

Dorchester Reporter March 25, 2010

Dot teens: ‘Don’t forget us on the summer jobs front

To the Editor:

With summer fast approaching it is important to start to focus in on an incredibly important issue for teens in our community – summer jobs. The current moment is a crisis moment for us and for our friends. Nationally, the unemployment rate for teenagers is higher than it has been since during the Great Depression. Locally, the state has cut over 6 million dollars from its budget line items that go to youth jobs (Youth Works and School to Career) which will lead to over a thousand fewer summer jobs for us and other teens across Boston.

A good summer jobs program not only creates a safer Dorchester for us and the entire community, but it also puts us on a track where we are learning jobs skills and will be better prepared for a productive career path.

Teens across Dorchester have been organizing to make sure this summer is not “jobless” and thus more violent. We helped to organize a rally for more than 700 of our peers at the State House during February vacation week. Just last week, we and other teens connected to GOTCHA (“Get Off The Corner Hanging Around”) invited Representative Martin Walsh and Senator Sonia Chang Diaz to Uphams Corner to discuss this pressing issue. We would like to thank both of them, as they spent more than an hour listening to our stories about why jobs are important. They both promised to make youth jobs a priority for them. We know they have fought for youth jobs before; and it is really great to have politicians who care so much about teens.

The summer will be here before we know it, and we hope that other elected officials and powerful leaders in our community will help make sure this summer is successful for the youth and the community.

Sincerely,

The teens of GOTCHA:

Angelica McNeil (Bird St Community Center);

Derrica Stone (Dorchester Bay Youth Force);

Berdine Viaud (Bird St. Community Center);

Sally Barros (GOTCHA/Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative);

Ventris Clark (Bird St. Community Center);

Cindy Surin (Dorchester Bay Youth Force);

Ashlee Smith (Dorchester Bay Youth Force);

Josh Lynch (The City School); and

Jessica Gomes (Bowdoin St. Health Center)