By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY

The relative and literal “calm before the storm” on the afternoon and early evening of Wednesday, Sept. 1, perhaps lured many Bronxites into a fall sense of security that then-impending Storm Ida would not be as extreme as forecast. The consequences of such nonchalance proved to be devastating.

Between noon and 6 p.m., the day was overcast, humidity was at 82 percent, temperatures ranged from 68 to 72 degrees F, southwesterly winds were traveling at 11.8 mph but there was no rain. However, at 6.18 p.m., the National Weather Service (NWS) tweeted that tornado warnings had been issued for New York, Connecticut and New Jersey and the next three hours saw a deluge of rainfall which continued through the night.

By 9 p.m., NWS had issued a flash flood warning to all New Yorkers via their cell phones. Residents were instructed not to travel unless they were fleeing a flooded area. “This is a dangerous and life-threatening situation,” the warning read. A half an hour later, NWS tweeted that a flash flood emergency warning had been issued for Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

NWS officials later clarified that Flash Flood Emergency alerts are only issued when an area experiences 6 to 10 inches of rainfall over several hours. “A flash flood emergency is issued for exceedingly rare situations when a severe threat to human life and catastrophic damage from a flash flood is happening or will happen soon,” a tweet from the service read.

In the Bronx, Breaking News Network (BNN) began to report...
Bronx Legislators, Activists Call Out City Plan to End “Solitary Confinement”

By DAWN CLANCY

When Melania Brown, 33, heard that New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio had publicly vowed in June 2020 to end solitary confinement, Brown hoped she might finally make good on a promise she, herself, had made to her deceased sister.

Brown’s younger sister, Layleen Xtravaganza Cubilette-Polanco, 27, died a preventable death following an epileptic seizure on June 7, 2019, while she was held in segregated confinement on Rikers Island.

NBC News reported that Polanco was arrested in April 2019 on misdemeanor assault charges, was held at Rikers on $500 bail, and that records indicated she had been placed in segregated confinement for assaulting a corrections officer.

The Bronx District Attorney’s Office found that staff had left Polanco alone for up to 47 minutes around the time of her death. However, people placed in segregated confinement were required to be checked every 15 minutes, especially those who were vulnerable.

Time magazine reported that Polanco’s period in segregated confinement followed a stay in hospital where she had received psychiatric care.

In August 2020, the City news publication reported that Polanco’s family agreed to a landmark lawsuit settlement from Level 1 to Level 2 over the 15-day duration, and release from Level 2 in 15 days; precludes the extension of RMAS punitive measures, except when necessary, requiring documentation that demonstrates a clear threat to safety, and allows the inmate to appeal the extension with attorney representation; and individualized behavioral support plans.

(continued on page 8)
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Some Recent Verdicts & Recoveries for Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction Accident</td>
<td>$19,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truck Accident</td>
<td>$10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Misconduct</td>
<td>$28,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elevator Accident</td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Accident</td>
<td>$1,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slip &amp; Fall Accident</td>
<td>$2,650,000</td>
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This week, we asked readers their thoughts on U.S. President Joe Biden’s decision to end America’s longest war in Afghanistan.

"I think it’s about time they did this. I am so happy to hear that they’re doing this. They’ve been in Afghanistan for such a long time, I think it’s about time they do pull them out. No, it wasn’t done the right way. I don’t believe so, but few wars end peacefully. I don’t believe this world learned anything from the occupation. I think it’s gotten worse. We’ve gotten very stupid." Kendall Levine

Hunts Point

"It was a horrible ending, leaving all of our stuff and leaving Americans behind. The killing of our 13 men and women was a disgrace and Biden is a coward. He should have gotten all of our men and women out first, with all of our equipment, but instead they killed 13 of our people and he let them walk. He should have gone back in, took our stuff back, and killed them all. This wouldn’t fly with Donald Trump. Kill them all like they wouldn’t hesitate to kill all of us. Don’t forget 9/11. I believe in an eye for an eye." Barbara Cafaro Jusino

Yorktown Heights, Westchester

"We, as a nation, must realize that democracy in the United States has been in great peril for some time now. As a Muslim American, in my opinion, what unfolded on Jan. 6, just made us more aware of the evil tyranny of those who oppose a civilized society, still exists within our ranks of government, and until true leaders understand, and actually take all the necessary measures of our justice system to deter such actions that occurred on Jan. 6, we will still be a country with insecurities and unrest. President Biden’s decision to leave Afghanistan and abandon military hardware has great concerns to me, especially not knowing who’s going to be in the country’s new cabinet." Aldo Rafael Perez

Bedford Park

"In my opinion, we should have withdrawn from Afghanistan, but more responsibly. We left so much military equipment behind in the hands of the Taliban fighters. We also left many Americans stranded and that’s what I mean about responsibility. Would Al-Qaeda attack us again? That depends on the president. He must demonstrate force!"

Rev. Oswald Denis

Morrisania

Our mission in Afghanistan was to take out Osama bin Laden and his organization, which we did. Unfortunately, we did not foresee a war among different terrorist organizations. The transition of power from the U.S. to the Taliban was not peaceful as ISIS-K instigated the violence, but like the saying goes, ‘The enemy of our enemy is our friend.’ The Taliban is our enemy, but a lesser evil of the two. I believe we should have had SOCOM (U.S. Special Operations Command) stay until every American was safely evacuated. I feel that President Biden showed a lot of weakness and another 9/11 will eventually occur."

Joseph Ronda

Throgs Neck

DOT: Expand Speed Camera Use in School Zones

By SÍLE MOLONEY

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Hank Gutman is calling for the expanded use of cameras in school zones, following two fatal crashes which occurred over the weekend of Aug. 27, one on East Fordham Road in the Bronx, and one in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn.

Under prevailing State legislation, cameras in school zones can only legally operate between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., Monday to Friday. “This weekend saw two high-speed, fatal crashes on our streets, both of which occurred within school zones, near speed cameras we aren’t legally allowed to operate,” said Gutman. “Once again, we urge the state legislature to allow our cameras to operate 24/7. There must be consequences for dangerous drivers, no matter what time of the week they break the law. Speed cameras are an efficient, equitable way to reduce speeding, and we must do everything in our power to stop violence on our streets before it happens,” he added.

On Aug. 28, at 8:42 p.m., two pedestrians were struck by a vehicle at East Fordham Road and Morris Avenue in Fordham Manor. Both female victims, a 44 and a 53-year-old suffered trauma throughout the body and were transported to St. Barnabas Hospital, where the 44-year-old was pronounced deceased, and the 53-year-old was listed in stable condition.

A preliminary investigation determined that an unidentified vehicle was traveling eastbound on East Fordham Road when the driver failed to properly navigate the roadway and struck the 44-year-old woman. The vehicle also collided with some metal items that were on the sidewalk, causing them to injure the 53-year-old. The driver fled the scene and NYPD is investigating the incident.

The deceased was identified as Murielle Gousse, 44, of Prospect Avenue in the Bronx. The Brooklyn crash occurred at Halsey Street and Marcus Garvey Boulevard, causing a 45-year-old man severe trauma to the head and he was pronounced deceased later at Interfaith Hospital. A preliminary investigation determined the man had been driving a Suzuki motorcycle and collided with an unidentified, dark-colored sedan.

The driver fled the scene, and the NYPD is investigating the incident. The deceased was identified as Donnell, L Oakes, 45, of Charlotte, NC.

According to DOT, one-third of fatal crashes on City streets last year happened in school speed zones during overnight and weekend hours when cameras were not active. DOT officials are urging the State legislature to pass S5602/A6681, a bill sponsored by State Sen. Andrew Gounardes and Assembly Member Deborah Glick, which would allow DOT’s cameras to operate 24/7.
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PORFAVOR PRACTICA LA DISTANCIA SOCIAL
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B.R.A.G. & St. Barnabas Partner for New Youth Boxing Program

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Since the second week of July, a group of four young Bronxites have been meeting at St. Barnabas Hospital’s Healthplex in Little Italy on Thursday and Friday evenings for hour-long fitness and boxing classes. The classes are the latest initiative by St. Barnabas Hospital and the Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.), a cure violence program.

The classes are part of a B.R.A.G., 12-week, pilot program which will end in October. Norwood News spoke to David Caba, senior program director at B.R.A.G., on July 29 about the new initiative. He said it’s just one of B.R.A.G.’s many programs which helps young people stay away from high-risk activities and grew out of B.R.A.G.’s long-time partnership and hospital response program with St. Barnabas.

“It’s really designed for the young people that come into the emergency room of St. Barnabas hospital, recover from their injuries, and now it’s time for them to get physically fit and strong again and learn the art of self-defense, which is boxing,” he said. “It teaches things like discipline and accountability, responsibility, and an overall sense of well-being, mental and physical health.”

According to Caba, the program is designed so that participants meet on Thursdays and Fridays at 6 p.m., because it’s at these times when young people are most likely to get involved with high-risk activities.

“They’re with us in the evenings on Thursdays and Fridays, the next 12 weeks,” he told the Norwood News. “That gives us a huge opportunity to turn them, push them, nudge them in the right direction, and try to keep them there when it’s all said and done,” said Caba.

Daniel Bonilla, clinical integration director at St. Barnabas Healthplex Fitness Center, is one of the program’s instructors. He reiterated Caba’s point, saying that gun violence is most prevalent in the Bronx on Thursday and Friday evenings. He said youth are less likely to get into trouble if they’re in class with him, and when they leave class, they are hopefully too exhausted to engage in violent activities.

For the week ending Aug. 30, murders in the Bronx were up 40 percent compared to the same period last year, the number of shootings had increased by 36.4 percent compared to the same period last year, and the number of shooting victims was also up by 33.4 percent compared to the same period last year. In the 48th precinct, which covers Little Italy, murder is down compared to the same period last year as of Aug. 30, but shooting incidents are up by 21.2 percent and the number of shooting victims has also increased compared to last year by 2.3 percent.

Bonilla said the program organizers chose to provide boxing classes because a lot of kids and youth are into that sport right now. However, he said that if they learn what the body is capable of doing, they are less likely to fight in the streets.

“As counterintuitive as it sounds, if you know how to fight, you don’t really want to fight,” he said.

Jool Castillo, BRAG responder supervisor, who happens to be a former professional boxer, said boxing helped him leave behind a life of violence. He said he wants to help show kids in a similar situation that they, too, can do something positive with their lives.

“As long as they’re staying occupied, right? [It’s] what’s important but most important is what they can learn from this program, the discipline, their (continued on page 17)
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7:30pm Prayer Meeting

FRIDAY NIGHT:
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be confined to fenced-in cages which extend out from their cells, keeping inmates physically segregated and making it impossible to implement any congregate, rehabilitative programming.

“It seems outrageous to me that a city that claims to be as progressive as New York would continue to use solitary confinement,” said Jennifer J. Powers, the director of criminal justice advocacy at the Urban Justice Center. “We know that isolating people in this way not only causes harm to them at the moment but has long term consequences as well.”

A study in The Lancet, a British medical journal, found that even a few days of solitary confinement can significantly increase an inmate’s risk of death, once released. The study included roughly 14,000 formerly incarcerated people at a Danish prison. Researchers found that 5 percent of the inmates, most of whom had spent less than a week in solitary, died within five years of release. This compared to 3 percent of former inmates who died following release, who had spent no time in solitary.

Candie Hailey, 37, spent three years in solitary at Rikers for allegedly assaulting a staff member while in protective custody. She told Norwood News she tried to commit suicide 188 times while in solitary and that, occasionally, she struggles with the same urges, post-incarceration. “Sometimes I’ll be sitting down, watching television and I’ll think this is a dream and I’m going to wake up and be back in solitary,” she said.

Today, Hailey lives in South Carolina, and although she’s thousands of miles away from Rikers, there are certain smells and even foods that can send her back to her days in solitary. “I don’t like chicken,” she said. “Like, I like fried chicken, but I don’t like baked chicken. I hate when I go to their restaurant, and I see it because it reminds me of the bloody, undercooked chicken they used to cook at Rikers.”

Hailey, who was acquitted of her charges after going to trial, said, “Solitary is torture. It’s just torturous. It’s inhumane and it’s evil.”

Meanwhile, Chris Moreau, the Mid-Hudson regional vice president for the New York State Correction Officers Benevolent Association (NYSCOPA), the union representing the State’s correction officers, contends that currently, solitary confinement doesn’t exist in New York or anywhere else in the United States.

“It’s, you know, a buzz word that everybody clings to,” he said. According to Moreau, what advocates call solitary confinement is a necessary disciplinary tool that correction officers use to keep staff and inmates safe from those inmates who get violent.

Moreau said inmates who commit crimes are pulled out of the general population, are held in secure housing units, and cannot move about the facility unattended. “Even if they’re in the SHUs, inmates have access to recreation. They have access to programming. They have access to counselors and their attorneys,” Moreau said. “They’re seen by medical, and this is all time spent out of the cell. They’re given tablets, and some even have television and radios, depending on the facility.”

After the HALT Act was signed into law in April 2021, the New York State Council of Probation Administrators (NYSCOPA) filed a federal lawsuit against the State and NYS DOC to overturn the legislation. They say, if implemented, it would expose officers to a level of inmate violence that would put their lives at even greater risk.

NYSCOPA analyzed data provided by the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and found that from 2012 to 2020, inmate-on-staff attacks in NYS prisons increased by 100 percent, and inmate-on-inmate attacks increased by 85 percent, despite a 37 percent decrease in the total inmate population.

Jeff Dumas, 54, a retired sergeant who worked at DOCCS for 25 years, said, “These politicians lose sense of the fact that they are condemning what we do to keep ourselves safe from murderers, rapists, child molesters, gang bangers, thieves, and drug peddlers,” he said. “What about the normal person who’s just going to work to earn a wage, and go home to his family? They’ve done nothing wrong, but yet the politicians are going to step on the security procedures that keep officers safe.”

Norwood News attempted to contact two correction officers who were recently hospitalized following an inmate attack. However, to maintain their privacy, both declined to comment.

Currently, activists who seek an end to solitary are working with NYC Council Members Danny Dromm and Keith Powers. They aim to create and pass legislation at City Council level that would amend RMAS and bring it into compliance with HALT.

Norwood News reached out to Dromm’s office to ask if the proposed amended RMAS legislation is expected to pass before Nov. 1. We did not receive an immediate response.

Meanwhile, Jason Kersten, DOC’s press secretary, provided the following statement to Norwood News, on the alleged gaps between HALT and RMAS.

“No, they are not. They are not. We are confident that RMAS complies with HALT when it comes to eliminating solitary, we believe it goes much further. It mandates more programming, eliminates the use of routine restraints, and allows people to communicate with the people next to them for a minimum of 10 hours a day. We don’t claim that it’s perfect, and we will keep refining it after the initial implementation in November.”

*Sile Moloney contributed to this story*
By SARAH HUFFMAN

A housing rally organized by Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15) in Hunts Point on Aug. 3 achieved the desired result: an extension of the State eviction moratorium. In addition, the State moratorium offers greater protections than its federal counterpart, which is also fortunate as in the meantime, the federal moratorium extension has been struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Torres was joined at the Aug. 3 rally, held at 1231 Lafayette Avenue, by New York City Council Member Vanessa Gibson (C.D. 16) and advocates from Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), the Supportive Housing Network of New York, the New York Housing Conference, and the Legal Aid Society. Together, they called for the extension of the eviction moratorium at both State and federal levels, as the country and State continued to battle the effects of the Delta variant amid sluggish COVID-19 vaccination rates.

A previous federal eviction moratorium expired on July 31, and New York State’s moratorium was set to expire one month later, on Aug. 31. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced on Aug. 3 that the federal moratorium would be extended until Oct. 3 for areas experiencing substantial or high levels of COVID-19 community transmission.

In response to the CDC announcement, Torres said, “Although the CDC extended the eviction moratorium, we need New York State government to act. New York must expedite rental assistance to tenants in crisis and extend the State moratorium.” He added, “We cannot allow a single New Yorker to go homeless during the current pandemic and public health emergency.”

The congressman said letting the federal housing moratorium expire in the first place had been a failure on the part of all parties and branches of government. He specifically called out New York State officials for, in his view, a lack of action during the pandemic, citing the fact that New York was one of the last states to extend its eviction moratorium.

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(continued on page 24)
Police Involved Shooting

Protest Turns Violent

A Fordham Heights protest on Sept. 3, at 10:32 p.m. turned violent when protesters knocked over metal barricades and a police vehicle was doused with gasoline. The protest, held outside the 46th precinct, was held in response to the Aug. 29 incident. In a video shared by the NYPD, one person is seen dousing the police van, which police say was occupied, apparently with gasoline. An investigation is underway.

Fordham Manor Robbery

The NYPD is seeking the whereabouts of the man seen in the attached photo who is sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. On Thursday, Aug. 19, at 9:15 a.m. inside a Burlington Coat Factory located at 2543 Webster Avenue in the 52nd precinct, the man attempted to exit the store with merchandise that he didn't pay for. A 47-year-old female store security guard recovered the merchandise and attempted to stop the suspect, who produced a knife and threatened the security guard with it. He then threw a garbage pail at her before fleeing on foot. She was not stabbed, was not struck with the garbage pail, and was not injured.

Man Dies in Norwood

The NYPD confirmed a 41-year-old man died in a Norwood apartment. Officers from the 52nd precinct were called to 333 East 209th Street at 2 p.m. on Saturday, August 21. Upon arrival, they discovered the man unconscious, lying in the hallway of the location. EMS responded and pronounced the man deceased.

His name was not immediately released as it was pending proper family notification. The Office of the City’s Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death.

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COVID-19 Updates
On June 24, 2021, New York State ended the State disaster emergency (PAUSE order) declared on March 7, 2020, to fight COVID-19.
NYS Department of Health (NYS DOH) requires all teachers, administrators, and other school employees to submit weekly COVID-19 testing, unless they show proof of vaccination.
NYS DOH has released official guidance for classroom instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. This can be found on: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/09/school-guidance.pdf
Gov. Kathy Hochul recently signed into law a new moratorium on COVID-19 related residential and commercial evictions, which is in effect until Jan. 15, 2022. To prevent and commercial evictions, which are occurring in unvaccinated people. Between January 17 and August 17, people who are unvaccinated in NYC accounted for:
96.1% of all COVID-19 cases
96.9% of COVID-19 hospitalizations
97.3% of COVID-19 deaths
Resources & Help following Storm Ida
Service centers have opened citywide to support individuals and families affected by the Flash flood emergency that occurred on Sept. 1 following Storm Ida. Services are available to all visitors, and visitors to the sites will not be asked about their immigration status. The Bronx center is located at 2365 Waterbury Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462 (P.S. /M.S. 194). Bronxites can also call 311, or access city services online by visiting NYC.gov/ida.
The office of Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80) is offering support in filing claims for damages. Residents can stop by the assemblywoman’s office any time until Sept. 10 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. for assistance. Call (718) 409-0569 or email district6@nyassembly.gov.
State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi has said The Bronx will receive funding for emergency protective measures, debris removal and repairs to public buildings and infrastructure, as well as direct support for individuals and homeowners. Eligible New Yorkers can receive funds for uninsured or under-insured disaster-caused expenses, such as repair or replacement of personal property or funds for moving and storage, or medical, dental, and childcare.
The link to apply for FEMA financial assistance can be found here: www.disasterassistance.gov. The senator is offering assistance with filing FEMA claims. Contact her office at biaggi@nyassembly.gov or call 718-822-2048.
False Rumors of Illegal Conversion Inspections
DOB officials said rumors on social media that DOB inspectors are going door-to-door, unannounced, asking for access to homes to conduct illegal conversion inspections. Are FALSE. The City received over 2,700 self-reported notifications of storm-damaged property across the five boroughs. These notifications have been self-reported by property owners and tenants living in these properties.
Back-to-School Events
City Council Member Eric Dinowitz and Assemblyman Jefrey Dinowitz are hosting a back-to-school at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center at 3450 DeKalb Avenue, on Sept. 9 at 4 p.m. until supplies last. The National Black Leadership Commission will also host a similar giveaway on Sept. 10 at 3 p.m. at 2976 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx. Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center in Norwood is also hosting a back-to-school event on Saturday, Sept. 11, from noon to 2 p.m., with games, read-along sessions, arts & crafts and more.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES
COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

COVID-19 Updates
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COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

COVID-19 Updates
On June 24, 2021, New York City Council Member Eric Dinowitz and Assemblyman Jefrey Dinowitz are hosting a back-to-school event at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center at 3450 DeKalb Avenue, on Sept. 9 at 4 p.m. until supplies last. The National Black Leadership Commission will also host a similar giveaway on Sept. 10 at 3 p.m. at 2976 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx. Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center in Norwood is also hosting a back-to-school event on Saturday, Sept. 11, from noon to 2 p.m., with games, read-along sessions, arts & crafts and more.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES
COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

COVID-19 Updates
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CITY OF NEW YORK
Bronx Community Board 7

JOB VACANCY NOTICE
Civil Service Title: Community Coordinator (Full-Time)
Title Code: 56058
Number of Positions: One
Salary Range: $54,100 to $83,981

Bronx Community Board No. 7 is a New York City agency established to identify the needs of our community and advocate through city government to meet those requirements. The 59 community boards are independent City agencies that advise on land use, the City budget, municipal service delivery, and other matters on a geographically exclusive basis. Bronx Community Board 7 serves the neighborhoods Bedford Park, Fordham, Jerome Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Moshulu, Norwood, & University Heights of the Bronx.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Community Coordinator, under supervision and direction of the District Manager, assists in resolving community issues and is responsible for various administrative tasks. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Participate at meetings/events to represent the District Manager (DM) as assigned
- Assist in organizing monthly meetings of the board and its committees, participating in all full Board meetings and in committee meetings, including evening and weekend meetings as assigned by the DM
- Ensure all meeting notices and minutes are received, distributed and posted on time, coordinating with staff and IT (DoITT)
- Prepare and update board member attendance reports and other reports as assigned
- Assist the District Manager to process complaints from residents of the community district relating to services provided by municipalities or assisting to attain services from CBO’s and reporting the problems and actions taken
- Assists in the day-to-day operations of the office including internal budget, processes constituent complaints, provides accurate information to the public and maintains files, service request log and records both paper and electronic
- Review invoices and input and/or approve purchase orders and entries in the city Financial Management System (FMS) for further approval and assist in maintaining financial records
- Assists in policy and strategy recommendations including but not limited to, CB7 Capital and Expense budgets of NYC, and executes board policies
- Establishes and maintains a working relationship with local stakeholders with outreach and database building
Responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assist in maintaining and updating the Community Board 7 social media platforms to increase community engagement
- Assist in responding and preparing correspondence from the Board and the public, conducting research as necessary and tracking key data
- Perform other tasks as assigned to support the mission and work of the Board and District Manager

**Qualification Requirements**

1. Must be able to travel locally and attend evening and weekend meetings/events
2. Education and/or experience which is equivalent to “a”, “b” or “c” below:
   a) A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college and two years of experience in community work or community centered activities in an area related to the duties described above; or
   b) High school graduation or equivalent and six years of experience in community work or community centered activities in an area related to the duties described above; or
   c) Education and/or experience which is equivalent to “a” or “b” above. However, all candidates must have at least one year of experience as described in “a” above.
3. New York City residency is generally required

**Important Skills**

- Cultural sensitivity and competency for a diverse population
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) a plus
- Interest, familiarity and experience with community boards and/or NYC government
- Takes initiative, uses sound judgement and demonstrates service orientation
- Excellent oral and written communications skills a must
- Computer proficiency including mastery in MS Office, Google Drive, social media
- Ability to adapt to change in a fast-paced environment
- Must be a team player and enjoy interacting with people on a daily basis
- Superior organizational skills and keen attention to details, including the ability to effectively juggle multiple projects and meet strict deadlines

(*) Salary Note (2019): for employees with two or more years of continuous city service, the minimum starting salary is $60,403

**To Apply**

EMAIL your cover letter and résumé to: ibravo@cb.nyc.gov no later than Thursday, September 30th, 2021. Please type Community Coordinator in the subject line. *Do not call or visit the Community Board office regarding your application*

- Residents of Bronx Community Board 7 are encouraged to apply
- This position is classified in the Non-Competitive Class
- For Fair Labor Standards Act purposes, this position is Exempt
- This position offers a New York City comprehensive fringe benefits package

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“I Do!” Lehman College Becomes Backdrop for Surprise Engagement of Two Former Students

BY LEHMAN COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

As Lehman students head back to campus for the Fall ‘21 semester, the community has one extra reason to celebrate. Two former students recently got engaged in a surprise proposal outside the campus building where they once attended class together.

Giancarlo Paternoster, 27, proposed to girlfriend, Julia Djokic, 26, in front of Davis Hall on Aug. 19. The two had bonded while taking an organic chemistry course the College offers to post-baccalaureate students preparing for careers in various health professions. Paternoster is now a first-year medical student at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, while Djokic is a first-year student at NYU College of Dentistry.

With help from their former instructor, Sharif Elhakem, Lehman’s chief college laboratory technician, Paternoster tricked Djokic into thinking she’d been asked to return to campus to speak to a pre-dental student group. Instead, Elhakem led her to Davis Hall, where she found Paternoster with a bouquet of roses, a sparkling diamond ring, and a life-changing question. Their big moment came roughly two years after they took their final exams and completed their organic chemistry class.

Standing outside Davis Hall, Paternoster said, “We fell in love here, in this building... This is really where we laid the foundation for our relationship.” Paternoster and Djokic initially met in February 2018 while taking a biology course at Purchase College, SUNY. As the end of the semester neared, they discovered that they needed to take organic chemistry as a prerequisite for dental and medical school and discussed possible options. Each decided to take the summer class at Lehman, Djokic said.

However, Djokic hails from Somers, New York, about 35 miles from the Bronx, and initially, she had doubts that she could make the trek from her home to the Bronx campus. Paternoster, who lives in Scarsdale, stepped in with a fix. “As he usually does, Giancarlo came up with a solution to make my life easier, which was to drive to his house each morning where we would then take his car and drive the final 20 minutes to Lehman together,” Djokic said.

The two initially considered themselves good friends, but after a summer of teaming up to prepare for exams and lab assignments, they realized there was something special about their relationship and started dating that fall.

To others, however, their personal chemistry was apparent, both inside and outside the lab. “I could see the spark there three years ago,” Elhakem said. “They were becoming closer in their friendship and studying together and helping each other out in the course... I knew, with time, something might happen.”

Djokic concurred. “I think everybody saw it before we did,” she said.

With their engagement taking place at Davis Hall, the couple now has a new reason to come back and visit the campus. Both had already felt a strong connection to the college. “I absolutely loved my experience at Lehman,” Djokic said. “The staff I met were incredibly kind, the students were all hard-working, and there was a warm feeling of camaraderie amongst them. Even though I was only at Lehman for a short time, I felt very at home there.”

Paternoster agreed. “I found the learning environment to be kind, yet rigorous, and I found my fellow students to be both challenging and supportive,” he said. “I’m grateful for the guidance I received while I was enrolled as a student, and I look forward to being able to pass my blessings on to others when I am a physician.”

Editor’s Note: Norwood News extends our best wishes to the happy couple!
the streets.”

selves, and a place to come, other than
where they “just have an outlet for them-
participants not only about boxing, but also
classes in a way that teaches the par-
ing skills on Fridays.

on Thursdays and Bonilla teaches box-
participants strength and conditioning
plex Fitness Center, usually teaches the
general manager at St Barnabas Health-
boxing technique sessions. Albert Jovel,
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organized to provide the

The classes are broken up into
strength and conditioning sessions and
boxing technique sessions. Albert Jovel,
general manager at St Barnabas Health-
usually teaches the

classes in a way that teaches the par-
ing skills on Fridays.

Jovel said the idea is to provide the
classes in a way that teaches the partic-
not only about boxing, but also
how to move better, and how to deal with
their bodies better. He said it’s a place
where they “just have an outlet for them-
, and a place to come, other than
the streets.”

He said he would also like to see the
youth take the knowledge they acquire
about health and fitness with them
throughout the rest of their lives.

BRAG purchased boxing equipment
for each of the participants to make
sure that they each had everything
they needed to be successful in the pro-
gram.

“When you’re working with youth
and you’re trying to keep them engaged,
you want to make sure that you have
everything that’s necessary for them
to see that we’re taking this seriously,”
Caba said. “We want to invest in them,
and we want them to maintain this long
after the 12-week curriculum is over.”

Bonilla said that after working with
the youth for a few weeks, he’s learned
that they are respectful of the stuff,
the equipment, and the environment
they’re in when they come to class.

“They’re really good kids,” Bonilla
said. “That’s the thing that strikes me
the most. They’re actually really good
kids when you talk to them. So, the
goal is to keep them off the streets, give
them something they really enjoy and
make sure they’re too tired to do any-
thing bad.”

While B.R.A.G. usually targets
young people aged 16 to 25 for its other
programs, the participants chosen for
the boxing program are between 14 and
18. Castillo picked the kids for this
particular program based on the prog-
ress he had seen them make in other
B.R.A.G. youth programs. He said they
are teens from the local neighborhood,
and he has known them since they were
young.

One of the class participants we
spoke to in early August said he’d never
boxed before but joined the class after
his uncle pitched the idea to him. “I’ve
been fighting all my life, like, just regu-
lar street fighting and stuff like that,”
he said. “So, getting into this, it’s a good
thing because instead of fighting out-
side, I get properly trained and stuff
like that.”

After the pilot program ends, Jovel
said the organizers hope to operational-
ize and expand the program over time,
eventually expanding to more than just
boxing. He said he would like to see the
program fully operational with a con-
stant flow of kids and dedicated facil-
ities.

“So, the idea is that if the first pi-
lot goes well, it will go into the second
iteration of it… into, you know, more
advanced skills leading to an eventual
sparring. So, the carrot, if you will, is
like an actual sparring session and
learning how to, you know, not fight but
box and if that works, then identifying
other cohorts of kids and making more
of a program,” he said.

Caba reiterated the ideas behind
Jovel’s vision for the future, saying he
wants the program to become a stan-
dard programming initiative under
BRAG and St. Barnabas.

Castillo said the process of getting
the program going has been long, but
he’s excited to see how it’s growing. “I’m
very happy and I can’t even tell you how
I feel about how happy I am [to be] work-
ing with these kids and knowing that
they are actually pursuing something
that they’ve been asking me since they
were kids, when they were younger
kids,” he said. “I’m just looking forward
to keep working and for this program to
keep growing,” he said.

B.R.A.G. operates under the non-
profit, Good Shepherd Services, in con-
junction with New York City’s crisis
management system and the Mayor’s
Office to Prevent Gun Violence and
runs a range of other programs in the
Fordham, Belmont, and Wakefield sec-
tions of the Bronx.

*Síle Moloney contributed to this
story.
Report: Quarter of the Bronx Still Food Insecure

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Public and Community Meetings

The 52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. at the precinct at 3100 Webster Avenue. Masks and social distancing are required at the meeting. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824 for further details.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 28 at 6.30 p.m. Contact ibravo@cb.nyc.gov and mirosario@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list. Join the meeting online at https://zoom.us/j/83066035540 or by phone on (646) 558-8656. Meeting ID: 830 6603 5540.

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 was held on Sept. 1. For further details, contact bedfordmoshola@verizon.net.

Ridgewood Savings Bank Sedgwick Avenue Branch to Remain Open Finally

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Ridgewood Savings Bank (“Ridgewood”) announced Wednesday, Sept. 1, that its Sedgwick Avenue branch, located at 3899 Sedgwick Avenue in the Van Cortlandt Village section of the Bronx, will finally remain open. In May, the bank had announced the branch was expected to close, as reported, much to the disappointment of residents.

“We are very pleased to make this announcement,” said Leonard Stekol, Ridgewood Savings Bank chairman, president and CEO. “It’s truly exciting to remain a part of this great community and to continue to provide the award-winning banking services and community programming to which our customers are accustomed.”

Bank officials said that in addition to discussions with the office of New York State Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz of the 81st A.D., over the past several weeks the bank has worked closely with numerous other partners including the New York State Department of Financial Services, University Neighborhood Housing Program, Van Cortlandt Jewish Center, Bronx Community Board 8, Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development, and the Bronx Borough President’s Office to pursue a Banking Development District (BDD) program designation to help Ridgewood Savings Bank continue to serve the financial needs of the community from its Sedgwick Avenue branch location.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. said the bank had provided services to an underbanked community for many years, and the Northwest Bronx would benefit greatly as a result of the Sedgwick Avenue branch staying open. “The potential closure of this branch would have severely limited the availability of banking services to this topographically isolated section of the borough, and I am thrilled residents in the area will

(continued on page 26)
If you’ve ever been part of the end-of-life planning process for a loved one who has died, you know how stressful it can become. So many decisions, so many options...and it’s rare for the family to agree on what’s best.

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As a complimentary gift, you’ll also receive a Living Will Kit and Personal Planning Organizer, easy-to-use resources for gathering information and putting your wishes in writing in one place.

These trolley tours are our no-obligation service to the community. We want to help you, however we can, to make a difficult time a little easier! Won’t you join us?

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Pelham Parkway Residents Protest City’s E-Scooter Program

By SHANIA DEGROOT

A heavy downpour of rain reduced the impact of a rally organized by Friends of Pelham Parkway (FPP) on Thursday, Aug. 12., near the e-scooter roadway on Pelham Parkway North and Holland Avenue. Only about five people remained to protest the arrival of new e-scooter corrals in Pelham Parkway North.

Roxanne Delgado, founder of the group, wrote a recent op-ed in the Norwood News, in which she voiced her opposition to the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT)’s e-scooter program. She alleges DOT did little to communicate with residents about the important changes impacting their community, referring to the launch on Aug. 17 of the new e-scooter program in the area.

“The launch provoked safety concerns among some residents, along with calls for environmental justice and a preference for more Citi Bikes over e-scooters. Phase I of the project spans areas from Eastchester to Morris Plains Road, and south for three blocks along Pelham Parkway South to White Plains Road, and extends from Bolton Street, east along Pelham Parkway South to White Plains Road, and south for three blocks to Brady Avenue. However, Delgado said it doesn’t cover Pelham Parkway North, and reiterated that it doesn’t represent the residents. Norwood News reached out to the BID for comment and will update this story upon receipt of any feedback we receive.

Meanwhile, Delgado said FPP have been cleaning and maintaining the Parkway for at least five years, and... (continued on page 22)
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Bronxites more susceptible to COVID-19. The Bronx is the unhealthiest in the country, who don’t care about this community, making decisions that will impact us in a negative manner. We have been overburdened. None of our concerns and needs have ever been addressed.”

As someone who pays taxes, and rents property in Pelham Parkway, Kevin Arnold, who also attended the rally, agrees that DOT should have engaged more with residents before removing vehicle parking space and replacing it with a scooter corral. He said it could have been used for disability parking rather than for e-scooters.

Arnold said DOT has also failed to address potholes and poor street-lighting that makes it hard to see parking signs at night. Sal Foreman of Pelham Parkway also attended the rally and said he received a parking ticket for $115 two weeks prior, after parking on Cruger Avenue in an e-scooter parking space. He said poor street lighting meant he didn’t see the e-scooter parking sign at night.

Arnold said scooter riders ride down the street in the opposite direction of regular traffic flow and ride recklessly on the sidewalk, without wearing safety helmets. He added that e-scooter riders are dangerous to drivers of other vehicles since other drivers can be sued if they hit an e-scooter rider, but e-scooter riders do not face the same consequences.

According to DOT, e-scooters never have handlebars and a floorboard or seat and may be powered by electric and/or human power. They must not be ridden at speeds in excess of 15 mph. Norwood News asked DOT to clarify that the 15 mph-speed limit applies because DOT officials said e-scooters may be ridden in bike lanes and on streets with a speed limit of no greater than 30 mph, but they cannot be ridden on sidewalks.

Meanwhile, Delgado concurred that safety is a real concern, and that over the last year, the community has been burdened with illegal mopeds, ATVs, dirt-bikes, and e-bikes driving recklessly on the streets and greenways. “Does DOT address this to make it more safe for us?” she asked. “No, they add more fuel to the fire by putting 6,000 more scooters on our streets.” According to DOT, helmets are recommended for all e-scooter riders and are required for 16 and 17-year-olds.

For Delgado, the DOT plan is also discriminatory. She said even though Pelham Parkway is one whole community, there is a difference between Pelham Parkway North and Pelham Parkway South, not only in terms of the zip code but also in income.

She said a significant number of NYCHA residents and a large immigrant community from Latin America live on the north side, while the south side encompasses more of the business corridor. She alleged that non-negotiable scooter corral installations targeted for South Pelham Parkway did not go ahead finally while they did in the North.

In conclusion, Delgado said she had two demands for DOT. Firstly, she wants all Pelham Parkway residents to be treated equally, meaning if there are no e-scooter corracl s in the southern part of the neighborhood, it should be the same in the North. Her second demand is community engagement. She said the e-scooter program should not have been launched before DOT met with the community and addressed their concerns.

“At least give us the respect that you heard us first before you decide to go ahead with a program no one wants or asks for,” she said. “In fact, we need to make our streets safer and fix all these pot-holes. None of our requests have ever been heard or addressed by DOT.”

A follow-up rally was held at the same location on Saturday, Aug. 14. Norwood News reached out to DOT for further comment, providing copies of Delgado’s requests. The agency had already responded to some but is preparing a summary response to all points raised.
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Eviction Moratorium Extension follows Bronx Rally

(continued from page 9)

of only two states which had failed to deliver rental assistance by the end of June.

Torres also highlighted the fact that less than 1 percent of available [federal] rental assistance had been distributed by the end of July. “New York State has been the most incompetent in administering the rental assistance program,” he said, adding that 24 percent of households in the Bronx owed back-rent, and half a million New Yorkers were in danger of facing eviction.

“Do not evict people from their homes,” he warned. “Give them the opportunity to pay their rent and hold on to their homes with the emergency rental assistance. Families who are in danger of losing their homes should not be faulted for the incompetence of the federal and state government,” he added.

Gibson, who is on track to become The Bronx’s next borough president if she wins the general election in November, reiterated Torres’ message, saying that 24 percent of households in the Bronx owed back-rent, and half a million New Yorkers were in danger of facing eviction. “We know that there are many families that remain behind in their rent,” she said.

The councilwoman said expanding the eviction moratorium would provide families with the stability they needed. “Everyone deserves to have a solid roof over their heads, because the rippling effect of an eviction not only affects that head of household, but their children, and the entire community, who is predominantly immigrant New Yorkers and New Yorkers of color,” she said.

For their part, representatives from CASA said The Bronx continues to be greatly impacted by the pandemic because it is one of the poorest parts of the City. They said CASA had seen, firsthand, how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected Bronx residents and that they knew people who were not getting the money they needed.

Laura Mascuch, executive director of Supportive Housing Network in New York, said 74 percent of people in the homeless system were people of color, even though they make up only 24 percent of the population. She added that the eviction moratorium had helped reduce homelessness by over 25 percent since March 2020.

“We need an extended eviction moratorium to ensure that housing court isn’t flooded with eviction proceedings, and the shelter system and streets with what can be thousands of people. The human and economic costs are far too high,” she said.

Meanwhile, Jessica Bellinder, a supervising attorney with the Legal Aid Society in the Bronx, told Norwood News she worried that without the moratorium extension, there would be a wave of evictions because many people were not aware of their rights or the resources available to them to prevent such evictions.

“It’s reprehensible that we would, in the midst of this enormous health crisis, place this additional stress and anxiety on people that they might lose their homes because that is the kind of stress that ripples through the entire family and it causes an untold number of consequences,” said Bellinder.

Torres stressed that, ultimately, an eviction moratorium was not a permanent solution to the housing crisis. Citing the “Ending the Homelessness Harbor Act” a proposed federal bill of which he is a sponsor, as a systemic solution to the housing problem, explaining that it would establish a universal voucher program to ensure all eligible households could receive rental assistance.

The congressman said that even before the pandemic, more than 580,000 people were experiencing homelessness on any given night, and 10.5 million households were paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent.

Bellinder agreed with Torres, saying a long-term solution would be rents that are in line with people’s incomes.

On Aug. 27, CNN reported that in an unsigned, eight-page opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court had challenged the CDC’s authority to further extend the federal eviction moratorium to Oct. 3, insisting that Congress had been on notice that a further extension would almost surely require new legislation and highlighting that Congress had failed to act during the weeks leading up to the federal moratorium’s expiration date.

The Supreme Court also struck down one part of New York’s eviction moratorium, the fact that the tenant hardship declaration form did not provide a way for landlords to challenge it.

On Sept. 2, New York State Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a new State eviction moratorium on COVID-related residential and commercial evictions into law, effective through Jan. 15, 2022. The new law also expands the State’s rental assistance program and accompanying eviction protections to localities that had previously opted out of the program.

Hochul said the pandemic had created unimaginable anxiety for families and business owners who have lost income and are struggling to pay the rent every month. “To help remedy the Supreme Court’s heartless decisions, striking down the New York and the Biden administration’s moratoriums on evictions, we are enacting a new moratorium on residential and commercial evictions and extending the protections of New York’s Safe Harbor Act to Jan. 15. These steps will alleviate the crisis facing vulnerable New Yorkers who are suffering through no fault of their own.”

The law also enacts foreclosure protections for landlords and homeowners. New York now boasts the strongest eviction protections in the nation for those facing hardship due to COVID-19.

The new governor urged New Yorkers to apply to the State’s emergency rental assistance program (ERAP). State officials confirmed that applicants to the program are automatically protected from eviction while their applications are pending and they will receive a year of eviction protections if they qualify for assistance. To apply, go to: https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/.

State officials also confirmed that as of August 31, more than $1.2 billion in funding has either been obligated or distributed through ERAP, including more than $300 million in direct payments to more than 23,000 landlords.

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) said the new State eviction moratorium was as much health policy as it was economic policy. “We must do everything we possibly can to keep New Yorkers safe amidst a surge in the Delta variant,” he said. “This law will help thousands of families keep a roof over their heads and doors open for small businesses as the State works to improve and streamline the ERAP program and we all work together on a recovery from this deadly pandemic.”

*Site Moloney contributed to this story.*
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have an easily accessible community bank close to home,” Diaz Jr. said. “I want to thank the team at Ridgewood Savings Bank for being good neighbors, hearing our concerns, and taking action.”

Jim Buckley, executive director of the University Neighborhood Housing Program, said the news of the Sedgwick branch remaining open and receiving Banking Development District designation came as a huge relief to UNHP, especially during a time of multiple, consecutive bank closures and economic uncertainty in The Bronx, as reported.

“This is a win for The Bronx as a whole!” Buckley said. “UNHP applauds the work of Ridgewood Savings to find a way to keep their Sedgwick Avenue branch open. The bank reached out to us and others in the community as it considered closing the branch. After several conversations, it is really good to know that they heard our feedback, and because of their commitment to serving their customers, as they say, they’ve found a solution.”

Jack Kleinfeld is chair of the Board of Trustees of Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC). He said as a key factor in the social and religious life of the Van Cortlandt community, the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center recognized the need and benefit of having the branch and Ridgewood, which he described as a “partner,” remain in the neighborhood. “It allows them to continue to serve as a financial anchor for the area, just as VCJC serves in other ways,” said Kleinfeld. “VCJC was pleased to be able to support their efforts to stay and is even more pleased at their effort’s success.”

Meanwhile, Laura Spalter, chair of Bronx Community Board 8, said the board members were strong advocates for Ridgewood because it provided essential services for local residents and small businesses. “There is no other bank branch within the vicinity of Van Cortlandt Village, and the branch’s closure would have been extremely detrimental to the quality of life of our residents and the overall commercial ecosystem,” she said.

For his part, Dinowitz echoed the sentiments of others involved in the negotiations, saying it was an incredible benefit to the community that Ridgewood was able to keep open the branch. “This particular neighborhood has a dearth of accessible banks to serve local residents and businesses, and I am very pleased that people will not have to travel extensive distances over significant elevation changes in order to access their money,” he said.

“Thank you to the leadership team at Ridgewood Savings Bank for being responsive to our community concerns, and let this be an example for all banks that want to understand how to be good community partners to Bronxites.”

Ridgewood had notified its Sedgwick Avenue and Jerome Avenue branch customers that in order to better serve the community’s banking needs, a new state-of-the-art branch, located at 320 E. 204th Street in the Norwood section of the borough, would open in August.

Bank officials said, like the Sedgwick branch, the new Norwood branch will offer all the usual banking services, products, and community-based programming, “along with the same, trusted and friendly personnel customers have come to know so well.” They added that existing customers will not need to take any action on their account(s) at the Sedgwick branch.
Storm Ida Rips Through The Bronx

(continued from page 1)

road flooding on the I-95 (New England Thruway Interchange) at Bartow Avenue in Co-op City at around 10 p.m., citing reports by emergency service units that numerous people in cars were stranded in the water. A half an hour later, similar reports were received at the Bronx River Parkway and Westchester Avenue in Soundview.

Between 11 p.m. and 11:45 p.m., BNN issued a traffic alert at the Cross Bronx Expressway and Jerome Avenue at the Mt Eden/Morris Heights border. Emergency units reported that both eastbound and westbound lanes of the expressway were shut down due to flooding.

At 11:20 p.m., BNN reported an officer-assist request, received by Yonkers police department, for two officers seemingly in the Bronx’s 47th precinct who were reportedly standing on the roof of a police vehicle which was under water on the Bronx River Parkway at the City/County border in Woodlawn.

Citizen’s App users posted at around 9:50 p.m. that several people were reportedly trapped inside Bedford Park Boulevard subway station, which serves the D and the B lines, and that emergency personnel were responding to the situation.

A separate Citizen’s App post that night showed a video of severe flooding in the South Bronx at Crotona Avenue and Claremont Parkway with motorists also trapped in cars due to the severe conditions.

Janno Lieber, acting MTA chair and CEO, had, at that stage, instructed New Yorkers not to attempt to travel until further notice, and at around midnight, both New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Gov. Kathy Hochul had issued a state of emergency.

At 12.24 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 2, the 52nd precinct sent a tweet which read, “The following intersections are closed due to flooding, avoid these areas. Bedford Park Blvd and Webster Ave. Parkside Place and Webster Avenue. Mosholu Parkway from Van Cortlandt Ave to Jerome Avenue.”

A photo shared on Twitter at 3.41 a.m. on Sept. 2 by former City Limits editor-in-chief, Jarrett Murphy, showed a flood-lit and flooded Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood, with the message, “The Williamsbridge Oval was once a reservoir. It is now a shallow lake.”

At 5:26 a.m. on Sept. 2, Citizen users said firefighters were reportedly rescuing around 50 people from an estimated 80 out-of-service vehicles at the Major Deegan Expressway at 230th Street in Kingsbridge.

On Thursday morning, Lieber provided a statement on the impact of the storm on the subway system, urging residents to stay home while water was being pumped from stations.

Images captured by Norwood News at around 8:45 a.m. on Thursday morning showed some vehicles almost submerged on the Major Deegan Expressway, while at Kingsbridge Road and Bailey Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, large fallen trees were seen on top of two abandoned cars. On seeing the downed trees, people passing the scene were heard saying, “Oh my God, oh my God!” and expressed their hopes that the occupants got out alive.

At 5:16 a.m. and 5:47 a.m. on Sept. 2, according to BNN, emergency units reported standstill traffic from Yonkers on the Major Deegan Expressway in Van Cortlandt Park, with the NYPD reporting major flood conditions and warning of a potential impact to a retaining wall at the location.

Later that morning, at 8:56 a.m., BNN reported on a partial roof collapse at 2980 Third Avenue in Woodstock. Assistance was requested from NYC Department of Buildings (DOB).

At 8:58 a.m., Citizen App users said police allegedly received a report of a ceiling collapse on a fourth-floor building at 1704 Seddon Street in Westchester Heights. They said that FDNY reportedly responded and there were no injuries.

At 11:20 a.m., BNN reported that highway units were requesting aviation units to perform a flyover to check for occupants in any cars which remained in the flood water on the Major Deegan Expressway.

At 1:15 p.m., it published reports of an apparent sink hole opening in the middle of the street at Van Nest Avenue and Radcliff Avenue in Morris Park and at 2:30 p.m., there were reports of a water rescue of two people allegedly stuck in the mud at Pelham Bay Bridge. They allegedly refused medical attention.

On Sept. 4 at 12:43 p.m., BNN reported that a retaining wall collapsed following Storm Ida at 1107 Boynton Avenue in Soundview and that assistance from DOB had been requested.

A source at the U-Haul company told the Norwood News that all floors at the U-Haul storage facility on W. 230th Street in Kingsbridge had been flooded, but not all customers suffered damage.

Norwood News attempted to corroborate the details of the various unconfirmed, reported incidents with EMS/FDNY, MTA, DOB, and the NYPD. We did not receive an immediate response. We also asked the FDNY for details of any injuries in the Bronx but did not receive an immediate response.

The New York Times reported that 13 people were killed in the City, following the storm, mostly in Queens and Brooklyn. Many lived in basement apartments.

On Friday, Sept. 3, Van Cortlandt Park Alliance shared storm-damaged photos of their flooded swimming pool which they said would be closed for a few days. On Sept. 4, officials confirmed the Park’s resident goats were safe although their hay got wet. Because they are located on higher ground, it didn’t flood. “We want [to] assure everyone they were just fine. They rode out the storm in their ‘goatel’ and Van Cortlandt House Museum kept a close eye on them,” officials said.

In the wake of the storm, Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) have called for funding and construction to speed up the proposed “daylighting” of Tibbetts Brook in Kingsbridge. Daylighting rivers or streams like Tibbetts Brook, which has been partially rerouted underground and covered over, is the process of removing obstructions like concrete or pavement which cover rivers and drainage ways and restores them to their previous condition.

On Sunday, Sept. 5, Norwood News spoke to residents at the newly opened Bronx Service Center set up by the New York Public Engagement Unit to provide assistance with relief efforts following the floods. It is located at P.S./ M.S. 194 at 2865 Waterbury Avenue in Westchester Square.

An official who greeted us at the front desk explained the type of services being offered. “They get your contact information in case anyone needs to contact you, and we have, like, the Red Cross, the Department of Buildings, as well as for rental assistance, COVID testing, vaccines, but it’s really the Red Cross and the Department of Buildings,” the official said.

A female resident of a basement apartment at 2147 Starling Avenue in Castle Hill, said of the damage she incurred, “Beds, clothes, everything, food… Oh my God! I had just gone grocery shopping and $500 down the drain.” Asked where he water came from, she said, “from the street, from the walls, because it seemed like, on the other side, they have the sewer or whatever room… and everything came up and flooded.”

She said she assumed the sewage had not been properly cleaned out and that caused the problem. “It came out from the toilet, the bathtub. I have so many bad videos. It’s depressing.”

Fred Valentin of Throgs Neck Boulevard lives near the Marina Del Rey and said he would be thankful to get some help in his neighborhood if it comes. “If we do, then it’s a big help because I got flooded in my basement and I had my son down there and he lost the computer, the bed, everything downstairs.”

Asked how much water he took in, he said about two feet. “Even my boiler and the hot water tank, I couldn’t even start it,” Valentin said. “We went without (hot) water for three-days. I called to see what they could do to start the hot water. They said, ‘It’s bad.’ I have a contractor and even these people were so busy. They were saying it’s going to take a week to get to me. Imagine something like that happening in the winter! What’s going to happen?”

Asked about two other recent storms that produced over 7 inches of rain, Valentin said, “Yeah, I had a flood, but not as bad as this one. It wasn’t that bad because I had like an inch or an inch-and-a-half, but this…”

He said this time the water was in his backyard and came through the back door. “I thought it was Niagara Falls back there. It was coming to the side of the door and the wall where I have my boiler. Water was pushing out of the wall and that had to be repaired and it had to be sealed. I had to have a contractor come in.” Valentin added that he had a heart problem and had to go for a knee replacement.

Asked if he thinks the City will see another 7 inches of rainfall, he said, “I hope not because right now, I cleaned up downstairs. We had to throw out clothing, appliances, but most of it was my son’s computer. That’s how he does his work for school and all that and it’s a headache.”

Randy Au from Schuylerville said the entire block at Codington Avenue and Crosby Avenue got flooded. “We had backyard flooding that flooded our basement, about a foot, up to my knees in water,” he said. “The basement flooded so the water heater… a bunch of walls… it took a lot of stuff.”

Au said water bubbled out of the sewer line, there was a giant pool in the center of the block and all his neighbors got flooded. He wasn’t sure what the Service Center staff could do. “We don’t know. We’ll see what they say,” he said.

“I have no idea.” Asked if he had experienced flooding during previous storms, Au said he had not, but that it had gotten close a couple of times. “This was the time that it, finally, like, went over and got in.”

Asked if he thought such extensive flooding would become the new normal, he said, “Probably it’s going to happen more and more. That’s what I’m guessing. Yes, if not, it’s going to get worse, so… probably.”
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