



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 34, No 10 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • MAY 13-26, 2021

HOMELESS MAN ALLEGES EVICTION FROM NYCHA HOUSING



Photo by David Greene

RISKING LIFE AND limb “Jerry” panhandles in between two lanes of traffic at Mosholu Parkway and Southern Boulevard on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

by **DAVID GREENE**

On more than one occasion during April, *Norwood News* had observed an old, frail man pushing a walker between traffic lanes on Mosholu Parkway on the border of Bedford Park and Norwood, at the entrance to the iconic New York Botanical Garden. On Tuesday, May

4, we spoke to “Jerry,” a self-described panhandler, who preferred not to have his surname printed.

As drivers paused for the red light before turning left onto Allerton Avenue or right onto Fordham Road, Jerry, 63, pushed his walker up the steep incline on Mosholu Parkway

and held up his handmade sign that read, “HUNGRY, PLEASE HELP.” Somehow, he managed to get out of the way each time the light turned green.

Once he was safely on the sidewalk, we approached him and asked about his circumstances. “Why am I here?” Jerry said. “I was illegally

evicted from my apartment. I lived with a girl that was handicapped, taking care of her,” he added. Jerry then explained that his friend, “Maggy,” whose name, we understand, was on the lease, had been involved in a car accident five years ago. He said she subsequently be-

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NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 34, No. 8

Norwood News is published

bi-weekly on Thursdays by

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Bronx Week 2021 Sees New Walk of Fame Honorees

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Under dark, gray skies, with an intermittent drizzle falling, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. announced the resumption of Bronx Week 2021 on Wednesday, May 6, another welcome sign of things slowly returning to normal, after last year's celebrations were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Usually, Bronx Week is an annual 10-day series of events whereby The Bronx celebrates the best of the borough. "The fact of the matter is, what we've been going through, the last 13/14 months, there was an uncertainty," Diaz Jr. said. "We weren't able to do Bronx Week last year. [Now] we're doing all that we can, as safe as we can."

Events *are* being scaled back, however, to just eight days this year, from May 8 through May 16. Olga Luz Tirado, executive director of the Bronx Tourism Council, explained that because COVID-19 precautions are still in place, the festivities could not extend beyond a week. "In the past, it's been 11 days, Bronx Week," she said. "This time, for this 2021, [it] is a week."

The good news is that the celebrations do include some in-person events, with limited capacity, such as the Grand Finale Concert which is taking place at Orchard Beach, and which requires pre-registration. Other offerings can be enjoyed from home like the broadcast of past Bronx Week parades, which can be viewed on BronxNet. One event which cannot yet be held safely is the arts and food festival, which usually includes a parade on Mosholu Parkway.

As the main sponsor of Bronx Week, Montefiore Health System, along with other health-related entities, is making sure public and personal health issues are a central theme of the festivities. Former Bronx assemblyman, Marcos Crespo, who now serves as a senior vice president for community affairs at Montefiore, was eager to promote its mission of wellness in the community. "We celebrate our long history as



Photo by José A. Giralt

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Ruben Diaz, Jr. (at podium), announces the program line-up for Bronx Week 2021 at the New York Botanical Garden on Wednesday, May 5, 2021. The series of events and activities will take place throughout the borough from May 8 through May 16.

the main sponsor of Bronx Week [with] events like Health Day, our COVID Day of Remembrance, and the Bronx Food and Farm Tour, which recognize our frontline workers," he said.

Crespo also sees an opportunity, during the week, for Bronxites to look back, remember, and then, look forward. "As we celebrate, let's not forget what we've been through," he said. "Not to sound too somber but the reality is, we lost many of our friends and family. We have been through a lot. We need to make sure that we continue to protect our families."

One of the highlights of Bronx Week is the addition of new honorees to the borough's Walk of Fame, located along Grand Concourse in the South Bronx. The class of 2021 includes photographer, Joe Conzo Jr., who was featured in a *Norwood News* housing-related story earlier this year on Jan. 22, DJ, Kid Capri, and music executive, Sal Abbatiello.

The join actress, Rita Moreno, TV host, Regis Philbin, rapper, Fat Joe, and many others who have been honored every year (except last year) since 1997 for their ties to The Bronx and the significant contribution they've made to society. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 15, at the Bronx County Courthouse.

Some of the earliest photographs of the young men and women of the Bronx who held block and house parties in the early 1970s were shot through Conzo Jr.'s lens. Acknowledging the support he got from his mother and grandmother as he pursued his love and passion for photography, Conzo Jr. described an explosion of a new musical culture that morphed out of humble beginnings.

"That's what I did as a young man in the Bronx; document my surroundings and the birth of a billion-dollar industry that we now call hip-hop," he said.

Meanwhile, the borough president seemed to be barely able to contain his excitement that all three honorees, this year, had a distinctly hip-hop background. Abbatiello was also recognized for his role as the owner of the seminal, hip-hop club, Disco Fever, located on Jerome Avenue and 167th Street in the Concourse section of the borough. Introducing him, Diaz Jr. couldn't resist reciting some LL Cool J lyrics. "My radio, believe me, I like it loud / [I'm the man with a] got the musical box that'll rock the crowd," he rhymed.

The third inductee, Grammy award winning DJ, Kid Capri, who has produced tracks for Snoop Dog, Jay-Z, Heavy D and 50 Cent, was not present at the event. However, the borough president is working to have Capri put his early, turntable talents on display on induction day. "I can't wait until we induct him, and I'm going to try and bait him into getting on the 'wheels of steel,'" said Diaz Jr.

Some of the highlights of this year's program line-up include a contemporary dance series, a Bronx fathers' soccer challenge, a "Building the Bronx" trolley tour which looks at some of the borough's historical figures, and a cooking demonstration.

It's no secret that The Bronx was hit especially hard by the pandemic, having recorded some of the worst rates of infection and death in the city. The borough president recognized the devastating impact the pandemic has had on Bronxites, before acknowledging that with the recent, gradual decline in infection rates, and the ongoing pace of vaccination roll-out, he can see things gradually returning to normal.

"The best way that we can do it is slowly but surely to celebrate our victories," he said. "We all know what's transpired here with the pandemic. We all know all of the pain that it's caused in our borough. But, nonetheless, it's time to start opening up. It's time to start celebrating," he added.

For more information about Bronx Week 2021, visit www.ilovethebronx.com.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers for their thoughts on President Joe Biden's job performance after 100 days in office.



"Well, my expectations were pretty low because I'm old enough to remember Biden through the decades and I'm pleasantly surprised, not because I think he's had a change of heart, but because conditions have become dire. I think the Trump interregnum was a real wake-up call for - let's call it - the establishment, our governing pooh-bahs. They realized that they actually have to try and do something while at the same time serving their money-bag overlords. That's their priority, not actual people."

Tim Frasca,
Inwood, Manhattan (visiting Kingsbridge Heights)



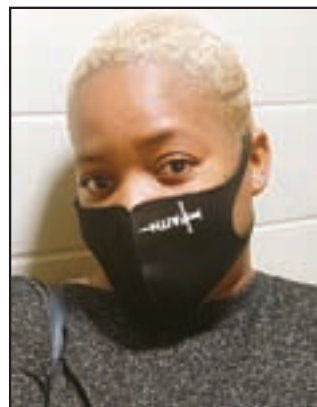
"Well, my opinion is that he's doing a lot of the things that he said he was going to do. I do really hope that, like FDR, he puts into play this Green New Deal or at least begins it, and the infrastructure plan is really important to me. But, he's well ahead of his target of 100 million vaccinations, where he's had over 200 million vaccinations, and slowly but surely, he's trying to get the country back on track from the way we crashed under Trump."

Alan Gary,
Van Cortlandt Park South



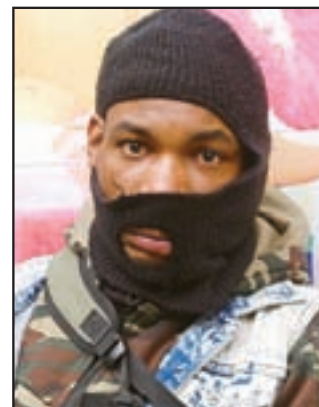
"The last 100 days seem longer than 100 days after those crazy four-years we went through. It feels like it's been a year already with Biden due to how bad it was since the Trump campaign. We just went through a tough situation for all of the immigrants who understand what I'm saying, because of the fact that you could just go out for anything, and you could get into big trouble because he [former President Donald Trump] was literally sending everyone back to their home countries for whatever reason, and you had no chance. So, today, you feel a little more freedom now and feel way better than before. The bad energy has kind of gone away and hopefully, it will stay this way."

Pablo Andres Escobar, College Point, Queens (working in Edenwald)



"I really think he's doing a great job! I love Mr Biden! He's really good, and he's taking his time approaching the situation. I like how he's cautious in dealing with the vaccine, and how people are getting the injection and how he's going about it. So, I'm happy he's my president. Go, my president!"

Petrina Brown,
Edenwald



"His first 100 days were good, but people need to wake up because if he's giving away a whole bunch of the government's money, that means the government is about to close again, or even become bankrupt. In American history, the government has never just given away \$2 trillion, just like that. I don't think they should do the stimulus. They should put everyone on a monthly plan instead of one shot, because people are going to take this money and live it up and he's cutting off the people that actually go to work, and by doing that, you're going to create more crime... Joe Biden is not doing a good job."

Warren Young,
Kingsbridge



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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

NYPL Expands In-Person Services

NYPL has expanded its service beginning May 11 at some branches to allow limited browsing and desk-top computer use under Phase 2 re-opening. In the Bronx, the branches that have reopened under Phase 2 include Allerton, Baychester, Belmont, Edenwald, Francis Martin, Highbridge, Jerome Park, Kingsbridge, Parkchester, Van Cortlandt, West Farms and Woodstock.

The library system also plans to open all available branch libraries (except those undergoing renovation or being used by the City) with expanded service by mid-July, with the full complement of services such as general space use, programs, and classes incrementally reinstituted as quickly as circumstances allow. All patrons must follow required safety protocols, including mask-wearing and physically-distancing.

New Grants for Outdoor Arts & Culture Performances

New micro-grants of up to \$3,000 are available for the City's most under-resourced communities to provide free arts and culture performances in neighborhood parks, plazas and community gardens this summer and fall. Grant applications to the Green Arts Live NYC fund can be submitted from Monday, May 10, through Friday, May 28, at 12:00 p.m. ET via the application portal. Award notifications will begin the week of June 21. All grant awarded projects must be completed no later than October 31, 2021. Go to <https://cityparksfoundation.org/green-arts/>, for more information, and grant guidelines.

State Senate Passes Bill to Shut Down Puppy Mills

The State Senate approved a bill on May 6 to shut down the puppy mill pipeline and end the retail sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores across the state. Sponsored by Senate deputy majority leader, Michael Gianaris, (D-Queens), the bill is supported by leading animal welfare groups. A companion bill has been introduced in the Assembly, by Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan) and was recently approved by the Assembly agriculture committee.

New City Law Aims to Support Moms & Caregivers

City Council introduced a new

"Marshall Plan for Moms" law on May 12 to help revitalize and restore mothers in the workforce, in recognition of the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and working mothers.

The pandemic forced 52 percent of women in New York City, who provide care to family members, to reduce their paid working hours, compared to one in three men, according to a poll by the Comptroller's Office. The crisis was most severe for women of color, of which 36 percent needed to take time off to care for a child, compared to 29 percent of white women. The legislation seeks to help create a path for ro-

bust paid leave, along with affordable childcare.

New Fordham Flea Market to open this Summer

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. Its organizers say the concept is just another

way to support the borough's local entrepreneurs and micro businesses by producing "world-class, affordable, and fun experiences."

AG Aims to Protect Kids from Social Media

New York Attorney General, Letitia James, sent a letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Monday, May 11, urging him to abandon plans to launch a version of Instagram for children under the age of 13, as part of a coalition of 44 attorneys general. The coalition contends that social media can be detrimental to children for myriad reasons and that Facebook has historically failed to protect the welfare of chil-

dren on its platforms.

Norwood News reached out to Facebook for comment and a company spokesperson said Facebook had just started exploring the issue and agreed that any experience must prioritize the safety and privacy of children. The company plans to consult with experts in child development, child safety and mental health, and privacy advocates to inform its decision. "We also look forward to working with legislators and regulators, including the nation's attorneys general. In addition, we commit to not showing ads in any Instagram experience we develop for people under the age of 13," the spokesperson said

What We Now Know About Veterans & Health



Photo courtesy of Dave Rosas

DAVE ROSAS, 50, served 23 years in the U.S. Air Force which included two deployments to Iraq, two to Saudi Arabia, and a special assignment at the U.S. embassy in Oman, where he met his wife.

By DAWN CLANCY

Since the Vietnam War, hundreds of thousands of veterans have received other-than-honorable (OTH) discharges, many for misconduct related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Many veterans don't realize that they may be eligible for a discharge upgrade, if the evidence shows they experienced service-related trauma.

On leaving the military, service members receive one of six discharge designations that determines their eligibility for healthcare and disability benefits provided by the U.S. Depart-

ment of Veteran Affairs (V.A.). However, an OTH discharge can render soon-to-be veterans potentially ineligible for V.A. benefits, leaving those with mental and physical injuries without access to life-saving treatments.

In 2017, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that 62 percent of the over 90,000 service members discharged for misconduct between 2011 and 2015 had been diagnosed with PTSD or a TBI at least two years before release. These results added to growing concerns that trauma may be contributing to veterans' misconduct, leading to these less-than-honorable discharges.

The loss of benefits is not the only setback, however. When vets leave the military with an OTH discharge and try to integrate back into civilian life, it can cause debilitating shame, create barriers to employment, and increase a veteran's risk of becoming homeless or of committing suicide.

Coco Culhane is the founder and executive director of the Veteran Advocacy Project, a non-profit that provides free, legal services to low-income veterans seeking discharge upgrades and more. "I find this shocking," she said at Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) Veterans' Affairs Committee meeting

(continued on page 14)



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Resident Says Ceiling Fell in during 12th Apartment Flood

by DAVID GREENE

For the 12th time in 13 years, a Bedford Park senior says he has suffered through a flood of rushing water pouring into his home. However, this time, he said the cascading water brought down the man's ceiling on top of his head in a spare room adjacent to his living room.

Longtime tenant, Tony Apostolos, 78, of 116 East Mosholu Parkway South, invited *Norwood News* to inspect the damage to his apartment and belongings on Sunday, April 25, a day after rushing water caused his ceiling to collapse, and sent Apostolos on a brief trip to the hospital.

"I'm going to have to send all of my clothes to be cleaned," said Apostolos, a former carpenter and restaurant worker. Pointing to a turntable and a Macintosh CD player, he said, "That thing was \$2,500 - just for that," he said.

Going down a list of destroyed or damaged property, Apostolos counted an equalizer, two chairs, ten coats, and six pairs of shoes. "The shoes, ranging from \$2 to

\$500, everything in the closet was flooded out," he said.

Recalling how the incident unfolded a day earlier, Apostolos said, "I heard something, but I just went out [of the room where the ceiling fell in]. He added, "I thought they were running a washing machine upstairs. I went to the bathroom and as I was coming out, I heard the sound like a washing machine, and as I was going in [to the original room], I started to see the water coming out from the walls," he said.

"I tried to grab my turntable... and by that time, it was on top of me," he said, referring to the water and the debris from the ceiling. He said he was hit by falling debris on his neck, back and shoulders, and fell to the floor. Apostolos said an ambulance took him to Montefiore Hospital where he was treated and released same day, as his injuries were not serious.

He said before he went to hospital, the fire department had arrived on the scene. "They told the Super, at 7 o'clock in the morning, to shut

the water off," Apostolos said. The incident took place in the morning before 7 a.m. "He didn't shut the water," he continued. "I came home at two in the afternoon, and the water was still coming down."

He said the firefighters were called back to the building once again, having left earlier that morning while Apostolos was at the hospital. When they arrived on his floor, he said a discussion ensued with the Super. Apostolos said, in his opinion, the Super was initially acting like he didn't understand what they were saying when they asked him to turn off the water supply. "He speaks perfect English," Apostolos said, referring to the Super, though he acknowledged he has an accent.

Apostolos said one of the firefighters then demanded, in Spanish, that the Super shut off the water and told him that if he didn't, the firefighter would break down the door leading to where a broken pipe was located that was apparently causing the flooding. Apostolos said the landlord then proceeded to shut off the water but that, at that point, it had been seven hours since the original flooding began.

Norwood News called the number listed for the Super which was posted in the lobby of the building to ask for his comment regarding the allegation by Apostolos that, in his opinion, the Super delayed turning off the water supply for whatever reason. The call went through to the answering machine for the management company, Genesis Realty Group. We left a message requesting that they return our call.

Apostolos recalled being in similar situations in the building, several times before. "I sued him six or seven years ago," he said, referring to the landlord. "I won the case." He said, on that occasion, it had been a smaller flood which, nonetheless, had destroyed some of his personal property. When asked if Genesis Realty Group had offered to fix the pipe or the damaged ceiling, Apostolos responded, "Personally, I really don't want them to come and do the job because they never fix it. This is twelve times."

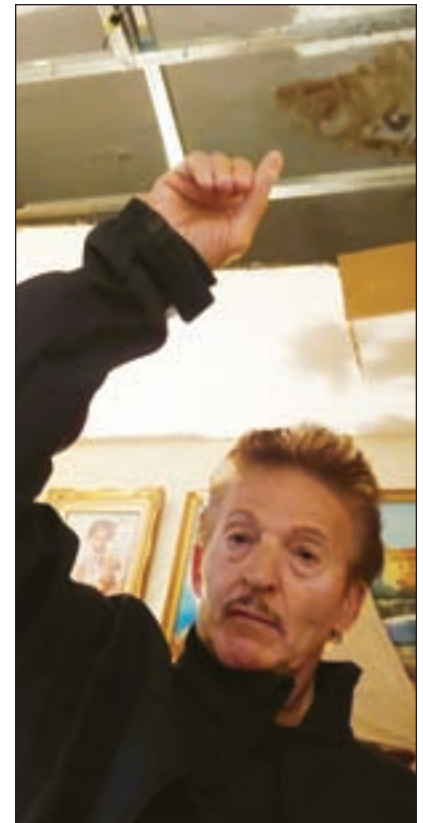


Photo by David Greene

TONY APOSTOLOS, A resident of 116 East Mosholu Parkway South, in Bedford Park, points to a giant hole in the ceiling of his apartment on Sunday, April 25, 2021.

He did not elaborate on how he planned to fix the ceiling, nor who would pay for it.

According to the New York City Department of Buildings, the building currently has a partial stop work order in effect, as well as a whopping 215 complaints and 22 open violations. The records also indicated that Genesis Realty was slapped with two \$10,000 fines in October and December 2020 for a construction safety violation.

Several subsequent calls were placed with Genesis Realty Group, at the number listed in the lobby, requesting a comment. Our calls were not returned. Apostolos subsequently gave us a direct cell phone number for Jac Zadrma who, according to his LinkedIn profile, is the manager member for Genesis Realty Group. On Tuesday, May 11, Norwood News spoke with Zadrma, who said, "I don't make comments to newspapers regarding our properties."

116 Mosholu LLC is listed as the owner of the building. Norwood News will continue to monitor the situation.

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BY SÍLE MOLONEY

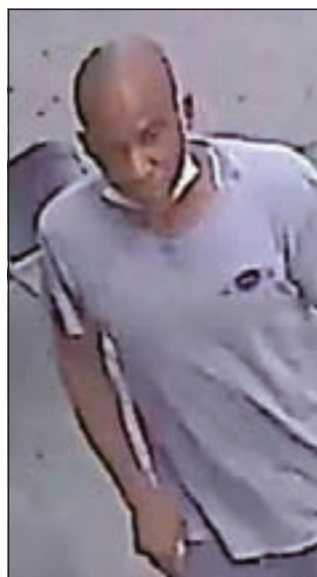


Two Sought in University Heights Robbery

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating the individuals seen in the attached photos to the left, who are sought in connection to a robbery in the 46th precinct. On Tuesday, April 13, at approximately 1.10 p.m., a 20-year-old male victim and a 22-year-old male victim engaged in a verbal dispute with two men who were unknown to them in front of 44 West 183rd Street, in University Heights. As the dispute turned physical, the first individual stabbed the 22-year-old in the left arm and the 20-year-old in the hand. The suspects fled on foot, east-bound on 183rd Street. Both victims were transported by EMS to SBH Health System / St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. An electrical bicycle (e-bike) was stolen.

Man Sought in Fordham Heights Shooting

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the person seen in the video screenshot below, obtained from the location of a shooting in the 46th precinct. On Tuesday, April 13, at around 1.14 p.m., on the corner of East 183rd Street and Grand Concourse in Fordham Heights, the suspect discharged a firearm in the direction of a group of males who were inside a vehicle. No injuries were reported to police. The suspect fled to parts unknown.



Man Sought in Kingsbridge Slashing

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the person seen in the photo above, taken from the vicinity of the location of a knife assault in the 52nd precinct. On Sunday, May 2, at around 2.45 p.m., the suspect engaged in a verbal dispute with an on-duty, 41-year-old, NYC Parks Department employee in front of 2587 Jerome Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights.

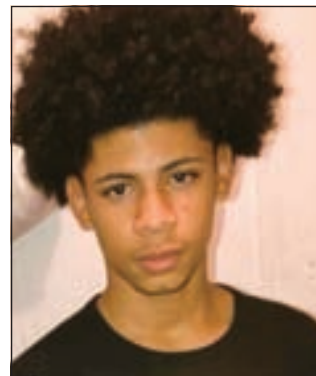
The suspect proceeded to slash the victim with a knife across the face and chest multiple times. He then fled north-bound, on foot, on Jerome Avenue. The victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital, in stable condition, where he was treated for his injuries.

Male Sought in Fordham Manor Stabbing

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the person seen in the photo above right regarding an assault in the 52nd precinct. On Monday, April 19, at around 2.30 p.m., in front of 2406 University Avenue in Fordham Manor, a 13-year-old male victim was approached by the suspect, who stabbed the victim multiple times in the left leg with a cutting instrument, before fleeing the scene, on foot, towards Father Ziezer Place. EMS re-



sponded to the location and transported the victim to NY Presbyterian Hospital in stable condition.



NYPD School Crossing Guard Arrested

On Wednesday, May 5, at 12.15 in the afternoon, Rolando Rivera, 45, an off-duty New York City employee was arrested and charged in the 46th precinct, which covers the Fordham, University

Heights, Morris Heights and Mount Hope neighborhoods in the Bronx. According to the police report which detailed the arrest, Rivera is an NYPD school crossing guard. He was charged with criminal contempt for disobeying a court order (5 counts), and aggravated harassment (5 counts). A person arrested and accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Anyone with information with regard to these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at WWW.NYPD-CRIMESTOPPERS.COM, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

Funeral Arrangements for The Hon. Aurelia Greene Announced

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Former Bronx deputy borough president, The Hon. Aurelia Greene, who died on Saturday, May 8, will lie-in-state in the Rotunda of the Bronx County Courthouse at 851 Grand Concourse, NY 10451, for public viewing on Monday, May 17, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A viewing and wake will be held on Tuesday, May 18, from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. and on Wednesday, May 19, from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Bronx Christian Charismatic Prayer Fellowship, at 1069 Morris Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456.

On Thursday, May 20, at 9 a.m., there will be a homegoing service at Thessalonians Worship Center at 941 Rev James A. Polite Avenue, Bronx, NY 10459. The homegoing services can be viewed via Facebook Live on the Facebook pages of either Pastor Andre Faison or the Bronx Christian Charismatic Prayer Fellowship.

The internment will be at Kensico Cemetery, 273 Lakeview Avenue, Valhalla, NY 10595. Funeral repast will follow the internment from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., in the garden of The Andrew Freed-



Photo courtesy of NYCHA via Flickr
FORMER SOUNDVIEW TEN-ANT Association President Mary McGee (left) and Bronx Deputy Borough President Aurelia Greene.

man Home, 1125 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10452.

Masks and social distancing are required at all events.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. paid tribute to Greene on May 11, saying, in part, "On behalf of my entire team, and the 1.4 million Bronx residents, I offer my prayers and condolences to her two children, Rhonda and Russell, her grandchildren, and all of her loved ones. To my partner of over eight years in borough hall, my friend, and one of my mentors, you will truly be missed. May you rest in peace."



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DMX's Final Bark: We Say Farewell to 'The Dog'

By JASON GONZALEZ

There's been a sudden boom in traffic on the corner of Burke Avenue and Holland Avenue in the Williamsbridge section of The Bronx. Fans of DMX and members of the Ruff Ryders motorcycle club have flocked to the intersection to memorialize Hip Hop icon, DMX, who died on Friday, April 9.

"Where my dogs at?" is a phrase and a song popularized by DMX. According to the late, multi-platinum selling rapper, whose real name was Earl Simmons, his "dogs" were his brothers and sisters from the "hood," and for the past month, they've been out in packs, making stops in Yonkers, Mount Vernon, The Bronx and Brooklyn to celebrate his life, and the impact he made on Hip Hop music over the last 20 years.

ABC7, FOX5 and CBS2 reported that DMX's heart attack was provoked by a drug overdose. On April 2, the rapper was rushed from his home to White Plains Hospital in Westchester County.

1010 WINS was one of the first outlets to report that DMX had experienced cerebral hypoxia, immediately prompting doctors to place him on life support, that same day. TMZ would later announce the rapper had fallen into a vegetative state, and by Thursday, April 8, it was reported that DMX's vital organs had begun to shut down.

It was later reported that the 50-year-old rapper and actor died after suffering from catastrophic cardiac arrest. However, the medical examiner's report hasn't yet been released.

As the world continues to mourn his death, fans, at least, in "The Big Apple" now have a place where they can come and pay their respects to him, in the North Bronx.

Queens-based artist, Efred Andaluz (pronounced "on da loose") has painted a mural depicting DMX on a wall next to La Estrella Tropical Restaurant, located at the junction of Burke Avenue and Holland Avenue. "It was an honor to paint this tribute to the late, great Earl 'DMX' Simmons,"



Photo by Jason Gonzalez

A MURAL BY Queens-based artist, Efred Andaluz, of the late, Grammy award-nominated artist, DMX, is painted on the wall next to La Estrella Tropical Restaurant, at the junction of Burke Avenue and Holland Avenue in Williamsbridge.

Andaluz said in an Instagram post on April 14. "He was the voice of my childhood. We will continue to mourn his loss but let us also celebrate his life."

Meanwhile, Eddy "Blaze" De Jesus, owner of the Latin American restaurant, is a member of the Ruff Ryders club. Speaking to the *Norwood News* about the importance of the mural to him, Blaze said he had difficulty suppressing his excitement about it. "I was blessed and honored to get this piece done here by an amazing artist," he said.

With DMX gone, Blaze is hopeful that people will remember the good deeds that he carried out during his life, rather than focus on what some might call his checkered past, which included a long battle with substance abuse, as well as multiple stints in prison, reported on the website, WBEZ Chicago, and on Medium.

"Everybody has downfalls, and he's a good person and showed love to everybody," Blaze said.

The stage name of "DMX" came to the singer after he began playing an instrument of the same name during his time at a boys' group home for troubled teens. DMX tried out an Oberheim DMX drum machine that was readily accessible. He would later also sometimes use the moniker, "Dark

Man X," or just "X."

The rapper appeared in 15 movies, most notably, "*Belly*, *Romeo Must Die* and *Exit Wounds*." Throughout his music career, he was signed to Columbia Records, Def Jam, and Ruff Ryders Entertainment, a subsidiary of Universal Music Group.

In 2000, DMX won an American Music Award for "Favorite Artist" in the Hip-Hop/Rap category. The same year, he earned three Grammy award nominations for "Best Rap Solo Performance" for "Party Up [Up in Here]" and "Best Rap Album" for "...And Then There Was X." The following year, he was nominated for another Grammy for "Best Rap Solo Performance" for the song "Who We Be."

On Saturday, April 24, the "Ruff Ryders Anthem" MC was memorialized at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, where DMX had performed various times. He was part of the line-up of what transpired to be the last Hip Hop show, "Masters of Ceremony," to take place before the COVID-19 pandemic hit New York City. The memorial service was open to friends, family and his music contemporaries.

The funeral procession, which originated in DMX's hometown of Yonkers, and concluded in Downtown Brooklyn was attended by

1,000 people, mostly members of the Ruff Ryders motorcycle club. The trek was dubbed the "Final Ride" as seen on Facebook and Instagram posts, in honor of the rapper.

The Ruff Ryders, along with other bikers, flooded the streets of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. Motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and dirt bikes made up most of the traffic. A customized Ford F250 "monster" truck with the words, "Long Live DMX," painted on the side, brought the casket into the Barclays Center.

An earlier vigil had been held on Wednesday, April 14, in Mount Vernon in Westchester, 15 minutes north of Norwood in the Bronx. At the event, DMX's manager, Craig Broadhead, reminisced about the good times they spent together.

Broadhead disclosed that the rapper's charitable work had gone unnoticed, because he chose to keep it that way. According to Broadhead, DMX once put several homeless people up in an Atlanta hotel for the night, while on tour a few years ago.

"X is the people's champ," Broadhead said. "I keep telling everybody the same thing. It's just a blessing for us. It does our heart good as we grieve his loss, to see the love from all over the coun-

try, the world. When he was here, he gave so much of himself to everyone."

Meanwhile, Ruff Ryders founder, Darrin "Dee" Dean, uncle of music producer, Swizz Beatz, expressed gratitude and humility for the outpouring of love and support from the public.

During the memorial, rapper and LOX member, Jadakiss, described DMX as being the "biggest piece on the board." Dean also acknowledged his impact outside of the recording studio. "He served his purpose on earth because he's not here no more, but he's still here 'cause you're still talking about him," he said. "So, that means he did something to make you remember him."

On Sunday, April 18, another vigil was held in honor of DMX in Yonkers at the Nepperhan Community Center, a short ride from the North Bronx. DMX was a member of the center as a child. His extended family confirmed that his passion for "rocking the mic" started in the basement of the center.

"We grew up right here on the corner of Warburton and Point, 321 Warburton," said Raquel Holloway, the rapper's aunt. "We have a connection to the center, 'cause my mother was a part of the center, and as you may know, he loves Mary Ella Holloway, which is his grandmother."

DMX's cousin, Robin Holloway, said that while the world knew the rapper as "DMX," she prefers to remember him as Earl. "He was more than that," she said. "He was more than an artist to us. He was family. He would give you the shirt off his back in a snowstorm and then walk back by himself without shoes. He would pray for everybody."

DMX is survived by his mother, Arnett Simmons, three siblings (two sisters and one brother), 15 children, along with their mothers [nine of them].

If you, or someone you know is struggling with addiction, please contact the SAMHSA substance abuse helpline at 1-800-662-HELP [4357].



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

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What We Now Know About Veterans & Health

(continued from page 6)

on Apr. 28. "To me, it's the clearest indication that we are punishing mental injury and mental illness," she added.

Culhane said when clients of her nonprofit who have experienced trauma learn about the discharge upgrades, they realize they're not alone. "[They] were just up against this unjust system," she said. "It can be healing to realize that their misconduct was out of their control."

According to data collated by the V.A.'s National Center for PTSD, roughly 22 percent of all veterans who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq sustained brain injuries, compared to 12 percent of Vietnam veterans. TBIs can be caused by improvised explosive device (IED) blasts, motor vehicle accidents, and gunshot wounds. The severity of symptoms can range from mild, causing temporary headache and dizziness, to more severe, including angry outbursts, anxiety, depression, and marked changes in personality.

Unlike brain injuries, which are caused by a sudden blow or jolt to the head, PTSD, generally, can occur when a person is exposed to life-threatening situations related to, or during, com-

bat.

The VA estimates between 11 to 20 percent of veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq live with PTSD compared to 30 percent of veterans who served in Vietnam.

Veterans seeking an OTH discharge upgrade should know the process can be long and arduous, and includes a review by one of two military boards, each governed by its own set of rules and regulations. In total, the entire process can take up to 24 months or longer.

However, without an OTH discharge upgrade, veterans can still apply for V.A. benefits and health care through a process called Character of Discharge or COD. Unlike the process for applying for a discharge upgrade, where a bulk of the work falls on the shoulders of the veteran, a COD review is carried out by the V.A., and the process is triggered when a veteran first applies for benefits.

Upon review of the veteran's record of service, the V.A. will decide whether to grant him, her or them an honorable COD. If obtained, the veteran will then be given the equivalent of a waiver into the V.A. However, it is not considered a

discharge upgrade.

Most veterans and their spouses aren't aware of this health care option, a point raised by committee member, Jean Hill, at the Apr. 28 Veteran Affairs Committee meeting. "I've been the wife of a veteran for years and I've never heard of this before," she said at the time.

The New York City greater metropolitan area is home to over a million service members, veterans and their families. The most recent data from the American Community Survey and the V.A., from 2016, shows that there are 37,495 veterans living in The Bronx who make up 17.9 percent of New York City's total veteran population. The majority, 58,815 or 27.9 percent, are based in Queens, 54,178 or 25.7 percent are based in Brooklyn, 38,577 or 18.3 percent are based in Manhattan, and 21,502 or 10.2 percent are based on Staten Island.

For more information or questions on navigating the OTH discharge upgrade process, contact the Veteran Advocacy Project at 646-602-5620, email contact@veteranadvocacy.org or visit their website at veteranadvocacyproject.org.

As reported recently by Norwood News, Bronx veterans in need can also access health care at one of the Union Community Health Centers (UNION) located throughout the Bronx. For more information on UNION center locations, hours of operations, and services, call UCHC veteran health care liaison, Raul Gonzalez, on 718.618.8152 or email rgonzalez2@uchcbronx.org.

Veterans should note that they do not need to provide discharge or separation documentation to access UNION health services. UNION centers are Federally Qualified Health Centers, and are not part of the V.A.

The next CB7 Veterans Affairs Committee virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 26, at 6:30 p.m. The event will feature a roundtable discussion on Bronx veterans' mental health and well-being. To assist with veteran community outreach in the Bronx, or to learn more about CB7's Veterans' Affairs events and meetings, email committee chair Chad Royer at chadyroyer@gmail.com.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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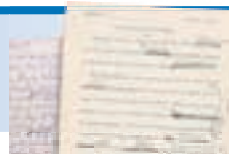
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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Compiled by **SÍLE MOLONEY**



Lehman College Vaccination Site

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is available at the Lehman College vaccination site, located at the APEX Athletic Center, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West. The site is open to New Yorkers aged 16 or older, as well as to non-New York City residents aged 16 or older who work or study in the city. Eligible individuals aged 50 and over may walk-in without making an appointment, as long as they're able to show proof of age.

However, those aged 49 and under will not be seen without an appointment. To schedule a vaccine appointment, visit <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations/664> or call (877) 829-4692.

Other Bronx COVID-19 Vaccination Sites

The following Bronx sites are now vaccinating New Yorkers aged 50 and older, without an appointment:

- Bronx Co-Op City Dreiser Community Center
- Northeast Bronx YMCA (Edenwald)
- South Bronx Educational Campus
- West Bronx Gymnasium
- Bathgate Contract Postal Station

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>. The form does not set up an appointment, but it enables City officials to contact you to further discuss your eligibility.

Johnson & Johnson Q&A

On April 26, City officials confirmed that in-home vaccinations of Johnson & Johnson have resumed. On April 29, the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene published a Frequently Asked Questions document on its website. It can be accessed here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/>

[pdf/covid/covid-19-jj-vaccine-faqs.pdf](https://covid/covid-19-jj-vaccine-faqs.pdf).

Mobile Vaccination Bus

A Mobile Vaccination Bus will be traveling throughout the borough, offering COVID-19 vaccinations, starting on Monday, May 10.

The dates, times and locations are as follows:

- From Sunday, May 9, to Monday, May 10, from midday to 8 p.m. in the South Bronx at 368 E. 149th Street, The Bronx, NY 10455.
- From Thursday, May 13, to Saturday, May 15, in Allerton at 738 Allerton Avenue, The Bronx NY 10467
- From Sunday, May 16, to Tuesday, May 18, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Mott Haven at 519 E. 138th Street, The Bronx NY 10454 (midday to 8 p.m. on Monday & Tuesday)
- From Wednesday, May 12, to Friday, May 14, from midday to 8 p.m., in the North Bronx at 3901 White Plains Road,
- From Saturday, May 15, to Tuesday, May 18, from midday to 8 p.m. at Fordham Plaza, 2543-61 Webster Ave, Bronx, NY 10458.
- From Monday, May 10, to Friday, May 14, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., and again on Monday, May 17, in Hunts Point, at Meat Market/Produce Market/Baldor, 101 Food Center Dr, The Bronx, NY 10474. (Baldor on Friday, May 14, and Monday, May 17, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.)
- From Monday, May 17 to Tuesday, May 18, from midday to 8 p.m. at 101 E. 170th Street, Bronx NY 10452

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Unless you are exempt, appointments are required to receive a vaccination. To determine your eligibility, access a list of nearby providers, and schedule your vaccination appointment, use New York State's Am I Eligible app. Prior to receiving your scheduled vaccination, you must complete the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Form.

New York State: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> or call 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829).

New York City: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/> or 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692).

VaccineTogetherNY:

<https://vaccinetogetherny.org/Pages/default.aspx> or call 646-697-VACC.

To schedule an appointment, go to: <https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov/patient/s/>.

To find a vaccination site, go to: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations>.

Your physician or local pharmacy may also have information on scheduling vaccine appointments.

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>.

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>.

Latest Updates on Vaccine Eligibility

Who is now eligible? The COVID-19 vaccine is now available to all New York residents 16 and older. People who live outside of the state but work or study in New York are also eligible to get vaccinated. People who are eligible based on employment include both paid and unpaid workers.

Note: People who are 16 or 17 years old are only eligible for the Pfizer vaccine.

Proof of eligibility is needed at your appointment. If you have questions, call the New York State COVID-19 hotline at 833-NYS-4-VAX (833-697-4829).

On April 23, the City confirmed that New Yorkers aged 16+ can now get their COVID-19 vaccine without an appointment at select sites across NYC: <http://on.nyc.gov/walkupvax>.

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>.

COVID-19-Related Updates

Most capacity limits on businesses, in terms of customer occupancy, will be removed, effective May 19, at which point, business owners will only be required to ensure there is sufficient space in their premises for patrons to maintain the required social distance of six feet. For more information on the easing of pandemic restrictions, go to <https://forward.nyc.gov/>.

In accordance with the CDC's new guidance on mask use, fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear masks outdoors, except in certain crowded settings and venues. For more information, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.

As of April 10, asymptomatic travelers will no longer be required to quarantine after entering New York State. For more details, go to: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

If you have been on quarantine due to contact with someone known to have COVID-19:

- a negative test does NOT release you from quarantine.
- It is essential to wait 10 full days to make sure that no infection appears, even if you have no symptoms, before being released from quarantine.
- Quarantine should last 10 days from the last exposure to a person with known COVID-19.
- In addition, you should continue to monitor yourself for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 for up to 14 days after that last exposure.
- If you have any questions about your period of quarantine, please call your Local Health Department.

Health care workers can text NYFRONTLINE to 741-741 to access 24/7 emotional support services.

Any New Yorker can call the COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline at 1-844-863-9314 for mental health counseling.

Help with Funeral Costs

As of April 12, 2021, FEMA will accept applications by phone for COVID-19 Funeral Assistance for COVID-19 funeral expenses, up to \$9,000. The FEMA COVID Funeral Assistance information can be found here: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>.

This document serves to summarize the U.S. Department of Health Bureau of Vital Records (DOH BVR) role in helping applicants obtain the certified death certificate that is needed to submit their application to FEMA. COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Line Number: 844-684-6333 or TTY: 800-462-7585. Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Central Time.

Bike Month: May 2021

The 2021 NYC Bike Map is now available online and serves as a guide for anyone biking in NYC. Download the map and stay tuned for when printed copies become available. <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/bikemaps.shtml>.

Bike and E-Scooter Share News

NYC DOT announced that three companies have been selected for the City's electric scooter share program in the Eastern Bronx: Bird, Lime and Veo. The program is now entering the planning and community engagement phase. NYC DOT and the three companies will work with local communities to find sites for the e-scooter parking corrals and educate the public about the pilot program. Education will focus on the programs' safety, equity, and accessibility components. The pilot is expected to launch by early summer. Find more info on: <https://nycdotscotershare.info/home>.

Tell DOT where you would like to see e-scooter parking corrals. Corrals will be placed in busy areas to keep sidewalks clear and create predictability for riders. Use the feedback map here: <https://nycdotprojects.info/project-feedback-map/suggest-scooter-parking>.

Note the NYPD have stated that dirt bikes and ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) are illegal on all NYC roadways and sidewalks.



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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

You can email the application to Egonzalez@ilchs.org
or by mail at International Leadership Charter High School
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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd 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](tel:7182205824) 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 on **Tuesday, May 25 at 6.30 p.m.** Zoom details will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Contact mirosario@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The meetings are usually held on the **first Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m.** For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News* April 29-May 12 edition, on page 6, "Mayoral Candidate Dianne Morales Hosts Fordham Rally," Morales' first name was spelled incorrectly as "Diana" in the first paragraph. We apologize for this error.

**TO REPORT A STORY TO THE
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Medical Students Vaccinate Norwood Bengali Community, One of the Hardest Hit by COVID-19

By DAVID GREENE

A small team of medical and pharmacy students assisted in vaccinating more than fifty Norwood residents and worked to inform members of the growing Bengali community in Norwood on how to properly take their medication while fasting during Ramadan, which ended on May 12.

Fifty patients arrived at the Safe Medical Center, located at 3099 Bainbridge Avenue and East 204th Street in Norwood, for a pop-up vaccination event held on Monday, April 26. A team of medical students offered patients free health screenings, as well as the COVID-19 vaccination.

During the event, pharmacy student, Maliha Tabassum, and medical student, Shamim Ahmed, both in their final year of college, briefed patients on the COVID-19 vaccine. They also provided individual consultations to residents on how best to manage their health, and how to safely take their usual medication during the holy month of Ramadan, when millions of Muslims throughout the world fast each day from sunrise to sunset.

Both Tabassum and Ahmed speak Bengali which made it easier to answer the residents' questions and allay any fears before getting the vaccination. According to Tabassum, the pharmacy students came from Long Island University (LIU) in Brooklyn, and the event was overseen by Dr. Yuliana Toderika, a registered pharmacist and faculty member at LIU.

According to figures provided by the Asian American Foundation, an advocacy group based in Manhattan, the largest Bangladeshi-American community in New York City is based in Queens (66 percent), followed by the Bronx (16 percent), Brooklyn (15 percent) and Manhattan (3 percent). The figures are based on the latest American Community Survey data (2015).

The foundation also confirmed there are about 3,500 Bengali-speaking



Photo courtesy of Maliha Tabassum

(L-R) TINTU YOHANNANNA, pharmacy student; Maliha Tabassum, pharmacy student; Shamim Ahmed, medical student; Manreet Uppal, pharmacy student; Daria Korenkova, pharmacy student, and Yuliana Toderika, pharmacist and supervisor of a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination event held in the Norwood section of The Bronx on Monday, April 26, 2021, pose together for a photo.

community members in Bronx Community Board 7 (based mainly in Norwood, Bedford Park and Fordham), some of whom are from India, and some of whom are from Bangladesh. This does not include children, who may not necessarily speak Bengali.

LAAL, a nonprofit which works specifically with Bengali women in Norwood, has conducted their own data research in recent years and found that, within this community, one of the worst hit by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are approximately 132 households, comprising more than 554 individuals, with the average age being 42.2. *Norwood News* previously reported on LAAL's work when the nonprofit launched in 2019.

According to Laal, the median annual household income in the community is \$22,000 and the average number of people in a household is five. Prior to the pandemic, about 67.6 percent of the community were unemployed, 13.1 percent were looking for work, and 19.2 percent were employed. Those figures have likely changed dramatically in the meantime.

In terms of other demographics, 43.4 percent of the community immigrated to New York City from another city, whereas 56.6 percent immigrated from rural areas, an additional factor which impacts upon some members' integration into life in The Bronx. Mean-

while, the average person in the Bengali community in Norwood has lived in New York City for 9.4 years, and in terms of housing, 86 percent of households rent their place of residence, while 12.4 percent are home owners.

Having conducted subsequent research amid the pandemic, LAAL found that 78.4 percent of households did not have enough money to pay for groceries. Meanwhile, 32.7 percent did not receive any EBT (food stamps or pandemic related aid). In terms of income loss, 79.3 percent faced job loss or reduced income due to COVID-19, and 40.3 percent did not receive any un-

employment benefits.

In response to the pandemic, Laal created the COVID-19 Relief Fund, a fundraising campaign in partnership with The Zakat Fund of NYC, which was established in 2016 to collect and distribute "Zakat," or almsgiving in New York City.

To distribute the assistance equitably and calculate relief amounts, Laal created a formula by measuring household size, immigration status, SNAP benefits recipients, and health impact due to COVID-19. Using this formula, the group distributed cash aid amounts ranging from \$400-\$1000. Through

the relief fund, the group distributed groceries and cash aid to over 54 families.

Laal also received a \$10,000 NYC Impact Grant to support an additional 30 families with assistance. The nonprofit directed all cash aid into the names of the women in the community, ensuring that households were made aware of which family member was responsible for bringing in the income.

Meanwhile, The New York Times recently reported that vaccination rates within the Asian-American community exceed those in the general population.

As of May 11, the vaccination rate in The Bronx for the entire population is still the lowest of all five boroughs at 37 percent, and below the citywide average of 46 percent. In ZIP code 10467 which covers Norwood, Allerton, Pelham Parkway and Williamsbridge, 27 percent of residents have been fully vaccinated and 35 percent have received one dose.

Howard Shih from the Asian-American Foundation told the *Norwood News* that even though, overall, vaccination rates are high in the Asian-American community, because of the diversity within it, some communities have fared better

than others. He added that language barriers had impacted significantly on the pace at which some Asian-American communities, such as the Bengali community, got vaccinated.

"One thing that we're always cognizant of is ensuring that, for example, seniors who have a difficult time with language, and also with technology, actually are able to sign up for vaccines," he said. He added that the Bengali community was hit badly by the pandemic since many were employed in industry sectors like hospitality and retail which didn't allow them to work from home. Compared to other Asian-American communities, Bengalis also have one of the highest rates of poverty in New York City.

The language factor was echoed by Tabassum at the recent vaccination event in Norwood, where the fifty patients who attended the event were presented with a goody-bag after their visit. "Patients were glad to have someone to speak to them in their native language," he said. "The event was so well received they have asked us to come back and do it again."

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



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Letters To The Editor

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

On Diversity and Transit

The "diversity" Richard Marias complains about [Norwood News, April 29-May 12 edition], is a result of the weakening of the unofficial, affirmative action program that benefits white men. Most people who smoke marijuana do not go on to use heroin. While most people who use heroin probably used marijuana, they probably also used alcohol. At worst, marijuana can be psychologically addictive, but it has many beneficial medical purposes. Alcohol is physically addictive to some people, and is more harmful than

beneficial, medically.

Marias has the right to practice his traditional values, as long as he doesn't force them on others. Every person's rights end where the next person's rights begin. As for religion, there are both believers (or those who claim to be) and non-believers who are evil, and who are good. I hope there's a God, but I'm sure a perfectly righteous being does not care if you're a believer, only if you're a decent person. In the movie "Oh, God!" John Denver says, "But I'm not a member of any organized religion." George Burns' God answers, "Neither am I." That

sounds like the answer He or She would give.

I have four problems with Larry Penner's letter [Norwood News, April 29-May 12 edition]. I'm a retired transit worker. When I had the title of stock handler, I worked in main storerooms (warehouses), a satellite storeroom, plus I loaded, unloaded, and drove trucks. I think that's enough worker flexibility. The fact that unionized public workers still have pensions is a good thing. Unless social security is increased to the level where people can live decently on it, pensions are needed to avoid elder poverty. I wish salary increases

had been tied to the consumer price index (CPI). I would have made a lot more money, and I'd be getting a bigger pension. While recent contracts have decent raises, we went decades with contracts that did not keep up with inflation. To gain back that lost ground, many workers would need raises greater than the CPI. Finally, then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is no friend of labor, said overtime saves management money. They don't have to hire additional workers and incur the costs of training and paying them benefits

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Abigail Martin is My Candidate

I would ask all voters in District 11 to please support the candidacy

of Ms. Abigail Martin for the NYC Council seat. Why? Because she supports a constituency that cannot vote for her: homeless animals that might end up in an animal killing pound. That says a lot about someone who helps those who cannot give back any support. I volunteered in these pounds, and it is hard to get volunteers due to the sadness of the work.

She also volunteers her time to help those aging out of the foster system. Think about it - you are 18 years of age and never had a real home before, and know you are out on your own. It's hard, and I know firsthand as I did volunteer work in this area back in the 1980s with Covenant House.

Ms. Martin appears to be a caring and soft-spoken individual who

is married to a military veteran. I am sure all the candidates are worthy of your consideration, but my vote is going to Ms. Martin.

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Happy 90th Birthday Willie Mays!

He was one of the key players in the golden era of NYC major league baseball in the 50s. It was a three-way rivalry between the American League Bronx Yankees, National League New York Giants, and Brooklyn Dodgers. All three teams claimed to have the best center fielder in baseball. On street corners all over town, citizens would argue whether the Giants' Willie Mays, the Yankees' Mickey Mantle or the Dodgers' Duke Snider was champ.

Almost everyone could afford a bleacher, a general admission, or a reserve or box seat. Hot dogs, beer, other refreshments, and souvenirs were reasonably priced. Residents of the era sat outside on the neighborhood stoop, listening to games on the radio. Baseball fans would also look for their favorite sportswriter in the morning, midday, and late afternoon newspaper editions, available at thousands of newsstands. Television was a relatively new technology.

**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.

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Out & About

Compiled by SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

As part of **Bronx Week 2021**, a **Day of Remembrance** will be held on Thursday, May 13 to remember those lost to COVID-19. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. has created a virtual memorial for Bronxites, to share stories of friends and family members lost to COVID. The memorial page can be accessed at <http://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/covidmemorial/>. The borough president encourages Bronxites to honor those lost by getting vaccinated. Use the hashtags #Bronxremembers, #whyvax, and share a picture and your reason for why you have chosen to get vaccinated. Write "I got vaccinated for _____ and that's #whyvax."

The end of **Bronx Week 2021** will be marked by a Drive-in concert and awards presentation on Saturday, May 15, from

midday to 6 p.m. The newest **Bronx Walk of Fame** inductees, Joe Conzo Jr., Sal Abbatiello and Kid Capri will be honored amid performances by Frankie Negrón, Ja Rule, Coró and DJ Ted Smooth. This is a ticketed event and registration is required on <http://bronxtourism.wpengine.com/bronx-week/>.

Do you like Sports? Do you like to talk about Sports? Look no more! Join the staff of **Van Cortlandt Library** at the **Sport's Club** on Thursday, May 27, at 3:30 p.m. for discussions about sports! This is a casual session that will focus on sport's book recommendations, what you are currently reading and conversations about what's currently going on in the sport's world. For more information, call (718) 543-5150 or email vancortlandt@nypl.org

ART

The **Born in Flames: Feminist**

Futures exhibition runs at the **Bronx Museum of the Arts** until Sept. 12, 2021 and is a constellation of imagined world-scapes projected by fourteen contemporary artists. Set within the space of an exhibition, the artwork presented is a projection of the artists' larger visions about futurity. Each section of the show is a microcosmic speculation on what could have been, what is, or what is to come. These worlds are steeped in lessons of our complicated pasts, peppered with the ravages of oppression but also blooming joys. Their work critically examines current struggles for equity by exploring strategies for justice and equality through multifaceted futurisms. For more information, go to: <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/exhibitions/born-in-flames-feminist-futures>.

MUSIC

Bronx Arts Ensemble (BAE) Concert Hall presents **Chamber Music Month: Strings and Woodwinds** on Sunday, May 16, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. This is a free virtual event on Facebook Live and YouTube. BAE celebrates National Chamber Music Month with members of the Bronx Arts Ensemble Woodwind Quintet and String Quartet. The musicians will present a dynamic, uplifting, and soothing concert featuring beloved chamber music repertoire. The string quartet will perform Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* in commemoration of the lives lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This video premiere also features the beautiful artwork of Marsha Heller, BAE's longtime oboe player.

FOOD

Bronx Night Market takes place at Fordham Plaza every Saturday until Nov. 13, 2021 with rotating vendors. The market supports the borough's cuisine and culture by producing world-class, affordable, and fun events. COVID safety guidelines are followed, and the event requires reservations for a one-hour time frame. Sign up at <https://www.eventbrite.com/> and search for "Bronx Night Market." The market will celebrate **New York Cider Week** by collaborating with the upstate NY cider - Angry Orchard to bring exclusive, limited edition ciders from Welden, from May 15 to 31.

As the city of New York moves to reopen by July 1st, Bronx Night Market is announcing an open call to musicians and entertainers from New York City. Go to <https://www.thebronxnightmarket.com/> for more information.

MOVEMENT

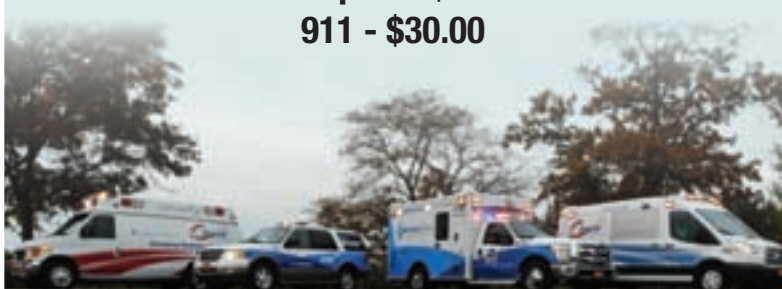
Did you know that **Van Cortlandt Park Alliance** grows veggies and fruit? In fact, over this past year, food grown locally has taken on an even more important role in meeting our community's needs. Volunteer in the garden on Saturday, May 22. Meet at 10 a.m. sharp! Help us plant crops, weed, and prepare for what we hope will be an extraordinary season of garden growth! RSVP at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-garden-volunteer-day-tickets-147669558625>. Enter the park at Broadway and Moshulu Ave.

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Montefiore Holds Free Breast Cancer Screenings on Saturday, May 15

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Many Americans have postponed medical appointments, including preventative cancer screenings, for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported recently in The Wall Street Journal. Researchers estimate this could lead to 10,000 breast and colorectal cancer deaths over the next decade.

Montefiore Health System representatives say this is especially troubling in the local Bronx community since breast cancer is one of the most common cancers among women in New York State, and pre-COVID, was reported to be a leading cause of death for Hispanic women in the U.S. In addition, they say women in the Bronx are 23 percent more

likely than the average woman in New York State to get a cervical cancer diagnosis.

To get women screened, Montefiore is holding its annual See, Test & Treat event on Saturday, May 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Greene Medical Arts Pavilion, located at 3400 Bainbridge Avenue, and will offer free cervical and breast cancer screenings for women who have limited or no insurance to identify early signs of disease.

Women are encouraged to sign up for the screening in advance by calling (718) 920-4600 and get any questions they may have answered in advance. The event is free for women who are uninsured and underinsured.

Homeless Man Alleges Eviction from NYCHA Housing

(continued from page 1)

came extremely ill and died on Jan. 18.

Jerry said they had been friends for over a decade, and his many visits to see Maggy at various hospitals over the years were well documented. "You could see in the records," he said.

He said he used to live with Maggie at Baychester Houses, a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) complex, located at 1930 Schefflin Avenue in the Edenwald section of the Bronx. "They said that I wasn't [living] in her apartment," Jerry said, referring to a company called Cross Bronx Preservation LLC, which he said he is now suing for illegal lock-out.

"Even after she died, I was still in the apartment until they illegally locked me out on the 22nd or 23rd of March," he said. "They locked me out, and I'm still going to court for this, and I hope I win the case." Jerry said he is being represented by The Legal Aid Society.

According to a Feb. 16, NY1 article, "NYCHA Shows Off New Renovations at Privately Managed Buildings," Baychester Houses is a "former" NYCHA development that is now being managed by a private company, Camber Property Group. According to the story, NYCHA was in the process of "converting" thousands of City apartments to private management under a "public-private partnership" called PACT [Permanent Affordability Commitment Together]. Another target was Edenwald Houses, located directly across from Baychester Houses.

According to NYCHA, PACT basically converts selected NYCHA housing projects into a "more stable, federally-funded program called Project-Based Section 8."

According to the non-profit, Coalition for the Homeless, Project-based Section 8 housing covers all apartments in a given housing complex, similar to public housing. Housing assistance is "tied" to the housing project, not to the tenant. Tenants who leave the project leave their housing assistance behind — unless specific exceptions are made.

Under PACT, private and non-profit development partners are contracted, based on resident input. Once a property "converts" to Project-Based Section 8 housing, NYCHA leases the land and buildings to the development partners, which conduct repairs, serve as property managers, and provide enhanced social services and community programs to tenants.

NY1 reported that the new Baychester Houses property manager, Camber Property Group, oversees the 11 buildings and 440 units that make up the complex, that it had been converted from public housing into Section 8 housing in 2018, and that it had undergone a multimillion-dollar renovation at the end of 2020.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Cross Bronx Preservation LLC confirmed to *Norwood News* that Camber Property Group is part of a group of investors that formed the partnership, Cross Bronx Preservation LLC.

Rick Gropper of Camber Property Group was quoted in the NY1 story as saying that no tenants had been evicted since the conversion. "Before we evict anyone, we first make every attempt to make sure they have the services they need to pay the rent," he said.

When *Norwood News* informed Jerry of the statewide eviction moratorium, amid the pandemic, that has recently been extended to Aug.

31, Jerry said, "Right on, Brother. They did it illegally." Asked if he had any mail at the NYCHA complex with his name on it to prove he lived there, or a witness who could corroborate it, he replied, "I don't know if anyone would be willing to testify. They might be too scared."

Hunched over his walker, taking small, slow steps towards the Botanical Square Station of the Metro North train line, Jerry was asked where he was now staying. "I was staying with a really bad guy," he said. "I had to leave. I couldn't stay with him anymore. Now, I'm really homeless."

He added, "The only thing that can help is if somebody from the building will testify. You see, I get my mail at POTS." POTS or Part of the Solution is a nonprofit based in Fordham Manor which supports the homeless, and those on low income through different programs. "I showed them [a letter] and they [Cross Bronx Preservation] used it against me, saying I lived at POTS," Jerry said. "You know nobody lives there. They tried to say I lived at POTS."

On Saturday, May 8, *Norwood News* paid a visit to Baychester Houses. There, resident, Petrina Brown, confirmed that Jerry had previously lived there. Referring to Maggie, Brown said, "I don't know what happened. It seems like they put him out, because when she was alive, she never let them stop him from going there."

Brown said Jerry had medical problems and that he would let out an occasional scream of pain. Jerry told the *Norwood News* he had been hit twice, in the past, by a car and required back surgery and surgery on his right foot. Brown

added that on rare occasions, Jerry and Maggy would have what she described as little arguments. "But no matter what happened, she would not leave him," she said, and added that he would not leave her either.

Brown said that she has lived in the building nearly 11 years, and that Jerry had been with Maggy all that time. She said the residents on the fifth floor, where she lived, were very tight-knit and that she was very confident that four or five other residents on the floor would also back Jerry up.

Meanwhile, Brown said she was still in the dark when it came to the NYCHA deal. "I don't know if it [the complex] was sold, or we have some kind of arrangement," she said, referring generally to housing rights. *Norwood News* has reached out to Cross Bronx Preservation LLC to ask what type of information tenants had received about the new arrangement.

We noticed that in the lobby of the building, the usual public notice that is supposed to contain the name of the building owner, as well as contact details for the management company and Super was blank. A visit to the adjacent building also part of Baychester Houses, described Cross Bronx Preservation LLC as the building owner, rather than The City of New York.

Referring to Jerry's character, Brown said, "He's a nice guy. I don't mind helping him because I really want them to open the apartment back open for him, because I know she [Maggie] would never put him out, so they don't have the right to throw him out like that."

She said that she understood the manage-

ment company changed the locks on Jerry's apartment door. "He kicked the door in, and I think they got annoyed with him or whatever," she said. "But, at the same time, they don't come as quick as possible to do the things they're supposed to do, and then, it was Corona and all of this... It was a lot of stuff, but the way they put him out, if they put him out, I don't think it's right."

On May 8, *Norwood News* contacted Jerry and told him that we found a neighbor who said she could corroborate the fact that he had previously lived at Baychester Houses. He was excited and grateful to receive the news, as he said he is due to appear at a virtual courtroom session with a Bronx Housing Court judge on May 27.

During a series of follow-up questions, Jerry was asked if he was not afraid of getting hit by a car when he walked between traffic. "Of course, I'm scared," he said, letting out a laugh. We asked him if the supermarket or train station would not be a safer location. "There's a lot of people doing it," he said. "There's only one person [doing] what I do."

Having lived previously in Edenwald, Jerry was asked if he chose Bedford Park because he felt safer there. He agreed, saying, "Yeah, the police bust my chops, but one time a guy tried to rob my walker and an off-duty cop caught him."

On Monday, May 10, Joshua Stephenson of West Bronx Housing & Neighborhood Resources Center, a tenants' advocacy group located at East 204th Street in Bedford Park, said Jerry should have been protected by the eviction moratorium. Stephenson said a hardship declaration form is required to avoid evic-

tion, and that if one had been submitted and if the management company evicted Jerry, they would have done so illegally, in his opinion.

He continued, "He would have been entitled to succession rights, if it were a rent-stabilized apartment, but even if he wasn't entitled to succession rights, they can't just kick him out, even if he's not on the lease."

He added, "Anyone who stays in an apartment past 30 days, they're entitled to squatters' rights, which means the landlord has to go to housing court to evict them."

Calls placed by *Norwood News* with Cross Bronx Preservation LLC went to a voicemail box which indicated that the mailbox was full, and no message could be left. We also reached out to Barbara Brancaccio, the chief communications officer at NYCHA, about Jerry's situation and she said she would look into the matter. She subsequently referred us, via email, to Cross Bronx Preservation LLC for follow-up.

On Tuesday, May 11, Cross Bronx Preservation issued a statement to the *Norwood News*, saying, "There are rules for apartment succession when the named leaseholder no longer occupies the apartment, and we are following those guidelines. The residency of the apartment will be determined through proper legal channels."

Anyone in the Bronx who has been illegally locked out of an apartment should immediately visit Bronx Housing Court, located at 1118 Grand Concourse to fill out a petition in support of an Order to Show Cause.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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Verdicts/Settlements

\$28,500,000.00 **\$16,687,615.91** **\$16,000,000.00** **\$15,000,000.00** **\$4,000,000.00** **\$3,700,000.00**

Placental Abruptio

Brain-Damage Baby

Pedestrian Hit By Bus

Construction Accident

Construction Accident

Construction Accident

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- Medical Malpractice
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Nursing Home & Assisted Living Abuse
- Pedestrian Accidents
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- Product Liability
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