



PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY FUND

Common Corner Transforms Concrete Bleachers into a Colorful Multiactivity Space at the Morris Houses in The Bronx

The Public Housing Community Fund, NYCHA, The Jeffrey H. and Shari L. Aronson Family Foundation, Center for Justice Innovation, and The Urban Conga unveil Common Corner for and with the residents of Morris Houses in the Bronx.

Designed by The Urban Conga in partnership with the residents of Morris Houses, Common Corner provides a multi-generational space for play, rest, and celebration



Photo Credit: Brook Banister

BRONX, NY (November 24, 2025) – The Public Housing Community Fund, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), The Jeffrey H. and Shari L. Aronson Family Foundation, Center for Justice Innovation, Morris Houses residents, and The Urban Conga unveiled *Common Corner*, a permanent installation at NYCHA's Morris Houses (1477 Washington Ave) in the Bronx. *Common Corner* was co-designed by The Urban Conga, a multidisciplinary design studio, in collaboration with the residents of NYCHA's Morris Houses. The project site, an existing

concrete bleacher, has been transformed into a dynamic hub for multigenerational activities, evoking pride, and inspiration within the community. *Common Corner* was funded by the Aronson Family Foundation and developed in partnership with the Public Housing Community Fund, NYCHA, and the Center for Justice Innovation.

Images of Common Corner are available to download at this [LINK](#)

The residents of Morris Houses identified the bleachers as a priority for redesign through a community-wide survey. Decades ago, this area was lively and active, but over time had aged and fell into disuse. The community's goal for this project was to revitalize this open space and foster renewed activity and vibrancy through open-ended play and community engagement. Through a series of workshops with The Urban Conga and the Center for Justice Innovation, the residents' vision was realized.

With *Common Corner*, the bleachers have become a multigenerational space, where a range of passive and active recreation can take place. The space, which was once only for seating, is now a place of connection within the Morris House community. The flexible design allows opportunities for residents to play, work on their fitness, or take a moment to reflect. Key features include words of affirmation, reflective color-changing dichroic panels, a climbing wall, and a perforated panel for communal crafting.

This effort is part of NYCHA's [Connected Communities](#) program, which focuses on transforming and modernizing open spaces through public-private partnerships. The program's efforts are based on participatory planning and design, striving to enhance physical and social connections between residents and their communities. *Common Corner* was developed for the community by the community. The co-design process ensured the residents developed an inclusive design that reflected the community's wants, needs, and ideas.

"*Common Corner* is a catalyst for change and investment in Morris Houses' open space and proof of what's possible when residents, artists, philanthropy, and partners come together to reimagine shared spaces in public housing," said **Alex Zablocki, Executive Director of the Public Housing Community Fund**. "Through collaboration and creativity, this once-forgotten corner has become a vibrant hub for play, reflection, and community connection. The transformation at Morris Houses shows how resident-led design can spark pride and inspire new opportunities across NYCHA communities citywide."

"We set out to make a tangible and lasting impact right here in our home of New York City - revitalizing a place to play and connect - where everyone feels welcome. Visiting Morris Houses and hearing the residents speak with such joy and pride about their home served as a powerful reminder of the value of investing in community spaces. We feel incredibly fortunate to have played a role in helping bring these bleachers back to life," said **Nicole Aronson, Trustee of the Aronson Family Foundation**.

"The transformation of the Morris Houses bleachers into the *Common Corner* is a perfect example of NYCHA's commitment to our Connected Communities program and the power of

resident-led design," said **NYCHA Chief Executive Officer Lisa Bova-Hiatt**. "By working collaboratively with the residents, The Urban Conga, the Public Housing Community Fund, the Aronson Family Foundation, and the Center for Justice Innovation, we have created a dynamic, beautiful, and functional space that fosters play, social connection, and community pride for all generations at Morris Houses."

"*Common Corner* represents what we can achieve when residents' voices are truly heard," said **Regina Carter, President of the Morris Houses Residents Association**. "For years, these bleachers sat empty, but through this project, they've been transformed into something beautiful and meaningful for everyone. A place where young people, older adults, and families alike can meet and play. For us, this is more than a space to sit; it's a space to come together, to play, and to celebrate our community."

"*Common Corner* showcases what true codesign processes can do. It was an honor for us to work with the Morris House residents to transform these underutilized bleachers through their ideas, stories, and hopes for their community's future. This project is about creating a spark for more to come within the community while showcasing the power of community led design," said **Maeghann Coleman and Ryan Swanson, The Urban Conga**.

"This welcoming public space is a vivid example of how empowered residents can build justice and safety in their own community. At the Center for Justice Innovation, we know the importance and impact of shared public spaces. We are grateful that Morris Houses residents will continue to be able to use this beautifully transformed area to build justice and safety together," said **Courtney Bryan, CEO of the Center for Justice Innovation**.

PROJECT DETAILS:

Project Name: *Common Corner*

Lead Designers: Maeghann Coleman and Ryan Swanson, The Urban Conga

Additional Designers: Alden Copley, Pramity Shah

Initiative: NYCHA Connected Communities

Partners: Public Housing Community Fund, NYCHA, Aronson Family Foundation, Center for Justice Innovation, and The Urban Conga

Completion Date: November 22, 2025

Dimensions: 600 square feet

Project Location: NYCHA Morris Houses at 1477 Washington Ave, Bronx, NY 10456

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About the Public Housing Community Fund

The Public Housing Community Fund is an independent not-for-profit organization that creates and leverages resources and relationships to enhance the opportunities and quality of life for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and their communities while uplifting the importance of public housing in New York City. www.communityfund.nyc

About the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the largest public housing authority in North America, was created in 1934 to provide decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. NYCHA is home to 1 in 17 New Yorkers, providing affordable housing to 520,808 authorized residents through public housing and Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) programs as well as Section 8 housing. NYCHA has 177,569 apartments in 2,411 buildings across 335 conventional public housing and PACT developments. In addition, NYCHA connects residents to critical programs and services from external and internal partners, with a focus on economic opportunity, youth, seniors, and social services. With a housing stock that spans all five boroughs, NYCHA is a city within a city.

About The Jeffrey H. and Shari L. Aronson Family Foundation

The Jeffrey H. and Shari L. Aronson Family Foundation is a private family foundation based in New York City. The Aronson Family cares deeply about supporting vulnerable populations, expanding access to opportunity for young people, and sustaining the global Jewish community.

About the Center for Justice Innovation | Neighborhood Safety Initiatives

The Center for Justice Innovation works with communities and justice systems to advance equity, increase safety, and help individuals and communities thrive. The Center's goal is to identify and resolve as early as possible the challenges that bring people into the criminal and civil legal systems. Since its founding in 1996, the Center has grown to a nationwide organization with more than 800 employees staffing dozens of initiatives in New York, New Jersey, and California, advising practitioners and policymakers across the country and around the world, and conducting research and sharing their expertise with those seeking to transform the justice system. Neighborhood Safety Initiatives, a project of the Center works to improve quality of life in New York City by investing in residents, transforming public spaces, and influencing policy to address structural racism, local concerns and enhance public safety, reduce victimization, and promote healing. For more information visit: <https://www.innovatingjustice.org/>

About The Urban Conga

The Urban Conga is an award-winning multidisciplinary design studio based in Brooklyn, New York led by Ryan Swanson and Maeghann Coleman. The studio is focused on sparking community interaction and social activity through open-ended play design. Their work encourages people to think about the value of “play” beyond the playground and how creating more multigenerational play everywhere can dramatically impact our daily lives. To achieve this, they utilize play methodologies as a critical tool implemented not just in the work itself but within the community-driven design process in which the work is created. Focusing on working with

communities to create inclusive multiscale spatial opportunities that transform once overlooked or underutilized situations into stimulating creative outlets that evoke our innate drive to discover, explore, and empathize with others. Through this work, they have collaborated worldwide with municipal agencies, communities, institutions, private businesses, NGOs, and more, delivering a wide variety of work from multiscale spatial interventions, public installations, temporary activations, workshops, development plans, and public policy recommendations.

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