



# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 33, No 9 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • JULY 30-AUGUST 12, 2020

## FREEDOM YOUTH NYC CALL OUT SILENCE ON SEX TRAFFICKING

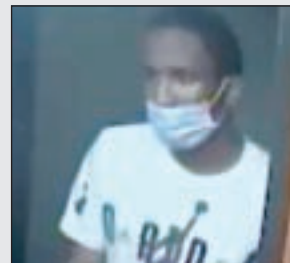
*Implore Elected Officials to Implement Youth Prevention Programs*



**MALIK FERGUSON SPEAKS** during a press conference on Fordham Plaza in the Bronx on July 20 organized by Freedom Youth NYC to highlight the dangers of human trafficking.



**\$30M for Two Bronx DV Shelters**  
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**Two Murders in Six Days in 52 Pct**  
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**Elections 2021: Pierina Sanchez Runs**  
pg 12

### By SÍLE MOLONEY

It was not the high-profile nature of Ghislaine Maxwell's arrest on July 2 for various, alleged sex trafficking crimes that shocked the world. After all, we'd grown accustomed to seeing various photos, interviews with her accusers, and documentaries

which purported to describe her relationship with the late Jeffrey Epstein.

What was, perhaps, more unsettling to some people, was realizing just how ordinary the former girlfriend and alleged co-conspirator was. She is described invariably as funny, intelligent and

charming. She may well be all of those things, and of course, Maxwell denies all charges against her, but some would say therein lies the myth of the "house mom," a euphemism for pimp. Indeed, the manipulation of language is just another feature of the attempted normalization of sex trafficking

across the globe, including right here in the Bronx.

Human trafficking is defined as modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. According to humantrafficking.

*(continued on page 10)*

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Courtesy of Volunteers of America - Greater New York Area

## Volunteers of America Receive \$30M To Run Two Bronx Domestic Violence Shelters

By AURÉOLE RIBES

Volunteers of America - Greater New York (VOA-GNY) announced on July 13 that it will receive \$30 million from the New York City Human Rights Administration (HRA) over five years to take over the running of two domestic violence shelters in the Bronx starting on Oct. 1. VOA-GNY is an affiliate of VoA, a national, faith-based human services non-profit helping individuals and families in need through social service programs.

The two shelters will serve different purposes. The first, Victory I, will be a 120-bed emergency shelter for critical and acute domestic violence situations, and will provide housing to survivors for 180 days. The second, aptly named Victory II, will act as a transitional shelter with 30 beds, and its purpose will be to stabilize domestic violence survivors, help them find a job, housing, and re-enter their community. The location of the shelters is not disclosed to protect survivors. The shelters will be open to women and children, including trans women, and men with families who are the heads of their households.

The Montefiore Bronx Health Collective will provide primary care and mental health services at the shelters through an on-site satellite community health clinic, which will cater not just to parents and the heads of households who attend the clinic, but also to children. Thea Jandzio is a licensed social worker who serves as Vice President of Business Development and Program Services at VOA-GNY. Referring to both the adult and child mental health services, she said, "They really do go hand in hand."

As is the case at the existing shelters it currently manages, VOA-GNY is taking every precaution to ensure social distancing is implemented. Jandzio said the organization

has reported very low rates of COVID-19 infection among clients and staff in the past months. "We make sure everyone has food and other necessities they need to stay safe and healthy indoors," she said. "The public health precautions we've been taking - wearing masks, washing hands, frequent sanitizing, social distancing - will be with us for the long haul."

VoA-GNY research shows that one out of every three women and one out of every four men have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetime.

According to a 2019 report by the New York City Domestic Fatality Review Committee, intimate partner homicide in the Bronx increased by 85.7% between 2017 and 2018. "The Bronx has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the city," Jandzio said. "This [transition to VoA-GNY] comes at a really critical time," she added, explaining that the pandemic has placed survivors in an unprecedented situation.

"There is a fear to enter [a] shelter because of COVID," Jandzio said. "We have seen that people are trying to weigh which is worse; to stay in their abusive sexual situation, or is it riskier to go into a shelter?"

Maureen Curtis is a Norwood native and Vice President of Criminal Justice Programs at Safe Horizons, the largest domestic violence victim services agency in the country. It operates in over 50 locations throughout the five boroughs of New York City and works with VoA-GNY.

Curtis said there was a marked decline in domestic violence related calls to their hotline at the beginning of the shutdown. "[It] wasn't surprising because if you're told to stay at home, to stay safe, and home is not a safe place for you, and now the person who is abusing you is working from home, that's going to

impact your ability to possibly call the hotline," she said.

Curtis began her career as a domestic violence advocate at the NYPD's 52nd precinct, one of the first precincts to have a Domestic Violence Police Program. She said that Safe Horizons has seen a city-wide increase in family violence in 2020, and an uptick of people petitioning for orders of protection at the Bronx Family Court office.

Curtis described one instance of family violence where the threat of COVID-19 infection was the tactic employed against a victim. "We had one elderly person that we worked with where her son was diagnosed with COVID-19. He was not socially distancing, did not wear a mask, and was threatening to infect her," she said.

Indeed, according to Curtis, the pandemic and shutdown has placed survivors in even more complex situations than before because when perpetrators of domestic violence lose their jobs, the resulting stress can exacerbate their violent tendencies. The downturn in the economy has also made it harder for survivors to find housing and employment.

One of the ways that VoA-GNY, and other domestic violence shelter groups, conduct outreach is through presentations at schools and to different community groups. However, such outreach has not been possible during the shutdown. Jandzio explained that instead the organization has been reaching out to victims through the District Attorney's office, getting referrals through the City HRA's project NoVa (No Violence Again), working with Safe Horizons, and other community providers.

Jennifer DeCarli is Assistant Commissioner of Family Justice Center Operations & Programming at the May-

or's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence. She said since the pandemic, the agency has used virtual town halls and Facebook Live events to conduct outreach. To help victims who may not have access to these platforms, the agency also looked at the areas in the City with high rates of domestic violence incidences and put up flyers in those areas to advertise their services such as the Family Justice Centers and the NYC Hope hotline.

The City's Family Justice Centers offer free legal advice to DV victims who may need court protection or other legal help. They are one of the most meaningful aides to DV victims trying to exit dangerous, domestic situations. Meanwhile, the NYC Hope confidential hotline connects victims to resources to help them or a loved one who may be experiencing dating, domestic, or gender-based violence. "It was really grassroots old-school - just phone calls to laundromats, to bodegas and to [other] essential businesses," DeCarli said.

In fact, most domestic violence organizations and shelters have had to shift their approach over the course of the pandemic from in-person health counseling and legal sessions to virtual ones. "This has been a more accessible way for survivors to go to meetings," DeCarli said. "We've actually heard from survivors that they hope that we continue with our virtual services," she added.

Overall, the two Victory shelters will offer a comprehensive range of services, including trauma-informed care, behavioral health counseling, housing placement, resilience strength training, employment and vocational counseling, and on-site childcare for survivors of domestic violence and their families. In some ways, they encapsulate the moment that both victims and domestic violence organizations are in right now. They're learning how to adapt and evolve in line with the pandemic.

If you are unsafe at home, you can reach out to an advocate from the NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline day or night. All chat, texts, and calls are completely confidential and secure. Text 844.997.2121, call 800.942.6906, or chat at [OPDV.NY.GOV](https://www.opdv.ny.gov).





# Proteja a las personas que ama

Cuando forma una familia ... aprende lo que realmente significa amar. Sin embargo, ¿se ha preguntado qué pasaría si ya no estuviese para cuidar de sus seres queridos?

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



## For this edition, we asked readers for their thoughts on the recent spike in shootings across the City.



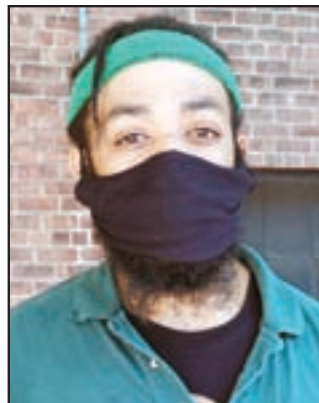
I like this area here in Belmont, and I prefer to do most of my activities here because I don't feel comfortable where I live. It's safer in Belmont than it is anywhere else around here. I like to do all my shopping. I even come here to do all my laundry and in the other neighborhood I see a lot of homeless people, and homeless shelters spread all over the Tremont area and yes, I see crazy people everywhere. I haven't seen anything myself. I'm not into anything like that, thank God. I really don't know. I don't think it has too much to do with the police. I think it's mostly about the community, and there are places where people behave better than other places.

**Tony Jag,**  
Tremont



I've seen a lot of crime scenes and people fighting and pulling out guns lately - yes, this year. People are waking around angry. It probably has to do with the pandemic, but I can't say for sure, but that's probably what's causing it. Yes, a lot of people are unemployed because of the COVID-19 virus. It's keeping a lot of people from working and a lot of people are dying from the virus every day. The police just want to sit in their vehicles and have coffee and donuts.

**Alexander Ottis,**  
Bedford Park



I think the cause of the shootings is a little bit of the COVID, a little bit of a lack of jobs, and definitely the Black Lives Matter thing. I don't think it's causing the shootings but it's in the air, this momentum of animosity. I'm tired of the shootings but we can't preach Black Lives Matter when we're killing each other, and I feel that's the biggest hypocrisy because how can you expect others to respect us when we're out here doing this to each other? There has to be a common ground - you have to get educated and understand what's going on and act accordingly. No, I don't think the police are doing enough. Honestly, every cop is not bad but it's kind of like guilt by association and no one can hand pick who's good and who's bad. We just see the videos like what we've been seeing for years.

**Vaughndre Banks,**  
Parkchester



We have the elderly and the young here and everybody's happy, but then when the sun goes down, all hell breaks loose. So, what do you do with that? I don't know. I don't know if it's this COVID-19 thing, if it's everyone being cooped up, or if it's because no one has a job, and they're looking to take away the extra \$600 unemployment benefit. I mean how are people going to live? There are lines right now going from New York to Chicago for people in line for food, so what are the Republicans thinking about? I believe the police are trying to save their own souls. They are not going to put their lives and their families lives on the line for something silly and getting sick and giving it to their families. There has always been crime, there will always be crime. [It's] just now, it's being hyped up. I don't know, but it's not good.

**Joe Gari,**  
Bedford Park



I've been on this planet 67 years and like the commercial, I know a thing or two. This thing was brought about due to indoctrination. People, especially people of color, have been indoctrinated to think a certain way and to turn on one another. But we must first ask how is an intelligent man, and we are the most intelligent creatures on the planet who know the difference between right and wrong, and still go ahead and do wrong? What's causing us to behave like this has been going on for thousands of years. He was known in the beginning as Lucifer. Yes, I have seen a rise in crime, just the other night two people got killed in the area I was staying.

**Ervan Vincent Purnell III,**  
Fordham



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# Two Homicides in Six Days in 52nd Precinct

by DAVID GREENE

Having recorded just one homicide during the first six months of 2020, the 52nd precinct has since recorded two additional homicides in July, both occurring within a six-day span. This equals the precinct's homicide record for the same period last year.

In the first of the two most recent cases, police were called to 3340 Decatur Avenue between East 209th Street and East Gun Hill Road in Norwood at 11:44 p.m. on Monday, July 20. Officials reported that upon arrival, officers discovered a 24-year-old male "unconscious and unresponsive" in front of the five-story building at the reported location.

The NYPD said the victim had suffered at least one gunshot wound to the back and was rushed to Montefiore Hospital on East Gun Hill Road where he died a short time later. On Monday, July 27, police identified the victim as James Rivera, 24, of East 209th Street in Norwood. Police officials reported that there were no arrests made nor any suspects identified in relation to the case and that the investigation remained "active and ongoing."

On the morning of July 21, an investigator with the NYPD's Crime Scene Unit (CSU) was observed photographing and documenting each of what appeared to be at least a dozen shell-casings left on the corner of East 209th Street and Decatur Avenue. One neighborhood resident, who asked not to be identified, said, "They ran out of the signs with the numbers," referring to the yellow numbered markers investigators typically use to document each bullet or piece of evidence.

Two neighborhood sources, who asked not to be identified, each said that the victim was allegedly running away when he was shot in the back. Crediting police sources, News 12 reported that the victim was allegedly arguing with three men when the shooting began. The news network also reported that the three men fled the scene on foot, after the shooting.

Two residents of the block said that more than a dozen rounds were fired allegedly. They also said that Rivera allegedly exchanged gunfire with the three men. One longtime resident of Decatur Avenue said, "It was the Dominican guys that hang on East 209th Street who just wanted to rob the 24-year-old guy".

The same resident added, "He pulled out a gun and shot three times, and the



Photo by David Greene

**A MEMBER OF** the NYPD's Crime Scene Unit (CSU) documents and processes evidence on July 21 of some of the nearly one dozen rounds fired from the corner of East 209th Street and Decatur Avenue during a shooting incident on July 20.

guys from 209th Street fired 12 times, killing him".

A resident from East 209th Street said they doubted the July 20 shooting was in retaliation for an earlier shooting on May 27 one block over at East 209th Street and Hull Avenue, when a gunman fired at several men outside of Moronta's supermarket.

When questioned by *Norwood News* about the July 20 shooting, the NYPD declined to divulge the number of rounds fired, whether Rivera returned fire, or if the shooting appeared to be gang related. Officers also declined to provide any details on the May 27 shooting at Moronta's, or to say if the two shootings were potentially related.

Recalling the July 20 shooting, a second resident of the block stated, "I didn't look out the window because I didn't want to get shot. This is the Bloods' territory," referring to a Bronx street gang.

Though it is not clear if the resident

was referring to the same gang, The New York Times reported in December 2018 that 29 suspected members of the Mac Balla Bloods gang were indicted for a smuggling operation that moved information and contraband among city jails and an upstate prison.

The network shuttled scalpel blades into lockups and organized the sale of crack cocaine and suboxone strips, which are prescribed to treat opioid addiction but were sold for \$100 each inside a maximum-security prison in Pine City, N.Y., according to the indictments.

The second homicide case was reported six days later when police were called at 1:38 a.m. on Sunday, July 26 to 2575 Jerome Avenue at West 192nd Street, across the street from St. James Park. The police identified the victim as female, aged between 25 and 35.

On Monday, July 27, police said the victim was a 32-year-old transgender woman, whose name is Soloman Kemar

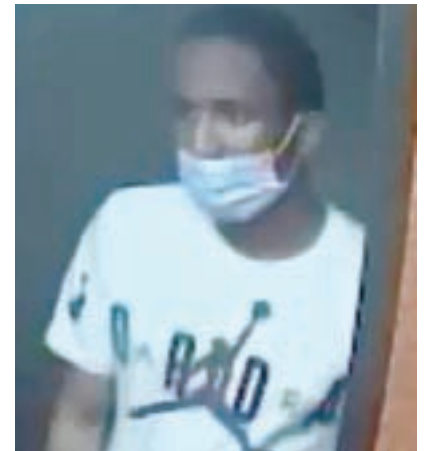


Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**THE NYPD RELEASED** a photo on Monday, July 27 of an individual wanted for questioning in connection to the death of 32-year-old Soloman Kemar, who was stabbed to death at 2575 Jerome Avenue in the Bronx on July 21.

of East 176th Street from the Tremont section of The Bronx.

Police said that Kemar was found on the third-floor hallway of the building at 2575 Jerome Avenue with one stab wound to the chest, and was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital where she died less than an hour later.

One resident of the building told the *Norwood News*, "Most of the people who come into this building don't live here. They just come to do their business". When asked what business, he replied, "drugs and prostitution".

When contacted by telephone on July 27, the building's Super, Joel Corona, said, "Day and nighttime, I lock the door. Yes, prostitution and drugs. It's no good". Corona continued, "The police are here and yesterday too". He added that officers do patrol the building, but he couldn't say if arrests were made, saying, "I'm in the apartment. I don't see what happens".

On July 27, the NYPD released a photo of a person wanted for questioning in relation to Kemar's killing. The individual is described as a Black male. In the photo, he is wearing dark pants and a white t-shirt. A photo and video of the suspect is available at the NYPD's press office. The motive for the killing is unknown at this time.

Anyone with any information about this individual is urged to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1 (800) 577-TIPS or visit their website at: [www.NYPDCRIMESTOPPERS.COM](http://www.NYPDCRIMESTOPPERS.COM) or by texting "CRIMES" to 274637. All calls are confidential.

# NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

## Food and Mask Giveaway

Councilman Andrew Cohen, State Sen. Jamaal Bailey, and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, in conjunction with Met Council organized a Food and Mask Giveaway at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center on Thursday morning, July 23. Local residents were able to refill bottles of hand sanitizer, pick up free face masks and they each received a box of non-perishable groceries which typically lasts two to three days. 600 food boxes were donated by Met Council, and though Cohen said he was receiving less calls about food insecurity than he had been at the start of the pandemic, about ninety people had gone through the line within 15 minutes of the start of the event. One man who spoke with *Norwood News* became tearful when discussing his economic circumstances, while other residents raised concerns that the Kingsbridge Armory food hub may be winding down. *Norwood News* has queried this with the City and awaits feedback. Free books were also available on the day from the Parks' department.

## NYS AG Laetitia Releases Preliminary Report on Policing

On July 8, the Office of NYS Attorney General, released a preliminary report on the ongoing investigation into the NYPD's response to the recent Black Lives Matter protests and contained an overview of proposed systemic changes the NYPD should consider implementing to address the concerns of the public. These include the creation of an oversight commission to monitor department policies and leadership, the redesigning of public safety and the role of police in society, ensuring real, independent oversight, accountability, and transparency of individual officer misconduct, and establishing a codified use of force standard with real, legal consequences for violations.

The office is continuing its in-

# Montefiore, Einstein Publish COVID-19 Steroid Study

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

On Wednesday, July 22, the results of a study carried out by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Health System, on the use of steroid treatments in COVID-19 patients, was released. It identified the benefits and risks of steroid treatment in COVID-19 patients.

The study built upon a larger, earlier British study involving 6,000 patients. The British study found that the steroid, dexamethasone, reduced deaths from COVID-19 by about one third in patients who were on ventilators and by about one fifth among patients who needed oxygen but were not on ventilators.

The Montefiore & Einstein study went further and answered several key questions: Which patients were most likely to benefit from steroid therapy? Could some of them be harmed? Could other steroids substitute for dexamethasone, the steroid studied in the British trial?

Marla Keller, M.D. is vice chair for research at the department of medicine at Einstein and Montefiore and was the lead author of the research. "Our study is consistent with the promising findings from Britain," she said, adding that, for the first time, their research was also able to show the life-saving benefits of other steroids, other than dexamethasone.

Keller said that in March and April, when less was known about COVID-19, as part of an observational study, she and her colleagues looked generally at the data for all COVID-19 patients to see if steroids might prove beneficial, knowing that they had been used to treat other infections, and were known to have been successful in treating inflammation.

"We weren't sure it [steroid treatment] was good for everyone," Keller said. "We thought it might be [good for] patients who required a lot of oxygen, or patients who had evidence of inflammation." She added, "We looked at our data, we did an analysis and overall, didn't see an effect on death or mortality".

The researchers subsequently defined subgroups of COVID-19 patients with particular characteristics like age, or levels of inflammation. "We tried to match on clinical characteristics; similar underlying medical conditions like diabetes or other conditions," Keller said.

They then carried out a comparative study selecting candidates from 3,000 COVID-19 patients. One group of 140 patients was treated with steroids within 48 hours of hospital admission, while a control group of 1,666 similar patients did not receive steroids. Most of those who received steroids received the steroid prednisone, while some received dexamethasone and methylprednisolone.

The research found that in patients with a *high* level of inflammation, steroid treatment *reduced* the risk of dying or needing to go on a ventilator by 75 percent.

Data has shown that a large percent of the people who succumb to COVID-19 die from the body's intense inflammatory response, which can overwhelm and severely damage the lungs. Keller said the highest levels of the virus are present in patients very early in infection, soon after a patient is infected.

On the other hand, critically, the study also found that in patients who had *normal* or *low* levels of inflammation, steroid use *increased* the risk of going on mechanical ventilation or dying by 200 percent.

Nearly all patients had an initial blood test to measure their levels of inflammation prior to the comparative study. Keller said the group found that a common blood test may identify the best candidates for steroid treatment.

The study included approximately equal numbers of male and female patients, and nearly 40 percent of patients studied were Black and 36 percent were Hispanic.

Researchers found that the demographic diversity of the patients studied suggests that steroid therapy benefits hospitalized COVID-19 patients affected by significant inflammation regardless of their race or ethnicity.

vestigation into the use of force during the protests, the use of "kettling" to surround and block protesters, the treatment of press, legal observers, and elected officials, the treatment of essential workers, arrest-related practices, and other alleged practices that impair community trust.

## Español Calls for \$75 million To Combat Drug Trade

Congressman Adriano Espaillat, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has introduced a bill to increase funding to the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). The legislation, if passed, would allocate nearly \$75,000,000 per year from 2021 through 2025 to improve security cooperation with Caribbean nations and combat illicit drug trafficking, support justice sector reform, strengthen the

rule of law, and address instability caused by natural disasters.

## Serrano Secures National Museum of the American Latino

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to approve a new Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino on the National Mall in Washington D.C. The legislation was authored by soon-to-retire Congressman José E. Serrano. The congressman said he was proud to have led the bipartisan effort, which was co-sponsored by a record 295 bipartisan members of congress.

## Moshulu Park Clean-Up

Members of the City's Parks' department, Council Member Andrew Cohen, Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez and representatives from State Sen. Jamaal

Bailey's office were joined by Friends of Moshulu Parkland for a clean-up of the park and surrounding area on Monday, July 20. About 30 volunteers, young and old, braved the hot summer temperatures, and met at Moshulu Parkway 4 train subway station where they received clean-up supplies including bags, masks, and gloves to help with the clean-up project. They asked residents to help to keep the park clean by not littering, not starting fires, and protecting wildlife from harmful plastic objects.

## NYC BID Association Plan to Save City Businesses

The NYC BID Association has called for a 9-point plan to save New York businesses. Recommendations include appointing one senior City Hall official to oversee a multi-agency

business recovery effort, rent and mortgage relief for small businesses, expansion of the Open Restaurants program to other storefront businesses, maintaining existing siting criteria for mobile street vendors, quickly developing new enforcement protocols since the NYPD has been relieved of this duty, streamlining of the State Liquor Authority's procedures to allow for quicker approval of temporary and permanent permits, the activation of sales tax exemptions to spur retail activity, easing requirements to allow non-profit organizations which want to establish open-air markets and pop-ups in city parks and open spaces, holding customers and patrons, not businesses, responsible for their actions, continuous review and revision of outdated and burdensome rules and laws.



## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



### 37-Year-Old Man Shot in Head, Dies

On Sunday, July 26, at approximately 3:10 a.m., police responded to a 911 call about a man who was shot in front of 2760 Bronx Park East, within the confines of the 49th precinct, in the Parkside Housing Project of the Bronx. Upon arrival, officers discovered a 37-year-old man unconscious and unresponsive with a gunshot wound to the head. EMS responded and pronounced the man deceased. There are no arrests and the investigation is ongoing. Identification of the deceased is pending proper family notification.

### Bronx River Parkway: Man Killed in Hit and Run Incident

On Friday, July 24, at approximately 4:30 a.m., police responded to a 911 call about a motor vehicle collision involving a pedestrian who was struck in the southbound lanes of the Bronx River Parkway in the vicinity of Exit 9. Upon arrival, officers discovered a 37-year-old man, unconscious and unresponsive, lying in the shoulder of the southbound

lane with severe body trauma. EMS responded to the location and pronounced the victim deceased at the scene. Further investigation by the NYPD Highway District's Collision Investigation Squad determined the man attempted to cross the parkway and was struck by an unidentified vehicle traveling in the southbound lane. The vehicle did not remain at the scene. There are no arrests and the investigation remains ongoing. The identification of the deceased is pending family notification.

### Man Wanted in Connection with Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance identifying a man wanted for questioning in connection to a robbery that occurred within the confines of the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx. On Monday, July 20, at approximately 3:30 p.m., inside 237 West 231st Street (All Wireless and Electronics), an unidentified man engaged in a verbal dispute with a store clerk. During the verbal exchange, the male took out a knife from his pocket and proceeded to remove five cellphones from behind the

counter, along with \$440 from the register. The male fled in an unknown direction. The store clerk was not injured as a result of this incident. A photo and video of the suspect is available at the NYPD press office.

### Police Searching for Missing 14-Year-Old Girl

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance in locating 14-year-old Grice Curtis of 704 Taylor Avenue in the Soundview section of the Bronx. It was reported to police that Curtis was last seen at her residence on Tuesday, July 17 at midday. She is described as an Hispanic female, 6 foot tall, weighs 140 pounds, and has brown eyes and black hair. A photo of Curtis is available at the NYPD press office.

### 13-Year-Old Girl Missing

The NYPD are seeking the public's assistance to locate 13-year-old Rose Sanchez, who was reported missing "(runaway)" by her mother on Friday, July 24 at around 4 p.m. Sanchez was last seen at her home at 1064 Findlay Avenue. The NYPD said it was reported that the girl has run away numerous

times in the past. She was last seen wearing a blue NASA t-shirt and blue Jordan sneakers. She is 5 foot, 4 inches tall, and weighs 130 pounds.

### Man Wanted In Connection to Robbery Spree

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance identifying a man wanted for questioning in connection to a pattern of robberies in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. A video and photo of the suspect is available at the NYPD press office.

On Sunday, July 5, at approximately 6:55 p.m., as a 44-year-old female victim exited the elevator on the 8th floor inside 1348 Webster Ave (Butler Houses), an unidentified man punched her in the face. The man proceeded to remove the victim's shopping cart which contained groceries, as well as her set of apartment keys, before fleeing via a staircase. The victim sustained pain and bruising but refused medical attention at the scene.

On Tuesday, July 7, at approximately 9:45 p.m., in the vicinity of 1330 Webster Ave, a 58-year-old female victim was standing at a bus stop when the man approached her and punched her

in the side of the face while she was placing money in her purse. The man attempted to grab the money from the victim's hand but was unsuccessful. He ran inside Butler Houses in an unknown direction. The victim suffered pain and swelling to the face but refused medical attention at the scene.

On Monday, July 13, at approximately 5 p.m., a 78-year-old female victim was on the 16th floor inside 1348 Webster Avenue when the man followed her through the staircase door. The man snatched the victim's purse from her hand and fled in an unknown direction with \$400, a cell phone and identification belonging to the victim. The victim was not injured as a result of the incident.

Anyone with information in regard to the identity of this male is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the CrimeStoppers website at WWW.NYPD-CRIMESTOPPERS.COM or on Twitter @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.



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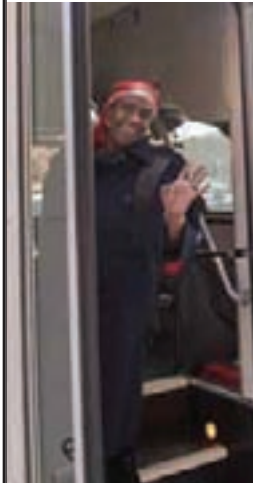
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# Freedom Youth NYC Call Out Silence on Sex Trafficking

(continued from page 1)

org, any instance in which an individual engages in a commercial sex act (such as prostitution) as a result of force, fraud, or coercion, is considered sex trafficking.

It does not require an individual to be transported across state lines to be considered sex trafficking. It can take place within the confines of a home, and it includes the commercial sexual exploitation of children or minors (commonly abbreviated as CSEC).

Freedom Youth NYC is an organization, based in the Bronx, that has been helping local, at-risk youth since 2013. It seeks to help secure the future of inner-city youth by raising awareness about prostitution and human trafficking prevention.

Spurred on by Maxwell's arrest, and on a mission to topple additional, powerful figures who pull the strings of the billion-dollar industry, Freedom Youth NYC recently held a press conference on Fordham Plaza on Monday, July 20, calling on the public to end the silent nature of the sex trade, and expose those who exploit children and young adults. Monique Riley, a sex trafficking survivor and fierce public speaker, is the organization's CEO and Founder.

"I stand here today as a survivor, and I'm unashamed of where I've come from, and the journey I took to stand here today because it's not easy," Riley said. "Survivors don't come out because often times, they're victim-shamed, but I stand here because I want to be here, and because my words and what my experiences are, is going to help you guys to stay clear of being trafficked," she told the assembled group of about fifteen to twenty youngsters.

Some held signs displaying the words, "Stop Human Trafficking!" while others also addressed those present. No elected officials attended. Riley said she believed the invitation went out to Assemblyman José Rivera, City Councilman Ritchie Torres, New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez and State Senator Alessandra Biaggi. She later said Fernandez and Biaggi said they had meeting conflicts. *Norwood News* reached out to the other elected officials for comment.

A representative for Torres sent the following email reply, "I would have gone to the event had I been invited, and had I known about it, but I neither knew about the event nor was I invited."

Coincidentally, on the following day, July 21, in Albany, the START Act officially passed the New York State Assembly, led by efforts from Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, among others. If passed by the senate and signed by the governor, the bill would give human trafficking survivors the opportunity to clear their criminal records of crimes they were compelled to commit due to being exploited, and under pimp control. The step denotes progress, following months of advocacy work by activists.

Research shows that a substantial number of people who enter the sex trade, enter it initially as minors and know no other life. There is also evidence to suggest that a large percentage of people who are trafficked are runaways, who have already been sexually abused at home. Riley said that young, Black and Hispanic girls make up 52 percent of individuals who are trafficked and targeted in New York City.



Photo by Sile Moloney

**MONIQUE RILEY, CEO** and Founder of Freedom Youth NYC, speaks during a press conference about the dangers of human trafficking on Fordham Plaza in the Bronx on July 20.

It is because of this that Riley seeks to educate vulnerable youth about the harms of sex trafficking at an early age. She said she herself was trafficked as a twelve-year-old, because the mother of someone she knew sent the girl to school to recruit other children into the trafficking world. "Do you think that that has ended today?" she asked the crowd. "It did not. It did not end today, because my organization has been asked to come to some schools to speak, and every time that we spoke at a different location, somebody's child, somebody's mother, would say, 'That's my lifestyle. All I got is ten dollars in my pocket. I got to feed my children. My rent is due. My husband is pimping me out!'"

As she recalled her own trauma, tears began to stream down Riley's face. "It is real. It is happening, and we must stand up and fight it today. We have to," she said, before leading into a rousing and defiant chant of, "End Human Trafficking!" and "You can't have our babies!" as if addressing the traffickers directly.

In terms of media coverage of the press conference, other than *Norwood News*, just one other TV media outlet was present, a point noted in the speech given by Joe Riley, who also represents Freedom Youth NYC. "We realize that when this particular subject [human trafficking] comes up, it gets real....?" he said to those present, to which they responded, "Quiet!" Once again, he said, "It gets real....?" and the crowd shouted back "Quiet!"

"What I want to know is, where are the noise makers right now when there is no more Black Lives Matter or any of the protests going on?" he said. "Where are the protests for human traffickers? Where are the protests for the victims and survivors of human trafficking? Where are you? See, this is why I'm calling you out today. Where are the elected officials? Where's the media? Where's all the coverage? Where's all the lawmakers? We are here on the front line of human trafficking every single day!"

According to Freedom Youth NYC, it is estimated that human trafficking generates \$150 billion in profit per year, second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of transnational crime. Some say the reason it is so lucrative is because "the product" can be sold over and over again.

Okeria Ritchie is 17 years old and attended the event also. She started work-

ing for Freedom Youth NYC just three weeks ago. "I love it," she said in a telephone interview with *Norwood News*. "I am an activist for human rights and anti-human trafficking," she said. "I just spread the word. I lend my voice to victims. That's who I'm here for. I'll help as much as I can 'cause I know that their voice, their voices are often silenced, so I just lend my voice," she said.

Ritchie got involved with the group through Bronx Works, through a community program that she said helps students get a job. She said her work involves hitting the streets, asking people to complete surveys, and providing information. She said the work can sometimes be hard.

"Some people don't want to be educated," she said. "Some people do. Some people just come up to us and want to get our card and want to know more and are thankful that we're on the streets giving them the information that we do, so it's 50/50."

Ritchie said that Freedom Youth NYC also provides outreach via videos and sketches, as a way to engage with youth. "Everyone intakes information differently," she said, adding that her outreach work is usually carried out during the day, on weekdays. "We move around a lot. So, we were at Mount Vernon in front of City Hall this week, one [event] was at Fordham, and today we're doing a giveaway," she said.

Asked what prompted her interest in getting involved in the work, she said, "It's a very serious issue, and I feel like not enough people understand or are educated about it and victims need a voice. They aren't able to use theirs so I'll use mine 'cause it's a very serious topic." She also said she was inspired by Monique Riley's personal story which she described as very emotional. "I could feel her pain," she said.

Norwood News asked Ritchie if she believed documentaries like the Netflix documentary, "Surviving R Kelly" which describes the alleged experiences of a large number of young girls who were allegedly trafficked by Kelly, helps raise awareness about sex trafficking and how it can present itself in different guises.

"Yes, definitely, it has, 'cause some

communities are just - they're closed-minded," she said. "So, when they see certain documentaries, it opens their mind to things that they never believed were happening, so I actually feel like it has."

Norwood News also asked Ritchie about educating young men about sex trafficking.

"I feel like women are more open to the information because, of course, you're a woman," she said. "But, you know, anyone could be sex trafficked, but generally women are. Men are not so much open to the information, but you do have a few men who are open-minded about receiving information."

Meanwhile, Monique Riley said that sex traffickers are major recruiters of LGBTQ+ youth. "These individuals are highly targeted for human trafficking. Their families don't accept them. They want to fit in. They are rejected by the community, so the first person that shows love to them, they're going to go with that," she said. "They get kicked out of their homes, kicked out of their churches. So, some of them will come right on these grounds [Fordham Plaza] right here, and they participate in survival sex because they don't have basic needs. They don't have a home to go to. They don't have a person who loves and supports them. They don't have food and clothing."

Monique Riley said that it is sometimes not by choice that LGBTQ+ youth get involved in human trafficking, but because of their circumstances. "They're out here fighting for their life," she said, her voice growing weak. "They make up 76 percent in New York, New York FBI stats say 76 percent of LGBTQ+ are trafficked and are participating in survival sex because they aren't a part of their community. You never know how much a smile will change their life. Be kind."

In the future, Riley said she also intends to reach out to Councilman Andrew Cohen about outreach efforts in the Kingsbridge Heights area of the Bronx. Though he did not receive a notice about the July 20 press conference, when contacted for comment, Cohen said, "I stand with the Bronx Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence Taskforce and all victims calling for human traffickers and abusers to be held accountable and brought to justice. We must redouble our efforts to bringing awareness to the signs of human trafficking. Victims can be right in front of our eyes, and recognizing the signs is critical to ensuring they get the help they need."

Meanwhile, in terms of advice she would offer to people who might not know a lot about human trafficking, Ritchie said, "I just feel like people need to be extra cautious nowadays, especially with social media because it's very easy, you know, through the social media platforms to get caught up in the wrong things". She added, "So, just always be careful and always keep an open mind as everyone does not always have the best interests for you, and stay safe."

If you are being trafficked or suspect trafficking activity in your area, please call the National Human Trafficking

Resource Center Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or Text "Be Free" to 233733.





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# Pierina Sanchez, from The Bronx to the White House and Back

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Next year, residents of New York City's 14th District will vote on a new representative. Incumbent Councilman Fernando Cabrera has reached the end of his last term. He has represented the district, which extends from just south of the Cross Bronx Expressway to Kingsbridge Heights in the north, since 2010.

In June 2020, Pierina Sanchez, 32, announced her candidacy to replace Cabrera with a focus on improving permanent housing and education, among other issues. "With 70 percent of our residents unable to afford their rents, I want to work to improve that number," Sanchez said. "I want more homeowners [in our community]."

As a child who lived on East 183rd Street and University Avenue, Sanchez and her family experienced housing uncertainty when a fire in their building forced the family onto the street in the middle of the night. "I have a vivid memory of being displaced," she said. "My mom was yelling '*Ponganse la ropa!*' ('Put on your clothes!')." The fire happened in the midst of a tense relationship with the landlord. Sanchez attributes the poor relationship to tenant harassment.

This formative memory informed

and inspired Sanchez to seek a life of public service which ranges from previous work in the 14th District where she helped tenants get heat and hot water, to urban planning work at the Regional Plan Association (RPA), and later as a member of Community Board 5, where she advocated for affordable housing during the rezoning process along Jerome Avenue.

In 2015, Sanchez was elected to serve on the board of the Bronx Young Democrats, and work to raise awareness in young people interested in politics and public service. She credits her family's insistence on getting an education as integral to her success in her life and career, which includes an internship at the White House during the Obama administration.

Locally, Sanchez attended public schools until her admittance to the Academy of Mount St. Ursula in Bedford Park. She went on to study at Harvard University for an undergraduate degree in psychology, and later a master's degree from Princeton University in public affairs.

As of July 24, the New York City Campaign Finance Board lists three other candidates running in District 14,

including Fernando A. Aquino, former press secretary to the NYS Attorney General, Haile M. Rivera, who oversees community and government affairs at the Dominican Consulate, and Yudelka Tapia, district leader of the 86th Assembly District.

Although the State's Democratic Party primary is more than 10 months away, and other candidates may opt to join the race to replace Cabrera who, it would seem, plans to run for Bronx Borough President, Sanchez is confident she can gather enough support from voters to secure Cabrera's seat.

Her campaign announced that it had raised \$66,000 from over 950 donors in the span of four weeks with contribution amounts averaging at \$68. "I have been honored by the outpouring of support from our community, especially during these difficult times," Sanchez wrote via a press release. "These strong results show the Bronx is eager for new, progressive leadership that will fight for justice. I'm excited to build on our momentum and grow our support across the 14th District, the community that raised me and the neighborhoods I call home."

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# Out & About

## Events

GACED presents a fundraiser for the 2020 NYC Global African Monthly Power Up BBQs at Belmont Park, The Bronx, NY on Saturday, Aug. 15 at 1p.m. Free entry! There will be a giveaway, food and music. This is an event to foster community and goodwill, that spreads the spirit of unity. Donations will be accepted for: Apprentice Enterprise Training, GACED Social Services Emergency Housing Fund, GACED Realty Trust Distressed Property Crowdfunding. Further details are available at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-nyc-globalafrican-monthly-power-up-bbq-tickets-110678470284?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Illusions The Show presents Drag Queen Dinner Show that meshes comedy with burlesque, and features the best celebrity impersonators and the funniest Bronx drag queens. These dinners are every Friday and Saturday at 1060 Home St., Bronx, NY 10459. More information here: <https://www.facebook.com/illusionstheclub>

### Compiled by AURÉOLE RIBES

[www.eventbrite.com/e/illusions-the-drag-queen-show-bronx-drag-queen-dinner-show-bronx-ny-tickets-86580599905?aff=ebdssbdestsearch](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/illusions-the-drag-queen-show-bronx-drag-queen-dinner-show-bronx-ny-tickets-86580599905?aff=ebdssbdestsearch)

The Bronx Toastmasters Club of Riverdale will have a meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 12 at 7:30 p.m. via ZOOM video conferencing. The club teaches public speaking and leadership skills. Please R.S.V.P. to [BronxToastmastersClub@gmail.com](mailto:BronxToastmastersClub@gmail.com). Go to: <https://www.bronxtoastmastersclub.org> for more information.

Fever Records is a Bronx-based entertainment company that organizes Throwback Thursdays with DJ Blazerone, every Thursday afternoon from 4-5 p.m., streaming at: <https://www.facebook.com/FeverRecords/>

Norwood Farmstand sources its food from GrowNYC, a program that brings the freshest, highest quality, regionally grown farm products to the New York City community. GrowNYC is now offering virtual gardening workshops.

On August 5, from 2p.m. to 3p.m., the group will host a container gardening workshop. Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grownycsummer-garden-series-2020-tickets-109835484892>

Volunteer Opportunities Van Cortlandt Park has volunteer opportunities to help clean up the park on Mondays from 9a.m. to 12p.m., Wednesdays from 5p.m. to 7p.m., and Saturdays from 9a.m. to 11a.m. Meet at the Van Cortlandt Golf House. BYOM (Bring your own mask!) For more information: <https://vancortlandt.org/calendar-of-events/>

movement classes that can be joined via ZOOM. The classes range from capoeira, hip-hop dance, yoga/meditation/ community dialogue, general music (vocal), and African drumming and dance. Information about the classes is here: <https://bronxartsensemble.org/summerarts/>

80/20 Fit Kickboxing offers a \$10 hour-long class at Van Cortlandt Park on Aug. 8 at 9a.m. Follow: [8020fit](https://www.instagram.com/8020fit) on Instagram for more details. This is a socially distanced class, and you will need to bring your weights for shadow boxing (Up to 3 pounds is suggested).

## Exhibits

The Bronx Museum presents, "Alicia Grullon: March to June: At Home with Essential Workers" from June 23 to Oct. 23. This online exhibition explores Grullon's relationship with the COVID-19 pandemic as a woman of color living in the epicenter of it. Through self-portraits, Grullon delves into the treatment of essential workers and incarcerated people during the crisis, and shows how COVID-19 disproportionately affected people of color, and the Bronx. Here is a link to the exhibit: <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/exhibitions/aliciagrullon-march-to-june-at-home-with-essential-workers>

## Sports and Movement

Each week the Bronx Arts Ensemble presents summer music and

## Outdoor Dining

The Bronx Night Market is opening on Saturday, Aug. 1 at 4p.m., and it will highlight and celebrate Bronx culture. It will be hosted at 1 Fordham Plaza and will include a variety of delicious food, music and fun! The event is free. For more information, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1227164044149688/>. If you would like to volunteer with The Bronx Night Market for their new season click here: <https://bit.ly/30hIUUK>

Gene DiNapoli, an actor, entertainer and musician who performs tributes to Elvis, The Blues Brothers and everything in between, will be returning to the Pasquale Rigoletto Restaurant on Arthur Avenue, so go eat some delicious Italian pasta and enjoy the music! This event is on Saturday Aug. 8 from 7p.m. to

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10p.m. More information can be found here: <http://www.facebook.com/events/927428721014289/>.

## Educational Events

NY Botanical Gardens (NYBG) offers virtual garden walks, a herbarium expedition, the fundamentals of gardening, and many other activities which can be found at <https://www.nybg.org/whats-on/month-view/>. If you are interested in delving into your passion for plants, NYBG also has a book club where you can access digital archives, podcasts, films, and books. The group discusses plant-related themes every two weeks. Participants can join the group via Facebook at NYBG Beyond Books Club.

The Bronx Documentary Center hosts a virtual panel discussion about The Contemporary Latin American Photobook on Saturday, Aug. 1

at 6p.m. This event explores the complex storytelling in Latin America through photobooks which combine images, texts, archives and drawings. Latin American photographers and editors: Musuk Nolte (Peru), Lujan Agusti (Argentina), Cristobal Olivares (Chile), and Zully Sotelo (Colombia) will join moderator Santiago Escobar-Jaramillo (Colombia) to discuss the state of the Latin American Photobook today. This event is held in conjunction with the 3rd Annual Latin American Foto Festival. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, indoor galleries will remain closed. This photo festival will be made up of outdoor banners and projections, as well as the virtual component viewable at [bronxdoc.org](http://bronxdoc.org). On view July 25-Aug 2. You can join the ZOOM webinar via <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84381941880> or you can view the Livestream on the event date at 6 p.m. via The Bronx Documentary Center's website.

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# Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,  
Please respect our beloved Norwood

We live in the greatest city in the entire world and are blessed to live in the Norwood area of the Bronx. To see our beloved city rocked by criminal violence and racial tension is heartbreaking.

Let us all make a conscious

effort to lift our neighborhood up by reporting quality of life issues, picking up any litter in

our parks and perhaps most importantly, saying a prayer for the welfare of all our first respond-

ers.

It is such good news to hear St. Brendan's Church, whose patron saint was a navigator is now open for prayer. Friends of mine laugh when I tell them my beautiful Church is shaped like a ship in the middle of the Bronx!

You do not have to be Catholic to come in as all are welcome and trust me when I say God will hear your prayers. I would also ask a prayer for the unborn. Sadly, the Bronx leads the nation with the highest rate of abortions performed. And if possible, please make a donation if you can to their food pantry. Once a month St. Brendan's gives out bags of food to over three hundred (300) individuals in need.

And know I am praying for all of you who call Norwood home!

**Richard Marias**

Dear Editor,

It is ironic that the NYC Transit Authority has instructed local bus drivers to open up all

windows and roof hatches in an attempt to block the spread of COVID-19.

The air-conditioned buses and subway cars that we take for granted today were virtually non-existent during the time of the 1964-65 World's Fair. Air-conditioned buses were still a novelty. It was not until 1966, that NYC Transit first purchased over 600 buses with this new feature. Subsequently, all new buses would include air conditioning. By the early 1990s, 100 percent of the bus fleet was air conditioned.

In 1967, NYC Transit introduced the first ten air-conditioned subway cars operating on the old IND line. It was not until 1975, that air-conditioned subway cars were introduced on the old IRT lines. It took until 1982 to retrofit all the original IRT "Red-bird" series subway cars. By 1993, 99 percent of the NYC 6,000 subway cars were air conditioned, with the exception of a handful running on the #7 Flushing line. It may be a long hot summer for commuters.

Sincerely,

**Larry Penner**

(continued on page 18)

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## Letters To The Editor

(continued from page 16)

**Dear Editor,**

**HAPPY 56TH BIRTHDAY TO  
BRONX PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

July 2020 marks the 56th Anniversary of federal government support for public transportation. The success of public transportation can be traced back to one of the late President Lyndon Johnson's greatest accomplishments which continues benefiting many Americans today. On July 9th, 1964 he signed the "Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964" into law. Subsequently, this has resulted in the investment over time of several hundred billion dollars into public transportation.

Millions of Americans, including many Bronx residents, today, on a daily basis, utilize various public transportation alternatives. Try riding a local or express bus, commuter van, ferry, light rail, commuter rail or subway. Most of these systems are funded with your tax dollars thanks to President Johnson.

Most have forgotten that up until the 60s, bus drivers made change and drove the bus at the same time. Nobody would dare bring soda or food on the bus or leave any litter behind.

Today we have the MTA and its various operating agencies, including NYC Transit subway, bus and Staten Island Railway, Metro North Rail Road, Long Island Rail Road and Westchester Bee Line Bus.

Using MTA Metro Cards provides free transfers between the subway and bus. This has eliminated the old two fare zones making public transportation an even better bargain. Purchasing a monthly Metro North Rail Road or MTA subway/bus pass reduces

the cost per ride and provides virtually unlimited trips.

Employers can offer transit checks which help subsidize a portion of the costs. Utilize this and reap the benefits. It supports a cleaner environment.

Some businesses allow employees to telecommute and work from home. Others use alternative work schedules which afford staff the ability to avoid rush hour gridlock. This saves travel time and can improve mileage per gallon. Join a car or van pool to share the costs of commuting. The ability to travel from home to workplace, school, shopping, entertainment, medical, library etc. is a factor when moving to a new neighborhood. Economically successful communities are not 100 percent dependent on automobiles as the sole means of mobility. Seniors, students, low and middle-income people need these transportation alternatives. Investment in public transportation today contributes to economic growth, employment and a stronger economy. Dollar for dollar, it is one of the best investments we can make.

**Sincerely,**

**Larry Penner**

(Larry Penner is a transportation advocate, historian and writer who previously worked for the Federal Transit Administration Region 2 New York Office. This included the development, review, approval and oversight for billions in capital projects and programs for the MTA, NYC Transit, Long Island Rail Road, Metro North Rail Road MTA Bus, NYC Department of Transportation, Westchester Bee Line Bus along with 30 other transit agencies in NY & NJ).



## SPONSORED CONTENT

# Jerome Gun Hill BID Merchant Spotlight: Outdoor Dining in the BID!

By **ARIANA CIPRIANI**

As New York City's small businesses transitioned to Phase 3 of the city's reopening plan earlier this month, restaurants and diners took to the streets and sidewalks for open dining. From now through October, restaurants can offer outdoor seating on the sidewalk and curb lane to customers. With six outdoor dining destinations to choose from in the BID, there are plenty of opportunities to sit back and relax on Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road.

Jennifer Tausig, Executive Director of the Jerome Gun Hill BID, said, "Open dining has provided a much-needed lifeline for our small, locally



**QUEEN OF TACOS**, 9 E Mosholu Parkway N

owned restaurants and restaurant specialties like empanadas and mofongo while relaxing in the shade. Whether you are out to dinner with your family, or grabbing a quick lunch on your break, business owners are going above and beyond to make customers, as well as employees, feel relaxed, cared for, and safe.

Lizeth Echevaria, manager of

a good meal and some normality, of course taking precautions and ensuring our customer's safety. We want to thank all our patrons for their continued support."

A popular lunch spot for hospital employees, Marconi's Pizza was one of the first businesses in the BID to offer outdoor seating. Owner, Alban Krasniqi, said it has helped improve business and customers like it. While not as busy as before, Krasniqi welcomes the opportunity to serve customers outside. On a sunny day you will find the outdoor tables full of local workers enjoying a slice of pizza on their break, alongside neighborhood families sharing a pie.

You can also enjoy outdoor dining at Club Valle (352 East Gun Hill Road), Oasis Restaurant and Bar (3441 Jerome Avenue), and D'Amigos Restaurant and Bar (12 East Gun Hill Road). Enter to win a Jerome Gun Hill BID swag bag by sending us a photo of you enjoying an outdoor meal in the BID! Send us your entries by August 20th to [jeromegunhillbid@gmail.com](mailto:jeromegunhillbid@gmail.com).

*Ariana Cipriani is Program Manager at the Jerome Gun Hill BID. For more information about the BID please follow @jeromegunhillbid on Instagram or head to our website, [jeromegunhillbid.org](http://jeromegunhillbid.org).*



**CARIBE RESTAURANT**, 2 E Gun Hill Road

owned restaurants. Delivery was not enough to pay the bills, and we are grateful to the City for listening to our requests to provide quick, flexible guidelines to restaurants so they can serve on the sidewalk and in the curb lane". She added, "It is a good first step in helping our restaurants reopen so they can continue to serve the neighborhood".

Meanwhile, restaurant owners

have taken the opportunity to innovate, revitalizing their businesses as well as the streetscape with planters, colorful umbrellas, string lights, and outdoor decorations. Yasmin Familia, owner of Caribe Restaurant, has been hard at work making her outdoor dining area look and feel like a tropical escape. Customers can enjoy drink spe-



**MARCONI'S PIZZA**, 181 E Gun Hill Road

Queen of Tacos, told us that outdoor dining is helping both her employees as well as restaurant sales. "Waitresses are receiving tips and customers are enjoying the outdoor seating experience," she said. "We are committed to ensuring our patrons come have



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