RESTORATION WINS PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD—
A PUBLIC CALL TO ACTION TO PRESERVE HISTORIC LANDMARKS IN BED-STUY

By Nilanjan Bhattacharya

Restoration recently became a member of an exclusive club – a handful of organizations across the nation that have received funding from Partners in Preservation, a joint venture between American Express and The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). This year American Express and NTHP have teamed up with Main Street America to launch Partners in Preservation: Main Streets, a program that will distribute up to $2 million in grants and funds to restore historic buildings and update street architecture along 25 main streets in American cities.

A unique part of this campaign is that the general public will have a say in which sites receive additional grant money by voting for their favorite main streets at VoteYourMainStreet.org, a website hosted by National Geographic Travel. The voting takes place between September 25th and October 31st. On November 2nd, the sites with the most votes will be announced and awarded additional grants for restoration projects. In addition, the public will also have the opportunity to enter a sweepstakes for a chance to win a trip of their choice to New York, Los Angeles, or Miami under the sponsorship of National Geographic.

This partnership between NTHP and American Express has a long track record of success. Since its inception in 2006, Partners in Preservation has awarded more than $19 million in support of more than 200 sites. This year’s campaign is premised on the fact that Main Street is America’s quintessential address. The nation has 7,664 main streets, according to the National League of Cities. Main streets are where communities unite to celebrate, where cultures are exchanged, and where writers and pollsters stroll, eager to take the nation’s pulse. A main street is where a city reveals its face. Restoration was able to make a strong case to the selection committee that the Restoration Plaza complex is a focal point of Bed-Stuy’s downtown district and deserves assistance in protecting its unique heritage.

As a participant in this campaign, Restoration is encouraging the public to visit VoteYourMainStreet.org/bed-stuy and cast their votes. Other entities that have made the cut include the Richmond Main Street Initiative in California, Main Street Steamboat Springs in Colorado, and Downtown Greensboro Inc. in North Carolina.

Restoration has already received funding from Partners in Preservation to undertake facade renovation of its main building, together with some ancillary projects. Constructed over a hundred years ago, Restoration’s flagship building at 1368 Fulton Street is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style. It was used as a milk bottling plant by the Sheffield Farms company for many years until it was abandoned by the early sixties, and was later purchased by the newly created Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in 1967. Today, the building and its adjacent plaza serve as a vibrant center of community life in Central Brooklyn, attracting 1.5 million visitors each year.

Several public events are planned to introduce the Partners in Preservation project to the community. The first in this series, an Open House was organized around Restoration’s 36th Annual 10K Run and 5K Walk on October 8th. Attendees received instructions on how to access VoteYourMainStreet.org and vote. Restoration staff were on hand to distribute specially printed T-shirts, picture postcards and other literature designed to raise awareness of the historical significance of Fulton Street in general and Restoration Plaza in particular.

For more information, and to vote for Restoration through October 31st, please visit VoteYourMainStreet.org/bed-stuy. Also, please help us spread the word via social media by accessing #VoteYourMainStreet.
RESTORATION’S 10K COMMUNITY RUN AND 5K WALK

On October 8, 2017, the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation held its 36th annual 10K Community Run and 5K Walk. The morning began muggy and misty, as the community came out for 8 am registration. Over 90 runners came out with their friends and family to cheer them on. Despite the rain, the warm up led by Always Fit 4 Lyfe, got everyone ready. The rain cleared and the runners and walkers began in great weather.

Overall female and male winners were Mesert Geberederebo from Bronx, New York and Fabian Daza from Farview, New Jersey.

BROOKLYN PRIDE CENTER OPENS ITS DOORS AT RESTORATION PLAZA

By Ashima Gandhi

Brooklyn Pride Center is Restoration's Plaza newest addition, serving a wide swath of Central Brooklyn's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) population. On October 11th, on National Coming Out Day, elected officials, community leaders, and neighbors came together in a colorful ceremony to celebrate the launch of the new space at the corner of Herkimer Street and New York Avenue. Restoration President Colvin Grannum joined other speakers in welcoming the Center to our community.

Several public officials issued proclamations on this occasion, including Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer and Public Advocate Leticia James.

Floyd Rumohr, Executive Director of the Center, described the new space as a comprehensive resource for the LGBTQ+ community, calling it the WeWork for LGBTQ+, bringing together several community-based organizations such as CAMBA, Stonewall Community Development Corporation, Callen-Lorde Health Center, and SAGE under one roof. Rumohr noted that while there were many excellent community development organizations in Brooklyn, until fairly recently none were LGBTQ-specific, forcing many individuals to travel to Manhattan in search of appropriate services. This led to the creation of the Brooklyn Pride Center in Downtown Brooklyn in 2008. The Center provides services for youth, elders, transgender people and gender non-confirming individuals, as well as arts and cultural programming.

“Restoration is a model for community development,” asserted Rumohr, citing this as one of the main reasons they relocated to the Plaza. He also rated the Bed-Stuy location higher compared to their previous location in terms of people served. The Center had already experienced a lot more walk-in traffic since opening its doors at Restoration Plaza, he noted. Rumohr is hopeful for collaboration opportunities within the Plaza. He said several Restoration departments had already reached out to see how they could make their programs more responsive to LGBTQ+ concerns. In turn, Rumohr hopes to adopt best practices from Restoration, specifically mentioning the success of our Summer Youth Program. Given the severe paucity of services aimed at LGBTQ people of color, he is optimistic that the Center will fill a significant void in this community. Readers are invited to visit the Brooklyn Pride Center at 1360 Fulton Street, and access their website (lgbtbrooklyn.org/) to learn more about their events and programs.
NEW YORK CITY MAYORAL DEBATE: RESTORATION HOSTS WATCHING PARTY

By Derek Moore

On October 11th, Restoration hosted a Debate Watch party at Restoration Plaza. As the afternoon darkened into dusk, local residents got together to watch the first debate among New York City mayoral candidates. The event was organized in partnership with NYCVotes, Transportation Alternatives, IDNYC, and Dominicanos USA. Attendees enjoyed free refreshments and music, along with voter registration facilities. The debates were projected on a large screen on the West Plaza at 7:30 pm.

Errol Louis of NY1 news channel moderated the proceedings, assisted by a panel of four. Participants included the incumbent Democratic mayor, Bill de Blasio, Republican candidate Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis and Independent Bo Dietl, a former police detective. It was a spirited debate that sometimes devolved into shouting, finger-pointing and cut-off microphones. The challengers sharply questioned Mayor de Blasio’s record on a number of issues, including homelessness, income inequality, budget and fiscal management, public transportation and crime and policing. But the six-foot-five-inch de Blasio kept his cool as he stood above the fray, literally as well as figuratively.

After the debate, attendees expressed their thoughts about what they had just seen. Jonathan Y, a Bed-Stuy resident, said, “The main thing that stood out for me was the lack of decorum. There were a lot of personal attacks by the upstart candidates, but the Mayor defended himself as best as he could.”

Betsy G., another local resident, remarked “There was not much new information conveyed, just a lot of yelling. I wish the candidates had talked more about affordable housing and development in Brooklyn. I was happy to hear de Blasio giving a firm ‘yes’ on closing Rikers Island.”

The Debate Watch party was part of Restoration’s efforts to provide a public venue for civic participation and discussion of New York City politics. The next debate is scheduled for November 1st. The election will be held on November 7th.
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation to participate
in this year’s #GivingTuesday event

October 1, 2017 – As in past years, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (Restoration) will participate
in this year’s #GivingTuesday, a global movement that foregrounds the collective power of individuals,
communities, and organizations to encourage philanthropy, civic engagement and altruism.

#GivingTuesday is held annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving in the US and this year, the date has fallen
on November 28th. This event was created as a counterpoint to popular shopping dates such as Black Friday
and Cyber Monday, when consumerism is on conspicuous display. By participating in #GivingTuesday, we
want to encourage our community to consider the upcoming holiday season as a time for sharing our good
fortune with others and to come together to improve our neighborhood.

Bedford Stuyvesant, it should be noted, continues to rank poorly on many common economic and social
indicators. For example, 49.7% of children under the age of 18 live under the poverty line compared to the
New York City average of 28.6%. 20% of the 18-24 year-old age cohort in Bed-Stuy are disengaged, that is,
neither in school nor employed. This is one of the highest disengagement ratios in the city. By helping young
people with high school graduation, college preparation and career guidance, Restoration has worked hard
over its 50-year history to prepare our young people for a better tomorrow. We have also made good use of
arts education, through our innovative Youth Arts Academy, to engage youth in creative endeavors that set
them on the path to healthy self-discipline and success.

This year all our fundraising efforts for GivingTuesday will directly benefit the Elsie Richardson Scholarship
Fund established by Mrs. Richardson’s granddaughter Celeste Moses and administered by Restoration. Elsie
Richardson was among the many people, some famous, some unknown, whose courage and idealism led to
the creation of our organization. In 1966, Sen. Robert Kennedy, our co-founder, took a walking tour of Bedford
Stuyvesant to evaluate the effectiveness of President Johnson’s War on Poverty. Richardson, a Bed-Stuy resident
and a community activist, famously asserted to Sen. Kennedy that Bed-Stuy’s problems had been “studied to
death and what we need is bricks and mortar.” This scholarship celebrates Richardson’s vision and conviction
by providing material assistance to two college-bound high school seniors from Central Brooklyn who
demonstrate a strong commitment to public service.

Restoration urges all community members to contribute to Restoration’s #GivingTuesday campaign by
visiting www.restorationplaza.org. For more details about the #GivingTuesday movement, please visit the
#GivingTuesday website (www.givingtuesday.org), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/GivingTuesday) or
follow @GivingTues and the #GivingTuesday hashtag on social media.

About Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation is a longstanding Brooklyn institution and the first community
development corporation in the nation. Restoration works to preserve neighborhoods, uplift residents, preserve
a rich cultural heritage, and tackle issues from poverty and unemployment to health disparities and cultural
impoverishment impacting communities borough-wide. Reaching an estimated 50,000 Brooklynnites annually,
Restoration’s mission remains to improve the quality of life by enhancing economic self-sufficiency, fostering
family stability, and transforming the community into a vibrant and viable place to live, work and raise a family.

To learn more about Restoration and join the celebration of giving, please visit:
Website: restorationplaza.org | Facebook: facebook.com/bedstuyrestoration | Twitter: twitter.com/BSRC