

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY SERVICES



THE EXPERIENCE AND VISION
TO MEET THIS MOMENT

SEPT 13TH 2021
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American Express is proud
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Brooklyn Community Services Gala



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WELCOME



HUMAN
SPIRIT
AWARDS

PROGRAM

Video Presentation
The Experience and Vision to Meet this Moment

Welcome
Janelle Farris, BCS Executive Director

Awards Presentation
& Performance

Live Auction:
Invest in our Vision for Brooklyn's Future

Closing Remarks

OUR VISION

Brooklyn Community Services envisions
One Brooklyn Community where everyone
can realize their full potential.

Our mission is to empower children,
youth, adults and families to overcome
the obstacles they face. Together
we partner with our community to
ensure opportunities for all to access
an excellent education, jobs, safe and
affordable housing, quality health care
and wellness programs.

OUR MISSION

Congratulations to Brooklyn Community Service for
155 years of outstanding service to Brooklyn



And to our Human Spirit Awards Honorees

American Express
Constance Christensen
Stefanie Batten Bland
Nikole Hannah-Jones



With Appreciation and Affection

I Salute the Memory of

Peggy Everson

Whose Outstanding Leadership
and Steadfast Commitment to BCS Over Many Years
Inspired Me to Volunteer and Support Your Great Work

Dino J. Veronese



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LETTER FROM
OUR PRESIDENT


Dear friends,

Welcome to the Brooklyn Community Services 2021 Human Spirit Awards Gala! Our theme for tonight's event, The Experience and Vision to Meet this Moment, recognizes that while we are living in extraordinary times and face uncertainty, all that we have grown through in the past has prepared BCS for this moment.

In our 155 years of service, BCS has been on the front lines ensuring that the community we serve thrives through challenges. From the end of the Civil War to the epidemics of tuberculosis, influenza and polio; from joblessness during the depression era, to recovery from 911 and the devastation of superstorm Sandy: in response to each event, BCS evolved its programs and services to address the needs of the underserved in Brooklyn.

The global pandemic of 2020-2021 brought us to the frontlines once again. Within days of the City's shut down we transformed our programming. As the shutdown continued, we rapidly created food banks and food delivery systems, transformed our education





systems, assisted our clients to bridge the digital divide, and this summer, opened day camp programs to help lessen learning loss attributed to this difficult year. We advanced our organization's technology to be effective in this new era. And as America once again has come to recognize and wrestle with racial inequities that lie at the heart of the systems through which our country operates, BCS has turned to examine itself and the space we occupy. BCS is a human service organization with a social justice mission and we are ready to seize this moment to raise awareness and to strive to better serve Brooklynites.

Tonight, we invite you to look back with us on our recent experiences, and to look forward with us as we strive towards our vision of a community where all Brooklynites have the resources, education, opportunities and safety they need to thrive.

This year's honorees inspire us with their experience, commitment and tangible impact that their work makes. **American Express**, an international financial services corporation and longtime supporter of BCS, is the winner of our Corporate Leadership Award. Founded

in 1850, Amex is one of the 30 components of the Dow Jones Industrial Average. Clearly their attention to management and leadership has carried them through the test of time. Today, as in years past, their support for non-profits including BCS to build leadership capacity is why we honor them. Their efforts to invest in non-profit organizations that work "on the ground" fosters sustainable organizations and communities, and assures a strong generation of future leaders.

Stefanie Batten Bland, is an interdisciplinary global artist, with New York City roots. Her work depicts how culture intersects with community, the complexities of the human experience, and an exploration of what it truly means to belong. Toward the end of 2020, her company, Company SBB, premiered the dance film *Kolonial*, a work commissioned by the Baryshnikov Arts Center that takes our 21st century "shut down" experience of separation and voyeurism and connects it to the colonial exhibitions that ran from the late Victorian era through the mid 20th century. This summer, SBB premiered *Embarked*, a performance inspired by the Martha's Vineyard African American Heritage trail that brings to life the Middle Passage within

a framework that values difference and the freedom within one's personal flying fabric or flag. In July of 2021, SSB presented a work in progress at Lincoln Center, "Guess Who is Coming to Dinner?" that asks the question, with whom is it appropriate for us to be intimate? Ms. Batton Bland's work dares us to examine our personally held beliefs about who we are individually and as a community.

Constance Christensen's integral support and longstanding relationship with BCS has bolstered our efforts for over 30 years. In addition, her deep involvement in private and public institutions across Brooklyn and New York includes: the Board of Trustees at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the NYC Art Commission, Brooklyn Hospital, Theater for a New Audience, and Citizens' Committee for Children of NY. Ms. Cristensen has a firm belief that being a member of a community means more than just having a place to live; it should include investment and being a stakeholder in the community's institutions. We are grateful to be the recipient of her support and even more grateful that she ingrained her strong beliefs into her daughter, our Board of Directors' Vice Chair, Elizabeth Christensen.

Our final honoree, **Nikole Hannah-Jones**, is an American investigative journalist, known for her coverage of civil rights in the United States. Ms. Jones writes to discover and expose the systemic and institutional racism that she says are perpetuated by official laws and acts. In April 2015, she became a staff writer for The New York Times. In 2017, she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship, and in 2020, won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary for her work on The 1619 Project. Hannah-Jones, currently a Brooklynite, is the inaugural Knight Chair in Race and Journalism at the Howard University School of Communications, where she will found the Center for Journalism and Democracy. Her efforts to ensure that society, particularly youth, learn from lessons that the past reveals has opened debate, one that may bulldoze a pathway toward dismantling the inequitable systems that perpetuate the widening wealth, education and opportunity gaps that we experience in this moment.

Thank you for joining us tonight. I hope this evening leaves you inspired.

Janelle Farris

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SALUTES

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HUMAN SPIRIT AWARDS GALA 2021

**Congratulations
To The Honorees**

AMERICAN EXPRESS
CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

CONSTANCE CHRISTENSEN
PHILANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP

NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES
PULITZER PRIZE WINNING JOURNALIST

STEFANIE BATTEN BLAND
CHOREOGRAPHER/ DIRECTOR

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**Congratulations
to the 2021
Human Spirit
Awards Honorees**

**American Express
Constance Christensen
Nikole Hannah-Jones
Stefanie Batten Bland**

Congratulations

To BCS

For its important work

and

To Connie Christensen

For her many and longtime contributions

To BCS and her grateful community

Alan Beller and Stephanie Neville





OUR HONOREES

AMERICAN EXPRESS

Corporate Leadership Honoree

American Express believes that strong communities enable thriving people and business. Since 1954, American Express' commitment to corporate responsibility has supported BCS and so many other non profit organizations. Their philanthropic and community work seeks to develop leaders, engage citizens, and sustain communities. American Express recognizes that charitable giving is key to helping organizations tackle some of society's most complex issues, and thus has a longstanding relationship with Brooklyn Community Services as a trusted supporter and thought partner in serving our community. Over the years, Amex has given billions of dollars to thousands of causes around the world.



CONSTANCE CHRISTENSEN

Philanthropic Leadership Honoree



Constance Christensen is a longtime partner of BCS and a philanthropist with a passion for giving to underserved communities in Brooklyn. As a resident of Park Slope since 1971, Christensen made her mark on Brooklyn by serving on the Board of Trustees at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the NYC Art Commission, and Brooklyn Hospital. Today, she currently serves on the Board of Theater for a New Audience and at Citizens Committee for Children NY. Her husband, Terry, was founding chair of the Prospect Park Alliance. Connie's philosophy of giving is "The more you have, the more you give away," and we know she'll pass on this generous mantra to her four kids and five grandchildren.



STEFANIE BATTEN BLAND

Arts and Cultural
Leadership Honoree

Jerome Robbins Awardee Stefanie Batten Bland is a choreographer and director whose dance-theatre productions interrogate contemporary and historical culture. Known for her unique visual and movement aesthetic, Stefanie has been featured in The New York Times and more. She has performed and directed across the world at places like The Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Juilliard School, and The American Center for Art & Culture in Paris, and just some of her COVID-19 installations include socially distanced films for Brooklyn Botanic Gardens and Works & Process at the Guggenheim. Stefanie is also an Assistant Professor at Montclair State University's Department of Theatre and Dance, and she lives in SoHo with her family.



NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES

Civil Rights Leadership Honoree

Nikole Hannah-Jones is a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter covering racial injustice for The New York Times Magazine. She created the 1619 Project, a project that examines slavery's modern legacy and reframes the way we understand the contributions of black Americans to our nation. Throughout her journalistic career, Nikole has covered race, class, equity, school resegregation, demographics, the census, and county governments, and she even co-founded the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, a training organization dedicated to increasing the ranks of investigative reporters of color. Nikole is a Native Iowan, and her work has taken her to many places across the US, including her now-home in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn.



OUR HOSTS



Live Event Host

BRIAN VINES

Emmy Award Winning Journalist

We are so excited to have Emmy award winning Journalist, Brian Vines, host this evening's program! After completing his Master's in Broadcast Journalism at Boston University College of Communications, he fetched coffee for some of the most respected journalists and news figures in the world during his tenure at CNN. After a stint in political communications, Brian reported for here! Networks, NYC-TV, and the Guardian US among many others. Brian served at BRIC-TV, where he moderated a series on social justice and hosted his own segment, "Going In with Brian Vines." Brian is currently deputy, special projects at Consumer Report Magazine where he investigates and reports on marketplace inequities.



Our Auctioneer

COURTNEY BOOTH CHRISTENSEN

As Director of Trusts & Estates
Winston Art Group

BCS is incredibly grateful to have Courtney Booth Christenson serve as tonight's auctioneer. Courtney serves as an advisor and appraiser working on strategic estate planning, appraisal, and disposition of fine art and other collectibles. A licensed auctioneer since 2008, Courtney continues to offer her auctioneering expertise to a host of museums and charitable organizations. She has been a lecturer and panelist on a full range of art and art market topics at museums and organizations across the country. Courtney also serves on the board of East Side Settlement House, the Advisory Planning Committees for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Historical Society.



Our Online Experience Host

ROSE SAULS

BCS Division Director
Services for People Living with Disabilities

BCS is proud to have Rose Sauls MC our 2021 Human Spirit Awards Online Experience! Rose is our Division Director for Services for People Living with Disabilities. She oversees over thirteen BCS programs that support people living with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health concerns. From day treatment to supportive housing, employment training, job placement and volunteerism, Rose ensures a wide variety of opportunities are available for these special needs populations. With over fifteen years of experience working in this field, and a Masters in Social Work from Fordham University, Rose's work is inspired by the people she serves and her supportive coworkers.

Our Special Guests

FARRAGUT DANCE TROUPE



The Farragut Dance Troupe is a junior BCS hip-hop dance troupe that formed at our Cornerstone Community Center Summer Camp this June. Taught by the Brooklyn Gatoettes, a majorette dance group that volunteered with BCS for the duration of summer programming, Farragut Dance Troupe are the champions of the BCS Color War Cornerstone Dance Competition! Dancers in the group are between five and ten years of age, and their favorite hip hop routine is called Rock around the Clock, a high energy and fast paced number that inspired them to continue dancing in the upcoming school year.

CONGRATULATIONS
TO



&
THE 2021 HONOREES!

WE CELEBRATE YOUR DEDICATION AND
SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF BROOKLYN'S
RECOVERY THROUGHOUT THE
CHALLENGES OF THE LAST YEAR



www.upcnyc.com



On behalf of Joe Freyer and the
Turning Point Board of Directors,
we congratulate tonight's honorees
and recognize the significant
contributions the staff of BCS
and its organizations make each day
to create a better Brooklyn for all.



UBS

Gerry McGinley
Managing Director
Gerry.mcginley@ubs.com
212-821-7027



**Honored to be
the Chair of this
awesome organization!**

Proud to Support BCS.

Shawn Austin

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OUR IMPACT

How We Met the Moment: Our Disaster Relief Impact

10,000 +

meals and grocery bags were distributed from BCS Food Distribution Centers

1,000 +

adults with serious mental health concerns or a developmental disability received virtual health services

8,000 +

wellness checks were sent from BCS Staff to our community members, helping them access resources to technology, counseling and health, food, and other crucial needs

435 +

youth participated in empowering virtual internship opportunities through BCS Youth Development Programs

2,000 +

families received PPE and other health safety equipment across BCS Community Centers



Health, Housing, and Homelessness Solutions: BCS Shower Bus

"My team is not only a shower services program but much more. The struggles we see daily are unbelievable. We live in a time where we have various resources, yet some people cannot get access to them. As the Shower Bus Program, we want to bring those resources to them, and to ensure that we can, even for a moment, provide them with some human kindness, compassion and understanding."

Theresa Ramdath, Program Director





Families, Community Building, and Workforce Development: Fatherhood Program

“Our program is named The Father2Father Initiative. As a father and Brooklyn native, many of the themes, circumstances and challenges that our participants have lived through are shared by both me and my fellow staff. That shared experience creates a bond between service provider and father, which keeps us all engaged throughout the program. For many clients, this is their first experience in a supportive setting where they can share their life experiences, receive mentoring from positive role models, and build friendships with other fathers.” *Karim Johnson, Fatherhood Staff Member*





Services for People Living with Disabilities: Community for All Day Habilitation

“Community for All Day Hab strives to improve the lives of the participants with developmental disabilities, through hands-on life skills training and community inclusion experiences. Through COVID-19, the Day Hab team steadily provided creative telehealth services such as online karaoke and even heartfelt conversations on how COVID-19 affected their families.”

La’Kisha Alvarado, Program Director





Education and Youth Development: Gary Klinsky After School Programming

“Right now, parents tell us that childcare and educational support for their kids is their greatest need. Our programming shifted to virtual school last year and still offers virtual services through the summer months, because we know that now is the time to be flexible. We’re passionate about investing in our students, and we see academic learning here translate into improved performance during the school year.” *BCS Afterschool Staff*



WE 

BCS

Brooklyn Community Services

Serving Brooklyn since 1866

WE ARE: Early childhood education. After-school education.
Youth development. Family services. Workforce development.
Mental health and wellness. Services for people with
intellectual disabilities. Mobile care operations.
Supportive housing. Disaster recovery. [WeAreBCS.org](https://www.WeAreBCS.org)



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BCS Brooklyn Community Services
HUMAN SPIRIT AWARDS

The Experience and Vision to Meet This Moment. We will celebrate
the strength, resilience, and creativity of our community
as we chart a course of action to rebuild Brooklyn.



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KEITH BANHAZL

Strengthening
Communities



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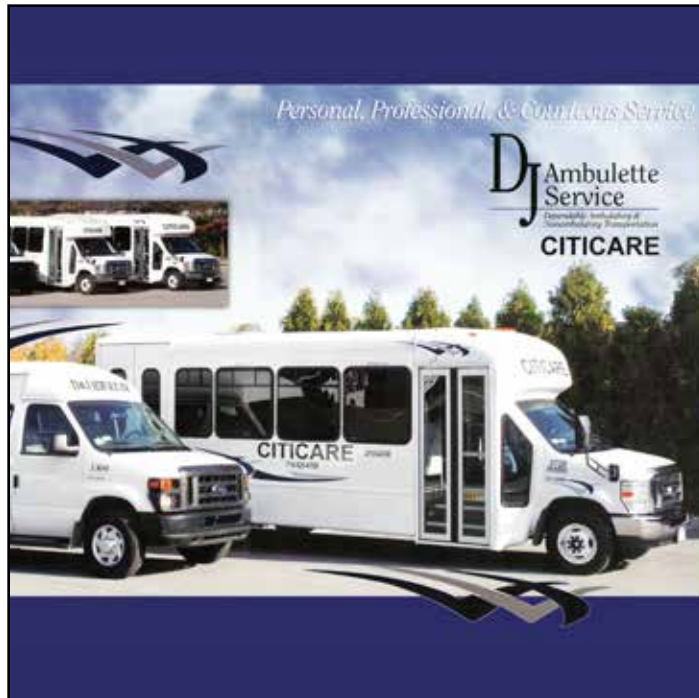
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WE JOIN IN CONGRATULATING THE
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Everything
Matters



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BROOKLYN COMMUNITY SERVICES:
BUILDING A STRONGER
BROOKLYN FOR EVERYONE**

*Kathryn and Peter Yatrakis
and the entire Yatrakis family
congratulate Connie Christensen
and celebrate her tireless efforts
to enhance our community.*

THANK YOU
TO ALL
OF OUR
CONTRIBUTORS,
GUESTS, AND TO
THOSE WHO
JOINED US FOR
THE LIVE, ONLINE
STREAMING OF
THE 2021 HUMAN
SPIRIT AWARDS!

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THANK YOU

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**155
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