



## THE PROCESS III - THE PJN BOARD RETREAT PERSPECTIVE

Article by Michael George

Photo by Natalie Cramer

February 26, 2011 – New York City – Until now this column has examined the roads well traveled by some of the clients of ParentJobNet as they seek employment, training or preparations to find meaningful and fulfilling careers. It's not always a smooth journey and can be full of twists and turns. However with the right outlook and attitude towards the journey, the results usually help people to grow.

For the parents and people we serve, the metamorphosis can often be life changing, taking them in directions they never considered. Career changes, finding their entrepreneurial muse or realizing their financial potential and responsibilities have all been outcomes for the folks we serve. In order for ParentJobNet to continue to serve our clients to the utmost of our potential, we have to look at ourselves in the mirror on occasion and see if we can do more. On the last weekend of February, ParentJobNet held a two-day Board Retreat and looked in the mirror.

We actually liked what we saw, however the reflection made us realize there is room to tweak, reshape and reconstitute what we do. The mission of PJN is to educate prepare and connect low to moderate-income public school parents with job opportunities, economic resources and the resolve to empower them to build financial security and peace of mind for themselves and their children. The meeting was coordinated by Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the Board. Helen Rosenthal and Michele Burger, Board Member/Program Committee Chair played pivotal roles in keeping to the agenda and keeping the ideas flowing with the help of Natalie Cramer, a communications major at Marymount College and PJN intern.

The two-day session which saw staff, volunteers, board members and advisory board members come together, re-examined the PJN program from top to bottom. Through a program overview we looked at the classes and workshops we sponsor, our networking events, one-on-one career counseling and the partnerships that help support us among other things. We checked out the structure of PJN, the nuts and bolts of how we go about achieving our mission, who are we really serving and how can we deliver better services in the face of a belt-tightening economy.

All this questioning and self-examination is bound to make one hungry, and a beautiful lunch was served, while the attendees got to know each other a little better and exchanged ideas and information. This, however, brought on, and intentionally so, the beginning of the metamorphosis I mentioned earlier.

The ideas for how to improve, refocus, be more efficient and effective began to sprout and bloom like spring wildflowers in a field. By looking at the infrastructure, partnerships, programs, classes, special events, schedules, workshops and more, PJN had begun to change, and all for the better. How can we reach our targeted clientele? How can we get the information out to more people? How to accommodate all the people

who want and need what PJN has to offer? Ideas and suggestions were flowing and with the introduction of nine new board members and 11 new advisory board members, the infusion of new ideas and energy to our mission was nearly palpable.

It's clear that the process that our clients sojourn through, is a path that PJN must traverse without fear, in order to serve the people better. Our mission remains the same, however the focus is now more intense. The commitment and desire to help is ablaze with a white-hot glow and the dedication to achieve our goals is as constant as the sunrise. The process will continue to unfold as it should and ParentJobNet will grow fruitfully along with it.

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