

NORWOOD NEWS

Be Healthy

Stores Shaping
Up Through Shop
Healthy Program
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Photo by David Greene

POLICE REMOVE the body of Magda Dagostino, who was beaten to death with a hammer and found dead inside her Perry Avenue apartment on June 25. Her son committed suicide two days later. In an unrelated incident, another man who lived in the building was arrested and charged with the murder of another man in the South Bronx.

Norwood Woman Killed With Hammer; Son Commits Suicide

By DAVID GREENE, ANDREA CETRA
and NATASHA RODRIGUEZ



Photo by David Greene

POLICE SEARCH for evidence in the beating death of longtime Norwood resident Magda Dagostino.

Just two days after a Norwood woman was found beaten to death with a hammer in her Perry Avenue apartment, her son, who was wanted in connection with the murder, took his own life in a seedy East Gun Hill Road motel, police officials said.

Officers from the 52nd Precinct were called to 3525 Perry Ave. at just after 10:20 p.m., on Tuesday, June 25, to conduct a wellness check on longtime resident Magda Dagostino, 64.

Upon entering her second-floor apartment, police discovered Dagostino lying dead on the floor. She had suffered severe trauma “about her body,” according to a police report. Police sources say a bloody hammer lay nearby.

Neighbors were shocked to hear of the news. “She was a lovely, lovely woman,” said Helen Ginty, a friend of the victim who has been a second floor resident since the 1970s. “I am shocked. I thought she was in Puerto Rico because her curtains had been closed for the past couple of days,” she said.

Andres Perez, a resident of the first floor, was equally alarmed. “I did not see or hear any suspicious activity,” he said, recalling the hours prior to the murder.

Almost immediately, police began to search for her son, John Rodriguez, 39, a former English teacher at Queensborough Community College who was identified as a person of interest in the case.

Rodriguez had reportedly moved in with his mother about six months earlier, according to Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, who

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Parents Not Satisfied With Health Report

By ALEX KRATZ

Tension slowly bubbled to the surface during a meeting last week with the state’s Health Department and parents of Bronx New School students. Nearly two years ago, those parents found out their children had spent several hours a day for up to six years in a toxic environment that went undetected by the Department of Education for nearly two decades.

After releasing a report saying students and staff at the Bronx New School (PS 51) were at a slightly increased risk for cancer due to exposure to trichloroethylene (TCE), a known carcinogen found at 10 times the legal limit inside the building, Health Department officials were doing their best to allay parents’ greatest fears.

The report categorized the increased risk of cancer as “low,” which is higher than “minimal,” but lower than “moderate” or “high.” There were levels found below the surface of the school that were 10,000 times the legal limit.

“The risks [for cancer] really do appear to be quite low,” said Thomas Johnson, a toxicologist with the Health Department, during the meeting at St. Philip Neri Parish on the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park, just blocks from the old PS 51 building at 2300 Jerome Ave.

But several parents weren’t interested in playing the

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Snapshots From Graduation Day

By NORWOOD NEWS

On June 25, the Norwood News sent reporters to chronicle the graduation ceremonies of three Bronx high schools — DeWitt Clinton, Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music and the High School of Computers & Technology. The following are accounts of those celebrations:

DeWitt Clinton

On a hot and humid day at the Track and Field Center at the Armory in Upper Manhattan, family and friends gathered in the stands to support the graduating class from DeWitt Clinton High School.

Everyone spent less time looking through the programs they had been given and more time using them as fans to cool each other down. But despite the heat and major changes coming to the school in the future, there was a lot of excitement amongst the graduates.

Clinton is one of the most well known and recognized schools in the city. It was once considered one of the top schools in the city, and has had many famous alumnae

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BREAKING BRONX



News • Politics • Policy

Candidate Building Support for Vacant 86th Assembly Seat

Victor Pichardo claims he does not want to be a politician. While campaigning, the 28-year-old candidate for State Assembly in the 86th District of the Bronx has been making it his mission to be seen as a public servant instead of a politician. “I see the people who live in my district as my bosses,” he explains.

If elected, Pichardo will inherit the seat that has been covered in scandal ever since Nelson Castro left office in March when it was revealed that he had become a government informant and the star witness in a corruption case against Bronx Assemblyman Eric Stevenson. Since then, a handful of candidates have emerged, but Pichardo is garnering the most support.

Pichardo, a former staffer for United States Senator Chuck Schumer and Bronx State Senator Gustavo Rivera, said he first became interested in public service after an unexpected tragedy occurred in his early teens.

His cousin, Jose Guitierrez, who was a student at John Jay College and a delivery cab driver by night, got into a fender bender with a motorcycle gang one night. When Guitierrez got out of his car to see what had happened, he was fatally stabbed in the back.

Schumer took a special interest in the case and led a successful effort to extradite the killer, who had fled to Belgium. “When I saw how much interest he had in this case, I was inspired,” says Pichardo. “With this experience, I learned that elected officials really can make a direct impact on families.”

Pichardo graduated from DeWitt Clin-



Photo courtesy Pichardo campaign

VICTOR PICHARDO, 28, is gaining support in his candidacy for the 86th Assembly seat.

ton High School in 2003, then went on to the University at Buffalo. After graduating, he started an internship at Schumer’s office. “I fell in love with public service there,” he says.

If elected, Pichardo wants to help get the Bronx up and running.

“The Bronx always lags behind,” he says. “We need more employment opportunities and health benefits.” Pichardo also plans to spend some time focusing on education.

“If you expand education opportunities, then there’s more incentive to want to learn,” he explains. “I want to make sure that education is available to everyone in the Bronx.”

Pichardo has already been endorsed by several politicians, including Schum-

er, Gustavo Rivera, and Bronx Democratic County Committee Leader Carl Heastie. Pichardo calls these endorsements incredibly humbling.

Now all he has to do is focus on beating his Democratic opponents in September, including Haile Rivera, Yudelka Tapia, and Keny Nuñez.

Rivera, who announced his intention to run on Monday night, had his 15 minutes of fame back in 2008 when he was one of the four small-dollar donors chosen to have dinner with then-presidential candidate Barack Obama. However, not all of his history is as inspiring. Rivera served as a staff member for then Senator Pedro Espada Jr, who has since been indicted on six federal counts of embezzlement and theft of the nonprofit healthcare network he founded. This job isn’t listed on Rivera’s linkedIn page.

Tapia, the only woman in the race, has many obstacles to overcome. It was discovered earlier this year that she owes more than \$100,000 to the city’s campaign finance board in violation penalties and reimbursement payments stemming from an unsuccessful City Council campaign in 2009.

Castro, who considered running again for the seat he resigned from, is supporting his own “stand-in” candidate, Keny Nuñez, a Dominican-born attorney, according to *New York Magazine*. Castro said he and Nuñez share the same ideals.

Pichardo says he is pretty optimistic about winning the race. “I’m not here for my own personal interest, I’m here for the community,” he says. “That’s what should matter.”

—NATASHA RODRIGUEZ

New Budget Pleases Bronx Council Members

Bronx Council members are pleased with the finalized budget for the next fiscal year which was announced last week. The \$70 billion budget includes no tax increases and will restore hundreds of millions of dollars in planned cuts to public housing, libraries, and after-school programs.

Overall, the budget for the new fiscal year, which began on July 1, is roughly the same as the previous one. “There’s not a lot of news here because this mirrors the last year,” said Mayor Michael Bloomberg at a City Hall news conference. “It was done responsibly, without a lot of acrimony.”

Outgoing Bronx Council Member Oliver Koppell called the new budget “good news.”

“Since this is the last budget in which I will be involved, I am pleased that it maintains support for my priorities and for the critical services needed to protect and enhance the lives of residents in our communities,” he said.

Koppell added that he had been able to designate funds for a number of projects in his district including building a new roof for the Spuyten Duyvil Library, a new building for the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and \$500,000 more for a new library at the Kennedy High School Campus. Koppell said he also used discretionary funds for tech grants at “virtually

every school in the district.”

Other Bronx members were just as content. “Above all, the budget will keep intact many services for New Yorkers and will not raise taxes,” said Council Member James Vacca.

Member Annabel Palma called the budget “another hard-won victory for the Bronx” because it continues to fund after-school and childcare programs.

Council Member Joel Rivera was also

pleased. “In my district, we allocated funding for new technology in public schools, including smart pads and computers,” he said. “We have also allocated some capital money for affordable housing.” Rivera adds that while the budget will have a positive impact on the Bronx, it could be better. “While there’s no doubt the budget will benefit the Bronx, we could have done with more.” he said.

—NATASHA RODRIGUEZ

Public and Community Meetings

- On Thursday, July 11, at 6 p.m., LEHMAN COLLEGE AND BRONX JOURNAL RADIO will be hosting a debate among candidates for City Council District 11, which includes Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Woodlawn, Wakefield and Riverdale, at the Lovinger Theatre, Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., West. Candidates taking part will include Cliff Stanton, Cheryl Keeling and Andrew Cohen. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
- NYC DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (DYCD) will hold a public hearing on the allocation of federal funding to combat poverty and support community-based programs at Sister Annuciata Bethell Senior Center (Bedford Park Senior Center), located at 243 E. 204th St. from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, call (347) 641-9498 or email bronxnab7@gmail.com.

www.norwoodnews.org

Be Healthy

95%

Percentage of Bronx stores participating in Shop Healthy NYC program that now offer healthier snacks.

Vital
Stats

After Initial Success, Shop Healthy Program Expands

By ANDREA CETRA

The second wave of Shop Healthy NYC programs are coming to local retailers in the South Bronx neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Hunts Point, and Longwood, the city's Health Department announced late last month.

The program, operated in conjunction with the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, first launched in West Farms and Fordham in June 2012 and is designed to fight the borough's disproportionately high obesity rates by encouraging local delis, mobile vendors, and supermarket chains to stock healthy snacks, limit sugary beverages, supply more fresh produce to their customers, and increase the visibility of healthy products throughout their stores.

The Health Department reported that the Shop Healthy NYC program successfully persuaded 95 percent of the 175 participating stores to provide healthier snacks. It also encouraged 70 percent of participating retailers to provide customers with healthy deli and canned food options and to display water at a visible eye level.

Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley said action is urgent.

"More than one in six adults in the Bronx is now overweight or obese, and

has developed or is at risk of developing related illnesses like diabetes," he said. "Shop Healthy NYC's approach acknowledges that we must work on multiple levels to change our environment so that healthy foods are easily accessible to all people," Farley added.

According to Health Department statistics, the Bronx has the highest obesity rate of any of the five boroughs at 30.5 percent, compared to the 13.9 percent in Manhattan. Five of the 10 community districts with the greatest rates of diabetes-related deaths are in the Bronx, the Health Department also reported.

"Diabetes and obesity are serious health conditions affecting thousands of Bronx residents," said Bronx Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo, who represents the neighborhoods that will be added to the program. "Access to healthy food is essential to combating these conditions."

The program's Adopt-a-Shop initiative allows local residents to have an active role in promoting healthy eating in their neighborhoods by encouraging them to support local retailers.

"The Adopt-a-Shop program has allowed our teens and young adults to see that healthy choices can have a huge impact," said Caroline D. Davis, director of Teen Services at St. Barnabas Hospital and Union

Community Health Center. "They are now more interested in leading a healthier lifestyle and telling their own stories about how they've made healthy changes."

The new programs will impact an estimated 100,000 Bronx residents, according to a recent press release from the Health Department.

Tips for Holding Up in the Heat

It will come as no surprise to anyone who has ventured outside recently: it's hot. So hot that a citywide heat advisory is in effect as temperatures continue to rise and the National Weather Service estimates temperatures will reach the mid-90s this week.

Here are some sources of relief for this week and the rest of the summer:

1. Citywide Cooling Centers, including Department of Aging Centers, Salvation Army community centers, and public libraries are free air conditioned spaces. To find the cooling center closest to you, call 311 (TTY: (212) 504-4115) or visit Office of Emergency Management's Cooling Center Finder at www.nyc.gov/oem.

2. The OEM has issued some precautions that are worth considering in the heat:

- Whenever possible, stay out of the

sun.

- Use AC to stay cool and especially during the hottest parts of the day. Visit one of the city's Cooling Centers or cool indoor spaces such as the movies, shopping malls, swim at a NYC pool or beach.

- Drink water at regular periods, and avoid alcoholic or caffeinated beverages.

- Limit strenuous activity, especially between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., the hottest hours of the day. (The coolest part of the day is between 4 and 7 a.m.)

- Use sunscreen with an SPF 15 or above to prevent burning, and wear a wide brimmed hat to cover your face and head.

- Do not leave pets and children in the car.

- Check on those particularly vulnerable to the heat at least twice a day. (This includes: elderly neighbors 65 or older; those who are very young, and anyone else with a pre-existing medical condition.)

- Look out for symptoms of heat illness/stress: hot dry or cold clammy skin, difficulty breathing, fast heartbeat, confusions, disorientation, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.

Editor's Note: For more information, see the Ready New York: Beat the Heat guide at www.nyc.gov/oem. or visit www.nyc.gov/health.

—Source: Office of Emergency Management

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Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers about the proposed creation of a new Inspector General position that would oversee the NYPD.



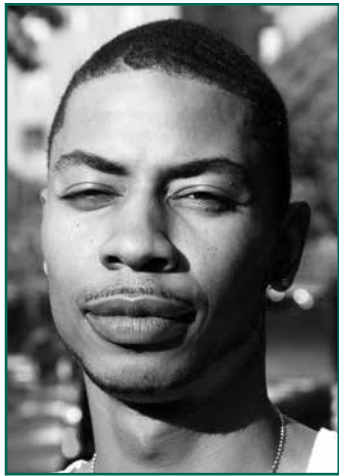
I agree. They should be watched because they probably do some bad stuff. They do stop people for no reason.
Jessica Lopez



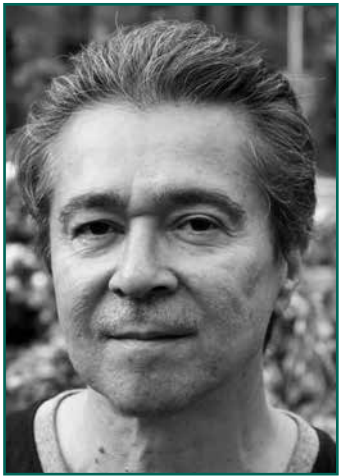
I feel like it's a good idea because not everyone can be trusted because no one is above the law. Everybody needs to be watched once in a while.
Keury Rodriguez



I think it's a great idea because this stop and frisk thing is getting out of control. They stop anybody for any little thing. I've never been stopped, but I know several people that have been stopped for no reason.
Mary Osario



I guess I'm for it. You've got the police in New York City that's supposed to protect the people, but if they're doing wrong and no one can judge them or oversee them, that's not right. We need somebody to oversee them. It's a good thing to have and they need to answer to somebody. There has to be some consequences for their actions.
Alejandro Anderson



I've actually seen first-hand what the police do with the stop and frisk. I've actually seen them stop kids just sitting on benches, doing absolutely nothing and make them empty out their pockets and arrest them because they have a little bit of weed on them, which I think is completely absurd. The police are here to serve and protect us, we shouldn't be afraid of them.
Fernando Sepulveda

Parents Not Satisfied With Health Report

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percentages.

"It seems a little flippant to say, 'actually this is quite low,'" said Laura Klein, a parent of a former PS 51 student, adding that there was no way for them to predict how the exposure will affect individuals.

Klein said she would "like to see some organized way of gathering" and tracking health information about students who attended the school. The term used for this is called "medical monitoring" and it's been implemented among former teachers at the school as part of deal between the powerful teachers union, the United Federation of Teachers, and the DOE.

(At least one former teacher is suing the DOE after losing her baby during

her time at the school. The Health Department's report said babies born from women who worked at the school were at a "moderate" risk for heart diseases.)

But the DOE has not agreed to medical monitoring for students. Department officials have told parents they would not discuss the possibility until seeing the report, which was released two weeks ago.

Many parents have organized through the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition into an advocacy group called PS 51 Parents United. They are pushing the DOE for medical monitoring and for an end to the so-called "leasing loophole," which allowed the school to remain open in a contaminated building for nearly two decades.

The DOE is not required to do a full environmental review of a building when it is first leased. It is only when the lease is up for renewal, as it was at the PS 51 building in 2011, that an extensive environmental review, including checking toxicity levels, is required.

(Before becoming a school, the former PS 51 building housed an automotive garage and, most recently, a lamp manufacturer called Nessen Lamps. From 1982 to 1987, Nessen was listed on a government database as a manufacturer that used hazardous materials.)

Parents also remain upset that it took months for the DOE to inform parents of the high levels of TCE at PS 51. Readings were taken on January 22, 2011, but parents and students were not told until July of that year, after the school year was over.

Many former students and parents still have yet to be notified. The DOE says it has compiled a list of 2,400 former students, but many parents in attendance said they had not received a letter, despite living at the same address as when their children went to the school. One parent said she received a letter for another former student who never lived there.

Though parents had technical questions for the Health Department — including the questionable accuracy of the readings and the report's findings — their frustration ultimately kept being redirected toward the DOE, who had sent a representative to the meeting, Elizabeth

Rose, the chief of staff for the division of operations.

Rose, who sat in the audience with two other staff members, was reluctant to speak up until the crowd continued to stare and direct questions at her. At one point, former student Lelanie Foster, 26, stood up and asked Rose directly: "Why are you here?"

Finally, she stood up and said the DOE was here because it was invited and it wanted to continue its "dialogue with the community."

Parents weren't satisfied with Rose's answer, but many said it helped to receive some re-assurance that the risks weren't dire from the Health Department's report.

"It wasn't a total whitewash," said Alan Gary, a parent of a former student who is working with PS 51 Parents United, about the report and question-and-answer session. "They offered some information. But they're not going to give us all the ammunition to sue the city. There is only one agency that is truly responsible here and that's the DOE."

Gary said the next goal is to get into the room with Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott and demand accountability.

He added that the report didn't make him any less worried about the potential for illness down the road for his son, who remained in the school for the months between when the first readings were made and when the DOE shuttered the school.

"But that's what I tell my son to make him feel better," he said.



Photo by Alex Kratz

ALL EYES are on Elizabeth Rose, the chief of staff for the DOE's division of operations, at a meeting with PS 51 parents and the state Health Department last week.

City Council Votes for More Oversight of NYPD

By **ANDREA CETRA**

Two weeks ago, the City Council convened in the middle of the night to vote on a crowded agenda of issues, including the adoption of two bills under the Community Safety Act.

The first measure, known as "The NYPD Inspector General" bill, passed by a vote of 40 to 11, and would allow the commissioner of the Department of Investigation to appoint an Inspector General to oversee the NYPD's activities and policies.

The second bill, known as, the "Bias-Based Profiling Bill," which passed 34 to 17, would expand current anti-discrimination policy over the NYPD's stop-and-frisk procedure to protect everyone regardless of age, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, disability, and housing status and would permit individuals to sue the NYPD in state court.

According to a press spokesperson from the speaker's office, the meeting's delay (it was originally scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. but didn't get under way until nearly 11:30 p.m.) was due to the council members' busy schedules and the wide array of issues on the agenda.

Although no Bronx Council members voted against both bills, support for the anti-profiling legislation was split. Council members engaged in a heated debate on the floor that lasted until nearly 2:30 a.m. Thursday morning. Bronx Council Members James Vacca of District 13 and Majority Leader Joel Rivera of District 15, both voted in favor of the Inspector General bill, but against the anti-racial profiling policy.

"The [Inspector General] bill will address people's real problems," said Rivera. "It will be able to actually help people. The profiling bill does not because it doesn't create the ability for people to really get justice."

Amongst the profiling bill's strongest

supporters were other Bronx representatives, Helen D. Foster, Oliver Koppell, Fernando Cabrera, Maria del Carmen Arroyo, and Annabel Palma, head of the Bronx Delegation.

"We should not have someone terrified because of their race, ethnicity, or anything else," said Koppell, who represents the northwest Bronx.

"As the mother of a young Latino and resident of the South Bronx, nothing is more important to me than keeping our communities safe," Palma said. "But with Blacks and Latinos making up nearly 90 percent of those stopped and frisked, it's clear that the NYPD needs to rethink its approach. These bills will bring accountability to the Police Department without jeopardizing the enormous reductions in crime over the last two decades."

According to anti-profiling advocates from the Black, Latino, Muslim, LGBT, homeless, disabled, and immigrant communities, the current stop-and-frisk policy is unsuccessful in fighting crime, and instead targets minority groups who are not necessarily exhibiting suspicious behavior. In 2011, the Police Department made over 684,000 stops. Almost 90 percent of those stopped were not arrested or summoned. The ACLU reported that guns are found in less than 0.2 percent of stops.

Despite these statistics, the bill faced strong opposition from Mayor Bloomberg and Republican Council members, who said the bill would interfere with police work and make the city less safe.

"I am deeply disturbed by what I have been hearing tonight," said Republican Council Member Eric Ulrich. "Why don't we take that money and hire more cops? They have made New York the safest city in America!"

Staten Island Council Member James S. Oddo agreed, but with more civility. "I like and respect Council Member [Jumaane] Williams [who sponsored the

bills], and I acknowledge the difficulties between certain communities and the NYPD," he said, addressing Williams. "We have to be vigilant in trying to repair these relationships, but these two bills don't do that. Officers will avoid following instincts and it will lead to terrible things," Oddo said.

Council Member Peter F. Vallone, Jr. of Queens said the profiling bill will give everyone the right to sue and will cost millions. It will take cops off the streets." He added, "Crime will soar, murder will rise, children will die."

Bloomberg has vowed to veto both measures and will spend time lobbying representatives before attempting to veto either bill.



Photo by Andrea Cetra

ADVOCATES OF the Community Safety Act hold a rally on the steps of City Hall before a vote on two controversial bills that would place more oversight and accountability on the NYPD.

Norwood Woman Killed With Hammer; Son Commits Suicide

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also told Eyewitness News that police had tried unsuccessfully to contact the suspect.

Police would later report that an employee at the Friendly Motel, located at 1119 E. Gun Hill Rd., entered a room on June 27 and discovered Rodriguez' lifeless body. Officials say both his wrists were slashed and his death is believed to have been a suicide.

In a bizarre twist, as crime scene investigators collected evidence on June 26, a second investigation was being conducted in the normally quiet Perry Avenue building as police arrested resident Jason Tomczyk, 34.

Tomczyk was charged in the murder and attempted robbery of Jonathan Sanchez, 23, who was shot to death outside of

1010 Hoe Ave., also on June 25.

Neighbor Ernesto Juarez called Dagostino, "a very nice and kind lady," but had few words with Rodriguez.

Juarez had not yet heard about Tomczyk's arrest until a reporter told him. "That's kind of crazy because lots of people live here with their families and kids," he said.

The Perry Avenue building is a block away from where the bodies of a young woman and her uncle were found shot to death in an automobile on Jan. 16.

Jason Rivera, 30, and his niece Jennifer Rivera, 20, were both shot one time in the head. Their killer remains at large, but police believe the murder was connected to drug activity in the Fordham-Bedford neighborhood.

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Snapshots From Graduation Day 2013



Photo by Hugh Thornhill

CLINTON STUDENTS make their way to a bittersweet graduation ceremony at the Armory in Upper Manhattan.

(continued from page 1)
including comic book publisher Stan Lee, writer James Baldwin, and comedian Tracy Morgan just to name a few.

The ceremony began with Principal Geraldine Ambrosio giving her open remarks. She announced that she would be stepping down as principal, and would be replaced by Santiago Taveras, a former deputy chancellor for the Department of Education.

After the presentation of awards and a few musical numbers from the band, alumnus Tabitha Ferrer spoke to the

graduates about her struggles through high school and how she was able to graduate on the honor roll. She emphasized the importance of the education they had received from high school and how important it was to go to college.

“After my experience with my family going to the EAU (Emergency Assistance Union), I began thinking about my future,” said Ferrer. “I didn’t want to be poor. I wanted to go to college. I wanted to have a future.”

The graduates were then handed their diplomas and Ambrosio declared them

official graduates as the students cheered and threw their caps up in the air.

Amidst the celebration however, there was a mutual feeling of disappointment among the graduates towards the future of Clinton.

Back in March, a 13-member Panel for Education policy voted to downsize Clinton and open two more schools in the same building. The reasoning behind the decision was because of the decline of Clinton’s graduation rate in recent years. Even Ferrer touched on the fact that the rate of Blacks and Latinos graduating on time was only about 55 percent.

She added that this shouldn’t discourage students still attending Clinton, but that they should continue to persevere and get the most out of their time in high school.

“It’s probably not going to be a good idea,” said graduate Donte Clarke while talking about the school split after the ceremony. “There are going to be problems with the three schools that are going to be there. Sharing the library, cafeteria, and all those areas is going to create problems.”

“The school was growing, and now we’re being separated again,” added graduate Daniel Shepard. “It’s a big disappointment.”

—HUGH THORNHILL

Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music (Walton Campus)

Students at the Ceila Cruz Bronx High School of Music gathered in the Lehman College Performing Arts Center amidst a sea of balloons and flower bouquets to receive their diplomas. White and blue block letter balloons displayed on stage read “CCHS 2013.” Outside on the street, a mock photo studio, awaited the soon-to-be graduates. The canvas backdrop, complete with painted ivy covered columns, was draped along the side of a nearby bridge.

After the class proceeded to the stage and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, members of the Celia Cruz Women’s Choir sang the “Star Spangled Banner.” Valedictorian Marty Kate Mutze and Salutatorian Ryan Mullane received certificates along with several of their classmates. Members of the Celia Cruz Full Orchestra performed.

“Change is the law of life, and those

who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future,” Mullane said, quoting John F. Kennedy. The student drummer was also the recipient of the New York State Comptroller Award, and a Regents Diploma.

“We are products of so many people who invested time in us and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude,” Mutze said during her Valedictorian address. “You do you. Work hard and pave the way forward...if you make a mistake, fake it and keep going,” she said, smiling.

Mutze also received a slew of advanced diplomas and awards. Her mother was granted the Outstanding Parental Involvement Award.

Council Member Helen D. Foster, who represents District 16 and was, in 2002, the first African-American woman from the Bronx to be elected to a city office, offered her wisdom, joking with the room full of music students about several previously failed attempts to play the violin.

“I am sufficient in and of myself,” she said, listing three tokens of advice. “Be present right here where I am, and have a vision,” Foster said, repeating the last phrase for emphasis. “If you can look up, you can get up and if you can get up, then you’re back in the race,” she told the graduates.

—ANDREA CETRA

(continued on page 7)



Photo by Andrea Cetra

THE AUDIENCE JOINS in the celebration at the Celia Cruz graduation ceremony at Lehman College.

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7-12	Ballet/Modern	Wednesdays	4:30pm-5:30pm
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Snapshots From Graduation Day 2013

(continued from page 6)

High School of Computers & Technology (Evander Childs Campus)

The graduation ceremony for the High School of Computers & Technology's class of 2013 included moon-walking, rapping, and lots of cheers. Held at the Lehman College Center for the Performing Arts, the spacious auditorium housed an enthusiastic crowd and plenty of giant "You Did It!" balloons.

The ceremony included musical numbers from students and advisors as well as a slideshow presentation of the soon-to-be graduates. All of the students, who were clad in royal blue caps and gowns, were extremely appreciative of their teachers.

One student urged his peers to "Make some noise for the teachers. If it wasn't for them we wouldn't be here right now!" during his rap performance. As the diplomas were presented, every student seemed eager to give their teachers big hugs as they walked onstage.

During the event, more than 100 students were presented with awards in addition to their diplomas.

Salutatorian Joshua Tagle started his speech by taking a "selfie" photo with his phone, much to the crowd's amusement. He later thanked Principal Bruce Abramowitz for making their senior year so memorable. Nailene Cruz, the class valedictorian, spoke about the countless



Photo by Hugh Thornhill

GRADUATES FROM the High School of Computers and Technology receive big hugs after getting their diplomas.

memories that had been made in the past year and thanked her teachers for helping every student who was graduating that day.

After the diplomas were handed out and the final pledge was spoken, the students finally graduated and threw their caps into the air against the deafening sounds of cheers, whistles and screams.

—NATASHA RODRIGUEZ

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Housing Policy Needs Local Ideas and Input

By JOHN M. REILLY

Jay Shuffield (Housing Op-Ed, June 27, 2013, *Norwood News*) is right to be concerned about the amount of very low-income and supportive housing being created on Webster Avenue and throughout the West Bronx. It is a complex issue. Some of the terms he uses should be further defined and our overall housing situation needs more examination and planning.

Shuffield refers to the role of 'not-for-profit housing organizations', but makes no mention of for-profit owners and speculators who have been pouring into the West Bronx for years. There are private developers filing plans as this is written to build outsized apartment buildings using city subsidies all over our community and the new 'hotel' on Webster was built by a private company. One prominent real estate broker is actually using the city's own Webster Avenue brochure to invite private speculation. The not-for-profits involved are not primarily hous-

ing providers, but more service providers building housing for their clients.

Shuffield also mentions “public assistance.” This term often refers to city “welfare,” which is not to what’s going on here. This housing is being built with government subsidies, all kinds of subsidies, which are used all around the city to create not only supportive housing, but also housing for seniors, low-income working families all the way up to households

City agencies need to talk more so the EDC plan for Webster Avenue doesn't become a sad joke and so the community can get more of the housing it needs.

making incomes well into the six figures.

The problem is only the government programs used for supportive and low income housing are being used in the West Bronx. The 80-20 program for mixed income buildings has been seldom if ever used in our community.

There are ways the government agen-

cies could reduce the risk involved in using these middle income programs in “softer” markets, but they have not done so to date.

Importantly, none of these players, private or not-for profit, are community based or sponsored. This is a big part of the problem. These owners and organizations have no instincts as to the local situation and what our neighborhood's needs and concerns are. And the govern-

There is a lack of coordination between city agencies leading to overbuilt buildings, increased concentration of poverty and virtually no possibility for income diversity. City agencies need to talk more so the EDC plan for Webster Avenue doesn't become a sad joke and so the community can get more of the housing it needs, such as housing for the elderly which is so desperately lacking. We need improved input and support not just from our elected officials, but also from the public officials who run our housing agencies and make the final decisions on what is built and where it lands.

John M. Reilly is the executive director of the Fordham-Bedford Housing Company and a lifelong Bronx resident.

Correction: In our previous issue, we mistakenly identified Jay Shuffield as a member of Community Board 7. Shuffield has not been a member of Community Board 7 since April, 2013.

Letter to the Editor

What About 2nd Ave. Extension?

The Metro North expansion described in the Norwood News (June 27, 2013) is a good example of the MTA shafting the outer boroughs.

While the new Metro North stations would certainly be helpful to the “reverse commute” to Connecticut, most Bronx residents will still be working in Manhattan and will need better access to new jobs created by Far West Side development. As is the case with Metro North on Park Avenue, most Bronx residents simply can’t afford Metro North fares to Manhattan. What the eastern Bronx desperately needs is a 2nd Avenue subway extension to Co-op City.

It must be emphasized that the Amtrak roadbed has space for six tracks! Two, which are used by Amtrak trains today, would be shared with Metro North trains. At least two of the remaining four are ideal for a Bronx extension of the 2nd Avenue subway, which would be the easiest

and most cost effective subway extension in New York City history — no tunneling — just install the tracks and signals. Thus, the Bronx could have both the 2nd Avenue subway as well as the Metro North extension!

The MTA, however, wants to build the new Metro North stations directly on the remaining Amtrak track beds which would make them useless and forever block the 2nd Avenue subway from serving Co-op City and the eastern Bronx. These stations can and must be built to accommodate both Metro North and 2nd Avenue subway trains.

Bronx politicians, however, are so anxious to get something, anything, from the MTA that apparently they don't see the big picture:

Phase 1 of the 2nd Avenue subway (63rd to 96th streets) is scheduled to open in December 2016. After this, the MTA will continue the line north in Phase 2. Instead of going into the Bronx, plans call for the new subway to turn west and terminate at 125th Street. This would guarantee that

the 15 Q trains, which will run along the new line, will never get to the Bronx!

By turning the line west and by blocking Amtrak with the new stations, the MTA wants to make a 2nd Avenue subway extension to the Bronx almost impossible, thus reserving the 15 Q trains for wealthy

riders. This is a crime against the Bronx!
This is an outrage against the hardwork-
ing middle class!

Bronx politicians can't let the MTA get away with this!

John Rozankowski
Bedford Park

Neighborhood Notes

Free Writing Workshop

The Bronx Council on the Arts' Bronx Writers Center presents a free hands-on workshop, *In Progress: First Page Matters*, July 22, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at 2700 E Tremont Ave. in Westchester Square. For more information, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 21 or visit www.bronxarts.org.

Free Cancer Screening

Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center, 234 E. 149th St., offers free mammograms and screenings for cervical and colorectal cancer for the uninsured on July 16 and 17. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (800) 227-2345.

Youth Track Program

City Parks Foundation offers a free cross country track program in Soundview Park for boys and girls ages 8 to 16 through Aug. 6, from 9 to 10:30 a.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Participants should bring light clothing, sneakers and water. Meet coaches at The Steps at the corner of Morrison and Lafayette avenues (across from 825 Morrison Ave.). For more information, call (718) 760-6999.

H.S. Sports Calendar Fundraiser

The Walton High School Athletic De-

Free Fitness Classes

North Bronx Healthcare Network offers free weekly fitness classes via its “Shape Up NYC” program starting July 15 at Jacobi Medical Center, 1400 Pelham Pkwy., So.; and at North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kosuth Ave. Cardio-Sculpting at NCB starts July 18, cross training at Jacobi starts July 15, and aerobics at Jacobi starts July 16. Participants should bring a water bottle and workout mat. For more information or a detailed schedule, call (718) 918-3827.

Martial Arts Classes

The Cove & CTM Dreams offer martial arts classes for people ages 5 to adult at The Cove, 3418 Gates Place (in the basement, through the gate on the side of the building), at \$5/week. For more information, call Starr at (718) 405-1312 or e-mail anorris@ctmdreams.org.

Free Technology Training

Per Scholas, 804 E. 138th St., offers free
(continued on page 9)

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RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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Myshkin, the Goldendoodle puppy: For free to a good home. Male. Needs a new good home. It has current shots and plays along with children and other animals. Contact marlaochla177@gmail.com for more information.

Trip to Hershey Park: Saturday, Aug. 10, 2013. Leave at 8 a.m. from 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard. For more information, contact Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

Neighborhood Notes

(continued from page 8)

15-week technology training, Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (high school diploma or GED is required), and includes free tuition, books and exam materials, and free career counseling and job placement assistance. Earn up to 10 college credits. For more information or to register, stop by the office Monday through Thursday, at 9 a.m. or call (718) 991-8400.

Free Job & Career Services

SUNY North Bronx Career Counseling and Outreach Center offers daily tuition free services including career counseling, college, financial aid and resume and cover letter assistance, as well as job readiness training at 2901 White Plains Rd. Computer literacy and GED programs are available during the day and evening.

Seats are limited. For more information, call (718) 547-1001.

Buy a Poe Paver

The Bronx County Historical Society is offering the public the chance to purchase a tax-deductible Poe paver, a fundraising project based on the sale of inscribed commemorative pavers that are to be laid near the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage in Poe Park. Each paver costs \$250, and will have your name and/or the date etched on it (two lines, 16 letters including spaces, per line). For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

For more Neighborhood Notes online, go to www.norwoodnews.org and click on "Neighborhood Notes."



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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

Onstage

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Latin Jazz**, July 13; and the **New York Opera**, July 20; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ Pregones Theatre, 575 Walton Ave., presents **From Breast Cancer to Broadway**, July 14 at 3 p.m. This free event celebrates cancer survivors via stories written by the women themselves, performed by Pregones Theater ensemble. For more information and to reserve, call (718) 585-1202.

■ The Westchester Square BID hosts a free **Bollywood in the Bronx**, July 13 from noon to 3 p.m. at Owen Dolen Park, Westchester and East Tremont avenues. Events include dance groups and a DJ. For more information and directions, call (718) 597-4629.

■ The Bronx Music Heritage Center Lab, 1303 Louis Niñé Blvd., presents **Bronx Rising**, featuring music, film and the

spoken word. Events include **Caribbean Carnival Music**, July 18 at 8 p.m.; **documentary film & Q&A**, July 19 at 8 p.m.; and **Book Readings/Signings**, July 20 at 7:30 p.m. (\$5/suggested donation for each performance; programs are subject to change). For more information, visit bronxmusic.org.

■ The New York Botanical Garden presents a **Cocktail Evening and Summer Concert**, July 18 from 6 to 9 p.m. (rain or shine), in an open air pavilion tent (bring blanket and picnic dinner for before the concert on the Conservatory Lawn). Tickets are \$20/ members; \$30/non members (advance tickets recommended; includes one complimentary cocktail for over age 21, or non-alcoholic beverage). For more information, call (718) 817-8700 or visit www.nybg.org.

■ City Parks Foundation presents **Summerstage**, a series of free summer events including **Mambo to Hip-Hop Part 3**, July 16 from noon to 6 p.m., at The Point, 940 Garrison Ave. Children's programs which take place

at 10:30 a.m. include **Mr. Chris' Musical Experience**, July 11 at Van Cortlandt Park's Classic Playground, Van Cortlandt Park South and Orloff Avenue; CityParks PuppetMobile, featuring **Little Red's Hood**, July 17 at Mt. Hope Playground, East 177th Street and Walton Avenue; **Mr. G**, July 18 at Van Cortlandt Park's Classic Playground, Van Cortlandt Park South and Orloff Avenue; and **Ken Waldman and the Secret Visitors**, July 24 at Mt. Hope Playground on East 177th Street and Walton Avenue; and also on July 25 at Van Cortlandt Park's Red Steps Playground, 246th Street and Broadway. For more information or a detailed schedule including all Bronx locations, call (917) 626-0525 or visit cityparksfoundation.org.

Events

■ St. Ann's Church, 3519 Bainbridge Ave., holds **summer flea market**, Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from July 12 through Aug. 17. Vendors welcome. For more information, call (718) 547-9350.

■ The Woodlawn Conservancy presents **Intro to Astrophotography**, a free workshop at the Woodlawn Cemetery on the art of capturing astronomical bodies on digital film, July 13 at 8 p.m. (registration required). For more information, call (718) 920-1469.

■ The Botanical Garden presents its **Greenmarket**, farmers market at the base of the Library Allee inside the Moshulu Gate entrance, Wednesdays through Nov. 27, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 817-8658.

■ Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. invites the public and the Bronx Muslim community to celebrate **Ramadan**, July 25 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Bronx County Building's Veterans Memorial Hall, 851 Grand Concourse. Call to confirm at (718) 590-3522 or email Iroldan@bronxbp.nyc.gov.

■ Friends of Van Cortlandt Park hosts a **fundraising picnic supper** on the lawn of the Van Cortlandt House Museum on July 16 at 6 p.m. Tickets for this event start at \$100 and include a concert by the New York Philharmonic, and parking. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (718) 601-1553 or visit www.vancortlandt.org.

■ **The Great Bronx Bar Tour** will take place on July 13 from noon to 8 p.m. to benefit the Bronx Historical Society.

Participants will enjoy beer, drink and food specials at 25 bars, and receive matching bar tour T-shirts, a map of all participating bars, and drop-off and pickup locations, visiting at your own pace, using a free trolley bus service. Tickets are \$50 on the website www.TheGreatBronxBarTour.com, and \$40 on July 13 at the Jolly Tinker Bar, 2875 Webster Ave. and the Bronx Beer Hall, 2344 Arthur Ave. For more information, visit the website.

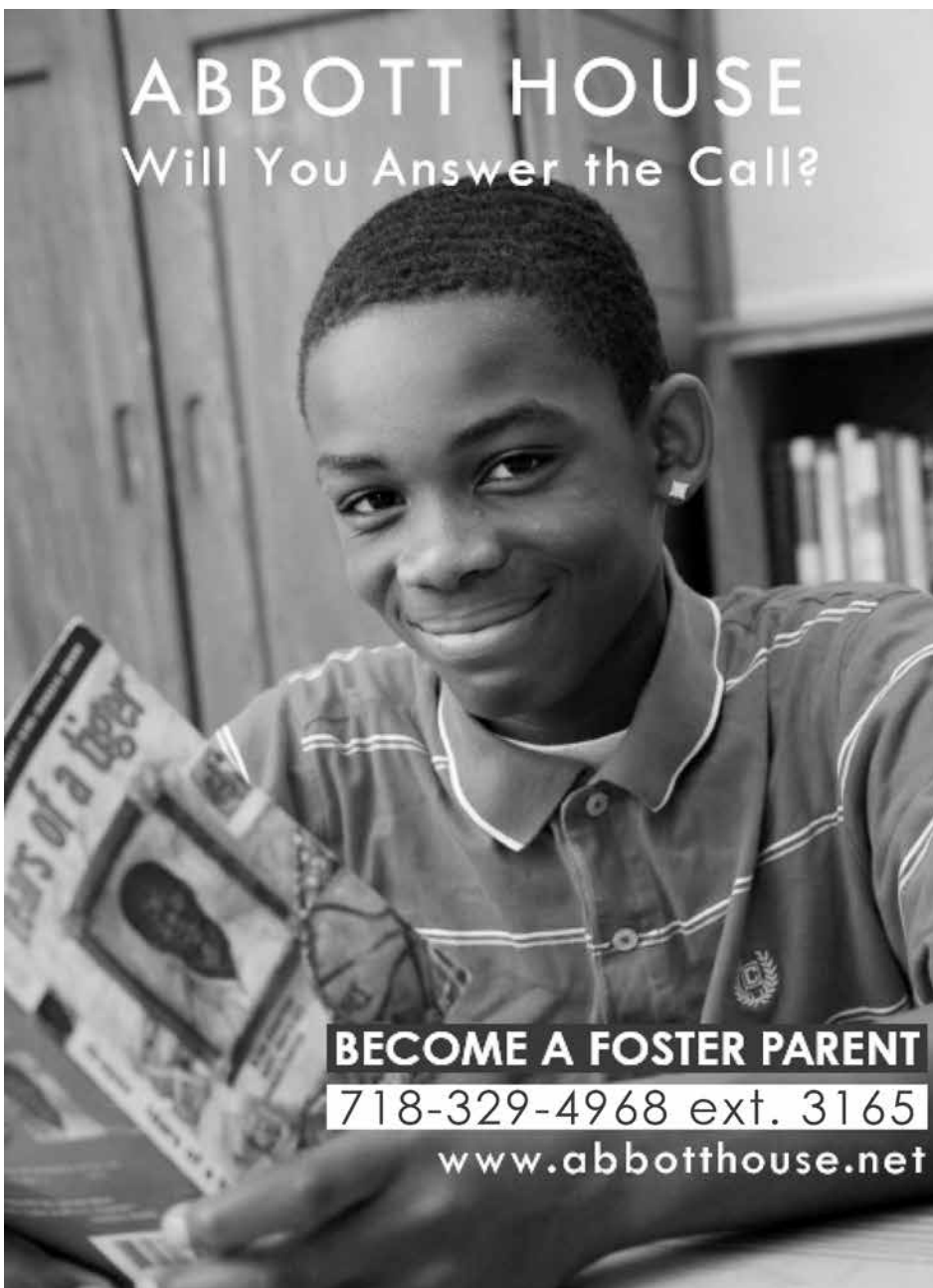
■ The Bronx River Alliance presents the **Bronx River Festival**, July 13 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Bronx River Forest's Burke Bridge. This free event includes live performances, free canoe rides and bike loan-outs, tour, games and more. For more information and directions, visit www.bronxriver.org/calendar.

■ Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse, offers a **variety of activities** for the entire family during July. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 365-5516.

■ Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Arts Projects**: My Green Heaven, to visit the hillsides, July 13 and 14; and Water, Water Everywhere, to create liquid landscapes o take home, July 20 and 21; both at the Wave Hill House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is a free **Bronx Calling Bike Tour**, to explore the Bronx along the Grand Concourse between the Bronx Museum and Wave Hill. Begin at Wave Hill on July 13. Registration is required online at www.wavehill.org or call (718) 549-3200 ext. 305, or at WH's Perkins Visitor Center. In addition, there will be **Sunset Wednesdays**, featuring Bronx Beat Music, yoga, guided walks and art. **La Roka** performs on July 17; and **classical guitarist** Andrew Geddis performs on July 24; each from 7 to 8 p.m. on the grounds. Grounds admission is free Saturdays until noon all year, and free Tuesdays all day in July. 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.

Exhibits

■ *Norwood News* photographer **Adi Talwar** presents "Abstract," a collection of his photographs in an exhibition at Illuminated Metropolis Gallery, 547 W. 27th St., Suite 529 (between 10th and 11th avenues), Fridays from 1 to 5 and



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■ The Bronx County Historical Society's Museum of Bronx History at the Valentine-Varian House, 3266 Bainbridge Ave., presents **Pastimes & Pleasures: Having Fun in the Bronx**, through Oct. 20. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

■ The New York Botanical Garden presents **Wild Medicine: Healing Plants Around the World, Featuring the Italian Renaissance Garden**, including interactive stations with activities and samples of products made from therapeutic plants, through Sept. 8. For more information, call (718) 817-8512/8637.

■ The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, presents **State of Mind: New California Art Circa 1970**, story of the California artists of the '60s and '70s who impacted artists across the country; and **Bronx Calling: The Second AIM Biennial**, a variety of work by Artists in the Marketplace participants (free). Both exhibits run through Sept. 8. For more information, call (212) 671-5169.

Library Events

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E.

Kingsbridge Rd., presents programs for adults including **MS Word for Beginners**: July 12 at 6 p.m.; **Computer Basics**: July 16 at 2 p.m.; **film**: "The Mambo Kings," July 18 at 11 a.m.; and **Learn a Language With Mango**: July 21 at 1 p.m. Teens/young adults can attend **On the Plate**: to learn to cook, July 11 at 4:30 p.m. Children can enjoy **Leaf Book Making**: July 11 at 2 p.m.; **The Tortoise and the Hare**: (ages 3 to 12), puppet show, July 13 at 2 p.m.; **films at 2 p.m.**: July 16 and 23; **Animal Door Hanger Making**: July 18 at 2 p.m.; and **Presley and Melody**: (ages 18 months to 12 years), concert, July 20 at 2 p.m. Immigrants may join free **English Classes**: July 16 at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ The Mosholu Library, at 285 E. 205th St., offers for seniors and adults: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m.; **Wii Program**: Tuesdays at 3 p.m.; and **film**: "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows," July 15 at 4:30 p.m. Teens/young adults can attend **Inside the SHSAT**: to learn how to prepare for specialized high school exams, July 18 at 3:30 p.m. Children can enjoy **Toddler Story Time at 10:30 a.m.**: (ages 18 to 36 months), July 11, 18 and 25; and **The Tortoise and the Hare**: (ages 3 to 12), puppet show, July 12 at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

EDITOR'S PICK

Summer Music and Dance

Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy presents the following free events, all on the VC House Museum's lawn from 6:30 to 8 p.m. (enter the park at 246th Street and Broadway):

New York Philharmonic, classical music concert - July 16 at 8 p.m., on the Parade Ground.

Fireworks Display - follows the concert.

African-American String Band - July 11.

East Coast Hula - July 18.

Keito Academy (Chinese) - July 25.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble (BAE) presents **Afro Tango** on July 14; and **Sunday With Bach** on July 21 at Rockwood Drive Circle at 2 p.m. (enter the park at Mosholu Avenue and Broadway); and at 4 p.m. at Fordham University. BAE also presents **All You Need is Love**, on July 12 at Pelham Bay Park at 6 p.m.

Rain location for VC Park is Vladeck Hall, Amalgamated Houses, Hillman Avenue and VC Park South; and for Pelham Bay, it's International Caterers, 3243 Ampere Ave. For more information, call (718) 430-1890 or (718) 601-7399.

■ The Jerome Park Library, at 118 Eames Place, offers for children: **Toddler Story Time** (ages 18 to 36 months), July 17 at 11 a.m.; and for adults: **Computer Basics at noon**, July 11, 16, 18, 23 and 25; and **Microsoft Word for Beginners**: July 24 at 10 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 July 15 for the next publication date of July 25.*

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1x A WEEK MONDAY at 6:00pm-7:00pm
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2x A WEEK TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS
Level 1: 5:30-6:30pm Level 2: 6:45-8:00pm
• MEMBERS: \$25/ NON MEMBERS: \$30



Photographer Charles Chesler

PRENATAL YOGA

FREE FOR ALL, 8 WEEK CYCLE
1X A WEEK, TUESDAYS AT 10:30am

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FREE FOR ALL, 9 WEEK CYCLE
1x A WEEK, TUESDAYS AT 7:30am



MOMMY AND ME YOGA

8 WEEK CYCLE
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BABIES MUST BE 4 WEEKS OLD TO CRAWLING
• MEMBERS: \$40/ NON MEMBERS \$48



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The Five-Week Series Schedule

Grades	Time	Price for Members	Price for Non-Members
K-2nd	4:30pm-5:30pm	\$52	\$75
3rd-5th	5:30pm-6:30pm	\$52	\$75
6th-12th	7:00pm-8:30pm	\$65	\$90
Adults 19+	7:00pm-8:30pm	\$75	\$110

Classes are twice a week on
Mondays and Wednesdays