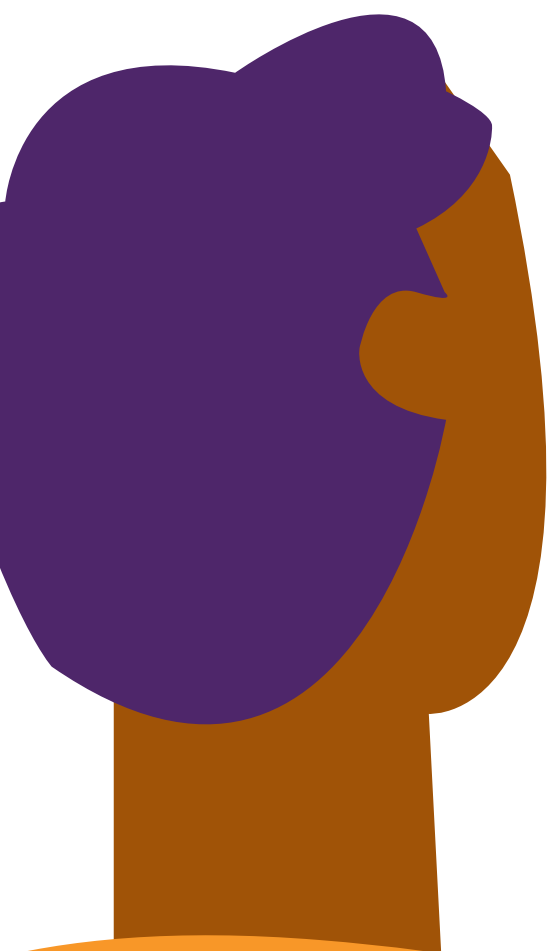


MAY 2021

# NWSLTR

HARLEM UNITED ISSUE 11



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## Dear Harlem United Family,

As we celebrate [LGBTQ Pride](#) next month for the second time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are thankful to stand shoulder to shoulder with the staff at Harlem United. There's a lot for our agency to be proud about – we are here and we are together; there are [new protections](#) on the horizon for LGBTQ clients, staff, and community. This year will again look different from years past and I encourage all who are interested to participate in Pride activities in the ways you feel most comfortable.

As many of you know, Harlem United has engaged in advocacy efforts for more than a year to reverse [planned changes to the 340B drug discount program](#). Under the 340B program, drug companies sell discounted drugs to safety net providers like Harlem United. We use those savings to support programs that are underfunded or with very restrictive funding. When state lawmakers proposed a 340B carve-out last year, Harlem United and many other providers formed a coalition to save the program and, by extension, the safety net providers who rely on it.

In the New York State Budget process, which concluded at the beginning of April, we pressed lawmakers to consider the devastating impact that eliminating \$1.5 million - \$2 million in annual savings to Harlem United would have on the communities we serve. In the end, [legislators reached an agreement to delay the carve-out until at least April 2023](#). This is a victory for all of us who have fought so hard and long for healthcare access for New York's most vulnerable communities. Harlem United advocated for — and will continue to advocate for — a full repeal of the carve-out, but we will celebrate this win today. The two-year delay gives us the time to work in partnership with the Legislature, the Governor's office, and the NYS Department of Health to ensure the safety net system is sustained.

I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone who contacted their legislators, [attended a virtual town hall](#), and followed this advocacy effort. Together, we truly made our voices heard. Though the fight is far from over, we can all take a moment to celebrate the amazing work that we've already done. We will continue to fight for our services because we know what a difference they make for our clients.

With gratitude,



Jacqui Kilmer  
CEO







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## **Employee Assistance Program**

Licensed counselors are prepared to take calls from employees or household members who are experiencing fears or anxieties related to COVID-19. Call: 800-386-7055  
Visit: [www.ibhworklife.com](http://www.ibhworklife.com)



## Strategic Planning Process

The Harlem United Leadership team is currently engaged in the important process of Strategic Planning. In collaboration with the Executive Team, a SWOT analysis for the organization and individual programs is being completed. SWOT stand for Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. This analysis tool is designed to help organizations identify positioning, areas that should be addressed, and formulate a strategic plan. Over the course of the next few weeks, the Leadership Team is working to layout a road map which will guide the organization's services through 2023. Overarching Goals of the Strategic Plan are:

- T**o improve the organizational infrastructure;
- E**nsure optimization and efficiency of processes;
- A**chieve long term sustainability;
- M**eet our client's needs through enhancements and expansion of services

As we've done for over thirty years, Harlem United is working together to ensure we continue to provide lifesaving services and improve community health. For more information on this effort, please reach out to Leadership or a member of the Executive Team.

## Upcoming Presentation

Danielle Strauss, AVP of Evaluation and Population Health, and Elizabeth (Lizzy) Furth, Program Evaluator, will be presenting at the upcoming 2021 National Conference on Social Work and HIV/AIDS about the process of developing the Comprehensive Assessment/Reassessment in eICare.

The presentation addresses the need for the Comprehensive Assessment, the process of creating the document and building it into each program's work flow, training staff, some challenges we had to overcome along the way, and staff feedback about the assessment. It will also cover preliminary data analysis of the 436 assessments completed to date.

## COVID-19 Vaccination Project Dashboard

In response to high interest and requests from across multiple programs for more information about clients being vaccinated at The Nest Community Health Center vaccination clinic, the Evaluation and Population Health team have created a comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccination Project dashboard. This dashboard will be updated monthly and serve as a tool for staff across programs to quickly access information about vaccination rates across the Harlem United community.

The Dashboard gives a vital overview of our progress so far, including: total number of doses distributed; percentage of recipients by race and gender; and enrollment in programs. Harlem United staff can find information about their clients' vaccination status at The Nest, helping them to follow up with clients to ensure that they get their second dose, or to encourage clients who have not yet received their vaccine to make an appointment. The COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard is available on the shared J: drive in the Dashboard folder.

Special shout out to Katerina Chapman, Population Health Specialist, for her hard work on this project.

## Scheduling a Client for a Vaccination Appointment

In an effort to address the intense demand for COVID-19 vaccinations, The Nest recently announced a new, streamlined system for internal referrals to the vaccination clinic. If your clients would like to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at The Nest, email your request to [vaccineappointments@harlemunited.org](mailto:vaccineappointments@harlemunited.org), with the following required information: client name; date of birth; phone number; address; referring staff name; and referring staff phone number.

Your client will be contacted within 24 hours with the appointment specifics and a corresponding email will be sent to you. For all follow ups and concerns, please contact us through the aforementioned email as well.



## Community Advocacy: Pride

Next month is LGBTQ Pride Month! The COVID-19 pandemic forced many Pride events to be cancelled or to go virtual, changing our understanding of what Pride could look like. This year, Harlem United encourages participation in multiple online and in-person LGBTQ events in June:

**New York City Pride** – The Pride Parade will be virtual this year, on Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Other virtual events will take place throughout the month, as well as a stationary float experience in the city for Pride Weekend. Similar to [2021 New Orleans Mardi Gras House Floats](#), the Pride floats will use the outdoor seating areas of locally owned businesses in Manhattan.

**Harlem Pride** – Harlem United will participate in this year's virtual Harlem Pride celebration as a sponsor, working with the event organizers to share Harlem United's services with the wider Harlem community.

**Queer Liberation March** – In celebration of the revolutionary intent of the Stonewall Riots and the first Pride marches, the Queer Liberation March is a protest. The March will take place in-person this year, on Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

**ADHC Pride Show** – Every year, ADHC clients put together a performance to celebrate LGBTQ Pride Month. In the past, clients performed at the National Black Theater, but last year's show was canceled due to COVID-19. Though ADHC has yet to receive approval from their funders to resume normal in-person services, clients are adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic this year with a virtual show.

Staff members who are interested in helping plan Harlem United's participation in any of the Pride events mentioned, or who would simply like to attend, can email [communications@harlemunited.org](mailto:communications@harlemunited.org).

## The Equality Act

A bill that would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans from discrimination is working its way through Washington DC. [The Equality Act](#) would expressly list sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics in existing federal civil rights legislation. President Biden pledged to protect LGBTQ Americans from discrimination in his first 100 days.

The Equality Act has been introduced in some form or another in nearly every congressional session since the 1970s, and has currently been passed by the House of Representatives. The bill faces resistance in the Senate, as advocates continue to push for its passage. To support the bill, you can [sign this petition on change.org](#). Last month, Harlem United co-sponsored a [virtual town hall](#) about the Equality Act, hosted by NY Senator Chuck Schumer and Cecilia Gentili from [New Pride Agenda](#).



## Strategic Advancement Updates

Strategic Advancement has had a great third quarter this year, with exciting news in the last two months. In late March, we welcomed a new member to our team, Jose Lora, as the Program Development Coordinator. Jose holds a Master's in Public Administration from New York University and will be handling government and foundation proposal writing as part of his portfolio. He comes to us after a long history with Brotherhood Sister Sol in NYC, which focused on youth development in Black and Brown communities. We are so happy to have him join the team!

**Grants:** We have been so busy! Throughout March and April, the team pulled together to work on 18 different applications, submitting 9 different grants in April 2021. These applications, which touched all four areas of the agency (Health Services, Housing, Prevention, and Supportive Services), amount to a pending total of \$896,855. We are proud to report that we were already awarded 3 of the 9 applications: The Prevention Department received \$20,000 (NYC DOHMH) to continue syringe litter clean-up activities, with an additional \$4,500 (NYC Mayor's Office) for additional clean-up activities in East Harlem parks; and Food and Nutrition Services received \$4,250 (Mayor's Office) for an Emergency Food Pantry to be operated through Foundation House East. We are anxiously awaiting more information on other pending applications while having many more applications in process.

**Individual Giving:** In March, we received a very special gift from the personal estate of H. van Ameringen, who passed away earlier this year. His bequeathal of \$250,000 represented Henry van Ameringen's life long support to community based organization and their fight for health equity and LGBTQ rights. We are so grateful for Mr. van Ameringen's steadfast commitment to social justice and generosity to Harlem United through the years.

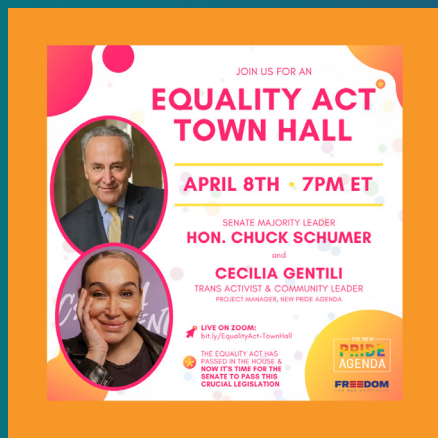
In April, we want to especially thank the Crawford Doyle Charitable Foundation for their donation of \$2,500. Their generous gift and commitment to Harlem United's mission makes us stronger. Individual donations year over year have increased significantly with the new department already surpassing their FY21 goal of \$80K. We still have a couple more months to go, and we're on route to hit a new high of over \$400K.

## Top Social Media Posts

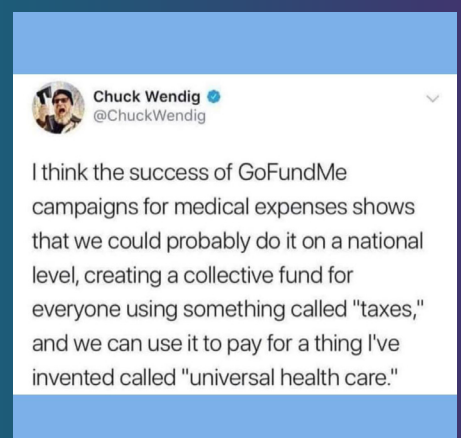
As we continue to grow our social media presence, we ask all staff to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and share our posts with your personal networks.



**Facebook:** At the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic last spring, Girl Scout Heather organized her community to make cloth masks to donate to Harlem United. Our thank you post received 54 engagements on Facebook.



**Twitter:** Last month, Harlem United co-sponsored an event about the Equality Act. 24 people engaged with the invitation on Twitter.



**Instagram:** At Harlem United, we believe that access to healthcare should not depend on your financial situation. Apparently our Instagram followers agree! This post received 84 engagements, making it the top post in March.

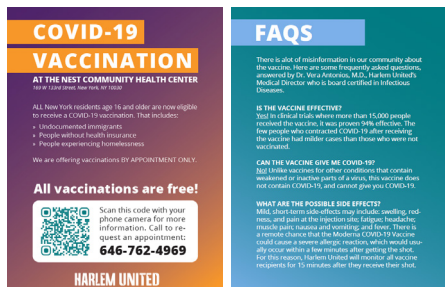
## Strategic Advancement Updates Cont...

### Communications



**Branding Guide:** Over the last year and a half, the Strategic Advancement team has worked hard to modernize Harlem United's existing visual style and create a fresh, professional brand system while remaining committed to our essential brand elements, such as the logo and brand colors.

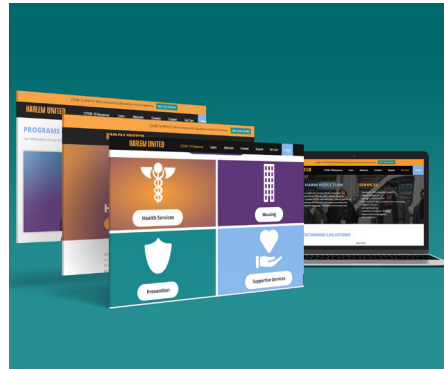
In April 2021, we released a substantial update to Harlem United's [Branding Guide](#). The new guide includes links to download our PowerPoint templates, instructions to update your Outlook email signature, and much more. You can find the guide, along with other essential brand components, on your office desktop in the "Brand Package" folder.



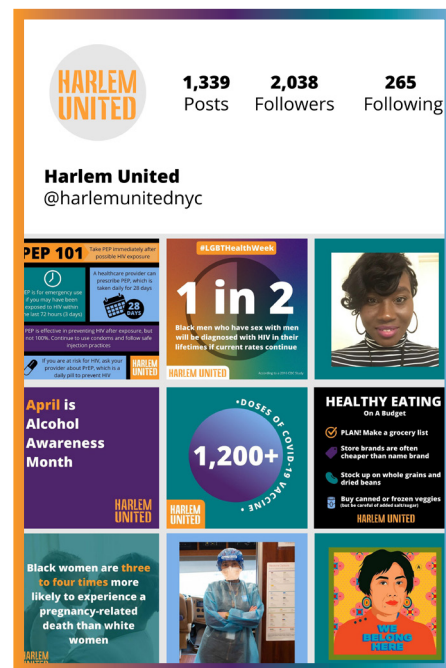
**Print Collateral:** We're excited to share a new outreach resource – six executive summary fliers that offer a holistic view of the programs offered by Harlem United. We developed single-page overviews of each of the four program areas, the agency as a whole, and our COVID-19 response. These handouts can be found alongside other marketing materials on the [Press Center](#) on our website.

Additionally, all departments can request a printing of our COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Palm Cards. The postcard-sized flyers include details for scheduling a vaccination appointment, as well as educational information to combat the misinformation about

the vaccines that is circulating in the community. To order professionally printed cards, [download this request form](#) and email to [communications@harlemunited.org](mailto:communications@harlemunited.org)



**Website:** In the past two months we have created six new webpages, based on evaluation of our audience's needs using analytics from the last year: [Programs and Services](#); [Health Services](#); [Housing](#); [Prevention](#); [Supportive Services](#); [Programs Overview](#).



**Quarterly Social Media Analysis:** In quarterly comparison of Q2 to Q3, Facebook remains stable with slight increases, notably 25.93% increase in reach; Instagram shows dramatic increases to engagement metrics, and is up an additional 56% in likes and 53%

in reach; Twitter continues to climb across all metrics, with 91% rise in profile visits and 81% in mentions; and LinkedIn shows gains in key metrics, with unique visitors soaring by 375%.

**Harlem United in the News:** In March and April, we contributed to multiple partner and media pieces. [City Limits](#) quoted CEO Jacqui Kilmer about the importance of the 340B program in distributing COVID-19 vaccinations to those most in need. The Nest's COVID-19 vaccination clinic was featured on an [Amida Care Blog and eblast](#). Jacqui Kilmer contributed a quotation to a [Gay City News](#) article about the Medicaid carve-out delay. And finally, [Gay Mutual Aid NYC](#) requested details of Harlem United's services to be included in their online directory of COVID-19 resources. And finally,

**Advocacy:** We continued to participate in advocacy efforts in March and April: Harlem United signed on to a letter asking the NYS legislature to restore [Public Health Solutions](#) funding to protect essential sexual and reproductive health centers; we continued our advocacy for the critical 340B program with a [Rally Press Release](#) and [Virtual Press Conference](#); and we co-sponsored the [Equity Act Town Hall](#).



**Conference Presentation:** In April, [Mari Eva Mendes](#), AVP of Strategic Advancement, presented at the 2021 Nonprofit Technology Conference with colleagues at Safe Horizon. Entitled "Let's Talk About Race: Inclusive Communications," the presentation offered an overview of how to center race in nonprofit communications and marketing. Over 200 people attended the virtual presentation.



# Integrated Harm Reduction Program

Harm reduction is an approach to care which is aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Simply put, harm reduction describes any positive change in our clients' behavior which results in improved health outcomes. Harlem United's Integrated Harm Reduction Program (IHRP) offers people who use drugs tools to protect their health while respecting their right to make their own decisions.

Harlem United began providing our mobile syringe exchange in 2007, but IHRP provides many other comprehensive, peer-supported services, like risk reduction and substance use counseling, overdose prevention training and Naloxone dispensing, Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) navigation, and more.

Recently, Harlem United has focused on expanding our syringe litter cleanup programs. Used syringes can transmit HIV and HCV, so syringe litter poses a public health concern in Harlem and the Bronx. During the most recent six-month period, (from September 2020 to February 2021), our IHRP team picked up 5,682 ground syringes in public parks throughout Central and East Harlem, with only one full time staff member. Recently, we've received nearly \$500,000 of DOHMH funding to hire five additional staff members, who will perform syringe litter pickup and outreach in Central and East Harlem. Additionally, we recently received supplemental funding for safer use supplies from the DOHMH and funding from the NYC Mayor's Office for cleanup in East Harlem parks.

If you have questions about our harm reduction programs, reach out to Mary Brewster, Managing Director of IHRP. Special shout out to Julian, Norman, Anthony, Tahliba, and Robert for their amazing work in the field since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Policy Victory!

On March 31, 2021, New York State legalized recreational marijuana. This victory was the result of years of activism from impacted communities and advocates. As with all criminalized drugs, marijuana policing disproportionately impacts Black and Brown communities of color, despite similar rates of use across racial and ethnic groups. [According to the NYC DOHMH](#), 24% of white NYC residents report using cannabis, while only 14% of Black NYC residents and 12% of Latino residents report its use. Yet across the city, Black people were arrested on low-level marijuana charges at eight times the rate of white, non-Hispanic people, [according to the New York Times](#).

The new law automatically expunges criminal records for certain marijuana-related activities that are no longer illegal. This is essential to reverse the racist effects of over-policing on communities of color, as a record can make obtaining employment, housing, and student loans very difficult. Additionally, New York has set goals to offer dispensary licenses to women, people of color, and those impacted by marijuana policing, because [many other states that have legalized marijuana](#) have struggled to ensure diversity in the new cannabis industry.

Hopefully, this is a first step in embracing public health based approaches to drug use and decriminalizing other substances.







Nursing staff from top left to bottom right: Fiorella Ramirez, Danita Johnson, Alexandria Massey, Esmilda Queiro, Stephanie Fischman, John Quijije, and Miranda Veaser

## Nurses Week 2021

May 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>

Thank you to the world-class nurses who make our health-care services possible. We appreciate the expertise, dedication, and care you all bring to your work. During the COVID-19 pandemic, your frontline work was even more critical to keep our community safe and healthy. Our nurses deserve so much of the praise we've received for our vaccination clinic, which has brought protection and ease of mind to thousands of people. Thank you for being an integral part of the Harlem United Family!

Tamisha McPherson, Chief External Affairs and Development Officer & Executive Director of URAM, extends her personal thanks to the entire nursing staff for their dedication, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



After 25 years of dedicated service, Alba Sosa, holder of many titles at Harlem United, retired last month. Alba exemplifies the client-centered approach to service we all strive for. We thank Alba for her commitment to the agency and the community. We wish her well in the next chapter in her life.



Mike Rossi at The Willis Green Jr. Community Health Center

It was with heavy hearts that we learned of the passing of Mike Rossi, former Director of Operations for the ADHC. As a valued member of the Harlem United family, he worked six days a week at Willis Green. Mike was often the first staff member on site, taking on any responsibility or task that would ensure clients received quality services. He managed the daily schedule, facilitated groups, responded to any crisis, and was the program DJ and MC. Mike was a passionate member of the Harlem United family and he will be greatly missed.

## Congrats on 3+ years at Harlem United!

Rafael Algarin - Maintenance Supervisor  
 Shannon Bruce-Robinson - Program Assistant  
 Diana Christoforou - Clinical Director  
 Anthony Cousins - Program Director  
 Alice Cruz - Care Manager  
 Daniel Delvalle - Maintenance Coordinator  
 Tracy Hastings - Team Supervisor  
 Donnell Hubbert - Patient Navigator  
 Karen Kellman - Sr. HARP Care Manager  
 Anthony Lafontant - Program Coordinator  
 Danielle Malloy - Healthcare Case Manager  
 Sigrid Maxwell - Managing Director  
 Danita Mitchell - Executive Assistant  
 Andrea Treadwell - Clinical Care Coordinator  
 Tyson Boudreaux - Psychiatrist  
 Mario Cruz - Program Coordinator  
 Gwen Didier - Managing Director  
 Aicha Dierro - Client Registrar  
 Vanessa Edwards - Care Manager  
 Matthew Goode - Executive Assistant  
 Allen Hong - Sr Support Tech  
 Thomas Marino - Chief Transformation Officer  
 Nathan Mayrant - Maintenance Worker  
 Hassan Miller - Driver/Coordinator  
 Anusky Mojica - Associate Vice President  
 Pedro Morales - Patient Office Assistant  
 JhaMaul-AnToine Pinkney - Referral Specialist  
 Margo Praylow - Managing Clinical Director  
 Magda Tovar - Program Associate

## Upcoming Events - May/June 2021



## Upcoming Events

### May is ... Mental Health Month

May 9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>

[National Women's Health Week](#)

May 19<sup>th</sup>

[Malcolm X's Birthday](#)

[National Hepatitis Testing Day](#)

[National API HIV/AIDS Awareness](#)

[Day](#)

May 27<sup>th</sup>

Jazz in the Community Event

May 31<sup>st</sup>

Memorial Day

(Harlem United Closed)

### June is ... LGBTQ Pride Month

June 3<sup>rd</sup>

[Mayoral Candidates Forum on HIV](#)

June 5<sup>th</sup>

[HIV Long-Term Survivors](#)

[Awareness Day](#)

June 12<sup>th</sup>

[Brooklyn Pride](#)

June 16<sup>th</sup>

Juneteenth: Black Community Workshop

June 18<sup>th</sup>

Harlem United closed in observance of Juneteenth

June 19<sup>th</sup>

[Juneteenth](#)

June 20<sup>th</sup>

Father's Day

June 22<sup>nd</sup>

[NYC Primary Elections](#)

June 26<sup>th</sup>

[Dyke March](#)

June 27<sup>th</sup>

[National HIV Testing Day](#)

[Virtual NYC Pride Parade](#)

[Queer Liberation March](#)

## Training Corner

Please join our upcoming trainings. For more information contact [Jamila Taylor](#), Director of Administrative Operations.

### May 20th

Understanding Anxiety and Panic Disorder, 2:00pm -3:00pm

### June 10th

Managing and Coping with PTSD, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

### June 24th

Suicide Prevention, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

### Jazz in the Community

On Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 pm - 1:45 pm, Harlem United community members are invited to login to a virtual concert through the National Jazz Museum of Harlem. Look out for an all-staff email with details.

### NYC Mayoral Candidates Forum on HIV and Sexual Health

Harlem United is co-sponsoring a Mayoral Candidates forum on Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm. This is an opportunity to learn how candidates intend to sustain NYC's progress toward ending the HIV epidemic before the election on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

2021 Mayoral candidates will share their vision for improving sexual health in the time of COVID-19.

[RSVP to the event here.](#)

### Juneteenth: Black Community Workshop

Gather in the legacy of Juneteenth to reflect on Black freedom and the current movement for Black lives. We will create sacred space to ground, heal, and witness each other through embodied movement, meditation, ritual, and discussion. Learn practical tools from to navigate grief, uncertainty, and loss.

Save the Date: June 16, 2021, 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm