



# BELMONT AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB

**The Brownsville Community Justice Center (BCJC)** works to reduce crime and incarceration and increase public safety. We develop innovative, place-based strategies for community resilience building, healing, and economic vitality. The Justice Center aims to support community healing and mobility out of poverty to lead to long-term sustainable community-driven change.

We envision 50 Belmont Avenue in Brownsville as a community resource to anchor our work in the neighborhood for the long term. **With your support, BCJC will maximize the full potential of this critical community hub of youth leadership, technology, incubation, placemaking, and health for an equitable and just Brownsville.**



# THE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB: A NECESSARY INVESTMENT IN THE BELMONT AVENUE CORRIDOR

A Belmont Avenue Neighborhood Hub will connect our community to resources and programming that will help it flourish. On top of that, the Hub will address long-term economic inequities, infrastructure disinvestment, and social resiliency in Brownsville. Technology, arts, and music and skills development will reach young people, entrepreneurs, and Brownsville at large together at the Hub. This new space will sustain BCJC's critical initiatives and leverage a network of neighborhood partnerships.





## ANCHOR THE COMMUNITY

The Belmont Avenue Neighborhood Hub is equipped with community and event space, a lab focused on new technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, a recording studio and industry development space, and a youth-led entrepreneurial incubator space. The Hub will house our youth-led social enterprise, violence reduction programs, and employment development programs that impact whole community health and bring about an end to generational poverty in Brownsville. It will be a place where young people, long-term residents, new residents, entrepreneurs, and small business owners alike can be creative, innovative, and supported as they cultivate new skill sets, strengthen civic engagement and leadership, and connect to the larger community.

## REVITALIZE THE CORRIDOR

The Belmont Avenue Neighborhood Hub is a place-based urban revitalization and public safety strategy that honors the history of a vibrant pushcart market on a since-neglected corridor. It will newly activate Brownsville from its core, in a space shaped by and for the community. Exciting things are happening in Brownsville! The Hub will connect to other inspiring neighborhood institutions on Belmont and nearby streets, all within 5-blocks of the Hub including, Made



in Brownsville, 3 Black Cats Café, Brownsville Community Culinary Center, We Run Brownsville, the Brownsville branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, community gardens, and more. We can't wait to harness the home-grown entrepreneurial energy in the neighborhood, work collaboratively with our neighbors, support local residents and small business owners, and build relationships for new opportunity on the corridor.

## FOSTER YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND REDUCE RECIDIVISM

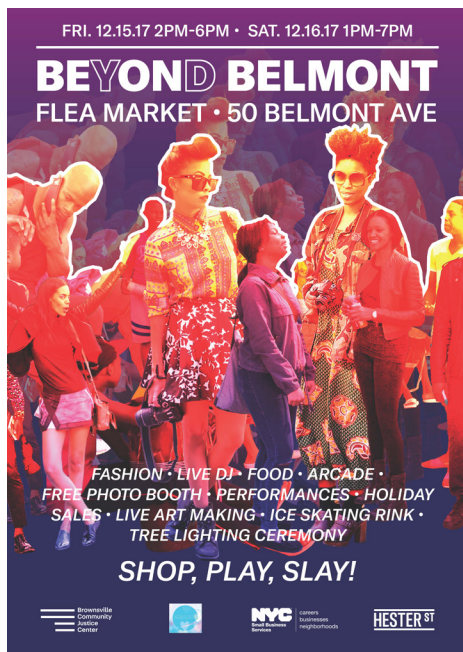
Enterprises that provide skills to connect adults and young people alike to their local economy are proven to reduce recidivism. The Hub is just such an enterprise. We will provide assistance and resources so that existing businesses can reach their potential size and profitability. The Hub will expand BCJC's reach and programs, with more space to house more music, technology, media production, and entrepreneurial enterprises for more young people. These opportunities enhance quality of life for young people, as well as provide alternatives to incarceration for a more just Brownsville.







# THE NEIGHBORHOOD HUB PILOT



In 2017, BCJC worked in partnership with Hester Street and the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to pilot the idea of a Neighborhood Hub along Belmont Avenue. Spearheaded by BCJC's team of young leaders, we organized a two-day holiday flea market to support local businesses and bring the community together.

The Neighborhood Hub pilot was held on 50 Belmont Avenue over a December weekend and welcomed more than 200 visitors. Not only were local entrepreneurs featured, there also were performances by Brownsville's young people. BCJC activated the plaza beside the venue with a skating rink and a tree lighting ceremony that increased foot traffic to the corridor. Through surveys and activities, the market provided BCJC with a platform to gather valuable information about what local shoppers want and need and how to further develop the entrepreneurship learning lab.

The success of the holiday flea market demonstrates the need for a permanent Neighborhood Hub to bolster BCJC programming and foster partnerships in the community to promote youth development, economic revitalization, and community healing.

## PILOT TIMELINE





## PROFILE: JERE HOLLAND UPHER, SPREADLUV BROOKLYN

By helping her family and friends start their own businesses, Jere became inspired to create Spreadluv Brooklyn, connecting entrepreneurs to their community. Her recent work managing a pop-up market with the local 3 Black Cats Café, caught the attention of BCJC – who then brought on Jere for the 2017 Beyond Belmont holiday market. Fulfilling her passion to support her neighborhood, Jere filled the market with local vendors and ensured an interesting mix of products.

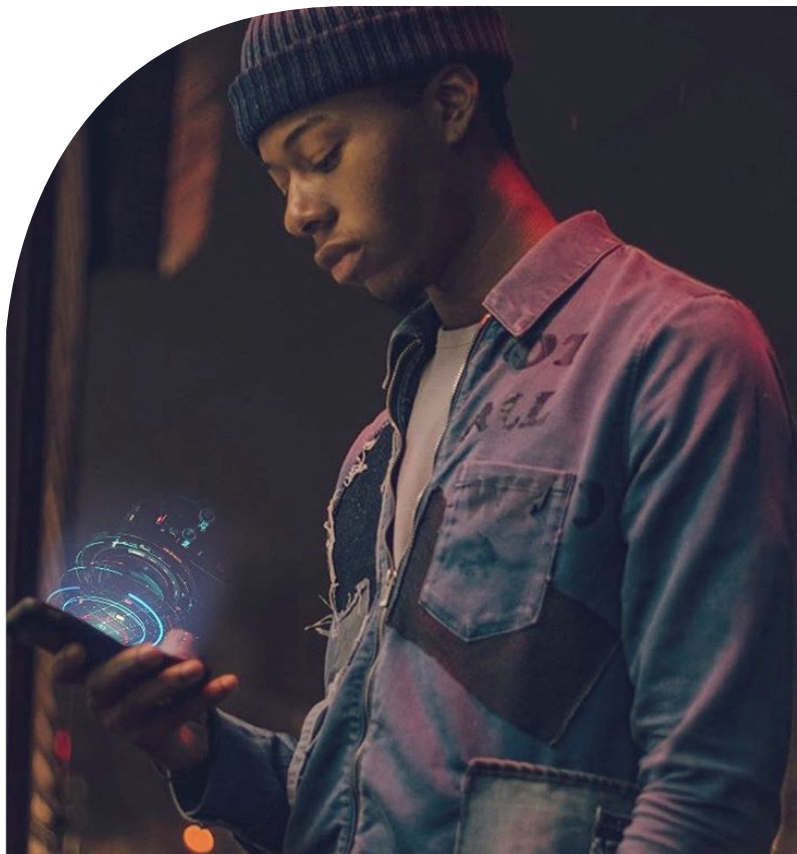
**“It’s easy to hop on the train and go to downtown Brooklyn, but it’s a different feeling when you can shop in your neighborhood and promote businesses that started here.”**

# MEET THE PILOT ENTREPRENEURS!

## PROFILE: KWESI JOHNSON, SCTR7

A local artist and fashion designer, Kwesi sold his hand-crafted clothing and accessories for the first time at the BCJC Beyond Belmont holiday flea market. He has been making shirts, jackets, hats, and other items mainly for friends and family. With the help of BCJC, he received wraparound business development services that helped him debut SCTR7, his business, to his community. BCJC provided business coaching, initial funds to buy materials, and lent him a laptop to work on his website.

**“It was interesting to see how people reacted to things I’ve done... It was great to feel supported by people coming to see what was going on in the community.”**





# LONG TERM SPACE

## WHY 50 BELMONT

BCJC secured a long-term lease and is renovating the ground floor and basement of the currently vacant retail space at 50 Belmont Avenue in order to consolidate our youth empowerment and place-based revitalization efforts throughout Brownsville. The Hub will house all of BCJC's neighborhood programs and is centrally located, convenient to current and future program participants, and walking distance from bus and subway stations. The corner building with full height windows around the ground floor will increase visibility of BCJC programs, encourage walk-ins, and support a vibrant street life on this key corridor. The pedestrian plaza adjacent to the Hub will increase foot traffic, and presents limitless possibilities for public events.

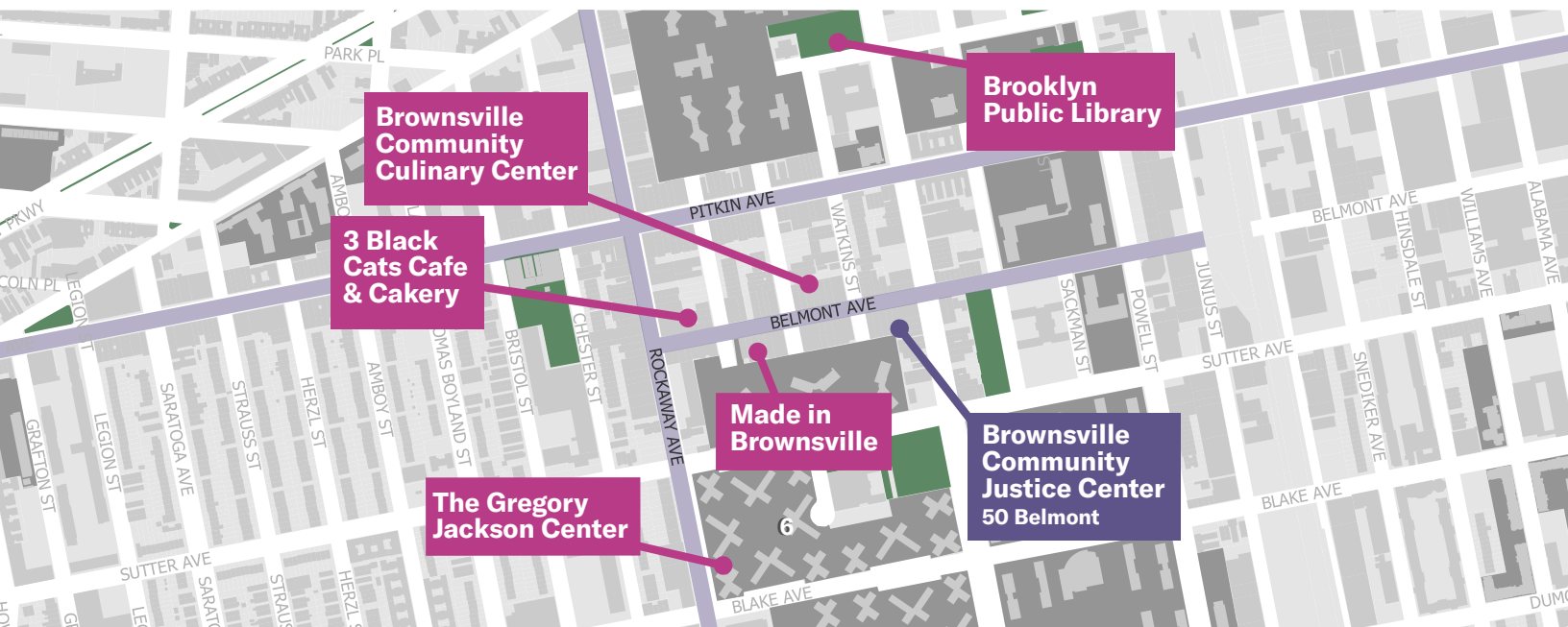
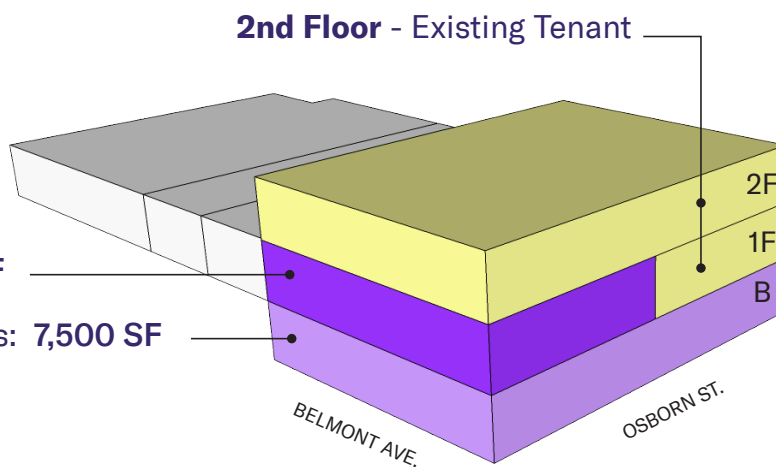
With 10,500 total square feet, the HUB will house a large community meeting space, a music and recording studio, collaborative and private meeting areas, and skills and entrepreneurial development facilities, as well as other programmable space. Renovations will result in a space where the community can gather, local organizations can collaborate and young people can create their work while providing BCJC staff with efficient and productive workspace.

# SPATIAL POTENTIAL OF 50 BELMONT

### Ground Floor - Hub Storefront: 3,000 SF

**Basement** - BCJC Program & Staff Spaces: 7,500 SF

**BCJC Total: 10,500 SF**



## MOVING FORWARD

BCJC's Neighborhood Hub builds on our continued efforts to enhance the socioeconomic vitality of Brownsville. Since 2014, BCJC has hosted a young adult entrepreneurship program for individuals who had contact with the justice system within a year of their enrollment. Over the last several years, BCJC has built strong relationships with locally-owned businesses and organizations. This work has helped leverage \$500,000 in investments in local entrepreneurship, merchant organizing, space activation, and corridor maintenance,

as well as two social enterprises (bakery and business accelerator). The technical support, knowledge network, and training offerings within the Hub are critical to BCJC's place-based strategies for youth development, economic vitality, and community health and healing.

## ACTION STEPS

### ➔ **BCJC - Continue to build and leverage existing relationships to:**

- Secure long-term space
- Seek and secure public and private funding
- Catalyze community to ensure support from community board and capital funding from local councilmembers

### ➔ **Partners - Continue to grow network with BCJC to:**

- Widen the network of local partners
- Gain public support
- Participate in BCJC Neighborhood Hub activities and programs to build skills and access

### ➔ **Funders - Support the programs and capital needs of BCJC**

#### Private

- Private foundations
- Individual donors
- Local government

#### Public

- City capital funds
- NY infrastructure fund
- Federal economic development fund

## NEIGHBORHOOD HUB SUPPORT SYSTEM

