



92NY on the Upper East Side of Manhattan hosts a senior center, a nursery school, art classes and more. It's also built a legacy by hosting world-renowned artists like James Baldwin, Maya Angelou and Yo-Yo Ma.



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On the Upper East Side of Manhattan, 92NY is an institution that wears many hats.

A temple of high culture, it has hosted literary powerhouses like Maya Angelou and T.S. Eliot, musicians like Yo-Yo Ma and John Coltrane and choreographers like Alvin Ailey.

92NY, long known as the 92nd Street Y, is also a bread-and-butter community center with a nursery school, a senior center, painting classes and nearly 250 beds where students and young people are welcome to stay.

And it is a Jewish cultural institution, with Hebrew classes and services for the High Holy Days.



After the renovation, there is now a single entrance to 92NY, where visitors walk under artwork titled "Everybody Everybody" by Deborah Kass.

But for many years, that collection of missions and identities has existed in a somewhat awkward space, in two mismatched, mazelike buildings at 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue. The buildings were completed decades apart — the north building in 1929 and the south in 1968 — and then poorly connected with oddly placed hallways and inaccessible staircases. Seth Pinsky, the chief executive of 92NY, said that for reasons no one had ever been able to explain to him, the floors of the buildings did not line up, even though the structures were built to be one campus.

“What I always said about the 92nd Street Y was that we were a microcosm of New York,” Mr. Pinsky said. “Amazing things happened here, and we made it as difficult as possible for people to access them.”

A \$250 million renovation, now complete in most of 92NY’s public spaces, is trying to fix that. The project, which began in 2020, has connected the buildings more smoothly and designed spaces to flexibly serve as many purposes as possible — because in New York City, every square inch of space is needed, ideally for many uses at once.