



# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 35, No 3 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • FEBRUARY 10-23, 2022

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## POTS, SERVING THE BRONX FOR 40 YEARS



Photo courtesy of Part of the Solution

**A PART OF** the Solution (POTS) staff member unpacks some of the free 5,800 COVID-19 home test kits provided to the 2759 Webster Avenue center on Dec. 23, 2021, by the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs and NYC Health + Hospitals, amid the spike in COVID-19 cases caused by the omicron variant.

by **JULIAN NAZAR**

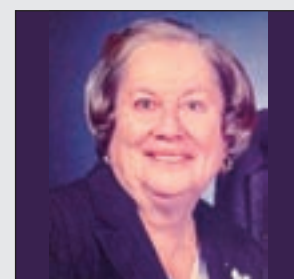
Ten years ago, Sabrina Cardoza heard about Part of the Solution (POTS) through

her grandmother. She was having some legal trouble and needed information about how to access wel-

fare. However, she didn't use POTS at first. It wasn't until five years had elapsed that she decided to seek help from

the nonprofit, which is located at 2759 Webster Avenue in Fordham Manor.

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# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 35, No. 3

Norwood News is published  
bi-weekly on Thursdays by

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# Rose Margaret Moran, Remembered

by ELLEN MARY LAWRENCE

Rose Margaret Moran, long-time Bronx resident of Decatur Avenue in Norwood, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022, at the age of 90. Born on July 20, 1931, she was the daughter of James Moran and Ellen (Neville) Moran.

Rose was the epitome of the song, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." As a young girl, she traveled with her mother and younger sister, Mary, by steam liner back to the family farm in Ireland. They lived there for a year, learning the culture and heritage from her beloved grandparents.

Rose taught elementary and middle school for nearly forty years in The Bronx and loved it. The family historian throughout her life, Rose would enrapture her adoring siblings, nieces and nephews with her stories about

life, family lineage, travels, and her infinite stories from the classroom.

She was a devout Roman Catholic and an integral part of St. Brendan's parish in Norwood, attending mass daily. She served as a lector, sang in the choir, taught CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine), and led fundraising and blood drive efforts for the church.

While Rose spent her last few years living in Connecticut, New York, and specifically, The Bronx, was always her home and an intrinsic part of her identity.

Rose is survived by her siblings; Mary Agnes Clark, Ellen Flannery, and James Moran; her brother-in-law, James; sister-in-law, Mary; along with many nieces, nephews, great nieces, and great nephews.

Rose's wake took place Wednesday,



Photo courtesy of Olan Mills Photography  
**ROSE MARGARET MORAN** passed away peacefully on Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022 at the age of 90.

Feb. 9, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at McKeon Funeral Home, located at 3129 Perry Avenue, The Bronx, NY 10467.

Rose Moran was a beloved matriarch and will be profoundly missed.

*Ellen Mary Lawrence of Vermont is a niece of the late Rose Margaret Moran.*

# Opinion

By MICHAEL HOROWITZ

Broken windows and graffiti-laden subway cars are symbols of a society that is out of control. A permissive approach to crime is making it extremely difficult for law-abiding citizens to live in New York City.

Former Police Commissioner William Bratton was credited with controlling crime between the 1990s and 2017 in Boston, New York City, and Los Angeles, through enforcing punishment for minor crimes in order to prevent major crimes. In short, enforcing the law for minor infractions of the law took criminals off the streets and sent a message that authorities were serious about cracking down on crime.

A much-discredited policy of searching seemingly minor criminals for guns and other weapons took weapons off the streets and made all of us safer than we are now in our crime-ravaged city. A number of police officers have, in recent years, committed horrendous crimes against individuals, but that doesn't mean that we should make it virtually impossible for good cops to fight crime. Social activist movements, like calls to "Defund the Police," have made all of us, Black and White, significantly less safe in our city.

# "Broken Windows" are Symbols of a Society that is Out of Control

We should not distinguish between White criminals and Black criminals. In the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we should be judged by the content of our character, rather than the color of our skin. With our city now crime-ravaged, many of the same people who were clamoring for the defunding of the police, now see the need to beef up the police force to fight crime.

Also, many of the same people who had been clamoring for lack of enforcement of nonviolent crimes are now advocating strict enforcement of the law. Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg had allegedly instructed his staff to downgrade charges for certain "nonviolent" crimes, including, in some cases, resisting arrest.

On the other hand, Eric Adams, the city's new mayor, was elected on a promise to crack down on crime in our city. Now, these two elected officials are at loggerheads, as New Yorkers come to grips with the reality that there are good and heroic cops, just as there are horrendous cops who commit homicides with criminal actions.

Two hero cops recently died in a shootout in Harlem, emphasizing that we should not judge all cops based on the actions of a few barbaric cops in New York, Minneapolis, or other

American cities. We desperately need enforcement of our laws and the help of our police to bring crime under control in New York City and other cities in our nation. We can't tie the hands of the police with unreasonable restrictions if we are to have safe cities in our nation.

In short, by cracking down on minor crimes, we can get more guns off the streets in our city, former Police Commissioner Bratton said, in a recent interview with Don Lemon on CNN. As Bratton noted, the current climate has triggered a major rise in crime in our city over the last three years. How far we have come! In 2018, the city had its lowest crime rate at a time of strict enforcement of the law.

The message then was loud and clear. Law-breaking should not be tolerated, and those who break the law should be prosecuted, to the fullest extent of the law.

We need to return to a time when there was more concern about the victims of crime than those who break the law. We desperately need to have the police and private citizens working together in the fight against crime.

*Michael Horowitz is a longtime journalist and resident of The Bronx*



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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE

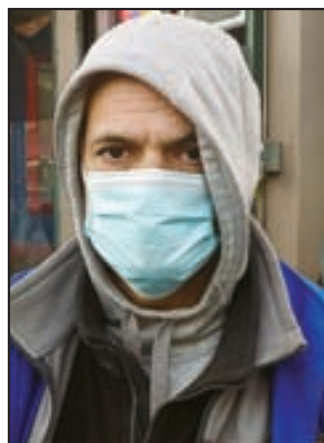


This week, we asked readers their thoughts on Mayor Eric Adams' blueprint to end gun violence.



"What's going to work is if they bring back the 'Stop & Frisk' [policy] and they fund the police again, give them back the money they deserve. When they had the 'Stop & Frisk,' even though people say it was racist, I feel it wasn't so much a racist thing. It's just that people complain, and it's wrong. If they bring that back, I guarantee you that crime will drop. When they had it when [Mayor Michael] Bloomberg was in, the City was perfect; crime was very low. They must put restrictions on the guys selling guns; they have to. The bad guys have better guns than the military, and it's not good."

Ricky Santiago,  
Bedford Park



"I've heard some parts of his plan, but I don't agree with what he is doing. I believe that there's a lot of individuals that carry a lot of money, and work very hard for their money, and they should be allowed to carry a gun to protect themselves. Now, with gun violence, if a person has felonies, and constant arrests, they should go to jail. The jail system is a game; it's all a joke, and politicians use it for politics. You're supposed to go to the Feds now if you get caught with a gun, and it's supposed to be one-year for each bullet."

John Abreu,  
Hunts Point



"So far, I agree with what he's saying because there are too many guns out here, and the majority of people that are getting shot are mostly kids: innocent bystanders. So, with all the problems that are going on right now, we need somebody like him out here to help with all these guns, not only prosecuting them, but keeping them inside. Anybody with a gun shouldn't be able to come out; that's what's killing a generation. A lot of the young kids are the ones carrying the guns and doing the shooting. I got shot four times in August of 2020. I thank God that I'm still alive today. The person that did the shooting, I spoke to him, and I forgave him. If I can't forgive him, how's God going to forgive me?"

Miguel Perez,  
Fordham Heights



"I support Mayor Adams and his plan for combating gun violence in New York City. We're losing lives daily and halting the flow of guns is a non-negotiable tactic. To address violence in the schools, I support restoring conflict resolution and peer mediation training."

Tiffany Forte,  
Crown Heights, Brooklyn



"The City is going to pure hell with these Democrats in office. Put 'Stop & Frisk' back out there. The State's where these guns are coming from; we know the routes they are taking. You just put up checkpoints; it's not rocket science. Then, you go into the southern states where all the stores are selling guns and put an end to that. They need to do the same thing with the flow of illegal Mexicans coming over the border."

John Schaffer,  
Gerritsen Beach, Brooklyn



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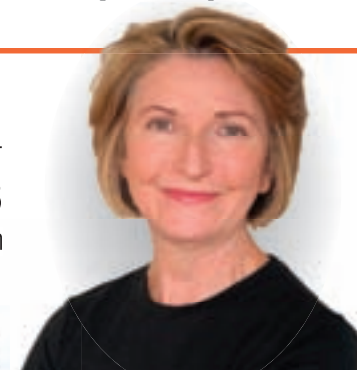
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# KHCC Brings Computers & Art to Community

by DAVID GREENE

The Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) has teamed up with TechFIN, a firm that renovates old computers, and has donated the first of 50 desktop computers to residents in the community, rather than sending them to a landfill.

On Thursday, Jan. 13, staffers at KHCC were busy processing the paperwork for residents who were patiently waiting in line, respecting the social distancing guidelines. Boxes of computers were later brought out of the center, located at 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood, and were placed in the hands of waiting students and other community members who will use them to work, do their homework or engage with friends on social media.

During the distribution of the desktop computers, Margaret Della, CEO of KHCC explained to *Norwood News*, “They’re computers that Tech Fin has acquired through various corporate donations, bringing different businesses together to refurbish and distribute them to the community.” According to TechFIN, the computers were donated by large corporations like the National Football League, Jet-Blue, and Pfizer.

Della continued, “We’ve identified families that need computer equipment in their home, in addition to other needs like food insecurity or safety, and this is one of those things that’s so important to how people are getting by, so today, we’re really excited to knock off our wait list of computer equipment through the help of TechFIN.”

According to Della, pick-up appointments were scheduled and spaced out “for COVID purposes,” to facilitate parents’ pick-up times for their children who were in the daycare program at the center, and for residents who were also visiting the food pantry. Each computer included a monitor, hard drive, keyboard, mouse, and software.

Della added, “We anticipate that we’ll have a greater need as we continue to provide this service in the community, but definitely, this is something that parents and community members have expressed a need [for].”

For residents who didn’t have internet access at home, KHCC assisted with applications to have a discounted internet service set-up through the federal government. They also helped some residents in need with donated “private dollars” to help defray some of the cost of utility bills. The center also had KHCC Connect, the group’s IT team, on hand to help new users connect their new devices and troubleshoot any internet issues.



Photo by David Greene

**MORE THAN 50** newly refurbished computers were given out to members of the community as part of a new program at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, at 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood, on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022.



**AT THE “ART Lives at KHCC”** event held at Summit Place on Sunday, Oct. 2, 2021, are (l-r) Margaret Della, CEO of Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and at then Councilwoman-elect Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14).



Photos by David Greene

**DURING THE MURAL** unveiling at the “ART Lives at KHCC” event at Summit Place on Sunday, Oct. 2, 2021, Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and then Councilwoman-elect Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14) speak to Kingsbridge Heights artist, José “Base” Serrano, (right).

Watching as his organization’s computers were placed into cars, and rolled down the street, John Valdivia of TechFIN, said, “TechFIN, which is short for Technology for Families In Need, partners with nonprofit organizations that actually know the need within the community.” He added, “So TechFIN acquires computers, and then works with nonprofits to find recipients that need them. So, this is the first of hopefully many that we get to do with KHCC in distributing these desktop computers.”

*Norwood News* also spoke with Kingsbridge Heights resident, Derrick Rumph, whose son attends the center. “We heard about this [computer giveaway] when we were signing him up for summer camp, and they called us when they became available,” he said. The father added, “It’s a really cool thing to do. Now, my kid has his own computer for school.”

Devin John of Harlem added, “My son will use it. He’s in high school, so it will be good for him to use.” He added, “I think it’s totally cool. I wish I knew the in-depth information on the whole program. It’s, like, just sign up and send them an email and they send you a batch number. It’s, like, so fast, so I really don’t know the story behind it.”

According to instructions on the website of the Brooklyn-based TechFIN organization, “Millions of low-income families lack access to a computer in the home. This contributes to a growing digital divide, where completing schoolwork or... job applications becomes increasingly difficult.”

The free giveaway of the 50 home computers by KHCC may well have been something of a curious twist of fate. When *Norwood News* attended another KHCC sponsored event on Oct. 2, 2021, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) who was also present, recalled his memories of the center, saying, “I remember this building when it was a police station, when I was a little kid...”

He added, “When the 50 Precinct moved to Kingsbridge Avenue, there was a group of women from this neighborhood who wanted to do something really good with this building, and that’s how the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center was born.”

It was at that Oct. 2 “ART Lives at KHCC,” event that a “Together, We Rise” mural was unveiled. It had been completed in conjunction with The Association for a Better New York and artist, José “Base” Serrano, 39, a lifelong resident of Kingsbridge Heights. Serrano has a series of murals which he calls, “A Reflection of the Time,” that stretches down Summit Place at Kingsbridge Terrace. His first, dedicated to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, was completed in 2019, and the

most recent, which is of the Statue of Liberty, was completed just before October’s unveiling. The latter took Serrano six days to complete.

KHCC opened in 1974, and is a nonprofit that offers thousands of Bronxites programs such as daycare, literacy, mental health services, technology, arts and gardening. For more information on KHCC, visit their website at: <https://www.khcc-nyc.org/donate>. For more information on TechFIN, visit their website at: <https://www.tech-fin.org>.



# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

## MTA Pilots New Fare Change Program

To encourage New Yorkers to get back on subways, buses, and trains, and to reduce the cost and worry surrounding everyday travel, the MTA has announced a pilot fare change program, beginning Feb. 28, for City transit riders and Feb. 25 for commuter rail ticket holders, and will last for at least four months. The MTA will extend weekend 'City Ticket' pricing to weekday off-peak trains, offering more affordable, more flexible and fairer fares, while OMNY will offer the best weekly fares automatically with a new fare capping system. Metro-North will offer new 20-trip tickets, and 10 percent discount off monthly tickets. If successful, the new fare changes could become permanent. For more information, go to <https://new.mta.info/fares/how-to-save-money>.

## Montefiore Co-Authored Study Shows Danger of Magnetic Toys

A new study, co-authored by two pediatric gastroenterologists at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore has highlighted the danger of small, high-powered magnets commonly sold as "desk toys" for adults, and which are sometimes ingested by children. The study, published in *Pediatrics*, combines data from 25 children's hospitals in the U.S., assessing 596 children over three years when high-powered magnets were reintroduced to the market, after having been removed previously by the Consumer Product Safety Commission in 2012.

The research shows that 95 percent of children exposed to the magnets were under 14 years of age; nearly one in 10 kids had a life-threatening injury such as bowel obstruction, perforation or bleeding; more than half (55.7 percent) of the children impacted by the magnets required hospitalization; almost half (46.3 percent) required a procedure to remove the magnets, or treatment for complications from the exposure; 17 percent of the children who were exposed to the magnets had development delays, and those children were three times more likely to have an injury related to the exposure, suggesting this is a particu-

# Redistricting Brings Changes to the Bronx

By SÍLE MOLONEY & JULIAN NAZAR

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) shared in his regular newsletter on Feb. 2, that the New York State Legislature would likely approve new maps for the Bronx's congressional districts. The legislature reportedly did just that on Feb. 2, and Gov. Kathy Hochul approved the new maps on Feb. 3. The new maps are part of a process that happens once every ten years following the Census count. Starting in 2014, the redistricting process was redesigned via an amendment to the State constitution to create a new Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) which would have the first two opportunities to create new maps.

According to Dinowitz, the Legislature's involvement in creating new district maps came as a result of the IRC not being able to produce an agreed upon set of maps before the deadline. "The timeline was very tight because the process for candidates to qualify for the June primary election ballot begins on March 1, 2022. The maps created by the Legislature are built on dozens of public hearings that were conducted by the IRC, with the goal of keeping communities together," he said.

Acknowledging that it was an imperfect process, Dinowitz, added, "I believe that the proposed maps from the Legislature are fair and correct decades of Republican-led gerrymandering that had resulted in the underrepresentation of many New Yorkers in government." He said for residents of the current 81st Assembly District,

larly vulnerable population when it comes to this dangerous "toy."

Efforts are underway to prevent the sale of these magnets and the associated harm they cause, but for now the researchers are trying to raise awareness about the dangers and discourage families from having them accessible to children.

## Feb. 18 Deadline for Homeowner Relief

NYS Homeowner Assistance Fund offers relief for owners of co-ops, condos and homes in New York. The funds may be used for mortgage arrears, mortgage principal reductions, property tax arrears, insurance and utility arrears, homeowners association fees, maintenance fee arrears for

condos and co-ops. Eligible households may receive no more than \$50,000 in total assistance. To be eligible, the applicant must have experienced a financial hardship, defined as a material reduction in income or a material increase in living expenses arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and meet income requirements. Apply by Feb. 18 at <https://www.nyhomeownerfund.org/> or call 1-844-77-NYHAF (1-844-776-9423) for more information.

## Rodriguez-Rosa is City's New Deputy Parks Commissioner

Mayor Eric Adams has appointed Bronx parks commissioner, Iris Rodriguez-Rosa as the new City deputy parks commissioner at NYC Department of Parks and

Recreation. The new City parks commissioner will be Susan M. Donoghue, who was the president and parks administrator of Prospect Park Alliance in Brooklyn. Bronx Council of Environment Quality (BCEQ) has praised the move, calling both appointees two highly qualified executives, and describing Rodriguez-Rosa a beloved leader who makes parks the centerpieces of healthy, resilient communities.

## Ruben Diaz Jr. Joins Montefiore

Montefiore Health System announced on Tuesday, Feb. 8, that Ruben Diaz Jr., former Bronx Borough President, has joined Montefiore as senior vice president of strategic initiatives. Diaz

and the neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, and Van Cortlandt Village remain in the district currently represented by Espaillet.

Norwood News spoke with 63 people on the street in the neighborhood on Thursday, Feb. 3. Of these 63 people, 60 didn't know who Ritchie Torres was. The other three people weren't Norwood residents. We tried again on another day.

Asked how he would feel being represented by Torres, local resident, Alex Soto, 62, said, "This guy, Ritchie Torres? I consider him useless. He does all these proposals. Where is the money? Ritchie Torres was always hiding. I don't want him to represent our community. He's going to do nada." Meanwhile, on the main issues he felt his congressional representative should work on, Soto said, "The main issue is when the community invites them, they need to show up. Show their respect for the community. Espaillet shows up. If he doesn't show up, he sends his people to show up."

Meanwhile, asked how she would feel being represented by Torres, local resident, Angel Seymore, 48, said, "I don't think he will do anything for us. I don't want him as a representative. He hasn't shown interest in low-income neighborhoods. He's only working with high-profile neighborhoods. He's just trying to make himself look good." Asked what was the main issue she felt her congressional representative should work on, she said, "Well,

Jr. served as Bronx borough president from 2009-2021, where according to the official press release, he led an unprecedented revival of The Bronx in areas of economic development, job creation, health, and housing. Prior to serving as borough president, Diaz Jr. was a member of the New York State Assembly from 1997-2009.

Dr. Philip O. Ozuah, president and CEO of Montefiore Health System, said, in the context of the announcement, "Ruben Diaz has been a tireless advocate and a force for change in The Bronx. His passion and experience will be instrumental as we seek new and innovative ways to invest in the health and economic wellness of our community."



Source: NYS Legislative Taskforce  
NY-15 NEW CONGRESSIONAL Map





Source: NYS Legislative Taskforce

**NY-3 NEW CONGRESSIONAL Map**

definitely investigate what is going on with these fires. They seem very suspicious, especially in our low-income areas. Fires are getting too frequent. We didn't have them frequent like this." *Norwood News* has reached out to Torres for comment and will follow-up on this story.

Meanwhile, as reported by The Bronx Times on Tuesday, Feb. 8, East Bronx residents have sent an open letter to Gov. Kathy Hochul, State senate majority leader, Andrea Stewart Cousins, State assembly speaker, Carl Heastie, State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi

(S.D. 34), herself, and Assembly Member Michael Benedetto (A.D. 82), voicing their dissatisfaction with the new redistricting arrangements which sees the East of the borough essentially cut off from the rest of The Bronx, and now falling into New York's newly drawn 3rd congressional district (NY-3), together with parts of Queens and Long Island. "We have about as much in common with someone in Smithtown, Long Island, as we do with someone on the planet Mars," the residents wrote. The GOP has filed a lawsuit challenging the new district lines.

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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## COVID-19 Updates

The highly transmissible, omicron variant has overtaken Delta as the dominant coronavirus strain in the U.S. since December 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). As of Feb. 8, citywide COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are still on the decline, according to NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

Infection rates are nonetheless still *comparatively high*, when compared to other stages of the pandemic. Locally, they are not as high as in some other parts of the Bronx. As of Feb. 8, the 7-day percentage positive rate in ZIP code 10468, covering Fordham / Kingsbridge / University Heights, was 2.6 percent, according to DOHMH. In ZIP code 10467, covering Allderton / Norwood / Pelham Parkway / Williamsbridge, it was 3.7 percent. In ZIP code 10458, covering Belmont / Fordham University / Kingsbridge, it was 3.53 percent. Meanwhile, in ZIP code 10455, covering Mott Haven, it was highest at 14.71 percent.

In terms of COVID-19, full vaccination rates across the City, as of Feb. 8, the Bronx ranked second-lowest out of the five boroughs, at 71 percent, just above Brooklyn at 69 percent. Meanwhile, the citywide average is 76 percent.

New York State DOH issued a special pediatric COVID-19 report on Jan. 14, and among other findings, officials found that from Dec. 5 to Jan. 8, hospital admissions increased 16-fold for those under or 18 years of age and increased 8-fold for all age groups in NYC. Notably, among children admitted to the hospital for or with COVID-19 during the week of January 3-9, 4 percent of 5 to 11-year-olds were vaccinated, and 90 percent were unvaccinated, 31 percent of 12 to 17-year-olds were vaccinated, and 61 percent were unvaccinated.

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

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/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/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>.

The federal government announced in December that every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free, at-home COVID-19 tests. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days and residents are encouraged to order their tests now so they have them when they need them, at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>. The federal government is distributing 400 million free N95 masks to pharmacies and community health centers effective Jan. 24.

Effective Dec. 13, 2021, NYS Medicaid will cover COVID-19 diagnostic and screening tests with "at home" sample collection for reimbursement with no member cost sharing. Coverage will be provided for Over-the-Counter (OTC) FDA-authorized COVID-19 test kits, that are used in accordance with CDC recommendations, for antigen detection. This policy applies to both Medicaid fee for service (FFS) and Medicaid Managed Care (MMC).

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.

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>.

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>

## NYS Emergency Rental Assistance Program Alert

The NYS Emergency Rental Assistance Program has resumed accepting applications, effective Jan. 11. Assistance is not guaranteed. Go to: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/> for more information.

## Apply to Sit on Your Local Community Board

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson is encouraging all Bronx residents to apply to sit on their local community board. Applications should be sent by Friday, March 4, 2022, to [cbapplications@bronxbp.gov.nyc](mailto:cbapplications@bronxbp.gov.nyc). More information is available about the roles at <https://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/community-boards/>.



# University Heights Fire follows Torres' New Space Heater Bill

By SÍLE MOLONEY

New York Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), and New York Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke (NY-09) announced that on Friday, Feb. 4, they introduced federal legislation to address manufacturing issues with space heaters. The “Safer Heat Act” (H.R. 6615) comes as a result of the recent Twin Parks North West apartment building fire that stole the lives of 17 New Yorkers, including 8 children, as reported, and one day before another 2-alarm fire was reported in the University Heights section of The Bronx on Saturday, Feb. 5.

The new bill is part of a federal legislative package aimed at solving the underlying issues that caused the deadly Twin Parks fire and preventing future tragedies. The legislation would require space heaters to have an automatic shut-off and require the U.S. Commission on Consumer Product Safety to establish mandatory safety standards for the manufacturing of space heaters.

In the context of the announcement Torres said, “It is no accident that the four worst fires in New York City’s history in the last thirty years have all been in the Bronx. The tragedy at Twin Parks North West only underscores that we must take federal action to ensure tenants have safe and affordable homes no matter their zip code.”

He added, “Currently what the law requires often falls short of what tenants need to remain warm in their homes. The feeling of freezing in apartments causes tenants to resort to space heaters out of sheer desperation. This legislation aims to address the deficiencies in space heater manufacturing and require an automatic shutoff. These cautionary measures would help prevent another fire from devastating communities and help residents feel safe in their homes.”

The “Safer Heat Act” is part of an initial slate of federal legislation which will tackle the root causes of the Twin Parks fire, including self-closing doors and compliance with fire codes. The legislative package includes the following:

- **TWIN PARKS NORTH WEST FIRE SAFETY ACT OF 2022 (H.R. 6529)**

A federal law requiring federally funded or regulated multi-family developments to have self-closing doors (on apartment units, stairwells, etc.) and requiring owners and operators to inspect and certify that the doors are properly functioning and self-closing

- **HOUSING TEMPERATURE SAFETY ACT OF 2022 (H.R. 6528)**

A federal law requiring the installation of heat sensors in all federally funded or regulated multi-family housing developments. HUD, as well as the state and local housing administrator, shall receive real-time reports that flag when the level of heating in a unit is out of compliance with housing inspections.

- **COMPLIANCE WITH ALL STATE & LOCAL BUILDING, FIRE, & HOUSING**



Photo courtesy of the Office of District 14 City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez  
**2397 GRAND AVENUE** in University Heights was the location of a 2-alarm fire on Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022, at around 6.33 a.m.

## CODES

A federal law clarifying that federally funded or regulated multi-family housing developments are required to comply with state and local building, fire, and housing codes.

- **HOUSING INSPECTION TRANSPARENCY**

A federal law to create a publicly available database to easily search housing inspections required by HUD.

As reported, a number of other legislative measures have also been taken in recent weeks in response to the tragedy at State, City and federal

level. Meanwhile, a number of other fires in The Bronx have also been reported since the tragedy occurred, including one at 2397 Grand Avenue in University Heights in the early morning of Saturday, Feb. 5.

Norwood News reached out to FDNY for more information about the incident and was informed by an FDNY official on Monday that fire units responded to the incident at 6:11 a.m. on Saturday morning and that the fire broke out on the third floor of a 6-story, multiple dwelling at the location. The official said the incident quickly escalated to a 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm fire, bringing 25 units and 106 fire per-

(continued on page 10)



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# University Heights Fire follows Torres' New Space Heater Bill

(continued from page 9)

sonnel to the scene. He confirmed that there were ten patients with non-life threatening injuries, comprising nine civilians and one firefighter, arising from the incident.

Five patients were brought to St. Barnabas Hospital, two were transported to Jacobi Medical Center, and three refused medical attention. He said the fire was placed under control at 7:25 a.m. and the cause and origin of the fire are under investigation. It is still unknown, therefore, if the latest fire was potentially caused by a space heater or not.

District 14 City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez, who represents the impacted building, wrote in a tweet on Sunday, Feb. 6, "Yet Another Fire Bronx Fire. Several of my neighbors injured and displaced from housing that was not up to standard, even before the blaze. My team spent hours on site today, making sure every affected family was taken care of."

She continued, "We're not stopping there. The landlord didn't answer my calls, my team's calls, the city's, or the tenants' calls. This is a

lack of respect for human life. They did not even show up to the building today and after 12 hours, the essential necessary repairs have STILL not started. We are showing up for our tenants and making sure they get the housing dignity they deserve. Thanks to @FDNY for your swift response, @NYCHousing, @NYC\_Buildings, @RedCross, @bronxbp, @jpegnyc your partnership today."

Norwood News is following up with the affected tenants to ask about the status of the repairs in question. In the meantime, NYC Department of Building (DOB) records did not list any entity with a certificate of occupancy for the building when we checked online on Monday. Norwood News reached out to DOB for comment on the incident and we were informed as follows:

"Over the weekend, DOB inspectors were called to the scene at 2397 Grand Avenue, Bronx, to conduct structural stability inspections inside of the 6-story apartment building that was damaged by the fire. Our investigation found that

the fire took place in apartment 3B, causing severe fire damage in the unit. Less severe damage was also found in the apartments above, and holes were found at the roof level. The building was found to be structurally stable at the time of our inspection, and not in danger of collapse."

The DOB official added, "As a result of the fire damage, DOB has issued a Vacate Order affecting seven of the apartments in the building. Specifically, all of the apartments on the "B" line of the building (5B, 4B, 3B, 2B, 1B and B) underneath the damaged areas of the roof were subject to the Vacate Order, as well as apartment 5A, where fire-stopping material in the ceiling had been damaged by the fire."

The statement concluded, "The other units in the building were not subject to this DOB-issued Vacate Order. All residents affected by the Vacate Order were offered emergency relocation assistance by the American Red Cross and connected with our partners at HPD for additional assistance.

Prior to Saturday's fire, DOB has not received any complaints from members of the public about this building."

According to DOB records, there are two buildings on Lot 82 at the location of the fire: 2395 Grand Avenue and 2397 Grand Avenue. According to Realty Hop records, a corporation called 2395-97 REALTY LLC is the owner of the buildings. Norwood News asked DOB to validate if this information was correct. We were referred to NYC Department of Finance, who records appear to indicate that the entity is indeed the owner. We have attempted to reach the company for comment. A number of complaints logged with DOB as of Feb. 7, at both 2395 Grand Avenue and 2397 Grand Avenue, referred to problems with trash, air conditioning units not being installed correctly and renovations taking place without evidence of a permit.

On Sunday, the FDNY circulated a video which explained that space heaters needed space around them to avoid any fabric from igniting.



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# CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



## University Heights: Man Shot, Dies

Police confirmed a 41-year-old man died on Monday, Feb. 7, following a shooting in University Heights. Police responded to a 911 call at approximately 10:02 a.m. regarding a man who had been shot at 2296 Andrews Avenue. Upon arrival, police observed the man lying on the ground, unconscious and unresponsive, with a gunshot wound to his head. EMS also responded and pronounced the man deceased on the scene. There are no arrests, and the investigation is ongoing. The victim has been identified as Anthony Savarese, 41, of Noble Avenue in The Bronx.

## Off-Duty Corrections Officer Arrested for Assault

An off-duty, New York City Department of Corrections female employee was arrested and charged in the 46th precinct on Tuesday, Feb. 1, at 8:15 a.m. Keila Brown, 43, was charged with criminal obstruction of breathing, and assault. A person charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

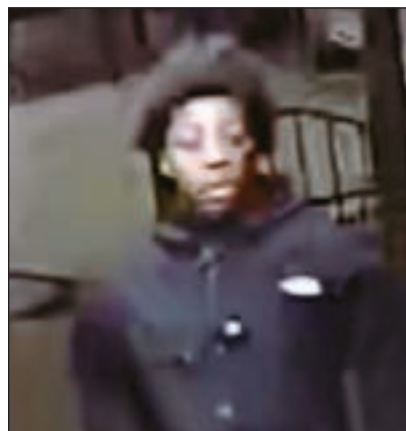
## Bronx Man Sentenced to 18 Years for Fatal Stabbing

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, Jan. 31, that a Bronx man was sentenced to 18 years in prison after pleading guilty to first-degree manslaughter for fatally stabbing his mother's roommate in their Williamsbridge apartment in 2019. She said the defendant, Arian Medina, 26, last of East 220th Street in Williamsbridge, was also sentenced to five years of post-release supervision. Medina pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter on Dec. 1, 2021.

According to the investigation, on June 16, 2019, Medina, who was living with his mother and her roommate, José Garcia, heard his mother and Garcia arguing. The next morning, at approximately 8:37 a.m., Medina stabbed Garcia multiple times in the torso and right arm using multiple knives. He then called 911 and told the operator: "I just stabbed somebody and killed him. Come get me." Medina also told NYPD officers who responded to the scene that he had stabbed the victim. His confession was captured on the officers' body-worn camera. The victim was declared dead at the scene. Clark thanked NYPD Detective Tracey Treanor of the 47th Precinct and Detective Patrick Flatley of Bronx homicide for their assistance with the investigation.

robbery and stabbing that occurred in Fordham Heights. On Thursday, Jan. 20, at 9:28 p.m., in the vicinity of 3222 Bronx Boulevard in Olinville, a 34-year-old male livery driver picked up three passengers who asked to be transported to another location. A short time later, when the cab arrived at the vicinity of 184th Street and Creston Avenue in Fordham Heights, the three passengers, two men and one woman, exited the cab without paying the fare and fled on foot.

The cab driver exited his vehicle and was able to apprehend the woman, but one of the two men turned back and stabbed the victim in the chest several times with a knife. The three suspects then fled on foot in an unknown direction. An undetermined amount of money was removed from the victim, after the assault. EMS responded and transported the victim to Saint Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. The three suspects were described as being 20 to 30 years of age, and the attached photos are taken from the vicinity of the incident location, after it occurred.



## Norwood: Man Shot, Police Search for Suspect

The NYPD continue to search for a suspect following a shooting of a man inside a residential building in Norwood. Police responded to a call regarding an adult male who had been shot in the leg on the 4th floor of a building at 3211 Parkside Place on Thursday, Jan. 27, at 3:31 p.m. The victim was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital and is expected to survive.

The perpetrator was last seen on foot in the vicinity of 207th Street and Parkside Place. No physical description was available for the shooter, according to police. There were no other injuries reported.

## Tennessee College Student from Bronx Charged with Gun Trafficking

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell announced that a 23-year-old Bronx man was charged with hundreds of counts of criminally selling a firearm, criminal possession of a firearm and related charges for trafficking 73 weapons and high capacity magazines to the Bronx and Manhattan, where they were sold to an undercover NYPD officer.

Clark said the defendant allegedly brought semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity magazines up from the south of the country, sometimes transporting them in a duffle bag by bus. Dozens of the firearms were loaded, and four were considered assault weapons. Officials from the District Attorney's office said the NYPD worked diligently to intercept the weapons before they hit Bronx streets.

Clark said the defendant, Shakor Rodriguez, 23, who was attending Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, was charged in two indictments, totaling 304 counts, and was arraigned Jan. 24, on 79 counts, which included various criminal charges. Rodriguez was remanded in custody. He was previously arraigned in December on other charges.

According to the investigation, between July 17, 2020, and December 22, 2021, in the Bronx and Manhattan, Rodriguez, also known as "Sha," allegedly sold an undercover officer 73 firearms, of which 59 were loaded, as well as over 40 high-capacity magazines, including multiple "drum" magazines. He sold most of the weapons near his former home in the vicinity of Weeks Avenue and Nelson Avenue in the Mt Hope section of the Bronx, and multiple sales occurred on Allen Street in Manhattan.

The investigation is continuing into how he obtained the guns and where they were purchased. According to the Tennessee government website, effective Jan. 1, 2020, an enhanced handgun permit allows open or concealed carry, while a concealed permit allows concealed carry only. There are also separate options for temporary gun licenses and those for former and current law enforcement officials and other licensed owners.

According to the government website, the state restricts firearms like machine guns and antique weapons, except for officers of the law, military members, and federally licensed owners. We asked representatives of the university if, aside from the state laws, if it had its own pol-

icy on the carrying of guns on campus, and if there was a metal detector which people had to go through to access the campus. We did not receive an immediate response to this question. A university official previously confirmed that the college was unable to comment on Rodriguez's specific case.

Clark thanked the NYPD's Firearms Investigations Unit for their work in the investigation, specifically Detective Gustavo Medina, Sergeant Brian O'Hanlon, Lieutenant Michael Raso, Captain Jeffrey Heilig and Inspector Brian Gill. A person who has been charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law. Rodriguez is due back in court January 31, 2022.

## Rikers Inmate Charged with Attempted Rape of Nurse & Forcibly Touching DOC Officer

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, Jan. 24, that a Rikers Island inmate was charged with attempted rape in the first degree and with additional charges for sexually abusing a nurse, and for forcibly touching a female Department of Correction officer in the jail.

According to the investigation, on Nov. 12, 2021, at approximately 2:22 a.m. in the Eric M. Taylor Center (EMTC), located on Rikers Island, the defendant, Michael Cleaver, 56, allegedly lunged at a 39-year-old female correction officer and touched her in her breast area. At approximately 4:12 p.m., also in the EMTC, Cleaver allegedly forced the second victim, a 51-year-old nurse, into a room and locked the door. He allegedly placed the victim in a bearhug and pushed her to the ground. He then placed his hand into her pants and pulled her clothes down, exposing part of her lower body. The victim yelled for help and another inmate broke the lock on the door and punched the defendant several times in an effort to get him off the victim.

Clark thanked Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Giunta, deputy chief of the special victims division, for her assistance, as well as investigators, Anthony Scoma, Paul Smith, and Walter Holmes, all of the Department of Correction Intelligence Bureau, for their work on the case. A person arrested and charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law. Cleaver continues to be held in custody and is due back in court on April 6.

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 Crime Stoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



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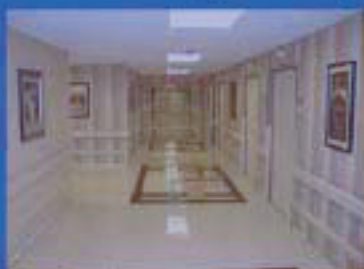
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## Letters To The Editor

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

### Gay Marriage Horrendous?

The definition of horrendous is “horrible; frightful.” I ask Richard Marias [Letter to the Editor, *Norwood News*, Jan. 27-Feb. 9 edition]: In what way does two people of the same sex getting married fit that definition? Marias bemoans the U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down the “Defense of Marriage Act.” In what way does allowing same-sex marriage threaten heterosexual marriage? I see no evidence that allowing the former is leading to the end of the latter. Marias justifies his viewpoint by citing the Holy Bible. It has its virtues, such as the Sixth Commandment, “Thou shalt not murder.” It also has a lot of things that are not quite that sensible. The First Amendment of our constitution says of religion: “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” Simply put, you’re free to follow your religion but not to force it on anyone else. But if Marias wishes to live under Biblical law, there are a few countries I can think of where he could relocate: Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia. But if he enjoys pork and shrimp, he’d better be willing to give that up. They follow Kosher rules. Christians decided to abandon that while insisting that the forbiddance of homosexuality be maintained. Even in this, there is further hypocrisy. The Catholic Church will not marry members of the LGBTQ community, but they have protected priests who rape boys.

Marias previously wrote that he respects gay people, but he expects them to respect his traditional values. How is he respecting them by demonizing their marriages as “horrendous.” Then, there is Marias’ closing sentence, “God wanted Adam and Eve to be joined together, not Adam and Steve.” Elvis Presley once called “Elvis the Pelvis,” the most childish thing he ever heard from an adult. I think Marias’ closing sentence can give it competition in that department.

**Richard Warren,**  
Van Cortlandt Village

### Abortion and Marriage Equality

Re: “Hail to the Supreme Court,” [Letter to the Editor, *Norwood News*, Jan. 27-Feb. 9 edition], I am personally opposed to abortion as a means of birth control, but any discussion of abortion must bear in mind several facts. First, prior to the legalization of abortion, it was controlled by criminal enterprises, and back-alley butchers. Do we want to return to the days of “underground” abortions, with abortions being performed by the incompetent, maiming the mother, eliminating her ability to conceive?

Second, does Mr. Marias’ desire to eliminate abor-

tion include victims of rape and incest, and situations in which the mother’s life is in danger? Third, how does Mr. Marias feel about the killing of doctors that perform abortions? Fourth, Mr. Marias is not a woman. Neither he (nor I) have to carry a baby to full term, and neither of us truly has the right to impose our will on one who does.

On Mr. Marias’ desire to see gay marriage overturned, I would refer Mr. Marias to the statement made by the 1964 Republican / Libertarian / Conservative candidate for president, Barry Goldwater. Although he was referring to civil rights, he said, “You cannot legislate what is in men’s hearts.” What happens behind closed doors between two consenting adults is nobody else’s business, nor is it anyone’s right to sit in judgment. In an episode of “All in The Family,” Edith and Archie travel to California only to discover Mike and Gloria are separated and (it is strongly implied) Gloria committed adultery. In lamenting Gloria’s adultery, Archie states, “It’s God’s business.” Edith replies, “Then, let God tend to it.”

Finally, Mr. Marias advocates writing to the Supreme Court, asking them to find cases where they can overturn the Defense of Marriage Act. Agree or disagree with Mr. Marias, I strongly encourage his desire to engage in civic engagement. I would never tell anyone not to write a public official, expressing his/her views in a civil fashion, but it is not the job of the United States Supreme Court to pick and choose cases based on the desires of the citizens. It is not the job of SCOTUS to act as an auxiliary legislative branch. The job of SCOTUS is, pure and simple, to determine if a given law, action, or inaction on the part of government violates the Constitution of the United States. Nothing I have written should be interpreted as advocating gay marriage or abortion.

**Nat Weiner**  
Parkchester

### Amtrak Kathy?

The apple, Gov. Kathy Hochul, didn’t fall far from the tree, former Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Both enjoy the perks of office at taxpayers’ expense. Is it necessary for Gov. Hochul to travel from Albany via helicopter or airplane for events in NYC, and the nearby suburbs? Upon arriving at Penn Station, the Governor can transfer to either an NYC Transit Subway, Long Island Railroad or Metro North Railroad train to reach her final destination. Just like ordinary New Yorkers who travel with a laptop or other communication devices, she can still work and stay in touch with her office while riding Amtrak, NYC Transit subway, LIRR or MNR.

As a senator, now President Joe Biden was known as “Amtrak Joe.” He commuted from his Delaware home to the Capitol via Amtrak on a regular basis for decades. Why can’t Hochul emulate Biden? Forget the helicopter and private airplane trips between Albany and NYC. Set an example for others. Show your support for transit just like Biden and become “Amtrak Kathy.”

**Larry Penner**  
Great Neck

## Bronx Park: Man Dies following Car Accident

by SÍLE MOLONEY

A 50-year-old man has died following a car accident in the vicinity of Bronx Park. Police said on Sunday, Feb. 6, at approximately 5.13 a.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding a vehicle collision on the southbound Bronx River Parkway at East Fordham Road. Upon arrival, they observed a vehicle that had been involved in a collision and a 50-year-old man with serious injuries.

EMS also responded and transported the man to NYC Health + Hospitals/ Jacoby, where he was pronounced deceased. The NYPD’s Highway Collision Investigation Squad is investigating.

The victim has since been identified as Dennis Alaribe, 50, of De Kruiff Place, in the Co-op City section of The Bronx.

The NYPD Collision Investigation Squad investigations handles all criminal investigations, while NYC Department of Transportation reviews the street design at the locations of such crashes. Norwood News reached out to the NYPD to ask whether the initial investigation indicates a hit & run incident or if it was a one-vehicle collision. A department official responded on Tuesday, Feb. 8, saying there were no further updates at this time.



Photo courtesy of José Miranda via Flickr  
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# Biaggi Launches Congressional Campaign, Others Eye Senate Seat

by SÍLE MOLONEY

New York State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi announced her candidacy for U.S. Congress in New York's 3rd congressional district (NY-3) on Monday. Biaggi, known as a progressive leader who has worked to make State government more transparent, said she was running to ensure hard working families along the Sound shore have their voices, needs, and vision heard in Washington D.C.

Up until now, NY-3 included most of the North Shore of Long Island, and expanded from Northwestern Suffolk County, across Northern Nassau County, and into far Northeastern Queens. However, following the latest redistricting proposal by Democrats, which has since been signed off by Gov. Kathy Hochul, the newly drawn NY-3 district encompasses parts of the senator's current Senatorial District 34 in The Bronx and Southern Westchester, and spans along the Sound from Northern Westchester to Suffolk County.

The district has been represented, since Jan. 3, 2017, by Thomas Suozzi, a Democrat, who announced in November 2021 that he is running for governor.

In a statement, announcing *her* decision on Monday, Feb. 7, Biaggi said, "Our country doesn't just need more Democrats in Washington, we need bolder ones. I am running for Congress in NY-3 to bring progressive and honest leadership to the frontlines of our country's most important fights." The senator added that the hard-working families of Westchester, Long Island, the Bronx, and Queens deserved an experienced, strong, and fearless leader in Washington, and that this was exactly what they could expect from her.

"As the Representative of the Sound, I will work to combat climate change and protect our shorelines, expand voting rights, enact universal pre-K to support working parents, provide opportunity and relief for the middle class, protect abortion rights, ensure public safety and a fair criminal legal system, and deliver affordable healthcare for all," she said. "Together, we delivered progressive change on these issues in Albany, and it is time to bring our energy and resolve to Washington."

Having caused widespread upset in 2018 when she defeated the powerful head of the IDC (Independent Democratic Caucus) in the form of establishment Democrat, Jeffrey Klein, to put Democrats back in control of New York's State Senate, many would not



Photo Courtesy of NY Senate Media Services

**NYS SENATOR ALESSANDRA** Biaggi speaks at a press conference regarding healthcare for transportation workers at the 4th Floor Senate Staircase in the Capitol Building, Albany NY on February 12, 2020.

doubt that Biaggi could well pull it out of the bag, once again, at congressional level. This is especially so, given her close, political allies in Congress in the form of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) and Rep. Jamaal Bowman (NY-16). Both unseated long-time Democrats when they won their respective seats for the first time in recent years. Bowman formally endorsed Biaggi in the NY-3 race on Tuesday, Feb. 8.

The IDC, led by former Bronx State Sen. Jeff Klein, was a group of eight New York State senators who were elected to office as Democrats but who formed a coalition with Republicans, blocking most progressive legislation in New York State for over seven years. As reported by The New York Times, in the Sept. 13, 2018 Democratic primary, after an unprecedented grassroots campaign, six IDC senators, including Klein, were defeated by progressive challengers backed by the group, No IDC NY, including Biaggi.

The senator is a long-time critic of former Gov. Andrew Cuomo, both for his handling of the care of nursing home patients amid the pandemic, and in the context of the allegations of sexual misconduct which were investigated by the Office of New York's Attorney General, Letitia James. The senator was among the first to call for the former governor's resignation long before he was ultimately forced out of his position last August. James later referred her office's report findings to local State prosecutors to liti-

gate.

The New York Times and other media outlets have since reported that the former governor has avoided sex-crime charges in all five cases brought forward, and is reportedly considering a new run for office, himself, as is former Mayor of New York City Bill de Blasio. Cuomo apologized for his behavior and continues to deny the allegations of sexual misconduct, saying he never intended to make anyone feel uncomfortable, but apologized if this was the case.

Biaggi is known for her strong stance on any matter relating to sexual misconduct and has been open about being a survivor of child sexual abuse, saying in a joint statement on Twitter on April 28, 2021 amid the allegations against Cuomo, together with State Sen. Julia Salazar and Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou, "As survivors of childhood sexual assault, we believe survivors."

The senator has also shown that she pulls no punches, and is not beyond cutting ties with former allies when she feels strongly about an issue, as was the case when she withdrew her support for former New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer during his recent run for Mayor of New York City. It followed allegations made against Stringer by a former staffer, also of sexual misconduct, which Stringer also denied.

When *Norwood News* contacted the Stringer campaign for comment, following reports of a second allegation by a second woman, Teresa Logan, in

early June 2021, which the comptroller also denied, a representative for his campaign provided a quote from the former City Comptroller, which read, "While I do not remember Ms. Logan, if I ever did anything to make her uncomfortable, I am sorry." Stringer ultimately stepped down from his campaign after poor polling. Biaggi had previously campaigned for the former comptroller in Riverdale.

Later, Biaggi, Salazar and Niou said in a joint statement, "Our commitment to a harassment-free government, workplace, and society is steadfast, and our zero-tolerance standard regarding sexual assault applies to [alleged] abusers like Andrew Cuomo, if not more so, to our friends."

Biaggi has since become a two-term Democratic State senator, having regained her seat in 2020. Since taking office, her campaign said she has been working to create a more equitable New York, delivering wins for working families and paving the way for progressive Democrats to run for office and win.

She was a fervent supporter of Mino Lora, executive director of the People's Theater Project, and a progressive candidate who ran in the 2021 District 11 City Council special election and primary election. She placed second on both occasions. The sometimes bitterly fought races were ultimately won by now Councilman Eric Dinowitz, son of Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D.81).

In September 2021, Hochul announced...  
(continued on page 17)



# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

Poe Park Visitor Center had been closed amid the pandemic, while other centers reopened last fall. NYC Parks confirmed it reopened to the public on Jan. 10, with limited programming. On Feb. 9, Feb. 16, and Feb. 23, from 11 a.m. to noon, the center will host a three-part series of **Black History** workshops. Adults and seniors are welcome to come and create inspirational images, using various art media. Social distancing and safety protocols will be enforced. Space is limited to ten people. For more information about the latest NYC Parks events, visit <https://www.nycgovparks.org/>.

Join Elizabeth Cooney, Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy's coordinator of educational programming for **Woodlawn's Lovers Trolley** tour of the cemetery, located at 4199 Webster Ave, Bronx, NY 10470, on Sunday, Feb. 13, the day before St. Valentine's Day, at 2 p.m., at the Jerome Avenue entrance, and visit the sites of Woodlawn's notable

lovers. Tour stops include Irene and Vernon Castle, Ida and Isidor Straus, and Celia Cruz and Pedro Knight. Adults \$25 and Students/Seniors \$20. All guests are required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations and will be asked to wear a mask on the trolley. For tickets, go to: <https://www.woodlawn.org/conservancy/tours-events/>, and search for Lover's Trolley tour.

Local nonprofit, GrowNYC is hosting a free **Stop 'N' Swap Community Reuse Event** on Sunday, Feb. 13, from noon to 3 p.m. at Vladeck Hall at the Amalgamated Housing Cooperative, located at 74 Van Cortlandt Park South, in Van Cortlandt Village. The public is invited to bring clean, portable, reusable items to share with those who can use them. No one is required to bring something to take something. You can simply show up with a bag and see what's free for the taking. By reusing through events like Stop 'N' Swap, New Yorkers can help divert over 40 million pounds of material from landfills every year.

Books, toys, fashionable clothing, housewares, and electronics are just some of the offerings. Furniture and other large items are not accepted at the swap. Anything left over at the end of the day is donated or recycled. Proof of vaccination and face coverings required for all attendees. Learn more at [www.grownyc.org/swap](http://www.grownyc.org/swap).

## DANCE

**Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández**, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, will perform at The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, The Bronx, New York 10468 on Sunday, Feb. 20, at 4 p.m. The company's U.S. 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 more information, go to: <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events> or call (718) 960-8833 Monday to Friday between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

## FILM

Join photojournalist, documentary filmmaker and author, Bill Gentile, as he discusses his memoir, **"Wait for Me: True Stories of War, Love and Rock & Roll,"** at the Bronx Documentary Center on Friday,

March 4, 2022, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. EST. Gentile did more than just "cover" Nicaragua's 1979 Sandinista Revolution, and the 1980s Contra War. He lived them. First as a correspondent for United Press International (UPI) and later as a photojournalist for Newsweek magazine, Gentile experienced those historic events from the inside, as the partner of a Nicaraguan woman whose prominent family "adopted" him as one of their own. For more information, click [here](#).

## MOVEMENT

Families and children are invited to come along and join in some free, fun, **Mid-Winter Excitement** and winter activities at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467 from Feb. 21 to Feb. 25. On Monday, there will be Lantern Creations through paper art, on Tuesday, Winter Olympics consisting of hockey, curling, and sledding (outside), and on Wednesday, musical fitness with Zumba, musical chairs, and Ballet. Thursday afternoon will be filled with games like Bingo, Uno, and Jenga and Friday will consist of a movie and crafts. Join for the big screen showing of *Scoob!* Activities from Monday, Feb. 21, through Thursday, Feb. 24, take place from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and those held Friday, Feb. 25, from noon to 3 p.m. Prevailing COVID-19 guidelines apply. For more information call (718) 543-8672, email [Sarah.Bishow@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Sarah.Bishow@parks.nyc.gov) or visit [nyc.gov/parks](http://nyc.gov/parks). For more information regarding accessibility, contact [accessibility@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:accessibility@parks.nyc.gov) or (212) 360-1430.



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# Biaggi Launches Congressional Campaign, Others Eye Senate Seat

(continued from page 15)

nounced the appointments of Commissioner James E. Dering and the Hon. C. Randall Hinrichs to serve on the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE). Dering was previously appointed to JCOPE by Cuomo and formerly served in the Cuomo administration as general counsel of the Department of Health.

Biaggi issued a statement in response to the announcement at the time, saying, "As Chair of the Senate Ethics Committee, the appointment of Commissioner James E. Dering to serve as the Acting Chair of JCOPE is concerning. Gov. Hochul had both an opportunity and responsibility to appoint a new Chair with the qualifications to transform the culture of JCOPE. Rather than fulfilling her promise to prioritize transparency and integrity in government, Governor Hochul's appointment only maintains the status quo. It is now even more imperative for the Legislature to take matters into our own hands, and pass legislation to completely reform and restructure our state's system of ethics and oversight."

Hochul later announced she was appointing Jose Nieves and Sharon Stern Gerstman to serve on the Commission, with the two appointees

filling-in the seats vacated by Robert Cohen and James E. Dering, who would be stepping down from their roles. "Restoring trust in government is a top priority for my administration, and that includes strengthening ethics oversight," Hochul said at the time. "Jose Nieves and Sharon Stern Gerstman are well-respected and talented professionals who will uphold our commitment to open, ethical governing and help to transform not just State government, but more importantly, people's image and perception of their State government."

With Biaggi's announcement, rumors abound that Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80), may be thinking of running to fill the senator's seat. *Norwood News* reached out to the assemblywoman's office for comment on Monday morning. We did not receive an immediate response.

Meanwhile, City & State have reported that in addition to Fernández, A.D. 82 district leader, John Doyle, recently elected, district 13 city council member, Marjorie Velázquez, Bronx Community Board 11 member, Christian Amato, and Kate Theobald, chief of staff to Manhattan Council Member Keith Powers, were also considering running.

*Norwood News* reached out to each

for comment. We received the following response from Doyle. "I worked for the State Senate for five years and I'm a lifelong resident of this district. It's important to me that we elect someone who understands how to make government work for people while also continuing the change Senator Biaggi and her colleagues started in 2018," he said. "Whether as a candidate or a concerned citizen, I will be fighting to make sure we get the best possible senator who can achieve great things for our community."

Velázquez was quoted in the City & State story as saying, "I'm seriously considering running for State Senate." She added, "The State Senate provides a great platform to make the lives of our neighborhoods better. I look forward to the process." The councilwoman reportedly told City & State that COVID-19 and housing would be key issues in a possible senatorial campaign run.

For his part, Amato later told the *Norwood News*, "From the minute we took our district back from the clutches of the IDC, it has been crucial to ensure that our State Senator remains connected to the grassroots movement that helped us gain our historic Democratic Majority in the Senate."

He added, "Over the years, I have had the privilege of working in the Senate to serve our community and help our constituents. As an organizer, I have worked across the Bronx and Westchester with regional advocates, and through the pandemic, I formed a mutual aid network that continues to bring 10,000 pounds of fresh produce weekly and over 1 million face masks and PPE supplies to our Bronx neighborhoods."

Amato concluded, "I am deeply committed to seeing our communities rise together. As I explore the viability of a Senate run, I'll be certain to remain connected to the grassroots voices in our District and will make a decision based on what is best for our community."

For her part, Theobald said, "I can confirm I'm considering it. The messages of support I've received since yesterday has only encouraged me more. The district needs strong, experienced leadership and I think I have a lot to offer."

Biaggi's campaign, meanwhile, said she's ready to bring her fighting spirit to Washington on behalf of the people of NY-3. Her campaign added that she is a fourth-generation resident of the district.

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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, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD** 7 meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, Feb. 22, 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, **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 Feb. 2. For further details, contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## CORRECTION

In the January 27-February 9 edition of the *Norwood News*, the front-page story entitled, "Birthday Vigil Held for Baby Catherine," did not reference that Brenda Caldwell-Paris, president of the 52nd Precinct Community Council, was the co-organizer of the event, and that both Caldwell-Paris and the 52nd Precinct's commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Jeremy Schaublin, both spoke at the vigil.

In the same edition, in the page 17 article entitled, "Congressman Jamaal Bowman Released After Arrest in D.C. Amid Protests Over Voting Rights," an incorrect photo accompanied the photo caption, "Congressman Jamaal Bowman (NY-16) on the steps of the Capitol in Washington D.C. on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2022, holding copies of 33 bills

passed in 19 states throughout 2021 that restrict voting rights. The congressman was arrested the next day, along with others who participated in an ongoing protest to protect the right to vote. He was later released." The published photo was of Bowman speaking at the Edenwald YMCA in the Northeast Bronx on October 22, 2021, during a visit to the center by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris. The published photo was taken by David Greene.

In the same edition, in the page 15 article entitled, "Mental Health Services Needed, Staffing Problems Persist at Fordham Village," Tori Lyon, CEO of the Jericho Project was referenced incorrectly in some parts of the story as Tori Lyons. We apologize for these errors.

# POTS, Serving The Bronx for 40 Years

(continued from page 1)

"I was completely homeless," Cardoza told the *Norwood News*. "I was staying in the street. I had nowhere to turn to." It was around this time, Cardoza recalled, that POTS gave her the courage to go to a homeless shelter. The nonprofit also helped her with her public assistance case and allowed her to use its mailing address so she could receive benefits. Cardoza is just one of the many people whose lives have been transformed by the organization over the decades.

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nonprofit, an anti-poverty and food insecurity organization that seeks to address these issues through a multi-varied approach. POTS is a daycare center and does not offer shelter services. However, many, if not all its clients experience homelessness. Last year, POTS served the social needs of 35,943 people, and provided 2,860,901 meals. By contrast, in 2008, when POTS first started compiling data on its services, it found that it had served the social needs of just 7,505 people and provided just 285,978 meals.

POTS representatives acknowledge that it has been a remarkable journey for the organization since its origins. Back in the late 70s and early 80s, its founders, Rev. Ned Murphy, Timothy Boon, and Sr. Jane Iannucelli, were working together in homeless services, and were interested in creating a place where the community could come together.

Christina Hanson, executive director of POTS, explained, "They conceived of the idea of having a soup kitchen which is a place where people could gather and communicate with one another." She added, "The original idea was creating this community by listening to people and hearing what was going on in their lives."

At the time, Hanson said most of their clients were people experiencing homelessness and were living on the street. He said due to the downturn in the economy in the late 70s and early 80s, New York City faced great challenges when it came to addressing homelessness. Not much has changed.

Currently, the City said there are more than 15,600 people from The Bronx who currently experience homelessness, and who live in transi-

tional housing facilities in areas all across the City. This service is provided by the Department of Homeless Services under the umbrella of the Department of Social Services and is designed to assist those who are transitioning out of a situation where they may have previously been living in different shelters but are moving into a more stable setting. An additional 14,300 people experiencing homelessness live in actual shelters across The Bronx itself. Shelters are more akin to emergency accommodation.

Jack Marth, director of programs at POTS, first got involved with the organization in 1982 when he was a freshman at Fordham University. He had heard about the organization through a student group on campus called the Hunger Action Committee. When he had time during his academic schedule, he would volunteer at the original POTS soup kitchen, which was on Fordham Road in the University Heights neighborhood.

Since 2011, Marth has served as director of programs at POTS, and has seen first-hand how the nonprofit has evolved. "Early on, it was clear that we were living hand to mouth," Marth said. "There was no guarantee the resources that were needed for the next day would come. Over time, POTS began to put all the things in place that were needed if the organization would survive."

Marth recognizes how important it was to receive financial support from the New York Foundation in the early 90s. "One of the biggest grants we got in our early years was to support an AIDS education program, which was something that was a big change for us," Marth said. "The City was looking for organizations, at the grassroots level, who were meeting people who were marginalized to do the important work of educating them about preventing the spread of HIV. I wrote the grant proposal, collaborating with others, that got us one of our biggest grants ever. I think it was \$250,000 per year."

Another foundation that POTS benefited from immensely is the Robin Hood Foundation. "That's been really helpful in not only giving us money but helping us to develop the systems and management to be a successful nonprofit," Marth said. "They have been indispensable in that respect and continue to

be." During the pandemic, POTS received additional funding from The Robin Hood Foundation's COVID-19 Relief Fund.

Marth also points to the longstanding relationship POTS has with the Church of Resurrection in Rye, New York, as crucial to its success. "They continue, to this day, to be a huge source of financial support and volunteer support," Marth said. "Every Thanksgiving and Christmas, we have a special meal for people. They basically run it. It's the people from Rye who do all the planning and execution of that."

Thanks to the generosity of donors, POTS is now able to offer three programs to address the needs of people in the community. The first is food security. As part of the program, there is a dining room onsite where members of the community can go to receive a hot meal. Since COVID-19 hit, Marth said the group has focused on to-go meals [to facilitate better social distancing]. In addition, POTS has a food pantry that provides groceries to people. Last year, he said 2.5 million meals were served through the pantry program.

The second program covers dignity & wellness. Through this program, POTS clients can use the POTS location as their mailing address. Marth said many of the individuals they serve who use this mailing service are experiencing homelessness or are unstably housed. Under the umbrella of the dignity & wellness program, there is also a shower element where POTS provides everything clients may need to take a shower.

The organization also offers 30 free haircuts, once a week. The final component of the dignity & wellness program is the hosting of an onsite medical clinic. POTS has partnered with "Care for the Homeless," which operates a primary care clinic, and dental care clinic for POTS clients.

The final program relates to long-term stability. One component is case management, where case managers screen POTS clients to see if they qualify for things like SNAP, public assistance, social security benefits and medical insurance. Another component of this program is mentorship. "We have a group of case managers who specialize in working more in-depth with our clients to do long-term planning,"

Marth said.

"Some people call it life coaching." The final component is a legal clinic which is primarily focused on eviction prevention and benefits access.

Reflecting on some of the highlights of his time at POTS over the last 40 years, Marth said he remembers the time he helped a family keep its home. "I remember intervening once on Christmas Eve," Marth says. "This young mother and child were about to be kicked out of the shelter system. We did the necessary advocacy to keep them from becoming homeless on Christmas."

Taina Rodriguez, associate director of food and dignity services, first came to POTS as a client. She recalls that she was 11 years old, and it was during the summer of 1993. At the time, her mom was suffering from mental health problems and drug addiction. "We were facing that we didn't have enough food in the household," Rodriguez said. "Somebody had suggested to her this little place on Webster Avenue where if you were hungry, you could go get some food."

Her early experiences with the POTS staff left a strong impression. "The feeling of people welcoming you and delivering service that didn't make you feel like a number, that you were less than, or making you feel guilty because you needed help, it wasn't at the forefront," Rodriguez said. She ended up volunteering at the soup kitchen in 1994.

Since transitioning to the team of POTS staff in 1996, Rodriguez has occupied many different roles within the organization. The memories she cherishes the most are some of her past interactions with clients. "The moment where the lightbulb goes off are the moment when you see somebody, and they were down, out, and hopeless, and somehow you see a spark in their eye," she said. "You see them smiling. You see hope."

Now, thanks to POTS, Cardoza has hope. She has a job at a real estate company in The Bronx and is on the cusp of leaving her homeless shelter and getting her own apartment. "Without their support, I don't know where I would be," Cardoza said.

Anyone who may be interested in volunteering with, or donating to, POTS can visit <https://potsbronx.org/english/>.



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