

## **PAT Meeting #40 02/04/2022**

### **Attendance:**

- 6 UB Backbone Staff (Kassa Belay, David Harrington, Athenia Rodney, Danielle Herring, Ruth Horry, Briona Clark)
- 24 PAT Members
- 16 FAB members

### **Meeting Objectives:**

- Review 2021 EI data and introduce adjusted strategies
- Advance project planning on public benefits access in Brownsville
  - a. Surface relevant community connections
  - b. Discuss optimizing access to all benefits v.s. Improving experience with one particular benefit

### **Takeaways**

The February PAT meeting included the introduction of a new pediatric medicine office in Brownsville and an in depth discussion of Public Benefits optimization as one of our potential projects for the 2022 year.

### **Opener**

*What is one example of someone doing work that you admire and why?*

- Kayereatha Boyd - her assistant goes above and beyond to make sure that the kids at her daycare have everything they need
- Zakiyyah Mohammed - COM at Tribeca Pediatrics. Everyone here on this call shows initiative by looking at the community needs and finding the best way to serve the neighborhood

- Sara Robinson from Riseboro - Her supervisor is vervent in disrupting unfairness and Ruth Horry of the Backbone is doing important work as well
- Stephanie Ludwig of SCO Nurse Family Partnership - Admires Ruth Horry and her dedication to connecting families in Brownsville to all of the services they deserve
- Deanna Giordano, Family Coach at Jeremiah Program Brooklyn NY - Admires Ashton Kutcher and his constant work to end Human Trafficking and defending children from sexual abuse.
- David Harrington, United for Brownsville - Brian Flores, an NFL coach from Brownsville, who is taking on the entire NFL in a class action discrimination lawsuit for not hiring Black coaches
- Kari Kurjiaka (she/her) ROR GNY - Admires so many of the peditricians and medical workers that we partner with. This week, I got to speak to Francine Cutler for the first time in a while and I am reminded how much she does to support the Brownsville Community with resources. Thank you Francine and all the medical professionals for their dedication and service during these last two difficult COVID-19 years.
- Robin at Excellence Baby Academy - I admire Ruth, Athenia, Maria, Audrey, Evelyn, and all the wonderful community members for their passion for and commitment to children and families.

### **UB Mission Statement**

New PAT member Kay Boyd read our mission statement to the group.

# UB Mission Statement

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**United for Brownsville is a family-led collaboration transforming the early childhood systems in Brownsville, Brooklyn, so that all young children are able to flourish.** Our work starts with families' hopes for their children and their ideas for eradicating systemic inequities in early childhood services. This approach disrupts harmful power dynamics and beliefs rooted in anti-Black racism that prevent Black and Latinx children from lifting off.


## Review of January

- January PAT
  - Acknowledged UB staff transitions
  - Discussed UB priorities for 2022 and identified useful contacts within our networks
- January FAB
  - Discussed benefits access experiences and developed a list of potential benefits to target for improvement
  - Reviewed UB's new fellowship job application
  - Discussed FAB membership engagement and recruitment

## News and Updates

### Book Bodega

Athenia Rodney, UB's Assistant Director of applied projects announced the free book giveaway. We will be giving away books, Learning Landscapes kits, and more.



# FREE BOOKS

FOR BABIES, KIDS, AND TEENS

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2022**  
**12:00 - 2:00PM**

The Greg Jackson Center  
 519 Rockaway Avenue  
 Brooklyn, NY 11212

**10+**  
 free books for every family!

**UNITED FOR BROWNSVILLE**  
**UB**

Vaccination cards or recent Negative test  
 Required to enter the building

[BROOKLYNBOOKBODEGA.ORG/INPERSONEVENTS](http://BROOKLYNBOOKBODEGA.ORG/INPERSONEVENTS)

### Learning Landscapes

- More kits are available and distribution is ongoing
- Ruth will be distributing Learning Landscapes kits on Thursdays from 3pm - 5pm.


### Early Intervention


- David shared a recap and updates
- UB has been working to try and improve Early Intervention rates for Black and Brown children in Brownsville
- Beuro of Early Intervention data shows that UB's focus on increasing the number of referrals for children in Brownsville has resulted in increased referrals on par with the city average
- Cases of receipt of services for children that go through the EI Ambassador is higher than both the Brownsville average and city-wide statistics
- Dr Wendy asked: Why do kids drop out of the EI process?
  - Referral to evaluation is the biggest drop off, this could have to do with previously identified barriers such as
    - Stigma
    - Fear of having city agents entering homes
    - Lack of clarity about what early intervention is
    - A long and draining with little support outside of the relatively new position of EI Ambassador

- New Strategies from Danny
  - Recognizes the emotional, social impact of early intervention.
  - She will be creating a peer support group for parents to connect with others going through the same process
  - Support as well as information and advocacy so that parents feel strong in their role
  - Please contact Danny if you are aware of any parents that might need her services
- Rapid Action Service Network - Ruth
  - Felicia Alleyne-Dais support group starting on March 4th.
  - They meet weekly and she will send the information to Ruth to share with the group next week.

## Events and Guest Presentations

### Dr. Wendy Johnson of Tribeca Pediatrics





**Tribeca Pediatrics - Brownsville Info Session**

Thursday, February 10th  
10am - 12pm  
Gregory Jackson Center  
519 Rockaway Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11212

*Come out to learn about Tribeca Pediatrics' new office in Brownsville!*

*Learning Landscapes @ Home, a United for Brownsville Project, will be distributing free learning kits!*

**(All visitors must socially distance and wear masks)**

212-226-7666 | [info@tribecapediatrics.com](mailto:info@tribecapediatrics.com) | [www.tribecapediatrics.com](http://www.tribecapediatrics.com)

UB and Tribeca Pediatrics have created an opportunity to meet a new pediatric provider in the neighborhood and get LL kits. There will be masks worn and

socially distance. The new office will be around the corner from the GJC at 1700 Pitkin Ave. They take most medicaid and private insurance and can pre-register for an appointment before the office opens.

Dr. Wendy Johnson then presented to the group.

- TP is a pediatric group started in the 90s. They have 15+ offices in Brooklyn and Dr. Johnson will be operating out of the Brownsville office. She will be starting alone, but will be joined by other pediatricians as registration increases.
- They offer same day appointments, newborn services, reminders, school forms, contact from providers.
- Parents can call in questions to local nurses.
- Two insurances not accepted are Fidelis and Metroplus.

### Q and A

Naimah asks if they do on-site blood work.

A: Yes they do. Kids don't require as many blood tests.

Are they offering COVID testing and the vaccine

A : Testing yes but the vaccine is not at the Brownsville location because it does not have the required space.

Athenia: Do the offices have space for kids to play aka is the space kid friendly?

A: Play spaces had to be removed

\*Learning Landscape Kits could help fill this void

Q: Do you have an area for parent feedback? How responsive is your office to these feedbacks?

Feedback is requested directly after appointments via email [info@](mailto:info@tribecapediatrics.com) or [feedback@tribecapediatrics.com](mailto:feedback@tribecapediatrics.com)

Anyone who has more questions can email [zakiyyah@tribecapediatrics.com](mailto:zakiyyah@tribecapediatrics.com)

The next presentation was from **Michelle Blassou and Harrison** from **Community Action for Healthy Homes**

- A new program out of the Brownsville partnership attempting to eliminate risks, and track the long term health impact
- Based out of Health Habitat Australia, this approach resulted in a 40% reduction of admissions.
- There is a huge need for this program in Brownsville. Residents experience everything from fire hazards, broken outlets, leaking faucets, inferior heating and hot water, to mold and poor ventilation and structural issues.
- The organization works with local contractors to make repairs.
- They partner with One Brooklyn Health, The International Water, sanitation and hygiene.
- To refer a household use the link below: <https://forms.gle/LgBzoV1F7DAT6dBn9>
- Register for the healthy homes training here: <https://tinyurl.com/mvb9ap3h>
  - Brownsville partnership will be hiring some training members
- Email follow-ups to [cahh@brownsvillepartnership.org](mailto:cahh@brownsvillepartnership.org)

**Shannon Osbourne of Riseboro Community Partnership**

- Riseboro Community Partnership is developing a program called Fasten focused on helping undocumented New Yorkers facing eviction. They have assisted over 135 families in Brownsville with back rent, supportive services, financial services and coaching, and TIN numbers.
- Riseboro Home Base program reaches out to families in the community who need assistance applying for benefits and public assistance with their liaisons.
- Contact: [Prevention@riseboro.org](mailto:Prevention@riseboro.org) You can also call their hotline at 718-210-2767 or SMS 215-0214
- Residents can also email [ybutts@riseboro.org](mailto:ybutts@riseboro.org)

**New Project Priorities**

- Kassa explained the Ub workstreams split into systemic and direct projects
- The backbone explained three of the potential priorities which won't be discussed today.



- Learning Neighborhoods
- Equitable access to pediatric care
- Childcare and educational enrollment
- The focus of this month's meeting is Public Benefits Optimization

### **Activity and Discussion: Public Benefits**

- Optimizing Public Benefits was one of the priorities we received from the FAB. The Backbone aims to gain more information to help us decide whether we should focus on optimizing all benefits in general or one specific benefit.
- The discussion began with a synthesis of the FAB's opinions on the topic.

### FAB discussion synthesis

We posed the following questions to the FAB last meeting and summarized their answers to the PAT to inform our discussion.

1. If you could wave your wand, what would be the ideal experience signing up for benefits
  - a. Convenience: closer locations and more mobile/virtual options
  - b. User Experience: streamlined and centralized application process, family friendly and culturally reflective settings, better staff training for navigation
  - c. Policy: Address stigma and anti-social requirements
2. Which benefits in your experience work well or closest to the ideal?
  - a. In NYC: Veteran's benefits, SNAP, Medicaid, and WIC
  - b. Out of State/country: Penn Health Insurance Marketplace; Dallas, TX WIC System; UK's National Health Service (NHS)
3. Which benefits are furthest from the ideal experience?
  - a. All would benefit from a Personal Ambassador/Guide to assist and contact that knows and respects residents on site
  - b. Rental and housing assistance and childcare vouchers are particularly confusing and difficult to get
  - c. HRA customer service is widely criticized



## PAT Q & A

### How could improving families' awareness of and access to a single benefit improve your work? Which benefit and why?

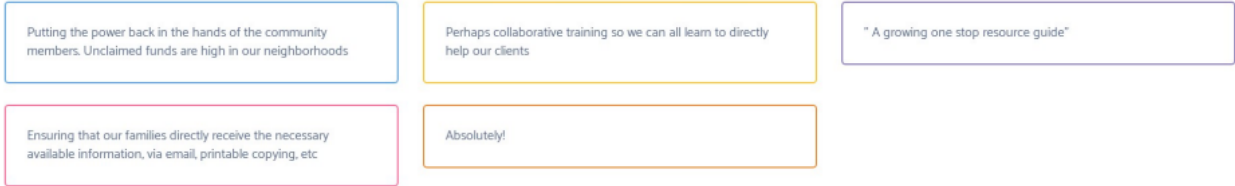


SNAP	We could spend more time assisting with other needs that are important to them. Example: SNAP, it's hard to focus when you are hungry	Communication between SNAP and the family
Help alleviate stress on single mothers and their families	More time for families to focus on other things like improving their children's development	Could help reduce the stress associated with accessing these benefits and free the family to explore other services that benefit their family.
Families reporting that mailings were sent to them but never received.	Lower the anxiety around seeking assistance	Housing: So many families are without housing security. They are overwhelmed. And as a service provider you can't even point them in the right direction. We don't know
Exactly what you said	Improving everyone's awareness of how to access child care would make our work and families' access significantly easier.	Families would be able to have peace of mind, knowing that they put their trust in us to offer them the best available options that will help their situation
Childcare vouchers are in very high demand and easily accessing this benefit would reduce the amount of time a parent has to be away from work to access this benefit	Support access to affordable and quality childcare	If a family or person are knowledgeable on Housing insecurities, they would then reach out more
Improving families' access to ACS/HRA childcare vouchers to pay for home-based childcare or center-based care	We have a staff person that provides resources and often gets feedback about the difficulties families encounter when we call to follow up on access of the provided resource.	Access to childcare. They are not able to take on jobs if they do not have a safe place to put their children)
Childcare: it's impossible for even the provider to know what is available.	Right now the major issue is eviction from COVID job loss	It would allow a provider to attend to other needs of the family.
SNAP will help families access food during challenging times		

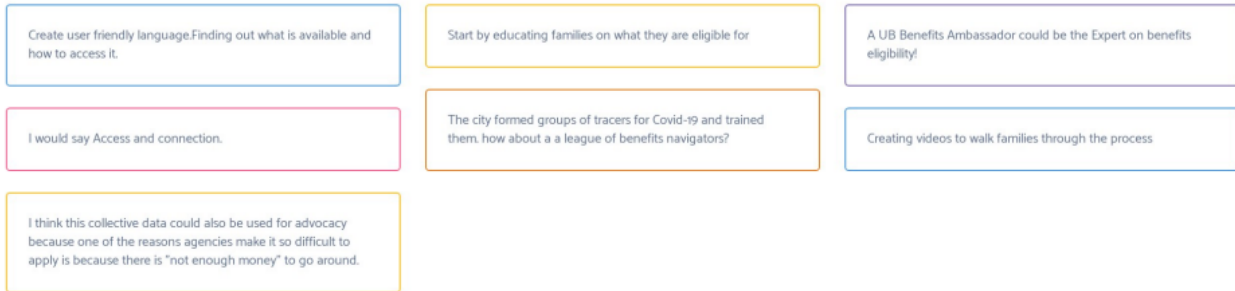
### How could a new comprehensive benefits navigation service for families impact your work?



Housing insecurity	Confident and secure clients are able to focus on receiving services and pulling themselves out of these situations if this was easier for them	We can then redirect families attention to other services they may need
Understanding how different applications can support access to benefits while others decrease your likelihood of getting benefits – this uncertainty is so nerve wracking	Make it easier to help single mothers on a broader spectrum.	Take the load off of casework's and those who come in direct contact. They have to tell the families that they can't assist them
Recognizing that life events trigger multiple needs: housing, food, care. They often happen all at once so families need a lot of things all at once.	nyc.gov and getting help from partners like UB	This would afford our families the opportunity to access what they need, while being able to complete the necessary information via a user-friendly online service



## What do we collectively have the power to improve about how families navigate the full suite of benefits they're eligible for?



## What do we collectively have the power to improve about access to particular (single) benefits?



### Specific Recommendations

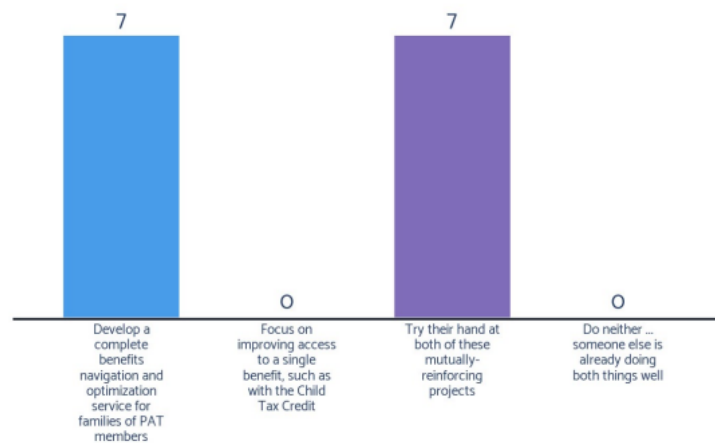
- Kassa suggests we orient the resource checklist tool towards public benefits for an Ambassador/liaison to use
- Ms. Giordano says that she doesn't know where to look or what programs offer specifically.
- Jamie-Jin says organizations share data on eligibility and utilization as a budget request to accurately reflect the financial and budgetary needs of the community

After thinking through our capacities and community needs, I recommend that UB

- a) Develop a complete benefits navigation and optimization service for families of PAT members
- b) Focus on improving access to a single benefit, such as with the Child Tax Credit
- c) Try their hand at both of these mutually reinforcing projects
- d) Do neither...someone else is already doing both things well

**After thinking through our capacities and community needs, I recommend that UB ...**

**UB**

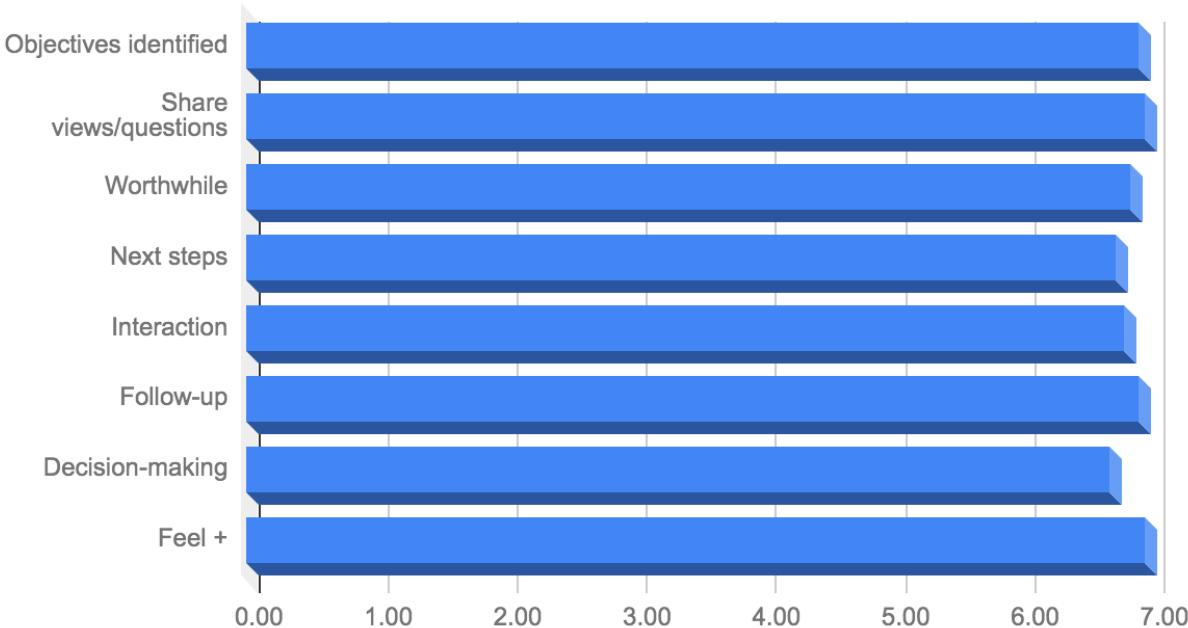


### **Next Steps**

- UB to follow through on connections suggested in PAT survey re key collaborators
- UB team will share conversation and survey results re preferred approaches for a Public Benefits project with FAB to inform their deliberations
- Bring content from today's meeting to the FAB
- Ping more people about the PAT survey
- Follow up with getting LL kits into Tribeca Pediatrics

### **Reality Check**

# PAT Reality Check Average Answers



access admires ambassador assistance athenia backbone **benefits**  
**brownsville** children coach com **community** connections  
 contact **discussion** early ei email **experience** fab families  
 focus **group** health homes information intervention kids kits learning **meeting**  
 members office optimizing parents **pat** pediatric priorities  
 program projects **public** riseboro ruth **services** share space  
 support tribeca **ub** work