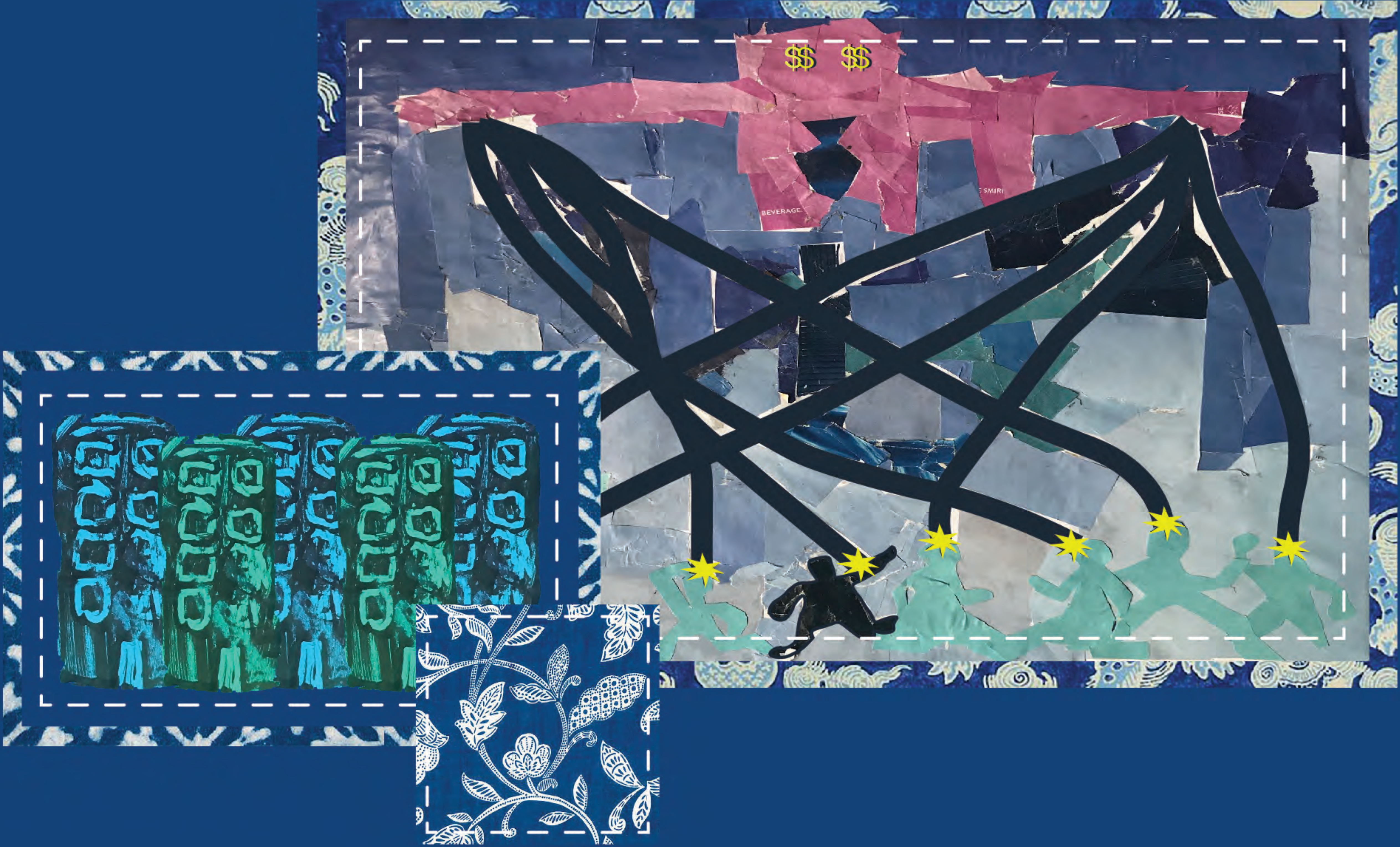


IS THERE A PATTERN?

Homelessness and Temporary Shelters in NYC



New York City must, by court order, provide temporary shelter to every person who asks. Currently, NYC spends about \$1.8 billion a year on shelters, apartments, hotel rooms, and programs.



What is homelessness?

How does the shelter system work?

How does homelessness impact the City?

What is the City's responsibility?



In the spring of 2019, CUP collaborated with Teaching Artist Gabriella Coll and public high school students at Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy (KAPPA) International High School in the Bronx to dig deep into the issue of homelessness. To investigate, students wove textiles to depict the cycle of homelessness, surveyed community members, visited a shelter, and interviewed key stakeholders working on the issue. This booklet is a guide to what students learned about homelessness in NYC and their ideas for shaping a different future.

What is homelessness?

“You have street homeless, you have shelter homeless, and you have people that are ‘housing insecure’ because your name is not on a lease and technically you are homeless.”

– Jermain Abdullah, Organizer, *Picture the Homeless*

John Sentigar



“Homelessness is not just the obvious stuff like seeing someone on the train. It’s people couch surfing, people who are going from place to place every night. Maybe they do have a roof over their head but it’s not theirs.”

– John Sentigar, Director of Development and Communications, *Covenant House*

“The state of homelessness in NYC is currently at record levels. We are experiencing the worst homelessness crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.”

– Jacquelyn Simone, Policy Analyst, *Coalition for the Homeless*

Jermain Abdullah



Facts about Homelessness in NYC (2018)

63,000

Number of homeless New Yorkers sleeping in shelters every night

23,000

Number of New York children sleeping in shelters every night

114,659

Number of NYC public school students that lived in temporary housing during the 2017–2018 school year

How do people become homeless?

There are many reasons why people become homeless. However, many experts agree that the lack of affordable housing is a major underlying cause.



Jacquelyn Simone

“We know that the primary drivers of homelessness are eviction, domestic violence ... severely overcrowded housing, or job loss. Those are all contributing factors. For a lot of people it's that they have one shock and that causes them to fall behind on their rent and lose their housing.”

– Jacquelyn Simone

Charmel Lucas



“We were in the system because of Hurricane Sandy... We really need a safety net for those that come on hard times... There should be a mechanism to pick people up. You shouldn't have to be in the system for six years.”

– Charmel Lucas, Organizer,
Picture the Homeless

“The main driver of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing. Simply put, the gap between incomes and rents has grown, and we see that there's not really any neighborhood in NYC with a sufficient supply of affordable housing.”

– Jacquelyn Simone

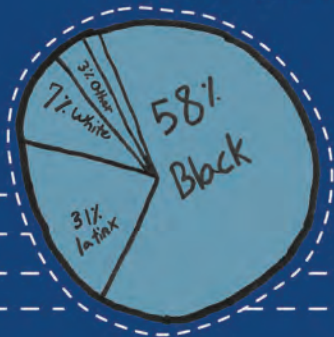


“[The City] says it's a homeless crisis. But it's not a homeless crisis. It's a housing crisis.”

– Jermain Abdullah

Black and Latinx People

Black and Latinx New Yorkers are disproportionately affected by homelessness.



LGBTQ Youth

“Being LGBTQ makes you 120% more likely to be a homeless young person than people who do not identify as LGBTQ. In fact, many of the youth that stay at [Covenant House] identify as LGBTQ. [Over] 40% of our entire homeless youth population [are LGBTQ].”

– John Sentigar

Who is most at risk?

People who face multiple forms of discrimination are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless.

Formerly Incarcerated People

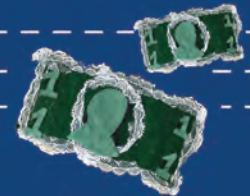
“[Formerly incarcerated people] come home and if they live in an [area] with a high crime rate, their parole officer [may] tell them they cannot live at that residence even though they have nowhere else to go.”

– Jermain Abdullah

Low Income Individuals

“If you are living paycheck to paycheck, at any time you can become homeless again... It’s more than getting a job – it’s about getting a decent job.”

– Jermain Abdullah



Encounters with the Shelter System

“If you’re a homeless [adult] you go to an intake center... You get placed where there’s an available bed. And that could mean that if you have a job in the Bronx where you’re from [but] you’re placed in a shelter in Far Rockaway.”

– John Sentigar

“[There is] the right to shelter for homeless people in New York City... The City can’t turn you away if the shelter is full – they have to find a shelter bed for you.”

– Jacquelyn Simone

Spotlight: The Bowery Mission

In Spring 2019, students met with James Macklin, Director of Outreach for The Bowery Mission.



Students reflected on their conversation with James and created artwork in order to process their experience.



James Macklin

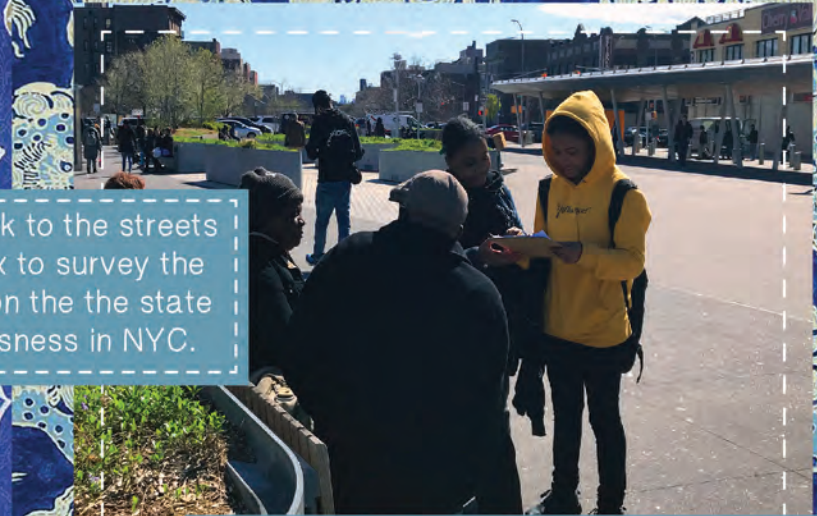


They toured the facility and met the staff.





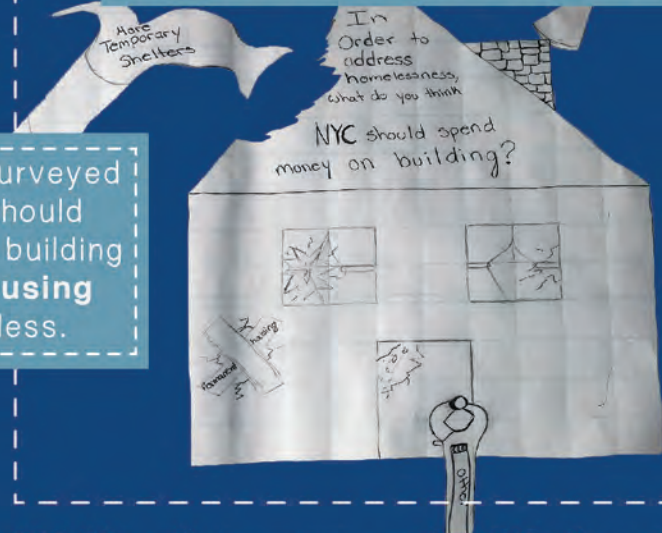
Students took to the streets of the Bronx to survey the community on the the state of homelessness in NYC.



Community



56% of people surveyed believe NYC should spend money on building **permanent housing** for the homeless.





90% of people surveyed believe the City is **not** doing enough to help people experiencing homelessness.



Surveys



Students studied the data they collected and used it to create infographic designs.

Weaving with Intention

To process and empathize with the topic of homelessness, students created a collaborative weaving in which they **Weaved with Intention** – a method in which materials and techniques are mindfully chosen in order to communicate complex emotions through textile art.

COMFORT

SHELTER



Students worked in groups to select a theme that they associated with the concept of home.





Using fabric, yarn, paper and found objects, groups chose colors, textures, and patterns to represent their ideas through weaving.

UNKNOWN & DISCOMFORT



Every design decision was intentional and helped convey a certain meaning.



DANGER



Students collaboratively decided on how to connect their work based on the way themes relate to one other.



HOME

How could it

Create Community Land Trusts

“One [solution] is something called a ‘Community Land Trust.’ The city owns a lot of property. Some of these buildings have been vacant for 50 years or more... If this land is given to a nonprofit they can come and build housing and the rents stay low for the people that need it.”

– Jermain Abdullah

View Housing as a Human Right


“We [need to] stop thinking about housing as a commodity or as a source of revenue and ... start thinking about it as a fundamental human right.”

– Jacquelyn Simone


Create More Affordable Housing

“There needs to be more of a push on the government level, on the city and state level, to mandate that affordable housing be created. Truly affordable housing meaning you pay [up to] 30% of whatever your income is and you get to live in a clean, safe apartment that fits you and your family[.]”


– John Sentigar



WE
Weed
Homes



B+S
A



be different?



Rehab Vacant Buildings

“Turn [vacant buildings] into housing and also bring in jobs for homeless folks [such as] electricians, plumbers, carpenters.”

– Charmel Lucas

Provide Permanent Housing for all People

“We really need to be thinking past shelter. We need to be thinking about how do we move people out of shelters faster, so that we don't have a system that's bursting at the seams and how do we move those people into permanent housing.”

– Jacquelyn Simone

Center Homeless People

“Speak to the people [who experience homelessness] before you make decisions for us. We are in the struggle... We know what we want. We know what we need.”

– Seth Stewart, Organizer, Picture the Homeless

Seth Stewart





"I would place more money into creating liveable, affordable homes."

– Praisia Ortiz, Student



"Homelessness is a terrible cycle that people struggle to get out of."

– Brianna Douglas, Student



Kenyon Cooper, Student

"[In my opinion] the government isn't doing much to help solve homelessness."

– Amanda Rapha, Student

What do



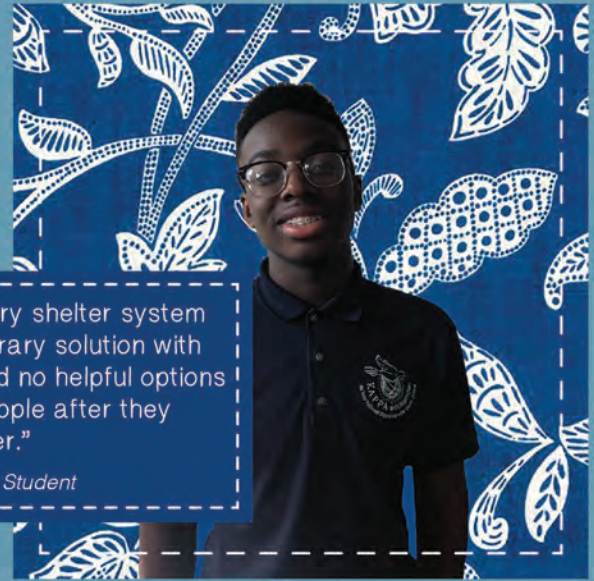
"People are suffering from being in the shelter system. More action needs to be taken."

– Hildaleez Pizzini, Student



“Homelessness is perpetual and has many root causes.”

– Jaylyn Brown, Student



“NYC’s temporary shelter system is only a temporary solution with limited beds and no helpful options to homeless people after they leave the shelter.”

– Brandon Downer, Student

students say?



“I learned that homelessness has been an enduring issue for over 50 years and has gotten worse in the last 10.”

– Nasser Troché, Student



“I would change things by giving people jobs so they could contribute to their community. If the money stays in the community, people will thrive.”

– Jaime Fowler, Student

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

This project is one of CUP's *Urban Investigations* – project based afterschool programs in which high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP and Teaching Artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the fields of arts and social justice. To learn more about CUP, visit welcometoCUP.org.



CUP

Teaching Artist: Gabriella Coll

Project Lead: Fielding Hong

Project Support: Leigh Taylor

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy (KAPPA) International High School

Principal: Panorea Panagiosoulis

Assistant Principal: Casey Smith

Students: Jaylyn Brown, Kenyon Cooper, Brianna Douglas, Brandon Downer, Jaime Fowler, Praisia Ortiz, Hildaleez Pizzini, Amanda Rapha, Nasser Troché

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