# COMUNITAS AMERICA

Building inclusive and equitable economic ecosystems with diverse community-and social impact-driven entrepreneurs in hyperlocal communities.

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Heyground Harlem, run by Communitas America

#### ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITY, AND BEYOND

Communitas America began five years ago in the fall of 2018. Despite challenges posed by the pandemic and instances of social and political unrest, we have remained true to our commitment to foster hyperlocal and inclusive entrepreneurship, primarily in the Bronx and Harlem of New York City. Continuous innovation and adaptation have been key for us, which we could not succeed in without our supporters and partners. Their collaboration reaffirms that we are on the right track in enhancing the significance and influence of community-driven entrepreneurs.

First and foremost, our primary supporters are **Communitas Ventures** alumni and our family of nearly 200 program participants from Cohorts 1 to 11. The Chung Family, Justworks.org, the Siegel Family Endowment, and the New York State Empire Development Corporation, which certified us as an NYS Business Incubator, have all provided unwavering encouragement to continue our Communitas Ventures Accelerator, and soon launch upcoming new initiatives centered on our bold ideas and investment in community-driven entrepreneurs who take risks to better serve our communities.

Since **Heyground Harlem** opened in March 2023, our community of entrepreneurs has brought the space to life with over 100 programs, events, and community gatherings. The dynamic activity has positioned Heyground Harlem as a place where culture and economy meet. Collaborating closely with our neighbors and partner organizations, such as Columbia Business School, CUNY, Blue Ridge Labs, and EGF Accelerator, who are great thinking partners, helps us navigate resources to tackle systemic challenges embedded in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Collectively, we have forged a unique and **community-driven entrepreneurship program** that's needed, but remains untapped.

Personally, I prefer avoiding the word "help," as its direction and meaning need to be reconsidered. I don't view our role in the program as providing help, but rather as receiving support from our alumni entrepreneurs, who, in turn, provide support to one another. Our alumni entrepreneurs, many with lived experiences, are our most astute partners. They are courageous risk-takers who invest their time and energy into the communities they come from or serve. We will continue to learn from them, facilitate the peer learning within the community of entrepreneurs, and keep improving our programs to better serve them.

Lastly, I would like to extend our gratitude to our founder, Kyungsun, as well as our esteemed board of directors: Dorothy, Malcom, Yolanda, and William. Their support has allowed our creative minds to flourish, and has inspired us to consistently push the boundaries of innovation within our program.

While we are deeply rooted in our communities, we also aim to push ourselves further, venturing beyond our current boundaries in the coming five years.

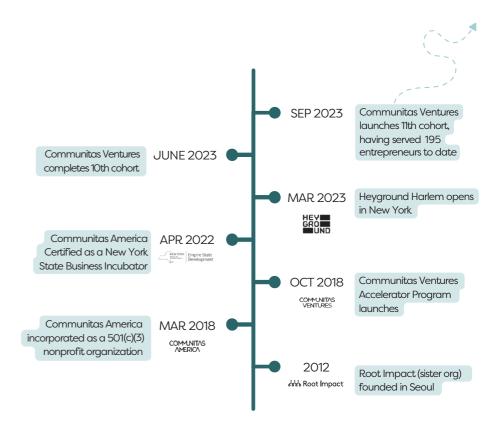
SUNMOON JANG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gunmoon Jang

#### **ABOUT COMMUNITAS AMERICA**

Communitas America launched in 2018, drawing inspiration from our sister organization Root Impact's meaningful growth in Seoul, South Korea. Communitas America is a nonprofit organization that empowers social entrepreneurs to promote economic mobility, build family wealth, and reshape local communities.

We serve diverse women and BIPOC entrepreneurs who face persistent and significant barriers due to structural racism. Our work fuels a wider impact-driven ecosystem providing inclusivity, access, opportunities, and entrepreneurial tools in historically underresourced communities like the Bronx and Harlem in New York City.

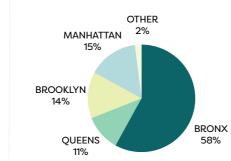


#### **OUR IMPACT DATA**

We are building an inclusive ecosystem, primarily made up of BIPOC and women changemakers, who are helping create equitable local economies in historically under-resourced communities in the U.S.

Including Cohort 10, we have served over 175 entrepreneurs to date.

GENDER NYC BOROUGH



RACE/ETHNICITY

NATIVE AMERICAN 2 OR MORE 8%

ASIAN 6%

WHITE 7%

**NON BINARY** 

7%

WOMEN

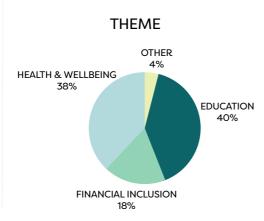
67%

BLACK/LATINO

76%

MEN

26%



Impact Data 2018 - June 2023 (Cohorts 1-10) CampusLush is an EdTech venture that creates access to opportunities, events, resources, and communities. primarily for Black students. Mac is currently negotiating a potential contract with the National Association of **Historically Black** Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I HAVE TRULY EXPERIENCED COMMUNITY IN THIS MANNER. FROM THE GUIDANCE TO THE FRIENDSHIPS, IT HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING.

 Mac Exumé, founder of CampusLush and Cohort 10 Ventures Award winner

Cohort 5 alum Hetal Jani (founder of SpeakHire) running a hybrid professional development workshop for immigrant youth in the **Forum at Heyground Harlem.** SpeakHire collaborated with six Communitas Ventures program alumni from cohorts 8-10 for this event.



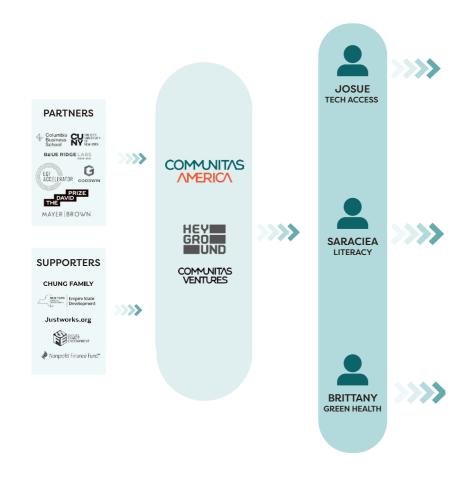
The Communitas America team brainstorming and **cocreating** with Communitas Ventures alumni and ecosystem partners at a Heyground Harlem Town Hall in August 2023. Members come together at Town Halls to set goals, plan skill-sharing workshops, and weigh in on Heyground Harlem's community and evolution.

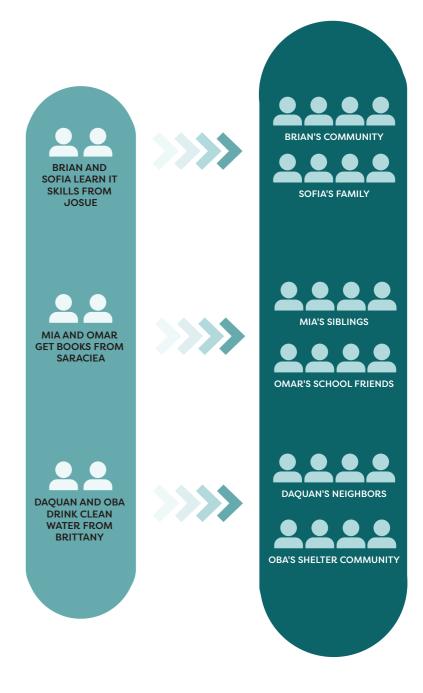
THE COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT IS UNMATCHED

- **Josue De Paz**, founder of First Tech Fund, Cohort 6 participant, and Communitas America grant awardee

First Tech Fund breaks down barriers for students by providing them with technology, mentorship, and career advancement curricula. Josue was recently selected as a 2022-2023 Obama Foundation Scholar.

# THEORY OF CHANGE: "REACHING ANA IN APT 3B, THE BRONX, 10454"





COMMUNITY DRIVEN ENTREPRENEUR ECOSYSTEM WOMEN/BIPOC ENTREPRENEURS IN OUR INCUBATOR PROGRAMS

**RECIPIENTS** 

BENEFICIARIES: RECIPIENT'S COMMUNITIES

#### **COMMUNITAS VENTURES**

Legacy Dinner in the **Quad at Heyground Harlem**, which comprises the central wellness component of our Communitas Ventures programming.

Communitas Ventures is currently running its eleventh cohort. We have served **195 entrepreneurs** since launching the program in 2018, awarding over **\$300K** in seed funding across 30+ ventures.

At Communitas America, we believe that those with lived experience and proximity to a problem are best equipped to solve it. Our professional development accelerator serves entrepreneurs solving for equity, inclusion, and diverse representation in their communities. The program is sector agnostic, to facilitate real-world intersectional collaboration among entrepreneurs supporting underserved communities.

Communitas Ventures runs twice a year. The 10-week cohort-style program combines structured business development coaching, guest speakers, workshops on impact models, business models, and pitching, peer mentoring, networking events, legal, financial, and marketing consultations, wellness programming, skill-sharing workshops, a pitch competition, resource navigation support, and - most importantly - a thriving community of likeminded changemakers who address inequities in our communities.



Our Communitas Ventures program culminates in Pitch Night, where entrepreneurs showcase their ventures through pitches, vendor stands, and panels discussions.

For Cohort 10, we partnered with Columbia Business School's Tamer Center for Social Enterprise. They cohosted pitch night, and awarded the first inaugural **Tamer Center Award** for social impact, in addition to **five Communitas America grants**, totaling \$33,000 in support for our entrepreneurs.



Cohort 10 sharing insights about the legacies they have cultivated and want to pass on.

Second Wind is a co-op empowering indigenous Ecuadorian artisans. Founder Diego Torres shares a prototype from the artisans' Edith brand, an heirloom childrenswear line using traditional embroidery techniques. The World's Borough Bookshop is a BIPOCcentered bookstore. Founder Adrian Cepeda leveraged Communitas America and other seed funding to open his physical space in Queens in August 2023.

#### Liberty Learning Group

is a Bronx-based childcare and learning center for parents with non-traditional work schedules. Founder Jessica Duran is currently conducting customer discovery research.

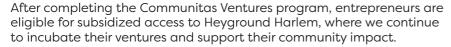
#### **HEYGROUND HARLEM**

# WHERE CULTURE AND ECONOMY MEET

Our incubator space launched in March 2023 in Harlem, New York.

Leveraging hybrid meeting rooms, event spaces, screening capabilities, communal working spaces, and a community gathering hub, Communitas America hosts regular networking events and pipeline development workshops with ecosystem partners, anchored by our signature **Heyground Sundowners** happy hours, morning **Coffee + Impact** workshops, co-creating **Town Halls**, legal workshops, and more.





Since March 2023, our members have held **over 100 events**, including professional development programs, brainstorming sessions, internship programs, book fairs, poetry slams, pilot launches, press interviews, wellness programs, and skill-sharing workshops. These alumni memberactivated programs have invited over 500 local community residents and partners.







#### **EDUCATION & LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS**

#### BLACK MENTOR NETWORK, NGOBITAK WILLIAMSON, COHORT 10

An education collective of Black professionals that provide mentorship and career guidance to Black students interested in a wide array of career fields.

#### BRONX BOUND BOOKS, LATANYA DEVAUGHN, COHORT 3

The bookstore that comes to you: a literacy venture that provides access to books in book deserts like the Bronx with mobile libraries on wheels.

#### THE BRONX IS READING, SARACIEA FENNELL, COHORT 8

Celebrating literacy (especially for children and teens) through initiatives including the Bronx Book Festival and The Bronx is Reading Literacy Program.

#### CAMPUSLUSH, MAC EXUMÉ, COHORT 10

Making the college experience equitable for schools, students, and alumni.

#### **CULTIVATORS, KASHON DUBOSE, COHORT 4**

School and community enrichment horticultural programs that encourage people to learn about plants and connect with nature.

#### INCLUSIVE ARTS MEDIA, LUZ MARIA MACK, COHORT 10

Empowering children to be the heroes of their own stories.

#### INTERNATIONAL SALSA MUSEUM, WILLY RODRIGUEZ, COHORT 9

Preserve the past, teach the present and influence the future: a museum dedicated to Salsa and its impact on NYC culture.

Leveraging his experiences as a musical student and eventually director working with Salsa legends Celia Cruz and Tito Puente Jr., founder Willy Rodriguez leveraged Communitas Ventures Award funding to launch music and educational programs for youths in the Bronx as he works towards launching a brick and mortar museum housing artifacts from the Tito Puente estate. The International Salsa Museum has garnered significant media coverage on the New York Post, NPR, and Univision, including interviews held at Heyground Harlem.

#### LOC'D AND LIT, TRICIAH CLAXTON AND ALANNA RAMIREZ, COHORT 9

Promoting BIPOC authors and celebrating the joy that books bring.

#### NEVER STOP GROWING COACHING & CONSULTING, DENISE RELF, COHORT 9

Paving the path to success through the transformational powers of coaching.

#### **OAAARS, SIMONE GAMBLE, COHORT 9**

Social justice and DEI centered training and education for safer and inclusive work environments.

#### SHARED TALENT, LASHAWNNA HARRIS, COHORT 2/5

A matchmaker for schools seeking highly skilled professionals to support their improvement projects.

#### SPEAKHIRE, HETAL JANI, COHORT 5

A virtual mentorship solution for youth, targeting immigrant youth, that combines college and career readiness with social emotional support.

#### START LIGHTHOUSE, RINA MADHANI, COHORT 6

Advancing childhood literacy through a social justice lens.

Start Lighthouse has seen tremendous success since launching in 2021, including support from funders including Macmillan, Penguin, and Sephora for educational literacy programs with NYC Schools. In 2022, founder Rina Madhani was endorsed by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and honored by L'Oréal Women of Worth. So far, the organization has distributed almost 24,000 books, established 5,700 first-time home libraries, and implemented over 750 hours of literacy programming.

#### STAPLEDON ARTS, CHARLECIA JOY COLE, COHORT 9

Inspiring emerging artists with skin-tone inclusive "Melanin" paints and programs for representation, art education, and professional development. After winning a Communitas Ventures grant in 2022, art educator turned

entrepreneur Charlecia Joy Cole went on to win **the New York Urban League Small Business Solutions Center Pitch Black Competition and NY NOW grant in August 2023.** grant in 2023.

She works out of Heyground Harlem most days of the week.

#### THE WORLD'S BOROUGH BOOKSHOP, ADRIAN CEPEDA, COHORT 10

A Latino-owned, Jackson Heights-based bookstore dedicated to promoting diversity, representation, and inclusivity through the power of literature.

### **HEALTH & WELLBEING HIGHLIGHTS**

#### DOTZZ, NATASHA JOHNSON, COHORT 8

Combating domestic violence by connecting the Dotzz to your safety with a creative and effective safety tool.

#### DANZARTES, YASMAR CRUZ, COHORT 6

An arts organization dedicated to promoting Puerto Rican and Afro-Caribbean dance and folklore.

In April 2023, founder Yasmar Cruz performed at the opening reception of the Daniel Lind Ramos exhibit at New York's iconic **MoMA PS1** museum. Yasmar is also a published poet, and she has penned a number of articles on yoga. She joined Cohort 10 as an alumni guest at Legacy Dinner at Heyground Harlem.



#### **EQUITY DESIGN, MAURELHENA WALLES, COHORT 3/5**

Leveraging physical activity programming to close the gap between health and wealth in communities that have the highest health disparities.

#### FLORA'S TEA, ARNALDO LOPEZ JR., COHORT 9

Promoting education, literacy, and literature for seniors in underserved communities of color with high-quality fresh tea and community outreach.

#### **GRASSROOTS GROCERY, DAN ZAUDERER, COHORT 7**

Advancing food justice by cultivating a community of neighbors helping neighbors.

Grassroots Grocery has gained significant community traction, having launched over 32 community-led hyper-local food distribution sites, recruited almost 3,000 volunteers, and raised over \$900K in funds. In June 2023, founder Dan Zauderer was named a 40 under 40 rising star by the Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center. Grassroots Grocery has been featured in CNN, CBS New York, and the Kelly Clarkson Show. The Grassroots Grocery team have been leveraging the space at Heyground Harlem for weekly planning meetings as they expand their growing team.

#### THE HOOD HIKERS, JASMINE GUADALOUPE, COHORT 7

Curating carefree, healing, and fun nature experiences for BIPOC citydwellers while diversifying outdoor activities and outdoor leadership.

#### LBX SPORTS, DAQUAN HAWKINS, COHORT 8

Sports and recreation programs for youths to enhance self-esteem, cultivate leaders, and break down social/cultural barriers to opportunity.

#### NANA'S VEGAN, NIYA JARVIS, COHORT 3

Vegan soul food kitchen offering meal delivery, catering, and curated educational/culinary experiences for underserved communities, with a mission to nourish, educate, and transform communities.

#### ÖZEMI BEAUTY, RUBEN TORRES, COHORT 10

Drawing form Afro-Latino heritage to create a safe space for stillness, wellness and gratitude with Harlem made, ethically sourced beauty products.

#### POETIC BLACK GURL, ANDREA AUGUSTUS, COHORT 9

Empowerment through art to heal, grow confidence, and connect with others.

#### TRAC ACTIVITIES, LUCAS ADDO, COHORT 8

Inclusive art, movement, culinary expression programs and communities that fostering creativity and self-expression for people of all abilities, including those with special needs.

#### SILVER SHOES DANCE CLUB, DANIELA DEL GIORNO, COHORT 4

Ballroom and Latin Dance programs for active senior citizens in underserved communities to encourage longevity, community, partnership, and good health.

Centering around the Bronx, Cohort 4 winner Daniela Del Giorno's venture, Silver Shoes Dance Club, holds regular public events in addition to its virtual and in-person classes. The organization is a frequent recipient of grants from the Bronx and NYC Councils of the Arts, the NYC Department for the Aging, and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.



#### THEORY 9, SHAKIR SEAGERS, COHORT 10

A community organization bringing knowledge to underserved youth through sports, life coaching, STEM, marketing, career prep, and more.

#### **TECH & SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS**

#### HERA HEALTH SOLUTIONS, IDICULA MATTHEW, COHORT 6

Nanotechnology-enabled biodegradable drug implants that enable companies to rapidly increase the efficacy of existing therapeutics.

In 2023, Hera Health Solutions was awarded a prestigious SBIR **National Science Foundation (NSF) grant** for research and development.



#### HYDRONOMY, BRITTANY KENDRICK, COHORT 5

Creating equitable solutions to global water crisis, including a patentpending solar powered atmospheric water generator system that captures moisture in the air and converts it into clean water.

Founder and Cohort 5 winner Brittany Kendrick was accepted to **NYCEDC Venture Access's Founder Fellowship at Newlab**. She is also partnering with **BlocPower** to run green professional development programs for underserved job-seekers at Heyground Harlem throughout 2023.



#### KERATIN NAILS, JIYE SON, PHD, COHORT 9

Supporting environmental research and solutions for women in STEM, and revolutionizing the nail industry with keratin-based nail polish that is nontoxic for wearers and nail technicians alike.

#### **RSSPCTS, SAIRA PATEL, COHORT 8**

Reducing inequality and driving social change in aquatics, while increasing BIPOC participation in the sport with coily-hair-protecting swim caps.

#### VADER NANOTECHNOLOGIES, TREVON GORDON, COHORT 4

Improving the ability to recycle plastic and degrade forever chemicals by creating new organisms and enzymes that breakdown these pollutants.

Vader Nanotechnologies has received **IndieBio/SOSV** funding and was selected as a semi-finalist for the **2023 Black Ambition Prize**, competing for up to \$1M in funding.

#### FINANCIAL INCLUSION HIGHLIGHTS

#### BLACK TO BUSINESS, MONIQUE MARSHALL, COHORT 9

Fostering financial growth through digital tools including a podcast, business toolkit, masterclass, and start-up course for Black entrepreneurs.

#### FIRST TECH FUND, JOSUE DE PAZ, COHORT 6

Closing the digital divide by supporting students from underserved backgrounds with technology, practical skills, and opportunities to succeed.

#### GOOD VIBES, IBRAHIMA BADJI, COHORT 10

Providing education and business consulting to disadvantaged communities. 90% of students go to college debt free.

#### MAKING MONEY MOVERS, HAIZEL MCINTYRE, COHORT 9

Expanding financial literacy with financial education starting at an early age.

#### REVIVAL FUNDS, DARYL HOLMAN JR., COHORT 1

Bankers are incentivized to keep people in debt. Revival helps people buy out their debt and build wealth.

For 2023, founder Daryl Holman Jr. secured \$100K+ in funding as a Blue Ridge Labs Catalyst Fellow @ Robin Hood
Foundation. Daryl has served as an alumni mentor for
Communitas Ventures Cohorts 10 and 11.



#### UNLOCK NYC, JESSICA VALENCIA, COHORT 10

Designing user-friendly digital tools that New Yorkers with rental vouchers can protect their right to a home.

Unlock NYC has participated in several NYC accelerators including **Blue Ridge Labs @ Robin Hood Foundation**. Founder Jessica Valencia joined Communitas Ventures seeking **community**. She collaborated with Cohort 10 alums Tasha Dougé (Thou Art Pay Us) and Jessica Duran (Liberty Learning Group) to host fundraising events at Heyground Harlem.





HEYGROUND SUNDOWNERS
41 THUS A TURN HOW TO HOUSE TO HOUSE

Heyground Harlem Town Hall: A Lively Co-Creating Changemaker Community Gathering

At Communities America, we firmly believe in co-creating with our community base on entrepreneurial needs and lived experience. Our Town Halls enable Heyground Harlem members to share ideas about the space and its resources.

le were thelited to vericome allumri trom collorts one through ten to our latest Toall last week. Participants also enjoyed a happy hour and free professional eadshots while setting goals and weighing in on Heyground's evolution.





Since Heyground Harlem opened his doors in March 2023, our enhapements has hondred over 100 works wisolshops, and programs. In the meantime, we've been body adding some business in solution insolution for monitions, missing legal pages of the program of the solution of the solution

#### Communitas America Resources and Events



together at Heyground Harlers. Our Executive Director Summoon Jung w host these moming get-togethers in collaboration with local partners. Joi to discuss the impact ecosystem an its resources.

Our first Coffee + Impact morning gathering will be on Wednesday August 9, 2023 at 9,30 AM in the Heyground Harlem kitchen and lounge. RESVP hero.



COMMUITAS AMERICA MICROGRANTS \$500-\$2500 including legal and financial consultations, merfores, incubator space access, networking everts, wellness programming, a thriving entrepreneur community, workshops on impast models, business plans, a opportunities to pitch for funding.

We understand that entrepreneurial needs don't follow set timeframes, microgrants support small, yet urge requirements as they come up on a proping basis. Apoly to cover

Apply for microgrants

Art Education: A Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship



Road about founder of <u>Stapledon Arts</u> and Cohort 9 alum **Charlecia Joy Cole**'s journey from art educator to social entrepreneur in our latest <u>alumniting good</u> (ADD LINK)

#### Congratulations to Our Latest Microgrant Winners



oaching for children in foster care.

latzel McIntyre, Cohort 9 aium and founder of <u>Making Morellogues</u>, won a microgrant for professional development and

BLA⊆K₩

istoria Caller, Cohort 8 alum and founder of <u>Black Vico Fest</u> on a microgrant for certification. Alumni News



Congratations to Bronx-based author, Include Arch Media: Younder, and Cohort 10 alum Law Maria Maex for being honored at the <u>Latin Impact Awards</u> on July 27, 2023. Her books and media center Dominican lived experience.



ons, Bound Books, founded by Cohert 3 alum tamps Deflaughn is expanding From October 1st, 233, Bronx Bound Books will have a klosk on the 3rd or of The Mall at Bay Plaza. Support their <u>Cofunction</u>



Table World's Borough Bockshop started as an Astria-based per-sea. After sinning the CIRC pitch competition and Communitate World's Started Astria, Andrea secured a lease on the space. The Isanch feetaness basic-hoschople giveney for local children and events for Latin Hertage Warth. Stop in and chool out the space at 34-56 73rd Store in Lackson Helaphia.

Cohort 10 alum Jazy Cintree, founder of Lefty Height Movement, will be teaching yogs on Randals Island this summer as site continues incubating her Bonsbased wellness venture. Follow Jazy for updates.



er of in Terres participate in is a Black independent

Cohort 10 alum and <u>Campusture</u> founder Mor Essend has been selected as a finalet for <u>PER Institution</u> of Libbs. Mor also promoted Campustures in an Effect vertices connecting students with college and melecohorg vertices at the base intend Negro College Foundation College Country.

Cohort 6 alum Candice McCoy, founder of Laby & Lt is patheting with Harlem Grown this summer to teach children about self-care using literature. Learn more.



August Event Highlights @ Heyground Harlem



Satisfully August 19, 2023, 12:00 - 5:00 PM (SSSE) to attend the Children's Book Fair by Lazy & Lit, when booksymms can discover new children's books and supplies, entry to all ages.



Relaxing Yoga and Breethwork Retreat to unwind, enjoy is giveness;s, refreshments, and connect with community. Finday August 25, 2023, 4:00 PM. RSUP to cet up with the award-winning Morrisanta Band.

Project's 90s Soul Review! Tickets \$50 in achanne, \$25 at 9 door. Dinner and drinks included, plus a Salute to 90s Soul

#### Ecosystem Resources

We are growing our community partner network as we expand our footprint in Ne York City. Watch this space for updates, engagement and funding apportunities,

events, resources, and more.

Join the NY Urban League and TD Bank on August 7, 2023 for "Meet Your Match, So

Black women business owners, apply for the Peacer Startus Grant, including SSK funding

Enterpreteurs with \$75%+ revenue who have been in business for over 2 years, apply to join the <u>WYPACE Enterpretend Program</u>, **NYPACE** connects enterpreteurs with pro-bon immant advisors in a cohort value occurry.

Check out this ideaticate article by Nick Jain: What is Social innovation? Definition consoles and Best Proclines.

Want to learn impact data insights about social emerprises? Sign up for the 60\_decit revellence. It's packed with resources for the social impact sector.

Sign up for the Aspen Institute's <u>nonsister</u>: Th packed with publications, events, a programs for busing an inclusive economy.

August 2023 Newsletter

Communitas America's monthly newsletters and social media serve as curated hubs highlighting upcoming resources for changemakers.

- (i) @COMMUNITASAMERICA
- HELLO@COMMUNITASAMERICA.ORG
- 9 461 W 126 STREET, 5W, NEW YORK, NY 10027
- WWW.COMMUNITASAMERICA.ORG



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19 NEWSLETTER 20

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Erum Naqvi **Program Manager** 



Amber Walker
Assistant Program Manager



Sofia Mojica **Heyground Community Manager** 



Edward Greenwood
Partnerships Manager



Hailey Kim
Operations Manager



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