



NORWOOD NEWS

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BRONX BARRIERS:
KNOWING YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS | PG. 9

RENT ROLLS QUESTIONED

Bedford Park housing group questions legitimacy of tenants' rent



Photo by Adi Talwar

SALLY DUNFORD, EXECUTIVE Director of West Bronx Housing (r), and her colleague Andrew Laiosa (l), compile rent history forms alleging inconsistencies in rent rolls.

By DAVID CRUZ

A Bronx tenant's advocacy group claims landlords may be skirting the rules by not showing rent-stabilized tenants rent history forms. They're also claiming the state agency tasked to track these rent histories fails

to thoroughly double check whether a landlord's rent increase on a tenant is justifiable.

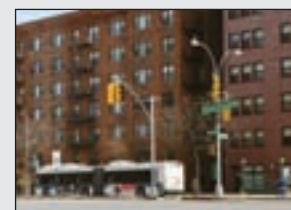
West Bronx Housing, headquartered in Bedford Park, has since been collecting these statements dubbed FL/DR-1.0 forms to pick up patterns while en-

listing the help of elected officials. The group has now zeroed in on an apartment building in Riverdale, where rent histories are suspect. They're now requesting these forms to tenants living in Norwood and Bedford Park.

Sally Dunford, execu-

tive director of West Bronx Housing, has noticed an uptick in these suspect rent histories amid an affordable housing crisis that's making living in New York City, including the Bronx, almost impossible for the working class.

(continued on page 15)



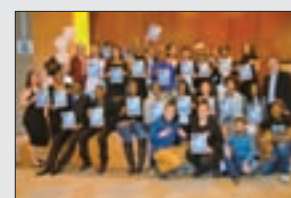
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OPINION

Turning the Tide on Homelessness

By DR. HERMINIA PALACIO

As a doctor, I learned to be relentless when treating my patients. So, I am proud of the relentless effort the de Blasio administration has put into taking on the homelessness crisis. As a New Yorker, I share the frustration of many that we haven't made enough progress.

We have already stopped the decades-long rise of people coming into shelters with an aggressive set of programs, including rental assistance, street outreach, affordable housing, and expanded legal services for those facing eviction. But we must do more.

Now, we will create a more rational and effective shelter system that responds to homelessness borough by borough, neighborhood by neighborhood, human being by human being.

New Yorkers will see fewer shelters. We will end the use of all cluster apartments by 2021 and all commercial hotels by 2023, reducing the number of shelter facilities by nearly 45 percent. New shelters will be cleaner, safer, and situated strategically to help residents stay near their old neighborhoods and supplied with services to help residents back into stable housing.

This isn't a quick fix, but it will turn the tide on a decades-old reality. From 1994 until 2014, the number of people living in shelters soared 115 percent. Years of rising rents combined with stagnating wages means that today 70 percent of those in our shelters are families; 34 percent of them have at least one member working.

Reacting to this crisis, the City sent people wherever a shelter bed was open, even if that bed was far from their old home. When shelters overflowed, people were sent to more isolated hotel rooms or apartments in buildings with renters. Far from their old lives, in shelters that lacked appropriate services, shelter residents had no easy path back to stability.

Our reformed shelter system keeps people in the boroughs they call home and offers career counseling, health counseling and more to help them back on their feet. This approach, coupled with other efforts, will reduce the number of homeless people in shelters by 2,500 over the next five years – the first reduction in a decade.



File Photo

THE CITY LOOKS to reduce the number of homeless individuals by 2,500 over the next five years. Here, a homeless man sleeps on a bench along Mosholu Parkway in 2015.

We are also committed to reforming how we notify communities about new shelters, giving advance notice of new facilities and creating an advisory board in every new shelter to handle local complaints. In turn, we are asking neighborhoods to be our partners, helping to make new shelter sites work

and helping to house people in need from their own community.

Working together, this city of 8.5 million people will make sure that no New Yorker has to face homelessness alone.

Dr. Herminia Palacio is deputy mayor for Health and Human Services.



Letters To The Editor

St. Ann School Should Convert

Now that the closing of St. Ann School at the end of the school year is official, it may be a good time to channel Alexander Graham Bell when he said, "When one door closes, another opens."

This can be a great opportunity for the Board of Education to consider using the building for a public school. With all the overcrowding in our local schools, such a large prop-

erty would be ideal. Building changes should be minimal since classrooms are already established. In addition, the attached church which has remained unused and empty for almost two years can be part of a possible future public school.

Perhaps it would help if parents of young children attending public school spoke out.

Judy Noy
Norwood resident

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on March 21 at Sister Annunciata Bethell Senior Center, 243 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. CB7 committee meetings will be held on the following dates at the board office, 229A East 204th St., at 6:30 p.m.: Economic Development, Community Relations & Long Term Planning Committee on March 28; and Website Acknowledgement & Media Committee on March 29. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

The **52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** will hold its monthly meeting at Part of the Solution, 2759 Webster Ave., on March 23 from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



Affordable Housing for Rent

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This building is being constructed through the **Inclusionary Housing Program** of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the **SLIHTC and LIHTC** programs of the New York State Department of Homes & Community Renewal.

Who Should Apply?

Individuals or households who meet the income and household size requirements listed in the table below may apply. Qualified applicants will be required to meet additional selection criteria. Applicants who live in New York City receive a general preference for apartments.

A percentage of units is set aside for:

- Mobility-disabled applicants (5%)
- Vision- or hearing-disabled applicants (2%)

Preference for a percentage of units goes to:

- Residents of **Bronx Community Board 7** (50%)
- Municipal employees (5%)

AVAILABLE UNITS AND INCOME REQUIREMENTS

50% AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) UNITS	Unit Size	Monthly Rent ¹	Units Available		Household Size ²	Annual Household Income ³ (Minimum – Maximum) ⁴
	Studio	\$734	1	→	1 person	\$26,503 - \$31,750
1 bedroom	\$786		2	→	1 person	\$28,320 - \$31,750
					2 people	\$28,320 - \$36,250
	\$943		4	→	2 people	\$33,737 - \$36,250
					3 people	\$33,737 - \$40,800
2 bedroom	\$943		4	→	4 people	\$33,737 - \$45,300
					3 people	\$39,223 - \$40,800
					4 people	\$39,223 - \$45,300
	\$1,090		2	→	5 people	\$39,223 - \$48,950
					6 people	\$39,223 - \$52,550
60% AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) UNITS	Unit Size	Monthly Rent ¹	Units Available		Household Size ²	Annual Household Income ³ (Minimum – Maximum) ⁴
	Studio	\$880	5	→	1 person	\$31,508 - \$38,100
1 bedroom	\$943		10	→	1 person	\$33,703 - \$38,100
					2 people	\$33,703 - \$43,500
2 bedroom	\$1,132		12	→	2 people	\$40,217 - \$43,500
					3 people	\$40,217 - \$48,960
	\$1,308		2	→	4 people	\$40,217 - \$54,360
					3 people	\$46,697 - \$48,960
3 bedroom	\$1,308		2	→	4 people	\$46,697 - \$54,360
					5 people	\$46,697 - \$58,740
					6 people	\$46,697 - \$63,060
80% AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) UNITS	Unit Size	Monthly Rent ¹	Units Available		Household Size ²	Annual Household Income ³ (Minimum – Maximum) ⁴
	Studio	\$1,174	2	→	1 person	\$41,589 - \$50,800
1 bedroom	\$1,258		4	→	1 person	\$44,503 - \$50,800
					2 people	\$44,503 - \$58,000
2 bedroom	\$1,510		4	→	2 people	\$53,177 - \$58,000
					3 people	\$53,177 - \$65,280
					4 people	\$53,177 - \$72,480
					3 people	\$61,680 - \$65,280
3 bedroom	\$1,745		2	→	4 people	\$61,680 - \$72,480
					5 people	\$61,680 - \$78,320
					6 people	\$61,680 - \$84,080

¹ Rent includes gas for cooking.

² Household size includes everyone who will live with you, including parents and children. Subject to occupancy criteria.

³ Household earnings includes salary, hourly wages, tips, Social Security, child support, and other income. Income guidelines subject to change.

⁴ Minimum income listed may not apply to applicants with Section 8 or other qualifying rental subsidies. Asset limits also apply.

How Do You Apply?

Apply online or through mail. To apply online, please go to nyc.gov/housingconnect. To request an application **by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to: The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418**. Only send one application per development. Do not submit duplicate applications. Do not apply online and also send in a paper application. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

When is the Deadline?

Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than **May 5, 2017**. Late applications will not be considered.

What Happens After You Submit an Application?

After the deadline, applications are selected for review through a lottery process. If yours is selected and you appear to qualify, you will be invited to an interview to continue the process of determining your eligibility. Interviews are usually scheduled from 2 to 10 months after the application deadline. You will be asked to bring documents that verify your household size, identity of members of your household, and your household income.

Español

Presente una solicitud en línea en nyc.gov/housingconnect. Para recibir una traducción de español de este anuncio y la solicitud impresa, envíe un sobre con la dirección a **The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418**. En el reverso del sobre, escriba en inglés la palabra "SPANISH." Las solicitudes se deben enviar en línea o con sello postal antes de 5 de mayo 2017.

简体中文

访问 nyc.gov/housingconnect 在线申请。如要获取本广告及书面申请表的中简体中文版，请将您的回邮信封寄送至：**The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418**。信封背面请用英语注明“CHINESE”。必须在以下日期之前在线提交申请或邮寄书面申请 2017 年 5 月 5 日。

Русский

Чтобы подать заявление через интернет, зайдите на сайт: nyc.gov/housingconnect. Для получения данного объявления и заявления на русском языке отправьте конверт с обратным адресом по адресу **The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418**. На задней стороне конверта напишите слово "RUSSIAN" на английском языке. Заявки должны быть поданы онлайн или отправлены по почте (согласно дате на почтовом штемпеле) не позднее 5 май 2017.

한국어

nyc.gov/housingconnect 에서 온라인으로 신청하십시오. 이 광고문과 신청서에 대한 한국어 번역본을 받아보시려면 반송용 봉투를 **The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418** 으로 보내주세요. 봉투 뒷면에 "KOREAN" 이라고 영어로 적어주세요. 2017 년 5 월 5 일까지 온라인 신청서를 제출하거나 소인이 찍힌 신청서를 보내야 합니다.

Kreyòl Ayisyien

Aplike sou entènèt sou sitwèb nyc.gov/housingconnect. Pou resevwa yon tradiksyon anons sa a nan lang Kreyòl Ayisyen ak aplikasyon an sou papye, voye anviwop li gen adrès pou retounen li nan: **The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418**. Nan dèye anviwop la, ekri mo "HATIAN CREOLE" an Anglè. Ou dwe remèt aplikasyon yo sou entènèt oswa ou dwe tenbre yo anvan dat me 5, 2017.

العربية

تقدم بطلب عن طريق الإنترنت على الموقع الإلكتروني nyc.gov/housingconnect للحصول على ترجمة باللغة العربية لهذا الإعلان ولنموذج الطلب الورقي، أرسل مظروف يحمل اسمك وعنوانك إلى: **The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418**. على الجهة الخلفية للمظروف، اكتب باللغة الإنجليزية كلمة "ARABIC". يجب إرسال نماذج الطلبات عن طريق الإنترنت أو أختتمها بختم البريد قبل 5 مايو، 2017.



INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their thoughts on President Donald Trump's revised Executive Order calling on a temporary ban of citizens from six largely Muslim countries.



It's basically the same thing. He's still targeting certain countries, even though Iraq is no longer on the ban, but it's really the same thing. It's just that this time he's going through the proper protocols. I support protecting our borders and I believe there are rules, there are ways to come into this country. However, I don't think it should just target certain countries and not just mainly minority countries.

Marie Destin
Norwood



They just have to check people who are applying for visas, check their records if they've been a criminal or if they've been with any kind of terrorist group. Terrorists don't just come from the Middle East; they can come from anywhere in the world. You shouldn't just split families because I have my two kids who are U.S. citizens and their mom is stuck in Africa, not even in Yemen. I've paid \$70,000 just to keep them eating for one year. Imagine if I could have spent that \$70,000 here in America.

Mohamad Quteibi
Bedford Park



I feel that it should not be the way it is. I feel that people should be able to come in when they want. I don't feel that it supports America. I feel that it mostly hurts America because the United States is based on people coming back and forth since the beginning of time. I've heard that travel to America is down and it's hurting the economy.

Ronald McDaniel
Throggs Neck



i think in a way it's good because illegal immigration is making the economy drop. You see all of these people are making their money here and they're sending all of the money that they make here and send it to their countries, and it's hurting the economy. I didn't vote for Trump, but some of his ideas I support.

Juan Larregui
Soundview



I think the travel ban really doesn't work for a lot of people, but unfortunately these things do happen and if you don't have any money or a green card you're in trouble. I really don't support it.

Walter Ramirez
Parkchester

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To Stem Double Standard, Twitter Account Takes on Placard Abuse

By DYLAN CROLL

During a New York City Council hearing last year, the NYPD addressed claims over the abuse of police placards displayed on a civilian car's dashboard, indicating that the owners are police officers or emergency personnel looking to avoid getting a ticket.

The police asserted it was a very minor problem of infrequent occurrence. Little did they know that a skeptical audience member was watching with every intention of holding them accountable, going on to create a Twitter page wholly dedicated to tracking abuse of police placards.

Since early 2016, the "Placard Corruption" page has almost 5,000 followers and 6,000 tweets. Its feed is laden with photos that exhibit NYPD placards displayed on a civilian car so owners can skirt traffic laws, creating a double standard by law enforcement sworn to uphold the law. These infractions, sent directly to the NYPD's official Twitter handle, include blocking fire hydrants, parking on sidewalks, blocking crosswalks, and parking on alternate side days.

On top of parking infractions, Placard Corruption is known to also take offense to illegal plastic covers on license



Screen Shot

THE PLACARD CORRUPTION SITE is frequently filled with posts involving police officers or emergency personnel who exploit the powers of a placard, according to its network of users.

plates, which can be seen head on, but not at an angle, making it tougher for enforcement cameras to identify the registered owner. These covers are illegal in New York State. And though Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill allegedly took a public stance against them, a picture was posted on the Placard Corruption site showing a covered license plate in the parking lot of the NYPD headquarters.

"The only people with these covers are police officers because if a regular civilian does it, there are [Traffic Enforcement Officers] walking around every day and if they do it, they get a citation," says the creator of Placard Corruption, who asked to remain anonymous due to threats from purported police officers. "The NYPD won't let people do their job when it comes

to people who work for the department."

The network of Placard Corruption users has noticed particularly egregious examples of these transgressions within the 52nd Precinct borders, which cover Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights.

"Let's say a car is parked in front of a fire hydrant. They'll get the complaint, they'll go into their system, they'll put it in a response that is untrue. Let's say it's a blocked fire hydrant for example. They'll go in and they'll say that they responded and they didn't see any evidence of the parking violation," the founder says. "We'll have one of our people go back afterwards and there it'll be clear as day. No one could have missed it and they'll take pictures and they'll post it up..."

"Where does it stop?" Placard Corruption's creator asks, "Do these guys start fudging the truth whenever they want to put somebody behind bars as well? It really starts to erode the trust."

A request to the NYPD for comment was made, but remained pending as of press time.

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Elevator Planned For B/D Line Bedford Pk. Station

An elevator is coming to the Bedford Park B/D line train station.

The MTA revealed those plans at a Community Board 7 Transportation Committee meeting on March 9. They told members the lift will be installed at the center median of the Grand Concourse near Bedford Park Boulevard after reconfiguring the intersection with help from the city Department of Transportation. The plan requires no approvals from the board, though Transportation Chair Lowell Green backs the project, telling the *Norwood News*, "The more elevators we get, the better off we are."

Ridership on the B/D line has remained steady in recent years, thanks to attractions like the New York Botanical Garden and the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, which are within walking distance.

The news comes two years after the MTA installed an elevator at the Kingsbridge Road B/D station at the northeast corner of the Grand Concourse and Kingsbridge Road.

Construction of the new elevator is expected to take place sometime in 2018.

—David Cruz



Photo by Adeline Hanssen

MTA OFFICIALS TOLD members of Community Board 7's Transportation Committee it plans to install an elevator at the center median of the Grand Concourse near the B/D Bedford Park subway station (pictured).

Cohen Backs Fair Fares Act

On Monday, Feb. 13, a meeting was held by the New York City Council discussing ways to improve public transportation to impact the lives of New Yorkers under the so-called Fair Fares campaign. Among the supporters is Councilman Andrew Cohen.

Council Members argue the cost of a subway ride has been an issue for citizens, keeping them from job opportunities, education, cultural experiences, and more. The campaign looks to reduce the cost of a subway ride for low-income New Yorkers to as much as half price to ensure riders are able to travel affordably.

"The cost of public transit continues to increase while the quality of service does not. Many New Yorkers are being priced out of utilizing our public transit with one in four low-income New Yorkers unable to afford subway and bus fares."

—Christina Owusu-Ampaw

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Bx. Chamber of Commerce Honors Woodlawn Cemetery



Photo by Jessica Gordon

MITCH ROSE (2ND FROM R.), president and executive officer of Woodlawn Cemetery, accepts a plaque on behalf of Woodlawn Cemetery, named Non-profit of the Year by the Bronx Chamber of Commerce at its annual gala celebration on March 9. Rose stands with (l-r), Nunzio Del Greco, president of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce; Joseph Kelleher, chairman of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce; and WABC-TV meteorologist Dave Evans. Woodlawn was among some of the institutions honored at the annual gathering, with Montefiore Health System among the honorees.

Success at BMCA Flea Market



Photo by Miriam Quinones

NORWOOD AND BEDFORD PARK residents took time to browse through knickknacks at the annual flea market sponsored by the Bedford Mosholu Community Association. Books, housewares, and other items were on display at the market held on March 4 at Saint Mary's Orthodox Church of India. Barbara Stroncz, president of BMCA, characterized the daylong bonanza as a success.

**TO REPORT A
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With Kingsbridge School Set to Close, Parents Now Eye Norwood's BCCS

By ADELINE HANSSEN

Talk about a long shot.

The demand for entry into Bronx Community Charter School (BCCS) in Norwood has increased now that Tech International Charter School (TICS) in Kingsbridge will close at the end of the school year. Parents of the soon-to-close school hope to win the lottery for entry into BCCS.

But of the 28 applicants for the seventh grade class and 21 for the eighth grade class, only four of them may be allowed into the school, according to the school's co-founder. And that's if there are four slots indeed.

Of these applications, 19 come from students who are currently enrolled at TICS, falling within the overly crowded School District 10. After not meeting its goals, TICS's board of trustees voluntarily decided to close. According to Sasha Wilson, a co-director and co-founder of BCCS, the closure of TICS has led to "parents flooding our tours, desperate for middle school seats."

"The application process is governed by a law and so all charter schools accept applications from anyone and everyone and we're obligated to go out and recruit," said Wilson, "Once we hit our deadline, we stop taking applications and then we hold a lottery."

Parents apply despite being aware that students will be on a waiting list that grows by each year. "[T]here are hundreds of kids who will need sev-

enth and eighth grade seats in District 10 next year, many of whom live in the *Norwood News* readership area," said Wilson. "The dozen or so families who have come here are just a small piece of the very complicated question of how you find seats for all of these kids when their school no longer exists."

After TICS closes, there will be five charter schools remaining in District 10, including BCCS. The rest include Atmosphere Academy Public Charter School (AAPCS), Charter High School for Law and Social Justice, International Leadership Charter School and the combined New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science and New Visions Charter High School for Humanities.

BCCS, the only K-8 school in the district, was founded in 2008 by local educators and families. It expanded to a middle school in 2015. About 50 kindergarten students are accepted from an application pool of 200 to 500 prospective students.

According to Wilson, the lottery is random, but with "a certain set of preferences," which include siblings of current students and students who live within the community school district. The results of the lottery are made in a public event, and families of potential students are invited to come.

The 19 TICS applicants will be entered into this lottery if any spots open up for the fall.

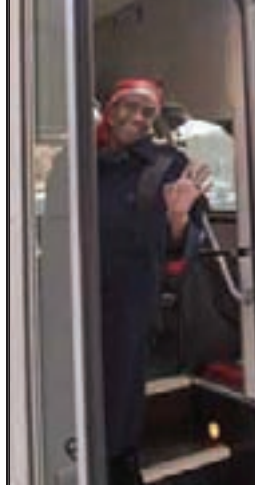


Photo by Adeline Hanssen

BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

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Before Shutdown, St. Ann's School Teachers Demand Answers

By DAVID CRUZ

Gerri Gagliardi, a third grade teacher at St. Ann's School, didn't say much to convey the sense of grief over news that the Catholic school she's taught in for a decade will close. Her hazel-green eyes did most of the talking.

The same went for Tracy McGovern, Robbin Vails, and Sylvia Rini, all teachers at the parochial school and stricken with anger as they continued processing the Archdiocese of New York's decision to close the school. The school is co-located with the Shrine Church of St. Ann, which closed its doors in August 2015 for financial reasons, according to the Archdiocese. These days, the church inside has remained "just a shell," as Rini put it. The parish, meantime, merged with St. Brendan Church a mile away.

Speaking to the *Norwood News*, the foursome couldn't grasp why a school that's shown increased enrollment, fostered community, and infused a sense of spirituality in young children would suddenly be picked for closure.

"What we think is unfair is that we're not being closed because of anything we have done," Rini said. "It's not poor test scores, it's not an enrollment that's dropping. We were on a growth spurt."

For Vails, the fix was already in. "We're just told four months before school ends, so even if there was a possibility that we could salvage ourselves, we don't have any time to do it," Vails, who teaches first grade, said.

The results, teachers argue, would be pernicious to the young ones, and particularly devastating to its seventh grade class forced to relocate at a critical juncture in their life.

A cloud of heartache now consumes the school. Its principal, Ajeia Beebe, a year and a half into the job, was once enthusiastic over new directions she could take with the school. These days, she's adrift, according to teachers. "She was hired when the church closed that summer," Rini said. "[T]his woman has done so much in the year and a half. And I feel like she was lied to. I feel like this was a given when the church closed. It's made itself clear now, that this was already in the works, that this was going to happen."

For McGovern, who teaches sec-



Photo by Adeline Hanssen

PARENTS OF STUDENTS of St. Ann's School walk their children out of the Catholic school that's set to close at the end of the school year.



File Photo

ARIEL WILLIAMS of St. Ann's School dons a homemade helmet to play Neil Armstrong during a "wax" museum presentation in spring of 2014.

ond grade, it's a crucible that's rattled her faith. She's drafted a letter to Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, venting over the decision to close an esteemed school four months before the end of the academic year.

"Many of us are feeling betrayed and shunned by this whole system," McGovern wrote.

The children have also drafted letters to the Archdiocese, pleading to keep the school open. The Archdiocese has reversed its decision on school closures in the past, though reversals seldom happen.

But teachers have kept a positive veneer for the sake of the students. Guarantees were made that the

teachers will be reassigned, though they were told their paychecks will decrease and their tenure status revoked, the result of an agreement between the Archdiocese and the Federation of Catholic Teachers, the union representing Catholic school teachers.

"I wind up going backwards," McGovern said, estimating she may lose \$2,000 a year.

St. Ann's School is one of three schools the Archdiocese decided to close by the end of the school year. Diocesan officials offered a tepid explanation to justify closing St. Ann's School, simply citing that it cannot continue to "educate students in a school where a significant portion of the facility is unutilized."

The timing of St. Ann's School's impending closure comes within the two-year anniversary of the church's closing. The group noted that canon law dictates that a church needs to be vacant for two years or de-sanctified before diocesan officials can put the property up for sale. With the two-year mark approaching, teachers suspect diocesan officials of lining up interest to sell the property right as the church approaches its two-year anniversary. Beebe had hoped that the empty space could've been converted into a gymnasium for children to play in, rather than the parking lot.

A review of property records through Property Shark shows the four-story, 21,375-square-foot lot to be valued at just over \$3.2 million. In most cases, the property for defunct Catholic schools are typically leased to the New York City Department of Education. A review by the *Norwood News* shows that of the six Bronx Catholic schools the Archdiocese announced would close in 2013-2014, three have or will be converted to a public or charter school. The rest have remained vacant.

A spokesman for the Archdiocese said the school closed because it was not operationally and logistically feasible to keep the school open without an active church. The spokesman added that although diocesan officials issue a closure, which was not motivated by a desire to sell the property, it's up to the head of the parish to decide the fate of a closed school.

Adeline Hanssen contributed to research for this article.



BRONX BARRIERS:

Knowing Your Legal Rights

Part 3



The Norwood News and WFUV continue their five-part series profiling ongoing challenges impacting the Bronx.

By REBECCA LEWIS of



Leviticus Mitchell's life could have taken a different turn had he known his rights. Mitchell, who is 22, was just 14 years old when he entered the criminal justice system, arrested on a gun possession charge. He was living in the Crotona section of the Bronx and said he was on his way to the local precinct to drop off a gun he had found for a gun buyback program. But a recent stabbing in the area had increased police presence and when Mitchell saw some cops, he panicked.

"I knew I had a weapon on me and that I was trying – I didn't want to pull out a weapon and get shot or anything like that. So I was scared, so I ran," Mitchell said. "I'd rather go to jail than be dead."

When the police saw Mitchell running, they chased him, arrested him, and brought him to the precinct. There, he said the police questioned him for a long time until he finally gave a false confession and admitted to a crime he didn't commit. Mitchell would spend the next five years in prison.

At the time of his arrest, Mitchell didn't realize the police weren't allowed to question him without a parent present, given that he was a minor. And he has learned since that the first thing he should have done was ask for a lawyer before he said anything to police.

Mitchell learned a hard lesson about the law and his rights, one that might have been avoided if he had known them. The Bronx Defenders, a non-profit group offering free legal defense services to Bronx residents, holds know your rights workshops hoping to prevent outcomes like Mitchell's. Walter Rodriguez is charged with organizing these sessions. He said at the start of every single one, the trainer asks five true or false questions on police interactions.

I have to speak with a police officer if he or she wants me to.

If a police officer tells me I'm not being detained, I can walk away.

If I am a non-citizen, I have to tell police what my immigration status is.

It doesn't matter if I consent to a search

or not.

If police ask me questions at the precinct, I should respond.

With the exception of question two, all the other questions are "false." But Rodriguez said residents often get the answers wrong. He said "90 percent of the time" people think that if a police officer wants to talk to you, they have to talk to them.

But simply knowing your rights is not enough, according to Stanley Richard, executive vice president of Fortune Society. The organization helps former inmates reenter the community and offers alternatives to incarceration. Richard said he has been arrested multiple times and each time, learns more about how to interact with police.

"My first arrest, I was busy trying to tell them I didn't do it. And what I've learned is everything I said to them, when I got in front of a judge, the district attorney was repeating it," Richard said. "So I learned after that interaction you don't talk to the police; you don't try to tell them your story because there is no 'your side' of the story. The only thing they're going to do is they're going to document it and they're going to use it against you in court. And they say that in your Miranda Rights, but your first interaction, you're not thinking about that."

Richard said a resident from an area like the Bronx, a borough largely affected by broken window policing, is much more likely to interact with police than in other parts of the city. He said knowing your rights goes beyond simply knowing your rights, but understanding the best ways to



Photo by Rebecca Lewis

LEVITICUS MITCHELL (PICTURED) spent five years in prison after he said he made a false confession while under pressure from the NYPD.

exercise those rights when interacting with police. Richard said that understanding happens from experience. His main piece of advice is what he and Mitchell learned after their first arrests: "I want to talk to my lawyer."

Kurame James is one such criminal defense attorney who works for the Bronx Defenders. James noted if a person or client hadn't interacted with police before, knowing their rights is sometimes limited. But those with past interactions know far more. For James, the issue comes down to whether police respect those rights.

"I have had plenty of clients who initially stated their rights when they were on the street, when they actually followed what they were supposed to do," James

said. "And instead of their rights being protected, they were beaten, they were tackled."

James said the burden should not be on "people who do not have the power in these situations to have to assert their rights, manage the entire situation, deescalate aggression between officers, and try to preserve their life at the same time."

Bronx Councilman Ritchie Torres wants to remedy this through a bill he introduced in 2014 called the Right to Know Act, where officers would need to identify themselves and explain the reason for an encounter. The officer would need to formally ask for consent to search while explaining the person's right to refuse.

"Without the Right to Know Act, the burden falls on the civilian to ask the officer 'Who are you? Why are you stopping me?' And I worry if it's not proactive... you could risk provoking the officer," Torres said. "I see an affirmative obligation on the part of the police officers to identify themselves and explain the reason for an encounter as a way to deescalate the exchange, and to set a tone of mutual respect."

The City Council didn't vote on the bill, but brokered a deal with the NYPD to include aspects of the Right to Know Act in their official NYPD handbook. Torres said the agreement involved a stripped down version of the bill's proposals that fails to cover the majority of police interactions that would be covered under the bill. He also said without the force of law, enforcing the policies is optional for the NYPD.

Since 2011, stop-and-frisk tactics have substantially dropped throughout New York City. In 2015, police stopped people 22,939 times compared to 685,724 times in 2011. In 2014, the most recent year with borough data, 6,823 people were stopped. But the stops resulted in 1,730 arrests. That's more than Brooklyn, the city's most populous borough where 13,371 stops resulted in 1,511 arrests. This coincides with data from the same year showing the Bronx has among the highest rates of incarceration in the city.

The NYPD had not returned a request for an interview by the time this publication went to press.

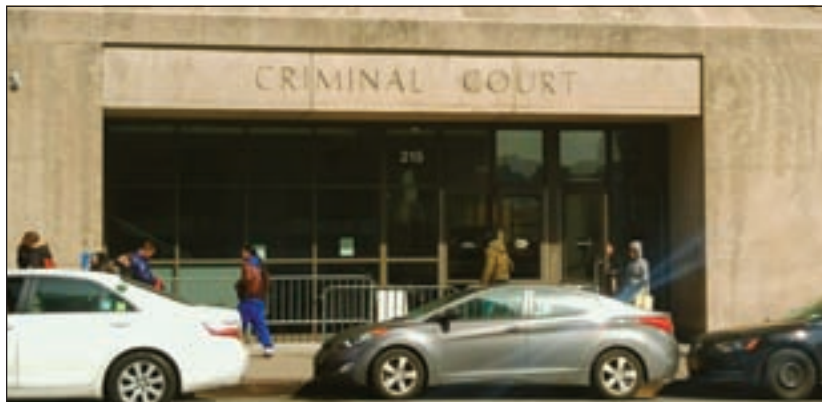


Photo by Rebecca Lewis

HIGH NUMBERS IN arrests coincide with the backlog of cases at the Bronx Criminal Courthouse, though the number of delayed cases has significantly declined over the last year.

CRIME FILE By DAVID CRUZ



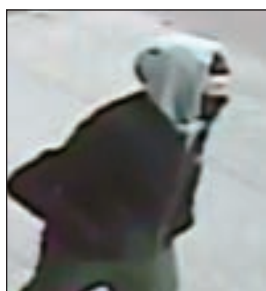
Elderly Man Attacked

An 88-year-old man was attacked on a Bedford Park street on March 6. Police say the victim was walking at the intersection of Briggs Avenue and East 196th Street when a young man between the ages of 15 and 20 randomly attacked him, hitting the victim in the face and taking off on foot. Nothing was stolen and the victim turned down any medical attention at the scene. The suspect (above) is described as a male Hispanic with a medium complexion, brown eyes and black hair. He was last seen wearing a dark blue jacket, blue hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans and black and white sneakers.

Stray Bullet Hits 5-2

Police are scratching their heads over who fired a bullet into the back of the local 52nd Precinct stationhouse during the overnight hours of March 2. Deputy Inspector Peter Fiorillo, the precinct's commanding officer, said no one was hurt. Police are still investigating.

of the thieves was seen wearing a face mask.



Cops Hunt

Shooting Accomplice

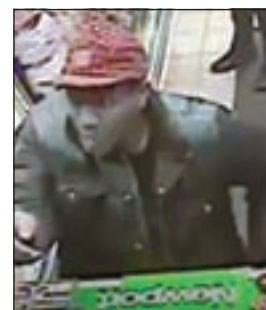
A person in connection to a shooting that happened on Feb. 8 in front of 240 E. 194th St. in Bedford Park remains on the run, and police are looking for him. Marcos Figueroa (pictured below) is described as a black Hispanic, standing at 6' 2", weighing roughly 190 pounds and has black hair. He hasn't been seen since the shooting.



Knife Wielder at Large

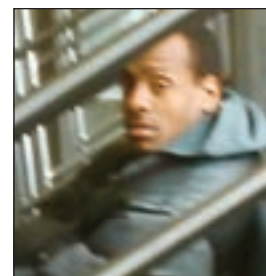
Police continue their search for a man wanted for stabbing an 18-year-old inside a bodega during the overnight hours of Feb. 21. Police say the suspect entered the bodega at 77 E. Kingsbridge Rd. and made threatening gestures to the clerk. He was captured

in surveillance video showing off two knives, then turning to the victim, who was off screen, and stabbing him. The suspect (pictured below) is described as black, and last seen wearing a black jacket, and a red baseball cap.



Subway Perv Wanted

A man captured on video below is suspected of exposing himself to a woman on board a #4 northbound train. Police say it happened on Feb. 19 just after 11 a.m. just as the train was approaching the Moshulu Parkway train station. The man is described as black between the age of 40 and 50 years old, and last seen wearing a black winter jacket, gray hooded sweatshirt underneath, dark pants, and sneakers.



Anyone with information with regard to any of these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS or for Spanish 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging on to the Crime Stoppers Website at WWW.NYPD-CRIMESTOPPERS.COM or texting their tips to 274637 (CRIMES) then enter TIP577.

Albany Hails Monte Surgeons



Photo courtesy Will Schwartz

DR. JAMES GOODRICH of Montefiore's Pediatric Neurosurgery Department (with beard) stands with Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (center) in Albany on Feb. 25. Dinowitz presented a proclamation to Dr. Goodrich and his medical team of staffers for successfully performing a medical procedure that surgically separated Jadon and Anias McDonald, twins conjoined at the head.

"Ghost Gun" Bill Introduced by Espaillat

A Bronx representative wants to make so-called "ghost guns" disappear.

"[They] are called ghost guns because they are oftentimes completely untraceable, assembled using a receiver that does not have a serial number, and are almost impossible to be tracked by law enforcement," Congressman Adriano Espaillat, who represents Norwood and has introduced a bill to close the loophole, said. "These guns are more often used in violent crimes and pose serious safety concerns to our communities and law enforcement."

Espaillat announced the introduction of the Ghost Guns Are Guns Act on March 1, with Illinois Congressman Brad Schneider co-sponsoring the bill.

Under current law, people can purchase gun-assembly kits online and at stores without a screening process. According to Espaillat, this bill will expand background checks to include buyers of these kits.

Espaillat called for the crackdown on "ghost guns" amid an increase in gun violence throughout the Bronx so far this year. There have been 32 shooting incidents reported in the borough, compared to 24 in the first couple months of 2016, according to NYPD statistics.

Espaillat notes this amendment will "improve the safety of our communities by making it more difficult for these deadly weapons to fall into the wrong hands."

The bill is now in committee.

—Adeline Hanssen



Monte Study: Train System Loaded With Fatty Food Ads

By **DEBORAH CRUZ**

There is a new fight against obesity and it is not against food itself. While fast food may be the main culprit behind poor health, a recent study published by Montefiore Health System found unhealthy food ads are placed in low-income communities where nutritional challenges abound.

The Bronx has brought in the wrong kind of attention from advertisers, according to the study conducted by Sean Lucan, M.D., M.P.H., attending physician, for Montefiore Health System's Family and Social Medicine Department. He and colleagues from Albert Einstein College of Medicine found ads promoting candy, chips, sugary cereals and frozen pizza ads on display more so than healthy food ads at Bronx subway stations. While healthy food was not outright advertised, there were pictures of healthy produce and display ads for the New York City Department of Education's Summer Food Program.

The Bronx remains the unhealthiest borough in New York City and is consistently linked to high rates of diabetes, blood pressure, and cholesterol. According to County Health Rankings



Photo by David Cruz

RIDERS WHO TAKE the D train (pictured) to get around may notice a higher number of unhealthy food ads peppered throughout the line, according to a study by Montefiore Health System.

and Road, which tracks health trends by county, 29 percent of the borough's population suffers from obesity the most when compared to the rest of the city. Ads containing alcoholic beverages were placed in communities with a higher percentage of children and outnumbered food ads as a whole.

"I wanted to look at what the ads

were saying, who they were directed to, how people see it in their daily lives," said Dr. Lucan. "This is another barrier; another obstacle these people have to face."

The research shows that demographics are taken more into consideration when placing an ad than actual ridership figures. Overall, there is an

estimated 400,000 riders who use the 68 train stations in the Bronx. More food ads were found in more impoverished and less educated areas. It also found these areas to hold a large Hispanic population, rather than in stations that had the most commuters. "I treat many people from the community and it is difficult to advise what to eat and then when they leave they see these ads sending a different type of message," said Dr. Lucan.

It's unclear whether the MTA is aware of the abundance of these ads in low income communities. The agency did not return an email or phone calls seeking comment.

"It is pretty well known that unhealthy foods target children. However, some people do not know that. I'm sure they would be upset that they were being particularly targeted, it would change community behavior," said Dr. Lucan.

According to the study, the 161st Street Yankee Stadium station had the unhealthiest food ads in all of the stations in the Bronx. Meantime, the D line, one of which takes riders to Norwood, was riddled with unhealthy food ads.

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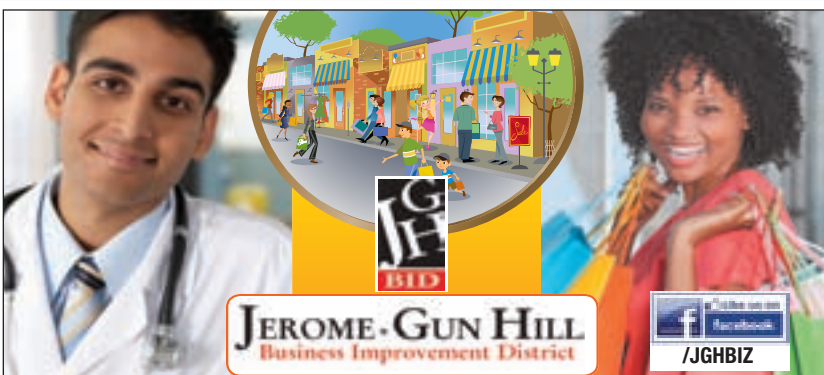
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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

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.

NYS Gov't Internships

Hundreds of new summer internships for students are available throughout New York State government. The

internship is available to undergraduate and graduate students interested in the work of governing and policy-making. To apply, go to nysinternships.cs.nyc.gov.

Stop the Bleed

A workshop on how to prevent or stop blood loss for shooting victims will be held March 30 at 7 p.m. at Bartow Center, 2049 Bartow Ave. For more information, call (718) 918-3827.

After the Arrest Workshop

The Bronx District Attorney's Office, 198 E. 161st St. (3rd floor Litigation Training Room), will host a free workshop offering an overview of the arrest-to-arraignment process in Criminal Court on March 29 from 5:45 to 8 p.m., including an understanding of Central Booking and the Complaint Room. For more information,

call (718) 590-2272 or to RSVP, call Robert Barnes at (718) 838-7461 or email barnesro@bronxda.nyc.gov.

Free NYS Tax Filing Assistance

The NYS Tax Department is hosting free online tax return filing for individuals or families in the Bronx with Federal adjusted incomes of \$64,000 or less. Online assistance is offered from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Eastchester Library (1385 E. Gun Hill Rd.) on select Wednesdays and at the Melrose Library (910 Morris Ave.) on select Fridays. For more information and a detailed schedule, visit www.tax.ny.gov.

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 April 18 by appointment only. Tax preparers can also review your credit report, provide financial advice, and freeze your rent. Applicants 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 \$34,000 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.

Free Tax Service

Free tax services for individuals earning less than \$54,000 are available at Councilman Ritchie Torres' office, 573 E. Fordham Rd., on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from noon to 7 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments are required. To schedule an appointment, call (718) 842-8100.

Free Tax Service

The Bronx campus of Mercy College, 1200 Waters Pl., offers free tax services each Friday through April 14. To schedule an appointment or for more information, call (800) 899-1479 or email Denise Stefano at dstefano@mercy.edu.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Visit the COVE

The public is invited to attend the COVE's Spring 2017 Showcase featuring youth produced projects including video, visual arts, and web design, March 17 at 7 p.m. at Montefiore Health System's Grand Hall, 107 E. Gun Hill Rd. For more information, visit COVEbx.org or Dare2Dreambx.org.

Onstage

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents the following performances: **Andy Montañez & Charlie Aponte**, two salsa legends will sing their popular hits, March 25 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$50 to \$65; \$100/VIP); **Shaolin Warriors**, musical extravaganza with numerous costumes, March 30 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$25 to \$45; \$10/age 12 and under); **Victor Manuelle**, April 1 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$45 to \$100); and **Moscow Festival Ballet**, featuring a Tchaikovsky Gala, April 2 at 4 p.m. (tickets: \$25 to \$45; \$75/VIP; \$10/age 12 and under). VIP tickets include

pre-concert wine and hors d'oeuvres reception and the best seats in the house. For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 960-8833.

Hostos Community College's Repertory Theatre, 450 Grand Concourse (149th Street) presents **En el Nombre de Salomé (In the Name of Salomé)**, a play about Dominican poet and political advocate Salomé Ureña, March 21 at 7 p.m. (tickets: \$15/ \$5/ages 18 and under/ students). For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 518-4455 or visit www.hostoscenter.org.

The NY Botanical Garden presents **Magical Thailand - A Journey With**

Freestyling at Lehman Center



Photo by Miriam Quinones

SONGSTRESS CORINA SINGS her heart out at the Forever Freestyle 11 music event at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on March 4. Corina was part of a musical lineup that included TKA/K7, Judy Torres, and Johnny O, all singing throwback music from the 1990s.



File photo

COMMUNITY ORGANIZED WITH a Vision (COVE) will host the annual film festival on March 17. Here, students pose at last year's festival (see Editor's Pick for more information).

the Somapa Thai Dance Company, performing classical and folk dances, March 18 and 19 at 1 and 3 p.m. in Ross Hall. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble presents **Pablo Zinger**, pianist and arranger, who leads a performance of old and new tangos, March 25 at the Pregones Theatre, 571-575 Walton Ave. (tickets: \$15 to \$30; \$50 at the door). For more information and to RSVP, call Susan at (718) 601-7399.

Events

The Bronx Federation of Teachers, 2500 Halsey St., will host a **college fair**, March 31 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for high school students and counselors, featuring college prep workshops, information on admissions, financial aid, exams, and more. Schools are required to complete an online group registration form by March 24 at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bronx-uft-college-fair-tickets-31665059044> (password: UFT). For more information, call (866) 509-5921 or (914) 943-9345 (cell).

The Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood, 2975 Bainbridge Ave., presents **National Women's History Month**, March 18 from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Events include free HIV/ HEP C testing, guest speakers, and a scanvan mobile for mammogram testing for women ages 40 and older who have not had a mammogram in the past year. Free hot meals will be distributed. For more information, call (718) 208-5996 or (917) 636-0346.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Give a Winter Bird a Home or a Feeder, to make a milk carton into a feeder and add seeds, March 18 and 19; and Big Bud Monoprints, to make monoprints from construction paper, March 25 and 26; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Concert: Sirius Quartet**, performing a variety of music, March 19 at 2 p.m. in the WH House (\$28; \$22/member; \$15/ages 8 to 18; \$12/child member; info: ext. 251). 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**, through April 9, at the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

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), Shape Bird Making, March 16; Popsicle Stick Chick Making, March 23; and Paper Plate Bird Craft, March 30. Adults can attend: **film: "Suffragette,"** March 18 at 2:30 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 (ages 5 to 12): **Greenhouse Exploration:** to visit the backyard, weather permitting, to play and help maintain the garden, plant seeds, water plants, and do crafts, March 29 at 3:30 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **film: "Alice Through the Looking Glass,"** March 25 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **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: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 2:45 p.m.:** (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, March 17 and 24; **Preschool Story Time and Craft at 11:15 a.m.:** (ages 3 to 5), featuring books, puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, March 16, 23 and 30; and **Homework Desk Help at 3 p.m.:** (ages 5 to 12), March 20, 22, 27 and 29. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics:** March 16 at noon; March 20 at 6 p.m.; March 23 at noon; and March 30 at noon. 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 March 20 for the next publication date of March 30.

Questioning the Rent Rolls

(continued from page 1)

"My guess is thousands of New Yorkers got cheated," Sally Dunford, executive director of West Bronx Housing, said. "Because you just figure—we're seeing two a week."

For rent-regulated apartments, landlords must submit rent histories to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), a state agency that tracks the rent history. Only tenants can request these confidential forms to DHCR while the lease is active or have someone else request it on a tenant's behalf. The form lists the preferential and legal rents year by year. And on each rent history form, a legal advisory explains DHCR cannot verify the "truthfulness" of a landlord's statements.

But these forms are not always provided to tenants, according to Dunford, while some tenants know little about them. Dunford suspects that some shifty landlords can exploit that and charge a rent-subsidized tenant the legal rent, which is substantially higher than the preferential rent. In leases

"My guess is thousands of New Yorkers got cheated because you just figure—we're seeing two a week."

**--Sally Dunford,
Executive Director of
West Bronx Housing**

and lease renewals, owners must inform the tenant they are either paying a preferential or legal rent. In some cases, that's not happening, according to Dunford.

"Landlords are supposed to tell you, they're supposed give you that information, they're supposed to be attached to your lease, but there's no verification attached to your lease," Dunford said. "All

they have to do is give you numbers that add up to what you're now paying. If those numbers are bogus, how would you know?"

Meantime, tenants can indeed challenge the rent, by calling DHCR's Office of Rent Administration or Tenant Protection Unit, a group that tracks patterns and practice of harassment or fraud by a landlord owning multiple buildings. Its Rent Registration Initiative has reclaimed more than 57,000 rent-regulated apartments, and recouped more than \$3 million in overcharged rents for rent-regulated tenants. A spokesperson for DHCR stood by the agency's protocols, explaining that the agency audits a landlord, double checking leases, rent receipts, cancelled checks, money order receipts, DHCR order(s), Major Capital Improvements, and Individual Apartment Improvements.

"If you file a complaint, it's risky thing to do. If you lose your complaint, out of spite, the landlord can revert to the legally registered rent, and for sure you're out of there," Andrew Laiosa, a West

Bronx Housing employee helping Dunford collate rent registration forms, said. He added that tenants can also just walk away, causing a vacancy, and allowing a landlord to legally increase a new tenant's rent by 20 percent.

But should a tenant decide to challenge the rent, it sends them on a lumbering legal and bureaucratic maze. At that point, some tenants may be unable to pay the rent.

"If they don't rule for a year, what are you going to do for a year?" Laiosa asked. "They need \$1500 a month, per year."

"And pray [DHCR] actually get[s] around to you before you run out of money," Dunford said.

But even before that can happen, Dunford has found that many simply don't want to request their rent history form fearing their landlord can opt to change their preferential rent to their legal rent upon lease renewal.

Editor's Note: *The number to DHCR's Office of Rent Administration at (718) 739-6400.*

Have an Opinion On What You've Read In Our Paper?

The *Norwood News* loves, welcomes and encourages letters to the editor.



Write to:

**David Cruz, Editor-in-Chief
Norwood News
3400 Reservoir Oval East
Bronx, New York, 10467**



Or email dcruz@norwoodnews.org

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.

Please join us at our
Open House
to discuss the proposed

The Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School

The proposed Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School will provide an exceptional educational curriculum along with clinical and therapeutic support for at-risk children, children from the community and children with special needs. If you are an educator, an elected official, the parent or caregiver of a child, or an involved member of the community, we hope you will attend.



When: Thursday, March 30th, 3:00 – 5:30PM

Where: CMCS Early Childhood Education Office
629 Courtlandt Ave, Bronx NY

To RSVP: Call 718-402-0081, ext 227
or email us at info@CMCSCharter.org

(Refreshments will be served, child care will be provided.)

www.CMCSCharter.org





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