



# NORWOOD NEWS

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**HOUSING MATTERS:  
REZONING JEROME AVE. | PGS. 8-9**

## SECURING DEVOE PARK

*Cabrera orders gates for University Heights park*



Photo by Adi Talwar

**DEVOE PARK AT** West Fordham Road and University Avenue will see gates retrofitted to all nine entrances.

By **NIALL RIDGLEY**

New retrofitted gates, enhanced lighting, and security cameras will be installed by early spring in response to high levels of summer nighttime activity at Devoe Park in University Heights.

The installation of the nine locking gates at nine of the park's entrances, spearheaded by Councilman Fernando Cabrera, should help curb insufferable disturbances for residents living in the neighboring Fordham Hill Oval

Co-op and on the adjacent streets of Father Zeiser, Webb Avenue, and University Avenue.

Residents near Devoe Park have long been concerned about heavy late-night activity and noise, from partying to drug dealing, particularly during the summer months. A representative from Cabrera's office told the *Norwood News* that Devoe Park will be closing and locking at dusk once the project is completed. Parks are usually closed at night. The gates

and added security measures are planned to be completed by July using mayoral funding granted to Cabrera by Mayor Bill de Blasio.

The additions come on the heels of a new homeless shelter/affordable housing residence at 233 Landing Rd, blocks from the park. But residents of Fordham Hill say the homeless are not the problem. Israel Ruiz, a longtime Hill resident, says that the term 'shelter' is almost too harsh for the new facility. "These are transitional,

screened, people looking for work. They get screened in Manhattan and other places. These are people who should be helped," said Ruiz adding that he cried in shame at a community meeting during which residents were vilifying their new homeless neighbors.

Another Fordham resident, Natalie Martine, agrees with Ruiz, clarifying that it is the fights, often drug related, that raise safety concerns, not the homeless who "don't (continued on page 15)



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# IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## At State of the Borough, BP Highlights Fixes and Needs

By MARY MELLON

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. delivered his ninth State of the Bronx address before an audience of supporters and fellow elected officials.

For nearly 45 minutes, Diaz stood composed as he delivered a speech that largely underscored the borough's positives while lambasting the city's shortcomings. But read between the lines, Diaz's speech also showed his sights set on higher office.

"Look at how different things are in this borough today than just a decade ago," Diaz said. "We have set the bar for the entire nation on transformative urban renewal and development. We are the new standard for revitalization."

Indeed, the Bronx has made a comeback, as outlined by his speech. Diaz began by stressing some of the positives. Workforce participation is at an all-time high with "110,000 more Bronx residents" holding "jobs than when I first took office," according to Diaz. Unemployment is down by more than half, at just 5.5 percent. Crime has also taken a dive. For the fifth straight year there have been less than 100 homicides in the Bronx, aligning with the rest of overall drop across the city.

Diaz also acknowledged some persistent challenges facing the Bronx. Though the Bronx saw an increased graduation rate, math and reading scores are still at a low. Over half of students are striving to learn in overcrowded classrooms.

Urban planning and infrastructure were described as "significant issues" facing the city, given the affordable housing crunch. "We have a



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Ruben Diaz Jr. shortly after his 45-minute speech.

shortage of affordable housing and the subway is falling apart. In the Bronx, we have developed solutions, creating 21,000 units of affordable housing and rezoning for more functional, more inviting neighborhoods."

Turning to federal matters, Diaz finally included in his speech the raging heroin and opioid crisis that's impacted the Bronx. In 2016, the Bronx saw the most heroin-related deaths across the city with 308. There are no numbers available for 2017 as yet.

Diaz appeared to play racial politics, saying the problem was present all along, just not in suburban neighborhoods. "[N]ow that the face of opioid addiction is changing to include non-urban communities, we welcome the increased national conversation on this epidemic," said Diaz. "When they speak of this crisis, are Republicans talking about helping

the folks in our communities?"

On the subject of immigration, Diaz called for Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to "stay out of our courts" when it came to arresting undocumented immigrants. "It is time for our nation's leadership to stop polarizing and speaking untruths, and to start leading. We reject any misguided, harmful, and frankly, un-American erosion of our rights. We will protect our youth who have sought refuge and made their home in this great nation from deportation."

While issues brought about my city and federal policy were at the forefront, one glaring omission was references to the Kingsbridge National Ice Center, a \$348 million project that's been delayed for nearly five years. "Different items and issues go into the speech every year," said John DeSio, a spokesman for Diaz.

## Public and Community Meetings

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Traffic & Transportation Committee meets on March 1; Veterans Committee meets on March 1 at 7:30 p.m.; Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee meets on March 6; Health & Hospitals Committee meets on March 6 at 7:30 p.m.; Environment & Sanitation Committee meets on March 7; Education, Youth & Libraries Committee meets on March 7 at 7:30 p.m.; Executive Committee meets on March 8; Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee meets on March 13; Senior Services Committee meets on March 14; and Parks & Recreation Committee meets on March 14 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets on March 7 at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So. #B1 (lobby floor). For more information, email [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).



# NORWOOD NEWS

## S N A P S H O T S



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**THIS THRILLSEEKER FEELS** a burst of cold after she gets in and quickly out of Orchard Beach waters at the annual Polar Bear Swim Feb. 17. The hypothermic event saw several dozen swimmers go for a rejuvenating swim at the borough's beach, all aimed at perking up the body on a midwinter's day. It also called attention to the issue of homelessness.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**THESE KIDS SHOW** plenty of heart at this magical party hosted by the Children's Hospital at Montefiore on Feb. 16. The pediatric patients, suffering from various heart ailments, reunited with the same medical teams that currently or previously treated them. The event was co-sponsored by Harboring Hearts, which offers financial aid to patients awaiting a heart transplant.



Photo courtesy Office of Sen. Jamaal Bailey

**GUESTS, INCLUDING STAFFERS** for Sen. Jamaal Bailey were on hand for a Black History Month celebration hosted by Bailey's office on Feb. 24 at Tracey Towers. Pictured (l-r) are: Kenny Agosto, Timothy Tapia, Kevin Riley, Lisa Gattis, Cynthia O'Neal-Riley, Jascelyn Parson, Dominique Maddox, and Ranell Ogilvie. The event also brought a series of African dance performances that highlighted black culture.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**SUMMER DAY IN WINTER!** This boy not only gets a week off from school, but a respite from frigid temps normally seen in February. On a record-breaking Feb. 21 warm weather day, he hangs out at Williamsbridge Oval Park with his uncle.

Photo courtesy Fordham Hill Oval  
**FORDHAM HILL OVAL** Cooperatives President Myrna Calderon (l) and Vice President Rachel Bradshaw pose at a Black History Month event that honored the pair for their efforts in keeping West Fordham welcoming for its residents. Congressman Adriano Espaillat, who represents the area where Fordham Hill Oval is established, hosted the Feb. 22 event.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**FRIENDS OF MOSHOLU** Parkland (FOMP) was well represented at the annual Bronx Parks Speak Up event at Lehman College on Feb. 24. The daylong event featured park groups sounding off on some of the needs for the borough's parks, including Moshulu Parkland. FOMP members on hand included (l-r) Jay Shuffield, his son Dax, FOMP Vice President Lorita Watson, FOMP President Elizabeth Quaranta, and Doug Condit.



# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



**With the recent school shooting in Florida, we asked readers if such a tragedy could happen here.**



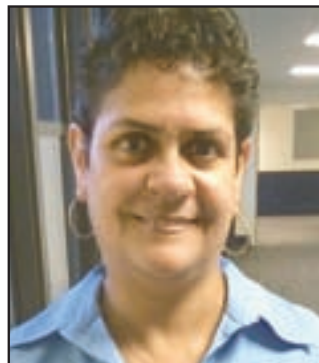
To be honest, it is possible because people get bullied a lot. I'd heard about the student who stabbed two students here in the Bronx and the killer was actually bullied. So it is possible. The victims of bullying like to take things into their own hands. When you're in school you don't really think about these things, but sometimes you do see signals and I'll think about it. People need to ask a person how he feels; he could be suicidal. Friends could do more than the police or teachers.

**Abdoulaye Gassama**  
Hunts Point



Well, that could happen anywhere. Donald Trump said something the other day; he suggested arming the teachers. I believe in that. I don't believe that they should carry a gun every day, but I believe there should be a gun in the school, so when something like that happens one of the teachers could go and get it. He just killed 17 people. If there was a gun in the school, it may have not been so many. I think the laws here are tough enough, but they should conduct better background checks. They should check and double check.

**Bobby Santiago**  
Bedford Park



It could definitely happen here. There are a lot of guns here in New York that are illegal. I feel the AR-15 shouldn't be in the hands of anyone. They buy them and then cross the border. As an educator, I feel that arming the teachers is the worst thing you can do. We worry enough about how we're going to educate our students to worry about someone coming and pulling a gun. A student can grab the gun and we could accidentally shoot another student. No, not a good idea at all. They should outlaw the AR-15, look at the mental health issue, and the age limit should be raised to 21.

**Yolanda Roman**  
Norwood



If they outlaw guns, they're still going to come in here. It's like drugs. They outlaw drugs and it still comes in. I think Trump is right, let's arm some teachers. That's the best way to do this. Oh no, the cop is not that dumb to shoot the teacher. He can distinguish who the bad guy is and who's not. It can happen here, of course. I think they should outlaw the AR-15s, yes. The minimum age should be 25, it's all the young kids doing these shootings. Absolutely they should do better background checks, it's the NRA who doesn't want it.

**Louie Maietta**  
Morris Park



I don't think it's a good idea to arm the teachers, there could be an accident. That could happen anywhere, including New York. We do have metal detectors in most schools, but it could happen anywhere. The gun laws here could be strengthened because there's a lot of guns out here. They do need to conduct better background checks.

**German Santos**  
Parkchester

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# Faceoff

## KNIC Founder to Attend Private Meeting With Stakeholders

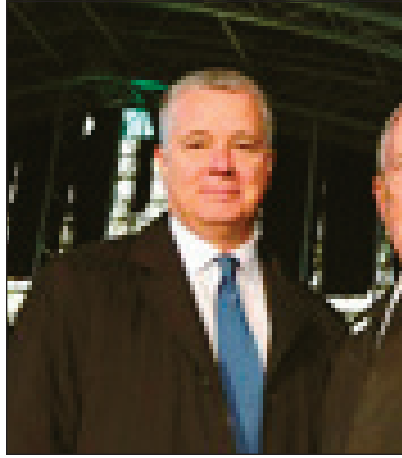
By DAVID CRUZ

The founder of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) is expected to appear at a closed-door meeting with community stakeholders March 2 to discuss the long delayed project.

Kevin Parker, founder of KNIC, has been a no-show at community meetings since the city announced his project would be housed in the cavernous Kingsbridge Armory, which has been vacant since the 1990s. Mark Messier, the NHL legend and face of the project, serves as president of KNIC and has made the rounds since the project was approved nearly five years ago.

His appearance was confirmed by Senator Gustavo Rivera's office, which arranged for the meeting. The meeting will involve official signatories of the Community Benefits Agreement worked out between community representatives and KNIC. Members of the KNIC Community Advisory Council are also expected. "The goal of the meeting is for the developer to report to the appointed community representatives on the progress, and vice-versa," said Annalicia Finol, Rivera's chief of staff.

For the last year, KNIC representatives have remained quiet on the project's advancement. It was in April 2013 that the city under Mayor Mike Bloomberg had announced the long vacant Armory would be home to nine ice skating rinks and a 5,000-seat arena. Roughly 50,000 square feet has been allocated for community space.



File Photo

**KNIC FOUNDER KEVIN PARKER** in one of his few public appearances.

Parker, a former Wall Streeter employed by Deutsche Bank, is a hockey enthusiast. The project has been well received by elected officials, notably Rivera and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

The Armory project has been plagued with delays attributed to a yearlong lawsuit that was the result of the project's financing and internal squabbles. It was approved for a \$138 million state loan in November last year, clearing them to seek a construction loan, which will then lead the New York City Economic Development Corporation to formally activate the 99-year lease to the city-owned property. It's unclear whether they've secured it.

It's unclear where the meeting will take place.

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## Norwood Man Pleads Guilty to Supporting ISIS

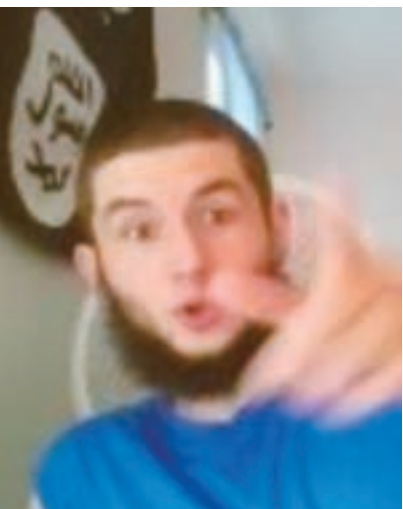
A Knox Place man has admitted to a federal judge that he attempted to fly to the Middle East so he can train with and join the terrorist group known as ISIS, among the many admissions made.

Sajmir Alimehmeti (pictured below), also known as Abdul Qawii, faces numerous charges including one count of attempting to provide material to ISIS, making a false statement in an application for a US passport with intent to support ISIS, and attempting to join ISIS. He faces a maximum sentence of 45 years.

"Sajmir Alimehmeti took steps to travel overseas to support ISIS's terror campaign. He also bought military-type weapons and assisted another to get travel documents, equipment, and encryption technology to fight with ISIS in Syria. Thanks to the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorism Task Force, Alimehmeti now awaits sentencing for his admitted crimes in support of a terrorist organization."

Alimehmeti lived on Knox Place, where he hung an ISIS flag.

--David Cruz



## Woman Shot in Decatur Avenue Dispute



Photo by David Greene

**COPS FROM THE 52nd Precinct** outside 3050 Decatur Ave. in Norwood.

By DAVID GREENE

A 36-year-old woman remains in serious, but stable condition after a heated domestic dispute led to gunfire.

Police were called to a third-floor apartment at 3050 Decatur Ave. in Norwood, at 11:09 a.m., on Feb. 18, when they discovered the wounded woman.

One police official stated, "The job came over as a domestic dispute. We got over there and she was shot in the right shoulder, the torso and right hand." The unidentified victim was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital.

The suspect, who was known to the victim, reportedly fled south on Decatur Avenue, towards Mosholu Parkway North. He was described as a bald-headed black male, 5' 7" and wearing all grey clothing.

One resident reported hearing a loud "bang" thinking it was a door that had slammed, moments before police arrived.

Responding officers stopped a possible suspect at Webster Avenue near Botanical Square. That man was briefly questioned and released. Police officials say there had been no arrests by the following morning.

Gun Hill Road resident Hector was just walking by as police arrived, when he recalled, "I saw the victim and the EMTs brought her out... she did not appear to be moving at all. It's sad to see things like this." He added, "Her hands were up over her head and she was not moving at all and there appeared to be blood on her hands."

The shooting took place a block and a half from the 52nd Precinct on Webster Avenue.

The shooting comes one day after the precinct's commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Peter Fiorillo posted three photos of weapons recovered by the precinct's anti-crime unit.

The Bronx District Attorney's office

is currently investigating claims that officers at the command were tricking suspects into revealing where a gun was, stating they would not be charged. The alleged practice caused a spike in gun confiscations and arrests.

Calls to the main switchboard at the 52nd Precinct on Monday morning were answered by a voicemail, telling callers, "Thank you for calling the New York City Police Department. The party you are trying to reach is unavailable at this time. Please call again at a later time. Good-bye."

According to NYPD crime statistics, the 52nd Precinct has not had any murders so far this year, at the same time the precinct saw one murder recorded last year. However, there have been six reported rapes, compared with just three last year, and there have been four reported shooting victims compared to just one at this time last year.

## Fresh Graffiti Scrawls Found on Oval Park Staircase

The steps on the northern end of Williamsbridge Oval Park were found smeared with graffiti the week of Feb. 18.

The scrawls make out what appear to be a "PF" stained on the family-friendly park's left staircase facing north. It's unclear when the markings first appeared.

The Department of Parks has stood on top of the graffiti issue, cleaning up a large graffiti-laden sign near the tunnel entrance.

Spurts of violence have crept up along the 19.75-acre park in recent weeks, including the shooting of a teenager.

—David Cruz



PHOTO BY DAVID CRUZ

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# Nathalia Fernandez Gets on Special Election Ballot for 80th AD

By DAVID CRUZ

Nathalia Fernandez, the former chief of staff to then Assemblyman turned Councilman Mark Gjonaj, won support from her fellow committee members, securing a nomination for a special election for the 80th Assembly District slated for April 24. Her name on the Democratic ticket all but secures her place as the next interim

Assembly member before the September Primary.

Committee members from the Bronx Democratic County Committee of the 80th Assembly District unanimously voted in favor of Fernandez. The vote was quick with no other challengers coming forward.

"The community will be seeing me at community meetings. I got a lot of

people that have been waiting to speak to me, and so connecting back to the district," said Fernandez shortly after getting her name on the ballot.

The 80th Assembly District covers the east-west neighborhoods of Norwood, Morris Park, Pelham Parkway, and Allerton. Gjonaj won a second term in 2016 before winning a seat as the Councilman for the 13th Council

District, which slightly overlaps with the 80th Assembly District.

"She knows every square inch of the 80th Assembly District, she knows everyone in the 80th Assembly District regardless of association, organization or residency," Gjonaj said.

Fernandez has been a rising political operative in the Bronx since working as a volunteer for Gjonaj when he first ran for the 80th Assembly District seat in 2012. She was hired as the Bronx representative for Governor Andrew Cuomo, a job she's since resigned from to run for office.

Fernandez is a virtual shoo-in for the empty seat, though she will have to once again run for the seat in the September Primary.



Photo by Bob Kappstatter

**NATHALIA FERNANDEZ** AT the Bronx Democratic County Committee's 80th Assembly District Committee meeting where she secured the nomination for the Democratic ticket to fill the seat left vacant by her former boss, Mark Gjonaj.

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# HOUSING MATTERS

## *The Jerome Avenue Rezoning's Spoken and Unspoken Policies*

By DAVID CRUZ

Whether in grueling heat-filled days or frigid temperatures, a cadre of activists has been fighting for their communities' soul.

Their communities lie in the heart of Jerome Avenue between 184th and 167th streets. It's there where the city looks to rezone 92 blocks, the largest rezoning for the Bronx in years. For the last three years, the valley-like neighborhoods—from Mt. Hope to the Grand Concourse—have been studied by the city.

They're home to a largely low-income Hispanic bloc and a concentration of auto mechanics that do business below the rumbling 4 subway line. Hispanics from all backgrounds make up more than 60 percent of the population.

Graffiti-strewn with ripped up business awnings and cracked streets, quality of life along the two-mile stretch remains relatively low, given the high crime rate, poor health outcomes, and expensive apartments relative to residents' take-home pay. Two-thirds of residents set aside more than 30 percent of their take-home salary on rent, making them rent-burdened.

For New York City, the answer to a crunched housing market is making affordable housing more available through rezoning. The Jerome Avenue proposal is pushing for some buildings to go as high as 19 stories. In exchange, the city is committed to building 4,000 affordable housing units and preserving 1,500 other units as a way to resist market pressure to increase the rents. The New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) is overseeing the rezoning with help from multiple city agencies, including the Parks Departments, Transportation Department, and most notably Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

For Carmen Vega-Rivera, an activist with Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision (BxCCV) and a Bronx resident on the Grand Concourse for 37 years, the rezoning proposal has swallowed up her life. Getting around with a walker, Vega-Rivera, along with a sentry of community activists, has spent three years convincing the city to rethink its zoning policy. If New York City history has taught her anything, historically minority neighborhoods primed for rezoning will see many move out given housing policies that ultimately allow market forces to reign.

"I'm so angry I'm thinking what about my daughter and my grandkids. Where they gonna live? My son, who is with me, where's he going to live?" said Vega-Rivera, speaking to the *Norwood News* at Court Diner on

East 161st Street and Walton Avenue, a block and a half east of Jerome Avenue.

Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), a grassroots tenant-organizing group has helped spread word of rezoning to its membership of 5,000 strong as part of BxCCV.

The Jerome Avenue housing proposal was introduced by Mayor Bill de Blasio in February 2015, one of the first proposals born out of his Housing New York plan, which seeks to build or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing through its Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program (the figure has now been pushed to 300,000). It's one of 11 rezonings currently carried out by DCP. The neighborhoods are mostly comprised of black and Hispanic residents.

And it's promising affordability in an area that's vastly dependent on it.

### Real Affordability

But the affordability question and its consequences has been stuck on the mind of Vega-Rivera along with many activists. Affordability, after all, is a relative term. For Vega-Rivera, rents can determine whether one can live in a neighborhood.

She points to the city's housing policy that proposes some rents on new affordable housing units to be at 60 percent Area Median Income (AMI), or \$51,540 for a family of three. HPD enforces those guidelines. Building affordable housing is largely dependent on whether developers will build them in exchange for tax subsidies.

The policy presents problems for a third of the residents characterized as living in poverty, making less than \$20,780 for a family of three. That makes them ineligible to even apply for affordable housing through HPD's Housing Connect lottery. Even apartments the city has committed to build, set aside for extremely low income earners, won't make them eligible, as requirements stand at 30 percent AMI, or \$25,770 for a family of three. This has led Vega-Rivera to conclude that new housing is not intended for the existing community, including the rent-burdened. Worse, new housing at the rates proposed by HPD can lead to a speculative jump in rents around the area prime for rezoning.

"If you're making \$20,000, even \$40,000, where you going to move? Can you pay the \$2800? Can you pay the \$3200?" asked Vega-Rivera, referring to the types of rents she's been inquiring about in her area in the last few months.

New York City's AMI formula is lumped with incomes in neighboring Westchester

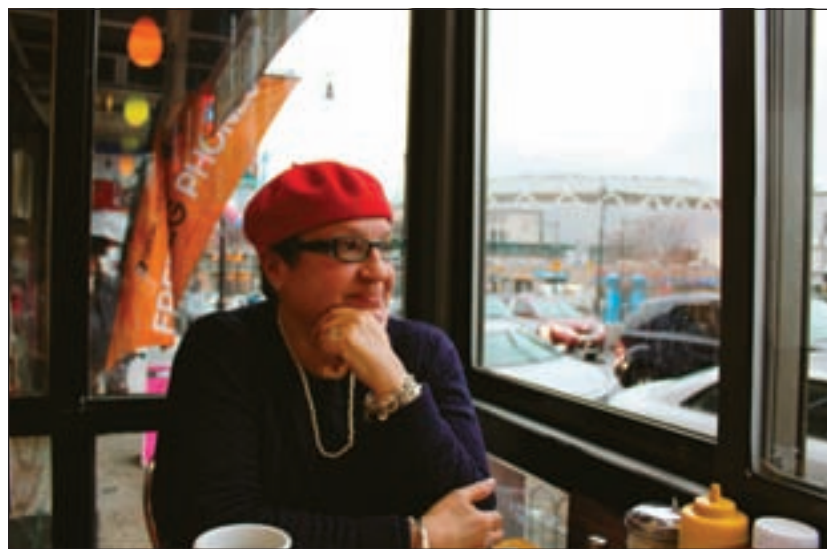


Photo by David Cruz

**CARMEN VEGA-RIVERA IS** one of several hundred activists fighting for deeper affordability along Jerome Avenue.

and Rockland counties, where salaries are much higher. This skews the policy unfavorably towards the very low-income earners.

In DCP-led community visioning sessions, representatives told a number of CASA members that affordable housing will indeed come to the satisfaction of Jerome Avenue residents. They just weren't aware it wouldn't be for them, recalled Sheila Garcia, executive director of CASA.

"My members were like, 'Oh, the city is going to mandate housing and it's going to be affordable.' And I said, 'How much money do you make in a year?'" asked Garcia. The member said \$20,000.

"The units will not be for you because you don't actually make the amount of money in your household in order to qualify for the housing," Garcia remembered responding.

At a hearing on the rezoning held by City Planning Commission, Madeline Mendez, a disabled Hispanic woman living on Social Security, took her frustrations out on the board that ultimately approved the rezoning as part of the public review process.

"[Supplemental Security Income] is \$19,000 a year. Do you think I could afford those affordable housings that you're making for the middle class and the upper class? Do you think my community that makes \$25,000 in under a year could afford those affordable housings that you're planning to make? Do you think that them developers are considering us?" said Mendez. "We're being discriminated and you all know that."

Affordability, it seems, is in the eye of

the beholder.

"The people who qualify for 'affordable' housing are people who make more than a lot of people who actually need it," said Gregory Jost, adjunct professor of sociology at Fordham University. "The formulas are kind of set up to benefit certain people and not others. And then what happens is that those who don't benefit, which are a lot of people in the neighborhoods where there's a lot of targeting for, like, rezoning, feel completely shut out, because the rezonings trigger a whole wave of speculative investment, which then triggers displacement."

Jost is part of "Undesign the Redline," an exhibit chronicling the health effects of neighborhoods that were redlined, a federal policy where so-called "hazardous populations" comprised of mostly minority neighborhoods were deliberately deprived of investment. The area of Jerome Avenue that's the present focus of rezoning was deemed "Definitely Declining." A review of the original maps outlining redlined neighborhoods show nine of the 11 current rezonings fell in areas redlined by the federal government in the 1930s.

HPD has attempted to assuage the rent-burdened by increasing the number of mandatory affordable housing units per building.

### Exchange Policy

Deeper affordability is the main component to CASA's quest for the impoverished. Change in the face of affordability is second.



Rezoning is usually followed by positive change. For Jerome Avenue, that includes upgraded sidewalks, street trees, benches, lighting, and major, multi-million dollar renovations to parks, including Aqueduct Park, Mt. Hope Garden, and Grand Avenue Playground.

Vega-Rivera looks upon these changes with satisfaction and resentment. On one hand she's content with the city taking a closer look at what's needed, which include more open public spaces and a plan to fix the infrastructure. But on the other hand, these changes come with strings attached.

For Vega-Rivera the city appears to engage in an unspoken exchange policy where new amenities come in exchange for affordable housing that's not quite affordable to the current masses. Rezoning usually spurs development, but at the expense of dangling positive amenities she believes won't be enjoyed by the existing population. Change is good, but only on the community's terms, according to her. "It shouldn't be a tradeoff... and say that the developers can't build real affordable housing for those that need it. That's no tradeoff for me. That's what pisses me off," she said.

Garcia agrees. It's one reason that drove community boards 4 and 5 to give conditional approval to the proposal (Community Board 7 is also included in its rezoning, with just a sliver of the rezoning proposal edging into the neighborhood, compelling the board to defer to boards 4 and 5), realizing the city's investment to Jerome Avenue was rare.

"The city is saying to people of color, poor people of color, 'The only way we're going to invest in your community is if you let us rezone and make your home more unaffordable for you and maybe potentially displace you in order to provide good schools,'" said Garcia. "It's actually really hurtful and it says something how we value poor people of color throughout the city."

The mayor's office did not return an email seeking comment.

Regardless, Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson, whose 16th Council District represents a large swath of the proposed rezoning, is seizing on the moment. Throughout the public review process, Gibson has noted the city has made little investment on Jerome Avenue until now.

"Despite the real fear and the anxiety that many families and residents feel and I hear it almost every day, I realize the risk that we are taking, but I also realize how much is at stake," said Gibson in testimony she gave at the Nov. 29 City Planning Commission hearing. "Many of our seniors and families have lived in the Bronx for a really long time, and they deserve to stay there. They lived in an era of the dark days in the Bronx. And now that we have brighter days ahead they certainly deserve to remain. I will not allow this community to be short-changed."

Councilman Fernando Cabrera, whose 14th Council District covers a portion of the rezoning proposal, said the "proposed rezoning comes at an important time when my district and the entire district have a critical need for affordable housing. But this is only part of the story. In truth District 14 is



Photo by David Cruz

**TOM ANGOTTI IS** the author of "Zoned Out! Race, Displacement and City Planning in New York City."

an extreme one of the basic amenities that are crucial to community survival."

Cabrera's and Gibson's vote arguably count as most members typically vote in line with the Council member whose project overlaps with their district. Gibson arguably has the most power. She could effectively advance or kill the rezoning on several conditions, namely that the city consider creating more seats to ease the already overcrowded schools in the areas. It's the promise of schools that convinced CB4 Chair Kathleen Saunders to back the proposal.

The potential casualties of the rezoning are the existing auto industry that lines Jerome Avenue. Born out of a policy to put affordable housing above everything else, the city's proposal will change zoning distinctions at where automotive shops do business, revising the distinction from commercial to residential effectively putting them in the line of fire for displacement. An August 2017 report by BxCCV notes that the "introduction of housing will displace auto businesses in these areas, as property owners can receive a significantly greater return on their investment for residential uses."

Yes, the affordable housing stock will increase along Jerome Avenue with the intent of keeping the housing market affordable. But Tom Angotti, an urban planner, retired professor of urban planning at Hunter College, and author of "Zoned Out," a book on rezonings, notes that's not always true. Market forces will dictate and cause a speculative jump in land values and rents along Jerome Avenue, where two-thirds of the units are rent-stabilized and vacancy rates are lower than New York City's average.

Those units appear to be always in constant threat: over the last 10 years 172,000 of the near 1 million rent-stabilized units in New York City were deregulated, pushing those rents beyond the \$2500 to \$2700 threshold needed to keep them regulated.

This paradox happened in Greenpoint-Williamsburg following the 2005 rezoning. There, thousands of Hispanic families fled while white families began to settle. This came even as nearly 10,000 housing units were built, which included affordable housing. Median incomes rose from \$46,255

to \$71,325, a 65 percent jump, from 2002 to 2013.

"[T]he increase in development potential led landlords to buy out or evict tenants, while homeowners in affordable units were enticed to leave. And then the affordable units that were built weren't truly affordable to most local residents. And many of the promised affordable units were not even built," said Angotti in an email.

Back on Jerome Avenue, the city admits that their rezoning proposal "could" result in 4,000 affordable units. In its Draft Neighborhood Plan updated in October 2017, the city also admitted that only 1,000 of the 4,000 affordable units earmarked for construction will ultimately remain affordable, opening the door for increases.

Creating those units depends on the real estate industry where private developers may not be sold on the subsidies offered by the city. "The city is saying, and they said this in the past, 'Of course we're going to build all this housing, but we're going to prioritize developers that use the least amount of subsidies.' We know that right now that would be catastrophic for anyone who lives on Jerome," said Garcia.

Even Right to Counsel, enacted by the city to offer attorneys to tenants in Housing Court against their landlord, won't help, said Garcia. "Right to Counsel is irrelevant to Jerome if people can't actually afford the rent," said Garcia. "No attorney will be able to keep you in your house if you can't pay the rent."

Gentrification is certainly on the mind of Vega-Rivera. She's beginning to see rents creep along the Grand Concourse, running parallel to Jerome Avenue. "Where's the affordability in this neighborhood?" she asked.

In her apartment building just outside the proposed rezoning area, at least 37 housing units in her building remain vacant.

### Thinking Inclusively

For the last three years the city has hosted a total of 41 types of public meetings and get-togethers related to the Jerome Avenue rezoning.

Vega-Rivera has long believed that the city is not listening to its residents, especially

when it comes to its affordability terms. In the early stages of the rezoning effort, she was struck that meetings had taken place well after the city announced its intent to rezone the neighborhoods. "I know that first-hand because I learned about meetings that were already happening when the announcement was made in 2014 and I learned about meetings that took place that fall in 2014 that did not involve me," said Vega-Rivera. "I was shut out. Is it because I'm an agitator? Is it because I speak up? Is it because I know about my community? I know what the needs are."

Garcia of CASA remembers a summer festival on the Grand Concourse where several streets were shut down. DCP had set up a table outlining the Jerome Avenue rezoning while downplaying plenty of the technical terms. "They just had a table and told people, like,

'Look we're going to make the community beautiful, we're going to bring all these things in,'" Garcia recalled. "I think that's problematic because it's not giving people the context and engaging in a conversation that's real."

The city swears it pays attention to the needs. By City Charter mandate, rezoning proposals go through a public review process involving community boards.

While Vega-Rivera calls it "lip service," Angotti says their version of planning falls flat.

"New York City does not do planning. It really has not done it in any open democratic systematic way. What they call planning is nothing more than holding some meetings at which residents, local business owners, are simply observers who get the chance to speak from time to time but have really no fundamental control over the decisions that are gonna be made," Angotti argues.

### Fighting Back

Regardless of socioeconomic background, Angotti said the best thing anyone facing a rezoning is getting organized.

"There're really three rules: organize, organize, organize. [P]rivileged communities, white communities—that's how they get what they want. That's the only way that people are going to get anything," said Angotti. "If you're going to sit and wait, you're never going to get anywhere. If you're going to believe they're mainly to support your interests, then you're not going to get anywhere."

BxCCV has taken on that strategy. For its part, they've convinced the city to agree to some safeguards that include a revised term sheet, tougher tenant protections, legal representation for qualifying tenants at housing court, and a certificate of no harassment program that verifies that landlords seeking building permits have not harassed tenants.

Those would not have come without intervention.

"We don't want to make the same mistake twice," said Garcia.

This article is made possible by a fellowship from the Marguerite Casey Foundation, which supports low-income families in strengthening their voice and mobilizing their communities to achieve a more just and equitable society for all.



# The Bronx Food Fight

Part 1 of 5

## A Healthier Lifestyle is a Matter of Time

*The Norwood News, in partnership with WFUV radio and BronxNet Television, present a five-part series on food insecurity issues impacting the Bronx and its residents.*

By THERESA SCHLIEP  **WFUV**.org

Jessica Shapiro, RD, does one-on-one nutrition counseling with Montefiore Health System employees entitled to free nutrition counseling.

She said one of the most common reasons people feel like they are unable to make healthy choices is time. People simply just don't have enough of it. Whether someone works many hours or multiple jobs, commutes far, or have families, Shapiro said those commitments often leave people with little time and energy to cook for themselves.

Time, or the lack thereof, often impacts a person's dietary choices. And for the Bronx, a county that ranks as the unhealthiest in the states, it stands as a barrier to a healthy wellbeing.

A 2012 study featured in the *American Journal of Health Behavior* states that working over 40 hours a week is associated with time-related barriers to nutritious eating.

Although the *Journal* notes there is little research done on so-called "time poverty," professionals and nonprofits alike report that their patients and benefactors find trouble feeding themselves and their families healthy meals, and instead defer to unhealthier options like fast food.

Most of Shapiro's patients are residents of the Bronx. She said many do not think that healthy food can be affordable and report having trouble finding time to cook or grocery shop. Socioeconomic status certainly plays into time poverty, given the long commutes facing the working poor.

A number of factors contribute to a person experiencing time poverty. One factor is long working hours. Another is transportation. Some neighborhoods in New York City may not have bus lines that go directly to another neighborhood with a grocery store. A report by marketplace.org says the relationship



Photo by Theresa Schliep

**MANGO GROCERY AND Meat Market** is one participant in the city Health Department's Healthy Bodegas Initiative, which works with bodegas to supply healthy food options.

between places without grocery stores and obesity was especially prevalent where people did not have their own cars or ready access to public transport.

Another factor that contributes to time poverty is a long commute time, both work and the grocery store. Some call the Bronx a food desert, an area with few grocery stores and places to buy fruits and vegetables.

"There are definitely areas [in the Bronx] where it's hard to get a healthy meal," said Shapiro. "It's hard to get healthy snacks as readily as other areas in the Bronx."

Time poverty especially seems to impact women with children. According to the *Journal*, women with children reported feeling that a lack of social support prevents them from regularly exercising, and a lack of social support and time prevent them from eating healthy. Single mothers in particular struggle.

Shapiro said women are the most likely to seek her help at Montefiore. Many of these women are mothers and single mothers, who often report feeling

a time crunch when it comes to feeding themselves and their children. However, Shapiro said that while their work provides a significant barrier to eating healthy, mothers may unwittingly pass some bad habits on to their kids. "[T]hey are thinking about their kids, and some of them are upset because they are allowing their kids to eat unhealthily because they're eating unhealthily and they realize that they need to be the role models and they just don't know where to start," Shapiro said.

Montefiore has partnered with the New York City Department of Health on an initiative with bodegas, where many Bronx residents grocery shop, to ensure there are healthy choices in places where there may not be many other options.

Amy Shapiro, RD, CDN (no relation to Jessica), is a Manhattan-based nutritionist. She said clients often report that between work and family responsibilities, they don't have the time or energy to go grocery shopping or prepare nutritious meals. A study in the Hop-

kins Bloomberg School of Public Health Research shows people who cook their own meals tend to eat healthier and eat fewer calories.

Amy said people often don't try to make time to cook because of other eating options. "Finding time these days is something that people don't prioritize because there are so many other avenues to get food," she said.

According to the *Journal*, a link exists between eating on the run, taking food to go, and poor diet. This includes fast food and sugar-laden beverages. Obesity Action Coalition, an advocacy group for those suffering from obesity, says eating fast food every day can lead to increased calorie intake, obesity, and related health problems. Some chains do offer healthier options.

Amy said eating healthy while having a busy schedule is sometimes a matter of going against the body's natural urges. "Because there's all these fast food restatements and things that make feeding a family of four, six, eight or 10 people easy, it's almost like you have to outsmart yourself to make the time," she said.

Amy also said there are some misconceptions surrounding cooking times, although some foods unique to specific demographics take longer to cook. She said having a freezer full of frozen food and cupboards full of canned food can help alleviate time spent shopping. She suggests that planning ahead can help those with busy schedules stay away from unhealthy fast food options.

"Pick one day a week and slot it in your calendar, even if you're just dragging yourself there," she said. She added that taking care of your body can be draining. Some people take notice of their health only when it's too late. "I do think that thinking about health and nutrition and just wellness in general takes a lot of brainpower and interest."



# BMCA Gears Up for March 10 Flea Market

Something old can be new again at the annual Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) Flea Market scheduled for March 10.

In the basement of St. Mary's Orthodox Church, 360 Bedford Pk. Blvd., residents can check out some of the offerings up for sale at modest prices. Much of these knickknacks include books, appliances, picture frames, and music items, to a name. Much of these goods came from donations BMCA volunteers cobbled since the beginning of the year. This time, BMCA leadership forewent clothes.

"It's our annual fundraiser, it's our only fundraiser," Barbara Stronczer, BMCA president, said. "It's a big com-

munity event. Many people from the community come to help us out."

Monies for the one-day flea market go towards BMCA's yearly overhead, which include rent and a phone bill.

It's been BMCA's way of operating for quite some time. The civic body was established more than 40 years back in response to tenant issues that cropped up along the sleepy neighborhood.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Last year, the group raised nearly \$2000 in sales to carry them through the next year. For more detailed information, see Editor's Pick in Out & About.

--David Cruz



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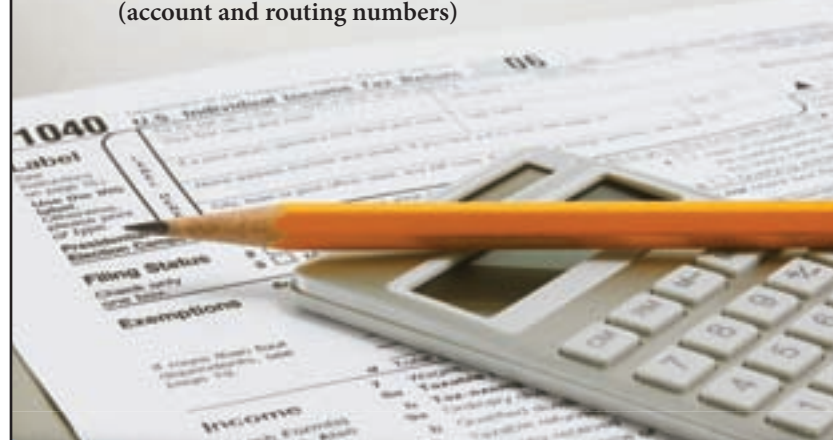
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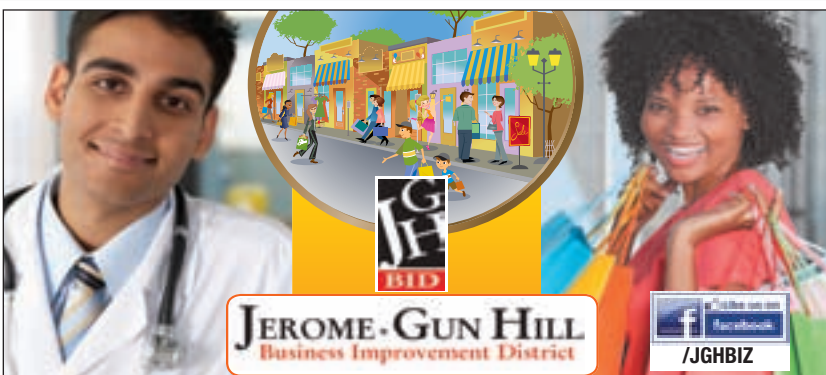
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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

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Free colonoscopy screenings are available at St. Barnabas Hospital, 4487 Third Ave., to those ages 50 and older. No insurance is required. A colonoscopy determines whether any cancer symptoms are present in the body. For more information or to schedule a free colonoscopy, call (718) 960-9040.

### Commercial Lease Help

Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition offers free legal help to small businesses in negotiating commercial leases with their landlords. Businesses have to be in New York City, must be non-franchise, have a household income below 500 percent of the federal poverty guideline, and have a new or renewal lease. For more information, contact Evy Viruet at (718) 584-0515 ext. 100.

### Medicare Card Update

Medicare cards have been updated and expected to be mailed out between April 2018 and April 2019. The new cards do not contain Social Security numbers. Medicare reminds anyone with a card to check to make sure their information is updated by contacting Social Security at ssa.gov/myaccount or (800) 772-1213. They also remind cardholders that the agency will never ask for personal or private information to get your new Medicare number or card.

### College Fair

A free college fair is set for March 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Bronx borough office, 2500 Halsey St. Representatives from more than 100 colleges and universities will be present. No registration is needed for parents, though large groups must register at this link: <http://bit.ly/2HEpwGi>.

ter at this link: <http://bit.ly/2HEpwGi>.

### 360° Fellows Sought

The 360° Fellowship Program is open for those interested in implementing commercial revitalization projects and connect businesses with city resources. Applicants must be a New York City resident more than 90 days, have one or more years of community outreach experience, and be familiar with neighborhoods participating in the program. To apply, go to <http://on.nyc.gov/2EMLMjv>. Applications are due March 4.

### Scholarship Program

The National Puerto Rican Day Parade is accepting applications for its 2018 National Scholarship Program. The program will award a \$2,000 scholarship that will go towards college education. Applicants must be of

Puerto Rican descent, have a 3.0 or higher grade point average, a high school senior or freshman through junior at a two- or four-year college/university, and have a proven track record of volunteer work or community service. Previous scholarship winners are eligible to apply. The deadline is March 30. For more detailed information or to apply, go to [www.nprdpinc.org](http://www.nprdpinc.org).

### Flea Market Donations Sought

Donations are needed for the Bedford Mosholu Community Association flea market scheduled to be held on March 10. Bring new and used items (except clothing and hard cover books) to the BMCA office at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor) on March 3 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. and March 7 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 367-2230 or email [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

### Pre-K Applications

Pre-K applications are available for families with children born in 2014. Families who submit a Pre-K application by the March 30 deadline will get an offer letter in May 2018. To apply, go online at [nyc.gov/prek](http://nyc.gov/prek), call 311 to be directed to the New York City Department of Education, or visit the Family Welcome Center at 1 Fordham Plaza, 7th floor, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays or 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fridays.

### Heating Assistance

Sign up to receive free heating assistance through the New York State Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). Eligible households can receive assistance of up to \$725. A family of four with a yearly income of \$53,482 can still qualify for help. For more information about eligibility, and to sign up, call (212) 331-3126.

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Flea Market

**Bedford Mosholu Community Association presents a giant flea market at Saint Mary's Orthodox Church of India, 360 Bedford Park Blvd. (at Decatur Avenue), March 10 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Select from new and used items including gifts, china, lamps, bric-a-brac, jewelry, books, toys and much more. Included will be homemade cakes and cookies and a raffle. For more information, call (718) 584-1900.**

### Onstage

Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk., Blvd. W. presents **Forever Freestyle 12**, March 3 at 8 p.m. featuring a variety of performances. Tickets are \$55 to \$65; \$100/VIP. For more information, call (718) 960-8830.

Lehman College's Department of Music, Multimedia, Theatre and Dance, 250 Bedford Pk., Blvd. W. presents **New Student Play Festival**, March 1 and 2 at 7 p.m. and March 3 at 2:30 p.m., in the 'backstage' space of the Lovering Theatre in the Speech and Theatre Building. Featured will be six dramatic works. For more information, call (718) 960-8710.

Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk., Blvd. W. presents free, **The Da Capo Chamber Players**, March 12 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Studio Theatre in the Speech and Theatre Building, featuring recent works by contemporary African-American composers. For more information, call (718) 960-8247.

Pregones Theatre, 571-575 Walton Ave., presents **Arturo O'Farrill Sextet**, March 3 at 8

p.m., **Mantra Percussion**, March 7 at 7 p.m. (free), and **Yasser Tejeda + Palotré** (Dominican rock & funk), March 10 at 8 p.m. Tickets (non refundable) are \$15/rows B&C; \$30/advance online sales only; \$50/at the door; 25% off regular admission for members. For more information, call (718) 585-1202.

Bronx Arts Ensemble presents **The Black Madonna Performs Contemporary Jazz**, featuring bassist/vocalist Mimi Jones and her band, March 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Lehman College's Student Experimental Theatre, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W. Tickets are \$15; \$25/at the door. For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

### Events

North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kosuth Ave., presents **Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist Day Conference**, March 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the 17th floor private dining room. Refreshments will be served. For more information or to RSVP, email [gloria.bent@nychhc.org](mailto:gloria.bent@nychhc.org) or [cristina.contreras@nychhc.org](mailto:cristina.contreras@nychhc.org).



Photo courtesy Bronx Arts Ensemble

**THE BLACK MADONNA** features vocalist Mimi Jones (pictured) at Lehman College's Student Experimental Theatre (see under Events for more information).

Tracey Towers' Community Room B, 1st floor, 40 W. Mosholu Pkwy., So., holds **Health Fair**, March 7 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Included are blood pressure screenings, Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) information, and applying for Medicaid and for home health care. For more information, call (718) 829-2131 ext. 153.

Williamsbridge Oval presents free: **Tiny Prints**: Baby and Toddler Program, Mondays 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and Fridays 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.; and **Imagination Playstation**, March 2, to combine art and play to create rocketships and castles. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

Bronx River Art Center (BRAC) presents art workshops at Bronx Community Board 6, 1932 Arthur Ave. (East Tremont Avenue), 4th floor, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (for ages 6 to 12) and 2 to 4 p.m. (for teens and adults), as follows: **Painting** on March 3; and **Sketchbooks** on March 10 (\$8/youh; \$10/adults; \$15/parent/child). Also offered is **Cartooning Classes**, through March 9 from 4 to 6 p.m. for ages 12 to 18 (sign up at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com)). For more information, call (718) 589-5819.

Mosholu Montefiore Senior Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave. offers seniors **dance workshop**, Latin Rhythms, Music and Dances From Around the World, at 10 a.m., March 5, 12 and 19. Register in advance or just show up. The course culminates in a revue. For more information, call (718) 798-6601.

**Wave Hill**, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Give a Feathery Friend a Home or a Feeder, to make a feeder from a milk carton covered with pines and leaves and add seeds and a perch, March 3 and 4; and Avifauna Fun Monoprints, to use construction paper and paint to make birdy monoprints, March 10 and 11; both from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **concert**, featuring pianist Ann Schein performing classical music, March 11 at 2 p.m. (\$28; \$24/members; \$12/ages 8 to 18; info: ext. 251). All events are in the WH House. Grounds admission is free until noon Tuesdays and Saturdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

Bronx County Historical Society presents free lecture, **Dress and Undress: Women's Clothing During the American Revolution**, featuring clothing worn by upper, middle and lower classes during the 18th century, March 16 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th

Street). For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

### Exhibits

New York Botanical Garden presents **Orchid Show**, March 3 through April 22, in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. For more information, call (718) 817-8616.

Bronx Documentary Center, 614 Courtlandt Ave., presents exhibit "**Father Figure: Exploring Alternative Notions of Black Fatherhood**," through March 31, Thursdays and Fridays 3 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 993-3512.

The Bronx County Historical Society presents **What Lies Beneath - Cemeteries of the Bronx**, through April 8, 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 (at 165th Street), presents **Gordon Matta-Clark: Anarchitect**, and **Susannah Ray: A Further Shore**, both through April 8. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

### Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **film**: "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," March 3 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nysl.org](http://www.nysl.org).

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Crafty Fridays**: (ages 5 to 12), crafts, March 2 at 3 p.m.; **Toddler Bilingual Storytime**: (18 to 36 months), librarian reads, sings and plays songs in English and Spanish, March 5 at 10:30 a.m.; **STEM: Kids Science at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), March 6 and 13; **Toddler Storytime at 10:30 a.m.**: (18 to 36 months), stories, songs, finger plays and crafts, March 8, 12 and 15; **Crafty Fridays**: (ages 5 to 12), crafts, March 9 at 3 p.m.; and **Build-a-Puppet Workshop**: (5 to 12 years), to make a puppet from arts and crafts materials to keep, March 14 at 3:30 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Craft-eens! at 3:30 p.m.**: Crafts on Wednesdays, (all materials are provided), March 7 and 14. 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: **puppetry**: (ages 5 to 12), "The Three Ancient Myths and My Annoying Sister," March 15 at 3:30 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](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by March 5 for the next publication date of March 15.



File Photo

**SUPPORT THE BEDFORD Mosholu Community Association by stopping by its annual flea market on March 10 (see Editor's Pick for more details).**



# Securing Devoe Park

(continued from page 1)  
bother anybody.”

The greatest disturbance, however, stems from the summer parties that drag late into the night. Myrna Calderon, president of the Fordham Hill Cooperative Board says the parties “will start in the afternoon and it will go sometimes until two, three, four in the morning.”

“One block wide and one avenue - that’s not a giant park, and yet we were dealing with the same issues that Mosholu Parkway had, Pelham Parkway had,” said Calderon. “I like a good party too, but you know we have to be reasonable. We have a lot of seniors here and they will do it on a school night, a work night. People gotta work the next day!”

Martine, who raised her son in a building right next to the park, spoke on the recent violent incidents that haven’t raised as much concern as has a 2011 double murder committed in the park. One of the victims in 2011 was the son of Martine’s close friend. Martine says security improved at the park after the tragedy, as the community demanded a change. A squad car from the 52nd Precinct began to patrol the park regularly, and the community enjoyed a couple of comparatively quiet years.

The summer of 2017 was a different story. Preempting what would be a boisterous summer, there was a gang related fight last June, hospitalizing a 15- and a 17-year-old, who were clubbed and stabbed respectively. Two shots were fired during the incident, but no casu-



Map courtesy New York City Department of Parks

**THIS MAP OUTLINES** where the gates at Devoe Park will be installed.

alties. A summer with substantial amount of noise and activity ensued, prompting Cabrera to seek funding for added security measures at the behest of the community.

All the residents the *Norwood News* spoke to praised the community, citing a hard-working, always diversifying, populace that doesn’t want any trouble. Martine and Ruiz

hope for more youth programs and events at the park in the future. Both think the security measures could be the first step on the way to further positive steps for the park and community.

Residents also mention an underfunded Parks team of five who are tasked with maintenance of the entire park, alongside a 52nd

Precinct that is stretched thin, with greater activity in other areas.

Calderon, on the necessity of closing the park at night, concludes that “I don’t know what else to do - I mean you hate to do that. But what are you going to do... Because everything else has not worked.”

*Additional reporting by David Cruz*



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