



NORWOOD NEWS

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS | PG. 4



SPEAKING UP, SPEAKING OUT:
BRONX YOUTH HEARD | PGS. 9-12

ICE PROJECT THAWING OUT

Developers secure \$138M construction loan for nine-rink center



Photo by Adi Talwar

THE KINGSBRIDGE ARMORY should be under renovations once again this spring. Developers for the massive \$348 million project were approved for a \$138 million state loan.

By **DAVID CRUZ**

Developers behind the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) have been approved for a multi-million dollar loan by the state to begin construction on its \$348 million ice skating center at the Kingsbridge Armory. The

news signals a major hurdle crossed by developers, whose progress at the vacant Armory waned in 2015.

Developers for KNIC Properties LP have spent the better part of 2015 scouting for philanthropists and private donors to help fund the mas-

sive project, purported to become the world's largest ice skating center.

The Board of Directors for the Empire State Development (ESD), an economic development agency that seeks to boost economic growth in New York State, met Dec. 17 to

approve a \$30 million capital construction loan to KNIC. ESD offers funds or financial assistance to projects it believes can produce a healthy rate of return.

The ESD had first met with developers of the project last
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Man Stabbed to Death on Decatur Ave. | pg 3



New Laws Take Effect
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Norwood Property Sells for \$6.9 Mil
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EDITORIAL

Welcoming 2016, With Predictions on New Round of Stories

Anticipating news stories is a bit tricky in journalism. Stories involve truth, which is always stranger than fiction, making news predictions, well, tricky. But in looking ahead, the *Norwood News* is looking backward to determine what stories will spark ire, provoke further discussion, and signal change. So far, this could be the year of repeats.

With that, here are some stories that could get the presses going:

Securing the Oval: Let's hope 2015 was the last year the neighborhood saw a string of violent incidents, brush fires, and fresh graffiti tags that bewildered neighbors around the park in the latter part of the year.

The offices of the *Norwood News* face the massive playground. We'll be sure to keep an eye on any incidents that abound there.

Taking Out Gangs/Crews: In 2015, the 52nd Precinct, which covers Norwood, stressed that some violent acts were committed by members of gangs and crews, a blurry distinction with some similarities. While gang members have a hierarchy and involved in serious crime (i.e. drug running, gun smuggling), crews typically wreak havoc on quality of life crimes.

Over the summer, police rounded up 14 gang members on a litany of charges ranging from attempted gang assault, attempted murder, and carrying a concealed weapon. The gang operated on the outskirts of Bedford Park, a sleepy community that's not without pockets of problems. At least four homicides within the 52nd Precinct were gang-related, which begs the question over whether authorities are pumping in more resources to smoking out gangs.

Statistics show that murder ran rampant in the 52nd Precinct, with 12 reported homicides in 2015, compared to seven the year before, a figure that could galvanize the stationhouse to decrease

this year.

Kingsbridge Armory: Last year, not much came from developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center over how things for its giant-size project were going. Not much was said about the highly anticipated project that remains, at least on its surface, dormant. CEO Mark Messier assured that the project was happening, and many presumed shovels would hit the ground in grandiose fashion. Sadly, nothing happened.

Questions have been raised on whether there's enough financing in place. We finally got affirmation, thanks to the \$138 million loan the developers received to get construction going. That's a good sign. Now all that awaits is the grandiose ribbon-cutting.

Gentrification: It's a hot-button topic (notably in the South Bronx) that ramped up in 2015, especially after the de Blasio Administration released zoning proposals to execute its controversial Housing New York plan. Finding an affordable place to live is clearly becoming rougher in the Bronx, considered a bastion of cheaper living compared to the rest of the boroughs.

But the bigger question that remains unanswered by lawmakers, housing groups and developers is: Can working poor, working class and middle class exist in one neighborhood? Does a neighborhood demand only one demographic?

Election Races: The political season in 2015 went slightly unnoticed, especially if one looks at the troubling voting numbers in the closely watched race for Bronx District Attorney. Barely anyone came out to vote, which may not be the case in 2016 given it's a presidential election year.

This will certainly lure voters to the polls come September, for the Primary vote, which matters the most in the Bronx. So far, intentions have been quietly made on the congressional front.

With Congressman Charles Rangel hanging up his hat following a long tenure at Capitol Hill, a race to replace him has commenced since early 2015. Rangel represents most of Norwood, but he's been criticized for barely making himself available, save for a handful of town hall meetings at the Bronx Library Center. Capitalizing on that opportunity is state Senator Adriano Espaillat, running for the seat a third time around. This opens the door to another host of problems: a wide range of candidates looking to fill the seat, namely Clyde Williams, Adam Clayton Powell, and Keith Wright. The big question remains: Will the next Congressman ignore Norwood?

On state matters, many have been wondering whether longtime Assemblyman Jose Rivera, representing the 78th Assembly District, will face another challenger. He's fended off plenty of challengers over the years. This time, insiders suggest he will win the September Primary so that his daughter, former Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera, can ascend to the seat in a special election. It could be a hard fought battle. No names have officially presented themselves, but should there be a contender, residents in Bedford Park are in desperate need of a full-time legislator.

While on the subject, the *Norwood News* predicts 2016 to be a quieter and perhaps cleaner political season when the Albany Legislative Session resumes sans former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and former Majority Leader of the New York State Senate, Dean Skelos, who had set the tone for Albany's corruptible reputation over the years. Can't imagine U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara is done with Albany, but he'll be hard pressed to find corruption in Albany, not after acquiring two big fishes.

Those are some predictions for 2016. If you have one we missed, forward comments to David Cruz, at dcruz@norwoodnews.org.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on Jan. 19 at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., at 6:30 p.m. CB7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Public Safety & Quality of Life, Jan. 7; Education/Libraries & Youth Services, Jan. 7 at 7:30 p.m.; Senior Services, Jan. 13; Parks & Recreation, Jan. 13 at 7:15 p.m.; and Veterans Committee, Jan. 14 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

Arrest Made in Fatal Stabbing on Decatur Avenue

By DAVID GREENE

Police have arrested one of six young men wanted in connection with the stabbing death of a man on Decatur Avenue during the overnight hours of Dec. 30.

Police say Hugo Ivan Galindo, 24, of nearby Hull Avenue, had been surrounded by the group outside 3340 Decatur Ave. at 2:45 a.m., where he was stabbed multiple times in the torso. He died a short time later at Montefiore Hospital.

Less than 24 hours later, detectives from the 52nd Precinct arrested Alexi Santiago, 21, of 323 E. Mosholu Parkway N., and charged him with gang assault in the first degree.

According to Galindo's cousin, Francisco Lucero, "His mother and my other aunt are taking it very hard. They can't believe it, they're in shock."

Police have not yet released a surveillance video that reportedly shows the six men attacking Galindo. Two suspects allegedly went through Galindo's pockets while he lay mortally wounded outside of the Decatur Avenue building that still had a cutout of a Christmas



Photo by David Greene

POLICE HUDDLE OUTSIDE 3340 Decatur Ave., investigating the death of a stabbing victim on Dec. 30. Five of six men wanted in connection to the stabbing remain on the run.

tree hanging on the lobby door.

Galindo was a popular soccer player on the field at Williamsbridge Oval Park. One fellow player paid his respects, leaving flowers and a note on a makeshift memorial where Galindo was stabbed.

It remains unclear what sparked the suspects to attack Galindo.

"These guys should turn themselves in," Lucero said of the suspected perpe-

trators. "If it wasn't a setup, then why did they run away?"

Family members say that Galindo had nothing in his possession when they sought his belongings at the 52nd Precinct. The precinct has seen a drop in crime in 2015, though murders increased considerably when compared to 2014.

Galindo was the 12th recorded homicide victim within the 52nd Precinct

in 2015, compared with just seven in 2014. The Five-Two murder numbers align with an increasing trend in the city's total number of murders in 2015.

Police officials believe, but could not confirm, that Galindo was the 88th and final homicide in Bronx County in 2015.

Meantime, a page on GoFundMe, a crowdfunding website that raises money for causes, has been set up Galindo. The page is asking for \$4,000 for Galindo's family.

Lucero knew of the GoFundMe page for Galindo that has so far raised more than \$2,500, but couldn't say who started the page.

"You weren't just a friend, you were a brother and an example to follow," said one supporter.

Another wrote, "Hard to believe it, but I just have to accept the fact you're gone."

Editor's Note: Police are still looking for five male Hispanic men in their 20s. Anyone with any information is urged to call CrimeStoppers at 1 (800) 577-TIPS. All calls remain confidential.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their New Year's resolutions and hopes for 2016.



My New Year's resolution is for me to help out my mom more with things like paying for groceries and anything that she needs, and for me to do better in school.

Tevin Woodley
Parkchester



I'm going to help my family out, so they may live more comfortably.

Joshua Rivera
Manhattan



My hope for the New Year is for these politicians to help clean up the Bronx a little more and create more jobs and help the homeless. It's a real crisis. That's what I hope to see. My resolution is to just quit smoking cigarettes, become a better father, and a better friend.

Danny Parente
Norwood



I wish everyone a great New Year, with good times and no problems, no aggravation. That's all I want, peace and love.

Fonzy Almalhe
Norwood



No more smoking. It's progress. I've been seeing a lot of stuff in the newspaper about violence and all this crazy stuff happening, people dying. Hopefully everybody calms down for the winter.

Miguel Quinones
Norwood

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

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APPLICATIONS DUE JANUARY 25, 2016

2016: New Minimum Wage, Workers Rights and Commuter Laws in Effect

By VIVIAN R. CARTER

When the clock struck midnight on Jan. 1, 2016, hundreds of new laws and policies passed by city and state governments and regulatory agencies took effect. Several of these are notable in extending assistance to New York residents, like those in the Bronx, striving to make ends meet.

Minimum Wage

The most talked-about, an increase in the minimum wage from the state-wide \$8.75 to \$10.50 per hour for New York City fast-food workers (and \$9.00 for others), will benefit working-class Bronxites on a massive scale. Annually, that's a raise of at least \$500 for all full-time minimum earners, and over \$3600 in the fast-food category. Under the new law, increases ramp up to \$15 per hour for New York City workers by 2018. The move was championed by Governor Andrew Cuomo, who has vowed to "not stop" his crusade for better wages "until all workers are paid the decent wages they deserve."

Protections for the Homeless

Cuomo also aroused controversy in the opening days of 2016 by sign-

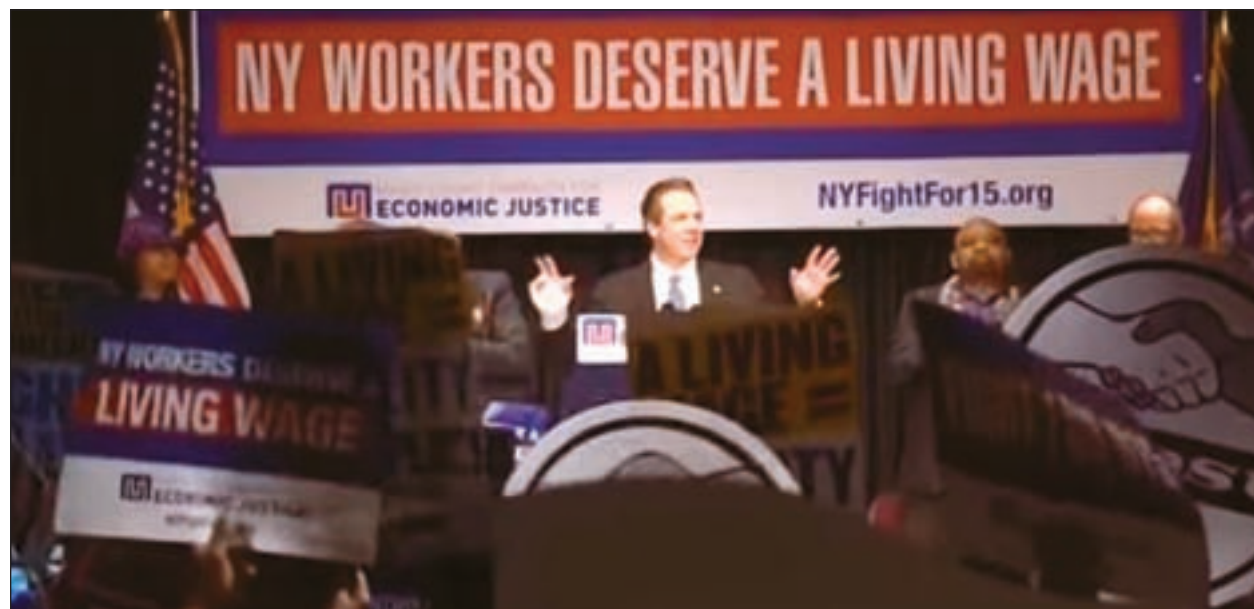


Image courtesy Office of the Governor of New York

GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO, at a Jan. 4 rally in New York City, hails the passage of an increased minimum wage across New York State.

ing an executive order requiring that all homeless individuals in New York State be taken to shelters when temperatures drop below freezing. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio protested that the governor's order lacked funding to allow the city to carry it out, but as a cold snap hit the northeastern U.S.

on Jan. 4 and 5, de Blasio appealed to houses of worship to charitably supplement the efforts of shelters and social service agencies in providing the homeless with protection from the cold.

Commuter Benefits Law

Another benefit that may save up to \$800 a year for some Bronx commuters, depending on their tax bracket, is the Commuter Benefits Law, which doubles the cap on pre-tax income that can be used to pay for qualified mass transit expenses. The previous cap of \$130 per month generally covered the cost of a regular MetroCard used on subways and buses. By doubling the cap, more of the cost for express buses and commuter rail tickets is now affordable for certain commuters.

However, an individual interested in taking advantage of this benefit has to jump through a few hoops in order to enjoy it. First, it's only available to full-time, non-union workers at companies with 20 such employees, and only after the employer has established the program by filling out paperwork with the City's Department of Consumer Affairs. Second, many low-wage workers who already qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit due to their support of dependents are being advised to seek tax advice before deciding whether to sign up for these commuter benefits, as it could result in a smaller tax refund. Information in multiple languages is available by calling 311 or logging on to www.nyc.gov/CommuterBenefits.

Water Assistance Program

Another New Year's gift to certain New Yorkers is an extension of the Home Water Assistance Program. The 2016 rate schedule approved by the NYC Water Board will put more money into the pockets of 52,000 low-income New York City seniors and persons with disabilities who own their homes and pay water bills. These individuals will receive an automatic credit of \$115.89 on their first water bill of the year. More information about these credits can be found at www.nyc.gov/dep.

Workplace Rights

Other new employment laws seem poised to prompt major change in the landscape of offices and factories, particularly for working women. More extensive accommodations will be required in the workplace for pregnant employees and those who have given birth and must take regular breaks to pump their breast milk. For details on how these new protections work, log on to www.labor.ny.gov/home/individuals.php.

Finally, New York is now the first state in the country to make women immediately eligible for health insurance coverage on the state health exchange as soon as they become pregnant, rather than having to wait for the open enrollment period. The U.S. Government has not yet accorded such benefits to women who apply for health benefits through the federal exchange. As New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer noted, this step "improves the health of babies and new mothers, while saving taxpayer dollars and strengthening our city's economy."

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- ⇒ **Marble Hill**



CB7 Presents DM Pick at Jan. Mtg.

Community Board 7's Screening Committee is expected to unveil its recommended district manager candidate for the Board at the next general board meeting.

The post was vacated in October by Dustin Engelken, who resigned for personal reasons. He was at the helm for just over a year, making him the third district manager to leave the position in three years. Thomas Lucania, the Bronx Borough President's Director of Community Boards, had since been filling in the position.

District managers are paid city administrators who serve the needs of a community board comprised of volunteer residents.

The Screening Committee will present its pick at the Jan. 19 general board meeting at the Bronx Library Center.

--David Cruz

Car Smashed By Cable Pole on Wayne Ave.



Photo by David Cruz

AN UNFORTUNATE WAY to end 2015. Crews with Con Edison work to remove this cable pole that dropped onto a vehicle on Wayne Avenue off Gun Hill Road on Dec. 29. Crews spent an hour hoisting the wooden pole off the vehicle following the incident which happened around 4 p.m. No one was hurt. The incident drew several bystanders who snapped some pictures as they stumbled upon it.

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Bronx Youth Heard

At Catholic Schools, Lessons Extend Beyond the Classroom

**JONATHAN
MERCEDES**

Catholic school students say they're excelling in and out of the classroom, thanks to the recent number of after-school programs offered to them by the Archdiocese of New York.

Chris Valerio, 17, says the programs offer students an escape from the serious problems of everyday life. The Cardinal Hayes High School senior added that the extracurricular activities also allow students to enjoy the company of their friends.

The programs are not just beneficial from a social aspect, but students also attribute their academic success to extracurricular activities.

Nathalie Cortes, 15, shares a similar experience to Chris'. At the Academy of Mount St. Ursula in Bedford Park, Nathalie says her after-school jazz music program has improved her mood, which has also helped her

understand the importance of time management. Her homework still gets done and she's developed a strategy to balance school and the other clubs she's involved with. "Out-of-school programs make challenging classroom experiences more pleasant," she says.

According to Rebecca Tuttle, spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of New York City, these programs help students expand their resources and gain extra knowledge and experience. "After-school programs matter because they present new ideas and options to students that may have a rather insulated life, centered around a small Bronx neighborhood. Their world enlarges and their dreams expand," Tuttle says.

And Tuttle may be right in her assessment.

Henry Rodriguez, 15, says, "These programs really helped my knowledge evolve in other things, which helps me to contribute more in class."

Henry is part of Lehman College's Engaging Latino Communities for Ed-



Photo courtesy Catholic Archdiocese of New York
STUDENTS FROM THE Visitation School, a Catholic school in Van Cortlandt Village, practice "It's a Hard Knock Life" for their Drama Club's debut presentation of *Annie*. Back row l-r: Shirley Fernandez and Olivia Ward; Front row l-r: Rita Familia and Nayani Rojas.

ucation (ENLACE), a program that offers extra math and science classes to Latino students to help improve their grades. Henry has been a part of the program since February 2015.

The benefits also help students become more qualified and prepared for colleges and future careers.

For Catholic schools, Tuttle adds,

"Students that participate in the programs have more success when they transition to high school and college as they have already have a head start in exploring their interests in a safe, nurturing, monitored environment and developing a more complete sense of self."

Many students have other interests outside of school and programs that support their creativity and help in the process of their development. As a freshman, Chris of Cardinal Hayes High School played the guitar and drums outside of school but wanted to collaborate and learn from other students. So when Cardinal Hayes offered an after-school program for young musicians he was thrilled. Now a senior, Chris recalls that he wanted to take his creativity to new heights and share it with others.

"These music programs helped me evolve into a better student and a better person," said Chris. "They gave me the focus I needed to be the best I can be."

Teen Pregnancy Rates Drop, But Still Pose Problems in the Bronx

**SAFIYA
HYLTON**

Teen pregnancy rates have fallen in the Bronx, but the push to drop the teen pregnancy rate continues.

The latest figures from the New York City Department of Health (DOH) shows that teen pregnancies dropped 10 percent since 2012 and 37.6 percent since 2004.

"We attribute the drop in teen pregnancy to a decline in sexual activity and an increase in the use of

hormonal or highly effective birth control," the city's health department said in a statement.

Still, the problems persist in the Bronx, a borough with the highest number of teen pregnancies, according to the DOH. Babies born to teen mothers typically experience a lower quality of life, compared to babies born to older parents.

"Teenagers don't have the experience to take care of a child," said stay-at-home mother Diana Harris of Edenwald. Harris was surprised by the rates going down but insisted that teens need to focus on their education.

Still, rates of teen pregnancies remain the highest in the Bronx. Data from the DOH show there were 84.4 percent of pregnancies in the borough for every 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 in 2012, compared to the overall city rates which saw 59.9 percent of pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19.

And while many adults are opposed to teen pregnancies, teen girls are just as opposed to teen motherhood.

Star Croney, a freshman at University Prep Charter High School in Mott Haven, said that it amazes her to know that kids nowadays are hav-

ing kids. "It's not their time to have children" she said.

Star believes that kids of this generation want to experiment with everything, never wanting to wait until they are older. Prevention is key but some students are unaware of the best resources.

Cierra Brown, who was a teen mother, notes that the doctor is the best resource to educate girls about birth control.

Planned Parenthood, a federally-funded clinic, has resources for teens wishing to learn about pregnancy. According to Louise Marchena, di-

(continued on page 11)

For Teens Finding Work, a Job Unto Itself

TAYRELL JACKSON

Teens looking for part-time jobs in New York City may have a hard time finding work because employers discriminate based on age, and the process is unfair, say some students.

Lerret Jackson is a 17-year-old high school senior who now works at Dunkin' Donuts but remembers the job search being difficult and the "constant rejection" a lot to deal with.

The Bronx resident is not alone. In the past 13 years, the number of jobs held by teenagers ages 14 to 18 has decreased by 33 percent. Nationally, that's an estimated 1.7 million teens unemployed from April to July of 2015, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Lerret said that patience and age helped her finally get an interview at Dunkin' Donuts. After a two-year search, she said turning 17 made a huge difference. It's almost impossible to find employment "unless you are 17 or have an immediate connection to someone who could get you a job", she said. "The process is unfair because there is such a large group of people in need of jobs, and there is not a lot of space but a lot of applicants."

According to the Pew Research Center, teens are finding more jobs in the food service industry rather than in the retail sector.

The struggle to find a paying job continues for other students.

Aspyn, who did not want to give her full name, is a 16-year-old high school junior still looking for work and trying to make sense of the application process. "It's hard because teens are limited to where they can work and how



File Photo

FINDING A JOB is tough work for teens, standing at a long line outside MMCC for a job through the city's Summer Youth Employment Program.

long they are permitted to work. Managers don't want to hire people who can't work whenever," she said.

Aspyn recalled how the summer of 2014 was particularly hard to handle. She was rejected from a summer youth jobs program. She also complained that the application process for these kinds of programs was also unfair. "Teens out there actually need the job and don't get it because it's a raffle, yet others who may not need the job get it," said Aspyn, referring to the job program.

Both Aspyn and Lerret agree that potential employers have stereotypes about teenagers. "Employers either think you are immature or can't work when they need you, so they hire more 'reliable' people who could work full time when it is needed," Aspyn said. "Employers also think that teens are immature, loud and bring trouble. But that's the opposite of what actually happens and how teens actually are."

"The reality," said Lerret, "is that managers like responsible and mature

workers who have flexible schedules, which isn't always the case for teenagers in high school."

"I have been looking for a while and it is really stressful because it takes a lot to get working papers," Aspyn said. Then, she said, the process of applying for job is "even worse because you can apply for hundreds of jobs and not get one callback, which sucks and then you're back at the beginning looking. And on top of all that, only about one in five stores hires 16-year-olds."

For Teens of Foreign-Born, Double the Pressure to Succeed

THOMAS POKU

Aaron Dumfeh is motivated to study hard because his parents immigrated to the U.S. from Ghana to ensure he had the best opportuni-

ties.

Aaron's parents are among the approximately 36 percent of foreign-born residents in the Bronx, according to statistics from the New York City Department of City Planning.

The Dumfahs are not alone in their high expectations for their children.

Immigrant parents with good in-

tentions often push their children to succeed. But at what cost? As some teens complain about the lack of a social life and limits on watching TV or using digital devices, researchers have cited that the emotional costs may be even higher.

"They believe I can achieve a great education," said the senior at Cardinal Spellman High School.

Aaron is an 80-and-above student and after graduating in 2016 he wants to attend Union College in Schenectady, New York.

Yet, according to research published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology in November, there are positive and negative aspects of parents' aspirations for
(continued on page 11)

Curbing Teen Pregnancy

(continued from page 9)

rector of youth programs at Planned Parenthood of New York City, resources are available through the organization's Teen Advocate Program, a peer education program. Teens provide workshops and perform skits in their communities and schools, educating them on topics that include birth control options, guides for healthy relationships, and information on how to prevent sexually transmitted infections.

Once a teen is pregnant, Marchena says that there are many other resources available in the city for young expectant mothers. Planned Parenthood clinics in New York City also offer pregnancy testing as well as counseling on options including parenting skills, adoption and abortion.

Boys also can be included in the education of how to prevent teen pregnancy by taking lessons about healthy relationships, and hygiene, building on these lessons with age-appropriate information throughout middle and high school.

Students and adults agree that teen motherhood remains a problem and teenagers should help their peers. Many agree that teens are supposed to be changing the world, not changing diapers.

For Teens of Foreign-Born, Double the Pressure to Succeed

(continued from page 10)

their children's academic performance.

"Although parental aspiration can help improve children's academic performance, excessive parental aspiration can be poisonous," writes lead author Kou Murayama, PhD, of the University of Reading in England. "Unrealistically high aspirations may hinder academic performance."

Yet, despite parents setting high aspirations, not all children's academic abilities reach such expectations.

Stephanie Hernandez, 15, attends school at the Bronx Center of Mathematics and Science. Stephanie said that, overall, she knows she's been prepared for life's difficulties.

Many immigrant parents arrive in the U.S. to escape the hardships of their home countries. As they nurture their children, they emphasize education as a vital aspect of their lives. As they strive for their children to be successful, they are unapologetic about their expectations.

According to the Secretary for Church of Saint Luke for the Ghanaian community in the Bronx, who went by Mr. Danso, achieving

success is unconditional. "I want the best. Not 50 percent, not 70 percent, but 100 percent. As a parent, if I set the standard low, they perform poorly," said Danso.

Murayama's study warns that "simply raising aspiration cannot be an effective solution to improve success in education." She and others suggest parents should develop better ways to set realistic expectations for their children.

But some children accepted their parents being hard on them.

The pressure is "equally a burden and a help," said Meagan Owusu, 14. The student at Holy Cross School admitted that the parental pressure is "overwhelming, but it also motivates me to do better."

Many immigrant parents like Danso might also have led decent lives in their home country, but like Danso, may have left it knowing their children couldn't lead better lives there. The trick to that would be educational attainment.

Rosemond Serwah is the mother of boy and girl 15-year-old twins. She was a teacher in Ghana. When asked why she moved, she responded: "My country was falling; the opportunities were dwindling; and the fate of my children was at stake."

Although there might be miscommunication between teens and their immigrant parents, the slight show of encouragement in their children seems to do the trick. The support parents seem to put on them in their education, might seem unrealistic, but it teaches the value of hard work and resilience.

And some students understand that reality.

"They expect me to get good grades and prepare for my high school and college stuff. You try to do it, but sometimes it's a challenge for me so I have to go step by step," said George Danquah, 13. "It is helpful to me because my parents have to make sure I become better and not become a burden on them."



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Bronx Youth Heard

Vol. 9, No. 1

c/o 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467

Phone: (718) 324-4998 Email: bronyouthheard@gmail.com

Bronx Youth Heard is a publication of the Bronx Youth Journalism Initiative, published twice a year in the *Norwood News*.

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The Bronx Youth Journalism Initiative is a free journalism program for Bronx high school students, run by the Norwood News with support from the Mosholu Preservation Corporation, and in collaboration with CUNY's College Now program at Hostos Community College.

Opinion

Last Leg of High School No Easy Feat

**ARLENIS
PENA**

Senior year is not what my friends and I imagined it would be. Instead of the fun of going on class trips, taking the perfect yearbook photo, or just cooling off after three years of high school, the 12th grade is surprisingly stressful.

According to a UCLA survey of college freshmen in 2015, 18 percent of students spent 16 hours or more with their friends each week during their senior year of high school. That's compared to 37.9 percent of students surveyed in 1987.

I can relate to that statistic. As a high school freshman

at International Community High School in Mott Haven, my friends and I expected to be more independent in the 12th grade. Yet, no one warned us about the responsibilities that come with being a senior and the added pressure of being a teen immigrant who aspires to go to college. I came from the Dominican Republic in 2011, and I've always set big goals for myself.

In 2016, I'll be applying to the University of Tampa in Florida. It's my dream college and it offers opportunities that will hopefully lead to a career in sports management.

But the thought of how to pay for school is stressful. One year's tuition is about \$25,000, discounting room and board. Financial aid is an option, but

the process is long. And even if I get some money, I would still have to apply for additional loans and scholarships, which are not easy to get. The emphasis on SAT scores and GPAs is understandable, but the system is a bit unfair.

As an immigrant, it is hard to stay on top of my grades while learning a new language. I know my friends and I are smart, but college administrators and even high school counselors do not understand the daily struggles immigrant students face. The process of adapting, doing work that you don't really understand, or being distracted by personal issues can sometimes bring our grades down. It doesn't mean that we won't be able to overcome all that and do really well in school.

I think that this should matter when applying for college. Colleges should look at each applicant as a whole person. Numbers can't sum up how good a student will be in college. Many students never get the chance to prove themselves because SAT scores keep them out. Even with impressive personal statements, completed high school credits, extracurricular activities and letters of recommendations, students are still not accepted. That's just not fair.

In a recent *Washington Post* op-ed, college administrator Kristin Tichenor explains why her school, Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, adopted a test-optional admissions policy in 2008.

She writes: "*Most gatekeepers in higher education continue to require standardized tests that we know correlate strongly with race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The irony is that for even the most selective institutions, ad-*

missions decisions are based primarily on the rigor of a student's high school course program and demonstrated academic achievement, not on test scores."

But unfortunately, most schools have not taken that approach.

We live in era where people are judged by numbers. Inside school it's about GPAs and SAT scores while outside of school it's about how many followers you have on Instagram or how many likes you get on Facebook.

When you are only defined as a number or statistic, it's tough for many students to get past that label. Some teens decide not to go through with college and instead get a job to support their families. International Community High School, an English Language Learners school, has many students that are brilliant with a lot of great ideas, but they lose confidence because their English is not always perfect by their senior year.

They are afraid to move forward with their dreams. This sometimes has an impact on their grades. Even though they study a lot, the language challenges can be a barrier to other opportunities. Many push forward but the stress is a lot for a 17-year-old.

We shouldn't be defined by numbers. The character of our actions should speak louder than a math score on an SAT exam. I expected classes to be harder. Tests didn't surprise me either in my senior year, but what I did not count on was the high level of stress. Yes, teachers are encouraging, but no one can prepare you for the reality of what applying for college really means and learning to be an adult.

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ADVERTORIAL

Lehman College to Hold Career Info Session

Lehman College's School of Continuing and Professional Studies is offering the first of its spring 2016 semester free career information sessions on Jan. 16 at 10:30 a.m. Expert guidance will be provided on several non-credit certificate programs for those who wish to acquire new skills to change careers or upgrade skills for their current position.

Programs covered include Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC); Business Bookkeeping; Certified Financial Planner (CFP); IRS Enrolled Agent; Real Estate Salesperson; Entrepreneurship; Computer Information Technology including Microsoft Office Specialist Certification, Graphics and Web Design and Programming, A+ Computer Technician, Healthcare IT Technician, and Cisco Networking Academy Certi-

fication; Medical/Surgical Coding and Billing; Allied Health including Pharmacy Technician, Dental Assistant, Clinical Medical Assistant, Home Health Aide, CNA, EKG and Phlebotomy Technician, PCA/PCT (Nurse Technician); and Child Care (Early Childhood Development Professional).

The session will be held on the Lehman College campus in the Music Building at the first floor. These information sessions will be repeated on Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 6:30 p.m. On Jan. 22 at 10:30 a.m. at CUNY on the Concourse (2501 Grand Concourse), additional information sessions for the Allied Health programs only will be held. For more information or a catalog of all spring semester classes for adults and children and teens, call (718) 960-8512 or visit www.lehman.edu/scps.

Bronx Youth Heard

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Student articles will be published online and in the Norwood News.

Find more information and the application at:
<http://www.norwoodnews.org/youth-journalism/>

Questions? Contact David Cruz at (718) 324-4998 or bronxyouthheard@gmail.com

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Bronx Youth Heard

The Norwood News is accepting applications for Bronx Youth Heard, a free afterschool program that teaches journalism skills to Bronx high school students ages 14 to 18. Applications are available online at <http://bit.ly/BYH-Fall2016>. For more information, contact David Cruz, program director for Bronx Youth Heard and editor-in-chief of Norwood News, at dcruz@norwoodnews.org or at (718) 324-4998.

"Treecycling"

Recycle your holiday tree to nourish parks throughout the city. Free mulch and free collection bags will be provided at Van Cortlandt Park's golf course at Bailey Avenue and VC Pk. So., Jan. 9 and 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Donors may bring trees until Jan. 10 to local drop-off sites for future recycling: Williamsbridge Oval Park, Kossuth Playground at Moshulu Parkway No. and Kossuth Ave-

nue, St. James Park at West 192nd Street and Jerome Avenue, or Poe Park at the Grand Concourse between East Kingsbridge Road and East 192nd Street. For more information and additional sites, visit www.nyc.gov/dsny or www.nyc.gov/greenyc.

Free Income Tax Guide

A free copy of the "2015 Income Tax Guide" by the Financial Advisors Group is available to anyone. The guide covers current tax law provisions, capital gains and losses, and plenty more. Call (347) 575-5045 to request a copy.

Kindergarten Registration

The deadline to enroll your child in Kindergarten is Jan. 15. Register over the phone by calling (718) 935-2400, online at nyc.gov/schools/kindergarten, or stopping by the Family Welcome Center at 1 Fordham Plaza, 7th floor for students going to schools in districts 7, 9 and 10.

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NCBH Delivers Its First Baby of 2016



Photo courtesy North Central Bronx Hospital

SAY HELLO TO Emma Singh, North Central Bronx Hospital's first baby to arrive in 2016. Little Emma, born to parents Ravina and Chaitram Singh of Norwood, came into the world at 12:13 a.m. on Jan. 1 weighing 6 pounds, 12 ounces.



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Choosing a Catholic School? Consider Villa Maria Academy

What is the Villa Maria Academy?

The Villa Maria Academy is a Catholic, private, independent, co-educational elementary school situated in the Country Club section of the Bronx. Owned and operated by the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND), the Villa strives to provide a liberating education that develops the full potential of students, supporting them in becoming responsible citizens of the world.

Over the course of 129 years, the Villa has established a reputation for academic excellence, a robust faith life and a deep and abiding sense of family and community. The Villa has been an outstanding member of the academic community of New York City producing capable, well-rounded alumni active in the worlds of business and the arts.

Class sizes are kept small so teachers develop a sense of individual students' strengths and weaknesses and tailor their instruction to maximize each one's ability. Standardized test scores regularly exceed national and local averages in both public and Catholic school systems. The pedagogy features a rigorous study of fundamentals in conjunction with common core standards. Students develop proficiency in foundational skills that



Photo courtesy Villa Maria Academy

AMANDA TREZZA (RIGHT), a fifth grade teacher at Villa Maria Academy, helps these two students discover the wonders of science.

equip them to delve deeper into subjects like Honors Math, STEM and Italian.

The Villa is an independent Catholic school inspired by Visitation spirituality that teaches students to see Christ in one another. Faith education is central to the curriculum. Religious observances take place throughout the liturgical year. Students study papal encyclicals and learn about the universality of the Catholic Church through the international work of Sis-

ters. The school community has a special dedication to peace, justice and service.

The Villa campus is nestled on 8 waterfront acres along Eastchester Bay. Facilities include a fully equipped science lab, technology lab and music and art studios and library. An athletic facility includes a regulation-size gym used for classes, leagues and tournaments that doubles as a theater for performances. Large, grassy lawns surround a colorful playground, teaching

garden and grotto.

A Villa education pays attention to the physical, emotional and spiritual lives of students. Physical education, music and art are integral parts of the curriculum and are included in a wide range of extra-curricular activities like competitive sports, performing arts and leadership development.

The Villa supports families with Universal Pre-K, after care and summer camp. Parents' Guilds offer service opportunities and social occasions for families.

An Open House will take place on Sunday, Jan. 31 (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.). For more information, visit www.vma-nyc.org.

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Teen Sought for Snatching Purse at the Gap

By JASMINE GOMEZ

A teenage girl is wanted for grand larceny after allegedly swiping a handbag left behind at a local Gap clothing store.

On Dec. 21, the 36-year-old victim's purse containing her identification and about \$100 was stolen by the unidentified suspect, who appeared browsing in video surveillance released to the public by the NYPD. Police say the victim's son accidentally left the purse at the apparel store at 271 E. Fordham Rd.

In the surveillance video, the unidentified girl suspect notices the purse on the floor near a clothing rack, takes it, and browses clothes at a nearby table in an effort to go unnoticed as she swipes the handbag.

The female, last seen wearing a

black jacket, blue jeans, and black sneakers fled the store with the purse.

As of the week ending Dec. 26, a total of 660 cases of grand larceny have been reported within the 52nd Precinct in 2015, down 5.3 percent from the 697 cases that were reported in 2014. In the week beginning Dec. 27, grand larcenies took a holiday, dropping 18.8 percent when compared to the same week a year before.

The theft suspect is described as a female Black, approximately 14 years old, 5'7 and 110 pounds.

Police are asking for the public's help in locating the suspect. Anonymous tips can be sent to the Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS or submitted on www.NYPDCRIMESTOPPERS.com.



Photo by Jasmine Gomez

SOLD! THIS COMMERCIAL property at 360-368 E. Gun Hill Rd. changed hands in mid-December. Ermioni 360 LLC is now the owner.

Norwood Property Sells for \$6.9 Mil

A two-story commercial building, home to several stores, has sold for \$6.9 million by investors with offices on Wall Street.

Ermioni 360 LLC, a limited liability company registered in Manhattan's Wall Street section, purchased the property of 360-368 E. Gun Hill Rd., near Decatur Avenue, from 360-368 East Gun Hill LLC. Brokers Aaron

Jungreis and Ryan Perkoski of Rosewood Realty Group brokered the deal in mid-December.

The 17,000-square-foot property, with terracotta roof, is home to Soma Health Club, a deli grocery store, a 99-cent store, and furniture and clothing shops.

The building was opened in 1922.

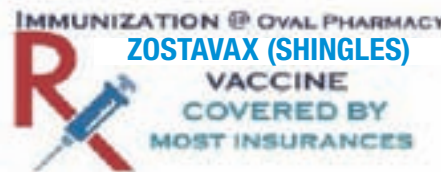
--David Cruz



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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Lengthen the Holiday Season

Keep the holiday going with the following events:

The New York Botanical Garden presents **All Aboard With Thomas and Friends**, through Jan. 24, featuring sing-alongs, mini performance adventure, and crayons and coloring for the kids. Kids can be photographed with Driver Sam and Thomas the Tank Engine which can be printed out and purchased onsite. They also receive a certificate and temporary tattoo. For more information, call (718) 817-8700. Also offered is the **Holiday Train Show**, presented by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, daily through Jan. 18 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Garden's Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, featuring model trains that zip through a display of 150 NYC landmarks, each recreated with bark, leaves and other natural materials. Advance reservations are recommended. For more information and tickets prices, call (718) 817-8716.

The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation presents free: **Seasonal Crafts**, each Friday through Jan. 29 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at Poe Park's Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse (at Kingsbridge Road). For more information, call (718) 365-5516.

PS 5, 564 E. Jackson Ave. (corner of 149th Street) invites the public to its free **Three Kings in the Bronx** event, Jan. 9 at noon. There will be free toys for the first 500 children between the ages of 1 and 9 who must be present. For more information, call Leila Martinez at (718) 991-3161.

Onstage

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts at Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **The Band of the Royal Marines and the Pipes, Drums, and Highland Dancers of the Scots Guards**, in the Concert Hall, Jan. 17 at 4 p.m. (tickets are \$25 to \$40; \$10/age 12 and under); and **Viva Cuba!** featuring Septeto Nacional de Cuba Ignacio Piñero and Orquesta Broadway, Jan. 16

at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$45 to \$60). Programs are subject to change. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Sonido Costeño Trio in Concert**, performing Latin music, Jan. 9; and **Broadway Ladies**, featuring singer and musicians, Jan. 16; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57.



Photo courtesy Jean Claude Capt.

THE HERMES STRING Quartet is set to show off its musical talents at Wave Hill on Jan. 10.



Still image courtesy "Write With Me"

STILL IMAGE FROM "Write With Me," an independent short film directed by Hannah Leshaw (not pictured). It will be screened at the Bronx International Film Festival on Jan. 22 at Lehman College. See details under "Events."

Events

The Bronx International Film Festival will screen **independent films** at Lehman College's Studio Theatre, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., Jan. 22 to 31. This includes 70 short and feature narrative and documentary films; audience may chat with filmmakers in attendance. \$30/all screenings; \$7/daily pass. For more information and film details, trailers and schedules, visit bronxfilmfestival.com.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Sunrise, Sunset, to create an inspirational scene using paint and tissue-paper dyes with a background of trees, skyline, river or bridge, Jan. 9 and 10; and **Freedom Poem Tapestries**, to learn about the poems and stories of Maya Angelou, and make a quilt, Jan. 16 and 17; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also in the WH House is free **Community Restorative Yoga**, with equipment provided, followed by herbal tea, Jan. 9 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; and **Concert**, featuring French ensemble, Hermes String Quartet, performing classical music, Jan. 10 at 2 p.m. (tickets are \$28; \$22/WH member; \$15/kids 8 to 18; \$12/WH member). 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.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following events for children: **Hands-on Projects at 4 p.m.**: (ages 7 to 12;

in-person preregistration required), Winter Frame Making, Jan. 7; Penguin Making, Jan. 14; and Cotton Ball Polar Bear, Jan. 21. Adults can attend **Microsoft Word for Beginners**: Jan. 11 at 2 p.m.; and **Internet for Beginners**: Jan. 12 at 2 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Fizzy Science**: (ages 18 months to 5 years), to do science experiments with common cooking ingredients, Jan. 15 at 10:30 a.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy **Magic Tricks and the History of Deception**: to watch magic show, then learn how it's done, Jan. 8 at 3 p.m.; and **film**: "Ant-Man," Jan. 16 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Free Computer Classes**: to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), to enjoy dance and zumba, Jan. 8 and 22; and **Super Cool Science**: (ages 5 to 12), to join hands-on experiments, Jan. 19 at 4 p.m. Teens/young adults can attend **Fuji Instax Portrait Workshop**: learn to use Fuji Instax cameras and make instant photos (each student keeps two images), Jan. 20 at 3:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Jan. 11 for the next publication date of Jan. 21.

Ice Project Thawing Out

(continued from page 1)

August, categorizing the impending venue as an Economic Growth Investment Project. The move represents the state's overwhelming confidence in the project, described as "transformative" by the ESD.

"This \$30 million loan is the first tranche of up to \$138 million in ESD construction loan financing for the project," said Joe Tazewell, New York City Regional Director for ESD, during the meeting. "The \$108 million balance of the loan financing will be brought to the directors for consideration at a later date."

The two-year loan with a seven percent annual interest rate totals at least one year's worth of construction. Under the deal, the state would provide incremental funds to KNIC to help build Phase 1 of the colossal project. KNIC agreed to pay back the funds through an EB5 program, which uses money from wealthy foreign investors in exchange for visas. Developers of the project will rely on \$250 million, roughly 70 percent of the project's total cost, on EB5 funds, according to financial materials submitted to the ESD.

The KNIC project, headed by former Wall Streeter Kevin Parker, will house nine ice rinks, in-house parking, and 50,000 square feet of community space promised to community stakeholders. Roughly 400 new jobs and 1300 construction jobs will be created, with 51 percent of those jobs secured for Bronx residents. This project is set to be built in two parts: Phase I and Phase II. Phase 1 of the project consists of the construction of five NHL-size rinks, in-house parking and 50,000 square feet of community

space.

KNIC will also agree to hire an ESD-approved construction monitor to oversee progress of the ice project, where Phase 1 is expected to be completed by April 2018.

KNIC now is in possession of \$158 million in construction funds, a figure required by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), the city's real estate arm, to release the lease to KNIC. But the city organization has still kept the lease in escrow.

"We remain excited about the plan to reactivate the Kingsbridge Armory, and once all conditions are met, we will release the lease from escrow," said Ian Friedman, a spokesman for the NYCEDC.

The lease has remained in escrow for more than a year while developers sought monies to jumpstart the project. It received \$30 million in other funds from various philanthropic groups. Among them are funds from the Kresge Foundation, where monies from that organization were used as seed payment towards the ESD loan.

But while the lease remains in escrow, KNIC has done what it could to get the project off the ground. It hired the Gilbane Building Company, a multi-national construction firm that built the Prudential Center, home to the New Jersey Devils, an NHL ice skating team.

A representative from KNIC could not be reached.

For now, a public hearing on the project is set for Jan. 14 from 3 to 4 p.m., at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., to discuss details of the approved loan. The public is invited.

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