



# NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER;  
BRONX NEWS COVERAGE | PG. 4**



**BRONX WEEK:  
CHECK OUT 2016 HONOREES | PG. 10**

# RESIDENTS: AUDIT TRACEY TOWERS

*Request comes after \$40 million renovation of Bronx's tallest towers*



Photo by Adi Talwar

**SEEKING ANSWERS. (L-R)** Delores Edwards, Jean Hill, and Evelyn McDonald, members of the Tracey Towers Tenants Association support a request for a three-year renovation project of Tracey Towers (background).

**By DAVID CRUZ**

Over the last four years, Tracey Towers underwent a \$40 million renovation by its building management firm following an incremental 62.5 percent rent hike imposed on its residents. It was considered the largest investment for a Mitchell-Lama residence such as Tracey Towers, home to some 3,000 residents.

Upgrades went towards electrical circuit boxes, kitchens, intercoms, bathrooms, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. But complaints still persist, which compelled 80th Assembly district committeeman Kenneth Agosto to directly ask New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer to conduct a detailed financial review of the tower through

a forensic audit. Stringer had scheduled a town hall meeting in the Bronx when the question was raised.

The audit request represents mounting dissatisfaction toward the new upgrades and the towers' management, RY Management.

"People just want to make sure that the money that I'm paying [them] is being spent

on the things that [they] told me [they're] spending on and [they're] getting the work down," said Jean Hill, president of the Tracey Towers Tenants Association. "Nothing is ever perfect, which I understand. Tracey [Towers] is always a work in progress, anyway."

While Hill admitted some (continued on page 19)



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## EDITORIAL

# Beating the 311 System

For anyone who's lived in the Bronx long enough, they'll learn it can take an insane amount of time to fix a quality of life problem. So if it's a busted fire hydrant, perpetually loud neighbors, an overpopulated cat colony, or a lost coin (it's been known to happen), resolve is almost never instantaneous, a curse that bedevils anyone making a complaint through the city's 311 hotline.

The system, implemented in 2003 during the Bloomberg years, serves as the city's official customer service line, though that depiction is a stretch, depending on who you talk to. It functions more as an intake center, intended not to necessarily resolve non-emergency issues, but defer it to the most relevant agency. So if you're thinking a problem is quickly handled just by calling, don't hold your breath.

Problems can nag for years to the point you just give up, letting the issue blend in into the neighborhood's DNA. Not good.

It's common to let things go in the city, forgetting about it completely. But not so much for residents living within local Community Board 7 (CB7).

CB7, the city-recognized panel overlapping with *Norwood News*' coverage area, covers the zip codes of 10451, 10453, 10457, 10458, 10460, 10463, 10467, and 10468. A recent review of 311 shows residents living in CB7 have helped place the Board in the top five of 59 community boards with the most complaints on file across the city.

That can be seen as a good thing, an accomplishment really. After all, in these days of quick-seeking gratification, CB7 is aware of this problematic timeframe.

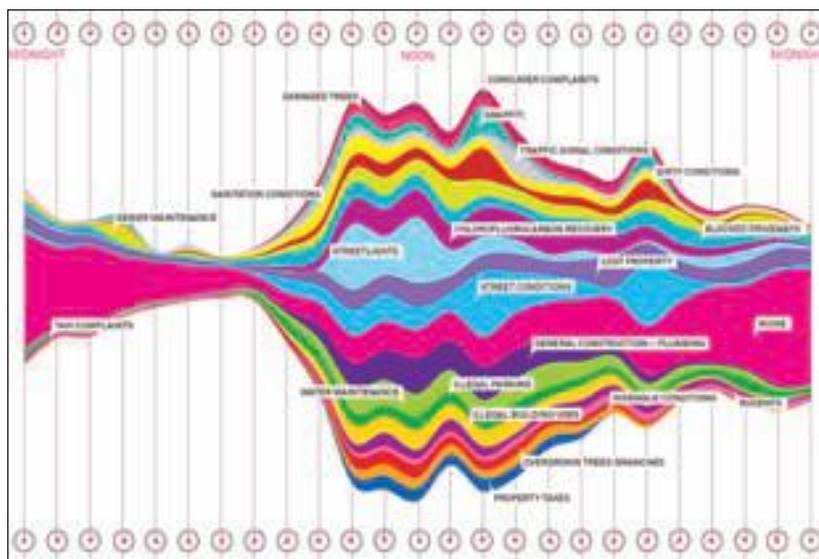


Photo courtesy 311

**THIS HEAT MAP** shows the volume and types of calls the 311 system fields within a 24-hour span.

But they're aware of how to beat it: constant calling through strength in numbers.

So pull your friends to call on an issue and there's a greater chance of a fast tracked resolution. Besides, leaving a paper trail, in this case obtaining a 311 Unique ID number that's logged with any complaint filed, holds plenty of weight.

A brief overview of 311 complaints filed between 2010 and early 2016 shows roughly 207,419 gripes were made within Community Board 7's borders. Some are repeats, yes, but repeats are often the key to resolutions. The more individual residents begin filing 311 complaints on the same infraction, the more you will get results. So one person can't quite make a difference; not in the city's eyes anyway. It takes a village to eradicate a problem.

CB7's ranking beats out all other community boards in the Bronx. Sadly, Community Board 2 in the South Bronx ranked dead last in

the number of complaints filed city-wide. Not exactly a testament to the neighborhood's civic engagement, but an indicator that city agencies are not paying attention to that part of the city. The city could, in fact, believe all is copacetic.

Falling fifth out of 59 is certainly an accomplishment. But for the Board to be number one, it takes you and your neighbors to flood the system with complaints. Positive change is bureaucratically slow. In some instances, such as a case involving a damaged tree near Wayne Avenue in Norwood (311 Unique ID# 16309497; filed in 2010 and resolved in 2015), an outcome can take years.

The bottom line is to keep complaining; fuel your anger on the system with patience, persistence, and perseverance. The secret to greasing the wheels is outright complaining. Staying silent won't lead anywhere. Empower yourself to reclaim your neighborhood. Call 311.

## Public and 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: By-Laws Committee meets on April 28; Executive Committee meets on May 2; Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee meets on May 5; Education/Youth & Libraries Committee meets on May 5 at 7:30 p.m.; Health & Hospitals Committee meets on May 10; Senior Services Committee meets on May 11; Parks & Recreation Committee meets on May 11 at 7:15 p.m. For more information, call the Board office at (718) 933-5650.

**THE BEFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy, So., apt. B1 (lobby floor), on May 4 at 8 p.m. For more information, call (718) 367-2230.  
**52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets April 28 at The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.

# Community to Bangladeshi Neighbors: “We’re here to help”

By DAVID CRUZ

There wasn’t quite much talk on bias incidents aimed at a forum for the Bangladeshi community. Instead, the meeting morphed into an information session with a message in mind: the community at large is here to help.

The gathering was the brainchild of Aldo Perez, a community activist, who sought to bring representatives from the NYPD, Bronx District Attorney’s office, local Community Board 7, Public Advocate’s office, and the state Assembly Speaker’s office to introduce themselves and the powers each office brings. Two dozen guests from the Bangladeshi community were at the meeting hearing from representatives.

Norwood has seen an ever-growing Bangladeshi population, a tight-knit demographic with most residents having arrived from Bangladesh. The U.S. Census estimates the population of Norwood, or those living in the 10467 zip code, comprises 2.4 percent of Asian Indians, those considered originating from Bangladesh, Pakistan, or India. Reaching out to the group has proven problematic as many prefer to keep to themselves.

At the heart of the meeting stood a chance for Bangladeshis, many of whom were Muslim, to list their grievances on bias-related issues. But there have been no reported bias crimes within the 52nd Precinct, which covers Norwood. That point was noted by the stationhouse’s commanding officer,



Photo by David Cruz  
**SERAZULISLAM KHAN SPEAKS** at a forum intended to engage Norwood’s Bangladeshi community.

Inspector Nilda Hofmann, at the start of the meeting inside Williamsbridge Oval Park’s Recreation Center.

But Perez, a Puerto Rican Muslim, stressed to the *Norwood News* that bias incidents within the 52nd Precinct are underreported since many Bangladeshis are too scared to speak to the police, having had experiences with authorities in their native country.

“They don’t want to air out their problems.

They rather handle them internally,” said Perez, shortly after the meeting. “But with incidents like this, they need to air them out publically.”

Bias incidents have its frequencies, with many pointing to the 205th Street/Norwood D train station near Perry Avenue as a common spot, though not as prevalent. Khairul Islam, a Norwood resident, was the target of a bias crime in 2013. Driving his cab, he was confronted by a passenger who spat in his face numerous times. The passenger later served two years in prison. Islam, recovered, did find the meeting to be productive.

The Bangladeshi community’s grievances were those any typical neighbor would complain about—streaks of dog mess, the need for better schools, and wants of more improved amenities. But immersing themselves in their communities was another nascent topic born out of the meeting.

“We need to wake up; we need to wake up,” said Chowdury M. Mumin, a member of the Bangladeshi-American Community Council.

John Snider, member of Community Board 7, encouraged Bangladeshis to further immerse themselves in their communities, noting they shouldn’t be a “community into yourself.”

“Get involved in the community as a whole,” said Snider. “And some of the issues you may have can get resolved because you have all these agencies here. This is the way to go.”

## CAREER INFORMATION SEMINARS

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**This week we asked readers how the major and local news outlets are doing with regard to coverage of the Bronx.**



When I watch the local channels, I don't really feel like they cover the Bronx, but they look at all the other boroughs like Staten Island and Manhattan, with Manhattan being the largest business district. But when I look at papers like the Norwood News, I do get that focus and it's on education and community development, business and local community leaders and you don't get that from the big broadcast stations.

**Leon Wentt**  
Bedford Park



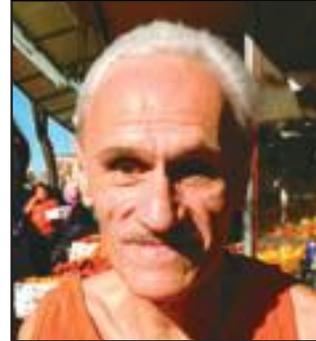
I don't feel like the Bronx is covered at all. We are the forgotten borough. They cover Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, but the Bronx is forgotten. If you see anything about the Bronx, it's always something negative, it's never anything positive. I hope that if we get more coverage in our daily newspapers, maybe it will help, but the daily papers don't really cover us. They stopped covering us a few years ago.

**Paulette Cohen**  
Williamsbridge



The large media organizations only cover the Bronx a little bit. We do get our coverage from the local papers. I also think the Internet has a lot of negative stuff that's targeting kids.

**Angeles Barragan**  
Norwood



I'd say the coverage is fair. Not every paper is the New York Times, and the [New York] Post is like the old Daily Enquirer. They have more about who's marrying whom and who's doing what. So they cover a certain amount of Bronx topics, but they could do it better. But all in all, the coverage isn't bad.

**Victor Durosa**  
Norwood



That's a tough question. I just work here, but if I need news specifically about this area, I would go to your paper, the Norwood News and just pick up the paper. When stuff happens here, I see it covered in the [Daily] News and the [New York] Post. Yes, it's true, they do run the negative stories because it generates hits and unfortunately, that's what's popular and gets people to read.

**Dr. Jide Aniuoku**  
Manhattan

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# 52nd Precinct CO Moves On

By **JASMINE GOMEZ**

Inspector Nilda Hofmann, commanding officer, of the 52nd Precinct, announced a reassignment from the stationhouse after more than two years there.

“It’s bittersweet,” said Hofmann, making her announcement at Community Board 7’s general board meeting April 21. Her news was met with loud sighs and a resounding “no” from CB7 chair, Adaline Walker-Santiago.

“It’s been two plus years but I wanted to thank everybody here,” continued Hofmann, who was given a standing ovation from attendees at the meeting.

Hofmann began her tour at the 52nd Precinct in 2013, having replaced the previous inspector, Joseph Dowling. Hofmann began her career with the New York City Police Department in October 1990, and since then has served several precincts including the Bronx’s 42nd, 43rd, and 44th precincts.

Her latest promotion will be taking her to the NYPD headquarters in downtown Manhattan. “There’s a promotional spot so I soon will be a chief so I’m very grateful for this opportunity,” said Hofmann.

Hofmann reassured everyone she will visit the neighborhood in the future. “I’m sad because as you know this is where I grew up. This is my commu-



**INSPECTOR NILDA HOFMANN**

# Bronx Youth Empowerment Program Celebrates 10 Years

By **DANIELA BEASLEY**

The Bronx Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) rang in their 10th anniversary with its yearly Youth Speaks event on April 20 at the Richard R. Green School auditorium. The event was complete, with several performances leading into a panel discussion to make up this year’s theme of excelling in life.

Youth Speaks is hosted by Bronx YEP in partnership with Councilman Andy King, founded in that same auditorium by King and his wife Neva Shillingford-King. They developed the Youth Empowerment program after the Gloria Wise Boys and Girls Club closed down, which left around 60 kids with nowhere to go and nothing to do. The event provided



Photo by Daniela Beasley

**THIS DANCE TROUPE** lights up the stage at the Bronx Youth Empowerment Program’s 10-year celebration.

an outlet where teens could express the issues they are confronted with daily to community leaders while asking for solutions.

Many of these issues were brought up in the panel discussion in which YEP members

were able to ask a wide range of questions to a panel made up of police officers, elected officials and New York City Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña, serving as the event’s keynote speaker.

“To me, the history of

the past is the story of the future,” said Fariña when asked how important she thought history was as a part of the school curriculum.

Although there were some questions centering on academics, most of the questions asked by students focused squarely around the issue of police brutality. Officers from the local 47th Precinct were there to answer, emphasizing that respect often helps keep police interactions from escalating.

Jeff Tweedy, an executive with the Sean John men’s clothing line, unexpectedly jumped in on this issue and stressed to the students to “always be respectful, but don’t let any officer determine your future. Deal with the situation and then go on to do great things.”

# Verizon Workers, on Strike, Rally in Fordham

By **DAVID GREENE**

Hundreds of Verizon workers held a demonstration along the Grand Concourse near East Fordham Road on April 20. Nearly 40,000 workers walked off the job in early April after executives declined to negotiate a new contract with its retail workers and technicians.

Verizon execs also tried to implement a waiver in the new contracts that stated the wireless phone company can change any stipulations in the contract at any time.

For Faith Griffith, a three-year Verizon employee living in nearby Tracey Towers for the last five years, the strike signified her “last paycheck” from Verizon the week of April 18. Griffith, a single mother, told the *Norwood News* she faces uncertainty. “I am basically worried about the future,” she said.

Griffith, who maintains pride working at Verizon, said the company doesn’t want to “help their workers.” “They’re actually trying to crush the union and New York is a union town,” she said. “So without us, Verizon



Photo by David Greene

**DECKED IN RED** shirts, Verizon workers converged in Fordham by the hundreds, calling attention to their strike that’s now lasted two weeks as of press time.

wouldn’t have anything without its workers.”

Assemblyman Michael Benedetto and Senator Gustavo Rivera, attending the event, vowed to stand with workers as long as the strike lasts.

In a statement released after the strike, Marc Reed, Verizon’s chief administrative officer said the strike “hurts all of our employees. “Since last June, we’ve worked diligently to try and reach agreements that would

be good for our employees, good for our customers and make the wireline business more successful now and in the future,” said Reed. “Unfortunately, union leaders have their own agenda rooted in the past and are ignoring today’s digital realities. Calling a strike benefits no one, and brings us no closer to resolution.”

*Additional reporting by David Cruz*

# Traffic Twister on Webster Avenue

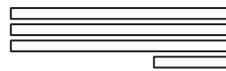


Photo by David Cruz

**TRAFFIC IS A** jumbled mess at the intersection of East Gun Hill Road and Webster Avenue...or as the neighborhood calls it, Friday! The jumbled mess is a typical Friday at this stretch in working class Norwood. Residents have long demanded traffic-calming measures at the strip.

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# Armory Ice Rink Developers Shoot Down Lease Compromise With City

By DAVID CRUZ

Developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) have rejected a three-part deal with the city that would allow KNIC access to the vacant Kingsbridge Armory while their lease stays in escrow. The development came one week after the city lobbied legislators to support its new compromise, and another week since KNIC filed a lawsuit against the city.

In a two-page letter emailed to the media before KNIC reviewed it, New York City Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen offered developers entry into the Armory, with the lease still in escrow, so it can begin some asbestos removal work. KNIC is currently barred from performing any kind of work in the Armory.

Glen, who oversees major real estate transactions for the New York City Economic Development Corporation on behalf of the de Blasio Administration, offered KNIC until Dec. 30 to show it has \$158 million needed to start the nine-rink project, eight months from its original April 25 deadline. Roughly \$138 million would be set aside by the Empire State Development corporation, a state agency that committed the monies but hasn't fully wired the funds. KNIC already secured \$20 million in private funding, saying it has stood by the April 25 deadline by showing it has a statement commitment.

The state pledge falls short of releasing the lease, according to city officials, who want to see actual funds earmarked for the massive project. The stalemate forced KNIC to sue the city, alleging it's purposely blocking the project from moving forward.

### Ramifications

Notwithstanding, the new agreement was intended to move the project forward without court intervention.



File photo by Adi Talwar

**AS OF PRESS TIME**, it's been 849 days since the New York City Council approved an ice skating center to be built at the Kingsbridge Armory.

Glen also justified the city's position to keep the lease in escrow by maintaining it "must guard against a worst-case scenario in which the City turns over a 99-year lease for this 750,000 square foot facility only to see construction stall mid-project."

The costs of "removing and renovating a partially completed ice center could prove fatal to any alternative effort" for the Armory should the KNIC project fail, Glen argued.

In a letter responding to the city's position, KNIC CEO Mark Messier rebuffed the offer, saying it has already satisfied the terms of a lease agreement and is entitled to the lease in its totality. "[T]he community is entitled to all of the opportunities and benefits which will flow from our project," wrote Messier, adding his rejection to the compromise on the grounds that it "limits the ability of this project to re-

alize its full potential."

KNIC had already offered to leave the project entirely if it doesn't have financing available by Dec. 30, according to a letter dated April 1, nearly two weeks before the offer. In its letter, KNIC also agreed to pay any attorneys fees "in the unlikely event any eviction litigation occurred in connection with such proceedings." Eviction proceedings could take years to resolve.

### Lobbying Lawmakers

Before the deal was presented, Wiley Norvell, the de Blasio Administration's communications advisor on housing and economic development matters, reached out to local elected leaders, to support the deal with the goal to "see the project through."

Among those contacted was state Senator Gustavo Rivera, a major pro-

ponent of KNIC whose district covers the Armory. Rivera told the *Norwood News* he was briefed on the compromise, and discussed it with "members of the administration some of the potential benefits and obstacles such a proposal would pose to the project."

"Overall, I was supportive of the City's efforts to find a compromise with the developer that both protected this historic property and moved this transformative project forward for the Kingsbridge community and the Bronx overall," said Rivera, who emphasized that Glen did not directly reach out to him.

Councilman Fernando Cabrera, whose district covers the Armory, didn't have a chance to review the deal, but released a statement saying the city "is acting prudently" in requesting the "necessary funds be secured before releasing the 99-year lease from escrow."

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., perhaps the biggest endorser of the KNIC project, said little about the recent development at an unrelated news conference. He only added that conversations are in the works, adding he believes the city will release the lease "as is."

Glen was named in the lawsuit filed by KNIC in early April alleging she was secretly working behind the scenes with former KNIC principals, Jonathan Richter, to divert control of the project to him and two of his partners, Jeff Spiritos and Marcos Wignell. It's purported that Glen and Richter have had a long-standing friendship.

Glen called the lawsuit "totally unfounded and an unproductive step in moving the project forward." Norvell, also frustrated, said the deal with KNIC still remains.



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# Keith Wright, Running for Congress, Promises Bronx Office...if He Wins

By DAVID CRUZ

Manhattan Assemblyman Keith Wright gave a “guarantee” that the Bronx will see a legislative office should he win in the heavily crowded race for the 13th Congressional District long held by Congressman Charles Rangel, who is retiring.

“We’re actually looking to open a Bronx campaign office as well as a Bronx congressional office after we win,” said Wright, standing beside Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who endorsed him for Congress before the steps of Borough Hall April 21.

Roughly 20 percent of the district, gerrymandered a few years back, is in the west Bronx, which includes Norwood. A long-held bone of contention from Bronx political observers was Rangel never opening a legislative office in the borough, which would have forced residents to travel to Manhattan should they have wanted to make an in-person complaint.

Wright sought to mend the Upper Manhattan-Bronx portions of the district, once largely comprised of



Photo by David Cruz

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Ruben Diaz Jr. (at mic) throws his support for state Assemblyman Keith Wright (right) for Congress.

black voters that’s shifted to a mixed ethnic crowd, by saying its problems are one and the same.

“What happens in the Bronx, happens in Harlem,” said Wright, calling Diaz’s endorsement the “most coveted.”

Diaz, who endorsed another 13th Congressional District challenger,

state Senator Adriano Espaillat (Espaillat also promised a congressional office in the Bronx) during his first two attempts for the seat, switched sides, calling Wright a “bonafide Grade-A contender.”

Wright has served in the Assembly since 1992. He serves as chair of the Assembly’s housing committee.

“Chairman Wright expanded coverage to our Mitchell-Lama developments; Chairman Wright was there to increase capital funding to the tune of \$100 million for the New York City Housing Authority; Chairman Wright was there to push for \$1.5 million in New York State Finance Authority so we could have more housing,” said Diaz, sticking to Wright’s legislative record in the Assembly, seeing how policies and laws impact the entire state.

But political insiders say Diaz’s endorsement of Wright was a concession the Bronx Democratic County Committee gave after Wright withdrew his name for the vacant Assembly Speaker race, which eventually went to current speaker and Bronx legislator, Carl Heastie.

Wright, opportunely added his connection to the Bronx, having been born there, attending a Bronx high school, and meeting his wife in the borough. “I don’t know how much more Bronx you can get than that,” said Wright.

The congressional primary is June 28.

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# In Rare Exception Across the City, Portion of Woodlawn Downzoned

By VIVIAN CARTER

The trend in New York City real estate development is unquestionably upward.

But residents in the Woodlawn Heights section of the Bronx have orchestrated a reversal.

Woodlawn Heights is an outlier, a hilly neighborhood of one- and two-family homes along the city's northern line, surrounded by Van Cortlandt Park, the fences of Woodlawn Cemetery, and a bustling Webster Avenue corridor. The bulk of Woodlawn Heights (except along the cemetery and Webster Avenue) is zoned R4A, allowing only suburban-style homes. For years, three local homeowners groups have been working closely with local legislators and the community board to maintain the neighborhood's low-key visage.

Their efforts bore fruit on April 20, when the New York City Council passed a downzoning amendment, the city's first in two and a half years, that belts all high-rise development tightly along the existing towers on the Webster Avenue corridor.

The area affected is bounded by East 240th Street to the north, East 234th Street to the south, Vireo Avenue to the west and Webster Avenue to the east. This section will now be designated an R4A district, shifting from an R7A District, a designation allowing multiple dwellings as high as eight stories to be built among detached private homes. Before the amendment passed, 19 lots were either



Map provided by New York City Department of City Planning  
**MAP OF WOODLAWN** Heights showing a highlighted sliver indicating latest downzoning.

zoned R7A or were split between R7A and R4A districts.

Councilman Andrew Cohen praised the com-

munity groups that approached him to request the zoning change, concerned about an out of character building being constructed on East 236th Street between Webster and Vireo avenues.

"The downzoning of Woodlawn will stop the destruction of the single family homes that currently gives the neighborhood its intrinsic character, as well as prevent high-rise developments from invading its narrow streets," said Cohen. "This is something that the residents of Woodlawn have been in support of for quite some time and I am proud to have been able to make it a reality. I would like to thank Community Board 12, the Women of Woodlawn, the Woodlawn Taxpayers Association and the Webster Avenue Taxpayers Association for their backing on this issue."

"This zoning amendment...will maintain the current character of our neighborhood, and prohibit large, multi-family dwellings from being built on our quiet residential streets," said Kenneth Nugent, president of the Woodlawn Taxpayers Association. His comments were echoed by Erin Kelly, president of Women of Woodlawn, and Jeremy Skehan, president of the Webster Avenue Taxpayers Association.

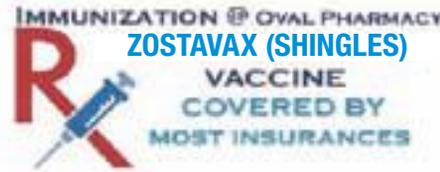
George Torres, district manager of Community Board 12, which covers Woodlawn Heights, credited "careful planning" on the part of community stakeholders to "help preserve what makes Woodlawn a vibrant and close-knit neighborhood."



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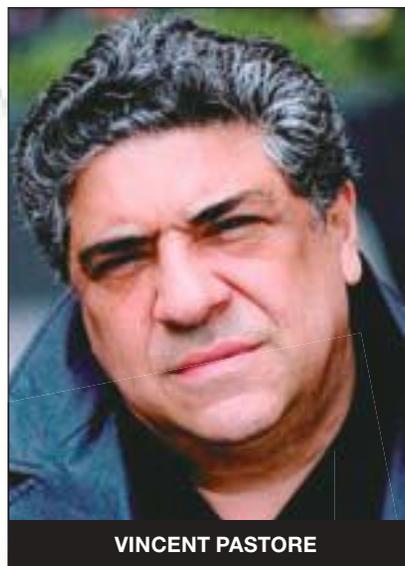
ARLENE ALDA



EDUARDO VILARO



PETER SOHN



VINCENT PASTORE

# Bronx Week 2016

## Accomplished Bronxites Recognized

This year's lineup of honorees in the Bronx Walk of Fame includes an actor, animator/director, author, and dance pioneer.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and The Bronx Tourism Council, hailing May 5 as the start of the 11-day, 45th annual Bronx Week, announced the new roster of inductees. The honorees are actor Vincent Pastore, animator and director Peter Sohn, author Arlene Alda, and dance pioneer Eduardo Vilaro. The quartet was chosen primarily because of their roots to the Bronx. They will be officially inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame as part of Bronx Week, a program celebrating the borough's finer points.

Diaz noted the honorees "have seen considerable success in their chosen fields, and throughout it all they have highlighted their strong roots in the Bronx."

"I look forward to celebrating their accomplishments during Bronx Week 2016," said Diaz.

### Vincent Pastore

Vincent Pastore has been a star of screen and stage for decades, and is best known for his role in HBO's hit series *The Sopranos*, for which he received a Screen Actors Guild Award for his work in 2001. A City Island resident, Pastore has appeared in films including *Goodfellas*, *Awakenings*, *State of Grace*, and TV shows *Law & Order*, *General Hospital* and many more. This year, he is expected to appear in a whopping 14 films.

"I love living in the Bronx," said Pastore. "This borough is a great mixture of cultures and ethnic groups—a true cross section of today's America. And my home, City Island, is growing each year. It's New York City's very own Martha's Vineyard."

### Peter Sohn

The first Asian-American ever to be inducted to the Bronx Walk of Fame, Peter Sohn is an award-winning animator and director with Pixar Studios, having worked on numerous hit films including *Finding Nemo*, *The Incredibles*, and *Up*. Most recently, Sohn directed Pixar's 2015 feature hit *The Good Dinosaur*.

"I am so proud to be honored in this way. The Bronx is a part of me in so many ways, in how I was formed and how my family was formed," said Sohn. "There were several years of study and drawing at the Bronx Zoo that helped me fill up my portfolio to get a job in animation. And the stories and memories of my youth here have fueled so much of the work I do at Pixar today. So thanks Bronx. Thanks for taking care of me and my family."

### Arlene Alda

Arlene Alda, who grew up in Williamsbridge and gradu-

ated from Evander Childs High School, is an award-winning photographer and author whose work has appeared in books, newspapers, magazines and galleries. Alda is the author of 19 books, most of them children's books. Her latest book, *Just Kids from The Bronx: Telling it the Way it Was, An Oral History*, consists of stories about growing up in the Bronx based on interviews with over 60 accomplished and proud Bronxites.

"I am a first-generation American, and so to be inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame is especially meaningful to me. I feel the special connection to the current generation of first generation immigrants in the Bronx, now. It is a deep honor I do not take for granted," said Alda.

### Eduardo Vilaro

First generation Cuban-American Eduardo Vilaro became artistic director of Ballet Hispanico, the nation's first and oldest Latino dance organization, in 2009. He is only the second person to head the company since it was founded in 1970. In 2015, Vilaro became chief executive officer of Ballet Hispanico. He has been part of the Ballet Hispanico family since 1985.

"I have been blessed with a

special life. I create art and impact young people with the arts education and my culture. When I look back and think of what in my DNA made me strong enough to contend with the challenges I had to face, I know it is because I grew up in the Bronx," said Vilaro. "The Bronx gave me the strength and determination to excel and succeed. Growing up in a tough neighborhood wasn't just about learning to stand up for yourself. It was about community and the neighbors who watched out for you—the helping hand when one of your own was in trouble. We learned the respect and dignity of hard working adults. Behind the often described gritty face of the Bronx, there is a community that is full of pride and a beautiful soul that welcomes everyone."

"Witnessing our hometown heroes take their rightful place on The Bronx Walk of Fame is one of my favorite events for Bronx Week. It fills me with pride to honor these sons and daughters of the Bronx!" said Olga Luz Tirado, executive director of The Bronx Tourism Council.

At the end of the 11-day celebration, these four hometown heroes will be honored with induction into the Bronx Walk of Fame, where their names are emblazoned on a street sign to reside on the historic Grand Concourse forever.

For more information about Bronx Week 2016, along with its listing of free or affordably priced events, visit [www.ilovethebronx.com](http://www.ilovethebronx.com).

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# Tribute to Volunteers at St. Patrick's Home

Volunteers make the difference at St. Patrick's Home Rehabilitation and Health Care Center located just at the tip of Norwood. We are blessed to have dedicated volunteers who give of themselves and their time to our beloved residents. On April 16, the home celebrated and recognized their Volunteers for National Volunteer Week with a Mass of Thanksgiving and brunch. A wonderful time was shared by all who attended and participated.

The home is always seeking new volunteers to share their time, treasure and talent serving the residents and the facility. Volunteering in a nursing home can be a rewarding, life changing experience for both the volunteer and the residents. We pride ourselves at St. Patrick's Home on how we care and provide services for our residents. Volunteers play a significant role in this process. It is also rewarding for the residents to receive one-on-one attention as volunteers visit with them and provide different activities. And what greater reward

than to see smiles on the residents' faces.

Volunteers at St. Patrick's Home are involved in a variety of programs and services depending on their preferences. Volunteers are able to give of their time depending on their personal schedules and availability. It becomes obvious after a brief time what a difference the individual volunteer makes in the life of our residents. Opportunities vary from reading, storytelling, sewing, helping write letters and cards to family and friends, playing Bingo, board and card games, and walks outside for some fresh air and sunshine, just to name a few.

Venerable Mother Mary Angeline Teresa, O. Carm., is foundress of the Carmelite Sisters for the aged and infirmed, a congregation of religious women dedicated to the care of the elderly. Founded in 1931, St Patrick's philosophy of loving care seeks to provide a true home for each elderly resident with compassion, respect and a regard for the dignity of life. Continuing with Mother Angeline's legacy,



Photo courtesy St. Patrick's Home Rehabilitation and Health Care Center

**THIS VOLUNTEER (STANDING)** is one of several helping hands assisting folks like this wheelchair-bound resident from St. Patrick's Home Rehabilitation and Health Care Center.

the 264-bed skilled nursing facility offers a warm, welcoming, home-like environment for residents.

St Patrick's will have multiple

upcoming events for residents, their families and friends, volunteers, staff and community. The month of May is "Senior Month" and the facility will have regularly scheduled activities and special celebrations.

National Nursing Home Week runs May 8 to 14. The facility will be having events such as "Fun Fair" on May 11, which will feature a clown, a cotton candy machine, games and lots of smiles and laughter with our beloved residents. On Tuesday, June 21, the home will celebrate their annual "Centennial Celebration," honoring all residents who are 100 years of age and older.

For more information on our facility, services provided, opportunities, and upcoming events, please check out our website at [stpatrickshome.org](http://stpatrickshome.org) and our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/stpatrickshome](http://www.facebook.com/stpatrickshome). If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and are in the neighborhood, stop on by and pay us a visit at 66 Van Cortlandt Park So., or call (718) 519-2800.

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## OPINION

### Mother's Day From a Different Point of View

It seems ages that I've been cooped up in this small dark wet space. I don't even know how I got here in the first place. But the longer I'm here, the less room I seem to have. I can hardly get around. I used to be able to stretch out, move around, punch, kick, do whatever I felt like, but I can't anymore. I used to like it here, no one bothered me. I ate and slept whenever I wanted. I had no one to answer to. I could hear light pleasant sounds even though I couldn't see very well.

But now I just want to get out of here as soon as possible. I feel, after all this time, like a guest who has overstayed his welcome. I also get the feeling that if I don't leave on my own, and soon, that somehow I'll be forced to go. And even while

I feel this way, trying to make up my mind, I realize that the decision has already been made for me. I'm now being forced to leave this comfortable place, which I've called home for so long.

I find myself now being pushed through a long dark tunnel, and ready or not, I'd better accept this fact, since I no longer have any say in the matter. The tunnel seems so tiny that I find myself straining with the effort of getting through, squinting into the darkness and hoping I'll get through safely and with no complications. I've never been on a journey that is taking as long as this one is through this seemingly endless tunnel. There's no way I can turn back, and after a while I think that I can't wait to reach the

other end after such a struggle, no matter what lies in store for me. Although I was reluctant to leave my cozy space, I'm thinking I can't wait to get out and see what lies in wait for me at the other end.

At last when I think I'll never get there, I burst through the end of the tunnel into a world full of light, so bright, that I need to squint, and even close my eyes for a while. I feel cool and dirty after such a long trip, but I'm lucky because in an instant I find I'm being cleaned and wrapped up so that I feel comfortable again.

And low voices all around me are whispering, "What a darling baby! It was certainly worth the nine month wait."

**Judy Noy**  
Norwood resident

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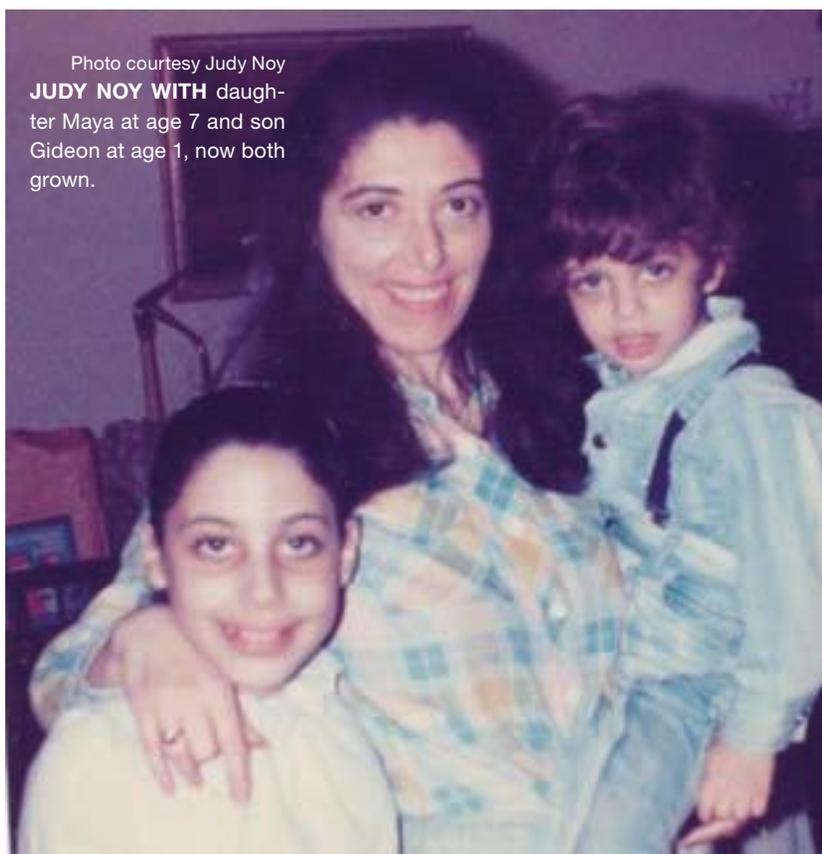


Photo courtesy Judy Noy  
**JUDY NOY WITH** daughter Maya at age 7 and son Gideon at age 1, now both grown.



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### TRIPS

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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES



## Cleanup Volunteers Needed

The Bedford Mosholu Community Association seeks volunteers to help in its annual cleanup of Mosholu Parkway on April 30. To sign up, email [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## 5-Boro Bike Tour

May 1 will have 40 miles of NYC streets totally free of cars to allow 32,000 cyclists to ride through all the boroughs, with proceeds funding the largest free urban bike education program of its kind in the world as well as more than 50 charity fundraising partners. Riders come from every state and many countries, and will be entertained along the route by 25 acts from disco to hip-hop to folk and modern dance. For more information, visit [www.bike.nyc](http://www.bike.nyc).

## Fresh Air Fund

The Fresh Air Fund holds free registration April 30 from 1 to 4 p.m. at MASA, 2770 Third Ave. Applica-

tions can also be dropped off at the Fresh Air Fund's office, 633 Third Ave., 14th floor, all week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parents from low-income communities can sign up their children for a free summer experience, at an upstate camp or with a volunteer host family. For more information, call (800) 367-0003 or visit [www.freshair.org](http://www.freshair.org).

## Summer Camp at Lehman

Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., offers an Open House for its summer day camp, May 7 and June 4 at 10:30 a.m. in the Carman Hall, room B08. Both half days and full days are available for ages 6 to 16 on the campus, for one week or more. Activities include swimming, sports, computer technology, arts and crafts, and more. Free breakfast and lunch is provided. For more information, details, and tuition, call (718) 960-8865. Early registration is advised.

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Any application received after May 24, 2016 will be added to the waiting list to be considered for future availability.

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\*\* Income limits based on family size

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Keeping Fit

The public is invited to join the following fundraisers, and exercise at the same time, both on April 30:

**Wildlife Conservation Society** - Run for the Wild, a Run and Family Fun Run/Walk at the Bronx Zoo. Registration fee includes complimentary admission and parking, free post-run activities, refreshments, entertainment and a silent disco. For more information, visit [wcsrnforthewild.org](http://wcsrnforthewild.org).

**Mosholu Community Center** - B'N Fit Teen & Community Walk at the NY Botanical Garden, to call attention to ending teen obesity. In-person registration begins at 7:30 a.m.; walk begins at 8 a.m. Participants who raise \$50 walk for free. One who receives most donations receives trophy and \$100 gift card. For more information, call (718) 882-4000 ext. 350 or register at [mmcc.org](http://mmcc.org).

### Onstage

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents the following free events: **Lehman College & Community Chorus and Symphony Orchestra**, performing classical and popular music, May 1 at 2:30 p.m. in the Concert Hall; **Lehman College & Community Jazz Big Band**, performing jazz, May 8 at 2 p.m. in the Hearth Room, Music Building, 3rd floor; **Lehman College & Community Latin Jazz Ensemble**, performing mambo music of Latin greats, May 10 at 4:30 p.m., in the Hearth Room, Music Building 3rd floor; and **Daniel in the Lion's Den**, musical theatre production, May 12 to 16 (check time schedules, but reserve tickets at (718) 960-7796), in the

Recital Hall, Music Building 3rd floor. Also scheduled is **Oscar D'León**, performing salsa music with his orchestra, May 7 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$45 to \$60). Programs are subject to change. For more information and program details, call (718) 960-8833.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., presents **singer/songwriter Sheri Miller**, performing music from the Beatles to Patsy Cline, on piano and guitar, May 7 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

Hostos Community College's Repertory Theatre, 450 Grand Concourse (149th Street), presents **Tito Puente Legacy Project: The History of Latin Jazz Part VI**, through April 30, at 11 a.m. in the Longwood Art Gallery (info: (718) 518-



File photo courtesy Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj's Office  
SPRING CLEANUP AT Mosholu Parkway happens April 30. Volunteers are needed!

6656). Show is free but tickets are required and must be picked up at box office. Additional programs are: **Drawn and Quartered**, play performed by the Hostos Repertory Company, through May 6 in the Black Box Theatre (\$10; students/free); **Bennyroyce Dance**, dance company, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. in the Repertory Theatre (\$10; students and under 18/free); **Papo Vazquez & the Mighty Pirates Troubadors**, performing Latin jazz, April 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the Repertory Theatre (\$20; students and under 18/\$5); and **Mambo Memories**, featuring numerous Latin performers, May 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Main Theatre (reserved seating: \$30/orch; \$25/mezz; \$10/students and under 18). For more information, call (718) 518-4455 or visit [www.hostoscenter.org](http://www.hostoscenter.org).

from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. 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; pre-registration required), Flower On a Popsicle Stick Making, April 28; Mother's Day Card Making, May 5; and Flower Collage Making, May 12. Teens/young adults can attend: **SAT Prep: Verbal/Writing:** April 28 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for adults: **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: **Junior Explorers at 4 p.m.:** (ages 5 to 12), to learn the science of how toys work and tricks work (phone or in-person registration required), April 28 and 29. Adults can attend **Computer Basics at noon:** April 28, May 5 and 12. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

**SAVE THE DATES: Bronx Week** takes place from May 5 to 15. Events include outdoor performances, health fairs, and more, culminating on May 15 in the grand finale including Bronx Walk of Fame inductions on the Grand Concourse, followed by annual parade, food & art festival, and concert on Mosholu Parkway. For more information, visit [lovethebronx.com](http://lovethebronx.com).

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL OUR MOM READERS!**

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by May 2 for the next publication date of May 12.

### Events

The Bronx River Alliance presents its **Bronx River Flotilla**, a 5-mile paddle for the river, May 7, to celebrate progress to reclaim the river and a fundraiser for its canoe program. For more information or to put a team together, visit [www.bronxriver.org/flotilla](http://www.bronxriver.org/flotilla).

NYS Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Friends of Mosholu Parkland, NYC Parks Dept., Partnerships for Parks with 52nd Precinct Explorers, and the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, seek volunteers for their **Mosholu Parkway Cleanup**, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., which includes planting, trash and graffiti removal. Meet at Circle of Friends Plaza, Jerome Avenue and East Mosholu Parkway North. For more information and to volunteer, call (718) 409-0109.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects:** Buds, Buds, Buds, to sketch trees, then make one of natural materials, April 30 and May 1; and Lavender Pillows and Violet Notes for Mom, to listen to animal stories, then make a card for your mom, May 7 and 8; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also offered is **Junior Arborist Station**, for ages 5+ to climb a tree wearing tree-climbing harnesses and hardhats, free, April 30



Photo courtesy Wildlife Conservation Society

**RUNNING WILD! BRONX** locals will gather at the Bronx Zoo for the annual Run for the Wild charity event on April 30 (see Editor's Note for details).

# Residents: Audit Tracey Towers

(continued from page 1)

amenities have been pleasant, her concern is directed at the buildings' mechanical guts, primarily pointing to a plumbing system she considers spotty.

RY Management ordered crews to replace worn out boilers, installing a complex boiler system for domestic hot water and new heater exchange tanks for hot water.

But Hill, who has lived in the building since the 1970s, questioned the boiler equipment's reliability in delivering hot water.

"[Y]ou don't know if the water is going to be hot or cold. Sometimes the water is lukewarm, you get up and take a shower," said Hill. "You might be in there for about two minutes and the water will turn cold on you."

"Or vice-versa," noted Delores Edwards, a retired employee with a computer software company and now the association's corresponding secretary. "It could be steaming hot."

Still, water issues continue at Tracey Towers, according to Hill, who highlighted the buildings' propensity for leaky apartments. "You could come out and it'll be a river running through your apartment," said Hill, adding the

damage can be problematic.

"The construction was supposed to stop the leaks," said Evelyn McDonald, the group's second corresponding secretary.

For their part, RY Management welcomed an audit, standing by its "commitment to transparency," and allowing "the tenants and tenants' association full access to all financial statements concerning Tracey Towers."

RY Management also defended its boiler system, declaring the "equipment is the most sophisticated on the market."

"During the coldest days in the past two winters, the equipment has proven itself to be reliable," read a statement by RY Management provided to the *Norwood News*.

Forensic audits are usually considered more intensive than regular audits, requiring examiners to investigate any alleged financial misappropriation. In the case of RY Management, the review would come from monies that were part of a 62.5 percent rent increase that was to be used for the \$40 million renovation project.

RY Management has kept the build-

ing under the program, a voluntary decision since residences have the option of leaving the program 20 years after entering it.

Tracey Towers opened in 1974. The largest buildings in the Bronx, with its brown towers looming over the rest of the borough, the buildings once boasted a doorman, shoeshine worker, and laundry room staff, now defunct amenities. Its 535-space garage is still intact.

"The only thing I thought was great was security," said McDonald. "But afterwards, things started to go down."

Apartments are rented or sold through a current five-year waiting list comprised of 5,000 names. The property is deemed a Mitchell-Lama, a program that started in 1955 by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) specifically for middle-income earners who could not afford market rate. Residents must meet income eligibility standards. HPD, which offers tax exceptions and cheaper mortgages to Mitchell-Lama residents, routinely reviews income paperwork from tenants yearly to determine whether they still fall within acceptable income guide-

lines.

A separate, unrelated audit of Tracey Towers was conducted by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, which found high-income tenants still living there despite a rule mandating they leave if their income goes past the maximum allowable limit.

Eric Sumberg, spokesman for Comptroller Stringer, was unclear whether the office would consider an audit, but noted it is "in constant contact with the tenants and management at Tracey Towers about all issues affecting residents, including building services, maintenance and the rental increase."

"The Comptroller's office will continue to work with all parties to ensure high quality of life, transparency and the preservation of this important affordable housing stock," said Sumberg.

For now, Hill is crossing her fingers hoping an audit will shed light on what was spent.

"People need to know, 'was my money spent correctly?'" said Hill. "And I don't want no shortcuts. Don't give me the two cents version of the product and tell me I spent \$20 for it."

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