

NORWOOD NEWS

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SUMMER FUN IN THE WINTER



Photo by David Greene

BRRRRRRRRR! In an annual tradition during the dead of winter, two dozen members of the Bronx Polar Bears Club took their yearly dip into Orchard Beach on Saturday, Feb. 15. These swimmers, with some representing the country of Austria, braved below-freezing temps during their Valentine's swim, but were able to warm up with complimentary hot cocoa and a trolley ride courtesy of the Bronx Tourism Council.

Pre-K Plan Squeeze in District 10

By DAVID CRUZ

Several buzzwords abound to Mayor Bill de Blasio's lofty plan in expanding the city's universal pre-K program. Terms such as "progressive" and "equity" appear on most news reports, suggesting de Blasio's genuine belief the program can help increase a child's future success.

But another word still trails behind—"space."

Indeed, should de Blasio get state permission to tax the wealthy to fund the program, finding classrooms for the 13,845 new UPK full day students by September arguably presents a potential roadblock to his plan. Logistical details remain somewhat vague, though the School Construction Authority's newly-released FY2015-2019 Capital Budget plan concluded the authority intends to fit "pre-kindergar-
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Hot Political Races Brew in the Bronx

By DAVID CRUZ

Higher political aspirations are brewing these days, as several Bronx incumbents jockey to unseat their fellow incumbents within the Bronx political sphere, a rare development in the borough. This season could also pit the rest of the delegation against one another when the time for endorsements comes.

While ambitious legislators have yet to fully flesh out their political ambitions, several warning shots can be heard in the distance, signaling open season for election 2014.

Cabrera Mulls Rivera's Seat

Among the more closely watched potential races simmering involves Councilman Fernando Cabrera (D-14th CD) mulling a run against State Senator Gustavo Rivera (D, WF-33rd Senate District). "We're exploring it," said one Cabrera source. "We're not saying yes, we're not saying no. We're seriously looking into it."

Cabrera is weighing his options with help from an exploratory committee he convened after being pressed by community leaders and residents to consider running.

"I'm looking forward to putting my progressive record as a leader in the Bronx against anyone who wants to challenge that," said Rivera. "I would be very interested to see how [Cabrera] compares his record in the Council to my record in the Senate."

A Rivera-Cabrera contest could test the political might of each candidate, both of whom carry some baggage heading into the race.

Rivera, for instance, went rogue on several major endorsements made by Bronx County Democratic Party Leader Carl Heastie, whose endorsements are often representative of other party members. Rivera opposed Heastie's choice for New York City Mayor by endorsing Christine Quinn over Bill Thompson. Months later Rivera would publicly endorse Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito over Manhattan Councilman Dan Garodnick for Council Speaker.

"I don't agree with Carl on everything, but we've had a good working relationship," insisted Rivera. Still, what could carry Rivera to victory is strong support from labor unions, which could organize on his behalf.

Cabrera, a preacher at New Life Outreach, is one of the few social conservatives on the New York City Council whose beliefs have conflicted with other pols. And allegations he attempted to solicit funds from developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center a year back can also work against him. But victory could depend on his record: he helped pass several bills that included the creation of an NYPD Crime Map and another that allowed religious groups to rent space in school after hours.

Cabrera still needs the signatures required
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File Photos

POSSIBLE POLITICAL MATCHUPS loom in the Bronx, with Councilman Fernando Cabrera (top left) looking to unseat State Senator Gustavo Rivera of the 33rd Senate District (top right). On the federal level, State Sen. Adriano Espaillat (bottom left) looks for a rematch against Congressman Charles Rangel (bottom right).

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3400 Reservoir Oval East
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Phone: 718 324 4998

Fax: 718 324 2917

E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.orgWeb: www.norwoodnews.org**Publisher**

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Editor-in-Chief

David Cruz

CEO, Mosholu**Preservation Corporation**

Roberto S. Garcia

Classified Advertising

Dawn McEvoy

Accounts Receivable

Dawn McEvoy

Proofreader

Judy Noy

Production

Neil deMause

Regular Contributors

David Greene, Adi Talwar

Interns

Shayla Love, Paolo Mossetti, and Justin McCallum

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In The Public Interest

Previewing State of the Borough

By JUSTIN MCCALLUM

Feb. 20 marks Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s fourth State of the Borough Address. With many accomplishments to bolster his image as an economic development BP this past year, Diaz will have a full set of talking points for the speech. BP spokesman John DeSio teased the speech will be "about the 'New Bronx,' and will use the history of the borough in light of our centennial to discuss how we are making the most of our available amenities."

The *Norwood News* compiled a list of expected themes, as well as some items that'll likely be downplayed or just ignored.

KINGSBRIDGE ARMORY

What you'll hear: Though Diaz virtually ignored the Kingsbridge Armory in his State of the Borough last year, this year he will undoubtedly tout the victory as an economic booster, which DeSio describes as the biggest accomplishment of the previous year. Diaz received overwhelming support from the community on the project to convert the Kingsbridge Armory into the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC), which should bring \$1.7 billion to the borough in the coming years. KNIC will turn the vacant space into a bustling multi-purpose venue hiring a majority of the employees locally and at a living wage--\$10 per hour with benefits or \$11.50 without benefits. Diaz has long stuck with his endorsement of an ice rink even as the public's initial support of the rink wavered.

What you likely won't hear: As exciting as the future revenue earner is, the rink is at least four years away from boosting the local economy. So even with an ice venue that creates 200 jobs, it still won't do much to reverse the sky high unemployment figure in the borough, the state's highest.

CRIME

What you'll hear: The era of aggressive stop-and-frisk is drawing to a close, and Diaz couldn't be more excited to see what he labeled as the "wedge between the police and our communities" lifted. The Bronx had seen a sizeable drop from 2011 to 2012 (the most recent NYPD figures) in the number of incidents, minorities questioned, and percentage relative to the other boroughs. DeSio told the *Norwood News* that "the Bronx has never been safer" - a point Diaz will promote heavily.

What you likely won't hear: While stop-and-frisk is winding down in the Bronx, the Bratton/de Blasio reign has seen a spike in crime across other boroughs as many sources report a 33 percent increase in crime since their inception, according to published reports. Additionally, one of Diaz's boldest initiatives from his previous State of the Borough Address, the formation of a gun criminal registry, has received little attention since its announcement. Having made little progress on the lofty plan, it appears that his passion declaring "law-abiding citizens ought to know who among us is respon-

sible for gun violence," one year ago has been placed on the back burner for now. This follows a year that saw 100 fewer guns recovered by police in the Bronx, and 250 fewer gun chargers, according to NYPD CrimeStat figures.

TRANSIT

What you'll hear: DeSio stressed "the highest priority of 2014 is to see the East Bronx Metro North expansion come to fruition." Indeed, the next game-changer for thousands of Bronxites received a major endorsement from Governor Andrew Cuomo during his State of the State Address. This now puts the ball in the Albany legislature to approve adding the plan to the MTA's five-year Capital Budget Plan. With stops at Co-Op City, Parkchester, Morris Park and Hunts Point along an already existing Amtrak line, the neighborhoods are likely to receive an economic boost in years to come. These stops are also expected to reduce commute times for many workers and create thousands of jobs.

What you likely won't hear: The freshly viable transit stops may bring higher costs of living and gentrification along their rails. But good or bad, the ease by which to travel to these working class areas may also raise property values, as indicated in a report released by Sen. Jeff Klein and Diaz last year. There was also the Diaz slip of "up-zoning" some of the neighborhoods to allow for bigger properties to be built along the rail corridor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What you'll hear: From the Kingsbridge Armory, to FreshDirect to the Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point, Diaz has maneuvered his muscle in a non-legislative role to bring as much commerce into the Bronx as possible, and he doesn't plan on stopping. DeSio said to expect rhetoric around "[changing] the image of the Bronx, to rebrand the borough." The speech will also discuss the continued growth and revitalization of southern Grand Concourse.

What you likely won't hear: The borough president plans to do even more with a strategy outlined at the Crain's meeting to rezone neighborhoods and attract more. Diaz is even straying from the party line in the discussion over land-marking, voicing concern over economic impediments in preservation. And though Diaz may use



Photo courtesy Office of the Borough President
BOROUGH PRESIDENT Ruben Diaz Jr. gears up for his fourth State of the Borough Address on Feb. 20, touting some major steps for the so-called "New Bronx."

the unemployment rates to motivate further economic pushes, it is still bleak news compared to the national and state figures on unemployment, 6.6 percent and 7.1 percent respectively, according to the Bureau of Labor. DeSio provided a vague outline of how they'll address unemployment, telling the *Norwood News* in an email that "[Diaz] 'will focus on job creation, growth, and more in our next term, as we continue to rebuild and rebrand the 'New Bronx.'" Diaz's development plan has some other shortcomings too, such as holes in his efforts to bring FreshDirect to the south Bronx which remains a food desert with no grocery stores to speak of in neighborhoods that include Hunts Point.

EDUCATION

What you'll hear: Already a contentious topic and sure to be a major point in a looming budget battle, Diaz supports Mayor de Blasio's push for universal pre-K for New Yorkers and concurrent tax for those earning \$500,000 or more. A long-time advocate for education as a means of economic advancement, Diaz is working to ensure his promise for a quality education as well as a STEM-based high school.

What you likely won't hear: Where are they going to fit over 13,000 more students in already cramped classrooms? Neither Diaz nor de Blasio have offered much on how to resolve this, or an alternative to fund it given Republican pushback in Albany, led by State Sen. Dean Skelos. A proposed solution is granting pre-K at charter schools, on which Diaz has not spoken definitively.


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Public and Community Meetings

- **The BEDFORD-MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets **Wednesday, March 5 at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor) at 8 p.m.**
- **The 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY AFFAIRS** meets **Thursday, Feb. 27 from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Ann's Parish, 3519 Bainbridge Ave. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.**

All meetings are subject to change. Call to confirm.

Crime File

By DAVID CRUZ

5-2 Recruits Neighbors for Crime Watch Program

By JUSTIN MCCALLUM

To curb major crime and increase community engagement, the 52nd Precinct is ushering in new reinforcements—the public.

Inspector Nilda Hofmann, commanding officer of the Five-Two, recently announced the formation of a local block watch association, intended for the community to “be the eyes and ears for the police department.” But the program somewhat deviates from normal block associations, which often involve residents physically patrolling the area. Instead, residents will undergo a NYPD-sponsored training session, learning how to properly report a crime.

Hofmann explained that the program is designed to make citizens more aware of their surroundings and give them the tools to effectively and accurately report crimes to a tip line. When calling the police, members of the anti-crime group will utilize a specially designated, anonymous ID number to tell police the caller is credible. “We hope that this program provides more credible information based on what our volunteers will be seeing and hearing in their respective neighborhoods,” Hofmann said.

But the inspector made it clear that no citizens are to endanger themselves by trying to stop crime, but only notify the police when they can do so safely. “At no point will the volunteers be instructed to take any police action,” she explained, adding “this program will have many of the same duties and responsibilities as a neighborhood watch.”

Space for all 50 spots filled quickly two weeks before the Feb. 22 training session, said Hofmann. “We were expecting a good response based on positive output from community council meetings,” she wrote. “Though, I was truly impressed with the overwhelming positive response from the community.”

Crime in the 5-2

Major crime in the large precinct covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, University Heights and Kingsbridge shot up 1.8 percent, according to NYPD CrimeStats. Much of the uptick stemmed from the high murder rate recorded, doubling to 12 murders in 2013 from 6 in 2012.

Shooting incidents dramatically increased by 63 percent, rising from 19 in 2012 to 31 in 2013, according to CrimeStat figures. The incidents are loosely aligned with shooting victims, rising up to 35 in 2013 from 26 in 2012.

Hofmann arrived in November after the crime numbers sealed the Five-Two’s fate as a high crime precinct. She acknowledged shootings to be a major problem in certain sectors of the Five-Two, though she hasn’t disclosed where the problem areas are concentrated.

Attempts to reverse the crime trends in the Five-Two appear to need more than its existing manpower. Because of the spike, One Police Plaza (1PP) has deployed 44 new officers to canvass high crime areas as a way to

knock down crime. Hofmann also included to the block watch association assisting in further reduction.

The Power of Crime Watch

This is not the first community watch in the area, however. Just a few miles east, the Morris Park Civic Association and North East Bronx Association have developed a legacy as effective crime fighting auxiliaries.

Vincent Prezioso, president of the North East Bronx Association, explained how his community’s watch association is similar to Hofmann’s proposal. With vigilant eyes watching from homes and anonymous, better trusted tip lines, locals can communicate with the NYPD. In particular, Prezioso spoke highly of the direct contact with authorities.

“[The tip lines] became a great asset to us, because if community members saw something happen they’d call right away,” he said. “Because they knew the calls were real, it was much faster than directly calling 911.”

The Morris Park Civic Association also has a watch, with a legion of its 32 members patrolling nightly. The association has served as the neighborhood sentinels for years, assisting the local 49th Precinct in deterring crime. MPCA executive member Al D’Angelo attributes the safety of the neighborhood, one of the city’s safest, to frequent communication with the police. “We let the police know that we’re out. We have a pretty good decorum with them,” he said.

Norma Jean Scully, a lifelong Norwood resident and member of the Friends of Mosholu Parkland, remained cautious over the new block watch association. “I’d like to participate,” Scully said. “I know too many people in the neighborhood are creeps, but I don’t want them to know I’m involved with the police in any sort of way.”

Scully expressed concern over the neighborhood’s gun problem, but thought the program could have a positive impact on safety. “I’m all for it and it’s a good deterrent,” she said. “I only go out during the day to do my business, but I do feel safe here. If I didn’t feel safe, I wouldn’t live here.”

The 52nd Precinct has yet to set a date for a second training, awaiting allotment of resources by 1PP and a successful outcome of its first session, according to the 52nd Precinct community affairs office. For more information on the block watch association, Hofmann encourages all those interested to call the community affairs office at (718) 220-5847.

THE 52ND PRECINCT at 3016 Webster Ave. covers Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Norwood and University Heights. Under the command of Inspector Nilda Hofmann, over 40 officers joined the 5-2’s ranks last fall to combat high crime in the area. Now Hofmann will introduce a crime watch program.

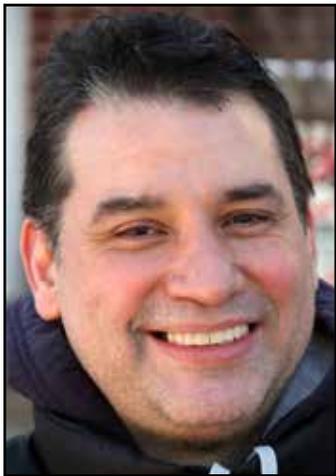
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Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

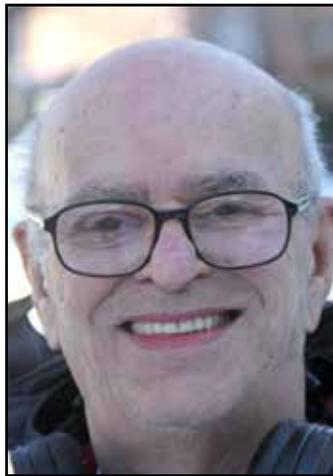
With mid-winter upon us, we asked readers this week how they've been coping with the marathon of snowstorms this season.



For me, I'm an adult and it's been lousy. I fell down once heading to church. The snow prevents you from going out and moving around and it makes things harder for everybody, but the young kids love it.
Leon Tapia



I've enjoyed playing in the snow and throwing snowballs at cars and stuff. My school took me on a skiing trip and I went snowboarding, and from that day on, I just love the snow.
Ian Tapia



It's been a brutal winter. I've been here for about 60 years and I don't remember it ever being so bad. The mayor wants people to move the snow right away, but a lot of seniors have health problems and can't do it. I live two blocks from the store and I can't get there.
Jerry Sorensen



The way it's been snowing is the way it should be. People think that during the winter time we're supposed to have all these hot days...no! You have to expect it. We have, what, 27 days until spring? You're going to have to deal with it and just trample through the snow like everybody else.
Hubert Douglas



It's been very bad. I fell down three times and had a big accident. I can't do any business to make money, nothing. I'm tired of the snow.
Camila Carbono

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Bedford-Mosholu Assoc. Gears Up for Flea Market

By PAOLO MOSSETTI

The Bedford-Mosholu Community Association is now accepting recycled knick-knacks, trinkets and all sorts of unused items from area residents for its 33rd annual flea market scheduled for Saturday, March 8 at St. Mary's Orthodox Church, 360 Bedford Pk. Blvd.

"We collect new and used items, except clothing," said Barbara Stronczer, the group's longtime lead organizer, explaining that the venue has no space for "people who can try on the items." She added that all the funds collected at the flea market go toward operating expenses of the organization.

The flea market is the association's biggest event, aimed at recharging the kitty to help cover operation costs. Stronczer recalled the group crafting the plan years back after kicking around ideas that would "keep our overhead low."

But beyond the monetary gain, Stronczer sees this as a thrilling event for the neighborhood, drawing plenty of locals who've grown tired of hunkering down during the winter. Volunteers usually man tables, including members of NYPD Explorers, auxiliary officers, and officers from the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs.

"Many of our volunteers help by preparing the articles for sale and setting up our wares," said Stronczer.

A not-for-profit association composed of neighborhood volunteers, the Bedford-Mosholu Community Association has

served the area since 1975. Aimed at improving the quality of life in the leafy area, the group has often been at the forefront to take the pulse of hot-button issues.

Currently, the association is active in neighborhood cleanups, graffiti removal, and the maintenance of a community garden along Mosholu Parkway and East 204th Street. They have assisted several neighborhood buildings with heating problems and other service issues that are brought up during its monthly meetings, which attract representatives from police, fire, sanitation, and postal agencies. Elected officials, landlords and commercial developers have also stopped by.

Stronczer estimates an average of 150 people attend the neighborhood flea market. Among the items most frequently on sale are china, glassware, lamps, jewelry, toys, games, linens, housewares, electronics and pictures. The event will be held at St. Mary's, a former supermarket burnt down and never rebuilt. The association has found its relationship with the church synergistic, since "most of the congregation does not live in the neighborhood." The group often lends an ear to the church, acting as a resource for church leaders over the years. "They have always been very appreciative and a plus for the neighborhood," said Stronczer.

Donations can be dropped off at the group's office at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor) on the following dates: Wednesdays, Feb. 26 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and March 5 from 7:30 to 9 p.m.; and Saturday March 1 from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

DINKINS HONORED AT EVANDER CHILDS

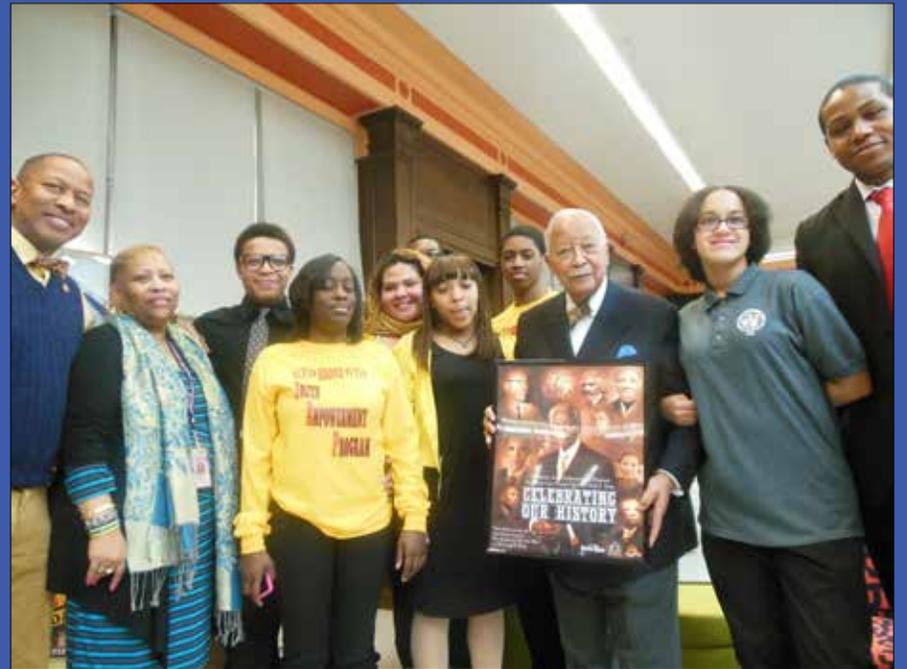
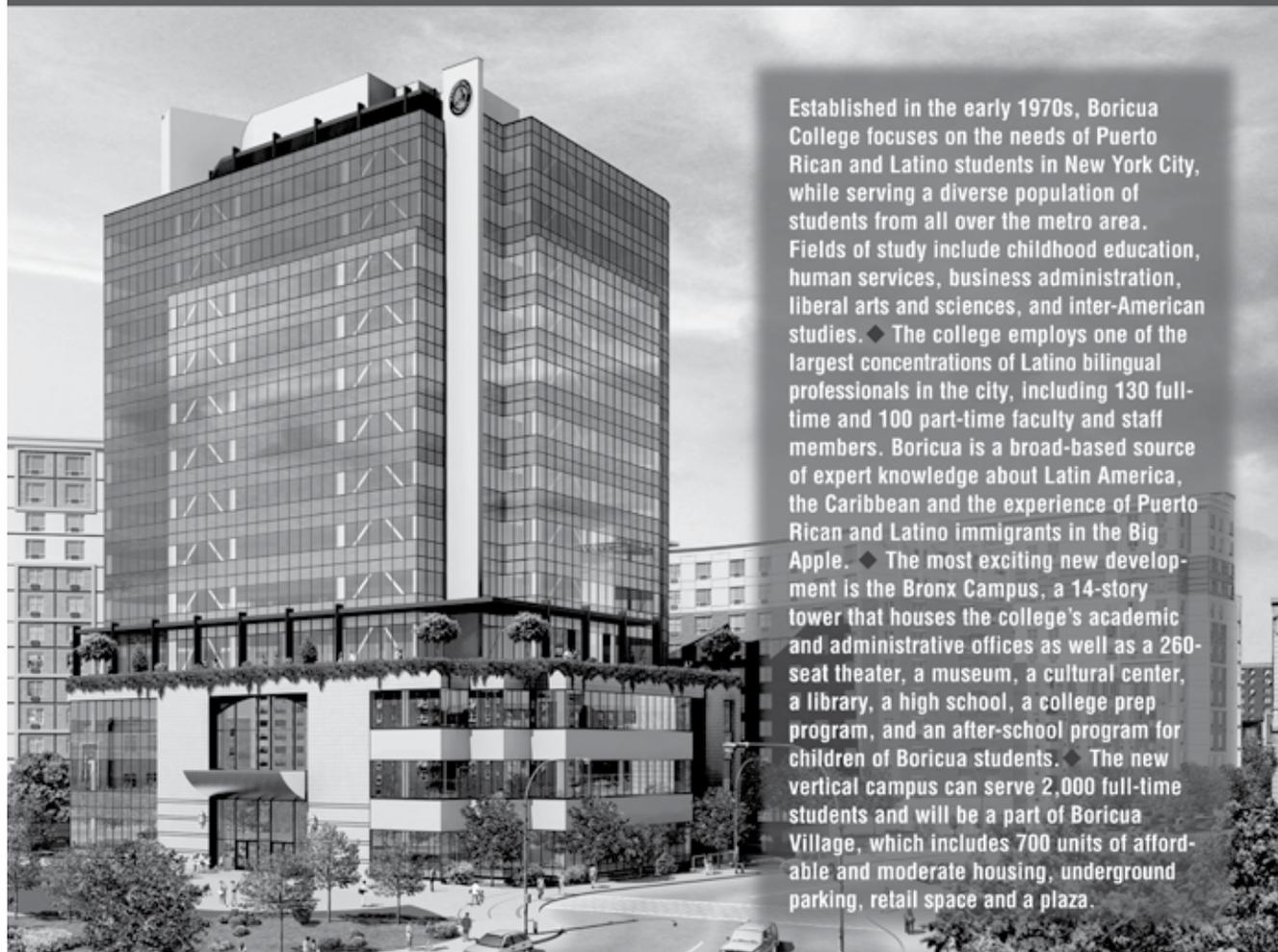


Photo courtesy Office of Councilman Andy King

FORMER MAYOR David Dinkins (center) shows off his recognition award among students at Evander Childs High School during the second annual "Celebrating Our History" program organized by the Bronx Youth Empowerment Program. Councilman Andy King (far left) honored Dinkins, the city's first African-American mayor. Dinkins spoke to students at Evander on Feb. 12 as part of a celebration of Black History Month. Dinkins is surrounded by King, his wife Neva Shillingford-King (second from left), and members of BYEP.

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Pre-K Plan Squeeze in District 10

(continued from page 1)

ten seats into existing buildings with the greatest amount of ease and swiftness.”

De Blasio echoed the report when testifying in Albany over the merits of increasing pre-K space, telling legislators his administration is “confident that we’ll have the space to accommodate those children across public school and community-based organization settings.”

Scavenging for Space

But the School Construction Authority, tasked to find and build space, may have to scout beyond the overcrowded school buildings that pepper School District 10. Encompassing Norwood, Kingsbridge, Riverdale, Fordham, Tremont and Bedford Park, District 10 stands as one of the

most squeezed school districts in the city, according to Inside Schools.

“As soon as I heard they were going to expand UPK, I said ‘where?’” recalled Marvin Shelton, president of the Community Education Council for District 10.

An analysis by the *Norwood News* found that school building utilization rates, which tallies the current capacity of structures, average 99 percent in District 10. Of the 66 total number of recorded school buildings within District 10, 18 elementary school buildings are apportioned to house UPK classes, holding a student body of at least 18 pre-K seats per classroom. Because of a major age gap, the city Department of Education places students in elementary school buildings, offering fewer options for the agency to find extra space.

Turning to CBOs and City Space

The bulk of part-time or full-day students attend UPK at one of 39 community-based organizations (CBO) such as Ready Set Learn or Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, which are scattered throughout District 10. The DOE imposes strict guidelines with questions that run from classroom space and licensing, to teaching staff.

The DOE and the Administration for Children’s Services have already released Request for Proposals for pre-K classes to established CBOs. The RFP contract is open to all, though a portion of the RFP states that much of their target audience is in the southwest Bronx, mainly Tremont, Highbridge and Morrisania. Shelton cautions that a new policy could usher in new CBOs that could take advantage of this new revenue stream, totaling a yearly cost of \$10,239 per child. “Thank goodness there’s high guidelines and rigorous foresight of these programs,” said Shelton. “But I can see a flood of people saying, ‘Hey, you know, we can open up a UPK program, get x amount of dollars, and not be high quality.’”

A report by the city Office of Management and Budget states the city will review space in other “city-owned property with the Economic Development Corporation, space in branches of the New York Public Library, and others to secure additional space as needed.” The results are pending.

The report dismissed space as the main crux of de Blasio’s plan, but rather “sufficient, sustainable funding,” a point that’s inspired the mayor to travel to Albany.

Making the Case to Albany

The mayor recently traveled to Albany to pitch his plan, contingent on a city tax he would impose on high-earning families to cover the \$340 million cost. Because the city cannot unilaterally raise taxes, de Blasio needs state permission, setting up a contentious political battle with Governor Andrew Cuomo, who’s vowed not to raise taxes this year. Cuomo’s instead crafted a five-year, \$1.5 billion plan that would expand pre-K statewide.

State Assembly Democrats have supported the plan, including Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, whose district would have residents impacted by de Blasio’s plan, though he admits scouring for space in a short amount of time is a tall order.

“At least in September it’s going to involve finding space that already exist in one form or another,” said Dinowitz, who represents the area. “There are already institutions that already have pre-K programs, and so this might involve expanding their capacity. But I think because we don’t have a bunch of empty buildings waiting for four year olds, I think finding the space, at least in our school district, is going to be an important issue.”

But while de Blasio’s cause is championed by Democrats, Senate Republicans have vowed to reject the plan once it has the chance to review it.

As of press time, the Assembly’s Ways and Means analysts are still reviewing whether it’s financially feasible. A poll by Quinnipiac University showed New Yorkers favor Cuomo’s plan over de Blasio’s.

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Hot Political Races Brew in the Bronx

(continued from page 1)

to officially run in the September Primary. Those signatures are due April 10.

Rangel-Espaillet Rematch

In the race for Congress, a wave of challengers eye the seats of two longtime Congressmen.

In the northwest Bronx, Congressman Charles Rangel, whose 13th Congressional District covers portions of the Bronx, thanks to redrawn district lines, faces several challengers in the June Primary. Among them is State Senator Adriano Espaillet of Manhattan, who nearly defeated Rangel during the 2012 Congressional Primary.

Rangel has been prominently making the rounds at several functions throughout his Bronx congressional district lately, perhaps some political strategizing since the 20-term congressman only captured 42 percent of the Bronx vote to Espaillet's 46 percent during the Primary. But Rangel is in a tricky spot since his political survival is still dependent on his Harlem base, which is seeing other African-Americans such as former New York Governor David

Paterson and former New York Assemblyman Keith Wright considering a run.

Changing demographics have made the district less of a guaranteed win for Rangel, an African-American legislator who benefitted from the large African-American voting bloc that appears to show signs of erosion. These days, Hispanics are moving into the district, one reason why Espaillet, a Dominican Republic native, nearly won.

But Rangel's campaign war chest is three times larger than Espaillet's, certainly helping Rangel market himself more.

Palma and Serrano Matchup?

Speculation has surfaced over South Bronx Councilwoman Annabel Palma's (D-18th CD) intention to run against seasoned Congressman Jose Serrano, who's never faced a Primary challenge since taking office through a special election in 1990. Palma, whose 18th Council District overlaps with Serrano's enormous 15th Congressional District, has remained quiet over the potential to run.

"I don't have much to comment on," said Kenneth Thomas, an advisor to Palma, adding her run is "still speculative

until further notice."

With the 15th Congressional District pegged as a safe seat, Serrano has never met any primary challenger. But his comfort also could be his undoing, since Serrano has no concrete political infrastructure to help knock on doors, pass leaflets or get the Serrano message out.

Palma's political ambitions may be fueled by Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., grumbling over Serrano's recent criticism of FreshDirect and the Bronx Overall Economic Development Committee. Other possible contenders include Senator Ruben Diaz Sr., and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, whose loyalties lie with the BP.

Klein vs. Koppell

Though former Councilman Oliver Koppell has remained largely out of the spotlight, there are several reasons why the lifelong legislator may come out of retirement to take on Independent Democratic Conference President Jeff Klein (D-34th Senate District). Koppell seethed over Klein's power grab in late 2012, crafting an Op-Ed piece in the *Norwood News* that demanded Klein be a "genuine dem-

ocrat."

Koppell may have laid low since retirement until he raised several eyebrows condemning Klein for allowing Senate co-leader Dean Skelos, a Republican, to threaten a no-vote on Mayor Bill de Blasio's pre-K plan before the Senate.

Koppell told *Politicker* he might run if Klein does not fully re-group with the Democratic Conference. Klein's office declined to comment.

Machine Test

The Bronx County machine has mainly been in solidarity, but this uncanny election season presents a test to Bronx County Leader Heastie, whose regular formula involves him supporting incumbents. He did not return requests for comment.

"If the county executive endorses a candidate, that likely means that they will put resources to supporting that candidate," said Gary Axelbank, host of the BronxNet political talk show *Bronx Talk*. "Sometimes they've silently endorsed a candidate and not put a lot of resources to it. It would be interesting in how this plays out, given the dynamics involved."

Business Beat

Fordham BID Flies to New Heights

By DAVID CRUZ

The eagle has landed at the Bronx's biggest business improvement district.

Shoppers at the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, where an estimated 80,000 people bypass the corridor daily, recently noticed the soft opening of American Eagle Outfitters.

The high-end clothing retail store opened its doors with little fanfare, settling just across the street from another mega-clothing retail store, The GAP. The store is known for its chic graphic-Ts, low-cut jeans and Henley shirts, catering mostly to the age 15 to 25 demographic. The apparel store's pick of Fordham is fitting, given Fordham University is just blocks away.

Wilma Alonso, executive director of the BID, sees this as "a validation of the trust as a prime shopping destination in the Bronx." In recent years, Alonso has noticed an uptick in the number of national retailers choosing Fordham as the next neighborhood in which to do business. Last year, the BID welcomed Burlington Coat Factory, adding it to its line of 300 stores that pepper the BID.

"Fordham has been transformed from being a local neighborhood of 99 cent stores to a more trendy location that will attract more people," said Alonso.

But welcoming stores is just one aspect of the BID that runs from East Fordham Road and Jerome Avenue, ending at Fordham Road and Webster Avenue. Alonso, sharing the duties with co-executive director Daniel Bernstein, has her hand in several projects that include sprucing up the look of the neighborhood, introducing a wireless Internet system and creating a marketing campaign to draw younger shoppers. Their biggest endeavor

or involves expanding the BID's borders to One Fordham Plaza, home to an Applebee's, TJ Maxx, and offices.

The Fordham BID functions much the same as all the others. It is often a promotional vehicle that maintains the look of the district. Funding for the BID comes in the form of a BID Assessment, a special tax on property owners who usually pass the cost on to the consumer. Because of the BID's high presence, property owners have gradually raised rents on business tenants, eroding some of the mom and pop store presence.

"Our commercial square footage price is very high," said Alonso. "But also what comes with that is 80,000 people coming every 12 hours."

Merchants can also benefit from the BID's geography. The strip stretches along one of the busiest thoroughfares in the Bronx, a nexus of travel that includes four subway lines, six bus lines, and a Metro-North station that ushers in plenty of out-of-towners.

In an area where shoppers arrive, thieves are not too far behind. Grand larcenies are still the number one crime in the area, with pickpockets often lurking around each holiday season. Veteran NYPD officers from the 46th, 47th and 52nd precincts often patrol the area, adding to the "presence" as Alonso sees it. She downplayed the crime, citing the low percentage of crime when compared to the high traffic going through the area. "In every neighborhood where there's a commercial strip like that, you will find that in Times Square, you will find that at 34th Street, you will find that in Chinatown. Those things are going to take place, but it doesn't reflect the neighborhood not being safe."

Alonso and Bernstein are still working

to gather funding for extra security cameras to complement the NYPD's already existing 24-hour cameras. With cameras, promotional programs, and beautifica-

tion projects in store, Alonso admits the BID will be quite busy this year.

"The list will never end. If it ends, that means I'll be out of a job," she laughed.



Photo by Justin McCallum

THE BIRD'S the word at the Fordham BID, welcoming clothier American Eagle Outfitters to the busy shopping strip.

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Be Healthy 600,000

Number of Americans who die of heart disease each year – that's one in every four deaths. (Source: Montefiore Medical Center)

Vital Stats

Keeping Your Ticker In Shape

By the Norwood News

February is National Heart Month, and Montefiore Medical Center has been spreading awareness through several events on the dangers of neglecting the heart. The Montefiore Einstein Center for Heart and Vascular Care is now leading an effort to reduce heart disease, the leading cause of death in the country. The hospital's goal is aimed at educating patients, the community and Montefiore associates about heart disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

"Most people don't realize that heart disease kills more people each year than all forms of cancer and HIV combined," said Mario Garcia, M.D., chief, Division of Cardiology at Montefiore, and co-director of The Montefiore Einstein Center for Heart and Vascular Care. "Being heart healthy – eating right, exercising regularly and working with your doctor on a plan that's right for you – can improve one's quality of life and longevity."

Heart disease can stem from a variety of conditions including abnormal heart rhythms, heart failure and coronary heart disease, which can lead to a heart attack. Coronary heart disease is the most common type of heart disease, killing more than 385,000 people each year and carrying a cost of over \$108 billion annually. Major risk factors for heart disease – high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, obesity and smoking – can be controlled or managed. Regular checkups are encouraged.

"Montefiore is a leader in providing innovative

therapies and clinical best practices for adult and pediatric heart disease patients," said Dr. Robert Michler, professor and chairman, Department of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at Montefiore, and co-director of The Montefiore Einstein Center for Heart and Vascular Care. "We are passionate about Heart Month and helping people learn how important it is to lower their risk of heart disease."

Montefiore's Heart Month program continues to offer a wide variety of events including heart healthy screenings, healthy eating demonstrations, and educational talks. Other events include:

Healthy Eating Food Demonstration (Feb. 21) - Montefiore dietitians will teach healthy eating options and creative ways to make staying healthy fun. The session takes place at the Montefiore Medical Group West Farms Family Practice, 1045 E. Tremont Ave., from 1 to 1:45 p.m.

Heart Month Fashion Show (Feb. 27) - This first-ever event will feature awareness and education throughout the health system about heart health. The celebratory evening takes place at the Moses Campus, 111 E. 210th St. from 6 to 8 p.m. and includes several raffles and other surprise activities.

For Heart Month, Montefiore has developed the hashtag #MonteHeart to help spread educational messages through social media. Follow @MontefioreNYC for information about educational Twitter chats, Montefiore events and general heart health facts and tips. Additional information will be available on Montefiore's Facebook and YouTube pages.

Source: Montefiore Medical Center

POL HELPS RESIDENTS GET BACK ON THEIR FEET



Photo courtesy Office of Councilman Ritchie Torres
After a devastating three-alarm fire left locals at 23 Hoffman Ave. homeless, Councilman Ritchie Torres (pictured center) and his staff have worked with the community through Part of the Solution (POTS) to bring 10 bags of clothes to those displaced by the fire. The displaced received help facilitated by Torres' office over the last three weeks, including aid from the American Red Cross, HOPE Line and The Islamic Center. Those affected by the fire have been relocated to permanent housing, thanks to Belmont Arthur Avenue Local Development Corporation.

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Classifieds: \$12 for the first 20 words and 25 cents for each additional word. **Professional Directory:** \$144 for six months; \$260 for one year. To place an ad, call (718) 324-4998 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

Neighborhood Notes

Donations for Flea Market

The Bedford-Mosholu Community Association is accepting items for its annual flea market on March 8. Donations can be dropped off at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor) on Wednesdays, Feb. 26 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and March 5 from 7:30 to 9 p.m.; and on Saturday, March 1 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 367-2230.

Art & Poetry Contest

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection is sponsoring its 28th annual Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest, open to students from 2nd to 12th grades. Applicants are asked to create original art and compose poetry that reflects an appreciation for water resources. Entries must be received by March 1. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep/artandpoetry.

Summer Camp Applications

The Fresh Air Fund is accepting applications for its free 2014 summer camp program for eligible children ages 6 to 12 for the Volunteer Host Family Program, and ages 8 to 15 for the camping program in Fishkill, NY. For more information, call (800) 367-0003 or visit www.freshair.org.

Registration is open for summer day camp at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace. For more information, call Marlene Delgado at (718) 884-0700 ext. 168 or visit www.khcc.org.

Foreclosure Prevention Workshops & Free Tax Prep

The University Neighborhood Housing Program will hold a foreclosure prevention workshop on Thursday, Feb. 20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (workshops are held the first and third Thursday of every month); and free tax preparation sessions on Saturday, Feb. 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and most Wednesdays (1 to 5 p.m.) and Saturdays (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) until April 9. For more information or an appointment, call (718) 933-2539.

MetroCard Vans

MetroCard vans will be making stops on the second and fourth Friday of each month at Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse from noon to 2 p.m.; and Fordham Plaza from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Seniors with photo ID may apply for reduced fare cards and others may add value or purchase cards. For more information, call (212) METRO-CARD or visit www.mta.info.

Volunteer for Food Pantry

Part of the Solution (POTS) seeks volunteers to help feed the hungry year-round. Anyone interested can call (718) 220-4892 or email serve@potsbronx.org.

For more Neighborhood Notes online, go to www.norwoodnews.org and click on "Neighborhood Notes."

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Park Groups Get Say

Con Edison presents **The 20th Annual Bronx Parks Speak Up Bronx Parks: A 20/20 Vision,** Feb. 22 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Lehman College's Music Building, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W. Events include workshops on addressing park group dilemmas, engaging youth, and working together on a master plan. Lunch will be served, courtesy of Con Ed. To request a table, email speakuptabling@hotmail.com. For more information, email bxspeakup@hotmail.com. In case of bad weather, call (718) 601-1460 or visit www.bronxspeakup.org.

Onstage

■ Bronx Arts Ensemble presents **"Hansel and Gretel,"** featuring singing and dancing, Feb. 23 at 1 and 2:30 p.m., at the NY Botanical Garden (\$6; free with All-Garden pass); and **"The Three Little Pigs in the Kung Fu Wolf Caper,"** a spoof, March 2 at 2 p.m. in Lehman College's Lovinger Theatre, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W. (\$6); both for kids; and **Valerie Capers Jazz Quintet,** including wine and cheese party, Feb. 22 at 8 p.m., at the Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture, 4450 Fieldston Rd. (\$20; \$15/seniors/students). For more information, call (718) 601-

7399.

■ Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **Krasnoyarsk National Dance Company of Siberia,** featuring folk (\$25 to \$45), Feb. 23 at 6 p.m.; and **Forever Freestyle 8,** featuring Latin '80s dance music sensation (\$55 to \$100), March 1 at 8 p.m. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

■ The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **"Resistance,"** a play, Feb. 22; and **Chang-er Flies to the Moon,** Chinese theatre performance, March 1; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or

visit www.nypl.org.

Events

■ BronxWorks has scheduled a **Health, Housing and Access to Benefits Fair,** Feb. 20 at 3 p.m., at the Bronx Museum of Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse. Experts from BronxWorks, Montefiore Medical Center, and other institutions will answer questions on a range of public benefits, including the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), applying for food stamps, and immigration services. There will be refreshments, gift giveaways, raffle prizes, and Montefiore staffers will offer free health screenings. Private consultations and assistance will be available. For more information, call (718) 508-3169.

■ The entire family is invited to enjoy the winter school break during Presidents Week at the NY Botanical Garden's **Culinary Kids Food Festival,** through Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., in the Dining Pavilion behind the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. Events include cooking demonstrations (daily at 1 p.m. featuring kid-friendly recipes and samples), hands-on activities, music, and tastings.

Additional activities feature **"Even Puppets Love to Eat,"** Feb. 21 to 23 from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.; and the Bronx Arts Ensemble presents animated actors in **"Hansel and Gretel,"** Feb. 23 at 1 and 2:30 p.m. in the Ross Hall, performing songs, dance, and juggling. For more information and fees, call (718) 817-8658.

■ Community Board Athletic Leadership League (CBALL) presents free **Rematch Game** (Bronx Celebrity/Community team vs. NYPD Ballers/NYPD Finest team), at Forest Community Center Gym, 955 Tinton Ave. (corner of East 163rd Street), Feb. 22 at 1 p.m. Female game is at 1:30 p.m.; male game is at 3:15 p.m. Events include live performances, DJ, celebrities, elected officials, and giveaways. For more information and to RSVP, email cballeague@gmail.com.

■ The public is invited to ride the March 5 free **Bronx Culture Trolley,** which transports visitors on the first Wednesday of every month (except January and September), to free Bronx hot spots. Trolley night starts with a 5 p.m. reception at the Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos Community College, 450 Grand



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Call **212-889-5500 x204** with questions.





Concourse (at 149th St.). From there, the trolley departs at 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. Riders can get on and off at any scheduled stop and spend as much time as they wish at any or all of the featured venues. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 33 or log on to www.bronxarts.org.

■ Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Arts Project**: Papermaking Suites, to make handmade paper from natural fibers, Feb. 22 and 23; and Stylish Seed Pots, to make fancy decorated pots with soil and seed from plain ones, March 1 and 2; both at the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is free Saturdays until noon all year, and free all day Tuesdays in February and March. Glyndor Gallery **tours** take place Tuesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.; garden **walks** are held Tuesdays and Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., from the Perkins Visitor Center. For more information and a schedule of events, call (718) 549-3200.

Exhibits

■ The NY Botanical Garden presents **Close: A Journey in Scotland**, through March 16, featuring creations of 21 notable contemporary designers and artists working in the Scottish landscape. For more information, call (718) 817-8700 or visit nybg.org.

■ The Bronx County Historical Society's Museum of Bronx History at the Valentine-Varian House, 3266 Bainbridge Ave., presents **History Woven Into Cloth**, selections from the Society's textile

collection, through April 6. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

Library Events

■ The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents programs for adults including: **Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners**: (in-person advance registration required), Feb. 20 at 2 p.m.; **A Centennial Celebration**: Julia De Burgos in film music and poetry, Feb. 23 at 1:30 p.m.; **Heritage Arts & Poetry**: (advance in-person registration required), Feb. 28 at 4 p.m.; and **"Cinemability"**: presented by ReelAbilities Film Festival, March 6 at 11 a.m. Children can enjoy **Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.**: Feb. 20, 27 and March 6; **Toddler Play Time at noon**: Feb. 20, 27 and March 6; **Animal Mask Making**: Feb. 20 at 4 p.m.; and **Cat Book Making**: March 6 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for seniors and adults: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m.; **Wii Program**: Tuesdays at 3 p.m.; **Adult Beaded Jewelry**: Feb. 20 at 11 a.m.; and **Film**: "Captain Phillips," based on a true story, Feb. 24 at 4:30 p.m. Children can enjoy **Toddler Story Time at 10:30 a.m.**: Feb. 20 and 27; and **Reading Aloud**: (ages 3 to 12), Feb. 24 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

■ The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers: **Pajama Party**: including arts & crafts, read aloud, and snacks, Feb. 24 at 6 p.m.; **CR Movie Program**: Feb. 28 at 3 p.m.; and **Chess**: March 4 at 4 p.m.; all for ages

DONATING BLOOD FOR A GOOD CAUSE



Photo by Adi Talwar

LOCAL RESIDENT Eric Marcelino takes a breather after donating his blood at St. Brendan's School in Norwood for the New York Blood Center. A graduate of the school, Marcelino was one of dozens who took part in the annual blood drive held on Sunday, Feb. 9. Like the other donors, Marcelino was treated to cookies, juice and water for his good deed.

5 to 12. For adults: **Exploring Cultures**: featuring Valentine's Day and Malcolm X, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m.; and **Computer Basics at noon**: Feb. 25, 27, March 4 and 6. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Feb. 24 for the next publication date of March 6.

HOMECOMING FOR MIND-BUILDERS



Photo by David Cruz

ONE-ON-ONE music lessons like this one pictured is just what's happening under the roof of Mind-Builders Creative Arts, which recently moved back to its main headquarters at 3415 Olinville Ave. in Williamsbridge after several years of renovations. The top-to-bottom upgrades was four years in the making for the after-school program, which holds music, art, dance, and acting classes primarily for young people. Go to www.norwoodnews.org to read the full story on this program that's been a staple in the northwest Bronx community for decades.

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