Building Community Broadband
A showcase of NY State broadband collaborations

Learn how New York communities are coming together build equitable digital infrastructure.

Thursday Oct. 8, 2-3:30pm

Moderator
Greta Byrum, Community Tech NY

The Bronx, NYC
Sharon Lee De La Cruz, THE POINT CDC
Derrick Lewis, Bronx Community Foundation & Relief Effort
Hillary Kolos, DreamYard & Bronx Relief Effort
Danny Peralta, THE POINT CDC

Buffalo-Niagara Region
Esther Annan, John R. Oishei Foundation
Curtis Robbins, John R. Oishei Foundation

Kingston
Erica Brown, Radio Kingston
Kale Kaposhilin, Radio Kingston
Alan Macaluso, Ulster County
Brian Macaluso, Techsmiths
Margie Menard, Kingston Public Library

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~Introduction~
Our Moment: Crisis & Opportunity

Greta Byrum, CTNY
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~ Kingston ~

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What is local networking?

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~ Buffalo-Niagara Region ~

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Buffalo-Niagara Region: Digital Equity Initiative

Key Themes for Today’s Discussion

• Leveraging Collaborative Partnerships
• Building the Puzzle Together
• Ensuring a Community-driven Process
Our Mission
To enhance the economic vitality and quality of life for the Buffalo-Niagara region through grantmaking, leadership and network building.

1997-1998
Commitment to Racial Equity
COVID-19 Exacerbating Inequalities

- Unemployment rate – 10% (30%)
- Nearly 40,000 children across WNY, live in a household without either a computer or high-speed internet.
- Virtual platform is here to stay; education, telehealth, workforce development, accessing services and community organizing.
- Enormous and complicated issue; multi-faceted solutions (public & private)
- Opportunities – willingness to partner, creative solutions and a sense of urgency
Supporting Disinvested Communities

“Designing their own Futures”

1. Community-driven approach
   - Authentic collaborations with the experts
     ▪ Grassroots to help identify root causes
     ▪ Communities impacted have the knowledge to guide their own change
   - Motivation for change requires one to be “a part of” the process

2. Partnership with CTNY
   - Strategic partnerships—a core value at the Foundation
   - Leveraging relationship and experience
   - Develop a digital equity coalition of community members
     ▪ Guidance of best practices
     ▪ A starting point to build on existing resources
Existing Partnerships/Initiatives are Key to Success

1. Strategic Partnerships
   • Established relationships with stakeholders
     ▪ Building on relationships with Grantees
   • Ensuring representation of various sectors
     ▪ Five focus areas
   • Common understanding
     ▪ Purpose, Outcome and Process
   • Accountability
   • Commitment to transparency
   • Trust
Existing Partnerships/Initiatives are Key to Success

2. Say Yes Buffalo
   • Support to City of Buffalo residents and Buffalo Public Schools students and families
   • Range of stakeholders including public, private, government, community-based organizations, parents, youth and student voice

3. WNY Nonprofit Support Group
   • Key themes from counties on nonprofit needs in recovery

4. Partnership for the Public Good
   • Community organizing
   • Flexibility to meet communities where they are
     ▪ Guidance and capacity building
   • Advocacy
     ▪ Long-term change/sustainability
Existing Partnerships/Initiatives are Key to Success

5. Community Conversations
   - Focused on organizations with leaders of color

6. Mobile Safety-Net Team (MSNT)
   - Formed to meet a community need by the Foundation (2008)
   - Greater understanding of communities in our region
     - Rural & Urban
     - Diverse group of stakeholders
     - Data and information—Numbers In Need
       - https://numbersinneed.org
Where We are in the Process

1. Needs Assessment—intentional to connect the dots
   - Working with our community partners — complementary efforts, both public and private
     - Opportunity to hear from the City of Buffalo’s Needs Assessment RFP
     - WNYNSG—Stakeholder Conversations
   - Opportunity to hear from the community
     - Forming authentic collaborations to expand efforts

2. Digital equity lens — training and sustainability
   - Experiential learning opportunities
   - Community coalitions—existing and new
   - Workforce and employment opportunities
Lessons Learned

1. Build the capacity of orgs. – “only shop in town”
2. Process is an outcome – don’t let urgency and outside pressure get in the way
3. Despite a complex landscape remain focused on complementary solutions
4. Plug into existing groups and coalitions
5. Building trust and strong partnerships takes time
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THE POINT Community Development Corporation is dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx. Celebrating over 20 years of service, THE POINT offers a multi-faceted approach to asset-based community development.
South Bronx Community Resiliency Agenda

The South Bronx Community Resiliency Agenda (SBCRA) engages local communities in creating a comprehensive climate resiliency agenda that will strengthen the physical and social resiliency of the South Bronx Significant Maritime And Industrial Area (SMIA). This project enables THE POINT CDC to strengthen the local capacity for community-led resiliency planning while addressing historical environmental injustice. The SBCRA advances Advocacy and Legislation, the ownership of green Infrastructure projects including Community Shared Solar, as well as Emergency Planning and Communication via the Hunts Point Community Network.

Community Context For Digital Justice

- 56% Hispanic/Latinx & 43% Black or African American
- 500K Immigrants (2018)
- 43-45% of Households without Broadband Internet Access in the Bronx (July 2019)
- 24.90% Unemployment Rate in Bronx County NY (July 2020)
- $38,085 Median Household Income in South Bronx (2018)
- 27% Living in Poverty (2018)
- 72% HS Graduates & 20% Advanced Degrees (2018)
- $40/month lowest price for internet in the Bronx
- 4400 Confirmed Covid-19 deaths (2020)
Hunts Point Community Network (HPCN)

The Hunts Point Community Network is a wifi mesh network established in 2016 by THE POINT CDC and its partners to provide resilient internet service to small businesses and local residents before, during, and after a climate emergency. This community-owned and digital justice driven communication network aims to spur economic development by 1. offering educational and employment opportunities in technology for youth and residents, 2. providing an emergency communication system and 3. addressing the local digital divide.

1. Hunts Point Community Wifi Network
   - 14 nodes throughout Hunts Point
   - 600 individual monthly users
   - 100% Free Service
   - Employs 2 Full-Time & 3 Part-Time Bronx Residents

2. Digital Steward Training Academy (DSTA)
   - 12+ hour training experience
   - 100+ stipended positions for 18+

3. Strategic Partnerships
   - Mozilla Hive, CTNY, SkyPackets, Greater Hunts Point EDC, Allied Media, Detroit Digital Network, SayCel, El Hormiguero (PR), NYC DOE, CUNY Service Corps, etc.

4. Funding and Sustainability
Strategic Focus Areas

The Bronx Community Foundation has four focus areas:

COMMUNITY
- Food Insecurity
- Education Technology & Connectivity
- Personal Protective Equipment

HEALTH
- Small Business Relief
- Housing Stability
- Nonprofit Economic Relief

ECONOMIC SECURITY
- Distributing Microgrants
- Equity & Justice

The Bronx community agreed, prior to COVID-19, that these 8 areas of need are required to be prosperous and Bx.C.R.E. matched the areas of need with on-the-ground operations and partnerships to ensure funds and resources are effectively deployed, which align directly to the four focus areas above.
Each area of need is led by a Captain. Captains roles are to:

1. Meet daily to coordinate and twice-a-week to strategize.
2. Ensure all voices are invited to the table as contributors to the Common Agenda.
3. Devise the strategy and workplan to generate the Common Agenda’s outcome goals.
4. Ensure that resources, expertise, organizational assets, and policy makers are brought together for impact.
5. Guide and support action, innovation, and risk-taking.
6. Ensure financial resources are distributed and allocated for successful outcomes.

### Captains

- **Food Insecurity:** Michael Blake, Eddie Summers
- **Distributing Microgrants:** Derrick Lewis, Abby Jo Sigal, Demetris Giounnalias
- **Connectivity and Technology Gaps:** Jason Duchin
- **Small Business Retention:** Michael Brady and Demetris Giounnalias
- **Non-profit Economic Relief:** Eileen Newman, Tim Lord
- **Housing Stability:** Jessica Clemente, Desmon Lewis
- **PPE for Frontline Responders and Health:** Paulette Zalduondo Henriquez, Sloka Iyengar
- **Equity & Justice:** Justine Olderman, Wesley Caines
To the right is an example of one of our areas of need:

The Working Group meets weekly to coordinate efforts to support the common agenda.

Sub-committees meet regularly to accomplish the weekly initiative goals.

The sub-committee shares accomplishments and challenges each week with at the weekly Committee meeting.

*Captain rotates from other working group members*
Sub-committees work collaboratively to identify and create real-time solutions, and garner real-time community feedback.

*Coordinators rotate from other working group members
IMPACT:

- Local Tech Lending Libraries
  - Distributed +1600 laptops and hotspots to students
- Supporting **Local Mesh Networks** and a Summer Mesh workshop series
- Per Scholas Bronx Help Desk
- **Help for the Bronx** website
Bronx Future Vision

Digital Steward Training Academy (DSTA)

Community Internet Trust (CIT)

Addressing the digital divide through community owned infrastructure
October 8, 2020
Community Tech NY
Rebuilding tech to build community