MAKE ART.
BUILD COMMUNITY.
CREATE CHANGE.

BEDFORD-STUYVESANT
2005–2020
HISTORY OF CENTRAL BROOKLYN

Bedford-Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy) is a neighborhood in Central Brooklyn, New York City. For decades, it has been a cultural center for Brooklyn’s Black population and was once considered "Brooklyn's Little Harlem."

FIRST PEOPLE OF CENTRAL BROOKLYN

The original inhabitants of Central Brooklyn were the Nayack and Canarsee who lived across Brooklyn and were part of the Lenape nation. They were avid farmers and fishermen who thrived until the arrival of the Dutch in the 1600s. In parallel and through forced migration, the first enslaved African people arrived with the Dutch and were bound until the early 18th Century.

Throughout the mid 18th Century, new generations of African Americans settled around Central Brooklyn and established their own colonies, such as the historic neighborhood of Weeksville which was established by a group of African-American land investors and political activists in 1838. With more than 500 residents by the 1850's, the neighborhood became a hub for political and social activity and produced one of the first African-American newspapers called the Freedman's Torchlight.

THE GREAT MIGRATION

During and after World War II, large numbers of African Americans seeking opportunity and safety, migrated from the southern United States, some moving into Central Brooklyn. Bed-Stuy became an early meeting point for Black communities and immigrants from the Caribbean. Many considered Central Brooklyn as the Black cultural mecca of the borough, similar to what Harlem is to Manhattan.

CIVIC MOVEMENTS

The 1960s and 1970s were a difficult time for New York City overall, including Bed-Stuy. Early forms of organizing and movement building that took shape and were helpful in bridging conversations across racial divides. Many organizations throughout Central Brooklyn expanded to provide social services in aid of historic disinvestment.

Today, many civic and mobilizing organizations continue to work towards building stronger neighborhoods through campaigns around anti-street harassment, food sovereignty, police accountability, and anti-gentrification work. Bed-Stuy is also home to more than 30 community gardens that provide food, green space, and community rest and renewal.

ART & CULTURE

Currently, Bed-Stuy is home to numerous small businesses and artistic spaces that pay homage to the vibrancy and cultural aesthetics of the neighborhood. Many cultural icons have strong ties to Bed-Stuy, including Lena Horne, The Notorious B.I.G, Chris Rock, Jay-Z, and Gabourey Sidibe. Today many local murals pay homage to these figures.

Bed-Stuy is also home to many cultural institutions such as Restoration Arts, Cumbe Dance, Bailey’s Cafe, Asase Yaa Cultural Arts Foundation, and nearby Weeksville Heritage Center.
BEDFORD STUYVESANT

152,403
TOTAL POPULATION

Councilman Robert E. Cornegy
DISTRICT 36
COMMUNITY BOARD 3

POPULATION BY RACE
*Latino presence is most prevalent bordering Bushwick

- 64% Latino
- 20% Black
- 11% White
- 3% Asian
- 2% Other

BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S

- 20% Latin America
- 13% Asia
- 9% Europe
- 6% Africa
- 2% North America

POPULATION BY AGE

- 69% Latin America
- 13% Asia
- 9% Europe
- 6% Africa
- 2% North America

GLOBAL DIVERSITY

- 69% Latin America
- 13% Asia
- 9% Europe
- 6% Africa
- 2% North America

PRESSING ISSUES

GENTRIFICATION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
HOUSELESSNESS
SCHOOL SYSTEM
FOOD JUSTICE

TOTAL POPULATION IN CENTRAL BROOKLYN

529,154
Inclusive of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Bushwick, Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Oceanhill and Brownsville

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$52,897
Average Income (Inclusive of new residents)
FIELD DAY FESTIVALS 2013-2018

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING AND ARTIST ENGAGEMENT IN CENTRAL BROOKLYN

2015
Imagine Bed-Stuy
Luminal Theater
405 Tompkins Ave

2016
Politics of Protection
380 Tompkins Ave

2017
Weaving Histories
Hancock Community Garden

2018
STooPS ArtCrawl
Hancock Community Garden

2016
Iyapo Repository
The Bedford Stuyvesant Museum of African Art

2017
Storytelling For Self & Community Care
Concord Nursing Home

2015
"Sincerely, Tommy" 343 Tompkins Ave

2014
Dept. of Local Affairs Mei Tai Laundromat

2016
I ♥ COPS
Fulton Street Laundry

2015
Imagine Bed-Stuy
Restoration Plaza

2013
The Renters' Archive
For My Sweet

2014
Politics of Protection
380 Tompkins Ave
The Laundromat Project was seeded in 1999 by Founder Risë Wilson. Years later, in 2005, it became incorporated, functioning as a Brooklyn-based nonprofit organization. Since then, The LP has sustained a visible presence and ongoing engagement with NYC communities of color, including Central Brooklyn and specifically Bed-Stuy.

The first LP arts program took place at the Stuyvesant Heights Senior Center. The LP launched Create Change, including Miriam Neptune, The Birthright Crisis.

**2006**

Artists-in-Residence Stephanie Dinkins, Book Bench, Marmy Laundromat.

**2007**

A showing of The Birthright Crisis by AIR Miriam Neptune at Bed-Stuy laundromat

**2009**

Artist-in-Residence Tracee Worley, Dirty Laundry Line.

**2011**

Artist-in-Residence Jabari Owens-Bailey, Dispersing Planes II.

**2012**

Commissioned Artist Aisha Bell, SUSU, Marmy Laundromat.
2013

In its inaugural year, Bed-Stuy’s edition of Field Day featured the *Renters’ Archive* by Create Change Fellows Noelle Ghousaini, Raul Ayala, Joyce LeeAnn Joseph, Sukjong Hong and Kameelah Janan Rasheed.

The LP launched *Power of Perception*, at the Brooklyn Community Arts & Media High School (BCAM) in Bed-Stuy.

Community art workshops, *Work in Progress*, launched at Fulton Laundromat.

2014

Field Day featured activities presented by Create Change Fellows Sara Abdullah, Taja Lindley, Leon James, Denae Hannah, Nehemoyia Young, and Katherine Toukhy, in support of the *Department of Local Affairs* project.

The LP launched another arts intensive program at BCAM called *Print Change* where students explored printmaking techniques.

2015

Field Day featured *Imagine Bed-Stuy*, presented by Create Change Fellows Adaku Utah, Hossannah Asuncion, Jason Maas and OlaRonke Akinmowo.

2016

For Field Day, Create Change Fellows Lindsay Catherine, Sue Jone Ka, Shamilia McBean, Salvador Muñoz and Cynthia Tobar present *Politics of Protection* in partnership with the Audre Lorde Project’s, SOS Collective.

2017

Artist-in-Residence: Lizania Cruz, *We The News*, Black Alliance for Just Immigration

For Field Day, Create Change Fellows Abby Dobson, Kearra Gopee, Nayo Sasaki-Picou, and Candace Williams presented *Weaving Histories* at Concord Nursing Home.

The LP launched after school program, *Youth POWER Lab* at BCAM.

2018

For Field Day, Create Change Fellows Jaime Sunwoo, Ashleigh Goh Hua and Zain Alam supported *Art Crawl by STooPs Bed-Stuy*, Hancock T&T Community Garden, and Life Wellness BK Center.

Lizania Cruz continued her project "*We The News,“ in partnership with the Black Alliance for Just Immigration.
After a 2-year visioning process, The LP has committed to balancing ongoing citywide work with an anchoring presence in a single NYC neighborhood. Thus, starting in early 2021, the organization will return to its original home of Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn with the opening of a new multi-use space.

In a nod to founder Risë Wilson’s original vision of The LP as a lively, public, creative hub firmly embedded in a neighborhood, the organization is consolidating programs and administration into a single home for the first time. This move will situate The LP in the everyday path of local artists and neighbors, becoming part of their fabric of community life.

The LP will use its new home to foster creative and neighbor-driven programs in partnership with local artists and entities; offer art and community-building workshops; support artist commissions and exhibitions; and host community gatherings. We are exploring innovative ways to do this safely in the time of social distancing.

**2019**

Artist-in-Residence: Seyi Adebamjo, *AfroMystic Experimental Project*


Artist-in-Residence: Ariana Allensworth, *Staying Power*, New York City Housing Authority’s Lafayette Gardens

**2020**

Artist-in-Residence: Ariana Allensworth continues *Staying Power* in partnership with NYCHA

Artist-in-Residence: Sydney Baloue, *Icons, Legends, Statements and Stars*

**A NEW HOME FOR THE LAUNDROMAT PROJECT**

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THE LAUNDROMAT PROJECT STAFF

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Dr. Deborah Willis  
Laura Zabel

COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN CENTRAL BROOKLYN

462 Halsey Community Garden  
Audre Lorde Project’s SOS Collective  
Bedford-Stuyvesant Museum of African Art  
Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation  
Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Arts  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration  
Bridge Street Development Corporation  
Brooklyn Community Arts & Media High School  
Brooklyn Movement Center  
Brooklyn Museum  
Brooklyn Public Library  
Concord Baptist Freedom School Scholars  
Concord Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center  
Feeding Tree Community Garden  
Fulton Street Laundry  
Hancock T&T Community Garden  
Lafayette Gardens Community Center  
Life Wellness Brooklyn Center  
M & M Community Laundry  
Marmy Laundromat  
Mayday Space  
Mei Tai Laundromat  
Museum of African Art  
Once Upon A Corner  
STooPs Bed-Stuy  
Sincerely, Tommy  
Stuyvesant Heights Senior Center  
The Luminal Theater  
Von King Park  
Weaving Hand  
Weeksville Heritage Center