

*Dear Neighbor,*

I am proud to represent the 25<sup>th</sup> Senate District where we enjoy some of Brooklyn and New York's greatest hidden treasures. We have a proud history of civic involvement, and while we remember and honor the past we encourage the new, like the Stronger Together initiative of four of our not-for-profit organizations which will further opportunities for our neighbors. We also enjoy an ongoing history of artistic achievement celebrated in the works of world renowned African American Bedford-Stuyvesant artists and in the rich exhibits of the Brooklyn Historical Society.

*Senator Velmanette Montgomery*

## Welcome Back!

In a much anticipated event, the Guzman family returned to the neighborhood with a new grocery store, serving Clinton Hill, Wallabout, Lafayette Gardens, and Fort Greene.

Senator Montgomery, Borough President Eric Adams, Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo, members of the Guzman family and neighbors celebrate the Grand Opening of the family-owned Key Food Supermarket on Myrtle Ave.



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Albany, NY 12247

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## Senator Montgomery Reports!

Winter 2015-2016

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## Saluting Two Community Builders

### My Friend, Bette Stoltz

It is with great sadness that I salute the passing of one of the truly great ladies of Brooklyn, the much loved Bette Stoltz. Bette worked for her community with every fiber of her being. I can't imagine what Carroll Gardens, the Gowanus, or Smith Street would be today without Bette...she was the engine for everything that has happened and *is* happening in the area! I think Smith Street stands as a monument to her ferocious generosity and vision. We all owe her so much, and we will never, ever forget her.



### The Indefatigable Buddy Scotto

It was a great pleasure and privilege to present a proclamation this year to Buddy Scotto during Veterans Day Celebrations in Carroll Park. Buddy has been a tireless advocate for preservation and reasonable development in Carroll Gardens and the Gowanus area, and he keeps us all on our toes!

## Montgomery Legislation

### Anti-shackling bill...again!

In 2009, Senator Montgomery's first anti-shackling legislation was signed into law banning the shackling of women inmates during pregnancy, labor and recovery. Unfortunately, the practice has continued. This Legislative Session, Senator Montgomery and Assemblyman Nick Perry sponsored legislation to strengthen the law and protect pregnant mothers. Senator Montgomery joins the Correctional Association and advocates to urge Governor Cuomo to end this inhumane treatment...and he has signed it into law!



### College Credit To Count Towards Work Participation Requirement

The 2014-15 budget included language that allows attendance of up to four years of post-secondary education to count toward an individual's public assistance employment requirement where the attendance is consistent with the individual's employment and assessment plan goals, and make corresponding changes to income and resource exemptions for monies set aside for paying for education.

### GED Bill Signed Into Law!

This legislation requires the Department of Correctional Services to establish academic programs to prepare inmates to complete the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and provides inmates with an opportunity to complete a GED prior to release on parole, conditional release, post release supervision or presumptive release. This bill will ensure that inmates will have an opportunity to obtain a GED thereby helping to reduce recidivism and better prepare inmates for successful reintegration into the community.

## Fifth Avenue Committee + Stronger Together = Jobs & Training for Brooklyn

*Stronger Together* is an initiative led by the Fifth Avenue Committee with partners Red Hook Initiative (RHI), Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC) and Brooklyn Workforce Innovations (BWI) focused on adults in one of the five public housing developments in Red Hook and Gowanus (Red Hook East & West, Gowanus Houses, Warren Street Houses, and Wyckoff Gardens.)

*Stronger Together* provides NYCHA residents with access to award winning and free programs including **job placement and workforce training in several sectors, including commercial driving, woodworking, TV/Film, cable installation and employment with NYCHA.**

*Stronger Together* also provides high school equivalency (HSE/formerly GED) classes, English classes, college access and access to benefits, legal and financial coaching.

What makes *Stronger Together* unique is the coordination and commitment among the four nonprofit partners to provide access to successful programs that lead to higher incomes, employment and educational outcomes for residents living in public housing in Red Hook and Gowanus. We are early in year two of a four year effort currently funded by the Change Capital Fund and the New York City Council.

#### Getting Involved

Adults living in Red Hook East & West, Gowanus Houses, Warren Street Houses, and Wyckoff Gardens who are interested in accessing any of *Stronger Together's* programs and assistance, please call Fifth Avenue Committee Community Services Hotline at [347-844-0220](tel:347-844-0220) or via email at [StrongerTogether@fifthave.org](mailto:StrongerTogether@fifthave.org)

FAC, BWI, SBIDC and RHI serve other low and moderate income residents in Red Hook and Gowanus through a variety of other programs as well.

## CELEBRATING CHIEF JUDGE JONATHAN LIPPMAN AND 15 YEARS OF THE RED HOOK COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER



Senator Montgomery with the Honorable Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York.

On October 26, 2015, Senator Montgomery joined the **Red Hook Community Justice Center** in saluting the 48 years of service by departing Chief Justice Jonathan Lippman. He is honored for his advocacy and vision of a court system that serves the public, which he accomplished by increasing funding for courts and civil legal services, mandatory pro-bono service from law students, special and alternative courts, including: community courts; bail reform; and his advocacy for raising the age of adult criminal responsibility.

The **Red Hook Community Justice Center (RHCJC)** is the nation's first multi-jurisdictional community court where a single judge hears neighborhood cases from 3 police precincts serving approximately 200,000 people. The courthouse is the hub for an array of unconventional programs including mediation, community service, and a youth court where teenagers are trained to resolve actual cases involving their peers. The **Red Hook Youth Court** has played an important role in keeping young people out of Riker's Island and the adult criminal justice system. The (RHCJC) connects individuals to appropriate services and offers a housing resource center, which provides support and information to residents with cases in housing court.



# A LEGACY OF ART & HISTORY



**BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

"The Brooklyn Historical Society is dedicated to making Brooklyn's history engaging and accessible to a broad and diverse audience. We are particularly devoted to the

thousands of school children who come with their teachers to learn from exhibitions like *In Pursuit of Freedom* and *Personal Correspondence*. Knowing that the stories of local leaders and activists have been brought to life for a new generation of Brooklynites is deeply gratifying to our capable team of museum educators, historians and archivists, who have, in many cases, found evidence of history that have long been buried deep in the archives." - Deborah Schwartz, President

## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS:

### Personal Correspondents:

#### Photography and Letter Writing in Civil War Brooklyn

April 9, 2015 - Spring 2016

Between 1861 and 1865, over 30,000 men departed Brooklyn to fight in the American Civil War. They left behind spouses, sweethearts, parents, children, siblings, and friends. *Personal Correspondents: Photography and Letter Writing in Civil War Brooklyn* examines how these Brooklynites remembered and communicated with each other, and how they chronicled the war on the home front and the battlefield. Featuring evocative letters and photographs from Brooklyn Historical Society's collection, this exhibition brings to life Brooklynites' everyday experiences during one of the nation's most transformative times.

#### Brooklyn Abolitionists/In Pursuit of Freedom

January 15, 2014 - Winter 2018

This major, long-term exhibit explores the unsung heroes of Brooklyn's anti-slavery movement -- ordinary residents, black and white -- who shaped their neighborhoods, city and nation with a revolutionary vision of freedom and equality. The exhibit is part of the groundbreaking *In Pursuit of Freedom* public history project

## UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMMING INCLUDES:



© Sanviki Chapman

#### Chester Higgins, Jr. and Brooklyn's African Diaspora Thu, Mar 3, 6:30 pm

State Senator **Velmanette Montgomery** introduces acclaimed *New York Times* photographer **Chester Higgins, Jr.**, who has documented New York's African Diaspora for over 40 years, with images that range from the Caribbean Festival to African American Hebrews in Bedford-Stuyvesant. View these remarkable images as Higgins muses on his work with current City Council Member **Laurie Cumbo**, who founded MoCADA, Brooklyn's first Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts.

For more information on times and fees for the Brooklyn Historical Society, visit [www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)

## Black Masters at Boys and Girls High School



Senator Montgomery (center) and Councilman Al Vann (Right) with members of the Bed-Stuy Brownstoners

### A Great Legacy of Art and History

Developed by Brenda Fryson

Photographed by the Distinguished Artist, Che Baraka, Director of the Skylight Gallery

Written by Jacqui D. Woods, Director Emeritus of the Skylight Gallery, Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Special Thanks to Mr. Bernard Gassaway, former Principal, Boys and Girls High School

(The original brochure was a joint project of Brownstoners of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Inc.; Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation; Bed-Stuy Alive! 2014; and Boys and Girls High School)

### BLACK MASTERS AT BOYS & GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Boys and Girls High School is the repository of the largest collection of African-American art in a New York City public school.



It is fitting that the momentous collection of art at Boys and Girls High School is introduced in the gracious, curving entry into the building. The eye travels from one magnificent sculpture to the next...each conveying a message of hope and remembrance.

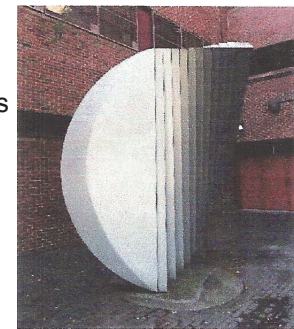
In the courtyard of Boys & Girls High School stands the "Middle Passage," a sculpture by **Ed Wilson**. Jo Thomas, writing in the *New York Times*, in 1995, said of this work:

"...hauntingly, three gently curving slabs of concrete stand side by side; as you gingerly walk between the slabs, you see his signature narrow band of bronze bas-relief portrayals of families on slave ships in chains; small faceless despairing figures." This work is a powerful means of engaging youth in an important historical period—the horrors of slavery."



The courtyard is also home to "Air Afrique #4", by sculptor **Chris Shelton**. The painted-steel sculpture is dedicated to Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The final work in the courtyard is the masterful circular sculpture, by **Todd Williams**, (1939-).



The exterior of the school features **Ernest Crichlow's** untitled mural, suffused with soft tones of yellow, blue, green, brown, and measuring 110' by 7'. The present is represented by the bold, reflective face of a student. The mural continues with a series of symbolic figurative images that capture the challenges and hopes of blacks, including the South, with its cotton fields. Three sets of hands—white, black and brown—represent international unity. The mural concludes with hope for the future, as represented by a black infant being

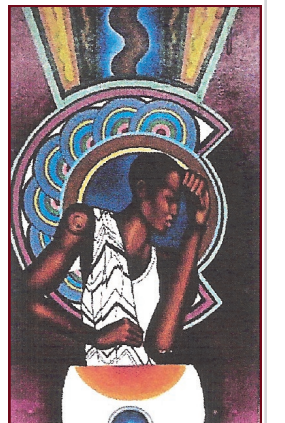


held aloft in strong, black hands. In her seminal paper, "Art to Educate: A History of Public Art in the New York City Public Schools, 1890-1976", Dr. Michele Cohen states, "Given his work, history and familiarity with black artists in New York, Brooklyn's Ernie Crichlow was a

natural choice as the curator for Boys and Girls High School. Working closely with the architect and planner, Max Stein, and the architects at Max O. Urbahn Associates, his selection of black artists will stand the test of time."

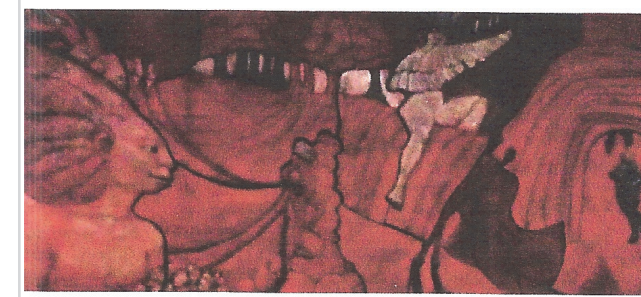


The remaining pieces in the collection appear on the first floor of the building, and include **Eldzier Cortor's** figurative panels with "Music and Dance" work, which inspired the exciting new work by artist **Che Baraka Norman Lewis**, (1909-1979), viewed by



many as the first major African-American abstract expressionist and modernist was a colleague of **Ernie Crichlow**, **Jacob Lawrence** and **Romare Bearden**. His bold blue, black and white triptych features abstract geometric figures and his hallmark ideographic dancery glyph-like figures. The dramatic, untitled piece dominates the walls outside of the auditorium. Norman Lewis' work has sold at Christie's and Sotheby's auctions, and is in many prominent collections, including those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Modern Museum of Art.

**Camille Billops' "War of Fives"**, with its fairy-tale like scenes of



creatures and demons, inspired by the Vietnam War, hangs at the entrance to the auditorium. **Fern Stanford's** vibrant mural is located close to the gymnasium. The work features overlaid drawings of faces and hands, with geometric forms that are integral to the mural.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, in a 1969 paper entitled *Courage: the Black New York Struggle for Quality Education*, acknowledged that, "...the Black Bedford-Stuyvesant community was the epicenter for the organized effort to gain community control of the schools and to improve education for its children." Opening in 1976, the new Boys and Girls High School was viewed as the beginning of a bright new day for public education for all, and especially for black children. Art was deemed important to the comprehensive cultural and social studies education of our youth, and the permanent art collection was viewed as integral to this premise. The collection is the only repository of Black art of this magnitude and value in a New York city public school.

The works continue to inspire and educate.