



NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
WANTS FOR THE CITY | PG. 4**



**NIGHTLIFE IN NORWOOD:
IS THERE ONE? | PG. 8**

DIST. 10'S NEED FOR A SCHOOL

NYC budget adds seats to ease overcrowding, but CB7 wants a school



Photo by Adi Talwar

KIDS WALK OUTSIDE PS 56 after a day of school on Jan. 26. The school is one of a few that saw a new annex, part of a larger goal of resolving an overcrowded school district.

By DAVID CRUZ

Three years ago, PS 77 at 3177 Webster Ave. opened with the hopes of easing overcrowding within the school district.

Three years later, the school is overcrowded, according to Marvin Shelton, president of the Community Education Council for School District 10.

"I talked to the principal and she said, 'yeah, we're capping Kindergarten already,'" Shelton said, recalling a meeting he had at the school recently. "They're a Pre-K to 5 and they're only Pre-K to 3, and they've already filled up the building. It just shows how backed up the district is in terms of making new

capacity."

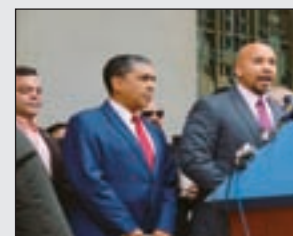
And as the de Blasio Administration proposes funding for more than 38,000 seats into schools in his proposed Fiscal Year 2018 \$85 billion budget, it appears to simply place a Band-Aid onto a real solution, according to Community Board 7: an actual new school.

"We need, like, three new buildings...now," Shelton said, arguing the overarching issue of crowded schools is the inability to navigate the school easily or even have fast access to basic amenities, such as a bathroom. Among the more prevailing concerns is whether large classes can

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EDITORIAL

We're Just Getting Warmed Up

Repealing the Affordable Care Act. Building a wall. Holding federal funds to New York City hostage. A temporary ban on refugees. All this happened in one week of President Donald Trump's America. And though his executive orders were theatrical at best (except the ban), they're just getting warmed up. And so is the media.

Since the Inauguration, there's been a wake-up call among career politicians who believed none of this could happen. The reversal of fortune is tough to stomach for Democrats, who are now banding together to stymie the fallout of the Republican president's policies, which appear to be seriously reactionary and definitely ad-libbed. In a White House where nearly every major player (exception Reince Priebus) is a political novice, you can expect the consequences to be dire.

Therefore, it's incumbent that local federal Representatives Adriano Espaillat, Joseph Crowley, Eliot Engel and Jose Serrano step it up to keep Mr. Trump from fulfilling policies that spell irreparable harm to America's image as a beacon of freedom and tolerance. Appealing to Mr. Trump will be quixotic, if not impossible. They can use the power of their committees as a way to slow down Mr. Trump's legislative agenda be it financing the wall or defunding the Affordable Care Act.

So will Congressman Jose Serrano, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, be able to convince Republicans to hold off on funding a new version of healthcare? Can Congressman Joe Crowley, the fourth highest ranking Democrat in the House and member of the Ways and Means Committee, do the same on his end? Can both members do much to persuade their Republican colleagues not to reduce federal funding to New York City? Newly sworn in Congressman Adriano Espaillat recently told the *Norwood News* he has spoken to members of the other side of the aisle. But will he parlay his achievement as the first Dominican-born legislator elected to the House of Representatives as an example of an America built by immigrants?

Will Congressman Eliot Engel, ranking

member on the Foreign Affairs Committee, work with committee chair, Republican Representative Ed Royce (Royce called Engel a "good friend" in a press release the committee sent out in the beginning of the legislative session) in holding public hearings on Russia's meddling of the US presidential election? Can he stymie an all-out war by the US against the Middle East?

The possibility is gravely there, particularly after Mr. Trump stressed it will eradicate "radical Islamic terrorism" in his Inaugural address. The temporary ban on Muslims who come from seven countries in the Middle East only underscores that position. It emphasizes a kind of latent Islamophobia that's now dangerously permissible by Mr. Trump, galvanizing ardent supporters who think it's now okay.

It's clear Democrats cannot reverse course alone. It's high time they all single out moderate House and Senate Republicans waffling at Mr. Trump's policies as they think about the 2019 midterms, where results usually indicate whether the ruling party is doing well.

For Republicans, the adage "You're judged by the company you keep," applies. By Election Day 2021, America could no longer be a symbol of virtue, but a laughingstock promulgated by a populist president who will peddle conspiracy theories to his final hour as President. Presidents come and go. Is Mr. Trump a stain Republicans can live with long af-

ter he's left?

And though the President is getting warmed up in his role as leader of the free world, so is the media, a thorn in Mr. Trump's side. The attacks on the press will continue. They'll be viewed as peddlers of fake news, dishonest, out of touch by the Trump White House. Mr. Trump thinks this is his way of getting the press on his side. Not a smart strategy. The press will continue to shut him down. Headline after headline, probe after probe, story after story.

Does the press get it wrong? Yes. Presumption and irresponsible prognosticating was in full display throughout the election, where certain news outlets showed a fondness for Hillary Clinton, perpetuating the claim that news media has morphed into a source of validation for the impassioned. In most cases, the media doesn't get it wrong. Its overall intent is to spell out what is happening in the world without prejudice. Objective journalism can be disputed. Can we ever achieve it? It's unlikely. But a cardinal rule among journalists is they strive for it. And that's what matters.

Mr. Trump's closest advisors have labeled the media the "opposition party" for questioning him. While questioning the boss is rare in the private sector, it doesn't hold water for the leader of the free world. The questions will keep coming. And the media will not let up.

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Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee on Feb. 2; Education, Youth & Libraries Committee on Feb. 2 at 7:30 p.m.; Senior Services Committee on Feb. 8; Parks and Recreation Committee at 7:15 p.m.; Traffic and Transportation Committee on Feb. 9; Veterans Committee on Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m.; Environment & Sanitation Committee on Feb. 14; Health & Hospitals Committee on Feb. 14 at 7:30 p.m.; and Housing, Land Use and Zoning Committee on Feb. 15. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.



Eroding Play Space on Mosholu Parkway

The dispute over the placement of trees in the middle of the Mosholu Parkway green space might appear to be an arcane bureaucratic conflict about notification and process. There are deeper issues at play, however, if you'll pardon the pun.

Because institutions and organizations in the neighborhood tend to favor the placement of the trees, they have been permitted to frame the issue as one in which their favored action wisely prevents the misuse of a valuable civic resource.

However, as one of the people who frequently used Mosholu Parkway -- for touch football games, playing catch with a baseball, teaching my younger son to ride his bike in a place where he'd not be hurt when he fell, working on sprints and drills during my sad and brief late 30s rugby career, all done there because the Oval was too crowded or was poorly lit at night -- I can assure you that it's the planters, not the players, who have reduced the value of that public asset.

Yes, the six- to 10-year-olds and dads who played a few hours of football there a few weekends a year might have torn up the grass. But

grass grows back. The tree planting, however, turned a public park--once useful to everybody--into what is now effectively just another highway median, a freeze-dried grass museum for the enjoyment of only those (hopefully few) local residents who like to look at trees from across three lanes of traffic and prefer the kids of the Bronx to play out of their line of sight. That's permanent, and that's a shame.

People who know about open space, and care about its preservation, understand that you have to maintain those areas in a way that sustains a constituency for its use. Whether it's an asphalt basketball court in the Bronx or a national park somewhere in Idaho, if people can't use it, no one will step up to defend it, to fight for resources to maintain it. Under the current policy, Mosholu has gained trees and lost users.

Having thrown more interceptions than completions on Mosholu Parkway over the years, I'll admit that the planting isn't the first bad play to occur there. But I do think it's the worst.

Jarrett Murphy
Norwood resident

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Letters should be 400 words max, and include writer's name. Anonymous letters will not be published, but names will be withheld upon reasonable request.



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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their thoughts on what should be included in the proposed \$85 billion New York City budget.



I think it's very important for the de Blasio Administration to fund transportation, education, health issues and children's health and education, and to fund local colleges. There isn't enough money being spent on higher education and money should also be allocated for senior citizens.

Grace Chanke
Norwood



This money should go to people in need, like people on public assistance because they really need it to help pay their rent and buy food. They should spend some of this money creating jobs and putting people back to work.

Fermin Torres
Bedford Park



They should direct some of this money to people with small business in the area. Jobs are number one because everyone is looking for a job. I think they waste money on a lot of things. [A]n example is the MTA. They put so much money into it, but it's not clean and it's not getting any better, and the price keeps going up. So it does not make sense. It's a problem.

Samb Conteh
Fordham



I think they're spending the money all right. The money should be spent on services for the people like the subway and the buses and the cleaning of the streets, and things like that. I think the services are good with the MTA, they provide a good service. I do think the mayor is spending too much money on politics and litigation.

Rafael Rodriguez
Kingsbridge



The government is losing money because immigrant citizens can't find work because too many illegal aliens are working and the owners of those businesses are getting rich and it's just not good. The money should be spent on health care because people don't have it. It should be \$20 to a doctor's visit, not \$100. The money should go to health care and education.

Melissa Thompson
Norwood

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"Hamilton" Actor Visits BCCS to Hear Anti-Bias Message

By DAVID CRUZ

Hours before Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th President of the United States, one of Broadway's staunchest critics against Mr. Trump visited the Norwood section of the Bronx to hear lessons of tolerance.

Brandon Victor Dixon, an actor who plays Aaron Burr in the popular Broadway musical, "Hamilton," and who garnered greater fame for delivering a measured, unprecedented message of tolerance to Vice President Michael Pence days after Election Day, came to Bronx Community Charter School on Webster Avenue to spread that message and to hear from students. "I love [the students] taking today to really focus on the many aspects of standing against bias, and united communities," Dixon told the *Norwood News*.

His visit happened on BCCS's Anti-Bias Day, where students presented projects illustrating gender and racial inequality, taking aim at a perceived nationalistic tenor set by Mr. Trump, a Republican, who was sworn in on Jan. 20. "The inauguration, him being elected, it's a lot of symbolism," Dixon told the *Norwood News*. "I see Donald Trump, in a lot of ways as a distraction."

Ushered from classroom to classroom, Dixon heard one lesson from Demara Ntiamoah-Agyekum, a 5-year-old who prepared a letter ready to be sent to national chains, claiming their toy aisles could do more to break gender stereotypes. "Where you going to send this letter to?" Priscilla Otero, Demara's kindergarten teacher, asked. "And what are we telling them? What's our message?" she asked. "That it's not fair," Demara replied.

While Dixon reserved more of a lighthearted tone to the school's lower grades, his talk with a large group of fifth, sixth, and seventh graders took a more sobering route. "How's everyone feeling about this new year and all the changes that are happening?" Dixon asked the crowd.

"Terrorized," one student volunteered to say. "Terrorized. Why do you feel terrorized?" Dixon asked. "'Cause I'm scared," the student said. "There are more peo-



Photo by David Cruz

"HAMILTON" ACTOR BRANDON Victor Dixon speaks to students at Bronx Community Charter School on Inauguration Day.

ple who want to live in a united, open level of progressive society," Dixon said, drawing applause. "Be excited about that."

The sentiment of fear wasn't as pronounced for Erick Diaz, a third grader, who drafted a letter to Daniel Snyder, part owner of the Washington Redskins, for its continued stereotypical portrayal of Native Americans through its official team mascot. When asked who his new President was, Erick knew it was Mr. Trump, though he was cautiously optimistic of his presidency.

"He says he's going to make America great again, but on the Instagram and social media he's just putting horrible comments about people," Erick said. "When he's at home he can be whatever he wants, but when he's President, he has to take some responsibility."

Leahnell Ramirez, 13, a seventh grader who explored what she labeled gender inequalities in Walt Disney films, was also on the fence over her true conclusion of Mr. Trump. "Maybe he was doing all that stuff for publicity, like all the crazy stuff, but maybe he'll be good, maybe he'll be bad, we just don't know yet," Leahnell said.

BCCS is home to a largely diverse K through 7th grade student body that's home to black, Latino, and Muslim students, reflecting a large part of Norwood's overall population. After Election Day, Sasha Wilson, the school's principal, remembered the school in a

state of apprehension and wanted to ease those anxieties. "We want our kids to know it's not a time of hopelessness when they can really double down on what they really value," Wilson said.

Indeed, in the Bronx, Mr. Trump's ascension to the White House has stoked fears and anx-

iety in a borough that's overwhelmingly and loyally Democratic. Tabitha Guzman, a mother whose fifth grade son is enrolled at BCCS, remembered when Mr. Trump mocked a disabled news reporter. "If he feels that way about that man, what would he feel about my son?" Guzman asked. "[My son] knows that things can change with a President like Trump, but I just tell him keep hope alive and continue to pray for that man," Guzman said. She initially said her other son had an asthma attack the day Mr. Trump was elected.

On Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse, Democratic state Sen. Gustavo Rivera, who boycotted the inauguration, joined a coalition of healthcare and civic groups to demonstrate power in localities that can oppose Mr. Trump's policies. "I do not want him to be successful," Rivera said of Mr. Trump, referring to him as the "Orange Madness." "Because this President's success is utter destruction for the communities I care about."

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CRIME FILE

By DANIELA BEASLEY

Domestic Dispute Escalates



The NYPD needs help finding this man in connection with an incident involving a gun on Thursday, Jan. 12. Police say the suspect, identified as Baez Lisandro, got into an argument with a 34-year-old woman inside a University Avenue apartment, when he threatened her with the firearm. Lisandro is described as a Hispanic male, approximately 24 years old, 5'7" tall, and has brown eyes and black hair.

Bicycle Thief on the Loose

A suspect is on the run from police for allegedly stealing a bike on Dec. 30. That Friday at around 4 a.m., the suspect forced open the front door of a residence, located in the area of Valentine Avenue and Bedford Park Boulevard, took the victim's bicycle and left, heading in an unknown direction. He was last seen wearing a hooded jacket and a knit cap.

Metro Station Robbery

The NYPD is asking the public for help in identifying individuals shown on surveillance video in connection with a robbery that was reported on Dec. 26, at the University Heights Metro North train station. At around 6:30 a.m., a 66-year-old victim was entering the train station, on the Univer-



sity Avenue Heights Bridge, when he was approached from behind and put into a bear hug. Another suspect then took the victim's book bag. Both thieves then took off eastbound on West Fordham Road, with no injuries reported. The robbers are each described as a black male between 20 and 30 years old with black hair and each last seen wearing a black hooded jacket. The first is 6' tall with a medium complexion and last seen wearing black jogging pants and grey sneakers. The second is 5'4" tall and last seen wearing black pants and black sneakers.

Knife Attack in Bedford Park

Three individuals are wanted in regard to an assault that ended with a victim's pinky finger lobbed off. The incident happened on Jan. 21 at 3029 Briggs Ave. in Bedford Park. Police say that at around 11 p.m., the three individuals assaulted a 25-year-old male with machetes and a knife. The victim was taken

to a hospital and was treated for his severed pinky as well as lacerations to his arms and legs. He is in stable but critical condition. Each of the three attackers is described as a Hispanic male in his 20s. The first was last seen wearing a blue and white jacket, a blue baseball cap, and white sneakers. The second was last seen wearing a blue jacket, dark

colored baseball cap, white pants, and black sneakers. The third, who has a ponytail, was last seen wearing a black T-shirt, dark colored pants, and white sneakers.

Anyone with information on these crimes is encouraged to call CrimeStoppers at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). All calls are confidential.



79 Y.O. Attacked and Robbed



Police have released a photo of a suspect wanted for allegedly attacking a 79-year-old man from behind. The victim was entering the lobby of an apartment building on Bainbridge and DeKalb avenues around 7:15 p.m. on Jan. 19 when the suspect, described as a male Hispanic in his teens, came from behind and put him in a headlock, ac-

cording to police. The suspect threw the victim to the ground, and quickly took the victim's wallet and cellphone before taking off. The victim was rushed to Jacobi Hospital and treated for his injuries. The perpetrator was last seen wearing a blue hoodie, blue baseball cap, black pants, black shoes, and sporting a backpack.

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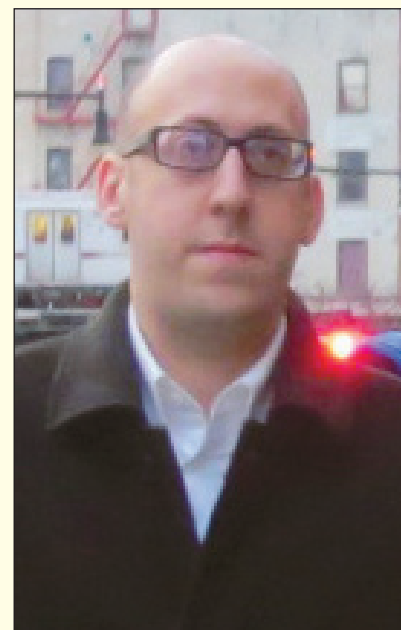
CB7 DM Out for Several Months

Community Board 7 is currently operating without a district manager, following suit with Community Boards 5 and 8, also without DMs.

Andrew Sandler (pictured), the CB7's district manager, has been out on medical leave since early January and it is unclear exactly when he will return. He's expected to be back within the next couple of months. In the interim, CB 7 will be run by Tom Lucania, director of community boards from the Borough President's office. He'll also take over DM duties at CB5 and CB8 until the DM seats can be filled.

"Community boards 5 and 8 are undergoing processes right now, so the DM seats won't be vacant for much longer," said John DeSio, spokesman for the Borough President's office, dispelling any belief that Lucania might become overwhelmed by the workload of watching over three different community boards.

With Sandler's medical leave overlapping with the upcoming meeting in February to address his position with CB7, the status of Sandler's probationary period as DM is unknown at this



time. All meetings and events held by CB7 will go ahead as scheduled, despite Sandler's absence. Although the board will be overseen by Lucania, any concerns, questions or other matters having to do with CB7 should still be dealt with by visiting their website at www.bronxcb7.info or by calling CB7's direct line at (718)-933-5650.

—Daniela Beasley

Bronx Electeds to Immigrants: We'll Protect You

By DAVID CRUZ

Amid President Donald Trump's controversial immigration stances that include erecting a wall along the US-Mexico border and cutting billions of dollars in federal funding to so-called "sanctuary cities," New York City among them, Bronx Democratic officials from all levels of government blasted the new policies as a show of unity against the Trump administration.

"[N]o other borough, no other county in the state of New York will suffer more from these cuts than the borough of the Bronx," Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. said, flanked by a cadre of Hispanic legislators at a news conference at Borough Hall.

Diaz noted that Mr. Trump's policies have stoked worries among undocumented immigrants, having noticed an uptick of complaints his office's official Facebook and Twitter have received. "When I go out to the streets there's a high level of anxiety," Diaz told the *Norwood News* shortly after the news conference. "What I'm telling people is we cannot continue to agonize, we need to organize."



Photo by Daniela Beasley

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ says it's in the city's DNA to welcome people from around the globe.

Among the dissenters is Bronx Councilwoman and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who attended a rally in Manhattan's Washington Square Park, and saying at a separate news conference, "I don't have time for fear. I want to defy, resist, and stand up."

On the federal level, Congressman Adriano Espaillat, representing Nor-

wood in the 13th Congressional District and the first Dominican-born legislator in the House of Representatives, said he's since reached out to Republican members in Congress to convince them to oppose Mr. Trump's strong stance on immigration.

"Some of them are not necessarily for this, and so we will have to wait to see how this plays out because

some of them are not necessarily as deeply rooted against this," Espaillat told the *Norwood News*. "The best approach is to confront him, and to oppose, and to bring him to the table, drag him to the table."

The Bronx is home to 250,000 undocumented immigrants, with the bulk originating from Mexico. Some have lived in this country for nearly a decade. The figure represents 50 percent of the total number of undocumented immigrants, which stands at roughly a half million.

Mr. Trump has threatened to cut \$8 billion in funding for New York City, prompting Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Democrat who has been severely critical of the president, to declare the move could undermine public safety. De Blasio warned that loss of funding can severely compromise security at Trump Tower, where First Lady Melania Trump and her son Barron are staying for the next few months.

Though he remains a frequent critic of de Blasio, Diaz stood in agreement with the mayor saying, "Now is the time to come together despite our political differences."

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NIGHTLIFE IN NORWOOD

The potential is there, say residents

By DANIELA BEASLEY

The familiar phrase, “ID please,” followed by the extended hand of a straight-faced towering bouncer with music drowning out conversation penetrating the door, could describe the scene of a typical night out in New York City. A ‘go ahead’ nod from the bouncer leads the way inside where people are dancing, smoking hookah and drinking, but not in the obvious Manhattan setting. Instead, they’re doing so in the Bronx, more specifically Norwood.

Norwood is now home to more Hispanic oriented eateries and stores which once fostered a much more Irish atmosphere with pubs that lined both sides of 204th Street. McDwyer’s Pub was the bar that seemed to outlast all of the changes Norwood has seen over the past two decades, but closed late last year.

Norwood has made room for three primary spots that make up nightlife in the neighborhood. Because of this, outsiders may be inclined to say that the music and nightlife scene in Norwood is non-existent, but according to staff and Bronxites alike, it still has a pulse, and endless possibilities to expand.

“I’ve been doing this for a long time and I’d say overall, the nightlife [in the Bronx] is growing,” explained Alissa Castro, a bartender at Lexa Bar and Garden.

Lexa Bar and Garden, located at 357 E. 204th St. would be considered the newest addition to the bar scene in Norwood. It opened around a year and a half ago diagonally across the street from Beso Lounge, a long-standing nightclub that used to be the only spot to go in the area. Beso, at 320 E. 204th St. is the oldest of the three popular places, open until 4 a.m. It lures customers from Lexa, which only stays open until 2 a.m.

“Yeah, there is definitely a night-



Photo by Daniela Beasley

LOUNGERS AT LEXA’S can expect to see Jasmine Hernandez (pictured) behind the bar.



Photo by Daniela Beasley

TEQUILAZ LOUNGE AT 3489 Jerome Ave. is among some of the nighttime bars Norwood’s nocturnal residents can frequent.

life in Norwood,” said Richie Calogio in between serving customers at Beso Lounge, where he’s been a bartender for the past year and a half. “There are bars around here and a lot of people are always in them so of course there’s a nightlife.”

Owners of the two bars, Eli Garcia (Beso) and Gino Pacheco (Lexa), were unavailable for comment.

Tequilaz, located at 3489 Jerome

Ave., is the only lounge that isn’t on 204th Street, but is conveniently located near the 4 subway train and is 10 minutes from the East 204th Street stop. The lounge was once home to Escape Lounge, which closed in early 2016.

“I come here [Tequilaz] when I want to relax and unwind. It’s the weekend and I want to be able to party, but I don’t always have the

money or time to go into Manhattan,” said Jonaly, a local resident. “I’m just glad we have more than only Beso here now where I can do that.”

The bar scene is there, but definitely in its early stages with little interest from business owners. But Jose Rodriguez, a bouncer who has worked at Beso Lounge for two years, says a bar should have more amenities to please people outside the Bronx.

“Around the Bronx, most clubs all need food to cater to everyone’s preferences. In Manhattan, you don’t need that. There are shops all around open late for food. But when you’re coming to the Bronx, you find there aren’t as many places to eat and they’re picky about what they want,” laughs Rodriguez, pointing to the buffet setup on the bar with the line forming in front of it. “Also most of the clubs and bars in the Bronx have hookah because people love their hookah around here.”

For Lexa, the hookah appears to have finally attracted customers from outside the neighborhood.

“Now, we get people from other areas; we get people from all over the Bronx,” said Jasmine Hernandez a bartender at Lexa’s. “It takes about a year for people to become familiar with you out here, so now people are really coming to us.”

Still, with these crutches, there’s an untapped market of locals who want to stay loyal to their borough when choosing where to enjoy a weekend night out.

“These places are away from the bad area, but still in the Bronx,” said Carlos Tapia, a local resident, on why he decided to come here for a Saturday night. “I like to stay in the Bronx to find the right type of place. It’s not as bougie as Manhattan, it’s just the right scale.”

The 411 on Bronx411.com

By SARAH STEIN KERR

Three years ago, serial entrepreneur Gino Pacheco tried out a new career: stay-at-home dad.

Pacheco, 40, a native Bronxite who started his first business at the age of 14, quickly became restless and began thinking about his next venture. "I always wanted to find things about the Bronx," said Pacheco. "I was on Google looking for stuff and I just couldn't find anything. I thought there was a void for that."

Last July, Pacheco launched Bronx411.com, a new Bronx-focused online directory that helps small business owners in the Bronx get more bang for their marketing buck — especially since it's free. Pacheco and his team have been helping member businesses from the 204th Street Bainbridge Merchant Association in Norwood get up and running on the site. So far a handful of businesses have set up their pages and are reporting small successes. For others, technology learning curves and a lack of time remain a challenge.

Pacheco's own business start-ups include real estate agencies, bars, including Beso Lounge and Lexa Bar and Garden on East 204th Street, and a handful of other successful ventures. But he didn't have any tech experience. So, being a go-getting en-

trepreneur, he taught himself how to build a website and pulled together a team to make his vision a reality.

On Bronx411, businesses can post their hours, a description, and pull in social media feeds from sites like Twitter and Facebook. Besides business listings, the site also has sections for Bronx news, jobs and events.

"Because Yelp and things like that are larger sites, the Bronx tends to get kind of drowned out," Nicole Perrino, creator of Bronxmama.com, a leading blog for Bronx parents, said. "We definitely need that one go-to place."

Early web traffic is ranging between 16,000 to 40,000 visitors per day, without any promotion. Pacheco plans to push the site to wider audiences in the coming months and then hopes to work with other merchant associations in the Bronx to get their businesses on Bronx411.

On East 204th Street, La Nueva Estrella restaurant used their page to set up a delivery deal on their lunch special. "It helps me with my promotion and getting the name of the business out there," Caroline Almonte, who manages online marketing for the restaurant, said. The restaurant has since seen an increase in traffic to their page and an uptick in lunch

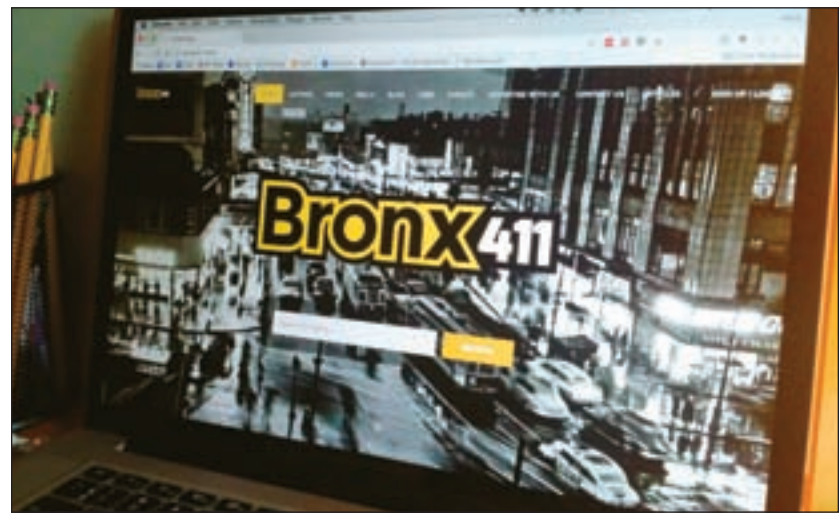


Photo by Sarah Stein Kerr

BRONX411.COM IS AN online directory for small businesses in the Bronx.

business.

Leroy Pharmacy, also an East 204th Street business, has been able to list its full range of services and picked up some "likes" on Facebook.

Melissa Lebron of Windows of Hip Hop, a non-profit focused on hip-hop education, has gained some media attention through her page on the site.

But for other small business owners, getting online has proved intimidating and hard to fit into their busy schedules.

Melissa Cebollero, senior director of community relations for the Montefiore Health System and the Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC, publishers of the *Norwood News*), provided support and helped secure funding for the project from the New York City Department of Small Business Services. Cebollero recognizes many small business owners simply don't have enough hours in the day. "It's hard enough to start a business, it's hard enough to start a business as a new American, and it's even harder to learn or

afford to really market yourself in a real way," she said. But in the age of the smartphone, she acknowledges that an online presence is rapidly becoming the norm. Not giving our local merchants an opportunity to compete in that new world puts them at a real disadvantage," Cebollero said.

To help more businesses get online and on Bronx411, Pacheco and his team regularly spend time setting up pages for small businesses and training them on how to use social media. "I am trying to teach these owners that don't have the capability of operating a computer," Pacheco said. "I am telling them, 'I'll teach your son; I'll teach your daughter how to do this. It's really simple.'"

In the future, Pacheco wants Bronx411 to reach people outside the borough as a way for them to rethink their perception. "I want people to understand that the Bronx is beautiful, the Bronx is smart, the Bronx is a great place to live and raise your family," Pacheco said.



Photo by Sarah Stein Kerr

GINO PACHECO, CREATOR of Bronx411.com at Lexa Lounge, a bar he co-owns on East 204th Street in Norwood.

Bedford Park Bldg. Up for Sale



Photo by David Cruz

THIS BUILDING THAT had been under construction for years, prompting complaints, is finally on the market. Realtors with Ariel Properties are selling the newly built seven-story property, 174 E. 205th St., off Mosholu Parkway South, for \$5.9 million. Marko Agbaba, director of Ariel Properties, called the build a "rare opportunity for both investors and owner-users."

Outreach Meetings Set for Proposed Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School

The proposed Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School recently held two community outreach meetings to provide information about the proposed school and to gather community input.

A third community meeting is scheduled in February at the Tolentine Head Start location at 2331 University Ave. Details about these meetings are posted on their website, CMCSCharter.org.

In addition to community meetings, the Cardinal McCloskey Charter School Committee has been speaking with local politicians and visiting schools and businesses to discuss the mission of the proposed school and gather feedback. There are many steps involved and the application and review process set by SUNY to obtain a charter is very stringent. Comprehensive plans, including the school curriculum, expected out-

comes and strong community support are all key factors in the application process.

Cardinal McCloskey Community Services (CMCS), the social services agency that provides foster care services for at-risk children as well as early childhood education programs in the Bronx, is striving to further help children in need by enhancing their educational opportunities.

CMCS has been a part of our Bronx community for years. Their programs and services that help children who have suffered trauma and neglect is at the heart of their work. Their foster care and prevention programs have helped thousands of children in the Bronx live safer, caring and healthier lives.

Each of their programs is designed to help improve the paths and opportunities for children. As an example, their Strategies for Success program is an educational and advocacy program designed specifically for children in foster care. Children in foster care face unique challenges and obstacles that leave them at a disadvantage to their peers in school. They face challenges that are intensified by the uncertainty in their home lives, the neighborhood influences around them, and the difficulty of living through and coming to terms with the trauma and tragedies they face.

Dropout rates for children in foster care at the high school level approach 50 percent. Yet not one child in their Strategies for Success program has dropped out of school since the program began in 2008.

A key component of the Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School will be the focus that will be placed on children in foster care. The school plans to have an array of on-site, wraparound support services so that most, if not all, of the child's needs can be taken care of at the school.

The plans are to open in September 2018 and initially serve kindergarten and first grade. Each year a new grade will be added until the school serves kindergarten through eighth grade.

If you have questions, please visit their website; cmcscharter.org or you can call them at (718) 402-0081, ext 227.



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Stakes H-i-g-h in PS 94 Spelling Bee

By **DEBORAH CRUZ**

There was a hush as each contestant spelled the words in front of their classmates. But then it followed with a burst of cheers from each classmate sitting in the auditorium of PS 94, which also included many supportive parents witnessing an annual tradition play out at the neighborhood school.

One of the parents was Isabel Jimenez who was there cheering on her daughter Diana Leon. "This is a nice experience for the kids. It improves their vocabulary while having the support of the parents," said Jimenez, whose daughter went all the way to round 14 before the word "caricature" put her out of the competition.

Andrew Singh, 9, was a crowd favorite not only among the students but also among many of the teachers. For every word he spelled correctly a thunderous applause followed. Singh, who reached round 18, surprised many when they learned of his learning disability. Singh spelled as many words correctly as a he could, going as far as giving himself a personal shout out a few times after his correct spelling. That was until he reached the word "acknowledge," which he misspelled. "We are really proud of him," said his teacher.

As the spelling bee continued past level 20 the words gradually became more difficult, with words such as "conceivable" and "desperate" to "monotony" and "differentials" challenging students. By level 23 there were only three contestants left: Brian Puma, 10; Mazeen Chawdhury, 9; and Shahrin Alfi, 10. It was at round 24 that Shahrin misspelled "equivalent" putting her in third place of the Spelling Bee.

By the end of the competition Brian and Mazeen remained. The last round was intense as the competition had changed, with the moderator challenging students' spelling abilities one word at a time instead of a grouping of words.

Brian's mother, Martha Niola, was sitting at the edge of her seat as a volunteer to the event and as number one fan of her son. "This is very exciting!" said Niola as she watched her son on the stage. Finally, with the word "glorious," Brian won first place at the spelling bee.

"I'm very happy," said Niola. "He studied very hard for this. He would study the words and I would test him every weekend."

The trio of finalists walked away with trophies, while all participants showed off participation medals.

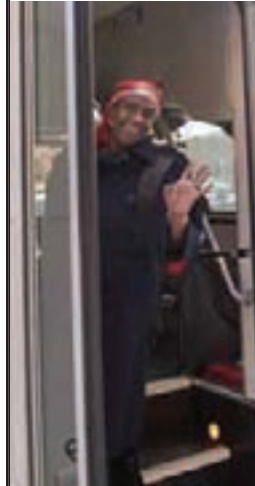


Photo by Deborah Cruz

(L-R) **MAZEEN CHAWDHURY**, 9; **Brian Puma**, 10; and **Shahrin Alfi**, 10; holding trophies as the winners of this year's PS 94 Spelling Bee. They share the moment with a police officer from the NYPD Community Outreach Team.

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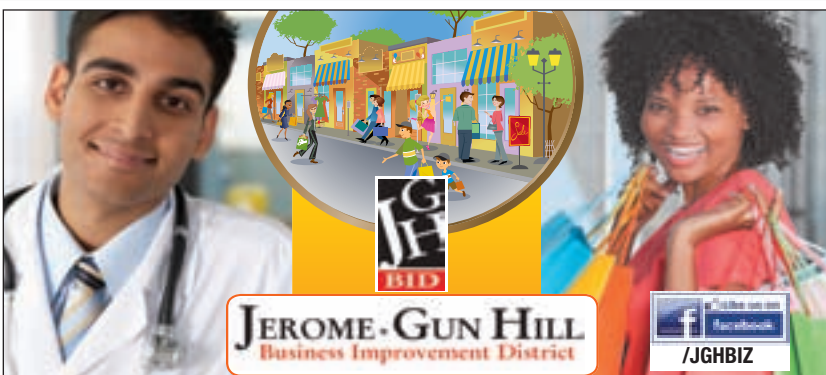
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Bronx Community Board 8 is seeking a district manager. Please view the full job description at www.nyc.gov/bxcb8. Email cover letter and resume to CB8resumes@gmail.com. Or mail to Bronx CB8 Search Committee, 5676 Riverdale Ave., Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471. Email or postmark no later than Feb. 17, 2017. Bronx Community Board 8 is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Flea Market Donations Sought

Donations are needed for the Bedford Mosholu Community Association flea market scheduled to be held on March 4. Bring new and used items (except clothing) to the BMCA office at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor) on Feb. 15 and 22 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Feb. 25 from 1:30 to 4 p.m., and March 1 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 367-2230 or email bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

Suited for Success

The Community Affairs Unit of the Office of the Bronx District Attorney is requesting donations of clean ready-to-wear suits, ties, dress shirts and shoes for for-

merly incarcerated inmates looking for work. Clothing can be dropped off in the lobby of 198 E. 161st St., from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays until Feb. 10. For more information, call (718) 509-2272.

Transit Plan Workshops

The NYC Department of Transportation invites the public to attend its transit plan workshop on Feb. 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Fordham University's Campbell Hall, 441 E. Fordham Rd. to share opinions on transit. For more information, log on to transit-plan.nyc.

Snow Laborers Sought

NYC seeks emergency

snow laborers to help remove snow and ice from bus stops, step streets, and other locations throughout the city this winter. Interested applicants must be at least 18, eligible to work in the USA and capable of performing heavy physical labor. Registration is at the DOT garage, Bronx Yard, Mosholu Avenue and Broadway (Van Cortlandt Park), weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring two small photos (1-1/2" square), original and copy of two forms of ID, and SS card or Tax ID number. Hourly salary is \$15; and \$22.50 after 40 hours are worked in a week.

NWBCCC Annual Meeting

The North West Bronx

Community and Clergy Coalition's annual meeting will be held on Feb. 4 from noon to 3 p.m. at Monroe College's King Hall's Conference Space, 2501 Jerome Ave. The event is potluck style so attendees are encouraged to bring a dish to share. For more information, contact Brigida Valenzuela at (718) 584-0515 ext. 323.

Free Tax Filing Service

Free income tax preparation for qualifying residents is available at University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) on select Wednesdays and Saturdays through Apr. 18 by appointment only. Tax preparers can also review your credit report,

provide financial advice, and freeze your rent. Must have all tax documents available before meeting with tax preparer. To learn the qualifications and to schedule an appointment, call (718) 933-2539 or www.unhp.org.

Free Tax Service at MMCC

Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave., offers free tax preparation services for families with an income of \$54,000 and under and individuals with income \$30,000 and under, Tuesdays through Fridays (call for times). For more information and details regarding required forms, and to make an appointment, call (718) 882-4000 ext. 209.

School for Autistic Children Opens at Old PS 51

By DEBORAH CRUZ

The doors to a once so-called "toxic school" reopened with a well-attended ribbon cutting for Quality Services for the Autism Community school (QSAC). Administrators told the *Norwood News* the school is no longer a health hazard.

"There is a whole new system in place, we have our testers come in quarterly and test our air and our water and we have passed all of our tests," said Susan Silvestri, director of the QSAC school, at the school's ribbon cutting on Jan. 26. "We are actually going to graduate to testing twice a year instead of four times a year."

The building, at 3200 Jerome Ave., had housed a lamp factory in the 1970s and later a garage. Trichloroethylene (TCE), a widely known industrial chemical, was heavily used in the cleaning of the site before becoming the home of PS 51x. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) leased the space beginning in the 1990s, converting the space into classrooms.

High levels of TCE, well beyond acceptable standards and invisible to many, were found inside classrooms in



Photo by Deborah Cruz

(L-R) DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR and Chief Operating Officer Corey Polshanski, QSAC President Yvette Watts, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Deputy Executive Director Lisa Veglia, Assembly Member Mark Gjonaj, and other Board members cut the ribbon at the opening of the QSAC school.

2011, prompting the New York City Department of Health to step in and close the building. The school was relocated to the Belmont section of the Bronx. The building, meantime, was remediated following pressure from PS 51 Parents United, a group of neighborhood parents.

"I am very conscientious about it," said Silvestri of the monitoring. "I

want to know everything about this building because I am responsible for it."

QSAC is a nonprofit group that receives funding from the NYC DOE to provide education to autistic children. Students as old as age 21 will be bussed to the school from all parts of the city. For QSAC, it's their first foray into the Bronx. It received high praise from

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who attended the ceremony and calling the school "one more thing we can brag about."

When asked about the TCE problem, the Deputy Executive Director of QSAC, Lisa A. Veglia, said, "I called the people that were responsible in the DOH and the [New York City Department of Environmental Protection] and asked them 'would you open a program here? Is it safe?' and they stood by their cleanup."

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS-DEC) cleared the building to be opened after building owners fulfilled its promise when under the Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP), a program focused on the cleanup of sites with exceeding levels of contaminated soil. The end goal is to stimulate redevelopment in economically damaged communities.

Following the closure of the school, a law proposed by Councilman Fernando Cabrera mandates the DOE publicly post test results the agency receives of schools that show high traces of toxic chemicals.

Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Soup for Polar Bears

BronxNet and BronxWorks present The Bronx Polar Bears 2017 Dip Against Homelessness, Feb. 11 at 11 a.m. at Orchard Beach, followed by hot soup for the participants. Registration is requested to help raise money for services provided by BronxWorks for the Bronx homeless. Donations are welcome for winter hats, gloves, socks and scarves. For more information and to register, call (646) 393-4002.

Onstage

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Songs of Freedom and Inspiration**, performed by pop/jazz Cody Childs and The Ladies of Soul, featuring gospel, soul and folk, Feb. 11 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents the following performances: **Taj Express: The Bollywood Musical Revue**, Feb. 4 at 8 p.m. and **The National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine**, Feb. 12 at 4 p.m., featuring classical music (tickets for each: \$25 to \$45; \$10/age 12 and under); and **Love in Salsa**, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m., featuring a variety of performers (tickets: \$50 to \$65; \$100/VIP). VIP includes pre-concert wine and hors d'oeuvres reception at 6:30 p.m. and the best seats in the house. For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 960-8833.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble presents **NY Philharmonic Clarinet Virtuoso Anthony McGill**, Feb. 12 at 2 p.m., in the home of Paula Luria and Bill Caplan, 761 W. 231st St. (\$90). For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

Events

The Williamsbridge Oval offers free **Women's Self Defense Workshops** for females ages 10 and over, Sundays through Feb. 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Learn self defense moves and discuss the threats faced by females. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

Bronx Community Board 7 Veterans Committee presents the first annual **Veterans Breakfast and Soaring Eagle Award Ceremony**, Feb. 10 from 9 a.m. to noon, at Lehman College's Music Building Faculty Dining Room. This event will honor and give thanks to those who have served and hear their inspiring stories; and honor those who strive daily to improve the lives of veterans in our communities. Continental



File Photo

CODY CHILDS AND The Ladies of Soul will perform at the Bronx Library Center on Feb. 11. The group includes (l-r): Roxann McDade, Lisette "Peaches" Armstrong-Smith, Debra Robinson, and Cody Childs (check out details under On-stage).

breakfast will be served to 75 veterans as well as present each with Certificates of Merit. For more information, call (718) 579-4260.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Coyote and Owl Fixtures and tricksters, to learn about these animals, followed by creating a tableau of simple paper puppets, Feb. 4 and 5; and Hearts for Flowers, Love for Manatees, to create flowery cards and gifts and make a stuffed manatee; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Nature Presentation**: Feb. 4: **Owl Discovery**, and Feb. 5: **Owls: Raptors of the Night**, both in WH House at 2 p.m.; to meet live owls; free with admission to grounds. 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.

Exhibits

The NY Botanical Garden presents **The Orchid Show**, Feb. 18 through April 9, at the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

The Bronx Documentary Center, 614 Courtlandt Ave. at 151st Street, presents **Whose Streets? Our Streets!**, a photo exhibit through March 5, Thursdays and Fridays from 3 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m., featuring New York events from 1980 to 2000. For more information, call (718) 993-3512.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the

following for children: **Hands-On Projects at 4 p.m.:** (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), Groundhog Puppet Making, Feb. 2; and Red Rectangle Robot Making, Feb. 9; **Valentine Card Making**: Feb. 5 at 3:30 p.m.; and **Family Storytime**: (ages 3 to 5; preregistration required), reading aloud and crafts, Feb. 11 at 11 a.m. Adults can join **Social Security: Medicare and Taxes**: to learn about benefits, Feb. 4 at noon; and **Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners at 10 a.m.:** Feb. 7 and 9. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for teens/young adults: **film**: "Suicide Squad," Feb. 11 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children: **Valentine's Day Party**: (ages 5 to 12), crafts and games, Feb. 14 at 4 p.m.; **Preschool Story Time and Craft at 11:15 a.m.:** (ages 3 to 5), featuring books, puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, Feb. 2, 9 and 16; and **My Life as Celia Cruz**: (ages infant to 12), story of her life with songs and audience participation, Feb. 13 at 3 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 Feb. 6 for the next publication date of Feb. 16.



File photo courtesy BronxNet Television

BBBBBBBBBBBB! THE ANNUAL Polar Bear Plunge at Orchard Beach takes place Feb. 11 and it's expected to invigorate the swimmers (see details under Editor's Pick).

District 10's Need for a School

(continued from page 1)

impede a child's ability to learn.

Creating more seats stands as a proposal supported by Community Board 7, whose boundaries mostly overlap with School District 10, one of the more heavily crowded school districts in the city. The congestion is one reason why the Board placed the need for a new school as the number one priority in the Register of Community Board Budget Requests, a report that lists community needs in order of importance. The request was one of 20 appeals the Board made to the city.

"Currently, 11 out of our 14 grade schools are operating over capacity, with several of these schools severely over capacity. Our community is experiencing a large increase in residential development with hundreds of planned housing units across the district," read the report. "As a result of these new developments, school overcrowding will continue to become a larger issue unless new grade schools are built immediately."

Community Board 7 chair Adaline Walker-Santiago presented

the needs at a Borough Board meeting on Jan. 26. She told the Norwood News the need for a school is great.

"Ideally, we always want more schools and more seats," Walker-Santiago said. "Now with all the development that's coming in, we're going to need more."

Residential development in Norwood and Bedford Park has crept up gradually over the last few years following the rezoning of Webster Avenue, where at least four buildings, two of which intend to house families, are currently under construction. With the de Blasio Administration prioritizing the building of 80,000 units of housing under the Housing New York plan, finding empty space for the building of a school will remain a struggle over the next few years.

"Which means, if you had a playground, you're not gonna have a playground," Shelton said.

New seats appear to be the city's preferred route, though it does not completely fix the issue. A 2016 capital projects report by the School Construction Authority (SCA), the

construction entity tasked to build seats, stated 5,692 seats are needed to fix the overcrowding issue within School District 10. So far, the SCA can only fund the building of 3,016 seats over the next five years, costing a total \$285 million, while leaving 2,676, or 47 percent of the total seats not funded at the moment. Most of the needed seats, 3,384, are in Kingsbridge Heights/Norwood/Bedford Park.

"They're playing catchup, but they're getting further and further behind," Shelton said.

While funding comes from the city and added to the capital budget, New York City Council Members can earmark their capital monies toward new seats. Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose 14th Council District overlaps with the beleaguered School District 10, is among those who've set aside funds, but he told the Norwood News there's simply no room for these new seats.

"Even though [SCA has] money for 3,000 seats they don't identify locations," Cohen said. Funds for his project could therefore sit in

escrow for a while.

Still, seats are better than nothing, according to parents picking up their kids at PS 56, a Norwood school that recently opened a state-of-the-art annex that added some 500 seats to the elementary school. But they would rather see a new school, which could take years to build.

For Pilar, the parent of a student, a school is the better route. After all, there are 30 kids to her son's first grade class, which she feels is too much (according to contract agreed upon by the United Federation of Teachers, 32 kids to a class is an acceptable number). "The problem would be where [to build] because there's no space here in this neighborhood," she said. "We don't have empty space."

A resident who went by Marcia S. would like to see a new school building, but prefers a charter school. "It's less kids and more fun to learn," she said.

The New York City Council is expected to hold hearings on the budget in the next few months.

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Ridgewood Savings Bank invites you to attend a **FREE** **Tax Preparation Day** for eligible residents of the Bronx



You are eligible for a FREE 2016 tax preparation if you are single with no dependents and earn less than \$30,000, or you file with dependents and earn less than \$54,000.

You must bring with you:

- ☐ Photo IDs
- ☐ Social Security Cards or ITIN for everyone named on the Tax Return
- ☐ W-2 and/or 1099 Statements for all jobs held in 2016
- ☐ If claiming child care expenses, bring documentation and care provider Tax ID Number
- ☐ Last year's Income Tax Return and any other relevant tax information
- ☐ Form 1095A (if applicable)
- ☐ Bank account information for direct deposit (account and routing numbers)



Space is limited • Call today to make an appointment

2 DATES AVAILABLE:

Saturday, February 11, 2017 & Sunday, February 12, 2017

10:00am - 4:00pm

3445 Jerome Avenue, Bronx • (718) 881-3430

www.ridgewoodbank.com

Tax preparation services are provided by Ariva, a non-profit organization. Ridgewood Savings Bank makes no representation regarding and is not responsible in any way, for the Ariva tax preparation services. 2016 Federal & NYS Tax Returns prepared by an IRS Certified VITA Volunteer Preparer.

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