



Poster by Lila E, BFS Class of 2022

Brooklyn Friends School Community Issues Conference **November 26, 2019**

8:00am	Welcome and opening with 10th grade student organizers, 5 Metrotech Center, Pfizer Auditorium
8:45am	Move to Upper School Building, 116 Lawrence Street (3rd Floor Classrooms)
9:00am	Session One
10:00am	Snack Distribution
10:15am	Session Two
11:15am	Move to 375 Pearl Street Meetinghouse
11:30am	Closing Performances *
12:15pm	Dismissal from 375 Pearl Street Meetinghouse

*The [opening](#) and [closing](#) will be live-streamed via the [BES Facebook page](#)!

Partner Organizations:

API Rainbow Parents of PFLAG NYC, Arab-American Family Support Center, Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network, Brooklyn Autism Center, Brooklyn Community Pride Center, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, Campaign for New York Health, The Chaikuni Institute, Clear Health Costs, Commonwealth Fund, Communities United for Police Reform, DayOne, EPIC Players, FIERCE, FoodtoEat, Girls for Gender Equity, Global Kids NYC, Gowanus Canal Conservancy, #HALTSolitary campaign, The Independent, IntegrateNYC, Just Food, Make the Road NY, New Sanctuary Coalition, New York Civil Liberties Union Teen Activist Project, Our Justice, Realize Your Beauty, Red Hook Community Justice Center, Sigma Psi Zeta Sorority, Teens Take Charge, Theater of the Oppressed NYC, United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, UrbanWord NYC, Vera Institute for Justice, & VOCAL-NY

Closing Performances

Theatre of the Oppressed NYC

TONYC's Rapid Response Troupe, made up of veteran actors from TONYC Forum Theatre Troupes provides short-notice, flexible, targeted, and creative support to grassroots organizers and campaigns. This experimental troupe draws on communities' and activists' collective knowledge to attract new audiences to urgent grassroots campaigns and engage those audiences in transformative conversation--while devising new strategies, through improvisation, with which to hold the powerful accountable and demand substantive change. The Rapid Response Troupe is facilitated by Liz Morgan. Liz works with TONYC as a Joker and as Community Resource Coordinator. She is an actor and playwright, best known for her poem "Why I was Late Today and Will Probably Always be Late as a Black Woman" featured in The Huffington Post. She holds both a B.A. and M.F.A. from Brown University where she was a graduate teaching fellow in the Theatre Arts department as well as the recipient of the Davis Wickham Prize for Excellence in Playwriting. Liz has worked as a teaching artist with Opening Act, The Other Side and People's Theatre Project. TONYC's mission is to partner with communities fighting against oppression to inspire transformative action through theatre. Their goals are to build community, solidarity, and awareness; to enable actors to become activists; and to influence policy-making through participatory theatre. Their work is guided by several core principles: that any discussion of a social problem should center the voices of those directly affected; that unscripted, live encounters have immense potential for transformative change; and that community-based art and activism can influence structural change.



Matthew Sanchez, UrbanWord NYC



Matthew Sanchez is a poet, Urban Word NYC youth ambassador, model, and activist who hails from the Bronx, NY. He has shared his poetry at special events throughout the New York City including the world famous Apollo Theater, Fordham University, Bronx Music Heritage Center, and more. Matthew was the youngest graduate and valedictorian in the history of John V. Lindsay Wildcat Charter School Academy, and since then, he has been a Recipient of the 2016 Certificate of Merit by Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr, won the NYC Parks & Recreation 2016 Rising Stars Award, and received the Community Service Award from Owen Dolen Recreation Center. His image can be seen all over the city through print campaigns by Nike and Champion. Matthew is presently a part

of the 2019 cohort of the Community Word Project's Teaching Artist Program, gaining more tools to help him continue to use his voice to be an advocate for his community.

10th Grade Student Dancers: Maddie, Justin, Charli, Amaya, Sophia, & Bree



CITIZEN
AN AMERICAN LYRIC
CLAUDIA RANKINE

The tenth grade students in Dance 1 choreographed duets and solos, weaving them together to create one piece inspired by the book *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. The main issue that this book covers is being a Black woman in America and the struggles that come along with it, in her perspective. The first section we created is to the song Save Me (coldcut remix) by Nina Simone. The movement is based off of the feelings we have when discussing race in a multi-racial group. The second section is to the song We Move Lightly by Dustin O'Halloran. We based this section off of our discussion of

two images in the book: the cover image titled "In the hood" by David Hammons (1993), and "Jim Crow Road" by Michael David Murphy (2008). The third section of this piece is to the instrumental version of the song Alright by Kendrick Lamar and we based this section off of selected excerpts from the text.

BFS Community Issues Conference

Room	Community Issue	Community Partners
317	Body Image & Fatphobia	Nicole Hamilton & Damala Denny, Girls for Gender Equity Stacey Lorin Merkl & Starr Kirkland, Realize Your Beauty
320	Criminal Justice & Mass Incarceration	Mickey Belaineh, Vera Institute for Justice Laura Pelcher, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives Jack Davis & Roger Clark, #HALTSolitary campaign
305	Disability Rights	Jana Levin & Julie Russell, Brooklyn Autism Center Aubrie Therrien & Travis Burbee, The EPIC Players
307	Domestic Violence & Partner Violence	Nora McGlynn, Sigma Psi Zeta Sorority Giselle Sanchez Huerta, Day One
309	Food Justice, Food Waste, Food Access	Deepti Sharma, FoodtoEat Iyeshima Harris & Kristina Erskine, Just Food
310	Health Care Reform	Ana Djordjevic, Campaign for New York Health & Commonwealth Fund Jeanne Pinder, Clear Health Costs
311	Immigrant Rights	Ravi Ragbir, New Sanctuary Coalition, Labiba Adil, Arab American Family Support Center
312	Indigenous Rights	Tecumseh Ceaser, United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Caucus Sophia Rokhlin, The Chaikuni Institute
315	LGBTQ+ Rights	Diana Viglucci, Brooklyn Community Pride Center Lance Chen-Hayes, PFLAG API Rainbow Parents Ayo Taveras, FIERCE
301	Marine Life	Andy Simons, Gowanus Canal Conservancy Cristian Cruz & Carly Avezano, Global Kids
325	Police Brutality & Accountability	Darian Agostini, Communities United for Police Reform Michael Higgins Jr., Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network Royce Russell, Esq., Emdin & Russell, LLP
321	Racial Equity in Schools	Jace Valentine, Integrate NYC Shelda Francois, Teens Take Charge
322	Reproductive Rights	Aaliyah Ansari, New York Civil Liberties Union Teen Activist Project Shayla Walker, Our Justice
323	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Joshua Pacheco, Red Hook Community Justice Center Peter Rugh, The Independent

Please note that filming and photography will take place at this conference and may be used for educational and promotional purposes by Brooklyn Friends School.

Concurrent Sessions:

BODY IMAGE/FATPHOBIA - Room 317

(10th grade student organizers: Amaya, Bree, Kendall)

Historically, certain body types have been praised, while others have been looked down upon. Body Image is the perception that a person has of their physical self and the thoughts and feelings that result from that perception. These feelings can be positive, negative, or both, and can be influenced by individual and environmental factors (psychalive.org). Our session will be focusing on how Body image affects the population today, and how youth, men, and women, are targeted in different ways. We are excited to welcome speakers from Girls for Gender Equity and Realize Your Beauty to speak about Body Image and its effects at our session.

Nicole Hamilton is the Director of School Based Programs and Partnerships at Girls for Gender Equity. In addition, from 2010 until this year, Nicole has also served as the Program Director of GGE's school based direct service program, Urban Leaders Academy. Urban Leaders Academy is a holistic social justice based afterschool program servicing middle and high school students in Brooklyn, New York. In line with the mission and vision of Girls for Gender Equity, Nicole develops programming and provides leadership, training and professional development for a blended staff of school teachers, teaching artists, specialists, line staff, interns and volunteers. Nicole works with school administration to assess the needs of the school community and engages staff to design and facilitate programming that is committed to the physical, psychological, social and economic development of youth of color, particularly girls and women. Through social justice education, leadership development, academic support, organizing, health and wellness awareness and arts enrichment, Urban Leaders Academy supports youth in developing critical consciousness, cultivate allyship and strengthen the advocacy and activism skills needed to overcome obstacles and to live self-determined lives.

Damala Denny (she/her), Coordinator of School Based Programs & Partnerships, is a proud black girl from Brooklyn with strong family roots in Buxton, Guyana. She keeps hold of her culture through her love of soca music, dancing, and Caribbean food. She studied English Writing & Rhetoric as well as Political Science as an undergraduate and considers herself a social justice warrior. She supports the resistance by being herself unapologetically and allowing her emotions to hold space, regardless of the setting. Damala is committed to dismantling respectability politics and uplifting the biased way in which they affect black and brown girls within her community. Her mission is to uplift the authentic voices of young people and she joined GGE as the Program Coordinator for Urban Leaders Academy in 2018 to do just that. ULA is a holistic afterschool program designed to advance leadership skills, social justice principles and values, and self-determination within our young people. Damala now works with NYC teachers to heighten their critical consciousness, build their restorative practice toolbox, and hone their culturally responsive pedagogy lens to help create the schools girls deserve.

Stacey Lorin Merkl (Founder & Executive Director, Realize Your Beauty) is a native of Denver, Colorado. She holds a BA in Theatre Arts and a BA in French from the University of Northern Colorado. She has taught theatre and music to children and teens at various arts centers in Colorado, Seattle, Paris (France) and New York City. Stacey founded Realize Your Beauty, Inc. in 2010, combining her love of theatre arts with her passion for social change and education. She is a longtime volunteer for the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) and is a trained facilitator/trainer for NEDA's Body Project. Stacey is also a trained facilitator of Confident Body, Confident Child, an evidence-based resource providing parenting strategies to promote positive body image, healthy eating and physical activity in children aged 2 to 6 years. She is a member of Endangered Bodies NYC, IAEDP Denver Chapter (International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals), AED (Academy for Eating Disorders), Colorado Nonprofit Association and the American Camp Association.

Starr Kirkland (Workshop Facilitator, Realize Your Beauty) is an actress and poet from San Diego, CA. She graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara with a BFA in Theater. As a writer and performer, Starr has used her spoken word to combat racism, violence, and bigotry, and to promote tolerance and an awareness of social issues. Some of the other programs Starr has worked with include: street outreach with The Storefront, an emergency shelter for youth; and Take Wing Transitional Living Community, a transitional living community specifically designed to break the cycle of homelessness for youth. She later started her own peer education theater troupe for at-risk youth, The Y.E.S. Program (Youth Expressing Self). Starr was a recipient of the Gandhi Nonviolence Award for her work in violence prevention in the community with specific emphasis on teen relationship and gang violence.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & MASS INCARCERATION - Room 320

(10th grade student organizers: Charley, Ethan, Wyatt, Isaiah)

Injustice in the criminal justice is a pressing issue in today's society. Oppressed peoples, such as Black people, Latinx people, people of low income, and others around the country are targeted by officers because of biases surrounding their identities, as well as demand from private prisons who profit off of the imprisonment of people. Furthermore, low income people often can't pay bail and don't have access to good lawyers, and once people are imprisoned, they are often subject to bad conditions and overpopulated facilities. Criminal justice issues don't just affect the people being detained, but also their families, who could be children whose parents are incarcerated. For our session, we want to focus on injustice towards oppressed people in the criminal justice system as well as mass incarceration. We have speakers attending from the Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, Vera Institute for Justice, and the HALT Solitary Confinement campaign who are excited to talk about their organizations, their experiences with the criminal justice system, and ways we can get involved. If you join our session we will make sure you are engaged and learning new things about criminal justice.

Laura Pelcher is a court liaison for Brooklyn Justice Initiatives. Ms. Pelcher previously interned at the Red Hook Community Justice Center and worked as a research assistant with the Center for Court Innovation. She has worked in journalism and has an M.A. in forensic linguistics from Hofstra University. Operating out of Brooklyn Criminal Court on Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives is staffed by a team of social workers, case managers, and resource coordinators. By providing meaningful precinct diversion, pretrial supervised release and post-conviction sentencing options, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives seeks to use a misdemeanor arrest as a window of opportunity to change the direction of an individual's life and avoid unnecessary incarceration.

Mickey Belaine As a program associate in Vera's Center on Sentencing and Corrections, Mikelina's work has focused on reducing jail incarceration, addressing racial, ethnic and other disparities in the criminal justice system, and engaging impacted communities in system reform efforts. Their work consists of research, writing, and providing technical assistance to local jurisdictions and communities. During their time at Vera, Mikelina has also contributed to publications, reports, and presentations covering special topic issues including: Jail Construction, Women in Jails, LGBTQ and Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Education for Journalists. Prior to joining Vera, Mikelina served as the Chief Program Officer for the nonprofit social enterprise InnerCity Weightlifting (ICW), a street violence reduction program serving the highest risk street and gang-involved adults and their networks/communities. Mikelina holds a JD from Harvard Law School, where they served as co-president of Lambda and co-founded the Queer and Trans People of Color student organization, and a BA with honors from Texas A&M University. Mikelina was born and raised in Arlington, TX, where their family established a diaspora after immigrating from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Pronouns: They/Them

Jack Davis is an organizer and advocate with the #HALTsolitary campaign. Jack has engaged in advocacy and activism in Albany and New York City, carried out community forums across New York City and Long Island, and has received media coverage in such outlets as the Associated Press, Daily News, Queens Daily Eagle, Newsday, the City, NBC, and more. The #HALTsolitary campaign brings together survivors of solitary, family members, advocates, concerned citizens, lawyers, and leaders in human rights, health, and faith communities. The campaign aims to end the torture of solitary confinement for all people and create more humane and effective alternatives. The campaign also aims to build on these changes – and the pursuit of these changes – to dismantle the racial injustices and punishment paradigm that underpin the entire incarceration system. Learn more at nycaic.org.

Roger Clark is a Community Leader with VOCAL-NY and a member of the #HALTsolitary campaign. Roger has engaged in organizing, advocacy, and activism on a variety of issues of the injustice system, including solitary confinement, bail, speedy trial, discovery, police misconduct, and more. He has a powerful op-ed published about solitary confinement in the Daily News, and his work has received coverage in the Associated Press, US News, Gothamist, the Intercept, the City, and more. VOCAL-NY is a statewide grassroots membership organization that builds power among low-income people affected by HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, the drug war, homelessness, and mass incarceration in order to create healthy and just communities. VOCAL accomplishes this through community organizing, leadership development, public education, direct services, participatory research and direct action. Learn more at vocal-ny.org.

DISABILITY RIGHTS - Room 305

(10th grade student organizers: Franka, Indea)

There are many manifestations of disabilities. During this session, we will have speakers from Brooklyn Autism Center (BAC) and the EPIC Players who will focus on developmental disabilities and programs in place that offer support. People with varied cognitive disabilities navigate the world with the same wants in life as everyone else. But many are often left behind and/or isolated because of the lack of access to good education, employment discrimination, and general disregard of necessary resources, especially in lower income communities. EPIC focuses on equity in the neuro-diverse and disabled community geared around employment opportunities and the arts. BAC is a school next to Brooklyn Friends that supports young people on the autism spectrum. In this session we will discuss the issues facing people with developmental disabilities and more with our speakers from Brooklyn Autism Center and The EPIC Players, which will include one of their neuro-diverse members.

Jana Levin, Executive Director at Brooklyn Autism Center has over 20 year's experience working in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. She has been the Executive Director at BAC for the past 6 years, and before that was a founding board member. She's responsible for the implementation of the organization's overall philosophy, mission, and strategic goals which includes raising awareness of the school, revenue generation, financial management, organizational development, staff management and program operations.

Julie Russell, Educational Director at Brooklyn Autism Center has over 15 year's experience working with children with autism and related developmental differences in centers, schools, school districts and home-based programs. She has been the Educational Director for the past 7 years. She oversees all aspects of curriculum development, staff training, research, development of behavior intervention plans, and ensures the overall quality and effectiveness of the day-to-day education and treatment of the students at BAC.

Travis Burbee is the Associate Artistic Director of EPIC Players. He has been a resident of New York for 3 years and this is his 4th show directing with EPIC. Travis graduated from Missouri State University with a BFA in Musical Theatre. His previous director work includes *The Little Prince*, *Shakespeare's Tempest* as a Director, and *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* as the Assistant Director at the FLEA Theatre. Travis has also directed numerous children's productions. Travis is also a choreographer. He choreographed for EPIC's past productions of *Little Shop of Horrors* and *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. Travis has performed with several theatre companies in the past and was nominated for an Innovative Theatre Award for his performance of *Beethoven* in EPIC's production of *Dog Sees God*. In addition to being on the EPIC creative team Travis also heads up the in school and outreach EPIC education classes and performances.

Aubrie Therrien is the Executive Artistic Director of The EPIC Players, dedicated to creating neuro-diverse opportunities and communities through the arts. She has been an actress regionally and in New York City for 15 years and holds a BFA in Theater from Longwood University and a Masters of Public Health from New York University. She has worked with neuro-diverse individuals through theater for several years and is a passionate advocate for inclusion in the arts. She was recognized as New Yorker of the Week for her work and was recently published in *Autism Spectrum News* with Dr. Sam Goldstein on theater and autism. Additionally, Aubrie and The EPIC Players had the honor of ringing the New York Stock Exchange opening bell to celebrate Autism Awareness month on April 3rd, 2018 and, additionally, to speak at the United Nations on Empowering Women and Girls with Autism, specifically through the lens of film and the arts. She has also spoken at the Producer's Guild of America conference on the importance of inclusive casting and will be a featured panelist at the upcoming AASCEND Conference on Autism in the Media in October 2019. Aubrie serves as the Co-Chair of the Coalition for Disabilities in the Arts in New York City and is the Executive Director of the Horizons program at Brooklyn Friends School.

DOMESTIC/PARTNER VIOLENCE - Room 307

(10th grade student organizers: Delila and Val)

Domestic/Partner Violence often stems from power and control. When a partner feels the need for more power in the relationship, they may turn to abusive measures. This abuse can include but is not limited to verbal, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Such violence can affect a community as a whole because it is often a taboo subject, which causes it to not be spoken about. This is an important topic for us because we feel domestic settings should be safe for not only children, but everyone involved. For our session, we have invited representatives from the sorority Sigma Psi Zeta and from Day One to engage with us about how to prevent and combat domestic/partner violence. We aspire to have students leave our conference session with knowledge on how to combat, prevent, and speak on domestic violence.

Giselle Sanchez Huerta is the Youth Leadership Development Coordinator at Day One. They work in high schools, ACS Close to Home sites and within community based organizations throughout the 5 boroughs to deliver Day One's educational and interactive workshops. Giselle is passionate about their work with young communities of color in their native New York. They have previously worked to support ENL students across K-12 schooling, facilitate conversations on race, class and culture, and mentor high school youth through social justice organizing, identity work, and purposeful self-reflection. They believe in the importance of discussing the historical violence black and/or indigenous femmes of Latin-american descent/background face, as well as supporting said femmes as community builders/shapers and healers. Outside of work, you can find Giselle praising the sky and their ancestors, practicing self-care and spiritual wellness through eating delicious foods, and connecting with folks in spaces of love and resilience.

Nora McGlynn (She/hers/her) is a Minor Board Member of the Sigma Psi Zeta National Sorority Expansion Mentor Team. As an undergrad, she led a campaign to fund a local domestic violence crisis shelter in New York, which provided immediate housing for domestic violence victims. Her mission is to educate a larger audience to domestic violence issues – particularly those faced by the Asian/Asian American Community. She spent the last 7 years in active advisory roles grappling with systemic issues of inter-partner violence in communities of color. She hopes to embody the Sigma Psi Zeta National Motto of "Lead from the Front" and believes that activism and involvement in the democratic process cannot be separated from service to the community. Sigma Psi Zeta is a historically Asian-interest sorority and official partner of the It's On Us White House Initiative to end sexual assault on college campuses. As well as the initiative APIAVote, which encourages civic participation of Asian Pacific Islander Americans in the electoral and public policy process on the local, state, and national levels.

FOOD JUSTICE, FOOD ACCESS, & FOOD WASTE - Room 309
(10th grade student organizers: Ava S., Maddie)

This session aims to further understand the idea of food justice, food access, and food waste. "The Food Justice Movement is a grassroots initiative emerging from communities in response to food insecurity and economic pressures that prevent access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods." (Food Justice Movement) Food waste is also a significant issue in our society. "Up to 40 percent of the food in the United States is never eaten. But at the same time, one in eight Americans struggles to put enough food on the table." (NRDC) We will explore food as a social justice issue and look at it through a community-based lens. Speakers will engage the group in an activity surrounding these concepts. We hope that participants will walk out with a better understanding of food justice. We also aspire to have students be aware of ways to get involved. We are delighted to welcome Deepti Sharma, CEO and Founder of FoodtoEat as well as Iyeshima Harris and Kristina Erskine of Just Food.

Deepti Sharma is a lifelong entrepreneur and the CEO and Founder of [FoodtoEat](#), a community-minded catering concierge service. She started FoodtoEat in 2011 to connect immigrant, women and minority-owned food vendors to opportunities for growth - ultimately helping them strengthen their own business skills. FoodtoEat helps businesses feed employees great food and build stronger & more diverse work cultures. She is also a Co-Founder of Bikky, a platform solving customer engagement for restaurants. As a mother and small business owner, Deepti is a vocal advocate for policies that benefit these communities. She served on the [Board for the Business Center for New Americans](#), a non-profit that encourages immigrant entrepreneurship by providing micro-loans and financial education. She also writes about how companies can modernize motherhood in the workplace, and mentors female entrepreneurs as part of the [NYC Mayor's WE NYC initiative](#). Deepti is a [World Economic Forum Global Shaper](#), a [Forbes 30 Under 30 alumnae](#), and an avid runner. She lives in Queens with her husband (Abhinav Kapur) and two children (Zubin & Chetan).

Kristina Erskine is a 23 year old artist and organizer. After successful youth engagement at the 2018 Just Food Conference she is ready to lean into cultivating youth empowerment with Just Food once again. Kristina brings over eight years of experience uplifting youth and marginalized folks around food justice ranging from farming and grassroots organizing to policy advocacy work. As an artist and organizer that is passionate about sharing the powerful lessons food teaches us about land, culture and history through art, stories and hands on learning. In all of her work, she focuses on highlighting the importance of young people challenging and redefining systems, and being agents of systemic change. As a product of youth empowerment work, she is excited to collaborate with Just Food on a project created specifically for youth that age out of programs. Kristina is currently the Corporate Program Coordinator with Free Arts NYC. When she isn't organizing, she loves to spend her time creating art, music, and playing video games.

Iyeshima Harris' passions are food justice, fighting for youth voices to be represented in adult dominated spaces and uplifting people of color to continue raising the bar creatively. Her purpose of being an intricate teammate of Just Food is to bridge the gap between youth and adults by creating intergenerational exchanges, providing safe spaces for youth to express their own passion, skills and bravery, and by supporting youth through their visions. It is important to her that our communities are being self sufficient, self reliant and financially confident while maintaining an adequate and fair environmentally sustainable system.

HEALTHCARE REFORM - Room 310

(10th grade student organizers: Addy, Noam, Sophia S)

Our session is about the idea of healthcare reform in New York City. The United States of America is deeply rooted in putting its economy over the people. The wealthier people tend to have more influence over the government and often have prejudice against or disregard for those who are not wealthy. The wealth gap in America is gradually getting wider and wider. It is a cycle in the sense that poor health contributes to reduced income, which goes back to poor health care. We welcome Ana Djordjevic from Campaign for New York Health and Jeanne Pinder from Clear Health Costs. Questions we've asked our speakers to consider are: What are some institutionalized health policies that don't benefit people who are middle to lower class? How should the government prioritize healthcare funding? What can we, as young people, do to advocate for improved healthcare for all?

Ana Djordjevic is a health justice activist and community organizer working with the Campaign for New York Health, focused on South-Central Brooklyn. For the last few years she has been a freelance, editor, educator and event-planner working at such organizations as the Commonwealth Fund, the New York State Nurses Association and Physicians for Human Rights. She has a Master's degree in Health Policy, Planning and Financing from the joint program at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the London School of Economics. Prior to obtaining her Master's, she worked at several human rights organizations such as PEN America and Human Rights Watch. She has volunteered in a variety of health organizations such as the Mae Tao Clinic, run by Burmese refugees on the Thai-Burmese border, and LSA Family Health Service in East Harlem, and sits on the Board of Physicians for a National Health Program - NY Metro Chapter. Djordjevic has a BA in post-colonial literature and women's studies from Fordham University. Djordjevic, a native of Belgrade, former Yugoslavia, is fluent in Serbian, French and Spanish and is proficient in Portuguese. She lives in Brooklyn.

Jeanne Pinder is founder and CEO of ClearHealthCosts, a journalism startup in New York City that is bringing transparency to the healthcare marketplace by telling people what things cost. It's like a mashup of Kayak and the Waze traffic app for health costs. Did you know that a simple MRI could cost \$300 or \$6,200 in the same metro area? Or that a common blood test could cost \$19 or \$522? Did you know that you might well pay less if you put away your insurance card and instead pay cash? ClearHealthCosts has partnered with big media organizations and others to report on and crowdsource health prices. Pinder worked at The New York Times as an editor, reporter and human resources executive for nearly 25 years. She took a buyout in 2009, and a year later won a shark-tank type pitch contest at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism to found ClearHealthCosts. She built the company into a leading national resource for health costs, in the process saving people tons of money and also having policy impact. Her recent TED talk about health costs went viral, picking up more than 1 million views in about six weeks.

IMMIGRATION RIGHTS - Room 311

(10th grade student organizers: Yami, Jade, Willa)

In this session, we will be addressing the issues related to immigrant rights in our country and what we can do to show our support and make change. These rights are fundamental constitutional protections that are granted to some and denied for others coming to live in the U.S., and now, they are also being taken away from many people. This is a very prevalent issue in our country today, and it is important that we educate ourselves on the topic so that we can take action. Immigrant families are being separated at the border, people coming to the U.S. seeking asylum are being sent back to their dangerous homes, and visas and green cards are being revoked for small crimes. In addition, immigrants face discrimination and prejudice in our country on a daily basis while our country fails to protect and enforce their rights. In our session we will hear from two amazing organizers who will share their own stories as immigrants and also about their work through New Sanctuary Coalition and Arab-American Family Support Center.

Ravi Ragbir, Executive Director of New Sanctuary Coalition, and a long-time permanent resident, community activist, father, and husband, faces permanent exile from his life in the U.S. Ravi's immigration story began when he came to the U.S. from Trinidad in February 1991 on a visitor's visa. In 1994, he became a lawful permanent resident (green card holder). A 15-year green card holder, Ravi was detained and ordered deported in 2006 by an immigration judge—without a hearing—based on a conviction for fraud, which he is currently seeking to vacate, based on factual and legal errors in his trial. Through his own struggle to remain in the U.S., Ravi became active in supporting other immigrants who were facing similar challenges. Today, Ravi is a nationally recognized leader in the immigrant rights movement. Through his work, Ravi met, fell in love with, and eventually married Amy Gottlieb, a U.S. Citizen, and fellow immigrant rights, activist. Despite being eligible to readjust his status to permanent resident based on his marriage, the Board of Immigration Appeals denied Ravi's request for an opportunity to be heard. Ravi is currently appealing this decision so that he can remain with his wife in the U.S., the place he has called home for over twenty years.

Labiba Adil was born and raised in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She moved to New York City five years ago after receiving a scholarship to study International Relations at The New School. At the Arab-American Family Support Center, Labiba works as a Senior Case Planner within the Preventive Program where she helps ensure the safety and welfare of immigrant children and families. Labiba currently lives in Brooklyn and loves being involved in her community's creative and social activities.

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS - Room 312

(10th grade student organizers: Ursula, Lila)

The Indigenous Rights session will focus on the marginalization of the Indigenous peoples of the “Americas”, as named by the European colonizers, hearing from the perspectives of two individuals working towards resolving these issues of systematic oppression and mistreatment in the United States, or Turtle Island, and the Amazon. During this session, we will touch on the historical roots of these problems, such as colonization, disease, warfare, slavery, forced displacement, and forced assimilation. We will also talk about the discriminatory government policies that enable the environmental injustices, substandard school systems, unfair taxes, language erasure, and cultural genocide that continue to occur on Indigenous land across the world. We are honored to welcome Tecumseh Ceaser, leader with the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus at the United Nations and Sophia Rokhlin, BFS alumna and leader with The Chaikuni Institute, to share their insights with all of us. We are grateful these two speakers are bringing two different perspectives and experiences with this important issue.

Tecumseh Ceaser is a Native American artist and cultural consultant of Matinecock Turkey clan, Wampanoag, Montaukett, and Blackfoot descent. Born and raised in Queens, NY, the homeland of the Matinecock, he works in the traditional medium and practice of quahog shell (wampum) carving. Tecumseh's goal is to bring exposure to the indigenous groups of Queens and Long Island and draw attention to the fact that Native American culture and art are not stagnant. He frequently collaborates with local tribes to bring cultural programming to their communities. As a cultural consultant and Native activist he currently serves as an advisor for the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus at the United Nations, where he advocates for Indigenous Americans' rights to member states, NGOs, and other indigenous nations. Tecumseh has also provided cultural education to universities, museums, and institutions including St. John's University, Socrates Sculpture Park, Flushing Town Hall, and New York University. He is currently in residence at Flushing Town Hall, Socrates Sculpture Park, and IBEX Puppetry. For more information or to get in touch with him, visit www.nativetec.biz.

Sophia Rokhlin (BFS Class of 2011) holds a BA in anthropology from The New School and a MSc degree in Ecological Economics from the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She is the co-author of the book [When Plants Dream \(Watkins, 2019\)](#) and serves as Program Coordinator at the [Chaikuni Institute](#), a nonprofit organization working with indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon. She collaborates with indigenous communities across South America, providing communications and development resources to advance their reforestation, land remediation and conservation efforts.

LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS - Room 315

(10th grade student organizers: Asher, Dylan, Lily)

Throughout history, the LGBTQ+ community has been persecuted and oppressed. Although conditions have improved, LGBTQ+ folks in many countries still face bullying from their communities, punishment, torture, and even death. In this session, we will be examining the inequalities the LGBTQ+ community faces in the United States. We also want to look at the intersectionalities of LGBTQ+ people and other aspects of identity such as,

transgender rights, and the LGBTQ+ API experience. We seek to address questions including, what specific inequalities do transgender people face, especially with the recent Supreme Court case regarding an employer's ability to hire and fire people based on their identity? What are the intersectionalities of the LGBTQ+ API experience? How are the experiences of API LGBTQ+ people different from other LGBTQ+ groups? We are delighted to welcome to our session representatives from FIERCE, PFLAG, and the Brooklyn Community Pride Center. We encourage you to attend this session to learn more, grow more, and leave with an excitement to take what you've learned out to the world.

Diana Viglucci (she/they), Program Manager at the Brooklyn Community Pride Center, is an advocate, community-builder, and lifelong learner. With a broad background in community-based nonprofit programs, her experience includes leading youth programming and outreach at the New York City affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), overseeing training and technical assistance for peer support professionals under contract with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and coaching young adults from diverse backgrounds to build careers in the tech industry. She is thrilled to be creating spaces for LGBTQ+ Brooklynites to connect, heal, and live authentically.

API Rainbow Parents of PFLAG NYC was founded in 2012 as a dedicated group for Asian Pacific Islander (API) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, & queer/questioning (LGBTQ) people and their families and allies within PFLAG NYC chapter. API Rainbow Parents of PFLAG NYC provides support and information in the same way as PFLAG NYC's other support groups but has a special focus on meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of API families. This group is open to API parents, family members, and friends, as well as LGBTQ people. API Rainbow Parents of PFLAG NYC also strives to advocate and educate the intersectional issues within API and LGBTQ communities to create an API LGBTQ affirming environment.

FIERCE is a membership-based organization building the leadership and power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color in New York City. They develop politically conscious leaders who are invested in improving ourselves and our communities through youth-led campaigns, leadership development programs, and cultural expression through arts and media. FIERCE is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of social justice movement leaders who are dedicated to ending all forms of oppression.

MARINE LIFE - Room 301

(10th grade student organizers: Alex, Charlie, Peter)

In this session, we are focusing on how marine life is affected by pollution on a global and local scale. Globally, we are focused on how marine life and coral reefs are being wiped out due to plastic and littering. On a more local scale we are focusing on the Hudson River, with how it was being polluted for about 30 years by mainly General Electric, who were dumping tons of electrical waste into the river. In this session we will be discussing coral reef destruction, how coral reefs are barriers and can act as a buffer to hurricanes, what communities are being affected by water pollution, and why some communities get higher quality, fresher water than others. We welcome Andy Simons from Gowanus Canal Conservancy and Cristian Cruz and Carly Avezzano from Global Kids NYC to our session.

Andrew "Andy" Simons is the Founding Board Chairman of the Gowanus Canal Conservancy (GCC) and currently serving as the Treasurer and Fundraising Committee Chairman. During his seven year tenure as chair, Andy leads the organization's rapid growth in operational budget, increased programming and staff and board size. In addition, Andy has served as Vice-Chairman and in the early years, Acting Executive Director, overseeing daily activities including events, lectures, walking tours, volunteer programs, and financial planning, to name a few. Andy has lived in the Gowanus Watershed for 28 years with his wife and two daughters and is extremely passionate about environmental action taking place in the area. In his free time Andy enjoys coaching youth girls lacrosse in Brooklyn.

Cristian Cruz was born and raised in Spain and earned masters degrees in Policy, Management and Education Administration and Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language from the University of Valencia. Since high school, his passion for education and human development has driven him to work with refugees and migrants inside Spain as well as with underserved communities and kids in Greece, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Honduras, India, the Navajo Nation and Morocco. In 2015, he moved to California to join the World Languages and Culture faculty at Pacific Union College, where he developed curriculum, led student service trips to India and Lebanon, and established a new degree program for Global Development Studies. Cristian enjoys learning about cultures in any way he can, but traveling is his favorite.

Carly Avezzano, was born and raised in Montvale, NJ and now lives in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from Macalester College with majors in International Studies and French. During College, she worked at Macalester's Civic Engagement Center, volunteered as a literacy tutor with youth, and studied abroad in Rabat, Morocco. After graduation, she spent a year teaching English in Montpellier, France through TAPIF and a year coordinating service learning experiences for high school students in Boston with buildOn. Carly currently works as a Trainer at Global Kids, running workshops on human rights, social justice and global issues with NYC high school students. At Global Kids, she co-leads a project called HRAP focused on youth activism and mobilization around issues of climate justice.

POLICE BRUTALITY - Room 325

(10th grade student organizers: Xavier, Frankie, Charli, Ava P., Ayoub, Luc, Jackson, Lucas)

Police brutality is a civil rights violation in which young people of color are wrongly targeted due to unjustified fear among police and wrongly based stereotypes pervasive throughout our society. Although people of all ages are affected, youth are often the victims of police brutality. Police brutality dates back to slavery which was formally in practice in the United States from the 1600s to the 1800s. Slavery, and the inception of racism and white supremacy in the US are historical roots of police brutality today. Although slavery was abolished by the 13th Amendment in 1865, racism and the problems attached to it still linger on to this day. The term "police brutality" was first used in the American press as early as 1872, when the Chicago Tribune reported on the beating of a civilian under arrest. Since then it has continued and spread throughout the country, targeting people of color, particularly Black and brown men and women. Our session will talk about the history of the NYPD, how law enforcement has evolved, and how it remains the same. Along with talking about the history, we will talk about how police brutality affects people in our communities currently and how we can address it. We would like to inform our community about police brutality, and make sure the audience stays engaged. In our session, we will go into depth as to why police are doing this and how they should be held accountable. We are thrilled to welcome guests from three organizations that focus on police accountability, raising awareness, and making change.

Darian Agostini has fully dedicated the last 4 years of his life to community organizing and forwarding public policy in New York City. At Make the Road NY, he was active in city wide campaigns with young people around both Education and Policing reform and recently served as the Police Accountability Youth Organizer at Make the Road after his time being a Youth Leader. Darian also has partnered with the Public Science Project at CUNY for a Participatory Action Research project called Researchers for Fair Policing to address the impact of abusive policing practices on youth of color, and also is a member of Communities United for Police Reform, a city-wide coalition of organizations aimed at ending abusive and discriminatory policing in communities of color. Darian has also given testimony to President Obama's 21st Century Policing Task Force, and also sat on the Mayoral Leadership Team around School Discipline focused on changing policies, practices and overall climate between young people and the NYPD's School Safety division; as well as being apart of the International Boot Camp: Documentation of Policing Practice in Amsterdam.

Michael Higgins, Jr. Michael Higgins Jr. is a member turned organizer at FUREE and a native of the Fort Greene area of Brooklyn. Michael first joined the Accountable Development campaign, before engaging more deeply in work around public housing. He now does organizing within FUREE members around environmental justice, civic participation and further inclusion of public housing in the greater housing justice movement in New York City. Michael's interests include housing rights, from tenant rights to rezoning and development issues, and city governance over areas such as education and public housing.

Royce Russell specializes in Criminal Defense, False Arrest/Police Brutality, Immigration, Contracts, Employment Law and Trademark. At Emdin & Russell, LLP, he has represented individuals in Federal and State Court from Criminal Investigations, to Trials, as well as represented victims of Police Brutality/False Arrest (1983 Civil Rights Violations). Most notably, he has represented the family of Ramarley Graham, who at 18 years old, was shot to death by NYPD officers. Dedicated to justice and reform from an early age, once Royce graduated from Hofstra University School of Law he began his practice of the law as an Assistant District Attorney in the Bronx, NY under the first African-American District Attorney, Robert Johnson. Royce served as the co-host of Legally Speaking, which aired on WWRL 1600 am, as well as a Legal Analyst for television stations. With the release of "Cardiac Arrest...A Tactical Guide on How to Manage Unlawful Police Stops", he is now a published author. His book was written with young men of color in mind, who are disproportionately victims of unlawful police stops. Readers can hopefully mitigate the escalation of these incidents and make it home alive. The objective is to Think C.A.L.M.: Stay Composed* Be Aware * Listen *Make a Call.

RACIAL EQUITY IN SCHOOLS - Room 321

(10th grade student organizers: Sophia, Kai, Justin, Saraii)

As of a 2014 study, New York City has one of the most segregated public school systems in the country. Funding inequalities and racial segregation are plaguing our schools. This session will be led by student leaders and activists from Teens Take Charge and Integrate NYC. It will focus on the issues they have been organizing around and the work they have been doing to integrate and equalize NYC schools.

Jace Valentine is a high school graduate from a Bensonhurst Highschool of District 19. She was born and raised in Brooklyn NY. Jace has been working with integrate for a year now, speaking with political figures, going to rallies, marches, testimonies at city hall and more. Jace has been a devoted youth advocate for desegregation and equity especially in schools. Since she's started her work at Integrate she has become a member of the Fair Student Funding Task Force and various other organizations to better our school systems. Jace is very excited to open a new chapter in her life to making change, modernize and transform the way we live with each other and the way we learn from each other.

Shelda Francois is an organizer with Teens Take Charge.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS Room 322

(10th grade student organizers: Meghan, Eve)

Our session is centered around the important and nuanced topic of reproductive rights. We will focus on how we can keep reproductive rights safe and legal for everyone affected. Since this is a highly debated subject throughout our country we will discuss the ways in which we can protect our natural born rights. We welcome Aaliyah Ansari from the New York Civil Liberties Union Teen Activist Project and Shayla Walker from Our Justice to our session.

Aliyah Ansari is the Teen Health Strategist for the New York Civil Liberties Union. For five years she has worked as an adolescent sexuality educator for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene as well as several community based organizations. Her passion for helping youth make healthy decisions regarding their bodies and for destigmatizing sexuality education has been foundational in her work and in her continued advocacy for Comprehensive Sexuality Education for students in New York State.

Shayla Walker As a Black Dominican American Gemini it's only natural that Shayla Walker thrives while working at the intersections of life. A rare Twin Cities native - who loves Minneapolis just as much as she does St. Paul - Shayla is using her leadership and organizing skills to advance the Our Justice mission and ensure that all people and communities have the power and resources to make sexual and reproductive health decisions with self-determination. In her free time Shayla practices pleasure liberation through engaging in humor, joy, dancing, snacking, napping and car karaoke.

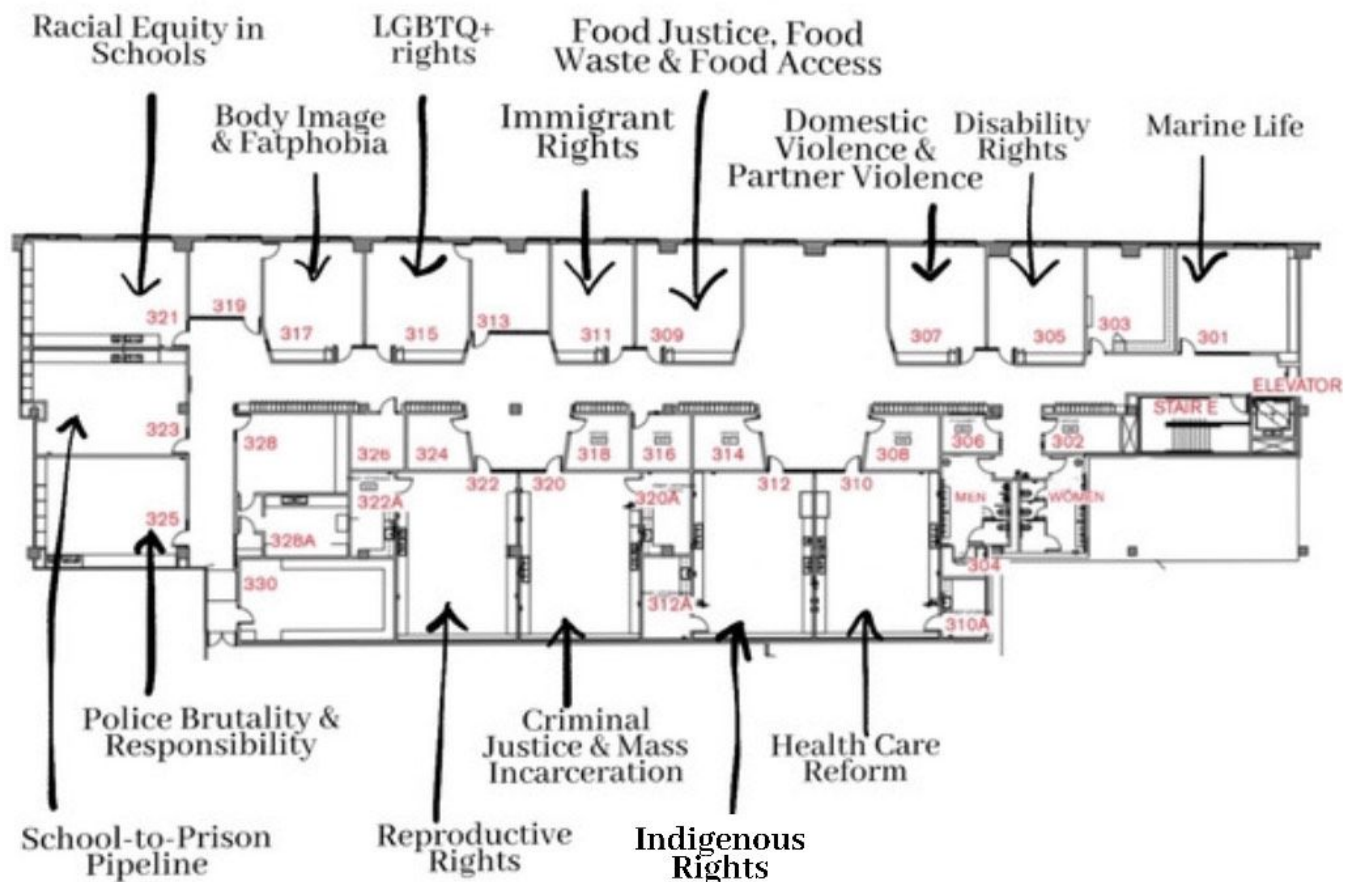
SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE Room 323

(10th grade student organizers: Ceci, Nina)

Students as young as 7 are suffering from being the victims of the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Our session will discuss the issues in the school systems that are creating pipelines for low income kids of color. We will explore who is primarily targeted, why, and how this process repeats itself, as well as the actions people are taking to get children out of the Pipeline to prison. We are happy to welcome Joshua Pacheco from the Red Hook Community Justice Center and Peter Rugh from The Independent, who will be leading our discussion.

Joshua Pacheco is the Youth & Community Program Associate at the Red Hook Community Justice Center where he works to empower adolescents and young adults from ages 13-24 emotionally and socially. At the age of 16 he became an ambassador with the Eisenhower Foundation and travelled Europe for three months to study prisons, schools and health care policies. He attended the Borough of Manhattan Community College and was awarded his Associates Degree in Liberal Arts. Then he attended John Jay College of Criminal Justice and was awarded his B.A. with honors in Law and Society with a minor in Political Science. Currently he helps manage all the Justice Center's youth programs. His specialty is finding ways that youth can become politically active and teaching them to become stakeholders in their own communities. He also works with men and women who have been victims of violence and works with the court to ensure that Justice is achieved for all parties involved each case. In his spare time he gives speeches all across the United States which focus on various social issues such as women's rights, immigration reform, criminal justice, and healthcare reform.

Peter Rugh is managing editor of The Independent, a free, progressive newspaper now in its 20th year.



THANK YOU!

Thank you all for your participation in our Brooklyn Friends School Community Issues Conference! In addition to all of our inspiring community partners, committed 10th grade student organizers, as well as student and colleague participants, we would also like to acknowledge the support of everyone who supports this event:

Our Facilities colleagues for cleaning the space!

Our Cafeteria colleagues for arranging the delicious snacks!

Our Tech colleagues for their support with video/camera equipment and tech needs during the sessions!

Our Communications, Media, and Advancement team for getting our conference posters printed, posting to social media, as well as recording and live-streaming our opening and closing sessions!

Our Middle School Leadership Team for helping to integrate our entire 8th grade into the Conference!

Our Upper School Leadership Team and US colleagues for being present and supportive!

Our Service & Justice Coordinator, Tian Yi, for being a wonderful colleague and member of the Office of Service Learning & Civic Engagement throughout these past three months!

And thank you to our partners at NYU for use of the Pfizer Auditorium so that we could open the day together!

Congratulations Class of 2022 on organizing a powerful and inspiring day!

For more context, please visit our conference website:

<https://sites.google.com/brooklynfriends.org/communityissuesconference>. If you have questions or feedback,

please contact Director of Service Learning & Civic Engagement, Natania Kremer, at nkremer@brooklynfriends.org or 718-852-1029 x511.