



Albert Kakudji is the Chief Operating Officer at Made in Brownsville. In this role, he has overseen operations which led to the opening of the first youth creative agency in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Albert has been instrumental in the development of organizational strategic plans and corporate partnerships. His experience in the investment management industry has enabled him to effectively cultivate major donor and foundation relations. Albert holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Berkeley College.

Albert's Neighborhood Change Project is to increase the flow of private capital to help support the revitalization of Belmont Avenue.



Amy Tse is the Director of Neighborhood Engagement at the Meatpacking Business Improvement District, where she oversees programming, partnerships, and marketing. During her prior tenure as Interim Executive Director at the Greenwich Village Chelsea Chamber of Commerce, she created the organization's first Women In Business committee to foster volunteerism, mentorship, and networking. A Brooklyn-bred urbanist, Amy holds a Master of Public Administration degree from New York University's Robert F. Wagner School. She and her Capstone team received the Howard Newman Award for exemplary work on deliverables for the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Amy's Neighborhood Change Project is to reactivate the district's public spaces after years of reconstruction, through a data-driven and community centric strategy.



Christina Chavez is Senior Project Manager at Long Island City Partnership (LICP), where she focuses on neighborhood development and community engagement. Over the past three years, Christina has led the production of the first-ever LIC Comprehensive Plan Phase 1 (2016), secured more than \$370,000 in public and private grant funding to implement the Plan's recommendations, and is spearheading stakeholder participation in the development of Phase 2 projects. Prior to joining LICP, Christina worked at the New York City Economic Development Corporation and at Brooklyn Hearth Realty, a small business in central Brooklyn. Christina received her MS in city and regional planning at Pratt Institute and BA at Trinity College.

Christina's Neighborhood Change Project is to continue LICP's Community Streetscape and Arts Program through implementation of LIC Arts Connection, a multi-site art installation project, and Opening Up the Public Realm, a community engagement process for reactivating public urban space.



David Estrada is the Executive Director of the Sunset Park Business Improvement District, where he promotes economic development and a better quality of life on Brooklyn's Fifth Avenue. A southern California native, David has called Brooklyn home for over 30 years. His career has included running away with an Italian street circus, managing warehouse operations for a SoHo-based fashion company, and over 20 years of teaching and technology development for an international human resources consulting firm. In 2010, David dedicated his career to public administration, formed a campaign and served as treasurer for a successful New York City Council race. He then worked as Chief of Staff in a City Council Office.

David's Neighborhood Change Project is to create and innovate Sunset Park BID's new neighborhood branding strategy.



Erin Piscopink is the Executive Director of the Grand Street Business Improvement District in Williamsburg. She has a background in community and economic development and brings her experience as a marketing and communications professional to the work of placemaking. Before joining the Grand Street BID, Erin worked in communications in both government and higher education. Prior to those appointments, she worked with planning and development nonprofit organizations in Detroit and served as the Marketing and Communications Manager for LIC Partnership.

Erin's Neighborhood Change Project will focus on making every effort to prepare the BID for the impact of the upcoming changes in L Train service and corresponding mitigation plan, both of which will have a substantial impact on the neighborhood. Erin will lead the BID as it takes on new and increased placemaking initiatives and partners with other local business service organizations to provide the support and resources businesses will need.



Hai-Yin Kong is co-founder and director of THINK!CHINATOWN. Fluent in Mandarin, she utilizes community engagement and inter-generational volunteer energy to design and build projects connecting city resources to Manhattan's Chinatown. Previously project lead of the Dashilar Project, she consulted with a municipal agency of Beijing on urban revitalization strategies in the city's historic hutong core. She holds a Master of Architecture, Urban Design from the Bartlett School of Architecture at University College London and a Bachelor of Arts in urban studies from Columbia University. Her work has been presented at the 2016 Venice Biennale and the Shenzhen Biennale of Architecture 2007 & 2009.

Hai-Yin's Neighborhood Change Project is "HowToChinatown.NYC", a narrative map-based web platform where a community of contributors can highlight Chinatown small business and cultural organizations, and give cultural context to their products, services, and cultural assets.



Heather Ducharme is the Director of Storefront Business Engagement at the Downtown Alliance. She is responsible for maintaining relationships with and providing support, advocacy, and resources to over 1,200 storefront and small businesses in Lower Manhattan's Business Improvement District. Prior to working at the Alliance, she served as Mayoral Aide to Mayor Alex Morse of Holyoke, Massachusetts. Outside of work, she is a mentor and active alum of UMass Women into Leadership, a competitive leadership training program for undergraduate women at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst who are interested in public service.

Heather's Neighborhood Change Project will be expanding the Alliance's Downtown Digital Innovation Grants for storefront businesses in the lower Manhattan BID. These grants will pair the winning storefront businesses with digital experts to help fulfill a critical digital need for their business to help them compete with online retailers.



Jacqueline Tesman is the Project Manager for Avenue NYC at Community League of the Heights (CLOTH). Jackie is a licensed master social worker and has worked in both the nonprofit and private sectors. She understands the challenges associated with the perception of underserved communities and has extensive marketing experience combatting these misleading perceptions. Prior to joining CLOTH, she worked with Union Settlement's Business Development Center in East Harlem, serving as Assistant Project Manager for "East Harlem 360", now known as "East Harlem | Working Together". Both programs serve the small business community in NYC and aim to support sustainability, encourage business growth, and provide resources to level the playing field.

Jackie's Neighborhood Change Project will focus on neighborhood unification with the goal of ensuring that the small business community in Washington Heights is exposed to new ideas and collaborations while focusing on sustainability and economic growth.



Javier Medrano is the Deputy Director of the Third Avenue Business Improvement District. He leads and supports the formulation of policy, strategies, and programs to accelerate private sector development and public-private partnerships in the South Bronx. He is currently coordinating the expansion of the Third Avenue BID which will triple the organization's budget and increase services to local businesses. Javier is also part of the Advisory Board of the HIV League. He holds a MA in international relations from the University of London and a BA in political science with a minor in entrepreneurship from Appalachian State University. He has traveled to 35 countries and previously lived in France, England, and Vietnam.

Javier's Neighborhood Change Project is to expand the Third Avenue Business Improvement District. The BID's expansion will better serve the neighborhood by providing supplemental services and improvements to areas of the neighborhood that were not included in the original BID boundaries.



Joanna Castro is the Executive Director of the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, where she works to cultivate, support and promote the works of artists and art organizations in northern Manhattan. Born in NYC, Joanna grew up fully bilingual (English-Spanish) and living between Caracas, Venezuela and Washington, D.C. She has a BA in Spanish and international studies from Dickinson College and received her MA in arts and cultural management from the Universidad Carlos III in Madrid. Joanna has been selected to leadership institutes offered by the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, and the Hispanic Federation.

Joanna's Neighborhood Change Project is to create a theater reading/performance with several uptown theater groups and collectives on how to envision the community within ten years from both artistic and economic perspectives.



Joanna Tallantire is the Deputy Director of the Park Slope Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District, spending a majority of her five years increasing merchant participation and strengthening the small business community. As a former environmental campaigner working on marine pollution for nonprofit organizations in the UK, she took a huge career change when moving to Germany to build a billing department for a law firm. In 2005, Joanna landed in New York City and started her own small business before heading into the BID world.

Joanna's Neighborhood Change Project is to develop a strong education and support program in areas of customer service, employee training, negotiating a lease, employment law, social media and more. Securing sources of funding for a regular monthly program of workshops brought to the merchants hosted at the BID Office is also a goal.



Jose Taveras is the Community Development Specialist for the Greater Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation, where he is currently managing the Avenue NYC Commercial Revitalization Program for the Hunts Point and Longwood neighborhoods in the South Bronx. He is working to revitalize the commercial districts of both neighborhoods through community advocacy and action. Previously, Jose was the Director of Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) Services at the New York Women's Chamber of Commerce. In May 2015, he graduated with a master's degree in urban planning from Hunter College.

Jose's Neighborhood Change Project is to work with merchants and community organizations to create neighborhood improvement and placemaking projects to revitalize the commercial viability of these two historically and culturally rich neighborhoods.



Lupe Ramsey is the Economic Development Manager at the Flatbush Development Corporation. She oversees department operations and growth to achieve strategic goals and objectives that support small businesses. She brings over 10 years of experience as Executive Director working with overseas communities in complex urban and rural development issues. Lupe has expert knowledge in providing strategic leadership, developing multi-stakeholder relationships, and launching global economic development initiatives to advance health and education priorities in emerging economies. Lupe received her MS in international affairs from the New School with a focus on socio-economic development and is a multilingual reformed world traveler.

Lupe's Neighborhood Change Project will focus on improved engagement of local minority and women businesses to maximize results of commercial revitalization efforts, while becoming a stronger, more thoughtful, innovative, and targeted leader that can respond to future community needs while advancing the dialogue for sustainable livable cities.



Michael Devigne is an Industrial Business Account Manager at the Business Outreach Center Network (BOCNET). He focuses on connecting businesses to grant opportunities, tax incentives, and energy savings programs as well as helping them navigate government regulations. He also organizes networking events, markets the Industrial Business Zones (IBZs), and advocates for the industrial business community in Central Queens and East Brooklyn. His experience as a former warehouse worker in the Garment District gives him unique insight into the value of industrial jobs for working-class New Yorkers. Michael holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from City College and a master's degree in urban planning from Hunter College.

Michael's Neighborhood Change Project will work towards providing a collective voice in advocating the needs and interests of industrial and manufacturing businesses in the Maspeth IBZ.



Morgan Fowler is the Project Manager for Harlem Park to Park, a social enterprise of small business owners dedicated to the cultural preservation, economic development and small business in Harlem. She is currently producing a Commercial District Needs Assessment report as an Avenue NYC Grant project manager funded through NYC Department of Small Business Services. Born in New York City and raised in Los Angeles, Morgan moved back to New York to pursue her studies at St. John's University, where she received her bachelor's degree in government and politics.

Morgan's Neighborhood Change Project is to conduct a Commercial District Needs Assessment survey for her community in Harlem.



Oma Holloway is the Director of Community Engagement for Bridge Street Development Corporation. She manages a portfolio that includes tenant organizing, youth workforce development, and economic development in Central Brooklyn, with a particular focus in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area. Oma holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Xavier University of Louisiana and has done graduate work at New York University. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, Oma serves on Community Board 3; is a member of the Vanguard Independent Democratic Association and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc; and, serves on a number of Boards for local community-based organizations.

Oma's Neighborhood Change Project is to build upon the success of Merchants Associations such as the Tompkins Avenue Merchants Association (TAMA), that will allow for replication to other secondary corridors and explore the feasibility and/or viability of TAMA evolving into a Business Improvement District (BID).



Raquel Olivares is the Executive Director of the Woodhaven Business Improvement District (BID). She oversees the day-to-day functions of the organization and executes programming and services for commercial tenants along a 25-block stretch of Jamaica Avenue that includes 369 ground floor storefronts. Raquel has a passion for social justice and a demonstrated record of strengthening commercial districts. She previously served as the Program Director for Cypress Hills Business Partners at the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation. She holds an associate's degree in office management from ASA and a Bachelor of Arts degree in business management from St. Joseph's College. Raquel is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Raquel's Neighborhood Change Project is to design a business directory that will allow the BID to advertise all services it has to offer in Jamaica Avenue. This will be a tool that businesses will also use to promote their services and help them to attract more customers and generate more sales.



Rebecca Lieberman is the Manager of Policy and External Affairs at the Times Square Alliance. For nearly three years, she has worked as a member of the Policy, Planning and Research team, managing Times Square's robust research portfolio—which includes analyzing neighborhood economic trends, tourism, stakeholder attitudes, transportation and more—and overseeing the Alliance's public policy and government affairs agenda. Prior to joining the Alliance, Rebecca worked at the Lowline, Community Housing Innovations, and the New York State Assembly. She holds a bachelor's degree from Barnard College of Columbia University in urban planning and economic development.

Rebecca's Neighborhood Change Project focuses on revitalizing Times Square's commercial office corridor to attract growing and innovative industries to the neighborhood.



Shannon Goodson is the Neighborhood 360° Program Manager for Davidson Community Center, Inc. Focusing on the merchants in the BJT Bronx Commercial District, she facilitates activities around merchant organizing and district marketing. Shannon has worked in economic and community development for twelve years, with experience as the Senior Planner for a planning and development consulting firm, Deputy Director of a nonprofit community development organization, and Senior Urban Design Planner for the City of Fort Worth, Texas. Additionally, Shannon is a Design Educator for the Center for Architecture. She earned a Bachelor of Architecture and Master of City and Regional Planning.

Shannon's Neighborhood Change Project is to expand the merchant organizing and business improvement district feasibility activities. The fruition of the project would best prepare the merchants and preserve the district for the inevitable changes that the rezoning of Jerome Avenue will bring.

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William Lewis is the Marketing and Events Director at the Village Alliance BID. In this role, he has significantly expanded the BID's marketing program in Greenwich Village and launched a new brand and plaza activation and placemaking strategy for the Astor Place plazas, which opened in 2016. Will is from the UK, where he gained twenty years' experience in retail, mixed-use property and public space developments in London.

Will's Neighborhood Change Project will focus on creative placemaking initiatives for West 8th Street in Greenwich Village to reduce storefront vacancy rates, while also addressing some of the policy restrictions which currently restrict the street from achieving its full potential.

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