



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## TREE LIGHTING EVENT BRINGS JOY TO CB7



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**ALANI ANTIGUA ENJOYS** a ride in a wagon at the annual, holiday tree-lighting ceremony hosted by Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) and Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP) on Thursday Dec. 8, 2022, at Mosholu Parkway lawn and Bainbridge Avenue in Bedford Park.

### By SÍLE MOLONEY

Smiles and laughter were seen and heard in abundance during a fun-filled, joyous gathering on Mosholu Parkway lawn

on Thursday, Dec. 8, for the annual holiday tree-lighting ceremony, hosted by Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) and Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP).

Families and residents gathered at the usual location at the intersection of Mosholu Parkway and Bainbridge Avenue on the Norwood/Bedford Park bor-

der and were treated to snacks, hot chocolate, hot cider, peppermints and goodie bags as they mingled through stands, Santa's

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# NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo courtesy of Mike Steele via Flickr

CITY HALL AND environs, New York City

# The Fair Chance Housing Act Will Only Lead To More Discrimination

By BLANDON CASENAVE

New York City Council is now considering passing a bill, The Fair Chance Housing Act, which would not allow most landlords or management companies to perform criminal background checks on prospective tenants. One of the bill's supporters, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, has argued that criminal background checks are a loophole that "consigns people with conviction histories to continued cycles of poverty, homelessness, and potential recidivism".

Once again, New Yorkers are caught between politicians on both sides of the aisle that lazily rely on the law to find solutions to economic problems that they are neither creative nor astute enough to tackle.

Time and time again, instead of addressing the root causes of poverty and homelessness, the elites in this city opt for a band-aid approach that will likely never impact their own quality of life. Here's a startling statistic: in spite of many of the high-profile, Black, elected officials in this City, nearly 60 percent of homeless households are also Black according to the Coalition of the Homeless report entitled, "State of the Homeless 2022, New York at a Crossroads."

Homelessness is not a function of housing discrimination, but instead, a lopsided, economic development driven by the high cost of housing in New York City. As of May 2022, Black people in New York City also have an unemployment rate of 10.2 percent, with Latinos, a distant second at 6.2 percent, accord-

## Opinion

ing to data in the New York City Comptroller's July 2022 report, "New York by the Numbers, Monthly Economic & Fiscal Outlook."

In the case of The Fair Chance Housing Act, the greater risk of violence will be shouldered in Black and Latino neighborhoods, the very constituency the sponsors of the bill say they're trying to protect. In fact, the title alone is deceptive as a play on words from the federal government's Fair Housing Act of 1968, which was designed to protect individuals from discrimination based on their demographics, and not their own behavior.

The answer to homelessness is economic mobility and vitality across all classes of New Yorkers, and especially within the Black community. One way that our elected officials should be tackling poverty is to ensure that homeowners in majority Black and Latino communities have the property values they deserve, equitable access to credit and capital, and are not victims of scams to confiscate their properties – such that they become entrepreneurial, job and housing creating engines within their own communities.

Absent a criminal background check, landlords would also be incentivized into a pattern of profiling to protect their current tenants and property. The politicians can pretend to be color blind if they want to, but with a majority of Black people being arrested

for, and/or suspected of, violent crimes according to the NYPD's 2021 Crime & Enforcement in New York City report, landlords will easily conflate that with the fallacy that the majority of Black New Yorkers are criminals.

As a result, in all likelihood, they will resort to using race as a de facto criterion for deciding who they rent to.

A decrease in safety for the most vulnerable, and an increase in discrimination are the likely results of this ill-conceived policy. This bill, if it becomes law, will have the opposite impact that its proponents are promising us, and will also let the elected officials off the hook for not creating real, economic justice opportunities and mobility for the New Yorkers who need it most.

*Blandon Casenave is a data scientist, resident and board member of Fordham Hill Owners Corporation, a private housing co-op located in the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx.*

*Editor's Note: Regarding the referenced NYPD "Crime and Enforcement Activity in New York City (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2021)," report, Norwood News asked the Bronx District Attorney's Office if it has a racial breakdown of those eventually convicted of violent crimes in order to compare it to the report compiled by the NYPD on the racial breakdown of those suspected and / or arrested for violent crimes in any one year, to see if the racial breakdown of those eventually convicted for such crimes aligns with the racial breakdown of those arrested/suspected of the violent crimes. We did not receive an immediate response as of press date.*

# Phase II Construction Begins at Bedford Greene

By JULIAN ROBERTS-GRMELA

Construction of Bedford Green House II, located at 2880 Jerome Avenue in Bedford Park, the second of a two-phase, supportive housing development, began on Friday, Dec. 9. The first building, constructed under Phase I of the development and located on the adjacent lot at 2865 Creston Avenue, was completed last winter and residents started moving in in January 2022. A formal ribbon-cutting opening ceremony took place in July.

News of the construction comes on the back of the mayor's recent announcement of the City's latest approach to addressing the homelessness crisis, as well as a related mental health component to the crisis, amid mixed reaction. The City's latest approach requires substantial input by the NYPD, as the first point of contact. Nearly 1,500 people are recorded as being homeless every month in The Bronx, according to City data.

Phase II of the 17-story, Bedford Green housing development is expected to be completed in 2025, according to a presentation to Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7)'s housing and land use committee on Sept. 12 by Project Renewal, the entity developing and operating the housing project.

According to the presentation, Phase II of the development, which is costing \$72 million, will comprise 116 new apartments, 70 of which will be supportive units for the formerly homeless. Of these 70 apartments, 38 will be allocated to people with a mental illness, including 14 for seniors, while 32 will be allocated to those with a substance use disorder.

Meanwhile, 46 units will be made available as affordable housing units to the community. Additionally, it will include a 2,400 sq. ft., street-facing, medical clinic, a library, social service office, fitness center and landscaped backyard.

Of the project, Gov. Kathy Hochul said, "As our state faces a severe housing shortage, essential projects like this Bedford Green development are critical to ensuring that all New Yorkers have a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home."

The primary care medical clinic will serve both residents and the wider community. Some Bronxites are skeptical when it comes to the running of shelters and supportive housing facilities in The Bronx, the cheapest borough in terms of real estate costs in the City, by non-Bronx-based nonprofit organizations, particularly when they expand their remit beyond onsite services to include the provision of healthcare to local community members.



Photo by Julian Roberts-Grmela

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM CITY** and state government, as well as the nonprofit, Project Renewal, celebrated the groundbreaking for the construction of Bedford Green House II at 2880 Jerome Avenue in Bedford Park, on Friday, Dec. 9, 2022. Construction of the building, phase II of the project, is expected to be completed in 2025.

Article 28 of New York State public health law recognizes and regulates the accreditation of public health care facilities. Article 28-certified facilities participate in Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurance plans with a higher rate of reimbursement than that of non-certified facilities, and therefore it can be lucrative for such nonprofits to expand healthcare provision beyond their original remit, to avail of such higher rebates.

Project Renewal is a Federal Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and an New York State Department of Health licensed facility, as defined by Article 28 of NYS public health law. According to its website, Project Re-

newal meets all 20 of the Better Business Bureau's standards for charity accountability.

"We collaborate with a variety of partners to reach the right mix of funding and achieve our results," an extract from its website reads. "These include corporations, foundations, public funders at the federal, state, and city level, as well as private individuals. Additionally, our social enterprises and rental income from some of our housing programs provide supplemental revenue."

A number of scandals involving Bronx nonprofits have not helped to quell this skepticism by some Bronx-

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



As New York City Mayor Eric Adams approaches the end of his first year in office, this week we asked readers to grade the mayor on his performance so far.



"The mayor gets a D+. I know the mayor doesn't have control over bail reform, but we, as parents, are concerned about public safety shortages at all of the city agencies which can be a potential danger to constituents in low and high-income neighborhoods. Staff the agencies with people who come with experience. We need the mayor to work, and less partying. I hate to say this, but the mayor did inherit the former Mayor Bill de Blasio's issues and now, he has to work to reverse the damage which he can't do with staff shortages. The one good thing he's done is finally removing the homeless and mentally ill. I am concerned about the police shortages because of police officers quitting and putting in for early retirement. The hospitals are already filled to capacity. I'm hoping that a plan is in place to treat the mentally ill accordingly. The ones with serious mental issues should be in a facility to receive the best care. Unfortunately, these facilities have been shut down and we need to revamp them. The city currently has over 60,000 homeless and that's a 'state of emergency.' The city should be ashamed as to how we let it get so bad."

Lattina Brown,  
Longwood

Photo courtesy of Lattina Brown



"I would give Mayor Adams a B or B+. As a mayor coming out of the COVID pandemic, it has been amazing to witness his leadership throughout the city. From galvanizing a resurgent class of blue-collar New Yorkers and working-class community, to his ability to encourage the city to return to work, you have to admit he's on task. Say what you want about Mayor Adams, but you can't knock his effort. You may disagree with his approach, but you can't disagree with his constant effort to stay present. When the subways became unsafe, he brought more enforcement, as well as an altered approach to addressing the mental illness in the transient community. As cannabis has influenced current affairs, he brought in Dasheeda Dawson to become the founding director of Cannabis NYC. The relationship with the NYPD, FDNY and city workers in general was a bit hampered through the vaccination pressures throughout COVID. However, I think things are steadily improving."

Marques Payne,  
Riverdale

Photo courtesy of Marques Payne



"Grade?... No, he doesn't get an A. I give him a D, that's right. He just talks a lot and does nothing. I'd like to see him stop the crime. Get the community and pull people together and let us build a bigger and brighter city. Stop all this smoking [of weed] wherever you go...in the park, I know it's the law! Yeah, in the hallways and buildings, man. Let's get real here. I know he added additional police, but I only see one or two, and crime is not going down."

James Macklin,  
Norwood

Photo by David Greene



"I would give Mayor Adams a C. It's great that he wants to help people with mental illness. Unfortunately, getting them off the street is part of the problem. The other part of the problem is rent is too damn high, and that's the real issue. We have an equally amount of crazy people that have housing as well as equally crazy people that don't have housing. The only thing is you see the craziness when they're homeless. He hasn't been addressing the real problems of homelessness and mental illness."

Anne Leighton,  
Norwood

Photo by David Greene



"I'm disappointed in the state of our city after just one year. Mayor Adams claims to support first responders, yet we saw thousands of first responders lose their jobs due to the mandates. We need to get everyone back to work and get the city running smoothly again. We need a real plan to resolve crime, mental health, and homelessness. I hope to see some turnaround in the next few years."

Arthur Roldan,  
Staten Island

Photo courtesy of Arthur Roldan

## Search for Missing Clinton H.S. Employee

By DAVID GREENE

According to a New Rochelle police captain, multiple law enforcement agencies are looking for a New Rochelle man and longtime janitor employed at DeWitt Clinton High School, located in the Jerome Park section of The Bronx, who disappeared without a trace nearly one month ago.

According to two fliers circulated by the man's family and the New Rochelle Police Department, Christopher Corcoran, 61, left his home on Shore Road in New Rochelle, N.Y., at 12:15 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 16, and has not been seen since.

Corcoran is 5 feet, 5 inches tall, weighs 115 pounds, has blue eyes and a gray goatee. He was last seen wearing a mid-length, green, canvas jacket with a hood, royal blue pants, and black shoes. According to one flier, Corcoran may be "disoriented."

On Tuesday, Dec. 13, Captain J. Collins Coyne of the New Rochelle Police Department told Norwood News, "Our detectives have used, I believe, State (police), NYPD, Harbor Patrol, and used a bunch of different, multi-agencies during this investigation. It's a pretty extensive search we've done for him."

Captain Coyne added, "We've done extensive searches, wooded areas all the way through The Bronx. Inter-agency cooperation has been obtained. We've given information out and not



Photo Courtesy of New Rochelle P.D.  
**CHRISTOPHER CORCORAN**

only did a lot of calls go out, but actual leg work of the detectives, going to various places, looking for potential video, and interviewing witnesses."

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, Corcoran's sister, Ellen, told the Norwood News that her brother has been a custodian at DeWitt Clinton High School for about the last 20 years and had never gone missing before. Ellen recalled, "He went to school that day, and then that night, he hadn't slept in a long time. He had a stomach problem and his health...he lost weight, and he wasn't sleeping and the video shows him agitated."

Multiple calls to DeWitt Clinton High School regarding Corcoran were not returned. As police continue searching for Corcoran, his mother and four sisters pray for his safe return home. Anyone with any information on Corcoran's whereabouts is asked to call the New Rochelle Police Department at (914) 654-2300.

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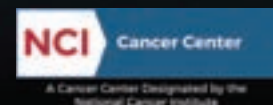
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# NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

## Public Hearing on Short-Term Rentals Rules Change

A public hearing will be held on Jan. 11, 2023, on The Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement's proposed rule to implement Local Law 18 for the year 2022, which requires short-term rental hosts to register with the City and prohibits various booking services from processing transactions for unregistered listings.

More information can be found at: <https://rules.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Proposed-Rules-Registration-and-Requirements-for-Short-Term-Rentals-Second-Notice-with-certifications.pdf>.

Attendees who need reasonable accommodation for a disability such as a sign language translation should contact the agency by calling (646) 576 3533 or emailing [oserules@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:oserules@cityhall.nyc.gov) by Jan. 4, 2023. Interested parties are asked to send comments by email to [oserules@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:oserules@cityhall.nyc.gov), by fax to 212 312 0750 or by mail to Christian Klossner, executive director at The Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement, 22 Reade St. Room/Floor: 4th Floor; New York, New York 10007.

## Male Detainee, 39, Dies in Custody at Rikers

NYC Department of Corrections (DOC) announced the death on Sunday, Dec. 11, of Edgardo Mejias, 39, who was held in custody on Rikers Island. A DOC spokesperson said the cause of death was under investigation, with confirmation pending from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). According to DOC, Mejias was pronounced deceased at the jail at approximately 5 p.m. on Sunday. DOC Commissioner Louis A. Molina issued a statement on Mejias' passing, saying, "Mr. Mejias' passing fills our hearts with sadness, and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to all who held him dear as we recognize how hard it is to lose a loved one during the holidays."

He added, "As with all deaths in custody, we will work with our sister agencies to ensure that this matter is thoroughly and completely investigated." According to DOC, Mejias entered the department's custody on Oct. 2, on charges of a robbery in the first degree. DOC officials count Mejias' death as the 17th in DOC custody this year while advocates for people in custody count his death as the 19th death this year. Two people in custody had been compassionately released from Rikers prior to their deaths.

Torres Introduces Mental Health Law  
Bronx Congressman, Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) introduced a new bill, The Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion Act of 2022, on Dec. 12. The bill aims to amend the existing Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 to clarify the meaning of psychiatric rehabilitation services under demonstration programs, to improve community mental health services, and for other purposes. Officials say the new law is an important step in the fight for accessible and holistic mental health care services.

They said the bill comes at a critical time as the nation's mental health crisis has been on a sharp rise since the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, they said one in five adults in the U.S. experiences mental illness each year, and suicide is the 2nd highest leading cause of death among people aged 10 to 14. The bill aims to close

the gap that leaves many Americans without access to mental health services, they said.

## New Tablet Access for People in Custody

On Tuesday, Dec. 13, DOC announced the beginning of a roll out of new tablets for people in custody. Partnering with an existing vendor, Securus Technologies, the goal of the new tablet program is to reduce idleness, increase engagement with programs and services, and provide more opportunities for people in custody to connect with loved ones in the community, and maintain vital support networks.

In addition, for the first time, people in custody can make free phone calls from their tablets, which will be the largest expansion of phone accessibility to the population. Detainees will continue to have access to landline phones in their housing unit and all phone calls will remain free, in accordance with existing departmental detainee phone policies.

The new tablets will also have access to a robust variety of programming and services at no cost, such as but not limited to educational services, digital law library, library of e-books, timely departmental messages and notifications, access to AM/FM radio stations, and 24/7 accessibility.

## New FDNY Diversity Laws Passed

Five new bills became law recently with the goal of strengthening the FDNY through diversity initiatives, amid reports of lack of racial diversity within the department generally, and also amid reports that some female members of the department were, at times, left feeling uncomfortable in their work environment, particularly when it came to privacy.

City officials said the legislation addresses the recruitment and retention of diverse firefighters, confronts exclusionary practices that undermine diversity, and re-

quires more transparency within the FDNY, which for the first time ever, since Oct. 27, 2022, is officially led by a woman, Commissioner Laura Kavanagh.

Specifically, the bills would require FDNY to develop a concrete plan to recruit and retain women and people of color as firefighters, take actions to retrofit firehouses to serve a mixed gender workforce, increase transparency on the demographics of firehouses through public reporting, require ongoing training on harassment, diversity, and inclusion for all FDNY staff, and submit a public report on complaints filed with the Department's Equal Employment Opportunities Office.

Meanwhile, as the holiday season continues, FDNY officials are also reminding residents of some safety tips to remember when cooking. "Stay in the kitchen. Don't leave cooking food unattended," they said. Residents can visit <http://fdnysmart.org> for fire safety tips.

# Local People Reported Missing

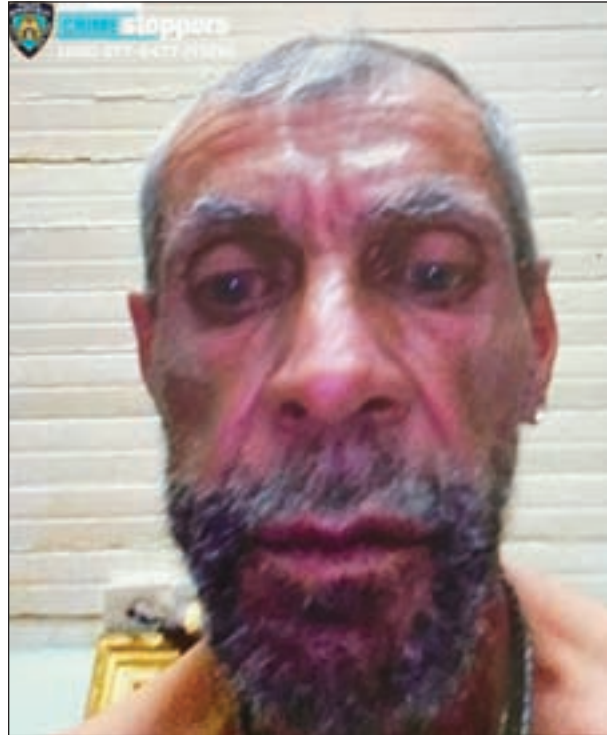
By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating a 68-year-old man reported missing in University Heights. It was reported to the police that Luis Berrios, 68, of 12 West 184th Street was last seen on Tuesday, Dec. 6, at around 11.28 a.m., leaving his home. He is described

as male, is around 5 feet, 3 inches tall, weighs 115 pounds, has brown eyes and short salt-and-pepper hair.

The NYPD is also searching for a 64-year-old woman reported missing in Bedford Park. Police said Jessie Brown, 64, of 320 East 197th Street in Bedford Park, was last seen on Wednesday, Nov.

30, at around 12.10 a.m. in front of 230 East 198th Street, also in Bedford Park. She is described as female, is around 5 feet, 5 inches tall, weighs around 120 pounds, and has black hair and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a blue jacket, a black hat, and a black jumpsuit.



2022. Photo courtesy of the NYPD.  
**LUIS BERRIOS, 68**, was reported missing on Tuesday, Dec. 6,

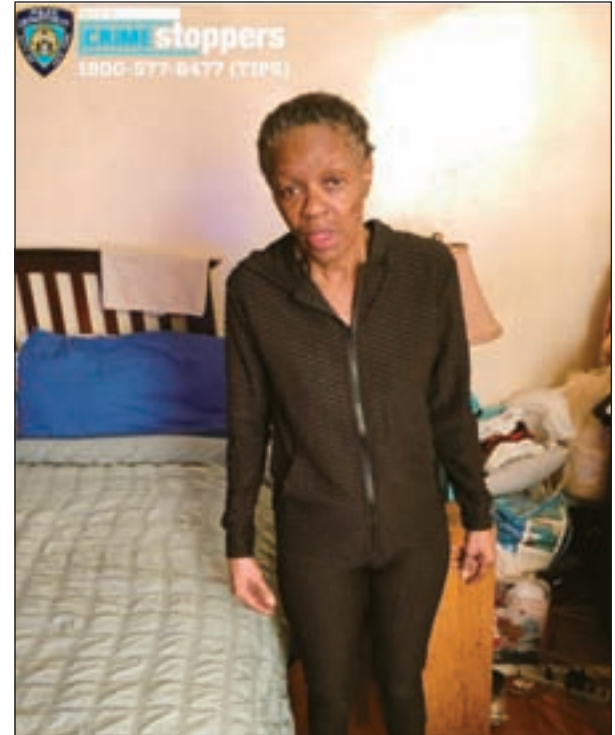


Photo courtesy of the NYPD.  
**JESSIE BROWN, 64**, is reported missing.

# Phase II Construction Begins at Bedford Greene

(continued from page 3)

ites. Recently, two shelter residents complained about alleged, inadequate supportive service provision at a shelter at 246 Echo Place in the Mt. Hope section of The Bronx, at which a young mother allegedly stabbed her two, young, infant children to death on Nov. 27. ACS is investigating the incident. Norwood News contacted the shelter for comment. We did not receive an immediate response.

According to NYC Human Resources Administration, supportive housing is affordable housing with supportive social services for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The onsite supportive services at Bedford Green II will include “coordination of medical services, occupational therapy, crisis management, and assistance with access to public benefits,” according to the Office of Mayor Eric Adams. Eighty of the 116 apartments will be studios, 24 will be one-bedroom units, and 12 will be two-bedroom units, according to the mayor’s office.

Adams said the new development is part of his administration’s effort to build 15,000 new units of supportive housing by 2030. “The combination of supportive homes and a medical clinic here will deliver residents and the entire community access to care they may not otherwise be able to access,” he said.

The 13-story, Creston Avenue building, constructed in conjunction with NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), under Phase I of the development, includes 118 affordable apartments: 71 for formerly homeless residents, 25 for single people living with HIV/AIDS, 30 for families who are dealing with mental illness, and 16 for single people who have a substance use disorder. The development also includes a playground, a rooftop greenhouse, and a social services office.

City officials said all of Bedford Green House II’s apartments will be “affordable to households with incomes at or below 60 percent of the area median income (AMI).” In relation to the 70 units of permanent housing for residents experiencing homelessness, residents will receive rental subsidies funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health.

In its presentation to CB7, Project Renewal officials wrote that care and support is provided for the “full range of physical and behavioral health needs of low-income and formerly homeless individuals and families.” They said all tenants are assigned to a case manager, who is supervised by a master’s level professional.

Case managers meet with tenants to develop support plans. Residents also receive primary medical and dental care, which is currently being provided from a mobile clinic located outside the building. Residents also receive mental health services, substance use counseling, and financial management education, according to the Project Renewal presentation.

In a press release, Eric Rosenbaum, president and CEO of Project Renewal, said of the new facility, “Bedford Green House has become a community of renewal and stability for individuals and families overcoming homelessness, mental health concerns, and other challenges.”

He added, “With this second phase of the development, we are excited to bring not only more critically needed affordable homes to the Bronx, but also a medical clinic providing health care to our tenants and our neighbors in the community.”

Meanwhile, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams said supportive housing developments like the Bedford Green House provide the ongoing care and permanent housing that people without secure housing need. Williams said the best way to solve the homelessness issue

was to invest in more permanent, supportive housing opportunities.

“This type of project is the type of thing we need to get the continuum of care and actually fix the problem,” the public advocate said. “It’s hard to do your homework and be well in school if you don’t have a place to live. It’s hard to get better if you’re physically ill, if you don’t have a place to live.”

He continued, “It’s hard to get better if you have substance abuse or mental health issues if you don’t have a place to live. It’s hard to be a productive citizen coming home, a productive resident coming home, if you don’t have a sustainable place to live and a community to help build you, and the supports that are needed.”



Photo By Julian Roberts-Grmela

**NYC PUBLIC ADVOCATE** Jumaane Williams speaks at the groundbreaking of Bedford Green House II at 2880 Jerome Avenue in Bedford Park on Friday, Dec. 9, 2022.



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## Letters To The Editor

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

### Safety for Criminals?

Nowadays, I read more often about violent confrontations between cops and suspects that end with suspects getting away, even when cops are shot at or injured. Now I'm all for punishing cops who wrongly use deadly force, but I suspect that the pendulum has turned so far in the opposite direction that sometimes cops are afraid to use force when it is justified.

An example of this is in the *Norwood News*, Dec. 1-14, Crime File column, "University Heights: Assault on Police Officer." Police vehicles stopped in front and behind a BMW where a suspect was changing its license plate. The suspect jumped into the car and started ramming both the police vehicles. The cops called for back-up and the driver hit that officer with the car and then drove up onto the sidewalk and got away.

Now if this was in the past, the cops probably would have pulled their guns and warned the suspect. If the suspect did not heed the warning, he would have been shot and the cops would have been justified. It's not only cops who face pushback when fighting criminals. Manhattan bodega worker, José Alba, 61, defended himself against an assault by a much younger Austim Simon by stabbing him, resulting in Simon's death. Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg had to be pressured to drop charges against Alba.

Then, there's the case of Tracy McCarter, a Manhattan nurse who, on March 2, 2020, defended herself against

a husband with a history of beating her by, according to media reports, holding a knife in a defensive position in the aftermath of an attempted strangulation, which resulted in her husband incurring stab wounds. She was arrested for murder and spent the first seven months of the pandemic at Rikers Island as then-District Attorney Cy Vance insisted on going ahead with the case. Though Bragg promised, during his campaign, to drop charges against McCarter, it wasn't until Dec. 2, 2022, he had the charges dismissed.

I'm reminded of a scene from one of the many great, but critically underrated, movies starring John Wayne, "Cahill, United States Marshall." In that film, Wayne's sons, played by Gary Grimes and Clay O'Brien, get in trouble when they participate in a bank robbery that they later regret when someone gets killed.

Wayne wants to draw the outlaws who are now after his sons into the open. He pretends to abandon his sons and when the outlaws appear, he takes them in a gunfight. When he explains why he did this, Grimes says, "But we could have been killed." Wayne answered, "You could have been killed robbing the bank." In other words, you're risking your life when you commit a crime. Some people want to remove the risk for criminals. Cops and victims have to fear for their lives, but criminals are not supposed to fear anything? No wonder crime is on the rise.

**Richard Warren,  
Van Cortlandt Village**

### Metro North Rail Road

Fare hikes are periodically required if the MTA and operating agencies such as the NYC Transit bus, subway, Staten Island Railway, MTA Bus, Long Island

and Metro North Rail Roads are to provide the services millions of New Yorkers count on daily. They are inevitable, due to increasing costs of labor, power, fuel, supplies, materials, routine safety, state of good repair, and replacement of worn-out bus, subway and commuter rail rolling stock.

To run any transit system, other costs for upgrades to stations to bring them into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the costs for signals, interlockings, track, power, yards, and shops all need be covered, not to mention the cost of inflation. The same is true for ensuring that maintenance programs for all assets are fully funded and completed on time to ensure riders have a safe and reliable service.

The financial viability of the MTA has always been a four-way dance between farebox revenue, City Hall, Albany, and Washington. All we ask in return is a reliable, safe, on-time trip and as periodically necessary, a reasonable fare increase that doesn't exceed the current inflation rate. There also needs to be real, legal consequences for those who don't pay their way and who contribute to fare evasion which will reach \$500 million in 2022. There is no such thing as a free lunch or in this case, a free ride for everyone who uses mass transit.

**Larry Penner  
Great Neck**

*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.*



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# BCC Heat Restored Amid Resignation

By SÍLE MOLONEY

When Bryan Cortez started studying Computer Information Systems at Bronx Community College (BCC) in the Fall of 2021, New York City, like the rest of the country was still getting to grips with living through a second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. This had followed a summer spike in COVID cases caused by the then-new and highly infectious Delta variant.

As a result, Cortez started his first semester at BCC, located at 2155 University Avenue in the University Heights section of The Bronx, learning remotely. He was happier when by spring of 2022, the college switched to in-class learning. However, little did he know that ten months later, BCC would pivot to remote learning once again, though this time, it wouldn't be because of high COVID-19 transmission but due to insufferable cold on the college campus.

"The heating situation at BCC has been an ongoing issue that had been happening for many years," Cortez told *Norwood News*. "But they told us that it was the boilers. The boilers are outdated. So, due to that issue, they were having issues getting the boilers online and then spreading the heating throughout campus adequately."

Cortez said students, staff and faculty were eventually informed by the college that classes and work would have to move to a remote, online model because the college was unable to properly heat all the buildings while people were onsite, and they would have to try fixing the boilers when people were not on campus.

"The dates that they told us we were moving online were Nov. 16 to Nov. 28," Cortez said. Asked how the news impacted his studies, he said, "So, I technically try to use the computers at school because that's actually a place for me to concentrate better and to just submerge my-

self in the environment."

He added, "That the classes and everything [were] moved to online actually caused me to feel very depressed, because I was not able to submerge myself in the field that I wanted to be in, which also caused a lack of motivation." Having experienced both online and in-person learning, when the college abruptly switched back to online learning, he said it was like reliving COVID all over again.

He added, "I do have a laptop, but sometimes my WiFi is not as good [as on campus]. So, sometimes I had to use my mobile hotspot. So, going into campus and just using their hotspot or their Wi Fi is a personal advantage for me because of the stable, strong connection."

Asked if he had complained about the heating, before the college went remote, he said, "Faculty and students had complained about the heating situation to the BCC administration for actually some time now." He added that it had been an issue at least since he began studying at BCC.

Asked what, if anything, the college had done to address the situation, prior to going remote, Cortez said, "They keep saying that they're fixing the issue, that they're going to switch the boilers to the new ones."

He added, "Right now, their main goal is to entirely gut the boilers that are there and switch into a new boiler system but to do that, they have to wait for the winter season to be over, to even start. So right now, what they're doing is just fixing the current, outdated boilers until the springtime, so they can start switching over to the new boilers in the fall."

The college reopened for in-person learning once again on Nov. 28. "They were able to get the boilers online, but there were some issues with *some* buildings," Cortez said. "Overall, the campus, thankfully, is heated. They were able to fix the issue." He later added that in some cases, the rooms are



Photo courtesy of Jose Ayala.

**BRYAN CORTEZ, WHO** studies Computer Information Systems at Bronx Community College (BCC), located at 2155 University Avenue in the University Heights section of The Bronx, who is pictured in Central Park in June 2021, told *Norwood News* he began feeling depressed when the college had to pivot back to remote learning in November 2022 due to insufficient heating on campus as his remote WiFi connection is not stable.

even too hot.

According to Cortez, most people were fed up with the situation. "I, actually, attended Cottage Senate [which] usually runs for two hours," he said, adding that the presidential report is for about 15 minutes. "The entire conversation - it was all about the heating situation. So, everybody was being affected by it to the point that we kept requesting for more time, to keep asking questions as to when the heating situation will be fixed, so, it was something that affected everybody on campus, whether it was students, faculty members or BCC admin. Everybody was honestly concerned regarding the situation."

The Professional Staff Congress or PSC CUNY is a trade union that represents faculty

and professional staff of the City University of New York (CUNY) campuses.

*Norwood News* also spoke to biology professor at BCC and chair of PSC union's local chapter, Yasmin Edwards, on Nov. 18, who has been with the college for 10 years and who reiterated that the poor heating there has been a longtime problem for both students and employees every year.

"Since October, we have been begging - I hate to use that word but that is the word I have to use here - begging the administration of our college to provide us with heat," Edwards said. "In October, there was no heat in any of the buildings on campus. We did have some, really mild days from October, absolutely. We were fortunate in that way, but we also had some

days where it was topped out at maybe 55/56 [degrees]."

She continued, "In the morning and evening, the temperature was in the 40s." She said the college prided itself on its diversity and was designed to try to accommodate working students. "Well, you had those students sitting in rooms in the morning and evening, when it was 40 degrees outside with no heat. We have temperature readings of rooms that were 57/59/62 degrees."

Edwards said staff like advisors, financial aid, those working at the registrar were working all day, arriving to work early in the morning when it was cold, with no heat. "They were making these reports as early as October 3rd," she said. We [union members] started to get complaints that the offices were cold."

However, Edwards said the administration and the president confirmed to her in a public college meeting that the college made the decision to keep everyone in class, face-to-face, "because there were so many warm days in October."

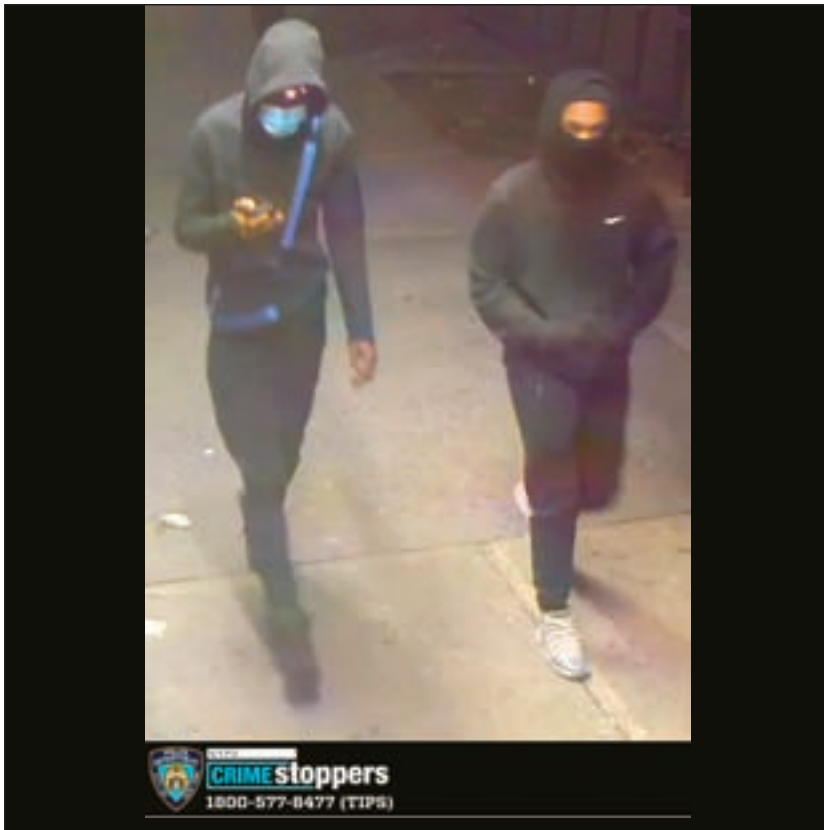
She said they then began appealing to the president to provide heaters. "They've said for three weeks...they kept telling us 'yes,' the issues we're having are due to the very lengthy process involved in converting from [a] cooling [system], because we have a heating system that is maybe over 25 years past it's useful life."

Edwards continued, "It's an old system and it takes a long time - three weeks - to convert from cooling in the summer, to heating. They know the system is old. They know it takes a long time to switch from cooling to heating, and for reasons that are unclear to anyone, they wait until October to start the process, so that we're not getting heat until the end of October or November."

*Norwood News* reached out to both CUNY (City University of New York) Central and BCC  
(continued on page 11)

## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



### Fordham Heights: Boy, 14, Fatally Shot

A 14-year-old boy was fatally shot in Fordham Heights, police said. A police spokesperson said that on Wednesday, Nov. 30, at around 9.15 p.m. officers responded to a 911 call regarding a male who had been shot in front of 2249 Morris Avenue. "Upon arrival, officers observed a 14-year-old male [with] a gunshot wound to the torso," the spokesperson said.

"EMS responded and transported the victim to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased." There are no arrests, and the investigation is ongoing. The deceased has since been identified as Prince Shabazz, of East Tremont in Mt. Hope. A GoFundMe page has been set-up to help support the victim's family and can be visited at <https://www.gofundme.com/>. Search using "Prince Shabazz."

On Dec. 4, the NYPD asked for the public's help identifying the two people seen in the accompanying photo, obtained near the incident location, who are sought for questioning in connection to the fatal shooting.

The first person of interest is described as a male with a dark complexion and a thin build, who was last seen wearing a black, hooded sweatshirt, a black face mask, black pants, and gray sneakers. The second person of interest is described as a male with a dark complexion, and a thin build, who was last seen wearing a black, hooded sweatshirt, a blue face mask, black pants, and black sneakers.

### Fordham Heights: Man, 28, Fatally Shot

A 28-year-old man has died after be-

ing fatally shot in Fordham Heights. On Tuesday, Dec. 13, at around 12.28 a.m., police said officers responded to a ShotSpotter activation [technology that monitors the sound of gunshots] in the vicinity of 2171 Grand Concourse, located within the 46th Precinct. A police spokesperson said, "Upon arrival, officers observed a 28-year-old male, unconscious and unresponsive, with a gunshot wound to the head in front of 2155 Grand Concourse."

The spokesperson added, "EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. There are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing." The deceased has since been identified as Parrish Truesdale, 28, from the Olinville section of The Bronx.

### Bedford Park: Man, 29, Stabbed

A 29-year-old was stabbed in Bedford Park, police said. He remains in stable condition. On Saturday, Dec. 3, at around 2.25 a.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding an assault in the vicinity of Valentine Avenue and East 198th Street. Upon arrival, officers were informed an unidentified person entered a home and stabbed a 29-year-old man after a physical altercation. "The subject fled the location to parts unknown," police said. "EMS transported the victim [to] St. Barnabas Medical Center in stable condition. There are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing," police added.

### Bedford Park Reckless Endangerment Incident

Police said there was a "commotion" involving a group of armed people at

Grand Concourse and East 199th Street on Saturday, Dec. 3, at around 5.50 p.m., which was classified as a reckless endangerment incident. Upon arrival at the location, officers were informed there was a commotion among a group, with three people displaying guns. There were no reported injuries as a result of this incident, no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing, police said.

### Lawsuit Challenges

#### NY Gun Reform Package

Assembly Member Patricia Fahy (A.D. 109) released a statement on Friday, Dec. 2, following news that a lawsuit has been filed, challenging a New York State law, requiring social media networks to provide and maintain mechanisms for reporting hateful conduct on their platforms and to disclose how they respond to such reports.

State law, A.7583-A, which took effect Friday, Dec. 3, was sponsored last year by Fahy, who represents parts of upstate New York, including Albany, and State Sen. Anna Kaplan (A.D. 7), who represents parts of Nassau County. The law was part of Gov. Kathy Hochul's gun reform package, which was passed earlier in the summer, following the racist-driven, mass shooting caused by Payton Gendron in Buffalo in May, which resulted in the deaths of 10 Black people and the wounding of three.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg has reported the law was challenged by the Volokh Conspiracy legal blog and the Peter Thiel-backed video site, Rumble Inc., which, Bloomberg reported, claims the law will hurt online services and seek to silence unfavorable but constitutionally protected expression.

"In a federal lawsuit filed Thursday against New York Attorney General Letitia James, the plaintiffs sought to stop the new state law from taking effect as scheduled on Saturday," Bloomberg reported, adding the plaintiffs claim New York "cannot regulate disfavored online speech by compelling online service to 'mouth support for views they find objectionable' in hopes of deterring or eliminating hate speech."

Reacting to the news, Fahy said, "We have seen how dangerous the unmitigated spread of violent extremism and misinformation across social media networks can be. With over 4.75 billion posts made on Facebook alone every day, and more than 70 percent of Americans having some form of social media account, New York's law requiring social media platforms to put into place clear, concise policies on how to report and address hateful content is a basic, common-sense step in the right direction."

As reported by CNN, Gendron, a 19-year-old, White man, pleaded guilty to one count of a domestic act of terrorism motivated by hate, 10 counts of first-degree murder, three counts of attempted murder and a weapons possession charge in the mass shooting at Tops Friendly Markets on May 14. The charges come

with a mandatory sentence of life in prison without the chance of parole.

Under the NYS gun reform package, legislation S.9458/A.10503 bars the purchase of semi-automatic rifles by anyone under 21 by requiring a license. Legislation S.9407-B/A.10497 prohibits the purchase of body armor, with the exception of those in specified professions.

Legislation S.9113-A/A.10502 expands the list of people who can file Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) and requires law enforcement to file ERPOs under a specified set of circumstances.

The package also strengthens crime reporting; closing "other gun" loopholes; requires the microstamping of new semi-automatic pistols; eliminates grandfathering of high capacity feeding devices; and requires social media companies to improve the response to, and reporting of, hateful content.

The lawsuit comes in the wake of recent comments, widely regarded as anti-Semitic, by rapper, Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, in which he praised Adolf Hitler during an interview on the right-wing talk show, Infowars. The show is hosted by conspiracy theorist and conservative talk show host, Alex Jones who, himself, has declared bankruptcy after a series of defamation trials resulted in his owing nearly \$1.5 billion to the families of the victims of the 2012 Sandy Hook mass shooting.

As reported by NPR, among other statements, Ye, who has over 30 million followers, said during the Infowars interview, "I see good things about Hitler." He also said, "I love Jewish people, but I also love Nazis."

Meanwhile, according to the The Times UK, a British teenager, Daniel Harris, 19, from Glossop in Derbyshire faces extradition to the United States after being found guilty of publishing far-right, terrorist material that allegedly inspired the mass shooting in Buffalo. Harris produced videos that called for armed insurrection and glorified the crimes of white supremacist mass murderers. His content was seen by Gendron. His "manifesto" used an image from a Daniel Harris video.

Of the latest lawsuit, Fahy added, "I believe the constitutionality of New York's social media law will be affirmed by the courts, and it will be used to protect New Yorkers from dangerous, hate-fueled extremism both online and offline."

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

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



# BCC Heat Restored Amid Resignation

(continued from page 9)

administration for comment, as we were informed that the PSC union had contacted both the management of the college and CUNY Central about the heating issue.

Richard S. Ginsburg of BCC marketing team responded on Nov. 28, saying, "The heat has been restored at the college, and all in person classes have resumed. A CUNY spokesperson responded on Nov. 30, saying, "The boilers have been fixed and the University delivered a temporary boiler to the campus as an additional precaution."

For Edwards, the issue goes beyond the heating problem, however, which she agrees is now resolved. "There was a lot of hard work that went into bringing Bronx Community College into being," she said. "It came out of community organizers. Organizers unhappy with the lack of higher educational options in The Bronx fought for this college to be created. They fought for a better future for the young folks in the community. We're going to be damned if we are going to be the ones who are going to see that die. It's not going to happen! No, I will not have these young folks coming into this situation."

On Dec. 8, the BCC Senate signed a resolution calling for number of actions to be taken to address various concerns with the college facilities which, generally, the senate said were endangering the health and safety of students, staff and faculty. They also called for the removal of BCC's vice president of administration and finance, Kay Ellis. Edwards said Ellis has since tendered her resignation.



Photo by David Greene. **A PLUG-IN HEATER** warms the office of a security guard at the entrance of Bronx Community College, located at 2155 University Avenue in the University Heights section of The Bronx on Nov. 22, 2022.

Photo by David Greene **HALL OF PHILOSOPHY**, Bronx Community College, located at 2155 University Avenue in the University Heights section of The Bronx in August 2022.

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<b>Queens Borough Hall</b> 120-88 Queens Boulevard Kew Gardens, NY 11423 Monday & Thursday 10:00am - 4:00pm	<b>Staten Island Borough Hall</b> 10 Richmond Terrace Staten Island, NY 10310 Wednesday & Thursday 10:00am - 3:00pm	

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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Health Commissioner Issues Advisory

NYC Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani issued a new advisory on Dec. 9 as NYC faces high levels of triple onslaught of COVID-19, flu, and RSV cases. New Yorkers are strongly urged to wear masks in public, indoor settings, and crowded outdoor settings, to get vaccinated, test regularly, wash hands regularly and stay home, if sick. For more information, visit <https://on.nyc.gov/3ULqGDZ>. This is especially important for people who are – or are meeting – those who are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19, RSV, or the flu, such as those age 65 and older and people who are immunocompromised.

## What is RSV?

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene is also educating New Yorkers on the spread of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), which is a common respiratory virus that often causes mild, cold-like symptoms but may result in severe illness in some people. Anyone can be infected, but RSV can be serious, especially in infants and older adults. Symptoms often include runny nose, sneezing, cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, fever, and decrease in appetite. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/rsv>.

## 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 212-684-4319 or (212) 268-4319. Find a vaccine or booster location today at [ny.gov/vaxtoschool](http://ny.gov/vaxtoschool).

## MPV Updates

A two-dose MPV vaccination is available for those eligible. 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.

## Social Security Increase in 2023

The U.S. Social Security Administration has announced an 8.7 percent benefit increase for 2023. See attached flier below for more information. On average, social security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month, starting in January. Social security recipients can create their own account online by visiting [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

## Free English Classes

Practice your English while getting to know your community, regardless of immigration status, with free English classes offered by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Visit <https://we-speaknyc.cityofnewyork.us/> for more information.

## New Car-Sharing Plans by DOT

As confirmed by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) has unveiled plans for a pair of carsharing companies (Getaround and Zipcar) to establish four carsharing sites in the local Northwest Bronx community. Each site would come with two parking spaces.

The sites they are looking to use are at:

- Cambridge Avenue between West 235th Street and West 236th Street
- Arlington Avenue between West 227th Street and West 230th Street
- Manhattan College Parkway between West 242nd Street and Manhattan College Parkway
- West 236th Street between Irwin Avenue and Tibbett Avenue

The assemblyman welcomes feedback from the community on the proposal at [DinowitzJ@nyassembly.gov](mailto:DinowitzJ@nyassembly.gov) or on (718) 796-5345.

## Student Loan Forgiveness Repayment Deadline Extended

The Biden administration has extended the pause on federal student loan repayments to allow for the Supreme Court to rule in the case on the student debt relief program. The pause will end no later than June 30, 2023. Payments will resume 60 days after the pause ends.

## The David Prize

Kingsbridge Library is advising Bronxites that The David Prize is giving away \$200K to New Yorkers with big ideas. The David Prize is a celebration of individuals and ideas to create a better, brighter New York. Open to any individuals working in the five boroughs, the Prize welcomes those with the grit and vision to change their communities, culture and future for good. Head to the official website at <https://thedavidprize.org/> to submit your idea, or nominate someone!

## Community Holiday Toy Drive

Bronx Community Board 7 is organizing a community holiday toy drive in conjunction with the 52nd Precinct Community Council. All unwrapped, donated toys should be brought to the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office, located at 3016 Webster Avenue in Norwood. For more information, call (718) 220 5824.

## 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>.

[cold-church](https://www.gofundme.com/f/warm-hearts-cold-church).

## Holiday Food Distribution

A holiday food and toy distribution event will be held on Saturday, Dec. 17, at noon at P.S. 94, 3530 Kings College Place in Norwood, hosted by various elected officials and partners. Kids must be present for the toy giveaway. Bring your shopping cart and bags. The event is open to the community while supplies last.

## KHCC Needs to Fund Repairs

Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) has been providing cradle-to-career services to the local community for nearly 50 years. It is now calling on the local community to help fund urgent repairs which are needed to its building (owned by NYC Parks) which cost \$4 million. If not completed soon, KHCC will be forced to leave Kingsbridge. KHCC is asking residents to share this on social media tagging @khccnyc, contact local elected officials to request that they secure \$2 million to fund the repairs, and ask the City administration to repair the building in 2023.

## New State Law Bans Fees on Tenant-Installed AC

Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) announced on Dec. 1 that his legislation with State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) to ban fees for tenant-installed air conditioners has been signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

## College Prep and Leadership Classes

Learn how to navigate the process of choosing a school that is best for you, what to expect after graduation, and how to become a leader at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood, each Wednesday from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Email [shagari.allyene@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:shagari.allyene@parks.nyc.gov) for more information.

## Visit Santa for Free

Visit Santa for free at Kingsbridge Riverdale Van Cortlandt Development Corporation (KRVC), located at 505 W 236th St, The Bronx, NY 10463, on Monday, Dec. 19, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. There will be a holiday gift boutique inside with items for sale, and free books available outside.

## Ombudsperson Call Center

Did you know that if you are not happy with NYCHA's response to your mold or leak complaint, a court-appointed independent Ombudsperson Call Center ("OCC") is available to help. To learn more about the OCC, visit [ombnyc.com](http://ombnyc.com) or Call 1-888-341-7152.

## UNHP Housing Forum

Have questions about financial or housing services? ASK University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) on Thursday, Dec. 15, on Zoom

at 4 p.m. This month, UNHP will share information and advice about applying to open Housing Connect lotteries, but feel free to bring up any topic relevant to you! Register at <https://unhp.org/calendar>.

## Heating and Cooling Assistance (HEAP) 2022-2023

As confirmed by State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi (S.D. 34), the regular HEAP season opened on Nov. 1, 2022. More information including 2022-23 benefit amounts and eligibility requirements can be found <https://www.ny.gov/services/apply-heating-and-cooling-assistance-heap>. The Emergency HEAP Benefit opens on Jan. 1, 2023. The Emergency HEAP Benefit assists those in a heat-related emergency. More information, including 2022-23 benefit amounts and eligibility requirements, can be found at <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/#emergency-benefit>.

## New Affordable Internet Access Program

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has launched the Affordable Connectivity Program to help connect families and households struggling to afford internet service. Find out how you can immediately save \$400 per year. Under this new federal program, you may be eligible for a discount on internet access. Visit <https://www.fcc.gov/acp> for more information.

## Moshulu Library Teen December Calendar

Moshulu Library, located at 285 East 205th Street in Norwood, continues its December calendar of events for teens, including Game Day on Dec. 15, at 3 p.m., College Essay Support on Dec. 19, at 4 p.m., and a board game bonanza on Dec. 22, at 4 p.m. Visit [www.nypl.org/events](http://www.nypl.org/events) for more information.

## State Sen. Robert Jackson Listening Tour

State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) is hosting another session of his listening tour for constituents at Van Cortlandt Library, Airline Schwartzman Building, 3882 Canon Place, Bronx, NY 10463 on Thursday, Dec. 15, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. All are welcome.

## Affordable Housing Lotteries

Affordable housing lotteries for seniors and others are open for units at the following locations:

740 Brook Avenue in Woodstock, with a deadline of Dec. 27.

2850 Webster Avenue in Bedford Park with a deadline of Jan. 3, 2023

915 Elmsmere Place in West Farms with a deadline of Dec. 30, 2022.

For more information, run a search using these addresses on [www.norwoodnews.org](http://www.norwoodnews.org), or contact the Affordable Housing Lottery Helpline on (212) 863-7990, or via email at [nychousingconnect@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:nychousingconnect@hpd.nyc.gov). For information on applying for affordable housing for people with disabilities, call (212) 863-6486 or email: [accessibility@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:accessibility@hpd.nyc.gov). HPD housing ambassadors can be reached at [ambassadors@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:ambassadors@hpd.nyc.gov).



# Bronx Marks World AIDS Day Amid High HIV Rates

By ARIEL PACHECO

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson hosted a press conference on Fordham Plaza to mark World AIDS Day on Thursday, Dec. 1. The purpose of the event was to spread awareness about AIDS, a life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that attacks the immune system of the patient, and to offer helpful resources to the Bronx community.

Gibson was accompanied on the day by numerous organizations and non-profits, including Black Health, Amida Care, Latino Commission on AIDS, Es-sen Health Care, Osborne Association, Boom! Health, African Services Committee, Health Advocacy Care, and more.

"Today's event marks another day, another week, another moment for us to advocate for those with HIV/AIDS regardless of their race, gender, or socio-economic status, but the fundamental right to receive high-quality patient-centered care," Gibson said.

Those who elected to get tested at the event were given free MetroCards. Free HIV testing was also available, with Gibson strongly encouraging attendees to get tested. Bronxites were also encouraged to participate in various giveaways and to pick up additional educational resources.

In June 1981, the first cases of the illness now known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were reported in Los Angeles in five young, homosexual men. HIV/AIDS can affect anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, or age. However, certain groups are at higher risk and merit special consideration because of particular risk factors, including having several sexual partners and having unprotected sex.

Stigma has always surrounded those diagnosed with the disease, in part because it was first detected among members of the LGBTQ+ community, and when less was known about the illness. Battling this



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Vanessa Gibson, surrounded by HIV-prevention advocates, holds up a proclamation designating Dec. 1 through Dec. 7 "World AIDS Awareness Week" annually in The Bronx, during an event held at Fordham Plaza in the Belmont section of The Bronx to mark World AIDS Day on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022.

stigma has been an ongoing struggle for those working to raise awareness about prevention and treatment.

Gibson pointed to the stigma being even more prevalent among marginalized groups like the African American, Latino, LGBTQIA+ and immigrant communities. "They face the greatest social stigma and suffer the most," she said.

Such stigma also often prevents people from seeking treatment or from getting tested as they fear the perception of others on those who are HIV positive. Gibson explained that this was the reason it was so important that officials and advocacy groups were active and on-the-ground, going into communities and seeking people out, as opposed to having people seek out services.

"Many people fear coming forward," she said. "They have anxiety, are traumatized; they don't want to know their status because of what is associated with being HIV [positive]."

She continued, "The stigma is especially severe for many of our brothers and sisters who experience intersectional stigma, for holding identities across systemically oppressed races, sexual orientations, and socio-economic statuses, and

it often prevents these vulnerable communities from receiving preventative care and treatment services."

According to a November 28th press release from the Bronx borough president's office, AIDS is responsible for over 36 million deaths worldwide and reached a one-year peak of 1.9 million deaths in 2004 alone. That number has dropped to 680,000 as recently as 2020, according to the release.

Meanwhile, according to the website, <https://aidsvu.org/>, while case numbers have dropped significantly worldwide since the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, rates in The Bronx have actually increased in recent years, as reported by *Norwood News* earlier this year.

"As of December 2021, there are 31,035 people living in The Bronx with HIV," said Gibson. "Every year, hundreds more are newly diagnosed [..], and many are our loved ones and our family members and friends. This epidemic is not over."

According to the CDC, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) can be highly effective in reducing a person's chances of contracting HIV through sex or from injection drug use, when taken

as prescribed.

However, according to the CDC, only about 25 percent of people for whom PrEP is recommended use it. "There are still a lot of misconceptions and stigmas associated with HIV and PrEP use," said Sandrine Blake, assistant director of events at Amida Care. "HIV can infect anyone."

Blake pointed to Black women being disproportionately affected by HIV, saying they've accounted for nearly 60 percent of all new HIV infections in the U.S. women's count.

Meanwhile, Tabytha Gonzalez, associate human rights specialist and transgender community liaison at the NYC Commission for Human Rights, said, "Despite new treatment and modes of prevention, HIV continues to be a pandemic, especially among communities of color."

Gibson relaunched the HIV roundtable earlier this year, as reported, and the group held its first meeting in September. They discussed ways to tackle the disease and established a boroughwide network of community partners who can provide services to help end the epidemic.

"My office is committed to

working with all of our residents across the borough and partners on our HIV roundtable to increase access to HIV prevention treatment, care, to reduce the stigma, and all the barriers associated with accessing care," said Gibson.

The borough president also declared Dec. 1 through Dec. 7 as "World AIDS Awareness Week" in The Bronx, going forward, adding that HIV-related services and events will be promoted particularly during that week, but also throughout the year in efforts to continue the fight against the disease.

The first World AIDS Day took place in 1988, according to website. [www.hiv.gov](http://www.hiv.gov). It is also dedicated to raising awareness of the disease and mourning those who have died because of it. The day is marked globally on Dec. 1 each year. This year's theme was "Putting Ourselves to the Test: Achieving Equity to End HIV." People were encouraged to unite globally to eliminate the disparities and inequities that create barriers to HIV testing, prevention, and access to HIV care.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced that both City Hall and the David N. Dinkins Manhattan Municipal Building were to be lit red in recognition of World AIDS Day. Meanwhile, a medical team at Montefiore Health System in The Bronx performed the world's first HIV-positive to HIV-positive heart transplant earlier this year.

At a press conference on Nov. 22 at Norwood's Montefiore Medical Center, Westchester resident, Miriam Nieves, the heart organ recipient, who received the heart from the late Brittany Newton of Louisiana, encouraged people to become organ donors, saying those living with HIV probably didn't even know they could become donors. "I hope to inspire more people to become organ donors and see that they have the power to save lives," she said.

Learn more about HIV prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/index.html>.



# Two Men Found Dead in Subways: One in Norwood, One in Morris Park

By DAVID GREENE

Police are currently working to identify the first of two men found dead inside a Bronx subway station within a 24-hour period. One man was found dead inside East 205th Street subway station, the last Bronx stop on the D train. Police in conjunction with the City's medical examiner's office are also working to ascertain his cause of death.

According to police, the first man was discovered at 7:48 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 6. A police official told *Norwood News*, "Police responded to a 911 call of an aided individual at the 205 Street subway station located in the confines of Transit District 11 / 52 Precinct. Upon arrival, officers observed an unidentified male, unconscious and unresponsive, in the mezzanine area of the subway station."

The unnamed police official added, "EMS responded and pronounced the individual deceased. The deceased remains unidentified at this time. The Medical Examiner will determine the exact cause of death."

A longtime female resident of the area who declined to be identified said shortly after the man's removal from the station, "I saw it. They took him out through there. They brought him out to the coroner." She said the man was placed in a waiting black truck. The woman added, "He had OD'd. He had OD'd. Twenty-three years old....been here 3 months from Santo Domingo." Asked where she heard that, the woman replied, "I talked to the cops, I know them. I live here. I'm an old timer."

The woman then produced a cell phone photo showing police officers assisting with the removal of the deceased from the station and placing his body inside the waiting vehicle.

In reference to the discovery of the body, a second resident, a man selling food outside the subway station, added, "Somebody told me it was from yesterday, like 10:30 or 11 p.m. He was there, like asleep. I don't know. Maybe sick? Maybe he died already?" The police official we spoke to was asked if the man had been in the station all night. He declined to respond.

A third resident added, "Somebody told me about it and then when I came up to Foodtown, they had the street blocked off and I asked the cop and he said, 'Supposedly, there's a dead body on the train.'"

Police reported a second death inside the Bronx transit system when at 12:55 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 7, police were



Photo by David Greene

**POLICE SAY AN** unidentified man was found dead inside the 205th Street subway station in Norwood on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022. His identify and cause of death are yet to be determined.



Photo courtesy of a local bystander in Norwood

**A CELL PHONE** photo shot by a bystander shows police assisting medical examiner workers placing a deceased man, found inside the 205th Street subway station in Norwood, on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022, into a waiting vehicle.

called to the East 180th Street subway station at Morris Park for a report of a male struck by a train. The still-unidentified victim was pronounced deceased at the scene, and police continue to investigate the incident. The medical examiner will also determine the man's cause of death.

Anyone who may have information regarding either 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 Crime Stoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

A National Suicide Prevention hotline is available since July 1, 2022.

Call 988 for help.

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene provides a confidential mental health and substance use support 24/7 via their NYC Well service. Talk with a professional on (888) 692-9355 or via 888-NYC-Well, text "well" to 65173, or chat on [NYC Well - Talk. Text. Chat. 24/7](https://nycwell.org/) ([cityofnewyork.us](https://cityofnewyork.us)).



# Fordham Hill Celebrates 40 Years as a Co-Op

By DAVID GREENE

Local elected officials, invited guests, residents and members of the Board of Directors of the Fordham Hill Owners Corporation gathered in October to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the latter as a co-operative. Located in the southwestern edge of the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx, at 1 Fordham Hill Oval, the housing complex sits on seven acres of property and comprises nine high-rise, apartment buildings consisting of 1,130 apartments.

The celebration was held on Saturday, Oct. 15, a few weeks before the November general election, and special guests included Gov. Kathy Hochul, Mayor Eric Adams and a host of other elected officials, including Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez (D-14), who represents the neighborhood, is chair of the City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings, and a Morris Avenue homeowner.

During her address, Hochul, told the Fordham Hill owners, "It's my commitment as we head into the next legislature to make sure that we can allow the dream that was created and blossomed here on Fordham Hill to continue for other people across the state."

Meanwhile, Congressman

Adriano Espaillat (NY-13) echoed Hochul's statement, saying, "Ownership builds pride. Ownership builds responsibility, and ownership builds community, and we need to have more ownership in our community."

Regarding ongoing development around the Fordham Hill complex, Espaillat vowed, "I will work with you to make sure it's smart development and that only strengthens your investment. Your investment is important to me and to this community."

Emcees for the event were Myrna Calderon, president of the board of directors at the Fordham Hill Owners Corporation, and Rachel Miller-Bradshaw, board secretary. Also in attendance were the Co-op's vice president, Michelle Centeno; treasurer, Blandon Casenave; and directors, Esteban Garcia, Tiffany Hart, and John Howard.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson said of the milestone, "Way back in 1982, there was a group of people that had a mission, a vision and a blueprint to make sure that we can turn Fordham Hill from affordable housing into ownership opportunities."

Gibson also referred to Ford-



Photo by David Greene

**FORDHAM HILL RESIDENTS**, invited guests, and elected officials gather for the 40th anniversary celebration of the Fordham Hill Owners Corporation, located at 1 Fordham Hill Oval in the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx, on Saturday, October 15, 2022.

ham Hill as "the fabric of the West Bronx," and "a pathway to the middle class." She later pre-

sented the Co-op with a proclamation in recognition of Fordham Hill's 40th anniversary.

For his part, former District 14 city councilman and Fordham Hill owner, Rev. Dr. Fernando Cabrera, Ed.D, pastor at New Life Outreach International Church and now a senior faith advisor to the mayor, recalled his origins at Fordham Hill "The board....I remember when I first got interviewed, I was so nervous," he said. "I was like...I hope they let me [in]." His comments drew laughter from the crowd as he continued, "And it's been a true honor to live here in Fordham Hill.... so much that I asked my son to live here."

Fordham Hill Owners Corporation later presented Cabrera with a public service award. Cabrera added, amid more laughter, "I live in Building 7. I won't tell you my apartment [number] because you'll

be knocking on my door asking for the mayor to do something."

During his own address, Adams recalled his time as a Brooklyn police officer. "I saved up enough money to buy a one-bedroom, co-op apartment and it just became the foundation of a small group that was in Prospect Heights [Brooklyn]," he said.

"We did our own block association. We organized, we used to hold events and slowly the block turned around. So, I think about what The Bronx looked like 40 years ago, long before some of the renovation and renewal that came through."

Meanwhile, outgoing Assemblyman José Rivera (A.D. 78), another homeowner at Fordham Hill complex, was presented with a community service award for his decades in public service and community advocacy, while Edward Thomas Williams, Jr., the person who incorporated the Fordham Hill corporation was presented with a visionary award.

Members of the Ceila Cruz High School Chorus were also on hand for the celebration to perform several songs for guests during the event.

Prestige Management is appointed to manage the housing complex. Addressing those gathered, Horace Henry, executive vice president of Prestige, told the Fordham Hill Co-Op owners, "Seven years ago, when we came on board, our vision was to first increase the value of your investment. I can stand here today and proudly say we have increased the value of the units here over 240 percent."

The Co-op is a private entity and as such, its financial records are not publicly available. One Co-op owner, who declined to be identified, later told Norwood News that the referenced increase in the value of the properties was, in his opinion, attributable to favorable market conditions in recent years rather than to any specific actions taken by the management company. He cited the deterioration of the sidewalks at the

(continued on page 16)



Photo by David Greene

**(L TO R)** FORDAM HILL OWNERS Corporation (FHOC) board member, Myrna Calderon, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, and FHOC board member, Rachel Miller-Bradshaw, former NYS Assembly Member Michael Blake, and attend the Fordham Hill Owners Corporation's 40th Anniversary celebration, at 1 Fordham Hill Oval in the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx, on Saturday, October 15, 2022.



# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

Join Mosholu Library, located at 285 East 205th Street, for its first **Teen Movie & Discussion** program, featuring *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, Thursday Dec. 29, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the library. No registration is required. The discussion will be moderated by the teen librarian.

Bridgefield Civic League, located at 3551 Laconia Avenue in Williamsbridge, and partners will host a free **Holiday Celebration** on Thursday, Dec. 15, at 4 p.m., including a visit by Santa, story time, food and drinks, toys and a holiday giveaway for kids. Call (917) 385 2961 for more information.

On Saturday, Dec. 17, at 11:30, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and partners will join Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Bronx Zoo [Dancing Crane Pavilion, 2300 Southern Blvd parking lot] for a **Toy Giveaway to local children of Bronx military families in need**. The Bronx Zoo serves as a collection point for donations. Toys can be purchased and donated in any of the gift shops at the Bronx Zoo or at any of the other WCS zoos or aquariums in New York City. The borough president's office manages distribution of toys to families of veterans and active-duty members of the military. Those who make a qualifying donation will receive a free ticket to the Bronx Zoo or New York Aquarium (based on the

donation location). Bronx Community Board 7 and the New York Yankees will host a **Winter Wonderland at 229A East 204<sup>th</sup> Street in Bedford Park**, on Friday, Dec. 16, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Every child must have a ticket. For more information, call Karla Cabrera Carrera on (929) 496 0748 or email [kcabrera@carrera.cb.nyc.gov](mailto:kcabrera@carrera.cb.nyc.gov). The 2023 opening hours for the **Bronx Children's Museum**, located at 725 Exterior Street near Yankee Stadium along the Harlem River, as of January 3, 2023, will be Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Visit <https://www.bronxchildrensmuseum.org/> for more information. Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Councilman Eric Dinowitz and partners will host a **Bronx Chanukah Celebration** on Dec. 21, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Riverdale Y, 5625 Arlington Avenue, Bronx, NY, to light the menorah, sing songs and enjoy refreshments. For more information, contact Jeffrey Laufer [jlaufer@bronxbp.nyc.gov](mailto:jlaufer@bronxbp.nyc.gov) for more information.

Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center, located in Olinville, will be hosting a **Kwanzaa Celebration** on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at P.S. 41, located at 3352 Olinville Avenue in Olinville, The Bronx. This traditional community celebration of African-

American culture is free and open to all, an event to create a space of unity. For more information, email [jcope@mind-builders.org](mailto:jcope@mind-builders.org) or call (718) 652-6256.

The Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, located at 450 Grand Concourse and 149th Street, The Bronx, presents **Calpulli Mexican Dance Company's Navidad** on Sunday, Dec. 18, at 3 p.m. Admission is free for all ages. This cultural journey gives us a glimpse of how a young person of immigrant parents growing up in NYC embraces and celebrates her dual identity and all her cultures! The journey will feature folkloric Mexican dance and music, U.S. contemporary traditions and the combination of both. Children of all ages and their families will learn about this special **Navidad** from dancers, musicians, and directors. All Adults must show proof of vaccination OR proof of a negative PCR Test taken 7 days prior with a valid Photo ID. Children 5 and over must show proof of vaccination OR a negative PCR Test taken 7 days prior. Reserve tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-cultural-journey-of-navidad-a-mexican-american-christmas-tickets-480051174987>.

## ART

En Foco, Inc. located at 15 Canal Place, Bronx, NY 10451, is hosting an **En Foco Media Arts Fund: Virtual How-to-Apply Session** on Tuesday, December 20, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. ahead of the deadline for the En Foco's Media Arts Fund: Work in Progress (WIP) Initiative grant on Friday, Jan. 27, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. The grant is to support New York City based, early-career artists of color who engage with digital media technologies in their art-making processes. In collaboration with BronxNet, these \$2,000 awards will focus on applicants needing support for the completion of a quality work in progress, as determined

by a panel of professionals. The session will focus on the application process and feature a Q&A Session with En Foco staff. First time applicants are encouraged to attend. To register visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/483892524567>.

## MUSIC

The Lehman College and Community Band celebrates the holiday season with the **"Holiday Cheer 2022 Winter Concert!"** a musical performance featuring a mix of holiday selections and classics for wind bands. Free and open to the public, the concert will take place on Sunday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m. in the Lovingher Theatre music building, Lehman College, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd. Bronx, NY 10468. For more information, contact the Department of Music, Multimedia, Theater, and Dance at (718) 960-8247 or [music.department@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:music.department@lehman.cuny.edu).

## MOVEMENT

The New York Knicks, YMCA of Greater New York, and NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) are expanding their existing partnership, launched in February 2022, of providing safe, high-quality sports programs at no-cost to teens across the City. Beginning on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Castle Hill YMCA, 2 Castle Hill Avenue in The Bronx, the Knicks will host a series of five basketball clinics for YMCA teens between the ages of 11 and 18 as part of the Saturday Night Lights program. The Knicks **Saturday Night Lights** Basketball Clinics will be held at four different YMCA branches through April, in addition to a special marquee event this coming spring. For more information, contact Matt on (919) 500-1146 or email [merraguto@ymcanyc.org](mailto:merraguto@ymcanyc.org).

# Fordham Hill Celebrates 40 Years as a Co-Op

(continued from page 15)

complex as one example of why he believes the management company is not doing a good job.

The owner in question said he is not the sole Co-op owner to hold this viewpoint and has also critiqued the management company over an alleged lack of transparency. Norwood News raised this point with the management company in the past. We did not receive an immediate response.

A protest was held outside Fordham Hill Owners Corporation housing complex on June 4, 2022, by a minority of residents, who

said they were opposing a proposed management fee increase. One resident, who was not part of the protest and who did not oppose the increase, believed the board and the management company were doing a good job. Norwood News asked for a comment from the Board on the issue at the time. We did not receive an immediate response.

A fire broke out at the housing complex on Thursday, Dec. 8. The FDNY said there were no reported injuries and the cause is under investigation. Bronxites can visit <http://fdnysmart.org> for fire safety tips.

Bradshaw, who ran, and was elected, in 2022 as the new Democratic State committee woman for Assembly District 78, a position she will take up in the new year, told Norwood News the Fordham Hill Owners Corporation started rebranding in 2017, led by its communications committee, which she chairs.

She said the process is now complete and the website is now live, [www.fordhamhill.com](http://www.fordhamhill.com). She said potential buyers who are interested in the housing co-op can visit their website for more information.



Photo courtesy of Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office via Flickr  
**MAYOR ERIC ADAMS** greets an attendee at Fordham Hill Owners Corporation's 40th anniversary celebration at 1 Fordham Hill Oval in the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx, on Saturday, October 15, 2022.



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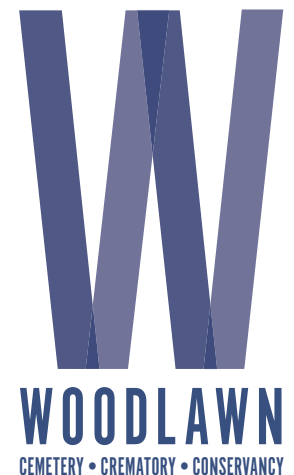
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## Public and Community Meetings

The 52<sup>nd</sup> **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting for December will take place on Thursday, Dec. 15 at 6 p.m. at Monroe College (King Hall Bldg), located at 2501 Jerome Avenue. 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** board meeting will be held in January 2023 (date TBC). Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are being held virtually, via Zoom, until further notice.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. The December meeting was held in person at 400 E Mosholu Pkwy S, #B1 (lobby floor), The Bronx. For details of future meetings, please contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

### CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News* edition December 1-14, 2022, in the first paragraph, and in one of the photo captions for the Page 9 story entitled, "Bronx CB7 Holds 1st Veterans' Flagging Event," we incorrectly referred to Bronx Community Board 7 Veterans Committee chair, Chad Royer, as a veteran. We apologize for this, which was our error.

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# Tree Lighting Event Brings Joy To CB7

(continued from page 1)

workshop, while kids participated in various holiday activities and games.

There were musical performances, including holiday carols, and of course the highlight, a visit from Santa Claus, and the countdown to the annual holiday tree-lighting, itself. With traffic blocked off on the lawn, a large stage was erected for the hosts, performers, and other participants, including a DJ who got everyone dancing towards the end of the evening to "All I Want for Christmas Is You!" by Mariah Carey and Walter Afanasieff.

Meanwhile, volunteers, some dressed as snowflakes, holiday trees, and in other festive costumes, served snacks and drinks and added to the fun atmosphere! CB7 deputy district manager, Karla Cabrera Carrera, newly elected CB7 chairperson, Yahaira Arias, and other members of the CB7 board welcomed those gathered, while CB7 Parks committee chair, Barbara Stronczer, acted as MC. "Just to give you a little bit of history – our first tree-lighting on Mosholu Parkway started back in 1978, and it was not a big spectacle like this," said Stronczer.

"It started with a 5-foot-high tree that residents tied to a streetlight on Decatur and Mosholu Parkway South," she continued. "One of our members came out and they hooked up the lights on the tree and we had our first celebration, and here we are today! It's been a great celebration each year!"

District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz was also in attendance with his children and

wished everyone a Happy Christmas. "I see a couple of menorahs, so I'll say Happy Hanukkah too!" he said, giving a shout out to his predecessor, former District 11 City Council Member Andy Cohen, now a judge at Bronx County Court, who he spotted in the crowd.

"It's always so great to see the community coming together having fun, especially our children, coming together, back in school," Dinowitz added. The former teacher continued, "But don't worry kids! You're going to have your Christmas break soon, right? You're most excited for that, right?" Amid cheers of "Yay!" he added, "I know, I know!" The councilman concluded, saying in part, "I know there's lots of activities for kids. We're going to be here having some fun. You guys, enjoy the holiday season, and I look forward to seeing all of you. Thank you!"

Also present on the mild winter's evening were Frederic Klein, representing Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), and George Cooke and Esperanza Diaz, representing District 15 City Council Member Oswald Feliz. Klein wished everyone happy holidays, thanked residents for coming out, said how much the assemblyman loves representing Norwood, and that he and his team are excited to continue doing so in January.

Co-sponsors of the event included Montefiore Einstein, Verilife Dispensary, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, and Part of the Solution (POTS), a nonprofit catering for those experiencing homelessness. Meanwhile, performances



Photo by Sile Moloney

**AMELIA CRUZ (RIGHT)** and her friend, Caylin, find a hiding place under the Holiday Tree as the annual, holiday tree-lighting ceremony hosted by Bronx Community Board 7 and Friends of Mosholu Parkland draws to a close. The event was held on Mosholu Parkway lawn at Bainbridge Avenue in Bedford Park on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022.

were given by students from P.S. / M.S. 20, located on Webster Avenue in Norwood, who sang "Christmas Time," "Here Comes the Snow" and "Light Up the World."

Students from Academy of Mount St. Ursula, located on Bedford Park Boulevard in Bedford Park, also performed, singing, "Winter Wonderland" and "Jingle Bell Rock," while the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center Dancers, in conjunction with NYC Parks, gave a performance to "Father, Can you Hear Me?" by Tyler Perry.

Other participants at the ceremony included the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Explorers and the group, "Spontaneous Entertainment," while ornaments were provided by P.S. 8, located on Briggs Avenue in Bedford Park, P.S. 54, located on Webster Avenue in Bedford Park, and P.S. 77, also located on Webster Avenue in Bedford Park.

Jade Foster, community relations manager at Montefiore's Office of Community Affairs, who recently succeeded Jason Caraballo in the role, introduced herself to those gathered. Foster congratulated both the student performers and Bronx CB7 for the great turn-out. She said Montefiore was, once again, happy to co-sponsor the annual event.

"Bronx CB7 is home to two of our campuses within the [Montefiore] health system, and we are excited to continue to improve the health of the community by working together on these events with CB7 and other local organizations," she said.

Foster wrapped up by wishing everyone happy holidays.

Elizabeth Quaranta, executive director of FOMP, thanked everyone for coming on behalf of all the FOMP members, many of whom were also in attendance and who had worked hard to put the event together. "It's great to see familiar faces, some getting older and wiser!" Quaranta said. "But it's also nice to see new faces from neighbors who have moved into the community – welcome! Together, we continue to care and to fight for this quality of life and onto the new year 2023! Happy New Year!"

Departing CB7 district manager, Ischia Bravo, was not present for the ceremony as she is currently on leave from Dec. 5 to Dec. 28 and will briefly return to the office from Dec. 28 to Dec. 30. She had received many well wishes from elected officials and community members alike during the November CB7 general board meeting, her last meeting.

Her resignation takes effect at close of business on Dec. 30. As of Jan. 3, 2023, Bravo will take up a new position as the commissioner of jurors/Bronx county clerk, based at 851 Grand Concourse, Room 118.

Bravo told *Norwood News*, "I would like to thank the members of Bronx Community Board 7 for the opportunity to serve the community I was born and raised in; and all of the community partners who have made this an experience of a lifetime. These past 5 years have been truly an experience that has helped me grow pro-

fessionally and emotionally." She added, "For the last 18 years, I have served my borough in many different roles, and I will continue to do so for years to come. I love The Bronx, its people, its diversity, and more importantly, the strength Bronxites have to thrive. So, I won't be going too far because there is still lots of work to be done."

She concluded, "I believe my role in the Courthouse will be yet another opportunity to provide a positive experience and quality services to all Bronxites. The journey to a better today, tomorrow, and always for The Bronx and its residents will always be my priority."

Local resident, Emma, 5, attended the event with her parents. Asked what the best thing about the holidays was, she said, "I love having presents! I love getting candy! I love everything about the holidays! You get toys!" Asked what kind of toys she liked, she said, "I like every kind of toy but not boy's toys... girl's toys." Asked what the best part of the tree-lighting ceremony was, Emma said, "Everything," before wishing everyone Happy Holidays!

We also spoke with attendee, Mario Rodriguez, who was present with his 3-year-old daughter, Carla. They were attending the event for the first time. Asked for his reaction, speaking in Spanish, Rodriguez replied, "It's very good!" Asked, in his opinion, what was the best part about the Christmas season, he replied, "Sharing with family, and nothing else."



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**MEMBERS OF THE 52ND PRECINCT**, Tracey Towers Tenants Organization president and former Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) chair, Jean Hill, and CB7 board members attend the annual, holiday tree-lighting ceremony hosted by CB7 and Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP) on Thursday Dec. 8, 2022, at Mosholu Parkway lawn and Bainbridge Avenue in Bedford Park.



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