



NORWOOD NEWS

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DRIVER: FLY CAUSES CRASH INJURING INFANT



A CAR IS left partially blocking the right lane of the Grand Concourse at Miriam Street in Bedford Park, after it crashed into a tree and burst into flames on Saturday, April 30, 2022.

By **DAVID GREENE**

An insect flying inside a moving car is said to be the reason for a single-vehicle accident that occurred on the Grand Concourse in

Bedford Park, causing an unidentified driver to slam into a tree and the car to burst into flames.

According to the NYPD, on Saturday, April 30, at ap-

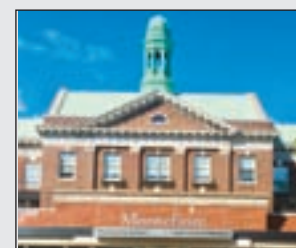
proximately 3.37 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a motor vehicle collision in the vicinity of Grand Concourse and Miriam Street. Upon arrival,

officers were informed by a 25-year-old man that he had been driving northbound on the Grand Concourse, when he lost control of his Honda

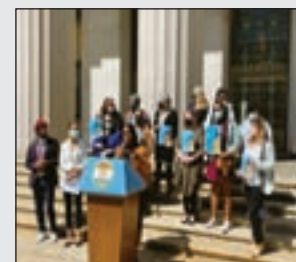
(continued on page 23)



Parks Advocates Rally for 1% of City Budget
pg 12



Montefiore is LGBTQ+ Healthcare Leader Again
pg 14



BP Gibson on Black Maternal Health
pg 21

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Tree Planting Locations in Bronx CD7 Released

By JULIAN NAZAR

Following recent meetings between the City Parks' department and Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), Parks has finally provided a list of the planned spring and fall tree plantings in Bronx Community District 7 (CD7). The news was confirmed during the April meeting of CB7's Parks, Recreation & Youth committee.

Barbara Stronzcer, Parks' committee chair, highlighted one caveat, saying she was told some of the selected sites might not finally undergo tree-planting if it transpired that there were issues with them, such as the site being in close proximity to a fire hydrant, underground piping and wiring, or objections from property owners.

The next order of business during the meeting, held on April 13, was summer Parks staffing within CD7. Joseph Magneri, a Parks manager for the district, provided an update on the topic. "Today, we did an orientation for 10 people, but they were existing staff from last year," he said. "The summer plan did not officially get released yet."

Stronzcer also asked Magneri about trash collection on Mosholu Parkway. Specifically, she wanted to know if residents could expect to see a garbage truck on site in the future. As previously reported by *Norwood News*, residents have complained about the amount of trash left at the litter corral.

"You know it was great until it became a magnet for dumping," Magneri said. "So, I made it clear that we no longer wanted the corral on the parkway. It was a pilot. We tried it; It didn't work there. So, you will see the truck." However, Magneri said the corral at Williamsbridge Oval will stay in place because he said there hadn't been the same level of trash build-up there.

Last year, some residents disputed this, citing rat sightings in the park. Elizabeth Quaranta, executive director of Friends of Mosholu Parkway (FOMP) and a CB7 board member, had

also posted a photo on the Friends of Williamsbridge Oval Facebook page, showing overflowing trash at the Oval corral. She encouraged residents to log 311 complaints to address the issue.

Representatives from three of the recreation centers in the district later provided updates on programming at their respective centers. Sarah Bishow, recreation specialist at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood, highlighted one of the center's latest sports initiatives. "We're doing soccer now on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday," Bishow said. "Tuesday and Thursday from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m., they're starting a soccer league. They're looking for all ages."

Later, Sheroly Jones, recreation specialist at St. James Recreation Center, located at 2530 Jerome Avenue in Fordham Manor, said, "So, we'll be having some day classes, outdoor fitness, soccer, and family arts." She added, "I'm also working on bringing in some 'Movies under the Stars' for the community." Jones said her goal was to launch the movie program on May 2. The outdoor movie night initiative, supported by District 11 Councilman Eric Dinowitz, had proved successful at Williamsbridge Oval and other borough parks last year.

Meanwhile, Lucy Aponte, community associate at Poe Park Visitor Center, located at 2640 Grand Concourse, also in Fordham Manor, said there were some outdoor concerts coming up in May. "We have a concert on May 13 with the Jazz Foundation of America, and another in June," she said. "We have a solo artist exhibition." This entails an artist setting up artwork inside the center and then being there to answer any questions the public might have.

Also in attendance at the meeting were representatives of the various friends of local parks. Quaranta, representing FOMP, shared that the Keeper's House Edible Garden, located at 3400 Reservoir Oval in Norwood, is

now open on the weekends. "We're definitely looking for volunteers to help us do spring clean-up and also planting seedlings," she said.

Meanwhile, Tobie Buford of Friends of Devoe Park (FoDP), shared details of an Easter Egg Hunt which was due to take place at the park on Saturday, April 30, at 1 p.m. "They plan to have face painters," she said, "They plan to have a bunny. We're going to be playing some games with the children. We're going to have some board games out there."

Stephanie Ehrlich, executive director of the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance, later provided an update on Indian Field, located in Van Cortlandt Park along East 233rd Street, between Jerome Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park east, which she said had partially reopened. "The little league field is open, and the fence came down," she said. "The rest of the fences are slated to come down a little bit later this spring." Ehrlich also mentioned that Woodlawn playground was under construction and that the project should last through the fall.

She went on to say there would be barefoot dancing on May 4 and May 19. "I don't know if any of you've come out for barefoot dancing before?" Ehrlich asked. "This year, we're going to set up on the back deck of the golf house over at Van Cortlandt golf, so that if it rains, we're covered. So, it's a rain or shine event. It's going to be really fun!"

The meeting concluded with Stronzcer highlighting some future agenda items. She said at the May meeting the City's design & construction department (DDC) would provide an update on the ongoing construction of the golf clubhouse on Mosholu Golf Course in Van Cortlandt Park along Jerome Avenue.

She said the committee would also probably hear more about the Bronx Week Parade that will be taking place on Mosholu Parkway as part of the Bronx Week 2022 festivities on Sunday, May 15. The next Parks meeting will be held on May 11.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers for their thoughts on curbside car washers who have sprung up since the pandemic and who use fire hydrants across the city.



"I'm aware of them. I usually see them where I live in Soundview, and I see them in Fordham and in different areas. I think if it could be a hazard to the firemen or a hazard for the community, then yes, they must take them out. They can't be allowed if it brings down the pressure of the water and it's hampering the firemen from doing their jobs, and they're losing their lives. Then, automatically, the city needs to eliminate these types of businesses. Are they even legal? The people who sell hot dogs with the little carts on the corners, they have to do everything by the law and have to have standards and pay the state license to even sell in the street, so why are they not doing that? They're just making profits and that's it, and they're hurting the city."

Yesenia Carrion,
Soundview



"I feel that at least they are out there trying to make money and not hurting anyone. They do a better cleaning than the legitimate car wash. They go inside and out and clean every inch of your car. At the car wash, they put it through the machine, and it comes out and they wipe it down, and you look in the car and it looks like they never vacuumed. They do not wipe the windows or anything inside, but the street guys do. It's ridiculous how much the regular car wash charges for only driving through a machine."

Miriam Quiñones
Bedford Park
(Photo courtesy of Miriam Quiñones)



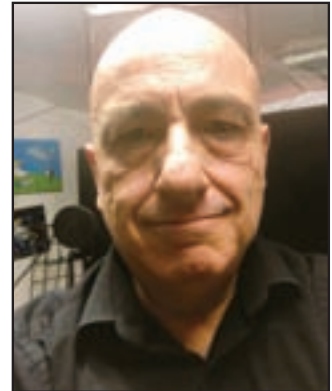
"When I see them, they seem to do a great job. I see them off of the FDR drive, along the back streets and also by 204th Street, and numerous spots in the Bronx. And I see a line of cars waiting for them. It's often packed by the FDR. I have yet to see it cause a hazard, and we don't have enough car wash businesses, so I prefer the side of the street dudes who wash the car manually, and pay attention to detail in cleaning the car as well as offering a better price than the car wash that uses those big machines that sometimes mess up your car."

Lilah Mejia,
Manhattan
(Photo courtesy of Lilah Mejia)



"While I believe in being charitable, helping my fellow neighbors and paying forward, I stopped giving money to the corner car washers ever since a very scary experience two years ago on Jerome Avenue where they were not happy with my donation. That was all I had! \$2! I've also seen fights break out on Jerome (Avenue) under the elevated train. I saw a driver hit the poor washer. The driver kept telling him he did not want his windshield washed, but the guy did it anyway and all hell broke loose."

Hilda Rosario,
Pelham Bay
(Photo courtesy of Hilda Rosario)



"If properly licensed with New York City, it can alleviate congestion at the fixed car washes. Curbside should also entail private property locations, as well as areas designated by city planning which would prevent any safety hazards. I've seen them on the service road of the Cross Bronx Expressway next to the cemetery and on Brush Avenue and in Co-Op City. Without a permit, I am diametrically opposed to any service business, retail or otherwise doing business on the streets of New York without proper licensing."

Andrew Perretti,
Throggs Neck
(Photo courtesy of Andrew Perretti)

Editor's Note: Miriam Quiñones is a freelance photographer with Norwood News.

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Extended Deadline for Summer Youth

Mayor Eric Adams and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is reminding applicants that the deadline for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is Friday, May 6, 2022. The nation's largest summer youth employment initiative is offering 90,000 jobs this summer, with an additional 10,000 opportunities available through other city agencies.

Applications for the summer youth employment program can be completed online at nyc.gov/syep or at a participating community-based organization during the application period. Employers and worksites looking to support SYEP should visit nyc.gov/hirenycyouth. For more information, call 311 or DYCD Community Connect (1-800-246-4646).

Carpenter Apprenticeship Drive

The New York State Department of Labor announced on Friday, April 29, that the joint apprenticeship and training committee for New York City District Council of Carpenters will conduct a recruitment campaign from June 1, 2022, through May 3, 2023, for 25 carpenter apprentices. Applicants must obtain a lottery card, in person, at the New York City District Council of Carpenters Training Center (NYCDDC Training Center), 395 Hudson Street (Clarkson Street entrance) New York, NY 10014, on the first Wednesday of each month, excluding Dec. 7, 2022, and January 4, 2023, during the recruitment period.

Lottery cards will be available from 7 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. until minimum lottery cards have been distributed or whichever comes first and there will be no admittance after 7:30 a.m. Only the applicant will be allowed to complete the lottery card and applicants must provide a valid, government-issued, picture I.D.

Gifted & Talented Program Expanded

Schools Chancellor David

Bronx Fashion Week Returns!

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Fashion Week returns to the Mall at Bay Plaza, located at 200 Baychester Ave, Bronx NY in the 3rd floor food court, on Saturday, May 7, at 3 p.m. Bronx Fashion Week initiates innovative events that attract a multitude of fashion influencers. The events have become preferred for diverse and inclusive audiences, and their objective is to provide real-time business opportunities to local emerging and established designers to showcase their skills and abilities in an industry that is often non-accessible.

According to the organizers, Bronx Fashion Week is already shaping up to be one of the most amazing fashion experiences at The New Mall at Bay Plaza, surrounded by over 100 retailers from The Bronx. The mall has over 25 million visitors per year. Designers being showcased include Callejas Atelier, Yo Soy Mia, Mia Roman, Boulevard Menswear, Daysi Collection, Macy's, Forever 21, and Ashley Stewart.



Photo courtesy of Bronx Fashion Week

MODELS WALK THE runway.

Banks and Mayor Eric Adams announced the expansion of New York City Department of Education's (DOE) Gifted & Talented program for the school year 2022-2023 on April 14. The public-school program offers accelerated instruction to eligible elementary school students in New York City. With the addition of 100 kindergarten seats, and 1,000 third-grade seats, both these entry points to the program are being expanded to all 32 school districts for the first time, bringing the total number of available seats to 2,500. Applications for both programs open on May 31.

Parents should make inquiries at their children's respective schools for more information.

Search for 68-Year-old Missing Man

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating a 68-year-old man reported missing on Sunday, May 1, from the Fordham Heights section of The Bronx.

Mingnolio Tejada, 68, of 253 East Kingsbridge Road, Apartment 4A, from the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx was last seen in-

side 2315 Walton Avenue in Fordham Heights at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 30.

He is described as male, is 5 feet, 5 inches tall, weighs 140 pounds and is White Hispanic. He was last seen wearing a red jacket, checkered pants, a blue shirt, and black sneakers. Anyone with information regarding this missing person is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782).



Photo courtesy of the NYPD
MINGNOLIO TEJADA, 68, is missing.

Bedford Park: Search for 71-Year-old Missing Woman

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating a 71-year-old woman reported missing in Bedford Park. It was reported to police that

Hyse Berdynaj, 71, of 2910 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY was last seen on Saturday, April 30, at around 7 p.m., leaving her home. Berdynaj is described as female, is around 5 feet, 6 inches tall, weighs approximately 150 pounds, and has black hair and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a black coat, a black dress, and black boots.

Anyone with information regarding this missing person is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782).

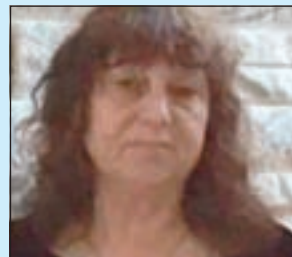


Photo courtesy of the NYPD
HYSE BERDYN AJ, 71, is missing.

Affordable Housing Lottery Launches

The New York City Department of Housing, Preservation & Develop-

ment (HPD) has launched an affordable housing lottery for 225 units at River Crest Apartments, located at 1164 River Avenue in the Concourse section of The Bronx, within the boundaries of Bronx Community Board 4. Individuals or households who meet the income and household size requirements are eligible to apply. The eligible income range is \$15,429 to \$132,400 and the eligible household size is one to seven people. Five percent of units are being set aside for those with mobility impairments, and 2 percent are being set aside for those with vision or hearing impairments. Preference for a percentage of the units goes to community board residents (50 percent), and to New York City employees (5 percent). Apply online at <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/2849> or to request an application form by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to: River Crest Apartments c/o Wavecrest Consulting LLC, 87-14 116th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418. The deadline to apply is June 27, 2022.

Two Norwood Fires in Two Weeks, Two Injuries

By SÍLE MOLONEY & JULIAN NAZAR

The tragedy of the Twin Parks housing complex fire in Fordham Heights which claimed the lives of 17 people, including 8 children, in January has made Bronxites more fire conscious, if also a bit more fire sensitive. Despite a wave of new fire prevention measures being enacted at all levels of government, as reported, when two fires broke out in Norwood in the space of two weeks, they were accompanied by an extra level of concern in terms of the cause. However, trying to obtain feedback from the FDNY on the cause of several fires even several months later has not been easy.

The FDNY requested all hands respond to a residential fire in Norwood on Friday, April 22. The alarm was raised regarding a fire in a multiple dwelling at 3224 Decatur Avenue at around 11.15 a.m.

Multiple fire trucks were later seen at the location, with firefighters using ladders to reach the third-floor apartment (Apt. 7) where the fire broke out. The blaze was brought under control, according to a Twitter update from FDNY, at around 11.32 a.m.

Norwood News contacted the FDNY for details of any injuries and to ask what caused the blaze. We were informed that no injuries were reported, and the cause was still under investigation.

On Wednesday, April 27, at 3.16 p.m., another more deadly fire broke out on DeKalb Avenue. When contacted for more information, an FDNY official told *Norwood News*, "Units were assigned to 3569 De Kalb Avenue for reports of a fire. Units were able to identify that the fire was located on the 4th floor of the 6-story, multiple dwelling at that location."

The fire official said 12 units, comprising 60 firefighters took part in the rescue effort. "Two patients were transported to Montefiore," the fire official continued, adding that the fire department had no additional update on the status of the victims. "The fire was placed under control at 15.52 hours [3.52 p.m.]," the fire official concluded, adding that the cause was undetermined for the time being.

Norwood News spoke to some residents at the location, immediately after the incident. Ronnie Rogers, 71, lives on the second floor, below the



Photo by Julian Nazar

12 UNITS, COMPRISING 60 firefighters respond to a fire that broke out on Wednesday, April 27, at 3.16 p.m., at 3569 De Kalb Avenue in the Norwood section of The Bronx.

apartment where the fire broke out. As we walked around the building, he pointed to where the apartment windows were busted through by the firefighters. "They weren't sure where the fire started," Rogers said. "In my apartment, they punched a hole in the wall too, but I told them that there was no fire here." Rogers later pointed to his apartment from outside the building. "I was there," he said. "I didn't let them start tearing up stuff, but there is enough damage."

We entered his building and headed up the stairs to see the damage to the interior of his apartment. An American Red Cross representative was waiting at his door, and all three of us entered the apartment. The representative asked Rogers where the damage was mostly. "What I have is water damage," Roger said, pointing to the damage on the wall adjacent to the window of his apartment. "Luckily, I didn't leave the apartment," he added.

Richard Santa, 49, is another resident of the building. Asked what had happened before the firefighters arrived, he said, "We started noticing smoke. My upstairs neighbor, 4C, she came down and said, 'I smell smoke.' We started knocking on 3C. They opened and said, 'We aren't cooking.'"

Santa then said a little girl from



Photo by Julian Nazar

12 UNITS, COMPRISING 60 firefighters respond to a fire that broke out on Wednesday, April 27, at 3.16 p.m., at 3569 De Kalb Avenue in the Norwood section of The Bronx.

3B came over to him and also asked, "Do you smell smoke?" He said, "That's when we started calling the fire department. They came quick. It was coming from the walls. If there

is nothing on the stove, it's from the walls somewhere," he added.

Asked if he felt safe in the building and if there was a fire plan, Santana said, "Well, yeah, we have an escape plan. I feel safe. Everybody is safe in this building. The problem is sometimes people don't take precautions with what they do."

Mara Gordon is also a resident of 3569 De Kalb Avenue. Asked what she had witnessed, she said, "We just saw smoke coming through the walls. We started knocking on people's doors and called the fire department. That's exactly what I did. We went down to the floor that we thought it was coming out of and they say it's not their floor." She then added, "I knew it was their sh*t."

You knew it was what? Asked to clarify her remark, she suddenly said as she began to approach her building, "Oh my God, I got to go... Look at my house!! Look at my house!!"

Norwood News has been following up with the FDNY on the causes of several fires which have occurred across The Bronx over the last 9 months or so, often to little avail. We will continue to follow up, and share any updates we receive.

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The Holy Spirit has clearly shown us that we are called to be a church led not by a program or a personality, but by the presence of the Lord. This is really why God's hand of blessing and increase has been upon us all these years. As we look to the future, we know that His presence will lead us in a continuous increase of souls and expansion of facilities; for our true desire is to glorify Jesus Christ.



Self-Care & Compassion Lead to More Joyful Parenting

By DR. AMANDA ZAYDE and DR. OLIVIA DERELLA

Parents have been asked to carry a heavy load – balancing work demands, childcare, changes in school format, and worries about COVID-19. Many people have noticed changes in how they feel and respond to others. Stress can affect mood, leading to irritability, anxiety, or withdrawing from close relationships.

When your mind is crowded with many different priorities and worries, and your body is drained from poor sleep or limited self-care time, parenting can feel more challenging. Stress can lead you to a “reactive” mode where frustration takes over. When overwhelmed, it’s hard to tune in to what children need and make sense of what their behavior is telling you.

Kids tune in to parents’ feelings and behaviors too; this is how they learn about emotions, from the important adults in their lives. When you’ve cared for your own emotional needs, it’s

easier to respond in calm and supportive ways to your child’s big feelings. By modeling how to talk through upsetting moments and solve problems with your children, you help them learn to express themselves, calm down from intense emotions, and handle difficult situations with confidence.

There’s more room to feel joy, curiosity, and delight together with children when your mind is less clouded by stress. Over time, these moments of connection strengthen caregiver-child relationships and children’s developing brains.

Using a few skills can help us take control of stress and become more present while parenting:

- While it may seem easier to avoid unpleasant thoughts and feelings to manage stress, they are important signals. We must notice that we are feeling stressed in order to take action. In these moments, take 30-60 seconds to slow down, breathe deeply and identify your feelings. This can help lower emotional intensity, allowing you to respond to your child more calmly and sensitively.
- Another approach is a visualization vacation. To do this, briefly close your eyes and imagine yourself somewhere you feel at peace – the more detail the better. If you’re evoking a warm, sandy beach, pic-

ture yourself gazing up at the blue sky and listening to the sounds of the waves rolling in and out. Breathe in the salty, ocean air and notice your body begin to relax.

- Take note when your inner critic is making an appearance. After your child struggles with big emotions during bedtime for the third night in a row, you might find yourself thinking, “I should be able to handle this better.” In these moments, it can be helpful to imagine what you’d say to a friend in this situation. Would you use different words or a different tone when talking to them? Often, we have more practice at being compassionate towards others. Remember! If our compassion does not include ourselves, it is incomplete.

Parenting can be challenging whether a child is 8 months or 18 years old – and it has been especially so over the last few years. The many stressors in today’s world make it even more important to offer yourself the same care that you strive to offer your children.

Dr. Amanda Zayde is a psychologist and director of connecting and reflecting experience (CARE) and Dr. Olivia Derella is a psychologist in child outpatient psychiatry, both at Montefiore Medical Center.

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New May 6 Deadline for Summer Youth Employment Program as Mayor Pushes for Safer Streets

By SILE MOLONEY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is reminding applicants that the deadline for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is Friday, May 6, 2022. The nation's largest summer youth employment initiative is offering 90,000 jobs this summer, with an additional 10,000 opportunities available through other city agencies.

The push is part of the mayor's blueprint strategy to attain safer streets and to end gun violence, alongside other initiatives like the Saturday Night Lights program. City officials say there is still time for both SYEP applicants and SYEP employers, who may be interested in hosting worksites, to apply to the program. The 2022 program runs from July 5 through August 20.

"The Summer Youth Employment Program not only puts money in the pockets of New York City's young people, but also exposes them to potential career interests and new learning experiences," said Adams.

"Having the summer youth employment program extend its application deadline [...] will be key to getting our youth to participate in what could be life changing experiences. Every young person should have the opportunity to work or learn over the summer, and this historic investment will help secure a better future for tens of thousands while helping to make our city safer."

In addition to providing young people with paid opportunities to explore potential career interests and learning experiences that help develop their professional, social, civic, and leadership skills, DYCD officials said the SYEP has been shown in studies to save lives, cut crime, strengthen communities, and reduce a participant's chances of being arrested or incarcerated.

DYCD officials said the Adams' administration's commitment to summer jobs for any young person who wants one is part of the mayor's Blueprint to End Gun Violence and part of an overall strategy to keep youth engaged and safe over the summer months.

As part of the program, SYEP teens aged 14 and 15 learn about career opportunities and make a difference in their communities through paid project-based activities. Older youth aged 16 to 24 improve their work readiness skills and explore career pathways through paid summer jobs in a variety of industries throughout the five boroughs. Special programming is available for:

- youth residing in select New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments; students from select Department of Education (DOE) schools;
- DOE ACCESS and Alternative School students;
- students in the Young Adult Borough Centers (YABC) program;
- unhoused or runaway youth;
- young people experiencing gender-based violence;
- youth in the Living for the Young Family Through Education (LYFE) Parental Program Support program;
- youth who are in foster care, or justice or court-involved care, receiving preventive services through the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) or receiving cash assistance through the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA).

DYCD deputy commissioner for workforce connect, Valerie Mulligan said by extending the Summer Youth Employment deadline, DYCD was giving even more young New Yorkers an opportunity to apply for a "record



Photo by Sile Moloney

A YOUNG BOY listens to speeches given by Mayor Eric Adams, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, and other elected officials during the relaunch of the 2022 Saturday Night Lights program at P.S./I.S. 224, located at 345 Brook Avenue in the Mott Haven section of The Bronx on Saturday, March 27, 2022.

number of jobs this summer."

The deputy commissioner said, "DYCD strongly encourages youth and families to visit the application site or contact their local community-based organization for a chance to explore their interests and career pathways, and take part in learning experiences that help boost their workplace, social, civic and leadership skills."

As reported, also as part of the mayor's Blueprint to End Gun Violence, the NYPD, DYCD, the city's five district attorneys' offices and several city agency partners, community based organizations and foundations relaunched the Saturday Night Lights program in March, which began last year, opening up gyms across the city for free, high-quality sports programs for kids on Saturday nights.

The mayor visited P.S./I.S. 224, located at 345 Brook Avenue in the Mott Haven section of The Bronx on March 27 for the relaunch, noting that the number of open gyms across the city on Saturday Nights had expanded to

106 since the program began, all in efforts to provide a safe space for young people to congregate on Saturday Nights.

Speaking on the night of the relaunch, Adams said, "We have been so reactive in the engagement between our police and our young people. This proactive approach is just so important." He added, "We are making wonderful changes and we don't really lift up enough.... when you look at these sergeants and police officers, and lieutenants and inspectors, the only thing that will come to mind is that that individual is going out there, fighting crime, and that is just so not true."

The mayor went on to say that the police had observed many young people being denied basic services and that it had affected them. "They don't like placing their hands on a young person, trust me," he said. "And whenever they do programs like this one, they're able to foster relationships with these young people. They're going to now view police officers differently because of this proactive approach."

The mayor said more programs like it were needed, acknowledging that when he was a borough president, he hadn't expected it to become such a huge program. "We have these beautiful schools," he said, adding that more use should be made of them on the weekends. "Pools, classrooms, locker rooms, it belongs to them," the mayor said.

"This is what we are going to do - intervention and prevention, and whenever I say that it's ignored," he said. "No! It's not about locking people up. It's about placing them on a pathway so they don't have to do a crime in the first place. That is what is at the heart of this administration, because I was one of them."

Adams also highlighted the importance to the youth of playing ball and interacting with one another. "We have to keep them safe. Be clear on it," he said. "Three-year-old babies won't be shot in this city. We're very, very clear on that. We're not going to apologize for protecting our young people."



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CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY

**Kingsbridge:****Man Shot in Chest Dies**

A 43-year-old man has died following a shooting in Kingsbridge, police said. On Monday, May 2, at 5.53 p.m., officers responded to a report of a man who had been assaulted at 3414 Irwin Avenue. Upon arrival, officers discovered a 43-year-old man with a gunshot wound to the torso. EMS responded and transported the victim to NYC Health and Hospitals/Harlem where he was pronounced deceased. There were no immediate arrests. On Tuesday, May 3, the NYPD said the deceased was identified as Daniel Valdez, 43, of Irwin Avenue in the Kingsbridge section of The Bronx. The investigation is ongoing.

dent that occurred in Fordham Manor. It was reported to police that on Saturday, April 23, at approximately 3.20 p.m., in front of 2501 Morris Avenue, an unidentified man approached two other males and fired multiple rounds from a gun. The assailant then fled on foot to parts unknown. There were no injuries reported as a result of the incident.

The assailant is described as a man in his early 20s who has a thin build, facial hair, is dark-skinned, and was last seen wearing a black hoodie “PUMA” sweater, light-blue, ripped jeans, black sneakers and a light brown winter hat. A surveillance photo of the assailant

**University Heights: Man Slashed in Both Legs**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the 38-year-old man seen in the above photo who is sought in connection with an assault that occurred on the border of University Heights and Morris Heights. It was reported to police that on Monday, April 4, at 8.12 a.m., the victim, a 39-year-old man, was walking in the vicinity of West Burnside Avenue and Davidson Avenue, when he was approached by Jean-Carlos Abreu, aka Luis, a 38-year-old man. Abreu allegedly produced a knife and slashed and stabbed the victim in both legs before fleeing on a bicycle. The victim was transported in stable condition by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital.

Fordham Manor: Man Sought for Reckless Afternoon Shooting

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the person seen in the photo (right) who is sought in connection to a reckless shooting inci-

dent that occurred in Fordham Manor. It was reported to police that on Saturday, April 23, at approximately 3.20 p.m., in front of 2501 Morris Avenue, an unidentified man approached two other males and fired multiple rounds from a gun. The assailant then fled on foot to parts unknown. There were no injuries reported as a result of the incident.

Norwood Man Sentenced to Two Years for Possession of Ghost Guns

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Tuesday, April 26, that a Norwood man has been sentenced to two years in prison after pleading guilty to criminal possession of a weapon for possessing six “ghost guns,” assault-style rifles that he built from parts, along with components to assemble two more guns.

According to the investigation, on Nov. 20, inside the Norwood home of Peter Rivera, 67, the defendant, of 300 Reservoir Place, a search warrant was executed during which investigators recovered six completed assault-style rifles, none with serial numbers, as well as firearm components capable of being assembled into at least two other assault-style rifles. Investigators also found numerous imitation pistols, unfinished receivers, and a work bench and tools for the construction of guns. Rivera had purchased the weapon



parts online.

Clark said Rivera was sentenced on April 25 to two years in prison, two years post-release supervision, and 90 days of alcohol treatment by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Joseph McCormack. He pleaded guilty to second-degree criminal possession of a weapon on March 16.

Arrest Made in Fatal Shooting of Norwood Man

A 36-year-old man has been arrested following the fatal shooting of a Norwood man. On Friday, April 22, at approximately 1.28 a.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been shot near the corner of East Gun Hill Road and Webster Avenue. Upon arrival, officers observed a 34-year-old man, unconscious and unresponsive, with a gunshot wound to the torso. EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to Saint Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

A 36-year-old male, a person of interest, was taken into custody in the vicinity of the incident location and a gun was recovered. The deceased has since been identified as Jonathan Maldonado, 34, from the vicinity of Gun Hill Houses in The Bronx. The NYPD later confirmed that Supreme Williams, 36, of East 217th Street in Williamsbridge, was arrested and charged with murder, manslaughter, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon and criminal possession of a controlled substance. A person arrested and charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Anyone with information regarding any of these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the CrimeStoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>

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Parks Advocates Rally for City Parks Budget of 1%

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Elected officials and representatives from parks all over New York City gathered on the steps of City Hall on March 22 to protest Mayor Eric Adams' proposed Parks budget. Referencing Adams' campaign promise to allocate 1 percent of the City budget to Parks, the protesters chanted, "What do we want? One percent! When do we want it? Now!"

Zoë Arcidiacono, a member of Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), said she voted for Adams in the 2021 election because she trusted that he would make good on his promise of an increase in the Parks' budget to 1 percent. Adams released his preliminary City budget in March, which actually cut the Parks' budget by \$60 million, a move which, according to rally attendees, could potentially lead to 3,500 Parks' jobs being cut.

"I voted for him because he said he was going to up the budget to 1 percent," said Arcidiacono. During the pandemic, the parks were used more than ever. We are volunteering, picking up garbage, because there isn't enough staff as it is, so the parks are important and they get used and they're for the people."

Arcidiacono attended the rally with fellow FOMP member, Lorita Watson. Both said the City's parks needed more investment and added that well maintained parks lead to a better city. "What we're doing here today is representing The Bronx.... and just to say that we want our fair share of funding of the budget - the 1 percent," Watson said.

"Those spaces that we choose to spend our time in....it's very important to us who live in the city to have clean, safe, well programmed spaces such as our parks, and that's what we're here to support."

The rally was organized by New Yorkers for Parks, a non-profit organization that focuses on improving the parks of New York City. Adam Ganser, executive director of the group, opened up the rally, explaining the important role parks played for New Yorkers during the pandemic, but also how, in his view, their current state highlighted how disinvested city leaders were in maintaining and improving them.

"Now is the time to follow through on the commitments our candidates made when they were running for office, and to invest in the health and



Photo by Sarah Huffman

REPRESENTATIVES FROM PARKS all over New York City rally on the steps of City Hall on Tuesday March 22, 2022, to protest Mayor Eric Adams' proposed Parks' budget.



Photo by Sarah Huffman

DISTRICT 11 CITY COUNCILMAN Eric Dinowitz speaks at the Play Fair for Parks Budget Rally on Tuesday March 22, 2022, at City Hall in Manhattan.

safety of our city and to its future," said Ganser.

For her part, Julie Tighe, president of New York League of Conservation Voters, a state-wide environmental conservation group, shared with the rally participants some statistics about how parks can improve the climate. "They lower air temperature by up to nine degrees," Tighe said. "They cut air conditioning use by 30 percent and can reduce heating energy use by another 20 to 50 percent, and they remove 1300 tons of pollutants from the atmosphere every year."

Tighe then informed the crowd that despite these benefits, the City's Parks' department receives only about half a percent of the total City budget, for their upkeep and programming. "We hope the city council will hold up to this commitment [of 1 percent] as the budget is negotiated and works with the mayor to make sure that funding



Photo by Sarah Huffman

DISTRICT 13 CITY COUNCIL Member Marjorie Velázquez speaks at the Play Fair for Parks Budget Rally on Tuesday March 22, 2022, at City Hall in Manhattan.

is baseline so that parks get consistent funding every year," she said.

City Council Parks committee chair, Shekar Krishnan, and council members from Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens all attended the rally to support their constituents. District 11 Councilman Eric Dinowitz, representing the Northwest Bronx, talked about how important the parks were to him as a father and how important they were to all community members.

"And to my community, what are our parks? They're oases for our families, for older adults, for our children, but so many of our green spaces are shut off from us. So much of our equipment is old, and our workers are not given the dignity and respect that y'all deserve," he said.

Dinowitz said the topic was less about the numbers and more about serving families in the community,

referencing those who worked to protect and take care of the parks. "It's about everyone behind me who are working their butts off to make sure our parks stay those oases that we went to during the pandemic, to be safe, and to enjoy our lives, and to socialize," he said.

District 13 City Council member Marjorie Velázquez, representing the Northeast Bronx also spoke about the importance parks held for families in the community. "It's about solidarity, but it's also talking about what this means, not only to our communities, right?" she said. "It means the world to our families, right?" She added that Pelham Bay Park in The Bronx was the largest park in New York City but was not treated as important, or given the resources she felt it merited.

"It's not fair!" she said. "Now, Hart Island has been transferred to Parks. What kind of respect are we giving to that? What kind of respect are we giving to our families if we're not honoring and giving at least 1 percent," she said, seemingly in reference to the thousands of people who died of COVID-19 and were buried on Hart Island amid the height of the pandemic as reported by The City publication in 2021.

Velázquez later talked to *Norwood News* about how Parks' department jobs give people the opportunity to earn a livable wage, work a union job that protects their family, and again, how parks served as a safe space for families at the height of the pandemic. "Every family deserves to have an outlet," she said. "Every family deserves to have that ability to be out there. Every family deserves that green space, and it needs to be protected, and it needs to be equitable, and it needs to be protected in a way that we all can enjoy."



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Letters To The Editor

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

Veterans' Health, Not Waste

The article, "U.S. VA Deputy Secretary Seeks to Calm Fears amid News of NYC VA Medical Center Closures" [*Norwood News*, April 21-May 4] about the Veterans' Affairs Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) appears to be full of hot air. Numerous veterans have suffered terrible physical and mental injuries to their health, mostly from fighting in wars that our country should not have engaged in. Veterans enlisted to serve and defend our country, but often wound up fighting in wars of U.S. government aggression instead. So now, the government wants to cut veterans' medical care under the pretext of an increase in veteran numbers in the southeastern part of our country, and a decline in the northeast.

How about an increase in medical care without the decrease? This way, no veterans will be short-changed. Where does the money come from? Here's an idea. When China is spending \$252 billion on defense, and Russia is spending \$61.7 billion, why is the U.S. spending \$768 billion? Veterans' health is more important than corporate welfare for weapons producers. Also, here's one more piece of advice. If the Democrats want more support, try this: become "good" instead of merely "not as bad" as the Republicans.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

NYC Transit President

Larry Penner just doesn't get it. ["NYC Transit President Should Have Come from In-House" letter, *Norwood News*, April 7-20]. The New York City subway will keep on keeping on, no matter who is in charge. It will provide a mostly reliable ride during the day, less so at night. The fare will eventually rise. Once in a while, a passenger will be struck by a train or will

fall ill, wreaking havoc up and down the line. On occasion, the 7th Avenue line will be rerouted down Lexington and vice versa. Announcements on and off the train will be unintelligible. The subway will continue to operate in the red. This will take place until the fall of the republic. Under Pataki, Spitzer, Patterson, and Cuomo, there was no significant improvement or deterioration.

Ironically, the author recently posted an opinion piece talking about how well the U.S. Department of Transportation ran without Pete Buttigieg. The subway will run with or without the new NYCTA president. The author states what an insult it is to transit employees and 5 million riders (make it 4,999,999). I'm not the slightest bit insulted. I doubt my fellow riders are.

Ninety percent of the author's opinion pieces insult my intelligence, contradict each other, sometimes within themselves, or require multiple Google searches to understand them. As a resident of Nassau county, the author speaks with authority on things he knows nothing about, such as how great the ferry service expansion in The Bronx is, without understanding that the vast majority of The Bronx lives nowhere near the ferry. It is not a sin in and of itself not to know, but he refuses to do perfunctory research such as looking at a map or asking anyone who actually lives in The Bronx.

The practice of bringing people into senior positions from outside NYC Transit has been going on since Noah was building a boat. I'm not agreeing or disagreeing. I doubt a station agent giving a passenger directions, or a track worker working on the third rail will care who the new president is. I know I don't.

**Nat Weiner,
Parkchester**

Celebrate Earth Day Every Day

Let us celebrate Earth Day April 22, all year long. Recycle newspapers, magazines, glass, plastics, old medicines, paints, and cleaning materials. Leave your car at home. For local trips in the neighborhood, walk or ride a bike. For longer travels, consider many public transportation alternatives already available. Use the

MTA, NYC Transit subway or bus, Metro North Railroad, Westchester Bee Line Bus or NYC Economic Development Corporation private ferry. They use less fuel and move far more people than cars. Employers offer transit checks to help subsidize a portion of the costs.

Utilize your investments and reap the benefits. You'll be supporting a cleaner environment and be less stressed. Many employers allow employees to telecommute and work from home, full or part time. Others use alternative work schedules, which allows staff to avoid rush hour gridlock. This saves travel time and can improve mileage per gallon. Join a car or van pool to share costs of commuting. Use a hand-powered lawn mower instead of a gasoline or electric one. Rake your leaves instead of using gasoline-powered leaf blowers. The amount of pollution created by gasoline-powered lawn mowers or leaf blowers will surprise you. A cleaner environment starts with everyone.

**Larry Penner,
Great Neck**

Thank you Rev. Ruben Díaz Sr.

Reading the great Rev. Ruben Díaz Sr.'s letter in the latest edition of the *Norwood News* brightened up my day with his words about the horrors of abortion, and how some people use words to mask what it really is, which is murder. I had tears in my eyes reading his heartfelt message. Rev. Díaz Sr. served The Bronx both in Albany and in the City Council with integrity and honesty.

Rev. Díaz Sr. said something before his term in office ended last year, which I hope resonates with Hispanic voters concerning the present crime surge. That was that the Democratic Party is not helping crime victims and that the Republican Party might be the place for Hispanics to cast their votes. I heartedly endorse that statement, and encourage all Bronxites, especially my dear fellow Norwoodites, to say "no" to expanding criminal rights, which the Democrats are doing, and "yes" to helping crime victims which the Republicans want!

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Montefiore Earns Perfect Score as LGBTQ+ Healthcare Leader Again

By SILE MOLONEY

Among a record number of healthcare entities which participated in the compilation of the 15th Human Rights Campaign health equality index (HEI), Montefiore Health System scored a perfect 100, and earned the designation of "LGBTQ+ healthcare equality leader."

The HEI serves as the gold standard in benchmarking healthcare institutions on policies and practices dedicated to the equitable treatment and inclusion of their LGBTQ+ patients, visitors, and employees. Montefiore has received this top designation now for eight years in a row.

The 2022 HEI scorecard evaluated healthcare institutions on criteria related to four key areas, and Montefiore received the top score in each one:

- Foundational Policies and Training in LGBTQ+ Patient-Centered Care;
- LGBTQ+ Patient Services and Support;

- Employee Benefits and Policies; and, Patient and Community Engagement.

Gloria Kenny, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at Montefiore said the recognition by the nation's largest LGBTQ+ civil rights organization shone a spotlight on the work, ethics, and moral compass of the Montefiore community. "Founded more than 135 years ago, Montefiore has always been steadfast in our commitment to ensuring our patients, staff and communities are heard, well cared for and not discriminated against," she said. "This is our North Star."

Montefiore officials said the health system's commitment to policies and practices dedicated to the equitable treatment and inclusion of their LGBTQ+ patients, visitors and employees is exemplified by many "firsts," including being the first health system in New York City to have joined and to have had a float in the annual NYC Pride march.

Additionally, Montefiore has sponsored Pride events in four of New York City's boroughs, as well as in Westchester and Rockland counties, and has also worked with the Bronx borough president's office to raise the pride flag at Bronx Borough Hall.

Montefiore has also implemented an inclusive identity policy, allowing associates to identify by

the name and pronouns that best align with their gender identity. In addition, the health system has established programs and training opportunities to address the LGBTQ+ community's needs, helping employees understand appropriate terminology, gender identities and sexual orientation.

Officials said this latest accomplishment builds on what they described as Montefiore's long history of providing LGBTQ+ care in hospitals, community health centers and specialty clinics. The services provided at the Adolescent and Youth Sexual-Health Clinic (MAYS) and at the Montefiore AIDS Center, the largest single site for HIV care and prevention programs in New York State, have been at the forefront of HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ care for adults and youth for more than 30 years. The centers serve those aged 13 and up with comprehensive care, including mental health and support services, Trans* care and primary care.

Alana Murphy, MB, organizational change management consultant and program chair to the Healthcare Equality Index for the Human Rights Campaign at Montefiore, said, "At Montefiore, we believe in a world where people can be their authentic selves in a safe and encouraging work environment, and we strive to provide equity in our approach to healthcare for our LGBTQ+ community."

Actor, Malik Yoba, Talks Real Estate with Students

By SARAH HUFFMAN

The Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters welcomed actor, Malik Yoba, to their school on March 28 to present his documentary film series, “The Real Estate Mix Tape Vol. 1,” which also features Majora Carter, real estate developer and founder of Hunts Point’s Boogie Down Grind Café.

According to different sources, Yoba, born in The Bronx, is an actor, filmmaker and writer, known for his starring role as NYPD Detective J. C. Williams on “New York Undercover,” and as Yul Brenner in “Cool Runnings.” He has also appeared as former FBI special agent, Bill Harken, on the SiFi drama series, “Alphas,” as Jim Hudson in “Revolution,” and as Vernon Turner in “Empire.” He has a younger brother, Abdur-Rahman Yoba, who is a literary manager, writer, actor, producer, former indie record label owner and hip-hop recording artist.

During the first episode of the documentary series, students and faculty watched Yoba share his journey about how he also got into real estate and founded his own company, Yoba Development LLC. He also talked to Bronxites about the changes they have seen in their communities over the decades.

Later, the students were invited to approach the microphone to discuss real estate development in The Bronx, in general, along with sharing ideas for the redevelopment of their school, based at 339 Morris Avenue in Mott Haven.

“This was just the first day to bring the community together to show you what we were up to, to share some of the ideas from students, from the faculty here, from the architects, and everyone else that could be involved with this project,” Yoba said.

According to myschools.nyc, Bronx Academy of Letters was founded on the idea that students who can express themselves in writing can succeed in any path. Writing



Photo by Sarah Huffman

ACTOR, MALIK YOBA, and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson discuss school redevelopment, and creating change in the Bronx at the screening of Yoba’s film, “The Real Estate Mix Tape Vol. 1” at Bronx School of Letters in Mott Haven on March 28, 2022.

is seen as another way where student voices can be leveraged to strengthen social justice. In addition to the school’s inquiry-based college preparatory curriculum, students participate in regular field trips to arts institutions, overnight trips to universities, SAT prep, and other community-building activities.

Some of the ideas for proposed improvements to the school from the students included bigger gyms, better temperature control throughout the building, swimming pools, more working elevators, a school garden, and bigger bathrooms.

One student suggested wider hallways, explaining that the existing hallways were too small and crowded and caused her to be late for her classes. One of the school counselors suggested adequate space for new classrooms, and professional offices because many of the staff members’ offices were in closets.

Yoba talked about how the process of redeveloping is very long, but that the first step to getting the ball rolling was to gather ideas and thoughts from the community to share with the City and the Department of Education. “So, the first step is what we’re going

to focus on today,” Yoba said. “The first step was to come together and look to have a conversation to share vision.”

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson had also stopped by for the screening to talk to the students and to hear their ideas. “It’s up to the architects, the designers, the developers, the borough presidents, your educators and all of us to come together and make sure that we put money where our commitment is,” she said.

Before the screening, a student named Constantine introduced himself and told the story of how he first met Yoba. He said he had been walking down the hallway during his lunch period one day and ran into the actor, along with the dean of Bronx Academy of Letters, David Garcia Rosen.

Yoba invited Constantine to a meeting later that day about redeveloping the school. At that meeting, the student pulled out a book about real estate investment and connected with Yoba over their shared interest in the topic.

“He didn’t have to stop,” said Constantine of Yoba. “And he definitely didn’t have to invite me to the meeting, but he did because he wants to make a connection to the commu-

nity, to make it better for everyone.” The student later presented Yoba with a sweatshirt with the words, “Constantine Development” printed on it.

The school redevelopment project stemmed from Rosen’s years-long effort to build athletic facilities for the sports teams at the school. Amy Schless, the school principal, credited Rosen for getting the ball rolling regarding the school’s redevelopment with the partnerships they formed with Yoba and a specific architectural firm.

“Thank you all for being here to share our excitement about what started as a dream of David Garcia Rosen to improve our athletic facilities,” Schless said. “Here, at Bronx Letters, this dream has now grown to building a new school, a new athletic center and housing. And so now, this potential project will now benefit not only our students and our student athletes, but all of the students at Bronx letters, all of our staff and the entire community.”

Rosen, who has been in education for 24 years as a teacher, an athletic director and coach, explained that his career started when the “Small Schools” movement started. The movement, a na-

tional initiative to reorganize schools into smaller autonomous schools, allows teachers to have smaller classes and get to know students better.

However, according to Rosen, it presented a challenge in that they were cramming classes into buildings that didn’t have sufficient space, and not every school had the resources and extracurriculars that some schools did, including sports.

“So as someone who was working in those schools, working on sports, and talking to students who were dropping out of school because they didn’t have baseball, they didn’t have soccer, it was the same kids that were dropping out [that] were the kids coming to my office, saying ‘I want to play soccer, I want to play baseball. Where’s the football team?’ And I have no good answers for them because New York City just didn’t care,” said Rosen.

According to Rosen, the Small Schools movement left 17,000 Black or Latino students in New York City schools with no high school sports at all, while White and Asian students had double the access to high school sports.

Bronx Academy of Letters, which is made up of mostly Black and Latino students, only had two sports teams just five years ago. Rosen and the school community advocated for access to sports for the students, and the school now has 29 sports teams.

Bronx Academy of Letters partnered with The Urban Assembly, an organization that helps to improve public schools and which currently partners with 22 other public schools. The Assembly helped Rosen and his students to advocate for sports by writing letters to those in power and offering support.

Even though they’ve added 27 sports teams to the school, Bronx Academy of Letters still doesn’t have the sports facilities needed for the students to

(continued on page 17)

Morris Heights: Search for 15-Year-Old Missing Girl

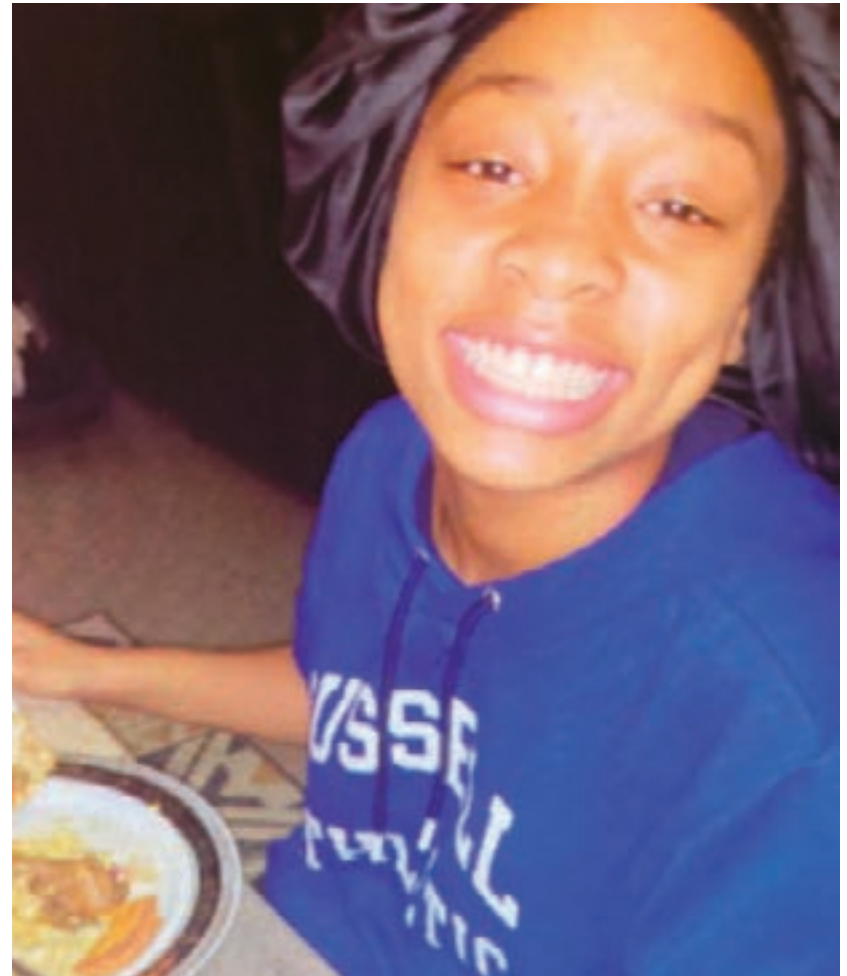
By SÍLE MOLONEY

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating a 15-year-old girl reported missing in Morris Heights.

It was reported to police that Koshianna Chavis, 15, of 40 Richman Plaza, 22E, Bronx, NY was last seen on Monday, April 25, at approximately 5 p.m., leaving her home. Koshianna is described as female, is approximately 5 feet, 4 inches tall, is Black, weighs around 120 pounds, has brown hair and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a purple hooded sweatshirt, dark blue jeans, and dark blue crocs.

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 strictly confidential.



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Mobile Car Washers Posing Fire Hazard & Other Concerns

By SILE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

District 11 Council Member Eric Dinowitz and Assemblyman Jeffery Dinowitz (A.D. 81) visited Webster Avenue with the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP), the Department of Sanitation (DSNY), and members of the 47th Precinct on Friday, April 29, to observe firsthand an escalating situation regarding the increased presence of mobile car washes along the avenue.

The council member and assemblyman discussed with agency representatives how best the issue can be remedied after significant concerns were raised about it by local community members in the surrounding area.

Bronx Community Board 12 District Manager George Torres, Alina Dowe, Bronx borough director of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, and *Norwood News* also attended the walkthrough at 10 a.m., when, strangely, no mobile car washers were to be found. Concerns attributed to the situation include an increase of trash and illegal dumping from the shops. Additionally, some car washers open fire hydrants and leave water running.

Since the walkthrough, Eric Dinowitz's office said it had been found that several of the hydrants were empty, causing a clear fire hazard. In addition, according to the councilman's office, in the warmer months, practices such as car washes breed mosquitoes. Discussed on the day was also the danger posed from a traffic congestion perspective.

"The mobile car washes we see on Webster Avenue are certainly a display of entrepreneurship, and are an important source of income for the operators," the councilman said. "The expansion of them has raised concerns for some neighbors, and poses questions about car washes as a regulated industry."

He continued, "I believe we made great strides in addressing some of the concerns during our walkthrough and gained a greater sense of the roles each agency plays in regulating operations, as well as the side effects of the car washes, such as trash accumulation and excessive



Photo by David Greene

OFFICIALS FROM THE Bronx Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, Department of Sanitation, the NYPD, and others join Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Councilman Eric Dinowitz for a walkthrough of Webster Avenue as they discuss the mobile car wash operations in the area on Friday, April 29, 2022.

use of water. We are now counting on our agencies to take action and mitigate the problems while allowing operators to conduct business."

For his part, Jeffrey Dinowitz said, "We have a vibrant city, full of entrepreneurial spirit and I wholeheartedly support our ambitious neighbors who take the initiative to start their own businesses. However, we live in a city with eight and a half million people in it and in a metropolitan region with nearly twenty million people." He added, "It is necessary to have rules about how and where businesses can operate safely and in a way that is respectful of neighbors and nearby businesses. We need the City to step up and address the proliferation of unregulated, mobile car washes along Webster Avenue."

Torres said Webster Avenue has long been a problem from illegal dumping to tractor trailer parking. "In the last two years, we have seen more than a dozen mobile car washing outfits taking up residence on Webster Avenue making residents and travelers' quality of life worse," he said. "This walkthrough with the elected officials and city agencies will bring some accountability and resolve some of these longstanding complaints

from the folks who live and work in this area."

None of the city agencies in attendance at the walkthrough were comfortable giving a comment on the day but are following up separately on the matter. Mobile car washing is a licensed operation in the City, though it is not clear how many of the operators on Webster Avenue actually have licenses, nor how many have been issued.

It was confirmed that there is no cap on the number of licenses that can be issued, and *Norwood News* understands neither is there any restriction on the concentration of the licenses in any one area of the City. Enforcement was discussed among the groups as being problematic as the rules around the activity appear to be unclear.

As the walkthrough finished up at around 11:29 a.m., there were still no car washers in sight. By 1:17 p.m., there were at least three crews opening up on the avenue, and two others looked like they were also about to open up. *Norwood News* attempted unsuccessfully to speak to them to ask if they were licensed, and to get their perspective on the matter.

On Saturday, April 30, we, again,

attempted to speak to one street car washer, located outside a former [legal] car wash unit on the 3200 block of Webster Avenue, between East 205th Street and East Gun Hill Road, a block or two away from where the walkthrough took place. We are still checking but it is understood that the former car wash unit closed just before or just after the start of the pandemic.

The apparent manager who was running the car wash, said of any potential crackdowns by police, "The police come here, but they tell me I'm alright. I'm not worried." A small group of men were standing on the street with buckets and rags assisting with the wash, as another group of about 10 men and women were sitting on chairs and milk crates across Webster Avenue, apparently drinking alcohol.

We spoke to a second street carwasher at the same location. Speaking through a translator, the operator who said he lives in Fordham, explained he was going through the process of obtaining a license. Asked if police had ever checked on his license before, he said, "No," adding that he intends to wait for that moment, but if he has his license by then, he feels there will not be any problem.

We asked if he operated the car wash business before the pandemic, or if he started due to losing his job. He said he hadn't been doing it prior to the pandemic but when it hit, he did lose his job, and that was the way he survived.

Asked what he did before, he said, "construction and deliveries." He added that he has his own business now, it's going well, and he can survive on it. Asked if his customers liked his service, he said, "They are very kind and treat me with respect." He added that he charges the same as a regular car wash - \$10, \$15 or \$20.

We also spoke to one customer who was present at the car wash during our interview and asked him for his rationale for doing so. "They do a better job," he said. "Yes, they do a better job." The car wash operator added, in English, "Yeah, the people are good."

Actor, Malik Yoba, Talks Real Estate with Students

(continued from page 15)

actually play. Rosen said three schools share a tiny gym, and they only have one small field. He said they don't have proper fields, courts, or a swimming pool to accommodate the activities they offer.

David Adams, CEO of The Urban Assembly, said Bronx School of Letters had an opportunity to engage

in a public private partnership with two development corporations who were looking to invest in the expansion of the school and/or the creation of a whole new school on behalf of the community.

"So we're very excited about this because we know that The Urban Assembly's public private partnerships has defined the way that we pursue

improvement in public education, and this is an example of what that looks like," said Adams.

Rosen said when the original idea came up to build an athletic center for the students, he got a call from an interested architect about it. However, they are now talking about redeveloping the school, as a whole.

"So, we've been working over the past five years with the community trying to come up with an idea from the grassroots, and we've been lucky enough over the past year, really, to get involved with Sherman P Architects and Yoba Development just got

on this project about a month and a half ago," he said.

Rosen insisted that schools shouldn't have to accept the norm of no sports, or lower quality facilities, or three schools housed in one building, and that they can work to create change within their community.

"There's an opportunity here to do something revolutionary, something special for our students," he said. "And I'm excited to be a part of it and I do really believe, even though I'm already talking about potential possibilities today a lot, I believe it's going to happen!"



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Public and Community Meetings

The 52nd **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings usually take place on the evening of the **third Thursday of the month**, sometimes in person and sometimes virtually. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email list. Proof of vaccination required for in person meetings.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 24 at 6.30 p.m.** via Zoom. The meeting ID is 859 4776 2187 or by phone (646) 558-8656. 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 May 4. For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

LEGAL NOTICE

This advertisement is to serve the High Court of The Supreme Court of Judicature of Guyana. In compliance with the Court, the family of deceased persons' Bhooplall Budhu (deceased as of January 29th 2006 at the Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, New York, United States of America), is looking to contact witnesses in the matter of the execution of the Last Will and Testament dated 23rd of December, 1996, of the aforementioned deceased persons.

The witnesses are: Melissa Mincey, whose given address at the time was 3169 Bainbridge Ave, Bronx, NY 10467, USA, and Josephine Pellicren, whose given address at the time was 3169 Bainbridge Ave, Bronx, NY 10467, USA. If you are Melissa Mincey, Josephine Pellicren, or are an acquaintance of Melissa Mincey and Josephine Pellicren, please call the chambers of Mr. Paul Stanislaus Braam, Attorney-at-Law at Lot 5 Avenue of the Republic and Robb Street, Georgetown, Guyana in relation to the witnessing of the above Last Will and Testament.
4/24/22 7196867

CORRECTION

In the latest edition of the *Norwood News* dated April 21-May 4, 2022, in the front-page photo caption accompanying the story entitled, "*Fencing at P.S. 340 a Hit with Students!*" the first name of the photographer was missing. The photo was by Adi Talwar. We apologize for this error.

Charlie Hewitt Brings Hopeful Project to The Bronx

By JULIAN NAZAR

Lisa Watkins, a retired Bronx schoolteacher, recalled seeing a story on the news about a Charlie Hewitt, a Maine-based artist, who had a huge “Hopeful” sign displayed on billboards in New Jersey. Considering the collective trauma of COVID-19 endured by so many Bronxites in such a relatively short space of time, she remembered thinking at the time that it would be a great word to have projected across the borough.

“We had the two years of the pandemic,” Watkins said. “Just when we thought we were coming out of the pandemic around Christmas time we had the resurgence of the Omicron variant. Then, we had the shooting of an innocent kid and his mother who were sitting in their car. That was followed by the big fire.”

Watkins was referring to the non-fatal shooting of an 11-month-old baby girl, known as “Baby Catherine,” who was shot in the face, in crossfire, on Valentine Avenue and E. 198th Street in Bedford Park on Jan. 19, while sitting in a car with her mother, as well as the Twin Parks fire tragedy that took place on Jan. 9 at Twin Parks North West housing complex at 333 181st Street in Fordham Heights, which took the lives of 17 people, including 8 children.

She decided to reach out to Hewitt on Jan. 25. “I found the Hopeful Project on Instagram,” Watkins said. “I wrote him. I thought of three places where I would love to see one of those billboards.” In her message, she suggested the Cross Bronx Expressway, the Deegan Expressway near Yankee Stadium, and someplace along the Bronx River Parkway.

Thanks to Watkins’ initial message, Charlie Hewitt has since brought his Hopeful Project to The Bronx. In a phone interview with the *Norwood News*, he shared why he decided to place his digital billboards where he did finally. “I wanted them on the subway stations because the people went into Manhattan and other parts of the boroughs to work during the virus,” Hewitt said. “They suffered the most. They didn’t have cars or country homes. They had to take the trains.”

He added, “All the work that was done came from places like The Bronx and the people who took those trains in a very unstable and unsafe time. I celebrate that work. That is the most appropriate place to put a message in The Bronx.”



Photo by Barbara Wagner Communications.

ARTIST, CHARLIE HEWITT, stands alongside Lisa Watkins during the unveiling of the Hopeful digital billboard at Kingsbridge Road Station on March 22, 2022.

There are now six Hopeful digital billboard signs in The Bronx that project the word “Hopeful” in radiant colors at five subway stations, serving the B and D lines. The stations are Bedford Park Boulevard, Kingsbridge Road, Tremont Avenue, 170th Street, and at both exits of the 161st Street- Yankee Stadium station, one at the River Avenue exit and one at the Walton Avenue exit. Hewitt said the billboards will remain displayed until the end of May.

Recently, Hewitt also placed Hopeful signs in two Brooklyn subway stations following the horrific, non-fatal, mass shooting that took place on April 12 at the 36th Street station in Sunset Park, which serves the N, R and D lines. Miraculously, nobody was killed and the alleged suspect, Frank R. James, has since been apprehended. As reported by *Norwood News* at the time, 10 subway passengers were shot and at least six other people otherwise injured in the context of the attack.

The Hopeful Project was born in Portland, Maine in 2019. Hewitt recalls that his first Hopeful sign went up in the neighborhood, Woodfords Corner, on the rooftop of Speedwell Projects, a nonprofit gallery. The gallery had asked him to put a sculpture on the roof. “I thought I needed change,” Hewitt said. “That was going to be a piece of my ego on the roof. I wanted to do something more challenging.”

He added, “I knew that I live in a dark state. I thought it would be great to make something that brought light to this corner. I also wanted to challenge myself to be positive rather than take this negative stance,” he said. “As a challenge, let’s get together and start projecting this positiveness into our communities, our families, and our future.”



Photo by OUTFRONT Media.

A “HOPEFUL” DIGITAL billboard, located at 161st Street-Yankee Stadium subway station, is unveiled on March 22, 2022.

Since then, Hewitt has completed 28 Hopeful installations. His work has also appeared in other states like Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Maine, in addition to New York, and ranges from sculptures, billboards, and paintings. Of the digital “Hopeful” billboards, he said it’s the message more than the medium that stands out. “It pops up as something surprising, unique, and bold,” Hewitt said.

It is not the first time billboard messages have had an impact on society. The 2017 movie, *“Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri,”* is a crime drama written, co-produced, and directed by Martin McDonagh, and starring Frances McDormand as a Missouri woman who rents three roadside billboards to call attention to her daughter’s unsolved rape and murder, in an effort to pressure police to resolve the case. The film went on to win seven Academy Awards, including Best Actress for McDormand and Best Picture.

McDonagh said the film script was inspired by similar billboards he had seen when traveling across America decades earlier which related to a 1991 murder case in Texas that remains unsolved. People magazine reported in 2018 that since the movie came out, investigators have doubled the reward for any information that leads to an arrest in the killing of 34-year-old Kathy Page.

The film would go on to inspire, Kat Sullivan, a 17-year-old girl, who alleged she was raped by a former staff member at Emma Willards private boarding school in Troy, New York to push for the passage of the New York State Child Victims Act.

Sullivan alleges when she sought help from school administrators, they instead pressured her to withdraw from the school. The school later set-

tled with her and she used her settlement money to purchase billboards to warn people about her alleged rapist.

She said she also wanted to pressure New York State Assembly Members to pass the Child Victims Act, which extends the statute of limitations for civil and criminal cases against perpetrators of child sexual abuse and the institutions that cover up for them. The bill became law in 2019.

Meanwhile, Hewitt and Jim Kempner, owner of Jim Kempner Fine Art, are privately funding the Hopeful signs in The Bronx. Kempner has been friends with Hewitt for 35 years and is his art dealer. They first met at a poker game with a private art dealer in SoHo. After that meeting, Kempner started showing Hewitt’s art. Kempner said that they have done ten art shows together in Chelsea and are doing another show together on May 19 at Kempner’s art gallery, located at 501 West 23rd Street.

Kempner recalls the first time he saw the design for the Hopeful project. “It was a perfect throwback to the ‘50s with the neon signs on the highway for diners,” he said. “It really hit a chord. It’s so simple, but so powerful.” In conversations with his friend, Kempner has heard about the impact of these Hopeful signs.

“A lot of people have written to him about how much it’s meant,” the art dealer said. “Some of the workers and the nurses in the hospitals, just working late hours, seemingly thankless... then they come out and see this. It’s brought tears to their eyes.”

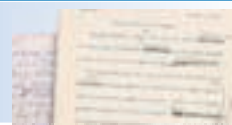
Watkins has also seen firsthand the reception the Hopeful installations have gotten in the community. “My friends who saw the TV interview we did for NY1 were raving about it,” Watkins said. “They were saying, ‘What a wonderful word in these times!’” She also recalls the time Hewitt handed a Hopeful pin to a man during the unveiling of the Hopeful installation at the Kingsbridge Road Station. “He took off his hat and he put the pin on the hat,” Watkins said. “It was a Yankees hat. It said, ‘Hopeful NY.’ What a perfect symbol of The Bronx!”

Watkins said she believes the Hopeful signs are making a difference. “You can’t help but feel the energy from it,” she said. “As a Bronxite, being hopeful for tomorrow and what it might bring, it’s a light in these dark times.”

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



COVID-19 UPDATES

Omicron BA.2 (Stealth) Variant

The Omicron BA.2 (stealth) variant is now the dominant coronavirus strain in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). The Omicron variant is comprised of several lineages and sub-lineages, the three most common being BA.1, BA.1.1 and BA.2.

As of May 3, citywide COVID-19 cases were increasing, and hospitalizations and deaths were on the decline, according to NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). NYS health department (DOH) is using an alert level system that tracks COVID-19 transmission and health care capacity in the city. These levels aim to help New Yorkers understand what precautions need to be taken and how to best protect themselves and others based on each level.

The risk rating was medium as of May 2, despite rising cases. The citywide 7-day percentage positive rate was 6.49 percent as of May 2. As of the same date, the 7-day percentage positive rate in ZIP code 10468, covering Fordham / Kingsbridge / University Heights, was 3.51 percent (up from 1.2 percent as of March 29), according to DOHMH. In ZIP code 10467, covering Allerton / Norwood / Pelham Parkway / Williamsbridge, it was 8.04 percent) up from 1.01 percent as of March 29. In ZIP code 10458, covering Belmont / Fordham University / Kingsbridge, it was 4.63 percent (up from 1.29 percent as of March 29). Meanwhile, in ZIP code 10471, covering Riverdale, North Riverdale and Fieldston, it was the highest in the borough at 10.83 percent (up from 5.19 percent as of March 29).

Additional at-home testing kits are being distributed to all New Yorkers to allow people to stay at home if sick, and a telemedicine service has been implemented to ascertain whether New Yorkers who contract the new variant need access to lifesaving COVID-19 medication. New Yorkers who test positive for COVID-19 can now receive these treatments that help prevent severe disease and hospitalization. DOHMH officials said if they do need such treatment, it will be delivered same day to their homes, curtailing the spread of the virus and keeping the City open.

COVID-19 Vaccination Updates

DOH officials have said New Yorkers who are 12 and older who received their Pfizer-BioNTech initial vaccine series at least five months ago are now eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech booster. New Yorkers who are 18 and older who received the Moderna initial vaccine series at least five months ago or the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at least two months ago, are eligible for a booster dose.

Children aged 5 to 11 with certain immunocompromising conditions who received their Pfizer-BioNTech initial vaccine series at least 28 days ago are eligible for an additional dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Dosages vary for different groups. All individuals 5 years of age and older that reside in the United States are eligible to receive the vaccine. FDA fact sheets for recipients and caregivers on each vaccine are available on the FDA's website.

COVID vaccines are widely available at pharmacies, local health departments, clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and other locations across

the state, irrespective of immigration status. To schedule an appointment directly at a New York State-run site, go to <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> and follow the instructions. Walk-in appointments are also accepted at New York State mass vaccination sites for all eligible individuals.

Guidelines for Business & Other Public Settings

For the latest COVID-19 business guidelines and industry guidance from New York State Department of Health, go to: <https://forward.ny.gov/active-industry-guidance>. All businesses must develop a written business safety plan to outline how their workplaces will prevent the spread of COVID-19.

According to the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, workers in New York City who perform in-person work or interact with the public in the course of business must show proof that they have received a COVID-19 vaccine. Businesses may not allow any unvaccinated workers to work at their workplace. A workplace is considered any location — including a vehicle — where you work in the presence of at least one other person.

Effective March 2, masks are no longer required in schools. However, Mayor Eric Adams announced on Friday, April 1, that New York City would keep its school mask mandate in place for children under 5 due to the recent uptick in coronavirus cases in the City and because such children cannot yet get vaccinated. The State also announced that effective February 10, the statewide indoor business mask, or vaccine requirement is lifted.

As of April 26, masks are still required at indoor train stations and onboard subways, commuter rail, buses, and paratransit vehicles. New Yorkers do not have to wear a mask at outdoor train stations and platforms, or at bus stops, but must wear a mask once they board a train, bus, or paratransit vehicles. Riders who refuse to wear a mask could get a \$50 fine.

COVID-19 Vaccine Exceptions and Reasonable Accommodations

This private sector workplace requirement does not apply to people who work alone, at home or otherwise, and do not have in-person contact with co-workers or others in the course of their business; people who enter a workplace briefly for a limited purpose, such as to use the bathroom; performing artists and college or professional athletes; or people who have requested reasonable accommodations for medical or religious reasons. If a worker is granted a reasonable accommodation, businesses must record the basis for the accommodation and keep supporting documentation.

Travel Requirements

All travelers, domestic and international, should continue to follow all CDC travel requirements. Go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notices.html> for more information. According to CNN, a federal judge in Florida recently struck down the Biden administration's mask mandate for airplanes and other public transport methods, and a Biden administration official says the order is no longer in effect while the ruling is being re-

viewed.

Federal Vaccine Mandate

Reuters reported on April 7, that a U.S. appeals court panel has reinstated President Joe Biden's executive order mandating that federal civilian employees be vaccinated against COVID-19. On Sept. 9, 2021, Biden had mandated that all private employers with 100 or more workers require their workers to be vaccinated or tested weekly. He also mandated that all healthcare workers in hospitals, clinics and other facilities that accept Medicare and Medicaid payments, and all federal contractors must get vaccinated, with no opt out option.

MTA Rider Feedback Survey

New York City Transit and the MTA are inviting New Yorkers to participate in a survey to obtain feedback on public transportation on subways and buses in New York City. To complete the survey, go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NYCT-CoMET>.

The 2022 New York Cares/Fordham Bedford Community Services Sophomore Skills program offers college preparation classes remotely to high school sophomores. If you are accepted into this program, New York Cares volunteers and FBCS Staff will tutor you and share strategies to prepare you for success in taking your SAT Exam. This tutorial program is a 2-hour, weekly-commitment that lasts from April 2022 to June 2022. The class is from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, click <https://bit.ly/3LGoJEQ>.

Notice of Replacement of Trunk Water Mains, Rehabilitation of Sewers in Norwood and Woodlawn Heights

NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) has advised that a replacement of the trunk and distribution water mains and a rehabilitation of the sewers is taking place in Norwood and Woodlawn Heights during the second quarter of 2022. Residents should expect water service interruptions, trash collection changes, new traffic patterns, and increased levels of dust and noise while the project is ongoing. DDC has advised of the following impacts to the community:

There will be a temporary rerouting, around the clock until June 30, of BX16, BX34, and BXM4, northbound, from Bainbridge Avenue, between East 212th Street and Jerome Avenue, to Jerome Avenue, between East 212th Street and Bainbridge Avenue. Board the bus at 210th Street.

There will be a temporary rerouting, around the clock until June 30, of BX10, westbound, on East Gun Hill Road and the intersection of Bainbridge Avenue. Board the bus on East Gun Hill Road between Rochambeau and Dekalb Avenues.

There will be no curbside parking, around the clock until June 30, on Bainbridge Avenue, between East Gun Hill Road and 211th Street.

There will be a temporary lane closure, around the clock until June 30, northbound, on Bainbridge Avenue between Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road. Residents are asked to be mindful of traffic detours and message boards.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

The **Annual Bronx Week festival** takes place from May 5 to May 15, this year. As usual, there will be a series of events from every sector of the community including senior activities, small business networking, family, health, finance, and more. Bronx Week will culminate with a Black-tie gala honoring this year's Bronx Walk of Fame inductees on Saturday, May 14. To purchase tickets and/or journal advertising online, go to <https://bit.ly/3saJeC5>.

The **Bronx Week Parade** will take place on Sunday, May 15 at 11 a.m. on Moshulu Parkway and Hull Avenue. Come on out and celebrate school and community pride. If you or your organization would like to march, please send an email to educationRSVP@BronxBP.NYC.Gov or call (718) 590 6012. The Bronx Week concert also takes place on May 15. If you would like to showcase your talent, email press kits or other audition materials such as videos, mp3s, photos/headshots and/or performance links to bxspecialevents@gmail.com.

[gmail.com](mailto:bxspecialevents@gmail.com).

MUSIC

Manny Cruz returns to at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, The Bronx, New York 10468, with special guest, URBANDA, on Saturday, May 21, at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$100, \$65, \$50, \$45, \$35. The new international music sensation from the Dominican Republic will wow audiences with this very special performance. Manny is already a 4x Latin GRAMMY® Award nominated singer, composer, and star of Bachata, Merengue, and Pop-balada music and will have a very special guest performance from the NYC Group URBANDA! Visit www.LehmanCenter.org for more details.

Would you walk 200 miles (in a skirt!) for something you believed in? The journey of Women's Suffrage "pilgrims" is brought to life during a free concert at Woodlawn Cemetery, Conservancy and Crematory, on Sunday, May 22, at 3 p.m., in a new chamber piece entitled, **Suffrage**

Signatures with the Canta Libre Chamber Ensemble. Composer, Joelle Wallach, will include live dialogue and images based on the personal letters and photographs of these fascinating women during the performance. Join members of the Canta Libre Chamber Ensemble (flute, harp and strings) for the premier performance of this exciting multi-media work. Many of these groundbreaking suffragists are buried at Woodlawn Cemetery, located at 3800 Jerome Ave, Bronx, NY 10467. Their memory is alive and well, thanks to ongoing research and outreach to living relatives by the Woodlawn Conservancy. For tickets, go to: <https://bit.ly/3Fkbjwf>. Enter through the Jerome Avenue entrance.

DANCE

The Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance (BAAD) springs forward with the 21st annual Boogie Down Dance Series which began Saturday, April 23 and continues until Friday, May 27 at BAAD, located at 2474 Westchester Square in the Westchester Square section of The Bronx. **Alethea Pace**, a Bronx-based award-winning dancer/choreographer premieres "Here Goes the Neighborhood," a multimedia performance work that conjures Bronx memories born from turmoil and resilience. The festival also includes the inaugural event, igniting the year-long 10th anniversary celebration of **Dancing While Black** (DWB).

All events are in-person with select events also available via livestream. Ticket prices vary from free to \$20. BAAD

offers discounts to BAAD members, BCA cardholders and NALACqueros, and free admission to residents of 10474 and 10461 zip codes. Ticket offers cannot be combined. Call (718) 918-2110 or visit website: www.BAADBronx.org for tickets, information, and additional directions. The Boogie Down Dance Series receives specific funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation.

ART

Beyond the Canvas exhibition is showing at The Green House Gallery, located at 315 East 201st Street, Bronx, NY 10458, from April 15 to May 15, 2022, and features works by Melissa Martinez, Tehmina Brohi, Blanka Amezhua, and Gabriel García Ramón. The exhibition is curated by Ella Santos. For additional information and appointments, email ella@ellasantosart.com.

MOVEMENT

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson will be hosting a **Health Day Fair Skating Party** on the tennis courts of Williamsbridge Oval, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval E, Bronx, NY 10467, on Saturday, May 7, from noon to 4 p.m. The event is taking place in conjunction with Bronx Week 2022 and will include fitness and fun activities, health screenings, food demonstrations, and community resources. The event is sponsored by Humana, Montefiore/Einstein, Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Office of the Bronx Borough President.

Bronx BP Calls for Policy Changes to Improve Black Maternal Mortality

By JULIAN NAZAR

To mark Black Maternal Health Week, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson joined a host of mothers and advocates fighting for access to safe childbirth support on the steps of the Bronx Supreme Court on Wednesday, April 13. The group were gathered to demand policy changes at State level to combat the high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity seen in the borough.

According to data published by Fatoumata Diallo, city research scientist for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, The Bronx had the highest severe maternal morbidity (SMM) rate among all five boroughs as of April 11.

During the event, Gibson spoke about the lives that had been lost to pregnancy complications, saying, "I think about the failure. We failed some of our mothers, and they have died giving birth," she said. "We owe it to them to carry on and make the future different."

During the event, which was also attended by Deputy Borough President Janet Peguero, Gibson highlighted the importance of marking Black Maternal Health Week, which is now an annual, national event that was officially recognized by the White House on April 13, 2021. Gib-

son formally declared the same week, April 11 to April 17 as Black Maternal Health Week in The Bronx.

Its purpose, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is to "bring attention and action in improving Black maternal health." Through her research, Diallo found that Black, non-Hispanic women in New York City had a maternal morbidity rate more than 2.5 times higher than their White counterparts.

Gibson shared that one of her goals as borough president was to provide a birthing center for mothers in The Bronx. "Delivering a baby in a birthing center allows our Black women to have a different kind of experience," Gibson said. "These facilities provide culturally sensitive care and demonstrate an understanding of traditional birthing practices in our BIPOC communities and allow the family members to be present."

Bruce McIntyre III is the founder of Save a Rose Foundation and understands better than most the importance of medical care that is attuned to the specific needs of patients. His partner, Amber Rose Isaac, died giving birth via an emergency C-section. Since then, through the work of the foundation, McIntyre has been advocating for freestanding, midwifery birthing centers. He said due to his

partner being at high risk during her pregnancy, they were unable to have a home birth with midwives. "And we weren't able to have our delivery in a birthing center setting," he said. McIntyre said the couple were therefore obliged to enter the medical system and his partner ended up passing away at the hospital. Their baby survived.

Gibson later outlined current actions her office is taking to address the issue of Black maternal mortality and morbidity in The Bronx. "First, we are restoring an important borough-wide body, the Bronx Maternal Health Consortium," she said. "And with our long-standing partnership with the Bronx Health Link, we will provide the borough with a network of doula services as well as pre and post-natal education to support Bronx mothers with the highest level of health risks."

A doula is a woman, typically without formal, obstetric training, who is employed to provide guidance and support to pregnant women during labor. Gibson later outlined the three main policy recommendations of the Bronx Maternal Health Consortium. "New York should make doula coverage statewide across New York State, on a permanent basis, and increase the reimbursement rate to match our peer states," she said.

"The New York State Department of Health should make health records truly portable, and strictly enforce hospitals and other health care facilities compliance with health record-sharing through regional health information organizations," Gibson continued. "New York State must also adopt the New York City standards for respectful care at birth as a required notification of patient rights at all hospitals and birthing facilities across The Bronx and The City of New York."

Myla Flores, a doula based in The Bronx, later discussed her new initiative, the Womb Bus, a mobile community health and wellness hub. "We need to provide families in Black and brown communities in The Bronx with immediate access to quality maternity and reproductive care," she said. "We know that we need to solve this by coming right to the communities, posting up, and having families pull up with information and resources available to them that we can connect them to."

Flores also spoke about the expected timeline for the initiative. "This wellness hub is coming at you in mid-May, and we want you to pull up to our stations, and every day of the week, Monday through Friday, for six hours of the day, we'll be there," she said. "And of those six

hours, 90 minutes are going to be a community education offering that is provided at no charge."

Flores said the five pillars of the Womb Bus are reproductive wellness and fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, infant and feeding partners, and community. She said each of the pillars will be addressed at different locations throughout The Bronx.

Paulette Henriquez, director of Bronx Health Link, was the final speaker at the event. Her organization was founded in 1998 by former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer while he was in office. According to Bronx Health Link's website, the organization "researches and reports on the health problems of Bronx residents and collaborates with other like-minded, community agencies toward the goal of good health care for all."

Henriquez shared information about one of her organization's latest initiatives. "We have a program right here with the borough president where we provide doula services and resources for pregnant women, and also provide portable cribs for many families that don't have a proper place for their infants to sleep," she said. Henriquez said anyone interested in learning more about their programs can visit their website at www.bronx.healthlink.org.

Court Orders New May 20 Redistricting Map Deadline, Primaries Postponed to Aug. 23

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A new deadline of May 20 for revised 2022 redistricting maps for the congressional and State senate districts has been ordered by the New York State Supreme Court, according to court documents filed April 23, and the 2022 primary date for congressional and State elections has been postponed to Tuesday, August 23. The court also ordered a new deadline of July 8 for receipt of overseas and military ballots for the primaries.

The orders were documented in court paperwork filed with the State Supreme Court in Steuben County. They follow an April 27 decision, announced by Chief Judge Janet DiFiore of the New York State Court of Appeals, throwing out the latest, redrawn, redistricting lines voted on by the Democrat-controlled State legislature on Feb. 2 and signed off by Gov. Kathy Hochul on Feb. 3. As part of the April 27 ruling, the New York Court of Appeals ordered new redistricting maps and had indicated a likely postponement of the June primary elections.

DiFiore shared the April 27 split opinion ruling, following months of legal wrangling amid a lawsuit filed by members of the Republican and Conservative Parties which challenged the State legislature's February vote approving the latest redrawn redistricting maps.

As reported, in 2014, New York State amended its constitution to adopt historic reforms to the redistricting process which follows each decennial census by requiring the creation of revised electoral maps by an Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC). This was to avoid what had been seen as certain undemocratic practices up to that point, such as partisan and racial gerrymandering.

Delayed due to the pandemic, 2022 was to be the first year the new independent redistricting process was to be followed with the new independent commission overseeing the process, since the adoption of the 2014 constitutional amendment, and following the 2020 census.

Due to shifts in New York's population following the census, the State lost a congressional seat and other districts were malapportioned, necessitating the redrawing of new district lines. The IRC held several virtual sessions with community residents to discuss the redistricting process over a matter of months starting in September 2021. The final Bronx County hearing on the proposed redrawn maps was held on Nov. 9, 2021. The maps/plans were submitted by the commission to the State legislature on Jan. 3.

Throughout January 2022, according to court documents, negotiations between the IRC members deteriorated, and split along party lines, the IRC was unable to agree upon consensus maps.

The legislature voted on the IRC's first set of plans, without amendment as required by the State constitution, and rejected both plans. According to the independent redistricting process, as set out in the constitutional amendment, "if



Photo courtesy of Onasill ~ Bill Badzo – Be Safe & Happy via Flickr

NEW YORK STATE Court of Appeals, Albany

[the] first set of maps [proposed by the IRC] is rejected, the IRC is required to prepare a second set that, again, would be subject to an up or down vote by the legislature."

The process further specifies that "only upon rejection of a second set of IRC maps" is the legislature free to offer amendments to the maps created by the IRC and, even then, certain restrictions around the process apply. The legislature notified the IRC of the rejection of the first set of maps, triggering the IRC's obligation to come up with — within 15 days — a second redistricting plan for the legislature's review.

On Jan. 24, the IRC announced that it was deadlocked and, as a result, would not present a second plan to the legislature. The State legislature ultimately never voted on a second set of plans by the IRC, therefore. Within a week, the Democrats in the legislature composed and enacted new congressional, senate, and assembly redistricting maps, "undisputedly without any consultation or participation by the minority Republican Party," according to court documents.

Elected representatives voted to approve the alternate maps proposed by the Democratic Party therefore and these were signed off by the governor on Feb. 3. Under those plans, Norwood fell out of Congressional District 13, represented by Rep. Adriano Espaillat and into Congressional District 15, represented by Rep. Ritchie Torres. Currently, it is unclear where the district will end up.

According to court documents, and as one house of the legislature explained during the litigation, in their view "there [was no] reason for the Democratic super-majorities in both houses of the [l]egislature to seek 'input or involvement' from the Republican minorities" regarding the development of these legislative maps, characterizing such communications as inviting "time-wasting political theater."

State Republican Party members immediately mounted a legal challenge. According to court documents, petitioners — New York voters residing in several different congressional districts — commenced the process of challenging the congressional and senate maps. Petitioners alleged that the process by which

the 2022 maps were enacted was constitutionally defective because the IRC failed to submit a second redistricting plan as required under the 2014 constitutional amendments and, as such, the legislature lacked authority to compose and enact its own plan.

Petitioners also asserted that the congressional maps were unconstitutionally gerrymandered in favor of the majority party because they both "packed" minority-party voters into a select few districts and "cracked" other pockets of those voters across multiple districts, thereby diluting the competitiveness of those districts. Democrats dispute this assertion.

According to the Court of Appeals, the IRC and the State legislature ultimately failed to follow the procedure as laid out by the State constitution. "A stalemate within the IRC resulted in a breakdown in the mandatory process for submission of electoral maps to the legislature," according to the court's opinion. "The legislature responded by creating and enacting [alternate] maps, in a nontransparent manner, controlled exclusively by the dominant political party — doing exactly what they would have done had the 2014 constitutional reforms never been passed."

In early April, a judge overruled the Feb. 2 vote by the State legislature as unconstitutional, saying the latest maps were gerrymandered by Democrats, and ordering new maps to be redrawn. Lawmakers had until April 11 to submit new maps, but on Monday, April 4, a judge issued a stay on the case, which temporarily retained the prevailing district lines in place, allowing candidates time to collect the required number of voter signatures needed to get on the ballot for the June Primaries before the deadline. The case was later heard by the New York State Court of Appeals.

On April 27, the NYS Court of Appeals declared the latest congressional and senate maps, voted on in early February by the State legislature, as void. "Judicial oversight is required to facilitate the expeditious creation of constitutionally conforming maps for use in the 2022 election and to safeguard the constitutionally protected right of New Yorkers to a fair election," the April 27 court documents read.

The New York State Court of Appeals requires the maps be redrawn with the assistance of a neutral expert, who must propose new maps by May 16, and finalize them by May 20.

In the context of the April 27 ruling, New York State Conservative Party chairman, Gerard Kassar, said, in part, "The court victory against Kathy Hochul's and the Democratic state legislators' attempted gerrymandering of New York senate and congressional lines will be heard all across America. Mrs. Hochul and her Democrat colleagues blatantly attempted to subvert the will of voters, who expressly passed a referendum to create a nonpartisan redistricting commission just a few years ago. Today, the Governor and Democratic Party leaders had their hats handed to them."

He added, "This decision legally validates what Conservatives, Republicans, editorial boards, and good government groups have been saying for months: the court-rejected lines were right out of the Tammany Hall playbook. This is a good day for democracy in New York."

On Friday, April 29, in the context of the April 27 ruling, *Norwood News* spoke briefly with Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) who said he disagreed with the April 27 ruling. Democrats have argued that their latest plan corrected historically drawn redistricting lines which, in their view, had disproportionately favored the Republican Party.

Meanwhile State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi (S.D. 34) who, as reported, is running for New York's 3rd congressional seat, based on the Feb. 2 redistricting lines, issued a statement on Friday, April 30, saying, "I entered this race because I am deeply committed to fighting for the people of NY-3 and protecting abortion and voting rights, combatting the climate crisis, and expanding access to affordable healthcare and housing. I am the most experienced, qualified, and committed candidate in NY-3, and I am staying in this race."

The CUNY Graduate Center has made available online, interactive maps, entitled Redistricting & You, at the following link: <https://newyork.redistrictingandyou.org/>. The maps enable the public to quickly determine their current congressional and State legislative districts and see how any proposed district plans will impact them.

The Redistricting & You website helps provide transparency to the redistricting process, showing how the district lines would change, and how the different district plans compare with each other. According to CUNY, no other site provides all this information in one place with an easy, engaging way to compare current and proposed districts.

The map features a slider tool to transition seamlessly between the new maps and current ones, providing a powerful interactive visual showing how the lines would change under the new plans. Move the slider left to show current lines, move it to the right to show proposed districts.

Driver: Fly Causes Crash Injuring Infant

(continued from page 1)

and collided with a tree, causing the vehicle to catch fire.

Police added, "A 3-year-old male passenger was removed to Bronx Municipal Hospital Center by private means in stable condition." A resident at the scene of the incident corroborated the approximate time.

About an hour after the crash occurred, the vehicle was still partially on the street. Residents were standing around observing the damage and taking photographs with cell phones when the driver of the car returned with family members.

A woman who identified herself as the aunt of the infant was later asked by *Norwood News* if she knew why the car had been left partially on the street where it seemed to be causing a hazard. "That's my issue," the woman said. "They can pull up your information when they want to give you a ticket, but when your car blows up, oh okay, let's just leave it there."

The family member continued, "He [the driver] was driving with his son, so he left the car there because the baby was unresponsive, and he had to take him to the hospital." She added, "Thankfully, somebody just driving by did the favor for him," explaining that the infant had been rushed to North Central Bronx Hospital.

A resident of the area then asked the family member, "Is he [the baby] okay?" The family member replied, "Ahh, pending response," to which the resident then blurted out, "Oh my God!" The resident, who recorded video of the vehicle as it went up in flames, then told the family member, "Thank God they made it out because that car blew fast."

At least one police officer at the 52nd precinct confirmed being aware of the location of the abandoned vehicle when contacted by *Norwood News* about the incident. However, witnesses report that police, a tow truck, and a Department of Sanitation truck did not arrive on the scene to tow the vehicle until later that night.

When contacted the following day, the resident, who declined to be identified, was asked by *Norwood News* if the driver had told her



Photo by David Greene

A CAR IS left partially blocking the right lane of the Grand Concourse at Miriam Street in Bedford Park, after it crashed into a tree and burst into flames on Saturday, April 30, 2022.

what happened. She said, "He told me that a bug went into his face, and he went to smack the bug and he hit the tree." She continued, "He said he was doing about 20 miles-per-hour."

She added, "He said when he first crashed, a lady was driving by and saw him crash, and they [he and the baby] were both passed out for a second, and he got up and got the baby out, and the lady drove him to the hospital... He didn't even know that the car went on fire."

During March 2022 alone, there were 1,555 motor vehicle collisions. This compares with 1,432 collisions in Manhattan, 2,817 in Brooklyn, 4,402 in Queens and 448 on Staten Island. Of the 1,555 collisions in The Bronx, 553 were fatal, 353 involved the motorist being injured, two resulted in the motorist being killed, 267 involved a passenger being injured, none involved a passenger being killed, 29 involved a cyclist being injured, none involved a cyclist being killed, 140 involved a pedestrian being injured and one involved a pedestrian being killed.

Last year, *Norwood News* reported that then NYC Department of Transportation commissioner, Hank Gutman, had been calling for the expanded use of cameras in school zones, following two fatal crashes in August 2021, one of which occurred on East Fordham Road in the Bronx.

On Saturday, Aug. 28, 2021, at approximately 8.42 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding two pedestrians who had been struck by

a vehicle at the intersection of East



Photo by David Greene

A CHILD'S CAR seat remains in the back seat of a car after it struck a tree and later burst into flames on the Grand Concourse at Miriam Street in Bedford Park on Saturday, April 30, 2022.

Fordham Road and Morris Avenue in Fordham Manor.

Upon arrival at the scene, police observed a 44-year-old woman and a 53-year-old woman, unconscious and unresponsive with trauma throughout the body. EMS also responded and transported both aided women to St. Barnabas Hospital, where the 44-year-old was pronounced deceased, and the 53-year-old was listed in stable condition.

A preliminary investigation determined that an unidentified vehicle was traveling eastbound on East Fordham Road when the driver failed to properly navigate the roadway and struck the 44-year-old

woman. The vehicle also collided with some metal items that were on the sidewalk, causing them to injure the 53-year-old woman. The driver did not remain at the scene.

The deceased was later identified as Murielle Gousse, 44, of Prospect Avenue in the Bronx.

According to State records, the relevant bills covering this expansion of the use of cameras, S5602/A6681, are still at committee level. *Norwood News* contacted local State Assembly Members Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80) and Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) at the time, as well as State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36) for comment on the pending bills.

A representative for Dinowitz later said the assemblyman is a co-sponsor of the bill and therefore, it is safe to say he is in support of its passage. Meanwhile, a representative for Fernández later said, "The assemblywoman is incredibly supportive of A6681 and will advocate for its passage in the Assembly."

Meanwhile, this year, there have been a number of road related fatalities in the North Bronx. A 51-year-old woman died from her injuries after she was hit by a car while crossing the street in the Laconia section of the East Bronx following a daylight road incident involving one vehicle on Thursday, April 28, at approximately 12.31 p.m.

A 29-year-old man died following a scooter collision in Belmont on Thursday, March 24, at approximately 10.32 p.m. A 63-year-old man also died following a road collision in the Wakefield section of The Bronx on Monday March 14, at approximately 10.06 p.m.

Police also confirmed a 41-year-old Bronx man died following a car accident in the Kingsbridge area, on Sunday, Jan. 9, at approximately 4.04 a.m. Mayor Eric Adams and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) recently announced a \$904 million investment in the "Streets Master Plan," implementing hundreds of "Vision Zero" type projects across the city to create safer pedestrian crossings, new pedestrian traffic islands, as well as raised crosswalks and dedicated turning lanes.

NYPD are continuing to investigate the April 30 crash.

Sile Moloney contributed to this story.

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