



NORWOOD NEWS

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DID BOMB THREAT REVEAL DYSFUNCTION AT P.S. 20?



Photo by Síle Moloney

LINES OF STUDENTS and staff return to P.S. 20 on Webster Avenue in the Norwood section of The Bronx on Friday, March 4, after a morning call placed with the school advising of a bomb threat instigated an evacuation at 8.50 a.m. The building was later declared clear and dozens of staff and students were seen returning to the school, walking in single lines down Webster Avenue.

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Around two and half hours after students and teachers were evacuated from The Bronx's P.S.

20 due to a bomb threat last Friday, the building was, thankfully, declared clear by police and safe for reentry. However, according to some P.S. 20 staff

members, the incident served to highlight what they say is a dysfunctional environment at the school.

A police official told *Nor-*

wood News that an anonymous call was made to the school, located at 3050 Webster Avenue in Norwood, next door to the

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George Diaz Runs for A.D. 81, Again
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Murder on Perry Avenue
pg 15



Monroe College Hosts Bronx Young Kings
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Photo by Sile Moloney

SOME TREE PITS along Perry Avenue in Norwood, seen here on February 10, 2022, have had stones placed on them or have been paved over with flag stones, making it difficult for them to survive. In other parts of the Bronx, merchants have filled certain tree pits with pebbles, which also hampers tree survival.

Bronx CB7 Frustrated with City's Forestry Unit

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Frustrations were evident among the attendees at Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7)'s Parks meeting on Feb. 9, as members and residents expressed their exhaustion when it came to dealing with the Forestry unit within New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

Parks committee chair, Barbara Stronczer, shared that she had recently attended a meeting with a Bronx representative of the Forestry unit, along with Ischia Bravo, CB7 district manager, and Karla Cabrera-Carrera, community coordinator for CB7.

Stronczer said Forestry informed her the unit does not usually attend community board meetings, even though CB7 had been trying to get a representative to join a meeting for quite a while. She said they preferred for questions and concerns to be submitted in writing.

At the meeting with the Forestry representative, Stronczer said she brought up the concerns raised by members at prior committee meetings, including the request for an updated list of where the unit plans to plant trees in the neighborhood. She said she was told that planting had slowed down because

of COVID-19, but that the unit agreed to try to compile the required list for CB7 members.

Stronczer said she also told the Forestry unit that Parks committee members were concerned that their complaints, submitted to Parks' 311 system, were not being answered. She said Forestry said the unit prioritizes complaints and responds to the most urgent ones first.

"So those that entail safety are the ones that get taken care of first," Stronczer relayed to members. "He also added that in The Bronx, they have 4,000 requests. So, at this point, I don't know what to say as far as a tree complaint, and how long you will have to wait if it's not a safety issue."

Stronczer added that she had also informed Forestry about some trees located at a local intersection which she noticed had been felled and had asked if there was regulation which allowed for such felling. She said Forestry said they didn't know of any.

Moving on to another topic, according to Stronczer, some local merchants have decided to place large stones and pebbles into street tree pits, leaving

very little room for the trees to grow, and she raised this with Forestry also. They confirmed that people were supposed to have a permit for this. Stronczer said she provided the addresses of where she had noticed this happening, and said Forestry agreed to go out and check them out.

"I did thank him for the work they did along Sedgewick and Bailey [Avenues]," she said. "So, other than that, my feeling is that I'm going to have to ask our staff at the community board to follow up on these vague answers that I received." She added, "And, you know, it wasn't the first time that some of these questions were given to Forestry."

Bronx CB7 sanitation chair, Betty Arce, said she felt like Forestry was using the pandemic as an excuse not to follow up on matters even when they said they would. She suggested offering a daytime meeting time to the Forestry unit in case that was the reason why representatives were not attending community board meetings.

"I feel like it's insulting that Forestry treats community boards the way they do," Arce said. "This whole issue

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



"I feel that with this war, the Russians are unjust at what they're doing...like a bully, and I'm glad that people of other countries are coming together and putting the pressure on him [President Vladimir Putin]. I don't think it's going to last too much longer. If you don't have money, you can't run a country, right? That's how I feel about it. But I hope that this thing stops soon, because it's going to spread like cancer in Europe if it doesn't. He's saying he doesn't want NATO countries too close to him, but that's how the world is. He's shooting civilians, it's crazy."

Michael Grady,
Kingsbridge



It's a waste of human life and it's a matter of freedom of choice. Yes, they want to go back to the 1800s or early 1900s when [former Soviet leader Vladimir] Lenin was in power. All I know about their bombing is they just missed killing a bunch of kindergarten students and luckily, they were on the other side of the building when the bomb hit. So, I don't trust [President Vladimir] Putin. I think Sweden and the other surrounding countries know what Putin is thinking and they're not going to let him get away with this."

Lt. Shelly Hunter (Ret.),
Kingsbridge



"Yes, I've been following it. According to what's on the news, it's very unfortunate what's happening to the people in Ukraine, and unfortunately Russia has made a grave mistake. He [Putin]'s actually united the nations of NATO, and the people of the European nations, and I think it's going to be a bad outcome. Everybody's feeling the pinch; my groceries went up, my gas is going up. I'm feeling the pinch. What's the alternative?"

Moses Burgos,
Van Cortlandt Park



Maybe he was waiting for [former U.S. President Donald] Trump to win so that he could walk in there and just take it, I don't know. That's the rub; if they go in there, he might do what he's saying, because he doesn't care. Maybe he really doesn't care. Maybe he's sick and dying, and he figures he might as well take the whole world with him. But they're not doing enough, obviously. So, what if the United States doesn't get in it? What about Europe? Let them get in it, but somebody should do something. Cluster munitions and vacuum bombs are supposed to be against the Geneva Convention...that's terrible. They're going to take that country and they might not stop; the Baltic states might be next. Everything is up in the air; whatever it is, it's not going to be good."

Peter Basilone,
Morris Park



"I think the only people who are going to pay for this war are the innocent people. I mean this guy, [President Vladimir] Putin, he has money and power. He has everything, and some believe he has this in his brain, and that's leading to all of the Ukraine people's suffering. They're losing their houses, they're losing their lives, their kids, their family, and their financial situation. I think this is a disaster. In my opinion, the innocent people pay for all of this. If any president in the world had done the same thing he's doing now, it would be considered a war crime. There is no justice in this world. He has power and money, and no one will mess with him. He's not Saddam Hussain. God bless America!"

Mohamed Ouertani,
Morris Park

Editor's Note: The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is an international treaty, drafted in Dublin, Ireland in 2008, and ratified in Oslo, Norway in 2010, that prohibits all use, transfer, production, and stockpiling of cluster bombs, a type of explosive weapon which scatters submunitions or "bomblets" over a specific area. Among the countries which have not signed the treaty as of July 2021, are the U.S. and Russia.




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New Bronx CB7 Education Chair Hosts Jam-Packed Meeting

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Nearly two out of three children affected by systemic poverty cannot read at grade level, according to Literacy Incorporated (LINC), a New York City nonprofit focused on early childhood literacy. The organization said children who cannot transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” by third grade are 13 times more likely not to graduate on time from high school.

Childhood literacy, along with resources for youth, schools and libraries formed the main topics of discussion at last month's Bronx Community Board 7's education committee meeting, held on Feb. 2, and the first of the year to be chaired by Leury Acosta, the new committee chair.

The first presentation was by Gladys Gomez, a LINC representative. “Our mission is to engage families and community members to support our youngest readers, ages birth to five years old, and we are currently in eight neighborhoods across New York City,” Gomez said, adding that LINC teams were based in each of the City's five boroughs.

According to LINC, illiteracy impacts children's ability to access better opportunities in health, education, and the economy. In the United States, the organization estimates that 43 percent of adults with the lowest levels of literacy live in poverty. They say low literacy rates also cost the American economy \$225 billion a year in loss of productivity. LINC promotes investment in literacy as the path out of poverty, with representatives saying, “It is both the smart **and** the right thing to do!”

The group regularly hosts parent workshops on literacy and education so that parents can help their kids prepare for school. During the meeting, Gomez gave an overview of LINC's main programs which include the “very involved parent” or VIP volunteer program, a book distribution program, a reading everywhere program, and the “lit zone,” program. The latter involves partnerships with local businesses where boxes full of free books are available for community members to take home for their children.

Gomez said LINC also accepts book donations for their lit zones at their Bronx locations. In Fordham, these are the Bronx Library Center at 310 E Kingsbridge Road, Saint Barnabas Hospital WIC Offices at 260 East 188th Street, 2021 Grand Concourse, and 4507 3rd Avenue, Twin Park West at 365 Ford Street, and Niño de la Caridad Foundation at 578 E Fordham Road.

In Kingsbridge, they are United Pharmacy at 5539 Broadway, Marble Hill Senior Citizen Center at 5365 Broadway, and W TwoThirty Laundry Services at 215 West 230th Street. All LINC programs are free and as of mid-February were taking place virtually. For more information, residents are invited to visit lincnyc.org.

Later in the meeting, Pam Cora, managing librarian at the Bronx Library Center (BLC), the borough's largest public li-



Photo by David Greene

MOSHOLU BRANCH OF New York Public Library, in Norwood, is one of many branches that offers an afterschool program.

brary, located at 310 E Kingsbridge Road in Fordham Manor, provided updates on the library's activities and resources. She said in-person programming was on hold but was due to return by mid-February.

Cora added that BLC was also hosting a small-scale exhibit called “Micro Museum of Care” for one month, which explores the future of care work through the voices of healthcare workers. She also highlighted the availability of New York Public Library's STEAM [Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics] kits for kids, which can be checked out for three weeks at a time with a library card.

Last September, NYPL announced a range of new programs for the fall season, including the STEAM program. Students have access to five different types of STEAM kits: engineering, stargazing, young coders, and young builders. Additionally, ten library branches offer Sphero Robotics kits.

Used in conjunction with books from the library and resources from home, the kits, help students develop their skills in STEAM topics and support creative, scientific, and collaborative thinking. “There are different kinds of gadgets, gizmos, technology that makes it really fun and exciting for children to learn about STEAM in a collaborative way with either siblings or their family while they're at home,” Cora said.

BLC is also hosting tax preparation classes in partnership with Ariva on Fridays from Feb. 18 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. by appointment only. To qualify for the program, the income limit for a single individual must be \$32,000 per year and the income limit with dependents must be \$56,000.

Meanwhile, Cora said the college and career pathways program (CCP) provides information to parents and students about the college application process. CB7 member, Chad Royer, asked about SAT preparation assistance, and Cora said SAT materials are also available in the library and

CCP occasionally hosts preparation programming also.

Acosta asked if the library was still hosting story time for children, and Cora confirmed that the sessions were virtual but would be returning to an in-person format in the future, as would the afterschool child assistance program. “This was very, very well attended before our pause on in-person programming, and we expect it to be just as well attended once we reinstate in person programming,” Cora said.

Isha Taylor, president of Community Education Council (CEC) District 10, then introduced herself and provided an overview of CEC's background and resources. “This term, we decided that we wanted to empower students, inform families, and unite our individual school and local external communities,” she said.

Taylor said there are 36 CEC councils across New York City, with 32 district boards and four city-wide councils. District 10, in which Norwood is located, has 62 total schools with 55 kindergarten through 6th grade schools, two 6th grade through 12th grade schools, and five pre-kindergarten centers.

“Our priorities for this 2021-2023 term [are] to, again, empower students by ensuring that every student in District 10 receives high quality, cultural, responsive and sustainable education,” said Taylor. She said the council wants to make sure families are adequately informed and empowered, that they understand the curriculum and can make informed decisions that benefit their children and the surrounding community.

One meeting attendee named Leteisha brought up the issue of more families coming into the district when the district's schools are already overcrowded. Taylor acknowledged that 38 out of 62 schools in District 10 are over 100 percent capacity. She said she was in the process of learning about plans to open some new schools in the district.

Ischia Bravo, Bronx CB7 district man-

ager, agreed that the local schools were heavily saturated. “The goal of tonight was to kind of bridge the fact that we're all doing the same thing, separately, and we need to make sure that we come together to advocate for the same things,” Bravo said about the issue.

Both Leteisha and Royer asked Taylor about resources for special education students. Taylor shared some resource links, adding she didn't understand why special needs children had to travel to District 75 for their needs to be met. She said she plans to have a meeting with District 75's council and the office of district planning to open up new seats in some District 10 schools for special education families.

Later, Joy Knight, the second vice president and chair of scholarship for the Bronx alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, shared information about their 2022 scholarship application program. The scholarships are open to male and female Bronx high school seniors who have a B grade point average or better, who will be full-time students taking a four-year college course this coming fall.

Knight said an \$8,000 scholarship was available, awarded in tranches of \$1,000 per semester, as well as numerous one-time grants for students. She said the organization awarded over \$29,500 in grants and scholarship prizes to students last year.

Later, Naqi Cruz, a representative from the civilian complaints review board (CCRB), which investigates allegations of misconduct by NYPD officers, presented information about CCRB's “Know Your Rights” workshops regarding police encounters, which he said were to keep everyone safe and hold both parties accountable. “We're out here, just trying to push that line of education,” he said.

Local Bedford Park resident, Sirio Guerino, whose child attends Bronx Collaborative High School, located on DeWitt Clinton Campus, said the school used to have a pool for students for gym and other activities, and don't use it anymore. He said he wanted to look into why it was not usable, and see if that could be changed.

As part of the discussion, Hugo Gonzalez said Bronx High School of Science did not have a swimming pool on site but did have a deal with Lehman College to use **their** swimming pool and suggested this might also be an option for Bronx Collaborative High School.

Finally, Tasha Andrews gave a presentation about the local Buccaneers tackle football team which practices in the Williamsbridge Oval. She said the group takes any kids who want to play football from ages 6 to 14. The group meets on Saturdays at 11 a.m. for two hours.

More details about NYPL's afterschool program can be found at:

<https://www.nypl.org/remote-learning-resources/nypl-after-school>.

More details about NYPL's STEAM program can be found at:

<https://www.nypl.org/remote-learning-resources/steam>.

NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

NYCHA Prepares for New Trash System

On Monday, March 7, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking proposals from waste haulers and manufacturers of containerized collection equipment to develop a pilot program for bringing hoist-lifted trash collection to public housing developments. The technology will enable NYCHA residents and staff to deposit waste in overground or submerged containers that will be then picked up by specialized garbage trucks with mechanized hoist lifts. This method will enable residents to conveniently dispose of trash and recyclables while minimizing the number of trash and recycling bags set out at the curb.

NYPD Officer Charged with Reckless Endangerment

An NYPD police officer has been charged with a second-degree misdemeanor offense for reckless endangerment, for firing his gun at a fleeing car in a busy Bronx intersection during rush hour. Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark said the defendant, Richard Delahanty, 29, was arraigned on March 8 before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Beth Beller.

On Feb. 16, 2021, at around 6:25 p.m., Delahanty and two partners from the 44th precinct were on patrol in an unmarked police car travelling north on Gerard Avenue when they saw a gray Dodge Charger with excessive tinted windows and a loud exhaust. Delahanty, the driver of the police vehicle, activated lights and siren and attempted to pull the other driver over. The driver's windows and windshield were darkly tinted, such that none of the officers could see inside the car. The driver slowed to a stop on East 167th Street and as the officers were exiting their vehicle, the driver sped away and led them on a brief chase eastward on East 167th Street toward the Grand Con-

Two Women Assaulted Inside Norwood Apartments

By **DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY**

Police are searching for an assailant who is wanted in connection with an assault of a woman which took place inside a Norwood residential building.

According to police officials, officers from the 52nd precinct were called to a four-story building at 371 East 204th Street at Webster Avenue, at 12:40 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 27. Police say the still-unidentified suspect

was involved in a verbal dispute with the victim, which later escalated into a physical assault.

The man allegedly pushed the woman and punched her, causing pain, swelling and a laceration to her mouth. The victim, who also suffered a bump on her head, was transported by EMS to North Central Bronx Hospital, where she was reported in stable condition. The NYPD had no immediate description of the

suspect and no arrests have been made in the case. The investigation continues.

On March 2, a 32-year-old woman was also assaulted inside an apartment on Webster Avenue. That incident was reported at around 2:30 a.m. inside 3349 Webster Avenue, also in Norwood. An NYPD spokesperson said a 32-year-old woman suffered a laceration to the stomach and right arm in the context of a dispute with a 32-year-old man. The victim was

taken to a local area hospital and is in stable condition. There are no arrests according to police and the investigation is ongoing. According to users of the Citizens App, the perpetrator fled the scene.

Year-to-date felony assault rates in the 52nd precinct were up 9.6 percent in February, compared to February 2021. Rape was up 50 percent. In the 50th precinct, felony assault was up by 22.7 percent compared to last

(continued on next page)

course.

At East 167th Street and Walton Avenue, as they exited their vehicles to approach, the driver reversed, executed a K-turn, and drove past where Delahanty was standing. As Delahanty reached towards the door, his hand got caught in the partially opened window causing a laceration. As the driver drove away, Delahanty fired his police-issued pistol six times, with civilians on the street running away and those in nearby vehicles ducking for cover. The driver, Luis Cabrera, 28, was arrested hours later and charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. He pleaded guilty to the charge and paid a \$200 fine. Delahanty is due back in court on May 18, 2022. A person accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

DOB Offers Homeowners Help with Violations

Under the Homeowner Relief Program, run by New York City Department of Buildings (DOB), owners of one and two-family homes can correct violating conditions without incurring any financial penalties. Residents qualify for relief if they own a one or two-family home and have not received notice of any violations from DOB in the past five years. Residents also

qualify for the program if they are the new owner of a one or two-family home. Residents don't need to take action to participate in the program. In the event a DOB inspector visits a home and identifies a violating condition, the DOB will determine if the homeowner is eligible for the program. If so, the homeowner will not receive a violation notice but a certificate of corrective action which does not carry a financial penalty.

The homeowner must, however, correct the violating condition within 60 days. DOB will work with homeowners to do this. A DOB inspector will visit the home after the request for corrective action is issued and if it has not been corrected within the 60 days, the homeowner will receive a violation notice. Homeowners may need to hire a registered and State licensed professional, plumber or electrician, depending on the condition, to correct the violation, file plans and obtain permits before the work can begin. While residents are not required to pay hiring fees, they may be required to pay permit fees. More information can be found by calling DOB at (212) 393 2760 or at www.nyc.gov/dobhelp.

Dinowitz Hosts Fire Safety Session

District 11 City Council-

man Eric Dinowitz hosted a virtual fire safety session in conjunction with the FDNY on Feb. 28. Firefighter, Zachary Bitzer, reminded residents to plug space heaters, air conditioners or other electrical appliances into a wall socket rather than into an extension lead. He said space heaters should also be kept three feet away from anything combustible. If a unit is getting too hot, it should be replaced. Bitzer said space heaters should be shut off when they are not being used, when residents are sleeping, or when they go out.

Electrical cords and cables should run over and not under rugs and carpets. If there's an issue with the cord (frayed), it will make contact with the rug and may cause a fire. Bitzer said cooking should be a kid-free zone and encouraged residents to always have two oven mitts to hand. Pots and pans should have proper fitting lids which will cut off the oxygen if the fire starts in the pot or pan, while the mitt protects the person from getting burned as they place the lid on the pot or pan. Tight arm-fitting clothing should also be work when cooking to avoid any accidents and handles should be turned inwards on the stove. Further tips can be found at FDNYsmart.org.

Bitzer also highlighted

the importance of placing smoke detectors in every room in a home. Residents can get a free smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector through the #GetAlarmedNYC program provided by FDNY and the Red Cross. For more information, call Red Cross at (877) 733-2767 or visit <http://www.redcross.org/local/new-york/greater-new-york/home-fire-preparedness-campaign>.

Amato Joins S.D. 36 Senate Race

Christian Amato, community advocate, organizer and Democratic strategist, has formally declared his bid for the 36th senatorial seat, currently held by Bronx and Westchester senator, Alessandra Biaggi, who herself is running for Congress in NY-5. Amato is a Bronx Community Board 11 member and a member of both the Liberty Democratic Club and the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association. According to his campaign site, he has worked across The Bronx and Westchester to build awareness for Democratic candidates and causes, fighting for fair and equitable representation, elevating women, people of color, and the LG-BTQ+ community into leadership positions.

He previously worked as deputy chief of staff and district director for Biaggi.



Photo by David Greene

POLICE SAY A 36-year-old woman was punched in the face inside 371 East 204th Street, at Webster Avenue, in Norwood and later treated at North Central Bronx Hospital on Sunday, February 27, 2022.

year, and rape was up by 250 percent. In the 46th precinct, felony assault was up 58.7 percent compared to February 2021 and rape rates remained stable. In the 47th precinct, felony assault rates were down 8.2 percent compared to February 2021, and rape was also down by 25 percent.

Meanwhile, the NYPD said the person sought in connection to the murder of a 26-year-old woman and a 6-year-old girl in the Eastchester section of The Bronx, has been found deceased. On Saturday, March 5, at approximately 11.56 p.m., police responded to a call for a wellness check at a building on Monticello Avenue in Eastchester, located in the 47th precinct. Upon arrival, police observed the 26-year-old woman and the 6-year-old girl, both with stab wounds about their bodies and both unconscious and unresponsive.

EMS responded and pronounced both deceased at the scene. The identities of the deceased had been pending proper family notification. Police later confirmed on Sunday, March 6, that the deceased victims had been identified as Gabrielle Muniz, 26, of Monticello Avenue in The Bronx, and Rozara Estevez, 6, also of Monticello Avenue in The Bronx.

On Monday, March 7, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson released a statement, saying she was deeply saddened and disturbed by news of the incident. "According to the NYC Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee's 2021 Annual report, The Bronx had the highest number of Domestic Violence homicides of any borough in the city," she said. "These statistics are heartbreaking and unacceptable."

Gibson continued, "During my time in the City Council, and as the former co-chair of the women's caucus, we worked with organizations and providers that were on the ground providing support to survivors of Domestic and Gender Based Violence. Last month, our office reinstated our Domestic and Gender Based Violence Advisory Council and we will be working with providers from throughout the city to identify areas in which we can collaborate to find solutions to this problem in our borough."

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic or gender-based violence, help is available. Call 311 to be connected to the nearest NYC Family Justice Center. Find resources and support in NYC by searching the City's hope directory at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/nycchope/site/page/home>.

Anyone with information regarding any of the reported 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. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

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A multi-cultural, multi-generational evangelistic church with five services every Sunday, and various ministry programs and activities throughout the week. Several churches have been planted in the Bronx from Van Nest, including the African Assemblies of God Fellowship, which is now a network of African AG churches throughout the USA.

Rev. David Hernquist, Pastor
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Diaz Offers Alternative to “Go Along to Get Along” Politicians

By JULIAN NAZAR

On a brisk Thursday afternoon, George Diaz Jr. descends the steps of Norwood's 205th Street subway station, located at East 205th Street and Perry Avenue. After swiping his metro card, Diaz shares what changes he would like to see in the station. “We need an elevator,” he said. “Feasibly, it is probably better to make the elevator by this entrance because when you step out, you see Whalen Playground, a City park. It should be easier for the MTA [a State-run agency] to work with the City,” he said.

In the eyes of Diaz, the station symbolizes a larger issue. “It represents neglect,” Diaz said. “It represents the neglect of our government and the people who are in office, and have been in office a long time. How often do they go to these stations? When they do go to a station, it is very strategic.” Meanwhile, Diaz said he has ridden the D line train since he was in high school.

Now, at 40, he is vying for State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz's 81st district seat, again, having previously challenged Dinowitz, unsuccessfully, in the 2020 Democratic Party, when he won 36.2 percent of the vote. Dinowitz, meanwhile, has served as assemblyman in A.D. 81 since 1994. The district comprises Riverdale, Kingsbridge, Van Cortlandt Village, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Norwood, Woodlawn, and Wakefield.

“I am running because, after nearly 30 years of the same representation, we can do better,” Diaz said. “I am the one that actually sees the issues that are going on. I am someone that has lived in the district most of my life. I feel that a lot of elected officials, the incumbent in particular, don't see these issues that are really affecting the community.”

He also believes that the current crop of elected officials have failed to stand up on big issues. “You don't call out the [Assembly] Speaker for not bringing things to a vote,” Diaz said. “How are you going to continue to tell us you fight for these issues if you can't call truth to power? And it's the ‘go along to get along’ policies that we have been stuck with, decades. If you say you are about the people, be about the people!”

Diaz has lived in Norwood since he was 12 years old. Previously, he resided in Wakefield and Kingsbridge. “I know people in different neighborhoods,” Diaz said. “I spend time in every neighborhood. I feel comfortable there.”

He is not the only candidate who will be challenging Dinowitz in the 2022 Democratic primary. Jessica Altagracia Woolford, a former New York City press secretary for U.S. Sen. Kristen Gillibrand, announced in November that she would be running also. What separates Diaz from the other candidates?

“I have done the work in the commu-

nity long before I decided to run,” Diaz said. “My experiences are also different because I know what it's like to really struggle. There was a time when my mother and I had to go to food pantries to get the things we needed so we could continue to eat while I looked for a job.”

His work in the community started while he was attending Saint Raymond High School in Parkchester. At that time, he volunteered with God's Love We Deliver, an organization that delivers meals to people who are physically unable to prepare meals for themselves. After graduating from high school and later, the City College of New York with a degree in media communication arts, he worked at the office of former New York City council member, [Gabriel] Oliver Koppell, for five years. Koppell also served in the State Assembly and as New York attorney general. Diaz started out as a volunteer in December 2008.

During this period, he focused on issues surrounding transportation, paratransit and the police. According to his personal website, he helped dozens of people continue to receive their Access-A-Ride Paratransit Service. Diaz said this was despite efforts by the City to cut them off. He said he also worked behind the scenes to help get the Living Wage Bill passed, as well as create a space for the NYPD and local young people to engage in dialogue. He is currently a board member of community groups like the Bronx chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Concerned Citizens for Change, Northwest Bronx Indivisible, and Bronx Progressives.

Diaz is confident that this time around, the outcome of the race will be different. “I have money this time,” Diaz said. “My name and face are also more recognizable now. Additionally, I have had more time to work on my ideas. I have ironed them out better.”

He feels that, unlike his opponents, he has a strong grasp of the issues that matter to people in the district. “At the same time, people are more aware of safety and quality-of-life issues. This benefits me because I am the one who talks about the issues of quality of life.” Specifically, he argues that the police need to crack down on fireworks and noise complaints.

In fact, the number one issue of his campaign is quality of life and public safety. “Everything from making it safer to [for] all of us dealing with COVID and the long-term aftermath, along with the community feeling safer because crime is up,” Diaz said. “People don't feel safe on the streets. They really don't feel safe on the subways. I feel less safe on the subway than I have ever felt.”

To address the issue of subway safety, he hopes to get on the State standing committee on corporations, authorities, and



Courtesy of Julian Nazar.

GEORGE DIAZ STANDS in front of the Church of Saint Brendan. He is an alum of St. Brendan School.

commissions. Once on the committee, he said he would investigate the MTA's priorities. “I am going to be asking for reports that list every station, and a breakdown as to the stations that are in most need of repairs.....actually having MTA give us their priorities and then work it from there, looking and saying, ‘You have this as your number six priority, but I am seeing an issue that is a bigger priority.’”

He also plans to add elevators to stations that don't have them already and making stations more wheelchair accessible. His goal is to make the subway safer and more functional. “You want people to take the subways to go to work, but if it is a big inconvenience because their stations are closed, you are affecting their ability to get to work and do their jobs,” Diaz said. “You need to be dedicated to the long-term, not just short-term fixes.”

The second big issue of his campaign is reforming the education system. “You are in an overcrowded school,” Diaz said. “Teachers are overworked or overstressed. The system works against the students and the teachers - everything from the tests to how the schools are funded.”

He also highlights the cost of going to college. “Kids are in a situation like me,” Diaz said. “If I wasn't working, I wouldn't be able to go to school. And that also affects you. If you have to work five days a week to take five classes, you are losing a lot of time that you could have dedicated to your studies and your assignments.” To fund his college education, Diaz said he worked full-time in a hotel.

To make college more affordable, Diaz supports the “New Deal for CUNY,” which would make CUNY colleges tuition-free. He also says that he would introduce a new deal for SUNY. “It would give opportunities to go to a State college for free if you are a New York State resident,” Diaz

said.

Regarding funding issues with schools, Diaz said he would introduce a bill that correlates funding to the schools' student population. “We do that with the census in deciding how much money goes into communities,” Diaz said. “We have to siphon the funding so that it's more evenly distributed. It should be based on the number of students at a school, as supposed to the income of their parents.”

The third key issue of his campaign is housing reform. “The issue that I am talking about that neither of my opponents [is] talking about is abusive landlords, how they are able to harass and intimidate tenants to get them to either comply or move,” Diaz said. “They refuse to make repairs.”

Housing reform is personal for Diaz. A woman he knows had an abusive landlord. “Her landlord wouldn't make repairs and would basically try to get her to shut up,” he said. “She was hospitalized due to the black mold and rodents in her building and apartment. She had a very serious health issue.”

Diaz considers what the landlords are doing to be a form of domestic violence. “Domestic violence doesn't occur suddenly,” Diaz said. “It isn't suddenly you get struck; it builds that way. Being ignored or being belittled, being verbally abused to eventually being intimidated, then it eventually leads to that point,” he added.

To solve this problem, Diaz wants to change the criminal code to make landlords criminally liable for their actions. “When landlords are arrested and they have a little perp walk on TV, that's going to start changing minds,” Diaz said. “That's going to change behavior.”

Diaz thinks, based on the conversations he has had as well as things he has observed on Facebook, that political dynamics in the district are in his favor. “The shift is that the district is becoming even more progressive,” he said.

He also credits the general anti-establishment wave. “It is continuing as people realize that this person has been there for a long time, and they are having trouble coming up with things that this person did that were good,” Diaz said. “I don't just say that about the incumbent I am facing. That is a sentiment for a good number of elected officials as well.”

In conclusion, Diaz wants voters to know, regardless of their political leanings, that he will always be available. “They should know that were I to have the honor of winning this election and serving, I will be the candidate you see out in the street and have conversations with,” Diaz said. “Even if we disagree with a particular issue, I will always try to be respectful and inclusive. I am the one that is willing to work with everyone for change.”

Bronx CB7 Frustrated with City's Forestry Unit

(continued from page 2)

about attending meetings... the way they follow up is really unacceptable." She then suggested connecting with Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, former Bronx parks commissioner and current City deputy parks commissioner, to help get Forestry more engaged with the community.

CB7 veterans chair, Chad Royer, agreed with Arce's points, and on the back of Stronczner's earlier acknowledgement of the work done on Bailey Avenue, he said trees there still needed some branches cut. "I find that very insulting," Royer said. "They will not even give us the time of day to express our opinions and thoughts about our complaints. A lot of us in the community don't know or understand what Forestry is. They don't understand how you have to have special permits to deal with trees over certain heights."

Royer suggested the board take a formal vote to demand a response from the Forestry unit. Stronczner then suggested that further to her recent meeting with the unit, Forestry be given some time to get back to the community board, and if nothing happened, to wait for the new Bronx Parks commissioner to be appointed and then write that person a letter to escalate the issues.

Stronczner said the Forestry representative mentioned that he had connected with local resident, Sirio Guerino, already about complaints he had submitted. Guerino, who was also at the CB7 meeting, said he had previously worked with Rodriguez-Rosa, but that since changing roles, she allegedly hadn't done anything to help with the complaints.

Bedford Park resident, Anthony Riveccio, agreed with Guerino about the lack of communication from Rodriguez-Rosa since changing positions. "A lot of us know Rosa," he said. "We know that Rosa comes from our section of The Bronx, but she's also had a lot of broken promises within the last year. So, you know, just the fact that we know her doesn't really ensure anything," he added. *Norwood News* has reached out to Rodriguez-Rosa for comment.

"This is just totally bogus, okay?" said Guerino, alleging that Forestry had already caught up with the most urgent work of removing dangerous trees two years earlier. "I've been always on them, constantly talking with them," he said. "They should have got to the trees that need to be removed, and they should be putting in new fresh trees for us. This is unacceptable," he said.

Guerino added that he is a licensed tree pruner with New York City and would be willing to go out and work on the trees himself. An attendee named Gwen said she also had a pruning certificate and would be willing to join him. *Norwood News* contacted NYC Parks department for comment on the complaints raised and the department is reviewing them.

The committee then moved on to talk about snow removal issues following the recent snowstorms. Daisy Perry said in Bedford Park, near Moshulu Parkway, off of Grand Concourse, there wasn't much shoveling on the first day after the recent storm, and that there was some shoveling the second day, but then the snow washed away.

Stronczner said she noticed the City did a good job



Photo by Síle Moloney

SOME TREE PITS along Perry Avenue in Norwood, seen here on February 10, 2022, have had stones placed on them or have been paved over with flag stones, making it difficult for them to survive. In other parts of the Bronx, merchants have filled certain tree pits with pebbles, which also hampers tree survival.

shoveling after the last snowstorm. Guerino said Moshulu Parkway North and South were cleared, but he found out workers couldn't clear east to west because their trucks were broken.

A meeting attendee named Tasha added that the track at Williamsbridge Oval had been covered with ice. She said she and some kids tried to break it up, but it didn't help much. Royer said some of the walking paths at Devoe Park had been shoveled, but the western part of the park had been ignored. He said the sidewalks around the park had also not been done well.

Later, Stronczner updated the Parks committee on a recent Moshulu Parkway Safety Improvement Project workshop that had been hosted by NYC Department of Transportation (DOT). She said most of the workshop focused on plans to make lane changes to enhance parkway safety, including adding left-turn lanes to some intersections.

She mentioned there was also a dirt pathway between Bainbridge Avenue and Van Cortlandt Avenue that pedestrians use to cut across the parkway, and that during the workshop, attendees discussed adding a light there to make pedestrian-crossing safer.

Stronczner then spoke about a bike path on the north side of the parkway that needed work. She said she didn't hear anything about funding for the project during the workshop, but that according to DOT, funding for the work would indeed be covered by that department. It is anticipated that the department will present plans to CB7 in the spring and have the work done in the fall.

"There's no money at this point from DOT to touch any of the parklands or do anything with some of the items that really need to be done on the parkway," said Stronczner.

The meeting concluded with Royer asking about Parks staffing levels as the spring and summer seasons approach. Stronczner said if Parks received a funding increase from 0.5 percent to 1 percent of the City project, as promised by Mayor Eric Adams, additional staffing wouldn't be an issue. However, she said she was recently at a meeting where Adams did not confirm or deny the budget change.

Finally, it was confirmed that the annual Bronx Parks Speak-Up event, organized by the Bronx Coalition of Parks and Green Spaces, was scheduled to take place on Saturday, Feb. 26, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. and that this year's theme was, "Green Infrastructure: Building a Healthier Bronx."



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Norwood: Man Barricades Himself inside Apartment

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Several emergency vehicles were seen on Webster Avenue in the Norwood section of the Bronx on Sunday afternoon as officers were called to an apartment building to engage in dialogue with a man who had barricaded himself inside.

The incident was reported at around 10.45 a.m. on Sunday, March 6, at 3100 Webster Avenue at East 204th Street. When contacted for comment, an NYPD spokeswoman initially had no further information on the incident.

A source at the scene said the man was on the roof at one point and that an officer and a K9 unit had entered the building. He also said there was concern among residents along the block.

We asked the emergency services if mental health experts had been dispatched to the scene in addition to police. The FDNY responded, saying, “No, just fire and EMS dispatch information.” An NYPD Technical Assistance

Response Unit (TARU) had reportedly also been requested, according to one source at the scene.

At one point, NYPD, EMS and FDNY vehicles were seen parked outside the building and one of the side streets had been blocked off. By about 2.49 p.m., most emergency vehicles were no longer at the scene except for one ambulance.

We asked the emergency services for an update as to the welfare of the person impacted and how the incident had been resolved. FDNY/EMS informed us that one patient had refused medical attention, and that due to HIPAA rules, they were unable to provide any further information.

The NYPD later confirmed they had received a 911 call at 10.45. a.m. about a 35-year-old, emotionally disturbed man who had barricaded himself in at the location. Asked if it was inside his apartment, the police spokesperson said it was in *an* apartment. He added that there was nobody else involved in the incident.



Photo by John Norwood

POLICE SAID OFFICERS attempted to engage in dialogue with a man who had barricaded himself inside an apartment at 3100 Webster Avenue at East 204th Street in the Norwood section of The Bronx on Sunday morning, March 6, 2022.



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CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

**Woodlawn: Man Punches Woman in Face**

The NYPD is investigating an assault on a woman at Woodlawn subway station. It was reported to police that on Monday, Feb. 28, at 7.12 a.m., the victim, a 46-year-old woman, was walking down the stairs to the Woodlawn subway station when a man in front of her turned around and punched her in the face. He then fled the scene, on foot. The victim suffered pain, swelling, and a laceration to her lips. The woman later reported the incident and refused medical attention at that time. Police had identified a person of interest in relation to the incident but have since confirmed he is no longer being sought in connection with the assault and the investigation remains ongoing.

Man Arrested following Burglary at 52nd Precinct

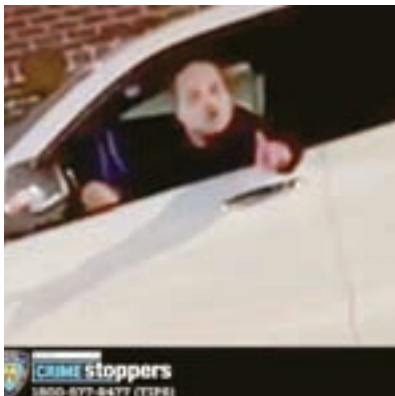
A 28-year-old man has been arrested following a burglary and criminal trespassing incident at the 52nd precinct station house in Norwood on

Wednesday, Feb. 23. The NYPD said police were alerted to the man entering a partially open, side window of the precinct building, located at 3016 Webster Avenue at approximately 10.29 p.m.

Police officials said officers inside the precinct observed the man as he gained entry and attempted to walk around the station house. He was subsequently apprehended. No injuries were incurred as a result of the incident. The man has been identified as Carlos Luciano, 28, of East 199th Street from the Bedford Park section of The Bronx. He was charged with burglary, criminal trespass, and criminal mischief. The 52nd precinct community council held its monthly meeting the following evening on Thursday, Feb. 24, and Deputy Inspector Jeremy Schaublin addressed the incident during the meeting.

Norwood News reported last month how a fire broke out at the precinct building on Friday, Jan. 28. We followed up with the FDNY to check if the cause of the fire is yet known. We did not receive an immediate re-

sponse. A person accused and arrested for a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

**Man Assaults Security Worker With Bottle**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photograph above who is sought in connection to an assault that occurred in Norwood. It was reported to police that on Saturday, Feb. 19, at approximately 2 a.m., in front of Mar & Tierra, a restaurant and bar lo-

cated at 3236 Bainbridge Avenue, a 30-year-old male victim, working as security for the business, was approached by another man who was exiting the location.

The man struck the victim with a glass bottle, causing a laceration to his right eye and face. The victim suffered bleeding and severe swelling, while the suspect fled the location, southbound, on Bainbridge Avenue in a white Jeep Grand Cherokee. EMS responded and treated the victim at the scene. The suspect is described as male, has a light complexion, and is known as "Bori". He was last seen wearing a black sweater, blue jeans, and a black baseball hat.

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.

Feces Incident Reignites Bail Reform Debate

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A 37-year-old man has been arrested following an assault on a woman at East 241st Street subway station in Wakefield, police said. It was reported to police that on Monday, Feb. 21, at approximately 5.15 p.m., on the southbound platform of the East 241st Street subway station, an unidentified man approached a 43-year-old woman who was sitting on a platform bench and struck her in the face and in the back of the head with human feces. He then fled the location in an unknown direction. A video of the incident was later circulated by police and a photo of the assailant is attached.

Police later confirmed that Frank Abrokwa, 37, of East 160th Street in the Woodstock section of The Bronx, was arrested in connection with the incident, and charged with forcible touching, menacing, and disorderly conduct and harassment.

The *NY Daily News* later reported that the suspect was released without bail Tuesday night, March 1, for the Wakefield incident after a Bronx Criminal Court judge said she

didn't have evidence at the time of his arraignment of the defendant's alleged, three other recent arrests.

The publication reported that following Abrokwa's release without bail, Brooklyn NYPD detectives immediately placed him in custody and charged him with harassment and menacing, both hate crimes, following a report of a 2021 attack by Abrokwa in Brooklyn on a Jewish man, where he allegedly spat and cursed at the victim because he was Jewish.

On Thursday, March 3, Mayor Eric Adams released a statement in connection with the case, after Abrokwa was reportedly released from custody once again. "This individual should not be out on the streets of New York and his release shows the scope of changes that we need to make in order to keep New Yorkers safe," Adams said. "It is the result of a failed mental health system, a failed housing and support system, and failing criminal justice laws that allow someone with a history of violence who poses a clear threat to public safety to just walk out of court."

The mayor continued, "We can't



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

FRANK ABROKWA, 37, of 760 East 160th Street of the Woodstock section of The Bronx, was arrested in connection with the incident, and charged with forcible touching, menacing, and disorderly conduct and harassment.

allow this horrific situation to be the status quo and must make changes to our laws to both prevent these sorts of

attacks, through intervention and support, and when they happen, to subsequently keep people who are clearly a danger to others off the street."

MTA chair and CEO, Janno Lieber, also issued a statement on the release of "the serial transit attack suspect," saying, "I'm not a criminal justice expert but I don't understand how someone who commits this kind of assault, which was violent, horribly victimizing a transit rider, can just walk free even when he has four other open cases against him, including two other transit assaults and a hate crime charge." He added, "It defies common sense."

When contacted for comment about Abrokwa's Bronx arraignment following the feces incident, a representative from the Office of the Bronx District Attorney (DA) said the case was not a bail reform issue. The representative said the bail reform law was tweaked last July to allow the prosecution to ask for bail in bail ineligible cases, when the defendant is a recidivist which, they said, Abrokwa is.

"We believed bail was appropriate
(continued on page 17)



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Letters To The Editor

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

Bronx Going Back to the 1970s!

I just read, in horror, of the stabbing of a female at 3349 Webster Avenue and her assailant is on the loose. I also just finished watching the 6 p.m. news and the NYPD crime reports show all major categories are up double digits. People, wake up! This is all due to the Democrats in office, and their codding of criminals. Please hold your nose and vote for any Republican and/or Conservative candidates running for office. For those new to The Bronx, The Bronx was famous in the 1970s when the term, "The Bronx is burning" went all around the world. We led the City in crime back then, and we are doing that now! Our governor, Kathy Hochul, let me down, big time, as I was so pleased to see a female in the office. Now, she is refusing to address bail reform which is the cause of all these crimes. We have to vote her out before the election by having a recall now!

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Editor's Note: The Bronx District Attorney's office has said bail reform laws were tweaked in July 2021, to allow prosecutors to ask for bail in bail ineligible cases, in the case of repeat offenders.

Redirecting Moral Energy to More Acceptance

In the Feb 24-Mar 9 issue of the *Norwood News*, Richard Marias wrote about how he encouraged a lesbian, and the parent of a gay man, to attend a meeting of Courage, a Roman Catholic ministry which serves those who have same-sex attractions. He wrote about this meeting as "life-changing" and encouraged readers to "ask for help" if they're unsure about something. I would like to encourage readers to be discerning about the type of help which others offer because that help, or advice might not be the type of help they are looking for.

According to the Courage International website, which Mr. Marias linked to, one of the goals of the organization is "to foster a spirit of fellowship...and ensure that no one will have to face the problems of homosexuality alone." It also says that it exists to help the family and friends of people who experience same-sex attraction to "reach out with truth" and "to witness to their own loved ones...that fulfillment is to be found in Jesus Christ."

While I realize that Catholic doctrine forbids same-sex sexual activity or marriages, I also want to highlight that homosexuality is not actually a "problem." One's sexual orientation, whether towards the same-sex, the opposite-sex, or both is not a problem which one or one's family has to deal with, but rather one, neutral aspect of one's identity. If you are straight and I am gay, it does not matter. There's no evidence which shows that one's sexual

orientation is a problem that needs to be solved, or that there's some truth which the parents of a gay person need to confront their child with.

Mr. Marias wrote that he enjoys and appreciates it when people seek him out for moral advice. I can imagine that it makes him feel good to be a kind of expert on moral issues, and I can imagine that the "perfect timing" of having two people ask him for advice about homosexuality, and that it just so happened that there was a local meeting of Courage taking place, might have seemed like divine serendipity to him.

For many religious people, living a moral life is equated with practicing a certain kind of sexual morality, and if one is able to resist sexual temptations, like homosexuality, then one is living a moral life. I wish that people who held this point of view would redirect that moral energy towards accepting people the way that they are, regardless of whether they're gay, straight, bisexual, single, or coupled. Instead of judging which sex a person is attracted to, I think it would be preferable to focus on the quality of the person's romantic relationships - is it marked by love, kindness, loyalty, forgiveness, respect, trust, empathy, and understanding? I think that we should judge romantic relationships on that criteria, not on what sex the other person in the couple is.

Finally, since Mr. Marias provided a link to the Courage website, I'd like to include a link to PFLAG NYC (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) whose mission is to create a better future for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youths and adults: <https://www.pflagnyc.org>.

**Mark Cutolo
Kingsbridge Heights**

Ukraine Swiss Cheese Editor's Note

I appreciate editor, Sile Moloney's courage in printing my letter about Ukraine [Norwood News Feb 24-March 9 edition]. Unfortunately, she felt it necessary to attach an editor's note that had as many holes in it as swiss cheese.

Victor Yanukovych fled to Russia after his ouster and still lives there. Any trial for treason in Ukraine against him was conducted by the traitors who overthrew his government. So, a coup is a "pro-Western revolution" when it's supported by the United States? As for charges of corruption against Yanukovych, if that could justify a coup, a lot of U.S. presidents would have been overthrown.

As for police brutality, this would be a long letter if I started citing all such instances in the U.S. As for what Moloney claims the mainstream media has reported, I don't recall seeing that in any of the articles about Ukraine I have read in The Daily News. She dismisses Michel Chossudovsky as a conspiracy theorist after confirming the truth of what he wrote. Human rights abuses by Russia do not justify the coup. There are certainly human rights abuses in our country.

Finally, the U.N. condemning the Honduras coup

does not change the fact that the U.S. supported the new government and showed no desire to return Manuel Zelaya to the presidency. In fact, that coup occurred right after President Barack Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, left that country, after a visit.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Editor's Note: The U.S. State Department issued a press release dated Sept. 21, 2009, three months after the 2009 Honduras coup, on former Honduran President Manuel Zelaya's return to the country. In it, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said it was imperative for Zelaya and then Honduran President Roberto Micheletti to begin dialogue. "Certainly, the United States supports the San Jose Accords," Clinton said. The San Jose Accords called for Zelaya's return to power, the creation of a unity government and early elections. Clinton added, "It's also imperative that the return of President Zelaya does not lead to any conflict or violence, but instead that everyone act in a peaceful way to try to find some common ground."

All our readers are free to share their opinions in the Letters to the Editor section, and we welcome them! The purpose of the editor's note is not to engage in a debate on geopolitical affairs or to refute a letter writer's opinion on foreign or domestic policy or any other matter. We do, however, have a responsibility, within a limited amount of space and time, to fact-check statements and provide some level of context and balance to what can be complicated topics. The note provided in our last edition comprised just that: statements of fact, not opinion. The pdf version of last week's edition can be read here:

https://www.norwoodnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NWN_2022_02_24-3.pdf.

Andrew & Chris Cuomo Should Open a Grocery Store

Former New York State governor, Andrew Cuomo, has allegedly begun using part of his left over million-dollar reelection fund to pay for commercials. The message says he has been exonerated from charges that he sexually harassed a number of women. Both Andrew and his brother, Chris, might be better off listening to Kenny Rodgers song, "The Gambler" when he sings, "You've got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away..." It is wishful thinking on the part of Andrew Cuomo that he can resume his political career with a simple media blitz. Both Andrew and Chris should look for honest work. Why not follow in the footsteps of their grandparents who opened a family grocery store in Queens and do the same? Chris could also open a gym upstairs, as he loves working out. Andrew and Chris Cuomo have a long history in selling baloney. This makes them perfectly suited for this new occupation!

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Two Arrested as Man Stabbed in Perry Ave Apartment

By SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

Police confirm that two people have been arrested following the fatal stabbing of a man inside a Perry Avenue apartment in the Norwood section of The Bronx. Police officials said officers responded to a 911 call regarding an assault inside an apartment at 3135 Perry Avenue in Norwood, located in the 52nd precinct, on Friday, March 4, at approximately 3.09 a.m. Upon arrival, they observed a 29-year-old man, unconscious and unresponsive, with stab wounds to the neck and chest.

EMS responded to the location and pronounced the victim deceased at the scene. Two individuals, who were also inside the apartment, a 21-year-old man and a 20-year-old woman, were taken into custody at the scene, as the investigation continued. The deceased was later identified by police as Jonathan Hutcherson, 29, of 3135 Perry Avenue.

On Saturday, March 5, pursuant to an active investigation, police said Meanna M. Torigoe, a 20-year-old woman, of 3135 Perry Avenue, was arrested on March 4, at 9.25 p.m. and charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon.



Photo by Síle Moloney

A 29-YEAR-OLD MAN has died following a stabbing at 3135 Perry Avenue in Norwood on Friday, March 4, 2022

They said John Delgado, 21, also of 3135 Perry Avenue, was also arrested and charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon at the same time and date.

Norwood News spoke to one man who was inside Perry Avenue building on Saturday, March 5, who told us, in relation to the incident, “I woke up in

the middle of the night and the hall was flooded with cops.” He added, “I don’t know why the media is so interested in this case; people kill people all the time. I don’t understand, it’s going on two days. They lived together for years, I never heard anything.”

Later, we also spoke to a local worker at an East 204th Street store who

said, “A customer told me it [the murder] was about the music; it was too loud, and he went to tell the people to turn down the music and he went back into his room, and he came out and knocked on the door again. He said, ‘Hey, what’s going on here?’ Then, they stabbed him. Yeah. Yes, the guy’s girlfriend? She was involved too, and they both got arrested because of loud music.”

The employee also alleged that two officials in white crime scene garb who were seen at the crime scene, later stripped down to reveal army fatigues. “When they took off the white thing, they were [wearing] military camouflage, both of them,” he said. “They had the military issue clothes on.” *Norwood News* contacted the NYPD to ask if the military were or are involved in the investigation. We did not receive an immediate response.

A former Norwood resident, Victor Dong, who now resides in Van Cortlandt Park and who was walking down Perry Avenue on Saturday, said of the case, “Criminals are back on the street before they finish the paperwork. You have all the mental, crazy people

(continued on page 22)

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Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

Join Disability Rights New York and panelists on Tuesday, March 22, at 4 p.m. as they discuss the importance of local elections to the LGBTQ+ community, for an online event entitled, **"Change Begins at Home: Intersectionality of Disability, Voting, & LGBTQ+ Community."** Bring your experiences and questions to share. Panelists include Tiffany Cabán, NYC Councilmember (22nd Council District), Marc Fliedner, PAIMI & PAIR Program Director at Disability Rights New York, Émilie Decaudin, Queens District Leader. Closed Captioning provided. ASL available, upon request. Register at <https://bit.ly/3CuRmS8>.

MUSIC

TAPCO School of the Arts presents, **"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"** musical, based on the book by Rachel Sheinkin, conceived by Rebecca Feldman, with music and lyrics by William Finn. The show takes

place on Friday, March 11, at 6 p.m. and Saturday, March 12, at 1 p.m. at TAPCO, 2190 Folin Street in Fordham Heights.

STEPHANIE MILLS and HOWARD HEWETT will perform at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, The Bronx, New York 10468, on Saturday, April 2 at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$100, \$85, \$75, \$65, \$50. Stephanie Mills has one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music! She is a legendary GRAMMY® and American Music Award-winning recording artist with five, best-selling albums and ten Billboard #1 singles. Joining her is Howard Hewett, formerly of Shalamar, singing his hits such as, "I'm for Real," "Show Me," "For the Lover in You". Visit www.LehmanCenter.org for more details.

DANCE

Experience the next generation of **Irish Dance** at Lehman Center for

the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, The Bronx, New York 10468, on Sunday, March 13, at 4 p.m. **James Devine** is the record-holder for the fastest feet in the world with an astonishing 38 taps in one second. **David Geaney** has five world championship titles to his name. Together, their new show, **Velocity**, has been a well-loved performance for all ages. Visit www.LehmanCenter.org for more details.

Each Monday, from Jan. 3 to March 31, from 6 p.m. to 6.45 p.m., **Ballet for Kids** classes take place at Norwood's Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. More information is available at: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2022/01/31/ballet>.

ART

Gallery 505, located at 505 W 236th St Bronx, NY 10463, has opened its first exhibition of the year. The gallery is pleased to be sharing the work of Bronx artist, Doris Cordero. The event is free. Go to KRVCCDC.org/events for more information. The gallery is open to view the exhibit live, by appointment. Email LindaKRVCC@gmail.com to arrange a viewing.

MOVEMENT

NYC Parks has announced that registration is now open from March 7 to March 21, 2022, for **Summer Day Camp** which runs from July 6 to Aug. 19, 2022. The camp is an exciting

chance for children ages 6 to 13 to have a fun-filled summer! Campers engage in sports, fitness, and outdoor adventures while taking part in many of New York City's rich cultural and educational opportunities. Regular Day Camp is Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and costs \$500 per child for seven weeks. Extended Day Camp is from Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and costs \$575 per child for seven weeks. Register for the lottery online at: <https://on.nyc.gov/3IUky7h>.

Bronx Buccaneers football club meet on Saturdays in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood from 11 a.m. to 1p.m. The session consists of a "Bootcamp" comprising strength, cardio and endurance training and the group also uses weights, bands and other equipment. The sessions are in preparation for the team's upcoming Tackle football program which begins March 19 and every Saturday thereafter from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., where kids are taught the fundamentals of football in a safe, fun atmosphere. Understanding there is more to football, the Buccaneers strive to develop the students/athletes, and the hope is that the players will use the program not only as a stepping stone to advance to upper level sports in High School and college, but also as a means to engage in a positive behavior and as a healthy distraction from idleness which the group says can lead to poor decisions. The Buccaneers accept kids from any community, boys or girls, ages 6 to 14. Contact Tasha Andrews at (917) 662-3632 for further information.



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Feces Incident Reignites Bail Reform Debate

(continued from page 12)

because of the horrendous nature of this case, and because of Mr. Abrokwa's open assault cases in Manhattan and open petty larceny case in The Bronx," the representative said. "We requested \$5K cash/\$15K insurance bond/\$15K partially secured bond." The representative said the Bronx D.A.'s office submitted affidavits/complaints [about the defendant] from open Manhattan cases, which they said were statements from a police officer who had been informed of the cases by victims named in the complaints. However, they were not statements coming directly from the victims. As a result, the Bronx Criminal Court judge in question, Judge Wanda Licitra, considered them hearsay. The Bronx D.A.'s office said their position had been that it does not matter whether the affidavits contained hearsay or not. The law mentions "reasonable cause" as the legal standard, and they said the filing of an affidavit is reasonable cause to believe that a crime occurred. (An affidavit is a written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation, for use as evidence in court.)

The Bronx D.A.'s office added that

Licitra required the prosecution to provide fully converted affidavits, along with supporting depositions and video [of the prior complaints] in order for her to set bail. (A deposition involves the taking of sworn, out-of-court, oral testimony of a witness that may be reduced to a written transcript for later use in court.) However, the Bronx D.A.'s office maintains that this is not true. "We gave her enough information to support our request for bail," the representative said. "The defendant was ROR, released on his own recognizance [without bail]."

The representative added that supervised release was denied "as well" since the defendant had an open I-Card for the hate crime case in Brooklyn. Abrokwa was arrested and taken to Brooklyn shortly thereafter. An open I-Card is an online document created by an NYPD detective that notifies patrol officers that a person is wanted.

Norwood News reached out to Licitra at Bronx Criminal Court for comment on the point about the legal standard. Lucien Chalfen, a spokesperson for The Office of Court Administration for the Unified Court System, responded, saying, "The Judge heard

extensive arguments from both the prosecution and defense regarding bail. Ultimately, in her determination, the prosecution did not meet its burden. Should the defendant not meet the conditions of his release, I am sure the issue of bail will be revisited."

On March 4, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) chair and CEO, Janno Lieber, visited Wakefield's 241st Street subway station to meet riders and demonstrate what was described as the agency's continued commitment to ensure everyone's safety.

"My focus is on the woman and the riders and how they are feeling," said Lieber. "This particular story is just horrific and there's no other way to describe it. I'm not here to give an opinion as a criminal justice expert or to write laws, I'm here to speak out on behalf of our riders and let everyone know what we

at the MTA feel." While meeting with commuters and discussing their experiences and concerns using the transit system, Lieber updated them on the MTA's efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone who uses the system.

A person accused and arrested for a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

KEEP THE LOST ART OF LETTER WRITING ALIVE!

WRITE TO US

Síle Moloney
Editor
Norwood News
3400 Reservoir Oval East
Bronx, NY 10467

OR

EMAIL US

Síle Moloney
Editor
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Letters should be 400 words max, and include the author's name. Anonymous letters will not be published, but names will be withheld upon reasonable request.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

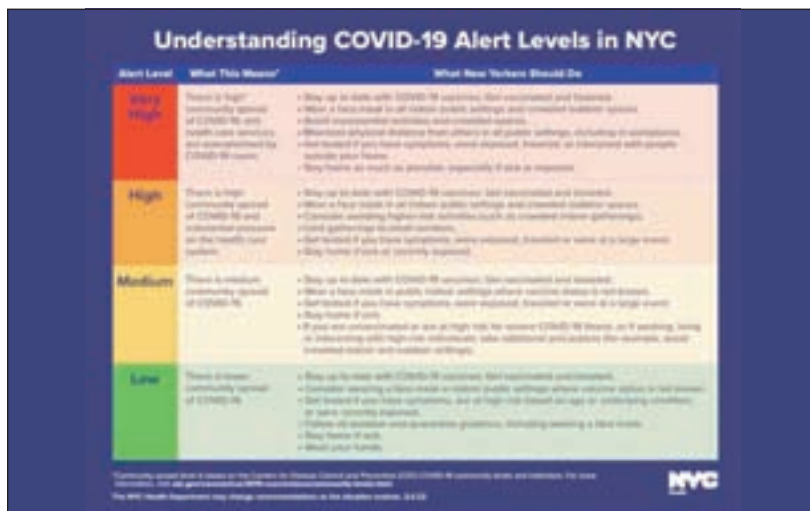


Image courtesy of New York City Department of Health

A NEW COVID-19 alert system has been implemented across New York City.

COVID-19 Updates

Effective February 10, the statewide indoor business mask or vaccine requirement was lifted, and is optional for businesses, local governments, and counties to enforce. Masks are still required on public transport.

Effective March 7, indoor venues, including restaurants, fitness facilities, and entertainment spaces will no longer be required to check for proof of vaccination

before customers enter. Businesses previously covered by Key to NYC rules will still have the flexibility to require proof of vaccination or masking indoors if they choose.

Effective March 7, masks will no longer be required on public school grounds for kindergarten to 12th grade students. While these public-school children will be able to remove their masks, if they so choose, schools will continue to main-

tain strict COVID-19 protocols, including increased ventilation, a daily screener to ensure those with symptoms do not come to school, and test kit distribution. Masks will continue to be required for all settings with children under 5 years of age (where none of the population is yet eligible for the vaccine), including programs contracted by the New York City Department of Education with 3- and 4-year-old children as well as 3k and 4K classrooms in district schools.

All other COVID-19 mandates will remain in effect. Under the rules, employees will still be required to be vaccinated unless they have received a reasonable accommodation from their employer.

State Health officials said a COVID-19 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.

A new COVID-19 alert system has been implemented across New York City, as per the attached chart.

Gas-related Work Ongoing in Norwood

Gas pipe replacement work is underway by a contracted entity of ConEd at

the junction of Reservoir Place and Reservoir Oval West in Norwood. The foreman confirmed low pressure [piping] is being replaced with high pressure [piping] and the street area will be opened up again each day at 4 p.m., and the works may continue to the Gun Hill Road area. Norwood News reached out to ConEd for more information about the extent of the works, including whether new meter installations would also be required in the affected nearby housing.

Jamie McShane, a spokesperson for ConEd, responded, saying, "This work is a part of our gas main replacement work in Norwood. Through our MRP [Construction LLC], we replace leak-prone pipe with more resilient materials, further improving system safety. The estimated time of completion for this project is May 15, 2022." He did not provide the geographical scope. We have asked for more information and will share this upon receipt.

ConEd Assistance Programs: visit www.conEd.com/PaymentPlans to view their payment program and other types of assistance.

Apply for help paying your bill: the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps eligible families. Contact the HEAP Information Line at (800) 692.0557 with questions about the program, or (212) 331.3126 for help from an operator.



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Public and Community Meetings

The 52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meeting is usually held on the **third Thursday of each month, either via Zoom or 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 March. 22 at 6.30 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting ID is 859 4776 2187. Contact 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 March. 2. For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

CORRECTIONS

In the Feb 24-March 9 edition of the *Norwood News*, on page 23, in the article entitled, New Homeless Shelter for University Heights, there was an incorrect reference to the shelter being located about 100 feet from Lehman College. In fact, the location at 2287 University Avenue is closer to Bronx Community College. In the same story, there was a reference to 1,800 stabilization beds and safe haven shelters being available in New York City. The latest figure is actually 3,000 specialized beds (such as Save Havens and stabilization beds). We apologize for these errors.

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2nd Annual MBK Event Celebrates Young Kings in The Bronx

By JULIAN NAZAR

One hundred and fifty Bronx-area high school students filed into Monroe College's Mintz auditorium in Fordham Manor on Wednesday, Feb. 9, for the second annual Bronx event, celebrating the nonprofit, My Brother's Keeper Alliance (MBK).

As "The Champion" played on a loop before the event got underway, on top of each table were small water bottles, snack bars, yellow Monroe College folders, and framed inspirational quotes from notable figures like basketball legend, Michael Jordan, and rapper, songwriter and record producer, Kendrick Lamar. Four TV monitors projected various PowerPoint presentations during the event.

Launched in February 2014 by former U.S. President Barack Obama, the MBK Alliance is an initiative that was created to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color, to ensure all youth could

reach their full potential. An extract from the organization's website reads, "Our mission is to inspire, empower, and connect people to change their world."

In welcoming the attendees, Marc Jerome, president of Monroe College, said his hope was that people would leave at the end of the day, saying, "This was an interesting event; I want more." He then kicked things off, asking one student from each Bronx high school to step up to the microphone and say which high school they attended.

Represented on the day were Bronxwood Preparatory Academy in Wakefield, Fordham High School for the Arts in the Bronx Park neighborhood, Harry S. Truman High School in Baychester, and Dreamyard Preparatory High School, Bronx Collegiate Academy, and Bronx High School of Business, all located in Claremont.

Students from Bronx Envision Academy and Fannie Lou



Photo courtesy of Trevor Felder

DR. LESTER YOUNG delivers opening remarks to 150 Bronx-area high school seniors at Monroe College in Fordham Manor on Feb. 9, 2022.

Hammer Freedom High School, based in the Crotona neighborhood, Bronx International High School in Morrisania, the High School for Teaching and the Professions, and The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music, both in Kingsbridge Heights, were also represented.

After a two-minute, motivational video by author, William King Hollis, Jerome introduced former Bronx assemblyman, Michael Blake, a visiting social justice and civics fellow. Blake was responsible for bringing the MBK initiative to New York, having previously worked for the

Obama administration.

In another short video shown of the former president speaking at Lehman College during his 2015 visit, Obama is seen giving Blake a shout out and joking that when a president introduces you, you have to stand up. "Mike grew up in difficult circumstances," Obama said. "Now, he's in public office, making sure that other young people like him have every chance in the world."

The MBK non-profit works with corporations to fund community programs for young Black and Latino men. "How well we do as a nation depends on whether our young people are succeeding," Obama said during his visit. "That's our future workforce." Addressing the minority youth specifically, he said, "You matter. You matter to us."

Presenting the biographies of the various speakers present at the Monroe College event, Blake said, "We want you to un-

(continued on next page)

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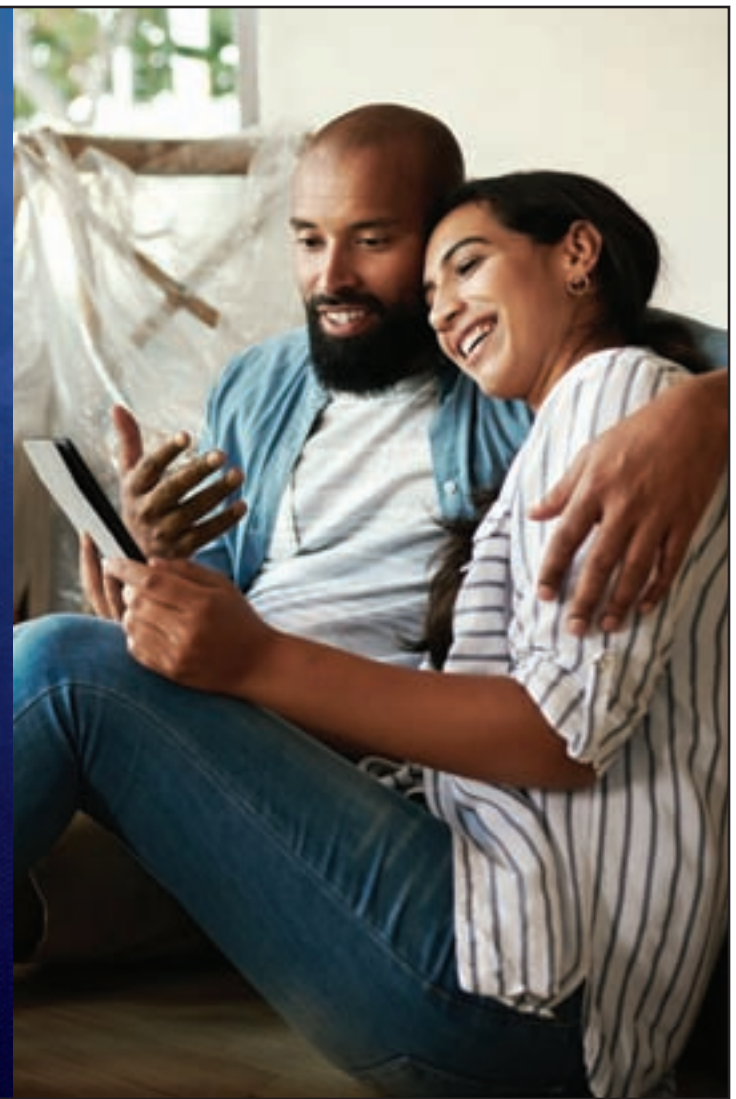
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derstand who the people are who have your back,” Blake said. “People, nationally, are rocking with you.” Later, sharing what the MBK event means to him, Blake said, “I am you. You are me. I came back home because you matter to me.”

For his part, Dr. Lester Young, chancellor of the State education department’s Board of Regents, discussed the importance of history. “History is about life,” Young said. “History is about who we are. History is about how we interact with each other,” he added, before reminding the students to be their brother’s keeper each and every day.

Explaining the origins of MBK, Young then said, “It started with the death of Trayvon Martin. MBK was designed to ensure we do something once and for all, so we don’t have any more Trayvon Martins.” Martin was a 17-year-old African American from Miami Gardens, Florida, who was fatally shot in Sanford, Florida in 2012 by George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old Hispanic American. Young wrapped up, saying, “My only hope is that when you see me, you see a little bit of yourself.”

Niiobli Armah, interim executive director for MBK, delivered his remarks over Zoom, saying New York was one of the best MBK sites and calling it “a light for people all over the country.” Armah spoke about the work MBK was doing. “MBK is really about providing support to people who want to see population level changes for boys and young men of color,” he said. “MBK represents a change in systems. The adults are doing the system change work, helping alleviate the barriers.”

He asked the students what was one thing, in their lives, they could do with excellence. He then shared a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr: “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, ‘Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.’”

Armah concluded, saying



Photo courtesy of Trevor Felder (Instagram handle: @Therapy-Vision)

A COUPLE OF Bronx-area high school seniors look inside one of the yellow folders containing additional information about the My Brother’s Keeper nonprofit, as well as worksheets for attendees to fill out, at the organization’s 2nd annual Bronx gathering at Monroe College on Feb. 9, 2022.

MBK was about making sure the community was doing enough work to tap into their excellence. “What are you going to do with excellence?” he asked. “I would love for you all to meditate on that question.”

Later, Blake returned, encouraging the students to think about the four Cs: Culture, Criminal Justice Reform, Celebration, and Community. He asked one person from every table to go to another school’s table. “We want you to understand that you need to rock with each other, even if you aren’t in the same high school,” he said.

Young returned to the stage to discuss culture, describing it as a way to build community and understand community wealth. “When you are walking down the street and someone looks at you, what do you think they see?” he asked. After a few students shared their answers, Young said he saw the next Barack Obama and the next Jay Z.

He went on to say that community started with a word that begins with a big “R” and that if students could guess the word, they would be on their way to building culture and community. The word was relationships. He then wrapped up, explaining there were three important words that were needed to build relationships: confidence, trust,

and respect.

Jerome returned to the stage for a discussion on criminal justice reform. Holding up a photo of [Trayvon] Martin, he asked the students who he was, and why he was important. Explaining that MBK started after Zimmerman was acquitted, he then played another video about the war on drugs, narrated by Jay Z, which explained how Black users of crack cocaine were and are arrested at much higher rates than White users of powdered cocaine.

He then asked the students what Jay Z’s main message was. After a couple of students answered, he showed a slide containing nine criminal justice trivia questions, including some related to bail reform. “The bottom line is too many people of color who were arrested for minor crimes, because bail was so high, were being locked up in jail,” Jerome said. “And so, bail reform lowered that and now people are not locked up so fast. Now, in New York, bail is much, much lower or there is no bail for many crimes.”

The topic of bail reform is a contentious one, particularly when it comes to *violent crime*. According to the Bronx District Attorney’s office, bail reform laws were tweaked in July 2021 to allow the prosecution to now

ask for bail in bail ineligible cases when the defendant is a repeat offender.

Blake, who cosponsored, among other bills, the Andrew Kearsse Act, a law to protect people in custody who may be in medical distress, following the death of Andrew Kearsse, later gave a brief presentation on gun violence. He wrapped up by sharing the acronym C.A.L.M. “Composed,” Blake said. “Aware. Listen. Make the call.”

Later, George Patterson, senior director at the New York City Department of Education (DOE), focused his talk on celebration. Asked how many people had heard of Carter G. Woodson, two students raised their hands. “This is one of the most historic Black men in history, and you guys have never heard of him,” Patterson said. “That has got to be the school’s fault.”

Referring to Black History Month, he said, “It gives every American the chance to recognize and celebrate Black accomplishments.” Saying it all started with Woodson, Patterson went on to explain that in 1926, Woodson launched Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month, because he wanted school goers to know about the accomplishments of Black people.

In 1976, former U.S. President Gerald Ford declared February Black History Month, “urging Americans to seize the opportunity to honor the too often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor, throughout our history.” Patterson concluded, “The rest is history,” adding, “What will your legacy be?”

The final speaker was Dr. Anael Alston, assistant commissioner of the State education department’s Office of Access, Equity and Community Engagement, who also spoke about community. Sharing a personal story about his oldest brother, Alston said, “Who you associate with matters.” He added, “The streets are real; it’s not a game.”

He then introduced the concept of the four Bs: Body, Being, Balanced, and Business. He asked the students if their lives were ideal, what they would want through the lens of the four Bs. Alston concluded, saying, “If you are willing [to] take on the battle, you got a shot at success.” He added, “Be prepared to fight for the life you want.”

Carlos Ortega, a 26-year-old man from The Bronx who graduated from Monroe College in 2016, was then invited to join Blake and Jerome on the stage and briefly shared his life story.

Jerome later announced that on Feb. 22 at 5 p.m., along with Blake and Joy Tolliver, Jerome would teach a free social justice course that would provide three college credits to go toward any college. He then played a final short video from NYC Schools Chancellor David C. Banks. The event concluded with remarks from Blake, saying, “We are proud of you. Look around! This is your MBK community.” In closing, he asked everyone in attendance to stand up and repeat the mantra, “I am a King!”

Jeremy Flete, a high school student at Fanny Lou Hamer Freedom High School, said the event was a really good experience. “They said some meaningful things that will stick with me,” he said. “It was worth my time definitely.”

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story*



Tips for Tasty Meals During National Nutrition Month

By MARY LOU POMPEI

March is National Nutrition Month. Every year, The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spearheads a nutrition education campaign, and this year's theme is "Celebrate A World of Flavors." The goal is to help us improve our nutrition and celebrate flavors and cuisines from both our own and other cultures. This National Nutrition Month, we encourage you to try new flavors and foods from around the world.

Many cultures have foods in common that can be prepared in different ways. For example, beans are a popular food in many cultures. Beans are high-fiber, low-fat sources of protein, and a great substitute for meat. They are also inexpensive and easy to cook.

Here are some examples of bean dishes found in different cultures:

- **Sweet beans** are popular in some Asian cultures. One example is red bean paste, usually made by cooking red kidney beans, or other beans, down to a paste and adding sugar or honey. This paste becomes the base of sweet desserts. Sweet bean paste covered with sesame seeds is very popular.

- **Pasta fagioli** is a traditional Italian dish that means "pasta and beans" and is enjoyed by many cultures. This dish combines cannellini beans with pasta, tomatoes, and garlic to create a delicious dish.
- **Southern-Style Blackeye Peas** is a traditional southern dish enjoyed by many cultures. Many versions of this dish incorporate vegetables and herbs to season the beans and can be made with or without meat. This dish goes nicely with cooked collard greens on the side.

Family mealtime is also a tradition in many cultures and a great opportunity to encourage healthy eating habits and family bonding. This National Nutrition Month, we also encourage you and your family to find time to eat meals together, whenever possible. Research from The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics shows that family mealtime has many benefits, including:

- creating a routine around healthy dinners;
- helping children establish healthy eating habits;
- teaching table manners;
- increasing the chances that everyone gets the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and;
- strengthening family bonds through sharing food and conversation.

Parents and guardians can create a fun environment around mealtimes to introduce children to different foods and flavors from their own and other cultures. To add more to the family experience, allow your children to choose nightly themes and help with

menus. Children can also help you prepare the meal or set the table.

Snacks can also be an important part of a healthy meal plan. When planning family activities, think about purchasing snacks from neighborhood stores that sell foods from different cultures. You will add a new taste to your palate and connect with others in your neighborhood at the same time.

Here are a few ideas for healthy snacks to try with your family:

Tzatziki is a creamy yogurt-based dressing, common in Southeast Europe and the Middle East, made with cucumbers, garlic, herbs, and spices. It can be eaten with raw veggies and whole-wheat crackers or used as a sauce with foods

Hummus is another dish common in Southeast Europe and the Middle East. Hummus is made from cooked, mashed chickpeas that are blended with garlic, and other herbs and spices. This can also be enjoyed with raw veggies or whole-wheat crackers

Guacamole, an avocado-based dish that originated in Mexico, is a popular dish used all over the world as a dip, condiment and ingredient in many salads and sandwiches

When you and your family celebrate National Nutrition Month, it can boost your health and open a whole new world of flavors for you.

Bon Appetit!

Mary Lou Pompei is associate wellness dietitian with the Office of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Health System.

Two Arrested as Man Stabbed in Perry Ave Apartment

(continued from page 15)

around, pushing people in the subway, mugging people in the street... you don't even see cops on the street here."

Dong continued, "I remember the days, I lived in this neighborhood 30 years ago when cops used to be walking the beat. Stores never had gates and all the crap now. No one wants to get involved now. We used to have the C-POP program around here a long time ago, like 30 years ago... [Citizens patrolled the streets and called police to report problems]. We used to walk the streets here."

He added, "They don't have that anymore. People don't get involved anymore. The way the economy is, people are going to rob and steal whatever... the hate crimes, knocking elderly people in the head... and there's no cops around here. I used to live here 30 years ago, and it was nothing like it is today. The demographics have changed. The police are in the squad cars, and they can't see what's going on." In reference to the recent reported burglary at the 52nd precinct, Dong said, "There ya go, even the cops aren't safe."

We also spoke to an elderly female resident of the building next door at 3139 Perry Avenue. When asked if she knew the couple who had been arrested in the context of the case, she said, "Sometimes I see them, but it's been a while I haven't seen them. I didn't hear anything, but half of the day I wasn't home."

Asked if there were just two people living in their apartment, she said, "There were three, so they killed the one: one woman and two men, yes, so the girl and one of the men killed the other....terrible." The resident said she didn't know the man who had been killed, adding, "I knew the girl a long time ago. Now, I don't even see her around here."

The resident added that the woman was Caucasian. "We didn't really talk," she said. "We'd say hello, you know, because we're neighbors, but that's about it."

Asked what she knew of the incident itself, the resident said, "We got out of the car, and we saw a bunch of people here and they were taking pictures, and so my husband says, 'Why are they taking pictures?' and I said, 'I don't know.'

I felt terrible.... terrible after I found out."

Another male resident of 3135 Perry Avenue also spoke to us about the incident, saying, "Honestly, I hate to say it, but I slept through the entire debacle and didn't hear about it until the next morning, so I really don't have any details on what happened." He said he just knew the people involved from entering and exiting the building. "I maybe had one conversation with the girl in question, ever, in the four years that I've been here, so there's not been a lot of interaction."

He added, "I keep to myself, honestly, just because of situations like this." Asked if all three people lived in the building in the four years that he's lived there, the resident said, "I didn't even know there was a third person.... I knew of the couple; I had no idea there was a third person in that apartment."

Asked if he thought the couple who were arrested were the original tenants of the apartment, he said, "I think so, because they're the only ones I'd really see." He then added, "It's so funny when people ask, 'Are you okay?' I'm

probably not as shaken up as I should be. I'd probably be more shaken up if someone broke in... it's nuts! I just hope they figure all this nonsense out, and I don't have to deal with murders in my building."

In the context of the confirmation that the two people had been taken into custody, the resident said, "Yes, exactly. So, I just hope whatever happens, it resolves itself and all of us can sleep easier knowing that things are getting resolved." Asked if the security video works in the building, he said, "That's a good question. People have asked me that before... but I couldn't tell you if they work."

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

Anyone with information regarding this incident 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 confidential.

Did Bomb Threat Reveal Dysfunction at P.S. 20?

(continued from page 1)

52nd precinct, at around 8.50 a.m., on Friday, March 4, and that the person advised there was a bomb on the premises. The NYPD spokesperson was unable to confirm on which extension or on which phone number the call had been placed but confirmed the school had been evacuated.

"All the students were taken to a nearby school, but everything is [now] clear," she said, referring to the school building having been checked by police. "At 11.36 [a.m.], everything was clear. Nothing was found at the school and the students are back in the school."

Police vehicles were still blocking off Webster Avenue at East 204th Street at around 12.22 p.m. on Friday, about one hour after the area had been deemed clear, and as lines of students and staff were seen making their way back to the building. Enrollment at the school for the academic year 2020-2021 was 857 according to the school's website.

In reference to the incident, on Friday afternoon, one social media user commented, "It was a student that did it." *Norwood News* reached out to the person in question in order to corroborate his assertion but did not receive an immediate response. We also contacted New York City Department of Education (DOE) on Friday and asked, among other questions, if the department had found out who had placed the call. We did not receive an immediate response.

Also, on Friday, we spoke to some parents outside the school as they waited to pick up their children and asked them what they knew of the situation. One mother who preferred not to be identified and who was with her daughter, said, "We really don't know what happened. My daughter texted me and she told me they thought the school was on fire from an alarm, and then, some of the kids have Citizen App, and the Citizen App was telling them there was a bomb threat, so, she called me." She added, "Most of these kids didn't have any coats on. They were sent to another school up the street, and I had to go pick her up in the middle of the scare."

The mother said she thought the incident had occurred at around 9/9.30 a.m. "They had literally only been at school for like an hour," she said referring to the kids. Asked if she had been scared, she said, "Definitely. Everyone was scared." She added that she didn't receive a message from the school directly and that she also called some other parents to let them know as they were not aware of the incident either.

Speaking in Spanish, Walky De Nunez, another mother to her 6-year-old daughter who attends P.S. 20, said she was not sure what exactly had happened but that she understood the situation arose because of an apparent bomb alert. "I received a message from the school. They told me to

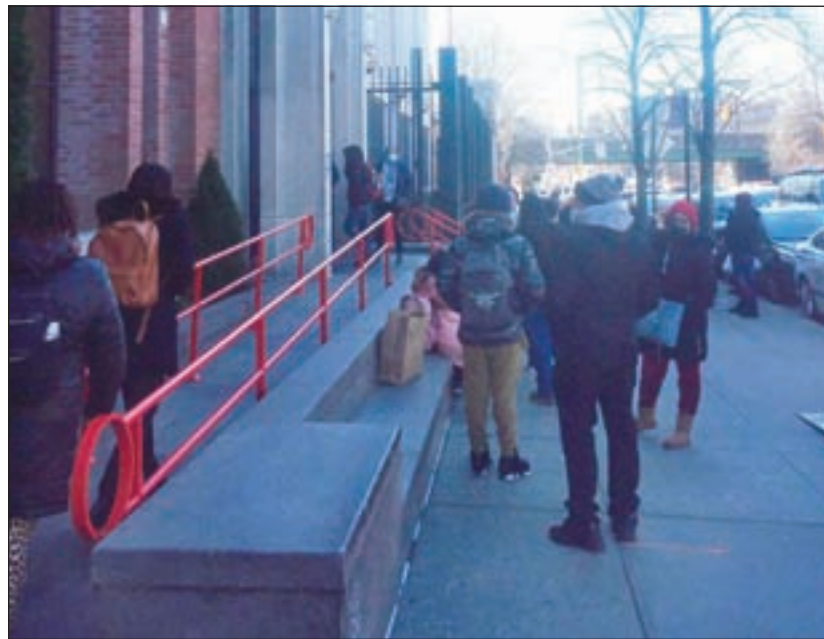


Photo by Sile Moloney

LINES OF STUDENTS and staff return to P.S. 20 on Webster Avenue in the Norwood section of The Bronx on Friday, March 4, after a morning call placed with the school advising of a bomb threat instigated an evacuation at 8.50 a.m. The building was later declared clear and dozens of staff and students were seen returning to the building, walking in orderly lines down Webster Avenue.

come and collect my children because the building had been evacuated," she said. "I spoke with my brother-in-law, and I told him, 'I'm in another location with my boyfriend, working,' and so I said to him, 'Please, go collect the children'."

She said everything happened very fast and they evacuated the building and that was all she knew. Asked if she had gotten a shock when she got the news, she said, "Yes, it really shocked me.. it's the truth. The idea of losing my daughters... I cried.. but thanks be to God because the kids are ok. All the kids are ok."

Later, we also spoke to some P.S. 20 staff members who asked for their names not to be disclosed and who described an apparent chaotic situation inside the school, following receipt of the bomb threat and how the evacuation did not go as expected.

We were informed that even though the fire alarm was activated, no instructions were provided to the staff/teachers regarding the evacuation, contrary to their expectations, and that as a result, a school safety agent eventually stepped in to take charge of the situation and instigate the evacuation. We were informed that a PA system is not used in such situations in order to curtail panic, and that consequently, teachers usually awaited direct instruction from senior staff members.

Because of this, some staff members said the evacuation was delayed. In addition, we were informed that even though there is an evacuation plan for P.S. 20, which is agreed with two other nearby schools, because the plan had not reportedly been shared with teachers, some students were directed by staff members to

a third nearby school, which was not expecting them.

We were also told when parents arrived at the different alternative school sites, following the evacuation, they began to immediately pick up their children from those sites, making it difficult for teachers to keep track of the number of students in their care.

There were also reports of some children being left outside in the cold without their coats for a long time, and that when they did return to P.S. 20, after the evacuation, there was confusion over whether all students had received lunch at the alternative school sites or not. It transpired that some had not been fed, and were therefore provided lunch at P.S. 20.

A second Bronx school evacuation was later found to have taken place in the Pelham Gardens section of The Bronx also on Friday, March 4. Police confirmed that students and staff were evacuated from the Holy Rosary School, located at 1500 Arnov Avenue, in Pelham Gardens on Friday, March 4, at 12:07 p.m. An unidentified male teacher, standing with his students on the Tiemann Avenue side of the school building on Friday, said, "They said the lights went out on all the floors and that triggered the fire alarm, and the fire department had to come." Asked if he thought the building had suffered a computer hack, he replied, "It was the Russians."

In recent days, there have also been media reports circulating of bomb threat in Queens. In the meantime, the NYPD confirmed a second bomb threat was received at P.S. 20 on Monday, March 7, once again, at 8.50 a.m. A police spokesperson said the threat was made via phone by

an anonymous caller. The spokesperson declined to confirm the exact number / extension dialed. "The school was evacuated," the NYPD official said. "A search was conducted of the school with negative results."

Norwood News asked if the two P.S. 20 incidents were related, if the investigation was still ongoing, and if the NYPD now knew who had placed the calls at the school. We did not receive an immediate response. We also contacted the UFT for comment on the allegations raised about the evacuation process. A UFT spokesperson responded, saying, "We are aware of the recent threats, and are in constant communication with other stakeholders to ensure that the entire school community always remains safe."

Meanwhile, a DOE representative responded to our separate requests, saying, "The Building Response Team quickly mobilized to evacuate students, and the NYPD quickly investigated both threats and deemed them non credible. Students returned to class."

Ongoing debate continues over school safety agents, with some students, parents and teachers opposed to what is sometimes regarded as a heavy-handed approach when it comes to security staff interacting with youth, while others believe *more* security is actually what's needed in schools.

We received a lengthy response last year from DOE on the then planned strategy for school safety, with officials advising at the time that plans were on track to transfer school safety agents away from the responsibility of the NYPD and under the remit of DOE. *Norwood News* contacted the DOE for clarification once again of the latest plans since the change of City administration. We did not receive an immediate response. Another male parent, Samuel Estevez, who spoke to us, said he would like to see more funding and support for police in schools. Speaking in Spanish, he said, "In years gone by, there was more safety than there is now."

In reference to the incident, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson later wrote on social media, "Thankfully, this bomb threat was found to be non-credible. All staff and students of P.S. 20 were able to return to their school building. A very scary situation that could've been much, much worse." She added, "Thank You first responders and the school team at P.S. 20 for the swift response and evacuation procedures in place to keep our students and educators safe."

Anyone with information regarding this incident 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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