



# PERSPECTIVES

a PhotoVoice  
Participatory  
Photography  
Program

supported by  
The NYC Center for  
Economic Opportunity

in partnership with  
The Red Hook  
Community Justice  
Center, The  
Brooklyn Arts  
Council and United  
Photo Industries

photograph by  
Dante Bennett

## Brooklyn PhotoVoice

This summer, 18 young people from the Brooklyn neighborhood of Brownsville were able to participate in PhotoVoice, a participatory photography program that teaches a documentary style of photography focused on issues related to their neighborhoods and self-exploration. The goals of this program are to empower participants, inform policy-makers, and raise awareness about issues facing these young people.

PhotoVoice is funded by the New York City Mayor's Office Center for Economic Opportunity. This project is in collaboration between four Brooklyn organizations – The Red Hook Community Justice Center, the Brownsville Community Justice Center (both projects of the Center for Court Innovation/Fund for the City of New York), the Brooklyn Arts Council, and United Photo Industries.

Participatory photography gives youth the opportunity to connect in a visual dialogue that often excludes them. This project employs professional photographers to teach participants photography skills and engages students through a series of workshops, class critiques, and field trips, and culminates in a final exhibit. Teaching Artists, Russell Frederick and Sam Barzilay, facilitated these workshops and students crafted visual stories from their own unique perspectives.

These final projects presented in this book were chosen by each student to engage the public on topics that inspire or concern them. Students have found new and different ways of voicing their perspectives and asserting themselves as experts in their individual and community needs. The funders, administrators and teaching artists of this program are extremely proud of the work the students have accomplished.

The Brooklyn Arts Council continues to be a vehicle for Brooklyn young people to engage with the larger New York City arts community. United Photo Industries invited students to visit their gallery, based in DUMBO, Brooklyn, and gave them insight into the professional artists' world. The Red Hook and Brownsville Community Justice Centers engage young people in a wide variety of strengths-based arts programming informed by Positive Youth Justice, which considers young people to be resources to their communities.

The administrators of this program and partnering organizations wish to thank the New York City Mayor's Office Center for Justice Centers and the staff at the Brooklyn Arts Council for their continued support in engaging Brooklyn students in the arts, and the United Photo Industries for inviting our students into their gallery and to be a part of Photoville. We would also like to thank Joseph Rodriguez for talking to our class about his work, the Jack Shainman Gallery, the International Center of Photography, and DUGGAL Visual Solutions for donating the prints for the exhibition.

# Eric Ellison

## Music

My name is Eric Ellison and I have lived in the borough of Brooklyn, NY all of my life. I am very familiar with some of the more infamous neighborhoods in Brooklyn, including the notorious Brownsville. Throughout my life, I realized that although most people will never understand the lingo that is spoken in Brownsville, one universal language that can be understood is music. The language of music is something that transcends all barriers, whether it is race, sexuality, or educational status. My plan is to show those outside of the community that the citizens of Brownsville are no different than them. They use music to express an array of emotions ranging from joy to sorrow and everything in between. I feel as if people who live in harsh environments like Brownsville need a voice to tell their stories and relate their situations to the world. If the world would understand us better, then they would see that underneath the violent overtone of Brownsville's reputation lies a strong community just trying to live life to the best of their ability.

### about Eric

Eric Ellison is a 23 year old Brooklyn, NY native who was born in Manhattan and currently lives in Brooklyn. Adopted at birth, he is the youngest child in his adopted family and the oldest boy in his biological family. He is of African-American/Puerto-Rican descent. In 2008 he graduated from High School with a photography diploma and is currently attending lcc for Music Recording Technology. Over the years he's done several things like earn an EMT license and published poetry, he is currently getting back into photography by utilizing the program at the Brownsville Community Justice Center.



# Jessica Rochez

## Masculinity

Masculinity is the label I've been given by the society of people who have a binary view of gender and gender expression. I've wondered, can masculinity really be defined by the clothes you wear, the way you sit or talk? I wanted to learn more about what really is masculinity and growing up without any father figures in my life, I'm naturally intrigued by men and the meaning of what it is.

Living in the predominantly black community, what I thought I saw as masculinity was aggression, violence, suppression, pressure, having the world on your shoulders but not being allowed to cry or speak of it. Any expression of emotion other than a "mean mug" would get you the name "pussy." It was like being a man was being the total opposite of being a woman. I was misled to believe that these things also defined masculinity. I chose this topic to dissect and change the misconstrued image of "how to be a man" or what it is to be a man. What I hoped to gain was a better understanding of masculinity and then open up the minds of those who have been misled.

### about Jessica

Jessica Rochez (Jai Florez) was born on April 2, 1993 and is a full-time student enrolled at Five Towns College. Jessica is a first generation Garifuna-American living in East New York, Brooklyn. She has always shown a strong interest in the arts. During her senior year she finally realized her true calling is film and she recently discovered her love of photography. She plans to pursue a career in photography, thanks to the encouragement of her professor Jennifer Shea. Jessica has worked on sets for three short films and two webseries. She also worked as a still photographer and at FTC she is the staff photographer for the college newspaper, The Record. She currently volunteers at her community's garden and interns with PhotoVoice at the Brownsville Community Justice Center. Jessica plans to graduate with a BFA in May 2015. She believes we are all humans, so therefore we matter and deserve to be understood.



# Yonaka Harris

## Progress

Yonaka's vision through the lens of her camera is to portray the community of Brownsville in a positive way to those who are ignorant to the special unknowns. Progress has developed in Brownsville to the community in this present day. Some examples of progress are: new buildings, modern day technology, female barbers, multiple new franchises and youth programs etc. Capturing photos to express the theme 'Progress' will enable foreigners to look at the community and see another aspect of the people and positivity of the community. The developments of Brownsville have drastically changed over the years of the elders to the present day youths. The photos are intended to inform both members and non-members of the community that there are changes being made to uplift the community. This will make a better environment to produce quality characters to be assimilated into the community and lives of the people.

### about Yonaka

Yonaka Harris was born on 19th December 1993 into the family of 5 five siblings, in the South American country Guyana. Yonaka migrated to the USA 2 years ago, 3 months pending. She attended Brownsville Academy High School right after the summer of her first year of living in the country. Ms Harris academic prowess was well known in the school. The quality of her work kept the standards for the other scholars quite high. People who came into contact with Ms Harris rave about her consistently friendly and professional demeanor. Yonaka accomplished many awards and earned the title of Salutatorian amongst her graduating class of 2012. The very ambitious and persistent young lady wishes to become a pediatrician which she is studying at New York College of Technology and is currently volunteering her service at the Woodhull Medical Center, additional to attending the summer program Photovoice. This program has given her the ability to be more comfortable in speaking to random people and able to see the world for more than just what it is when seen through the lens of a camera. Yonaka has taken the opportunity to gave back in any way possible to help others but also to gain some experiences of her own. The work of her hands will enable her to achieve humanitarian spirit to benefit others.



# Yoseph Hunt

## Small Business

I chose small business as a theme to do in the PhotoVoice program because Small and Independent Business is the start of Big Business. And importantly, Small Business is a majority in the Brownsville Community.

### about Yoseph

Yoseph Hunt is a high school student at the South Shore High School. Yoseph is 16 years old and is the oldest in a household of three. He has lived in Brooklyn all his life. Yoseph wants to become a firefighter because he likes the action and he wants to save lives. He is a student photographer at the Brownsville Community Justice Center PhotoVoice program. He wants the outer world to get a better look on the Brownsville Community Justice Center and help change the perspective the media has portrayed.



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# Monica Hawkins

## Community Gardens

Community gardens are the seeds towards a growing community. It brings people together to make a change for one another.

Photographing community gardens shows the many differences of Brownsville and positive things seen worldwide. Whether it is healthy, nutritious or saving someone's life, it's an effective way to help anyone out. The lessons of these gardens is to appreciate everything in life. It gives people peace and happiness.

### about Monica

Monica is a sixteen year old high school student at Teachers Preparatory School. She resides in Brooklyn, New York. She was born in the US and her parents were both born in Panama. Monica is the oldest of three children. Throughout her school years, Monica has been on the honor roll and on the National Honor Society. She has been a part of the summer PhotoVoice program and believes it can provide a change for Brownsville. She will be a junior in High School, next year.



# Saquan Frontis

## Small Business

The reason why I picked small businesses is because I wanted many people to see that you are able to open up your own business and not have to work for anybody else. I also chose this theme because having a small business comes from the heart, it's usually something people love doing. Having a small business of your own, you are able to hire who you think is good for the job.

### about Saquan

Saquan Frontis is a 19 year old African American who lives in Brownsville Brooklyn. This August, he'll be graduating from Frederick Douglass Academy VII High School in Brownsville Brooklyn. As of now, he is a student photographer. Saquan decided to participate in a program called PhotoVoice which he and 19 other student photographers were taught how to tell the meaning of something through pictures. He joined this program mainly because he felt that it would be great to be apart of a positive change for his community. He wants people who live outside of his community to see Brownsville as a beautiful community filled with a lot of people doing positive things. In January 2014 Saquan is planning to attend LaGuardia Community College to major in travel agency operations and management.



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# Douglas Palmer

## Basketball

I chose the theme of sports but more specifically basketball, because it means a lot to me. Walking throughout the neighborhood of Brownsville, street games catch my attention. Seeing teenagers work together without violence shows sports keeps teenagers out of trouble and occupied throughout the day.

### about Douglas

Douglas Palmer is sixteen year old teenager. He is a photography student from the east side of Brooklyn. Douglas was living in Brooklyn for about eleven years and was born in the Bronx. His nationality is Jamaican and Puerto Rican. Douglas is working on helping the community and the people in it. He is also trying to make people change the view of Brownsville. Douglas is working in the program called PhotoVoice and attends Tilden High School. The photographs Douglas takes shows how Brownsville isn't a bad place to live.



# Joseph McClinton

## Religion

I chose religious beliefs for my topic because it shows people in Brownsville can have faith, even if they believe in different things. Brownsville residents show more patience through their beliefs of faith and prosperity of their religion. The religious beliefs in Brownsville provide young people with opportunities to explore their religion and enlighten their peers on their studies. I believe this will show members of this community and outsiders that with faith and hope, Brownsville residents can overcome oppression.

### about Joseph

Joseph McClinton was born in Newark, New Jersey. In 1992, Joseph moved to Brooklyn, NY, in the heart of Brownsville. As a young black man growing up in a community known for having misunderstandings, Joseph set out to shine a light on the positive things that was being done in his community. Since Joseph joined the PhotoVoice program, he has been able to capture photographs of positive work being done in his community. Now his goal is to help enlighten others of what it take to help build more pride in his community. With the help of PhotoVoice, his dreams are one step closer to the success of his long term goal.

In Loving Memory Of



# Vianny Lugo

## Hispanic Culture

Perceptions of people and places are something that can be overturned with time and experience. Through a lens, things can be perceived differently even for the most critical eye. Brownsville is a community where people who dream live, where the desire to surpass themselves as human beings is alive. The Hispanic community is present at Brownsville, attempting to catch a glance of their personalized version of the American dream. Through my lens, I capture people's desires, who they are and who they want to be.

### about Vianny

Vianny Lugo is a sixteen year old Dominican student photographer at the Brownsville Community Justice Center with PhotoVoice and has been residing in the US for eight months. She is involved in several activities related to computer science, art, tutoring and agriculture. She is a senior at Teachers Preparatory School and aims to pursue a career in cognitive science.



# Terrence Buckner

## All Types of Art

My name is Terrence Buckner I am a student photographer. My work shows that not everyone from Brownsville is about the lifestyles that are portrayed on television and in films. When I went to high school in Harlem I would tell people where I live; after the words "I am from Brownsville" escaped from my mouth everyone looked at me in a state of shock. They would tell me all the bad things that they hear about Brownsville. I used to laugh when people told the rumors that were about Brownsville. As my first year of high school went by I was able to show my friends that Brownsville is not a bad place. We have artists, dancers, singers, and more. Not everyone from here is all about gangbangng, drug dealing, and violence. My work shows the people that are very interested in the arts from 5 year olds to 65 year olds doing something positive not only for themselves but for the people of Brownsville.

### about Terrence

Terrence Buckner is 19 years old and was born in Brooklyn. He currently resides in Brownsville, Brooklyn. He is originally from Cypress Hills. His mother is from Brooklyn but raised in Portland, Maine. His father is from Guyana but was born in East Flatbush. Ever since Terrence was young he has been interested in the arts whether it be singing, drawing, dancing, or acting. He graduated from Wadliegh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual arts in 2012. Terrence majored in the Theater but has always had a love for photography. He also studied photography in high school. Guided by his love for photography, Terrence joined a program called PhotoVoice where they are helping make Brownsville a better place through photography. Terrence is also a student at Laguardia Community College, where he is majoring in Theater and minoring in Education.



## About the Program Collaborators:

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) fights the cycle of poverty in New York City through innovative programs that build human capital and improve financial security. Launched by Mayor Bloomberg in 2006, CEO works with both City agencies and the federal government to implement successful anti-poverty initiatives in New York and partner cities across the United States.

Launched in June 2000, the Red Hook Community Justice Center is the nation's first multi-jurisdictional community court. Operating out of a refurbished Catholic school in the heart of a geographically and socially isolated neighborhood in southwest Brooklyn, the Justice Center seeks to solve neighborhood problems using a coordinated response. The courthouse is the hub for an array of unconventional programs that contribute to reducing fear and improving public trust in government.

Currently in planning, the Brownsville Community Justice Center seeks to reengineer how the justice system works in Brownsville, Brooklyn. In particular, the Justice Center is dedicated to building multiple off-ramps for young people who come into contact with the justice system. The ultimate goal is to reduce crime and the use of incarceration, while at the same restoring local faith in the justice system.

BAC's Arts in Education (AIE) program provides a wide array of educational arts experiences for students, teachers, parents, and community members in digital, literary, performing, and visual arts. Our collaborative process allows for personalized programming, enriching hands-on experiences, and enhanced depth of knowledge. We instill skills and positive attitudes about the arts that are designed to be retained for a lifetime.

The mission at United Photo Industries is to promote and showcase emerging photographers through curated exhibitions around the world. Working in partnership with local galleries and key media partners, they concentrate on producing site-specific exhibitions that explore new thematic directions in photography.



## Center for Economic Opportunity

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