

LINDA – Fieldnotes – June 26, 2007

Subject: Phone call to ITSOC

Location: My office

Time: 4:50-5:10

60P

63P

58P

288

Ms. Simons: Hi, In the Spirit of the Children?

Linda: Hi, is this Ms. Simons?

Ms. Simons: Yes.

Linda: This is Linda Lin, the Asian girl who came in to observe a few weeks ago?

Ms. Simons: Oh yeah, how are you?

Linda: Fine, how are you? Uh, how's DeQuesa? Did she find an apartment?

Ms. Simons: Uh, she's still working on that. Would you like to speak with Ms. Jones?

Ms. Jones: Tell me more about what information

Based on what you observed while you were here?

I tell her that it's the details of what people have to do to secure a job, housing.

Working and or trying

Yes, she still is in her process (DeQuesa)

[so Keila Simons has told her that I asked about DeQuesa]

You're not going to

We won't reconvene with a session again,

So that you can see those other aspects

So I was like, okay, I don't know that we would have [sessions]

To facilitate your need

In July and August we don't hold anything on a Saturday

[people are working]

Anything that we do now is individual sessions

Catch as catch can

The young man that you observed

He works

He was here yesterday

That was his date

It would be hard for [us] to give you a date

[I ask about individual sessions]

It still takes place, that's ongoing

Individual sessions

That's ongoing throughout the year

Parenting skills classes

14 week stretch

[quoting someone else] You *do* that with them [as in, extensive commitment]

Try to get them as they're fresh

Capture them as they just come out of placement

Why [she states rhetorically]

Because you don't want them repeating the cycle

I trained my trainers

Instruction

Free to look at some of the posters

We started the parenting skills in 2000

Program site

Subcontracted with one of the child welfare organizations

We didn't receive that many from January til now

New referrals, intakes with children

They come in spells

Again we don't receive these young people until they age out

No cuz they're still under the auspices of the commissioner

I ask if by community-based she means not a government agency

(She explains, Yes, and)

There are also child welfare agencies that are private

Funded straight through the city

Linda: state

Ms. Jones: or the state, yes.

DeQuesa

In two weeks time she's aged out

(I ask about her)

Confidentiality, outsiders

I apologize and say I'm not trying to pry

She says I know, it's intriguing.

[some negotiation over whether I can come again, no programming until October, I ask about individual sessions, again this catch as catch can]

Wed new intakes

[Tells me to look at website, calendar]

She also asked me about what is the connection with supplemental education. I said, as I explained before, we're trying to broaden education. She says, but there has to be a link. I

say, the basic life skills, learning how to transition out of the system. She asks another question, and I take a moment to think, and she asks if I understood the question. I say something like, with our kind of approach we can't draw conclusions yet. [This felt like PR work, possibly damage control.]

She repeated that people might come in, might not. I say that I understand it's a lot to think of another person's needs. She says something about being too busy to pick up the phone, says she's tired. It's five o'clock, she says. I have one document left. She tells me yesterday she was up at 5 (am, presumably), and I ask what she was doing. She says working from home, preparing for the day, maybe sending email straight to the office.

I don't live in Harlem, she tells me. So she must commute. Then, she says she will call me, or have Ms. Simons call me. She asks if Ms. Simons has my contact info, and transfers me. I am all professional with Ms. Simons this time.

[I'm disappointed. Ms. Jones was so warm in person but is now discouraging me from coming. The same with Ms. Simons, who was very professional toward me. Are they warm towards everyone, dissect them later, and I was found lacking? Or maybe worthy of another test. I was starting to get tired of pushing for another visit, but perhaps I merited half an hour of her time.

I'm sure they have lots of visitors who ask too personal questions about the charismatic young people they meet. Oh well. At least their initial warmth gave me encouragement to continue fieldwork. And, I can't write off the possibility that they will indeed contact me. I suppose I will have to wait and see. Perhaps after a decent interval, maybe a month, I will call again.]