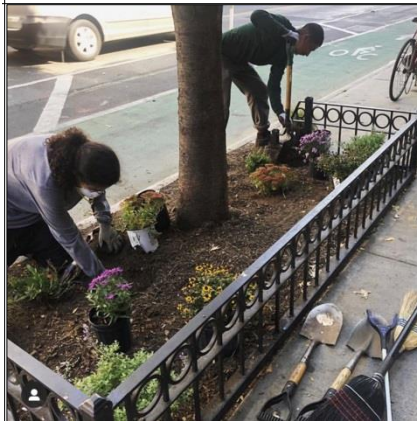




# Grand Street Neighborhood Initiative



Annual Report – June 2020



Grand Street Business Improvement District  
246 Graham Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11206  
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Dear Grand Street Community,

As we look back on the 2020 Fiscal Year, it's essential that we begin by acknowledging the challenges our community has faced in the past few months. While the coronavirus pandemic upended our small business community and shifted the regulatory landscape, our merchants have been resilient and adapted in so many ways to keep Grand Street open for business. Our small businesses owners have always been the foundation of what makes Grand Street special, and this pandemic served as yet another demonstration of that fact.

In mid-March, as New York elected officials began orders to reduce capacities and close businesses, the BID pivoted to absorbing new regulatory announcements and breaking them down for our district's stakeholders. We responded quickly by partnering with other BIDs to learn new best practices and secured pro bono financial and legal assistance for our businesses. We've kept up-to-date public listings of open businesses and shared information on how to support Grand Street merchants with our neighbors. It has been our aim to be a trusted, timely source of information for all of our stakeholders. As we move toward fully reopening, the BID will continue to support Grand Street businesses both in ways directly related to these unique challenges and through our more traditional means.

Even in the face of the crisis, our organization's core mission of creating a clean and welcoming district remains our highest priority. In recent weeks, we've overseen the installation of 20 new tree guards as well as infill and new plantings in our tree beds. Our street sweeping team continues to keep the sidewalks clear and, since the start of the pandemic, have been sanitizing street furniture, garbage bins, and other high-touch areas frequently. We look forward to being able to host events again, but until then we will continue to find inventive ways to encourage our neighbors to patron local businesses.

In the last year, we've also updated our communication strategy to better serve all audiences in our dynamically changing neighborhood. In October, we launched a new website for the first time since 2012, featuring our new Grand Street Neighborhood Initiative campaign. The new site allows us to publish stories, feature our videos, and highlight the work we do in the community. Most importantly, it serves as the central connector to our monthly newsletters, daily social media postings, and frequent on-the-street connections in a more comprehensive digital communications strategy. Because of these changes, we saw our website traffic double this year. Our commitment to building relationships with all of our stakeholders is unwavering and we take great joy in getting to know the people who call Grand Street home.

I'm proud of all the BID has accomplished in the last year. I hope that as you page through this Annual Report you also look back on the year with an appreciation for your role in shaping our neighborhood for the better. This work wouldn't be possible without the support of our business owners, property owners, and local residents. Thank you for your commitment to this community! I also want to thank my colleague, John Landzert. During his time here, John has been an amazing collaborator and works tirelessly to support the mission and work of the BID.

I look forward to a time when we can all gather together again in one of our favorite Grand Street businesses. I also look forward to all that is to come for Grand Street in the coming fiscal year. Please don't hesitate to be in touch. Community is more important now than ever.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Piscopink".

Erin Piscopink  
Executive Director  
Grand Street BID

The Grand Street BID is a nonprofit organization that serves the business community on Grand Street from Union to Bushwick Avenues in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. We advocate for the interests of the neighborhood; beautify, program, and market the district; and work to ensure that Grand Street continues to grow in its role as a thriving and vital corridor in the neighborhood.

## Greening

### Protecting our Greenery

The BID secured funding to oversee the installation of 20 new tree guards in the district. With this new round of guards the BID has protected all of our tree pits! New tree guards allow for us to plant flowers and greenery to beautify the neighborhood with fresh blooms.



### Planting Native Blooms

We teamed with The Horticultural Society of New York to plant Brooklyn native perennials with the help of additional funding from Council Member Reynoso. To combat the city summer heat we've connected with over 20 neighborhood volunteers to adopt tree pits and help keep our flowers watered and healthy.

### Recycling Neighborhood Waste

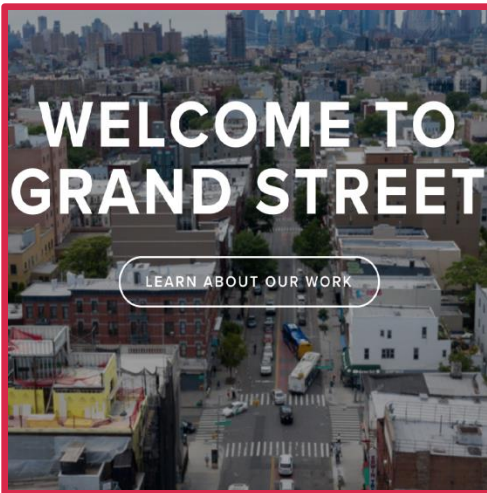
Our office doubles as a local center for neighbors to drop off e-waste and other recyclable materials. The BID continued our recycling program hosted by Grand Street businesses for residents to safely dispose of corks, batteries, clothes, and other recyclables.



# Stories

## Showing All our Angles

We hired a professional photographer to take high quality shots of Grand Street for use in our website and digital communications. With this archive we now have a rich library of photos to use showcasing the district.



## Building a New Website

We unveiled a new website in October to serve as a comprehensive connector for all of our digital communications. On the website we now host a blog, a gallery for our documentaries and art, real estate guides, and more.



## Connecting with Community Based Organizations

Our staff made trips to other business improvement districts throughout the City to learn from their programs and discuss strategies for placemaking unique to our commercial corridors. We bring those lessons back to Grand Street, allowing staff to see challenges from a new perspective.



## Launching our Neighborhood Initiative

In an effort to better illustrate the mission of the BID, we created new branding to divide our work into five categories: Cleaning, Greening, Events, Art, and Stories. At no cost to the BID, we received new logos, fonts, and brand guidelines to help provide clarity for the role of the BID in the neighborhood.

## Documenting Grand Street

We commissioned Owley to film our new mural installations last June as well as provide three short documentaries of life on Grand Street. Owley interviewed the artists, business owners, and residents in the process of filming.



## Art



## Celebrating Pride through Art

We partnered with Pride NYC and the Lisa Project to paint four murals honoring NYC hosting World Pride and the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Artists Damon Johnson, Paid, Paul Richard, and Ria Burns-Wilder with SINNED each left their unique impressions on the district.



## Partnering with Brooklyn Artists

Damon Johnson returned after the Pride mural project to paint a hummingbird mural on another business facade. We've worked to cultivate relationships with local artists to make Grand Street a home for curated street art.



## Businesses Brightening the Streetscape

Small businesses such as Chongkho, Crystal Lake, and Groomers & Pomade have commissioned their own gate murals to brighten the streetscape. The BID often serves as an intermediary to connect businesses and local artists.

# Events

## Showcasing Restaurants

We found success in our Summer and Winter Restaurant Weeks which highlight our diverse food scene with prix fixe, discounted menus. The events primarily serve to encourage customers to patron new businesses they perhaps wouldn't have tried otherwise. The events also garnered press attention from outlets such as The Wall Street Journal and News 12.



## Popping Up

BID staff took to the streets throughout the year to promote events and connect with local neighborhood shoppers. We distributed informational fliers while offering raffle games to engage with our neighbors and put a face to our organization.



## Preparing with Reusable Bags

In preparation for the NY State Bag Ban the BID worked with North Brooklyn Neighbors to collect branded reusable bags from businesses to distribute to local residents. The collection helped to advertise businesses while helping in the adjustment to a greener environmental policy.



## Collecting for our Holiday Food Drive

Throughout the holiday season, thirteen small businesses collected food donations from shoppers for the local food pantry at St. John the Evangelist. In total, businesses collected 509 lbs of non-perishable food to donate to local families.

## Glowing Up with Holiday Lights

In our annual holiday tradition, the BID strung decorative lights over the street to shine in the winter nights. This is the 35th straight year the BID has delivered holiday lights to the district.



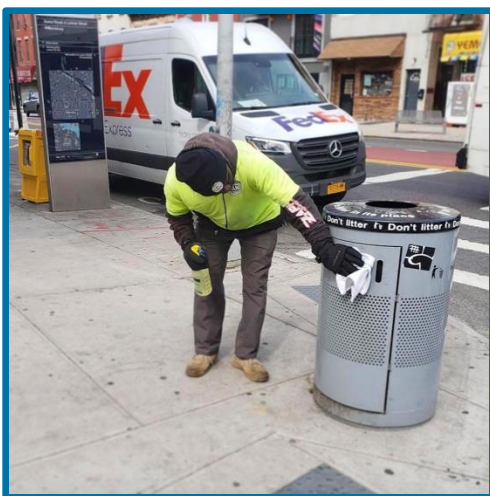
## Small Business Saturday

In celebration of the 10th annual Small Business Saturday event, the BID served as a neighborhood partner, distributing shop small swag to district merchants and residents. We were out on the street meeting neighbors, sharing cider and doughnuts, and encouraging shoppers to support small, local businesses.

# Cleaning

## Removing Graffiti

The BID removed 136 incidents of graffiti in the district through our partnership with Ridgewood Restoration funded by Council Member Reynoso. This is in addition to the BID team coating our murals with graffiti proof cover and hand-cleaning tags to protect our commissioned art works.



## Talking Trash

The BID collected over 5,700 bags of litter from the street this fiscal year in over 2,800 hours of cleaning efforts. At the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the BID also began increased sanitizing of high-touch areas such as trash cans and picking up disposed gloves and masks from the streets.

## A Year of Service on Grand Street By the Numbers

**24,000** website **visits**

**5,700** bags of **trash** collected

**600** new followers on **social media**

**60** planted **tree beds** maintained

**136** occurrences of **graffiti** removed

**20** additional **tree guards** installed

**2,800** hours of sidewalk **cleaning**

**7** promotional **events** hosted

**7** new **public art** installations

**17** new businesses **opened**

### Welcome to New Grand Street Businesses!

Carnival - 507 Grand Street

Brooklyn Brickhouse Vintage  
521 Grand Street

Ilash Studio - 527 Grand Street

BK Framers - 485 Lorimer

Chongkho - 562 Grand Street

La Taqueria - 572 Grand Street

Red Table Underground - 631 Grand Street

Tacos Lokos 4ever - 647 Grand Street

Dr. Rico - 648 Grand Street

BK Jani - 679 Grand Street

MC Prime Nail Spa - 700 Grand Street

Yadea E-Bike - 716 Grand Street

Tea Time - 749 Grand Street

Rome to Brooklyn - 755 Grand Street

Landline - 790 Grand Street

Masa Empanada - 804 Grand Street

Pastrami Masters - 812 Grand Street