New Schools Inside Clinton Look To Lure 2nd Round Students

By ALEX KRATZ

Students still looking for a place to land when school starts next fall will have two new options opening up inside of DeWitt Clinton High School, including one with a successful Manhattan pedigree.

As part of its new plan to improve performance inside Clinton, which saw its four-year graduation rate drop to 50 percent, the Department of Education is gradually shrinking enrollment of the storied 115-year-old school and starting up two new smaller schools.

The plan was vigorously opposed by the entire school community and local elected officials who believe the co-locating of two schools inside Clinton will ultimately lead to its closure sometime in the near future. After more than a decade of overcrowding and an increasing population of special needs and English language learners, Clinton supporters felt the DOE set the school up for failure.

After approving the plan on March 11, the DOE recently revealed the identity of the two new schools as Bronx Collaborative High School and World View High School. Each will admit 108 students next fall and the following three years. At the same time, Clinton’s overall enrollment will drop from around 3,800 to around 2,250 by 2016.

Lawsuit Charges Cemetery With Discrimination

By SARA REGALADO

A group of workers filed a federal lawsuit against Woodlawn Cemetery, saying they are seeking justice for all workers subjected to racism at the northwest Bronx historical landmark.

The group of workers — brothers Alexis Coss and Enrique Coss, as well as Todd Brown and Frank Russo — are suing the not-for-profit corporation, its board of directors, and Woodlawn’s president, John P. Toale, Jr., for discriminating against the not-for-profit corporation, its board of directors, and Woodlawn’s president, John P. Toale, Jr., for discrimination at the cemetery workplace on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, and disability.

The Cosses, Brown, and Russo say management has promoted racial division within the workplace by ignoring harassment claims. The workers say they (and several other workers who are not plaintiffs) have been subject to racial slurs including, “monkey, gorilla, and mutt,” and have also not received equal opportunities for overtime pay and/or promotions.

The cemetery has faced racist claims for years now and (continued on page 4)
Klein’s State Budget Deal Leaves Local Democrats Wanting More

Bronx Democrat Jeff Klein, who represents a whiff of Bedford Park and is the co-leader of the State Senate, trumpeted the state budget deal hammered out last week as the most “family friendly budget in a generation.”

The deal included a minimum wage hike that would gradually go up to $15 an hour in three years, a $350 tax rebate check for families and incentives for businesses to hire veterans.

“Thousands of low wage families in the Bronx will directly benefit from this boost in wages,” Klein said in a statement announcing the deal.

But many Democrats outside of Klein’s five-person Independent Democratic Conference (which may soon shrink after the high-profile arrest of Malcolm Smith on bribery charges Tuesday morning) say Klein compromised too much, to the detriment of Bronx families.

State Senator Gustavo Rivera, who is becoming Klein’s most vocal liberal critic among Bronx elected officials, blasted the deal on the Senate floor for including a watered-down minimum wage hike and not including funding for the DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented immigrants to receive tuition assistance at state college and universities.

“Not only did the Education, Labor and Family Assistance budget bill completely omit funding for the DREAM Act, it proposes a minimum wage increase that does not meet the immediate needs of our workforce and that will be outdated by the time it reaches fruition,” Rivera said.

Before the deal went down, Assemblyman Nelson Castro also called for DREAM Act funding, saying, “New York State can no longer continue to ignore the need to ensure that these young adults, who we have educated and raised for decades, have access to good quality education.”

Public and Community Meetings

• COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, at St. Philip Neri Church, 3025 Grand Concourse, in the parish center. For more information, call (718) 933-5660 or visit www.BronxCB7.info.

• COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings will be held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Parks & Recreation, Thursday, April 4; Traffic & Transportation, Thursday, April 11; Health & Hospitals, Monday, April 15 (6 p.m.); Housing, Wednesday, April 17; Community Relations/Long-term Planning, Thursday, April 18. All Community Board meetings are open to the public. For more information, call (718) 933-5660 or visit www.BronxB7.info.

Underdog in 11th Council District Battle Hypes Local Endorsement

While Andrew Cohen, the establishment favorite in 11th Council District race, continues to tout out a cavalcade of endorsements, from the city’s most powerful labor unions to the Bronx borough president, his chief rival was thrilled to announce the backing of a small political club based in Norwood and Bedford Park.

On a recent Friday afternoon, Cliff Stanton talked about the endorsement of the Northwest Bronx Democrats, a small political shepherded by Anthony Rivieccio, a political neophyte who is a constant presence at local community meetings and rallies.

Stanton said the endorsement showed he was garnering support in the Norwood and Bedford Park communities, which he said have been neglected in favor Riverdale, the wealthiest and most politically powerful part of the district.

“Norwood and Bedford Park residents... have been ignored for far too long,” Stanton said. “The political power in this council district resides in Riverdale and it’s been that way for far too long.”

Stanton also talked about his desire to take a more active role in area schools, specifically citing the recent bullying problems at MS 80 and the controversial co-locations at DeWitt Clinton High School (see front page).

24-Year-Old Winning Money Game in 15th District Race

By WILL SPEROS

The race to replace Joel Rivera as City Council representative in District 15, which includes the Fordham-Bedford Park area, is shaping into the most unpredictable and interesting race in the Bronx this year.

Albert Alvarez, Rivera’s current chief of staff and longtime right-hand man, seems as if he would be the likely shoo-in for office. However, the odds shifted quite dramatically on March 16 when all City Council candidates filed their latest campaign finance disclosure reports.

The estimated balances of Joel Bausa and William Rivera (no relation to Joel) more than overshadowed that of Alvarez. While Bausa and Rivera’s numbers show they have received generous financial support, even their numbers have been more than outdone by 24-year-old upset Ritchie Torres.

William Rivera, a state committee man for the 87th Assembly District, has been campaigning since December 2012. Over the course of these few short months, Rivera has managed to gain enough financial support from the Bronx community.

At PS 8, Anthony Rivieccio (center) of the Northwest Bronx Democrats announces his club’s support of 11th Council District candidate Cliff Stanton (far right).

Photo by David Greene
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ParentS hold a demonstration on Feb. 28 against embattled principal Emmanuel Polanco.

A spokesperson at the Department of Education said, “An internal investigation is under way and disciplinary action is pending the outcome of that investigation.”

This latest incident amounts to more trouble for first-year MS 80 principal Emmanuel Polanco, 30, who some parents say has lost control of student discipline. Union leaders also say Polanco violated the collective bargaining rights of at least one staff member and have held rallies calling for removal.

One source at the school, who declined to be identified, said, “They had known about this poor kid being bullied for months now and nobody did anything. This principal needs to be gone.”

Cemetery Charged With Discrimination

(continued from page 1)


A local teen is recovering and waiting for a transfer to another school, after she was viciously beaten by a group of teens who had been tormenting the girl for months.

Paramedics were called to MS 80, located at 149 E. Mosholu Pkwy., No., in Norwood at 3:13 p.m. on Monday, March 18.

An EMS spokesman said, “A female fell, that’s what [the call] came in as — having head pain and feeling disorientated.”

Sources close to the situation claimed the 14-year-old victim was surrounded during ninth period and beaten, punched and even bitten by a group of three or four individuals, including at least one male before she was tossed down a flight of stairs.

Sources say the victim was in a semi-conscious state when paramedics carried her out of the school.

The victim was taken to Montefiore Medical Center for treatment. She reportedly suffered a gash to her head and an injury to her hand, as well as scrapes and bruises.

A spokesperson at the Department of Education said, “An internal investigation is pending the outcome of that investigation.”

One source at the school, who declined to be identified, said, “They had known about this poor kid being bullied for months now and nobody did anything. This principal needs to be gone.”

Brown and the Coss brothers all served as shop stewards — elected positions — in their unions.

“I didn’t like that men were walking with their heads down,” Brown said about taking a leadership role.

Brown said management required Russo to rotate out of a position he had held for more than 10 years, causing him to lose multiple overtime opportunities. Plaintiffs believe retaliations caused Russo’s brain tumor to worsen and he was left to take a disability leave. Russo went into retirement because he could not survive to publicizing the racism at Woodlawn, employees believed that the layoffs were due to management has allegedly violated, over-time is to be rotated equally within each department, so that each worker can benefit; promotions are to be posted and given to senior workers; and lastly, workers are not to be fired without just cause.

“There was such an atmosphere of fear … we said enough is enough,” Enrique Coss said on deciding to take action against the cemetery. “The myth is that we were, for a lack of a better term, ‘brave enough.’ We showed leadership qualities that elevated us into leader roles.”

He added, “The fact that workers fear and hesitate in standing up shows that there is a problem. The mere fact that we were not afraid spoke volumes.”

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Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers about the New York legislature’s decision to raise the minimum wage from $7.25 to $9 an hour over three years.

Because of this economy we need to raise the salary in order for us to survive right now as working class people. Hopefully, Albany will listen. We have to let them know we are suffering right now. It's the best idea right now because we don’t see another solution to create more higher paying jobs.

Julio Alvarado

My opinion is I feel like it should go up. There’s people that are in need of money for their families and especially with the cost of living, everything is going up, so it’s something that would help people in their everyday lives. I think it would have a good effect by raising the minimum wage to $9.

John Sanchez

I think it's terrible with the economy the way it is now and with the subway fare going up, I don't agree with that at all. Of course raising it now to $9 an hour would be better for the people. There are a lot of hardworking people out here and you can’t do anything with $7.25 an hour.

Angel Sampayo

I would say it’s good. [But] I would say it should be two years when it should go to $9.

Jimmy Lanzetta

I don't think it's a good thing at all. I think they should have done this a long time ago, and then maybe, if they were where they should have been, they could have raised it over time but I think they waited so long for the minimum wage to go up that it’s time for people to be making more money. Everything is going up in this world except for people’s incomes and it’s not fair.

Jeanie Occhino

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An estimated 35 million Americans suffer from allergies, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. More commonly called hay fever, seasonal allergic irritation results in symptoms that include itchy eyes, nose and throat, sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, tearing or dark circles under the eyes.

“In the early spring, trees are the first to start producing pollen as soon as they start budding, and it creates major problems for people with allergies,” said David Rosenstreich, M.D., director of the allergy and immunology division at Montefiore Medical Center. “The symptoms people experience often resemble a common cold, but, if it happens every year at this time, it’s most likely allergies.”

An allergy symptom is the result of the immune system overreacting. It mistakes the pollen for a foreign invader and attacks it, which leads to the release of chemicals called histamines into the blood. The histamine travels through the blood and latches onto histamine receptors on other cells, causing them to swell. This inflammation causes many familiar allergy symptoms.

People with asthma are especially affected by allergies and may have asthma attacks, which can be dangerous and even life-threatening. Asthma is often triggered by allergies; however most people with allergies do not develop asthma.

Over-the-counter medications often make people experiencing allergies feel better, but if they experience difficulty breathing or the symptoms become more severe, they should seek medical attention. Antihistamine drugs work by blocking the histamine from affecting these cells. Additionally, a physician can prescribe more potent medications.

In addition to medications, lifestyle changes also can help relieve symptoms. Several to consider include:

• Limiting outdoor activities during days with high pollen counts.
• Keeping windows closed (at home or in the car) to keep pollens out.
• Installing your air conditioners early, since they’re ideal for filtering the outside air that comes into your home.
• Washing your hair after coming indoors.
• Refraining from mowing lawns or raking leaves because this stirs up pollen and molds.
• Avoiding hanging sheets or clothes outside to dry.

Source: Montefiore Medical Center

Get in Shape

Shape Up NYC offers free fitness classes for ages 50+ at the following locations: Moshulu Montefiore Senior Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave. (Senior Fitness), Fridays at 10:30 a.m.; St. James Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave., (Zumba), Wednesdays at 9 a.m. and Thursdays at 7 p.m.; and Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse, (Cardio Sculpt), Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. (through April 13). No registration is required. For more information, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/parks.

Health and Wellness Summit

The Bronx Health and Wellness Summit will be held April 6 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Fordham University, 441 E. Fordham Rd. and will feature CBS medical reporter, Dr. Max Gomez, as the keynote speaker. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information or to register, visit www.bronxboropres.nyc.gov.

Study on Aging

The Cognitive Neurophysiology Laboratory (CNL) at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University seeks participants ages 60 to 75 for a study on the aging process and its overall effects on brain activity and everyday functions. Participants get an EEG recording to read brain waves and then complete a series of computer-based tasks (approximately 4 to 6 hours), and will receive $12 per hour in compensation for their time. For more information or to apply, call (718) 862-1328, e-mail AgingResearchUnit@gmail.com, or visit www.cognitiveneurolab.com.

Mentoring in Medicine

The Frederick Douglass Academy I, 2581 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd. (at 7th Avenue between 148th and 150th streets), will host a free program called Mentoring in Medicine, April 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., where students of all ages can learn about careers in the health care industry. Included will be hands-on workshops, interactive demonstrations, research competitions, a health fair and other activities. Registration deadline is April 20. For more information or to RSVP, call Ms. Perrineau at (718) 920-6628, email mimconference@gmail.com, or visit medicalmentor.org.

Norwood Triangle | Adult Programs at MMCC

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Rock Climbing Wall Classes • 8 Sessions
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Tuesdays, beginning April 16: 5:30pm–6:30pm
Special: Montefiore Employees $50
$70 Member/$80 Non–members

Learn to Swim at Fordham University • 8 Sessions
Tuesday, beginning April 16: 7:00pm–8:00pm
$130 Members/$135 Non–members

Zumba • 8 Sessions
Fridays, beginning April 15: 5:30pm–6:30pm
Special: Montefiore Employees $50
$70 Members/$80 Non–members

Computer Training • 8 Sessions
Beginners Saturdays, beginning April 13: 11:00am–12:00pm
Intermediate Thursdays, beginning April 18: 6:30pm–7:30pm
$80 Members/$90 Non–members

Back to Work Seminars • 5 Sessions
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New Schools Inside Clinton Look To Lure Students

(continued from page 1)
on April 12, parents and students will only have a short time to get to know Clinton’s new building mates.

In a recent press release, the DOE said nearly three out of every four students (74 percent) was admitted to one of their top three high school choices, while 90 percent of students were matched with one of their top 12 choices.

While the DOE trumpeted these numbers as a success story, that still leaves thousands of students in the Bronx and citywide who weren’t matched or didn’t apply at all. The latter group represents the so-called over-the-counter or “OTC” students who are often less prepared and have less active parents than those who apply to schools during the first round.

The new schools at Clinton will accept students from throughout the city, but give priority to Bronx students as well as those students who make their interest in the school known by attending an information session, an open house or visit the school’s exhibit at the DOE’s high school fair (see sidebar).

In a recent blog post listing recommendations for the second round of high school applications, Clara Hemphill, a columnist for InsideSchools, a website that tracks city public schools, included both older schools that still have open seats and new schools opening in the fall.

Of the eight Bronx schools named, one was the Macy’s Honors program at Clinton, which screens applicants for the cream of the crop and still has open slots, and the new Bronx Collaborative High School.

Hemphill said she included Bronx Collaborative because it is modeled after the Institute for Collaborative Education (ICE), an East Village secondary school (grades 6 through 12) founded two decades ago. Last year, ICE received an “A” on its DOE progress report and graduated 86.4 percent of its high school student in four years. Clinton, on the other hand, has received two straight “F’s” and, last year, graduated only half of its students in four years.

Bronx Collaborative High School’s founder and principal, Brett Schneider, is a former assistant principal at ICE.

“In general, good leadership and a coherent, well thought out plan make a school successful and it seemed to me that Brett Schneider has the experience to pull it off,” Hemphill said in an email.

In literature and on its website, Bronx Collaborative promotes itself as a place where students are “academic detectives, bringing New York City’s unique resources and rich history into the classroom to investigate and solve real-world mysteries.”

Bronx Collaborative and World View High School both say they will have “social justice” components and teach students how to use technology effectively and positively. The two schools will also offer Native Spanish Language Arts and Spanish classes. Bronx Collaborative says it plans to offer French in the future.

While World View will have strict uniform requirements — white button-down collared shirts, ties, no jeans, slacks or skirts, black or brown shoes — Bronx Collaborative appears to be more casual. It doesn’t have uniform requirements, according to its bio in the DOE’s high school directory, and, if it’s like ICE, students may be calling teachers by their first names.

It’s unclear exactly how the new schools will affect Clinton’s programs and staffing next year, but it will be significant. Decreased enrollment will mean decreased staffing that won’t always be proportional. For example, although the school will lose less than 10 percent of its population next year, administrators said the counseling office will probably be cut in half, from 20 counselors to 10.

Editor’s Note: For more on Bronx Collaborative High School, visit bxchs.org. For more on World View High School, visit worldviewhs.org.
Reform Bus Rides Into the Bronx

Frustrated by the Department of Education’s policies under the control of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a coalition of community groups calling itself A+NYC is looking for a fresh start under the next mayor.

But before the new organization, which includes several Bronx groups, including the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and Sistas and Brothas United, began pushing its agenda, it went on a months-long citywide outreach tour to solicit ideas and figure out priorities.

Last month, following 75 visioning events throughout the five boroughs, A+NYC launched a bus tour to finalize its priorities, promote its efforts to this year’s crop of mayoral candidates and register voters.

On a snowy Saturday afternoon in mid-March, the bus, an old-school yellow bus painted teal, parked in front of the Bronx Library Center in Kingsbridge. Inside, underneath a cloud-dotted ceiling, organizer Maria Fernandez talked to random people whose interest was sparked by the colorful bus.

Most of the seats on the bus had been removed and the interior was divided into separate rooms. On the walls were case studies and platforms discussed at the visioning sessions. Each platform included a small ballot box. Fernandez told people on the bus to place tickets into the platforms they believed were most important.

“They’re also trying to do what they believe the DOE does not: engage communities, especially those in poorer neighborhoods with high populations of minority students,” Fernandez said.

Though Bloomberg touts a higher four-year graduation rate as proof his policies are working, Fernandez says there’s also proof that they are failing.

“We know [Bloomberg’s policies] aren’t working because, after 12 years, only 13 percent of black and Latino students are college ready when they graduate,” Fernandez said.

Fernandez said the plan is to push the finalized education platforms into the mayoral campaign conversation. Already, at least four Democratic candidates have visited the bus.

”—ALEX KRATZ

Photo by Alex Kratz

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This is The Bronx’s newest destination for great food and fun! Located in Throggs Neck, Bronx, NY, the recently renovated contemporary Steakhouse has its very own fireplace and full bar.

Visit us for a menu full of mouth-watering American & Spanish delights! This new eatery features a signature dish, exclusive to Thirty3 Sixty3 called "Tri-Fongo" where Yuca, Plantains, and Sweet Plantains are married together and stuffed with mouthwatering steak, chicken or shrimp.

The menu consists of both American and Spanish cuisine with delicious side dishes. Don’t eat steak? Try our daily specials featuring chicken and fish. Have Allergies? Please inform your server, and the Chef will be happy to make changes to your dish.

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By SARA REGALADO

Decades ago, when the Bronx was infested with crime and drugs, negative views plagued the borough, darkened its beauty, and cloaked the talents of its residents. It seemed as if the borough would never see the light of a new day.

Nowadays, however, plans to reopen the High Bridge — a walking connection to Upper Manhattan — bring forth an indication that the borough has persevered. Census figures show that more and more residents are choosing to remain loyal to the borough; students of the Bronx Academy of Promise participated in and won a national competition; and earlier this year, the Bronx Museum of the Arts received a generous donation that inspired the building to keep its doors open free of charge.

Today, the Bronx is consistently making good news, and Bronxites continue to prove that there is more to the borough than its dark history.

“Not enough people pay attention to the culture here,” Bronx artist Jason Minos explains. “There is a lot of talent that is underappreciated and undervalued in the Bronx. There are a lot of people who still look at the Bronx as a place to avoid.”

This decades-long, apparent rejection of the Bronx inspired Minos to plan the Bronx Festival of the Arts, a weekend-long celebration showcase of Bronx-based singers, poets, dancers, painters, writers and all other art forms.

Minos, multi-talented himself, has always had a love for drawing and painting. He began to draw as soon as he was able to hold a pencil. In his mid-teens, he took his longtime interest in the guitar and began strumming. He was a natural and began to teach himself. Now, Minos plays in a band with his longtime friend, singer Richard Elam. The two record original music and are working on creating a website where they plan on uploading their songs.

Minos says he works “uninteresting jobs” to fund his passions. What keeps him alive is his love for the arts, which, in 2011, elevated into a grand idea. Inspired by citywide arts events, Minos decided to bring together Bronx-based artists and exhibit the hidden talent buried deep in the borough.

Minos began to gather a collective of artists who were interested in linking together to bring more attention to the borough by promoting Bronx talent. It seemed, however, that things fell apart overnight. The group found it hard to commit long-term. Despite this, Minos ventured on with his dream, knowing it would become a reality.

Apart from wanting to promote Bronx artists, Minos wants to bring New Yorkers into the forgotten borough. The festival will run through the weekend of May 31 with several events planned throughout many of parts of the Bronx, including Bedford Park, Claremont Village, Pelham Bay Park and Hunts Point.

“The community needs this, especially in this day and age,” Minos says. “There are a lot of problems with the economy. There is so much uncertainty of the future.” He added, “People have questions about things and this is all really about people. I want them to know that if they want to pursue the arts, they have a chance to, which is why I wanted to include schools.”

After connecting with museums, schools, painters, bands, and poets throughout the past year, Minos will finally see his idea come to life at the festival’s opening events at the Focal Point Gallery and at BAAD! (Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance), on May 31.

Editor’s Note: For more information on the Bronx Festival of the Arts, visit bronxfestivalofthearts.com.
Why NYPD Needs an Inspector General

By ZELLNOR MYRIE

In June of 2012, the City Council introduced a bill that would establish the office of Inspector General for the Police Department. The bill would oversee the policies and practices of the NYPD and analyze the effect of those policies and practices on civil liberties, among other things. Mayor Bloomberg has expressed serious opposition to the bill, promising to veto the legislation and describing the creation of an Inspector General’s office as more “politics” that tamper with public safety. The mayor could not be more wrong.

The Police Department has consistently said that there are already oversight mechanisms in place to keep law enforcement in check, and that these current oversight entities are ill-equipped to address policy issues and are only responsive to individual cases. Furthermore, in individual cases, there have been instances where the department has refused to cooperate with these oversight entities. Ignoring the City Charter’s mandate to cooperate with the Civilian Complaint Review Board, the police commissioner refused to let his officers testify before the board regarding a 2004 incident of alleged police abuse on a wide scale.

Similarly, the former chairman of the Mayor’s Commission to Combat Corruption within the department acknowledged to the City Council that the commission was largely ineffectual because it lacked subpoena power and did not receive cooperation from the department when they made inquiries into larger policy issues like the integrity of crime statistics reporting, fraudulent claims for police overtime, sexual misconduct, and domestic violence by officers.

Additionally, the CIA, FBI, U.S. Department of Justice, most New York City agencies, and comparatively large municipal police departments, such as Los Angeles, all have Inspectors General. Yes, policing the cultural and financial capital of the world requires a special kind of oversight. But this is not a reason for less oversight, it is the precise reason for more.

Cluster-siting is a Community Killer

By CLIFF STANTON

The New York Times recently featured an article on cluster-siting, a controversial city program aimed at housing the homeless that impacts the Bronx in a disproportionate manner. It’s time to rethink this old problem. And as one seeking to serve the people in the City Council, it’s time to formulate a public policy solution...smartly and quickly.

Cluster-site housing has become the Bloomberg administration’s primary tool for sheltering 47,000 homeless, a record city high and a population that includes 20,000 children.

By providing enormous subsidies to residential landlords, the city has quietly, possibly permanently, altered the affordable housing market. The subsidies may be as high as $2,500/month per room. Many times more than what’s obtained from rent stabilized tenants. Over a decade ago, cluster-siting was intended to replace an equally unpopular strategy, scatter-site housing, and gained momentum after federal and state funds for providing Section 8 housing vouchers to the working poor disappeared.

The new trend is disturbing. Rent-paying tenants are harassed or bought out of their existing apartments so landlords can make comparisons to this lucrative program. They may wind up homeless themselves or submit to remaining in a distressed building with a huge influx of homeless tenants. The city arranges for security and the provision of social services to these new tenants, while the city pays enormous rent at an exorbitant expense to taxpayers—significantly more than what would have been paid had the city replaced the lost federal and state money with its own under the now defunct Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Advantage program.

Too often the beneficiary is not the tenants but the for-profit companies with whom the city contracts, such as Aguilas Inc. Aguilas is run by former DHS commissioner Robert Hess. Currently the Comptroller’s office is auditing $10 million in payments to Aguilas, and a 2011 audit showed that Aguilas-operated buildings had more than 1,700 open code violations.

Despite these problems, DHS is rapidly moving families into cluster-sites. In 2009, it folded 1,500 units into the program; last year, it added 2,011. The vast majority of these units are located in the Bronx and only a few remain in the city’s East and West Sides. The city pays much higher rent to cluster-sites than it would to a substantially lower cost apartment.

Social service providers take a broader, more holistic view. A Norwood housing advocate on Bainbridge Avenue related that a typical client facing imminent eviction is a single mother, hopelessly behind in rent payments—a symptom of a larger problem such as domestic or substance abuse, under- or unemployment, or a systemic health problem.

These frontline social service providers have an incredible record of mitigating such problems, but they are under siege, fighting without adequate support from their local elected officials and a city government more interested in balanced budgets than long-term solutions.

Most of the people seeking help in Norwood are not on public assistance; they are the working poor, our neighbors, and need tools to lift themselves out of their difficult circumstances. A city and state that cares about fixing community problems, rather than funding expensive Band-Aids—or worse, turning a blind eye—has several tools at its disposal: increasing the state minimum wage, passing and implementing a real living wage law and a paid sick leave act, reinstating DHS’s Advantage program, adequately supporting organizations that advocate for tenants’ rights, and “redesigning” Medicaid without gutting it.

FDR said, “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

Letter to the Editor

Is It Ever Enough?

Your “Fearing the Worst” article in the March 7-20 issue mentions that NYC’s West Clin- ton H.S. English teacher who had previously worked at Walton H.S. which closed and subsequently reopened, housing several schools within its building. Now, his concern, as well as the concern of Clinton’s students, parents, and teachers, is that they may lose their fight to prevent the same thing from happening to their school.

In addition, the op-ed by Public Advocate Bill de Blasio in the same issue deals with the closings of struggling schools without their first being offered more time and resources to improve. De Blasio also mentions Clinton and says he has called upon the Bloomberg administration to freeze school closings for the remainder of the mayor’s term, and that “enough is enough.”

The fact is that enough had been long a time ago when one school after another bit the dust. When it came to school closings, the mayor ignored protests throughout his tenure, and it seems unlikely that he would “change his modus operandi anytime soon, especially now that his term is almost coming to an end.”

It is our esteemed mayor who has been at the heart of school closings. Instead of helping troubled schools with additional funding or support for new teachers, the school board was frequently closed, then re-opened with new names and new staff, and some of the school buildings would then house more than one school within its walls. The number of students attending remained about the same or may have increased, which would, in turn, cause classes to be more crowded, and learning and teaching to be more difficult.

Some subjects, such as the arts and music, have been discontinued due to insufficient funds, but aren’t more funds required for the newly reopened two-schools-in-one when each one has its own staff? In a recent news report, it was mentioned that several more NYC schools were scheduled to be closed by the end of this school year.

If de Blasio can convince the mayor to freeze future school closings, he will have accomplished something that no one else has been able to do to date. Unfortunately, Bloomberg may have set his own personal goal in school closings before he leaves of- fice, and that “enough is enough” is not at all in his vocabulary.

Judy Noy
Norwood resident and graduate of the ‘former’ Roosevelt H.S.

We love, welcome and encourage letters to the editor and opinion articles from readers. Write to: Editor, Norwood News, 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. Fax: (718) 324-2917; or e-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org.
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Saturday, April 20, 10:30 am
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250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., Bronx, NY 10468

Friday, May 10, 10:30 am*
at CUNY on Concourse, 3rd floor
2501 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468

Tuesday, May 14, 6:30 pm
at Lehman campus, Music Building, 1st floor

*Allied Health: CNA, EKG, Phlebotomy and Nurse Technician ONLY date.

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Center Opens Up to Neighbors With Easter Egg Hunt

By CLARKE ILLMATICAL

Last Friday, families cheerfully gathered at Tender Tots Child Care Center at 3322 Decatur Ave. in Norwood for an Easter egg hunt. The afternoon’s activities were focused on the children. However, the underlying purpose of the event was connecting with community.

The afternoon’s activities included an egg hunt, egg painting, potato sack races and entertainment from a clown. “We felt that we would want to do something fun for the kids,” said Rachel Denaro, the center’s educational director.

“We started with a really small plan and it expanded, and we opened it up to the community. We want us to be known to everybody and let everybody have fun.”

Many present that afternoon were attending the center for the first time. Elaine Valentin, a grandmother whose children live in the area, was impressed with the facility and is interested in enrolling her two grandchildren.

“This place looks nice; it would benefit the kids,” said Valentin. “They have all ages and they have activities for all for all the kids. I like the way they are organized. It looks like all of the kids here are happy.”

Tender Tots uses a “play based” learning curriculum that works in conjunction with lesson plans and is tailored to specific age groups.

“That is the most important part of this experience,” Denaro said. “The ability to play together and share and grow healthy relationships. We do our ABCs, but I like to promote that learning.”

Despite the revelry, edification of the neighborhood was a concern.

“There is too much violence, there is too much hate on hate. We need to let the new generation get something positive.”

In addition to childcare, the center really wants to establish relationships with families in the community, letting them know that child care is a component of their responsibilities.

“We love to grow; we’re trying to create a family here,” Denaro said. “With our parties, we try to bring all of the families in.”

The center is also looking forward to their universal Pre-K program, free of charge, starting in September. Currently there are 85 children at the center, and they would like to expand to as many as 150. Children enrolled vary from infants up to six years of age.

Editor’s Note: For more information, call (718) 324-1052 or visit www.tendertotsny.com.

Kosher Deli Comes to Norwood

Michael Kravitz, who you will find behind the new deli counter at MD Café on Jerome Avenue, says he will stack his Kosher-style roast beef and pastrami up against anyone, including a certain famous spot on the Lower East Side.

“It’s similar quality to Katz’s, but cheaper,” says Kravitz, a longtime deli operator now plying his trade in the Bronx for the first time.

Kratvits says he has a “guy in Hunts Point” who makes the Kosher-style meats. The deli also offers a wide-range of Boar’s Head cold cuts and is offering a $3 lunch special on cold cut sandwiches.

Perhaps not coincidentally, MD Café owner Harold Richardson brought in Kravitz to open the deli to offer piping hot pastrami during Holy Week. Although observant Jews may have had to wait until after Passover to put that succulent meat on leavened bread, from now on, the deli will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Editor’s Note: MD Café, located at 3489 Jerome Ave., is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. For delivery or more information, call (347) 899-8300 or visit mdcafebronx.com.

Express Bus Coming to New Look Webster Ave.

(continued from page 1)

auto shops. But following a rezoning of the area that encourages more residential and retail development, the total number of commuters may spike in coming years.

Already two new schools are being built on Webster Avenue, just above East 204th Street. And a longtime Webster Avenue institution, Garson’s Hardware Store, located at 2865 Webster, was recently demolished. In its place, three apartment buildings are being constructed.

In a recent presentation shown to Community Board 7, the DOT showcased its ambitious plans to make the corridor more commuter-friendly.

The hallmark of select service is that buses stop less frequently and only at major intersections. It also allows passengers to pay up front, eliminating the long lines to pay inside the buses.

For the Webster service, the DOT has already begun milling and paving near East 204th Street in order to begin the installation of specialized bus lanes for speedier travel. The new service also allows Transit Signal Priori, which will enable buses to move quicker through critical locations. Doing so will hopefully change traffic flow patterns, the DOT says, which ultimately make conditions for select service on Webster Avenue to officially begin by the end of June. In the northwest Bronx, the BX41 Select Bus will stop at East Gun Hill Road, East 204th Street, Bedford Park Boulevard, East Fordham Road, East 180th Street and East Tremont Avenue.

To Castrillon, and the many others like her who catch the crowded Bx41 or Bx55, having the option of select service could mean shorter waiting times and, ideally, a less hectic commute.
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Personal

Age □ Male □ Female
How many adults (over 21) live in your home including yourself?
□ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9+
Children: □ Yes □ No
How many?
Ages
What language(s) are spoken at home?:

Combined Household Income?

□ Less than $ 39,000 □ $40,000 – $99,000 □ $100,000+

Financial

Do you use a commercial bank?
□ Yes □ No

Health

Check the services that you expect to use in the next year:
□ Doctor □ Dentist
□ Eye doctor □ Chiropractor □ Specialist
Are you in need of a new health insurance plan?
□ Yes □ No
Do you have a primary care doctor?
□ Yes □ No
Have you used a hospital in the area recently? If so, Which one, and why?:

Entertainment

How many times in the next month will you:
Dine out? □ Not at all □ 1-5 times □ 6+ times
Go to a movie? □ Not at all □ 1-5 times □ 6+ times
Go to a club, or sport event?
□ Not at all □ 1-5 times □ 6+ times

Which of the following items are you or someone in your family likely to buy in the next 12 months?
(Check all that apply)

□ Automobile □ Airline ticket □ Vacation travel
□ Mobile phone – upgrade or service □ Jewelry □ Clothing for children
□ Clothing for men □ Clothing for women □ Wedding related or big family celebrations
□ Groceries □ Computer or home electronics

What kinds of news and stories do you want to see more of?

□ US national news □ National politics of home country
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□ Horoscope, brain teasers, word or number puzzles

How often do you read the newspaper in print or online?
□ Very often □ Often □ Sometimes □ Not often
How often do you use the ads in the newspaper to help make shopping decisions or plan regular shopping?
□ Very often □ Often □ Sometimes □ Not at all

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MISCELLANEOUS

Trip to Atlantic City Resorts Casino: Saturday, April 6, 2013, 11 a.m. from East 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard. For more information, please contact Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

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(continued from page 12) work, along with the tireless advocacy of communities and organizations throughout the city, will pay off as the Speaker of the City Council and mayoral candidate, Christine Quinn, recently suggested that she will allow the bill to go to a vote soon. It is my hope that this sends a strong message to our mayor that our communities want the Police Department to continue its great work in bringing crime down throughout the city in a manner that is consistent with our civil liberties and under the accountability that an Inspector General would help provide. I can personally attest to the excellent work our Police Department does to keep us safe as a member of my local precinct council. An Inspector General will help spread and maintain this work throughout the entire city.

Zellnor Myrie is a current Urban Studies graduate student at Fordham University and serves as the Chair of Bronx Neighborhood Advisory 7.


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Longtime Mosholu Rabbi Dies
Rabbi Hershel Schacter, the longtime leader of the Mosholu Jewish Center on Concourse Avenue, died on March 21 at the age of 95.

According to a riveting account in the New York Times, during World War II, Schacter famously rushed to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany to tell the Jews there that they had been liberated from the Nazis.

After the war, Schacter eventually ended up in the northwest Bronx where he would serve from 1947, when the Norwood and Bedford Park areas were heavily populated with Jews, until the temple closed because of waning membership in 1999.

Schacter is survived by his wife; a son, Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter; a daughter, Miriam Schacter; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren, according to the Times.

Pastor Moves on From Transitioning Church
In a move announced on the Norwood News Facebook page, Pastor Bob Rainis left Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Epiphany (known as Epiphany Lutheran Church) in early March, just as the church was in the midst of its own transition.

Rainis, who had served at Epiphany Lutheran since March of 2008, is moving on to Trinity Lutheran in Wyncote, New York.

In the Facebook post, Rainis also announced that Epiphany would soon be selling its building and begin to share space with Holy Nativity Episcopal Church, just a couple of block away.

Rainis wrote, “Epiphany Lutheran Church was erected in 1928 at its present location, 302 E. 206th St., but was established in Manhattan in 1880. The church property is fast approaching the signing of its sale contract, details of which will follow. Epiphany will common mission use of Holy Nativity Episcopal Church, which is at 206thStreet/Bainbridge Avenue. Each of these two denominations will maintain their respective identities and liturgies, but will share in the Proclamation of the Gospel and community outreach.”
Onstage

- The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents Sonido Costeno Trio, April 6 at 2:30 p.m.; and Silk and Sword, performed by the Red Silk Dancers, April 13 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

- The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents Lehman Jazz Combos With Special Guests, April 7 at 2 p.m. in the Music Building Heathroom (free); Dance Brazil, April 7 at 6 p.m. (tickets are $25 to $40); $10/$12 and under; Fiddler on the Roof, April 13 at 8 p.m. (tickets are $25 to $45); and Lehman Brass Quintet, April 18 at 11 a.m., in the Music Building Recital Hall (free). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Events

- The New York Botanical Garden presents The Orchid Show, in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, featuring a viewing, music and complimentary cocktail with admission, April 6, 13 and 20 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. (tickets are $20/members; $30/ non members). For more information, and to reserve, visit www.nybg.org.

- The Wildlife Conservation Society presents its 5th annual 5k WCS Run for the Wild, at the Bronx Zoo, this year dedicated to saving elephants from poaching crisis, April 27 at 8 a.m. Casual runners and walkers can participate in the Family Fun Run/Walk at 8:45 a.m. Prizes will be awarded to those who meet various fundraising goals. Minimum to raise to participate is $30. For more information or to register, visit www.wcs.runforthewild.org ($35/adults; $25/ages 3 to 15 and seniors).

- The Woodlaw Conservancy offers events held at Woodlaw Cemetery: Spring for the Bronx, with the Bronx Tourism Councils Action Tours, to learn about Bronxites laid to rest at Woodlaw, April 6 at 9:30 a.m. (reserve tickets through the Bronx Tourism Council: $35); Solar Sensations, daylight observations, free, hands-on demonstrations for the entire family, April 13 at 2 p.m. (RSVP); Spring Starfest, to tour solar system and universe via high-powered telescopes, free, April 13 at 7 p.m. (RSVP); and From the Ground Up: A Day for Trees, to register for a free tree, and take a trolley tour, April 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 920-1463.

Events

- The Bronx African-American History Project presents free events commemorating BAAPH’s 10th anniversary, at Fordham University, 441 E. Fordham Rd., on April 6: Conference, featuring participants and special guests, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. in the Lecture Hall, Keating 1 (required RSVP to http://baaphconference.eventbrite.com); and Concert and Film Screening, featuring Jimmy Owens and his band, hip-hop performances, documentary, and a DJ dance party, from 5:30 p.m. to midnight (required RSVP to http://theconcertbaaph10anniversary.eventbrite.com).

- The Bronx Council on the Arts, 2700 E. Tremont Ave., offers free Big Read in the Bronx events: Contest, open to Bronx students, ages 12 to 18, to design a new cover for “Fahrenheit 451,” through April 15 (winner receives Barnes & Noble $50 gift certificate); and Write Your Dream Screenplay, April 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Event dates are subject to change. Also scheduled are Read Aloud for Kids, April 13 from 2 to 3 p.m., at the Westchester Square Library, 2521 Giebe Ave. (718) 863-0436; Community

EDITOR’S PICK

Learn to Cook

The Jerome Park Library, at 118 Eames Place, offers cooking for the entire family. Children ages 5 to 12 can attend on April 9 at 4 p.m.; teens and young adults can attend on April 4, 11 and 18 at 4 p.m.; and all family members can attend on April 13 at noon. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.
Write and Read-a-thon, April 14 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Journal-Making Workshop, April 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information and contest details and requirements, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 21.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers Family Arts Projects: Drawn to Nature, to create drawing projects to add to the grounds, April 6 and 7 (free all weekend); and Daffy for Daffodils, to make a hat or costume, April 13 and 14; both from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Ecology Building. Also scheduled is Spring Exhibition Reception and Artist Talks, to showcase work of seven artists, plus talks during reception (free), April 7 from 2 to 4:30 p.m., in the Glyndor Gallery. Grounds admission is free Saturdays until noon and free Tuesdays all day. Glyndor Gallery tours take place Tuesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.; garden walks are held Tuesdays and Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., from the Perkins Visitor Center. For more information and a schedule of events, call (718) 549-3200.

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, presents First Fridays, through April 14. Pastimes & Pleasures: Having Fun in the Bronx will run from April 18 (opening reception from 4:30 to 7 p.m.) to Oct. 23. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

The Bronx Council on the Arts presents free, In the Realm of Dreams & Fears at Hostos Community College’s Longwood Art Gallery, main gallery, through May 1. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 518-6728.

Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents Contemporary Cartographies, expressing an array of ideas in various styles, through May 11, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 960-8731.

Exhibits

The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, presents Joan Semmel - A Lucid Eye, self portraits of a female aging through her 80s, through June 9. Also featured are Honey: I Rearranged the Collection (artwork from the museum’s permanent collection) and Bronx Lab: Style Wars (featuring graffiti and its relation to style), both through June 2. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

The Bronx Historical Society’s Museum of Bronx History at the Valentine-Varian House, 3266 Bainbridge Ave., presents Hart to the Chief and Hooray for Our Side, through April 14.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents programs for adults including Computer Classes at 2 p.m. (in-person registration required); Intro to Computers, April 4 and Intro to Internet, April 9; and Single Stop/ Government Benefits at 9 a.m.: April 4, 9, 11, 16 (also at 3 p.m.) and 18. Children can enjoy Flower Making: April 4 at 4 p.m.; The Hobbit: (ages 3 to 12), April 6 at 2 p.m.; Global Partners Junior at 4 p.m.: (ages 5 to 12; phone or in-person registration required), April 10 and 17; Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.: April 4, 11 and 18, Films: April 9 and 16 at 4 p.m.; Family Time: (ages 3 to 6; preregistration required), April 13 at 11 a.m.; Chicken Book Making: April 18 at 4 p.m.; Carnegie Kids: Shine and the Moonbeams: (ages 3 to 6), concert, April 14 at 2 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Moshulu Library, at 285 E. 205th St., offers for seniors and adults: Reading Time, April 13 at 11 a.m.; and Jewelry Making: April 12 at 2 p.m. Children can enjoy Popsqueaks: (ages 18 months to 5 years), featuring puppets, music, magic and more, April 16 at 11 a.m.; Toddler Story Time at 10:30 a.m.: (ages 18 to 36 months), April 4, 11 and 18; Little Red Riding Hood: (ages 3 to 12), puppet show, April 5 at 3:30 p.m.; Read Aloud at 4 p.m.: (ages 3 to 12), April 8 and 15; and Bilingual Birdies: Spanish Language: (newborns to age 5), music, puppets and games, concluding with a bubble dance party, April 9 at 11 a.m. Teens/young adults can join Test Strategies: with Kaplan representative, April 4 at 4 p.m. Speakers of other languages can attend free English Conversation Program: intermediate level, Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., starting April 16. Testing and registration is on April 9 at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, at 118 Eames Place, offers Crafternoons: (all materials provided), April 17 at 4 p.m.; and Movie: April 8 at 6 p.m., both for teens/young adults. Children ages 5 to 12 can enjoy: Arts & Crafts: April 8 at 4 p.m.; and Film: April 15 at 4 p.m. Toddlers (ages 18 to 36 months) can join Toddler Story Time: April 17 at 11 a.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by April 8 for the next publication date of April 18.
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