Date: November 12th, 2013.

To: Mayor Bill De Blasio

From: Timothy Stewart

Subject: Fixing the Problem through Team Work

I was previously employed at (DEP) Department of Environmental Protection this summer for an internship (WOTG) called Water-On-The-Go. The program established by Eva Lynch, employed by DEP as their “Outreach and Education Coordinator Marketing & Partnerships,” created the program sometime in 2009 as a way to promote NYC tap water. Over the past decade there has been a constant influx of new bottled water claiming to hold the number one spot as the best drinking water in the world. Big Companies like Pepsi own branches of manufacturing companies that process these water brands such as Poland Spring, Aquafina, Life Water, and Propel Zero. Many of these plastic bottles are produced with a chemical called, “Bisphenol A.” This chemical is known to release into its properties when exposed to heat. During the summer DEP distributed about 1,000 of their own “BPA free” water bottles. My job was to direct people to fill up their BPA free bottles at home or work and avoid buying bottled water.

**Water on the Go and NYC’s Futile Outreach**

DEP’s motto is, “NYC has the cleanest drinking water in the world, it’s filtered naturally through the trees, rocks, and soil up in the CatSkills Mountains, come have a sip.” As you may or may not know, the same water pumping through your toilet, sink, shower and garden hose is the same water (pumped out of the fire hydrant to fight fires) that we drink. This is simply done by connecting a portable water fountain to a fire hydrant, and turning up the pressure to feed the water into the bathtub themed fountain.

Now, persons who once resided in the Bronx, Brownsville, and Bed-Stuy have no problem with drinking from a fire hydrant. To them it’s a way of life, good living.

DEP has always had problems promoting the drinking water to lower and middle income families. Sometime in June, Mayor Bloomberg announced the start of the program and stated a few locations. They are Union Square, Washington Square Park, City Hall Park, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1, Chelsea and Williamsburg. Now, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Well, I can name a few, Condominiums, Co-op, limousine, Ferrari, Mercedes, BMW, $10,000. My point is, DEP is reaching out to the wrong demographic, and we are in the worst locations. Instead of taking advice from the person who create the program, they leave it up to the directors and lower level personnel.

**Problem from within DEP**

Anybody who has years of working experience at DEP, knows that people love to gossip. I was able to extract information from a few subordinates with 25+ years on the job who told me that, Eva Lynch (creator of the program) is not making the top dollars like she should, and earning her fair share of credit for the program because she is one of us, “black.” Last time we spoke, she told me, “I will not be doing this program next summer; these people are ruining my program.” Also, this summer I found myself working events by myself such as the “Smorgasburg” (food vendors) at Brooklyn Bridge Park, and “Summer Streets,” for three Saturdays. I had wondered why this was happening. Apparently Eva’s top bosses asked her to recommend someone to run a fountain by themselves because that’s all she’s good for. Now, because of this we were not able to surpass our previous record by a large margin. We need change, a form of action must be taken or they will cause a catastrophic meltdown between the creator of the program and the director. They are just like Whole Foods, catering to the middle and high income earners.

**Action Taken to Fix Problem**

During summer streets in mid-August, we had about 225,000 drinkers…this was embarrassing and a total let down. Our most popular fountain locations were Union Square, City Hall, and Brooklyn Bridge Park. From working outside for 7 hours every day, I realized that we would have about 14 people approach the fountain, 6 would stay and the others would leave because there weren’t enough drinking fountains. The Smorgasburg event at Pier 1 was attracting around 4-7,000 people every Sunday. So, I contacted my superiors and requested another fountain. At Union, we went from 1500 to 2400 drinkers, City Hall was 2000 to 2700, and Brooklyn Bridge accumulated a(n) jaw dropping 2100 to 4900, and this occurred every weekend. By the end of October we had accumulated more than 586,800 drinkers, thus surpassing our previous record of 500,000.

My pay wasn’t increased, but because Ms. Lynch had always recommended me for various events and concerts such as the rock concert at Ramsey Playfield in Central Park, it helped her credibility. I only hope that know they would rely on her for more than just, “who can man a fountain by himself for a couple of hours.”