

Lines of Opportunity

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BETWEEN THE LINES



Randy Peers
Executive Director

On behalf of all the OBT Staff, Board of Directors, and our Trainees, we want to wish you and your families a happy and healthy 2014! We greatly value your support, and we look forward to another year of working with you in an effort to improve the lives of young people through job training, education, and employment.

I have lived in New York City all of my life. In all these years, I can honestly say I have never seen such dramatic change in government as we are currently experiencing. In addition to a new Mayor who brings with him a progressive agenda, a majority of members of the NYC Council are also new. We will also have a new Council Speaker who will lead a legislative body that is committed to addressing extreme inequality that has imbedded itself in our City. Regardless of your political affiliations, I hope you can join me in wishing Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, new Public Advocate Leticia James and new City Comptroller Scott Stringer best wishes as they take the reins of government and lead us in a new direction. We are optimistic that this new direction will fit nicely with OBT's empowerment model for supporting young adults in need of a High School Equivalency Diploma, job training and employment.

On this note, OBT has joined a coalition of over 90 organizations citywide that have pledged to aggressively promote an agenda that stresses increasing the investment that government makes in supporting programs that serve disconnected youth. This coalition, called the Youth Opportunity Agenda Network, has developed a platform consisting of recommendations for NYC to increase the investment in programs that effectively support "opportunity" youth – the youth we serve here at OBT. For those of you who want to learn more about this network, please take a moment to visit their website at www.nyopyouth.org.

Finally, you will notice in this issue that we featured three other organizations that work with young people around NYC and partner with OBT on several strategic initiatives. OBT is proud to profile the work of Youth Represent, The Lamp, and Churches United for Fair Housing. At OBT, we recognize that in order to truly have an impact on the crisis facing our young people, organizations must leverage their respective strengths and partner for maximum impact. As Henry Ford once said – "Coming together is a beginning; Keeping together is progress; Working together is success."

OBT Partner Profiles



Youth Represent opens the door for many OBT youth struggling to get past legal barriers in the criminal justice system because of mistakes they have made. Their successful model has been to partner with non-profit organizations, providing them with services such as on-site rap sheet review and representation in court. OBT Executive Director Randy Peers praises Youth Represent in their ability to, “relate to these young adults and speak their language in order to really get them back on track. What Youth Represent really brings to the table is their ability to clear up any known and, in many cases, unknown legal issues that these young adults are facing.” OBT began partnering with Youth Represent over four years ago and now serves over 140 of OBT’s youth per year.

“OBT was one of our first partners, and they immediately embraced the idea of the need for legal assistance for their participants,” said Youth Represent Executive Director Laurie Praise. “The OBT staff has been invaluable in enabling us to effectively break down the legal barriers that some of their youth face as they seek employment, housing, higher education, and other cornerstones of stability. We are grateful for the dedication and passion of the OBT staff and look forward to our continued partnership.” For more information please visit: www.youthrepresent.org

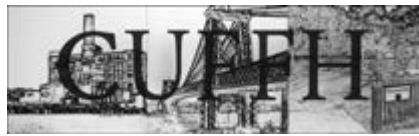
Michael C. Pope
Director of Community Partnerships
Youth Represent



Rob Solano
Executive Director
CUFFH



DC Vito
Executive Director
The Lamp



OBT is excited to start a new partnership with Churches United for Fair Housing (CUFFH) and the Academy of Urban Planning to address the needs of the Mexican and Mexican-American young adult community in Bushwick. This collaboration will address some of the most pressing needs of this population by helping them stay in school or reconnecting to the education system by enrolling in OBT’s high school equivalency programs. These various programs strategically combine education and job skills training with higher education opportunities and sustainable employment. At the same time, this partnership provides necessary social service resources such as CUFFH’s affordable housing workshops.

“Many immigrant communities in Bushwick are facing a double-edged sword of vast gentrification and violent neighborhoods,” says CUFFH Executive Director Rob Solano. “This has the effect of pushing families out of their homes and stunting youth growth. These kids desperately need access to safe places where they can receive guidance in job training and college access. The partnership between our two organizations allows us to connect with this community to empower these youth to be the future leaders of our community.”

For more information please visit: www.cuffh.org



One of OBT’s newest and most creative partners, The LAMP (Learning About Multimedia Project) co-teaches with OBT

underserved young adults in the Digital Career Path Program. This program aims to teach specific skill sets which will help young people to understand and comprehend media as they enter the workforce. “We teach them how to create, critique and talk back to media, because media is everywhere,” says The LAMP’s Executive Director, D.C. Vito. “People need to understand what they’re doing when they engage with and make media, and how media messages influence the way we look at the world.”

The LAMP has been instrumental in teaching youth how to maximize opportunities in the digital technologies and media fields, industries that are growing at incredible rates. Participants are learning about Word Press, Tumblr, and LinkedIn, which has helped in preparing some young adults for internships at exciting new workplaces like Etsy and Kickstarter. “One of the most important contributions to this program is The LAMP’s ability to provide artistic and entrepreneurial participants important information on how to market their abilities in the digital world. They teach them what many typically do not tell you in the classroom because it is from their vast experiences,” said BWRC Technology Instructor Rodney Siau. For more information please visit: www.thelampnyc.org

OBT Welcomes New Staff



Alfonso Castro
Outreach
Coordinator



Matthew Millman
Data
Coordinator



Alex Jones
Corporate
Recruiter



Dickson Samuel
Computer
Instructor



Quinton Bailey
Youth
Coordinator



Sara Martin
Corporate
Recruiter



David Shi
Instructor



Alyssa Bain
ONA
Coordinator



Latoya Dalmida
Youth
Coordinator



Darren Latanick
Director, Adult Education
& Literacy Program

Happenings Around OBT



Burberry Workshop
September 2013



Job Fair
November 2013



First Y Roads Graduation
November 2013



Speed Networking w/ AIG
November 2013



Debate Day
January 2014



Save The Date Summer ²⁰/₁₄ Soirée

Tuesday, June 3rd 2014

For more information, please contact Leah Hebert
lhebert@obtjobs.org / 718-369-0303 x22

OBT launches New Junior Board

Over the past two years, OBT's Board of Directors sought to grow and develop the OBT Board. During the course of their search, they were presented with a number of qualified candidates who displayed great enthusiasm for OBT's efforts and goals. Their solution was to create a Junior Board as a means of engaging new talent to assist in expanding the reach of OBT services through cultivation of new relationships, education of the public, and fundraising.

On November 12th 2013, the Junior Board launched its First Annual Social Mixer at M1-5 Lounge in Manhattan to kick off its commitment and service to OBT. Allie Abbott, OBT Board Member who cultivated the creation of the Junior Board, said, "OBT's Junior Board worked hard to organize an impressive mixer to raise funds for OBT's programs. It not only netted a profit, but more importantly, it expanded OBT's reach to over 70 new young people around NYC." Junior Board members Kiki Teshome, Marc Gross, William Jimenez, Evan Kelsay, and Julio Gomez leveraged their existing networks from Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, AIG, LinkedIn, and other businesses to attend the event, allowing new individuals the opportunity to learn about the mission of OBT and to network with OBT Alumni.

From left to right: Allie Abbott, Kiki Teshome, Marc Gross, Randy Peers, Evan Kelsay, Marjorie Parker, William Jimenez



According to Kiki Teshome, "What attracted me the most to OBT is that it is not like any other charity I have been in contact with. OBT takes these young adults and applies their tough love approach, holding them accountable for their actions. They empower them to become self-sufficient and instill in each participant confidence, discipline, and professionalism that they will carry with them when they leave."

Employer Spotlight: FSO

FSO is a national enterprise-wide onsite outsourcing organization that delivers innovative people solutions to some of the world's most prestigious companies. Recognized on the Inc. 5000 list of the nation's fastest growing companies for the second consecutive year, FSO's growth and success can be attributed to making a positive and powerful impact on their clients' bottom lines, as well as their employees' careers and lives. OBT began its partnership with FSO in 2012, providing candidates to fill positions within the fields of: Concierge, Hospitality Services, Security, Messenger Services, Office Services, Facilities, Mailroom Logistics and more. Since then, FSO has hired over 50 of OBT's young adults from their Out of School Youth Education and Job Training Program (OSY) and the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP).



“Everyone at FSO feels so appreciated and valued as a person. They encourage us to finish our education and they adjust our schedules so we can enroll in college. I feel so fortunate to have an employer that treats us like family.”

With operations in over 50 major US cities, FSO proudly maintains a 98% client and employee retention rate and distinguishes itself from its competitors by the amount of time and resources it invests in its staff.

FSO's owner and industry pioneer, Mitch Weiner, knows the hardships of striving for a better life. It was through outreach programs such as OBT that Mitch was able to gain a sense of self understanding and reach his full potential as an entrepreneur, building and running some of the largest outsourcing companies in this business.

Mitch provides all of his employees with the most comprehensive training, awards, and recognition programs that the industry has to offer. For FSO, the goal is not just to retain outstanding talent; it's about helping that talent realize their full potential through growth and discovery. FSO prides itself on providing their employees with knowledge, a career path and, most importantly, the confidence to succeed in any environment.

"At FSO I am constantly learning new things and inspired to want to do more." said Terrance Crumpty, a recent OBT alumnus. Terrance started as a Messenger for the Durst Organization and within six months, he received a raise and was promoted to a Team Leader. As FSO continues to expand their national footprint, their emphasis will always remain on the people.

To learn more about FSO please visit their website at www.fso-outsourcing.com

OBT Hosts its First Annual Employer Recognition and Networking Breakfast

Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow hosted its first annual **Employer Recognition and Networking Breakfast** in October to thank the many employer partners that support its life-changing programs by providing its youth with jobs, internships and speed networking opportunities. Over 100 representatives from businesses across NYC joined OBT in the beautiful conference space at Morgan Stanley in Times Square.

The event's featured speaker, **Kathryn Wylde**, President & CEO of the Partnership for NYC provided her insights on the NYC labor market in relationship to the new mayoral transitions. She commended OBT's employer partners for being, "leaders in creating the greatest opportunities possible for the next generation of our workforce for all these years." She added, "Some of you even go back to the day when Sister Mary Franciscus had this dream, long before others understood how important this was for the future of the city." Ms. Wylde also spoke about the how important it is for the next administration to replicate an OBT employer model to real scale. "This is a real opportunity to organize employers in a way we haven't done before," said Wylde. "If we create industry associations that are public/private partnerships with educators, service providers, and employers and we create a system where small employers can afford to participate, we think we can really increase these types of opportunities for a lot more people."

An example of the types of opportunities Ms. Wylde was referring to was captured by OBT Alumni Douglas Saunders. He engaged the audience with his courageous story detailing his troubles in foster care that led to him dropping out of high school. In an effort to pursue a better life, he enrolled in OBT's Youth Education and Job Training Program and earned his GED. Douglas then participated in the Young Adult Internship Program, where he interned for Swiss Post Solutions and secured a position as a File Clerk at Norton Rose Fulbright Law firm. This past fall, Douglas was awarded Swiss Post's most prestigious employee award, The Joshua Colon 2013 Leadership Award, for his dedication to the company.

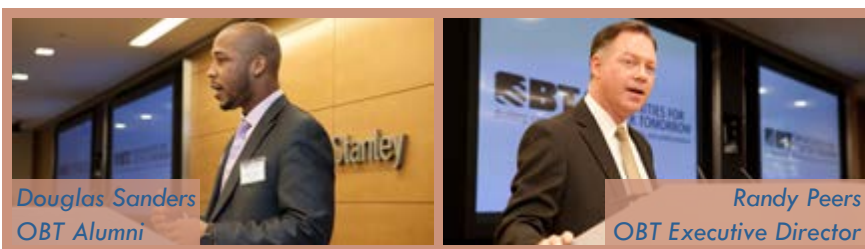
Douglas is one of the many young adults who has been able to succeed in entering the professional world in part due to OBT's dynamic partnerships with top notch companies. "We would not be here today without the support of our employers," said Randy Peers. "It is their initial investment in these young adults that allows them the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and advance into sustainable futures."



(Above) Kathryn Wylde
President & CEO
Partnership for New York City

Executive Director Randy Peers also highlighted a new company, Novato Sports Apparel, that started with OBT in its mission. Its creator, Angel Lopez, an OBT Alumni and former OBT Board Member has pledged to make a contribution to OBT from each item sold. More information on Novato can be found at www.novatosportsapparel.com

OBT would like to thank everyone who contributed to the event's success. A special thank you also goes to OBT Board Member Mary Lou Peters and Morgan Stanley for hosting the event.



Douglas Saunders
OBT Alumni

Randy Peers
OBT Executive Director

Opportunities For a Better Tomorrow

Randolph Peers, *Executive Director*

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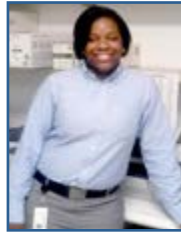
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Spotlight on Success: **Shanice McLaughlin**



Shanice McLaughlin enrolled in the Jamaica Y Roads Youth Education and Job Training Program (OSY) soon after the center's grand opening last May.

Shanice was looking to obtain her GED, and was excited when she learned that the Y Roads program also provided job training, college access, and supportive resources. Shanice felt that as a recent immigrant from Jamaica, she benefited the most from the program's public speaking workshops. Jamaica Y Roads Center Director Clare Dwyer recalled, "Shanice was extremely shy at first but took on the challenge of public speaking. She even encouraged and mentored her classmates, blossoming into a real team leader."

Shanice completed the OSY program earning her National Retail Federation Certification in Customer Service, and then enrolled in OBT's Young Adult Internship Program to gain professional experience.

Her internship with Swiss Post Solutions provided her with a leadership training prior to her starting at New York Law School Copy Center. "When I first came to the US, the only job I could find was working at a restaurant cleaning tables. The training that Swiss Post and OBT provided me with was invaluable. They brought in inspiring speakers whose backgrounds were similar to mine who encouraged us to be the force in our success, giving us tips on how to survive the first few weeks."

At the end of her internship, Swiss Post quickly hired Shanice to work as a Mail Associate at Commerce Bank in the Manhattan Financial Center. "I love that I am getting to interact with people and becoming more familiar with the American culture," said Shanice. She earned her GED in December and is now looking to go to college to become a nurse. "I would recommend Y Roads to anyone. The most important thing they teach you is that you are worth something and if you believe in yourself, your dreams can come true!"