

Stores of the Future: Insights from Saatva's Chief Strategy Officer **Ricky Joshi '97**  
Jamie Grill-Goodman, Senior Editor  
Retail Info Systems  
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Think of the store of the future as a fully immersive billboard for the brand.

This is the idea behind Saatva's Viewing Room stores, which aim to re-create the digital experience shoppers have with the luxury mattresses and home furnishings retailer in person. Saatva opened the doors to its first Viewing Room, and first brick-and-mortar, in December 2019 in NYC.

Since its opening, the NYC Viewing Room has been a smash hit, exceeding financial expectations exponentially. The store performs at a \$5 million annual run rate versus the expected \$3.5 million revenue goal.

Now, with 20 locations planned to open over the next two years, RIS sits down with Ricky Joshi, Saatva's chief strategy officer, to uncover how Saatva's Viewing Room concept defines a new breed of retail stores.

#### The Viewing Room Experience

The first thing to notice about the Manhattan location is that it departs from the traditional retail model of associates asking "can I help you" at the door.

It's designed in such a way that shoppers are prompted to explore and experience Saatva's full range of luxury sleep products – including mattresses, sheets and pillows, and designer bed frames – on their own, with associates available if needed.

"Our Viewing Room is designed and equipped to re-create the digitally-native experience that our customers have with us on the internet," Joshi tells RIS. "It is conceived as a self-guided space, where visitors can interact with our award-winning products and learn about the features at their own pace, as well as receive personalized assistance from our Sleep Guides when they want it."

To achieve this, the store is packed with self-service technology, such as tablets and information stations, throughout the 3,300-square-foot destination.

"Customers enjoy the self-directed shopping experience and learning more about our products at their own pace using the technology that's available to them," explains Joshi. "Because we started as a digital-first brand, we've gotten really good at talking about our products in a way that allows customers to discover them quite well on their own."

The customers that come to the store are highly informed shoppers that have done lots of product research prior to their visits, he notes. Before they even enter the store, digital signage enhancements produce a state-of-the-art retail environment feel.

“Through our partnership with Samsung, we utilize the latest display solutions, mobile devices, and behavior-sensing technologies installed throughout the Viewing Room to create a personalized experience for our customers,” he says. “Samsung’s OMN-D Series dual-sided displays installed at the entrance allow us to maximize messaging, reduce equipment and installation costs, and increase operational efficiency.”

Currently, one screen educates visitors and passersby on in-store COVID-19 standards and safety measures, while the other features a scroll of customer reviews from Saatva’s website. Inside the store, each bed display is equipped with a mobile and website-connected tablet where customers can learn more about the product they are looking at or order it directly.

“It’s wonderful to see our technology in action — customers can actually pick up the tablet and explore the features of a mattress while lying on that very mattress,” Joshi says. “We use behavior-sensing technology at our display of bedding products. When a customer interacts with any of the sheets, pillows, blankets, or other top-of-bed products, information about that specific product appears on a screen adjacent to the display.

“We also have an interactive digital easel where we feature information on our mattresses and can give an in-depth explanation of any of our products on a larger surface, but it can also be used as a drawing board to entertain kids as their parents shop.”

In addition to the bedside tablets, there are a few other screens throughout the store that share brand, product, and craftsmanship content. The technology design and integration helps shoppers experience products at their own pace, without needing to have an associate looking over their shoulder as they shop, explains Joshi. “It’s very similar to the way that they would shop online. We want our Viewing Rooms to be extensions of the online experience. In the same way that our customers can shop online and use our chat feature to connect with a customer service representative if they wish, we offer that same freedom in our Viewing Rooms.”

#### Gathering Customer Data

Having a store loaded with technology has another benefit above offering a true omnichannel experience: the ability to gather customer data.

Ceiling cameras inside the Saatva store deliver the retailer data about store traffic and product interactions. The placement of technology throughout the store is meant to align with the customer experience and the buying journey, but the tech also provides analytics for who visits which bed and what areas they interact with.

“We use learnings from this data to provide more tailored information about what customers want to know about our products and tell a better story,” explains Joshi, who also notes that, since Saatva was not built using legacy systems or antiquated inventory systems and other systems that don’t speak to each other, the retailer is able to reap the benefits of a fully integrated digital system that connects in-store and online operations without having data issues.

“We have been efficient through our enhancements of online purchasing experience and because of that, we have clean, informative data that we can extrapolate on for a physical retail launch,” he says.

As the retailer expands this data is invaluable. Saatva has five new locations in the works for 2021 with 15 planned for 2022.

“Using customer data, we are able to be far more efficient than traditional retailers in picking locations that have a strong base of consumer interest,” explains Joshi.

Saatva retail locations are chosen based on historical and benchmark data, brand awareness information, and sales conversion statistics. In addition to choosing physical retail locations based on where the brand is succeeding from an online revenue perspective, Saatva also considers areas where it has broader brand awareness, such as Washington D.C., Austin, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

“Our decisions are based on customer feedback, data, and changes in the retail environment,” he says. “We will always look for regional differences and take them into account when designing the store and selecting the merchandise that we choose to display, to make sure that we have an assortment that speaks to the needs and questions of that customer.”

In addition to choosing locations and assortments, Saatva is using its new Viewing Rooms to improve point of sale systems to make tracking and sales execution as seamless as possible. “And we see even further integration between our e-commerce data and our in-store data, so we can further extrapolate and understand who our in-store customers are versus our online customers,” he says.

#### COVID-19’s Impact on Retail Stores’ Future

Many retailers succeeding during the pandemic have noted that they had the business models that helped them in play before 2020, and Saatva is no exception.

“We saw the trend of DTC brands entering the physical retail space before COVID-19,” says Joshi. “While a percentage of mattress purchases have shifted online during the pandemic, there will always be people who want to experience the product in person, especially for a considered purchase like a quality mattress. We wanted to be able to serve those customers where they are and have a physical presence that offers the experience they want, with the added benefit of personalized assistance with our on-site Sleep Guides, should they request it.”

COVID-19 arrived a few months after the NYC Viewing Room opened, but most of the challenges Saatva faced were related to creating an even safer environment for customers.

"Thankfully given the self-guided nature of our retail space, we have adapted our retail environment fairly easily to the guidelines set forth by the CDC and NYS," he says.

Between customer visits, tablets are sanitized and reset to make sure that they highlight the product information page related to the mattress they correspond to. Saatva also has the ability to update displays onsite or from a remote location. The company's marketing office in Austin has the ability to update and share new brand information, product videos, and the latest content as soon as it is available.

"Post-COVID-19, there will be a return to the store and a return to face-to-face interactions, and customers will appreciate the level of sanitization and socially-distanced service retailers offer them," says Joshi.

"Including smart technology in the retail experience to make the shopping process seamless and efficient will be important to maintain post-COVID," he recommends. "It makes the experience even better for the customers who want to control their journey in our retail environments."

He also says he expects a smaller retail footprint in the future, as DTC companies won't need as much floor space to offer the educational experience customers want when visiting a showroom or store.

"Brands will allow their websites to do more of the education and selling before customers make a visit. We think that customers will continue to utilize their own digital devices for education, know a lot about the product they are considering, and be ready to complete their purchases by the time they enter a retail space. We are proud of our 70% close rate in-store. By the time customers visit us, they already have a pretty good idea of how our products will enhance their sleep experience and only have a few remaining questions. We also feel that customers will travel longer distances for highly-considered purchases, like mattresses, so we can be more strategic about where we open physical locations to best serve our clients."

His advice to other retailers looking to achieve a balance between a digital and physical presence is this: "Digital and physical retail experiences need to complement each other, be consistent as well as seamless. We will always be a digital-first company, so for us, the physical presence is an opportunity to bring our online brand to life."

<https://risnews.com/stores-future-insights-saatvas-chief-strategy-officer-ricky-joshi>

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As COVID-19 vaccines arrive in Chicago's hard-hit Latino communities, hope is revived but outreach to Spanish-speakers and skeptics still needed

By LAURA RODRÍGUEZ PRESA

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

MAR 04, 2021 AT 10:47 AM

It was not even 2 a.m. when people began to line up outside a Little Village church Sunday in hopes of getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

By 8 a.m., dozens of umbrellas lined more than four blocks in one of the Chicago neighborhoods hardest hit by the coronavirus as people waited their turn, a turn many of them had thought would never come.

By the end of the day, more than 1,000 residents, the majority Latinos — many people gave up their spot for their parents and grandparents — received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

“Me da esperanza,” said 63-year-old Antonia Quiñones, “It gives me hope.”

“After so much obliviousness by leaders all over, we feel like we are being seen right now, but it was after demanding and fighting for this, we made this happen for ourselves,” Quiñones said in Spanish.

Quiñones and other members of her family, who became ill with COVID-19 last March, all got vaccinated.

“We want the vaccine, we need it, but we just don't know how to get it or where,” Quiñones said. “And some people may just need to learn more about it before they decide to get it.”

Despite efforts by the city to make the shots available to every resident of areas most affected by the virus, regardless of whether they meet other standards to be vaccinated, some Latinos are still having trouble getting the vaccine while those in other hard-hit communities continue to wait for it.

Community leaders say hesitancy about the vaccine plays a role in keeping some Latinos from getting inoculated even where it is available. But language and technology barriers also are discouraging people from seeking an appointment or even learning more about the vaccine.

Recently, a group of more than 40 community organizations called on the Chicago Department of Public Health to expand its initiative for high-risk neighborhoods to more communities and improve its approach to reaching Spanish-speaking Latinos as well as Black residents.

Angelica Rivera, 72, didn't plan on getting the vaccine even though she was eligible, until she heard from one of her sisters that she could get it at the school gym at St. Agnes of Bohemia

Catholic Church, 2651 S. Central Park Ave., the same church where she attends Mass every Sunday.

Rivera said she was initially reluctant to get the shot because she was scared after hearing from co-workers that “the vaccine was made to kill poor people.”

Instead, she was willing to rely on her faith to remain healthy. That’s what many of her friends are doing, she said.

But Sunday morning, she changed her mind and walked over to the church to request some information. She eventually decided to register to get the vaccine.

“It just felt right to get it here,” Rivera said right after getting vaccinated.

“I did it for my family because I want to make sure I see them again,” added the mother of eight and grandmother of 43, now trusting that her faith in God led her to the right decision.

The initial strategy for distribution of the vaccine put in place in Chicago failed to account for language barriers, lack of technology access and work schedules in Black and Latino communities, and that contributed to mistrust that already existed, said Dolores Castañeda. Misinformation spread faster than proper resources and scientific facts from the start of the pandemic, and that’s contributed to mistrust, Castañeda said.

Most information campaigns and announcements about vaccine availability have been centered on social media, so many older Latinos without a smartphone or internet may not even know vaccines are available in their area or that they are eligible regardless of their age or job, she said.

And even if people hear about the vaccine on TV or on the radio, people are often left with unanswered questions that discourage them from seeking an appointment, she said.

Castañeda is a leader of Mi Villita, an organization that was created to combat a lack of attention from local officials to issues the Latino immigrant community faces and that put together Sunday’s vaccination clinic. It took only a week for Mi Villita to work with Walgreens to plan and promote the vaccinations at the St. Agnes gym.

Castañeda gathered volunteers and walked the streets of the neighborhood, going into laundromats, grocery stores and the neighborhood discount mall to inform people, as well as posting flyers and calling area seniors.

“We wanted to make them feel welcomed and reduce their fear of the vaccine,” Castañeda said.

At the event, volunteers helped to fill out the forms and simplified questions as much as possible to help people intimidated by inquiries about identification and health insurance. When Walgreens ran out of forms in Spanish, the volunteers stepped up to translate.

By the end of the day Sunday, 1,170 residents of the 60623 ZIP code, which has seen 240 deaths during the pandemic, had received their first dose of vaccine.

“We didn’t have enough to give to all the people that wanted the vaccine,” added Izquierdo. “So we hope others see why this event was so special: People feel empowered and feel less skeptical when they see their neighbor, friend or family getting the vaccine in a familiar place to them.”

Most people have questions about the vaccine, “so they need to be engaged and educated about it,” said Dr. Evelyn Figueroa, a University of Illinois Health physician who’s been active with Illinois Unidos, a group of health advocates working to blunt the impact of COVID-19 on Latino communities.

But “how can we expect to have these conversations with people and encourage them to be vaccinated if the people who are driving the conversations don’t even speak their language?” asked Izquierdo.

Castañeda said some people are reluctant to get the vaccine because of failings in the way public health agencies serve Black and Latino communities, “and the only way to eliminate it is by coming into their neighborhoods, eliminate the barriers and give the vaccine.”

“The city did not consider us a priority until health advocates began to point out the disparities and racist distribution of the vaccine,” Castañeda said.

Initial data on vaccine distribution in Illinois showed whites received a disproportionate number of vaccines. In Chicago, white affluent neighborhoods on the North Side and downtown had the highest number of people vaccinated, while South and West Side communities were stalling on vaccine distribution.

In response to the racial disparity data, the city created the Protect Chicago Plus initiative, which provides mass vaccination events to 15 communities hit hardest by the pandemic. **Andy Buchanan '84**, a spokesperson for the city health department, said the areas included in the program are those most burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic based on the city’s COVID-19 vulnerability index.

But advocates said in a recent letter to Mayor Lori Lightfoot that the index relies too heavily on census data, “a data source well known to undercount undocumented populations.”

“Also, the use of hospitalization rates is problematic given that Latinx communities are less likely to seek medical attention in the hospital and have higher rates of dying at home,” it says.

In an emailed statement, Buchanan said the city is collaborating with community partners, faith leaders, health care providers and employers to reach all vulnerable populations. The city is using phone and text banking, going door to door and more to connect people to vaccine appointments, he said.

“While we still have work to do, we are seeing significant progress,” Buchanan said, adding that rates of vaccination are starting to better reflect the racial makeup of the city, with half of all doses now going to Black and Latino Chicagoans.

But some neighborhoods that are at high risk have been left out, said Alonso Zaragoza, a community organizer and founder of Belmont Cragin United, a Facebook group that has served as a resource center for residents in the most affected ZIP code in Chicago. Groups throughout the city have been trying to counteract the disparities, often through online outreach.

Thousands of residents were able to sign up to get the vaccine because of information shared on Zaragoza’s page in Spanish and English. Hundreds of children sent messages to inquire about shots for their parents and grandparents, Zaragoza said. He registered every resident he could for vaccines.

“It’s heartwarming to be able to help and I’m glad that my community is finally getting what they need, but there’s gotta be a different way to reach them and make it easier for them to access these vaccines,” he said. “Not only to facilitate access but to also help them feel more comfortable getting it. There is so much misinformation out there.”

Editor’s note: An earlier version of this article omitted the first name and title of Dr. Evelyn Figueroa.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-covid-19-vaccine-latino-hesitancy-barriers-20210304-dj4bltezmvfxfmuwbcjbalddsi-story.html>

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Goodbye Confluence Village, hello Astor Park: Columbus Crew development gets new name  
By Tristan Navera – Staff reporter  
Columbus Business First  
Mar 16, 2021 Updated Mar 16, 2021, 10:44am EDT

The development formerly known as Confluence Village has a new identity – Astor Park.

Development team Pizzuti Cos. and Haslam Sports Group have renamed the residential and commercial development that will surround the new \$300 million Columbus Crew SC stadium in the Arena District as they aim to break ground on the downtown development this year.

The neighborhood is being named for Astor House, the New York City hotel frequented by U.S. Soccer Federation founder Thomas Cahill, who elevated soccer to a major sport in North America.

Cahill also will have a street named for him in the development, said Patrick Crawford of Blackletter, the branding firm behind the project.

"For people who are true fans of the game and know the history, they'll appreciate that it hearkens back to the birthplace of soccer," Crawford said. "For people who want to live downtown ... it will be a great name for the place, but doesn't hit you over the head with the Crew."

The developer decided that Confluence Village was too similar to Confluence Park across the river and might not slip off the tongue as easy as Astor Park.

Developer **Joel Pizzuti '90** said the new branding helps identify the stadium area as a distinct neighborhood connected to new development in the Arena District, Grandview Yard, Short North and the Reach on Goodale.

"It's a natural line of demarcation, that railroad line, and we want it to feel like when you cross under those tracks, you'll be in a new neighborhood," Pizzuti said.

Architects MKSK and Goettsch Partners have designed the five- and six-story building with distinctive architecture from the rest of Arena District.

Pizzuti said one permits are in place, the first phase – a parking garage, office building and the first apartment building – could begin construction this year. The second apartment building would follow. Each has an 18- to 20-month buildout.

The development envisions a third phase to the north of the stadium. Drawings submitted to the city show a 20-story senior housing tower along the railroad tracks. Pizzuti said whether that building remains senior housing has yet to be seen.

The 460,000-square-foot, 20,000-seat stadium is on track for a planned opening in July.

[https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2021/03/16/columbus-crew-development-gets-new-  
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MARCH 4, 2021

A team of WilmerHale lawyers achieved a significant victory for Bitmanagement when the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit found that the company should be compensated by the Navy in relation to the installation of Bitmanagement's software onto hundreds of thousands of Navy computers.

The lawsuit concerns the Navy's mass installation of BS Contact Geo, an advanced graphics rendering software developed by Bitmanagement, onto every computer on the Navy Marine Corps Intranet despite having only purchased 119 total seat licenses from Bitmanagement. After extended discussions with the Navy failed to reach resolution, Bitmanagement filed a copyright infringement lawsuit in 2016.

On September 9, 2019, following a six-day bench trial held earlier that year, Judge Edward J. Damich of the United States Court of Federal Claims found that while Bitmanagement had established a prima facie case of copyright infringement, the Navy was not liable because an implied license permitted it to make the copies.

On appeal, Bitmanagement argued that Bitmanagement had never implicitly authorized the Navy to copy the software. Even if it had agreed to an implied license, the Navy exceeded the scope of that license by violating a key condition that the Navy use a separate license tracking software called Flexera to track and limit their usage of BS Contact Geo.

On February 25, 2020, the Federal Circuit found that the Claims Court had failed to consider whether the Navy complied with the terms of the implied license. The panel agreed with Bitmanagement's argument that the Navy had failed to use Flexera and held that "[s]uch unauthorized copying is copyright infringement." . The Federal Circuit vacated the Claims Court's decision and remanded for a calculation of damages.

In a concurring opinion, Judge Newman contended that Bitmanagement had not agreed to any license that would allow the Navy to make so many copies of BS Contact Geo. She stated: "The Navy has not justified this improper copying; it violates the terms of its purchases of Bitmanagement's product, and violates Bitmanagement's copyright."

Brent Gurney, who tried the case for Bitmanagement, said: "This is a big win for our client, Bitmanagement, which has been fighting for justice from the Navy for many years. This is a significant victory not just for our client, but also for all software creators who find their works copied without their authorization."

The WilmerHale team included Brent Gurney, Mark Fleming, Leon Kenworthy, Jamie Yood, Jessica Lutkenhaus, and **Michael Carpenter '05**.

<https://www.wilmerhale.com/en/insights/news/wilmerhale-wins-big-federal-circuit-copyright-trial-for-bitmanagement>

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Let's make our economic system more equitable

The current moment is ripe for business leaders and investors to fix what isn't working.

**MARTY NESBITT '81**

February 18, 2021 03:33 PM

Crain's Chicago Business

Want to get back to business? Save capitalism.

Yes, we hope the light is at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel. But then the hard work really begins. Health care inequities laid bare by COVID, boiling social divisions and the murder of George Floyd, which revealed the severity of injustice and systemic racism in America, all are symptoms of deeper, insidious social ills that threaten our society. For those who are fortunate enough to have had economic success, it has come at a steep cost—leaving so many of our fellow Americans behind that now the very cornerstone upon which our socioeconomic system is built is under assault.

Capitalism and democracy—the quest for profitable growth, fueled by efficiency, continuous improvement, rule of law and innovation—helped America become an economic superpower. Yet while entrepreneurship and private enterprise run deep in the American DNA and are the secret sauce of our economy, too many Americans have been left out in the cold. Capitalism is not perfect, and its natural dynamics have skewed opportunity and created an unsustainable wealth gap.

Here in Chicago, the pandemic has revealed the stark levels of economic fragility and vulnerability. Over 75 percent of Chicago residents who died from COVID-19 have been nonwhite, and a poll of Chicago households found that 60 percent of Black and 72 percent of Latinx households can barely make ends meet. Further, Illinois has yet to recover half of its COVID job losses, extending the length of the recovery. Altogether, it is not at all shocking that we are witnessing broad opposition to the status quo.

Capitalism is an economic system invented to promote a secure society with access to an ever-improving quality of life. The good news is we can tweak the system and make it better. We have the power to target how and where we invest our capital. We can ensure our employees and vendors are diverse. We can partner more effectively to support our communities and customers. Here's what that means in practice.

First, take stock. Are you leading your firm in a way that promotes the well-being of your core stakeholders and communities? Over the past few years, corporations have been engaged in an important dialogue about their role as the U.S. confronts myriad social crises. After the murder of George Floyd, we asked our portfolio companies to engage with mayors of cities where they operate to support local efforts to address social injustice, while also making clear that we would assess their progress when making future investment decisions.

Second, spread the wealth. This can mean increasing wages, but also being thoughtful and creative about procurement. Think about deploying capital and engaging smaller vendors in ways that might make a community a little stronger. Demand accountability from your larger suppliers, too. Create incentives for your employees to pay it forward in their communities. CareMetx, a Vistria portfolio company, has a commitment to pay equity and a profits interest pool for their employees. Carefully designed incentives can provide economic security and build lasting wealth.

Third, be intentional about tackling inequities. We all know that what gets measured gets done. At Vistria, we always looked to impact and diversity as a key factor in our investment process, but we established new financial incentives for our portfolio companies. Put plainly, management teams that improve on diversity, equity and inclusion have a chance to earn more.

Our investment philosophy is predicated on the reality that if you sell a product, good or service in America, you rely on a functioning and thriving society to do so. A strong and stable society is the golden goose we must protect and invest in. The golden egg is the opportunity for every American to pursue a higher standard of living and quality of life on a level playing field. Business efforts to positively impact society aren't a "nice to have," they are a must-have. It is the foundation of value creation. And it also happens to be the right thing to do.

We are at a fork in the road. The country is socially weak and economically fragile—and we know what happens when you try to build on a shaky foundation. None of this is easy. It is a journey without perfect outcomes. But if, as business leaders, we just pick up where we left off without acknowledging the strains revealed during the pandemic, shame on us. We will regret we did not use this moment to reboot and save capitalism.

Marty Nesbitt is co-CEO of the Vistria Group, a Chicago-based private-equity firm. Vistria Group is a sponsor of Crain's Forum.

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/forum-ideas-future-capitalism/lets-make-our-economic-system-more-equitable>

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Arlington debates implementing a police review board with teeth

By Rachel Weiner

The Washington Post

Feb. 18, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. EST

To reduce disparities in policing, Arlington, Va., should give a civilian review board investigative and disciplinary power while reducing police involvement in traffic enforcement and mental health crises, a committee recommended this week.

Spurred by the killing of George Floyd in police custody last year, cities and counties around the country have pledged to confront bias in their departments. D.C. passed sweeping new accountability legislation last year over police criticism. Maryland is considering its own dramatic changes.

“We do some things well, but there’s always room for improvement,” County Manager Mark Schwartz said at a Monday evening meeting where the proposals were presented.

A 15-member committee of advocates, attorneys and police spent seven months reviewing police practices locally and nationally to make the recommendations, which county officials will consider.

The committee assumed that Arlington would form a civilian board to oversee police, a step taken by many jurisdictions to increase accountability and trust in their communities.

Arlington’s board should be led by an independent auditor with experience monitoring law enforcement agencies, a majority of the committee recommended. Along with reviewing internal investigations and disciplinary decisions, the board should have the power to take and investigate complaints on its own, including having the power to subpoena information, the group said.

It was only last year that investigative review boards were made possible under Virginia law. Alexandria is also moving toward establishing a powerful civilian board, despite opposition from the mayor. In addition, Arlington and 10 other police departments in Northern Virginia have formed a pact to investigate one another’s police shootings, in-custody deaths and officer suicides.

A minority of members of the committee in Arlington wanted a less powerful review board, saying that independent investigations would be seen by the police department “as an indication of a lack of trust.”

Sam Walker, a professor at the University of Nebraska who studies police accountability, said civilian review boards tend to be ineffective; he favors an independent-monitor model with paid investigators.

“This is complicated work,” he said. “Volunteers don’t have the time, and they don’t have the expertise.”

A spokeswoman for the Arlington County Police Department, Ashley Savage, said the department would “work collaboratively” with county officials “to ensure accountability.”

Scott Wanek, president of the Arlington Coalition of Police, said his members did not oppose the review board doing its own investigations. “Any opportunity the community has to have a better idea what we’re doing is a good thing,” he said.

But he said the police were “not thrilled” about the possibility of limiting traffic enforcement, which he argues helps prevent more serious crimes. “We’re taking a lot of illicit firearms and drugs out of vehicles on traffic stops,” he said. “I haven’t heard a way to effectively replace that.”

The group also recommended expanded use of red-light cameras as a way to take racial bias out of traffic policing and said fines should be set on a “sliding payment scale . . . based on income levels and fixed expenses” to address the economic consequences of increased enforcement.

“Traffic safety increases significantly when these cameras are in place,” Deputy Public Defender **Allison Carpenter ’99**, a member of the committee, said at the meeting Monday. “Our suggestions are not at all in order to get money for the county.”

The group also suggested the county look into using sheriff’s deputies or dedicated traffic safety officers, rather than police, to deal with “scooter congestion” and other issues that plague the D.C. suburb.

Prosecutors should pursue cases involving false, racially motivated 911 calls, the group recommended, while acknowledging that in “most circumstances” those allegations are difficult to prove. So the focus should be on educating residents that “differences among community members” are not a reason to call the police.

All patrol officers should be trained in crisis intervention, the panel recommended, and the country mental health crisis center should be open at all times as an alternative to jail.

Eventually, mental health professionals should respond to crisis calls whenever safe, the group recommended.

In a review of mental health calls, ACPD Lt. Matthew Puia, also a committee member, said at the meeting, in “the vast majority of circumstances . . . law enforcement is not needed.”

Special courts for people with mental health, behavioral and drug problems should also be expanded, the group said.

Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, which advises police across the country, said many localities are working on ways to move police out of social services.

“The reason people call the police is simply because they don’t know who else to call, but that shouldn’t mean that the police can’t coordinate with other city agencies to respond,” he said. The challenge, he said, is finding the resources to make alternative options available 24/7: “That’s what’s a work in progress right now.”

Schwartz said the recommendations would be considered in coming weeks as part of the budget process. The county also tasked a legal expert with reviewing current police practices; that report is forthcoming.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/legal-issues/arlinton-debates-police-review-board-with-teeth/2021/02/17/a227bef6-7091-11eb-93be-c10813e358a2\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/legal-issues/arlinton-debates-police-review-board-with-teeth/2021/02/17/a227bef6-7091-11eb-93be-c10813e358a2_story.html)

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**TYLER DENMEAD '94**, AUTHOR OF THE CREATIVE UNDERCLASS, ANNOUNCES ONLINE TOUR

Duke University Press

3.10.21

Tyler Denmead is author of *The Creative Underclass: Youth, Race, and the Gentrifying City* (2019). He teaches in the Faculty of Education and Queens' College at the University of Cambridge. As the pandemic cut short his planned travel to discuss the book with audiences in both the UK and US, Denmead is now planning an online tour. Below he discusses how the book came to be and announces the tour dates.

The *Creative Underclass* is not the book I planned to write when I returned to New Urban Arts in 2012 as an educational ethnographer. It had been 5 years since I left the studio in Providence, Rhode Island as its founding director. I wanted to return to the studio, however, because I was still puzzled by the studio's pedagogic conditions, or "the magic" as so many youth participants and artists put it. It was still unclear to me what this magic was, why this magic mattered, or how this magic might be useful to community arts programs elsewhere.

The Center for Public Humanities at Brown University provided me the opportunity to return to New Urban Arts as a post-doctoral fellow to study this magic. Rather than raising money and facilitating committee meetings, I had the the privilege of hanging out with teenagers and the artists that supported them. I could participate in their collective artmaking and the studio's vibrant social life. I could talk to them about why their artmaking mattered to them and how they interpreted the studio's pedagogic conditions.

Several unexpected events happened that prevented me from writing that familiar book. First, in my ethnographic encounters, I confronted a double bind reported by some former youth participants. Some noted the transformational power of New Urban Arts in their own lives, while also expressing their concern that the studio functioned as a gentrifying force in their neighborhood. This insight forced me to consider what role educational institutions (and therefore my educational leadership) play in white gentrification.

As I turned my attention to this analysis, anti-gentrification protests erupted across the United States as a prominent feature of Black Lives Matter protests. These protests targeted the threats that whiteness pose to Black life through policing, mass incarceration, neighborhood displacement, and state-led urban renewal projects.

With these protests, as well as constructive criticism of readers and friends, I started to write a reflexive book that begins from my position as the urban problem. I thus situated the magic of New Urban Arts in relation to racializing discourses that positioned me as a good white creative and youth of color as urban problems in need of transformation through creativity. I formulated the concept of the creative underclass to not only illuminate this problematic discourse and its role in mobilising white gentrification, but also how young people contested it through their creative disobedience, through the magic of New Urban Arts.

The concept of the creative underclass is clearly in conversation with Richard Florida's creative class. Florida's influential ideas were discussed and critiqued exhaustively in and beyond the academy in the 1990s and 2000s. Not surprisingly, the perspectives, experiences, and practices of young people of color were largely absent from those debates. Since then, attention on this topic have ebbed. After the 2007 financial crisis and Ferguson, vague commitments to creativity as a panacea for social and economic problems can no longer succeed like it used to in mobilizing a political bloc with diverging ideological interests.

Nonetheless, the troubling nexus of urban property development, arts and culture, and educational institutions was not new in the 1990s and it continues today. In the United States, this nexus is central to the expansive and possessive logics of whiteness itself. I hope The Creative Underclass accounts for the creative and critical practices of young people at New Urban Arts in ways that make us better equipped to engage directly with, and potentially transform, ongoing racial and economic injustices in the city.

Read the introduction to The Creative Underclass and save 30% on the paperback with coupon E19DENMD. Denmead has launched a virtual book tour beginning in March 2021, presenting ethnographic snapshots from The Creative Underclass in public lectures and student seminars. If you are interested in hosting a private class talk or public lecture, please contact the author at [td287@cam.ac.uk](mailto:td287@cam.ac.uk).

Upcoming public events:

24 March 2021, 5pm EDT

Hosted by the Centre for Study of Learning and Performance at Concordia University

Register in advance: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-creative-underclass-youth-race-and-the-gentrifying-city-tickets-145093591839>

25th March 2021, 12:30 pm GMT

Hosted by the Critical Childhood Studies Research Group at University College London

Register in advance for this talk:

[https://ucl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYlOCsqDkrEtxjyOwn3Tlyd\\_qzHW1SVsRg](https://ucl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYlOCsqDkrEtxjyOwn3Tlyd_qzHW1SVsRg)

16 April 2021, 11 am EDT

Hosted by the Barnett Symposium Virtual Speaker Series at the Department of Arts Education, Administration, and Policy at Ohio State University

See [www.tylerdenmead.org](http://www.tylerdenmead.org) for registration details.

April 21, 2021 12:30 pm EDT

Hosted by Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia

Register in advance for this talk: <https://art.uga.edu/events/tyler-denmead-book-talk-creative-underclass-youth-race-and-gentrifying-city>

<https://dukeupress.wordpress.com/2021/03/10/tyler-denmead-author-of-the-creative-underclass-announces-online-tour/>

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## In Memory

**John Allen Briggs '48** passed away peacefully after celebrating his 91st birthday with his 3 adult children at his side. John is preceded in death by his beloved wife Carol with whom he was married 53 years, his parents Anne Elizabeth Milliken Briggs and Dr. John Earl Briggs and his cherished sister Nancy Lou Briggs Hickie. He was the father of Samuel (Carol) of Portland, OR, John (Irene) of Fremont, CA and Anne (Roland) of Mill Valley, CA and proud, loving grandfather to 5 grandchildren and close loving Uncle to 8 nieces and nephews.

Born in Columbus Ohio John attended the Columbus Academy and graduated from Colby College in Waterville, ME in 1952 after a 4 year stint in the Navy as a Hospital Corpsman, 2nd class. He remained a very proud alumnus of Colby College throughout his life enjoying many reunions with old friends.

In 1957 he moved his family from New York to the Bay Area to further his career in San Francisco. He spent his career focused on employee benefits, retirement planning and pension administration and was a vital and passionate advocate for business owners and their employees to pay themselves first. He brought the 401(k) to the Bay Area as a general sales manager for various large east coast financial services companies before starting his own company, Independent Pension Services, Inc. in 1977.

He was a fantastic public speaker and motivator with a sharp mind and memory which would lead to memorable moments and often rooms filled with laughter and happy tears. He was a believer in a positive mental attitude and was a constant source of optimism and pillar of strength to his 3 children. When he wasn't working his hobbies included playing the piano, reading, collecting Royal Doulton and restoring classic cars and served as a docent at the Blackhawk Automotive Museum. The family enjoyed living in the Castlewood Country Club neighborhood and being long time members utilizing every aspect of what the club had to offer his kids and the close knit community it provided where neighbors were all friends. He was a long time Rotary member and President in Pleasanton and later in life enjoyed religious studies and was a proud member of the Vestry at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Danville. John's memory will be celebrated in a private family memorial later this year.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/eastbaytimes/obituary.aspx?n=john-allen-briggs&pid=198198137>

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**Andrea Lynn Esselstein '00**, 39, born November 23, 1981, passed away unexpectedly on March 10, 2021. Andrea attended Columbus Academy and graduated from Emory University and The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. Andrea was a member of the Ohio State Bar Association. Andrea was an avid participant in sports, especially basketball and yoga. Survived by her parents, Jerry and Lynn; brother, Alexander; maternal grandmother, Barbara Sappie; many aunts, uncles, cousins, and her beloved rescue dog, Apache. Her outstanding personality, kind heart, and love of family will be missed but NEVER forgotten. Donations in memory of Andrea can be made to Powell Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) <https://powellpaws.org/donate>

<https://www.maederquinttiberi.com/obituary/andrea-esselstein>