



RESEARCH REPORT

Empowering Young People to Make Their Place

A Case Study of the Marcus Garvey Youth Clubhouse in Brownsville, Brooklyn

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Empowering Young People to Make Their Place

Introduction

How can creative placemaking efforts help further the goals of an organization committed to involving young people in its efforts to reduce crime and incarceration and promote community? Although youth-centered programming dates back decades, traditionally it has been more about “keeping kids out of trouble” than actively engaging with their needs. But increasingly, the benefits to actively engaging with young participants in formative work have become clearer: by better understanding the needs and goals of youth, programs can position themselves to better serve them and their communities. This brief explores this dynamic through a case study of the Marcus Garvey Youth Clubhouse (the Clubhouse), in Brooklyn, New York.

The Clubhouse is a project of the Brownsville Community Justice Center (BCJC), an initiative of the Center for Court Innovation. The Clubhouse involves residents of the Marcus Garvey Apartments (formerly Marcus Garvey Village),¹ L+M Development Partners (L+M, a real estate development firm), Columbia University, Made in Brownsville, and other local stakeholders in the Brownsville area. The Clubhouse was conceived and developed in early 2015, when BCJC, which was already doing work in the neighborhood, worked with youth to identify and clarify a need for a space for young people in the development. This collaboration resulted in a project led by youth nearly every step of the way, from assessing the needs of their community to identifying solutions and working together to bring their ideas to fruition. The arts have played a role throughout this engagement, but the Clubhouse is also a creative endeavor because it is created not just for, but by, its users. What makes the Clubhouse’s design and development creative are the ways in which it has been collaboratively selected, designed, built, and programmed.

Box 1 discusses creative placemaking and public safety and describes the three case studies of creative placemaking that accompany this brief.

BOX 1

Creative Placemaking and Community Safety: Research Agenda

Public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors have begun using creative placemaking strategies to address the challenges facing disinvested communities and their residents, with barriers to public safety being one area of focus. *Creative placemaking* is a strategic and collaborative approach to the physical, social, and economic development of neighborhoods around arts and culture. We understand “arts” broadly to include murals, music, sculpture, and dance, but it also incorporates creative work more generally, such as promoting entrepreneurship, creatively engaging stakeholders, and using space in novel ways.

Although prior work has drawn links between creative placemaking and public safety, we lack specific knowledge about how public safety-oriented programs that integrate creative placemaking address public safety challenges. This is one of four case studies, and a report synthesizing common themes, that aim to fill this knowledge gap. The other studies include the following:

- **The Beerline Trail and ARTery** project in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, focuses on how cultural organizations are working with police, other local law enforcement agencies, and community groups to turn places perceived as unsafe or actually unsafe into community assets.
- **Eden Night Live** in Alameda, California, is an effort by the county sheriff’s department to build a community space by working with community developers, artists, and arts and cultural organizations and to rethink the department’s mission, priorities, and ways of engaging with the community.
- **The People’s Paper Co-op** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, analyzes artist-led programs and initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism and working with formerly incarcerated residents through transformative artmaking.

The four programs featured in this series vary in how they address community safety through creative placemaking. The case studies discuss their design, implementation, challenges, and successes. This work aims to inform others interested in understanding how creative placemaking improves community safety, as well as how to measure the effectiveness of these interventions. Although creative placemaking is only one part of the work local stakeholders are undertaking to improve community safety, these case studies focus on that thread.

The Urban Institute collected information for the creative placemaking and community safety case studies between August 2017 and March 2018. Data we collected include semistructured phone interviews with ArtPlace/LISC staff, semistructured, in-person interviews with stakeholders, broadly defined to include community leaders, local artists, nonprofit partner staff, and city government agency staff, in-person focus groups with program participants, systematic observations of key events (i.e., planning meetings, public events), surveys administered by site staff, and a document review of quarterly reports, memos, grant applications, presentations, and other materials. Content, survey, and secondary data analysis methods were used to identify common themes and recommendations presented in the creative placemaking and community safety case studies.

The Brownsville Community

Many of the challenges that have faced New York, and urban America more broadly, in the 20th century can be found in Brownsville. At the turn of the century, most neighborhood residents were immigrants (largely Russian Jews) living in overcrowded, and often unsafe and unsanitary, housing. Political activism was common: Margaret Sanger started the United States' first birth control clinic in the neighborhood in 1916, and residents voted for socialist candidates in the subsequent decades and participated in the Civil Rights Movement, including at one point advocating for (rather than against) the construction of public housing (Pritchett 2002). This activism, during the 1940s and 1950s, was occurring as African American and Latino households began to move into the neighborhood. Although there were some efforts to build social and organizational ties with the new residents, tensions continued to grow as the neighborhood lost the industrial jobs that had brought them there. This tension was most famously illustrated by the 1968 teachers strike, instigated when the neighborhood school board (given control as part of a decentralization effort) fired several teachers, who were mostly white and Jewish. The cleavages from this strike divided the neighborhood and the city (Rieder 1985). Arson and disinvestment followed, leaving empty lots scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Today, although modest redevelopment has been occurring since the 1980s, Brownsville still faces many challenges. It has the highest concentration of public housing in the United States (24 percent of neighborhood residents live in public housing in several developments), and close to 50 percent of residents 17 or younger are at or below the federal poverty level (Roussine et al. 2016). Brownsville is also at the forefront of issues surrounding community safety: it has the second-highest rate of currently incarcerated individuals in the city; it is characterized as a high-crime neighborhood; and it has had tense relations with law enforcement, notably illustrated by its being an epicenter of the New York City Police Department's controversial stop and frisk policy (Roussine et al. 2016).

Chronic challenges of poverty and community safety make Brownsville a neighborhood in which young people grow up with a range of social and economic resource constraints. Not only are local economic opportunities limited, but the existence of multiple public housing developments in the neighborhood has meant that many issues surrounding territory and turf have developed over time, and youth from one part of the neighborhood may feel unsafe in another. When schools, jobs, transportation, and amenities are located elsewhere, youth may feel trapped where they are. These limitations have spillover effects, as more school is missed and job opportunities are foregone.

Marcus Garvey Village

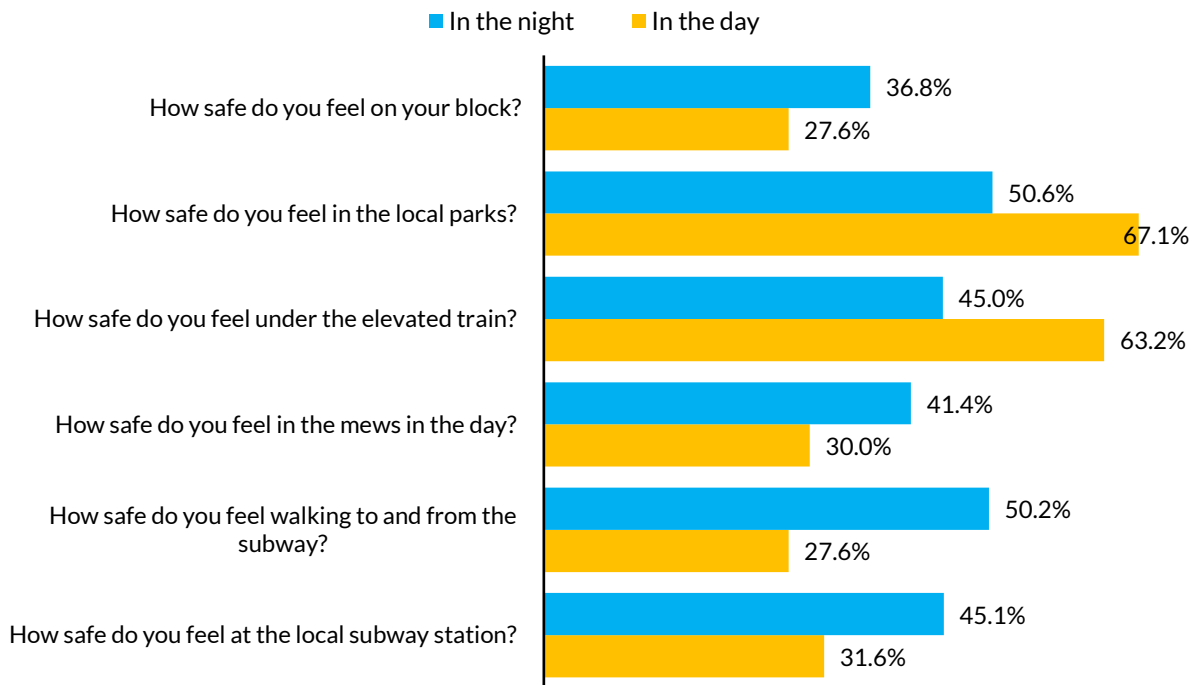
Marcus Garvey Village was conceived and developed in the early 1970s, when the social and economic consequences of conventional approaches to urban planning and development were placed under public scrutiny after Martin Luther King Jr.'s death spurred riots nationwide. Responding to this challenge, the New York state legislature established the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) in 1968. UDC was charged with developing low- and middle-income housing to integrate communities by income and race in an effort to reduce neighborhood violence.

As part of the UDC's Model Cities Urban Renewal Initiative, Marcus Garvey Village was constructed between 1973 and 1976 by the UDC in partnership with the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies and the Museum of Modern Art's Department of Architecture and Design. Finalized shortly after the UDC halted the production of new housing developments and dissolved as an agency in 1975, Marcus Garvey Village used a low-rise, high-density mews design (with home entrances arranged around courtyards or alleys rather than the main street grid) to meet the needs of families with children and to cultivate a community atmosphere—or, as then-UDC president and CEO Edward J. Logue called it, the “low rise, lots of children solution.”² The development was funded through New York State's Mitchell-Lama program, which provided low-interest loans and tax abatements in exchange for profit limitations, tenant income limits, and agency oversight.³ Absent ongoing maintenance and community programming under the management of a private company that may have otherwise bolstered community development, Marcus Garvey Village became fertile ground for an emerging and persistent drug market and associated gang violence, contrary to the complex's design goals of promoting interaction and community development. This pattern of economic and social disenfranchisement was exacerbated by a shifting housing policy landscape, particularly in the wake of President Nixon's suspension of federal subsidies for housing programs in 1973.

Issues of community and group violence continued to loom large in Marcus Garvey Village when it was acquired by L+M in 2014 and renamed the Marcus Garvey Apartments. Before this acquisition, L+M commissioned a community service needs assessment by a local nonprofit agency, the Saboath Group, which found that moderately large proportions of the 259 surveyed residents⁴ reported feeling unsafe in their neighborhood (figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Share of Marcus Garvey Apartments Residents Feeling Unsafe or Very Unsafe, 2014



Source: Service needs assessment conducted by the Saboath Group between June and July 2014.

The assessment showed that residents' top five concerns included gangs, drugs and alcohol, noise, cleanliness of streets, and lighting. In response to these issues, residents expressed interest in several areas of programming they believed would improve the quality of life and earning potential of tenants and their families (table 1).

TABLE 1

Marcus Garvey Apartments Residents' Desired Services, 2014

Service	Residents desiring service (%)
Exercise and fitness counseling	39.3
Job training and referrals	30.4
Youth sports	21.1
Nutrition and food counseling	16.6
College preparation	16.2
Gun violence prevention	16.2
Tutoring for youth	14.6
GED preparation	14.6
Legal assistance for credit repair, debt collection, or child support	14.2

Source: Service needs assessment conducted by the Saboath Group between June and July 2014.

To address these issues, L+M partnered with a local organization, Project EATS, to fill one of the many vacant lots in the apartment area with a half-acre urban farm that would operate a weekly stand throughout the summer, along with several other community programming activities. One year after L+M assumed management of the Marcus Garvey Apartments, they also collaborated with BCJC to engage justice system-involved youth ages 16 to 24 residing in the Village and surrounding neighborhood to identify meaningful solutions that respond to residents' concerns. With a long-standing history of robust public safety and youth development programming, BCJC's introduction to the Marcus Garvey Apartments represented a shifting tide to divert youth in the neighborhood from justice involvement and link them to social and economic resources.

Clubhouse Goals and Leadership

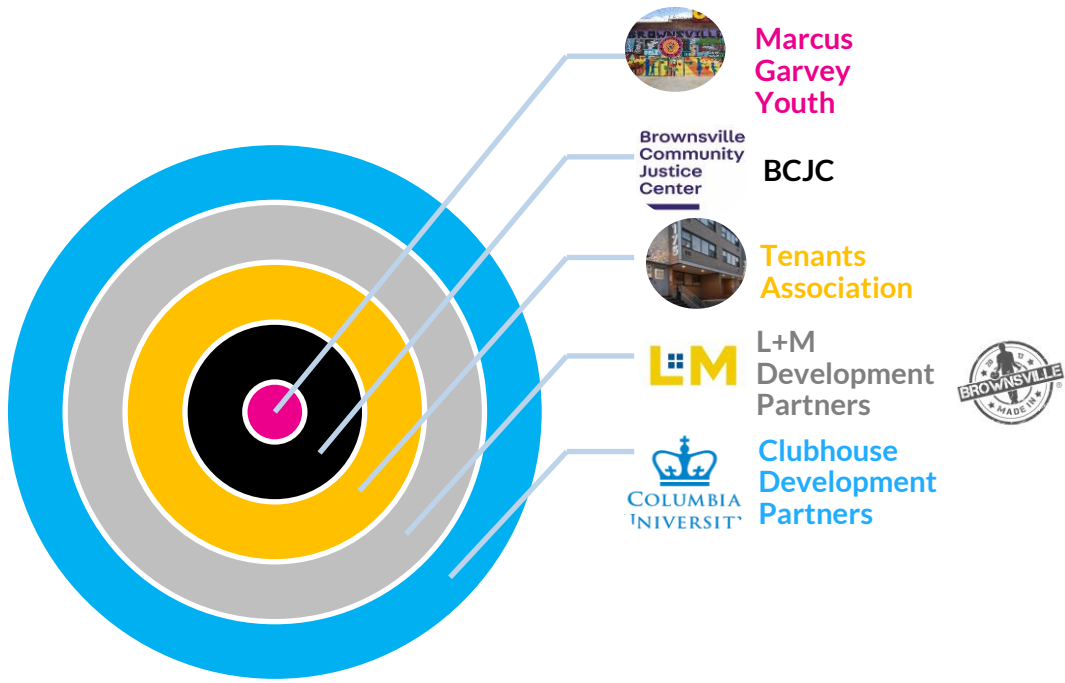
Since its inception as a project of the Center for Court Innovation, BCJC has worked to prevent and minimize Brownsville residents' connection to the growing phenomenon of mass incarceration through a range of programming designed to strengthen public safety and enhance the neighborhood's livability and quality of life (see box 2 for descriptions of BCJC programs and activities in the Brownsville neighborhood).

As part of its cooperative agreement with L+M, BCJC was tasked with "creat[ing] a dedicated pro-social space for residents and young people living within the development" through three measurable activities: public art projects, community benefit projects with Marcus Garvey Apartments residents, and community events. Under this charge, BCJC facilitated programming with Marcus Garvey Apartments youth, and through its engagement and assessment of their needs, the development of the Clubhouse unfolded. Developed in collaboration with Marcus Garvey Apartments youth residents, the Clubhouse was designed to engage youth in civic and creative placemaking activities that included

temporarily redesigning and activating a vacant lot in the surrounding area where crime reportedly flourished.

Figure 2 shows an organizational map of Clubhouse leadership and decisionmaking (see appendix A for a more detailed logic model). Youth are at the heart of Clubhouse leadership because they are seen as the experts on what youth in the Marcus Garvey Apartments need. Their input is solicited by BCJC staff, who lead youth recruitment and facilitate programming. With support and guidance from BCJC, youth share their ideas for programming with the Marcus Garvey Tenants' Association to ensure that decisions align with the interests of the community and that everyone has a say in how best to tackle programming. Upon agreement from the Tenants' Association, L+M takes the lead with funding and management decisions to ensure that programming and other considerations are brought to fruition. Finally, creative partners such as Made in Brownsville and students and faculty from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation supported the development of the Clubhouse. Made in Brownsville is a creative service agency that promotes postsecondary education and economic mobility by offering programs and mentorship opportunities to young people that develop skills related to design, art, multimedia, technology, and communications and by engaging in place-based community revitalization efforts.⁵

FIGURE 2
Leadership and Collaboration Structure



BOX 2

Brownsville Community Justice Center

The Clubhouse is one element of BCJC’s work.⁶ BCJC is a demonstration project of the Center for Court Innovation and the Fund for the City of New York that works to build “off-ramps from the criminal justice system” for young people ages 13 to 24 in Brownsville. Programming includes case management, life skills group, workforce readiness and skills training and certification, community benefits projects, and linking young people to internship and employment opportunities. BCJC targets young people at risk of involvement, or already involved, in the courts.

Projects include

- providing incarceration alternatives to judges and receiving referrals from the Department of Probation, Office of Children and Family Services, and other local organizations;
- the Belmont Revitalization Project, a placemaking project along Belmont Avenue that involves cleanup, design elements, and programming;
- the Learning Lab, an onsite computer room with drop-in and scheduled programming;
- community service initiatives throughout the neighborhood; and
- “Virtual Brownsville,”⁷ a virtual reality game made by Brownsville youth to capture their community and challenge negative perceptions of the neighborhood.

A key element of BCJC’s programming is its B Live youth-driven social enterprise program, in which participants are provided a stipend and engage in six months of programming in three phases that use a project-based learning model (figure b.1). During phase one participants enroll, discuss interests, and work on some job readiness preparation (such as resume building or finding documents); during phase two, residents engage in vocational training and workshops related to their interests and participate in community benefits and civic engagement activities; in phase three they are placed in an internship related to their interests. The stipend ends after six months, but participants still have access to programs and resources.

FIGURE B1

B Live Program Model



Milestones and Activities

The development of the Clubhouse was a collaborative effort, with youth voices steering progress. The formal agreement among BCJC, L+M, and C&C Management, which started in February 2015, called for BCJC to complete one public art project, one community development project per quarter, and two community events through activating a vacant lot in the Marcus Garvey Apartments. The agreement included site buildout, regular programming and weekly open hours, maintenance, promotion of a volunteer and user base beyond BCJC involvement, and development of a process for resident access.

BCJC started its concrete involvement with community residents in early 2015 with a concerted “MGA Shakedown” engagement and recruitment strategy. During a seven-day period, staff made it their goal to meet and shake hands with 70 residents.⁸ This early outreach led to the initial justice community group that would help do the visioning and planning for the Clubhouse (figure 3).

FIGURE 3
Project Timeline



Source: Images courtesy of Made in Brownsville.

Siting and Designing the Clubhouse

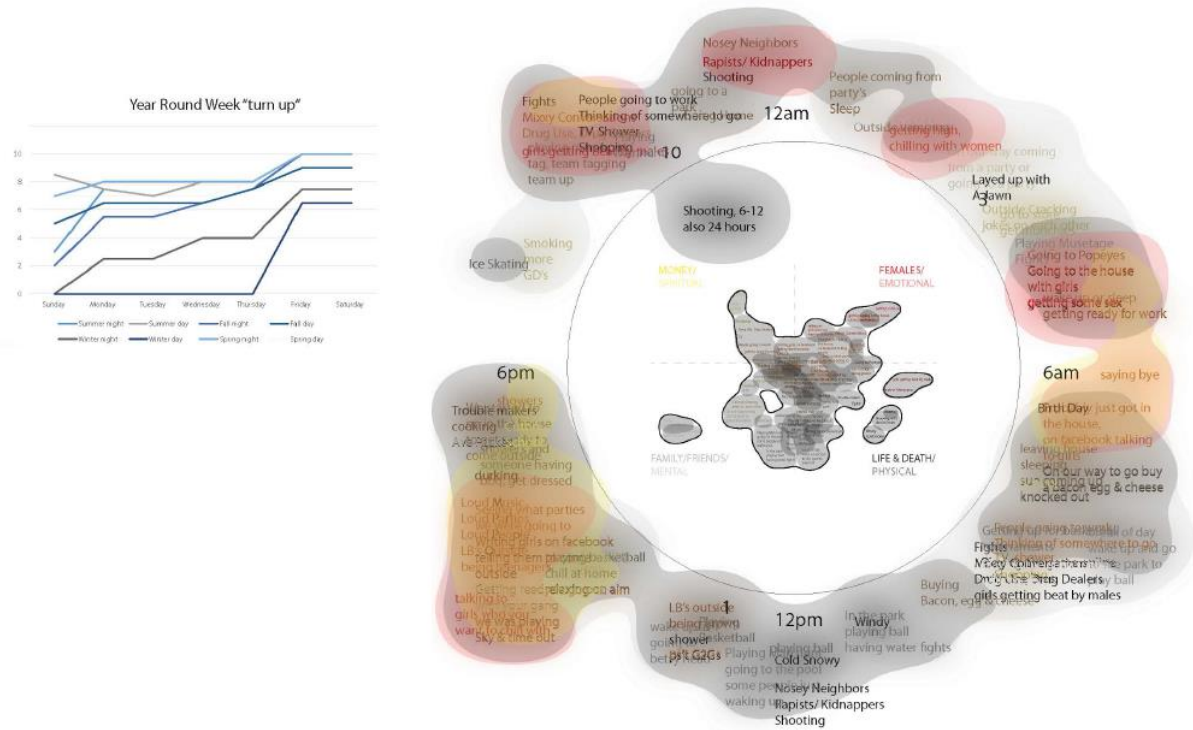
Both the siting and design of the Clubhouse were intentional processes. New participants came into programming in groups at the same time in cohorts, allowing them to focus on a shared purpose or goal together. One of the first workshops new cohorts have engaged in has been a demographic analysis of the neighborhood. During this workshop, participants review a community report that includes everything from health outcomes to incarceration rates to education and employment. As participants work through the statistics, “their initial response is usually anger,” as one stakeholder put it.⁹ For the 2015 group, the discussion then turned to what participants thought should be done about the challenges revealed in the community report. They concluded that young people in the Marcus Garvey Apartments did not have a space of their own, whether basketball courts or a youth or community center. Without a dedicated space, young people found themselves outside on the streets or corners, and more likely to, as one stakeholder put it, “get into stuff.”¹⁰

[T]hey see the data in this information and they get angry about it. And that anger transforms, and it's usually followed by questions. What can we do about this? This is a huge problem. – Staff member interviewee

Building on these insights, the demographic analysis and initial brainstorming were followed by an “Urban Rhythms” analysis, a collaborative effort by young people, BCJC, and Made in Brownsville, sponsored by L+M. This process used a set of urban planning and design tools to describe the neighborhood over time and space.

The time component was a “time zoning” analysis in which residents described their daily, weekly, and seasonal schedules, with a safety lens. Answers were compiled to identify patterns and periods of relatively less or more safety (figure 4). Seasonal and weekly patterns (figure 4, left) indicated that people were more likely to be out (to “turn up”) throughout the week during the summer, and otherwise on Friday and Saturday evenings. Daily patterns indicated that the least safe period was during the midafternoon, between 3 pm and 7 pm. As one stakeholder explained, “The 3 train is right at the center of all these developments. So young people from all over the developments are coming home from school at that time. People are coming home from work, so they all converge on this corner at the same location.”¹¹

FIGURE 4
Time Zoning Analysis



Sources: Made in Brownsville, Alan Waxman, and BCJC.

The time zoning analysis led to the spatial component of the analysis, which consisted of a mapping exercise in which participants identified the relative safety of the spaces throughout the neighborhood. The exercise became known as the “don’t get caught lacking” index, referring to the importance of paying attention to one’s surroundings in less safe areas. These spaces tended to be along housing development borders, as they were the most likely spaces where residents of the Marcus Garvey Apartments would come across residents of other developments and where longstanding conflicts would be more likely to surface.

Participants used this information to identify a safe site accessible to all Marcus Garvey Apartments community members and began the design process. They wanted a diversity of spaces within the space for recreation, games, and workshops. During this period, the group worked with professors and students from Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Design, and Planning. This work included meeting with Professor Kenneth Frampton, who designed Marcus Garvey Village in 1970, and engaging in a design process with a group of urban design students led by Professor Kaia Kuhl (figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Design Discussion at Columbia



Source: "Place-Based Work: A Year in Review," Brownsville Community Justice Center blog, January 29, 2016, <http://brownsvillejusticecenter.blogspot.com/2016/01/place-based-work-year-in-review.html>.

The initial siting and designs were for a lot facing Livonia Avenue under the 3 Line elevated tracks, but after a negotiation with L+M, the spot approved was a vacant lot on the west side of Chester Street, one block west of Rockaway Avenue. The lot itself was abandoned and overgrown, with dilapidated fencing in front (figure 6). Across the street another vacant lot, similarly fenced off but larger and paved over, would be turned into the Project EATS Brownsville at Marcus Garvey Apartments community garden. Stakeholder and youth respondents expressed ambivalence about the Clubhouse location, noting that it did not fully resolve their concerns about safety, but BCJC staff made concerted efforts to mitigate these issues.

There were boundaries in the community that young people were self-policing their bodies daily to avoid conflict. I don't think they had ever seen a visualization of themselves policing their bodies. It was esoteric to them. They didn't understand why they were doing it. When they saw it collectively, none of us go over there. It was a direct mind mapping of the spaces they avoided.¹²

At the time the lot selection was finalized, the first cohort graduated from the program, and a new group came in. This second cohort worked on the actual buildout of the space, including clearing out the lot and starting to activate the space both through the work itself and through holding workshops and trainings in the space.

By 2017, the lot had been transformed: it is now fronted by decorative planters, a paved entrance pathway, and a small shipping container (figure 7). Also notable is that the property wall to the south (figure 7, left) has been converted from cinderblock to see-through metal mesh. The current lot fencing remains chain link.

FIGURE 6
Future Clubhouse Lot, October 2014



Google Street View, October 2014.

FIGURE 7
Clubhouse Street View, October 2017



Google Street View, October 2017.

Behind the planters is a grass lawn and a large shipping container, set at an angle to the street (figure 8). The placement of the shipping container within the lot was set to create a street-facing public front space and a more secluded back space. Behind the large shipping container is more lawn, storage, a game table, and a small stage.

FIGURE 8

Clubhouse Opening, October 2016



Alan Waxman.

Ongoing Activities and Programming

Formal Clubhouse activities are structured around the needs and interests of program participants, although as the space has developed it has increasingly been opened for other activities, such as movie nights and Halloween and Thanksgiving events. The Clubhouse operates around a continuing cohort model: new cohorts have approximately six months of formal programming with stipend and six months without stipend. During the first six months, participants discuss needs and interests, identify what sort of training and development they need to meet those needs, and finish with an internship providing them an opportunity to build on their experiences in a professional setting.

BCJC provides regular written program reports to L+M that include milestones and activities, participation, attendance, and employment-relevant outcomes related to its justice community residents.

Impacts

Creating an Active Site: Creative Placemaking

The Clubhouse can be seen as a creative placemaking venture for several reasons. But for stakeholders, it is less about “art” in terms of a mural or performance, and more about the creative and collaborative processes through which the place was selected, designed, built, and programmed. The space for art is there, obviously, whether through the stage or the entrepreneurial workshops the Clubhouse has hosted over time (or in a planned recording studio). But the Clubhouse is a creative space for more than those specific elements, because it is whatever its users want it to be.

The activation of the space itself has changed local perceptions. As one stakeholder put it, the Clubhouse space changed “from a blighted, ugly place to a happy place.” It continues to provide the backdrop for a range of structured and unstructured activities.

To me, creative placemaking is looking at a space that has a negative narrative around it—the narrative can be anything from like “this place is dirty” to “this place attracts crime” or “something bad happened”—and really taking those things about a space or those feelings and trying to change it by changing the way the space looks and feels, and that can be something like doing a beautification project, or it could be having an event there that can change the space.¹³

Safety

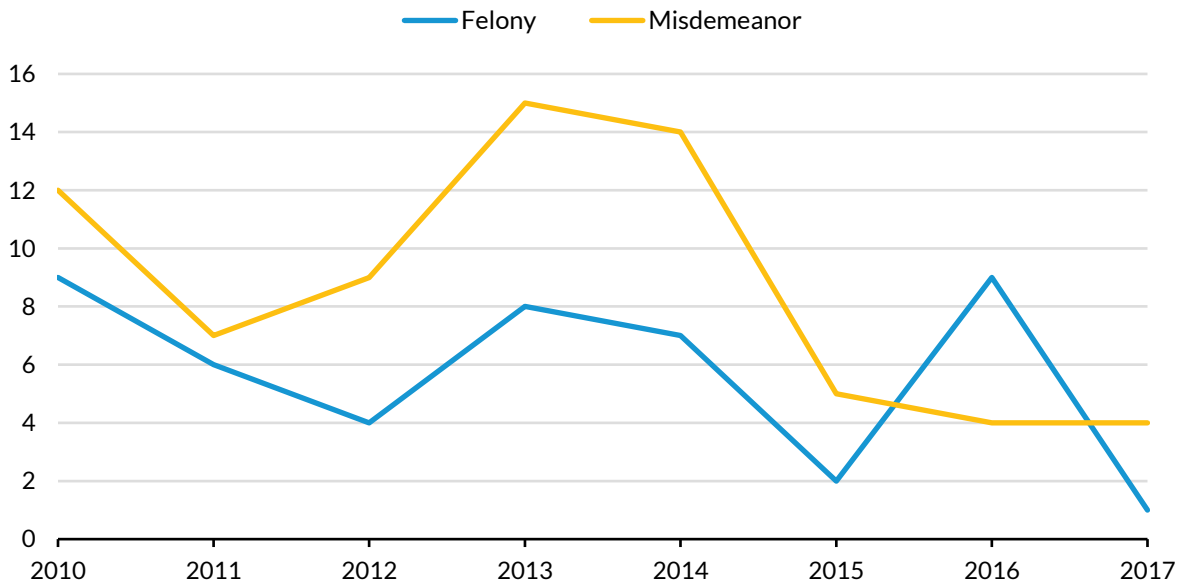
Teasing out the effects of the Clubhouse on neighborhood safety is complicated. For one, the activation of the Clubhouse space was part of a larger effort that also included the Farm. From the perspective of the street front, the Farm’s future lot was a much larger vacant space than the future Clubhouse site. The conversion of both spaces roughly at the same time meant this block of Chester went from largely vacant to largely activated. Taking Jane Jacobs’ “eyes on the street” as a goal, this conversion meant the block had the potential to draw in more people and, by drawing in more people, had the potential to make the block safer. To this end, the Clubhouse selection seems to have made a difference on the block.

Youth expressed that they saw the Clubhouse as a safe space where they could relax away from home without worrying about some of the safety challenges elsewhere in the neighborhood. They also noted that the police respected the space and did not just come in without permission.

The initial mapping process indicated that this particular site was not the safest block in the community, and at least one stakeholder was concerned that the final location was too close to a particularly problematic corner. Part of this concern may be related to the site’s location on the northern edge of the Marcus Garvey Apartments on a stretch of Chester Street that was less commonly traversed prior to the Clubhouse’s creation. However, the young people in our focus groups noted that they did not see the site as being on an unsafe stretch. Any discussion of the site’s previous condition focused on its being vacant and overgrown rather than being particularly unsafe.

Incident reports along Chester in front of the Clubhouse are generally lower as of 2017 than they were in previous years (figure 9). Year-to-year variation is notable: since 2010, the year with the most felonies was 2016; the year with the fewest was 2017. Misdemeanor reports dropped notably between 2014 and 2015 and have stayed comparatively lower in the years since.

FIGURE 9
Incident Reports, Chester Street from Blake Avenue to Dumont Avenue, 2010–17



Source: New York City Police Department incident reports.

However, as the young people involved in the Clubhouse have stressed, a busy space is not always a safer space—it depends on who is using it. In terms of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, Rockaway

Avenue is the busiest corridor in the immediate neighborhood, but it is also seen as a place where one cannot be caught lacking. This lack of safety means the Clubhouse is an intervention best seen as targeted to the residents of the Marcus Garvey Apartments rather than as a bridge to residents in nearby developments. Although some stakeholders indicated they would like to see the Clubhouse play this role in the years ahead, at present such an effort would make little sense without first addressing the underlying tensions between developments.

Training and Job Readiness

The Clubhouse has, at the very least, provided a space for participants from the Marcus Garvey Apartments to participate in skills-building, training, and certification efforts. Given that some existing BCJC offices are located in areas perceived as unsafe to Marcus Garvey Apartments residents, this use of the space is beneficial in itself. Although its narrow nature makes the space awkward for larger workshops, the site has provided hands-on opportunities for skills building by way of design, construction, and programming.

BCJC has been successful placing Clubhouse participants into full-time employment or paid externships, although reporting focuses on current participants and does not track longer-term outcomes for past participants. However, as past participants are often currently in contact and directly engaged with staff, formally tracking longer-term successes and challenges could be a relatively easy lift and help identify future programming needs.

Youth Voice and Collective Efficacy

The central thread running through the positive assessment of the Clubhouse, whether from stakeholders or young people, has been the process, from initial conception through planning, design, and implementation, led by the young people of the Marcus Garvey Apartments. Empowering young people to lead the charge helped ensure that whatever was created responded to what the participants were actually interested in building and was a tangible product they could point to, and it also enabled young people to use their own voices and arguments to obtain what they wanted.

The process started with the demographic analysis workshop; developed as the participants discussed what they needed, formed a plan, and presented their plans to the Tenants' Association; and continued through implementation. The cohort model helps to ensure ongoing buy-in from new groups of participants by tailoring the process to their interests and needs.

You have this collective energy that really centralizes around this core group of BCJC and these partners who work with youth to make them changemakers in the community. People are seeing that and recognizing that there is hope. I would say that that's a direct impact. There's nothing but positive impact that we get. People say "I see that. I walk past that all the time." ¹⁴

Challenges

The Clubhouse has provided a site for young people in the Marcus Garvey Apartments to create, to program, and to feel safe, but it is a limited intervention involving limited resources. Consequently, one challenge is to manage expectations for what the Clubhouse can accomplish. For one, young people did not get carte blanche: the site chosen was not the original preferred site, and a basketball court has not been approved. In focus groups, participants also expressed a desire to have the Clubhouse open more, especially in winter. Although L+M and BCJC have an understanding that the space needs to be open 20 hours a week, more open access is desired. There is also a need to engage future groups of participants to take ownership of the Clubhouse space, especially after original members involved in its design and creation have moved on and after the initial period of excitement has passed.¹⁵

Related to this limitation is the sense from some youth that the Clubhouse space came at the expense of a more desirable space elsewhere in the Marcus Garvey Apartments. The development's mews design, with multiple interior courtyards, was intended to provide semipublic spaces throughout the neighborhood. However, residents who had intentions of voicing concerns about young people congregating in these spaces actually attended the Tenants' Association on the same day the young people in the first cohort presented their initial plans. Although in some ways this was a lucky coincidence in aligning interests, some youth indicated a sense of an informal trade-off, in which they were expected to congregate at the Clubhouse rather than elsewhere in the development.

There are also basic siting and design limitations. Although shipping containers are affordable and relatively modifiable, a single container, even heavily retrofitted, is not an ideal space for workshops or other project activities. Some of these issues may be explored in the years ahead. Although the currently activated and designed spaces only touch the eastern half of this block between Chester and Bristol, participants noted that extending the space west to Bristol Street would not only provide more space for site elements and programming, but it could link two other public spaces in the neighborhood:

the Farm to the east and Betsy Head Park to the west. However, in June 2018, L+M released a plan to develop a seven-building extension to the Marcus Garvey Apartments, with 840 additional affordable apartments. One of these proposed buildings would be across the street from the Clubhouse, on the site of the existing community garden. In turn, the garden would be moved to the space behind the Clubhouse on Bristol and acquired by the city.¹⁶ As such, future work will need to address how the Clubhouse fits into these plans and designs.

Finally, the issue of safety remains salient. Young people feel safe in the Clubhouse itself, and they have indicated no particular sense of a lack of safety on the adjacent block, but broader neighborhood safety, especially in the boundaries between developments, remains a concern.

Looking Forward

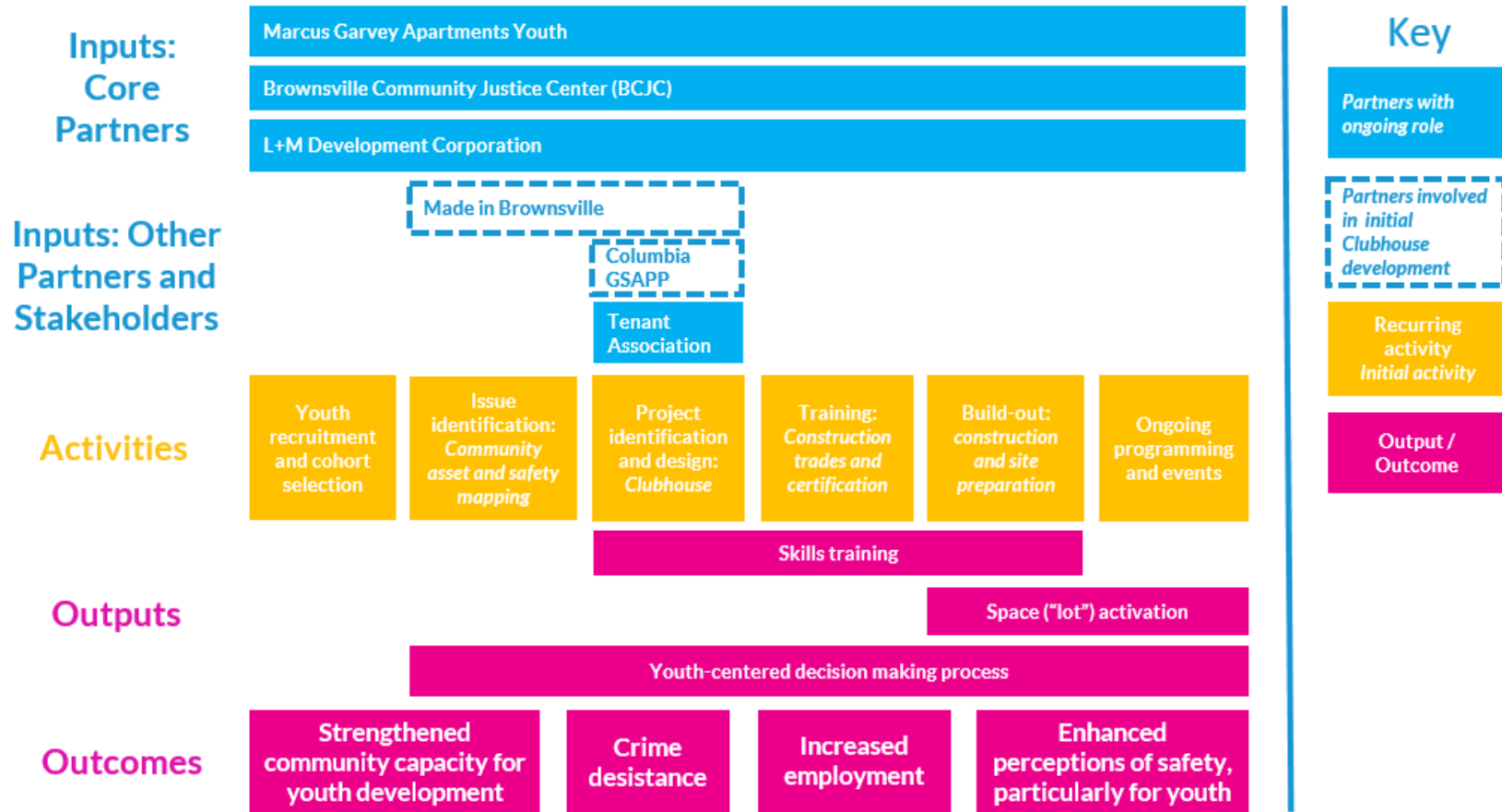
The Marcus Garvey Youth Clubhouse is a success on various levels. For young people, it has activated an unused site, provided space for them that they did not have previously, and served as a place for structured and unstructured programming. It can accommodate performances and (soon) music recording. It has provided BCJC a means to more effectively engage participants in its programs and give them useful professional experiences. For L+M, the Clubhouse has had a positive effect on the feeling of the neighborhood and has provided an opportunity to showcase the role that developers can play in promoting an innovative intervention.

But, what has been most creative about this placemaking venture has been the collaborative process, which led to a deeper, richer engagement and created a space tailored to the community safety goals. This process has also built social ties between BCJC and the young people in the neighborhood and between young people and other stakeholders such as the Tenants' Association.

However, the Clubhouse cannot do everything. Brownsville still has many challenges, and it is unrealistic to expect the Clubhouse to solve historical tensions between residents of different developments, lower crime neighborhood-wide, or lead to full employment. Future programming efforts will also face the challenge of a significantly changing neighborhood, as Brownsville is seeing increasing investment interest, highlighted by the 2017 passage of a city plan calling for 2,500 additional affordable housing units in Brownsville¹⁷ and L+M's proposal for the development itself. From an evaluative perspective, understanding the goals of an intervention like the Clubhouse is crucial, and one better measured through analyzing how young people in the neighborhood may

become connected to community organizations, obtain employment, or engage in civic activities, than in tracking incident reports or even following justice involvement.

Appendix A. Clubhouse Logic Model



Notes

- ¹ In general, we refer to the development as the Marcus Garvey Apartments although we note “Marcus Garvey Village” when in reference to the original development’s construction and early years.
- ² The Museum of Modern Art, “Another Change for Housing: Low-Rise Alternatives, Introduction,” press release, June 12, 1973, https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_326850.pdf.
- ³ For Marcus Garvey Village/Apartments, this is New York State’s Homes and Community Renewal, or HCR.
- ⁴ Between June and July 2014, the Saboath Group surveyed 48 percent of the 625 occupied units in Marcus Garvey by an online survey at surveygizmo.com (accessible by desktop and smartphones), door-to-door recruitment, and hosting interested residents in Saboath’s office.
- ⁵ “Made in Brownsville: About,” Made in Brownsville, accessed September 20, 2018, <https://madeinbrownsville.org/about/>.
- ⁶ “Brownsville Community Justice Center,” Center for Court Innovation, accessed September 20, 2018, <https://www.courtinnovation.org/node/20105/more-info>.
- ⁷ Yasmeen Khan, “Seeing the Light in Brownsville, Virtually and in Real Life,” WYNC News, January 29, 2018, <https://www.wnyc.org/story/seeing-light-brownsville-not-just-virtually/>.
- ⁸ “Brownsville Justice Community Program and Marcus Garvey Apartments,” Brownsville Community Justice Center blog, March 11, 2015, <http://brownsvillejusticecenter.blogspot.com/2015/03/brownsville-justice-community-program.html>.
- ⁹ Stakeholder interview, March 2018.
- ¹⁰ Stakeholder interview, March 2018.
- ¹¹ Stakeholder interview, March 2018.
- ¹² Stakeholder interview, March 2018.
- ¹³ Stakeholder interview, March 2018.
- ¹⁴ Stakeholder interview, March 2018.
- ¹⁵ Maintaining ongoing participation after an initial effort has passed is a challenge anywhere, but especially in low-income neighborhoods with significant economic and social challenges. See Small 2002 and 2004.
- ¹⁶ Named the Marcus Garvey Extension, the proposal involves apartments available to residents at 80 percent or below the area median income. See, Devin Gannon, “Plan Released for a Seven-building, 800+ Unit Affordable Development in Brownsville,” 6sqft, June 26, 2018, <https://www.6sqft.com/plan-released-for-a-seven-building-800-unit-affordable-development-in-brownsville/>.
- ¹⁷ See “Neighborhood Focus Areas: Brownsville, Brooklyn,” New York City Housing Preservation and Development. Accessed September 20, 2018, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/community/brownsville.page>.

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