

NORWOOD NEWS

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BX. PRIMARY ROUNDUP
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WEBSTER HOUSING RENTS REVEALED

Supportive Housing Worries Quelled



Photo by Adi Talwar

THE STAGG GROUP buildings continue to go up amid assurances the site will not become supportive housing.

By DAVID CRUZ

Fears of new supportive housing along Webster Avenue have been quelled following the preliminary release of rent listings, signifying concrete progress for a burgeoning corridor.

The *Norwood News* obtained copies of a rent list for 2979, 2985, and 2999 Webster

Ave., the first type of housing built following extensive rezoning in 2009. Copies of the list have yet been presented for approval to Housing Preservation and Development, the oversight agency for affordable housing, according to a spokeswoman.

In this case, the lists in-

dicate that developers, The Stagg Group, a family owned development firm, will indeed build mixed-use apartments that cater to would-be working class tenants and those just above the mark.

By revealing the list to stakeholders, Mr. Stagg puts himself in a position to deliver on these apartments.

For close to a year, community leaders suspected Stagg would sneak in supportive housing units, a type of housing that offers social services for formerly mentally ill, homeless, or drug abusers.

The project serves as a benchmark for the neighbor-
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BRONX PRIMARY ROUNDUP



Photo By David Cruz

COUNCILMAN FERNANDO CABRERA speaks to supporters on primary night, where he lost a bid to unseat incumbent State Senator Gustavo Rivera of the 33rd Senate District.

By DAVID CRUZ

It will be business as usual in the November elections as the Bronx political landscape remained virtually unchanged following outcomes to several hotly contested races this year, with some longtime vacant public seats finally filled.

33rd Senate District

In the race for the 33rd Senate race, challenger Fernando Cabrera, Councilman for the 14th District, found himself a loser. He emerged just before 11:30 p.m. on primary night flanked by supporters inside his campaign headquarters on the Grand Concourse. He appeared an hour after the state's unofficial results showed he lost the race, garnering only 37.17 percent of the vote against incumbent State Sen. Gustavo Rivera's 55.33 percent.

"I'm grateful for the experience because I got to see who are my real friends," said Cabrera, appearing teary-eyed as he delivered a 10-minute concession speech alongside his wife and hard-lined supporters. But

Cabrera also hinted of a possible run in two years should Rivera fail to bring in state funding to the largely working poor district. "If I'm still the only elected official bringing funding, then I'm going to run again," Cabrera told the *Norwood News*.

Cabrera added that an oversized state district, lack of a proper campaign war chest, and a liberal media is really what sunk his chances at winning. "We were probably outdone at least four or five times," said Cabrera. "Really, this was a work of love."

The silver lining remained—Cabrera was still the councilman for the 14th District, covering Fordham, Kingsbridge Heights, University Heights and Mount Hope. In his speech, he highlighted the millions he's allocated to community-based organizations and after school programs, which outmatches Rivera's, who Cabrera admonished for bringing little. "It's very unfair that the 33rd Senate District is not getting funding, when you see [Sen. Jeff Klein, Senator Diaz Jr.] getting fund-

ing," he said.

The celebrations were different at Escape Lounge on Jerome Avenue, where supporters flocked to the Latin eatery to cheer for Rivera.

In a statement following the unofficial final count, Rivera said the question of idealism "between real progressive values that help Bronx families, and the divisive, counter-productive politics of the past" was at stake. "In the end, I'm truly grateful to see that our progressive message won the day," he said in his statement.

34th Senate District

State Senator Jeff Klein emerged victorious over challenger Oliver Koppell. Klein launched an army of volunteers, knocking on doors, hanging posters and distributing leaflets for Klein, head of the Independent Democratic Conference. The unofficial final count from the state Board of Elections was 64.74 percent for Klein over Koppell's 32.20 percent.

Money and power played a major role in the race for the 34th Senate



BRONX PRIMARY ROUNDUP



District, a gerrymandered seat that covers Morris Park, Throggs Neck, Hunts Point, Pelham Parkway, a sliver of Bedford Park, and Riverdale. The middle-class neighborhood in the northwest Bronx was the epicenter and perhaps harbinger in the battle between Klein and Koppell. But Klein went full force in Riverdale, using millions of dollars in allocated member items to fund causes and nonprofits, no match to Koppell who had retired from 40 years in politics before launching a bid against Klein.

"Tonight, your vote in this primary election has guaranteed a functioning government that delivers results," Klein told supporters at Maestro's, a catering hall in Morris Park. "For the past 20 years I have had the honor of serving you and your families and today you made it possible for me to continue to work for you doing the job I love."

Koppell did not respond to requests for comment.

78th Assembly District

In the race for the 78th Assembly District seat, challenger Fernando Tirado was routed by longtime legislator, Assemblyman Jose Rivera. The race went overwhelmingly in favor of Rivera, who garnered 69.02 percent of the vote over Tirado's 20.37 percent despite Rivera's absence at a debate and public forum towards the latter part of the race.

Tirado remained graceful post-primary, posting a humbling note on Facebook thanking supporters for their commitment. He also addressed Rivera, writing the political duel was "not a personal thing." "There are real problems that are not being addressed in our community," wrote Tirado, "and they need the attention of all those in elected office sooner rather than later."

86th Assembly District

But perhaps one of the more surprising contests happened in the 86th Assembly District, where the race remains too close to call. But incumbent Victor Pichardo still trails by a mere 11 votes behind challenger Hector

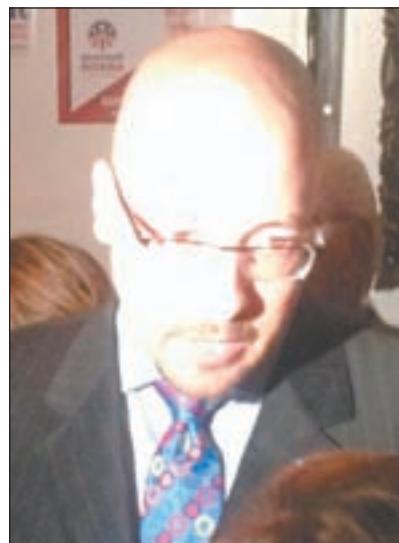


Photo by Kasia Romanowska

STATE SEN. GUSTAVO Rivera celebrates his victory at Escape Lounge, winning against challenger Fernando Cabrera.

Ramirez, according to state election results. Ramirez, a Democrat and veteran district leader lost the primary a year back against Pichardo. Ramirez later charged that voting machines were tampered with, which he believes led to him losing the election to Pichardo. In a statement, Pichardo affirmed he will prevail over Ramirez.

"I am confident that my neighbors have again chosen me as their representative to the Assembly," said Pichardo. "And I am energized by the support I have received from our community, elected officials, unions and my family."

It's unclear whether Pichardo will ask for a federal inquiry on the matter. As of press time, the city Board of Elections is recounting all the votes, including paper ballots and absentee ballots. There have been charges that Ramirez caused trouble at one polling precinct, with paid Ramirez volunteers intimidating voters at P.S. 33 90 minutes before the polls closed.

79th Assembly District

In the west Bronx, the borough's political newcomer, Michael Blake, edged out party favorite Marsha Michaels to fill the seat of the 79th Assembly District. The seat was once

occupied by former Assemblyman Eric Stevenson, forced to give up the post after being convicted of bribery. Money heavily influenced the contest, uncommon for a race in a relatively poor district, with Blake's coffers filled from all over the country.

Blake, a former White House operative for President Obama, hails from the Bronx. Blake's ascension to Albany serves as a black eye for Bronx County Democratic Party leader Carl Heastie, who backed Michaels. Heastie was also in a tough spot when he backed Senator Adriano Espaillat in his race against Congressman Charles Rangel.

77th AD and 36th SD

As all eyes focused on other high profile races, there were indeed contests for the 77th Assembly District

and 36th Senate District, where the victor seized the spoils. The 77th AD was a seat vacated for nearly a year after former Assemblywoman Vanessa Gibson relinquished her seat after winning the election for New York City Council District 16.

Party favorite Latoya Joyner, a Bronx Democratic Party-backed candidate, snagged 65.21 percent of the vote over runner-up Sherrise Palomino. Joyner, a practicing attorney, wrote on her campaign website that "Now, the real work begins" following her win.

Meantime, Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson secured a fifth win as legislator for the 36th Senate District, winning overwhelmingly over Crystal Collins by 80 percent. Her win was critical, as the Bronx/Westchester pol eyes a run for mayor of Mount Vernon.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their thoughts on the new NYPD pilot program that would have some officers wearing a small camera that's able to record interactions with the public.



I think it's a good thing because people who claim they have been brutally attacked by policemen would actually have evidence that they did or they didn't.

Tyzannah Sands
Kingsbridge



I think it's a good idea because their interaction with the people will be recorded. It's better for them and it's better for the public, I guess for everybody. Even the police chief thinks it will be better.

Antonio Romero
Van Cortlandt Village



After reviewing and listening to the situation that has happened between the community and the police, I think it's good in a sense that there will be an eye between the police and the community. That way, the abuses and false allegations will stop.

Juan L. Jimenez
Riverdale



No, I don't like the idea because the police and the public are entitled to some privacy. A lot of people have no money and they want to spend millions on something stupid.

Joel Alcenia
Castle Hill



My feeling is that if they are the police and they are upholding the law, then there should be nothing to hide when it comes to having a camera. If you're doing the right thing, there's nothing to hide. It's definitely worth the money.

Phyllis Rodriguez
Bedford Park

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Help on the Way for Norwood Fire Victims



Photo by Anton K. Nilsson

THE AFTERMATH OF two homes on Decatur Avenue near Gun Hill Road following a three-alarm fire.

By ANTON K. NILSSON
and DAVID CRUZ

A local councilman and community board are stepping to help families affected by a fire on Decatur Avenue near Gun Hill Road.

A food and clothing drive organized by Councilman Andy Cohen, along with Community Board 7, has now been set up for families affected by the Sept. 10 three-alarm fire at 3311 Decatur Ave. in Norwood.

Food and clothing for adult victims and those as young as one year old are in order, according to Cohen's spokesman Daniel Johnson. "We're looking to collect winter clothes, shoes, umbrellas, baby food and other items that could help families to recover from the tragedy," said Johnson.

Those interested in donating can drop things off at Engine Company 79, 2928 Briggs Ave. Those closer to Community Board 7, 229A E. 207th St., can donate items there from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The news comes as some relief to tenants, who literally jumped out of their windows when a three-alarm fire raged

at 3311 Decatur Ave., a three-story home. The fire later extended to a private three-story home next door. In all, 12 people were hurt, including three firefighters, according to the Fire Department. Both homes were gutted and issued vacate orders by the city Buildings Department.

Kim Davies, a woman who lived on the third floor of 3311, told the *Norwood News* that she struggled to rescue herself and her grandson, a toddler, from the flames. "It was the most frightening feeling I ever had," Davies said, as she stood on the sidewalk alongside her family staring at the home while waiting to regain access. "I was ready to jump, but then two Good Samaritans helped rescue me."

"We were trying to help the lady on the top floor, who had her baby with her," said Ryan Ortero, one of the Good Samaritans. "Finally she managed to get out the front door."

Meanwhile, another woman was forced to jump from the second floor of 3311 into a locked alleyway wedged between the two homes, breaking both her ankles as she landed on rubble.

Ortero said bystanders tried to break open the gate using a rock to reach the injured woman.

Ortero was also concerned over the FDNY's response time, arriving to the scene 20 minutes late after the 911 dispatcher was unable to locate the building that rests between 209th Street and East Gun Hill Road.

By the time emergency services arrived, the gate had been unlocked and the heavy chain removed. "Probably someone from the landlord's family removed the chain, so that they wouldn't get in trouble," Ortero said. According to one resident, the landlord of 3311, listed on city building records as Uddin Mohammod, had gone on vacation and left his son in charge of the house.

The total injury count was seven minor injuries (four requiring medical attention), and two serious injuries, who were later transported to Jacobi Medical Hospital. Three firefighters were injured, though their injuries were not considered life threatening. It took two hours to put out the fire.

Lexus Chabert, the

daughter of Kim Davies, said she was at school when she heard what had happened. According to Lexus, around a dozen people were in the house at the time of the blaze, including three toddlers.

Despite its scruffy appearance, Lexus said, the neighboring building was not completely abandoned. "I saw a man walking in and out of that house, taking out the trash every day. My mom said she saw someone get him out of there after the fire."

One investigator noticed the home had been receiving mail.

The Red Cross worked to find shelter for the 14 people who lost their homes in the flames.

It remains unclear what started the fire.

Public & Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Parks & Recreation and Senior Services committees meet Tuesday, Sept. 23. Budget/Personnel & Ethics committee will meet at a to be determined date. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meets Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor).

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What Happens After You Submit an Application?

After the deadline, applications are selected for review through a lottery process. If yours is selected and you appear to qualify, you will be invited to an interview to continue the process of determining your eligibility.

Rallying Students for New School Year



Photo courtesy Councilman Andy King's Office

COUNCILMAN ANDY KING (2nd from right) speak to the crowd of students and faculty at the Evander Childs Campus Football Field.

By JANAKI CHADHA

Kamrin Pressley is, from all angles, a model student. She has an energetic and confident exterior, and speaks with a level of purpose that is almost rare for a 14-year-old girl. She is a freshman at Harry S. Truman High School, where she is part of the Law and Legal Studies Program.

"In that program, I'll be able to graduate with a two-year Associate's Degree," she says. "To me, that makes it the strongest program in the school."

Kamrin is also an active member of the Bronx Youth Empowerment Program (BYEP). Her involvement in the organization is what brought her along with several hundreds of students to the Evander Childs Campus Football Field on Friday, Sept. 12 as part of the annual "Out of the Pool, Back to School" youth rally. Hosted by city Councilman Andy King, in conjunction with BYEP, the event drew students of all ages and faculty members from

schools within School District 11, which overlaps with King's 12th Council District. The event served as a call to academic responsibility within a borough where graduation rates remain low when compared to the rest of the city.

The event began with attendees given T-shirts to wear showcasing the slogan: "People Pay Attention to People Who Participate," a phrase coined by King as part of BYEP, of which he is a founder.

This idea carried throughout the event. In his speech to the crowd, King announced, "Let me give you a rule. Today is about participation," punctuating his speech with his familiar motto. He encouraged students to ask questions in class, stay on top of homework, join clubs, and did not forget to add, "Why? Because people pay attention to people who participate."

King, a flamboyant legislator known for his lavish blue suits and bow tie, told stu-

dents it's okay to sell yourself. "Don't be confused, you can be an 'A' student," said King. "But if nobody knows that you are on the planet, it means absolutely nothing."

Kamrin also gave a speech in which she presented "tips of advice to help you all through the school year," and incorporated many common sense approaches to tackling school. "With these tips," she continued, "I believe, feel and know that we will do great and fulfill our life's dreams and goals."

To King, the main issue that the schools in his district are facing is figuring out how to be one coherent school system. He said, "I'd like to see us being able to coordinate, and get a chance to figure this out with the educators that are on the ground, and get their input on how we can raise the standards for our kids, recognizing that the system has failed some of our kids, but now being here to correct that."



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At Kingsbridge Building, a Crusader on Her Own

By DAVID CRUZ

In the 43 years that Suzanne has lived at 95 W. 195th St. in Kingsbridge Heights, her standard of living has progressively gone from bad to worse. She's left with memories of yesteryear when things were in better shape.

"It's deteriorated to the point where there is no turning back," said Suzanne, 63, who asked her name be withheld for fear of her landlord.

And yet despite those fears from the building owner, known to be negligible and at times vindictive, Suzanne has made it her priority to right wrongs in the six-story, pre-war building—those include chronically noisy tenants above her, an illegal laundry room with no signs of correction, unreliable cooking gas, and an indifference by tenants who prefer to keep their heads down than take on a faceless landlord. Many of them refused to go on the record. By all accounts, Suzanne is alone, trapped in an apartment building that's offered her rent stabilization.

"The handful of tenants don't want to back me," said Suzanne, a rent-stabilized tenant. Though she's had some

small victories that involved some tenant meetings, support consistently fizzles out. "They want to fight, but they just don't know how to go about it."

It seems fitting for Suzanne to serve as a building crusader. Her father worked for the NYPD at one point. In her quest, she's learned to catalogue her complaints in a green folder, filing photographs of the building's shoddy work, and police records detailing murders in the building that stretch to the 1990s. The paperwork substantiates her claims. She's the building's go-to cop, hoping to build a case to topple the landlord.

"I started learning as I went along," said Suzanne, unemployed and living on a fixed income. Despite this, she has found navigating the Housing Court system, wrangling with the NYPD, and obtaining records through Freedom of Information requests to be full-time work.

In February, Suzanne remembered "a lot of things started happening" within the property. Among the more recent incidents was a faulty gas system that disabled cooking gas.

"There was no gas in the building



Photo by David Cruz

A SLEW OF issues plague this apartment building in Kingsbridge Heights, including this illegal laundry room (inset), yet only one resident remains vocal over the problems.

to cook," recalled Suzanne. "The pilot light went out on Feb. 26. Con Edison was not informed of this, which they should have been. I notified Con Ed, they notified the police. This could've been a horrible situation. That management was supposed to notify Con Ed." Had the gas leak remained undetected, the building would've exploded, a similar situation that played out in Harlem earlier this year.

Michael Edelstein, a Brooklyn businessman, purchased the building in 1986, according to city records. But Edelstein, owner of several other properties in the Bronx, gradually allowed the building to fall into decline. Mayor Bill de Blasio, at the time the city's Public Advocate, placed Edelstein under the now defunct NYC Worst Landlord Watch List, a public condemnation against unscrupulous landlords. His office did not comment.

The city Housing Preservation and Development agency has intervened

on several occasions, recording 61 violations that still remain unresolved. Those include lead paint chips in a fifth floor apartment discovered in 1999 to bolted trash chutes at several floors.

Suzanne has taken her complaints to Bronx Housing Court, which she's compared to a meat market, where folks "take a number" waiting for their case to process. She's noticed Edelstein's attorneys at court appearing quite busy, with tenants at Edelstein-owned buildings zipping in and out of courtrooms.

Many tenants simply have given up. One of Suzanne's neighbors, a city EMT, grew fed up. After five years, she decided to move but not before asking Suzanne how she can put up with it all.

"I guess the only way to answer her is that it used to be good many years ago and then I didn't have the money," said Suzanne. "That was my answer."

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BUSINESS BEAT

JGH-BID Gears Up for Sept. 20 Fall Festival

By DAVID CRUZ

For the past eight months, the Jerome-Gun Hill BID has been gearing up for the Fall Festival, the biggest event for the BID. But even as the 12th annual Fall Festival was under way in September 2013, BID Executive Director Marcia Cameron had early thoughts of what to do about this year.

"I look at this from a project management perspective," said Cameron. "We break it down to our expenses, what sponsorships we need, entertainment, lineup, and everything that goes into that."

The fruits of her labor, along with her staff, will be in full view at the 13th annual Jerome-Gun Hill BID Fall Festival on Saturday, Sept. 20. The portion of Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and Gun Hill Road will be closed to vehicular traffic to make way for a bazaar-like vibe.

Headliners

Musical headliners for the all-day venue include freestyle artist George Lamond, La Orquesta Jeryco, Candela, DJ Jazzy Jay, Shire, Sarakna, DJ Krazy Rob, 12-year-old songstress Lela Brown, all expected to take to the stage. Brown, discovered by Quincy Jones, has already been making the rounds, having performed on Good Morning America. Several feet away, a Radio Disney road crew will be stationed to broadcast the festival, the only BID event Radio Disney covers. An organized street basketball game will tip off at a pop-up court by 208th Street and Jerome Avenue, where players can expect to see former NBA all-star point guard Kenny Anderson showing off his jump shot. "If you think you can dunk over Kenny Anderson, then stop by," joked Cameron.

Families can benefit from other attractions that include rides, giveaways, raffles and a chess tournament. All the amenities are free. Following the event, revelers will head to the newly opened Escape Lounge for some Latin cuisine and music.

For Cameron, yes, the event is intended as a promotional vehicle, luring in a cache of potential customers to the L-shaped BID.

"It's not just a day where we have a lot of people there, but we want to bring awareness to the area so they



Photo courtesy Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District

A LOOK AT LAST YEAR'S Jerome-Gun Hill BID Fall Festival, which drew thousands of revelers to the commercial corridor.

can see what's available in the commercial corridor," said Cameron, adding that a central theme explored during the planning process involves "community engagement and how do we engage that community."

The BID, an ad hoc city agency funded through property tax assessments, offers beautification services such as graffiti cleanup and marketing service. It's home to nearly 200 restaurants, banks, pharmacies and variety stores. Mom and pop shops complement national retailers, with Cameron now setting her sights on lobbying for a Chipotle store throughout the corridor, knowing firsthand how much foot traffic it draws.

One carrot and stick approach involves talking discount merchants into adopting a discount program, so that the foot traffic morphs into buying customers.

Award Ceremony

The event also serves as a thank you to community leaders who've been good neighbors to the BID in recent months. Those include Community Board 7 chairwoman Adaline Walker, Councilman Andy Cohen and 52nd Precinct Commanding Officer Inspector Nilda Hofmann.

Cohen recently secured capital funding required for the NYPD to install all-seeing surveillance cameras throughout the BID as a way to deter crime. The installation of those cameras is still pending.

Cameron is especially grateful to

city agencies that include the NYPD, FDNY, MTA, and Sanitation Department, along with program coordinators Al Pizzaro and vendor coordinator Mike Debillis for getting the program off the ground. Major spon-

sors include Montefiore Medical Center, Healthfirst and MetroPlus.

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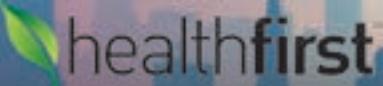
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Be Healthy

4.1M

Total number of pounds of prescription drugs seized nationally by the DEA since starting a take-back program in 2010.
 (Source: Drug Enforcement Administration)

Vital Stats

Prescription Meds “Take-Back Day” Slated for the Bronx

By CATHARINA THUEMLING

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is slated for Sept. 27, where prescription meds can be dropped off at participating police stations throughout the Bronx from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. These precincts include:

47th Precinct,

4111 Laconia Ave.

45th Precinct,

2877 Barkley Ave.

42nd Precinct,

830 Washington Ave.

50th Precinct

3450 Kingsbridge Ave

48th Precinct,

450 Cross Bronx Expwy.

46th Precinct,

2120 Ryer Ave.

The nationwide event, overseen by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), is intended to support disposing of expired or unneeded prescription medications. It also serves as teaching moment for the general public to understand the importance of being responsible with doctor prescribed medications.

According to Ellen Rudnick, MS, RPh, Director of Pharmacy Operations at Montefiore Medical Center, “Prescription medication abuse and misuse is a growing problem not just in our local area but across the U.S. Medications are accumulating in the home, cabinets and drawers,” said Rudnick. “They can fall into the wrong hands either purposely or accidentally.”

The program was first

launched in September 2010 after President Obama signed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010. Since then, take-back events occur in the spring and fall.

The need for a program like this is evident by the steadily increasing number of pills taken back each time. Since the event’s inception, happening nationally, the DEA hauled in a total of 4.1 million pounds of prescription medications.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 6.8 million Americans abused prescription drugs in 2012. Most of the misuse is obtained by family or friends who pass along leftover medications. More than 54 percent of people who abuse pre-

scription pain relievers got them through friends or family. Some drug seekers are also known to rifle through trash to find their fix.

Dropping off drugs is also done for environmental reasons. The public is encouraged not to dispose of meds down the sink, in the toilet or in the

regular trash because of the potential harm to the environment, humans or animals.

This initiative is the only acceptable way of disposing prescription drugs, said Rudnick. “It’s safe from diversion, safe from accidental harm, and safe from causing harm to the environment.”

JONAS BROTHER AT CHAM



Photo courtesy Montefiore Medical Center

POP STAR NICK JONAS made a surprise visit to The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore the first week of September. The visit was arranged through Musicians on Call (MOC), a group of volunteer musicians that regularly entertains the patients in CHAM. Jonas went room to room to entertain the patients, singing his new hits and playing guitar.

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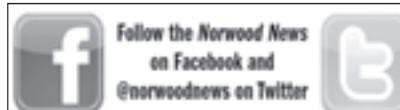
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Stagg Reveals Rents for Webster Avenue Housing

(continued from page 1)

hood, since it's the first project built following rezoning in 2009, which requires new buildings along the corridor to have a commercial component. The building is deemed a 421a site, which requires the developer to set aside one-fifth of its apartments for affordable housing in order to qualify for city tax breaks.

The lists were initially released during a private meeting in June organized by Councilman Ritchie Torres. He, along with Councilman Andy Cohen, Community Board 7 District Manager Dustin Engelken, Chairwoman Adaline Walker-Santiago, and CB7 Housing and Land Use Chairwoman Jean Hill met with The Stagg Group's president, Mark Stagg.

"I think we pretty much let them know that we're not going to accept supportive

housing," said Walker-Santiago.

Rent Roll

The list details housing for both market rate and affordable housing tenants, offering a glimpse into the number of apartments and type of economic demographics Stagg wants. A total of 122 apartment units take up the properties—97 for market-rate units and 25 for affordable housing units. Residents will be required to apply for housing through a lottery system.

Among the amenities market-rate renters will receive include air conditioning, hardwood floors and an open kitchen. The maximum market rate monthly rent for a 2-bedroom apartment will run \$1,700 for a family of four. Studios and 1-bedroom apartments run \$1,250 and \$1,500 respectively, with the same amenities.

For affordable housing renters, prospective tenants are subject to a lottery, rules imposed by HPD. Qualifications are largely based on income. For instance, a family of four earning a combined income between \$38,400 to \$61,440 qualifies for a 2-bedroom apartment at \$1,434. This includes air conditioning, heat and hot water and electric stove. Salary requirements are not set in stone, as indicated on the list reading "income guidelines are subject to change."

Commercial Component

The question of what type of first floor storefront should be included became a major topic. It's a requirement for developers, following the 2009 rezoning. While ideas of a Subway sandwich shop, Carvel and a Cinnabon were bounced around, several stakeholders pushed aggressively for a bank, given

its shortage in the neighborhood. The latest news comes amid a long term plan to spruce up the barren corridor, with city agencies working alongside neighborhood institutions such as Fordham University, The New York Botanical Garden, The Bronx Zoo and Montefiore Medical Center to prop up the community.

Marketing Plan

To ensure that Stagg follows through in attracting market rate and affordable rent paying tenants, the Board recommended Stagg create a marketing plan that draws in new clientele. Stagg agreed, according to Walker-Santiago, promising to allocate \$10,000 for a marketing plan. Walker-Santiago thinks that's not enough.

"Definitely the marketing plan is crucial to us," said Walker-Santiago. "That

it's out there and we're going to do everything we can to put it out there when they have it ready."

Walker-Santiago suggested the marketing plan should target employees of The New York Botanical Garden and Montefiore Medical Center. They would likely respond well to the notice, given the relatively modest salaries per institution. While Montefiore lies roughly a mile from the new Webster Avenue buildings, The New York Botanical Garden is just a block away.

The marketing plan is still pending. The strategy is certainly a harbinger, as far as Walker-Santiago is concerned. "I think marketing has to be more extensive to get all the populations we're looking at," she said.

The city's Housing Preservation and Development agency is currently reviewing the plan.



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BIG TURNOUT FOR FINAL FORDHAM PICTURE SHOW



Photo courtesy Fordham Road Business Improvement District

TURNOUT FOR THE Fordham Business Improvement District's screening of "The Lego Movie" was a success on Sept. 12 with over 200 viewers in attendance. Residents brought out lawn chairs for the picture show under the stars. The weather held nicely for the event happening on Muller Park and Plaza on Fordham Road and Creston Avenue.

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LIVING IN SQUALOR: LIFE AT

**By KASIA ROMANOWSKA
and DAVID CRUZ**

Shanequa Charles, a single mother, lives in an apartment at 2543 Decatur Ave., a six-story walk-up just off 193rd Street by Fordham Road. Her 4-year-old daughter, Miracle, remains scared to enter the bathroom because of the bugs squeezing out of the tub.

On the first floor, Sonia Ortiz has endured leaks of water dripping from her wrinkled ceiling, which soon caved, forcing a call to management. When the company finally arrived, she recalled the repair job was "a joke." Another leaky roof incident caused an old man to slip and fall down the stairs.

At the building next door, another tenant, whose identity is being withheld for privacy reasons, suffers from HIV and lives in squalor. On top of a bedbug infestation, the tenant also has dealt with an archaic dumbwaiter ripped from her kitchen, its inner walls exposed with a portion covered with expandable foam to prevent vermin from entering. Her bathroom's no better. Loose plumbing insulation is no match for rats that worm their way into her apartment. The tenant is a client of the city's HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA), which



Photo by Kasia Romanowska

TENANT SHANEQUA CHARLES stands by a neighbor's exposed wall where an old-fashioned dumbwaiter once stood.

covers a part of her rent.

Charles, recently named a Community Board 7 member, has been living in her two-bedroom apartment since 1988. According to her, the place "is not given the proper care and

people are not getting enough guidance." All three tenants agreed that throughout their time of living here, now has been the most problematic time so far.

As the *Norwood News*

learned, this is life at 2543, 2549, 2553, 2559, 2563, and 2567 Decatur Ave., a set of row houses where many tenants, mostly minorities, have felt abandoned, often left on their own to sort out their building's troubles. It's in those same row houses where hundreds of tenants were deprived of heat during early winter, until a local news outlet intervened. It's there where working poor Bronxites have dealt with conditions that are too much to bear, with claims the management company has impeded their right to organize.

Who's in Charge?

Although Charles pays her rent regularly every month, she's repaired most of her apartment's squalid conditions with her "own hands and resources." In one instance, workers were supposed to paint her apartment, though they stopped halfway through. The directive came from the management-Fortress CD LLC--who've now set their sights on Charles. The contact is limited to a phone and a P.O. Box, with little knowledge of the building's owner, given its limited liability company status. The company's managing agent is Meir Lieblich, who maintains tenants are living in high quality housing.

When interviewed for the story, Lieblich denied the buildings are in bad shape. He also brushed off claims that tenants were deprived of their right to organize meetings. "We try as much as we can and we do a lot of work over there," he added. "All the tenants have my office number, my cell number and my address," he said responding to the accusations concerning the communication problem between residents and Fortress CD LLC. However, he didn't want to discuss the specifics when it comes to the tenants' claims about poor customer service on the part of the company.

According to Charles, "There's no peace of mind about anything. There's no quality of life." It's happening," she added, "because the manager is not cooperating."

Problems with Fortress surged after Charles' mother's death, a long time resident of the building whose rent was subsidized by Section 8. Although the deed to the rent-stabilized unit had been transferred to Charles to assure Section 8 continues, inspectors with the federal program didn't return to Charles' home until after her mother's death, claiming no updating was made. This raised her rent an additional \$300.00.

When it comes to personal confrontation with management, it's even worse. Charles now has a case against Lieblich, alleged to have turned up one late winter night with an unidentified man to check the heat. Charles no longer allows Lieblich to enter the apartment.

Political Intervention

Councilman Ritchie Torres, who represents the area where the buildings are located, countered Leiblich's take on building conditions, saying the homes "might have [had] the highest standard of the quality in the early 20th century New York City, but not today."

Torres, a proponent of quality housing, met with Leiblich early this year during a one-on-one meeting over the building's state. He said that after the manager refused to cooperate, the city sent inspectors from Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). Fortress has been charged with 489 violations of the housing code so far. The majority of that number, 397 in all, are considered B and C violations. They include improper fire exits, rodents, lead-based paint, lack of heat, hot water, electricity, or gas.

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DECATUR AVE. BUILDINGS

ing violations and at times the inability to identify the name of the building owner, Torres has crafted a package of bills called the Housing Quality Act. The bill would push for more accountability for building owners to make repairs following a notice of violation by HPD.

As it stands, getting owners to make repairs can be a repetitive process "until the tenant is caught in the cycle of submitting complaints but never actually getting repairs." Torres wants to issue the attachment of the re-inspection fees to the Notice of Violation, which would be tacked on to the owner until the action is corrected.

Problems Organizing

Another lingering problem is the ability to organize, an issue that's slowed any progress for tenants. Much of



Photo by Kasia Romanowska

THIS BUILDING AT 2543 Decatur Ave. "might look decent from the outside, but inside it's corroded with mice and bugs," said tenant Shanequa Charles.

that is driven by tenants who would rather look the other way than to jeopardize their leases, which are month to month, according to Charles. Some keep quiet since their rent is covered by social service agencies, believing their right to be vocal suspended,

said Charles.

Although Charles repeatedly asked to have an actual meeting with the owner, she didn't succeed. She failed also to organize the meeting among the tenants, because, "the manager always finds out when the meetings are

and gets rid of the ads" posted throughout the buildings.

"I saw Lieblich ripping down the sign myself," said Ortiz, speaking specifically about one winter meeting to discuss the lack of heat and hot water. Many had to move elsewhere and those who stayed

wore sweaters and blankets to get by.

Throughout their ordeal, tenants realized that a "real investment into these apartments" is what's required to raise the standard of living, according to Charles. "Especially for the elder people who are having a hard enough time as it is getting up and down the stairs or either going to the doctor's appointment or work," Charles added.

Charles simply wants to forget about those moments when Miracle hurt herself several times running into things, when their apartment was full of lead and she was left to make repairs herself. It was a moment when she said: enough is enough and has no intention of quitting until the situation gets better.

"More people should look up to Shanequa as a role model," said Torres.

**uplift the Bronx
uplift yourself
volunteer**

The Bronx Volunteer Coalition (BxVC) is a group of Bronx organizations with a mission to increase volunteerism in the Bronx. We act as a hub for Bronx residents to give back to their community by helping people connect with volunteer opportunities in their neighborhood.

Bronx Volunteer Coalition

Volunteer today at www.bxvc.org (646) 274-6047
[@BronxVolunteers](https://twitter.com/BronxVolunteers)
[f Bronx-Volunteer-Coalition](https://facebook.com/Bronx-Volunteer-Coalition)

Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Free Fall Fun on Jerome

The Jerome-Gun Hill BID presents its free 13th Annual **Fall Festival** on Sept. 20 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., rain or shine, between Gun Hill Road and Mosholu Parkway. Events include live performances, kiddie rides, food, health screenings, raffles, giveaways, sports tournaments, and more. Join the after-party at Escape Restaurant and Lounge at 3489 Jerome Ave. For more information, call (718) 324-4946 or BID Director Marcia Cameron at (347) 640-0104.

Onstage

- The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Chatham Chamber Ensemble**, Sept. 20; and **Jose Obando Trio**, Sept. 27; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

- The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents "**Obsesión**" featuring singer Danny Rivera, musical director Nelson González, pianist Emilio Morales, and a number of other Latin performers, Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$45 to \$60. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Events

- Pelham Bay Park hosts a free **Bronx Native American Festival**, Sept. 21 from noon to 4 p.m. at its south picnic area (last stop on #6 train; enter park at Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue). Events include music, storytelling, food, and dance. For more information, call (718) 430-1891.

- Bronx Community Board #10 presents its free **Healthy Lifestyles Challenge**, Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Pelham Bay Park (field behind bleachers at Middletown Road parking lot). Learn about proper nutrition. Join an hour-long walk through the park at 11:30 a.m. and receive a free pedometer (while supplies last). Wear sneakers, long sleeve shirts, and pants. For more information, call (718) 892-1161.

- Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family**

Arts Projects: Spicy Paper, to mix pulp and spice to make flavored handmade paper, Sept. 20 and 21; and Nature Becomes a Greek God, to transform materials found in nature into a portrait of a native deity or Greek god, Sept. 27 and 28; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is free Saturdays and Tuesdays until noon all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

Exhibits

- The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, presents **Beyond the Supersquare**, featuring a variety of artwork, through Jan. 11. For more detailed information, call (718) 681-6000.

Library Events

- The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **School Bus Bookmark**: (ages 7 to 12) hands-on project, Sept. 25 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 teens/young adults: **Film**: "Ender's Game," Sept. 20 at 2 p.m. Adults can attend: **Microsoft Word for Beginners**: Sept. 25 at 12:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.
- The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids ages 5 to 12: **Active Health at 4 p.m.**: Yoga and zumba, Sept. 19; **Pajama Party**: Arts and crafts, read aloud, and snacks, Sept. 22 at 6 p.m.; and

Chess Program: Learn to play, Sept. 30 at 4 p.m. For teens/young adults: **Film**: Sept. 18 at 3:30 p.m. For adults: **Computer Basics Open Lab at noon**: Sept. 18, 23, 25, 30 and Oct. 2. 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 Sept. 29 for the next publication date of Oct. 2.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Bronx Youth Heard

The *Norwood News* is accepting applications from Bronx high school students ages 14 to 18 for its **Bronx Youth Heard** after school journalism program. To obtain a copy of the application, call (718) 324-4998 or log on to www.norwoodnews.org/youth-journalism/.

Free Credit Score and Analysis Program

Ridgewood Savings Bank will host a free credit score and analysis program, to learn to manage finances, at two of its branches from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.: 3824 White Plains Rd. on Sept. 20 (718) 882-0440; and 1626 Bruckner Blvd. on Sept. 27 (718) 589-1323. Appointments are required.

Free Legal Assistance for Citizenship

NYCitizenship in Schools is offering free and confidential legal and application assistance for citizenship on Saturday, Sept. 20 at the Bronx High School for Law and Community Service at 500 E. Fordham Rd. For more information and required documents, call (212) 788-7654 or visit www.nyc.gov/nycitizenship.

NYBG Open House

The New York Botanical Garden seeks hosts/attendants to work at its Holiday Train Show. An Open House will take place on Wednesday, Sept. 24 from 4 to 8 p.m. in the Watson Building room 302. For more information on duties and requirements, call (718) 817-8700 or visit [nybg.org/employment](http://www.nybg.org/employment).

School Registration

The Department of Education has Registration Centers open at various sites in the Bronx from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for new and re-entering students. To find the center nearest you, call 311.

MMCC Services

The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center offers a number of services including food stamps (ext. 304) at 3450 DeKalb Ave. For more information and details of classes and programs, call (718) 882-4000. In addition, there is Head Start and Universal Pre-K at the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center at 3880 Sedgwick Ave. Call (718) 654-0563 for more information.

Special Needs Services

Parent Advocacy Services offers help for parents of children with special needs, finding the right high school for one's child and preparing students for college. For more information email Hazel Adams-Shango at info@BeingSpecialNYC.com.

Cash for Guns

Trade in guns for money, no questions asked, at three Bronx churches on Saturday, Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information and details, contact your local precinct.

Food Bank Assistance

The Food Bank of New York offers free meals and food for the needy throughout the Bronx. They also assist with other services including food stamps, income tax returns, job training, and legal assistance. To find a location near you, call (212) 566-7855 or visit <http://www.foodbanknyc.org/news/find-help>.

REMEMBERING 9/11



Photo courtesy Bronx Borough President's Office

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Ruben Diaz Jr. (at podium) speaks to a crowd at his office's annual 9/11 memorial event, "The Bronx Will Always Remember." The event was co-hosted by the Bronx County Supreme Court and took place in Lou Gehrig Plaza on East 161st Street and the Grand Concourse on Sept. 12. During the event, the names of all 144 Bronx residents who died in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 were read aloud.

DENOUNCING GUN VIOLENCE WITHIN 52ND PRECINCT



Photo by David Greene

NEIGHBORS SICK OF the gunfire hold a rally to take a stance against gun violence, following a second fatal shooting in as many weeks. More than two dozen residents of Bedford Park and Fordham Manor turned out for the rally held at Decatur Avenue and East 195th Street on Sept. 8. The site was the scene of six shootings in the last five months, the most recent just last week when a 31-year-old man was killed by gunfire. Police suspect the shooting was drug related, with the assailant gunning for drug turf space.



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Our mission is to serve the healthcare needs of the community and provide individual care to each and every patient.

We hope you will find the time to visit and give us the opportunity to serve you.

Bainbridge Pharmacy will work with your doctor and your insurance company to ensure your needs are met.

We are grateful for all the support we have already received from the community. We hope Bainbridge Pharmacy becomes your Pharmacy of choice.

Rob Ryan, Pharmacist
Allison Ryan, Pharmacist



Starting Saturday, September 27 And Every Other Saturday

Come Wine And Dine With Friends

**Live Band At Escape
From 6pm to 10pm**



**After School
Lunch Special
ONLY \$5.00!**

3-6pm. Pick-up or Delivery Only.



Tacos

3 Tacos
(Beef or Chicken)

French Fries
and a Soda
or Water

Hamburger

2 Mini Burgers, French Fries
and a Soda or Water

Fried Rice

(Chicken or Beef) and a Soda or Water

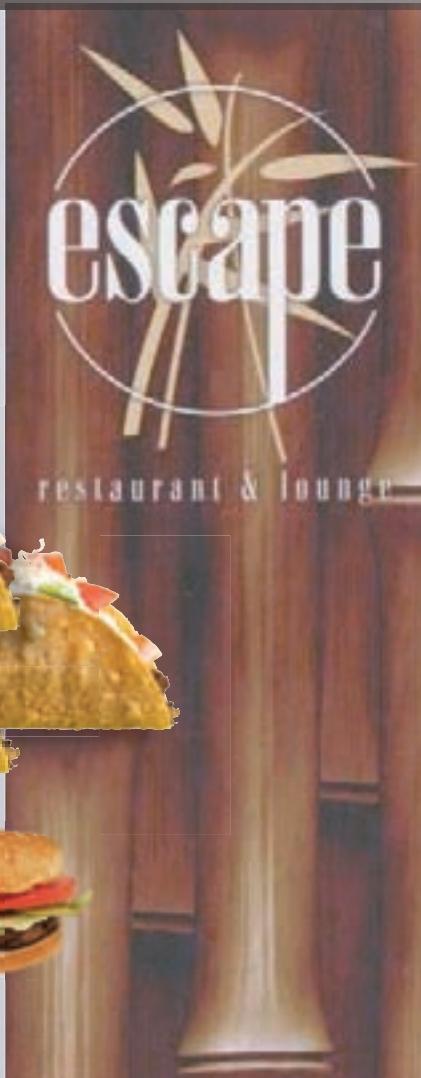


Choice of Salad

Optional for an Additional \$2

Caesar, Mixed Greens or Watercress

If you have food allergies, please inform
a staff member. Si tiene alergias de comestibles,
por favor decírela a uno de los empleados



**BOOK YOUR
HOLIDAY PARTY
WITH US NOW**

**3 Course
Lunch Special
ONLY \$5.99!**

11am-3pm. Pick-up or Delivery Only.
(10.00 minimum for delivery)

Choice of Salad

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Choice of Entrée w/Side

Pork Chops, Grilled Chicken
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Side Choices:

Rice & Beans, Fried
Green Plantains,
Fried Sweet Plantains,
French Fries,
Mashed Potatoes or
Steamed Vegetables

**Choice of
Dessert**

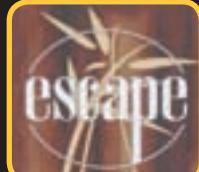
Ice Cream or Flan

Choice of Beverage

Optional for an Additional \$1

Soda (Cola or Ginger Ale), Water,
Iced Tea or Lemonade

If you have food allergies, please inform
a staff member. Si tiene alergias de comestibles,
por favor decírela a uno de los empleados



restaurant & lounge

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