



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## BRONXITES MARK GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

*May Recorded a 271% Increase in Shooting Victims*



Photo by David Greene

**BRONX DISTRICT ATTORNEY** Darcel Clark (center, holding banner) organizes a coalition of police, clergy, community leaders and anti-violence advocates for 'A March to End Gun Violence' through Fordham Manor on Friday, June 4, 2021.

by **DAVID GREENE**

June marks Gun Violence Awareness Month across the country. In the Bronx, lawmak-

ers pushed for more stringent gun reform laws, increased federal funding for local cure violence programs, and an an-

ti-gun violence rally took place along Valentine Avenue, all in efforts to address what has long been categorized as a gun

violence epidemic.

Bronx shooting incidents were up 190 percent in May, (continued on page 27)



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# Bronx CB7: New Officer Nominations & Veteran Fare Discounts

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

A jam-packed agenda extended Bronx Community Board 7's (CB7) May general board meeting to just under two hours. Much of the meeting, held on May 25, was spent going over the nominations for incoming officer positions for the upcoming year, including chairperson, first vice chair, second vice chair, third vice chair, treasurer, and secretary. Several motions were also passed, including those relating to requested letters of support to different city agencies and elected officials.

Each year, during the general board's May meeting, nominations are made for new officer positions, and the final vote is then revealed at the June board meeting, ahead of the summer recess. Sandra Erickson is leading the nomination committee which oversees the election process. She is joined on the committee by Betty Arce, Victor Saldaña, Untwain Fyffe, and Cole Hawkins.

The duration between the nominating process and the vote count, one month later, allows the board to review each candidate's record, to date, on the board. "Candidates will be vetted by the nominating committee and the office staff to be sure they're in good standing," Erickson said. "Good standing means they have to be a member for one year, and not have missed more than three consecutive meetings."

Following the nomination section of the meeting, the board agreed to pass several motions including writing a letter of support for the

renovation of a building which formerly housed the Old Fordham Library at 2556 Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor. As reported by *Norwood News* in recent months, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) made several presentations to CB7 asking for their support in allowing certain zoning changes to be made to convert the building into a computer-based testing and application center for jobs.

Another motion that worked its way through the board's committee on Housing, Land Use & Economic Development, sought local support for an amendment to the City's zoning resolution known as the Citywide Hotel Special Permit. The proposed amendment would allow for greater oversight by local community boards when hotels are built within their boundaries. According to the board, "All new hotels would be required to obtain a special permit and be subject to site plan review. This would give community boards across NYC the ability to review the land use context and site plan for proposed hotels."

The motion was passed even though board member, Andrew Laiosa, expressed the commonly held view that it was not among the most pressing issues facing the local community. "Of course, we're not quite Times Square; we don't have as many hotels as, say, Midtown Manhattan," Laiosa said. "The committee reviewed the proposal, and we like the idea of having greater oversight and authority over where hotels are located in the

district, and the site plans."

The final motion was the one that raised the most concerns before it was passed. Through the Veterans Affairs Committee, a letter of support will be sent to State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), and Assembly Member Helene Weinstein (A.D.41) in favor of the "MTA Reduced Fares for Veterans Program" (bills S1287 and A00774) so that they can be instituted into this year's budget.

Some concerns were raised that no income threshold is defined for the beneficiaries of the program. If passed, it would allow veterans to purchase transit fares at half price. The issue of whether veterans with an other-than-honorable discharge would be eligible for the benefit also raised a few questions.

Frederic Klein, staff member from Dinowitz's office, responded to the concerns regarding the income requirement. "There's no income requirement on the bill because there's no income requirement to serve [in the military]," Klein said. "This is a gesture to say, 'thank you' to people who have served our country."

A compelling argument was made by 94-year-old World War II veteran, H.P. Schroer, who spoke directly to the board members. "If the MTA were to dedicate two cents from every fare collected, it would supply sufficient funds for the discount," he said. "So, I simply ask you, is a veteran's service and sacrifice worth two cents?"

The vote to approve the incoming board officers for next year will take place June 23.

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By DAVID GREENE

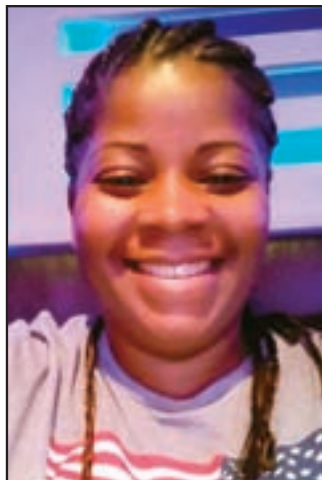


This week, we asked readers what is the main factor that will decide their choice of candidate for New York City mayor – crime, civil rights, housing, other?



"Crime is up in every aspect, as I'm sure you've seen all the shootings that have taken place, and I just think Eric Adams is the right man to address the violence, the crime in the subways and also the hate crimes that are taking place."

**Rev. Oswald Denis,  
Mott Haven**



"The issues that are most important to me in this election [are] specifically safety in the community, and the actual clean-up because now, it's turning back to like it was in the '70s and '80s, when you had graffiti everywhere, and it's unsafe riding on the trains and public transportation for people like us who can't afford to have a car and are stuck riding public transportation. At the end of the day our safety is at risk on an everyday basis."

**Alicia Felipe,  
Wakefield**



"Once upon a time, the neighborhood was good, when all the Irish were at the bars. Crime is taking over everything. We don't have anything anymore. Get me out of here - all my friends are gone. I'm the last of the Mohicans. I don't like what they are doing to our people. Get rid of these bums. Thank God my mother isn't around, I swear to God."

**Phyllis Butler,  
Norwood**



"Crime is an important issue, equal opportunity for low-income yet affordable housing. Living around here, food is an issue as well. Cherry Valley is the only one in the area, and there should be more choices for supermarkets."

**Bernice Gladden,  
Bedford Park**



"What bothers me is the drugs in the street. That could become a big problem. Why? Because you have different people selling drugs, different people and different gangs and it's a problem. You don't know where to walk at night. You don't know if you go buy a pack of cigarettes... you can't even do that because it's dangerous. You don't know what's going to happen next."

**Mary Rosario,  
Bedford Park**



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# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

## SUNY/CUNY

### "Vaccine" Scholarships

Gov. Andrew Cuomo launched the "Get a Shot to Make Your Future" incentive for 12 to 17-year-olds on May 27. Teens are encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccination and enter a random prize-drawing with the potential to win a full scholarship to a SUNY or CUNY college. Winners receive a full scholarship to any public college or university, including tuition, room, and board. New York State will administer the random drawing and select ten winners a week, over five weeks, for a total of 50 winners.

### Bill to Decriminalize Syringes Passes State Senate

Bronx State Sen. Gustavo Rivera's bill to decriminalize the possession and sale of hypodermic needles and syringes passed the State Senate, it was announced on June 7. "Policing and criminalization will not end our State's substance use crisis," said Rivera, adding he was proud the Senate Majority passed his bill. "Syringe access programs are proven public health initiatives that help to reduce the rate of HIV and hepatitis transmissions and connect those in need to harm reduction services."

Rivera said that while syringe access programs have been successfully operating in the State for decades, syringe possession was never removed from the State's penal code. He said this legal ambiguity deterred countless New Yorkers struggling with substance use from accessing harm reduction services or resulted in the unnecessary incarceration of New Yorkers participating in the program. He said the bill would make a simple yet critical change that ends this cycle.

### Public Schools to Fully Reopen in September

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced, May 24, that New York City schools will fully reopen this fall without any remote option for the city's one million public school students and staff. Meanwhile, parents who missed the April 19 enrollment deadline to enter their child in the "Pre-K for All" program can still apply, according to the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Department officials said parents with children enrolled in free, full-day pre-K save an average of \$10,000 annually on childcare costs, and an NYU study found that Pre-K for All makes it more likely that a low-income child in New York City is properly diagnosed with asthma or vision problems and receives screening or treatment for hearing

# CD11, CD14 Races: Lora & Abreu Get AOC's Backing

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

City Council candidate for District 11, Mino Lora, and District 14 City Council candidate, Adolfo Abreu, picked up the coveted endorsement of the progressive wing of the Democratic party on Saturday, June 5. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) gave Lora and Abreu her seal of approval at an event held just a few steps from Manhattan's City Hall.

In a later statement sent to Norwood News, the Lora campaign expressed gratitude for the congresswoman's backing. "I'm honored to be recognized by Courage to Change, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's progressive PAC," her statement read. "She's one of the first elected officials who made me not feel invisible in my own home."

Meanwhile, the Abreu shared a similar sentiment on his Twitter account shortly after the event. "I'm so grateful to be [Ocasio-Cortez's] 1st choice for Council District 14. They are growing a movement of leaders that will fight unapologetically for working-class power & racial justice," Abreu wrote in the Tweet. "Together, we're going to transform politics to work for our people."

The big reveal at the end of the event was the Bronx congresswoman's endorsement of Maya Wiley for mayor. Wiley is a civil rights lawyer and former legal counsel to Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Meanwhile, in other citywide races, incumbent, Jumaane Williams, was endorsed by Ocasio-Cortez for the role of public advocate, and the congresswoman gave the nod to Brooklyn city councilman for District 39, Brad Lander for the position of City Comptroller.

The endorsements from Ocasio-Cortez came after a month-long vet-

or vision problems.

### Applications Open for Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Applications are now being accepted for the NYS Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). According to government sources, the program will provide significant economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance and utility arrears assistance. There

are no immigration status requirements to qualify for the program. Go to: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/Renter-Checklist.pdf> for more information.

### DOB To Sweep Construction Sites for Safety Violations

NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) announced on Tuesday, June 1, that enforcement inspectors will be deployed across the five boroughs to perform safety sweeps on "the city's larger and more complex construc-

tion sites," to ensure they are safe for both workers and the public. DOB officials said when performing the "zero tolerance" sweeps, inspectors will issue enforcement actions if they observe any safety violations and will shut down sites if they find serious safety lapses. Inspectors will also distribute Worker Alert safety information at construction sites on the dangers of worker falls.

In the last two weeks, three construction workers in New York City lost their lives in separate work-related incidents. Two of these fatal

incidents were the result of worker falls. The three incidents are still under investigation by DOB and law enforcement.

### NY Lottery Ticket Sold in The Bronx

The New York Lottery announced on Sunday, June 6, that one top-prize winning ticket was sold for the June 5 TAKE 5 drawing. The ticket, worth \$62,606.00, was purchased at Kingsbridge Tobacco & Convenience Store, located at 271 E Kingsbridge Road in the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx.



Photo by José A. Giralt.

**AFTER RECEIVING THE** endorsement of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at an event near Manhattan's City Hall, Mino Lora, candidate for City Council District 11 in the Bronx, holds a sign promoting the congresswoman's progressive PAC, Courage to Change, on Saturday, June 5, 2021.

ting process by her team, which asked prospective candidates to complete a questionnaire entitled the "Courage to Change Pledge," also the name of her PAC. Questions ranged from national issues like Medicare for All and support for the Green New Deal to more local issues involving securing "quality broadband internet services for NYCHA residents," and support for "at least \$50 million per year in city funding to expand bike lanes throughout NYC."

In all, 60 candidates were identified as having received a perfect score on the questionnaire. Although there are only 51 districts represented in the City Council, the extra nine endorsements included multi-choice candidates in accordance with ranked choice voting rules, which allow voters to select up to five candidates in order

of preference.

In the District 14 race, Abreu was ranked as the "First Choice," candidate, while Pierina Sanchez was ranked second. Meanwhile, in District 11, Lora was the lone candidate to be endorsed by Ocasio-Cortez, a factor which has energized her campaign, due to the association with progressive policies.

"The Courage to Change pledge is a tool to help New York City voters elect a strong progressive city council in our new ranked-choice system," Lora wrote. "It's clear I'm the only candidate in this race committed to truly progressive values, who will take the bold stands we need to overcome climate and housing injustice, to create green new jobs, a universal healthcare system, criminal justice reform and fully-

(continued on page 8)





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# CD11, CD14 Races: Lora & Abreu Get AOC's Backing

(continued from page 6)

funded, equitable public schools.”

Fellow candidate in the District 11 race, Abigail Martin, had a different perspective on the “Courage to Change Pledge” however. “Because of the drastic cuts to the NYPD budget candidates were asked to commit to, I did not seek Rep. Ocasio-Cortez’s endorsement,” Martin wrote in an email.

She continued, “The candidate in this race who did receive AOC’s endorsement has, on multiple occasions, said the NYPD should be abolished. With climbing crime rates and hate crimes against Asian and Jewish communities continuing to increase, no responsible City Council candidate should be willing to consider such drastic cuts to the NYPD.”

With less than two weeks left, for democratic voters to choose in-person at the June 22 primary, it remains to be seen how progressive policies will influence voters their selections.

Norwood News has reached out to the other candidates in the District 11 race for their reaction to the endorsement of Lora by Ocasio-Cortez, and will update this story upon receipt of their feedback.



Photo by José A. Giralt

**AFTER ENDORSING MAYA** Wiley (left), a civil rights lawyer and former counsel to Mayor Bill de Blasio, for mayor, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (right) stand together for some photographs at City Hall Park on Saturday, June 5, 2021. In local Bronx races, Ocasio-Cortez endorsed Mino Lora in District 11 and ranked Adolfo Abreu as first choice in District 14, and Pierina Sanchez as second.

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# Woodlawn Welcomes Vets for Memorial Day Service

by DAVID GREENE

Over a year into the pandemic, the 2021 Memorial Day service at Woodlawn Cemetery marked almost a return to normalcy with Mitch Rose, president and CEO of the cemetery, saying this year, he “called in the marines.” For the first time, the New York City Department of Veteran Services (DVS) were invited to participate in the event, and were also allowed bring some friends.

This year’s ceremony at Woodlawn, located at 3800 Jerome Avenue, was held on Saturday, May 29, and the cemetery partnered with DVS and the Bob Woodruff Foundation in hosting the event. It was well attended by local elected officials, local veterans, and their family members, as well as members of the NYPD and young members of the 46th and 52nd Precinct Explorers Program.

Special guests included DVS Commissioner James Hendon as well as Rear Admiral Charles Rock, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, and Craig Newmark of the Bob Woodruff Foundation, who donates the American flags each year.

Referring to the veterans, Rose told the rather large, post-pandemic crowd of about 200, “It’s up to us to



Photo by David Greene

**A MILITARY COLOR** guard stands to attention during a Memorial Day service at Woodlawn Cemetery on Saturday, May 29, 2021.



Photo by David Greene

**RECENT MANHATTAN COLLEGE** graduate, Emmanuel Luzincourt, plays taps for the crowd at Woodlawn Cemetery during a Memorial Day event on Saturday, May 29.



Photo by David Greene

**A CROWD GATHERS** under a large tent at the Woodlawn Cemetery to honor fallen service members during a Memorial Day event on Saturday, May 29, 2021.

not only tell their stories, but to honor their service and memory by paying re-

spect to them on Memorial Day, and I have to say, at a cemetery.” He added, “It is

the palace to be on Memorial Day. There’s no place that’s more important on

this day than at a cemetery.”

The ceremony also kicked off a pop-up exhibit of the DVS Veterans Voices Project, which collects oral histories of various New York City veterans who have served from World War II to current conflicts. The exhibit, which now contains 50 stories of local veterans, will be on display at Woodlawn through the summer of 2021.

*Norwood News* recently reported on the hundreds of thousands of veterans who 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.



Photo by David Greene

**WOODLAWN CEMETERY REPRESENTATIVES** join local elected officials, members of the military, the NYPD, and its Explorers program members in remembering America’s fallen service members on Saturday, May 29, 2021.



Photo by David Greene

**A MEMBER OF** the NYPD’s Explorers’ Program places a flag at the headstone of a U.S. service member at Woodlawn Cemetery on Saturday, May 29, 2021. Photo courtesy of the NYPD Explorers’ Program.



## CRIME FILE

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

**Fordham Manor:  
Daylight Stabbing**

A 56-year-old man was stabbed during a verbal dispute over money by another man in the vicinity of East Fordham Road and Elm Place in Fordham Manor, in the 52nd precinct. Police responded to the incident on Saturday, June 5, at around 1.13 p.m. The victim said the dispute escalated and the suspect stabbed the victim in the back. EMS transported the victim to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. The suspect fled the location to parts unknown and the investigation remains ongoing.

**Fordham Heights:  
Man Shot, Dies**

A 40-year-old man is dead following a shooting in Fordham Heights. On Sunday, June 6, at around 2.14 a.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been shot inside a Tiebout Avenue building, located in the 46th precinct. Upon arrival, officers observed the man, unconscious and unresponsive with a gunshot wound to the torso. EMS responded and trans-

ported the victim to Saint Barnabas Hospital where he was pronounced deceased. There are no arrests, and the investigation is ongoing. The deceased has been identified as Edward Campbell, 40, of Tiebout Avenue in The Bronx.

**Fordham Manor Stabbing,  
Man Sought**

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the man seen in the above surveillance photo, taken from the incident location of an assault that occurred in

Fordham Manor, in the 52nd precinct. On Tuesday, May 25, at around 6 p.m., in front of a residential building located in the vicinity of Jerome Avenue and West 192nd Street, a 41-year-old man was approached by the suspect and the two engaged in a verbal dispute which escalated into a physical encounter.

The suspect displayed a knife and stabbed the victim in his torso, before fleeing the scene on foot in an unknown direction. EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to Saint Barnabas Hospital, where he has since been treated and released. The suspect is described as an adult male, approximately 5 feet, 6 inches tall, with a medium complexion. He was last seen wearing a black t-shirt, blue jeans, a blue baseball cap and sneakers.

**School Safety Agent Ar-  
rested on Assault Charges**

An off-duty New York City employee was arrested and charged with assault in the 49th precinct, which covers Allerton, Morris Park, Van

Nest, Pelham Parkway, Eastchester Gardens, and Pelham Gardens. Ashley Samuels-Johnson, 33, an NYPD school safety agent, was charged on Tuesday, June 1, at approximately 6.13 p.m. Samuels-Johnson's name does not appear in the NYPD's public records database. A person arrested and accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

**Fordham Manor: Three  
Sought in Shooting**

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the individuals seen in the video screenshot below who are wanted for questioning in connection with a shooting that occurred in the 52nd pre-

cinct, categorized as a reckless endangerment incident. On June 1, at approximately 4.08 a.m., the individuals displayed a firearm and discharged it three times in the vicinity of East 194th Street and Briggs Avenue in Fordham Manor. No victims were located.

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the CrimeStoppers website at [WWW.NYPDCRIMESTOPPERS.COM](http://WWW.NYPDCRIMESTOPPERS.COM), on Twitter @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.



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# The Fountain Diner & Cafe Grand Opening

**Monday June 14th at 6:00 am**  
**131 E Gun Hill Road**

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On Monday June 14th please join us in welcoming The Fountain Diner & Cafe to the neighborhood. Owned by Hasheem Yehiya, owner of popular neighborhood spots Tasty Picks and Tasty Caribbean Buffet, The Fountain Diner and Cafe will bring a whole new world of flavor to E Gun Hill Road.

Customers can look forward to a state of the art coffee bar, fresh shawarma, rotisserie chicken, freshly baked personal pizzas, as well as a hot and cold food buffet bar. One side of the restaurant you will find grab and go options and on the other will be a sit down restaurant with a separate dine-in menu.

The Fountain Diner and Cafe is on the corner of E Gun Hill Road and Rochambeau Avenue, in the former VIP Cafe space. The entire facade and interior of the restaurant have been transformed into a colorful culinary oasis. Lush greenery, imported tiles, and custom light fixtures outfit the space, along with an indoor waterfall wall. When you step into the restaurant you immediately feel relaxed and at ease, not to mention hungry! Stop by Monday June 14th for a grand opening celebration.



**The Fountain Diner & Cafe**  
**131 E Gun Hill Road**





# Eric Adams Stakes Claim in The Bronx

By MIRIAM QUIÑONES & SÍLE MOLONEY

Brooklyn borough president and mayoral candidate, Eric Adams, has staked a claim in The Bronx, visiting the Northwestern section of the borough on two recent visits within the last week, and opening a campaign office, with less than two weeks remaining before the June 22 primary election.

In a race that will decide who will run the 11<sup>th</sup> largest city in the world, and the largest city in the country, many are categorizing the mayoral election as one of the most consequential in decades, with some saying it has the possibility to bring about a much needed turning point in race relations. Adams says he is the man for the job.

On Thursday, June 3, he joined District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz on a walking tour of Norwood's business district along Bainbridge Avenue. He was accompanied by an enthusiastic crowd of about twenty people, some of whom included members of the local Bengali community, including secretary of the Bengali community of the Northwest Bronx, Monjur Choudhury, as well as staffers from the Dinowitz and Adams campaigns.

Dinowitz, who is defending his seat in the upcoming primary election, said after the tour ended that he has not endorsed any mayoral candidate to date, and that he had extended a similar invitation to each of the mayoral candidates to show them around the neighborhood.

Similarly, Adams did not announce his endorsement of any candidate on the day of the tour. Together with Dinowitz, he briefly entered various small businesses along the street, briefly greeting each business owner or staff member on site, chatting with

some a bit longer on issues like healthcare, and stopping occasionally along the route to shake hands with prospective voters or to take a photo with them.

A former NYPD captain, Adams was observed keeping a watchful eye on his surroundings, conscious of approaching traffic and warning residents occasionally to be careful.

*Norwood News* asked the borough president if, given the high rate of human trafficking in The Bronx, he would support a dedicated Human Trafficking Intervention Court in the borough, like the one that operates in Queens. He said he would be in favor of one, acknowledging that human trafficking was a problem that affected many people of color. "I think we are underestimating the real impact of human trafficking inside our city,"



Photo by Miriam Quiñones.

(FRONT ROW L to R) Brooklyn borough president and mayoral candidate, Eric Adams, is joined by Rep. Adriano Espaillat and State Sen. Jamaal Bailey, at the opening of his Bronx campaign office at 280 E 149 street, opposite Lincoln hospital in Mott Haven on Sunday, June 6, 2021.

Adams said. "It is something that has remained below the radar. I believe that it has a lot to do with for the victims. The victims are poor, Black, brown and, really, have been forgotten."

We also asked the borough

understood that public safety was crucial, and Bloomberg because he understood that power of real metrics and data, and that's very important, and oftentimes, people underrate that."

Later in the week, Ad-

Assemblyman José Rivera, former Bronx borough president, Fernando Ferrer, Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), District 14 City Councilman Fernando Cabrera, Bronx Democratic Party chairperson, State Sen. Jamaal Bailey, District 12 City



Photo by Síle Moloney

**BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT** and mayoral candidate, Eric Adams, joins District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz on a tour of Norwood's business district, along Bainbridge Avenue on Thursday, June 3, 2021.

ams was back in The Bronx on Sunday, June 6, to open a campaign office at 280 E 149 street, opposite Lincoln hospital in Mott Haven, in front of about 80 people. Present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were

Councilman Kevin Riley, and the president and director of the International Puerto Rican Parade.

Later that day, Adams was back in the North Bronx for a campaign visit to Jerome Park, and specifically to Tracey Towers, the two tower blocks which comprise about 871 residential units and are part of the Mitchell Lama affordable housing program.

Standing in the midday heat outside the towers, Adams started off his address to the 25 or so residents, including Jean Hill, president of the Tracey Towers Tenants Organization, about the need to balance effective policing with protecting civil rights and public safety. "We can have justice *and* safety - don't let anyone fool you that we can't have both!" he said. "We *can* have both. We just need the right mayor!"

Amid enthusiastic applause from the crowd, Adams stressed the importance of the upcoming election. "Seventeen days away, and we're all over the city, and I wanted to come here just to greet you personally," he said. "I remember as a rookie transit cop looking at these beautiful buildings behind me, watching how you

(continued on page 24)



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

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# NYC will Pay Youth \$1,200 to Take Online Courses This Summer

By SILE MOLONEY

New York City will pay youth from designated city areas \$1,200 to take online courses this summer, following the success of the NeON Summer initiative which was launched in 2020. Mayor Bill de Blasio recently announced the 2021 initiative will enroll 2,700 youth in six weeks of online instruction. It is hoped the program will help the city's youth build skills, focus their career goals, and express their creativity.

According to City officials, participating eligible New Yorkers will receive a stipend, and could earn up to \$1,200. NeON Summer is open to three groups: young people aged 14 to 24 who live in the seven Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) communities of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Harlem, Jamaica, North Staten Island and the South Bronx; those who live in the 27 hardest-hit COVID-19 com-



Photo by Ethan Johnson on Unsplash

## TEENAGERS

munities; and those who live anywhere in New York City and are on probation.

City officials said the initiative aims to help offset the impact on some young New Yorkers of a lack of opportunity in their local neighbor-

hoods. Applications from those living in NeON communities, and in the hardest-hit COVID-19 communities are due by June 15. The online programs will be run by community-based organizations that specialize in mentorship,

cultural, arts programming, mental health and wellness services.

The hardest hit COVID-19 Bronx communities are Mott Haven and Melrose, Hunts Point and Longwood, Morrisania and Crotona, High-

bridge and Concourse, Fordham and University Heights, Belmont and East Tremont, Kingsbridge, Parkchester and Soundview, Williamsbridge, Baychester and Edenwald.

According to City officials, NeON Summer is "designed to strengthen social, civic, and leadership abilities." The program will help fill the gap left by the city's cancellation of the Summer Youth Employment Program earlier this year.

More information about the various updated NeON programs for 2021, including both free and paid opportunities, can be found at the official NeON site, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/neon/index.page>.

A digital magazine put together by last year's participants is also available, and can be accessed at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/neon/programs/neon-summer.page>.

To apply, go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/neon/index.page>.

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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Mass Vaccination Sites

All New York State mass vaccination sites are now open to eligible New Yorkers for walk-in vaccination on a first come first served basis. In addition, all vaccine providers are encouraged to allow walk-in appointments for eligible New Yorkers. People who would prefer to schedule an appointment at a state-run mass vaccination site can do so on the Am I Eligible App or by calling (877) 829-4692.

## 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>.

## Reopening New York City

There have been numerous recent changes to COVID restrictions in NYC, as follows:

## New York City Subways

New York City's 24-hour subway service resumed on May 17. Mask use remains mandatory.

## Restaurants and Bars

Indoor dining in New York City is currently at 75 percent capacity. The midnight curfew has been lifted for outdoor dining and was lifted on May 31 for indoor dining. The 1 a.m. curfew for catered events (w/ proof of vaccination or recent negative COVID-19 test result) was lifted on May 17, and the curfew for all catered events was lifted on May 31.

## Social Gatherings

The outdoor limit on social gatherings was increased to 5,000 on May 10, and the indoor limit was increased to 250 on May 19.

## Residential Gatherings

The outdoor limit was removed, and indoor limit was increased to 50 on May 19.

## Large-Scale Venues

Indoor capacity at large scale venues was increased to 30% on May 19. Outdoor venues are now only limited by the space available for patrons to maintain the required social distance of six feet

## Resources

Restaurant operators should refer to <http://nyc.gov/restaurantopening> for guidance on reopening safely and legally.

All business owners can go to <http://nyc.gov/covid19biz> or call the SBS Reopening Hotline at 888-SBS-4NYC (888-727-4692) for assistance in understanding and implementing reopen-

ing regulations.

## NYC Restaurant Week

Every year, NYCgo hosts NYC Restaurant Week, a city-wide campaign which aims to promote NYC's local eateries. The campaign is now bigger and more flexible than ever, with indoor and outdoor dining, takeout and delivery options, plus an all-new pricing structure designed to showcase the breadth of restaurants across the five boroughs. Restauranters interested in participating in NYC Restaurant Week can find more information here: <https://business.nycgo.com/nyc-restaurant-week-sign-up/>. Registration must be completed by June 11. If you have any questions, please contact [nycrestweek@nycgo.com](mailto:nycrestweek@nycgo.com).

## 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 <https://thebronx.org/> to see when the application window reopens.

## 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. To apply and for more info, go to <https://www.connect2capital.com/partners/new-york-forward-loan-fund/>.

## SBA 7(a) and SBA Community Advantage Loans

The SBA 7(a) loan program makes funding from \$50,000 to \$5 million possible for startups and growing businesses in any qualified industry. The SBA 7(a) rates fluctuate, and the rate is determined by your financing needs. The SBA Community Advantage loan program, which provides loans of up to \$250,000, is a unique type of 7(a) loan designed to provide additional support for businesses operating in underserved areas. For more information, visit: <https://pursuitlending.com/business-loans/products/sba-7a-community-advantage/>

## SmartLoan

The SmartLoan provides fast, small business loans with

flexible terms. Through this program, you can access up to \$100,000 in funding at a fixed interest rate with affordable monthly payments. You can apply online for the SmartLoan and be funded in as soon as five business days. For more information, go to: <https://pursuitlending.com/business-loans/products/smartloan/>

## The Small Business Resource Network

The Resource Network is a newly established team of 22 dedicated Small Business Specialists embedded within the City's five Chambers of Commerce to help small businesses navigate a range of challenges including technology, real estate, legal and accounting services, procurement opportunities, marketing, and sources of loans and grants. Help with navigating the complex new regulatory environment established to contain the pandemic is also available. Business owners can access these resources by contacting a Recovery Specialist in their borough via: <https://www.nycsmallbusinessresourcenetwork.org/>.

## Summer Friday Events

Join the Jerome Gun Hill BID for its summer event series. Events will be held at the corner of Jerome Avenue and East Mosholu Parkway North under Mosholu Parkway #4 subway station. Friday, June 11, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., dance with the Afro-Latiners and grab a free book from Norwood Community Library. Friday, June 18, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., play a giant match with giant board games. Friday, June 25, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., make art with the Uni project and grab a book from Norwood Community Library.

## Department of Sanitation Food Waste Fair

The NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) will be hosting its biannual Food Waste Fair from June 14 to 19. The goal of the Food Waste Fair is to connect everyday New Yorkers and small business owners with the resources they need to fight food waste at home and at work. DSNY has also created a Food Waste Toolkit which teaches people about various strategies for reducing food waste and highlights vendors that can help them achieve their food waste goals. Businesses with food waste solutions can apply to be featured in the Toolkit here: <https://www.sanitationfoundation.org/toolkit>. Check out the toolkit, apply to be featured and stop by the Food Waste Fair in June!

## Free COVID-19 Decals!

Jerome Gun Hill BID is offering free COVID-19 decals to small business owners within MPC Corridors. To request decals, email [jeromegunhillbid@gmail.com](mailto:jeromegunhillbid@gmail.com) and include your name, business address, mailing address, business name, and email. Decals will be sent in the mail.

## June Primary Elections 2021

June Primary Election Important Calendar Dates

Friday, May 28: voter registration deadline

Saturday, June 12: early voting begins

Tuesday, June 15: absentee ballot request deadline

Sunday, June 20: early voting ends

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

Early voting for the election begins on June 12. There are 22 early voting sites throughout the Bronx. Visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> to find your early voting and election day poll site, view a sample ballot, and check the hours and location of the poll site, before you participate in early voting.

All registered voters can request an absentee ballot be mailed to them if they wish to vote by mail by going to <https://vote.nyc/page/absentee-voting-0>. You can submit your ballot request online via <https://nycabsentee.com/> or mail a paper request form to the New York City Board of Elections by June 15.

The deadline to mail or drop off your actual, completed, absentee ballot at any BOE office or at a poll site is June 22, Election Day. The completed ballot must be postmarked on this date.

Those voters in City Council Districts 11 and 15 who voted in the recent special elections on March 23 will be familiar with the new method of voting in New York City called ranked choice voting. For any voter who is not, note that New York City will use ranked choice voting in the upcoming primary elections on June 22, the first primary elections in the city to use this relatively new methodology.

Go to <https://rankthevoitenyc.org/>, to learn more about ranked choice voting. For questions, contact the Bronx Board of Elections Office, located at 1780 Grand Concourse, 5 Fl, Bronx, NY 10457, Tel (718) 299-9017, Fax (718) 299-2140.

## June 14 Bronx Public Hearing on Property Tax Reform

In 2018, Mayor Bill de Blasio and City Council Speaker

Corey Johnson established an advisory commission to develop recommendations to make the City's property tax system simpler, clearer, and fairer. City officials said they did so while ensuring there was no reduction in the revenue used to fund essential City services. In early 2020, the Commission released a preliminary report, which included ten initial recommendations for property tax reform.

The preliminary report also included a brief history of New York City's property tax system, the current methods that the City's Department of Finance uses to calculate property tax bills, and challenges with the existing tax system. Planned in-person hearings were postponed due to the pandemic.

The commission is now seeking input from the public on the initial ten recommendations at a Bronx virtual hearing via ZOOM, which will be held on June 14 at 6 p.m. Residents are urged to read the report, attend the hearing and make their voices heard. To testify, you must sign up on the Commission's website no later than 24-hours in advance. All hearings will be broadcast to the NYC Council's virtual hearing rooms, with a link on the Commission's website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/index.page>

The preliminary report can also be viewed on this website. Speakers may (but need not) submit their testimony ahead of time by emailing it to [PropTaxInfo@propertytaxcommission.nyc.gov](mailto:PropTaxInfo@propertytaxcommission.nyc.gov) or by uploading it to the Commission's website.

## Amateur Sports

Outdoor competitive play for high-risk sports, as defined by New York State, can resume. This includes competitive team practices games, scrimmages, meets, matches and tournaments. Competitive play for low and moderate-risk sports, as defined by New York state, is also permitted. The Public-School Athletic League is phasing in strength and conditioning training. Competitions can be held.

## Small Business Training

The NYC Department of Small Business Services is providing no-cost, online training to help business owners and employees in NYC. For more information, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/article/nyc-means-business-training-for-your-employees>.





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## Public and Community Meetings

The next **52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 24 at 6 p.m.** Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824 for further details.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held **Wednesday, June 23, at 6.30 p.m.** Zoom details will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Contact [mirosario@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:mirosario@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

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

## Search for Missing 13-Year-Old Girl

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating Elena Figueroa, 13, of 2683 Creston Avenue in Fordham Manor. Elena was last seen Sunday, June 6, at around 11 p.m., leaving her home, located in the 52nd precinct. She is described as female, approximately 5 feet, 3 inches tall, weighs 120 pounds, and has brown eyes and black hair. Her clothing description at the time of her disappearance was

unknown. A photo of Elena is attached.

Anyone with information in 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 CrimeStoppers website at [WWW.NYPD-CRIMESTOPPERS.COM](http://WWW.NYPD-CRIMESTOPPERS.COM), on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

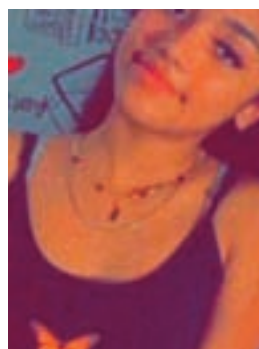


## Search for 16-Year-Old Missing Girl

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance in locating Jazzmarie Arsenec, 16, of 31 West Mosholu Parkway North, Apt 1M, in Norwood. Jazzmarie was last seen Thursday, June 3, at 7 p.m. inside her home, located in the 52nd precinct. She is

described as female, approximately 5 feet, 3 inches tall, weighs 145 pounds, Hispanic, has a medium build, light complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. She was last seen wearing a green hooded sweatshirt, blue pajama pants and white sneakers. A photo of Jazzmarie is attached.





# NYC Campaign Finance Board Approves \$19.9 Million in Public Funds Payments

By SILE MOLONEY

The NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB) approved \$19,903,652 in public matching funds payments to 162 candidates in the 2021 primary elections during a public meeting held on May 27. With these payments, the Board approved more than \$32.3 million to seven candidates running for mayor.

The CFB has now 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 have reported raising in private contributions (nearly \$60.3 million as of May 21). Public funds dwarf the amount spent thus far by independent expenditure committees, or Super PACs, which have reported \$15.7 million in spending mostly on the race for mayor.

An independent expenditure committee is a political campaign that expressly advocates for the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate that is not made in cooperation, consultation or concert with; or at the request or suggestion of a candidate, the candidate's authorized committee or political party.

Amy Loprest is executive director of the CFB and said, "The historic amount of matching funds issued to candidates in the 2021 elections is the direct result of New Yorkers making contributions to candidates, suggesting widespread interest and excitement for the candidates seeking their votes."

The payments approved by the CFB for the Citywide offices and for the various Bronx races as of May 27, are detailed in the table below and will be added to the CFB's overall campaign finance summary of all payments made to date.

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 more than 72 percent coming from NYC residents.

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 May 27 public funds payments are based on campaign filings re-

ceived from candidates as of May 21 and amendments filed by campaigns in response to the CFB's ongoing audit process. The next filing deadline for candidates and independent expenditure groups is June 11, with daily disclosure requirements beginning on June 8.

The CFB withholds five percent of the public funds payment until the final payment prior to the election. For primary election candidates, the withheld amount will be issued in the payment scheduled for June 17.

The next disclosure reports are due by midnight on June 11. There will then be a public funds payment on June 17 based on those disclosures. In total, there are eight public matching funds payments scheduled ahead of the primary elections on June 22.

The CFB provides matching funds out of the city's General Fund to qualifying candidates at a rate of \$8 for every \$1 received 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.

| Office                        | Candidate               | 27-May-21   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Mayor                         | Eric Adams              | \$618,976   |
|                               | Shaun Donovan           | \$315,675   |
|                               | Kathryn Garcia          | \$2,059,980 |
|                               | Dianne Morales          | \$1,401,047 |
|                               | Scott Stringer          | \$824,482   |
|                               | Maya Wiley              | \$1,438,423 |
|                               | Andrew Yang             | \$2,165,245 |
| Comptroller                   | Brian Benjamin          | \$359,523   |
|                               | Michelle Caruso-Cabrera | \$1,041,854 |
|                               | Zachary Iscol           | \$226,375   |
|                               | Brad Lander             | \$155,950   |
|                               | Kevin Parker            | \$956,855   |
|                               | Reshma Patel            | \$1,046,376 |
|                               | David Weprin            | \$451,803   |
| Borough President - The Bronx | Fernando Cabrera        | \$151,901   |
|                               | Nathalia Fernandez      | \$109,676   |
|                               | Vanessa Gibson          | \$146,384   |
|                               | Samuel Ravelo           | \$5,652     |
|                               | Luis Sepulveda          | \$15,002    |
|                               |                         |             |

|                     |                    |           |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Council District 8  | Diana Ayala        | \$570     |
|                     |                    |           |
| Council District 11 | Eric Dinowitz      | \$132,384 |
|                     | Mino Lora          | \$115,847 |
|                     | Daniel Padernacht  | \$67,830  |
|                     | Marcos Sierra      | \$43,457  |
| Council District 12 | Kevin Riley        | \$16,112  |
|                     |                    |           |
| Council District 13 | Monique Johnson    | \$159,296 |
|                     |                    |           |
| Council District 14 | Fernando Aquino    | \$869     |
|                     | Haile Rivera       | \$15,846  |
|                     | Socrates Solano    | \$5,130   |
|                     | Yudelka Tapia      | \$2,812   |
| Council District 15 | Ischia Bravo       | \$40,111  |
|                     | Oswald Feliz       | \$39,161  |
|                     | Bernadette Ferrara | \$40,111  |
|                     | John Sanchez       | \$40,111  |
| Council District 16 | Ahmadou Diallo     | \$2,736   |
|                     | Yves Filius        | \$6,772   |
|                     | Althea Stevens     | \$5,791   |
| Council District 17 | Helen Hines        | \$58,558  |
|                     |                    |           |
| Council District 18 | Michael Beltzer    | \$20,892  |
|                     | Darlene Jackson    | \$4,522   |
|                     | Mirza Rashid       | \$6,156   |

Image courtesy of the CFB

**PAYMENTS MADE BY** the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB) to New York City candidates as of May 27, 2021, in accordance with the Board's matching funds program.





## Letters To The Editor

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

### Portrayals Pigeonhole Too Easily

I just read a review of the new "West Side Story." The same hate back then is alive and well today. I was 4 when my mother came here with my baby sister and two brothers not much older than me for a better life. She worked in a sweat shop. She made sure we were clean and went to school. All we got was abuse and curses. We were called "dirty sp-s" and my brothers were chased after. We were forced to get together to defend ourselves. Every day, I would come home from school, the super was sitting there wait-

ing for me. "Here comes that dirty little s-c," he would say. I didn't get it. I was traumatized.

The mailman would make me wait while he took his time. I was a mailman for 30 years, all over. Man, if someone wanted to get in the truck, I would stop and let them in. The only one in that original movie who was right was the old Jewish man in the candy store. It was not a beautiful love story. They made us look bad - "everything free in America." They should ban that movie or put a disclaimer. Puerto Ricans have served this country. My father was a vet, my late brother,

his son, my ex-wife. I am a disabled Vietnam vet, 1st Cavalry, '68 to '69. The roaches were here way before we got here.

**Julio E. Rivera**  
Jerome Park

### Gardens Needed, Not Useless Principals

Meg's Garden at the DeWitt Clinton campus proved very convenient to me recently. I'm not always dressed and ready to leave my apartment between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on Saturday. That's when scraps for compost are collected at the co-op where I live. So, Meg's Garden compost dumpster, accessible 24/7, proved very convenient. Recently, it was sealed with a notice saying that compost collection was suspended but they hoped to resume soon. David Greene's *Norwood News* article [May 27-June 9] "Dismay Over Community Garden Eviction," makes it clear it won't, and explains why.

Three of the four principals for the schools sharing this campus voted to evict those tending to the garden, while the others abstained. As the article shows, their reasons are absurd. Though paid student interns from Clinton participated and learned from this project, the principals claimed it didn't help students. After the principals locked the garden's workers out, they complained the garden was not maintained. They also complained that the landscape was changed. Putting in a garden hurts the landscape?

This is a decision that not one, but four principals are responsible for. It doesn't surprise me. Over the years, I've read about principals who are

racist, who try to cover up crimes committed in their schools, who harass good teachers and whistleblowers. The problem is I don't hear about any

of these incompetent, mean-spirited principals being fired.

**Richard Warren,**  
Van Cortlandt Village

## Norwood/Bedford Park: Cyclist Struck by SUV on Mosholu Parkway

By DAVID GREENE

An unidentified cyclist was struck by an SUV on the Norwood-Bedford Park border, with both the driver and the biker blaming each other for the collision. According to NYPD spokesperson, Sergeant Edward Riley, the incident was reported at 1:16 p.m. on Saturday, May 22, at the intersection of East Mosholu Parkway South and Bainbridge Avenue.

Riley wrote in an email, "Vehicle 1 stated he was going straight when a bicycle was going at a high rate of speed and tried making a left turn and collided with Vehicle 1." He added, "Bicyclist states he was going straight, and tried making a left turn and collided into vehicle one." Riley confirmed the cyclist was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital with pain to his legs. His injuries were not believed to be life threatening.

Police officers questioned the unidentified driver of a white, Jaguar SUV that suffered damage to its front fender.

"Rose," an eyewitness to the crash and resident of Bedford Park who declined to give her full name, said of the driver, "This guy was right. We were there in the park and whatever happened was an accident. The kid (the cyclist) crossed when the light was red, but no matter what, he's going to get a citation."

As Rose was still talking about the crash, a scooter driven by a man and carrying a woman and a young girl on the

back, blew through the red light, and had to break and maneuver quickly to avoid a collision with an oncoming vehicle.

Two police officers at the scene were in their patrol car and appeared unaware of the scooter, as Rose fumed, "It's disgusting. Did you see him? He doesn't even have a license plate. He's out of control, and they (the police) don't do anything."

Still speaking on the issue of scooters, Rose continued, "Something is wrong with these scooters. They don't have license plates, no helmets. They go in the street with no insurance." Later, referring to the biker who suffered minor injuries, Rose concluded, "Like this kid, he didn't have a helmet." She added that cyclists shouldn't be required to get a license, but riders should be required to take a course, and follow all traffic laws and said such laws "should be better enforced."

An hour later, a group of five male scooter drivers converged at the side of McDonald's on East 204th Street and Perry Avenue in Norwood. It appeared the young men were working for one of the new food delivery companies. Over the course of several minutes, one man drove from the sidewalk and into the crosswalk, before joining the normal flow of traffic, while another drove down Perry Avenue towards Mosholu Parkway..... in the wrong direction.

## University Heights: Fire in 6-Story Multiple Dwelling

By SILE MOLONEY

A fire that broke out in a 6-story, multiple dwelling in University Heights was brought under control in the early hours of Monday, May 31. Images from the Citizen's App showed several firefighters and fire trucks at the scene. An FDNY tweet at 3:28 a.m. indicated that "All Hands" were responding to the incident. An update by a Citizen's App user posted at 3:38 a.m. indicated that firefighters had reported that nobody had been located inside the building at that point,

and that the fire had been brought under control.

The FDNY later confirmed directly to *Norwood News* that the FDNY had been alerted to a fire in a 6-story building (150x125) at 2707 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx at 2:59 a.m. on May 31, following reports of an electrical fire in the ceiling of the 5th floor. Officials confirmed the fire was brought under control at 3:36 a.m., that there were no injuries, and that fire marshals were investigating the cause.

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

Brookside Cremation Garden

**W**hen 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?

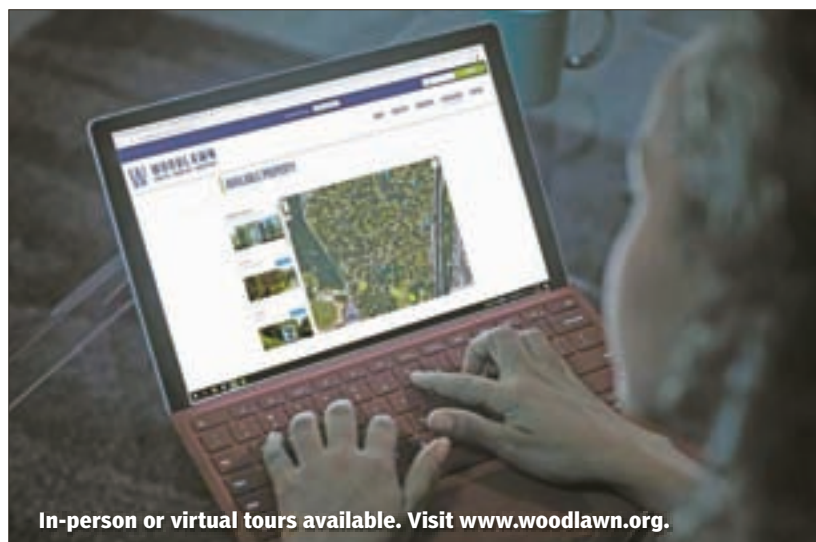
**Woodlawn:** First, we explain how important it is to have a place they can come back to over the years to visit their loved one who has died. This is an essential part of the grieving process and one that is

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](http://www.woodlawn.org).





# Out & About

Compiled by SILE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

Norwood Community Library will be discussing, **"Before the Fires, An Oral History of African American Life in the Bronx from the 1930s to the 1960s,"** by Mark Naison and Bob Gumbs, during its book club sessions over the next four to six weeks. For further information, follow Norwood Community Library on [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com).

Woodlawn Conservancy will be hosting **The Countee Cullen, The Salons, and the Black Tower Trolley Tour** on Saturday, June 12, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The tour celebrates Woodlawn's African American and Afro-Caribbean Heritage, where participants can visit the sites of Countee Cullen and Hubert Harrison and read their writings along the way. The tour supports Woodlawn's reading and discussion group sponsored by Humanities New York. Tour participants are kindly asked to wear a

mask while on the trolley. Children over the age of 4 require a ticket for the tour. Tickets are \$15 per person. For more information, call 718-920-0500 or email [info@woodlawn.org](mailto:info@woodlawn.org).

Bronx Anti-Prom presents **Proud to Read: LGBTQAI+ Book Tasting** by Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library on Monday, June 21. In celebration of PRIDE month, librarians from Bronx Library Center, Hunts Point and Pelham Parkway-Van Nest will highlight favorite LGBTQ reads that showcase the diversity and voices of queer representation. Participants must register with an email address to receive the link to join. The link will be sent by email approximately one day before the program. You will need a device with audio and video and an internet connection to participate. This program is part of the 2021 Bronx Anti-Prom Virtual Programs. The theme this year is 'New Beginnings', a hopeful outlook into the future ahead after a difficult year. Discover what the library offers NYC

teens, including TeenLIVE events, programs, book recommendations and more. For more information, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/> and search for "Bronx Anti-Prom Presents: Proud to Read: LGBTQAI+ Book Tasting."

**Van Cortlandt Park Alliance (VCPA)** is hosting a spring benefit Lawn Party on Thursday, June 24, from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Van Cortlandt House Museum, located at 6036 Broadway, Van Cortlandt Park, The Bronx, NY 10471. This year, VCPA is honoring Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation. The event will feature music, individually boxed dinners, mingling in the park, goats, lawn games and more. For tickets and more, go to <https://givebutter.com/vcpalawnparty>.

**The 52nd Precinct Community Council** is hosting a brunch on Thursday, June 17, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The New York Botanical Gardens, located at 2900

Southern Boulevard Bronx, NY 10458. The event will be held at Clay Family Picnic Pavilions. Enter the garden via the conservatory gate (across from Fordham University). Contact precinct council members Brenda Caldwell at [bcserina@gmail.com](mailto:bcserina@gmail.com), Joy LaFontaine at [lafontaine73@yahoo.com](mailto:lafontaine73@yahoo.com), Doug Conduit at [thoracicsurgpa@msn.com](mailto:thoracicsurgpa@msn.com) or Geraldo Landron at [jerrywv69@gmail.com](mailto:jerrywv69@gmail.com) for more information.

## MOVEMENT

Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in the Bronx, is hosting various Adult Programs from April 5 to June 25, 2021. All programs are free, held outside, and are limited based on social distancing requirements. All participants must wear a face covering. Call Sarah on (718) 543-8672 for more details.

**Chair Aerobics with Ingrid** is held on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. This chair aerobics class is perfect for someone new or for those getting back into working out. **Circuit Training with Carl** is held on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. Join this low impact strength workout, a beginner's way to start building muscle. **Kripalu Yoga with Michele** is held on Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Through breathing, meditation and movements, wake up with

this great morning routine.

**Riding to the Beat with Ingrid** is held on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. Come out for a morning spin bike ride to get your heartbeats up. This is a great cardio workout. **Pickleball with Oscar** is held on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Learn the basics in this paddle game, similar to tennis and compete against others on the tennis courts.

Families and children of all ages are invited to join Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center for **Family Fitness Festival** on Thursday June 17 from 4.30 to 6.30 p.m. in Williamsbridge Oval Park. Activities will include yoga, spin bike classes, whine fitness, aerobics, and much more! The events are FREE and open to the public. Please note, space is limited due to social distancing requirements and remember to wear a face covering. Call Sarah on (718) 543-8672 for more details, or email [Sarah.Bishow@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Sarah.Bishow@parks.nyc.gov). Contact [accessibility@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:accessibility@parks.nyc.gov) or call (212) 360-1430 for more information regarding accessibility.

## ART

Get an **Introduction to Art** on Fridays, from May 21-June 28, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, N.Y. (In front of the recreation center). Calling all aspiring artists! Bring your paint brushes and love for art and expression to Williamsbridge Oval. Art, drawing, and painting techniques will be at the forefront of this program. The events are FREE and open to the public. Please note, space is limited due to social distancing requirements and remember to wear a face covering. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/parks](http://nyc.gov/parks) or contact [Sarah.Bishow@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Sarah.Bishow@parks.nyc.gov). Contact (212) 360-1430 or [accessibility@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:accessibility@parks.nyc.gov) for more information regarding accessibility.

The Bronx Documentary Center welcomes photographer, James Nachtwey, and TIME Magazine Editor, Paul Moakley, as they discuss their work **'The Opioid Diaries'**, on Saturday, June 12, at 6 p.m. This is an in-person socially distanced event held at The Bronx Documentary Center Annex, located at 364 East 151st Street, The Bronx, NY 10455. In 2017, Nachtwey and Moakley set out to document the U.S. opioid crisis, an addiction epidemic that kills nearly 64,000 people in America every year. The pair traveled the country gathering stories from users, families, first responders and others at the heart of America's opioid epidemic. To register, go to Eventbrite.com, and search for BDC Conversations: James Nachtwey + Paul Moakley. The New York Botanical Garden is hosting various virtual events to celebrate **PRIDE month** in The Bronx. Go to [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org) for more information.

## MUSIC

The National Museum of African American Music is hosting an inaugural **State of Black Music** virtual summit on Friday, June 18. This one-day event will feature dynamic discourse and panels exploring the intersection of Black music and culture, with industry leaders, top artists, and media personalities gracing the stage as panelists. This event will also feature the premiere of the official State of Black Music podcast as well as mark the release of the museum's 4th State of Black Music report. The event will be livestreamed on YouTube starting at 9:30 a.m. CT (all times below CT). Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/> by searching for "State of Black Music Summit."

**The Bronx Arts Ensemble (BAE)** proudly announces its 2021 Virtual Benefit Concert, ¡Jazz Puertorriqueño! Latin jazz legend and multi-Grammy nominee, Bobby Sanabria, joins the members of the Bronx Arts Ensemble on Thursday, June 10 at 7p.m. for a musical collaboration to support BAE's community concerts and arts-in-education programs. The event will be live on Facebook and YouTube. For more information, go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for Bronx Arts Ensemble.



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Montefiore





# Eric Adams Stakes Claim in The Bronx

(continued from page 12)

stabilized this entire community and how, no matter what happened, the people rode [out] the Bronx storm.”

Saying Bronxites needed more stable housing like Tracey Towers, the Brooklyn borough president added, “We need to reinvest in housing, reinvest in the Mitchell Lamas, reinvest in [inaudible], reinvest in affordable housing that will turn into home ownership for those that move into the housing, by allowing people to own their homes, and own part of where they are, so they’re not displaced.”

Adams then spoke about the need for more investment in education and social programs. “You know, if we don’t educate, people incarcerate,” he said. “That’s why we have of 80 percent of the men and women on Rikers Island who don’t have a high school diploma or an equivalency diploma - 30 percent are dyslexic, 55 percent have learning disabilities.”

Adams, who has been a critic of racism within the NYPD, said real crime is not only what happens on the streets, but what is happening within the Department of Education, every day that

the city fails to educate its children.

“Think about this number - 65 percent of Black and brown children never reach proficiency in this city, every year,” he said. “Only 20 percent graduate high school.” He went on to discuss the plagues of homelessness and mental health problems, including depression.

“Yet, if we just invested in them, and allowed them to age out at 26, instead of 21, one report shows that 90 percent would graduate from high school,” he said.

Adams went on to say that he is frequently asked what type of mayor he’s going to be. “Just look at the type of man I have been,” he said. “Look at the issues that we have fought, from [inaudible] addressing diseases, to making sure our schools have the adequate resources - \$160 million, we placed inside our school system, to empowering our crisis management team.”

He said that people look at the funding of crisis management teams now but that the original funding for this came from when he was in the State Senate. “We put together the thing called SNUG, guns spelled backwards, where we gave money to on-the-ground organizations that deal



Photo by Miriam Quiñones.

**BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT** and mayoral candidate, Eric Adams, speaks outside Tracey Towers in the Jerome Park section of the Bronx during a campaign rally on Sunday, June 6, 2021.

with conflict resolutions,” he said. “If we’re going to change the ecosystem of public safety, we need to allow police to do their roles, and [inaudible] the other roles like mental health professionals, conflict resolutions, nonprofit groups, the clergy, like the God Squad group in Brooklyn that we sponsor.”

According to its website, the 67th Precinct Clergy Council Inc. or “The GodSquad” is a faith-based organization comprised of clergy, focused on lessening neighborhood tensions, and acting as a liaison between their communities and law enforcement.

Recently, the GodSquad established the Clergy for Safe Cities (CSC) program, a national coalition to support clergy-based gun violence prevention initiatives and implement a collective, comprehensive, community initiative to decrease the involvement of young people in crime and gun violence in their cities. To date, CSC has trained 500 faith leaders on successful clergy-based models and best practices.

District 14 City Councilman and candidate for Bronx borough president, Fernando Cabrera, was also present at Tracey Towers on Sunday making his own pitch to win in the upcoming primary election.

Touting his long experience as an elected leader, he said, “At the end of the day, we’re going to need leadership right

here in The Bronx. We’ve been hit hard. The pandemic hit every single one of us in The Bronx and you know that the resources did not come here like it came in other parts of the State, and for that matter, in other parts of the city, and this is why we’re going to need a fighter” he said. “We’re going to need somebody who’s going to stand for you, so we can get our fair share, right here in The Bronx.”

Cabrera said he was committed to making that happen, saying he was not a newcomer to politics, having served the community for 33 years, and saying Bronxites didn’t need someone in office who was “just trying to figure out what to do.” He said he had worked in government, in public schools, as a college professor and as the director of a rehab program. “That’s why I bring all that capacity and competency to making sure that our people get what is due to them and on June 22, we’re going to stand victorious, and when we win, our people win,” he said.

Meanwhile, summing up his visit at Tracey Towers, Adams said, “I’m excited about the future of the city. Responding to the cheers from the crowd and shouts of “That’s right!” he said, smiling “One of your own, one of your children, one of your neighbors is going to become the mayor of the City of New York, a blue-collar mayor for blue collar people, and save our city.”

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# Bronx Civil Court Judgeship Election: NYC Fire Officers Endorse Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The New York City Fire Officers' Association (UFOA) announced its endorsement on Sunday, June 6, of judicial candidate, Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor, in her run for a civil court judgeship in Bronx County's Second Municipal Court District, marking the candidate's second union endorsement from a major city union.

Jake Lamonda, president of the UFOA, wrote in the letter of endorsement, "The executive board of the UFOA unanimously and enthusiastically voted to endorse life-long New Yorker, Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor, an ambitious attorney and long-time advocate for civil servants." The letter continued, "Her experience, commitment to justice, and passion for public service will make her an excellent Judge for the Bronx County Civil Court."

Gonzalez-Taylor previously received endorsements from the Uniform Firefighters Association (UFA) which represents 11,000 uniformed firefighters, the Riverdale-based civic group, Concerned Citizens for Change, The Northwest Bronx Democrats, Progressive Women of New York, among other Bronx based community leaders.

The 2nd municipal court district covers the entire west side of Bronx County from north to south, encompassing the neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Belmont, Claremont Village, Crotona, Fieldston, Fordham Heights, Highbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Morrisania, Morris Heights, Mott Haven, Mount Hope, Norwood, Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, Woodlawn, and Woodlawn Heights.

Voting begins on June 22, 2021, and early voting starts on June 12.



Image via Twitter

**THE NEW YORK** City Fire Officers' Association (UFOA) announced its endorsement on Sunday, June 6, of judicial candidate, Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor, in her run for a civil court judgeship in Bronx County's Second Municipal Court District, marking the candidate's second union endorsement from a major city union.



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# Residents Say Loud Music is Public Enemy Number One

by DAVID GREENE

Unacceptable levels of noise, noise and more noise have been the bane of many a Bronxite's existence over several years, and never more so than during the hot summer months when many residents are also contending with fumes from illegal barbecues, insufficient AC in their homes, and other quality of life issues.

This year, complaints appear to be on steroids as the worst of the noise-related incidents have already begun, and now include noise from illegal dirt bikes, scooters, and self-amplified speaker systems.

On Tuesday, June 4, one resident of the Knox Place / Gates Place area in Norwood, who declined to share her name for publication, and who also works in the area, said of the loud music in an around Van Cortlandt Park is "every freakin' weekend, and these people don't even live in the neighborhood."

The resident said when the group was kicked out of the park, on nights when police enforced the 10 p.m. closure of the public parks, members of the crowd would sit in their vehicles, on lounge chairs, on milk crates or along the wall to Van Cortlandt Park at West Gun Hill Road and blast music from customized speakers until the wee hours of the morning.

The resident continued, "Sometimes I can't even hear my T.V.! That's how loud the music is! It's worse when you're trying to sleep, when you've got to go to work the next day!"

During the latest monthly meeting of the 52nd Precinct Community Council, held on Thursday, May 27, the first in-person gathering of the council since the pandemic began, the precinct's commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Thomas Alps, addressed the concerns, telling residents, "I understand that there's a lot of issues in this community that need to get resolved." He added, "I'm talking about quality-of-life issues, motorcycles, noise."

Referring to the day-to-day work of cops on the beat, Alps continued, "The officers in this precinct are fighting for you day in and day out, at great risk to themselves physically." He added, "We're getting a lot of push-back, a lot of resistance. Nothing's simple anymore - not much compliance on the street. We're not getting a lot of respect, whether it's deserved or undeserved."



Photo by David Greene

**A GROUP OF** young men barbeque and blast loud music along Mosholu Parkway North on Saturday, May 16, 2021.



PHOTO BY DAVID GREENE

**POLICE OFFICERS ROLL** in several confiscated bikes during the 52nd Precinct's Community Council meeting on Thursday, May 27, 2021.

Speaking to the interactions officers have with the public in combating such quality-of-life issues, Alps said, "These stops are confrontational. They're dangerous. They're (carried out) at great risk to officers both liability-wise, career-wise, and it can go bad. Use of force is a very hot topic."

Alps told community members he had told his officers he didn't want to be embarrassed by the sound of noisy illegal dirt bikes passing the station-house while the meeting was in progress. The crowd broke into applause as several officers later rolled in a dirt bike and two scooters that had been confiscated during the meeting.

Recalling a recent confrontation on Morris Avenue, after an amplified

speaker was confiscated, Alps said, "We try and reason. We try and say, 'Hey, please! It's one o'clock in the morning, on a Sunday. It's God's day. Give the residents a break.'"

In conclusion, Alps said he would continue to be an advocate for the residents of the community who are making the complaints. "I have to address their issues, and if you don't want to respect their issues, I'm going to have to do the enforcement," he said. "So, we did the enforcement that night [on Morris Avenue]. It turned confrontational, ripped up summons, foot pursuit, but this is what we're dealing with now."

Last summer, *Norwood News* spoke with former District 11 Councilman Andrew Cohen about issues raised by

NYPD officers, after the latest package of police reform laws was passed, and how officers were finding it difficult to balance not getting too confrontational with residents when it came to addressing noise complaints, with the need for enforcement of the law. At various Build the Block meetings, different officers from the 52 and 50 precincts had brought up the matter.

In response, Cohen said that the law was clear, and that officers should simply apply it. We have since reached out to Councilman Dinowitz for his views on the matter and will update this story upon receipt of a response.

Before the precinct meeting was held, one longtime resident of the Amalgamated Houses had complained to the *Norwood News* of a loud radio playing by Harris Field and illegal dirt bikes riding up and down Goulden Avenue, in Jerome Park. Speaking to us on Monday, May 17, the resident said, "Last night, the music went until 2:45 a.m. I called 311 three times to issue a noise complaint." The resident said he was told twice that police were on scene and had found no evidence of the complaint.

The resident provided copies of several of the logged 311 complaints, saying, "The music was blasting for several hours that police couldn't have not heard it, unless they never showed up." He then added, "I do not mind public gatherings, but music heard five blocks away is totally inappropriate."

*Norwood News* has also received complaints of unacceptable levels of noise from other residents along Mosholu Parkway, Bronx Boulevard in Olinville and on Exterior Street in University Heights. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Meanwhile, in terms of other quality-of-life issues which were not raised at the precinct meeting, a storeowner in Bedford Park who declined to be identified, confirmed a report by the *NY Post* that a previously vacant Bedford Park building at 3059 Valentine Avenue is being used by squatters, referring to them as a gang of young men.

A second source from the area, who also declined to be identified, classified the group as a local gang who sold weed at the location. Another resident told the *Norwood News* she was scared to go out at night in the vicinity of the building, because she felt fearful.



# Bronxites Mark Gun Violence Awareness Month

(continued from page 1)

compared to May 2020, while the number of shooting victims in the borough over the month increased by 271 percent, compared to the same period last year.

On Thursday, June 3, Rep. Jamaal Bowman (NY-16), Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and District 13 City Councilman Mark Gjonaj joined staff members of Jacobi Hospital in calling for more funding for programs like Jacobi's "Stand Up to Violence (SUV)" gun violence reduction program.

Bowman, Ocasio-Cortez, and Schumer called on Congress to provide nearly \$400,000 for the hospital's youth violence reduction program. The event was held just three days after a bloody Memorial Day, when more than a dozen people were shot across the city, including the murder of Bronxite, Amir James, 15, who was shot and killed at East 123rd Street and Lexington Avenue in East Harlem.

Schumer said the money, if approved, would come from the Congressional Community Project Fund, from which Bowman and Cortez had jointly requested \$393,840 in May. If received, the funds will go towards Jacobi's SUV program, adding a new emergency room, a social worker, and a case worker. Schumer said the case worker would be assigned to the person or family affected by gun violence throughout their journey.

With Jacobi officials standing behind her and her colleagues in elected office, Ocasio-Cortez said, "When we have these concerns, when we have crises where violence starts to increase in our community, we know that one of the most effective things we can do is take a public health approach, and it is these heroes right behind us who made this happen."

Praising the SUV program that was founded in 2014 and modeled after the Chicago-based Cure Violence program, Bowman, a former teacher, said, "I would not be a member of Congress if it weren't for Jacobi and SUV. If I didn't have the mentorship, the coaching, the guidance, the friendship as a young kid who used to run these streets like a lot of my former students, I would not



Photo by David Greene

**STATE SEN. LUIS** Sepúlveda presents checks to local violence reduction groups: Stand Up to Violence, Save Our Streets and Guns Down Lives Up, to continue their community outreach during a presentation on Friday, June 4, 2021, to mark Gun Violence Awareness Month.

be standing here today, and it's an innovative program, but it's also a very common-sense program."

Meanwhile, explaining the clinical approach to crime, Dr. Noe Romo, the medical director of the SUV program at Jacobi, said the program was established initially by the hospital's trauma center's collective efforts and response to treating gun violence. He said the center's dedication to using a public health approach was the right one, by not just treating the medical situation, but looking beyond the confines of the hospital "to treat the violence like the disease that it truly is."

According to Romo, the program has, so far, responded to over 1,300 patients admitted for violent trauma, and has decreased the incidents of reinjury by over 50 percent. At the same time, he said the program has decreased shootings in the hospital's response area of the Northeast Bronx by 45 percent.

Romo added, "This funding will allow us to provide wrap-around services to our patients and allow the SUV program to better protect and treat our patients."

During the press conference, a reporter asked Cortez for her stance on bail reform, which some believe is one of the reasons for the skyrocketing crime rate. In response, she said, "This blaming of bail reform is not evidence-based. There's no facts / data to back it up. What we have here is [an] actual clinical approach with facts and evidence to back it up."

Meanwhile, in Albany, first-in-the-nation legislation (A.6762-A Fahy/S.1048-A Myrie) aims to end the 'Iron Pipeline' or flow of illegal guns into New York from other states. The bill has passed the Senate but not yet the Assembly, as of June 7.

The following day Bronx State Sen. Luis Sepúlveda (S.D. 32) allocated grants totaling \$50,000 to three community-based, gun violence intervention groups: Save Our Streets (S.O.S.); Stand Up to Violence (SUV); and Guns Down, Life Up (GDLU) from the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS) in line with the Community Violence Intervention Act (CVIA). S.O.S. received \$25,000, SUV was allocated \$15,000 and GDLU was awarded \$10,000.

Speaking at the event, Sepúlveda said, "The gun epidemic is now a health crisis and is now the leading cause of death of young men of color between the ages of 15 to 25. The violence has a ripple effect that hurts everyone, not only those involved, [but] it traumatizes children, families and entire communities."

After thanking Sepúlveda for the funding, S.O.S. program director, James Reddick, said of the program, "Our goal is to push forward our message of non-violence." He said it was also important for the community to learn how to take care of themselves, and to make sure that the trauma that young people, adults and seniors go through is addressed in a timely fashion, making their lives easier, more productive, and positive.

Marni Confino is director

of social work at NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi under the SUV program. Explaining some of the work his team carries out, he said, "Our staff goes into Bronx communities, their own communities and mediate volatile and dangerous situations with the sole aim of saving lives." Confino added, "Because of their commitment, someone's son returned home instead of winding up dead in our morgue. Because of their encouragement, a young man picked up a video game, instead of a gun."

Later that day, Friday, June 4, National Gun Violence Awareness Day, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark joined police officials, community and clergy leaders, as well as members of several anti-violence groups in "A March to End Gun Violence," through the sometimes, crime-ravaged streets of Fordham Heights and Fordham Manor.

Delayed 30 minutes due to a passing thunderstorm, the crowd of about 75 participants kicked off their march at Slattery Playground on East 183rd Street and marched up Valentine Avenue, amid light drizzle, to East 194th Street. Yelling into a bullhorn, SUV's director of community outreach, Pastor Jay Gooding, led the group with chants of, "Guns Down! Life Up!" and "Who's streets are these?" to which the crowd chanted back, "Our Streets!"

Referring to the area's residents, Clark told the *Norwood News*, after the march, "We're not afraid to walk the same streets that they have to walk. We understand the same violence that they are experiencing, and we care and love them. We want to do all we can to bring attention to the plight that they have been experiencing on a daily basis."

According to Clark, 467 people were shot in the Bronx in 2020. This year, so far, 215 people have been shot in the borough, compared with 82 during the same period last year. In terms of homicides, 54 have been recorded in the Bronx in 2021 so far, 43 of which involved a firearm.

As part of the event, which also included a resource fair, Clark announced the creation of the Bronx Precision Enforcement and Community Engagement (PEACE) initiative.

"With non-fatal shootings, so often, we have victims now that are not cooperating, and you know why?" she asked. "They want to take care of themselves."

Referring to the non-fatal shootings and the new PEACE program, Clark said, "I'm going to treat them just like homicide. We know who the major offenders are. We know who the major crime drivers are."

Explaining the strategic selection of the rally's kickoff point at Slattery Park, located at East 183rd Street, and its end at East 194th Street and Valentine Avenue, Deputy Inspector Thomas Alps, commanding officer of the 52nd precinct, said, "We've seen a lot of young men travel the route that we took along Valentine Avenue... and engage in gun violence that's causing a lot of hardships and death and injuries to many young men on this block and vice versa."

According to Alps, there have been six shootings in and around Valentine Avenue and East 194th Street in the two and a half years since he's been the CO of the 52nd precinct, including a shooting a week earlier on East 194th Street, and another two weeks earlier on East 196th Street and Valentine Avenue.

Alps added, "There's a lot of issues on this block. We have gangs, we have drugs, drug sales. So, the police department knows we can't arrest ourselves out of this situation. We need to bring services to these residents and help these residents who are suffering."

One of those residents, who was sitting outside her building as participants ended the rally due to the arrival of more rain, was asked if she thought such events would help curb gun violence in the area. She responded, "No, it's not going to help. People are dying before they grow up. My little cousin just died. He was shot two years ago."

According to Dr. Kate Eklund of the National Association of School Psychologists, Gun Violence Awareness Day began in Chicago in 2014, and was initially held in honor of Hadiya Pendleton, 15, who was shot and killed just one week after performing at President Barack Obama's inauguration parade in 2013.



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