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SB7 Small Business Spotlight



Baltimore Broken Glass: Building Beauty from the Pieces of a Broken System

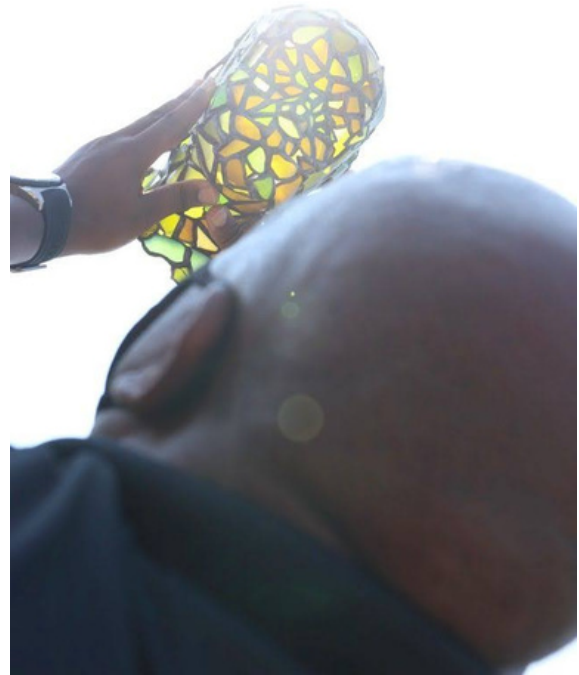
By:

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Communities in SB7 historically have been overlooked. It's time to shine a spotlight on small business operating in the area that continue to contribute not only to workforce and economic development, but improve the overall quality of life in their respective neighborhoods and beyond. Our first Small Business Spotlight features a Curtis Bay company that takes the adage "one man's trash is another man's treasure" quite literally.

The Inception

Baltimore Broken Glass was birthed out of frustration. Faced with the threat of the largest incinerator in US history set to be built less than a mile from Curtis Bay schools and homes, Terriq Thompson, Maria Grajales and Taysia Thompson drew inspiration from past youth leaders. In 2012, the South Baltimore student leaders who founded Free Your Voice spoke out against something detrimental to their community and started a conversation about local, community owned businesses that could heal the environment, instead of contributing to its downfall. After learning about zero waste enterprises across the country, and realizing that glass, despite being a multi-use material, was not being recycled by the company contracted to do the City's recycling, Terriq, Maria and Taysia decided to act.



The company was launched on Baltimore's first ever Zero Waste Day in April 2021 with a mission to "divert materials from being dumped in [their] communities, burned in incinerators, or buried in landfills while simultaneously creating employment opportunities for local youth." Being able to experiment freely with ways to make positive change to the broken waste system that directly impacts them and the surrounding communities was a major motivator in taking the leap to start the business.

Operating out of a small workshop on property held by South Baltimore Community Land Trust (SBCLT), Baltimore Broken Glass is proud to involve youth from Cherry Hill, Curtis Bay, Lakeland, and Mt. Winans and to have the guidance and support from community leaders from SBCLT, including access to a free workshop space.

Trust The Process

Glass found discarded on the streets during community organized clean ups is taken to the workshop and processed using a method that recreates smooth sea glass, like that found on long walks on the beach. After sorting through the options, the team picks the most viable/best pieces and wraps each one individually in copper foil. Once this arduous step is completed, the pieces are soldered together to create different forms and sculptures. This hands-on technique is extremely labor and time intensive, making it difficult for the small team to keep up with some orders placed on their Etsy shop. However, take it from someone who has personally placed an order, the product is well worth the wait.

While it's a unique operation in itself, Baltimore Broken Glass is proud to be a part of a community of local craftspeople and astounding artists, all who contribute to the tradition and existing community rooted in South Baltimore.



A Look into the Crystal (Glass) Ball

In the future, Baltimore Broken Glass hopes to score a larger contract, allowing it to hire more South Baltimore youth and expand the team. They eventually would like to relocate their operation to a community owned Zero Waste Resource Recovery Research, Education and Jobs Center in South Baltimore, alongside other businesses that take improperly discarded materials and create jobs by re-using or recycling them. In a perfect world, their workshop will be next door to other recycling and re-use enterprises, like a compost facility where farmers can pick up healing black gold (compost), or a furniture restoration shop with community-friendly prices. In addition to expansion and relocation, the team envisions joining with local educational anchor institutions on research and initiatives to educate students, community members and officials on the ins and outs of zero waste in hopes of more people putting it to practice any way they can.

For more information on Baltimore Broken Glass, click on the links below! And don't forget to check out their products at <https://www.etsy.com/shop/BaltimoreBrokenGlass>.

Baltimore Broken Glass's Story
Dr. Lawrence Brown's Testimonial
Production Process