



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 33, No 16 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • NOVEMBER 19-DECEMBER 2, 2020

RESIDENTS LIVE IN FEAR OF RATS



Photo by Miriam Quiñones.

RESIDENTS LIVING AT or adjacent to 3440 Gates Place in Norwood are fearful of rats which they say are drawn to excess, mishandled garbage that is being left in a dirty, adjacent alley way.

**By MIRIAM QUINONES &
SILE MOLONEY**

A number of residents who live in or adjacent to 3440 Gates Place in Norwood are living in fear of large rats which, they

said, are frequenting the alleyway adjacent to the building where the tenants' garbage is stored. At least one rat has entered the basement of the adjacent dwelling, and though the

residents have complained, individually and repeatedly, to the building's super, landlord, and to a number of city agencies, they have yet to receive a satisfactory response. They said the situation

is already a health hazard.

The residents, who wish to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation, have attributed the arrival of the rats to overflow-

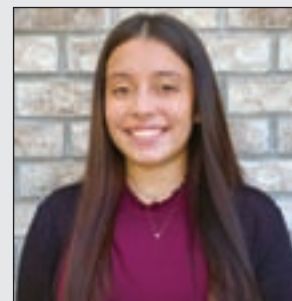
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NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 33, No. 16

Norwood News is published
bi-weekly on Thursdays by

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Elections 2021: Sanchez Aims to Harness Bronx Power

By SILE MOLONEY

John Sanchez said there's a role for everyone to play in changing society. One of six remaining candidates aiming to replace newly elected Congressman, Ritchie Torres, in the City Council 15th District race, Sanchez is focused on reducing unemployment, expanding affordable housing, and investing in municipal broadband services as one way to address education inequality in the Bronx.

Ever the optimist, he said campaigning in a borough with a large non-voting population is not disheartening. "Even if people can't vote, they know people in their neighborhood that *can* vote, and even if people are unable to vote, they're still able to support our campaign by making phone calls, sending emails, sending texts," he said. "As a council member, I plan to involve everyone in our office, regardless of their ability to vote."

Leading a campaign powered largely by women, Sanchez sees his role as district manager of Bronx Community Board 6 as a natural springboard into City Council politics, saying council members do very much the same thing as district managers, except they have a bigger budget, and they get to initiate and pass legislation.

"A major part of my platform is to invest in workforce development, specifically, doubling the funding that goes towards the Workforce 1 Centers," he said. Because the pandemic has disproportionately affected the retail and service sectors, which impact the Bronx economy more than in other boroughs where employees can work remotely, we asked Sanchez about the importance of job diversification.

In response, he said he advocates for investment in nonprofits that already train Bronx residents how to get high-paying jobs that *can* be performed remotely. "There are nonprofits such as Per Scholas Inc., The Knowledge House and Pursuit which train Bronx residents in web development, computer science, without a college degree," he said.

With discretionary dollars the City Council has at its disposal, Sanchez said investment in such training would mean Bronx residents could earn \$80,000 to \$100,000 annually. He said it's also possible to draw both public and private sector jobs to the Bronx.

"What's great about the district is



Photo courtesy of John Sanchez

JOHN SANCHEZ

we have some major anchor institutions that can be attractive to the private sector," Sanchez said, referring to Fordham University, The Bronx Zoo, and The Botanical Gardens.

He also wants to expand the city-owned Bathgate Industrial Park to attract more public and private sector investment, along with the Old Fordham Library and Tremont Park.

"We have the Old Fordham Library, [located at 2556 Bainbridge Avenue], which hasn't been used in nearly a decade, and we also have Tremont Park, which is the old site of Borough Hall, torn down in the '70s with a stairway to an empty patch of grass," he said.

"I'm proposing to develop both of those sites as job and workforce development centers." He said this was something the community wanted for a long time. "It needs to be done. 50 years is too long, and we need to restore the glory of that old past," he said.

We asked Sanchez why, in his opinion, these sites were never identified or developed under the federal Opportunity Zones tax program, given the program's objective was to re-develop underserved areas in exchange for attractive tax breaks.

"I think it depends," he said. "I think there's valid criticisms that the Opportunity Zones haven't created opportunity for people that need it the most, but because the two properties I mentioned are city owned, there's

more leverage for the City in determining what happens with those sites."

He said focusing on city owned properties yields more power when partnering with private sector developers, in contrast with wholly private developments, where the City has less influence on what happens at a specific site.

Though not in the 15th District, this raised the question as to why it has taken the city owned Kingsbridge Armory project so long to come to fruition. "It's a valid point," he said. "It speaks to a larger point on how come it costs so much money to redevelop a site that the city owns."

Sanchez acknowledges the cost to renovate certain spaces is too high and said the point should be a major [reform] platform for the next city council, across the board. "We're dealing with limited dollars," he said.

"We need to have procurement reform. We need to change the cost of construction projects in the city and make them more affordable so we can get more done with less money, because if the costs keep ballooning, then we'll never be able to have any improvements in our parks, our libraries, or our streets. City Council can change that."

He said there's also a need to expand the availability of affordable housing. "We need to expand the base-

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, following news of the latest recommendations and restrictions on movement in order to curtail the spread of the coronavirus, we asked readers how they plan to celebrate Thanksgiving.



"We're cancelling it this year, unfortunately, yeah. My family is in New Jersey and they're really cracking down because it's really spiking over there. So, keep the kids safe and just do without this year. We'll cook at home for ourselves and do something on the phone. That's about it, but actually, physically going to a Thanksgiving dinner? Not this year. We'll just call and wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving. That's all we can do. Hopefully, next year we'll see this thing go away. I don't know. Viruses never go away. They're always going to be there. It depends on how our bodies adjust to it."

Melvin Scott,
New City, Westchester



"My plan for Thanksgiving is staying home because they cancelled. Yeah, my family cancelled it because they're not having Thanksgiving, because it's a big family so nobody's getting together. We might have a little something, but it's just me and my wife, and that's it. We might buy a little turkey and cook it and that's it. Yes, I'm disappointed because everything is shutting down again and it's crazy. When is this going to stop, or when will they have a vaccine to cure everybody that's sick? Millions of people are just falling down now. It's horrible."

Luis Ramos,
Norwood



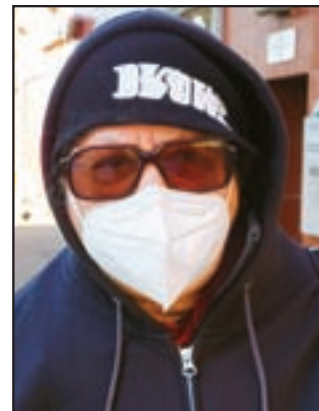
"Well, this year is different because of the pandemic. During the summer, we thought, by now, we'd be back to normal, and winter is about to start and COVID is our main concern right now. Thanksgiving is always with family and friends. Every year, I invite people and they come over and get together at my family party. They live all over the city and some come from upstate, but so far this year, I didn't invite anybody and I'm not thinking of inviting anyone, just my immediate family. Maybe I'll watch TV and stay home."

Mohammad Ali,
Clason Point



"Of course, I will be with family. I'm going to go to my brother's house, and I'm going to be with brothers and sisters. Yes, it's going to be limited to a small family group. It's not disappointing for me. I like big crowds, but I take it as it comes. I'm going to live my life normally. Whatever happens, happens. I won't restrict myself. I could get hit by a car or, God forbid, you know? Death comes in different ways but it's not going to stop me from living."

Leo Al Kateeb,
Yonkers, NY



"I think we should give the country back to the native Americans, as in the indigenous people of this land. It's canceled. I'll be with my husband and my cat. We normally travel to New Jersey. We might do ZOOM. They've been doing a lot of ZOOM lately. I hope we're done with this by this time next year."

Kathleen Hutchinson,
Parkchester



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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

New Law Requires Property Repairs in 60 Days

A new law introduced by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz establishes a 60-day maximum deadline for property owners to make court-ordered repairs to their property, the culmination of a nearly two-decade effort to honor the life of Jashawn Parker, who was 8 years old when he died in a Bronx fire at 3569 DeKalb Avenue in 2002. The building's tenants had long decried extreme deterioration, but repairs were not made despite multiple court orders over two years. Tenants and advocates had been pushing for remediation of nearly 400 code violations, including leaks and electrical problems. Housing Court judges granted at least two rulings that extended the property owner's deadline to complete the needed repairs before the accidental electrical fire occurred.

Kingsbridge Armory Ice Rink Project

Following some calls from residents to rethink the proposed ice-rink project at The Kingsbridge Armory, Councilman Fernanda Cabrera provided the following statement to the *Norwood News*. "I, and many others, have long awaited it's [the Armory's] repurposing into a facility that meets the community's needs and aspirations. In early discussions, many residents expressed strong interest in the Kingsbridge Armory housing a school, the borough's various museums, a high-quality supermarket, and family friendly forms of entertainment, all of which would provide much needed jobs. In view of the nationwide, state and local fiscal challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the way forward is not totally clear at this time. However, I look forward to resolving the various issues associated with this project in a way that responds to the community's vision and needs."

New Charter School to Open in Fall 2023

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Details of a new charter school to be located at 2720 Jerome Avenue in Fordham Manor were presented during Bronx Community Board 7's Education, Youth and Libraries Committee meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 4.

Jhennelle Robinson, committee chairperson, said "One of our priorities was to have amenities for our growing community." She added, "They're building all these buildings, but with that comes families, and children, and we're already strapped for [school] seats, so we need to continue to support any new schools or education programs coming in."

KIPP NYC public charter schools was founded in the South Bronx in 1995. It is not the largest charter school system in the city, but it is well established. According to its website, the group runs 15 free, public charter schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, and Washington Heights.

Through open enrollment, the group serves 5,970 students, 99 percent of whom are students of color, and continues to support 2,100 alumni. Twenty percent of students are classified as having special needs, and 88 percent

qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

According to the KIPP NYC website, its staff and teachers comprise 65 percent people of color, and the group says it has a 95 percent average, student attendance rate.

Targeted for opening in Fall 2023, the new structure will comprise a five-floor, second elementary school and a middle school, serving 890 students. The site acquisition was completed in August 2020, and the site itself spans 95,500 gross square feet.

The K-8 building will include a high school regulation-size gym, a stage in the gym for auditorium use, a cafeteria / multi-purpose room, dedicated art, music and dance rooms, and a play terrace and outdoor ball field.

Jane Martínez Dowling and Mariela Meza presented the project, with Martínez Dowling highlighting that the school will not just be a charter school but a space that can also be used by the community.

Charter schools are free public schools that are independently run and given freedom to innovate inside and outside the classroom, with the "charter" detailing the school's mission, program, students served, performance

goals, and methods of assessment.

Each charter is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of community, business and education leaders. Despite their independence, charter schools and their Boards are still held accountable by the State for student performance and charter school students take all required state assessments.

Literacy, science and math make up the core curriculum at KIPP NYC, with science being introduced to students at a much earlier stage than in other schools. Electives covering subjects from art to drama will also be offered, while mindfulness will be incorporated into the curriculum for all students.

Details of the construction phase of the project were requested by District Manager Ischia Bravo, who wanted to know of any anticipated disruption to local residents or services during at the weekends or otherwise. A site visit will also be scheduled.

Plans are also underway by KIPP NYC to open a separate elementary school and middle school by 2023 in Mount Eden at 1504 Macombs Road. It is expected that the new schools will generate up to 500 jobs in the borough.

WIC Program Rules Extended

On Nov. 5, it was announced, in Albany, that close to 400,000 New Yorkers can continue to receive critical remote support through the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, known as WIC, thanks to extended federal flexibilities. As the impact of the pandemic continues, more families may now be income-eligible and are strongly encouraged to apply for help. The WIC program provides access to healthy foods, as well as nutritional counseling, mental health support, and breastfeeding support to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and children up to age five.

City Issues Clarification on Open Storefronts Program

The Open Storefronts program was launched on Oct. 28, and allows exist-

ing, ground-floor, storefront businesses to use a portion of the sidewalk and roadways to display merchandise, sell goods, and more from Oct. 30 to Dec. 31. On Nov. 12, the City issued further guidance on the program. Existing Stoop Line Stand licensee businesses can continue to operate under existing regulations, without participating in the Open Storefronts program. However, there are added benefits for those businesses which self-certify and join the Open Storefronts program. More info is available at nyc.gov/OpenStorefronts.

Track Maintenance on D Subway Line

Between Friday, Nov. 20, at 9.30 p.m. and Monday, Nov. 23, at 1 a.m., the D subway line will undergo track maintenance. As a result, trains will be rerouted in Manhattan and in Brooklyn. Up-

town trains will skip 170th Street, and from 174th to 175th Streets. For service to these stations, take the D to Tremont Avenue, and transfer to a Coney-Island bound D. For service from these stations, take the D to 167th Street, and transfer to an uptown D.

Between Monday, Nov. 30, at 10.45 p.m. and Friday, Dec. 4, at 1 a.m., there will be further track maintenance on the D line. Coney Island-bound trains skip Union Street, 4th Avenue-9th Street, Prospect Avenue and 25th Street stations. For service to these stations, take the D to 36th Street, and transfer to a Manhattan-bound D, N or R train. For service from these stations, take the D, N or R to Atlantic Avenue-Barclays Center, and transfer to a Coney Island-bound D.

The subway is closed each night between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. to clean the

trains and stations. MTA is running an extra bus service overnight, including new interborough routes. More information at new.mta.info.

Price Gouging Redress

A number of residents have complained about price gouging in local stores, where they say items are either overpriced, or the prices rung up at the check-out are not those advertised. Price gouging is illegal and anyone who has concerns about price gouging can report sudden and unexpected increases in consumer goods by calling the consumer hotline toll free at 800-697-1220. This line is available seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Complaints can also be filed with the Department of State Consumer Protection Division or with the New York Attorney General's Office.



We Want Your Advice

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Northwest Bronx Small Businesses: Apply Before Dec. 15 for PPE Micro Grants

By **ARIANA CIPRIANI**

Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC) is inviting Bronx small business owners to apply for PPE Micro Grants. The PPE Micro Grant program, made possible by The Robin Hood Foundation, provides direct relief to Bronx small business owners to ensure that their businesses remain compliant and safe for employees and customers.

Fifty grantees will receive \$1,000 in funding to cover the costs of COVID-19-related, personal, protective equipment expenses. Eligible expenses include masks, hand sanitizer, face shields, cleaning equipment, barriers, gloves, signage, and more.

To be eligible for grant funding, businesses must be located in the Northwest Bronx, have a valid business EIN, and have less than 50 employees. Applications are open from now until Dec. 15, 2020 at midnight, and funding will be awarded on a rolling basis until the funds are exhausted.

Please apply online using



Photo by SÍLE MOLONEY

SMALL BUSINESSES CAN now apply for PPE Micro Grants made possible by The Robin Hood Foundation.

your phone, computer, or tablet through this link: rebrand.ly/mpcpe. Grantees will be notified of funding awards via email by Dec. 30, 2020.

This opportunity is made possible by Robin Hood, New York City's largest poverty fighting organization.

Ariana Cipriani is Program Man-

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CRIME FILE

By SÍLE MOLONEY

**Norwood: ATM Damaged in Burglary Attempt**

The NYPD is looking for an unknown person, or persons, responsible for an attempted commercial burglary of Bank of America ATMs, located at 3424 Jerome Avenue, just before noon on Friday, Nov. 6.

The bank's two ATM machines were closed to customers the entire day until the NYPD's Crime Scene Unit arrived to collect evidence from the scene. The perpetrator(s) caused damage to the ATMs, but no property was removed from the location.

Police have made no arrests to date and no description of the suspect(s) is currently available. They NYPD is continuing with their investigation of the incident.

Norwood: Motorcyclist Suffers Severe Head Injury

Police responded, at around 6.25 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 6, to the scene of a col-

lision at Jerome Avenue and Mosholu Parkway South, involving a motorcycle.

The 47-year-old motorcycle operator had been struck by a vehicle, and was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital by EMS, suffering severe trauma to his head and body.

The other vehicle and driver remained at the site where an investigation was carried out by police. The NYPD could not confirm, based on the initial report, if it was just the driver in the other vehicle or if there were other passengers. The investigation is continuing.

Woodlawn Attempted Robbery

On Wednesday, Oct. 28, at around 10 a.m., inside Woodlawn subway station on the number 4 subway line, a 58-year-old man was riding the southbound subway when an unknown male assailant attempted to snatch the victim's phone from his hands as the doors opened, causing the vic-

tim to fall to the ground.

The suspect was unable to remove the phone from the victim and subsequently fled the scene on foot, exiting the station to parts unknown. No property was stolen as a result of the incident, but the victim suffered pain and bruising from the fall. EMS responded and transported the victim to Montefiore hospital in stable condition. The individual being sought is described as a man, 20 to 30 years of age.

University Heights: Two Suspects Sought in Non-Fatal Shooting

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance in ascertaining the whereabouts of two unidentified men, sought in connection with a non-fatal shooting in University Heights.

On Monday, Oct. 19, at 7.05 a.m., two unidentified men entered Mixtec, a restaurant located at 2345 Jerome Avenue. One of the men, referred to by police as "Unidentified Male

#1," produced a handgun and discharged it, striking a 30-year-old male victim once in his left arm, and once in his left leg.

Both suspects later fled the scene. The victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

Fordham Manor: Two Burglary Suspects Sought by Police

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance identifying two individuals in connection with a commercial burglary that occurred in Fordham Manor, in the 52nd precinct.

On Friday, Oct. 30, at around 5.30 a.m., at 127 East Fordham Road (Fordham Jewelry), two unidentified men cut a hole in the roof and gained entry to the jewelry store, using a ladder. Once inside, they removed approximately \$100,000 worth of jewelry.

They later fled in a tan

Chevy Tahoe to parts unknown. There were no injuries reported as a result of the incident. The individuals are described as male and were last seen wearing all black.

Fordham Manor: Man Shot, Dies

On Tuesday, Nov. 17, at approximately 2.20 a.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been shot in front of 341 East 194th Street. A preliminary investigation determined that a 36-year-old man was shot in the torso by an unknown individual at the location and was transported via private means to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. There are no arrests and the investigation is ongoing. The deceased has been identified as Dashan Carver, 36, of Crotona Parkway in the Bronx. Anyone with information with regard to this incident is asked to contact the NYPD.

Officials Honor Veterans at Woodlawn Cemetery

by DAVID GREENE

A number of different events are scheduled throughout November to honor and assist America's veterans, ranging from health seminars to legal discussions covering veterans' rights. On Veterans' Day, Nov. 11, local, elected officials gathered at Woodlawn Cemetery for the annual, wreath-laying ceremony at the monument dedicated to those who served and died in World War I, the so-called "war to end all wars."

Unlike years past, this year, the 25 or so attendees wore face masks, remained socially distant, and had plenty of hand sanitizer available, hyper-aware of the rising coronavirus cases reported across the city.

Sadly, absent from this year's event were those who would be recognized - service men from World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. At previous events, many would often be seen covering their gray or balding heads with caps representing the carrier group or ships they served on as younger men and women.

Instead, this year, they remained



Photo by DAVID GREENE

A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE embedded in the bedrock at Woodlawn Cemetery shortly after World War I is dedicated to the men and women who fought and died in the "war to end all wars."

isolated by a pandemic that poses as great a threat to them as any Nazi or Japanese soldier. To date, 26,159 people have died in New York State from

COVID-19, and 65 percent of those were over 70 years of age.

To mark Veterans' Day, New York State Senator Jamaal Bailey, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Councilman Andrew Cohen and Quamid Francis, the deputy chief of staff at the New York City Department of Veterans' Services, joined Mitch Rose, president of Woodlawn Cemetery, in remembering the servicemen.

The officials placed a wreath at the foot of the monument where a plaque is embedded in the bedrock that reads, in part, "In memory of the heroic men who gave their lives in noble sacrifice." A minute's silence was also held.

The plaque inscription ends with a passage from the Bible that reads, "He maketh wars to cease." The United States suffered 116,516 casualties in World War I, and 320,000 more were left sick or wounded.

To date, representatives from Woodlawn Cemetery have identified 6,500 soldiers for whom the cemetery is their final resting place. Between them, they have served in one capac-

ity or another, in every American conflict since the War of 1812.

Those buried at Woodlawn include Civil War hero; David Glasgow Farragut, the first admiral of the United States Navy; Edward Knox, a member of the 15th New York Light Artillery who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery at the Battle of Gettysburg; and Lucy Bainbridge, a nurse during the Civil War who cared for wounded soldiers of the Union Army on the front lines in Virginia.

According to Bronx historian, Lloyd Ultan, anyone standing on Central Avenue inside the cemetery and facing east would be looking over the actual battlefield of The Battle of Gun Hill, the Revolutionary War battle that took place on January 25, 1777. On that day, freedom fighters carried a cannon up Gun Hill and were able to push British troops east, back into Queens.

The Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy is open to the public and often hosts walking tours and other events. It is located at 4199 Webster Avenue. For more information visit their website at www.woodlawn.org.



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Elections 2021: Eric Dinowitz on Relationships, Education & Equality

By SÍLE MOLONEY

In politics, cultivating relationships is key. Eric Dinowitz says teaching taught him that, early in his career. In 2007, at 21, he tried out for a position at John F. Kennedy High School in Marble Hill, giving a demo to a class on how to create a PowerPoint presentation.

"I go to the principal's office afterwards," he said. "I go over the lesson and she's like, 'Well, the lesson was okay, but you memorized all their names, so you have a good personality.'" He got the job.

Now, having taught "thousands of students over 13 years," Dinowitz said building relationships, and social and emotional learning are the cornerstones of good education, and good policy. "You got to remember their names - day one, day two," he said. "It's super important in developing that relationship."

One of six remaining candidates in the City Council race in District 11, Dinowitz believes history has shown us that education is key to fostering greater understanding among people. To illustrate this, he recounted a story about a high school student who once, innocently, called him a Nazi.

"Mr Dinowitz, you have those nice eyes," he said she told him. "You look like a Nazi." Dinowitz, whose eyes are a sparkly blue, said there was nothing either malicious or comical in her voice. "She meant it as a compliment," he said, adding that he initially thought he might have misheard her, but she said it again in exactly the same way.

Reassuring the student that she was not in any trouble, Dinowitz said he took her aside, and explained how what she said could be deemed offensive. After some initial shock and confusion, the student asked why the Jewish people hadn't resisted.

"I didn't have a good answer," he said, and so, he just explained that by the time people really understood what was happening, it was kind of too late. "The extra layer on top of that is that this student didn't know what the Holocaust was," he said.

Asked if it was taught in

school, Dinowitz said, "It's taught in middle school but, you know, if the takeaway is, 'Nazis are all those people with the blue eyes'..."

It was two or three years later when Dinowitz said he started to see swastikas in the school and other staff members started seeing them on test papers, on desks, and on the walls. "I was upset. I was mad," he said. "And while some people wanted to say, 'Let's find who did this,' and 'We'll have detention, suspend them,' I was like, 'No, let's educate our staff, and let's educate our children.'"

Working with a Black female colleague, he said they carried out anti-bias training that covered a variety of cultures, religions and symbols of hate, asking the students what bias look like. "It was very successful," he said.

Staying on the topic of education, Dinowitz referenced a recent survey provided by the New York Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) to New York City Council candidates in July 2020.

According to both The New York Post and the Jerusalem Post, candidates were asked, "Do you pledge not to travel to Israel if elected to City Council in solidarity with Palestinians living under occupation?" A follow-up question asked if they would support a boycott.

Following the Arab-Israeli War in 1948, the Aida Palestinian refugee camp in Israel's West Bank was established. Later, the UN passed Resolution 194.

Article 11 of that resolution, "Resolves that the [Palestinian] refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return, and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

Those Palestinians have been waiting to return to their original homes since 1948. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Aida



Photo courtesy of Eric Dinowitz
ERIC DINOWITZ

camp is located near two large Israeli settlements that are illegal under international law. The camp is segregated by an 8-meter-high, concrete wall, and clashes between the camp's residents and the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) have caused numerous injuries.

The camps' proximity to the main checkpoint between Jerusalem and Bethlehem means residents have limited access to water, and job opportunities. There is also no hospital in the camp.

We asked Dinowitz if he could see how organizations such as the DSA might have legitimate concerns about Israeli government policy, without being considered antisemitic. "Yeah, I do," he said. He highlighted, nonetheless, that the question about Israel in the DSA survey was the only foreign policy question included, and its phraseology bothered him. "It wasn't, 'Do you disagree with the way the Israeli government is?'"

"When you weight a question, and word it so heavily like that, it's hard *not* to think it's antisemitic," he said. "But, regardless of the way the question is worded, as an educator, it is hard for me to conceptualize this idea that less experience, less exposure, and less education is better." He said he doesn't plan on filling out the questionnaire.

As part of a Jewish acappella group called 613, Dinowitz travels the country and the world singing to audiences. He said helping communities around the world build their Jewish community is one of the great joys and great experiences that he gets to have in his life. He also sees how Jew-

ish people are not a monolithic group and can disagree about the governance of Israel.

Dinowitz says he can even see in the classroom, every day, the way the policies of the U.S. and New York City have failed children, and seniors, and working families, and the ways *they're* hurting. "It doesn't mean I boycott New York, and New Yorkers, and people who like New York, right? And so, if you take that idea, it's the same idea for me with Israel."

"When I think of Israel, with all the faults that there may be in the governance of Israel, the basic idea, to me, is that Jewish people should have a homeland, a place they can call home, and should have the right to defend themselves, and to me, it's just heartbreaking the fact that we have to debate that, because we know what happens when we, kind of, sit back and just, like, let bad things happen to the Jewish people," he said.

As a committee chair on Bronx Community Board 8, and as a District Leader in the Bronx Democratic Party, Dinowitz is already familiar with the issues that affect the community. From housing to healthcare and from transit to accessibility, he is a fierce advocate for equality, especially when it comes to seniors and people with disabilities.

"We need to make sure to fight for our children, for our working families, and for our seniors," he said. "I want to make sure seniors are able to live independently, without fear, because that's what they want, right?" he said.

"That's the number one thing I hear from seniors. Sometimes, that fear is a crack in the sidewalk. I talked about how quality of life is important, so cracks in the sidewalks may be annoying to people like me, but they could spell the end of independence for a senior."

Dinowitz also wants to keep seniors in their homes, by making sure rents and maintenance remain low, that rent control laws work for them, and that they have access to SCRIE (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption)

and DRIE (Disability Rent Increase Exemption) and other programs.

The need for greater accessibility in District 11 for both seniors and people with disabilities is also part of his campaign platform. He said he brought together a coalition of elected leaders, business leaders, and residential leaders, who recognized that an elevator at Mosholu subway station was badly needed.

"With two hospitals there, a business district, Tracy Towers, Clinton High School, Bronx Science, all of our subways and trains should be accessible," he said. "We collected over 2,000 signatures from people using that train, people in the neighborhood. I went down to the MTA meetings. I testified there. I spoke on behalf of the vital need for this elevator. A year later, the MTA came back and said, 'Okay.' It's part of their next capital plan. They're going to install elevators at this train station," he said.

When, later, the MTA wanted to cut a local, express bus service, Dinowitz said he recognized that this was the only accessible means of transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, precisely because the local train station didn't have an elevator, or because the residents lived too far from the station.

Again, he said he attended multiple, public meetings to support community members who rely on the express bus service, including those who don't have regular nine to five jobs, and need to travel during off-peak hours. During the pandemic, he said all of these inequalities have been exacerbated. "Not everyone works nine to five in Manhattan, but that's the mentality of so many decision makers," he said.

"So, that's what I've been for our community," he added. Whether it's with transit, on the trains, whether it's with the Express Bus speaking out, whether it's with absentee ballot voting, whether it's for our children, I've been the voice for so many people, and that's what I want to do, is be our voice in City Hall, so we can reimagine the way we do things."

Holiday Wishes And Happy New Year 2021

To Our Community

It's been a challenging year. Norwood, Bedford Park and Mosholu, we all pulled through together and cared for the parkland. People in the community, local businesses, and elected officials got litter out from our parks and sidewalks, helped with gardening, and stayed alert to keep our surroundings safe from crime.

2020 saw the opening of a new, edible community garden located at the Keeper's House, the reconstruction and reopening of the new Kossuth Playground and, most important, new volunteers from the community joined the FOMP team and spent hours keeping Mosholu Parkland landscape clean and green.

As we look back on this bittersweet year, we are humbled by the increase in civic pride, and grateful for the environmental awareness growth that needs to continue to help battle global warming.

Our condolences to all those who transitioned over, especially from COVID-19. Believe that everything is connected and walking in nature will remind you that your loved ones are still connected with you, a reminder that we need to be kind to everything that lives.

Whatever holiday you're celebrating this season, Friends of Mosholu Parkland a.k.a. FOMP are taking this time to wish you all the best now, and for 2021.

Together, let's end this year by displaying, more than ever, colorful holiday lights on your windows, building entrances, and houses: bright lights for those we lost, and a happier beginning for the rest.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

www.mosholuparkland.org/
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Out & About

Compiled by AURÉOLE RIBES

Events

This first **Annual Holiday Display** will take place at Kossuth Playground from Dec. 5 through Jan 3, complete with a festive tree, polar bear, penguin, snow bear, lights, garlands, and snowflake decorations.

The New York Public Library will host **Cozy Reads Book Tasting** on Monday, Nov. 23, at 4 p.m. for teens aged 13-18. Join a panel of YA Librarians from the Bronx Library Center for a cozy read recommendation. For more information, go to: <https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2020/11/23/cozy-reads-book-tasting>.

New York Botanical Garden presents the beloved **29th Holiday Train Show** to say thank you to its members and the Bronx community for their loyalty and support. Marvel at model trains zipping through an enchanting display of famous

New York landmarks, made from natural materials. As capacity is limited due to social distancing safety protocols, the show is open to patrons, members, and Bronx community partners only. For more information, go to: <https://www.nybg.org/event/holiday-train-show/>.

On Dec. 4, New York Botanical Gardens hosts **Lucian Freud's Paintings of Plants - From Symbolism to Truth**. This digital webinar delves into how Freud was able to capture the illusive character of plants. Register and find more information here: <https://www.nybg.org/event/lucian-freud-and-plants-from-symbolism-to-truth/>.

Arts

Try the **Bronx Museum at Home** through art studio visits, guided tours, and meet the artists through their websites. Art studio videos feature educators presenting specific art-

making activities from cross-hatching to object sculptures. More information here: <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/>.

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 open every Saturday and Sunday, through November. More information can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/BronxNightMarket/>.

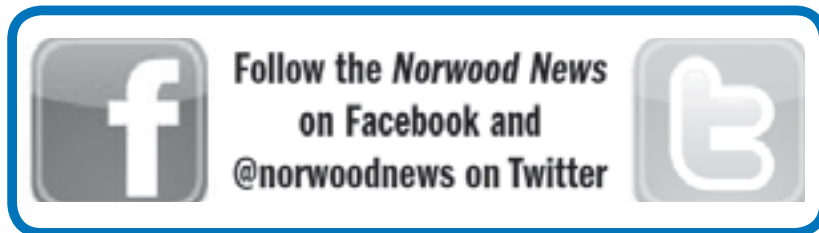
Movement

Shape Up NYC presents seven, weekly walking groups at Allerton Skatepark, Franz Sigel Park, Van Cortlandt Park, Macombs Dam Park, St Mary's Park, Williamsbridge

Oval Park, and Patterson Playground. This free fitness program includes a warm-up and a walking workout in these beautiful Bronx parks. More information on the days and times of the walks can be found on the www.nyc.gov/shapenpny.

Every Monday night from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., the **Bronx Nomads** organize weekly runs / walks, which start at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center. All are welcome to join. For more information, go to the group's Instagram page at www.instagram.com, and search for "brnxnomads."

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m., **Free Vinyasa Yoga** classes take place at BronxWorks, located at 1130 Grand Concourse. Yoga mats are provided. For more information, go to www.eventbrite.com and search for "Free Vinyasa Yoga". Do not hit return. The event will appear as the second pictured item in the dropdown list.



Bronx Writer Chronicles Life as a 19-Year-Old

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Before Brianna Lopez turned 19, she decided to make a written record of her experiences during her last year as a teenager. In doing so, she decided that she wouldn't hold back from sharing the ups and downs, the happy and sad times, the darkness and the hope she felt on the cusp of adulthood.

Through a combination of prose and poetry, Lopez, now 20, and a college junior in Miami who is majoring in professional writing, has self-published a collection of those experiences in a book entitled, "the nighttime series: a collection of poetry and short stories" [author's punctuation]. Lopez said she made the stylistic decision to write without capitalizing words because the emotions she went through and which she describes in the book made her feel "small."

The book's preface contains a revelation regarding its serious content. "There are some pieces that refer to self-harm, anxiety, depression and other things that might trigger someone who is in recovery from any type of mental

health disorder, or might just make you feel sad or mad," she wrote.

Throughout the 122 pages of the book, Lopez takes readers on a roller-coaster ride of emotions and reactions. Sometimes, it is autobiographical, but she also uses fictional writing to reveal some deeper thoughts and feelings.

"Even though I might have fabricated a story like [the] one about my cousin who passed away, I wrote a story about what I thought her life would be like," she said. "The emotions there are real," she told the *Norwood News* in a phone interview. "All of the feelings that I felt, all the things that I went through internally were the most real part of the book."

Lopez, who was born in Manhattan and grew up in the Bronx with an older sister, said she used her writing skills as a way to deal with stressful situations during her younger years. Originally, she said she set a goal of writing every day as a 19-year-old, not only to create content for her book but also as an outlet to help her decompress.

"Writing has always helped me when

I go through anxiety," she said. "It has helped to calm myself down." While the finished book doesn't necessarily contain an entry from every single day of her 19th year, Lopez credits the setting of that goal with making her feel accountable as a writer.

Someone who has seen Brianna's growth as a writer over the years is her father, David Lopez. She said he has been an encouraging influence, and has offered a unique perspective throughout her life. "Brianna was a very interesting child - spunky, snappy, witty - in a good way," David recalls. "As a young adult, she would escape in her room, and just write and write and write."

While Brianna's writing process is mostly a solitary activity, both daughter and father realize that sharing her story can have an impact on others. "She wanted to put her words out there and help others in any way she can, and that was through her writing," David said.

The book is not only the culmination of Brianna's teenage years, but also marks an early milestone in her career as a pub-



Photo courtesy of Brianna Lopez.

BRIANNA LOPEZ, WHO grew up in the Bronx, has recently published her first book.

lished writer. She continues to sharpen her writing skills by completing internships at publications, and by contributing to her school newspaper in Miami.

"I want to be a writer in whatever capacity that is," Lopez said. "I'm going to do another internship in my senior year. So, it's really just providing me with real world opportunities where I have those skills in the future when I do go home to New York."

Brianna is scheduled to graduate from college in May 2022. Her book is available on Amazon.com.



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HEALTH CHECK

Healthy Living with Diabetes

By ROXANA YUSTI

According to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, nearly a million New Yorkers are currently living with diabetes. In usual times, managing diabetes can be a challenge. With the COVID-19 pandemic and associated stressors, this may be an even more difficult time to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and control of blood sugar levels.

In honor of National Diabetes Awareness Month, the Montefiore Office of Community and Population Health is sharing ways to prevent and control diabetes.

Diabetes is a long-lasting health condition that makes it hard for your body to break down the sugar from food and beverages into energy. Your body produces a substance called insulin that helps with this breakdown process. When this process does not work, this leads to high amounts of sugar in the blood.

Excess weight, inactivity, age and genetic make-up contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease.

Over time, high sugar levels from diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, and nerve damage. To avoid these complications, and keep your type 2 diabetes under control, you can stay healthy by doing the following:

- eating a balanced diet, high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats like olive oil, nuts and av-

ocados;

- limiting or cutting out sugary beverages, sweets, and unhealthy fats like deep-fried foods, bacon and animal fats;
- exercising regularly for at least 30 minutes, three to five times a week;
- taking diabetes medication, as prescribed by your doctor.

Some people do not yet have diabetes, but are at high risk of getting it because their blood sugar levels are slightly higher than normal. This is called prediabetes and can be confirmed with a simple blood test. You may have prediabetes if you:

- have a family history of diabetes;
- are age 45 and older;
- are not physically active;
- are overweight;
- have high blood pressure.

If you have prediabetes, you can still prevent diabetes from developing by following the same healthy tips mentioned above. If you have some of these risk factors, make sure to go in for your yearly physical, and talk to your doctor about getting tested.

Montefiore offers both free diabetes prevention, and diabetes management education to its patients to help them achieve a healthier lifestyle. Ask your Montefiore provider to see if you qualify. Talk to your doctor and take charge of your health.

Roxana Yusti is a health educator for Community and Population Health at Montefiore Health System.



Letters To The Editor

MTA and ADA Compliance Costs

Here are two ways the MTA can obtain financial support to bring more NYC Transit subway stations into compliance with the Americans With Disability (ADA) Act; "New Elevator Finally Installed at Bedford Park Boulevard Subway Station," (*Norwood News*, October 22).

The MTA receives \$1.4 billion in annual assistance from various Federal Transit Administration grant funding programs. In 2021, this will grow to \$1.5 billion. Why not ask any major business, college or hospital which benefits from subway stations adjacent to their facilities to sponsor the installation of an elevator?

Let them split the cost 50 percent with the MTA NYC Transit in exchange for naming rights to the elevator(s). The MTA needs to make some difficult decisions as to what other projects and programs may have to be canceled or reduced in the \$51 billion MTA 2020-2024 Five Year Capital Plan, which is no longer financially viable.

This is necessary to find funding for installation of ADA compliant elevators at more subway stations in the Bronx, along with Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and at Staten Island railway stations on Staten Island.

Larry Penner
Great Neck

Kenny Agosto for City Council

I find that City Council candidate, Kenny Agosto, for the most part, has excellent positions. Legalizing cannabis would be a no-brainer in a rational society. Marijuana never should have been illegal.

Except in extreme offenses, for instance, identity theft, non-violent peo-

ple should not be sent to prison. As for bail reform, I'd prefer bail elimination. Money should not allow dangerous people to be bailed out, while a lack of money should not allow people who can safely be released to remain incarcerated. Agosto supports police reform without being specific. Having a police commissioner and a mayor who are willing to fire bad cops and replace them with good ones is the best reform. Defunding the police is just an invitation to criminals to run rampant. Helping working families and the disabled, pushing for affordable housing, and supporting equal rights for people regardless of their sexual preferences should all be part of a just society.

Everybody should obviously have the right to competent legal counsel. Without that, their constitutional right to a fair trial is violated. Decriminalizing sex work is humane.

The only two Agosto positions I find fault with are his support for eliminating solitary confinement and closing Rikers Island. Solitary confinement should be used as a last resort, and action should be taken against prison officials who unjustly use it, but to eliminate it altogether is dangerous. What other option is there when dealing with dangerous, violently out-of-control inmates?

Closing Rikers Island is wrong for several reasons. Wasting money to build new jails in neighborhoods that don't want them makes no sense. Also, the same prisoners and the same system in new buildings will not make a difference.

Hopefully, Agosto will reconsider those positions. It will be a shame if his irrational views on a couple of issues alienates voters when he makes so much sense on other issues.

Richard Warren,
The Bronx

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Public and Community Meetings

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings have been held via **ZOOM**. The next meeting will be held, exceptionally, on **Monday, Nov. 30**, at 6 p.m. 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 **Thursday, Nov. 19** at 6.30 p.m. Zoom details will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Contact mirosario@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

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, Dec. 2** at 8 p.m. For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.



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Residents Live in Fear of Rats

(continued from page 1)

ing garbage which they said regularly piles up in the alleyway. Indeed, they said trash management at 3440 Gates Place is not being handled in a timely or correct manner.

Their complaints appear to be substantiated. Inspection records from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene showed that an inspection of the premises was carried out July 25, 2019 and the report showed "Problem Conditions." Meanwhile, 311 data complaints logged under the same address, many of which were closed, show poor sanitation as being a root cause of the complaint, some of which constituted rodent sightings.

One 69-year-old female resident, who lives in a ground floor dwelling adjacent to 3440 Gates Place, and who also wishes to remain anonymous, has lived in her home, which she owns, since 1985. She said this is the first year she has encountered rats. "I've never had a problem with rodents at all, not even in my house," she said. "I don't have roaches. I don't have mice. The rats? Sept. 30 is when I started noticing them, but the garbage, this has been going on for years."

The woman, who has a health condition, said both she and her husband also logged various complaints with 311, but to no avail. In fact, they were told that their tickets were closed as so many other tenants had also filed 311 complaints about rats at the same address or in the vicinity.

"I've called 311," she said. "I've called the health department, and it's getting ridiculous." Last month, an exterminator was due to come to the building, but the rat sightings are still ongoing.

The woman said both she and her husband have asked the building's super

to address the situation, but it has often ended in arguments, with him telling her to mind her own business. According to City regulations, a two-inch space should be maintained between the woman's exterior, side wall and anything placed in front of it.

Despite this regulation, the woman has been exasperated by the placement of her neighbors' trash containers, along with loose trash in high piles, against her exterior wall. The dividing alleyway between the two buildings is not part of her property, and she does not use it.

She has her own separate area for her own garbage, which she said she manages and stores correctly. She would prefer if the neighbors' trash containers were placed on the opposite side of the alleyway against the exterior wall of 3440 Gates Place, but the building's super allegedly told her that he can place the trash anywhere in the alleyway he wants.

She said when the super empties the trash cans, he only takes the top layer of garbage and leaves the remainder. She added that not all the trash is covered and she believes this is also drawing rats.

Meanwhile, the female resident said as the trash piles up outside her window, she can hear the rats rustling at night-time, and is fearful they may enter her home, either through her ground floor window or by some other means. Her son helped her dispose of the first rat she found in her basement recently.

Aside from the trash, the resident said garbage also gets stuck to her wall, causing odors, and even when the trash containers are removed, the containers, yard and walls need to be hosed down, but she said this is not being done.

She told the *Norwood News* that the super apparently told the landlord that the tenants sometimes throw their trash onto

the yard from their apartment windows, instead of leaving it in front of the building, as instructed, and this also causes a mess.

"How you going to throw big garbage bags out the window?" the resident asked?

Neither is she enamored with the arrangement of leaving the trash in front of the building, since she believes this may also draw rats.

The female resident also said that the super allegedly said prior to the arrangement of leaving the trash in front of the building, the tenants used to throw it into the alleyway from the ground floor entrance, and that it would get scattered across the yard. Because of this, the super apparently no longer provides a key to the alleyway to any of the residents of 3440 Gates Place.

Norwood News reached out to HPD for a comment on the status of the complaints and was informed that if the landlord was not reacting, the next course of action would be for the tenants to take the case to Housing Court.

Meanwhile, the female resident who lives adjacent to 3440 Gates Place said when she told a Con Edison representative about the rat situation in her basement, he refused to enter the area to read the meter, as that was where the rat which entered from the yard was found.

Because the resident has two meters in her building which are synchronized, she has taken the decision to no longer use the meter in her garage, where the rat was found, and will only use the one in her washroom, going forward. She is arranging to have the other meter disconnected.

Asked what the building super told her when she raised the trash and rat issues with him, the resident said he said, "Oh it's

[garbage] going out tonight, because tomorrow is recycle day. It's going out tonight."

However, the resident added, "If you come back tomorrow, you still see all that recyclable stuff there, and the garbage in the evenings." Another problem she said is that some tenants from 3440 Gates Place throw trash onto her rooftop. She said, when she sees it, she throws it down onto the yard.

Asked what the health department told her when she contacted them, the resident said, "They gave them a summons of non-compliance, which is on display inside the building."

The resident said that other tenants in her building and in the adjacent building have thanked her for taking action. If the problem is not resolved soon, she said she is afraid the value of her property will fall. However, she's mainly concerned that the rats will bring disease or get into her home.

The resident thought she might have some form of redress when she contacted the City's Finance department, but they told her there's nothing they can do as long as the landlord is paying his taxes and rates.

She said the rats, themselves, are bigger than the one she found in her basement, and that even the alley cats are afraid of them.

Norwood News reached out twice for comment to 3440 Holdings LLC, based at 314 McDonald's Ave in Brooklyn. They said they had none. We asked if they could provide us with a contact number for the building's super and they said it was not their policy to do so. We were unable to reach the super for comment through other means.

Asked if she planned on moving out because of the issue, the woman said, "No! I own this home. Why should I move? Why should I be put out? I've been here since 1985. I've never dealt with this before."

Elections 2021: Sanchez Aims to Harness Bronx Power

(continued from page 2)

ment apartment program, so we can construct new housing at a lower cost, but also allow homeowners to have extra income."

The aim of the program was to investigate if basement apartments could legally and safely be converted to sanctioned affordable housing units, but cuts to the City budget has caused the program to be suspended.

For his part, Sanchez decried the shortage of housing in the city. "We have wealthy areas in this city, such as Riverdale and Soho, which have outdated rules which prevent affordable housing being built there," he said, adding that this has caused most re-

zonings to occur in low-income neighborhoods.

"Because we have limited funds right now in this budget, we need these wealthy areas to do their fair share and build affordable housing in those areas, so we have more subsidy dollars to build housing in the Bronx," he said.

"We cannot have gated communities in New York City," he continued. "This is the biggest city in America, and we need to invite people to live here. There's no area in this city which should not have affordable housing."

Sanchez said if housing is not expanded, it will simply cause further gentrification and displacement,

with higher-income earners battling with lower-income neighbors over the scarce housing that does currently exist in the borough.

When it comes to the cost of building affordable housing, Sanchez said the HPD budget was cut by about a billion dollars leaving less money for affordable housing, but said by building in wealthy areas of the city, market rates would help subsidize the affordable units. "So, you don't require as much City subsidy, and because of that, the City subsidy that's freed up can be used in the Bronx," he said.

When it comes to education, Sanchez wants municipal broadband to be regarded as a public utility like gas and electricity. "We need to have the City invest in municipal broadband so every family in the city can have internet, not only for schooling, but for their job," he said.

Indeed, a September 2019 report by

the City Comptroller indicated that about 29 percent of the City's residents did not have reliable access to the internet. Later, when the pandemic hit, there was a rush to provide tablets to students, but as Sanchez notes, those tablets are not much use in areas where there is poor internet connectivity.

In terms of where he sees himself on the left-right political spectrum, Sanchez said he doesn't like titles because people interpret them in different ways. He defines himself as a public servant that's willing to work with all stakeholders.

"I want to make this a neighborhood where people that graduate from college, want to return back to the neighborhood, and stay and raise their family, rather than leave and move elsewhere. I want people to stay here. I want people to move here. I want people to enjoy living in the 15th City Council District."

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