



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

# ENJOY OUR NEWSLETTER!

Senator Velmanette Montgomery

December 20, 2015

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

Senator Montgomery, Borough President Eric Adams, Councilwoman Susan Dinko, members of the Gutman family and neighbors to celebrate the Grand Opening of the family-owned Key Food Supermarket on Myrtle Ave.



**College Credit To Count Towards Work Participation Requirement**

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

**GED Bill Signed Into Law!**

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

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

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

Stronger Together provides NYC-HR residents with access to career training and free programs including job placement and workforce training in several sectors, including commercial driving, food service, IT/ITIS, cable installation and employment with NYCHA.

Stronger Together also provides high school equivalency (HSE) for early GED classes, English classes, college courses and access to benefits, legal and financial counseling.

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

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



On October 28, 2015, Senator Montgomery joined the Red Hook Community Justice Center in celebrating the 15 years of service by Chief Justice Jonathan Lippman. He is honored for his advocacy and vision of a court system that serves the public, which he accomplished by increasing funding for courts and civil legal services, mandatory pre-trial service from law students, special and alternative courts including community courts, bail reform, and his advocacy for saving the age of adult criminal responsibility.

The Red Hook Community Justice Center (RHCJC) is the

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**Senator Montgomery Reports!**  
Winter 2015-2016

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**Saluting Two Community Builders**  
**My Friend, Bette Stoltz**

It is with great sadness that I salute the passing of one of the truly great ladies of Brooklyn, the much loved Bette Stoltz. Bette worked for her community with every fiber of her being. I can't imagine what Doris Sanders, the Dowdus, or Smith Street would be today without Bette. She was



Below you'll find a quick peek, but just download the PDF to fully enjoy all the articles on your computer (or phone!)

# A LEGACY OF ART & HISTORY



**BROOKLYN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

"The Brooklyn Historical Society is dedicated to making Brooklyn's history engaging and accessible to a broad and diverse audience. We are particularly devoted to the thousands of school children who come with their teachers to learn from exhibitions like *In Pursuit of Freedom* and *Personal Correspondence*. Knowing that the stories of local leaders and activists have been brought to life for a new generation of Brooklynites is deeply gratifying to our capable team of museum educators, historians and archivists, who have, in many cases, found evidence of history that have long been buried deep in the archives." - Deborah Schwartz, President

## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS:

### Personal Correspondents:

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

April 9, 2015 - Spring 2016

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

### Brooklyn Abolitionists/In Pursuit of Freedom January 15, 2014 - Winter 2018

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

### UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMMING INCLUDES:



© Samaki Chapman

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

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

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

## Black Masters at Boys and Girls High School



Senator Montgomery (center) and Councilman Al Yarn (right) with members of the Bed-Stuy Brownstones

### BLACK MASTERS AT BOYS & GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

### A Great Legacy of Art and History

Developed by Brenda Fryson

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

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

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

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

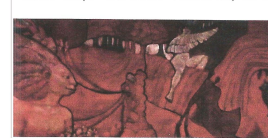
natural choice as the curator for Boys and Girls High School. Working closely with the architect and planner, Max Stein, and the architects at Max O. Urbahn Associates, his selection of black artists will stand the test of time."



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

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

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



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

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

The works continue to inspire and educate.