



NORWOOD NEWS

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KEEPER'S HOUSE EDIBLE GARDEN REOPENS



Photo by Miriam Quiñones.

(L to R) AESHA VALENCIA, ACTING public relations director of Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), Zoë Arcidiacono, volunteer coordinator with FOMP, Lorita Watson, acting senior director of education for FOMP, and Elizabeth Quaranta, acting executive director of FOMP, at the reopening of the Keeper's House Edible Garden in the Norwood section of the Bronx on Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

By SARAH HUFFMAN & MIRIAM QUIÑONES

The first, public edible garden in Norwood sits at one end of the Williamsbridge Oval park on Reservoir Oval East, next to the historic Keeper's

House. For Zoë Arcidiacono, a volunteer coordinator with Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), the garden became a haven during the COVID-19 pandemic, and she felt nurtured by the atmosphere which

FOMP created around it.

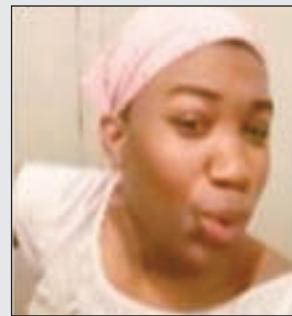
"I was volunteering a little before the pandemic, but I got laid off and this group has taught me so much," Arcidiacono told *Norwood News*. "I moved to the Bronx four

years ago. Before that, I was in Queens, and so I have gotten to know my neighbors, and [now] connect to my neighborhood in an entirely new way." Arcidiacono said her work with FOMP

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Jerome Gun Hill BID Opens Seating Space for Residents



Photos by Miriam Quiñones

(L TO R) Senior urban designer, Jessica Cronstein, Bronx Department of Transportation commissioner, Nivardo Lopez, executive director of the Jerome Gun Hill BID, Jennifer Tausig, State Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), Ariana Cipriani, manager of neighborhood development at the Jerome Gun Hill BID, and DOT assistant commissioner for street improvement programs, Sean Quinn attend the opening of a new public seating area on Jerome Avenue in Norwood, on July 14, 2021.

By SHANIA DEGROOT

A new public space and seating area was formally opened for residents along Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road on Wednesday, July 14. It was organized by the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID) and New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) and will function as a social center for local residents. The space has been dedicated to the local medical community for the work they have done throughout the pandemic.

Movable seating, planters, and a mural created by Bronx artist, Britny Lizet, are some of the features of the space. Throughout the summer and early fall, Jerome Gun Hill BID will host programming in the area, including free public events twice a month. The BID will collaborate with local community organizations and businesses to bring free art activities, books, food from local restaurants, live music, and other events to the space.

Part of DOT's Public Space Unit and Art Program's revitalization of the intersection, the new space builds on Mayor

Bill de Blasio's "State of the City" commitment to create newly designed public spaces for the city's top 33 hardest-hit neighborhoods. It is intended to support local small businesses, foster community ties, and provide space for arts, culture, and programming.

A press conference took place at the new space to formally open it, and in attendance were senior urban designer, Jessica Cronstein, Bronx DOT commissioner, Nivardo Lopez, executive director of the Jerome Gun Hill BID, Jennifer Tausig, State Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey (S.D. 36), Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), District 11 Councilman Eric Dinowitz, Ariana Cipriani, manager of neighborhood development at the Jerome Gun Hill BID, and DOT assistant commissioner for street improvement programs, Sean Quinn.

Eric Dinowitz expressed his appreciation for the newly built space, which he said he believes enhances the community's values. "During COVID, we realized how much those small spaces matter for us to come together and just have moments to enjoy one another's company

and do nice things, and those spaces look like this," he said. "Beautiful artwork where residents can enjoy the stores and sit down and have meals with one another and have events like the book reading which I am very much looking forward to" he added. He went on to congratulate the DOT for recognizing the value of creating such spaces in the Bronx, a borough that he said is sometimes overlooked both for large and smaller projects.

Meanwhile, Lopez said as the city recovers from the pandemic, additional and similar spaces will open up around the City, and in the Bronx.

For his part, Jeffrey Dinowitz thanked the Jerome Gun Hill Bid staff for working with the community and for their work in improving the area over the past twenty years.

"It is really exciting to be here," he said. "I have been coming around this shopping district for most of my life. I have seen this beautiful neighborhood, and I have seen when it had really big problems, the best of times, the worst of times, but we are in the best of times again in this community."

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the new charging stations currently being installed in public areas around the City, including in Norwood, for electric vehicles (EVs).



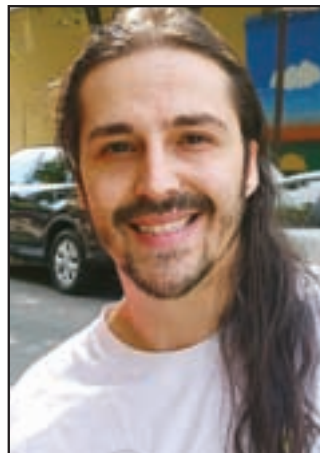
"My feeling is, basically, that it helps out the community, you know? It gets everybody into electric vehicles that are better than gas. It's better for the environment. We all need to step up. I don't drive, but I see a lot of these electric scooters, which I think are a bad idea. They are very hazardous, yeah. Can you charge a scooter on those things? I think it brings a brilliant idea to the community if you have an electric vehicle, and it will get more people to get electric vehicles."

Mario Hernandez,
Norwood



"First off, when I first saw it, I was shocked and grateful, grateful that we have something like this, especially in my community, because it does build up the community. I didn't think about the consequences of it taking up two parking spaces, and now that I think about the two parking spaces, I'm just saying to myself, well, how much is it worth right now? When I think about it right now, I just ask how many people in this community are going to use it, and benefit from it having an electric vehicle? When I first came, and they were giving tickets and I was like - why not put it at a gas station? It's almost like [the situation with] the Citi Bikes. You see the Citi Bikes taking up all these parking spaces in residential areas, so why not put those in the parks?"

Manny Rabaza,
Norwood



"I like the idea a lot, but there are certain issues - one of them is signage and letting people know that there is a charging station out here, only for charging [electric] vehicles. Basically, that's the biggest issue I see. They could even put a light and it shines green on the floor. You don't even have to paint the floor. I love the station. I like the idea. They should put a lot more in more visible areas. This is too much of a residential area. I feel like it's hidden where it's at."

Gilbert Polanco III,
Bedford Park



"I think it's great. I like that it's less expensive, renewable, and it creates less pollution than the old gas engines, and I think it will be a lot better for the neighborhood. I'm all for it. Yes, if people support it, and they keep installing more of these, there'll be more electric cars, and I think it will get things going in a better direction."

Ivan Martinez,
Yonkers



"I think it's awesome. I think that things are definitely moving in the electric direction exactly, and it's very convenient to have something like this, especially at a major hub like West 242nd Street, and I think there should be more things like this. Honestly, it's only a few [parking] spaces. There's always pros and cons to everything whenever things change. It's always difficult because someone is going to lose out in the end."

Leslie Banks,
Van Cortlandt Village

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Search for 17-Year-Old Missing Girl

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance in locating a 17-year-old girl who was reported missing on Sunday, July 18, in Norwood in the 52nd precinct.

Kelis Williams, 17, of 30 East 208th Street, Apt 1G, in Norwood, was last seen at her home at 4 a.m. on Thursday, July 15. Kelis is described as female, 5 feet, 4 inches tall, Black, weighs 120 pounds and has brown eyes and blonde hair.

A photo of Kelis is attached and available at DCPI.

Anyone with information with regard to this missing person 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.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD.
KELIS WILLIAMS OF Norwood is missing since July 15.

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

NYC Board of Standards & Appeals Public Hearing

NYC Board of Standards and Appeals will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, Aug. 24, at 2 p.m. via ZOOM. The Board is proposing a rule to enable it to continue its digital operations. The meeting ID is 960 3513 2986 and the passcode is 008943. Anyone can comment on the proposed rules either online at <http://rules.cityof-newyork.us>, by email at submit@bsa.nyc.gov or via fax on (646) 500-6271. Residents can also mail comments to Board of Standards and Appeals, 22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007. Participants can speak during the meeting for three minutes. The deadline to submit comments is Friday, Aug. 20.

Restaurant Week

NYC Restaurant Week is back and runs from July 19 through Sunday, August 22. Diners at nearly 530 of the City's best restaurants can enjoy more than 50 distinct cuisines in 75 neighborhoods. New Yorkers can avail of lunches or dinners priced at either \$21 or \$39, depending on the individual restaurant price points, as well as the option of an all new "Signature Dining Experience" priced at \$125. Diners can seamlessly browse participating restaurants at <https://www.nycgo.com/restaurant-week/> using filters, including "location," "cuisine," "has menu," "\$10 back," and "amenities."

Child Tax Credit

The recent Child Tax Credit (CTC) expansion ensures payments of up to \$300 per child will automatically go out to families across New York State each month, effective Friday, July 16. U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the plan will impact over 86 percent of New York children, and deliver an estimated \$2.9 billion in additional economic relief to New York City families with children.

The relief bill increases the CTC amount from \$2,000 to \$3,000 per child aged 6 to 17, and to \$3,600 per child aged under 6, during 2021. It is also fully refundable and removes the \$2,500 earnings floor in 2021, ensuring the lowest income households will be able to benefit. Find out more information at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/consumers/Advance-Child-Tax-Credit-Flyer-2021.pdf>.

NYC Streets Plan Seeks Community Input

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) is developing the NYC Streets Plan, a five-year transportation plan to improve the safety, accessibility, and quality of the City's streets for all New Yorkers. The plan involves an

Norwood: Car Break-in on Reservoir Oval East as Grand Larceny Auto Incidents Increase by 44 Percent

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A car break-in occurred in front of the Keeper's House at 3400 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood, resulting in a smashed window and a damaged door. The incident apparently took place during the early hours of Friday morning, July 15.

A rock was lying on the street close to where the car was parked in front of the Keeper's House (home of the *Norwood News*) on Friday morning, and one resident reported having heard a loud noise at around 5 a.m. that morning.

Police arrived at the scene and requested access to the security camera footage to see if the culprit(s) can be identified. The owner of the vehicle was upset and did not wish to comment. It is unknown at this time what the motive was or if anything was stolen from the car.

Grand Larceny Auto crimes in the 52nd precinct are up 44 percent year to date compared to 2020, according to NYPD crime statistics, with 104 incidents reported to date this year, compared to 72 as of the same date last year. The NYPD have reminded the public not to leave their keys in the car ignition, even for short periods.

On Friday, Sept. 25, 2020, there was an attempted break-in at the Keeper's House itself. A downstairs window was smashed at around 8 p.m., while one member of staff remained on the second floor. The incident took place on the same evening as an anti-gun violence rally was held in nearby Bedford Park, with many members of the local 52nd precinct participating in the march.

More recently, as reported, a shooting also occurred in the same vicinity in May 2021. According to police, a gunman opened fire on two men 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 (the short side street adjacent to the Keeper's House) and Perry Avenue.

Anyone with information with regard to the car break-in 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, or on Twitter @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

A CAR PARKED in front of the Keeper's House on Reservoir Oval East in Norwood, had its window smashed and door damaged, apparently during the early hours of Friday morning, July 15, 2021.

in-depth analysis of the current state of the City's streets with DOT aiming to respond equitably to unique neighborhood needs. Local Law 195, enacted in December 2019, directs NYC DOT to issue and implement a transportation master plan every five years.

The first phase involves public outreach through an online survey. DOT will use the feedback to understand overall transportation priorities as well as the specific needs of the City's diverse neighborhoods. It will be followed by virtual public workshops focusing on all five boroughs in the coming months. Bronx workshops will be held on Monday, July 26, at 6 p.m. and Wednesday, July 28, at 2 p.m.

More information, including a link to the survey, is available at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/nyc-streets-plan.shtml#events>.

NYCHA Heat Action Plan

A virtual presentation of the NYCHA Heat Action Plan will be held on July 29, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., followed by a Q&A with NYCHA residents and community stakeholders. Attendees are required to register beforehand. View the Heat Action Plan here: <https://nychamonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Heating-Action-Plan-12.4.19.pdf>. Register here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TTN9oZf5QHiMWPO-q85VbZa.

Restoration of Veterans' Benefits

NY Division of Veteran Services is accepting applications for the restoration of New York State benefits. Any individual with prior military service who was discharged under conditions that were other-than-honorable (OTH) or generally under honorable conditions may apply for restoration of their NYS veterans' benefits if the discharge resulted from sexual orientation or gender identity, "military sexual trauma" (MST), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI). Email inclusions@veterans.nyc.gov with inquiries.

Blood Drive

Due to the pandemic, blood is in short supply. Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) and the New York Blood Center are holding a Blood Drive on Sunday, August 1, from 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. VCJC is looking for volunteers to help blood donors have a pleasant experience while donating. Anyone who would like to donate blood should schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-933-BLOOD, sponsor code 70486. VCJC is located at 3880 Sedgwick Ave, Bronx, NY 10463. If you have questions on the blood drive, contact Stuart Harris, blood drive coordinator, at stuarthar@outlook.com.



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NYC Campaign Finance Board Approves \$3 Million in Public Funds for General Election Candidates

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB) approved \$3,119,815 in public matching funds payments to 56 citywide candidates during a public meeting on Thursday, July 15. With these payments, the Board has issued more than \$112 million to candidates in the 2021 elections.

The payments approved by the Board on Thursday included \$1,328,235 to mayoral candidate, Eric Adams, \$42,758 to city comptroller candidate, Brad Lander, \$855 to Bronx borough president candidate, District 16 City Council Member, Vanessa Gibson, \$1,710 to District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz, \$40,111* to District 13 City Council candidate, Marjorie Velazquez, \$40,111* to District 14 City Council candidate, Pierina Sanchez, \$570 to District 15 City Councilman, Oswald Feliz, \$4,963 to District 16 City Council candidate, Althea Stevens and \$40,111* to City Council candidate,

Amanda Farias.

(*According to city law, public funds payments in this race are currently capped at 25 percent of the maximum allowable payment.)

The CFB's interactive contribution map helps voters see where candidates are raising money within the city and shows that more than 93 percent of individual contributions raised by candidates are less than \$250, and that more than 72 percent come from NYC residents.

As we reported previously in May, over \$19.9 million had been paid out to 162 primary candidates citywide, which included more than \$32.3 million to seven candidates running for mayor.

By May 27, the CFB had issued nearly \$96 million to candidates participating in the 2021 elections, the most in the history of New York City's campaign finance program, and more than the candidates reported raising in private contribu-



Photo by Sharon McCutcheon on Unsplash

CASH

tions (which was nearly \$60.3 million as of May 21). Public funds dwarfed the amount spent at that time by independent expenditure committees, or Super PACs, which reported \$15.7 million in spending as of that date, mostly on the race for mayor.

As reported, by June 18, in the 15th City Council primary alone, candidates received close to half a million dollars in public funds. We also reported on how the District 11 and District 15 candidates spent those funds. This followed allegations by local political organization, the Northwest Bronx Democrats, that the candidates in question had not spent the funds locally in the Bronx, and had allegedly "broken promises" previously made to the local community, allegations which most candidates denied. Separately, on June 11, we reported how super PACs had spent \$18.6 million citywide on various NYC candidates.

To qualify for public funds, candidates must meet fundraising thresholds demonstrating support from within their communities. The eligibility thresholds encourage candidates to raise small contributions from voters living within the city.

The CFB provides matching funds out of the city's General Fund to qualifying candidates at a rate of \$8 for every \$1 raised from New York City residents, up to the first \$175 for donations to City Council and Borough President candidates, and up to \$250

for donations to citywide candidates, for a maximum payment-per-resident of \$1,400 or \$2,000, respectively.

To qualify for matching funds, candidates must demonstrate support from within their communities by meeting a two-part fundraising threshold, and abide by the other requirements set in the Campaign Finance Act. For instance, to qualify for public funding in City Council races, candidates must raise at least \$5,000 from city residents. Only the first \$175 contributed per city resident counts towards meeting the threshold.

Additionally, City Council candidates must receive at least 75 contributions from residents of the district where they are running. Candidates also must comply with all program rules, including individual contribution limits and a prohibition on collecting contributions from corporations, limited liability companies, and partnerships.

The matching rate increased to \$8-to-\$1 in November 2018 when it was adopted by voters along with other improvements to the matching funds program. For 2021, candidates may choose to participate in the previous program, which provides public funds at a \$6-to-\$1 matching rate. However, 98 percent of 2021 candidates participating in the program are choosing to abide by the new rules.

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Bronx BP Confirms \$35 Million in Capital Funding to Bronx Institutions for Fiscal Year 2022

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. announced on Wednesday, July 14, that his office is providing more than \$35 million to institutions across the borough through his Fiscal Year 2022 capital funding allocations.

According to representatives from the borough president's office, this year, the borough president will allocate \$35,880,000 to 130 total projects. This includes funding for nearly 100 education projects, park upgrades, healthcare technology, improvements to cultural facilities, the creation of over 900 units of new housing, as well as the redesign and redevelopment of Orchard Beach and the design of the Universal Hip Hop Museum.

"Through these funding allocations, my office will be able to provide technology upgrades to public schools, new state-of-the-art equipment to



Photo by José A. Giraldo

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Ruben Diaz Jr., speaks to the media at the New York Botanical Garden on Wednesday, May 5, 2021. Diaz announced the lineup of events for the 2021 Bronx Week celebration to be held from May 8 through 16.

healthcare facilities, park renovations and hundreds of units of new housing, which will play a critical role in our borough's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,"

said Diaz Jr. "I am proud to have been able to provide this funding to so many worthy institutions in this year's capital budget."

This year, the largest

allocation went to education, \$9.9 million, representing 28 percent of the borough president's total capital budget. This money will go towards laptop distributions,

technology upgrades and other physical improvements in public schools in different areas around The Bronx.

The borough president said that the COVID-19 pandemic had further revealed the deep educational inequities faced by students in the borough. "Through these new funding allocations, my office will be able to take an important step towards leveling the playing field and bringing digital equity to our Bronx students," he said.

According to his office, several notable projects this year include \$7 million towards the next phase of the renovation of Orchard Beach. These capital funds are in addition to over \$23.9 million that were allocated in previous fiscal years, \$3.7 million towards the Universal Hip Hop Museum, and \$3 million to-

wards the construction of a sensory playground. The Daniel Boone Sensory Playground will take into account the unique needs of youth with autism and special health needs.

Since taking office in 2009, according to officials, Diaz Jr. has provided \$356,253,000 in total capital funding to 1,086 projects. "Each of these projects will contribute to the continued progress of our borough that we saw prior to the pandemic. In my final year as Borough President, I am proud to have helped fund so many important projects that have changed the lives of Bronx residents in every corner of our borough," Diaz Jr. said.

A complete list of the capital funding allocations for Financial Year 2022 can be found at <https://on.nyc.gov/3B5IrVV>.



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CRIME FILE

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Van Cortlandt Park/ Kingsbridge: Search for Man Wanted in Con- nection with Two Home Robberies

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the man seen in the above video screenshot who is wanted for questioning in connection with two robberies that occurred in the Northwest Bronx, in the 50th precinct on July 16.

At around 10.15 a.m., the suspect knocked on the door of an 89-year-old man's apartment in the vicinity of Van Cortlandt Park. When the victim answered, the suspect forced his way inside and removed jewelry from the man's bedroom, along with his bicycle.

Later, at around 1 p.m., the suspect knocked on the door of a 42-year-old woman's apartment in the vicinity of 232nd Street and Tibbett Avenue in Kingsbridge. When the victim answered the door, the suspect, once again, forced his way inside, displaying a firearm as he did so, and forced the victim to hand over \$150 in cash before he fled the location. The video screenshot is taken from the location of the second incident.

Fordham Manor – Man Found Dead

Police are investigating an incident in Fordham Manor following the discovery of a dead man in a residential building. On Sunday, July 18, at approximately 6.35 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a report of an unconscious man on the fifth floor of 2608 Creston Avenue in Fordham Manor, in the 52nd precinct.

Upon arrival, officers observed a 59-year-old man lying on the fifth-

floor hallway, unconscious and unresponsive with no obvious signs of trauma observed. EMS responded to the location and pronounced the aided man deceased at the scene. The medical examiner will determine the cause of death, and the investigation remains ongoing.



Bedford Park: Two Men Sought in Slashing Incident

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance in locating the two unidentified men seen in the above photos who are sought in connection with an assault that occurred in

Bedford Park, in the 52nd precinct. On Monday, July 12, at around 9.41 a.m., at the corner of Valentine Avenue and East 204th Street in Bedford Park, a 61-year-old man got into a verbal dispute with the two suspects. The dispute escalated into a physical altercation, and the two suspects began assaulting the victim, slashing him about the body using an unknown object.

The suspects then fled the location in a black Honda Civic, traveling westbound on East 204th Street. The victim sustained slash wounds to the back of his head and torso. He was transported via EMS in stable condition to NYC Health & Hospitals/Jacobi for treatment and was later released.

The first individual (#1) is described as male, has a medium complexion and long, black hair in dreads, a slim build, and was last seen wearing a black t-shirt, red pants and gray sneakers.

The second individual (#2) is described as male, has a medium complexion, a slim build and was last seen wearing a black baseball hat, a white t-shirt, gray pants and black sneakers. A screenshot of the surveillance video taken from the incident location is attached.

Fordham Manor: Man Slashes Victim with Machete

Police are seeking the public's assistance locating the man seen in the photos on right who is wanted for questioning in relation to a felony assault, involving a machete, which occurred in Fordham Manor. The incident unfolded at West Kingsbridge Road and Webb Avenue on Sunday, July 11, at 4.28 p.m. The suspect slashed the victim across the back of the neck with a machete. There is a reward of \$2,500 for anyone with information.



Anyone with 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, or on Twitter @NYPDTips.

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Family Member Disrupts Press Conference ahead of Anti-Gun Violence March

By DAVID GREENE

A crowd of 100 turned out for an anti-gun violence rally in Belmont on July 14, near the site where 13-year-old Jaryan Elliot was shot and killed on Sunday, July 11. A man, believed to be Elliot's Godfather, used a bullhorn to temporarily disrupt the press conference held by elected officials which preceded the rally.

The event was organized by District 15 City Councilman Oswald Feliz, District 16 Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson and Assemblyman José Rivera (A.D. 78) and was held at the corner of East 187th Street and Prospect Avenue in Belmont. The crowd was mostly made up of anti-gun violence groups like Bronx Connect, Release the Grip (RTG), Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) and Guns Down Life Up.

The press conference location on East 187th Street was diagonally across from Angels Café, where Elliot reportedly sought help after being shot and later died.

On nearby Prospect Avenue is the site of the former 'Bronx Deli', now called MNE Deli, where a candlelight vigil was once held for the 12 victims who died in a devastating 5-alarm fire in an apartment building at 732 Prospect Avenue back on December 28, 2017.

Before the rally could begin, traffic was backed up to Boston Road caused by the additional vehicles that were carrying the organizers, members of the media and police officers to the event. In addition, two double-parked RTG vehicles and one S.O.S. truck temporarily prevented a mini school bus from passing.

As news cameras set up in front of a private home outside 764 East 187th Street, Abdul Rahim Shabazz, who identified himself to WCBS News as an uncle of Elliot's, stepped between the television cameras and Gibson and Feliz with a sign that read, "Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys." A source who was dealing with the family later stated he was the child's Godfather.

The unexpected outburst caused a bizarre atmosphere and some stunned looks on the faces of elected officials and members of the media. Shabazz did not appear to be under the influence or impaired in any way. He said, "I don't mean no disrespect to none of you all, but this is the truth. This is what time it is, a conspiracy that's been going on for 500 years to destroy Black boys and the gang [expletive] is just a part of that."

He continued, "I don't know what you all were expecting today, but this ain't it. This is not it." Both Feliz and Gibson looked momentarily stunned before both seemed to intentionally look away from Shabazz.

As young members of 'Guns Down Life Up' proceeded to walk away from the disrupted press conference, Shabazz then told them, "I'm telling y'all. Get in your books. Do your studies and unify, organize, mobi-



Photo by David Greene

Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson (left) looks on as a high-ranking police official talks to Abdul Rahim Shabazz, believed to be the Godfather of the late Jaryan Elliot, who disrupted an anti-gun violence press conference and rally held in Belmont on Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

lize so we can deal with this situation, because this situation is out of control."

The entire group then moved a few feet away to the front of the MTR Grocery at 760 E. 187th Street at the corner of Prospect Avenue, and Feliz attempted to restart the press conference.

He began speaking of the neighborhood children, telling the crowd, "We love them. We care for them. We're there for them and we're going to do anything to make sure that they could realize their dream whether it's becoming a lawyer, a doctor, a psychologist, and that we're going to do everything we can to make sure we don't lose them to our streets."

At that moment, Shabazz interrupted again, speaking over Feliz and saying, "A yo' man. This is straight up [expletive]. This is straight up [expletive]. We don't want to hear this, man. This is not why we're here. This is [expletive]. They're not going to do anything, and you know that this is politics [expletive]. They're not going to do anything. We've been fighting racism forever. It ain't going nowhere."

After several minutes, and as order was restored, Rivera told the crowd, "I will be brief because we have to march so the people in the neighborhood can see us, instead of just hearing us on the 6 o'clock news. The entire City and State will hear the frustration and anger that you have heard here this afternoon."

He went on to say that he was grateful and happy that following the recent elections, the community had elected young leaders who he hoped would lead the community out of many of the problems they were facing."

At that point, once again, using the bullhorn, Shabazz countered Rivera's comments by saying, "We're not here for all this damn rhetoric. Nothing is being done, and you keep coming with the same storyline."

Rivera responded, telling the crowd, "We see this is the anger and frustration that we have. We have to move forward." Both men then proceeded to speak over each other in separate efforts to connect with the crowd.

Shabazz and his bullhorn won the battle as he fumed, "We're not doing that! We have a very serious crisis on our hands, and we need to get out and address it."

He continued, "The answer is that New York City takes millions, if not billions of dollars and they invest it in everything else but our children, but you want to stand here and talk this nonsense." At that point, some in the crowd began heckling the officials and appeared to support Shabazz.

Reverend Wendy Calderón-Payne of Bronx Connect and Release the Grip then attempted to speak with Shabazz but as he responded using profanities, Payne walked away. At that point, both Feliz and Gibson signaled to someone in the crowd, and a high-ranking police official went over and spoke to Shabazz.

As the press conference resumed once more, Payne then said, "If we don't hope for something better, if we lose hope, that's it. Then why is anybody living, right?" Revealing to the crowd that she had lost "more than one family member" to gun violence, she then added, "And our children are hurting, because they're afraid they're the next one."

Minister Tara Brown-Arnell from Bronx Connect and Release the Grip then began to explain the work of the Crisis Management System of New York City, saying, "They go into schools. We would get a call from a principal... we've taken groups of kids out of the City, when a beef was too crazy."

Speaking for a second time, Gibson offered, "We're going to march because our young people are dying right in front of us.

I am outraged and I'm upset and I'm [expletive] off when a 13-year-old is shot dead in broad daylight." Calling the situation a "state of emergency," Gibson said she didn't want anyone to think that he or she couldn't be the next gun violence victim.

She went on to highlight several, local anti-gun violence initiatives available in the community, including the Beacon Cornerstone, the Sonic Summer Youth programs, the latter a year-round youth employment program, as well as the recently expanded Saturday Night Lights program. Gibson concluded, "There's a war going on in our community. There is a war going on with our young people. They are at war with each other, and we need to break that cycle. I can't tell you enough how important this is."

Shabazz never interrupted Payne or Gibson, and it should be noted that Gibson did agree with Shabazz's philosophy on, in Gibson's words, "systemic racism in society."

In the end, the reduced crowd of about fifty anti-gun violence advocates, including Shabazz and other family members, marched down Prospect Avenue to East 182nd Street. Neither Feliz, Gibson nor Rivera were observed along the march route, nor were they seen during the closing remarks made by the anti-gun violence advocates at the end of the rally.

Afterwards, Shabazz called the event, "a waste of time." Asked why he marched, he replied, "To get my message out... I want to see results and they're [local officials] not doing that."

Asked if he thought the rally would stop the violence, one man, who asked not to be identified, who casually knew Elliot, and who was working behind the counter of Happy Deli on East 187th Street, replied, "To be honest with you. I don't know."

On the same day, presumed Democratic mayoral nominee, Eric Adams, met with Gov. Andrew Cuomo to speak about New York City's future and gun violence. In a separate interview the same day, Adams called out Mayor Bill de Blasio, telling Marcia Kramer of WCBS News, "The mayor should be up there and send a real signal to residents that we're not going to allow the Bronx to go backwards."

Later that night, the NYPD released a photo of the Honda Accord, the suspected getaway vehicle that was used in Elliot's killing.

Gun violence took a brief pause in the Bronx until the following morning, July 15, when a 25-year-old man was shot to death outside his home on College Avenue and East 167th Street in Morrisania. Meanwhile, as of July 15, the NYPD reported 829 shootings citywide to date in 2021, and 968 shooting victims citywide during the same period. In the 48th precinct, which serves Belmont, East Tremont and West Farms, nine homicides have been reported so far this year.

What Does the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act Mean for Bronxites?

By **DAWN CLANCY**

Considered a major win by progressives when it was passed by New York State legislators, the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) was the subject of a virtual community discussion hosted by The Bronx Defenders on Tuesday, July 6, in conjunction with local Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80). The purpose of the discussion was to explain to Bronxites what the new law means for them.

According to its website, The Bronx Defenders is a public defender nonprofit that is “radically transforming how low-income people in the Bronx are represented in the justice system and in doing so, transforming the system itself.” Brittany McCoy, policy associate, and Eli Northrup, policy counsel on criminal defense practice, represented the group during the discussion.

Signed into law by Gov. Andrew Cuomo on March 31, 2021, the MRTA permits the use of cannabis by adults of 21 years and older and automatically expunges or removes records of cannabis-related convictions. Plans are also afoot to invest 40 percent of all tax revenue generated by future cannabis sales back into communities devastated by the “War on Drugs.”

At its core, the MRTA attempts to mark an end to decades of overcriminalization of people who have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis-related convictions, who are usually from low-income communities and people of color. According to criminal justice experts, the collateral consequences of such convictions have created years of economic insecurity, chronic unemployment, and severed access to loans for education and housing.

In 2018, New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer conducted an analysis of such convictions and identified a list of neighborhoods across the five boroughs with the highest, average, marijuana-related arrest rates from 2010 to 2017. Nearly half of all Bronx neighborhoods were among the top ten. They included Concourse, Highbridge, Mount Eden, Bel-

mont, Crotona Park East, East Tremont, Bedford Park, Fordham North, Norwood, Morris Heights, Fordham South, and Mount Hope.

In addition, the racial breakdown of total marijuana arrests during the same period was 53 percent Black, 35 percent Latinx, 11 percent Asian, and 3 percent White.

Meanwhile, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) recently released its marijuana possession report for the first quarter of 2021. Out of 163 arrests and summonses, the Bronx had one of the highest rates at 25 percent compared to Staten Island, which had the lowest at 3 percent.

The report showed that when broken down by race, age, and gender across the five boroughs, 48 percent of offenders were Black, 43 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent White. Marijuana possession was also found to be highest among males, at 96 percent, while the age group that was most impacted was the one comprising 25 to 34-year-olds.

For Fernández, the impact of over-policing hits close to home for Bronxites. “We’ve seen families torn apart. We’ve seen communities crumble from the over-policing and from the need to start selling drugs,” she said. However, she’s optimistic that the MRTA will put an end to such trends which transcend generations of Bronxites.

“The MRTA is literally going to bring people back home, allowing them to restart their lives with a clean slate and to be a part of this, you know, new industry that people across the country are benefiting from,” she said.

As outlined in the MRTA, the new industry will be regulated and administered in New York State by a soon-to-be created, ten-member Cannabis Control Board (CCB). The board will oversee the distribution of licenses to individuals looking to start cannabis-based businesses.

It will also ensure that tax revenue generated by cannabis sales, which are projected to generate up to \$350 million annually and potentially create up to 60,000 jobs, will be invested back into the commu-

nities which have been most impacted by overcriminalization for marijuana-related offenses.

Officials said the tax revenue will be distributed to the community through non-profit organizations and select government agencies and will prioritize people with prior cannabis convictions.

“The money from this is literally going to bring resources into the Bronx,” Fernández continued. “We want to see community centers. We want to see workforce development, where people can get the licenses to start businesses that will regenerate the economy and keep money in the neighborhood.” She added, “The door is open. Now, all we have to do is design the room.”

Despite MRTA’s monumental passage, some community members like Kendall Jackman, an activist and community organizer, though cautiously optimistic, are also skeptical that the law’s promised benefits will reach Bronxites at a grassroots level.

“When you say to us, qualified non-profit organizations, and government agencies, we know how that works out,” she said. “So, my question is, how do we ensure that we, the community, are involved and get what we need?” Jackman asked.

She said there was a history in the country of people who looked like her [a person of color] not getting loans to open stores or not even getting mortgages. “So, hopefully, the MRTA will be a salve for all the wrongs that have happened,” she said. “If it works the way it should, as it is written on paper, it’d be great for the community.”

Prohibition of marijuana in New York State began in 1914 when the passing of the Boylan Bill, a piece of narcotics legislation, banned the use of cannabis. Then in 1973, nearly six decades later, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller signed legislation that increased the penalty for distributing cannabis. This meant a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison, up to a maximum of 25 years to life, could be imposed for selling more than two ounces of cannabis, or for processing more

than four ounces.

These laws dovetailed with other strict regulations mandated at the federal level with the creation of the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in 1973. The Comprehensive Crime Control Act was passed in 1984, and was followed by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, passed under President Ronald Reagan, in 1986. Prompted by the infamous “War on Drugs” campaign, and as reported by PBS, the laws raised federal penalties for marijuana dealing and possession, such that possession of 100 marijuana plants received the same penalty as possession of 100 grams of heroin.

A later amendment to the Anti-Drug Abuse Act established a “three strikes and you’re out” policy, requiring life sentences for repeat drug offenders, and provided for the death penalty for “drug kingpins.”

In the meantime, federal laws prohibiting marijuana have recently been challenged by way of draft, proposed legislation crafted by U.S. Senator of New York and U.S. Senate majority leader, Chuck Schumer. At a press conference on July 14, Schumer introduced The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act (CAOA) which, if passed, would legalize cannabis, and expunge all nonviolent cannabis-related criminal records.

“The war on drugs has really been a war on people, particularly people of color,” Schumer said. “The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act will help put an end to the unfair targeting and treatment of communities of color.”

He continued, “We have all seen the agony of a young person arrested with a small amount of marijuana in his or her pocket, and because of the historical overcriminalization of marijuana, they have a very severe criminal record they have to live with their whole lives. The waste of human resources because of the historic overcriminalization has been one of the great historical wrongs for the last decades, and we are going to change it.”

While current support for

the CAOA in the U.S. Senate is slim, a recent Gallup Poll found that 68 percent of U.S. adults back the federal legalization of marijuana. According to Gallup, this is nominally the poll’s highest reading, exceeding the 64 to 66 percent range seen from 2017 to 2019.

With the passing of the MRTA, New York has joined a growing list of states (18 so far) that have legalized adult-use, recreational marijuana, including, most recently, New Mexico, Virginia, and Connecticut. In addition, medical marijuana use is currently legal in 37 states.

However, Eli Northrup, a public defender at Bronx Defenders, contends that New York’s MRTA goes one step further than every other state where marijuana has been legalized.

“The odor of marijuana can no longer be used as a basis to stop or search or harass people on the street,” he said. “And that’s a huge deal because, you know, after ‘Stop and Frisk’ was outlawed, what we saw as public defenders is police officers claiming that they smelled the odor of marijuana and using that as an excuse to harass people.”

Northrup continued, “And that’s not something that shows up on a body cam or anything like that. It’s an easy thing to say, and it’s a hard thing to disprove. So, they can’t use that justification anymore.”

Meanwhile, according to a June 5, 2021 news report by greatneckrecord.com, critics of the law, especially law enforcement, cite the complexity for police of determining whether drivers under the influence of marijuana are impaired.

While Northrup admits the MRTA is still far from perfect, he’s confident it’s a strong start, and that the bill can positively impact thousands of lives, but only if it fulfills its many promises.

“If I’ve seen one thing so far in my short time doing policy work, [it] is that once you accomplish something, that’s still half the battle,” he said. “Then you need to make sure that the policy is actually carried out, and that’s a whole other fight.”

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



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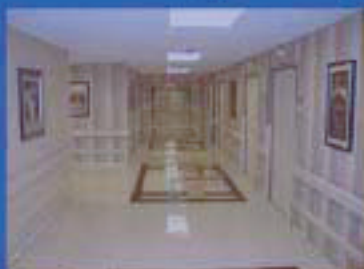
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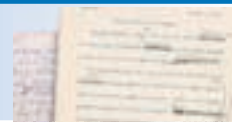
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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SARAH HUFFMAN & SHANIA DEGROOT



COVID-19 Updates

COVID-19 restrictions are now lifted, as 70% of adults have received their first dose of the vaccine. New York State's health guidance and industry specific guidelines are now optional across commercial and social settings. Effective May 19, New York State has adopted the CDC's Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People for most businesses and public settings.

See more information here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>. See New York's guidance for implementing the new CDC recommendations on <https://forward.ny.gov/>. The Open Enrollment Period for uninsured New Yorkers has been extended through December 31, 2021. New Yorkers can apply for coverage through <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/> or directly through insurers.

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.

The Delta variant is on the rise

in New York City. According to Yale Medicine, there have been reports of symptoms that are different from those associated with the original coronavirus strain. It seems like cough and loss of smell are less common, and headache, sore throat, runny nose, and fever are more common [in the Delta variant] based on the most recent surveys carried out in the U.K., where more than 90% of the cases are due to the Delta strain.

Youth Run Farm Stand

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance reopened its Youth Run Farm Stand on July 7. This is the 10th anniversary of selling locally grown produce and other locally sourced goods. The farm stand is located in the Train Park, at Orloff Avenue and Gale Place and is open on Wednesdays from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Organizers accept WIC, FMNP Checks, EBT, SNAP, cash and credit/debit cards. For every \$2 spent on EBT/SNAP, visitors will receive \$2 in Health Bucks (maximum of \$10/day), including new Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits for all families that have school-aged children.

New York City Cooling Centers Open

New York City Cooling Centers are open in cases of extreme heat. These centers are spaces where people can go to enjoy air conditioning during a heat emergency. You can find a cooling center near you by calling 311.

NYCHA-CUNY Scholarship

The NYCHA-CUNY Resident Scholarship Program offers five distinct scholarships, each worth \$1000. All scholarships require that the applicant is currently a NYCHA public housing resident, is currently enrolled as an undergraduate at CUNY, has earned 30 or more credits, and has a minimum 3.0 GPA. Application are open until August 2, 2021. To apply go to this website:

<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ovsa/scholarships/nycha/>

Training for Small Businesses

The NYC Department of Small Business Services is providing no-cost, online training to help business owners and employees in NYC. Click here for more information: [https://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-](https://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-business/article/nyc-means-business-training-for-your-employees)

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Bronx Community Relief Effort Updates

Sign up for Bronx Community Relief Effort updates. Applications for grant funding from the Bronx Community Relief Effort are currently closed but the next round of applications will open soon. Head to their website to sign up for updates, or periodically check here: <https://thebronx.org/> to see when the application window reopens. Check out <https://www.uschamber.com> for a list of current grants, loans and programs for small businesses.

New York Forward Loan Fund

The New York Forward Loan Fund is continuing to accept applications to assist those impacted by COVID-19. This program will target small businesses with 20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees, nonprofits and small landlords that have seen a loss of income or rental income. If approved, these loans will need to be paid back over a five-year term with interest. Go to: <https://www.connect2capital.com/partners/new-york-forward-loan-fund/>

for more information and the application.

Volunteer Events

The Bronx River Alliance is hosting volunteer events at Starlight Park (1490 Sheridan Boulevard) every Thursday in July from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information, you can contact their volunteer coordinator at volunteer@bronxriver.org, call 718-542-4284, or visit www.bronxriver.org.

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Contact Elizabeth at (347) 346-4677

13 Barber
250 E Gun Hill Rd
- Barber
Contact manager at (914) 979-0893

Bronx Fashion Week Model Casting Call for September Fashion Show

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Fashion Week (BxFW) organizers are planning their next fashion show, scheduled to take place on Sept. 18. In preparation for the show, organizers are holding a casting call for models on July 31.

According to its website, Bronx Fashion Week hosts some of the leading fashion events in the country by encouraging and empowering people through fashion. Since its inception in 2013, the organization has been dedicated to "cultivating the success of both established and emerging designers, as well as other talented individuals by advancing diversity and inclusivity within the fashion industry."

Having had to cancel the Spring 2020 show, organizers of Bronx Fashion Week have now begun the process of accepting designer applications for the September 2021 show as well as organizing the upcoming model casting call. They encourage anyone who is interested in either role to check out their website, <https://www.bronx-fashionweek.com/>, and to email or direct message the organizers with any

questions. Contact details are listed on the website.

Organizers say Bronx Fashion Week's events and programs highlight designers, artists and models from the Bronx and surrounding areas. They say the group's mission is to continue to create platforms and opportunities that help talented individuals build their brands, reveal their talent, and expand their networks.

Bringing people together to share their passion for fashion and giving everyone an equal opportunity to make something of themselves in the competitive industry of fashion is one of the organization's primary aims. Organizers say the group's roots are stapled and tied to the Bronx, they truly believe in the talented artist of the Bronx and they know such artists need help gaining exposure and recognition.

Accordingly, auditions for the casting call will be held on Saturday, July 31 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Confetti Party Place, 3190 Westchester Avenue in Pelham Bay. Masks are required and model coordination is by BxFW's Andres Chulisi Rodriguez and Crys-



Photo by Catherine Fonseca/Fonseca Photography via Flickr

BRONX FASHION WEEK 2015 Fashion Designer: Francoise Desmangles Model: Veronica Bayb Background: No Longer Empty Exhibition Artwork by Teresa Diehl

tal Gomez.

Models should wear all black attire, high heels, and dress shoes only. No sneakers or open toe sandals are

allowed, and models are requested to arrive on time. Upon arrival, models should submit a comp card, portfolio, and head shots.

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No Hurry to Die

99.2 percent of COVID deaths are of people not vaccinated. The number of vaccinated people who die is slightly above 0 percent. That's why when I was asked why I got vaccinated, I answered, "Because I'm in no hurry to die." To make this a racial thing is ridiculous. Vaccine refusers range from people of color to White Trump supporters. But even dumb Donald Trump is smart enough to get the vaccine.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

MTA Storm Preparation

In 2012, Super Storm Sandy resulted in extensive flooding damage to the NYC Transit subway system. In the aftermath, the Federal Tran-



Letters To The Editor

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

sit Administration (FTA) provided billions in discretionary funding to MTA under the Super Storm Sandy Recovery and Resiliency program. This supplemented over \$1 billion in annual FTA formula funding that has grown to \$1.5 billion today.

NYC Transit should have learned from Super Storm Sandy which of the 471 subway stations and 36 subway lines were most vulnerable to flooding or which were located in flood zones. Remedial actions should have been completed years ago. Fast forward to 2021 and after spending

emergency funds on upgrading and adding additional sump pumps, securing thousands of subway entrances, elevator shafts and street level air vents, there are still too many subway stations and lines subject to flooding after major rainstorms.

Based upon last week's storm, it appears NYC Transit still needs to do more. Consider adding new pump rooms, improve coordination with NYC Department of Environmental Protection to ensure there is adequate storm water and sewage system capacity adjacent to stations and

tracks. Purchase additional mobile pumps and pump trains. Are there additional capital improvements in the current \$51 billion five-year, 2020-2024 Capital Plan to deal with flooding?

If not, why not program additional federal or local funds to deal with this periodic problem? What capital improvements are included in the pending MTA 2020 - 2040 twenty-year capital plan to deal with this? Gov. Cuomo and MTA Chairman Foye promised to release this document by December 2019. It is now nineteen months late. Subway riders should not have to deal with continued inconveniences every time there is a major rainstorm.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Beth Abraham Center Resident, Clarence Duncan, Turns 101!

By JEFFREY JACOMOWITZ

The ever so popular Clarence Duncan from the South Bronx turned 101 on July 9, happily celebrating yet another birthday milestone surrounded by his family at the Beth Abraham

Center, in Allerton. Mr. Duncan arrived at the large 448-bed nursing and rehabilitation center just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit New York City on March 27, 2020.

Like so many other seniors, Mr.

Duncan was unable to be around his family amid the height of the COVID-19 pandemic while visitor restrictions were in force at care homes. Once families were, once again, able to intermingle with their loved ones and mark these momentous occasions, Leduc Le, recreation director at the care home, together with his staff took advantage of the times, and had a special birthday room dedicated to Mr. Duncan and his family to enjoy the beautiful celebration.

Clarence Duncan was born in 1920. According to Reader's Digest, that same year women gained the right to

vote in the U.S., prohibition was introduced, the ACLU was founded, Amelia Earhart took her first flight, American football became a professional sport, Charles Ponzi was arrested by federal authorities for having orchestrated what became known as the very first "Ponzi scheme," the Olympic flag made its debut, the League of Nations was founded but the U.S. didn't join, and a bomb exploded in front of the Wall Street offices of J.P. Morgan & Co., killing 38 and injuring hundreds.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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Photo courtesy of Beth Abraham Center

(L TO R) Leon Smith, Vanessa Smith, Wayne Duncan, Clarence Duncan (sitting), Rose-lynn Duncan, Clarence Duncan Jr celebrate Clarence Duncan Sr.'s 101st birthday party, held at Beth Abraham Center in the Allerton section of the Bronx on July 9, 2021.

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For all NYC Parks hosted events, masks are required for unvaccinated people or those who cannot maintain social distance. Social distancing is strongly encouraged.

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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting are usually held on the **third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.** at the precinct at 3100 Webster Avenue. Masks and social distancing are required at the meeting. 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 September**, after the summer break. 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.** The last meeting for the season was held on June 2. The group breaks for July and August. For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

TAKE 5 Lottery Winning Ticket Sold in The Bronx

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The New York Lottery announced on Tuesday, July 20, that there was one top-prize winning ticket sold for the July 19 **TAKE 5** drawing. The ticket, worth \$53,784.50, was purchased at 3N Convenience Inc, located at 950 Allerton Avenue in The Bronx.

The five winning numbers for the **TAKE 5** game are drawn from a field of one to 39. Prizes are paid on a pari-mutuel basis, a form of betting in which those backing the first three places divide the losers' stakes (less the operator's commission).

The **TAKE 5** drawing is televised every day at 10:30 p.m. A lottery draw game prize of any amount may be claimed up to one year from the date of the drawing.

Starting Monday, July 26, New Yorkers will be able to play the popular **TAKE 5** game twice daily. The new draw time at 2.30 p.m. aligns **TAKE 5** with the "Numbers" and "Win4" games, which already draw twice daily. Sales for the newly added mid-day drawing will close at 2.15 p.m. The daily drawing at 10.30 p.m. will continue as currently scheduled.

Gweneth Dean, executive director of NY Lottery, said "Take 5 created more than 2.5 million cash prize winners last fiscal year. The added drawing for this

popular game will give New York players more chances to win."

Lottery officials said, "Money in the prize pool is allocated by percentage to prize tiers and distributed based on the number of winners for each tier. If there is no top prize winner, the top prize money is added to the second prize." They added, "The overall odds of winning any prize is 1 in 8.77. Complete prize and odds information is available on the Lottery's web site at nylottery.ny.gov."

According to lottery officials, the New York Lottery continues to be North America's largest and most profitable lottery, contributing \$3.38 billion during the fiscal year 2019-2020 to help support education in New York State. The lottery revenue is distributed to local school districts using the same statutory formula applied to distribute other state aid to education and accounts for both a school district's size and its income level. Larger, lower-income school districts receiving proportionately larger shares of lottery school funding.

New Yorkers struggling with a gambling addiction, or who know someone who is, can find help by calling the State's toll-free, confidential HOPEline at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369) or by texting HOPENY (467369) Standard rates may apply.



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Woodlawn helps you plan ahead for peace of mind in person or virtually

Brookside Cremation Garden

When a death occurs, most New Yorkers aren't sure who to turn to or what to do. We recently spoke with The Woodlawn Cemetery about how they help individuals put their end-of-life preferences in writing ahead of time to prevent their loved ones from having to make decisions on their behalf.

Norwood News: How does Woodlawn help families with making difficult end-of-life decisions?

Woodlawn: Our Family Service Associates work with individuals and families to address their preferences about end-of-life arrangements. This includes offering our complimentary Personal Planning Organizer, to gather all the information needed for final arrangements in one place. Then, when the time comes for loved ones to make decisions, the process is easier. Not to mention you can secure today's payment rate with the decisions you make.

NN: What type of information is typically needed when making arrangements?

Woodlawn: Essentially, the location of all of your important documents. This includes social security numbers, marriage licenses, and military discharge papers. Where to find bank, retirement, and investment accounts. How to locate insurance policies, veterans, and social security benefits, and of course, preferences for funeral and cemetery arrangements.

We provide families with a Personal Planning Organizer so they can collect all the information that the funeral home or cemetery will need and ask for at the time of death. When properly filled out, this organizer can simply be handed over to the funeral home and cemetery so bereaved family members don't have to dig through documents for these details in their time of grief. We offer book-lets for singles, married couples, and a Spanish version.

Woodlawn: During these unusual times, our Family Service Associates are able to meet with families either in person (with safety precautions) or virtually. If you choose to meet virtually, our staff can walk you through property selection via our website. If needed, multiple family members can participate in a contactless appointment at the same time. We are here to make sure that all your questions are answered and that you receive the highest level of service whether you choose to meet with us in person or virtually.

NN: What are some of the options that Woodlawn offers for memorializing a loved one?

Woodlawn: There are many options for traditional burial and cremation including private mausoleums, community mausoleums, traditional burial with a headstone, cremation benches, niches, and more. It's important for an individual to express their preferences between traditional burial and cremation, and which type of burial is preferred: in ground, above ground, or cremation. This is a great example of a question

that can be addressed in the Personal Planning Organizer. Most people have a strong opinion on their own final disposition, and it's important to make sure those preferences are in writing.

NN: With the rise in cremation, what kinds of questions are you hearing from families?

Woodlawn: Most families want to know what their options are. After all, according to a 2019 report by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), the cremation rate in the U.S. is projected to be 78.7% by 2040. That is a huge increase compared to previous years. Families need to know there are meaningful options for cremated remains. We hear from so many who have the cremated remains of a loved one at home and aren't sure what to do with them. We'll make sure you understand all of your options and talk through what is best for you and your family.

NN: What do you say to these families?

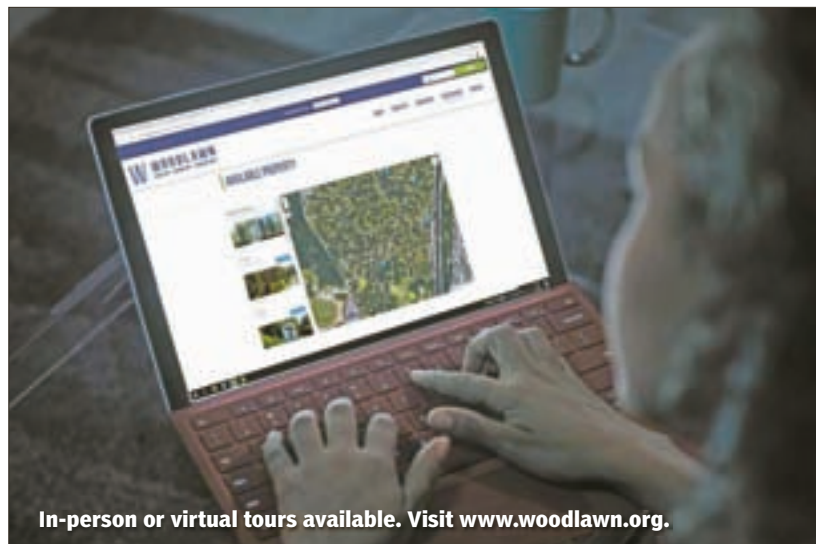
Woodlawn: First, we explain how important it is to have a place they can come back to over the years to visit their loved one who has died. This is an essential part of the grieving process and one that is

often overlooked. Then we advise them to come to Woodlawn to see their options for themselves. We have something for everyone and every budget. We also make sure to tell families that Woodlawn is proud to be an exclusive provider in the Bronx of the Cremation With Confidence™ Guarantee. This means that we own and operate our own crematory and follow a 10-step process that ensures your loved one is treated with dignity and respect throughout the cremation process. We take our responsibilities very seriously and want families to know that.

NN: What is the next step families should take?

Woodlawn: Call us to make an appointment to meet with one of our Family Service Associates in person or virtually. They will help you know exactly what to do, and explain your options so you can ultimately reduce stress on your family. Call **718-920-0500** or visit **www.woodlawn.org** for more information.

The Woodlawn Cemetery is located at **4199 Webster Ave., Bronx, NY.**



In-person or virtual tours available. Visit www.woodlawn.org.





Why Hydrate?

By **AUGUSTINA KWAFO BAIDOO**

Drink water! Your body needs it to survive! We read and hear this often, especially during the hot summer, and as the temperature rises, we do need to stay hydrated, whether we are playing sports, travelling, or simply sitting in the sun. But why does staying hydrated matter? How much do we really need to drink to stay hydrated, and what should we be drinking?

According to the American Heart Association, drinking water helps the heart pump blood easily through the blood vessels to the muscles, which helps the muscles work more effectively.

In fact, water provides many health benefits:

- It helps manage weight.
- It prevents dehydration.
- It promotes a healthy heart.
- It keeps our body at a normal temperature.
- It lubricates and cushions our joints.
- It protects our spinal cord, organs, cells, and tissues.
- It gets rid of waste through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements.

Drinking plain water helps with weight management because unlike sodas and juices that contain sugar, it has no calories. Drinking enough water prevents dehydration, a condition that can cause foggy thinking, overheating, constipation, swollen feet, and kidney stones. Serious dehydration can lead to life-threatening illnesses such as heat stroke.

Each person's daily fluid intake depends on age, sex, and pregnancy and breastfeeding status. Our daily intake is the amount of water we get from foods, plain water, and other beverages.

Although there are no precise recommendations for how much plain water adults and children should

drink, there are recommendations for total fluid intake per day. Adults need between 2.1 to 2.6 liters (8 to 10 cups) and children need 1 to 1.6 (4 to 6 cups).

Some foods have high-water content and can add to your daily water intake. For example, watermelon and spinach contain a significant amount of water so by adding extra fruits and vegetables to your diet, you can boost your hydration.

Here are some ways you can make drinking water a daily habit:

- Carry a water bottle and drink at least half a cup every hour.
- Freeze your bottle overnight to enjoy ice-cold water.
- Choose water over sugary drinks like sodas or juices.
- When eating out, drink water – it'll save money too!
- Serve only water during meals.
- Have your kids drink at least one glass of water before they have juices.
- Add herbs, fruits, or vegetables, such as mint, cucumber, or lemon to your water. It will help improve the taste and help you drink more water.
- Sparkling water with fruit added can be a delicious treat.

To prevent dehydration, and ensure your body has the adequate amount of fluid it needs, make water your go-to beverage. Drink it icy cold, or fizzy, or with fruit to make it a delicious habit. Make sure you drink water before, during, and after exercise, especially on hot days, and whenever you feel thirsty. Your body will thank you for it!

Augustina Kwafo Baidoo is health educator in the Office of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Health System.

Ridgewood Savings Bank Welcomes Customers Next Month at New Norwood Location

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Representatives from Ridgewood Savings Bank issued a statement on Thursday, July 15, confirming the opening, next month, of the group's new branch at 320 East 204th Street in Norwood, which will replace the Norwood location at 3445 Jerome Avenue which is closing. As recently reported by Norwood News, the new branch was scheduled to open by September.

Bank officials said they were also working with partners including regulators, community groups, city officials, and other associates, as they explore alternate options for their Sedgwick Avenue branch, which had been set to close. Such discussions include the feasibility of continuing to operate the Sedgwick Avenue location as a complement to the new Norwood branch. Officials said they anticipate the process will continue to evolve in the coming weeks and they look forward to continuing to serve the Bronx community.

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) had commented on the closures last month, on June 10, saying it had come to his attention that two more bank locations would be closing in the Northwest Bronx community, and referred to the Sedgwick Avenue and Van Cortlandt Avenue West location as well as the Jerome Avenue and West Mosholu Parkway North location.

"At least two other bank branches are in similar situations in our community over recent months, Chase Bank at the Knolls Crescent shopping center, as well as Capitol One Bank on Riverdale Avenue and West 259th Street," he said. "It is readily apparent that there is an industry-wide trend to close retail bank locations, impact on consumers be damned."

The assemblyman said he wrote a letter to the CEO of Ridgewood Savings Bank requesting that he keep the bank on Sedgwick Avenue open. "The next closest branch will be located on West 204th Street, which is a lengthy distance from their customers who live in Van Cortlandt Village and Kingsbridge Heights – with a 94-acre reservoir and a busy parkway in between people and their bank," he said. "Even if these residents wanted to switch banks, the numerous bank options on Broadway are on the other side of a 150-foot elevation change that makes it nearly impossible for people with limited mobility to maintain the banking access that they have enjoyed on Sedgwick Avenue."

Dinowitz said that he was not optimistic that the battle against corporate banks would be won, and referred to such banks as "deciding to line their pockets with more profit by disregarding the banking needs of our community." He said this was why the acceleration of the establishment of banking services at post offices was needed (which requires federal action). "It's also why we need to more actively discuss how to create a pub-

lic banking system that can supplant our current reliance on private corporations for essential banking services (this likely requires coordination between the City and State)," Dinowitz said.

The assemblyman added that he was deeply troubled by any and all bank closures, but especially those that are the only realistic banking option within walking distance of major residential communities. "People should not need to take two buses just to get their money, nor should they be obligated to use digital banking services if they are not comfortable doing so," he said.

He added that while residents (in neighborhoods like Riverdale) were fortunate to have several concentrations of banks to serve the community (northern Riverdale Avenue, Johnson Avenue, Broadway, Jerome Avenue, Bainbridge Avenue, and White Plains Road), there were too many communities that lacked sufficient banking services already, such as Woodlawn, Van Cortlandt Village, Kingsbridge Heights, Knolls Crescent, Spuyten Duyvil, and more. "This is not acceptable," he said.

As previously reported by Norwood News, we reached out to the City's Independent Budget Office (IBO) in January 2021 to get a sense of the overall impact of the pandemic on Wall Street revenues in 2020, and to understand if the impact had had a significant effect on the availability of local bank branches across the City. Despite reports that some firms (including some financial firms) had left the city amid the crisis, it transpired that Wall Street actually had something of a bumper year.

According to an IBO report published in January 2021, New York Stock Exchange member firms profits soared to \$27.6 billion over the first half of 2020, and the IBO projected that profits would top \$47 billion for the year as a whole—a total exceeded only in 2009 according to the IBO, when Wall Street was rebounding from steep losses at the onset of the Great Recession. The IBO also forecast at that time that Wall Street profits would subside to \$25 billion in 2021 and then hold in the \$23 billion to \$25 billion range over the rest of the financial plan period.

Norwood News reached out to Ridgewood Savings Bank for a comment on the assemblyman's statement on the matter and Adam Brill, spokesperson for Ridgewood reiterated that the bank's president had responded to Dinowitz's concerns and had been in touch with his office many times. In fact, he said the bank is working diligently with a number of community partners and nonprofits all of whom are "exploring every option to get a good resolution for the community."

Meanwhile, officials at the bank said they remained steadfast in their commitment to serve the needs of all New Yorkers, as they have done for more than 100 years.

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Mother and Son Charged in Citi Bike Assault on Webster Avenue



by DAVID GREENE

Two local residents, a mother and son, have each been charged with a single count of assault after they both allegedly attempted to choke a young, female Citi Bike rider. Witnesses reported that the two claimed the Citi Bike rider scratched their ride with her bike.

A video recording of the unfolding events shows that a large crowd gathered after a dispute arose between the occupants of a grey Honda Accord and one of two Citi Bike riders on Sunday, July 11 just after 4 p.m. in the Fordham Manor section of the Bronx. The car driver stopped in a designated bus lane, outside Burlington clothing store on Webster Avenue between East Fordham Road and East 193rd Street.

Police responded to the incident and later, many in the crowd, estimated at 75, broke out into spontaneous applause as officers placed handcuffs on the burly male driver. One woman shouted out to the man, “Bye! See ya!”

However, several minutes later, when the female passenger in the car was also taken into custody, it drew less applause from the crowd and prompted another woman to call out apparently to the Citi Bike victim, [as opposed to the arresting police officer] “You feel good about yourself, right?”



Karma’s a [expletive].”

One male witness at the scene, who asked not to be identified, recounted to *Norwood News* what happened before the arrests took place. “The [bike] rider swiped the car,” he said. He then explained that both the car driver, who he said was wearing a red shirt, and the passenger, who transpired to be the driver’s mother, grabbed the Citi Bike rider by the neck.”

An NYPD source later reported, “A 23-year-old female reported to police that she was pulled off her bicycle by two individuals after a verbal dispute. She reported being thrown to the ground, grabbed by individuals who ripped her shirt.”

The police source added, “The victim sustained visible injuries to her chest, arms and hands.” She was treated for her injuries by EMS at the 52nd precinct.

Police charged Luis Quinones, 22, of 366 East Mosholu Parkway South in Bedford Park and Oriallys Coriano, 44, of 391 East Mosholu Parkway in Norwood, each with one count of assault.

On July 19, Patrice O’Shaughnessy, director of communications at the Bronx District Attorney’s office, confirmed that the charged individuals were son and mother and that both had been charged with a single count of misdemeanor assault and were is-



sued desk appearance tickets (DATs). Both were expected to be arraigned on July 30.

A person arrested and accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

(TOP) A GREY Honda Accord and two Citi Bikes sit in the bus lane after a driver and passenger were arrested for allegedly attempting to choke a Citi Bike rider after a minor collision along Webster Avenue in Fordham Manor on Sunday, July 11, 2021. Photo by David Greene

(ABOVE LEFT) LUIS Quinones, 22, of Mosholu Parkway points to a scratch on the side of his Honda Accord moments before he is arrested for assaulting a Citi Bike rider on Sunday, July 11, 2021 in Fordham Manor. Photo by David Greene.

(ABOVE) A CROWD of bystanders breaks into spontaneous applause as police arrest Luis Quinones for allegedly attempting to choke a female Citi Bike rider on Webster Avenue in Fordham Manor on Sunday, July 11, 2021. Photo by David Greene

Keeper's House Edible Garden Reopens

(continued from page 1)

has also presented her with a new opportunity for which she is also very grateful. "Now, I want to do this for work [for a living]," she said.

The garden officially reopened for the summer with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and "NeighborFood" cooking demonstration on Wednesday, July 14. FOMP welcomed neighbors to stop by and check out all the fresh fruits and vegetables that are growing right in the heart of the neighborhood.

The cooking demonstration was given by Bronx catering business, B Blossom, and residents were invited into the enclosed garden to learn how to make a fresh summer salad, using some of the 20 varieties of fruits and vegetables that grow there.

The garden generates enough food to feed over 100 people and every Wednesday, the produce is harvested by volunteers and donated to a local food pantry called Project Bravo.

Aesha Valencia, acting public relations director for FOMP, explained that the edible garden is a partnership project between FOMP and Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC), a subsidiary of Montefiore Health System, and has only been operating for about two years.

Valencia said they started out with just a few planters, but the garden now occupies the entire, 250 square-foot garden space adjacent to the Keeper's House. She said the gardeners make the most of their space by finding ways for plants to grow up instead of out. On a day-to-day basis, the garden is cared for by volunteers who water, weed, and harvest the produce.

This summer, FOMP hired local youth to work with them through the City's Summer Youth Employment Program. The workers are brought in to help grow food for both themselves and for the community.

Elizabeth Quaranta, acting executive director of FOMP, explained that the young workers are learning about sustainability and growth through the summer program.



we grow, and keeping it local, now they have the opportunity to realize that they will never grow hungry as long as they realize that that seed can be planted," said Quaranta. "And once that food is eaten, that seed can be saved and the whole cycle starts all over again."

Since the garden is public, Quaranta explained that local neighbors are welcome to sow their own seeds and plants in it too and grow whatever vegetation is specific to their background. The surrounding community is very diverse and Quaranta said that this is reflected in the crops grown in the garden.

"We have a big community," she said. "Our community is very diverse. We have Hispanics, we have Bangladeshi, we have other Middle Eastern entities here, and so they have brought in some [different] seeds," she added.

The garden also embodies FOMP's commitment to sustainability. It is part of the New York City's compost project where all waste goes into the compost bin or is reused. From there, it is reused either in the garden soil or elsewhere.

Valencia said, as people, we all know we need to be more sustainable and responsible with our space. "We just really want to teach people, you know... trying to divert things from landfill," she said. "That's why we have the compost operation going on right now. So, that's just one thing we all share."

She continued, "Elizabeth has always been into reuse, recycle. I've always been into reuse, recycle, Zoë as well," she said. "We all just know that



Photos by Sarah Huffman

(ABOVE) LOCAL YOUTH CHOP up vegetables as part of the "NeighborFood" cooking demonstration held to coincide with the reopening of the Keeper's House Edible Garden in the Norwood section of the Bronx on Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

(LEFT) (L TO R) AESHA VALENCIA, ACTING public relations director of Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP) and Zoë Arcidiacono, volunteer coordinator of FOMP harvest kale and greens to use in the "NeighborFood" cooking demonstration at the Keeper's House Edible Garden in the Norwood section of the Bronx on Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

there's a lot of knowledge that is not shared or exercised in this neighborhood. So, it's just important."

Presiding over the official, ribbon-cutting ceremony were Quaranta, Jennifer Tausig, executive director of Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC) and the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID), Jason Carabello, community relations manager at Montefiore Medical Center, along with other Montefiore officials.

Tausig said when she first started at MPC, five years ago, one of her goals was to turn the underutilized garden space into an asset for the local community. "I'm so grateful to the Deutsche Bank Working Capital Fund for making this vision a reality," she said. "We were thrilled to turn the unused outdoor space into an edible garden to feed our neighbors with fresh food."

She continued, "'NeighborFood' is a true community collaboration between MPC, Montefiore Medical Center, Einstein College of Medicine, Elizabeth Quaranta and the Friends of Mosholu Parkland, without whom this garden would not be possible."

Tausig added that the whole team were very excited to be able to come together to provide fresh food, cooking demonstrations, health education, and technical assistance to local businesses, with a goal of increasing access to healthy foods and improving health

outcomes in the Bronx."

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted for Bronxites the importance of eating more healthily. Though there were clearly many different factors which contributed to the spread of the coronavirus during the early stages of the pandemic, including lack of adequate residential space to maintain a social distance, and inadequate access to healthcare, studies also found that, sadly, many who were hospitalized had followed a poor diet and were more susceptible to the virus, once infected.

For his part, Carabello said the "NeighborFood" initiative was a great collaborative effort and matched perfectly with Montefiore's general mission to improve the health of local communities. "It's been great to see how many people from across Montefiore Einstein have come together to support MPC's work," he said. "And the best part is that all this great fresh produce is distributed to neighborhood residents at Montefiore's food pantry, Project BRAVO."

In reference to the summer salad demonstration, Ariana Cipriani, manager of neighborhood development at MPC and the BID, said a lot of the vegetables used in the demo were abundant and seasonal right now. "We've got kale, collard greens, some cucumbers, cilantro, radishes, onion and a green apple, and

we're going to make a dressing from honey, apple juice, Dijon mustard and olive oil," she said.

"We also have some feta cheese, and some capers so if folks are dairy-free, they can use capers." She added that all the ingredients used in the demo were available locally and could be grown locally.

Meanwhile, Lorita Watson, acting senior director of education for FOMP, said the edible garden project is also focused on bringing education about sustainability and gardening to the community and specifically to the local schools.

"It would be great to increase our education program.... and [that] we use the resources in our community as a whole," Watson said. "Because our students don't know enough about our community, they think they need to go elsewhere, when we are a resource for that and we could build our own, right here."

Meanwhile, Valencia said it was important for people to know that they can grow their own food and be sustainable, especially during times when the community may be facing food shortages.

"I mean, back when Sandy hurricane hit, that was when I first was witnessing empty supermarkets," she said. "And now with COVID, we've seen all that. So, it's just very important to remind people you can grow this stuff yourself."

Quaranta reiterated the point, saying there were similar gardens in nearby Bedford Park but none in Norwood. She said this was why having an edible garden in Norwood was such a big deal. "This is groundbreaking. That's why when I said that I was humbled, we literally have changed thousands of lives here," she said. "And so, we just have to continue to do that, and I thank you guys for that opportunity. As long as you have soil, you should never go hungry," she said.

Project BRAVO food pantry is located at 3058 Bainbridge, and food is distributed on Mondays and Fridays from noon to 2 p.m., and on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon. The pantry is open to all Bronx residents.

*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.

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