

**Addressing the Summer Achievement Gap in the South Bronx NY:**

**The Ideas Box Trial Program**

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## ABSTRACT

### *Access to visual arts and writing projects as demonstrated by a three month long educational program in the South Bronx*

One of the most pressing issues facing educators in the US today is the growing achievement gap. By the age of three the vocabulary of children of professionals is twice as large as children of families on welfare, and by the end of high school black and Hispanic students reading and mathematic skills are comparative to white students performance in eighth grade.<sup>1</sup> This issue has a variety of contributing factors, including healthcare, immigration status, and income level. Underlying all of these factors is the influence of a long legacy of class and racial inequality. Due to these many interconnected issues that contribute to the achievement gap, there are many routes one can take to address and attempt to remedy the achievement gap. At a pedagogical level, “many teachers may feel overwhelmed by the large-scale social and economic factors” that affect students.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite the enormous influence of economic status, research has found even controlling for income and wealth, the achievement gap persists.<sup>3</sup> This data rejecting the common assumption that economic status plays the defining role in academic performance, opens up a discourse on other major influential factors: such as the effect of institutional racism on access to education.

This thesis focuses on the barriers posed by institutional racism to visual arts and literary education that influences the success of projects targeting the achievement gap. Using the case study of a three-month long visual arts and literature program conducted in the South Bronx, NY, these broader questions of the level of accessibility of public school education and specific

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers College, Columbia University. (2005, June 9). The Academic Achievement Gap: Facts and Figures.

<sup>2</sup> Howard, Tyrone. (2015). *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Classrooms*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

<sup>3</sup> Jencks, Christopher and Phillips, Meredith. (2011). *The Black White Test Score Gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

non-profit programming can be examined in relation to a specific pilot project. Ultimately, the implications of the results of this pilot project will inform how future educational programs can negotiate these crucial points of access when structuring further efforts.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

Fourteen years after the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, and forty years after the passage of Elementary and Secondary Education Act, academic achievement on a national level remains a pressing issue in policy restructuring. The House is currently in the process of rewriting No Child Left Behind: the bill that “became synonymous with one-size-fits-all testing and a punitive approach to failing schools – and which is reviled almost equally on left and right” (Severns 2013). No Child Left Behind is characterized by its strict system of testing and accountability: a federal response to the perception that states were not doing enough to fix their schools. President George W. Bush described federal spending as being targeted “at methods that actually work. Not feel-good methods. Not sound-good methods.”

Despite these “tough” policies, the racial gap has not narrowed between minority and white students. On the 2013 NAEP Mathematics grade 8 Assessment, the black white gap was 31 points, a gap equivalent to about 3 years of schooling and one, which has generally persisted from 2007 to 2013 (American Institutes for Research, 2015). Critics of the bill argue that this “tough” federal policy of high stakes testing and strict sanctions in response to a schools AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) performance is reflected in similar zero tolerance disciplinary policies. These zero tolerance policies “have created a hostile and alienating environment, particularly for students of color” and have incentivized “[moving] lower-achieving students out of their general populations to special education placements, alternative schools, or elsewhere” (Finkel, 2010). As we anticipate the rewriting of ESEA, it is crucial to delve further into the persistent racial gap in performance on national testing.

### **Understanding the achievement gap on a national level**

In 2015, the amount of students who scored at or above proficient on the NAEP exam for reading was 36% for grade 4 and 34% for grade 8. When examining the racial breakdown of these scores for the reading exam for grade 4, the amount of white students who scored at or above proficient was 46%, the amount of black students was 18%, the amount of Hispanic students was 21%, and the amount of Asian students was 57%. Grade 8 scores for reading had a similar breakdown with 44% of white students scoring at or above proficient, 16% of black students, 21% of Hispanic students, and 54% of Asian students. While the aggregate score for Asian students is comparatively high, research consistently reveals large inconsistencies among Asian identifying groups. Generally, there is a large divide with Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students scoring much higher than Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other Southeast Asian students. 2015 NAEP data on reading proficiency also reveals the effect of location, with students in cities performing worse than students in suburbs.

### **Race in relationship to Education**

The United States has been famously characterized as a land of opportunity. Central to this image is the concept that access to a high quality education in the US is the key to upward mobility. In his commencement speech in 2013 at New York State University in Buffalo, President Obama said “There aren’t many things that are more important to that idea of economic mobility –the idea you can make it if you try than a good education” (Porter, 2013). The United States has promoted this “mantra of education as the proverbial “equalizer” perhaps more than any other nation (Howard, 2010).

The link between education and the value of economic mobility in a capitalist society has elaborated by Bourdieu (1968), whose theory of cultural capital is structured as a paradigm examining resource distribution over time. Without a grounding in historical inequalities of

different racial groups access to education, studies are often superficial. It is necessary to examine the patterns over time in how education, as a resource, has been distributed.

To understand race as a variable in education, it is imperative to examine the legacy of race in America. Marable, in his book, challenges how politicians “like to say that diversity is our greatest strength,” arguing “instead of ‘celebrating diversity,’ we must theorize it, interrogate it, and actively seek the parallels and discontinuities in the histories of the people who over many centuries have come to call themselves ‘Americans’” (Marable, 2002).

The legacy of the various ways oppression has been formulated into social policy in the US requires that we not theorize about race abstractly, but rather theorize about “the social processes of racialization” (Marable, 2002). The foundation of the US today rests on the genocide of American Indians, slavery, and the Jim Crow era: different social processes that have worked to create a hierarchy with whiteness being placed at the top. Whiteness has been consistently associated with legitimized citizenship. For example, the 1970 Naturalization Act defined immigrant citizenship for “free white persons,” thus excluding a multitude of Asian immigrants. This hierarchy of race has been constructed to intersect with gender and sexuality, resulting in a society privileging whiteness, males, and heterosexism.

### **Cultural Access to Education in New York**

While race can be defined as a social construct based on phenotype, culture is described as the learned norms, values, beliefs, and ways of knowing. Race and culture are closely linked, however culture “is not bound exclusively by one’s race, ethnicity, or place of origin, but is shaped by a myriad of factors” such as immigration status, generation, and religion (Howard, 2001). Culture is a fundamental component of education, as culture influences cognition and informs how students interact with students, peers, and the ‘outside world’ (Haenen,

Schrijnemakers, and Stufkens, 2003, p 251). This understanding of the importance of the social dimension of learning has its roots in research conducted by Vygotsky, the leader of the sociocultural theory, who argued that learning occurs in a proximal zone where individual developmental processes are activated by interaction with adults and peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

When teachers work to incorporate cultural understanding into their teaching approach it is crucial that attempts at cultural understanding are not reduced to simplified categorizations of different culture's learning styles. For example, attempts at teaching Latino students using family oriented activities, based on the assumption that Latino students come from large family backgrounds are extremely problematic. There is no simple method to maximize a student's success through an understanding of their unique cultural repertoire. Teaching methods, such as hosting a culture fair, do not adequately address the connection between culture and learning. Culturally responsive pedagogy is extremely nuanced, however it is generally based on cultural difference theory over cultural deficit theory, disruption of Eurocentric and middleclass forms of discourse represented as the norm, a commitment to challenging inequities, an authentic and culturally informed notion of care for students, and a recognition of the complexity of culture (Howard, 2001, p. 70). With these foundations in mind, teachers can utilize culture to facilitate a student's learning process, and avoid the treatment of culture as a static element that can be addressed on a surface level through introduction to culturally significant foods or fairs.

Data from the US Department of Education illustrates the diversity of various states and school districts, and the current impact of immigration on demographic changes in each state and district. New York ranks as one of the top five most diverse states, and reflects the influx of Hispanic and Asian students resulting from the more recent immigration waves. Of the counties in New York, Bronx County ranks as the ninth most diverse district and as of this year recorded

almost 206,000 enrolled students (New York City Department of Education, 2015). This data reflects the enormous size and diversity of the state of New York, and specifically of Bronx County, where the student population demographics are rapidly changing, like many other school districts.

The research and case study of this thesis was implemented in one neighborhood of the Bronx: Morris Heights. The neighborhood of Morris Heights is on the West Side of the Bronx, however, yet is often associated with University Heights and the South Bronx. Morris Heights is primarily comprised of Hispanic residents with origins in the Dominican Republic; another third of the population is African American with a smaller population from the Caribbean and Western Africa (mainly Ghana and Nigeria). Data from the American Community Survey for 2008-2013 found that 40.5% of the population of Morris Heights is below the poverty line. In comparison, 29.8% of the Bronx and 20% of New York City lives below the poverty line. Various organizations and educational programs work in this neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods to support families and students who face many difficulties including these high rates of poverty. To successfully support these students, many of these educational programs involve methods of culturally responsive pedagogy.

One such organization, the Bronx Corridor of Success Initiative, responded to the “poor attendance, low academic achievement, and high dropout rates” by creating a “network among the public education institutions in the community that serve elementary through college students” (Gillespie, 1998). The Bronx Corridor of Success Initiative implemented a key culturally responsive method: parental involvement. Interactions between the education subcommittee and representative parents of students in the program led to the creation of a Family Assistance Center. Family involvement and communication is crucial to understanding

the culture of a student and their modes of discourse and cultural repertoire. Further research has solidified the argument for parental involvement. Villegas and Lucas reference the instance of a teacher who invited parents of children who had immigrated to New York to share their experience during class as part of a section on immigration. When teachers draw upon community resources, such as parents of the children in their class, they strengthen “the connections between home and school” as well as “convey[ing] to the children that their families have knowledge and experiences that the school values” (Villegas and Lucas, 2002, p. 101).

### **Linguistic Access to Education New York**

Linguistic and cultural access represent two very different loci of access to education that cannot be separated from race in America. However, both of these points of access relating to education are negotiated by the structure of Eurocentric and middleclass dominance in many classrooms. Heller and Martin-Jones criticize these previous texts that ignore the power imbalance “which fundamentally shape[s] the experience of students and teachers in multilingual contexts” and seek to address this inequity in their work (Maybin, 2003). While most works on multilingual classrooms focus on linguistic proficiency, Heller and Martin-Jones assert, “debates over linguistic norms and practices are, in the end, debates over controlling resources (Heller and Martin-Jones, 2001, p. 3). This framing of language in education as an illustration of power imbalance in society is a method originating from the work of Bourdieu. His publication of *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, utilized formal logical arguments to “propose a model of the social mediations and processes which tend, behind the backs of the agents engaged in the school system – teachers, students and their parents – and often *against their will*, to ensure the transmission of cultural capital across generations and to stamp pre-existing

differences in inherited cultural capital with a meritocratic seal of academic consecration by virtue of the special symbolic potency of the *title* (credential)” (Bourdieu, 1990). His approach to language in education emphasizes the power imbalances that are reproduced throughout generations resulting in an imbalance of resources and unfair institutional ideologies.

This method of examining language in the context of power relations over time is a much stronger form of analysis, as it does not erase the historical context of dominant and subordinate languages in education. The dichotomy between dominant and subordinate languages is evident throughout history. There are clear examples of the relation between power in language in the history of American Indian populations, whose attempts to use Native languages in schooling were continually restricted by different measures, such as regulations in 1880 enforcing that “all Indian education, whether in government or missionary-run schools, must be done in English, or the schools would risk losing government funding” (Field and Kroskrity, 2009, p. 17).

Linguistic access is a critical point of access to education in the neighborhood of Morris Heights in the Bronx. 59.6% of households in Morris Heights speak Spanish and 4.6% of the households speak an African language (an extremely high rate compared to the national average of 1.5% in 2011). As the goal of the educational program conducted over the summer in Morris Heights aimed to address the achievement gap by including programming including literacy projects and visual arts projects, linguistic access to these programs is a significant component.

## CHAPTER I

### *Introduction to the Case Study*

#### **\*\*\*\*\*Outline of Chapter 1\*\*\*\*\***

**This chapter begins with a brief overview of the immigration patterns in Morris Heights. Information about the demographics of the neighborhood becomes more detailed when focusing on Hispanic, African American, and West African immigrants whose populations began expanding in Morris Heights in the early 50s. These populations moved to Morris Heights when new housing developments were rapidly being built, allowing Hispanic and black New Yorkers who were originally limited to tenement housing, to move into housing with better heat, hot water, and sanitary conditions (Naison, 2004). However, conditions rapidly began to decline as German, Irish, and Jewish populations moved to suburbs, the cross Bronx expressway was built, and the economy declined. This exodus to suburbs was also sparked by a desire to avoid the desegregation of schools in 1954. Hispanic and black populations were forced to contend with arson epidemics, drug epidemics, and a rapid decline in quality of life. These events of the 80s and 90s have repercussions in the present day neighborhood of Morris Heights particularly in the area of education and literacy. As the poorest congressional district, almost half of Morris Heights residents live under the poverty line and drug trafficking and violent crime persist at higher rates than neighborhoods in other boroughs. These conditions are the manifestation of compounded disadvantages that have resulted in a population with low literacy rates and college readiness rates. Present day Morris Heights is in the process of urban renewal and revitalization. This process of renewal and attempts to target the summer learning gap and literacy rates are a lengthy effort to address issues of historical disadvantage.**

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## 1.1 The Community of Morris Heights and the site of Hayden Lord Park



Morris Heights is located on the West Side of the Bronx, just north of the Cross Bronx Expressway. Morris Heights and University Heights (immediately north) are usually associated with the much larger South Bronx. The neighborhood is part of Bronx Community Board 5.

### *1.1 a. The 1600s and 1700s and the formation of the Morris Estate*



*A barn looking south west from 176<sup>th</sup> street and corner of Montgomery Avenue.  
May 30, 1923  
Gelatin silver print*

The neighborhood of Morris Heights takes its name from the old Morris Estate, the once 1,900-acre estate of Governor Morris (Brookhiser, 2002). The estate, which encompasses almost all of the current day South Bronx, was purchased between 1670 and 1692 by the great grandfather of Governor Morris, Richard Morris (Kozol, 1995). Governor Morris's family made its fortune off sugar production on a slave plantation in Barbados (Kozol, 1995). Slaves of the Morris family were brought to New York to work on and build the estate (Kozol, 1995). By 1600, enslaved African Americans, such as those who worked on the Morris Estate, made up 40% of the population of New York City and half of this population died by the age of 12 (Kucsera and Orfield, 2014). Governor Morris's political legacy is his contributions as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Many street names in the neighborhood of Morris Heights are relics of the Revolutionary War such as Featherbed Lane, where housewives spread out their mattresses to muffle the steps of American soldiers (Jonnes, 2002). Despite Governor Morris's

criticism of slavery in his speech at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, where Governor Morris decried slavery as an act “in defiance of the most sacred laws of humanity” Morris retained slaves on his property (Gottheimer, 2003). The urban slavery occurring on Morris’s estate in the Bronx, and throughout 1600s New York City demonstrates the ways in which race during this time was employed to restrict the education levels of different populations. By denying access to education to slaves, slaveowners attempted to control and maintain segments of the population.

### ***1.1 b. The 1800s and 1900s: Mass Immigration of Eastern European Jews and Irish***

During the early 1900s Morris Heights was “a middle class area of apartment houses and single family homes settled by a *mélange* of Jews and Irish” (Jonnes, 2002). Many of these residents, however, began to move to the northern Bronx, suburbs or other boroughs: “the migration...left a thriving Hispanic (mostly Puerto Rican and Dominican) and African American population” (Yes the Bronx). The shrinking rates of Jewish and Irish populations in Morris Heights and the rapid growth of Hispanic and African American populations is characteristic of immigration patterns in New York City. Nancy Foner, in *New Immigrants in New York*, identifies New York City as “one of the principal destinations of recent immigrants – documented and undocumented – to the United States. As new groups of recent immigrants have established communities, many urban, suburban, and even rural areas have become ‘suddenly’ diverse and different” (Foner, 2001).

### ***1.1 c. 1950s and 1960s***

This general trend of rapid emergence of new groups of recent immigrants that Foner describes is applicable to the South Bronx and Morris Heights, where Hispanic, African American, and West African populations rapidly grew in the 1950s and made up an even greater

percentage of the population as German, Jewish, and Irish immigrants out-migrated. These changes in the ethnic makeup of residents in Morris Heights follows a pattern previously referred to as residential succession, where a “new group...supplants a departing group, and consolidates its presence in the neighborhood (Lobo and Salvo, 2012). Yet, this pattern of movement into and out of Morris Heights can be more accurately referred to as white flight. The outmigration of white residents in the post war years was noted by Massey and Denton (1993) to stem from white resistance to racial integration in housing, as “withdrawal to the suburbs provided a more attractive alternative to the defense of threatened neighborhoods” (45). Looking at the broader pattern of outmigration during these years reveals the ways in which anti-black and anti-immigrant patterns were intensified by the economic insecurity of the white working class population. Thus the white racial contestation over space becomes evident when looking at the larger pattern of motivations to move in and out of the district. A further attraction noted by Frey and Speare (1988) to move to the suburbs was the “large government subsidies to build housing and infrastructure in suburban areas to meet a huge demand from returning war veterans and a growing middle class” (Lobo and Salvo, 2012). White resistance to residential racial integration is fundamental to shaping education during this time. Resistance to public school desegregation efforts was a white effort to force out non-whites from housing areas and public schools. White residents moved to the suburbs to avoid desegregated public schools in New York City (Kucsera and Orfield, 2014). The white flight occurring in residential areas of New York City including Morris Heights reveal the racial conflict during this time over school desegregation and busing during the 60s and 70s. At the federal and local level, government policies supported the interests of whites: encouraging privileged white preferences for white residential and educational spaces and disinvesting in inner city areas.

### ***1.1 d. Access to Whiteness for Jews and Irish and White Flight***

This exodus of Jewish and Irish residents coincided with landmark developments in public school education. After 1954 desegregation case of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*, two Commissioners of Education, James Allen and Edwald Nyquist, “led the Board of Regents and the New York State Department of Education in a twenty-year long effort to desegregate and integrate New York’s school systems (Kucsera and Orfield, 2014). Public schools began keeping records of enrollment by race in 1957 as part of desegregation efforts. A school on Charlotte Street in the South Bronx, PS 61, reported 48% Puerto Ricans, 15% blacks, and 35% whites in 1957. By 1960, PS 61 had become 62% Puerto Rican, 21% black, and 17% white. Finally, by 1965, PS 61 was 66% Puerto Rican, 27% black, and 5% white. (Jonnes, 2002)

**School Enrollment by Race (PS 61)**

	Puerto Rican	Black	White
1957	48%	15%	35%
1960	62%	21%	17%
1965	66%	27%	5%

These statistics of enrollment in PS 61 are characteristic of other schools in the South Bronx in the 1960s and reflect the exodus of white residents to suburbs and growing numbers of Hispanic and black residents. Population growth during this time led to crowded housing and residents faced poorer living conditions: the 1969 *Plan for New York City*, described the “problems...that stem from ghetto conditions in Morrisania and the South Bronx and from a changing and aging population” (Chronopolous, 2009). Commissioners Allen and Nyquist’s goal of racial balance became official policy in 1960 (Kucsera and Orfield, 2014). Allen and

Nyquist faced heavy opposition from school boards and legal challenges. As opposition continued to mount against Allen's 1964 desegregation plan, laws focusing on decentralization were passed and amended as a result of growing demand for community control of local schools throughout 1969-1973 (Kucsera and Orfield, 2014). These pushbacks resulted in superficial formal equality as mandated by the Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools, while schools remained, in actuality, segregated and drastically differing in quality. Blocking black and Latino populations from economic, political, and social opportunities allowed for white opportunity hoarding and wealth accumulation, which has shaped the conditions of current inequality and segregation in education today.

***1.1 e. 1960s – 1980s Arson Epidemic and Decline in Living Conditions for Residents of Morris Heights and the South Bronx as a Whole***

During the mid 1960s and 1970s Morris Heights and much of the South Bronx was hit by an arson epidemic. The rapid decline in quality of life for residents during this time is attributed to a few major factors. One theory is that “urban renewal projects in the borough (such as Robert Moses' Cross-Bronx Expressway) destroyed existing low density neighborhoods in favor of roads that produced urban sprawl as well as high density housing projects (Yes the Bronx). The arson epidemic that left the southern part of the borough ravaged left aftereffects “still felt into the early 1990s thanks to the infamous crack epidemic.” While urban decay characterized the Bronx during this period, the northern section of the borough was not as affected by these changes. The separation evident between disinvested black and latino spaces and privileged white spaces reveals how racial residential segregation creates cities within cities (Du Bois, 1899).

### ***1.1 f. The 1970s and the Emergence of Hip-Hop as a Creative Artform Outside of the Classroom***

During the 1970s the composition of the population continued to evolve, as many immigrants from the Caribbean came to the Bronx. James Braxton Peterson, Director of Africana Studies at Lehigh University, explained how the convergence of these immigrants and the African-American and Latino populations in the Bronx gave birth to a new genre: hip-hop. Peterson explains, “hip-hop emerged because young people of color said, ‘If we’re not going to be able to play instruments in school and there aren’t going to be art classes in school, we’re still going to find a way to create...Hip-hop is one of the most democratic forms of American culture ever created” (Gurney, 2016). New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation now point to 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, a street a few blocks down from Hayden Lord Park, as the official birthplace of hip-hop. While many artists made their fortunes from hip-hop, most djs who built the foundations of the genre have not seen financial returns on their careers. The creation of hip-hop on the fringes of society in the cities within cities, demonstrates ways in which different artforms and forms of expression develop outside of the classroom. Robin Kelley comments on the negotiation between the message and the method of hip-hop, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the complexity of the artform. Hip-hop is not merely a political text to be analyzed: “what counts more than the story is the ‘storytelling’ – an emcee’s verbal ability on the mic, the creative and often hilarious use of puns” (Kelley, 1997). Hip-hop has grown as an artform and has been employed by black youth to “put these negative social constructions of them to work” (Anderson, 2007). However, as hip-hop has become more and more successful it has increasingly been co-opted by white mainstream society, revealing the contradictory attitude of White America towards black youth: where white mainstream society

“commodifies and posits their images and bodies alternatively as menaces to society or near-deities on the basketball court, gridiron, or boxing rings” (Anderson, 2007). Hip-hop demonstrates the ways in which black youth create art despite the lack of support and resources for the arts in traditional educational institutions and use that art to negotiate their contradictory representations in society as both Public Enemy No. 1 and worshiped athletes or rappers.

## **1.2 Current Day Demographics of Morris Heights**

Morris Heights has seen many evolutions in its community and since the 1990s has continued to develop. This growth is reflected in the drop in crime rates compared to the 1970s and 1980s and the resurgence in housing (Yes the Bronx).

Today, 69% of the population of Morris Heights is Hispanic and 30% is black (Census Reporter, 2014). Additionally, 42.4% of the population is foreign born (mainly from Latin America and Africa), a figure, which is nearly double the rate for New York City as a whole (Census Reporter, 2014). 70.9% of residents in Morris Heights speak another language at home, which is, again, double the rate of New York City as a whole. The poor economic conditions, which were emerging and being noted in the late 60s by New York City’s urban planners still persist decades later. 45.4% of the population of Morris Heights lives below the poverty line. This is a staggering number when considering 15.9% of all New Yorkers and 15.5% of US citizens live below the poverty line. The heterogeneous population of Morris Heights and the difficult economic circumstances of its residents stemming from years of systemic inequality now pose a difficult situation to educators and policy makers. Making a comprehensive curriculum for students who have varying degrees of proficiency in multiple languages is a difficult task; a task which is only further complicated when these students often lack the financial resources to supplement their education over school breaks and during the school year.

In 2014, census reports found 36% of residents in Morris Heights have no degree, 29% have a high school diploma, and 22% have some college education (Census Reporter, 2014).

### ***1.2 a. The Summer Learning Gap and its Manifestation in Morris Heights***

The achievement gap that is continually widening in schools in New York and throughout the US demonstrates the inequity of learning time for different white, black, Latino, and Asian students. The achievement gap widens most over the summer as parents with the means to do so invest time and resources into the child's education (National Summer Learning Association). Students who have the financial means to go to music lessons, summer camps, and museums stay engaged over the summer, while children who lack these resources have more limited options: often to play in nearby parks, attend the closest public library, or entertain themselves at home. The total amount of hours over the summer one child may accrue at summer camp or other programming by sixth grade is 1,080 hours (Expanded Schools). An additional 245 hours over the summer is the amount of time one child may have spent by sixth grade visiting educational locations such as museums or the zoo (Expanded Schools). These studies make clear the advantage children have when their education is continued and expanded over the 1,080 average hours of learning time when enrolled in summer camps or other summer programming. Children who do not have the opportunity to partake in these activities suffer from the gap in learning.

Many state and local organizations have recognized the significance of the academic engagement over the summer and offer programming over the summer. In Morris Heights over the summer, typical summer programming options include summer camps/childcare, summer school, and the public library. The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene lists two camps in the neighborhood of Morris Heights: Kips Bay Boys and Girls Club (1835 University

Ave.) and St. Edmunds Youth Programs (1905 Morris Ave.). Beyond these two options there are other programs in the neighborhood such as Featherbed Lane Improvement Association Inc., Girls Inc. of New York City, and Davidson Community Center. Parents who can do so have the opportunity to enroll their children in these nearby summer programming options. However, for many parents these programs are not accessible due to cost, hours, and conflicts with work schedules.

Another program that many students take part of during the summer in the Bronx is summer school: around 34,000 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders must take summer school in order to pass to the next grade (Smink, 2011). However, classes are half day, so by noon children are on their own for the afternoon. The NYPL is another option for children seeking activities over the summer. The library offers access to the internet, the chance to borrow books, films, and participate in programming such as story hour and crafting. Despite the assumption that libraries are outdated centers, attendance and circulation at the NYPL branches has gone up in the last decade. This demand for library services has been a strain for human resources as the budget was cut in 2008 and only since 2015 has been increased. For children who are not enrolled in summer camps and rarely visit the library, the final destination over summer is the nearest public park. Attending the park is a popular option not only because it is free, but also because if the park is close enough children may attend by themselves. Often, parents are busy during the day during the summer and children are restricted to places they can go by themselves while a caretaker, such as an older relative, either comes with them to watch them at the park or stay at home. Even if a caretaker stays at home, oftentimes children can still go to a nearby public park because neighbors will usually then look after not only their own children, but also their neighbor's children in the park.

### Summer Activities in the Bronx

Street Address	City	State	Zip	Name
1835 University Avenue	Bronx	NY	10453	Kips Bay Boys and Girls Club
1905 Morris Avenue	Bronx	NY	10453	St. Edmunds Youth Programs
2038 Davidson Avenue	Bronx	NY	10453	Davidson Community Center
1491 Montgomery Avenue	Bronx	NY	10453	Featherbed Lane Improvement Assoc.
Broadway & W 242nd Street	Bronx	NY	10471	Van Cortland Swimming Pool
E 164th Street	Bronx	NY	10452	Mullaly Pool
E 180th Street bet. Mapes and Prospect Avenue	Bronx	NY	10460	Mapes Pool
Tiffany Street	Bronx	NY	10474	Floating Pool
1700 Fulton Avenue	Bronx	NY	10457	Crotona Pool
Bronx River Avenue	Bronx	NY	10472	Bronx River Playground Pool
E 170th Street	Bronx	NY	10457	Claremont Swimming Pool
Burke Avenue	Bronx	NY	10475	Haffen Swimming Pool
Schiefflin Avenue	Bronx	NY	10466	Edenwald Houses Outdoor Mini Pool
1701 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard	Bronx	NY	10453	Sedgwick Public Library

#### *1.2 b. The Program Site: Hayden Lord Park*

Hayden Lord Park is a small park located on Andrews Avenue South in the neighborhood of Morris Heights. The park is flanked on either side by six floor residential buildings owned by Bronx Pro Real Estate. Before 2010 the park and these residential buildings were the property of NYCHA. During that time they were in poor condition and many apartments were unoccupied. Older residents in the neighborhood recall the lower apartments were drug dens, whose activity extended out to the park, which was a social location for young men who took advantage of the basketball court.

When Bronx Pro bought the area, they intended to build over the park. However, city code prohibited building over the lot, so Bronx Pro compensated by building taller residential buildings and keeping the Floor Area Ratio lower through the ground level park. They then

reached out to DreamYard about renovating the park, offering to fund the renovation and name the park after Tim Lord's deceased son: Hayden Lord.

The first summer in 2013 the park was only open to residents of the buildings. However, other nearby families complained, so the park was then made public on the condition that parents fill out a waiver when they first come to the park. Due to this past of closed access to the park, many occupants of the neighborhood did not know about the park or if they did, know that they were free to enter the park. Contributing to this tension surrounding the private and public nature of the park was the number of video surveillance cameras dotting the park: more than most shops and public spaces in the same area. These video surveillance cameras speak to the desire of DreamYard to keep the park heavily regulated and ultimately private, despite the voiced goals to also reach other community members unaware of the programming in the park. In an effort to boost attendance at the park and add to programming in the park, Tim Lord developed a partnership with Libraries Without Borders to bring the Ideas Box program to the park.

### **1.3 The Nonprofit: Libraries Without Borders**

From July to August of 2015 I interned with the education nonprofit, Libraries Without Borders. Founded in 2007 by Patrick Weil, Libraries Without Borders mission is to promote access to information and to support libraries in developing countries. The nonprofit runs many projects, each focused on improving access to education. One of the biggest projects run by Libraries Without Borders is the Ideas Box: "a portable multi-media kit for refugee and vulnerable populations." The Ideas Box was originally designed to address the lack of a library in refugee camps in Central Africa. The Ideas Box is composed of four differently colored cubic

boxes and two rectangular metal boxes. The talented French designer, Philippe Starck, designed the colored boxes and two metal boxes to be easily transportable and sturdy. Inside the four boxes are laptops, e-readers, tablets, paper books, MOOCs, built-in tv set, projector, films, board games, cameras, GPS devices, and arts materials. There is also a server and generator so the electronic devices can be used even in locations without easy access to power. Before the Ideas Box is shipped from Libraries Without Borders' headquarters, its contents are curated for its intended users. Employees of Libraries Without Borders collaborate with its local partner organizations to curate the paper books, films, games, e-book contents, and apps.

The Ideas Box has demonstrated that it is effective when employed in refugee populations. The longest running implementation of the Ideas Box is in the Africa Great Lakes Region (Burundi), where it has been employed since February 2014. The official mission of the Ideas Box program in Burundi is: capacity-building through education, connecting refugees, and building resilience of a community (Libraries Without Borders). The 6 month project report conducted in 2014 on the Ideas Box in Burundi noted three levels of impact: child protection, strengthening education, and strengthening community links. These themes emerged from the evaluations conducted by an expert in mental health in humanitarian crises and Burundian interpreter. The study on the Ideas box program in Cameroon conducted a greater amount of quantitative evaluations, using a mathematics test, social interaction/cognitive test, and creativity test with 257 students. Students in the test group increased math scores by 13.8 percentage points after two three month tutoring sessions. Additionally, students progressed in both skills that were covered in the tutoring sessions and related skills that were not covered. Tutored students also increased by 36 percentage points on the creativity test. These results demonstrate

the successful impact of the Ideas Box when examining scholastic improvement as well as community growth and resilience.

#### **1.4 Research Team and Methodology**

Stéphane Tonnelat, a CNRS researcher at the CIRHUS Center of New York University, offered to research the trial program in the South Bronx pro bono for Libraries Without Borders. The executive director of the American branch of Libraries Without Borders, Allister Chang, suggested I and the other interns go through the Tufts IRB to assist Stéphane. As Stéphane was on site for the first week of the program and returned August 20 to September 5, the interns collected a lot of the on-site material during the program. This thesis is based on research conducted over a two-month period (July and August of 2015).

The research is primarily ethnographic: we collected feedback on specific activities, took pictures and recorded different activities, noted attendance, and conducted interviews with participants. When collecting feedback on specific activities, both participants and facilitators were asked questions to understand both the student's perspective and the facilitator's goals. For the interviews, interviewees were asked a set list of questions while longer interviews were less structured.

For the first two weeks (July 1-July 14) I met the other interns and heads of the organizations and helped out at the park prior to the Ideas Box arrival. After the opening ceremony for the Ideas Box in the Bronx program on July 15, I began facilitating programming at the park with the other interns and conducting research. The interns would take turns covering attendance and research tasks and facilitating. At times it was difficult to reliably conduct thorough research when large groups visited the park or when the Ideas Box was transported to

street fairs. Each intern also kept notes taken down throughout the day and photos to help record information and supplement the formal research material.

During the course of the research process I found that the interviews and narratives were the most compelling. Later in the program when we experimented more with changing the location of the program to a different park a block away and outside a nearby Laundromat, we drew more adult participants. These adult participants and the older teenagers often gave a more complex portrait of their background. Recording the narratives and accounts of these participants introduced much more nuance into understanding how educational programming, like the Ideas Box program, fit into different community members lives.

***1.4 a. The Partners: DreamYard, Libraries Without Borders, Bronx Pro Real Estate, Sustainable South Bronx, and the New York Public Library***

*When I tell my mom that I'm bringing my brother to the park so He can think  
inside the box*

*Her face is sour patched lemon twisted with confusion*

*She, like so many, have been fooled into believing that the box isn't her friend*

*That the park isn't a place to learn*

*She doesn't know that this box is a wonderland*

*That inside are the tools to change the future*

*That it's a classroom*

*Where the urgency of reading is encouraged*

*But ten year old Mathew [from 1665 Andrews] is convinced that*

*This box is a transformer who came to share a story with us*

*This box can turn this park into a movie theater  
Comes with 5 cameras so that we could get our Spike Lee on  
Can invite Toni and Gwendolyn to kick rhymes while the kids play in the grass  
It's education reformed and neatly packed into a box  
Fantastical but don't bet caught up in its novelty  
This is a dream waiting to be planted in our children  
Where Langston himself could teach about ones that are differed  
The opportunity for them to be raised in the sun  
Taught that learning is always fun  
But most importantly  
Necessary  
(Slam poet Jessica Blandon, DreamYard intern for the summer)*

Jessica Blandon, a DreamYard intern that summer, was the first to speak at the opening ceremony of the Ideas Box program in Hayden Lord Park on July 15, 2015. Her poem speaks to the anticipation of those invested in the program and their expectations and the tensions within the community. The speeches of the directors of each organization outlined a general goal: successful engagement with the community and providing summer programming for an area where opportunity for summer camps and day camps is sparse. This mission for the summer program was created through the collaboration of a multitude of partners: a complex relationship between non-profit and for profit organizations who operate locally or globally.

The opening ceremony was a platform for each of these partners to introduce themselves and provide their reasons for supporting the Ideas Box program in the Bronx and their

expectations for the program. Tim Lord, one of the two executive directors of DreamYard, moderated the ceremony. He thanked each representative of the various partners involved in the program and expressed his hopes that the program would mitigate the summer learning gap. During his speech he mentioned Bronx Pro Real Estate, who owns Hayden Lord Park and leases it to DreamYard for about a \$1. He also mentioned Sustainable South Bronx, a non-profit focusing on urban gardening. Each summer DreamYard hires a park manager from Sustainable South Bronx as the park manager and interns are responsible for tending the park grounds and gardening the small vegetable plot in the park. The next speaker, the city's public attorney Leticia James expressed her hopes that the Ideas Box would make learning more dynamic and interactive and reduce the learning gap. Leticia James, the first woman of color to hold a city wide elected position in NYC, also expressed her belief in the power of libraries as a resource to poor children of color. She recently defended and helped pass a bill that raised the operating budget of the New York Public Library (NYPL). Anthony Marx, president of the New York Public Library, spoke next, praising the initiative to link the library's resources to pockets of the neighborhood that do not use the library's services. Finally Alex Soros of Soros Foundation and Patrick Weil, director of Bibliothèque sans Frontières, spoke about the success of the Ideas Box in previous trials in refugee populations and their hopes to expand its application to urban areas. Ultimately, the complex ties between these various partners complicated the programs operations due to difficulty communicating and some misalignment of expectations on how to employ the Ideas Box to fulfill the goal of community engagement and addressing the summer learning gap.

Chart displaying partnerships working together on the Bronx Ideas Box Program

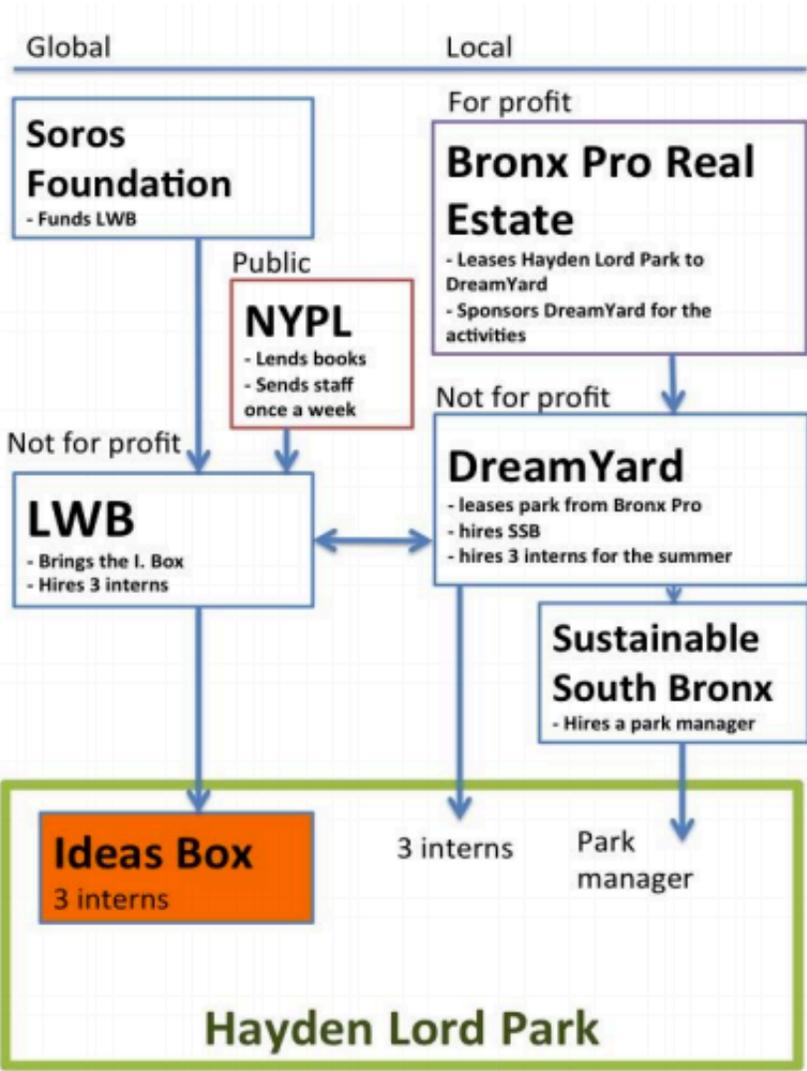


Diagram created by Stéphane Tonnelat displaying the institutional partnerships and how they are related. This diagram illustrates the different levels on which each institution operates: global, local, for profit, and not for profit.

## CHAPTER II

### *Critical Race Theory (CRT) and its Application to Education*

This paper utilizes a critical race theory framework to analyze the state of education and the achievement gap in Morris Heights and to examine the case study of the Bronx Ideas Box program (the two month educational programming held in Hayden Lord Park in Morris Heights). I chose to evaluate the Bronx Ideas Box program through a critical race theory lens due to CRT's emphasis on acknowledging systemic racism as a deep-rooted component of American society in order to expose the ways in which racism is enacted and its emphasis on de-silencing marginalized narratives. These two tenets of CRT were critical to my analysis of the Bronx Ideas Box program as I sought to examine the legacy of institutional racism that has shaped the achievement gap in Morris Heights and to prioritize the narratives and experiences of the participants in the Bronx Ideas Box program. Approaching the issue of the racial achievement gap in Morris Heights necessitated "[acknowledging] race and its intersection with racism as a first step to combating the daily oppression of racial injustice" (Kohli, 2008, p. 9).

An analysis of how race shapes access to education in Morris Heights and the South Bronx would not be possible without acknowledging the deeply rooted legacy of system racism in the US, its educational policy structures, and the way in which racism is manifested today. The Bronx Ideas Box program was an effort to counter the achievement gap by expanding access to educational resources to supplement the summer break, a time when many students face a major decrease in educational resources and activities. However, to evaluate the success of the trial Bronx Ideas Box program, it is necessary to focus and amplify the feedback of the participants, most of whom belong to marginalized groups. This amplification of narratives that fall outside of the dominant discourse "is a means of exposing and critiquing normalized

dialogues that perpetuate racialized stereotypes” (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p. 27). By engaging in counter-storytelling in this thesis, participants can address not only the way in which race influences their experience with education, but also situate that response in relation to their experience and opinion of the Bronx Ideas Box program.

## **2.1 Origins and Tenets of Critical Race Theory**

### ***2.1 a. The Origins of Critical Race Theory***

In the wake of the civil rights movement a number of educators, lawyers, and activists realized advances were grinding to a halt and facing strong pushback. The stalling of progress towards racial equality was observed not only in education, but also in all other major institutions. As discussed in Chapter One, Commissioners of Education in NY, James Allen and Edwald Nyquist, recognized this pushback as the many efforts they had made to promote desegregation of public schools were countered by white flight to avoid desegregated public schools and a push for greater community control over local schools to further avoid desegregation. This stalling and pushback against progress towards dismantling systemic racism spurred various legal scholars, notably Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado, to develop a new theoretical framework to conduct further legal research: CRT (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p. 26). While CRT originated in the field of legal studies, other scholars, such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate, and Daniel Solórzano have since expanded its application to frame research in education. What is especially unique about CRT is its activist nature. Crenshaw explicates on this aspect of CRT, pointing out how “race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination” and “according to this understanding, our liberatory objective should be to empty

such categories of any social significance” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). However, Crenshaw, along with other CRT scholars, see identity categories not as solely markers of difference that need to be erased of significance, but rather as “source[s] of social empowerment and reconstruction” (Crenshaw, 1001, p. 1242). Thus, CRT advocates for the delineation of difference (such as different racial categories) to be utilized to empower groups and effect social change. Along with this activist agenda, the framework of CRT is characterized by five main tenets.

## **2.2 The Five Tenets of Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) operates within a framework with an “activist aspect, the end goal of which is to bring change that will implement social justice” (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004). To further social change, CRT functions based on the five following tenets: the permanence of racism, whiteness as property (Harris, 1995), interest convergence (Bell, 1980), the critique of liberalism, and counter-storytelling.

### ***2.2 a. The Permanence of Racism***

Derrick Bell first expanded upon the permanence of racism in a CRT framework in his work, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. In this and later works, Derrick Bell drew attention the persistence of racism, which characterizes it as a “permanent component of American life” (p. 13). DeCuir and Dixson elaborate upon the permanence of racism, stating this notion “suggests that racist hierarchical structures govern all political, economic, and social domains. Such structures allocate the privileging of the Whites and the subsequent Othering of people of color in all arenas, including education ” (p. 27). The tenet of

permanence of racism aligns with many broad definitions of racism, such as Carmelita Castaneda and Ximena Zuniga's (2013) definition of racism: "The set of institutional, cultural, and interpersonal patterns and practices that creates advantages for people legally defined and socially constructed as "white," and the corollary disadvantages for people defined as belonging to racial groups that were not considered Whites by the dominant power structure in the United States" (McCoy and Rodricks, 2015, p. 6). Understanding the permanence of racism works to combat the idea of racism as being tied to random isolated incidents, but rather as operating within the institutional hierarchies that connect series of related racist incidents.

### ***2.2 b. Whiteness as Property***

The notion of whiteness as property as a key tenet of CRT is indicative of CRT's roots in legal studies. As the US is a capitalist society, much of US legal studies focus on property rights. Ideologically, democracy and capitalism have become so intertwined in the American consciousness it is difficult to separate the two systems and take a more critical view of how property rights often undermine democratic values. Ladson-Billings and Tate call attention to how "traditional civil rights approaches to solving inequality have depended on the 'rightness' of democracy while ignoring the structural inequality of capitalism" (p. 52).

### ***2.2 c. Interest Convergence***

The tenet of interest convergence forms the foundation of Bell's argument in his analysis of *Brown v. Board of Education*: a decision, he argued, was made only because "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality converge[d]...with the interests of whites" (Bell, 1980). DeCuir and Dixson extend this argument, adding, "that these concessions were offered to the

extent that they were not seen (or exacted) as a major disruption to the ‘normal’ way of life for the majority of Whites.”

#### ***2.2 d. The Critique of Liberalism***

In critiquing liberalism, CRT scholars focus on three points often included in liberalism: “the notion of color-blindness, the neutrality of the law, and incremental change” (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004). Positing the law as neutral and color-blind essentially erases the earlier distribution of rights and privileges exclusively based on race. And erasing this past of institutionalized racism makes it easier to ignore current racism. Furthermore, the notion of incremental change implies steps towards equality must be made at “a slow pace that is palatable for those in power” (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004).

#### ***2.2 e. Counter-storytelling***

A fundamental tenet of CRT is counter-storytelling. The use of counterstories “allows for the challenging of privileged discourses, the discourses of the majority, therefore serving as a means for giving voice to marginalized groups (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004). Counter-stories and narratives function to disrupt the dominant discourse. For example, in education mainly administrators control the dominant narrative. Research, such as that conducted by DeCuir and Dixson, focusing on the experiences of African-American students at a rich predominantly white private academy in the southeast, works to shed greater light on race as experienced by marginalized students in an educational context. Their narratives ultimately portrayed a different perspective of the role of race in disciplinary decisions and the acts of racism enacted by other students on campus. Without centering research on the experience of those whose experiences

are not reflected in privileged discourses, academic research remains limited, operating in a narrow perspective.

## **2.3 Critical Race Theory and its Application to Education**

### ***2.3 a. Critical Race Theory's Focus on Historicizing Racial Progress and Retrenchment:***

#### ***Understanding Changing Access to Education at Different Points in Time***

Critical race theory has its origins in legal studies, but has since expanded to other fields, such as education. The content in Chapter One discussing the history of education in Morris Heights and the South Bronx is crucial to understanding how disadvantages have played out over time to affect different groups access to education in that area. Critical race theory focuses on historical disadvantages and the “ebb and flow of racial progress and retrenchment” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). Many critical scholars have pointed to the way in “dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). For example, the Japanese are now racialized as belonging to a model minority group, whereas during WWII Japanese Americans were relocated to internment camps and racialized as threatening and requiring forcible monitoring by the US government. Racialization by the dominant society evolves over time, changing the access different racial groups have to resources such as education at different points in time.

While critical race theory originated as a critique of racism in law, it is clear that racism is present not only in the legal structure, but other societal institutions, including education. Scholars Ladson-Billings and Tate are prominently credited in making explicit the relation between critical race theory and research in education. Since then, critical race theory has grown as a theoretical framework to examine racism within education. Prominent scholars who built

upon the work of those who expanded the application of critical race theory to education include Solorzano and Yosso. However, most scholars acknowledge the potential for further elaboration on the application of critical race theory to education.

### ***2.3 b. The Tenet of Whiteness as Property and it's Relation to Education***

As exemplified in Chapter One, location and property play a major role in education. The white flight from Morris Heights and the Bronx to the suburbs and other states demonstrates how property is inextricably linked to the quality of public school education. During white flight to the suburbs, the suburbs became the enclave for the upper working class white. As DeCuir and Dixson sum up in their discussion of property taxes: “Recurring discussions about property tax relief indicate that more affluent communities (which have higher property assessments, hence higher tax assessments) resent paying for a public school system whose clientele is largely nonwhite and poor” (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p. 53).

### ***2.3 c. Derrick Bell's application of CRT to Brown v. Board of Education***

Though Derrick Bell wrote “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma” more than thirty five years ago, his observation that “most black children attend public schools that are both racially isolated and inferior” does not drastically differ when considering the current achievement gap in the US (Bell, 1980). At the time of the court decision, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was heralded as a landmark victory for the Civil Rights movement. Yet the court decision has not been followed by any major narrowing of the gap between black student and white students test scores. The persistent segregation that is apparent in education is most clear when examining housing and living conditions for each

public school district. Bell argues that the court decision was motivated less by idealistic desires to promote equality, than the “calculated convergence of interests between northern liberals, southern moderates, and blacks” (Guinier, 2006).

In his article, Bell first points to the fact that the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* was not the first case to be brought to the courts regarding segregation and harm it was inflicting on black students.

Early in his career, Bell had worked as an assistant counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund working to combat segregation and other forms of racism in education. He worked in Mississippi on over three hundred desegregation cases before beginning his career as a professor. Thus, Bell’s personal experience handling desegregation cases and his later research as a professor of law informed his critical analysis of the *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In the case of *Brown v Board of Education*, Bell argues that the decision only occurred because the interests of black and white citizens converged at that moment in time. During the time period of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, the US had just emerged as a world power after WWII as well as founding member of the United Nations. Maintaining segregation at home would only detract from US aims to expand global influence and would appear hypocritical in conjunction with the anti-racist mission charter statements of the United Nations. American officials were concerned with the image of the US abroad, as international press coverage continued to draw comparisons between “American segregation and related injustices in the international press. For example, newspapers in India carried stories with titles such as, ‘Untouchability in India: Worshipped in America’ (Harpalani, 2004). Through careful examination of the interests and priorities of the US government at that time, Bell identified the

interest convergent covenants that allowed for the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

While celebrated as a major civil rights achievement, many CRT scholars now argue that *Brown* was “less an issue of discrimination and more a means to reinforce the country’s image as democratic and anticommunist” (Wassell, 2004).

## **2.4 Counter-storytelling and the Narratives of Participants**

### ***2.4 a. The Tenet of Counter Narratives and its Relevance to Education***

A major component of critical race theory is the tenet of counter narratives, which brings attention to the importance of perspective when considering racial disadvantages in fields such as education. Individuals are limited by their subjectivity: the way we experience and ‘read’ the world. When Michael Bamberg introduces his work on counter-narratives, he first attempts to define what distinguishes and makes counter-narratives ‘special’ as opposed to other discourse genres, such as descriptions or explanations. He posits that the narrative genre links past events to present states, revealing character transformation: “[offering] something to the presentations of selves (and others) that other speech genres don’t do so eloquently and directly” (Bamberg, 354). As we are all limited by our own subjectivity, we can only broaden our understanding through careful attention to the narratives of others.

A fundamental premise for critical scholars who focus on narratives and storytelling is “members of this country’s dominant racial group cannot easily grasp what it is like to be nonwhite” (Delgado and Stefancic). Therefore, in a society with a dominant racial group, the dominant narrative often overpowers the perspectives and narratives of members of minority groups. Counter-storytelling, the expression of the narratives of those in minority positions is a method to destabilize the dominant narrative. Through exposing the subjectivity of the dominant narrative, counter-storytelling challenges accepted premises that perpetuate racism.

The function of counter-narratives is not limited to destabilizing dominant narratives. Engaging in counter-storytelling also functions to alleviate silence that affects the psyche of a minority group as well as to create a dialogue surrounding race. Ladson-Billings and Tate elaborate on these further functions of counter-storytelling in their 1995 article, "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education." In their article they connect Delgado's statements on narratives and storytelling in legal studies with education. Delgado states:

- “1. Much of reality is socially constructed.
2. Stories provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychic preservation.
3. The exchange of stories from teller to listener can help overcome ethnocentrism and the dysconscious conviction of viewing the world in one way.”

Ladson-Billings and Tate explicate on these statements of Delgado. Delgado's first point challenges the universal framework used often in legal studies that implies there exists “a universal system of right and wrong” (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Use of a universal analytical framework acts to devalue or discount narratives as unscholarly or emotional. Ladson-Billings and Tate go on to explain Delgado's second point regarding the psychic preservation of marginalized groups that results from counter-storytelling, explaining “the story of one's conditions leads to the realization of how one came to be oppressed and subjugated and allows one to stop inflicting mental violence on oneself.” Thus, counter-storytelling not only functions to challenge the perspective of those who control the dominant societal narrative, but also functions to support the narrator and other members of the minority group who may have

internalized certain stereotypes. The third point Delgado makes concerns the effect of counter-storytelling on the dominant group: the effort to destabilize ethnocentrism perpetuated by the dominant narrative. Ultimately, counter-storytelling is one of the most powerful methods to address historical disadvantages in education as the voices of people of color are so noticeably absent in academic discourse and in reports on educational programming.

Counterstorytelling has been utilized in this thesis to give a greater variety of perspectives from community members on their thoughts and critique of the Bronx Ideas Box Program and the effectiveness of literacy and visual arts programming. A number of brief interviews were collected throughout the two months of the summer program. The programming was free and in an outdoor space, so there was no registration or fee necessary to participate. This led to many drop by attendees at different times, and thus only a short interview or collection of basic background information could be taken (name, age, check in time, and check out time). However, as certain participants were daily visitors to the Ideas Box program, the facilitators and park employees became well acquainted with them. As the researchers and facilitators spent more time with these participants, longer interviews could be collected. These interviews were also interesting as they offered the chance to learn more about those who took the time to return to the programming each day. Interviews with the teachers are also included in the appendix to give more background on the people who led the programming.

## CHAPTER III

### *Analyzing the Results of the Project Within a Critical Race Theory*

#### *Framework*

#### **3.1 Positive Results: Projects that Addressed the Needs of the Community**

##### ***3.1 a. The Need for Safe Spaces for Educational and Recreational Activities***

One of the major needs of the community that has been described in quantitative observations and statistics and in participant interviews is the high levels of crime in the neighborhood. Morris Heights is part of the 46<sup>th</sup> precinct, which includes Fordham, University Heights and Mount Hope. In 2015, there were 14 murders, 418 robberies, 558 cases of felonious assault, 268 burglaries, and 446 cases of grand larceny. Crime has become a more pressing issue recently as well in all of New York City, with a reported 20% increase in murders and 20% increase in shootings, though crime has dropped overall by 11% in most major crime categories, such as burglaries and thefts (Parascandola, Moore, and Hutchinson, 2015). This uptick in crime has led the NYPD to increase patrols in the five most troubled precincts: the 46<sup>th</sup> precinct in the Bronx, the 102<sup>nd</sup> precinct in Queens, and the 67<sup>th</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup>, and 75<sup>th</sup> precincts of Brooklyn (Burgos, 2015). Issues regarding crime were one of the most reported needs of the community when speaking with residents of Morris Heights. Jessica, a fifteen year old girl who acts as a caretaker during the day for her two younger siblings, said when asked about what she believed were the needs of the community:

*“I believe the dangers during the nighttime...the dangers will make people more afraid to go out from their homes and will be more secluded inside. Like social conflict in general, people will be having conflicts on the street, and then parents will think it will not be safe for their kids to be outside without their supervision.”*

The same question provoked a similar response from Jimmy, a man who worked in the laundromat on the same street as the Ideas Box programming in the park and who would often help during his breaks, as he said:

*“It’s good this area has something [Ideas Box program] networking; before there was just foot traffic. This area needed more activity. I think having this here also stops crime and gives people the chance to stop.”*

These comments reflect similar themes that emerged when speaking with parents of children who were engaged in an activity at the Ideas Box. Many of them stressed the need for safe and free activities for their children. The concern for safety often was a factor for many parents that conflicted with their availability to watch their children and accompany them to the park or to the library. As most parents were limited by the hours they were working, they either had to rely on a caretaker like an older sibling, relative, or neighbor, or limit their children to going only to certain streets of the neighborhood. For example, one ten year old boy, Ulysses, and his nine year old brother, Jay, said they spent most of their time indoors playing video games and watching TV, as they would be punished if they stayed out for too long. Their mother had lost her arm in a car accident, and did not leave the house much. While they were allowed to leave the house to play, her concern for their safety and inability to leave the house often, led them to spend much of their summer indoors. Thus, a common theme that emerged was parents working hours and the safety of the area often meant that children’s access to activities, educational or recreational was limited.

A CRT analysis of this need of the community for a safer neighborhood, reveals how Morris Heights has been shaped by two factors that are foundational to CRT: the permanence of racism and whiteness as property.

The permanence of racism tenet points to the enduring legacy of racism that operates on a structural level.

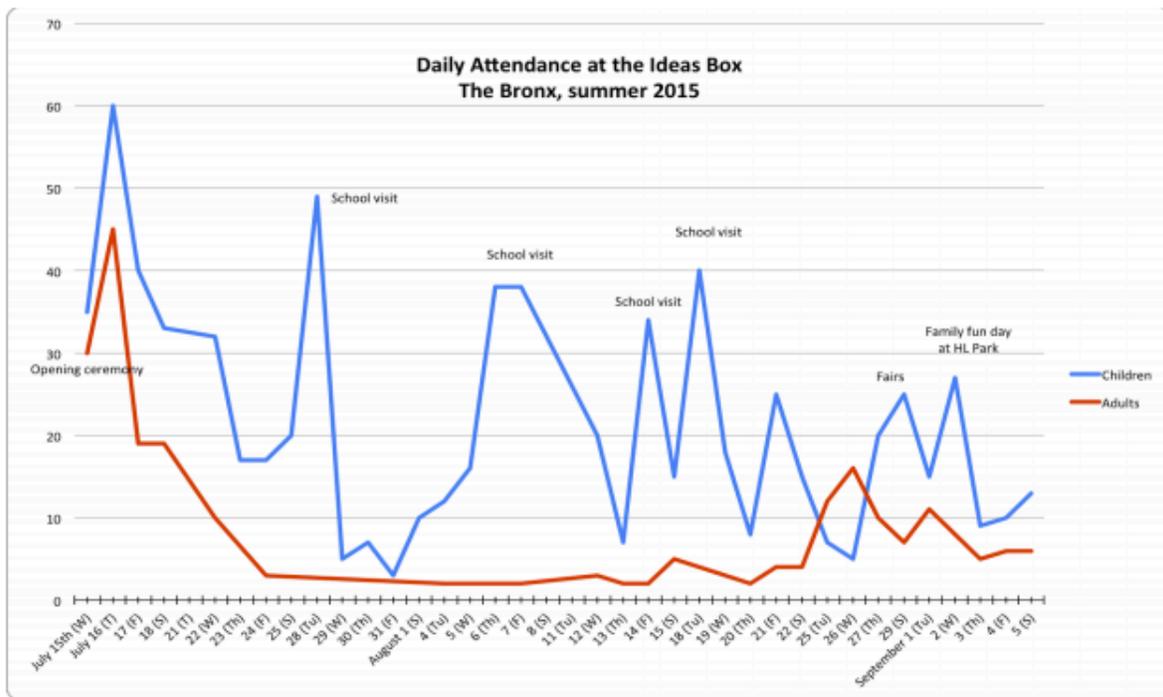
The well documented school to prison pipeline demonstrates how racism at the institutional level in academics and in the criminal justice system, lead to a cycle of minority students moving from school to prison. This pipeline progresses as students encounter underfunded and underserved schools, zero-tolerance disciplinary action, school-based arrests, juvenile detention centers that culminate in an overwhelming amount of barriers to completing school.

Another instance in which institutional racism operated to contribute to Morris Heights' current levels of crime and poverty occurred post-WWII. Black veterans returning from the war were unable to take advantage of the GI bill like white veterans. Out of blatant racism, many banks refused to make loans for mortgages in black neighborhoods. This historical disadvantage also reflects another tenet of CRT: whiteness as property. In this case, the whiteness of veterans gave them material benefits: the ability to take advantage of the housing provisions of the GI bill, causing a huge boom in white wealth and upward mobility during this era (Callahan, 2013). This contributed to the white flight, leaving many black and Latino residents concentrated in poorer areas, such as Morris Heights. Institutional structures have continued to perpetuate the criminalization of marginalized communities in following years. The hypercriminalization of marginalized communities is then framed in the dominant narrative as crime stemming from "personal troubles" in order to blame Black criminality, racial tensions, or White Supremacy" rather than attempting to find "a systematic explanation for the public issues of punitive social control that affect poor marginalized youth in local settings" (Rios, 2011). The poor economic conditions of the

area and criminalization of community members then feed into the crime rates of the neighborhood.

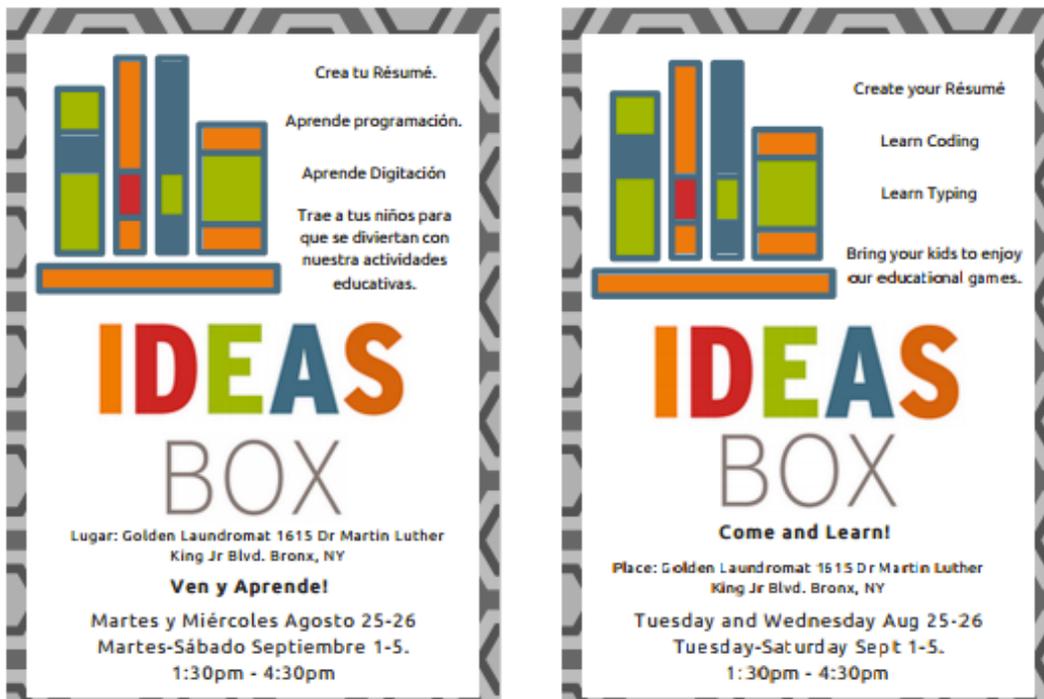
**3.1 b. The Need for Assistance with Job Searches**

Another need of the community that is related to the economic conditions of the neighborhood is the need for assistance in job searches. This need of the community was not fully understood by the Bronx Ideas Box program until the team decided to change locations of the program to down the street in an effort to boost the number of participants.



As described in Chapter One, Hayden Lord Park was located on a quiet residential street (Andrews Avenue) right off the main busy street (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.). As the park was on a quiet street and was formerly a private park for building residents, many people did not know about the park. To reach more participants, the Bronx Ideas Box program team decided to change locations. While the team initially considered setting up outside the nearest subway

station, but there were too many challenges. The Ideas Box was not easily transportable and the amount of stairs outside the subway would make the location too challenging. After many discussions, the team decided to set up outside the laundromat down the street from Hayden Lord Park. The laundromat would be a perfect location to reach people sitting on the benches on the main street, people waiting for their clothing, and more adult participants.



*Photo of the flyers created by intern, Juan David Nunez Hurtado that were distributed for the change in location to the Golden Laundromat.*

The team brought a smaller version of the Ideas Box program than had been at Hayden Lord Park, due to difficulties transporting everything in a timely manner. The team first came to the laundromat once a week for two weeks. The positive response from participants who stopped while passing the laundromat led the team to come back eight more times during the last two weeks of the program until September 5.

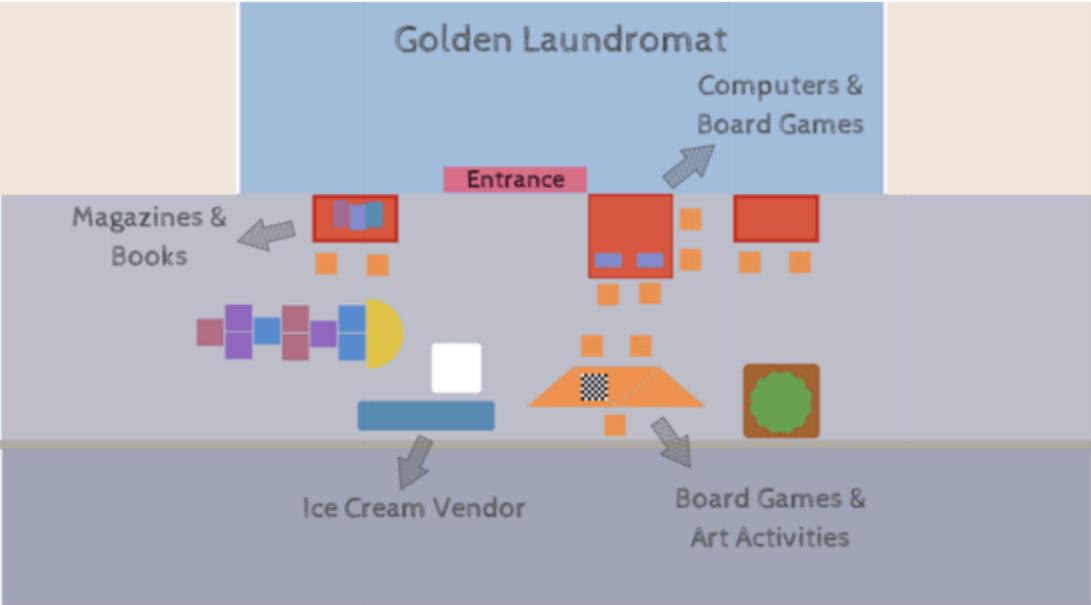


Diagram displaying the layout of the Bronx Ideas Box Program on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. outside The Golden Laundromat created by intern, Juan David Nunez Hurtado.



The Bronx Ideas Box Program set up outside The Golden Laundromat, September 2015.

Each time the team came to set up outside The Golden Laundromat, the team brought the orange box module with several books, magazines, comic books, board games (chess, dominoes and connect-4) , four chromebook laptops, some art supplies, a cardboard Chairigami table and stools, about ten metal folding chairs, a whiteboard, and chalk. Generally, the team set up the orange box module alongside the side of the laundromat and set the cardboard Chairigami table across from the entrance to the laundromat. Each time the team came, one member would write up the activities offered for the day and the hours and chalk out a hopscotch game on the ground in between the two tables. The street got a fair amount of foot traffic each day, and around fifteen to thirty people were usually inside the laundromat at any given point during the day.

While the team had looked forward to meeting more adult participants, they did not anticipate the degree to which adult participants would respond to the Bronx Ideas Box program. Many adults were enthusiastic about the resume services the team set up at the computer station. On Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, there were difficulties due to the laptops dying quickly. However, at this point, the team had become friendly with the two main employees working at The Golden Laundromat, who allowed us to charge the laptops inside. Once the laptops were charged, Stephane began to work with Ken, a man who was interested in updating his resume to apply to work as a truck driver. Though Ken did not have an electronic copy of his resume on him, he ran to his apartment to get a copy. He then sat down with Stephane and another intern to update his last job, include his new driver's license, and then write a cover letter. In addition to resumes, the team helped with other aspects of the job search. For example, intern Juan David helped one man, Eric, who was interested in creating an advertisement for his headlight polishing and restoration services. At first, Eric said he had been planning to create a flyer with sharpie. However, Juan David worked with Eric at the laptop station to create a professional looking flyer

and printed out several copies. As the team was friendly with the employees of the laundromat, Eric was then able to post one of the flyers for his car services on the door of the laundromat. During his time working with Juan David, Eric opened up about his professional motivations and his personal life. He explained he was married to a woman with two children, a ten year old and a fourteen year old, and that he wanted to be a good stepfather and role model. When walking to print the flyer at the printer located in the storage room of the park, Eric went on to explain he had been involved in drug dealing and spent several years in jail. He now wanted to move on and find better work and be a better role model. After the flyer was completed, Eric called his wife to tell her about the flier. On the phone, his wife mentioned she is a dental assistant and supports the family. With the flyer, Eric hoped to jumpstart attracting more clients and provide additional support to her income.

At the end of the ten days, spent outside the Golden Laundromat, the team produced ten resumes. This number is much lower than the amount of people who initially sat down to begin their resume, but did not have enough time to finish. The people who were unable to complete their resume before they had to leave, had the partially complete resume in their email, however, it seemed doubtful that most would finish the resume without the encouragement of the team members. The amount of unfinished resumes may stem from several factors. Those who did not finish their resume may have doubted the resume would help that much, may not have trusted the staff with their private information, or may have been too ashamed to admit they need help, as suggested by the local librarians. However, the time spent working with adults on their resumes, gave the team much greater insight into the lives of families in the immediate area and their needs. From working with these adults, it became clear one major need in the community was finding better employment, and that the barriers to job searches were not necessarily internet

access or word processor access, but an inability to formulate past work experience in professional language on their resume, familiarity using word processors or typing, and, in some cases, difficulty reading. When speaking with Eric while he worked with Juan David on his flyer, Eric mentioned he had not learned to read until he was an adult. Like Eric, many participants seemed to struggle with literacy: when asked to read their resume aloud, while a team member typed it out, participants sometimes struggled with pronunciation or reading aloud.

The community need of assistance with employment and job searches again relates to CRT tenets of whiteness as property and the permanence of racism. The issue many adults faced when attempting to phrase job experience in language customary for a resume and cover letter reveals the disconnect in language that is delineated by race and socioeconomic status. As established through a closer look at the way economic status is shaped by historical disadvantages caused by racism and racial hierarchy in the US, it is clear that race and economic status are intertwined. It is not by accident that the poorest congressional district in the US is mainly black and Latino. The many ways racism has worked to stem upward mobility of these minority groups, has culminated in a concentrated region where many residents live below the poverty line. Research has continued to demonstrate the spatial politics of race and poverty. In New York about 27% of black residents live in concentrated poverty as opposed to 18% of white residents (Badger, 2015). This trend holds for most other major metropolitan areas. Black residents are consistently more likely to live in an area of concentrated poverty than white residents. Jargowsky, in a new report for Century Foundation, observes that “The concentration of poverty is really about the spatial organization of poverty” demonstrating “how we’ve designed communities to pen poverty in, restricting many poor African Americans in particular to a limited number of neighborhoods” (Badger, 2015). Also, as most residents speak another

language due to the high foreign-born population: difficulty with English for those who have recently moved to the US further contributes to the barriers to employment. Thus, the type of language most preferred when searching for job candidates reveals the privileging of Standard English, and the hierarchy of forms of communication. Difficulty with accessing employment also relates to the CRT tenet of the permanence of racism. The struggle many adults had with literacy when working on formulating their resume reveals the vicious cycle of institutional racism, where difficulty in school leads to further difficulty finding employment.

### ***3.1 c. The Need for Fun Educational Activities***

Over the course of the two-month trial program of the Bronx Ideas Box program, the team facilitated many different activities, attempting to provide the most engaging, yet educational activity for the participants. Activities for children ranged from board games, story hours, coding games and workshops on the chromebooks, arts projects, film projects, and occasional author readings. Over the course of the two months, LWB and DreamYard worked to find a temporary teaching artist to facilitate: there were five teaching artists who came regularly at different points in the summer. These teaching artists were: Sam, Vlad, and Jessie who were documentary filmmakers, Kelsey Van Ert who was a poet and dancer, and Francesca who was a visual artist and poet. The feedback from participants cited projects led by these teaching artists to be the most memorable of the summer. A characteristic each of these projects shared was that they were accessible for any age participant to creatively express and explore their identity. By the end of the summer, it seemed these workshops stood out to participants because of they successfully allowed participants to express something about their identity and their community. This support for the expression of identity and experience most directly illustrates the tenet of

counterstorytelling in CRT. Thus the most memorable and successful activities for child participants were those that centered on creative expressions of one's identity through written or spoken word or through visual arts.

***The first teaching artist project: the documentary film workshop***

Sam, Vlad, and Jessie led a successful three day film workshop in the beginning of the summer. The three documentary filmmakers were currently working on a documentary on Libraries Without Borders, when they volunteered to run a film workshop for the children at the park. During the course of the workshop, the three teaching artists screened clips from a documentary, led a brainstorming session, taught basic filming and interviewing skills, and helped the children to edit their documentary. One of the participants, a fifteen-year-old girl named Jessica, recounted when thinking back on the film workshop:

*“To the extent of the film program, when we had those two people with video cameras and they handed it over to little kids, that was a perfect opportunity to show their expressions and their emotions around the park. And, that was a perfect opportunity too. It was very hands on, and then kids from different backgrounds could just show how they felt about the park and how others felt about it, and the neighborhood too.”*

Jessica noted that the film program was successful because it was accessible to all ages, and allowed everyone to showcase their perspective.

During the brainstorming session, the children decided to focus their documentary on an important issue to all of them: bullying. During the brainstorming session many kids were eager to share their thoughts on bullying. One participant, a nine-year-old boy, interjected “a lot times there's bullying on school buses and people don't know what's going on.” His comment led many other students to recount their experiences with bullying. Another nine-year-old, Kendra, spoke about bullying she also saw at school where a girl is routinely bullied for her weight. These numerous incidents of bullying, led Kendra to ask the group “who here has been bullied?”

Most of the children raised their hands. Some of the kids began to explore the consequences of bullying, with one nine-year-old boy, Jaquis, commenting, “You can really hurt somebody’s feelings. You can hit somebody too and say you’re playing, but you still hit them.” This brainstorming session then transitioned to the children discussing how to formulate interview questions around bullying for their documentary. Jaquis proposed the group ask, “How can we stop bullying?” while a thirteen-year-old boy, Josh, asked, “Are we talking about cyber bullying?” and suggested adding another question for the interviews, “If you get bullied do you engage or do you ignore it?” At the end of the first day of the workshop, children commented that this was their favorite activity and they enjoyed not only “learning different methods” of filming, but also “learning to communicate” when going out to conduct street interviews. At the end of the day, when following up to get the teaching artists feedback, teaching artist Jessie explained she believed a successful workshop involved creating a safe space to participate, creating a workshop that builds skills and meets the socio-emotional needs of the group, and helps young people feel confident, have a voice, and have fun. Each of the teaching artists felt the workshop was successful, and noted how “everyone was engaged, participating, and excited to practice.”

The film workshop run by the three documentary filmmakers in late July resonated with many of the children who regularly came to the park, with them listing it as one of their favorites when reflecting on the whole of the program. The program fulfilled the need for engaging educational activities that gave them agency. Earlier, Jessica described the film workshop as the perfect opportunity for children to show how they felt about the park, and how others felt about the park and community. Another child shared similar sentiments about the film workshop, saying about the film workshop:

*“It taught me. I got to see everyone’s experience with bullying. I got more comfortable with cameras. I think it will affect how I do in school. Well, in school I don’t really raise my hand. I’m kinda shy. But at the Ideas Box you get experience talking and sharing your idea. So now in school I might be more comfortable talking.”*

Beyond exploring an important issue, bullying, the film workshop encouraged participants to share their perspective and experience and convey that perspective through film. Through a CRT lens, this workshop’s strength lay in its emphasis on counterstorytelling. By discussing the issues for the documentary in a brainstorming setting, in interviews, and creating a narrative framework when filming and editing, children gained greater confidence communicating and expressing their views.

### ***The second teaching artist project: The Ode to the Bronx and poetry projects***

Kelsey Van Ert, a poet, singer, and dancer associated with DreamYard, led the second teaching-artist led workshop of the summer for three weeks during August. Kelsey, who majored in sociology at University of Wisconsin, now lives in New York City. Kelsey explained her move from her hometown of Minnesota to New York, saying as biracial Puerto Rican and white woman, she encountered greater discrimination in Minnesota and preferred the diversity of NYC. The focus of Kelsey’s workshop was a poetry project created in collaboration with any drop in participant. Her project, the ‘Ode to the Bronx,’ was a long poem with different lines of poetry and illustrations contributed by different drop in or regular participants. The goal of her project was to encourage children to reflect on their relationship with the Bronx. She reflected on the ‘Ode to the Bronx’ project, saying:

*“The first day, [the regulars] sat down and we talked about an ode or a dedication, using fancy words. We brainstormed to find them, and then write sentences with them. With the big group, the Davidson center, we just rolled out the Kraft paper and told them that we needed their help. Where are they from? What are their favorite memories? They don’t even realize they are practicing writing. What*

*stands out: it's a very strong community. A lot of arts and community activism."*

At the end of her three week contract with the program, Kelsey created a video with photos of the final poem and illustrations created by all of the different participants. She then screened the video at the park for the children, passing around a microphone so each child could read a line of the poem. Her project not only encouraged students to write, illustrate, and read aloud, but guided them to reflect on their personal connection to their neighborhood. One thirteen year old boy, Chris, who came to the Bronx Ideas Box program at least once a week, commented on the last day of the program in September that:

*"The 'Ode to the Bronx' changed how I'll do in school next year a little bit. I think it will change how I'll talk with friends about how to improve the city. Because of the positive things about the Bronx in the poem."*

Chris's reflection on how the Ode to the Bronx connected to how he thinks about the ways in which the city can be improved, underscores Kelsey's earlier observations on the strength of the community and the support for community activism.

Another project Kelsey led, similar to the 'Ode to the Bronx,' was a poetry project held in another park down the street. For this project, the team brought a microphone and stand, speaker, whiteboard, chairigami table, chairs, paper, and pencils. For this project, she had participants write a poem about themselves in the 'I am...' format. When participants were gathered, Kelsey introduced herself, saying "Hi, I'm Kelsey and I'm a teaching artist." After Kelsey, participants introduced themselves, one by one. Around fifteen children, mostly black and Latino between ages of five and ten, sat in the folding chairs in a circle around Kelsey. After introductions, Kelsey explained students would write a short poem about themselves and then read it into the microphone. To jumpstart the project, she had children brainstorm words to

describe themselves that she then wrote on the whiteboard. After brainstorming, Kelsey read her poem aloud as an example:

*"I am Kelsey  
I am smart  
I am brave  
I make my  
dreams come true  
because I am determined."*

Everyone claps after her poem, then kids break up into groups as they begin to write their poems. The interns all help children with spelling and brainstorming as they move from group to group. After their poems are complete, the first girl, an eight year old Latino girl named Carrie, approaches the microphone to read her poem:

*"My name is Carrie,  
I am American  
I am self sufficient  
I am smart  
But I am not rude"*

The group again gives a loud round of applause for Carrie. As each child reads their poem the group becomes more and more confident as a whole, though some children need help reading their poem or want to be accompanied at the mic while reading their poem. At the end of the project, each child has read a self-affirming poem and received applause from their friends, their caretakers, and other people stopping by the program. Kelsey reflects on the project, saying she has "tricked them into writing." It is true, each child spent time brainstorming how to describe themselves, writing a poem about themselves, and sharing their poem with the group, but the project seemed less of a trick and more of a genuinely engaging experience. At the end of the project, the kids are so comfortable in front of the mic, they take turns either singing something into the mic or putting together a dance to perform in front of the group. Kelsey's poetry project, much like her 'Ode to the Bronx' project, provided a platform

for children to reflect on various parts of their identity and express that both in writing and in front of their peers.

Both of Kelsey's projects during her time with the Bronx Ideas Box program draw out the importance of counterstorytelling and self-expression. Counterstorytelling, as Ladson-Billings and Tate observe, serve not only to shift the dominant discourse by voicing underrepresented experiences, but also "provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychic preservation" (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Thus, counterstorytelling has many functions that go beyond shifting or countering the dominant narrative. Counterstorytelling also facilitates the celebration of oneself and one's community through sharing one's experience. Viewed through a CRT lens, the Ode to the Bronx project functioned not only to disrupt the dominant narrative that the South Bronx is a dangerous, undesirable area, but also provided a space for participants from the Bronx to share with each other what makes the Bronx their home. Similarly, the second poetry project went beyond voicing the underrepresented narratives of black and Latino children, but created a space for them to celebrate themselves and their peers.

Another participant's statement during an interview, built upon these concepts of how dominant narratives on race and identity emerge, and the necessity for spaces in which members of a minority group can share their experiences. During the interview with the fifteen-year-old girl, Jessica, she spoke more in depth on her personal experiences with race and identity. When considering how living in the Bronx intersects with her racial identity, Jessica responded:

*"Well where I'm living right now, my racial background does not really affect who I am or what others think of me. If I were to go to others states, for example if I were to go to Washington DC, people who see me might think differently of me than who I actually am. And sometimes it could affect me or sometimes I could just not notice it. But, its very likely to happen in America even in different states."*

However, when asked about how her perspective on her racial identity may relate to how other's perceive her racial identity, she went on to say:

*“Yea there could be a major to minor difference in the perspectives. So when my friends see me, they just think of me as a friend, as someone they can trust. But if a person that has never seen me before and has like a racial stereotype of how African Americans are, they’ll think that I’m someone who’s not trustworthy or someone who could be highly dangerous. And that doesn’t correlate to everyone who’s African American. Really affects how people will trust others and how they’ll think a person actually is, which isn’t actually fair.”*

Jessica’s comments on the unfair negative racial stereotyping of African Americans speak to the ways in which the dominant discourse continues to perpetuate racist generalizations. The privileging of white narratives and experiences in the US contributes to the silencing of black and Latino narratives, resulting in an overarching narrative that promotes a racist and derogatory perception of blacks and Latinos. In the face of this erasure of black and Latino experiences and silencing of black and Latino narratives, it is important to maintain and create spaces for the celebration of one’s identity and one’s community. The importance of spaces to express one’s experiences and to discuss shared racial experiences is the foundation for poc-only and black-only spaces and events. In the interview, Jessica explains this need for space for shared racial experiences, when she says:

*“...if the faculty is a majority of one certain ethnicity, there can be a little biased perspective there. So if a student from a completely different cultural background is having some problems and they go to a faculty member who’s completely different, and they have a certain problem that’s a little traditional or a little personal. Sometimes the faculty member won’t understand how that student feels. It might cause even more problems than it’s solving. So a more diverse faculty, from like minority cultures, it would be great adjustment. Especially for high school and college, cause sometimes students from a certain culture might need someone from a similar culture to help them, and they won’t be available, so the problem might still be there or it won’t be solved whatsoever.”*

When society is dominated by an overarching privileged discourse, those who do not belong to the same minority group can, even unintentionally, “cause even more problems.”

Therefore, improving support services for student requires a greater diversity of faculty and staff

members. A 2013 report from the National Center for Education Statistics found that there are only 12% part time and 9% full time professors of color at universities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, Race/Ethnicity of College Faculty table). The underrepresentation of professors of color can be detrimental to students of color, as Jessica observes. Having a more diverse faculty improves campuses as faculty members “have the long-term ability to shape the campus culture and make it more in sync with the rest of the world” as well as act to support students of color (Lynch, 2013).

### **3.2 Limitations of the Program**

While the Bronx Ideas Program successfully worked towards addressing some of the major needs in the community for safe spaces for educational activities, assistance with job searches, and fun educational activities, there were many limitations to the project. Some of these limitations were due to technical issues, such as a lack of water fountains in the park or bright sunlight and lack of shade, which made using electronics like chromebooks and tablets difficult. These technical issues significantly impacted the performance of the program, as the program was so short there was little time to adapt and experiment with changes to the program and location of the program. Other limitations emerged at an institutional level. These limitations include lack of leadership on-site, some miscommunication among partners, and the unfortunate short-term nature of the program. While the first two issues are purely issues resulting from the partnership between many organizations that have slightly differing expectations and goals for the program the last issue is one that touches more upon situations relevant to CRT scholarship. The last issue, the short term nature of the program, was dependent entirely on attempting to find enough funding to support the program for longer than two

months. However, the short-term nature of the program follows a trend common for many non-profits who come in and then leave a community in a short period of time.

### **3.2 a. Lack of Leadership**

One of the limitations was the issue of leadership on-site at the Bronx Ideas Box program. In the park, the interns and workers all had three different employers: Libraries Without Borders, DreamYard, and Sustainable South Bronx. Libraries Without Borders provided three interns at the park, DreamYard hired four interns, and Sustainable South Bronx hired the park manager. While the park manager was in the position to take on a greater leadership role, they lacked any experience with educational programming and the Ideas Box resources specifically. This caused a split between the workers, with the Libraries Without Borders employees managing the Ideas Box activities, while Sustainable South Bronx's park manager was focused directing the DreamYard employees to work on the garden and grounds of the park. Thus, the organization with the least stake in the Bronx Ideas Box program, influenced the project the most, by keeping the DreamYard employees focused on maintaining the grounds of the park and not becoming involved with the educational programming. This was especially detrimental to the project, because DreamYard has been established in the Bronx for twenty years. Their arts center, inschool programming, and high school share mission statements and values that aligned with the goals of Libraries Without Borders for the Bronx Ideas Box program. Their Director for Digital Learning, Hillary Kolos, described some of these values, saying:

*“I think we are an education non-profit, but we’re doing it through a particular lens, which is the arts. And when we say the arts, we don’t just mean the visual arts, we mean basically all art forms, it could visual arts it could theater or poetry, digital music, fashion. We really cover a lot of areas of the arts. And then I think the other lens we are using and also more and more*

*developing is the social justice lens for the work we do, and that's more and more becoming integrated and a central tenet of the work we do. And I think, I'm sort of channeling Tim and Jason who are founders here and co-directors who started DreamYard twenty two years ago, they are really interested in sustained work in communities and also pathways. And, I can't say that we've fully figured it out yet, but because we work in three different ways, we have a high school, we have in-school programs in 45 schools in the Bronx, and then we have an art center that works with pre-k through twelfth grade here in Morrisiana in the Bronx, that we're always trying to figure out how we can work with young people in the Bronx from elementary through middle to high school and really support them the whole way using our art social justice approach."*

Hillary's description of DreamYard demonstrates how the values of both partner organizations align in many respects. The goal for the Bronx Ideas Box program was to address the achievement gap and provide educational activities for children through a social justice lens. However, only the DreamYard interns were from the area. Without them as a core component of the Bronx Ideas Box team, the program lacked the crucial link to the community. Under the leadership of Sustainable South Bronx, the DreamYard interns focused more on manual work, than working with people from the community to become more involved with the educational programming. As all the interns were the same age, there was no clear leader in terms of seniority at the park. Even the teaching artists, who were older, felt uncomfortable taking a leadership role, due to their unfamiliarity with the park. By the end of the program, a system evolved where interns would meet and make suggestions for the next day, which would be run by the Executive Director of Libraries Without Borders before being implemented. Ultimately these issues centering on leadership to guide the various employees of different employers is intimately connected with the second limitation: miscommunication among partners.

### ***3.2 b. Miscommunication Among Partners***

Goals	LWB	DreamYard	NYPL	Bronx Pro	SSB
Testing the box in an urban context	X				
Addressing the summer learning gap	X	X	X		
Offering activities for families in HL Park	X	X		X	
Managing HL park		X		X	X
Extending library services	X		X		
Fundraising to keep the box in the Bronx	X				

*Chart created by Stephane Tonnelat demonstrating the various goals of each partner.*

The above chart demonstrates where the various goals of each partner overlapped. Only Libraries Without Borders had the goal of testing the box in an urban context, as Libraries Without Borders (LWB or BSF) has implemented the box in refugee situations, but not in urban areas that still demonstrate a need for educational resources. LWB, DreamYard, and the New York Public Library (NYPL) all shared the goal to address the summer learning gap. This goal was not shared by Sustainable South Bronx (SSB) however, which resulted in the issues between the park manager from SSB and LWB and DreamYard interns who were supposed to work on facilitating educational activities. LWB did not share the goal regarding managing the park, which was a goal of DreamYard, Bronx Pro, and SSB, which further contributed to issues over leadership. Finally, only LWB had the goal to fundraise to keep the box in the Bronx. Without the tie to the community, it was impossible to raise enough money to keep the box in the Bronx. The miscommunication among partners and misaligned goals demonstrated the need in the future

for more clearly outlined and measurable goals, as well as greater communication between partners to react quickly to problems before too much time passes and the program ends.

### ***3.2 c. Trial programs: The Downsides of Short Term Programs***

One of the final major limitations of the program was the short amount of time it operated. As a trial program, LWB went into the program hoping to get more insight on how to successfully implement the program in other urban contexts, and also attempt to raise money to fund the program beyond the end of the summer. However, the goal of keeping the box in the Bronx was not shared by the other partners. Without having the support of a local grassroots organization, that shared the goal to raise funding to keep the programming going past the summer, LWB did not succeed in making the Bronx Ideas Box program permanent. This temporary nature of the program is part of a large trend that is problematic through a CRT lens. There is a common trend of nonprofit efforts that enter a community, and then leave, providing only short-term services and losing the opportunity to build trust and communication with the community. Hillary describes this phenomenon, when recounting her first experiences as a teaching artist and doing similar work in underserved areas.

*“...for about six to eight years I was a freelance teaching artist and was bouncing around all these different classrooms all the time, sometimes going to three parts of New York City in one day...bringing technology with me, and then taking it away. And that just felt really bad to not be in a sustained place for a while. So, I felt coming to DreamYard is an opportunity to be in one community for longer periods of time and learn what they need and how to support the work here using technology.”*

As is evident in Hillary’s story, much of the temporary nature of nonprofit programs is due to funding restrictions. Many nonprofits have struggled to make sustained committed efforts in a community, when “most grants are small, short-lived, and restricted to specific uses” (Bradach and Foster, 2005). The nature of nonprofit funding has limited the reach of nonprofits.

While both partner organizations, LWB and DreamYard, have maintained successful longterm programs, the Bronx Ideas Box program ultimately did not garner enough funding to stay in the Bronx. And, if the program had stayed, there would have needed to be a clear discussion among partners on how human resources would be organized to lead the program, and which nonprofit would take the leadership role.

At the end of the summer, there did seem to be a high level of interest from local organizations to become involved in the management and organization of the Bronx Ideas Box program. A woman who stopped by the program while it was set up outside the laundromat in late August, took an interest in the program. She had been living in Sedgwick houses, the projects down the street from the park and laundromat, for forty eight years and was active on the tenant's association. She took a handful of flyers that day to bring back to her building, and expressed interest in hosting the Ideas Box program in the Sedgwick housing. Another man associated with the tenant's association at the Sedgwick housing, became interested in the program as well when he stopped to talk outside the laundromat. He was so enthusiastic about the program, he took an active role in encouraging people off the street to take part in the activities and services. Arriving almost every day the box was set up outside the laundromat in the last two weeks of the program, he brought snacks for interns, hailed down interested onlookers passing the laundromat, and engaged with participants, either playing games or directing them to a computer to begin working on their resume. These relationships that formed with residents of Sedgwick housing and their tenant's association were made possible by the change in location to a more crowded and active location. However, since the change in location was made so late, there was not enough time to pursue a more lasting relationship to bring the Bronx Ideas Box program to Sedgwick housing. Despite the inability to create another program

to implement the Ideas Box further in Sedgwick housing, the president of the tenant's association got in contact with Allister Chang, Executive Director of LWB to express her interest in the program and the tenant's association attended the celebratory end of the program on September 11<sup>th</sup> at the French Cultural Services of the Embassy. These contacts from the Sedgwick housing tenant's association, demonstrate the potential of the Bronx Ideas Box program. If the program were to be structured in closer association with a local organization, such as the tenant's association, there is a great opportunity for the program to more accurately assess and address the educational needs of the community.

## CONCLUSION

### *Implications for Future Programming*

Based on the qualitative results of the Bronx Ideas Box program, there are several ways in which the program could be altered for similar future programming. These changes for future programming are rooted in a CRT approach to educational non-profit work, and include: working closely with a local organization whose goals for the project are closely aligned with Libraries Without Borders, hiring facilitators who are trained in social justice based pedagogy, and to plan how to transition from a trial program to a permanent program if funding becomes available. The first change for future projects, working closely with a local organization, seemed possible near the end of the Bronx Ideas Box Programming. The tenant's organization seemed interested in becoming more involved in the management of the program and were eager to host the program in the housing project. Working with organizations, such as the tenant's organization, whose residents have lived in the housing for upwards of forty years, is an amazing opportunity to work more closely with long time residents of the community. It also gives the chance for residents to take greater ownership over the program, and thus adapt the program to more closely fit their community's needs. The next suggestion to hire more trained facilitators is critical to increasing engagement with the community. The final suggestion, to have a plan to transition to a permanent program if possible, mitigates the short term nature of many non profits. While funding is the key factor for this last change, being prepared with how to transition the program to a longer term implementation, would increase the likelihood of the program surviving a longer term implementation. Stop cap programs do little to make effective and lasting change that is in tune with the actual needs of the community. A longer-term program facilitates communication and relationships with the community, which makes residents

more likely to take ownership for the program and attend programming more regularly. While research on this program demonstrated there are an infinite number of factors that contribute to the success of a program, approaching a program through a CRT lens highlights the importance of qualitative evaluation of a program and prioritizing the opinions and feedback of members of the community who took part in the program.

## Appendix

**APPENDIX A****Transcribed Interview with Ideas Box Program Participant: Jimmy**

Jimmy worked delivering laundry from the local laundromat. The group got to know Jimmy when, in an effort to reach more participants, the group decided to take advantage of the foot traffic on the main road, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The wide sidewalks outside the laundromat on the main road, row of benches, shade, and icee stand made the space an ideal location to set up. After speaking with the owner of the laundromat to confirm the location, we set up and got to know the two regular workers at the Laundromat, including Jimmy. As Jimmy was enthusiastic about the program, we spoke with him fairly regularly.

*“My sister is a police officer. We’re fraternal twins. I was born in the Bronx, not too far from Tremont. Then I moved to Westchester City four years ago, before moving to Orange City. Now, I’ve lived here for fifteen years.*

*I help everybody here. Everybody calls me: ‘Jimmy!’ Just a couple days ago I helped a woman carry mattresses up. I’m like a freelancer.*

*I enrolled in school for building supplies and materials. I want to be a superintendent. I finished high school, but never went to college. From 2002 to 2009 I was a peer specialist at the Bronx Children’s state hospital. I had done an internship for an adolescent MHA (mental health association) for six months and got my certificate. It felt like it wasn’t for me – they wanted me full time, but I wanted part time. Full time was too straining, you know I had to come home and do my own life. My uncle still works for the company (MHA), as a maintenance man there. Working with kids makes me happy, helping kids get through the day. When I was in a shelter, I met this guy Ronald Perkins and he told me about that job for months – he told me to go to MHE.*

*When I was in the shelter we had workshops and training for us to get jobs. At the same time I went to school to study case management – social work. This was around 1997. The shelter was Argus Community, a halfway house on 156<sup>th</sup> Melrose Avenue. I was in there with criminals. I think I was the only innocent guy there. That’s what I get when I spent all my money. I lived with my mom. But she got remarried and I didn’t get along with her husband. I was always like the many of the house before. When I got in a car accident (I was hit by a car) I sued. With that money I moved out and the house split up. I find it cool here; I want to relocate though. I tried to move to Boston, but it was too hard. I was paying double there than rent here in the Bronx.*

*It’s good this area has something [Ideas Box program] networking; before there was just foot traffic. This area needed more activity. I think having this here also stops crime and give people the chance to stop.”*

1979: Born in the Bronx (Tremont)

Older sister (North Carolina), twin sister (Yonkers), little brother (1984), sister (1985), half sister (1998), half brother (2001).

1995: Mother moved to Yonkers

1993: Had car accident and moved out of home

1999-2001: In two halfway homes

2002: Moved to Bronx to live with his uncle. The uncle then left him the apartment.

## APPENDIX B

### Transcribed Interview With Ideas Box Program Participant: Jessica

#### *Explanation of goals of interview*

I am working on my senior thesis focusing on last summer's Idea Box program and the mission of the program: to address the summer achievement gap in urban areas. A lot of my background research for my thesis focuses on how one's background and ethnicity influences one's educational experience. In particular, I focused on the history and current state of education in Morris Heights and the communities that live in Morris Heights.

I was hoping to discuss with you your opinion on the impact of the Ideas Box program and its degree of success in acting as a resource to fulfill an educational need in the neighborhood and park. I also hope to discuss with you your personal experience with education, and your thoughts on how different aspects of your identity relate to your experience in school and your academic plans. As stated in the consent form, there's no need to answer any question if you would prefer not to, and you may refuse to participate in the interview at any time if you'd like.

#### **Questions about the Ideas Box**

Set up question by asking about challenges at school for her and her peers. Are there challenges at school that center on literacy and improving literacy?

*"And with new incoming students who have different perspectives on how school is run. There will probably be problems that we have to adjust to that. But other than that I'm okay with that."*

How would you define education?

*"The way I would define education is...based on the work ethic of the student. On how much they will push themselves to learn what they want to learn. Not on anything the teacher pushes onto them that they have to learn."*

1. What do you believe are the needs of the community (the residents around Hayden Lord Park) that relate to education? How important or pressing are educational needs in the community in comparison to other issues that affect the community?

*"I think the neighborhood, I believe the dangers during the nighttime...the dangers will make people more afraid to go out from their homes and will be more secluded inside. Like social conflict in general, people will be having conflicts on the street and then parents will think it will not be safe for their kids to be outside without their supervision. I believe that's it."*

Has that affected you, in terms of your parents wanting to make sure you're okay when you're out of the house?

*"We got lucky to be able to go to the Hayden Lord Park without my parents being there. It's because it's right next to our home so they're ok with that. Plus I'm around the age of thirteen and up, so they'll think I'm a, how do you say this, a well rounded guardian. So if it's other than that, parents will provide a guardian to go with the children if they're not available. People like you taking care of siblings, is it usually relatives, neighbors, or friends?"*

*“Yea, if they’re well rounded and they’ve known each other for longer than a few months.”*

Did you feel the first park manager was a guardian or responsible person to keep an eye on kids in the park?

*“Yea I think she was a well enough character to watch over the children, she seemed like she was capable of it. She made sure, like she enforced the rules to make sure the kids do something or to stop the kids from doing something really bad. I think the parents would have trusted her to make sure their kids were safe.”*

Can you think of any educational needs in Morris Heights?

*“I’m not really sure about that, cause the only schools I know around here are my sister’s school and mine. And, I haven’t noticed any educational conflicts.”*

Jill: CMSP 327 (731 students NYC Department of Education school search)

Heidi: PS 109

2. Did you feel that the Ideas Box program was an effective program to address the educational needs of the neighborhood? Are there aspects of the program you feel that did not actually address those needs?

*“It was slightly effective in the educational base format, for like little kids, for example, they would come and gather around in a circle to hear one person read a certain book. But to improve that I think we would need more educational based activities, cause usually we had legos or games that some kids didn’t really want to play with and everyone would just stick to the playground.”*

Do you have any ideas of some educational based activities you would’ve liked?

*“Probably like competitions that get the kids brains functioning well, like working. For example, we’ll have a competition where you have to answer certain questions either math based or puzzle based and get to a certain level to achieve a prize.”*

Public Spaces and programming

3. And, what role do you think public spaces mainly play in Morris Heights (meeting spot, recreational, family location, etc.)? What was your opinion on having the program in the park?

*“The public park was perfect spot to start the program, but Hayden Lord Park was a little secluded because it was blocked off by apartment buildings so not that many kids or family members could see it. So the other park, I forgot what that park was called, the one you relocated to, it was more out in the open.”*

*“A park including a basketball court will attract older kids, and sometimes little kids will get a little intimidated by that park and won’t go there that much, because sometimes older kids can be more aggressive or more dangerous to little kids.”*

What do you think of building educational programs in public spaces?

*“ I believe they were a perfect opportunity for kids who don’t get enough education to have more time, more free time to have a hands on activity that helps both their brain and their emotional state. So they’ll be well prepared for going to the next educational level of school.”*

I’m interested in your comment about educational activities and their affect on emotional states, could you elaborate more?

*“For the emotional state, they’ll be more social. They won’t be afraid to encounter other students when they’re in school. Cause some kids are very shy and very secluded, and they don’t want to interact with others cause they’re afraid of interaction. So if they go into a program that’s educational based and in a park, they’ll probably have more courage to talk to other kids around their age, and that will carry out into school life.”*

4. Did you think the Ideas Box program was a short term or long term project?

*“Well, it was only during the summer, and that’s like two to three months. But, in general I would say it was long term, because it was around one to five, that’s like four hours. If it was during winter or fall, I don’t think many kids would be available at that time cause they’re probably doing homework from school or busy doing something else. So summer was the perfect time, so I’d call that a long-term program.”*

Do you think it was made clear that the Ideas Box program in Hayden Lord Park was a trial program, and would need further funding to be permanently installed?

*“Yea, it seemed more like a trial, to see how things work out. And, I would appreciate if it was a more permanent program, cause then more kids would remember, and would continue going on to the future year.”*

5. A mission of the Ideas Box program that may have or have not actually been actualized in the program was to celebrate the neighborhood and center on the neighborhood. For example, the poetry project led by the teaching artist, Kelsey, was meant to gather different kids’ expressions of living in the Bronx. The program also was meant to bring attention to the resources at the Sedgwick library on the corner. To what extent do you think the program managed achieve this goal of highlighting unique aspects and institutions of the Bronx?

*“To the extent of the film program, when we had those two people with video cameras and they handed it over to little kids, that was a perfect opportunity to show their expressions and their emotions around the park. And, that was a perfect opportunity too. It was very hands on, and then kids from different backgrounds could just show how they felt about the park and how others felt about it, and the neighborhood too.”*

What do you like most about living in the Bronx?

*“The different cultures. So, in the Bronx you’ll find many people from different ethnic backgrounds and once you get to know them you’ll learn their culture too and have an appreciation of the diversity.”*

*“Yea, for example, in my school I have friends from the Dominican Republic or have friends who have their families from Ecuador, or even Japan, and that was very interesting to find out about.”*

6. Did any of the Ideas Box programming affect or later relate to what you have done in school this year? How about for your younger siblings?

*“Besides helping me with my community service, which has opened up my mind to the different opportunities that my school can offer that I have the chance to take. Like, doing the College Now program in Lehman College. So, I can go to a college and take college credits while I’m in high school.”*

Are you planning to do that for this year?

*“I already done that for last semester; I did the English composition class, and got three credits for that. And right now, I’m doing the stem program where in the summer I’ll work in the lab with a professor, and get high school credit for that.”*

### **Questions on Identity and Education**

Now, I’d like to discuss questions that relate more to your personal experiences with education, and how literacy and educational programs have fit into your academic career.

1. How do you feel your race and ethnicity play a part in your identity?

*“Well where I’m living right now, my racial background does not really affect who I am or what others think of me. If I were to go to others states, for example if I were to go to Washington DC, people who see me might think differently of me than who I actually am. And sometimes it could affect me or sometimes I could just not notice it. But, its very likely to happen in America even in different states.”*

Do you see a difference in your conception of your racial identity and other people’s conception of your racial identity?

*“Yea there could be a major to minor difference in the perspectives. So when my friends see me, they just think of me as a friend, as someone they can trust. But if a person that has never seen me before and has like a racial stereotype of how African Americans are, they’ll think that I’m someone who’s not trustworthy or someone who could be highly dangerous. And that doesn’t correlate to everyone who’s African American. Really affects how people will trust others and how they’ll think a person actually is, which isn’t actually fair.”*

Has your conception of your racial identity changed or evolved at points in your life?

*“Um, no. Even if people think of me as someone untrustworthy, that wouldn’t affect how I really am. That’s based on their opinion, so if it’s their opinion I shouldn’t change myself just because of that. I can still be the same person I am today and in the future.”*

Do you think you might experience a change later when you make a big transition, such as going to college?

*“I wouldn’t think there would be any conflict based on race, because once a person goes into college they’ll find people, even students from different countries. And, they won’t find it as scary once they get to know the person.”*

3. How do you feel your racial identity, as well as other aspects of your identity (such as gender or class) intersect with your experience growing up in New York and living in Brooklyn and Morris Heights?

*"I wouldn't be sure how it would affect me personally. Because growing up I've been around people with a similar background, or a different one like a Hispanic background. And nobody has thought of me any different, we're just close friends."*

3. Do you feel your racial identity is relevant to your experiences at school with teachers and with classmates/peers? Does this differ from experiences relating to racial identity and family or friends?

*"No, race shouldn't be relevant to how you interact with your teachers. If your teacher wants to help you, they shouldn't be hesitant to just because of your racial background. Everyone is equal. So race shouldn't affect it to make it more beneficial or more degrading. And with classmates it's no different, because I have classmates with a similar background to me or a totally different one, and we still treat each other with the respect we deserve. I even have friends who have different sexual backgrounds. For example, I have a friend who's interested in girls and she's a girl herself, and it doesn't affect the way I think of her."*

5. Are there any major factors that have influenced your academic goals?

*"Yea, because now I'm taking an AP biology class, and it's helping me confirm my intention of being a neurologist, because now I have a more in-depth experience of what science is like. And it's a really rigorous course, but I'm doing this to the best of my ability. So, hopefully with this class being done, I have a better chance of getting the job I deserve."*

I remember you mentioning a lot of your relatives living in New York. Do you have any reflections on how your racial identity is also tied to what generation you are and your relatives' experiences of immigrating?

*"Well, when my relatives first immigrated to New York, they were struggling to adjust to the lifestyle of it until they met others, who were from the same country, Ghana. And they became close friends and ever since then, they could rely on one another whenever they need help."*

Do you know how your relatives were able to find other people who had also moved from Ghana?

*"It was surprisingly by chance, or if they came during the same year. Because, for example, my mother met my father surprisingly on the train going home when they were going home. And it just started from there; they started talking to each other. And then eventually they met more people from Ghana. And then just started having these connections."*

Was it your grandparents or your parents who moved from Ghana?

*"It was my parents who moved to America from Ghana. And my grandmother just came recently, and she will be returning to Ghana for the summer."*

And, do you know what motivated your parents' move to New York?

*"I believe it would be just to have a new lifestyle. To find what they think is right for them or a place they belong. I'm not really sure, cause I don't want to say something that's not entirely"*

*true. But, if it were me, I would say just to find the job they are best at and to continue from that, continue a new lifestyle.”*

And have your parents made an effort to keep you guys connected to culture from Ghana?

*“Yea, they’re teaching us how to speak our native language. I’m still trying to learn it. And, they’re teaching us the traditional foods and the traditional dances and everything. We even went to Ghana for a family vacation. That was when I was seven, so my other siblings, Heidi and the baby, Emmanuel, didn’t get the chance to see it. But my brother and I, we were lucky enough to go to Ghana.”*

6. More broadly, do you feel race and one’s background is important in education? Do you feel it is a factor in out of school programming, such as the Ideas Box program and other non-profits?

*“Let me start with the negative. The negative would be, being African American, society will believe that we are not very educated. They’ll think that we won’t withstand education as far as high school. We’ll just drop out or not fully complete college or they’ll just believe that we won’t have the greatest education whatsoever. But the positive is that Africans who really want to try, they will, and they can surprise others by our ethnic abilities. They won’t really limit us, but it will make people more aware that racial ethnicity does not really correlate to education. That we can actually strive to be greater than we really are. That our color does not affect our brain, that our color does not affect our educational abilities whatsoever.”*

Do you think it is important to have different ethnicities represented on staff?

*“Yea, I think that is important cause certain ethnicities, if the faculty is a majority of one certain ethnicity, there can be a little biased perspective there. So if a student from a completely different cultural background is having some problems and they go to a faculty member who’s completely different, and they have a certain problem that’s a little traditional or a little personal. Sometimes the faculty member won’t understand how that student feels. It might cause even more problems than it’s solving. So a more diverse faculty, from like minority cultures, it would be great adjustment. Especially for high school and college, cause sometimes students from a certain culture might need someone from a similar culture to help them, and they won’t be available, so the problem might still be there or it won’t be solved whatsoever.”*

Does the makeup of your teachers reflect the makeup of the student body?

*“Not really. Well, for my school there’s a certain fellow who has a family member who works with the faculty, but that doesn’t correlate for the majority of it. Because my faculty - they come from certain backgrounds: some are Jewish, some are even Asian, some are even from a Muslim background, and it doesn’t really affect the ethnicity of the students, because it doesn’t really matter to us. If we need help, some faculty members that are in the school can help us, and even students themselves can help others, because they have similar backgrounds.”*

Do you think the gender makeup of your teachers is balanced?

*“It’s about an equal amount. I have a similar amount of male teachers correlating to female teachers. Even if it was a majority of female or male teachers, it wouldn’t affect their ability to teach their students, because gender doesn’t really relate to how well a teachers helps the students on their education. As long as they help the student better themselves, it doesn’t matter what gender they are.”*

Do you think one's background is a factor in out of school programming, like the Ideas Box programming?

*"Yea. So, the Ideas Box program has members from a different culture, they can even teach the kids about it, and see if the kids are even interested to further their education about it. So, faculty members from Ideas Box, they could be from a certain culture that's African, Asian, or Hispanic, and then some kids might get interested in it and try to learn more about it, and that would be more beneficial."*

## APPENDIX C

### Transcribed Interview with Hillary Kolos, Director of Digital Learning Programs at DreamYard

I first wanted to ask you questions about DreamYard in general, to give a better picture of the organization for the write-up about the partners.

1. What differentiates DreamYard from other education non-profits?

*“One is art. I think we are an education non-profit, but we’re doing it through a particular lens, which is the arts. And when we say the arts, we don’t just mean the visual arts, we mean basically all art forms, it could be visual arts it could be theater or poetry, digital music, fashion. We really cover a lot of areas of the arts. And then I think the other lens we are using and also more and more developing is the social justice lens for the work we do, and that’s more and more becoming integrated and a central tenet of the work we do. And I think, I’m sort of channeling Tim and Jason who are founders here and co-directors who started DreamYard twenty two years ago, they are really interested in sustained work in communities and also pathways. And, I can’t say that we’ve fully figured it out yet, but because we work in three different ways, we have a high school, we have in-school programs in 45 schools in the Bronx, and then we have an art center that works with pre-k through twelfth grade here in Morrisiana in the Bronx, that we’re always trying to figure out how we can work with young people in the Bronx from elementary through middle to high school and really support them the whole way using our art social justice approach.”*

2. What are some of the main results DreamYard has achieved recently?

*“I’m gonna be bad about giving you actual stats or data. I don’t always have those around. But, if you need them I can also get them from our development department. But more anecdotally, I know that, around 2012 we got an award from the White House for being one of the best arts focused after school programs. So that was a huge award, and folks from DreamYard got to go and meet Michelle Obama and accept that award. They give it to around fourteen organizations a year that they recognize for outstanding work after school. And, I think what’s most interesting is our reach in the Bronx. We’re always growing and kind of expanding our reach. We serve probably around 250 to 300 young people here at arts center and their families, we have 350 students at our high school, and we’ve reached thousands of students through our in-school programs. And, something else that made us unique, is that we just work in the Bronx, and that’s something Tim and Jason, our founders, decided to do about nine years ago. Because they were all over the city and they were thinking of starting one in LA too. And, then they really realized if they focus on a geographic area, where they had a lot of networks and partners already interested in arts education, they could do deeper work. So, I think it’s just a result of the fact that we reached out to young people and their families through our work every year, which is really awesome. We’re really adding to the arts, supporting the arts landscape here in the Bronx through all of our programming.”*

3. What are DreamYard’s plans for the future, in terms of programming, in the Bronx?

*“We’re always growing and changing here, and that’s partly because we try to stay responsive to what our community is asking for and needs. For example, in our arts center we used to only*

*have middle school and high school programs, and we had a lot of folks asking for little kids programs, so we started the minis program, which is kindergarten through fifth grade.”*

I follow them on instagram.

*“Oh yea, they’re really good at sharing cute pictures of their work. So that’s sort of like a recent, not recent since it was a couple years ago, expansion. And even that used to be one day a week for the minis for each age group, and now it’s four days a week. So there’s just ways we’re trying to be more supportive to our community and hear what they need. I don’t think there’s any plans to expand programming at the arts center right now. We just hired a new arts center director, so she’s getting caught up to speed, getting to know the arts center, and then we’ll see if there’s any big expansion changes. At the high school, I think they’re always looking at deepening the work there. I think it’s a nine-year-old high school, which sounds like a while, but actually it takes a long time to really get a high school up and going, so they’re always deepening the work there. And something I’ve been working on in particular with them is a digital portfolio project. That’s the partnership we’ve had with Parson’s School of Design. We’ve had that partnership for a couple of years. We’re also doing that at the arts center, and that’s helping people document their process, for whatever art form they are doing, helping them use visual tools to document that online, and tell their own story about what they’re making and what they want to say to the world. So that’s something we’re trying to figure out how to bring to more schools, as well. Because we’re trying to figure it out in our own high school, and then share what we’ve learned with other high schools. And another thing that’s been growing is maker programs, which we pretty broadly define, but it’s design and technology focused, and they might be doing anything from little design challenges to video game design to building robots to using circuitry to 3D printing or design or making their own musical instruments. There’s a lot of stuff that falls into ‘making,’ which I think you know about. But, we’ve had a program for a couple years here at the art center, and the past two years we’ve been expanding that into schools more, so I think we have the ground for a program in schools. And I could see that growing a little more too, in the future. So, there’s a couple things; I’m sure there’s more going on that Tim and Jason could tell you about, but that’s sort of what I know about.”*

4. I was especially interested when you talked about the emphasis on social justice in DreamYard. I was hoping you could give a couple examples of how DreamYard has been addressing social justice issues.

*“Yea, I think a lot of the work came out of the arts center. So, there have been folks at the high school and in-school programs, who have really been integrating social justice well into their work for a while. But I think a couple years ago, DreamYard became more serious, in general, about becoming an anti-racist organization. And we did a lot of work at the staff level of educating ourselves and talking more about how to be an anti-racist organization, and how the personal work and all the organizational and systemic work that needs to happen to help fight racism and other types of injustice as well. Part of the way it’s grown, I mean we do professional development really well here. There are some amazing folks who are in charge of developing that professional development for our teaching artists. So, something that the arts center has had for a long time is called the social justice pedagogy team, which meets basically every month for three hours. And they take each meeting as a chance to focus in on some social justice approach or issue, and learn more about it and talk about how it could impact the work*

*we do with young people. Part of it was just saying, this is really important work that we need to do, and we're gonna make sure we're talking about it and doing professional development with our teaching artists around it. And that could be like bringing in a speaker, or doing an art project together, or reading something together and learning. And, before I came here, the arts center team had worked on coming up with core values and a framework to base all their programs in. And the core values are create, empower, and connect. And out of each of those core values they came up with a question that supports that. So, for 'empower,' there are really open questions, like 'Who am I?' 'Where am I from?' For 'create,' under that I think there is 'Who do I admire?' So, looking at other artists and people to influence the work young people are doing. And 'connect' is more about understanding your community and what you want to say to your community. So, just practically how that can work in a class, is that the teaching artist might pick a question to focus a couple of classes on or a whole unit on or a whole semester on. So if they pick, 'Who am I?,' they'll do a lot on identity and looking at your family's history, your family's culture, and what your strengths and weaknesses are. So, I think something that's really great about the social justice work here is, it's not just pick and issue and say something about it: like, 'Say no to drugs,' or 'We want to save the earth.' It goes much deeper than that. And, it's more reflective of the individual too. And, understanding that knowing history is important, exploring your culture and knowing it and affirming it is important, and all that is connected to the larger issues. That you kind of have to look at yourself, and then the community and the world around you, and the larger world, and how it all kind of fits together. And a lot of that is through questioning, and then research, and having young people understand better at all those different levels. And then, you know, how to make art about that. And, we've been working on how to share that throughout all of our programs. And that could be through a shared professional development or through our different - we have two different associate directors of professional development, and they often work together to plan and think about how it's shared. And then also creating some documents around it that teachers can use, like resources, so everybody's kind of starting from the same page."*

I didn't know a lot of the background for the arts center.

*"Yea, it's getting there more organization-wise, but sort of in a pocket, so now we're more intentionally trying to make it throughout. And stating that it's the organization's priority to do social justice work."*

4. Has the achievement gap ever been directly identified as an issue to work on beyond the park, either in the high school or arts center?

*"It's funny, because I don't hear people use that term or talk about it specifically. And I wonder if it's under the surface of all of our work, and why we are where we are and why we do the work we do. And I think the achievement gap is a part of that, but some of the schools we work in, and a lot of the schools we work in, are doing great, and may have gaps within their own schools. So I would say the majority of our young people we reach are low income, because of where they are in the Bronx, and mostly black and Latino, there's a large English language learning community, and lot of new immigrant families from all over the world. And there's a long history of injustice in the Bronx, where schools haven't been funded enough, housing hasn't been funded enough, there just hasn't been the support needed. So I don't know it's funny, we don't call it that, but I think we all know that: our schools struggle in a variety of ways and therefore*

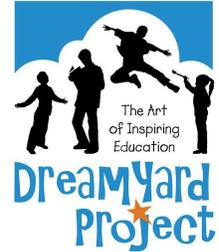
*our young people aren't always getting the support they need. So it might mean, I'm trying to think of ways it would manifest itself here. So we have an art center and we focus on art, but there's many ways that we have other supports. So, like we have a college counselor here at the arts center, who, we know, as a lot of the schools we work with, there either is no college counselor, or the college counselor has like 300 kids that they're trying to help, so everyone's not getting the attention they need. So we decided to put the college counselor on staff here to help our kids with that process. So that's like us realizing there's a gap in support, and we can help fill that gap, because we have young people coming here. Or, in schools obviously integrating art in classrooms, we believe, helps young people learn what they're trying to learn better and helps them celebrate themselves and share their voice with the world. I don't have data on that, but there's been a lot of research on how integrating arts into the classroom can support some academic achievement. And at the high school too. The high school was purposely started as an arts integrated high school. And all the students take multiple arts electives and choose an arts major. But, it's not a screening school. Since you know a lot of high schools where you have to do an audition to get in, but we're an open school, anyone can apply to it, or just put it on their regular high school application and go to an arts based high school if they want. And there's a lot of regular classes, but we believe that having a robust arts program in there will help kids want to be in school, help them feel good about themselves, help them want to pay attention more to regular classes. So I hope that's not too roundabout.*

What led you personally to become involved with DreamYard, and what personally motivated you to work with non-profits.

*I've always worked with young people, like even when I was a young person I feel like I was working with young people. I would volunteer at the library or work at a camp over the summer. I was a babysitter, and then when I got into college I worked at an afterschool program four days a week. That was where I made money while I was in school. And I did a range of things, basically as a teacher's assistant, but I was pretty embedded for a couple years in that actual program, and got to know how it ran. So I did film production for undergrad, and for my work when I first got out of school. So I was always kind of balancing 'I'm doing art' and 'I'm making movies,' working in documentary and also working with young people. And they were kind of two separate things, and then they started combing. And, I started being a teaching artist, teaching video to young people in after school programs. I really found that I liked that. I liked merging what I had learned in college with what I was doing to make money, and working with young people and doing education, but not as a day school teacher, but in these other ways to reach young people and help them with whatever they're trying to achieve. So, DreamYard in particular. So I had been a teaching artist for a while, worked in filmmaking for a while, and then I went to grad school for media studies to think about how to use new media and technology in education. In particular I was following the work of the MacArthur foundation a lot. They helped fund my grad school, and they were doing a lot of work around new media and learning how we could use technology. And, they were funding this project called the You Media Center. And that was like a grant to help organizations, libraries, and museums to open digital teen centers. And I thought that was really cool and would be awesome to be part of. And DreamYard happened to get one of the grants, and posted a position for director of Digital Learning to help develop that at DreamYard. And I was done with grad school, so I was really interested in it because I knew about the project. And, then also the last part is that for about six*

*to eight years I was a freelance teaching artist and was bouncing around all these different classroom all the time, sometimes going to three parts of New York City in one day...bringing technology with me, and then taking it away. And that just felt really bad to not be in a sustained place for a while. So, I felt coming to DreamYard is an opportunity to be in one community for longer periods of time and learn what they need and how to support the work here using technology. And So, yea that's about me.*

## APPENDIX D

**CONSENT FORM FOR STAFF**

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the impact of the library in Hayden Lord Park in the Bronx. This study is conducted by Stéphane Tonnelat, Center for International Research in the Humanities and Social sciences (CIRHUS), New York University and Madeline Ochi, Tufts University. The study is sponsored by Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at CIRHUS and Professor Charles Inouye at Tufts University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to take part in interviews concerning your work at the library. Participation in this study will involve two to three hours of your time in total.

Your interview may be audio-taped. You may review the tape and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigators understand the role that such a library in a public space can play in enhancing the educational opportunities for children, youth and adults, in enlivening public debates in the neighborhood and in offering a safe place for learning and playing during the summer, when schools are out. The results will be shared with DreamYard and LWB who will communicate them to the community.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by changing your name and keeping the consent form with your name in a safe place separate from the data.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. You have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Stéphane Tonnelat by phone: 347 662 7799, by email: st2451@nyu.edu, or by mail: CNRS CIRHUS, 4 Washington Square North, NY NY 10003, or the faculty sponsor, Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at 212-998-8731, rb68@nyu.edu, or by mail at the same address.

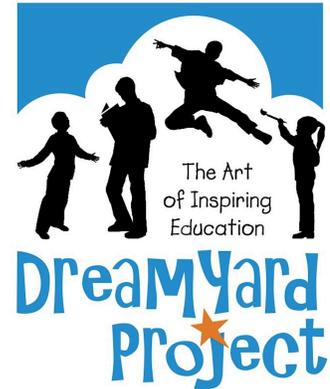
For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects, New York University, 665 Broadway, Suite 804, New York, NY 10012 at 212-998-4808 or ask.humansubjects@nyu.edu

Yes, I give the investigator permission to use my name when quoting material from our interview in his/her presentations or publications.

No, I would prefer that my name not be used.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate  
Subject's Signature & date



## APPENDIX E

### Sample Assent for Children over 12 and Adults On site interview (To be read aloud)

My name is *Madeline Ochi*. I am a researcher and I work with parents and children. Right now, I am trying to learn more about this library in the park.

If you agree, I will ask you questions about your activities here and why you came to this place. This will take about 15 minutes.

You may be helping us understand why this library is important or not and how it can be improved.

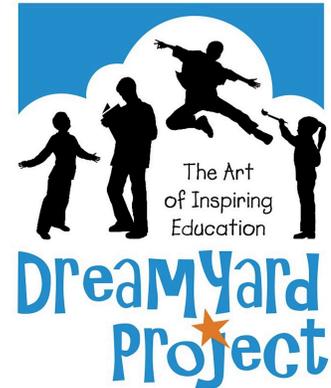
If you agree to help us, you should know that nobody else will know what you've *said*. You should also know that if you decide to help us or if you decide to say "no," your choice will not affect your activity here.

There are no right or wrong answers.

You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me or ask *your parents, teacher, or someone else* to call me at: 1 347 662 7799

Would you like to *talk to me*?

[Child answers yes or no; only a definite yes may be taken as consent to participate]



## APPENDIX F

### Sample Child Assent for Children under Age 12 On site interview (To be read aloud to the child)

My name is *Madeline Ochi*. I am a researcher and I work with parents and children. Right now, I am trying to learn more about this library in the park.

If you agree, I will ask you questions about your activities here and why you came to this place. This will take about 15 minutes.

You may be helping us understand why this library is important or not and how it can be improved.

If you agree to help us, you should know that your teacher and classmates won't know what you've *said*. You should also know that if you decide to help us or if you decide to say "no," your choice will not affect your activity here.

There are no right or wrong answers.

If you don't want to be in my study, you don't have to be in it. Remember, being in the study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to be in the study or if you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay, too. Also, remember that no one else, not even your parents, will know what you've *said*.

You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me or ask *your parents, teacher, or someone else* to call me at: 1 347 662 7799

Would you like to *talk to me*?

[Child answers yes or no; only a definite yes may be taken as consent to participate]

## APPENDIX G



### CONSENT FORM ADULT

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the impact of the library in Hayden Lord Park in the Bronx. This study is conducted by Stéphane Tonnelat, Center for International Research in the Humanities and Social sciences (CIRHUS), New York University and Madeline Ochi, Tufts University. The study is sponsored by Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at CIRHUS and Professor Charles Inouye at Tufts University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to take part in one or two interviews concerning your use of the library, your neighborhood and your educational career. Participation in this study will involve two hours of your time.

Your interview will be audio-taped. You may review the tape and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigators understand the role that such a library in a public space can play in enhancing the educational opportunities for children, youth and adults, in enlivening public debates in the neighborhood and in offering a safe place for learning and playing during the summer, when schools are out. The results will be shared with DreamYard and LWB who will communicate them to the community.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by changing your name and keeping the consent form with your name in a safe place separate from the data.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. You have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Stéphane Tonnelat by phone: 347 662 7799, by email: st2451@nyu.edu, or by mail: CNRS CIRHUS, 4 Washington Square North, NY NY 10003, or the faculty sponsor, Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at 212-998-8731, rb68@nyu.edu, or by mail at the same address.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects, New York University, 665 Broadway, Suite 804, New York, NY 10012 at 212-998-4808 or ask.humansubjects@nyu.edu

Yes, I give the investigator permission to use my name when quoting material from our interview in his/her presentations or publications.

No, I would prefer that my name not be used.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate  
Subject's Signature & date

## APPENDIX H

### CONSENT FORM FOR MINOR



You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the impact of the library in Hayden Lord Park in the Bronx. This study is conducted by Stéphane Tonnelat, Center for International Research in the Humanities and Social sciences (CIRHUS), New York University and Madeline Ochi, Tufts University. The study is sponsored by Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at CIRHUS and Professor Charles Inouye at Tufts University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to take part in one or two interviews concerning your use of the library, your neighborhood and your educational career. Participation in this study will involve two hours of your time.

Your interview will be audio-taped. You may review the tape and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigators understand the role that such a library in a public space can play in enhancing the educational opportunities for children, youth and adults, in enlivening public debates in the neighborhood and in offering a safe place for learning and playing during the summer, when schools are out. The results will be shared with DreamYard and LWB who will communicate them to the community.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by changing your name and keeping the consent form with your name in a safe place separate from the data.

Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. You have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Stéphane Tonnelat by phone: 347 662 7799, by email: st2451@nyu.edu, or by mail: CNRS CIRHUS, 4 Washington Square North, NY NY 10003, or the faculty sponsor, Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at 212-998-8731, rb68@nyu.edu, or by mail at the same address.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects, New York University, 665 Broadway, Suite 804, New York, NY 10012 at 212-998-4808 or ask.humansubjects@nyu.edu

Yes, I give the investigator permission to use my name when quoting material from our interview in his/her presentations or publications.

No, I would prefer that my name not be used.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate  
Subject's Signature & date

## APPENDIX I



### PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

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Your child has been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the impact of the library in Hayden Lord Park in the Bronx. This study is conducted by Stéphane Tonnelat, Center for International Research in the Humanities and Social sciences (CIRHUS), New York University and Madeline Ochi, Tufts University. The study is sponsored by Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at CIRHUS, NYU and Professor Charles Inouye at Tufts University.

If you give permission for your child's participation in this study, your child will be asked to take part in one or two interviews concerning her or his use of the library, neighborhood and educational career. Participation in this study will involve two hours of her/his time.

Your child's interview will be audio-taped. He or She may review the tape and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed.

There are no known risks associated with your child's participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although your child will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigators understand the role that such a library in a public space can play in enhancing the educational opportunities for children, youth and adults, in enlivening public debates in the neighborhood and in offering a safe place for learning and playing during the summer, when schools are out. The results will be shared with DreamYard and LWB who will communicate them to the community.

Confidentiality of your child's research records will be strictly maintained by changing your child's name and keeping the consent form with her or his name in a safe place separate from the data. Your child's responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to him or herself, to children, or to others.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. Your child also has the right to skip or not answer any questions she or he prefers not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your child's participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Stéphane Tonnelat by phone: 347 662 7799, by email: [st2451@nyu.edu](mailto:st2451@nyu.edu), or by mail: CNRS CIRHUS, 4 Washington Square North, NY NY 10003, or the faculty sponsor, Professor Ruth Ben Ghiat at 212-998-8731, [rb68@nyu.edu](mailto:rb68@nyu.edu), or by mail at the same address.

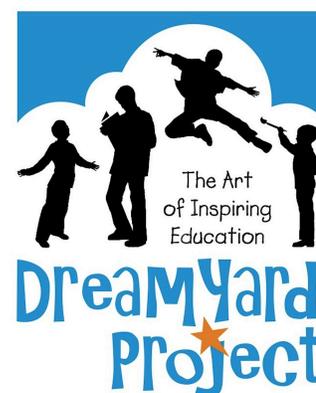
For questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects, New York University, 665 Broadway, Suite 804, New York, NY 10012 at 212-998-4808 or [ask.humansubjects@nyu.edu](mailto:ask.humansubjects@nyu.edu)

You have received a copy of this parental permission form to keep.

Permission to Participate  
Name of Child

Parent's signature

Date



## APPENDIX J

### **Child Assent for Children under Age 12** **Off site interview** (To be read aloud to the child)

My name is *Madeline Ochi*. I am a researcher and I work with parents and children. Right now, I am trying to learn more about the library in the park.

If you agree, I will ask you questions about your life in the Bronx and your activities at the library. This will take about 60 minutes.

You may be helping me understand why this library is important or not and how it can be improved.

If you agree to help us, you should know that nobody except me will know what you've said. You should also know that if you decide to help me or if you decide to say "no," your choice will not affect your activity at the library or elsewhere.

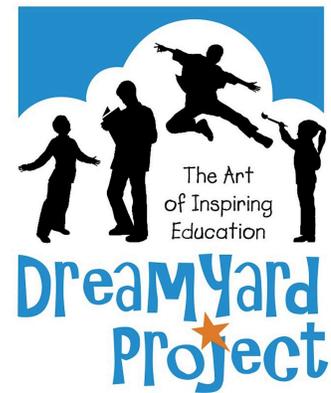
There are no right or wrong answers.

If you don't want to be in my study, you don't have to be in it. Remember, being in the study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to be in the study or if you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay, too. Also, remember that no one else, not even your parents, will know what you've *said*.

You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me or ask *your parents, the staff at the library or at DreamYard, or someone else* to call me at: 1 347 662 7799

Would you like to *talk to me*?

[Child answers yes or no; only a definite yes may be taken as consent to participate]



## APPENDIX K

### Parental Assent for Children On site interview (To be read aloud)

My name is *Madeline Ochi*. I am a researcher at Tufts and I work together with DreamYard with parents and children. Right now, I am trying to learn more about this library in the park.

If you agree, I will ask your child's permission to ask her or him questions about her or his activities here and why she or he came to this place. This will take about 15 minutes. You may be helping us understand why this library is important or not and how it can be improved.

If you agree to help us, you should know that nobody else will know what your child has *said*. You should also know that if you decide to help us or if you decide to say "no," your choice will not affect your activity here.

There are no right or wrong answers.

You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me or ask the staff *or someone else* to call me at: 1 347 662 7799

Would you agree to let me *talk to your child* ?

[yes or no; only a definite yes may be taken as consent to participate

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