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Bloomfield College answers the call and brings stories of Newark to life

By Editor on June 9, 2022 · Comments Off



Photo Courtesy of Laura Nova

'Stories of Newark' is a temporary outdoor art exhibition on the Bloomfield College campus.

BLOOMFIELD, NJ — The "Stories of Newark" art exhibit recently attracted more than 100 attendees to its opening at Bloomfield College. With input from a new advisory group to the college's grant-funded Stories of Newark oral history project that had been underway since fall 2021, the goal of capturing oral histories to document past and current struggles for racial equality in Newark was further enhanced by the addition of new visual components. For more information, visit <https://storiesofnewark.com/>.

"I have been buoyed by the tremendous support for this project by members of our community," assistant professor of writing and writing intensive coordinator Nora McCook said. "When I put out a call on campus to check on interest, a pool of individuals, from faculty, to students, to alumni — stepped forward and responded. We soon established an advisory group and those members — especially through the leadership of professor Laura Nova — moved to the visual aspects of storytelling."

What came together was a marriage between the Newark Photo Walk work of alumnus Chrystofer Davis '15, the design work of student artist Hugo Gonzalez '22 and the interviewing expertise of broadcast journalism major Tyra Brooks '22, among others. Soon Photoville, a New York-based nonprofit organization, was brought in and the final project emerged.

The communal aspect of this project has brought so many additional resources together. The Bloomfield College Alumni Association sponsored a photo contest with prizes to further support the project. WBGO Public Radio developed a special four-episode **podcast series** covering the oral histories being uncovered, with Bloomfield College's own Dante Plummer '22 composing the music for the introduction of each episode. **BC Underground Magazine** focused on Newark in its spring 2022 issue. And, specifically for the Stories of Newark opening, Gourmet Dining LLC worked hand-in-hand with the project coordinators to research and offer Newark-themed foods at the event.

"The Bloomfield College community has immersed themselves in this uplifting project to tell stories of Newark using storytelling, photography and now public art, and involved students in every aspect of the production," McCook said. "I want to thank all who have been involved from day one to now."

The Stories of Newark project is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan Act.

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