



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## KEEPING THE PEACE OUTSIDE DWVC CAMPUS

*Cops, parents, and lawmakers hammer out solutions after stabbing*



Photo by Adi Talwar

**SIRIO GUERINO (PICTURED)**, the former PTA president at Bronx Collaborative High School, housed at DeWitt Clinton Campus (background), has been calling for greater safety measures at the school following a Nov. 20 stabbing outside the campus.

By **DAVID CRUZ**

The 52nd Precinct's commanding officer pledged to maintain safety outside DeWitt Clinton Campus during dismissal time following the stabbing of a 16-year-old boy on Nov. 20 shortly after

school, prompting a meeting between engaged parents, elected officials and their representatives, and officers two weeks following the incident.

The meeting was called by Sirio Guerino, the for-

mer PTA president for Bronx Collaborative High School, which is housed inside the campus along with DeWitt Clinton High School (DWCHS) and Worldview High School. The city Department of Education re-

cently approved the opening of a D75 school to operate in the campus.

For Guerino, the issue of safety is personal. He has two sons who attend Bronx Collaborative High School.

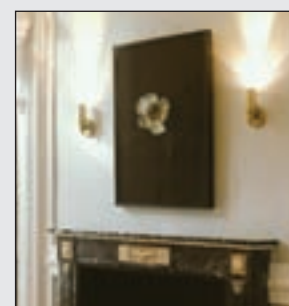
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# NORWOOD NEWS

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# IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## Samelys Lopez Gets 15CD Backing From NYC Democratic Socialists of America

By DAVID CRUZ

Giving her candidacy a much-needed boost, Samelys Lopez, former Community Board 7 member, received the backing of the New York City Democratic Socialists of America (NYC-DSA) in the race for the South Bronx's 15th Congressional District seat.

The endorsement, coming roughly six months before voters head to the polls, comes with a heavy volunteer base that's ready to pound the pavement for Lopez, whose campaign is among those on a shoestring budget. The New York City-based DSA chapter currently boasts a membership of 5,500.

"In a country with unsustainable levels of income inequality, worsening health outcomes and profound housing insecurity, and in a world with dangerously rising sea levels, it is crucial to support bold candidates like Samelys Lopez," said Chi Anunwa, NYC-DSA Chapter co-chair, in a statement. "In this political moment, we can't afford to be timid in our demands for a Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and a nationwide homes guarantee."

In recent months, NYC-DSA's influence has grown, leading the outcry against Amazon's arrival to New York City that ultimately led to its demise after Amazon executives canceled the deal. In recent months, the group asserted itself onto the New York political scene further by propelling Queens District Attorney Democratic candidate Tiffany Cabán, a virtual unknown who lost her bid for district attorney by a handful of votes, to stardom within Democrats' progressive wing. That endorsement was later followed by endorsements from prominent Democratic socialists that included Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders and Bronx/Queens Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. The backing inspired even more cash donations to come Cabán's way.

The NYC-DSA endorsement of Lopez could lead to an ever greater campaign war chest. As it stands, Lopez



Image courtesy Samelys Lopez Campaign

**SAMELYS LOPEZ** (with mic) gets the endorsement from the New York City Democratic Socialists of America.

"The South Bronx has a revolutionary and socialist history that has for too long been held back by conservative, incrementalist and centrist forces. I know together we can bring bold social change to the most exploited area in the country."

—Samelys Lopez  
Candidate for the 15th  
Congressional District

raised just over \$12,000, the second least amount of money in the race so far.

"I am proud and honored to have earned the endorsement of NYC-DSA," López said in a statement. "The South Bronx has a revolutionary and socialist history that has for too long been held back by conservative, incrementalist and centrist forces. I know together we can bring bold social change to the most exploited area in the country."

Lopez, 40, who just recently moved to the South Bronx (residency in the congressional district one's running in is not a requirement), still faces a tough road to Congress, vying for the seat against a swell of other candidates that include Coun-

cilman Ritchie Torres, Councilman Rev. Ruben Diaz Jr., Assemblyman Michael Blake, Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation executive director Marlene Cintron, community organizer Jonathan Ortiz, and former New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. The race for the seat began after current seat-holder, Jose Serrano, announced he'll not be seeking reelection.

While the group is self-described as a people-powered operation where all voices are heard, Ortiz sees the NYC-DSA differently.

Roughly a month before its announcement, the group had held a candidates forum on Nov. 14 that did not include Ortiz, who later inquired about it. He received an email response from a representative, who told him there was "no way to incorporate you (or several other candidates that have approached us in the last week with similar requests) into the endorsement consideration process," citing the lack of a "robust, investigative capacity."

"How is it possible that the first person to register for the race was not given the opportunity to speak about his vision?" said Ortiz, referencing himself.

# Public and Community Meetings

The **52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets on Dec. 19 at North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kossuth Ave., 17th floor, at 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5849.

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT



## This week we asked families across the Bronx how they will be spending the holiday season.



I'm having family over and I'm doing the cooking for the first time. I'm the big mom hosting. Family from Jamaica is coming, some family from Guyana is coming. And whoever else are nearby. And we're just going to celebrate that way.

**Shauna Lee**  
Morris Park



Be with my family. Spend time with them and get a bunch of presents for my son. I got a newborn.

**Snackz**  
Norwood



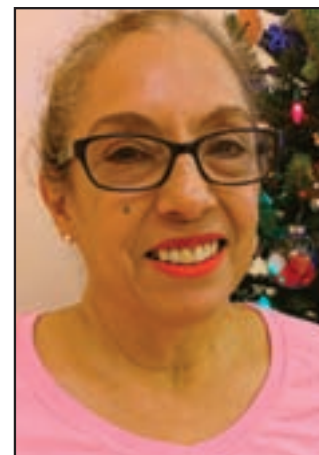
I'll probably be spending time with a few close friends and staying safe. And just feeling thankful and grateful for what we have and very happy about that.

**Robert Sullivan**  
Fordham



My plans are to stay home and chill but I also have a special event that I'm heading to this weekend on the 22nd in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm judging a newcomer, new faces pageant, so that's also part of my holiday plans.

**Gary Ariel Washington**  
Longwood



My plans for the holidays are I'm going to visit my granddaughter in Baltimore, so I'm spending a week with her. She recently moved to Baltimore...so this is going to be the first Christmas that she's going to be away from the family so I want to go over there so that way she won't be alone for the holidays. And, of course, I'll be having a lot of fun with my great-grandchildren, her children. So it's going to be a wonderful time.

**Dilletta Pina**  
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# NEWS BRIEFS

By DAVID CRUZ

## New-Style Trash Bins Unveiled

The city of New York-home to more than 23,000 trash cans--unveiled a new model trash can following a contest that sought designs for the bin. The new, two-piece trash can comprises a crescent-top shell that holds an inner, easy-to-grab plastic bin. They're also 50 percent lighter than the old steel design. The city received and reviewed some 200 submissions of proposed designs from around the world, which was reduced to 12 finalists, with the final two put through a rigorous 90-day test this year.

## Five-Two Officers Reassigned

The two 52nd Precinct officers involved in the shooting death of a Yonkers man following a traffic stop have been reassigned. A source told the Norwood News the reassignment came a month and a half after Allan Feliz was killed by the pair's sergeant. The two officers had been part of the Five-Two's Neighborhood Coordination Officer program, which stations officers permanently in sectors within the precinct, getting to know the neighborhood and stakeholders as part of their duties. The family of Feliz has since filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the NYPD.

## King Returns

Councilman Andy King is back on active duty after completing his 30-day suspension after the New York City Council substantiated claims he misused his office. King has denied claims that he sexually harassed a staffer, fired staffers for complying with a 2017 investigation against him, and allowing his wife to dictate office affairs. King, however, has reportedly not paid the \$15,000 fine as part of the punitive measures the

# Squatters Busted, Ousted From Norwood Home After Shooting

By MICHAEL TURAY

Scattered Budweiser cans, shabby clothes, and pieces belonging to a worn out cabinet lay strewn about the front lawn of a two-family home at 290 Reservoir Pl. near East Gun Hill Road. For all intents and purposes, the property appears vacant from the outside. Inside,, squatters had invaded, creating an unsettling feeling shared by longtime residents.

Things reached a tipping point on Dec. 2 when a shootout happened inside the property, sending officers to the home. Near a second-floor window of the house, multiple bullet holes can be spotted from the shots fired following the nighttime dispute that led to 11 arrests, according to eyewitnesses. Patrol and field intelligence officers from the 52nd Precinct responded to shots fired. Two guns were also retrieved from the crime scene.

For three longtime Norwood residents, who all requested anonymity for fear of reprisal, the shooters and subsequent arrests is unprecedented for their neighborhood.

"It was more than five shots, about eight or nine shots. I've never seen so many police on that block in the 40 years I have lived on and off in this area. That's how quiet it is," said the first Norwood resident.

The trio of residents are claiming a small victory nonetheless, after maintaining vigilance towards the home. They first noticed squatters occupying the home in early spring, but despite numerous complaints to 311, the city Department of Buildings (DOB), and Police Department, the squatters were left to drift in and out of the home for months. Residents also brushed up on their knowledge of squatters rights, where state law allows

Council passed against him on Oct. 28. He filed a lawsuit against the city, citing a lack of due process, which was ultimately tossed out.

## Sheridan Expressway

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the completion of the Sheridan Expressway from an interstate highway to an accessible boulevard is now complete, giving South Bronx residents and visitors a direct connection to the Bronx River waterfront and Starlight Park. The project is part of a \$1.8 billion multi-phase infrastructure project in West Farms, where the second phase of the project will see crews reconstruct the interchange of the Bruck-

ner Expressway and new Sheridan Boulevard, which would improve access to the Hunts Point Market. Cuomo said the project is aimed at fixing "the planning mistakes of the past." In a statement, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, who advocated for the funds, said the project is "the most impactful and transformational project [the Bronx] has seen in decades."

## NYPD Anti-Hate Forms

Following a spike in hate crimes across the country, Mayor Bill de Blasio formally announced the creation of the NYPD Racial and Ethnically Motivated Extremism unit, designed to identify "any trends and

any signs of racially and ethnically motivated extremism" as a way of preventing any anti-hate crimes before they occur. The unit has been up and running in the last weeks, and has so far been tracking where immediate threats exist across the city, specifically Brooklyn, which the mayor said has "seen so much of the hate crime activity in this city." De Blasio encouraged New Yorkers to report hate crimes by calling 911 or (888) NYC-SAFE.

## Fentanyl Ban Bill

Amid the opioid epidemic that's reached crisis levels in the Bronx, Gov. Andrew Cuomo is proposing a ban on fentanyl, the

for 45 years.

The house has had complaints, according to DOB records. The first complaint was filed in November 2018 after pizza boxes were found on the property, attracting rodents. The second complaint that was reported in July claimed squatters had been causing havoc at the unoccupied home.

"Right next door there used to be a

(continued on page 13)



Photo by David Cruz

**POLICE OFFICERS** in front of 290 Reservoir Pl. are on hand to monitor man known to be a squatter removing his items from inside the property on Dec. 4. A shooting had occurred inside the two-story home only two days before.



# Carmen Corrigan, 40-Year Norwood Stalwart and Lifelong Artist, Dies at 79

By DAVID CRUZ

Carmen Corrigan, a longtime Norwood resident who carved a life for herself in the neighborhood--married and raising two sons, one of whom went on to an established movie and television career-- while also establishing herself as a prolific artist mesmerized by the neighborhood, died on Nov. 30 at age 79 after a long fight with cancer.

Corrigan is best known for her body of work that immortalized the borough's landscapes, notably Mosholu Parkway, the lush greenway serving as the cornerstone to the neighborhood's character. Over the years, Corrigan became something of a loving stalwart for Norwood, updating her old neighbors on the goings-on at the north Bronx neighborhood through Facebook.

Born Carmen Leon on May 15, 1940 in Puerto Rico, Corrigan was a lifelong student of art, open to the medium's power. Part of the second wave of Puerto Ricans migrating from the island to New York City, Corrigan moved with her family to the South Bronx at age four, later attending the High School of Art and Design in Mid-

town Manhattan before enrolling at the School of Visual Arts. Her undying love for impressionism, blotches of color blended to form contours of landscapes or faces, inspired a career in the arts. Corrigan also had developed a skill for sculpting.

"There's so much of her in her work," said Kevin Corrigan, her son who went on to become an established actor in Hollywood, whose film credits include "Goodfellas," "The Pineapple Express," and "Unstoppable." Kevin also starred in the Netflix series "The Get Down," which transported viewers back to life in the Bronx during the 1970s. Carmen married her late husband Kenneth Corrigan on Feb. 6, 1965. Along with Kevin, Carmen had another son, Kenneth Jr. The Corrigan family moved to Norwood in 1977, living on the sixth floor of a seven-story building that overlooks Mosholu Parkway and JHS 80. She never moved. For Kevin, that devotion to the parkway stemmed largely from its visceral splendor, a feast for the eyes on any given day.

"My parents never left Mosholu Parkway. When the neighborhood



Photo provided by Kevin Corrigan

**CARMEN CORRIGAN, SEEN** sculpting a bust of her husband Kenneth, died on Nov. 30 at age 79.

changed, and everybody started moving away, that was just never part of the plan for my folks. They loved it there. They loved where they lived," said Kevin.

While Mosholu Parkway served as Carmen's go-to source for inspiration, she would go beyond it, bringing her assortment of acrylics, pastels, and oil colors to paint landscapes at Wave Hill or the New York Botanical Garden. She also experimented with profile paintings, using models that were available at the Arts Students League.

"There were 30 or 40 portraits of all kinds of people. A very diverse array of different people who would come into the Arts Students League to make a few bucks modeling for the students there. You wondered who they were. You wonder what their stories were. Your imagination can take off when you look at my mother's paintings of these people," said Kevin.

Carmen garnered much success throughout her life, showcasing her work at various galleries that included the Kingsbridge Riverdale Van Cortlandt Development Corporation, Montefiore Medical Center, and the Salvation Army. Her work has been incorporated into collections both public and corporate, including the Tudor Investment Corporation, Auburn Technical Services Group, and the U.S. Navy. There's also a portrait of famed New York Yankee Joe DiMaggio, which Carmen was commissioned to paint for a private art

collector.

She also made room to offer words of encouragement to burgeoning artists, including her son. "I got the literal mother lode of encouragement, as far as my own creative pursuits," said Kevin. "To be in her world...was to creatively be free."

Her love of neighborhood pulled like-minded friends into her orbit, among them Sheila Sanchez, a resident and community activist in Norwood. The two met after Sanchez learned a hawk, a rare sighting in Norwood, had built a nest on Carmen's fire escape. Sanchez soon learned Carmen, though reserved, was outspoken over conditions at the parkway.

"She was someone I could look up to as a reason to keep fighting for the community," said Sanchez. "She may not have gone to a meeting, but she will reach someone like me. She would call straight to the community board. She kept her eyes open and she would post it on social media, and make complaints about it, and make it public. She would not keep her mouth shut."

Sheila paid her respects to Carmen at a wake held at Hodder Farenga Funeral Home in Yonkers, NY, which doubled as an exhibition paying tribute to Carmen's work.

Carmen was buried alongside her husband, who died in February 2016, at St. Raymond's Cemetery in Throggs Neck. She is survived by her sons Kevin and Kenneth, her brothers Sam and Manuel, and three grandchildren.

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# Worst Landlord Watch List Singles Out Four Bldgs. in Norwood

By **MICHAEL TURAY** and  
**JONATHAN CUSTODIO**

Four buildings in Norwood are among those on the notorious Worst Landlords Watch List compiled by the New York City Public Advocate's office.

On the list is 3366 Decatur Ave., a 60-unit building with 201 violations listed on the city Department of Housing Preservation & Development's (HPD) website and 14 violations through the city Department of Buildings (DOB) along with three evictions this year alone.

The majority of the HPD violations were filed under Decatur Enterprise LLC and Matt Levi, who was listed as the 14th worst landlord in the city. While a stop work order has been activated on the property, building owners also owe civil penalties.

The building's management is now registered under EK Realty LLC, owned by Moshe Katzenstein, according to HPD records. It was sold five months ago, according to Marina Perez, 73, a tenant who has lived in the building for five years. EK Realty LLC last registered the edifice on Nov. 1 of this year.

In a visit by the *Norwood News*, doorknobs were found used as door stoppers in the hallways and a nest of dead bugs in a spider web lay near mailboxes in the lobby.

"They don't fix nothing here," said Perez, listing issues that include a leaky ceiling, unstable floorboards, and windows in need of repair. "The only thing that's good here is the heat."

Perez also points out unreliable communication with her current landlord, having been sent a notice calling for documentation of past payments with the previous landlord so that any overdue fees can be accurately invoiced. When she calls the management office to ask for repairs, either "they don't come" or the mailbox is full.

"I take off my shoes and forget where I put them and they're asking me to pay five months of lease," she said, explaining that she's been unable to file for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program, which prevents future rent increases and freezes it at a third of the income of qualifying tenants, because she doesn't have a



Photo by Michael Turay

**THIS BUILDING AT** 3366 Decatur Ave. is among four buildings in Norwood listed on the New York City Public Advocate's Worst Landlords Watch List.

lease with the new owners yet. "They're not supposed to keep raising the rent like

this."

Her rent had been raised this year from \$1,380 to \$1,401.

The Watch List criteria was based on the number of average monthly complaints filed with HPD and DOB, and the number of units landlords oversaw between December 2018 and November 2019.

Only violations categorized as a Class B or Class C, which are known to threaten a tenant's health such as a broken elevator or lack of heat, were used to determine poorly run buildings and the landlords behind them.

"I had a leak for almost a year or two," said Chris, a three-year resident of the building who has also had mold and pests and

complaints of an adequate repair of his bathroom. "They pretty much rushed the job."

Denise, a tenant who has lived in the building for over 30 years, recalled about 10 years ago when things for the building began to go downhill, a change in management. "The old super, he went out of his way to help, anything you needed he helped. This [current super] sucks big time," she said.

After recently becoming disabled from an accident, she emphasized how underappreciated she felt as a tenant. "I got mold growing in my bathroom that the super supposedly fixed repeatedly. The super uses very minimal [tools] to make repairs. For instance, my door I've been complaining about this for years, someone can bust right into my apartment," said Denise.

Two of the three other Norwood buildings that placed on the list included 374 E. 209th St., and 414 E. 204th St. Identifying the last home on Perry Avenue between East 204th and 205th streets was unclear as the list's map feature identifying problem buildings was not properly working as of press time.

"Through legislation and organization, through political power and tenant power, we're going to take them on," said New York Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams, in a statement.

"We're doing the best we can to make everybody happy and get stuff done right. And that's our motto," said Abraham of EK Realty LLC, noting that the company just took over as the building's managing agent. "Check back with us in six months to see how everybody's feeling. That'll be the real test."

Decatur Enterprise LLC could not be reached for comment.

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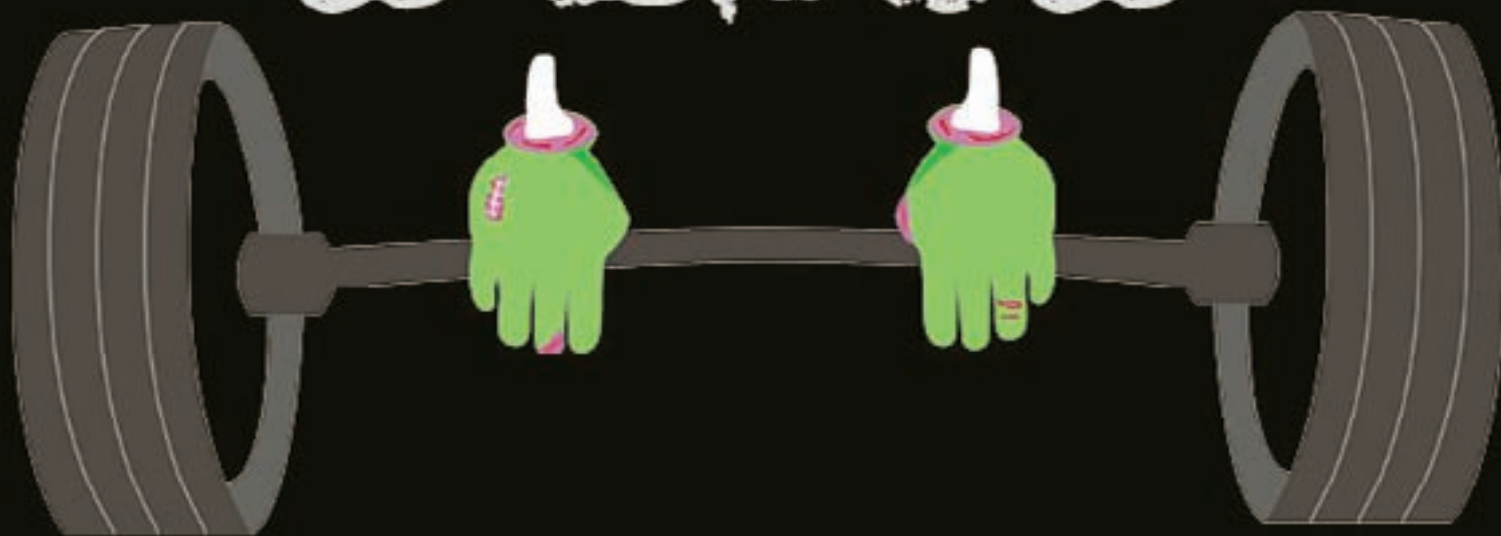
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# In Fight to Debunk Census Myths, MMCC Secures Grant

By DAVID CRUZ

Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) is among the 150 groups slated to receive a financial boost in its quest to ensure everyone is counted in the U.S. Census, which is slated to touch off in March under new methods of getting counted amid the political climate that's been hostile to undocumented immigrant communities such as Norwood.

Lenora Sealey, MMCC's director of support services, is mapping out what the organization will do with the \$150,000 boost it received from New York City as part of a coordinated effort in ensuring New Yorkers are counted. So far, the monies will be earmarked for hiring upwards of 10 census outreach workers. The plan, according to Sealey, is to get everyone counted.

"We're gonna tie it to all of our support services, so anybody that's walking in the door is asked to complete the census," said Sealey, in a telephone interview with the *Norwood News*.

Sealey is also planning bi-weekly information sessions on the census, clarifying its importance to residents.

The U.S. Census can be filled out by hand through a form New Yorkers will receive via mail sometime in March. It can also be filled out online for the first time. If none of those methods are used to fill out the questionnaire—which is used by the federal government to determine how much money the city would receive—so-called enumerators visit homes in a last-ditch effort to ensure a resident is counted.

The grants—a total of \$40 million in city and state funds—were set aside for community-based groups. Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition was granted \$125,000 intended for census-related education and organizing.

Mayor Bill de Blasio mobilized an effort to ensure New York City residents are counted after President Donald Trump demanded a citizenship question be included in the census, a request that could have kept many immigrant communities from taking part in the census. Trump has since rescinded that request.

For Sealey, the fear of participating in the census is palpable in her experience with MMCC's clientele. And Trump's positions—which have stoked fears within the immigrant community—are behind it, she said.

It's impacted various social services provided by MMCC, including help for residents applying to the federal government Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as the federal food stamp program. The service hasn't been as utilized to the same frequency as the organization's food pantry, said Sealey. In the case of the latter, there is no need to apply to take advantage.

"There is a portion of people who will refuse to apply for it because they feel like it will impact their immigration status in some way. So, we do come into people who are afraid of doing any kind of government documentation of any sort," said Sealey.

She added that even if undocumented immigrants apply for the census, federal law forbids the U.S. Commerce Department, which oversees the census, from sharing personal information with other federal agencies.

The addition of census outreach adds to the litany of offerings provided by MMCC's social services department, which include ESL classes, help securing housing, and disability insurance.

"We'll probably make the work, hopefully, seamless," said Sealey.



File photo

**MOSHOLU MONTEFIORE COMMUNITY** Center is among the 150 organizations the city has chosen to conduct outreach on the upcoming U.S. Census count.





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# Nike Ad Mistakes Norwood for Williamsburg. Misspells WBO Center

Perhaps this commercial should've done some fact-checking before airing its video.

A heartwarming commercial by Nike featuring the highly utilized Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center and its impact on young people aired some glaring mistakes on the Norwood center run by the New York City Parks Department.

Intended to promote the center in partnership with the Parks Department, the ad features multiple youth, who are presented as representing the Bronx, described as a "Williamsburg local." Though it is a popular area of Brooklyn, there is no Williamsburg section of the Bronx. There was once a Williamsbridge section of the Bronx, which is now known as Norwood.

The mistakes didn't stop there.

In a Twitter post that was taken down following our inquiries, Nike misspelled the name of Recreation

Specialist Tatiana Lewis (the name is spelled differently in the video) and referred to the Williamsbridge Oval Rec Center as the "Williamsburdge Oval Rec Center." Williamsburdge is not only not a section of the Bronx but doesn't exist anywhere in New York City.

The Nike ad is part of its "All For 1" campaign that involves distributing its popular Air Force One sneaker to community organizations and activists, in support of their missions. The intent of the campaign is not clearly expressed in the commercial. Nike has an estimated value of \$15 billion, according to Forbes magazine.

Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center gets its name from the area Norwood was once known as. The former is named after 18th century landowner John Williams.

Nike did not return an email seeking comment.

—David Cruz

# Squatters Ousted After Shooting

(continued from page 5)

nursery, but these dingbats come in and decided to have a shootout. That's how innocent people get killed," said a third Norwood resident who has lived in the area since 1980.

Residents who first noticed the house being occupied by squatters slowly built a case against the property, which included a better understanding of squatters rights through research.

"We exhausted 311, they diverted us to [the Department of Buildings]. [Department of] Buildings said we had to make a report and they would send somebody, which I did, and I have the email to confirm. They said they would send somebody out. That never panned out," said the first resident.

State law defines a squatter as someone who does not pay rent nor own the property that they're currently living in. The law also states that if a squatter or trespasser has been on the property for 30 days, they are automatically considered a legal tenant that could only be removed through a court-ordered eviction.

"They're like cockroaches: when the lights are on then everybody is scattered. But once the light starts to dim, which it will, they start to trickle back. The scary thing is, it was over 20-odd people next to 30 people who got arrested that night [of the shootout] and they were back the fol-

lowing morning, or at least a few who got away or released," said the first Norwood resident of 40 years.

Such a law appears to work unfavorably toward landlords, said the tenants, who expressed frustration with the law's current language.

"We don't agree with the squatter's rights and the way its written up, it's too vague. We have families, we pay bills, taxes, and it's unfair how these people can come in and occupy these homes under law," said the resident who has lived in Norwood since 1980.

A deeper dive into public records from the DOB also shows that a boiler was replaced and some plumbing work was performed on the seven-bedroom, four-bathroom property back in 2017. It's unclear who was living in the house when this took place. Tracy Daniels O'Connell, a real estate lawyer linked to the property, did not respond to phone calls from the Norwood News.

For now, residents remain satisfied with the recent police activity the 3,324-square-foot home has attracted, hoping resolve is permanent.

"That's what I'm worried about. It took something drastic, luckily no one died. I was afraid, I was thinking more about a fire and the way those row houses are set up," said the first unnamed Norwood resident of 40 years.

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# Season's Greetings

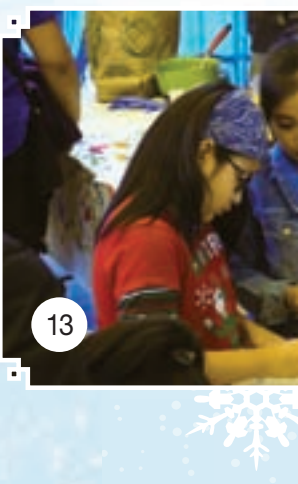
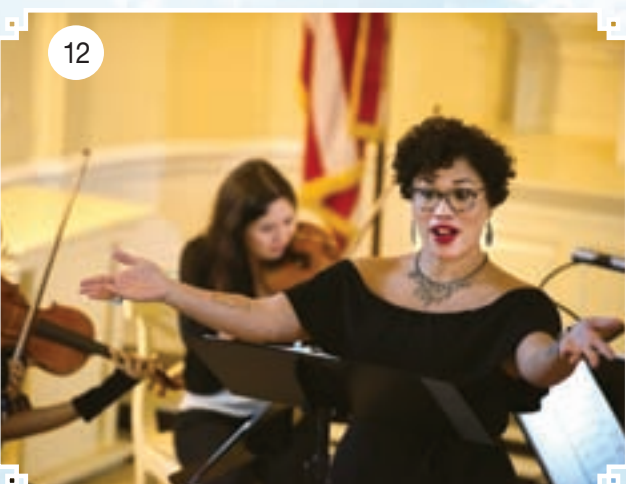
Our borough ushered in the holidays throughout December with a number of community organizations across the northwest Bronx hosting a



(1) **(BACK ROW, L-R) ERIC** Dinowitz, District Leader for the 81st Assembly District; Councilman Andrew Cohen, State. Sen. Jamaal Bailey, Jerome Gun Hill Business Development Corporation, and Norwood residents (front row). Photo courtesy Office of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz. (2) **SOME ACADEMY OF** Mt. St. Ursula students hold up toys they secured from a school administrator. Photo courtesy Academy of Mt. St. Ursula. (3) **ELIZABETH QUARANTA (L)**, president of Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), smiles along with residents (home of the Norwood News). Residents popped in to the house with an arts and crafts station and snack table waiting for them. Photo by David Greene. (4) **THIS LITTLE GIRL** gets her picture taken with Santa Clause at the annual tree lighting event organized by the Jerome Gun Hill Improvement District in Norwood on Dec. 4. Photo by José A. Giralt. (5) **CHILDREN OF ALL** ages get gifts and have their picture taken with Santa Clause at the annual tree lighting event organized by the Jerome Gun Hill Improvement District in Norwood on Dec. 4. Photo by José A. Giralt.



(6) **CHILDREN MEET OLD** St. Nick and get gifts at the tree lighting event organized by the Jerome Gun Hill Improvement District in Norwood on Dec. 4. Photo by José A. Giralt. (7) **THE CROWD REACTS** to the tree lighting on the median of Mosholu Parkway at Bainbridge Community Board 7. Photo by José A. Giralt. (8) **THE CROWD REACTS** to the tree lighting on the median of Mosholu Parkway at Bainbridge Community Board 7. Photo by José A. Giralt. (9) **MEMBERS OF THE** Performance Choir from the Academy of Mount St. Ursula sing under the direction of Aquiala Walde on Dec. 12. Photo by José A. Giralt. (10) **THIS LITTLE GIRL** gets her picture taken with Santa Claus next to the enormous holiday tree at the tree lighting event on Dec. 12. Photo by José A. Giralt.





# From the Bronx

variety of Yuletide events that brought good cheer. Norwood News' photojournalists were out there capturing the season's festive activities.



ss Improvement District executive director Jennifer Tausig, and Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz at the BID's annual tree lighting ceremony. They're joined by two  
d for the University Neighborhood Housing Program as part of a toy drive the Bedford Park school hosted this month. Pictured are four students posing with  
side a rep from the veterans services nonprofit the Mission Continues at FOMP's first-ever Winterfest celebration on Dec. 14 at the landmark Keeper's House  
**PAIR OF** participants color together at Friends of Mosholu Parkland's first annual Winterfest celebration at The Keeper's House on Dec. 14. Photo by David  
ovement District on Jerome Avenue and East Mosholu Parkway North in Norwood on Dec. 4. The event was sponsored by Councilman Andrew Cohen. Photo



José A. Giralt **(7) SANTA CLAUS WELCOMES** guests at the tree lighting event hosted by the Jerome Gun  
dge Avenue on the border of Norwood and Bedford Park on Dec. 12. The event was organized by Com-  
en (far right) before the tree lighting ceremony on the median of Mosholu Parkway at Bainbridge Avenue  
Dec. 4 organized by the Jerome Gun Hill Improvement District. Photo by José A. Giralt



**(11) CHILDREN CROWD SANTA** Claus as he hands out some early holiday gifts  
following the tree lighting ceremony on the median of Mosholu Parkway at Bain-  
bridge Avenue on Dec. 12. Photo by José A. Giralt. **(12) RACHEL KARA PÉREZ,**  
soprano, sings during a holiday event accompanied by musicians from the Bronx  
Arts Ensemble inside the Woolworth Chapel at Woodlawn Cemetery on Dec.  
15. The event was organized by the Bronx Arts Ensemble in conjunction with  
The Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy. Photo by José A. Giralt. **(13) THESE**  
**YOUNGSTERS ARE** several of dozens of children who take advantage of the  
arts and crafts table during the Winter Wonderland celebration at the Williams-  
bridge Oval Park recreation center on Dec. 14. Photo by David Greene **(14) THIS**  
**BABY DOESN'T** seem fully aware she's sitting on Jolly St. Nick's lap, who made  
an appearance at the Williamsbridge Oval Park's Winter Wonderland celebration  
on Dec. 14. Photo by David Greene



# Gates Place Tenants Unveil Anti-MCI Sign, Ratcheting Up Against Landlord

By DAVID CRUZ

The banner sign that hung diagonally above Silvia Estulillo captured her fellow tenants' story: "Rent Strike; No Mas MCIs," referring to Major Capital Improvements that took effect shortly after the landlord's \$1.9 million, top-down renovation of the six-story building on Gates Place in Norwood.

It wasn't easy for Estulillo—who's joined in the MCI strike—to share her story, bursting into tears after speaking openly on the ongoing strife she and a handful of tenants, fueled by gumption, have had to endure. Last year, the tenants decided not to pay for the MCI fees they say are too costly.

"We're working. We're not doing anything else. Not robbing; just trying to work to pay this extra rent," said Estulillo, speaking at a Dec. 16 rally at the doorstep to the apartment build-

ing at 3425 Gates Pl. she's called home for the last 10 years. "I hope [the landlord is] conscious of what [they're] doing. We've suffered a great deal."

Other tenants followed suit, sharing their rage against their multi-million-dollar landlord, the Morgan Group, whose vast portfolio of properties stretches across the northwest Bronx. The owners—Scott, Ryan, and Brooke Morgan—were approved by the state for an MCI renovation on apartment kitchens and bathrooms in 2017.

The rally is the latest in a series of actions by tenants condemning the Morgan Group, which have included demonstrations in front of Housing Court. The tenants' plight has also signaled a lack of support for MCIs, even in the face of reforms that were weakened following the passage of the state's rent reform laws. The new MCI



Photo by David Cruz

**TENANTS AT 3425** Gates Pl. in Norwood hold up signs criticizing the owner of the building, the Morgan Group, for its MCI rent fee that it effected in November 2018.

regulations don't apply to Gates Place since the MCI work was approved prior to when the current rent laws took effect.

Tenants have long blasted the project they insist had disrupted their day-to-day living in the building. Dozens of tenants on the building's H line were forced to share a bathroom on the fourth floor for three and a half months, taking shifts to ensure they had time to shower. The stoves on the same line, meantime, were off limits, forcing tenants to shell out monies for buying hot food. Renovations also included upgrades to the intercom system.

"Instead of fixing them, they did more damage," said Evodio Rosas, a 20-year tenant in the building, who pointed to the work in his bathroom where its window space was effectively reduced.

Yarisme Guilamo, 30, a lifelong tenant in the building, said the work was "not up to par," pointing to the intercom system she said does not work properly.

At the end, tenants were shocked over the sticker price imposed on them in September 2018: an MCI fee of \$81.33 per room.

That's an extra \$325 for Flor Morales Rojas, a fourth-floor tenant caring for her disabled husband, would have to pay. "The only one who's working is my son," said Rojas, adding that he's been helping the family get by.

Estulillo was hit with an extra \$243 a month, equivalent to what would be a month's grocery bills.

The Morgan Group has responded to tenants, even meeting with them, to the lack of tenants' satisfaction. Even after Linden Miller, the tenants' lawyer, demanded the MCI fees be waived at a meeting on May 22, the attorney for the Morgan Group, Luise Barrack, said they couldn't. In a statement, Barrack said that the landlord had responded

to additional requests for work to be performed in the apartments.

"As some tenants have elected to stop paying their rent entirely, these tenants and their families are living in and enjoying their apartments rent free which is entirely unjustified. These tenants are not leaving the owner, which is required to and is maintaining all of the building's services and is paying real estate taxes, etc. for the building, any choice but to pursue their legal remedies to collect the unpaid rent," said Barrack in an email to the *Norwood News*.

For a building home to low-income tenants, Guilamo alleged the MCI could simply be a ploy to systematically remove the tenants from the property. "We're not renters. We're here to for the long haul. And the problem is this corporation wants to get us poor people out of here. They want to gentrify because we're right here by Montefiore, we're right by the 4 train, and they want to get the poor people out of here so they could get renters and rent it for triple what it's worth," said Guilamo.

The Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC), which specializes in tenant organizing, has since stepped in, empowering tenants to take on the Morgan Group, ranked as the seventh worst evictor by housing advocacy groups that include NWBCCC.

The group is now planning a trip to Albany for Jan. 9, when the State Legislature begins its session, to discuss a further weakening of the MCI. It's unclear whether state lawmakers will prioritize a revisiting of the MCI laws, but they have at least an ally in City Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose district covers the building.

"It's very hard to get people to stand up, so you're being very brave," said Cohen. "I'm going to stand by you all the way through this."



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# Washington Greys Military Cadets Working to Return to Kingsbridge Armory Annex

By JONATHAN CUSTODIO

After having been removed from its annex in 2017 over safety concerns, the Washington Greys Military Cadets is one step closer to returning to an annex abutting the Kingsbridge Armory, which they've called home for decades.

Community Board 7 has since approved a critical letter advocating for the group, which would relieve the military group of any rents it would have to pay to stay at the annex.

Known also as the Greys, a program modeled after the national Washington Greys organization, the non-profit organization that instills discipline to youth who have been involved with or at risk of juvenile delinquency, the group would have had to pay about

\$10,000. The annex has served as its headquarters for more than 20 years.

According to Col. Francisco Santana, commanding officer of the Greys, the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA)—which holds oversight of such groups operating at military bases that include the armory—recommended the Greys obtain the letter to be relieved of rent. But it doesn't exempt the Greys from hiring a mandated security guard.

Getting the letter was easy. Santana went to Community Board 7's Nov. 21 executive committee meeting, where board members agreed to send a letter of support. General board members approved the letter unanimously at its Nov. 26 general board meeting.

Two years ago, the group was forced



File photo by David Greene

**THE WASHINGTON GREYS**, seen here marching during the Bronx Week Parade in May 2016, are closer to returning to the annex near the Kingsbridge Armory.



File photo courtesy Bedford Mosholu Community Center

**THE WASHINGTON GREYS** have donated their time to help with various quality of life projects, including this cleanup of Mosholu Parkway in October 2016.

to vacate after traces of lead paint were found. Though the organization still maintains an office there, cadets currently conduct their operational training and drills at neighboring locations, including P.S. 86, Walton High School, and the Fort Independence Community Center. "It's tough because of lack of space, but we're grateful for what [these locations] provide," says Santana. "We definitely are appreciative."

Santana emphasizes that the DMNA has been very helpful in the process of moving back into the annex, following the removal of the lead.

Serving as a Washington Grey cadet during the 1980s and '90s, Dave Laguer, commanding officer of the New York Grey Cadets, an offshoot of the Washington Greys, credits the person he is today to the organization. "They were a big part of the community. I give my existence to the original program," he explains, highlighting leniency he received from a judge during his adolescence after an incident he

described as "being in the wrong place at the wrong time." At his court date, the presiding judge let him off scot free because of his clean record and Washington Greys membership.

The Washington Greys, originally established inside the armory in 1954, work with cadets at ages 10 to 18. Cadets undergo field training exercises that include rappelling, hiking and kayaking at Harriman State Park in upstate New York. Kayaking equipment was provided by the Panda Express on Fordham Road.

Santana says he recently led cadets up Mt. Marcy, the highest mountain peak in the state, and plans to add some of the state's other natural apexes to the list. "A lot of these kids will never have been to these places," he says.

The cadets are not only being prepared for the various rigors that life will throw at them, but also for higher education, says Santana. "The focus is on the cadets going to college."

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# Bronx Library Center Selected for Citywide ThriveNYC Initiative

By **DAVID CRUZ** and  
**DAVID GREENE**

Thirteen library branches, including the Bronx Library Center in Fordham, will now join the fight for increased mental health awareness services in areas where such services are considerably low.

New York City's First Lady Chirlane McCray, who helps oversee the office of ThriveNYC, made the announcement on Dec. 5 alongside New York Public Library CEO Anthony Marx and ThriveNYC director Susan Herman at the Fordham branch that will see greater mental health resources, joining schools, senior centers, shelters, and police precincts across the city. The initiative, dubbed "Spaces to Thrive," also includes Pelham Bay Library.

"Libraries are in the heart of our communities, and we are honored to partner with an institution that has provided New Yorkers with free, accessible programming for 100 years. This new partnership will allow us to reach even more people in our city with information about mental health resources and support," said McCray in a statement.



File Photo

**THE BRONX LIBRARY CENTER** (pictured above) has been chosen to spread greater awareness on mental health services as part of ThriveNYC's "Spaces to Thrive" initiative announced Dec. 5.

ThriveNYC is now primed to roll out services at the library that include mental health workshops on a range of topics, a bookshelf dedicated solely to books on mental health, and a public awareness campaign.

"The Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC



Photo by David Greene

**NEW YORK PUBLIC** Library President and CEO Anthony Marx (at podium) and New York's First Lady Chirlane McCray (l) announce the kickoff of "Spaces to Thrive" as part of the ThriveNYC campaign.

exists to fill critical gaps in our mental health system, and each of these library branches is in a neighborhood where services may still be too hard to come by. That's why we're here, putting books and programs in neighborhoods where they'll make a real difference," said Herman.

In his comments, Marx praised the partnership as the "latest example of how we can bring reliable, important information to our communities."

One in five New Yorkers has been identified as suffering from a mental health condition, according to boilerplate statistics provided by ThriveNYC. Data from the Health Resources & Services Administration compiled in October 2018 shows Fordham needs 17 mental health care professionals to meet the current population demand, which it currently does not have.

The initiative has faced intense backlash over the last year, with experts arguing the sums of money spent on the initiative over the last five years--a total of \$1 billion--have not produced the kind of positive results these figures should yield.

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Part 4 of 5

*The Norwood News, in partnership with WFUV radio and BronxNet television, continues its five-part series on the impact gun violence has had on Bronx neighborhoods and the people who live in them.*

## The Cure to Gun Violence? Treat it Like a Disease

 By **SABRINA BOYD** of


At Jacobi Medical Center, health professionals and community members are teaming up to combat gun violence, adopting a method akin to fighting an infectious disease.

It's where Dr. Noe Romo, director of Pediatric Inpatient Services at the hospital who doubles as medical director for Stand Up to Violence program, comes in.

The program, which has spread across parts of the Bronx since it began in 2014, utilizes so-called violence interrupters—the equivalent to an antidote—to serve as mentors to gunshot victims who may be spurred to retaliation that could get them, or others, killed.

"We are using them as essentially mentors to mentor our patients in the hospital when they come in to try to prevent retaliation, counsel against re-injury, and figure out the factors that led to their injury," said Romo.

The heavy involvement from neighborhood leaders coupled with the strong support, has al-

lowed Stand Up to Violence to flourish, coinciding with a drop in shootings in areas it serves. Romo, though, isn't resting on the Program's laurels.

"As long as there is a single shooting, then we [Stand Up to Violence] haven't fulfilled our purpose," said Romo, adding there is still work to be done as long as community members continue to suffer from violence-related injuries.

For Romo, the prospect of seeing fewer shootings is personal.

Growing up in East Los Angeles exposed Romo to the effects of gun violence at an early age, which had a significant impact on his career trajectory after moving to the East Coast. After receiving his medical degree at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Romo completed his residency up the road at Jacobi Medical Center.

With its designation as a Level 1 Trauma Center, handling the most severe emergency cases that include gunshot wounds, Romo said he found himself as the "physician taking care of the patients who were injured, either shot, stabbed, or assaulted, as opposed to being the family member or the commu-



Image courtesy BronxNet Television

**DR. NOE ROMO (L)**, director of Pediatric Inpatient Services at Jacobi Medical Center who doubles as medical director for the Stand Up to Violence program, speaks to WFUV reporter Sabrina Boyd on the anti-gun initiative that's helped lower shooting incidents in the Bronx.

nity member who had been the witness or who had experienced that same violent trauma."

Witnessing the realities of gun violence and its devastating effects on the overall community served as the main inspiration for Romo and his colleagues in the trauma surgery, social work, surgery, and pediatrics and emergency medicine departments at Jacobi Medical Center to develop the program that not only treats immediate wounds, but addresses the underlying issues that lead to these acts of

violence.

"This program kind of came out of [these departments] ... to kind of come up with a sense of how can we address violence like a disease. And how can we have a hospital-based intervention that also has a foot in the door in the community?" said Romo. "We decided to start the Stand Up to Violence program as what we were calling a hospital-based, community violence prevention model."

Under the program, patients undergo what Romo called a "three-pronged approach" to their care to establish a holistic picture of the incident and take the necessary steps to keep another violence-related incident from occurring.

"If there is a patient who comes in who is shot, stabbed, or assaulted, we are notified of that particular incident ... I respond, along with our social worker, who is our program director, and also with our outreach worker... we all see the patient together," Romo explained. "My main job is to make sure patients and parents understand the medical issues surrounding the injury of the patient. Our social worker... her main point is supporting the family and providing any kind of services we can provide. Our hospital outreach worker's main position is just trying to figure

out exactly what happened; what were the circumstances around the injury? Do you know who did it?"

Romo's team also delved into whether there are confirmed thoughts of retaliation, which would trigger the deployment of outreach workers to prevent the cycle of violence.

Though the majority of outreach workers is recruited through community networks, Romo said the outreach workers who have teamed up with Stand Up to Violence are sometimes former patients. "We are able to have a steady stream of people who we are mentoring and potentially identifying as potential workers," said Romo.

Stand Up to Violence is currently implemented within three precincts in the Bronx. Results from the time the program was created in 2014 have shown a steady drop in gun-related incidents.

"We look at community-level data, and data collected at the patient level. The areas that we serve [the 43rd, the 47th, and the 49th precincts] combined... we've seen a 44 percent decrease in shootings in the neighborhoods where we are present. From a hospital perspective, we have noticed that those patients that we have intervened in have three times more likelihood of coming back for their follow-up appointments, so they get better clinical care. They also have a 52 percent less chance of coming back with a re-injury within a two-year period," said Romo. "So essentially, patients that we see are less likely to get re-injured and are more likely to be more adherent to their medical care. In the community we are seeing significant decreases in the violence... that we used to see."

While Romo is proud of the program's success, he said "the numbers [for the program] are great, but that number should be 100 percent, and I think there shouldn't be a single shooting in these areas."

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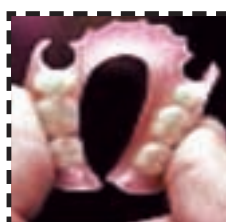
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100 Alcott Place  
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## EDITORIAL

# Help DeWitt Clinton Campus Regain Some Order

The stabbing of a 16-year-old boy outside DeWitt Clinton Campus was the talk of the four schools housed in that storied campus: DeWitt Clinton High School, World View High School, a D75 school, and Bronx Collaborative High School, where the victim's enrolled.

The stabbing stood at the heart of an hour-long discussion into ways violence can be reduced outside the school, with the commanding officer of the 52nd Precinct, Thomas Alps, taking a pragmatic look at the situation he's tasked to quell. It was a frank discussion given the belief that no reporter was expected to show (Sirio Guerino, the former PTA president of Bronx Collaborative High School, who has two sons enrolled at the campus, called the meeting, inviting this publication's editor to attend), and it revealed a full-throttled attempt by Alps to keep order at a school that's sadly seen spurts of violence.

To Alps' credit, he appeared to take the issue seriously. And he was transparent enough to outline some detriments to his strategy: the large crowds during dismissal, the night tour schedules that begin as school lets out forcing

officers to hotfoot it out of the station house, an ongoing feud between gangs at Walton High School, and the lack of respect for its officers. The work Alps is pouring towards the problem will continue, he noted. Our hope is that the presence of police officers is enough to keep the peace.

But with police cars routinely spotted, often strategically stationed outside the school, is this what students want to head out to when dismissed?

Could the remedy be more pronounced outreach to more parents demanding they do right by their children by denouncing violence? Can there be a broader conversation framed around how students from schools can help not hurt each other? Can the city Department of Education reconsider a policy where four schools are crammed into a building, creating a kind of tribalism that breeds isolation from within?

DeWitt Clinton High School is often the school that gets singled out for its unfortunate history of violence. That perception continues to this day, as media reports of the stabbing indicated the incident happened at DeWitt Clin-

ton High School. The school's alumni association has called out those errors in the reporting of the stabbing, even calling out this paper numerous times, for making such a call despite reports from the Police Department claiming it happened at DeWitt Clinton High School.

Such a group is welcome in this discourse as it tries to reverse an image of violence that's been burned onto the school. Since the stabbing, the alumni association has tagged this paper on social media, showcasing the increase in test scores, now on par with the rest of

the city, a robust debate team, and an infectious pride. If only the principal, Pierre Orbe, or the city Department of Education were so bold as to invite this paper to look at the progress the school's made firsthand. Only time will tell.

And perhaps the association, school officials, police, and parents can build on that momentum, amplifying an anti-violence message before the year's out, hoping that the summer months can be incident-free. Perhaps there could be a day where the police wouldn't have to be stationed outside the school.

Like us to look into a news story for you?

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## Letters To The Editor

### Shopping Deserts

I sympathize with the sentiment expressed by Gregg Bishop in his opinion piece, "Shop Small (Not the Online Mall)," in the December 5-18 issue of *Norwood News*. But even in our neighborhoods, can the small stores provide what the bigger ones can?

I do most of my food shopping at Garden Gourmet. Most of what I get there, I cannot get at the supermarket blocks from me or from the nearby small food store.

Should I buy electronic equipment in my neighborhood instead of ordering it by phone and having it delivered? Well, there used to be three electronic stores near 231st Street and Broadway. The Dixie Chicks could tell you that they're a "long time gone and they ain't coming back again." There used to be a men's clothing store on one corner of 231st Street and Broadway,

across the street from Cohen's Optical. Cohen's is still there, but now they have competition from another optical store that's located where the clothing store was. When I need clothes, I go to the nearby Target, which has parking, or I order from Macy's. Some non-clothing items Target sells are not available in their stores so I can only get these products if I order them. As for gifts, I can get much better ones ordering by phone and having the item(s) sent to the person. If I want to buy a friend the 60 CD Elvis Presley collection, I won't find it in a neighborhood store. I order it and have it sent to him. When he receives it, he says "Thank you very much." I have no problem buying from a small neighborhood store when they have what I want. But that's not often the case.

**Richard Warren**  
Van Cortlandt Village

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# New Settlement Community Center Register For Fall Programs

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## Mixed Martial Arts

Tuesday, November 5 for Members  
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Classes are 1x or 2x Week for 8 Weeks  
Pricing starting at \$65 for Members



## Group Swim

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Thursday, November 7 for Non-Members  
Classes are 1x Week for 8 Weeks  
Members: \$80; Non-Members: \$120



## Youth Technology

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### QUALITY MEASURES

Medicare assigns the star rating based on data from a select set of clinical data measures and compares the facility performance to national norms. The measure looks at how well the facility is caring for the residents' physical and clinical needs. More stars means better quality of care.

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### HOLIDAY EVENT

The Bedford Park Congregational Church, located on the corner of 201st Street and Bainbridge Avenue, invites you to attend our Christmas services. We gather together to celebrate our Lord's birth on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019 at 11 a.m. and on Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2019, Christmas Eve, at 7:30 p.m. Come visit our beautiful historic church to celebrate the season. Pastor: Reverend Dr. Christopher Ponnuraj. All are welcome.

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### LEGAL NOTICE

Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 05/17/2017. Location: Bronx. SSNY designated as agent for service of process on LLC. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to: Carl Leach, 2975 White Plains Rd., 7A, Bronx, NY 10467.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### LGBT Scholarship

College scholarships totaling \$10,000 will be awarded to students who are members or allies of the LGBTQ+ community. Applicants must write two 500-word essays that discuss a challenge they have faced in life, and the historical significance of the Stonewall Inn within the context of the gay rights movement. The deadline is March 1, 2020. Applications can be filled online at <https://bit.ly/2PugZdH>.

For questions, contact Eric Vaughan at [LGBTQ@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:LGBTQ@schools.nyc.gov).

### Book Sale

Sistas & Brothas United and Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition host a book sale at 103 E. 196th St. on the following days: Thursdays and Fridays from 4 to 6 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays from 12 to 4 p.m. Book genres will range from short stories, dramas, fiction, horror, kids' books, and more. For more information, call (718) 584-0515.

### Heating Assistance

Applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) for older adults and low- and middle-income New Yorkers will be accepted by local departments of social services. Eligibility is based on income, household size and how the home is heated. Residents can apply online at <https://on.ny.gov/2Fn062M> and mail it to NYC DSS/HRA/HEAP, P.O. Box 1401, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008. For more information, call (212) 331-3126.

### STEM Teacher Award

Nominations are now being accepted for NBC 4 New York and Telemundo 47's Weather Kids Star Teacher award recognition program honoring science, technology, engineering or math teachers. A portion of the application includes a section that asks what makes the nominated teacher deserving of the honor by listing reasons or a story relating to the teacher and the work they do in the classroom. Schools of each winning teacher will receive a \$1,000 award that benefits the learning needs of the winning teacher's students. To nominate a

teacher, go to [nbcnewyork.com/weatherkids](http://nbcnewyork.com/weatherkids). The deadline is Jan. 31, 2020.

### Community Grants

Applications for community improvement grants of up to \$3,000 to community-based groups are being accepted by the Citizens Committee for New York City. Grants will be awarded for neighborhood improvement projects planned and executed by local residents. The application deadline is Jan. 20. To apply, visit [www.citizensnyc.org/grants](http://www.citizensnyc.org/grants). For more information, call Arif Ullah, program director, at (212) 822-9580.

### Mulchfest

Live Christmas trees can be recycled at the following locations from Dec. 26 through Jan. 11 as part of the New City Parks Department's annual Mulchfest: Williamsbridge Oval Park at Reservoir Oval and Reservoir Place (drop-off site only); and Van Cortlandt Park, Bailey Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park South, for drop off or having the tree chipped. For more information, call 311.

### Crib Bumper Exchange

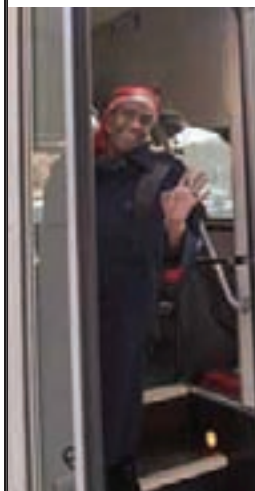
Parents and caregivers can dispose of their crib bumper pads—known to cause injury to infants or possibly death—in exchange for a baby sleep sack at the Administration for Children's Services' (ACS) Bronx office at 2501 Grand Concourse, fourth floor. It's recommended to call the Bronx ACS office at (718) 933-1212 ahead of receiving the sleep sack. For more information, go to [www.nyc.gov/safesleep](http://www.nyc.gov/safesleep).

### Naloxone Training

Free trainings on the administration of naloxone, the drug used to reverse opioid overdoses, is available through the Bronx Community Health Network on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at 1 Fordham Plaza (excluding holidays). For more information, contact Matthew Carrion, community health worker, at (929) 220 8176 or [naloxone@](mailto:naloxone@)

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Holiday Events

The public is invited to the following free events:

**Los Nutcrackers: A Christmas Carajo** – Dec. 20 at 8 p.m. and Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. (includes post-show party), at BAAD, 2474 Westchester Ave., a Latino queer comedic Christmas play about a gay couple that combines “*The Nutcracker*” and “*A Christmas Carol*,” \$25. Info and tickets: (718) 918-2110.

**Breakfast With Santa** – Dec. 21 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Lehman College’s faculty dining room, Music Building, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W. Included are breakfast buffet, activities, live music, theatre, take-home arts and crafts, and Santa. Info and tickets: (718) 960-8495.

**Holiday Concert** – Dec. 22 at 2 p.m., featuring classical holiday music, in Lehman College’s Lovinger Theatre, Speech and Theatre Building Info: (718) 960-8247.

**Chanukah Menorah Lighting** – Dec. 23 at 3 p.m. at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave. Info: (718) 882-4000.

**Holiday Concert and Lunch** – Dec. 23 at 1:15 p.m., at the JASA Van Cortlandt Senior Center, 3880 Sedgwick Ave., 1st floor. Event includes Chanukah and Christmas songs in English, Yiddish, Spanish, and other languages. Special refreshments will be served. Preregister for lunch. Recommended senior donation: \$3/meal; \$2/event. Info: (718) 549-4700.

**Kwanzaa Celebration** – Dec. 28 from 4 to 8 p.m. at St. Helena Church, 1315 Olmstead Ave. (at Benedict Avenue). Food served; African attire; guest speakers and performers. \$15/suggested donation; half/seniors; free/children. Info and tickets: (718) 892-3232.

**Seasonal Music** – Through Jan. 1, at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. at the Botanical Garden, featuring carols and pop hits. Info, fees, and detailed schedule: (718) 817-8700.

**Holiday Film Festival** – Dec. 21-29, at the Botanical Garden. Info and schedule: (718) 817-8700.

### Events

The Bronx Zoo features the **Return of Holiday Lights**, through Jan. 5, Sundays to Thursdays from 5 to 9 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 5 to

10 p.m. Included are carolers, costume characters, train rides (fee), lantern safari, animated sculptures, light show in Astor Court every 20 minutes, and nightly ice carving demonstrations. Tickets: \$29.95/adults; \$22.95/children;



File photo

**MOSHOLU MONTEFIORE COMMUNITY** Center’s annual Menorah Lighting on Dec. 23 is part of the litany of holiday celebrations at the tail end of the season (see Editor’s Pick for more information).



Photo courtesy Wave Hill

**AN EXHIBITION OF** photos taken by Ngoc Minh Ngo is scheduled through Dec 31 at Wave Hill, one of many activities happening at the Bronx (see Events section for more information).

\$28.95/seniors. There will be an Ice Jubilee featuring an ice bar, ice throne, ice slide from Dec. 21 to 31 excluding Dec. 24 and 25, and an ice carving competition on Dec. 28 from 6 to 9 p.m. For ticketing and a full schedule of activities, visit [bronxzoo.com/holiday-lights](http://bronxzoo.com/holiday-lights). Info: (718) 220-5100.

The Bronx is Reading official book club presents “*Daughters of the Stone*,” Dec. 21 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Andrew Freedman Home, 1125 Grand Concourse. Info: (718) 293-8100.

St. James Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave., offers a variety of **adult and senior programs** through Dec. 21. Info or a detailed listing: (718) 367-3657.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Chasing Light Poetry Catchers, to create poetry and a three-dimensional light catcher, Dec. 21 and 22; in the WH House 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Grounds admission is free until noon Tuesdays and Saturdays all year. Info and a schedule of events including tours and walks: (718) 549-3200.

### Exhibits

The Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture, 4450 Fieldston Rd., presents **Riverdale Art Association Exhibit** at the Society Meeting House, through Jan. 2. Info: (718) 548-4445.

The Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), presents **A History of the Bronx Latino**, ongoing. Hours: Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

### Library Events

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for ages 5 to 12: **STEM Fridays**: Dec. 20 at 4 p.m. – Insta-Snow. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Holiday Celebration**: Dec. 19 at 4:30 p.m.; and **films**: Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.; and Dec. 31 at 10 a.m. Adults can attend: **films at 2:30 p.m.**: “It’s A Wonderful Life,” Dec. 21; and “Gremlins,” Dec. 28; and **Computer Basics**: Dec. 18 at 1 p.m. Info: (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nysl.org](http://www.nysl.org).

Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for kids: **Crafty Fridays at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12): crafts, Dec. 20 and 27; **Toddler Storytime at 11 a.m.**: (ages 18 to 36 months): stories, songs, fingerplays and crafts, Dec. 23, 26, 30, and Jan. 2; and **STEM: Kids Science at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12): Dec. 10 and 17 (Building). Families can attend **film**: “Yesterday,” Dec. 28 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can join: **Knitting**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. Info: (718) 882-8239.

Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Pl. (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children ages 5 to 12: **film**: “Wonder,” Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics**: Dec. 26 at noon. Info: (718) 549-5200.

**HAPPY CHANUKAH, MERRY CHRISTMAS, JOYOUS KWANZAA AND A HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!**

**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 Dec. 23 for the next publication date of Jan. 2, 2020.



# Keeping the Peace Outside DWC Campus

(continued from page 1)

"[M]y whole life revolves around my two sons. I'm not sending my two sons to DeWitt Clinton Campus to come home to me in a box," said Guerino, his voice bellowing throughout the PTA conference room. "I am not waiting for a shooting to bring more officers here; I'm very upset with this."

Councilman Andrew Cohen and 52nd Precinct commanding officer Thomas Alps were among those who gathered inside the campus on Dec. 5 to discuss the stabbing that hospitalized the student, who attends Bronx Collaborative High School, leaving him in stable condition. The meeting was also attended by Assemblyman Victor Pichardo, an alum of DWCHS currently serving the 86th Assembly District, which falls outside the school.

Alps, who recently marked one year since he was assigned to oversee the precinct, explained the logistical challenges in dispatching officers to the campus after school dismissal.

"Right around 3:15, 3:30 [p.m.] the precinct is changing tours. I have to pull the people in while you guys are dismissing, and I have to get people out the door quick as possible, doing a quick turnover. So that's been a bit of a struggle. I'm also pulling guys from other tours to supplement the coverage," said Alps, flanked by his community affairs officer along with the principal of DWCHS, Pierre Orbe.

Neighboring Walton High School in Kingsbridge Heights is currently a major concern for the precinct, much of it due to infighting between subsets of the notorious Trinitarios gang, where members are also students there. After school fights have resulted in retaliatory, bloody attacks that have prompted Alps to station more officers, some of whom are plainclothes officers, near the school.

"We have challenges; we have two schools that are experiencing violence at the same time. We're throwing all the resources we have at it. We're not ignoring it," said Alps.

But DWCHS is just as notorious as Walton High School, given safety issues that go back years. In 2012 the school saw the most weapon seizures for the year, and in 2015 it had the highest number of student arrests, according to the *New York Daily News*. Fights are common after school, with disputes beginning inside the school and settled on Mosholu Parkway or Jerome Avenue, according to students who spoke to the *Norwood News* for a previous article.

Pichardo himself recounted the

different dynamics from when he had gone to the school, remembering that the threat of a fight circulated through word of mouth. That's now been replaced by chatter on social media, which police do monitor. Pichardo added that he will advocate for greater funding towards school resources when budget season in Albany begins.

The Five-Two has been strategic in maintaining a visible presence, keeping its patrol vehicles within sight of students leaving school. The strategy is in line with a lower number of felony assaults across the campus. So far, there have been a total of three felony assaults.

The latest incident, a 16-year-old who was stabbed multiple times in the face and chest, occurred after his iPhone was stolen. This prompted a squad of the NYPD school safety officers to arrive at the school from neighboring schools. While Walton High School has Cure Violence interrupters, which help defuse disputes involving gangs, DWCHS does not.

In the last few years, DWCHS has made strides in turning its school around, much of it credited to Orbe. Newly released statistics from the New York City Department of Education show the four-year graduation rate at the Norwood school is now at 78 percent, surpassing the Bronx rate and lining up with New York City's rate.

With a student body of about 2,200 (not counting the D75 school, which has no enrollment data available), and Alps conceding there's not enough eyes to monitor the majority of the students during dismissal time, Cohen proposed staggered dismissal where students from the different schools leave separately. Currently, DeWitt Clinton High School and Bronx Collaborative High School leave simultaneously first, and World View High School second.

"If we can stagger it, Assemblyman Pichardo and I will call the Chancellor now," said Cohen, referring to Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza.

Alps saw that as a solution, despite some skepticism from staffers.

"When there's less people and you're scanning the crowd, you can pick out people that are more problematic," said Alps, who recalled this method used at Columbus High School, which falls in Alps' previous command at the 49th Precinct in Pelham Parkway. "If you see a rush of kids coming out, you're just overwhelmed."

*Michael Turay contributed to this report. See the editorial on page 22 detailing the paper's position.*

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