

0:00:01.860,0:00:11.700

My name is Antoine Cassidy. I'm 44 years old.

0:00:14.820,0:00:21.600

As quiet as kept, I was born in Bed-Stuy. What kept me here Imma' be honest. Everything that

0:00:21.600,0:00:26.160

we did was wrong but at that time it was exciting. Selling drugs. Drinking, drinking

0:00:26.160,0:00:31.560

liquor. Smoking weed. All the women around. Money, cars, all that stuff was exciting to me.

0:00:32.760,0:00:39.360

All of it was challenging. You know, because when we was hustling a customer would buy drugs

0:00:39.360,0:00:43.920

from us but there would be a kid that run up on you and say- ask you for twenty dollars. So I'd

0:00:43.920,0:00:47.400

serve the customer first and then turn to the kid and give him twenty dollars. But he would

0:00:47.400,0:00:53.700

walk off and I would never say, "yo don't do this no more." They ain't have the chance to hear that.

0:00:54.300,0:00:57.780

You know, so all of those things was challenging. just watching these people

0:00:57.780,0:01:01.320

just use drugs in front of my face. Kids I grew up with. Their mothers.

0:01:04.320,0:01:06.660

I love it now because I can give them a bigger gift

0:01:07.860,0:01:15.000

and it's a bigger picture. It's more than- it's bigger than me. So I need help to do

0:01:15.000,0:01:19.200

it. So when I need help to do something I can go get something bigger to give them.

0:01:20.220,0:01:26.220

Because I can carry it with other people. So um, I could put them in programs. You know.

0:01:27.480,0:01:36.480

Um, let them come work for us, fix their phones at my phone store for free. Just give them things

0:01:36.480,0:01:42.060

to get through day to day. Whatever it is. As long as it ain't no drugs or no liquor.

0:01:42.960,0:01:52.560

That we all be successful. That we all be business owners. That mean when I say all, all of us.

0:01:53.280,0:01:57.180

We all have more than what we got now. All our kids have an education,

0:01:57.180,0:02:02.640

they're accepting whatever is going on in a strong positive way and having an understanding,

0:02:02.640,0:02:07.740

and also being understood when somebody explaining things, explaining these things to them.

0:02:07.740,0:02:12.300

And just have a sense of direction and be focused, and be able to engage with

0:02:12.300,0:02:16.560

different conversations cuz a lot of us from the streets can't engage with different conversations.

0:02:19.800,0:02:28.320

My name is Donna Heyward, 62 years old.

0:02:32.040,0:02:36.840

I moved from Georgia here. I used to live in Bed-Stuy years ago. Moved out of state,

0:02:36.840,0:02:41.160

moved out of New York to Georgia. When I came back, looking for a place,

0:02:41.940,0:02:43.980

I always wanted to be in Fulton Houses.

0:02:46.980,0:02:52.740

So when I found out that there was availability,  
not knowing the condition and what's going on in

0:02:52.740,0:02:58.740

there, I went in there and got the apartment. And  
I been there now, eight years going on nine years.

0:03:02.280,0:03:08.220

The people hanging out in front of the door,  
in the hallway, by your house door, smoking,

0:03:08.220,0:03:12.120

drinking, cussing, fussing,  
fighting. It's just too much.

0:03:12.120,0:03:17.760

You can barely get in and out your apartment or in  
and out the building without smelling the reefer,

0:03:17.760,0:03:21.180

watching the bottles and stuff, they just  
leave their garbage all around the place.

0:03:24.180,0:03:30.000

Well I tried being nice about it but it's like  
they— it went over their head. I tried to give

0:03:30.600,0:03:36.060

a few events around here. I gave out laptops,  
gave out school supplies. I fed the community,

0:03:36.060,0:03:41.740

gave out coats. I did Christmas for the kids.  
Trying to bring the community together but...

0:03:43.200,0:03:46.500

You know, try to focus on the kids. Try  
to guide them in the right direction.

0:03:47.160,0:03:51.060

You know, there's a lot of kids that's  
lost out here because their parents is

0:03:51.060,0:03:55.980

not teaching them what they should know, you  
know. And too many kids are being kidnapped.

0:03:55.980,0:04:01.080

Too many kids are running away. Too many kids are lost to the streets. I'm trying now to

0:04:02.460,0:04:07.560

find a way to bring them back in with something positive. I want to open up,

0:04:07.560,0:04:12.900

you know, programs where the kids can come together, and where the kids can go and

0:04:12.900,0:04:17.100

shoot pool or play handball and stuff like that. I'm trying to bring all of that back,

0:04:19.440,0:04:29.160

Pastor Renee Sheffey, and I am in my sixties.

0:04:32.040,0:04:36.000

My husband and I decided that we wanted to purchase another home. I just happened

0:04:36.000,0:04:40.260

to walk down the street one day and ask, "do you know if there are any homes for

0:04:40.260,0:04:44.400

sale?" The man responded, "this house is for sale." And he walked me through the house,

0:04:44.400,0:04:49.560

and the house had big gaping holes in it and I saw the completed project.

0:04:49.560,0:04:55.500

For me it was inevitable. And then we moved to Beford-Stuyvesant twenty-two and a half years ago.

0:04:58.440,0:05:04.440

Jackie Robinson houses are right across the street from my home. When I first moved I found that

0:05:04.440,0:05:13.920

there was a lot of excessive noise, excessive crime, a lot of shootings. And I decided one

0:05:13.920,0:05:18.960

day to go across the street and introduce myself to a few people and basically ask the question,

0:05:18.960,0:05:23.640

"what is it that you need?" People who are underrepresented never get asked that question.

0:05:26.460,0:05:32.760

So I did a walkthrough with a tenant. This public housing is now private, but I saw extensive mold,

0:05:32.760,0:05:40.680

water issues, heat issues, cleanliness issues, people hanging out issues... and when you're

0:05:40.680,0:05:46.920

afraid you tend not to speak up for yourself. There's always this thing, they need to do

0:05:46.920,0:05:54.120

something. They should have done this. We are the they. So we have to address violence. We

0:05:54.120,0:05:58.200

have to address the way that police respond to us. We have to address food insecurities.

0:05:58.200,0:06:02.940

We have to address developers who come into Bedford-Stuyvesant and don't do the right thing.

0:06:05.460,0:06:12.060

It's a collective effort between tenants, other residents, homeowners, the police, a whole bunch

0:06:12.060,0:06:16.140

of different people... and I think that at the end of the day we will get what we want.

0:06:18.780,0:06:23.460

I want a lot for Bedford-Stuyvesant and I hope that I get to see it in my lifetime. It's very

0:06:23.460,0:06:29.160

important to me that we don't have the words food insecurity or homelessness or underrepresentation.

0:06:29.160,0:06:34.380

I would be really pleased if not one person I know would have any of those issues.

0:06:42.480,0:06:47.160

Barry Cooper. Age is 39 going on 40.

0:06:49.800,0:06:52.860

I grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant. My grandmother,

0:06:52.860,0:06:56.460

she owns a home on Marcus Garvey  
between Lexington and Lewis.

0:06:59.640,0:07:05.700

Went to Boys & Girls High School which is directly  
across the street. My sister and her then husband

0:07:05.700,0:07:10.560

got an apartment inside Jackie Robinson Houses.  
It's funny because I used to be like, "oh I

0:07:10.560,0:07:18.540

wish I had an apartment here." In my adult years  
there have been a lot of negative interactions...

0:07:21.240,0:07:25.980

As quiet as it's kept the challenges in  
the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, I mean,

0:07:25.980,0:07:30.720

they run the gamut. The epidemic of drugs.  
Housing issues like the people in Chauncey

0:07:30.720,0:07:36.960

Street. And I mean that's like one of the biggest  
situations where, families and especially mothers

0:07:36.960,0:07:41.220

don't necessarily feel like they have a voice.  
And because it's under-resourced and they don't

0:07:41.220,0:07:45.540

have the support and the confidence that they  
need, what I believe happens it kind of like

0:07:45.540,0:07:51.660

builds generations of people who develop learned  
helplessness or hopelessness. The quality of life,

0:07:53.100,0:07:54.060

um, is the challenge.

0:07:56.940,0:08:02.040

How I think that I've addressed it is in my  
work to give space for people to just one,

0:08:02.040,0:08:08.100

be heard so that way we can build authenticity.  
And then when they feel more authentic it makes

0:08:08.100,0:08:13.800

them more brave to speak out and to share  
experiences, and through that i feel that we

0:08:13.800,0:08:18.960

cultivate connection. And when you are able to do  
those three things, over time that's how you build

0:08:18.960,0:08:25.260

culture or a community that is aware enough so  
that we can attack all of those issues together.

0:08:28.200,0:08:35.340

I hope that Bed-Stuy will start to take care of  
the people that have been with Bed-Stuy as long

0:08:35.340,0:08:43.680

as they could and can be. There's generations of  
families who have been with and in Bed-Stuy since

0:08:43.680,0:08:50.100

the 60's and I just hope that Bed-Stuy understands  
that people in the community are loyal to her.

0:08:51.900,0:08:59.940

Nequan Mclean, 38.

0:09:02.220,0:09:06.120

...just a product of this great  
community. I actually still live

0:09:06.120,0:09:12.060

here. I moved in 2004 from Madison to Chauncey.

0:09:15.240,0:09:19.680

I live there. My grandmother's actually lived  
there about forty something years. She's,

0:09:19.680,0:09:24.060

I believe, one of the first residents.  
So my father was raised there. My uncles,

0:09:24.060,0:09:27.660

my aunts was raised there. When  
I got married and had kids,

0:09:27.660,0:09:33.780

we moved to Jackie Robinson. My family grew and I moved to a bigger apartment, still in

0:09:33.780,0:09:38.820

the same building. I've had a lot of challenges there, but um, this is where my home is at.

0:09:41.340,0:09:48.480

In Bed-Stuy I've lost two of my loved ones. One of my younger brothers was shot and killed right

0:09:48.480,0:09:53.640

down the block. My nephew was killed in our corner store. Even before my youngest brother

0:09:53.640,0:09:59.400

was killed I felt that as a Black man, I did not receive the best education that

0:09:59.400,0:10:04.680

I could've receive. What we see in Bed-Stuy is that a lot of things are blamed on gangs

0:10:04.680,0:10:10.020

but a lot it is built on the disinvestment of the education system in this community.

0:10:13.560,0:10:18.600

I have stayed up really trying to understand and really trying to advocate to make sure

0:10:18.600,0:10:23.340

that we have a strong education system in this district, um,

0:10:23.340,0:10:27.780

the community education council for District 16, which I serve as the President of...

0:10:30.480,0:10:36.300

I dream that Bed-Stuy will return back to somewhat what it was. And we all know that

0:10:36.300,0:10:42.180

Bed-Stuy do or die, you know all of that, but I remember growing up as a kid... you were outside,

0:10:42.180,0:10:45.600



you had block parties that you didn't have to worry about a shootout at the

0:10:45.600,0:10:49.500

end of it. I remember you'll get disciplined by your neighbor and then your parent would

0:10:49.500,0:10:54.060

discipline you as well. I remember being able to really be a kid... hopscotch,

0:10:54.060,0:10:59.820

and freeze tag, steal the bacon. And we need to get back to that and really figure out how

0:10:59.820,0:11:03.300

do we strengthen this community because it was done before and if it was done before

0:11:03.300,0:11:06.960

it definitely can be done again. It's just about coming together to make it happen.

0:11:08.940,0:11:17.340

Justine Warren, age 19.

0:11:19.620,0:11:24.420

I was born in Bed-Stuy. My mom was born in Virginia and then she came here,

0:11:24.420,0:11:28.720

and I've been in Bed-Stuy ever since. Nineteen years (laughs).

0:11:32.040,0:11:38.340

As quiet as it's kept the challenges in Bed-Stuy it's, I'm sure every body knows,

0:11:38.340,0:11:43.080

if it's not police brutality it's us killing each other. And it's you know,

0:11:43.080,0:11:47.520

it's so much good that could come out of the neighborhood, but because of all

0:11:47.520,0:11:51.960

the violence it's like, you know, you're fearful when you walk outside. You know,

0:11:51.960,0:11:56.040

a lot of people say the community is not what it used to be. You sit outside and

0:11:56.040,0:12:00.180

every five minutes it's either the cops, or your neighbor, or somebody you know, or...

0:12:03.180,0:12:09.780

Me personally, you know, I try to be part of the solution. So you know, I do my art program

0:12:09.780,0:12:15.780

Arts & Justice. I do poetry, music, different stuff. I try to get around and do positive stuff,

0:12:15.780,0:12:21.180

try to bring out the laughter and joy in with all the pain, you know.

0:12:23.940,0:12:30.120

Maybe more culture and laughter back into the community. I feel like we just need,

0:12:30.120,0:12:37.200

like... a community. Stuff that we can do together. We wouldn't have to be at so much

0:12:37.200,0:12:41.460

competition with each other. Felling like we have to harm each other and stuff like that. But we can

0:12:41.460,0:12:45.720

all just relax and chill, even though we don't all get along. But at least have that sense of

0:12:45.720,0:12:53.460

culture and community. I think that we can do better if we address the biggest problem with,

0:12:53.460,0:12:58.200

um, amongst us human beings, which is ignorance. Ignorance is the start of a

0:12:58.200,0:13:02.700

lot of problems. Hopefully one day we can all stop being ignorant and

0:13:02.700,0:13:06.300

try to listen to each other so that we

don't have the problems that we have.

0:13:14.280,0:13:19.080

Evangelist Valerie Ferguson. I am 57 years young.

0:13:21.780,0:13:28.860

As quiet as it's kept I was born here. Moved to um, East Flatbush we came right back.

0:13:32.340,0:13:37.920

My daughter is a resident, she is disabled. I started by helping her

0:13:37.920,0:13:41.220

out with the children and in the home and things like that.

0:13:43.980,0:13:47.160

The community lost the neighborhood connection.

0:13:48.540,0:13:54.300

The next door neighbor don't care about their neighbor. We don't check on the neighbors no more.

0:13:54.300,0:14:01.080

Just every body seems to be more concerned with self. Like what is in it for me?

0:14:03.840,0:14:09.480

You know I believe by the spirit of God I was led to come out and just evangelize. And I

0:14:09.480,0:14:12.720

sing a little song, then I walk through the neighborhoods. Everywhere I go I

0:14:12.720,0:14:18.720

walk, and so I get to see a lot of stuff. I get to see what's missing, what's need,

0:14:18.720,0:14:23.040

what's happening, what's going on. I noticed that a lot of children didn't have summer camp,

0:14:23.040,0:14:29.040

especially from Jackie Robinson. So I decided I'm going to grab a few children that's with

0:14:29.040,0:14:34.860

me and my grandchildren, and we can hang out

for the summer. And it wound up becoming the

0:14:34.860,0:14:40.920

Children of Grace Empowerment Summer Camp Program. And so I was allowed to do it two

0:14:40.920,0:14:46.380

summers with the grace of God. The blessings came from people. I didn't have no finances,

0:14:46.380,0:14:52.140

I don't have no [501(c)3]. After I did it the first year more and more children wanted it,

0:14:52.140,0:14:56.520

so now every day I come out now. "Miss Val are we gonna have the program? Are we gonna have it?"

0:14:59.400,0:15:04.980

I see a bigger picture. Get the community back, strengthened. And not be afraid

0:15:04.980,0:15:09.840

to communicate with the next person. We want to keep the foundation here.

0:15:11.060,0:15:20.760

R: Ralph.

Q: Quelinda.

0:15:20.760,0:15:24.240

Q: 10.

R: I stop counting after 21.

0:15:24.240,0:15:29.100

Q: Daddy.

R. (Laughs).

0:15:29.100,0:15:33.120

Good answer.

R: My

0:15:33.120,0:15:38.820

grandmother in 1973 was one of the first three families in Jackie Robinson building. The family

0:15:38.820,0:15:44.400

just grew from there. We been in there ever since 1973. You could walk through the building and

0:15:44.400,0:15:49.740

drop something on the floor and eat it, because it was clean. Mostly the women ran the building

0:15:49.740,0:15:54.120

back in the 70's and 80's. We had security, we had a community center where we could play,

0:15:54.120,0:15:58.080

there were parks in the courtyard. This was a nice area, this was a beautiful area.

0:16:01.040,0:16:06.720

Q: It's never quiet.

R: (Laughs). Hmm, quiet as it's kept the

0:16:06.720,0:16:12.300

gentrification is challenging. It's watching the way it's changed and there's nothing for specific

0:16:12.300,0:16:19.020

people to do. And it's like they're just pushing us in one big corner until they decide to push us

0:16:19.020,0:16:26.880

out. My little brother got killed in the lobby, just stabbed up with no security or nothing.

0:16:27.540,0:16:34.320

When you go from being able to have security to your little brother dying in the hallway

0:16:34.320,0:16:40.020

with no security, and all they can tell you and your family and your grandmother is "well it's

0:16:40.020,0:16:45.500

not our fault that the locks are broken." That's a drastic change. You don't want to live like that.

0:16:45.500,0:16:55.507

Q: Put a pillow over my head.

R: (Laughs) Hmm. Mmm.

0:16:55.507,0:16:59.759

R: Money is power. I don't have any money so I haven't. Just deal with

0:16:59.760,0:17:02.820

it. Move around it. The best you can.

Get to know some of the good people,

0:17:02.820,0:17:07.320

you leave the rest of them alone. But as far as telling somebody, or speaking to somebody...

0:17:11.060,0:17:15.240

R: Let's make Bed-Stuy great again. Because it's falling apart.

0:17:15.240,0:17:20.820

R: What would you want to see happen out here?

Q: For it to be safe?

0:17:20.820,0:17:24.887

R: There we go. Let's make Bed-Stuy safe again. Right?

0:17:24.887,0:17:28.080

Q: Mmmhmm.

R: High five. My girl.