

Pittsburgh Yards' Coworking Members and Tenants Bring Kwanzaa Principles to Life Year Round

Mission-Driven Black Entrepreneurial Community on Atlanta's Southside Founded in Purpose (Nia)

ATLANTA (Dec. 19, 2022) - Pittsburgh Yards, a mission-driven entrepreneurial development on the southside of Atlanta, is a community of more than 140 Black-owned and run businesses and organizations that is community-inspired. Its mission is simple – to serve as a catalyst to spur economic equity, job growth and entrepreneurship to benefit area residents and entrepreneurs throughout Atlanta for future generations. Situated in the historic Black neighborhood of Pittsburgh with a rich history (352 University Avenue), Phase I of Pittsburgh Yards was completed in 2020 and included James Bridges Field, the infrastructure for the pad sites for future development, and The Nia Building™, which serves as the development's nerve center and hub. Named after one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa - Nia means purpose in the African language of Swahili. The word "purpose" defines the mission of Pittsburgh Yards as a place to create unprecedented opportunities for the community and beyond. What happens at Pittsburgh Yards and through the businesses there personifies the principles of Kwanzaa throughout the year.

As Pittsburgh Yards delivers against its purpose and mission and encourages mission-driven businesses and organizations to join and become coworking members or tenants, many of the businesses bring the seven principles of Kwanzaa to life. Here are just a few:

Umoja (Unity) - Stakeholders within the community came together in 2017 through numerous community meetings and work groups to engage in creating the spirit of Pittsburgh Yards, from the actual name to the art from local artists throughout The Nia Building. The space was designed for collective productivity and as an enjoyable place to work and collaborate with a vibrant group of like-minded entrepreneurs and businesses. As Pittsburgh Yards evolves and grows, husband and wife team, Anthony and Sharon Pope, principles of [Atelier 7 Architects, LLC](#), are at the center of designing the ten shipping container retail spaces for the future Container Courtyard that will be situated adjacent to an access point to Atlanta BeltLine's Southside Trail.

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) - Born in Atlanta, Mary-Pat Hector is a graduate of Spelman College and a current graduate student at Georgia State University. She began community organizing at the age of 12 years old. At the age of 18, she was one of the youngest community leaders to advise President Barack Obama on criminal justice reform in the oval office. By the age of 19, she became the youngest woman and person of color to run for public office in the state of Georgia, losing by only 22 votes. She is the founder of [Equity for All](#), an organization that develops that develops successful get-out-the-vote programs for partners across the South. Hector finds inspiration in this quote by Coretta Scott King: "Struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won. You earn it and win it in every generation."

Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) - [Our Village United](#), the collaborative partner and organization that leads the programming and curates community culture for Pittsburgh Yards, is grounded in the core belief that by serving the whole business, the entire community prospers economically and holistically. Through their work, they support the growth of Black solopreneurs and microbusinesses by delivering targeted technical assistance and shared professional services that not only focus on the health of the business but also the health of the business owner to empower and elevate small businesses to grow and scale.

Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) - Malika Redmond is CEO and co-founder of [Women Engaged](#), an initiative that uses a creative, hands-on learning approach to advancing Black women's human rights, youth empowerment and civic engagement efforts in Georgia, offering leadership development opportunities, public policy advocacy, and year-round non-partisan voter engagement campaigns. She solicited the talents of Amber Lawson, the president/CEO of [Aspire Construction & Design](#) to design and build out her office space at Pittsburgh Yards. Aspire is a commercial design-build general contractor providing entrepreneurs like Malika and Women Engaged a one stop shop for design and construction services. She launched Aspire to provide opportunities for under-represented demographics in the architecture and construction industry. Her real passion is imagining the possibilities of a space - building something different than what was there yesterday, and doing that for other entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs.

Nia (Purpose) - Reggie Hammond, CEO of [Your Crescendo](#), empowers individuals, teams, leaders and organizations to connect their work to their purpose. This includes coaching, strategic planning, high performing team building and placement services - all centered in purpose.

Kuumba (Creativity) - There's no shortage of creativity at Pittsburgh Yards. In addition to having an artist studio, there's an inspirational, art-centered environment in which to work. From coworking member, Thomas Gray, CEO of Zwentz 58 Entertainment, the creator of [Adult Game Nights](#) games, to Destiny Brewton, CEO of [A House Called Hue](#), which is more than a high-quality embroidery company, but also a business that has become an incubator for local creatives in the community, thus developing more artists in Atlanta. And then there's Sharon Brooks Hodge, CEO and managing partner of [Phenomenal Media Productions](#), a company that creates multimedia content relevant to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Black businesses. It includes content development and traditional media, new media, social media, and corporate communications.

Imani (Faith) - "Chin up champ, you've got this!" is the quote Danielle Walker, CEO and founder of [BLKGTV Network LLC](#), has used to motivate herself, even before she was an entrepreneur in the business of helping independent filmmakers maximize their revenue growth through viewership by providing a controlled environment for them to host their content. Although she's had her business for 9 years under the parent company YJLM LLC, BLKGTV Network was founded in 2021. According to Walker, being a part of the community has elevated her confidence in her ability to grow her company to its fullest potential. "Pittsburgh Yards is motivating and inspiring because you are in a building with like-minded individuals -- all working towards one real goal and that's to be the change we want to see," said Walker. "Pittsburgh Yards is a movement. It represents hope."

You can explore more businesses by going to the 2022 Pittsburgh Yards [Gift & Giving Guide](#).

More information about becoming a Pittsburgh Yards coworking member or tenant can be found at PittsburghYards.com or by visiting the community in person and taking a tour on the second Thursday of every month at 11:30 a.m. or at 2:30 p.m. at 352 University Avenue in Atlanta. Contact Pittsburgh Yards via email at info@pittsburghyards.com or by phone at 470-890-5030.

To Expand the Economy, Invest in Black Businesses - Make it a New Year's Resolution

During the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, wealth and access to capital inequities were exposed as having a significant impact on Black communities and Black-owned businesses, becoming national news. Despite the systemic-based challenges the pandemic brought to light, it also inspired many to pivot, grow and spurred the creation of new Black-owned businesses, showing resilience to change. A leading public policy organization, the Brookings Institute, reported there are 7,539 Black-owned businesses in Metro Atlanta that create approximately 6 jobs on average per firm. Supporting Black entrepreneurs and helping them grow and gain access to the tools needed to scale their businesses is an essential component to rectifying the inequity that exists. The institute issued a report supporting this concept, "[To Expand the Economy, Invest in Black Businesses](#)." Unique to the [Pittsburgh Yards](#) ecosystem is the strategic technical support offered to coworking members and business tenants offered by [Our Village United](#).