

FALL 2020

OFF THE SHELF

A LOOK INSIDE
BROOKLYN PUBLIC
LIBRARY

WELCOME
TO
STORYTIME

2pm Storytime
3pm \$Cafe

We require that all participants wear masks or face coverings at our programs. All are welcome, but if children cannot wear masks and maintain their distance from other participants, please be aware of the risks and consider participating in our virtual programs.
For more information, to RSVP call 718 624-1334 or go to bklynlibrary.org.

Bklyn
Public Library



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This summer, tens of thousands of Black Lives Matter protesters gathered on the steps of Central Library to demand racial justice in our city and across the nation. As painful as it is to confront the racism that continues to shape our country and its many institutions, including our own, it has also renewed our sense of purpose as a public library. There is perhaps no institution better poised to help people understand our shared past and move toward a genuinely democratic future.

To that end, hundreds of our librarians and library staff joined virtual conversations about how BPL can cultivate a culture of racial justice within our institution and every neighborhood we serve, and formed a Diversity Council to translate ideas into action.

As you will see in this issue of *Off the Shelf*, despite the ongoing pandemic, Brooklyn Public Library continues to take action. At the Center for Brooklyn History, we are democratizing access

to the largest archive of Brooklyn's history in the world, and at New Lots Library, we are striving to make previously erased history visible once again. We're registering new voters, curating booklists about how our voting rights were won, and preparing to safely open the Civic Commons, a new hub for civic engagement at Central Library. As award-winning librarian Adeeba Afshan Rana describes, we are "building a community where everyone thrives...striving for equity and liberation together."

If libraries are centers of ideas, they are also centers of ideals. In this disorienting and difficult year, so many of our American ideals—such as equality under the law—have been undermined. But while public libraries persist, we will never stop striving for them.

Linda E. Johnson

Linda E. Johnson
President & CEO

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Cover image: BPL librarian Donette Riker leads a children's storytime as part of Macon Library's weekly Open Streets program.

Inside cover: *RaiseUp!* sculpture by Hank Willis Thomas at the Southern Poverty Law Center's Civil Rights memorial and center.

FEATURE

THE CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY

On October 2, BPL's President and CEO, Linda E. Johnson, and Brooklyn Historical Society's (BHS) former President, Deborah Schwartz, announced that the institutions have been combined, creating BPL's Center for Brooklyn History (CBH), which will be home to the most expansive collection of Brooklyn history in the world.

The new Center is housed at the landmarked Pierrepont Street building that was home to BHS for nearly 140 years and extends the collection and programming throughout the Library's 59-branch system. The Center will democratize access to Brooklyn's history and be dedicated to expanding and diversifying representation of the history of the borough by unifying

resources and expertise, and broadening reach and impact throughout Brooklyn and beyond. "By joining with BPL to form the Center for Brooklyn History, the archives and programming that scholars, students and researchers expect from BHS will be extended across every neighborhood in the borough, creating greatly increased opportunities to educate visitors about Brooklyn's important history and its relevance to each of them," said Schwartz. Johnson added, "Programs and exhibitions will bring it to life throughout our 59 branches and empower Brooklynites to contribute to their own historical record, so that future students, scholars and curious citizens will know the diversity and dynamism of our city across time."

CIVIC COMMONS

A BEAUTIFUL NEW SPACE
TO WELCOME BACK PATRONS

In March 2020, Central Library's Civic Commons was undergoing finishing touches before its grand opening celebration when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down New York City—including all of Brooklyn Public Library.

Located on the first floor with a brand new entrance on Flatbush Avenue, the Civic Commons is the first public space developed through Central Library's renovation project, and the first expansion of public space at Central Library since the early 1970s. Designed by Toshiko Mori Architect to be a hub for community services, it houses a 40-desktop computer lab, a Passport Services Center and IDNYC office, as well as an office where partner agencies can provide free information on social services, benefits enrollment, legal assistance and government initiatives.

BPL began reopening select library branches for grab-and-go service in July, and the Civic Commons' bright, open space turned out to be ideal for welcoming back patrons to Central Library when they return books and pick up holds.

"We were really lucky that the Civic Commons was completed when it was," says Christine Schonhart, the director of Central Library. "We can greet patrons right when they come in off Flatbush—there's no confusion about where to go or who to speak to! Since we have more room, we can be creative about some enhanced, contactless services."



View of what will be the Civic Commons' computer center.

For example, we put out a bunch of free books and activity kits for Summer Reading, and it was nice to get those into the hands of kids who were excited to take part in that program."

When BPL is able to fully reopen, the Civic Commons will host civic events such as local community meetings, informational workshops and voter registration drives thanks to partnerships with Brooklyn Borough President Adams, Brooklyn Voters Alliance, Immigrant Justice Corps, the NY State Comptroller's Office, the DOH Office of Health Insurance Programs, Hester Street, Brooklyn Pride Center and others.

"I hope we can take some of the lessons learned from this time and see the Civic Commons as a space that is adaptive and useful for whatever the community needs, whether it's voter registration, health information or conversations around anti-racism," Schonhart says.

In the meantime, according to Jennifer Thompson, the assistant director of Central Library, Brooklynites are just happy to walk by Central Library and see open doors.

"Our patrons are thrilled and grateful to be able to pick up holds again, and frequently thank us for being back."

Across New York, across the nation, and even around the world, there has been growing momentum to acknowledge and address racism within societies, institutions and ourselves.

Throughout the spring, thousands of protesters gathered on the steps of Central Library to protest racist practices and to proclaim that Black Lives Matter. While supporting these demonstrations, BPL also looked inward.

From May through July, BPL held a series of four organization-wide virtual conversations focused on institutional self-examination and cultural change, titled Real Talk: Race, Truth and Transformation. The goal was to establish an ongoing, honest, cross-racial conversation, disrupt White complacency at BPL and generate ideas for long-term culture change.

Professional facilitators guided discussions for the 400-500 employees who attended each session. The conversation ranged from hiring practices to police presence in libraries to culturally-responsive collection development and focused on actions

BPL can take to make lasting cultural change. This September, the Library established a Diversity Council to continue this work. Staff from across the institution will work together to gather relevant data, set goals, organize action teams, measure results and ultimately hold BPL accountable. Among other initiatives, the Council will reevaluate our policies and practices regarding recruitment, hiring and promotion to ensure that our organization is representative at every level, including leadership. It will also develop our diversity, equity and inclusion training so that all of our employees receive training on implicit bias, microaggressions and active bystandership.

Though this work is just beginning, we are determined to sustain its momentum. Equity has long been at the heart of BPL's mission, and in order to practice what we profess to value, we must strive for racial justice in every facet of our work and in every branch across the borough.

➔ See BPL's official statement regarding Black Lives Matter at bklynlibrary.org/black-lives-matter

DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Each year in June, BPL recognizes two exceptional BPL employees for their dedication, creativity and commitment to excellence. Staff are nominated by their colleagues, making this recognition especially meaningful to recipients.



Adeeba Afshan Rana



Elizabeth (Liz) Gomez

The **Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for Excellence in Librarianship** is awarded to a librarian who provides exemplary service to the public and upholds the highest ideals of the profession. The award is named for the late Dr. Thomas, a longtime BPL Trustee and the first African American to serve as president of both the New York Library Association and the New York City School Librarians Association. This year the award went to **Adeeba Afshan Rana**, Library Information Supervisor at Arlington Library. Described as a powerhouse by her colleagues, Adeeba helped launch the Cookmobile teen cooking and nutrition program and has been involved with countless other projects, including the annual Teen Writing Contest and Librarians of Tomorrow teen internship program. Her boundless energy for our teen patrons is only surpassed by her compassion and empathy for all. Noted Rana, "I am honored to be a librarian in Brooklyn, and so grateful to my colleagues. I love that we are building a community where everyone thrives, that we are striving for equity and liberation together. That I get to mirror back to this city all the love we can be, all the power we can harness, all that we need to bloom together."

The **Feder Leonard Family Award for Excellence in Service to the Library's Public**, inaugurated in 2019, was established by the Feder Leonard Family Fund to recognize non-librarian staff who have done outstanding work in advancing and strengthening BPL's services to the people of Brooklyn. **Elizabeth (Liz) Gomez**, an office assistant at New Lots Library, was this year's recipient. Working for BPL for over 20 years, Liz is well known both in the Library and in the East New York neighborhood for forming lasting connections with patrons. Whether putting aside newspapers and favorite books for regular visitors, overseeing room reservations for the many organizations and community groups in the neighborhood, helping patrons on the computer or creating new initiatives, her colleagues say Liz is "generosity embodied." As noted in her nomination form, "Liz is always ready and willing to help other staff to make sure that the library runs smoothly and give our patrons the best possible experience. Whenever a new staff member is assigned to New Lots Library, many of the staff will tell the new employee if they have questions to ask Liz. She is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to the workings of BPL."

Congratulations to both Adeeba and Liz!

BKLYN BOOKMATCH VOTING RIGHTS EDITION



With a momentous presidential election pending, voting and its significance to the preservation of democracy has never been timelier. This booklist, created by BPL librarian Emma Carbone, features books about the importance of voting and the fight for women's suffrage and, later, the Voting Rights Act. All selections are available as eBooks. Visit vote.org to find everything you need to vote in your state including confirming registration, requesting an absentee ballot, and looking up polling locations and early voting sites.

BookMatch is a readers' advisory service that uses what readers like (and dislike) to create customized reading recommendations based on the interests or needs of patrons.

Thank You for Voting: The Maddening, Enlightening, Inspiring Truth About Voting in America

by Erin Geiger Smith

From the founding fathers to Jim Crow to women's suffrage to gerrymandering—and everything in between—readers will get a look at the complex history of voting.

Our Time Is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America

by Stacey Abrams

Suppression and identity altered the 2016 presidential election—and will do the same in 2020. But progress can win, and here Abrams lays out how.

Votes for Women! American Suffragists and the Battle for the Ballot

by Winifred Conkling

The story of the American women who demanded, fought for and finally won the right to vote.

One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy

by Carol Anderson

Anderson chronicles the astonishing story of government-dictated racial discrimination unfolding before our very eyes as more and more states adopt voter suppression laws.

Lifting as We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot Box

by Evette Dionne

An eye-opening book that tells the important, overlooked story of Black women as a force in the suffrage movement—when fellow suffragists did not accept them as equal partners in the struggle.

Stolen Justice: The Struggle for African American Voting Rights

by Lawrence Goldstone

This vivid portrait of the systematic suppression of the African American vote traces the injustices of the post-Reconstruction era and draws direct links to today's creeping threats to suffrage.

Uncounted: The Crisis of Voter Suppression in America

by Gilda R. Daniels

This book examines the phenomenon of disenfranchisement through the lens of history, race, law and the democratic process.

Jailed for Freedom: A First-Person Account of the Militant Fight for Women's Rights

by Doris Stevens

A first-hand account of how suffragists in the National Woman's Party organized and fought a fierce battle for the passage of the 19th Amendment.



Get your own BookMatch list at bklynlibrary.org/bookmatch

JOURNEY TO MONTGOMERY

Memorial bust of a family at the Legacy Pavilion.

By Natiba Guy-Clement, Assistant Director of the Center for Brooklyn History

The following was excerpted from an article in Brooklynology, the Center for Brooklyn History's blog.

WHAT DOES REMEMBRANCE LOOK LIKE? AS AN ARCHIVIST AND LOVER OF HISTORY, A LARGE PART OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ME IS REPRESENTATION. WHO ARE WE REPRESENTING? WHO HAS ENOUGH AND WHO DOES NOT?

In early March, staff from BPL went on an informational and inspirational visit to Montgomery, Alabama to explore these questions and gain immersive knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement. Our other purpose was to look at how memorials can serve as a reminder; a space to inform and a way to honor the people and events that are connected to that place. BPL is renovating its New Lots branch, located in East New York, and will also highlight the historic significance of the library which is located on a once-unacknowledged African burial ground.

In 2010, community activists and political leaders rallied the city to create a landmark and in 2013 the area was officially recognized as the African Burial Ground Square. Further steps will find ways to honor the connection to the community, educate Brooklynites about this part of the borough's history and create ways and spaces to memorialize those who were forgotten. This is also what led us to Montgomery, Alabama.

Alabama was one of the largest slave-holding states in the country and among the first six states to secede to the Confederacy. The Montgomery state capitol is where Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederate states, was inaugurated and where the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King ended the historic Selma to Montgomery march. The city is considered by many to be both "the cradle of the Confederacy" and "the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement" creating a dual (and opposing) history. The way

sites relate to these opposing elements of Montgomery history gives anyone who experiences it no choice but to acknowledge this.

Monuments in Montgomery are represented in the form of actual places where historical events happened.

For example, Dr. Martin Luther King's home and the Dexter Avenue church where he preached, the Greyhound bus station where Freedom Riders were attacked as well as built spaces that required thoughtful, intentional planning about the subject matter and the people they represent. The Rosa Parks Museum, on the grounds of Troy University and located near the bus stop where she was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger, was almost turned into a parking garage, but University officials noticed that visitors would stop to read the marker about her arrest and determined they could honor Parks while also serving their students. They built a museum and library that opened on December 1st, 2000, the 45th anniversary of Rosa Parks' arrest.

Built memorials in Montgomery have also been created to honor those who were unnamed or are not in the consciousness of the average American, and to tell the stories of African Americans who suffered unthinkable horrors, often while exhibiting exceptional bravery. Some of the more well-known, recently built memorials in Montgomery have been spearheaded by The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending mass incarceration, challenging racial and economic injustice, and protecting basic human rights. These sites were some of the most impressive, community oriented and heartbreaking memorials we



BPL team at the Southern Poverty Law Center Civil Rights Memorial.



Marker tribute to Rosa Parks and the Bus Boycott.

witnessed. To help tell the stories of racial and civil injustice, EJI conceptualized and created four distinct spaces: The Legacy Museum, Legacy Pavilion, Peace and Justice Memorial Center and National Museum for Peace and Justice.

The Legacy Museum gave us a view of the path American justice took from enslavement to mass incarceration. It features a mix of interactive multimedia pieces including a database to track lynching events around the country, video interviews with civil rights leaders and activists, installations that give visitors a glimpse of the life of the incarcerated and in-depth information about the inequalities that exist in African American communities and what led to them. The Legacy Pavilion memorial was built to honor families that



Wall of soil jars collected from lynching sites.



Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library tribute mural.

were victims of lynching as well as the labor of highly-skilled enslaved people. It features an outdoor water sculpture that represents a family.

The Peace and Justice Memorial Center recognizes the 24 men and women who were lynched or killed in racially-motivated attacks during the 1950s. One of the most moving aspects of the Center is its wall of jars of collected soil. EJL worked with community partners to gather soil from places where a lynching occurred and to erect markers to signify the spot. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice is a six-acre open air sculpture garden built to honor the lives of over 4,000 African American men, women and children that were lynched and murdered between 1877

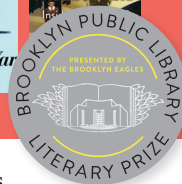
and 1950. These lives are represented by 800 weathered steel pillars, one for each county where a lynching or racial terror event took place. If known, the names and date of death are engraved on the pillars. Despite the heaviness, the memorial is peaceful, reflective and has places to uplift and encourage, providing balance and a bit of inspiration.

Our final stop in Montgomery was a visit to the Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library. The library was renamed in honor of librarian and civil rights activist Juliette Hampton Morgan, who used her privilege and wrote letters to speak out against the mistreatment of Black people in Montgomery. She became a target for her views, was harassed by members of her community and had a cross burned in her yard. The Library was another example of opposing historic elements. It was renamed to honor a civil rights activist and librarian, but within its walls contains a place that honors the Confederacy: a wall affixed with an engraved memorial dedicated to “those who served, with honor and courage, the Confederate States of America.” This kind of dichotomy is often a challenge for librarians everywhere.

We left Montgomery with a renewed sense of the importance of creating a space to honor the enslaved and free Africans interred in the New Lots African burial ground.

There is so much erasure, both intentional and collateral, of the lives of enslaved and Black lives. They deserve acknowledgement and for us to learn about their experiences and triumphs. We hope to fulfill those goals for them and the New Lots community. The March continues...

THE 2020 BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY LITERARY PRIZE LONGLIST



The Brooklyn Public Library Literary Prize, one of only a few major literary awards bestowed by a public library system, is awarded annually to recognize the year's top contemporary writers nonfiction, fiction & poetry. Over the spring, a committee of BPL librarians reviewed dozens of titles published within the past year that were submitted by Library staff. They then narrowed these titles down to an initial longlist of nonfiction and fiction & poetry nominees, which we are pleased to present here. All of the longlist titles are available in BPL's collection as both print books and eBooks. The winners of the 2020 BPL Literary Prize will be announced on November 20.

The Brooklyn Public Library Literary Prize was established in 2015 by the Brooklyn Eagles, a group of young and engaged Brooklynites who are passionate about Brooklyn Public Library and work to engage new patrons, promote the Library as a cultural center, and build a vibrant community around the resources the library offers. The Eagles also host the Library's annual Brooklyn Classic to celebrate the Prize-winning books. For more information, please go to bklynlib.org/litprize. Support for the Brooklyn Public Library Literary Prize is generously provided by the Peck Stacpoole Foundation.

NONFICTION

America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States
by Erika Lee

A Black Women's History of the United States
by Daina Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross

Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family
by Robert Kolker

Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot
by Mikki Kendall

How We Fight for Our Lives: A Memoir
by Saeed Jones

I Hope We Choose Love: A Trans Girl's Notes from the End of the World
by Kai Cheng Thom

The Outlaw Ocean: Journeys Across the Last Untamed Frontier
by Ian Urbina

Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code
by Ruha Benjamin

FICTION & POETRY

The Deep
by Rivers Solomon (with Daveed Diggs, William Hutson, Jonathan Snipes)

Gods of Jade and Shadow
by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous
by Ocean Vuong

Patsy: A Novel
by Nicole Dennis-Benn

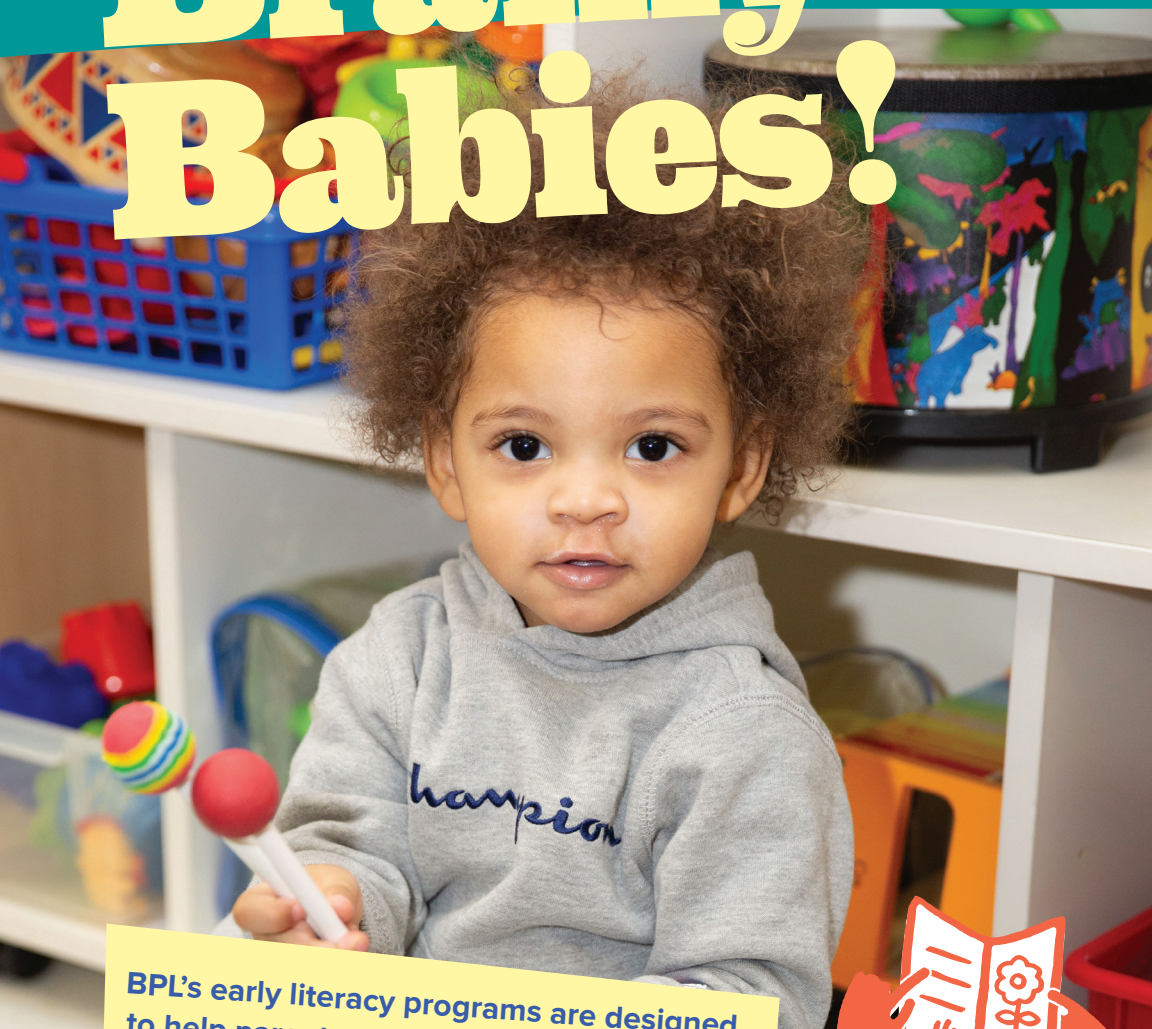
Postcolonial Love Poem
by Natalie Diaz

The Starless Sea
by Erin Morgenstern

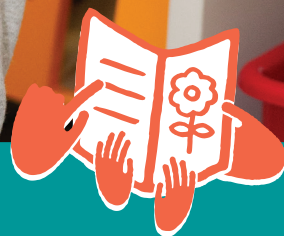
This Is How You Lose the Time War
by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone

Weather: A Novel
by Jenny Offill

Brainy Babies!



BPL's early literacy programs are designed to help parents and caregivers in their role as their child's first teacher, providing crucial sensory stimulus to the growing brains of babies and toddlers.



An enthusiastic participant at a Brainy Babies session at Bushwick Library.

BPL has a long track record of providing programs to serve new families and families with young children, including our acclaimed First Five Years programming that offers storytimes in multiple languages, musical activities and parent workshops.

Recognizing that the well-being of caregivers has a direct impact on the mental growth of young children, in 2019 BPL piloted **Brainy Babies** thanks to a generous grant from the Robin Hood Foundation. Brainy Babies is an augmented storytime series for families with children ages 0-3 that encourages early literacy and learning while also addressing the stresses and strains of parenting. Specifically targeting families living in under-served communities, the program is offered at the Bushwick and Brownsville branches in English and Spanish as well as American Sign Language. Programming at each location is managed by an Early Literacy Outreach Associate who reaches out to families throughout the community, distributing fliers to local schools, hospitals, bus and subway stops, playgrounds, businesses and even car windshields, as well as making visits to nearby New York City Housing Authority complexes and other local organizations.

Each **Brainy Babies** series consists of six sessions held weekly in dedicated library space outfitted with welcoming baby furniture, toys and books. Regular activities led by the branch children's librarian and/or Early Literacy Outreach Associate create a comfortable routine for caregivers and provide an opportunity for parent-child bonding. Guest appearances from



Families enjoying Brainy Babies sessions.

specialists cover topics such as nutrition, music, prenatal and postnatal health and fitness, and breastfeeding, among others. Through these visits, families have been connected to additional outside resources such as early intervention programs, child care facilities, information on transitioning into the NYC Public School system through the various 3K and 4K programs, music and art programs, health-related community programs such as nutrition and doula services, and other BPL literacy services such as our school readiness program, Ready, Set, Kindergarten!

Since **Brainy Babies** was launched in October 2019, attendance has totaled more than 2,000 parents, caregivers and children. **At the onset of the pandemic the program moved online, but sessions continue to attract a dedicated audience.**

A Bushwick parent said, "Keep up the great work! I was able to join storytime with my toddler for the first time since we transitioned to remote learning and she was engaged and very excited." With the success of the program, plans are in place to launch **Brainy Babies** at additional BPL branches beginning July 2021. Neighborhoods under consideration include Canarsie, Brighton Beach, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Coney Island, Cypress Hills, East New York, Sunset Park and Borough Park.

One of the things we love about Brooklyn is how culturally varied it is. BPL corporate partner Apple Bank shares this love of Brooklyn's multiculturalism. In fact, 2020 marks the fifth year that Apple Bank has partnered with BPL to celebrate the cultural heritage of the borough's diverse neighborhoods. Through their generosity, Apple Bank supports BPL in offering annual World Language Day celebrations at branches across the borough, underwrites our Language Line multilingual phone reference resource (available in over 100 languages!), distributes books published in five different world languages to people living in Brooklyn through book giveaways (over 1,000 given out), has helped add 600 titles in English language learning and citizenship to the circulating collection, and supports the printing of BPL Welcome Guides for new library cardholders in 10 different languages.

We are a proud supporter of Brooklyn Public Library and its extensive community programs that embrace the diversity of our Brooklyn neighborhoods. These programs are a prime example of how Apple Bank connects to the communities it serves by engaging local residents and working with community organizations.

JAMES G. MATERA
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
RETAIL BANKING OFFICER AT APPLE BANK

Apple Bank has provided personal and business banking services to New Yorkers since 1863, with 79 branches in greater New York.

BPL is honored to have Apple Bank as a partner to celebrate and support the range of cultural expression that is part of Brooklyn's unique character.

Musician demonstrating a pipa (Chinese lute) during a cultural event at New Utrecht Library.

A holiday event at Midwood Library.



BPL PRESENTS OUR LIVES / OUR DEMOCRACY

THE 28TH AMENDMENT, I WISH TO SAY & VOTERS' BROADCAST



On October 17, BPL released the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on behalf of the people of Brooklyn. Over the spring and summer, BPL gathered participants in online town halls to deliberate and exchange ideas on how to strengthen our country and its founding document. The gathered ideas were organized by town hall moderators and volunteer Constitutional framers who created a two-part document of radical proportion that sets forth the People's response to the pressing needs of our time.

Part One is a legal proposal for a 28th Amendment drafted by the framers: Anand Giridharadas, author (*Winners Take All; The True American*); Susan Herman, President of the American Civil Liberties Union; Kimberly Peeler-Allen, Co-Founder of Higher Heights and Board Chair of the ERA Coalition; and Nathaniel Rich, author (*Losing Earth; King Zeno*). Part Two is a narrative summary that seeks to capture the voices of the participants, crafted by moderators Brian Tate (writer and activist) and Craig Manbauman (poet and veteran).

I Wish to Say, an ongoing project by socially engaged artist Sheryl Oring, invited patrons to dictate messages to the next US President, which were transcribed onto postcards using old-fashioned typewriters. These will be sent to the White House after the 2020 Presidential election.

Voters' Broadcast used excerpted messages from **I Wish to Say** to create a vocal work composed by 2020-21 Kaufman Music Center Artist-in-Residence Lisa Bielawa. On Saturday, October 24, the Kaufman Music Center and BPL presented the live world premiere of **Voters' Broadcast** at Central Library in a day of socially-distanced outdoor performances on the Plaza.



Patrons can read the amendment and town hall notes, and write their own amendment at bklynlib.org/28th-amendment.



ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S PRESENTS MUSIC IN COLOR: THE IMAGINATION OF ELEANOR ALBERGA

Thursday, December 3, 6 pm
Video premier on BPL's YouTube and Facebook @
BPLPresents

A British composer of Jamaican descent, Eleanor Alberga is prolific in nearly every genre, from opera and choral works to pieces for both chamber ensemble and full orchestra. This concert will include the North American premiere of Alberga's *Shining Gate of Morpheus* for horn and string quartet. Playwright and performer Kirya Traber will join to guide audiences through Alberga's story and inspiration.



EXHIBITION

OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM

Through December 31
Central Library, Eastern Parkway lawn

The Celestial Heroes Banquet, as shown here at BPL's Outdoor Living Room, are furniture concepts for public park-like settings. Artist Heinrich Spillmann imagines Celestial Heroes as forces or powers which help us keep our surroundings and time/space in balance. As concepts created for Celestial Heroes, this installation invites viewers to rest, spread a banquet of their own and celebrate community.

The objects on display are of various dimensions and from a variety of tree species. They're treated by fire scorching, using the ancient Japanese technique of Shou Suji Ban, with wood sealers and/or clear varnishes or are intentionally left exposed to the decaying elements of nature.



MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY: MOLLY CRABAPPLE Sunday, December 13 7 pm, Live on Zoom

Award-winning artist, writer and author of *Drawing Blood* and *Brothers of the Gun* (with Marwan Hisham) Molly Crabapple has been commissioned by Brooklyn Public Library to present the next Message from the Library lecture.

Message from the Library is made possible through support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

➔ For more information: bklynlib.org/outdoors

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ART & SOCIETY CENSUS: A PROJECT ON THE STATE OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Winter 2020 – Spring 2021
Live on Zoom

In this year of radical listening, BPL Presents and curator Laura Raicovich, in partnership with Hyperallergic, launches a new project inviting Brooklynites and citizens across the country to talk about what they believe matters most for culture right now.

The current global pandemic has emphasized existing racial, economic and social inequalities in the US. Social distancing and new health constraints, in addition to powerful protests and conversations, are profoundly impacting how we gather in shared public space. Importantly, these flash points are also pushing cultural and public institutions to re-evaluate our work.

What do you feel is most important in culture right now? We want to hear from you. We begin with an online survey gathering your feedback. Based on your responses, we will host a series of working groups over Winter/Spring 2021, free and open to the public, to investigate and address the changing role of the arts in personal and public life and those cultural issues you deem most pressing. All the work we do in those groups will be shared during a Spring 2021 convening with NYC residents, artists, art-appreciators, national and international arts workers, museum and public institutional directors and staff. Our aim: to spur new ways of sharing art and culture in public spaces that will best serve the broadest collective imaginable.

Art & Society Census is funded by the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation's Innovation Fund.

EVENTS FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES



LAYER THE WALLS

**Saturday, December 12,
1 pm, BPL's Facebook**

Using shadow puppetry, Bunraku puppets, masks, and toy theater techniques, Layer the Walls imagines the proud and perilous histories of Italian, Jewish and Irish immigrants who occupy a Lower East Side tenement at the turn of the century.

WINTER CELEBRATIONS IN THE GREAT GREAT FOREST

**Saturday, December 19,
1 pm, BPL's Facebook**

Welcome to the Great Great Forest! Join Forester and Twig on an interactive, winter adventure to celebrate togetherness with all of their friends! We'll bring seasonal cheer to those who are feeling a little lonely, realizing that by connecting and playing with others we find joy ourselves!



AUTHOR READING & ACTIVITY

**Wednesdays, 3:30 pm
Author's Facebook and
Instagram**

December 2

**WHEN JULIA DANCED
BOMBA/CUANDO JULIA
BAILABA BOMBA
Raquel Ortiz**

December 9

**EVERY CHILD A SONG
Nicola Davies**

December 16

**MYSTERIOUS STONES
Diego Herrera known as Yayo**

STOMP, CLAP & SING

**Every other Tuesday at 11 am
BPL's Facebook**

**LUCY KALANTARI & THE JAZZ CATS
December 1**

Lucy Kalantari brings delightful Jazz Age-inspired music everyone can enjoy!



BILINGUAL BIRDIES ONLINE CLASS IN MANDARIN: CELEBRATE THE MAGIC WITHIN YOU!

December 15

Experience the online bilingual magic with live music, a bubble dance party and entertaining puppet show!

THE UNCLE DEVIN SHOW

December 29

The Uncle Devin Show is an interactive musical experience for children that uses percussion instruments to cultivate their mind—a dynamic cross between DC's Trouble Funk and Schoolhouse Rock.

➔ For complete listings visit:
bklynlibrary.org/bpl-presents

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