



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 28, No 22 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • NOVEMBER 12-25, 2015



**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
IMPLEMENTING VISION ZERO | PG. 4**



**BE HEALTHY: BRONX HONORED
FOR HEALTH INITIATIVES | PG. 12**

OVAL PARK LEFT IN THE DARK

Obscure lighting at Williamsbridge Oval Park affecting football practice



Photo by Adi Talwar

IN THE DARK. The Bronx Knights appear raring to go during their practice in virtual darkness at Williamsbridge Oval Park. The club's organizers have requested lights be installed at the park. (A flash was utilized for the photograph to illuminate the players.)

By DAVID CRUZ

The gridiron bustle could only be heard, not seen, at Williamsbridge Oval Park. A gruff voice barks "Get up! Get down!" as a sharp whistle signals an invisible

command. Tiny helmeted silhouettes buzz about mid-field in a pre-determined pattern, shifting carefully between the goalposts.

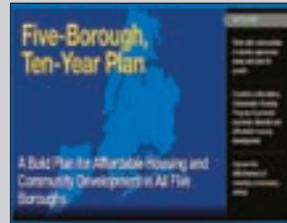
It's dusk at the Oval, with virtually no visibility

save for distant, orangey glows illuminating over the multi-purpose field. It's there where Drake Holliday blindly feeds a plug from a generator to a socket.

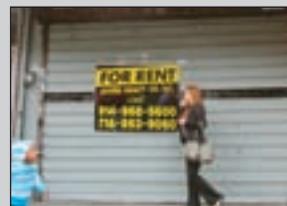
It's past 5 p.m. on Nov. 3,

pitch black after Daylight Saving Time, and practice for the Bronx Knights, a pee-wee team for which Holliday serves as president, must go on. The trio of floodlights

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EDITORIAL

Dismal Voter Turnout Only Hurts You

On Election Night, the *Norwood News* stood glued to the results of voter returns in the race for Bronx District Attorney, a contest rife with political intrigue wrapped in rarity (see page 7 for full story). The news of an actual race, the first in 27 years following the long tenure of borough District Attorney Robert Johnson, could have spurred a big presence in a contest that's lain dormant for nearly three decades.

One would think it would at the very least signal a spike in voter turnout in an otherwise lackluster political season. We expected that. Unfortunately, it didn't happen.

When the returns trickled in, we noticed there was barely a voice going to the polls. The bulk of registered Bronx voters had once again stood home, relinquishing a privilege that remains unseen in virtually most of the modern world. In the race for DA, the Board of Elections tallied 32,901 votes, despite polls staying open for 15 hours. Casting a vote seemed like a solitary event, with nary a voter in sight.

Doing the math further, and taking preliminary results from the DA race, we see that of the 96.67 percent of precincts finalizing their votes, 32,901 votes were cast. Of that number, 85.58 percent went to Darcel Clark, a Democrat, while Robert Siano, a Republican, received 14.10 percent with write-in



Photo by Jasmine Gomez

NOT MUCH TURNOUT in this year's Election Day, with just 3.2 percent of the voting population heading to the polls.

votes making up .32 percent of the vote. Of those figures, we've tallied 4.5 percent of the 718,146 registered voters went to the polls. Of the 1,016,912 Bronxites of the age of 18 who are eligible, a group termed the Voting Age Population, a whopping 3.2 percent of that number went out to vote. Not good.

It's been a matter of record that casting a ballot has been in sharp decline in New York State, following a trend in the U.S. powered by declining confidence in the money-driven political process and apathy towards civic responsibility. It's no longer viewed as duty-bound, which is unfortunate.

It's been said by political observers that legislators often pay attention to communities that vote, interpreted as a symbol of a conscious voting bloc. After all, politicians are beholden to

voters. The more voters such as you pay attention, the more politicians will pay attention, which can lead to a stream of improvements. That point is ever tangible during election season, when prospective and incumbent lawmakers pencil campaign stops in your neighborhood.

This would be significantly advantageous in poverty-stricken neighborhoods, where low voter turnout has prevented any shred of neighborhood improvement. Factors such as limited education, complicated voting procedures, language barriers, and even the transient state of some neighborhoods, contributed to scant turnout.

But could lack of voting be interpreted as a referendum on a voter's faith in politics? Maybe. Perhaps yearly headlines of elite politicians standing trial for abuse of power compel voters to stay home on Election Day.

The silent demonstration, however, only makes the incumbents stronger. It's ironic, yet it happens. Low voter turnout can maintain the status quo, and nary a challenge by anyone. By not voting, you've effectively shut out a right that's been earned and protected since the country seized its independence.

It's quiet out there, save for the streets. There has been protest after protest on a given cause, yet no one's making noise at the polls. Reverse it in the future.



Letters To The Editor

Alzheimer's Advance Testing Unnecessary

Dear Editor:

In the Be Healthy column in your Oct. 29 - Nov. 11 issue, it's suggested that people with early signs or symptoms of Alzheimer's be tested to learn if they're on track for the disease. The article claims the condition is "irreversible with no cure."

If someone exhibits one or more of the early warning signs of Alzheimer's

as listed in your article, they're undoubtedly already upset or frustrated enough without having to be tested for confirmation. Not only can testing positive for the disease cause more distress and depression to the patient, but to family members as well.

When patients are tested for illnesses for which there are treatments or cures, they can feel they have a fighting chance to become well. Since there's currently no known cure for Alzheimer's, it doesn't seem advan-

tageous to know in advance - unless it's to have the patient start putting their affairs in order - which is, in itself, a depressing thought, or to start a "bucket list" at an earlier age than they may have anticipated.

According to the article, having Alzheimer's may lead to "a gradual decline in memory and ultimately death," but can't that be said for all of us if we live long enough? Why get this information in advance?

Judy Noy
Norwood

CB7 Gets Turn to Vote on City Housing Plan

By **ADEDAMOLA AGBOOLA**

Mayor Bill de Blasio's proposal to create more affordable housing for New Yorkers dubbed Housing New York might hit a bump as community boards, including Community Board 7, will vote for or against the plan.

At issue with CB7, where its general board is expected to vote down the measure when it meets Nov. 17, is the loss of an in-house parking requirement for new buildings that could lead to increased demand for street parking. The rule would apply to neighborhoods falling under a so-called Transit Zone, where there's ample public transportation for neighbors. In mid-October, CB7's Land Use and Zoning Committee voted against the plan. The General Board usually follows the recommendations of its committees.

The new set of proposals by de Blasio's office also includes Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, which would mandate a reserve of about 25 to 30 percent residential floor area in any newly developed property permanently set aside for low- to median-income earners around the city.

The proposal has to go through the lengthy Uniform Land Use Review



MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO, at a news conference in May 2014, announces his Housing New York plan in the Claremont Village of the Bronx.

File Photo

Procedure (ULURP), which seeks advisory approvals or rejections from 59 community boards, the City's Planning Commission, and borough boards before any the New York City Council votes on it next spring.

Community boards around the city have organized town halls and special meetings to vote and have an open discussion about the pros and cons of

the mayor's new plan. The plans have residents skeptical over the claims of the program's claim to create income diverse neighborhoods and affordable income housing while others are simply concerned about parking problems the rezoning will cause in their neighborhoods.

Of the 12 Bronx community boards that voted on the mayor's plan, only

community boards 6 and 9 approved it. "Our Uniform Land Use Review Procedure committee and the Housing and Economic Development committee will be reporting their recommendations at the general board meeting before the voting exercise," said Dr. Bola Omotosho, chairman of Community Board 5. "At the moment, there are still a lot of questions being asked by [community board] members so that they be well informed before they cast their votes." Community boards have till the end of November to submit their recommendations on the plan.

Even though the community boards' votes carry an advisory capacity and not a legal one, they are seriously taken into consideration by the City Council. The Borough President's office plays a mandated role in the ULURP process, and won't be taking any position on the amendment until after the public gets its turn to speak on the issue.

"Our office will consider the input of elected officials, community organizations, our community boards and the public-at-large as we develop our position on this issue," Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., said in a statement.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



With some recent high-profile motor vehicle crashes, we asked readers their thoughts on the implementation of Vision Zero and whether pedestrian safety has gotten better or worse.



It doesn't matter because the drivers don't abide by the law anyway. People complain when you go too slow; they beep you and try and make you go faster and if people don't see police around, they're moving. Who wants to do 25 miles per hour? They're in a hurry. You ever drive 25 and see how far you get? You hold other drivers up.

T. Becerra
Norwood



I believe that traffic has gotten safer to some extent. Some drivers are actually driving more cautiously now because of the new laws that passed. However, some drivers don't take this into consideration and there are some accidents that still happen. There should be more enforcement to these laws.

Sach Torres
Norwood



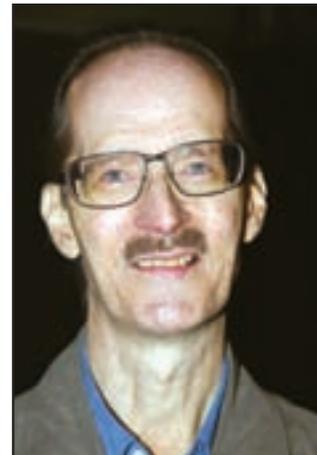
I feel like traffic fatalities have increased a little bit over last year with more casualties and more incidents. To tell you the truth, I feel like they should enforce more of the traffic laws. Nobody pays attention to the speed limit. Police give some fines, but few drivers care about the fines and accidents happen because people die every day.

Steve Tzvetanov
Norwood



The traffic over here is dangerous. Where I live they have construction on one side and there's a stop light for you to stop, but you can't see the traffic that's coming down and drivers always try and run the red light. I've almost gotten hit two or three times crossing the street over there. I haven't noticed a difference with Vision Zero. They need more patrol cars. I feel they don't give out enough tickets.

Jeremy Joseph
Burnside



I've noticed that it is getting better, yes. It's not what it should be, but it's starting to improve. I've noticed that it's easier to cross now without getting hit by a car. Drivers are driving more cautiously. I think they should continue to go further with it to provide more safety for pedestrians.

Dennis McCarthy
Kingsbridge



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Meeting on Oval Park Violence Fizzles

By WILLIAM MATHIS

Representatives from a number of Bronx-based anti-violence groups gathered on Nov. 4 to discuss strategies to reduce youth violence. The meeting occurred after a few recent violent incidents in the Williamsbridge Oval Park, including a couple of large fights among students of a nearby school.

But in the audience assembled in the Oval Recreation Center, there was a central demographic missing: young people.

"The people who need to hear it are not here," said Abdul "Sleep" Johnson, founder and CEO of the Community Board Athletic Leadership League, noting that all the interested people in the room could not effect change without input from youth.

Heavily utilized during warmer months, the Williamsbridge Oval Park has long been a staple in Norwood. While many family-friendly events use Oval Park as their venue, it's also a setting for fistfights among high school students. Recently, pictures taken by Aldo Perez, a neighborhood activist, captured a brawl among students by the track and field. In April 2013, a video of two teenage girls fighting at the Oval was uploaded to YouTube.

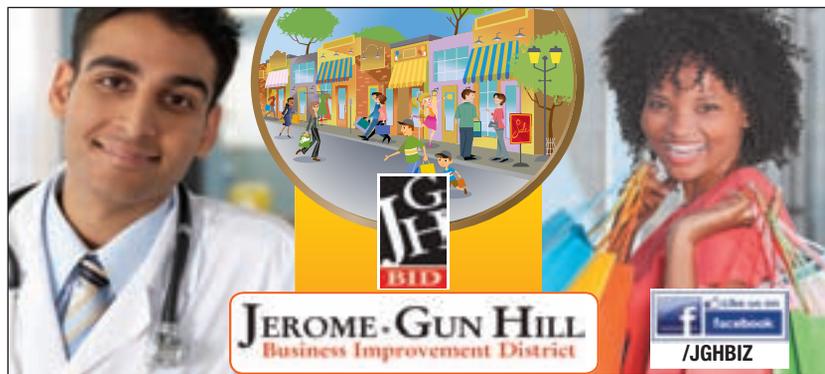
Crystal Reveron, community affairs officer for the 52nd Precinct, told the audience that the uptick in violence in the Oval is part of a general trend of increased use of the park. "Kids are attracted to parks," she said. Reveron

said the Police Department has made 13 arrests in the park so far this year, mostly for robbery crimes. Patrols can be seen daily by officers, who share duties with park enforcement patrol officers who are seldom seen.

Doug Condit, one of a handful of community members in attendance, emphasized the need to include youth in the conversation on how best to work with them. "If you're not into the athletic opportunities we provide, what do you want to do?" asked Condit.

The other organizations that presented, including Bronx Rise Against Violence (BRAG) and Peace December do not currently operate in Norwood, but offered their work as examples of successful youth outreach and peace building. Peace December operates a space where all kinds of groups get together and find common ground on contentious issues.

Emilio Rodriguez from BRAG spoke about the group's programs in the 46th Precinct to reach youth in gangs. He said they work with gang leaders to try and encourage the youth to get involved in other activities besides gangs. His organization is set to open a new \$80,000 music studio where they teach how to make and record rap music. While they do not work in the 52nd Precinct directly, he noted the interconnectedness of the neighborhoods. "What happens in the 5-2 goes into the 4-6," he said.



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Photo courtesy Aldo Perez

YOUNG PEOPLE BRAWL on the grounds of Williamsbridge Oval Park, a common setting to settle scores.



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Warning: Deadly Aphrodisiac Is Rare Drug of Choice

By JASMINE GOMEZ

Synthetic marijuana is not the only drug trend troubling city health officials, who are now warning the public of a deadly aphrodisiac making the rounds.

The warning by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene comes after a 39-year-old's death as a result of ingesting an aphrodisiac that goes by the nicknames "stone," "Piedra China," and "Black Rock," among others.

The hospital alerted the New York City Poison Control Center (NYCPCC) of the unidentified man's cause of death.

The NYCHD is asking health care providers to alert poison control if they suspect a case of poisoning from the drug. The NYCPCC has already seen seven similar cases since the year 2000.

"Stone," derived from toad venom and trees can cause heart problems by disrupting the normal rhythm of the heart, affect the skin if applied topically, and in some cases lead to death. Poisoning by the drug may manifest itself through vomiting or abdominal and chest pain.

Although "stone" has been banned by the Food and Drug Administration, it is imported illegally and sold in some adult and neighborhood stores as a small solid chunk. The Department of Health and federal authorities are working together to get the drug off store shelves.

They warn consumers who use the substance to stop using them, and to throw them in the garbage. They ask anyone to call the Poison Control Center at (212) 764-7667. Spanish-speakers can call (212) 836-3667.

St. Patrick's Home Honors Departed



Photo by Miriam Quinones

FATHER MARK ZITTLE, O.CARM., a chaplain at Fordham University, leads a special mass at St. Patrick's Home Rehabilitation and Health Care Center on Nov. 7 honoring the home's past and present clients who died between October 2014 and November 2015. The ceremony is a yearly tradition at the Van Cortlandt Village home at 66 Van Cortlandt Pk. So. Parishioners at the solemn gathering were also accompanied by Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm, the founders of the home.

SAT Prep Available to High School Juniors

By JASMINE GOMEZ

New York City high school juniors will no longer have to trek it to another school's campus on an early Saturday morning to take the SAT exam.

As part of the College Access for All Initiative, a program designed to make the path to college easier for students of all backgrounds, the school calendar will now include an SAT school day. Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina announced the program at a College Application Week kickoff event at the High School of Fashion Industries. The new SAT School Day will allow high school students to take the SAT exam for free during the designated school day in the spring of

their junior year.

"The new SAT School Day and the expansion of College Application Week demonstrate our commitment to providing every student with the support and resources they need to pursue college," said Farina in a statement.

The school calendar year already includes a PSAT school day aimed at sophomores as they prepare to take the exam the following year and has resulted in a threefold increase of students who actually take the exam. Officials hope that the SAT School Day will have similar results by removing hurdles such as individually having to register for for the test, traveling to another location on a Saturday morn-

ing, and in particular, broadening opportunities for African-American and Hispanic students.

Statistics taken in 2015 by the New York City Department of Education show average SAT scores fare better than the rest of the country, with the critical reading, writing, and math portions of the exam scoring three points higher when compared to the United States. In the last five years, the number of students taking the SAT has climbed steadily.

In spring 2016, 90 schools will serve as pilots for the SAT School Day program, with the citywide implementation of the initiative happening in spring 2017.

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With Gentrification Worries Germinating Across the

By DAVID CRUZ

In the decades since Tom opened his Kingsbridge business, things had always been profitable and quiet. That was until last year when his landlord denied him his regular five-year lease extension. Tom asked his last name be withheld for fear of retribution from his landlord who's dangled a month-to-month lease over his head.

"My future's uncertain there," said Tom. He's since kick started his restaurant business in nearby Westchester County, where small businesses reign, he noted.

Along Kingsbridge Road, a commercial area home to small businesses, many stores have maintained a holding pattern as the corridor awaits the opening of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center, considered a flashpoint in the future of the working class neighborhood. But talk of gentrification has become a predominant issue for small business tenants in Kingsbridge, thanks to the development project that's still in its early stages.

The real estate industry has indeed made a comeback, given the escalating rents across the city. For small business owners, the comeback has deepened into a crisis, according to Take Back NYC, an advocacy group that views the commercial lease renewal process more as a shakedown than an evenhanded exchange.

The group has been aggressively lobbying the New York City Council to enact the Small Business Survival Jobs Act (SBSJA), which would give automatic 10-year leases to commercial tenants, a benefit to small businesses that rely on time to cultivate their venture. Long term leases are more attractive to banks, who inter-

pret them as an indicator of stability and loan-worthiness.

SBSJA Bill

The small business sector has long been a driver of job growth, with 66.7 percent of the city's small businesses employing fewer than five workers, up from 65.2 percent in 2008, according to the Center for an Urban Future (CUF), a nonprofit think tank.

But as it stands, landlords have maintained a grip on their commercial leases, offering them up to the highest bidder, according to Kirsten Theodos, one of the lead organizers of Take Back NY. "The only factor that's taken into consideration in a commercial lease renewal process is how much is the landlord going to make," said Theodos. "It never factors in, 'Well, why can't the commercial tenant make a living?'"

Other stipulations in the bill include arbitration rights for commercial tenants who can deem their lease unfair and reduced down payments for first-year commercial tenants. The bill would also end the unconfirmed, underground practice of landlords seeking an under-the-table bribe, or "key money" to keep a commercial tenant active.

The bill is intended to reverse a struggle that's creeping into the Bronx: a priced-out borough. Rising rents by an unrelenting real estate industry have caused a drop in the number of small businesses opening and an escalating rise in big chain stores. In 2014, New York City saw a 2.5 percent increase in the number of national retailers opening in the city when compared to the .5 percent the city saw between 2012 and 2013, according to a



File Photo by Janaki Chadha

FOREVER YOUNG, a business once in Kingsbridge relocated after a recent rent spike.

report by the CUF.

In the Bronx, small businesses did not fare well in 2014, thanks to a 30 percent jump in the number of businesses facing court evictions. Rent, it seems, has been a burden that's forced many to close or simply walk away from their business without recouping their initial investment.

"How this system's set up today," said Theodos, "it's all about the landlord."

Reintroducing the Bill

The bill was reintroduced in 2014 by Bronx Councilwoman Annabel Palma, who was unavailable to speak to the *Norwood News* as of press time.

She's one of a handful of legislators in the Bronx Council Delegation supporting the bill, with Council Members Andy King and Maria del Carmen Arroyo also endorsing.

Twenty-seven Council members have now backed the bill, the magic number for a bill to pass the Council. Before a floor vote, the Committee on Small Business, which oversees business matters, would have to hold a hearing.

The bill has seen several incarnations since the mid-1980s, though it's never gained enough traction to achieve support from mayoral administrations. Mayor Bill de Blasio, while a City Councilman and later the Public

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Borough, a Bill Aims to Curb Small Business Erosion

Advocate, had pushed for the bill. He has maintained his support to small businesses by lowering fines levied on small business owners, though he's said little on his stance on the bill. His deputy mayor for Housing and Economics, Alicia Glen, opposes the legislation, explaining it may "not solve the problem that people think the problem is."

Theodos has long blamed the bill's holdup on the financial reach of the real estate lobby, which has pumped millions of dollars into City Council campaigns. During the 2013 election cycle, the political action committee known as Jobs for New York pumped millions of dollars into 17 Council races, according to campaign filings.

Other council members in the Bronx and beyond have largely kept quiet on the bill or have simply gone on record saying they were examining it after inquiries from the *Norwood News*. Some have questioned whether the bill infringes on the legal rights of the landlord, a claim that surfaces whenever the bill grabs attention.

Those standing against the bill include the Real Estate Board of New York, a powerful lobbying group that's fought the bill each time it surfaces. Its president, John Banks, has questioned the bills, calling them "unconstitutional."

Nisha Mistry, director of the Urban Law Center at Fordham University, said the bill, should it ever be challenged in court, has strong arguments for and against. While opponents could argue the State should have oversight in commercial rent laws, she said, supporters of the bill could point to the City's obligation in protecting New Yorkers from what it sees as unfair practices.

"The question of actually controlling the rent or doing a rent control strategy versus other strategies that can lock in affordability is still unclear," said Mistry, "because there are other things that can be done, like actually developing or prioritizing small business in actual development."

Mistry, who favored the bill's mediation policy, argued that rezoning of commercial corridors can serve as a roundabout way to keep the small business sector intact by only mandating mom-and-pops stores be established in certain areas.

The question of legality had been

addressed in 2010 when Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. hosted a forum on the legislation. Invitations went to the Real Estate Board of New York and then-Council Speaker Christine Quinn, considered major opponents of the legislation, though they never appeared.

"Even at the 2009 public hearing of the bill, no one brought up challenging the legality," said Theodos. She cited a report in 2009 that justifies the City Council authorization to pass the SBSJA bill with no legislative input from the state. A committee date for the current bill has not yet

been set.

Editor's Note: The comments Ms. Mistry initially made published in the online version of this story were misread by the author of this report. The Norwood News regrets the error.

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NORWOOD NEWS

S N A P S H O T S



Photo courtesy Miriam Quinones

MIRIAM QUINONES (LEFT), a freelance photographer for the *Norwood News* was among the winners of an art contest at Poe Cottage, which showcased photo artwork from several Bronx-based artists. On Nov. 7, Quinones shared a moment with several artists who had their work showcased.



Photo by Adedamola Agboola

THE HALLOWEEN SPIRIT coursed along the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District Oct. 30 with help from Nohelia Aquino (center), suiting up as Spider-Woman and Jasmine Gomez (right), dressed as a black cat. They share a moment with this youngster decked out as Captain America. The duo helped distribute trick-or-treat bags to stores participating in Halloween festivities.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

THESE KIDS HOP AND DANCE on Decatur Avenue near Fordham Road, which transformed into a Halloween bonanza loaded with benefits of staying healthy. Organized by Shanequa Charles, the third annual Miss Abbie's Halloween Extravaganza Health Fair drew some 2000 guests this year. Participants took advantage of healthy treats, a bouncy castle and health screenings. Councilman Ritchie Torres and Provident Loan Society were among the sponsors.



Photo courtesy Office of Councilman Ritchie Torres

WHAT TO DO with \$1 million in capital funding was a question posed at a Participatory Budgeting session organized by Councilman Ritchie Torres (center). His office launched the second year of PB, an initiative that puts the budgeting process to constituents, at Theodore Roosevelt Educational Campus on Oct. 28. There, locals drafted proposals for improvements to their neighborhoods.



Photo by Jasmine Gomez

CREWS FROM THE New York City Department of Parks & Recreation have begun repairs caused from a wall collapse at the north side of Williamsbridge Oval Park. It's still unclear what caused the wall to collapse and has since been cordoned off while crews make repairs. A video showing the initial repair work can be found on www.norwoodnews.org.



Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER for Shalom Kalnicki, M.D., F.A.C.R.O., chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology at Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care and professor of Radiation Oncology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, who has been installed on the board of the Radiosurgery Society (RSS) and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Chairs of Academic Radiation Oncology Programs (SCAROP). Kalnicki hails from Riverdale.

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Bronx Wins RWJF Culture of Health Prize

By NOAH CALDWELL

The Bronx's collective goal of improving public health has earned it the highly competitive "Culture of Health" prize from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

After a yearlong application process spearheaded by hospitals, nonprofits, and the New York State Department of Health, the Bronx has been chosen as one of eight winners from a pool of 340 nationwide communities. For health professionals in a county that consistently ranks as New York's unhealthiest, the prize is a symbol of positive change.

"It marks a turning of the page," said Dr. Amanda Parsons, vice president of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Medical Center (also known as Montefiore Health System), the coordinating body for the prize application. "It was won by tens of thousands of people, working

over decades; people who didn't flee when others fled."

The RWJF, a philanthropic organization based in Princeton, N.J., awards the prize to communities tackling public health issues from every possible angle. So when applications opened last fall, the prize committee looked for concrete action, not statistics.

Parsons and the Bronx application team highlighted a raft of ongoing initiatives, hoping to show that public health conditions are an interconnected web, with each strand pulling at another. Among the initiatives were a YMCA diabetes prevention program, a push for fresh produce in bodegas, school-based health services for underserved students, and collaborative data-sharing between clinics.

"The Bronx is thinking about health broadly," said Abbey Clofsky, an RWJF senior program officer



File Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

A WALK IN THE PARK. Health initiatives such as this Walk the Oval event by Montefiore Health System earned the borough a coveted prize by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

who vetted prize applications. "The physical environment, transforming schools, access to housing. We look at partnerships. We get a lot of applications that are highlighting just one organization."

And yet, the Bronx ranks last in New York in the "County Health Rankings and Roadmap"—a nationwide list compiled by the RWJF. The ranking considers dozens of indicators such as life expectancy, childhood poverty and sexually transmitted infections. Every year since the list began in 2010 the Bronx has been at the bottom.

Clofsky noted it was the county rankings that actually spurred the foundation to create the Culture of Health prize in 2012. "What we found was that it allowed counties to compare to each other. They wanted examples of what their peers were doing," she said. To the prize committee, the Bronx's low performance on paper didn't take away from the borough's progressive approach to public health. "There are a lot of places that are healthy across the board. But that doesn't tell us which are the communities that are working the hardest."

Dr. Jane Bedell, at the Bronx District Public Health Office, isn't deterred by the Bronx's low ranking.

For the last few years, she and other local health professionals have organized under the rallying cry "Not 62"—a reference to being ranked last of the 62 counties in New York. The hashtag #Not62 appears almost daily on Twitter, as Bronxites post about bike rides, community gardens or school nutrition.

"If we're going to get out of last place, we're going to need to do a heck of a lot of work," Bedell said. "But we can all agree that people should be able to achieve their maximum health potential."

At Montefiore Health System, Parsons believes winning the prize helps to clear the slate for a borough fighting a lingering negative reputation. "This isn't a prize for potential. This prize was about demonstrating that really good things have happened," she said. "It's a very poor borough, and there's been a lot of underinvestment. And yet, there's this community that really cares."

Along with receiving a \$25,000 cash prize, winning communities are folded into the foundation's network of previous recipients. "The cash prize is in some ways secondary," said Clofsky. "It's about giving them the opportunity to make a platform to tell their story."

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Heating Assistance Available

This winter, the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) offers eligible households of low-income and elderly New Yorkers to receive a one-time benefit of up to \$625 depending on income, household size, and heating source. Households may begin applying for assistance Nov. 16. Applications for emergency benefits for those in danger of losing heat will be accepted starting Jan. 4, 2016. For more information and requirements, go to <http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap>.

MMCC Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon

MMCC's Senior Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave., hosts a pre-Thanksgiving luncheon with musical entertainment on Nov. 19 at 11:30 a.m. for seniors 60 and older and advance registration is required. For more information, call (718) 798-6601. Space is limited.

Yankee Leadership Awards

Applications are available for the Youth Leadership Awards. Nominees are expected to perform 50 hours of leadership/volunteer services as a tutor, mentor, community unity developer, and/or as an advocate against violence in the community. Submit applications by Nov. 20 to New York Yankees Community Council, Attn: Brian Smith, Senior Vice President, Corporate/Community Relations, Yankee Stadium, One East 161st Street, Bronx, NY 10451. For more information, email community_relations@yankees.com.

Norwood Terrace Applications

Applications are available for affordable housing for low-income individuals wanting to secure housing at 3349 Webster Ave. Apply online or through mail. Deadline is Nov. 30. To apply online, go to www.nyc.gov/housingconnect. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Norwood Terrace Apartments, 1357 Broadway, Box 309, New York, NY 10018. Send only one application per development. Do not submit duplicate applications.

Do not apply online and also send in a paper application. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

Bainbridge Ave. Garden Seeks Donations

The Bainbridge Avenue Garden, sponsor of the Norwood Food Co-op, is accepting donations to help fix a falling stone wall in their garden. The cost of the repairs is estimated to be \$2,500, and \$1,250 is still needed. Make your checks or money orders payable to Bainbridge Avenue Garden and mail to: Janice Flood, 365 E. 209th Street, Apt. 1C, Bronx, NY 10467. All are invited to see the garden in the spring.

Snow Laborers

Early registration has begun for part-time emergency laborers for the upcoming snow season. Pay is \$13.50 per hour, and \$20.25 per hour after 40 hours are worked in a week. To register, visit the Bronx yard at Mosholu Avenue and Broadway in Van Cortlandt Park, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Applicants must be at least age 18, bring two small photos (1 ½ square), or original and copy of two forms of ID and a Social Security Card.

CHAM'S Lending Library

The Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM), 3415 Bainbridge Ave. (off Gun Hill Road), offers books for lending for all ages at the Family Learning Place located on their first floor lobby. The public is invited to browse and borrow books for one week, with the possibility of renewal. Book donations are welcome. For more information, call (718) 741-2357 or email the Family Learning Place at flp@montefiore.org.

Immigration/Legal Services

Immigration and legal services are available at the Office of Counselman Fernando Cabrera, 107 E. Burnside Ave., Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A housing lawyer is available every other Monday. Appointments are required. To schedule one, call (347) 590-2875.

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Oval Park Left in the Dark

(continued from page 1)

Holliday's set up, more suitable for home repairs, is the best he could do. The silhouettes, young athletes dressed in football gear, transform into blurry players, thanks to fluorescent beams that supply pockets of light. It's enough to avoid a serious collision, and at least see the pigskin.

Practice could be simpler and productive, notes Holliday, if the park had high-powered stadium lights, a sorely sought-after resource. In some ways, the glare of stadium lights, a slice-of-life rite for young athletes basking in their first-ever moments of gridiron glory, has slipped away. The pageantry of football remains incomplete for these young players wanting some lights.

"Many of the other parks we go through around the city—we compete with other teams—they have the very lights we're talking about," said Holliday. "It's extremely difficult to practice and it's extremely difficult to compete with organizations that have lights."

The lack of adequate lighting has presented several inconveniences for the Bronx Knights, which was formed in 2012 by Holliday and his wife, Latanya Wilkinson. She stood on the sidelines, flashlight in one hand, as she manned a table stacked with recently developed team photos.

So far, they've taken the issue to the de Blasio Administration. Holliday admits that while they "haven't gotten the runaround, we haven't gotten the result we're looking for."

For the 150 youngsters, playing football in total darkness serves as a test to their interest in football that comes with plenty of risk. With scant lighting, several young athletes have abandoned the sport altogether, dashing a rite that could very well serve as a ticket to higher aspirations.

Others, such as Jonathan Jenkins, a third-year quarterback for the club, stuck it out. But he's long realized his disadvantage. "My receivers can't see the ball in the dark," said Jonathan, a 12-year-old who aspires to play high school football.

Juan Carlos, a first-year cornerback, finds the no-light quandary

to have limited running plays, feeling completely unprepared. "There was one game, we went to Greenpoint, and in the night all the lights were on, and it was perfect," Juan recalled.

"It just doesn't give them the drive to run in the dark," said Wilkinson of the players. "That's why we went out and bought our own lights. And it helps, but it doesn't light up the whole park."

Those who remained are "determined not to be a victim of their circumstance," said Holliday, adding the light issue impacts the evening park goers taking an evening jog or engaging in some last-minute romp around the jungle gym.

Sheila Sanchez, president of Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval (FOTWO), remains neutral on the installation. She has considered factors that include "how invasive they will be for the neighbors" residing in two-family homes and residences that hug the Oval.

Stadium lights would likely be considered a capital project, since it could be considered a park im-

provement. Determining a capital park project is often a long, cumbersome process falling under the discretion of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. The agency works with the New York City Council, whose members allocate funds for a project on appeal from constituents. The agency's capital budget stands at \$803.2 million. Park projects can be tracked via a website the agency created.

The park has no recorded project except a \$750,000 skateboard area funded by Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose district covers Norwood, at the request of constituents. The last major renovation work at the Oval took place in 2013, when the Oval's newly renovated \$5.2 million Recreation Center opened.

For lights to be installed, community boards would provide input, according to Mario Lopez, a spokesman for the Parks Department. "Stadium lighting indirectly casts light on the adjacent community as well, so the community board would have to be in agreement with

construction of the lights," said Lopez. "It is up to the parks commissioner and borough commissioner to make the final determination."

After the Capital Budget Office estimates the project, funding is then asked of the local elected official, in this case Cohen.

A spokesperson for Cohen said the project has been proposed under Participatory Budgeting, a months-long process where constituents decide how they would want to spend \$1 million in capital monies. Cohen has adopted the program for the second year in a row. Though constituents have requested lights, procuring them would typically cost upwards of \$1.5 million, though an engineer determines a true estimate.

At the sidelines, parents begrudgingly accept the lack of lights. On the night of Nov. 3, Juan Diaz, a parent, noticed an ambulance had arrived to the park for an emergency unrelated to football, its fiery sirens cutting the night. "That's about the most lights we got in here," said Diaz.

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Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m. at Serviam Gardens (auditorium), 323 E. 198th St. CB7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Traffic & Transportation: Nov. 12; Veterans Committee: Nov. 12 at 7:30 p.m.; Housing/Land Use & Zoning: Nov. 18; Environment & Sanitation: Nov. 23; Health & Hospitals: Nov. 23 at 7:30 p.m.; Community Relations/LTP: Nov. 24; Economic Development: Nov. 24 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

THE 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meets on Nov. 19 at the Bedford Park Senior Center, 243 E. 204th St., from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



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Sex Pervert on the Run

Police are asking for the public's help in tracking down a suspect wanted for exposing himself to a 16-year-old girl on board a bus in Kingsbridge Heights.

Police said the incident happened Oct. 23 on the Bx9 bus at East Kingsbridge Road and the Grand Concourse at around 8 a.m. The suspect on the bus exposed himself to the young victim by placing his private parts on her wrist.

Police described the suspect as a male black standing at 5'8", and weighing 200 pounds. He was seen wearing a beige sweater, collared shirt underneath, light blue jeans and an over-the-shoulder bag.

Anyone with knowledge of the incident is encouraged to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477). The public can also submit tips by logging on to the Crime Stoppers website, www.nypdcrimestoppers.com or via text to 274637 (CRIMES) then enter TIP577.

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--David Cruz



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Bronx Voters Choose First-Ever Female Bronx DA

By **DAVID CRUZ, MICHAEL BROWN and DAVID GREENE**

The race for Bronx District Attorney went as expected, with Bronx voters electing its first-ever female DA.

Former Bronx Supreme Court Judge Darcel Clark, a Democrat, defeated Robert Siano, a Republican, in a DA race unseen in 27 years. The position had been held by Robert Johnson, who stepped down so he can run for a state judgeship.

Clark secured 85.58 percent of the vote over Siano's combined 14.10 percent of the vote. The race, however, was viewed as a lock for Clark. With the Bronx overwhelmingly comprised of registered Democrats by 10 to 1, Siano's chances of winning were considerably slim.

"I am truly, truly humbled that the voters have provided me with the opportunity to serve as the first woman District Attorney of our borough," said Clark, who stood before an electrified crowd at Eastwood Manor. A few weeks ago, the Judicial Convention held its meet at the same catering venue to nominate her.



Photo by Michael Brown Jr.

DARCEL CLARK, NEWLY elected Bronx District Attorney (center), approaches the podium during a celebratory get together on Election Night. Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (left) and Speaker Carl Heastie (right) usher the DA-elect to the stage.

The gathering certainly had a religious undertone, with the crowd sprinkling several hallelujahs as Clark spoke. Clark, a devout Christian, took the stage after a brief introduction from Speaker of the state Assembly, Carl Heastie, who also represents the district Clark lives in.

Her supporters, including lawyer

friend Lindo Solis, had nothing but praise to heap on her. "She's an amazing lawyer," Solis said, further dubbing her a "sister come back home."

Charles Orvan, chief of staff of the Bronx Clergy Task Force called Clark "a success story." "Here's a young lady from Soundview projects. She's not visiting us; she's from us," said Orvan.

Across the Bronx, there was no gathering at the Bronx Republican Headquarters in Morris Park. Siano, a lawyer with offices in the Bronx and White Plains, thanked supporters and offered his congratulations to Clark via statement. "I look forward to serving the public and I don't know what the future holds, but I know I'm not going to stop trying," said Siano, who had only two weeks to campaign.

Clark's victory came under a cloud of suspicion by political observers who accused the Bronx Democratic County Committee, and Heastie, an ally of Clark's, in orchestrating her victory with little competition. Many claimed Johnson was told to relinquish his seat after easily winning the September primary so the Judicial Convention can have the legal authority to nominate a party-friendly candidate. Johnson has vehemently denied the charge, explaining through a statement that his decision was made by him alone.

For his part, Johnson easily won a seat in Bronx Supreme Court. His and Clark's tenure will begin Jan. 1, 2016.

BRONX ELECTION DAY RESULTS

Justice of the Supreme Court—12th Judicial District (Six Winners Represented in Bold)

Candidate's Name	Party	Number of Votes	Percentage
Sallie Manzanette	Democratic	20555	15.60%
Steve Mayo	Republican	2731	2.07%
Steve Mayo	Conservative	1200	0.91%
Dianne Renwick	Democratic	19128	14.51%
Mitchell J. Danziger	Democratic	18256	13.85%
Guy T. Parisi	Republican	2458	1.87%
Guy T. Parisi	Conservative	1031	0.78%
Lizbeth Gonzalez	Democratic	21803	16.54%
Christopher B. Garvey	Conservative	2674	2.03%
Robert T. Johnson	Democratic	21756	16.51%
Ruben Franco	Democratic	19649	14.91%
Write-In		554	0.42%

Judge of the Civil Court—Bronx County (Two Winners Represented in Bold)

Ben R. Barbato	Democratic	20240	44.75%
Marsha D. Michaels	Democratic	24768	14.91%
Write-In		224	0.50%

District Attorney—Bronx County (Winner Represented in Bold)

Darcel D. Clark	Democratic	28,157	85.58%
Robert Siano	Democratic	3444	10.47%
Write-In		224	0.50%

(Source: New York City Board of Elections)

Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Walk With a Doc

The public is invited to join a free one-hour walk in the park with the doctors at Montefiore, Nov. 21 at 1 p.m. at the Williamsbridge Oval. Walking can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, osteoporosis and obesity, improve blood pressure and blood sugar levels, maintain body weight, enhance mental well-being, and more. Meet at the Oval's Recreation Center. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

Onstage

Lehman College for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Lalo Rodriguez, 40 Años de Historia Musical**, featuring 17-piece orchestra performing salsa and Latin music, Nov. 21 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$45 to \$60. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, 450 Grand Concourse, presents songstress **Choco Orta** performing a tribute to Ruth Fernandez, Nov. 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Main Theatre (tickets: \$25/orch; \$20/mezz; \$10/students and under 18); **Henry's Law** performed by the Hostos Repertory Company, Nov. 19 to Dec. 4 (call for times), in the Repertory Theatre (tickets: \$10; free/students and under 18), a friendship develops when popular female student is tutored by male socially awkward student leading to cyberbullying; and **Danza Fiesta**, featuring bomba, plena and seis, Nov. 21 at 4 p.m. in the Main Theatre (tickets: \$10; \$5/seniors/students). Also featured are free events (tickets are required): **An Evening With**

Miguel Algarín, writer/poet, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Longwood Art Gallery; and **Artisans Fair and Book Expo**, Nov. 21 from noon to 7 p.m. in the main gym, C-lobby. Shows are subject to change. For more information and to reserve, call (718) 518-4455 or visit www.hostoscenter.org.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble presents Just for Kids with Lehman Children's Theatre Company, **"Ferdinand the Bull,"** Nov. 22 at 1 and 2:30 p.m., at the Whitehall Club Ballroom, 3333 Henry Hudson Pkwy. (\$8). For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

The Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance (BAAD), 2474 Westchester Ave. presents **Behind the Language**, Nov. 13; **In Our Skin**, Nov. 14; and **Souls of Our Feet: Blaktno Dance Concert**, Nov. 21; all dance performances, all at 8 p.m., all \$20/each; and **The Cruising Monologues**, story of six people who cruise, walking or driving around town in search of one-time casual, usually gay and anonymous, romance, featuring poetry and dance, Nov. 20 at 8 p.m. (\$15). For more information, call (718) 918-2110.



Photo courtesy Joshua Bright/Wave Hill

THE CANAL STREET String Band headlines a folk concert at Wave Hill on Nov. 22.



Photo courtesy Lehman Center for the Performing Arts

LEHMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS presents Lalo Rodriguez, 40 Años de Historia Musical Nov. 21.

events, call (518) 436-4781.

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Salsa is Nuyorican**: Jose Obando Trio, lecture/demonstration and a dance lesson, Nov. 14 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The public is invited to a **Holiday Crafts Show**, Nov. 21 and 22 from noon to 6 p.m., at Vladek Hall, 74 Van Cortlandt Pk. So. (corner of Hillman Avenue), to purchase handmade items including beads, hats, jewelry, variety of clothing, and more. Refreshments will be available for sale. For more information, call (718) 796-9300.

Events

Van Cortlandt Jewish Center, 3880 Sedgwick Ave., holds its free **11th Annual Bazaar and Carnival**, Nov. 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Events include magic show at noon, free giveaways to children, silent auction, carnival games with prizes, raffle, food for sale, and more. For more information, call (718) 884-6105.

The Williamsbridge Oval offers **Hip-Hop Aerobics Classes**, Thursdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. For more information and to become a member, call (718) 543-8672.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Dances With Leaves, to create framed hangings of leaf designs and prints, Nov. 14 and 15; and Cornhusk Dolls, to weave and shape dried husks into a doll, with storytelling at noon, Nov. 21 and 22; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to

Fordham University Rose Hill Campus, 441 E. Fordham Rd., presents **Latino College Fair**, Nov. 21 from noon to 4 p.m., including several workshops. For more information and a schedule of

1 p.m. Also offered is **Canal Street String Band Concert**, Nov. 22 at 1:30 and 3 p.m. in the WH House, featuring folk and blues (tickets: \$28/adults; \$22/members; \$15/ages 8 to 18; \$12/members. Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following events for children: **Hands-on Projects at 4 p.m.** (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required): Gingerbread Making, Nov. 12; and Turkey Making, Nov. 19; **Family Time**: (ages 3 to 6; preregistration required), reading aloud and crafts, Nov. 14 at 11 a.m.; and **Chicken Sound From a Cup**: (ages 7 to 11; preregistration required), workshop to learn about sound, Nov. 24 at 4 p.m. Adults can attend **Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners**: Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. (advance in-person registration required). For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Chess Class at 3:15 p.m.**: (ages 6 to 12), from beginners to advanced, Nov. 13 and 20. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **film**: "Avengers Age of Ultron," Nov.



Photo courtesy Jack Spiegel

VOLUNTEERS AT LAST year's Van Cortlandt Jewish Center bazaar sell old fashioned bric-a-brac items.

21 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Free Computer Classes**: to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, Nov. 13

and 20; **Kids Pajama Party**: (18 months to 12 years), craft and read-alouds, Nov. 16 at 6 p.m.; **Super Cool Science**: (ages 5 to 12), hands-on experiments, Nov. 17 at 4 p.m.; and **Story Time for All**: (ages 3 to 5), stories, music and crafts, Nov. 19 at 11:15 a.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Vision of Tile**: workshop to carve, draw and make impressions in clay, Nov. 18 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718)

549-5200.

*A HAPPY AND HEALTHY
THANKSGIVING TO ALL OUR READERS!*

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Nov. 16 for the next publication date of Nov. 26.

Inner Goblins Run Rampant at Annual Pumpkin Smash

By VIVIAN CARTER

It's become a popular post-Halloween ritual in the Bronx—the Pumpkin Smash at Lehman College, sponsored by NYC Compost Project, an initiative of the City Department of Sanitation.

On Nov. 4, the community was once again invited to constructively channel their inner goblins, to create compost for greening local parks. The New York Botanical Garden contributed an impressive display of hundreds of fading gourds and pumpkins for dropping, and neighbors could donate their own drooping jack-o-lanterns as well.

Participants chose a straight drop from the two-story plaza onto a tarp below, or a catapult rigged to propel the gourds onto a target. Lehman College's President, Dr. Ricardo R. Fernandez, assisted with the smashing. The college, a

composting pioneer since 2009, displayed The Rocket, a closed system that processes almost 12 gallons of food scraps a day from their food services department, one of only two such U.K.-designed devices in use in the city.

There were plenty of free snacks and compost information, plus exercise opportunities. After lifting and hurling gourds for the compost pile, attendees could jump on a stationary bicycle rigged to a blender and make their own pumpkin smoothies, or try some homemade pumpkin bread, local Honeycrisp apples, and Bronx Greenmarket Hot Sauce, made from Serrano peppers grown in the borough's community gardens.

Jack-o-lanterns are still welcome at food scrap drop-off sites. Find a location near you by searching online at: on.nyc.gov/foodscrap-dropoffs.



Photo by Vivian Carter

PUMPKIN SMASH! PARTICIPANTS at the Pumpkin Smash event hosted by NYC Compost Project drop a pumpkin from atop a Lehman College building Nov. 4.

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