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ECE 411

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Mini Ecological Study Part II

On my neighborhood tour in the community of Brownsville in Brooklyn, New York. I observed various institutions, government-owned and private properties that provide support services. The community is extremely busy and is populated with business places near houses and apartments that serve the needs of the community. Some of these include a justice center, public schools, daycare centers, a multi-service family health center, playgrounds, churches, a fire station, and a post office among others.

The Brownsville Justice Center offers youth development by guiding young people towards a path of employment and education. They also offer community services. For example, clean-up such as the park one of which is the Betsy Head Park, or at community gardens. Public School 298 and 183 provides free education and daily breakfast and lunch to its scholars. Public school 298 where I work is located at 85 Watkin Street is a community school that offers a myriad of resources to the families and community it serves. Within the school is a pantry called “The Love Pantry” which is available to parents and community members twice a month or as needed. This pantry offers non-perishable and perishable food items, clothing, toiletries, and detergents. The school also provide job opportunity for parents, it offers an after-school program that provides homework help for students and teaches different skills to students. The

Brownsville Multi-Service family health Center provides residents with a variety of health care services under one roof. During the COVID-19 outbreak and even now they offer free COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

Although these organizations offer support to the community they are lacking in numerous ways. Public School 298 has a constant battle with limited space. The school shares the building with a middle school, 363 Brownsville Collaborative Middle School. When there are state tests, teachers and administrators struggle to find space for children to test. We have schedules that show when the auditorium and the gym are accessible to PS 298 or the middle. On many occasions, the students of PS 298 are robbed of gym time because of the intrusion of the older students from the middle schools. The students of PS 298 eat their lunch in the classroom, so gym time is the only time that they get to be active. The school also has a lack of teachers and technology devices. The Brownsville Multi-Service Center has many health services; however, they need staff, the wait is always long, and consultant time is always short.

The community of Brownsville is plagued by crime and violence. Watkins Street where Public School 298, the middle school, and residents are located are often affected by shootings. These shootings disrupt the schedule of the school which causes the school to go on lockdown which is called a shelter-in where no one can enter or live the building or the room that they are in. A student in my class and his sibling along with other staff members has witnessed people being shot and had to receive counseling. There have also been cases where people who were shot have used the school building as an escape route which prove to be extremely dangerous to the children and staff. The streets and corner stores are always populated with police officers, but this does not seem to lessen the crime and violence in the community. Fougere, (2020) writes, "As shootings and murder have nearly doubled in Brownsville over the past year, Mayor Bill de

Blasio says the city and the NYPD are fighting the surge of violence and take it seriously...NY1's Dean Meminger reports that murders in the neighborhood have risen by 72.7 percent over the last year (11 in 2019 through Labor Day compared to 19 by that point in 2020) and shooting victims increased by 95.5 percent (44 shooting victims by Labor Day 2019 compared to 86 this year)" (Para. 1-2).

The surge of crime and violence affects the development of the community which also affects job opportunities. Reyna and Durkin (2017) write, "James Brodrick of the Brownsville Community Justice Center said the biggest obstacle to more businesses and facilities moving in is the feeling that the neighborhood is not safe. The violent felony rate is the highest in Brooklyn, though it's down 31% since 2000" (Line 20). Gangs are being formed in the community to orchestrate organized crime. Our youth are at risk since they are the ones who head these gangs and oftentimes, they recruit other youth to join them. Fondren (2022) writes, "The gangs, made up of young people from the Brownsville, East New York and Fort Greene Neighborhoods, joined forces in an "umbrella" gang known as YPF to expand their territory and increase their access to guns...The young men and women, ages 17 to 23, face charges that include second-degree murder, assault and criminal weapon possession" (para.2-3).

The Corona Virus caused an outpour of unemployment which resulted in crime and violence. Vertuccio (2010) writes, "COVID definitely exposed some of the underlying conditions that we have in our community today...Newerls is the program director of BIVO, Brownsville in Violence Out, which gives young people in this Brooklyn neighborhood alternatives to violence by providing them with supportive services, including job training. When the crime started to rise this year, Newerls saw a direct connection to COVID. We have so many people unemployed now who can't get jobs...some of those who lost jobs turned to violence"

(para. 1-6). The closure of schools, after schools, and other support services also played a part in the increase of crime during the COVID outbreak. Vertuccio (2010) writes, “Campbell and Newerls say the closure of after-school programs and community centers because of the pandemic also played a role in the crime spike” (para. 10).

Violence, to be more specific domestic violence is known to affect the community of Brownsville. Chapman (2021) writes, “A 46-year-old man previously convicted of manslaughter fatally shot the mother of his daughter and two of the women’s other children in a Brooklyn apartment late Monday before killing himself” (para. 1). This incident took place on Sutter Avenue, in an apartment in Brownsville. Domestic violence can also affect the development of an unborn child and the mother drastically. O’Donnell and Quarshie (2019) write, “The Georgia woman says she had been in an abusive, on-off relationship for six years when she became pregnant... Huff spent 25 of 37 weeks on bed rest, she says, due in part to rectal bleeding her doctors said was caused by stress” (para. 1). O’Donnell and Quarshie continue to add the devastating impact domestic violence has on children, “The boy was born with “floppy baby syndrome,” a muscular condition doctors said might be attributed to abuse during pregnancy. Both children struggle with health issues, including speech disorders, and have spent months in instructional therapy to learn how to follow directions” (para. 3). Domestic violence also has a horrifying effect on children who have witnessed it. O’Donnell and Quarshie explain that “...Witnessing abuse carries the same risk of harm to children’s mental health and learning as being abused directly” (para. 5).

There must be a way to go forward that can lessen the accessibility of weapons to young people in the community. I believe that they must be other outlets or support services that are available to young people that can sway them away from crime and violence in their time of

desperation. Turning to crime or violence should not be an option or the only way out of unemployment. The increasing rate of crime and violence in the community of Brownsville is a cry for help that should not go unnoticed. It has been shown that crime and violence are hindrances to the development of the community as business owners are fearful of the community. Schools are also affected by the surge of crime and violence directly and indirectly. Domestic violence also plays puts the community at risk, it has direct and indirect effects on individuals, and it is connected to disabilities in children. Paper 3 will seek to find ways to address the issue of crime and violence and implement combative strategies.

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