PLACARD ABUSE CRACKDOWN

Mayor’s plan comes after Twitter account chronicles placard abuses

By DAVID CRUZ

Of all the daily annoyances that make Norwood and its surrounding neighborhoods a peril for drivers it’s parking. In every case, there’s barely enough spots to go around. Rolling civilian drivers more is city employees who skirt the rules by placing a city-issued placard on their dashboard, indicating to a traffic agent that they are on official business.

It’s promulgated a culture of opportunity for drivers who may use the placard to park with impunity, and creating resentment among residents toward traffic agents. It’s further promulgated by a culture of tolerance from traffic agents who create a double standard by issuing a ticket to a violator but look the other way for a placard-carrying car.

Mayor Bill de Blasio is now putting city employees, which mainly includes teachers and NYPD officers, on notice: abuse placards or face the consequences. It will be even worse (continued on page 15)
EDITORIAL

USPS and Bronx DA Need to Reel in Mailbox Fishers

For the past two years, the commanding officer of the 52nd Precinct has sounded the alarm on so-called “fishing” scams where thieves feed adhesive and glue into a mailbox on the hopes of hoisting, or fishing, out mail containing money orders and checks.

But the crime has not only bedeviled the precinct, but the entire Bronx. Indeed, this crime of opportunity remains even in the face of consistent arrests made on the scam. It’s also time to call out the United States Postal Service for allowing this crime to continue.

The United States Postal Service, which cries over loss of revenue, is doing a poor job in not resolving the issue despite their meetings with commanding officers from each Bronx precinct. The federal agency does have an enforcement unit to handle these types of fraud cases, yet the effort has been somewhat passive. Where’s the public relations campaign to stymie this? Where’s the outreach aside from interactions with police? The USPS has taken preventive steps in fixing the issue by installing new mailboxes, but not much of a mention was made.

And while the United States Postal Service is largely to blame for allowing this crime of opportunity to spiral out of control, the Bronx District Attorney’s Office, headed by Darcel Clark, have done little to help the situation. In most instances, the perps plea down the case to a simple slap on the wrist even as they continue to do it again. The Norwood News has determined that officers are frustrated over Clark’s handling of a quality of life grievance that has not gone away. They, too, seem to have contributed to a state where mailbox fishing is low priority. Tell that to the 69-year-old whose rent checks were stolen, and the son or daughter waiting to get a monetary present that never came.

It’s time the public puts pressure on the United States Postal Service to ask for better enforcement efforts. At this point, it seems the police are taking the lead regarding a federal offense.

Also, consider barraging the US Postal Service with mailbox fishing complaints. Call (800) ASK-USPS (275-8777) to make a complaint as well as for emergency situations such as mail theft or identity theft.

Where Are the New Slit-Covered Mailboxes?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip 10467</th>
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<tr>
<td>2280 Olinville Ave.</td>
<td>625 E. 187th St.</td>
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<td>2550 Olinville Ave.</td>
<td>2426 Grand Concourse</td>
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<td>3501 Barnes Ave.</td>
<td>200 E. 196th St./Grand Concourse</td>
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<td>2300 Barnes Ave.</td>
<td>240 E. 204th St.</td>
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<td>786 Burke Ave.</td>
<td>698 E. 219th St.</td>
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<td>735 Mace Ave.</td>
<td>700 E. 222nd St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3000 Bronx Park East</td>
<td>300 E. Gun Hill Rd.</td>
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<td>2540 Barker Ave.</td>
<td>159 E. Gun Hill Rd.</td>
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<td>2815 White Plains Rd.</td>
<td>3700 Jerome Ave.</td>
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<td>711 E. Gun Hill Rd.</td>
<td>701 Pelham Pkwy. N.</td>
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<td>650 Adee Ave.</td>
<td>3102 Decatur Ave.</td>
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<td>2300 Boston Rd.</td>
<td>299 E. 207th St.</td>
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<td>650 Thwaites Pl.</td>
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<td>2400 Barker Ave.</td>
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<td>2933 Barnes Ave.</td>
<td>3499 White Plains Rd.</td>
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<td>298 E. 204th St.</td>
<td>3464 Jerome Ave.</td>
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PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on June 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at the Ross Lecture Hall (entrance via Mosholu Gate. This is the final general board meeting until September). Committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Traffic & Transportation Committee meets on June 8; Veterans Committee meets on June 6 at 7:30 p.m.; Environment & Sanitation Committee meets on June 13 (meet at the back of the office); Economic Development, Community Development and LTP Committee meets on June 13 (meet at the front of the office); Health & Hospitals Committee meets on June 13 at 7:30 p.m.; Parks & Recreation Committee meets on June 14; and Housing, Land Use, and Zoning Committee meets on June 21. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

The 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL will meet on June 15 at 7 p.m. at Cosmopolitan Church of the Lord, 39 W. 190th St. (around the corner from Monroe College’s King Hall). For more information, call (718) 220-5824.
Letters To The Editor

Knoxx/Gates
Home to Good Neighbors

Many who live on Knox, Gates, Gun Hill and Moshulu in the Knox Gates triangle would disagree with the Norwood News’ casual conclusion to the article “Feds Charge Seven in Norwood for Drug Crimes” [issue dated May 11]. No one disputes the presence of drug sales on our streets, and the unfortunate fallout it has in the lives of many young people here and in other neighborhoods. However, that “the Knox Gates neighborhood is rooted in drugs” as your paper says, is an unfortunate misrepresentation of the quality of family life that most of our neighbors work hard to maintain.

And as recent as the previous edition, the Norwood News reported on The COVE, a thriving Media Arts & Literacy Program for teens deeply rooted mid-block on the same Gates Place for 28 years. The COVE has provided a creative, often life-changing alternative to selling drugs for many neighborhood teens.

Life in Knox Gates is far from utopia, but please do not forget the neighbors who have extended the spirit of The COVE beyond the walls of our basement youth center, and organized park cleanups, coat drives, the struggle to stop the City’s construction of a filtration plant in our corner of VC Park and their success getting the City to retrofit the diesel equipment that protected our air quality during construction, yes, and Harmony Day in 1992 and the 2014 Block Party to celebrate The COVE’s 25th birthday.

Knox Gates Neighborhood Association/The COVE

Keep Help for Seniors Active

This year, the BronxWorks Senior Homelessness Prevention Project helped me avoid eviction, but it is unfortunately at risk of shutting down in June unless the city steps in to continue the program.

I am 60 years old and I have been living in my apartment in the Bronx for over 20 years. I received a court notice because I fell into arrears when my work hours were cut. When I got to Housing Court, I was told to go downstairs to be assisted with my court case. I met the woman who would be assisting me with my case and she was a pleasure to work with. Aside from helping me with the money that I owe, she also helped me with food stamps.

My case worker also told me that once I turn 62, if the program is still around she will help me apply for SCRIE, so I hope the program stays because it is so helpful.

I was in tears when I faced eviction, especially since I have been working all my life. I feel relieved knowing my caseworker was able to help me pay back the money that I owed. I never want to feel like this again, and my caseworker helped me find a third party to help me pay my rent so I can have some breathing room. I am going to make sure my rent is paid first before I do anything else every month because having a roof over my head is important and I want to keep it that way.

The Senior Homelessness Project is an important program, helping people like me and my neighbors in the Norwood community who need support to stay in their homes. I hope the City Council will see the importance of the program and provide funding to keep it open.

Linette Samuel
Norwood Resident

Honor the Paris Climate Accord

Are you, too, fighting mad about Trump pulling the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord? Then let’s fight back three times a day by adopting an eco-friendly plant-based diet.

Yes, our diet is pivotal. A 2010 United Nations report blames animal agriculture for 19 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, 38 percent of land use, and 70 percent of global freshwater consumption.

Carbon dioxide is emitted by burning forests to create animal pastures and by fossil fuels combustion to operate farm machinery, trucks, factory farms, and slaughterhouses. The more damaging methane and nitrous oxide are released from digestive tracts of cattle and from animal waste cesspools, respectively.

In an environmentally sustainable world, meat and dairy products in our diet must be replaced by vegetables, fruits, and grains, just as fossil fuels are replaced by wind, solar, and other pollution-free energy sources.

Each of us has the power to protest Trump’s failure to maintain America’s leadership in moderating climate change, simply and effectively, by what we choose at the grocery store.

Niles Neusbaum

Legalize Abortion

I am writing to urge your readers to do everything they can to see that the NY State Reproductive Health Act (RHA), S.2796, is passed in the State Senate this year. It has repeatedly passed in the Assembly, only to die in the Senate. With the federal government in its current state, we are likely to lose federal protections of our reproductive rights and have only the state to rely on.

Our state law has not been updated since 1970 – this is the year this legislation must pass. Currently, women who have health complications later in pregnancy are being forced to leave the state for abortion care. The RHA provides an easy legislative fix that would enable a woman to access abortion care throughout pregnancy when a fetus is not viable or when her health or life is at risk.

The RHA would also protect health care providers who perform these vital services and would remove the potential for criminal prosecution of women who end their own pregnancies. The RHA would address constitutional flaws in our laws and recognize a woman’s fundamental right to access safe, legal abortion. It would essentially codify Roe v. Wade into New York State law.

There are things we can do to try to convince our elected officials to properly represent the more than 80 percent of New Yorkers who support protecting a woman’s right to choose. We can call our senators, particularly Senators John Flanagan (518-455-2071), Jeff Klein (518-455-3595), and John Bonacic (518-455-3181) to insist that they bring the RHA to the floor. We can call Governor Cuomo (518-474-8390) to urge him to lead by pressuring the Senate to act. We can go to https://action.aclu.org/secure/pass-reproductive-health-act-comprehensive-contraceptive-coverage-act to sign the petition posted by the NCLU, National Institute for Reproductive Health, and Planned Parenthood.

As Liz Krueger, the sponsor of the RHA, states, “Complex and personal decisions about reproductive health care are the sole right and responsibility of a woman and her medical providers.” We only have until June 21, the end of the legislative session, to see that this lifesaving legislation is passed.

Judy Fletcher
of NYC16-Indivisible

TO REPORT A STORY TO THE NORWOOD NEWS, CALL US AT 718-324-4998
This week we asked readers their thoughts on the controversy surrounding this year’s National Puerto Rican Day Parade and the organizers’ decision to rescind an honor to former convicted terrorist Oscar López Rivera.

Jean Hill
Bedford Park

I don’t think it will diminish the parade. Hector Torres
Norwood

What happened is the Puerto Rican Day Parade had someone marching in the parade that should not be leading the parade and we don’t like it. We want it like in the past promoting unity among everyone. Now there is no unity because they want to put that guy in there. He’s not going to lead the parade, but he’s still going to march. He’s not a hero. Carlos Ramos
West Farms

I think the way they handled it, they didn’t think of the consequences that were going to happen when you try and honor somebody who shouldn’t be honored. As far as our group, we can’t stand by and march behind someone we don’t believe in because we would have found someone better to honor, especially having done something in New York that was so terrible.

I just think that violence doesn’t solve anything. Violence to solve violence is not smart. I think it’s a good move that he stepped down. It could bring long term consequences to the parade.

It’s an interesting story. I would say no, he shouldn’t march. But in a historical context of the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, there have always been winners and losers and God knows what role big corporations played in labor and land in Puerto Rico. It’s a confusing issue, but I can understand the revolutionary aspect as well as the contemporary point of view.

Steve Ayala
University Heights

I think it’s better it was handled this way. A lot of sponsors pulled out and it should not be like that. People have been sponsoring that parade for years. I think with him stepping back and just walking in the parade, any person can walk in the parade and be a part of it. I don’t think it will diminish the crowd.

In the early hours of Thursday, May 25, a man walked into Montefiore Medical Center carrying a needle and a bag of heroin. He made his way to the bathroom, locked the door, and never stepped out.

“He passed away,” said Lieutenant Brian Hogan of the Narcotics division as he informed the crowd of nearly 50 who attended the 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting. “That’s up to number 11 [this year]. Last year we had 23; we’re going to surpass that number.”

“Three of them were lush workers,” said Officer Shauna Smith from Transit District 11. “One of them was a so-called ‘lush worker’ who rob snoozing straphangers.

It happens mostly between midnight and 5 a.m., according to the NYPD. Late night commuters will more than likely have a guaranteed seat, enjoy a quiet ride in a near empty subway car and be lulled to sleep by the subtle rocking of the train as it glides along the tracks.

However, NYPD urges commuters to stay up for their safety.

Within the past month, a number of passengers in Norwood awaken to the nightmare of stolen possessions taken by a so-called “lush worker.” The thieves get their names for often targeting drunk, or “lush,” passengers who doze off so deeply they miss their stop and wind up at the end of a train line.

“We’ve made five arrests, [mostly] on 205th Street on the D line and Fordham Road on the 4 line,” according to Officer Shaun Smith from Transit District 11. “Three of them were lush workers, the other two have been grand larceny.”

“The arrests that we have made have been between the hours of 5 and 8 in the morning,” Smith added.

The victims who had their property stolen did not realize their possessions were no longer on them until the end of the train line.

“As if the daily commute wasn’t hard enough, subway riders have another worry on their hands: sticky fingered “lush workers” who rob snoozing straphangers.

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The victims who had their
De Blasio Warms Up to Kingsbridge Ice Project

By DAVID CRUZ

Mayor Bill de Blasio, who held off on advancing the $350 million reconfiguration of the Kingsbridge Armory into an ice center, has finally turned over the lease developers needed to secure the $108 million state loan for the first part of the project.

“We’re ready to move forward with all the legal paperwork to make the project happen,” said de Blasio of the latest news as first reported by the New York Post.

De Blasio added that the state Empire State Development Corporation is expected to provide the loan that was approved by Governor Andrew Cuomo early this year. The Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC), expected to be the world’s largest ice skating center, is being developed by former Wall Street Kevin Parker and hockey legend Mark Messier. The massive, 750,000-square-foot castle, calls for nine rinks, and a 5,000-seat arena. Community stakeholders praised the project after securing a community benefits agreement with developers, which includes prioritizing construction and permanent jobs to Bronx residents and sets aside 50,000 square feet of its property for community space.

But the project hit a few snags after developers accused the city of working against them by not releasing the lease. Accusing them of breach of contract, KNIC filed a lawsuit in Bronx Supreme Court. The city argued that it would not turn over a 99-year lease to developers until it guaranteed it had the money needed to completely build the first half of the project. The Cuomo Administration came through with the $108 million to satisfy the $158 million KNIC needed to get the project going.

A groundbreaking is expected later this year, the same time developers were supposed to have originally built the ice center.

Should the development finally kick off, it restores some political clout for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who touted the game changing benefits the ice center could have on the Bronx. The timing comes as Diaz announced he had no intention of running against de Blasio in this year’s mayoral election.

The state is expected to officially vote in favor of the loan by the end of June.

LIKE WATCHING ICE MELT, development for an ice center at the Kingsbridge Armory (pictured) is slowly moving along after a series of hot and cold fits and starts.
Building Woes for Stagg Properties in Norwood

By DAVID CRUZ

For more than a decade, The Stagg Group, a family-owned real estate and construction firm, has been a powerhouse in building hundreds of units of affordable housing across the Bronx, becoming a saving grace to many low-income New Yorkers.

But an incident at one of its Norwood sites in late April, which exposed some deviations from approved construction work, represented some setbacks for the omnipresent construction group. Meantime, residents have some environmental questions for one of the group’s other properties slated to be built in Norwood.

“I think we still need to keep asking questions. We’re not making accusations, but questions are warranted,” said Jean Hill, chair of Community Board 7’s Land Use/Housing Committee, whose advisory role includes vetting construction projects in the neighborhood. “We expect to get answers back.”

Documents from the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) show the agency ordered all work to stop at 3084 Webster Ave. at the corner of East 203rd Street following the April 28 accident that resulted in no injuries. FDNY reported that second story fell, crashing three stories down from the eighth floor. A partial work order has been lifted to allow crews to repair damage to the fifth, sixth and seventh floors.

DOB investigators determined that the required site safety coordinator was absent. A DOB spokesman could not explain why the company-hired coordinator, who was hit with a violation, was not there. The spokesman did point out it was the second time a site safety coordinator was absent at the site, the first being on March 9.

The incident revealed The Stagg Group veering from approved DOB work plans it submitted to the agency. Among them is concrete work, which is not part of the approved work.

The site is one of two residences The Stagg Group is currently building within Norwood. At the other end of Norwood is the Mosholu Grand, Stagg’s property it looks to build at 153 Van Cortland Ave., a 13-story, 153-unit residence. It’s also planning a small 10-story, 62-unit residence at St. George’s Crescent, abutting the Van Cortlandt Avenue property.

Mark Stagg, the head of The Stagg Group, and his executive vice president and former Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, presented the plans to Community Board 7 in March. On April 26, DOB officials denied building permits to The Stagg Group after seeing it filed incomplete paperwork. Among the pending items is the soil report intended to determine the environmental safety of the ground. A DOB spokesman said it is not uncommon for paperwork to be refiled after it’s been submitted.

Members of Community Board 7, whose Land Use/Housing Committee have consistently badgered developers with questions on what their intentions are within Norwood, have inquired about the state of the soil.

Decades ago, the property was once a gas station and auto body shop. Despite its past history, The Stagg Group is not required to conduct an environmental assessment review, a more aggressive screening of a particular property. Exempting them is the fact that the gas station’s tanks were removed some 20 years ago.

The property rests diagonally across the former PS 51, which in 2012 was discovered to contain hazardous toxic fumes that were later removed. It’s since been turned into a school for autistic children after the state Department of Environmental Conservation cleared the property for occupancy again.

“[H]opefully, we should have learned our lesson,” Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky, who chairs the Community Board 7’s Environmental Committee. “We’re talking about the health of a good community.”

With city agencies giving her the runaround, Hartman-Kutnowsky still plans on requesting an environmental impact study, seeking support from elected officials.

In a phone interview, a representative for the Stagg Group, Javier Monroy, said the soil is fine. “Absolutely the soil is safe. Yes, all the borings have been done and we’re in good shape there,” Monroy said.

As for the Webster Avenue site, Monroy maintains there was a site safety coordinator on site, adding any assertion that there was no coordinator at the site “couldn’t be anything farther from the truth.”

“Nobody got hurt, nobody got injured,” Monroy said. “That’s a positive thing. Just a couple of pieces of concrete got damaged and cleaned up and we’ve moved on.”

Additional reporting by David Greene
HEALTHY VILLAGE HEALTH & WELLNESS EXPO

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Reading Initiative Sees K-2 Students Receive 11 Free Books

By DAVID CRUZ

After making a policy announcement intended to bolster reading skills among children from kindergarten through second grade, Mayor Bill de Blasio sat before a group of some 20 students from Bedford Park’s PS 177, his lanky presence dominating.

Sitting beside him was a diminutive Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña. Together they took turns reading pages from Curious George at the Baseball Game, one of H.A. and Margaret Rey’s books that chronicle the misadventures of the titular character.

“This is one of the books that you’re going to get to take home and read over and over again,” Fariña told the students to cheers. “And how many of you have little brothers and sisters at home?”

“Maybe even get a bookcase in your room,” de Blasio added.

“Who’s going to read this book to their brothers and sisters?” de Blasio asked. Many raised their hands.

For Fariña, the hope is to ensure the 7- and 8-year-olds who stood before her don’t go educationally idle over the summer. It’s a reason why the New York City Department of Education has promised it will give 11 free fiction or nonfiction books to students from kindergarten through second grade in the entire city over the summer. Children will be able to choose between 15 to 20 titles per grade. It’s unclear how much the reading initiative will cost.

Fariña emphasized that the initiative is not schoolwork, but simply reading for fun. “We want summer reading to be reading as a pleasure and something that you will do for the rest of your life,” she said.

The goal is to raise reading skills to grade level, a harbinger for more successful academic outcomes.

“We want every child to have that opportunity regardless of their family’s economic situation or how much education previous generations have had. We want to make sure books are available in the home,” de Blasio said in remarks before reading to children.

Councilman Andrew Cohen, representing Bedford Park, stood alongside de Blasio. In a statement, Cohen noted the initiative will “ensure that their learning doesn’t end with the school year.”

As it stands, 41 percent of students can read at grade level. The numbers have improved, according to de Blasio, who pointed out that 30 percent of kids were able to read at grade level when he came to office in 2013.

The free book initiative is part of a broader goal of raising reading levels across the city. The book initiative complements the inclusion of a reading coach available at select schools across the city. At the announcement, Fariña noted that there will be a reading coach at every Bronx elementary school.

“The Bronx needs some extra investment when it comes to literacy and we’re making that extra investment,” de Blasio said.

Norwood News Wins NY Press Club Award, a First

The Norwood News was honored June 5 by the New York Press Club in the first-ever Community Coverage category. The paper was recognized for its series on efforts to stop overdevelopment in the neighborhood of Bedford Park amid an eviction proceeding that went awry for residents.

The award honored the paper’s editor-in-chief, David Cruz, along with former reporter Daniela Beasley, freelance reporter Deborah Cruz, and freelance photographer Adi Talwar for contributing to the series.

“We wish to thank Mosholu Preservation Corporation, publisher of the Norwood News, for supporting local community journalism for nearly 29 years,” David said.

Ironically, it was David who lobbied the New York Press Club’s board of governors to consider creating the award, given the large number of small community journalism outlets across the city.

The award caps a gratifying awards season for the paper, which also took home prizes from the New York Press Association and Ippies, which include second place for Best Small Circulation Publication and Best In-Depth/Investigative story.

“We’ve always been seen as the tiny little newspaper that could,” Cruz said. “Now we’re the little newspaper that did.”

Annual Flagging of Graves At Woodlawn Cemetery

NORWOOD NEWS STAFF (l-r): Freelancer Deborah Cruz, former freelance reporter Daniela Beasley, editor-in-chief David Cruz, and freelance photographer Adi Talwar stand with New York Press Club president Steve Scott (2nd from right) as winners of the club’s first-ever Community Coverage category.

BRUCE CAMPBELL FROM the volunteer Woodlawn Conservancy group plants flags on the graves of U.S. military service members at Woodlawn Cemetery on Memorial Day. Read David Greene’s story on how long this tradition has taken place and how the group identifies the deceased military veterans at the landmark cemetery. It can be found on www.norwoodnews.org.
Caring for Caregivers, Courtesy of Montefiore

By SHERRI OUSTALET

Montefiore Health System is New York City’s first medical center to offer families a Caregiver Support Center. The role of caregiver can be demanding, stressful and lonely; the Center offers patients’ families and friends a private, safe, soothing and confidential environment to reflect, talk, and meet with the medical team.

Professional staff and specially-trained Caregiver Coach Volunteers ensure caregivers find the warm, welcoming atmosphere they deserve. Services are free of charge to Montefiore patients. The Center is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please visit: www.montefiore.org.

Montefiore’s Volunteer & Student Services department is looking for mature, positive, community service-oriented, compassionate, caring individuals who can provide emotional support and practical assistance to family caregivers while their loved one is hospitalized or in treatment. Whether you’re a husband, wife, sister, brother, son, or daughter… a family member or dear friend who’s been through the caregiving experience, you know what it’s like to burn the candle at both ends as you care for a loved one in a health crisis. You’ve “been there,” you relate, and you can help others find their way.

As a Caregiver Coach Volunteer, you’ll greet and welcome caregivers, listen and provide one-on-one support, offer resources, care, and available services information, and assist caregivers in navigating the hospital to easily find the Caregiver Support Center. We welcome your excellent interpersonal and communication skills, ability to motivate others and work well as a team member and independently, and availability to volunteer a minimum 4-hour shift weekdays during business hours. Prior caregiving experience to a family member, friend, or colleague with serious, acute, or chronic illness, and other health issues offers Caregiver Coach Volunteers the opportunity to give back and be there for others.

Montefiore locations to be a Caregiver Coach Volunteer:
Montefiore Medical Center – Moses Campus
111 E. 210th St.
Montefiore Medical Center – Einstein Campus
1825 Eastchester Rd.
Montefiore Medical Center
Wakefield Campus
600 E. 233rd St.

Sherri Oustalet is director of Volunteer and Student Services at Montefiore Health System. To volunteer, contact her at soustale@montefiore.org.

SOME OF THE caregiver coaches at Montefiore Health System.

This is what landing more than $5 million in City contracts looks like.

Celeste Ramirez
President, CARA Construction Management Inc.

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Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/getcertified

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Drop off fruit & vegetable scraps at convenient collections near transit on Friday mornings in The Bronx

138th St & Brook Ave (6:45am - 10:00am)
149th St & 3rd Ave (7:00am - 10:15am)
149th St & Grand Concourse (7:15am - 10:15am)
161st St & River Ave (7:30am - 10:15am)
163rd St, Southern Blvd & Hunts Point Ave (6:30am - 9:45am)
Burnside & Jerome Aves (7:30am - 10:30am)
E Tremont Ave & Boston Rd (6:30am - 9:30am)
E Fordham Rd b/t Webster & 3rd Aves (7:00am - 11:00am)
E Fordham Rd & Jerome Ave (7:15am - 10:45am)

More info: GrowNYC.org/Compost or 212.788.7964

Office of the Mayor
Richard Buery
Deputy Mayor
Mayor’s Office of the Net
United Dept. Sustain. Affairs
and Director

Recycle@GrowNYC.org
212.788.7964

GrowNYC.org/Compost
Recycle@GrowNYC.org
212.788.7964

Photo courtesy Sherri Oustalet
A Bittersweet Street Renaming
For Kalief Browder

By DAVID CRUZ

A street renaming in the memory of a dead man was unveiled on his birthday.

“To Kalief, I want to say happy birthday to him. My brother would’ve been 24 today,” Dion Browder said of his late brother, Kalief Browder.

With a blue tent shielding him from punishing rain, Dion was joined at the street renaming by Kalief’s friends and family, and lawmakers who’ve used Kalief’s death as an example of the effects a flawed criminal justice system on an individual. A large black and white portrait of Kalief, staring stoically off camera, was propped up alongside the Browder family and lawmakers.

Events such as a street renaming offer a kind of bittersweet tenor and tribute. They usually are approved for New Yorkers who’ve lived a long fruitful life. But the renaming of the corner of 181st Street and Prospect Avenue to Kalief Browder Way, the block where Kalief and his family lived, doubles as a cautionary tale.

“Whether it be the criminalization of poverty for bail, or the systemic failure to guarantee a speedy trial, or the human toll of solitary confinement, or the correctional culture of violence, the story of Kalief Browder exposes everything that is corrupt and cruel and callous and complacent within the criminal justice system,” Councilman Ritchie Torres, who passed a bill officiating the street renaming, said shortly before the unveiling.

Kalief Browder, the youngest of four, committed suicide in June 2015. It happened two years after spending three years at the notorious Rikers Island prison while awaiting trial. He was alleged to have stolen a backpack at age 16. At Rikers Island, Browder endured attacks from inmates, food deprivation from guards, and weeks in solitary confinement, exposing deep-seated problems within a brutal penal system.

Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who’s trumpeted major criminal justice reforms that include the closing of Rikers Island by 2027, said Kalief’s death has “altered history.”

Browder spent his life living in the Crotona section with his mother, Venida, brothers Dion and Akeem, and sister Nicole. When he left Rikers, Browder earned a GED and later enrolled at Bronx Community College to study business management.

“This is my first time since October coming back to this area, so it’s bittersweet, especially standing across the street from where I lived, and seeing the ‘For Sale’ sign. It’s kind of hard.” Dion said. “But I think this is more of an inspiration to come back to this block now.”

Media reports pegged Kalief as mentally ill, which Browder sister’s Nicole disputes, arguing the system and his time spent in solitary confinement caused him to go “stir crazy.”

“[B]eing mistreated by the guards and nobody helping him and reaching out, only made it worse.”

Residents who knew the Browder family cautiously hope the gesture is full of promise. At the corner across from the renamed street, Jamel McCoy, a resident, wants real results.

“There’s kids going through worse things than Kalief,” McCoy said. “We’re gonna have to wait for another tragedy to happen to get out here and throw up another sign?”

Editor’s Note: An expanded version of this article can be found at www.norwoodnews.org.
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Healthy Alternative Eating

Saturday
June 17, 2017
12:00pm-3:00pm
At Williamsbridge Oval

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NAME: Kingston Eight 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.

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Job Fair
A job fair with city agencies expected to attend will take place on June 16 from 6 to 8 p.m. at 991 Longwood Ave. For more information, call (718) 931-2620.

LGBTQ Needs Assessment
An assessment survey on the needs of the Bronx's LGBTQ community can be filled out online at http://bit.ly/2so1TJB. Hard copies of the survey are also available throughout the borough’s 12 community boards, with the closest at Community Board 7, 229A E. 204th St., weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 590-3500.

Free Education Program
Free classes to improve reading, writing, and math are available at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. The classes are open to young adults ages 16 to 24 or currently in an “out of school” or “out of work” program. For more information and to enroll, call (718) 579-4208 or email liteonyalp@gmail.com.

Preserving NCBH
Volunteers are needed to join the Bronx Health-care Coalition, which seeks to ensure North Central Bronx Hospital remains a public hospital. For more information and to join, email Bxhealthcoalition@gmail.com.

Bird Walks
Free bird walk tours, sponsored by Councilman Andrew Cohen with guides provided by the New York City Audubon Society and Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, are scheduled for every Saturday from now through July 29 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy. Meet at the VC Nature Center. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at mcmanus638@aol.com.

Housing Assistance
Free housing assistance on topics relating to tenant harassment, denial of repairs/services, evictions, overchargers, and more are available at the office of Assemblyman Victor Pichardo every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 2175 Jerome Ave., Suite C. For more information, call (718) 933-6909.

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.

Literacy Initiative
The New York City Department of Education has announced a reading initiative where students from grades kindergarten through second grade can receive 11 different books from 40 different book titles. For more information, contact your child's school principal.

Tour MMCC Camps
Free transportation will be provided to take a tour of Mosholu Montefiore Community Center’s Moshulu Day Camp at Harriman State Park on June 10. For more information about the camp, or to schedule the visit, call (718) 882-4000 ext. 0 or www.mosholu-daycamp.com.

Community Gardening Program
A free 16-week education, skills-building and community development program through community gardening activities is available only for those who are on probation or recently released from prison. Participants must be committed to completing the program. For more information, call Rachel Schneider of the Hawthorne Valley Farm at (518) 672-4465, ext. 236 or email rachels@hawthornevalleyfarm.org.
Family Fitness Festival

The public is invited to the 4th annual Family Fitness Festival Healthy Alternative Eating, June 17 from noon to 3 p.m. at Williamsbridge Oval. Activities include zumba, kickboxing, yoga, face painting, relay races, music, healthy cooking demonstrations, raffle prizes, gifts and giveaways. For more information, call (718) 324-4461.

Onstage

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents Let’s Do It, featuring songs by Cole Porter, June 10; and The Music of Stevie Wonder, performed by Cody Childs & The Ladies of Soul, June 17; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park presents the New York Philharmonic Concert & VIP Reception on June 13 at 6:30 p.m. on the lawn of the VC House Museum preceded by drinks and hors d’oeuvres. For more information and tickets, visit www.vancortlandt.org.

New York Botanical Garden presents its summer concert series: The French Connection, music ensemble performing a variety of music, June 16 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. featuring trumpeter and Parissian singer, on the Conservatory Lawn. Tickets are $40/member; $45/non member; 3-concert package available. Also scheduled is Live Music & Lawn Games from noon to 5 p.m. on the Conservatory Lawn; and Flame Work Demonstrations, from 1 to 4 p.m., at the Conservatory Plaza and Visitor Center; both on June 17. For more information, call (718) 817-8700 or visit www.nybg.org/visit/admission.

Events

Healthfirst presents its Health & Wellness Expo, Family Fun Day, June 17 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Claremont Housing Healthy Village, Gouverneur Playground, Third Avenue at East 170th Street. Events include live entertainment, free massage, medical screenings, face painters, bouncy castle, prizes and giveaways, fresh smoothie samples and fitness workshops; all preceded by a town hall from 8 a.m. to noon at the Charles Drew School, featuring a panel discussion on health. For more information, visit www.healthfirst.org.

Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy presents Barefoot Dancing, featuring demonstrations and teaching, on the VC House Lawn from 6:30 to 8 p.m.; June 8 - samba; June 15 - capoeira; and June 22 - West African. For more information, call (718) 430-1890.

University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) will hold its free Views NWBX Affordable Housing Forum on June 15 from 8:30 to 11 a.m. at Serviam Gardens, 323 E. 198th St. to discuss Bronx happenings including community development, demographics, multifamily housing sales, and more. Breakfast is at 8:30 a.m. followed by presentation and panel discussion at 9 a.m. Seating is limited and reservations are required. For more information and to RSVP, visit UNHP.org.

The public is invited to celebrate Abrazo Boricua, June 8 from 7 p.m. to midnight, at Eastwood Manor Caterers, 3371 Eastchester Rd. For more information, call (718) 991-3161.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers Family Art Projects: Lotus Paper Lanterns, to sketch in the Aquatic Garden, then make lanterns out of paper mache, June 10 and 11; and Big Hand, Little Hand, to make a replica of your hand and one of a family member from plaster of Paris and natural materials, June 17 and 18; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: Hands-On Projects: (ages 7 to 12); preregistration required), Paper Plate Boat Making, June 8, Father's Day Tie Making, June 15; and Paper Plate Watermelon Making, June 22; all at 4 p.m.; and Boat Making, June 11; and Father’s Day Card Making, June 18; both at 3:30 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: Jungle Safari and Friends: Kickoff Party: (all ages through 12; registration required), a summer reading program featuring a live music program with reading, singing, dancing, audience participation, and musical instruments, and including games and crafts, June 8 at noon; Resist Painting: (ages 5 to 12), to create artwork using paint and yarn, June 13 at 3:30 p.m.; Teddy Bear Sleeppover: (ages through 12 years), bring your stuffed toy, read books, do crafts and sing songs, June 14 at 5 p.m.; and Origami: (ages 5 to 12), Japanese paper folding, June 20 at 4 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy Summer Reading Kickoff Party: including music and games, June 16 at 3:30 p.m.; and film: “Sing,” June 17 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: Summer Reading Dance Party: (ages to 12), music, dance and puppets, June 8 at 2 p.m.; Kids Get Active Fridays at 2:45 p.m.; (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, June 9 and 16; Preschool Story Time and Craft at 11:15 a.m.; (ages 3 to 5), featuring books, puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, June 15 and 22; Summer Dance Party: (all ages to 12), summer reading program including music, dance, puppetry, and leis, June 8 at 2 p.m.; Father's Day Craft: (ages 5 to 12), create gifts for dad, June 17 at 2 p.m.; and Stories and Tales From Around the World: (ages to 12), summer reading program including audience participation, June 20 at 5 p.m. Adults can attend: Computer Basics: June 8 and June 15, both at noon and 6 p.m.; and June 22 at noon. Families can enjoy Thunder and Sunshine: rock band for kids, June 21 at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by June 12 for the next publication date of June 22.
Placard Abuse Crackdown

(continued from page 1)

for vehicles that display phony decals.

The mayor made the announcement as part of his weeklong visit to the Bronx from May 22 to 26, telling reporters that the more than 148,000 placards issued to city employees, mainly teachers with the Department of Education and NYPD officers, must be used properly. The rest are doled out by the New York City Department of Transportation.

Enforcement includes the creation of a Placard Fraud Enforcement Unit that falls under the NYPD, the hiring of 100 more traffic agents who will solely monitor placard abuse, increased fines, and pending technology that will determine whether registered placards are being placed on non-registered vehicles. Violators could be subject to disciplinary action or even having their car towed, according to Chief Thomas Chan of the NYPD Transportation Bureau.

“[A]nyone who thinks, in any agency, that they will be able to get away with the abuse of their placard will quickly see that the new enforcement capacity is not like anything they’ve seen in the past,” de Blasio said.

Placards are issued to city employees to park in designated areas, mainly their place of employment, be it school or police precinct. The practice was to identify themselves to traffic enforcement agents and to avoid the hassle of finding parking. For years, it was commonplace for traffic agents to turn a blind eye to cars that carry placards and drivers who park their cars in illegal spots or even at hydrants.

“When someone who’s a public employee parks in front of a fire hydrant, they’re putting lives in danger,” de Blasio said.

The lack of enforcement has inspired Twitter accounts such as @PlacardCorruption to begin chronicling instances where traffic agents avoid ticketing a placard-carrying vehicle despite an obvious infraction. The mayor added that he and city agencies would continue monitoring those sites, and welcome folks catching traffic agents overlooking infractions.

“We’re going to invite the public to help us in this enforcement effort by putting any information either online or calling it in to 3-1-1, and our enforcement personnel will be looking for those violations,” de Blasio said.

The news was received with cautious optimism from the creator of @PlacardCorruption, a Twitter account that’s designed to minimize its real impact,” the creator of @PlacardCorruption, who asked for anonymity fearing reprisal, said. “Relying on specialized units will invariably mean the small number of ‘right’ people will not be in the right place at the right time. What is needed is proper, lawful orders and accountability for the standing army of Traffic Enforcement Agents to simply issue tickets fairly and consistently for the violations they observe.”

The enforcement unit essentially is creating divisions among agents which will “marginalize those who are assigned (‘the rat squad’),” according to the creator of @PlacardCorruption.

Double down enforcement began June 5.

“[W]e’ll see what our folks send in,” said @PlacardCorruption. “We will continue to hold the City accountable for doing the right thing.”

Representatives from the United Federation of Teachers or Police Benevolent Association did not respond to requests for comment. But on a televised appearance on NY1’s Inside City Hall, Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers, said having a placard for teachers will increase teacher retention.

“If you want to retain your teachers, you have to have a place for them to get to, and how to get there and actually how to park their car...It’s nice so many teachers come here, get trained here, are great teachers. New York City’s the toughest place to teach, and then they leave,” Mulgrew said. “And they’re like, ‘Well, I can go over here and teach, and I can drive to the school, and I have a beautiful parking spot, and I don’t have to worry about anything. You know, this goes both ways.”
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