



Thursday, January 29
Citywide Senior Center
806 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Summary of Conversation Topics

- Every Youth Connected and Every Adult Equipped - Cambridge Caring Adult 101 Guide
- Every Youth Empowered to Lead - UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative

Chair Sumbul Siddiqui

Members: Tina Alu, Shakia Afrose, ~~Johanny Castillo, Caitlin Dube~~, Christine Elow, Lida Griffins, Michelle Godfrey, Tabithlee Howard, Kieu Anh Huynh, Michelle Lower, Kam Maali, Jasper Mallon, Maria McCauley, Larisa Mendez-Penate, ~~Dave Murphy~~, Matt Nelson, Derrick Neal, Geeta Pradhan, Bridget Rodriguez, Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, Liz Stapleton, ~~Tagesech Wabeto, David Weinstein, Yoyo Yau~~

Executive Director: Nancy Tauber

Notetaker: Andrew Liedtka (Find it Manager)

CYC Coordinator: Izzy Schpeiser

CYC Members: Maia Shen, Lio Caravan, Fatima Najri, Reyanna Elfiky, Audrey Vautier

Guests: Sarah Lincoln, Connor Epsteinkraus, Jordan Harvey, Nina Nedrebo, Ukpong Etteh, Cindy Mensah, Fred Fantini, Marse Romero, John Galli

5:30 Welcome and Introductions

- Family Policy Council Business
 - Approval of December 3, 2025 Minutes
 - PASSES: Unanimously
- Public Comment
 - N/A
- Announcements
 - The Family Policy Council is the Advisory Council for The Center for Families, the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grantee.
 - At the March 26th Family Policy Council meeting, Commissioner Elow will be leading a discussion about the Cambridge Police Department.

- CYC is not going to the National League of Conference in DC this year. NLC has reduced the number of youth attending the conference. However, we will be going to **Boston on March 28-29** for an overnight trip. We'll stay at a hotel, spend time downtown doing fun team building activities to develop leadership skills. The focus will be on connection, growth, and creating a strong shared experience as a group.
- CYC is doing a career readiness workshop at CRLS. Staff from the DHSP Office of Workforce Development are co-facilitating workshops.
- Library doing strategic planning and releasing a survey to get input from the community.
- Cambridge Community Foundation and the Cambridge Public Schools are presenting THRIVE! Equity Audit in Cambridge on February 9th.
- Art Resource Collaborative For Kids – Greater Pathways Program 14-19 years old, creative story telling and art geared towards potential careers and career readiness skills. Starting on the 10th? Need adult mentors.
- CYC is helping out with a Galentine's Day event in February at Cambridge Street Upper School for middle school girls.
- Creative Pathways Program at [ARCK Boston!](#) focuses on closing the opportunity gap for socio-economically disadvantaged youth between the ages of 14 and 19 – bridging them to career pathways that ignite purpose while amplifying their voices as they lead creative capstone projects for positive social impact and cultivate confidence in planning, developing, and presenting their portfolios. The mentorship program will run biweekly from 4:30 to 6:30 pm the first day, Thursday, March 5, and from 5:30 - 6:30 pm the following Thursdays until May 15. The deadline to apply via this [mentorship interest form](#) is February 27.

Every Youth Connected, Every Adult Equipped, and Every Youth Empowered to Lead Overview

1-29-26 Family Policy Council Slides

Every Youth Connected and Every Adult Equipped

- Read Cambridge Caring Adult 101 Guide - www.finditcambridge.org/adult101
- Caring Adult 101 Guide Postcard Assignment
- Comments
 - 15+ Potential caring adults doing an event with young black and brown students on Saturday, 1/31. Potential opportunity to distribute and get feedback from some real prospective mentors.
 - Printed and electronic? Yes, likely both.
 - Languages, beneficial to have translations into other languages besides English.
 - Links/QR to related resources and translated versions.
 - Nancy's name should go on the letter, good to have a recognizable person/name associated with it.

- Some messaging that's actually in a youth's voice. People hearing a youth voice expressing the need might encourage more investment from caring adults, representation of more types of voices in the guide.
- Connecting the spread of the guide to different organizations, especially represented in Family Policy Council, to measure impact through data.
- Images of students and caring adults around the community should include captions about where they are from, who is represented in the photos, informing people of those places throughout the community where work is happening.

Every Youth Empowered to Lead

- UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative Update
- Cortico
 - <https://vimeo.com/1074377487?fl=pl&fe=sh>
 - <https://newarkyouthvoices.portal.cortico.ai/>

Discussion Questions:

1. If we want to be a City to be a city where no child "falls through the cracks" and everyone has a caring adult in their life, what do we need to do?
2. What will it take for all young people in Cambridge to thrive?
3. What might thriving require that we are not currently measuring, funding, or valuing?
4. Whose voices and experiences are we not fully listening to, and how might our city change if we centered them?

Discussion and Questions

- If we are asking young people for their opinions, then we need to be clear about what we are doing with the information. There must be follow through. Be clear how it will make a difference and matter.
- City Council Meetings - challenging for people to attend for a variety of reasons (time of day, language barriers, etc.)
- Cambridge is very good at planning and very poor at action. Can we do more small planning and small actions to keep pace and make strides rather than a long, drawn-out process. Lots of engagement without action makes people cynical (Child Friendly Cities Initiative Pilot)
 - Community Development Department is hiring a Youth Outreach Worker
 - Cambridge Caring Adult 101 Guide
- We don't host enough youth summits/retreats. Youth led workshops. Peer to peer is on a small scale so far, not on a larger stage.
- What do CYC members and other young people have to say? (we've heard mostly from adults).
 - Students are constantly being asked "How's your day" but not being told how much adults in the community want them to succeed, authentic enthusiasm from others in the community that believe in youth potential.

- It can often feel like if you aren't on the right track early in HS that it's hard or impossible to change that later on. Having an adult to talk to about these things, who are also equipped and informed, are crucial to preventing those young people from falling through the cracks. Having more support, making sure someone is addressing this with young people early on is essential. Drastic difference between middle school students having a caring adult vs. a high school student having one. Conclusion: if you're a MS you really only see your teacher and parents, some don't get to know lots of adults. That requires community-based programs/connections for those youth, if they aren't connected they aren't meeting and exposed to adults. Finding more ways for young people to interact/connect to the community, particularly for that age group.
- As you get older you're seen as more of a person than children are. Youth might not have large vocabulary or fully formed opinions. Doesn't change the fact that they don't want to be talked down to. Only seeing people at school or at home, even those places can be hard to get attention and make connections with adults. Not sure how to make more diversity of the adults young people interact with.
- Family Policy Council (including Cambridge Youth Council) is one of the best groups in the City that's actually doing something about this.

Next steps

- **We are canceling the February 25th meeting. The remaining meetings this year are Thursday March 26th and Wednesday May 6th** The focus of our March meeting will be the Cambridge Policy Department facilitated by Commissioner Elow.

Adjourn 7:15