



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 30, No 8 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • APRIL 13-26, 2017



**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
CLOSING RIKERS ISLAND | PG. 4**



**BRONX BARRIERS:
MONEY MANAGING | PG. 9**

COURT TO STATE: GIVE JHS 80 \$\$\$\$

Court orders state to release critical grants to JHS 80



Photo by Adi Talwar

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 80 (pictured) is expected to receive a \$3 million infusion from the state to help improve the academic outcome.

By **DAVID CRUZ**

The New York State Appeals Court has ruled Junior High School 80 in Norwood receive a \$3 million grant that was stripped away by the state last year after officials took the near century-old school off a so-called turnaround list for chronically failing schools.

But the grant remains im-

periled since the state has one last shot of denying the funds at a hearing in May.

JHS 80, resting on a hilltop on Mosholu Parkway North, was part of a class action lawsuit filed last September claiming the state's budget director illegally froze taxpayer grants intended to improve school performance for JHS 80. The middle school

has experienced an academic decline over the years, and was in danger of closing in 2013. It remained opened, though it was placed on the "persistently failing" schools list, allowing it to apply for a Transformation Grant in 2015 to improve its academic performance.

For Nidia Cortes, a Norwood parent named as one of

the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, seeing the lawsuit through represented something bigger than her or her high school bound 14-year-old daughter. After all, her daughter is in eighth grade and is expected to go to high school in the next school year, when the grant kicks in.

"[I]t's not just thinking

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Norwood News is published bi-weekly on Thursdays by Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC) 3400 Reservoir Oval East Bronx, New York 10467 Phone: 718 324 4998 Fax: 718 324 2917 E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org Web.: www.norwoodnews.org

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EDITORIAL

The Kingsbridge Ice Center, and Cuomo the Sorcerer

Could the curse of the Kingsbridge Armory be lifted? For decades, it seemed any time there's some headway in turning it into a promising venue, a barrier gets in the way.

There was the failed attempt to repurpose the enormous castle into a public school and then a mall by the Related Companies. The latest proposal that's within reach of reality is the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC). And even then, that project has hobbled along, facing lawsuits along the way.

But Governor Andrew Cuomo appears to have broken the spell. Even as the now-approved Fiscal Year 2018-19 \$153 billion budget faced uncertainty, Cuomo still included a \$108 million loan allocation to KNIC, advancing a mega project that bolsters the borough's image to the outer reaches and activates a Community Benefits Agreement intended to add pump equity into a working poor community.

Though he's the spell breaker, Cuomo's commitment to the project is certainly politically motivated. After all, politicians aspiring for higher



Photo by Philip Kamrass/Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO (center), at briefing on FY 2018 state budget, could take credit for getting the Armory project moving again.

office need to demonstrate to their would-be constituents they are legislators who are doers. What better way to show that than by allocating monies for several major physical projects to spur job growth and build upon infrastructure? Cuomo, dabbling with the prospect of running for the White House in 2020, is taking a page from that playbook, and is willing to dole out a hefty loan to make that happen.

It's a win-win, though the idea of accepting a major loan from the state

(the state loan amounts to 68 percent of the total sum needed to begin the first phase of the project) signals some lack of confidence in the project by private investors. KNIC has presently remained quiet on any developments, abandoning a transparency it adopted last year.

Money has always been a major issue for the ice project that's expected to bring permanent jobs to the Bronx. It's certainly no bailout, but an investment into Cuomo's future, and certainly a brighter one for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. The project would serve as a major talking point for Diaz, who longs to be viewed as a job creator and infrastructure builder when he runs for office, be it Public Advocate or New York City mayor. He first needs to see this project through.

These days, he seems confident that he will. After all, he did include the project in his annual development report for 2016 even though it was nowhere near shovel ready. Perhaps his crystal ball told him that Cuomo the Sorcerer finally seals the deal.

Now get a shovel in the ground.



Letters To The Editor

St. Ann's School Should Remain Open

St. Ann's teacher Sylvia Rini says, "What we think is unfair is that we're not being closed because of anything we have done. It's not poor test scores. It's not an enrollment that's declining. We're

on a growth spurt."

If the Catholic leadership wonders why more people are not attending their churches, they might pay attention to this woman's words. If your mission is supposed to be for the purpose of providing moral and spiritual leader-

ship, then how do you justify closing St. Ann's School at a time when more good schools are needed? We also know that teachers in general, and certainly Catholic school teachers, are not well paid. So how do you justify \$2,000 a year pay cuts for reassigned teachers?

According to the March 16-29 *Norwood News* article, a spokesman for the Archdi-

ocese said the school closed because it was not operationally and logistically feasible to keep the school open without an active church. That does not sound like an explanation you would ever have heard from Rabbi Jesus. But it does sound like something the moneychangers he railed against would have said.

Richard Warren
Norwood resident

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on April 18 at North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kossuth Ave., 17th Floor, 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. unless otherwise noted: Traffic and Transportation Committee on April 13; Veterans Committee on April 13 at 7:30 p.m.; Housing, Land Use and Zoning Committee on April 19; Economic Development Committee on April 25; Community Relations & Long Term Planning Committee on April 25 at 7:30 p.m.; and Website Acknowledgement & Media Committee on April 26. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

The **52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** will hold its monthly meeting at Serviam Gardens, 321 E. 198th St., on April 27 from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers about a proposal to close the Rikers Island jail complex and move the prisoners to smaller jails throughout the five boroughs.



I guess if they find a good place for them where they'll be safe and keep the rest of us safe, then that's a good idea. But put a jail in Bedford Park? Ah... no, no.

Carla Roth
Bedford Park



Yes, close Rikers Island because it is rampant with corruption. Just as failing schools were closed down, so should this jail. Break it into smaller facilities so there's no more bureaucracy and chaos and more order. They should also hold those officers accountable for failing in their jobs and taking part in the chaos.

Rosanna Delgado
Pelham Parkway



I think it would make more sense to keep the prisoners in the borough they were arrested in. Either way, you're still going to have corruption and the other things that go on there.

Edwin Soto
Pelham Bay



Really? Wow. If it's saving taxpayer money I guess it's good. A jail in Norwood would be hard to adjust to. That would be a little weird. You say, "not in my neighborhood, not in my backyard." It's a tricky thing, but building a court on the island makes sense, have a one-stop shop. Lock them up and hold the court there.

Isaac Feliciano
Norwood



My opinion of Rikers Island is that it seems like it's a perfectly good place for it to be. I don't see any point to it unless they're going to privatize the jails as the Trump Administration wants to do. I'm sort of sad to hear that [Mayor Bill] de Blasio wants to build jails in the outer boroughs. I don't see any point to that. Maybe they just need to fix it up with some reconstruction. I just wonder how they are going to pay for it.

Aaron Olsham
Van Cortlandt Park South

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Immigration Forum Focuses on Rights and Pitfalls

By DAVID CRUZ

As the Trump Administration toughens its enforcement and policy on undocumented immigrants, with federal agents further zeroing in on immigrant communities, know-your-rights forums have dotted the borough's landscape.

For attorneys at the Legal Aid Society, which offers pro-bono services to immigrants sorting through their status, these forums are critical. After all, many are unaware that every immigrant, undocumented or not, have rights. Those tenets include the right to a lawyer, questioning the legitimacy of so-called "notarios," and the variety of methods used to prevent deportation. Every case is different, they admit, and the best way to mitigate it is consulting an attorney.

"Unfortunately, there are people who hold themselves out as immigration practitioners and they can cause a great deal of harm and damage," said Yvonne Floyd-Mayers, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society, speaking to guests at a forum organized by Montefiore Health System's pediatric and behavioral health department.

The presentation on April 3 served as a kind of crash course on immigration law, detailing the variety of visas available, waivers the undocumented can apply for,



Photo by David Cruz

LISA FREEMAN, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society (r) presents at an immigration forum at Montefiore Medical Center in Norwood.

and penalties on providing false information.

"The offenses that are so minor to US citizens can be big problems to immigrants," Antonia Codling, an attorney who presented, said.

Though open to the public, staffers from the hospital's pediatric and behavioral health department, which normally interfaces with the immigrant community, were on hand. The forum was the brainchild of Dr. Miguelina German, a psychologist with the department, who started noticing her

patients asking "lots of legal-related questions" pertaining to immigration "that we don't have the background to answer."

Immigration attorneys have been known to periodically verify the medical status of a child to demonstrate a compelling need to have the undocumented parent of the child stay in the U.S.

"We're trying to impress upon the court or USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) how important it is, let's say, that family member be here to care for the child, or the child be allowed to stay here.

Then potentially we might want something more detailed and we would if I was making the request I would let you know," Lisa Freeman, an attorney presenting, said.

The hospital has taken a staunch pro-immigration policy, declining to question a patient's immigration status. Three days after President Donald Trump was sworn into office, the hospital's CEO and President, Dr. Steven Safyer, distributed an internal letter to employees assuring them that it will continue serving everyone regardless of status, and declaring "healthcare as a basic human right."

The information at the Legal Aid Society forum came in handy for Adriana, who attended the forum with her 7-month-old baby, and her friend Elsa.

The forum could've worked well for Adriana's friend, who now fears deportation.

"I know a friend who's depressed, doesn't leave her house and is really scared," Adriana, who is of Mexican descent, said. "She doesn't want to leave the house for that reason. She used to work at a Mexican restaurant, now she doesn't want to go because she thinks that's where immigration will come."

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Norwood Man Killed in Drug Related Shooting, Suspect Charged With Murder

By DAVID CRUZ

Police from the 52nd Precinct have charged a 32-year-old man wanted in the shooting death of a Norwood man during the overnight hours of March 29.

Jamal Burnel of the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn was charged with shooting the victim, identified as 46-year-old Michael Vermong, killed outside his home at 3110 Bainbridge Ave. at the corner of East 205th Street just before 3 a.m., according to police. He was pronounced dead at Montefiore Medical Center a few hours later. Police told the Daily News the incident started over drugs, and intensified with violence, with Burnel brandishing a gun and opening fire.

Police chased Burnel after spotting him running from the scene. He was caught at the nearby D train station and taken into custody. Police found a gun with bullets matching the shooting. Burnel, reported to have an extremely long rap sheet but never did major time, was later charged with second-degree murder. This is the 52nd Precinct's first shooting death so far this year.

A makeshift memorial, complete with several dozen lit candles, pictures of Vermong, and a wax-made sign with the word "Mike," was found outside Vermong's home, with mourners paying respect to the neighborhood man.

At the vigil, Vermong was described as a good man who would do anything for anyone.



Photo by David Cruz

MOURNERS SET UP a makeshift memorial outside shooting victim Michael Vermong's home. Vermong was fatally shot on March 29. A suspect has been charged with second degree murder.

CB 7 Hosts First Women's Empowerment Summit



Photo courtesy Marketing & Advertising Solutions

WOMEN OF HIGH achievement, including (l-r) Neva Shillington King, executive president of 1199SEIU; Darcel D. Clark, Bronx District Attorney; Adaline Walker Santiago, chair of Community Board 7; Deputy Bronx Borough President Aurelia Greene; Maria Teresa Montilla, president, Institute for Latin Studies; Cristina Contreras, Chief Operating Officer of New York City Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx; Roberta Gjonaj, registered nurse and wife of Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj; Dr. Rica Brusi, anthropologist, writer, advocate, and wife of Lehman College President Dr. José Luis Cruz; at a recognition awards event organized and hosted by Community Board 7.

By DAVID GREENE

A diverse group of successful women who all grew up or lived in the Bronx gathered for the first annual Women's Empowerment Summit 2017, extending March's Women's History Month into April.

The panelists came from high positions in government, with a surprise televised appearance from Merryll Tengesdal, an astronaut who grew up in the northwest Bronx. She was introduced by her cousin, Gwendolyn Thomas-Steed, a member of Community Board 7. The civic panel hosted the event at Lehman College's Lovinger Theater on April 8.

On hand panelists included Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, New York City Public Advocate Leticia James, and Deputy Bronx Borough President Aurelia Greene, whose career in male-dominated politics began as a community activist.

"It was a very, very challenging time," Greene, 82, said. "You have to realize that the late '60s and '70s was a time when women were not re-

garded as humans really. We were not allowed to own property, we were not allowed to have any kind of executive job and to become a legislator was simply impossible."

She added, "But my work in the community made me very popular, because I was all over the place doing a lot here in the Bronx."

According to a release announcing the event, the gathering was intended to "inspire, educate and empower women with a better future through life-long learning. The goal is to provide the best resources and role models to help many transform their lives and aspire to achieve their highest potential."

Clark, who was sworn in to her current position a year earlier on the same stage at Lehman College, told the crowd, "It's important that we support each other and encourage each other. The biggest problem women have, or people have in general, is they think they can do everything themselves, and that's a mistake." She added, "A good leader is

somebody that can work with other people, that can delegate responsibilities, so that you can get the best result possible."

Phyllis Bowdwin of University Heights was most impressed with Leticia James. "She was very, very dynamic, she woke the place up," Bowdwin recalled. "She talked about looking out for others, what she was doing in her role as Public Advocate. Her presentation was very effective. She made some really good points in terms of advancement for women, equal pay for women, and domestic violence."

Adaline Walker-Santiago, chair of Community Board 7, said she conceived the event, which members supported. "[They] loved the concept of having women share their most valuable secrets from successful women from our community," she said. "We all agreed this was long overdue. What was different about this event was that these women came to share their most valuable secrets of success," she concluded.

Norwood-Bred Man Heads to Amazing Race Determined

By DYLAN CROLL

Growing up in Norwood with his single mother, Shamir Arzeno knew the odds were stacked against him. Though determined to succeed, little did he know that his tenacity would one day land him a job at Goldman Sachs and a spot as the first Dominican contestant in the *Amazing Race*, an Emmy Award-winning reality TV series on CBS, in which the winner walks away with a \$1 million prize.

He grew up watching the show while living on East 207th Street and Decatur Avenue. The show critically altered Arzeno's conception of what was possible.

"For a long period of time, Norwood was my world," Arzeno said in a phone interview with the *Norwood News*. "I didn't know anything past it. I told myself 'I will one day see the world and travel and go on vacation and live a good life.'"

His mother, Clara Almanzar, remembered watching the program with Arzeno, recalling her son saying, "Mommy, when I grow up I am going to be on that show."

"I used to tell him, 'when you grow up, you could, you could,'" Almanzar said.

For Arzeno, 28, self-improvement and grit stood as keys to an enriched life.

At age 14, he was already packing groceries at a local supermarket every weekend for spare money. Years later Arzeno was accepted to Fordham University, majoring in economics and graduating within the four-year mark, defying skeptics who often told him it was "hard to make it for people from your background," or even "you're not going to make it."

To support himself during that time, Arzeno worked as a waiter, janitor, sold real estate, had a brief stint at Yankee Stadium, and worked at Cablevision in sales.

After graduation, he began working at JPMorgan Chase and then BNY Mellon. During this time, he pursued his dream to work at Goldman Sachs,

calling it the "Yankees of the finance world." He was hired on his fifth try as a financial advisor, working at Goldman Sachs's Jersey City location, where some hedge funds have already moved. Arzeno is currently living in Jersey City.

Now that he is done with the *Amazing Race*, Arzeno is now eyeing MBA programs and other ventures. But to stay grounded, he recalls his roots, often crediting his mother for raising him to be the man he is today.

"Although we had very difficult times growing up, I knew that it was possible and my mother always believed in me 100 percent. She instilled in me this drive that has taken me this far and that I know will take me even further," Arzeno resolutely said.

As for whether he was the first to cross the finish line, Arzeno is bound by secrecy not to reveal the results until the season's last episode.

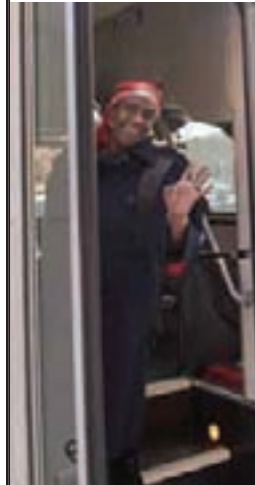


Image courtesy Shamir Arzeno

SHAMIR ARZENO, SEEN here at Yankee Stadium, is slated to appear on the reality TV series *Amazing Race*, which appears on CBS.

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when I have a family here?"*

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Cambodian-Born Gardener Cultivates Passion in Bedford Park

By ADELINE HANSSENN

Between towering brick apartment buildings and a bustling train station at Botanical Square, Rem Kim, a thin, lightly-wrinkled man can be seen working in a small community garden. The ground is finally beginning to thaw after an uneven winter, and Kim is getting ready for the spring.

Kim, 62, has been volunteering in the Botanical Square Community Garden for the past three years. Although he speaks limited English, his passion for gardening was immediately apparent upon meeting him. His face lit up when he listed the vegetables that would soon be available to Bronx residents in the latter part of the spring.

"Once it warms up, I [will] grow tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, a lot of things. I [can] grow anything I want," he said. "All along the sidewalk, I am going to grow sunflowers."

Bronx Green-Up, the community garden outreach program affiliated with The New York Botanical Garden, trains and assists volunteers in roughly 300 community gardens in the Bronx, including the Botanical Square Com-



Photo by Adeline Hanssen

BEDFORD PARK GARDENER Rem Kim stands beside the greenhouse and garden he created. He is busy preparing for the warm weather.

munity Garden. When a gardener needs help, they contact Green-Up to schedule

a day where volunteers come to work.

In 2014, Kim approached Bernard Conway, a volunteer who has managed and worked in the community garden since 2007, and asked him if he could help out in the garden. According to Conway, Kim has since created a small farm with a little greenhouse for growing his vegetables.

"People around here, they like [the garden]," said Kim. "Last summer, I gave [vegetables] out every day."

Kim has also planted flowers along the sidewalk and cleaned up the area behind the garden to make room for more vegetable crops. Beyond gardening, Kim is also known to sweep the sidewalks, pick up garbage, and help Conway in the areas he tends.

"Many of the neighborhood people do appreciate the work he does..." said Conway, in an email. "He is a wonderful person. He would give the shirt off his back to those he knows if they needed it."

When asked about his inspiration behind his creations, Kim attributed it to his childhood. "When I was with my parents, I grew up on a farm," he said. "We grew rice, beans and cotton."

"For a long time I tried to do that here," he added with a laugh.

Kim grew up in the province of Battambang, Cambodia, before escaping to the Khao-I-Dang refugee camp in Thailand. He moved to the United States in

1985 and has been living in Botanical Square ever since.

Kim was eager to lend his gardening services when the Botanical Square Community Garden was started in 1989, but he was busy supporting his family. According to Kim, things changed when he retired three years ago from his job in a warehouse. His six children had moved out to start families of their own, and he had more free time to work in the garden.

"I got sick. I got a disability, and after I felt better, nobody [wanted to hire me] because I was old," said Kim. "I'm here. I'm going to still do something. I don't want to stay still in my house. Time's running out."

Kim has dedicated himself to the community garden, going out almost every day and sometimes working from dawn until dusk. Some days he is accompanied by one or more of his five grandchildren. They play beside him in the garden with toy tools he gives them.

Kim talked about his work in the garden with pride, happy to be devoting his time to such a fulfilling hobby. He expressed the most joy when describing the success of his botanical creations.

"I don't want [the vegetables and other plants]. I just want to grow [them]," he said. "When something comes up good and nice I feel good. I don't want anything."

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BRONX BARRIERS:

Managing Your Money

Part 5



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

By ANTHONY ALI of



With the Bronx experiencing the highest rates of poverty and the lowest median income of all the five boroughs, money is tight. Compounding the problem is education on how to use that money wisely. After all, New Yorkers do not have to learn about personal finance in order to graduate high school -- something required in only five other states.

The end result is that many Bronx residents are on their own when learning how to properly manage their finances. A lack of understanding personal finance makes them vulnerable to amassing debt, where they borrow money that steadily accrues interest that they can't afford to pay. This, in turn, negatively impacts savings, credit score, and securing housing, according to Alma Rojas, a financial coach in the Bronx.

"Thirty to 40 percent of some of our clients' income goes toward their rent," says Rojas. "And credit is an issue. Some of them go to rent a new apartment and the prospective landlord turns them down because they have a low credit score."

Rojas works for The Financial Clinic, a nonprofit group focused on improving financial security for lower income families. She offers individual coaching sessions at different sites in New York City, including the Northwest Bronx Resource Center at University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP), a Bedford Park-based nonprofit offering free financial services.

There, clients are taught how to build a budget, set financial goals, and understand the pros and cons of credit cards. Sessions can last anywhere from an hour to four hours, with many clients returning for additional coaching. Most of Rojas' clients are low-income New Yorkers and some, she says, don't understand the financial complications facing them.



Photo courtesy Northwest Bronx Resource Center

FINANCIAL COACH ALMA ROJAS (L) works one-on-one with a client at Northwest Bronx Resource Center.



Photo courtesy Northwest Bronx Resource Center

JUMELIA ABRAHAMSON (C), executive director of the Northwest Bronx Resource Center, helps a client with tax preparation.

"I have a lot of customers facing IRS tax liens," she says. "And sometimes, they didn't even know they had them until I pulled up their [credit] report."

"Costly Options"

Although unexpected or unknown that IRS liens can take a toll, more Bronx residents see their potential savings drained by a different source.

According to a 2013 study by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, 11.7 percent of households in the city were unbanked. That number nearly doubles in the Bronx, with 21.8 percent of Bronx households having no bank accounts. Rojas notes that many unbanked residents "turn to

more costly options."

Sometimes, those options come in the form of check cashing locations, where customers are charged a two percent flat rate to cash their checks, a rate that banks don't charge. Check cashing sites are typically scattered across the Bronx, overlapping with largely working poor neighborhoods, according to a listing of check cashing locations on Google Maps and U.S. Census data. The Bronx accounts for almost 20 percent of all check cashing locations in New York State, according to Financial Service Centers of New York, the association representing all licensed check cashing locations in the state.

"It's a matter of access," says Ju-

melia Abrahamson, the director of the Northwest Bronx Resource Center at UNHP. "But it's also about affordability. Some of our clients don't have the option to get direct deposit so they feel they won't be able to afford a bank account."

Several of the most common banks in New York City, including Citibank and Wells Fargo, require at least one direct deposit and a bill payment to maintain an account. Other banks ask for the direct deposit to meet a minimum amount, or service fees as high as \$50 will be charged to the account, thus creating further debt for a low-income resident.

While the check cashing industry might be seen as less conventional, Abrahamson says there's a reason her clients prefer them to regular banks.

"There's a certain insecurity when you don't know how to properly manage a bank account," she says. "You worry about the fees even if you don't know what exactly they are."

Finding banks that offer affordable banking for low-income residents can be difficult as well. A 2015 report by New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer found that 28 percent of banks in the city "did not appear to offer or widely advertise" a low-fee bank account -- something that is required under state law. The same report also found that the Bronx has the lowest concentration of banks per household in the entire country.

While evaluating different banks and finding the right one might be one way to attain a certain level of financial security, Abrahamson suggests there's another way to start.

"Sometimes, it's all about changing your relationship to money," Abrahamson says. "If you don't know how to save, you'll make the same mistakes even if you have a higher income."

That's where people must take matters into their own hands, and according to Rojas, they're doing just that.

"My coaching calendar is booked until May," she says. "People want to learn how to manage their finances."

Bill Seeks Clarity on Capital Projects

By DAVID CRUZ

A bill looking to strengthen accountability on city agencies carrying out long term construction projects, or capital projects, has been introduced.

Councilman Andrew Cohen, representing Norwood, introduced the measure amid long delays to capital projects he's funded since his time in office, including a skate park at Williamsbridge Oval Park. The original completion date for the project, introduced in 2014, was this year. So far, nothing has been done. The proposal for a skate park has been in the works since 2004.

His bill calls for city agencies to notify community boards, New York City Council members, and borough presidents whether any project experiences delays by 60 days or more or cost overruns that run 10 percent or higher. Capital projects are funded by capital monies, are valued at over \$35,000, have a five-year longevity, and are for general public use.

In a statement, Cohen called the city's lag time on capital projects "unacceptable."

"[A]gencies must know that when they make a commitment to our communities, they have to deliver on it, and if they don't, there will be consequences," Cohen said in his statement.



File Photo

CONSTRUCTION OF A skate park at Williamsbridge Oval Park (pictured) has experienced setbacks.

Report: Total Bronx Investment at \$3 Billion

By DAVID CRUZ

Just more than \$3 billion in residential, commercial and institutional projects have been pumped into the Bronx in 2016, according to a newly released report, signaling a continued trend of a Bronx on the mend.

But the report hedges its bets somewhat, throwing in its report on the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) project, which was mired in delays and near extinction last year. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who drafted the report and presented it at a forum focusing on development projects in the Bronx, included the \$350 million project in the report nonetheless.

The KNIC project stalled after developers failed to secure funding the city needed to approve and activate a 99-year lease. But Governor Andrew Cuomo announced in this year's State of the State his administration's approval of a \$108 million loan to KNIC, giving it just enough capital to begin the first part of the project. Cuomo's approval seals a deal that had come just over a year before when developers applied for funding via the state's Empire State Development Corporation. The funds were included in this year's state budget, which passed on April 9.

Diaz, speaking to a group of reporters, said of the budget. "It is my understanding that the city will release the lease to the Kingsbridge National Ice Center folks, and development and construction will begin within another month or so."

The KNIC development stood as the bellwether project within Community Board 7, which has long awaited for the project to begin.

The project is part of the \$924 million in commercial investment for Community Board 7 spread out over the last seven years, although, when negating the pending KNIC project, that investment comes down to \$574 million.

Still, the report outlined \$3.2 billion in



Photo by David Cruz

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Ruben Diaz Jr. delivers the keynote speech at a forum on development in the Bronx.

investment for the Bronx, up from 2015 when the borough saw \$2.3 billion. The range of projects included a supportive/affordable housing project in the Bedford Park/Kingsbridge Heights area valued at \$49.9 million, another supportive/affordable housing project near the corner of Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue at \$36 million, and a movie studio in the Soundview section of the Bronx that's estimated at \$59 million.

"I thought we were done," Marlene Cintron, president of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, which is tasked to attract economic interest to the borough, told developers at the forum. "But we're not."

The report showed residential investment as the number one investment vehicle in 2016, coinciding with a four percent population increase the Bronx has seen over the last few years, according to Diaz.

"The diversity here is second to none," Diaz said.

Diaz chalked up new investments to a lower crime rate unseen across the city since

the 1960s.

But how to meet a new population demand amid an era of construction continues to bedevil stakeholders. With a borough burgeoning in population and attracting a new workforce, talk of whether schools, trains, and police precincts are equipped to handle a new demand continues to surface, particularly among Community Board 7. The Board, which covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights, has put the question out there, though no sufficient answers have been given.

"It's not just about bricks and mortar, it's not just about putting up units. It's how is it that we also look at development holistically," Diaz said. He cited a proposal to extend bus service to the southern tip of Port Morris, which will be home to a pair of towers for market rate tenants and the construction of four Metro-North stations along an existing rail line as ways to address the transportation issue.

Comptroller Stops by Tracey Towers



Photo by Miriam Quinones

NEW YORK CITY Comptroller Scott Stringer (r) glad hands members of the Tracey Towers Tenants Association at a meet-and-greet hosted at the Norwood towers on April 3. It had been more than three years since Stringer stopped by the Mitchell-Lama complex. This time, the city's so-called "moneyman" ran down his role in the city and some reports his office has released including a report on the city's senior population. Jean Hill (l), president of the tenants association, awaits him at the podium.

Healthfirst Honors Women



Photo by Jessica Gordon

HEALTHFIRST HONORED 11 WOMEN who've risen to prominent positions in the private and public sector at a March 30 ceremony at Maestro's restaurant in Morris Park. Among the honorees is Brooklyn Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo (second from right), who shares a moment with (l-r) Gaye Anderson, manager, Community Engagement Healthfirst; Council Member Vanessa Gibson; Sheimyrah Mighty (performer); and George Hulse, VP Community Engagement, Healthfirst.

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TRIPS

Kancellea's Travel & Tours presents "Tour 2017"

Jonah The Spectacular Show at the Sight & Sound Theatre in Pennsylvania on Saturday, May 20. \$169 per person includes buffet dinner.

Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic, Aug. 25: 8 days and 7 nights. All inclusive \$1,789 per person. Use our easy lay away plan.

Noah's Ark in Kentucky. 3-day weekend. \$389 per person includes admission to Noah's Ark and Creation Museum on Friday, Aug. 18.

Las Vegas, Nevada. 5 days and 4 nights. \$889 per person at Tropicana Casino, Friday, Aug. 25.

For more information and reservations, please contact Kancellea's Travel & Tours at (347) 405-2017 or Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY.

NAME: Kingston 8ight Project Management Consultants, LLC. Articles of Organization were filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 1/17/2017. Office location: Bronx County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to the LLC, United States Corporation Agents, Inc., 7014 13th Avenue, Suite 202, Brooklyn, NY 11228. Purpose: For any lawful purpose.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for a cleanup of Jerome Garden Plaza on April 22, rain or shine, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Jerome Avenue and East Mosholu Parkway North. This event is being organized by state Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Friends of Mosholu Parkland, Jerome-Gun Hill BID, New York City Parks & Partnerships for Parks, and the Bedford Mosholu Community Association. For more information, call (718) 409-0109.

Meet Local Lawmakers

A meet and greet with state Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, Congressman Adriano Esparillat, Councilman Andrew Cohen, and state Senator Jamaal Bailey will take place April 19 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave. For more information, call Dinowitz's office at (718) 796-5345 or email dinowitzj@nyassembly.gov.

Immigration Services

Free immigration services ranging from naturalization, citizenship, visa renewals, and information on DACA are available by appointment at the office of Councilman Ritchie Torres, 573 E. Fordham Rd. (entrance on Hoffman Street) Mondays and the first and third Wednesday of every month from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (718) 842-8100.

Paid Work Training

New York City Small Business Services is accepting applications for anyone interested in 300 hours of paid, work experience installing reflective rooftops. For more information or employment, email coolroofs@sbs.nyc.gov, call 311 or log on to www.nyc.gov/sbs.

Tax Lien Removal

For those delinquent on wa-

ter and tax bills and already received a warning letter from the New York City Department of Finance, the deadline to remove oneself from the NYC Tax Lien Warning List is May 11. For more information, visit nyc.gov/liensale or call a foreclosure prevention counselor with the University Neighborhood Housing Program at (718) 933-2359 to schedule an appointment.

NYS Gov't Internships

Hundreds of new summer internships, paid and unpaid, for NYS college and university undergraduate and graduate students interested in the work of governing and policy-making, are available throughout New York State government. Application deadline is April 20. To apply, go to nysinternships.cs.ny.gov.

MetroCard Bus/Van

Buy or refill your MetroCard at a MetroCard bus or

van at the following locations on every second and fourth Friday of each month: Fordham Road and Grand Concourse from noon to 2 p.m.; Fordham Plaza, Third Avenue and Fordham Road from 2:30 to 4 p.m.; and Van Cortlandt Village, 3887 Sedgwick Ave., from 9:30 to 11 a.m.; and every fourth Monday at Scott Tower, 3400 Paul Ave. from 1 to 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 330-1234 or 511.

Free Tax Filing Service

Free income tax preparation for qualifying residents is available at University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) on Saturday, April 15 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 ap-

pointment, 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.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Spring Has Sprung!

The public is invited to a free Spring Egg Hunt at the Williamsbridge Oval on April 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Events include an egg hunt, relay races, carnival games, a helmet giveaway (while supplies last), a visit from the bunny, and more. Egg hunt for ages 3 to 6 is 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and for ages 7 to 11 from noon to 1 p.m. Sponsors include Mosholu Preservation Corporation, Jerome-Gun Hill BID, NYC Parks, and New York Cares. For more information, visit nyc.gov/parks.

Onstage

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents the following performances at 8 p.m.: **Jose Alberto "El Canario"** and **Septeto Santiaguero**, April 15 featuring a variety of Latin music (tickets: \$50 to \$65; \$125/VIP); and **Doo Wop & Rock 'n' Roll**, April 29 featuring a variety of performers (tickets: \$45 to \$55). 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 Center for the Arts & Culture, 450 Grand Concourse, presents a **Tito Puente Retrospective**: April 20 to 22 featuring a variety of performances honoring the King of Latin Music. For more detailed information and for tickets, call (718) 518-4455.

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents free: **Music**



File photo

HOP ALONG WILLIAMSBRIDGE Oval Park on April 15 for the annual Spring Egg Hunt set for 11 a.m. (see Editor's Pick for details).

With Renato Thoms, April 22 at 2:30 p.m. featuring Latin music; and **Jazz** featuring the Celia Cruz Bronx H.S. of Music, April 26 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

549-3200.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers **Music With Jousé Pagan** performing on classical guitar, April 26 at 3:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

Events

The Fordham BID is holding **Earth Day Sidewalk Sale**, April 20 to 22 from noon to 7 p.m. between Washington and Jerome avenues, where businesses will display seasonal merchandise. For more information, call (718) 562-2104.

Spring Into Health Fair will be held in the Bronx at the Bronx River location, Children's Arts & Science Workshops, 1619 E. 174th St., April 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Events include medical screenings, physical activities and health related demonstrations. For more information, call (718) 589-0553.

The Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents free **Family Focus**, April 29 from 10 to 11:30 a.m., to construct and create a bouquet of flowers using tissue paper and other craft materials. All materials are included; walk-ins are welcome. For more information, call (718) 960-8731.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Eggs in Watercolors, to listen to story followed by making poetic painting, April 15 and 16; and **Earth Day** for Protecting Pollinators, to learn how to support and protect our environment and pollinators like the honeybees, April 22 and 23; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Earth Day Insect Expedition**, to see live and preserved insects on display, followed by a hunt for native creatures April 23 at noon and 1 p.m., on the grounds (free with admission to grounds); and **Concert: Women Composers in the Spotlight**, featuring classical music, April 23 at 2 p.m. in the WH House, followed by a conversation with the artists (tickets: \$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)

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **Hands-On Projects at 4 p.m.:** (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), Easter Bunny Making, April 13; Plate Umbrella Making, April 20; and Magic Wand Reading Craft, April 27. Adults can attend: **film:** "Big Eyes," April 15 at 2:30 p.m.; and **Computer Basics**, April 18 at 2 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Rocket Ship Rock to Outer Space** (all ages to 12 years), live music program with reading, singing, and audience participation, April 14 at 3:30 p.m.; **Art & Mozart at 11 a.m.:** (ages 18 months to 5 years), to read stories, listen to classical music, and explore the world of art, April 19 and 26; **Author Celebration:** (ages 3 to 12), to celebrate picture book author Kelly DiPucchio with games and crafts, April 19 at 4 p.m.; and **Crafternoon: Paper Flowers:** (ages 3 to 12), to create paper flowers, April 26 at 3:30 p.m. Teens/young adults: **film:** "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," April 22 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Knitting Circle:** Thursdays at 3 p.m. For all: **Free 8-Week Poetry Workshop:** to read and write original poetry for all levels of experience, Saturdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., through May 13. For job seekers, there is: **Mini College & Career Fair 2017:** April 18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (online registration required; info: (718) 579-4260). 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, April 14 and 21; and **Preschool Story Time and Craft at 11:15 a.m.:** (ages 3 to 5), featuring books, puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, April 20 and 27. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics:** April 20 at noon and 6 p.m., and April 27 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 April 17 for the next publication date of April 27.

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Judge Orders State to Release Grant to JHS 80

(continued from page 1)

about your kids, but thinking about the other kids," Cortes, who received very little education while growing up in her native Honduras, said.

The grants, earmarked for mentoring programs for academically at-risk students, available guidance counselors during extended school hours, and staff development, were initially promised for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. The funds, if left unused, would expire in 2018.

"They didn't even get a chance to use any of that \$3 million to implement any of it," Wendy Lecker, the senior attorney for the Education Law Center (ELC) representing JHS 80, told the *Norwood News*.

But as JHS 80 was told it received the grant, MaryEllen Elia, the state Education Department's commissioner, announced it had pulled the school from its list of failing schools in Feb. 2016. This triggered the state's budget division to deny JHS 80 the funds. The budget director, Robert Mujica, claimed that the commissioner's decision to pull the school out of the list caused JHS 80 to lose

the funds. In December, New York State Supreme Court Judge Kimberly O'Connor, who presided over the case, did not agree with Mujica's position, ruling in favor of JHS 80 and ordering the funds be released. The state quickly appealed to the appellate division, where a three-judge panel upheld O'Connor's ruling on March 27.

JHS 80, a 6th-to-8th grade school comprised of some 600 seats, remains largely under-performing, according to records from the New York City Department of Education. The 2015-16 School Quality Snapshot report showed 14 percent of students passed the state English exam while 16 percent of students passed the state math exam. These marks fall well below the district and citywide English and math test rates, which showed 24 and 20 percent of the district passed the English and math test while 37 and 32 percent of the city passed the state English and math test.

The school, a staple in the Norwood community for close to a century, does have available programs for its academically ambitious students with an accelerated track pro-

gram that prepares students to take five high school regents exams before the end of the eighth grade year.

Though the state filed the appeal, the court who ruled in ELC's favor set an appeal hearing for May. Appeal hearings can usually be set nine months from the time they're filed, but Lecker noted the judge's confidence in the strength of ELC's case indicates the judge's desire to see the case end. Should the ELC win its case, JHS 80 can start implementing grant-funded programming by next September.

Lecker, who maintains ELC will win the case, said the latest victory clears the schools to "restore these programs to improve performance and help their students succeed."

Still, the possibility for the school to be deprived of the grant stands as

a reality. "If the funds are not in our [school] budget before July 1, 2017, it will be very difficult for JHS 80 to implement any of the programs funded by the grant in the 2017-18 school year," wrote Emmanuel Polanco, JHS 80's principal, in an affidavit.

Polanco told the *Norwood News* the campaign to retrieve the grant was "to ensure

that our schools receive these promised resources as intended."

He added, "We value the shared responsibility and accountability as we support the needs of our communities. We are grateful that we will receive these funds and continue to deliver more for our students and families."

A representative for the state's budget division did not respond to a request for comment.



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- Municipal employees (5%)

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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
	\$1,090		2	→	4 people	\$39,223 - \$45,300
					5 people	\$39,223 - \$48,950
3 bedroom	\$1,090		2	→	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
	\$1,132		12	→	2 people	\$40,217 - \$43,500
					3 people	\$40,217 - \$48,960
2 bedroom	\$1,132		12	→	4 people	\$40,217 - \$54,360
					3 people	\$46,697 - \$48,960
	\$1,308		2	→	4 people	\$46,697 - \$54,360
					5 people	\$46,697 - \$58,740
3 bedroom	\$1,308		2	→	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
	\$1,510		4	→	2 people	\$53,177 - \$58,000
					3 people	\$53,177 - \$65,280
2 bedroom	\$1,510		4	→	4 people	\$53,177 - \$72,480
					3 people	\$61,680 - \$65,280
	\$1,745		2	→	4 people	\$61,680 - \$72,480
					5 people	\$61,680 - \$78,320
3 bedroom	\$1,745		2	→	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 мая 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 보내주십시오. 봉투 뒷면에 "KOREAN" 이라고 영어로 적어주십시오. 2017년 5월 5일까지 온라인 신청서를 제출하거나 소인이 찍힌 신청서를 보내야 합니다.
Kreyòl Ayisyen	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 anvlòp ki gen adrès pou retounen li nan: The Bedford, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418 . Nan dèyè anvlòp 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 ختمها بختم البريد قبل 5 مايو، 2017.

