



NORWOOD NEWS

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COMMUNITY MARCH AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Traffic in the Bedford Park area of the Bronx was held up for more than half an hour at the start of the rally on Friday, Sept. 25. Horns blared as invited speakers addressed a crowd of more than 50 people who had gathered at the busy intersection of Bainbridge Avenue and Bedford Park Boulevard. There was no need to call the cops, however; they were already lined up for the Community March Against Gun Violence.

Thomas Alps, deputy inspector of the 52nd precinct, told *Norwood News* before the rally the event had been organized to bring together the community, elected officials, the Bronx DA, and the community's violence interrupters "Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence" (B.R.A.G.) to fight back against the increase in violence in the local precinct.

A review of the most recent NYPD crime data shows shootings and shooting victims in the 52nd precinct have almost doubled based on year-to-date figures, compared with the same period last year. There have been 19 shooting incidents in 2020 through Sept. 27, compared to 13 during the same period last year, representing a 46.2 percent increase.

The uptick in crime is reflective of the ongoing violence witnessed across the city throughout 2020. Just two days after the rally took place, a man was mur-



Photo by José A. Giralt

ACTIVISTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, elected officials and members of the NYPD participate in a Community March Against Gun Violence through Bedford Park on Friday, Sept. 25.

dered in an apparent stabbing incident at 315 East 206th Street in Norwood.

The rally started with speeches from Alps, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, Councilman Fernando Cabrera, B.R.A.G. Senior Program Di-

rector David Caba, and Brenda Caldwell-Paris, president of the 52nd Precinct Community Council. Afterwards, the marchers, some holding signs which read "SOS - Save Our Streets", "Don't Shoot - I Want to Grow Up!" and "Stop the Violence!" made their

way through Bedford Park, ending at St. James Park.

During her remarks, Clark made clear her reason for attending the event. "I have been marching all summer because I'm tired, tired, tired of this vio-

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2020 Election Local Lens: Crime & Criminal Justice

By NORA THOMAS &
SÍLE MOLONEY

Norwood News, in partnership with WFUV radio and BronxNet Television, presents a five-part series on national issues affecting voters in the lead up to the 2020 presidential election, seen through the local lens of Bronx neighborhood communities. Part 2 looks at crime and criminal justice.

New York State and City officials have drawn a lot of criticism from President Donald Trump this election cycle. In a Sept. 2 memo to the Department of Justice, drafted to review federal funding for certain state and local governments, Trump said New York City officials were “permitting anarchy, violence, and destruction,” in the city.

The Justice department, led by Attorney General William Barr, concurred saying the City had “refused to undertake reasonable measures to counteract criminal activities.” Trump had cited an almost doubling of shootings from 492 to 896, compared to last year, and also referenced the killing of a one-year-old baby boy.

The president did not offer any views as to why there was an uptick in crime, nor did he acknowledge the widespread calls for police reform in the wake of the recent killing by police of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other African Americans. The president, it seems, is concerned by some but not all crime.

While nobody heralds a 17.6 percent uptick in city-wide murders compared to September 2019, maintaining public safety, as well as just and accountable policing may well be the single most important issue facing voters this election.

In a January 2020 New York Times Op-Ed, NYPD Police Commissioner Dermot Shea wrote that New York’s recent bail reform laws constrained judges from holding repeat offenders with long records of both crime, and absconding trial.

“It eliminates cash bail and the possibility of detention for a wide array of offenses, including weapons possession, trafficking of fentanyl and other drugs, many hate-crime assaults, the promotion of child prostitution, serial arson, and certain burglaries and robberies,” he wrote.

Prior to this recent spike,

crime in the Bronx, like elsewhere in the city, had dropped dramatically in recent decades since the peak rates of the early ‘90s. The borough has, nonetheless, the highest per capita rate of crime of the five boroughs and is home to a number of violent gangs.

The NYPD reported a 3.83 percent increase in total crime complaints in the Bronx in September 2020 compared to last year. While the increase is not insignificant, crime levels in the borough are still more than 70 percent lower today than in 1993.

Referencing the rising violence, the president also cited the City Council’s \$1 billion cut from the NYPD’s budget and the cancelling of 1,163 new hires as evidence, in his opinion, of the City’s mismanagement of crime.

At a recent campaign rally in Atlanta, Trump said, “Every year thousands of African Americans are murdered as a result of violent crime in these Democrat-run monstrosities. The way they run them - it’s worse than Afghanistan.” He added, “I will always support law enforcement.”

Trump’s emphasis on law and order is not new. In 1989, he took out a full-page ad in four newspapers calling for New York State to adopt the death penalty following the brutal rape of a woman in Central Park. Five Black and Hispanic youth were subsequently convicted wrongfully for the crime.

According to The New York Times, their convictions were vacated in 2002, and the city paid \$41 million in 2014 to settle their civil rights lawsuit. The incident was the subject of the documentary by Ava DuVernay called “When They See Us.”

While Trump has addressed criminal justice reform in signing the bipartisan First Step Act, which can shorten sentences for those who exhibit good behavior, he has done little to acknowledge the infringement of the rights of protestors and independent observers during the recent Black Lives Matter protests, nor the violence inflicted upon them by police, the very reason the protests began in the first place.

Human Rights Watch recently issued a scathing report of the use of kettling by the NYPD at a June 4 protest

in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, whereby protestors were beaten, corralled into a ring and then arrested for breaking curfew. Many later testified during a State hearing on the handling of the recent protests by police.

Some police were dressed in riot gear, and later said there was a known, credible threat of violence in the vicinity. An earlier car stop by police in the nearby vicinity resulted in two males and one female being charged with criminal possession of a weapon. Police recovered lighter fluid, a helmet, two hammers, spray paint, fireworks, a laser pointer, and a sledgehammer. A separate, nearby incident resulted in the arrest of a woman and a man for criminal possession of a loaded .357 revolver.

A few days earlier, during the riots which took place on Fordham Road on June 1, Jahmel Leach, 16, is seen on video being hit with a Taser by police, who said he had started a fire. The teen was also allegedly assaulted by police to the point where he almost lost his teeth, and subsequently required surgery.

He had been brought into custody without a parent or guardian being present. His family and attorneys are bringing a lawsuit against the NYPD as a result of the incident. In the meantime, charges against the teen have been dropped, and the Bronx DA’s office is investigating the incident.

Trump’s approach to criminal justice contrasts with the more measured views of his opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden, who acknowledges the injustices faced by African Americans by some members of law enforcement within the criminal justice system.

Biden has said repeatedly he does not condone violence or looting and stresses the importance of criminal justice reform as a way to reduce crime. In particular, he cites the need for the expansion of educational opportunities and increased funding for mental health and substance abuse services as being key to his vision for crime reduction.

In response to the president’s attacks on Democrats, Biden has also suggested that one reason for the increased violence in the United States has been the president’s in-

flammatory rhetoric.

“This president long ago forfeited any moral leadership in this country. He can’t stop the violence, because for years he’s fomented it,” Biden said. “He may believe mouthing the words ‘law and order’ makes him strong, but his failure to call on his own supporters to stop acting as an armed militia in this country shows how weak he is. These are not images of some imagined Joe Biden America in the future. These are images of Donald Trump’s America today.”

Melody Jiménez is the founder of No Voice Unheard, a Bronx-based advocacy platform that gives a voice to youth impacted by gun, gang, and street violence. She says the president’s words have been “a bit harsh,” but she respects his commitment to helping the police keep communities safe.

“I feel that the President is just trying to strive for law and order,” she said, adding that throughout the pandemic, there had been a lot of looting, and a lot of protests. She said she agreed with both the slogan and the agenda of Black Lives Matter in the beginning but later, she had some doubts. “At this point, I do feel like a lot of hatred is being portrayed, and at this point, if change is to come about, we need to do it with policy and not riot the way riots are happening.”

Jiménez said she is worried the protests are eroding the existing communication networks between Bronx residents and the police. She said she believes the police are necessary and that the best way to hold them accountable is by speaking up at community events.

“If we do speak up more, if we do engage with [the] NYPD, if we do go to town hall meetings, and we do go to board meetings, it would make a change in our community... [but] not to protest, not to make a person feel uncomfortable, because you know, it’s a job at the end of the day.” Nonetheless, Jiménez seems concerned that the president’s choice of words distract from his broader pledge to keep Americans safe.

Meanwhile, Bronx Councilmember Ritchie Torres acknowledges crime statistics are rising, and at a recent

(continued on page 18)



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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



After a recent national study found one in three parents would not get their children flu shots this year amid concerns over the COVID-19 vaccine, we asked readers for their views on this topic.



"Honestly I'm against flu shots. I got vaccine shots for my kids when they were little which I didn't want to, but I have a granddaughter who just turned one year old and her mom did not get her a flu shot. She didn't give her kids any of the shots. I've always taken a flu shot, but this year I'm so afraid with all of this stuff happening with COVID, and all of the new medicines that they are trying to test out on people, I don't want to be someone's test, so I personally am not taking it this year."

Iris Rivera-Smith,
Morrisania



"I have taken the flu shot before and I will take a flu shot. No, I'm not concerned. I am a little concerned about the COVID-19 shot, so I will have to do some research on that, but the regular flu shot I take every year [...] and I have no side effects, but the COVID shot, I don't know. I have to think about it."

Rosa Velasquez,
Belmont



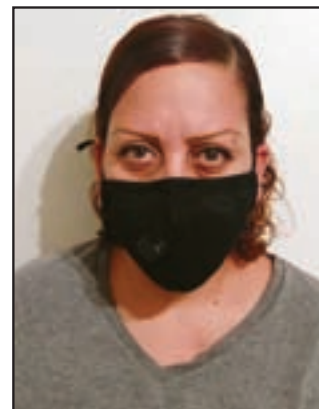
"Honestly, I do not trust the flu shots. What I guarantee do we have that the flu shot is actually a flu shot and not something else? I would like to see that it actually is a flu shot before anyone shoots me up with anything. I feel they could be testing the COVID-19 shot. I don't trust anything or anyone at this point, especially now that the president caught it. I don't want my family to get the flu shot. The only one I'll trust is God."

Heather Guerino,
Norwood



"Yes, I do get the flu shot every year. Ah yeah, I think I'll get it this year. I'm talking to you now and I'm thinking about it. I always got it every year and I was thinking about getting the flu shot. I don't know. Do you trust this government? I always trusted the government. I don't trust (Donald) Trump. I don't trust him, so that makes me want to think. I don't trust his administration. It's been known that the government sometimes experiments on the people. Wow, you think they could be testing us again and experimenting with us? Maybe... wow, I'm going to have to think about that now."

Julio Cutanda,
Norwood



"I believe if you're wearing your mask, washing your hands and keeping your distance you can combat COVID and the flu. I have always taken the flu shot in the past. For some reason there is too much going on in the government now and I distrust it for many reasons. Stay safe, be considerate of others and wear your mask."

Barbara Melendez,
Morris Park



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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Overdose Prevention & Reversal Training

On Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 9:30 a.m. and at 4 p.m., an Overdose Prevention & Reversal training course will be held at Tremont Neighborhood Health Action Center at 1826 Arthur Avenue. Participants can learn how to become a Certified Opioid Overdose Responder and will receive an Overdose Rescue Kit with naloxone, a medication that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose and restores breathing. This training will take place monthly and is open to anyone. More here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/overdose-prevention-and-reversal-training-tickets-90857129119?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Councilman Andy King Expelled

New York City Council expelled Councilman Andy King on Monday, Oct. 5, over charges he harassed and discriminated against a female employee, took a kickback from another staffer, and failed to pay a fine for previous misconduct. The decision was taken following the release, on Sept. 29, of findings by the City Council Standards and Ethics Committee of a third investigation into his conduct. The committee recommended that the councilman be expelled, and the vote was carried 48-2 in the council. King opposes the decision and plans to appeal.

CB7 Voice Community's Concerns Over Affordable Housing Project

Following a meeting on Sept. 15, the CB7 Housing, Land Use & Economic Development committee issued a letter to the City's Landmarks Preservation Committee (LPC) to voice their concerns, and those of some residents, in relation to a proposed 9-story affordable housing project targeted for the grounds of St. James Episcopal Church. The church, a protected building, is located at 2500 Jerome Av-



Photo by DAVID GREENE

ANTI-ABORTION DEMONSTRATORS display signs to passing cars along Eastchester Road as part of a protest outside Bronx Abortion GYN Services on Saturday, September 26, 2020.

Anti-Abortion Protest Spawns Political Discourse

by DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY

Opponents of abortion arrived early on Saturday, Sept. 26, to Bronx Abortion GYN Services at 2070 Eastchester Road in the Indian Village section of the Bronx, but what was expected to be a single-issue protest quickly evolved into an all-out debate on a whole range of political topics and the upcoming presidential election.

A handful of anti-abortion demonstrators quietly held signs across the street from the location, while a separate group of nuns prayed a short distance away outside the clinic. A third group of pro-abortion activists stood in front of the clinic's entrance, and provided safe passage to those entering, as police officers sat in a nearby vehicle on Eastchester Road observing all three groups.

The anti-abortion protesters are members of a national organization called "Forty Days for Life," and were continuing a forty-day, daily protest which they said began on Sept. 23, and which was also taking place simultaneously in other locations across the country. The daily protest is due to continue until Nov. 1.

One unidentified, anti-abortion protestor explained, "Forty days for Life is an organization that comes together, twice a year, to fast and pray peacefully in front of the abortion clinics for the end of abortion, and it's a period of forty-days, 24-hours, seven days a week, for forty days, with the hope and prayer and diligence that each abortion clinic would be closed down permanently, to end abortion altogether." She added, "Why? Because

we want to save the lives of the unborn."

The members of the Texas-based organization said they planned to continue holding similar demonstrations outside of the Eastchester Road clinic in the future, as well as at Dr. Emily Women's Health Center on Southern Boulevard in the Longwood section of the Bronx.

As discussions between the protesters and *Norwood News* continued, one woman who was standing briefly with the nuns, and who was wearing a white lab coat drenched in fake blood, took the conversation in the direction of education and gender.

"You're voting for children in the first and second grade to be told they can switch their genders because

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enue in Fordham Manor, adjacent to St. James Park, and would be restored and renovated as part of the development.

Some residents had concerns that the new housing structure, though designed to blend in with the historical church stonework, would overshadow the church, due

to its height, while others had concerns that there were insufficient transport services, parking and other facilities in the local area to support additional affordable housing. Other residents supported the development saying they needed affordable housing options in the area. Following a vote, the commit-

tee did not reject the project but agreed to send the letter to the LPC.

Long-Term Roadway Closure

There will be a full roadway closure of E. 203rd Street between Grand Concourse and Valentine Avenue, two to three days per week, be-

tween 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and between Monday and Friday, or between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. when school is not in session, from Oct. 7 through Dec. 31, 2020, in order to pour concrete and make deliveries. Local deliveries and emergency vehicles will be able to access East 203rd Street from both ends of the block.

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Community March Against Gun Violence

(continued from page 1)

“The violence that’s plaguing our community,” she told the crowd. “We are killing ourselves and we have to do more to bring awareness to that fact and do more to make sure that we can do things to prevent it and to save lives.”

As of Oct. 6, the percentage increase in year-to-date shootings and shooting victims in the Bronx was 72.5 percent, and 84.8 percent respectively, compared with the same period last year. These were below those recorded this year during the same period in Queens South (106.3 percent, 100 percent), Brooklyn North (110 percent, 101 percent), Brooklyn South (141.7 percent, 163.2 percent) and on Staten Island (100 percent, 125 percent), but were above those recorded in Queens North (31.6 percent, 57.1 percent), Manhattan North (59.5 percent, 75 percent) and Manhattan South (50 percent, 60 percent).

The 52nd precinct has partnered with B.R.A.G. to bolster outreach efforts with some of the local neighborhoods most affected by gun violence. B.R.A.G. originated within the 46th precinct and has since grown into three divisions: B.R.A.G. West, B.R.A.G. North, and B.R.A.G. North-west, which includes the 52nd precinct.

The organization’s violence interrupters, also known as “credible messengers,” are members who have experienced gun violence, and are trained to identify youth at risk of “retaliatory violence.” By engag-

ing with the community at events like anti-gun violence rallies, the group hopes to create a bridge with law enforcement in communities that need protection from violent offenders.

David Caba attributes the group’s success in helping reduce gun violence to its members’ good reputation within these communities. “If you’re out there late at night at 1-2 a.m., if you’re us [B.R.A.G.], we’re credible,” Caba said.

“We’re from that community. We grew up in that community. They know who we are,” he added. “They’ll stop and think about the consequences before they do conduct the violence.” In addition, B.R.A.G. raises awareness about violence and its larger impact, and promotes community norms that embrace non-violence.

Meanwhile, Caldwell-Paris had a message for anyone who feels the NYPD is not interested in their concerns. She suggested they attend the monthly meetings of the 52nd Precinct Community Council, currently held online through Zoom since the pandemic hit.

Caldwell-Paris said attendees will hear from Alps about the latest precinct crime statistics, tips on how to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime, they will be introduced to new precinct officers, and hear examples of how individual cops are protecting the public.

Just as important to Caldwell-Paris, though, is the time set aside at these meetings for residents to share concerns and ask questions to the precinct leadership. “When you have issues in regards to policing, or any quality of life issues in regards to policing, coming to the [52nd] Precinct Community Council meeting is the most important place,” she said.

At the most recent meeting, Alps talked, among other issues, about what the precinct is doing to keep crime down

and guns off the streets, his ongoing monitoring of use of force by officers through bodycam footage, response times, and the liability concerns that individual officers have when doing their jobs.

Alps said there were 21 less civilian complaints logged at the precinct compared to last year, and that compared to the rest of the borough, the precinct was number two in gun arrests.

According to the latest available Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) monthly report, there were five complaints received by the Board for the 52nd precinct in August (and three for the 50th precinct). A further breakdown of those complaints by precinct was not available. The Board currently has a total open docket of 2,764 cases citywide.

Generally, complaints are classified into four categories: Force, Abuse of Authority, Discourtesy and Offensive Language. Under the Force category, sub-categories include Gun pointed, Gun fired, Nightstick as club (incl asp & baton), Gun as club, Radio as club, Flashlight as club, Police shield, Other blunt instrument as a club, Hit against inanimate object, Chokehold, Pepper spray, Physical force, Handcuffs, Nonlethal restraining device, Animal, Other and Restricted Breathing.

Referring to the 52nd precinct officers, Alps commended their work, said it had been a tough year and said, “I’m looking to see if they’re not avoiding their responsibilities, and they’re doing their research on what they’re asked to do and when an arrest needs to be made, and it’s appropriate that [they’re] actually making that arrest.”

Also, at the meeting was newly assigned NYPD Chief of Community Affairs, Chief Jeffrey Maddrey, one of the highest-ranking African Americans

within the NYPD. Maddrey said prior to his recent promotion, he had been based in Brooklyn but that in recent months, he had spent more and more time in the Bronx.

“As I’ve been touring around in this new role, meeting many different communities, we’re seeing all the things that are going on in our communities and in our country, and there’s a lot of different things we can talk about in that [inaudible], but the thing that I talked about most of all is what has affected us the most, and that’s gun violence,” he said.

He added, “It’s so important that we pull together as communities, and as I’m walking around talking to people, so many people are supportive of the NYPD, despite what we hear in the news and read in the paper.”

Maddrey said that with gun violence running amok, and communities dealing with loss of lives, the police department and the community needed to work closely together. He cited the NYPD’s ongoing commitment to removing guns from the streets. “I think it was two weeks ago - 173 guns, the week before that - 160 guns. It just shows you the proliferation of guns,” he said.

He then encouraged the community to support the police. “Sometimes, the job can be thankless, and it’s always dangerous but you have cops out there that are dedicated to protecting each and every one of you,” he said.

For those interested in attending a meeting of the 52nd Community Council, they typically take place on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. More information can be obtained by calling the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824.

**Sile Moloney contributed additional reporting to this story.*

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CRIME FILE

By SÍLE MOLONEY



Norwood Murder, 50-Year-Old Man Arrested

On Sunday, Sept. 27, at approximately 7.13 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding an aided man inside 315 East 206th Street, apartment 2D, within the confines of the 52nd precinct in the Norwood section of the Bronx. Upon arrival, officers conferred with FDNY personnel who discovered an unconscious and unresponsive, unidentified man lying face down in the apartment with multiple slash wounds to his head and back. EMS pronounced the man deceased at the scene. An additional, unidentified man was taken into custody from the scene on pending charges. On Sept. 28, the NYPD reported that Juan Alonso, 50, of 315 E. 206th Street was arrested and charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon in relation to the incident.

Bronx NYPD Employee Arrested for Assault

On Sunday, Sept. 27, at approximately 4.30 a.m., an on-duty New York City employee was arrested and charged, in the confines of the 44th precinct in the Bronx. Ariel Victor Castillo, 41, of the NYPD was arrested and charged with assault.

Norwood: Investigation Into 3 Fires in 4 Days

The FDNY's Fire Marshal unit is investigating three fires which struck commercial businesses over a four-day period in Norwood. FDNY officials reported that a first blaze was reported on Sept. 24 at 1.27 a.m. which destroyed three shops, D'Amigos Restaurant and Bar, P&S Wigs and Jewelry, and a beauty supply shop, all located between Jerome Avenue and DeKalb Avenue, between numbers 10 and 14 East Gun Hill Road. The fire was brought under control by 108 firefighters from 25 fire units at 3.02 a.m. Three

firefighters were injured.

A second fire broke out inside the W&K Beauty Salon & Barber Shop, located at 6 West Gun Hill Road, at 10.47 p.m., on Sunday, Sept. 27 and 60 FDNY members from 12 fire units brought the blaze under control by 11.28 p.m. A third fire was reported in a 4th floor apartment at 3120 Bainbridge Avenue, at 9.26 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 28. Sixty FDNY members from 12 fire units were called in to battle the fire, which was brought under control 32 minutes later.

Gunman Sought in Hull Avenue Daylight Shooting

Police are looking for a gunman who fired into an apartment building on a crowded street in Norwood, on Wednesday, Sept. 30, outside of 3307 Hull Avenue at East 209th Street. The NYPD said the incident was reported at 2.57 p.m., that the shooter discharged his weapon from inside a gray sedan aiming it at another person and then

fled the location. There were no injuries, there are no arrests yet, and the investigation is ongoing. One local resident said a half dozen young members of the Bloods gang had just walked in the direction of the Hull Avenue building when the shot rang out.

City Employee Arrested on Assault Charges in Bronx

On Saturday, Oct. 3, at 00:38 a.m., an off-duty New York City male employee was arrested and charged within the confines of the 44th precinct, which covers the neighborhoods of Grand Concourse, Bronx Terminal Market, and Yankee Stadium. Diego Carmona-Suero, 33, an employee at the New York City Department of Sanitation was charged with assault.

Norwood: Man Wanted in Connection with Forcible Touching Incident

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance in

identifying an individual wanted in connection with a forcible touching incident that occurred in the 52nd precinct. On Monday Sept. 14, at approximately 6.50 p.m., at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Reservoir Oval West in the Norwood section of the Bronx, the individual grabbed a 45-year-old female victim's buttocks and then fled on foot. The individual is described as male, is 6 feet tall, and of a slim build. Video and photographic surveillance of the suspect was captured prior to the incident and is available at the NYPD.

Anyone with information with regard to these incidents 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 confidential.



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By SÍLE MOLONEY

The first thing that strikes you about Dan Padernacht, the first candidate to jump into the race for the 11th City Council District seat, is the speed at which he speaks, and not in a nervous way. Padernacht leaves you with the impression that if he could squeeze additional information into each answer, he would do so. Is he prepared? It would seem so, and that is precisely the platform on which he is running.

Asked what differentiates him from his peers, the lifelong Bronxite cites his experience. “I was an economics major, so that was my background in college,” he said. “As an attorney, I’ve got a good amount of experience in the sense of dealing with just [real estate] transactional and then, I do a good amount of pro bono in housing court as well.”

Padernacht said it is this combination of housing and real estate experience, plus his years of service on Bronx Community Board 8, in different capacities, that gives him an edge. He seems well placed when it comes to weighing in on the ongoing debate around rent deferral.

“So, what I think is happening right now, and what I think *should* happen is that the State and the City really need to bolster HRA (Human Resources Administration) in the City of New York,” he said. “Make sure that they have the financing that they need to subsidize the families that need help with their rent.”

He said that when New Yorkers fall behind on their rent, they usually have to apply for assistance to HRA, and that with the new Universal Access Program, attorneys are helping most tenants with these applications, and have their own connections and liaisons within HRA.

Padernacht said the agency assesses the individual and family applications for assistance by examining their income, rent, need, and ability to pay in order to form a bigger picture. They then make a determination based on affordability, and on what the family most needs.

The problem Padernacht sees with the process is that there appears to be no targeted approach, and each applicant is painted with the same broad brushstroke. Padernacht said this results in folks in need feeling scared because they know they don’t have the money or the resources to sustain themselves, and yet the outcome of their applications is uncertain.

“I always say in a lot of these circumstances, you need a scalpel, and not a brush,” he said. “I think what’s happening is that they’re not being given that reaffirmation from the City and the State that they’re going to be there to back them up, and then you have another range of folks who *can* afford to pay their rent, and *can* afford to go on, but they’re not,” he said.

“They’re, kind of, in that brush supporting this movement that everything should be canceled. You don’t have a sharp tool going out there to find those people and assess their situations, and not only help them with rent arrears, but with food delivery, with other services that they need,” he added.

“That’s a whole other bigger issue but

Elections 2021: Dan Padernacht, Party and People

right now, we need to go and find those families who *are* vulnerable, and figure out not just rent assistance, but what else they need.”

Padernacht added that, from an economic perspective, it makes sense to do the same thing. “If you were just to do this wide-sweeping, ‘cancel rent’ for this [pandemic] period, what you’re essentially doing is creating another vulnerable population of small owners - folks who own one to four family houses who can’t support themselves,” he said.

He acknowledged there were calls to cancel mortgages as well, but said that this creates another problem - pressure on regional banks, whether they can afford to take that hit, and what that means for future investment within the community.

“Now, you’re sucking money out of the economy, and any economist will tell you, if you want to grow an economy, you need to spend money,” he said. “You need to put money in the pockets of people who are going to spend it, and that’s how you generate demand within an economy for further services, and with more services and sales, you’re generating jobs, and it’s growing, growing, growing.”

Padernacht said the alternative approach creates a vacuum, sucking up the essential fuel that is needed to grow an economy. “So, my take is, you bolster the agency, you make sure you have the financial assistance for those who really need it, and you put the money into the pockets of especially the smaller owners who are going to need that help as well.”

He said what was *not* needed was housing stock going down, which would affect a lot of homeowners. “Most folks, the average individual, their retirement savings is generally the equity they have in their homes, when they spend 20-30 years paying down a mortgage,” he said. “At the end, they have that money for retirement and when you start playing with the economy, and you start playing with the housing market and the [market] values, you start hurting that population, and you start dipping into folks who have been saving their entire lives.”

Given the known reticence by undocumented New Yorkers to share personal information with government officials, and their fears of completing the census or participating in contact tracing efforts, *Norwood News* asked Padernacht if he thought the same undocumented resi-



Photo courtesy of Dan Padernacht

DAN PADERNACHT

dents were also potentially afraid to contact HRA for assistance.

“Yeah, you don’t need many of those documents when you’re making your application to HRA,” he said. “I mean, it’s been going on for many, many years now where you can get assistance without having to come forward with that. I don’t believe that’s a concern, and I don’t think the City of New York has made that a priority to exclude folks who don’t have such documents.”

In light of Padernacht’s experience in the real estate world, we move on to the topic of Opportunity Zones and his views on why it would appear certain developers received tax breaks under this federal program, without ever investing in the economically distressed areas that were identified under the program.

“Criticism is properly placed for the execution of the program and its lack of oversight,” he said. “The biggest problem was the selection of zones. Like other tax incentives, this program is a tool to bring capital to areas that need economic stimulus. Of the 514 zones [identified], more than 300 tracts were in New York City, ten were in Long Island, and 12 were in Westchester. Anyone looking at the market in 2018 could tell you this program was not necessary in these downstate areas.”

He said the zones should have been targeted at Upstate and Western New York in places where investment was barren, and jobs were low. “As a tool, Opportunity Zones could be used to pool capital from a group of local residents to rehabilitate housing stock in their communities,” he said. “They could also generate larger projects creating construction jobs and supporting mom-and-pop shops. In both scenarios, local reputable non-profits could provide useful information and even manage projects.”

Padernacht added that he did not know what local input was sought out when the Opportunity Zones were originally identified and recommended. “There should be a targeted approach to re-task the program to areas in the State where this program could be beneficial,” he said.

In terms of his background, Padernacht grew up in the Shalom Aleichem Houses on Sedgwick Avenue along the Jerome Park Reservoir. “It was built for socialists,” he said. “And it was supposed to be a cooperative, but it failed, like,

right away in the Depression, so it went into private ownership and it stayed in private ownership.” He said the building now houses rent-stabilized apartments. “My grandfather was the Super here, became the Super in 1949, and my father grew up here,” he said. “We grew up here.”

He said he attended PS 95, Fordham Prep, and later Fairfield University. “I worked for a while, and then I went to law school when I was 28,” he said. He later started his own law practice.

In terms of campaign fundraising, Padernacht has accumulated the third highest total contributions according to the City Campaign Finance Board, after Eric Dinowitz and Jessica Haller. However, it’s votes that count at the end of the day, and Padernacht’s campaign recently received a boost with the endorsement of the North West Democrats, in addition to a previous endorsement by his former running mate in the 11th District Council race, Dionel Then, who dropped out in August.

Having correctly anticipated, as early as 2018, Councilman Andy Cohen’s eventual judgeship nomination, Padernacht has patiently bided his time in terms of his higher political ambitions. He has continued to serve on Community Board 8, and dropped out of a prior political race for the sake of the Democratic Party.

“In 2010, I ran for State Senate against somebody named Pedro Espada,” he said. Both Espada and the incumbent, Efrain González Jr., had legal troubles at the time and were controversial figures. When González announced he was court-ting the support of the Republican Party in Albany, Padernacht decided to run against him, as did now Sen. Gustavo Rivera.

“The Democratic Party wanted me to step back, so that way Gustavo had a one on one,” he said. “Ultimately, that’s what I decided to do for the good of the party. I just backed Gustavo, Gustavo became the state senator, Pedro [was] out, and then I continued on the community board, and I became the chair in 2014.”

When Padernacht later stepped down as board chair, he didn’t run for any position as he said he wanted to just take the year to be a regular member but then, a friend who had been the new traffic & transportation chair fell ill the following year. “I kind of stepped up and took on the traffic committee,” he said. “I don’t think anybody else wanted to do it at that point.”

Padernacht said when he stepped back from the senate seat in 2010, he thinks most people saw that he will always do what’s good for the general public. “I’m going to put other people’s needs in front of mine,” he said.

“Any issue that’s put in front of me, I’m going to problem-solve, and I’m going to give real solutions. I’m not going to give sound bites. I’m not going to give what people want to hear. I’m actually going to give the real, hard facts of any situation, look at it from every end, and say, ‘Look, these are possible solutions, and these are the consequences of taking those actions,’ and go from there.”

**This story is based on an interview which took place on July 29.*



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Out & About

Compiled by AURÉOLE RIBES

Food

The Bronx Night Market series celebrates culture and cuisine, represents the city's diverse offerings, and supports up-and-coming food concepts, all the while encouraging visitors from the greater New York area and beyond to explore our borough. Entrance is free and the market will be every Saturday and Sunday through November. Learn more here: <https://www.facebook.com/BronxNightMarket/>.

Events

Noelle Santos, owner of The Lit. Bar, an independent bookstore / wine bar at 131 Alexander Avenue (between 134th Street & Bruckner Boulevard) in Mott Haven, hosts an online book club called **"Readers and Shakers."** Learn more here: <https://www.meetup.com/ReadersandShakers/events/>.

Friday Night Live, hosted by Zambo Aroma, is an open mic platform for singers, dancers, poets, comics, live painters, etc. Doors open at 8 p.m. Open Mic Starts from

9-11 p.m. at 3848 White Plains Road. More info here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/friday-night-live-tickets-122484355003?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

The New York Botanical Garden has an ongoing event called **"Hello Harvest"** where you can explore the Edible Academy's fall bounty with a scavenger hunt and learn how to prepare the garden for the winter season. Schedule: Tuesday to Friday, 1:30-5:30 p.m., and Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Find out more here: <https://www.nybg.org/event/hello-harvest/>.

Join a plethora of **New York Public Library events** online, from craft circles to book discussions. Find out more here: <https://www.nypl.org/events/calendar/online>

Exhibits

Bronx Arts Space presents **"How to Dance"** curated by Phyllis Rosenzweig, which explores the joyful, imperfect and awkward aspects of dancing. Artists

Lindsay Benedict, Julia Brown, Mark Bradford, Klara Liden, and Glendaly Medina delve into the performativity, and cultural and historical aspects of movement. The exhibit is on view through Oct. 16 at 305 E 140th Street. Gallery hours: Thursday & Friday, 2-6 p.m., Saturday, 12 a.m. to 5 p.m. Learn more here: <http://www.bronxartspace.com/>.

Sports and Movement

Westchester Parks Foundation hosts a free **Bodyweight Bootcamp**, sponsored by New York Presbyterian Hospital. This 45-minute workout is designed to mobilize your movements, strengthen your muscles and take your cardio to the next level! It takes place at Bronx River Reservation, 2-4 Palmer Ave on Oct. 11 at 10 a.m. More info here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bodyweight-bootcamp-tickets-123037200579?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m., there are free **Vinyasa Yoga** classes at Bronx

Works, 1130 Grand Concourse. Yoga mats are provided. More info here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/free-vinyasa-yoga-class-every-wednesday-2nd-floor-gymnasium-tickets-86803458481?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

At **Bronx Zoo Mitsubishi Riverwalk**, a lake paddle will take place on Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., organized by the Bronx River Alliance. A beautiful trip, this paddle starts and ends within the Mitsubishi Riverwalk area of Bronx Zoo, and tickets are \$15-\$25. More info here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lake-paddle-101020-tickets-86804716243>

Community Friday, hosted by Bronx River Alliance, takes place on Oct. 16 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and offers people the chance to bond as they canoe through the tidal section of the Bronx. Open to everyone, no experience is needed. To check out this and more events by Bronx River Alliance, visit: <http://bronxriver.org/calendar>.



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2020 Virtual Healthy New York Summit

By **AURÉOLE RIBES**

On Sept. 17, the “2020 Virtual Healthy New York Summit,” took place. The aim of the summit was to examine the ways in which COVID-19 has and will affect New York State’s health care policies, innovation, and future.

During the three-hour summit, health care decision-makers, politicians, and policy experts examined obstacles encountered and discussed solutions and suggested improvements to health care.

Jon Lentz, editor-in-chief of City & State New York, opened the annual summit, emphasizing how the topic of health is more present than ever, before introducing Dr. Howard A. Zucker, the New York State Health Commissioner.

Zucker outlined how New York State went from having the highest COVID-19 infection rate in the country to the lowest by implementing the world’s most extensive COVID-19 testing operation per capita, mandating the wearing of face masks, and creating a nationally replicable contact-tracing program with Bloomberg Philanthropies. “We know that each of us must keep on modifying our behaviors to stop COVID-19 infections,” he said.

Dr. Dave A. Chokshi, who recently replaced Dr. Oxiris Barbot as the Health Commissioner of New York City, spoke next. As reported by *Norwood News*, Barbot left the position in August, expressing her “deep disappointment that during the most critical public health crisis, the [City’s] health department’s incomparable disease control expertise was not used to the degree it could have been.”

For his part, Chokshi highlighted ways in which New Yorkers can continue to interrupt transmission as we enter the colder season and spend more time indoors. He said individual proactive measures like wearing a mask, and social distancing need to be continued, and supplemented with community and city-level actions.

He added that being data-driven, not being complacent, and making sure that our COVID-19 efforts are hyper local was key. Chokshi reiterated that everyone had a responsibility to protect one another by wearing a mask and by getting the flu vaccine, adding that he hoped more New Yorkers would get vaccinated this year than ever before.

Zucker said that, currently, in New York State, manual contact tracers are contacting those who have been in contact with people who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Next, Dr. Michael McConnell, the clinical lead of the Mobile Health & Devices division at Google Health, gave a presentation on Apple’s COVID-19 exposure notifications, which form part of a supplemental digital contact-tracing pro-



Photo courtesy of New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

DR. DAVE A. CHOKSHI, New York City Health Commissioner, participated in the 2020 Virtual Healthy New York Summit on September 17, 2020.

gram.

Exposure notifications utilize non-identifiable Bluetooth signals that show a person’s proximity to those who have COVID-19, alerting them that they have come into contact with an infected person.

According to an Oxford study, even a 15 percent increase in the adoption of such exposure notifications, along with manual contact-tracing could reduce infections by 15 percent. “The more adoption, the even greater impact that one can have,” McConnell said.

During the first panel discussion, health care reporter for POLITICO New York, Amanda Eisenberg, asked about contact tracing, safety net hospitals, and what lessons were learned since the first COVID-19 wave hit.

Sen. Gustavo Rivera responded referencing Senate Bill S84450C which he sponsored, and which restricts the sharing of patient information between public health agencies, police, and immigration enforcement.

Rivera explained that New York would not be able to enter normalcy until there was a robust contact-tracing program in place. In this context, he said the government needed to guarantee that patient information for undocumented residents would be kept completely private. “Particularly with this administration in D.C., they have a fear of sharing any of their information,” Rivera said, referring to the State’s undocumented residents.

The senator added that even for those who *are* documented, the history of police

intervention in the U.S. had made people wary of giving out personal information out of fear of how it might be used.

Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, chairperson of the health committee at the State Assembly, spoke about HIV testing and a prior confidentiality law that had been passed to protect the privacy of people with HIV, drawing similarities between that law and the new Contact Tracing Data Privacy Bill.

“Certainly, in this day and age of concern about the police and immigration, people need solid legal documentation that their contact tracing information is going to be kept under lock and key,” he said.

Louise Cohen is chief executive officer at Primary Care Development Corporation and asked about the primary care role during the crisis, and the dramatic increase in NYC Health + Hospitals telehealth visits.

Cohen said there had been no messaging at the State or local level about how to engage with primary care providers during the crisis. She said she spoke to one nurse who told her that 100 percent of the adult patients she

had been seeing had elevated hypertension.

“They couldn’t manage that elevated hypertension because it was a mass pass-through testing site,” she said. She added that such a delay in care created a second pandemic or shadow pandemic, which resulted in untreated and undiagnosed chronic diseases. Cohen urged the utilization of primary care going forward as the pandemic continues.

Dr. Ted Long, executive director of Test & Trace Corps at New York City Health + Hospitals, explained that they had used the pandemic to get people who never had primary care physicians enrolled at mass testing sites. “We’re able to leverage this as an opportunity to bring people into the primary care world for the rest of their lives, and we start with telehealth,” he said.

Rivera concluded by acknowledging that the crisis hadn’t changed the health system and emphasized that there was an obligation on public representatives to alter them. “The reimagining of our healthcare system has to be done in a way where we have people at its center,” he said.



Letters To The Editor

Election 2020

President Trump, you have had almost four years to lead the United States and have failed us by your own choosing. Whether it be in foreign policy and domestic policy you have not protected the United States as Commander-in-Chief.

Now comes the latest news about your complete disrespect for our military and total disregard for the COVID-19 virus. We, the American people have finally borne witness to what happens when they place an incompetent business leader into the Oval Office. Quality of life is not a business decision, Sir, but rather it is a humane choice to be empathetic to those who cannot help themselves.

Joe Biden has that empathy and will return the United States to the era when we were respected internationally because of how we treat our citizens domestically. This election is a clear choice between those who have never had it so good and those of us who know we can do better. Joe Biden will lead us there.

Fellow citizens, exercise your right to vote to preserve your sacred heritage, promote your children’s future and obtain the blessings of liberty we all cherish. To restore a sense of decency to the United States, rise and vote!

**Joe Bialek
Cleveland**

Solution for Dirty Subway Stations

There is more to the MTA & NYC Transit issuing new rules and regulations for riding the subway. Until the early 1960s, subway riders respected authority. There was a ten cents fee to use station bathrooms. That generation of riders did not litter subway stations and buses, leaving behind gum, candy wrappers, paper cups, bottles and newspapers. They didn’t spit, urinate or defecate on subway platforms or cars.

Today’s riders are reluctant to use subway station bathrooms, even when available. Many stations have no working facilities or are closed. Who wants to deal with the lack of toilet paper, soap or hot water, unhinged doors to stalls or finding a mess left behind by the previous patron? Who wants to find others using it as a safe place for consumption of drugs or sex? Homeless people afraid to go to shelters end up using the bathroom sink to shower in an attempt to maintain hygiene. Why not assign a matron to each male and female bathroom? Ask any local business, college or hospital to adopt an adjacent station bathroom to help cover the costs of staffing. In exchange, give the sponsor free advertising space at the station. If necessary, charge a nominal fee to use the facility.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**



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2020 Election Local Lens: Crime & Criminal Justice

(continued from page 2)

press conference with Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams offered some suggestions as to why this was the case.

"Fewer gun arrests, fewer gun cases solved, slower response times - these are signs of a possible work slowdown," he said referring to the NYPD's work. "Occam's razor holds that the simplest explanation is almost always the best and the dramatic increase in gun violence can be best explained by the dramatic decrease in gun enforcement."

Torres is the chair of the City Council Oversight and Investigations Committee. He and Adams have called for an investigation into whether there has been such a slowdown.

At a recent community council meeting of the 52nd precinct, Deputy Inspector Thomas J. Alps rejected this suggestion, citing a list of precinct response times and statistics as back-up. He also added that there had been no "blue flu" at the precinct but there had

been a reduction in headcount due to retirements and resignations.

In contrast to the president's steadfast calls for "law and order," Torres, who is running in November to replace Congressman José Serrano in New York's 15th congressional district, argues that safety for all individuals depends on the equitable application of accountability, a reference perhaps to the proposed independent oversight of the NYPD.

In the meantime, Torres believes the Bronx will become safer by investing in social programs that work to prevent crime from occurring in the first place. He said "a reimagining of public safety," is needed and he supports efforts to "civilianize" state responses to substance abuse and homelessness.

"The federal government should provide more resources to state and local governments," he added. "If there's a collapse in public services, then that's going to contribute to more violence in New York City. We need funding to invest in alternatives to policing."

Public and Community Meetings

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, the **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The meetings are usually held on the last Thursday of each month. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824 for further details.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** committee meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, Oct. 27**. Zoom details will be circulated ahead of the meeting.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **Bedford Mosholu Community Association** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next meeting will be held virtually on **Wednesday, Oct. 7, at 8 p.m.** For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

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Anti-Abortion Protest Spawns Political Discourse

(continued from page 6)

that's what they're taught," she said, adding that she was a former teacher at the Department of Education.

Referring to the children in first and second grade she had spoken of, she continued, "Instead of just learning reading, writing and arithmetic, now you have got to think, do I want to continue being a man?"

As the conversation progressed, the woman then steered the discussion towards race and the criminal justice system, saying, "So, you also want to support more Black people being locked up in prison? Because that's what [former Vice President Joe] Biden pushed. That's what [former President Bill] Clinton pushed, so that's what you're voting for."

The woman appeared to be referring to the First Step Act, a law which had broad bipartisan support, was passed by Congress in 2018 and signed into law by President Donald Trump. It rewards certain prisoners who exhibit good behavior with reduced sentences, and also reorients criminal justice toward rehabilitation rather than punishment. In reference to the law, the woman said, "Trump helped a lot of Black people to get out of

prison."

According to an article in the Washington Post, within the first year of enactment, more than 3,000 federal prisoners were released based on changes to the "good-time credits calculation formula under the First Step Act." *Norwood News* has not independently verified the racial breakdown of those released.

The woman then went on to praise what she saw as the president's commitment to permanently funding historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In fact, according to Inside Higher-Ed, the president signed what was, once again, legislation that had broad bipartisan support. Dubbed the FUTURE Act, the U.S. Congress passed the law in December 2019, and made permanent \$255 million in annual STEM funding for minority-serving colleges, including roughly \$85 million which was specifically allocated to HBCUs.

In conclusion, in reference to the upcoming election, the woman said, "I'm Black, but the fact that I'm Black does not mean, like Biden said, if I'm Black I've got to vote for him." She added, "I researched. I don't have to vote for him because I'm Black. We're not talking about what Trump said.

We're talking about what he *did* - now *that*, you can believe."

A second demonstrator, an African-American man, also defended Trump, saying, "Most politicians don't do anything. He actually does things. Yeah, he does what he says he's going to do, whether you like him or not. Obama said, 'If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. That was a lie.'"

According to Politifact, President Barack Obama clarified his remarks about Obamacare by saying people could keep their plan if it hadn't

changed since Obamacare passed. "Now, if you have or had one of these plans before the Affordable Care Act came into law and you really liked that plan, what we said was you can keep it if it hasn't changed since the law passed," Obama said.

According to Bronx Abortion GYN Services website, 1.3 million pregnancies are aborted each year in the United States. Calls for comment to both the Bronx Abortion GYN Services and Dr. Emily Woman's Health Center were not immediately returned.

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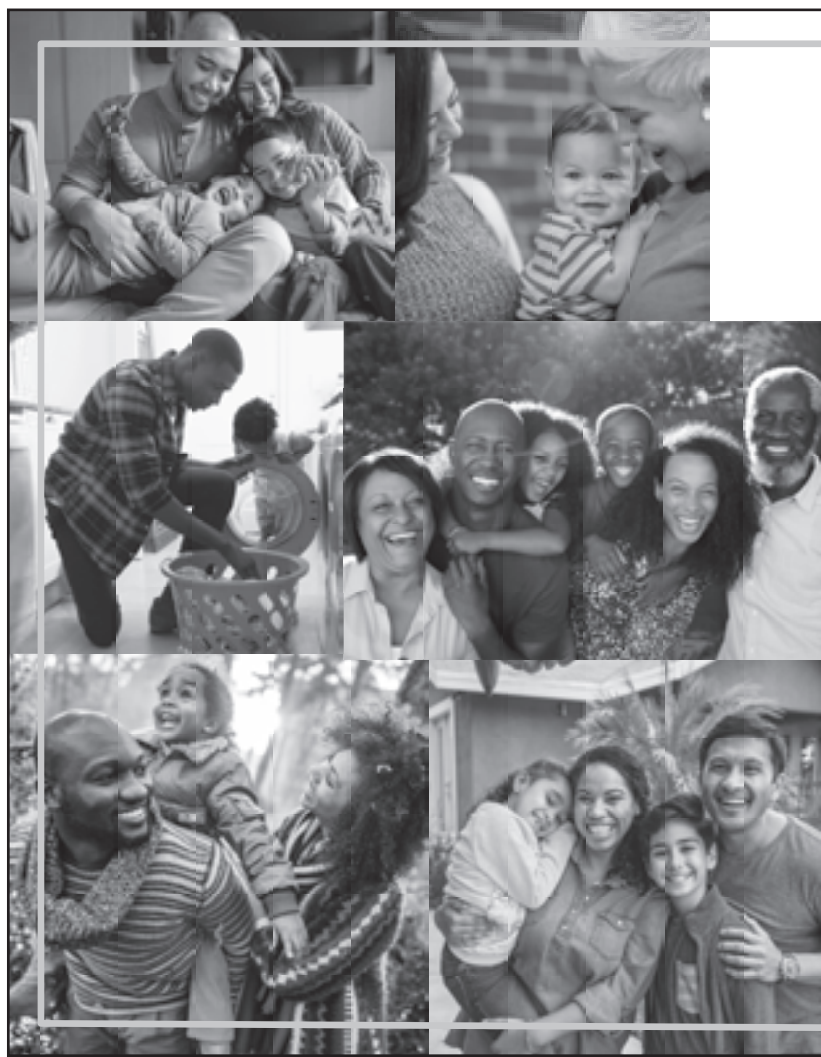


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