

LINDA – Fieldnotes – Monday, July 16, 2007

I have been exchanging messages with Alexandria Barrau of the The Rev. Linnette C. Williamson Memorial Park Association, Inc., who had let me know not to return to observe the program until I had spoken with her.

Ms. Barrau calls me around 6:30pm on my cell phone. She speaks very, very quickly. She says that she did not want to bother me over the weekend.

Overall, I learn that Ms. Omega, who is actually Reverend Omega, had thought I was from Columbia as a funder of the program. It turns out that Varenne was right that this program looked too fancy not to be partners with Columbia and others. Again, this question of blocking my access. One of the interesting things here is that the example of all the children sleeping in one bed is used again, as if it is a story trotted out for rich people like me.

Barrau: So you went to our program on Monday
I guess when Reverend Omega spoke to you
She wasn't able to tell me much

(I say my understanding was that I shouldn't return until I had spoken with her. I give overview of research program)

We work with program
Ms. Maltree who you met with Monday
Had the impression that you would [come back]

When Reverend Omega spoke to you
You would be coming to observe
To see how it works
Like a one time deal
Ms. Maltree is president of the board
If you want to make it more
She asked me to talk to you this week
She's not in town
If you'd like to come back
We have our board meeting

L: When do you meet?
We actually meet this Thursday

(I propose to come and speak with the board)

We have a pretty full agenda

101P
30P
102P
103P
104P

287
497
504
505

I can definitely pass on your information

We're a pretty small board
This program only functions in the summer
We don't have a full time staff member
The staff that you see we hire them for the summer
So there was a concern
Who is this person
Are you observing because we wanted you to observe

(I say that some staff members were surprised; I spoke with Babs Smith, who told some but not others)

Yeah it caused anxiety
And we experience
Because every year we hire a new director
We're also learning and developing in terms of fit for the program and staffing and directors
We get frequently people who want to come and observe
Some of our funders come to [see an activity]

She heard Columbia University
That's one of our funders

We've never had anybody come all day
L: (left at lunch)
She thought you were
Rev. omega has been grassroots with this organization from the 10th year
Two have really held it together
I'm one of the newer, immigrant from downtown came up here two years ago

The gardens are part of the land trust
Paul
(yeah I met him too)
We're about to purchase another one
He can explain about the Land Trust

(I explain that I am interested in this idea of "learning to organize")

I'll forward your email address to Paul Copa like I said
I don't know if she explained but she's been with us for about a week and a half

(I ask if Rev. Omega is pastor of the church that hosts the program)
Not of this church necessarily
She's always been Rev. Omega to me
(I say she introduced herself as Dorothy Omega)

She said she met this lovely person

How to make it work

It's an educational summer program

It's not a camp

They hand out a specific (curriculum)

Every activity has a purpose

Especially kids who are underserved

[why is this distinction so important, does it bring different kinds of money?]

Again probably Paul

He's one of the founders with Rev. Omega and Ms. Maltree and Reverend Williams

Getting it together and getting it to function

(Some programs use educational DVDs)

For us it was really important not to have a TV

Cuz there's not a book or a TV there's a TV

we don't want to encourage TV as an activity for our kids

Although there's all these great DVDs for children

(They get enough of that)

That's *all* they have

When you're trying to explain

From talking with the parents, from home visits

(I ask about home visits)

When we pick up applications

The park

It's a few streets

Very very community oriented

This one knows that one

They all know what's going on in everybody's life

For the most part, for the most part

Can you stop by my house to pick up the paperwork?

We really want the child to participate

Not a social work type visit

If we happen to see that everyone is sleeping on one bed in the middle of the living room

And there's no food

Then we can mention there's this organization

One boy his father said his mother just passed away

Reach out to that father

Grief counseling and programs for his son

That can really help him
By profession I'm an attorney and a social worker
Putting into practice it takes a village

(She says that she is an attorney and social worker)

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