



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## GEORGE ALVAREZ POISED TO WIN IN A.D. 78



Photo courtesy of Ischia Bravo

**ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 78** candidate, George Alvarez, (in pink tie and blue shirt) listens, along with his supporters, including District 15 Councilman Oswald Feliz (to Alvaro's right) and Bronx Community Board 7 district manager, Ischia Bravo (in black top and green skirt) as Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13) addresses the group on Election Night, June 28, 2022.

**By SÍLE MOLONEY &  
JOSÉ A. GIRALT**

The biggest surprise of Election Night, June 28, after the polls closed and the Board of Elections released the ini-

tial unofficial results based on early voting and Election Day votes, was that in the Democratic primary for Assembly District 78, candidate, George Alvarez, came out on top with

42 percent, followed by incumbent, Assemblyman José Rivera, with 31 percent. Absentee votes and overseas ballots still have to be counted. As reported, Rivera has held the A.D. 78 seat

since 2000, having previously served in the Assembly from 1982 to 1987.

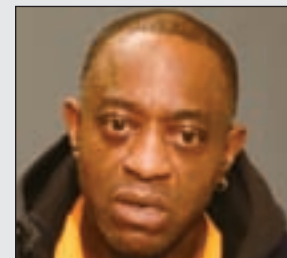
Alvarez was a 2016 candidate for the District 17 City  
*(continued on page 23)*



**Woodlawn Celebrates  
Masonry Interns**  
pg 3



**Special Ed Kids  
Go for Gold**  
pg 8



**Missing 58-Year-Old  
Norwood Man**  
pg 18

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# NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo courtesy of BMCA

**MARISA CANAPI (CENTER) IS** presented with the annual Mary Vallati Memorial Award by Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) for her gardening work, developing and maintaining a garden located along the Metro North Railroad tracks, next to Frisch Field, in the Bedford Park neighborhood. She is pictured with BMCA president, Barbara Stronczer (left) and other BMCA members.

# BMCA Honors Marisa Canapi with Mary Vallati Memorial Award

## By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) recently honored local resident, Marisa Canapi, with the annual Mary Vallati Memorial Award for community service, “for the gardening work which has brought so much joy to her neighbors,” developing and maintaining the beautiful located along the Metro North Railroad tracks, next to Frisch Field, in the Bedford Park neighborhood.

BMCA president, Barbara Stronczer, said of Capani, “She has put much time and effort into the garden and currently grows annuals and some vegetables.” Honorees are usually presented with a plaque during the last meeting of the community association’s calendar year in June, ahead of its summer recess.

Reacting to the honor, Capani said it had been a pleasure to take on what she said was a great challenge to transform the Botanical Square Community Gar-

den into a beautiful oasis, enjoyed by many. “It was my intention to bring joy to the community by providing a colorful landscape for a much needed relief, with the challenges COVID added to our lives,” she said, adding that she had received many compliments from Metro North commuters & conductors, New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) visitors, staff and locals.

Canapi said a huge amount of time had been dedicated since March 2021 to restructuring, transplanting, and nurturing plants and growing beautiful flowers and vegetables in the garden. “It is a great pleasure to gift visitors to the garden vegetables that I have grown, and also a pleasure to donate the landscaping products and plants to the garden,” she said. “The work is still ongoing as the renovation of the garden continues this year.”

Working with Canapi on the commu-

nity garden were her nephews, Xavier, 11, and Adrian, 7. As helpers, they were given an opportunity to learn to give back to the neighborhood that has been the family home since 1970. “They also get to have hands-on experience on how to grow vegetables, which is important,” Canapi said.

Vallati was a longtime community activist who was active with BMCA until her death at 101. Last year’s winner of the annual honor was Sirio Guerino of Guerinos Against Graffiti\*.

Canapi concluded, saying “Once again, I am grateful to be the recipient of the Mary Vallati Memorial Award. In this ever-transforming environment, like Mary Vallati, we need to work together to ensure that our community remains the neighborhood where families feel comfortable to raise their children, and proudly welcome friends from afar.”



# Woodlawn Prepares Next Generation of Masonry Workers

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

A group of young adults have found a path to employment that does not require knowledge of coding, social media, nor the latest technological tools. In fact, they have been trained in how to work with some of the oldest materials humans have used, namely, brick, stone, and mortar.

The Bridge to Crafts Careers – Preservation Training Program (PTP) was a 10-week course, organized by the Woodlawn Conservancy, to help young people aged 18 to 24 gain hands-on experience in cleaning monuments, learning how to cut and clean mortar joints, and repointing using traditional methods. Repointing is the process of chipping out old mortar, the bonding material seen between individual bricks or stones, and replacing it with new mortar. The most traditional method is done slowly and deliberately with a hammer and chisel.

The training extended beyond just working with a few tools though. At the completion ceremony, held in the Woolworth Chapel in Woodlawn Cemetery on May 19, Sasha Erazo spoke about the variety of training the participants received, which ranged from, “pointing to building a scaffold, operating a man-lift, bricklaying, caulking, using power tools, and [facing] my fear of heights.” There was also an additional training skill that Throggs Neck resident, Erazo, 24, learned over the course of the program. Being the sole female participant in the program, Erazo joked, “Working with all guys should be a skill in itself.”

The group of 17 interns is the



Photo by José A. Giralt

**EDWARD F. MARKIEWICZ** (AT podium) acting president of the Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy, addresses the 2022 interns of the Bridge to Crafts Careers - Preservation Training Program, inside Woolworth Chapel at Woodlawn Cemetery in The Bronx on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

eighth cohort to finish the annual program. The Woodlawn Conservancy started it back in 2015 with help from the World Monuments Fund and the International Masonry Institute. The cemetery, founded in 1863, provides an abundant training ground for those eager to learn such masonry skills.

The 400-acre burial ground has approximately 130,000 memorials, including 1,300 private family mausoleums, according to a press release. The Woodlawn website describes the memorials on site as representing “the largest and finest collection of funerary art in the country.”

Since 2015, interns and apprentices have helped restore

over 250 monuments and mausolea, developing some of the same hard skills necessary to care for the diversity of buildings in the greater metropolitan area.

The training program holds a special place for Edward F. Markiewicz, president of Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy. “It is one of the most worthwhile things that the Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn Conservancy do, and we’re very, very happy and proud to have it here,” Markiewicz said.

A reciprocal relationship exists between the cemetery and the interns as a result of the program. Markiewicz told the interns, “You should be proud too because you made contribu-



Photo by José A. Giralt

**TYRAHEL COLEMAN SINGS** “Amazing Grace” to his fellow interns during the completion ceremony of the Bridge to Crafts Careers Preservation Training Program, held inside Woolworth Chapel at Woodlawn Cemetery in The Bronx on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

tions here to the cemetery in the past 10 weeks. Your efforts help the cemetery look better than before you started.... This is a very special place and I hope you always remember that you worked here, and you improved it while you were here.”

Indeed, for the previous 142 interns who have gone through the program, they can also point to the structures and monuments with a feeling of pride and accomplishment. Susan Olsen, director of historical services at Woodlawn, reminded the newest interns of that feeling that they will soon have. “They can point to

the Woolworth building, the Chrysler building, Lincoln Center, and say ‘I did that,’” Olsen said, referring to some of the restorative work that alumni have worked on across the City.

Graduates of the program have gone on to work with the Bricklayers and Associated Craftworkers Union, Local 1 of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, independent restoration firms, as well as in the construction industry.

During his first semester in college in 2021, Tyrahel Coleman, 18, a Wakefield resident, experienced a brain aneurism. After being released from the hospital, he reassessed his future goals in February. Reconnecting with his high school guidance counselor, he became aware of The Door, a youth-oriented outreach program that helps young people find a wide range of services, including college preparation, career development, job training and placement, among many others.

The Door organizes job preparation workshops for interns at the Woodlawn program. Coleman signed up for the training at Woodlawn and immersed himself in the field of masonry work.

“We gained a new amount of knowledge about the specific amount of work,” Coleman recalls. “It was masonry and construction, which meant a new door for opportunity.” He echoed the words of great appreciation mentioned by the other interns for the thorough training they received from their instructors and craftsmen, Robert Cappiello, Gerald Dowd, Lorenzo Peralta, and Fernando Gonzalez.

Aliano Matthey, 23, commuted to Woodlawn from his home in Highbridge for the duration of the training. He shared some special memories of the course with his fellow interns. “Today, we come to meet and appreciate the goals that this program has helped us achieve. From getting new skills for potential careers to having the honor of restoring headstones and monuments for families, we have new knowledge, new skills, new friends, thus renewing ourselves,” Matthey said.

“The appreciation I have towards Susan [Olsen] and all the instructors for allowing us to work at Woodlawn Cemetery, The Door for reaching out to individuals such as myself...and the experiences that I have encountered, thank you from me, and all my fellow graduates.”



Photo by Jose A. Giralt

**INTERNS FROM THE** 2022 cohort of the Bridge to Crafts Careers Preservation Training Program pose for a photo during the completion ceremony held in Woolworth Chapel at Woodlawn Cemetery in The Bronx on Thursday, May 19, 2022.



# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



Following the latest Supreme Court decision to strike down Roe vs. Wade, we asked readers their thoughts on the issue, and what it means for the country, moving forward.



"I believe it's unjust. I kind of see it's been a long time coming, especially with the nomination of [former President Donald] Trump, and how he appointed three Supreme Court justices who are conservative, so I think America is regressing, honestly. I feel we have a lot of work to do and it's time we start listening to the people, start listening to women, and start prioritizing woman and actually care for children, because if you look at the foster care system, if you look at formula, if you look at education, you know a lot of these entities are underfunded. How can you force women to have children if you're not even helping the children that are here now? I believe Justice [Clarence] Thomas was already talking away contraception, gay marriage relationships, so I think abortion rights are just the beginning and I feel it's just a catalyst for what is to come in the future and unfortunately, it's not looking good."

Lexi Jackson,  
Allerton



"Roe v. Wade being overturned by the Supreme Court is an injustice and needs to be stopped, and we cannot go back. This has been going on for 50 years since Roe v. Wade, even prior to that, and too many women have died as a result of trying to get an abortion because of a variety of reasons. Now it's crazy; they're talking about if someone has a miscarriage...all of that kind of stuff. I mean, it's outrageous! And then, they're going to work on birth control. If you can't use birth control, then if you get pregnant... Men need to be responsible as well, and I won't say what I think. As far as women with darker skin, younger women, poor people, they can't afford to do anything else if they can't afford to have children. It's like the government, as far as having an abortion..... but once a child is born and somebody can't afford to support that child for a variety of reasons, then they can be put in jail, and the government doesn't help, it's crazy."

Bobbi Siegelbaum,  
Riverdale



"Yes, we saw them organizing amongst those who really wanted to abolish abortion rights, and they are very effective organizers. So, what we have to do is we have to out-organize them, and we have to organize ourselves for the next 50 years so that we can get this put back as a right for all humans, not just for those of us in this country, but for everybody to have the right to make their choices for themselves and their own bodies. They're going to continue to do this and what we have to know is, if you go back 400-years, this country has been working toward freedom of human rights with a long, long, long history, and so what we have to do is recognize that, and the only way that these victories are going to be won is by organizing locally, at the state level, and organizing to elect the people that we want to see in office that can stand for human rights. I wish I could say it's going to be just a year, but it's not. It's going to be a long time. My grandchildren are going to be fighting this and I don't like that. I would wish that they didn't have to. I would wish that they could spend most of their energy on other struggles, but this is an important one."

Margery Freeman,  
Riverdale



"I'm very upset with what's happened with Roe vs. Wade and I don't think the judges or government should have a say on a woman's rights. Whether they give birth or not, they're in situations, and even in cases of rape and incest, they're going to stop it [abortion] and that's outrageous. Like they said, it's been 50 years that it's been in place, and now these conservative judges decide this topic and it's not their right to do so. They'll have to protest, and they'll have to go somewhere else, to another state. They'll have to fight the system. They can't allow older, white male conservatives to make the decisions for women, because they'll never be in that situation, and it's outrageous. I hear somewhere, I don't know what state, that not even [with] rape will they be able to get an abortion; it's crazy! Donald Trump was the cause of this by selecting these judges, and when you have the money, you can go around the laws and make things work. If they suspend this [the right to abortion] and people will be going the illegal way to do these things, they could get sick and die from this. There has to be exceptions, and they should have their own choice."

Wilfredo Rivera,  
Fordham Manor



"I've kind of gotten used to the whole idea of women's rights and I was surprised to see that it was overturned, and now it's going to be up to the states, but for my mom, unfortunately, when I was little, that was never an option. By the time my mom was 19, she already had three kids, and I remember she gave me 'the birds and the bees' talk when I was 15, washing dishes, and she said, 'You'll never get an abortion.' She, like, punched me in the stomach. She was, like, that's not how we do things. So, I've kind of had that drilled into my head already, that it's no good. I always vote. I'm somebody that feels if you don't communicate, how is somebody supposed to hear you? Voting is really one of our only ways to do that."

Crystal Cruz,  
Norwood

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## Montefiore Einstein Neurosurgery



# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

## NIH/NIAID Template Banner

On Tuesday, June 28, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced that a Phase 1 clinical trial of a novel influenza vaccine was underway, inoculating healthy adult volunteers at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. The placebo-controlled trial will test the safety and ability to prompt immune responses of a candidate vaccine, BPL-1357, that was developed by NIAID researchers. The single-site trial, which can enroll up to 100 people aged 18 to 55 years old, is led by NIAID investigator, Matthew J. Memoli, M.D.

## Jacobi Receives \$10M in Capital Funding

Jacobi Medical Center, part of NYC Health + Hospitals system, was awarded \$10 million in FY 2023 capital funding through District 13 City Council Member Marjorie Velázquez and City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams to replace the hospital's hyperbaric chamber, and expand hyperbaric medicine services. In addition to the funding, Velázquez also awarded Jacobi \$286,000 to purchase new ultrasound machines and \$500,000 to acquire echocardiography ultrasound machines. According to Jacobi, the new ultrasound machines will replace the current end-of-life units at the facility which are over 11 years old. The new upgrade will prevent disruption of services due to faulty and aged equipment and offer better resolution and state-of-the-art modules that will enhance diagnostic care for patients.

## Montefiore Einstein Cancer Center To Receive \$1 Million Grant

Montefiore Einstein Cancer Center is one of four New York City Cancer Centers to receive a \$1 million SU2C grant to improve lung cancer care in underserved minority patients.

A team of lung cancer experts, led by investigators at NYU Lan-

# Norwood Daycare Center Owner Charged with Alleged Child Sexual Assault

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, June 27, that a 32-year-old Norwood man, the owner of a Norwood daycare center, has been formally charged with alleged predatory sexual assault against a child, as well as other charges for allegedly sexually assaulting a boy, and for allegedly possessing child pornography.

According to the NYPD investigation and the prosecution's case, on May 3, authorities with the U.S. Secret Service and the NYPD conducted a search inside Lina's Garden Daycare, located at 3525 Decatur Avenue, which was owned by the defendant, Silfredo Castillo Martinez, also of Decatur Avenue in Norwood, and seized 30 [electronic] devices.

According to the investigation, Castillo Martinez had allegedly downloaded 12 child pornography files to his Google drive. The files included images and videos of boys between the ages of 7 and 12, and one child who was less than a year old, officials from the Bronx District Attorney's office said. He was arrested that day, as reported by *Norwood News*.

As investigators continued to examine the files seized, they found among them a photo and video of a child that were allegedly taken inside the daycare center. According to the investigation, Castillo Martinez allegedly sexually abused the child and forced the boy to perform sexual acts on him multiple times.

In the context of the announcement, Clark said, "The defendant, a daycare owner, was supposed to keep children safe. Instead, he allegedly sexually assaulted a boy in his care. Our crime victims assistance unit has been working with the child and his family, but he has been scarred for life."

She added, "The defendant was also indicted for allegedly possessing multiple child pornography files on his computer. His alleged actions are despicable and sickening, and he cannot be caring for children in our community."

Clark said Castillo Martinez was arraigned on June 27 on two counts of predatory sexual assault against a child, two

counts of a first degree criminal sexual act, two counts of a second-degree criminal sexual act, first-degree sexual abuse, two counts of use of a child in a sexual performance, two counts of endangering the welfare of a child, five counts of promoting a sexual performance by a child, and 12 counts of possessing [footage] of a sexual performance by a child before Bronx Supreme Court Justice George Villegas. Bail was set at \$500,000 cash/\$500,000 bond/\$500,000, partially secured bond. He is due back in court on September 20.

The investigation is ongoing. Officials from the District Attorney's office said, "Anyone who may have been a victim of the defendant or has information about victims is encouraged to call the NYPD Bronx Child Abuse Squad at (929) 265-3638."

The center was closed after the Castillo Martinez was arrested. According to its website, it remains 'temporarily closed.' Under the testimonial section of the website, there was one review 3 years ago by "Imtiaz A," who wrote, "Good place." Meanwhile, the center's motto, referenced on its Instagram page, reads, "Play and learn with love."

Very little information about the center, including rates, is available on its website. A sign above the door of the center, which is advertised as a "group family" daycare center, suggests government vouchers are accepted. It also refers to "ACS" (NYC Administration for Children's Services). However, it also suggests the center is "private."

According to a statement on ACS's website, "EarlyLearn" programs are managed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE). *Norwood News* has contacted both ACS and NYC Department of Education (DOE) for information on what, if any, their involvement with the center is or was. We will follow up with any information we receive in this regard.

*Norwood News* attempted to speak to some of the neighbors and parents at the center in May, without much suc-

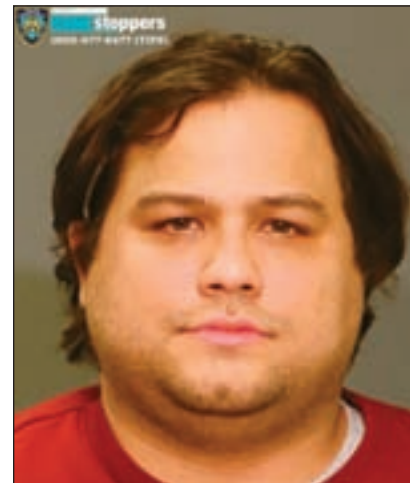


Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**SILFREDO A. CASTILLO MARTINEZ**, 32, of Decatur Avenue has been been charged with various crimes related to child sexual abuse and pornography.

cess. Some parents seemed to be, initially, unaware of the arrest of Castillo Martinez.

The case is being prosecuted by assistant district attorney, Carissa Caukin, of the child abuse/sex crimes bureau, under the supervision of Danielle Pascale and Johanna Hernandez, deputy chiefs of the child abuse/sex crimes bureau, and Mimi Mairs, chief of the child abuse/sex crimes bureau, and under the overall supervision of Adrienne Giunta, deputy chief of the special victims division, and Joseph Muroff, chief of the special victims division.

Clark thanked assistant district attorney, Rachael Baughman, of the child abuse/sex crimes bureau, and trial preparation assistants, Simone Chin and Elaina Clarke, both with the child abuse sex crimes bureau.

She also thanked special agents of the U.S. Secret Service, the internet crimes against children task force; Detective Ralfi Hernandez, Detective Anthony Rodriguez and Lieutenant Felix Rivera of the NYPD computer crimes unit; and Detective Ariel Florentino of the NYPD special victims child squad.

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

gone Health's Perlmutter Cancer Center have received a three-year, \$1 million grant from Stand Up To Cancer® (SU2C) to bring technology-enabled immunotherapy monitoring to under-represented patient populations. The grant will establish the Lung Cancer Health Equity SU2C Catalyst® Research Team.

Partners in the initiative include Tisch Cancer Institute, Montefiore Einstein Cancer Center, and Colum-

bia's Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The grant is made possible the support of Bristol Myers Squibb and is a part of SU2C's Health Equity Initiative. Announced in 2020, the initiative focuses on increasing diversity in cancer clinical trials, initiating advocacy group collaborations and awareness campaigns, and funding research aimed at improving cancer outcomes and screening rates in medically underserved communi-

ties.

The team will use an artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted smartphone and web-based app to monitor the side effects of immunotherapy treatment in a highly diverse population of people in New York City with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

Underserved minority patients with NSCLC treated with immunotherapy face numerous barriers to using technology to report adverse effects. The project aims to

evaluate barriers to the adoption of technology, determine the impact of using technology-enabled remote monitoring, and enhance the overall quality of care for these patients.

To accomplish this, the four institutions will enact a community outreach plan, involving community physicians, patient advocates, and other community leaders to implement and conduct the study.



# Celebrating June at Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

By EMILY SAWAKED

Brightly colored decorations and a bounce house full of joyful children made one Kingsbridge Heights location the most exciting part of the neighborhood to be in earlier this month. With banners celebrating Juneteenth and Pride alike, the 9th Annual Neighborhood Festival hosted by Kingsbridge Heights Community Center [KHCC] involved a lot of planning by the center's team. While taking place on a smaller scale than in previous pre-pandemic years, the annual celebration was still a success.

An event that usually takes up the entire block where the center is located, at 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the borough, this year, the celebration on Friday, June 17, was contained within the grounds of the center, itself. Around it were various booths dedicated to photos, composting, balloon animals and of course, plenty of food. All were occupied by families who streamed in and out through the surrounding fence. There was even a station for kids to play video games together.

"I was responsible for most of the photobooth," said Shubhra Mishra, communications director at the center. She explained how the center's different departments each came up with a specific activity for people to enjoy at the festival.

Margaret Della, the center's executive director, told Norwood News, "It's a months-long planning [process]. We have multiple divisions within KHCC... so those folks all take time out of their busy schedules to make this event happen."

The work put into the event was obvious from the number of activities available to the food and decorations. Some free gifts were also handed out. On a smaller



Photo by Emily Sawaked

**KINGSBRIDGE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CENTER** members gather for a photo in front of the building on Friday, June 17, 2022 during the center's summer celebration in Kingsbridge Heights.

scale, there were pins and bracelets but for those in need, work clothes for job interviews and professional positions were also available. The clothes, according to Mishra and Kadiah Caban, youth operations director at the center, were the result of a previous clothing drive held by the center. Prom dresses and tuxedos for students unable to afford them and who were about to graduate high school were also made available.

"It is a complete team effort," said Caban, in reference to the festival organization. "We really use it as a time to come together. It's so easy for us to feel siloed because of the different buildings, the different departments, the different sites. But this event is really a time for all the agencies to come together and put ourselves out, so that we can support the community."

The importance of the annual festival extended to celebrating Juneteenth and Pride Month. "As a community center, as a nonprofit, we feel it's best to make sure the community knows that we are allies, and that we support all young people, all human beings," Caban said. "We use this event to show them that."

KHCC employees also make sure that uplifting all marginalized groups is part of their daily programs. This is the second time they have hosted the festival in June and thus, the second time ever that they have used the event to celebrate both Juneteenth and Pride together.

Aside from Juneteenth and Pride, the event was a way to reconnect with the community, after a few years of social distancing. Della said, "It's really important for the community to come together for a celebratory event. The news just barrages us with how terrible the world is, and this is just a great opportunity for us to come together."

Also at the event, and amid his reelection campaign for Senatorial District 33, was State Sen. Gustavo Rivera. The senator said it was important for him to be present because he said he always supports KHCC, praising the center's repre-

sentatives for the work they do to solve problems like food shortages and the opioid epidemic in the local community.

Rivera added that he was also saddened because "Kingsbridge Heights, according to the redistricting, will no longer be within my jurisdiction, even though I'm about two blocks away from it." Indeed, the senator seemed greatly displeased with what has been generally regarded as a redistricting debacle.

He did admit, however, that the pro-

cess was affording him the chance to serve new parts of The Bronx, including Norwood, and said he looked forward to that.

Indeed, with all the confusion that resulted from the long, drawn-out redistricting process, the wave of rallies being organized to combat gun violence and the focus on summer primaries, the KHCC festival seemed more pertinent than ever, especially for those hosting the event.

Many parents said that they enjoyed themselves, and though Norwood News was unable to speak with the children who attended the event, it was clear from the amount of temporary tattoos, video game matches, and balloon sword duels that they were all enjoying themselves.

There were also learning opportunities for both adults and kids on how to be more sustainable at the composting booth, as well as understanding what "safe spaces" were, using rainbows in the context of Pride Month.

"We're all together here," said Edili Almonte, one of the center's employees. "We are here because of Pride Month [and Juneteenth]. We're an organization that cares about kids and their wellbeing."

Indeed, spreading awareness about social issues and having a good time were the main goals of the celebration. According to Mishra, there will be more, similar events taking place this year, including their annual, Halloween-themed Harvest Fest. If anyone is looking to celebrate in a safe space, the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center is the place to be.



Photo by Emily Sawaked

**A WOMAN MAKES** balloon animal during the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center summer celebration in Kingsbridge Heights on Friday, June 17, 2022.

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# Special Education Students Go for Gold

By EMILY SAWAKED

Cheers wafted through the air on the field outside the New York Institute for Special Education in Pelham Parkway on Thursday, June 2, as special education students of all ages competed against one another for a gold medal.

The competitions consisted of track courses, shotput, softball throws, and long and short jumps, with the students split up into teams, designated by colors. The excitement of the day was clear judging from the determination and joy expressed on the young athletes' faces.

Adolescents participating in the institute's "readiness program" to 12th grade took part in a series of modified physical games which mirror those included in an annual sports tournament organized by the Eastern Athletic Association of the Blind [EAAB], a collective of schools for the blind.

According to the APE [Adapted Physical Education] teachers at The New York Institute for Special Education, which is located at 999 Pelham Parkway North, students participate in swimming, wrestling, cheerleading, goal ball, and track and field.

Since the start of the pandemic, however, the EAAB has been unable to hold the tournament, which usually consists of a weekend-long event, hosted at individual schools. The students would usually travel with coaches, aides, and teachers to take part, but starting last year, the institute adopted a modified version of the tournament.

Although this contingency effort was appreciated by most students, according to the institute's assistant principal, Jason Laracuente, some still felt a little disheartened at missing out on the usual trip away for the EAAB tournament.

"Some of our students who participated in the past [in EAAB] feel like they're not participating now [to the same degree]," Laracuente said. "They felt as if they're missing out."

Another issue was that some students had to wait until they



Photo by Emily Sawaked

**STUDENT, JAMILIA CONDE**, jumps in the long jump competition, competing for the yellow team, at the New York Institute for Special Education in the Pelham Parkway section of The Bronx on Thursday, June 2, 2022.



Photo by Emily Sawaked

**A STUDENT THROWS** a shotput ball during a sports competition at the New York Institute for Special Education in the Pelham Parkway section of The Bronx on Thursday, June 2, 2022.



Photo by Emily Sawaked

**A STUDENT JUMPS** as part of the short jump competition at the New York Institute for Special Education in the Pelham Parkway section of The Bronx on Thursday, June 2, 2022.

though, students from different classes were able to intermingle and compete both alongside and against one another. On the warm day of fun activities, there were no walls acting as barriers to separate them.

"It's a great opportunity to test our strength," said Cho. "It's nice to get to have a chance when, in the real world, we don't." He also mentioned that the school hosts a lot of fun, pleasant activities for them, which he acknowledged showed how much the school officials care for them. "It's like a family here," he said.

The familial atmosphere, along with some friendly, competitive rivalry, permeated the air on the day as kids cheered on their friends and were, in turn, cheered on by others. With coaching, encouragement, and

jokes from the faculty, the event was, overall, one that sparked much joy.

For the students who are visually impaired, Margherita Manz, the principal, explained, "We have guides running with the kids." For those participating in the events which required throwing like the shotput, the staff banged sticks together to let the students know in which direction they should throw. For the jumping type activities, aides stood beside and in front of the students to guide them.

From throwing to running, the students showcased all the practice they had put in and which they had started about a month before the event took place, according to Carina Cam and Christopher Pabisch, two APE teachers at the institute.

"For the past month, we were coming out, practicing the jumps..." Pabisch said. "Certain ones.....there's a hop, step, jump...it's typical for them [to encounter some difficulty] to get the footing down."

Indeed, some students are still learning the jump, according to Cam, who has been an APE teacher for 5 years. She said the students' practice in the lead up to the tournament also included figuring out in which events the students would compete.

"We identified the appropriate events for them," Cam said, mentioning that the APEs worked individually with the students on this matter. She added that a good portion of her work was also trying to ready the kids to compete in front of people, noting that trying to make them feel comfortable in themselves and with an audience was sometimes a bit of a challenge, especially given the limited time they had to prepare. "My main thing I tell the kids is that they're only competing against themselves; they should be proud of themselves," she said.

APE classes usually comprise six kids. This, according to Pabisch, can also have its downsides, even though coaches can work one-on-one with the students. "If there's 2 or 3 kids absent, we can't really do much," he said. "The classes are so small, and you can't combine them."

The competitions which made up the tournament were also part of the students' curriculum. Aside from the enjoyment the kids derived from participating in the activities, they also helped improve their motor skills, grip, and focus.

"The kids had a willingness not only to compete, but to do better," Pabisch said. He added that he felt that, overall, the day had been a success, not only in terms of the kids' progress but also in terms of their happiness. "It feels amazing," he said. Cam agreed. "If the kids are smiling, then we did our job." There were smiles all around.





## Addressing Childhood Trauma as a Community

By DR. MIGUELINA GERMAN

In 2016, Montefiore Medical Group primary care offices began to screen children for the ten types of trauma that can impact their long-term health. Some examples include physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect, and witnessing violence. Today, we've screened more than 12,000 children and have found that 30 percent experienced an adverse event or trauma that could impact their future mental health.

The last two years have been stressful for families as kids studied at home, socialized less, and mourned the loss of loved ones. These challenges have only added on to ongoing concerns over finances, housing, and food that many families in The Bronx face. As mental health professionals, we are also concerned about the impact of rising violence, shootings and hate crimes in our community.

Traumas impact individuals differently based on risk factors, and they can have both long-term and short-term affects. In the short-term, children could have difficulty at school, not paying attention or focusing in the classroom. In the years that follow, those who experience trauma are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use disorders. Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Infectious Diseases (CDC) shows a connection between trauma and the development of heart disease, cancer and alcohol use disorder.

At Montefiore Medical Group, we have created screening protocols and programs to identify children who have experienced trauma, and work with them to minimize the negative impacts of such trauma. Through our primary care offices, we can directly connect children with mental health experts, who use evidence-based therapies to help these children. Kids are resilient, and swift mental health support can lessen the likelihood of long-term impacts, while giving them and their families the tools to manage future challenges.

We use a trauma-informed care approach or TIC, which starts by acknowledging that chronic stress and trauma can impact behaviors, attitudes, academics, or health. TIC is based on the understanding that people are *more likely than not* to have had past traumas. TIC training teaches tools to identify signs of trauma, assess the level of traumatic stress, and helps build healthy coping strategies and skills to reduce negative impacts both on people and on our communities overall. TIC is an approach that can be used in many fields and settings. Another way we can reach children with this approach is in the classroom. We can empower teachers and administrators during times of crisis to identify and assist with children's mental health needs.

So, what can TIC look like in the classroom? Fo-



cusing on cultural humility is a good place to start. Children often experience stress due to bullying, microaggressions, or targeted attacks. Trauma Informed Care in the classroom equips educators with a powerful tool to uncover trauma and to intervene. It means asking questions gently, when the child feels comfortable, uncovering the cause of their behavior.

For example, when a student is unwilling to present an oral exam, educators could privately speak with the student about their reasons for non-participation. During this conversation, educators may find that students do prepare their presentations for such exams, but due to being mocked by others for their accent, they may feel self-conscious, anxious, and wanting to avoid the exam.

When teachers are equipped with TIC, they can

ask the right questions and get to the heart of the issues their students are facing. In addition, people trained in TIC can share simple strategies for emotional control and self-soothing, like breathing exercises or visual imagery.

Working together, we can all do our part to help address the socioemotional and psychological needs of children in our community. Families, teachers, healthcare providers can all play a role in lessening the impact of trauma on young lives and help them heal and grow from their experience.

*Dr. Miguelina German is director of pediatric behavioral health services at Montefiore Medical Group and associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics & Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.*



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## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY &amp; DAVID GREENE



### Edenwald: NYPD Appeal for Help with Alleged Sex Crimes

The NYPD is asking for the public's help in providing further information on the person seen in the accompanying photo above who was arrested for various alleged sex-related crimes. Police said sometime between June 14 and June 19, 2022, inside the home of the arrested individual, he allegedly sexually assaulted at least two adult females.

Police said Kemoy Royal, 32, of 3716 Pratt Avenue from the Edenwald section of The Bronx, was arrested on Sunday, June 19, at 6.27 a.m. in connection with the incidents. According to the NYPD, the first sex crime took place on Wednesday, June 15, at around 4 p.m. "Police were alerted to an attempted rape of a 26-year-old female victim," police officials said. Royal was charged with attempted rape, sexual abuse, and assault.

Police said on Sunday, June 19, at around 6.20 a.m., police were alerted to the rape of a 24-year-old victim. Royal was charged with two counts of rape, two counts of strangulation, a criminal sex act, unlawful imprisonment, menacing, assault, criminal possession of a weapon and sexual abuse.

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

### Off-Duty NYPD Sergeant Arrested for Assault in The Bronx

An off-duty, NYPD sergeant has been arrested in the Bronx's 45<sup>th</sup> precinct. On Tuesday, June 28, at 6.58 a.m., Gregory Smith, 42, was charged with strangulation, assault, and harassment.

Smith is assigned to the 41st precinct in The Bronx

which serves Hunts Point and Longwood. According to his file, he became a police officer in 2011 and was promoted to sergeant in November 2020. Under disciplinary history, a note in his file reads, "This officer does not have any applicable entries."

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



### Norwood: Man Stabbed on East 204th Street

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the person seen in the accompanying photo above who is sought for questioning in connection to an assault that occurred in Norwood. Police said on Thursday, June 2, at approximately 2.40 p.m., at 361 East 204th Street, a 32-year-old man was approached by the unknown assailant with whom the victim got into a verbal dispute.

The assailant subsequently produced a knife and stabbed the victim in the abdomen before fleeing westbound, on foot, on East 204th Street. "The victim was transported by EMS to Saint Barnabas Hospital in stable condition," police officials said.

### Woman Shot in Norwood

A woman sitting in the front passenger seat of a vehicle in Norwood was the first of five people to be shot during a string of non-fatal, daytime shootings that

took place across the borough within a 12-hour duration, beginning on Thursday, June 16.

Police were first called to 3585 Jerome Avenue at East 215th Street in Norwood at 7:11 a.m. on June 16. Officials say the unidentified, 26-year-old female victim was shot in the leg as she sat in a parked vehicle near Van Cortlandt Park.

She was rushed to Montefiore Hospital where she was listed in "stable" condition. Police reported no arrests in the case but were looking for the gunman who, according to police sources, was described as a male with a dark complexion. The other shootings occurred in Mott Haven, Soundview, Concourse Village and in Woodstock.

### Bedford Park: Woman & Two Dogs Struck in Hit & Run

Police said a 55-year-old woman was brought to hospital and one of her two dogs died after they were struck in a hit and run incident in Bedford Park. On Tuesday, June 14, at approximately 9.07 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a motor vehicle collision, involving a pedestrian who had been struck at the intersection of Mosholu Parkway and Paul Avenue, located in the 52nd precinct.

"Upon arrival, officers observed a 55-year-old female pedestrian with a contusion to the forehead and complaint of pain to her left hand," police said. "EMS responded to the location and transported the aided female to St. Barnabas Hospital, in stable condition."

Police said further investigation by the NYPD Highway District Collision Investigation Squad determined a 2018 Audi sedan had been traveling along Mosholu Parkway and through the intersection of Paul Avenue, when the vehicle struck the female pedestrian, who was attempting to cross Mosholu Parkway at a marked crosswalk.

"After striking the pedestrian, the vehicle continued to travel along Mosholu Parkway," police said, adding that there are no arrests and the investigation remains ongoing.

The incident was also reported on the Citizens' App and users reported that a dog had also been hit and died at the scene. *Norwood News* asked police if they could confirm if this was the case. A police official responded, saying, "Two dogs involved, one deceased."

*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/> or on Twitter @NYPD-Tips.*

*All calls are strictly confidential.*

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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY EMILY SAWAKED & SÍLE MOLONEY



## COVID-19 UPDATES

### Omicron BA.4 and BA.5

The Omicron BA.2 (stealth) variant continues to be the dominant coronavirus strain in the U.S. since March, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). The Omicron variant comprises several lineages and sub-lineages, including BA.1, BA.1.1, BA.2, BA.4 and BA.5.

### Current Risk Rating

As of June 28, citywide COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths were decreasing, though cases were increasing, according to NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The alert level is medium as of the same date.

The citywide percent positive rate was 9.95 percent, up from the mid-June rate of 7 percent approximately. As of June 28, the 7-day percentage positive rate in ZIP code 10468, covering Fordham / Kingsbridge / University Heights, was 8.55 percent (up from 5.08 percent in mid-June), according to DOHMH.

In ZIP code 10467, covering Allerton / Norwood / Pelham Parkway / Williamsbridge, it was 10.03 percent (up from 6.81 percent as of mid-June). In ZIP code 10458, covering Belmont / Fordham University / Kingsbridge, it was 6.47 percent (up from 5.61 percent in mid-June). Meanwhile, in ZIP code 10461, covering Morris Park, Pelham Bay and Westchester Square, it was the highest in the borough at 14.03 percent.

### Managing the Pandemic

NYC offers free, at-home, COVID-19 testing for all New Yorkers. The service is available 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and appointments can be scheduled by calling (929) 298-9400. Testing kits are also available at many public libraries.

A telemedicine service is available to ascertain whether New Yorkers who contract the variant need access to lifesaving COVID-19 medication or not. New Yorkers who test positive for COVID-19 can receive treatment that helps prevent severe disease and hospitalization. Such treatment can be delivered the same day to homes, curtailing the spread of the virus and keeping the city open.

On May 25, the NYC Test & Trace Corps announced it had expanded its COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidance Tool, which provides New Yorkers direct access to order care packages to help isolate safely and receive COVID-19 therapeutics, including oral antiviral prescriptions and monoclonal antibody treatments. In addition to the resource portal, the quarantine and isolation guidance tool offers personalized guidance to New Yorkers who are exposed to, tested positive for, or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. For more information, go to <https://covid19.nychealthandhospitals.org/COVID19help> or call the NYC Test & Trace Corps COVID Hotline at 212-COVID19.

### COVID-19 Updates & Key Info

All eligible New Yorkers, 6 months and older, should get vaccinated and get their booster dose, when eligible. If you are experiencing symptoms or were exposed, get tested. If you test positive, stay home, and talk to your healthcare provider about treatment.

Masks are still required in healthcare facilities, nursing homes, correction facilities, domestic violence shelters, and on public transit. All travelers, domestic and international, should continue to follow all CDC travel requirements. Get the latest COVID-19 information at:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

### August Primary Elections 2022

As reported, the New York Supreme Court ordered

Congressional and State Senate elections to be held Tuesday, August 23, 2022, amid the latest court decisions around redistricting which followed the 2020 Census. A court-appointed special master approved new redistricting maps for the congressional and State senate districts in New York State on May 20.

The CUNY Graduate Center has made available an online comparison map at the following link: <https://newyork.redistrictingandyou.org/>. The map enables the public to quickly determine their current congressional and State legislative districts and to see how the latest redistricting maps impact them.

Meanwhile, a further court decision on June 10 determined that the Assembly Districts approved by the New York State legislature in February 2022, are finally invalid "based on procedural infirmity," according to court documents, and therefore, new assembly district maps will finally be redrawn by a court-appointed special master but not until 2024.

New Yorkers voted, based on the latest assembly district maps approved in February 2022, in the June 28 primary elections for statewide offices, the State assembly, for judicial delegates, alternates and local offices.

### DOB Virtual Sessions

The New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) is hosting live, bi-weekly, online Q&A sessions for property owners, registered design professionals, filing representatives and other licensees/registrants, providing a space for attendees to ask job specific questions for filings in DOB NOW, the Buildings Information System (BIS), or general questions about permits, construction codes, zoning regulations, sign-offs, certificates of occupancy, places of assembly, equipment installations, violations and civil penalties, etc. For more information on the July 21 event, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dob-bronx-borough-qa-session-tickets-311826620817?aff=erelexpmlt>.

### Waste Management Plan

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) now requires owners and developers of new large residential buildings to submit a Waste Management Plan. This requirement is found in a new rule effective April 1, 2022. Visit [nyc.gov/wastemanagementplan](https://nyc.gov/wastemanagementplan) to learn more and submit your plan.

### Free Haircuts

SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center is offering free haircuts by appointment. Taking place Mondays through Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Bronxites can call the following number if interested: 718-530-7043. The haircuts will take place at the following location: SUNY Bronx EOC, 1666 Bathgate Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457. Vaccination or a negative test within three days is required to receive a haircut.

### Free Parenting and Prenatal Classes

The Parenting Resource Center at Catholic Guardian Services, located at 3356 Fort Independence St., Bronx, NY 10463, is providing free, parenting, and prenatal classes for new and expecting parents. Classes will be held in person and will be taught in English and Spanish. Parents that complete the classes will be given a free crib. The four classes will be on breastfeeding, stress or trauma, safe sleep, and women's health. To sign up, contact Marie at (718) 828-0300 Ext. 209.

### Street Closures

NYC Department of Design & Construction (DDC) is advising residents of a bee-line bus stop relocation on Jerome Avenue to facilitate work on the 48-inch trunk water main on Jerome Avenue from June 13 through August 31. Residents are asked to walk 300 ft. along Jerome Avenue to a new bus stop for Buses 4 and 20.

In addition, NYS Department of Transportation officials said there will be some changes to traffic flow on the Major Deegan Expressway (MDE). The department advises motorists of long-term, right travel lane closures on the southbound MDE (I-87) in the vicinity of Exit 3 (East 138th Street/Madison Avenue Bridge) and on northbound MDE in the vicinity of Exit 3 (Grand Concourse/East 138th Street) in the Bronx, on or about Tuesday, April 19, through approximately fall of 2024.

### Free Summer Meals

NYC Schools is providing free, summer breakfast and lunch for everyone 18 years old and younger under from June 28 to September 2 at select public schools, pools, and parks. No registration, documentation or ID is required. Find a location at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/summermeals>.

### New York City Districting Commission Public Hearings

New York City Districting Commission will hold public, in-person and virtual hearings on the upcoming redistricting process for the City Council districts on July 6 at Hostos Community College in The Bronx, and on July 7, at Borough Hall on Staten Island.

A Zoom connection will be posted on the commission's website before the meetings. Translators will be made available upon advance request. The Commission is responsible for drawing 51 new City Council maps based on the results of the 2020 census. Besides public hearings, the Commission is also soliciting public comments at these hearings, via Zoom, by email, by web portal and via QR codes.

Email testimony can be submitted to [publictestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov](mailto:publictestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov) also. The commission can be followed on Twitter at @districtingNYC and on LinkedIn at NYC Districting Commission. The commission's website is [nyc.gov/districting](https://nyc.gov/districting).

The commission will vote on new council maps on July 18. Further public hearings will be held on Aug. 15, 16, 17, 18 & 22. The commission will vote on council maps on Sept. 15 and will submit the final plan to the City Council on Sept. 16.

### NYCHA-CUNY Scholarships

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)-City University of New York (CUNY) resident scholarships for \$1,000 are now open for applications. Go to [nyc.gov/nycha-cuny](https://nyc.gov/nycha-cuny) for more information.

Notice from NYCHA / Con Ed re People Who Use Life-Support Equipment

New York City Housing Authority is advising residents that if they use life-support equipment or if someone in their household does, it's important to let Con Edison know. Con Edison keeps a record of such individuals to contact them in case of emergency and make sure they are safe. Call 1-877-58-CONED (1-877-582-6633) or visit <https://on.nyc.gov/3tScCuR> to complete the online form. Please have your 15-digit account number available when you call. Life-support equipment conditions require certification that must be updated annually.

### NYC Care

NYC Care is a health care access program that guarantees low-cost and no-cost services to New Yorkers who do not qualify for or cannot afford health insurance. All NYC Care services are provided through NYC Health + Hospitals. With NYC Care, residents can get a unique membership card to access health services, choose their own doctor, and get affordable medications. Immigrants no longer have to have lived in NYC for six months to be eligible for NYC Care. Go to <https://www.nyccare.nyc/> to learn more.



# George Alvarez Poised to Win in A.D. 78

(continued from page 1)

Council seat, currently held by Councilman Rafael Salamanca. Alvarez was defeated in the special election on February 23, that year. Previously, he was a 2014 Democratic candidate for Assembly District 79.

According to his campaign website, Alvarez is an Afro-Dominicano, a long-time resident of The Bronx, educated on two continents, and a local entrepreneur and job creator. He is a Bronx Community Board 1 member and is vice president of the Bronx Democratic Party.

Asked for his reaction to his early lead knowing that Rivera has held the seat since 2000, the candidate later told Norwood News, "Jose Rivera was one of the first Latinos that worked to organize our Bronx community that has been left behind by so many. His work in community organizing in The Bronx brought much needed awareness and attention to the issues the Bronx faced decades ago when 'The Bronx was burning.' I thank Jose Rivera for his commitment to our borough and look forward to building from the path he trailblazed."

We asked Alvarez what in his opinion, swayed the Election Night vote in his favor, based on the initial results. "My team and I worked tirelessly to knock on every door and speak to every person," he said. "We did not just speak to registered voters, or just double or triple prime voters, but interacted with everyone in a community like ours, speaking to people directly, listening to their concerns, and word of mouth about you as a candidate matters more than anything else."

Asked what he felt were the factors that prompted people show up and vote for him in this election, Alvarez said, "I am running on a platform of issues that affect the people of the 78th district every day: better schools, safer streets and improving our quality of life. If you speak to anyone on the street here, and ask them what impacts them, what do they



Photo by José A. Giralt

**AFTER CASTING THEIR** votes at P.S. 8, Deena Debeaux (center) and daughter Nia Salley, 18, (right) proudly wear "I Voted" stickers outside the Valentine Avenue entrance to the Bedford Park school on Tuesday, June 28, 2022. Daughter Nakai, 13, (left) wears a "I'm a Future Voter" sticker.

care about, or what would they like to see improved, they will mention one of those issues, and I made a commitment to the voters that I would work to improve those very same things."

According to his website, Alvarez was awarded a bachelor's degree in computer science from PUCMM, a top-rated university in the Dominican Republic, and a master's degree in logistics from EOI, a prestigious school of industrial organization in Madrid, Spain, and studied cybersecurity at Harvard University VPAL office.

He ran as a "fighter for immigrant families, racial justice, affordable housing, and good jobs."

Should he advance to win the A.D. 78 seat, we asked Alvarez what his priorities would be for A.D. 78. "Improving and expanding access to education for our children, making our streets safer from crime, especially gun violence, raising the quality of life for everyone," he replied. "This means ensuring our community in The Bronx receives its fair share of services, as much as any other part

of our City and State."

We also asked Alvarez about his election campaign strategy. He said, "The 78th district is a close-knit community, made up of many people who have called this place their home for decades. When you speak to one voter, you are also indirectly speaking to their friends and family who also live here. This means that you must build trust with voters by offering both holistic and tangible solutions to the difficulties that the working class faces here."

He continued, "Families

want better schools for their children, they want to improve public safety for when they go out with family and friends, and when they get to their destination, they do not want to see garbage on the streets or in the parks, meaning a higher quality of life. These are the things I made a commitment to them to fight for."

Asked if he was confident he would make it over the line, in terms of the remaining absentee votes and overseas votes, he said, "We must let the democratic process play out, first and foremost, always. However, I am confident that I will be the Democratic nominee for the 78th Assembly district when each vote is counted."

Alvarez had been endorsed by Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), and District 15 Councilman Oswald Feliz, among others. We asked him how important those endorsements were to his campaign, in his opinion.

"Endorsements matter if the endorser is someone who holds credibility with your voters," he said. "I am proud that the endorsements I received were from people who have that credibility within my community. These are leaders who have worked non-stop to deliver for the people of The Bronx and the voters know that. With their support, I am further committed to delivering to the same high standards for the people of the 78th district."

Rivera last won his A.D. 78 seat in 2020 with over 86 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, the other A.D. 78 candidate in the race, Emmanuel Martinez, who chair of Bronx Community Board 7, won 25 percent of the vote. Reacting to the election night results, Martinez told Norwood News, "I am very proud of the campaign we waged, and the issues we raised. I want to thank my sponsors, who worked tirelessly for my campaign. Rest assured I will continue to fight for all the resi-

(continued on page 19)





## Letters To The Editor

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

### Independence and Freedom for All this July 4th

When we think about our independence and freedom in the United States, I wonder how many people think of the freedom of farmed animals. There are currently 1.6 billion animals in our nation's 25,000 factory farms who often never see the light of day.

Cows, chickens, pigs and more are subjected to unnecessary breeding, overfeeding, abuse, and slaughter each and every day. The majority of these animals are raised in environments unfit for any beings and there seems to be no end in sight.

But releasing animals from cages, crates, and the psychological torment of Big Ag and slaughterhouses can happen and is truly a step towards independence for all. When we stop treating animals as commodities, overall suffering in the world reduces, the Earth can heal, pandemic and antibiotic-resistance risks are reduced, and human health will improve.

Luckily, there are options. Browse any grocery store or food co-op, and you'll uncover a variety of delicious, and nutritious, plant-based burgers and more. Companies like Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods, Gardein, and

Field Roast are showing up at cookouts across the country and are proving that this 4th of July, there can be freedom for all.

**Niles Neusbaum**  
**Williamsbridge**

### The Sleaze that is Clarence Thomas

Does the name Emma Mae Martin ring a bell? Back in July 24, 1991, The Chicago Tribune's Clarence Page wrote about this hard-working woman who supported her family for decades with low-wage jobs. But for approximately five years, she stopped working and went on welfare to take care of an elderly aunt who had a stroke.

But she had an opportunistic brother who wanted to impress conservatives. So, he told a story of her sister developing a dependency on welfare. That brother was Clarence Thomas. The fact that he would use his sister to score political points just shows what a low life he is. Thomas also criticizes affirmative action. But he's a product of it. His predecessor, Thurgood Marshall, was the first, Black Supreme Court Justice. But unlike Thomas, Marshall was a brilliant lawyer. Thomas' "qualification" that met President George H.W. Bush's approval was that he was a Black conservative.

Now Thomas is part of the group of judges striking down Roe v. Wade. Now, even if one accepts the questionable assertion that the government should protect the lives of fertilized eggs, other problems remain. Should a

woman be forced to give birth to a child resulting from rape or incest? What if the mother's life is in danger from the pregnancy? What if the fetus is dead? Many abortion bans have no exceptions.

Now Thomas has written that the court should reconsider a ruling, ensuring the right to birth control. How do you protect a life that hasn't been created? Now if it's purely science, then it's impossible to create every potential life. How do you fertilize every egg in a woman's body? On the other hand, let's say you believe in Christianity. Certainly, a God who impregnates a virgin to give birth to the Savior will guarantee that everybody who is supposed to be born will be born.

But Thomas gets more ridiculous. He wants to take away the right of same-sex marriage and even same-sex relationships. You can't even argue that this is to ensure more births. What would be next? Would he have straight couples who engage in sex acts that can't produce children arrested?

Thomas even wants to take away the right to birth control. Would he have men arrested for pulling out of a woman's vagina before ejaculation? Will the sale of condoms be outlawed? This sounds especially intrusive considering conservatives claim to oppose too much government interference in people's lives. When judges are picked for blindly political or ideological reasons, you wind up with ones whose ethics and rationality are dubious.

**Richard Warren,**  
**Van Cortlandt Village**

# Crackdown Underway on Quality-of-Life Crime within 52nd Precinct

**BY DAVID GREENE**

As residents in Norwood, Bedford Park and other communities across the borough complain of blaring, amplified music, illegal cookouts, and double-parked vehicles, heard and seen at all hours of the night, the 52nd Precinct's commanding officer announced he now has two teams specifically working on these issues.

As the NYPD continues to respond to the complaints across the precinct, Deputy Inspector Jeremy Scheublin told residents during the monthly 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting, held at North Central Bronx Hospital on Wednesday, June 23, that help was on the way.

Scheublin told the packed room, "Quality of life is the conversation, right? As it is at every meeting, everybody wants to know what we're going to do in regards to quality-of-life conditions. So, we established two teams so far, to address specific conditions within this command." He added, "Enforcement is not always the answer. We don't want to arrest our way out of issues."

Commanding officer of the 52nd Precinct for 8 months now, Scheublin continued, "You're in your house and somebody downstairs is creating a condition where you're not getting

your rest, we're going to address that. We may try to warn them. Sometimes they don't listen, and sometimes enforcement is necessary." Scheublin said that the command has seen a nearly 300 percent increase in criminal court summonses regarding quality-of-life issues.

During the meeting, residents of Loring Place North and Hall of Fame Terrace in the southwest section of the command, commended Scheublin and his officers on their efforts on their blocks. But one resident from Decatur Avenue and East 198th Street complained, "I have 3 kids and where we live, it's just like a nightclub on the street."

The meeting identified other trouble spots like East Kingsbridge Road and East 194th Street, where a group has allegedly taken over a vacant home. *Norwood News* has also received complaints from residents about other troubled spots, including Paul Avenue along the Jerome Park Reservoir and East Gun Hill Road between Perry and Decatur Avenue.

During the meeting, community activist, Sirio Guerino, asked about sprinkler caps for the open fire hydrants which he said he believes "leads to barbecuing and hanging out." He added that he felt the Depart-

ment of Environmental Protection (DEP) were not doing enough enforcement.

*Norwood News* contacted DEP for comment, providing some photos as examples. A spokesperson responded, saying, "The first photo shows a 'fully open' fire hydrant - this is illegal. This should be reported to 311 immediately so a DEP crew can be dispatched to close it. The second photo shows a sprinkler cap installed on a hydrant. Sprinkler caps are legal and can be obtained free of charge at any FDNY firehouse."

On June 25, Mosholu Parkway resident, Crystal Cruz, told *Norwood News*, "I'm used to seeing people in the park just cooking, but now I see people bring cars for music and they'll have a little grill and set up chairs on the sidewalk, and they're cooking right on the sidewalk." Cruz added, "I get so surprised because the precinct is right there, and they're still doing these things."

A pair of Parks Department enforcement officers were observed speaking with a group of about 30 people who had been playing amplified music and had set up a 'bouncy house' for the children on Saturday, June 11, at East Mosholu Parkway North, near Webster Avenue, directly across from the 52nd



Photo by David Greene

**PARKS DEPARTMENT ENFORCEMENT** officers stop a group gathered along East Mosholu Parkway North, between Webster Avenue and Hull Avenue, in Bedford Park due to amplified music and a children's bouncy house on Saturday, June 11, 2022.

Precinct.

One Parks Department official was asked by *Norwood News* if they were there due to the loud music. A female officer replied, "Well, yeah, we told them to lower it and also the bouncy-house." The group complied with the order to lower the music, but there seemed to be a discussion regarding the group deflating the bouncy house which apparently is not allowed on Parks de-

partment property.

From simple observations, the loud music, open fire hydrants and barbecuing has begun earlier this year than in years passed and they also appear more frequent, with illegal cookouts spotted in Williamsbridge Oval Park on June 18 and 19, and at least three separate cookouts observed in Bronx Park in the 49th Precinct on June 19.

# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

A **Media Grant: Exploring Emotions Thru Media** series will be held at the Bronx Library Center (BLC), 310 East Kingsbridge Road at Briggs Avenue on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 p.m. from June 6 to Aug. 29 for teens aged 13 to 17 and emerging adults who want to explore the complexity of emotion through photography and / or videography. BLC will provide gear and teach you photography basics and analysis, and videography and editing basics. Work will be exhibited at BLC in August. For more information, contact New York Public Library on (718) 579-4244 or visit: [nypl.org/events](https://www.nypl.org/events).

Want to work with other writers? Commit to a writing schedule? Practice your craft through writing prompts? Receive and discuss information and tips on writing, reading, editing, and revising? Join the weekly meetings of the **Kingsbridge Writing Circle**, held online at the

Kingsbridge Library every Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon. Share your unpublished drafts in an intimate setting. Get and give feedback. Writers of all genres and styles are welcome to participate. The program is for those aged 18 and up.

You must register to receive the Google Meet meeting code which will be emailed the day before. Register at <https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2022/06/30/kingsbridge-writing-circle>.

Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.) Northwest is holding a **Peace BBQ** on July 16 at 193rd Street between Jerome Avenue and Morris Avenue. (No time was provided.) All are welcome. Any questions, please text (646) 937-3754.

Become the DJ as you learn to use audio editing software at an **Intro to Audio Production** class. Record your own music, poetry, stories, or lyrics while learning about the recording process at the same time on Friday, July 1, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Media Lab at

Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. For more information, visit <https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2022/07/01/intro-to-audio-production>.

## KIDS

On Thursday, June 30, at 5 p.m., at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center in Norwood, a **Line Dancing Youth Edition** session will be held. This program consists of a non-stop, rhythmic cardio conditioning class, utilizing different genres of dance and basic bodyweight exercises; all set to high-energy music designed to give you a full body workout. Dance at your own pace. All levels are welcome.

The movie, Megamind, will be screened in the open air as part of the summer **Movies Under the Stars** series on Thursday, June 30, at 9 p.m. at Pelham Bay Park, Bronx.

## MUSIC

On Saturday, July 16, at 8 p.m. the **Bronx Music Heritage Center (BMHC)**, located at 1303 Louis Nine Boulevard, Bronx NY 10459, will host a celebration of women who changed the Blues, including the music of Sister Rosetta Thorpe, Memphis Minnie, Smith Big Mama Thorton and more. The event features the vocals of Bronx daughters,

Monica Hope & Jenn Jade Ledesna. A pre-concert discussion by Jackie Lennon about Billie Holiday's Bronx connection will also take place.

BMHC is also hosting the **"Rock the Bronx"** summer concert series on the plaza outside the Bronx Music Hall (438 East 163rd Street). The series features emerging artists from the borough and the surrounding area that span various genres bringing a variety of new sounds to the South Bronx throughout the summer. Visit: <https://www.thisisbronxmusic.org> for more information.

## MOVEMENT

Come and enjoy some **Outdoor Fun and Fitness** at St. James Park, 2530 Jerome Avenue at East 192 Street, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., from June 1 to Sept. 30. This program includes spin classes, stretching, sports activities and games. The program is free and open to the public. For more information, visit: [nyc.gov/parks](https://www.nyc.gov/parks).

**NYC Parks** outdoor, public pools reopened on June 28. Free summer breakfast and lunch is also available at public pools from June 28 to Sept. 2. Visit: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/summer-meals> for more information.

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## Public and Community Meetings

The 52<sup>nd</sup> **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., sometimes physically and sometimes virtually. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email list. Proof of vaccination is 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 in September after the summer hiatus and is targeted to be held physically but this is to be confirmed. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The meetings are usually held on the **first Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m.** The next meeting will be held on July 6. For further details, contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## Norwood: Search for 58-Year-Old Missing Man

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating a 58-year-old man from Norwood, reported missing on Sunday, June 26. Jerome Hooks, of 3569 Dekalb Avenue in Norwood, was last seen on Friday, June, 3, at around 10.15 a.m. inside his home. He is described as male, 5 feet, 5 inches tall, weighs 155 pounds, has a dark complexion and a stocky build, black hair, and brown eyes. His clothing description was unknown.

Anyone with information regarding this missing person is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the CrimeStoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypd-online.org/> or on Twitter @NYPD-Tips. All calls are strictly confidential.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**JEROME HOOKS, OF** 3569 Dekalb Avenue in Norwood, is reported missing. He was last seen on Friday, June, 3, at around 10.15 a.m. inside his home.



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# George Alvarez Poised to Win in A.D. 78

(continued from page 13)

dents of the 78th assembly district.”

Norwood News attempted to reach out to Rivera’s campaign for comment but were unsuccessful.

The 78th district broadly covers an area running from Fordham Manor in the West of the borough through Bedford Park, Belmont, the New York Botanical Garden and Bronx Zoo.

The June 28 election was the first of two separate Primary Election Days being held in 2022 due to longstanding issues and lawsuits following the redistricting process. Primaries for State Senate and Congressional races will be held on August 23.

In the Democratic Primary for Assembly District 81, incumbent assemblyman, Jeffrey Dinowitz, led on Election Night with 68 percent of the vote, while his challenger, mutual aid organizer, Jessica Altagracia Woolford, won 31 percent.

Reacting to the news, Dinowitz said, “I am humbled to continue serving the people of Riverdale, Norwood, Kingsbridge, Van Cortlandt Village, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Woodlawn, and Wakefield in the Assembly. It has been the greatest honor to serve the community that raised me, that raised my family. I’ve spent my career fighting for our progressive values and delivering, and I can’t wait to continue delivering for the North Bronx in Albany.”

Norwood News attempted to reach Altagracia-Woolford for comment on the unofficial Election Night results, but were unsuccessful.

In the Republican primary for governor, radio presenter and candidate, Rob Astorino garnered 14 percent of the vote. Astorino had previously organized a rally outside Dinowitz’s constituency office to oppose the assemblyman’s stance on a COVID-19 vaccine mandate in public schools. Some protestors at the rally carried anti-Semitic imagery, including yellow stars and swastikas. The rally was widely condemned by officials across the State.

Democratic Assembly Member Nathalie Fernandez (A.D. 80) ends her current term on Jan. 1, 2023. As reported, Fernandez is running for election to New York Senate to represent District 34, a seat currently held by State Sen. Ales-

sandra Biaggi who, in turn, is currently running for Congress in New York’s 17th congressional district. Fernandez is on the ballot in the Democratic primary on Aug. 23.

The assemblywoman was also running for re-election to State Assembly in District 80. The June 28 Democratic and Working Families Party primaries for this office were canceled.

In Assembly District 82, incumbent Assemblyman Michael Benedetto led with 56 percent of the vote on Election Night, followed by Jonathan Soto with 35 percent. The district covers the neighborhoods of Baychester, City Island, Co-Op City, Country Club, Locust Point, Pelham Bay, and Throggs Neck. We reached out to Benedetto for comment but did not receive an immediate response.

Asked for his reaction to the Election Night results in the district, Soto told Norwood News, “Our team is energized by the thousands of voters who affirmed our vision of whole communities and safe streets for the East Bronx. Though we came up short this election, our movement will apply sustained pressure to pass the Build Public Renewables Act, Good Cause Eviction and end mayoral control of schools.”

The candidate added, “It’s key to note that Bronx Democrats, specifically, Speaker Carl Heastie, and party boss, Jamaal Bailey, welcomed a tsunami of racist, Republican-funded attacks to smear a Latino candidate, and protect Benedetto, a white man who took Trump’s money and protected the release of his tax returns.” Norwood News reached out to the Bronx Democrats, including Bailey, as chair, for comment on Soto’s statements. We did not receive an immediate response.

Soto concluded, “We look forward to building in our communities and holding Benedetto accountable to working families in the East Bronx.”

In the Democratic female district leader’s race for A.D. 78, Maria Gonzalez led with 58 percent of the vote, followed by Jasmin Clavasquin-Cruz with 24 percent.

In the Democratic female district leader’s race for A.D. 81, Abigail Martin led with 53 percent of the vote, followed by Sara Liss with 32 percent. As

reported, Martin ran for City Council in District 11 in 2021, winning 14 percent of the vote but ultimately losing to now Councilman Eric Dinowitz.

Martin told Norwood News following Election Night, “Although we are still waiting for the results of [the] election to be finalized, the preliminary results show that Democrats in the Northwest Bronx were ready for new leadership. Now more than ever, we need every Democrat to be engaged and involved in democracy. I look forward to making good on my campaign promises, and continuing to build community as we fight for our core values.”

Martin added, “I want to thank my running mates, Ramdat Singh, Aaron Stayman and Morgan Evers, and all of our supporters, who worked day and night to reach voters in every corner of our district. Most importantly, I would like to thank every voter who came out to be part of the democratic process to bring positive change to our community.”

In the Democratic county committee 043 race in A.D. 81, Fiona Crisp led with 24 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. In the Democratic county committee 042 race in A.D. 81, Elizabeth Dwyer led with 25 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only.

In the Democratic county committee 035 race in A.D. 81, Beverly Fettman led with 26 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. In the Democratic county committee 025 race, in A.D. 81, Jessica Haller led with 26 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. Haller also previously ran in the 2021 District 11 City Council race, placing third in the special election that year and ultimately losing out to now City Councilman Eric Dinowitz.

In the Democratic race for delegate for the judicial convention in A.D. 78, Jose Rivera led with 11 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. In the Democratic male state committee race in A.D. 81, Michael Hel-

ler led with 56 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. Heller is the president of the Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club.

In the Democratic male state committee race in A.D. 78, Rafael Matos led with 70 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. In the Democratic female state committee race in A.D. 81, Morgan Evers led with 37 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only.

In the Democratic female district leader race in A.D. 78, Rachel Miller-Bradshaw led with 56 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. Miller-Bradshaw is an active member of Friends of Poe Park, as well as being president of the political organization, Northwest Bronx Democrats for Change, who have actively campaigned for Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY13), Mayor Eric Adams, and District 15 City Councilman Oswald Feliz.

In the Democratic male district leader race in A.D. 81, Ramdat Singh led with 51 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only. In the Democratic male district leader primary race in A.D. 78, Angel Santana led with 76 percent of the vote on Election Night, June 28, 2022, based on early voting and Election Day votes only.

At P.S. 94, Kings College poll site in Norwood, poll site coordinator, David Agront, told Norwood News on Election Night that about 300 people arrived to vote at the site only to realize their usual voting site had been changed. Their voting cards indicated this, but often, they had not opened their cards until they got to their usual polling site. Many were not happy. Norwood News contacted NYC Board of Elections (BOE) for comment on the matter since a similar issue involving Tracey Towers polling site had been put down to a clerical error by the BOE. Redistricting did not affect P.S. 94, since it still falls within A.D. 81. We did not receive an immediate response from BOE.



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