

## Robert “Bob” De Sena



Robert “Bob” De Sena was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. During his youth, he was involved with several street gangs—experiences that proved invaluable in his later work with at risk teenagers. Despite these obstacles, he was able to obtain his B.A. from St. John’s University and two Master’s Degrees, one from N.Y.U. and the other from Queens College.

In 1965, he became an English teacher. His skill in bringing contending ethnic and racial groups together led to the formation of the Council for Unity, which he founded at John Dewey High School in 1975. Concerned with the ever increasing support services needed for younger children, Mr. De Sena tailored the Council paradigm to engage youngsters from as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and keep them in the Council network through intermediate school and high school. He then created a college model so participants could continue their involvement all through their higher education. With the foundation of the Council’s Alumni Partnership, membership in the program is extended for life.

Realizing that adults need support systems as well, Mr. De Sena created the latest addition to the Council network, the Adult and Family Partnership, which engages entire families in the Council’s mission. To complete the circle necessary to break criminal and gang activity in schools and communities, Mr. De Sena designed and implemented a correctional facility model currently employed in the Sing –Sing Correctional Facility and the Suffolk County Jail that engages inmates in the Council mission. This groundbreaking initiative has led to the transformation of prisons as institutions of retribution to community assets in deterring crime.

Mr. De Sena is a man of many interests. He has acted on the stage and written over 15 plays with multi-cultural and anti-violent themes. Performed by his students, these plays showcase the Council’s work and have attracted nationwide publicity. His latest opus in this regard is a Modern fairy tale called *Chrysallia: The Princess of Possibilities*, which has received high critical acclaim.

Mr. De Sena serves as President of Council for Unity. Under his stewardship, the organization has grown from a community-based nonprofit organization in Brooklyn to one that now spans the entire state of New York.

Due to his commitment to public service and leadership, Mr. De Sena has received numerous awards. Mr. De Sena has written for *School Safety Magazine* and been the subject of articles in *The New York Times*, *The Daily News*, *Newsday*, *Teacher Magazine* and featured on *CBS Evening News*, *ABC Eye Witness News*, *Fox 5 Good Morning America*, *The God Squad*, the BBC, NEWS 12 LONG ISLAND and *Street Talk* as well as numerous cable channels. He recently published a modern fairy tale called *Chrysallia: The Princess of Possibility*, which received widespread critical acclaim.