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YOUTH AND ADULTS COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS



June 20, 2007 – The Brandon Family Support and Resource Center hosted a Town Hall meeting to hear from local residents what they need for their children to be successful. Dr. Peter Gorski, Director of Program Impact and Innovation at the Children’s Board of Hillsborough County, broke new ground by inviting youth from the **Hillsborough Youth Collaborative** to actively participate in the conversation about their needs.

“Youth today need encouragement from adults; someone who lends a helping hand and guides them,” said HYC member Frank

Wade (16). On ways and means to make this happen, Melissa Gooden-Davis (16) felt it was important to *“provide parents with the tools to help children with their homework. Parents also need to make time to really listen to their children so they can feel comfortable openly sharing their thoughts and feelings.”*

A conversation ensued on opportunities for youth in the Brandon area. *“They [youth] are looking for fun things to do. They need fun opportunities where they can be themselves and find social acceptance in positive places”*, says HYC member Jerry Kent (18). One of the ideas generated by the meeting was a summer event to be coordinated by youth for youth. *“It is such a pleasure to meet young people who are so dedicated to improving our community”*, said Wendy Zaiter, staff member at the Brandon Family Support and Resource Center.



Community Tampa Bay’s Hillsborough Youth Collaborative (HYC) gives young people a voice and fosters meaningful youth inclusion as the vehicle for positive community change. HYC members participate in service learning activities and skill building workshops that empower them to serve children and families through the Children’s Board of Hillsborough County. These dedicated young people mobilize others through civic engagement and advocate the needs of youth. They are a true example of the power of youth-adult partnerships and the participation of youth in decision making processes.

To learn more about Community Tampa Bay’s Hillsborough Youth Collaborative, please visit www.communitytampabay.org or call Josué Hegg at (727) 568.9333



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