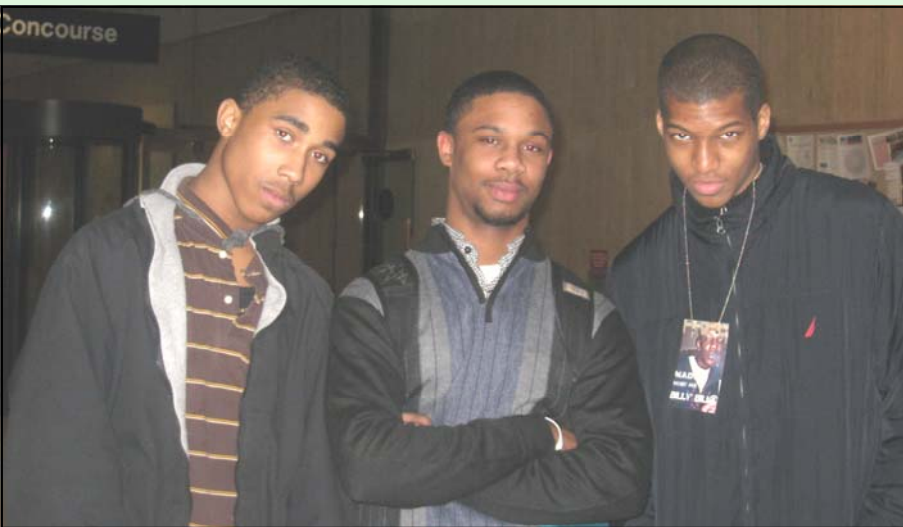


# Activists In The Making

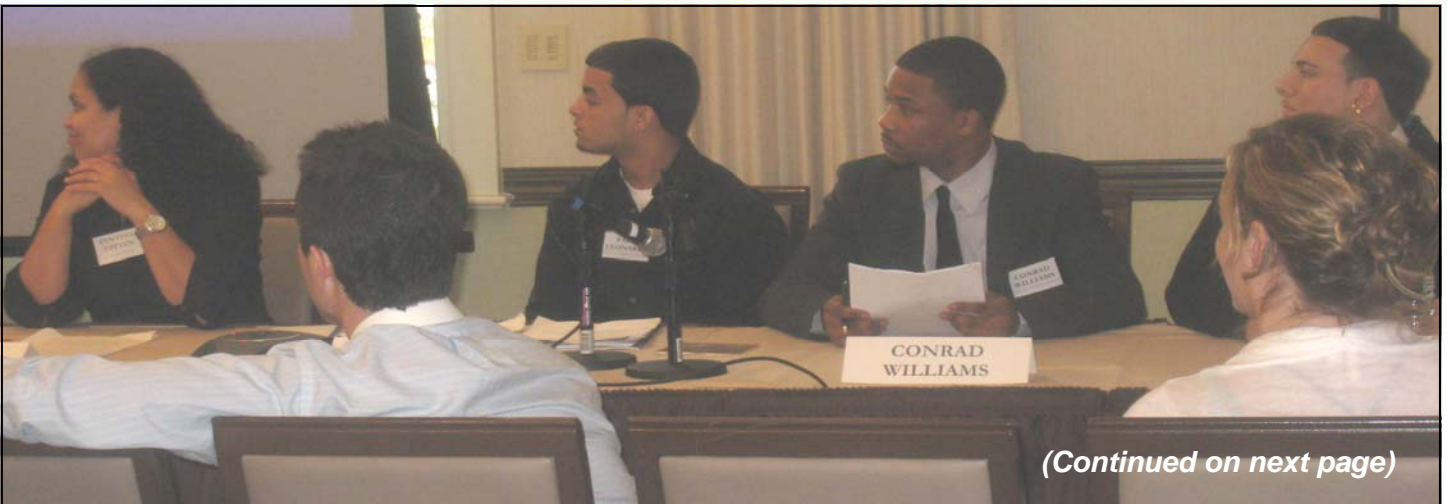
By: Rukia Lumumba  
Assistant Director of Youth Services

(NOTE: The pictures that accompany this article are from the Universal Periodic Review Conference 2010 and Youth Advocacy Day 2010)

On February 26, 2010, as New Yorkers were stuck at home due to the snow storm, CCA youth, lead by CCA Case Manager Brendan O'Connell, braved the snow storm to share their stories and involvement in the Juvenile Justice System. CCA youth, Fabio L., Jesus R. and Conrad W. were selected to sit on the Criminal Justice and Detention Panel of the UPR Consultation at Columbia University. The UPR Consultation is one of many consultation sessions convened by the Obama Administration to solicit information and recommendations regarding the U.S. Government's fulfillment of its obligation to protect human rights. The purpose of the consultation is to assist the government in developing its human rights report for submission to the United Nations as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Fabio, Jesus and Conrad testified about the human rights violations they experienced in the U.S. Juvenile Justice System. They described the inhumane police encounters they experienced. They praised CCA for fostering



their growth and providing them with an opportunity to not only remain in the community, but providing them a chance to improve their lives and achieve their goals. Moderator of the panel, Jin Hee Lee of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, commended Fabio, Jesus and Conrad on delivering excellent testimonies. Ms. Lee stated that they were the highlight of the entire panel. Other UPR Consultation attendees applauded them for overcoming adversity. Following are excerpts from Fabio, Jesus and Conrad's testimony:



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## Activists In The Making (cont'd)

*"I wish that police would not arrest kids for minor behaviors, that police should not be allowed to barge in schools and humiliate students and that there should be more programs like CCA so that more kids can have good things to do in places that respect and believe in them. My CCA case manager has helped me understand my past poor choices and has equipped me with the knowledge to make better decisions. I can truly say I have learned valuable life lessons through my participation in CCA and I am focused on continuing to improve my life and the lives of others."*

Fabio L. (YAP)

*"For three days my friend and I were handcuffed to a chair in the police precinct. We were un-handcuffed only to go to court and use the restroom. I remember waking up each day thinking I had been dreaming that all of this was happening to me. I hope that no one else has to experience what I experienced those three days."*

Jesus R. (YAP)

*"CCA taught me how to advocate for myself and others. CCA taught me my rights and helped me to understand the complexities of the juvenile justice system. As a result of my participation in CCA programs, I now have the knowledge to stand up for what's right and advocate on behalf of myself and others."*

Conrad W. (Smart Choices)

CCA Youth did not end their advocacy efforts at the UPR Conference. They made their way all the way to Albany to meet with Legislators about reinvesting in community based alternative to detention programs. Nine (9) CCA youth, including Fabio and Conrad, attended the Juvenile Justice Coalition's Youth Advocacy Day in Albany, New York. Accompanied by myself and CCA Life Transitions



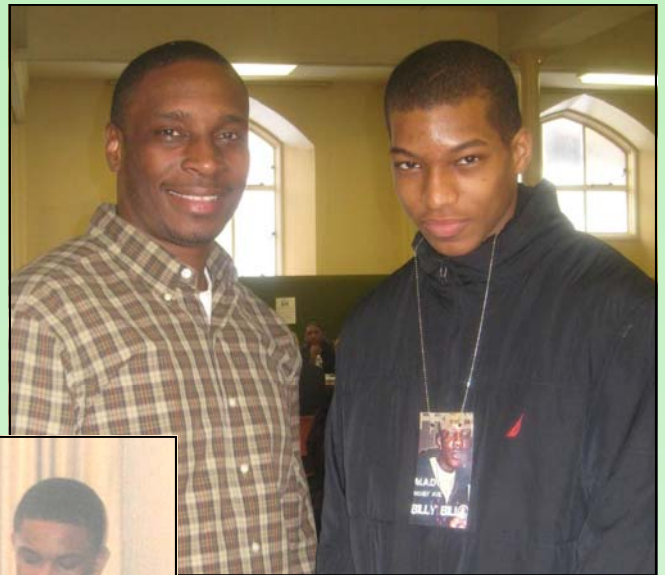
Specialist Francois Richards, CCA youth boarded a bus for Albany at 7:00am. While in Albany, CCA



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# Activists In The Making (cont'd)

youth lead discussions with State Senators about the need for the State to reinvest in community alternative to detention programs. CCA youth used their positive experience as participants of CCA to express the importance of alternative to detention programs. One brilliant CCA youth, Larue J. informed Senator Annette M. Robinson that because of CCA he has



‘matured, improved his relationship with his mother and has a new positive outlook on life.’ He encouraged Senator Robinson to support the funding of programs like CCA because without such programs, ‘youth don’t know that they have the ability to change their lives.’ I ask that we applaud our youth for their advocacy efforts. With them by our side, we can not lose the fight for human rights, equality and positive-effective juvenile justice reform.

