

Activating Public Spaces Peer Exchange Session
September 23, 2020
2:00-3:00 pm

Presentation Slides:

- <https://hpbdb.com/s/9kq25bgynzuppxa6aaohawbrgm9dbdt5>

Participants:

- [Brian Archie](#) (Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative)
- [Nathalie Arzu](#) and [Keyla Navarro](#) (The RISE Project)
- [Justin Baratta](#) (Missio Church)
- [Rosa Marruffo](#) (Edible Schoolyard NYC)
- [Alexandra Mesick](#) (Clinton County Health Department)
- [Siobhan Ollivierre](#) (GirlTrek)
- [Adalgisa Rivera \(East Harlem\)](#)
- [Leah Russell](#) (Near Westside Peacemaking Project)
- [Addie Smock](#) (Brooklyn Public Library)
- [Tamara Greenfield](#) and [Tara Singh](#) (Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, Building Healthy Communities)
- [Nupur Chaudhury](#), [Bronwyn Starr](#), and [Liz Ward](#) (New York State Health Foundation)
- [Gabiella Moreno](#) and [Phil Bors](#) (Healthy Places by Design)

Recording:

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Z2GVa2atkFmroKWbEhZGj-w81fetoHG39Z1mEk7GEPw-rBSXMMnsvswKGCrmg4I3.DYWUD-khh2KjPonL>
Passcode: +uQ6#YN@

Agenda:

I. Welcome and Intros

II. Recap and Reflections from Previous Peer Exchange Session

The September 9th session featured Project EATS' resident outreach work in Brownsville and included remarks from Indy Li, Community Health Advisor, who manages the Farmacy program and edits The Companion weekly neighborhood newsletter. We also heard from ArtBridge's Faren Islam, Director of Programs and place-making expert, who shared about her organization's outreach since the pandemic hit our communities, specifically their efforts to activate public spaces with art.

Healthy Places by Design distributes a bi-weekly Roundup including resources, links, funding opportunities, etc. For those interested in receiving the Roundup, please email [Phil Bors](#).

Chat reflections:

- For future conversations, the importance of how to combat isolation and using various tools to reach and engage residents. For example, including a newsletter in a box of food delivery can help people feel part of a community with shared recipes, tips, responses, etc.

- Nice to come together and hear what others are doing, what worked for them, challenges, successes, etc.

III. What's on Your Mind?

From registration questions, we heard that you want to talk about the following topics with your peers:

- Public Space
 - Placemaking (e.g. Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper)
 - Outdoor learning
 - Transportation barriers
- Moving to Virtual, Adjusting to Physical Distancing
 - Virtual programming fatigue in youth
 - Participation in learning lab
 - How pivot to virtual is working
 - Technology barriers
 - Engaging families during back to school challenges
- Food Access
 - Healthy eating efforts during COVID-19; healthy food ideas/innovations
 - Food access; food justice
 - Social distancing & agriculture during the pandemic
- Broader Social and Organizational Issues
 - Black Lives Matter Movement
 - Community care; Community resiliency; Social Connection
 - Healing trauma
 - Intimate partner violence
 - Beyond mutual aid networks
 - Making policy recommendations
 - Shift in Community Based Organizations addressing basic needs
 - Collaboration/Joint resource development efforts

Today will be discussing activating public spaces. At the end of the call, we'll take a poll to see which topics should be addressed in the remaining two peer exchange sessions (on October 7 and October 21.)

IV. Group Discussion: Activating Public Spaces

- *Brian Archie, Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative*
[Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative](#) engages residents where they are and provides resources to uplift the community as a whole, starting in the siloed pockets in the city. This is accomplished by resident-driven projects and initiatives focusing on physical activity, healthy eating, and social connection.

Brian shared about their recent virtual event.

- 4th Annual Walk the Falls, a free virtual walk. The mission is to introduce the community to the community, get residents out and active for one day to build social connection, capacity, resources, and allow people to see Niagara Falls in a different light. Most people associate Niagara Falls as an attraction and forget that it's a living city with people. The Walk the Falls event was held Saturday, September 19 and Sunday, September 20 and included about 150 registrants.

Registrants received t-shirts, pedometers, and informational materials. This year, people could join from other cities since it was a virtual event also. Check social media (#walkthefalls2020) for additional information.

- *Leah Russell, Near Westside Peacemaking Project*
Leah shared about their strategies.
 - Peacemaker Walk with volunteer peacemakers to be visible within the community. The walk included stops at houses of other peacemakers, and community impact team members, specifically to elders that have been sheltering in place.
 - Bringing the Service Providers Collaborative back together in-person in public spaces after many months of meeting virtually. This was another opportunity to be visible in the community.
 - A care package distribution project activated public spaces with people and voices. Walked through public housing, across from the location of a serious shooting with nine victims took place, which acknowledged that the public housing complex was traumatized. To send care and love to the Near Westside community, the project collected care cards made by children and placed in bags with toys, activities for kids, healing therapy bunnies, etc.

- *Justin Baratta, Missio Church*
Justin shared about their strategies.
 - Summer at Skiddy Park – Created spaces in the park for activities for children, such as crafts and games that were COVID-19 safe. They were unable to host the usual summer softball series this year, but setting up tables with activities for kids brought the families out in a safe environment.

- *Adalgisa (Lisa) Rivera*
Through the Mayor’s Office she received a grant, to reinvest in the community for walks in East Harlem. Lisa shared about their strategies.
 - On Friday, September 18 they held a 2-mile walking tour led by “Mr. Harlem,” a community member born and raised in Harlem, with a wealth of information, who served as a tour guide through Harlem Heritage. Harlem Heritage is an industry that uses cultural tourism to preserve Harlem’s history. The tour included 15 individuals. Advertising for the walks is done via social media and mass emails to previous participants.
 - On Sunday, September 20 they held a walk that connected to Randall’s Island. Randall’s Island does a great job getting people involved, having an array of sports fields, and an amazing urban farm (growing rice, tomatoes, chickens, etc.) with a number of farmers. The farm is connected to Harlem Grown and the food is donated to pantries. Food has been distributed during COVID-19. A tour of the farm was given by a local farmer and about 15 participants played with chickens, tasted food, and gained knowledge about how the farm is kept going, composting, and programs for children.

V. What's Next?

Participants were asked to indicate their topic preferences for two upcoming calls via the poll feature in Zoom. Poll results are as follows:

1. The Black Lives Matter Movement
2. Community Resiliency and Social Connection
3. Violence
4. Virtual Programming

VI. Next Steps

Please join us for the next Healthy Neighborhoods Learning Collaborative and Building Healthy Communities Peer Exchange Session on **October 7, 2020 at 2:00 pm**.