



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## CITY MOURNS 17 LOST IN BRONX BLAZE



PHOTOS OF 14 of the 17 victims who tragically lost their lives in a residential fire at 333 East 181<sup>st</sup> Street in the Fordham Heights section of the Bronx on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022. Photo courtesy of the victims' families via Sheikh Musa Drammeh

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

News of the devastating, January 9th Bronx residential, high-rise fire which claimed the lives of 17 people, including 8 children, and

which injured 63, at the Twin Parks North West housing complex in Fordham Heights made international headlines this week, as the Bronx and the City rallied around the impacted, mostly immigrant

community from North West-ern Africa.

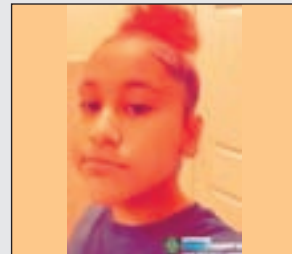
During a press conference held on Sunday, in the aftermath of the blaze, Mayor Eric Adams urged those impacted not to be afraid to come for-

ward to get help, adding that with the City "facing multiple crises at once," it was "a significant moment to have a unification" among New Yorkers during what he called this

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# COVID Closures Return with Long Lines for Testing, Boosters & Food, City Reacts

**By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY**

As the COVID-19 omicron variant continues to spread across the Bronx, prior to the holidays, local residents had been seen waiting on increasingly longer lines for vaccination boosters, for COVID-19 testing and for food. Meanwhile many local restaurants had, once again, suspended in-person dining.

On Wednesday, Dec. 19, at the COVID-19 mobile testing bus, parked outside St. James' Park at Jerome Avenue and East 192nd Street in Fordham Manor, moments after being tested, one woman who declined to be identified was asked if she was feeling sick. She replied, "No, but somebody at work got sick, so I'm just being cautious that I don't have it."

By Dec. 24, the line for the same mobile testing site stretched all the way down Jerome Avenue where, at the corner of East 190th Street, another line had formed and was heading in the opposite direction. The second line was for residents arriving for a bimonthly food giveaway at which an estimated 50 residents first waited in the cold outside St. James Episcopal Church, and then, one by one, received a bag of groceries.

Members/volunteers of the church told *Norwood News* food distribution began there in 2017 and that they have been feeding between 160 and 200 families, or between 330 and 400 people, per month.

Similarly, in the Westchester Square section of the borough, longer lines for COVID-19 testing were observed, once again, outside of Essen Health Care,



Photo by David Greene

**A LINE OF** people stretches around the block from the Level Up MD located at East 204th Street and Hull Avenue in Norwood on Saturday, December 18, 2021.

located at 1434 Williamsbridge Road, just two and a half short blocks from where long lines had also been seen (sometimes of over 100 people) outside Harvest Fields Community Church. There, church leaders have been seen handing out boxes of food to several hundred Bronxites, over the last several months.

Another woman we spoke to on Dec. 19, who declined to be identified and who was about to get tested at the Level Up MD office located on East 204th Street in Norwood, said, "I don't

have symptoms, but I'm getting tested because I'm about to travel."

According to Norwood resident, Sheila Sanchez, by Dec. 31, residents were arriving at Level Up MD for COVID-19 testing as early as 5:30 a.m. even though the medical office does not usually open until 8 a.m. Sanchez added that the line nearly reached Mosholu Parkway North that day.

Meanwhile, a visit to the Kam Man Kitchen Chinese Restaurant on East 204th Street in Norwood saw a dining table placed upside down on top of another, preventing customers from sitting inside. The woman behind the counter told *Norwood News*, "I don't have enough help to check for the vaccine card, and if you don't check, you get a ticket. Yeah, it's \$1,000 [fine] and I can't afford that."

Asked if the elimination of indoor dining was hurting business, the business owner replied, "Yes, most people pick up [their food], but some people want to eat here, and some people refuse to show the card, so we have arguments with the customers. It's a lot of trouble."

The woman added, and *Norwood News* later confirmed, that Popeye's, located next door to Kam Man Kitchen Chinese Restaurant, Subway [restaurant] and McDonalds, all on East 204th Street in Norwood, had each closed their dining areas to the public also.

Meanwhile, during a COVID-19 briefing by U.S. President Joe Biden on Dec. 21, the president told the nation, "Tens of millions have gotten sick. We've all experienced upheaval in our lives, but while COVID has been a tough adversary, we've shown that we're tougher...."

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Photo by David Greene

**A LARGE CROWD** waits to be tested for COVID-19 outside St. James Park mobile testing site, located at Jerome Avenue and East 192nd Street in Fordham Manor, on Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021.

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, amid the latest omicron variant wave, we asked readers about their recent experience of either getting tested on-site for COVID-19 or of waiting for free, home test kits.



I went to get tested because my granddaughter was COVID positive. I waited 48 hours before visiting the LevelUp Urgent Care on East 204th Street and lucky me I wasn't cold, because it was a warm day. I was in line from 6 a.m. until 10 a.m., but because I was negative, it didn't mess up my plans. Some folks came with entire families and at 5:45 [a.m.] there were already twenty people on the line... Later, the line almost went to Moshulu Parkway."

**Sheila Sanchez,**  
Norwood  
(at LevelUp Urgent Care, East 204th Street in Norwood)



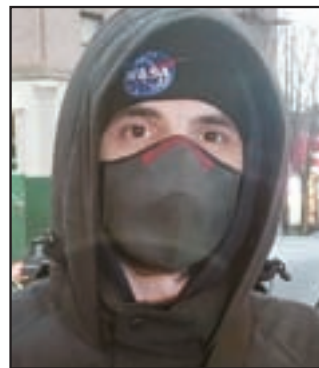
"I think the giveaway [for home testing kits] is great because most people are having a very difficult time [getting tested]. I think we're in a very serious situation with the pandemic. We have people who think it's a hoax and people are dying, and it's just a matter of [them] saying 'it's their freedom.' I say our health and our lives and anything that can be done to help those who can't do for themselves is greatly appreciated. I'm going to take the test. I'm the site manager here [Dennis Lane Apt. complex, Belmont] and I have people coming in and out of my office, and they're not allowed in without a mask. If I could ask them their vaccination status, I would, but I can't."

**Susan Shatz,**  
Brooklyn  
(at Dennis Lane Apartments in Belmont, where Rep. Ritchie Torres held a test kit giveaway on Jan. 6)



"I just came out for the [home] test [kit] because I live here. I will probably hold onto it until I have symptoms, because I am a veteran so I can go to the V.A. Hospital to make sure I'm good. But this test [kit] is for my wife because she's not covered by my [health] coverage, because I only spent two years in the army and she's not eligible for whatever I get as a veteran. This kit giveaway is great because it gives people hope, because we all have to hope and have a little patience and make sure that whatever you do is going to help the community."

**Lewellyn Bernard,**  
Belmont  
(at Dennis Lane Apartments in Belmont, where Rep. Ritchie Torres held a test kit giveaway on Jan. 6.)



"The lines have been terrible; I mean I've gone to four different places. Every time I try and get tested, I go to four different places. I spent like four hours last time; it was terrible! Right now, it happens to be a little bit easier because I stayed on line [in the past] and they told me it was over and I left. But these people right here are very accommodating; this is the only place that actually took care of the patients before they actually got inside, and they provided everyone with hot chocolate. This messed up some of my holiday plans. In fact, if we had the ability to do quicker testing, we would have been able to do a lot more, and we would have known who was sick, who to bring, and who not to bring. The holidays would have been better. I was actually positive a few days ago, and I believe I'm past the timeframe according to the CDC, but I wanted to get a negative test before.."

**Bestar Mujaj,**  
Norwood  
(at LevelUp Urgent Care, East 204th Street in Norwood)



"It didn't mess me up because I was out of work for a year and a half due to the COVID. The line wasn't too bad, but the only thing I can't understand is about this new variant now that is so transmittable. How come, all of a sudden, everybody is getting sick with the shot and without the shot. I haven't gotten the shot, but two of my engineers that I worked for had their shots, and they caught the virus two weeks ago. One had the booster shot, and he caught it, so there's still a lot to be explained about this thing that's going around. I think it will be with us forever, like the flu."

**Joseph Parrome,**  
Bedford Park  
(at St. James Park mobile testing site at Jerome Avenue & E. 192nd Street in Fordham Manor)



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# City Mourns 17 Lost in Bronx Blaze

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time of tragedy. “When there is a crisis in this City or State, we are coming together,” he said.

FDNY Commissioner Daniel Nigro confirmed that the 5-alarm blaze, originally raised as a two-alarm fire, had been caused by an electric space heater. “The loss of one life is sad for us, much less 19 lives,” he said [the number was subsequently reduced to 17]. “It’s certainly traumatizing when we can’t save a life,” he added. He said firefighters would receive counseling following the incident, adding it had been a very difficult job for them. Nigro said said the alarm was raised by a resident who noticed a lot of smoke.

When asked by the media about reports by residents of false fire alarms going off in the building, possibly causing a delayed reaction by some, he said he could not confirm and would have to investigate further. Fire officials were able to determine on Sunday that open doors in the building had impacted on the spread of smoke, making escape more difficult.

On Monday, the mayor urged New Yorkers to “close their doors” in the event of a fire in order to curtail the spread. “The most important thing New Yorkers should know about fire safety is ALWAYS close the door behind you,” he said. “It will slow the spread of fire and give people more time to safely evacuate. Teach your children, remind your friends and family: close the door.”

Adams also confirmed that the City was, however, investigating whether automated self-closing doors, which are supposed to contain the spread, were functioning properly. Upon further investigation, Nigro later concluded they were not.

The NYPD confirmed that officers responded to a call regarding the fire on Sunday morning, Jan. 9, at 10.55 a.m. at 333 East 181st Street, where FDNY personnel were already attempting to suppress a large fire on the third floor of the 19-story building, in which smoke had spread throughout. In the end, FDNY officials reported that 200 firefighters responded to the blaze, which has been described as the deadliest fire in New York City in 30 years.

According to the FDNY, it was brought under control at around 1.27 p.m. There were media and other reports praising firefighters for having pressed on to save survivors despite having low levels of oxygen remaining in their tanks. Once the fire had been brought under control, police said multiple injuries and fatalities were reported and victims brought to various City hospitals, whose ICU units were already coping with the uptick in coronavirus hospitalizations amid the latest winter surge caused by the highly transmissible omicron variant.

Sunday’s press conference was also attended by Gov. Kathy Hochul, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), Councilman Oswald Feliz (C.D. 15), Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia (A.D. 86) in whose respective districts the building is located, and other elected, NYPD, EMS, and FDNY officials.

The governor, who announced that a Victim Compensation Fund had been set up as a part of the executive budget to help for the victims of the fire, spoke at the press event and later tweeted of the tragedy, “I am horrified by the devastating fire in the Bronx today. My heart is with the loved ones of all those we’ve tragically lost, all of those impacted and with our heroic @FDNY firefighters.” She added, “The entire State of New York stands with New York City.”

In the meantime, the NY Post and various other media outlets reported on Jan. 11 and Jan. 12. that the building owners, Bronx Park Phase III Preservation LLC, and its three member companies, Lich Investment Group, Belveron Partners, and Camber Property Group, have been hit with a billion-dollar class action lawsuit by some of the buildings’ residents.

The NY Post reported that other defendants named in the suit are former building owners, Cammeby’s International Group, and the company’s founder, real-estate tycoon, Rubin Schron, of Brooklyn who, reportedly, sold the property in 2019, as well as The City of New York; the Department of Buildings; the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development; former Mayor Bill de Blasio and Housing Commissioner Melanie La Rocca. The NY Post reported that the suit seeks \$1 billion each for everyone who joins the class-action case.

The NY Post reported that the class action notice referred to the shutting devices, or “returns,” on self-closing apartment doors becoming “rusty over time” and that “the springs on the door returns need to be replaced over time.” It alleged that City officials, “failed in every way” to make sure that happened at the 333 East 181st Street building which was built in 1972.

In the aftermath of the blaze, some residents had told reporters that some doors in the building did not always close, and that the alarm in the building sometimes went off, even when there was no fire.

Schumer addressed the Senate on Monday, regarding the fire, saying, “Today, my thoughts, my prayers, and our condolences are with everyone whose lives were ripped apart because of the awful fire in the apartments that ignited yesterday, at the Twin Parks

North West tower in the Bronx.”

He asked that people pray for the recovery of the dozens of victims of the “unspeakable tragedy,” including many who he said were in the ICU. “I grieve for all the families, friends, and neighbors whose lives were suddenly cut short in the fire. Many were from immigrant families, people who came to our City to start climbing up the ladders of prosperity, and a decent life for themselves and their children in this beautiful country, and now they’re lost,” he said.

He also commended the firefighters, saying, “They did not think about their own safety. They just answered the call and did their jobs – that’s what firefighters do. We respect them, we love them,” he said. “I am profoundly grateful for them and for all the workers who are rebuilding from the damage, as well as the health workers tending to the injured.”

He vowed, at the federal level, to do whatever was possible in terms of housing assistance, disaster assistance, to help the affected families. Schumer said many of those affected by the fire came from Gambia and other West African countries on the Diversity Visa lottery program. “I say to these immigrant families: do not hesitate to reach out to local and federal authorities—you will find nothing but a helping hand.”

A review of the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) complaints records for the building in question, revealed there were nine complaints recorded, with two still active as of Jan. 10. Of the two that were active, one related to a “24 hour follow-up compliance inspection for Vac X 04/202224 hour follow up compliance inspection” and one related to an “elevator audit.” *Norwood News* reached out to DOB for clarification on what exactly the former complaint related to and were informed that after Sunday’s fire, DOB issued a Partial Vacate Order for the entire 3rd floor (14 apartments in total).

“It is standard protocol at DOB that following the issuance of a Vacate Order, our inspectors will return to the location within 24 hours to confirm that the Vacate Order is being complied with. This follow up inspection is noted in BIS for record keeping purposes,” a DOB official said. “In this case, our investigators have been on scene all day, and we can confirm that the order was being complied with.”

Regarding the elevator complaint, the DOB official told *Norwood News*, “DOB performed an inspection of the two elevators inside of the building following the fire. We found that they were not damaged by the fire, and at the time of inspection they were in safe operable condition.”

Meanwhile, a search of the 311

complaints logged from Jan. 1, 2021, to Jan. 9, 2022, for the building at 333 E 181st Street, where the fire broke out, generated no complaint records for the address in question during that specific timeframe.

However, NYC Department of Building (DOB) records show that the building in question, listed on DOB’s website with Building Identification Number (BIN # 2013306), and Borough Block Lot Number (BBL #: 3143/36), lists other mailing addresses i.e. 2180 Folin Street as well as Webster Avenue, though no street number was provided for Webster Avenue.

A search of 311 complaints within a 500-foot radius of 333 East 181st Street did generate complaints for 2148 Webster Avenue, and 2233 Webster Avenue, some of which related to lack of heating and water, and to roach and mice infestation. Some of the complaints had been filed as recently as December 2021.

A DOB official told *Norwood News*, prior to the fire, it had received six 311 complaints for the building, under the Folin Street address. These can be viewed in the attached table. The Daily Mail UK also reported on Monday that the building owner, Bronx Phase III Housing Company, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, comprised three property developers, one of which is The Camber Group.

On Dec. 10, 2021, NYCHA announced the selection of Camber Property Group as part of a development team set to deliver what it called comprehensive building and apartment upgrades to more than 2,000 apartments at Edenwald Houses in the Bronx, as part of a new “PACT” deal, worth approximately \$445 million in repair work.

As previously reported by *Norwood News*, according to NYCHA, under the PACT [Permanent Affordability Commitment Together] program, private and non-profit development partners are contracted by the government, based on resident input, to manage certain NYCHA developments. Under the program, once a property “converts” to “Project-Based Section 8 housing,” NYCHA leases the land and buildings to the development partners, which conduct repairs, serve as property managers, and provide “enhanced social services and community programs to tenants.” Edenwald Houses is one of the largest NYCHA developments in New York City.

Several media outlets have reported that Rick Gropper of Camber Property Group is also named as a contributor to Eric Adams’ housing transition team.

Meanwhile, as news of the tragedy reported across the world, Pope Francis sent a message of condolence and support to the victims via Cardinal

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# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

## Biaggi's New Bill to Hold NY Fashion World Accountable

State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi (S.D. 34) has joined the "Act on Fashion Coalition," partnering with animal rights activist and fashion designer, Stella McCartney, and others, to introduce the Fashion Sustainability and Social Accountability Act in the State senate. The first-of-its-kind legislation aims to hold the New York fashion industry accountable for its impact on people and the planet. The coalition includes various, local, environmental, educational, and other groups.

Under the bill, all apparel and footwear retailers and manufacturers, with global annual receipts of at least \$100 million doing business in New York State, would be required to map their supply chains, disclose environmental and social impacts, and set binding targets to reduce those impacts.

According to Biaggi's office, apparel and footwear are responsible for an under-acknowledged part of global greenhouse gas emissions. Unlike other heavy polluting industries such as the auto sector, fashion retailers and manufacturers operate in a regulatory-free vacuum. Officials from the senator's office said this has led to a global race to the bottom, where the companies that have the least regard for the environment and for workers have the greatest competitive edge.

Impact reductions include mandatory science-based targets, ensuring the fashion industry operates within the bounds of the Paris Climate Agreement. Companies will also be required to disclose their material use, by material type and the wages of workers. Noncompliant companies will be required to pay fines, the revenue of which will fund projects specifically for New York's environmental justice communities.

## Dinowitz Fake Vaccination Card Bill Now Law

Gov. Kathy Hochul signed into law, in December, a bill sponsored by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), which makes the falsification of COVID-19 vaccination records a crime. The new "Truth in Vaccination Law," takes effect at a critical moment in the State's battle against the coronavirus. The recent rise in COVID-19 cases,

# Van Cortlandt Jewish Center Honors Jeffrey Dinowitz

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz was honored by Van Cortlandt Jewish Center on Sunday, Dec. 19, as part of a "Celebration of Appreciation" event held at the center in the Van Cortlandt Village section of the Bronx. The assemblyman, who is Jewish, was elected to the New York State Assembly to represent the 81st Assembly District, on Feb. 15, 1994, and has been the elected assemblyman since then.

The district broadly covers the Northwest Bronx section of the borough and includes Van Cortlandt Village where the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) is located. His son, Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) was elected to office last year and represents much of the same area.

The gesture of appreciation from the local Jewish community was in stark contrast to the protest held outside the assemblyman's home in Riverdale on Sunday, Dec. 12, as reported, when a small number of Jewish community members joined others in opposing the assemblyman's proposed bill A8378, while also dis-



Photo courtesy of the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center

## ASSEMBLYMAN JEFFREY DINOWITZ

(A.D. 81) speaks to some of the attendees who were both physically present and who joined virtually, during an event held in his honor, at the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) in Van Cortlandt Village, organized by the center on Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021.

playing anti-Semitic imagery.

The bill, if passed, and which is still at the committee level stage of the legislative process, would authorize the State commissioner of health to develop and supervise the execution of an immunization program against COVID-19 for schools funded with State aid, and would

require immunization against COVID-19 for those attending such schools. It was the second such rally protesting the assemblyman's legislation, in a month. Jeffrey Dinowitz responded, at length, to the protest, affirming people's right to rally but denouncing the anti-Semitic imagery displayed at the event.

Meanwhile, the VCJC event garnered a smaller than usual audience, with some taking the decision to play it safe, connecting virtually out of an abundance of caution amid the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising case rates of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, now confirmed as the dominant strain of COVID-19 in the U.S.

The center's representatives said they were pleased to be able to show their appreciation for what they described as all the work the assemblyman had done for VCJC and the community over the years. Stuart Harris, president of VCJC, said, "I am happy that we're finally able to honor Assemblyman Dinowitz after the year we've had, due to COVID." He added, "He is a man that deserves to be honored, and I'm sorry we had to put it off last year."

hospitalizations and deaths, some stemming from the prevalence of the highly transmissible omicron variant, has added new urgency to efforts to ensure every eligible New Yorker is fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

"Vaccine requirements work," Dinowitz said. "The data is clear. However, when we have a preponderance of fake vaccine records, that lulls New Yorkers into a false sense of public health safety and undermines the protections that vaccine requirements provide to everyone. This law will help ensure that New Yorkers are as safe as they can be from this virus, while going to work or patronizing a business." Hochul, meanwhile, urges all parents to vaccinate their children and prevent what she said were unnecessary hospitalizations.

## AOC, Other Electeds Test Positive for COVID-19

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has received a positive test result for COVID-19, it was announced on Jan. 9. Her office said she was experiencing symptoms and was recovering at home. They said the congresswoman received her booster shot this fall and encouraged everyone to get their booster also

and to follow all CDC guidance. Ocasio-Cortez had drawn expected criticism from the right, after she was seen vacationing in Florida over the holidays, where her mother reportedly lives. Her opponents criticized her for going maskless, even though she was photographed outside. Other elected officials who have also been vaccinated and tested positive for COVID-19 over the holidays included Councilmember Pierina Sanchez (C.D.14), Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), NY health commissioner, Mary Bassett, and Councilman Kevin Riley (C.D. 12).

## Housing Lottery Launches for Units at 2779, 2781 University Avenue

A new affordable housing lottery was launched on Dec. 22, 2021, for units in a pair of four-story residential buildings at 2779/2781 University Avenue in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx, as reported by YIMBY. Designed by Woody Chen of Infocus, and developed by Yaniv Zohar, the structures yield a total of 18 residential units. Available on NYC Housing Connect, NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development

(HPD)'s online portal, are six units for residents at 130 percent of the area median income (AMI), ranging in eligible income from \$61,715 to \$167,570.

The smoke-free amenities include an accessible entrance, an elevator, bike storage lockers, and a gym and the apartments come with in-unit washers and dryers. Tenants are responsible for electricity for cooking, heat, and hot water. At 130 percent of the AMI, there are two one-bedroom units with monthly rent of \$1,800 for those with incomes ranging from \$61,715 to \$139,620, and four one-bedroom units with monthly rent of \$2,000 for those with incomes ranging from \$68,572 to \$167,570.

Prospective renters must meet income and household size requirements to apply, and applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than January 20, 2022. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to 2779 & 2781 University Avenue Apartments c/o Tax Solute Consulting, 185 Marcy Avenue, #3-3A, Brooklyn, NY 11211. No deposits or application fees apply. For more information, go to: <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/2539>.



## Search for 14-Year-Old Missing Girl

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance locating a 14-year-old girl reported missing on Sunday, Jan. 2, in Fordham Manor. Venus Sabater, 14, of 2546 Bailey Avenue, The Bronx, was last seen leaving her home on Thursday, Dec. 30, 2021, at approximately 6 p.m. She is described as female, approximately 5 feet, 2 inches tall, weighs 120 pounds, is Hispanic, and was last seen wearing black sandals, blue jeans, and a black jacket. 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. All calls are strictly confidential.





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# COVID Closures Return with Long Lines for Testing, Boosters & Food, City Reacts

(continued from page 2)

ness and save lives.”

Biden vowed that his administration would open 10,000 new vaccination sites across the nation, to add to the existing 80,000 sites, with more to follow in January. He added that his administration would also be deploying hundreds of vaccinators to more vaccination sites to assist FEMA with pop-up clinics that would provide booster shots in “areas of high demand.”

In his strongest statement on the anti-COVID-19 vaccination movement to date, Biden said, “The unvaccinated are responsible for their own choices, but those choices have been fueled by dangerous misinformation on cable TV and social media, and these companies and personalities are making money by peddling lies and allowing misinformation that can kill their own customers and their own supporters.”

The president added, “It’s wrong. It’s immoral. I call on the purveyor of these lies and misinformation to stop it. Stop it now.”

On Dec. 20, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced that NY health commissioner, Mary Bassett, had tested positive for COVID-19. On the same day Councilwoman-elect, Pierina Sanchez (CD 14), announced, via Twitter, that she too had tested positive for COVID-19. On Dec. 21, Councilman Kevin Riley (CD 12) also announced, on Twitter, that he too had tested positive for the virus.

Later, on Jan. 1, Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13) confirmed in a statement that he had also tested positive for COVID-19. The congressman previously contracted the virus in 2021, just as the vaccines were first being rolled out.

As police, fire, paramedics, and teachers all continued to report rising rates of sick employees, City MD, announced on Dec. 29 that it had temporarily closed 20 locations. That number later rose to 32 locations, including four in the Bronx, which were reportedly due to staffing shortages. The Bronx locations which were closed were at East 161st Street, The Hub, Southern Boulevard and Westchester Square.

On their website, City MD told its customers, “Most City MD locations are operating at full capacity, doing our best to meet the urgent care needs of the people of New York and New Jersey. Continuing to provide these services to the community is a top priority. However, our physicians and teammates are also a priority. To preserve our ability to staff our sites, we have temporarily closed certain locations. It is our hope that closing sites now will best allow us to avoid future closures as this surge continues.”

In response to the unprecedented surge, the NYC Test & Trace Corps announced on Wednesday, Jan. 5, that,



Photo by David Greene

**CHAIRS ARE PILED** on top of tables and tape cordons off the dining area at the Subway restaurant on East 204th Street in Norwood on Sunday, December 19, 2021.

since the surge began in early December, it had doubled the number of City-run test sites available, opening over 100 new fixed and mobile COVID-19 testing sites, and was, on Jan. 5, operating over 200 testing sites throughout New York City.

NYC Health + Hospitals president and CEO, Mitchell Katz, MD, said the NYC Test & Trace Corps’ ability to expand the number of COVID-19 testing sites so quickly “by triple digits,” underscored its ability to respond to the changing waves of the pandemic and the threats the various COVID-19 variants posed to New Yorkers. “Our City’s public health system and our partners remain committed to ensuring every New Yorker has timely and convenient resources to better protect themselves and those around them from infection,” he said. “This has been our basic mission for over 20 months and will remain so for the duration of this pandemic.”

Meanwhile, senior VP of ambulatory care and population health at New York City Health + Hospitals and NYC Test & Trace Corps executive director, Dr. Ted Long, said working with communities across NYC, the hospital system doubled the number of City-run testing sites and distributed “millions of at-home test kits” to help New Yorkers get tested. “NYC Test & Trace and NYC Health + Hospitals stand committed to providing all New Yorkers with fast, accessible, and free testing resources,” he said. “Our teams have worked around the clock to open over one hundred new testing sites across New York City to help New Yorkers quickly and conveniently get tested.”

On Dec. 6, City-run testing facilities had processed 17,000 tests, or approximately 19 percent of the 7-day citywide average for PCR and antigen testing, according to NYC Health + Hospitals officials. Three weeks later, City-run testing facilities were conducting close

to three times as many tests, officials said, with more than 50,000 tests being administered daily, or 35 percent of the 7-day citywide average for PCR and antigen testing.

City officials said there were also over 100 City-run mobile testing sites operating in all five boroughs, over 50 of which had opened in the space of three weeks. There are also nearly 100 City-run, fixed, test site locations, over 40 of which opened in a three-week period, according to City officials. Fixed test sites include over 70 testing facilities operated by NYC Test & Trace, 18 testing facilities operated by New York City Health + Hospitals and Gotham Health testing facilities, and eight COVID-19 Express testing sites operated by the NYC Health Dept. Over 20 additional testing sites were opened in early January.

Shifra Goldenberg is NYC Test & Trace Corps senior manager of site and service implementation and director of implementation for the office of ambulatory care and population health at NYC Health + Hospitals. She said since the pandemic began, day in, day out, the NYC Test & Trace teams have worked tirelessly to provide additional testing resources wherever they’ve been needed, innovated ways to deliver testing as effectively as possible, and engaged community partners to determine site locations convenient to all New York’s diverse communities.

“I am proud of our team members, including our healthcare workers and service operators providing testing on the frontlines of the pandemic, who have made this critical testing expansion possible and encouraged to see so many New Yorkers showing up to get tested and stop the spread,” Goldenberg said.

City officials also said that since Dec. 28, NYC Test & Trace had also distributed nearly 2 million tests to schools

across New York City to support the City’s “Stay Safe and Stay Open” plan. Since schools reopened on Jan. 3, they said NYC Test & Trace had doubled the amount of in-school surveillance testing conducted on a daily basis, as was called for in December by District 11 Councilman Eric Dinowitz, a former teacher. Officials said Test & Trace is also currently operating five fixed testing sites exclusively for Department of Education (DOE) staff to make testing for educators and other school employees as easy as possible.

Some New Yorkers continue to post on social media that they are still not convinced by the City’s approach to containing COVID-19 and said they do not want their kids at school. Some teachers have also voiced their frustrations on social media about the difficulties they face while teaching amid the surge of infections among kids and adults in schools. A student walk-out took place by Brooklyn Tech students on Jan. 11, amid fears over rising cases.

Officials said that between Dec. 15 and 29, NYC Test & Trace also distributed over 1 million at-home test kits, or approximately 75,000 at-home test kits per day. This included City-run sites where at-home test kits were provided to people experiencing long lines, distributions at borough-based community locations, distributions to the offices of elected leaders throughout New York City, and distributions through the CBO-guided At-Home Test Kit & Mask Distribution Program.

At-home testing for COVID-19 is available to all immunocompromised New Yorkers and those ages 65 and older. Appointments for at-home testing are available seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. New Yorkers may schedule an appointment by calling 929-298-9400. Officials urged New Yorkers to visit NYC.gov/covidtest for a complete, up-to-date list of City-run testing sites to find a location that is most convenient and accessible for them.

Meanwhile, Forbes recently reported that it was announced that a new variant of COVID-19 was identified in France in recent weeks, following the return to France of a resident from Cameroon. Health officials, so far, have said the new variant is not considered a variant of concern.

Separately, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called on President Joe Biden to provide more supplies of recently approved antiviral pills to treat COVID-19 patients who are seriously ill, to be delivered to New York State, to counter the surge in hospitalized COVID-19 patients, the majority of whom are unvaccinated, according to the City data.



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## COVID-19 Updates

According to estimates by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) released on Dec. 28, 2021, the highly transmissible omicron variant overtook the delta variant as the dominant strain of the coronavirus circulating in the U.S. by Dec. 25, 2021, when it accounted for nearly 60 percent of all variants in the U.S. As of Jan. 11, 2021, COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths were all increasing across New York City.

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) officials say New Yorkers who don't feel well should stay home, masks should be worn in public, indoor spaces, and hands should be washed regularly. They say the latest winter surge is impacting everyone, including people who are vaccinated, and those who were previously infected. They say everyone is at risk of infection, but unvaccinated people are significantly more likely to have severe illness from COVID-19, including from omicron.

NYC Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi said in a recent social media post, "New data from NYC DOHMH: Unvaccinated NYC adults who previously had #COVID19 were \*more than twice as likely\* to get reinfected, experience illness, and be hospitalized than people who were vaccinated after infection," and provided the following link: <https://www.medrxiv.org/con.../10.1101/2021.12.09.21267203v1>.

Health officials said New Yorkers should call 911 immediately if they develop: trouble breathing, a persistent pain or pressure in their chest, confusion, an inability

to stay awake, bluish lips or face, or any other emergency condition.

They said residents should NOT call 911 if it's NOT an emergency or if they are looking for a COVID-19 test.

NYS Department of Health (DOH) advises all New Yorkers aged 5 and older to get fully vaccinated, and all eligible New Yorkers to get a booster vaccine. New Yorkers aged 12 and older who were fully vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at least five months ago, are eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech booster dose.

New Yorkers aged 18 and older who were fully vaccinated with the Moderna vaccine at least five months ago, or fully vaccinated with the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago, are eligible for a booster dose. Children aged 5 to 11 with certain immunocompromising conditions who were fully vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at least 28 days ago, are eligible for an additional dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Dosages vary for different groups.

State Health officials said a booster dose helps maximize protection, prolongs the vaccine's durability, and continues to safeguard communities against the virus. Booster and additional doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are free and widely available, statewide, irrespective of immigration status. For New Yorkers aged 18 and older, State health officials say Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (COVID-19 mRNA vaccines) are preferred. New Yorkers may get the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine in some situations. For more information on this, go to the CDC's website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/janssen.html>.

NYC health officials say it has never been easier to get a COVID-19 vaccination, and they are required for many public indoor activities in the City. City residents of 65 and older can get free transportation to and from a vaccination appointment. This service is also available for those with disabilities who have no other way to get to a vaccination site. To schedule free transport by either ambulette or taxi (including wheelchair accessible vehicles), call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). If you are younger than 18, you must have your parent or guardian call to book the trip on your behalf.

You can also sign up online for an in-home vaccination, or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). Anyone 12 or older is eligible for in-home vaccination. Generally, find out how and where to get vaccinated here:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines.page>. If you test positive after taking a home self-test, call your provider or 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319) to be linked to care. For more information about when to get tested, the types of COVID-19 tests available, and how to interpret test results, including what to do if you test positive or negative, go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-testing.page>. When you go for a test, you will not be asked about immigration status.

State Officials said all New Yorkers 6 months and older should also get a flu shot.

The FDA recently authorized two antiviral pills, paxlovid and molnupiravir, to treat those who are severely ill with COVID-19. Due to limited supply, the antiviral pills are currently only available to people who have tested positive and are at the highest risk for severe illness from COVID-19. If you think

you have symptoms, or if you have tested positive, talk to your health care provider, or call 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319). If you are a health care provider, get information about eligibility, prioritizations, and distributions of the oral antiviral pill treatments here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers-treatments.page#oral>.

Health officials say New Yorkers should get tested after traveling, before seeing family, and if they have symptoms or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19. All travelers, domestic and international should continue to follow all CDC travel requirements. NYC Health + Hospitals testing sites and mobile clinics offer free testing, including some sites that will test children 2 years old and younger. For more information, go to: <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/>. To find a COVID-19 testing site near you, visit [nyc.gov/](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-testing.page)

covidtest or text "COVID TEST" to 855-48. Additional Citywide sites can be found here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/get-tested/covid-19-testing.page>.

Most people who have COVID-19 completely recover, but some have lasting symptoms and health problems. Post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, also called long COVID or chronic COVID, refers to a wide range of symptoms that develop during or after COVID-19 illness and continue for several weeks or months. Symptoms include fatigue, breathing problems and muscle pain. For more information on the symptoms of long COVID and available care options in NYC, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/covid/covid-19-long-covid-faq.pdf>.

For information on COVID-19 business regulations, go to:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines-keytonyc.page>



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# Annual “Tree of Angels” Tree-Lighting Event Held in Tribute to Loved Ones Killed on Bronx Streets

By DAVID GREENE

Dozens of still grieving local, Bronx family members and survivors of crime and street violence gathered in early December in the Wakefield section of the Bronx, together with members of the Crime Victims Assistance Bureau (CVAU) and with Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, for the annual “Tree of Angels,” tree-lighting remembrance ceremony, held in memory and in tribute to the families’ loved ones who were the tragic victims of street violence.

Canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, the somber and poignant tree-lighting and tree-decorating event was held on Saturday, Dec. 4, and began in Bronx Community Board 12’s usual meeting venue that also houses the satellite office of CVAU, and is located at 4101 White Plains Road in Wakefield. Several speakers offered prepared remarks before the crowd stepped outside into an adjacent courtyard where the tree-decorating and tree-lighting event was held.

Referring to the work involved in bringing the perpetrators of such crimes to justice, during her prepared remarks, Clark told those gathered,

“You know that my office never gives up. Obviously, there was an example of that this year when we were able to solve the cold case from 22 years ago.” At that point, the crowd, some of whom were unable to fit into the venue for the first part of the event, burst into applause.

Clark was referring to the November 29th arrest of Joseph Martinez, 49, for the 1999 murder of Minerlitz Soriano, 13. Clark continued, “I’ve talked to some of you that still haven’t had answers; don’t worry. We’re going to keep trying.”

According to Steven Rivera, 46, the “Tree of Angels” event was the brainchild of his father, Freddy Guzman, following the October 1990 murder of Freddy Guzman’s then 10-year-old daughter, Jessica, and the subsequent 1992 conviction of her killer, Alejandro Henriquez. The latter was also known as The Bronx Serial Killer and was also convicted of the murders of 14-year-old Shamira Bello and 21-year-old Lisa Ann Rodriguez. Currently serving a 75-year-to-life prison sentence, Henriquez continues to maintain his innocence.

Meanwhile, at the Wakefield event,

Steven Rivera recounted the story of how the first of the annual tree-lighting events, held in December 1993, came about, telling the *Norwood News*, “My dad saw that everybody was still miserable during the holidays, and he lit a tree, and invited the families over.” Steven Rivera also explained how his mother, Milagros Guzman, had, at that point, formed the group, Justice for Children, with the other grieving families who had also lost loved ones at the hands of Henriquez.

Reminiscing on that first 1993 tree-lighting ceremony, Steven Rivera described a tree decoration his father had created for the occasion. “He had a teardrop with an angel inside, and he took a gold marker and wrote ‘Jessica’ on it,” he said, adding that the other families continued to meet each year at the Guzman home in Soundview until 2009 when Milagros Guzman moved to Florida. Then, in 2010, the event began to be held at the CVAU office, also used by Bronx Community Board 12, and the tradition has continued annually ever since.

In the courtyard, one by one, the various family members said the

names of their lost loved ones aloud before hanging ornaments on the tree in remembrance of them. Julian Oden, Jessica Guzman, Joseph Luna, Darin Capehart, Jaryan Elliot, and Luis Gonzalez were just some of the names of those honored. Jaryan, as reported, was just 13 years old when he was fatally shot in Belmont in July 2021.

During the ornament hanging section of the ceremony, sadly, one woman was seen hanging one ornament on the tree for her son, murdered in 2018, and another for her daughter, murdered in February 2021. She was not the only one, tragically, to place ornaments on the tree for two different family members.

The family of Lameek Akins, 19, who was fatally shot in February 2013, also attended the gathering. A family member, who declined to be identified, said, “We’ve just begun with justice, as we speak,” and added that the next court date for the suspected gunman in the shooting was Dec. 14. Asked why it had taken so long for the suspect to be tried, the family member replied, “They caught him at first, but

(continued on page 14)



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## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY

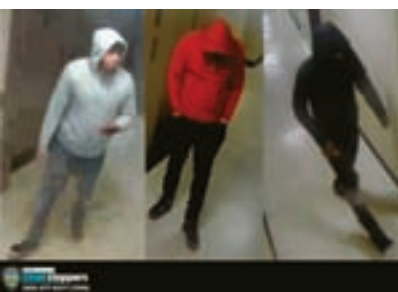


### Man Arrested after Norwood Assault

Police arrested a man following an assault involving a pocketknife in Norwood. Offering few details of the incident, an NYPD source reported that the assault took place at the northwest corner of Jerome Avenue and East 208th Street in Norwood, at approximately 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 30, 2021. Police said Charles Perkins, 62, was arrested at the scene and charged with assault, menacing and possession of a weapon, a pocketknife. The unidentified victim was treated at the scene for a "minor" laceration to the lip. A person arrested for a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

### Fordham Manor Daylight Shooting

The NYPD confirmed a man died following a daylight shooting in Fordham Manor at around 3 p.m. on Dec. 5, 2021, at Aqueduct Avenue and West Fordham Road. Upon arrival, police discovered a 62-year-old man shot in the head. He was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The victim has since been identified as Robert Brown, 62, of Grand Avenue in University Heights. There have been no arrests and the investigation is ongoing.



### Three Sought in Armed Robbery

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the three individuals seen in the above photo who are sought in connection with an armed robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. On Nov. 2, 2021, at approximately 5:30 a.m., they entered a 69-year-old male victim's livery cab in front of 2686 Bailey Avenue and displayed a firearm. They took \$200 in cash and two cellular phones from the victim before fleeing the location.



### Armed Robbery of USPS Worker

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the individual seen in the bottom left photo who is sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in Fordham Heights. On Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, at approximately 11:45 a.m., the individual approached a 43-year-old USPS worker, in the vicinity of 2051 Grand Concourse, while he was delivering mail. The individual threatened to shoot the victim and removed a quantity of mail. No injuries were reported.



### Fordham Manor: Woman Assaulted

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the individuals seen in the above photo regarding an assault that occurred in Fordham Manor. On Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, at approximately 5:40 p.m., inside a store located at 2543 Webster Avenue, the individuals struck a 42-year-old female victim in the face with a metal garbage can before fleeing the location. The victim was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital with serious injuries to the face.



### Stabbing on East Kingsbridge Road

The NYPD is seeking the public's help identifying the person seen in the above photo in connection with an assault that occurred on the border of Kingsbridge Heights and Fordham Manor. On Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021, at approximately 1:33 p.m., in the vicinity of East Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue, the person stabbed a 32-year-old man, following a verbal dispute that escalated into a physical altercation. The victim suffered a stab wound to the chest and was later transported by EMS to St.

Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. The assailant entered the Kingsbridge Road subway station and fled aboard a southbound train. He is described as male, Hispanic, had his hair in a ponytail, and wore a dark-colored baseball cap, a black, hooded sweater, a black jacket, black pants, and white sneakers.



### Bedford Park Armed Burglary

Police have arrested a 41-year-old man sought in relation to a burglary that occurred in Bedford Park in October 2021. He has been charged with robbery, burglary, and other additional charges. On Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021, at approximately 9:40 p.m., at a residence in the vicinity of East 204th Street and Grand Concourse, the man gained entry to a 22-year-old woman's home through an open front door.

He displayed a firearm and demanded money from the victim. He managed to successfully remove jewelry, val-

ued at approximately \$2,200 and \$500 in cash, before fleeing the location on foot southbound on Grand Concourse. No physical injuries were reported following the incident. On Dec. 15, 2021, police confirmed Jacob Carrasquillo, 41, of West 25th Street in Manhattan was arrested and charged with robbery, burglary, grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property, petit larceny, acting in a manner injurious to child, and criminal possession of a weapon. A person arrested and accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

### Bronx Man Gets 22 Years for 2018 Killing

Bronx D.A. Darcel D. Clark announced on Dec. 8, 2021, that Akeem Samuel, 32, whose last known address was at Andrews Avenue in the University Heights section of the Bronx, has been convicted and was sentenced to 22 years to life in prison, after a jury found him guilty of a 2018 murder. Samuel was sentenced on Dec. 7 for the second-degree murder charge, along with eight years in prison and five years' post-release supervision for a second-degree criminal possession of a weapon charge by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Steven Barrett. The sentences will run concurrently. A jury found Samuel guilty of the charges on October 27, 2021.

According to the investigation, on the evening of July 31, 2018, the victim, Frederick Hayes, 27, was walking near 2222 Andrews Avenue in University Heights when Samuel approached him from behind. An eyewitness to the crime testified in court that Samuel approached the victim, shot him, and when Hayes fell to the ground, fired at him again at close range. Hayes was shot three times in the back, three times behind the ear, and once in the arm. He was pronounced dead at the scene. Samuel fled the scene and was arrested on Dec. 11, 2018.

### Fordham Manor: Man Stabbed in the Face

Police confirm a man was stabbed during an attempted robbery in Fordham Manor. They said the attempted robbery took place in the vicinity of Decatur Avenue and East 195th Street on Dec. 6, 2021, at 5:09 p.m. They said a 23-year-old man reported to police that an unknown individual stabbed him in the face with a sharp instrument and attempted to take his phone. The victim was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

*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.*

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# Letters To The Editor

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

## Justice?

Bloods gang member, Alexis Dubouchet, was accused of the June 9, 2020, stabbing of Samuel Diaz, brother of the former Bronx Borough President. He was released on \$100,000 bail. This emphasizes what I believe. Bail should not be reformed; it should be abolished. If a dangerous person has \$100,000, that person can be released. People who are innocent or guilty of a minor crime can be kept in prison if they don't have \$100. Dubouchet is now being held for the July 25, 2021, shooting murder of Anthony Rios.

As the July 24, 2021, Daily News headline stated, Joshua Martinez was sentenced to "20 Years to Life for Stabbing Lover to Death." So, by 2041, he could be free to kill again. As the June 15, 2021, Daily News headline tells us, a newlywed, "Hub Gets 16 Years for New Wife's Slay." So, Miguel Pichardo will be free to kill again in 2037.

The Dec. 7, 2021, Daily News article "OK to Beat a Woman," tells of Darrell Johnson, accused of randomly attacking and viciously beating two women in Manhattan. He did not even have to pay bail to be released. But the December 16, 2021-January 13, 2022 edition of the *Norwood News* informs us who our "justice" system is "protecting" us from: a 58-year-old, then-homeless man named Reginald Randolph, who suffers from COPD, diabetes, asthma and who has a history of tuberculosis. In response to him shoplifting Nyquil, our courts decided to provide him with housing by sen-

tencing him to 2 to 4 years in prison.

**Richard Warren,  
Van Cortlandt Village**

## Witchcraft & Wicca Equals No and No!

As many of you remember from the 1980s, I used to give talks and presentations around the Bronx to PTA and community groups about the dangers of heavy metal music and its connection to satanism. As a result, here in our little hamlet of the Bronx I was affectionately given the title of Mayor of Norwood which I relish and brings a smile to my face. Many of you have been asking me recently for advice and information about some form of the occult, especially witchcraft, more commonly known nowadays as "Wicca."

Witchcraft, and its benign sounding counterpart, Wicca, has been made popular and appealing by mainstream movies and TV shows which portray the "craft" as adventurous and exciting, but in an alluring and spooky kind of way. "It's just harmless fun," is the popular claim of its adherents. But let me state that witchcraft is not the same as satanism. Yet, they are both part of the "occult," which, in my opinion, is a word that is much overused. Still, there are many similarities to them. Most notably, their founder is the devil.

I know many would vehemently protest this. They're welcome to do so.

But I am only stating what I believe to be true. Not all religions or spiritual practices originate from God. There is a being known as Satan (or Lucifer), as the Bible makes abundantly clear. He is an arch deceiver. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle, Paul, warns, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles (schemes and lies) of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). In the same letter, Paul describes the devil as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), while the Lord Jesus, himself, calls Satan the "prince of this world" (John 14:30).

Likewise, Scriptures such as Acts 26:18 show Satan as having "power" and authority, but with only a limited amount of it. Yet whatever power he does possess, it is deadly. Ultimately, Satan seeks to keep people from receiving a correct knowledge of God. He tries to keep them from believing the gospel account that Jesus died for our sins, was buried in a tomb, and was resurrected on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-9).

The devil, in his hatred for God and His creation, tries to lead people astray and thereby keep them from recognizing Jesus as the one who desires to be their Savior. The devil's end goal is to lead them into hell. This is serious! Many a hungry soul and many an innocently curious person has been lured into things like witchcraft and wicca. While some of this magic actually seems to work, it is only because of demonic entities who are in operation behind the scenes. It's nothing but devilish deception that's meant to put the practitioner in bondage.

I pray people will see witchcraft and wicca for what it is. It's a deadly poison. But Jesus loves these precious souls, and He longs for them to come to Him. He can offer far more than the occult with all its confusion,

and the seemingly endless need of having to cast spells, do rituals, and partake in sorceries.

**Richard Marias,  
Norwood**

## Keep Those Letters Coming...

Congratulations to my fellow 2021 Letter to the Editor writers. Surveys reveal that the "Letters to the Editor" section is one of the most widely read and popular sections of any newspaper.

Most newspapers will print letters submitted by any writer regardless of where they live so long as the topic is relevant to readers. It helps to have a snappy introduction, good hook, to be timely, precise, have an interesting or different viewpoint to increase your odds of being published. Many papers welcome letters, commenting on their own editorials, articles, or previously published Letters to the Editor.

I continue to be grateful that *Norwood News* affords both me and my fellow letter writers the opportunity to express our views, as well as differing opinions on issues of the day. Please join me, along with your neighbors, in reading *Norwood News*. Patronize their advertisers; they provide the revenues necessary to keep them in business. This helps pay to provide space for your favorite or not-so-favorite letter writers.

**Larry Penner  
Great Neck**

*Editor's Note: Norwood News welcomes letters from all our readers. Our preference is actually to receive letters which are in response to previously published stories, and as space is limited, we prioritize letters from local residents. We thank Mr. Penner for his feedback also.*

(continued from page 10)

they had to let him go, and [then] they got him back because they had a witness saying that he went in the house [location relevant to the shooting] and he did this, and he did that."

Leandra Feliz, mother of 15-year-old Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz, who was brutally murdered by a gang on June 20, 2018, said, after placing her son's ornament on the tree, "We're all going through the same pain, and we miss our family and we would like to make a wish right now... that these criminals have to stop." She continued, "We have to stop crime, and the

killing of innocent people." Feliz said she believed 25 years [in prison] was a slap on the wrist for taking the life of another person but added that she does not believe in the death penalty. A local Belmont street was later renamed in memory of Lesandro.

Awilda Vega also attended the event in honor of her son, Leon, who was murdered on Oct. 23. Vega recalled, "He was lured into a building to be robbed and he was shot in his left leg and was left to die in a hallway." She added that Leon bled to death inside a building at Soundview Houses. The grieving mother said the NYPD captured the gunman, but oth-

ers involved in the case have not yet been charged. Asked about the significance of the annual tree-lighting ceremony, Vega replied, "It's bittersweet, because it gives me comfort that I have people that support me and that I'm not alone, but at the same time it's sad to see so many parents and family members suffering due to gun violence."

Ali Acevedo-Hernandez, a family member of slain Bronx EMT, Yadira Arroyo, said, "Every year we come here, and this is a way for us to remember Yadira, and to be with other people that are going through the same agony and the same pain that

we are." Acevedo-Hernandez added, "It's a reminder that we are not alone. We have so many people here who are going through the same things as we are, so it gives us some solace, and we are also starting the Christmas, and we always start with Yadira first, just to remember our loved ones that are gone, but they're still very much here in our hearts."

Arroyo, 44, was killed in March of 2017 when a man struck her with her own ambulance after he attempted to steal it. A street was also later renamed in Arroyo's memory.

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



# Bronx Townhall Addresses Complexity of COVID-19 Biz Regs

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Amid the ongoing pandemic, the Bronx has been labelled the hardest hit borough. From a health perspective, though the number of actual deaths was not the highest in the City at 4,884 people, the borough's COVID-19 death rate per head of population is the City's highest, so far, at 0.34 percent. Staten Island's COVID-19 death rate is 0.26 percent, Manhattan's 0.20 percent, Brooklyn's 0.30 percent, and Queens 0.33 percent.

But the borough's economy has suffered badly too. Last summer, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli released a report and accompanying statement, substantiating the similarly harsh impact on its economy. "More than a year of sustained damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the Bronx, throwing it off its pre-pandemic course," he wrote. "The road to recovery will take time, and it is crucial that the State and City ensure that the Bronx receives its fair share of assistance to address the serious damage it has sustained."

On Jan. 4, New York City Mayor Eric Adams signed a "Small Business Forward" executive order to reform existing business regulations, with the aim of helping local businesses face fewer and what were described as "needless" fines and penalties.

Two days later, on Jan. 6, a virtual townhall was held to specifically address the needs of Bronx business owners with their economic recovery. Moderated by Michael Brady, chief executive officer of the Third Avenue Business Improvement District (BID), the event was held in partnership with the NYS Department of Health, Empire State Development, NYC Department of Small Business Services, and various Bronx business organizations.

Participants included Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15), Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, and Small Business Services Commissioner, Jonnel Doris. One point that was emphasized by the event organizers was the obligation of business owners to making sure their employees were vaccinated.

According to NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), workers in



Photo by José A. Giralt

**RESTAURANTS AND DINERS** like the one photographed on Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2021, along East Bedford Park Boulevard, in the Bedford Park section of The Bronx, are among some of the small businesses who feel challenged by the quantity of regulations governing the business community in New York City amid the ongoing pandemic.

New York City *who perform in-person work or who interact with the public in the course of regular business* had to show proof by Dec. 27, 2021, that they had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The same workers have had 45 days to show proof of their second dose (for Pfizer or Moderna vaccines). During the call, an example of one such worker was given in the form of a bookkeeper who, it was mentioned, could potentially carry out their work remotely or in an isolated environment. The employer, therefore, would not be obliged to ensure such a bookkeeper was vaccinated.

However, it was not just the regulations addressing public health protections which appeared to confound business owners. There was also a general consensus by townhall participants, which included some business owners, that there were hundreds of other laws [some claimed thousands] governing businesses in New York City which confuse and baffle the business community.

Newly sworn-in Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson said she wanted business owners to know that City-level lawmakers have been trying to reduce the number of laws that govern the operation of a business and pointed to last year's enactment of Local Law 80 (LL80) as an example.

This law amended the City's administrative code to reduce penalties and allow "opportunities to cure certain violations" like the requirement to recycle plastic, laws on carryout bags, fees for certain li-

censes, and even the sale of certain plumbing fixtures, water supply valves, and gauges that utilize mercury. The goal, she said, was to avoid every single infraction causing a business owner to be fined.

"Our effort and our goal was to provide as much relief to small businesses as we could," Gibson said. "We had the city council team look over 6,000, ladies and gentlemen, 6,000 regulations [that local businesses] are subjected to in terms of fines, rules, [and] regulations." She added, "We were able to identify 180 infractions that we felt did not impede on anyone's public health nor public safety."

Gibson also made clear that it was *not* that business owners wouldn't be held accountable for violations, but that the *first* course of action would *not* be automatic fines or punitive measures. In some cases, a warning would be the first step by City inspectors, followed by additional education. In the context of the discussion, Gibson said she was encouraged by one of Adams' first actions as the City's top executive. "I am grateful ... [because] Mayor Eric Adams did announce the executive order, which was an expansion of Local Law 80 of the laws of 2021," she said.

Adams' executive order will require, within three months, specific City agencies to identify the 25 violations that are responsible for the greatest number of summonses and fines issued to small businesses, and to submit the following for review:

- recommendations for which

violations should be reformed via the following methods: a) elimination b) fine schedules scaled back c) allowance of a "first time warning" and/or d) allowance for a "cure period" for first-time violations;

- if no reform action is recommended for a violation, provide an explanation as to why the status quo should be maintained e.g. serious health or safety risk;

- identify the necessary actions needed for such reform e.g. rule-making, City legislation, State legislation, etc.;

- review and update violation tracking systems, inspection procedures and trainings, and the language on summons tickets in order to ensure each agency is prepared to introduce cure periods and first-time warnings for violations in compliance with this executive order;

- the establishment of an inter-agency working group which includes each enforcement agency, to be chaired by the deputy mayor for economic and workforce development and the Small Business Services (SBS) commissioner, to review agency submissions and oversee the ensuing business regulatory reform process.

Meanwhile, Torres described small businesses as "the anchor and the lifeblood of our economy," and emphasized the importance of reducing burdens on that community. He said he saw a way for such businesses to survive the pandemic, and added that as a former city council member, he knew many of the business owners in his district firsthand. He reiterated that he continues to hear from them that government regulations, whether local or federal, hinder economic growth.

"I will admit that we, in government, have to be more thoughtful when crafting regulations that affect small businesses," he said. "When we put together regulations, we have to ask ourselves, 'Do the costs outweigh the benefits?' Intentions are one thing, but consequences are something else." He asked, "Are we passing laws that will have unintended consequences...that will undermine small businesses?"

As of Jan. 6, the New York Forward Loan Fund was continuing to accept applications to assist those impacted by COVID-19. The State-run pro-

gram targets small businesses with 20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees, nonprofits, and small landlords that have seen a loss of income or rental income. If approved, these loans need to be paid back over a five-year term with interest.

Organizers of the townhall wrapped up the session by providing attendees with a list of links to various resources which help explain the various COVID-19-related regulations. These include how to accommodate workers who remain unvaccinated (because of religious or medical exemptions, or because they are not dealing directly with the public), as well as tips on how to plan and operate a business under "the new normal." Below is a partial list of these resources:

Frequently Asked Questions – Businesses and the Vaccine Mandate

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/counselltothemayor/downloads/Key-to-NYC-FAQ.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions – NYC Key to NYC Regulations

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/counselltothemayor/downloads/Key-to-NYC-FAQ.pdf>

NYC Accommodations for Employees

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/covid/vaccination-workplace-accommodations.pdf>

The New Normal – Adapting Your Business

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/sbs/downloads/pdf/businesses/covid19/sbs-businessadaptationplaybook.pdf>

For more information on the New York Forward Loan Fund and to apply, go to: <https://www.connect2capital.com/partners/new-york-forward-loan-fund/>.

For more information, including information on small business grants, business owners can refer to NYC Department of Small Business Services: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/sbs/index.page>.

Local businesses can also sign up to receive regular newsletters issued by Mosholu Preservation Corporation with useful information for small businesses by emailing: [je-romegunhillbid@gmail.com](mailto:je-romegunhillbid@gmail.com).

\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.



# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

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 Jan. 14, 15, 21 and 22, each day between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. See NYBG's iconic sights and buildings come to life as dramatic, glittering canvases with the Haupt Conservatory and Mertz Library Building as the centerpieces. Washes of brilliant color, thousands of dazzling LEDs, illuminated plant stories, and whimsical, picture-perfect installations reflect the surrounding gardens and collections—creating a spectacle not to be missed! For more information, go to: <https://www.nybg.org/event/holiday-train-show-2021/nybg-glow/>.

## MUSIC

On Sunday, February 3, at 4 p.m., The

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts will welcome the **The Polish Wieniawski Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by Wojciech Rodek, and featuring soloist, Tomasz Ritter, who is the first prize winner of the 1st International Chopin Competition on Period Instruments, in Warsaw. The program will include Beethoven, Overture to Egmont | Chopin, Piano Concerto No 2 | Beethoven, Symphony No 5. For tickets, go to <https://www.lehmancenter.org/polish-philharmonic>.

## DANCE

**Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernandez**, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, will perform at The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on Sunday, Feb. 20, at 4 p.m. The company's US tour in Fall 2018 was a coast-to-coast success, packing out houses across the country and receiving an enthusiastic response from audience members new and

old. Founded in 1952 by dancer and choreographer Amalia Hernández, Ballet Folklórico brings together the music, dance and costume of Mexican folklore from pre-Colombian civilizations through the modern era. For tickets, go to: [https://mpv.tickets.com/?agency=LEHV\\_PL\\_MPV&orgid=54429&pid=8975819#/event/8975819](https://mpv.tickets.com/?agency=LEHV_PL_MPV&orgid=54429&pid=8975819#/event/8975819).

## KIDS

On Saturday, Jan. 15, between noon and 1.30 p.m., bring out the artist within through the **"Creative Art – Family Edition"** program and participate in an arts or theater program at Norwood's Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. Participants are welcome to explore the arts, with skilled staff, through different mediums including dance, theater, music, comic book creation, woodcarving, painting, and drawing, as well as attend a lecture, panel, or talk.

The **NYC Parks After-School Program** is held at Norwood's Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval E, Bronx, NY 10467, through June 10, 2022, from Monday to Friday, between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. For more information, contact Debra Edwards at NYC Parks on (718) 430-1847 or email [debra.edwards@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:debra.edwards@parks.nyc.gov).

## MOVEMENT

The NYPD, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, the City's five district attorneys' offices, and several City agency partners, community-based organizations and foundations launched the **"Saturday Night Lights"** program on July 10, 2021, which continues all year long. The groups have opened 100 gyms across the City for free, high-quality sports programs for kids on Saturday nights, ensuring no indoor gyms will be closed on these nights – the time when they are needed most by kids in city communities.

Each Saturday evening, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., children and youth, aged 11 to 18, will be able to enjoy an array of indoor sports, including basketball, soccer, volleyball, dance, martial arts and more. According to the organizers, a key component of the program is bringing cops and kids together. Teams of Youth Coordination Officers from NYPD precincts will be at each of the 100 gymnasiums every Saturday night, helping to coach and participating with members of various Community Based Organizations to interact with young people and help make a lasting and positive impact in their lives. The Fordham Heights location is at 2255 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457. For a list of all venues, go to: <https://bit.ly/33eeXZQ>.



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## Public and Community Meetings

The 52<sup>nd</sup> **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings are usually held on the **third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.**, sometimes virtually and sometimes in person. 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, 2020, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022 at 6.30 p.m.** Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, 2020, **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 Jan. 5. For further details, contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net)

## Bronx DA Urges Possible Victims of Sexual Assault to Contact Police

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Further to the charging of a Bronx man in September 2021 for sexually abusing a four-year-old boy in Belmont in 2020, on Dec. 6, 2021, Bronx D.A., Darcel D. Clark, appealed to anyone who may also have been victimized, or who may have information about other victims of alleged sexual abuse by the same Bronx man, to contact the police.

The defendant, Eric Montes, 48, of Webster Avenue in Belmont, was charged with predatory sexual assault of a child in the first, second, and third-degree under the Criminal Sexual Act, first and second-degree sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and endangering the welfare of a child. He was arraigned before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Efrain Alvarado on Sept. 28, 2021, and remanded in custody. If convicted of the top charge, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

According to the investigation,

on Oct. 1, 2020, the four-year-old victim, and his mother, who did not know Montes, went to Montes' apartment to visit his roommate, who the victim's mother had met on social media. While the mother was in another room with Montes' roommate, the defendant allegedly brought the child into his bedroom in the middle of the night and sexually assaulted him.

The child told his mother and another family member about the incident. Montes was arrested on July 27, 2021. Since his arrest, investigators have acquired information leading to the possibility there have been other child victims. Anyone who may have been a victim of this defendant or who has information about other potential victims is encouraged to call the NYPD Bronx Child Abuse Squad at (929) 265-3638.

A person charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.



# City Mourns 17 Lost in Bronx Blaze

(continued from page 5)

York, who visited the scene of the fire on Monday to offer his assistance. The affected immigrant community is largely Muslim.

"It doesn't get worse than what we witnessed in New York yesterday at that tragic fire in the Bronx. I'm visiting the scene with the fire companies that responded so that I might see how the Church can assist. Thank God for the New York City Fire Department (FDNY)," he said.

On Tuesday, Jan. 11, Torres was joined by the Bronx borough president and Feliz, and Council Member Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14) to announce new financial resources which they said were to be made immediately available to the victims of the fire, including assistance for flights to bury victims in their home countries, as needed. They also provided the latest updates on the ongoing recovery efforts.

On Monday, Adams visited the Webster Avenue firehouse in the Bronx, home to one of the first firefighter crews to respond to Sunday's blaze. He thanked, once again, Nigro and the more than 200 FDNY firefighters, EMS workers, and all the first responders who he said had responded within minutes to save lives on Sunday.

On Monday, the FDNY unions held a public zoom call in response to the deadly fire, led by Andrew Ansboro, president, Uniformed Firefighters Association and Lt. James McCarthy, president of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association of America.

Recalling Sunday's tragedy, Ansboro said, "I was called to the scene when I was alerted to the 5th alarm and the large number of people requiring medical attention. When I got on the scene, it was absolutely horrific. I talked to many veteran firefighters who said it was the worst fire they'd ever been in, in their lives. They were doing CPR on people outside, getting them in ambulances, it was absolutely horrific."

He added, "The members that operated yesterday did so with the utmost heroism in traditions of the FDNY. Unfortunately, not all fires have a positive outcome."

Meanwhile, McCarthy said, "Two hundred firefighters responded to this incident and they really operated above and beyond the call of duty. Fire on the second floor that extended to the third floor and the smoke went out throughout the building into the stairwell and [the smoke overcame] a lot of the residents, and they could not get out of the building."

He continued, "Many went to the roof and many tried to make their way out and our firefighters attacked the fire from the interior and the exterior ladders and aerial in trying to rescue as many people as possible. Hundreds

of residents were taken out of the building and it's a shame that many of the residents succumbed to the toxic smoke. Our members followed their training and saved as many lives as they could in this incident that's such a tragedy."

McCarthy said as temperatures were getting colder in the evening, people were finding different ways to heat their apartments and stay warm, and space heaters were often a problem due to what he said were open electrical connections or disrepair, causing fires. "One of the biggest things that the fire department puts out in their public service announcements is to close the door to the apartment and that was one of the problems here – that the residents exited the apartment, left the door open, and the fire extended out into the public hallway, and the stairwell, exposing everybody else in the building," he said.

He added, "It's a federal building... built with federal subsidies that didn't have to adhere to New York City fire codes, so there was different fire protection in this building than we have in other tenements, and other high rises in New York City, under the New York City code. So it exposed members to a more dangerous atmosphere."

McCarthy concluded, "And people risked themselves and their wellbeing to try and get the residents out of this building. Many of them ran out of air with their STVA's (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) and still continued working at personal peril to try and rescue as many people as possible."

During the call, it was mentioned that it was believed there was no sprinkler system in the impacted building. Later, some media outlets reported in that sprinklers were only required in certain areas of the building like the laundry room and compactor. Meanwhile, in terms of staffing on the day, Ansboro added, "48 Engine was first due [to arrive at the scene]. They normally have five firefighters working. Due to medical leave, department-wide, being high, they didn't hire someone to work in that position, so there was one less person on that first engine company."

"The union negotiated to have more firefighters on the rigs at 20 engine companies, which is 10 percent," he added. "The first due engine would have had one more member on it if medical leave had not risen due to COVID." Ansboro said he believed four engine companies who responded to the blaze each comprised just four firefighters.

On Tuesday, a representative from the Commission on the Public's Health System (CPHS) said "The main languages spoken by those affected are



Photo courtesy of Michael Appleton / NYC Mayor Office via Flickr

**A SEEMINGLY EXHAUSTED** firefighter is photographed at the scene of a tragic fire in the Fordham Heights section of the Bronx on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, in which 17 people died, including 8 children, and 63 were injured.

Spanish, French, Soninke, Wolof, Pulaar, Mandinga. For dialects, Soninke is #1 and Wolof is #2," in case people wanted to help with translation. The City set up a service center at Monroe College, Ustin Hall, 2375 Jerome Ave, Bronx NY 10468 to assist those affected by the fire.

As of press date, numerous drives and resources have been set-up by various community and other organizations, including the Bronx Democratic Party, in support of the victims. A summary of those has been shared by State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi, who asked residents to follow her Twitter feed for updated details. Former judicial candidate, Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor, who ran for a civil court judgeship in Bronx County's Second Municipal Court District, is also helping with legal services.

Anyone wishing to donate cash can do so via the following links for the Gambian Youth Organization's Relief for Families Affected by Bronx Fire GoFundMe, or the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/relief-for-families-at-333-e-183rd-st?utm\\_campaign=p\\_cp+share-sheet&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link\\_all&utm\\_source=customer](https://www.gofundme.com/f/relief-for-families-at-333-e-183rd-st?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer)

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/fund/initiatives/bronx-apartment-building-fire.page>

Julie Bolcer, executive director of public affairs and senior advisor at the NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) told *Norwood News* on Tuesday, Jan. 11, "The cause of death [of all 17 victims] is smoke inhalation [and] the manner of death is accident."

A vigil was held on Tuesday evening, organized by the Bronx borough president, in honor of the victims, and attended by several members of the community, FDNY, NYPD and emer-

gency services. The NYPD has since released their names as follows:



Photo courtesy of Amr Alfiky via Twitter

**SCENES FROM A** candlelight vigil for the victims of the Twin Parks West fatal fire in the Bronx, Jan. 11, 2022.

Sera Janneh, a 27-year-old woman  
Seydou Toure, a 12-year-old boy  
Haouwa Mahamadou, a 5-year-old girl  
Haji Dukary, a 49-year-old man  
Haja Dukureh, a 37-year-old woman  
Mustapha Dukureh, a 12-year-old boy  
Mariam Dukureh, an 11-year-old girl  
Fatoumata Dukureh, a 5-year-old girl  
Fatoumata Drammeh, a 50-year-old woman  
Foutmala Drammeh, a 21-year-old young woman  
Muhammed Drammeh, a 12-year-old man  
Nyumaaisha Drammeh, a 19-year-old young woman  
Omar Jambang, a 6-year-old boy  
Fatoumata Tunkara, a 43-year-old woman  
Isatou Jabbie, a 31-year-old woman  
Hagi Jawara, a 47-year-old man  
Ousmane Konteh, a 2-year-old boy



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### Verdicts/Settlements

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

*Placental Abruption*

*Brain-Damage Baby*

*Pedestrian Hit By Bus*

*Construction Accident*

*Construction Accident*

*Construction Accident*

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- Pedestrian Accidents
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- Slip, Trip & Fall Accidents
- Spinal Cord Injuries
- Truck Accidents
- Wrongful Death

