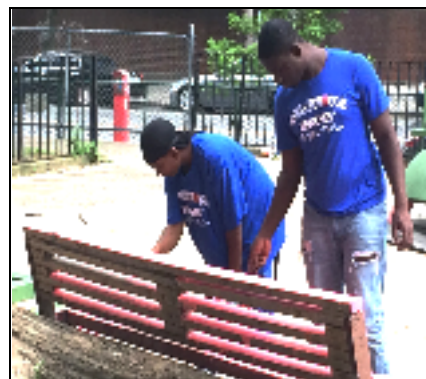




The Gift and the Curse

We have a surprise!

We're searching for **neighborhood and community leaders** to support our youth with their leadership skills and **community beautification** projects



The increasing economic inequality and residential segregation prevent neighbors from acting as neighbors, and as a result public safety and health continue to be an area of concern for communities. The under-resourced and underserved neighborhoods are in need of a place-based strategy that can beautify a community and build upon leadership step by step. As students we learned this to be true, and acknowledge how difficult it can be for community leaders to implement and sustain a place-based strategy inclusive to the community. Therefore, we designed a theory of change others can follow.

Aside from youth-adult relationship & development, our theory of change focus on five areas of leadership that influence change in individuals and within a community. In many cases the initiatives are viewed as a response to poverty and inequality. This can be a result of our build community strategy to partner with community agencies and allocate resources to improve community engagement and programs. However, our work builds upon natural strengths and leadership of individuals and communities, specifically those impacted by social problems.

During the summer our students put into practice what they've learned throughout the year by taking the lead as mentors and sharing experiences leading to their involvement

with Neighborhood Benches, Inc. In addition to this practice, we will invite our experiential learning college students for the same purpose. Some college students return to continue learning, provide support or to complete their college assignment. With these two approaches (summer and college) we're introducing our neighbors to students and the students are introducing neighbors to new strategies increasing the presence of leadership and teamwork. At the end, a collaborative project is completed to build community.

"There's nothing better than getting dirty together to build community and model change..."



Stepping out to Learn

Neighborhood Benches is a team of **thought partners** that model change for the **next-generation of leaders** to build community and leadership roles.

As part of our Multi-generational base-building strategies, we develop leadership and increase the ways of learning for our students. We do this by visiting or inviting leaders, educators and professionals to share their experiences and knowledge. The important lessons are taught when the process of transformation is shared. This practice assist with encouraging youth and young adults to take steps towards leadership roles inside and outside of their community. We do this through our: Operation Neighborhood Benches Project Initiative (ONBPI), Projects to College Pipeline Initiative, and The Experiential Learning program.

With our focus on these specific connections we drive change for students to practice new skills and build upon community changes that allow students and residents to work together on community projects. The inclusion of the neighborhood benches thought partners and associations create opportunities to "think outside of the box", utilize "what works" and transform the lives of community members seeking opportunities to make positive changes. At the end, we all leave with unforgettable experiences that shape our future.

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)
