



NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
REMEMBERING MLK | PG. 4**



**SEE PICTURES: SPRING EGG HUNT
HOPS TO OVAL PARK | PG. 8**

BAILEY HOUSES OF HORRORS

Tour of NYCHA complex comes amid \$550M state infusion and CEO's resignation



Photo by Adi Talwar

BAILEY HOUSES WAS built in 1972 by the New York City Housing Authority. Residents at the 20-story building say they've been forgotten.

By DAVID CRUZ

Teisha Jones shows no signs of stopping her quest to increase the standard of living at her building managed by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the beleaguered agency that recently received a rare \$550 million infusion of state funds and the resignation

of its CEO.

Jones has taken on NYCHA before, with a Bronx jury awarding a \$57 million judgment against NYCHA for failing to inspect her apartment at Fort Independence Houses for lead. Conditions left her four-year-old daughter developmentally delayed. Jones's daughter had lead

levels 10 times the normal rate.

She's since left Fort Independence Houses, moving to Bailey Houses on Bailey Avenue just blocks away. Her experience earned her a spot as president of the building's Resident Council, responding to a frustrated group of residents who seek a decent quality of life.

It's conditions in the building, home to the elderly, the sick, a World War II veteran, and children, that compelled Jones to summon the New York City Council's recently appointed chair of the public housing committee for assistance. Jones and resident council members gave

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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

IDC Disbands Ahead of Election Season

By DAVID CRUZ

Democrats in the Albany Senate are looking forward to April 16 when Bronx Senator Jeff Klein, who as head of the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) had caucused with Republicans for years, and will now caucus with his counterparts after agreeing to disband the IDC.

The IDC wielded some of the greatest political power in Albany for nearly six years when Klein formed it in 2011 as a way to fix Albany dysfunction. Its largest criticism came when the group—comprised of eight Democratic senators—routinely caucused with Republicans, effectively broadening the IDC's and Republicans' influence on legislation. But with a critical November election ahead on every level of government, and opponents mounting primary challenges against IDC members, Klein ultimately dissolved the conference “knowing that we must all make sacrifices.”

“[The] 2018 electoral victory will send a message to the entire country that in New York state we stand ready to confront any challenger that seeks to harm any New Yorker. The days ahead will be hard, there will be much to accomplish,” said Klein at an April 4 news conference with Governor Andrew Cuomo and Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins of Westchester County.

Klein, who represents a vast swath of the east Bronx and some parts of Westchester County, specifically mentioned passage of the Dream Act, which gives college financial aid to undocumented young people nicknamed “dreamers.” The measure has consistently passed in the Democratically-controlled Assembly but not the Republican-controlled Senate.

Under the deal, Stewart-Cousins will become leader of the Democratic Conference, the first for an African-



Photo courtesy Office of the Governor

(L-R) NEWLY APPOINTED Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins at a news conference with Governor Andrew Cuomo and Senator Jeff Klein of the 34th Senate District announcing the dissolution of the Independent Democratic Conference.

American woman, and Klein a deputy leader.

“I think we are a house divided, we don't stand; a house united, we stand. We stand tall. We stand for the right things and we're able to move not only the state, but to send a message that we really are stronger and more productive for everyone when we work together,” said Stewart-Cousins at the news conference.

Among the first orders of business is to get Democrats elected in two vacant senate seats at the April 24 special election left vacant by newly elected Councilman Ruben Diaz Sr. of Soundview and Westchester County executive George Latimer. Following that is the November elections where every member of the Senate is up for re-election. The trickle-down effect translates to more Democrats seeking to stump for Democratic challengers in Congress, potentially shifting power to Democrats from a Republican-controlled federal government.

Senator Gustavo Rivera, representing the Bronx's 33rd Senate District and a staunch progressive Democrat, told the *Norwood News* he believes Democrats will finally hold a majority in the Senate following election season. “The expectation is that we potentially have a majority by the end of

the session, but most certainly have a majority starting next session in January,” he said.

Cuomo's premise for unification of Democrats stemmed largely from the November election where Democrats from all levels of government seek to reclaim a majority in the legislative houses. Through unification, New York Democrats intend to demonstrate strength in numbers when combatting Republican opponents. Cuomo, who has presidential ambitions, also faces a challenger in actress Cynthia Nixon in his bid for re-election this year.

But even with eight Democrats back in the fold, the balance of power hasn't quite shifted. There are still 31 Senate Democrats in Albany to 31 Senate Republicans. Democrat Simcha Felder of Brooklyn remains the only holdout, continuing to caucus with Republicans as he's done for more than five years. For Cuomo, Felder is one piece of the puzzle. The other is Democratic unification.

“That reality in many ways trumps everything else,” said Cuomo. “It trumps individual rationales, it trumps factions, it trumps personal aspirations, it trumps personal disagreements because you're in a ship and you're all in the same ship together.”

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its monthly general board meeting on April 17 at PS/MS 280, 3202 Steuben Ave., at 6:30 p.m. Community Board 7 committee meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. at their office, 229A E. 204th St., unless otherwise noted: Executive Committee meets on April 12; Economic Development Committee meets on April 24; Community Relations & Long-Term Planning Committee meets on April 24 at 7:30 p.m.; and Website, Acknowledgment, and Media Committee meets on April 25. For more information, call the board office at (718) 933-5650.

THE 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meets April 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Fordham United Methodist Church, 2543 Marion Ave. For more information, call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs Unit at (718) 220-5824,

Letter: KNIC Project Could Start 8-10 Months From Now

By DAVID CRUZ

It could be another 8 to 10 months until developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center could see shovels in the ground.

Those are some of the new details outlined in a letter drafted on March 5 that recapped a closed-door meeting between Kevin Parker, founder of the project, and community stakeholders tied to the project on March 2. The *Norwood News* obtained a copy from a source who asked for anonymity as they are not authorized to speak on the project.

"[T]he bottom line is that KNIC has basic agreements for the financing for Phase I and Phase II but the details of several contracts need to be finalized and more detailed design drawings need to be complete before construction gets under way," read the letter written by Ivan Braun, a member of the Kingsbridge Community Benefits Council (formerly the KNIC Community Advisory Council). "The current projection is 8 to 10 months for construction to start."

The news confirms the project will be delayed once again, putting the project two years behind schedule. News of the KNIC project was announced in April 2013 after a lengthy public review. It was followed by approval by the New York City Council in December the same year. Elected officials have long

held the project is a true game changer for the borough and one that promises economic growth.

The original date of completion was 2017, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the National Hockey League. Though the project has been delayed, its concept has virtually stood the same: it is expected to be the world's largest ice skating complex that will be home to nine ice skating rinks and a 5,000-seat arena. The project would be housed in the still empty Kingsbridge Armory.

A unique community benefits agreement marshaled by representatives from various community groups, including the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, was forged and agreed upon by KNIC representatives.

Lack of locked-in financing had largely delayed the start of the project. Though the New York City Economic Development Corporation drafted a lease, it was not ready to release it to KNIC until all financing was met. The lease remained in escrow, prompting attorneys for KNIC to sue for its release. KNIC eventually found financing through a \$138 million loan from the state's Empire State Development corporation, which clears them to seek construction loans for the first phase of the project.



File Photo

CONSTRUCTION OF THE Kingsbridge National Ice Center could happen 8 to 10 months from now, according to a letter sent to community stakeholders. Armory appears in background.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their thoughts on race relations in America on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



It had gotten a little better, but we still have a long ways to go. Quality of life is everything for everyone to have. But now with the first openly racist president--there's probably been others before him--but he's just hitting the hammer on the nail as they say. I definitely have hope that people can walk hand in hand, no matter their color. We're all human beings and we all bleed and we should be treating each other a little better.

Laurence Anderson
Parkchester



I think we've come very far, but we have a long way to go. I think with the election of this new president shows us that we still have things that need to be worked on. There are a lot of things that are hidden, that are still relevant and need to be addressed. I felt like we were on the right path and saw a lot of progress, but the election of this new president you can see that there are still things underlying the surface that need to be addressed. It's brought more things to the forefront that were still there.

Natasha Ferrell



To be honest with you, we're living in Georgia now and I would say racism is still a pretty big problem. I have a child who goes to school that's primarily white and they are still calling him words that are not nice, because of his race and color. I think racism in America is still present, but it's done now with more diplomacy. People know that they can get in trouble for saying certain things, so they're thinking these things. Racism is very much alive in the south and here up north.

Daphnee Moise



I feel that it's not race relations as much as face relations, like the face on a dollar. The more Franklins you have, the more peace you have. At least that's what people think. People don't really think about race now. If you look like you have money, then you can enter the conversation. People don't have time for people who are not already successful. If one is successful, then they have time to listen. It depends on the person following their dream. I can just as easily have a problem with a black man as I could with a white man and yes, the two races are getting along.

Tony Belton
Claremont Village



Oh God, it's horrible, it's still the same. Nothing's changed. People are still getting shot down. What kind of change has been made? Sure enough, we did have a black president and where has that brought us today? They are still blaming him for everything that's happening now with economics, for DACA. They blame him for everything.

Paulette Gordon
University Heights

Editor's Note: In the *Inquiring Photographer* published in our March 29-April 11, 2018 edition, the photos for respondents Randy Jewels and Francisco Tirado were inadvertently reversed. The Norwood News regrets the error.

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Big Chain Bizs Face New Rules For Organic Recycling

By MARTIKA ORNELLA

Changes to organic waste recycling rules this summer are set to impact some food businesses.

The city Sanitation Department is now mandating businesses with a floor area of at least 15,000 square feet, chain food service stores with 100 or more locations in the city, and retail food stores with a floor area of at least 25,000 square feet must separate organic waste from garbage. The new rules take effect on Aug. 15.

Organic waste usually includes vegetable and fruit debris, bones, eggshells, food-soiled paper, and garden waste.

Businesses already affected by the rules as of July 19, 2016 include food service establishments in hotels with 150 or more rooms, arenas and stadiums with a seating capacity of at least 15,000, food manufacturers with a floor area of at least 25,000 square feet, and food wholesalers with a floor area of at least 20,000 square feet.

Local Norwood eateries like Dunkin' Donuts, Subway, and McDonald's may be impacted by the added rules.

In 2003, the city passed its Commercial Organic Waste law requiring any businesses selling food to recycle their organic waste. Businesses that violate the law will be liable to a civil penalty amounting in from \$250 to \$1,000 per violation.

General recycling requirements for metal, glass jars and bottles, rigid plastic, clean paper and cardboard cover all businesses regardless of establishment size or type, and items must never be mixed with garbage.

For more information on recycling requirements, visit on.nyc.gov/business-recycling.

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Owner of Dilapidated Home Dies, Cats Rescued

By DAVID GREENE

A Norwood man who appeared to have had hoarding tendencies passed away inside his dilapidated home on East 206th Street, with many suspecting his body had been inside the home for days.

Police confirmed they discovered the body of homeowner Martin Brennan, 55, at midnight on Sunday, March 25, inside the home at 306 E. 206th St. off Perry Avenue. The city Medical Examiner said he died of natural causes.

"I saw them going in there with hazmat suits and the police were outside, so I knew something was going on," said Natasha Ferrell, an eyewitness.

A second eyewitness claimed that police escorted at least two individuals from the home. "We removed 10 cats from the household, all of whom have since been placed," said Katy Hansen, Animal Care Centers of New York City (ACC) spokeswoman.

Records show Brennan had owned the house since at least 1997. The condition of the 83-year-old home was in good shape in 2007, but took a turn sometime in 2014 when mounds of trash were spotted outside.

"We had been on Martin for some time (about the cats) because he was sick. He used to feed and rescue cats around the



Photo by David Greene

THE HOME AT 306 E. 206th St. between Bainbridge and Perry avenues had become an ad hoc garbage dump, with discarded items strewn about.

neighborhood," said a resident, familiar with Brennan.

Brennan's home was shared with other occupants. "They refused to pay rent and they told him if he kept asking for rent, they were going to call the city about his cats," said the acquaintance of the home's other occupants.

Lastly, the resident also charged that squatters continued to live in the home for days after the man died. "We hadn't seen him in five days, so we were going to call 911 to ask for a wellness call, said the resident. "[A]nd one of the ladies who knew him said she would call someone who knows him and has a key. And the lady who had the key said she went [in] and that he was okay. And 10 days later we got the call saying he had been dead for more than two and a half weeks and the police had to break in."

The medical examiner could not give an exact date of death, but added, "due to the decomposition, he was there for a while," before he was found by police.

Four 311 complaints—three in 2017 and one in 2018—were filed against the building. One complaint in June 2017 was filed for excessive debris outside the home and people living in an abandoned building. A visit the next month found the home's door and windows secured and no further action was required.

In the days since the police and ACC left the home, the once open path into the home is again blocked by debris, and light continues to shine in a second-floor room. It's unclear if anyone is still living in the home.

Screening of Dreamers Film at Lehman



Photo by Miriam Quinones

THE DREAM TEAM (from left) Maria Jose Guzman, Justin Ale, Lehman College 'Dream Team' president Jesus Hernandez, vice president Francisco Aquino Ramirez, Maria Fernandez, and David Dorado attend the screening of the CNN en Español documentary "Deportados" ("The Deported") at Lehman College on March 27. The investigative film explores the impact of living illegally in the United States and its tragic consequences to Dreamers. The Lehman College Dream Team have been advocating for the rights of Dreamers, young people who arrived to the country illegally, amid the Trump administration's plan to phase out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA).

CRIME FILE

By MARY MELLON

**"D" Train Robbery**

Three people remain on the run



for allegedly attacking and robbing a woman inside the Kingsbridge Road "D" subway station on March 12. The incident occurred at 3:30 p.m., when two men and one woman approached the 34-year-old female victim. In a bizarre exchange, one of the men accused the victim of stealing his pizza and kicked her in the leg, causing her to drop her phone. The second perpetrator began to walk away, but sped up and ran off.

The man who initiated the assault is described as 6'3", black, and between 25 and 35 years old. He was wearing a black leather jacket; red, white, and blue scarf; gray sweatpants and black shoes.

The second man was described as

Hispanic, wearing a black knit cap, a black jacket, blue jeans, white sneakers, and a black-and-white backpack.

The woman accused of stealing the phone is described as black, with black hair. She was wearing a light colored jacket, red pants, and light colored sneakers.

Shooter on the Loose

Cops are once again calling on the public to help them track a man accused of shooting his roommate several times before fleeing.

Police have identified the suspect as Douglas Sellers, 36, described as black, 5'7" with brown eyes and weighing about 170 pounds. Police say Sellers got into an argument with his 35-year-old roommate on Feb. 18 at around 11 a.m.

inside their apartment on Decatur Avenue and Mosholu Parkway, leading to Sellers firing several rounds piercing the victim's chest, right shoulder, left hand and abdomen.

Teen Attacked

Two women are wanted for a Feb. 18 attack on a 13-year-old girl on West Gun Hill Road at around 10:30 p.m. The girl was walking on the street when the pair attacked her, taking her cell phone and clothes, and then running off, according to police.

Both suspects were captured on video. They are described as Hispanic women, both around 5'5" and last seen

wearing dark-colored clothes. One woman is 180 pounds while the other is described as 220 pounds.

Additional reporting by David Cruz. Anyone with information about the incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at (800) 577-TIPS (8477) or (888)-57-PISTA (74782) for Spanish speakers. All calls are kept confidential.

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Gangs, Crime, Quality of Life Issues: Focus of Public Safety Forum

By DAVID GREENE

A crowd of more than 200 community residents turned out for a public safety forum organized by Congressman Adriano Espaillat of the 13th Congressional District, held on April 3 at Our Lady of Refuge Church on East 196th Street in Bedford Park. The event brought NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill, whose attempts at forging stronger community relations prompted him to hold open forums.

Topics covered in the more than two-hour meeting included gangs, crime, and the local opioid epidemic that's crushing Bedford Park and Fordham.

Addressing the complaint of rampant drug sales across Briggs Avenue, Valentine Avenue and along East 198th Street, Deputy Inspector Lorenzo Johnson of the Bronx Borough Narcotics Bureau explained, "We send out undercover police officers, you'll never see them, but they're out there. And then you'll see what everyone likes to call DTs (detectives).



Photo by David Greene

NYPD COMMISSIONER JAMES O'NEILL (r) addresses a crowd at a public safety forum in Bedford Park.

They swoop in and they grab these guys that are dealing the drugs."

The meeting was held within the 52nd Precinct, covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights and University Heights. A September 2017 report by the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) showed the Five-Two received 76 complaints filed against officers stationed at the precinct, which ranked it sixth out of the borough's 12 precincts with CCRB complaints.

So far, crime within the precinct's borders has risen sharply by 13 per-

cent. Cases of rape have risen 175 percent, according to NYPD crime statistics. Cases of car break-ins have also jumped to 71 percent this year so far, according to the statistics. One upside has been the lack of homicides so far, as opposed to a reported homicide made around the same time last year.

O'Neill, who had a stint at the 52nd Precinct, said threatening the decrease in crime is the proposed Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017, currently being debated in Congress. O'Neill said of the law, "If it does [pass], it's going to put all New Yorkers at risk," before urging all those in attendance to write a letter to their elected officials in Congress against the proposed law that would allow gun owners from a different state to bring their weapons to other states like New York.

Joining Espaillat was Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., City Council members Vanessa Gibson and Andrew Cohen, Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, O'Neill and Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark. O'Neill

is credited as the architect behind the Neighborhood Coordination Officer program, where two officers assigned to a sector get a greater sense of the state of a neighborhood by attending meetings instead of responding exclusively to radio calls.

Myrna Calderon of the Fordham Hill Owners Corporation, had her issue addressed, explaining, "We had a shelter that opened up and there is an increase in the crime and we're just really concerned. We were promised more patrols and they addressed that question and I just hope they keep to that."

Espaillat, who represents Norwood, said he plans other such forums in the near future, in the surrounding neighborhoods of Bedford Park. "I know that the numbers have dropped and crime has been down citywide," he said, "but there's always room for improvement and I think this is a neighborhood that we can push a little harder on quality of life issues."

People's Pantry

MMCC Opens Food Pantry

By NIALL RIDGLEY

On April 4, the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) opened its first ever food pantry at 3450 DeKalb Ave. Though an official ribbon cutting ceremony is slated for April 24, the pantry has already begun serving the surrounding community.

Residents looking for assistance need not worry about income or location requirements. Although intended to serve Norwood's low-income residents, all are welcome, Lenora Sealey, director of Support Services at MMCC, explained. Residents can receive a set number of items depending on the number of family members they are providing for. The pantry will be open on the first and last Saturdays of each month, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 5 p.m.

MMCC opened in 1942 amid the devastation of WWII. As servicemen fought overseas, a group of eight women in the once Jewish

neighborhood sought to provide child care, teen, and senior services. Eventually, a 30,000 square foot home was built on DeKalb Avenue and East Gun Hill Road. MMCC's social service approach worked to create stability in Norwood. The center has since expanded to at least 20 schools and several other building sites.

The pantry's location within MMCC is a boon said Sealey. "People go in [to the center] for a variety of reasons. People go in to get their taxes done, so people feel like there's less stigma," she said.

Councilman Andrew Cohen, representing the district where MMCC's flagship center resides, allocated \$15,000 to get the pantry opened. For now, nonperishable foods will be offered for the first three months. The initial funding has been used to renovate and stock the pantry for this time, but inventory will be refilled through monetary and charitable donations.



Photo by Niall Ridgley

LENORA SEALEY, MMCC's director of Support Services (l) and Rita Santelia, CEO of MMCC, stand at the newly opened pantry.

Cohen emphasized the importance of keeping funding for the pantry coming in, citing the high use of such services.

"I think that [the pantries] are highly utilized. There's no doubt that the word is out at POTS (Part of the Solution), a neighboring pantry. I've seen lines at a num-

ber of food pantries throughout the district," said Cohen. "I think that we need more funding. If we fund these programs, they will come."

The US Census estimates 33 percent of Norwood residents are living below the federal poverty line.

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Spring Egg Hunt

Ready, set, hunt! Families came in droves to Williamsbridge Oval Park for the annual Spring Egg Hunt on March 31. Major sponsors included Mosholu Preservation Corporation, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, Montefiore Health System, and Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval. Check out these great photos of the family-friendly event by José A. Giralt.



KIDS DART OUT to capture Easter eggs at the Oval's Egg Hunt event.



LOOK AT HER GO! Liah Sanchez, 4, participates in the potato sack race at the Oval's Egg Hunt event.



GREAT DAY TO be a kid! Jane Delgado, 10, blows bubbles at the Oval's Egg Hunt event.



A LAUGHING MATTER. A clown makes an appearance at the Oval's Egg Hunt event.



IT'S EVERY KID for themselves at the Oval's Egg Hunt event!



THIS YOUNGSTER gets help searching for prizes at the Oval's Egg Hunt event.

Citizenship Question Could Push Immigrants Underground

By MARY MELLON

In the wake of the Trump administration's plan to ask Americans about their citizenship status in the 2020 census, city officials say answering the question is actually a way of fighting back. On April 3, J. Phillip Thompson, New York City Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives; Marisa Lago, director of the City Department of City Planning; and Bitta Mistofi, Acting Commissioner for the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, spoke at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism's Center for Community & Ethnic Media to discuss the impact of the Trump administration's latest move, which they say is politically motivated.

Thompson, who remembers the days of segregation, likened the citizenship question to the persecution African-Americans during the period of slavery and Jim Crow South. He said the question was meant to "drive immigrants underground" and that the best way to fight is actually to "stand up and be counted" rather than becoming "invisible." Mistofi agreed, emphasizing the significance of exercising their voices.

Lago, whose job involves assessing demographics for the city, stressed the importance of an accurate head count. "Federal funding for absolutely critical programs is determined by looking at the census," she said.

Lago believes it is vitally important to spread the word about how the U.S. Census Bureau uses data to alleviate misconceptions. "The census doesn't care about the legality of where you live. It just wants to know where people live," she said. "We do not receive information about individuals."

The city has joined the state attorney general's suit against the Trump administration.

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Recreating the Passion in Norwood



Photo by Adi Talwar

AN ACTOR PORTRAYING Jesus Christ walks up Bainbridge Avenue as a chorus of actors playing Roman guards berate and flog him, recreating the Stations of the Cross as chronicled in the Catholic bible. The Good Friday procession, organized by the Church of St. Brendan and St. Ann, took place on March 30, drawing hundreds of parishioners to the streets of Norwood.

Torres Plugs Free Tax Service, Warns Against Predatory Tax Preparers

By DAVID CRUZ

The warning from Councilman Ritchie Torres was dire: take advantage of his office's free tax preparation service or risk being exploited by a predatory tax preparer.

"Residents of the Bronx paid hundreds of dollars of their own pockets for tax prep services that we provide for free," said Torres, standing outside his Hoffman Street office to plug the service by Urban Upbound, which has prepared taxes at the office for four years. "And so no longer do residents have to subject themselves to predatory tax prep."

With an April 17 tax filing deadline looming, Torres urged locals to take advantage of his office's on-the-house service that's offered four days a week via walk-ins or by appointment. Constituents who qualify to take advantage of the service must have made \$66,000 or less last year and are required to live in Torres's 15th Council District which includes Bedford Park, Fordham, and Olinville. The terms were laid out by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, which recruited Urban Upbound as part of its NYC Free Tax Prep initiative that kicked off in January.

The last four years have seen a total of \$4 million in tax refunds to residents within the district, according to figures presented by his office. This year, 518 tax returns have been prepared at the office totaling \$881,000 in tax refunds to date.

"This program has been a resounding



Photo by Niall Ridgley

COUNCILMAN RITCHIE TORRES (second from right) with Bishop Taylor (far right), CEO of Urban Upbound, discuss free tax prep services ahead of the April 17 tax filing deadline.

success," said Torres, flanked by Bishop Taylor, founder and CEO of Urban Upbound, and two constituents who've benefited from it.

In the district, where 38.5 percent of residents live below the poverty line, a tax return doubles as an economic shot in the arm to the local economy.

Torres's warning comes as ads touting a rapid return via a so-called rapid loan have dotted the district, a tactic Torres described as "financial exploitation" for constituents who depend on getting a quick loan. The ads by tax preparers rarely mention the hefty interest rate terms, sometimes at a whopping 700 percent, tacked

on to receiving a loan, according to Taylor. Foreign-born New Yorkers are often preyed upon the most by unscrupulous tax preparers.

"[A]nd beware sometimes they make mistakes on your returns and they say you're going to get \$1500 back and they give you a check based on \$1500. And then in the end there's a mistake made [and] you only get back \$500. Then the other \$1000 that you already received becomes a loan at the highest interest rates that they could charge," said Taylor. "We have experienced this firsthand across the city, where residents have been taken advantage of by these predatory services."

The Bronx Food Fight

Part 4 of 5

The Lesson on Healthy Eating

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

By NATALIE MIGLIORE of  **WFUV**.org

In PS 109 Sedgwick in Morris Heights, students learn the importance of eating healthy with Edible Schoolyard NYC, which incorporates healthy eating in classroom lessons.

From classroom to cafeteria, PS 109 makes sure its students grow up with healthy eating habits through programs like afterschool family cooking activities.

Edible Schoolyard NYC is just one group trying to reverse statistics outlined in a recent state health department report that showed the Bronx as the unhealthiest county in New York State for the eighth year in a row. Embedding healthy eating into the lifestyles of young people stands among the many ways to improve health outcomes in the borough.

Elizabeth Quintero is a Food-Corps Service Member with Edible Schoolyard NYC. She teaches elementary school kids how to cook healthy meals and the importance of fruits and vegetables. “The ultimate goal is to educate students about what they’re eating and what their food choices are and where their food is coming from. And really raise awareness of what’s going into their food,” Quintero said.

Interacting with kids and teaching them about healthier food has made Quintero realize that most kids want to eat healthy. She said they do not always see their options. “They are just overly bombarded with unhealthy food options and by educating them and saying you can find these healthy food options in their neighborhoods maybe they will make more of an effort to find them,” Quintero said.

The recent state Health Department report also shows that 30 per-

cent of adults living in the Bronx are obese.

Bronx Health REACH

Like Edible Schoolyard NYC, the Bronx-based Institute for Family Health promotes a mission of healthy eating. It introduced REACH—Racial Ethnic Approaches for Community Health—with Charmaine Ruddock serving as director.

The group, Bronx Health REACH, has pointed out that there have been changes in ranking like health behaviors. Ruddock said the Bronx ranked 40 out of 62 in health behaviors, defined as how people believe or act regarding their health. Last year the Bronx ranked last. “There is improvement and that improvement should be noted,” Ruddock said.

The federally- and state-funded group also works with schools and bodegas to push for healthy community initiatives. It even works with churches to incorporate nutrition in Sunday sermons. Schools have stressed physical activity while its partner bodegas have started a marketing campaign to get the community to eat healthy.

Ruddock said it is important to get the families involved because it will ensure that the healthy habits kids learn will continue at home. It is part of an initiative called “Healthy Children, Healthy Families.”

“The people want to do better. When they get the information they are more inclined to use the information well,” Ruddock said.

The Children’s Aid Society

The Children’s Aid Society’s food and nutrition programs are another way people can get the information Ruddock is talking about. Whitney Reuling is the director of food and nutrition programs at The Children’s Aid Society, which has been around since 1858. “In order to



Photo by Natalie Migliore

LESSONS ON HEALTHY eating are on display in this classroom at PS 109 Sedgwick in Morris Heights. Healthy eating initiatives at schools are some of the ways young people are learning the value of a healthier lifestyle.

stay relevant we need to evolve, and ‘Go! Healthy’ is really a part of that evolution,” Reuling said of the group’s healthy eating initiative.

The five-branch program is designed to tackle all age groups throughout communities. “Go! Healthy” was originally designed in 2003 in response to the childhood obesity epidemic.

“We help support children and their families by providing an access to nutrition education as well as healthy food starting as early as childhood,” Reuling explained, adding that kids learn about their bodies through songs, stories, and physical activity.

With three early childhood sites in the Bronx and a number of locations around the city, children learn how to prepare snacks as a way for them to learn about the food that’s going into their bodies. “It’s really wonderful to walk through a site and smell food being prepared from scratch,” Reuling said.

The Bronx early childhood center prepares food from scratch that is delivered to the classroom. Students get to sit around the table and enjoy a family style meal.

Reuling explained the four other initiatives that cover every base of healthy eating. Its second branch dubbed “Go!

Chefs” was launched in 2006. Kids learn how to cook healthy meals as early as first grade. They are simple seasonal recipes that incorporate fresh ingredients.

“They’re accessible yet affordable so these recipes can really be replicated at home,” Reuling said.

The “Go! Healthy Gardens” initiative, which focuses on gardening, complements “Go! Chefs.” Every participating site has a vegetable garden that is maintained by students and staff with a shared goal to have a thriving garden.

“Go! Healthy Meals” and “Eat Smart New York” are two other initiatives that reach a wide net of people. Nutrition classes for adults and farmers market outings are ways to address access to healthy foods.

“We’re doing what we can to address the access issue,” Reuling said. “‘Go! Healthy’ is really a constant evolution.” Reuling thinks the multifaceted aspects of “Go! Healthy” are exciting. She said the program does a good job at meeting community members where they are.

“The more avenues you provide the more buy-in you’re going to get,” she said.

Back at PS 109 Rosa Lopez said she sees a difference in her nine-year-old son Rami. She said he’s more curious about trying new foods like pesto sauce that Quintero taught Rami to make. Lopez said eating healthy is critical for her son. “On his dad’s side of the family diabetes is something that they carry, you know. It means a lot because eating healthy can prevent that,” Lopez said.

She says her son’s exposure to these different vegetables has made her more conscious when she’s cooking.

“I always cooked healthy but now he’s asking for vegetables so I don’t have a choice. Every day he asks, ‘Mom can we try carrots? Mom, can we have corn or can we do tomato salad?’”



Eat More Greens In 2018!

By **CLAIRE GARON**

The old saying goes, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” But did you know the vegetables on your plate keep you healthy and can help you lose weight? Losing weight gives you more energy, and lowers your chances of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion introduced the concept of “MyPlate.” MyPlate is a simple visual tool to teach Americans about eating healthy portions at mealtime.

To follow the “MyPlate” method at lunch and dinner, simply fill half of a standard nine-inch plate with

your favorite vegetables. Next, add a food from the starch group, which includes rice, bread, pasta, tortillas, or potatoes. Choose one starch and serve yourself an amount that’s the size of your closed fist. Stick to that small size. It’s important to note that several vegetables, including potatoes, corn, peas and plantains are starchy foods because they’re higher in carbohydrates than typical vegetables (like eggplants, tomatoes, and lettuce). Finally, add a protein choice, like pork, chicken, beef, fish, eggs, or tofu. The protein choice should be about the size of your palm, not including your fingers.

Here are some health tips to get

vegetables onto your plate:

Salads - Make salads with leafy green vegetables like spinach, kale, arugula, lettuce or cabbage and add other vegetables of your choice. Add shredded carrots, chopped tomatoes, sliced cucumber, beans or any vegetable you desire. Use a small amount of dressing or make your own by mixing olive oil and lemon juice. Add chopped nuts or avocado slices for extra flavor and crunch.

Raw Vegetables - Cut raw vegetables into sticks and heap them onto your plate, along with a choice of dip. Try a few tablespoons of

hummus, low-fat dressing, guacamole, or cottage cheese. Veggies like cherry tomatoes, celery, and baby carrots are great to eat raw. Sliced cucumbers, peppers and broccoli are also great raw veggie additions.

For more information on healthy cooking methods or ingredients, search online or in a cookbook for recipes featuring your favorite green vegetables or combos. Enjoy the journey.

Editor’s Note: *Claire Garon is a health educator at Montefiore Health System’s Office of Community & Population Health.*

Carnival at Montefiore

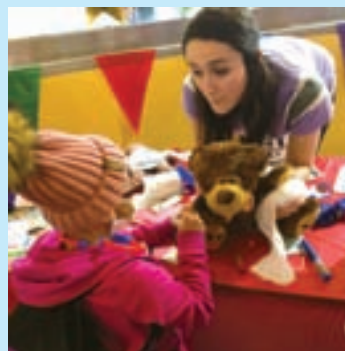


Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System
LIYAH LAKE GORDON, 8, (L) becomes the doctor for the day at a Carnival at the Children’s Hospital at Montefiore, coordinated in honor of Child Life Month. Child Life specialists help young patients understand their diagnosis and calm any fears and anxieties they may have as they undergo treatment.

“IT’S JUST A JOKE.”

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

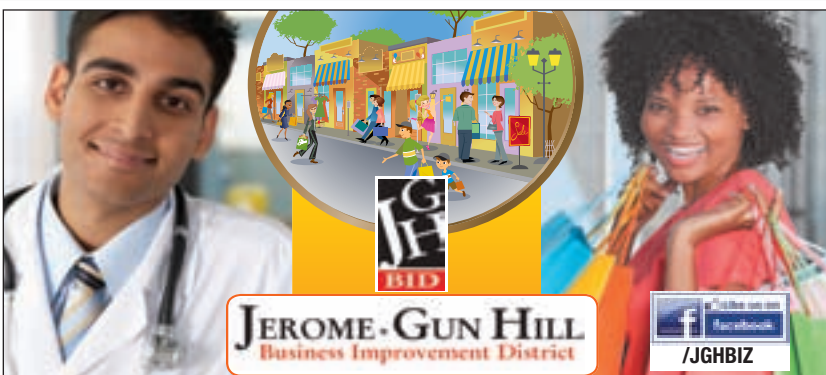
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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Free Graffiti Cleanup

"Guerinos Against Graffiti" is offering one military veteran free graffiti removal in honor of Memorial Day. Those eligible be a US military veteran who was honorably discharged and wounded in combat. Applicants must submit their photo standing next to their property. Send submissions to ssg.nag@gmail.com. For more information, call (718) 600-2570.

Housing Assistance

The Office of Assemblyman Victor Pichardo offers free housing assistance to tenants facing harassment, eviction, overcharges, denied repairs/services, and more. The service is available every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (excluding holidays) at 2175 Jerome Ave., Suite C. For more information, call (718) 933-6909.

Free GED Class

SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center, 1666 Bathgate Ave. (between 172nd and 173rd streets), offers tuition-free class for those 18 and over interested in obtaining their GED diploma. Classes begin on April 16. For more detailed information, requirements, and to register (required), call (718) 530-7000.

Summer Youth Employment The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provides New York City youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with paid summer employment for up to six weeks in July and August. Participants work in entry-level jobs in a variety of industries including arts and recreation, educational services, financial services, and more. To apply, go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/jobs-internships/summer-youth-employment-program-syep.page>. Enrollment dates are from April to June.

Excelsior Scholarship

Applications for the Excelsior Scholarship are now open for new applicants pursuing a college degree at city- or state-funded colleges/universities for the 2018-19 academic year. Eligible candidates must be New York State residents, take 30 credits per year (including summer and winter sessions), a family whose annual household income is below \$110,000, and be on track to gradu-

ate on time with an associate's degree in two years or a bachelor's degree in four years. Applications will be accepted through July 23. For more information, and to apply, go to <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior/>.

GEDs and Paid Internships Mosholu Montefiore Community Center offers the following for young adults ages 18 to 24: free classes and tutoring sessions to prepare for the exam to get their GED (orientation/registration sessions are held every Thursday at 3512 DeKalb Ave.); and 14-week paid internship to those who are not employed or enrolled in school, to receive training and workshops. For more information or to make an appointment, call Jessica Acevedo or Perlita Mendez at (718) 652-0282.

Free Tax Filing Assistance

Free tax filing is available for families whose total income is \$54,000 or less or individuals who make \$30,000 or less at the following locations: Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave. (appt: Dewayne Lee at (718) 882-4000 ext. 209 or email DLee@mmcc.org); and SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center, 1666 Bathgate Ave. (appt: (718) 530-7019). Applicants must bring a W2 and/or 1099 form or any other proof showing income, government-issued ID, social security card or ITIN number for self, spouse and dependents, a 1095 health form or health insurance statements and bank account information for those looking to have their tax refund direct deposited. Appointments are required.

Tax Help

Free tax preparation services are available at University Neighborhood Housing Program, 2715 Bainbridge Ave., with help from students from Manhattan College's O'Malley School of Business. The service is only available for qualified families with an income of \$54,000 or less and individuals with a gross income below \$30,000. Services are available, by appointment only, as follows: Wednesdays from 1 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (718) 933-2539.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Veterans Brunch Awards

The public is invited to the free Veterans Brunch Awards, April 20 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lehman College's Music Building faculty dining room, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W. This event will acknowledge men and women from all divisions of the Armed Forces who have served our country, and includes free raffles and free brunch. Meet veterans, active duty members and their families, and get information about services for vets. RSVP to veteransbrunch.eventbrite.com. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

Onstage

The Williamsbridge Oval presents **Henry V**, free, via a mobile theatre, April 14 at 1 p.m. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Latino Concert Series**, featuring singer Diego El Cigala and pianist Alex Conde, April 14 at 8 p.m., performing flamenco music. Tickets are \$50 to \$65; \$100/VIP includes pre-concert drinks and hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 960-8535.

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents free: **Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concert Series** featuring the Arturo O'Farrill Sextet, April 14 at 2:30 p.m.; and **Jazz Concert**, presented by the Celia Cruz H.S. of Music Standards Band and Sophisticated Ladies All Girls Band, April 18 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Bronx Zoo presents **Boogie Down**, featuring a variety of performers and artists; hip-hop, doo wop and salsa music; art, dance, food, and more, April 21 and 22 and weekends May 5 through June 3 including Memorial Day. For more information, call (718) 367-1010.

Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse, presents **free concerts**, Viento de Agua, April 14 and Enerolisa Nuñez, April 21; both in the Repertory Theatre at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture at 11:30 a.m. and each preceded by a pre-performance arts workshop at 10:30 a.m. (tickets are required). Also scheduled are **Mambo Memories 2** featuring a variety of performers, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. in the main theatre (reserved seating: \$35/orch; \$25/mezz; \$5/students), followed by **Mambo Dance Party** at 9:30 p.m. (for concert ticket holders only), featuring DJ, in the Hostos Café, 3rd floor (\$10/includes two tickets for wine/soft drink); and **Blind Spot (Punto Ciego)**, April 18 at 7 p.m. in the Repertory Theatre, about an illegal immigrant in America, performed in Spanish with English subtitles, for mature audiences. For more information, call (718) 518-4455.

Events

Williamsbridge Oval presents **Opioid Awareness Workshop**, April 28 from 1 to 4 p.m. For more information and to RSVP by April 27, call (718) 547-8854.

Lehman College's Lovinger Theatre, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **film**, "From Nowhere," story of three undocumented Bronx high school seniors and the obstacles they face while trying to pursue the American dream, April 18 at 7 p.m., followed by a Q&A.



File photo

THE VETERANS BRUNCH of 2017 saw more than a dozen veterans, including this WWII veteran (at microphone), honored by Community Board 7. Their next sponsored brunch is scheduled for April 20 (see Editor's Pick for more information).



Photo courtesy Lehman Center for the Performing Arts

SINGER DIEGO EL CIGALA will grace the stage at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on April 14 (see more information under Onstage).

Tickets (\$10/general public) and donations (\$5/suggested) can be made at the door. Students with student ID are admitted free. For more information, call (718) 960-8535.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Budding Birdwatchers, to identify birds and make binoculars out of cardboard tubes, followed by drawing birds, April 14 and 15; and Earth Day Gratitude Garden, to sculpt a miniature garden, April 21 and 22; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled are **Sirius Quartet**, April 15, featuring a variety of music; and **guitarist and mandolinist**, April 22, performing Brazilian music; each in the WH House at 2 p.m. (tickets for each: \$28 plus grounds admission; \$24/members; \$12/ages 8 to 18; info: ext. 251). 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.

The New York Botanical Garden presents **Citizen Science Day**, April 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring a variety of events; and **tours**, April 15. For more information and detailed listing, call (718) 817-8700

Bronx Cookspace, 50 E. 168th St., presents its 1st annual **Open House**, April 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. It's an incubator kitchen providing affordable commercial kitchen space and technical assistance to food entrepreneurs. Meet entrepreneurs, sample locally made food and drinks, and buy products to take home. Events include raffle featuring local products and chef gear. Purchase tickets (\$20) online at bronxcookspace.eventbrite.com. For more information, call (718) 839-1105.

Exhibits

The Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), presents **Bronx Expo - The Starlight Park Story**, April 12 (opening reception from 4:30 to 7 p.m.) through Sept. 30; and **Women's Suffrage and New York City: A Centennial Celebration**, April 12, 2018 through April 11, 2019. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

New York Botanical Garden presents **Orchid Show**, through April 22, in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory (\$28/members 21 years+; \$38/non members). For more information, call (718) 817-8616.

Rafaela (Ella) Santos, 315 E. 201st St., presents her solo art exhibit **W/O [man] Hood**, April 27 from 1 to 3 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. through May 28.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for teens/young adults: **film**: "Wonder Woman," April 20 at 3:30 p.m.; and **Penguin Finger Puppets**: World Penguin Day, to make a finger puppet (all supplies provided), April 25 at 4:30 p.m. Adults can attend **Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners**: April 24 at 2 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Crafty Fridays**: (ages 5 to 12), crafts, April 13 at 3 p.m.; and **Toddler Storytime at 10:30 a.m.**: (18 to 36 months), interactive stories, action songs, fingerplays and crafts, April 12 and 19. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **film**: "Thor: Ragnarok," April 14 at 1:30 p.m..Adults can attend: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children ages 5 to 12: **film**: "Coco," about a young boy and his love of music, April 14 at 2 p.m.; **Origami 101**, April 18 at 4 p.m.; and **Afternoon Arts**: to make a beautiful creation to take home, April 23 at 4 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Puppet Making Palooza**: Hands-on workshop (all materials provided), April 19 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by April 16 for the next publication date of April 26.

Bailey Houses of Horrors

(continued from page 1)

the tour to Brooklyn Councilwoman Allicka Ampry-Samuel, stopping by five apartments filled with questionable lead, exposed ceilings, falling bathroom tiles, and an unreliable plumbing system.

"The pipes are old, they need to be repaired, and they're just bandaging everything and not doing anything," said Jones.

Among the more egregious observations Ampry-Samuel witnessed was a bathtub continuously running hot water since early March, creating a sauna-like effect that stifles the apartment and led the paint on the bathroom walls to rise. The apartment's tenant, Lenore Porter, put in a work order to NYCHA weeks ago. As of press time, the problem remains unresolved, and the thousands of gallons of water just keeps flowing down the drain.

On the 20th floor, another tenant shimmied his refrigerator out of its spot to reveal patchwork covering a slowly crumbling wall. He blamed the damaged roof, which siphons rainwater straight into his wall. In some cases, water has been known to jut out of light fixtures and fuse boxes throughout the building. At the foot of the entrance to the roof, dried blood is spotted on the floor.

At another floor, Juana Vazquez showed Ampry-Samuel a bathroom ceiling on the verge of collapsing. "My ceiling was like that—it fell on my head, and I was six months pregnant," Jones recalled.

The tour was organized by the building's Resident Council with assistance from the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) in hopes of raising awareness of the building's deplorable standard of living.

The redundancy of NYCHA's problems is familiar territory for Ampry-Samuel, even as her home base is Brooklyn, representing the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East Flatbush, and Crown Heights. The problems in Brooklyn's housing projects mirror those in the Bronx.

"This is nothing new at all. Families have been suffering like this for many years," Ampry-Samuel told the *Norwood News* shortly after her walkthrough, a rare visit for the Councilwoman. "With all of this attention, we need to be focused on what's next."

NWBCCC, whose signature goal involves tenant organizing, drafted a report mandating a top-down review of repairs needed for the property.

Jones also wants "the whole development to be tested for lead and not visu-

ally."

Ampry-Samuel's visit represented a number of tactics Jones has employed to bring equity to Bailey Houses. She's also written to Community Board 7 (Bailey Houses is the only NYCHA complex to fall within CB7's borders), and met with elected officials. Among them was Councilman Fernando Cabrera, the sitting council representative for the neighborhood. Cabrera successfully allocated funds for surveillance cameras. But after giving the money to NYCHA, nothing has yet been done.

Filing a Work Order

But even with an infusion of funding, repair work at Bailey Houses is marred by NYCHA's institutionalized bureaucracy that forces progress to lumber at a snail's pace. With unchecked progress, NYCHA remains its own worst enemy when a work order comes through, testing a tenant's patience.

For each reported issue, a work order is placed, with maintenance allowed 48 to 72 hours to respond. After verifying the problem, maintenance employees will reach out to an employee dubbed a "skilled laborer," to perform the work. A response can take more weeks. But with NYCHA overwhelmed with a list of repairs, the latest work order stands in a queue that can take months to respond.

"I put a ticket in for plaster two years ago, and yesterday they came to my house," said Helene J. Wilson, vice president of the Resident Council.

In some cases, Jones has noticed that work orders, or tickets, are erased well before NYCHA addressed the problem. "Then you have to start the process all over again," she said.

Should the work be completed, Wilson compared NYCHA's tools to "Band-Aid and Crazy Glue."

Wilson cited the approach to fixing the mold issue. The fix? Painting over it, she said, as usual. "[T]hey're painting the building, but no one is eradicating the mold. They just scraping and painting, scraping and painting and the next time it rains, by the summer that same issue will bring things back right where they started," said Wilson.

NYCHA has since partnered with community-based groups to introduce a weatherization program, though Bailey Houses is not on the list. The state-funded service upgrades aging buildings with new windows, boilers, rooftops, and lighting.

Political Pressure

On April 10, Shola Olatoye resigned as NYCHA chair, following pressure to step down.

Olatoye, who was present at an event with Mayor Bill de Blasio in Far Rockaway, Queens to promote improvements at a NYCHA complex there, called the day "bittersweet." She conceded that some work went overlooked.

"For residents to be uncertain about possible lead paint hazards in their homes or unable to stay warm on the coldest days of winter, it unnerves me that we have failed here," Olatoye said in prepared remarks.

Olatoye's resignation may come as welcomed news to NYCHA residents like Jones. "I think [NYCHA chair] should consist of maybe a NYCHA resident that has experience...and can do the job," Jones said.

In a statement following Olatoye's resignation, Bronx Councilman Ritchie Torres, the former chair to the Council's Committee on Public Housing, relieved, said "finally!"

Torres, a fervent advocate for improving living conditions in public housing, said "[Olatoye's resignation] should be seen for what it is: less a choice than an inevitable consequence

of collapsed credibility."

Torres describes newly-appointed interim chairman Stanley Brezenoff and General Manager Vito Mustaciulo as "first-class."

News of a \$550 million cash infusion came after Governor Andrew Cuomo visited two NYCHA complexes in the Bronx and one in Manhattan. He declared a state of emergency for NYCHA, saying it's a "public safety and health risk." He's ordered the creation of a three-person panel—one from de Blasio's office, another from the New York City Council, and a third from a NYCHA development. The panel will appoint an emergency manager to oversee NYCHA. They will also appoint a contractor that will be entitled to circumvent NYCHA's overloaded bureaucracy.

The news could reverse the years of deterioration at the 46-year-old building. Wilson, who's lived in the building for 28 years, hopes something is done soon. "We've been off the map," she said.

Additional reporting by Martika Ornela —

Editor's Note: A series of photos of the building can be found on www.norwoodnews.org

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4/13 & 4/20 @ 7:30am, 2pm, 8pm
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