

YOUTH
JUSTICE
BOARD

Looking Forward: Youth Perspectives on Reducing Crime in Brownsville and Beyond
Executive Summary

The 2011 report, *Looking Forward: Youth Perspectives on Reducing Crime in Brownsville and Beyond*, presents the findings and recommendations of the Youth Justice Board, a group of New York City teenagers who study public policy issues that affect young people. Since August 2010, the Youth Justice Board has focused on reducing youth crime in New York City using the neighborhood of Brownsville, Brooklyn as a case study. This report presents ideas about how to reduce incidences of youth crime in Brownsville and neighborhoods that face similar challenges. In 2011-12, the Board will work to implement many of the ideas contained in this report in conjunction with the development of a new community justice center in Brownsville. The Board's ultimate goal is to make Brownsville a safe, supportive neighborhood for young people that provides for their social, emotional, and educational needs.

Over five months, the Youth Justice Board conducted interviews with over 30 individuals involved in the city justice system and the Brownsville community. The Board visited four community justice centers and conducted three focus groups with young people involved in the justice system to learn about the experiences and perspectives of youths. The Youth Justice Board developed 10 recommendations designed to reduce youth crime in Brownsville and make the community a safer, more supportive place for youths to grow up.

The Board's recommendations fall into three categories.

A. Community supports and services

1. Provide educational resources and supports for youths moving through middle school and into high school.
2. Provide alternative education, job-readiness, and mentoring services to youths.
3. Ensure that health, mental health, and social service resources are available at appropriate levels.
4. Provide programming for parents and families to help prevent foster care placement.

B. Community development

5. Foster community relationships and promote opportunities through events, media, and social networking.
6. Increase options for recreation to promote relationship building.
7. Engage youths from Brownsville in the development of the Brownsville Community Justice Center.

C. Crime and prevention

8. Provide programming designed to transform negative peer pressure into positive peer support.
9. Encourage better communication and stronger relationships between police and youths.
10. Establish coordination between the Brownsville Community Justice Center and the Crossroads Detention Center to better support youths involved in the justice system.

The recommendations put forth by the Board are not meant to be static—they are intended to be a starting point for change. The Board hopes its recommendations will spark conversation with community-based organizations, local schools, the Department of Probation, the New York City Police Department, and other partners. Over the next year, the Youth Justice Board will work with these stakeholders in an effort to encourage the implementation of the ideas contained in this report.

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Points of view and opinions expressed in the report are the opinions of the Youth Justice Board members and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the Center for Court Innovation or the program's funders.

**To download a copy of the Board's report and to learn more about the program, go to:
www.courtinnovation.org/youthjusticeboard**