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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

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Cover by: Tony Lipka

GENERAL INQUIRIES
THEBCVANGUARD@GMAIL.COM

CLUB HOURS
118 ROOSEVELT HALL
THURSDAY: 12:30 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
PAULINA GAJEWSKI
PAULINAGAJEWSKI8@GMAIL.COM

MANAGING EDITOR
RAMI MANSI
RAMI.MANSI66@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

BUSINESS MANAGER
JASON LIN
JLIN82752@GMAIL.COM

LAYOUT EDITOR
AMIRA TURNER
ARIMARENUT@GMAIL.COM

DIGITAL EDITOR
KHALAILAH BYNOE
KHALAILAH.BYNOE10@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

PHOTO EDITOR
TONY LIPKA
TONYLIPKAVT@GMAIL.COM

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
NIDHI MAHADEVAN
NIDI.MAHADEVAN@MACAULAY.CUNY.EDU

CONTENT CREATORS
SERENA EDWARDS
SERENAED103@GMAIL.COM

KEY JONES-FORD
KIARATATSUJF@GMAIL.COM

PODCAST MANAGER
YASSIR AZZAM
YASSIR.AZZAM07@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

SECTION EDITORS

NEWS: VICTORIA KERAJ
KVICTORIAK1@GMAIL.COM

FEATURES: T'NEIL GOODEN
TNEILGOODEN617@GMAIL.COM

ARTS: JAIDA DENT
JAIDA.DENT1@GMAIL.COM

OPINIONS: EZAE DARBY
EZAEDARBY@GMAIL.COM

SPORTS: MANUEL POLANCO
MANNYPOLANCO764@GMAIL.COM

YUKI EKOLTBY
AYATALLAHELKOTBY@GMAIL.COM

STAFF WRITERS
ALFONSO ABREU
DARLENE ARVELO ALMONTE
ANGELINA BANEK
MARGOT DRAGOS
DANIELLE DWECK
EDEN LAWRENCE
PATRICK LEON
MARS MARTE
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ALLEN MARDAKHAYEV
EMILY NIXON
GIOVANNI RAVALLI
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T ABBATEMARCO
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SAVANNA BRIEHL
ANNA KITCH

FACULTY ADVISOR
MJ ROBINSON

Monthly Open Forum Updates BC Community on Campus Projects

By Victoria Keraj
News Editor

Alan Gilbert, Senior Vice President (VP) for Finance and Administration, hosted an open forum to update Brooklyn College (BC) students, staff, and faculty on the capital projects that have been, or will be, underway, along with the school's budget for these projects.

An email sent by Gilbert emphasized a desire to inform the BC community on work being done on various facilities. As part of that effort, monthly open forums were announced to be held.

Gilbert stated that some projects discussed were already planned before the pandemic. "Do keep in mind, these are not just new things that popped up. These were things we've been planning for quite some time and [...] now the campus is not only going to hear about what we're doing but they're going to see progress."

With a total of \$74.5 million (M) for planned capital projects, not including future funds that have been requested, the open forum went in-depth on how these funds will be used efficiently and effectively. The largest project on campus in development is Ingersoll/Roosevelt Design phase 1. As part of the plan, 20 rooms are to be renovated in Ingersoll and 16 rooms in Roosevelt. According to Gilbert, the plan is for the renovated rooms to look like the updated lecture hall in new Ingersoll 148.

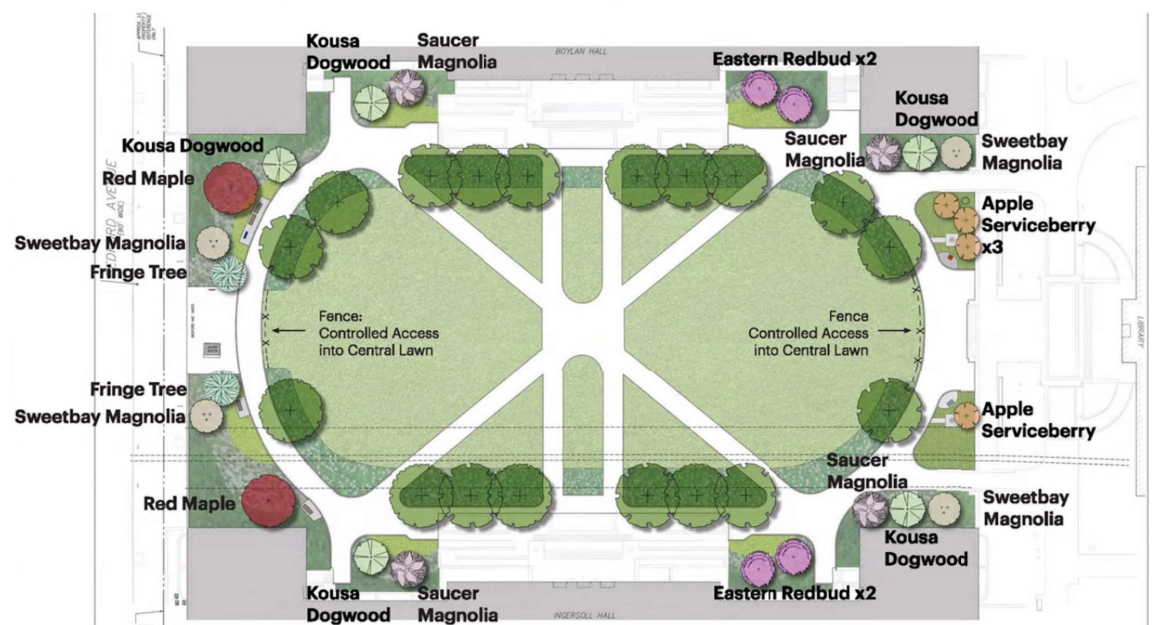
\$7.9M have been allocated for renovating Ingersoll lecture halls 1310 and 2310 to install Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), and make the rooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Construction is expected to start in 2026 and during the construction, no classes will take place in those rooms. Adding HVAC was listed as a top priority during the presentation. There are plans to replace the existing HVAC system which is "pretty much over 50 years old," explained Gilbert. In addition to HVAC, another item in need of replacement is the campus's pipe system.

"Our piping was installed in around 1994," Gilbert said. There

PLANTING SCHEME

Restoration Area: In total 2 new canopy trees and 19 new understory trees



East Quad Planting scheme shared during open forum./Courtesy of the Open Forum

are plans to replace the existing pipes to prevent steam leaks that were occurring on campus.

Along with this, there are also plans to address water leaks. "We have a significant capital project out there to fix roofs in many of our buildings, including the library, Boylan, etc.," Gilbert stated. He also mentioned that the plan includes the installation of gutters and leaders.

In the presentation, BC's efforts toward sustainability were also addressed. \$15M have been given to BC from the NYS Environmental Bond ACT, which gave \$150M in climate resiliency grants to college campuses.

"The environmental bond act funding is supporting clean energy initiatives and this [...] is going to include a solar roof on one of our buildings and some geothermal work," Gilbert said on the funds.

Also contributing to BC's efforts to be more environmentally friendly is the school's involvement in the Decarbonization Leadership Program. "The goal is to transition to low carbon or a carbon neutral economy by adopting cleaner energy sources," Gilbert stated. He also mentioned an upcoming presentation that will be led by Carrie Sadovnik, director of Environmental Health and Safety, occurring later this semester with more information about the college's clean energy initiatives.

There are also plans to repair

the library's exterior after an assessment of the damage was recently done. Gilbert stated that they are "[...] now working with the university and dormitory authority to bring a vendor in to do the repair," although there is no time frame for when.

For technology upgrades on campus, \$22M has been allocated. Included in technology upgrades are plans to improve the WiFi on campus. The school is currently working with the New York State Dormitory Authority (DASNY) to acquire a vendor to install new cabling in every building on campus except Roosevelt Hall, which will be undergoing extensive repairs.

The school will be replacing the fiber cables to improve network bandwidth. "Our fiber is old, more than a decade old. It's failing," Gilbert explained.

There are also plans to add cooling to places where IT equipment is kept. "That way we won't be in a situation where we have to turn off critical computer networks, because we don't want them to overheat and fry, and we lose valuable data," Gilbert stated.

\$15.7M have been allocated for upgrades to the school's East Quad.

On the plans for the Quad, Gilbert made clear that he did not intend to "change the historic beauty of the quad." He later said, "We're not gonna make it modern, we're gonna make it refreshed." Plans to refurbish the East Quad include replacing old trees with smaller, more disease-resilient ones and to add various new shrubbery to the yard.

Gilbert said that his hopes are for construction to begin next spring and take up about two years. "Trees are gonna come down, [...] it's gonna be sad, but it's gonna be amazing, because the end result is gonna be [...] even more spectacular," Gilbert stated.

After losing enrollment and \$20M dollars from the budget and having to be designated as

'high concern,' BC now has a balanced budget and no longer has to abide by the 2-1 hiring restriction due to an enrollment growth of over \$3M, though the school still has some restrictions. "We can't open up the floodgates, but we don't have the extra restrictions," Gilbert explained.

The new state budget is to be released by April 1. The budget will reveal the amount of money to be allocated for CUNY and whether or not the PSC contract will be funded.

"The preliminary budgets showed us short of \$34M CUNY-wide. A lot of lobbying, a lot of work has been going on since the preliminary governance budget," Gilbert said on the projected budget. He specified that "[...] the BC specific budget usually comes out around sometime in June."

Also shared in the presentation is that the school received 2M to renovate community spaces. "We're gonna focus on student spaces now, but it's really student, faculty, and staff."

Gilbert also urged anyone who is interested in volunteering, or who wants to be a part of the school's process of identifying spaces to be renovated, should reach out by emailing either him or Shamika Brathwaite, who is leading the committee for gathering feedback on CUNY spaces.

Throughout the presentation, Gilbert stressed that plans underway were aimed at making the campus more safer and sustainable.

"My ideal goal, and I call it a stretch goal, is that people come here and they don't think about the facility. They don't think about it because they're working," Gilbert stated. "I hope that people will start [...] to see actual physical changes that will make their life on campus better and more comfortable, because the facility is so important."



Equipment in BC tunnels./Courtesy of the Open Forum

TREEage Hosts Mayoral Student Town Hall

By Key Jones-Ford
Content Creator

On March 29, the climate-crisis-based student activist group, TREEage, hosted a student mayoral town hall. Held in the NY Society for Ethical Culture, the event was for NYC students and alumni to meet and listen to a few of the candidates running for mayor.

According to their website, TREEage is a “grassroots student-led climate advocacy organization dedicated to winning tangible, transformative climate action in New York.” They host several events relating to student social justice and activism, including a recent trip to Albany for a “youth day of action.”

This town hall was organized with the goal of getting students more involved in local elections and politics.

“Students should care about this election cycle because there’s so many things happening in our city that are affecting us,” said Idrees Ilahi, the CUNY director of TREEage.

State Senator Jessica Ramos, State Senator Zellnor Myrie, State Assembly Member Zohran Mamdani, DNC Vice Chair Michael Blake, NYC Comptroller Brad Lander, and Whitney Tilson were all in attendance for this town hall. Each candidate was given roughly two minutes to state their name and give an introduction to their platform. After their introductory speeches, the structure of the event was introduced to both the candidates and the audience as a “school day,” where each “class” would present the candidates with different forms of questioning.

English was a “socratic seminar” in which candidates answered questions submitted by



Candidates sitting on stage during the town hall./Key Jones-Ford

students prior to the event. Government was a scenario response, in which each candidate would give a realistic answer as to how they would respond to different crises. Gym class was rapid fire rounds of questions with yes-or-no or one-sentence answers. Finally, the town hall ended in a statistics class with a Family Feud-style game, in which the candidates were divided into teams of two and had to guess the six most-given answers to survey questions given to students.

Among other talking points the candidates posed were climate change and NYC’s survival, affordability and the housing crisis, reproductive rights and healthcare, and the growing unrest with the presence of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (ICE). Also discussed was expanding pre-K, school funding, and city infrastructure like the MTA. Candidates were questioned on their past beliefs and current beliefs, what actions they have taken within the last four years, and what they’ve

done to build up their platforms.

During Lander’s turn to speak in the government class portion, a small group of protestors got on stage, holding up a cloth with the words “Black Rock Brad.” The protestors called on Lander to divest from BlackRock, a leading management firm and big investor of oil and gas. They chanted “Black Rock Brad” and “off fossil fuels” as they were escorted off the stage and out of the auditorium.

“You guys told me this wasn’t going to happen or I wasn’t going to come again,” said Lander in response to the interruption, before exiting the stage. Lander would eventually be convinced to rejoin the stage.

The rest of the town hall continued without further interruption, however, the incident stuck out to some of those in attendance. “This town hall told me who not to support, especially after the incident that happened on stage with the protestors,” said Zain Latif, a current senior at BC. “I definitely feel like I wouldn’t want to vote for someone like that,

or like [Tilson], especially with how the audience reacted to his answers.”

Joan Joseph, another CUNY student, said the town hall made it easier for him to consider which candidates aligned with his views. “This town hall gave me a better idea about who the candidates are and what their priorities are, and how ready they are, because some of them were not good at giving answers or explaining their motives. So I definitely have a shorter list now of who I would support.”

Raja Abdullah, a CUNY alumni, offered a different perspective on attending. Having already graduated, Abdullah went in with the question of how his experience in CUNY could have been better.

“Going in, I thought I had an idea of who I was going to vote for, but coming out, I’m expanding my options a bit.” Abdullah mentioned also coming out of the meeting with more questions about the candidates, and wanting to do more research on their policies and views.

Based on a short survey given to the audience at the end of the town hall,

out of 41 participants, 23 of them left having a better idea of who they wanted to support.

TREEage stated both on the flyer for their event and to the Vanguard that they will endorse candidates, but have not disclosed who they would support.

For ways students can get involved, Ilahi suggested attending more town halls. “There’s so many town halls that are happening—definitely attending those and seeing how candidates answer the same question can tell you a lot about them.” Students are also encouraged to go to campaign websites and read the news relating to the election. “Look at their track records, and see if they’ve historically fought for the working class and everyday New Yorkers.”

The NYC primary election takes place on June 24, with the mayoral election itself on Nov 4. To find resources on voting in NYC, visit the NYC Board of Elections website.

Clothing Swap Comes to BC Campus

By Eden Lawrence
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, March 26, in the Amersfort Room of the Student Center, Brooklyn College students were welcomed to an afternoon of donating clothes and browsing tables stocked with garments for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance's (LGBTA) Gender-Affirming Clothing Swap event. The event, in collaboration with the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), was a way to let students, specifically transgender students, express their style in the way they want at zero cost.

The LGBTA president, Fia Sanchez, said they wanted to hold the event to celebrate Trans Visibility Day, which falls annually on March 31. Sanchez is aware of the recent attack on trans identities through President Donald Trump's executive orders. Trump has called for the US to recognize only two genders, tried to ban trans athletes from competing in sports, and wants to keep LGBTQ+ friendly practices from entering classroom, according to federalregister.gov. Sanchez wanted to create a space where trans

people feel seen and safe.

"We wanted to do something that gives people an opportunity to express their gender and their identity freely and without any kind of restrictions or feeling judged," said Sanchez, "And an open

Along with the free store, which provides clothes, food, and hygiene products to BC students at no charge, NYPIRG tries to positively impact students, both on and off campus. This ranges from hosting beach cleanups to advocating for a fully

Attendees were left more than satisfied with the event and what it had to offer. While many were excited for the thrifting, they still knew the importance and meaning behind the event. BC freshman Helena Nogueira, who

Vasquez also held the event in high regard. Vasquez loved how this event brought people together for a great time and an even better cause.

"Now more than ever, we need unity and community," started Vasquez, "It's just important because I think a lot of people like to express themselves through their fashion, and this is just an opportunity for everyone to mix and trade, build up their style, and find a new way to express themselves."

Attendees who wish for a second installment of the clothing swap will be glad to hear that Sanchez plans to host this event again in the future, with hopes of increasing turnout. Sanchez noted that more marketing for the event will get them to the numbers they want.

Until then, Sanchez implored higher-ups of BC to fight for trans rights in this shaky time period. With Trump's executive orders that continue to affect trans identities, Sanchez wants the people of this campus to use their voices and the strength available to them.

"Brooklyn College really needs to step up at this time and make a statement that they will support our transgender students," said Sanchez. "And now that we're living in a time where trans people's rights are literally being stripped away by the government, Brooklyn College should, and needs, to make a statement in support of transgender people because our college should be supporting our students, especially those who are most vulnerable to violence."



Students browsing through clothes./Eden Lawrence

space for people to feel comfortable in any gender identity."

This is the first time the LGBTA has held a clothing swap event, and Sanchez credited NYPIRG as the inspiration for holding it. NYPIRG, which runs the free store located in 1433 Ingersoll Hall, is no stranger to helping BC students in need, as they are the largest student advocacy group on campus.

funded CUNY. NYPIRG Project Coordinator Jake Mooney was willing to help out with the event, stressing the importance of occasions like this.

"It's important that students know this exists," stated Mooney, "Beyond just the LGBTQ+ Research Center, we want students to know that they can find belonging and community anywhere on campus, and we hope events like this help promote that."

With tables stocked with hoodies, t-shirts, dresses, make-up, and jewelry, attendees of the event were able to snag finds along with donating pieces with the hopes that they find a new home. Additionally, any clothes that had not been taken were planned to be given to a homeless shelter so as not to waste them.

gave the event a 10 out of 10, applauded the LGBTA for this event and holds hope for it to happen again.

"It brings a sense of togetherness. There is

" There's something here for everybody, and I think that's what we want it to represent. There is something for you here."

no limit to clothes, there are no restrictions to clothes, and everybody here shows that," said Nogueira, "There's something here for everybody, and I think that's what we want it to represent. There is something for you here."

BC student Matthew



Donations brought in by attendees./Eden Lawrence

Wolfe Institute Hosts Melissa Murray as 2024-25 Hess Scholar-in-Residence

By Serena Edwards
Content Creator

Lawyer and professor Melissa Murray will be the upcoming Hess Scholar-in-Residence for the academic year 2024-2025. The Scholar-in-Residence program boasts annual scholars across disciplines and invites them for a week-long series of lectures and panels at BC. This year, the Wolfe Institute's annual Hess Week is from April 1 to April 4, with lectures centered around the media, women's reproductive rights, and democracy. The Vanguard sat down with Murray two weeks prior to Hess Week to discuss her background and beginnings, upcoming Hess Week topics, and advice she has for students pursuing a similar career path.

Murray is a law professor at New York University (NYU) and has been teaching there for 17 years. She is also a co-host for the podcast "Strict Scrutiny," alongside co-hosts Kate Shaw and Leah Litman that discuss the Supreme Court rulings and the stigma around it. Murray also appears on MSNBC to provide insight as a legal analyst.

Murray was born in New York and moved to Florida when she was five. Her mother and grandmother never truly received the same opportunities that she had.

"My family, especially my grandmother and my mother. My grandmother was born and raised and lived her entire life in Jamaica, and she never really had a formal education," stated Murray.

Murray dove deeper into the past of gender stereotypes, especially those pushed onto women.

"I think she sort of tapped out a formal education in grade school, and you know she grew up at a time where it wasn't seen as

necessary to educate girls because they would just go on to be housewives," she stated. "I recall being very young, like 6 or so, and realizing that I probably knew how to read better than she did. But she was a remarkable person who is incredibly smart."



Lawyer and professor Melissa Murray./Courtesy of Jefferson Scholars Foundation

Murray touched upon the difficulties she faced getting to where she is today.

"I'm in a career, being a law professor where there aren't a lot of Black women, certainly not full professors, tenured professors, and certainly not at the top 10 law schools," stated Murray. She discussed the difficulty of not having the representation, but also not letting that be an obstacle.

"The lack of role models, I think, was difficult. But I just want to emphasize it wasn't insurmountable," expressed Murray. She emphasized that mentorship is based on shared interests rather than similar appearances.

"One of the things that really was important for me is that if I wanted mentorship, I recognized immediately that I would have to look beyond individuals who shared certain characteristics of mine that I would actually have to look to

fully diving into the depths of law she was pursuing business, but always knew law was the route she would choose.

"After graduating from college, I worked for two years as a management consultant, and there was a period where I thought,

law firm that made her question her career path.

"I just kind of left those 2 experiences wondering, maybe I made the wrong choice. Maybe being a lawyer, a civil rights lawyer wasn't what I wanted to do. I definitely didn't want to work at a law firm," expressed Murray.

She realized she wanted to do law, but also wanted it to have meaning.

"You know, I was thinking about what I could do with this law degree that would be satisfying and would be meaningful," stated Murray.

She then spoke about how she realized how flexible being a professor could be.

"It occurred to me that my law professors seemed to have the best of all worlds. They worked on really important cutting edge issues," Murray told The Vanguard. "They got to teach and be engaging with these young people all of the time. They had a really great life. I thought, maybe I should think about that. And that's effectively how I began investigating and ultimately becoming a law professor."

When discussing Hess Week, Murray talked about the events that will take place and how they all tie into each other.

"I think they all kind of relate to one another, so I'm not especially wedded to any of them. I think they all work really nicely together," stated Murray.

Murray expressed what she hopes the audience will take away from Hess Week.

"I hope they'll walk away with a sense of how all these different things fit together. Maybe they'll learn something that they didn't know all of those things," she told The Vanguard. "I'm just hopeful that it's a week where the audience is as excited about it as I am."

foster relationships based on shared interests," said Murray.

To get where she is today, Murray discussed the different routes that she took.

"I went to law school, thinking that I would be a civil rights lawyer in

"I'm just hopeful that it's a week where the audience is as excited about it as I am."

the mold of a Thurgood Marshall or Constance Baker Motley." Murray mentioned that before

maybe I'll go to business school, but I didn't really love it enough, and I always knew, like I had applied to law school before taking this job, and so I had this sort of sell by date," stated Murray.

Murray also worked for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) during her first year of law school. She reflected on how she felt unprepared at that time and didn't fully embrace the experience.

"I probably was not in the best position to fully appreciate how important the work I was doing really was, because, you know, I was a first year student. I wasn't terrible," explained Murray. Following that, Murray worked at another

“All Power to the People”: Discussion & Screening with Former Black Panther Party

By Ezae Darby
Opinions Editor
&
Serena Edwards
Content Creator

The Black Creatives Collective at Brooklyn College, Black Student Union (BSU), Puerto Rican Alliance (PRA), and the BC Film Society held an event on Thursday, March 27 with former Black Panther Party member, Rev. Dr. Sheila Glenn, as she came to shed some light on her work with the political organization.

She began by discussing her thoughts on modern-day activism and if she recognized any organizations that possess the same raw presence and influence as the Black Panther Party themselves.

“There’s no nobody really standing up, you know, and putting their fist in the air and saying we had enough. You know, we need to change,” Glenn told *The Vanguard*.

She went on to discuss,

She went on to explain how this period of unfortunate events served as the perfect time for the world to gain a new sense of hope. “They had assassinated Martin, Malcolm, Kennedy [...] They (BPP) came out with their guns and they were talking about power to the people and it resonated. And it just didn’t resonate to Black people, it resonated to the country.”

Glenn then dived into how she became a Black Panther member herself, citing her own troubling time as a youth as a key part of her story. Prior to joining the party, she experienced her own issues with substance abuse as a young woman and witnessed the devastating effects of drug use in her community. This served as the main motivation behind her departure.

“I went to Massachusetts to stay with my aunt because all of my friends were falling from heroin. They were falling like flies, and I didn’t want to be one of them,”

“I didn’t volunteer to be a Black Panther. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, I got arrested. We found out that we were arrested for conspiracy to commit anarchy, conspiracy to incite a riot and unlawful assembly. The Black Panther Party bailed me out and that’s how I became a member.”

Glenn then spoke about her role in the organization, where she was just 18 years old at the time. “I was a political education officer and financial officer. I was only 18 years old, but I was smart you know, I was so stupid and I could read the literature, even though I didn’t comprehend at the time that it was about communism,” said Glenn.

She also spoke on the inconsistency in retaliation from the government between the Black Panther Party in comparison to other organizations like the Nation of Islam.

“They were selling papers and they were saying that the white man was the devil [...] but they weren’t getting killed. [BPP] were getting killed because they were talking about overthrowing the government and changing the government from a capitalistic society to one of socialists or on a path toward communism,” she stated.

Still, Glenn remained grateful for her experience and the fact that she is a survivor of that violent time period.

Glenn now serves as an adjunct professor at Mercy College where she teaches a course on substance use. She also currently maintains the position of Assistant Pastor at Friendship Methodist Church in Brooklyn, NY.

For context on the organization itself, The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, which originated in Oakland, California, was a militant group formed to patrol and protect the Black community from police brutality. Founded in 1966 by Oakland residents, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, the party surged



A photo of Glenn in the 1960s alongside one of her colleagues./*Courtesy of Dr. Sheila Glenn*

in popularity over the years and became known as one of the most influential groups in American history.

The organization was able to establish different chapters, or branches, around the country to effectively serve the community by providing various services including children and youth services.

The party further aided the community in their struggles through the creation of their Ten-Point Program, a declaration with the intent to turn their needs into a reality. The document listed the demands of the African-American community in Chicago and included the need for adequate housing, full employment, and an immediate end to police brutality.

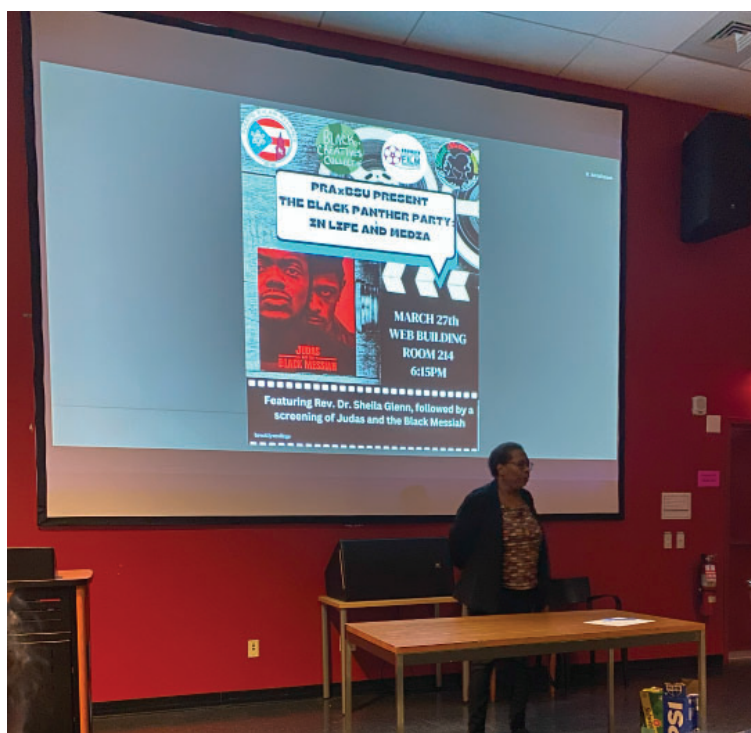
Most notably, the film “Judas and The Black Messiah”, which premiered in 2021, is a period-piece about the Black Panther Party, most notably the infiltration and murder of a ton of the party’s leading members. The film perfectly captured the heart and soul of the party and it’s mission to achieve peace.

The film, which was

screened during this evening’s event, focused on the events leading up to the murder of the Chicago Black Panther Party Deputy Chairman, Fred Hampton. Hampton is played by British actor, Daniel Kaluuya, who is best known for his roles in blockbuster, black-led films like “Get Out” and “Black Panther”.

Despite his unfortunate death at the age of 21, the young revolutionary left behind a remarkable legacy, having brought together many different political organizations across Chicago.

To end this evening, Glenn provided the audience with some words of inspiration: “You can’t be afraid to speak out [...] just show up, the more bodies we have, the more fearful we are. Keep up the fight, keep up the good fight, getting in good trouble like my man said, and don’t give up. We came a long way. But we still have a long way to go.”



Glenn speaks to attendees./*Ezae Darby*.

the effects of the Vietnam War and its effect on communities in the U.S.

“The Vietnam War had just ended leaving soldiers with undiagnosed PTSD. Our husbands, brothers, and cousins were coming back completely traumatized. We knew nothing about PTSD at that time, so they were just back home with no treatment,” said Glenn.

stated Glenn. Eventually, she found herself in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where she became an important member of the party’s chapter in that particular city.

Glenn explained how she did not purposefully join the Black Panthers and only became involved after getting caught up in the middle of a riot.

LGBTQ+ Resource Center Holds Film Screening for Trans Visibility Day

By Emily Nixon
Staff Writer

On March 25, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center hosted a film screening for the week leading up to the Day of Trans Visibility on March 31. The films screened were "Heightened Scrutiny" by Sam Feder and "These Kids Don't Get It, Ma" by June Jung, both of whom were in attendance during the screening.

The LGBTQ+ Resource Center held the event to get as much representation as possible for Trans Students before their day of celebration, according to Kelly Spivey, the center's director.

"I wanna do everything we can for Trans Visibility," said Spivey. "March 31st is Day of Trans Visibility, and so I'm just gonna really try to get as many trans-affirming, trans informational panels, events, screenings."

The LGBTQ+ Resource Center also hosted the event to give Brooklyn College (BC) students a chance to gain more understanding into Chase Strangio, the first openly Trans lawyer to argue in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, who will be one of the panelists on Wednesday, April 2, for BC's Hess Week.

Heightened Scrutiny is a documentary film about the recent Supreme Court Case, U.S. Vs Skrametti, which will decide whether it is constitutional to ban trans youth from accessing gender-affirming healthcare such as puberty blockers and hormones. The case was picked up by the Supreme Court in June 2024. The original legislation from Tennessee passed in March 2023 and barred minors from receiving surgery, medications, or medical devices to affirm a gender different than their gender at birth, according to the Tennessee General Assembly Webpage.

"I like to leave the legal stuff to Chase," said Feder. "The basic gist of it is the argument that Chase was arguing against was banning gender-affirming care for trans young people, including hormones and puberty blockers."



The panel answers questions posed by students and staff./Emily Nixon

Following the screenings, a small panel and Q&A session was opened up for participants to ask the filmmakers any of their questions.

When asked about the way the public has received the films, Jung shared her surprise at how her film impacted people and the positive reception she's received.

"A lot of people came up to me and told me that they resonated with it and felt seen by it," said Jung. "And that gave me a lot."

Similarly, Feder expressed his surprise with how

"A lot of people said they felt hopeful at the end, which I didn't know that was possible. So, that's been really nice."

viewers found his film hopeful and inspiring.

"The reception of this, beyond what I expected, much better like really good," said Feder. "A lot of people said they felt hopeful at the end, which I didn't know that was possible. So, that's been really nice."

Heightened Scrutiny's ability to inspire hope caused a senior BC creative writing

student, Angela Scire, to reflect on the way the trans social narrative has changed in recent years.

"Because of media and everything being so heavily politicized, there's so much hate," said Scire. "It went from complete ignorance to complete hatred."

The reactions of viewers in the screening to the films themselves caught Scire's attention, prompting them to reflect on how divisive our nation has gotten.

"As angry as I felt, I saw people laughing and joking and commenting on themselves through the tears, and that is the humanity we're not seeing," said Scire. "Like I always try to sympathize with the other side because I know that's the direct rebellion against us being isolated and dehumanizing each other."

The films inspired community strength and a lasting mark on history according to Dijana Jelaca, a BC film professor.

"Even if we don't win this case, the films still exist and feed us today with our broken hearts," said Jelaca. "So, I just feel like we have to know that making words, making images, making community, it's a magical sustenance in times of extraordinary crisis."

The power of words was stressed by Jelaca and the filmmakers as they drew from issues prevalent in today's world.

"Look at the words they're [the Trump Administration] striking. You can't be LGBTQ but you can be queer because they haven't struck queer yet," said Jelaca. "And if we can't use some words, we'll use others, and if we can't win, which may be, the images still exist, we hold space in all these ways, with our bodies, with our words, with our images, and I think that in this time of confrontation [...] we have to remember that we can use the words at our disposal, we can use the images at our disposal, and we can be together and there's some mix, some magical mix of both that's going to sustain us."

One of the main issues that emerged from the discussion was President Donald Trump's handling of legislation surrounding campuses and minority students according to Jelaca. "There's so many overlapping threats and pressures that are happening, and so much at the University," said Jelaca. "The University is under direct assault too. We can see that happening, and we don't know how much of that space we will be able to hold."

One University in hot water for its response to Trump's tactics is the Columbia School of Journalism, according to Jelaca. University officials warned students to not post commentary on issues in the Middle East, as reported by

Middle East Monitor.

"The Columbia School of Journalism, to my understanding, it's not really evident, it was in the news yesterday, that they were advising the journalism students from Columbia to delete from all their social media any mention of Gaza," said Jelaca. "So, this is encouraging journalism students in the opinion of the school of journalism to self-censor."

The main theme of these films has given both hope and representation to its viewers in the WEB building, as well as inspiring more self-education and dialogue about the issues presented in both films, according to Spivey.

"It's so important to be thinking about these things," said Spivey. "Start understanding why this is an important issue for everyone."

Students interested in future events by the LGBTQ+ Resource Center can check out their Instagram: @lgbtqcenter_bc.

Students interested in HESS week events can get information and a schedule at the Wolfe Institute's Instagram: @bc_wolfeinstitute.

“Let’s Get Free”: A Conversation with Dead Prez at BRIC

By Jaida Dent
Arts Editor

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of their debut album, “Let’s Get Free”, hip-hop duo, Dead Prez, spoke at BRIC’s Stoop Share Series on Friday, March 28th. Presented by Hip-Hop Wire and co-produced by Dead Prez and Jill Newman Productions, the event featured a conversation with Dead Prez followed by a concert in the BRIC ballroom.

Founded in 1979, BRIC is a non-profit arts organization that offers free to low cost media related courses like photography, video editing, podcasting, and TV production. The organization also hosts art exhibitions, poetry slams, music festivals, and panel discussions. The Stoop Share Series creates a platform for artists to utilize the BRIC stoop, an area of the building, to host an event.

“The Stoop is a very intentional name. It is part of our community, it’s part of our city landscape, but it’s part of Brooklyn [...] Stoop Share here at BRIC is this space and we share it with our community through a subsidy program and in that subsidized program, artists do not pay to use this space,” said Carmen Hernandez, the senior director of Community Impact at BRIC.

Coined as a political hip-hop duo, M-1 and Stic.man formed Dead Prez over two decades ago and have used their music as a form of activism geared towards political liberation. Their debut album “Let’s Get Free” discusses issues like economics, the prison system, police brutality, and oppression. Though released in the year 2000, messages from the album can still be applied to the social events we see today.

“The best rap has often served as a cultural and political diagnosis. But Dead Prez didn’t simply observe and analyze, they offered a solution: revolution,” said Rawiya Kameir, a writer and critic, in a review of the album for Pitchfork.

The conversation started with what the duo sees as the five qualities of revolutionary music: truth, risk, impact, timelessness/timeliness, and freedom. Truth encompasses being true to yourself as an artist, but also being accurate in their message. Risk is a factor expected when participating in this type of work and artists should have a sense of risk management when creating revolutionary music. Impact goes hand in hand with timelessness and timeliness when thinking about who the music is speaking to and how relevant it is to any time

period. Lastly, freedom is a value that revolutionary music strives to achieve. These values are ones that the duo hold themselves to as well and can be seen in their body of work.

“When you look at music in popular culture or in really any art form, not even just music, there’s going to be an element of truth and authenticity [...] Ultimately, [it] is going to add on to our consciousness towards developing what freedom can look like through our imagination and then in real-time,” said Stic.man

Beyond the qualities of revolutionary music, the duo creates the distinction between protest music and progress music. While protest music is important to express issues an artist may be against, it is equally important to voice the issues that you stand for in your music. The duo cites Bob Marley as an inspiration for progress music in his messages of “One Love”. Out of progress music, Stic.man created “Fit-Hop” after wanting to address health and well-being issues. His albums “The Workout” and “The Workout 2” are songs created with positive messages that people can listen to as they workout.

“When we go to the gym, when we keep our physical temples sharp and working, we need music that supports that. A lot of times, we’re listening to the hard stuff because it’s got that edge and it pushes you, but the little seeds of negativity in the music, you don’t really want to hear that when you’re trying to grow, but you want something strong and solid. So, I saw an opportunity as an artist to create that,” said Stic.man

The duo also discussed the idea of ownership for an artist and what legacy means to them. Though success can be measured in many ways, an artist must have their own metric of success. To Dead Prez, legacy, equity, and integrity are factors that can help someone define their success, and with success comes sacrifice. Being able to say things that may come with a risk is worth it in the long run, and has been the strategy that Dead Prez founded themselves upon over 20 years ago.

“25 years ago, making ‘Let’s Get Free,’ we did think, this could be the last time we could say anything to our people. So this is what we will say, and if that’s what we have to say, then let’s say it with all that we mean and knowing that many years later, it could mean something. I’m hoping that artists today can take that kind of sacrifice

FONSO'S INTENT: MY "MUST LISTEN TO" RAP ALBUMS OF MARCH

By Alfonso Abreu
Staff Writer

March brought the long-awaited return of boundary-pushing artist Playboi Carti, sparking yet another debate between the younger and older generation of hip-hop fans, something that always seems to follow him. In the midst of it all, though, is great music that highlights the creativity of young artists that managed to slip past the fans. Below are listed some of the “Must Listens” of March.

The enigmatic producer Tdf’s latest endeavor, “Culture,” is the audio equivalent of the content an iPad kid would digest. The Minneapolis producer once again combines his well-known skills: clips ripped from popular Gen-Z media like “Angry Birds” and “Regular Show” with fried, blaring 808s that can make any speaker sound like a possessed soul trying to free itself. His familiar tricks never become dull with a feature list resembling a guest list to an unofficial Soundcloud Met Gala, with collaborators ranging from underground veterans (Atl Smook & Pasto Flacco) to emerging melodic rappers (Okaymar & Ioneam). Seamless transitions between every song bring these close-knit artists closer and recurring words of affirmation from the producer’s father push them to keep going. “Fried”, a standout on the album, sees Okaymar smoothly dragging out every line over Tdf’s ethereal instrumental for a catchy trance inducing anthem resembling the euphoric allure of the “Kingdom Hearts” title screen. “Culture” is a well-deserved victory lap for Tdf.

The ever-so expressive rapper Baby Osama’s SoundCloud page plays like you’re scrolling through her personal notes app with some songs showcasing her in her most vulnerable state of mind. Whether she is expressing her gloomy yet relatable frustrations over finding an apartment in New York, or delivering a profound autotune-fueled venting about body-dysmorphia and self-isolation. The Bronx rapper is unapologetically herself; her latest unfiltered idea dump onto SoundCloud, “Some Songs I Owe My People,” proves this. The 12-track EP sees Osama explore a wide range of ideas that may not be fully realized but highlight her ambitions. Some songs contain dreamy, autotune-filled lyrics about her lifestyle and partner with a fondness that makes you believe she was shot by Cupid moments before recording. For now, this care package would keep me content as I wait patiently for her next audio diary entries.



Dead Prez performs at BRIC./Jaida Dent



Dead Prez engages in a panel conversation at BRIC./Jaida Dent

for the future as well,” said M-1

When asked about current artists they see that are creating progressive music and advocating for important movements, the duo doesn’t see the same culture that created them present in today’s music. The duo hopes for a change in the culture to see more artists taking a chance and using their music to push for social change.

“The science that was in the music that fed me. I don’t see it anymore. I’m going to say we need to create the culture that creates the artists that are then giving us what needs to be heard [...] I’m a revolutionary until I die. So, that fight, I’m looking for that. I’m looking for that in the youth,” said M-1.

Hip-hop has been seen as a vessel for creative activism,

but the genre we know today has strayed away from politics. For Dead Prez, their purpose as a group is to aid the social movements that occur today, whether it be Black Lives Matter or fighting to free the wrongfully incarcerated. Their music has been a soundtrack for the progress they fight to see and they are grateful for being able to fulfill that role.

“We are cultural workers in service to the movement. We always have been, not rappers, like never wanted it that, at all,” said M-1. “I just gotta say, thank you for having a movement that we could be at service to. It’s hard to articulate when I think, and in my mind, this art is made for this reason.”

The Time Is Now: BC Groups Hold Panel on Protecting Trans-Affirming Care

By T'Neil Gooden
Features Editor

On March 27, students gathered in the Tanger Auditorium Library to hear from panelists who had much to say about trans rights and trans-affirming care. The panel was hosted in collaboration with The Wolfe Institute, the Women's and Gender Studies program, The Women's Center, the Brooklyn College chapter of the Professional Staff Congress, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, and We Stand Against Hate at BC.

The panelists consisted of Dr. Stephanie Bonvissuto, a transgender adjunct assistant professor in Women and Gender Studies at Hunter College; Elisa Crespo, the executive director of Stonewall Community Foundation, also a transgender woman; and Dr. Janet Johnson, the 2023-25 Endowed Chair in Women's and Gender Studies at BC.

"If healthcare should be available to all, it is worth our time to interrogate what that can and should mean for transformative and transgressive gender

Before hearing from the panelist members, Bonvissuto spoke to students about the lack of trans care within the healthcare system and how that impacts people who are transgender both internally and externally.

"To be clear, I'm not referring to the ability to silently pass here, but rather the capacity to be oneself out loud. The trans community's high rate of suicidal ideation is well-known and documented."

Before ending her speech to bring in the panelists, Crespo and Johnson, Bonvissuto dedicated this talk to those who have come before her.

"We must move forward into the future without forgetting all the members of our community's past, whose light and strength and vulnerability have shown and continue to show a way through the darkness," Bonvissuto said. "It is for that reason that I wish to dedicate today's panel discussion to all who have gone before us, including and especially Brooklyn College's own Khalifa Mohammed."

Khalifa Mohammed (they/

year-old transgender child who has been fighting for transgender rights since she was five years old. Two videos were shown to students about the life that Shappley had to live in Texas as a transgender child. Since then, she has moved to upstate New York with her family.

According to Vice Media, Shappley and many transgender children are living in fear that they will be taken away from their parents because the state of Texas is policing trans children's every move. This is a result of Gov. Greg Abbott's demand that "gender-affirming care provided to minors is tantamount to child abuse."

Despite these orders, Shappley has the following model that she and her family live by: "There are more people with us than are with them. And you need to remember that it's my job to [...] Worry, and it's my job to tell my story," Kai and Kimberly Shappley, the mother of Kai, said.

The panelists followed these two videos by sharing their lives and thoughts on trans-affirming care

"I think it's important for us to fight back and to reclaim our power and despite the scariness and the reality of where we are, we have to find it within ourselves to be brave because the alternative is unacceptable in my opinion, which is at the risk of being silenced your entire identity and existence being eliminated."

organizations that really pounded the pavement in 2016 to make New York a sanctuary for gender-affirming care," Crespo said. "We helped pass what was called the Safe Haven for Trans Youth and Families Act, which was a big deal."

Janet Johnson followed Crespo, explaining the research she has done while being an advocate for trans rights and trans-affirming care.

"I've been thinking about how we fight [for trans-affirming care]. And it's not simple. I've been teaching up a storm, clarifying in my classes and to everyone I talk to that science is clear and sex is not binary," Johnson told the audience. "I've been teaching about the variety of gender systems that have existed across the world as long as we have recorded history."

Afterward, Crespo and Johnson were able to share some insight into the lives and research they have done for trans-affirming care. The floor was open for questions, with Dr. Bonvissuto leading the way. Bonvissuto asked the

panelists if these series of actions against trans people within how the government reflects what has been referenced in Nazi, Germany during the 1930s and 40s.

"I don't know, like detention centers, like we're rounded up and detained and imprisoned or something because of our identity. That feels like where we may be," Crespo told the audience. "But I think it's important for us to fight back and to reclaim our power and despite the scariness and the reality of where we are, we have to find it within ourselves to be brave because the alternative is unacceptable in my opinion, which is at the risk of being silenced your entire identity and existence being eliminated."

Johnson followed Crespo's comment by saying, "It's terrifying. I don't mean to suggest that it's not, but I do think that maybe there's a way out of this if we...keep, you know, talking and loving and being compassionate and speaking with other people about these issues in the way that Kai just does so beautifully."

Crespo and Johnson both agreed that finding and divulging in positive engagement is something that will help individuals get past the times we are in today and help the trans members of our communities.

"We must all name our fears, or I hope we can try to name our fears. This is terrifying. This is all terrifying for all of us, and we become conscious of our own stuff through meditation therapy, if we can afford it, so that we can be present to ourselves and to others, especially to our children and young people," Johnson said. "Then I ask us to choose love and pleasure and hope and knowing that these two can be infectious."

Students who are interested in learning more about trans-affirming care can go to the LGBTQ+ Resource Center in the Student Center.



Students listen to panelists discuss trans-affirming care in America today./T'Neil Gooden

identities," Dr. Bonvissuto told the audience. "For instance, the reducing of pain and suffering and how that correlates to trans-affirming, psychological, and medical interventions. This is because trans-affirming is another way of saying life-saving."

them) was a trans student at BC and an advocate for trans rights before they passed away in the first week of March 2025. Bonvissuto wanted this discussion to bring attention to those fighting for trans liberation.

This discussion featured Kai Shappley, an eleven-

in today's America. Elisa Crespo touched upon how the Stonewall Community Foundation provided an act that helped trans individuals within the tri-state area.

"[Stonewall Community Foundation is] one of the elite statewide advocacy

BC Women's Center Celebrates 50 Years at the Blooming Gala



By Bert Eugene
Staff Writer

On Thursday, March 27, Brooklyn College staff, students, and alumni gathered in the Student Center's Gold Room for the "Blooming Gala", an event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Women's Center here at BC.

The Women's Center, established in 1974, is the oldest women's center at any CUNY school and is among some of the oldest college women's centers in the U.S.. Located at 227 Ingersoll Hall Extension, the Women's Center provides a plethora of both personal and professional resources for students.

"For the last five decades, the Women's Center has been committed to progress

program coordinator for the Women's Center, during opening remarks. "Our mission is to create and promote programs, not only to raise awareness for women's issues, but also to empower individuals to take control of their lives."

Prophete is a first-year graduate student at BC, with a bachelor's degree in Communications and a double minor in Psychology and Music. She, along with Rabia Khalid, the Muslim Women's Leadership and Development Project's (MWLDP) program coordinator, work together at the Women's Center to organize and host events and workshops for students on campus.

"One of the most meaningful experiences for me has been hosting reproductive health workshops, helping individuals gain a better understanding of their bodies and overall well-being. I was also able to collaborate with Planned Parenthood to provide free Plan B on campus – a resource that's typically



Blooming Gala attendees listen to speech./Bert Eugene

selection of wonderful food, an awards ceremony, and a fundraising raffle at the end of the night.

The Women's Center hopes to see new members who may not be aware of its presence on campus.

"Being part of the Women's Center has been an incredibly meaningful experience – it truly feels like a home away from home. Over the past few years, I've been inspired by the strong sense of community, the friendships that have formed, and the mutual understanding that brings people together. It's been eye-opening to witness the support and connection that flourish in this space," said Prophete. "We love seeing new faces and hearing how individuals like to use our space! We are open to everyone, and our ultimate goal [is] to have students feel safe and have an enjoyable space on campus."

Furthermore, the gala featured keynote speaker Rana Abdelhamid, activist and founder of Malukah, formerly known as the Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE), and is an anti-violence organization that teaches self-defense to women. Born in Queens and of Egyptian descent, Rana studied karate as a child. At the age of 15, she was assaulted by a man who

had attempted to take off her hijab. This experience sparked what would become the beginning of her activism.

"It was a really vulnerable, isolating, scary moment for me as a young person [...] but I also had this rage inside me that made me become the organizer that I am today, I wanted to do something. I wanted to make sure that nobody, regardless of what you look like, regardless of who you

"Being part of the Women's Center has been an incredibly meaningful experience – it truly feels like a home away from home."

Abdelhamid said.

Malukah began as an idea pitch at Abdelhamid's mosque for a karate class. Over time, it grew into a global organization committed to being a force against gendered violence.

"And when you have a physical space that you can just gather and kick back in [...] where you can just like, be you authentically, not worry about anything," Abdelhamid stated. "That is the importance of the space that we're building, and that's the importance of the space that you all are a part of."

Students interested in upcoming events from The Women's Center can reach them at their Instagram, @womenscenterbc



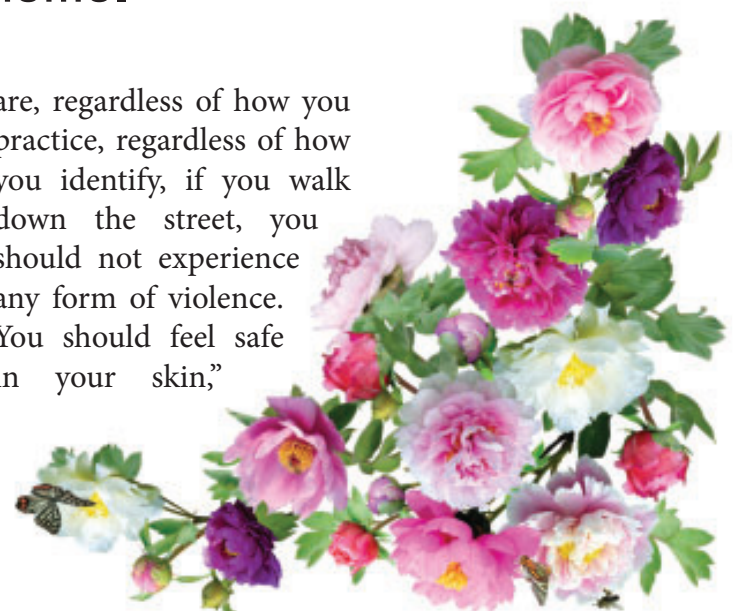
Malukah founder Rana Abdelhamid delivers speech./Bert Eugene

and empowerment of women, and with many centers on campus, our primary goal is to have some form of expansion and access for the availability of emotional, intelligent, physical, and financial wellbeing for every person and individual on campus," said Amber Prophete,

around \$50, which isn't always accessible to everyone. Knowing that this initiative has helped make reproductive care more attainable is something I'm really proud of," Prophete told The Vanguard

The gala featured music performances, a stand-up comedy routine, a wide

are, regardless of how you practice, regardless of how you identify, if you walk down the street, you should not experience any form of violence. You should feel safe in your skin,"



Brownsville, Brooklyn - Historically Underserved, What Its Residents Are Doing To Build It Up

By Ezae Darby
Opinions Editor

Brownsville, Brooklyn, is one of the most underserved communities in New York City, if not the country. The area has unfortunately been named one of Brooklyn's most dangerous neighborhoods by several different sources, including Time Magazine. Having maintained a bad reputation for the amount of violent crimes that occur in its communities, many people make sure to steer clear of this particular part of East Brooklyn altogether. Despite all of this, Brownsville has many redeeming qualities, and the true heart of it lies in its inhabitants.

With that being said, it's important to understand how this difficult situation came to fruition.

Let's start at the beginning. According to a bulk of information archived on the website of the Brooklyn Public Library, Brownsville first came into development around the early year of 1865 when 250 frame houses were built in the neighborhood. Around 1867, a portion of its land was purchased with the intention of attracting Jewish garment makers to set up shop there.

In decades after, the area became largely inhabited by the Jewish community and many large, multi-family buildings, along with the recent developments of many small businesses, became the focal points of the community.

Following the aftermath of World War 2, the neighborhood was confronted with many challenges, including decay, abandonment, vandalism, and arson. However, the neighborhood remained resilient, and towards the beginning of the 21st century, many more small businesses, clothing outlets, and even restaurants filled the area with new life.

As a result of this, Brownsville became a point of interest for many immigrant families leaving the Caribbean in the 1980s. The NYU Furman

Center lists the current demographics as of 2022. Having an estimated 99,827 people living in the neighborhood, 61.8% identify as Black or African-American, 23.1 identify as Hispanic, 7.7% identify as White, and 2.0% identify as Asian.

Despite its exciting history, Brownsville has come to be known as a desolate area, riddled with gangs and struggling minority-families.

Further research conducted in the last few years shows some troubling data about the once-promising neighborhood. In regard to income, "Median household income in 2022 was \$36,790, about 53% less than citywide median household income (\$77,550). The poverty rate in Brownsville was 39.1% in 2022 compared to 18.3% citywide."

In regard to rent, "33.9% of renter households in Brownsville were severely rent burdened (spent more than 50% of household income on rent)."

To combat these types of issues, residents in the community have come together to work in a number of different organizations catered towards the betterment of Brownsville as a whole. One of these organizations is Brownsville In Violence Out, which centers around practices like mediations, mentorship programs, and planning community events in order to end violence in the neighborhood.

The Vanguard recently had the privilege to speak with one resident, Angela Barnes, about her organization and what it's doing to support and restore the community. Angela runs the community-wellness organization, More Than Conquerers Productions, which focuses on the enrichment of it's residents and more specifically, families.

Barnes elaborated more on the purpose of the organization and her motivation behind starting it. "Our organization is called 'More Than Conquerers Productions.'



A photo of Brownsville, Brooklyn./Courtesy of NY Hoods.

We are what we call a holistic organization where we cater to the mind body and spirit of the individual. Hence the workout classes, prayer line, etc," stated Barnes.

She also spoke on the fact that it was originally her husband's idea to start the organization and shared that they both have a passion for correcting the issues plaguing Brownsville. "He actually came up with this brainstorm because of his background, having a tough childhood growing up."

"One of the biggest issues affecting the black community is the lapse of the family structure. There's a lot of single parenting whether it be single moms and dads. There's a lack of family, a lack of compassion, a lack of empathy that we used to have with one another and somehow it's gotten lost."

What changes do you want to see specifically in the community?

Barnes also named some changes that she believes are essential in order to get the community back on track. "I would like to see more workshops, I notice that a lot of families are lacking the male presence which is an important part of a home. The male is supposed to be the head, everybody has their role in the household, and the household is stronger when both males and females are raising their



Angela Barnes and volunteers pose at a Breast Cancer Awareness event./Courtesy of More Than Conquerers Production

fam together."

Besides Angela and her organization, there are tons of other resources that are catered towards the development of the neighborhood and it's residents. Some of these resources include organizations like BMS Family Health and Wellness Center, Brownsville Heritage House Inc., and Brownsville Jobs Plus, which all provide a variety of services designed to educate, employ, and protect the community.

Information regarding more agencies and services can be found on the official NYC government website.

Despite all of the issues harming this community, there are still people, like Angela, who are helping to lead the charge into this better future. With that being said, residents can remain hopeful that Brownsville will once again rise into it's previous glory.

Opening Day Extravaganza: New Journeys Begin

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor

March 27: the smell of sizzling burgers, freshly cut grass, warm spring air, and the sound of thousands of fans cheering their teams on, fill the air on a beautiful afternoon. This is the beauty of Opening Day in baseball.

A new season unveils new opportunities for rookies to make names for themselves on their respective teams, the emergence of new rivals, and above all, a team that will be crowned champion at the end of the 162-game marathon.

Before Opening Day, the defending champions, LA Dodgers took on the Chicago Cubs in a two-game series at the Tokyo Dome in Japan. This series took place from March 18 to March 19 and saw the Dodgers win both games, 6-3 and 4-1 respectively. This series was historic because multiple Japanese players participated in this series, including Shohei Ohtani, Seiya Suzuki, and the opening pitcher of the series, Shota Imanaga.

The defending champs would start the year 2-0 and have a lot of expectations to repeat considering how much money they spent in the offseason and the amount of talent they have on the roster.

For the NY Yankees, this opening week saw them hit 15 home runs in the first three games of the season. On Saturday, March 29, Yankees slugger Aaron Judge hit three homers in one game, and came up short for his fourth one.

This game saw the Bronx Bombers hit nine homers in one game, which became a record. This game started off with a bang as the first three

pitches of the game were hit for homers. The Yankees began the season 3-0 after their sweep of the Brewers.

This offensive explosion didn't go unnoticed, however, as many fans pointed out the fact that many Yankees players were using a new bat, which looked a bit fuller on certain parts of it. This new bat, dubbed "The Torpedo Bat," is nothing new to the game and is designed uniquely for each player. This bat makes it easier to barrel the ball while also adding more wood to the section of the bat where the batter makes most contact with.

Of course, many fans saw this as cheating, and Brewers relief pitcher Trevor Megill felt the same.

"I think it's terrible. We'll see what the data says. I've never seen anything like it before. I feel like it's something used in slow-pitch softball. It's genius: Put the mass all in one spot. It might be bush [league]. It might not be. But it's the Yankees, so they'll let it slide," said Megill, via the NY Post.

Across town, the NY Mets began their season away in Houston as they faced off against the Houston Astros for a three-game set. The excitement of finally seeing Juan Soto play a full season in Citi Field was about to begin and Met fans were ecstatic.

Clayton Kershaw started the first game of the season and went 4 2/3 innings, with four strikeouts and an unfortunate loss.

The Mets lost the game 3-1, but not without drama, as Soto had a chance for a signature moment in the ninth inning. Astros closer Josh Hader loaded the bases and got the next two batters while giving up a run, and Soto came up to bat. In an

intense at bat, Soto would strike out with the bases loaded on a slider away, his signature moment yet to come.

The second game would fare better for the Mets, who won 3-1. Soto's first signature moment came as he hit his first home run as a Met against Astros pitcher Hunter Brown in the third inning. Closer Edwin Diaz came in to solidify the win and get the save, as the Mets would win their first game of the year 3-1.

An apparent problem is that leadoff hitter Francisco Lindor has been hitless so far, as the Mets offense has been hindered in these two games.

Game three saw yet another Mets loss, but some positive outcomes as well. Newly signed pitcher Griffin Canning made his Mets debut and was stellar. He threw 5 2/3 innings with four strikeouts and two earned runs. Even though he ended up with a loss, Canning's debut showed very encouraging signs for his tenure as a Met, and he looked like a completely different pitcher than when he was with the LA Angels.

The Mets offense was once again shut down as Astros starter Spencer Arrighetti pitched six innings with five strikeouts and gave up only one hit in his start. The Mets' slow offensive start in these three games was not how they wanted to start the year, and the team hopes to spark the flames in their next series in Miami against the Miami Marlins.

Another great opening day and the start of the 162 game marathon has begun, and the top teams will duke it out to see who is crowned champion.



(L to R) Mets Juan Soto, Angels Mike Trout, Dodgers Shohei Ohtani, Yankees Aaron Judge, Kansas City Bobby Witt Jr./Courtesy of Fox Sports

Lemon Bar Recipe!

By Khalailah Bynoe
Digital Editor

For the Crust:

1 tablespoon lemon zest
1/4 cup of granulated sugar
1 1/2 sticks of unsalted butter at room temperature
1/2 salt
1 3/4 cups of all-purpose flour

For the filling:

4 large eggs, at room temperature
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest (from 1 large lemon)
3/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (from 5 large lemons)
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
Powdered sugar, for dusting

Make the crust:

Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F. Line the bottom and all four sides of a 9x9-inch square baking pan with two sheets of parchment paper, positioning them perpendicular to each other and allowing them to hang over all four sides by at least one inch to create a sling.

Combine 1 tablespoon of finely grated lemon zest with 1/4 cup of granulated sugar. Add 12 tablespoons of room-temperature butter and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Mix until creamy, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a flexible spatula as needed.

Add 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour. Mix until fine crumbs of dough form. Transfer to the baking pan and use your hands to press into an even layer. Bake until the crust is light golden-brown around the edges, 15 to 22 minutes.

Make the filling:

Crack 4 room-temperature large eggs into a medium bowl and whisk until beaten. Add 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest, 3/4 cup lemon juice, 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt to the bowl of eggs. Whisk until smooth. Sift 1/3 cup all-purpose flour over the mixture and whisk until smooth and combined.

When the crust is ready, immediately pour in the filling while the crust is hot. Bake until the filling is set with a slight wobble in the center for 18 to 20 minutes. Place the pan on a wire rack and let it cool for about 1 hour. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours or up to overnight.

Grasping the excess parchment, lift the slab out of the baking dish and place it on a cutting board. Cut into 16 pieces, dipping the knife in hot water and wiping it dry between each cut for the cleanest-looking pieces. Finish off with a dusting of powdered sugar.

Enjoy!