

Upward Bound

2021 Edition III

Reimagining our Path:

Resiliency to Succeed
as 1st Gen Students

Our Voices

**Discovering
More**

Becoming a Spy

College Tours

Camp Ramapo

Flash Fiction



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A Message from the Upward Bound Directors.



■ **Director, Oriel Straker**

■ **Assistant Director, Jovanne Augustin**

Each year Upward Bound Project at Borough of Manhattan Community College witnesses seniors graduate and attend colleges near and far. We are proud of our program participants' ability to endure and stay committed to the program during COVID-19 pandemic, Delta and Omicron variants throughout the past twenty-four months.

Our digital magazine, **Reimagining Our Path** is testimony to all participants, staff, workshop leaders, school liaisons, BMCC staff and other community and college partnerships in assisting us with continuous programming, in a virtual platform or in person format.

The past two years has demonstrated to all of us, especially high school students, the importance of adaptability, and flexibility toward reaching your goals, and identifying your unique gifts and talents.

In serving first generation students, it is so rewarding to help our participants graduate from high school and get accepted into college. It is the participants that make Upward Bound great.

"We hope that as you read our participants articles, you take a moment to reflect on life and how much you have grown despite the ups and downs and challenges that you face."



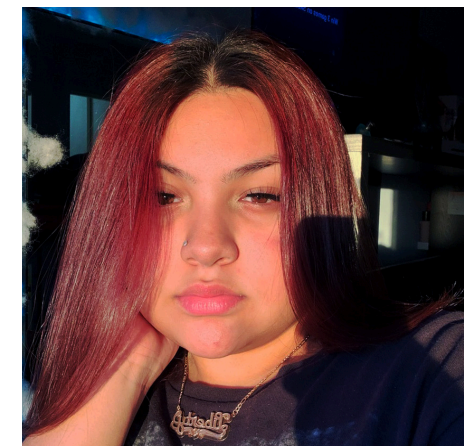
Social media is an influential platform that teenagers use but it needs to be monitored and used with precaution.

The Monsters in Teenagers' Cell Phones

Teenagers use social media for everything; they use it to communicate, learn, gossip, see new trends and navigate life. When a teenager sees an attractive product they either buy it or have their parents purchase it.

Social media is an influential platform that teenagers use but it needs to be monitored and used with precaution.

Body image is a commercial entity that teenage girls struggle with everyday. Impressionable girls that have body insecurities spend a lot of time swiping through models and young-beauty influencers that have the trending body shape 'slim thick' with big hips, a skinny waist, and a beautiful face.



Liberty Escobar

Unfortunately, they'll want to be exactly like her and try to change themselves or even hate themselves because they want to look like the 'ideal' beauty not realizing that these unattainable images are highly Photoshopped. The same can

be said for teenage boys. If a guy that is more on the plus side gets bullied for being bigger than the rest, then he utilizes a social media outlet to watch and follow men influencers that are very fit and muscular.

The boy would want to change himself, and based on the amount of bullying, and time he spends watching videos and pictures of men with the 'ideal' body type, could end up depressed and insecure.

According to 'Child Mind Institute',

“ Experts worry that the social media and text messages that have become so integral to teenage life are promoting anxiety and lowering self-esteem.”

Teens desire the “perfect” body as it relates to facial features, figure, and energetic personalities but the truth is your teenage body is still developing, puberty is a necessary phase.

Nobody is perfect and sometimes teens don't realize that they haven't fully developed yet; everyone is made to be different from the rest.

Teenagers can't just be themselves because they are bombarded with the images and expectations portrayed on social media sites. It isn't fair that some have to go through bullying or hating themselves because they don't feel beautiful.

Your gender, race, sexuality and body size is beautiful. Limiting teens' time on their devices by engaging them in activities that focus on education, athletics, teamwork and creativity can be the answer to improving teens' perception of self-image.

Offline, the gold standard advice helping kids build healthy self-esteem is to get them involved in something that they're interested in. It can be sports or music or taking apart computers or volunteering—anything that sparks an interest and gives them confidence.

When kids learn to feel good about what they can do instead of how they look and what they own, they're happier and better prepared for success in real life.

That most of these activities also involve spending time interacting with peers face-to-face is just the icing on the cake. **(Child Mind Institute, Inc.)**

This is a great step in improving teenagers' self-esteem. Let's get them out into the world of possibilities where their talents and skills are developing and being celebrated. They will gradually feel more comfortable in their own skin and will have far less time to scroll on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & TikTok.

Social interaction with other children doing productive activities will foster community, improve mental health and better equip teens for their future in society.



Michelle Oduro

Get Up Stand Up & Shout It Out!

The Problem Is Not The People

Why don't homeless people go to shelters even though they're very welcome? Living on the street or occupying a train cart may look horrible; many shelters are not really a safe haven. Unfortunately, there is a lot of abuse and sexual assault that occurs in certain shelters.

“...there are a lot of big warehouses that are just places where we stick people at night and we really don't have any regard for how they live there.”

In a transcript of a podcast titled “Why Some Homeless Choose The Streets Over Shelters” by Ari Shapiro, a former homeless person states, “But there are a lot of big warehouses that are just places where we stick people at night and we really don't have any regard for how they live there.”

The podcast was addressing the lack of safety measures put in place to ensure the safety of the occupants. Another important factor to consider is that there is a percentage of people



coming into shelters with mental illnesses. There is also the negative perception that surrounds the crime that supposedly occurs.

Another former homeless person also states “Part of the reason was, you know, the paranoia and the fear of large groups of people that comes along with schizophrenia ... is that you hear a lot of terrible things about shelters, that shelters are dangerous places, that they’re full of drugs and drug dealers, that people will steal your shoes, and there’s bedbugs and body lice.”

This poses the question “if you are homeless, is it safer to occupy public spaces or stay in a shelter?”

In my opinion, the government is at fault for the increasing homeless levels. It is also their fault that the shelters are not safe havens. When funding shelters operations it is important to consider the safety and mental health of its occupants.

Policy makers and community leaders are aware of the abuse that occurs which has been reported especially in NYC.

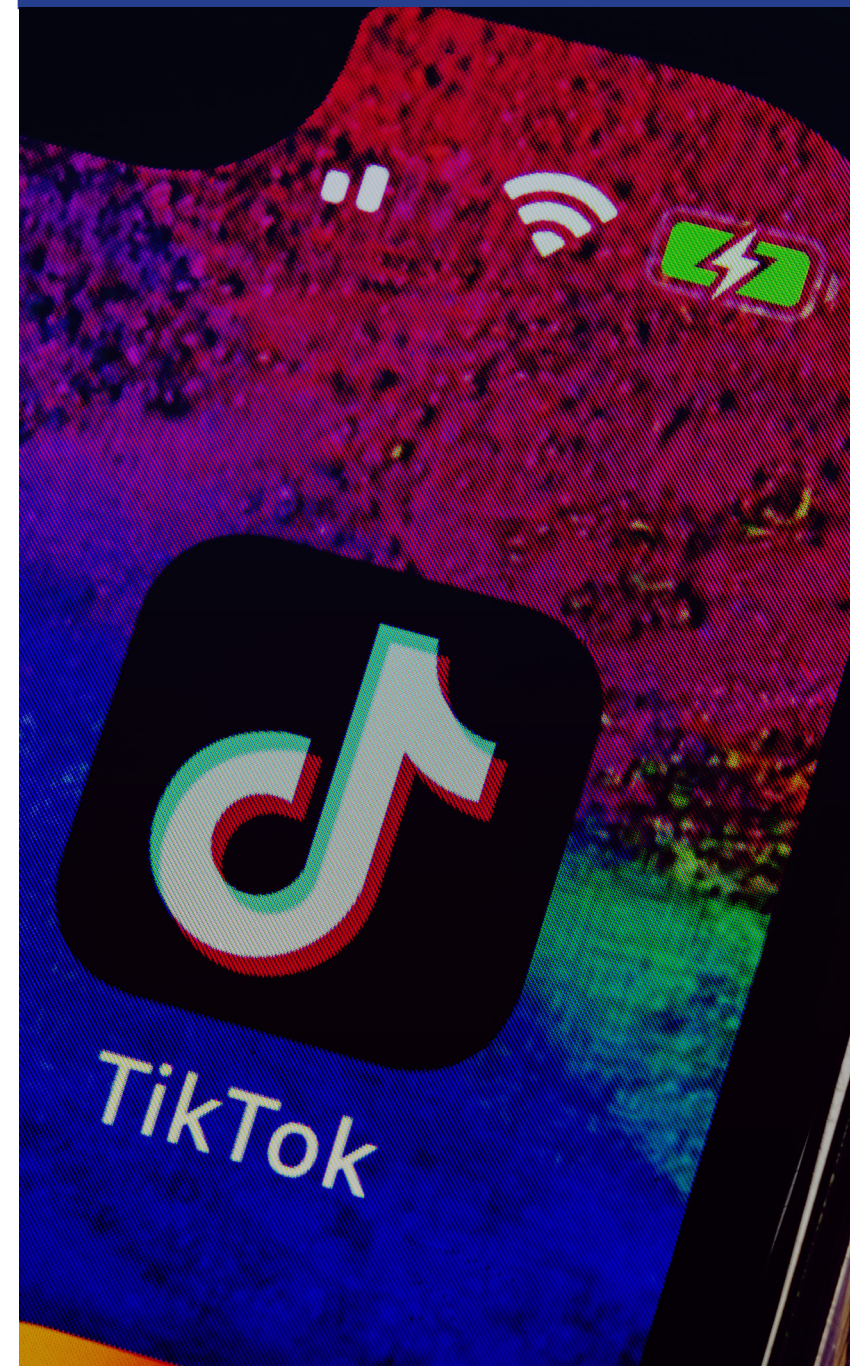
Policy makers and community leaders are aware of the abuse that occurs which has been reported especially in NYC. There are also

protests by homeless advocates that gain media attention but that still doesn’t convince lawmakers to push for a better shelter environment.

Local representatives know there’s a problem but it is not an easy fix because it will cost too much money. If funds are spent to build some tents at a public park, surely affordable houses can be built as well.

I’m specifically faulting the government because the homeless population continues to exist. The city and state taxes the government collects are not trickling down to those in need, so what exactly are politicians doing?

Watch Out For TikTok.



Kaylee Brizuela

TikTok is a popular worldwide App used for entertainment mainly among Gen Z. Top trending TikTok influencers from 2020 include: 1. siblings **Charli and Dixie**, who got their own reality series on Hulu, 2. **Ondreaz Lopez**, 3. **Charli D’Amelio**, 4. **Addison Rae**, who is featured on a podcast.

While creating TikTok videos can be fun it can also have a negative impact on teens self-esteem. I have this app and I see many kids who are famous for dancing, trying to be happy and create content for their supporters.

Some of those “supporters” comment that the star needs to act their age or they compare these kids to other famous people, saying which one is prettier or uglier.



"While creating TikTok videos can be fun it can also have a negative impact on teens self-esteem."

I've seen users post themselves crying because of the negative comments they received. Most of the TikTok users are young and they are not mature enough to endure such criticism.

Negative comments that fuel hate or are life threatening may lead to suicide. I've seen the way TikTok can transform a person from being happy to depressed because of the comments.

The 11-13 year-old stage is when someone begins figuring themselves out and feeling forced to change to please those who make the comments

is damaging to a young person.

During this pandemic, I've noticed that millions of kids use this app as their safe zone but then they start to quit because it's getting too hard to deal with the drama and pressure to increase their following. That really takes a toll on teen users and for some kids they don't feel secure in their own self.

While TikTok challenges involving fashion, lip-sync, dance and comedy skits can be entertaining, we have to keep an eye out for the long term effects of its influence on youth.



**Discovering
More.**



Virtual Reality World.

Salma Akter

The trip to VR World was so entertaining. I visited in August and December. I mostly enjoyed how unique each game brought a different but new challenge. I played Space Pirate, Superhot, Smashbox, Battlewake Arcade, Help Wanted and Aroza Sunshine just to name a few.

It felt really cool to be in VR, it's like you're in a different world. Once you put on the VR head gear everyone around you disappears and the VR gaming setting takes hold of your reality. I have control of things with the help of the VR staff. I can't imagine how the technology works, I believe there's a lot of motion sensors and coding involved.

After two hours of gaming we all headed to the State Grill Bar at the Empire State Building. It is a fancy restaurant and I ordered a delicious Jumbo Grilled Shrimp, Hand-cut Fries and a smooth Blackout cake. Can't wait to visit again and I totally recommend VR World and State Grill Bar for other participants.



Cristal Garcia

I joined UB in Summer 2021. It is great to be a part of the program as I continue to gain so much knowledge. The summer workshops provide useful information about career exploration, science, technology, and motion art and the trips allow me to visit new places, connect with people, make friends and eat out.

On the 29th of July we went to Virtual Reality World located at 10 E 34th Street in Manhattan. This was a great experience. At first I am in the physical space that sections off each game. Once I select a game a staff member puts the headgear on me that covers my eyes while I stand in front of a screen. In the game I see no screen but am surrounded by characters and the game itself. I tried about seven games and they were all incredible.

At first it is hard to understand how to play but then you start to get the hang of the hand gears as it becomes

quite realistic. The VR World team is very helpful in guiding you through the virtual experience.

It feels scary to be in the virtual reality room because it is just so realistic. In some games when I look down, I can see my hands and toes.

The visual scenery, movements and surroundings are out of this world ! It is astounding to see how advanced technology has evolved to make video games feel so realistic. After playing we went to eat at the State Grill and Bar at the Empire State building just a few blocks away. I had the Steak Frites with hand-cut fries and chimichurri on the side, and it was delicious.

The place was nice and it was great to sit down together and talk and meet each other. It was my first time dining there and I did enjoy the restaurant's ambiance. What I enjoyed the most from this trip is being there with the other participants. I am easily able to make new friends and this activity provided a safe space to do so.

I have grown as a person from this experience as it pushed me a bit out of my comfort zone. Just in this first UB trip I spoke up and made new friends.



Finally A Day Outside!

Camp Ramapo

Michelle Oduro

Instead of staying home bored and probably getting nagged at or wasting time on my phone; I went to Camp Ramapo in Rhinebeck, NY with Upward Bound. I made the right choice because I honestly had a great experience.

A year of quarantining at home had me quite excited to enjoy free time at the gym playing volleyball with friends. I thought I might have been rusty but once I got into the game it was like riding a bike.

The Balancing challenge was also fun and required some skill as in moments



it felt like I was going to land on my back and drown even though we were surrounded by dirt. Balancing on the round wooden-platform felt like I was surfing since it kept teetering every-time I moved. The 123....20 game was so frustrating because I just wanted to throw the rope into the sky. The right answer is what a bunch of people said but nobody listened, I knew cracking the pattern was a lot more simple than the group made it to be but there were so many voices.

Obviously, all the puzzles and games required a lot of teamwork. I became closer with people that I didn't previously talk to as much and enjoyed spending time with my friends. They would say something random or funny, and I would respond with something random or funny.

This is not my first time going to a camping resort. In fact, I went to a musical summer camp called Usdan (located in Long Island) back in 5th grade for two months and it was the best summer experience ever.



So, I was already used to nature and being with the bugs. However, the bugs were just a small organism in a tsunami of positive outlooks.

All in all, this was a great trip and I wouldn't mind doing this again. And SOON please.



Becoming a Spy, Surveillance is Real!

Spyscape, Espionage Museum

Liberty Marrero

Spyscape was an amazing experience for me because I was also able to test myself on different levels. Being challenged on accessing information and analyzing scenarios gave me some insight into a career in national security. I had never done anything like this and to be honest, I would love to do it again in the future to see where I've improved in my total spy skills.

The illusion and digital voice in the Spyscape elevator made it feel like we were secret agents on a mission. The elevator spoke to us about being a spy, how the devices we use affect us, how all over the world something or someone is always watching and listening, and finally how our profiles and challenges can determine what kind of spy we are.

Each challenge would determine if we are spymasters, analysts, agent handlers, intelligence operatives, or surveillance officers. Many of the challenges were based on our everyday lives, mathematical skills, observation, critical thinking skills, and speed.

In the past most of the spies usually used typewriters and cryptic messages to communicate with each other. In one of the challenges we had to cipher the cryptic messages to determine what happened. In another, we had to use the skill of observation to determine who was lying and telling the truth based on the suspect in question body language.

We were able to learn how security is utilized in spy missions by identifying

what is out of place in a particular mission or interrogation room. My team was put to the final test to determine our speed and agility when placed in a room with lighted buttons and "laser rays." The objective of the game was to press as many before the two minutes were up, but if we hit a laser the time would be reduced.

That day for me was a lot of fun because I was able to get closer to a new friend and be somewhere other than home. I finished all the challenges, fully enjoying my experience and sharing my success with my family once I got home.





Litiz Guzman Martinez

Spring 2021 was my first year in Upward Bound and my first trip with the program was to the Spyscape Museum in Midtown Manhattan during Spring break. In the lobby we are all asked to create an account in order to complete the tasks on our devices along with the bracelet the museum gave us.

Now this is the part that surprised me the most, the elevator. I know, it doesn't sound interesting but once I enter, the large elevator goes dark and all the walls start playing an introductory video detailing the missions and levels of encryption (code breaking/ code making), deception (lie-detection skills), surveillance (testing observational skills), special ops challenge (strategy and

agility), and debrief (where they tell you what kind of spy you are).

I was able to finish all but the special ops challenge because the line was too long. But when it was time for the analysis, my title was 'Spymaster' which was the highest level I believe. Overall this was a trip and experience that I would do over again because it taught me a lot about spy history.

My favorite level was deception because you enter a booth by yourself and must identify a person's truth from lies based on the person's mannerisms. I aced this challenge and got a perfect score. Thank you to the Upward Bound team for this experience at the museum and welcoming me into the program.

Nisha Reyes

On April 1 2021 Upward Bound held a trip for all of us to visit the Spyscape museum on 8th Ave.

The second we entered it was already an immersive experience. We received ID bracelets that could be scanned at every post to allow us to play spy activities.

On our ride up in the elevator we were debriefed about the spy world and how because of modern tech and social media anyone can be tracked. This was news to me.

This experience was like no other. We learned about famous government spies used especially in World War I & II. We also learned how spies communicate through morse code and other secret code languages. In the many activities one of my favorites is where we had to decode a secret message in order to help a woman escape and it was timed. The adrenaline of trying to figure this out before the time ran out was the best part.



There was another activity where we were in a room full of security cameras and we had to hear specific items in every security camera and say in which camera we were seeing it in. I also met many new Upward bound friends. People I had just bonded over being a part of the Upward Bound program.

Overall, this experience was amazing. It was both a learning experience and an amazing opportunity for me to get to know my fellow Upward Bound friends. This trip was great, after the hard year we had, after all the loss, and being at home and struggling with at home learning.





College Tours.

Upward Bound participants attending information sessions and virtual tours to Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Queens College, American University, University of Albany, and Babson College.

| Nisha Reyes

During Spring Break we virtually toured many colleges such Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Queens College, American University and University of Albany.

One of my personal favorite information sessions was with American University because I am interested in studying political science. It was very exciting to learn that students can apply to internships within government affairs and become involved right there in Washington D.C.

We also had many fun activities such as the Virtual Escape Room game. I also really enjoyed the Columbia PhD students presenting about the Juneau Icefield Research Program that involves students studying the change in the Alaskan ice glaciers.

As a future politician I can look back at this tour and be reminded of American University when applying to college.

| Michelle Oduro

The college tours helped me understand just how many important moving parts have to operate when running a college. It must be an efficient one that excels in making its students prepared for the career world.

For example, the University of Albany admissions staff talked about mandatory summer programs or certain programs that you have to attend in order to be eligible. While I oppose the mandatory requirements for incoming freshmen to attend introductory classes for subjects I have already taken in high school, it was good to hear about them.

The presentation gave me insight to what I need to be aware of when applying and once accepted into a university. Although the virtual college tour did not stand out, I still like those colleges from last year (Boston College and Skidmore) and I am likely to include them on my college applications because they have art or sports activities that I enjoy. Should I

go to a PWI or a community college? At least I have some time to decide.

| Kaylee Brizuela

Hobart William & Smith Colleges is my favorite so far. The Upward Bound alumni who currently attend this college addressed the beauty of the campus environment and the advantages of applying to HEOP as a low-income applicant.

I didn't even know this college existed but after watching and listening to our two tour guides who have Hispanic heritage such as myself the college seemed so nice.

It pleased me to learn about a security feature called an emergency blue light box used when someone feels unsafe or needs someone to walk with you in the dark, a student can press a blue button for help. I also liked when the ladies said if we can't afford school books that we can go to the library and get them, just return them by the end of the year. This is really important especially because sometimes college kids can't afford textbooks.

In addition, the college allows students to pick whether one would want to stay in a co-ed dorm. Some girls don't feel comfortable sleeping in the same building area as a male students and so this option was good to hear. I wished the other colleges could have shown a video tour as well to show us around the campus in addition to the informational session.

Babson Besties.

| Adam Rashad Ramirez

| Rebeca Tellez



We applied to Babson College under early decision and received our acceptances on December 17, 2021. Over Presidents Day weekend Rebecca and Adam were so excited to visit the campus in Boston.

Rebeca: Hey Adam, how did you feel about our trip to Babson College?

Adam: It was a wonderful experience that showed me what to expect for life on campus and student life outside of class.

Rebeca: I enjoyed visiting the campus during a warmer part of the year. We were able to see many of the Babson community dogs that were being walked around campus, greeting people along the way.

Adam: I appreciated the different alumni networking services that Babson provides, such as Freshman Fridays, where only Freshmen can have the advisory services from class suggestions to career services all to themselves.

Rebeca: Foundations of Management and Entrepreneurship (FME) Classes that we are going to be taking next semester sounds extremely interesting. We could be able to design, launch, and manage a new enterprise; in which we will learn the ins and outs of entrepreneurial leadership from a startup's perspective.

Adam: Seeing The Trim dining hall helped me envision what student life will be like and socialize with other students who share the same passions and interests as I do.

Rebeca: Many of the events and activities on campus are organized and developed by students, giving them an immediate opportunity to apply and practice entrepreneurial leadership.

"At Babson, anything is conceivable ... It only takes ... an eye for an unmet need and the vision and effort to build and implement a solution."

Adam: At Babson, anything is conceivable, just like in any other business enterprise. It only takes a big idea or an eye for an unmet need and the vision and effort to build and implement a solution.

Rebeca: Where do you think you are going to spend most of your time at Babson?

Adam: I think the Horns library which is very spacious and provides many methods to study whether it be alone or in a group. What about you?

Rebeca: I'm probably going to spend most of my time at the Babson Recreation Center and join your study sections in the Horn Library in the fall. During the Spring, we should find a study spot outside too.

Adam: What do you look forward to the most next semester?

Rebeca: I'm looking forward to learning statistics during our first semester at Babson, starting our Foundations of Management and Entrepreneurship



classes this autumn, and spending more time with my Bestie at Babson.

Adam: I'm glad to hear that from my Babson Bestie, because I look forward to all of that and more, especially being able to see you develop your career.

Rebeca: Honestly, we would have never gotten here without the help of Upward Bound from the start of our application process to revisit the campus.

Both: Thank You Upward Bound!

Flash Fiction.



Lights Out

Marquies Ross

Today, Wednesday January 7th, 3067 is the day I finally get to see my dad. I've been waiting all my life for this moment. I always relive the day we landed on Jupiter and he said he'd be back; I never saw him again. He feels like a distant memory and to be honest it might be very awkward seeing him. I fear he may disappear again but I don't know for sure.

As I enter his spaceship it's massive in size and very bold in blue. I would have never thought it would be this beautiful. But as I walk in, I hear a loud bang which makes me jump. I look around and search for the source of this sudden loud sound. I see a room glowing blue. What could this be? I don't want to snoop and go through my dad's things but what is this room? I move slowly making sure not to make too much noise. I turn the door knob and the room is freezing. I feel my body tense up as I enter the

room. My senses take over and I smell a stench of wet concrete and wood almost as it smells like a construction sight. I look around the room observing further. Oddly, the walls are radiating some sort of neon blue color with spiky cone looking walls.

Suddenly, I feel a sharp sense of fear and immediately regret sneaking around but I'm not turning back now, I have to meet my dad. There is another door in front of me. At first I'm hesitant to approach and actually go inside the room. But I hear something smashing and crashing that makes me eager to know what it could be. Building up all my confidence I turn the knob and swing the door open and there he is. I see my father building something that looks like a bed. The room is decorated with roses and has a big flat screen TV, PS10, makeup section and snack section even with its own bathroom.

I look at the man standing before me; he looks exactly the same just with a few gray hairs dancing in his unshaven beard. Once I have his attention he instantly gets up and screams "Surprise! I made you this room sort of like a homecoming gift. You're gonna come stay with me and catch up on some time with your old man!" He giggles. I paused in astonishment, a big smile engraved on my face. I run and hug him.

"I missed you dad!" I said.

My boy, I'm sorry I left. I had to get my business straight so I can fully be present for you and now I'm not going anywhere. You are my home.

My Roomie

Kaylee Brizuela

One stormy night I was fast asleep but I kept having these nightmares. I was all alone too. I hate it when I'm by myself because I tend to overthink things. I kept hearing glass breaking and someone whispering while another was crying. Should I investigate it or not? I wasn't sure but my roomie was right next door so I wanted to know if she was safe.

I could hear her crying, the room smelled of rose petal perfume and the other person's voice sounded mature. After that I knew right away who it was, her mother. She's not just any mom, she's rude, manipulative, and has a habit of taking her daughters money.

Once I knew who it was I still didn't know if I should open the door. I know how frustrating her mom can be, down right scary too. She always carries a weapon and I hope today she wouldn't need to use it.

As I was debating an hour passed by and I still couldn't get myself to go inside. I was too afraid of being smacked upside my head for interrupting with all that screaming and yelling taking place.

Next thing you know 30 minutes passed by and I finally got up the nerve to walk towards the door but as soon as I got close everything was quiet.

The last thing I heard was a slam. I rushed into the room thinking the worst but no one was there, the window was open and the weapon lay on the carpet. Where had my roomie and her mom gone? I couldn't believe she was gone

and I worried if she would still be alive by the time she was found.

A Subtle Reminder

Liberty Escobar

"I have had this dream for the last two weeks, where I wake up in this room with walls that are covered with sharp, rigid, points, but when I awake and pass through the door my dream ends."

I look to see if my friend thinks I'm crazy, but clearly, she's invested in finding out what's going on because she says, "Let me hypnotize you!" She was so excited because she likes weird voodoo stuff.

We finally get back to my house and she starts spinning a necklace around directly in front of my face. I thought she was crazy, but while looking at the necklace pendant I started getting tired. I woke up in the room with the pointy walls, I walked through the door and I saw nothing.

"Did I just die!"

I ran back into the room and looked at the daggered wall and realized that each point resembled something from my past. At the end of one point there was a necklace from my grandma and at another there was my ring gifted to me by my best friend. Then I woke up and realized that the message in my dream was meant for me to begin to appreciate the people and valuable things that I have because some people live life having nothing. And that was

the first time in weeks that I slept fully through the entire night.

The Happening

Litiz Guzman

"Don't go in there".

That's all I heard before the lights went out. I looked closely around me, noticing a shadow or something. But it was impossible, I was conflicted on my next step. I just started walking but next thing I know, I'm in the hospital. I lay in a bed with the sounds of beeps on the machine in an empty room. My head started hurting and the pain increased each minute that passed by. Finally when it was over, I closed my eyes for what felt like a second. Once I opened my eyes I remembered.

The flashbacks felt as forceful as nightmares. I screamed trying to wake myself up, "DON'T GO IN THERE, DON'T GO IN THERE" while tears were falling on my face.

The hospital staff burst into my room trying to calm me down. I blurted out "they are here" and "they are coming for me" however I looked around and realized I was still in a hospital bed. A sense of relief came over me. I kept on blaming myself over what happened in the room, that indescribable place that I never want to go back to. If my recklessness and curiosity didn't take the better of me, I would've been ok. If I had just listened, I could've been safe.

All of a sudden, a familiar rage burst out of me. It took the form of a scream, aggression riled it's nasty hands charged the staff, pushing them as far as the other side of the room.

"What. Was. That?" I said, trembling, shocked about what happened.

The nurses were staring at each other in alarm and I said in a childlike voice "I need to-o-go home" while looking around for my clothes. The doctor immediately looks.

"What are you doing, I have to go...", I yell.

The doctor moved towards me and said, "We need to know what happened in the place".

There was this alarming sense of power building up inside of myself causing me to begin screaming again and the door automatically opened. But this scream wasn't normal, it was almost like a sonic scream.

I don't even know where to go, but next thing I know I was back at the place. The place where it all started but I don't remember walking or transporting myself here. I heard a noise behind me and turned abruptly around to see a stranger. Feeling uneasy I screamed again but this time pushing the air in a strange way. It happened again.

"Well, nice to see you again, would you like to come in...again?" the stranger said on the ground.

The bits and pieces started clicking together...I remember now what

fully happened in the room. My daily reminder clicked in my mind :DON'T GO IN THERE is what my gut was telling me. But before I could leave, it happened. I was back in there with no recollection of my memories again.

Birthday

Nisha Reyes

Finally, 365 days had passed and it was my birthday. I couldn't believe how happy I was to have been turning 28. As I got ready for the day and prepared my special birthday breakfast, I found it strange I had yet to receive any birthday messages or phone calls but I figured it was still early and people must still have been asleep. On my drive to work, I received a call from my mother saying that she wasn't feeling well and that I should call her more often but as the call came to an end I was dumbfounded as to how my mother had somehow seemed to forget her only child's birthday. But I didn't let that phone call get to me because I knew for sure my friends and coworkers would not have forgotten my birthday, especially because I've been talking about it the whole month prior.

As I walked into the office the room was dead-silent, I didn't even get a quick happy birthday so I embarrassingly walked into my cubicle and mopped around during the entire 9-to-5 shift. My phone remained without any calls or messages. Towards the end of the day, I wasn't feeling well, since I had finished most of the cases I had to work on. I



went on into my supervisor's office and was going to ask to leave 30 minutes early. What I didn't expect, while getting up from the chair and walking around the office area cubicle, was hearing how quiet and empty the floor was. I quickly checked to see if my watch was wrong but it was indeed correct. As I walked through the whole floor I quickly realized a muffled sound coming from a closed board meeting room. Since I was on edge I quickly hid, but after 15 minutes passed I went to check what exactly was going on. When I was about to open the door suddenly I saw someone, it was a custodian. All he said was, "Don't go in there!"

As a curious person I of course I didn't listen. As I opened the door the lights were all out, and suddenly everyone came back on and out jumped everyone including my dear mother who lived over 3,500 miles away screaming "Happy Birthday!"



Upcoming Events 2022

April.	May.	June.	Jul - Aug.
Spring Break College Tour – Upstate NY	Camp Ramapo	End of Year Celebration UB Alumni Soiree	Summer Immersion Program

Upward Bound at BMCC is a college access program that serves first generation/low-income students from underserved NYC public schools. The goal of Upward Bound is to support the completion of secondary education and enrollment in and graduation from post-secondary educational institutions.



Upward Bound is a federally funded program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.