

# “The Neighborhood That Has It All”

The neighborhood that we researched is Gravesend, Brooklyn. We focused on the street Avenue U between East 3<sup>rd</sup> and East 4<sup>th</sup>. This street is packed with every store imaginable. It takes the meaning of convenience to a whole new level. Located near a big residential area where a big Syrian Jewish community lives, this street is always busy.

## Khaskys



Located at the beginning of the street, Khaskys, a kosher gourmet grocery, is filled with freshly baked pastries, store cut fresh fruits, home necessities and even freshly made sushi. Many of the desserts found in Khaskys are actually made by women in the Syrian Jewish community. Very aware of their customer base and also Jewish owned, Khaskys also has Challah for the Sabbath.

This showed how tight knit this community truly is and the importance of unity, even in something as trivial as a grocery store. Before the Sabbath is definitely their busiest time of the week as many people are picking up last minute things for their big Sabbath meal that takes place on Friday night.

## Isaac Michael



Next door to Khaskys is a hair salon, Isaac Michael. This salon is always busy but nothing compares to the rush on a Friday morning which we quickly discovered. Noticing the difference between the beginning of the week and Friday we decided to ask the owner of the store why this was.

He explained that it's customary for the Jewish women to beautify themselves before the Sabbath, and therefore Friday's are by far his busiest days.

## Access



The next store on the block is called Access. This store sells luxury items at a discounted price. The clothes found at this store are fancier than every day clothes. We asked the owner, Albert Braha, what role he feels he plays in the lives of his fellow community members and how his business betters his community seeing as they were his biggest customer base.

He answered that in a community that has many weddings, attends synagogue every Sabbath dressed to the nines, and lots of other events that require fancier clothes, he saw the need for more discounted items. There are too many events to count and he wanted to help his community feel their best in their clothes at a reasonable price. Access didn't seem to be extra busy on Friday unlike many of the other stores on this block because luxury clothing isn't really a last minute purchase.

## Coquette



Across the street from Access, is a little girls clothing store, Coquette. This store sells everything from everyday clothes to resort wear. The location of this store makes it very convenient for mothers with piles of errands that also need to shop for their daughters. This store is owned by a woman in this community, Bunny Benhooren.

When we asked her about the importance of being amongst so many other community owned stores she explained that as a mother who owns a business and has to run a household she understands the importance of convenience and wanted to make shopping as easy and enjoyable as possible for her fellow community members that she loves.

## Prime Cut



Next door to Coquette is Avenue U's kosher butcher, Prime Cut. The Syrian Jewish community that lives around this area is Orthodox.

Therefore they are only allowed to eat meat that is kosher, meaning that their food needs to satisfy certain Jewish laws. Here you can find fresh meat, chicken, cold cuts, frozen meat, prepared foods, and mazza, which is a Syrian spread of small appetizers. This butcher caters to the entire community as it is completely Kosher certified. They are busiest on Fridays, as it customary to have a big meal filled with meat foods. Even though Friday is there busiest day, in the beginning of the week the store is still packed with customers buying frozen and prepared foods for weeknight dinners because of the need for kosher meat.

# Ouris



Directly across from Khaskys is another kosher gourmet grocery, Ouris. Similar to Khaskys, Ouris has fresh fruits, dips, pastries, and desserts. Ouris also has prepared salads, bagels, and a coffee bar.

Even though Ouris and Khaskys sell many similar items there is definitely enough business to go around seeing as both stores were packed. Their busiest day was also Friday and it was nearly impossible to get down the aisles. We asked one of the shoppers what makes Ouris so great to shop at. She explained that besides for the amazing quality of their fruit and produce, it's great to see all the familiar faces in her community and get a second to catch up with everyone as she gets her errands done. She also said that the convenience of their location is unmatched especially since she does her hair every friday across the street by Isaac Michael.

# Millo



Next door to Ouris is Millo. This store is your one stop shop for everything including makeup, hair products, hair accessories, and luxury gifts. There is even a cafe in the back of the store where you can buy pastries and drinks.

This store is every girls dream and their cafe is the perfect place to unwind after the rush of errands in all the other stores on this block. Millo is busier in the beginning of the week rather than Friday because their items aren't really essential for the Sabbath.

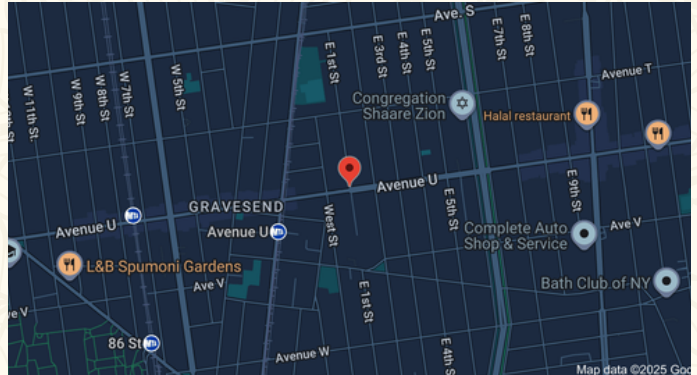
# Medical Center



Lastly at the end of the block, you can find Avenue U's Medical Center. This medical center is run by a member of the Syrian Jewish community, Dr. Victor Fariwa. Even though it's at the end of the block, it's at the center of the hearts of this community.

When asked what his goal was to add to his community, Dr. Fariwa explained that he simply wanted to help people. His patients were mainly community members, but he also helps many others. He said that he wanted to make sure that all his patients are the picture of health and always receive the best care. It was clear through observing how things operated in this office that all his patients were treated with care and respect. Dr. Fariwa has been in this business for a long time, and his office was just as busy in the beginning of the week as it was on Friday. The location of this doctors office is very accessible, which is very helpful and convenient for his patients, and he really did his job like a true professional. It was clear through how people greeted him in the office that he is extremely respected amongst his community members.

# Map



# HISTORY

The neighborhood Gravesend, where this street can be found, is one of the first places that guaranteed people religious freedom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was originally settled in 1645 by a religious group led by Lady Deborah Moody. She left Massachusetts Bay in order to be able to live freely as an Anabaptist. Her house is still stands today and is now a landmark in Gravesend. This area used to be farmland , but it gradually developed, and by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, rail lines brought easy access to the area. This led to housing growth and the emergence of commercial streets, such as Avenue U. As large groups of the Sephardic Jewish community began to take residence around this area this street evolved dramatically. This street is now filled with a variety of stores allowing for the most convenience possible for this tight knit community. These stores shape the neighborhoods identity, and continue on Lady Deborah Moody's legacy. She left Massachusetts Bay for religious freedom and she would surely be happy to see that her legacy is living on. Avenue U between East 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> is the epitome of religious freedom and convenience. This wouldn't have been reality without the amazing historical achievements many years ago.