

FAB Meeting #47 03/11/2022

Attendance:

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

Meeting Objectives:

1. FAB Fellow Announcement
2. Introduce sensory gym concept
3. Surface challenges with
 - a. Well-child visits
 - b. Child care enrollment

Takeaways:

The March FAB meeting consisted of us announcing the appointment of Ashanti, a beloved FAB member, to the position of FAB Fellow. The backbone also introduced a concept for a sensory gym in a piece of available retail space in a Brownsville new-build.

Opener

In honor of Women's History Month, we asked the FAB to name a woman in their life that inspires them to achieve more.

We received answers like:

- Our mothers

- Ourselves
- Our sisters
- Ruth named Kathy who inspires her to see things differently and support kids
- David named his wife
- Multiple FAB members named Ruth and Athenia

FAB Check-In

The FAB check-in is an opportunity every meeting for FAB members to say hello to the rest of the group and share anything they wish to about their lives at the moment.

- Ashanti led the group check in from a self-care venue called The Secret Garden
- Athenia is closing on her first house
- Evelyn is grateful for her health and waking up, we congratulate her on losing over 20 pounds.
- Ruth shared that her difficult journey with her daughter's schooling has found a new direction through a connection via Dionne.
- Maria shared a difficulty in her and her family catching Covid and becoming sick, they have now recovered.
- Kersha's husband is coming back and she is going back to St. Lucia on a solo trip after taking care of her three children non-stop throughout the pandemic
- Jahvene has been traveling 2 hours each way to take her kids to school for the last 6 months. This was their first week going to a school a 5 minute walk from her house and she already feels the difference in her days.

Mission Statement Review

Kersha reviewed the UB mission statement.

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.

Previously at UB...

- February: FAB discussed Benefits Optimization strategies via case studies in the context of single benefit v. all benefits approaches
- March: PAT discussed the Child Tax Credit project's impact, Benefits Optimization strategies & Well Child visit barriers
- The newly created Brownsville EI Equity Workgroup met Wednesday for the first time specifically focused on increasing EI enrollment

New and Updates

- Covid-19 Tests!
 - We have Covid-19 at-home testing kits available beginning 03/17. They can be picked up on Thursdays from 3-5pm from the Greg Jackson Center .
 - Register for kit pick up at the linked google form below.
<https://forms.gle/wEmSjAbf3MUkQ4sig>
- Applied Projects
 - Parent Corner
 - Evelyn and Audrey introduced the new Parent Corner, a program they will be launching on March 15th to facilitate bonding, support, and sharing among parents with young children in Brownsville.
 - UB requests that members share the flier to parents in Brownsville with children 0-5.

15 March 2022
7:00PM - 8:00PM
Meetings bi-weekly



PARENT CORNER START UP

TO WHOM?







Parents who have little ones 0-5 in Brownsville.

NEXT SCHEDULE:

March 29, 2022
7:30PM - 8:30PM



OBJECTIVES

-  Get to know each other
-  Discuss goals for yourself and family
-  Play games
-  Share resources
-  Prayer Partner
-  Book Club

TO JOIN, REGISTER IN ADVANCE: <https://bit.ly/ParentCorner1>

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- Tribeca Pediatrics - UB hosted an event with the new pediatric office in the neighborhood and distributed 50 Learning Landscapes kits
- Brooklyn Book Bodega
 - UB distributed 43 kits at this event as well as Pampers
 - UB plans to partner with them again for a “Book Flood” event to bring 1001 diverse books into the community
- Applied Project Updates
 - There will be a **FAB Interim Meeting** March 18th at 1pm focused on FAB participation and engagement, core values, and accountability
 - There will be an EI Brownsville Townhall in April

- There is a Back to School event in August
- WNET, our partner on Learning Neighborhoods, has found a coordinator who plans to meet with the Backbone team next week

UB's new EI Working Group

- UB's Backbone team invited local EI referrers to join the Brownsville EI Equity Workgroup on March 9th from 2pm - 3:30pm
- Agenda
 - Understand when and why children in Brownsville fall through the cracks during the EI enrollment process
 - Surface quick and effective ways that we can help a child's referral to EI succeed
 - Discuss messaging to families that helps children progress through the enrollment process
- Other notes
 - The first meeting was this week and included exciting new collaborators that can broaden the impact of improved EI access beyond what our EI Ambassador position can do.
 - *Maria suggests to add Danny's contact information onto fliers at future events
- Child Tax Credit
 - Ruth covered the creation of UB's effort to increase the receipt of Child Tax Credit Funds received by Brownsville families.
 - We started by identifying the problem with marketing tools, outreach, and language.
 - We then formed theories about why eligible families in Brownsville may not be accessing the CTC
 - Between October 1st and November 15th, UB used the following tactics
 - Redesign and disseminate promotional materials

- FAB phone/text/email/social tree and contest
- In-person flyering at events and outside service providers
- Linkage to remote/in-person application assistance
- Encourage residents to tell a friend who isn't connected
- Ruth covered the below chart describing the difference in accepted CTC funds before UB began our efforts v. afterwards
- A total of \$366,600 was delivered in the 11212 zipcode between September 1st and November 15th
- The average estimated refund was \$4,582.50
- The median time between GetCTC to an accepted refund was 19.75 minutes



FAB Fellowship Pt. III Selection

- Ashanti Walker will be starting as our new FAB fellow instead of Bashirah Okeh, who forfeited her position as she believed Ashanti would be more fitting
- The entire FAB is excited to see Ashanti move into this new position.

Final decision

Overall, do you think this applicant's answers qualify them to be a good candidate for the FAB Fellow position for the next year?

15 responses



Sensory Gym Concept

- A sensory gym can help transform Brownsville into a community that supports early childhood development
 - Connects to the Learning Landscapes original vision and Learning Neighborhoods idea of revitalizing unused community spaces
 - Supplies an inclusive all-weather playground, which has been mentioned by the FAB in multiple prior meetings
 - Revisits the idea of a Gymboree type space generated in prior FAB conversations
 - Connects to a need identified for spaces to host EI and other services
 - Occupational therapy needs in Brownsville are not able to be met because they are so far away and inaccessible by public transport
- Sensory Street is the closest example of this model and the backbone included a video of this venue.

- David took his son Auggie there which he truly enjoyed and wanted to return to
- Partially Funded by the state DOH through reimbursement
- Also offer paid classes where children can do activities, gym time, etc.
- Each activity is related to a specific skill children need to work on
- Educates training occupational therapists who can work with children hands on
- UB asked the group: *What opportunities would a sensory gym bring to Brownsville?*
 - Provides an opportunity for children to have a play area
 - Parents will be excited to bring their children there to help motivate parents to do activities outside of the home
 - All year/all weather play spaces are needed, especially in New York for our climate where kids can be comfortable and stimulated year-round
 - Ashanti adds it is important to make sure that special needs kids are prioritized
 - Adds a way for overweight children to move in a fun way
 - Can be a place for alternative, culturally-centered learning
 - Can act as a distribution center for LL kits, brown toy boxes, etc.
 - Can be used to add emphasis on STEM that is typically not accessible to Brownsville parents
- What kinds of activities would you like to see there?
 - Yoga
 - Tumbling
 - Playing fort structures
 - Sand tables, sensory mats
 - Ages and stages activities
 - Rock climbing
 - STEM lessons
 - Dance lessons
 - Culturally-centered language

- Non-english language classes, Audrey will share a free app she is aware of for this purpose
- Doula classes
- Mommy and me
- Family counseling
- Emotional support and vulnerability
- Communication classes
- Black History and Ancestry lessons
- Reinvigorating community storytelling - inviting ancestors
- Non sensory room/ Soundproof space
- Sound bath
- Group acupuncture
- Lactation room
- Wellness center spa
- a space to regulate strong emotions through individual coping strategies, such as deep breathing, exercise, music, etc
- A plant room/Recovery room
- Massage chair
- Self massage or partner massage classes
- Feeling check-chart
- Drop-in respite services
- Computer lab
- Wifi
- A slide/playground
- Note on staffing
 - Athenia - “I always caution away from volunteers as it sometimes devalues those who offer the services not paying them what they are worth. It is also not very long term sustainable especially in a community where people are already financially tapped.”
- Similar existing spaces
 - Spark at Brooklyn Bridge Park - arts and crafts, paid
 - Aviator - has golf, ninja warrior, different interact
 - Marli Boxes and other Sensory Kits

- Bashirah compares The Door, a center for resources for teens and young adults
- Livonia 4
 - There is some potential for filling a part of the unoccupied commercial space at a building area at 368-72 Livonia Ave.
 - The original plan for the space was to service justice involved youth, which was not well received by residents
 - We believe that an early childhood oriented program may be much more easily digested by residents, developers, and other decision makers.
 - UB Backbone has floated the idea of a sensory gym and multipurpose space to help combat the obstacles we have identified around EI in Brownsville
 - Profitability is a key component to this business idea being successful. Multiple streams of revenue can come from CPSE and EI services, grants, insurance, non-profit subsidies, and more

Arguments for a Sensory Gym

- Sensory support is not in Brownsville at all but is plentiful in other more economically privileged area of Brooklyn
- Because play is a child's native language, they can express what is holding them back from growth
- Helping to make Brownsville self-sustainable so that families in Brownsville can work, play, and live all in the same neighborhood and lengthen the amount of time the Black dollar remains within our communities
- Doing something different to shift the narratives and stigma surrounding the Brownsville community
- Further create space for other organizations to come into Brownsville who have historically avoided it
- The opportunity to corner a formerly ignored market segment in the neighborhood with a strong demand as well as potential positive PR
- Allows a place where children with all levels of needs can interact

- Provide a welcoming, safe, and structured environment to re-socialize while coming out of COVID isolation for children and adults improving daily living and independence
- Increase patronage at local businesses
- Increases the quality of life of residents of the building and easy access to the offered services
- Increases the level of safety for neighborhood children by giving them a safe space away from neighborhood violence such as shootings

FAB Membership Meeting

- A meeting was held on January 30th via zoom to...
 - Discuss membership goal setting
 - Talk about how to grow and sustain engagement and membership
- A follow up Interim Meeting will be held
 - March 27th at 10am
 - Athenia shared a new updated survey via Mentimeter.
- The Backbone shared a poll asking if UB should move on in drafting a letter of support for a Sensory Gym at the Livonia site , receiving 100% yes and adding the additional stamp of community approval.

Next Steps

- Finalize FAB Fellow selection
- Synthesize and share back FAB discussion from today
- Develop a UB/FAB Letter of support for sensory gym at Livonia
- Struck single benefit optimization from this meeting, will cover in April meeting

activities add ashanti athenia backbone benefits
brownsville center child children classes
community connects covid different discuss ei enrollment event fab
families fellow group gym help idea increase kids kits learning livonia
meeting members named neighborhood opportunity parents play
pm position received room ruth school sensory services share
space support ub