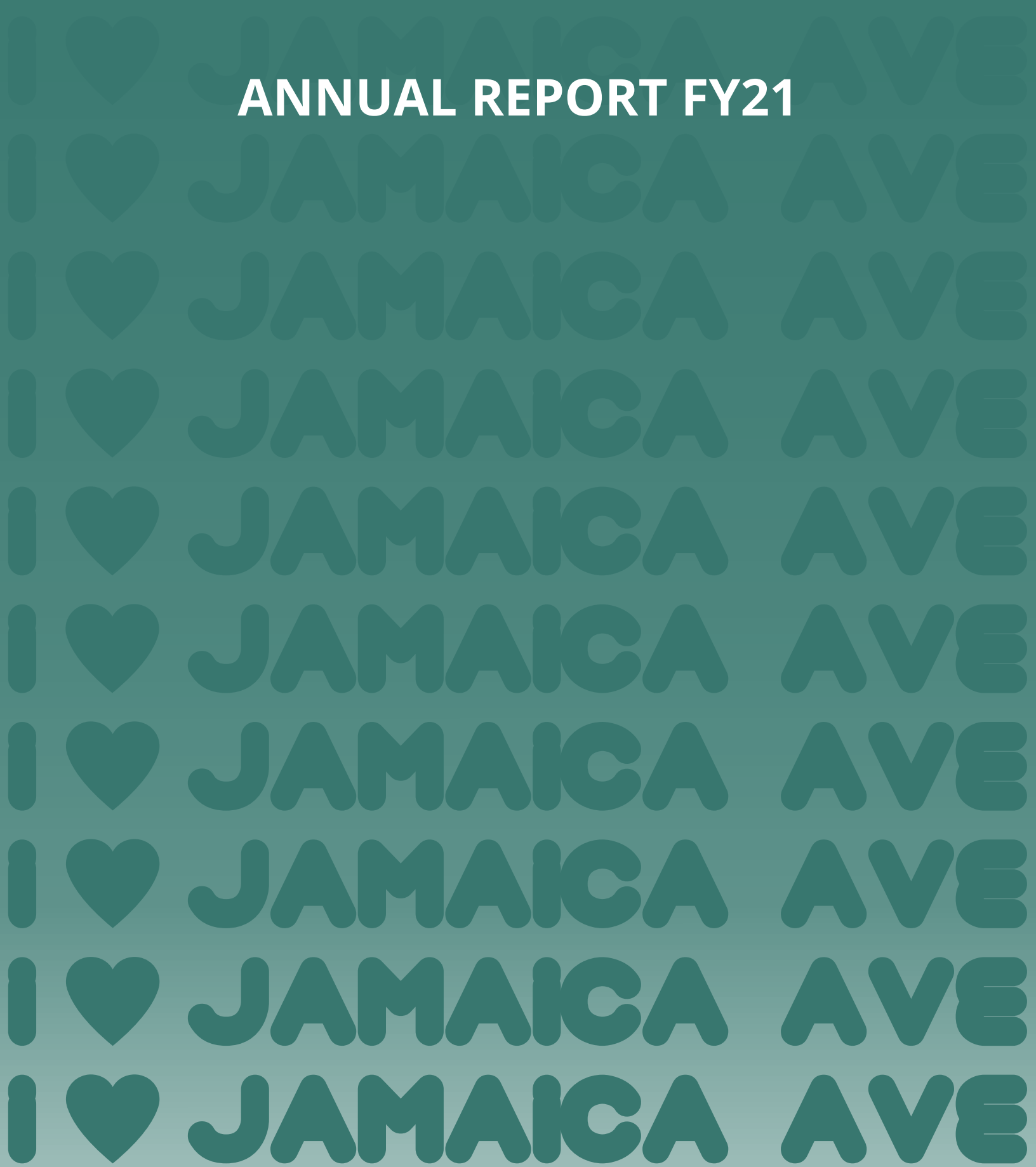


ANNUAL REPORT FY21



A Note from our Executive Director

Dear Reader,

Time seems disorienting these days. March 2020 feels like yesterday, yet it equally feels like our journey out of this pandemic is moving at a snail's pace.

Last year's annual report focused on our real-time, adrenaline-led reactions to the very scary and very confusing economic and public health emergency bearing down upon us. Now, nearly a year and a half out from the pandemic's start, it is evident that recovery from Covid-19 will take more time than initially imagined.

Weeks before the pandemic hit our country's shores, I happened to read Dan Harris's book *10% Happier*. A phrase regarding adversity that I gleaned from that book served as a beacon for me during the toughest days of the pandemic when I felt unsettled: "The only way out is through." As a shopping district, a city and a nation, we continue to muddle through. Frankly, we have no choice but to forge ahead. But I hope you see, as I do, that within this journey there is an abundance of inspiration to lighten the emotional load. For example, most of the businesses in downtown Jamaica managed to survive the worst of the Covid-19 crisis. New quality businesses opened! Civic groups found new ways to partner and address community needs. Our cultural organizations presented a roster of engaging and inclusive events such as JCAL's Mic Drop series. The beloved Jamaica JAMS festival returned! Several of our former Board members, City liaisons, and community partners welcomed new babies or grandchildren to their families (we couldn't resist gifting each newcomer an "I Love Jamaica Avenue" onesie). Despite early claims that New York was dead, there is a renewed energy and vibrancy in the streets across the City. And of course, there is one other positive moment from this period of time: the restoration of the historic and landmarked street clock at the corner of Jamaica Avenue and Union Hall Street is nearly complete. Once this timepiece is reinstalled to its rightful place, our community will have a beautiful spot to meet friends long into the future, a future which I still believe remains very bright.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Furioli
Executive Director



Video Bonus!

Hear Jennifer speak about our recent work [here](#)



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JAMAICA AVE





New plantings in Parsons Public Space, June 2021



Jamaica Center BID's Sanitation team in action, Summer 2021



New plantings in Parsons Public Space, June 2021



Side street clean up day, December 2020



New plantings in Parsons Public Space, June 2021



Business sanitation education day, November 2020

Keeping Downtown Clean

We always begin our report with an accounting of our sanitation activities. Why? Well, without our sanitation program and our extraordinary **team of uniformed clean-team workers** (5-6 workers per day, 7 days per week), our downtown just wouldn't be the same. Just walk a few blocks south or north and see the stark difference in cleanliness.

Our sanitation program sweeps litter from the sidewalks and the gutters; removes graffiti, stickers, and bills from storefronts and public fixtures; wipes and sanitizes street furniture; services 101 wastebaskets along Jamaica Avenue to prevent them from overflowing; and regularly power washes our sidewalks. In FY 21, the BID provided 16,923 sanitation hours to the downtown community, collecting 33,379 bags of trash. This year our team removed a whopping 31,247 incidents of graffiti, stickers, and bills, confronting a 37% increase from the year prior. Numerous illegal dumping incidents also challenged our team this year. The Jamaica Center BID removed no less than 300 bags of illegally dumped garbage and many other unsightly surprises from our sidewalks.

Supplementary Clean-Up Days

In the past year we partnered with other community-based organizations and businesses (notably SE Queens Clean Up, Home Depot, Cambria Heights Florist and Lindon Studios) to tidy key corridors and important public spaces just adjacent to our business improvement district. After all, when it comes to consumer impressions, what good is a clean Jamaica Avenue if the streets leading to the Avenue are messy? In December, **we swept, bagged, and removed litter** from 162nd Street between the shopper parking garage and Jamaica Avenue, giving shoppers an improved first impression of downtown the minute they began their holiday shopping journey. In June, we jointly raised funds with Cambria Heights Florist, Lindon Studios and SE Queens Clean Up to **refurbish the 39 planters** at Parsons Public Space. Each planter was wiped down and **enhanced with fresh plantings**. Dozens of volunteers of all ages showed up to sweep litter from the plaza, remove dead plants and weeds and install dozens of new shrubs, ornamental grasses, and hundreds of summertime flowers.

Sanitation Education

In November 2020 our BID coordinated a **business sanitation education day**, along with Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, Council Member Miller's Office (District 27), the Sutphin Boulevard BID, 165th Street BID, and the NYC Department of Sanitation's Community Affairs office. The majority of our ground floor storefront businesses **received information** on the City's Open Storefronts program, and friendly reminders regarding their sanitation responsibilities as a business.



Side street clean up day, December 2020



Side street clean up day, December 2020

Supporting Our Businesses

Emergency Preparation - JBID-Alerts!

Launched during the peak of the pandemic to better reach businesses quickly during emergencies, our business and property **text notification system JBID-Alerts!** continues to grow. Today 124 merchants and property owners are enrolled. The value of *JBID-Alerts!* was renewed the day after Hurricane Ida. Our BID was able to immediately text support links and hurricane-related news and solicit feedback from our merchant community to help us assess and report damage quickly.

Covid-19 Recovery

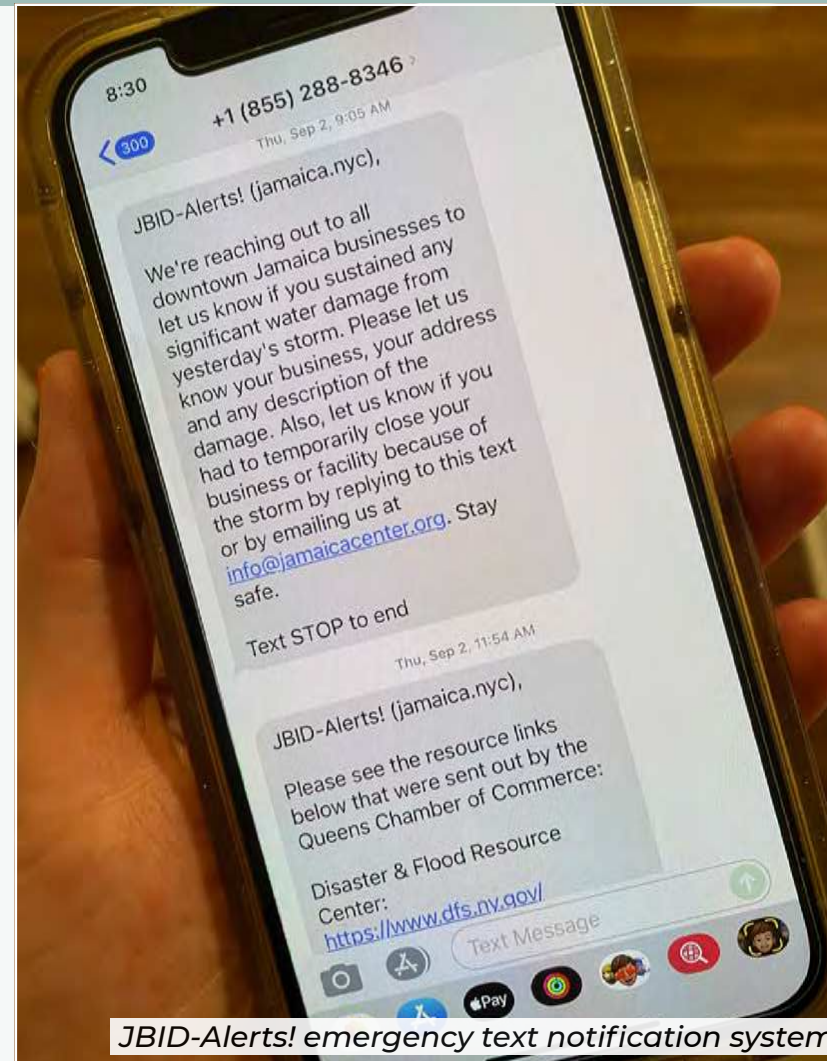
Building upon our robust 2020 Covid-19 response, our team continued spreading information about loans, grants, and other programs (NYC Open Storefronts, Open Restaurants) to our local businesses through e-blasts, website updates, in-store canvassing, our social media and text notifications. We remained a **PPE partner to the City of New York, distributing an additional 7500 masks and hundreds of bottles of hand sanitizer** to area businesses in the last year. We also were awarded a NYC Department of Small Business Services **Strategic Impact Grant**, which allowed us to offer Covid-19 **recovery business support services to 193 additional storefronts** just outside our BID boundaries, providing 386 business support “touchpoints” that included **helping businesses apply for loans and grants, raising awareness regarding nearby free business support counseling centers; and coordinating marketing videos** for several of our merchants in partnership with video content creator and storyteller, Alan Goldsher. We are especially grateful to the Queens Chamber of Commerce, which provided a business recovery specialist available for on-site visits to any businesses we identified as needing deeper technical assistance.

Broadband Support

Much discussion exists regarding the digital divide amongst individuals throughout our diverse City, but less attention has been paid towards **equitable access to high-speed and reliable internet service for business corridors** outside of Manhattan. Yet the importance of improving internet speed and access for businesses, particularly small business, is profoundly important, especially as digital commerce expands and consumers grow ever more expectant of the ability to order and learn about goods and services online. In October, our organization conducted an **internet service quality survey** of our ground floor storefront businesses. We learned that many of our businesses were receiving substandard service, no service, or were experiencing difficulties upgrading to better service, for a variety of reasons. We shared our findings with our local elected officials, the Queens Chamber of Commerce, NYC’s Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, and the Empire State Development Corporation. We **convened with leadership of two leading telecommunications providers to make immediate internet access “spot” fixes** where possible, and held a special meeting with former District 24 Council Member Rory Lancman (now the State’s first Special Counsel of Ratepayer Protection) and local businesses to explore the issue further.

Business Safety

In January, our BID **helped coordinate a business safety discussion** with the 103rd Precinct, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, local businesses, property owners and elected officials and the Queens District Attorney’s office. We also participated in the **launch of The Jamaica Merchants Business Improvement Program**, a new initiative designed to protect storefront businesses from repeated loitering, harassment, and threatening behavior. To date 14 businesses are enrolled in this program.



JBID-Alerts! emergency text notification system



Launch of business safety program, June 2021



Business visits in partnership with recovery specialist, Spring & Summer 2021



See the final video [here!](#)

Coordinating marketing videos, Spring & Summer 2021

Bringing Shoppers Downtown

Before the City of New York launched their ticker tape parade last July, our BID launched its own **celebratory Ribbon Cutting Parade** in February, right on Jamaica Avenue. In a nod to NYC's storied history of ticker tape parades, our BID celebrated five new businesses that had opened on Jamaica Avenue during the pandemic, along with the hundreds of downtown businesses that had survived the pandemic with grace and grit thus far. Our team, local electeds and community leaders **donned celebratory hats, waved ribbons, and marched from new business to new business**, allowing each business owner the opportunity to cut a ribbon and receive a special sidewalk mini-concert by the New Orleans-style brass band the Underground Horns. To encourage a shop local mindset, that same month, we launched our **I Love Jamaica Avenue social media campaign which featured a variety of downtown personalities** that live, work and shop downtown with callouts to their favorite stores.

We also rolled out the welcome wagon for visitors and residents alike. When the supersized vaccine clinic was stationed at York College in March, our team **compiled a list of downtown restaurants and local business discounts for the out-of-state FEMA, National Guard and nursing staff** temporarily located in SE Queens.

Making Jamaica Avenue a Pleasant Place to Shop and Do Business

In addition to our ongoing sanitation program and supplementary clean up days, there are other ways our BID has worked to make Jamaica Avenue a more pleasant place to shop and do business. Due to our advocacy, in FY21, **Council Member Gennaro's office provided a grant to the Horticultural Society to plant two new trees in empty pits and to add four protective tree guards** elsewhere on the Avenue. We continue to advocate for additional funding to rebuild our tree canopy downtown.

Our holiday lighting adorned the Avenue from Sutphin Boulevard to 169th Street once again from mid-November through late January. And in partnership with the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation and the horological preservation group Save America's Clocks, and with the financial support of Council Member Miller and the NYC Department of Small Business Services, we **helped advance the restoration of the landmarked historic street clock located at the corner of Jamaica Avenue and Union Hall Street**, a project that was featured in the New York Times. The clock is expected to be fully restored to its original glory and re-installed by this calendar year's end.



New tree, Spring 2021



Ribbon Cutting Parade, February 2021



Ribbon Cutting Parade, February 2021

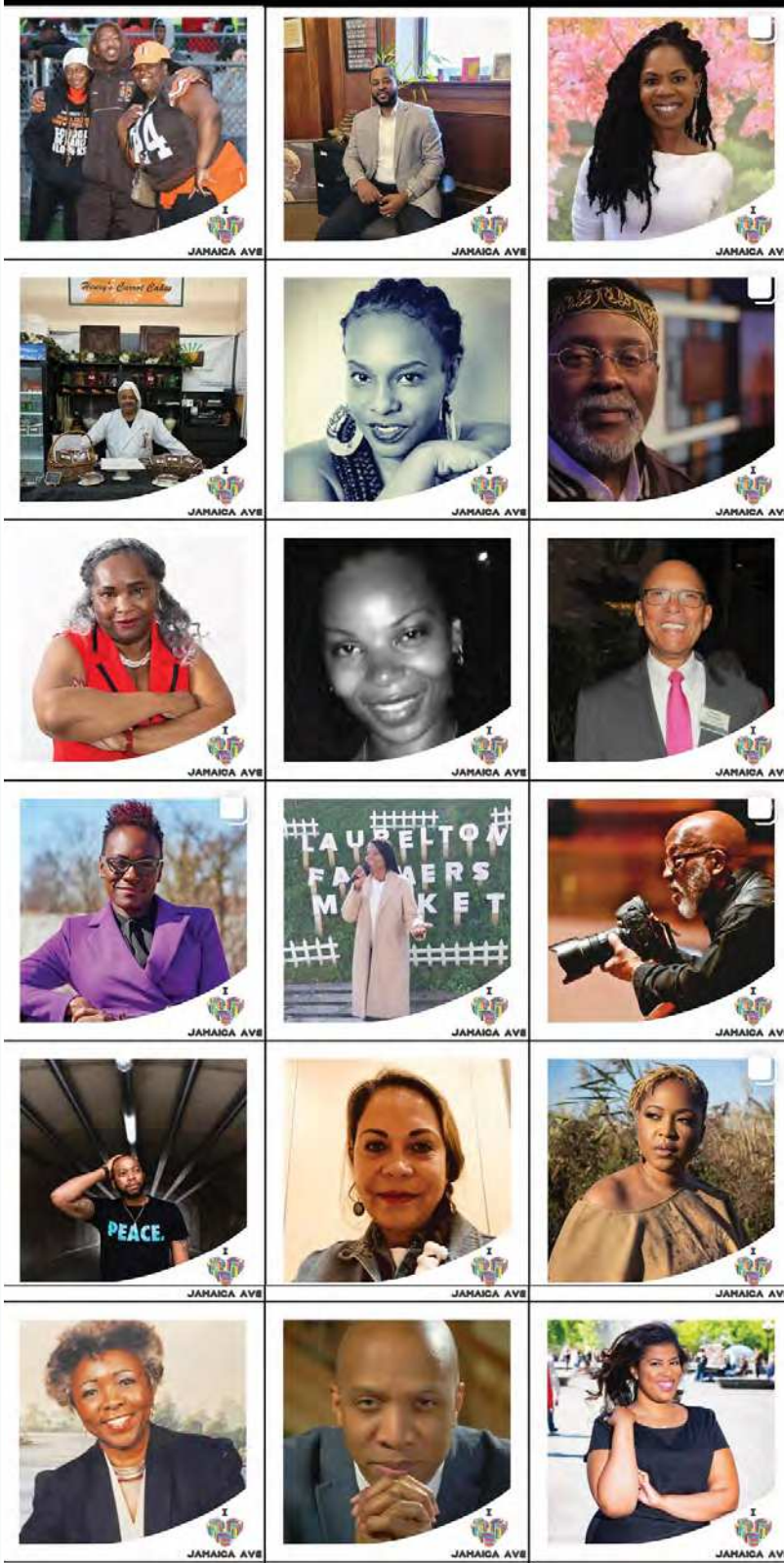


Holiday lights, Winter 2020



Ribbon Cutting Parade, February 2021

I ♥ JAMAICA AVE I ♥ JAMAICA AVE



I Love Jamaica Avenue digital campaign, February 2021

STREETSCAPES

A Sidewalk Clock Standing Proudly in Queens Gets a Restoration

Local leaders raised the funds, but mysteriously, there was no record of what the battered timepiece looked like when it was installed more than 100 years ago.



New York Times article, April 2021

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to read the full story!



Advocating for Our Community

Our daily on-the-street observations and deep relationships with hundreds of businesses and other community groups allow us to serve as an intermediary between civic, business and government entities to ensure that Jamaica Avenue remains clean, safe, and vibrant. In addition to our advocacy around in-store safety issues and commercial broadband access this year, our BID also took a leadership role in advocating for quality of life issues via regular 311 calls, participation in Queens Community Board 12 cabinet meetings, and having our Executive Director serve as a lead coordinator for the Commercial District Recovery bimonthly Safety Plan meetings (which bring together top brass from various City agencies and other Business Improvement Districts in south Queens to confront economic recovery challenges).

Last summer when NYC's Department of Transportation announced plans to install a pilot busway on Jamaica Avenue, we jumped into action to ensure that our entire business community was offered ample opportunity to learn about the proposal. We publicized info in our newsletters, through JBID-Alerts! and on local LinkNYC terminals and requested that DOT survey businesses for their input. We are monitoring impact of the new busway on our business community, and raising issues where needed. We are also closely watching the City's conversion of Parsons Public Space to a permanent plaza and advocating for minimal impact on the adjacent businesses.



Surveying visitors regarding desired streetscape improvements, August 2021



Uninstallation of historic sidewalk clock for repairs, June 2021



Business sanitation education day, November 2020

Financials:

Our current fiscal year runs from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. We are required to conduct an annual audit by a certified external auditor each year and to submit these documents to New York City's Department of Small Business Services and the Comptroller of the City of New York. Our FY21 annual audit was prepared by Lyle Bauer of Cipriani and Bauer, LLC.

A copy of our most recent 990's (financial documents prepared for the Internal Revenue Service and the public) are always available at [GuideStar.org](https://www.guidestar.org). Simply search "Jamaica Center Improvement Association, Inc." or scan the QR code.



Bonus Videos!

Meet our team members [Trey](#) & [Jahnavi](#) and hear them speak about their work!



Bonus Video!



Bonus Video!

2020-2021 Board of Directors:

Michael Hirschhorn, President
Jenel Management

Aaron Schwartz, Vice President
Francmen Realty LLC

Michael Mattone, Secretary
Mattone Group

Norman Fairweather, Treasurer
First Presbyterian Church

Jerry Black, Board Member
Parsco Realty

Samantha Champagnie, Board Member
Champagnie Dawkins, CPAs, PLLC & Golden Krust

Daniel Kulka, Board Member
KJL Realty

Sari Kulka, Board Member
KJL Realty

Jonathan Guzman, Board Member
Carter's

Bryan Atkins, Board Member
Chase

Public Representatives:

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
(represented by NYC Dept. of SBS
Commissioner Jonnel Doris)

Honorable Scott M. Stringer
Comptroller of the City of New York

Honorable Donovan Richards
President of the Borough of Queens

Council Member I. Daneek Miller
District 27 (non-voting)

Council Member James F. Gennaro
District 24 (non-voting)

Executive Staff:

Jennifer Furioli
Executive Director

Jahnavi Aluri
Program Manager

Trey Jenkins
Director of Marketing and Business Services



Jamaica Center BID team with the summer intern, 2021

Special gratitude is owed to the following entities, which provide support, friendship, partnership (or a combination of all of the above!) to our organization: our volunteer Board of Directors, 165th Street BID, A Better Jamaica, Cambria Heights Florist, Commercial District Services LLC, Council Member I. Daneek Miller (District 27), Council Member James F. Gennaro (District 24), Cultural Collaborative Jamaica, Dunkin', Golden Krust, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, Home Depot, Jamaica

Center for Arts and Learning, JFKIAT and Partners (4GOOD Community Philanthropic Program), King Manor Museum, Lindon Studios, Mattone Investors, NYC Department of Sanitation, NYC Department of Small Business Services, NYC Department of Transportation, Office of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Our World Media, Popeye's, Queens Chamber of Commerce, SEQ Clean UP, Streetplus LLC, Sutphin Boulevard BID, York College and the SBDC.

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jamaica.nyc

161 - 10 Jamaica Avenue
Suite 419
Jamaica NY 11432

718-526-2422

info@jamaicacenter.org

