



# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 33, No 6 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • MARCH 12-APRIL 8, 2020

## THE CHANGING BX. POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

*As leaders step down, or face term limits, others stepping up*



Photos by Adi Talwar

**STATE COMMITTEEMAN FOR** the 78th Assembly District, Oswald Feliz (r), faces a challenge for the county position by Emmanuel Martinez (l).

By **DAVID CRUZ**

It began at the top.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who's helmed the borough presidency for 10 years, announced in late January that

he will no longer seek the Democratic nomination for New York City mayor, dashing the hopes of many that Diaz would be the first Latino mayor in city history.

Just over a month later, as

many political observers were still processing the Diaz news, one of his closest allies and power player, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, who happens to be the Bronx Democratic Party

boss, announced he'll be done with public life, opening his seat for the Democratic primary in June.

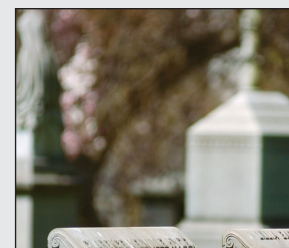
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# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 33, No. 6

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# A Farewell: I Will Miss the Readers

By DAVID CRUZ

I never thought I'd reach this moment; writing a goodbye article in the *Norwood News*, which is my last as editor-in-chief.

After painstakingly trying to find where to start, I realized I was suffering from writer's block. To undo that, I took some inspiration from what my predecessor for the *Norwood News*, Alex Kratz, wrote in his personalized farewell to readers. His exit came as the paper reached its 25-year milestone.

"Here's to the next 25 years of the *Norwood News* giving voice to the voiceless and a grand purpose to another editor looking for a job," wrote Alex.

Not sure if he had me in mind, but I was that next editor. And the following six years would be wild ones.

Before I get to that, I want to go back to 2012.

I was at *The Bronx Times Reporter* on the other side of the Bronx, having returned to the Boogie Down after an eight-year break from the borough (my first journalism gig was assignment desk coordinator for News 12 The Bronx), so while I had some experience here, I wasn't a borough wonk. Thankfully, I was trained under veteran journalist Bob "Kappy" Kappstatter, who, on top of knowing the ins and outs on Bronx politics, helped me spot the essence of a news story, write with impact, and convince me that the Bronx has a goldmine of stories.

Eventually my reporting led me to Norwood, and a story on the proposed closing of the vitally important Junior High School 80 on Mosholu Parkway. The story landed on the front page of the *Norwood News*, and as I was researching background on the story I came upon the *Norwood News* (the story landed on the paper's front page, with its jump page including a photo of the meeting, with me seen in the far distance). It soon became a must-read.

It would be another year and a half before Alex, who by then became a contemporary, was leaving. I didn't want to pass the chance on applying. On Halloween 2013, I had my job interview with Alex and then executive director for Mosholu Preservation Corporation, Roberto Garcia. It was later followed by an interview with human resources. Two months later, I started here.

I never ran a newspaper before. There were times I gulped, second-guessing myself over whether this was the right move, which wasn't helped when Kappy jokingly called on God to have mercy on my soul. After more than six years man-



Photo by Ariana Cipriani

**DAVID CRUZ, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** (r), of the *Norwood News* for the last six years with proofreading maven **JUDY NOY** (l).

aging a tiny bi-weekly newspaper, and bearing witness to how much this paper means to readers, I see what he meant.

Over the years, I've had my share of criticism. But I also received praise, accumulating various journalism awards along the way. It's flattering, though credit shouldn't go to me alone. Behind me was a core group of dedicated freelancers—photographer Adi Talwar, reporter/photographer/deliveryman David Greene, designer Mauro DeLuca, photographer Miriam Quinones, reporter/photographer José Giral, and salesperson Janet Geller—who have kept the ship steady over the years. Leading the pack is Judy Noy, the proofreader who will finalize this article you're reading now. Judy has been with us for more than 30 years, having started when the paper was first established. On the 30th anniversary of the paper, we celebrated with a gala on Nov. 1, 2018 and awarded her with a plaque for her dedication to the paper and providing excellent proofreading services. It's the least we could do. I will miss her and our years toiling away production night by lovingly arguing over words, their placement, and their meaning. Judy was quite the confidante. I'll miss her honesty, fairness, and that great Bronx accent of hers.

I'll also miss my boss, Mosholu Preservation Corp. executive director Jennifer Tausig, for her fairness, lending me her ears, and her desire to see all of us produce our best work.

I'll miss my interns as well, who came and went over the years, the fuel that motivated me during my tenure, witnessing their growth during the few

months interning here at the Keeper's House, some knowing nothing about journalism, but leaving with a desire to continue pursuing it. I like to think it was because of their time here.

The linchpin to the paper's success are the readers, the neighbors who consistently kept tabs on issues in their neighborhoods and relayed them to the paper so we can investigate them. Their simple message of a desire for an improved quality of life resonated with me. That included a story on an oil-filled drum left virtually abandoned on Hull Avenue and East 204th Street, the ongoing development projects in Norwood/Bedford Park, a pee-wee football club's plea for stadium lights at Williamsbridge Oval Park, and who was planning to run for public office.

My last day here is March 18. On March 30, I start work as a news editor for Gothamist/WNYC, covering all parts of New York City. I can't imagine my time in the Bronx is over. But this isn't a complete goodbye. The new job will bring me back here.

Journalism is about people, and you won't find it more crystallized than in community journalism. They are part of an ecosystem that, if taken out of the equation, can be disastrous for any editor. These are words I hope the next editor takes to heart, whoever he/she might be.

**Note:** This edition is covering the next four weeks, March 12 - April 8, instead of the standard two, while the *Norwood News* goes through a transition, hopefully followed by its usual biweekly publication schedule.

# Tribute to David Cruz

By JENNIFER TAUSIG

On behalf of Montefiore Medical Center, Mosholu Preservation Corporation and the Jerome Gun Hill BID, I express my deep, heartfelt gratitude for David Cruz's more than six-year tenure as editor-in-chief of the *Norwood News*. It has truly been an honor and a pleasure to watch David grow as a journalist, manager, and father. His daughter, Eliza, was born on my first day on the job!

As some of you may know, I wear several hats at Montefiore, as the executive director of both Mosholu Preservation Corporation and the Jerome Gun Hill BID. Although the *Norwood News* falls under the umbrella of Mosholu Preservation, I rarely had to worry about managing anything

related to it. As essentially a one-man show, David not only produced a quality paper every two weeks on a shoestring budget overseeing freelancers and interns, but he raised the profile of the paper through partnerships with WFUV and other local media outlets, increased social media presence, award winning original stories, a truly spectacular 30th anniversary celebration, his frequent appearances on *Inside City Hall* with Errol Louis and landing himself on City & State's Bronx Power 100. He was often the first in the office and the last to leave, due to his fierce dedication to both fair, balanced, quality journalism and his love of the Bronx. Additionally, at times, he attended events, wrote grants, sold ads,

answered phones, and moved cars around in our tiny backyard parking lot. Despite his workload, he never said no when asked for help. His shoes will be truly difficult to fill.

A less public part of David's legacy, which I believe warrants attention, is his internship program in community journalism. David recruited interns, every semester, from lots of different institutions ranging from journalism schools to high schools and everything in between. He taught the craft of journalism with as much passion and fervor as he put into every issue of the paper to all the interns who came through the doors. Some credit him for getting their start in the field. Today, interns who started at the *Norwood News* are working in the journalism field at organizations such as: Politico, ESPN, the Gotham Gazette, Vice, *Forbes*, WABC-TV, City Limits, Bloomberg, the *New York Post*, NPR,

*Tricycle Magazine* and NY1, to name a few. The field of journalism, particularly community and ethnic journalism, seems to be waning with large media companies buying up small, local newspapers. However, it gives me hope for the future that so many young people will carry the torch of the field, and the *Norwood News* for decades to come.

We are thrilled for David's new opportunity at the Gothamist/WNYC and wish him all the best! It is truly an honor to have been a part of his career path, part of his story in journalism, as we know he will go on to do great things in the field. He will certainly be missed around the Keeper's House, and is always welcome there, but we will see him on Twitter!

*Jennifer Tausig is executive director of Mosholu Preservation Corp., publisher of the Norwood News.*

## Opinion

### Do Your Part! Stand Up and Get Counted for the U.S. Census

By JASON CARABALLO

The 2020 Census kicks off on March 12 with nearly every household in the country receiving an invitation to complete the census online, over the telephone, or by mailing in a paper form, all in an effort to count every person residing in the United States. The decennial census is a requirement of the United States Constitution and the results determine a number of very important things, including the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives, congressional and state legislative districts, school districts, voting

precincts, and the annual allocation of \$675 billion dollars of federal funds until the next census in 2030.

That last point is critical for the funding of public schools, government housing programs, infrastructure, and health care. Funding for major health programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and community health centers is determined by the results of the census. In 2019, there were approximately 172 million people receiving Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, SNAP, or WIC benefits, so ensuring that everyone in the country is accurately counted has a direct impact on the health and well-being of people all across the country.

The Bronx has a large population of people who receive such benefits, but unfortunately, the county has historically been undercounted. For the 2010 census, the Bronx had a response rate of just 64 percent

compared to the overall national response rate of 73 percent. This significant undercount means that residents of the Bronx did not receive the full allocation of resources they deserved and many people in our communities suffered as a result. In a county that has consistently ranked last in health outcomes in New York State, an accurate count of Bronx residents is vital to ensuring that the basic health needs of our neighbors are met.

And it's not just beneficiaries of such government programs who are impacted by the census count. An accurate count is important for everyone because when a given area is undercounted and therefore doesn't receive the necessary resources to meet the needs of its residents, local governments are forced to come up with other ways to fill in the funding gaps, often in the form of tax increases.

There are numerous reasons people might be reluctant to complete the census. But be assured that doing so is completely safe. The census will not ask about immigra-

tion status or release any other sensitive information that puts people at risk. In fact, the Census Bureau does not share the data they collect from the decennial census with any government agencies, and all Census Bureau employees take a lifelong oath to protect the data or face a penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if they fail to do so.

We all have to do our part to make sure our communities receive the resources they need and are as healthy as they can be, so let's do everything we can to no longer be among the most undercounted counties in the country and the least health county in the state. Let's do ourselves and all of our neighbors a favor by completing the census accurately, making sure to include everyone in the household regardless of age or status. It's important, it's safe, and it's easy.

*Jason Caraballo is a member of Bronx Community Board 4, a member of CB4's Health & Human Services Committee, and member of the Jerome Avenue Public Health Task Force.*

## Public and Community Meetings

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will hold its monthly general board meeting on March 25 at 6:30 p.m. at a site to be determined. CB7 committee meetings will be held on the following dates at 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m.: Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee meets on March 12 at 7 p.m.; Housing, Land Use & Economic Development Committee meets on March 17; Executive Committee meets on March 19; and Veterans Affairs Committee meets on March 25.

The 52nd Precinct's next **BUILD THE BLOCK** meeting takes place on March 24 at 6 p.m. at Fordham Hill Oval, Kensington Building, 2455 Sedgwick Ave. This is open specifically for those living in the Fordham and University Heights neighborhoods. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

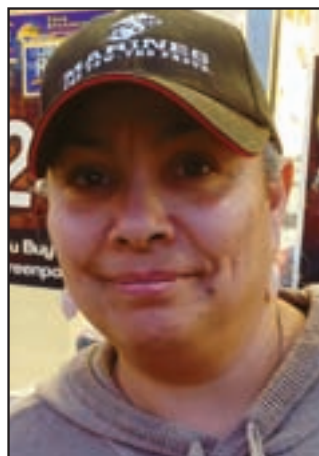
By DAVID GREENE



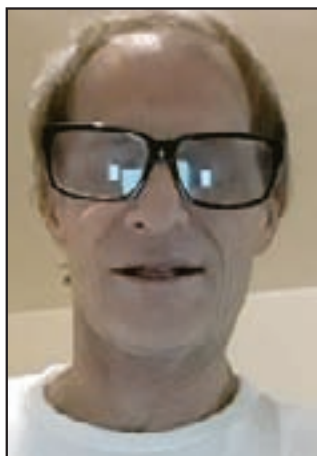
**This week we asked readers their thoughts on the new ban on plastic bags from local stores and if the new plan will be successful.**



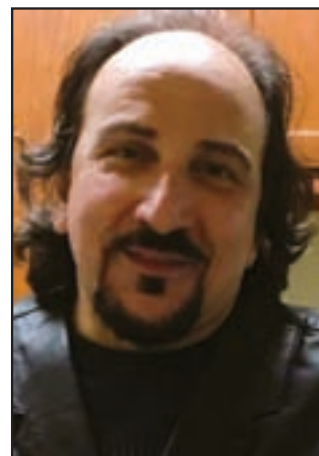
Yes, I support the ban because it's killing the marine life and our environment, so I'm totally for it. They are giving out brown paper bags, which is perfect and environmentally friendly or these things (reusable bags), which are reusable. I haven't seen anyone giving out plastic bags. You know what I do [with the reusable bags]? I throw them in the washer with the towels and then I throw them in the dryer for six minutes and they don't get wrinkled or anything, and then I've killed the bacteria.  
**Melinda Mendoza**  
Norwood



I don't know; they say it helps against pollution, but they're still giving out plastic bags. If people choose to get plastic bags, they're still giving them out. Why not give reusable bags that are better for the planet? Target is using paper bags, but you still have to pay for them and if people don't recycle them, they still end up in the environment. Also, if you're paying with EBT or WIC you don't have to pay for them and you can take as many as you want...I don't think they thought this out enough.  
**Christine Richards**  
Kingsbridge



I think it's a great idea and it's about time. Too much of our wildlife in the ocean and land are suffering and dying because of plastic getting tangled around the limbs and fins [of animals]. Now, for us humans, I think we better figure out a way to supply us with a more proper means of getting our groceries home, because I just went grocery shopping the other day and it was a mess with confusion.  
**Ricci Campbell**  
Fordham Heights



I don't like it. There's some stores price gouging with the price of the paper bags. Some stores charge 75 cents and others charge a dollar for the bag. Then when you buy the bags and walk up the hills like I do, they break and my stuff goes all over the floor. With the plastic bags, you can carry five bags in each hand. The paper bags today are so thin and break so easily; the best you can do is carry one and hold it to your chest. I feel that if we can send a man to the moon, we can find a way to recycle plastic bags.  
**Aristides Thanasoulis**  
Riverdale



A lot of the stores still have them; many small businesses still use them knowing that they're not supposed to. Honestly, it's great getting rid of what's killing a lot of the sea animals and destroying our environment. The only problem is the paper bags break so easily. I hope it works, I honestly like the program. We used paper bags in the 1960's through 80's, before plastic bags were used and they worked perfectly, so it will most definitely work now. People can also buy those heavy-duty grocery bags that are made out of a cloth-like material. I'm glad they banned plastic bags, I'm all for it.  
**Grace Gavilan**  
Belmont



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# NEWS BRIEFS

## Officiant Bill

The New York State Senate passed a bill drafted by state Sen. Alessandra Biaggi allowing lay workers to be designated as one-day marriage officiants to solemnize marriages. Biaggi feels it will impact New York couples on their big day by allowing them to “engage their friends and loved ones on their special day.”

—Khalil Reddick

## Menthol Cig Ban Bill

On March 5, Councilman Fernando Cabrera’s bill to prohibit the sale of menthol flavored tobacco products is trying to gain traction. Cabrera, in a statement, states, “While we applaud the recent action by the U.S. House of Representatives to ban menthol cigarettes, we know the senate won’t be acting on this anytime soon. We also know the state legislature isn’t expected to consider menthol restrictions this session.” Cabrera argues that menthol cigarettes have “left a trail of sickness and death in African-American communities” which has largely been impacted by these cigarettes.

—Khalil Reddick

## Machete Attack Indict

A Bronx grand jury has indicted a New Jersey man for a horrendous machete attack on a Fordham woman that left her with life-altering injuries. Hector de la Cruz, 27, of Paterson, N.J., was indicted on attempted murder and assault charges in the Feb. 21 attack on his ex-girlfriend, Lisbeth Acosta-Ramirez, 20, inside the lobby of her Fordham Manor apartment building. Acosta-Ramirez was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital and underwent reconstructive and life-saving surgery. Bronx Supreme Court Justice George Villegas ordered de la Cruz held on \$500,000 bail at his March 3 arraignment on the indictment.

—Bob Kappstatter

# Duane Reade, Staple in Kingsbridge Heights, Closes

BY JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Kingsbridge residents who depend on the Duane Reade at 1 E. Kingsbridge Rd. to fill their prescriptions, purchase greeting cards, or buy their cosmetics will now have to find another store. Walgreens, the parent company, closed the store on Tuesday night.

According to multiple signs on the storefront windows, pharmacy customers can have their prescriptions filled at the next closest Duane Reade at 58 E. Fordham Rd., about a half mile south or at another Duane Reade or Walgreens location.

The now-closed store sits at a prime location on the northeast corner of East Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue. The Kingsbridge #4 train station is just steps away from the front door. Several bus lines travel along both thoroughfares and the D train is three blocks to the east.

On Tuesday afternoon, Oswald Feliz, state committeeman for the 78th assembly district, thought about a good location to collect signatures for his re-election. He chose to work the corner in front of Duane Reade. On a damp and misty afternoon, he expressed surprise at the news of the store’s closing. “I was actually not aware of the Duane Reade closing until now,” Feliz said. “I’m not only shocked but also saddened. I’ve lived here my entire life, and I know a lot of residents rely on this local store.”

New Yorkers have been shop-



Photo by José A. Giralt

**PEDESTRIANS WALK PAST** the Duane Reade store at 1 E. Kingsbridge Rd. on its last day of business in Kingsbridge Heights on March 3.

ping at Duane Reade since 1960 when brothers Abraham, Eli, and Jack Cohen opened a warehouse in downtown Manhattan on Broadway between Duane and Reade streets. In 1998, the company went public and raised \$102 million as it bought stores from Love’s, Value Drug, and Rock Bottom. It grew from 59 to 249 stores making it the most populous drugstore chain in the city.

In 2010, rival drugstore Walgreens bought Duane Reade for \$1.1 billion.

By December 2018, the corporate leadership announced a plan to cut

costs by \$1 billion. At the end of last year Walgreens announced a new goal of \$1.8 billion in cuts by 2022.

For Ashley Rosa, 24, a local resident, Duane Reade was a convenient place to buy more than just prescription drugs. “I used to come here for my prescriptions, but [now] I come here for my cosmetics ... shampoo, conditioner, and certain lotions,” Rosa said. “I don’t know any reason behind it [the closing] either. It sucks.”

In a written response to the *Norwood News*, (continued on page 24)

## Soccer Stadium Recommendations

With the plan by New York City Football Club (NYCFC) for a new soccer stadium in Concourse Village becoming a reality, the Urban Land Institute New York (ULINY) and Bronx Community Board 4 (CB4) released a joint report highlighting community-lifting strategies that should accompany any stadium built there, including recommendations for how the stadium could benefit the community as a whole, creating a more positive impact than just a new stadium. CB4 and ULINY want to make the space a community hub for business,

health and wellness programs and more. They propose encouraging NYCFC fans to use public transport, as traffic remains a large problem in the area. They further encourage the need for better infrastructure for transportation to make travel more efficient. To create a more unified neighborhood, CB4 and ULINY also proposed utilizing underused, city-subsidized parking lots and structures into affordable housing units to create a more connected neighborhood. “With careful planning and targeted zoning changes, River Avenue could become a bustling, dense, mixed-use corridor,”

as stated in the overview of CB4 and ULINY’s report.

—Eleanor Decker-Gavin

## Carbon Monoxide Installation Grants

Clason Point Gardens is one of several NYCHA complexes that will receive a one-time grant totaling \$250,000 by the U.S. Department for Housing and Urban Development for the purchase and installation of carbon monoxide detectors in public housing units where they are necessary. The grant was awarded as part of the federal agency’s Emergency Safety and Security Program, which doles out monies for housing complexes with combustion-based appliances and/or an

attached garage.

—David Cruz

## Alleged Would-Be Cop Assassin Charged

A Bronx man has been indicted on attempted murder and other charges for allegedly shooting at two NYPD cops who were inside a marked van, and for opening fire inside the 41st Precinct stationhouse in Longwood, striking two officers and one civilian employee, less than 24 hours later. Robert Williams of Soundview also faces 11 counts of attempted aggravated assault on a cop, 12 counts of first degree attempted assault, and weapons possession.

—David Cruz

# CB7 Wants You to Get Your Hands Dirty for Decatur Ave. Cleanup Event

By **DAVID CRUZ** and  
**HENRY MCEACHERN**

Community Board 7's Sanitation Committee is zeroing in on trash conditions along 194th Street in Fordham and they are not happy with what they're seeing.

"We'd figure let's start seeing if we can model good cleanup behavior in our communities, on our respective blocks and neighborhoods," said Betty Diana Arce, chair of CB7's Sanitation Committee, in an interview with the *Norwood News*.

Now, they're joining forces with the city Sanitation Department (DSNY) for a March 21 event that looks to spruce up the community. "They'll provide gloves, bags, whatever equipment we need," said the chairwoman of DSNY's involvement. "We'll bag it and they'll pick it up from us."

The street sweepers are focusing on East 194th Street from Valentine to Decatur avenues, with the event taking place from 9 to 11 a.m.

Arce stressed the importance of spreading a message of cleanliness in the Fordham neighborhood, saying, "We'd figured, let's start see-



Photo by Henry McEachern

**TRASH LIKE THIS** found on Decatur Avenue and Oliver Place will likely be removed from the premises following the cleanup event.

ing if we can model good cleanup behavior in our communities, on our respective blocks and neighborhoods." If everyone can make a habit of cleaning the community, then the load seems lighter overall.

When asked what blocks were notorious for excessive trash, Arce named a big spread, saying "A lot of areas in CB7 need cleaning. [East]

204th Street, parts of Hull Avenue... The biggest problem we have is Webster Avenue. From Gun Hill Road to Mosholu Parkway North is always full of trash. It's a difficult area to maintain clean."

They've enlisted the help of Cyrille Njikeng, a familiar face in the war on trash and a CB7 member who sits on the committee. Njik-

eng is credited for venturing out to the Kingsbridge Road underpass just near Decatur Avenue, sometimes with his kids, to give it a good cleanup each week. His efforts have not gone unnoticed. Last month, Njikeng was given a citation during Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s annual State of the Borough address.

The entire community is part of the cleanup's outreach, but the Sanitation Committee sees property owners and superintendents as particularly capable. "This is what we want to do, to try and get not only superintendents but property owners to take responsibility for cleaning up," said Arce.

The cleanup crew will also be handing out reading materials in different languages on community maintenance, and looks to inspire young people to create a culture of self-maintenance. "The cleaning is an effort from CB7 to engage our community members and remind them that we should treat the community with care, and teach our younger ones a better way of life," said Njikeng.



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# Talk on Reforming Bail Reform Set to Take Place at St. James Park

By HENRY MCEACHERN

With concerns on bail reform contributing to a spike in crime, and a disinformation campaign on the new measure fueled by those concerned, Community Board 7 is holding a forum to discuss the future of the state's new criminal justice reforms, and what these sweeping changes actually mean for the Bronx.

The meeting by CB7 is scheduled for on March 12 at St. James Park Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave. at 6:30 p.m. Bail reform eliminates cash bail for misdemeanors, meaning that accused persons can no longer be held in jail before their trial if they can't afford to get out. Judges can still place bail for some crimes, like violent felonies and misdemeanor sex crimes, but in most cases, they've lost bail as a way to control pre-trial conditions.

Supporters of the bill say this ad-



Photo courtesy Darren McGee/Office of New York Governor

**GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO** (l) has begun to change his position on bail reform, now adding it as a line item in the New York State Budget while Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (r) has remained fervently in favor of keeping bail reform as is.

dresses a long-time discrepancy where wealth determined whether a person walked free.

Also in the new law is discovery reform. Discovery is how an accused person is informed of the state evidence against them so they can accurately prepare their defense. Proponents of the bill, such as Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, saw it important to reform discovery. "Discovery is used as a hammer," said Heastie at a speaking event Feb. 21 in North Central Bronx Hospital, used to stack the odds against the accused, where prosecutors withhold information from the defendant until it's too late. The new reform mandates the accused receive the evidence against them within 15 days of their trial so that they have ample time to prepare their defense.

In the months since its integration, the law has fallen under public scrutiny for being too far-reaching. January saw a spike in crime that many attribute to the reforms. Proponents say it's too soon to tell. Heastie said in an interview with the *Times Union*, "I've simply said it is too early to determine whether this law is highly successful, successful, working – we just have not had enough time

to do that."

NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea wrote an opinion piece for *The New York Times* where he disagrees with the reform, mainly that judges can no longer determine the risk of letting someone walk. He says, "the new law constrains judges from holding repeat offenders with long records of both crime and absconding trial ... the NYPD believes significant bail reform can be achieved, as long as judges are granted the discretion to remand suspects whom they determine to be genuinely dangerous, including chronic repeat offenders."

He also points to problems with discovery reform, saying, "The new law's requirements also threaten to inundate police agencies and district attorneys with the sheer volume of paperwork that must be provided to defendants' attorneys within 15 days of arraignment under new discovery rules. Valid evidence can be suppressed and solid cases can be dismissed on the grounds of incomplete discovery, even when such failures are inadvertent and immaterial. The financial cost of compliance is also substantial — in the tens of millions of dollars across the state."

Those sentiments have been echoed by local police precincts, including the 52nd Precinct, where its commanding officer voiced concerns on discovery reform.

Other elected officials have softened their stance on bail reform. Governor Andrew Cuomo, for instance, says the reforms are a step in the right direction, but still have a way to go. Cuomo has long agreed with bail reform. He said all the way back in January of 2018 during his State of the State that "the blunt ugly reality is that too often, if you can make bail, you are set free, and if you are too poor to make bail, you are punished."

The eruption of debate in the time since has changed his tone. He has made amending bail reform a central issue in his upcoming 2020 budget, aligning with a proposal made by Senate Democrats who've also reconsidered their positions. Their proposal would keep the elimination of cash bail, but would also allow judges to determine the dangerousness of an accused person. This would give judges a new ability to keep people incarcerated before their trial, without bail, if they perceive them to be a threat to public safety.

Even if the proposed changes make it through the Senate, Heastie would stand in their way saying it's too soon.

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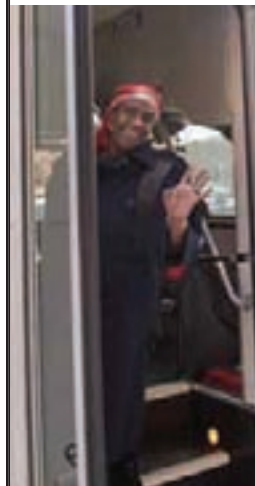
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# Free Tax Prep at UNHP Showcases Good Will

By ELEANOR DECKER-GAVIN

Students from the borough's high learning institutions are lending their newfound expertise on tax preparation to needy families, converging at University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) this tax season.

UNHP in Kingsbridge Heights/Bedford Park is offering its yearly service to Northwest Bronx residents, part of a litany of free resources that include financial education, access to benefits and healthcare, and much more. From now until April, UNHP is providing a service that has been much appreciated for years, free tax preparation.

Since 2010, accounting students from Manhattan College, Fordham University, and the College of Mt. St. Vincent have volunteered to help over 12,000 needy families. In partnership with Ariva, a year-round tax assistance program, UNHP and student volunteers have been able to bring well deserved relief to seniors and families making less than \$60,000 a year. Before students can volunteer, they must take an IRS certification course and software training to make sure they can properly assist families in preparing their taxes and receive the proper refund amount.

"It's kind of an eye-opener to the struggles that low income families go through," says Catherine Clarke, deputy director of development at UNHP.

This program is designed to help not only the students seeking experience, but more importantly Bronxites seeking help in receiving the refunds they deserve, without spending all the money they would receive in returns for the tax services themselves. Tax services usually cost as much as hundreds of dollars, a sum that many cannot afford, so being able to receive help with filing for free is a game changer.

In return for helping to file taxes for free, students gain experience in tax preparation assistance. Last year alone, student volunteers prepared more than 1,500 returns, accruing nearly \$2 million in state and federal returns for Bronx residents.

And the volunteers have their work cut out for them. Clarke said that there is such high demand that on a usual Saturday, UNHP's headquarters on the Grand Concourse and East 196th Street sees around 100 people come in and out, all seeking tax assistance.

"This program was created out of a sense of neighborhood need," said Clarke. "There are some residents that come every year."

**Editor's Note:** *This program is available until April 8, with mandatory appointments available on select Wednesdays from 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To make an appointment, please call (718) 933-2539.*



Photo courtesy UNHP

**MANHATTAN COLLEGE STUDENT** who only went by Matthew recently helps file taxes for this filer at University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP), part of an annual free service UNHP offers in partnership with the Riverdale school.

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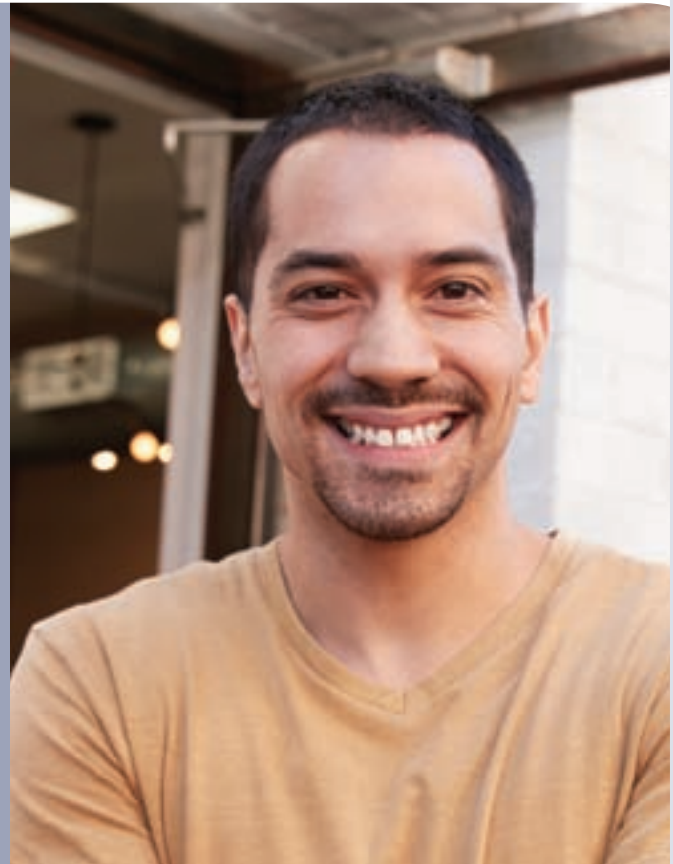
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# BMCA Flea Market

There was something for everyone at the annual flea market sponsored by the Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) on March 7. Patrons browsed, haggled, and found plenty of treasures at the one-day event, which featured decorative kitchenware, DVDs, and baked goods. Monies raised went to the civic group's coffers to cover yearly expenses. Check out these photos by Miriam Quinones.



**CARLOS FUENTES PROUDLY** holds up this vintage Beatles record at the BMCA flea market.



**RAFAELA SANTOS (L)** holds up some of her wares she's trying to sell to this patron (r).



**THE BMCA FLEA** Market wouldn't be complete without a bake goods area. This year, Mary (l) and Gladys (r) man the cake sale table.



**BMCA FLEA MARKET** patron Elizabeth Raimundi (r) holds up this fish-shape plate with help from Sheila Sanchez, who helps close the deal.



**THIS CUSTOMER (L)** buys a wine glass from Leonie Jarvis (r) who will prep it for safe transport.



**BETTY DIANA ARCE** shows off the many wares she's ready to sell during the BMCA flea market.



**(L-R) 52ND PRECINCT** Explorers Jamie Hernandez, Kevin Yella, BMCA executive committee member Robert Hamill, and 52nd Precinct Explorer Sgt. Adriana Alcantara offer plenty of assistance throughout the flea market.





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## New Outreach Van Brings Free Care To More Bronx Neighborhoods

By ELEANOR DECKER-GAVIN

The Bronx Community Health Network (BCHN) is bringing its services into new neighborhoods with its newly unveiled outreach van. Amid high winds, BCHN cut the ribbon on Feb 28 introducing their outreach van that will extend the services they provide throughout their network to neighborhoods that have lacked access to their resources.

According to Roger Newcomb, public relations specialist for BCHN, the network currently provides services to over 65,000 Bronx locals. With their headquarters in Fordham Plaza, and BCHN locations scattered across the borough, the 24-year group hopes to reach 10,000 more residents who need services but can't access them currently.

The free services that will be provided in the van include health screenings for blood pressure, referrals to housing search assistance and food pantries, linkages to primary care doctors, enrollment in insurance and other programs. There will be no nurse or other medical professional on the van, but outreach specialists (formerly known as community health workers) will administer blood pressure screenings and in the future there are hopes to add HIV rapid testing.

While services will be provided to all neighborhoods, BCHN does understand that these services aren't one size fits all for different Bronx communities. "There are some services like housing that are universal across the Bronx," says Newcomb. "But there are neighborhoods that need more of certain services or less than others."

The goal of the van is to be adaptable to the differing health needs of Bronx communities. For example, according to the community health profiles released by the City Department of Health, while Hunts Point and Longwood have higher rates of HIV, Parkchester and Soundview have higher rates of infant mortality. Knowing what certain neighborhoods struggle with will help BCHN bring the proper services to these communities and ensure every neighborhood gets the best care.

BCHN hasn't finalized where they'll be taking their services. To identify how to cater to specific neighborhood needs, BCHN is working on talking to locals in the individual communities to make sure the van is providing the best care possible. Health statistics show cancer and heart disease to be the leading cause of death in most Bronx communities.

BCHN is trying to make it as convenient as possible for locals to access their care. At full running capacity, the van will be traveling around Bronx neighborhoods at least three days a week.

Newcomb mentioned that BCHN is looking to talk to and partner with local food pantries and other organizations to provide services during hours when community members will be out and have time to take advantage of the van's services. They are hoping to be able to park near these community hubs during their hours of service so residents can get health screening at the same time they usually stop by these community centers.



Photo courtesy BCHN

(L-R) ASSEMBLYMAN VICTOR Picardo, BCHN Board of Directors treasurer John Ruiz, BCHN CEO Eleanor Larrier, state Sen. Gustavo Rivera, BCHN program director Tashi Chodon, and Fordham Business Improvement District (BID) Executive Director Wilma Alonso mark the introduction of BCHN's new outreach van with a ribbon cutting on Feb. 28.

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# Coronavirus Explained In Simplest Terms



Photo courtesy Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office

(L-R) **SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR** Richard Carranza with Mayor Bill de Blasio and New York City Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot at a news conference on March 6 after convening his sixth COVID-19 response tabletop exercise.

## By ELEANOR DECKER-GAVIN

Much talk has exploded about the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the New York City area. From the first case detected in Westchester County to multiple now arising, Mayor Bill de Blasio spoke to WNYC radio host Brian Lehrer on his March 5 show and took their weekly slot to provide some clar-

ity. Here's the latest information available on the spread as well as precautions people can take to protect themselves and others around them from contracting the virus.

"Get to a doctor," said de Blasio, if one suspects contracting or coming in contact with someone with the virus. "If you can call first, inform the doctor

of your situation so they can be prepared."

This may seem like an uneasy time but it is again no time to panic. There are easy measures you can take to protect yourself and others. According to Montefiore, the best way to avoid contracting coronavirus is to frequently wash your hands, avoid contact with people

who are sick, cough and sneeze into your elbow not your hand, try not to touch your face with unwashed hands, and stay home from work or other activities if you are feeling unwell.

Despite no confirmed cases of coronavirus originating in the Bronx, Montefiore Health System said it's prepared to respond with teams focusing on preparedness, prevention, and how to care for their patients. The hospital network released a list of frequently asked questions and answers.

## What is Montefiore doing to prepare for a possible outbreak of COVID-19?

Montefiore Health System, including faculty at Albert Einstein College of Medicine have a team of experts trained to handle emerging infectious diseases, critical care, emergency medicine, and all public health crises. We are in lock step with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the World Health Organization (WHO), and city and state health agencies. Together we are tracking the most current data and research about COVID 19.

Although no cases have been seen at Montefiore to date, we have already established screening measures and rigorous safety protocols. Anyone entering our hospitals, clinics and Emergency Departments with certain symptoms will be asked about recent travel and close contact with others who are ill and have recently traveled to affected areas around the world.

All healthcare providers will be using special equipment including respirators and other protective gear when providing care to patients with potential or confirmed COVID 19, as recommended by the CDC.

Any suspected COVID 19 cases will be immediately isolated in designated areas using infection control practices outlined by the CDC.

## What is Coronavirus and how is it spread?

The COVID 19 strain was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Public health officials have identified the source of this virus in bats and are investigating its spread from animal to human and human to human. It is typically spread by respiratory droplets from coughs or sneezes, similar to the way flu and other respira-

tory viruses spread.

## What is the incubation period for COVID 19?

Infectious disease experts have determined that symptoms can begin within 14 days of initial exposure to the virus.

## What are the primary symptoms?

- Cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath

Those who've recently traveled to China or other parts of the world where the outbreak is prevalent, been in close contact with someone who traveled to those countries, and have any of the above symptoms should contact their healthcare provider.

## How is COVID 19 diagnosed?

A special laboratory test performed by the CDC can confirm diagnosis. A diagnosis may be inconclusive with only a physical exam, because mild cases of the new coronavirus may appear similar to the flu or bad cold.

## How is COVID 19 treated?

Currently there is no targeted treatment or vaccine. Standard supportive measures for any respiratory illness will be used.

## What can I do to prevent COVID 19?

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing

Refrain from touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands

Stay home from work or school if you feel unwell

Vaccines have the potential to prevent or treat a wide range of infectious diseases. Make sure that everyone in one's house has received the flu shot to stay healthy and safe.

The benefit of wearing face masks is not proven and they are not recommended as a preventive measure.

**Editor's Note:** For additional information and updates on COVID 19, visit these sites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>, World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>, National Institutes of Health <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/coronaviruses>.

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# Drug Treatment Clinic Declared 'Dead' Buys Bronx Property, Defying Opponents

By ESE OLUMHENSE, THE CITY

**THE CITY**

*This story was originally published on March 3, 2020 by THE CITY*

Speaking to hundreds who attended a November East Bronx town hall meeting on a proposed drug treatment center, Councilman Mark Gjonaj left no doubt: "The deal is dead." He was referring to Carnegie Hill Institute's (CHI) heavily opposed plans to open an outpatient clinic at 2500 Williamsbridge Rd. in Allerton.

But city property records show the CHI, operating as CHI LLC, quietly purchased the property on Feb. 17, for \$925,000.

News of the deal stunned Gjonaj and other local officials, who said they didn't learn of the sale until contacted this week by Roxanne Delgado, a local resident who found record of the purchase online.

"I almost passed out when I saw the deed," she told THE CITY.

Gjonaj's office was not notified of the arrangement, a spokesperson



Photo courtesy Ese Olumhense/THE CITY

**THE CARNEGIE HILL** Institute had plans to turn this building on Williamsbridge Road in Allerton into a drug treatment clinic.

told THE CITY on March 3.

"We literally are just finding out," said Reginald Johnson, a Gjonaj spokesperson.

## One Buyer, Then Another

The building had been listed for sale by Exit Realty Group, whose president, Sonny Vataj, served as Gjonaj's chief of staff when the city lawmaker was a state Assembly member. Vataj told THE CITY that when the property went to contract,

the deal was done under a different entity's name. "An individual came in, acquired the property as WBRD LLC," Vataj said.

"The day this property closed, changed hands," Vataj added, "the actual deed transfer was in someone else's name" — CHI LLC.

No business going by WBRD LLC or any similar name is registered in New York.

Alma Mandija, the lawyer repre-

senting the buyer, declined comment on the sale.

The seller of the property, Florence Klapper — whose late husband ran a title insurance agency from the building — did not respond to a request for comment.

## Suboxone Treatment

Also caught off guard was the leadership of Community Board 11, which unanimously voted in November to ask state elected officials to create a notification process for proposed drug treatment facilities.

The board urged officials to require at least a 60-days heads up, said Jeremy Warneke, CB11's district manager. But before legislation could be drafted, CHI successfully purchased the Williamsbridge Road property.

"We reached out to our elected officials on it," Warneke said. "They were all surprised as much as we were."

Representatives from CHI did not reply to multiple requests for comment.

Last September, CHI told CB 11 it planned an outpatient program that

*(continued on page 24)*

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This rating is based on how well the facility meets Medicare's minimum quality requirements. Each facility is reviewed annually. The results of the last three years' worth of inspections comprise the score. The most recent inspection carries the greatest weight.

### STAFFING

This rating looks at the number of hours of care provided to each resident each day. This information is "acuity based", meaning it considered the care needs of the resident when looking at the number of staff available. This measure looks at both RN staff and total nursing staff.

### 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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<b>Wednesday, January 22, 2020</b>	<b>6:00 pm- 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Saturday, February 8, 2020</b>	<b>12:30 pm- 2:30 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, February 12, 2020</b>	<b>6:00 pm- 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, February 19, 2020</b>	<b>6:00 pm- 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Saturday, February 29, 2020</b>	<b>12:30 pm-2:30 pm</b>
<b>Saturday, March 7, 2020</b>	<b>12:30 pm-2:30 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 11, 2020</b>	<b>6:00 pm- 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 18, 2020</b>	<b>6:00 pm- 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Saturday, March 21, 2020</b>	<b>12:30 pm- 2:30 pm</b>
<b>Saturday, April 4, 2020</b>	<b>12:30 pm- 2:30 pm</b>

**\*Note: The lottery will be held on Wednesday April 8, 2020 from 5:00 pm- 6:00pm.**

For further information please contact Director of Parent & Community Engagment [egonzalez@ilchs.org](mailto:egonzalez@ilchs.org) Extension 404  
3030 Riverdale Avenue Bronx NY, 10463

# Duane Reade Closes

(continued from page 7)

wood News, Alexandra Brown, corporate media relations spokesperson for Walgreens, said “the decision to close it was not easy.” Although she did not share any details specific to the Kingsbridge store, she wanted to reassure the workers that the company was not abandoning them. “We expect to place the majority of that store’s employees in jobs at other area stores. We will continue to be the strong community supporter the Bronx has known us to be,” said Brown.

Although local residents are not expressing any sympathy for big losses in the corporate structure, they are mad at the company for closing a store with such a convenient location.

Mazina, who did not want her last name published, found out about the store closing “about two or three weeks ago.” And even though she does not live in the area, she finds it convenient to shop there as she travels to and back from the city. “I’m really sad that it is closing because it is a neighborhood staple,” Mazina said.

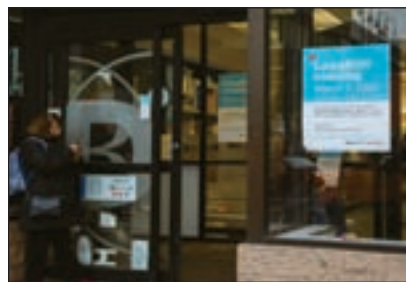


Photo by José A. Giralt

**A STOREFRONT SIGN** announces the last day of operation for the Duane Reade store at 1 E. Kingsbridge Rd. (pictured) in Kingsbridge Heights.

Nationwide, the Walgreens Company plans to close approximately 200 stores. “Given that these closures will represent less than three percent of our stores overall and given that we have multiple locations in many markets, we anticipate minimal disruption to customers and patients,” Brown added.

For Rosa, the store closure came suddenly. She did not have a backup plan at the moment. “I guess I have to travel somewhere else or find a local pharmacy that’s going to charge me a [expletive] arm and a leg, to be honest,” said Rosa.

# Drug Treatment Clinic Declared ‘Dead’ Buys Bronx Property, Defying Opponents

(continued from page 22)

oxone to help people control their addictions to drugs.

The state Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) told THE CITY that no application to provide services has been submitted in connection with 2500 Williamsbridge Rd.

In a statement late in the day on March 3, Gjonaj said he reached out to the buyer but they “would not confirm the final use of the property.” He added, “My opposition to it being used as a treatment center remains firm.”

## Protest Planned

Drug overdoses have emerged as a serious issue in the neighborhoods surrounding CHI’s new property, with fatality rates among the top 10 worst out of the city’s 59 community districts.

While drug use is a concern in the community, residents have complained the location of the proposed facility is too close to PS 89, two Catholic schools, Christopher Columbus High School and a playground.

“This has no place near any school,” said Delgado, who lives in the Pelham Parkway area. She’s not unsympathetic to the ongoing substance abuse crisis in the borough, she added, but believes other sites would be more appropriate.

“Even if it was next door to my house I wouldn’t be against it,” she said. “I just don’t want it to go in front of a school.”

Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez and state Sen. Alessandra Biaggi, agreed, telling THE CITY in November that the issue was complicated. “Our office had just been made aware of the sale of 2500 Williamsbridge Rd. this morning,” Fernandez said in a statement to THE CITY on March 3. “Neither our office nor the local community board were privy to the knowledge of this sale.”

She added: “Further investigation is still needed.”

Area residents plan a rally on Saturday to demand that OASAS reject any application from CHI to dispense medication-assisted treatments at the site, Delgado said.

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## Yo, Bronx! Don't Stress, Eat Fresh At Your Local Bodega!

By ELIZABETH SPURRELL-HUSS

For National Nutrition Month, the Bronx Bodega Partners Workgroup is running a “Don’t Stress, Eat Fresh” campaign encouraging Bronx residents to purchase healthier foods and drinks at twenty-four local bodegas.

Since 2016, the Bronx Bodega Partners Workgroup – consisting of community organizations, health systems and government programs – has worked to increase the amount of healthy food and drinks consumed by people in the Bronx by partnering with local bodegas to increase access to healthy choices.

This campaign challenges the onslaught of marketing of unhealthy food often targeted towards communities of color through a vibrant, bilingual media campaign promoting fruits, vegetables and other healthy choices on bus shelters and electronic displays throughout the

Bronx.

Besides the outdoor advertisements, Bronx residents will also receive a phone alert when they are near one of the twenty-four participating bodegas. When clicked on, this alert will show them a coupon for a free bottle of water and a map with directions on how to get to a “Don’t Stress, Eat Fresh” bodega.

The coalition is working hard to improve access to healthy food in Bronx communities. This work will take everyone working together. Here are three ways you can lend your support:

As a consumer, we need you to raise your voice to demand healthy options at your local bodegas and support the changes made. Visit one of these local bodega partners in Norwood to find healthy options:

Tita’s Mini Mart – 137 E. Gun Hill Rd.



Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

**HAKEEM AL HARIRI**, “OWNER” of Tita’s Mini Mart at 137 E. Gun Hill Rd., poses in front of a “Don’t Stress, Eat Fresh” campaign bus stop ad.

Green Earth Deli Grocery – 382 E. 205th St.

Local government can push back against these misleading advertisements and fulfill its responsibility to protect the public from false information. Contact your elected officials and ask what they are doing to make sure healthy food is being marketed throughout the Bronx.

Ask your local elected officials to support and fund the “Don’t Stress, Eat Fresh” Bronx bodega campaign so honest and healthy information is shared with our neighbors, friends, and families.

*Elizabeth Spurrell-Huss is the Director of Community Education for Montefiore Health System’s Office of Community and Population Health.*

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## Volunteers needed - you can make a difference! Sexual Assault Treatment Program Rape Crisis Advocate Training

### 5 Week Training Begins April 4, 2020!



The Sexual Assault Treatment Program (SATP) needs volunteers to join an interdisciplinary team that provides advocacy and support to survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones. Our advocates meet with patients in the Emergency Departments of both hospitals. Advocates commit to three shifts per month. Monday to Friday 6 pm - 8 am • Weekends 8 am - 8 pm and 8 pm - 8 am.

The 40 hour SATP training program includes:

- How to provide crisis counseling
- A basic understanding of the acute medical and forensic aspects of care.
- Criminal justice system as it relates to survivors of sexual assault.
- Survivor’s options for follow up care (physical and emotional).
- How to work as a member of the team in supporting survivor needs.
- How to document and review case information with social work staff.

At the successful completion of training, you receive certification as a NYS Rape Crisis Advocate from NYS Department of Health. We offer you monthly inservice to provide continued educational and emotional support. We encourage both women and men over 21 to volunteer.

Questions? Please contact: Olga Brito, MA, LMSW, SATP Advocate Coordinator at (718) 519-4788 or email [Olga.brito@nychhc.org](mailto:Olga.brito@nychhc.org)

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

ALL EVENTS MAY BE SUBJECT  
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## EDITOR'S PICK

### St. Patrick's Day at Woodlawn

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by wearing your green on March 15 from 2 to 4 p.m. on the Irish Heritage Trolley Tour at Woodlawn Cemetery. Visit the final resting places of some of New York's most prominent Irish men and women including George M. Cohan and Geraldine Fitzgerald. Meet at the Jerome/Bainbridge avenues gate at 1:45 p.m. Info/tickets: (718) 408-5600.



Photo courtesy Woodlawn Conservancy

**THE IRISH HERITAGE** Trolley Tour will take guests around Woodlawn Cemetery on March 15 courtesy of the Woodlawn Conservancy (check out Editor's Pick for more information).

## Onstage

8672/8.

Lehman College for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Forever Freestyle 14**, featuring live performers of different genres, March 21 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$50 to \$100 VIP/includes preconcert wine and hors d'oeuvres reception at 6:30 p.m.); and **Russian National Ballet**, performing scenes from *Romeo & Juliet* and *Carmen*, March 22 at 4 p.m. Info/tickets: [www.lehmancenter.org](http://www.lehmancenter.org) or (718) 960-8833.

Pregones/Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 571-575 Walton Ave., presents **weekend concerts** in March (some free). Info/schedule: (718) 585-1202.

Hostos Community College Center for the Arts & Culture, 450 Grand Concourse at 149th Street, presents **"Where You From? What You Be About?"** on March 20 at 7:30 p.m. in the Repertory Theatre. (tickets \$10; \$5/seniors/students). Info/tickets: (718) 518-4455.

## Events

Williamsbridge Oval offers numerous **activities** for all ages. Info/schedule: (718) 543-

**Project Dream Dress Donation Drive** (part of Bronx Fashion Week) collects donated gently used or new dresses, bridesmaid or formal gowns, to assist a student in need to attend their prom, or other events. Dresses will be distributed at the mall at Bay Plaza on April 11 from 2 to 6 p.m. Info/drop-off locations: email [floramontes@live.com](mailto:floramontes@live.com).

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Restore and Re-story Quilts - A Birthday Project, to plant your story in collective story quilt with photos of family, March 14 and 15; Protective Powers of Animal Armor, to learn about animals' protective armor, followed by a parade in your armor, March 21 and 22; and Unfurling Field Journal, to make handmade journals to document WH flowers and plants, March 28 and 29; all in the WH House 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Concert: PUBLIQuartet**, featuring jazz, traditional, modern and contemporary music, March 15 at 2 p.m. in the WH House (tickets: \$30/adults; \$14/ages 8 to 18; advance purchase saves \$2).

Grounds admission is free until noon Tuesdays and Saturdays all year. Info/schedule of events including tours and walks: (718) 549-3200.

## Exhibits

The Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), presents **A History of the Bronx Latino**, ongoing; **Mott Haven, the Bronx: A Historic District Turns Fifty**, through April 23. Hours: Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. Info: (718) 881-8900.

New York Botanical Garden presents **18th Annual Orchid Show** through April 19, featuring dazzling creations. Info: (718) 817-8700.

## Library Events

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents: **STEM Fridays at 4 p.m.**: March 13 (ages to 3 years) and March 20 and 27 (ages 5 to 12); and **Read to Me, Little Bee at 11 a.m.**: Includes play, music, storytime and free book giveaway (ages to 3 years), March 19, 26 and April 2. Teens/young adults can enjoy **film**: "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," March 21 at 2:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics**: March 20 at 2 p.m. and March 25 at 1 p.m.; and **film**:

*"Breakfast at Tiffany's,"* March 21 at 2:30 p.m. Info: (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for kids: **Crafty Fridays at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12): crafts, March 13, 20 and 27; **Toddler Storytime at 11 a.m.**: (ages 18 to 36 months): stories, songs, fingerplays and crafts, March 23 and 30; and **STEM: Kids Science at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12): March 17, 24 and 31 (Coding). Families can attend **film**: *"The Peanut Butter Falcon,"* March 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 ages 5 to 12: **film**: "Incredibles 2," March 21 at 2 p.m. Teens/young adults: **Birds of Prey**: to see hawks, owls, falcons and to touch raptor artifacts such as talons, skulls and feathers, March 12 at 4 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics at noon**: March 19 and 26. Info: (718) 549-5200.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by March 30 for what is hoped is the next publication date of April 9.




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### TRIP

Trip to the new Wind Creek Casino in Pennsylvania on Saturday, March 14. We're also going to an outlet shopping mall. Depart from East 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard at 9:30 a.m. For more information, please contact Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

### NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

It is the policy of Citadel Care Centers, not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender, handicap, disability, blindness, source of sponsorship, source of payment, marital status, age, sexual preference, genetic predisposition, or carrier status in employment or in the admission, retention, and care of residents and patients. All persons and organizations that have occasion to either refer prospective residents or patients to the Citadel Care Centers (The Plaza Rehab & Nursing Center, Citadel at Kingsbridge Rehab & Nursing Center, Hudson Pointe at Riverdale Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation and St. Barnabas Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Center) are advised to follow this non-discriminatory policy.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### Free Housing Services

Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez hosts a housing services workshop at 2018 Williamsbridge Rd. every first Thursday of every month from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for residents facing eviction, in need of a one-shot deal, or help with SCRIE/DRIE, among the many offerings. For more information and to schedule a mandatory meeting, call (718) 409-0109.

### Free English Classes

Register for free English classes for adults at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center. Day and evening classes are available at two sites—3101 Kingsbridge Terr. from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 295 W. 231st St. from 6 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 884-0700, ext. 100.

### Internships

The Van Cortlandt Park Alliance is now accepting applications for its paid summer internship programs through April 26. The first program is for anyone interested in the food system while learning about growing

and selling produce. The second program involves high school students working with horticulturists and natural areas restoration staff from Van Cortlandt Park. They also complete labs, go on nature-focused field trips, and explore green career opportunities with natural resource professionals. For more information, go to <https://vancortlandt.org/programs-overview/internships/>.

### Social Security Expanded Office Hrs.

Social Security offices in the Bronx will remain open to the public until 4 p.m. on Wednesdays. The nearest Social Security offices from Norwood is located at 2501 Grand Concourse. For more information, call (800) 772-1213.

### Recreational Volleyball

Join members of the NYPD, FDNY/EMS, and Community Board 6 every Saturday through April 4 from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Aquinas High School, 685 E. 182nd St. (corner of Cambreleng Avenue and Grote Street).

For more information or to register, call Rosie at (917) 569-7034, Victor at (917) 603-5600, or email [mattersofsports@gmail.com](mailto:mattersofsports@gmail.com).

### Comment on Bus Reroute Plan

The MTA is currently accepting comments for its plan to update the Bronx's bus route network, which is expected to take effect later this year. Comments on the MTA's plan can be submitted online by going to <https://bit.ly/2Zz86E3>.

### 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@bch-nhealth.org](mailto:naloxone@bch-nhealth.org).

### Free Reusable Bag Giveaways

Free reusable bags are avail-

able at the following locations while supplies last: district office of Councilman Andrew Cohen, 277 W. 231st St., during normal business hours. For more information, call (718) 549-7400; Community Board 7, 229A E. 204th St. during normal business hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650; and the Office of Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez, 2018 Williamsbridge Rd. For more information, call (718) 409-0109.

### Housing Discrimination

Renters who've been denied a home because of income discrimination can file a complaint online through the Office of the New York Attorney General by visiting <https://ag.ny.gov/sourceincomediscrimination>. Examples of income discrimination include paying rent through Section 8 vouchers, alimony, child support, foster care subsidies, Supplement Security Income (SSI), or any other type of government assistance. For more information, call the attorney general's New York City office at (800) 771-7755.

### Check State Tax Refund

New Yorkers who filed their state taxes can learn the status of their tax refund by visiting <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/file/refund.htm>. Filers must know their social security number, what form they filed, and the expected tax return form number.

### Tenant Support Unit

The Mayor's Public Engagement Unit will dispatch its Tenant Support (TSU), which informs tenants of their housing rights, identifies housing-related issues and connects New Yorkers to a range of resources, including HRA's anti-eviction legal assistance and HPD's home repairs program to the following locations: March 17, 24 and 31 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Office of state Sen. Gustavo Rivera, 2432 Grand Concourse, Suite 506; and March 17 and 25 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at University Neighborhood Housing Program, 2751 Grand Concourse. For more information on Tenant Support Unit services in your area, contact 311.

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# The Changing Bx. Political Landscape

(continued from page 1)

pending changes to the New York City Council, where four of the eight Council seats representing the Bronx are up for grabs. The news has also directly caused politicians to shift their plans.

Yes, there are tremors in the Bronx political landscape. And lawmakers or would-be lawmakers are looking to fill some seats.

## Ischia Bravo vs. Oswald Feliz

Locally, the news hasn't quite impacted Ischia Bravo, district manager for Community Board 7, who announced she'll be running for the Democratic nomination to replace Councilman Ritchie Torres, the term-limited council member for the 15th Council District.

For Bravo, who's grown up in the district and currently serves as CB7's district manager for two years (before then Bravo worked on all levels of government), the desire to run stemmed largely from ongoing problems she's witnessed growing up coupled with a greater understanding of city government, given her role.

"It seems like a natural transition to the City Council," said Bravo, speaking to the *Norwood News* from House Pizza on March 3.

Bravo, 35, who grew up and works in Bedford Park, has a litany of proposals that look to revamp city policies that, at the moment, are often rammed down communities in the area. That includes over-development, a constant worry for constituents. She's now proposing the city conduct an environmental impact review on any state- or city-subsidized development arriving to the district. For Bravo, that proposal would serve Bedford Park well given the arrival of massive residential buildings that, while within the zoning context, are tightly packed in the neighborhood.

"I think that when our tax dollars are invested we should know what impact that will have ultimately in our communities, whether that's our schools, that's our lighting, our air, all those things matter," said Bravo.

Other issues Bravo looks to give greater to include greater assistance to beleaguered small businesses, and more funding for schools.

It might seem unusual, or even a conflict of interest, for Bravo to run in her current role. But she was quick to point out that past district managers, including former New York City Councilman James Vacca and current City Councilman Rafael Salamanca Jr., ran for office (and won) while serving as district manager.



Photo by Adi Talwar

**ISCHIA BRAVO, CURRENTLY** district manager for Community Board 7, has declared a run for the 15th Council District.

Bravo isn't the only candidate who's declared. Running for the Council seat is Oswald Feliz, the State Committeeman for the 78th Assembly District, which covers Bedford Park. Feliz, a part-time instructor at Hostos Community College and an attorney specializing in housing, is also a member of the newly formed Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change, a political club closely aligned with Congressman Adriano Espaillat.

Feliz looks to undo the premise that a zip code determines outcomes. "The zip code should not determine the air you breathe, it shouldn't determine whether you will have an equal opportunity at achieving whatever your dreams are," said Feliz, who looks to also focus on improved employment opportunities and better public education resources.

"I've spoken to a lot of parents and I'm always saddened to hear that some parents have stated that they actually have to travel at least an hour every single morning to take their children to another neighborhood only because the local school is failing or does not properly prepare their students, or their child, to succeed," said Feliz, calling that arrangement unfair.

But even before he runs for the Council, Feliz will be defending his position as state committeeman in the June primary against Emmanuel Martinez, who happens to be chair of Community Board 7, working alongside Bravo. Feliz has learned that greater participation in the local democratic process should be prioritized. Ditto for Martinez.

"I want to be a part of the process," said Martinez, 31. "I'm very eager to learn. I've been in the trenches, learning how things operate on a basic level in the community board. And now with the experience that I've gained I feel our conversation can go a bit further."

Martinez, a member of the newly formed Louella Hatch Democratic Club, points out that committeeman positions, while limited in power, can serve help jumpstart policy discussions.

His political path, however, seems to be a mere means to an end. Ultimately, Martinez hopes his civic participation will serve him well when he applies for a position at the New York City Marshal's Office.

Still, Feliz's eye sounds like it remains on the Council. "As a Council Member I will have more power to actually implement solutions to the many problems that we have," said Feliz.

## Crespo Bows Out

A month after Diaz Jr. announced his impending retirement from politics, Crespo, who wielded power both in Albany and as Bronx Democratic Party boss, announced he won't be running for re-election. Instead, he'll be finishing out his term at the end of the year, opening the door for a vacant Assembly seat.

In a long statement, Crespo called his time as Assemblyman for the 85th Assembly District, representing the southeast neighborhoods of Soundview, Harding Park, and Castle Hill, an "honor of my

life." "I have decided not to seek re-election, but instead pursue opportunities outside of government that will allow me to continue to serve my community, be closer to my daughters and family, and also acknowledge and support a new generation of leadership that must continue the work that remains ahead," said Crespo in a statement.

He vaguely mentioned that he will be in the district for a "short time" once the legislative session finishes out in June. Crespo did not return calls seeking comment.

"This all boils down to money and family," said one Bronx political source familiar with Crespo's decision.

George Artz, a political consultant who's advised Crespo before, had gotten a sense something was coming down the pike when Crespo privately told him at a recent fundraiser that he is no longer seeking to become borough president, a longstanding plan for Crespo.

"He told me that he wasn't running for borough president, and I thought, 'Wow,'" recalled Artz. "These decisions don't come up suddenly."

The news comes as a surprise for many in the Bronx political landscape who believed Crespo—who began as an aide to then state senator and now Councilman Ruben Diaz Sr.—to have succeeded Diaz Jr., who also announced his retirement from public office. Like Diaz, Crespo had built a resume that appeared as though he was ready to mount a run for borough president.



Among his latest achievements as Assemblyman was seeing the passage of the Green Light Bill, which allows undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. He also helped usher in mega projects, including the transformation of the Sheridan Expressway, which runs through his district. Crespo also went on numerous trips to the island of Puerto Rico, following Hurricane Maria and the recent earthquake that ravaged the island.

"It's a surprise, but also an opportunity," said Camille Rivera, a partner at New Deal Strategies, of Crespo's announcement. "There's a real opportunity for stakeholders, for community organizations, and labor organizations to work towards coalescing around a progressive candidate and, considering the issues of the Bronx, a woman candidate and I think that's the most important thing right now."

Rivera argues that with more than half the Bronx comprised of women, it would seem a more logical choice to have greater female representation. Over the course of five years, more female legislators have stepped up to run and win office, including Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez, Assemblywoman Karines Reyes, state Sen. Alessandra Biaggi, and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Diaz Sr. told the *Norwood News* that his budget director, Kenneth Burgos, is now seeking to replace Crespo. He estimates with the seat effectively vacant, a slew of candidates will be vying for it.

With Crespo no longer in the running for borough president, this clears a lane for others to now become the front-runner. Council Members Vanessa Gibson and Andrew Cohen have both expressed interest in running. But a source told



Photo courtesy Marcos Crespo Facebook Page

**ASSEMBLYMAN MARCO CRESPO** (holding mic), at a news conference following the attempted assassination of cops within the 41st Precinct on Feb. 18, announced he won't be seeking re-election for his Assembly seat.

the *Norwood News* that Crespo is looking to back Councilman Rafael Salamanca Jr., whose Council district overlaps with Crespo's assembly district. Missing in his statement, however, was whether he'll continue as Bronx Democratic Party chair, a position he was elected to close to five years ago.

Though there are no indications of whether he'll remain party boss, a source close to the Bronx Democratic Party said told the *Norwood News* that Reyes, and Assembly Members Victor Pichardo and Jeffrey Dinowitz have expressed interest.

#### Cabrera Drops Out

While the borough presidency remains up in the air, the news of Crespo's departure has once again brought a familiar name back in the running.

Councilman Fernando Cabrera, the socially conservative Democrat, an-

nounced he won't be running for the congressional seat currently held by Ocasio-Cortez, five months after announcing he will run for the seat. He instead is running for borough president, a move he initially told the *Norwood News* he would not pursue.

Cabrera, who represents the 14th Council District covering Kingsbridge Heights, looks to clear the moderate Democrat lane so another moderate Democrat, Michelle Caruso-Cabrera (no relation), can run against the democratic socialist.

In a statement sent out to the press, the Councilman justified his self-removal from the race as it "would likely split the moderate vote allowing Congresswoman [Ocasio-Cortez] to win."

"The effort to unite the moderate majority will, I believe, allow the residents of the 14th Congressional to elected [sic] someone who will truly represent their interest and values," wrote Cabrera in

his statement, referring to the bifurcated 14th Congressional District that covers the Bronx and Queens.

As long been suspected, Cabrera is now running for borough president. When Cabrera announced he'll run for Congress he told *Norwood News* that he won't be running for borough president.

"I look forward to continuing and expanding the Bronx's forward progress as Borough President," said Cabrera.

For months, Cabrera has asserted himself more on Ocasio-Cortez's district, which included the drafting of a bill that would have created a harbor patrol unit around the Bronx. This came at the request of a civic group in City Island, which is covered by the 14th Congressional District.

Caruso-Cabrera, a former anchor for CNBC, is now urging other Democrats to unite behind one candidate to defeat Ocasio-Cortez to "allow the voice of the moderate majority to be fully represented."

#### The Future

The Bronx has never been impervious to the cycles of change across the political sphere, but when the changes come, they can be surprising. In 2018, for instance, Ocasio-Cortez and Biaggi stunned the establishment when they respectively defeated two political heavyweights in Congressman Joe Crowley and state Sen. Jeff Klein. The majority of voters, it seems, saw their time in office had expired.

Bravo, who once served as executive director for the Bronx Democratic Party, sees changes in the political landscape as positive.

"It's not a bad thing that there are transitions in this borough," said Bravo. "Given our history in this borough it may be a good thing to have a fresh lens."

## PASSAGES

### Saying Goodbye to Helena Terranova by SHEILA SANCHEZ

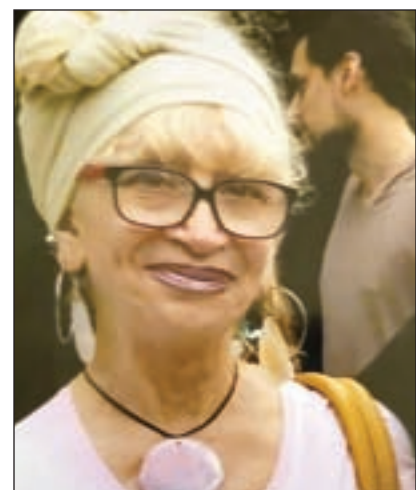
Helena Terranova was a very special, strong, private person, and I had the honor to call her my friend. She lived in Norwood for over 35 years, and in her quiet way always was involved in helping those in need, starting with our feral cats. She always was there to talk about what we are going to do with the new cats abandoned in the neighborhood, or where was the best place to put the food and water, depending on the weather.

Her love for animals and justice was the biggest, except for her love of papa, her son, with whom she's finally reunited.

She helped in different political campaigns and never expected or wanted recognition. She fought against injustice, for a better neighborhood, better quality of life, and she wouldn't fear speaking her mind and bringing results. She was fearless when she was about to follow her heart and do the right thing. She abhorred gossip and "bochinche" and always kept away from those who love the

drama and dedicated themselves to criticize and don't do the job, or those who didn't have compassion to others.

Unstoppable when she believed in a cause, the neighborhood has lost one of its secret heroines, and I have lost one of my best friends and partner in community activism. Helena will be missed by everyone who knew her for her love for life, justice, her love for nature and animals, her knowledge and understanding and compassion, her modesty and understanding of the needy.



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