



Three years, five boroughs, 200,000 doors

A REPORT ON KATAL'S #SHUTRIKERS
CANVASSING PROJECT
SEPTEMBER 2022–DECEMBER 2025



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The Katal Center is a Brooklyn-based nonprofit organization launched in 2016. We develop intergenerational leadership and organizing capacity to build community-based power and win systemic change to enhance equity, health, and justice. Our members are people who have been impacted by poverty, mass criminalization, and incarceration, including formerly incarcerated people and their families.

Over the past decade, we've provided organizing and advocacy trainings for thousands of people, and built and won campaigns to reform the pretrial system, overhaul parole practices, and expand oversight and accountability of jails and prisons. Read more about our history and victories on our [website](#).

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introduction

THE ORIGINS OF THE #SHUTRIKERS CANVASSING PROJECT

by gabriel sayegh

Katal’s organizing has always included canvassing – handing out flyers, knocking on doors, talking with people in the street – then working to get them to join us as members or supporters. But in 2022, we made a significant change in our approach, and over the next three years, we canvassed approximately 200,000 doors across New York City. Some background will explain why we made this shift.

Katal publicly launched in February 2016, but our work to shut down the Rikers Island jail complex began in the previous summer, when we wrote the initial strategy for the #CLOSErikers campaign. For the next two years, [we co-led that campaign](#) with JustLeadershipUSA.¹ In 2017,

This report is about our #ShutRikers Canvassing Project: why we launched it, where and how we did it, what it looked like day-to-day, what we learned. For those readers looking for an overview of the longstanding problems at Rikers, and the campaign to shut it down, please visit our [website](#).

that work compelled then-Mayor Bill de Blasio to make [closing Rikers](#) official city policy.² During this stretch, Katal built our first membership core through consistent canvassing across the city, particularly in Brooklyn and the South Bronx.

For us, the next step in closing Rikers was to reduce the number of people in the city’s jails. Over the next few years, we led a statewide coalition that got bail reform legislation [passed](#) in the spring of 2019.³ That dramatically cut the number



September 24, 2024, Manhattan: People rally and march from City Hall to Foley Square.

of people in jails across the state, including at Rikers. In the fall of that year, we were one of many groups that [pushed the New York City Council](#) to pass a package of bills to shutter Rikers by 2026 (though that later changed to 2027).⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted everything, including the plan to close the jails. But Katal and other groups soon found our footing again and we gained momentum. In the early summer of 2021, Katal and our allies won passage of historic statewide parole reforms known as the [Less Is More Act](#).⁵ On the day Governor Kathy Hochul signed the bill into law, nearly 200 people held at Rikers on parole violations were immediately

set free.⁶ Soon hundreds more were released from Rikers and even more were freed from prisons across the state. (The Less Is More Act eventually reduced the number of people held at Rikers on technical parole violations from nearly 1,000 to about a dozen; it also cut the number of people on parole statewide by about 50 percent and contributed to the [closure of six prisons](#).⁷)

The movement had established and sustained a consensus among key decision-makers to shutter Rikers, even through the chaotic early years of COVID. That agreement was on display in the mayoral election of 2021: Most of the Democratic candidates expressed their

commitment to follow the law and close Rikers, including Eric Adams, who went on to win. But after he was elected, he immediately backtracked.

AN OBSTRUCTIVE MAYOR AND A SHIFT IN ORGANIZING

The new mayor publicly disparaged the plan to close Rikers and appointed a corrections commissioner who was openly hostile to the idea. Adams called for rolling back bail reform, which would lead to even *more* New Yorkers going to jail. He began talking about a “[plan B](#)” that would keep Rikers open.⁸ City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams (no relation to the mayor) made strong statements opposing the mayor’s position on Rikers, but she wasn’t leading the council to take *action* to hold him accountable for following the law to close the jail complex by 2027. Meanwhile, the conditions at Rikers were getting worse and the death toll continued to mount.

City leader’s retreat from the closure plan by city leaders marked an alarming seismic shift. We knew we had to do something different. We had to deepen our organizing across the city and bring many, many more people into the fight, focusing on those who had not previously been engaged or activated.

We’d have to grow our base significantly. In September 2022, we launched our #ShutRikers canvassing project to do just that.

Canvassing wasn’t new for us. Katal organizers would routinely go out into the community to distribute 1,000 flyers a week – each one in a person’s hand. That would lead to connections the organizer would follow up for potential one-on-ones.* But now we were looking to do something on an entirely different scale: a small team canvassing** a thousand doors *every day* – and doing that every week and every month for the foreseeable future.

It was a huge change. We reprioritized staff time and resources. We trained our staff and sought trainings from trusted partners on the use of tech

* In community organizing, a “one-on-one” (sometimes written as “1:1”) is an in-person meeting between the organizer and a contact or member, to establish or deepen a public relationship. The meeting is held at a location familiar to the contact – their home, a café or park they frequent, etc. – and usually lasts 45 to 60 minutes.

** As with many organizing groups, we use the word “canvassing” to mean talking with people in neighborhoods. For our project and this report, we specifically mean knocking on a door, leaving materials hanging from a doorknob, or both, as well as the conversations with community members who are out and about while we’re entering or leaving their building or block. Melanie Dominguez details this practice in the essay that follows, and readers will find day-to-day examples in section 2.



May 24, 2024, Manhattan: Katal’s Melanie Dominguez and Lakenya Smith table at the Speak Up Harlem event, outside Harry Belafonte Library.



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July 27, 2023: Katal canvasser Matthew Ottey and organizer Melanie Dominguez table in East Harlem.

tools that could help us bring the work to scale. We created new work plans. We drafted fresh content, worked with artist [Josh MacPhee](#) to develop graphics and designs, and printed new materials.⁹ We updated our membership development processes so we could more effectively follow up with thousands of new contacts. And then we hit the doors and built reporting mechanisms to capture data, share insights, and keep learning how to do the work better.

Through practice and reflection, we soon figured out the right rhythm. The team would go out, hit up to a thousand doors, return and write a short report about the day, debrief all the conversations, plan for the next day. We set aside time to follow up with new contacts and schedule one-on-ones. We recruited new members, cultivated new leaders, and expanded our pool of supporters. We learned to incorporate phone banking into the canvassing as a follow-up tactic. We continued tabling in neighborhoods where we'd canvassed – at libraries, street fairs, and other local events. We refined our approach, eventually shifting to a deep canvassing model.

Three years later, we've knocked on or simply left materials at nearly 200,000 doors across the city. We've held thousands and thousands of conversations with a diverse range of New Yorkers in every borough – those who have been detained at Rikers, people who have worked there, and family members, neighbors, co-workers, and friends. We've talked with elders and young people, with students and teachers and crossing guards, with bodega owners, artists, public housing staff, parents, grandparents, daughters and sons, formerly incarcerated people and their family members, current and

former correctional officers, librarians, and construction workers. When we're out canvassing, our aim is to listen more than we talk – and then we incorporate what we learn into our organizing.

For us, it is telling that the vast majority of people we've connected with over the course of this project expressed interest in seeing Rikers shut down. And yes, we also came across some New Yorkers who believe Rikers should stay open – or who even want to see more people sent there. Instead of arguing with them, we listen and try to understand. Sometimes their concerns make sense to us; people want to feel safe, even if we don't always agree on *how* to bring about safety.

BUILDING OUR BASE, PROPELLING OUR CAMPAIGNS

The #ShutRikers canvass created a much larger pool of people for us to organize with. It also helped us develop a consistent get-out-the-vote program as part of our organizing. (As a 501c3 nonprofit, Katal is strictly nonpartisan and does not endorse candidates, but we do educate voters about our key issues.) In the 2024 and 2025 electoral cycles, we integrated voter registration into our canvassing and experimented with strategies to remind new voters to get to the polls. We know that the people from our base we contacted as part of our GOTV efforts voted at a higher rate than the city average. (We're particularly grateful to the nonprofit New York Civil Engagement Table for its support in this aspect of our work.)

The canvassing project didn't just grow the size and depth of our base – it propelled our issue campaigns, which were easy entry points for folks we met



April 27, 2023, Manhattan: Katal members, allies, and staff march from Foley Square to the federal courthouse.

who wanted to get involved. The work sparked a synergy that proved to be even more powerful than we had anticipated.

One of those campaigns was about calling on a federal court to appoint an [independent receiver](#) for Rikers, to improve conditions and save lives until the jail can be shut down.¹⁰ The Legal Aid Society represents formerly incarcerated clients in the [Nunez lawsuit](#) and had asked a federal judge to designate a receiver.¹¹ We worked outside the courthouse, generating media attention and building public support for a receiver. We held rallies and marches outside the court and at New York City Hall, held numerous information sessions, and brought dozens of organizations on board. A judge finally [issued a ruling](#) in May of 2025 and appointed a receiver (a “remediation manager”) in January 2026.¹²

Another campaign was about overhauling the state agency responsible for oversight of jails, prisons, and youth facilities in New York. The State Commission on Corrections has the [mandate](#) to ensure that jails and prisons are “safe, stable, and humane,” and has the authority to shut down any facility that

does not meet those criteria.¹³ The SCOC even issued a [report](#) in 2018 calling for the closure of Rikers but has not yet taken any relevant action.¹⁴ As described in a powerful investigative [report](#) by *New York Focus* in 2023, the agency has long been ineffective.¹⁵ We led a coalition that got SCOC reforms passed in May of 2025, and in December 2025, Governor Hochul signed the reform [into law](#).¹⁶ Now we’re working on implementation.

Katal members – a considerable number of whom joined the organization through the canvass – were at the center of these campaigns, working in planning meetings, leading rallies and marches, observing court proceedings, going to Albany to meet with lawmakers, attending SCOC meetings, testifying at legislative hearings, speaking to reporters, and issuing public statements in response to elected officials’ actions and other news.

RIKERS AND THE 2025 MAYORAL ELECTION

During the 2025 mayoral primary campaigns, candidates were asked about

Rikers. But it wasn't until the general election cycle, after Adams had dropped out, that it emerged as a real *electoral* issue. Through the summer and into late September, Republican candidate Curtis Sliwa vigorously opposed the plan to close Rikers, while Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani and independent candidate (and former Democratic governor) Andrew Cuomo supported closing Rikers. But less than a month before the November election, Cuomo [reversed his position](#), saying that the jails should stay open.¹⁷ His reversal and his aggressive push to scrap the closure plan spurred weeks of coverage from [local](#) and [national](#) news outlets.¹⁸ In the final mayoral debate before voters went to the polls, a question about Rikers, according to the [Queens Daily Eagle](#), “sparked one of the most contentious moments” of the forum.¹⁹

Mamdani won, in no small part by building a massive ground operation with [100,000 volunteers](#) who canvassed or phone banked for him.²⁰ Throughout his campaign, he had consistently called on the city to meet its legal and moral obligation to shutter the jail complex.

We know the impact our canvassing project had on our organizing, our campaigns, and our team. But what impact did it have on *educating voters*? We don't have the resources necessary to conduct the kind of polling and surveying required to definitively answer this question. But given the scale of the project, our day-to-day experience at the doors, the data we gathered, and what we observed and learned along the way, we think it's likely that our canvassing increased awareness and understanding of these issues in the communities we worked in, including among those who probably voted.

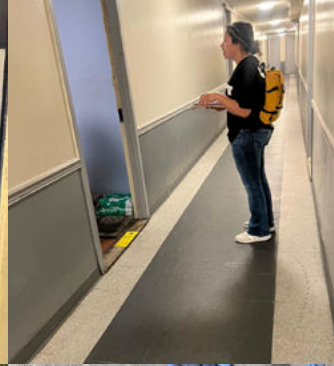
WHAT'S NEXT

Our canvassing work continues because it's a core element of our organizing. And even under a new mayor who has expressed support for closing Rikers, grassroots organizing to *compel* the city to follow through will remain essential.

For instance, during his first five months in office, Mayor Mamdani has made some good decisions consistent



March 25, 2025: Katal members, staff, and allies hold a rally and press conference in the state capitol, calling for reforms to the State Commission of Correction.

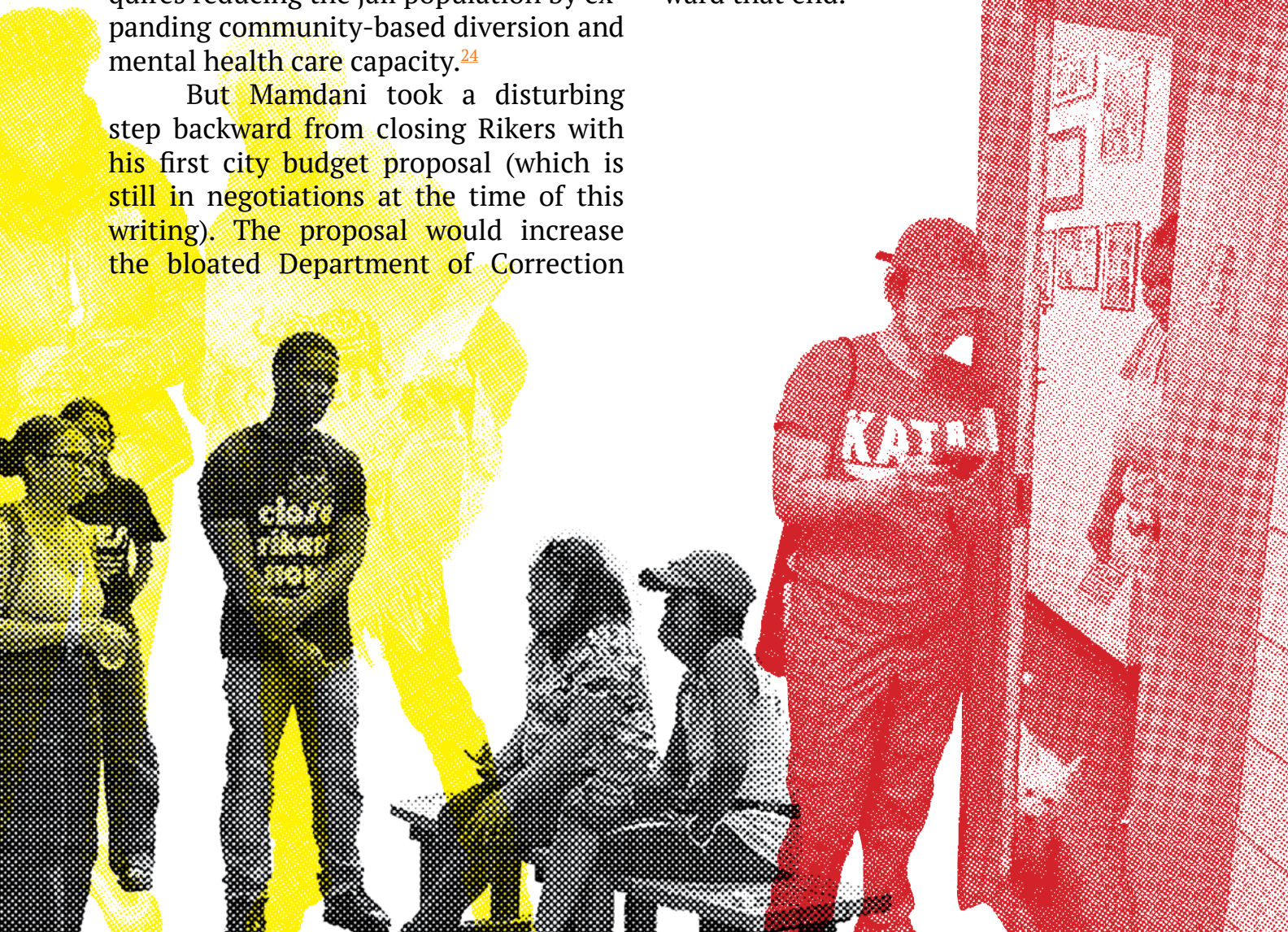


with his commitment to shut Rikers, among them selecting as commissioner of the Department of Correction a longtime champion for criminal justice reform and a stalwart supporter of shutting down Rikers: [Stanley Richards](#).²¹ And Mamdani also [took a critical step](#) to expand the capacity of the city's mental health system, announcing the opening of a new therapeutic unit at Bellevue Hospital for people with complex mental health needs who would otherwise be incarcerated at Rikers.²² This is important, because Rikers is the largest [mental health facility](#) in New York City and among the largest in the country.²³ As we outlined in a [2025 report](#) with our partners at the Data Collaborative for Justice at John Jay College, the path to closing Rikers requires reducing the jail population by expanding community-based diversion and mental health care capacity.²⁴

But Mamdani took a disturbing step backward from closing Rikers with his first city budget proposal (which is still in negotiations at the time of this writing). The proposal would increase the bloated Department of Correction

budget, while [starving the programs and services](#) critical to safely reducing the jail population.²⁵ This is the exact same approach taken year after year by former mayor Eric Adams, to disastrous effect. And just as we and other groups took on Adams for abandoning the closure plan, we're now taking on Mamdani.

Rikers won't be closed through energetic declarations, pointed press releases, or clever insider plans. This is a fight. And at Katal, we believe we must continue building grassroots power to effectively hold the mayor and city council accountable to the legal and moral requirement to shut down Rikers once and for all. Canvassing is one tool we continue using toward that end.



A CLOSE-UP ON CANVASSING

You can read the details of canvassing in the rest of this report. Part 1 features a terrific explanatory essay by our organizing director, Melanie Dominguez, who directed the canvassing project. She writes in depth about the logistics and practice of this work. Her essay is followed by the list of the neighborhoods we canvassed, a map showing where we canvassed, a remembrance, and photos.

Part 2 is a selection of our internal daily canvassing reports. Through those reports, which Katal team members wrote, you can get a good feel for what actually happens when we're out on the doors. Readers will see that Lakenya Smith, our community organizer, wrote a number of these reports. Lakenya started with Katal as a paid canvasser, joined our apprentice organizer program, and is now a full-fledged organizer leading the day-to-day canvass. Ricky Forde, who also wrote many of the daily reports, started with Katal in 2017 as a member volunteer, canvassing to close Rikers. He joined our staff in 2022 as a policy fellow, and later became a policy associate, serving in that position until June 2026.

We continue canvassing as a core component of our organizing, always learning more as we go. These are perilous times – and given the state of our country and the world, we think it's more important than ever to be out talking with people. The rise of fascism and the ongoing attacks on democracy are bigger than any issue campaign. At Katal, we believe that organizing is the antidote to authoritarianism. But for those who have never done it, canvassing can seem abstract or vague or even a little scary. We want readers to see and hear and feel

what this work entails, what it means. It's our hope that this report gets all of that across – and inspires others to get out and talk with people about the problems our communities are facing and how we can work together to do something about it.

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The what, where, and how of the #shutrikers canvassing project

by Melanie Dominguez

We launched our [#Shut Rikers](#) canvassing project in the summer of 2022, shortly after Eric Adams took office as mayor of New York City.²⁶ We knew from the get-go that he was going to take us further away from shutting

down Rikers, and we needed to make sure the community was ready to fight him. We wanted to make sure our chemistry was stronger, that we grew the number of people who were taking action with us, that we grew our base. And that led to expanding the door-knocking and



June 29, 2023: Katal's Melanie Dominguez and Ricky Forde lead the team to canvass a NYCHA complex in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn.

the canvassing, to pick the neighborhoods we wanted to focus on. Picking the NYCHA buildings didn't come out of nowhere. The #ShutRikers canvassing built on what we'd already been doing, but we wanted to scale it up and make it even more powerful.

Canvassing is a means for us to meet people where they're at – right at their front step, right at their door – so that we can share information about what's happening in our communities in New York City and in the #ShutRikers campaign. And it's a way for folks to learn what role they can play if they want to join the fight.

The way we canvass is by knocking on people's doors. If they're not home, we leave a flyer designed to hang on doors. Sometimes we're just flyering doors in a neighborhood, but mostly we're knocking on doors. We're holding conversations with people at their doors.

And as we're in the community, as we're in the buildings, we bump into folks who are coming in and out of the buildings or are just hanging out by some benches outside. And we're talking with them. We've had thousands of conversations this way, just being in the community, talking with people.

For this canvassing project, we've also done a lot of tabling at libraries, at community street fairs, and various other events. Tabling is another great way to connect with people, and we can share more of our materials that way. We have flyers, stickers, buttons, shirts. When we do the tabling in a neighborhood where we've been knocking on doors, people often recognize us and they sometimes want to talk more.

As for the why – it aligns deeply with the organizing we do at Katal. It is a continuation of the type of outreach we've done for years, though we definitely had to get creative during the pandemic.

In 2020 and early 2021, working on our [#LessIsMoreNY](#) campaign, I would do some flyering outside the parole offices – one in the Bronx, one in Midtown

Canvassing is a means for us to meet people where they're at – right at their front step, right at their door. And it's a way for folks to learn what role they can play if they want to join the fight.

Manhattan.²⁷ We've always done this type of outreach, just being in person with folks. We understand the value of having a conversation with someone face-to-face and learning a little bit about them, the things they're concerned about in their community. And then letting them know what's going on with Rikers and how it's impacting their neighborhood. In those conversations, sometimes we'd learn that they had a loved one who's been incarcerated or that they themselves had been locked up.

Through canvassing we find most of the people who become members at Katal. For instance, on the #LessIsMoreNY campaign, one of our most active members was someone named Luke. I met him outside of a parole office as he was going to meet with his parole officer. These are ways we can meet folks who often are not included in conversations about policy reform – and should be. So that's really at the heart of how and why we do our community organizing, how we meet people, and how we bring folks to the table.

PREPARING FOR A DAY OF CANVASSING

It starts with our team. Our organizers are always going out. Sometimes our members join us. Our interns will join us. In previous years, Katal staff from Connecticut would sometimes join us. And when we can, we've brought on paid canvassers, who are always directly impacted folks.

Before we head out, we prepare all of our outreach materials and make sure that people have access to our canvassing script. We make sure they have a document that has the frequently asked questions we encounter. If folks haven't been out before, we role-play for practice. If we're using an app that helps us identify registered voters, we teach people how to use it. And when we're picking a specific location, we prepare the team on where we're going to be – we'll talk about the neighborhood, our history and previous experiences there. Sometimes people on the canvassing team know a neighborhood better than anyone else, so they'll share their insights.

We also talk about the people in office who represent each neighborhood, the elected officials. That's in case a community member asks or is curious – or they even say on the spot that they want to meet with their elected officials.

Our canvassing work has evolved because with most of the NYCHA buildings where we're going and door-knocking, we've been there in the past. [The New York City Housing Authority is the municipal public housing agency.] We've already had conversations with some of the community

members there. And we pull up the notes on those conversations and read them, so that we have an idea of what to expect – what are some of the things they're saying and concerned about? And we bring that into the conversation.

The organizer sets the metrics: How many doors are we going to hit? And that's based on how many people are going to come out with us. It's based on the landscape. So how tall are the buildings, how short are the buildings? We have to really do our research to prepare: If the buildings are taller, you're able to move a lot quicker and knock on a lot more doors. Whereas if the buildings are shorter, it takes you a lot longer to walk from building to building or block to block. For example, in Bed-Stuy with the brownstones, we have to go up the stairs, knock on the door, come down the stairs, and then go to the next building. It just takes a lot more time. But if the building is tall . . . we've hit buildings that are like 25 floors and each floor has 12 doors. So doing the math, you get to hit close to 300 doors in just one building.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS AND RESPECT

Our safety protocols have evolved, and during prep we go over them to make sure people feel comfortable, that people feel

We learned from other folks who have been doing this: How you knock is really important. Because you don't want to knock in a way that's intrusive. You don't want to knock in a way that people think it's the police, that it's law enforcement or ICE.

This Building is a Proud Participant of the
**BREVOORT
HOUSES**
NEW HORIZONS' GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM



safe while they're out there. We always canvass in pairs so that nobody is alone.

You make sure you're not standing too close to the door when you're knocking. One, for their comfort, and for yours as well. Nobody's going to appreciate you hovering over their door, so creating that distance is always good. And we learned from other folks who have been doing this: *How* you knock is really important. Because you don't want to knock in a way that's intrusive. You don't want to knock in a way that people think it's the police, that it's law enforcement or ICE. We're cognitive that in many of our communities – Black, brown, and low-income

shelter in the staircases. And if we do, or if there's someone in a mental health crisis, we have hotlines we can call instead of the police to help make sure we're keeping safe and everybody else is too.

So after all of that prep, people who are going out canvassing ask questions and we answer. And then we let them know what the day's objectives are and where we're going.

HEADING OUT TO HIT DOORS

We do all of that preparation before any canvassing session. Effective prep work makes a serious difference.

We all head to the site together. We typically do our outreach from 1 to 5 p.m., because that's usually when we're going to encounter people, when people are home. Another time that is great to do outreach is from 6 to 8 p.m., because we know people

are home, people are coming back from work. And once we knock on someone's door and they open it, we start our conversation by telling them who we are. We do a quick introduction, so that it's not a complete stranger knocking on the door. They know who this is.

We let them know, "Hey, we're in the community having conversations about our fight to shut down Rikers. Have you heard about what's been happening at Rikers Island?" And then we listen. We listen to what they know, what they've heard – have they seen it on the news or been to Rikers or do they know someone who is at Rikers right now? And we ask them questions; we engage in a

We listen to what they know, what they've heard – have they seen it on the news or been to Rikers or do they know someone who is at Rikers right now? And we ask them questions; we engage in a back-and-forth. And we let them know about our campaign's demands. We ask them what things they would like to see changed in their neighborhood.

– law enforcement often terrorizes our neighbors.

One of the things we tell the folks who are coming out with us is to have a little jingle to it. Be mindful, think of the way you would like someone to knock on your door. Just be respectful. These are all things we really take into consideration. And there will always be things that pop up along the way that we just have to manage as they come.

We have another document we use that has contact information for support services people can call instead of the police. So for example, as we are going floor by floor, especially in the colder buildings, we encounter people who are taking

back-and-forth. And we let them know about our campaign's demands. We ask them what things they would like to see changed in their neighborhood. And that's when we hear about putting more money into the kids, making sure that there are more after-school programs, making sure that when school is out, there are summer programs the kids can go into.

WHERE WE CANVASS AND WHY

We've canvassed in all five boroughs. Wherever there are NYCHA buildings, we've canvassed. We've been to all of them. And we've focused on the neighborhoods

that have been most impacted by criminalization and incarceration.

When we started doing this type of canvassing, we had access to VAN [a voter database] and could see who was registered to vote in these communities and whether they'd voted recently or not. [Note: The database does not have information about how any individual votes.] And we quickly learned that in many of the NYCHA buildings, barely any folks were registered to vote. So again, here we go:



Here's a community and here are folks who are being left to the side and not being engaged. That to me really solidified why we were there and why we picked NYCHA buildings as places to do our outreach.

REAL TALK WITH REAL PEOPLE

I'm honestly so surprised by how many people open the door and feel comfortable opening the door. It's amazing. There are older ladies, older women, elders who open the door: "Hi, how you doing?" They're like, "Hey, sweetheart." And I tell them, "Well, thank you for opening the door." I always say that to them because I know they might not feel too comfortable. If a conversation with someone is going well, if the person seems like a possible good fit for our membership, we ask them if we can follow up for another conversation – a one-on-one. Or they might be a likely supporter, and we'll ask them: Would you like to sign a petition calling on the mayor to shut Rikers? Sometimes we get the one-on-one, sometimes not. People are often more willing to sign the petition than schedule a follow-up meeting.

Sometimes folks won't open the door at all. That happens. It's hard to talk when we're trying to have a conversation with the door closed. Those conversations usually aren't as fruitful.

And of course, we've also had conversations with folks on the other end of the spectrum: They don't want Rikers to be shut down. And we've had conversations in the same neighborhoods with folks who work on Rikers Island.

So while a lot of people in these neighborhoods are impacted by incarceration, some of the residents are *working* at

Rikers. Usually the pay is good – that's what we've heard from some of the correctional officers when we're canvassing – that this is the only thing they got, that they can provide for their families. When we have those conversations, we tell them: Absolutely, that makes sense. But it's also important that there's investment in jobs that make the community stronger, that help make us safer.

I had a conversation with one kid who said, "I wish they would invest more in me; I am into creating clothes and designing my clothes, but there are no opportunities. And I don't know how to go about that." Investment in jobs is so important: in some ways, it all boils down to that.

And some of the community members, they know people. They'll say, "I'm not a correctional officer, but I know someone who is." We recently had a conversation with a lady who said, "Yeah, my aunt just retired, and she's so glad she's retired, because it's been really bad." So we talk to them. It's bad for everybody on Rikers, including staff.

"THE KIDS, THE KIDS, THE KIDS!"

In nearly every neighborhood we've been to, one thing we hear from adults, without fail: *the kids, the kids, the kids!* The need to focus on supporting the kids, the need for services for the kids. In Brownsville, for instance, a lot of the elders in the community are concerned: They see that kids are getting caught up in kid stuff. And they say that there's a lot of gun violence in the neighborhood and they want to see that stop. They understand that the way that will stop is by investing in the kids. In some of the conversations we had last summer, people also mentioned that they

used to have all of these active community centers in their neighborhood. It's not like that anymore. And because people have lived there for years, they know what's possible. And so we engage in that conversation and let them know how much money the city spends incarcerating kids, incarcerating young adults, incarcerating people on Rikers Island from their neighborhood – and how that money could best be invested in the kinds of programs these community members say they want. And they start to connect the dots.

It's really about unpacking what public safety looks like – and it's not having more cops or putting more people behind bars. It's about making sure that our communities are thriving.

RETURNING TO AREAS WHERE WE'VE CANVASSED

Over three years, we've been able to return to a number of neighborhoods, so we're coming back to the same place over and over. And when we've returned to a place, we have previous conversations and experience to draw from. Those past conversations are important, because they come into the discussions we have with someone we've just met.

This is especially true if we're spending multiple days or returning to one place for weeks or months. We get to build familiarity with people in the community. So when we meet new people, we always bring into the picture, "Hey, I just spoke to one of your neighbors and they said this, they said that." Or "I spoke to one of your neighbors – and they agree with exactly what you're saying." It's helpful because they have to understand it's not something that's impacting just them, but they're part of a bigger group of

people who are also concerned and want to do something about this.

The neighborhoods where we've spent the most time are in Harlem and Brownsville. And those experiences were some of the most powerful for our team.

CANVASSING ALL SUMMER IN HARLEM NEIGHBORHOODS

We spent the summer of 2024 focusing on Harlem. And throughout the years we've built a really great relationship with [BroSis](#) – The Brotherhood Sister Sol.²⁸ They focus on supporting and training young people, and we've worked together for years – on the Rikers campaign, on our parole reform campaign Less Is More. They've brought the kids to our rallies in the summer when school is out. And they're able to join some of our rallies during the day.

Building off that, they were inviting us out to talk with their young people. We provided some training on organizing and advocacy, and trainings about the Shut Rikers campaign. And we were trying to figure out what else to work on with them. They wanted us to let the kids know more about what we do – and they were especially interested in the canvassing. So we decided to train them in canvassing.

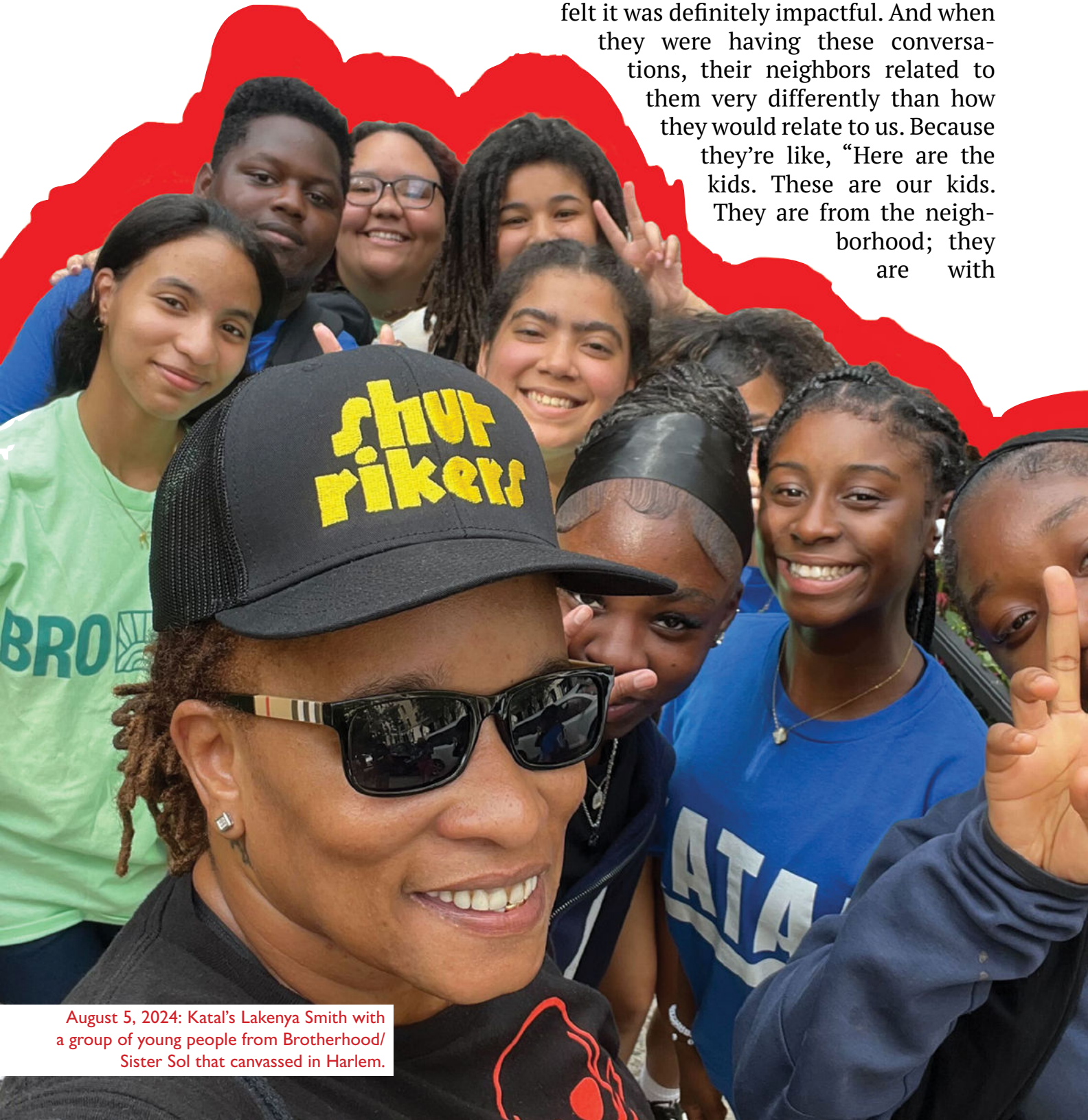
First, as always, we prepared. We set up a prep meeting. There were about 50 kids, young people 13 to 18, and we taught them why we do canvassing – the purpose of it and how to do it. We taught them the ins and outs of everything – and they had their questions, how kids are. And for the most part, they were really excited. A handful of them were a little bit nervous, more on the shy side.

And once we prepared them, the next day we were like, "OK, now you guys are ready." We did a final run-through,

split up into groups, and they went on to canvass their neighborhood in Harlem about the fight to shut down Rikers. But they also let their neighbors know about their work with BroSis and how essential it is for people to get involved, and how we need more funding for these types of efforts in the community. Here we

have a city that's spending billions of dollars incarcerating folks and incarcerating kids, but programs like BroSis are clearly a better approach.

As we were out in the streets, you could see the kids, how comfortable they were having these conversations with their neighbors. You could see how they felt it was definitely impactful. And when they were having these conversations, their neighbors related to them very differently than how they would relate to us. Because they're like, "Here are the kids. These are our kids. They are from the neighborhood; they are with



August 5, 2024: Katal's Lakenya Smith with a group of young people from Brotherhood/Sister Sol that canvassed in Harlem.

BroSis and they're going to be here. And they're talking to me about what needs to happen and what needs to get done."

And the kids were competing with each other. Three groups were canvassing in the neighborhoods and we all split up. And at the end, everybody was just like, "I got more signed petitions than you did. I spoke to more people." In my group, they would see somebody walk the street and they're like, "Hi, this is what we're doing." So it wasn't even just the door-knocking. It was just like everybody and anybody on the street was going to hear what they had to say. It was a different experience for us, and it was such a good time. It was very, very powerful. We really love our relationship with BroSis.

A SUMMER OF CANVASSING IN BROWNSVILLE

One beautiful thing about last summer [2025] was just focusing on canvassing in Brownsville, a Brooklyn neighborhood disproportionately impacted by policing and mass incarceration. Every single day, every single week, we were in Brownsville. That creates a familiarity. People started to recognize us. We would knock on someone's door and they would recognize us and say, "We spoke yesterday. We saw you in the hallway, in the lobby, or outside when people were hanging out." And they start to feel a lot more comfortable with us. We were beginning to build trust and that continued as we had regular conversations with community members and one-on-ones. This is precisely why we decided to focus on one neighborhood rather than doing outreach throughout the city during the summer. We knew that committing as much time

as possible to one specific neighborhood would allow us to foster stronger relationships with the residents.

And one thing I'm really excited about is that last summer we paired canvassing in the neighborhood with a community event. Over three consecutive months, organizers canvassed consistently, holding hundreds of conversations with neighborhood residents. This sustained presence culminated in a community conversation when dozens of neighborhood residents, many of whom we had met at their doors, came together at the local library. We invited everybody we met along the way to a town hall so that we could engage in a deeper conversation as a collective, understanding that we are not isolated in our care and commitment to our neighbors and the prosperity of the community. We held the town hall at the library and it was packed.

In this meeting, folks immediately expressed their frustrations related to the issues that they care deeply about and demanded that the city fix them, including housing, gun violence, education, and shutting down Rikers. It was powerful to convene in this space and have community members speak to one another and connect on such a deep level. My words cannot make you feel the energy in the room and love for their community and each other. This is what organizing is all about: building community-based power so that people are not being lied to and they exercise their power as a collective to change the systems that harm them.

There is more to come in Brownsville. We look forward to continuing to build strong relations with the members of the community and growing their collective power.



September 20, 2025: Community members take part in a #ShutRikers town hall meeting in Brownsville, Brooklyn.

GROWING OUR BASE

Often at the doors, we're talking and making a connection with someone and they express an interest in getting involved, they want to do something. When that happens, we try to do our one-on-one meeting with them, we develop a relationship with them. Sometimes we can have a longer conversation there at the

This is what organizing is all about: building community-based power so that people are not being lied to and they exercise their power as a collective to change the systems that harm them.

doorstep, but mostly we have to schedule a follow-up meeting. Eventually, the goal is to invite them to the member meetings we convene every two weeks. Or they could be a supporter – we have them sign our petition and they get plugged into upcoming actions and events.

But mostly we're looking to identify new members. People impacted by mass incarceration who want to do something about it. And door-knocking is one great way to meet people for that, but sometimes we don't even have to knock on the door – just being on the ground doing the canvass makes a difference.

One member in particular comes to mind: Sean is someone I met through the canvassing. I had knocked on his door and nobody was home. I'm like, "OK, I'm going to leave a door hanger on the door-knob." And then I hear somebody come up the stairs and heading toward where I am. And they ask, "Hey, what are you doing? That's my door." And I reply, "OK, I was just knocking. I was sharing some information about the work we're doing."

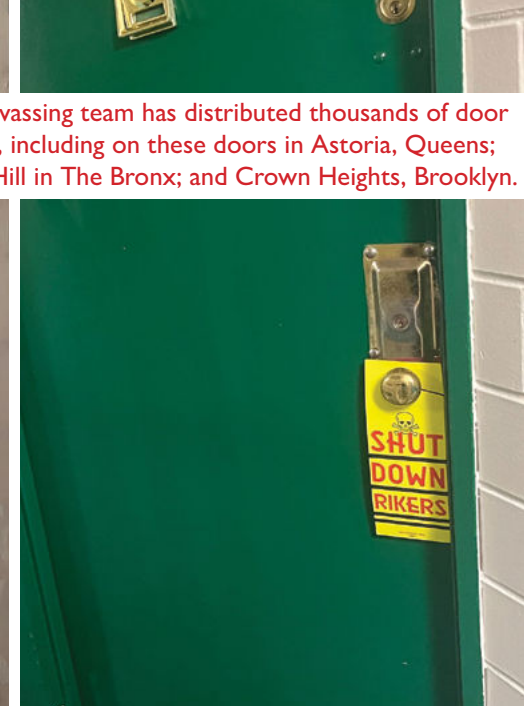
He says, "Oh, OK. Thank you. I don't have the time to speak right now. I'm visiting my mom, so I'm just going to go inside." And I could tell he felt a little bit thrown off. He felt a little bit uncomfortable, like, "Who's this stranger knocking on my door? I don't know them. I'm just going to keep this interaction real quick."

And then a few days passed – and I get this call. "I don't know if you remember me. We bumped into each other. You were leaving some information at my door about the campaign to shut Rikers." And I said, "Yeah, I do remember you." And he told me, "I saw on the news that another person passed away at Rikers. And I didn't share with you at that moment, but I've been incarcerated at Rikers Island." And so we talked a little bit more. And then he got interested in being part of the membership and joined the member meetings, joined the rallies, spoke at the rallies, worked on press-release calls with us. And he became really, really active because of his commitment to shutting down Rikers.

And there was this older woman who called me and said, "Hey, I saw the door hanger. I work in the NYCHA buildings." So she wasn't someone who lives there – she had just seen it because she was cleaning the hallways. And she's like, "My son is incarcerated at Rikers Island." We talked more and then she got involved in the member meetings.

"YOU CAN FEEL IT."

And you can't underestimate the impact this work has on the folks who might *not* call or might *not* want to take action yet. But just the conversations they're having



The canvassing team has distributed thousands of door hangers, including on these doors in Astoria, Queens; Castle Hill in The Bronx; and Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

in their household – the conversations they’re having with their neighbors and their family go such a long way. And those are some of the things we can’t really put a number to. We can’t capture it.

And in a building we were at recently, there were a lot of Spanish-speaking folks, but the door hangers were in English. I was able to translate for them and let them know what was happening. That was on one floor. Then we continued on – and I bumped into them again on another floor. But this time they’re with a bigger group. And I overheard them and they’re talking in Spanish about the door hanger. And they’re like, “Yeah, that’s actually about this jail that’s horrible.” And giving the others all of the information that I had just told them on the other floor.

And so they’re organizing their neighbors about this. And one of the young women in the group, she looks at me and she was like, “Can you tell us again where Rikers Island is at?” And I explained to them. That was such a beautiful thing to see. We’ve seen glimpses of that, where by being out canvassing, distributing these materials, talking to people – it builds a kind of energy and momentum that goes beyond what we see. We know

it is happening at a larger scale. We can’t really measure that – *but you can feel it.*

HOW THE CANVASSING IMPACTS OUR CAMPAIGN WORK

Through the canvassing project, we’ve learned a lot of lessons about what we can accomplish and the people we can bring into the mix, the new folks. It brings us back to why we started doing this kind of sustained, deeper outreach. We make sure people understand what’s at stake – and they are in our networks and *they know*. Some members have become active on these campaigns along the way. And many people who aren’t members, they become our supporters, joining us in actions and coming to events and meetings. Our organizing is the thing that connects all the pieces together. And it shapes all our campaigns.

We’ve canvassed all throughout the city, and every time we go, we always look up who the elected officials are for that neighborhood: city council members, state senators, state assembly people. I see some of the pressure it creates when we’re meeting with an elected official. We’ve hit doors in their district, and we

tell them, “We’ve been in this neighborhood, we’ve been here, we’ve been there, we’ve hit X number of doors, and these are the types of conversations we’ve had with people in your district.” Sometimes it’s their own constituents in the room, making demands.

You can definitely feel that it shifts the dynamic in meetings with them. Katal members have spent a lot of time in district meetings with city council members, with state reps. We spend a lot of time up in Albany. That changes the dynamic with elected officials. The city and state reps, when we meet with them, they know we’re organizing back in their districts.

The campaigns we’re doing gain their power from the work we do on the ground. The campaign to #ShutRikers, the campaign to overhaul the [State Commission on Correction](#), the #LessIsMoreNY parole reform campaign we won in 2021, the bail reform campaign before that, and on and on.²⁹ It’s the work on the ground. We can do that work because of what we’ve been doing on the ground with the community.

REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT

I’m so, so proud of the canvassing we’ve been able to do these past three years. I am proud of everyone that joined us along the way and came into this work with integrity and a deep commitment to community. This type of canvassing takes a lot of grit and a whole lot of heart. Together we’ve hit about 200,000 doors across the city, have had thousands of conversations and moved hundreds of people into action

to put pressure on the city to shut Rikers Island and invest in our communities.

It’s truly a wonderful thing to be able to look back and reflect on the impact that this type of outreach has had in the city. It is easy to measure the impact in the number of people we reached and the number of people who took action

Katal members have spent a lot of time in district meetings with city council members, with state reps. We spend a lot of time up in Albany. That changes the dynamic with elected officials. The city and state reps, when we meet with them, they know we’re organizing back in their districts.

with us. However, at Katal, we also reflect on the impact that can’t be counted as a number but is vitally important to account for. This is known as transformative metrics. It is the conversations that are had at the kitchen table after encountering our team or material. We know families are gathering and taking the time to reflect on what is happening at Rikers Island and their communities because of this type of outreach. Neighbors who catch up in the hallway are talking about conversations they had with us, sharing their lived experiences and connecting. Our communities are stronger when they are connecting and organizing!

We’ve been in so many neighborhoods that are often forgotten by our city and have had the privilege of speaking with amazing people who care about their families and communities and want to see a better future. All they needed was a way in. Needed to learn about what and how they can get involved. All of the people we met along the way have had a clear vision of what they want for their community

– access to safe housing, youth programming, food, health care, and so much more. Many people want basic human needs to be met as a way to address the root problems that lead to incarceration.

And people want to feel safe, they want to *be* safe. When a person does something violent, it can be difficult to imagine what it looks like to hold them accountable without jail or prison. And it’s not just a question of imagination – people want concrete solutions. Fortunately, there are groups doing that, like Common Justice here in Brooklyn. They “develop and advance solutions to violence that transform the lives of those harmed and foster racial equity without relying on incarceration.” They work for responses to violence that are “survivor-centered, accountability-based, safety-driven, and racially equitable.” We’re learning how to incorporate these principles and frameworks into the next phase of our organizing.

We look forward to continuing our canvassing and encourage others who may have never had the opportunity to do this type of outreach to try it. Feel free to reach out to us if you’d like any support or have any questions. These conversations and connections with your neighbors go a long way to building community-based power.

NOTES

26. Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice. “Shut Rikers Now.” <https://katalcenter.org/shut-rikers-now>

27. Less Is More NY Campaign. <https://www.lessismoreny.org>

28. Read more about the nonprofit organization at <https://brotherhood-sistersol.org>

29. Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice. “Shut Rikers Now” and Less Is More NY Campaign; SCOC fact sheet. 2025. <https://katalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Katal-SCOC-Factsheet-September-2025.pdf>; “Major Criminal Justice Reforms Passed in New York.” Press release, April 1, 2019. <https://katalcenter.org/2019/04/release-major-criminal-justice-reforms-passed-in-new-york>



June 22, 2023: The canvassing team talks with residents at a NYCHA complex in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn.

neighborhoods canvassed

SEPTEMBER 2022–DECEMBER 2025

The Bronx

1. Belmont
2. Castle Hill
3. Claremont
4. Co-Op City
5. Eastchester
6. Grand Concourse
7. Highbridge
8. Hunts Point
9. Laconia
10. Morrisania
11. Mott Haven
12. Soundview
13. Throgs Neck
14. Williamsbridge

Brooklyn

15. Bedford-Stuyvesant
16. Brownsville
17. Canarsie
18. Coney Island
19. Crown Heights
20. Dumbo
21. East New York
22. Flatbush
23. Fort Greene
24. Gowanus
25. Prospect Heights
26. Red Hook
27. Sheepshead Bay
28. Williamsburg

Manhattan

29. Chelsea
30. Harlem (Central)
31. Harlem (East)
32. Harlem (West)
33. Lincoln Square
34. Lower East Side
35. Washington Heights

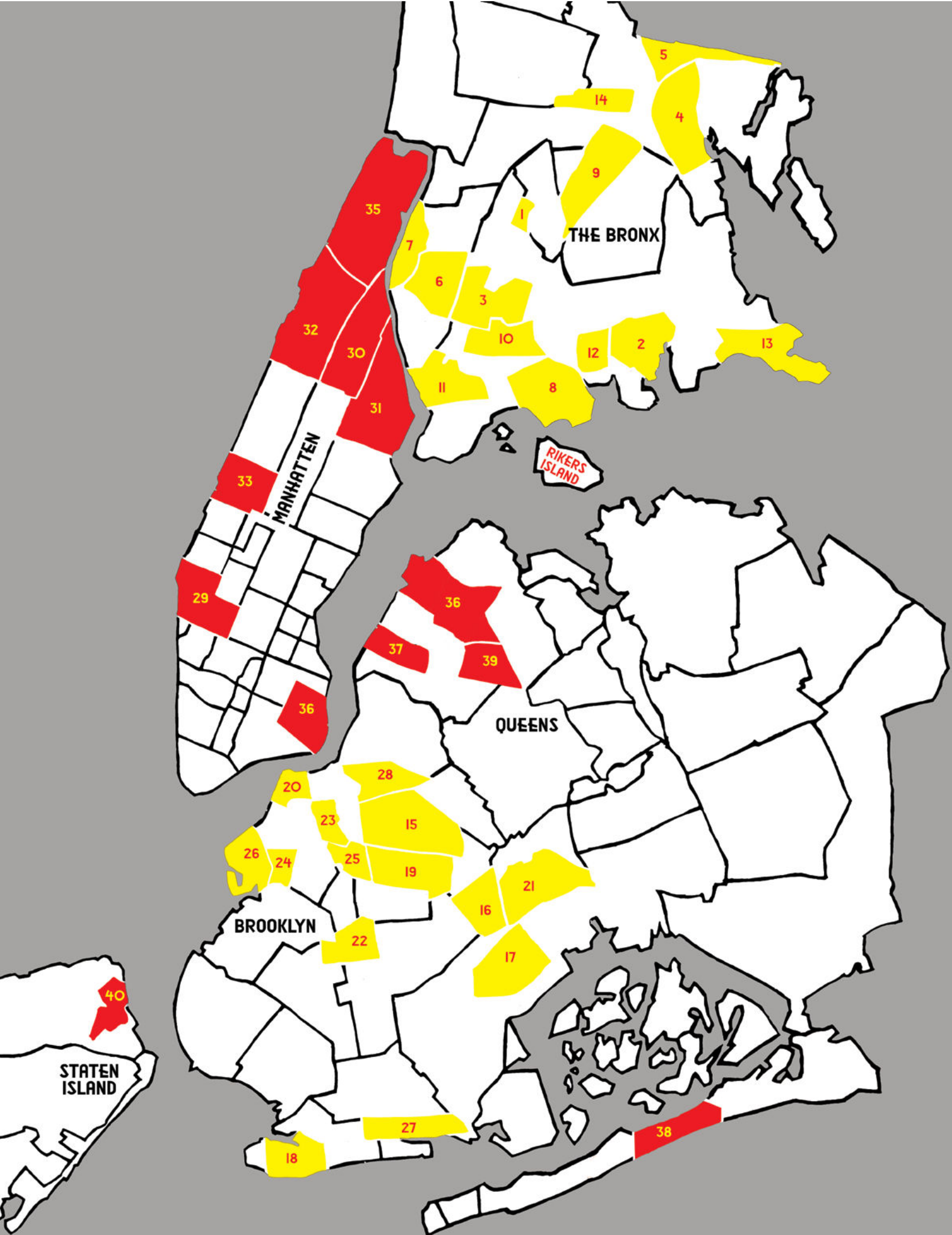
Queens

36. Astoria
37. Dutch Kills
38. Rockaway Beach
39. Woodside

Staten Island

40. Stapleton





our canvassing team

On average, our canvassing team would have two to five people on any given day. Over three years, more than 30 people have participated on the canvass – including members, supporters, interns, and staff. That number also includes seven people hired as community canvassers – all of them directly impacted by the criminal legal system.

Canvassing takes a lot of patience and heart, and we would like to thank everyone who participated in our #ShutRikers canvassing project (listed in alphabetical order).

Aarthi Bala
Alexis Lafrese
Aliyah-Begum Jessa
Alvin Dan
Amira Wittenberg
Anthony Maund
Anthony Reyes
Aryssa Speirs
Bianca Herrera
Cade Terada
Calum Ajax
Candice Fung
Candisha Weaver
Ciaran Henry
Cyrinthia Miller
Dawoon Lee
Dion Johnson
gabriel sayegh
Henry Robinson

Justin Williams
Karen Oberlin Hajdu
Katherine Ferrante
Khadija Maqsood
Lakenya Smith
Lily Fawcett
Luné Maldonado
Malika Qaza
Matthew Ottey
Melanie Dominguez
Muhsi White
Rafael
Ricky Forde
Taina Manick
Taylor Maloney
Yatri Baniya
Yonah Zeitz
Ziyadah Amatul-Matin

IN MEMORIAM – MATTHEW OTTEY

by Melanie Dominguez



Matthew Ottey was one of our paid community canvassers in 2023 and 2024. He was a proud Brooklynite from Canarsie, with a fierce love for his neighborhood. Matthew asked if we could canvass in his beloved Canarsie, and we did.

While canvassing there, he shared stories with us about growing up in the neighborhood, about the people there, the joys and struggles, the day-to-day life. While walking through the neighborhood, going from building to building, community members would come say hello to Matthew. These interactions embodied the love New Yorkers have for their community and their neighbors. Matthew going back to organize in his community – and his community’s response to that act of love – was a reminder of how people continue to show up for one another in difficult times.

Matthew passed away unexpectedly in 2024. We remember Matthew and his commitment to justice and his deep love for his community.




our door hangers

A yellow door hanger with a white circle at the top. Below the circle, the text "RIKERS ISLAND JAIL COMPLEX MUST BE SHUT DOWN." is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below this is a paragraph of text in black. At the bottom, there is a QR code, a call to action "SIGN THE PETITION HERE" with a series of arrows, and contact information for KATAL.

RIKERS ISLAND JAIL COMPLEX MUST BE SHUT DOWN.

New Yorkers want safety, fairness, and justice for all our communities. That's why most New Yorkers want Rikers shut down. Rikers is racist, unjust, costly, and dangerous. Over half of all people incarcerated at Rikers have a mental health condition. Jailing people at Rikers costs \$550,000 per person, per year. The conditions at Rikers are horrific for the people jailed there and for staff. Under Mayor Adams, at least 30 people have died at Rikers and other city jails. Rikers was supposed to close by 2027, but Mayor Adams is trying to keep it open. Mayor Adams must cut the city's jail population, shut down Rikers, and invest in real public safety: housing, health care, education, jobs.

SIGN THE PETITION HERE ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶



To learn more and get involved, visit: **SHUTRIKERS.ORG**

KATAL
CENTER FOR EQUITY, HEALTH, & JUSTICE

Contact:
Melanie Dominguez, Lead Organizer
Melanie@katalcenter.org
(516) 588-0127

@KatalCenter
#ShutRikers
#CutShutInvestNY

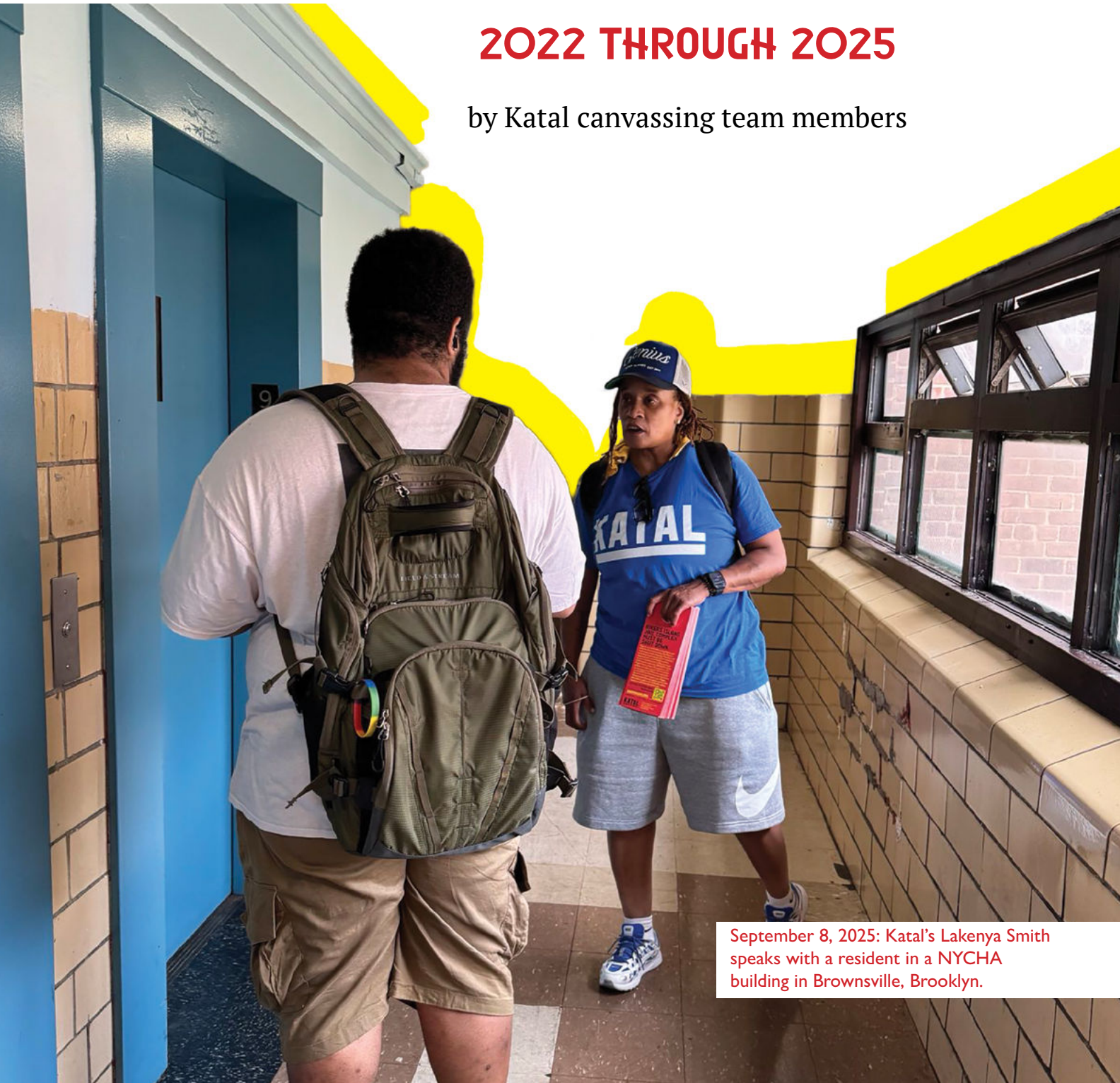
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Part 2

selected daily canvassing summaries

2022 THROUGH 2025

by Katal canvassing team members



September 8, 2025: Katal's Lakenya Smith speaks with a resident in a NYCHA building in Brownsville, Brooklyn.

overview

From September 2022 through December 2025, we hit a combined 200,000 doors across New York City through our #ShutRikers canvass.

We began with a regular canvass – knocking on doors, handing people materials or leaving door hangers behind, and having short conversations with folks at their doors or in the hallways, stairwells, foyers, and entryways of buildings. This approach allowed us to cover a lot of ground quickly; we could hit more than 1,000 doors in a single afternoon, holding dozens of conversations along the way.

In 2024, we shifted to an approach that is more akin to the deep canvassing model. This approach meant that we didn't hit as many doors in a day, as the longer conversations with people took more time. But this approach often yielded more lasting connections.

We canvassed nearly every week for three years, with a few exceptions – for instance, in the spring of 2025, we took a short break from the weekly canvassing so we could make a big push to pass legislation to overhaul the state agency responsible for oversight of every jail and prison in New York (the State Commission of Correction, or SCOC). But aside from a few pauses, we were canvassing every week – in the dead heat of summer, the brick-cold freeze of winter, after snowstorms, sometimes in the rain, and on lots of beautiful spring and fall days too. We coupled the canvassing with tabling at libraries, street fairs, and other events.

Upon returning from the daily canvass, a team member would file a report using the Slack app. Reports included which neighborhood and location the team canvassed that day; the elected representatives when the team canvassed that area (city council, state assembly, state senate); the number of doors they hit; and a short summary about the day, including notable conversations or interactions. Reports would also include a few photos from the day, mostly of our own team, rather than people we were talking with. As a rule, we were focused on canvassing, not photo ops.

In this section you'll find a sampling of reports from over three years of our #ShutRikers canvass. Each short report was written by a Katal team member; each has been lightly edited for punctuation, clarity, and to protect the privacy of the people we spoke with.

September 3, 2022

The Bronx: **Melrose/South Bronx, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) John Adams Houses**

City Council District 17: **Council Member (CM) Rafael Salamanca, Jr., Assm. Amanda Septimo, Sen. Alessandra Biaggi**

Door hangers: 600

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

Most of the door hangers we left were in the NYCHA John Adams Houses. Most of the conversations we had were with folks that were entering/leaving the building. The majority knew exactly what was happening at Rikers Island. Afterward, a woman who found my number on the door hanger called me about her son who is incarcerated at Elmira.



September 15, 2022

Manhattan: **Lower East Side**

City Council District 1: **CM Christopher Marte, Assm. Yuh-Line Niou, Sen. Brian Kavanagh**

Door hangers: 1,000

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**



Overall, everyone we spoke with knew what was happening at Rikers Island. We had a conversation with a woman who had a loved one at Rikers and she repeatedly mentioned how Rikers needs to shut down and how disappointing it is that the mayor [Eric Adams] isn't doing anything.

Another individual mentioned that he has had at least seven family members that have been to Rikers and he has heard so many horror stories.

September 16, 2022

Brooklyn: **East New York**

City Council District 42: **CM Charles Barron, Assm. Nikki Lucas,
Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Door hangers: **1,100**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

We spoke to a crossing guard that was extremely frustrated with the mayor's [Eric Adams's] lack of care for her community. She mentioned how she is the only crossing guard on a super dangerous street, Linden Blvd. Another crossing guard said the same thing and grabbed extra flyers to give to her friend.

We were able to have multiple conversations with folks that were coming and in and out of the building. It was a really busy day. A lot of people were out.

October 21, 2022

Brooklyn: **Downtown Brooklyn and Fort
Greene, NYCHA Farragut Houses
& Ingersoll Houses**

City Council District 35: **CM Crystal
Hudson, Assm. Phara Souffrant
Forrest, Sen Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **1,600**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Last Friday, Melanie, Karen, and I did outreach in Farragut Houses and Ingersoll Houses. In Farragut Houses we were able to have an interesting conversation with a group of elder men and women.

They told us about how a couple years ago, Farragut day-care facility was taken down to build a halfway house. This caused a problem for the mothers at the time but also shows how today Farragut still hasn't given back to the parents of this community. The majority of the people we spoke with knew about Rikers Island and knew about the atrocities going on there.



December 2, 2022

Manhattan: **Harlem, Manhattanville**

City Council District 7: **CM Shaun Abreu, Assm. Inez Dickens,
Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Door hangers: **500**

Report: **Karen Oberlin Hajdu**

We talked to a woman whose son's father had been in Rikers and had struggled there, and she knew quite a lot about what was happening there. Many people knew what was going on there and had heard stories directly or indirectly. One man we met, Conrad, said he'd been aware of the historical issues with Rikers and knew it needed to close for decades.

January 5, 2023

Manhattan: **Lower East Side, NYCHA Baruch
Houses**

City Council District 2: **CM Carlina Rivera, Assm.
Harvey Epstein, Sen. Brian Kavanagh**

Door hangers: **1,228**

Report: **Karen Oberlin Hajdu**

We spoke with a number of seniors in the neighborhood. We spoke to Gladys, who has been living in the LES for over 30 years and has had loved ones at Rikers. She understood the need to shut it down. Very aware about what her community needs – more investment in the youth. She has 16 grandchildren.

January 10, 2023

Brooklyn: **Crown Heights, NYCHA Albany Houses**

City Council District 36: **CM Chi Ossé, Assm. Brian Cunningham,
Sen. Zellnor Myrie**

Door hangers: **961**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

We got into conversations with community members who were concerned about the lack of investment in their communities. One individual spoke about how there needs to be more funding to support their creative process and start-ups. One of our



longest conversations was with a lady who has had many loved ones go to Rikers and is incredibly frustrated at the fact that it hasn't shut down. She is ready to take action!

January 13, 2023

Manhattan: **Harlem, NYCHA Saint Nicholas Houses**

City Council District 9: **CM Kristin Richardson Jordan, Assm. Inez Dickens, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Door hangers: **1,210**

Report: **Karen Oberlin Hajdu**

We spoke with numerous people who were interested and aware of what is going on at Rikers and were passionate about closing it and investing in communities. We talked to a woman who stopped on her way to the elevator to share how upset she was with the situation at Rikers, how inhumane it is, and how it needs to close. She gave us her info and wants to get involved.

Melanie received a call from a woman who received a door hanger today and they spoke for over 30 minutes – from the door hanger she felt like someone was looking out for her, as her son is currently incarcerated at Rikers. She's wanted to get involved and Melanie will invite her to the members meeting.



January 19, 2023

Manhattan: **Upper West Side (Manhattan Valley), NYCHA Frederick Douglass Houses**

City Council District 7: **CM Shaun Abreu, Assm. Daniel O'Donnell, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Door hangers: **1,000**

Report: **Bianca Herrera**

We spoke with many people including a NYCHA employee who was surprised that the number of deaths on Rikers was not higher. He acknowledged youth gun violence in his East Harlem neighborhood. He mentioned the importance of education for those impacted and other reentry services.

Two residents we spoke to briefly mentioned that they have family members who are COs [corrections officers]. One of the men we spoke to with CO family members mentioned another death on the island. He agreed that the environment in Rikers is unsafe for the incarcerated people and the employees.

Outside of the building, we spoke to three people in a car that began talking to us as they noticed our Katal hoodies. They shared about their friend who was previously on the island and suffered from violence. They expressed that COs and other staff don't care about those harmed and impacted by violence. We gave them a few door hangers and talked with them about possibly getting involved.



February 3, 2023

Brooklyn: **East Williamsburg, NYCHA**

Bushwick Houses

Council District 34: **CM Jennifer Gutiérrez,
Assm. Maritza Davila, Sen. Julia Salazar**

Door hangers: **900**

Report: **Bianca Herrera**

We talked with a number of people in passing today, but it was cold and people were moving.

February 10, 2023

Manhattan: **Harlem, NYCHA Saint Nicholas Houses**

Council District 9: **CM Kristin Richardson Jordan, Assm. Inez Dickens,
Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Door hangers: **400**

Report: **Karen Oberlin Hajdu**

We spoke to a director of the local senior center and set the groundwork for an info session. She confirmed she thought this would be great for the seniors there and let us leave door hangers on the info table.

We spoke with a woman who was with her young daughter, so the conversation was vague on some details, but she mentioned that when she was 19, she herself was at Rikers and how horrible it was even then. We spoke with her about investment in the community, and she said that if she had had opportunities she might not have been at Rikers in the first place. We got her contact information.

March 2 & 3, 2023

Brooklyn: **Bedford-Stuyvesant, NYCHA Marcy Houses**

City Council District 36: **CM Chi Ossé, Assm. Stefani Zinerman,
Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **1,200**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

On Wednesday and Thursday, we did outreach in Marcy Houses. Today we did it in the morning and were able to leave 700 door hangers. Yesterday we did outreach in the midafternoon and were able to leave 500 door hangers. Over the two days, we had a bunch of good conversations with residents. We spoke with one man who was very interested and had a huge question on where they were going to put the people on Rikers Island who are incarcerated once it is closed? I answered by telling him what the city's plan was, and I stated that right now the closing of Rikers Island is a stepping stone we need to accomplish so we can actually worry about the future in other ways, and he understood the logic behind it. He didn't agree 100%, but he did understand our role in educating the community on what's going on with our criminal justice system in NYC and how our voices can be mobilized to create changes.

March 7, 2023

Brooklyn: **Prospect Heights and Crown Heights**

City Council District 35: **CM Crystal Hudson, Assm. Phara Souffrant
Forrest, Sen Zellnor Myrie**

Door hangers: **350**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday we did outreach in Prospect Heights and the edge of Crown Heights. We were on the avenues of Underhill, Washington, Grand, and Classon. We encountered a bunch of refusals and this led to a deceleration in the amount of door hangers we were able to leave. For example, for a couple of blocks there was a "No flyers" sign on every gate or every other gate. We also ran into a white male who was very aggressive about us leaving door hangers. I was explaining to him that this is not the first time I have left these door hangers in the neighborhood and that no one has ever complained about it. He still didn't care to hear that explanation out, but once I informed him what our cause was, he was interested in our fight to close Rikers Island and made sure to keep the flyer.

March 15, 2023

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Tilden Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker,
Sen Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **1,200**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday we did outreach at the Tilden Houses in Brownsville, in the early afternoon. We talked with a bunch of people in the building. I had a conversation with someone who just came home from Rikers Island and they said Rikers Island needs to be shut down. We got his contact information.

March 16, 2023

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Tilden Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy,
Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **800**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday we were at Tilden Houses again. We were able to have some good conversations with people about our campaign to close Rikers Island. A few people had questions. For example, a woman wanted to know what will happen to the people incarcerated once Rikers is closed. I explained about the other four replacement jails being built and what we as a community need to do to keep up the fight for change. In the end, she agreed with the importance of why Rikers Island needs to be shut down. Also, I was able to talk to another person who told me he had already signed our petition online. He told me he has friends and family on Rikers Island and he hears nothing but horrible stories from them.



March 21, 2023

Brooklyn: **Sutter Avenue, border of Brownsville and East New York**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker,
Sen. Jabari Brisport and Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Door hangers: **700**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Today we did outreach on Sutter Avenue, at the border of Brownsville and East New York, Brooklyn. There were many people from the community outside. We had a number of good conversations. I spoke with one man who didn't want to get involved but respected our fight to close Rikers and shared his personal connection to Rikers. He was incarcerated between 1993 and 1997 and was incarcerated again in the 2000s. He told me the violence at Rikers Island is a defense mechanism that is learned behavior from your experiences dealing with the inhumane treatment from the correctional officers and the mental health issues of your fellow incarcerated peers. This was very interesting to hear because those same problems are still going on to this day and adds to the point why Rikers Island should close. I definitely want to do outreach again in this neighborhood and talk more with the people there.

March 28, 2023

Brooklyn: **Red Hook, NYCHA Red Hook East & Red Hook West**
City Council District 38: **CM Alexa Avilés, Assm. Marcela Mitaynes,**
Sen. Andrew Gounardes

Door hangers: **800**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

In Red Hook, we had a number of conversations with residents. One woman expressed strong sentiments around the lack of investment in her community. These NYCHA buildings are under heavy construction and she strongly feels like more can be done. When we spoke about the fight to close Rikers, she expressed frustrations around the delays: She said, "They have been talking about closing Rikers, but nothing gets done." We had another conversation with an older woman who had a son that was incarcerated at Rikers for many years. She would hear horrors from him about what is happening there.

April 11, 2023

Staten Island: **Stapleton, NYCHA Stapleton Houses**
City Council District 49: **CM Kamillah Hanks, Assm. Charles Fall,**
Sen. Jessica Scarcella-Spanton

Door hangers: **500**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Today me and Cyrinthia did outreach in her neighborhood at the Stapleton Houses in Staten Island. This was my first time doing outreach in Staten Island and it truly was successful. For the first conversation I had with an older Latina woman, she said she supports us because her husband has been to Rikers and she knows it's a terrible place. "They never come back the same and it messes with their brain," she told me.

In another conversation, a young brother around my age was surprised to hear about Rikers closing and agreed with me that it does need to shut down. On two doors I knocked, the residents literally looked at the flyers and said “Shut down Rikers, we

definitely need that!” Toward the end of our outreach, I also talked to two groups of young teenagers. Out of the first group, two had a father and brother who were locked up and understood that Rikers is an inhumane place. The other group of teenagers just listened and took more flyers to share with their friends. There are also three more buildings that I need to finish, so I will try to do an outreach next week in this area. There’s also a community center that I will get in contact with the next time I go as well.



April 13, 2023

Brooklyn: **Bedford-Stuyvesant, NYCHA
Roosevelt Houses**

City Council District 36: **CM Chi Ossé, Assm.
Stefani Zinerman, Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **500**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday, Alexis, Cade, and I did outreach in Roosevelt NYCHA buildings and finished doing door hanging to the buildings we didn’t do last week. We had many conversations with different ages of people from that community. For example, Alexis had a conversation with an older woman who was locked up back in the ’80s. She talked about the sexual encounters that she had with correctional officers at Rikers Island to make sure she got the supplies she needed. She also brings up how Rikers has been corrupt for more than three decades and there have been many women who have been assaulted and haven’t said anything due to the person who assaulted them being a correctional officer. I also talked to a young man from the community who agreed with our cause and also brought his thoughts on gentrification and that more respect for our struggle is truly needed. There was also a young woman in the community who’s seen our door hangers from last week and told me how important it was to her to close a place like Rikers Island; she shared her disgust with our new mayor [Eric Adams] and his tactics. We also left door hangers on the train on our way home from outreach and I had one conversation with an older man who told me, “A place like Rikers Island is for no man.” Finally, I went to the community center to retrieve the paperwork to hold an info session there, but the director was out and her assistant was on a trip with the kids. This Friday around noon I will go to grab the paperwork.

May 23, 2023

Brooklyn: Flatbush

City Council District 40: CM Rita Joseph, Assm. Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn,
Sen. Kevin Parker

Door hangers: 800

Report: Ricky Forde

Yesterday me and Candice did outreach in Flatbush, in apartment buildings near Ocean Ave. We were able to hit twelve buildings, with each building having six floors with either twelve doors or eight doors on every floor. To start the outreach, Candice had an interesting conversation with a young man who wanted to know about the aftermath of Rikers closing down. Once Candice explained it to him, he was all ears for more information about this fight and told us he will take the petition. Also, I had a conversation with a group of three children around the age of sixteen. They were asking questions about this campaign to close Rikers and were interested in learning more. They said they will take the petition as well and ask me for more door hangers to share with their friends.

June 2, 2023

Manhattan: Yorkville, NYCHA John Haynes
Holmes Towers

City Council District 5: CM Julie Menin,
Assm. Eddie Gibbs, Sen. José Serrano

Door hangers: 1,300

Report: Ricky Forde

Today me and Melanie did outreach in John Haynes Holmes Towers. We were able to hit five buildings with each building having about twenty five floors in each building. I did have two significant conversations that stood out. One older white woman came out her door while I was leaving the door hanger and asked what this was about. Once I explained to her our campaign and the current crisis at Rikers she said, "This is disgusting, I have no words." Another person, a younger white woman, said, "Rikers should of been closed down."



June 22, 2023

Brooklyn: **Cypress Hills, NYCHA Cypress Hills Houses**

City Council District 40: **CM Charles Barron, Assm. Nikki Lucas,
Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Door hangers: **785**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday, Melanie, Maribel, Jillian, Anthony, Yatrie, Taylor, and I did outreach in Cypress Hills. We were able to hit about two buildings with seventeen floors and 21 doors on each floor. One conversation I had was with a young man I saw walking through the park. He saw us all walking and asked about our shirts. He said that he was incarcerated at the age of 16. While incarcerated he did two and a half years on Rikers and took a plea deal on his case because he couldn't take being on Rikers Island anymore. He said the environment and the COs make life harder and also create more violence between people incarcerated. Maribel also talked to someone who had people who were incarcerated and said that Rikers is horrible and they even have talked to people who said people are also sleeping in the showers. Overall it was a great outreach session and was a great time with the CT team and our interns.

July 14, 2023

Queens: **Astoria, NYCHA Astoria Houses**

City Council District 22: **CM Tiffany Cabán,
Assm. Zohran K. Mamdani,
Sen. Kristen Gonzalez**

Door hangers: **300**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Today Melanie, Yatri, and I did outreach in Astoria Houses. We were able to finish the remaining buildings in that sector of Astoria's NYCHA buildings. We had some good conversations. Melanie talked to someone who asked about the door hangers. He went on to say that he has heard about this crisis from the news, and agrees that Rikers should shut down. I had a good meeting with someone at the nearby community center there, and he agrees with the campaign and wants to participate.



July 20, 2023

Brooklyn: **Bedford-Stuyvesant, NYCHA**
Brevoort Houses

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy,**
Assm. Stefani Zinerman,
Sen. Jabari Brisport

Door hangers: **600**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday, Melanie, Candy, Dion and I did outreach in Brevoort NYCHA buildings. We were able to finish leaving door hangers in every building. There were many conversations from all different types of people from the community. For example, there was an older woman we spoke to as soon as we entered Brevoort NYCHA and she said, “Even though you may be locked up, you have the right to be protected.” She has been incarcerated and knows a bunch of people who have been incarcerated and knows ones that died in NYC jail. For her, this hit home. We also spoke to another person when walking through the housing area who agreed with our campaign and stated, “Mayor Adams needs to go too.” There were also a bunch of people who saw our shirts while walking through the NYCHA buildings who yelled in solidarity, “Shut Rikers down!”



July 21, 2023

The Bronx: **South Bronx, NYCHA Forest Houses**
City Council District 16: **CM Althea Stevens,**
Assm. Chantel Jackson, Sen. Luis Sepúlveda

Door hangers: **750**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Today, Yatri, Anthony, and I did outreach in the NYCHA Forest building located in the Bronx. For our first time canvassing within that building, it was a success. At first there weren't many conversations but at the end a few people from the community talked to me and Yatri. For example, we talked to a mother who said her husband was in Rikers back in 2019 and she went three times a week to see him. This is where she was able to see and know about tragedies that happen there. Another older man said, “Thank you, brother, thank you, sister, for this work, because it needs to shut down and people in power shouldn't be taking advantage of people that are incarcerated for the mistake they made.” Overall it was a great way to end the week.

August 1, 2023

The Bronx: **South Bronx, NYCHA Morris Houses**

City Council District 16: **CM Althea Stevens, Assm. Chantel Jackson,
Sen. Luis Sepúlveda**

Door hangers: **1650**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday, Yatri, Matthew, Dion, Candi, Candice, Ciaran, Lakenya, and I did outreach in NYCHA Morris Houses located in the Bronx. We were able to hit eleven to twelve buildings and were talking to the people from the community the whole time we were there! For the first conversation I talked to a group of three young Black males. They saw my shirt and called me over to ask about our campaign. Once I explained our campaign, they agreed with it but also gave me their input on Rikers. One of them had a stepbrother who passed away at Rikers and explained to me how the madness that goes down in that jail facility trickles down to the family on the outside as well. One of them also told me how powerful the shirts are and how it's a big fashion statement in NYC. They also signed a petition and followed Instagram as well. We also talked to a group of older men and women who said that Rikers has been horrible and still is. They also brought up how GRVC [the George R. Vierno Center] in their era was a sector on Rikers that was horrible. They stated that COs would bring drugs, let people get sexually assaulted, and watch violence without stepping in at all. Overall, it was a great outreach day.

August 18, 2023

Queens: **Woodside, NYCHA Woodside Houses**

City Council District 26: **CM. Julie Won, Assm. Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas,
Sen. Michael Gianaris**

Door hangers: **576**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Today, Yatri, Melanie and I did outreach in the Woodside NYCHA buildings in Queens. We were able to hit 576 doors. We didn't talk with as many people as we'd hoped for, but the conversations we had were good. I spoke with an older gentleman who said, "People need to be held accountable for the atrocities that happen on Rikers Island." I also talked to an older woman who saw us and yelled down the hallway outside her door, "Close Rikers down!" Overall it was a great day of outreach and a great way to end the week.

September 8, 2023

Brooklyn: **Canarsie, NYCHA Bay View Houses**

City Council District 46: **CM Mercedes Narcisse, Assm. Jaime Williams,
Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Door hangers: **1,000**

Report: **Ricky Forde**

Yesterday, Lakenya, Matthew, and I did outreach in the NYCHA Bay View building located in Canarsie, Brooklyn. We were able to hit about twelve buildings and I was able to have a few conversations with the youth yesterday. One conversation was with a young man that just came home from Rikers. He was in Rikers for the last two years. He also experienced many lockdowns on Rikers for one week to two weeks at a time with no showering or commissary. He said, "If they treat us like animals, wouldn't we react as animals to them?" Hearing this

from the youth especially gives me another clear reason why Rikers must shut down. The youth should not have to deal with such trauma because of a broken jail system. Besides that, most of the conversations were people who wanted Rikers to be shut down and asked how to get involved in the campaign!



September 14, 2023

Manhattan: **Washington Heights and Inwood**

City Council District 10: **CM Carmen De La Rosa, Assm. Manny De Los Santos,
Sen. Robert Jackson**

Door hangers: **1,000**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

This is a community of primarily Spanish-speaking folks, so most conversations were had in Spanish. We had a conversation with an older lady who has been tracking the news and is horrified at what is happening at Rikers. We came across a grandma who was bringing the kids back home from school who expressed the need for funding for schools!

November 8, 2023

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, Earl W. Jimerson Apartments**

City Council District 42: **CM Charles Barron, Assm. Monique Chandler-Waterman, Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Door hangers: **850**

Report: **Ricky Forde**



Yesterday, Candi, Matthew, Moose, and I did outreach in Brownsville. We hit the Earl W. Jimerson Apartments. We were able to hit and finish four out of the five buildings there. The last one we couldn't get in but we went to another building across the street which had twenty-one floors. There were many great conversations as well. For example, I talked to one woman who agreed with our campaign and said she went to Rikers to visit her nephew. While being there, the COs treated her very badly with no respect and harsh treatment. She also told the COs she's not too friendly with dogs and they told her "I don't care" and let the dog jump on her face. This led to a lawsuit towards the Department of Corrections which she won. I also talked to a Muslim man who believes in closing Rikers and building replacement jails across NYC

because he thinks that will make it easier for correction officers to get to work and will make it easier for families of incarcerated people to see their loved ones.

January 21, 2024

The Bronx: **Castle Hills, NYCHA Castle Hill Houses**

City Council District 18: **CM Amanda Farias, Assm. Karines Reyes, Sen. Luis Sepúlveda**

Door hangers: **1,000**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

We spoke with a NYCHA worker who has a brother that is doing life in prison and her father-in-law is currently detained at Rikers for a crime he did not commit. She was incredibly frustrated with the system and the injustices her family has faced. She said they need to shut down Rikers.

Aryssa and Candi had a conversation with a couple in the lobby of the building who immediately defaulted on blaming the lack of resources of the community on asylum seekers. They stated that they are taking a lot of money that not even the

community gets. This issue continues to show up in conversations and it has been important to remain adamant that asylum seekers have a right to seek refuge and that they are not taking resources. Rather the mayor [Eric Adams] since he took office has been prioritizing putting more money into the NYPD and the DOC instead of investing in communities.

January 25, 2024

Manhattan: **Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam,**
Assm. Inez Dickens, Sen. Cordell Cleare

Door hangers: **562**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

This time around we spent most of our time flying inside and outside the train station on 125th Street. This gave us the opportunity to have many meaningful conversations with community members. When we had an hour to spare, we went inside a building to leave door hangers.

One of the conversations I had was with an older lady waiting for her bus who expressed how frustrated she has been with the Adams administration. She has been fighting since she was a teen for the rights of Black & Brown communities. She fully wants to see Rikers shut down and an investment in the youth.

One of our canvassers spoke with a community member that was just incarcerated at Rikers and talked about the horrible conditions. Another conversation we had was with an individual who at first was hesitant about shutting Rikers but then I told him about the current conditions and the lack of investments in our communities. He signed the petition.

March 12–14, 2024

Brooklyn: **Brownsville**

City Council Districts 36 & 37: **CM Chi Ossé (D36), CM Sandy Nurse (D37),**
Sen. Roxanne Persaud, Sen. Julia Salazar, Assm. Stefani Zinerman,
Assm. Latrice Walker

Door hangers: **2,231**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

We've been in Brownsville for the last few days. From the conversations that we had with community members, they expressed a need for community centers, centers for



the elderly, youth jobs, free things for the kids to do. Free events for people to take their children out. A lot of people can't afford to take their kids out due to how expensive it is. Many have felt the impact of the budget cuts but also expressed that it's been this way for years.

April 25, 2024

The Bronx: **Eastchester, NYCHA Edenwald Houses**

City Council District 12: **CM Kevin Riley, Assm. Carl Heastie, Sen. Jamaal Bailey**

Door hangers: **800**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

While we were in the community we spoke with NYCHA residents. One of them informed us that they knew a family whose kid had died by suicide after being detained at Rikers. As the conversation continued, we discovered that the family was that of [Kalief Browder](#). They understood the inhumane conditions found at Rikers and were extremely concerned about the well-being of young adults. They want Rikers shut down.

April 30, 2024

The Bronx: **Eastchester, NYCHA Edenwald Houses**

City Council District 12: **CM Kevin Riley, Assm. Carl Heastie, Sen. Jamaal Bailey**

Door hangers: **984**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We spoke with one man who said he did time on Rikers and it was horrible, he had got stabbed in the face. I spoke with a female who said Rikers is horrible: especially since the pandemic things have gotten out of control. I spoke with a gentleman who stated he was locked up on Rikers for 4 years and it made him crazy.

May 8, 2024

Manhattan: **East Harlem, NYCHA Wagner Houses**

City Council District 8: **CM Diana Ayala, Assm. Eddie Gibbs, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Door hangers: **441**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We were door knocking in East Harlem. One gentleman was locked up years ago and has brothers and sisters that work at Rikers and says it's not a good place. We had a conversation with a woman that said she heard Rikers is horrible and that they should shut it down. She also stated she would like to see a change not just in her community but all communities. There is nothing for the youth to get involved in.

We spoke with a couple, they said Rikers was bad. The female said she'd been assaulted and felt deciding to close Rikers was like being stuck between a rock and a hard place. I had a conversation with a young man who was incarcerated before and I asked him from the outside looking in for his opinion on Rikers. He said he looks at it from different angles, inmates make it hard and officers make it worse. He stated that a lot of COs are not from their communities so they don't understand. One thing he would love to see is UNITY, and more programs.

May 16, 2024

Manhattan: **East Harlem and
Central Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef
Salaam, Assm. Eddie Gibbs,
Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **109**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We had several conversations while in this community, everyone's wants and needs are similar. They want more programs, and things for the youth to be able to get involved in. And renovating in and out of their apartments.

We had a conversation with a 76-year-old woman who said she heard some horrible things about Rikers, how the COs were raping detainees and bringing drugs in the jail facility. She went on to say no one in her family ever was locked up,

but it was very important not just for her to sign the petition, but for the community as well to get involved with fighting to not just shut down Rikers but to get out and vote and help change the community.

Another woman stated that Rikers was built to warehouse Latinos and African Americans. She also wants to see repairs in her community. We spoke with an older gentleman who said he was locked up over 30 years ago. It was time for a system change.

Older women from the Gospel Temple would like to write the mayor [Eric Adams] and address police patrolling on foot instead of just riding by in her Harlem community. These elders asked, "How can you actually see what's going on in the community if you're just driving by?"

A woman who has lived in the community since 1974 said she heard people were dying on Rikers. She would like to see more outreach from social workers, not law enforcement. After-school programs, affordable housing. The communities should be first priority. Along with affordable housing for the homeless, addressing the mental health issue in the communities.





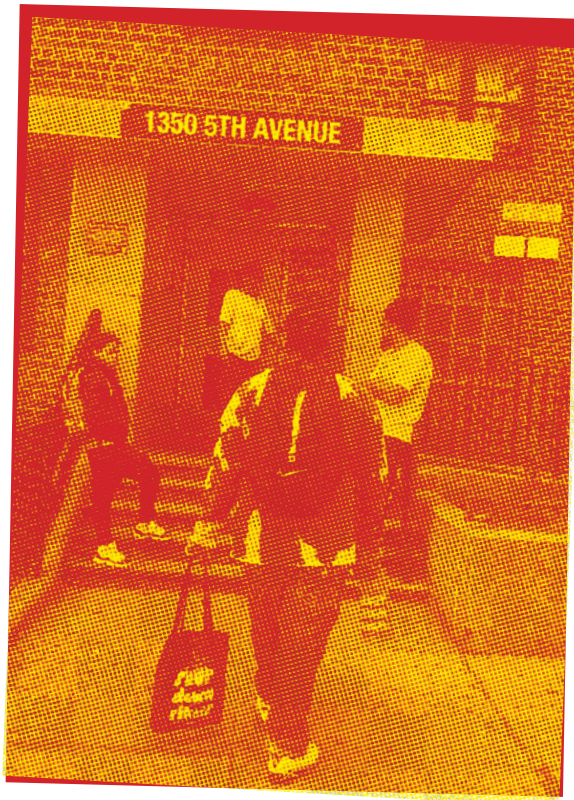
May 22, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Eddie Gibbs, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **141**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**



Of our conversations today, a majority of residents want to see more community centers, togetherness as a community. One woman stated that she wanted her community back, more Black business. She said there would be no NYCHA without the community. One woman said her daughter is a CO, so she has heard all the horrible things not only that happened to the detainees but also to the officers. An older woman said the community needs more people like Katal, people who care about what's going on in these communities. We also spoke with a young man who lost his mother, and he stated that he wanted to see a change in the justice system and more community centers.

May 30, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Eddie Gibbs, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Door hangers: **400**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

People in this community just want to see a change for them, and not against them. The community's concerns are all similar: They want renovations and programs for the youth. One gentleman stated he loved the work we do. "It takes a lot of heart to walk through these NYCHA buildings and try to reach the community," he said.

June 6, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Al Taylor, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **77**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Today we spoke with a woman named Denise who stated she heard Rikers is in horrible condition: instead of investing in jails, invest back into these communities. Another woman said she heard that Rikers is supposed to close in 2027, said to invest in schools,

parks, and back into the NYCHA buildings that have been in horrible condition for years.

We spoke with an immigrant from Ghana who had come to Harlem via France. She has read and seen the horrible things on TV about Rikers, yes, she agrees it should be shut down. Only living in this community for 3 years and raising a 17-year-old male teenager whose biggest influence is the community. She wants to see the community get rid of the drugs because of how it's destroying communities and families.

One resident told how she'd visited her brother in Rikers, and said it was the worst experience ever, she was very uncomfortable. She wants to see Rikers shut down, and investment back into the NYCHA buildings. Another resident works near the island. He said he didn't know much about Rikers itself, other than it was no place for humans. He wants to see trade programs, mentorship programs, for the youth.



June 12, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem, NYCHA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Towers**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Inez Dickens, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **198**

Report: **Melanie Dominguez**

On this day we had a conversation with a community member named Dulce who spoke only Spanish. She did not know much about what has been happening at Rikers but was horrified to learn more about the dire conditions. She did speak about the need to make sure that the community has access to resources like well-kept buildings.

We spoke to a woman that did not sign our petition but was deeply concerned about the conditions at Rikers. She was also confused about why they have not closed the jail complex because she heard on the news that it was supposed to. We had to unpack what has been happening. She was also concerned about lack of investments for programs for youth. We got a lot of questions regarding what would happen to people once Rikers is shut down.

June 13, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Inez Dickens, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **114**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We had several conversations with residents, one with an 80-year-old man who was in jail back in the early 2000s for shoplifting. When on Rikers they refused to give him his correct mental health medication. Which had him hearing voices and attempting to take his own life. He said Rikers should have been shut down a long time ago.

We talked with a super at one of the buildings we were in. He stated that he heard all the horrible things that have been going on at Rikers for years. He wants to see community centers for the kids – in his community they have nothing to do but sit on their stoops and pick up bad habits from old heads that have been in and out of jail all their life. We spoke with a homeless gentleman who said he has heard all the terrible things that go on at Rikers, that it definitely needs to be shut down. He'd like to see more affordable housing and for the homeless to be off the street.

July 5, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Al Taylor, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

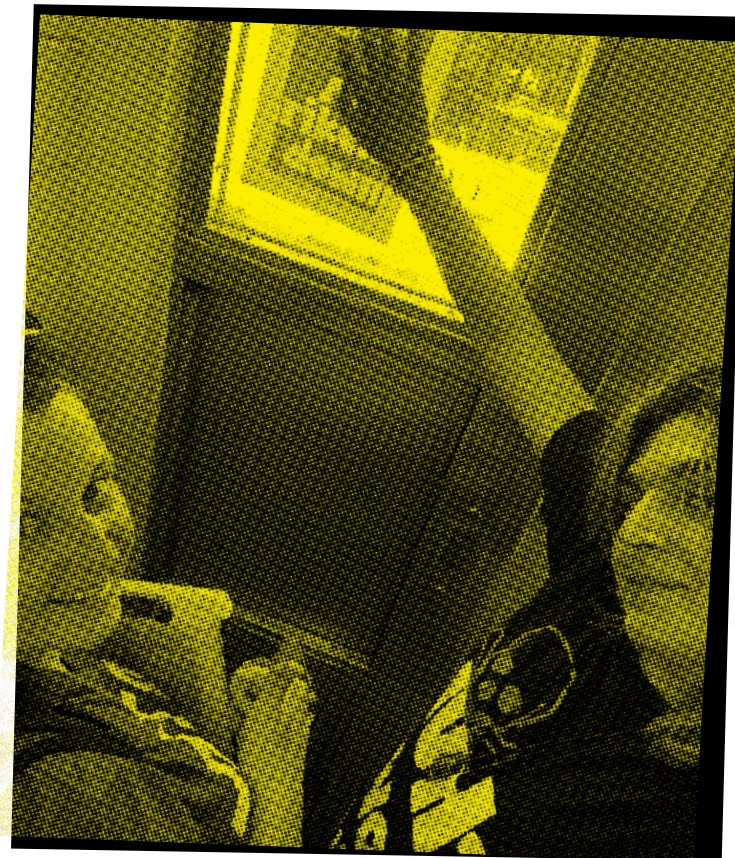
Flyers: **200**

Door hangers: **100**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Revisiting NYCHA buildings and direct engagement worked well. While out in the community, we put up flyers in various locations to spread the word about the upcoming SHUT RIKERS rally on Tuesday, July 9th. You can find our flyers in different pubs, beauty parlors, pet stores, storefronts, NYCHA buildings, community centers, storefront windows, light poles, telephone poles, buses, train stations.

We also handed out flyers to people in the Harlem neighborhood. In our outreach efforts, we spoke with a local resident who is program director at a nearby senior center. They'd like more information for the seniors. And we spoke with a number of people who want to come to the rally on the 9th.



July 15, 2024

Brooklyn: **Fort Greene, NYCHA Ingersoll Houses**

City Council District 35: **CM Crystal Hudson, Assm. Jo Anne Simon, Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **800**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

G. signed a petition, her little brother is in Rikers, he has been fighting his case for 4½ years. G. stated she has not heard from him in 5 months, she has not been allowed to see him. When she was visiting him, she was treated so badly. N., who signed a petition, wanted to see more resources for the community. She has a housing voucher and can't find an apartment, she doesn't want to be in the projects. N. stated, "They approve people for these housing vouchers, but don't help you find an apartment other than the projects."

T. was all for shutting down Rikers, her boyfriend has become institutionalized, he was stuck fighting his case at Rikers for over 3 years. She said the system doesn't care about your mental health at all. T. said it's so important for people to understand and know who they are voting for in this election because something has to change.



July 19, 2024

Brooklyn: **Fort Greene, tabling at Walt Whitman Library**

Council District 35: **CM Crystal Hudson, Assm. Stefani Zinerman, Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Conversations: **20**

Report: **Aryssa Speirs**

Spoke with someone who has a cousin that is currently on Rikers. He knows how horrible the conditions are and said it was overcrowded and overpoliced. He wanted to stay and talk longer with me but he was on his way to work. I gave him my email for him to reach out and we could set up a time to talk more. He also ended up signing a petition.

Spoke with another person who said her friend's sister had recently died in custody. She was only 23 years old. I gave her my condolences and we talked about how she was denied treatment, which ultimately led to her dying at Bellevue. She was all for what we were doing and signed our petition. This just underscores how vital it is to be present in the communities where people are most impacted by our criminal justice system.

Luné had a conversation with a woman in Spanish explaining why we were tabling today and the conditions at Rikers. She said her community needs more investment in

public safety and wanted her community to just communicate more with one another. We had a conversation with Carol, who was all for shutting Rikers down. We talked about the most recent death at Rikers that she was unaware of. She knows how horrible the conditions are there and that people are frequently denied medical treatment. She ended up signing our petition.

Talked to Washington, who is an environmental artist and also works at the shelter that is right by the library as a language teacher. He loved the stickers and I talked about our local artist and had a copy of our zine to show him. He signed our petition and was very happy that we were doing this important work.

Had a conversation with someone who works for Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership in the NStat program [NeighborhoodStat, part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety]. She was so happy to see us out here in the community talking about the inhumane conditions on Rikers. She invited us to an event tonight called Myrtle Avenue Summer Nights, where they have live music, activities, and tastings from local merchants. She said for us to follow up with her about a community event they are having on August 8th, that she invited us to table at! I will be following up on Monday. One of the librarians also came out and told us how the library budget cuts affected their branch and that they had to do away with one of their youth reading programs.

We also ended on a very high note getting two guys to sign and we talked for a little bit. It was also really great that we had done outreach there the day before at the NYCHA buildings literally across the street from the library, because we were able to connect with community members even more. Overall it was a really great experience, and we should try and schedule another session there before the summer is over. Some community members even asked if we would be back!

August 5, 2024

Manhattan: **Spanish Harlem**

City Council District 8: **CM Diana Ayala, Assm. Eddie Gibbs, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **471**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We had a fantastic experience working with Brother Sister Sol from Spanish Harlem. We actually split up into 3 teams. Of course my team excelled with getting signed petitions. By the second day the kids were so enthused to actually knock on the doors and hand out door hangers and speak to the people in the community. My challenge was splitting them up because everyone wanted to play a role by the second day. By the third day it was history. We were really outside with all the kids handing out door hangers and knocking on the doors. Lots of conversations. I also connected with the senior center, following up with them to do an info session this fall.

September 1, 2024

Manhattan: **West Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Asm. Al Taylor, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **138**

Report: **Aryssa Speirs**



Talked to T., who was all for shutting down Rikers. She wanted to see more money invested in the youth, like we have heard many times from other community members. Also spoke with M., who seemed interested in possibly attending some of our future actions after I mentioned the rally we would be having on the 25th. He had been to Rikers before, a long time ago, and keeps up with the news and sees how the conditions have only gotten worse.

September 5, 2024

Manhattan: **West Harlem**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Inez Dickens, Sen. Cordell Cleare**

Doors knocked: **289**

Report: **Aryssa Speirs**

It was a great day for door knocking! We went in the morning from 9:30 am – 1 pm to quite a large NYCHA building in West Harlem with 19 floors in all. We spoke to J., who had a very calming energy. We learned they were in Rikers for 6 months and were released in Feb. They talked about the horrible treatment there by the DOC and doctors and other medical professionals. They said that they lie about giving people certain medications, while also over-medicating or under-medicating them and how corrupt the whole system is. We also spoke to D., who had also been to Rikers. He mentioned how he was just talking about prison reform with someone yesterday and the way we funnel so much money into the prison system. He wants to see the money be spent on everything else for the community that actually creates true public safety. Lakenya spoke to someone who actually gives free financial counseling for people who are marginalized. Also she spoke to DA, who wants to see more money being spent on mental health resources. We also stopped by the senior center nearby, which me, Ricky, and Lakenya did an info session at already. She spoke to them and picked out a date for us to go back there and do a follow-up.



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October 11, 2024

Brooklyn: **Cypress Hills, Cypress Hills Library**

City Council District 42: **CM Chris Banks, Assm. Erik Dilan, Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Get Out the Vote tabling

Conversations: **20**

Report: **Aryssa Speirs**

We had a very successful day tabling outside Cypress Hills Library. The first conversation we ended up having was with a NYPD public safety officer. His name was Chris and this was the first time since I have personally been doing these tabling sessions that the public safety officer was talking to us and learning about all the work we do. We explained the #Nix2through6 campaign [about New York City ballot questions] and also the work Katal does around #ShutRikers. He was very receptive and understanding. He wanted to see more money being invested for youth centers for the children and teens in the neighborhood. A lot of the kids end up going to this library because there is nothing else that is free to do in the neighborhood. He remembered when he was a kid and feels that there has been a huge disinvestment in multiple activities for the youth. He ended up signing our #ShutRikers petition!

We were able to register 3 people to vote! One was a mother who first wanted to check if she was registered, and we found out she wasn't. So we were able to do that process as quickly as possible for her, while also sharing information about #Nix2through6. We also registered a gentleman who was working at the library. He has done a paper registration form at the last library he was working at, but when we checked his status, it still said he wasn't registered. We were able to register him and hoped that those who did do the paper registration forms at this library would have their forms mailed in.

We were able to check the status of 4 other community members, as well as where their polling sites would be this year. We had an interesting conversation with C., who has been to Rikers and prison before and now has 4 of his friends at Rikers right now. He knew that he was able to register to vote in NY because the law that was passed now allows those with felony convictions to vote, but despite that he did not want to vote. We gave him materials about #Nix2through6 and also about our #ShutRikers campaign. And we also talked about how many people are on Rikers right now that probably will not be given the chance to vote, even though legally they are able to. He said he was going to share the info with his daughters who did vote and were involved in community things like this. Me, Alvin, and Aarthi had a convo after about how it was great that he knew he could vote, because some with prior convictions may not know this, and he was willing to share the info with his family, but he was not going to take the step to register himself. He had a position we see a lot, in which people do not think their vote matters, because they think it won't change their situation.

October 15, 2024

Manhattan: **Central Harlem, Malcolm X Boulevard, Central Harlem Senior Citizens' Center**

City Council District 9: **CM Yusef Salaam, Assm. Inez Dickens, Sen. Cordell Cleare**
Presentation at senior center, followed by tabling outside

Conversations: **20**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Following up with the senior center was a success, we were able to share some key updates on Rikers Island and talk to the seniors about our campaign demands with [#CutShutInvest](#). The seniors were very receptive to the key updates. Also we dived into Get Out the Vote (GOTV) and Propositions 2–6 that are going to be on the ballot, explaining to the seniors why it's important to vote on these Props 2-6. Ending the day in Harlem with a tabling session at the Senior Center around GOTV and explaining to people in the community about the props that are going to be on the ballot and what each prop meant.

October 17, 2024

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, Pitkin Avenue, Brownsville Safety Alliance Community Safety Fair**

City Council District 37: **CM Sandy Nurse, Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Conversations: **38**

Report: **Aryssa Speirs**

A very eventful tabling event. There were a whole bunch of other organizations at the event, offering resources to community members in Brownsville. The first BSA event we did was back in April, and we have continued to make every event they have put on since.

October 18, 2024

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Glenmore Plaza Houses**

City Council District 37: **CM Sandy Nurse, Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Doors knocked: **220**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We had a productive day in Brownsville. We covered two buildings with 35 units in each building, knocking on doors asking people if they were registered to vote, discussing Props 2–6, along with telling people about the #ShutRikers campaign.

November 11, 2024

Queens: **Flushing, NYCHA Bland Houses**

City Council District 20: **CM Sandra Ung, Assm. Ron Kim, Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky**

Doors knocked: **340**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**



While out in Flushing we hit 340 doors. In one brief conversation a resident asked, “Why is the first approach for Black and Brown people incarceration, when there are people that have mental illness that need proper care, not jail?”

January 21, 2025

Brooklyn: **Crown Heights, NYCHA Albany Houses**

City Council District 36: **CM Chi Ossé, Assm. Stefani Zinerman, Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Door hangers: **450**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We met R. at the NYCHA Albany Houses while we were door-hanging. He noticed Aarthi’s Shut Rikers bag and began sharing his experiences from his time in Rikers, where he once spent over 3 years. He was released from incarceration 14 years ago and mentioned that he participated in the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020. R. has also been a positive role model for the youth in his community. After giving us a tour of the housing complex, he encouraged us to seek him out during our next outreach at the Albany Houses.

February 4, 2025

Brooklyn: **Red Hook, NYCHA Red Hook West Houses**

City Council District 38: **CM Alexa Avilés, Assm. Marcela Mitaynes, Sen. Andrew Gouardes**

Door hangers: **600**

Report: **Aryssa Speirs**

It was interesting because there is a lot of construction going on in the outside areas of the complex. But the buildings themselves are not in the best condition. When it’s

warmer out, I think this area would have a lot of people outside. Alvin spoke with someone who was formerly incarcerated at Rikers. I am also attaching a map of all the buildings we did. We were able to do 20 buildings. But there are a lot more to go.

July 8, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Brevoort Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Doors knocked: **200**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

While out in Brevoort Houses, we spoke with V., who has a lot of family and friends who went to Rikers. She wants to see more community activities going on in her community.

SM, whose son is 32 and has been incarcerated for the last 6 months, says Rikers should have been closed down. Her worst fear is her son not making it home from Rikers due to the violence that takes place at the hands of the DOC.

SK shared a story of his being incarcerated. He wasn't locked up on Rikers but locked up in Essex County, which he was told was the equivalent of Rikers. He witnessed COs being brutal to people incarcerated and experienced violence himself. He knows people incarcerated differently and he wants to stay informed to learn more about our campaign to Shut Down Rikers.



July 9, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Brevoort Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen. Julia Salazar**

Doors knocked: **220**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

A good day. B., who has never been to prison, shared his concerns about the conditions at Rikers. He has read and heard about the terrible experiences there and believes that the correctional officers lack respect for the humanity of those incarcerated. Having been in his community for over 30 years, he has witnessed

numerous individuals, including friends and family, cycling in and out of the prison system. He emphasized that people need help if they are repeatedly entering the system. Barry expressed frustration regarding the lack of mental health services and support for

homeless individuals. He questioned why people have to wait years to find out if they qualify for low-income housing. When asked what changes he would like to see in his community, B. stated that he wants to stop seeing ICE agents destroying people's lives.

S., a longtime resident of the Brownsville community, expressed her deep concern regarding Rikers – she'd experienced being arrested and sent there. She said it's a very alarming frequency of news reports about deaths at the facility, asserting that Rikers should have already been shut down due to its conditions. With friends and family members also having experienced the harsh realities of the prison system, S. emphasized the critical need for more free programs aimed at supporting the youth in the community.



July 11, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Brevoort Houses**
City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy,**
Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen. Julia Salazar

Doors knocked: **117**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

While out in the Brownsville community today, we had several conversations with folks about our #ShutRikers campaign. Many expressed deep concerns about the conditions at Rikers and the experiences of their loved ones who are incarcerated. D., a music therapist, shared her personal stories from people she works with in the community who have been incarcerated at Rikers Island, and she shared her frustrations with the lack of support and resources in the community.

N. expressed how there are way too many deaths happening at Rikers Island. She says there are far too many issues in her community that need to be addressed, like better mental health services, assistance for the homeless, and programs aimed at helping youth. We invited her to the community conversation.

J., who was formerly incarcerated, not even 90 days ago, says Rikers is a mental ward, and a homeless shelter for the homeless; they should have closed it down. He wants to see everything in his community change, including helping out the youth.

August 1, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Brownsville Houses**
City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker,**
Sen. Roxanne Persaud

Doors knocked: **126**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

While out in the Brownsville community today, we spoke with F., an older Latina woman who, without hesitation, shared that Rikers should be closed. She said her friend was detained at Rikers, and with the high temperatures in the summer, the heat was unbearable at Rikers. She shared that she's an active member in her community and has been fighting to protect community members from ICE. She is involved at the local YMCA, and when we have our community event, she will gladly share the info.

August 5, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Tilden Houses**

Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy,**

Assm. Latrice Walker, Sen. Roxanne Persaud

Doors knocked: **200**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

We talked today with E., who has lived in Brownsville for 35 years. He's never been incarcerated, but many of his family members and friends have spent time in and out of the system. He believes Rikers Island should have been shut down long ago. He also expressed his desire to see fewer scaffolds in the community. More parks for the kids to play in.

Z. says Rikers is no place for people struggling with mental illness. They need treatment, not punishment, not a jail cell. She is tired of fast food chains popping up on every corner in their neighborhood. What she would like to see is juice bars – places that offer something fresh, healthy, and real.



August 13, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Tilden Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker,**

Sen. Roxanne Persaud

Doors knocked: **112**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Today we spoke with M., whose brother was on Rikers for a while before being sent upstate. She said Rikers should have been closed a long time ago because of the inhumane conditions, violence, deaths, and the severe mental health issues people face there. She believes her community needs to help people way more than they're doing. It's way too many people addicted to drugs in her community.

August 18, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Tilden Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker,
Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Doors knocked: **200**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

In the Brownsville community, people are calling for less violence, more programs for the youth, and stronger access to mental health services. These are the changes everyone agrees will make the community safer and healthier. Y. says the violence is out of control and that if there were more for the youth to do then fewer arrests would be made and fewer youth would be going back and forth to Rikers. Rikers is no place for anyone to be.

September 5, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Seth Low Houses**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Latrice Walker,
Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Doors knocked: **100**

Flyers posted for Community Conversations event: **30**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Yesterday's outreach in Brownsville was a great day for knocking on doors and connecting with people in the community. Everyone we spoke with agreed that Rikers needs to be shut down, including K., who told us that both of her children have been through Rikers and are now upstate. She said Rikers has been horrible for decades. We also distributed flyers for the upcoming community conversation and some people have already RSVP'd. It was made clear through all conversations that folks want change.

September 11, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Glenmore Plaza**

City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Charles Fall, Sen. Julia Salazar**

Doors knocked: **96**

Flyers distributed: **50**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

While out in the community, we connected with A., a NYCHA resident of over 40 years. He shared how much change he's seen through the decades – and how heartbreaking it's been to witness all the deaths happening at Rikers. He said it's horrible and that one of the changes he wants to see is a change in leadership, starting with Mayor Adams. Along with these powerful conversations, we engaged with several storefronts and distributed 50 flyers to spread the word about our upcoming Community Conversation event.

September 15, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Glenmore Plaza**

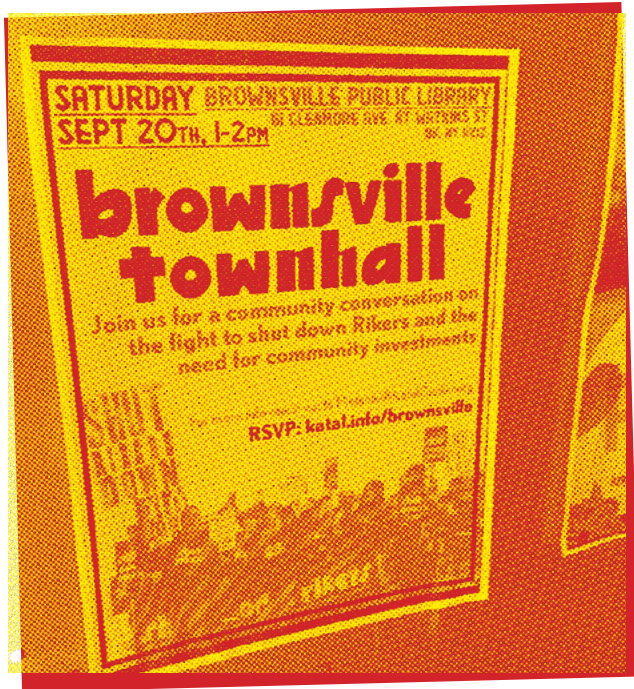
City Council District 41: **CM Darlene Mealy, Assm. Charles Fall, Sen. Julia Salazar**

Flyers distributed: **133**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

While out in Brownsville we hung up and handed out flyers for our community conversation, the Brownsville town hall. We spoke with so many community members about our campaign to shut down Rikers and the upcoming town hall conversation.

The response was clear, most people want to see real change, especially for the kids growing up in the neighborhood. Parents and residents stressed that there's nothing for young people to do, and they want more opportunities, programs, and resources for the youth.



September 24, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Van Dyke I Houses & Van Dyke II Houses**

City Council District 42: **CM Chris Banks, Assm. Nikki Lucas, Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Doors knocked: **102**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Today while out in Brownsville, we met L., who says six years ago her cousin died of an asthma attack while detained at Rikers. “That loss stays with me every day,” she says. “How can anyone not make it home from jail due to medical neglect? They need to shut Rikers down, take that money, and invest it back into the community.”

C., who did a year and a half, says Rikers is horrible. He shared, “I survived, but it was still horrific. You go in with a one-year sentence and end up serving more time than actually given, due to having to survive and defend yourself. So much needs to change. Rikers has become a homeless shelter.” Many people raised that conditions are horrible and inhumane at Rikers.

September 30, 2025

Brooklyn: **Brownsville, NYCHA Van Dyke I Houses & Van Dyke II Houses**

City Council District 42: **CM Chris Banks, Assm. Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn, Sen. Jabari Brisport**

Doors knocked: **133**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Today we spoke with many people, including R., a 60-year-old man who says he has been in and out of Rikers for years. He says, “They should have been closed Rikers down.” Rikers impacts their community because it is the first place they send you. There are so many changes that need to be made in the community, he can’t even name them all.

Ms. L., who is 60 years old, says she has been in and out of Rikers for half of her life. “They need to close it,” she said. It was inhumane when she was at the jail. “There needs to be more accountability and more investment in the community.” Reflecting on her experience, she said she can only imagine how horrible conditions must be in 2025. For her, there must be more accountability and greater investment in the community instead of pouring resources into Rikers. She wants to see more police in the community.

October 2, 2025

Brooklyn: **East New York, NYCHA
Belmont-Sutter Area**

City Council District 42: **CM Chris Banks, Assm. Erik Dilan, Sen. Roxanne Persaud**

Doors knocked: **157**

Report: **Lakenya Smith**

Today we spoke with R., whose son is currently upstate. She shared that Rikers should have been closed long ago. Her son, who spent time in Rikers before being transferred, described the jail as horrible and said he continues to struggle with mental illness and sleepless nights because of his time there. R. expressed frustration with her community’s ongoing neglect, from mold in buildings to youth without direction. R. believes there need to be more mentorship programs for young men and women, emphasizing that without real investment in guidance and opportunities, we’re losing our kids to the system.





shut rikers zine

As part of our canvassing project, we worked with artist Josh MacPhee to create and test new materials. That experimentation led to our zine, *Shut Rikers: a brief history of political graphics in 15 stickers*. Part history lesson, part organizing tool, part sticker set, this publication (now in its 2nd edition) traces the arc of reproducible political graphics over the past 100 years via a collection of 15 examples. These historic images have been reimagined as graphics mobilizing to shut the Rikers Island jail complex. Copies of the zine [are available](#) through the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative – or scan this QR code:



shut rikers shirt

Throughout the report, you can see photos of our canvassing team wearing Shut Rikers shirts and carrying Shut Rikers tote bags, both designed by Josh MacPhee. Now you can [get your own shirts](#) through Philadelphia Printworks – or scan this QR code (and if you'd like to buy a tote bag, please contact us at info@katalcenter.org).



Proceeds from sales of the zines and shirts go to Katal to support our work to shut down Rikers Island jail complex.

Katal thanks Josh MacPhee, Justseeds, and Philadelphia Printworks!