



NORWOOD NEWS

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CB7 FINDS NEW DISTRICT MANAGER

Hiring met with criticism over transparency and qualifications



Photo by Adi Talwar

ISCHIA BRAVO (AT PODIUM) speaks before Community Board 7 minutes before she's officially hired as the board's new district manager by a vote of 16 to 3.

By **DAVID CRUZ**

Ischia Bravo, the former executive director of the Bronx Democratic County Committee (BDCC), was hired as the new district manager for Community Board 7, becoming the fifth district manager for the board in the last five years.

Her hiring was met with some questions over whether

she was truly fit for the job.

Bravo, who's hiring was approved by the board 16 to 3 with nine abstentions, succeeds the late Andrew Sandler, who resigned from the job three weeks before passing away from cancer in August.

"Helping my neighbors on behalf of the community board is deeply personal for me," Bravo,

reading off prepared remarks, told members at the Dec. 19 general board meeting at Kittay House in Kingsbridge Heights.

For Bravo, who also served as a board member on and off since at least 2010, the position once again elevates her profile though on a more microcosm level. She served as executive director of BDCC, an adminis-

trative position that exposed her to the borough's elected officials and beyond. It's unclear why Bravo left the position. In 2015, Bravo tested her political clout by running against longtime Assemblyman Jose Rivera. She was unsuccessful.

Her approval raised questions on whether her qualifications truly fit the requirements (continued on page 15)



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EDITORIAL

A Brief Trip Back Through 2017

This year could once again be characterized as transitional for Norwood, full of business closures and nascent construction projects.

The neighborhood crossed off another year with more bulldozers dotted around the once sleepy community. On a stretch of Webster Avenue between Gun Hill Road and East Mosholu Parkway, four construction projects are well under way. The assumption is clear: more construction means more people are moving into to a neighborhood that is waking up to the realities of overdevelopment.

Greater interest in Norwood is a good thing, though a population boom in the next few years should signal greater concern to prepare for new neighbors. It's the *Norwood News*' hope that elected officials, namely Congressman Adriano Espaillat, Sen. Jamaal Bailey, Assemblyman Jose Rivera, City Councilman Andrew Cohen, and anyone looking to replace former Assemblyman and now Councilman-elect Mark Gjonaj, are aware of these developments. School District 10 is a grossly overpopulated district. With more people expected to move in sometime in the next few years, our elected officials ought to prioritize the school population issue. 2017 showed some signs of preparation for the future—construction for an upgraded Whalen Park broke ground in July, for example.

With each year that passes, notable deaths follow. They include the passing of Community Board 7 District Manager Andrew Sandler, who, despite passing away at the young age of 31, left so much of a good mark that work on a street with his name is in the works. On the far end of the spectrum of life is Mary Vallati, a community stalwart who died at age 102. Mrs. Vallati was among the few neighborhood sages that kept an eye on the neighborhood at any cost. She too will likely be memorialized with a street name. Their loss should prompt those who want to make their neighborhoods a better place to step it up. Volunteering and speaking up is tough work, but the results are noticeable.

The *News* also hopes that next year will be a year of preparation bolstered by good volunteers who care enough to lend their time to improving their quality of life.

Nationally, newsworthy events boiled down to two sections—those we can control versus those we can't. It's hard to imagine that anyone could have prevented the destruction seen in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. The category five storm walloped the island so badly it caused an exodus of its people who fled stateside. An event like that can't be controlled. Then there was the Las Vegas shooting, brought about by a domestic terrorist whose

motives are still unclear. It's gut wrenching, but beyond our control once again.

Then there are events that can be controlled, such as sexual harassment. It's clear the problem cuts through every sector of our workforce. The world of journalism is not free from it. Within it the mighty newscasters Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose fell from grace for their alleged misdeeds. Shame can silence the victims, but the enablers, the ones who knew and looked the other way, could have spoken up. It's within their control to go to human resources, or the police, to report it so it doesn't happen again and the accused could at least have their say. The subject is not new. Perhaps power allows these predators to roam and seek out another victim, but those who roam in those circles must be extra vigilant. Status is not an excuse to do or say whatever you want.

There are also things that are planned. Most of the United States paused on Aug. 27 to gaze into a solar eclipse so rare that even the jaded couldn't help but look into the heavens. Back in Norwood, a woman told the *News*' editor-in-chief that she had wished upon a star while looking at the star. She kept her wish private, though one suspects that it's a wish for something that hasn't happened yet. It's a wish inherent in the future. Let's hope it's for a better one.

Here's to a better 2018.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Economic Development Committee meets on Dec. 26; Community Relations & Long Term Planning Committee meets on Dec. 26 at 7:30 p.m.; Website, Media & Acknowledgment Committee meets on Dec. 27; and Budget, Personnel & Ethics Committee meets on a date to be determined. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

Brain Behind Batman Gets Street Renaming

BY AARON MAYORGA

A long-forgotten comic book icon's time in the spotlight has finally arrived.

On the morning of Dec. 8, Dark Knight superfans assembled at the corner of East 192nd Street and the Grand Concourse to rechristen the cross street in honor of Bill Finger, the man who co-created Batman.

"It's pretty surreal," said Benjamin Cruz, who was present at the street renaming, and the great-grandson of Finger, whose contributions to the creation of Batman have largely gone overlooked. "It's exciting to see that he's getting recognition... and people are remembering him this way. It's great."

In the run-up to Batman's debut in March 1939, Finger, along with fellow Batman scribe and DeWitt Clinton High School alum Bob Kane, regularly met in nearby Poe Park to brainstorm ideas for the Gotham City vigilante—a fact that, upon first listen, surprised many New Yorkers including New York City Councilman Ritchie Torres.

"I was shocked to discover that the co-creators of Batman have roots in the Bronx and drew inspiration from Poe

Park," said Torres who sponsored the event. "Like the Bronx itself, I think, the legacy of Bill Finger for too long went unrecognized, and I said why not tell that story publicly through a street renaming."

Torres was also joined by Finger biographer Marc Nobleman, who explained that it was common for comic book writers and artists, such as Finger, to not receive credit for their work. "Essentially, it started in the '30s, when the comic book industry was new," Nobleman, the author of *Bill the Boy Wonder: The Secret Co-Creator of Batman*, explained. "There was a studio-system, a shop-system, where one man would set up a shop and hire other people. Then, they would produce the story, and the boss would get the credit which to a modern ear sounds wrong... [but] that's just how they did it then."

Despite contributing to Batman's iconic look and helping create his equally iconic arch-nemesis The Joker, Finger, who also co-created the Green Lantern, died in relative obscurity in January 1974 at the age of 59. It wasn't until 1989 and 2015 when Bob Kane and DC Comics acknowledged Finger's work, respectively.



Photo by Aaron Mayorga

(L-R) TORRES'S DEPUTY CHIEF of staff Ronn Jordan, Councilman Ritchie Torres, Bill Finger's granddaughter Athena Finger, his great-grandson Benjamin Cruz, and Batman himself.

"He really got lost to history, which is really a crime, and it is so wonderful that it is being corrected now," said Kevin Conroy, the longtime voice of the Caped Crusader. "But it's a quintessential New York character—Batman, you know? Everything about Gotham City,

the darkness, the noir feeling about it, it's a very New York story."

For Nobleman, the street renaming was a dream realized. "This is one of many dreams come true for me as a Bill Finger fan and as a Batman fan and for the family's legacy."

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their New Year's resolutions and hopes and wishes for 2018.



I don't want to be a downer for the New Year, but honestly, we have a lot of work to do. There's a lot of corruption going on politically speaking and a lot of money that's influencing politicians. [A]nd with the Net neutrality--the FCC voted 3-2, which means the Internet can change possibly, because all of these big Internet companies are trying to monopolize the Internet. So I hope we just focus on peace, love and more positivity because a lot of people are depressed, especially around the holidays.

Ricky Fields
Bedford Park



For a New Year's resolution, I think we need to do more to create economic development in the Bronx. I think that's one of the goals for [next] year. And I think with everything going on in the world, be kind to people. Try and do more service, reach out and really try and make a difference in the community that we live in. I think that's my goal and will continue to do that in 2018.

Joe Kelleher
Morris Park



My New Year's resolution is to lose weight and eat healthier. I would like to retire. It's time for me to retire, I've been working too many years. I wish we could have peace and hopefully [President] Trump won't get us into World War III.

Yolanda Roman
Norwood



I hope to stay healthy, to help out others as much as I can, like those who are less fortunate, definitely. To pray that God will guide us through this mess we're in and that he will help us out.

Frederique Roy-Moore
Norwood



I haven't thought about any New Year's resolutions, but I just want my family to have a great New Year and hope we are blessed, and to make it through the wickedness in the world. For the Bronx in 2018, I hope there would be less crime, less violence and yes, more jobs.

Damond Bailey
Claremont Parkway

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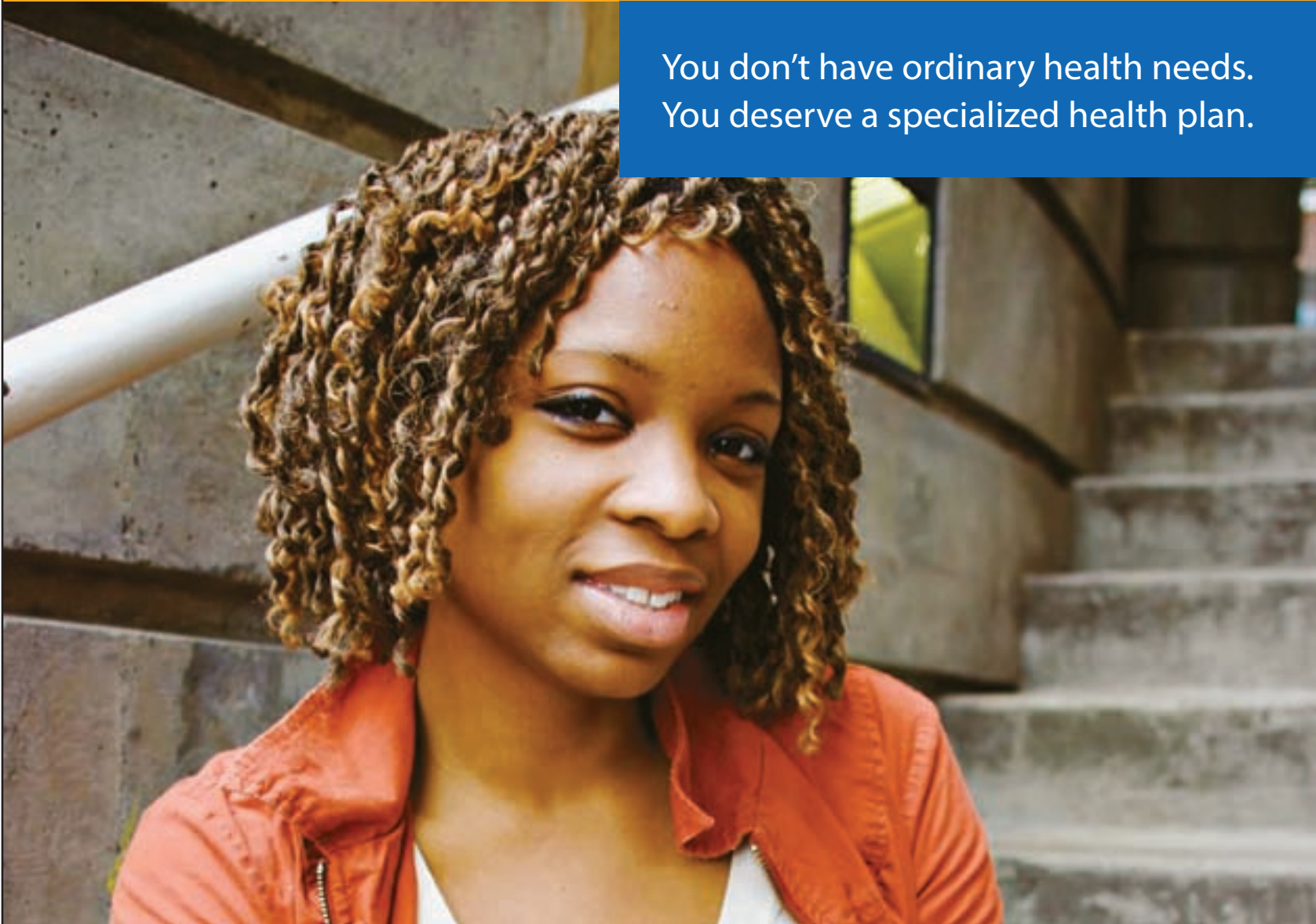
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One-Year-Old Ingests Heroin, Rushed to Montefiore

By DAVID CRUZ

A one-year-old child is still being treated at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore after reportedly ingesting heroin from his father's stash.

This happened over the weekend at the child's Tiebout Avenue home in the Fordham section of the Bronx.

Police say that the father, 20-year-old Edgardo Rodriguez, confessed that he had no idea that white powder had landed on his bed. Rodriguez reportedly went to sleep after taking heroin with his two kids in bed with him just after midnight. When Rodriguez woke up at 8 a.m. to find the child struggling to breathe, they took her to the hospital. The baby was revived with three doses of Narcan, used in overdoses.

Rodriguez was later charged with reckless endangerment, drug possession, and endangering the welfare of a child. The kids have now been separated from him.

A spokesman for ACS (Administration for Children's Services) said that "The safety and well-being of New York City's children is our top priority. ACS and NYPD are actively investigating the events surrounding this incident."

A spokesperson for Montefiore could not comment on the condition of the child, citing privacy laws.

The Bronx had the second most heroin overdoses in 2016, with 308. The neighborhood of Fordham has among the most heroin users in the Bronx, according to health statistics.

Volunteers Spread Holiday Cheer to Kingsbridge's Vulnerable

By STEPHANIE LUCIANO

Amid the season of giving, volunteers filled the space with holiday spirit at Jericho Project's Kingsbridge Terrace Veterans Residence to spread some cheer.

This year Jericho kicked off the holidays raising awareness on homelessness and formerly homeless individuals at the Jericho Project's Day of Action on Dec. 8 at 2701 Kingsbridge Terr., one of their buildings reserved exclusively for veterans.

Jericho Project provides supportive housing owning eight different buildings in Harlem and the Bronx. The residents are provided assistance, employment and educational credentials, to keep them from returning to the streets.

Tori Lyon, Jericho Project's CEO, employees and their supporting partners, Ernst and Young (EY), hosted a holiday event at the home. EY, whose purpose is to give back to the community, helped give residents gifts and a great lunch.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs released data that shows that most veterans across the coun-



Photo by Stephanie Luciano
A JERICHO TENANT (left) and volunteer play a game of Jenga at the holiday party at Kingsbridge Terrace.

try and in Puerto Rico are at increased risk for suicide compared to their non-veteran peers. Records show that between 2001 and 2014 suicide rates have decreased for veterans who have used the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) care.

Veterans such as Craig Hinds and Darold Cox are two of the indi-

viduals who have benefitted from the Jericho Project. "They bring us together, make us feel good for the holidays, a sense of family," says Hinds, who's recently finished school and been a Kingsbridge Terrace tenant for five years. Cox, 66, mentions he wakes up thankful to be under a roof. "Not just any roof, a great roof," he says.

Council Speaker Takes a Bow, But More Work Lies Ahead

By DAVID CRUZ

As the first New York City Council Speaker of Puerto Rican descent, Melissa Mark-Viverito placed a high priority on immigration issues that have helped raise her national profile as a staunch Democratic supporter of immigrant rights and vocal critic of the Trump administration.

And as she finishes her last month in office and as speaker, Mark-Viverito, representing the 8th Council District in the South Bronx and Harlem, sees herself lobbying even more criticism at the Trump administration sans a political pulpit.

"That's why we have to fight so hard," Mark-Viverito said. "There's so much at stake."

Those were some of her remarks in her last, hour-long roundtable discussion with reporters from community and ethnic media before leaving office.

The last year has arguably tested Mark-Viverito's strength as a speaker and the Council's relentless approach to reinforcing New York City's status as a so-called Sanctuary City. It's done so by passing resolutions that have sty-



Photo by David Cruz
MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO (at mic)

mied federal officers from arresting undocumented immigrants at courthouses, schools and other public facilities. Conceding that the city may not save every undocumented immigrant from deportation, Mark-Viverito said there is a deliberate slowdown in keeping authorities from doing their job.

There's also help in the form of providing legal services to those facing deportation or understanding their immigration status. "In some cases they actually do have status and may not even know it," Mark-Viverito said.

As speaker, Mark-Viverito kept on top of the city's issues. Among them is the multi-faceted issue of homelessness, which has increased over the last four years, prompting the de Blasio administration to build more homeless

shelters. Norwood is among the neighborhoods under consideration for a shelter, with the closed Sam's Floor Carpeting on Webster Avenue being eyed as one.

"We have a mandate that we have to honor and sometimes we have to build or lose a hotel in order to access—we're trying to stay away from that—but considering this mandate we have to do something," Mark-Viverito said.

As 2018 sees her out of office, the last bit of business for Mark-Viverito to contend with is influencing who will be the next speaker. Though coy on who she would endorse, Mark-Viverito acknowledged that the best speaker isn't one that has to align with a certain ethnic demographic. Her endorsement will not run on ethnic lines. "Just because you're a Latino candidate, doesn't mean that you're the best candidate," she said. "You could be a fighter for my issues even if you're not Puerto Rican."

Her endorsement will likely come before she decides what she will do next. "There's a lot of doors that could open," she said. "[A]nd I have to be ready."

Got a News Tip?
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Stagg to Start Work on Signature Property in Norwood in March 2018

By WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

Mosholu Grand, the planned site of a 152-unit apartment building at a former auto repair shop and gas station location, is environmentally cleared for development following a monthslong debate over the property's safety.

Throughout the planning and demolition process, the community board and neighborhood residents were worried that the site at 150 Van Cortlandt Ave. E. might be environmentally unfit for living.

But according to an environmental assessment statement signed off on Dec. 6 by Aaron Werner, the director of environmental planning at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), construction at the site "would not result in any significant adverse impacts on the environment." This ruling, called a "negative declaration," considers not only possible hazardous materials but also the impact the new residents will have on local schools and infrastructure, water and sewer systems, lighting conditions, and other factors.

"I feel we're in good hands, [the report is] comforting to me," said Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky, Community Board 7's Environmental and Sanitation Committee chair who has been leading the charge to make sure the site is environmentally safe for future residents. "My contacts in the businesses assure me that HPD and DEP [the New York City Department of Environmental Protection] are being very thorough, and the documents do look good."

Earlier this year, a site investigation by the Brooklyn company Hydro Tech Environmental Corp., hired and working on behalf of the developer, the Stagg Group, found that "vapors associated with gasoline constituents and chlorinated solvents were detected in the soil vapor beneath the western and eastern property boundaries" and that "metals were detected throughout the shallow and deep soils of the site at concentrations exceeding regulatory standards."

Though a remedial action plan is in place to remove soil and other excavated materials from the construction site, residents needn't be alarmed.



Photo by Wendy Joan Biddlecombe

THE STAGG GROUP considers this property at 150 Van Cortlandt Ave. E. their signature project.

Juliet Pierre-Antoine, HPD press secretary, wrote in an email that the site "wasn't contaminated enough to be considered a brownfield. It just needed simple remediation."

"This is not a special case, it is a common practice," Pierre-Antoine said of the City Environmental Quality Review process.

Hartman-Kutnowsky said the community is still very "sensitive" to environmental concerns after the former Bronx New School, which rests a block from the Van Cortlandt Avenue East site, was closed in 2011 after toxic chemicals were found in the air. A report released in 2013 found that students and employees at the school were exposed with high levels of trichloroethylene and were put at a minimal risk of developing cancer and other health issues from exposure to the carcinogen.

"Bronx New School was literally above levels that were safe to be around. I can't tell you what we went through as parents," said Hartman-Kutnowsky, whose child attended the school.

In a phone interview, Stagg Group president Mark Stagg said Mosholu Grand construction is expected to begin in March 2018. Though the environmental assessment statement lists construction time at an estimated 30 months, Stagg was adamant it would not take more than 18 months to com-

pletion once construction kicks off. He said that funding is in place and he looks forward to bringing more affordable housing to the Bronx. He also said he was unaware that graffiti is present on the construction walls, and said that his company will address the problem immediately. Several days after the interview, the graffiti was covered up.

Mosholu Grand is a proposed mixed-use building being funded for HPD's Multifamily New Construction Mix & Match program, which funds new construction of mixed-income apartment buildings. According to the plans, the complex is supposed to have 4,000 square feet of community space and roughly 2,590 square feet of off street parking.

According to the environmental assessment statement, of the 151 apartments (plus one apartment for a superintendent), 76 units would go to households that earn up to 60 percent of the Area Median Income. New York City's 2017 AMI is \$85,900 for a three-member household. The rest of the units would be available to households that earn up to 90 percent of the AMI. About 10 percent of the apartments would be earmarked for "formerly homeless households," according to the report.

The Stagg Group purchased the property for \$7.1 million back in 2015.

Editor's Note: *The full report is available at <https://a002-ceqr.access.nyc.gov/ceqr/> by searching with CEQR No. 17HPD109X.*

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Holidays In The Bronx

The Bronx is ready for the holidays! Several Christmas and Chanukah events took place in Norwood these past few weeks to help residents get into the yuletide spirit. Santa Claus was present throughout Norwood to give the gift of holiday cheer.



Photo courtesy Sterling Diaz

SANTA CLAUS HOLDS up a gift for this mom and her daughter at the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District's annual holiday tree lighting ceremony on Dec. 13. The BID handed out several dozen toys for the merry event.



Photo by Adi Talwar

MUSIC TEACHER CONDUCTS the majestic children's choir at the CB7 Christmas Tree Lighting, as the audience looks on.



Photo by Adi Talwar

SHEILA SANCHEZ, PRESIDENT of the Friends of Williamsbridge Oval, has a Christmas moment with her grandchild underneath the tree.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

SANTA CLAUS POSES with 52nd Precinct officers and community children at the precinct's annual event. They held it this year at St. Philip Neri Church.

Photo courtesy Mosholu Preservation Corporation

(L-R) SENATOR JAMAAL Bailey and East 233rd Street/White Plains Road Merchants Association's Michael Felter smile jollily with Santa Claus at the second annual Light the Night event at East 233rd Street and White Plains Road on Dec. 12.



Photo courtesy Mosholu Preservation Corporation

THIS LITTLE GIRL is full of cheer after receiving a Christmas gift from ole' St. Nick himself at the Kingsbridge Road Merchants Association's holiday tree lighting event while Councilman Fernando Cabrera, who represents Kingsbridge, looks on.





HEALTH CHECK

By KEYLA GARCIA

This time of year is filled with holiday cheer, gatherings, and lots of great food. For many folks the holiday season means eating more than usual, putting on a few extra pounds followed by weight loss being a New Year's resolution goal. However, the holiday season doesn't have to include weight gain if you eat in moderation, use portion control, and exercise regularly. It's important to take a healthier approach to what we eat during the yuletide.

The American Heart Association offers several tips toward a healthy approach. Small changes make a big difference.

Control portions. Especially during the holidays, know that you'll have more opportunities to eat festive snacks and desserts. You don't

have to deprive yourself, just eat smaller portions and less often.

Eat when you're hungry. If you're not hungry, wait until you are – just don't wait until you're famished because you might overeat. Also, don't eat just because the food is available. Learn more about why you might be eating when not hungry.

Plan. Prepare healthy snacks throughout the day. If you tend to get hungry between meals, bring along a 200-calorie, whole grain, high-fiber snack. Fiber keeps you feeling full longer.

Slow down. Enjoy each bite and put your fork down while chewing, then take a drink between each bite. This gives your body enough time to trigger your brain that you are satisfied (not necessarily full).

Pay attention. Do not eat in front of the TV or computer, or while standing in the kitchen or talking on the phone. When you do these things, you're more likely to lose track of how much you've eaten.

Keep a food diary. Write down everything you eat, look at it, then iden-

tify why you ate it – was it hunger, stress, boredom? Then look for areas in which you can make adjustments and incorporate healthy changes.

Editor's Note: Keyla Garcia, MPH, CHES, is a health educator with Montefiore Health System's Office of Community & Population Health.

MMCC Lights Up Menorah



Photo by Miriam Quinones

ASSEMBLYMAN JEFF DINOWITZ of Norwood turns on the first light of this menorah in celebration of Chanukah. Dinowitz, along with schoolchildren, were on hand for the menorah lighting courtesy of MMCC on Dec. 14. The holiday began at sundown on Tuesday, Dec. 12 and lasts for eight days. Chanukah is a Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. It's known as the Festival of Lights and the Feast of Dedication.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Apply to Local Community Board

Applications for placement into a local community board are available. City residents who qualify must either reside, work or have a professional or other significant interest in the Bronx. Applications are open to anyone as young as 16 years old. Deadline for application submission is Feb. 9, 2018. For more information and to apply, call (718) 590-3913 or visit bronxboropres.nyc.gov/community-boards/.

Summer Camp Applications

Applications for summer camps sponsored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will open Jan. 24, 2018. Applications should be submitted through the online registration program at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html>. Parents and guardians are encouraged to register early. For more information, call (518) 402-8014.

Heating Assistance

Sign up to receive free heating assistance through the New York State Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). Eligible households can receive assistance of up to \$725. A family of four with a yearly income of \$53,482 can still qualify for help. For more information about eligibility, and to sign up, call (212) 331-3126.

Toy Drive

The Office of Councilman Andy King is accepting new toys for its 11th annual "Sharing is Caring" toy drive collection for young Bronx residents. Toys must be new, unwrapped, and appropriate for children ages 18 and under. Donations can be dropped off at 940 E. Gun Hill Rd. from 10 a.m. to

6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, through Dec. 21. The holiday event is scheduled for Dec. 24. For more information, call (718) 684-5509.

Donate Clothes

The Office of Councilman Andy King is accepting warm clothes for the winter season through Jan. 5, 2018. Coats, sweaters or any other warm clothing can be dropped off at 940 E. Gun Hill Rd. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. They must be clean and in wearable condition. For more information, call (718) 684-5509 or (718) 684-5511.

Free Personal Financial Counseling

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs's Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) offers free one-on-one financial counseling by appointment. To schedule an appointment, and to find a Financial Empowerment Center near you, go to <http://bit.ly/2yQd11R>.

Crime Victims Support

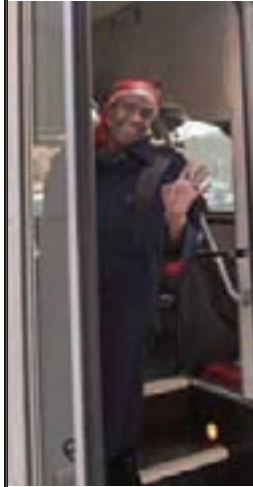
Crime Victims Support Services offers victims help in navigating the criminal justice system. Free confidential services include claim assistance, case follow-up, crisis counseling, and victim advocacy. For more information, call (718) 823-4925.

Bronx Photo Club

The Bronx Photographic Society (formerly the New York Botanical/Zoological Photographic Society) meets bimonthly at Fordham University Prep School on the Fordham University Campus, 441 E. Fordham Rd., room 327 or 329 starting at 9:45 a.m. as follows: Jan. 6 and 20, Feb. 3 and 17, March 3 and 17, April 14 and 21, and May 5 and 12. For more information, call (718) 543-3115.

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Coming Home



Photo by Miriam Quinones

BRONXITE MIKE BUFFALO (seated front center), an alum of Wings Academy, returned to his home borough on Dec. 8 for an event at The New School for Leadership and The Arts. After realizing his professional basketball dreams in Europe, the 26-year-old founded the Westchester-based Faith & Grind Basketball School.



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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Free Family Films

The public is invited to view free films at the following local libraries:

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org:

Dec. 23 at 2:30 p.m. - "A Christmas Carol"

Dec. 30 at 2:30 p.m. - "Wonder Woman"

Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., (718) 882-8239:

Dec. 23 at 1:30 p.m. - "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2"

Events

Bedford Park Congregational Church, 2988 Bainbridge Ave. (at 201st Street) offers its **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**, Dec. 24 at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. For more information, call (718) 733-3199.

New York Botanical Garden presents the **Annual Holiday Train Show**, through Jan. 15, featuring

model trains and miniature replicas of NYC landmarks. For more information and to purchase tickets, call (718) 817-8512.

Masjidus Sabur presents **Serving Humanity Day** where visitors can receive free confidential HIV/HEP C testing and free meals, Dec. 22 from 2 to 6 p.m. at 2975 Bainbridge Ave. For more information, call (718) 208-5996 or (917) 636-0346.



File Photo

THE BRONX LIBRARY CENTER is in the holiday spirit. Check out some holiday-inspired offerings in our Editor's Pick in Library Events sections.



Photo courtesy New York Botanical Garden
CHOO-CHOO! The New York Botanical Garden Annual Holiday Train Show is already under way and spreading some cheer (more information can be found under Events).

Bronx Music Heritage Center presents **Melrose Parranda**, Puerto Rican tradition involving processions of carolers featuring songs from Puerto Rico in a parade led by a number of musical performers. The public should arrive at El Coquí Community Garden's Casita., 414 E. 163rd St., on Dec. 21, no later than 4:30 p.m. For more information, call (212) 843-9216/8032.

7 to 12; preregistration required): Holiday Card Making, Dec. 21, and Dragon Making, Dec. 28, both at 4 p.m.; and **The Story of Ebenezer Scrooge**: (ages 3 to 12), classic tale performed by Traveling Lantern Theatre Company, Dec. 23 at 2 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for teens/young adults: **Craft-eens!**: Craft on Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 3:30 p.m. (all materials are provided); and **Ink Painting**: to learn calligraphy, free, Dec. 29 at 3:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children: **Preschool Storytime and Crafts at 11:15 a.m.:** (ages 3 to 5), including puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, Dec. 22; and **Gingerbread House Workshop**: Dec. 21 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

HAPPY CHANUKAH TO ALL OUR JEWISH READERS; MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR CHRISTIAN READERS; AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Dec. 26 for the next publication date of Jan. 4, 2018.

Exhibits

The Bronx County Historical Society presents **What Lies Beneath -- Cemeteries of the Bronx**, through April 8, 2018, at the Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (at 165th Street), presents **Gordon Matta-Clark: Architect**, and **Susannah Ray: A Further Shore**, both through April 8. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents free, **Dark and Stormy Night Gothic Influence in Contemporary Art**, Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., through Feb. 10, 2018. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **Hands on Projects** (ages

CB7 Finds New District Manager

(continued from page 1)

of the job. District managers serve as go-betweens for residents and New York City agencies. Much of the red flags were centered over her connections with the borough's Democratic lawmakers, where its City Council members and borough president pick members on the board. District manager positions are usually apolitical positions.

"None of this was politically motivated. This was something I saw as an opportunity to continue to serve," Bravo said. "I'm going to give it a shot because this is where I was born." Bravo's history with the board stretches when she was a child when the district manager at the time, the late Rita Kessler, served.

Bravo applied for the position, having been interviewed twice by the board's Search Committee. Aside from the BDCC, Bravo held jobs with Congressman Jose Serrano and his son, Manhattan/Bronx state Sen. Jose Serrano Jr.

On Dec. 14, Bravo was soon presented to the Executive Committee, where she was approved over another finalist, Lydia Hernandez, a community associate for Community Board 8.

The closed-door discussion was "heated and contentious" with some "sexist remarks and threats" made, according to the public minutes. Members ultimately voted 6 to 3 in favor of Bravo over Hernandez.

Striking the balance in keeping an open process while protecting the identities of applicants stands as a challenge for the board. Much of the anonymity stems from ensuring an applicant's current em-

ployer is not made aware that the applicant is looking for another job.

Well before the board had decided on their candidates, new members criticized the handling of the vetting process, citing a lack of transparency. The Search Committee met privately to review résumés and conduct interviews without general board members present. Other applicants included CB7 members Adaline Walker-Santiago, Robyn Saunders, and Lorita Wilson. At the November general board meeting, new members worried the process was not clear enough.

"It needs work," said one CB7 member of the hiring practice. The member asked for anonymity because they were not allowed to speak on the matter.

"The system was rigged," wrote another member on Facebook. The person identified himself or herself as a member of the Bronx Citizens Speak Out Now.

Andrew Laiosa, chair of the board's Search Committee, said the board made every attempt at walking a tightrope. "You have to have some kind of balance between transparency and privacy," said Laiosa. "What I find very disappointing is that it appears to me that the majority of people are so poisoned by their emotions that they cannot intellectually consider that this is indeed a concern."

Community Board 7 covers the neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge Heights and University Heights. Bravo lives within CB7's borders, which is not a requirement for a district manager, but a benefit.

It's unclear when Bravo will start her job.

Following String of Robberies, Norwood Thief Arrested

By YARA PALIN

The man who allegedly committed a string of robberies in Norwood and Bedford Park is now under arrest, police say. He robbed eight women before being captured.

Police say Germaine Butler, who is being charged with five counts of robbery and three counts of grand larceny, was hiding at his sister's home in Long Island after having been identified by several news outlets. The doorman there, who is a retired cop, recognized Butler and called in a tip. "[Butler] eventually left the apartment to order a pizza and [the doorman] called us," says Captain Kevin Coleman of the 52nd Precinct.

Coleman, who stopped by the Bedford Mosholu Community Association meeting on Dec. 6, says that they had identified Butler in early November but lack of sufficient proof prevented cops from making an arrest.

"We didn't have enough evidence," Coleman says. "Victims could not ID him and that can become an issue in terms of arresting him."

Most of Butler's robberies took place in October with one taking place in November. In several incidents, Butler would knock the women down and grab their purses and other belongings. During the second robbery that occurred on Oct. 21, he got away with belongings worth around \$1300. The 48-year-old victim suffered a bloodied lip, along with other bumps and bruises.

In another incident, a 22-year-old woman was thrown to the ground and robbed of her purse in front of 334 E. 205th St. on Oct 10. Butler also grabbed a 66-year-old woman's pocketbook on East 203rd Street and East Mosholu Parkway South on Oct. 24.

"That's the story with him," Coleman says. "He is no longer a worry or a problem."



Wishing you
Joy & Peace this
Holiday Season



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