THE POWER OF COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS

The power of a community-campus partnership can bring diverse groups of people together to identify new and better ways of thinking about communities and strengthening higher education.

The Department of Social Work at Nyack College has taken some significant steps in developing a community partnership with Community Connections for Youth (CCFY). CCFY is a New-York based nonprofit organization, whose mission is to mobilize indigenous faith and neighborhood organizations to develop effective community-based alternative-to-incarceration programs for youth.

Within the last two years, students in our Social Welfare Policy & Economic Justice have received training on how to mobilize their indigenous faith and neighborhood organizations to develop effective community-based alternative-to-incarceration programs for youth.

In an effort to deepen the partnership and understand what makes for successful partnership models between academic programs and indigenous social services, our partnership with CCFY has continued within our Community Practice course.

Some of the partnership practices this semester include:

1. Sharing spaces: Weekly classes will take place at both Nyack College and CCFY.

2. Students conduct an Organizational, Community Assessment and Change Project that will include the identification of a service delivery problem at CCFY and research-based/community informed recommendations for improvement of CCFY services with the community of-system-involved youth & families in the South Bronx.
3. The assessments provide students with an opportunity to visit to Department of Probation in the Bronx, where students will conduct interviews with South Bronx residents who are also parents of system-involved youth.

4. CCFY Employees, court-involved youth and their families will be invited to attend the Nyack College campus for class presentations and an opportunity to further inform the improvements & recommendations that students will present.

5. Senior social work students who are committed to implementing the change project will be offered a summer internship at CCFY, this internship will provide our students with an opportunity to implement the change project in partnership with CCFY clients and employees.

As the partnership moves forward, we are excited to see that the interest and learning has already deepened for both students and CCFY Employees.

**COMMENTS ABOUT THE CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

“It’s the first time I understood and realized how important research is when doing the work”  
- Harold Pinales (Student at Nyack College)

“It just made me think, if someone has an idea and a vision for a community-powerful things can happen. Vision matter.”  
- Kristen Perez (Student at Nyack College)

“This was good for me. Sometimes when you’re so in the work you don’t realize how many good things you are doing with the community. Having the students ask us questions, really brought the value of the work to the forefront.”  
- Rev. Ruben Austria (Executive Director of CCFY)

Jeanette’s story and her heart is an example of why I got into the field.”  
- Nola Thomas (Student at Nyack College)

“When they asked us: “How do we assess, in an on-going manner, the effectiveness of our services?” That made me really think, how do we do that? I am going to raise that question at our staff meeting tomorrow.”  
- Rosanne Knepper (Training Manager of CCFY)

CCFY Team: (from right to left)  
Rosie Knepper, Jeannette Bocanegra, Jennifer Cepero, Rev. Ruben Austria and Caitlin Anderson