

This Neighborhood Arts and Culture Survey captures responses from people who live, work, go to school, or spend time within the Melrose/Morrisania area in the Bronx, loosely defined by the zip codes 10451, 10456 and 10459. With support from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, from April to June 2018, WHEDco worked with DreamYard to produce the Melrose/Morrisania Arts and Cultural Inventory, for which we collected 469 surveys. The goal of this survey was to better understand community members' cultural and community interests. These findings will help inform the work of WHEDco, DreamYard and other stakeholders in the Melrose/Morrisania area, as well as the initiatives of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and other cultural and neighborhood organizations in Melrose and Morrisania. This document serves as a summary of survey findings.

Culture: an expression of local history, food, painting, theater, quilts, zoos, museums, dominoes, music, libraries, poetry, art, fashion, science and so much more.

Who took this survey

469 Respondents

- Males
23.8%
- Females
76.2%
- Respondents under age 30
35.1%
- Have children under 18 at home
64.1%
- Households earning less than \$34,999/yr
58.3%
- Connected to Morrisania 6+ years
50.5%

Language Spoken at Home

- 279** English
- 215** Spanish
- 11** African Languages
- 6** Other

Race/Ethnicity

- 65.4%** Hispanic of any race
- 26.4%** Black Alone
- 2.2%** White Alone
- 0.7%** Asian Alone
- 5.2%** Other

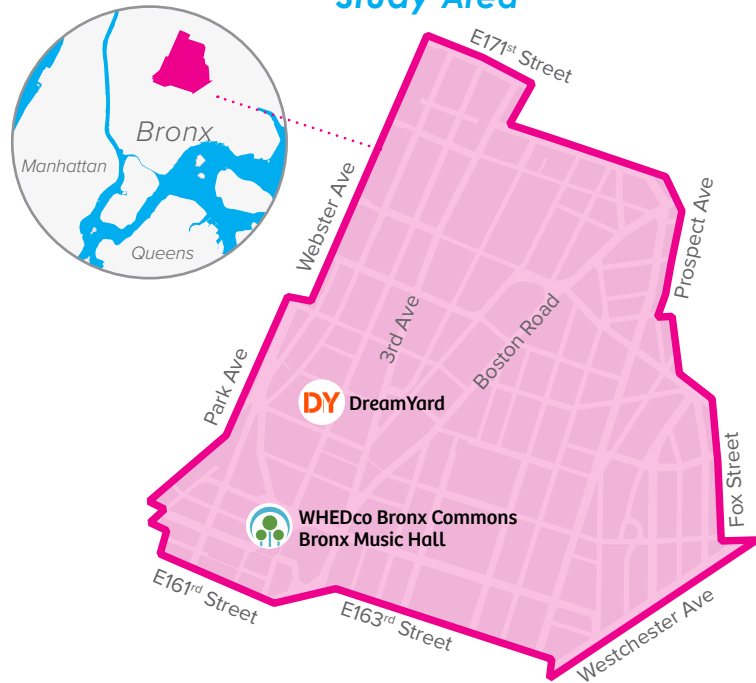
Educational Attainment Level

- 27.0%** High school diploma/GED
- 21.5%** Some college
- 15.2%** Bachelor's Degree
- 12.3%** Graduate or Professional
- 12.0%** Some high school
- 6.3%** Up to 9th grade
- 5.8%** Tech/Trade/Associate's

Relationship to Neighborhood

- 262** I live here
- 125** I work here
- 68** I visit here
- 59** I am a student here
- 12** I own a business here
- 35** Other

Study Area



Experience with Arts and Culture in the Melrose/Morrisania Area

Respondents participate in arts and culture in a range of places in the Melrose/Morrisania, with the most common places being outdoors (278), at a library (136), at an elementary, middle, or high school (115), or at a community center (112). The top Morrisania area cultural events, festivals, or celebrations that respondents attend include concerts/events in parks, church, DreamYard, Bronx Museum of the Arts and street fairs. Over three-quarters (77.6%) of respondents indicated that they feel that cultural events in the neighborhood reflect their interests.

Twenty two percent (22%) of community members surveyed say they are artists. There are a wide range of artists within this group, as expressed by the word cloud below: poet, visual artist, musician, painter, singer, dancer and photogtapher are among the most common.

Do you identify as an artist?



How does the community hear about local events?

Respondents primarily hear about cultural events in Morrisania through **word of mouth** (185), **flyers** (183), **email** (117), and **social media** (115). In other surveys WHEDCo has recently conducted in the Bronx we have also found that **people hear about services and events primarily through word of mouth.**

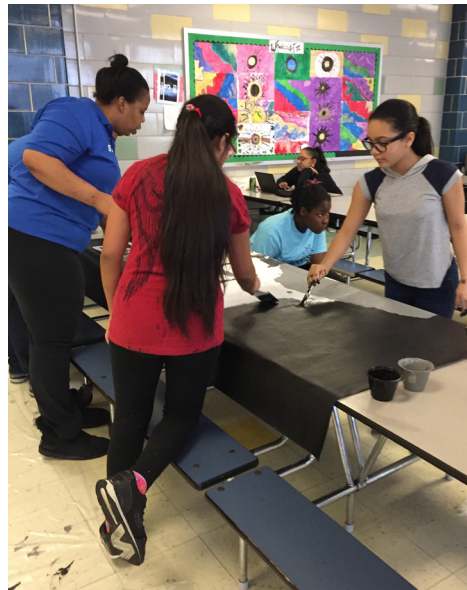
More Arts and Culture Events Wanted

Respondents were asked what cultural activities they would like to see more of in Melrose/Morrisania. Community members are most interested in youth-serving programs and outdoor activities and events.

Top Cultural Activities Community Members Would Like to See in the Neighborhood

1. After School programs
2. Programs in parks and public spaces
3. Classes: Dance, Music, Performing Arts
4. Community festivals & events that celebrate diversity
5. Music Performances

The survey also asked what draws community members to attend an arts and culture activity. The feeling of belonging and acceptance rank as the most important factor when deciding whether to participate in arts and culture activities in the Melrose/Morrisania area.



Top Factors that Draw Community Members to an Arts & Culture Activity

1. I feel comfortable/accepted/like I belong when I'm there
2. Level of comfort with the pace and content of program/activity offered
3. Convenient location
4. Cost/Affordability
5. Appropriate for families/youth/seniors
6. Time that program/activity starts

Neighborhood Perceptions

Respondents most frequently indicated that safety, youth engagement, quality of life, community connection, police and community interactions, and education were the most important community issues in the Melrose/Morrisania area. There is a strong desire to improve the overall safety and corresponding quality of life and relationship with the police, in addition to the economic standing of the neighborhood through education and workforce development.

What two words best describe what excites you about this neighborhood?



Respondents answered very positively, as illustrated in this word cloud. Standout words include **culture**, **community**, **people**, **diversity** and **calm**.

Please mark the community issues in this neighborhood that are most important to you:


Safety	256
Youth Engagement	232
Quality of life and community connection	222
Police and community interactions	216
Education	215
Workforce Development	209
Economic Advancement	193
Diversity and Ethnicity	170
Social Interaction	165
Local history and heritage	155
Displacement	135



Potential Positive Impact of Neighborhood Arts & Culture

 Public arts projects can mitigate issues of **community safety** identified by creating **cleaner**, more beautiful spaces that attract **foot traffic** and bring more '**eyes on the street**'.

Public arts projects are opportunities for **skill building** and **bringing together** community members, providing a way to learn about and discuss important community and **social justice issues**. 

 The arts can help **correct the narrative** around certain issues and provide **different perspectives** on a community, a place, an issue and people. It can also **foster community pride**.

The arts create **economic and job opportunities** for local creatives. 

 Arts projects can **inform** the public of important issues.

“At night you could hear the music pouring out onto the streets. . . The congas would start in the afternoon and last long into the nights. At some point or another someone would start singing, El Dia Que Me Quieras, quietly or something similar and someone else would tap on a pot, improvise maracas... it was an instant performance!”

- Participant in Melrose/Morrisania Arts and Culture Survey



Select Neighborhood Priorities and Goals

Addressing Cultural Gaps and Interests

Share Melrose/Morrisania cultural study findings with area arts and non-arts groups.

- I. Meeting of area arts and non-arts groups to discuss implications of the findings on their future programming and partnerships in the Melrose/Morrisania area (artmaking, entrepreneurship, connection to local history and cultures, etc.)

Activating Informal Outdoor Venues

Support access to cultural and community engagement in more outdoor spaces

- I. Coordinate with private and city agencies like NYC Department of Transportation and NYC Parks to improve public space infrastructure and safety in underserved areas
- II. Activate public spaces with music, dominoes, events, public art, outdoor exhibits, etc. to build on existing local culture of engaging in the arts outdoors and address safety concerns

Communications and Outreach

Expand communications about arts and cultural opportunities to community members and artists in more isolated parts of the Study Area

- I. Identify key high-traffic areas to flyer (word of mouth, print) per study findings
- II. Engage area youth—ideally with a stipend—in arts outreach via flyer-ing and social media

Strategic Area Partnerships

Build partnerships with area organizations/assets identified during study to enable collaboration across the neighborhood and with diverse segments of population

- I. Encourage local arts groups to set aside batches of tickets as giveaways/prizes to new local partners (schools, places of worship, barbershops, library, senior centers) for their clients to win, attend and hopefully, spread the word



What do you want to see in your neighborhood?

Call us at 718.839.1197 or email us at econdev@whedco.org to get help from WHEDco.

Visit whedco.org for more information about WHEDco.