



NORWOOD NEWS

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UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS \$2 BILLION DEVELOPMENT ADVANCES



Photo courtesy of Dynamic Star LLC

THE PHOTO CAPTURES a bird's eye view of the site of a new billion-dollar development in the University Heights neighborhood which will be known as Fordham Landing.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Steps for the planned, billion-dollar “Fordham Landing” mixed use, real estate development in University Heights advanced further this week amid news that the

developer, Dynamic Star LLC, had filed construction applications with the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB).

Billed by Crain's Business New York as the largest real

estate development in the City since Hudson Yards, the development has fueled the ongoing debate over balancing the need to create more housing, including affordable housing, with preventing the

displacement of local communities.

Norwood News first reported on the Bronx project, located along the Harlem River shoreline and which
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Police Impersonators get Away with \$130K in Cash and Jewels

By DAVID GREENE

Police continue to search for two, armed home invaders who posed as police officers, tied up the occupants of a Bronx home and made off with \$130K in cash and jewels.

According to NYPD spokesman, Sergeant Edward Riley, officers from the 45th precinct were called to an exclusive home near Country Club Road and Polo Place in the Country Club section of the Bronx at 8.05 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 9.

Riley told the *Norwood News*, "The preliminary investigation determined that two light-skinned males posed as police officers, displayed a handgun, and restrained the two victims with zip ties."

Riley said the victims of the break-fast-time robbery were a 50-year-old man and a 40-year-old woman. *Norwood News* has contacted EMS to inquire about any injuries.

Riley concluded, "The individuals fled the scene inside a white BMW Sport Utility vehicle with approximately \$30,000 in cash, and \$100,000 worth of jewelry. The unoccupied vehicle was recovered shortly thereafter."

Multiple sources and news outlets reported that the vehicle was located at Baisley Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, a short distance away.

EMS reported no transported patients from the scene.

One Citizen's App user, @gg65, in a post on the platform about the Nov. 9 incident, wrote, "2nd time this happened in the last two months, involving the same people. 2 white males dressed as law enforcement. They are targeting specific people who they know. It's not random."

In the context of the Nov. 9 robbery, Riley was asked if there had



Photo by David Greene

A POLICE VEHICLE sits outside the picturesque home in the exclusive Bronx Country Club neighborhood where armed bandits, dressed as police, robbed the home of cash and jewels on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021.



Photo by David Greene

A BRONX COUNTRY Club resident expressed his disbelief to news crews after armed bandits, dressed as police officers, entered his neighbor's home on Tuesday, November 9, 2021.

been any similar type robberies in the immediate area prior to the event. He did not respond to our request.

Meanwhile, Citizen App user, Soph8494883, added, "It was my house who got stolen for the second time." *Norwood News* attempted to reach out to the user to clarify her remarks, but we were unsuccessful.

In a follow up inquiry with the NYPD on Friday, Nov. 12 about the



Photo by David Greene

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING a break-fast-time home invasion in the Bronx's Country Club neighborhood on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, by suspects wearing NYPD gear who tied up a man and a woman before making their getaway.

home that had been robbed on Nov. 9, police spokeswoman, Detective Annette Shelton, said there had still been no arrests in the case. Asked if the home in question had been robbed in a similar fashion previously, she responded, "There are no other complaint reports for that location this year."

Talking to several television news crews outside his own home on the day of the robbery, the victims' neighbor, Silvio Caserta, recalled, "I saw this car over here, and then my wife sees they stopped over here, and there's police cars across the street. Then all of a sudden, you know, they all stopped here."

Caserta concluded, "Then, one of the neighbors came down and she said, 'You know they beat him up, and they took one of their cars?' That's all I know."

After being asked if he saw the suspects, Caserta said he'd only seen them from behind, before adding, "I wasn't paying too much attention."

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE

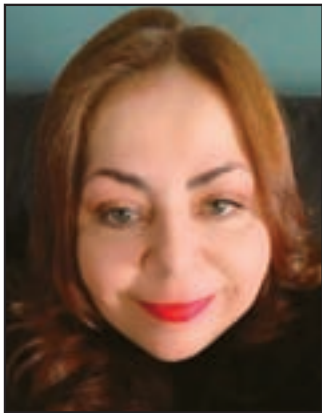


With the spotlight on Puerto Rico following the recent Somos conference, we asked readers, this week, for their thoughts on whether the island should become the 51st state or maintain its independence.



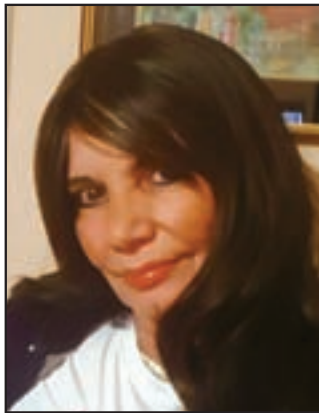
"I feel that Puerto Rico should stay the way it is and maintain their independence. They don't get enough support. I really don't know. I don't live there so I don't know what's going on exactly. But I know from what I see, and from what my family tells me, it would be nice to maintain their independence, but I don't think they will be able to continue to support themselves."

Alma Maisonet,
Parkchester



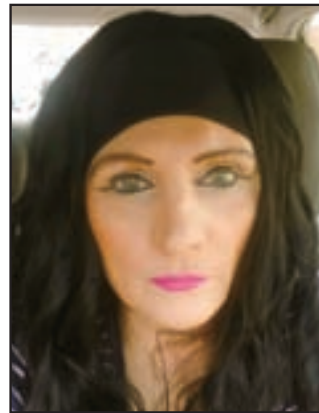
"Yes, I am a proud Puerto Rican, born and raised in the South Bronx. Both my parents were from the island and my grandmother was a significant influence on my life. At one time, I believed the island should be the 51st state, because of its benefits. However, after witnessing how they were treated after Hurricane Maria, my feelings have changed. Puerto Rico should be left to be completely independent and free."

Flora Montes,
Soundview



"I am Puerto Rican and yes, I would love for Puerto Rico to become the 51st state. That way, residents can have all the benefits of being American citizens in the United States, and the island always being well protected by the U.S. military. ¡Que Viva Puerto Rico!"

Elizabeth Sepúlveda,
Clason Point



"Puerto Rico had decided not to be a Commonwealth state. Puerto Rico should become the 51st state, because it can help with money problems the people of Puerto Rico are having. The people of Puerto Rico want to become the 51st state and we claimed Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. The island has problems from the hurricanes, and nobody ever helps out and the people are left to fend for themselves. I think if Puerto Rico becomes a state, the residents can get the help they deserve and live a better quality of life. Enjoying statehood, they would be able to pursue and live the American dream on the island."

Antonia Santiago,
Grand Concourse



"The best thing for Puerto Rico is to remain independent and stop being a colony of the United States. Puerto Rico has an economy of consumers which only benefits America and the Jobs Act law, and many others like Act 22 that gives tax incentives to outsiders who are not native to Puerto Rico, and locals do not benefit from these tax benefits. Congress purposefully ignores the plebiscite and vote of all Puerto Ricans, because if PR becomes independent or a state, the outsiders will no longer benefit from the tax haven they receive right now. Puerto Rico is being sold, and the illegal debt is being legalized by the Fiscal Control Board and they are raising taxes on all goods until 2052 to pay this illegal debt that the United States created with the Jones Act."

Tony Also,
Brooklyn

Editor's Note: The JOBS Act is a law intended to encourage funding of small businesses in the U.S. by easing many of the country's securities regulations. The Jones Act is a federal statute establishing support for the development and maintenance of a merchant marine to support commercial activity and serve as a naval auxiliary in times of war or national emergency.



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Jerome Park: Search for Missing 15-Year-Old Girl

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The New York City Police Department is asking for the public's help in locating a 15-year-old girl, reported missing on Saturday, Nov. 13, in the 52nd precinct.

Felicana Esteban, 15, of 2928 Jerome Avenue in Jerome Park, The Bronx, was last seen at her home at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 13.

She is described as being 5 feet, 3 inches tall, and weighs 110 pounds. A photo of Felicana is attached.

Anyone with information regarding 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 <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/> or on Twitter @NYPDTips.

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Zephyr Teachout Runs for AG

Zephyr Teachout, Fordham Law School professor and mother, has formally announced her run for Attorney General (AG) of the State of New York for a second time. She first ran for the position in 2018, winning 31 percent of the vote in the Democratic primary race but lost to now incumbent AG, Letitia James, who recently indicated she is running for governor.

Teachout's campaign is centered around rooting out corruption in Albany, standing up for workers and consumers, defending civil rights and protecting the environment. Her campaign pledges not to accept donations from corporations, adding that the AG must be independent of big money and special interests. Teachout was the first public figure in New York politics to endorse then-candidate and now Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) when she first ran for office in 2018.

Bronx Woman Cheats Tenants Out of Housing

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, Nov. 15, that Bronx woman, Stephanie Antonio, 27, of East 182nd Street, has been charged with grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property and other charges for taking thousands of dollars in deposits for rent-stabilized apartments she did not deliver. According to the investigation, between May 17 and September 30, 2019, Antonio allegedly told victims she was an employee of a property management company and had a real estate license.

Although she was briefly employed by the property management company, the role was only to take photos for its Instagram page. The defendant allegedly used that position to gain access to keys for apartments used in the scam. She allegedly took thousands of dollars from victims in deposits for apartments she could not and was not licensed to deliver. She is due back in court on February 28, 2022. A person charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Bronx Surpasses Brooklyn in COVID-19 Vaccine Rates

According to the City's health department vaccination data as of Nov. 15, the percentage of Bronx-

Community Groups Step Up Clean-Up Efforts

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Amid ongoing dissatisfaction by residents of the Northwest Bronx with the cleanliness (or lack thereof) and general state of neighborhood parklands and public spaces, they are doubling down on their ongoing efforts to maintain a clean district.

As reported by *Norwood News*, residents had expressed their frustration during various recent community meetings with the pace with which public garbage is being collected by the City, a problem exacerbated by budget cuts over the course of the pandemic. In response, they have taken matters into their own hands.

In recent weeks, different clean-up events have taken place, organized by various community groups, including Bedford Mosholu Community Association, Bronx CB7 Parks' committee, Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), Friends of Aqueduct Walk, and graffiti-removal group, Guerinos Against Graffiti* (with an extra "t" for toughness" according to the latter group's website).

Elizabeth Quaranta of FOMP wrote on the group's Facebook page on Tuesday, Nov. 16, "An incredible day, this morning, doing tree pit work on Gun Hill's small business area. Several trees needed upkeep. We removed litter, removed weeds, and mulched. Small business owners appreciated it!"

Meanwhile, described as a family-run organization, Guerinos Against Graffiti, also known as G.A.G., advocates for a "graffiti free neighborhood" in the Norwood and Bedford Park areas of the Bronx, and in all areas of New York City which are affected

by what the group calls vandalized graffiti.

Sirio Guerino, co-founder of G.A.G., along with his wife, Heather, are Bedford Park residents and said the group recently moved their clean-up operations from the area around 204th Street and Gun Hill Road in Norwood, to Webster Avenue and Parkside Place, also in Norwood.

"Does the sight of graffiti make you gag?" a message reads on the group's website. "Do you want a clean and beautiful neighborhood? We are a part of a community where our neighbors are like family. This is our home, and we like to set the standards high," the message continues. "We want our guests and our neighbor's guests or some who are just visiting, to say 'Wow! What a beautiful home!'"

On Oct. 29, the group cleaned the area from 3300 Webster Avenue to 3464 Webster Avenue. They said they left six black bags of garbage and a pile of branches that needed to be picked up, and they also started graffiti removal in the area.

Earlier this year, as reported, G.A.G. became an active partner with Deputy Inspector Thomas Alps of the 52nd precinct, recently replaced by new commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, along with the rest of the command in the "One Block At A Time Coalition."

The initiative was launched to address sanitation issues and poor quality-of-life levels in certain neighborhoods in the hope that it would lead to a reduction in violence in the area. Volunteers focused on specific blocks in Fordham Manor where there was

a high rate of gun violence.

In September, in honor of Mosholu Preservation Corporation's (MPC) 40th anniversary, G.A.G. painted lamps, street poles, stop sign poles and hydrants around the Keeper's House at 3400 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood.

Both G.A.G. and Guerino himself, have received numerous awards for their work, most recently, on Saturday, Oct. 23, when they received the Community Service Award from the Jerome Gun Hill BID for outstanding service to the community during the 2021 Fall Festival.

At the most recent 52nd precinct community council meeting, residents also voiced their concerns over the sight of seemingly homeless people who continue to shoot up and discard needles in public areas within Bronx CB7. District manager, Ischia Bravo, recently brought some elected officials on a tour of the worst areas affected by the problem in hopes of finding solutions.

Meanwhile, Stephen Caruso, citywide community affairs officer, supervisor at the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), and a past winner of the Guerinos Against Graffiti Golden Brush Award, said of G.A.G.'s work, "Every New Yorker has a right to a clean street, and we're proud to partner with community groups like Guerinos Against Graffiti." He added, "We thank them for their work and dedication, and ask all New Yorkers who want to help clean their neighborhoods to call 311 and ask about our Community Clean-up Program. DSNY supplies the tools, you supply the volunteers."

ites who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 now equals that of fully vaccinated Brooklynites at 62 percent, and the percentage of Bronxites with one dose (69 percent) exceeds that of Brooklynites at 67 percent. Manhattan and Queens tie at 75 percent in terms of the fully vaccinated, while 65 percent of Staten Islanders are fully vaccinated. Meanwhile, overall, 5,681,722 New Yorkers or 68.2 percent of City residents are now fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Montefiore & UnitedHealthcare Reach Agreement

Montefiore Health System and UnitedHealthcare have reached an agreement on a long-term contract that restores in-network access to all Montefiore Health System hospitals and healthcare providers effective Dec. 1, 2021, for UnitedHealthcare and Oxford employer-sponsored plans, as well as UnitedHealthcare's Medicare Dual Special Needs Plan. Montefiore officials said the

agreement restores in-network access to Montefiore's 10 hospitals and to more than 200 outpatient facilities throughout the Bronx, Westchester, Rockland, and Orange counties.

Espallat, Sanchez, Feliz Paid Bloggers for Flattering Posts

The City news publication recently reported that campaign committees for Rep. Adriano Espallat (NY-13) paid nearly \$15,000 to bloggers for posting flattering articles dating to Espallat's first run for Congress in 2016, according to Federal Election Commission filings. The outlet reported how the articles do not disclose their financial ties with the Espallat campaign. Under federal election commission rules, only content that explicitly advises who to vote for — or not vote for — must include a disclosure that the candidate's campaign paid for the advertisement. The City

also reported that Espallat presented one of the bloggers with an official award, through his congressional office, honoring the blogger's "ten years of work in digital communications."

Espallat's campaign reportedly told The City that it uses "new and traditional media to inform the community about issues that matter," and gave examples of various policy issues. Campaign officials reportedly said that it was especially critical to communicate with non-English-speaking constituents who may not seek out traditional media, and added that the payments were disclosed as part of the congressman's relevante campaign filings. The City also reported that similar arrangements for lesser amounts were in place for District 14 City Council candidate and presumed winner of the District 14 general election race, Pierina Sanchez, and District 15 City Councilman, Oswald Feliz.

Campaign representatives for both Sanchez and Feliz reportedly also said that such arrangements were in place to reach the Hispanic or Spanish-speaking community.

AG Seeks Protections against "Forever Chemicals"

New York Attorney General Letitia James announced on Monday, Nov. 15, that she is leading a coalition of 19 attorneys general from around the nation in urging the U.S. Senate's Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) to strengthen public health and environmental protections against "forever chemicals." These chemicals, a class of highly toxic, chemical compounds known as poly and per-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), are widespread, persistent contaminants in the environment, including in drinking water in New York, and in many other states.



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Veterans Day Recognized Across The Bronx

by DAVID GREENE

Following the recent withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan in August, after 20 years of war in the country, local officials, veterans, and their supporters gathered across The Bronx at several ceremonies to take time to recognize Veterans Day on Thursday, Nov. 11.

At Woodlawn Cemetery, once again, a commemorative event was held under a large, outdoor tent located a stone's throw away from where Revolutionary War troops fought off a British invasion from Queens in "The Battle of Gun Hill," in 1777.

Meg Ventrudo, executive director of Woodlawn Conservancy, told the crowd that more than 8,600 veterans have, so far, been identified as having been buried at Woodlawn Cemetery, up from 6,500 at the same time last year. This is due to the "Flagging the Graves" project which helps identify buried veterans in the cemetery.

Before introducing Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), event sponsor, State Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey (S.D. 36), told the crowd, "Don't forget those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. It's a cliché; you've heard it a thousand times, but freedom is not free. It's provided to us by brave women and men who sign up to protect those who don't ever know."

For his part, ten months after the failed insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, where the country's system of democracy was temporarily under threat, Dinowitz said, "We do take a lot of things for granted. I will never forget Jan. 6, 2021, when I was watching on TV what was happening at the United States Capitol." He added, "We take our freedom for granted. We take the fact that we live in a democracy, and we don't think about the fact that maybe it's a little more precious and a little more fragile than we would ever think."

Dinowitz continued, "Because we've been here all our lives, the United States is the greatest democracy to ever have existed on this planet, so we just assume it's always going to be that way, but I think we saw that maybe that's not the case. And we have seen this year that we should not take that for granted because efforts to undermine our democracy not only took place at the beginning of the year but, in fact, are ongoing."

For her part, District 16 City Councilwoman and presumed winner of



Photo by David Greene

LT. COL. RICARDO Singleton (Ret.) salutes at a World War I monument at Woodlawn Cemetery on Veterans Day, Thursday, November 11, 2021.

the Bronx borough presidency, Vanessa Gibson, whose uncle, Robert Gibson, was a Vietnam War veteran, said, "Every single day, a veteran wakes up and serves this great country, protects our values and our freedoms, and defends this country. But we also know that our veterans have supportive families, so as we honor veterans today, we must also honor their families, their spouses and children, and relatives and loved ones that are with them and supporting them on this journey."

As chairman of the veterans committee at New York City Council, District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz told veterans in attendance that the committee was in the process of holding hearings on recent military discharges. "We just had a committee meeting on the Joint Committee on Immigration for foreign-born veterans who risked their lives to serve a country in which they were not born," he said. "And the last [U.S.] administration took away their ability to gain

that citizenship."

Meanwhile, Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80) whose brother, Army Specialist Alejandro Fernández, served in Iraq, said, "And gratefully, by the grace of God, he came home and look at me, I'm getting all teary-eyed." She continued, "But today is a reminder that we should be grateful for those that did come back, that they were able to do that duty, and serve this country... They are home, and they need our support."

Also in attendance was Lt. Col Ricardo Singleton (Ret.) who lived on Forrest Avenue in the South Bronx before moving to Mount Vernon. A member of the U.S. Army Reserves, Singleton served for 40 years between 1974 and 2014, surviving three conflicts: Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. "I was there to do a job," he said of his service time. "I did it, and that was it."

Now a minister, Singleton added, "Our armed forces have the longest record of triumph over evil," he said. "In each case, they have fought, defending

the same values our great nation was founded on. Our veterans, this group of extraordinary Americans, the less than one percent who commit to something the other 99 do not, deserve our lasting gratitude and respect."

He concluded, "Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you... Jesus Christ and the American soldier." He added, "One died for your soul, and the other for your freedom."

Additional Veterans Day events were held at the Rudy Macina Peace Plaza on Williamsbridge Road and the Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance held their annual event on Unionport Road. Other gatherings took place at the Bronx Victory Memorial in Pelham Bay Park and at a recently renovated flagpole monument in Riverdale.

Another veterans' event was held for Fordham Hill residents, in Fordham Manor, some of whom are veterans. It was attended by Assemblyman José Rivera (A.D. 78), who also attended the Woodlawn event, outgoing District 14 City Councilman Fernando Cabrera, and presumptive Democratic winner of the recent District 14 general election, Pierina Sanchez. Fordham Hill resident, Blandon Casenave, who served in the United States Navy between 1974 and 1978, was one of those honored.

Another Fordham Hill resident, Marvin Millman, who served with the United States Marine Corps back in 1951, and was also honored, said of the event, "It's very nice they do this." Asked how he thought the country was doing now, Millman responded, "Terrible! It's very bad, it's going downhill." He continued, "We shouldn't have inflation, we shouldn't have these gas prices."

The celebration of veterans concluded with the Bronx Veterans Day Parade, held on Sunday, Nov. 14, when veterans, service members and supporters joined local officials in marching from East Tremont Avenue to Bicentennial Veterans Memorial Park in Throggs Neck.

Gibson used the Veterans Day celebrations as an occasion to suggest and to remind veterans seeking most types of assistance to visit the Bronx Veterans Mental Health Court which parks on East 161st Street five days a week and which can also be reached at (718) 584-900 Ext. 5457. Veterans can also find opportunities for jobs, housing, and health benefits at www.nyc.gov/vets.

UCHC's Mildred Casiano Honored as Woman of Distinction

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Mildred Casiano MSW, LCSW-R, MPH, director of behavioral health at Union Community Health Center (UCHC) was honored as a 2021 Woman of Distinction by State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (33rd S.D.) during a ceremony held at the center, on Oct. 22.

During her acceptance speech at the center, located in the Fordham Heights neighborhood, Casiano thanked Douglas York Ph.D., CEO of UCHC, her behavior health team, and the entire UCSC family along with friends and family who came out to support her on the day. Casiano said she felt "overwhelmed and overjoyed" but overall, "truly blessed," by the honor.

"I would like to thank my family and friends," she said. "Without their support, this award would not be possible. To my patients, I say, 'Thank you for trusting us and for [your] bravery and commitment to your mental health.' We will continue to work together to humanize and normalize the conversation surrounding mental health because talking about mental health saves lives," she added.

The ceremony also featured speeches by Rivera and York. For his part, York said community health centers and professionals like Casiano brought vital health care services directly to thousands of Bronx residents. "We are proud to celebrate her as our goal has simply been to help eliminate some of the existing barriers to accessing care," he said.

Rivera explained that the Women of Distinction are usually honored with a ceremony in Albany but



Photo by Sarah Huffman.

(L TO R) STATE SEN. GUSTAVO Rivera, Mildred Casiano MSW, LCSW-R, MPH, and Union Community Health Center (UCHC) executives pose for a photo at the Woman of Distinction 2021 award ceremony held at UCHC in the Fordham Heights section of the Bronx on Oct. 22, 2021.

because of the pandemic, UCHC was instead chosen as the venue for the event, during which a video outlining Casiano's accomplishments was played.

Rivera added that his office normally maintains a list of organizations and people doing important work in the district as a reference for both the Women of Distinction and the Veterans Hall of Fame awards. He said they wanted to present the award this year to someone who had been doing important work throughout the pandemic.

The senator said that the UCHC was key to providing care to what he described as a very, very high-needs population in his district (S.D. 33). "So, when I think about Ms. Casiano's work around behavioral health, how essential that is with communities like this one and the fact that this institution provides that, I'm always happy to come here and happier still to be able to celebrate somebody who does such good work," Rivera said.

The senator ex-

plained to those present that federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) like UCHC were places around the country where most working-class people obtained their primary care. "They are so deeply committed to the community so I'm always happy to be able to honor anybody who works for them, and Ms. Casiano was just the person," he said.

Casiano grew up in the South Bronx and focused her career on public health in the neighborhoods in which she grew up. From an early age, she said she knew she wanted to dedicate her career to helping the most vulnerable and underprivileged communities.

"I've been serving community health for over 30 years; that's been

my passion," she told the *Norwood News*. "I've had a lot of mentors that have guided me through the whole process, so growing up in the same communities that were at a disadvantage, it's just a great honor to have this opportunity because I think we all work very hard for a common goal. This is the common goal, to help others."

During her accep-

tance speech, Casiano talked about the negative stigma associated with mental health care and her wish to make mental health care as much of a priority as physical health care.

"I think it's important for all of us to continue talking about mental health and normalizing it, just like we've done with every other disease and feel that level of comfort when you come and see your provider," she said.

Every year, the New York State Senate Women of Distinction awards are presented by the respective state senator to a woman in each senatorial district who serves her community.

UCHC is a not-for-profit FQHC that serves Bronxites from six locations throughout the borough. Officials said its mission is to serve the community with the best health care possible, regardless of ability to pay, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion.



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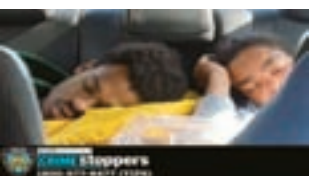
CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Woman Trespasses in Bronx Zoo

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating the woman seen in the photo, above, who is sought for questioning regarding a trespassing incident in Bronx Zoo. On Thursday, Nov. 11, at around 3.40 p.m., the woman entered the fenced lion exhibit inside the Zoo, located at 2300 Southern Boulevard. She later exited the exhibit and fled to parts unknown. She is identified as Mayh Autry, 32.



Kingsbridge Heights Armed Robbery

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the two people seen in the photo, above, who are sought for questioning regarding

a robbery that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. On Thursday, Oct. 21, at around 11.30 p.m., a 48-year-old male victim working as a Lyft livery driver picked up the two at 2678 Kingsbridge Terrace. While driving southbound on the Major Deegan Expressway, one of the two displayed a firearm and pointed it at the victim.

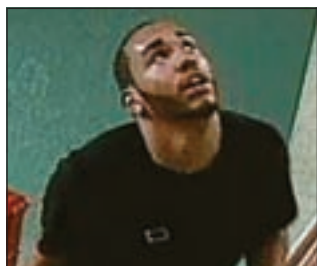
He removed \$1,600 cash from the driver, and both suspects demanded that the victim drive them over New York State lines to an unknown location. Both individuals later fled to parts unknown. The first suspect is described as a dark-skinned male with a tattoo above his left eye who was last seen wearing a gray, hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans and white/red sneakers. The second is described as a dark-skinned male who was last seen wearing a yellow jacket, a green, hooded sweatshirt and gray pants.

Norwood: Gunpoint Robbery & Assault

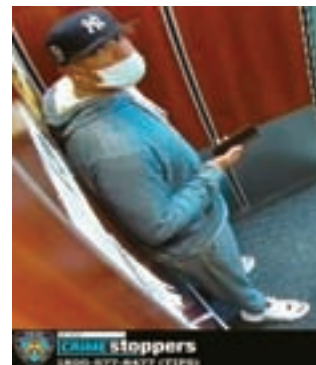
Police are appealing for help identifying the man seen in the photo, right, who is sought for questioning regarding a robbery and assault. On Saturday, Oct. 16, at around 3.55 a.m., at the northeast corner of Webster Avenue

and East 204th Street, a 22-year-old male victim was out walking when three unknown individuals approached him. One displayed a black firearm and robbed the victim at gunpoint, pistol-whipping him about the face as he did so and forcibly removing a chain from the victim's neck, before fleeing in an unknown direction.

The victim called the police and gave a detailed description of the three assailants. Responding officers apprehended two people who were later positively identified by the victim. The third, in possession of the firearm, threw the gun to the ground and was later observed on a security camera kicking open a locked door and entering the residential building located at 375 East 205th Street. A black, .40 caliber firearm was recovered. Although the victim



sustained bruising to his face, he refused medical attention at the scene. The assailant sought is described as a man in his 20s, weighs 180 pounds, is about 6 feet, 3 inches tall, has a medium complexion, brown eyes, a beard and short dark hair. He was last seen wearing black jeans, a black T-shirt, black sneakers, and was carrying a black satchel.



Bedford Park Domestic Robbery

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the person seen in the photo, above, who is sought for questioning regarding a robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. On Wednesday,

Oct. 20, at around 9.40 p.m., at a residence located in the vicinity of East 204th Street and Grand Concourse, the person gained entry to the home of a 22-year-old female victim through an open front door.

He displayed a firearm and demanded money from the victim. He stole jewelry valued at approximately \$2,200, and \$500 in cash, before fleeing the location on foot, southbound, along Grand Concourse. No physical injuries were reported. The individual is described as male, aged between 30 and 35, is light-skinned, has brown eyes and was last seen wearing a NY Yankees baseball hat, a gray hooded sweatshirt, gray sweatpants, and white sneakers.

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 <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/> or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



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If you've experienced or witnessed a traumatic event and now have unwanted memories of the event, struggle with fear and anxiety, feel isolated from family and friends; or avoid situations that remind you of the trauma, you may have **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**. Learn more about the CYPRESS research study of an investigational drug for people with PTSD.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



COVID-19 Updates

As of Aug. 17, people 12 and older are required to show proof they have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to obtain access to indoor dining, indoor fitness, and indoor entertainment. Where proof of vaccination is required, there are a number of acceptable forms. Visit here for more information: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines-keytonyc.page>.

People 5 and older are eligible for the vaccine. Many vaccination sites in the City no longer require appointments. For a list of walk-up sites, visit here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/covid-19-vaccines.page#walk-up-sites>. To find a vaccination site near you, including those that take appointments, use the City's <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/> (not accessible with Internet Explorer). Note, people who are 5 to 17 years old can only receive the Pfizer vaccine. The full schedule of mobile vaccine locations can be found: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/covid-19-vaccines.page#walk-up-sites>.

Vaccine booster shots are now available for New Yorkers ages 18 and older. The shots boost immunity from an initial vaccination series. Health officials say no one will be denied a booster shot in New York as long as they are 18 or older, and have received their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least six months ago, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago. Learn more and find a COVID-19 vaccine near you here: nyc.gov/covidvaccine

The City has expanded its in-home vaccination program to all New Yorkers aged 12+. You can select which of the vaccines you prefer at no cost. To request your in-home vaccination visit <https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/home>. NYC also offers free, at-home PCR COVID-19 testing for all New Yorkers who are 65+ or immunocompromised. The service is available 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and appointments can be scheduled by calling 929-298-9400.

The City has launched a COVID-19 hotline. Through this hotline, you can call and get all of your COVID-19 updates, including testing sites, advice from medical staff, quarantine information and mental health support. Call 212-COVID19 (2122684319).

The NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) requires COVID-19 vaccination for City employees and certain city contractors. The mandate required all City employees to provide proof they had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by Oct. 29 at 5 p.m. City employees or City contractors who opted for a two-dose vaccine must provide proof they received the second dose of that vaccine within 45 days of receipt of their first dose. For more information, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/>

assets.dcas/downloads/pdf/guidelines/faq-vaccine-mandate.pdf.

On Nov. 2, the CDC authorized COVID-19 vaccinations for children aged 5 through 11 and vaccination has already begun in New York State. Vaccinations are available at City-run sites, schools and elsewhere.

For those who receive their first vaccine dose at a New York City-run vaccine location or through the City's in-home vaccination program, they will be eligible to choose from a list of incentives, including a \$100 pre-paid debit card as of July 30, 2021. For more information, go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/vaccine-incentives.page>.

On Nov. 9, Gov. Kathy Hochul launched a new 'Vaccinate, Educate, Graduate' vaccine incentive program for 5 through 11-year-olds for a chance to win a SUNY or CUNY full scholarship. Go to: <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/Vaccinate-Educate-Graduate-Vaccine-Incentive> for more information. The deadline to sign up is Dec. 19.

The U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, has said that to date research has indicated that those who have acquired antibodies following an infection of COVID-19 may not have sufficient antibodies to fight a future infection. This is why it is recommended to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccination providers *cannot* charge for the COVID-19 vaccine, *cannot* charge directly for any administration fees, copays or coinsurance, and *cannot* charge an office visit or some other fee to the recipient if the only service provided is a vaccination. The federal government is urging people to report if and when they've received fees. Go to: <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/covid-19-care-uninsured-individuals/index.html#patients-no-health-ins> for more information.

Get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines at this site: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccine-facts.page>

COVID-19 business restrictions in New York State have been lifted, subject to ongoing guidance. For the latest industry guidance, go to: <https://forward.ny.gov/active-industry-guidance>.

A moratorium on COVID-19 related residential and commercial evictions is in effect until Jan. 15, 2022. To apply, go to: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/>. Also, New York's statewide, utility shut-off moratorium has been extended. The law extends the moratorium on utility shut-offs, including water, heat, electric, telephone, cable, and broadband services until the conclusion of the COVID-19 state of emergency, or until December 31, 2021, whichever comes first. For New Yorkers suffering financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the law enshrines a further moratorium extension of 180 days.

FEMA provides financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses. The COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline is 844-684-6333 | TTY: 800-462-7585 and the hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time. Call this dedicated toll-free phone number to get a COVID-19 Funeral Assistance application completed with help from FEMA's representatives. Multilingual services will be available. Get answers to frequently asked questions about the application process here: <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance/faq>

The \$2.1 billion Excluded Workers State fund provides financial relief for New Yorkers state-wide who have suffered income loss during the pandemic and were left out of the various federal relief programs, including unemployment and pandemic benefits. Visit <https://ewf.labor.ny.gov/new> to apply. For more details and to learn about documentation required to apply, visit on.ny.gov/ewf.

EvictionFreeNY.org is a free tool put together by JustFix and Right to Counsel to allow renters to exercise their rights under the New York State eviction moratorium. The website helps renters fill out and send a Hardship Declaration form to the Court and their landlord to pause their eviction case until January 15, 2022.

Maximum Base Rent Public Hearing

NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) will hold a virtual, public hearing on Thursday, Nov. 18, to gather feedback to consider in establishing a Maximum Base Rent (MBR) for rent-controlled housing in NYC for the 2022-2023 biennial MBR cycle, pursuant to the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019.

The morning session will run from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and the afternoon session from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Pre-registration of speakers is advised. Those who wish to pre-register may call the office of Michael Berrios, executive assistant, at (718) 262-4816 or email michael.berrios@hcr.ny.gov and provide a name, contact phone number, email address, and a preferred time to speak at the hearing as well the name of the organization being represented. For more information, visit here: <https://files.constantcontact.com/b392c2a4701/6ba74cfb-85ae-4f22-bdcb-365a146b32ac.pdf>.

Flooding Relief for Undocumented New Yorkers

Funding is available for New Yorkers who are not eligible to receive storm recovery assistance through the FEMA Individual Assistance Program or other means. New York State Office for New Americans (ONA) is managing this program. To qualify, applicants must a) themselves not be eligible for FEMA as-

sistance and b) not have an individual in their household who is eligible for assistance. In the Bronx, Catholic Charities Community Services, 402 East 152nd Street, Bronx, NY 10455 will administer services through the program. Call the ONA Hotline at 1-800-566-7636 for help on where to apply. The application period will close on Friday, Nov. 26, 2021.

POTS Thanksgiving Meal 2021

To keep everyone safe amid the pandemic, Part of the Solution (POTS) and Church of the Resurrection in Rye, NY have teamed up to provide Thanksgiving grab-and-go meals for low-income Bronxites, but anyone with proof of vaccination will be able to be seated indoors for the in-person 2021 Thanksgiving Meal. Over 500 people, including the resurrection community and volunteers, are expected to come together on Thursday, Nov. 25, at Our Lady of Refuge Church. 290 E 196th St, Bronx, NY. Volunteers arrive at 7 a.m. First seating starts at 11 a.m.

Price Gouging

Price gouging is illegal. Bronxites can report sudden and unexpected increases in consumer goods by calling the consumer hotline toll free at 800-697-1220. This line is available seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. for consumers.

Curbside Parking

There will be restrictions to curbside parking and sidewalk access for Bronx Community Districts 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 from Oct. 4, 2021, until Summer 2023, at certain times. For questions, call 311 or email the Office of Community Outreach and Notification: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ddc/about/contact-form.page?recipient=Community%20Outreach>.

Bronx Bus Redesign Restarting

The final Bronx bus redesign plan, initiated in 2019 by New York City Transit (an agency of the MTA), is available for review and comment by Bronxites. The final plan can be read here: <https://new.mta.info/bronxbusredesign>, and comments can be submitted here: https://mta-nyc.custhelp.com/app/comments_bronxbus.

Redistricting

The Bronx County hearing to discuss the drafts of the proposed redistricting maps put forward recently by New York's redistricting commission was held on Tuesday, Nov. 9. It can be watched here: <https://totalwebcasting.com/view/?func=VIEW&id=nysirc&date=2021-11-09&seq=1>. A schedule of upcoming public hearing dates can be found here: <https://www.nyirc.gov/meetings>. Draft plans can be found here: <https://www.nyirc.gov/draft-plans>. Residents can join any hearing that best suits their schedule.



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Letters To The Editor

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

were taken along with their Haitian driver during a visit to an orphanage. I have seen no follow-up in our media outlets but all the other nonsense about movie stars, sport figures, and celebrities, galivanting around. These missionaries are the real heroes in our society, and I am asking everyone reading my letter here to take one moment and say a prayer for their safe return.

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Express Bus Versus Commuter Rail? \$2.75 Discount Fare is a Better Deal

Those advocating for the Metro North Railroad offering a \$2.75 comparable NYC Transit subway or bus fare to those boarding within NYC missed a better option. Why not reduce the fare on all NYC Transit Express Buses from \$6.75 to \$2.75 as well? The MTA operates city wide a total of 80 Express Bus Routes. They primarily operate from two-fare (bus to subway) zones in what some refer to as transit deserts. How many potential new riders live within walking distance to a Bronx Metro North station? A majority would first have to either take a local bus or drive to a nearby station. In most cases, there is little available, adjacent parking. Local neighbors don't appreciate those from outside parking on the same streets they use. Upon arrival at Grand Central Terminal, you may need to make another transfer. Unless you can walk to work, most will have to board an NYC Transit subway resulting in another fare.

There is a far more elaborate network of express bus routes in the Bronx. In most cases, riders can just walk to a neighborhood bus stop. Most routes access midtown Manhattan on either the east or west side, or the

downtown Financial District. This provides a more comfortable one seat ride versus multiple transfers, if you use either the limited number of 15 Metro North stations and branches operating in the Bronx. Most seats on pre-COVID-19 rush hour trains that stop in the Bronx are already occupied by Westchester and other suburban commuters.

A majority of express buses go back to the depot in between the morning and evening rush hours for layover. As a result, there is available equipment to increase service midday and evenings.

Farebox recovery rates vary based upon the trip, route, and time of day. Any rush hour local or express bus, light rail, subway, ferry, commuter rail trip carries more riders than midday, evening, overnight or weekends. Rush hour trips tend to have a better fare box recovery rate and require less subsidy. There is always a fixed cost per hour. This includes equipment straight line depreciation of equipment over time and mileage, driver, conductors, ticket takers, fuel or power and maintenance of equipment.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Not So Common Sense

There's an old saying that common sense is not so common. A couple of stories in the November 4-17 edition of the *Norwood News* remind me of this. In the article, "Some Bronx Parents Hesitant to Vaccinate their Children," by Dawn Clancy, it states that Amy Tsai is vice president of The New York City Coalition for Educating Families Together. Yet so many people have died from the coronavirus. Almost 100 percent of those catching or dying from it are not vaccinated. Almost 100

percent of those vaccinated are **not** catching it, but Tsai's idea of educating families is to express doubt about the vaccine. The only legitimate reason to not get vaccinated is if you have a unique medical condition that would make it dangerous. Fatima Mustafa worries that it might be dangerous for her son who has ADHD and autism. She should consult her doctor about whether the vaccine is safe for him. But if there is no medical reason for him to be exempt, [he] should be vaccinated. Bail reform is another issue where common sense goes out the window ["Elected Officials Try Multiple Approaches to Curb Gun Violence," by José A. Giralt]. Bail should not be reformed. It should be eliminated. Decisions on whether to release a defendant awaiting trial should be based on whether there's good reason to believe they are dangerous, whether they might flee, or if they are repeatedly arrested for more offenses. High bail can be paid by dangerous criminals who are rich. A person who's not dangerous and might be innocent can be kept in jail on \$100 bail if he doesn't have \$100.

Also, Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández got it right when she said, "...it's not fair to completely blame it on bail reform." An example is Rupert Allen being arrested for allegedly repeatedly stabbing Anthony Nieves to death. It's bad enough that Allen is only charged with manslaughter, not murder. But the judge, not named in a Nov. 1 *NY Daily News* article, released him without bail. That judge needs to be removed.

Let me add one recent example of someone lacking common sense not dealt with in one of your articles. Who do you think said, "We've been through a lot of wars with guys in that room and guys are scarred"? Was it someone who fought in Afghanistan or Iraq? No. This was the manager of the Bronx-based New York Yankees after they lost a baseball game. Perhaps Aaron Boone should be dropped into a combat zone so he can learn the difference between war and being knocked out of the playoffs?

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

MTA Restrooms (Larry Penner letter, *Norwood News*, Oct. 7)

A lack of restrooms does not impact my decision to use or not use the subway. Back in 2014, I suffered terribly from Irritable Bowel Syndrome. I commuted from the Bronx to Brooklyn and back every day as we are temporarily on telework due to issues with our building. Invariably, either going to, or coming from the office, or sometimes both, I would feel the sudden need to use the bathroom. Knowing that more likely than not, none would be available, I went to "Plan B," a pathmark on my way to work: my alma mater, Pace University, Barnes & Noble, Planet Fitness or The New York Public Library, rather than lament about what isn't.

In case it missed the author's notice, we still have a homeless crisis in New York. This crisis is caused by a multitude of factors, including unemployment, underemployment, criminal recidivism, drug addiction, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and manic depression. The author proposes having a local college adopt a restroom. Would the author like to picture what happens if a student from a local college, quite possibly raised in a one stop-light town in the South or Midwest, stumbles upon a homeless person using drugs, having sex, or bathing in a sink? What does the author think a restroom attendant should do when the homeless person pulls a knife, a metal pipe, or even a gun? Putting an attendant in a subway restroom is a recipe for tragedy.

**Nat Weiner
Parkchester**

Haiti

The Christian Aid Ministries group is calling for prayer for the 17 missionaries who were kidnapped in Haiti on Oct. 16 to be brought home safely after the gang leader recently threatened to murder them all. Members from the 400 Mawozo gang are claiming responsibility for the abduction and want \$17 million in ransom for their safe release.

Five children are among the 16 Americans and one Canadian who

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Shanequa Charles Announces Run for A.D. 78 Seat

By JASON GONZALEZ

Some of the residents of Assembly District 78 showed up asking for change, while others voiced their frustration.

Despite a faulty weather concoction of wind and frigid temperatures, a group of Shanequa Charles' supporters joined the long-time community activist for a rally on Fordham Plaza in Belmont, close to the Fordham Manor border, early Sunday afternoon, Nov. 14, in hopes of hearing she would be throwing her hat in the ring for the A.D. 78 race, and they were not disappointed.

Charles formally announced that she will indeed be running in the primary election set for June 28, 2022, to fill the District 78 seat currently held by Democratic Assemblyman José Rivera whose current term ends on Jan. 1, 2023. Charles hopes to replace the incumbent assemblyman who has held the seat since 2001, has served as both deputy majority whip and assistant majority whip, and prior to that, was a city council member for District 15 from 1987 to 2000 and assembly member for District 77 between 1982 and 1987.

Although Charles has fallen short before in her attempts as a write-in candidate, she is confident that an upset can happen in 2022. She ran in the Democratic Primary in June 2020 to represent District 78 but withdrew her candidacy before the election.

"One of the things that absolutely qualifies me for this position is, I've been in this community for 42 years," said the advocate for making public transit free. "I know the issues very deeply as an activist and an organizer of housing, criminal justice, education and maternal rights. In addition to that, I also work on City, State, and federal level legislation," she said. "I also have a passion for policy."

Rivera won last year's general election with 86.7 percent of the vote, seeing off Republican candidate, Michael Dister. He won the primary that year with 83.1 percent of the vote, beating Francisco Spies.

Less than a year ago, Rivera found himself embroiled in some Democratic Party controversy. The NY Post reported that he landed himself in the hot seat for recording and ultimately leaking footage from an annual pre-legislative assembly meeting, the type usually held in private at a local Albany hotel but held on Zoom last year due to the pandemic. It included some heated exchanges between Bronx Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (A.D. 83) and Brooklyn Assemblyman Charles Barron (A.D. 60).

When Rivera was revealed as the leaker, because his face appeared in the corner of the Zoom meeting screen image, he didn't deny leaking the video to the Post reporter, saying, "The people have a right to see us in action in the



Photo by Jason Gonzalez

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND executive director of the nonprofit, Miss Abbie's Kids Inc., Shanequa Charles, poses for a photo after a rally on Fordham Plaza in the Bronx's Belmont neighborhood on Sunday, November 14, 2021. Charles is running to replace incumbent Assemblyman José Rivera in Assembly District 78 in the Bronx.

Assembly." Meanwhile, party officials reportedly considered expelling him for the leak, likely because the gathering was not an official, public meeting in the assembly chambers.

As it stands, ahead of any potential changes which redistricting may cause, following Census 2020, District 78 broadly covers an area running from Fordham Manor in the West of the borough through Bedford Park, Belmont, the New York Botanical Garden and Bronx Zoo.

As per Charles, District 78 is a pretty wide net that stretches from 187th Street all the way to Sedgwick Avenue. "There are many different areas [of the district] in which I've worked, and not only is it in the political arena, but it's also with the people that are supposed to be driving the legislation, so it's different," Charles said.

During the rally, the candidate said her legislative priorities were typically determined by the needs of the community members she hopes to serve. She said she also believes that her experience working on "results-based legislation" will influence other politicians to work with her.

Bronxite, Hiawatha Collins, 53, shares Charles's vision. He agrees that representation matters, especially when fighting a system that he believes is built on structural racism and white supremacy. "She has done things in the community when nobody else has," said Collins.

"For instance, as we heard today, during COVID, she opened up Miss Ab-

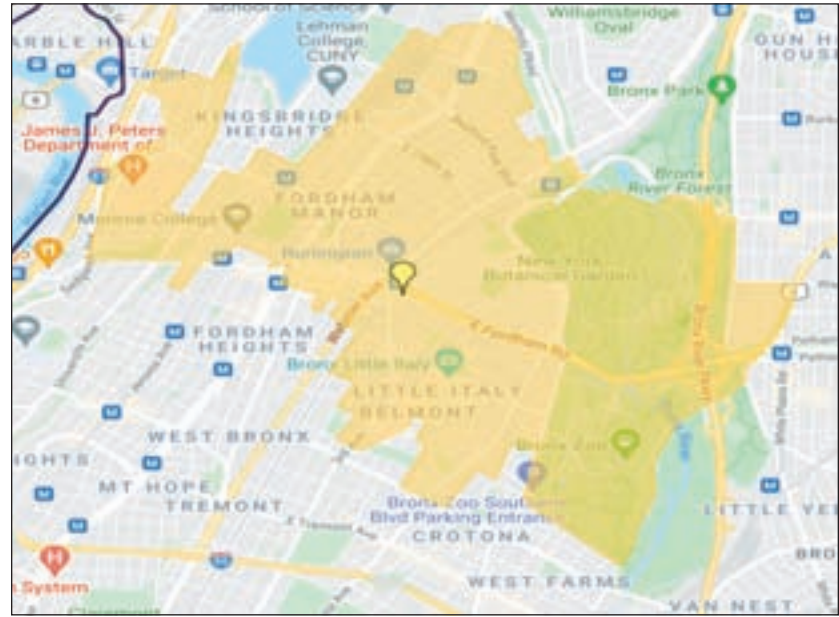


Image courtesy of the Office of Assemblyman José Rivera

THE AREA IN yellow on the map shows the neighborhoods which fall under Bronx Assembly District 78. Shanequa Charles is running to replace incumbent Assemblyman José Rivera in the seat when his term ends in January 2023.

bie's Place. It was a safe place for anyone within a community, especially for the youth, to go to." Collins added, "She provided food pantries out of there. She was in the community during the 'riots' right here on Fordham Road, trying to make sure that people were safe. She is of the community, and she's about it. She's generous, she's authentic, she's real, and she wants some real systemic change for the people."

Although Collins called it "Miss Abbie's Place," he was actually referring to Miss Abbie's Kids, Inc., a community center Charles started in honor of her late mother. The facility, which is located at 2477 Webster Avenue in the Fordham Heights section of the Bronx was named after Abbie Watson, who passed away from lung cancer nine years ago.

Charles said she firmly believes that issues like housing security, prison reform, universal healthcare, and eradicating the maternal mortality rate are all major problems affecting communities of color.

As she addressed the crowd, Charles said that over the course of 26 years, she had successfully secured more than 2.1 million rent-stabilized housing units for low-income residents throughout the Bronx. She also said she led a movement to get State and federal level criminal justice legislation passed that she said could potentially free over 180,000 people from correctional institutions across the country.

It was not specified which legislation Charles was referring to nor which exact housing units she had secured. *Norwood News* has reached out to Charles for further clarification on these points. In her campaign materials, Charles

also writes that she has serviced over 21,000 youth and families as the executive director of Miss Abbie's Kids.

Hip-Hop artist and criminal justice reform activist, Mysonne Linen, was on hand at the rally to publicly endorse Charles. He said low voter turnout throughout the region leaves him wanting to see a plan of action to address that.

"You see how early she is in announcing her campaign," said Mysonne. "She understands. She did this before, and she realizes [what] strategy is; you have to raise funds, you have to get the right connections, you have to get the right people to back you."

He continued, "You got to kiss babies, you got to knock on doors, you got to make sure that your plan for this community is right. You got to make sure that everyone is aware of what it is."

A resident of Highbridge in the Bronx, Mysonne, himself, said he has been involved in social justice issues, helping communities that are often marginalized and excluded. He said he is optimistic that, like him, Charles will continue to fight the "good fight". "There are things that you have to do to get voters in," said Mysonne. "And I think Shanequa understands that."

Although the June 2022 primaries are more than 7 months away, it's clear the Charles camp is already in campaign mode. When asked why she should get the vote of the people of A.D. 78, Charles said, "I have an innate ability to understand what the issues are because I face the same issues," she said. "And not only that, I also understand how to get to the solution. So, that's a big thing that makes me."

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

Events

Van Cortlandt House Museum is hosting a **Cozy Community Campfire** (two fires to help with social distancing) on Sunday, Dec. 5, between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Gather outdoors for a festive campfire, complete with free marshmallows and warm, mulled cider while supplies last and as a special treat, and d.i.y. s'mores kits will be available for purchase. (\$5 each or 3/\$12). There will also be a storyteller, an elf house hunt, and other fun activities (depending on the weather). The event is best for children ages 5 and up. Children of all ages must be accompanied by an adult.

Starting Nov. 24, 2021, discover NYBG GLOW at **The New York Botanical Garden**. Take in the beauty of the landmark landscapes after dark all breathtakingly illuminated with thousands of lights and whimsical installations. Tickets can be bought for various dates throughout November, December, and January each day between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. See NYBG's iconic sights and buildings come to life as dramatic, glittering canvases, awash with brilliant color and thousands of dazzling LEDs. Go to:

<https://www.nybg.org/event/holiday-train-show-2021/nybg-glow/> for more information.

A **Coat Drive** is being held at the Northeast Bronx YMCA in conjunction with the Women of Woodlawn from Nov. 5 to Nov. 28. Drop off new or gently used coats for men, women, children, and babies at the YMCA at 1250 E.229th Street.

November is **National Native American Heritage Month!** BronxNet pays tribute to the rich ancestry and traditions of Native Americans with two short films about the Indigenous community in the United States. Learn more at: <https://bronxnet.org/your-bronx/articles/national-native-american-heritage-month-block/>.

NYC Veterans launched the **Veteran Voices Project** to record the stories of NYC's veterans and preserve their legacy. Learn more at nyc.gov/vetvoices.

Art

"**Bronx Calling: The Fifth AIM Biennial**," curated by Ian Cofre and Eva Mayhabal Davis, is a meditation on the practice of

everyday life in uncertain times and runs from Nov. 10 through March 20, 2022. Featuring artworks by 68 artists who took part in the 2018 and 2019 cycles of the Bronx Museum's AIM Fellowship program, the fifth edition of "Bronx Calling" finds artists responding to the conditions of contemporary life in manifold ways. The Biennial is part of a series of exhibitions and public programs celebrating the Museum's 50th anniversary and legacy as an institution dedicated to social justice. For more information and to reserve your FREE ticket, go to: <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/.../bronx-calling-the-fifth...>

A **Fall Canvas Painting workshop** will be held at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval E, Bronx, NY 10467, on Friday, Nov. 19, from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 543 8672 or email Ana.Torres@parks.nyc.gov.

Friends of Aqueduct Walk are holding a **Public Art Unveiling** on Dec. 4 at noon at West 180th Street and Aqueduct Avenue.

Music

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located on the campus of Lehman College/CUNY at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468, is proud to present HÉCTOR "El Torito" ACOSTA, one of the Dominican Republic's most well-known *bachata* and *merengue* artists, for a Special VIP Concert, La Noche de El Torito, on Saturday, Nov. 20, at 8 p.m. For tickets, call (718) 960-8833 or go online at www.LehmanCenter.org.

Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture will premiere works by Jim Lahti,

Cynthia Miller and Melissa Shiflett as part of a "Di.vi.sion Concerts: Classical Music in the Bronx," on Sunday, Nov. 21, at 4 p.m. at 4450 Fieldston Road, Bronx, NY 10471. See attached flyer below for more information.

Movement

NYC Parks presents **Native American Heritage Month: Native Americans Past to Present** at Palisade Avenue and Spaulding Lane in Riverdale Park on Saturday, Nov. 27, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. This event is free. Urban Park Rangers will discuss how the Lenape used the area's plants, wildlife, and waterways, as well as how their legacy continues to persist today in the Bronx and beyond. For more information, call (718) 548-0912.

The NYC Parks Junior Knicks Basketball Clinics and League is teaming up with the Madison Square Garden Company to host free, citywide basketball clinics (Nov. 2021 to Jan. 10, 2022) and leagues (Jan. 10 to April 2, 2022) for boys and girls, ages 7 through 17. They hope the game of basketball will provide a positive, structured environment for self-improvement, personal growth, and community development.

This year, more than 180 teams will participate in 8U Co-ed, 10U Co-ed 12U Boys, 12 Girls, and 17 U Boys, 17 U Girls age divisions across the five boroughs. Instructional clinics will be held in each borough regardless of skill level, followed by a league. A Citywide Championship will be held on Saturday, April 9, 2022. For more information, please contact the Sports Coordinator, Dylan Santos, on (718) 430-1824 or dylan.santos@parks.nyc.gov. Register today!



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Public and Community Meetings

The next 52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meeting will be held on **Thursday, Nov. 18, at 6 p.m. via ZOOM**. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824 to be added to the email list.

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, Nov. 30 at 6.30 p.m.** Contact ibravo@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 Nov. 3. For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy. It is the policy of Citadel Care Centers, not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender, handicap, disability, blindness, source of sponsorship, source of payment, marital status, age, sexual preference, genetic predisposition, or carrier status in employment or in the admission, retention and care of residents and patients. All persons and organizations that have occasion to either refer prospective residents or patients to the Citadel Care Centers (The Plaza Rehab & Nursing Center, Citadel at Kingsbridge Rehab & Nursing Center, Hudson Pointe at Riverdale Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation and St. Barnabas Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Center) are advised to follow this non-discriminatory policy.

Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Community Board 7 and Friends of Mosholu Parkland have announced that the annual, community Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 7, at 6 p.m. on Mosholu Parkway lawn at the intersection of Mosholu Parkway

and Bainbridge Avenue. Residents are invited to come and enjoy this year's Winter Wonderland, which will include hot chocolate, holiday activities, special entertainment, and superb tree lights. For more information, contact ibravo@cb.nyc.gov or call (646) 330-3599.

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Kingsbridge Heights Community Center Hosts Annual Harvest Fest

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) hosted its annual Harvest Fest at the center, located in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood, on Oct. 28. The event featured raffles, vaccine and voting information, and various activities and stands.

Margaret Della, chief executive director of KHCC, said the Harvest Fest used to be held indoors, but last year they moved it outside as a COVID-19 safety precaution. “This was, like, the first event that we had where we were bringing people back together again, and it was so fun,” she said.

Activities on the day included a photo booth station, temporary tattoos, a Wii station, mask-making, pumpkin-painting, information about the center’s garden, cookie-decorating, T-shirt painting, games, snacks, and a haunted house run by the youth leadership council.

Della said the festival was mostly planned and run by different departments within KHCC, which is based at 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace #5900, Bronx, NY 10463. “It’s definitely a collaboration, she said. “It takes multiple months for people to pull it together. It’s just fun to see everyone roll up their sleeves together and come out, hang out, and then it’s even better to see all the kids having fun; something joyful!”

KHCC also partnered with New York City Artist Corps, a City-funded and City-run program which supports New York City-based working artists who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. According to Della, the center partnered with the Artist Corps for previous programs, but this is the first time they hosted

them at the Harvest Fest.

“There’s a couple of artists around that are doing different table exercises for people to just engage, and it’s all funded through the City Artists Corps,” she said.

Gerry Sherman, garden program coordinator for KHCC, was kept busy manning the pumpkin-decorating station on the day, and said it proved a popular stand, with lots of kids coming by looking for a pumpkin. “It’s going well,” she said. “Hopefully I don’t run out of pumpkins. I refer to last year’s harvest fest as pumpkingate 2020!”

Individually packaged snacks and candy, donated by KHCC staff and community members, were handed out to kids and families throughout the afternoon, some of whom were dressed in costume ahead of Halloween. As she distributed the snacks to the kids, Allison Lauro, a social work intern, was asked how the day was going. “It seems like it’s really good,” she said. “A lot of our snacks got eaten very quickly so that’s a good sign, and there’s a lot of little kids who I usually don’t see.”

Noris DeJesus-Petrone, director of the changing futures program, a KHCC program that assists survivors of trauma, including domestic abuse and sexual abuse, organized a stand for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. There, she also handed out bracelets, notebooks, masks, and information about the program.

KHCC offers a variety of programs for Bronx residents of all ages. The center provides resources and programming designed to help community members lead independent lives. For more information, visit khcc-nyc.org.



Photos by Sarah Huffman
(TOP) GROUP OF kids decorate masks at the annual Harvest Fest held at Kingsbridge Heights Community Center in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx on October 28, 2021.

(MIDDLE LEFT) ALLISON Lauro hands out snacks to kids at the annual Harvest Fest held at Kingsbridge Heights Community in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx Center on October 28, 2021.

(MIDDLE RIGHT) TWO kids play a game of bean bag toss at the annual Harvest Fest held at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx on October 28, 2021.

(ABOVE) KINGSBRIDGE HEIGHTS Community Center (KHCC) staff host a raffle and hand out vaccine and voting information at the annual Harvest Fest held at the center in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx on October 28, 2021.

(LEFT) HARVEST FEST attendees pose with Halloween-themed props and take photos at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center’s annual Harvest Fest celebration held at the center in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx on October 28, 2021.



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Norwood Community Shows Appreciation at Block Party



By SARAH HUFFMAN

The inaugural Norwood Community Appreciation Block Party was held on Oct. 17 on Tryon Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx. Alina K. Dowe and Sedella M. Harvin, two Norwood residents, joined forces with the nonprofit, Using Positive Initiatives Effectively (UPIE), and The Dowe Twins, a brand created to bring awareness to, and empower kids who learn differently from others, to host the event.

UPIE is Dowe's nonprofit which she started in October 2020 with the mission of identifying and developing initiatives to make positive change in the community.

The organizers obtained a permit to close the avenue between East Gun Hill Road and Reservoir Oval West for the event, saying, "We really wanted to let people get in the street and get in-

involved."

The party comprised of a DJ, free kids' clothes, donated by The Dowe Twins, and free COVID-19 tests, donated by Helen Peña of MVT marketing. Michael Welch, author of the book, "How to Make Crafts Using Recycled Materials," set up a table at the event to make crafts and toys with the kids. He said he got involved with the block party after participating in a prior event with Dowe.

There was free food, including hot dogs, a cake donated by Harvin, drinks and 400 prepared food boxes donated by the restaurant, Taste So Good, located on 1752 Lafayette Avenue in Soundview. The restaurant was a partner of the nonprofit, "Rethink," which links organizations and programs with designated food outlets to reduce food insecurity across New York City.

RethinkCertified empowers restaurants to feed their communities in need using surplus, donated, or purchased food, while Rethink Café is the group's donation-based café, where anyone can come and enjoy a fresh, nutritious meal. According to Rethink's LinkedIn page, through various programs, it has partnered with over 50 New York City restaurants and dining establishments and served over 2 million meals through 75+ community organizations.

Dowe said prior to the event, the organizers had reached out to local businesses to see if they could donate anything but didn't get any immediate responses from many businesses. Ultimately, she said they're trying to show local businesses that it's important for the community to stick together and get everyone more involved, to improve the neighborhood and help reduce crime.

Meanwhile, Harvin said the objective was also to try to get people in the neighborhood to come out and enjoy the party. "We're giving back," she said. "I asked, 'Could I do something for my community?' We went around and asked. Some people gave, some people didn't want to." She added, "We want our kids to come out and have fun."

Unfortunately, the block party faced its fair share of challenges on the day. The bounce house truck broke down on its way to the party, and an overcast sky threatened the celebration with rain for most of the afternoon. Some attendees believed this was partly why more people didn't come out on the day.

"This is nice for the neighborhood, but more people need to come out," said Viola Washington, who lives on Jerome Avenue. "That lets your neighbors know that you care about them in this area." She added that she, herself, came out to support Harvin, who is her sister.

Carol Lang, another Norwood resident who lives on the block where the

party was held, said she didn't know if the organizers got the word out fast enough. "I think it's too bad that there aren't more people around," she said. "But I think overall, they're trying to knit the community together."

Harvin said they hope to do another block party next year in the summer, with Dowe adding that, in fact, they hope to organize more block parties more frequently in the future so that the community knows there's a place for them to get together and support one another.

To learn more about how to become a community-based partner or restaurant with Rethink, visit Rethinkfood.org. More information about The Dowe Twins can be found at facebook.com/DoweTwins

Photos by Sarah Huffman

(TOP LEFT) JULIO Mejia, A volunteer at the Norwood Community Appreciation Block Party, welcomes guests to the closed off block on Tryon Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx on October 17, 2021.

((BOTTOM LEFT)) A little kid plays hopscotch in the street at the Norwood Community Appreciation Block Party held on Tryon Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx on October 17, 2021.

(ABOVE LEFT) COMMUNITY members put goody bags together for the kids at the Norwood Community Appreciation Block Party on Tryon Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx on October 17, 2021.

(ABOVE RIGHT) MICHAEL Welch sets up his table of crafts, made out of recycled materials, for the kids to play with at the Norwood Community Appreciation Block Party held on Tryon Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx on October 17, 2021.

(ABOVE) COMMUNITY MEMBERS sort through piles of free children's clothes, donated for the Norwood Community Appreciation Block Party, held on Tryon Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx on October 17, 2021.



University Heights \$2 Billion Development Advances

(continued from page 1)

falls within Bronx District 7 in 2019, when the area just south of the University Heights Bridge was bought for \$31.5 million by Dynamic Star LLC, the Connecticut-based developer headed by CEO, Gary Segal.

The goal was to invest \$3.5 billion in a 5 million square-foot area, which was set to include 2,800 residential units, with 30 percent set aside as affordable, and a 700,000 square-foot, Life Science Center, esplanades, as well as a stadium for professional video gamers.

At the time, the area north of the bridge was still being negotiated but presented more obstacles to the development since it runs north to West 193rd Street where the Metro-North train tracks curve west to the Spuyten Duyvil station.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) also utilizes some of that space to get its equipment onto the Harlem River for bridgework.

"While the site seems underutilized, we have found that it's pretty important for DOT to have a site where they can access the water," said Shawn Brede, deputy director of the city Department of City Planning's Bronx Borough Office at the time. "Aside from anything to do with land use or planning, this is just an incredibly complicated site."

John Snider, then-chairman of the CB7 Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee, said in 2019, "This project is years away; years away." He added, "I probably will not be on the board, and maybe many of us won't be on the board [when it's completed]."

Last year, YIMBY reported that developers had secured an \$18.85 million injection from Meridian Capital Group, one of the largest mortgage brokerage firms in the United States. The funding was specifically allocated to facilitate the construction of a new building at 2475 Exterior Street located along the Harlem River, immediately south of the Alexander Hamilton Bridge.

The new property was set to comprise 495,000 square feet and contain a mix of affordable housing units, student housing, a public school, a research center, retail, and office space.

YIMBY reported that the entire Fordham Landing development was to comprise an assemblage of five neighboring lots spanning approximately 40 acres of land, formerly



Photo courtesy of Dynamic Star LLC

PRELIMINARY RENDERINGS OF Fordham Landing Rendering

owned by CSX Corporation, a publicly traded holding company with a focus on rail transportation and the site functioned as a rail yard.

"The loan proceeds will be used to facilitate the acquisition of the CSX site and fund interest, carry, and closing costs," said Ronnie Levine, senior managing director of Dynamic Star, in 2020. "Our next step is to pair Dynamic Star with a strong equity partner who will [be] able to take advantage of significant tax benefits, as some of the assemblage falls within an Opportunity Zone."

According to the IRS, Opportunity Zones are economic development tools that allow people to invest in distressed areas in the United States. Their purpose is to spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing tax benefits to investors. Opportunity Zones were created under the Trump Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Thousands of low-income communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories, including some areas of the Bronx, are designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones.

The program has been critiqued by some for apparently not always honoring commitments to local neighborhoods. *Norwood News* recently spoke with U.S. Congressman Jamaal Bowman and asked if there were plans to recoup the tax breaks offered to developers who had not fulfilled their part

of the bargain. He said this was something some congressmembers might indeed consider.

In the meantime, YIMBY reported earlier this week that the building applications filed with DOB are for a 17-story, mixed-use building at 320 West Fordham Road in University Heights.

Located along the Harlem River, near the Major Deegan Expressway, the lot is within walking distance of the 207th Street subway station, serviced by the 1 train and the University Heights Metro-North station on the Hudson Line. Brad Zackson of Dynamic Star LLC is listed as the owner behind the applications for one phase of the mega-development.

The proposed 175-foot-tall development is expected to yield 582,122 square feet, with 553,835 square feet designated for residential space and 28,287 square feet for community facility space. According to YIMBY, the building will comprise 602 residential units, most likely rentals based on the average unit scope of 919 square feet. The concrete-based structure will also have a cellar, 274 enclosed parking spaces, and 274 open parking spaces.

YIMBY also reported that Fordham Landing will comprise a mix of community facility, commercial, and residential space with both affordable and market-rate units. In addition, there will be approximately 3 acres of public green space and waterfront

amenities including a community dock, kayak launch, and a marina.

Perkins Eastman Architects is listed as the architect of record and demolition permits will likely not be needed as the lot is currently vacant. An estimated completion date is set for 2025, with ULURP filing and approval targeted for the second quarter of 2023.

Crains New York reported that Fordham Landing represents one of the largest, private, waterfront land assemblages in New York City, according to Dynamic Star. They added that the developer ultimately expects the project to include amenities ranging from an e-sports amphitheater to a 2,000-seat music venue to a boat rental launch.

Norwood News asked Dynamic Star LLC about the terms of any tax breaks it had secured under the Opportunity Zone program and as well as the final affordable housing allocation. They confirmed they had not secured any tax breaks under the program and the final affordable housing allocation was 30 percent.

We also asked if Dynamic Star had started any negotiations with any community stakeholders in terms of what resources the community would like to see put in place in the context of the development. "Dynamic Star believes in the power of community engagement and has been working very diligently to clean up the site that has been an environmental hazard to the neighborhood for the past 20 years," said Chris Makos, a senior associate with the group.

"Dynamic Star has continuously met with key stakeholders in the community. Our vision and design goals for the project have been guided by their input from day one," Makos said. "For example, we are currently working with the Harlem River Working Group in support of the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook, which if realized, would flow through Fordham Landing into the Harlem River."

We also asked if Dynamic Star would be employing local, union workers for the construction of the development. "Yes," said Makos. "We have formed an alliance with the Building & Construction Trades Council and plan to use all union labor. We have signed an agreement with 32bj and look forward to having more interaction with key elected officials and the community board as well."

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