PRESIDENT OBAMA COMES TO THE BRONX

Visits Lehman College to push new nonprofit for young minority men

BY DAVID CRUZ

Back in April, residents on a portion of Valentine Avenue were reeling over the death of 17-year-old Hakeem Kuta, who plunged to his death after fleeing cops who allegedly caught him smoking pot in a building. Neighbors in the Bedford Park area had asked how a small-time crime could escalate to a death.

A month before, 18-year-old Jonathan Martinez was gunned down in the same neighborhood. Police determined it was a gang-related shooting. Three people, including a 16-year-old Hispanic boy, would be charged with second degree murder.

These two victims were young minority men, whose deaths underscored the timeliness to President Barack Obama’s first-ever visit to the Bronx on May 4. It would likely be his only visit as a sitting U.S. President, with Lehman College serving as the stage to promote My Brother’s Keeper Alliance, a nonprofit initiative aimed at setting minority men on (continued on page 10)
IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Developing a New Roadmap to Upgrade Mosholu Parkway

By DAVID CRUZ

They’re going back to the drawing board.

A 2007 blueprint to rehab Mosholu Parkway has been tossed out, and community members have offered new input on some of the priorities needed to fix the parkway.

At a forum on April 29, community residents broke up into teams of nine to pinpoint pockets of improvement for Mosholu Parkway, a freeway that cuts through the Bedford Park/Norwood community and towards the Saw Mill River Parkway. Pages of ideas are currently being sorted out and vetted by the offices of councilmen Andrew Cohen and Ritchie Torres to determine its feasibility.

“The idea is to get some real grassroots, on-the-ground feedback about what we think we would like to see,” said Cohen, who opened the workshop with his comments. “Some of them are going to be possible. Some of them are not going to be possible.”

Handed a printout that showed a portion of Mosholu Parkway, residents studied the map and jotted down some ideas, with Elizabeth Quaranta, president of the Friends of Mosholu Parkway, offering guidance. At one table, Betty Diana Arce a community resident, assessed that crosswalks were needed along the parkway. As it stands, pedestrians often take a chance of getting hit by a car while crossing the middle of the roadway.

“We need a crosswalk,” said Arce, pointing to a section between Bainbridge Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park East, which measures a third of a mile. “Look at that span. People have created their own crosswalk.”

“It’s such a long distance between the next available space to cross,” said JR Castaner, a nearby resident who joined Arce. “People dart across the parkway also.”

At another table, Jay Shuffield, a community resident, sat at the same roundtable as Aaron Bouska, vice president for Government and Community Relations for the New York City Botanical Garden, proposing changes that include a reduction of extra lanes to widen the center medians, upgrading stormwater drainage, and improving the greenway’s bike paths. Shuffield suggested that some issues can be immediately fixed with assistance from the city Department of Transportation, which utilizes its rapid response toolkit. “[The DOT] already did a nice job of proposals that will also be screened,” she said.

A spokeswoman for Cohen’s office also offered remarks.

The original 2007 plan, championed by the Four Bronx Institution Alliance, put a focus on the parkway’s primary three-lane roadway on the north and southbound sides, starting at an exit by Bronx River Parkway, cutting through the Bedford Park neighborhood, and towards the entrance to the Saw Mill River Parkway.

A spokesperson for Cohen’s office said another meeting will be scheduled following the office’s assessment of proposals that will also be screened by various city agencies that include Transportation, Design & Construction, and Parks departments.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on May 19 at Montefiore Medical Center’s Cherkasky Auditorium, 111 E. 210th St. CB7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Traffic & Transportation meets May 14; Housing/Land Use & Zoning Committee meets May 20; Education/Libraries & Youth Services meets May 21; Economic Development meets May 26; Community Relations/LTP meets May 26 at 7:30 p.m.; Parks & Recreation meets May 27. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will host a K2 Forum at North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kossuth Ave., 17th floor, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.
BIG SAVINGS

THROUGHOUT THE JEROME-GUN HILL AREA!

COME SHOP & SAVE BIG ALL YEAR ROUND

Over 200 Stores on Jerome Avenue from Mosholu Pky. to Gun Hill Road and on Gun Hill Road to Webster Avenue

Discover the Stores, Quality Service and Savings at the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District.

Where Good Neighbors Deserve Great Shopping!

All in a Safe, Clean & Friendly Environment

Call the BID Hotline at 718-324-4946 for more information or visit us at www.jeromегunhillbid.org
Lawmakers Demand Wakefield Shelter Shut Down After Killing of Its Director

By DAVID CRUZ

Elected officials and community stakeholders are calling for the closure of a Wakefield homeless shelter that once housed a client now charged in the shooting of its director.

That victim, Ana Charle, was shot to death April 27, as she ran naked from her attacker, West Spruill. The shooting has become a flashpoint over the safety of the shelter in a community that’s seeing a number of shelters coming down the pipe.

At an April 30 news conference fraught with several moments of anger and disruption, elected officials painted a picture of lack of security at the shelter at 4380 Bronx Blvd. It was set against the backdrop of the shelter, with a line of supporters for homeless shelters standing in solidarity.

Charle, a Spain native who lived in Queens, worked at the site managed by Project Renewal, a nonprofit shelter provider contracted by the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS). She was known for having built rapport with clients, all homeless men with a majority of them suffering from mental illness.

Over the course of the last year, hundreds of 911 calls have been made from the shelter. It created a level of vulnerability for shelter employees that went ultimately unresolved, according to officials.

“Just having beds is not going to do the job,” said Councilman Andrew Cohen, who represents the Wakefield area. “Unless these service providers insist on contracts that are real, that are tenable, that are viable, that include wraparound support services, it’s not a tenable model.”

Spruill is an ex-con with mental illness, having recently lived at the site, according to officials. Police say Spruill, carrying a .40 Smith & Wesson, stalked Charle as she was leaving her job on April 27, luring her to her vehicle. He demanded she undress, and tied her hands. It was unclear if she was raped. Charle eventually escaped, her naked body running through the streets as Spruill chased her down. He caught up with her at 4366 Bullard Ave., shooting her in the face. She was rushed to Montefiore Medical Center and later pronounced dead.

Spruill, who was also naked, was quickly apprehended and charged with 2nd degree murder, manslaughter, and weapons possession.

The shelter has been open since early 2014 despite objections from community leaders not to open it from the start.

“One of their anger was pointed at the Wakefield section becoming a hub for more men’s only homeless shelters. At the news conference, Fr. Richard Gorman, the chairman of local Community Board 12, said that the neighborhood has seen its fair share of shelters when compared to other portions of the city.

“The latest is the Mueller Center, a men’s only shelter that will contain 200 beds. It’s being housed in an old military center on Nereid Avenue, just at the border of Bronx/Westchester County. The abundance of shelters in the area is one reason why Dinowitz recommended the city “put a moratorium” on the Mueller Center.

But the Coalition for the Homeless, an advocacy group for homeless shelter providers, said closing the shelter is the “wrong response to this tragedy.” “Rather than taking the easy way out, we need our elected officials to contribute to real solutions,” said Mary Brosnahan, the president and CEO of Coalition for the Homeless.

“Supportive housing – which is proven to help those with mental illness get the help they need to stay off the streets.”

Project Renewal expressed its condolences through a spokesman, adding that “Ana was a dedicated, wonderful, and loving person.”

As for the somewhat lax security, Project Renewal said through a statement that it “did request that DHS provide additional security at the site and they did that and have since added even more security to the site.”

DHS did not return emails.

Additional reporting by Janaki Chadha.
By JANAKI CHADHA

Community advocacy for the building of a pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway to connect the two sides of Van Cortlandt Park has gone on for over a decade. On May 8, community leaders and representatives announced $12 million has been allocated for the proposed bridge, thanks to collective efforts from community, city, and state officials.

“It’s a dream come true,” said Christina Taylor, executive director for the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, one of many activists who worked towards seeing funding for the project through over the years.

“This park, as you all know, is truly a gem of the Bronx and this pedestrian bridge project will ensure that even more visitors have access to it,” said Mitchell Silver, Commissioner of the city Department of Parks.

The bridge will be built just near exit 13 the Major Deegan Expressway North, which dissects the park. The New York City Department of Design and Construction will spearhead the project, which will also see the formation of a pathway connecting the east and west sides of Van Cortlandt Park.

The bridge is expected to be completed in 2019. Funding for the project came largely from the city, with state Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and state Senator Jeff Klein footing the rest. Though this project was part of the original Van Cortlandt Park master plan, lack of funding had essentially delayed it. Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose entire district covers Van Cortlandt Park, was credited for prioritizing the reality of the bridge.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. spoke about the importance of community activism in initiatives like this. “We have good leadership, leadership that listens,” he said. “Maybe it doesn’t happen at the exact time you want it to, but for those of you who have been activists, for those of you who are community leaders, for those of you who have been speaking your minds, continue to do so.”

Many have wondered why solidifying this project had taken so long. Diaz said this may not have happened had the current community, city and state representatives, namely Cohen, Heastie or Klein not been elected.

The timing of the project came just as officials with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, which is using some funds to cover the cost of the bridge, quietly activated the long delayed Croton Water Filtration Plant, built underneath a portion of the park. Roughly 100 million gallons of water will flow through the plant daily, and to New York City homes. The bridge proposal was tied to a 2008 mitigation project linked to the building of the plant. DEP would ultimately conduct a feasibility study of the project.

Construction for the plant began in 2005. It was supposed to be completed in 2011 under a federal order, but was marred by the enormity of the project, which ultimately went $3 billion over budget.

“I would not gloat over a project built four times over budget,” said Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, a staunch critic of the plant. “It’s not something to be proud of.”

Want Stronger Hair?
Take the Bonita 90-day Challenge!

James M. Crump

Promotes healthy hair
Advanced skin formula
Supports healthy nails

Bonita Hair Skin & Nails $24.99
Save $10! Buy 2 for 19.99 each!

Forever Young
Your Neighborhood Health Food Store
2391 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10468
718-367-8161
ForeverYoungHealthFood.com
Organic Herbs | Quality Vitamins | Weight Loss Products
The New York City Police Department is asking for the public’s assistance with identifying a suspect wanted for a reckless endangerment offense within the 52nd Precinct. The alleged offense happened on May 7, 2015 at about 8 p.m., in front of 2734 Bainbridge Ave. near 196th Street in Bedford Park. Two men reportedly fired guns at that location, although no one was injured during the incident.

One of the suspects has been apprehended. The other is described as a black man, wearing red clothing. Anyone with information about this incident or the identity of the primary suspect is asked to call the NYPD’s Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS. The public can also submit their tips by logging on to the Crime Stoppers Website at www.nypdcrimestoppers.com texting their tips to 274637 (CRIMES), then entering TIP577.

For the week of April 27 through May 3, 2015, the 52nd Precinct saw a large overall reduction in the number of shootings, burglaries, and grand larcenies, compared to the same week last year, but modest increases in felonious assaults and petit larcenies. Reckless endangerment is not included within the major crime categories tracked by CompStat.

--Vivian R. Carter
By DAVID CRUZ

Across 24-hour bodegas in Norwood/Bedford Park, buying synthetic marijuana requires little to no screening. Its legality is caught in murky technicalities, and virtually no enforcement, leaving prosecutors little room to try a synthetic marijuana case.

Emergency room visits across the city have spiked because of synthetic marijuana, known by many nicknames—spice, AK-47, Scooby Doo and more commonly, K2.

It’s unrelenting usage, particularly among younger Bronxites, has driven Community Board 7 to host a K2 forum scheduled for May 26, with members convening a panel of experts on the 17th floor of North Central Bronx Hospital.

“A lot of the Board had no clue what it is, we had no idea,” said Adaline Walker-Santiago, the chairwoman of Community Board 7. “If you have kids, you’ll get worried.” Walker-Santiago organized the panel, with law enforcement officials from the 520th Precinct and Bronx District Attorney’s Office expected to be on hand.

Although state law has outlawed K2, the drug remains on the streets. Its ingredients are inconsistent, but its side effects pack a punch, with substances such as rat poison often mixed into the drug.

“The hallucinogenic component of the drug is what sends them to another land,” said Dr. Ernest Patti, the head emergency room doctor for St. Barnabas Hospital and the forum’s keynote speaker. “They say they want to jump off buildings, they say they want to do crazy things like cross Fordham Road in the middle of traffic.”

Patti routinely treats patients who’ve consumed K2. They often arrive at the ER, aggressive, paranoid and nearly uncontrollable. Other symptoms linked to K2 use include nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure, tremors, and seizures.

Its substance has crept up to Bedford Park’s bodegas, where colorful K2 packets can be spotted over the counter at stores along 198th Street. Though the packets suggest that the substance is not for human consumption, and at times incense or potpourri, experts suggest that it’s simply a ploy to avoid a fine.

Prosecuting Cases

But finding a legal basis to prosecute defendants has proven difficult, given some loopholes the Bronx District Attorney’s Office runs into.

The DA’s Office, known to turn away marijuana use cases, admits its hands are tied when prosecuting synthetic drug use cases given the lack of legal standard linked to its use.

“[W]e have not yet initiated [a case] because of the difficulty in getting the proof that’s needed to sustain a prosecution under current laws,” said Terry Raskin, spokeswoman for the Bronx DA.

The loophole exploited comes down to the availability of technology needed to quickly analyze the chemical makeup of synthetic drugs. Certain chemicals, for instance, contain rat poison, a legal chemical that’s purchased over the counter and yet included in the cocktail of K2. That kind of testing is unavailable, giving K2 manufacturers, and users, the upper hand.

“Producers of K2 are constantly changing the composition of the drug, based not only upon availability of substances, but also to keep one step ahead of the law,” said Raskin.
Across 24-hour bodegas in Norwood/Bedford Park, buying synthetic marijuana requires little to no screening. Its legality is caught in murky technicalities, and virtually no enforcement, leaving prosecutors little room to try a synthetic marijuana case.

Emergency room visits across the city have spiked because of synthetic marijuana, known by many nicknames—spice, AK-47, Scooby Doo and more commonly, K2.

It’s unrelenting usage, particularly among younger Bronxites, has driven Community Board 7 to host a K2 forum scheduled for May 26, with members convening a panel of experts on the 17th floor of North Central Bronx Hospital.

“A lot of the Board had no clue what it is, we had no idea,” said Adaline Walker-Santiago, the chairwoman of Community Board 7. “If you have kids, you’ll get worried.” Walker-Santiago organized the panel, with law enforcement officials from the 520nd Precinct and Bronx District Attorney’s Office expected to be on hand.

Although state law has outlawed K2, the drug remains on the streets. Its ingredients are inconsistent, but its side effects pack a punch, with substances such as rat poison often mixed into the drug.

“The hallucinogenic component of the drug is what sends them to another land,” said Dr. Ernest Patti, the head emergency room doctor for St. Barnabas Hospital and the forum’s keynote speaker. “They say they want to jump off buildings, they say they want to do crazy things like cross Fordham Road in the middle of traffic.”

Patti routinely treats patients who’ve consumed K2. They often arrive at the ER, aggressive, paranoid and nearly uncontrollable. Other symptoms linked to K2 use include nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure, tremors, and seizures.

Its substance has crept up to Bedford Park’s bodegas, where colorful K2 packets can be spotted over the counter at stores along 198th Street. Though the packets suggest that the substance is not for human consumption, and at times incense or potpourri, experts suggest that it’s simply a ploy to avoid a fine.

Prosecuting Cases
But finding a legal basis to prosecute defendants has proven difficult, given some loopholes the Bronx District Attorney’s Office runs into.

The DA’s Office, known to turn away marijuana use cases, admits its hands are tied when prosecuting synthetic drug use cases given the lack of legal standard linked to its use.

 “[W]e have not yet initiated [a case] because of the difficulty in getting the proof that’s needed to sustain a prosecution under current laws,” said Terry Raskin, spokeswoman for the Bronx DA.

The loophole exploited comes down to the availability of technology needed to quickly analyze the chemical makeup of synthetic drugs. Certain chemicals, for instance, contain rat poison, a legal chemical that’s purchased over the counter and yet included in the cocktail of K2. That kind of testing is unavailable, giving K2 manufacturers, and users, the upper hand.

“Producers of K2 are constantly changing the composition of the drug, based not only upon availability of substances, but also to keep one step ahead of the law,” said Raskin.
THE FIRST K2 FORUM GIVEN FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS

Sponsored by
Community Board 7
Health & Hospitals
Education and Public Safety Committees

GROUND BREAKING COMMUNITY FORUM

Tuesday May 26th, 2015
North Central Bronx Hospital
17th Floor—Cafeteria
3424 Kossuth Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467

6:00pm - 8:30pm

K2 "Synthetic Marijuana"

PRESTIGIOUS K2 PANELISTS

Dr. Ernest Patti · Chairman of Emergency Room Medicine · St. Barnabas Hospital
NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene · NYC Sheriff’s Department
District Attorney’s Office · Bureau of Narcotics
Inspector Hofmann · NYPD 52nd Precinct

RSVP (718) 933–5650 · By Tuesday, May 19, 2015 · Limited Seating
a path to success. Its initiatives’ relevance to the Bronx is certainly tangible, given the borough’s low high school graduation rate among black and Hispanic men, and an incarceration rate among blacks that is six times that of whites, according to the Pew Research Institute.

MBKA is an offshoot of a White House’s initiative of the same name, which began in February 2014. Joseph Echevarria, a Soundview native, was appointed interim CEO of the nonprofit. Tethering the Bronx to the White House was Elias Alcantra, a Bronx native, Lehman College grad and director of intergovernmental relations for the White House, who helped make the visit happen.

For a half hour, Mr. Obama touted the nonprofit’s national goal, which would be funded through private donations. “In every community in America, there are young people with incredible drive and talent, and they just don’t have the same kinds of chances that somebody like me had,” said Mr. Obama, delivering remarks at the campus’s music building. “They’re just as talented, just as smart. They don’t get a chance.”

The White House version of MBKA served as a national mentoring program for black and Hispanic men, bringing in donations totaling $300 million. A total of $80 million has been committed to sustain the newly created program, largely from corporate sponsors, including PepsiCo and Sprint. Advisory board members include retired NBA player Alonzo Mourning and singer/songwriter John Legend.

The initiative was well received by local officials, several of whom were present at the event. Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., a legislator with a Puerto Rican background, was among the guests present for Mr. Obama’s speech, sitting near Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Rev. Al Sharpton. Diaz chatted with Mr. Obama moments after the speech.

“I know firsthand the struggles young men of color face in this nation, and I know how challenging it can be to both lead one’s own life on the right path while also guiding others in that same direction,” said Diaz in a statement. “This initiative, which will combine public and private resources for the greater good, is welcome not only in the Bronx but across the United States.”

The tone taken by Mr. Obama appeared more acutely personal, evoking a bold stance on the personal struggles of minority men plunging into a hole of disparity, which he argued could start at birth. The first black U.S. President, Mr. Obama has waged a campaign to level the playing field for minority men, who often feel left out. “That sense of unfairness and of powerlessness of people not hearing their voices, that’s helped fuel some of the protests that we’ve seen in places like Baltimore and Ferguson and right here in New York,” said Mr. Obama.

Mr. Obama’s participation seemed
to offer a glimpse into his future. In his speech, he noted that he plans on being fully committed to MBKA once he leaves office. Until then, he will have no role in the Alliance nor how donations are screened, a measure that avoids any conflicts of interest.

Presidential visits to the Bronx are rare. Indeed, the last Bronx visit by a sitting U.S. President happened on Oct. 30, 2001, after then President George W. Bush threw the first pitch in Yankee Stadium during Game 3 of the World Series. It was a rare visit by a U.S. President, whose attentions are often focused on states where party loyalty can be skittish. Unlike Mr. Bush’s visit, which served as a symbol to America’s vitality following the 9/11 attacks, Mr. Obama’s visit underscored a racial discrepancy that’s experienced throughout communities in the Bronx.

Mr. Obama’s appearance in the Bronx was confined to Lehman College, sidestepping visits across the borough that’s home to the 15th Congressional District, deemed the country’s most impoverished. The White House did not respond to emails requesting why Mr. Obama did not extend his visit beyond Lehman College.

Still, the President and MBKA Board members met with several Lehman College students at a closed-door meeting. There, a type of straight talk took shape, with members sitting at a round table to espouse the benefits of succeeding. “You matter,” Mr. Obama told the crowd of young men, including members from Lehman College’s Urban Male Leadership program, which offers support programming to minority students to help balance their lives. Daniel Rodriguez, 19, a Lehman College student and member of the group, told the Norwood News that the pathway to success is education, a tactic Mr. Obama has constantly promoted.

“You can’t get very far without education, without at least a bachelor’s nowadays, and pretty soon you’re not going to get anywhere without a Master’s,” said Rodriguez, who lives in Marble Hill Houses, a housing project.

A mile from the school, a group of black teens huddled at a street corner on 197th Street and Valentine Avenue, a low-income section of Bedford Park. Some heard of Mr. Obama’s trip from the clamor of Marine One landing at Harris Field near Lehman College. Upon hearing Mr. Obama’s message on MBKA, one 19-year-old black man, who asked not to be identified, simply said, “Nobody is aspiring in this place right now.”

**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER**

With President Barack Obama’s recent visit to the Bronx, we asked readers what issues they would raise with the President if they had one minute with him.

**Editor’s Note:** Have an idea for an Inquiring Photographer question? Send suggestions to dcruz@norwoodnews.org.

---

**Shirley Lalande**

I would ask the President where are all the federal dollars that are earmarked to fix the streets, the potholes and the cracks on the sidewalks. I would ask him about the MTA. The train stations are falling apart, they’re dirty and they smell and they keep raising the fare.

**Robert Cruz**

I would ask the President where does the path—

**Stephanie Ramnauth**

The crime rate in the Bronx because there’s a lot of schools around here. Since he’s here in the Bronx, I would think he should pay a little attention to the little details that are going on around here.

**Carol Teig**

Yes, crime is a problem here and he should be aware of it. There’s too much crime here. Every day on the news you hear something else. I don’t go out at night. If I go out at night, it’s to Lehman College, maybe with a friend. But without a friend I won’t go because of the crime. Crime keeps me home, I don’t go out much anymore.

**Daniel Rodriguez**

I would say President Barack Obama: How are you handling the senior citizens of New York City? What can you do to help a senior citizen find a job? It is very hard for senior citizen that’s been retired and been out of work for more than two years to find a job that someone will give you a chance. I was a professional for 36 years. I worked in collections of major accounts that if you don’t pay your bills, I was there to help you. So it was a simple job, but it’s been very hard for me personally to find a job as a senior citizen. Social Security doesn’t make it. You have to have more than Social Security and your pension and your 401(k).

**Lincoln Lewis**

Well, one issue that I would raise is the child support system that has caused a lot of people to be in a really precarious position, because if you have outstanding child support it oppresses you. You can’t make any moves, you lose your license, and you can’t work. It’s something that hinders you from progressing. That’s one thing that I would really like someone to address. That is one personal issue that should be addressed by someone.

---

**By DAVID GREENE**
THE BRONX BELTWAY

By DAVID CRUZ

Mr. Obama’s Visit to the Bronx

President Barack Obama’s first visit to the Bronx was short and sweet, though attendance to see the Commander-in-Chief in person was somewhat of an exclusive affair, and away from the community at large.

The Norwood News was granted access to hear the President’s half hour address on a new nonprofit for young minority men (see front page story).

POTUS gave the proper shout outs to local elected officials, including Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Assemblyman Carl Heastie and Councilman Andrew Cohen, boasting over the President’s remark that he’s doing a “great job.” But perhaps the President’s biggest nod, and one for the Bronx (so far), went to former White House aide turned Assemblyman Michael Blake, who was introduced ahead of everyone else.

“You gotta stand up, Mike,” said the President, as Blake slowly rose from his seat. “We’re still trying to teach him about politics.”

There were rumblings within the Bronx community, who thought Obama’s visit could’ve been better publicized. Though the sounds of Marine One chopper can be heard by anyone within earshot of Lehman College, there was not much of a mention to this rare visit by a sitting U.S. President. Perhaps a lameduck Commander-in-Chief can skip a tour of the country’s poorest congressional district. It would have been good to see him among the masses. The White House didn’t return calls for comment.

Kudos to the Bronx, which now has seen three heads of state stop by the borough in 2015 (from the United States, Albania, and Israel). Bravo.

Rivera at BMCA

As promised, a dapper Assemblyman Jose Rivera (usually dressed down in the Bronx; he was in Albany), stopped by the Bedford Mosholu Community Association for his long-awaited talk with the community.

Among some assurances Rivera made: a sit down with the Bronx Assembly Delegation over how to secure state funding for the revitalization of Mosholu Parkway, now in the period of brainstorming. BMCA will likely hold him accountable for that task. They’ve done so with his attendance.

During his 10-minute remarks, Rivera tried passing the buck on future appearances to Kenny Agosto, District Leader for the 78th Assembly District, who will arrive in his stead. But BMCA brass didn’t buy that, pressing Rivera to personally stop by the group’s monthly meetings. “I wish I went back in the New York City Council when we only met once a month,” said Rivera.

Golden Age of Politics?

The Bronx Beltway mused whether we’ve settled in a Golden Age of Bronx politics. It’s been evident in Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.’s outlook, thanks to some political juice in Albany.

In recent comments, Diaz pegged the Bronx’s new Albany influence on Speaker Carl Heastie and Independent Democratic Conference leader and state Senator Jeff Klein, who doled out a combined $4 million needed for the long-awaited pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway in Van Cortlandt Park.

“We no longer beg, now we are where in the political situation in the Bronx where we ask,” said Diaz Jr., suggesting this project wouldn’t have advanced quickly without them. “What we asked, they gave us everything.”

Diaz Jr.’s take on Heastie certainly runs counter to an intriguing piece in City & State that chronicled Heastie’s rise in politics through some behind-the-curtain workings of the Bronx Democratic County Committee. One operative refuted the piece, calling it an article instead of report. “A report states facts.”

And the Numbers Are In...

Councilman Ritchie Torres’ exercise in handing over a fraction of his constitutes’ budgetary power to his constituents, commonly known as Participatory Budgeting, ended with five projects listing what $1 million in capital funds would be allocated towards. The less costly, $80,000 for security cameras in public, garnered the most votes, 1,352. Runner-ups included $450,000 for Bronx park improvements, grabbing 1,323 votes, NYPD security cameras, netting $315,000 and 1,288 votes, air conditioning for public schools, earmarked for $145,000 and 1,236 votes, and bus countdown clocks, costing $80,000 and earning 935 votes.

Councilman Andrew Cohen also tallied his PB numbers:

$200,000 for renovating MS/HS 141
$120,000 for bus countdown clocks
$70,000 for technology expansion at PS 24
$400,000 for Spuyten Duyvil Playground
$300,000 for Van Cortlandt Library

Sadly, there were not enough PB votes for Norwood or Bedford Park projects, but Cohen threw $450,000 towards auditorium repairs at PS 8 in Norwood and $350,000 for Mosholu Library’s Window Replacement. Capital funds tend to be earmarked for projects that can see shovels in the group by 2019. Hopefully that’s not the case.

DEP’s Slap in the Face

One would think that the city’s near completion of its largest project would come with cartwheels, balloons and plenty of political speaking. But the Croton Water Filtration Plant, which finally went online May 7 after years of delay, was given nothing more than a press release sneaked in by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

The plant, which cleans up to 290 gallons of drinking water daily, has been tied with an avalanche of outrage since the start of its construction, which went $3 billion over budget. Nice timing that the press release by the DEP was released on a Friday—way to contain the attention.

Activists who have followed the filtration plant’s exhaustive saga couldn’t help but feel slighted by the news. Fr. Richard Gorman, Community Board 12 chair, called the lack of notice “incredibly rude” while Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, a staunch critic of the plant, said, “To me, there’s nothing to celebrate.”
WOODLAWN MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, PC
3224 Grand Concourse, H1
Bronx, New York 10458
We are pleased to announce our move to a brand new
State of an art 17,000 sq.ft facility
Located at:
174 E. 205th St.
Bronx, NY 10458
Opening April 2015
For medical/professional
Space availability please call:
(718) 562-2200
Parisa Oraee MD, Founder & President, General and Adolescent Pediatrics
Monica J. Simons MD, GYN
Maria Emerson MD, GYN
Ian Yang MD, Anesthesia and Pain Medicine
Apple Bank BONUS Savings Account:
Great Rate and a Bonus on Each 1-Year Anniversary!

BONUS Savings Account
0.75% APY*
PLUS
BONUS**
0.25%

$25,000 minimum to earn stated rate
On each 1-year anniversary of account opening

626 Pelham Parkway South, Bronx
Sharelle Gardner, Branch Manager, 718-863-9200

12 Westchester Square, Bronx
Nancy Jones, Branch Manager, 718-863-1000

74 Hugh J. Grant Circle, Parkchester
Lori-Ann Reynolds, Branch Manager, 718-794-2375

2021 Bartow Avenue, Bronx
Nicole McNulty, Branch Manager, 718-320-3130

370 East 149th Street, Bronx
Kim Lane, Branch Manager, 718-402-6323

44 East 161st Street, Bronx
Jerry Dillon, Branch Manager, 718-537-2500

101 East 170th Street, Bronx
Eileen Lugo, Branch Manager, 718-681-6172

120 East Fordham Road, Bronx
Diahna Rivera, Branch Manager, 718-365-1167

3552-B Johnson Avenue, Riverdale
Kirk Warner, Branch Manager, 718-432-3020

Visit us today!

*For the Apple Bank BONUS Savings account, interest earned on daily balances of $2,500 or more at these tiers: $2,500-$24,999: .10% Annual Percentage Yield (APY), $25,000 and up: .75% APY. There is no interest paid on balances of $0-$2,499. APYs disclosed effective as of January 6, 2015. APYs may be changed at any time at the Bank's discretion. There is a minimum of $2,500 required to open the Apple Bank BONUS Savings account. $2,500 minimum daily balance is required to avoid $10 monthly maintenance fee. Fees may reduce earnings. Funds used to open this account cannot be from an existing Apple Bank account. Maximum deposit amount is $1,000,000 per household.

**Special bonus feature: A .25% simple interest rate bonus will be paid on each anniversary date of account opening on the lowest balance for that year (anniversary date to anniversary date). No bonus is paid if the account balance is less than $2,500 on the anniversary date. Additional deposits during a given anniversary period do not affect the bonus interest payment. Deposits made to the account on any anniversary date will be used to calculate the lowest account balance for the next anniversary period. **Hypothetical example of how bonus works:** Assume an account is opened on January 1, 2015 with $2,500, $2,500 is paid on each anniversary date. The bonus is calculated on the lowest balance on each anniversary date from the account opening date to the next anniversary date. Simple interest rate bonus is subject to change at any time after first anniversary date of account opening. Group of 10 people discount. Kancellas Tours, (347) 405-2017, (718) 757-5485, and (718) 832-2704.
NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Small Business Workshops
Monroe College School of Business and Operation HOPE host free small business development workshops Wednesdays through July 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the college’s Ustin Hall, 2375 Jerome Ave. (184th Street). Participants will learn how to start a business, build a business plan, and look for funding. For more information or to register, call (201) 381-8798 or email pedro.barry@operationhope.org.

Understanding Colitis
An educational program on inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis takes place May 21 at Montefiore Medical Center’s Tishman Learning Center room #1, 111 E. 210th St. Free registration and light snacks provided. For more information or to register, call (646) 388-9290.

Park Cleanup
Volunteers are needed to clean up a portion of Mosholu Parkway South on May 16 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Comfort Station on Webster Avenue and Mosholu Parkway South. For more information, email bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

Food Assistance Programs
Information on several food assistance programs including the federal SNAP/food stamp program, WIC, school and summer meals, senior meals, and more is available by calling the New York Coalition Against Hunger office at (212) 825-0028. Information on Bronx food programs is also available in English at http://bit.ly/1FksQB3 and Spanish at http://bit.ly/1aYB1GG.

Free Tutoring
Free tutoring in math, history, English and science is available for students ages 12 to 21 at Sistas & Brothers United, 103 E. 196th St., 3rd fl., Mondays to Fridays from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 584-0515 ext. 243 or (347) 481-6180.

Free Legal Help
Free legal services are available at the office of Councilman Andy King, 940 E. Gun Hill Rd., Fridays through June 26. Legal consultations include criminal, NYCHA, tenant/landlord, public assistance, wills, healthcare proxies, contract disputes, family law issues, and civil litigation. For more information and to schedule an appointment, call (718) 684-5509.

Bird Walks
Bird Walks at Van Cortlandt Park are available free, Saturdays from 8 to 9:30 a.m. until November. Anyone interested can meet at the Nature Center, 246th Street and Broadway. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at McManus638@aol.com.

Healthcare & Benefits Screening
The Northwest Bronx Resource Center is offering help for several services: healthcare enrollment and benefits screening every Monday and SeedCo will help with healthcare applications, benefits (SNAP, WIC, etc.), finding free and low-cost healthcare, finding a doctor and other programs. Community Service Society is available to assist with applying and/or questions regarding benefits, including SNAP, WIC, Disability, etc. For more information, email Jumelia@unhp.org or (718) 933-2539.

MMCC Services
The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave., offers services for children, teens and senior citizens including pre-K classes, day camp, adult education classes and wide-ranging services for senior citizens. To learn more, call MMCC at (718) 882-4000.

Bainbridge is a wonderful place. I have many friends and I get to socialize. Why should I stay home alone when I have a family here?
- Registrant since 1996

Services:
• Nursing, Medical Care and Health Monitoring
• Case Management and Coordination
• Therapy Services (physical, occupational, speech)
• Breakfast, Snacks, and Lunch provided daily
• Fun activities and trips
• Free Wi-Fi and access to computers

Free Door-to-door TRANSPORTATION!
Se habla español. Мы говорим по русски
Montefiore Honored for Hearing Out Westchester Sq. Residents

By JASMINE GOMEZ

A local civic group in the east Bronx has recognized Montefiore Medical Center for its outreach efforts.

The Westchester Square Civic Association, headed by Lou Rocco, honored Roberto S. Garcia, Senior Director of Community Relations for Montefiore Medical Center, and Mark Brutus, the hospital’s Director of Engineering, for taking significant steps towards making community-conscious improvements to the hospital’s Westchester Square Campus.

“I am very grateful to Montefiore because of what they did as a community-oriented hospital. We brought our plight to them and they immediately took response,” said Lou Rocco, president of the Westchester Square Civic Association.

Garcia, doubling as the Executive Director of the Mosholu Preservation Corporation, said he was “extremely flattered” to have received recognition. “In my role as the Senior Director of Community Relations, it was important that we work together to come to a solution to the problems and the concerns that the community raised,” said Garcia, who joined other officials for a tour of the facility.

When Montefiore purchased the rundown Westchester Square Medical Center in March 2013 to convert it into the state’s first free-standing emergency room, they also inherited a series of problems that included a noisy hospital-owned generator. Residents were unhappy with the constant noise and air pollution, with some worried that the fumes expelled from the generator exacerbate their asthma. The hospital, when it was acquired, also featured an outdated laboratory and flawed electrical and plumbing equipment, making the hospital appear dingy and past its prime.

When Montefiore purchased Westchester Square Medical Center, they had several goals in mind, to invest in a location that would preserve both healthcare access and job opportunities for Westchester Square community residents, and plans to expand clinical services beyond the emergency room such as access to primary care.

Montefiore has since updated the facility ten-fold, having created more than 200 jobs, expanded their services to include a sleep center, a brand new cat-scan room, a renovated laboratory, and perhaps most pleasing to its Westchester Square residents, a brand new cap on the old rusty generator pipe and a sound barrier door on the generator causing quality of life issues for some.

Upgrades at the Montefiore Westchester Campus will continue as the hospital expects to complete renovations to its radiology department soon, and hopes to expand services to include primary care access by the end of the year.

“Whenever you have a new organization that goes into a community like Montefiore did when we acquired Westchester Square, it was extremely important for us to continue to develop the relationship with the community and community-based organizations and civic associations to force the good will and compromise and relationships,” said Garcia.
Cancer Screening Saves Lives
We can help You

The fight against breast, cervical and colorectal cancer begins with regular screenings. We can provide free screenings regardless of citizenship status for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, if you:

- Have no health insurance
- Are between 40 and 64 years old
- Live in the Bronx

Did You Know?
- 108 people in the Bronx are diagnosed with cancer each week
- Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women in New York State
- In 2012, an estimated 3,000 New Yorkers may have lost their battle against colorectal cancer

Program Participants
- Lincoln Medical Center
- Morrisania D&TC
- Segundo Ruiz Belvis D&TC
- Jacobi Medical Center
- Montefiore Medical Center
- Multi-Diagnostic Services Inc.
- North Central Bronx Hospital
- Project Renewal, Inc.
- St. Barnabas Hospital
- University Diagnostic Medical Imaging, PC

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

Together we can reverse these trends.
The Bronx County Cancer Services Program can provide you with free cancer screenings.

For an appointment call 718-579-6453
Onstage
• The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents Matuto in Concert, featuring Brazilian folk forms, American bluegrass, and Louisiana jams, May 16 at 2:30 p.m.; and Take the 4 Train, concert performed by the Celia Cruz H.S. Latin/Jazz Band, May 27 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.
• Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents Un Especial a Las Madres en Concierto (A Concert Special for Mothers) featuring singer and band, May 16 at 8 p.m. (tickets are $25 to $50). For more information, call (718) 960-3500.
• The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Ave. (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: Get Active Fridays: (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, May 15 at 3 p.m.; Pajama Party (ages 18 months to 12 years): to make a craft and read aloud, May 18 at 6 p.m.; and Toddler Time (18 to 36 months): stories, action songs and nursery rhymes, May 20 at 11 a.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy Documentary: creative life of the South Bronx from Puerto Rican migration and Cuban rhythms to salsa. Refreshments will be served. 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 May 18 for the next publication date of May 28.

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 May 14, 21 and 28; Hands-On Projects: (ages 7 to 12): Chicken Nest Making: May 14 at 4 p.m., Bookmark Making: May 16 at 2 p.m., Lamb Making: May 17 at 2 p.m., and Sun Making: May 28 at 4 p.m.; film: May 17 at 3:30 p.m.; and Build a Soap Powered Model Boat (ages 7 to 11): May 26 at 4 p.m. Kids can sign up when you sign up). Teens/young adults can join Make on Demand: Garage Band: May 14 at 4 p.m.; Scavenger Hunt: May 18 at 4 p.m.; and film: May 22 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.
• The Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for adults Jewelry Class at 11 a.m.: bring your own materials to create original jewelry, May 14, 21 and 28; and Knitting Circle: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.
• The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Ave. (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: Get Active Fridays: (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, May 15 at 3 p.m.; Pajama Party (ages 18 months to 12 years): to make a craft and read aloud, May 18 at 6 p.m.; and Toddler Time (18 to 36 months): stories, action songs and nursery rhymes, May 20 at 11 a.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy Documentary: creative life of the South Bronx from Puerto Rican migration and Cuban rhythms to salsa. Refreshments will be served. 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 May 18 for the next publication date of May 28.

Onstage
• The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents Matuto in Concert, featuring Brazilian folk forms, American bluegrass, and Louisiana jams, May 16 at 2:30 p.m.; and Take the 4 Train, concert performed by the Celia Cruz H.S. Latin/Jazz Band, May 27 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.
• Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents Un Especial a Las Madres en Concierto (A Concert Special for Mothers) featuring singer and band, May 16 at 8 p.m. (tickets are $25 to $50). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Events
• Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. invites the public to a series of free events during Bronx Week: May 14, 7 to 8:30 p.m. - Yoga at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (free admission and bar); May 15 - Health Day, at Joyce Kilmer Park and Lou Gehrig Plaza at Bronx Borough Hall, 161st Street and the Grand Concourse, variety of fitness exercises (9 a.m. to noon); at Montefiore’s East Garden, 111 E. 210th St., free screenings (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.); and at Morris Heights Health Center, 57-69 W. Burnside Ave., health screenings, salsa, zumba, kids aerobics and face painting (2 to 4 p.m.); May 16 - Flagging of Graves, to volunteer to place flags on graves at Woodlawn Cemetery of those who served our nation (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.); includes picnic lunch); and May 17 at 11 a.m. - Bronx Walk of Fame inductions on the steps of the Bronx County Building, Grand Concourse at East 161st Street where Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. will unveil street signs bearing their names. For more information, call (718) 590-3500.

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 May 14, 21 and 28; Hands-On Projects: (ages 7 to 12): Chicken Nest Making: May 14 at 4 p.m., Bookmark Making: May 16 at 2 p.m., Lamb Making: May 17 at 2 p.m., and Sun Making: May 28 at 4 p.m.; film: May 17 at 3:30 p.m.; and Build a Soap Powered Model Boat (ages 7 to 11): May 26 at 4 p.m. Kids can sign up when you sign up). Teens/young adults can join Make on Demand: Garage Band: May 14 at 4 p.m.; Scavenger Hunt: May 18 at 4 p.m.; and film: May 22 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.
• The Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for adults Jewelry Class at 11 a.m.: bring your own materials to create original jewelry, May 14, 21 and 28; and Knitting Circle: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.
At Fordham School, a Sculpture Intertwines Humanity and Nature

By JENNY SHARP

A seven-foot-tall sculpture by a Japanese artist has found a home in Fordham.

The piece, entitled “A Child” and crafted by Akihiro Ito, adorns the entryway of local school IS 254. It will reside there permanently as a marker of artistic partnership and culture within the Fordham community.

Made from pieces of cherry wood, the sculpture resembles the abstracted form of a child, with a circular structure atop a cone—shapes similar to a head upon a torso. It now stands in an alcove high above the school’s main doorway, visible both to those within the Washington Avenue school and also to passersby on the street.

At the unveiling ceremony on May 6, Ito expressed his great happiness to be able to donate the statue, a process that was facilitated in large part by the Fordham Business Improvement District (BID).

“We are very thankful to the Fordham BID,” said Principal Alexis Marrero, who is in his first year at the helm of the middle school. Marrero said he plans to have lights installed beneath the sculpture so that it can be seen clearly during the day and night by anyone outside the school, a symbol of the revitalization within the community, he said.

However, for the artist, the sculpture has a more personal message.

“I want them to preserve nature,” said Ito, explaining that he hopes the sculpture will inspire the students of IS 254 to become engaged with environmental issues.

Ito’s artistic process and choice of materials strengthen his message. He uses mostly natural materials such as wood and stone as opposed to commercially produced products like canvas, paint, and metals. Wood, like that used in “A Child,” is a more renewable resource and produces less waste during the sculpture’s creation.

For the Fordham BID, the installation of “A Child” is part of a greater effort to bring art to a changing borough. Another sculpture by Ito, called “Tomorrow” was placed for 11 months at the corner of Fordham Road and Webster Avenue as part of a Department of Transportation program.

“It’s a statement,” said Fordham BID director Wilma Alonso. “It defeats the perception of people that the Bronx is burning.” Alonso explained that the Fordham area is a major shopping center for all of New York City, continuing to develop and grow economically, and should therefore be both a cultural and commercial center.

Marrero agreed that the acquisition of “A Child” represents “the change happening in the community,” standing as a reminder for future Bronxites at the doors of their middle school.
BRONX WEEK
CELEBRATING THE BEST OF THE BRONX!
Hosted by
BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT
RUBEN DIAZ JR.

BRONX WEEK
2015
May 7th-May 17th

Join us for a celebration of the best of the Bronx May 7th thru May 17th!
Over 100 events taking place across The Bronx
• Business Conferences • Festivals • Concerts
• Art Exhibits • Trolley Tours • Fitness Fairs
• Health Screenings • Environmental Events

Performing at the Bronx Week Concert
Hip-Hop Rappers & MCs
BRAND NUBIAN
Freestyle Dance-Pop Singers
THE COVER GIRLS
Salsa Singer “El Canario”
JOSE ALBERTO

Grand Finale Celebration
On Sunday, May 17th
11 AM: Bronx Walk of Fame Inductions
12 NOON: Parade and Concert
• Parade, Bronx Food, Art & Music Festival on Mosholu Parkway • HEALTH PAVILION
• Live performances throughout the day
• Vendors & much, much more!

Come Celebrate This Year’s Bronx Walk of Fame Inductees!

For more Bronx Week events, visit www.ilovethebronx.com