms. Sharon Marshall** said she works for the Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene and is the Director of Community Engagement and Partnership with the Borough of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health and they address all stages of live, they do specialize in perinatal and maternal child health. Some of the things they have been focusing on is the link of chronic disease and birth outcomes. Is there a section in the training around the relationship between diabetes and birth outcome, because within their community, they are more likely to be diagnosed with chronic diseases during their reproductive years? They want people to know how this affects cardiovascular health and other issues. The diabetes work is not just focusing on the older population, but those of childbearing age.

**Ms. Dillard** said those who had gestational diabetes and the risk factors in that are discussed in this program. This is a perfect example of how this program can become uniquely shaped to their needs in the community and why it is so valuable in terms of the education. Diabetes is affecting so many people across the scale and children as well and they talk about that component also.

**Ms. Marshall** said their catchment areas are North, South and Eastern Brooklyn. They have some upcoming events and activities going on. They are still encouraging people to get their flu and bivariant booster shots. They will be giving booster shots at 2 locations, one is 485 Throop Avenue and the Kingsborough Houses, located at 1880 Pacific Street. They do this every Friday and Saturday from 10:30am to 3pm. They also point people to where they can get their primary series of shots for COVID-19.

They are also having fire safety training on Dec. 2nd and Dec. 7th because people are more suspectable to house fires during the holidays and the cold seasons.

Each month, they have the Partners in Health chat on the last Tuesday of each month and they receive updated information about COVID-19, the flu and RSV. They also provide education around specific topics. They will be doing a presentation around health insurance enrollment. They also have mental health first aid training.

**Ms. Simone Colbert** said they do have the Healing Pathways to Parenting class being offered at the Brownsville location. The class is a 9-week series for parents of children of all ages and they address issues like communicating with their child and self-care for parents. They have parents that have to take mandated parenting classes. This is something that is definitely good for the community.

**Ms. Marshall** said community residents in the district that are illegible and in-need of pack-n-play affordable cribs, car seats and they must attend the required training. They also have an emergency diaper program and are distributed on an as-need basis, one time only, but they are building up their repertoire of classes. They have childbirth education classes at no cost and the newborn care classes are also available at the Brownsville location. They are also located at 259 Bristol Street, and they also have partners at Caribbean Women’s Health Association that offer breastfeeding and other classes as well.

**Ms. Colbert** said they have a breastfeeding support/baby café for women who may have questions about weening and other things. They have an array of services centered around family wellness.

**Ms. Lulu Friesdat** said she is the Founder and Executive Director of an organization called Smart Legislation. They are the legislative branch of a non-profit called Smart Elections and they work to improve US elections in New York making them secure, fair, acceptable, well administered and publicly verifiable. They reach out to different groups making sure the elections are inclusive. One thing they are concerned about right now is that New York will be getting new voting equipment. The current voting machines have been around since 2009, with them having a 10- year life span. They will be making big purchases and will cost the community millions of dollars and it is important that the money is well spent and help the elections and bring more people in to participate in voting. They machines coming into New York State are very problematic causing long lines to vote and they also have a lot of security issues.

The voting machines vendors know this big purchasing is coming up and they will try to sell them the most expensive voting machines because they want to make the most amount of profit because this only happens every 10 years. They can also sell them voting machines that have very expensive maintenance contracts for the equipment and they also make more money from maintaining that equipment. The voting machine vendors are ES & F and Dominion. The voting machine is called a Universal Use Voting machine or a Hybrid Voting machine. They are like ATM style voting machines, with touchscreens that are used to select the candidates and then the ballot is printed out. The system they have in New York is working well, you go to the polls, fill out a paper ballot and scan it. Using the voting machines costs more that using a pen and paper. They will cause longer wait times and also causing longer lines. This can also cause voter suppression in smaller communities. The voting machines use the barcodes to count the votes, not the marks made by the voter and they cannot verify who they voted for. They do not want these systems for a number of reasons, and meanwhile, these systems are rapidly coming into the State, and they are in the process of being approved and they already applied for approval with the State Board of Elections. Her organization has been fighting them for 3 years trying to keep this from happening and they have really good legislation that would stop them and maintain the system they have and it passed the NYS Senate, 2 years in a row, but could not get it through the Assembly, and this has to do with politics and corruption. The vendors hired a lobbyist, who is very influential, and he was able to stop the legislation from passing the Assembly. They as communities, to protect the elections, they need to get organized and stop the vendors from shoving these expensive, insecure voting machines onto their communities. She hopes that Community Board 17 can write a letter of support for this legislation to be reintroduced in January. They are trying to get it passed rapidly because the 1st of February, these voting machines are scheduled to be approved, and once approved, they start putting them across the State. There is a timeline on this issue, and it is urgent. She comes to them as a community member to help protect them from these voting machines.

**Ms. Joseph** said in terms of a letter, they would need to work more on that to make it easy for people who want to participate and they can sign a form letter to send to the elected officials. She asked if this were the kind of campaign she was pushing towards?

**Ms. Friesdat** said whatever the community feels comfortable with, if they want to do a petition that they sign onto as individuals or as CB 17. They can research this together. It is helpful for have a full letter of support and there are a number of organizations that represent Civil Rights organizations that have signed onto this legislation. Here in NY, the Center for Law & Social Justice, and they are in support as well as the Association of Black Educators of NY, and other groups that are supporting them include National Civil Rights organizations, like Center for Common Ground and **(INAUDIBLE)** There are many local organizations and good Government groups, and they do have letters of support from over 45 good Government groups. If they have any further questions, they can reach out to her.

**Ms. Joseph** said she has been able to arrange with the Dept. of Health, to do a Mental Health First Aid Certificate Training for Dec. 30, 2022, in CB 17 and they are looking for a venue. This will be an all-day training and they will receive a certificate at the end of the training. They will give the first 30 registrants, CB 17 residents first priority and after that, they will be filling the seats with residents from any outreach that was done from outside of the district. This will be the first of many trainings they will hold in 2023 with the capacity of the Dept. of Health. If anyone is interested in the training, let her know and they will be added to the list.

For the Resource Fair, they need to form a subcommittee and if anyone is interested in joining the subcommittee, let her know. They will start having discussions in January to start planning for the Resource Fair.

She asked if there were any other business to discuss? Having heard none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Ms. Janice Reid** made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Ms. Marshall** seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned.