



# NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:**  
**THE VOTING EXPERIENCE | PG. 4**



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**HALLOWEEN IN NORWOOD | PG. 10**

## GJONAJ WINS COUNCIL SEAT

*Victory opens Assembly seat covering Norwood to possible contenders*



Photo by Aaron Mayorga

**COUNCILMAN-ELECT MARK GJONAJ** wins the seat for the 13th Council District covering the east Bronx. Gjonaaj had represented Norwood since 2013.

**By WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE**

All that cash ultimately paid off.

Assemblyman Mark Gjonaaj, who set a new record for City Council spending, was elected to represent the 13th Council District on Election Night, securing 49 percent of

the vote, and effectively opening his Norwood Assembly seat.

Gjonaaj, an Albanian American from Morris Park, defeated Republican challenger John Cerini, an accountant and community leader from Throggs Neck, as well as Marjorie Velazquez, the

82nd Assembly District Female Leader and Community Board 10 treasurer who ran on the Working Families Party ticket. Velazquez was backed by the current holder of the seat, the term-limited Councilman Jimmy Vacca. The 13th District stretches from Morris Park east to City Island, and

does not include Norwood, a neighborhood that Gjonaaj represented in the assembly.

Gjonaaj got the most cheers at a Tuesday night victory party at Pasta Pasta restaurant in Morris Park when it was announced that he would be the first Alba-

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3400 Reservoir Oval East  
Bronx, New York 10467  
Phone: 718 324 4998  
Fax: 718 324 2917  
E-mail: [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org)  
Web.: [www.norwoodnews.org](http://www.norwoodnews.org)

**Publisher**  
Mosholu Preservation Corporation

**Executive Director of MPC**  
Melissa Cebollero

**Director of MPC**  
Jennifer Tausig

**Editor-in-Chief, Norwood News**  
David Cruz, [dcruz@norwoodnews.org](mailto:dcruz@norwoodnews.org)

**Accounts Receivable**  
Dawn McEvoy

**Proofreader**  
Judy Noy

**Interns**  
Diego Barcacer Peña, Stephanie Luciano,  
Yara Palin, Aaron Mayorga

**Regular Contributors**  
David Greene, Adi Talwar

**Contributors**  
Miriam Quinones, Reggie Francois,  
Wendy Joan Biddletombe

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# IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## Borough Board to Vote on Jerome Avenue Rezoning Nov. 16

**By DAVID CRUZ**

The Bronx Borough Board is expected to meet Nov. 16 to decide whether to approve or reject the Jerome Avenue Rezoning plan, a complex and sweeping proposal intended to create more affordable housing across the west and southwest sections of the borough.

The body, made up of the chairs and district managers of community boards, will meet two weeks after the Bronx Borough President got an earful from scores of residents, merchants and even doctors largely opposed to the plan.

Diaz held a hearing on the issue Nov. 2. The lofty proposal looks to rezone 92 blocks of Jerome Avenue between 184th and 167th streets. The plan covers a two-mile stretch along its commercial and major transit corridors within community boards 4, 5 and 7, which make up the neighborhoods of Fordham South, University Heights, Morris Heights, Mt. Eden, and Highbridge.

"This has shown to be one of the rezonings proposed with the most emotion from folks who either support it or don't support it," said Diaz in opening remarks.

The New York City Department of City Planning, the lead agency behind the rezoning plan, presented before the public, emphasizing that part of the plan looks to create more than 4,000 units of affordable housing, honoring Mayor Bill de Blasio's Housing New York Plan. New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) intends to offer tax breaks to developers who build housing for those making a maximum income of \$26,720 for a single person, translating to 40 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).

But many residents, particularly those from Community Action for Safe Apartments, got stuck on the word "affordable." Presently, only a small fraction of the residents could afford to pay these projected rents, raising the question that the units are not for the existing residents.



Photo by David Cruz

**COUNCILWOMAN VANESSA GIBSON** (at mic) testifies at the Jerome Avenue Rezoning hearing Nov. 2. Gibson testified that investments are needed "today."

"Every time I walk around and see billboards that say 'affordable housing,' I just stare at it and laugh and say 'for whom?'" Ed Viera Jr., a resident living within the impacted area, said.

During cross-examination of the plan, Diaz had wondered whether HPD would consider lowering the AMI threshold to 30 percent.

Three people who testified spoke of the racial undertone the Jerome Avenue rezoning represents, with Jessica Roque suggesting this is a new form of "colonialism" toward the existing black and Hispanic population living there. "The settlers here are the people right here on my left," Roque, a Hispanic woman motioning to the largely white group of city officials tasked to formulate the plan, said. "And the natives is us here."

Fitzroy Christian, a resident, compared the plan to a form of "ethnic cleansing" aimed at displacing minorities out of those communities. Dyaami D'Orazio, another resident, wondered whether any new businesses that would settle in the area for two years would be owned by "blanquitos" (Spanish for 'white') or "cafesitos, and our sandwich, and our empanadas."

Community boards 4, 5 and 7 have cast a yes vote to the plan so long as some stipulations are met. Some stipulations by Community Board 4 include the creation of a so-called anti-displacement fund, available resources for existing autobody mechanics, and the creation of an LGBTQ center.

Arguably, the most critical voice in the public review process could be Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson, whose district largely covers the bulk of the area that will be rezoned (Councilman Fernando Cabrera's 14th Council District covers some ground on Jerome Avenue). During her testimony, Gibson appeared to lean in favor of rezoning Jerome Avenue so long as certain conditions were met. Her position will determine whether the New York City Council will vote in favor of the project. Council members typically defer their vote to the council member whose project presides in that district. "As the Council Member of District 16, I refuse to allow our community to be short-changed nor will I sit by and allow other communities to get the investments that we deserve, that we need today," Gibson, reading from prepared remarks, said. "Not tomorrow but today."

## Public and Community Meetings

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will hold its general board meeting on Nov. 21 at 6:30 p.m. at North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kossuth Ave. Committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Executive Committee meets on Nov. 9; Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee meets on Nov. 14; Health & Hospitals Committee meets on Nov. 15; and Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee meets on Nov. 16. For more information, call (718) 944-5650.

**THE 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets on Nov. 16 at St. James Episcopal Church, 2500 Jerome Ave. at 190th Street, from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.

**THE 52ND PRECINCT NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY MEETING** for residents living within Sector D which encompasses Jerome Avenue from Mosholu Parkway to East Gun Hill Road; East Gun Hill Road from Jerome to Webster avenues; and Webster Avenue from East Gun Hill Road to Mosholu Parkway, will be held at Saint Brendan School in the gym, 268 E. 207th St. on Nov. 15 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call Neighborhood Coordination Police Officers Michelle Brown at (929) 285-0127 or Edward Barrett at (929) 281-7898.

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Bronx	Address	Date
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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers exiting voting sites about their general experience on this Election Day.



It was good because I came out early today, so I was in and out. They were very helpful. They had me in the back, and I'm all done. I'm not sure about the voter turnout today, and I don't like the mayor.

**Jacqueline Alvarez**  
Pelham Bay



They were very helpful and had no lines. It was very organized, and the process was equally distributed in terms of workload so it was very efficient. No, I didn't see any Russians. I don't know how the mayor is going to do today, but he has a lot of opposition. A lot of people don't like him, and we'll see about the Bronx races as well.

**Angelos Skordos**  
Morris Park



Well, I'll tell you one thing, it was the first time I voted in many years. Everybody was pretty cool and helpful, very. To me, the bottom line is I won't see change no matter who wins. It's the same story over and over again. The problems are there are no jobs, [there's] crime. And the change that has occurred over the years has been terrible.

**Cory Johnson**  
Pelham Parkway



I got in early. The line wasn't too bad, and they were very helpful. They gave me my voting papers. The people were doing a good job. I think the mayor should win. He's doing a good job. They never give him any credit for what he does good, just the negative they give him. It's amazing that people never speak of the good things. They look for the bad, but I give the mayor credit for what he's done so far.

**Paul Siblies**  
Norwood



It was nice, but then it became a little stressful because the machines weren't working. But I gave them my ballot, and I'm happy and proud to be a voter today. I voted 'no' on [the Constitutional Convention] so our union gets to keep our pension according to what the union told me. Mayor de Blasio? All the way, boo-boo.

**Jennifer Hernandez**  
Norwood

## CRIME FILE

By YARA PALIN



Images courtesy NYPD

**FOUR OF THE** five suspects were caught on surveillance video.

### Catholic School Robbed

Five people (two female and three male) entered St. Nicholas of Tolentine School in Fordham through an unlocked door on Oct. 23 and took around \$4500 worth of laptops and other electronics before taking off, police say.

All suspects are Hispanic. One female is in her teens and is roughly 5'5" weighing about 125 lbs. The second female is in her late teens or early 20s, around 5'6" and weighing about

125 lbs. The three males are in their late teens or early 20s and are around 5'7", each weighing about 170 lbs.

### Liquor Store Pickpocket

Police are looking for a suspect who pickpocketed a man in a liquor store in Bedford Park.

The suspect approached the 74-year-old victim inside the store at 248 E. 204th St. and allegedly removed his wallet from his jacket pocket at around 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 24, police say.

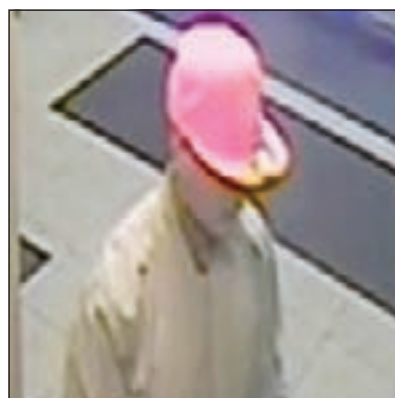
The suspect is described as a black man with black hair and was last seen wearing a gray long-sleeved sweater, black pants, black boots, and a dark colored cap worn backwards.

### Serial Thief Wanted

A man already wanted for another robbery in Norwood has struck again. He is described as a Hispanic around 30 to 40 years old, of light complexion. Last seen wearing a tan jacket, he matches the description of a suspect wanted for a Sept. 1 robbery in the same area.

This time the alleged thief came

with two other people to rob a 34-year-old victim of nearly \$400 at the corner of West Gun Hill Road and Knox Place on Oct. 13 just before midnight, police say.



**Editor's Note:** Anyone with information on any of these crimes is asked to call Crime Stoppers at (800) 577-TIPS. The public can also submit their tips by logging on to the Crime Stoppers website at [www.nypdcrimestoppers.com](http://www.nypdcrimestoppers.com) or by texting their tips to 274637 (CRIMES) then enter TIP577. All calls are kept confidential.

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Submission Deadline: November 29



# New St. Philip Neri Principal a Familiar Face in Norwood

By DAVID CRUZ

In the space of five minutes, Ajiea Beebe, new principal at St. Philip Neri Catholic School in Bedford Park, escorted a timid student out of a classroom, received a hearty “Good morning Mrs. Beebe” from uniformed children walking down the hallways, and gave a top-down tour of the 104-year-old school.

It’s been almost two months since Beebe came to the school, and she’s already feeling at home. In many ways, she is. It helps that a number of her old students at the school she’s previously worked at have now transferred to St. Philip Neri, making for a smooth transition.

“It’s nice to see that students still have that love for education, and I think it also has to do with making it a loving environment and a nurturing environment and that’s our goal,” Beebe, speaking to the *Norwood News* from her office on Oct. 30, said. “Our school motto is ‘Servium,’ which is pretty much ‘to serve’ and that’s something that I live by since I was I was born.”

Up until August, Beebe served as

principal at nearby St. Ann’s Catholic School, which closed this year after the Archdiocese of New York deemed it was not on proper financial footing to continue operating. It was a closure Beebe described as “heartbreaking.” Diocese officials reassigned teachers and administrators across the system, with Beebe ultimately chosen to lead the Catholic school that rests at the Grand Concourse near Bedford Park Boulevard. It’s an institution with an enrollment of some 200 students, and one now that’s replaced the New York City Department of Education’s Universal Pre-K for one they’ve solely sponsored.

With no signs St. Philip Neri would face closure, Beebe has hit the ground running with an aggressive agenda that includes expanding music services, increasing enrollment, starting so-called buddy classes, and instituting a teacher resource center that’s expected to launch in December. As has long been the case for Beebe, ideas are jotted down in a binder she’s kept containing an assortment of ideas.



Photo by Adi Talwar

**AJIEA BEEBE, PRINCIPAL** of St. Philip Neri Catholic School, works with students from the Bedford Park school. She transferred from the now closed St. Ann’s School during the summer.

On her days at school, Beebe remains omnipresent, evaluating teachers, serving as a watchful eye during dismissal or leading a choir class. She relies on her student hallway ambassadors, hand-picked to responsibly escort other students who may be running late.

“So it’s that personal touch where some students may feel a bit nervous going to class or going up the stairs by themselves because they’re not with their class, but with VIP service,” Beebe said.

Beebe spent a portion of her childhood in Highbridge. His mother was a lector while her dad volunteered at Sacred Heart Catholic School. “That was the elementary school that I went to so we were truly blessed with working with the Marist Brothers and also Father Mark Reagan,” recalled Beebe. “I was teaching religious studies when I was 13. I was teaching public school students third grade all the way up preparing for sacraments. I didn’t mind it. It was something I enjoyed.”

Her entire career has been in the Catholic school system, an institution she feels is making a

comeback. With parishes forming regional schools, it’s bridged a stronger bond between church and Catholic school officials. St. Philip Neri appears to be following that tract, according to Beebe, thanks to the school’s relationship with Father Jose Serrano, St. Philip Neri Church’s lead pastor.

“Father Serrano has been wonderful in assisting with mass, making a presence and walking through the building and saying hello and allowing us to utilize the church facilities if that is a need,” Beebe said. “But at the same time it’s give and take, but we work very well together.”

Scholarships and financial aid programs are available to students, a boon to the neighborhood’s working class and second generation of immigrants enrolled at the school.


The joys of teaching continue to course through Beebe, who relishes in popping her head into classes or even teaching a class every once in a while. “It’s those little things that still keep me going,” Beebe said. “It’s the children.”

## Pumpkin SMASH!




Photo by Miriam Quinones

**THIS PUMPKIN GUNNER** is about to toss an orange gourd into a launcher, ready to send it off to its fate at the annual Pumpkin Smash held at Lehman College Nov. 1. The newly squished pumpkins, fired off the rooftop of the college’s music building, were turned into compost set aside for city parks and green spaces.



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## Getting Into Nitty Gritty of Kingsbridge Ice Project Loan

By AARON MAYORGA

State officials are in the midst of finalizing a \$138 million capital loan to the developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) after a five-member board approved the measure during their latest meeting.

At its Oct. 18 meeting, the Public Authorities Control Board (PACB), which supervises the activities of New York's numerous public benefit corporations, unanimously approved the general project plan outlined by the state's Empire State Development (ESD) agency. In addition to the \$138 million loan commitment, the ESD plan also includes \$26.4 million in historic tax credits and an additional \$20.7 million in "other preferred equity." All told, under the PACB-approved plan, KNIC is slated to receive \$185.1 million in state public assistance.

But according to ESD spokesperson Amy Varghese, funds from the \$138 million loan will not be made available to KNIC until the ice center is completed. "Our agreement is to provide the loan at the substantial completion of construction," Varghese told the *Nor-*

*wood News* in an emailed statement. According to ESD's project plan, the first phase of development, which includes the construction of the ice center's first five ice rinks, is anticipated to be completed in late 2020.

The ESD loan, however, has not yet completed its journey through the state's bureaucracy. For it to be finalized, ESD's Board of Directors must still assess any public comments and affirm the loan.

The first matter is largely settled with local residents having already voiced their support for the state's plan for the ice center at a hearing last month. Community Board 7, the civic panel that overlaps with the Armory, originally approved the KNIC project in September 2013.

As a result of the positive feedback, it is expected that the ESD Board of Directors will sign off on the loan at their next meeting later this month. Approval of the loan will allow KNIC to release the lease to the Armory from escrow and to secure a construction loan, thereby enabling construction on the troubled project to finally begin.

## City Steps In to Aid Troubled Kingsbridge Hts. Building



Photo by Diego Barcacer Peña

**THIS BUILDING AT 60 E. 196th Street in Kingsbridge Heights is undergoing renovations.**

By YARA PALIN

The city has stepped in to help tenants of a troubled Kingsbridge Heights apartment building who were reportedly forced to share a single bathroom for weeks.

The superintendent for 60 E. 196th St., Cristian Rico, says that conditions first reported by the *New York Post* were exaggerated. He insists that The Morgan Group, which

owns the building, has only been renovating after the city ordered them to fix faulty pipes. There are still two official stop work orders posted on the front door, however.

Rico also says that the stop work order was given because "tenants were using one bathroom but now everyone since [Oct. 25] has had their toilet and their shower ready."

(continued on page 15)

## Norwood Car Dealer Aids Puerto Rico's Hurricane Victims

By STEPHANIE LUCIANO

LaSorsa Chevrolet Dealership announced their collection efforts for victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico were successful.

The auto group on the corner of East Gun Hill Road and Webster Avenue in Norwood collected hurricane donations for the past two months through Oct. 27 with a portion of donations coming from the recent Hurricane Relief Concert held at East 204th Street and Webster Avenue. With the help of local residents, they've received an abundance of water, clothing and nonperishable goods.

Satisfied with the amount of donations received, John A. LaSorsa, CEO of the dealership, told the *Norwood News* he was happy to be a collection center. With family in Puerto Rico, employee families involved, along with the community who



Photo by Stephanie Luciano

**THE TEAM BEHIND** the collection drive.

needed the help, "It's really a great effort on behalf of the community and we're happy to be involved," he says.

Hurricane Maria devastated

Puerto Rico in September, with electrical power still out across the U.S. commonwealth. Its impact has been greatly felt across the Bronx, where an estimated 300,000 people

of Puerto Rican descent live. There have been 51 deaths as a result of the Category 5 hurricane, though many have begun to dispute the numbers, claiming as many as 900 have really passed. A series of collection drives have been organized to send much needed relief aid to the ravaged island. Among the biggest collection drives is one organized by the City of New York, which has assigned FDNY stationhouses across the Bronx to serve as collection sites for Hurricane Maria victims. Batteries, baby food, diapers, and feminine hygiene products were among the more sought-after donations.

The dealership has left it up to the community to decide what areas of Puerto Rico will receive these donations. "Without them we don't exist, so it's important for us to be a part of anything that happens to our community," said LaSorsa.

**MARIE PYRAM, 82**

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# HALLOWEEN IN NORWOOD

From Mosholu Parkway to the Williamsbridge Oval, the Halloween season swept through Norwood with plenty of “scare-rific” events lined up.



Photo by David Greene

**A CHAINSAW WIELDING** clown poses with Norwood residents at the Williamsbridge Oval Haunted House.



Photo by David Greene

**NORWOOD RESIDENTS ENCOUNTERED** this armless girl at the Williamsbridge Oval Haunted House.



Photo by Adi Talwar

**TRICK OR TREATERS** eagerly await candy handed out by employees of Webster Gourmet Deli on East 204th Street and Webster Avenue on Halloween night.



Photo by Adi Talwar

**THESE TRICK OR TREATERS** make a stop at the Bainbridge Deli on East 207th Street and Bainbridge Avenue.



Photo by Aaron Mayorga

**THE JEROME-GUN HILL BID** hosted a free Halloween event at the corner of East Mosholu Parkway North and Jerome Avenue on Oct. 31. Guests were treated to free candy, face-painting, and photo ops with this friendly dinosaur.



Photo by Diego Barcacer Peña  
**THIS GENEROUS SOUL** dumps his Halloween treats... for a good cause. The kids, patients of the diabetes clinic at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore, took part in a Halloween candy buyback event on Nov. 1. Candies were exchanged for a gift card or present.





Photo by Diego Barcacer Peña

**SOME RESTAURANTS WILL** participate through specially priced menus.

## Savor the Bronx Aims to Satisfy Taste Buds

By **DIEGO BARCACER PEÑA**

A full serving of the borough's diversity will be dished out by local eateries during Savor the Bronx Restaurant Week, which runs from Nov. 6 to 17.

The 12-day event will give local restaurants the chance to showcase assorted Bronx flavors while continuing its decades-long quest to extinguish the "Bronx is burning," stereotype of the 1970s.

"[W]here we are today is a place where we celebrate our diversity," said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. at an event marking the start of Savor the Bronx. "[W]here we celebrate all of the great developments; we celebrate the job creation. But we have always been the borough of flavor."

From the south to the north Bronx, more than 30 different flavors will be available for tasting during the yearly event. It will feature Latin American restaurants, including Mamajuana Café, which serves Latin Caribbean food, and Habanero Mexican Cuisine. American restaurants like the Bronx Alehouse, which serves chicken wings dipped in "Bronx is Burning" hot sauce; Asian fusion restaurants like Siam Square Thai Cuisine; Bistro SK which will serve the only French food in the borough; and Italian restaurants like Porto Salvo, which specializes in seafood; will all be among the participating eateries.

"We are the new kids on the block, but we aren't new to the restaurant business," said Mark Lu, co-owner of Porto Salvo. "We know that it is very important to be engaged with the community."

Assemblyman Michael Blake, of the 79th Assembly District in the

South Bronx, was also present at Porto Salvo to discuss the changing environment of the borough. "For people born and raised here, we know that people didn't think about the Bronx the way they do now. They would always talk about it negatively as if there was always something wrong, but now people are talking about what's happening here," said Blake.

Blake noted that the South Bronx was included in the *New York Times'* annual 52 Places to Visit in the World, saying that, "It's showing that things are happening and changing the game."

Many eateries near Norwood will be a part of Savor the Bronx. One of them is Madden's Uptown Bar & Grill located in Kingsbridge. It has been in the same location for over 50 years as a bar, but recently it was renovated to a bar and grill that cooks American cuisine with an Irish twist. It has unique food tasting challenges like the four-pound burger, which can be eaten alone or with a group of friends. It also has cocktails like "The Hair of the Dog," which is a traditional Bloody Mary filled with bacon strips, olives, chicken wings, and onion rings.

"I love the Bronx, I'm born and bred in the Bronx. I was born in 1978 and there's nothing better than the Bronx," said Patricia Murray, owner of Madden's Uptown Bar & Grill. "I love anything positive for the Bronx, and this right here [Restaurant Week] I've been waiting for this."

**Editor's Note:** For a look at deals offered by restaurants, like Madden's \$16.39 fixed price lunch menu, go to [savorthebronx.com](http://savorthebronx.com) or [ilovethebronx.com](http://ilovethebronx.com).

## Fordham Shelter Housing Site Here to Stay

By **REGGIE FRANCOIS**

Despite numerous attempts to rid a homeless shelter/affordable housing site in Fordham, hundreds of residents at a nearby cooperative will have to get used to the site and its occupants, whether they like it or not.

Still, residents at Fordham Hill Owners Corporation expressed continued outrage for Fordham Landing, the homeless shelter and affordable housing site slated to open in December. An Oct. 25 town hall meeting took place between the corporation's community engagement community and representatives from the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Bowery Residents Committee (BRC), with executive director Muzzy Rosenblatt on hand.

"We're here to answer all the concerns, to listen to all of the concerns of the community and to hear the answers that both the agency has as well as the provider," said Senator Gustavo Rivera of the 33rd District, serving as moderator. Assembly members Victor Pichardo and Jose Rivera, who lives at the complex, were also on hand. The panel consisted of Rosenblatt and DHS representatives Jackie Gray and Iris Rodriguez.

Locals took to the mic to ask various questions, including whether there was a curfew for residents, and whether it was too late for the shelter's demographic to be changed. They also inquired whether Megan's Law, which requires convicted sex offenders to register with New York State, applies.

The shelter/affordable housing site is located at 233 Landing Rd., a block and half from the nine-building complex on Sedgwick Avenue and West Fordham Road. The de Blasio administration has favored the shelter model over the cluster site model, which puts

the homeless in apartment buildings.

Before taking questions and addressing concerns, DHS made a statement about the department's aim to close cluster sites.

"This February, the mayor announced a plan to really improve and reimagine the shelters," said Gray. "We made a commitment to shrink the DHS footprint by 45 percent, to close 360 facilities city-wide. We made commitments to get out all cluster sites."

"The shelter we're opening has employable folks," said Rodriguez after a local baseball coach expressed worry for the shelter's inhabitants wandering the streets during the day. "As Muzzy said, we're here to provide service to everyone — not only to our clients, but to the community."

Myrna Calderon, president of Fordham Hill Owners Cooperative Board of Directors, brought up the lack of communication between BRC and DHS and stakeholders, particularly schools in the area.

"The problem is not that you put a shelter here," said Calderon. "The problem is if you had bothered to have engaged the community, you would have realized this was not the best location."

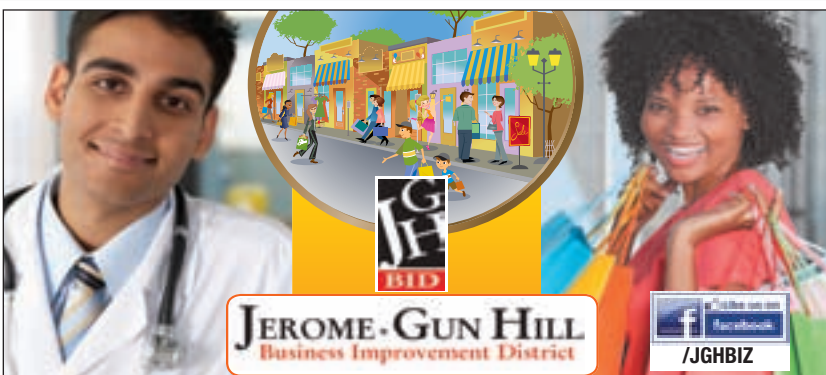
DHS also announced that an advisory committee meeting will be held on the last Wednesday in January.

"BRC will always consider concerns of and suggestions from the community. That is our practice throughout the city and we have been responsive," Rosenblatt told the *Norwood News*. "To facilitate that, and for that purpose, beginning in January we will hold quarterly meetings open to the public. The meetings for 2018 will be Jan. 31, April 25, July 25, and Oct. 24. They will start at 6 p.m. at the shelter."



Photo by Reggie Francois

**BRONX RESIDENTS WAIT** their turn to speak with BRC Executive Director Muzzy Rosenblatt (background center).



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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### Public Engagement Workshops

The Mayor's Tenant Support Unit will hold a workshop on tenant rights on Nov. 16 and 30 at UNHP Refuge House, 2715 Bainbridge Ave., from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The unit works with those who may be at risk of displacement, experiencing landlord harassment, needs a rent freeze for those who qualify, and other resources. For more information, call 311 or visit [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).

### Excelsior Scholarship

The Excelsior Scholarship application for students to attend SUNY or CUNY tuition free this spring semester is open through Dec. 4. The scholarship is open to New Yorkers with household incomes of up to \$100,000. Students must agree to be enrolled in college full time and complete 30 credits per year (including summer and January semesters). To learn more about qualifications, visit <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior/>.

### JGH-BID Annual Meeting

The public is invited to the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District meeting on Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. at a location to be determined. The BID will outline its list of accomplishments, discuss new initiatives and plan for the new year. Food and refreshments will be served. For more information and to RSVP (required), call (718) 324-4946 or email [jeromegunhillbid@gmail.com](mailto:jeromegunhillbid@gmail.com).

### Job Fair

A job fair is scheduled Nov. 15 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Creston Avenue Baptist Church, 114 E. 188th St. More than 40 businesses will be attending the fair with hundreds of job opportunities available. For more information, call the office of Assemblyman Victor Pichardo at (718) 933-6909.

### Heating Assistance

Sign up to receive free heating assistance through New York State

Home Energy Assistance Program. Eligible households can receive assistance of up to \$726. A family of four can earn up to \$53,482 per year and still qualify for help. For more information, and to sign up, can call (212) 331-3126.

### BID Survey

The Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District is conducting a survey through November to determine what stores are needed for the neighborhood business strip on Jerome Avenue between Moshulu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road and East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster avenues. To take part in the survey, go to <http://bit.ly/2ffXnfg>.

### Job Recruitment Event

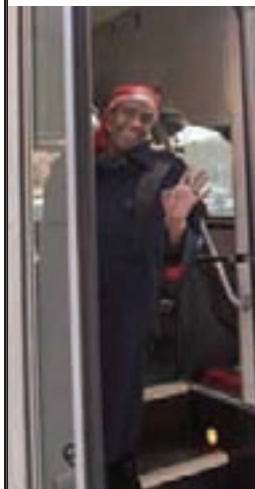
A free pop-up recruitment events where job seekers can meet with potential employees will take place on Nov. 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. Attendees are asked to bring plenty of resumes and dress professionally. For more information, call (718) 579-4244. In addition, job seekers can meet with a career coach, get free resume help, and participate in formal mock interviews. To schedule an appointment, call (718) 549-4260 or email [ceis@nypl.org](mailto:ceis@nypl.org).

### Hurricane Relief Drive

The Office of Senator Gustavo Rivera is holding a relief drive for victims of Hurricane Maria. Items urgently needed include baby food, diapers, batteries, first aid kits, and feminine hygiene products. To donate, stop by the office at 2432 Grand Concourse, 5th floor, and drop their donations off at room 506 or the FEDCAP office at rooms 516 and 517, weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-2034.

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Free Jazz at NYPL

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents free concert: Salute to Two Legendary Ladies of Jazz, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald, performed by singer Glendalys Sosa accompanied by pianist John Austria and saxophonist Joe Sherman, Nov. 18 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

### Onstage

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **Teatro Behemio** featuring bolero legends Anthony Rios and Francisco Céspedes and featuring Diomary La Mala, Nov. 11 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$50 to \$65; \$100/VIP which includes pre-concert reception with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Lehman College and Community Band presents its **Autumn Leaves Concert**,

featuring a variety of music, Nov. 19 at 2 p.m. in Lehman's Lovinger Theatre, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W. Donations are welcome. For more information, call (718) 960-8247.

### Events

Van Cortlandt Jewish Center, 3880 Sedgwick Ave., presents free **Annual Indoor Bazaar & Carnival**, Nov. 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Events include silent auction, raffle, kosher food and drinks for sale, magic shows at noon and 1:30 p.m., free giveaway for children, carnival



Photo courtesy Wave Hill

**LEARN HOW TO** handcraft cornhusks dolls like this at Wave Hill on Nov. 18 and 19 (see under Events for more information).

games with prizes, and more. For more information, call (718) 884-6105.

The Williamsbridge Oval offers a variety of **free classes for youth** ages 6 to 12, this fall, after school and Saturdays, including drama, sports, dance, art and more. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 543-8672.

Montefiore Medical Group offers a **free respiratory workshop**, Nov. 10 from 3 to 4 p.m. at 2532 Grand Concourse in the 3rd floor conference room. For more information, call (800) 636-6683.

New York Botanical Garden presents **Fall Forest Weekend**, Nov. 11 and 12, to see live birds of prey demonstrations at 1 and 3 p.m. (meet across from the Native Plant Garden entrance); and Shakespeare in the Forest, featuring actors performing excerpts from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," at noon and 2 p.m. (begins at the head of the Ridge Trail in the Forest). Also scheduled is the **Annual Holiday Train Show**, Nov. 22 to Jan. 15, 2018, featuring model trains and miniature replicas of NYC landmarks. For more information and to purchase tickets, call (718) 817-8512.

The Woodlawn Conservancy holds **tour** of historic gravesites at Woodlawn Cemetery's Jazz Corner on Nov. 12 at 2 p.m. (meet at the Jerome/Bainbridge avenues entrance). For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 920-1469.

**Wave Hill**, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Dances With Leaves, to collect leaves and add paper to make leaf hanging, Nov. 11 and 12; and Cornhusk Dolls, to listen to tales followed by doll making, Nov. 18 and 19, both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Concert**, Nov. 12 at 2 p.m. in the WH House, featuring the Alonso Brothers, two pianists playing classical music (tickets: \$28 plus grounds admission; \$24/members; \$12/ages 8 to 18; info: ext. 251). Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and

walks, call (718) 549-3200.

### Exhibits

The Bronx County Historical Society presents **What Lies Beneath -- Cemeteries of the Bronx**, through April 8, 2018, at the Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (165th Street), presents **Gordon Matt-Clark: Anarchitect**; and **Susannah Ray: A Further Shore**; both through Nov. 8, 2018. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

### Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **Hands on Projects** (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required): Turkey Making, Nov. 9 and Jewelry Making, Nov. 16, both at 4 p.m.; and Door Hanger Making, Nov. 12 and Picture Frame Making, Nov. 19, both at 3:30 p.m.; and **Little Red Riding Hood**: (ages 3 to 12), updated version including music, followed by a puppet demonstration, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy **BeWell: Using Kindness to Relieve Stress**: to learn about health, Nov. 15 at 5:30 p.m.; and **film**: "Divergent," Nov. 25. Adults can attend **Computer Basics**: Nov. 21 at 2 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for teens/young adults: **Film**: "Wonder Woman," Nov. 18 at 1:30 p.m.; and **Craft-eens!**: Different craft every Wednesday, Nov. 22 at 3:30 p.m. (all materials are provided. Adults can attend: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by Nov. 13 for the next publication date of Nov. 23.



Photo courtesy Glendalys Sosa

**SONGSTRESS GLENDALYS SOSA** performs at the Bronx Library Center on Nov. 18 (see Editor's Pick for more information).



# Gjonaj Wins Council Seat

(continued from page 1)

nian American city council member. “Black, white, Albanian, Irish, women and men, we are one collective voice and we are going to say ‘wake up City Hall,’” Gjonaj said. “The Bronx will not become a tale of two boroughs.”

Gjonaj said that after a short break of a day or two, he’s ready to start working on his campaign issues: improving transportation, quality of life issues, and addressing overcrowded classrooms and homeless shelters. “I will always be a part of this assembly district, I don’t care about borders,” Gjonaj said of Norwood no longer falling within his council jurisdiction.

Backed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Democratic Party Chair Marcos Crespo, unions that included 32BJ and 1199SEIU, Gjonaj clinched the Democratic nomination for the council seat by less than 400 votes in the September primary.

As of Nov. 7, Gjonaj raised \$838,904 in net campaign contributions and spent \$1,112,625 on his campaign. He did not participate in the New York City Campaign Finance Board’s matching funds program, which matches contributions from qualifying New York City residents at a \$6-to-\$1 rate. Candidates who join the program—that aims to have New Yorkers, not special interest groups, donate to campaigns—can



Photo by Aaron Mayorga

**NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILMAN** Mark Gjonaj will now represent the east Bronx, covering the neighborhoods of Morris Park, Throggs Neck, Silver Beach, and City Island.

receive up to \$1,050 in public funds for each contributor.

Gjonaj’s ascent, which comes with a bump in pay (council members earn \$148,500 a year to the \$79,500 that state legislators earn), leaves the 80th Assembly District without a representative for the foreseeable future, perhaps until 2019, unless Cuomo calls a special election in the interim.

In a phone call before Election Day, Anthony Riveccio, the founder of Northwest Bronx Democrats, said that Gjonaj’s win as a council member is a

loss for the 80th Assembly District and Norwood.

Riveccio said that he supported the new council member for years because he’s been “accessible” and “negotiable” in regard to any topic or issue” since he was elected to the assembly in 2012, having defeated incumbent Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera.

Riveccio said that now that Gjonaj is in the City Council, a number of hopefuls who have been eyeing his seat might come out publicly. These contenders might include:

- Marcos Sierra, District 80 Male Leader
- Andrea Siegel, District 80 Female Leader
- Adam Bermudez, aide to Councilmember Andy King who ran for the Assembly seat in 2012
- Nathalia Fernandez, the Bronx regional representative for Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s office who previously worked for Gjonaj
- Sheila Sanchez, president of Northwest Bronx Democrats

Riveccio pointed to Gjonaj’s willingness to not only support the down-

zoning of Mosholu Parkway, but also to provide video testimony as a sign of his commitment to preserve and protect the greenway from over-development.

Behind the scenes, Riveccio said Gjonaj has provided resources to community organizations for their flea markets, cleanups and other programming. Riveccio recalled an effort about four years ago to paint over unsightly and prolific graffiti that plagued the bridge to the New York Botanical Garden on Mosholu Parkway.

“Assemblyman Gjonaj got a team of community people together,” Riveccio said. “None of us were great painters. [But if you look at the bridge today] it’s clear and white.”

As for the high campaign spending, Riveccio said Gjonaj did what he had to do to win a more conservative Democratic district.

“Cerini happened to be a very credible candidate,” Riveccio said, adding that he was glad the assemblyman didn’t participate in the funds matching program. “Otherwise, the city would be broke,” Riveccio said.



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## City Steps In to Aid Troubled Kingsbridge Hts. Building

(continued from page 7)

He also admits that tenants were sharing a single bathroom “for like one week.”

A tenant who went by Miguel says that although the building was undergoing renovations, it wasn’t as bad as it appeared. “People like to gossip too much,” says Miguel. He insists that, although there was some water service disruption, it didn’t affect the entire building at once.

Most complaints filed to the city Housing Preservation and Development were by tenants on the fourth floor of the building in the west wing. Miguel lives on the first floor in the east wing and says that while he didn’t have to share a bathroom, he can’t imagine that the other tenants had it that bad. The faucet produced dirty tap water while his kitchen didn’t have a working

faucet or stove during September. Miguel says, “Yes, we did last a month and a half with that, but still they did fix everything.”

Complaints from tenants include non-compliance with the Tenant Protection Plan (TPP), which provides a standard for fire safety, structural safety, noise restrictions, health requirements, and compliance with housing standards.

Other complaints included the kitchen and bathrooms having been completely demolished, leaving occupants without water, gas and no sanitary facilities to use. In some cases, sinks and toilets were completely removed. Construction materials and tools were left in apartments, along with dust and debris and the fire ratings between all the apartments in the west wing were removed. Building-wide com-



Photo by Diego Barcacer Peña

**A NOTICE ALERTS** residents about the work happening in their building.

plaints to HDP spiked in August and picked up again in October. There are 103 open violations cur-

rently being investigated by HDP, with 95 of them being reported since August.

Fire guards provided by HPD declined to comment on site.

A spokesperson for HPD, Juliet Pierre-Antoine, says, “Forcing residents to live in such a difficult situation is unacceptable.” She also says that the building received a series of violations and a stop work order over a period of five days. “HPD’s Special Enforcement Unit is in direct contact with this owner and will continue to closely monitor this situation,” she continues. “If repairs are not completed in a timely matter, HPD will step in to perform Emergency Repairs for which the owner will be billed.”

Attempts to reach the owner of the building, Scott Morgan, were unsuccessful.

*Additional reporting by Diego Barcacer Peña.*



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