

**Cooperative Plan for Owen Dolen Park  
and Center in Westchester Square as a  
Community/Commercial/  
Arts Center**

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# **SECTION 1: Community Partnership and Overall Vision**

## **Cooperative Plan for Owen Dolen as Community/Commercial/Arts Center**

This paper will suggest a plan for the utilization of the Owen Dolen Recreation Center as a shared space for community, cultural, and commercial enrichment through programs, events, and activities, some geared to the changed demographics of the Westchester Square-Zerega community and the merchants of the Square and some with a wider, borough-wide scope (provided through a partnership with the Bronx Council on the Arts) to attract people into the area. It will also identify organizations to run, fund, and organize these programs (in addition to whatever programs are run by the Department of Parks and Recreation). Last, it will discuss a “grand plan” for the Square beyond Owen Dolen Center to be looked at for the future, including the relocation of the BCA offices in the Owen Dolen Center and a possible children’s museum at some point in the future. The challenges the utilization of this valuable space present will be discussed, and suggested implementation of programs by a partnership among several important stakeholders outlined.

Owen Dolen Park and Center is centrally located and surrounded by the Westchester Square commercial district, which is a transportation hub, with thousands of people passing through every day. It is at the crossroads of several schools, one of which is among the largest high schools in the borough. It is also 1 of the only 2 open/park spaces available to this largely underserved community of 6,400+ residents. For these reasons, the condition and utilization of this space (which is already designed as a community/recreation space) has a profound effect on the Square and its commercial and residential communities, as well as those communities surrounding it. Owen Dolen Park and Recreation Center is the “heart and centerpiece” of Westchester Square. In its current condition it has been an eyesore, a focus of illegal activity and a barrier directly in the way of the progress of the proposed BID for Westchester Square. Any future commercial/community development will succeed or fail depending on the condition and utilization of this key piece of the puzzle.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Owen Dolen Recreation Center is located in the old Westchester Square Public Library Building, and part of the building is also the District 9 offices for the Department of Parks. Approximately a dozen years ago the Center and Park were renovated. The building was made into a Parks Dept Recreation Center, and has had senior programs, after school homework help, and programs for children with special needs (REACH). Several years ago a youth center was located there, which drew its membership from around the Northeast Bronx. However, more recently, both the Park and Center have been in decline. Those programs at the Center are often poorly publicized and attended, and the surrounding park is in such disrepair it has been condemned. Indeed, the park

has become a potent visual symbol of the decline and decay of Westchester Square; urban blight in our very midst.

## **LANDSCAPE AND RATIONALE**

### **Seismic Demographic Shift**

There has been a dramatic shift in the predominant age groups and ethnicities in the Westchester Square-Zerega geographic area. In addition, poverty is a major factor for approximately one fifth of the population (21.4%). This has caused a mismatch and/or lack of those services most needed by this changed demographic.

According to the demographic maps on the US Census Web site<sup>1</sup> (for 2000, the last year for which such figures are available) (see Figures 1-7 in Appendix 1), and relative to the surrounding communities in the 10461 area, for this 6,400+ community:

- 21% of families are living below poverty level
- Younger median age (younger heads of households)
- Largest household size (3-4 persons+)
- Largest Asian population (India, Pakistan, other)
- Largest foreign-born population
- Largest population 5 years and younger (by now school-age, preteens and teens)
- Fewest people over 65

In the years that have elapsed since 2000, the population has only grown, with the building of new apartment houses and multifamily homes, and it can be assumed that the trends outlined above have continued and will continue.

### ***Needs Assessment Survey<sup>2</sup>***

In addition, several months ago volunteers from different community-based groups under the auspices of the Westchester Square Merchant's Association surveyed a population of 213 residents, commercial/property owners, and consumers on perceived needs relative to the establishment of a BID in the Square. Several questions on the survey pertained to Owen Dolen Park and Center and the need for a community center/space, events, and activities. Results clearly indicated strong dissatisfaction with the current condition of the park and center, and a strong need for a community center as well as events and festivals in the Square (see Figures 8 and 9 in Appendix 1).

### ***Community Resources: Existing***

Although there are existing spaces and programs, most are not open to the general community, and there has been no focus on those programs most needed. (See Appendix 2 for listing.)

## **SUGGESTED FOCUS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES**

### **A Cooperative, Mutually Beneficial Plan**

At the heart of the vision/concept outlined in this paper is a mutually supportive partnership among 4 major stakeholders:

- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Bronx Council on the Arts
- Association of Merchants and Professionals of Westchester Square in conjunction with a public/private partnership sponsored by the Westchester Square BID
- Westchester Square-Zerega Improvement, Inc. (WSZIO) in partnership with a Healthcare Partner TBD (eg, Westchester Square Medical Center, Jacobi/Einstein, Affinity Health Plan, Montefiore)

### **There are 3 suggested areas of programs: community; commercial needs and resources; shared programs, events and activities**

**Community:** A shift is needed from senior services to services that support younger families with younger children, preteens, and teens. In addition, services are needed to help educate and support families in financial distress and to reach out to immigrant families to be sure they take full advantage of important services offered them.

BCA will bring important cultural and art-focused programs that can be creative and practical, addressing both the creative and business aspects of being an artist or artisan, as well as weekday and weekend children's programs.

### ***Suggested Focus of Community Programs***

- Parenting skills
  - Caring for your infant, toddler, teen
  - Parent discussion groups
  - Guest speakers
  - The best nutrition for your child (workshop)
  - Your child's health
- Prenatal care
  - Nutrition workshops
  - What to expect when you're expecting discussion groups
  - Exercise for the mom-to-be
- Health screenings (on a regular basis)
- Household management (cooking, nutrition on a limited budget)
- Adult education classes
  - Vocational/training
  - Computers (basic and advanced)
  - ESL programs
  - Voter registration
  - Guest speakers to address special needs of immigrant families (eg, becoming a citizen, etc)
- Children's programs

- Arts (BCA; dance, painting, crafts, drawing, performances, etc)
- Storytelling
- Safety (fire safety, “good touch” “bad touch”)
- Homework help and tutoring
- Volunteer programs for teens (in conjunction with the Merchant’s Association)
- Holiday parties and programs

***Focus of Commercial Needs and Resources***

A thriving merchant and business community in Westchester Square is critical to the well being of both the immediate residential area and the surrounding communities, and vice versa. The following are suggested events/activities at the Center and Park to support the Westchester Square merchant community:

- Central location from which to run events, holiday programs, and festivals
  - Memorial Day, Veterans Day ceremonies, Christmas tree lighting, Easter egg hunt, etc.
- Classes for business owners
- Meeting Space for Merchant’s Association

***Suggested Shared Programs and Events and Activities***

There will be ample opportunity for these groups to come together to collaborate on shared activities. The following are some possible examples:

- Outdoor concerts, performances, and art exhibits
- Community children’s events
- Community meetings
- Sidewalk sales
- Flea markets
- Community meetings

**CONCLUSIONS**

It is very clear that the fate of the Owen Dolen Park and Center is the fate of Westchester Square. We believe that the cooperative plan outlined here among Parks, BCA, the Merchants’ Association and BID, and WSZIO (with a healthcare partner) can be key to making this happen. A **fully utilized** Owen Dolen Park and Center, along with the establishment of the BID, will take the Square from decay to a new era of prosperity and success.

With the funds slated for a complete renovation in the coming years, a window of opportunity has opened to make the Park and Center the showpiece it is meant to be. Now is the time to do it right; such an opportunity may not come again for a long, long, time.

**Addendum: LOOKING BEYOND OWEN DOLEN CENTER**

***Children’s Museum:*** BCA’s idea of locating a Bronx children’s museum at the Huntington Free Library is a good one. Currently, the library is in dire need of capital improvements and repair (parts of the ceiling have fallen in in some areas of the building), and like the dilapidated condition of Owen Dolen Center/Park, adds to the atmosphere of decay and neglect that is inconsistent with the revitalization of Westchester Square. We hope the ongoing negotiations between BCA and the Foundation and Board that run the library will be fruitful.

***Westchester Square Partnership:*** The idea has also come up to locate the major community-based organizations in 1 building to form a mini Westchester Square “service mall.” This would mean the offices of the BID, Merchant’s Association, Bronx Business Alliance, and WSZIO all under 1 roof. This is a great concept, especially as the suggested location is 25 Westchester Square, which is at the center of the Square and across the street from Owen Dolen Park. We hope these ideas for the further development of the Square will be fully supported by our elected officials and other stakeholders in the revitalization of the Square.

Thank you.

## **Appendix 1: Figures 1-9**

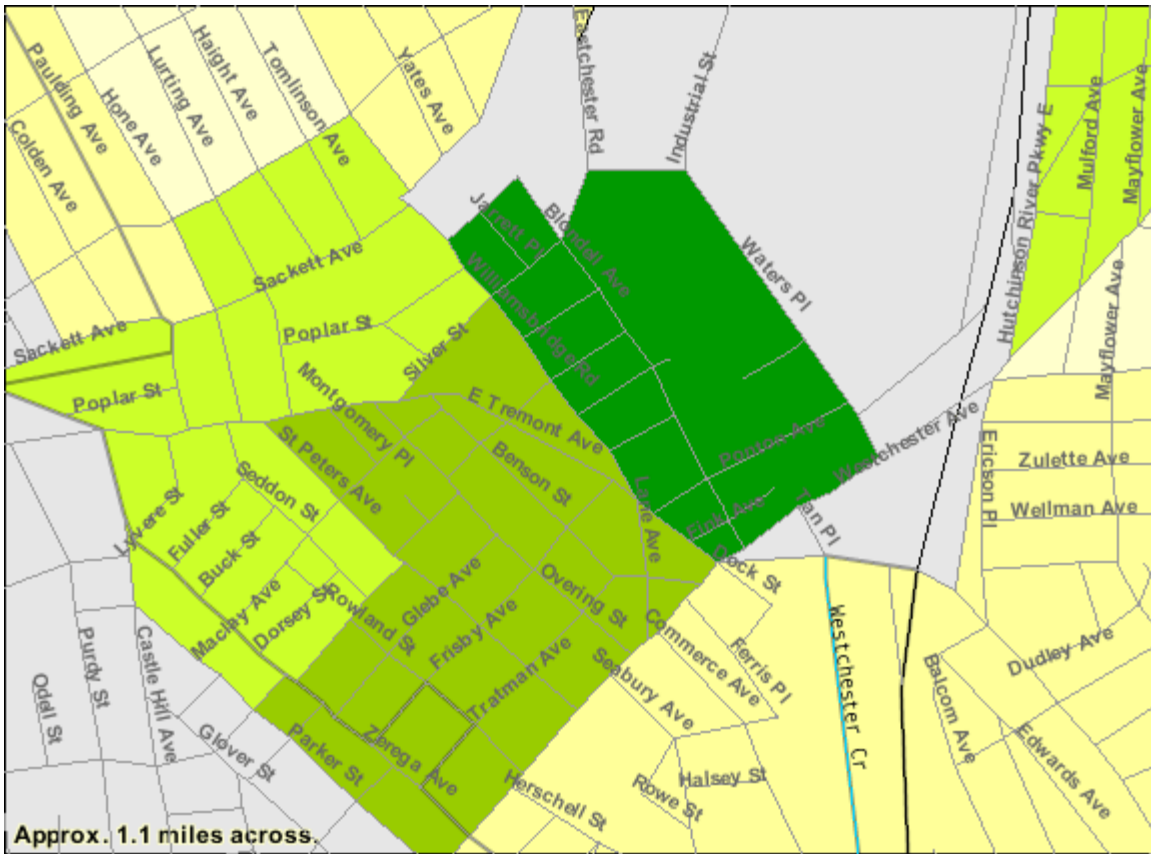











Figure 1. Families living below poverty level.

**Data Classes**

Percent	
	2.3 - 4.0
	5.4 - 9.0
	10.0 - 13.9
	18.0 - 19.5
	50.0 - 50.0

**Features**

-  Major Road
-  Street
-  Stream/Waterbody
-  Stream/Waterbody

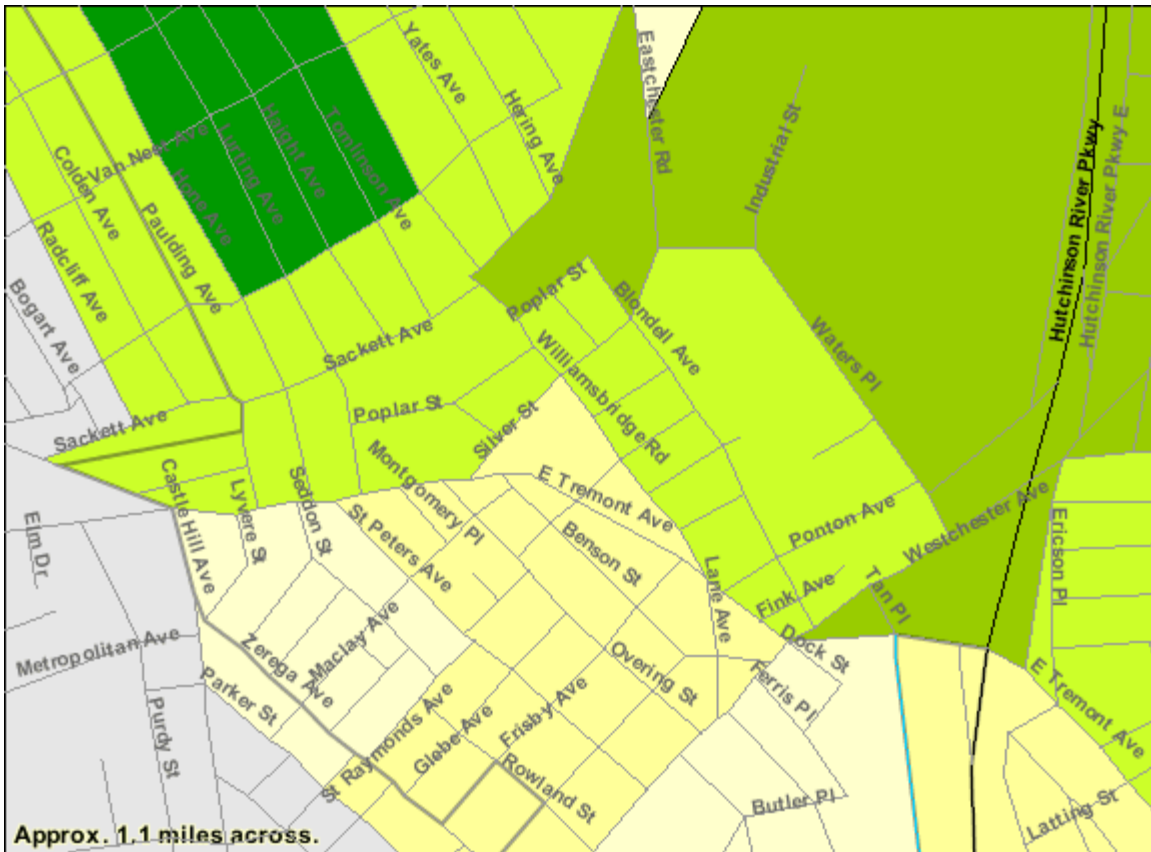











Figure 2. Median age.

**Data Classes**

Years	
	27.7 - 30.7
	32.2 - 35.2
	36.1 - 38.6
	39.8 - 42.1
	43.5 - 44.3

**Features**

-  Major Road
-  Street
-  Stream/Waterbody
-  Stream/Waterbody

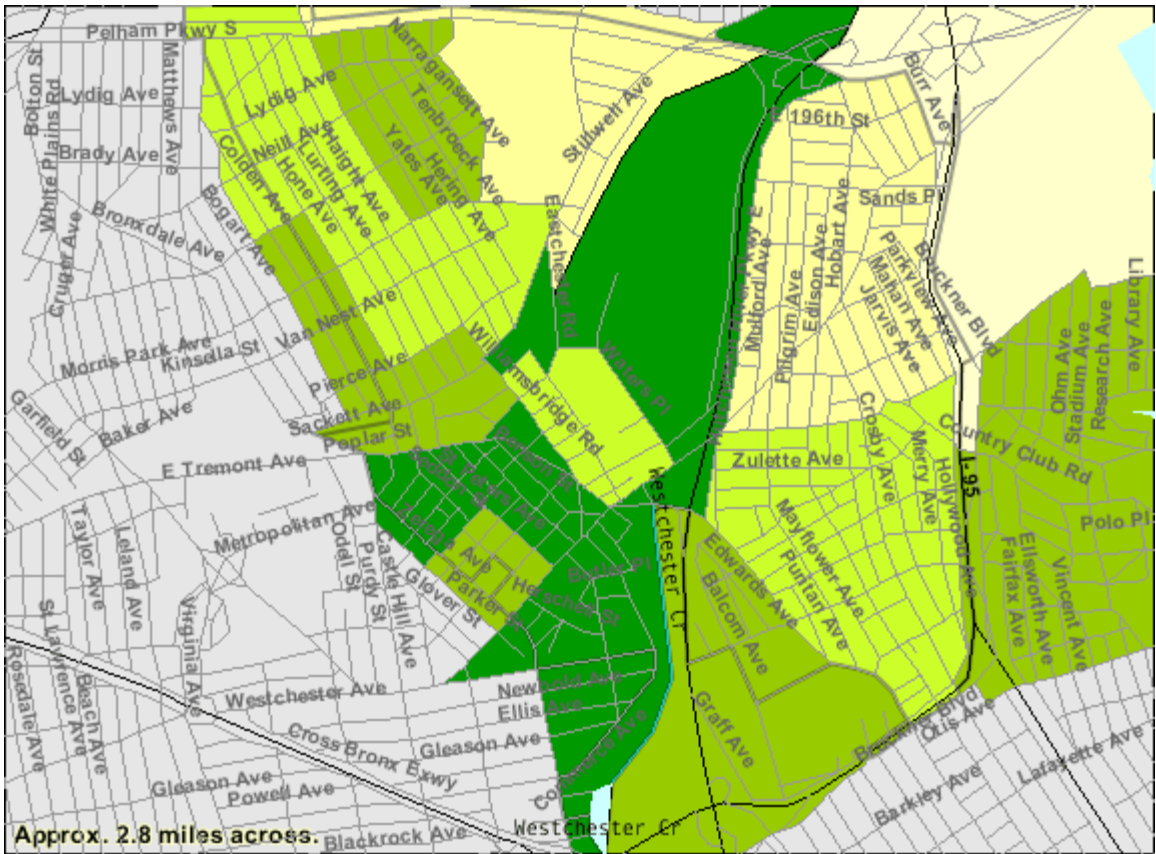











Figure 3. Household size.

**Data Classes**

Persons	
	0.00 - 0.00
	2.02 - 2.18
	2.28 - 2.42
	2.47 - 2.64
	2.79 - 3.28

**Features**

-  Major Road
-  Street
-  Stream/Waterbody
-  Stream/Waterbody



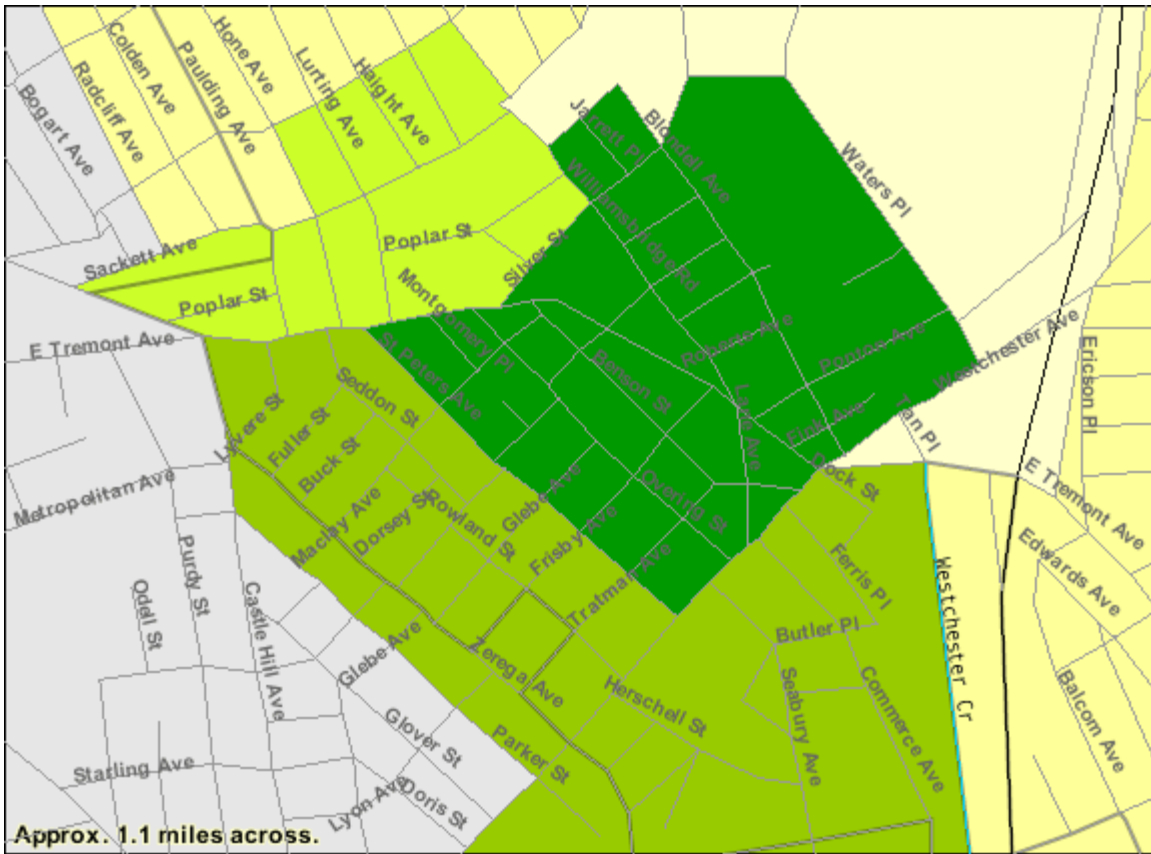











Figure 5. Foreign-born population.

**Data Classes**

Percent	
	9.7 - 14.0
	15.2 - 19.2
	21.3 - 24.6
	29.0 - 32.9
	38.0 - 46.4

**Features**

-  Major Road
-  Street
-  Stream/Waterbody
-  Stream/Waterbody

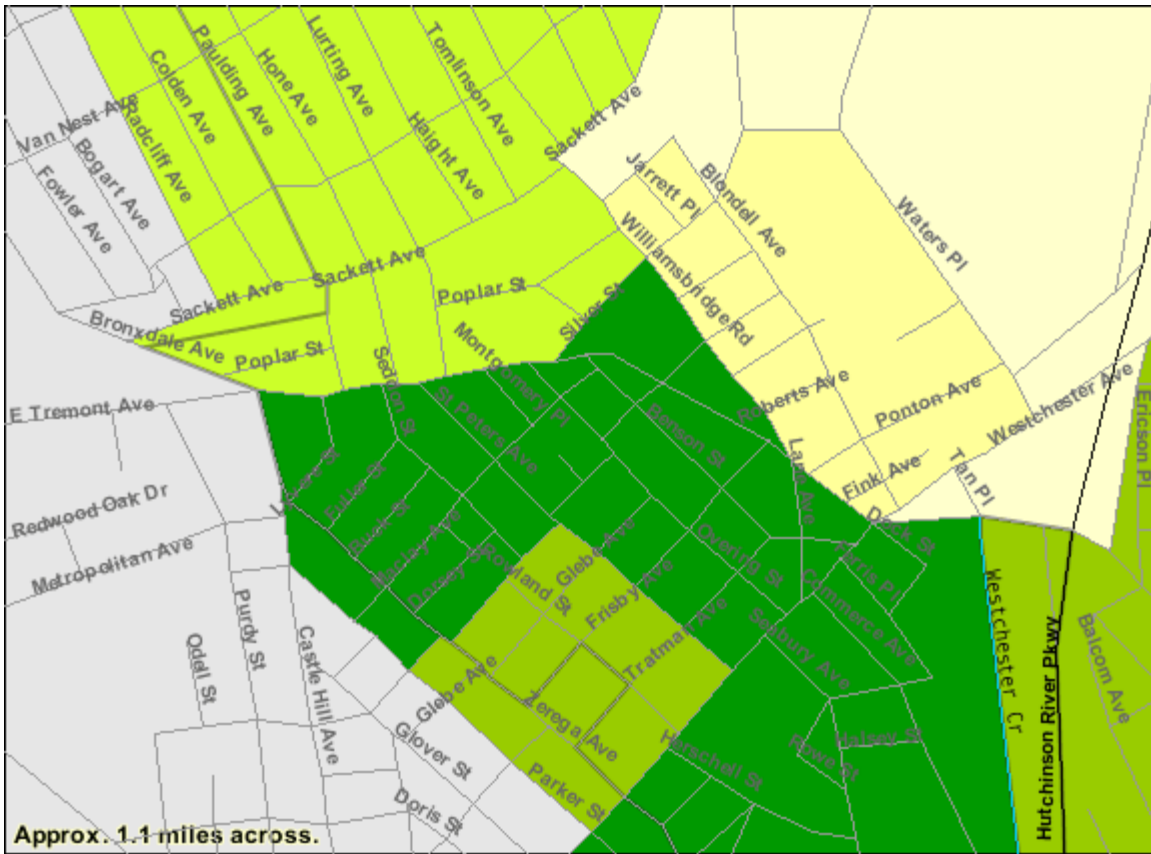


Figure 6. Population  $\leq 5$  years in 2000 (now preteen and teen).

**Data Classes**

Percent	
0.0 - 0.2	Lightest Yellow
4.3 - 5.1	Light Yellow
5.4 - 5.8	Yellow-Green
6.0 - 6.4	Green
8.4 - 9.3	Dark Green

**Features**

- Major Road
- Street
- Stream/Waterbody
- Stream/Waterbody

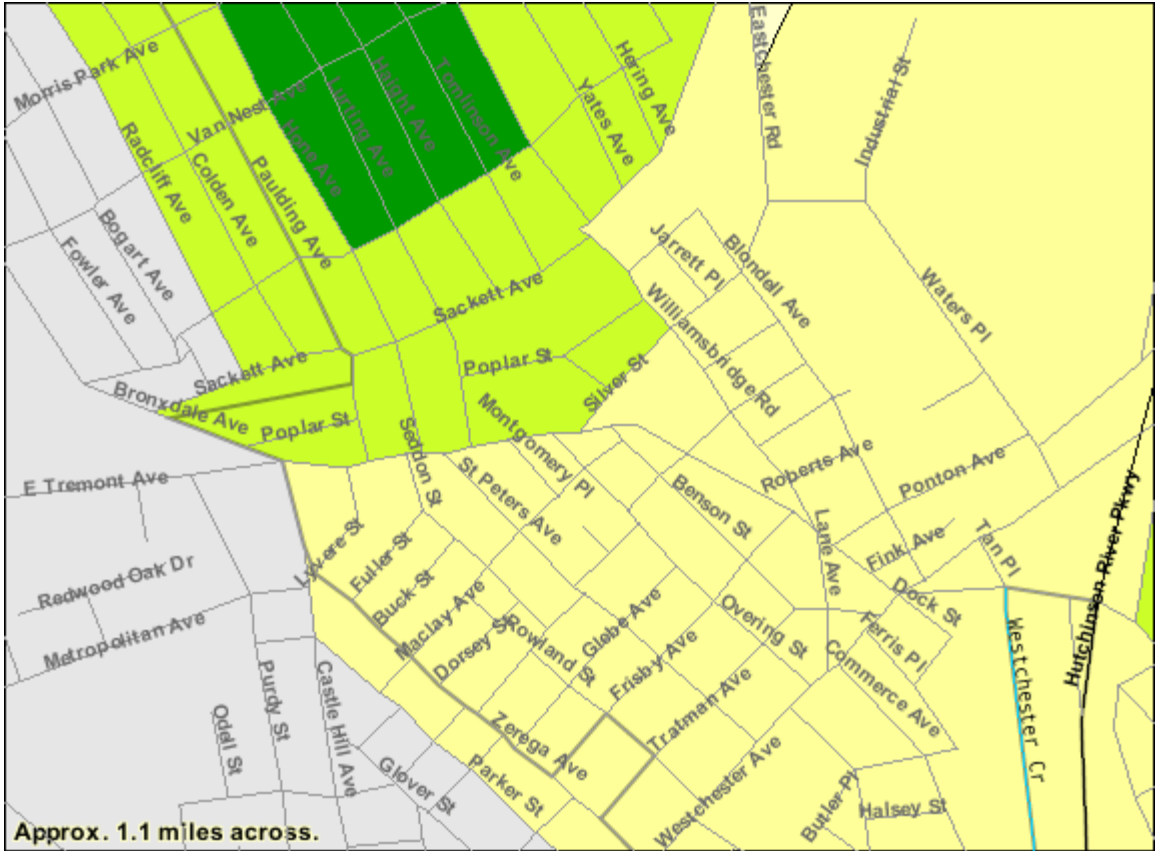






Figure 7. Population over 65.

**Data Classes**

Percent	
0.0 - 5.2	Lightest Yellow
8.6 - 13.5	Light Yellow
17.2 - 18.3	Yellow-Green
20.7 - 22.7	Green
25.3 - 27.6	Dark Green

**Features**

-  Major Road
-  Street
-  Stream/Waterbody
-  Stream/Waterbody

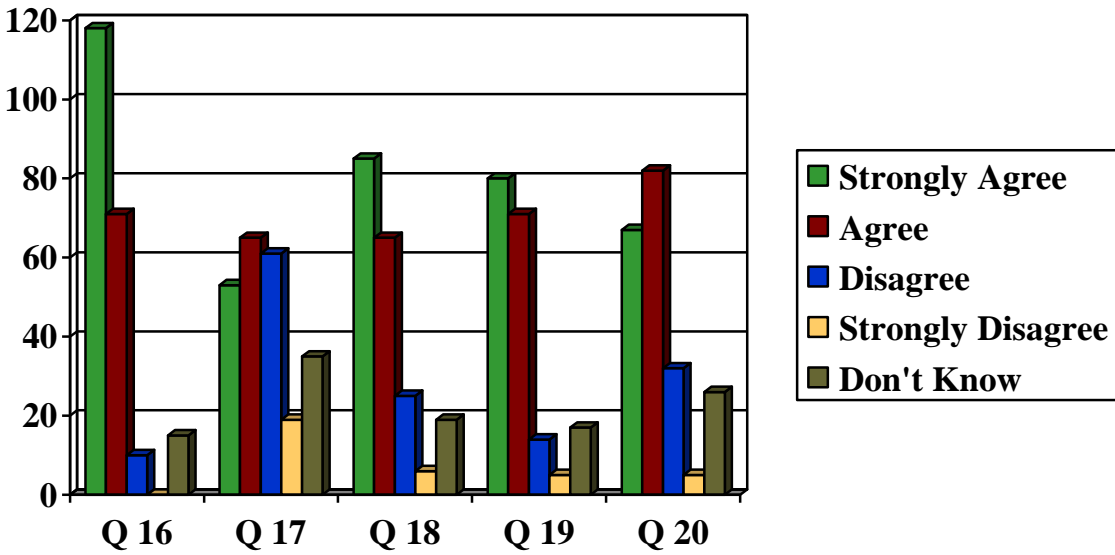


Figure 8. Overwhelming response to Question 16 in the Merchants Needs Assessment Survey: Owen Dolen should support community events and concerts.

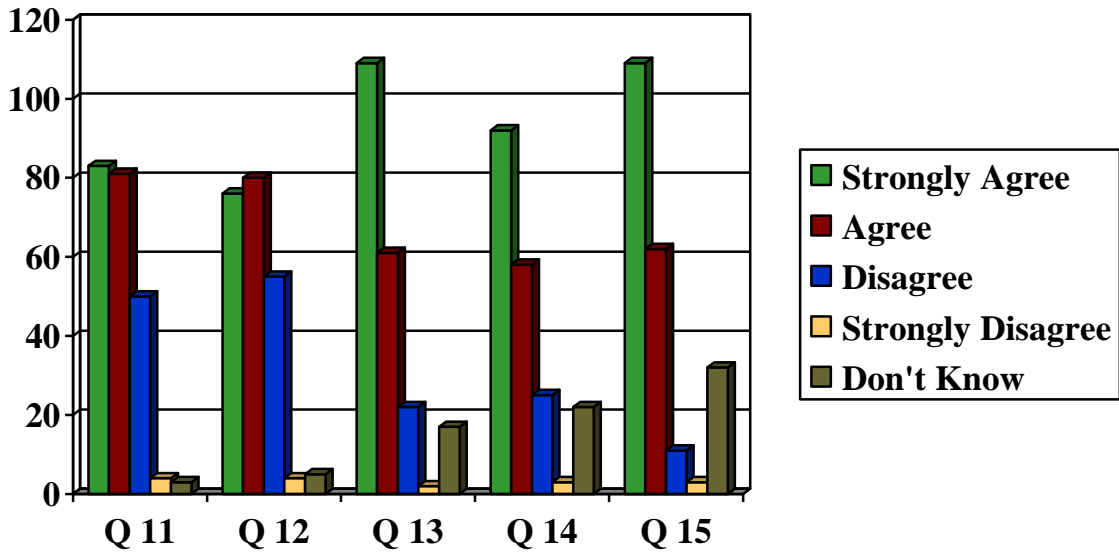


Figure 9. Obvious dissatisfaction with the current state of Owen Dolen Park and Center. **Question Key:** 13. Owen Dolen Park is dirty and not maintained; 14. Owen Dolen Park is dangerous; 15. Owen Dolen is poorly lit.

## **Appendix 2: Existing Resources**

### ***Parks/Open Space***

- 1 medium-sized playground (Pearly Gates), undergoing complete renovation in 2009. This is the only utilizable open/park space for kids at the time of this writing (not including schoolyards and playgrounds)
- Owen Dolen Park: Fenced off for “triage” renovation, not yet under way. Current design not user-friendly, and design has been downright dangerous, encouraging it as a place for drug use and other illegal activities; an eyesore and a drag on the surrounding area (\$5 million dollars slated to go for full redesign and renovation through the City Council and related sources)

### ***Schools***

- PS/IS 194 (The “Zerega” School, K-8, student population 1,250): YMCA programs for kids (fee-based) and after school homework help programs
  - Title 1 programs for parents through the PTA
- PS 12/Lewis and Clark Schools: District 75 (borough-wide) schools for severely emotionally challenged kids
- Lehman High School: After school programs and other clubs and activities for students

### ***Parish Schools and Churches***

- Santa Maria RC school and parish: sports programs and others for students
- St Raymond’s schools and parish, sports and activities for students
- “Storefront churches”

### ***NYPL and Department of Parks and Recreation***

- Westchester Square Branch Library: children’s programs, Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) writer’s workshop (borough-wide)
- Owen Dolen Recreation Center: REACH program, fee-based fitness facilities, BCA programs (knitting, poetry, painting, more to come)

### ***Other***

- WIC program (run by Montefiore Medical Center)

## REFERENCES

1. US Census Bureau Web site. American Fact Finder. Available at: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=10461&\\_cityTown=10461&\\_state=04000US36&\\_zip=10461&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show\\_2003\\_tab=&redirect=Y](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=10461&_cityTown=10461&_state=04000US36&_zip=10461&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y). Accessed October 30, 2008.
2. Association of Merchants and Professionals of Westchester Square. *Needs Assessment Survey Results, September 2008* [PowerPoint presentation].

**SECTION 2: Westchester Square Creative  
Economy Partnership  
Bronx Council on the Arts**

## **DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY**

### **Westchester Square Creative Economy Partnership (WestCEP)**

The Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) will, by its presence in Westchester Square, create a community where local artists and cultural programs help spur sustainable economic development. The mission of BCA is “to encourage and increase the public’s awareness of and participation in the arts and to nurture the development of artists and arts and cultural organizations”. This mission has broader implications, as the Council’s philosophy has always been that community, economic and cultural developments are inextricably linked. BCA is nationally known for its policies and programs that encourage economic development through arts-based initiatives. As a strategy BCA utilizes an assets-based model in using arts-related services to generate economic development opportunities.

Westchester Square as a community possesses many assets that make it attractive to those seeking arts programs and services, bringing many new potential customers to the area:

- Public transportation crossroads for buses: about 8 different bus lines converge on Westchester Square as well as the # 6 subway line
- A small park, adjacent to the Westchester Square Station has potential as a cultural venue
- A business district representing a wide variety of commercial enterprises
- A large number of artists (literary, performing, visual) reside in the community
- An anchor arts organization: Center Stage Community Playhouse has been in the community for 46 years
- Huntington Free Library: a landmarked building with potential for an arts center or children’s museum
- An ethnically diverse neighborhood making this community welcoming to all

### **What BCA Brings to the Community?**

BCA brings 45 years of expertise in delivering programs and services to Bronx communities with the goal of improving the quality of life for all residents by means of arts-related initiatives. Inherent in these efforts is the economic impact. These initiatives have taken the form of audience development for our cultural organizations which leads to an increase of customers to nearby businesses; cultural tourism-bringing outside visitors into the community to patronize both the arts and commercial enterprise; and nurturing new arts-related businesses which attract arts patrons who become customers for adjacent merchants. Some of

these efforts have included the following BCA programs which we expect to be replicated in the Westchester Square vicinity:

**Artisan’s Initiative**, a program designed to provide earned income opportunities and training to Bronx crafts artisans as well as underrepresented artisans of the Diaspora. It is our goal to cultivate a viable cultural and economic asset within our communities by providing these artists with marketing and valuable small business training. We will create a marketplace perhaps on the weekends in the park adjacent to Owen Dolen, to sell their original products, and encourage entrepreneurial activities by this special group of craftspeople. The nature of this marketplace is such that it attracts new potential customers to other businesses as well.

**Bronx Culture Trolley** draws visitors from all five boroughs and beyond. Making a cultural loop through the lower Grand Concourse, it provides an innovative way to travel free while giving its passengers the opportunity to sample several of the area’s hottest cultural attractions, dining establishments, artists’ studios, and entertainment venues on the first Wednesday evening of the month (except January and September). The trolley ride and admission to participating venues along its route are free. Optional cost to passengers is for food, beverages and souvenirs they may choose to purchase along the way. (Note: complete description on page 7) Also currently in operation is the “Seaside Trolley” which covers the City Islands/Pelham Bay area. THIS ROUTE COULD BE EXPANDED TO WESTCHESTER SQUARE, enhancing the profile of the community.

### **The Creative Economy**

At the core of the BCA’s efforts is a model of community revitalization using arts-led community economic development as its primary strategy. BCA is concerned with a range of social issues including civic engagement, community collective action, and quality of life matters. The relationship between culture and commerce sometimes identified as the [creative economy](#) sector is at the core of our community building initiatives. We will work to generate revenue for neighborhoods, increase tourism, strengthen bonds within neighborhoods and pique interest in and increase exposure to the arts. BCA’s Creative Economy strategy has been very successful in the lower Grand Concourse and Mott Haven communities.

### **BCA@ Owen Dolen and/or Huntington Free Library**

Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) will use the former site of the Owen Dolen Senior Center to enhance our current programming and provide new cultural programs to the communities in and beyond Westchester Square. BCA’s offerings will attract individuals of all ages and serve as a beacon in the community. Following are **New Proposed Programs**:

World Music Series: Free outdoor performance series featuring professional Bronx based musicians and ensembles reflecting the wonderful diversity of the Bronx.

Rotating Art Exhibits: The Council will present a series of theme-based exhibits displaying the work of Bronx artists with a focus artists from the areas around Westchester Square

Bronx Writers Corps: The new site will serve as a base for the Writers Corps for professional writers to work with young people as well as a sit for poetry slams

Saturday Mornings for Families: BCA will offer a series of interactive workshops in a variety of art forms for young people and their parents.

Bronx Indies: Monthly performing series featuring professional artists in literary arts, performance art and music

Older Adult Programs: Weekday morning programs in visual and literary arts designed to increase the creative capacity of our older citizens.

Salon on the Square: Monthly gathering of community artists to share their work, combine resources and collaborate on future projects

Arts Information Kiosk: The site will be a repository of information on cultural activities throughout the Bronx

Gift Shop: Artisans Boutique within Owen Dolen

**The aforementioned will complement BCA's current programs:**

### **Support to Organizations**

#### **Community Arts Grant**

The purpose of this grant is to foster the development of local cultural resources responsive to community needs. BCA awarded 41 grants totaling \$83K.

#### **Arts-in-Education Grant**

BCA make grants in support of partnerships between schools and either an individual teaching artists or arts/cultural organizations that focus on the integrated study of the arts and non-arts subjects. This year, BCA provided \$22,750 to 12 school artist partnerships.

## **Bronx Community Arts Fund**

This year BCA was able to provide project development funds that demonstrate a fresh approach to the work or the art form. BCA provided 31 artists and arts organizations \$60,000 for development and presentation of these projects.

## **JPMorgan Chase Program Management Initiative**

Program Management Initiative provides opportunities to upgrade program development for Bronx arts organizations. \$60k was awarded to eight Bronx Arts organizations.

## **SUPPORT TO INDEPENDENT ARTISTS**

Our **BRIO Award (Bronx Recognizes Its Own)** has been providing financial support and recognition of Bronx artists putting forth their very best in the areas of literary, media, performing, and visual arts. On an annual basis, twenty-five Bronx artists receive awards of \$3,000 for artistic excellence in all arts discipline and the awardees were adjudicated by a peer panel. BRIO awardees must complete a one-time public service activity **ACE** to receive their complete cash award.

Bronx Writers' Center's **Chapter One** is an annual competition that provides opportunities for emerging novelists to share their work with an audience, while emphasizing the importance of a strong first chapter. Bronx Writers' Center's **Fellowship and Residency Program** awards two nine-month fellowships annually to fiction writers, poets, playwrights, and screenwriters who reside in the Bronx.

**Bronx WritersCorps (BWC)** is part of a national program created to improve literacy levels and to provide avenues of expression for residents of the most underserved and challenged neighborhoods. The program is in its fifteenth year of sending professional writers to community based organizations in the Bronx. Individuals are introduced to the creative writing field as well as performance poetry. Each participant creates his or her own work or participates in producing a group anthology. Participants at each site make up a team in the Youth Poetry Slam League. A culminating slam was held at the Bronx Library Center.

## **Bronx Writers' Center**

In April 1996, the Bronx Council on the Arts opened the doors of the Bronx Writers' Center (BWC) for the first time. Housed in Westchester Square Library as a literary arts resource for up-and-coming Bronx writers and poets, the Writers' Center features individual and semi-private work areas and a research center with the most recent editions of various writers' guides, giving the writer

the opportunity to work and research in the same place. Still going strong after all these years, the Bronx Writers' Center's literary artists can receive skill-building instruction and attend first-rate workshops that address various levels of writing abilities. Writers with a desire to improve their talents are welcome to take one of the Center's free creative writing workshops, which cover the gamut of literary disciplines.

### ***CrossBRONX***

In April 2008, BCA launched its new digital literary journal *CrossBRONX*, an online publication to be published three times per year encompassing the best writing and digital art with a primary focus on Bronx writers and artists, both emerging and established. This new venture follows the success of BCA's Digital Matrix program which provides an online exhibition space for artists working with new media and continues the Council's ongoing commitment to the exploration of digital arts. To view the first issue of this publication, visit <http://crossbronx.wordpress.com>.

### **The Artisans Initiative**

The Artisans Initiative, a project of the BCA Development Corporation, is designed to cultivate a viable cultural and economic asset within the community and connects with creative, motivated, diverse artisans working in various traditional and contemporary craft forms.

Reaching a diverse immigrant community the program offers training, technical assistance and professional development workshops as well as grant and loan opportunities to underrepresented artisans, living and working in the Bronx. The diversity of the Westchester Square community lends itself to the new cohort of local artisans which can become an emerging economic catalyst.

Participants are also offered small business management counseling, individual assessment and evaluation sessions and marketing workshops to ensure market readiness, offering opportunity for economic advancement through micro enterprise development. For many in the community the creation of handmade goods perpetuates and preserves cultural practices an important aspect of asset building.

Our current focus on building capacity for the individual artisan has initiated important enterprises. The BronxArtWorks™ brand, The Artisan's Boutique, Art as Awards and Cultural Connectivity through gallery exhibitions, provide a cultural setting and social context.



❖ **BronxArtWorks™**

The BronxArtWorks™ brand serves to illuminate the cultural richness of the Bronx, showcasing craft created by immigrant artisans living and working in the Bronx, is helping to build a following through more public exposure and presence in the marketplace. Branding creates value that belongs to the group as a whole, beyond the capacity of the individual, making the work more valuable. The BronxArtWorks™ label has accompanied the work of artisans selling on consignment at the Bronx Museum of Arts gift shop and by artisans vending at the Bronx Food and Art Festival as well as at Culturefest the city's annual cultural celebration. The essential factor in the brand will be the differentiation from other competitors in the market.

❖ **Art as Awards**

The Artisans Initiative has sponsored an *Art as Awards* program in conjunction with The Citizens Advice Bureau, providing commissioned craft/artwork for presentation to honored recipients at their Living Legends reception, an alternative to plaques & statues. Nine artisans from the Initiative were commissioned to create original work and have presented their work to honored members of the community. We will expand our client list to include other local cultural institutions as this program has proved successful. This effort has generated earned income and higher visibility to the efforts of the program.

❖ **Cultural Connectivity – Gallery Exhibitions**

In the past artisans were vital parts of their community. Each artisan became part of the cultural landscape and community that he/she served - a reflection of the community's values, beliefs and industry. By providing an opportunity for local artisans to exhibit their work, we express the project's intent and purpose by introducing the work of these local artisans to the public.

## **Bronx Culture Trolley**

The Bronx Culture Trolley, a project of the South Bronx Cultural Corridor, remains the "must do event" on the calendars of "First Wednesday" regulars from all five boroughs and beyond since its inception in December 2002. Making a cultural loop through the lower Grand Concourse, its riders are treated to some of the hottest cultural attractions, dining establishments and entertainment venues in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. With the help of the Bronx Tourism Council, the BCA operates The Bronx Culture Trolley on the first Wednesday of each month (except January and September) providing Bronxites and tourists alike a fun way to travel via a replica of an early 20th-Century trolley car. Its riders have the freedom to hop on and off to enjoy various activities at stops along the route giving them full control of their evening.

Attractions include art exhibits, poetry readings, film screenings, and live theatrical, musical, comedy, and dance performances at such venues as the Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, Hostos Center for Arts & Culture, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Pregones Theater, Bronx Blue Bedroom Project, Bronx Museum of the Arts Project Space, Bruckner Gallery at the Bruckner Bar & Grill, Hagan Saint Philip Gallery, Haven Arts Gallery, J. Maxson's Bar & Grill, Spanic Attack's Bronx Salon, Yankee Tavern.

The quaint atmosphere of the new Artisans Boutique features a talented group of Bronx artisans whose imaginative creations are yours for the browsing and for the buying.

### **BCA Cultural Card**

The Bronx Cultural Card is designed to connect cardholders to the wide variety of arts and cultural activities in the Bronx while developing new audiences for arts providers and new customers for Bronx business and dining establishments. The card is available free-of-charge to BCA members, subscribers, enrollees and volunteers of the Bronx cultural organizations and businesses listed in the next section as well as to matriculated students in our 12 Bronx colleges and adult education facilities. The Bronx Cultural Card provides two-for-one or discounted admissions, cash or percentage discounts on gift shop purchases, and premiums at local restaurants. Visit [www.bronxarts.org/cultural\\_card.asp](http://www.bronxarts.org/cultural_card.asp) to see what owning the card has to offer. 50,000 cards are distributed annually.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### **Arthandler Training Program**

Since its inception in 1997, the [Arthandler Training Program](#) has provided innovative training programs that directly benefit Bronx residents with jobs while providing service to New York's fine arts industries. An Arthandler is responsible for the maintenance of fine art works and artifacts: intake & preparation, packing and shipping, and exhibition installation and dismantling. Graduates of this program are successfully employed in museums, auction houses and galleries. New classes for Arhandlers would be held at the Owen Dolen site.

### **SM(ARTS): Seniors Meet the Arts**

BCA was selected to participate in this city-wide initiative to provide cultural programs to borough senior centers. Through the combined efforts of the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the New York City Council, BCA was able to place Bronx artists in seven borough senior centers: Bay Eden, Glebe, Hope of Israel,

JASA Van Cortlandt, Kips Bay, COBO/Mt. Carmel, and RAIN Boston Road. These centers chose from a menu of Bronx craft, literary and performing artists.

### **Bronx Indie Artist Series**

#### ***Artists innovating and re-creating traditional art form***

This year BCA congregated a network of new media artists, music and dance performers, speakers, panels and exhibitions, creating a hybrid that is both refreshing and challenging. The Bronx Indie Artist Series combines advancements in technology with the creativity and ingenuity of artists innovating and re-creating traditional art forms. In the Bronx, it is not usual for young and emerging virtuosos to mix genres; that is, traditional – folkloric forms with cutting edge, contemporary styles. For example, an urban-inner city musician may experiment with the *plena* and *jazz*, or West African rhythms and Latin Jazz or Panamanian folk rhythms with rock and so on. Similarly, collectives of visual and spoken word artists are also seeking alternative, informal venues to exhibit, perform, present, etc. so that they may exchange ideas, concepts, and issues.

### **INFORMATION SERVICES**

BCA serves as a clearinghouse of information for independent artists, arts organizations, and community groups. The Council makes available a wide range of resources and services available to our constituents. BCA continues to be the place where people in the Bronx and beyond come to for answers to questions and solutions to problems.

### ***TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE***

While BCA has always committed financial support to Bronx artists and arts organizations we recognize that money alone does not define the artist's ability to prosper. The Council continues to provide Technical Assistance in an effort to spur creative and professional development to Bronx artists. These services complement our grants giving, and enable artists and organizations to maximize their potential.

### **Individual Consultations**

BCA staff meets with both independent artists and arts organizations in areas to advise on areas such as professional development, marketing, audience development, grant writing and fiscal management.

## **Business Development Services**

As a component of our various grants giving programs, these consultancies enhance an organization's ability to develop earned income streams, facilitate audience development and plan for growth over the long term.

## ***Professional Workshops***

This year BCA hosted several professional development workshops important to the arts community in areas such as business development, publishing, artists' submissions, marketing, arts education, and career planning. In addition the Council also hosted artistic development workshops for crafts artists and literary artists. These learning sessions provided the additional benefit of creating a forum where individuals could network to share resources and collaborate. BCA also provided (in conjunction with ARIVA), workshops for artists on tax and financial issues and tax preparation services.

BCA's exemplary track record as a community partner places it in a perfect position to be at the center of revitalizing the Westchester Square area. The work of the Council will encourage community residents to return and encourage new visitors to discover the area's assets.

b:legis/westcepRev.

## **APPENDIX: Listing of Local Artists**

## **Listing of Local Artists**

Focal Point Press  
321 City Island Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10464  
Ron Turner, Director

City Island Theatre Group  
P.O. Box #45  
Bronx, N.Y. 10464  
Joseph Nixon, General Manager

Huntington Free Library and Reading Room  
9 Westchester Square  
Bronx, NY 10461  
Ed Morgan

One World Arts/ Retumba!  
PO Box #7  
Bronx, NY 10464  
Yvette Martinez, Director

Starving Artist Café and Gallery  
249 City Island Ave  
Bronx, NY 10464  
Elliott Glick

The City Island Historical Society & Nautical Museum  
190 Fordham Street, PO Box 85  
City Island, NY 10464

Bronx Spotlight Theatre  
3174 Parsifal Place  
Bronx, NY 10465  
Maria Abbate

City Theatre Project  
170 Tier Street  
City Island, NY 10464  
Nick Garr, Director

Parkchester Chorus  
1778 Seminole Avenue

Bronx, NY 10461  
Jeronimo Paredes, Treasurer

Bronx Conservatory of Music  
Box 633, Baychester Station  
Bronx, NY 10469  
Richard Janniello, President

Bronx Symphony Orchestra  
2141 Muliner Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10462-2002  
Anna Vazquez-Howard, President

Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum  
895 Shore Road  
Bronx, NY 10464  
Clarissa Cylich, Executive Director

Center Stage Community Playhouse, Inc.  
P.O. Box 138, Westchester Square Station  
Bronx, NY 10461  
Donna Bellone

Garces Puppeteria  
1019 Calhoun Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10465  
Nilda Garces