NORWOOD NEWS

Be Healthy

The Basics of NY's **Health Insurance** Exchange page 7

PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION ■ October 3–16, 2013

LET THE GREAT WORLD SPIN



Photo by Adi Talwar for Montefiore Medical Center

A YOUNG MAN at the Jerome-Gun Hill Road Business Improvement District's annual fall street festival on Saturday, Sept. 21 keeps his eyes on the prize while balancing two spinning basketballs with the help of basketball performer Black Jack Ryan. More photos from the street festival on page 11.

Leaner and Cleaner, Westchester Square Hospital Gets a New Life

By ANDREA CETRA

Now cracked and crumbling, the limestone slab above the old entrance to the Westchester Square Medical Center still reads "Westchester Square." But now, a new Montefiore sign juts out onto the sidewalk.

Aside from two delivery trucks, there are few other signs of life. Inside the air conditioned lobby, a snack station advertizes Starbucks coffee. A man with a bandaged head leans on the counter in the waiting room as a TV glares in the background.

In March 2013, Montefiore Medical Center acquired the assets to the former Westchester Square Medical Center (WSMC) which has been bankrupt since 2006, in a \$15.3 million bid.

A \$20 million grant provided by New York State's Health Efficiency and Affordability Law financed the purchase. Also known as the HEAL NY Program, the law was passed in 2004 and has provided nearly \$3 billion in funding over the past seven years to health care facilities throughout the city.

"There are a lot of services that the Square could not offer before, that Montefiore now can," said Teresa Mandarino, senior director of ambulatory services and a WSMC employee of 34 vears.

The new Westchester Square specializes in out-patient emergency care, offering longer hours and more services than does an urgent care center. The facility houses an emergency room, ambulatory surgery division, radiology lab, and gastrointestinal unit. Renovations include an updated lobby, operating rooms, labs, digital radiology rooms, and outdoor lighting. The upcoming installation of a Pyxis system will facilitate medication management and distribution. Landscaping was set to line the front of the building, but the sidewalk remains shade less.

Leaner, For Now

But as of today, only three of the building's seven floors including the ground floor are in use. The seventh

floor is for ambulatory surgery and the fourth for gastrointestinal procedures, (continued on page 5)



Photo by David Greene

AFTER TAKING OVER in March, Montefiore has stripped down Westchester Square Hospital to its most core ser-

Bronx Girl Comes Home To Head 5-2

By RACHEL FORSHEE

The mood was bittersweet last week as Inspector Joseph Dowling tearfully removed his 52nd Precinct Commanding Officer's pin and handed it off to Nilda Hofmann, a hometown girl who grew up in the community she will now oversee.

Although there will be a transition period, Hofmann, commander of the 25th Precinct in Harlem for the past three years, now takes over a bustling precinct that covers the neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Norwood and University Heights.

After a little more than two and a half years at the helm of the 52nd Precinct, Dowling is moving on to a position with the Bronx Borough Patrol.

(continued on page 8)

Dems Hype 'Obamacare' **Benefits**

By ALEX KRATZ

As House Republicans attempted to demonize the Affordable Care Act in Washington, DC, local Democratic lawmakers in the Bronx began promoting the healthcare reform package, often referred to as "Obamacare," as a significant improvement in how Americans pay for and receive health care.

Because the House, which is controlled by Republicans, continued to link every budget bill to the de-funding of the Affordable Care Act, the federal government was forced to shut down many of its operations on Tuesday. (Editor's note: See p. 2 for more details on what the shutdown means. As of press time Tuesday night, Republicans and Democrats were not close to a compromise.)

President Obama, however, said he will not sign anything into law that would diminish his signature piece of legislation. Its funding is not tied to the general operating budget, meaning people were able to start shopping for new insurance plans through the act's mandated online marketplaces on Tuesday morning.

In the lead up to the launch of the marketplaces, Democrats were out hyping up its benefits and disparaging Republican political tactics.

Congressman Charles Rangel, a staunch pro-(continued on page 7)

NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 26. No. 19

Norwood News is published bi-weekly on Thursdays by Mosholu Preservation Corporation 3400 Reservoir Oval East Bronx, New York 10467

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Victor Pichardo Wins Controversial 86th AD Race

By the slimmest of margins, Victor Pichardo emerged with a victory in the heated and congested special election for the 86th Assembly District, which includes University Heights and Morris Heights. Though the Board of Elections finally declared him the winner by 72 votes last week, Pichardo did not emerge unscathed and a lawsuit looms.

Second place finisher Hector Ramirez says he will file a civil suit against Pichardo, the Board of Elections, State Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblyman Carl Heastie, saying they are all part of a corrupt political machine that conspired to rig the election in Pichardo's favor. Ramirez, of course, was backed by Heastie and the Bronx Democratic machine back in 2008 when he lost the primary to Nelson Castro.

Castro then went on to take office, get indicted on perjury charges, become a government informant and help build a case against fellow Bronx assembly member Eric Stevenson. He resigned from office earlier this year and is now the star witness in the case against Stevenson.

Ramirez says he has "no doubt" he won the election and is not going down without a fight. Although his case will be difficult to prove, there was evidence of irregularities during voting in the dis-



VICTOR PICHARDO was declared the winner in the special election for the 86th Assembly District, but not without controversy.

trict on primary day.

For one, Pichardo's mother worked one of the polling sites in the district, at PS 33, and Ramirez says she worked on Pichardo's behalf. (Pichardo says his mother was only doing her job.) And at least one site, all of the levers for 86th Assembly

candidates were broken, except for Pichardo's. It's unclear how long that machine was in use before it was pulled.

In an interview with the Daily News, Pichardo dismissed the allegations and said he's moving on, looking forward to working on behalf of his new constituents.

SNAP Bill on the Clock

Two weeks ago, House Republicans voted to enact a harsh SNAP bill that, according to USA Today, will result in 3 million people losing their benefits entirely and 850,000 people experiencing a reduction in benefits. Then on Tuesday, we were all witness to the first government shutdown since 1995-1996, because Congress could not agree on a set budget for federal funding.

There are roughly 48 million people, 1.8 million in New York, who rely on SNAP (previously known as food stamps), which is scheduled to be reduced - regardless of the government shutdown on Nov. 1. Republicans are proposing an additional \$39 billion to be cut from the program over the next 10 years.

Republicans say they don't want the program eliminated, they simply want loopholes removed so the benefits go to qualifying families. Democrats and hunger advocates say the cuts will hurt working parents, children, seniors and those with disabilities who need help in trying times.

To bring attention to the potential cuts, the New York City Hunger Coalition set up a countdown clock on the side of Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in Manhattan.

"Congress and the President must work together to stop the clock and restore this life-saving food," said New York City Coalition Against Hunger Executive Director Joel Berg. "Any further reduction in these already meager benefits would result in a drastic and unthinkable rise in the number of hungry Americans. As shocking as it is that things could get even worse, the government shutdown could start shutting WIC clinics nationwide that provide nutrition assistance to low-income pregnant women and infants."

Berg, along with several other Demo-

crats, says they are appalled by these current events.

"This is a dereliction of duty. No child should go to bed hungry because of an extreme political agenda in Washington," said Bill de Blasio, the city's Public Advocate and the Democratic nominee for mayor.

Gustavo Rivera, a state senator from the Bronx, said, "With no steps or precautions to counter the devastating consequences of such cuts, we cannot stand by and allow Congress to continue to make decisions that will drastically increase the number of Americans, and Bronxites, who are food insecure."

And Philip Schmidt, a spokesman of Congressman Jose E. Serrano who represents the 15th District in the Bronx, said, "Serrano is very upset. He has voted against every bill they've put out," but Republicans are just not budging.

What 'Government **Shutdown' Means**

On Tuesday, the federal government "shut down" after Congress couldn't agree on a budget (see our front page story on Obamacare for why). An estimated 800,000 federal workers were expected to be told to stay home until further notice.

Many services, however, will actually remain open. The Bronx VA in Kingsbridge will continue to care for patients. The United States Post Office will still deliver mail. People will still receive their Social Security checks.

But many agencies will cut back to skeleton crews and several will shut down completely.

What this means is that the head of an agency will divide their workers into "essential" and "non-essential" categories. "Essential" workers will remain at their job possibly with delayed pay, while all "non-essential" workers will be sent home. The government estimates that to be around 800,000 workers.

The Washington Post reported that anything related to national security, public safety or programs written into permanent law will still remain operating. The U.S Military will still be operating and so will Air Traffic Controllers, Emergency Medical Care, Border Patrol, Federal Prisons, and Law Enforcement.

Public and Community Meetings

- COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Parks & Recreation and Public Safety & Quality of Life on Thursday, Oct. 3 (Public Safety & QOL will begin at 7:30 p.m.); Environment & Sanitation and Health & Hospitals on Tuesday, Oct. 8 (Health & Hospitals will start at 7:30 p.m.); Economic Development and Community Relations/Long Term Planning on Wednesday, Oct. 9 (Community Relations/Long Term Planning will begin at 7:30 p.m.); Traffic & Transportation on Thursday, Oct. 10; Land Use/Zoning and Housing on Wednesday, Oct. 16 (Housing will begin at 7:30 p.m.); and Education/Libraries and Youth Services on Thursday, Oct. 17 (Youth Services will start at 7:30 p.m.). For more information, call (718) 933-5650 or visit bronxcb7.info/calendar.
- COMMUNITY BOARD 7 is scheduled to hold its general board meeting at St. James Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave., on Tuesday, Oct. 15 at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650 or visit bronxcb7.info/calendar.

Lehman College Awarded Highest Green Building Certification

By MICHAEL BROWN

Lehman College's new Science Hall recently became the first City University of New York school to be awarded a LEED platinum certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The U.S. Green Building Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting "green" buildings, and is well known for its creation of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system. The LEED rating system judges buildings on how environmentally-friendly they are. Platinum certification is the highest possible rating with gold, silver, and certified being the other levels from top to bottom.

Lehman's Science Hall was built with \$70 million in state funding through the CUNY Capital Program. Another \$1.5 million was provided by the New York City Council for the greenhouse. The building was dedicated in October of 2012 and classes started in the spring semester of 2013

The Science Hall is phase one of a three-phase plan with the goal of creating a science-oriented campus of the college. It was built also as part of the Bedford Park school's STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) initiative. As Dr. Ayanna Alexander-Street, of the Department of Biological Sciences, says, "We want to put science students from the

Bronx on the nation's map."

The Science Hall won the platinum certification due to its "environmentally sustainable technologies" such as roof-top solar panels, which are used to heat the building's water, and a garden system that collects rainwater, filters it, and reuses it.

There is also a greenhouse in the building. The newest of the three greenhouses at Lehman, it was built especially for the Science Hall using state-of-the-art technology, with a lighting system that can mimic other light types, a cooling system and heating system that reacts to the temperature in the room and adjusts accordingly. "I love to come up in February when it's 60 outside and 80 in here," said Dr. Liesl Jones, chairperson of Biological Sciences.

The Science Hall winning a LEED platinum certification is a bold step on the path of environmentally-friendly buildings in the Bronx, New York, and the world, says Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO and founding chair of the U.S. Green Building Council:

"With each new LEED-certified building, we get one step closer to our vision of a sustainably built environment within a generation," said Fedrizzi. "As the newest member of the LEED family of green buildings, Lehman College is an important addition to the growing strength of the green building movement."



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Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers what they knew and thought about the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.



I think it's a very important issue, everyone needs healthcare.

Tina Joyce



I haven't had the time to read the entire bill, but it's a very complicated issue. I'm in favor of healthcare for all. **Mamadou Doumbouya**



Basically what I know about Obamacare is that Medicaid is a part of it and it's mandatory that everybody receive Medicare [actually, healthcare insurance] and there is a penalty for those that don't obtain it [true] and I think that that's weird.

Dwanyel Okaman



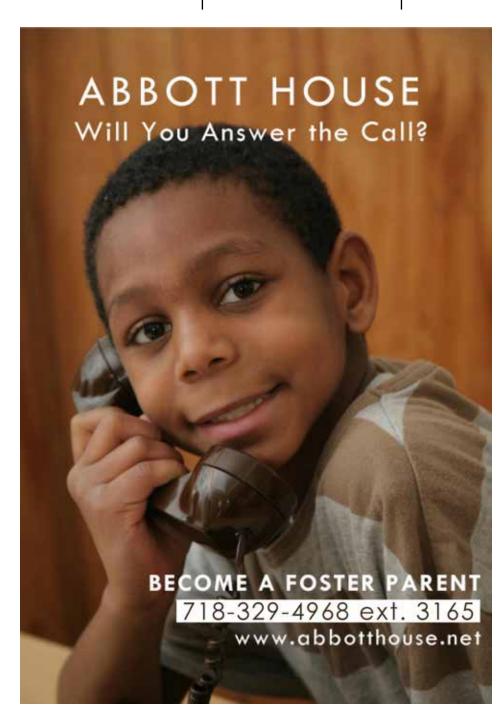
I don't really know much about Obamacare, but I think if they explained it a little better to the American people, I would know if it will work, but right now I don't know very much about it.

Emerald Gray



All Americans should have healthcare. I mean we do live in America, right? We do get sick. If we don't [have insurance] we'd get fined? Really? I think that's out of line.

Diandra Mendez





Westchester Square Hospital Gets a New Life

(continued from page 1)

Emergency Department Director Rafael Torres said.

"There are plans to populate the other floors with different programs," Mandarino said. "It will be at least another year or so," she added, indicating that the ambulatory surgery department will soon be moved to occupy the same level as the general operating room.

In its first three months, the new Center, which was recently ranked #7 among the top 10 best ranking hospitals in New York and the New York metropolitan area by the U.S. News & World Report, has treated roughly 4,500 Emergency Department patients and is open 24/7 (as was the former facility). Meanwhile, the Ambulatory Surgery Center has performed 1,400 outpatient procedures, according to a recent press release.

But since the facility only functions as an Emergency Department, 250 patients who require overnight stays have already been transferred to nearby Montefiore branches since March, although Torres said the practice is common.

Here's how the process works: once it is determined a patient needs to be treated elsewhere, the on-site logistics team decides which branch is most appropriate. An ambulance is called as staff members make contact with physicians at the new facility.

Some Still Skeptical

Yet critics, including former members of WSMC's board, most of whom were physicians, and the New York State Nurses Association, expressed concern about the loss of in-patient care, the strain it might place on nearby Einstein and Jacobi hospitals, and the loss of jobs.

"The people who live in Westchester Square deserve care in their community," said Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN and vice president of the New York State Nurses Association. "We are closely monitoring how the reduction of services at Westchester Square is affecting nurses and patients at other Bronx hospitals, and we are working with hospital administrators to make sure there are enough nurses to meet the increased patient need," she said.

"We can handle anything that crosses through the door," Torres said when asked about the loss of beds.

As for the loss of jobs? Montefiore says it has nearly everyone covered, although the details remain murky.

Of the roughly 600 to 800 employees under the old guard, nearly 300 were given part- or full-time jobs at Westchester Square. More than 200 doctors were granted privileges to practice at the new center, and over 100 staffers were reassigned to other branches, Montefiore said.

According to the hospital, a "huge majority" of former WSMC employees maintained their positions. A representative from 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East reported that as of April 2013, at least 196 of the 320 union members working at WSMC were given jobs at the new facility or at other Montefiore branches.

"We're pleased that Montefiore has

decided to acquire Westchester Square Medical Center's campus, and that as a result, quality healthcare and good jobs in the community will be saved," said Joyce Neil, executive vice president of 1199SEIU.

Montefiore said Westchester Square has been busy since opening its doors to the public, and treats an average of 49 patients per day. This is typical for Emergency Departments nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which reported that in 2012 there was an average of 43 visits per day.

Change is Good

Current employees say they are pleased with the changes.

"It's more organized, and the flow is much better," said Andrea Mackiewicz, an administrative nursing manager and former WSMC employee of 20 years.

"We are so pleased the community has embraced Montefiore Westchester Square," said Steven M. Safyer, president and CEO of Montefiore, in a recent press release. "Our goal from the very start was to preserve access to the best of health care services by providing exceptional care to meet the community's needs as well as to preserve jobs and support the local economy," he said.

"There has been nothing but positive changes here, from the updating of the exterior, to the inside of the building where all the renovations have taken place." Mandarino said. "Basically Montefiore has breathed new life into this facility."

According to Mandarino, services at the old center were dwindling long before it officially went bankrupt. "It was very rough during the last six to eight months of operation [before Montefiore]," she said, adding that at one point there were only 80 beds in use. "Some of the patients were told that the hospital was closing and not to come here, so that was just another uphill battle that we were facing," Mandarino said.

But WSMC has a long history of fighting for its life.

In 2007, the Center was added to Governor Pataki's Berger Commission list of five city hospitals set for closure. But in December 2008, just two days before it was scheduled to shut down, the facility was given a one-year extension during which to find a buyer. State Senator Jeffrey Klein, Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, and Congressman Joseph Crowley were among those who lobbied heavily in the Center's defense.

"While I would have liked for Westchester Square Medical Center to remain an open and viable, full-service hospital in the Bronx," Klein said, "I am pleased that Montefiore is able to continue offering emergency care to members of the community and hope that it will continue to provide critical services to the Bronx for years to come.

According to the Bronx Times, the new Westchester Square will not have a community advisory board but will continue to host "community forums" where residents can share input, the first of which is scheduled to take place this fall.

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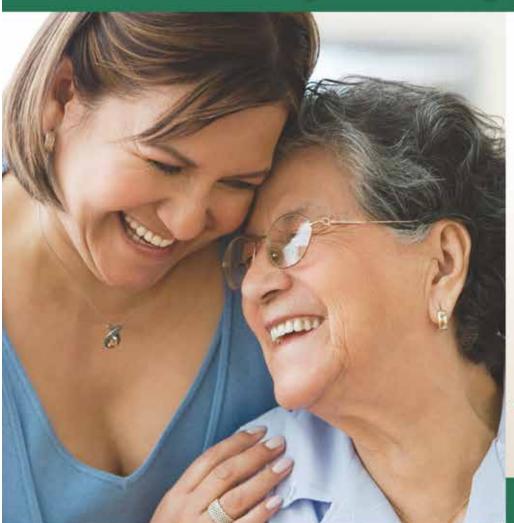
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Dems Hype 'Obamacare' **Benefits**

(continued from page 1)

ponent of the Affordable Care Act when the president and Democrats pushed it through Congress in 2010, told a crowd at North Central Bronx Hospital that the reform package "is complicated," but will begin showing tangible benefits. Comparing it to other established programs, like Social Security and Medicare, Rangel said Americans will soon adopt the ACA's "language and make it your own."

Rangel told the audience the healthcare reforms made under ACA will be the "best thing" Obama does during his presidency. For this reason, he says, Republicans want to tear it down. "They will do anything to hurt this president," Rangel said.

While some of the act's benefits have already started — children can now stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26, for example — the big test of its impact comes this fall.

In every state including New York, healthcare marketplaces or "exchanges" where individuals, families and small businesses can choose between insurance options, opened up online.

The 70 percent of Americans who already have insurance can stay with what they have or use the exchange to find a cheaper or better alternative. The other roughly 30 percent without insurance, which amounts to about 40 million people, must sign up for some type of insurance or face a tax "penalty." Some people with low income levels may receive federal subsidies or fall under the expanded Medicaid program, which is fully paid for by the government. Enrollment will be open until early March of 2014.

The more people who sign up through

the exchange, the cheaper and better the insurance options will become, advocates say. At the same time, less uninsured people will theoretically mean less uninsured people using emergency rooms — which Rangel called "the most expensive healthcare in the entire world" — for common maladies or as a last resort when they become extremely sick.

"In your hands is going to be a tremendous opportunity," Rangel said a week before the exchange opened. "This is going to work."

Republicans have pledged to end Obamacare, which they refer to as a "job-killing" program that is a grave threat to the American way of life. But defenders of the program say it's just sour grapes.

Congressman Joseph Crowley, who represents Queens and the east Bronx, said Republicans holding out on Obamacare was akin to a sibling who takes a toy from their younger brother and won't give it back, just because.

Proponents of the plan admit the system isn't perfect — delays and glitches were reported during the grand opening on Tuesday — but they say it will have a positive impact.

Kate Rose, the senior director of public policy and government relations at Montefiore Medical Center, said the insurance options in New York will be as good as any in the country. "New York's marketplace is exceptional," she said. "It goes above and beyond the minimum in comparison with other states and the federal government."

Rose says New York's program is going out of its way to be as helpful as possible. On Tuesday, the state's online marketplace, New York State of Health, received



Photo by Kimberly Jacobs

NORWOOD RESIDENTS receive information about the new healthcare insurance exchange program outside Montefiore Medical Center's main entrance on East 210th

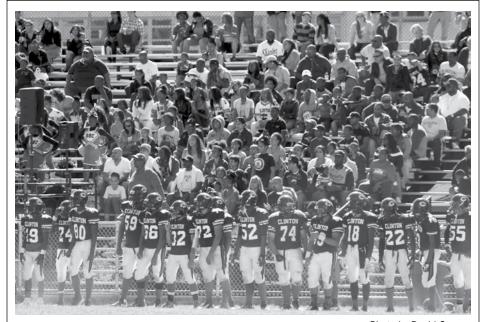
more than two million visitors.

Rangel said the idea behind near universal health insurance is simple — it will allow for more preventative care, which will allow more people to stay healthy, productive and successful.

On Tuesday, outside Montefiore's main entrance on East 210th Street in Norwood, the hospital set up booths as part of a campaign to inform staff and local residents about the new healthcare insurance exchange. Judy Czydek was there because her husband just received a bone marrow

transplant. She's covered under Medicare, but said she also wanted to get information for her nephew who recently lost his job and, with it, his insurance. She's a believer in Obamacare because of its potentially preventative benefits.

"A lot of times if you can go to the doctor and they can detect something in its infancy, they can address this and can get you back on your feet with a better chance of recovery," she said. "So I think that's the right thing to do and I'm just appalled at anyone who's against something like this."



A LARGE CROWD turns out to support the Governors at their homecoming game.

At Homecoming, Governors Come From Behind, Again

What You Need to Know About the New Healthcare **Insurance Exchange**

The open enrollment period for the first year of the marketplaces runs from Oct. 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. In the marketplaces, there is no denial for pre-existing conditions, no annual or lifetime limits, and no higher rates for women compared to men. It is estimated that substantially more than half of those shopping in the new marketplaces will qualify for discounts on their monthly premium based on their income, which will make the premiums more affordable.

New Yorkers looking for health coverage should go to https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/ or call (800) 318-2596, a national toll-free hotline open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They can also call the New York hotline at (855) 355-5777 or TTY at (800) 662-1220, which is staffed Mondays to Fridays, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The website and phone hotlines are also available in Spanish at https://www. cuidadodesalud.gov/es/ and (800) 3182596. The open enrollment period for the first year of the marketplaces runs from Oct. 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. In the marketplaces, there is no denial for pre-existing conditions, no annual or lifetime limits, and no higher rates for women compared to men. It is estimated that substantially more than half of those shopping in the new marketplaces will qualify for discounts on their monthly premium based on their income, which will make the premiums more affordable.

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By DAVID GREENE

varsity football team, the Governors, an additional six in the final quarter. remained unbeaten after coming from Meanwhile Clinton's defense shut down behind to beat the Engineers from Brooklyn Tech High School on Saturday, Sept. 28.

Played at Clinton's home field on Paul Avenue. the Engineers led the Governors at halftime by a score of 24-14. In the opening drive of the third quarter, Brooklyn Tech senior Teshawn Guy was tackled and suffered a broken ankle and was transported by EMS to a local hos-

As they've done before this season, the Governors regrouped, coming back The DeWitt Clinton High School with 16 points in the third quarter and the opposing offense and defeated the Engineers by the score of 36-24.

> Governors quarterback Brandon Harris led his team with nine completions for 198 yards, including three touchdowns.

> The Governors improved to (4-0) while the Engineers fell to (0-4).

> Clinton will next host Tottenville High School on Oct. 6, before going against Lehman High School on Oct. 12.

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Bronx Girl Comes Home to Head 5-2

(continued from page 1)

Dowling replaced former commander John D'Adamo who abruptly left after a series of scandals, including an incident involving his wife lying to authorities and his name coming up in the Bronx ticket-fixing scandal. D'Adamo was never charged with any wrongdoing, but left after less than 17 months on the job. Typically, commanding officers serve between two to four years at a precinct. They are rotated frequently to avoid corruption and stagnation.

Dowling leaves after earning a reputation as a thoughtful, responsive commander who saw violent crime drop significantly in the precinct last year, only to see those numbers rebound this year.

"The feeling that we're all feeling tonight are the same ones I had last night as I left the Two-Five," said Hofmann during an emotional introduction to her new precinct. "You become part of a community. So even if I feel sad about leaving, this is a homecoming for me."

In fact, Hofmann can count the "Five-Two" as her home stomping ground.

"I went to Walton High School [in Kingsbridge Heights]," she said. "My first job was as a cashier at the Associated [on East Burnside Avenue]. I used to hang out with my boyfriend right in this park right over here [St. James Park]."

Both Dowling and Hofmann addressed a nearly full room for the monthly meeting of the 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting held at St. James Episcopal Church on Jerome Avenue last Thursday, Sept. 26.

"We've come a long way," said Community Council President Brenda Caldwell-Paris. "I remember the '70s when they would threaten to close down the Five-Two. But after years of work, we have built the most vibrant Precinct Council and Inspector Dowling has been part of that. So even as we say goodbye, we welcome our new deputy inspector be-

cause she has as strong connections with this community."

Others also thanked Dowling for his service and encouraged the new CO to work with community members.

"It was an honor to know you," said University Heights resident Gloria Thomas, to Dowling. "You were always patient and you always tried to answer our questions." She continued: "And to our new inspector, we welcome you. And I would say, 'Don't be afraid,' even as 15 of us surround you — because we will!"

Hofmann is just one of seven women serving as commanding officers in all of the New York City Police Department. She has been in the police force for 23 years and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Psychology from the City University of New York John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

She joined the NYPD in October 1990, and began her career on patrol in the Bronx's 43rd Precinct, covering Soundview and Castle Hill, among other neighborhoods in the southeast part of the borough. She was then promoted to sergeant in April of 1998, lieutenant in December of 2003 and captain in April of 2008. Aside from the 43rd Precinct, she has served on Patrol Borough Bronx Task Force, the 23rd Precinct in Manhattan, Patrol Borough Bronx, and 44th Precinct, which covers the Highbridge area in the Bronx.

Hofmann previously served as Executive Officer of the Bronx's 42nd Precinct before becoming Commanding Officer for the 25th Precinct immediately preceding this appointment.

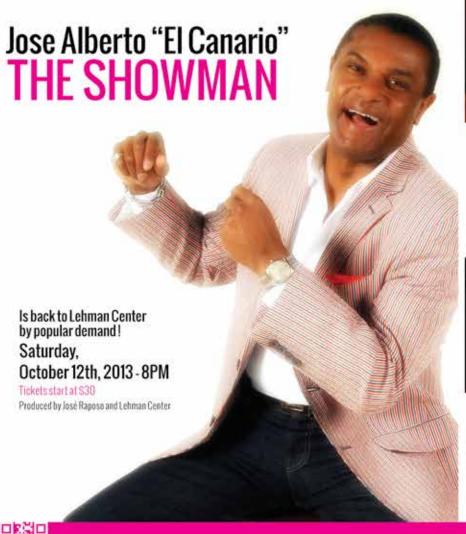
Both Hofmann and Dowling said they had been meeting to go over the issues concerning the area throughout the day and will continue to meet as is necessary.

"By this time next week, Inspector Hofmann will know as much if not more, than I do," Dowling said. "As the community embraces her, she'll embrace them back. She grew up here."



Photo by Rachel Forshee

LAST WEEK, Inspector Joseph Dowling passed the torch in the 52nd Precinct to new commander Nilda Hofmann who grew up in the northwest Bronx.







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Grassroots Opposition to NCBH Decision Growing

By ALEX KRATZ

Local residents are teaming with unions and healthcare advocates in putting pressure on North Central Bronx Hospital to re-open its popular labor and delivery department.

A couple of weeks ago, organizing under the name Community Power: North Bronx, more than a dozen residents from the area around North Central Bronx Hospital held a protest march outside the hospital's entrance on Kossuth Avenue.

They were joined by members of DC

37, the New York State Nurses Association, Lawyers for the Public Interest, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and the Commission on the Public's Health System.

Their singular goal: push hospital officials to re-open the labor and delivery units at NCB. Officials have only said that the services have been suspended, which opponents of the changes say is an opening for a reversal.

The fledgling local group began organizing in Williamsbridge Oval Park around the closure of NCB's labor and

delivery unit and is intent on becoming an activist voice in the community, said member Eileen Markey.

At least one midwife, who was transferred from North Central to Jacobi Hospital along with the rest of her department, was on hand to participate. She said morale has been low since NCB made the abrupt decision to consolidate its labor and delivery services at Jacobi.

While declining to give her name because she feared retribution, the midwife

said the group's coalescing in opposition to the consolidation of services at Jacobi might work, because now it's "not just disgruntled workers. They don't care about us."

NCB officials have said the consolidation was necessary to cut costs. A spokesperson for the hospital declined to answer specific questions.

An opposition vigil, led by Community Power: North Bronx was scheduled for Wednesday night, Oct. 2.



Photo courtesy New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

LOCAL RESIDENT Doreen Harris speaks out during a protest against North Central Bronx Hospital's closure of its labor and delivery units.

Police Report

Man Charged in Three Attacks on Women

Police have announced the arrest of a suspect wanted in connection with three attacks on women, including one attack where he removed the victim's shoes and smelled her feet.

Cops say University Avenue resident Calvin Presinal, 28, approached his victims from behind and choked them until they passed out.

Presinal reportedly approached his first victim at 12:10 a.m. on Aug. 5, when a 21-year-old woman was attacked at West Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue.

Investigators have also charged Presinal with two additional attacks that took place on Aug. 30. Police say the second victim was approached at the intersection of Sedgwick and Bailey avenues

at 1:10 a.m. In that incident, Presinal reportedly removed the shoes of his 18-year-old victim and sniffed her feet before running off.

Less than a half hour later, police say Presinal struck again along Parkview Terrace in Bedford Park, when he allegedly approached a 24-year-old woman, then choked her and wrestled her to the ground. The victim reportedly fought back as the suspect attempted to undress her.

Presinal was arrested on Friday, Sept. 6, and charged with three counts of assault, three counts of strangulation and attempted rape.

Police continue to hunt for a second individual who is being sought in connection with the Aug. 21 attempted sexual assault of a 20-year-old Fordham University student, who was attacked inside her off-campus building. —DAVID GREENE

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Thousands gathered under the 4 train tracks on Jerome Avenue in Norwood for the 12th annual Jerome-Gun Hill Business

Improvement Street Festival. The festival was highlighted by a tribute concert for the late local artist and musician Ibrahim Gonzalez who died earlier this year. The concert band, which featured many of Gonzalez's friends and colleagues, was directed by legendary Latin Jazz percussionist Bobby Sanabria. The festival also featured performances by several other musical acts, some 200 vendors, kids' activities,

Photos by Joe Conzo, Adi Talwar and **David Greene**

health information provided by Montefiore Medical Center, and more. See more photos from the festival at norwoodnews.org.









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Councilman: Park Repair Delays Unacceptable

By RACHEL FORSHEE

Bronx neighborhood parks wait as Parks Department deadlines come and go.

Weeds overrun an old slide set. Plastic bags are wadded up in cracks that would spell danger, or at least a sprained ankle, for residents who would use Mount Hope Garden — just one of the Bronx parks in need of improvements — if, of course, it was open.

Between 2010 and 2013, the Department of Parks and Recreation received \$5.33 million in capital funding for the parks of District 14, which includes the neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Mount Hope, Morris Heights and University Heights. To date, none of the funds have been used for this purpose.

Mount Hope Garden, on Creston Avenue, was set to receive \$1 million for repairs and surveillance cameras – repairs so severely needed, the park was forced to shutter its gates in 2009. The funds are there, but construction has yet to begin.

According to District 14 Council Member Fernando Cabrera, the story of Mount Hope and other parks in the Bronx is all too familiar.

"Mount Hope Garden is a prime example of what is going on with the parks," said Cabrera, in an interview. "Five years ago the Parks Department closed it down, rebuilt it, and five months later they shut it down again because they didn't do their job right." He added: "As a result, what we have is one of the worst parks in the city. If this were in Manhattan, I guarantee you that it wouldn't be in that condition for five years. Here in the Bronx we deserve better and we expect better."

Residents in Norwood, part of the 11th Council District, recently demanded the re-opening of the Williamsbridge Oval Park Recreation Center, which has been closed for four years, and was supposed to re-open before the summer of 2011. It's now slated to open sometime this fall.

In District 14, Grand Avenue Playground, St. James Park, Devanney Triangle and Regatta Park have all been allocated funds but have seen no movement forward, Cabrera said.

According to New York City Parks Advocates President and founder, Geoffrey Croft, similar situations can be found all over the city. "I have heard complaints for many years that the Parks Department's Capital Division is not doing their job," Croft said. Calling the Parks Department incompetent is just the tip of the iceberg, according to Croft.

A report released in January from the city comptroller appears to confirm Croft's beliefs. More than 47 percent of parks projects are listed as "behind schedule," with cost overruns cited in every borough.

"Unfortunately, this administration is more interested in ground breakings than actually seeing these projects through completion," said Croft.

Croft blamed much of the overruns on "soft costs," or management and administrative costs. He said that in some cases, these soft costs accounted for more than 30 percent of the total projects. "And the longer these projects are delayed, the more they end up costing," he said.

In an email statement, a Parks Department spokesperson said the department has completed many other projects in a timely manner and on budget, noting that cost overruns affected only 10 percent of the total projects in 2012. However,

in terms of scheduling, they do concede there is more to be done.

"We recognize that there is more we can do to ensure that our projects are completed in a timely manner and have taken steps to improve our processes so that more projects finish within their estimated completion dates," spokesperson Zachary Feder said in an email.

Feder also pointed out the extensive work that has been done at Williamsbridge Oval Park, including \$14 million in renovations that have been made since 2008. The latest delays at the rec center, the department says, are due to additional improvement not originally planned for.

But for both Cabrera and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, communication with the department has not been so straightforward. Both politicians have said they have often been left waiting when it came to getting answers from the agency.

Dinowitz's office first contacted the Parks Department in April and received notification that work on the Oval Park Rec Center would be completed over the summer. "Now I insist that the Parks Department provide my office with the details of the remaining work being completed on this project," Dinowitz said.

In Cabrera's case, he first received communication from the Parks Department, including a "snapshot" of standing projects, last June, along with a schedule of which every deadline has been missed. "The mayor allocated money for University Park and they put in the request way after us and that project is already done!" said Cabrera. "Sometimes I feel like the mayor has it out for us."

The Parks Department declined to say when construction on Mount Hope Garden will be completed.



Photo courtesy Fernando Cabrera's office

A LOOK AT Mount Hope Garden, which is scheduled to receive a \$1 million upgrade, but renovations have yet to start.

Neighborhood Notes

Free Medical Screenings

Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care offers women pap smears (ages 18+) and mammograms (ages 40+), who weren't tested in the last 12 months, free for those without insurance and co-pays for those with insurance. Exams will be held at Montefiore Medical Park, Outpatient Medical Oncology, 1st floor, 1695 Eastchester Rd. on Oct. 5 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information and to register, call (718) 920-7265.

Northeast Forest Volunteer Day

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park seek volunteers to help remove invasive plants and plant native trees and shrubs in the park's Northeast Woods, Oct. 5 starting at 10 a.m. Meet in front of the Woodlawn playground, near VC Park East and Kepler Avenue. For more information call (718) 601-1553.

Community Event

Black Light, an organization which seeks to unite and strengthen the Bronx, invites the public to a community event, Oct. 5 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., at St. James Park (between 191st and 192nd streets on Jerome Avenue). The event will include martial arts and boxing demonstrations, healthcare testing, dancing, music, games, and an anti-bullying poetry contest for students from Kg. through college in Bronx District 7. Fifty winners will go on to a live broadcasting of Black Entertainment Television show, 106 & Park. For more information, call (917) 582-3571 or (347) 882-9407.

Free Health Workshops

Montefiore Care Management is offering free interactive workshops for patients and their family members and caregivers, as follows: For diabetes: Oct. 17, 4 to 6 p.m.; and for asthma: Oct. 15, 10 to 11 a.m.; both at the MMG Co-op City Community Center, 177 Dreiser Loop (2nd floor, room 8). For more information, call (800) 636-6683.

Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Montefiore Medical Center, 111 E. 210th

St., invites the public to its 11th annual Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, Oct. 11, noon to 3 p.m., in the 1st floor Grand Hall. There will be educational materials on HIV and prevention, counseling on proper nutrition, free HIV counseling and testing, blood pressure screenings, musical performances, special guest speakers, and free raffle drawings. For more information, call (718) 920-5224 or (718) 231-3296, ext. 23.

Bronx Health Fair

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Eta Omega Omega and Tau Nu Omega will host a health fair at St. Mary's Recreation Center, 450 St. Ann's Ave., on Oct. 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Events include free blood pressure screenings, free mammogram testing, face painting, live music, and more. For more information, email etaomegaomega@gmail.com.

Environmental Internships

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park offer high school teens paid internships to learn about improving and conserving their environment, specifically VC Park. Learn about forest ecology, trail maintenance and tree identification as well as different careers, basic job skills, and writing and speaking skills. The program runs from November to June, Fridays from 4:30 to 6 p.m. and alternating Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Applications are due Oct. 9. For more information and an application, email Tina at tina@vancortlandt.org.

Breast Cancer Support Group

Jacobi Medical Center, 1400 Pelham Pkwy., So., and SHARE (self-help group for women with breast or ovarian cancer) are hosting a support group for women recently diagnosed with breast cancer, are undergoing treatment, and those who have completed treatment. Meetings are from 1 to 2 p.m., on Fridays, Oct. 25, Nov. 29, and Dec. 20. For more information, call (718) 918-4318 or (866) 891-2392.

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

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Out & About

Onstage

- Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents Jose Alberto "El Canario," Oct. 12 at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$30 to \$50); and The Shanghai Ballet, performing The Butterfly Lovers," the Romeo and Juliet of Chinese folklore, Oct. 13 at 4 p.m. (tickets are \$25 to \$45; \$10/under 12). For more information and tickets, call (718) 960-8833.
- Pregones Theatre presents Dancing in My

Cockroach Killers, through Oct. 13; Thursdays to Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 3 p.m.; and Wednesday, Oct. 9 at 1:30 p.m.; at the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. (between 8th and 9th avenues), in English with Spanish supertitles. For more information, call (718) 585-1202.

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E.

Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Doo Wop Concert**,
featuring the Exceptions, Oct. 5; and **Carnegie Hall's Neighborhood Concerts**, featuring The
Whistling Wolves, Oct. 12; both at 2:30 p.m. For

more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

- Manhattan College, West 242nd Street near Broadway in Riverdale, presents "Othello," free, Oct. 18 at 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.), in the Smith Auditorium. RSVP to brian.chalk@manhattan.edu.
- Casita Maria Center for Arts, 928 Simpson St., and Education and Dancing in the Streets present South Bronx Cultural Trail events, free, on Oct. 5, The Bronx Revolution and The Birth of Hip-Hop (a multi-media production), at 3:30 p.m., and To the Beat (a '70s themed hip-hop DJ party for ages 18+; come dressed in your '70s outfit), from 7 to 9 p.m.; at the Center. Also scheduled are various events around the Bronx, including performances, workshop, and exhibits. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 589-2230 ext. 3190.

Events

■ Woodlawn Conservancy presents free: walking tours, Oct. 12 at 2 p.m.; and Oct. 13 at 10 a.m.; and workshops, Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. (Stargazing); and Oct. 13 at 2 p.m. (Open House NY for ages 12 and under: sketch Woodlawn!). Also scheduled are Urban Mushroom Hunt, Oct. 5 at 10 a.m. (free to NY Mycological Society members; \$5/non members; \$10/families); and

Compiled by JUDY NOY

La Cultura Italiana, Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. (\$15/adults; discounts for Conservancy members/seniors/students). Enter at the Jerome and Bainbridge avenues entrance. For more information, call (718) 920-1469.

- The Bronx Zoo presents **lecture**, the first in a four-part series on the Bronx parks, Oct. 14 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Schiff Family Great Hall. This free event includes admission to the zoo. For more information, visit the Wildlife Conservation Society at www.wcs.org.
- Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers Family Arts Projects: Handmade Paper in Autumn Color, to make colorful papers including leaves, Oct. 5 and 6; and Buildings on the Land, to make a structure out of clay, cardboard and natural materials, Oct. 12 and 13; both at the Wave Hill House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is free Saturdays until noon all year, and free until noon Tuesdays in October. 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, 2nd floor North Wing, between 161st and 164th streets, presents **First Fridays**: 1040 Lounge Artist Spotlight With Brolab,





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Raptor Day at Wave Hill

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, invites the public to **Raptor Day**, Oct. 14, featuring a full day of activities to celebrate birds of prey. The entire family can enjoy live raptor shows (see hawks, owls and falcons, 11 to 11:45 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:15 p.m., Shade Border), performance (listen to Native-American tales which use song and dance, 12:15 to 1 p.m., WH House), workshop (to create shadow puppets, 1 to 4 p.m., WH House), bird walks, discovery tables, and more. Check under "Events" for additional WH programming. For more information and a detailed schedule of events, call (718) 549-3200.

free, Oct. 4, 6:30 to 9 p.m. Also scheduled are **Mapping the Bronx**, family affair, Oct. 5 from 1 to 4 p.m.; and **Native-American Edition**, in honor of Native-American Day, featuring storytelling, poetry, and music, Oct. 11, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 681-6000 ext. 131.

- The Fordham Road Business Improvement District presents International Day Fair, Oct. 4 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Muller Park and Plaza, Creston Avenue and East Fordham Road, featuring international cuisines, artifact displays and a bouncy house and fun bus for the kids. For more information, call (718) 562-1269.
- The public is invited to a free International Music Fest, Oct. 6, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Pelham Parkway and Barnes Avenue. Enjoy world-wide music of a variety of genres. For more information, call (917) 640-1003.

Exhibits

■ Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, 2nd floor North Wing, between 161st and 164th streets, presents **Paulo Bruscky**, through Feb. 9; **Tony Feher**, Oct. 6 to Feb. 16; and **Orchard Beach**: **The Bronx Riviera**, Oct. 13 to Feb. 16. For more information, call (718) 681-6000 ext. 131.

- 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. Also scheduled is Open House NY and Historic House Festival Weekend, Oct. 12 and 13. The Museum and Poe Cottage offer free admission. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.
- The Bronx Council on the Arts presents
 Esther Pagan: My Colors of Cancer and In the
 Headlines: Latino New Yorkers 1980-2001, as
 part of BCA's First Wednesdays Bronx Culture
 Trolley, at Hostos College's Longwood Art
 Gallery, 450 Grand Concourse (at 149th Street),
 through Dec. 20. For more information, call
 (718) 931-9500 ext. 33 or (718) 518-6728.
- The Bronx Documentary Center, 614
 Courtlandt Ave., presents **Refugee Hotel**,
 through Dec.1, Thursdays to Sundays, 2 to 7
 p.m. Exhibition chronicles refugees during their

first night in the United States and their lives in resettlement. For more information, call (718) 993-3512.

- Visiones Culturales presents Passages: A Collective Art Exhibition, through Oct. 10, free, at the Andrew Freedman Home, 1125 Grand Concourse. The exhibition includes many cultural events and art workshops for the community, dance, and music. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (646) 281-3402.
- Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Morphology of the Print**, Oct. 8 to Jan. 8, which includes works that push the boundaries of printmaking. Student workshops will be available including art and architecture. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 960-8731/2.

Library Events

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents programs for adults including Single Stop/Government Benefits at 9 a.m.: Oct. 3, 8, 10, 15 and 17; Heritage Arts & Crafts: (advance in-person registration required), Oct. 4 at 2 p.m.; Internet for Beginners: Oct. 3 at 2 p.m.; MS Word 2010 for Beginners at 2 p.m.: Oct. 4 and 16; MS Power Point 2010 for Beginners (Part I): Oct. 4 at 6 p.m.; Retail Seasonal Hiring Recruitment and Screening Event: Oct. 4 at 9:30 a.m.; Health Awareness Day: features free health screenings, Oct. 5 at 10 a.m.; Searching Besides Google: LawHelp: Oct. 7 at 2 p.m.; and Art is Business is Art: free workshop, Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m. Children can enjoy film: Oct. 8 at 4 p.m.; Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.: Oct. 3 and 17; Toddler Playtime at noon: Oct. 3 and 17;

Halloween Hanger Making: Oct. 10 at 4 p.m.; and Reading Aloud: Oct. 15 at 4. Teens/young adults can attend Films at 6 p.m.: Oct. 3, 10 and 17; and Chess Workshop: Oct. 7 at 3 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 2:30 p.m.; Wii Program: Tuesdays at 3 p.m.; and Internet for Beginners at 10:30 a.m.: Oct. 15 and 16 (in-person advance registration required). Teens/young adults can join Arts & Crafts: Oct. 8 at 3:30 p.m. Children can enjoy Toddler Story Time at 10:30 a.m.: (ages 18 to 36 months), Oct. 3, 10 and 17; Story Time: (ages 4 to 7), Oct. 7 at 4 p.m.; Bilingual Birdies: (ages to 5), Oct. 8 at 11 a.m.; and Writing Workshop: (ages 7 to 12; registration required), Oct. 11 at 3:30 p.m. Foreigners can join Free Intermediate Level English Conversation Classes: (ages 18+), Tuesdays 6:30 to 8 p.m., Oct. 8, 15, 22 and 29. The entire family can view film, "Monsters INC," Oct. 7 at 4:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.
- The Jerome Park Library, at 118 Eames Place, offers for children: Kids' Active Health at 4 p.m.: (yoga and zumba), Oct. 4 and 11; Cooking: Oct. 7 at 4 p.m.; and Chess: (learn to play), Oct. 15 at 4 p.m.; (all for ages 5 to 12); and Toddler Story Time: (ages 18 to 36 months), Oct. 8 at 11 a.m. For teens/young adults, there is: Cooking at 4 p.m.: Oct. 3 and 10; and for adults: Computer Basics at noon: Oct. 3, 8, 10, 15 and 17. 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 Oct. 7 for the next publication date of Oct. 17.

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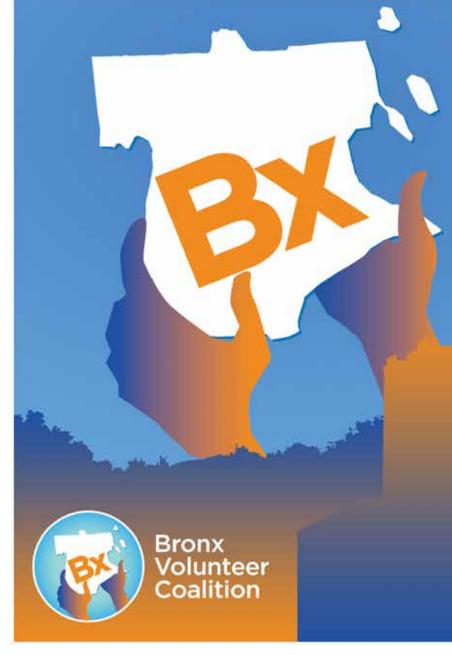


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