



March 2021

bwiny.org ▶

A NOTE FROM BWI

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Friend of BWI,

It's been a little over a year since the first outbreak of COVID-19 in NYC. Most of our lives look vastly different than they did a year ago, and the obstacles for low-income New Yorkers and communities of color that BWI serves have amplified.

Here's what we know as this crisis has continued to unfold:

- NYC's unemployment rate is currently more than 3x's pre-pandemic levels.
- Women are dropping out of the workforce at 4x the rate of men.
- At the peak of the pandemic, 1 in 4 New Yorkers could not afford to pay rent and 2 million were food insecure.

The fight towards recovery for our city and economy is far from over, but BWI will continue to do our part by training vulnerable New Yorkers for long-lasting careers in responsive and promising industries. In just over a year, we have connected 1,500 graduates with essential resources and placed 550 people into jobs since the start of the pandemic.

Thank you for taking the time to read about some of what we have been up to.

Stay safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ash", is written over a white background.

Aaron Shiffman
Executive Director

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Introducing Pratt Hannah:



A BWI Graduate Who Put His Technical Skills to Use During the Pandemic

As the pandemic continued to advance in NYC, Pratt's freelance video editing work had almost completely dried up. He was unemployed and felt like he didn't have any options. It wasn't until his friend told him about the "Made in NY" Post Production program at BWI that he began to see a brighter future for himself.

"If you want to work in the television and film industry but don't know how to start, this program is right for you," he said. Not only did Pratt expand his skill set and form valuable connections, but he appreciated the program's commitment towards diversity and inclusion for people of color like himself.

With support from BWI's instructors, Pratt got a job as a Post Production Assistant for an Emmy-award-winning television show: *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel!* Pratt didn't have the right equipment to start work virtually, so BWI drew from the *Francine A. LeFrak Tools of the Trade Fund* to purchase him a new computer. "This program opened doors that I couldn't open myself," he said.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Engaging Funders and Students in Remote World

Despite challenges from the pandemic, BWI has adapted quickly and found

ways to stay connected with trainees, graduates, and supporters. Earlier this month, our corporate partners at MUFG lent a hand during a virtual, mock interview event with trainees from BWI's Brooklyn Networks program.

Over Zoom, BWI paired trainees and MUFG volunteers to practice interviewing. Volunteers conducted two rounds of interviews, asking trainees questions about their experience and skills, and provided verbal and written feedback to help participants improve.

BWI's trainees took away from the experience both new skills and tips on interviewing, and the experience of completing an intimidating interview with a stranger. The volunteers were very impressed with the Brooklyn Networks team and students because of their professionalism and enthusiasm to learn. Great things are ahead for these graduates!

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Building Careers and Changing Lives with Red Hook on the Road



Red Hook on the Road is BWI's founding program that has touched the lives of thousands of New Yorkers since 1995.

This is a four-week training program that prepares 200-250 trainees every year for long-lasting careers in the commercial driving industry. Despite challenges from the ongoing pandemic in NYC, Red Hook on the Road has adapted and transitioned to a hybrid training model that relies on both in-person and virtual instruction. Students engage in intensive behind-the-wheel training and work on soft skills curriculum online via Zoom.

Once graduates are licensed, they are ready to begin working different commercial driving jobs throughout the city. Currently, there is a high demand for school-bus driving jobs as we slowly transition back to in-person activities.

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)



Brooklyn Workforce Innovations
621 Degraw Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217

P: 718-237-2017
F: 718-237-5366
info@bwiny.org