

# experimental station

building independent cultural infrastructure

## Redesign at Blackstone Bikes

2019 was a year of change for Blackstone Bicycle Works. With the goal of creating a more impactful, accessible, and in-depth experience, Blackstone redesigned our youth program curriculum. From a drop-in, learn-as-you-go model, we moved toward a more intentional class and workshop model, developing a series of after-school classes, two summer programs, and community outreach workshops. Through these, we're expanding and solidifying the fundamental skills that youths must master to advance through our apron levels—from gray (just walked in the door) to green, red, purple and black (employable mechanic). Besides learning mechanic and business skills to earn the next apron level, youths learn bicycle advocacy, safety, and cycling skills as well. Through this we hope our youths become well-rounded cyclists, mechanics, bike enthusiasts, and advocates.

This past summer Blackstone offered both a 15-hours per week teen enrichment program and our first ever Bike Camp. In addition to developing their apron skills, over 8 weeks, teens participated in field trips, bike physics and engineering workshops, and a college prep workshop. Younger Bike Camp participants enjoyed group rides, field trips, bike-related art, and STEM activities.

During the school year, youths ages 8-18 can now enroll in a variety of skill-based classes, including Earn A Bike, Gear Up 1, or Gear Up 2 (for teens) classes. Each of these allows youths to explore and develop their skills as well as participate in group rides, field trips, and bike building.



*Dancer/vocalist Ugochi Nwaogwugwu performing in Axolotl: Masters of Regeneration created with April/May Stillwell Institute artist-in-residence Andrea Wukitsch*

These changes come with a renewed commitment to creating an inclusive community that centers on Black youth from Woodlawn and the surrounding neighborhoods. Moving into 2020 the bike shop is excited to see how we grow!

## Universal Link Match is Here!

In 2019, Experimental Station's Link Up Illinois program funded, trained, and provided technical support to 103 farmers markets and mobile market sites across the state, enabling them to implement Link Match at their markets. With Link Match, Link purchases at participating markets are matched up to \$25 each market day. This year saw not only the greatest number of markets participating in Link Match since Link Up Illinois' inception in 2011,

but for the first time, Link Match became a transferable currency that could be earned at one market and spent at any other participating market throughout Illinois.

The creation of a transferable, universal Link Match is an exciting next step as we work toward building a strongly branded, statewide network of Link Up Illinois partner market sites. For Link customers, being able to spend Link Match at any participating market contributes greatly to the program's convenience and, we anticipate, will further increase Link Match use.

Over the summer, with support from the USDA and in partnership with CBS' Community Partnership Division, Experimental Station was able to provide a six-week targeted television and social media advertising campaign, building awareness of the availability of Link Match statewide. The 'I Link Match' promotion appears to have had an impact. The City markets showed a 400% increase in Link and Link Match sales the week following the start of the campaign!

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# Letter from the Executive Director

*Dear friend,*

*How do you value an ecosystem?*

*Environmental economists now speak of 'ecosystem services,' in their effort to place a dollar value on the benefits that we gain from properly functioning natural ecosystems. What they grapple with is the challenge of identifying the innumerable relationships inherent to a healthy, complex system.*

*The same can be said of healthy social and cultural ecosystems.*

*For the past 13 years, Experimental Station has been building a rich and diverse ecosystem of culturally, socially, and artistically significant programs at 6100 S. Blackstone. These range from Blackstone Bicycle Works, to the 61st Street Farmers Market, to our Arts & Events programming, to Link Up Illinois and our City Markets Link program, and to our small business and cultural producer incubation. While we can budget and account for our individual programs, placing specific values on salaries and supplies, it is impossible to account for the value of the countless relationships built, ideas and resources shared, lives enhanced, health improved, talents fostered, advice given, hugs and cheers provided, feelings of belonging gained....*

*As you read these pages, I hope that you will see that Experimental Station is more than the sum of its parts. Experimental Station is, intentionally, a diverse and complex ecosystem enriched by the myriad relationships that we have formed—and that have formed us—over the past 13 years. We invite you to be part of our ecosystem—whether as a donor, a volunteer, a collaborator, a guest or a customer. We value the benefits you bring.*

*Sincerely,  
Connie Spreen  
Executive Director*

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## It's All Sunshine at the 61st Street Farmers Market

The Midwest may have had more than its share of precipitation this summer, but our 61st Street Farmers Market bathed in sunshine almost every market day this season. Sunshine, along with longstanding favorites and exciting new vendors, brought out the customers. We topped all previous attendance records by 500 in a single day! Earnest Earth

Farm, Montelimar Bakery, and Rubi's Tacos—three 2019 additions—contributed to that growth with their super-fresh locally grown produce, tempting breads and pastries, and worth-waiting-in-line-for tacos and quesadillas.

Such an increase in customers is important, as it allows the Market to add vendors and products, while en-

suring that our current farmers and vendors continue to grow. Farmers markets in Chicago's South and West Sides are less likely to draw and keep top farmers and producers. It is critical to the Market's future—and to our community's access to the freshest and healthiest foods in the region—that we collectively support our farmers and vendors. Rain or shine!

## New Staff



**Brigid Maniates** became our Finance and HR Administrator in July. She comes to Experimental Station with years of non-profit administration experience. Most recently she was the general manager of Qumbya Housing Cooperative. She also knows how to fix a dishwasher!



**Kevin Applewhite** became the Lead Mechanic at Blackstone in January. He makes sure all repairs get done, helps walk-in customers, and does bike builds. Before joining the Blackstone staff, Kevin worked at the University of Chicago ReCycles program, at the Chicago Park District teaching bike safety and repair, and at bike shops in Houston, Texas (including Urban Bicycle Gallery).

## Spotlight on Kevin Applewhite

**What brought you to Blackstone?**

*I think it was 2008, maybe a little earlier than that. I wanted a bike, just so I could ride around with my friends. My mom couldn't afford it, so I found out about Blackstone, came down, got the paperwork, filled it out, came back to the shop, and before you know it, I was here forever. That was the initial thing that got me here.*

*My friend JT, he showed me a lot. He was the pioneer. A lot of my cycling stuff came from him. He was the first to ride track; he was the first to ride cyclocross, all of that stuff. Seeing him do it made me want to do it. That was my best friend. We did a lot of stuff together. It was dope and got me more into cycling.*

*And then it was just the people here. Having Chris and Aaron as mentors. They were really instrumental in me sticking to biking and for real, if it wasn't for them, I probably wouldn't even be dealing with bikes anymore. They were my backbone. They helped me a lot—in this industry and life. That's really it.*

*What brought me here and what's keeping me is really just the same stuff, the same values—it's a family shop. We're not really family, but we are family. We've known each other for years. Everybody grew up under this roof. We've been through a lot, and we've met a lot of people and added that to that family and made it bigger. It's a part of you. So, in a sense, I feel like this shop is a part of me. When I lived in Texas every time I came back this is probably the first place I touched down to make sure I came to see everybody. Because, like I said, it's like family. This is my home.*



Top: Artist-in-residence Dorothee Munyaneza (Rwanda/France) speaking to community members. Her new work involves alumni from Blackstone Bicycle Works and the Invisible Institute. Bottom: Market volunteer Laurel leads a chef demo showing Market shoppers how to make bruchetta with local vegetables!

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## 10-Year Partnership with the City

Since 2010, Experimental Station has partnered with the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural and Special Events (DCASE) to provide Link service for the City of Chicago's farmers markets. From 5 markets in the first year, to as many as 22 markets in 2015 and 11 markets in 2019, the Experimental Station team has been a welcome presence at the City markets, accepting Link payments for vendors and matching those Link benefits up to \$25 per cardholder per market day. "When we first began working with DCASE back in 2010, we were humbled and amazed at the level of interest by the public and vendors for Link access," recalls Corey Chatman, Senior Program Manager. "Today I am again humbled and amazed, as nearly 40 farmers market locations across Chicago now accept Link and Link Match."

For Experimental Station, this key partnership has made it possible over the years to test out innovative initiatives. One such initiative was 'Eat Up!', a program where we provided Link customers their health metrics at ten markets across the city and rewarded customers with free fruits and vegetables each time they participated. In 2018, with solid experience managing a universal, transferable Link Match currency at the City markets, we were able to test out a universal, transferable Link Match currency at almost 40 Link Up partner markets across Chicago—an initiative that went statewide in 2019.

As a result of our 10-year partnership with the City, Chicago's farmers markets have become welcoming spaces that serve everyone. We are proud to have led that transformation.

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## It Takes a Great Teacher!

Since its inception, the 61st Street Farmers Market has provided food education as part of its mission to ensure that everyone in our community has real access to fresh and healthy foods. Through our food education programming, we aim to make eating healthy desirable. So, we start with the kids!

Each year, the Market provides healthy eating, gardening, and after-school cooking classes to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students at CPS' Carnegie Elementary School. For the past eight years, the success of our Carnegie School food education program has largely been due to the commitment and enthusiasm of 3rd grade teacher, Ms. Caffie.

### What keeps you so supportive of and enthusiastic about the gardening and nutrition classes?

Ms. Caffie: What's not to be supportive about?!? With everything wrong with the foods we eat, I think it's important to offer and teach healthy eating habits to the babies.

They are exposed to fast foods—every day, all day—so it's important to show them that they can also put nutritious things in their bodies that also happen to be good for you and

actually taste good. The program does a great job with this!

### What values and lessons do you think the kids take away from the classes?

Ms. Caffie: I think they [unlearn] the misconception that vegetables are all, in their words, "yucky." It teaches them to try new things and exposes them to healthy choices that may be uncommon in their household, like sorrel and hummus.

### What are some of your favorite moments or stories from gardening classes through the years?

Ms. Caffie: My absolute favorite gardening moment was when we had a harvesting night with the parents in 2015. The students were uber excited to show their parents what they had been growing. They were coming in to school nearly everyday that week talking about what their parents had made using the harvested vegetables.

I also enjoy the tastings the students have. It's amusing to see them make grossed out faces, try it, and actually like it.



*Ms. Caffie and one of her students harvesting lettuce from our hoop house!*

# Blackstone Does Bicycle Science

There is a lot of science involved in bicycling. Thanks to a partnership with the University of Chicago Department of Physics started in 2015, this summer, Blackstone Bicycle Works middle and high schoolers were introduced to a host of basic physical principles behind riding a bike. Graduate students Colin Scheibner and Mike van der Naald provided eight fun, hands-on workshops promoting confidence and excitement about physics while cultivating scientific habits of thinking and problem solving.

Repurposed plastic water bottles were turned into high-flying rockets powered by a bike pump—teaching youths about air pressure, linear momentum, and aerodynamics. In the Egg Drop workshop, youths used a variety of materials to protect eggs dropped from a ladder, learning about the physics behind impact and the importance of wearing a helmet. Through two building-your-own-electric-car workshops, youths were exposed to basic circuits and electronics, while the marble roller coaster provided a lesson in the energetics of hills, gravity, and rolling. They discovered the physics of sound by building their own speakers out of wire, coils, magnets, and plastic cups, while the oobleck lesson demonstrated that some materials do not fit easily into the solid, liquid, gas classifications of matter, leading to discussions about the microscopic and macroscopic differences between the various phases. Of course, making liquid nitrogen ice cream to demonstrate phase changes and energy transfer was a very popular lesson to end the summer!



*Top: Workshop participants going over a circuit diagram for the miniature electric cars they designed and raced!*

*Center: Youths learned the importance of wearing a helmet by seeing the difference between a jello brain fall from the top of a ladder with and without a helmet!*

*Bottom: Blackstone youths had lots of fun racing each other on a standing bike attached to a generator that can charge phones!*

# Link Up Illinois Brings Link Match to Food Co-ops

Expanding Link Up Illinois' Link Match program to food co-operatives seemed like a natural fit. Sourcing local and sustainable produce, food cooperatives meet Link Up Illinois' aim to provide affordable healthy food while supporting local farmers. In fact, according to National Co-op Grocers, the average co-op purchases from 51 local farms and 106 local produce producers.

Thus in 2019, we were excited to introduce Link Match at the Sugar Beet Food Co-op in Oak Park, Illinois. Joining the Neighborhood Co-op Grocery in Carbondale, Green Top Grocery in Bloomington, and the Dill

Pickle Food Co-op in Chicago, the Sugar Beet Food Co-op now provides a \$25 per day match on Link purchases. While Link may be used for purchases of any Link-eligible foods, Link Match may only be used for purchases of locally grown produce, identified by special 'Link Match' signage.

We have been impressed time and again by the co-ops' commitment to overcoming challenges, promoting the program, working with local producers, and making Link Match a visible feature of their produce departments.



# Learning To Think Like Engineers

How do engineers think? And what do they think about? Led by artist and designer Amanda Berry and biochemist/molecular biologist Dr. Stephanie Larson, Blackstone youths learned this past summer what engineering is, the forms that it takes, and how it is present in all of the objects that surround us. Using the bike shop as their laboratory, youths assessed their work space and participated in engineering-based problem solving around how to make the space more efficient. Bicycling to engineered places like the Chicago River—the flow of which was reversed to prevent the city's pollution from flowing into the lake—and the Wired For Wear exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, youths experienced engineering and design at different levels. From robotics to genetics to civil engineering to art, they learned that engineering is fundamental to our world.

*Top: A visit to the Sugar Beet Food Co-op  
Bottom left: Market manager Wendy inspecting some Bike-a-Bee bees during a market school lesson.*

*Bottom right: From July-October, the Market offered a Saturday shuttle for elderly Jackson Park Terrace, Park Shore East, and St. Edmund's Haven residents.*



# Partnerships Enrich Blackstone Youth Experience

Thanks to our deepening partnerships in the cycling community, Blackstone Bicycle Works youths had an exciting summer of cycling! The Blackstone Race Team raced at the Northbrook Velodrome through the FixXie Racing program, developed in partnership with xXx Cycling. By having consistent access to racing at the Northbrook Velodrome, Blackstone rider and team captain KeJuan Smith won the 2019 state championship in Scratch, Keirin, and Points racing categories. We hope to continue the FixXie program in 2020, sharing the track with our youths and diversifying the Juniors field in track cycling.

In addition to our work with xXx Cycling, Blackstone also solidified its partnership with Out Our Front Door (OOFD), a non-profit organization dedicated to camping and adventuring by bike. In the summer of 2018, Blackstone participated in OOFD's inaugural youth ride to the Indiana Dunes. In 2019, Blackstone youths took part in two summer bike camping trips—a shorter ride open to younger participants, and a longer ride that tested our youths' riding stamina as well as their ability to adapt to challenges. So much adventure, all while experiencing the great outdoors and learning about Illinois' changing ecosystems!



*Top left: A youth showing off one of their engineered creations!*

*Top right: Shock and awe at finding mushrooms on the trail during a trip with Out Our Front Door.*

*Center: Blackstone youths ride marshalled for the Newberry Library tour of the 1919 race riots.*

*Lower center left: KeJuan won the state championships in three separate track racing categories!*

*Lower center right: Dominique won the youth womens state cyclocross championship a year after her brother Maxwell won the cat 5 state championship!*

*Bottom: The bike shop awaiting their appearance on the Steve Harvey Show!*



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# Arts and Events at the Experimental Station

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## Sustaining Engagement

Experimental Station is investing in building arts infrastructure with a focus on supporting emerging and under-represented Black artists. With over 80 performances, screenings, exhibitions, and convenings in 2019, we've amplified more voices than ever before. These two profiles feature relationships Experimental Station has nurtured over the past year that exemplify the unique ways we foster the arts on Chicago's South Side.



*To The Sea by Nik Whitcomb*

This year, Experimental Station incubated the pilot artist residency program of the **Stillwell Institute for Contemporary Black Art**, a new non-profit founded by Carla Stillwell in February, through funding from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation. The mission of the Stillwell Institute is to recruit, develop, and support contemporary Black artists and to teach art making in the Black community as a healing practice, a vehicle for social change, and a viable career opportunity. The Stillwell Institute's residency invites emerging Black artists to present original works developed on-site over the course of two months. Residents are paired with a mentor who guides their process as well as offers a master class for the artist and their peers. April/May resident **Andrea Wukitch** developed *AXOLOTL*, a contemporary dance piece exploring "the journey through the broken heart of a Black woman and the ways in which she must regenerate herself to remain whole." July/August resident **Nik Whitcomb** devised *To The Sea*, a musical experiment evoking the trans-Atlantic crossing. Carla shares that "The Stillwell Institute for Contemporary Black Art has been so privileged to be in residence at Experimental Station. Having a home base in our inaugural year has been beneficial to our ability to have safe space for our artists to create and to have a beautiful location around which to build our audience base and community support."



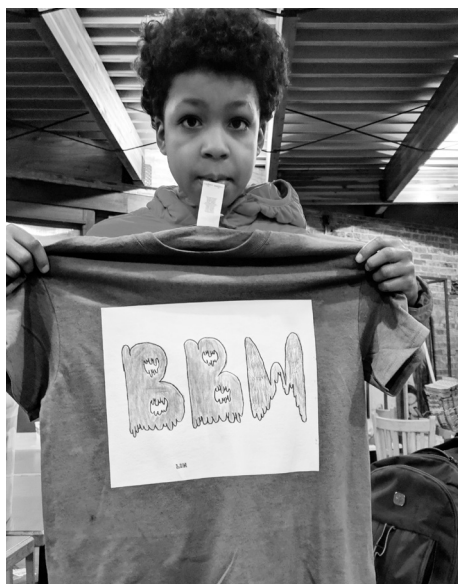
*Angel Bat Dawid performing in WHPK's Pictures and Sounds series in March. (photo credit: Adrian Mandeville)*

Multi-instrumentalist and composer **Angel Bat Dawid** has become a kind of resident artist of Experimental Station. Over the past year, Angel has performed solo clarinet, improvised with untrained community members and her group *Tha Brothahood*, brought existing programming, played with many of her collaborators, and guest hosted for our other programs. Angel states, "I choose to bring projects to Experimental Station because I get the support I need to execute my ideas in the best way possible. And the freedom to express myself and explore many different levels of my creativity." *Self Care = Resistance* is a project Angel developed with vocalist *Julian Otis* to explore music-making with the community as a form of self care. While at Experimental Station, the project has responded to and incorporated the people and activity in the building. It has taken on the forms of a hush harbor, a celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day, a gathering in the midst of a pine forest, and an exploration of art therapy strategies to live music. Having Angel as a long-term collaborator enriches not only our projects with her, but all of our community arts engagement.



## Annual Bike Shop Art Show Turns Into Temporary Store

Our annual Bike Shop Art Show is always quite an affair. This year, guests entered a vibrant retail space filled with t-shirts, tote bags, journals, posters, and buttons—all co-produced by our youths. To produce these bike-themed products, teaching artists Concitta Cavin and Michelle E.L. Merritt led 15 youths in a 10-week workshop series teaching both design and business skills. Youths learned about budgeting, marketing, and product design, while reflecting on Blackstone's unique cycling culture. The pop-up shop extended the retail space of the bike shop, truly combining art and business. The opening featured performances by violinist Windy Indie, artist/puppeteer Sam Lewis, and sculptor/percussionist Sura Dupart, who incorporated the sounds of a balloon hitting bicycle spokes into his performance.



Top: Teaching Artist Michelle E.L. Merritt speaking to the team moments before the opening of the pop-up shop.  
Center: Display of tote bags, t-shirts, buttons, and posters designed by youths in collaboration with teaching artists and volunteers.  
Bottom left and center: Blackstone youths showing off the shirts they made for the Bike Shop Art Shop.  
Bottom right: Thanks to a generous donation from Busy Beaver Button Co., youths made dozens of custom hand made buttons!

# Annual Block Party

What has now become an August tradition, this year's Blackstone Summer Block Party brought together more partners and community members than ever before. Led by Youth For Black Lives and Backyard Series, they all gathered to share resources in a safe and celebratory learning environment.

Upon arriving, guests could sign up for 30-minute workshops that ran several times throughout the event. Among them were workshops on New Orleans bounce dancing, slam poetry, fashion photography, painting, making balanced snacks, and gender roles and identity.

Guests then encountered informa-

tion booths and activities from community partners, including Carnegie Elementary robotics, Blackstone Bicycle Works, a Chicago Park District queer initiative, Major Taylor Cycling Club, and Girl Scouts. We partnered again with local organizer Porscha James to provide a large back-to-school supply giveaway offering basic supplies to 100 kids. Co-organizer, performer, and professional barber, Ano Banks, also offered free haircuts throughout the event.

DJs and live music kept the party going. The block party showcased 12 emerging musicians and a dance collective. In the two weeks leading up to the block party, the founder of Syn-

ergy, an all-femme Chicago hip-hop collective, Jovan Landry, and vocalist Sunde hosted a hip-hop techniques workshop for 16-24 year old femme-identifying individuals. The resulting music video was screened at the block party to a huge crowd along with live performances by Synergy members and workshop participants.

The block party is emerging as a signature event for Experimental Station and a community asset, activating the quiet street we share with Carnegie Elementary School to create a platform for artists, a safe space for shared learning, and a wonderful way to meet up with our neighbors and friends.



Top left: Tee Spirit and Jovan Landry (left) of the Synergy Collective performing at the Block Party.

Bottom left: Queering the Parks initiative shared about their efforts to make Chicago's Park District more queer-centered.

Top right: Co-organizer, musician, and professional barber Ano Banks gave out free kids haircuts the whole day.

Bottom right: Incredibly popular school supply giveaway organized by Porscha James with support from organizers Youth for Black Lives and Backyard Series.



*Top left: Kristian Espinoza and Julian Otis preparing for Self Care = Resistance.*  
*Top right: Printmaker Yoo A. Kang (right) discussing her work about U.S. imperialism in Korea, being an immigrant, and being a parent of a person of color in conversation with her child Taeyin (left).*  
*Center left: Synergy collective at the premier of their music videos at ES in January.*  
*Center right: Norman Teague (right) designed “screens” from found materials for a Fugal Systems building-wide music experiment designed by Jordan Martins (left).*  
*Bottom left: Improvised movement performance by Project Tool (photo credit: Ally Almore)*

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# Experimental Station Business Incubation

Experimental Station's **Small Business Incubation** program provides discounted rents, technological and administrative assistance, and a broad network of relationships to a number of socially and culturally relevant non-profits and small businesses each year. In 2019, we provided discounted rent for office and retail space to the Invisible Institute, City Bureau, South Side Weekly, Build Coffee, and Civic Projects, as well as fiscal sponsorship to South Side Weekly and Borderless.

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## Build Coffee

Build Coffee is a coffee shop and bookstore in the Experimental Station. It aims to serve as the public's casual daytime access point to the many goings-on of the building, and is designed as a hub of great coffee and radical collaboration. Build celebrated its second birthday this past June.

Saturdays during the 61st Street Farmers Market are always bustling at the shop, and this summer Build rolled out a weekend menu of decked-out bagels and lox, house quick-pickled cukes, and dressed avocado. As Build has settled into a second year of business, it has continued to expand its catering operation and now sends pastries, platters, and hot coffee and tea out all over Woodlawn and Hyde Park. For the cold winter months, caramel apple cider is back on the menu!

Build has continued several series of events: along with regularly hosting City Bureau's Public Newsroom, they've showcased local artists and small business owners all summer as part of a Saturday vendor pop-up series and host The Experiment, a monthly open mic on first Mondays hosted by barista Davon Clark.

The shop's Meal-Based Residency Program—where a local artist displays their work in the shop, hosts events, and is provided with food and drink—received a huge swell of applications for its second cycle. The current show, up through January, is large-scale textile art by Hyde Park artist Claire Zurkowski of Lattice Textile Studio.

For future events, menu updates, and new literary arrivals, follow Build on social media or visit [buildcoffee.org](http://buildcoffee.org).

## City Bureau

City Bureau, a civic journalism lab focused on racial equity and government transparency, kicked off 2019 by launching Documenters.org. This new website is a powerful tool for people in Chicago and Detroit (and soon, Northeast Ohio) to find information on government meetings in a centralized, searchable database. It was the first step in a big year of growth for the Documenters program, which trains and pays people from all walks of life to document these meetings and create a new public record—now averaging about 18 assignments per week in Chicago.

Elsewhere in City Bureau, the Public Newsroom team hosted two well-attended free events at the Experimental Station, including "Reporting on Race and Riots—1919 to Today," in collaboration with the Newberry Library's 100-year commemoration of Chicago's 1919 race riot. The Public Newsroom also celebrated its 100th installment with a big dance party, featuring Chic-A-Go-Go and Joseph Chilliams.

City Bureau trained two cohorts of reporting fellows this year, covering issues from racist home lending practices to the census to Woodlawn development. Fellows in the spring cohort produced a special issue of Austin Weekly News about Black maternal health and launched a series of engagement projects, including a text-message info line, which is now run by the wonderful folks at Chicago Birthworks Collective. And, the fellowship team cohosted a Reporting on Trauma panel with South Side Weekly to discuss how journalists can take a trauma-informed approach while telling important stories about difficult topics.

## Invisible Institute

In 2019, the Invisible Institute produced *16 Shots* (directed by Rick Rowley), a feature-length documentary on the Laquan McDonald case that premiered on Showtime in June 2019. In collaboration with the London-based human rights group Forensic Architecture, they also investigated the police killing of Harith Augustus in South Shore. As part of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, the investigation is presented as a six-video installation in Peterman Studio until January 2020. Along with *The Intercept*, they published an expanded reporting series, the "Chicago Police Files." The Invisible Institute also published a public database of decertified police officers across 44 states and a collection of Brady lists from police and prosecutors in thousands of counties across the US, as part of a "Tarnished Brass" series in *USA Today*. Additionally, *Somebody*, a podcast series that follows a mother who investigates her son's homicide, will come in winter 2020.

Beyond their investigations, the Invisible Institute continued their Youth/Police Project, and even brought several alumni to the National African American Museum of History and Culture in Washington D.C. They also created a complaint intake management system for the New Orleans independent police monitor.

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## South Side Weekly

In 2019, South Side Weekly continued to grow its operations and expand its programming with financial support from PEN America and the McCormick Foundation, culminating in an open call for their first paid editorial position.

At the start of the year, thanks to the support of PEN America and individual donors, the Weekly rolled out a series of workshops on fundamental journalism skills like interviewing, fact-checking, feature writing, data mapping, and more, taught by Weekly staff and outside journalists such as WBEZ's Cate Cahan, Weekly board member and writer Ben Austen, and Chalkbeat's Adeshina Emmanuel. Following the initial success of the series, the Weekly received additional funding from PEN America to continue the series through the end of the year and into 2020.

The Weekly also began fundraising in earnest for general operating support and was selected to receive a \$50,000 grant from the McCormick Foundation to expand editorial capacity and operations. With this

grant, the Weekly was able to make an open call for a part-time paid editor-in-chief, a first for the Weekly.

The Weekly's Board of Directors saw two new additions: Harry Backlund, director of operations at City Bureau and a previous publisher of the Weekly, and Kirsten Smith, a public policy consultant.

2019 also saw the Weekly's staff make a concerted effort to think about the governance and financial structure of the organization and take steps toward democratizing the paper and setting down a foundation for clear lines of collective decision-making and governing.

In 2019, the Weekly was a finalist for nine Peter Lisagor Awards, a record for the paper; we redesigned our website for the first time since the founding of the paper; and we put together one of the largest Best of the South Side issues, featuring over a hundred restaurants, parks, museums, bars, stores, and more, driven by residents of South Side neighborhoods.

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## Borderless

This fall, 90 Days, 90 Voices NFP changed its name to Borderless Magazine and launched a new standalone website at [www.borderlessmag.org](http://www.borderlessmag.org). The website and name will allow the news outlet to continue to grow in years to come and fulfill its mission of reimagining immigration journalism for a more just and equitable future.

The change came as the organization wrapped up a yearlong reporting series on asylum seekers, called Asylum City. The series included five feature stories, a poster campaign, and a mega feature centered on the voices of six asylum seekers living in the Chicago area. If you'd like to put up Asylum City posters in your neighbor-

hood or office, please contact them at [info@borderlessmag.org](mailto:info@borderlessmag.org).

The organization also expanded its media training program this year. Executive Director Nissa Rhee made the organization's first out-of-state trip to speak at the University of Wisconsin at Madison about Borderless' unique ethical guide to reporting on immigration. Finally, the organization was honored to be finalists for two Peter Lisagor awards this year from the Chicago Headline Club for their reporting on Little Village, including the prize for Best In-depth Reporting in a Community Newspaper and Best In-depth Report or Series.



*The South Side Weekly's Monday production nights can often go quite late!*

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## Civic Projects

Civic Projects is an architecture firm with a social impact focus. This past year has been a time of immense growth, as they have added two new architects to their staff. Civic Projects has continued working as part of the Obama Presidential Center Museum Design Team, in addition to taking on a number of other exciting projects. In February, they began working with Flood's Hall—an organization dedicated to supporting cultural, environmental, and social justice efforts on Chicago's South Side—to design their community living room on 53rd Street. Most recently, Civic Projects was chosen as lead architect for Global Citizenship Experience (GCE) Lab School's downtown campus. GCE has a unique, sustainability-driven curriculum that calls for a forward-looking and collaborative environment. Civic Projects looks forward to realizing the many aspirations they have for their new space.

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# Grants, Individual Donors, and Foundation Support

November 2018 – October 2019

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## \$300,000+

USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives (FINI) Program

## \$75,000 - \$150,000

The Builders Initiative  
City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events  
The Greer Foundation

## \$30,000 - \$74,999

Anonymous  
Paul M. Angell Family Foundation  
The Chicago Community Trust  
Clifford and Lavonne Graese Foundation

Lyft, Inc.  
Polk Bros. Foundation  
Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust

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## \$15,000 - \$29,999

Harper Court Arts Council  
Kanter Family Foundation  
Albert Pick Jr. Fund

## \$5,000 - \$14,999

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
BMO Harris Bank  
Helen Brach Foundation  
Chapin-May Foundation of Illinois  
Charles Custer  
Conagra Foundation  
John and Mary Douglas  
Martin and Peggy Friedman  
Steve Harvey Show  
League of Chicago Theatres Foundation and ComEd  
McGraw Foundation

## \$1,000 - \$4,999

Anonymous  
Michael Alper and Helyn Goldenberg  
Chicago Cuttin' Crew  
Evanston Bicycle Club  
Jay Dandy and Melissa Weber  
Fermata Foundation  
Michelle and Glenn Holland  
Emmitt House  
Thomas Inglis and Eileen Flynn  
Kalum Johnson

Kasey Klipsch and Angela Sherrill  
Brian Luerssen  
Gail and Andrew Marks  
Network for Good  
Planet Bike  
Provision Cycling, LLC  
SRAM  
T. Rowe Price Program for Charitable Giving

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## On the Horizon in 2020

We can feel it. 2020 is going to be a banner year! Here are a few of the new projects and initiatives we are planning for the year ahead:

- Having run out of space in our current facility, Experimental Station will be launching a Capital Campaign to build a second building next door. We aim to create more space for Blackstone Bicycle Works, new arts programming, and more non-profits seeking to join our mutually supportive community.
- Link Up Illinois will be holding its first Chef Potluck fundraiser on Sunday, May 31, 2020. It will raise funds to enable over 100 farmers markets across Illinois to offer Link Match programs, making the healthy foods sold at farmers markets affordable for Link recipients.
- With support from the USDA, the 61st Street Farmers Market will offer a Market Vendor Training Course for young people from the South Side, teaching them how to become sellers at farmers markets.

## Support Our Work

It is only with the financial support of our community that Experimental Station is able to do all that we do. Both our stability and agility are ensured by the gifts of our generous donors. We thank you for your past support and hope that you will continue to support us as we go forward.

Experimental Station is not only supported by financial gifts, but also the gift of time. We are deeply grateful for our volunteers, especially at our 61st Street Farmers Market and Blackstone Bicycle Works. Thank you for your hard work! If you would like to volunteer, learn more at [exp.st/volunteer](http://exp.st/volunteer).

Many supporters have also given to Blackstone Bicycle Works in the form of in-kind donations. Whether it be a bike, parts, after school supplies, or even gear for our cyclocross team, your generosity has not gone unnoticed. Thank you for helping the bike shop continue!

Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to Experimental Station to support our programs. You can do so at [exp.st/donate](http://exp.st/donate) or via check to Experimental Station.  
**Thanks to a matching pledge, your end-of-year gift will be doubled!**

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**\$500 - \$999**

Bahati Foundation Heiji and Brian Black Kristopher Brown Ladonna Butts Chicago Cross Cup Comrade Cycles Racing DuPage Cycling Foundation	Jody and Mark Furlong Dawn Gard Madelaine and Phil Gerbaulet-Vanasse Bernd Hosey IBM Employee Services Center	Jade Fiducial Jordan and Susan Koss Mira Koster Beth Loeb Scott Loring Major Taylor Michelle E.L.Merritt Gary Metzner	Midwest Facilities & Construction, LLC Sundeep Mullangi Deborah Mullin Steve Parkes Reed Centracchio & Associates Gail Spreen	Streeterville Properties Trinidad Construction, LLC Chris Woodbury
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**\$100 - \$499**

ABUS Mobile Security John Amdor Gisela and Luc Atflan Saba Ayman-Nolley and Charles Nolley Matthew Bares Mildred Barnes Sandra Basile Sharon Bell Aryeh Bernstein Beverly Bishop Mark and Madeline Bourdenko Simon Bourneuf Laura Bradford Bright Funds Frank Brooks Jessica Bukiet Barbara Burlington Benoit Capdordy and Tanguy Accart Norene Chip Frederic Chole Patricia Cohen Consulat General de France Trudy and Ted Cools Marina and Juan De Pablo Jeff Deutsch and May Yen Michelle and Steven Edwards Nancy and Daniel Engel Nancy Fishman	Paul Fitzgerald Andrew Fredrickson Andrew and Jennifer Friedman Nancy and David Frej Jeff Friedstein Ludovic Frugere Craig Futterman and Kenyatta Tatum- Futterman Leslie Gatton Maya Gavrilovic Susanne Ghez Robert and Hedwig Golant Jacqueline Goldenberg Jane Goldenberg Mitchell Goldflies Rob Goldsmith Mark Gozonsky Katherine Groninger Shantley Guidry Jack and Sandra Guthman Ethel & Floyd Hanson Diane Hermann and Andy Carter Lori Hockman Marvin A. and Rosellen Brown Hoffman Brad Holland Lisa Huber Heinrich Jaeger and	Julie-Marie Lemon Kineret Jaffe Drew Jones Daniel Judd Jamie Kalven Sarah Kammerer Steven Kase Carolee Kokola Eric Krzystofiak Guillaume Lacroix Mavis Laing Maria Larkin Jun Leng Susan and Michael Levine Debbie Lipsett Lynn Lockwood John and Rochelle Lodder Victoria Long and Lawrence Zbikowski Angela Lorenzo Kerith Luchins Mia Luna Susan Lyons Sean Madden Lindsey McKee Jennifer and Jonathan Miller Katherine L. Miller Anthony Montag and Katherine Griem Roland Montfort	Mulubwa Munkanta and Welugewe Aningo Michelle Navarre Cleary Stuart Nelsen Marta and Ralph Nicholas Eleanor Nicholson Eric Olson Ker Yu Ong Tom Pearl Dan Peterman Stephen Peterson Gloria and Thomas W. Piantek Jason Pickleman Marshall Pred and Gayla Brockman Virginia Price Ralph Rajs Bryan Reed Joe Reinstein Anne Renna Harry Richter Jill Riddell and Timothy Brown Reed Rigging, Inc. Melinda Ring Montfort Roland Shelley Rosenstein Sharon Rusk Anne Ruzicka	Chelsie Salib Tim Salm Catherine and Mamadou- Abou Sarr MaryEllen Schneider Deborah Schrayner Karmin Laura Schultz Alan Shannon Ajay Shah Eric Shutt Small Shop Cycles & Service Paola Smith Angela Smyth and Ian Foster Connie Spreen Anthony Star Patricia Sternberg Deborah Stevens Paul Straton David Strong Yuval Taylor Phoebe and Tad Turner Eric Usner Gavin and Marcy Van Horn Susana Vasquez John Vaughan Tad Verdun Tiffany Wang Ron Whitley Steven Wiesenthal Wendy Wong
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**\$1 - \$99**

A A Anonymous Andrea Ash Lilly Astrow AT&T Carolyn Banner Chuck Barthelme Moses Berra Amanda Berry Lauren Boegen Martino Boffa Rebecca Bolen Danny Burke Veronique Bushala Brenda Butler John Carlson Felicia Carr Cat Six Cycles	Monica Chadha Chrome Chicago Finnegan Clark Ally Condie Monica Crosby Deborah Daly Daisy Delogu Katie Dowling Kim Dubculet Erika Dudley Rose Dyrud Barbara Engel J. Michael Eugenio Arielle Exner Clairan Ferrono Fidlock USA Jeffrey and Cathy Fireman Yakima Fleming	Anna Formicola Séverine Fougerol William Founds Franklinton Cycle Works Sara Glerum Cindy and Neil Gottesman Imani Hardy Alaina Harkness Sinatra Hrobowski Paul Ingersoll Garth Johns-Harris Roslyn Johnson Megan Kelly Christopher King DC Lewis Megan Lipps Michelle Litvin Jillian MacDonald	Veronique MacDonald Main Street Bicycles, Inc Lisa McMillan Mabel Menard Wendy Minor Jasmine Mithani Maureen Movrich Robert Nathan Gretchen Neidhardt Sylvette Nicolini Lynne Ostfeld Patrick Palmer Ralph Perry Robert & Sarah Peters Elizabeth Polmanski Clara Raubertas Debra Rosenberg Jonathan Schwass	Andy Schweitzer Matthew Searle Octavia Shaw Lewis Shender Alec Singer Jessica Singh Sheila Solomon Michael Sprinker Jasmine Swyningan Bedford Darryl Tom Bradley Troast Lisa Waisbren Sarah Ward Erin Watson Danielle Zimmerman
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**experimental  
station**

6100 S Blackstone Avenue  
Chicago Illinois 60637 USA  
[www.experimentalstation.org](http://www.experimentalstation.org)

## our mission

The Experimental Station is an independent, not-for-profit incubator of innovative cultural projects and small-scale enterprises. It seeks to maintain a diverse and interdisciplinary balance of participants and activities. Areas of primary interest include, but are not limited to, art, ecology, food culture, cultural criticism, independent publishing, and alternative models of education.

In addition to the Experimental Station's own range of programs, its facilities provide essential resources enabling new, vulnerable initiatives to stabilize and flourish. These resources include: workspaces at discounted rents, information networks, tools, and technical support.

## support and donation

Please consider helping us build the Experimental Station into a more sustainable operation by making a financial contribution. More information and a credit card donation form can be found online at: [experimentalstation.org](http://experimentalstation.org).

Blackstone Bicycle Works accepts donations of used bicycles, parts, equipment, and tools. Drop off any donations at the shop during normal business hours: 1-6 PM, Tuesday-Friday; 12-5 PM, Saturday.

Volunteers are vital to the success of our programs. If you are interested in supporting our programs as a volunteer, contact us at [info@experimentalstation.org](mailto:info@experimentalstation.org).

## visit the station

The Experimental Station is located in Woodlawn at 6100 S. Blackstone Ave., south of Hyde Park and the University of Chicago. We are located near Metra stations and CTA #2, #6, #59 buses. The building is wheelchair accessible. For more information contact us at:

773-241-6044  
[info@experimentalstation.org](mailto:info@experimentalstation.org)  
[experimentalstation.org](http://experimentalstation.org)  
[@expstation](https://twitter.com/expstation)

