

# NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:**  
**THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING DEBATE | PG. 4**



**BRONX BELTWAY:**  
**CRESPO NAMED NEW**  
**DEMS COUNTY LEADER | PG. 10**

## CRIME SPIKE IN 52ND PRECINCT BORDERS

*Increase in robberies near Norwood/Bedford Park to blame*



Photo by Jenny Sharp

**EAST 194TH STREET** has seen its share of crime in recent weeks, including an attempted robbery at the Al-Tair Grocery Store (far left) on Feb. 18.

By **DAVID CRUZ**

On one hand it's number two. On the other hand, it's number four. But regardless of how crime is assessed in the 52nd Precinct, the trend has shifted upward, resisting a continued drop in crime across the Bronx.

Numerical statistics compiled weekly by the NYPD

show the 52nd Precinct, covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge and Fordham ties with the 43rd Precinct with the second most reported crimes out of the 12 Bronx precincts.

The 52nd Precinct has experienced 345 crimes compared to 331 the same time last year, translating to a 4.23 percent increase so far this year, ac-

cording to figures that ended March 8 by CompStat, the NYPD's crime gathering tool. Powering that crime spike are robberies, where 90 cases were reported this year up from 67 the same time a year ago, according to statistics. New York State penal law defines robberies as a person forcibly stealing an item from another

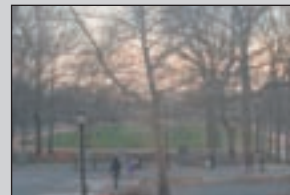
person.

Alarming community stakeholders is that most robberies have drifted to Norwood and Bedford Park (coded as NYPD sectors H, I, J, K, M and N), sleepier communities within the precinct's watch. Crime is cyclical, with types of incidents varying accord-

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## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## Stringer Urges Related to Resolve Heat Issue

By DAVID CRUZ

Following pressure from community activists and elected officials, Comptroller Scott Stringer has sent a letter to the head of a multi-billion real estate firm to resolve nagging heat issues in buildings purchased with city pension funds. Among the bigger requests is the real estate giant to come to the table.

Offering a diplomatic take on a mounting situation, Stringer drafted the letter to Jeff Blau, CEO of The Related Companies, requesting Blau send representatives to hear out residents experiencing heat issues in one of 36 buildings the firm purchased. A portion of the \$253 million used to buy the Bronx properties two years ago was made available through the New York City Pension Fund, which puts a portion of the funds into real estate deals expecting a healthy rate of return.

"...[A] dialogue must be established to correct outstanding issues," wrote Stringer, in a letter he drafted March 12.

Stringer, whose office serves as a custodian to Pension Fund investments, explained in his letter to Blau that city investments such as the Related's Bronx portfolio "can only be marked as a success if they are both achieving their financial and broader economic goals." During the height of the winter, 1200 complaints were filed against Related with the New York City Housing Preservation and Development Department (HPD). Some of the charges, mainly heat issues, were declared unfounded.

HPD routinely calls management to alert them they're sending an inspector before making a stop.

The letter demonstrates a more pronounced lead Stringer's office has taken since heat issues in several buildings, mainly scattered throughout the northwest Bronx, began to surface. Stringer's approach towed the line between public servant and arbiter, attempting to promote damage control before the situation worsened. His office had been working behind the scenes with several New York City Council members whose districts overlap with Related's buildings, according to sources.

Many tenants blamed Related's subsidiary group, Simply Better Apartment Homes, for allegedly ignoring mounting complaints. Tenants at 3013 Valentine Ave., a Related-owned building, pointed to newly installed heat sensors designed to turn on a boiler should temperatures fall below a certain threshold.

The company has made attempts in fixing some of the issues, Stringer notes, which include the "responsiveness of the management company, timelessness of repairs, lack of heat and outstanding billing issues." He also notes that should representatives come forward, it could help both sides come to the table, eliminating the middle man. "It provides [Blau], or [Blau's] designee, with the opportunity to hear directly from residents about concerns without third-party interpreters," wrote Stringer.

A representative from Related



File Photo/Jenny Sharp

**COMPTROLLER SCOTT STRINGER** whose office monitors investments made by the New York City Pension Funds, drafted a letter to The Related Companies requesting it meet with frustrated tenants living in the firm's buildings bought with city pension funds.

wrote in a statement that it shares "the Comptroller's belief that an open and ongoing dialogue with our tenants is of the utmost importance and we have taken a variety of steps to rectify any issues. We have established a clear protocol to ensure we respond directly and in a timely manner to tenant concerns. Simply Better has and will continue to speak to and meet with the Comptroller's office, tenant constituencies and elected officials."

## Public and Community Meetings

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Education/Libraries & Youth Services meets March 19; Website/Acknowledgement & Media meets March 23; Parks & Recreation meets March 25; Economic Development meets March 31; Community Relations/LTP meets March 31 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call the Board office at (718) 933-5650.

**THE BEFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy, So., Apt. B1 (lobby floor), on April 1 at 8 p.m. For more information, call (718) 367-2230.

**THE 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets March 26 at Fordham United Methodist Church, 2543 Marion Ave., from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



# Office Building Home to Struggling Nonprofit Up for Sale

By DAVID CRUZ

An office building home to a struggling social services firm in Norwood is up for sale, amid heavy selling and buying in the Bronx.

The building has been home to Federation Employment & Guidance Service (FEGS), an 81-year non-profit that offers education, healthcare, disability care, housing and employment services primarily for the Jewish community, according to its website. The organization boasts 350 other locations city-wide. A report in the *New York Daily News* in January said the firm is on the edge of filing for bankruptcy after laying off several dozen employees and revealing it's \$20 million in debt.

Massey Knakal Realty Services, the real estate firm recently acquired by Cushman and Wakefield, has priced the two-story building, 3600 Jerome Ave., for \$13.5 million, according to its latest listing. The 50,000-square-foot property is adjacent



Photo by Jenny Sharp

**THIS BUILDING HOUSING** offices for FEGS at 3600 Jerome Ave. is up for sale. The struggling nonprofit is reportedly on the brink of bankruptcy.

to the last stop on the #4 subway line and is walking distance from Woodlawn Cemetery. It's

also across the street from the Croton Water Filtration Plant, which has undergone construc-



Images courtesy Massey Knakal

**IMAGES TAKEN FROM** Massey Knakal's listing of 3600 Jerome Ave., a sizeable two-story office building on the market for \$13.5 million.

tion for over a decade. A Massey Knakal spokeswoman could not disclose the name of the owner. Building records show the site to be owned by Astro Health & Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

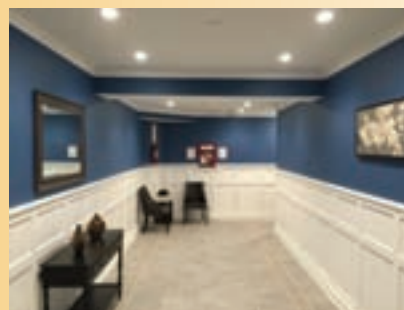
The listing noted the M-1 "zoning and configuration are ideal for a user such as a not-for-profit or possibly even redevelopment," a buzzword that's been heard around the Bronx in recent months.

Some amenities at the site include an indoor garage, 100 small offices, 30 classrooms, 20 bathrooms and some conference and staff break-rooms. It's unclear whether FEGS will vacate the property. A spokesperson did not return call seeking comment.

Norwood especially has seen a swell of redevelopment, primarily along Webster Avenue, which now includes several projects ranging from mixed-use apartment buildings to supportive housing shape the corridor.

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE

With news that The Doe Fund is building supportive housing in Norwood for those living with HIV/AIDS, we asked residents whether everyone deserves a decent place to live or if the infected should live elsewhere.



I was caught by surprise by this, but it all comes down to one thing: knowing the basics about protection and really following it through. That's the common law of the whole world; you don't want to catch something you don't want so you protect yourself. But this community as a whole accepting a building for that, affordable housing, I think it's all right, but at the same time I think they should be asking the community instead of just going ahead and doing a project.

--David Sanchez



I think it's a great idea and it will only help these folks live more productive lives.

--Keisha Raymond



There's a stigma that goes with HIV and AIDS. People always assume that they are drug abusers and that's not the case. Of course they deserve a place to live.

--Geraldine O'Neil



It's all right with me as long as they don't infect me. It doesn't bother me in any way. Everybody deserves a place to live. No one deserves to be homeless.

--Michael Villanueva



Everybody has the right to low-income housing and this is the community of the working poor, so welcome. Would we get in there? Probably not. It seems that they're building these places in the working poor neighborhoods, but the income guidelines are for the middle class, which we don't qualify for. Why is it only here in the Bronx? This is the first I'm hearing about it period. If you never would have said anything and if I didn't see the picture, I never would have known.

--Lisa Overton

**Editor's Note:** Have an idea for an Inquiring Photographer question? Send suggestions to [dcruz@norwoodnews.org](mailto:dcruz@norwoodnews.org).

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# Stagg Purchases Corner Parcel Off Grand Concourse

By DAVID CRUZ

A vacant parcel of property at a prominent part of Bedford Park is slated to become the next signature development by a real estate giant.

The Stagg Group, which has been buying properties in Bedford Park/Norwood, purchased a defunct mechanic shop, once known as Norwood Auto Diagnostic Center, at 150 Van Cortlandt Ave. E. at the corner of the Grand Concourse. Through loans, The Stagg Group purchased the site for \$7.1 million to convert it to what it dubbed "signature development," another sign the developer's here to stay in the northwest Bronx.

The property was marketed and sold through Massey Knakal, the real estate firm that was recently swallowed up by Cushman and Wakefield. The Stagg Group purchased the properties entirely through loans, according to a report by the *Commercial Observer*. The property had sat vacant for quite some time, with a vintage U.S. Army truck seen parked at the gated shop that was recently removed.

Adolfo Carrion, The Stagg Group's executive vice president, said the firm will create mixed-used housing that



Photo by Jenny Sharp

**THIS VACANT MECHANIC** shop at the corner of the Grand Concourse and East Van Cortlandt Avenue will see a new project by The Stagg Group.

includes roughly 220 to 250 units of housing. Zoning maps indicate that the property is deemed an R8 zone, which clears projects that can run upwards to 17 stories. Off-street parking

is required should The Stagg Group build that high.

The firm was eager to buy the property, given its location near the Pickwick Arms, a historic piece of prop-

erty that covers a large square block at the north end of the Grand Concourse. During the turn of the century, the Grand Concourse was rising, with Art Deco buildings comprising the arterial roadway's landscape that exists today. The Pickwick Arms is known for its English Tudor-style presentation and one of the older buildings along the Concourse, built sometime at the turn of the 20th century.

"This is an opportunity to make a design statement that honors those important New York City roadways and the Art Deco heritage of the Grand Concourse," said Carrion, in a statement. Carrion hinted that Bedford Park's amenities—"parks, great transportation, and shopping"—contributed to the purchase.

The latest purchase comes amid a string of properties The Stagg Group has snatched up in the last year. It recently purchased a property at 3084 Webster Ave. at the corner of 203rd Street, for \$4.1 million. The firm did not reveal their intentions toward the space as of press time. It's currently seeking tenants for its trio of buildings on Webster Avenue dubbed The Bedford Manor.

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## SCHOOL BRIEFS

# Equalizing the Specialized HS Test, With Lumbering Results

By JENNY SHARP

The admissions race to the city's specialized high schools continues to show signs that Bronx students are falling behind with little recourse.

A review by the *Norwood News* found the deck is certainly stacked against Bronx students when preparing for the specialized high school exam. The push to equalize the process has stalled some, with little follow-through on proposed reform.

The city's specialized high schools are nine elite public schools, which have the ability to turn a student into a successful professional, academic, or even a Nobel Laureate. The schools offer a variety of advanced placement and honors classes, extra-curricular activities, and esteemed faculty—resources akin to expensive private schools.

Of the nearly 17,000 New York City students attending specialized high school in 2014, only 1,131 were Bronx residents, according to statistics from the Department of Edu-

cation. This disparity has led many education advocates and elected officials to question the fairness of the entry process, particularly the lack of test preparation options available in the Bronx.

Obtaining a coveted spot comes down to one metric: the score on the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT), a 150-minute, standardized test comprised of two sections—math and verbal. Entry into LaGuardia High School of Music and Art, another specialized high school, requires students to audition.

The Department of Education (DOE) reports that roughly 27,000 8th graders took the SHSAT in 2015 with only 5,103 accepted. This means that 19 percent of test takers gained admission to one of their high school choices.

## Scant Test Prep

So how does one outscore 81 percent of New York City's high achieving 8th graders?

The DOE offers two forms of free SHSAT prep. The first is a 114-page online handbook, complete with test taking strategies and two practice exams. The only other form of free preparation is DREAM-SHSI, a 22-month intensive program for middle school students that meets on week-ends. But acceptance to this program is not a given. To be eligible, students must meet economic and academic requirements, including at least a 90 percent 5th grade attendance rate.

According to a 2012 report by Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. entitled "An Action Plan for Fixing the Specialized High School Admissions Process," the attendance provision significantly affects the eligibility of Bronx children who are hospitalized for asthma-related illnesses 70 percent more than students in other boroughs. Diaz recommended expanding criteria for admission and creating more specialized high schools.

## Paying for Test Help

If parents want help beyond these two resources, they must pay. The same report states that there are 14 private companies that offer both individual and group tutoring for the SHSAT. Prices range from around \$162 for a one-on-one session to \$3,600 for a semester of group tutoring. Even if parents are able to pay these fees, only three of the 14 companies have locations in the Bronx, which include Kaplan Test Prep. That is 64 percent fewer locations when compared to Queens.

"We choose locations based on a number of factors, including where demand and need is greatest, as well as accessibility for students," said Kennon Miller, executive director of educational partnerships for Kaplan K12. Miller also notes that the organization routinely partners with area schools to offer test prep courses, though it's unclear over how many schools it partners with yearly.

## Course of Action

Although politicians have noticed, their push to revamp the system is somewhat stagnated. Diaz's report was released three years ago,

though the implementation of his recommendations is slow or in many cases gone nowhere. In 2014 the DOE reported that only 10 percent of students attending specialized high schools were black and Hispanic—demographics that represent a large portion of the Bronx.

Asked whether the free test prep options would expand in the Bronx, Diaz's spokesman, John DeSio, said "We're confident that in partnership with Chancellor [Carmen] Farina and the Department of Education we can increase access to test prep services for our public school students."

Others, such as Marvin Shelton, president of the Community Education Council in School District 10, believe fundamental problems must be fixed before change is possible. "Test prep is test prep. It's not knowledge. You have to recognize potential early on and nurture it," said Shelton in a phone interview. He advocated the need for better primary education and the creation of a borough-based gifted and talented program (G&T), which would begin test preparation at a younger age, with content rather than test-taking strategies.

At the most basic level—Bronx schools and parents need more school resources, according to lawmakers. And resources need funding.

With Assemblyman Carl Heastie rising to the position of State Assembly Speaker, Bronx politicians and community members are optimistic that the borough will finally get the attention from Albany that it needs. On March 11, Heastie and the Democratically controlled Assembly proposed adding \$1.8 billion in next year's fiscal budget towards aiding public schools.

When asked whether any of these proposed funds would go towards bettering and increasing SHSAT test prep in the Bronx, Assemblyman Michael Blake of the 79th District in the South Bronx acknowledged the inherent bias within the current system. "Until you make sure that someone has the tools and the resources to be ready for those tests," said Blake, "you're creating an unfair scenario."

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# Parents, Advocates Hail Passage of Toxic School Bill

By **KIMBERLY JACOBS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio signed the Intro 126 bill inspired by a toxic exposure case in P.S. 51 in Norwood, last month. Parents and teachers at the school were outraged after learning high traces of trichloroethylene, a cancer causing toxin, coursed throughout the school, creating a hazardous environment. After four years of ensuring this never happens again, parents finally felt like a step in the right direction has been made by the bill's passage.

"I practically lived there," said Jean Hill, a parent whose child attended the school several years ago. "We as parents were devastated when we found out, but at least we made a step in the right direction."

The measure now mandates the DOE release findings of environmental reports at school buildings at a faster rate. Parents were initially angry over the building being hazardous. Their frustrations mounted after learning school officials waited six months before disclosing the information to them.

"Some of the key achievements of the legislation include increasing the City Council's oversight of school environmental health, improving the transparency of school leasing decisions, and ensuring parents and staff get prompt and complete notice of environmental test results," said Councilman Fernando Cabrera, who drafted the bill.

The news inspired several stakeholders to look back at how delays surfaced after the State Department of Environmental Protection sent a report

to the DOE detailing the toxic status of the school.

"I was stunned when the school chancellor got up during a meeting and said 'we knew about it 90 days before school ended,'" said Adaline Walker-Santiago, chair of Community Board 7, remembering when she first found out about PS 51.

Although Walker-Santiago and Hill's children no longer attended the school they were still driven to ensure this never happened to anyone else's child, which included those of Marisol Carrero. "You send your kids to school to learn, and have to worry about them being exposed to toxic chemicals. It's ridiculous. No parent should have to go through this," said Carrero.

Parents soon mobilized, drawing attention to the school's toxicity, though many felt the fight to be hopeless. As the years passed, many became hopeless and frustrated, but some continued to advocate and seek answers. "We had to support one another as parents, but some lost hope," said Hill.

"We didn't see a risk for students but we did for teachers who may have been pregnant at the time," said James Bower from the Department of Health (DOH). At least one teacher at PS 51 miscarried while working at the school. Bower also said "the amount [students] were exposed to is still relatively low."

A spokesperson for the DOE said the agency will "fully comply with the new law."

"We won! We won!" said Walker-Santiago. "Now we have to continuously fight for the kids of the future."

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Photo by Kimberly Jacobs

**COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS (L-R)** Adaline Walker-Santiago, Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky discuss the passing of Intro bill 126 with parent Marisol Carrero.



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# Summer Movie Nights Coming To Oval Park

By **KIMBERLY JACOBS**

The Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID) is bringing the movie experience to a park near you, and it's empowering you to pick the summer flick.

The BID, teaming up with the Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC), Partnership for Parks, a collaborative of City Parks Foundation and the New York City Parks Department, is set to present its first-ever movie event at Williamsbridge Oval Park. The site is ideal—it's the epicenter of Norwood, complete with a large football field to cater to dozens of moviegoers.

In preparation, they're asking for residents to nominate family-friendly movies by April 15. After the BID and the Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval sort through the nominations together, the top three movies will be placed on their social media sites, along with the BID and *Norwood News* websites, for voting, of which the two with the highest number of votes will be shown over the summer.

"We're looking for movies that you can watch with the entire family, kid-friendly movies," said Marcia Cameron, doubling as executive director of the Jerome-Gun Hill BID and deputy director of MPC. "Mosholu Preservation Corporation has always been focused on community development and what better way to bring families together than hosting movies in the beautiful Williamsbridge Oval Park," she said.

Readers can send in their movie nomination by emailing [info@jeromegunhillbid.org](mailto:info@jeromegunhillbid.org).



Photo by Kimberly Jacobs

**THE SCENIC WILLIAMSBRIDGE** Oval Park, location of this summer's movies in the park.

## Poe Cottage Extends Hours, Launches Audio Tour

The Bronx County Historical Society is proud to announce extended hours at the landmark historic Edgar Allan Poe Cottage along with an audio tour to enhance the experience of a place with such an extraordinary American legacy. Since its opening in 2011 following year-long renovation work, the Society began to explore new ways to make Poe Cottage more accessible to the rapidly growing Bronx community.

Although the cottage is 203 years old and the last remaining structure of the old 19th century village of Fordham, it was important to bring the famed historic house museum up to date with new technological means. The Bronx County Historical Society and the Historic House Trust of New York City banded together in 2012 to develop an audio tour available worldwide.

By dialing (718) 971-2156 or simply scanning with a smartphone a QR code located on the Poe Cottage webpage or throughout the historic house museum, one can hear the story of the great American writer's experience living at the cottage along with sound recordings of people reading works that Poe wrote in the house, even in Spanish.



Photo courtesy Bronx Historical Society

**A TOUR AROUND** the historic Poe Cottage (pictured) in Fordham can transport visitors back 200 years from when the literary giant drafted stories inside his cozy cottage.

Besides unlimited accessibility and for those with mobility and sight limitations, the Poe Cottage audio tour gives non-English speaking visitors an opportunity to learn more about the famed poet, as there are plans to expand the audio tour to include other languages.

Yet The Bronx County Historical Society thought an audio tour was just not enough. With the cottage's online media presence on popular sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the demand to visit the last place where Poe lived and wrote such great pieces like the "Cask of Amontillado" and "The Bells" rapidly grew. To satisfy mounting re-

quests, the Society extended the cottage's public visiting hours two extra days, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., in addition to its weekend hours. This gives the Bronx community and tourists the opportunity to visit the cottage during the week.

With these exciting and innovating implementations, the Society continues its mission to keep Poe's legacy alive in the vibrant Bronx community.

For more information on these exciting features at Poe Cottage, call the Society at (718) 881-8900 or visit <http://bronx-historicalsociety.org/poecottage.html>.

## Jericho Project Given \$200K for Homeless Vets

By **KIMBERLY C. JACOBS**

The Jericho Project, a non-profit that offers housing to homeless veterans, is slated to expand services and open its third home in the Bronx thanks to a hefty, two-year grant.

The project intends to continue its mission to end homelessness with the help of a \$200,000 grant it was awarded from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, targeted to assist veterans. The grant will fund a new veterans-only residence on Walton Avenue, an employment program for veterans, and hiring a resources coordinator to further fund its programming.

"Bank of America has been interested in supporting our veterans initiative for a number of years, and this is a much bigger program than we've run in the

past," said Tori Lyon, executive director of the Jericho Project. She also serves as the architect of its Veterans Initiative project begun in 2006, which owns and operates two supportive housing sites for homeless veterans in Fordham and Kingsbridge.

The Neighborhood Builders program also supports the Jericho Project through leadership training as they continue to provide several resources to thousands of at-risk and homeless New Yorkers. New York City has led a national fight to decrease the number of homeless veterans, fulfilling President Obama's goal of ending homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015.

"With this funding and leadership training, the Jericho Project is poised to make an even greater impact in its efforts to combat

homelessness among veterans by assisting those at-risk before they lose their homes," said Lyon.

Although the money will be allocated towards helping veterans, the Jericho Project also serves adults and families by fighting homelessness through unemployment, mental health, and family reunification services.

"The earlier that we can reach at-risk veterans with the stability of housing and the tools to secure employment, the more promising their future will be," said Lyon. "We are grateful to Bank of America for their invaluable leadership training and financial support. Together, we can end homelessness at its roots."

Construction on the Walton Avenue site is scheduled for this spring, and is expected to open in early 2017.



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Funded by a grant from the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Chronic Disease Control

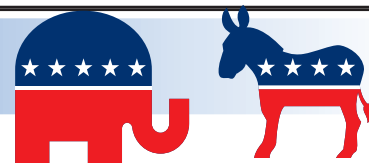
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# THE BRONX BELTWAY

By DAVID CRUZ



## Crespo Leads Bronx County

As expected, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo was crowned the new leader of the Bronx Democratic County Committee, succeeding Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie. It's certainly a steppingstone for Crespo, who's yearned to raise his profile. The vote was unanimous, something lawmakers kept emphasizing at a dinner party shortly after the March 5 vote, perhaps to ensure party unity remains intact.

Ethnic politics certainly seemed to play a role in Crespo's victory, with one unnamed lawmaker admitting a party dominated by minorities representing a borough of minorities makes the most sense. What could really work against Crespo is his affinity to the New York Mets. Don't know how the party's Yankee fans feel about that.

## King, the Motivational Speaker

Councilman Andy King of the 12th District is quite the showman, displaying moments of theatricality and sermon-like presentation at his State

of the District address. King, clad in his trademark blue and orange suit, highlighted a dozen dynamite women, including our very own Marcia Cameron, deputy director of Montefiore Preservation Corporation, before a crowd of more than 100 people. That's quite the turnout for King who came across more as a motivational speaker with the hallmarks of a preacher—he did, after all, address the flock at Beulah Church of God on East Gun Hill Road.

Preferring a headset mic over the podium ("I didn't want to lecture you, I wanted to talk to you," King shouted), King checked off accomplishments that included school upgrades such as a new airplane simulator, expanded youth programs, and installing cameras at NYCHA complexes.

Between the bravado and cheerleading, there were moments where King resembled a borough president. You never know. Or he could settle for being a preacher.

## Bx. Council Delegation Soaked

The Bronx New York City Council

Delegation was soaked with bad grades by the New York League of Conservation Voters, which released its 2014 New York City Council Environmental Scorecard.

The group examined voting records of Council members for nine environmental bills, which were skipped by some of the Bronx Delegation. Bills included a vote on whether to charge 10 cents for single plastic bags, reducing greenhouse gases 80 percent by 2050 and expanding tax incentives for employees who commute to work. The tallies include:

Councilmembers Andrew Cohen and Ritchie Torres scoring a perfect 100, making them the only two Bronx Council members to achieve a high mark.

The nameless Councilmembers did not make the grade. They know who they are.

## Rallying for Badillo Post Office

Re-naming a post office after revered Puerto Rican legislator Herman Badillo is another step closer to reality. Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. first called attention to rename the Morrisania branch of the United States Postal Service after Badillo. Now federal legislators including Representatives Charles Rangel, Jose Serrano, Joe Crowley and U.S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand have drafted a bill to honor Badillo.

It would be another commemoration to Badillo, whose trailblazing status as the first congressman born in Puerto Rico and the first Puerto Rican Bronx borough president, led to a school named after him...in Buffalo, not the Bronx. Should the bill be signed, sealed and delivered, the cash-strapped USPS will have to foot the bill.

## Holding Heastie Accountable

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie flexed some legislative muscle by unveiling the so-called One House Budget that pledged to fund the state's ever-empty Campaign for Fiscal Equity funding for schools. The Bronx Assembly Delegation backed Heastie's commitment, which would pump \$503 million into Bronx schools.

Asked whether he would hold Heastie accountable should the

budget fail, Assemblyman Michael Blake of the 79th Assembly District told the *Norwood News* that he would hold Heastie accountable. "We're absolutely holding the governor accountable, and everyone else..." said Blake, trailing off before asked once again if Heastie's on the accountability list. "And the speaker, absolutely," he finished. "This is the year of CFE, this is the year of education," Blake noted.

**(Side Note: Assemblyman Jose Rivera made a rare news conference appearance, mocking "wannabe journalists" out there. Wonder who he was referring to.)**

The budget once again includes introducing a state public campaign finance apparatus, where taxpayers will cover the cost of funding election campaigns. The likelihood of this happening is remote. The Senate killed it last year. When Democrats controlled both Albany houses in 2009, it was killed then too. "They're thinking of self-preservation," said one veiled political insider.

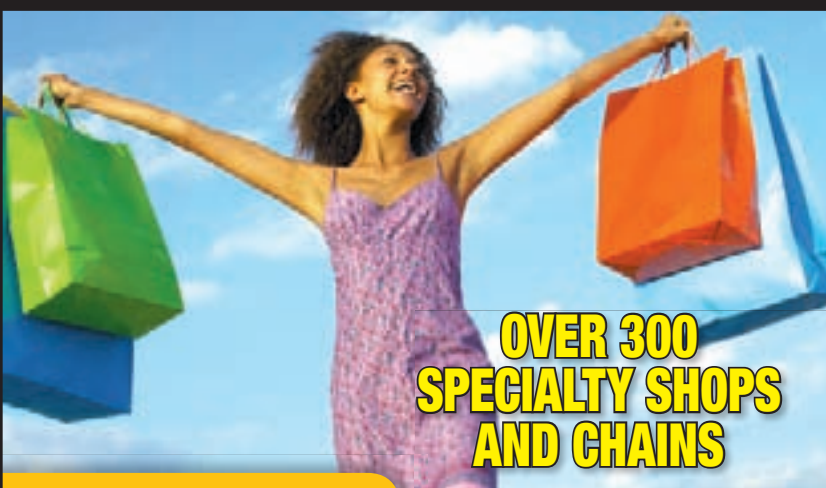
The New York City Campaign Finance Board drafted a letter to Heastie on the benefits of state campaign finance. "[P]ublic campaign finance has provided taxpayers with the confidence that city elections are decided by voters, not large contributions from special interests," wrote Art Chang, chair of the Voter Advisory Committee.

## West Bronx in the House

State Senator Gustavo Rivera, who leads the 33rd Senate District, has mobilized his fellow legislators to take on unscrupulous landlords in the West Bronx, home to the second most affordable housing in the city. He's now formed the West Bronx Housing Coalition, with his office serving as a central hub to help identify a pattern of landlord-related issues. It's relying on Assembly Members Jose Rivera, Michael Blake, Victor Pichardo, Latoya Joyner, Jeff Dinowitz and Councilmembers Vanessa Gibson and Andrew Cohen to re-route complaints to his office. So if you have a dispute with a landlord, take it to your fellow rep, who will take it to Sen. Rivera.

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# Be Healthy

# 56

Percentage of Americans who  
skip breakfast

(Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture)

Vital  
Stats

## Seizing the Day? Don't Forget to Eat Your Breakfast

By CARLOS SANTIAGO

Are you one of those people who fall into one of the following categories when it comes to skipping breakfast?: 1) "I don't have the time," 2) "I don't know what to eat," or 3) "I'll wait until I get to work." You've heard the phrase before: breakfast really is the most important meal of the day.

Remember that you've been sleeping for six to eight hours. During this state, your body is in hibernation mode, using up all the fuel you have consumed prior to bedtime. So, when waking up, your body is in starvation mode. Despite the fact that you may not feel hunger after you awaken, you must eat something. If you don't, your body will shut down after 45 minutes. You may begin to lose focus, and your body may tremble due to low blood sugar. All of this is detrimental to your health, your work, and the fitness goals you are trying to achieve.

For the excuses listed above,

there are solutions: plan or prepare your breakfast the night before. There are so many great options for breakfast that take little to no time at all. This could be something as simple as a smoothie. Blend one scoop of whey protein in 10 ounces of almond milk or soy milk with some blueberries or strawberries (fresh or frozen). To save time, this can even be blended the night before. Just place in the fridge overnight, grab it in the morning and off you go. For those who do have an extra 10 to 15 minutes to spare, you can quickly whip up three egg whites, one slice of whole wheat toast or one cup of oatmeal with some blueberries on the side. The recipes are loaded with protein, an essential nutrient to starting the day right.

Breakfast is the fuel for everyone. Children need to be sent to school after eating a nutritious breakfast as it helps with concentration. For those of us looking to achieve fitness goals, whether losing weight or building muscle, we must consume

## HHS Secretary Visits Montefiore

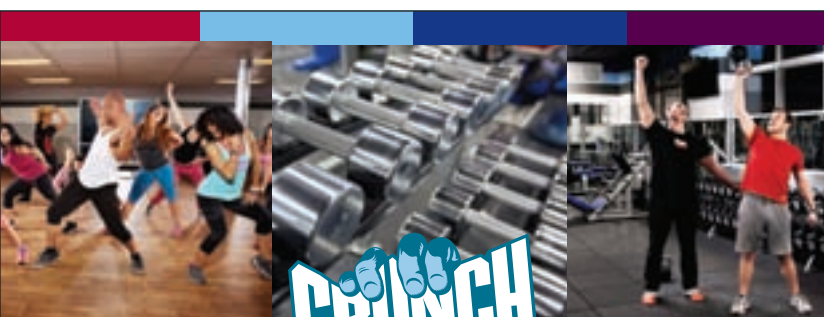
DR. STEVEN SAFYER (right), CEO and president of Montefiore Health System, gives the grand tour of the hospital's newest complex in Pelham Bay to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell on March 12. The two discussed the value-based model of patient care Montefiore's demonstrated at its more than 150 primary and specialty care centers.

Photo courtesy Montefiore Medical Center



five to six meals a day with breakfast being the important one. It sets the tone for our day and ensures we are on the right path, mentally and physically, for whatever lies ahead. Make a conscious effort by taking care of your body so it can work with you and not against you.

*Carlos Santiago is the fitness manager at Crunch Norwood and a certified personal trainer from the National Academy of Sports Medicine. He's been a personal trainer for 15 years.*



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# Choosing a Supportive Housing Site Boils Down To Need, According to Developers

By JANAKI CHADHA

The Doe Fund's recent decision to build a \$29.5 million supportive/affordable housing project at a vacant property on Webster Avenue comes at a time when real estate transactions have seen a major uptick along the northern corridor.

The property, once the home of a family-owned vehicle repair shop, has sat vacant for years until The Doe Fund purchased the lot in 2013 to make way for Webster Green at 3100 Webster Ave. The 82-unit, eight-story building will be split between affordable housing tenants and those living with HIV or AIDS. Across the street is a portal to a variety of small businesses that fuel retail activity in the neighborhood.

But the never ending question on supportive housing is whether it fits into the overall mission of community building. Definitions on community building vary some, with developers' views on neighborhood building differing from longtime residents whose vision foregoes a swell of supportive

housing sites.

On its surface, the ulterior motives of supportive housing developers are never rooted in destroying a neighborhood. Most of the time, deciding on a site boils down to location and opportunity.

Adam Horwitz, a spokesman for The Doe Fund, said that the Webster Avenue site was chosen because, "The property was affordable and in an excellent location, which made it ideal for housing that would support the community." He added "there was an RFP issued by HASA for new supportive housing, so it all worked together well. Whenever we have the opportunity to serve a population in need and help usher new investment in a neighborhood and community, we do everything we can to make it a reality."

Community Board 7, the advisory panel where Webster Green is located, has had several meetings with The Doe Fund, frustrated over the nonprofit's decision to build on Webster Avenue. Horwitz said that "big changes natu-



File Photo/Jenny Sharp

**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SITES** such as an impending project to use the site at 3100 Webster Ave. (pictured) pits community leaders against developers backing the project.

rally cause apprehension" and that the community concerns are understandable.

Horwitz pointed to the pros of such a development, citing a 2008 study by NYU's Furman Center that concluded that supportive housing can actually raise property values in an area. "It's a big win for everyone," he said. "The people who will live there finally have access to the affordable, comfortable, safe housing and services they need, and the rest of the community is uplifted along the way."

Scot Hirschfield, vice president of Ariel Property Advisors, a real estate firm that tracks trends and transactions, said it's a "tricky question" to determine whether Webster Avenue could have seen a development site that reflects the overall makeup of the area.

"What's most important," said Hirschfield, "is that the land is being developed and that it's making a positive impact on the community."

Hirschfield noted that there's no upward trend in supportive housing projects in the borough as of late, though rezoning has increased buildable square footage in several locations and attracted developers due to "more funding available for larger development sites."

Jean Hill, CB7's chair on Housing and Land Use, expressed concerns that an increase in supportive housing

developments is not what the Board wants. Her opposition has amplified following major rezoning in 2009 on Webster Avenue that would welcome more residential and commercial properties. Since then, a mix of supportive housing sites were proposed, beginning with Concerned for Independent Living.

"That's not why the area was rezoned," said Hill. "We want to be able to support our small businesses in that area and help them increase and we'd like to see some more commercial businesses come in."

Much of the opposition is not born of a fear that the site will negatively affect the neighborhood, but that it is a misuse of what Hill called "a prime location."

But Cynthia Stuart, chief operating officer of the Supportive Housing Network of New York, said that there's always concern about supportive housing before it's built, but "once it happens, the community is delighted that it is there."

In a recent statement of community district needs submitted by CB7 to the city, the Board cited that "the Bronx has taken on more city financed supportive housing in the past decade than any other borough" and explained that there is "a prevailing feeling in [CB7] we have received a disproportionate share of this housing stock."

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### OBITUARY

Celina Colon, a native of Aibonito, Puerto Rico who resided in Bedford Park, died on Monday, Feb. 9. She was a devoted mother to Camilo and Mayra Estevez and beloved grandmother to Giovanni Estevez and Leilani Suarez. She will be remembered for her acts of kindness, strength of character, courage in the face of adversity and her devotion to God. We love you, Mommy.



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## Women's Networking Powwow



Photo courtesy George Acevedo

**A NETWORKING BY** Latina 50 Plus, a women's empowerment group that recognizes efforts by women 50 years and over, drew several dozen guests to the March 7 get-together in celebration of Women's Month. Sharing a picture moment were (l-r) author Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa, dancer and musician Yvette Martinez, Latina 50 Plus Founder Maria Aponte, Mosholu Preservation Corporation Deputy Director Marcia Cameron, president of the New York Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses Professor Maria Elena Pina-Fonti, and community activist Anita Antonetty.

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Get Your Groove On

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Latin Jazz Concert** featuring Ray Martinez music, March 21; and **Celia Cruz Bronx H.S. of Music**, featuring Chamber Orchestra and Saxophone Quartet in Concert, March 28; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

## Onstage

• The Riverdale YM-YWHA, 5625 Arlington Ave. (off Riverdale Avenue and 256th Street), presents **A Little Night Music**, March 29, featuring orchestra, all-star Broadway cast, and members of the Y's resident theatre companies. For more information and details on time and admission, call (800) 838-3006 and select option 1.

• Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **Broadway Moves to the Bronx**, featuring Broadway hits, March 21 at 3 p.m. (tickets from \$15 to \$25; \$10/12 and under; \$100 p/p includes pre-concert reception, preferred VIP seating, and a meet/greet with the artists). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

• The Pregones Theatre, 571-575 Walton Ave. (between 149th and 150th streets), presents the **Papo Vazquez Quartet**, March 21 at 8 p.m.; (tickets are \$24/advance; \$40/door; meet artist free March 20 at 1:30 p.m.); **singer Chucho Avellanet**, March 28 at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$40/advance; \$60/door); and free piano concert by **Luis Perdomo**, March 22 at 3 p.m. For more information and to reserve, call (718) 585-1202 or visit [www.pregonesprtt.org](http://www.pregonesprtt.org).

## Events

• The Bronx County Historical Society presents free lecture, **A Look at Early Bronx Women**, March 21 at 1 p.m. at the Bronx County Archives Building, 3313 Bainbridge Ave. Learn about women who settled here in the 17th and 18th centuries with their families. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

• The Williamsbridge Oval offers free activities including **Tiny Prints** (ages 5 and younger) featuring play, yoga and art; **Shape Up Family Fitness**, featuring aerobics; and **Family Fun Night**, featuring use of game room and arts and crafts. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 543-8672.

• The Fordham Road BID presents a

**sidewalk sale** with a St. Patrick's Day Theme, March 19 to 21 from noon to 7 p.m., on Fordham Road between Washington and Jerome avenues. For more information, call (718) 562-2104.

• Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Arts Projects**: Oh My! Orchid Prints, to make orchid-inspired prints, March 21 and 22; and Camouflage Theatres, to create a nature stage as a secret hideaway for animal of your choice, March 28 and 29; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

• The public is invited to ride the free **Bronx Culture Trolley**, which transports visitors on the first Wednesday of every month (except January and September), to free Bronx hot spots. Trolley night starts with a 5 p.m. reception at the Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse (at 149th St.). From there, the trolley departs at 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. Next ride is on April 1. Riders can get on and off at any scheduled stop and spend as much time as they wish at any or all of the featured venues. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 33 or log on to [www.bronxarts.org](http://www.bronxarts.org).

## Library Events

• The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.**: (ages 3 to 5 years); and **Toddler Play Time at noon**: (ages 18 to 36 months); both on March 19 and 26; **Caterpillar Bookmark Making**: (ages 7 to 12), hands-on project, March 19 at 4 p.m.; **Bubbles Kids Show**: featuring female clown, face painting, games, singing and dancing, March 21 at 2 p.m.; and **films**: March 22 and 29 at 3:30 p.m. For teens/young adults, there is **film**: March 20 at 5 p.m.; and **SAT Math**: to learn new strategies, March 25 at 3:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy **Jewelry Club**: Bring your own materials to create original jewelry, April 2 at 11 a.m. For more

information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

• The Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Toddler Story Time at 10:30 a.m.**: (ages 18 to 36 months), stories, songs, and rhymes, March 19 and 26; **Reading Aloud Story Time at 4 p.m.**: (ages 4 to 6), March 23 and 30; and **Winter With Bilingual Birdies: Spanish at 11 a.m.**: (ages from birth to 12 years), live music, dance parties, and theatre-based games (instruments are provided), March 24 and 31. For teens/young adults, there is **film**: "Dracula Untold," March 28 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy **Jewelry Club at 11 a.m.**: bring your own materials to create original jewelry, March 19, 26 and April 2; and **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718)

882-8239.

• The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Natural History of Owls**: (phone or in-person registration required; ages 18 months to 12 years), see live owls, March 20 at 3 p.m.; and **Maker Kids**: (ages 5 to 12), create your own craft with provided materials, March 25 at 4 p.m. For adults, there is **Computer Basics at noon**: learn about computers, March 19 and 26. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by March 30 for the next publication date of April 2.

## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### Free Mammograms

The American Italian Cancer Foundation and SSC Community Development Corp. will host a free mammogram and clinical breast exam in its mobile clinic on April 4 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 2930 Valentine Ave. NYC female residents over age 40 who have not had a mammogram in the past 12 months are eligible and must schedule an appointment by calling (877) 628-9090.

### Suit and Tie Drive

Donate gently used suits at nearby Ridgewood Savings Bank branches through March 25 to support low-income men and women finding work. To schedule a pickup, call (917) 488-9568.

### Pre-K Applications

The New York City Early Education Centers are accepting applications for pre-Kindergarten for the 2015-2016 school year. To apply, go online at [nyc.gov/prek](http://nyc.gov/prek), call (718) 935-2067 or visit a Family Welcome Center.

### Veteran Health Fair

The Bedford Park Seventh Day Adventist Church and James J. Peters Veterans Hospital will host a free health fair for U.S. military veterans in need on April 4 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 3008 Bainbridge Ave. (at 201st Street). Hot lunch will be served. Free transportation buses will be provided to veterans. For more information call (646) 296-9256.

### SYEP Applications

NYC's Department of Youth and Community Development is accepting applications for the 2015 Summer Youth Employment Program through April 10. SYEP is available for young people ages 14 to 24 with up to six weeks of entry-level experience at worksites in the city. Participants are selected by lottery for the program, which runs from July 6 through Aug. 15 and are compensated for their work. Work-sites interested in providing jobs have until May 16 to apply. For more information, call 311 or DYCD Youth Connect at (800) 246-4646.



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# Crime Spike in 52nd Precinct Borders

(continued from page 1)

ing to seasons, though the timing of this year's robberies seemed like an anomaly.

"Usually your robberies go down in the winter because it's cold weather," said Keith Singer, a professor at Monroe College's School of Criminal Justice and a retired NYPD commanding officer lieutenant. "If it's five degrees or 10 degrees out, who wants to commit a robbery? That's what's so baffling to me about the robberies."

The Five-Two's coverage is somewhat dichotomous. The precinct covers Fordham and Kingsbridge, two neighborhoods where violent crime is the norm. For now, Fordham is grappling with a swell of turf wars, which claimed the life of an 18-year-old on March 13. Three people were arrested.

Inspector Nilda Hofmann, commanding officer of the 52nd Precinct, has appeared at several community forums to address concerns. She's a regular at the Community Council meetings and the Bedford Moshulu Community Association, where she explained that Borough Command has deployed extra troops to combat crime.

At the latest Community Board 7 meeting on March 17, residents heard from her second-in-command, Lt. John Korabol, who focused on CompStat's monthly figures for the 52nd Precinct. Korabol told guests that crime went up 13 percent throughout the past four weeks.

"Any increase in crime is not good," Korabol told an audience, adding that grand larceny cases have been the most problematic. That includes identity theft cases.

The NYPD turned down a request for the *Norwood News* to interview Hofmann over the recent crime trend, leaving some questions unanswered.

## Interpreting the Numbers

Evaluating crime numbers cannot be assessed at face value. Oftentimes it requires a further analysis, particularly when reviewing percentage figures, which are either downplayed or greatly emphasized by the NYPD. Singer of Monroe College notes that one major category, such as felony assaults, can "really, really screw up the numbers." "You could be down in murder, you could be down in rape, you

could be a little bit up in robbery, you could be way up in felony assaults, be a little down in burglary, be down in grand larceny and possibly, depending on how those felony assaults are, you could be up in crime overall," said Singer.

A look at the NYPD Digital Crime Map, a tool born out of a long-term investigation by the *Norwood News*, shows that the 52nd Precinct currently places fourth in crime with the ratio between crime and population being two for every 1000 people.

## Praising the Five-Two

Up Marion Avenue, longtime resident Lily Rodriguez has noticed crime go up and down in the 20 years she's lived in Bedford Park. She complained, however, that the NYPD response time drags, a nagging symptom of depleted city funds to hire more police officers.

Another neighbor who went by "Ms. John" has noticed crime drop significantly over the years since moving to the neighborhood in 1981. "There were a lot of stickups because at one point you had the heroin addicts," said Ms. John, who routinely sees patrol cars

cruising around the neighborhood.

Indeed, crime has decreased relative to 1993, when the neighborhoods saw 72 percent more crimes reported the same time that year, translating to 248 more crimes in the Five-Two.

Sam Ali, a 24-hour bodega owner at the corner of Marion Avenue and 194th Street edging towards Fordham, has been around the block for years. Police have not forgotten the neighborhood, Ali admits, though street fights, stickups and gunfights can happen at any given moment. Ali commended police, but knew their presence can be limiting. "Cops are doing their job, don't get me wrong. But cops are not gonna be here 24/7," he said.

The NYPD routinely offers tips to prevent one from being the victim of a robbery. Officers recommend purses be kept tightly around one's person, never carry a wallet in their back pocket and keep headphones (usually a sign one has a smartphone) out of sight.

**Editor's Note:** The next 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting will be held March 26 at Fordham United Methodist Church, 2543 Marion Ave., from 7 to 9 p.m.

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