

**FIND IT**

Washington Heights encompasses the northern portion of Manhattan from 155th Street to Dyckman Street, and runs from the Hudson River to the Harlem River.

THE BASICS
TRANSPORTATION**Trains**

- A to 168th Street, 175th Street, 181st Street and Dyckman Street
- C to 155th Street, 163rd Street and 168th Street
- B, D to 155th Street
- 1 to 157th Street, 168th Street, 181st Street, 191st Street and Dyckman Street

Buses

- M2, M3, M4, M5, M98, M100, M101

CRIME

Washington Heights is covered by the 33rd Precinct at 2207 Amsterdam Ave., and the 34th Precinct at 4295 Broadway, which serves north of West 179th Street. The 33rd Precinct reported three robberies and two burglaries in its CompStat report between Dec. 28, 2015, and Jan. 3, 2016. The 34th Precinct reported four robberies and five burglaries that week.

FUN FACTS

- Hilltop Park, the city's first American League baseball stadium and the Yankees' first home, was in Washington Heights. Today it is the site of the Columbia University Medical Center, at 622 W. 168th St.
- The car-chase scene in the classic 1973 flick "The Seven-Ups" was filmed in Washington Heights. In the film, Roy Scheider is a city cop who catches criminals with his unofficial squad The Seven-Ups.

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

The newest hub for art & nonprofits

BY DANIELLE VALENTE
Special to amNewYork

Real estate prices aren't the only thing booming in uptown Manhattan right now — so is the Washington Heights art scene.

From independent shops to nonprofit organizations, the area is bursting with civic-minded creative types.

"There are a lot of really engaged people up here — as there should be in any neighborhood," said Mary Ann Wincorkowski during her shift at Word Up Community Bookshop, a volunteer-run bookstore at 2113 Amsterdam Ave.

Word Up supports the local literary scene and the Spanish-speaking community with a variety of programs like open mic nights, workshops and jazz concerts.

Meanwhile, the newly established Higher Ground Festival gathers together Washington Heights and Inwood artists to network and collaborate on productions at places like the local Anne Loftus Playground.

"We are part of creating an art identity [uptown]," the festival's co-founder and director Pablo Francisco Ruvalcaba said.

Co-founder Temple Kemezis agreed: "Not everyone is creating in SoHo and living in Chelsea."

Similar organizations include the Washington Heights and Inwood Music



Fort Tryon Park houses The Cloisters and gorgeous views.



Learn about the city's history at the Morris-Jumel Mansion.

Project, which aims to make classical music accessible to community youth, and the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, a nonprofit that supports and promotes art organizations uptown.

Art isn't totally new to the Heights though, as the area is home to The Cloisters, a medieval monastery in Fort Tryon Park that is run by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But before the past decade, its reputation had more to do with the crack epidemic of the 1980s and

high crime rates in the 1990s.

"I think the art scene is very important to Washington Heights," said Robert W. Snyder, author of "Crossing Broadway: Washington Heights and the Promise of New York City," which chronicles the area's history and cultures. "It was the engine for the neighborhood's recovery."

The recovery was apparently successful, as uptown, above 110th Street, has one of the fastest-growing real estate markets in Manhattan.

Sales prices for Manhattan homes above 110th Street



Even the psychedelic, graffiti-covered tunnel for the 191st Street



Vanessa Fernandez hangs with her daughter at Burger Heights.

will increase at four times the rate of the rest of Manhattan in 2016, according to the listings site StreetEasy.

The median sales price for a one-bedroom in Washington Heights was \$383,530 in 2015, according to StreetEasy. The median rent for a one-bedroom was \$1,695.

And growing with the prices is its hipster scene.

Though the Heights is still

home to a large immigrant population, young people are moving in, and coming with them are trendy establishments like Green Juice Cafe at 4316 Broadway, Tampopo Ramen at 1 Bennett Ave. and the Buddha Beer Bar at 4476 Broadway.

"There are a lot of cute new places popping up in the midst of neighborhood staples," millennial and local resident Maria Minsker said.

Send your City Living tips to Heather.Senison@am-ny.com



LINDA ROSIER

1 train station has something to offer the art world.

TO EAT

Burger Heights

177 Wadsworth Ave.

A small spot on a quiet street, Burger Heights is a neighborhood cheerleader with its Washington Heights-inspired menu featuring The Broadway and The Saint Nicholas burgers. For those who crave something sweet after their meal, the eatery has Italian gelato shakes. Burgerheights.com



LINDA ROSIER

Taco Go-Go

181st Street between St.

Nicholas and Audubon avenues. It's all in the name. There are no seats at Taco Go-Go, so have your chicken or beef quesadilla (both \$8) while browsing windows on 181st Street. 646-620-0217

Malecon

4141 Broadway
Malecon offers a taste of the Caribbean. Foodies can enjoy dishes like yuca — or boiled

cassava — with a mango juice for breakfast, and sopas and arroces — soup and rice dishes — for lunch. Maleconrestaurants.com

TO PARTY

Buddha Beer Bar

4476 Broadway

This neighborhood spot is a go-to for craft beer. It offers a relaxed setting as customers enjoy cheeseburgers at the bar and take in a game. BuddhaBeerBar.com

Kazza Wine Bar

708 W. 177th St.

Newly opened, Kazza offers a simple atmosphere to enjoy a glass of wine or sangria. And on the first three Sundays of each month, Kazza-goers start the poetry slam at 8 p.m. 646-476-7887

Le Cheile

839 W. 181st St.

Even Washington Heights has its local Irish pub. Le Cheile offers a place for friends to meet over beer or coffee or our favorite pastime: brunch. Lecheilenyc.com

TO SHOP

Vamps NYC

3898 Broadway

Find a large variety of Ugg shoes along with Converse and Lacoste sneakers. Vampsnyc.com

Astro Game

554 W. 181st St.

Gamers, don't be fooled by the apparel in the window. Head through a narrow wall of hats in the J.J. Daiwon storefront to get to a large room with games along the entire back wall. Videogameusa.com

Vines on Pine

814 W. 187th St.

Employees taste roughly 80% of what they carry and the store itself offers an intimate vibe. You can grab a sip of your soon-to-be favorite during the Friday, Saturday or Sunday tastings. Vinesonpinenyc.com



LINDA ROSIER

TO DO

United Palace Theater

4140 Broadway

A cultural gateway, this theater hosts everything from nonprofit

REAL ESTATE

TO RENT

425 W. 162nd St.

Studio, one bath; \$1,300 per month

522 W. 161st St. #1

Two beds, one bath; \$2,350 per month

523 W. 156th St. #3B

One bed, one bath; \$1,595 per month

TO BUY

834 Riverside Drive #3E

One bed, one bath; \$209,000

566 W. 159th St. #43

Two beds, one bath; \$299,000

779 Riverside Drive #B35

One bed, one bath; \$550,000

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS DATA FROM 2015:

Median sales price:

\$480,000

Number of units on market:

539

Median rental price:

\$1,995

Number of rentals on market:

4,057



StreetEasy

Q&A with Mary Ann Wincorkowski

Volunteer at Word Up

Word Up, at 2113 Amsterdam Ave., is a volunteer bookshop dedicated to preserving the literary scene in Washington Heights. What began as a one-month pop-up shop is today a community of booklovers who offer shelves of used books, as well as host language salons and open mics. Volunteer Mary Ann Wincorkowski sat down with us for a chat.



KRIS WOODUP

When did you begin volunteering?

It was July 2011 when one of my friends called and said that he was reading at a bookstore in my neighborhood. I said, "There is no bookstore in my neighborhood." He then reiterated and said, "Well, I'm reading at this bookstore this next Saturday at 2 p.m." It was located in the old Word Up space, which is 176th and Broadway, right across from the United Palace. It was a pretty long program, but at the end, I walked up to the front counter and said,

"Who's in charge and how can I help?" From that point on I've been volunteering at least once a week.

How does this store serve the community?

We provide a necessary outlet for readers who maybe can't make it to the library. A lot of kids buy their schoolbooks here, like things they need for English class. But in addition to that, we also host programs like story time every week.

Because it's all volunteer-run and most of the volunteers live in the neighborhood, I think that we are really for the community and by the community.

What is your favorite memory from Word Up?

Well, I would say the most well-received event that we've had at Word Up — and there have been a couple but this has been a remarkable one — Junot Diaz came and spoke at our birthday celebration. We had 10 or 12 days of events leading up to the main party event. So he came and gave a talk at our old location.

THE BUZZ

The secret on Washington Heights' affordable housing costs is out, and the proof is in its climbing rental prices, according to experts.

"The rent has gone sky-high," said Carlos Rodriguez, broker at Ter-Rod Realty LLC at 1061 St. Nicholas Ave. "Many cannot afford it [and] landlords are trying to buy people out."

The median rental price in Washington Heights in 2015 was \$1,995, a 7.9% increase from 2014, which was \$1,849, according to StreetEasy.

Locals warn that the changing real estate climate could push resi-

dents out.

Robert W. Snyder, author of the book "Crossing Broadway: Washington Heights and the Promise of New York City," noted that upper Manhattan was historically an area for working-class residents looking to make a better life. These rent increases pose a threat to that promise, he said.

"It would be unfair if the old-timers who helped the community recover were forced out of the Heights by increasing housing prices," Snyder lamented. "It would deprive them of the fruits of their victories."

Large apartment spaces and park views are getting the attention of renters and buyers, Rodriguez said.

MORE Words pictures and neighborhoods at amNY.com/cityliving