

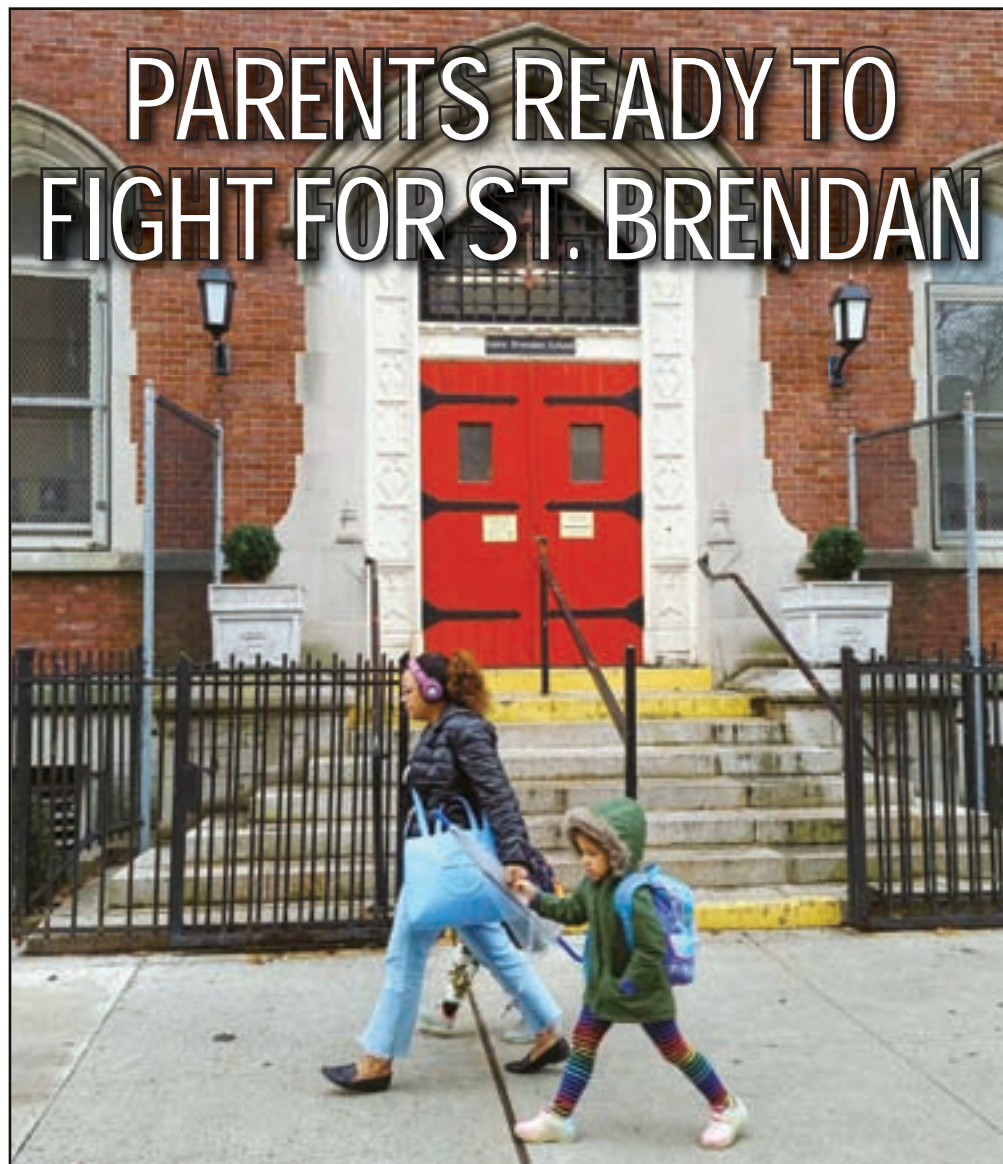


NORWOOD NEWS

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PARENTS READY TO FIGHT FOR ST. BRENDAN

Photo by David Greene

A PARENT WALKS with her children by St. Brendan School, located at 268 East 207th Street in Norwood on Friday, Feb. 17, 2023. The school is due to close at the end of the academic year 2022-23, much to the disappointment of students, teachers and parents.

By DAVID GREENE,
SÍLE MOLONEY &
SARA MARTINEZ

Norwood parents are gearing up for a fight to keep beloved St. Brendan Catholic School open following an announcement on Feb. 15 that the Norwood school, founded in 1908, will close its doors at the end of the 2022-23 academic year, along with 11 others across the City. Meanwhile four, *additional* Catholic schools in The Bronx will merge into two.

The news follows the previous closure of six Catholic schools in The Bronx in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to declining income. Of the twelve impacted schools set to close this year, six are, once again, located in The Bronx, five are in Manhattan, and one is on Staten Island.

As expected, the latest announcement has once again upended the lives of students, teachers and parents who are once more scrambling to find alternate arrangements for their children. Impacts for parents and students include much earlier morning starts and longer commutes in one of the least connected City boroughs in terms of public transportation, and one with a lower than City average income.

(continued on page 15)



Bravo Sworn in as Bronx County Clerk
pg 6



Family of Angellyh Yambo Launch Foundation
pg 9



Black History Month Profile: Sean Coleman
pg 9

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Opinion

Bronxites Will Create New Kingsbridge Armory

By ELISABETH ORTEGA-BAILEY

I live on Aqueduct Avenue with my 4-year-old son, Nori, and my husband, Nelson, close to the landmark Kingsbridge Armory that is now 514,000-square-feet of nothingness, thanks most recently to a failed plan to fill it with nine ice hockey rinks.

I'm 34, in my second year at Bronx Community College, and have been organizing around the Kingsbridge Armory with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) since I was 16 and attending DeWitt Clinton High School.

Nelson and I often joke that in order to live in New York City, you need both a job *and* a side hustle. We would love for Nori *not* to need a side hustle in the place where he grew up. We want to see him grow and thrive here along with our neighbors' kids. We shouldn't have to leave where we came from.

The Armory can be an asset for the entire community, not just for random developers whose only goal is profit. Unfortunately, the city has a lousy record in its Armory re-creation attempts.

In 2009, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg got behind the Related Companies' plan for a giant shopping mall while refusing to agree to the living-wage demand of the Coalition and labor unions. Our grassroots efforts resulted in the City Council voting down the plan 45 to 1.

Three years later, in 2012, we successfully insisted that a strong Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) be part of the deal. Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC), the group that got city approval to build nine ice hockey rinks, signed on to one of the strongest CBAs in the nation.

That meant providing 50,000 square feet of the Armory for community programs, \$5 million to develop that space, and one percent revenue to help maintain it. But a decade later, with zero redevelopment work done, KNIC's project fell apart because it hadn't secured the money to make it possible.

We do not want another failure. This time, the Coalition demands

that there is a significant amount of community ownership of the facility. This is not a fantasy. Market Creek Plaza in San Diego, CA and the Portland Community Investment Trust in Portland, OR are both examples of organized communities developing leadership and sharing the benefits, and risks and responsibilities of community real estate ownership with values-aligned developers. This can and will benefit all.

Like these successful projects, we would create a non-profit entity which would partner with experienced developers to own the Armory. I know that achieving something like this - to recreate this unusual amount of space to serve the community's needs - sounds daunting. But that does not mean that is unachievable. It is definitely achievable. It has been successful elsewhere. We will make it happen here.

We have heard some elected leaders say the Armory should be for giant businesses and corporations that can afford it. That would, of course, harm small business and store owners in the neighborhood and ignore the needs of everyone surrounding the Armory. And in our own city, there are armories and other large redevelopments that focus on community needs, and yet are still profitable and manageable. For example, the Bedford Armory in Brooklyn, has swim classes for kids, a track, basketball courts, and office space for non-profits.

We do agree strongly that the Armory needs to earn significant revenue to maintain the property, but that can and should lead to well-paying jobs for community members and not compete with local businesses.

A re-developed Armory that vitally serves the community will not solve every challenge my neighbors and I face. But it can provide a wide

range of opportunities: jobs, education, exercise, entertainment, community collaboration, and more.

Nori, my 4-year-old son, loves to explore our neighborhood and learn about everything around him, especially buildings. He calls some, especially churches, "castles" and for him the armory is a *gigantic* castle. When that castle opens and provides what we plan and deserve, the new Kingsbridge Armory can engage him and our neighbors in activities, living wage work, new businesses, and entertainment.

Decisions on what becomes of the Kingsbridge Armory will take place in the next three to four months. The more of us that show up and take part in the Coalition meetings and ongoing city-run envisioning sessions, the more likely we are to secure what will serve us all.

You can learn more about the Armory by coming to the Coalition's annual meeting, Friday, Feb. 24, at 5.30 p.m. at Monroe College, 2501 Jerome Ave. RSVP to info@northwestbronx.org.

Elisabeth Ortega-Bailey is a long-time member of Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, a mother, and a resident of University Heights.

Editor's Note: As previously reported by Norwood News, KNIC developers dispute the City's assertion that it didn't secure sufficient capital for the planned Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) project by the agreed deadlines and challenged this point in court.

As also reported, envisioning workshops led by NWBCCC, in conjunction with the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC), are ongoing since last year. The third of four public workshops will take place on Saturday, March 18, from noon-3 p.m. The location is yet to be confirmed. RSVP to info@northwestbronx.org.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

A PRESS CONFERENCE and rally organized by Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition is held at the Kingsbridge Armory in Kingsbridge Heights on Thursday Aug. 25, 2022, to discuss possible future uses for the building centered around the community.

Bronx CB6 Demands Progress on Fordham Plaza

By SILE MOLONEY

Extremely concerned members of Bronx Community Board 6 (CB6) sent a letter dated Feb. 20 to Keith Kalb, interim commissioner at the Bronx borough office of NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) on "the current state of Fordham Plaza." In it, they refer to DOT's prior eviction of vendors and businesses previously operating in the Plaza, located in Belmont on the border with Fordham Heights and Fordham Manor, for reconstruction work at the site. The work was completed in 2016, according to CB6.

At the time, CB6 members said DOT committed to filling the newsstands and retail café with vendors. "However, the Plaza's retail spaces remain vacant," they wrote, adding that they have yet to receive an update from DOT on the latest status. "The board is concerned that the ongoing quality-of-life issues such as vandalism and graffiti that result from a lack of daily space activation in the plaza," members wrote.

"This plaza was once a center for economic activity in the neighborhood and is now a source of quality-of-life issues for our community. The failure to find permanent vendors in the retail stands for this site for 7 years is an unacceptable waste of \$34 million federal, state, and local public dollars."

Members added that they would be voting on referring the project to the NYC Comptroller for a potential audit, writing, "The Board is requesting a public explanation of DOT's failure to find vendors for this site. This project used an immense amount of public resources and the public is owed an explanation to why DOT has failed to fulfill its initial promises to the community."

The Board asked DOT to provide a summary

of its efforts to find vendors between 2016 and July 2022 when the concessionaire Request for Proposal was publicized, and an update on the status of the RFP that DOT issued six months ago. "We ask that this information be relayed to the board in writing and at our Transportation committee, so that a public record of this presentation can be created," they said.

Norwood News contacted DOT for comment on the letter. We received the following response from DOT interim press secretary, Vincent Barone, "We look forward to providing a full Fordham Plaza Concession update to the community board."



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

AN AERIALVIEW OF Fordham Plaza, Belmont, on Feb. 14, 2023.

CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News* edition Feb. 9-22, on page 8, "Letters to the Editor," the second letter, "Transit Issues" was authored by Larry Penner of Great Neck. We had omitted his name at the end. We apologize for this omission.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the Chinese spy balloon and the 3 additional “unidentified flying objects” shot down in recent weeks over North American airspace by the U.S. military.



“As an American, I am very concerned about the security of our nation that has decreased over the years. I think the government is not as vigilant with security. I do believe that it was a spy balloon from China that was collecting data, and the other three balloons were also spy balloons. The U.S. government needs to do better in this area. We don't need to go to war.”

Maria Williams,
Wakefield

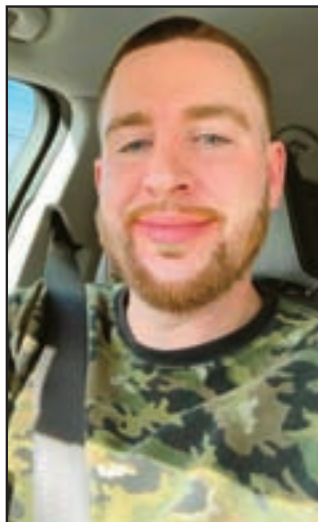
Photo courtesy of Maria Williams



“It was a distraction. My military experience and simple common sense regarding strategy...it may very well be in collusion with the U.S., but definitely a distraction...trying to move the conversation away from the war in Ukraine, and to shift the focus on something else, the old magic trick. The other objects are the same, a distraction, perhaps in collusion with other countries as well.”

John Perez, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Van Nest

Photo courtesy of John Perez



“Honestly, I think they are all spy balloons, but the U.S. government likely allowed them to stay in the air so long to gain additional intelligence. In addition, there's been multiple balloons they have shot down months before these news stories broke. I'm very concerned our safety as U.S. citizens has been compromised. Solutions would include getting more people interested in the armed forces and making sure you vote in the next election.”

Michael Delgado,
White Plains resident and Kingsbridge native

Photo courtesy of Michael Delgado



“It took them way too long to shoot the first one down. I am very concerned, but this is a government issue and at this point, whatever happens will be our fault for leaving the doors unlocked with the lights on, just like 9/11. I think the other objects were also some sort of spy equipment. If this were biological warfare, I think we would be experiencing it already. But I put nothing past the Chinese government.”

Stephanie Raptis,
Pelham Gardens

Photo courtesy of Stephanie Raptis



“With the understanding that I have a military background, there is no excuse why a foreign object should enter our airspace without our knowledge. It should have been shot down from the start. This would never have been allowed in any other foreign country. Also, we should know what type of objects these are. Our lack of knowledge in this area is disturbing.”

Al Pizarro, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Morrisania

Photo courtesy of Al Pizarro

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Ischia Bravo Sworn in as First Latina Bronx County Clerk

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

At a ceremony attended by many local elected officials, judicial dignitaries, and well-wishers, Ischia Bravo, former district manager of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), was sworn in as the first woman and first Latina to hold the position of Bronx County clerk and commissioner of jurors on Feb. 9. The ceremony took place at Gould Memorial Library on the campus of Bronx Community College, with Bravo sworn in by Rolando T. Acosta, presiding justice of the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department.

Among those in attendance for the occasion were NYS Attorney General Letitia James, Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, and NYS Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie (A.D. 83), who represents parts of Williamsbridge, Wakefield, and Eastchester.

As the first woman of color to hold a statewide office in New York, and the first woman to be elected attorney general, James spoke to the special qualities that helped Bravo break the glass ceiling in her own right. "[This appointment] is the result of her grit, her drive, and years of hard work in her community," James said. "You can be certain as Bronx County clerk and commissioner of jurors, Ischia will bring that same energy and experience."

James continued, "She will serve with honor and distinction and will be

a role model for her two sons, Manuel [Manny] and Zachariah. Her years of service and commitment to her community is what led her to earning this appointment."

As previously reported, in her capacity as county clerk and commissioner of jurors, a role which Bravo assumed on Jan. 2, she is responsible for the oversight of one of the State's busiest county clerk's offices and serves several functions for the Supreme Court, Bronx County, for both the civil and criminal branches.

When news of Bravo's appointment broke last year, Gibson said, "We are so proud that former CB7 district manager, Ischia Bravo, has been appointed the county clerk of Bronx County!" She added, "She will be the FIRST WOMAN & LATINA to hold this title. This is huge! We are so proud and cannot wait to see all that she does in this position."

Also present was Bronx Democratic Party chair and State Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey (S.D. 36) who represents much of the same area as Heastie, along with Baychester, Co-op City and south Westchester, State Sen. Nathalia Fernandez (S.D. 34), who represents much of the east Bronx as well as parts of South Westchester, and District 15 City Councilman Oswald Feliz, who represents parts of Bedford Park, and the Central Bronx.

Among the well-wishers unable to



Photo by José Giralt

FORMER BRONX COMMUNITY Board 7 district manager, Ischia Bravo, is sworn-in as the first woman and first Latina to hold the office of Bronx County Clerk and commissioner of jurors by Rolando T. Acosta, presiding justice of the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, in the presence of Bravo's sons, Zachariah, 8, and Manny, 15, during a ceremony at Bronx Community College, 2155 University Avenue in University Heights on Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023.

attend but who sent congratulatory messages via video for all to see were U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), who represents Bedford Park, Marble Hill, University Heights, parts of Fordham, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, as well as Northern Manhattan, and Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15), who represents Norwood, Woodlawn, much of the Northwest Bronx and a large area stretching from Eastchester in the north to Mott Haven in the south.

Bravo, 38, became CB7's district manager in January 2018. Andrew Laiosa is the chairperson of CB7's Budget, Personnel & Ethics committee, and was also part of the panel who reviewed candidates to fill the position of district manager in late 2017. "Anyone who meets Ischia the first time is very impressed," Laiosa recalled. "I had a good feeling about her that she was the real deal. She had that mixture of passion for her community, smarts, and the willingness to work hard."

Laiosa later chuckled, remembering some of his interactions with Bravo after she took up the position of district manager. "I witnessed it by having many long conversations with her; intense, involved, committed conversations," he said emphasizing the word "long." He added, "She's special."

Bravo previously ran for City Council in District 15 in the Democratic primary in 2021, finishing a strong runner-up to Feliz, and garnering a host of endorsements along the way. She was also a 2016 Democratic New York State Assembly runner-up candidate for District 78, winning 34.64 percent of the vote, but ultimately losing to then-incumbent, former Assemblyman José Rivera.

After the ceremony, Bravo, who was accompanied by her two sons, who also addressed those present from the dais, spoke to *Norwood News* about the special place CB7 will always hold for her. "It is a community I was born and raised in [and] the experience was priceless," she said.

Her new role as Bronx County clerk increases her responsibility geographically but narrows her purview to judicial matters in the borough. Where once she had to respond to a plethora of community-based issues, like too much dog poop on the sidewalks of Bedford Park to overdue building repairs in Norwood, now she must attend to matters that affect the 1.4 million residents of the Bronx. As commissioner of jurors, her role falls within the judicial branch of government.

According to the website, nycourts.gov, throughout the State of New York, potential jurors are randomly selected from lists of registered voters, holders of drivers' licenses, or IDs issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles, New York State income tax filers, recipients of unemployment insurance or family assistance, and from volunteers. Furthermore, a person must be a United States citizen, at least 18 years old, a resident of the county they are summoned to, able to understand and communicate in the English language, and not have been convicted of a felony.

Bravo said she is committed to changing certain negative attitudes about jury duty. "I want to amplify our judicial system," she said. "We often talk about reform and criminal justice reform, and it starts in our judicial system with a jury of your peers. And I think if folks understood the impact that they could have in our court system by just serving, as opposed to postponing it, they would serve. It's similar to their civic obligation [of] being a registered voter."

If Bravo's history of getting things done at CB7 is any indication of her commitment to her new role, the Bronx can expect to see an increase in the number of residents called to jury duty. Bravo isn't just driven by an analytical need to see results. She believes one quality sets her apart from the other 300 candidates that she bested for the position. "My love for The Bronx," she said. "I knew it extended far more than the boundaries of CB7. My admiration for the tenacity and diversity of this borough is what drove me to pursue this position."

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Nomads Celebrate 5 Years

"Can't Stop, Won't Stop!" is the mantra of local running group, Bronx Nomads. The exuberant and supportive group which launched 5 years ago celebrated their milestone with a 5K anniversary run on Sunday, Feb. 19, at the New York Botanical Garden. Among the runners are several marathon finishers, but the group, which comprises about 50, cater to all levels, with some walking and running groups, and other groups running at different paces. They generally meet up each Monday at 6.30 p.m. in the Williamsbridge Oval tunnel in Norwood. All are welcome!



Photo courtesy of Bronx Nomads

BRONX NOMADS CELEBRATE their 5th Anniversary as a group with a 5K run at the New York Botanical Garden on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023.

Summer Youth Employment Program

The application for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is open. SYEP provides youth between ages 14 and 24 with career exploration opportunities and paid work experience each summer. Through this program, participants can explore different interests and career pathways, develop productive workplace habits, and engage in learning experiences that strengthen their social, civic, and leadership skills. To apply, visit <https://application.nycsyep.com/>.

Overnight Truck Parking

Bronx Community Board 7 and District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz have shared a survey to collate feedback from residents on issues they are encountering with the overnight parking of articulated trucks in the district, which has been ongoing for several months and which residents feel are causing a hazard. Residents can complete the survey at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/1267646deeb5419284ab98c766ad6d9a>. *Norwood News* addressed the issue as it pertained to Moshulu Parkway with DOT and the NYPD last year. We recently followed up and received the following response from the NYPD. "In September of 2022 the NYPD conducted enforcement initiatives focused on the East Gun Hill corridor. The two initiatives yielded a total of 10 tows, 8 boots and 14 summonses. The Department recognizes that illegally parked tractor trailers are an issue and we are regularly responding to complaints of these trailers, issuing summonses and then following up with towing them. We antici-

pate another joint enforcement operation in the near future to continue to address this issue."

Fernandez Sworn in as Senator

Former assembly member Nathalia Fernandez for assembly district 80, which among other areas covers parts of Norwood and Bedford Park, was sworn in as state senator for senate district 34 during a ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 11, at SUNY Maritime College, 6 Pennyfield Avenue, in Throggs Neck. Fernandez was sworn in by NYS Attorney General Letitia James, as her mom held the Bible. Other attendees included U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36), Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark and NYC Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

NATHALIA FERNANDEZ IS sworn in as state senator for senate district 34 during a ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 11, at SUNY Maritime College, 6 Pennyfield Avenue, in Throggs Neck.



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Letters To The Editor

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

Eliminate Bail!

Gov. Kathy Hochul calls for reforming our bail laws again. Two other Democrats, State Sens. Michael Gianaris (Queens) and Brad Holyman-Sigal (Manhattan), have introduced a bill that would require judges to get an annual refresher course on bail. This raises several questions. Are judges not literate enough to comprehend what the bail laws mean, or are those laws so poorly written that they are not easily understood?

Even better, couldn't the legislature and Hochul simply eliminate bail? I propose a short and easily understood law to replace bail. Bail is eliminated. Defendants who are reasonably deemed a threat to the public or unlikely to show up

for trial or repeatedly re-arrested shall remain incarcerated unless charges are dropped against them or they are acquitted. All others will be released pending trial.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Transportation Feasibility Study Costs

The looming, multi-billion-dollar, multiyear, financial budget shortfall of up to \$3 billion is why the MTA should stop wasting millions of dollars on transportation feasibility studies on future system expansion projects. They cost billions and will never happen in our lifetime.

Do not initiate any system expansion projects that are under consideration as part of MTA's 2025-2044 Twenty Year Capital Needs Plan, such as the \$6.9 billion Second Avenue Subway Phase 2, the \$5.5 billion Brooklyn Queens Light Rail

Connector, and others.

Each MTA operating agency, including NYC Transit Bus, Subway and Staten Island Railway, MTA Bus, Long Island Rail Road and Metro North Rail Road must first reach a state of good repair for existing fleets, stations, signals, interlockings, tracks, power, yards, and shops.

Ensure most stations are ADA-accessible. To accomplish this will take several decades given current and future funding constraints. Maintenance programs for all MTA operating agencies' capital assets must also be fully funded and completed on time to ensure riders a clean, safe, reliable, and reasonably priced service.

**Larry Penner,
Great Neck**

Complain to the FCC Against CBS

I was appalled to watch the Grammy awards on CBS where that knucklehead,

Sam Smith, paid tribute to the evil with his song "Unholy" [terror]. I would ask everyone to complain to the FCC and penalize CBS for allowing such trash on TV. For your convenience, I have included the link for the FCC which is user friendly: <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us>.

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Editor's Note: In his song, "Unholy," Sam Smith sings about infidelity within a relationship involving parents of children.

To ensure sufficient time for review of all letters to the editor, please send them to 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.

Bronx Celebrates Dominican Heritage Month

By SILE MOLONEY

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson held her annual Dominican Heritage Month celebration on Thursday, Feb. 16, at Grand Slam Banquet Hall, 478 East Tremont Avenue in Tremont, with

live entertainment by Folkloric Dance Group/Folklorico and DJ Lex, with special greetings by consulate general of the Dominican Republic, Eligio Jaquez.

Gibson honored various community leaders, including President of the New

York State Latino Restaurant Bar & Lounge Association and owner of Mon Amour Coffee & Wine, Jeffrey Garcia; winner of the Best Animated Short Film at Bridge Fest and children's book author, Luz Maria Mack; president of Dominicanos USA, Eddie Cuesta.

The recipient of the youth award was Jamal Disla from the International School for Liberal Arts who arrived in the U.S. in April 2020 not speaking a word of English and who today is ranked 2nd out of 69 in his class with a cumulative average of 95.75, all while learning to speak English.

The keynote address was provided by NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Equity and Inclusion, Wendy Garcia, who was also honored on the night, News 12 The Bronx's Elly Morillo acted as emcee, and Fidelis Care, Union Community Health Center, Ponce Bank, VNS Health, the Bronx Terminal Market and other partners sponsored the event.

Earlier this month, on Feb. 7, Gibson and deputy Bronx borough president, Janet Peguero, traveled to the Dominican Republic and were awarded the Key to the City of Santo Domingo West by Mayor José Andújar in recognition of their efforts and contributions to the development of the Dominican commu-

nity in The Bronx.

According to representatives of Andújar, since taking office, the mayor has initiated several initiatives and projects that have improved the quality of life throughout the municipality. Among them are a clean streets initiative, intended to create open spaces where residents can safely congregate while also helping small business owners register their businesses and prosper.

"We are grateful to Mayor José Andújar for this incredible recognition and hospitality," said Gibson of the occasion. "Every day I am reminded of the rich diversity in our Borough, which includes over 350,000 Dominicans who call the Bronx home. Lasting changes are made in collaboration, and I believe this friendship and partnership will bear much fruit for the Dominican community in New York as well as in the Dominican Republic."



Photo courtesy of Richard Rodriguez @donproducciones.
BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Vanessa Gibson and Deputy Bronx Borough President Janet Peguero (center) join other dignitaries in the Dominican Republic as they receive the Key to the City of Santa Domingo West from Mayor José Andújar in recognition of their efforts and contributions to the development of the Dominican community in The Bronx on Feb. 7, 2023.



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Yambo Family Launches Foundation in Angellyh's Memory

By DAVID GREENE

Angellyh Yambo was a 16-year-old high school student with dreams of becoming a doctor when she was shot and killed as she walked home from school with friends in Mott Haven on April 8, 2022.

On Tuesday, Jan. 24, on what would have been Angellyh's 17th birthday, her family and friends gathered at her mausoleum in Woodlawn cemetery to mark the official launch of The

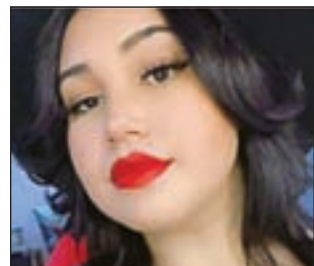


Photo courtesy of The Angellyh Yambo Foundation

ANGELLYH YAMBO OF Melrose, who was born and raised in Kingsbridge Heights, was shot and killed at the age of 16 by a stray bullet from a user of a ghost gun as she walked home from school in Mott Haven on April 8, 2022.

Angellyh Yambo Foundation.

During the emotional event, different colored balloons were released into the air marking the exact moment of her birth, 17 years earlier. Later, the family confirmed that the foundation's website was live, and talked about their hopes for what it could achieve in Angellyh's honor.

The press release announcing the foundation read, "We wish to turn our personal tragedy into something positive." *Norwood News* spoke with Yambo's aunt, Mary Hernandez, founder and CEO of The Angellyh Yambo Foundation, and Lissette Camargo, another aunt to Angellyh who is its program director on Saturday, Feb. 18.

"We came together as a family regarding the foundation, and we want to bring change in The Bronx, along with helping the youth, our future leaders," Hernandez said.

Angellyh's family said through the foundation, they hope to create a financial literacy program, an art program, and an anti-bullying program in local schools. They also hope



Photo courtesy of Mary Hernandez
FAMILY AND FRIENDS of Angellyh Yambo gather at Woodlawn Cemetery on what would have been her 17th birthday on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023, to launch The Angellyh Yambo Foundation.

to use it to address the needs of The Bronx, supporting anti-gun violence programs and providing support to gun violence victims.

Hernandez said Angellyh's mom, Yanely Henriquez, is also involved with the foundation and though she is devastated by her daughter's loss, it has helped in some ways to keep

her busy.

The family is currently working with the staff of Angellyh's former school, University Prep Charter High School, where they plan to host an anti-bullying program as well as parent and children's workshops. As reported, students at the school held "A March for Angellyh" last year during Gun Violence Awareness Month.

Many were seen holding up signs with Angellyh's face during the rally and a few of the students even spoke, reading out statements they had written. They talked of their own fears of being shot, whether in the streets or at school, and how they were tired of being afraid.

For her part, Camargo said of the foundation's plans, "Since the pandemic, it's been very hard for the youth, even children, to adjust to our new society. A lot of schools have done away with after-school programs at no cost." She added, "The foundation and the programs will be a very good resource for them."

According to the family, Angellyh was born and raised

at the Fort Independence Houses on Bailey Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, and later moved to Melrose with her mother. Throughout her childhood and teens, Yambo continued to return to Fort Independence Houses, as both her grandparents still live in the complex.

Camargo explained, "She did grow up in the Bronx, but she grew up to parents that were very much involved with her and always had a channel of communication." She added, "We want that to be known that even though she grew up in The Bronx, with so much happening around her, she didn't let that affect her development."

Having recently visited University Prep Charter High School to discuss the foundation's new programs, Hernandez said, "These are the kids we want to help," adding that the foundation and website are now, "an extension of her life."

For more information on the foundation or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit their website at: www.angellyhyambofoundation.org.

Sean Coleman Leads The Bronx's LGBTQ+ Community

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

To mark Black History Month, we're spotlighting the history and contribution of members of the Black community in The Bronx who are positively impacting the lives of others.

In the early 1980s, Sean Ebony Coleman didn't see much empathy for a community that was being ravaged by AIDS. "A lot of my friends were victims of the HIV-AIDS epidemic, so we were watching a bunch of our friends die [and we were] trying to figure out what we could do better," Coleman said in an interview with *Norwood News*. Over time, the epidemic hit very close to home. "My mom also was a victim of the virus," Coleman said. "So, it caught me from both angles, and it got me really interested in figuring out ways to better organize Black and brown people around health disparities."

With this first-hand experience of what the LGBTQ+ community needed most, Coleman, now 55, eventually founded Destination Tomorrow in 2009 to expand services beyond just health care. Located in the South Bronx, it serves the com-

munity through educational, financial, housing, health, and personal support. He is also its executive director. "I identify with this community because I'm a Black Trans man who was also formerly incarcerated, formerly homeless, formerly in need of services," he said. "So, I created that which was missing for me."

In an interview with *CBS News* during The Bronx Pride Fest in June 2022, Coleman reiterated the importance of having a safe space where the younger generation of LGBTQ+ could find support and most importantly, a sense of being understood. He told the reporter, "I wanted to create a space where there were LGBTQ adults that could help those young people navigate spaces and navigate life, and navigate some of those questions that they would ultimately have about their sexual orientation or gender identity."

Destination Tomorrow has now grown to offer more than medical and mental health care referrals. Anyone walking through its doors has access to emergency housing with a food pantry, job training, financial



Photo courtesy of Ed Reed/Mayoral Photography office
FORMER NEW YORK City Mayor Bill de Blasio applauds Sean Coleman as he accepts a proclamation for his work with Destination Tomorrow at the Destination Tomorrow Pride Heritage event in Mott Haven, on Tuesday, June 29, 2021.

education, GED resources, and group counseling. It has also extended its reach with some smaller offices in other parts of the borough.

In 2021, Cornell University published a research brief reviewing multiple studies on the effects of discrimination. It found that LGBTQ+ people experience the ill effects of exclusion more profoundly, "including grossly disproportionate rates of: experiencing discrimination over the past year, poorer mental and physical health, greater

economic insecurity, and attempts to die by suicide."

When asked what the most pressing issue he sees affecting members of the LGBTQ+ community in The Bronx, Coleman expressed a very relatable worry for most New Yorkers: housing. "The primary issue is housing," he said. "As we get older...trans people in particular...many don't have the support of their family. A lot don't have children, so that "growing old alone" becomes an issue." Another issue he sees of-

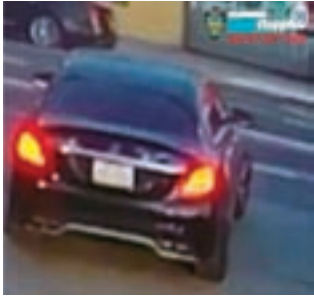
ten is food insecurity. It is no doubt daunting to face issues around poverty in a borough found to have 24.4 percent of its residents living in poverty, according to data from the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau.

The approach at Destination Tomorrow in facing these multiple obstacles is to instill a can-do attitude in its clients as they prepare to compete in the job market. Hopelessness is not an option at the organization. "With regards to job readiness [and] professional development, those are things that our older community members also access, because it's never too late to freshen up your resume and try to get back out there and see if you can get a better paying job," Coleman said. "[We're] making sure folks have the skill set that they need in order to be competitive."

Mimi Shelton, director of Trans' Initiatives at Destination Tomorrow, spoke at an event in April 2022 designated National Transgender HIV Testing Day, which was covered by *Norwood News* at the time. She recalled growing up in the South and
(continued on page 14)

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



Bedford Park: Man Sought following Shooting

The NYPD is asking the public's help identifying the person or vehicle seen in the accompanying photos regarding a shooting that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Saturday, Feb. 11, at around

6.47 a.m., an unidentified man got out of a black sedan and fired a number of shots in the direction of a black SUV located in front of 2870 Webster Avenue. They said the gunman then got back into the sedan and fled the location southbound on Webster Avenue.

An NYPD spokesperson said, "The SUV also fled the location to parts unknown. There were no reported injuries or property damage as a result of this incident." The gunman is described as male, has a light complexion, is 5 feet, 7 inches tall, weighs around 160 pounds, and is believed to be in his 20s, according to police. He was last seen wearing black pants, a black sweatshirt, and a black knit cap.

Local Man, 30, Shot

A Valentine's Day vigil was organized by violence interrupters, Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.) on the evening of Feb. 14 in response to the non-fatal shooting of a young man on Saturday, Feb. 11, on the Fordham Manor / Kingsbridge Heights border. The event was also attended by District 14 City Council Member Pierina Sanchez.

Police Officer Stephen Echevar-

ria from the 52nd Precinct said the shooting took place on Feb. 11 at 9:30 p.m. "Multiple calls for a male shot came through 911 at 196th Street and Morris Avenue," Echevarria said. "The uncooperative male victim was shot once in the leg. The victim was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital and is in stable condition." He added that 52nd Precinct detectives were investigating the incident.

An NYPD press officer later said police had responded to a 911 call regarding an assault at the location. "Upon arrival, officers were informed by a 30-year-old male victim [that] he [had been] walking when he was shot," the spokesperson said, adding that the subject fled to parts unknown. No description for the gunman was available, police said.

Fordham Manor Resident is Fatal Shooting Victim

A 37-year-old male resident of Fordham Manor has been identified as one of two fatal victims involved in last weekend's multiple shooting incident in the Tremont section of The Bronx, according to the NYPD.

Police said that on Friday, Feb.

10, at around 2.31 a.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding an incident in which multiple people were shot at East Tremont Avenue and Hughes Avenue, located outside a branch of the Popeye's restaurant franchise.

Upon arrival, officers discovered four people had been shot. An NYPD spokesperson said the first victim was a 24-year-old man who was shot in the chest and was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. The spokesperson said a second unidentified male was also shot in the chest and was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in critical condition.

According to police, the third victim, a 58-year-old man, was shot in the buttocks. He was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. Finally, police said the fourth victim was a 36-year-old man who was shot in the ankle. He was also brought to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

Later on Friday, police said the 24-year-old deceased man was identified as Jeremiah Smith of Tremont. On the same day, they said Salvatore Rivera, 51, also of Tremont, was charged with mur-

der, manslaughter, assault, and criminal possession of a weapon.

Pursuant to what was described as an ongoing investigation, on Saturday, Feb. 11, police said Jose Parilla, 32, of Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan was arrested and charged with murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon.

One day later, on Sunday, Feb. 12, police said a 37-year-old male victim had succumbed to his injuries and was identified as Devren Smith of Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor. No details of any further charges have been communicated by police in relation to this latest death so far.

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.

Tyre Nichols Rally Dark Day for NYPD

By DAVID GREENE

Outraged members of North Bronx Racial Justice were joined by students from Manhattan College outside the NYPD's 50th Precinct on Kingsbridge Avenue in the Kingsbridge section of The Bronx on Feb. 7, to protest the brutal beating by five Memphis police officers, of Tyre Nichols, 29, a Black man, on Jan. 7, following a traffic stop.

Nichols died three days after the beating by the officers, who were also Black. The incident was captured on camera and shared with the world, drawing comparisons with the May 2020 murder in Minneapolis of George Floyd, 46, by since convicted, White, former police officer, *Derek Chauvin*, while Floyd was in police custody.

Earlier on Feb. 7, it had been reported that off-duty, NYPD Officer Adeed Fayaz, 26, had succumbed to his injuries following a robbery attempt in Brooklyn during which Fayaz was shot in the head. He had been looking to purchase a car when the incident unfolded.

Earlier still on the same day, some media outlets reported that an unidentified, 22-year-old, rookie police officer reportedly attempted to take his own

life in The Bronx. Police confirmed a person had been shot in the head at the 47th Precinct, located at Laconia Avenue in Wakefield, but declined to provide further details.

Some media outlets reported a person was discovered inside the locker room of the 47th Precinct. Mayor Eric Adams and Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg acknowledged during a press conference later that day that an officer had been shot at the 47th Precinct, but declined to provide further details.

Back in Kingsbridge, demonstrator, James White, the former leader of the Riverdale Ethical Culture Society, said of his attendance at the rally, "I'm here today out of anguish and anger because repeatedly, young, Black men are being mowed down by police and it happens actually very frequently."

White continued, "There has to be outrage and fundamental changes made so that cops are not put into these situations." A former mental health lawyer, White continued, "One of my chief concerns is that cops not be brought into situations where people are mentally distressed, because they have no idea how to deal with that, and they generally agree that they're not trained to do that."

When told about the death of the police officer in Brooklyn and the wounding of the second officer in The Bronx, earlier that day, White was asked if the group had considered postponing the gathering to another day. He replied, "No. I'm sorry for the guy... we worked



Photo by David Greene

PROTESTORS FROM NORTH Bronx Racial Justice hold a peaceful demonstration outside the NYPD's 50th Precinct, located at 3450 Kingsbridge Avenue in Kingsbridge, on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, to protest the killing of Tyre Nichols, 29, a Black man who died three days after a beating by five, Memphis police officers on Jan. 7, 2023, during a traffic stop.

very hard to find a day that everyone involved could do."

Manhattan College student, Melony Estrella, attended with a handful of fellow Manhattan College students. Asked why they were protesting the 50th Precinct when Nichols died hundreds of miles away in Memphis, she responded, "We're protesting against the system and what it represents."

Asked if she supported defunding the police, Estrella said, "I support the reallocation of resources to go back to the community and the community having more of a say in what measures

that are actually taken to help us."

Asked if she was for the abolishment of the NYPD, Estrella added, "Um, no. Obviously there needs to be a system in place to help the people, but not work against them."

According to the website, mappin-zpoliceviolence.org, in 2022, 1,232 people were killed by police officers in the United States. Of this number, 90 were Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, 68 were Black, 39 were Native American, 31 were Hispanic, 23 were White and 8 were Asian. The states in which such killings were most concentrated, per head of population, were Wyoming and New Mexico.

Meanwhile, according to data from the Officer Down Memorial Page, during 2022, 234 police officers died in the U.S. in the line of duty, including 15 in New York State. The average age of the police officers was 45, and the average length of service was 15 years and one month.

Under the watchful eyes of a half a dozen officers outside the 50th Precinct station house, protesters peacefully chanted, "No justice! No peace! No Racist Police!" and "Justice for Tyre Nichols!"

If you or a loved one is feeling distressed, please call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. The crisis center provides free and confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to civilians and veterans. Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or text 741741.

**Síle Moloney contributed to this story.*

Out & About

COMPILED BY SARA MARTINEZ & SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

The Orchid Show 2023 takes place at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), located at 2900 Southern Boulevard in Bedford Park, until April 23. This year's theme is natural heritage, curated by artist, Lily Kwong, and inspired by her ancestral connections to the natural world. Tickets range from \$15-35, depending on age. Call (718) 817-8716 or email ticketingsupport@nybg.org for more information.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson and partners are hosting a banquet with the Bronx community in honor and celebration of **Black History Month**, at Eastwood Manor Banquet Hall, 3371 Eastchester Road in the Laconia section of The Bronx, on Thursday, Feb. 23, from 5.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Gibson is the first woman and first African American to hold the office of Bronx borough president. For more information, contact Cecilia Hernandez at chernandez@bronxbp.nyc.gov.

The Bronx Historical Society announced that a planned event at the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, located in Poe Park, Fordham Manor, on Saturday Feb. 11, was cancelled. The Cottage will reopen on Saturday Feb. 25, from 1-5 p.m. for the showcasing of the **Edgar and Virginia Poe Death Exhibit**, which explores Poe's infamous death. The exhibit is on loan from Poe Baltimore and will be displayed at the Cottage until September 2023.

To coincide with Women's History Month, **How**

Women Won the Vote, Part 1 is the first of two virtual lectures organized by the New York State Library and given by Sandra Opdycke, Ph.D., about the crucial final decade of American women's campaign for the vote (1910-1920), on Thursday, March 16, from 11 a.m. to noon. Register at <https://nyslibrary.libcal.com/event/9870312>.

ART

The exhibition, **"Queer Love: Affection and Romance in Contemporary Art,"** at Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard, presents paintings and photographs that illuminate both individual and universal stories of vulnerability, tenderness, and desire in the LGBTQIA community. It gathers the work of almost 50 artists and runs to April 23. The works explore the power and significance of intimate queer familial, romantic, and sexual relationships. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/#search> and search under the exhibition title.

MUSIC

Bronx Arts Ensemble presents a free concert by mezzo-soprano, Lucia Bradford, with pianists, Kyle Walker and Gary Mitchell Jr. on Feb. 26, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Christ Church, 5040 Henry Hudson Parkway East, in Riverdale, The Bronx. Bradford will be singing art songs, newly written works by Black composers, spirituals, and gospel. For tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com, and search under, **"BAE Presents: Mezzo-soprano Lucia Bradford with Pianists Kyle Walker & Gary."** **Juan de Marcos & The Afro-Cuban All Stars** will perform at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, on Saturday, March 4, at 8 p.m. Call the Lehman Center box office at (718) 960-8833 for tickets, or book online at <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/afro-cuban-all-stars>.

Lehman College will be hosting a musical performance by the **Lehman Chambers Players** at Lehman College Recital Hall, 3rd floor, Music Building, 250 Bedford Park Blvd W, The Bronx, on Feb. 25, at 2 p.m. Faculty members and guests will present work by Mozart, Debussy and Dvovak. Admission is free. Register for tickets at <https://chamberplayers02252023.bpt.me/>. Email music@lehman.cuny.edu or call (718) 960-8247 for more information.

MOVEMENT

A Winter Olympics Event will be held at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood, each day between noon and 3 p.m. from Feb. 20 to Feb. 24. Activities, held on different days, will include winter, Olympic-themed games, arts, crafts, sports, and fitness. Call (718) 543-8672 or email Shagari.Alleyne@parks.nyc.gov for more information.

Join Van Cortlandt Park Alliance and King of the Mountain Events on Saturday, March 4, for the first-of-its-kind, NYC Ultimate Trail Running Series, featuring 8 kilometers (4.97 miles) filled with rolling, single-track trails, mixed with stairs, wooden boardwalks, and sections of paved and double wide paths. A portion of net proceeds will be donated to the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance to support trail maintenance. Register at www.eventbrite.com and search under **"NYC Ultimate Trail Running Series at Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx"**

Learn to become a lifeguard. Make summer happen for NYC! Becoming a lifeguard is a rewarding experience. You'll work outdoors in some of New York City's most iconic locations, playing a critical role in helping New Yorkers of all ages and abilities have safe access to beaches and pools. For more details, visit <https://www.nycgovparks.org/opportunities/jobs/lifeguards>.

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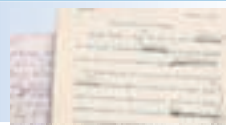
Income eligibility limits for the Medicare Savings Program have increased. Now, more New Yorkers can enroll and save money.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY & SARA MARTINEZ



Bx25/26 Bus Stop Restorations

Both the east and westbound Bx25/26 stops on Bedford Park Blvd at Marion Avenue, initially removed under the Bronx Local Bus Network Redesign, has been restored effective immediately.

Beat the Climate Crisis

Join Northwest Bronx Indivisible, Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), activist, Victor Davila, and partners on Sunday, Feb. 26, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. over Zoom for a discussion on how to beat the climate crisis. Register at <https://www.bit.ly/3HJrmXq>.

Maternal Health Expo

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson is hosting a Maternal Health Expo on Saturday, Feb. 25, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at La Central, YMCA, 434 Westchester Avenue, in the South Bronx. Hear from a panel of experts on maternal and infant health, enjoy "mocktails," food/drinks high in nutrients that support a healthy pregnancy, and pose for a complimentary, maternity photo-shoot (only available for the first 20 who register). Register at <https://tinyurl.com/Maternal-Health-Expo>.

Affordable Housing Lottery Wakefield

An affordable housing lottery has launched for units at 4435 White Plains Road, in Wakefield. Available are 27 units for residents on 130 percent of the area median income (AMI), ranging in eligible income from \$68,572 to \$187,330.

Applications must be postmarked or submitted by mail or online via *NYC Housing Connect* at <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/3008> no later than **April 17, 2023**. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to 4435 White Plain Road Apartments c/o Front Door Management P.O. BOX 9, Purchase, NY 10577. **No deposit or application fees apply.**

Affordable Housing Lottery Bedford Park

An affordable housing lottery has also launched for units at The Bronx Grove, two 11-story buildings located at 261 East 202nd Street and 207 East 203rd Street in Bedford Park. The structures comprise 127 residential units for residents earning 30 to 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), ranging in eligible income from \$0 to \$132,400.

Applications must be postmarked or submitted by mail or online via *NYC Housing Connect* at <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/3487> no later than April 11, 2023. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to The Bronx Grove c/o K&G Upright, PO Box 1181, New York, NY 10039. **No deposit or application fees apply.**

Affordable Housing Lottery Twin Parks Terrace

An affordable housing lottery has launched for Twin Parks Terrace at 373 East 183rd Street in Fordham Heights. Though the name is similar, and though the building is located in Fordham Heights, Twin Parks Terrace is not the same site as where the Twin Parks fire tragedy occurred on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022. The fire broke out at 333 East 181st Street, a 6-minute walk away from the new building.

Twin Parks Terrace comprises 181 residential units for residents at 40 to 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), ranging in eligible income from \$22,012 to \$132,400, and 11,000 square feet of retail space. Applications must be postmarked or submitted by mail or online via NYC Housing Connect at <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/3427> no later than **April 11, 2023**.

To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to Settlement Housing Fund, Attn: TPT Lottery, 247 West 37th Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10018. No deposits or application fees apply. More information can be found at <https://www.settlementhousingfund.org/twin-parks-terrace/>.

Housing Connect Workshop

A workshop to explain how the NYC Housing Connect portal works will be held on Saturday, Feb. 25, from 10 a.m. to noon, via Zoom, hosted by Bronx Community Board 7 and NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD). Register at <https://bit.ly/3Eh9e4N>.

An affordable housing lottery helpline is available on (212) 863-7990 or via email at nychousingconnect@hpd.nyc.gov. For information on applying for affordable housing for people with disabilities, please call (212) 863-6486 or email accessibility@hpd.nyc.gov. Housing ambassadors can be reached at ambassadors@hpd.nyc.gov.

Job & Housing Fair for Veterans

Help USA and American Works of New York Inc. will hold a job and housing fair for veterans on Thursday, Feb. 23, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1826 Arthur Avenue (Room 134) in Tremont. For more information, call Mrs. Jeniel on (646) 781 6371.

Fire Alarm Installation

Residents can sign up for fire alarm installation (smoke and carbon monoxide detectors) at www.bit.ly/FireAlarmInstall.

D Subway Line Track Maintenance Ongoing

The MTA has advised of ongoing repairs to the **D train** from July 2022 through **2023**. Rush hour service at all stations from Norwood-205th Street to 145th Street (inclusive) will operate as a local service. During weeknights and weekends, expect a partial D line service only. Use the 4 train from nearby stations instead.

There is also an ongoing temporary

suspension of the northern section of the D line weekend service from 205th Street-Norwood to 161st Street on Fridays from 11.30 p.m. through Mondays at 5 a.m.

Additionally, due to structural maintenance work, there will be no D service between 161 St-Yankee Stadium and Norwood-205 St from Friday, Feb. 24, through Monday, Feb. 27, from 11.30 p.m. to 5 a.m.

A free shuttle bus transports passengers to Mosholu Parkway subway station which serves the 4 train. Transfer between the D and 4 trains at 161st Street-Yankee Stadium. For service between 161 St-Yankee Stadium and Bedford Park Blvd, use nearby 4 stations along Jerome Ave.

Road Closures

Stateline Buildings advise of a full road closure at Villa Avenue between East 205th Street and Van Cortlandt Avenue East starting Jan. 16 until **April 14**.

SKF Contractors advise of a road closure at 2736 Creston Avenue between East 196th Street and East 197th Street from Feb. 20 to March 20, 2023, one to two times per week between Monday and Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., to facilitate the construction of a new building.

Temporary No Parking Notices

There will be no parking temporarily on West Burnside Avenue 150 feet between Phelan and Loring Place (south), and 50 feet on each side of the intersections of West Burnside Avenue, Hennessy, and Phelan Place from Feb. 8 through March 31.

Grand Concourse Reconstruction Continues

Phase 5 of the Grand Concourse Reconstruction continues according to NYC Department of Transportation. The construction will extend from the north at East Fordham Road to the south side of East 198th Street, also extending to East Grand Concourse, and down East Kingsbridge Road. Planned improvements include the resurfacing of the main line in both directions, full reconstruction of the service road, and building adjacent sidewalks to ensure pedestrian safety and safety for people with disabilities throughout, raising planters in the medians, raising bike lanes along the service roads, as well as many urban sign improvements. Construction is expected to begin Sept. 30 and end Sept. 30, 2027.

Tax Season

Tax Season is upon us. Single-filing New Yorkers who earned \$56,000 or less in 2022, or families who earned \$80,000 or less, are encouraged to file their taxes for free using NYC Free Tax Prep at https://www.nyc.gov/site/dca/consumers/file-your-taxes.page?utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery. NYC Free Tax Prep provides free, professional tax preparation that can help New Yorkers

keep their full refund, including valuable tax credits, like the newly enhanced New York City Earned Income Tax Credit (NYC EITC). The new NYC Free Tax Prep for self-employed New Yorkers will also provide income tax services to freelance workers and small businesses.

New Smart Compost Bins

Residents may have noticed new, orange, smart compost bins in their local neighborhoods. These are part of a new initiative by NYC Department of Sanitation to rid the five boroughs of its rat problem. Residents are being asked to use their phones to scan the QR code on the front of the bins to obtain instructions on their use. The bins *can* be used to deposit fruit, vegetables, meat, bones, dairy, prepared food, food-soiled paper, plants, and flowers but *cannot* be used to dispose of recyclables, diapers or hygiene products, pet waste, non-paper packaging or foam products.

Both Bronx Community Board 7 sanitation committee chair, Betty Arce, and executive director of Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), Elizabeth Quaranta, are encouraging residents to make use of the new bins, which are accessible 24/7, to keep local neighborhoods clean and residents healthy. Download the NYC Compost app and visit nyc.gov/SmartComposting for more information.

Bedford Park Congregational Church Costs

Bedford Congregational Church, located at 309 East 201st Street in Bedford Park, was founded in 1889 and is 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 much-needed oil tank was replaced on Nov. 1, and while the church thanks the public for recent donations, they weren't sufficient to cover the tank's cost. Having had to use its savings, which during a normal year help pay the oil bills, the church is still struggling to keep afloat. Anyone wishing to donate can visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/warm-hearts-cold-church>. The Church also welcomes direct donations mailed to 309 East 201st Street, Bronx, NY 10458.

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.

Valentine's Day Stabbing on Valentine Avenue

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A 23-year-old man and a 25-year-old man were stabbed and hospitalized following an incident on Valentine's Day in the Bedford Park section of The Bronx, coincidentally in the vicinity of Valentine Avenue.

Police said that on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at approximately 3.40 p.m., police [from the 52nd Precinct] responded to a 911 call regarding shots fired at 239 East 203rd Street, which intersects with Valentine Avenue.

A police spokesperson said, "Upon arrival, officers discover a 25-year-old male with stab wounds to the neck." The spokesperson added, "While conducting a hospital canvass at Montefiore Medical Center, officers discovered a second 23-year-old male victim with stab wounds to his left arm, right arm, lower back, and torso."

Police said it was reported to them that the victim at the hospital had also been stabbed at 239 East 203rd Street. All victims were listed in stable condition at Montefiore Medical Center, an NYPD spokesperson said. According to police, there were no arrests, and the investigation is ongoing.

Earlier that evening at around 5.51 p.m., a helicopter was seen flying over the vicinity of Norwood and Bedford Park. It wasn't clear if it was a police helicopter, though it appeared to be hovering over the area.

The area stretching from the intersection of East 203rd Street and Valentine Avenue as far as a Smoke Shop & Lotto store, located on Valentine Avenue close to East 204th Street, was cordoned off by police. A daycare center is located on East 203rd Street a short distance away from the crime scene.

As one young man was seen walking down East 203rd Street carrying a bouquet of flowers early on Valentine's evening, *Norwood News* spoke to several people in the area about the incident. Nobody wished to disclose their names.

The first man we spoke to, who was about 30 and who lived close by, said he didn't see what happened but that when



Photo by Síle Moloney

AN NYPD DETECTIVE (in bullet-proof vest) and other NYPD members investigate a stabbing at 203rd Street and Valentine Avenue in Bedford Park on Valentine's Day, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

people told him about it, he said he knew of the people involved in the incident. "I can't talk about that," he said in Spanish. "There were problems," he said.

When asked if he meant there were problems between different groups or individuals, he said he didn't know if there were problems between specific groups, just that there were "problems" and "fighting" and "gunfire exchanges." Asked if there were gangs frequenting the neighborhood, he said, "Yes, always." He added that an ambulance had been at the scene and that as far as he knew, one person had been hurt but was not deceased.

He continued, "There were problems between people, and I can't say much more than that. I'm not sure what happened. I just came upon it, walking, and there were a lot of police and all."

Most people we spoke to had not been present when the incident occurred and said they just saw the area sealed off when they arrived home from work. Others said they had been inside when it unfolded and hadn't seen what happened.

One man who worked on Valentine Avenue said he had the radio on and didn't hear any gunshots but saw people running up Valentine Avenue towards East 202nd Street. "I saw some people running and I said, Oh! what happened outside?" he said. "Later on, I saw the police and the ambulance and the people."

Asked if he saw anyone injured, he said no. We asked how he felt about something like a shooting happening in the area in terms of how it affected business. He replied, "I don't know because this area is good," he said. "No problem over here. For me, this area is good. It's like maybe one year [ago] something happened."

As previously reported, a short dis-

tance away, in early June 2022, a 22-year-old man was seated in a vehicle (as a passenger) located opposite 214 East Mosholu Parkway South outside P.S. 8 in Bedford Park when he was shot in the back. At the time, it was reported that the victim had survived the shooting.

One local store owner who did not witness the incident either told *Norwood News* that, in his opinion, the make-up of the neighborhood had changed a lot, and that a lot of people from Brooklyn and Manhattan had moved in in recent times. He said it was not the first time there had been a shooting in the area.

Another store worker on Valentine Avenue said he was not working at the time the incident occurred but that his colleague who had been working that day told him he heard [from inside the store] about six gunshots as it unfolded but had not seen the incident itself.

Another worker in a local business on Valentine also said they heard the gunshots but that the incident appeared to be out of their line of vision and they didn't see what happened.

Speaking in Spanish, another woman who had been in the area at the time the incident occurred, said, "I don't know any details. I didn't see anything. I just saw a multitude of police officers, that's all."

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



Photo by Síle Moloney

POLICE CORDON OFF the area at E 203rd Street and Valentine Avenue in Bedford Park on Valentine's Day, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023 following a stabbing.

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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place via Zoom on Thursday, Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. The Meeting ID is 516 509 8952 and the passcode is 4R4Uiu. Join by phone on +1 646 558 8656. The meeting ID is 516 509 8952 and the passcode is 477500. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email list. Proof of vaccination is required for in-person meetings.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 6.30 p.m. Contact KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are being held virtually, via Zoom, until further notice.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** general board meeting will be held in March (date tbc). Contact cannon@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m., sometimes in person and sometimes online. For details of future meetings, please contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

Sean Coleman Leads The Bronx's LGBTQ+ Community

(continued from page 9)

learning that society there considered gay and trans people to be "diseased" and "unworthy." She now works to advance the organization's mission.

"We're worthy of proper care, access to intervention and prevention services for HIV," she said. "And we're also worthy of people's, not just tolerance, but people's acceptance, people's concern, people's trust." It is precisely a space of acceptance, concern, and trust that Coleman has sought to foster at Destination Tomorrow.

Asked what lessons can be learned by looking broadly at what is happening across the nation with the rights of LGBTQ+ in the crosshairs of conservative leaders, he reacts bluntly. "Voting rights are under attack, criminal justice, criminal reform is under attack, a woman's right to choose is under attack. All of

these things are interconnected," he said. "The trans rights are under attack. Yet we stay at each other's throat. We don't figure out the commonalities, being unemployed, being underemployed, food insecurity, safe, affordable housing especially living in New York."

Though the list of social and economic problems appears to grow and intensify in some cases, Coleman remains optimistic because he has a plan and is confident it will work. "As an organizer, my first thought is to remove that whole 'trans' thing from it and speak to other organizers who may be Black or Asian or Latinx or whatever, and recognize those commonalities in all of us," he said. "[We] recognize that together we're stronger and if we take all those issues that they keep trying to use to divide us, and remove them and just work for common causes, we'd be a lot better off."

Parents Ready to Fight for St. Brendan

(continued from page 1)

In the context of the closures, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York said, "It is never a good day when we announce closures to any of our beloved schools, but the goal is always to strengthen the remaining institutions and preserve Catholic education in New York for decades to come."

He added, "We are doing everything we can to minimize the impact this will have on families and will provide both educational guidance and pastoral support to all those affected to ensure all children will be warmly welcomed into a nearby Catholic school. We are all in this together, and with hard work and God's blessings, we will come out on the other side."

In addition to St. Brendan School, located at 268 East 207th Street, the other five impacted Bronx schools which will close are Immaculate Conception School in Williamsbridge, the Holy Family School in Unionport, St. Margaret Mary School in Mt. Hope, Santa Maria School in Parkchester, and St. Angela Merici School, located to the east of Joyce Kilmer Park in the South Bronx.

It was noted that there are two Immaculate Conception Schools, one at 151st Street in Melrose, operated by Partnership Schools, which will NOT close.

Meanwhile, St. Francis Xavier School in Morris Park will merge with St. Clare of Assisi, also in Morris Park, while St. Gabriel School in Riverdale will merge with St. Margaret of Cortona in North Riverdale.

According to the archdiocese, extensive community research, detailed studies, and careful deliberation and analysis went into the final determination of which schools would not reopen. "Unfortunately, due to shifting demographics and lower enrollment made worse by the pandemic, the impact to the financial stability of these schools was detrimental," a statement read.

"All affected families will be welcomed in neighboring Catholic schools, with applications for financial aid and scholarships available for the upcoming academic year where applicable. Additional information will be shared with school constituencies in the coming days."

Michael J. Deegan, superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of New York, said in part that he personally mourned the loss of each school. "We will assist all students who are seeking to carry on their Catholic education to find a seat at another excellent school in the Archdiocese," he added.

His office also vowed to work closely with each affected family and added that directors of enrollment would answer any questions families had about enrollment, transportation, or tuition.

As regards the impacted staff, office representatives said they were "dedicated to working in coordination with the teachers' union to do everything it can to help faculty of the affected schools find employment within the archdiocesan school system."

"Friends of St. Brendan School," meanwhile, have set up a petition on www.change.org entitled, "Save St. Brendan School, Bronx." To date, it has garnered 1,884 signatures. An accompanying letter addressed to St. Brendan families, community, alumni, and supporters, reads in part, "Our beloved school is set to close at the end of this academic year. This news is a shock to us all and blindsided teachers and staff."

They went on to say that they chose St. Brendan to ensure their children received a solid education in a nurturing environment. "While the pandemic has been hard on everyone, the Archdiocese could have done a better job engaging the staff and families in this process. If this is truly a financial issue, it did not happen overnight," the letter con-

tinued.

It went on to reference an email [from the school representatives] who were chastised for coming to the decision without working "in collaboration with the people who will be impacted." The letter lamented a lack of "transparency" and "common decency" in not involving parents and staff in the process. "If we had been made aware, we could have tapped into our networks, worked to raise additional funds, or found ways to merge our school with Immaculate Conception," they wrote.

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New York serve nearly 53,000 students from Pre-K through 12th grade across 170 schools in nine counties and boroughs throughout New York State. According to the archdiocese, "Catholic schools offer a unique combination of academic and spiritual development that empowers children of all backgrounds to gain the confidence to realize their fullest potential."

The Friends of St. Brendan said they plan to join together to elevate their concerns to the archdiocese in a town hall hosted at the school for parents to hear from the superintendent and whoever made the decision in order to gain answers to questions. "It is only right to demand that our voices be heard, and that the archdiocese give us context and data to justify its decision," they group wrote. They added that at the present time they were not requesting donations.

Norwood News spoke to one parent of a child attending St. Brendan called Sasha Ramirez and asked if there had been any preliminary discussions about the closure before it was communicated to parents in letters dated Feb. 15. "No. From like teachers or anybody? No. I just got that letter and that's it," Ramirez said.

She continued, "From the perspective of a parent, where my daughter just started 3k there, just getting comfortable in her first year with the

teacher, knowing that she's not going to have the same teacher next year, you have to understand, like, she's just getting to know the school."

Ramirez added, "She's young. She's only four years old so to just drastically just change her to another school, to meet new teachers and everything new, because I'm pretty sure that the kids that she's going to be with weren't going to move up into the same class... so, you know, I feel like that's a little drastic for a child. You have to get them prepared."

Ramirez said now she has to move along and look for new 4K. "Also, I lived around the area. It was easy for me. I live right in front of the school." She added that she feels a school should be prepared enough to know when it's not going to open. "That's something that should be done at the beginning of the school year," she said.

Asked if there was anything else she wanted to add, Ramirez said, "It was a good school. Everybody was good there. I have no complaints about the school. They were understanding."

Norwood News contacted NYC Department of Education (DOE) and the Archdiocese of New York to ask if there had been any discussions between the two entities prior to the announcement of the closures in terms of potentially addressing how students would be impacted. We will share any updates we receive.

Meanwhile, the letter accompanying the petition concluded calling on supporters to join them at the school on Friday, Feb. 24, in an effort to save it! "If we show up in numbers, it will make a difference!" they wrote. "Join us and make your voices heard!"

On Sunday, Feb. 19, we also spoke to another parent, Anisha Applewhite, about the merger of St. Gabriel's School, located at 590 West 235th Street in Riverdale. As reported, Applewhite had previously told

her us about 3 years ago that her son attended St. John's on Kingsbridge Avenue and West 231st Street in Riverdale before it closed.

He was in kindergarten at the time and transferred to St. Gabriel's. He must now change schools again. A rally opposing the closure was held at the school on Tuesday, Feb. 14. "Everything was going great," she said. "He loved it. He progressed so much. He felt the community of family and friends, and then all of a sudden, we get a letter. A parent comes in and she contacts us via email about a rumor of the possible closing of St. Gabe's and I'm like, Wow! How? They just closed four, and they just closed St. John's, and they had told us that this would be an option for us."

Applewhite said the letter regarding the closure was very vague. "In my mind, I said I had to hide it from my son because I couldn't tell him, 'Hey, the school that you finally got comfortable in, you have to leave there too, and you might end up losing your friends too because not everyone is going to go to St. Margaret's.'"

The mother, who is also a teacher elsewhere, added, "The children are devastated. My son, this is the second time he's experienced this. The craziest thing that happened is that we saw the list of schools and one of the schools... because I live near St. Brendan... I literally live 5 minutes away from the school, so, I said, hey, if they merge, I'm sending them both [her children] to St. Brendan. Well, they're one of the schools that are closing..."

Applewhite now worries about enrollment at high schools. "If you take away all these schools, then they're eventually going to close the high schools because they're going to be under-enrolled. There's not that many elementary schools left and it's all about money, and I think that's the parent's disgust. It's about money, and this is Riverdale!"

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