

• HERITAGE • ART •

*Storefront
for
Brownsville*

• CULTURE • EXCHANGE •

An Initiative of the
Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District
1572 Pitkin Avenue | Brooklyn NY 11212
www.pitkinavenue.nyc

About the Project

Storefront for Brownsville was a pop-up interactive neighborhood history exhibition and gift shop launched by the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) in partnership with Brownsville Heritage House and the Brownsville Community Justice Center. The project was informed by the Brownsville Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA), a deep dive study into Brownsville's commercial corridors undertaken by the Pitkin Avenue BID in the Fall of 2018.

Project Objectives

- Catalyze local innovation and activate dead space by enabling emerging entrepreneurs to test their business ideas in a previously vacant storefront
- Attract new businesses that offer goods and services currently unavailable in the community by showcasing available commercial properties
- Host events that celebrate Brownsville history, culture, and community
- Invest in the repair of storefronts and commercial properties to rejuvenate Brownsville's built environment
- Connect Brownsville's youth to professional development opportunities with local businesses

Project Funders

- NYC Small Business Services Avenue NYC Program
- NYC Small Business Services Pop-Up Market Initiative
- NYS Office of Community Renewal New York Main Street Program
- IOBY Fundraiser

Project Deliverables

- 9 participating micro-entrepreneurs and/or micro-businesses
- 3 participating small business vendors
- 2500 storefront visitors
- Photographs and videos from special events

The Storefront for Brownsville ran from May 4, 2019 through May 31, 2019, Hours of operation were from 1pm to 7pm, Wednesday through Saturday, with extended hours on Saturday evenings when the BID would host special events to attract residents and customers to the pop-up. These events included:

Opening Night Gala | May 4, 2019

BCJC Teen Night | May 11, 2019

Gym Star After School Talent Showcase | May 17, 2019

Brownsville Heritage House Jazz Night & Fundraiser | May 18, 2019

Closing Night Open Mic | May 31, 2019

Gift Shop and Market

The Gift Shop at the Storefront for Brownsville offered for sale locally made goods from emerging entrepreneurs, artists, designers, artisans, and small businesses. The boutique-style gift shop provided an opportunity for twelve businesses to showcase their products in a storefront on Pitkin Avenue. Vendors included:

- Intimate Grind
- Sol Sips
- 3 Black Cats
- Run Trap Company
- Gym Star
- Gifted Hands
- Isabahlia Farmer's Market
- Lit 4 Lyfe
- Samuel Walker
- Boutique 25
- The Gifted Collection
- Fire & Sour Conscious Wear



"Awesome pop-up store with great vendors, food and knowledge. We need more stores like this on Pitkin."

- Jay R

"Love the spot. Very unique place. Bring it to Pitkin more often!"

- Ebony



"This place is dope!" - Jamal

The Living Archive

The Living Archive at the Storefront for Brownsville celebrated Brownsville's past, present, and future through an interactive exhibition that showcased artifacts from the Brownsville Heritage House's archive. The exhibition was a platform for contemporary narratives and cultural preservation, inviting Brownsville residents to submit their own objects, personal stories, and artwork to promote the thriving local culture that exists in Brownsville today.



"I love this little museum and the knowledge it has provided for our people. The artwork is superb."

-Gallery Visitor



"I'm hoping the [pop-up] exhibition comes back until it becomes a fixture in our community. Brownsville deserves it!"

- Gallery Visitor



"Selected materials were appropriate to represent Brownsville culture."

- Gallery Visitor

"We enjoyed coming to the Heritage House exhibition. Thank you."

-Grandma Spicer & Granddaughter Kimora





“Lovely place. We need more places like this in the neighborhood.”





"This is a very wonderful place. It teaches children all about local life and the way the neighborhood is changing for the better."

-Gallery Visitor

*"O-M-G!
This is an amazing and beautiful venue"*

- Gift Shop Customer



Gift Shop & Market Top Sellers

Run Trap Company

Intimate Grind

3 Black Cats

Gifted Hands

Gym Star

Marketing

The Storefront for Brownsville utilized a multi-faceted marketing strategy, including: social media posts, e-mail blasts, street flyers, and the Storefront for Brownsville website. Free tickets for special events, including the Brownsville Heritage House fundraiser, were available via Eventbrite.com which was also utilized to attract visitors from outside the district.

Vendor Outreach and Selection

The Storefront for Brownsville's vendors were solicited via social media advertising, the Storefront for Brownsville website, flyers, and through existing community-based organizations. All vendors were required to complete a vendor application either online or in-person. Vendors applications were accepted on a rolling basis and vendors were evaluated based on their staffing capacity, business readiness and business type. Business types that filled an existing retail gap within the Pitkin Avenue BID, such as full service restaurants, were given priority preference.

Project Outcomes and Next Steps

The project received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participating vendors, residents and storefront visitors alike, with widespread interest in additional pop-ups, including a potential 2019-2020 winter holiday market. Since the pop-up's closing night, at least two Pitkin Avenue BID merchants have shown an interest in re-selling merchandise created by the Gift Shop's entrepreneurs. Providing evidence that additional pop-ups and small market initiatives could be a catalyst for local entrepreneurs to expand their customer base.

The Storefront for Brownsville clearly demonstrated Brownsville entrepreneurs critical need for more small business incubators, low-interest lending opportunities and business planning workshops. The Pitkin Avenue BID will continue to partner with Brownsville CBO's and NYC Agencies to bring more of these crucial services to Brownsville's small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs.

About the Curator

The Living Archive Gallery at the Storefront for Brownsville was curated and organized by Layman Lee a Brooklyn native who began working in Brownsville in 2013 to create MGB POPS, a pop-up shipping container market, and community space. Layman is a multidisciplinary artist and designer working in the belief that every project should be equitable, innovative, and foster positive social and environmental change.

Acknowledgements

Community Partners

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Brownsville Heritage House
Central Brooklyn Economic Development Corp
Made In Brownsville
Community Solutions

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And most of all Brownsville's residents!



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