



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## DISMAY OVER COMMUNITY GARDEN EVICTION



Photo by David Greene

**A NOTICE POSTED** on a fence informs the public that Meg's Garden, located on DeWitt Clinton High School property is closed to the public, in a photo taken Saturday, May 22, 2021.

**By DAVID GREENE**

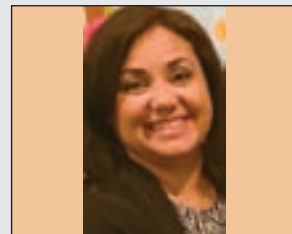
A local gardening group, founded by a former DeWitt Clinton High School teacher, has been ordered to vacate a

beloved garden created on the school's campus a decade ago, much to the dismay of students and some in the local community.

Former English teacher and later, DeWitt Clinton sustainability coordinator, Raymond Pultinas, said he taught at the school for more than 25

years, cultivating the one-acre garden in question, and facilitating hands-on work experience for student farmers.

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**Remembering Omara Flores**  
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**Feliz Sworn in as District 15 Councilman**  
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**The Bronx's Hip Hop Museum Gets Underway | pg 9**

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# Omara Flores, A Jewel in our Lives

By PS/MS 95 Staff

Members of the PS/MS 95, The Sheila Mencher Van Cortlandt School community in Van Cortlandt Village, held a socially distanced, outdoor memorial service on April 21 in tribute to our colleague, Omara Flores, beloved, long-time assistant principal at the school who died tragically and unexpectedly on April 6, 2020, of COVID-19. She left behind a husband and two adult children, both graduates of PS/MS 95.

The event, which was attended by about 35 people, was filled with sweet remembrances of an esteemed and admired colleague, with the participants immersed in a collective sea of sorrow. Under the leadership of principal, Serge Marshall Davis and thanks to AP Flores, the middle school is thriving. Principal Davis eloquently noted that, "Mrs. Flores was inspiring and impactful, her work emblematic of empathy and professionalism. She did a complex job, preparing the next generation for their futures."

Mrs. Flores had an unusual entrée into the school. She was first the parent of two students here. She spent several years as a teacher at another school, later topped by almost 20 years as an assistant principal at PS/MS 95.

During this time of mourning, faculty and staff reflected on Mrs. Flores' influence on the school as well as on them, personally. Retired teacher, Beth Klewan, who taught Mrs Flores' children many years ago, reflected, "Omara was dedicated to the staff, students and her family, and she treated



Photo courtesy of Amanda Barelli

**OMARA FLORES, ASSISTANT** principal of PS/MS 95, who died from COVID-19 last year, is pictured flashing her beautiful smile.

people as if they were part of her family." She added, "She embodied all that anyone could want in an educator and in a human being."

Meanwhile, secretary, Cecily Ginel, used to notice that Omara was always welcoming to all students, saying, "She always made time, no matter how busy she was, to see how you were doing." Teacher, Isobel Prieto, added, "She had such a pretty smile."

Paraprofessional, Liz De Jesus, who worked with Mrs Flores in the bilingual program cried as she said, "Omara was an incredible human being. The humanity she had within her just poured out." She added, "It was a privilege for me to know that I was on hand to work with her and the bilingual children."

Due to COVID-19 considerations, attendance at the service was limited to about 35 people, made up of school personnel, the Flores immediate family and two student singers, one an eighth grader and one a graduate. It was held outdoors in the schoolyard with chairs about 8 feet apart, utiliz-

ing a loudspeaker system, and people had to reserve in advance. The memorial could not be held any earlier due to COVID-19 restrictions, which are strictly upheld by the school, but the sadness lingered.

Mrs. Flores was equally important to the students. Eighth grader, Iris Reyes, who sang "See You Again," at the service, knew her well, as did many students. Describing her as being "like a mom," she added, "She brightened everyone's day." Meanwhile, graduate, Skyla Perez, who sang "A Million Dreams," at the service reiterated that sentiment, saying, "She was always there to talk [to], and to encourage you to be the best version of yourself you could be!"

Meanwhile, speaking on behalf of the faculty, teacher, Nick Merchant, confirmed definitively that the heart and soul of the school community was suffering. "But [we] will continue to try to emulate her high standards, her excellence, and her wisdom," he said.

Addressing the assembled PS/MS 95 family during the memorial service, fellow assistant principal, Eileen Rivera, shed tears as she remembered her late colleague. "While it was a difficult loss, we want to focus on what she left for us: her unmatched poise and grace, her sense of calm to get us through challenges, her humility, and her ability to always know what to do," she said. "She showed us how to live, by example."

During the service, Ryan, Amanda, and Elvin, Mrs Flores' son, daughter, and husband, respectively, recounted personal vignettes of the sacrifice, commitment, and hard work for which their mom/wife was known. Elvin immersed the audience in the couple's past as he described them as struggling, young newlyweds brought together by adversity and by their steadfast love for one another. "We planned the whole second half of our lives together....and now she's gone," he said sadly. The poignancy of his words was only matched by the family's deep loss.

In addition to being an accomplished and successful teacher, administrator, and first-rate mother, Omara was also a devoted daughter, taking responsibility for her own mother's well-being in her mother's later years.

Beautiful new plantings of pink rhododendron will grace the entrance to the school as a beautiful reminder of both Mrs Flores' influence and of her humanity.

In conclusion, Principal Davis told the audience that "time goes on, but memories are everlasting." PS/MS 95 will remember Assistant Principal Omara Flores.

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers how they felt about unmasking, if fully vaccinated against COVID-19, knowing that the vaccination rate in the Bronx remains the worst in the city. As of May 24, only 33 percent of Bronxites were fully vaccinated, while 40 percent have had one shot.



"Everyone has to wear a mask because you don't know if the next person has the coronavirus, and then they give it to you. No, I can't trust some people because I don't know who's vaccinated. When I'm among people, I wear the mask regardless of vaccinations or not."

**Richard Tootaram,**  
Bedford Park



"I do still wear my mask due to the fact that we don't know who has it, and even if you have your shot, you can still get it. I think people should have an I.D. card, but you can't laminate it because they may have a booster shot. So, I guess we're going to have to get it every year, so we'll be safe. It's their business to get the shot or not, and it is what it is. Whatever happens, happens. I believe in freedom of choice."

**Miriam Velazquez,**  
Norwood



"My fear is those that deny getting it, or don't believe it and don't believe they should wear a mask or get a shot. I'm not immune, even though I had it for the first time, and it took me a month to get out of that mess. I will respect the mask as I go into stores, but me sitting right here, there's no one here with me so I don't wear it. I don't want anyone next to me if they refuse to vaccinate and think this is a hoax. People are dying, and death is not a hoax."

**Lee Maxwell,**  
Norwood



"I've been vaccinated since March and actually, I prefer not to wear my mask anymore, but will always respect businesses and places that still mandate them because it's the right thing to do. It's one's choice whether to get vaccinated or not, but people should know that they can be putting others at risk by not getting it. While their immune system may be strong, they need to understand that not everyone's immune is strong, and they may be putting someone vulnerable at risk."

**Phyllis Marie,**  
Throggs Neck



"I took my final shot on March 28. Unfortunately, a lot of people are believing the nonsense that it's not safe. So, I still wear it [a mask] and it kind of [expletive] me off that a lot of people aren't. There should be a national vaccination card, a digital one that can't be forged."

**Patricia McFarland,**  
Brooklyn



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# NEWS BRIEFS

**By SÍLE MOLONEY**  
Espaillat, Feliz Endorse  
Adams for Mayor

Local congressman, Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), announced his endorsement of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams as mayor of New York City, calling him “the leader for this moment,” during an event in Washington Heights on Monday, May 24. Adams was also endorsed by other elected officials from Manhattan and the Bronx, who represent large sections of the Dominican and Puerto Rican communities, including recently elected, Bronx District 15 City Councilman Oswald Feliz.

## Bengali Community Celebrates End of Ramadan

LAAL, the Bengali Women's Empowerment group, based in Norwood, held a celebration on Mosholu Parkway on Saturday, May 22, to mark the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began on Monday, April 12, and ended on the evening of Wednesday, May 14. The festival of EID is typically celebrated at the end of the month, after a time of intermittent fasting and prayer. LAAL organized a picnic on the parkway, with about 30 women in attendance. Jonas Stankovic, director of finance at LAAL, was the only man to join the group, for the occasion.

## Local Ridgewood Savings Bank Move

The local Norwood branch of Ridgewood Savings Bank, located on 3445 Jerome Avenue, will be closing and moving premises, effective September 3, 2021, according to a letter dated May 17, received by customers. The new Norwood branch will open this summer (no exact date has been specified as yet) and will be located at 320 East 204th Street. No action is required by customers as their accounts will be transferred automatically to the new branch, and the bank said customers will continue to receive the same level of service at the new location. A representative said the reason for the move was because the Jerome Avenue branch was outdated and inefficient in terms of its size. “We are moving to a more modern facility on the corner of East 204th Street and Hull Avenue to better serve our customers,” she said, adding that the new location will have a coin-counting machine for the convenience of customers.

# Oswald Feliz Sworn in as New District 15 Councilman

**By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY**

A host of local elected officials joined former tenant lawyer and Hostos Community College adjunct professor, Oswald Feliz, as he was sworn in as city councilman of the 15th Council District, following his win in the March 23<sup>rd</sup> special election. Feliz assumes the seat left vacant for a few months following the resignation of the former councilman, now Congressman Ritchie Torres, after the latter won the 15<sup>th</sup> congressional race in November 2020.

The swearing in ceremony for Feliz was held on Sunday, May 2, at the Serviam Gardens, located at 2848 Bainbridge Avenue in Bedford Park. Officials in attendance included heavyweights, U.S. Senator and Senate Majority Leader, Chuck Schumer, local congressman for the 13<sup>th</sup> congressional district, Rep. Adriano Espaillat, city comptroller candidate and New York City Council Speaker, Corey Johnson, as well as Torres.

Espaillat had been a staunch supporter of Feliz throughout his campaign, which received strong support from both the Puerto Rican and Dominican communities. Both Espaillat and Feliz recently announced their endorsement of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams for mayor, providing a major boost to Adam's campaign, with speculation that he is now somewhat assured of having the backing of much of the coveted African American and Latinx vote.

Also, in attendance was Bronx borough president candidate and District 14 Councilman Fernando Cabrera, and embattled State Senator and fellow Bronx borough president candidate, Luis Sepúlveda. The latter voluntarily turned himself in to police in January in the context of alleged assault charges, following a domestic incident involving his estranged wife.

The senator denies the charges and the case is ongoing. Sepúlveda was stripped of his chairmanship duties on the senate committee on crimes, crime victims and corrections following the alleged incident. He made a brief ap-



Photo by David Greene

**AT THE SWEARING** in ceremony for District 15 Councilman Oswald Feliz at Serviam Gardens in Bedford Park on Sunday, May 2, 2021, are (l-r) Councilman Fernando Cabrera, Rep. Adriano Espaillat, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, Rachel Bradshaw, president of Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change, and Feliz.

pearance at the ceremony before the formal proceedings kicked off. Rachel Bradshaw, president of the Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change was the emcee on the day.

Feliz had previously led the Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change, a political group established in recent years, and after the establishment of another political group, the Northwest Bronx Democrats, which had been founded in 2003 by Anthony Riveccio. Sheila Sanchez is the current president of Northwest Bronx Democrats. Riveccio told the *Norwood News* his organization recently issued a cease-and-desist notice regarding the use of the name “Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change” by the other group.

Joined by his wife and family on the day, Feliz was sworn in as councilman by Bronx Supreme Court Judge Kim Adair Wilson, who was also elected to her role last November. Since his election win, Feliz announced on April 22 that he had been selected to join both the City Council's education committee and public housing committee.

“This was an extremely competitive race, probably one of the most competitive in the entire city,” said Feliz at the

ceremony. “I want to thank the voters of the 15th Council District for believing in me, for supporting me, and also electing me, thank you. For the next few months, I'm going to be working with all of the elected officials here including our great city council speaker, my good friend, Corey Johnson, and we're going to be working around the clock to build that better Bronx that I promised to the people of the 15th council district.”

Moments before being sworn in, Feliz vowed to secure money to fix Bronx parks, schools and playgrounds, as well as provide additional funding for NYCHA housing. He will be defending his seat, once again, in the upcoming June 22 primary election having won in the special election with 56.4 percent (1,766) of the 3,128 eligible votes, beating his nearest rival, Bronx Community Board 7 District Manager, Ischia Bravo.

Bravo, who is also running in the primary, among others, secured 43.54 percent (1,362) of eligible votes in a special election which had a 4.26 percent voter turnout, which was not considered surprising. Greater voter turnout is expected, however, in the upcoming primary given it coincides with other Bronx and citywide races.

## New eReporting System to track Human Trafficking

NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has announced new online resources aimed at facilitating human trafficking referrals to the State. These resources include a new digital handbook to assist service providers and victim advocates with making human trafficking referrals, and an eReporting system that allows them, along with law enforcement, to submit referrals electronically.

## Local Mothers Honored in Devoe Park

Assemblyman Victor Pichardo and District Leader Yudelka Tapia co-hosted an event honoring local mothers in University Heights. Both organizers represent the 86th A.D. in The Bronx. Held outdoors in Devoe Park at West Fordham Road and Andrews Avenue on Saturday, May 15, a few dozen community members gathered to see local mothers, Kpoto Kpana, Angela Salazar, Elaine Grays Watts, Rachel Miller Bradshaw, president of Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change, and Myrna Calderon, member of Bronx Com-

munity Board 7, honored. Each was presented with New York State Assembly Proclamations recognizing their individual contributions to the local community, as well as a bouquet of roses. The event was originally scheduled to coincide with Mother's Day weekend but was postponed due to rain.

## May 28 Deadline for Section 8 Housing

New York City has opened its Section 8 housing waiting list for the first time since 2006. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is a federal program designed to provide rental assistance to

low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to help them find decent, safe, and sanitary housing. State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi is encouraging Bronxites to avail of the opportunity to apply for Section 8 housing before the upcoming deadline. “The wait-list is open only until [Friday] May 28th, so please complete and submit your application at your earliest convenience,” Biaggi announced on Tuesday, May 18. She added that any residents with questions or concerns regarding the program could contact her office at [biaggi@nysenate.gov](mailto:biaggi@nysenate.gov) or by calling 718-822-2049.





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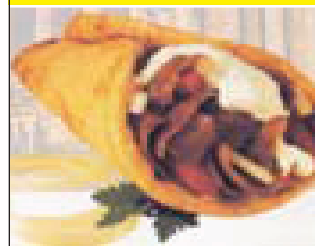
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# Bronx DA: No Criminality by NYPD in Jahmel Leach Case

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark released the findings, on May 18, of a 23-page report on the Public Integrity Bureau's investigation into an incident involving Bronx teen, Jahmel Leach, and the NYPD which took place on Fordham Road on June 1, 2020. A video of the incident was also released. The report found no criminality on the part of the NYPD in terms of the officers' use of force against Jahmel during the incident.

Shocking photos of the teen which had circulated on social media in the aftermath of the incident showed his face and mouth bloodied and swollen. Yamil Miller, Jahmel's uncle, told the *Norwood News* last year, that he was a caregiver to the teen at the time, as Jahmel's mother had been unwell. Speaking to us by phone last year, Miller said the teen had required emergency dental surgery the night of the incident.

"I was notified around one o'clock in the morning on June 2, [2020] that Jahmel had been in the hospital, and that the doc-

tors needed permission from his mother to perform an emergency surgery on him. They were trying to save his teeth," Miller said at the time.

Surveillance video obtained during the investigation shows Jahmel, 16, in the vicinity of East Fordham Road and Morris Avenue on June 1, 2020, at approximately 9 p.m. According to the Bronx DA's description of how the incident unfolded, the teen is seen among a crowd of people heel-kicking a T-Mobile storefront. Jahmel then moves to another spot, where he apparently attempts to light some street debris on fire.

At this point, NYPD Police Officer Kevin Hickey observes Jahmel and tases him, causing him to fall [forward] to the ground and injure the right side of his face. Two other police officers subsequently approach Jahmel and each one strikes him once with a baton in the lower part of his body. According to the report, police say Jahmel was then taken into custody and his case was processed in Family Court.

The investigation found no



**THE PHOTO SHOWS** the facial injuries suffered by teen, Jahmel Leach, following a headfirst fall after Jahmel was tased by police on June 1, 2020.

criminality on the part of the responding police officers, and it did not find that the force used to arrest and restrain the teen was excessive or otherwise unjustified.

Miller told the *Norwood News* at the time that Jahmel's mother said she had not known where Jahmel was on the night in question, and that she had never been informed that the NYPD had a minor child in their custody. "She was outraged, and when she went to the hospital, I was on the phone with her," Miller told us last year. "I could hear

the officers telling her, at first, [that] she couldn't see her son," he said. "I could hear the officer telling her, 'Put your phone away,'" he added.

Miller said that when he spoke, at the time, to the arresting officer about the incident, the officer told him that because Jahmel was so tall, he thought the teen was an adult.

Meanwhile, a year later, Clark provided her reaction to the report's findings. "Many took to the streets peacefully to decry the killing of George Floyd, but violence and looting broke out in the Fordham area on June 1, 2020," she said. "In the midst of the chaos, NYPD Officers observed Mr. Leach allegedly trying to ignite a fire, which could have hurt the officers, people in the area and Mr. Leach himself. After a full investigation, we have concluded that there was no criminality on the part of three police officers."

Clark added, "I support the right to peacefully protest, but I will not tolerate violence in our community. Neither will I tolerate police misconduct or brutal-

ity, and my office will review and take seriously any such allegations from the public." In the video, officers can be heard using a profanity and addressing Jahmel aggressively, despite the fact that he appears to immediately comply with their instructions and answers them in a respectful manner.

The DA's office confirmed that Jahmel's family and lawyer met with the Public Integrity Bureau on the day the report was released and were informed of the findings. Last year, Miller said the family had challenged the fact that Jahmel had been interrogated by police, before he had any family present.

*Norwood News* reached out to Miller for further comment, following the release of the report. We did not receive an immediate response. We also followed up with the NYPD for a comment on the findings of the report. We did not receive an immediate response.

Meanwhile, Clark thanked the Public Integrity Bureau for conducting a thorough investigation. The full report and video is available to the public.

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10:00am Morning Service  
11:30am Morning Service  
4:00pm Afternoon Service

**SUNDAY NIGHT:**  
7:00pm Evening Service

**TUESDAY:**  
12:00pm Prayer Meeting

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT:**  
7:30pm Prayer Meeting

**FRIDAY NIGHT:**  
8:00pm Family Night  
(Groups for all ages)  
11:00pm Prayer Meeting

...plus special services for high holy days — and other celebrations.

MANY KINDS OF GROUPS AND MINISTRIES THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

MINISTRIES

- Children
- Youth Group
- Young Adult Ministries
- Adult Ministries
- Outreach
- NY District School of Ministry
- Berean School Of The Bible
- Vacation Bible School
- Music Ministry

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# Politicians, Hip-Hop Legends Break Ground on New Museum

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

The transformation of the South Bronx continued Thursday, May 20, with a groundbreaking ceremony for a new museum which will memorialize the history of hip-hop in the borough, part of a \$349 million development known as Bronx Point.

With shovels in hand and scooping dirt from a pile of earth, elected officials, including Mayor Bill de Blasio, State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., joined hip-hop legends, Grandmaster Flash, Slick Rick, LL Cool J, Chuck D, Nas, and Fat Joe, in marking the ceremonial foundation of the museum's construction.

The 22-story building is projected to accommodate 1,045 apartment units, 542 of which will be dedicated to affordable housing, while the Universal Hip Hop Museum will occupy the ground floor. Rising along the Harlem River at 50 E. 150th St., the development will include 2.8 acres of public space with access to a playground, BBQ area, and an esplanade along the shoreline. Housing units will be reserved for low to middle-income households.

The \$349 million, mixed-use project is a public-private partnership between the City of New York, L+M Development Partners, Type A Projects, and BronxWorks. This type of investment in the South Bronx is a far cry from what Fat Joe remembers as a youngster growing up as Joseph Antonio Cartagena in the Morrisania neighborhood.

Addressing a crowd of over one hundred guests, assembled under a tent, he mentioned some of the common obstacles encountered by artists as they



Photo by José A. Giralt

**NEW YORK CITY** Mayor Bill de Blasio (center) and hip-hop music legend Chuck D (far right) from the group, Public Enemy, join others in shoveling dirt during the groundbreaking ceremony for the Universal Hip Hop Museum in the South Bronx on Thursday, May 20, 2021. The museum is part of a 22-story, mixed-use building which includes affordable housing, and is set to open in 2024.

attempted to create art in a forgotten borough. "Hip-hop music came out of oppression. It came out of people suffering. It came out of the Bronx looking like Vietnam," Fat Joe said. "The buildings were blown up, and people had to make something out of nothing."

The early days of hip-hop are filled with stories of young Latinos and African Americans who became inventive at creating the then, new musical genre, with limited resources. Grandmaster Flash (born Joseph Saddler) grew up in the Bronx and has been described as part of the trinity of hip-hop music, along with DJ Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa. He paused briefly as he addressed the crowd during the ceremony, overcome with the emotion of the occasion. "Ladies and gentlemen, I must tell



Photos by José A. Giralt

**HIP-HOP LEGEND FAT** Joe (far left, at podium) addresses a crowd of invited guests, including New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio (far right wearing blue suit) at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Universal Hip Hop Museum in the South Bronx on Thursday, May 20, 2021. (Below) Hip-Hop Legend Grandmaster Flash, describes his mixing technique as DJ while addressing the audience at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Universal Hip Hop Museum in the South Bronx on Thursday, May 20, 2021

you, this is a really special ... this is a really special time," he said. "I say this in the name of [DJ] Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, DJ Breakout, Grand Wizzard Theodore, DJ Charlie Chase.... the names go on and on and on."

From these humble beginnings in The Bronx, a global hip-hop movement was created. During 2020, for instance, over a fifth of songs streamed in the UK were rap and hip-hop and according to the BBC, the genres accounted for 22 percent of the singles market.

Meanwhile, according to Billboard.com, a search online for hip hop in South Korea, Pakistan, or Vietnam brings up results for K-hip hop, rap in Urdu, and "Def Jam Launches a Vietnam Label to Meet Hip-Hop's Growth in Southeast Asia."

Closer to home, during the ceremony, the mayor thanked Grandmaster Flash for helping him to think about the world more deeply with his song, "The Message." The mayor said, "In 1982, I was trying to make sense of the world as a

young man. I was trying to find my purpose." De Blasio added, "Some things influence you powerfully, so I heard these words: 'A child is born with no state of mind, blind to the ways of mankind,' and it gripped me. It gripped me, and I listened to 'The Message' over and over.... Think about that, something so powerful that it can claim to be the message."

In addition to the 52,000-square-foot space dedicated to the museum, the Bronx Point property will also include an early childhood space, run by BronxWorks.

Collectively, the Bronx Point mixed-use development will comprise over half a million square feet, including more than 12,000 square feet of retail space.

Elected officials like De Blasio and Diaz Jr. are continuing their calls for more funding for the Bronx Point project. Microsoft is the museum's strategic technology partner and is contributing \$5 million towards the institute's mission. On behalf of the Bronx, Diaz Jr. presented a check for \$4.2 million to help with the \$80 million total it will cost to build the museum.

Originally scheduled to open in 2023 to coincide with hip-hop's 50th anniversary, the museum's construction was delayed by the pandemic. It is now projected to open in 2024.

Rocky Bucano is the executive director of the Universal Hip Hop Museum and has high hopes for the institution once it opens to the public. He identified Joe Conzo Jr., Grand Wizzard Theodore, Melle Mel, and Afrika Bambaataa, among others, as the founding members of the museum. Photographer, Conzo Jr., was just recently honored with a place on the Bronx Walk of Fame during the recent Bronx Week 2021 celebrations.

"We started this journey not knowing where we were going. We didn't even have a name," Bucano said. "We came up with 'Universal' because we want this museum to represent the entire world of hip-hop. We love it so much that we're putting our heart and soul into this museum," he said.





## CRIME FILE

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY &amp; DAVID GREENE


**Fordham Manor: Man Sought for Robbery**

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance locating the unidentified man seen in the above video screenshot, who is sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in the 52<sup>nd</sup> precinct. On Wednesday, May 19, at 2.25 p.m., inside Bronx Pawn Brokers, located at 301 Kingsbridge Road, in Fordham Manor, the suspect entered the store, approached a 71-year-old female victim, grabbed her by the neck and snatched her necklace. He fled, with the necklace, valued at \$400, to a black SUV. The victim suffered lacerations to her neck but refused medical

attention.

**Norwood: Two Wounded in Gun Hill Road Shooting**

Police are looking for the gunman who opened fire from a black sedan on a 21-year-old male and a 19-year-old male, as they were walking along East Gun Hill Road in Norwood, in the 52<sup>nd</sup> precinct. Police said the shooting took place at 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 23, on the sidewalk outside 275 East Gun Hill Road, a six-story, occupied apartment building between Putnam Place and Perry Avenue.

They said multiple rounds were discharged, and then the vehicle took off. The 21-year-old was shot in the torso and right ear, and the 19-year-old was hit in the back and right arm. Both men were transported to Jacobi Hospital in "stable" condition. The motive for the shooting remains unclear and the investigation is continuing.

**Fordham Heights: Two Men Shot in Subway**

The NYPD confirm that two men were shot at 182<sup>nd</sup> Street subway station (servicing the B & D lines) on the Grand Concourse in Fordham Heights on Saturday, May 22. The incident unfolded on the mezzanine level of the station at around 6 p.m.

Police later confirmed that both men were alive, that it was a robbery that had gone wrong, and that both the perpetrator and the victim (both male adults) had been shot. They said the perpetrator was under arrest.


**Fordham Heights: Man Stabbed**

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the individual seen in the above photo who is sought in connection to an assault that occurred in the 46<sup>th</sup> precinct, in Fordham Heights. On Sunday, May 16, at around 10.08 a.m., the suspect approached

a 48-year-old man in the vicinity of East 184<sup>th</sup> Street and the Grand Concourse and displayed a knife, before stabbing the victim in his leg. EMS responded and transported the victim to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. The suspect was described to police detectives as a male who was wearing a black hoodie and black pants at the time of the assault.

**Fordham Heights Youth Arrested in Fatal Shooting of 17-Year-Old**

Police confirmed arresting a youth from Fordham Heights on murder charges in relation to the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old in Claremont. Police responded to a 911 call on Saturday, May 15, at around 9.07 p.m. regarding multiple people who had been shot behind 1625 Webster Avenue in Claremont, in the 44<sup>th</sup> precinct. Upon arrival, officers discovered a 17-year-old male unconscious and unresponsive with a gunshot wound to his chest.

EMS responded and transported the youth to Bronx-Care Health System where he was pronounced deceased. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that four additional victims had also been shot during the incident and

had made their way to Bronx-Care Health System by private means.

A 31-year-old man was shot in the left leg, a 28-year-old woman was shot in the right leg, a 25-year-old man was shot twice in the right leg and a 24-year-old man was shot in the right buttocks and left leg. All were in stable condition. The investigation is ongoing. The deceased was identified as Armanis Valdez of Morris Heights in The Bronx.

On May 18, police said Luis Cruz, 18, of Fordham Heights was arrested and charged on May 17, in the 44<sup>th</sup> precinct. Cruz was charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon (a loaded firearm). A person arrested and accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Anyone who has information about 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 Crime Stoppers website at [www.nypdcrimestoppers.com](http://www.nypdcrimestoppers.com), or on Twitter @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.



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# Commencement Ceremonies Celebrate Student Resilience

By SÍLE MOLONEY

With a series of sunny, yet smaller-than-usual, diploma ceremonies on the Rose Hill campus of Fordham University, as well as a university-wide commencement videocast, streamed on Saturday, May 22, graduates were honored for their bravery and determination amid the pandemic and Fordham flipped the script on an unprecedented year, offering the Class of 2021 a chance to celebrate their resilience, and look forward with hope.

During the videocast, Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham, officially conferred degrees upon nearly 5,500 graduates from ten different college schools, while acknowledging that it was not the commencement anyone had expected.

The adapted circumstances signified another aspect of college life curtailed by the pandemic “at a time when the whole world has been haunted by fear and overshadowed by loss,” McShane said. Still, according to the president, commencement was a day of shared victory, shared triumph, and shared accomplishment. “While some might have given in to despair, the Class of 2021 persevered,” he said. “You gave yourselves to a more than usually intense search for answers, and for meaning.”

Meanwhile, in her keynote address, retired Navy Admiral Michelle Howard, the first woman to become a four-star admiral, harkened back to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s observation that the ultimate measure of a person is not where they stand in moments of convenience and comfort, but where they stand in moments of challenge and controversy.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer also offered words of congratulations, saying the country needed students to rebuild, and make it even stronger. “This past year has revealed the injustices and prejudices that persist in our society, and we can’t just go back to the way things used to be,” he said. “We must make our society better, and we know we will, because you are our future leaders,” he added.

While many of the themes of the 176th college commencement felt familiar, some reflected the fact that the pandemic, though not yet over, appears to be waning. The victory bell that is rung to mark the beginning of commencement, a gathering which normally draws some 10,000 people to the campus, rang out on nine, different occasions during the week leading up to the main ceremony, for the nine, smaller diploma gatherings that took place. Seniors from Fordham College at Rose Hill, Fordham College at Lincoln Center, and the Gabelli School of Business arrived on campus with a maximum of two guests for those ceremonies which ran from Monday, May 17 to Thursday, May 20.

While students walked with their classmates to their seats, it was a walk unlike any other. Instead of the usual loop around Edward’s Parade that culminates with a march down a center aisle, the stu-



Photo courtesy of Fordham University.

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATES CELEBRATE** during an adapted commencement ceremony on the college campus, amid the coronavirus pandemic, on Saturday, May 22, 2021.

dents, wearing facemasks, proceeded, instead, straight onto Keating Terrace, down the steps of the “Terrace of Presidents,” to arrive at their individual seats which were spaced three feet apart.

McShane noted that the Class of 2021 were finishing their studies in spite of having lived through a year that featured a pandemic, an economic downturn, a reckoning with racism, a bruising presidential election campaign, and an assault on the U.S. Capitol and the democratic principles upon which the nation was built. “The toll that these cascading plagues has taken on all of us, and on you, in a special way, has been enormous,” he said.

Meanwhile, at Lehman College, civil rights icon, Dolores Huerta, New York State Senate Majority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and others are set to address students during the college’s

upcoming commencement ceremony on May 27.

Labor leader, Huerta and Stewart-Cousins, who made history by becoming the first woman and first Black woman to head a legislative chamber in the state, will address the Class of 2021 during the virtual ceremony. It will be livestreamed on the day at 10 a.m. on the college’s YouTube channel and website, on BronxNet TV, and on cable channels 67 (Optimum) or 2133 (FiOS).

According to her biography, Stewart-Cousins taught in the Yonkers public school district before entering politics and earned her teaching credentials in business education from Lehman College. She is one of the many prominent Lehman alumni who have gone on to hold elected office. Alongside Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, she’s among the most powerful

political figures in the state.

Described as a passionate advocate for public education, Stewart-Cousins has long supported Lehman College, and institutions like it. She played a key role in creating the excelsior scholarship, which provides eligible New York students with free tuition at CUNY and SUNY schools, and in 2018, she fought for a \$1 billion increase in state education aid.

In spring of 2021, as the State Senate considered a raft of bills designed to further expand access to college, Stewart-Cousins noted that “the years our students spend in higher education will help shape the trajectory of their lives.” She added, “New York is, and will continue to be, a national leader in offering quality college and advanced education opportunities.”

Students will also hear from several other high-profile speakers. Stewart-Cousins will be joined on the virtual stage by fellow Lehman alum, and the Bronx borough president, Rubén Díaz Jr., who will receive the College’s Presidential Medal. His remarks to graduating students come as he prepares for a significant transition in his own life. Díaz Jr., who has been borough president since 2009, will be leaving office this year when his third term comes to an end.

Other speakers include Lehman College President Daniel Lemons, who will leave the college next month for a new interim role as CUNY’s interim executive vice chancellor, Provost Peter O. Nwosu, deans of the College’s five schools, and student speaker, Esther Asibuo-Ramos.

In total, Lehman will award nearly 4,000 graduate and undergraduate degrees at the event. The college is set to confer honorary degrees on “three trailblazers who embody the College’s mission and values, pending approval by the CUNY Board of Trustees on May 24.”

They include Huerta, community organizer, founder and president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, who has devoted her life to improving working conditions for Latino farmworkers and laborers, and is one of the most important civil rights activists of the 20th century, former New York congressman in the 16th congressional district and Lehman alumnus, Eliot Engel, who represented the North Bronx and southern Westchester County in the United States House of Representatives for 16 terms, and T.J. English, an author, journalist, and humanitarian.

The college is planning a social media viewing party for the event and in the days leading up to commencement, will host several virtual activities, including a virtual dance party for seniors with Lehman alum, DJ Ode.

In advance of the ceremony, Lemons said, “I am thrilled that so many respected, notable luminaries will join us for our virtual commencement ceremony, and my last as president of Lehman College.” He added, “I am so proud of our graduates, and all of their achievements, and look forward to celebrating them on May 27.”





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**Thursday, February 25, 2021 5:00 pm - 6:00pm | Thursday, March 4, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm**

**Friday, March 5, 2021 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Thursday, March 18, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm**

**Friday, March 19, 2021 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Thursday, March 25, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm**

**\*Nota: La Loteria se llevara a cabo Abril 15, 2021, para solicitudes favor de vistar la pagina web [www.ilchs.org](http://www.ilchs.org)**

**Puede enviar su solicitud via email a [Egonzalez@ilchs.org](mailto:Egonzalez@ilchs.org)**

**Tambien Puede enviar por correo a: International Leadership Charter High School  
3030 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx NY 10463**



# Bedford Park “Business Solution” Partners with AAOHA for Food Giveaway

By DAVID GREENE

L. Jimenez Business Solution (LJBS) is the place to go to fax a document, create a résumé or prepare one's taxes, but for almost two months, hundreds of residents have been lining up outside the location for food now also.

On Friday, May 21, a crowd of well over 100 people, once again, lined up outside LJBS, located at 206 East Bedford Park Boulevard for a Food Giveaway. The event was sponsored by the Albanian American Open Hand Association (AAOHA), and was organized, and the food distributed by AAOHA, Miriam Quiñones, *Norwood News* photographer, and LJBS.

The line stretched up Bedford Park Boulevard and around the Grand Concourse. Luis Sanchez Jimenez, president of LJBS, Quiñones, Aleksander Nilaj, founder of AAOHA, drivers and volunteers were seen busily emptying vans and handing out boxes of food to the public. Smiling, Sanchez Jimenez said, “More is on the way.”

LJBS recently teamed up with the AAOHA and has been hosting food giveaways every Friday at its premises. Last Friday, the sealed boxes contained a gallon of milk, apples, and meatballs to name just a few of the food items.

Sanchez Jimenez is also president of Yeshua God Palace Corp., a domestic corporation, founded on July 30,



Photo by “Pablo,” a volunteer

(L TO R) VOLUNTEER AND DRIVER, Mark Pjetrushi, Luis Sanchez Jimenez of L. Jimenez Business Solution, volunteer, Eliu Torres, Albanian American Open Hand Association founder, Aleksander Nilaj, and *Norwood News* photographer, Miriam Quiñones, got together to distribute food boxes during a Food Giveaway held at 206 East Bedford Park Boulevard in Bedford Park, The Bronx on Friday, May 21, 2021. In total, 245 boxes of food were given out to the local community.

2020, also with an address at 206, Bedford Park Blvd, in The Bronx.

In reference to the regular food giveaways, Sanchez Jimenez said, “Whatever food I get... and they [the people] just show up.” He added, “We need it. The people are here, and they're asking.” Pointing to the Grand Concourse, he said, “You see the line over there.” He added with a smile, “And we're glad to do it.”

Bedford Park resident, Rita San-

chez [no relation to Sanchez Jimenez], had just recently learned of the regular food giveaway at the location, but said she had received similar food boxes from other sources throughout the pandemic.

Sanchez, who said she was lucky enough to have been employed throughout the pandemic, said of the giveaway, I think it's really good that they're giving this out to the community because it's so hard to get food.”

She added, “It's very expensive nowadays. It's a very beautiful thing, especially with COVID so I really do appreciate it. Usually, they have yogurt, fruits and vegetables.....things that you can use every day, so it's really great.”

Saying she felt fortunate to still have a job, Sanchez added, “It does help, especially being home all the time, working remotely, so I'm home eating more and it definitely does help.”

Sanchez Jimenez said LJBS holds the weekly food giveaway every Friday at the same location at 2 p.m., and the boxes are distributed to anyone in line, on a first come, first served basis.

A total of 245 boxes was given out to the community on the day according to Quiñones.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, May 25, Bronx District 13 City Councilman Mark Gjonaj, issued a statement calling for the extension of the federal food box program, amid the ongoing pandemic. “Please stand with us, click & sign this #petition, calling on the federal government to #extend #FoodBoxProgram for struggling New Yorkers,” he wrote on Twitter. “Since the start of the pandemic, along with community organizations, we have given out over 125,000 food boxes.”

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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Latest Updates on Vaccine Eligibility

According to New York State Department of Health, all individuals 12 years of age and older who reside in the United States are eligible to receive the vaccine, for free. While the vaccination process is underway, residents should continue to follow prevailing public health guidelines.

FDA fact sheets for recipients and caregivers on each vaccine are available here:

Pfizer-BioNTech: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>

Moderna: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>

Johnson & Johnson/Janssen: <https://www.fda.gov/media/146305/download>

COVID-19 vaccines are now widely available at pharmacies, local health departments, clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and other locations across the state. Visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/> to find appointments near you or contact your local pharmacy or provider.

To schedule an appointment directly at a New York State-run site, go to: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> and follow the instructions. **Walk-in appointments are also accepted at New York State mass vaccination sites for all eligible individuals.** <http://on.nyc.gov/walkupvax>.

If you need transportation to get your vaccine appointment, click this link for a list of options: <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/vaccine>.

For trustworthy information on the vaccines and the research behind them, go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccine-facts.page>.

## Lehman College Vaccination Site

For local residents of Norwood and the surrounding areas, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is available at the Lehman College vaccination site, located at the APEX Athletic Center, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West. To schedule a vaccine appointment, visit <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations/664> or call (877) 829-4692.

## Homebound New Yorkers

New York City is providing in-home COVID-19 vaccinations (Johnson & Johnson) to eligible NYC residents who are fully homebound, have not already been vaccinated, and do not already have access to a vaccination program. If you think you may be eligible for an in-home vaccination, fill out an interest form here: <https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/homebound> or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). The form does not set up an appointment, but it enables City officials to contact you to further discuss your eligibility.

## More Help with Scheduling Vaccine Appointments

Bronx Rising Initiative, a nonprofit launched in 2020, has launched a homebound vaccine initiative to help inoculate Bronx seniors where they live, in partnership with local community organizations which are already serving homebound seniors. Residents can sign-up at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/getvaccinated>.

## Digital Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Results

An excelsior pass provides New Yorkers with a free, fast and secure way to present digital proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or negative test results.

New Yorkers can store the pass digitally on a smartphone with the Excelsior Pass Wallet app, available for free from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, or they can also print the pass from <https://epass.ny.gov/home> and bring it with them.

Businesses and venues can then scan and validate the pass to ensure New Yorkers meet any COVID-19 vaccination or testing requirements for entry. Along with the pass, New Yorkers will be asked to show a photo ID that shows their name and birth date to verify the pass belongs to them. Adults may hold passes for accompanying minors.

Once you and your party enter an establishment, you will still be asked to follow State and CDC guidance regarding social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene.

Participation in Excelsior Pass is voluntary. New York-

ers can always show alternate proof of vaccination or testing at a business or venue, such as another mobile application or a paper form.

## COVID-19 Testing Sites

For a full list of COVID-19 testing sites, text "COVID TEST" to 855-48 or go to:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/get-tested/covid-19-testing.page>.

## Fraudulent Vaccination Cards

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz recently introduced legislation to combat the use of fake vaccination cards. The FBI issued a warning in March to make the public aware that there are individuals who are both selling fake, COVID-19 vaccination cards, and who are encouraging others to print such fake cards in their homes. Agency officials said that fake cards are also being advertised on social media websites, as well as on e-commerce platforms and blogs.

Faking a vaccination record puts the impacted person, and others around that person, at risk of contracting COVID-19. The newly introduced legislation would make it easier for prosecutors to charge those forging, or possessing a forged immunization record, with a felony. The bill adds explicit language to the definitions of forgery in the second and third degrees that addresses forged immunization records.

## June 22 Primary Deadlines

As the June primary elections approach, all voters are being encouraged to mark their calendars with the following important dates.

Friday, May 28: voter registration deadline

Saturday, June 12: early voting begins

Tuesday, June 15: absentee ballot request deadline Sunday, June 20: early voting ends

Tuesday, June 22: Election Day. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

To register to vote, go to: <https://vote.nyc.gov/register-vote>.

To find your polling site, go to: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc>.

To request an absentee ballot, go to: <https://vote.nyc.gov/absentee-voting-0>.

To learn more about Ranked

Choice Voting, go to: <https://rankthevoteny.org>.

## Flea Market

A new flea market will open on Fordham Plaza this summer. MASC Hospitality Group, the creator of Bronx Night Market and the upcoming Uptown Night Market, is working on a new market which will be dedicated to merchandise, arts & crafts, apparel, accessories, self-care products and more.

Fordham Flea market will be located at Fordham Plaza on the last Sunday of the month from May to October, from midday to 7 p.m.

## Boilermaker Trade Apprenticeship Deadline

The joint apprenticeship and training committee (JATC) for Boilermakers Northeastern Area, Local Union #5, Zone #5 will begin recruiting to fill five boilermaker (construction) apprenticeships, between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. on the third Monday of each month during the recruitment period which will be from June 21, 2021 through May 16, 2022, excluding legal holidays. The five openings cover the committee's three recruitment regions of New York City, Long Island, and Hudson Valley. Application forms can be obtained from JATC for Boilermakers Northeastern Area, Local Union #5, Zone #5, located at 24 Van Siclen Ave, Floral Park, NY, and must be received no later than **May 16, 2022**. Detailed information is available on the Boilermakers Northeast JAC website at [www.neaac.net](http://www.neaac.net) or by calling (516) 326-2500.

## Wood, Wire & Metal Trade Apprenticeship Deadline

The joint apprenticeship and training committee for the metallic lathers and reinforcing ironworkers, Local Union #46, will begin recruiting to fill 50 lather (wood, wire and metal) apprenticeships on weekdays, from June 22 to July 6, 2021, excluding July 5, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The 50 apprenticeships cover the committee's three recruitment regions of New York City, the Hudson Valley and Long Island. Applications must be submitted online at [www.ml46.org](http://www.ml46.org). Applicants who do not have access to the internet are encouraged to visit their local library.

Applicants must pay a \$25 testing fee by money order or cashier's check at the time of testing. However, they may re-

quest that this fee be waived. Fee waivers will be approved if the applicant can show verifiable proof of financial need. Call (718) 267-7500 for further information.

## Fordham University Offers Discount to Neighbor Learners

Fordham University plans to provide financial assistance to 'neighbors' of the university's Rose Hill campus, located in Fordham Manor, beginning this fall. The Fordham School of Professional and Continuing Students (PCS) announced the launch of its Good Neighbor Initiative for the Fall 2021 term on Thursday, May 6.

The Good Neighbor Initiative for adult learners provides an automatic 30 percent discount on tuition fees for undergraduate-seeking PCS students at the Bronx campus who live within certain neighboring zip codes. The selected zip codes cover neighborhoods in the Bronx, lower Westchester County (Mount Vernon, Yonkers) and the very northern part of Manhattan.

Students who participate in the Good Neighbor Initiative may also qualify for additional financial aid, such as merit aid, Pell grants, support from the New York State Tuition Assistance Program, and institutional aid. If a student qualifies for more than one discount e.g. NYPD, FDNY, NYC Ballet Dancers, etc., the student will receive the higher of the two awards.

The full list of eligible Bronx zip codes is as follows: 10451, 10452, 10453, 10454, 10455, 10456, 10457, 10458, 10459, 10460, 10461, 10462, 10463, 10465, 10466, 10467, 10468, 10469, 10470, 10471, 10472, 10473, 10474, 10475 and 10499.

Fordham PCS will host a virtual information session about the initiative on June 2 at 6:30 p.m. where representatives will explain the initiative and Fordham's undergraduate degree programs for adult learners. Those who attend will have their application fees waived. Go to the following link:

[https://www.fordham.edu/info/22123/information\\_sessions/6551/adult\\_undergraduate\\_information\\_sessions](https://www.fordham.edu/info/22123/information_sessions/6551/adult_undergraduate_information_sessions) to register. For more information, visit <https://www.fordham.edu/goodneighbor>.



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Thursday, February 25, 2021 5:00 pm - 6:00pm | Thursday, March 4, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm  
Friday, March 5, 2021 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Thursday, March 18, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm  
Friday, March 19, 2021 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Thursday, March 25, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm

\*Note: The lottery will be held on April 15, 2021 For applications, please visit our website at [www.ilchs.org](http://www.ilchs.org)

You can email the application to [Egonzalez@ilchs.org](mailto:Egonzalez@ilchs.org)  
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## Public and Community Meetings

The next **52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will be held **in person** outside the precinct at 3016 Webster Avenue on **Thursday, May 27, at 6 p.m.**, unless it rains, in which case the meeting will be held via ZOOM. The Meeting ID is 890 9414 8665 and the passcode is 05205. Dial in to (929) 205 6099 for phone access. 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** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held **in June. Date is TBC.** Zoom details will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Contact [mirosario@cb.nyc.gov](mailto: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 meetings are usually held on the **first Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m.** For further details, contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News* May 13-May 26 edition, on page 8, "Resident Says Ceiling Fell in during 12<sup>th</sup> Apartment Flood," it was stated that a discussion took place on April 24 between the landlord and the FDNY, during which Tony Apostolos, the tenant, alleged the landlord initially acted like he didn't understand the FDNY's instructions to turn off the water. In fact, Apostolos was referring to the Super, not the landlord.

The tenant said his reason for alleging this was because, in his experience,

the Super spoke perfect English. We attempted to reach the Super for comment, but our calls went through to the property manager, Genesis Realty Group. The group's representative, Jac Zadrima, said he would not be commenting on the story. In the same story, Zadrima was listed as the owner of the building [116 East Mosholu Parkway South], and his first name was spelled incorrectly as "Jack." In fact, the building owner is listed as 116 Mosholu LLC. We apologize for these errors.



# Virtual Marketing Workshop

FREE

Thursday, May 27  
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For the zoom link or any questions,  
send an email to:

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## Letters To The Editor

**Editor's Note:** We reserve the right to edit letters for space, clarity, civility and accuracy.

### Real Way to Support Troops

Politicians love to claim they support our troops, but as Dawn Clancy's excellent article, "What We Now Know About Veterans & Health," [Norwood News, May 13-26] shows, they are doing nothing to eliminate obstacles that prevent veterans from receiving needed mental health assistance. When problems develop while they're still in uniform, treatment should immediately be available. That is just. Giving them less than honorable discharges is not. Also, soldiers enlist for the heroic purpose of defending our coun-

try. That's the way they should be used. They should not be used to defend business interests of our oil companies or other corporations. No soldier should kill, suffer or die fighting in an unjust military action. We don't need to continue to have 22 veterans, 22 a day, dying by suicide

**Richard Warren,  
Van Cortlandt Village**

### Let Us All Give Thanks

As we begin to see the light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, we must stop and say, "thank you," to those operating businesses throughout this pan-

demic.

I am selecting Ms. Sile Moloney, editor of the *Norwood News*, who kept this valuable voice of our beloved community going. Despite the change in leadership, and hitting some small bumps, our voice in Norwood was there! Ms. Moloney deserves out undying gratitude, along with her team.

I would urge you, my fellow Norwoodites, to select a local store or business such as a dental office or bodega and go in and thank the owners and employees for staying open. When you see me on the street, tell me who you selected.

Other people to thank

are the volunteers like Ms. Elizabeth Quaranta of the Friends of Mosholu Parkway, and all volunteers who worked during COVID to keep our parkway flourishing! Remember to keep a small plastic bag on your person to pick up any recyclables you may come across when you leave your home.

We are all in this together, and together we will weather this pandemic and put it in our rear-view window, hopefully sooner rather than later! And then, we will have a huge party in the Williamsbridge Oval or on Mosholu Parkway, but no barbequing! We will sing either "God Bless America" or "America the Beautiful." Let me also know your preference.

**Richard Marias,  
Norwood**

### More than 24/7 Service Needed to Bring Back Riders

Resumption of full subway service is good news as The Big Apple has always been a 24/7 town. More people now work different hours from the old 9 to 5 routine, decades ago. However, there are still other outstanding issues to be resolved before the five million, pre COVID-19 ridership will return.

Riders remain concerned about criminal activity, homelessness, and vandalism. This needs to be dealt with if the MTA wants to see a return to pre COVID-19 ridership numbers. Have the police deal with more important issues than immigrant vendors selling churros, and other products underground. Return to the days when a transit police officer was assigned to ride

each train, and others patrolled stations. This, along with the installation of security cameras on trains and stations, might help to reduce crime.

As more riders return, there will also be a potential increase in rats, mice, and litter. Place more trash cans in stations. Consider installing separate cans for recycling newspapers, plastic, and glass. Selling advertising on the side of cans could generate revenue to help cover the costs of more frequent, off-peak, and late-night collection and disposals.

Conductors should try and refrain from closing the doors while riders attempt to cross the platform, attempting transfers from a local to an express train.

Find better solutions to waiting for or riding the subway while having the "urge to go." The odds of finding a working bathroom for "relief" may be too late. Until the 1960s, most subway stations had clean, safe, working bathrooms with toilet paper. Revenues generated from a 10-cent fee helped cover the costs. Increase the number of open, fully equipped bathrooms at more of the 471 subway stations. Working bathrooms are better than the current unpleasant alternatives, which contribute to dirty subways. Increase the number of ADA compliant stations.

**Larry Penner  
Great Neck**

### SPONSORED CONTENT

## New Clinical Study To Help People Who Are Living With Chronic Pain

**Allen Burton, M.D.,  
Medical Director,  
Abbott Neuromodulation**

Abbott's DISTINCT Clinical Study is Here to Help People in Your Neighborhood Who are Living with Chronic Low Back Pain

Low back pain is the world's leading cause of years lost to disability, according to a study in *The Lancet*. And for 20 percent of patients, low back pain can become "chronic," which the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke defines as pain that persists for six months or more.

Now, a clinical study, which recently got underway at Montefiore Medical Center - Waters Place, Bronx, N.Y., is investigating a distinct new way to help treat people who suffer with chronic low back pain. The DISTINCT (Dorsal spinal cord STimulation vs mediCal management for the Treatment of low back pain) study, sponsored by Abbott, will compare the use of spinal cord stimulation (SCS) to standard medical care, which can include taking medicine. The goal of the study will be to determine how much a patient's level of pain, physical function and emotional well-being improves under each type of care.

SCS treats people living with chronic pain by using mild electrical pulses delivered by a small implant to change pain signals as they travel from the spi-

nal cord to the brain. The study will use Abbott's BurstDR SCS device, which has been used over the past five years to help those affected by back pain.

Currently, doctors do not have consistent treatment guidelines for chronic low back pain. Many patients start on a regimen of over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications and exercise or physical therapy. Some will eventually be prescribed opioids for the pain, while others might qualify for surgery. For those who are not able to have surgery, treatment options can be limited.

Findings from the study could answer questions healthcare providers have about how to treat low back pain in patients who are not able to have surgery and for whom there are limited treatment options. This could also help inform future standards of care, and provide insurance companies with the evidence necessary to demonstrate the benefit of SCS for patients who are not able to have surgery.

The DISTINCT study is now enrolling at up to 30 sites across the United States. Patients will be randomized to either SCS treatment or be treated with medication. Participants will be followed in-clinic and via telephone over a two-year period.

To see if you may be eligible for Abbott's DISTINCT study and to obtain more information on how to enroll, visit [Neurostudies.abbott](http://Neurostudies.abbott).

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# Out & About

Compiled by RACHEL DALLOO

## Events

Want to help clean up local gardens, for spring and summer planting? Then join the Bronx River Alliance on May 27, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for **Tidy Thursday**. Come help remove litter and support local gardens for spring plantings and maintenance. Tasks include litter pick-up, weed removal, green infrastructure maintenance and plantings. Hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, social distancing guidelines, and temperature checks are provided to prevent the spread of Covid-19. For more information, please contact Lexi, the volunteer coordinator,

at (718) 542-4284 or email [volunteer@bronxriver.org](mailto:volunteer@bronxriver.org).

**The Golden Brush Awards**, presented by Guerinos against Graffiti, will be held on Thursday, May 27, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. during the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Council meeting, the first meeting to be held physically, this year, at 3016 Webster Avenue, in Norwood.

Looking to start a new piece of writing or a creative project? Longing to get back to the page, but finding yourself blocked? Join the **NYCWP's Generative Writing Boot Camp** from June 1 to June 3, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., for three days of generating your own creative writing! Over this three-day "boot camp," writers will have

the opportunity to engage with a variety of prompts, and participate in micro-studies of various craft elements, creative forms, and model readings. To register or for more information, visit <https://www.lehman.edu> and go to "All Events" or email [jane.higgins@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:jane.higgins@lehman.cuny.edu). Registration is required by May 31.

Interested in learning about sustainability? Then join Montefiore Hospital on June 2 from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. for **Sustaining Improvement: The Intersection of Quality Improvement and Implementation Science**. The speaker for this event is Dr. Rohit Ramaswamy, professor at the University of North Carolina. For more information about this event, contact [Noodal@montefiore.org](mailto:Noodal@montefiore.org).

## Movement

Kingsbridge Historical Society (KHS) members will be going on a **Revolutionary Walking Tour** of Spuyten Duyvil and Kingsbridge on June 12, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The group will visit the locations of several small forts, the strategic King's Bridge, and a prominent local tavern. Members will also stop at the homesites of local residents, whose lives were upended, and whose families were divided by conflict. Capacity is limited so this event is for members only, and reservations are required. The walk will begin at the Henry Hudson monument in Henry

Hudson Park at W. 227th Street and Independence Avenue and will end at W. 231st Street and Broadway. You can request a reservation by contacting: [info@kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org). You can also become a member at <https://kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org/donate/>.

## Food

Celebrate the Bronx's diverse culture and cuisine and try up-and-coming food concepts at the **Bronx Night Market** on May 29, from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Fordham Plaza. Support small & local businesses including 20+ food vendors. Family and pet friendly, the event is free to attend. As the city of New York moves to reopen by July 1, Bronx Night Market is announcing an open call to musicians and entertainers from New York City to perform at the market. Go to <https://www.thebronxnightmarket.com/> for more information.

## Music

Bronx River Arts Center (BRAC) presents **"Streams of Black Music,"** a concert series honoring Black Music Month during June 2021. Join BRAC on June 5 from 4 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. to hear music from "Anton Kot and Friends." To learn more about this event, or to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com> and search for "Bronx River Sounds 2021: Streams of Black Music May 22-June 19, 2021."



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Please visit our website at [www.saintGabrielSchoolBronx.org](http://www.saintGabrielSchoolBronx.org) to view our virtual tour and learn more about our school. Applications for admission may be filed at [www.ApplyCatholicSchoolsNY.Org](http://www.ApplyCatholicSchoolsNY.Org). Scholarships and financial aid packages are available to families who qualify.

**Please call us at 718 548-0444 for further information.**

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## Man, 39, Found Dead in Norwood

By SÍLE MOLONEY

On Thursday, May 20, in the early afternoon, emergency services responded to a call from 3395 Reservoir Oval West in Norwood, following reports that a male neighbor had not been seen for about a week. After trying unsuccessfully to contact the man who lived in one of the building's apartments, FDNY entered his home. Police later confirmed that officers discovered an unconscious and unresponsive 39-year-old man in bed. They said EMS pronounced the man deceased, that the Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death, that the investiga-

tion is ongoing, and the death is not considered suspicious.

A source, based at the building, told the *Norwood News* that he used to see the deceased man with a young girl of about 5 years of age, who he assumed was his daughter. He said he would see him take her to and from school. The source said he had not seen the young girl in about eight months. He added that the man tended to keep to himself, and was sometimes seen outside on the stoop, smoking marijuana. Neighbors apparently placed candles outside the building on the day it became apparent the man had died.

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Somos una escuela secundaria de preparación universitaria académicamente rigurosa de alto rendimiento ubicada en el sector Riverdale / Kingsbridge del Bronx. International Leadership Charter High School es una institución gratuita que tiene como objetivo preparar a los hombres y mujeres jóvenes del Bronx no solo para las demandas de la educación superior, sino también para llevar una vida productiva y significativa. Los estudiantes de International Leaderships representan a algunos de los futuros líderes del mundo. Nuestra visión durante los últimos 15 años es para tener una de escuela secundarias autónomas de liderazgo internacional y programas de estudios de preparacion universitaria. Tenemos un ambiente de aprendizaje inclusivo que promueve altas expectativas académicas para todos!

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# Laborers' Rep Calls Out "Corporate Greed" Amid Elevator Collapse

By **DAWN CLANCY & SILE MOLONEY**

The FDNY reported that an elevator collapsed at 8:17 a.m. on Wednesday, May 19, at 20 Bruckner Boulevard in Port Morris, in the South Bronx. On arrival, they found one person dead and another in critical condition. The incident was reported on the Citizen's App, and a verified video was uploaded to the site showing several fire trucks outside the building.

The NYPD later provided an official report, saying, "On Wednesday, May 19, 2021, at approximately 8:00 hours, police responded to a 911 call of an elevator collapse at 20 Bruckner Boulevard, within the confines of the 40 Precinct."

The statement continued, "Upon arrival, officers encountered two unconscious and unresponsive adult males inside of an elevator. EMS responded to the scene and pronounced one male deceased. The second male, a 29-year-old, was transported to NYC Health & Hospitals/Lincoln in critical condition. The preliminary investigation revealed that the two males, construction workers, were loading material into a freight elevator on the 5th floor when it fell. The Department of Buildings and Office of Emergency Management were notified, and the in-

vestigation is ongoing."

Norwood News reached out to New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) on the day of the accident and Andrew Rudansky provided the following statement. "Every worker who leaves for the job site in the morning deserves to come home safely at night. We are committed to finding out how this tragic incident occurred, and if we find that safety rules were ignored, we will hold those responsible to account."

He added, "Along with our partners in law enforcement, investigators from our Construction Safety and Elevator Enforcement units will be conducting a thorough investigation of the events that led up to this incident."

Rudansky said the location had active construction permits for a major alteration and vertical enlargement of the existing building. DOB's preliminary investigation determined that the two construction workers were using the elevator at the work site to transport construction debris between floors, when the elevator device fell to the bottom floor.

The agency issued a Full Stop Work Order for the entire work site, and the investigation into the incident was ongoing. Enforcement actions were pending the results of the

investigation.

According to DOB records, there are three buildings at the lot location, at 18-22 Bruckner Boulevard, and as of May 19, 34 complaints had been logged in respect of the building. Meanwhile, 78 violations had been recorded by DOB, and 44 other violations recorded by other City agencies.

Regarding the elevator records, specifically, 53 violations had been recorded between 1991 and 2017, while 282 inspections had been carried out between 1990 and 2021. The last recorded routine elevator inspection was carried out on Jan. 11, 2021, when no violation was found.

According to the self-reported ownership information provided to DOB on the recent work application associated with the site, the business owner of the building appears to be Bruckner Development LLC c/o MADD Equities. Norwood News reached out to MADD Equities on behalf of Bruckner Development LLC for comment. The named contact who answered the phone declined to comment on the matter.

The previous 1952 Certificate of Occupancy shows the building used to have legal occupancy as a manufacturing and storage space. Meanwhile, the name of the impacted elevator company is Alpha

Elevator, Inc. We called the company for comment, but the line was either engaged or otherwise unavailable.

DOB issues monthly enforcement bulletins, highlighting buildings which do not comply with DOB regulations, along with the agency's actions in sanctioning and deterring bad actors in the construction industry, through the enforcement of safety laws, and codes of conduct for construction professionals. The latest bulletin, issued on April 30, which covered March, did not reference the Bruckner Blvd building.

Norwood News attempted to speak to some construction workers at the site of the Bruckner Blvd incident on the day of the incident, but they declined to comment.

Anthony Williamson is the Bronx representative of Local 79, Construction and General Building Laborers. He spoke to the Norwood News about the dangers faced by construction workers in the building industry, saying, "This is the kind of thing we want to avoid happening. This is [a] \$1 billion water development happening here, in an Opportunity Zone - under the Trump administration, a \$2 billion Opportunity Zone."

Williamson was not specifically referring to the Bruckner Boulevard building in his remarks,

but to construction in the South Bronx waterfront vicinity generally. "What's happening here, there's a mix/combination of skilled and unskilled, trained and untrained workers, and because of the untrained workers, working in this environment, that's created these things that have happened," he said.

"We're asking the officials, the people who are responsible, the elected officials, to take a grip of themselves because this is unacceptable," he said. "Here you have a \$1 billion water construction, using unskilled workers."

The lobby group, Reinvent Albany, is supportive of legislation sponsored by Bronx Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz to essentially reverse the tax breaks earned by developers under the Trump 2017 tax laws, relating to so-called Opportunity Zones. Many independent fiscal watchdog groups say the Opportunity Zone program was a tremendous waste of taxpayer dollars and did nothing for the lower-income communities it was claiming to help.

"Rather than bringing jobs to disadvantaged New Yorkers, the program instead serves as need-less corporate welfare in a state that already gives out billions in tax breaks to real estate," a Reinvent Albany representative told the Norwood News, last year.

According to lobby group, prior to COVID-19, New York State and local governments gave away approximately \$10 billion a year in business subsidies - among the most of any state.

Meanwhile, Williamson said the hiring problem was not a union versus non-union issue when it came to workers. It was skilled versus unskilled. He said that developers were getting away with hiring low-paid workers and cutting corners at the expense of people. "It's called corporate greed," he said "It's people over money. He said the majority of construction workers in the area were minorities and people of color.

He continued, "Now, here is a guy that the family will never see him no more and the other guy, I understand, who is injured, who knows what condition he's going to

be in? And these are the kinds of things we want to stop."

Williamson went on to talk about a company called Brookfield Properties, which he alleged was an international conglomerate which hired and paid laborers as low as \$15 an hour, without healthcare and benefits amid the pandemic.

Williamson acknowledged that he didn't know the exact circumstances of the Bruckner Boulevard situation. He added, "It doesn't matter if you're an elevator construction worker, you're a plumber, or you're a laborer who holds a shovel in your hand. The fact remains that you've got to be treated with dignity and respect, and contractors have got to stop cutting corners at the expense of people."

Norwood News has reached out to Brookfield Properties for comment on what Williamson said. We did not receive an immediate response.

A separate construction accident was reported on the Citizen's App at 86 34th St. in Greenwood, Brooklyn on May 10, which also involved a collapsed freight elevator. One user said "multiple officers" reported that people were trapped inside the elevator and that some were injured, including one person with a back injury.

According to Citizen, EMS was called and the FDNY responded to the incident, which users said happened in Building 6 of Industry City. Citizen users later reported that police said two officers incurred non-life-threatening injuries arising from the incident. Norwood News reached out to the NYPD to inquire about the cause of the incident in Brooklyn. We did not receive an immediate response.

On Saturday, May 22, the New York Daily News reported that authorities confirmed a construction worker had died that day after falling four stories at a construction site in Long Island City, Queens. Preliminary reports said the victim fell down an elevator shaft at about 9:30 a.m. He was rushed to Mt. Sinai Queens, where he succumbed to his injuries.

We are following up with the DOB as to the cause of these two separate elevator incidents.



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# Celebrate World Health Hygiene Day!

By JOSEPH LOPEZ

When I was growing up, my mother always asked me if I had washed my hands. To be honest, I always said “yes,” whether I had washed them or not. Like most kids, I didn’t understand the importance of handwashing. As an adult, though, I realize that my mother’s constant reminders to wash my hands weren’t nagging; she was just teaching me good hygiene. And we can all recognize the importance of this, living through a global pandemic.

On May 5, we celebrated World Health Hygiene Day. We celebrate this day each year by reminding ourselves of what proper health hygiene is. According to the World Health Organization, hands are the main way germs are transmitted, so washing our hands is the best way to stop spreading germs.

We should wash our hands regularly, and specifically in these situations, when we are likely to be exposed to germs:

- before, during and after preparing food;
- before and after eating;
- before and after caring for someone who is sick;
- after changing diapers or cleaning a child who has used the toilet;
- before and after treating a cut or wound;
- after blowing our noses, coughing or sneezing;
- after handling pets or pet food;
- after touching garbage;
- after using the toilet.

Washing your hands is easy. Just follow these five steps every time:

- 1) Wet your hands with clean running water (it can be warm or cold), turn off the tap and put soap on your hands.
- 2) Rub your hands together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- 3) Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice to help time yourself.
- 4) Rinse your hands well under clean running water.
- 5) Dry your hands and turn off the tap using a clean towel. If clean towels aren’t available, let your hands air dry.
- 6) If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

For more information about hand hygiene and World Health Hygiene Day, visit the World Health Organization at [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

*Joseph Lopez is a health educator at Montefiore Health System’s Office of Community & Population Health.*



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# Dismay Over Community Garden Eviction

(continued from page 1)

Pultinas said he started the garden, a fenced off section of the school's campus, located between West Mosholu Parkway South and Goulden Avenue, as an informal project with his students in 2010. Together with student interns and some local volunteers, he said it was later formally launched with the school's blessing and was named "Meg's Garden."

This was in honor and memory of Megan Charlop, a longtime, Bronx community activist and volunteer. Charlop had been director of the Division of Community Health at Montefiore's School of Health, where she oversaw medical clinics at 16 Bronx schools. She was tragically killed in a bicycle accident on March 17, 2010, aged 57.

Pultinas retired from his formal role at the school in 2017. A year later, he opened the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center (JBOLC), a nonprofit with an address at 100 W Mosholu Pkwy S, Bronx, NY 10468, which is the school's campus address. The center hires student interns and, up until last month, had been teaching them how to grow fruits and vegetables at Meg's Garden. Pultinas named the center after James Baldwin, the essayist, poet, and activist who graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School in 1942.

Serving as founder and director of the center, Pultinas said he opened it "to keep those projects going," referring to different student gardening projects. Since he began the work in 2010, Pultinas said his programs have served thousands of students over the years.

"DeWitt Clinton administration encouraged us, since my retirement, that our organization, would become an official school partner once we became a 501-C3, purchased the proper liability insurance, and prepared a draft of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - all of which we did," Pultinas said. "There was tacit agreement that our plans were approved and encouraged since we were led to believe that an agreement would soon be in place." Of the Clinton Campus Council's decision to evict the group from the school garden, Pultinas said it happened once the school returned to in-class learning. "They condoned the project for many years, so it was a shock when they came back from the COVID break, basically back to in-person instruction in the school," he said.

"We shared with them our annual report which showed we were really very active during COVID," he added, saying they have distributed more than 2,400 pounds of food to the community,

contributing to local disaster relief.

For example, among other projects, the group hosts the JBOLC Farmer's Market each Saturday. The market is held on public property along Sedgewick Avenue, between Goulden Avenue and West Mosholu Parkway South. However, a google search for the market lists it as being located at the school campus address.

Pultinas received the formal, emailed notice of eviction from Meg's Garden on April 23 from the campus council, which comprises the principals of four public schools operating on the DeWitt Clinton campus. These are Bronx Collaborative High School, Worldview High School, DeWitt Clinton High School, and District 75 High School. The latter is a new school that is part of the Special Ed TOP program for special needs students.

In the notice, a copy of which has been obtained by *Norwood News*, Pultinas was informed that a vote had been taken on whether to continue issuing the required permit to JBOLC to allow them to continue their work in the garden. Three were against, none were in favor, and there was one abstention.

The council thanked Pultinas for his presentation of the center's annual report to them on April 20, and then referring to a specific NYC Department of Education (DOE) regulation, wrote, "We feel issuing this permit is not in the best interest of the campus or our students."

The council also instructed Pultinas to comply with a series of actions by May 12. These included the removal of all personal/JBOLC equipment from the DeWitt Clinton Campus, the removal of all mention of/or association with the DeWitt Clinton Campus from the JBOLC website and all published material, and the removal of the campus address from the JBOLC website as the "location" of the JBOLC Farmer's Market.

The May 12 deadline has since been extended to June 4. In conclusion, the email notice read, "We are informing you that at no point can you, or any member of the JBOLC enter onto or invite anyone onto the grounds of DeWitt Clinton Campus."

Student farmer and DeWitt Clinton senior, Brigitte Buntin, became a paid intern at JBOLC three years ago. Reacting to news of the eviction, she said, "The news really made me angry, but also sad at the same time, because the school was saying that the program was not doing anything for the students, and that it is not beneficial for the school." She said she didn't follow what the school officials were talking about when they said this because the

center/program was providing the students with jobs.

Buntin added, "We're learning how important community gardens are, and things like that, that the school doesn't teach, and it's kind of sad that they're taking that away from the students."

Meanwhile, Pultinas said the garden is self-funded through grants received through JBOLC from institutions like United Way and the National Endowment for the Arts. He said he currently has 11 kids working for him, and that monies earned go back into the garden. Pultinas said the school has not had any outlays for the upkeep of the garden, as these have all been handled by the center.

At the Farmer's Market held on Saturday, May 22, JBOLC's Sung Kim was busy working with two young children who were seen watering plants and assisting Kim at a separate "pollinator garden," which is also run by the JBOLC. "We want to engage children to teach them how to grow and nourish flowers," she said, adding that it helped to beautify the area.

In reference to Meg's Garden, Kim said, "They gave us an eviction notice without good reason, so all of the community members are very upset that we can't go into the garden anymore." Meanwhile, the pollinator garden is located on a Department of Transportation traffic island, across from busy Sedgewick Avenue, and not on DeWitt Clinton property. Consequently, neither the pollinator garden nor the Farmers Market will be affected by the eviction order.

Pultinas confirmed that irrespective of what happens with Meg's Garden, the students will maintain their jobs working at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays, selling donated bread from Terranova Bakery in Belmont and since they no longer have access to sell any fruits or vegetables at the market.

"Luckily, we're still running the market, so our students are still going to be working as interns," he said. "But the full experience of what we had going here was really much more. It was kind of the whole connection between nature and growing, and the market, and perennial herbs and seeds and things like this that we would gather for the market. We grew a lot of vegetables to donate to the market."

Members of JBOLC had been allowed keep unsold food from the Farmer's Market, and had used it to stock two community refrigerators - one at Jerome Avenue and Bedford Park Boulevard, and a second in Kingsbridge at West 242<sup>nd</sup> Street and Broadway, serving as lifelines to disadvantaged mem-

bers of the local community.

On Monday, May 24, a call and an email request by *Norwood News* to the four principals at DeWitt Clinton High School and an email sent to DOE superintendent, Sabrina Cook, generated a response from assistant principal, Steven Deep, who forwarded the query to the DOE press office.

Sarah Casanovas of the DOE responded, saying, "Schools should be a safe collaborative space for students and staff, and this group has not been issued an extended use permit since 2019, due to violations against DOE regulations." The DOE alleges that JBOLC failed to maintain the garden, ignored directives to cease operations, referred to the school's property as a "community garden," and changed the landscaping of the campus grounds without approval. As such, DOE said the group was no longer fit to partner with the school. Casanovas added, "The garden is temporarily closed until a new partner is found that will keep the area safe and useable for the school community."

*Norwood News* reached out to Pultinas for comment, following the feedback from DOE. He described it as "absurd," saying a common feature of all DOE community schools is that "community members are engaged in activities that help build a stronger school community." He said the center took this directive seriously. He added that the allegation regarding the lack of upkeep was equally absurd as the group was unable to tend to the garden of late as they were not permitted to enter it. He said he doesn't know what the school is referring to when it refers to the change of landscape, adding if they meant digging shallow trenches, a common permaculture technique, this was done to maximize rainwater retention.

Pultinas agrees the center does not have a permit since 2019. "When Mr. Deep, DWC Assistant Principal, reminded us that we were operating without a permit, that is the first thing I did. I requested a permit," he said. "That was when we received an eviction notice with reason. By the way, these complaints you're sharing with us now are the first we ever received. Note, they were made known to us after we were evicted," he added.

JBOLC's Farmer's Market will continue every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. until November 20, when the season ends. For more information on the center's gardening programs, residents can visit the website: [www.jamesbaldwinoutdoorlearningcenter.org](http://www.jamesbaldwinoutdoorlearningcenter.org).

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



# Jerome Gun Hill BID Merchant Spotlight



Meet the team behind the recently opened Grill Hill restaurant, located at 236 E Gun Hill Road! Cousins Ahmad and Hammam Alquran are bringing a taste of Jordan to the Jerome Gun Hill BID. Ahmad and Hamman immigrated to the Bronx from Jordan in 2014, settling in Morris Park among family. They worked as taxi drivers for five years before the wheels began turning and the idea for a restaurant was born.

"There is a need here. I was looking for the foods that I like and I couldn't find them. So we decided to bring it to the community", said Ahmad. "There is not a lot of fresh and homemade Mediterranean food in the Bronx".

They chose Norwood for their first venture because of the mix of cultures, the presence of schools and hospitals, and the absence of mediterranean cuisine.

"We want to give people the taste of our food and the chance to experience our culture", said Ahmad. Ahmad and Hammam have been cooking and preparing meals with family since a young age. "Some things I learn from my family, some things we created by ourselves. We want to bring the same original recipes from home to the restaurant, we don't want to Americanize it", said Ahmad.

They learned from their family members and have perfected their own blend of spices and marinades for their fresh homemade hummus, tabouleh, shawarma, sauces, soups, and salads. The basmati rice as well as the spices and seasonings, such as sumac and tahini, come straight from Jordan and their delicious pita breads are sourced from a bakery in Pennsylvania. For the delicious shawarma they prepare the Halal meats 24 hours in advance with a unique marinade you can only find at Grill Hill. "We grind up whole apples, oranges, carrots, and coriander and nutmeg and then let the meats sit overnight", said Ahmad.

For Ahmad and Hamman their favorite menu items are the hummus, falafel, and tabouleh. Reflecting on their home in Jordan, Ahmad and Hammam remember growing up eating hummus and tabouleh for breakfast and shawarma for dinner. Their hope for the restaurant is to introduce the community to new flavors and traditions. "We want everyone to eat our hummus every day!" said Ahmad.

The restaurant is currently open every day from 11 am to 11 pm. They are planning to offer local delivery and catering soon. For updates follow their Instagram @grillhillnyc. Phone: (914) 259-6663





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