



# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 35, No 19 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • OCTOBER 6-19, 2022

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## NEIGHBORS CLASH OVER ORCHARD BEACH SHELTER



Photo by David Greene

**CITY ISLAND RESIDENT** and counter demonstrator, Steve Swieciki (left), holds up a sign disparaging a group of Republicans who opposed the construction of a temporary shelter for asylum seekers at Orchard Beach parking lot, as he is confronted by angry members of the group on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022. The site is being moved to Randall's Island.

By **DAVID GREENE**

A contentious battle pitting neighbor against neighbor has apparently been averted, as the

temporary shelter being built to house 1,000 male asylum seekers at Orchard Beach parking lot has been halted. Mayor Eric

Adams did an about-face on Monday, Oct. 3 and is now moving the controversial shelter to Randall's Island.

Workers had begun erecting several massive tents on Monday, Sept. 26, but three demonstra-  
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N R W TO CORTLANDT STREET

# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 35, No. 18

Norwood News is published bi-weekly on Thursdays by Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC)  
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# Elections 2022: Phyllis Nastasio on Education, Crime and NYCHA Housing

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Raised in Arthur Avenue, Pelham Parkway resident, Phyllis “Tiz” Nastasio is running as a Republican/Conservative candidate in the November general election in A.D. 80 to succeed Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez. She sat down with *Norwood News* to discuss her candidacy and what she hopes to achieve in office while serving some or all of the neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Morris Park, Van Nest, Pelham Parkway, Pelham Gardens, and Allerton.

A teacher for 21 years, Nastasio’s number one issue is education. “We’re not doing the job for our children,” she said. “Public schools get \$26,000 per student, per year, and the kids are not at reading level, they’re not in math, they’re behind so many other states. Even within New York State’s upstate, their numbers are higher. Why? Why are we failing our children?”

Nastasio teaches at a Catholic school. “Our tuition is just under \$7,000 a year. That’s all we have to spend, and we’re educating children. Our children are successful; they’re coming out of their schools knowing how to read, knowing how to do basic math. We need to see where the money’s going because it’s not the teachers that are failing, it’s the system that’s failing. There’s a lot of money there; it’s not going into the right place. It’s not in the classrooms.”

*Norwood News* referenced recent comments by State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) who had called for the reimbursement of public funding owed to public schools over several years, after a successful lawsuit by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity found the State had been historically underfunding public schools.

Rivera said legislators secured a reimbursement in the State budget and therefore questioned why, when this money flowed back to the City, the City education budget was cut. *Norwood News* contacted the City for comment, but did not receive a response.

In the meantime, the city council voted to reverse the education budget, alleging they were misled by Adams administration officials as to the reason for the cuts. The matter is now in court awaiting a final decision. We asked Nastasio if she had a comment on the matter.

“I don’t think we need to put more money into it,” she said. “I think we need to know where the money that’s there is going because it’s not going to the kids. It’s not going to the classrooms. So, I think we need to audit.”

We asked if public records were not already available in this regard. “Not really,” she said. “They say how much each individual school is getting, but it’s not broken down. In my opinion, I think we



Photo by Sile Moloney

**PHYLLIS “TIZ” NASTASIO**, candidate for A.D. 80, with Sheila Sanchez, NorthWest Bronx Democrats president, at the Keeper’s House in Norwood on Friday, Sept. 30, 2022

have too much going into administration, and not enough going into the classrooms. I mean, we don’t need five assistant principals in every school.”

Nastasio said she also felt students need to be taught basic home economics. “They need to know how to cook,” she said. “They need to know how to do basic things, how to care for themselves. We don’t have that anymore, and I think that is progressively affecting the families. If you teach them when they’re in school, then the family unit will be stronger.”

Asked for her thoughts on an alternate curriculum and mayoral control over schools, Nastasio said she didn’t really think it mattered if it was State or City-led, but it had to be looked at, adding that she would like to see both parents and teachers involved in the decision, because they best knew the students’ needs.

“I think we should have a voucher system where parents can go to a Catholic school if they choose to,” she said, adding that in Charter and Catholic schools, parents had this input already, and she was for this approach for public schools also.

“In my school, we have every religion. It’s not just Catholic anymore. We registered a Jewish student this year. We have plenty of Muslim students, so it’s not because when we teach religion, we teach our religion. Everybody is welcomed,” she said.

We mentioned the six Catholic schools that had closed across the Bronx during the pandemic and asked how things were going since then in terms of serving students. “Our numbers are low; people are moving,” she said. “We have to stop the mass exodus out of New York City.”

Nastasio’s other top priority is crime. “The two of them are connected,” she said. “We need trade schools [to] teach our kids a trade so they can get a job. If they’re working, they’re not committing crimes.

You educate your children, you lower your crime level.”

We referenced the mayor’s August announcement at Bronx Community College about a new workforce development initiative which matches training needs to industry and construction jobs.

“It needs to start at the high school level,” Nastasio said, adding that the “SHOP” class, which covered plumbing and engineering training needed to be brought back into schools, after being axed in the ‘80s. She said even when her own son wanted to go to trade school, he had to go as far as Queens to find a course.

On criminal justice, the candidate said some sort of bail reform *was* needed, but she alleged the law later swung too far to one side. “We didn’t need to let people out there commit crimes without bail. What we needed was to reform the court system. Kalief Browder sat in jail for two years, awaiting trial.”

She continued, “That’s insane. That’s inhumane,” referring to the Bronx teen who was arrested over an alleged backpack theft which was never proven, and who later died by suicide after his release from Rikers Island, where he had been held because he couldn’t afford bail. He was also segregated from other detainees for a duration. “That kid’s life was ruined,” Nastasio said. “So, the court system needs to be expanded, not the bail system.”

Nastasio’s third top concern was NYCHA housing. “They’re a disgrace; people have ceilings falling on them,” she said. “The mold in these places... no working elevators, appliances that don’t work. Nobody has to live in those conditions. They pay rent to live there. They need to be treated as property people. You know what? It blows my mind that someone the city is the worst landlord that we have.

(continued on page 15)

# NWBCCC Pushes for Local Input on Armory's Next Phase

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Members of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) are organizing, yet again, to ensure residents living in the shadow of the majestic Kingsbridge Armory will have a say in how the iconic, city-owned structure will finally be used. Community members came from all over The Bronx, but most were from the Armory's surrounding area.

As reported, developers behind the most recent proposal, the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC), ended up in a court battle with the City in early 2022, after it was alleged the developer, KNIC LLC, did not deliver on agreed financing arrangements for the project. The developer had disputed these claims.

Juan Nuñez was introduced as the "new Armory leader" for NWBCCC at a press conference held on Aug. 25 outside the landmark building. He wasted no time in describing his role in its future. "[We're here] to launch the next phase of the Kingsbridge Armory campaign," he said. The conversation revolved around keeping the Armory in The Bronx for the Bronx community and providing jobs to people in the community.

"First, I want [to] say to you what we've been doing so far to ensure that this process is inclusive, transparent, and accountable," he added, before switching to Spanish. He listed local stakeholders, including Laborers Local 79, New Day Church, Nos Quedamos, and others who were invested in the final outcome of the project, both during its development and upon completion.

"We began to source a set of values and principles that should guide

this process and help decide what will ultimately go into that armory," Nuñez continued.

An art installation with a distinctive yellow and black color motif had been placed on the chain-linked fence, protecting access to the building. Messages in English and Spanish read, "What if we owned it?" and "Our Bronx, Our Lives, Our Solutions" and "Our Armory!"

Two young girls were seen sitting on the ground drawing hearts on a poster, the implication being that the project should be rooted in love of community.

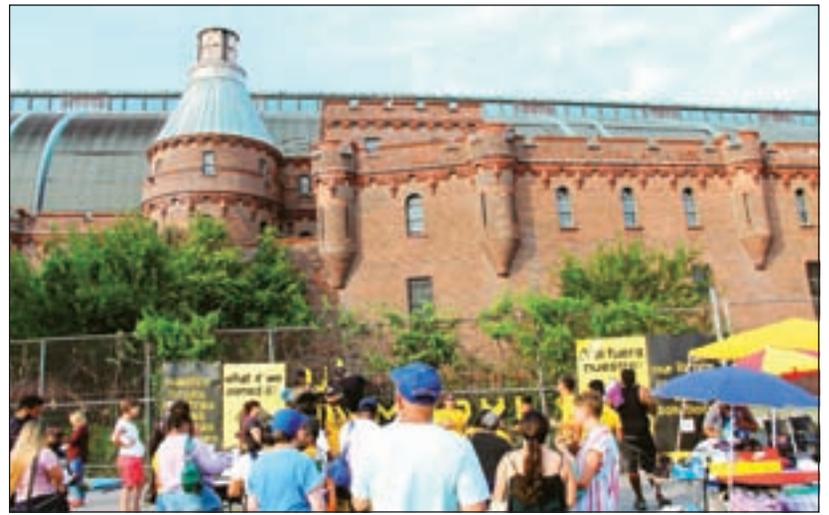
The process Nuñez refers to includes collecting surveys from local businesses, residents, and especially from young people. On the other end of the process is New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which has been handling the governmental procedures around the development and is responsible for producing a "public vision document" to help arrive at a final decision on the Armory's future.

For its part, the EDC is also collecting information on best usage plans for the building. On its website, EDC has a page dedicated to the Armory, which reads, "In the coming months, in collaboration with our community partners, we will hold community meetings and visioning sessions, start an online public engagement survey, and lead small group discussions and walking tours to help us shape a community-driven future for the Kingsbridge Armory."

One such walking tour took place with various elected officials on July 8, and included Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, State Sen.

Photo by Miriam Quiñones  
**A PRESS CONFERENCE**  
 and rally is organized by Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition at the Kingsbridge Armory in Kingsbridge Heights on Thursday Aug. 25 2022.

Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), District 14 City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez, among others. Also present was the district manager for Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), Ischia  
*(continued on page 11)*



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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on asylum seekers being housed at a temporary shelter that was being built on the Orchard Beach parking lot in the Northeast Bronx, but has been moved to Randall's Island.



"I think it's completely irresponsible for anybody to be putting something over there based on the fact that it's in a flood zone, based on the fact that there's no form of transportation for these people, which is pretty much inhumane. Why do they always consider The Bronx the dumping ground for society's problems? They started on Monday, and I saw them. I wonder what's going to happen when the hurricane from Florida is going to come up here and it's going to flood out that place. Find another place for these people and not do it in The Bronx! I am done with dumping in The Bronx."

**Renata Scervo,**  
Indian Village



"I'm not familiar with this issue, but I did look at articles in regard to it, and I feel that the City focuses so much on those coming in, but not necessarily helping people that are already here. During the pandemic, I had a lot of issues with people who [were] mentally challenged in my neighborhood and that's what made me leave Harlem for University Heights. But I notice there's been a slow rebuild in regard to the area, people being on the trains... It's unfortunate. I look at these scenarios and I feel bad for the people that are coming in, immigrants, refugees. I feel bad for them because they don't have that support system."

**Joseph Landon,**  
University Heights



"It's great! I'm glad. I hope they build more! I'm very serious... Why are they calling people criminals? Of course, I support them. We've been having a lot of storms. Okay, they do what they've got to do. They can speak up; it's freedom of speech, man. I may be a lone soldier, but all these people have their roots in other countries. They definitely forgot that."

**Robert Diaz,**  
Soundview



"My thoughts are simply that this is just another thing that has been basically snuck into a community. I mean, we've been battling a lot of things without prior knowledge, and this is just another one of those things. We know from just the dynamic globally as well as nationally, that this is just another group being used as pawns in a political theater, which just defies words. It defies logic to use human beings as pawns. Communities just want to have a say in what goes on in their neighborhoods."

**George Hav,**  
Spencer Estates



"It was sprung on the community, but we need our elected leaders, from Gov. [Kathy] Hochul down to make sure to say this is not the appropriate place, not to be using them as pawns. Also, they crossed over the border illegally; have it done the right way! Have them vetted so that the community understands who is here. Every unvetted single man that's here has crossed over illegally, and then claimed asylum. That's not how it works. So, we're asking our elected officials to do the right thing. Do stuff by law to protect them and also to protect the community."

**Bernadette Ferrara,**  
Van Nest

*Editor's Note: Bernadette Ferrara previously ran for city council in the 2021 Democratic Primary in District 15. Mayor Eric Adams announced on Sept. 22 that "the City will open Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers to support the hundreds of asylum seekers arriving in New York City each day from Texas and other border states." Norwood News asked City officials for comment on Ferrara's allegations that the immigrants crossed the border illegally. We were referred to a federal factsheet on asylum seekers.*



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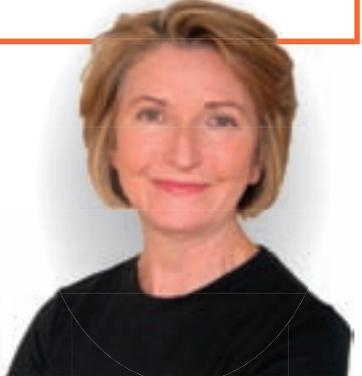
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# Nonprofit, KISS, Provides Overdose Training in St. James Park

By DAVID GREENE

In efforts to combat the alarming number of opioid overdose deaths in The Bronx, one local nonprofit, recently held an overdose prevention event at St. James Park in Fordham Manor, during which 240 “Narcan” kits were distributed, and training was provided on how to use it to save a life during an overdose situation.

In 2020, a total of 1,580 New Yorkers died from a fentanyl-involved overdose, according to the City’s health department (DOH). Meanwhile, the rate of overdose death per 100,000 people was 75.3 percent for the Hunts Point-Mott Haven neighborhoods, compared with the citywide rate of 30.5 percent.

During the third quarter of 2021, city-wide, there were 709 unintentional drug overdose deaths, compared to 552 deaths in Q3 2020, according to DOH. This period also recorded the highest number of overdose deaths in a single quarter compared with any quarter on record.

City health officials said they expect the final number of overdose deaths in 2021 (not yet known as of Oct. 4, 2022) to exceed those in 2020, a year which saw the highest number of overdoses in the City since records began in 2000.

Members of the nonprofit, “Keep It Simple and Safe” (KISS), set up tables inside the park, located at East 192nd Street and Jerome Avenue on Wednesday, Aug. 31, to distribute the Narcan kits and other resources. Narcan is a potentially lifesaving medication designed to help reverse the effects of an opioid overdose in minutes. Since most opioid overdoses occur in the home, according to the manufacturers, and are most often witnessed, having a Narcan rescue kit nearby can make all the difference.

The group also distributed opioid test strips, COVID-19 test kits, while members of the FDNY, the City’s health department, Montefiore Health System and Bronx Lebanon Hospital, along with other partnering groups were on hand with other giveaways and health related information.

Walter Bell of Kingsbridge Road-based, KISS, told *Norwood News*, “This has been a fantastic turnout.” He added, “It’s not a concert. This is a conscious event, an event with cause and meaning. This is a family event where children can come.”

He continued, “We already have 175 people trained on how to use Narcan.” Upon completion of the training, participants were presented with a certificate. Bell added, “This is about saving lives;



Photo by David Greene

**NARCAN KIT TRAINER**, Jesus Aquino (left), and Walter Bell of nonprofit, KISS, host a free, overdose prevention training event at St. James Park in Fordham Manor on Aug. 31, 2022.

it’s not about playing games.”

Having promoted the event in recent issues of *Norwood News*, as well as on the group’s website, Bell said people had come from as far away as Brooklyn for the training.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and City health commissioner, Dr. Ashwin Vasan, announced new measures to reduce the number of overdoses on Friday, Aug. 5, by expanding access to technology that allows people to, quickly and safely, test pre-obtained drugs for traces of fentanyl and other potentially lethal substances. This is taking place at sites running syringe service programs (SSP), co-located at overdose prevention centers (OPC).

Speaking on the opioid epidemic, Bell said, “Overdose episodes are happening all over this country.” He chose St. James Park for the event after a member of the 52nd Precinct community affairs team told him about the high number of overdoses on the east side of Jerome Avenue, as well as by Kingsbridge Road.

Bell added, “It’s happening repeatedly, so this is what we’re trying to prevent.”

Besides the training and the distribution of the free Narcan kits, KISS also distributed the opioid test strips. “They can test the product before they use it and if it comes back positive for fentanyl, they can make a conscious decision on whether or not to use that,” Bell said.

With help from State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), KISS was granted permission to set up a portable stage provided by the Parks Department on the day, where a DJ spun records between testimonials by six former drug abusers of their stories of recovery, including one who had experienced just one day of sobriety and another who had been drug-free for 15 years.

Bell explained that KISS is a “harm reduction program,” and a member of the NYS Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (OOPP). He hopes the nonprofit will be soon approved for a needle-exchange program also. KISS has a mobile van which circulates around the parks and streets of Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge and Fordham, bringing help to where it’s most needed.

(continued on page 6)

## NYBG

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# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY



Photo courtesy of Montefiore Health System

**DR. PHILIP OZUAH, MD, PhD**, is CEO of Montefiore Medicine, with honoree, Doug Condit, on the occasion of Condit's retirement, effective Sept. 30, 2022.

## Doug Condit Retires after 50 Years

Norwood resident, Doug Condit, physician assistant in cardiothoracic/vascular surgery at Montefiore Medical Center, retired on Sept. 30 after 50 years of service. Dr. Philip Ozuah, CEO of Montefiore Medicine, said the two shared some old stories on the occasion of Condit's retirement. "Doug was the person we called to come to the rescue of young kids with open heart surgery when I was training 33 years ago," he said. "He's retiring...after 50 years! Very best wishes to you, Doug!!"

Condit's dog-walking and membership of both Bronx Community Board 7's park committee and the "Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval" has kept him busy over the years, though he said the latter group kind of disappeared. He was chair of its skateboard committee and was instrumental in obtaining around \$400,000 in funding for the current skate park. He thanks former Norwood News editor, David Cruz, for a front-page editorial on why the Oval needed a skate park. He has been honored too by former State Sen. Ruth Hassell-Thompson (S.D. 36), who entered his name in the NYS Hall of Fame as a Vietnam combat veteran who continued to volunteer his time. Doug's words of wisdom on his retirement? "Don't get sick!"

**Barbara Gibson LaGrant Retires from BX CB12**



Photo by David Greene

**A MEMBER OF** Keep It Simple and Safe (KISS) hands out information on opioid addiction and the Narcan prevention program at St. James Park on Aug. 31, 2022.

## Nonprofit, KISS, Provides Overdose Training in St. James Park

*from page 5)*

Explaining how bad the opioid epidemic is in The Bronx, Bell concluded, "We're number one and number two, with the highest rate of overdose fatalities in New York City. Hunts Point and Tremont are the top two areas of overdose episodes in New York City, more than the other boroughs," he said, referring to information from both DOH and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

KISS case manager, Jesus Aquino,

provided the actual overdose prevention training on the day. "We had four classes and combined, we had about 30 people who were interested in learning how to dispense it and use it," he said. [Bell later explained that 240 people received kits and were shown how to use them though they did not all participate in the complete training, which also covered other matters. 35 people underwent the complete training by the end of the event.]

As part of that training, Aquino

showed participants the signs to look out for in an overdose scenario, fielded questions on people's rights in such a scenario, as well as the potential liability involved in dispensing Narcan.

Aquino, who volunteered his time at the St. James Park event, said, "The response was excellent. We had the Spanish and English community wanting information and wanting to learn what's going on."

FDNY firefighter, Chris Marin, *(continued on page 8)*

Mrs. Barbara Gibson LaGrant retired from Bronx Community Board 12 after 20 years of service on Sept. 22. "My great passion was to be a part of Bronx Community Board 12, learning and serving the Northeast community," the retired teacher, author, and community activist said, adding she enjoyed meeting the various Bronx politicians, and being recognized at the many Bronx parades and events over the years, along with her organization, ALFRBA, of which she is founder and CEO.

She said she was grateful for the many awards she has received for her dedication to Bronx children and parents, thanking the Granby Family, the Yankees Fund and the Williamsbridge chapter of the

N.A.A.C.P. She also acknowledged Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (A.D. 83) for funding which helped her produce fliers for the rap she wrote at the age of 81, on etiquette for COVID-19 prevention, "Kidz, There's a Virus in the Land," featured in *Norwood News* in February 2021.



Photo by David Greene  
**BARBARA GIBSON LAGRANT** hands out fliers for her rap song on COVID-19 prevention outside Bethlehem Church of God Holiness at East 216<sup>th</sup> Street in Olinville on Feb. 5, 2021.

## Diversity in the FDNY

On Sept. 19, the City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management held an oversight hearing entitled, "Evaluating Diversity and Inclusion in the FDNY." Council representatives said the hearing was a follow-up on what the department had accomplished regarding their plans to increase diversity and explore "the historical culture of harassment and discrimination of women and minorities in the department." Several bills related to improving the culture for women and minorities in fire houses, and diversity within the FDNY have been proposed.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, who

attended the hearing, said, "City agencies should reflect the great diversity of our city and the FDNY is no exception. We are dedicated to working with the FDNY, DCAS (NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services) and the City's Commission on Human Rights to build a more diverse work force in every sector in our city and to dismantle systemic barriers that prevent women and people of color from joining our first responders." Gibson thanked Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, District 12 Council Member Kevin Riley, the NYC Black, Latino, Asian Caucus, the Vulcan Society and all who supported the bills and their commitment to equity.

# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Women are encouraged to make an appointment to get screened. Bronxites can also participate in an NYC Health+Hospitals/NCB walk in support of Breast Cancer Awareness on Sunday, Oct. 23, at 8 a.m. starting at Bay Blaza Shopping Center, 200 Baychester Avenue, Bronx, NY 10475. All funds raised go to the American Cancer Society. Email [Vanessa.Eaddy@nychcc.org](mailto:Vanessa.Eaddy@nychcc.org) for more information. Go to <https://bit.ly/3fd6njY> to register.

Learn more about women's health services offered by NYC H+H at <https://bit.ly/3D5kpxF>. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), sometimes breast cancer shows no symptoms nor warning signs, not even a lump. Screening is important. If you have trouble paying for a breast cancer screening, the CDC offers free or low-cost screenings to women who qualify. Go to: <https://bit.ly/3NP4A0f>.

## Heat Season

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) announced on Oct. 1 the start of the City's "heat season," during which all residential building owners are required to maintain indoor temperatures at 68 degrees when outdoor temperatures fall below 55 degrees during the day. Indoor temperatures must also be a minimum of 62 degrees overnight, regardless of outdoor temperatures. Building owners are legally required to provide hot water at 120 degrees year-round.

## HPD in your District

District 11 City Council Eric Dinowitz and Bronx Community Board 8 are hosting an outreach event with NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD) on Thursday, Oct. 6, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at West 231st Street and Broadway, Bronx, NY 10463. Help will be provided on matters like affordable housing, housing rights, filing a housing complaint, finance improvements and repairs, registering a building, and remedying a violation.

Contact [hpdoutreach@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:hpdoutreach@hpd.nyc.gov) for more information.

## Monkey Pox Updates

As of Sept. 30, there were 3,600 cases of Monkeypox in New York City, up from 2,794 cases in late August. A two-dose vaccination is available for those eligible, and appointments are now open for second doses. A Bronx mass vaccination site is open at Lincoln Hospital, 234 E 149th Street. Book an appointment by calling 877-829-4692. Visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/monkeypox.page> for more information.

## 2022 Community Needs Assessment

Do you have ideas about what your local community needs? Take a few minutes and fill out a survey to help inform how future funding is spent across the city. Visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2022CNANYC>. In addition, Bronx Community Board 7 is inviting residents to join them to help identify community needs and ideas for expense projects at 6 p.m. on Wed., Oct. 5, Thurs., Oct. 27, and Wed.,

Nov. 2, at The Bedford's Community Room, 211 E 203rd St., Bronx, NY 10458. Call (929) 496 0748 or email [kca-breracarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:kca-breracarrera@cb.nyc.gov) for more details.

## GoFundMe Page for Bedford Congregational Church

Residents are being kindly asked to donate to support the upgrading of the heating system at Bedford Congregational Church, located at 309 East 201st Street in Bedford Park. Founded in 1889 and a designated landmark since 2000, the church is a 501c3 charity and provides space for local support groups

battling addictions, as well as other congregations. A replacement oil tank is needed before the water pipes freeze and burst. To donate, visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/warm-hearts-cold-church>.

## COVID-19 Updates

An NYC COVID-19 hotline provides residents with COVID-19 updates, including testing sites, advice from medical staff, quarantine information and mental health support. Call 212-COVID19 or (212) 268-4319. Find a vaccine or booster location today at [ny.gov/vaxtoschool](http://ny.gov/vaxtoschool).



Cardinal McCloskey  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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- Fatherhood Support
- Children Birth to 5 Years Old
- Pregnant Women
- Free Early Head Start Services with Qualified Providers for Infants & Toddlers. 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- DOE UPK and Family Child Care Programs
- Bilingual Programs

**CONTACT US:** Gilda Morales-Aleman & Alexander Martinez

Phone: 718-993-7700 ext. 915 & 924

Email: [gmoralesaleman@cmcs.org](mailto:gmoralesaleman@cmcs.org) & [AlexanderMartinez@cmcs.org](mailto:AlexanderMartinez@cmcs.org)

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# Nonprofit, KISS, Provides Overdose Training in St. James Park

from page 6)

was also on hand, handing out over 200 plastic fire helmets to children as well as an FDNY activity coloring book, of which he said, “We have good information in there.” Regarding the success of the event, Marin said, “It was fantastic, man. They loved it! We love coming out here. It was a pleasure!” On KISS’s dispensing of Narcan kits, Marin added, “I think it’s fantastic!”

Angie, a resident of Kingsbridge Heights, was just walking through the park when she came across the event and picked up a fire helmet for her son. Asked for her thoughts on the opioid crisis and the KISS event, she said, “It’s scary, but necessary.” Asked if she had ever seen someone overdose, Angie replied, “I have, unfortunately. Yeah, not around here, but in Manhattan.” When asked if the person had gotten help, she replied, “They did. They actually died and they were revived.”

Coincidentally, *Norwood News* had been at St. James Park on Feb. 7, 2021, when paramedics, firefighters and police were called following a report of a man who had seemingly overdosed on a park bench during a snowstorm, only several feet from where KISS had set up



Photo by David Greene

**PARAMEDICS AND FIREFIGHTERS** attempt to revive an unidentified man who apparently overdosed while sitting on a bench in St. James Park during a snowstorm on Feb. 7, 2021.

their table.

As several bystanders stood in the wind-blown snow, watching paramedics work, one woman said to another, “I hope he’s still alive. God help us.” The second woman responded, “I thought he was sleeping too. That’s why I say, ‘Thanks for noticing.’” The first woman replied, “You’re welcome, Mama. No problem. I was, like, ‘Mister, Mister, you need help?’”

After working on the victim for about 10 minutes, one young man approached paramedics, saying, “Yo! He’s dead, Bro!” One of the women agreed, telling the other, “He’s gone; I’m upset to my stomach.” Paramedics were later seen giving the man oxygen and bringing him to a waiting ambulance.

At the time, *Norwood News* painstakingly attempted to find out if the man survived. However, due to the un-

availability of an exact address for him, other than the park location, along with confusion as to which hospital he was taken to, his survival remains a mystery.

At the time, repeated requests via phone and email to Asia Worthy-Davis, the chief medical officer at the Office of the City’s Medical Examiner, went unanswered. A new request was made on Oct. 3 with the new chief medical examiner, Dr. Jason Graham. His office had not responded as of press date.

Meanwhile, during a press conference on Sept. 30, the mayor said the city’s overdose prevention centers have been successful averting over 480 overdoses since opening but more needed to be done to address the crisis.

Adams said a new bill, Intro 56-A, would require DOH to create a Nightlife Opioid Antagonist Program. “The program will permit nightlife establishments in the city to request and retain up to five opioid antagonist kits, five at a time, free of charge, to keep on premises,” he said. “This is going to help those who are in need of this usage.”

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



## Letters To The Editor

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

### Arresting the Innocent

It would seem logical that a person should not be arrested unless there is some reason to believe he or she is guilty. A woman pointing a finger at someone and saying, “He grabbed my breast,” with nothing to back up her claim is clearly not a reason, [“Bronx Cop Cleared in Sex Groping Case,” *New York Daily News*, Sept. 20]. Prosecutors finally dropped charges against Police Officer Julio Alcantara-Santiago more than a week after his arrest.

This allegation was made at the Yankee Stadium Hard Rock Café on Sept. 11. The case was dismissed after video surveillance footage and interviews with witnesses showed no such incident occurred. Why were the interviews and video viewing not done immediately? Also, if there were no video or witnesses, why can you be arrested on a mere accusation, if there is nothing to back it up?

Alcantara-Sanchez reportedly said, “To be arrested in the precinct I work at is beyond demoralizing.” He reportedly added, “I am humiliated by these baseless accusations that were leveled against me when the video surveillance clearly showed that I was completely in-

nocent.”

So, the question arises, with the video evidence, how come his accuser has not been arrested? One also has to wonder what would have happened if the woman accused a civilian instead of a cop. Would he have been cleared as quickly, or would he be awaiting trial at Rikers Island?

**Richard Warren,  
Van Cortlandt Village**

### Taxpayers are the Losers in NYC

Eric Adams is the worst mayor this City ever had. His expenditures for personal security details, according to some media reports, are in the millions. As per a *New York Daily News* exposé dated Oct. 3, 2022 [NYC Mayor Adams ordered NYPD protection for his public safety deputy Philip Banks: ‘I am the Intelligence Bureau’] just three people, Adams, deputy mayor of public safety, Phil Banks, and the police commissioner, Keechant Sewell, cost taxpayers \$6 million a year in protection costs.

This does not include the cost for other chiefs of other City agencies outside of the NYPD or for those inside the NYPD, or the cost for lesser-known politicians who no one would recognize on the street, such as the public advocate, the city comptroller, or the city council speaker. In other words, there are hundreds of precious NYPD detectives doing nothing more than, for example, moving their children

out of their apartments, as reported by the Daily Mail UK dated 4 Aug. 2019, [REVEALED: New York Mayor Bill de Blasio ‘ordered his NYPD security detail to help his 24-year-old daughter Chiara move out of her apartment’].

Could you think of a place in The Bronx alone where you would like to see one of these detectives standing to protect us and our neighborhood? This security protection issue comes at a time when cops are resigning in droves, all because of incompetence. Make your outrage known this November at the ballot booth and vote for Republican candidates who would shun such protection and instead assign these detectives to our neighborhoods!

**Richard Marias  
Norwood**

*Editor’s Note:* *Norwood News* has contacted the NYPD press team for comment on the allegations put forward in the NY Daily News and Daily Mail articles. We did not receive a response as of press date.

To ensure sufficient time for review of all letters to the editor, please send them to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org) or by mail to *Norwood News*, 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467, by the **Friday before each publication day**. If sent by email, please mark them as “Letter to the Editor” in the subject line. Letter writers should aim to write no more than 300 words and, ideally, in response to published articles. Thank you.

# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

Bedford Park Congregational Church, located at Bainbridge Avenue and 201st Street in Norwood, will be holding a **Fun Fair/Flea Market** on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. All are welcome.

Take an afternoon ride on WWI-era IRT Lo-V subway cars on Sunday, Oct. 23, from noon to 5 p.m., to explore the **Gilded Age Mausoleums and Monuments of The Woodlawn Cemetery**. The nostalgic ride will depart Old South Ferry Station at noon for a 60 to 90-minute ride, traveling uptown to Woodlawn Cemetery, arriving at around 1:30 p.m. During a 2-hour visit, join a guided tour featuring the art, architecture, stained glass, and gravesites of some of the most famous jazz musicians,

suffragists, civic leaders, and business moguls that “residing” at Woodlawn. Guests are welcome to bring a picnic lunch and restrooms are available onsite. The train will depart Woodlawn Station at 4 p.m. and return to Old South Ferry Station at approximately 5 p.m. Timing, routes, and equipment are subject to change. Tickets must be purchased through the New York Transit Museum. Visit <https://www.nytransitmuseum.org/program/woodlawn-cemetery/> for tickets.

A **Community & Connections Social** will be held in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Saturday, Oct. 8, from noon to 4 p.m. with food, fun and friends. RSVP at <https://cityparksfoundation.org/rsvp-bronx-community-connections-social/>.

## FILM

The Bronx Museum presents a free screening on Thursday, Oct. 6, at 6 p.m. of *Drylongso* directed by Cauleen Smith, a Janus Films release, in partnership with the 60<sup>th</sup> New York Film Festival. Sponsored by Turner Classic Movies, Smith’s 1998 feature debut, a landmark in American independent cinema, follows Pica (Toby Smith), a woman in a photography class in Oakland, as she begins photographing young Black men in her neighborhood, having witnessed so many of them fall victim to senseless murder, and fearing the possibility of their becoming extinct altogether. Tickets are limited. Check-in begins at 5:15 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

## MUSIC

**Five Boroughs Music Festival** presents the *Five Borough Songbook, Volume III* which premieres on Saturday, Oct. 22, at 7 p.m. at the Bronx Music Heritage Center. Comprising a new cycle of 15 songs, duets, and ensemble works by 15 composers, the songbook is performed by members of Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, sopranos, Nicole Joseph and Gitanjali Mathur, mezzo-soprano, Cecilia Duarte,

tenor, Haitham Haidar, and baritone, Jonathan Woody, in addition to pianist, Erika Switzer, violinist, Pala Garcia, and cellist, John Popham. For more information, call (646) 504-0545, email [info@5BMF.org](mailto:info@5BMF.org) or visit <https://5bmf.org/>.

Zuzanna Irena Jurczak, known professionally as “**sanah**,” is a Polish singer, songwriter, violinist, and composer, performing indie pop and art pop. She makes her debut at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Blvd West Bronx, New York 10468, on Oct. 21, at 8 p.m. Sanah received nationwide popularity in 2020, with the release of her single “Szampan,” which became a number-one hit in Poland. She later released her 2020 debut studio album, *Królowa dram*, which peaked at number one in Poland. For tickets, go to <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/sanah>.

## MOVEMENT

The Office of Bronx District Attorney, Darcel D. Clark, is hosting the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Run/Walk/Roll to End Domestic Violence** on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. This free event begins and ends at East 161<sup>st</sup> Street, between Grand Concourse and Walton Avenue.

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## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



### Williamsbridge: Two Scooter Riders Sought in Shooting

The identity of two men is sought by the NYPD following a “reckless endangerment” incident that occurred in Williamsbridge. Police are seeking the public’s help identifying the two people seen in the accompanying screenshot, obtained from the incident location, who are sought for questioning in connection to a multiple shooting.

Police said on Sunday, Sept. 25, at around 2.39 p.m. in the vicinity of Holland Avenue and Magenta Street, as two men were riding a moped, multiple shots were fired into Magenta Park. They said there were no reported injuries and the two fled northbound on Barnes Avenue towards East 220th Street.

“Reckless endangerment” is a criminal offense that makes it illegal to act in a way that puts others in danger or the property of others in danger. A person faces a reckless endangerment charge even if the person does not actually harm another person or damage property.

The first assailant, who fired the gun, is described as male, has a dark complexion, and was last seen wearing gray clothing. The second is also described as male, also has a dark complexion, and was last seen wearing a blue, hooded sweatshirt.



### Williamsbridge: Two Gunmen Sought for Multiple Nonfatal Shooting

The identity of two gunmen is sought by the NYPD following a “reckless endangerment” incident (shooting) that occurred in Williamsbridge. Police are seeking the public’s help identifying and locating the two people seen in the attached video footage above who are sought for questioning in connection to the shooting.

It was reported to police that on Sunday, Sept. 25, at around 2.39 p.m. in the vicinity of Holland Avenue and Magenta Street, two unidentified “males” riding a moped, fired multiple shots into Magenta Park. “There were no reported injuries as a result of this incident,” an NYPD spokesperson said. “The individual[s] fled the location northbound on Barnes Avenue towards East 220 Street.”

“Reckless endangerment” is a criminal offense that makes it illegal to act in a way that puts others in danger or the property of others in danger. A person faces a reckless endangerment charge even if the person does not actually harm another person or damage property.

The first assailant who fired the gun is described as male, has a dark complexion, and was last seen wearing gray clothing. The second is also described as male, also has a dark complexion and was last seen wearing a blue, hooded sweatshirt.

### Two Bronx Men Arrested for Multiple Carjackings

Two Bronx men, Diante Fernandes and Mark Francis, have been arrested in connection with a series of recent carjackings in The Bronx and Yonkers. The two appeared in federal court in the Southern District of New York on Sept.

28 and were ordered detained in custody.

According to the prosecution, between Sept. 26 and 27, Fernandes and Francis, allegedly carjacked, robbed, and kidnapped multiple victims in The Bronx and Yonkers. Once on Sept. 26, and again on Sept. 27, the defendants allegedly lured victims to a location in Yonkers using an ad for a used car posted on Facebook Marketplace.

When the victims arrived, hoping to buy the car, the two allegedly forced

the victims into the car they were considering buying, at gunpoint. They then drove around the New York City area, allegedly forcing the victims to withdraw money from bank accounts and allegedly threatened to kill them if they did not comply.

The defendants allegedly stole the victims’ money, wallets, and phones, and on at least one occasion, they allegedly held a victim captive in the car for several hours. They then allegedly left the victims on the street and allegedly stole the cars which the victims had driven in to arrive at the meeting place.

Fernandes, 19, and Francis, 18, both from The Bronx, are charged with carjacking, Hobbs Act robbery, kidnapping, and conspiracy to commit these offenses, as well as possessing a firearm during the offenses. If convicted of these charges, the defendants face a potential **maximum** sentence of life in prison.

The **maximum** potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress. Any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by a judge. A person arrested and accused of a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

### Norwood: 44-Year-Old Man Found Unconscious & Deceased

A 44-year-old man has been found deceased in the Norwood section of The Bronx.

On Monday, Sept. 26, at around 10.22 p.m., police from the 52nd Precinct responded to a 911 call regarding an unconscious man inside 16 East 208th Street.

“Upon arrival, police observed a 44-year-old male who was unconscious and unresponsive,” an NYPD spokesperson said. “EMS responded and pronounced the male deceased at the scene. The medical examiner [is] to determine the cause of death.”

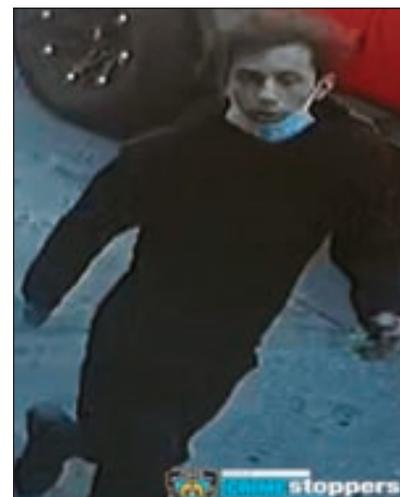
The deceased has been identified as Adam Perez of Bainbridge Avenue in the Norwood section of The Bronx. When asked, police said they could not confirm if the death was being treated as suspicious or not, until the medical examiner confirmed the cause of death.

*Norwood News* asked some local residents if they had heard or seen anything out of the ordinary on the evening in question, and they had not.

### Williamsbridge: Three Sought in “Reckless Endangerment” Shooting

Officers from the NYPD’s 49th Precinct are asking for the public’s help locating the three people seen in the accompanying photos who are sought for questioning in connection to a “reckless endangerment” incident that occurred in Williamsbridge.

Police said on Monday, Sept. 19, at around 11.20 p.m., in front of 2825 Olinville Avenue, three people were involved in a multiple shooting directed at another group. No injuries were reported.



*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.*

# NWBCCC Pushes for Local Input on Armory's Next Phase

(continued from page 3)

Bravo, and members of both CB7 and NWBCCC.

EDC will ultimately decide what the best use of the 180,000 square-foot, column-free structure will be, and this includes entertaining offers from various developers. This process of gathering input from residents, attracting developers, and selling the promise of a better future for the Armory has been ongoing for almost three decades, and the community's patience is waning.

The building was designated a landmark by New York City in 1974. It was also listed on the New York State and the National Register of Historical Places in 1982. Ownership was transferred to the City in 1996, and promises of a renovated armory have been a staple of *Norwood News* stories since then.

A generation of residents have only known an empty, nearly abandoned armory, as the norm. Sanchez spoke to *Norwood News* previously about her childhood in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood, and how she wondered what would ever become of the building. She remains optimistic that with federal funding and local input, something special can be accomplished.

"I know how disconnected Washington D.C. can be from local communities," she told *Norwood News* last year.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**A PRESS CONFERENCE** and rally is organized by Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition at the Kingsbridge Armory in Kingsbridge Heights on Thursday Aug. 25 2022.

"But this type of [infrastructure] spending [under Build Back Better] offers a glimmer of hope. It can transform The Bronx." She went on to point out that the armory "stands out for investment."

On the Armory site are two adjacent annexes which are currently undergoing a \$10 million renovation for military

use by the U.S. National Guard.

*Norwood News* contacted EDC for details of the final ruling on the legal case with KNIC LLC and were referred to court officials for more information. According to court records, legal proceedings have been stalled since April 2022.

One Bronxite in the crowd during the press event thought the speeches were promising but maintained a wait-and-see attitude. Gregory Hernandez lives on the Grand Concourse near Yankee Stadium. He showed up to find out how community leaders plan to ensure the concerns of local residents will be heard. "I'm a life-long Bronx resident, and I've known of the armory for over a decade now and the fact that that plan has been proposed about ice skating rinks, and a lot of bidding being done but it's not really for the community," Hernandez, 31, said.

Gibson was apparently scheduled to tour the venue again in August with other elected officials and stakeholders.

For his part, Hernandez has no illusions about the difficulty of re-creating a venue that would be inclusive of residents' wishes, saying, "I understand that this is an uphill battle to make this *for* the community and *by* the community, actually make it inclusive, make it diverse, but beyond that, actually make it something that will be far more productive than just something that is for a profit or someone's bottom line."

*\*Sile Moloney and Miriam Quiñones contributed to this story.*

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

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## The Importance of Getting Vaccinated this Fall

By ONI TONGO

Fall is the start of flu season. In addition to the flu, over the last few years, there has been an increase in the spread of vaccine preventable illnesses, including the rapid spread of COVID-19 and, more recently, monkeypox.

Vaccines can help protect our bodies against such diseases by imitating the infections and teaching our immune system how to fight them off in the future. Over time, our bodies build up “memory” enabling our bodies to “remember” how to fight similar infections in the future. Sometimes, after getting vaccinated, the imitation infection might cause some illness symptoms, like fever. This is normal and a sign the body is building up immunity which, typically, takes a few weeks to acquire. Because of this timeframe, it’s possible some people may contract an illness just before or just after a vaccination.

No vaccine is perfect, but they are the safest form of protection against severe infection. Sometimes, we get sick even when vaccinated, but if this happens, we are less likely to become seriously ill, since vaccines can protect us from severe illness, hospitalization, and death. They also help to protect women and babies during and after pregnancy. Getting vaccinated protects you, your family and community. This is especially important for those at higher risk of complications caused by vaccine preventable diseases, and includes those 65 years and older, people who are pregnant, and people with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease.

### What is the flu and how can I prepare for flu season?

Influenza, or the flu, is an upper respiratory illness caused by a virus that affects the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu is contagious and spreads through droplets from an infected person when they sneeze, cough, or talk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these droplets can travel up to 6 feet and can land in your nose or mouth. You can also pick up the virus from touching infected surfaces or objects and then touching your eyes or nose. Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle or body aches, and headaches. In extreme cases, influenza can lead to pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses, and may require hospitalization.

Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect yourself against the flu. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older be vaccinated. There are many free and low-cost options for receiving the flu vaccine. Once again, Montefiore has teamed up with Walgreens this year to offer free or low-cost vaccinations on these dates:

**Sunday, Oct. 2, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 832 E. 166<sup>th</sup> Street

**Sunday, Oct. 16, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at Our Lady of Angels, 2860 Sedgwick Avenue

**Sunday, Oct. 23, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at St. Simon Stock Church, 2191 Valentine Avenue

**Sunday, Nov. 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 627 East 187th Street

### How can I continue to protect myself from COVID-19?

The symptoms of flu are very similar to those of COVID-19, so if you are feeling unwell, you should get tested as soon as possible and start on the appropriate medication, as determined by your doctor.

If not already the case, and if you are eligible, get vaccinated for COVID-19. Even people who have had COVID-19 should get vaccinated, if eligible. If you *are* vaccinated, make sure to get a booster shot. The booster is designed to protect against the omicron subvariants that have been causing many of the recent infections.

According to NYC Department of Health and Mental

Hygiene (DOHMH), it is safe to get the booster at the same time as other vaccines, so go ahead and schedule both your booster and your flu shot today!

### What is monkeypox and how can I protect myself?

Monkeypox is an infectious disease caused by the monkeypox virus. According to the CDC, the virus is part of the same family of viruses that causes smallpox, and rarely causes death. Some of the ways monkeypox has spread from person to person during the recent outbreak are through:

direct contact with the monkeypox rash, scabs, or body fluids;

face-to-face or sexual contact including oral, anal, and vaginal sex or other intimate contact e.g. cuddling, massages and kissing;

touching fabrics, objects and surfaces used by a person with monkeypox which have not been disinfected.

Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, anyone who has been in close, personal contact with someone who has monkeypox is at risk. Getting vaccinated for monkeypox is an important way to help prevent the spread of this disease. Another way is to avoid sex and other intimate contact with multiple or anonymous partners. You can also reduce your risk by changing some behaviors that may increase your exposure to monkeypox. The CDC and DOHMH provide tips you can use if you choose to have sex or other intimate contact. To learn more, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/prevention/sexual-health.html>

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/monkeypox.page>

While most people should get vaccinated every year, some people should stay away from certain types of vaccines, or should not be vaccinated, based on their age, health status, and whether they have certain allergies. If you have questions about which vaccine is right for you, talk to your doctor or other health care professional.

Visit <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/> to find flu, COVID-19 and monkeypox vaccine locations near you.

*Oni Tongo M.S. is a registered dietician and program manager at the Office of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Health System.*

## Little Amal Evokes Empathy Amid Refugee Crisis

By Sile Moloney

A little girl on a big journey, “Little Amal” is a giant puppet representing a 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl and is at the heart of the “Walk with Amal,” global initiative launched in July 2021 to raise awareness of the plight of refugees across the world. Since then, Amal has travelled over 9,000 km, across 13 countries to represent all children fleeing war, violence, and persecution, each of whom has their own story.

Amal has become an international symbol of compassion and of human rights, according to the organizers of the NYC leg of her journey, who comprise various nonprofits and arts organizations. “She carries a message of hope for displaced people everywhere, especially children who have been separated from their families,” an extract from [walkwithamal.org](http://walkwithamal.org) reads.

On Sept. 26, Amal crossed The Bronx’s Highbridge on a beautiful

day, surrounded by musical groups, activists and supporters.

Sabrina Sutton from Hudson Heights was accompanying two children to the event and said, “I’m so excited that they’re excited about it, and that we get to go experience this together.” She described the experience as incredible, and added “I just think it’s really important and great for them to experience at such a young age, because we were talking about what it would be like, for someone their age to be going through this.”

She said the kids were were asking, “How do they pack up all their stuff in one bag? I could never do that. I have too many toys.” She said she explained to them that it is really difficult when your life gets turned upside down, and you have to go look for a place that’s safe.

Executive director of the People’s Theater Project and former candidate for District 11 City Council, Mino Lora, attended the event with some of



Photo by Sile Moloney

**LITTLE AMAL, A** giant puppet representing a 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl is the basis of a global initiative launched in July 2021 to raise awareness of the plight of refugees. Amal crossed The Bronx’s Highbridge on Sept. 26, 2022.

her students. “This was amazing, and we were so happy that the People’s Theater Project could partner with “Walk with Amal,” and as an immi-

grant-led organization, and working with immigrant communities, welcoming refugees, welcoming immigrants with a symbolic and beautiful puppet was just a dream come true.”

Asked if she felt the real message about the refugee crisis may have gotten overshadowed by the theatrical nature of the event, Lora said in part, “I think art creates the conversation. There’s people who have not engaged in immigrant rights issues and refugee and asylum seekers, and here they are welcoming one. So yes, it is about the beauty, but the beauty and the art bring us together.”

She added, “We’re in a protest today. We’re protesting against war and against separation of families, and this was said by some of our 12-year-olds. They’re like, ‘This is a protest, right?’ It was like, ‘It absolutely is!’ It’s a beautiful one. So, I don’t think it’s pushing it away. I think it’s bringing it to the forefront in a beautiful way.”

Little Amal’s urgent message to the world? “Don’t forget about us.”

# Bronx Native American Festival Delights Attendees

BY MIRIAM QUIÑONES

The Annual Bronx Native American Festival was held at Pelham Bay Park in the Northeast Bronx on Sunday, Sept. 25, and was hosted by Bobby Gonzales. It comprised music; colorful, costumed dancers; food and face-painting, and brought broad smiles to the faces of those in attendance.

Gonzales said The Bronx is Native American country. “There will always be a celebration of native cultures of the Americas here, north, south, central and the Caribbean,” he said.

The Thunderbird American Indian Dancers, Tchin, and Grupo Higuayagua (Taino) took part in “The Eagle Dance.” According to the dancers, this is a dance ritual practiced by some American Indians and is used by the “Pueblos” to ask for rain. The dancers said the Iroquois also use it to ask for peace and to cure illness.

About 200 people showed up for the festival on the day and a little rainfall sent nobody home.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**THE THUNDERBIRD AMERICAN** Indian Dancers, Tchin, and Grupo Higuayagua (Taino) take part in the eagle dance at the annual Bronx Native American Festival at Pelham Bay Park in the Northeast Bronx on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022.

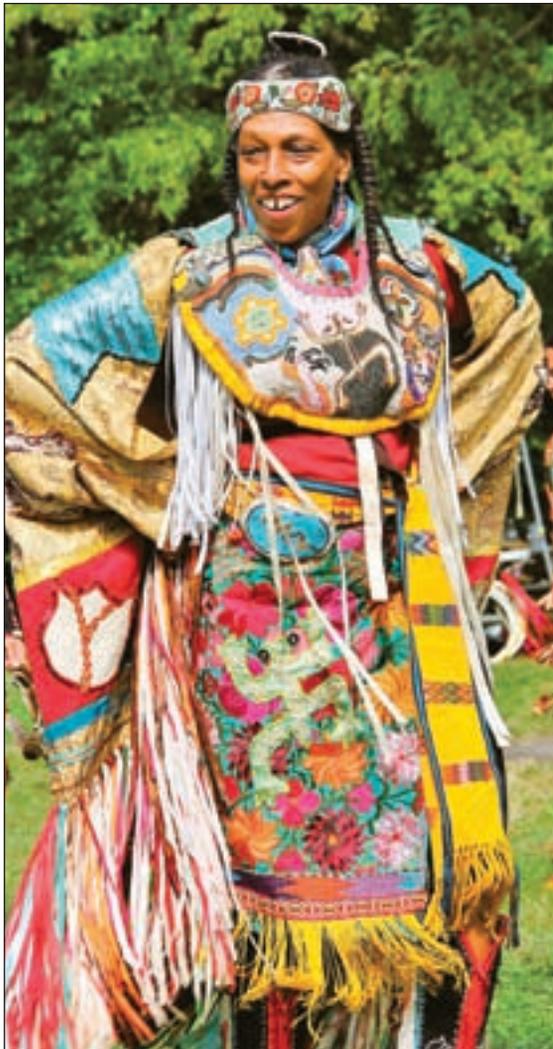


Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**A FEMALE DANCER** performs at the annual Bronx Native American Festival held at Pelham Bay Park in the Northeast Bronx on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**ATTENDEES AT THE** Annual Bronx Native American Festival at Pelham Bay Park in the Northeast Bronx on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022, perform the snake dance hug.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones  
**AKAYAWA DEVALLE, A DANCER,** enjoys the Annual Bronx Native American Festival at Pelham Bay Park in the Northeast Bronx on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022, with his daughter, also a dancer, Sofia Delvalle.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**JORGE ESTEVES, ONE** of the dancers at the Annual Bronx Native American Festival at Pelham Bay Park in the Northeast Bronx on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022, shares a hug with Maria Aponte.



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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 virtually and sometimes in person. 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.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** general board meeting will be held

on Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 6.30 p.m. at Bronx Library Center, 310 East Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10458. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. Proof of vaccination is required for in-person meetings.

The last **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meeting was held in person on Wednesday, Oct. 5. The meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m. For further details of future meetings, contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

### CORRECTIONS

The photo which ran with the story entitled, "Bedford Park: Stolen Car Crashes into Two Parked Vehicles," on page 3 of the *Norwood News* edition dated Sept. 22-Oct. 5, 2022, was taken by Miriam Quiñones, and not by David Greene, who wrote the story. We apologize for this error.

# Neighbors Clash over Orchard Beach Shelter

(continued from page 1)

tions were since organized opposing the site by local Republican Party candidates, Tina Forte, who is challenging Democratic incumbent, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), and John Greaney, who's currently challenging Democratic Assemblyman Michael Benedetto (82 A.D.)

During the third and final protest at Orchard Beach on Oct. 3, attendees used words like "Nazis" to describe Adams administration officials who had proposed to house immigrants bused from the southern border to Democratic-run cities like New York, at the site.

At the Oct. 3 protest, a former Republican candidate for Assembly District 80 and leader of the Allerton Merchants Association, Gene DeFrancis, told the angry crowd, "I'm there with the men and women of Venezuela that want to get the heck out of there, but like I tell every single Bronxite, stay here, don't run, because we're united."

Moments later, DeFrancis, who served in the U.S. Navy, told the crowd, "You don't know what it's like to be a community leader in The Bronx, where they laugh and say, 'I'm moving to Florida. I'm getting out of here. I can't take it anymore.' These men and women behind me, we're not going to take it. We'll die here if we have to. This is the hill we'll die on; this is our home!"

At a previous protest, also at Orchard Beach, on Saturday, Oct. 1, Forte challenged Ocasio-Cortez to come to Orchard Beach the following Monday for a debate on the issue, before using the congresswoman's well-known initials, AOC, to brand her an "All Out Communist." *Norwood News* contacted the congresswoman's team for comment. We had not received a response as of press date.

Unhappy that her speech wasn't being recorded by a News 12 camerawoman, who was off to one side of the gathering, Forte was later heard screaming out, "News 12! Where are you News 12? News 12, don't hide!" Then, directed by the crowd, Forte approached a News 12 reporter with a group of about 20 behind her and demanded, "News 12! Why don't you tape me? Want to interview me?"

In the face of the News 12 camerawoman, who was by then recording Forte, the candidate continued her rant, saying, "Play everything I say, and don't cut pieces out and put what you want. Put in everything that's really going on here. Taxpayer money is paying for these illegal immigrants, unvetted, coming to this community, thanks to Eric Adams and the policies of the Liberal Left."

News 12 later aired the bizarre encounter, during which Forte went on to declare Oct. 1 as "Adopt an Illegal Immigrant Day," adding, "So, Democrats, line up, pull up in your car, and take one home to your house."

Observing the demonstration was Melanie Miholics, who said she is currently experiencing homelessness. She told *Norwood News* she stays at Orchard Beach during the day "because it's safe," and either stays with friends or sleeps in her car at night.

Looking out at the giant tents that were being erected at that stage, Miholics said, "They're [asylum seekers] getting these tents which are beautiful. I wish they had them for the Americans that were suffering with the coronavirus, but it's very scary because you don't know anyone's background. It's scary for them, and it's scary for us."

Alleging she had been denied admittance to a Bronx homeless shelter for women, Miholics added, "I don't get this shelter, immediate medical care, gas... I sleep in my truck." She added, "I went to the shelter, but they put me last on the line."

As Miholics was speaking, a large group surrounded a group of four City Island residents, who had arrived to support the asylum seekers. Members of both opposing groups then held their ground during a heated exchange. Herbert H. Lehman High School teacher and City Island resident, Steve Swieciki, drew the ire of the opposing group as he quietly stood, holding a small cardboard sign that read, "Look at these racist a-----s."

There were further heated exchanges between several women, one wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat, and another with a "Trump 2024" hat, and Swieciki's group. Some of the woman said they were also concerned for the asylum seekers due to potential flooding and poor heating at the site.

Meanwhile, asked by *Norwood News* if he and his three colleagues were with any organized group, Swieciki replied, "Well, these are my neighbors. We're not, like, part of any formal group, but we actually didn't even know Tina Forte. I know she's opposing AOC, but I didn't know anything about her. I came here because I saw a flier that they were opposing the asylum seekers being located here, and I support helping asylum seekers."

Swieciki also said he had concerns over the conditions at the site but overall, he was in favor of supporting and providing shelter to the immigrants. Asked if

he had considered whether his sign and appearance might have put him and his neighbors in harm's way, Swieciki replied, "Yeah, that's what we do. No, but if it's for the right cause, absolutely." A protester opposing the site then asked Swieciki, "Why is this the right cause? They come here illegally?"

*Norwood News* contacted the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs for comment on the group's allegations of illegality. We did not receive a direct response but were referred to a Home Security factsheet on the "implementation of the credible fear and asylum processing interim final rule," which outlines the various ways in which asylum seekers can seek asylum.

The debate heated up once again, with officers sitting in an NYPD van watching from nearby. When a steady stream of rainfall arrived, everyone left.

Before the Saturday rally ended, DeFrancis said Republican gubernatorial candidate, Lee Zeldin, had been "working on his schedule" to attend a follow-up rally scheduled for Monday, Oct. 3, the likely reason many TV networks showed up at the Monday rally. Zeldin was a no show, however, and the mayor announced later that evening the site move to Randall's Island, after a weekend of

flooding, saying the **safety of** asylum seekers remained his top priority.

"Following this weekend's storms, New York City Emergency Management determined that, while we would be able to put in place the necessary ponding mitigation measures, relocating the Orchard Beach humanitarian relief center to Randall's Island is the most efficient and effective path forward, and work is underway to make this move."

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, who had previously raised her own concerns with the site location around potential flooding and lack of adequate transportation links, said that while she was grateful to the mayor for moving the shelter site to Randall's Island, she had similar concerns over flooding with the Randall's Island site also.

With the battleline now moved to Randall's Island, long simmering disputes among neighbors in the Northeast Bronx have been postponed for now or at least until the annual Columbus Day parade in Morris Park, which takes place later this month, and could bring demonstrators opposing the holiday out onto the streets once again.

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

## Elections 2022: Phyllis Nastasio on Education, Crime and NYCHA Housing

(continued from page 2)

And nobody's doing anything about it.

If more funding were to fix such issues, we asked if she had ideas of how to reallocate the budget. "Right now? No, until I see where money is actually going," she said. "I don't know the budget for NYCHA. I would like, once I get into Albany, to see where the money's going."

A self-described "community candidate," Nastasio said she is prepared to work with folks of all political persuasions to move things forward, adding that it was not just progressives who were fighting for so-called "bread and butter" issues. "We need our kids to be off the streets. We don't have any community centers. We need a community center where our kids can go feel safe, learn things, basketball, swimming, tutoring. Tutoring is big, especially for the specialized high school tests. We don't offer any of that," she said.

She has received the backing of local political organization, the Northwest Bronx Democrats, comprising around 1,800 members. Its president, Sheila Sanchez, described Nastasio as being centered in community and someone who

has already traveled to other parts of the district to help.

Asked what she would address on Day 1, if elected, Nastasio replied, "Expand our schools. Our kids are strangling in the classroom. There's too many of them in each class. We need more schools. They have to stop building things that won't benefit the community, so that's my first things. They're killing us with buildings. We can't even breathe. There's no fresh air left anymore because of all the buildings that are going up. Those buildings are bringing more students Those students are going into overcrowded classrooms. There's plenty of area to build schools, and let's free up some of that space for the kids."

Asked how she would convince voters who might say she is inexperienced for public office, Nastasio said she is a co-chair of Bronx Community Board 11's public safety committee, sits on the education committee, and is also a member of the 49<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council. "I know what the community needs. I've been active in the community, and I know I'll fight for them in Albany."

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